



THE ADVENT OF FORCE HEALTH PROTECTION

NAVAL HYGIENE AND SANITATION

- In the late 19th century, germ theory and public health began to reshape our understanding of disease and the means of prevention. The field of **naval hygiene** was every bit an offshoot of the public health movement and was specifically **tailored to the issues of the fleet**.
- The disciples of naval hygiene sought to **improve ship sick-bays, berthing spaces, ventilation, lighting, heating, means of obtaining distilled water, better refrigeration for food and protect shipboard crews and landing parties from disease outbreaks.**



ORIGINS OF HYGIENE

- The Greek god of medicine Aesculapius fathered nine children, including a daughter named **Hygeia**.
- Hygeia was a **“guardian of health.”** Pilgrims flocked to her temples in Corinth, Kos (birthplace of Hippocrates), Epidaurus and Pergamon seeking her **protection from epidemics and plagues** that ravaged their lands.
- Her cult was especially **popular among athletes** who called upon the goddess to keep them in good form in the first Olympic games.
- In art and sculpture, Hygeia was often depicted as giving food and drink to a **serpent which represented healing and medicine.**



FIRST SHIPBOARD PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE

- The U.S. Navy’s **South Atlantic Squadron** arrived in Rio de Janeiro in 1894 just as a deadly disease epidemic hit the city. To protect the crews, Navy physicians issued a series of strict **sanitary guidelines** that included: **rigid quarantine; prompt removal of infected patients from ships; isolation of patients who may be infected; strict enforcement of personal hygiene; and the disinfection of contaminated articles.**
- While in port, the squadron remained almost entirely **free of disease.**
- Although the U.S. Navy was still limited in treatment options for those suffering from many of the leading diseases of the 1890s, this guidance represented a **significant milestone** in the history of medicine and progress in the **prevention against disease in the fleet.**

NAVY MEDICINE *FAST FACTS*



A CABINET OF CURIOSITIES

- In 1882, the U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) founded the **Naval Museum of Hygiene**, a public health educational center for military personnel located in Washington, D.C.
- The museum exhibited collections of “instruments, appliances, inventions, and designs relating to, and illustrating, **the progress of sanitary science in its application to the exigencies of naval life.**”
- At its peak, the museum housed a **12,000-volume medical library** and an “**experimental laboratory**” used for a wide-spectrum of research.
- The museum **tested disinfectants, the purity of catgut sutures, examined the “clinical value” of the steel used in naval guns, and conducted experiments on water purification through filtration.**
- On May 27, 1902, the Navy Medical School was established at the Museum of Hygiene and, collectively, this institution was known as the “U.S. Naval Museum of Hygiene and Medical School.” Three years later, **on May 20, 1905, the Naval Museum of Hygiene was disestablished.**

“The whole atmosphere of the interior is light, airy, clean, and polished, the inlaid floors waxed, the white arches leading in long vistas into the various exhibit rooms. In the main hall . . . the exhibits of hospital service are arranged, together with a miscellaneous assortment of clothing and ornaments . . . and different specimens of life preservers. In the corridor leading into the main room is the metallic burial casket, like those sent to Siberia to receive the bodies of the officers who perished in the Jeannette [polar expedition]; also a model of the Parsee ‘Tower of Silence’; burglar-proof grave vaults, crematories and urns.”

~Record of the Naval Museum of Hygiene, 1900

LABORATORY SCIENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW OFFICERS, 1878

- On Feb. 1, 1878, Navy Surgeon General William Grier authorized the formation of the **Laboratory School of Instruction** at Naval Hospital Brooklyn, N.Y. to train newly commissioned naval medical officers.
- The curriculum consisted of course work in **recruit medicine, optics and microscopy, chemistry and chemical analyses, Navy regulations, and hygiene.**
- Students were also required to conduct **hygiene inspections** aboard naval warships at the nearby shipyard and were encouraged to attend clinics at local civilian hospitals to improve their clinical skills.

