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THE SCHOOL OF NAVAL WARFARE

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In 1884 a small group of naval reformers, under the leadership of Commodore Stephen B. Luce, succeeded in establishing at Newport, R.I., a school for the systematic study of naval warfare. In today's Naval War College, the direct descendant of the original school is the present senior course, the School of Naval Warfare, which is the highest educational institution in the U.S. Navy. In the 85 years the College has been in existence, the U.S. Navy has been transformed from little more than a token force of Civil War vintage wooden cruisers and overage monitors to the most powerful seagoing force in history. The Naval War College has played a substantial role in this transformation and, in turn, has itself had to change and adapt to keep pace. This article reviews some of the contributions of the College over the years and the influences which led to the present School of Naval Warfare.

Distinguished Early Faculty. The early War College, despite a meager budget and a shortage of students, had a distinguished faculty. Among those teaching at the College during the late 1880's were Capt. Alfred Thayer Mahan in naval history and strategy; Lt. Tasker H. Bliss, U.S. Army, who was later to be first President of the Army War College, then Army Chief of Staff, lecturing on military history, strategy, and tactics; James Russell Soley, a New York lawyer, professor at the Naval Academy, and later to be an Assistant Secretary of the Navy and President of The George Washington University, who taught international law, Lt. William B. Hoff, one of the Navy's foremost students of tactics; Lt. John F. Meigs, a design expert who lectured on naval gunnery; and Lt. William McCarty Little, who was perhaps the world's first professional war gamer. This distinguished teaching staff was augmented by guest

lecturers, a practice which is still a fundamental part of the curriculum. Among these early lecturers was Theodore Roosevelt who lectured on the War of 1812.¹

Contributions of the College. Although the principal purpose of the Naval War College has always been "to provide naval officers advanced education in the science of naval warfare and related subjects in order to improve their professional competence for higher responsibilities," the War College has made significant contributions to the Navy and to the study of naval warfare in addition to providing advanced education to generations of naval officers.² Not the least of these contributions has been the concept of a War College itself. When the Naval War College was founded, no similar institution existed anywhere in the world. The nearest equivalent, the Royal Naval College at Greenwich, offered only strictly technical courses to relatively junior officers.³ Yet, by 1910 all of the principal naval powers had institutions modeled on the Naval War College. One of the prime movers in the founding of the U.S. Army War College in 1901 was Brig. Gen. T.H. Bliss who, as a young lieutenant, had been one of the first members of the staff of the Naval War College.⁴

Mahan on Seapower. The most significant intellectual contribution of the early days of the War College consisted of the writings of Alfred Thayer Mahan on seapower. Naval and strategic thinking throughout the world is by now so colored by the influence of Mahan's work that it is difficult to realize just how influential he was. Before Mahan and the Naval War College there was virtually no systematic work on naval warfare. As Luce, the first President of the College, pointed out: "The first great fact that presented itself to us was that in all that related to naval tactics, naval strategy and the naval policy of a

state, not only were there no instructors but there were no textbooks."⁵ The *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, which now carries several articles in each issue on broad questions of strategy and naval policy, did not run a single article on strategy or tactics from its founding in 1874 until 1886.⁶ Mahan and the Naval War College moved into this intellectual vacuum, Mahan's work providing for the first time a systematic treatment of the influence of seapower upon history and politics and a theoretical treatment of the employment of navies in warfare.

War Games. Another area in which the College has had a fundamental influence is in the introduction, development, and systematic use of the war game. War games were introduced to the College in 1887 in a series of six lectures by William McCarty Little, then a retired naval lieutenant and, with some exceptions during the period 1887-1893, have formed an important part of the curriculum ever since. As a present war games specialist at the War College has pointed out, "The inclusion of Little's lectures in the College curriculum represented the first official recognition of war gaming in this country, and very likely its first official recognition by any navy."⁷ The games have served both as valuable training devices in naval decision for the participants and as an analytic device for studying questions of naval interest. As a result of war games analysis, for example, in 1896 the College recommended that oil fuel be explored as a substitute for coal, and in 1901 concluded that the all big gun warship had substantial advantages over the mixed caliber type then being used by all major navies; both conclusions were well ahead of their time. Today war games continue as an integral part of the curriculum and are still conducted for both educational and analytical purposes, using the advanced Navy Electronic Warfare Simulator.

International Law Blue Books. International law was included in the original curriculum of the War College in 1884 and continues to be an important part of the course of study. Starting in 1901 the College has published annually volumes of lectures and problem cases in international law. These "Blue Books" are a widely recognized authority on the international law of the sea. Since 1953 responsibility for preparing the *International Law Studies* has been assigned to the holder of the Charles H. Stockton Chair of International Law. Each year the distinguished professor who occupies the chair is asked to research and publish a treatise on an international law topic of interest to naval officers. Some of the volumes prepared to date include: submarine warfare, economic warfare, outer space, law of the sea, and war at sea. These volumes, which enjoy an excellent reputation in the professional and academic communities, are distributed by the Naval War College to major naval commands, other U.S. armed forces, interested federal agencies, to the war colleges of the navies of many friendly countries, and to law schools and college libraries throughout the world.

War Planning. Despite the fact that the Naval War College was founded as a purely educational institution, during its early years it served some of the functions of a general staff. Between 1890 and 1915 almost all of the war plans prepared for the Navy Department were drawn by officers from the Naval War College, sometimes with assistance from the Office of Naval Intelligence.⁸ The planning task fell to the College for two reasons. First, the organization of the Navy into semi-autonomous bureaus made little provision for planning campaigns and fleet operations. Second, there were virtually no officers in the Navy outside of the Naval War College trained in general staff work. As a result, the College inherited the job of

war planning almost by default, and it was not until the reorganization of the Navy under a Chief of Naval Operations in 1915 that the task of naval war planning was moved to Washington.

Navy Department Reorganization. The Naval War College was itself influential in bringing about the 1915 reorganization of the Navy Department. Officers associated with the College, among them Admirals Luce, Taylor, and Sims, had agitated over a period of years for a more efficient organization of the Navy Department which would divide responsibility for combat and support functions. The resulting organization of the Navy under a Chief of Naval Operations has carried the Department of the Navy through two major wars, several smaller conflicts, and the establishment of the Defense Department without a major change.⁹ It is also interesting to note that in 1910 Comdr. F.K. Hill, Chief of the War College Planning Staff, proposed a "Council of National Defense" to be composed of the Secretaries of War, State, and the Navy, the Chairmen of House and Senate Military and Naval Affairs Committees, the Chairmen of the House and Senate Foreign Relations Committees, the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Aide for Operations, and the Presidents of the War Colleges.¹⁰ Although a bill embodying the proposal was introduced into Congress the following year, it was unsuccessful, and the National Security Council did not become a reality until 1947.

Naval Organization and Doctrine. The Naval War College has made numerous contributions to the art of war and planning. Among these have been the development of the modern "Naval Task Force" organizational concept; the standard five paragraph operation order, which was adapted from the German "Operations Ordnung" and has been adopted by all the other armed services; and the "sound military decision"

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process, which was developed at the College, became standard throughout the fleet in the decades prior to World War II, and in the revised Estimate of the Situation form became standardized and used within all the U.S. Armed Forces.

Preparing the Navy for World War II.

The Naval War College played a major role in preparing the Navy for World War II. The possibility of a war in the Pacific with Japan had been recognized at the War College as early as 1897, and the successful World War II strategy of "island hopping" was first formulated as the "Orange Plan" in war games at the College in 1936.¹¹ During this same period the Marines were working out the doctrine of amphibious warfare which was to play such a crucial role in the Pacific. Each year from 1935 to 1943 the Marine Corps Schools at Quantico submitted solutions of amphibious problems to the Naval War College.¹² Of the work done during this period Fleet Admiral Nimitz, speaking in 1960, stated:

I don't know any institution in this country that has greater value to people in the military service . . . the war with Japan had been reenacted in the game room here by so many people in so many different ways that nothing that happened during the war was a surprise--absolutely nothing except the Kamikaze tactics toward the end of the war; we had not visualized those.¹³

The Second World War was fought not only in large part with doctrine developed at the College, but with its graduates in positions of key leadership in the Navy, among them Admirals King, Nimitz, and Halsey.

During the War. During World War II, unlike World War I when the College had closed its doors for the duration, classes continued to be held, although the normal curriculum was suspended. In its stead were taught a Command Course and a Preparatory Staff Course, each about 5 months in length.¹⁴ In

addition to these courses, a special course associated with the Army and Navy Staff College was conducted to prepare officers for the exercise of command and for staff duty in unified or coordinated commands. Altogether 787 officers were graduated from these courses during the 4 years of the war.¹⁵

A Post-War Change of Direction.

Following World War II, full-length junior and senior courses were reinstated at the College, but the courses themselves were thoroughly revised on the basis of experience gained during the war. Before the war, primary stress had been placed upon fleet action, and although the existence of naval air was acknowledged in all operations problems from 1921 on, the World War II concept for the employment of fast carrier striking forces was not developed at the War College.¹⁶ In concentrating on doctrine the College had moved away from the comprehensive study of warfare envisioned and practiced by Luce and Mahan. The move now was back to the high-level study of political-military strategy for the senior course, and geographical, political, economic, psychological, and logistic considerations gained a larger place in the curriculum.

Post-War Development. The postwar period saw a number of notable developments at the College. From 1946 until 1958 a research department served as the World War II Battle Evaluation Group to analyze selected battles and to draw lessons therefrom.¹⁷ In 1948 publication of the journal, *Information Service for Officers*, which was later to become the *Naval War College Review*, was begun.¹⁸ In 1949 the first of the Global Strategy Discussions were held, the discussions that first year being termed "A Round Table Discussion on the Future Strategy of the United States." In 1950 the old Junior Course was supplanted by the present Command and Staff Course. In 1952 the

first appointments were made of distinguished civilian educators to hold chairs on the faculty of the College in order to further strengthen the broadened course of study. In 1956 the Naval Command Course for senior naval officers of friendly countries was established. Throughout this period war games continued to play the same important part in the curriculum that they had during almost the whole history of the College, but in 1958 the completion of the Navy Electronic Warfare Simulator (NEWS) introduced further sophistication to the games.

Return to Broad-gauge Study. As a result of the ferment which followed World War II, the School of Naval Warfare is once again concerned with those broad-gauge questions of war pursued by the naval reformers who established the College. The course in Naval Warfare has undergone continuous change in order to adapt to the demands of the accelerating pace of military technology, the emergence of the United States as the strongest industrial and military power in the world, and by continuing international tension. These factors have greatly broadened the educational requirements for high command; it is no longer sufficient to focus almost exclusively on naval strategy, tactics, and doctrine, if it ever was sufficient. The course of naval warfare, as the Navy's primary educational vehicle for the preparation of senior officers for positions of great responsibility, has been shaped by all of these demands.

Students of Naval Warfare. Students in the School of Naval Warfare are Navy commanders and captains in their 16th to 22d year of service, selected for attendance at a senior service college, together with officers of equivalent grades from the other military services and governmental agencies. In the present class of 143, 72 are from the Navy, 22 from the Army, 16 each from

Marines, Air Force, and Government agencies, and 1 Coast Guard officer. Among the naval officers, 41 are aviators, 16 surface line officers, 7 supply officers, and 1 each from the specialities of submarines, cryptology, CEC, JAG, medical, AEDO, intelligence, and the Chaplains Corps. Approximately half of the students have done previous graduate work, and more than a quarter hold advanced degrees. The interaction among students of such rich and varied backgrounds constitutes one of the most valuable learning experiences of the academic year. Assignments to groups are varied throughout the year in order to insure the cross-fertilization inherent in differing backgrounds and professional expertise. It is important to bear in mind that all of the students come to the course with a high degree of professional competence and expertise, and that they frequently have as much to learn from each other as from the faculty.

The Present Course of Study. The 10-month course of the School of Naval Warfare consists of 4 major studies which are taught consecutively. The first 2 months of the academic year are taken up by the Fundamentals of Strategy Study, comprised of short basic courses in International Relations, International Law, Military Management, Economics, and Concepts of Strategy. This course is designed to provide the students, who have widely varying educational and professional backgrounds, with a common fund of knowledge on which to base the remainder of the year.

After the initial Fundamentals of Strategy Study, the curriculum is divided into 3 related studies which constitute the main body of instruction. These are the Seapower and National Strategy Study, the Strategic Planning Study, and the Naval Warfare Study. In Seapower and National Strategy there is a detailed examination of the capacities

and means by which other nations can influence U.S. strategy, with attention to the relationship between national power and objectives and the development of appropriate national security policies. The Strategic Planning Study is concerned with the means of translating national security policy into military planning at the level of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and of the Unified and Specified Commanders. The Naval Warfare Study takes up the problems of planning and operations at the fleet and major naval command levels, together with the use of seapower to further national goals.

Faculty. The faculty of the School of Naval Warfare is both military and civilian. The military faculty is assigned on the basis of professional qualifications and educational background. Normally all military faculty are themselves graduates of the course. In addition to varied professional backgrounds, 68 percent of the present military faculty hold graduate degrees, and another 20 percent have done at least some graduate work. Augmenting the military faculty is a distinguished civilian faculty which is shared with the other schools. The civilian faculty includes the Alfred Thayer Mahan Chair of Maritime Strategy, the Chester W. Nimitz Chair of Social and Political Philosophy, the Ernest J. King Chair of Maritime History, the Charles H. Stockton Chair of International Law, the Chair of Physical Sciences, the Milton F. Miles Chair of International Relations, the Chair of Economics, the James V. Forrestal Chair of Military Management, the Stephen B. Luce Chair of Naval Science, and, beginning in academic year 1969-70, the Chair of Comparative Cultures. The occupants of the Mahan, Miles, and Luce Chairs hold extended appointments, lending valuable continuity to the curriculum, while the occupants of the other chairs are invited for a 1 year's residence at the College,

then return to their parent university. The task of the faculty in the School of Naval Warfare is somewhat different than at the majority of educational institutions. The maturity and wide professional experience of the students not only means that they have much to learn from each other, but that in many cases the role of the faculty is more one of guiding and assisting the students in their own studies than it is a purely instructional role.

Research and Electives Program. Concurrent with the major studies, each student is expected to produce a research paper. This may be an individual research effort on a topic he has selected, or he may participate in a group research project. Oral presentation and defense of the results of the research are an important part of the program, and, where appropriate, research results are sent to interested naval commands.

During the winter and spring terms, students choose among a variety of elective courses and seminars in addition to the major studies. Particularly during the winter term these electives are research oriented, and a student normally enrolls in a course closely related to his own research project. The civilian faculty plays a major role in teaching these electives and in affording professional guidance to the student in the preparation of his research paper.

In addition to the Naval Warfare Course, many students voluntarily undertake one of three programs arranged between the Naval War College and associated civilian universities leading to a degree or advanced work in a selected academic area. Small groups of students attend specific courses at Brown University and the University of Rhode Island, but the largest number of students are candidates for a Master of Science degree in International Relations from The George Washington University. The University maintains a center at the Naval War College with a

small faculty for the conduct of this program. In addition to course requirements, the theses of students in the GWU program must meet the research requirements of both the Naval War College and the University.

The Lecture Program. A distinctive feature throughout the history of the Naval War College program has been the series of eminent guest lecturers. The lectures serve as an integral part of the curriculum and are invariably given by guest speakers of great distinction. During the course of the year students will typically hear several Ambassadors of major nations, a selection of flag and general officers, usually including the Chief of Staff of each service, members of the President's Cabinet, and scholars of the caliber of Hans Morgenthau and Henry Kissinger. Last year the Naval Warfare Course included an average of nearly 5 guest lecturers each week. A feature of lectures at the College is the question period following each address in which the speaker responds candidly to frequently pointed questions asked by faculty and students. The privacy of the candid replies is protected by long tradition, and not infrequently the question periods are of even greater value than the lectures themselves.

Global Strategy Discussions. The culmination of the academic year at the Naval War College is the week of the annual Global Strategy Discussions. These discussions are attended by the students and faculty of the Schools of Naval Warfare and Naval Command and Staff, the members of the 2-week Senior Reserve Officers' Course, about 30 regular flag and general officers, and about 150 selected civilian guests of the Secretary of the Navy, representing a cross section of civilian leaders including government, business, labor, the clergy, and the academic community. The discussions themselves bring to bear as many viewpoints as possible on the problems confronting the United States

in the formulation of national security policy. The discussions serve as a final forum and testing place for much of what the student has learned in the course of the year.

Future Growth. The Naval War College is entering a period of growth. It is anticipated that by 1980 the overall enrollment at the College will be about double the present enrollment, and the coming year alone is expected to show a 40 percent increase over present enrollment. The School of Naval Warfare is expected to increase from the present enrollment of 143 students to an anticipated 195 students. To provide the physical facilities necessary to handle the increased student load, the College has prepared a long-term building program which will add vital new buildings while preserving the handsome and historic main building of Luce Hall through a rehabilitation program. If approved, the building program will provide the College with physical facilities adequate to handle the anticipated growth of the student body.

After 85 Years. In the 85 years since the College was founded it has made significant contributions to the Navy--not only by providing advanced educa-

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



Comdr. James A. Barber, Jr., U.S. Navy, holds a B.A. in Economics from the University of Southern California and an M.A. in Economics from Vanderbilt; and, from Stanford University, an M.A. in International Relations and a Ph.D. in Political Science. His primary operational experience has been in destroyers, most recently as Executive Officer of U.S.S. *Henry W. Tucker* (DD 875) and as Commanding Officer of U.S.S. *Hissem* (DER 400).

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tion to generations of naval leaders, but by being in the forefront of naval concepts and doctrine. The School of Naval Warfare, as it stands today, has been shaped by the traditions of the Naval War College, the demands of the explosion in military technology, and the vastly increased destructive potential of war. To "provide naval officers advanced education in the science of naval warfare and related subjects in order to improve their professional competence for higher responsibilities," is perhaps a more demanding task than it has ever been in the past, for the

requirements for high command have grown in complexity.¹⁹ The accelerating changes in military technology carry with them a continual need for rethinking both tactics and strategy, while the immense destructive potential of nuclear war and the position of the United States as the leader of the free world demand that senior military officers have a clear and broadly based understanding of the interacting influence of politics, economics and military policy. To keep abreast of these needs will be a continuing challenge to the School of Naval Warfare.

FOOTNOTES

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18. The present name was adopted in 1952.
19. U.S. Naval War College, School of Naval Warfare, *Curriculum 1968-1969* (Newport, R.I.: 1968), p. 1.

