

## Best Prize Speech

Dear Prof. Dr. Neitzel, dear PD Dr. Scianna, dear Dr. Rieck, dear Dr. Kay, dear Dr. Pschichholz, dear Friends of the Chair, dear known faces, dear unknown faces:

A successful military campaign might be characterised by four elements: cunning leadership, a realistic goal, dependable allies and adequate resources. I was fortunate enough to experience these conditions here in Potsdam. I came here in 2017 as a young naval history enthusiast for my Bachelors and with the goal of doing something with ships later in life. The sole factor for my decision back then was Prof. Neitzel's chair and its associated study programmes. Not only was I able since then to take one of these, I also fulfilled my dream of working full time with ships when my studies neared their end.

Those of you who know me probably also know that I have a special and, for a student, unusually long relationship with the chair, having attended my first Bachelor lecture in 2018 and working with them since 2019. These last years have been formative, faceted and fantastic. Thank you to all of you. Your support for studies, internships and jobs are, and I am certainly not alone in stating this, superb. Special thanks also to FKpt Dr. Christian Jentzsch, who not only provided splendid support for my thesis, introduced me to new opportunities and always has extraordinary naval knowledge up his sleeve, providing us with material for at times overflowing discussions. In all these years it was a real joy to see the chair and its surrounding community grow. For one, each new cohort of students bringing in additional views, subjects, personalities and life experiences. For two, the events framing the academic year, like right this one, the summer party, the excursions or the recurring guest lecturers. It is getting bigger every year and making us here a wonderful little tribe. For three, it was also a joy to witness the successes of the staff, be it new degrees or highly regarded books, to which I want to congratulate here.

Next up are my dependable allies. First of all my girlfriend who always had my back and supported me in my naval, military history and security endeavours and escapades. Also she rather positively welcomed me lining up our hallways with dozens over dozens of model ships. Thank you! Secondly, I want to thank my fellow students and congratulate those who've also graduated this year or are about to. My warmest congrats and thanks for all the insights you had. Be it in the library writing term papers or the evenings in bars, where we of course only discussed study-related topics and nothing else. You were the reason my studies were fun,

successful and educational. Once again proving that in War and Conflict dependable allies get you ahead. Thank you!

Coming to the adequate resources I mentioned at the start: three tips to the new students.

I. Discuss like there is no tomorrow!

Figuratively, of course. Use your time to enter in lively exchanges. Be it about the political preconditions for long-lasting peace in Myanmar, be it about how you would've spent the 100 billion Sondervermögen or how you'd spend the next one (fingers crossed). Be it about the strategic deficit of Bulgaria during World War One or be it about the validity of Prof. Neitzel's opinion about the Stellersche Seekuh. The mutual exchange is vital and the creativity in ideas, approaches and findings is exactly what is needed. [Just a small note on that from the chair's perspective. The need for creativity does not apply to citations and citational standards. Please follow orders for these.]

II. Build your network!

This in Germany unique community gives you unique opportunities. The German security bubble and the military history bubble are small and you're almost guaranteed to encounter War and Conflict and International War Studies graduates, lecturers and associates. Additionally, use the academic infrastructure of Berlin and Potsdam. There are the Federal Archives, the Staatsbibliothek, the political institutions and adjacent organisations and the, caution tongue twister, Centre for Military History and Social Sciences of the German Armed Forces, to name a few.

III. Swarm out!

This is not only something for the new cohort, but also current ones and especially the graduates. There is a clear lack of people educated in security matters in all areas in Germany: Media, Politics, Industry. Gaps are wide and the events of the last years have widened them still. The more people with knowledge, expertise and topical familiarity there are, the better it is for the German and European future. So be the bright minds the world needs and will probably need more of. Especially in naval security.

Speaking of which: I can't separate myself from my naval history core, so to end my speech I included one last maritime nugget. I've spoken now for ten minutes, which is actually substantial more time than the Bismarck needed to sink HMS Hood.

And with this, thank you to the chair and my allies, congratulations to the graduates and welcome to the new cohort. Thank you.