

RESTRICTED

HISTORY, ROLES AND ORGANIZATION
OF THE NIGERIAN NAVY

INTRODUCTION

1. One of the primary responsibilities of a nation and indeed her government is the protection of national interests both at home and abroad. According to a school of thought on international relations, the tripod upon which national interests are founded are national security, economic well-being and international prestige. From this perspective, the overriding national interest of any nation can be concretely interpreted as preservation of territorial integrity and national values. Obviously, for littoral nations such as Nigeria, the protection of her maritime front and related activities by a capable naval force is an imperative. In supporting this assertion historically, General Hithles of the United States Marine Corps said, 'the pathway of man's journey through the ages is littered with the wreckage of nations which, in their hours of glory, forgot their dependence on the sea.'

2. Nations with maritime interests which aspire to exert their influence outside their own boundaries must be able to bring power to bear at sea. According to the doctrine of Sea Power, 'any nation which derives benefits from the sea cannot turn its back on the sea'. It, therefore, follows that any nation whose territory borders the sea, and whose economy is supported largely from the sea, must logically need the sea for at least 4 purposes. These are:

RESTRICTED

- a. Passage of goods and people, that is sustenance of commercial activities
 - b. Passage of military forces, for diplomatic purposes and in the event of war, as a base for engaging the adversary's land, air and sea targets.
 - c. Exploration and exploitation of resources in or under the sea.
 - d. Preventing hostile military access to its territory.
3. Nigeria's location at the corner of Africa in the Gulf of Guinea, within the South Atlantic Ocean, is very strategic. Her sea frontier extends from Long 002° 49' E to Long 008° 30'E, with a coastline of 420 nm. As a maritime nation, she needs the sea for the 4 purposes earlier enumerated. In addition, her dependence on the sea and other maritime interests need to be secured against any threats be they external or internal; political, economic or military. It was for these reasons that some Nigerian nationalists, prior to independence, perceived the need for a full-fledged navy with the capabilities and relevant organizational structure to ward off any attempt to undermine the nation's security, territorial integrity and maritime interests. Chief A Rosiji, a member of the erstwhile Nigerian Parliament, during the 1955 debate on the need for a navy, stated that, 'One of the functions of the navy will be the naval defence of Nigeria within its territorial waters..... I would like it to be extended beyond our own territorial waters'. The Nigerian Navy (NN) of today is the navy which emerged from those debates, even though it has evolved greatly overtime. This paper would

RESTRICTED

consider the history of the NN before enumerating the roles of the NN. It will finally highlight the organization of the NN.

AIM

4. The aim of this presentation is to acquaint the students of Senior Course 32 with the history, roles and organization of the NN.

HISTORY OF THE NIGERIAN NAVY

5. The history of the NN cannot be discussed without recourse to the colonial era. What is today known as the NN is an offshoot of the colonial Nigerian Marine Department of the Royal Navy (RN), which was established to further the interest of the British in the West African subregion. The functions of the Nigerian Marines at that time included:

- a. Port security and examinations.
- b. Provision of security for RN ships on patrol duties to and within Nigeria.
- c. Ferry services.
- d. Pilotage duties.
- e. Servicing of buoys and lighthouses.

6. These duties obviously did not impress the nationalists who desired a navy capable of ruling the waves just like the RN. The agitation for the establishment of a navy was succinctly summarized in the words of Mr LL Olakunle, a Member of Parliament in 1956. He said, 'If we must have a Nigerian Navy, then we must have something along

RESTRICTED

the pattern of the British Navy'. With further pressure from the nationalists, the colonial administration disbanded the colonial Marine Department. Sequel to this action, 250 officers and men of the disbanded Marine Department were put together to form the nucleus of the Nigerian Naval Force (NNF) in April 1956. The force was later renamed Naval Defence Force (NDF) of Nigeria.

7. On 1 June 1956, the NDF commenced operation with 11 assorted ships and craft inherited from the erstwhile colonial Marine Department of the RN. On 1 May 1958, the NDF was legally established as a force and re-designated Royal Nigerian Navy. The prefix 'Royal' was a mark of allegiance to the Queen of England. However, on Nigeria's attainment of a republican status in 1963, the prefix 'Royal' was dropped and this gave birth to the NN. The modern day NN subsequently came into being legally through the Act of Parliament No 21 of 1964.

ROLES OF THE NN

8. It is necessary to consider the concept of sea power and standardized roles of navies before highlighting the roles of the NN. This would enable one appreciate the roles assigned to the NN from a better perspective.

CONCEPT OF SEA POWER

9. Sea Power could be defined as 'the military power that is brought to bear at sea: on the surface of the sea, underneath it or in the air above it'. An American strategist, Admiral Alfred T Mahan

RESTRICTED

once contended that 'whoever rules the sea, rules the world' and that 'you cannot win any land campaign without securing the sea lanes of communication to supply the war materials needed on land'. Examples of this in some modern day operations are the battles for the Falkland Islands, OPERATION DESERT STORM, and OPERATION LIBERTY (ECOMOG). It is therefore no accident of history that all known empires and great industrial nations of today are, without exception, islands or coastal states who had protected, defended, harnessed, managed and used their own and other people's maritime resources effectively.

STANDARDIZED ROLES OF NAVIES

10. Navies worldwide generally have standardized roles. A maritime strategist, Ken Booth, categorized such roles into 3, namely: military, policing and diplomatic.

- a. **Military Role**. The military role consists of:
 - (1) Projection of force function.
 - (2) Balance of power function.

- b. **Policing Role**. The policing role is concerned much more with the territorial waters and as such with the maintenance of law and order within this area. However, with the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) stretching to 200nm seaward, there is always the need to extend this role beyond

RESTRICTED

the territorial waters. The functions of the navy under this role are:

- (1) Coastguard duties.
- (2) Nation building functions.

c. **Diplomatic Role**. The diplomatic role is concerned with the management of foreign policy short of the actual employment of force. The functions of the navy under this role are:

- (1) Negotiation from a position of strength.
- (2) Manipulation.
- (3) Prestige.

11. With the examination of these roles, it is pertinent to mention that the navy is the only arm of the armed forces of any nation that is suitably placed for a diplomatic role. The presence of army tanks or military aircraft in another country may constitute an act of aggression, but the visit of another country's warship is usually seen as a friendly gesture.

12. In line with the concept of sea power and the standardized roles of navies worldwide, the responsibilities of the NN can subsequently be enumerated.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NN

13. The Parliamentary Act No 21 of 1964 which legally established the NN charged the Force with the following responsibilities:

- a. The naval defence of Nigeria.
- b. Assisting in the enforcement of customs laws.
- c. Training in naval duties.
- d. Undertaking hydrographic surveys.
- e. Such other duties as the Council of Ministers may from time to time direct.

14. These responsibilities when critically viewed in the light of changes in the environment, threat perception, new alliances and defence arrangements reflect a shortfall on the standardized roles of navies worldwide as earlier enumerated. Hence, there was the need for the redefinition of these responsibilities. The NN, therefore, through the recommendation of a committee, forwarded a paper to the Ministry of Defence for a memorandum to the Government for the review of the responsibilities enumerated by the Act. Consequently, the Armed Forces Act Cap A20 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria charged the NN with the following responsibilities:

- a. Enforcing and assisting in coordinating the enforcement of all Customs Laws including anti-illegal bunkering, fishery and immigration laws of Nigeria at sea.

RESTRICTED

- b. Enforcing and assisting in coordinating the enforcement of national and international maritime laws ascribed or acceded to by Nigeria.
- c. Making of charts and coordination of all national hydrographic surveys.
- d. Promoting, coordinating and enforcing safety regulations in the territorial waters and EEZ.
- e. Any other duty as the President, with the advice of the National Assembly may from time to time determine.

ORGANIZATION OF THE NN

15. If the traditional missions of navies and, in particular, the basic roles of the NN which are primarily that of presence, deterrence and projection of power ashore, are to be sustained, then the NN needs to be organized to perform policing, military and diplomatic roles. This implies that the NN should be able to conduct all types of operations be it under the water, in the air and on the surface.

16. In order to carry out the assigned roles, ships and experienced men trained in various naval tasks and duties would be required. Furthermore, the ships would require secure bases, workshops and dockyard facilities for maintenance and continuous operations. Additionally, self-sufficiency would be paramount for the realization of any meaningful state of combat readiness.

RESTRICTED

17. In view of the aforementioned considerations, the NN, in her bid to remain effective operationally, has continued to be dynamic in her organization and re-organization. Directly under the Naval Headquarters (NHQ) are 2 operational commands, one training and one logistics command and 2 autonomous units.

THE NHQ

18. The NHQ is the administrative and policy-making organ of the NN. At the head is the Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) who exercises full command of the NN. The present CNS is V Adm II Yakubu.

19. To effect full command of the NN, the CNS has 6 staff branches in addition to the Office of the Navy Secretary. The staff branches are:

- a. Policy and Plans.
- b. Training and Operations.
- c. Administration.
- d. Naval Engineering.
- e. Logistics.
- f. Accounts and Budget.

20. These branches are headed by Principal Staff Officers (PSOs) of flag rank. It is necessary to consider these branches in details one after the other.

RESTRICTED

21. **Policy and Plans Branch**. The Policy and Plans (P&P) Branch is responsible for the formulation, coordination and monitoring of all policy and planning matters in the NN. The Branch is headed by the Chief of Policy and Plans. The following directorates are in the Branch:

- a. Directorate of Policy.
- b. Directorate of Plans.
- c. Directorate of Inspection.
- d. Directorate of Ship Design and Acquisition.
- e. Directorate of Research and Development.
- f. Directorate of Information.

22. **Training and Operations Branch**. The Training and Operations Branch is responsible for the formulation, coordination and monitoring of all naval operations and training policies. It is headed by the Chief of Training and Operations. The following Directorates are in the Branch:

- a. Directorate of Operations.
- b. Directorate of Training.
- c. Directorate of Combat Policy and Tactics.
- d. Directorate of Naval Signals.
- e. Directorate of Naval Intelligence.
- f. Directorate of Hydrographic Surveys.
- g. Directorate of Maritime Services.
- h. Directorate of Air Operations.

RESTRICTED

- i. Directorate of Information and Communication Technology.
23. **Administration Branch**. The Administration Branch looks after the formulation, coordination and monitoring of administration policies. The Branch is headed by the Chief of Administration; it has the following directorates:

- a. Directorate of Administration.
- b. Directorate of Medical Service.
- c. Directorate of Naval Education.
- d. Directorate of Naval Provost.
- e. Directorate of Legal Services.
- f. Directorate of Sports.
- g. Directorate of Music.
- h. Directorate of Veteran Affairs.
- j. Directorate of Chaplaincy (Catholic).
- k. Directorate of Chaplaincy (Protestant).
- l. Directorate of Islamic Affairs.

24. **Naval Engineering Branch**. The Naval Engineering Branch is responsible for the formulation, coordination and implementation of naval engineering policies. The Chief of Naval Engineering heads the Branch with the following directorates:

- a. Directorate of Construction.
- b. Directorate of Air Engineering.
- c. Directorate of Marine Engineering.
- d. Directorate of Weapon Engineering.

RESTRICTED

25. **Logistics Branch**. The Logistic Branch is responsible for the formulation of logistic requirement, coordination and monitoring of NN logistic activities. The Branch is headed by the Chief of Logistics and comprises:

- a. Naval Ordnance Depot.
- b. Directorate of Ship Spares.
- c. Directorate of Projects.
- d. Directorate of Procurement.
- e. Directorate of Supplies.
- f. Directorate of Armament Supplies.

26. **Accounts and Budget Branch**. The Accounts and Budget Branch is responsible for the formulation, coordination, monitoring and execution of financial regulations and budgetary plans of the NN. The Branch headed by the Chief of Accounts and Budget has the following office and directorates:

- a. Central Pay Office.
- b. Directorate of Naval Accounts.
- c. Directorate of Budget.
- d. Directorate of Non-Public Fund.

27. **Navy Secretary**. The Office of the Navy Secretary is responsible for enlistment/recruitment, appointment, discharge and resettlement of NN personnel. The office is headed by the Navy Secretary and it has the following directorates:

RESTRICTED

- a. Directorate of Manning.
- b. Command Naval Drafting.
- c. Directorate of Personnel Release.
- d. Directorate of Recruitment, Rehabilitation and Reserve.

THE OPERATIONAL COMMANDS

28. The basic requirements for any successful naval engagement whether against a purely military target or a vessel engaged in illegal fishing are information, strength and position. The organization of the NN into 2 operational commands, consisting of the fleets, formations, operations bases and other units is to achieve maximum strategic and tactical advantages.

29. Each of the operational command is presently headed by a Flag Officer of the rank of Rear Admiral, known as the Flag Officer Commanding (FOC) WEST and EAST respectively. In the Commands' HQs are 9 PSOs besides the Chief Staff Officer (CSO). These are Command Operations Officer (COO), Command Technical Officer (CTO), Command Accounting and Budgeting Officer (CABO), Command Administration Officer (CAO) and Command Medical Officer (CMO). Others are the Command Education Officer (CEDO), Command Intelligence Officer (CINTO), Command Provost Marshal (CPM) and Command Logistics Officer (CLO. It is therefore important to examine the 2 operational commands in details as follows:

RESTRICTED

a. **Western Naval Command.** The Western Naval Command HQ is located at Apapa in Lagos. It covers the sea and coastal areas from the Nigeria/Benin border at Long 002° 49' E to Long 006° E in Delta State from the Nigerian coastline to the limit of the nation's EEZ. The Command has the following units under its jurisdiction:

- (1) Western Fleet at Apapa.
- (2) NNS BEECROFT, an operations base at Apapa.
- (3) NNS DELTA, an operations base at Warri.
- (4) Naval Air Station, Ojo, Lagos.
- (5) Nigerian Navy Reference Hospital, Ojo, Lagos.
- (6) Fleet Support Group (West) at Apapa.
- (7) NNS WEY, a maintenance unit at Navy Town, Ojo.
- (8) Forward Operating Bases (FOB) IGBOKODA and ESCRAVOS in Ondo and Delta States respectively.
- (9) Nigerian Navy Secondary School, Abeokuta.
- (10) Nigerian Navy Hospital Warri.

b. **Eastern Naval Command.** The Eastern Naval Command (ENC) is the second operations command of the NN and it covers the sea area from Long 006° E in Delta State to the Nigeria/Cameroon border at Long 008° 30' E, and from the Nigerian coastline to the limit of the nation's EEZ. The headquarters is at Calabar. The Command has the following units under its jurisdiction:

RESTRICTED

- (1) NNS VICTORY, an operations base at Calabar.
- (2) NNS PATHFINDER, an operations base at Port Harcourt.
- (3) Eastern Fleet at Calabar.
- (4) FOBs BONNY, EGUWEMA and IBAKA in Rivers, Bayelsa and Akwa Ibom States respectively.
- (5) Fleet Support Group(East) at Calabar.
- (6) Navy Hospitals at Calabar and Port Harcourt.
- (7) Nigerian Navy Secondary Schools at Calabar and Port Harcourt.

THE NAVAL TRAINING COMMAND

30. The main functions of the Naval Training Command (NAVTRAC) are the coordination and harmonization of training doctrines and standards for all local training in the NN as evolved by the NHQ. The Command is headed by the FOC NAVTRAC, who is assisted by 9 PSOs namely: the CSO, the Command Technical Training Officer (CTTO), Command Logistic Training Officer (CLTO) and Command Medical Training Officer (CMTO). Others are the Command Academic Training Officer (CATO), CABO, CAO, CINTO and CPM. The units under NAVTRAC are:

- a. Sea Training Unit at Victoria Island, Lagos. It is responsible for Basic Operations Sea Training, Safety Operations Sea Training, and Consolidated Operations Sea

RESTRICTED

- Training of all NN ships when assigned. It also conducts harbour and ship acceptance trials of vessels after major refits.
- b. NNS QUORRA at Apapa, which caters for various forms of seamen professional courses for officers and ratings.
 - c. Nigerian Navy Engineering College (NNEC) Sapele, which caters for the technical training of all NN technical personnel.
 - d. The Nigerian Navy Finance and Logistic School (NNFLS) at Owerrinta.
 - e. Nigerian Naval College ONURA and the Nigerian Navy Basic Training School (NNBTS), which are co-located at Onne, Port Harcourt. The 2 establishments conduct basic training for officers and ratings respectively.
 - f. There are other professional schools, which include; the Medical Staff Training School, Offa in Kwara State, the NN School of Music at Otta and the Hydrographic School at Port Harcourt. Others are the Naval Provost and Regulating School, the Nigerian Navy Intelligence School and the Physical Training School all at Apapa, Lagos.
31. It is essential to state that the Command's relationship with the Nigerian Defence Academy, the Armed Forces Command and Staff College and the National Defence College is for liaison only.

THE LOGISTICS COMMAND

32. The Logistics Command is equally commanded by a FOC of Rear Admiral rank. The permanent HQ of the Command is at Oghara, Delta State though it's presently operating from Sapele. However, the Nigerian Navy Order establishing the Logistics Command which is expected to stipulate the organization and responsibilities of the Command is still been awaited.

THE AUTONOMOUS UNITS

33. The autonomous units are those units, which require prudent management and high-level control that need not be duplicated or represented at the lower hierarchy. Though small in outfit, they report directly to the CNS.

34. Prominent among the autonomous units is the Nigerian Naval Dockyard, located in Victoria Island, Lagos. Hitherto, third line maintenance was carried out either in a foreign dockyard or private ones in Nigeria, at very high cost. The Naval Dockyard in Lagos, which was commissioned on 27 August 1990, now takes care of this high level maintenance such as major overhaul of ships engines, additions and alterations, and modification of designs. The Naval Shipyard in Port Harcourt was also acquired in 1990 from Messrs Witt and Bush. Smaller ships of the NN and merchant ships are repaired there. The shipyard has built and delivered some tugboats and barges to some private organizations.

THE NN FLEET

35. The ships in the NN Fleet are grouped into squadrons based on their type. This is for ease of administration as ships of the same characteristics when grouped together are easier to administer. The NN Fleet is made up of the following types of ships:

- a. Frigates.
- b. Corvettes.
- c. Fast Attack Craft (Missile) [FAC (M)]
- d. Patrol Craft.
- e. Landing Ships
- f. Survey Ship.
- g. Training Ships
- h. Tugs.
- i. Inshore Patrol Craft.
- j. Mine Counter Measure Vessels.

36. At present, the NN fleet consists of 2 frigates, 2 MK 9 Corvettes, 6 FAC (M), 7 Seaward Defence Boats, 21 Inshore patrol craft, 2 Landing Ship Tanks (LST) and 2 MCMVs. Also, there are a number of service vessels, which include one survey ship, 4 ocean-going tugboats, 4 buoy tenders and some light personnel boats. Additionally, there are 6 newly acquired Manta Class vessels. These ships are divided into Western and Eastern Fleets each commanded by Fleet Commanders who are directly responsible to their respective

RESTRICTED

FOCs. This is to ensure administrative and operational control of the fleets for the effective protection of Nigeria's western and eastern maritime flanks.

NAVAL AIR ARM

37. One vital aspect of the NN organization, which requires separate attention, is the Air Arm. Based on the provision of the third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III), Nigeria has a 200 nm EEZ. With a coastline of over 420 nm, Nigeria, therefore, has an EEZ of over 84,000 square nautical miles. The size of the Nigerian Navy Fleet is small compared with the large area she has to police against potential maritime threats. Thus, it became necessary to consider practical means of extending the effectiveness and presence of the country's naval forces. It is in this regard that naval helicopters play important roles as a force multiplier in augmenting the efforts of surface fleets in patrol and reconnaissance. In pursuance of these advantages, Nigeria acquired some naval helicopters in 1982, which formed the first squadron of the NN Air Arm.

38. The NN Air Arm was established in 1985, with the NAS Ojo as its base. The Air Base was designed to fit the requirement of the NN. The aircraft types in her inventory are the Lynx and Agusta helicopters. The NN recently took delivery of 2 new Agusta in addition to her present fleet and an Agusta Bell 206 Helicopter for training.

RESTRICTED

39. The Lynx helicopter is designed primarily as a weapon carrier in the ASW role. It is an integral part of the ASW weapon system onboard NNS ARADU. In addition, the helicopter can carry out:

- a. Aerial Surveillance.
- b. Search and Rescue.
- c. Medical Evacuation.
- d. Mine Laying.
- e. Logistics Transfer.

40. The Agusta helicopters on the other hand are primarily fitted for aerial surveillance of the EEZ. However, they could also be used for movement of Very Important Persons and undertake other functions such as:

- a. Search and Rescue.
- b. Medical Evacuation.
- c. Mine Laying.
- d. Logistic Transfer.
- e. Fire Fighting.

ORGANIZATION ONBOARD NN SHIPS

41. There are 4 main departments' onboard NN ships. These are operations, marine engineering, weapon engineering and logistics. An officer, who is referred to as the head of department, is in charge of each department. He reports directly to the commanding officer

RESTRICTED

on operational matters or through the Executive Officer (XO) on all administrative matters. The XO is the second in command on all naval ships, as well as being the head of the Operations Department in smaller ships. However, in bigger ships while the XO remains the second in command, the Principal Warfare Officer is the head of the Operations Department. In the ratings cadre, the most senior seaman rating is referred to as the Coxswain. The Coxswain is responsible for organizing the ratings for work and discipline.

CONCLUSION

42. The NN from its humble beginning in 1956, as a seaward defence force has evolved into its present state as a sub-regional maritime force. At present, the NN has in its inventory, modern fighting ships equipped with state of the art weapon systems. The establishment of the NN was predicated upon the need to ensure national survival and the protection of the nation's maritime interests.

43. To perform her roles as the caretaker of the nation's maritime resources, the NN is organized into 2 operational commands, a training command and a logistics command. The ships as the basic fighting elements are organized into types and assigned to the 2 operational commands for ease of administration and operations.

44. The organization of the NN is aimed at achieving maximum strategic as well as tactical advantages of the 3 elements of information, position and strength in the NN daily operation.

RESTRICTED

Furthermore, in order to ensure that the ships float, move and fight effectively at all times, the dockyards and other support/logistic facilities are provided.

45. Finally, it must be stated that the protection of Nigeria's maritime environment and the resources therein requires a virile navy with a balanced fleet. Pandit Nehru, the great Indian Statesman, once said 'To be secured on land you must be supreme at sea.' The NN remains committed to protecting Nigeria's citizens as well as the nation's assets and interests at sea. Onward Together!