

Cutting America's Defense Budget:. U.S. Navy has 216 Admirals Today, More Than Ten Times as Many as in WWII

By [Sherwood Ross](#)

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There's been much talk about how to cut the military budget. Here are some suggestions from a retired U.S. Navy captain who is now Dean of the new American College of History and Legal Studies, in Salem, New Hampshire.

CUTTING NAVY DEFENSE BUDGET CAN BEGIN WITH OFFICER RATINGS A U.S. NAVY CAPTAIN, RETIRED, SAYS

The U.S. Navy defeated the powerful Axis navies of World War Two with just 18 admirals but today it has 216 admirals even though it faces no comparable enemy on the high seas.

What's more, today's admirals have far fewer warships and sailors to supervise. There are a total of just 333,000 sailors today compared to 3.4 million in 1945, and the number of warships today is just 286 compared to 6,700 in 1945.

The reason for the explosion of admirals, says U.S. Navy Captain Michael Chesson, Retired, is "grade creep," the tendency in the Pentagon to increase the rank for a particular job.

Chesson, now founding professor and dean of the new American College of History and Legal Studies, Salem, N.H., writes that the Navy could get by with only one four-star admiral as Chief of Naval Operations.

When the terms of other four-star admirals are up, replace them with officers "who will have only the three stars of a vice admiral," Chesson writes. Slots currently filled by (three-star) vice admirals will be filled instead by rear admirals, and the work of one-star admirals would be done by captains.

"Each job designated for a commissioned officer, and especially those in the gigantic shore establishment, whether in the Pentagon, at a base, academy, or whatever, will all be downgraded by one rank," Chesson suggests.

He goes on to call for the elimination of all uniform boards to eliminate "the countless hours wasted in tinkering with and tweaking various modifications to the enormous variety of uniforms in each branch of the service for male and female personnel."

"Eliminate service on a uniform board as a career enhancer. Ditch the contracts with civilian consultants, or shoot them. Put the officers who seek this kind of duty in the field chasing terrorists (and) if female personnel don't like the way a current uniform makes them look,

(let them) get a job as a fashion consultant.”

What’s more, he’d ditch “expensive and wasteful efforts to foist corporate group think on officers and the American military in general, so says goodbye to boondoggles like the late and unlamented Total Quality Management, which transmogrified into the Navy’s Total Quality Leadership program.” Chesson adds, “Countless officers spent tens of thousands of hours pushing red and white beads around a sand board...That might work on the playing fields of Walden University but it’s not likely to prove useful in a free fire zone. The military is not a democracy or a commune and it certainly isn’t a college campus filled with aging tenured radicals.”

Chesson says none of his proposals would save big bucks “but if projected over the next 10 years would add up to an amount of dollars that could be spent on our troops, or our wounded veterans in VA hospitals....”

Prior to assuming his position at the American College of History and Legal Studies, Chesson was Chair of the History Department at the University of Massachusetts-Boston. He earned his Ph.D. in history at Harvard. Chesson had 30 years of service, active and reserve, in the U.S. Navy, where he attained the rank of Captain

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