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From Our September–October 1984 Issue . . .

The Hundred Year Growing Pain

Opposition and Opportunity

Paul R. Schratz

> *The proposition to erect the institution now known as the Naval War College was not received with favor by the naval profession. It was said to be chimerical, impracticable, and wholly uncalled for. Moreover there was no precedent for such a thing to be found in history. . . . The plan for the higher education of naval officers, when unfolded to the chiefs of the line bureaus of the Navy Department, was coldly received. And no wonder. Their lines of thought lay in a different direction. The very qualities that had fitted them so well for their respective offices, had not prepared them to enter, with any degree of zest, an entirely new field of investigation.*
>
> Stephen B. Luce[1]

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS ARE FORWARD LOOKING, optimistic, upbeat. Critical commentaries are negative, pessimistic, downbeat. The task of discussing the opponents of the Naval War College, under the circumstances, calls for footwork as well as facts. That the Naval War College fills an essential role in the professional training of superior naval officers I do not question. What follows must be read within this framework.

Dr. Schratz (1915–1993) retired from the Navy in 1968 as a captain, having served in World War II and the Korean War and taught on the faculties of the Air, National, and Naval War Colleges. With a Ph.D. in politics from Ohio State University, he was director of international studies for the University of Missouri until 1973. He was a prolific writer in the field of national security affairs; among his books are *Communism Can Never Succeed Here!* (1961), *Evolution of the American Military Establishment since World War II* (1978), and *Submarine Commander: A Story of World War II and Korea* (1988). At the article's first appearance, Dr. Schratz expressed his appreciation for the assistance of Captain James A. Barber, USN, Philip A. Crowl, Vincent Davis, Raymond G. O'Connor, and David A. Rosenberg for their assistance in its preparation.

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The early history of the Naval War College discloses numerous organizations and individuals hostile to the institution. Many in Washington thought it should be located in Annapolis; the Coasters Harbor Island site favored by Admiral Luce was Naval Training Station turf under Admiral W.S. Schley, Chief of the Bureau of Equipment and Recruitment. Only two days after General Order 325 established the College on 6 October 1884, Schley informed Luce that "the Bureau has . . . no appropriation of funds under its control which warrants the expenditure of money for the U.S. Naval War College. . . ." The Chief of the Bureau of Construction and Repair added to the problem by informing Luce the same day that furniture recently bought for him was for the training command and not the War College, and "please transfer it to the U.S.S. *New Hampshire*" [a ship of the line moored at Coasters Harbor Island as a barracks vessel].[2]

When the College, with or without furniture, greeted its first class of nine students in September 1885, the Bureau of Navigation informed Luce he would be detached without relief a few weeks later. Captain A.T. Mahan was ordered in that summer to carry on the fight for survival. In 1888, without consulting Mahan, Secretary William C. Whitney, a foe of both Mahan and the College, abruptly placed the College under the Naval Torpedo Station on Goat Island and control passed to the Bureau of Ordnance. Worse was soon to come. The following year Rear Admiral Francis M. Ramsay, implacable foe of Mahan and the College, became Chief of Navigation. Mahan was "exiled" to the West Coast on temporary duty, turning over his duties to Captain Caspar Goodrich, commanding the Torpedo Station, who held the College presidency as additional duty. Goodrich, a friend of Luce, struggled to keep the Naval War College idea alive and independent, but when Congress appropriated $100,000 for construction of a new building on Goat Island, both bureaus battled for control.

Fortunately, a new administration took office in March 1889, and newly appointed Navy Secretary Benjamin F. Tracy strongly supported return of the College to Coasters Harbor Island. To get around the hostility of Ramsay, he arranged in July 1890 to transfer supervision of the College from the Bureau of Navigation to the office of the new Assistant Secretary, James R. Soley. Soley, former Naval Academy professor, had been Secretary of the U.S. Naval Institute when Luce, as head of the Newport chapter, founded the War College as a branch of the Institute. The delay caused by turmoil over the new building, however, forced the College to close its doors for the 1890 and 1891 sessions. Thwarting three attempts by Ramsay to send Mahan to sea, Tracy reinstated Mahan as President, and the College reopened in 1892.

Meanwhile, Hilary A. Herbert, who had been Chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee during the above period, succeeded Tracy as Secretary of the Navy in 1893. Herbert's hostility to the College had appeared in the *Congressional Record* years before, after Luce's testimony for the College appropriation in June 1886. Herbert had stated, "Now is the proper time to consider carefully whether or not that College is to become a permanent institution. In the opinion of a large majority of your committee, it ought not."[3] Herbert also had supported Ramsay in his earlier attempts to prevent creation of the College, and as Secretary worked with him to abolish it.

Ramsay also objected to drafts by both the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) and the Naval War College of a plan for a war with Spain—technically the responsibility of the Secretary. He urged Herbert to appoint a board of senior officers on 19 August 1896, with himself as chairman, to draft an alternate plan. The board supported the Naval War College plan with respect to the blockade of Cuba but dropped the Philippines operation—where Admiral Dewey was soon to gain world fame—in favor of a plan to seize the Canary Islands as a base for operations against Spanish support to Cuba and for harassment of trade off the Spanish coast.*

Ramsay promptly ordered Mahan to sea, despite his objections, to command USS *Chicago.* Without question Mahan was well qualified for the assignment but there was reason to suspect that because of his emerging fame he was "kicked upstairs" as a preliminary to a new artempt ro abolish the College and turn the building over to the Training Station. Mahan was detached on 10 May 1893; the Office of Detail announced it could find no one to send for the 1893 Naval War College class. Secretary Herbert, en route in USS *Dolphin* to notify Mahan of his decision to close the College, was given a copy of Mahan's *Influence of Sea Power upon History.* The book convinced him of the value of the College; he reversed his decision and became a strong supporter.[4] But the 1893 class met without students.

Mahan meanwhile strove mightily to stay in Newport and continue his work on *The Life of Nelson.* Ramsay had not been to sea himself for 12 of the 15 prior years but refused to cancel [Mahan's] orders [to sea,] for the revealing and legendary reason that "it is not the business of naval officers to write books." That belief and the hostility of the personnel chief to both Mahan and the College was shared by Mahan's new commodore, Rear Admiral Henry Erben, Commander, European Squadron.

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* Although the ONI-NWC plan was eventually carried out, the Ramsay plan lends itself to much interesting speculation. The Canary Islands operation offered basing facilities for direct actions against the decaying might of Spain. The ONI–Naval War College plan for action against the Spanish fleet in Manila prevented Spain from preying on U.S. trade in the Far East, but it supported few other goals of the U.S. policy. The destruction of the fleet and collapse of Spanish influence in the Philippines left only awkward choices. The Philippines could not be returned to Spain nor turned over to France or Germany, our commercial rivals in the Orient. The islands were unfit for self-government, and the possibility of a British protectorate was opposed by Congress, the press, and the American people. The remaining alternative was acquisition. Lacking both ships and the bases in the Western Pacific, acquisition was a clear strategic liability offering little hazard to Spanish commerce. Whatever freedom of choice existed was largely foreclosed by the initial decision to destroy the Spanish Asiatic fleet. President McKinley later grumbled, "If old Dewey had just sailed away when he smashed the Spanish fleet, what a lot of trouble he would have saved us."

From Erben's viewpoint, Mahan more than contributed to the intellectual breach. Erben was a bluff, gruff man of action, prone to act first and think later. Proud of his command and the new flagship, *Chicago*, it was disconcerting to Erben that Mahan's jury-rigged bookshelves in the captain's cabin had to be disassembled before the forward gun turret could be fired. Such incidents understandably contributed to tension and some loss of harmony in the cabin mess.

Mahan later confessed, in his reminiscences, that the refusal of the Bureau to kill his orders to *Chicago* was a blessing in disguise. The lionizing by British royalty and Admiralty officials gained prestige for the Naval War College, for it "brought my name forward in a way that could not but be flattering, and affected favorably the sale of the books."[5] It gave him experience with ships of the new fleet and valuable source material from British officials for his *Life of Nelson*. There is no record that Admiral Erben found equal enjoyment in the adulation heaped on his subordinate.

The war with Spain in 1898 freed the College of active opposition to its existence. Its President became a member of the General Board, itself an outgrowth of the Naval War Board of 1898 on which Mahan had sat. Fewer students came to scoff; more remained to pray. The opposition to the College became more insidious, generally as anti-intellectualism, appearing in many disguises: objections to the location, teaching methods, philosophy, curriculum, or the question of "practical" work rather than theoretical study and reflection.[6] By the end of World War I, the skill of many Naval War College graduates serving in key positions had brought its own reward. Department policy in 1920 favored Naval War College graduates in major commands where possible. Yet many major commanders refused to be convinced.

Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King claimed that Admirals Henry B. Wilson and Hugh Rodman, the Atlantic and Pacific Fleet commanders in 1920, were opponents of the Naval War College, of the Naval Postgraduate School, and of "book learning" in any form. Advising their officers that a year of graduate schooling would be a detriment to their careers, they claimed that if one went to sea he learned without studying.* When Wilson became Superintendent of the Naval Academy the following year, he tried to shut down the Postgraduate School and use the building for married officers quarters.[7] And the first Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Admiral William S. Benson, shared the anti-intellectual view. Benson stated to the House Naval Affairs Committee, with a certain air of superiority, "I do not pose as a theoretical War College officer. I am simply a plain sailor and practical naval officer."[8] Although 50 percent of the officers at that time had completed graduate study, Benson was clearly expressing widely held attitudes in an era which saw formal schooling with impatience, even in practical vocational matters—and abstract or theoretical study with undisguised hostility. The basis was neither logical nor legitimate but visceral and just plain stubborn.

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* When Admiral King was head of the postgraduate school in Annapolis in 1919–1921, Rodman would greet him contemptuously as, "Good morning, *Professor*." Time brought its revenge. After retirement Rodman became head of Culver Military Academy, and King returned the greeting, bringing the response, "Go to hell." See *Fleet Admiral King: Naval Record*, by E.J. King and Walter Muir Whitehill (New York: Norton, 1952), p. 152.

Admiral William S. Sims, himself a converted scoffer and early critic of Mahan, discussed before a congressional committee "the detrimental results of continuous opposition in the last 25 or 30 years against the training provided by the Naval War College." He added, with more accuracy than diplomacy, that "for many years the Navy has been controlled by uneducated and untrained officers—untrained in the military sense—who have been appointed to the most important positions. Lack of trained leaders explains why the Department is administering the Navy in violation of the military principles."[9]

During the interwar years, opposition to the Naval War College decreased markedly and led, for reasons we will investigate shortly, to the dawn of its golden era. After World War II, however, the opposition again took a new form. One name not generally considered in this role is that of Dwight D. Eisenhower, himself a product of the Army's highly integrated educational program. The parochialism of Eisenhower's formal training had left him not well prepared for theater command in World War II, however. His practical education at the hands of Winston Churchill and the British convinced him that the Army program fell short of what the military commander needed in the exercise of power in the military-political arena. Following the war, Eisenhower as Chief of Staff of the Army became a prime mover in founding the National War College to look at the higher direction of war, to study "grand strategy and the utilization of the national resources to implement that strategy"—and sought to kill the service war colleges. To the National War College, against the advice of the Army staff, Eisenhower turned over the Army War College at Fort McNair, its prize piece of real estate in Washington, complete with library and golf course. The Army Industrial College was upgraded to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, and also placed under control of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS).

Eisenhower then suggested that the Naval War College not be reopened after the war but used instead for an Armed Forces Staff College, which would thus place the higher educational facilities of all the services under joint control. The Navy demurred, however, believing it essential to retain the College for the study of maritime warfare.* The Naval War College was reopened at Newport, but the Navy offered a tract of land in Norfolk, Virginia, for the Armed Forces Staff College—a fact which Eisenhower neither forgot nor forgave.

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* The need for a national war college had first been recognized by the Pye Board in July 1944, but Admiral Pye never visualized the national as a substitute for the service war college. Each had distinct objectives. [*Editor's note*: Unlike the Army, which closed its war college in the summer of 1940, the Navy continued to hold classes in Newport, although these principally were five-month-long staff training sessions for mid-grade Naval Reserve officers. Vice Admiral William Pye was President of the Naval War College for most of this time.]

Following the tours of Eisenhower and General Omar Bradley as Chief of Staff, the Army leaders decided that the Army still needed a war college and reopened a facility, first at Fort Leavenworth in 1950, moving it to Carlisle Barracks in 1951. The emergent Air Force had already established an Air War College in 1947 within the Air University complex at Montgomery, Alabama.

As President, Eisenhower made several more attempts to close the service schools and place all such education under control of the JCS. On the last try, in 1959, the Naval War College again frustrated him, pointing out the essential nature of the advanced study of maritime warfare in all its complexity. Recognizing that a common core of study existed in all the war college curricula, however, Newport made a counterproposal, suggesting periodic meetings of the commandants on matters of common interest. The practice was enthusiastically adopted and has been followed quite successfully to this day.*

One might also consider Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara an opponent of the war colleges. Except for a talk to the combined National War College–Industrial College of the Armed Forces in 1962, McNamara turned down all requests to address the war colleges throughout his seven-year tour as secretary. A former Naval War College president thought the reason was obvious: "He's Management and we're Labor." A McNamara associate denied this, claiming the demands on his time and energy prevented acceptance, but his senior associates were always available for lectures at the war colleges. There is truth in both statements.

Passing mention need be made of the late Edward L. Katzenbach, Jr., as hardly a supporter of the war colleges. Katzenbach, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Education in 1961 and later Director of the American Council of Education, in his widely discussed lament on the loss of professionalism at the war colleges was at least constructive. He recognized a need for a higher level of military education but only if one accepted the possibility of revising the misty missions of the war colleges and prescribing their function as the study of military doctrine. This he defined to include strategic concepts and tactics, weapons development and employment criteria—"that gamut of matters which encompasses military professionalism."[10] And the record would certainly be incomplete without inclusion of feisty Admiral Hyman Rickover, whose views on American education always receive wide prominence [but whose] ideas on war college education are much less known. Accused by Norman Polmar of being "contemptuous" of the Naval War College, Rickover faulted the curriculum for training officers to rely on management techniques to make decisions, and for numerous other academic deficiencies. War college students and faculties were frequently singled out as a special target. "Service colleges are worth their expense and effort only if they develop selected high quality officers into higher quality officers ready to assume leading roles in the fleet or in the Navy Department. . . . This is not the way officers are being selected, nor the courses used. . . . The inability to get top performers into the service colleges because they are in demand elsewhere proves the minimal need of present service college instruction. [The fact that] service college graduates have not been consistently selected for promotion merely proves the point. Clearly those courses have been kept full by assigning less capable officers who were not in demand elsewhere . . . primarily to justify the service college as an institution and to give an excuse for maintaining the faculty. . . . The results . . . show that there is no way to elevate an average performer into a front-runner simply by providing him with a year's sabbatical leave at a college of his choice."[11]

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* Eisenhower never accepted the verdict. Although he opted for Newport as his summer White House, quartered in historic Fort Adams, he pointedly ignored the coexistence of the Naval War College immediately adjacent to his presidential offices in the Commander, Naval Base headquarters. No press release during his repeated visits to Newport recognized the existence of the College; he declined all opportunites to meet and greet students, except for one meeting, pointedly with only the foreign officers, and held off the Naval War College's turf.

Admiral Rickover's zeal for excellence is as demanding in others as in himself. He supported the purpose of a college but not the implementation. Early in his career he took the Naval War College correspondence courses in International Law and Strategy and Tactics. He translated for the College a definitive book on the World War I German submarine experience and did not hesitate to call on it for assistance in writing his book on the loss of the *Maine*. Indeed, readers of the *Naval War College Review* may recall his harsh criticism of a review of that book, *How the Battleship* Maine *Was Destroyed*. Admiral Rickover's letter to Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale, President of the College, questioned why government funds, personnel, and paperwork could not be saved by eliminating the *Review*. His advice to reviewers is outstanding, however, and merits repetition: "A book reviewer occupies a position of special responsibility and trust. He is to summarize, set in context, describe strengths, and point out weaknesses. As a surrogate for us all, he assumes a heavy obligation which it is his duty to discharge with reason and consistency."[12]

Less noticed, perhaps, were Admiral Rickover's gratuitous criticisms of the Naval War College and its lack of a challenging curriculum. Long the nation's top authority on nuclear propulsion, he repeatedly decried any flirtation of naval education with a field other than engineering. Many of his ideas on liberal arts are quite valid. Many also reflect his own specialized engineering background and lack of professional training in the art of war. Unfortunately, his low esteem of the College course of study acts as a suicidal prophecy. His nuclear-trained people, like many other outstanding officers, were not sent to the College, because it was not career enhancing. Since many such outstanding officers have no opportunity to attend, despite the great benefits they have both to give and to receive, the quality of the student body declines and the duty becomes less career enhancing.

The hostility of individuals toward the Naval War College sometimes acted as a goad to improvement. More often it led to assignment policies that shortchanged students and faculty and discouraged superior officers from wanting to attend. These factors will be examined in more detail below.

Samuel Huntington claims that the American military officer is more engineering-minded than military minded, a technician rather than a student of war. The technical bureau chief, in the past, was the highest leadership position in the Navy. Until the modern era, professional study—planning, operations, and strategy making—was the province of the Secretary of the Navy in peacetime; in war, planning was largely *ad hoc*, through boards and committees. When the Engineer Corps was amalgamated into the Line in 1899, the elimination of engineering specialists meant that the line officers had to know much more about engineering, creating a need for postgraduate studies in technical subjects.

Because of the natural bent of naval officers toward technology, the study of strategy and tactics and the purpose of war rarely rivaled the study of engineering or armaments and the means of war. In 1899, the first year of the amalgamation of engineers into the line, 200 applications were received for 20 vacancies in graduate study of engineering, none for the Naval War College. The line officer saw the respect accorded the engineer in his newly won stature as a threat to his status and command prerogatives.[13] The rapidly increasing complexity of the Navy at the same time encouraged him in his new *line* responsibilities to broaden his *technical* education. No comparable stimulus urged either the line or engineer officer toward mastery of the art of war. The Naval Institute helped ease the mutual strain between the two by giving a common service-wide forum for exchanging professional and scientific knowledge. But the pages of the Naval Institute *Proceedings* over the years verify that the Navy is machine-oriented in a society which worships technology. Essays on weapons, tactics, operations, and organization are profuse; less than one Institute book in a hundred is on strategy and the art of war.

Philip Selznick identifies the over-concentration on technology as a phenomenon associated with the difficulty of integrating political and military strategy in the higher direction of war. The historical isolation of military power from policy in America made difficult a close and integrated study of the relationship of strategy and broad policy. The anti-Clausewitzian attitudes of political and military leaders tended toward a sphere of "purely military" decisions "congenial to the creation of secure boundaries between power and diplomacy within which known principles can be applied."[14] Secretary of Defense McNamara, the technician par excellence, came far too late to a realization that he had been shortchanged by technology. In his words, ". . . the ambivalence of technology grows with its own complexity. The real question, clearly, is not whether we should have tools, but only whether we are becoming tools."[15]

Former JCS Chairman General David C. Jones, USAF, reached a similar conclusion. In his far-reaching study on JCS reorganization, a key recommendation is "putting military strategy ahead of doctrine, and doctrine ahead of weapons systems, instead of the inverse, as is now the practice."[16]

Charles W. Ackley, a retired naval chaplain, became emotional on the point. His overriding concern was "the pathetically shortsighted, if not blind, refusal to look beyond the technology of war to the utterly crucial problem of what values can survive their development and use. . . . A fascination for the concrete, the specific, is the most ancient and persistent of idolatries and dead ends."[17] In eloquent substance, to look beyond the technology of war is the purpose of a war college. The technician takes naval policies for granted as "givens"; goals are accepted as externally set, and efforts are concentrated on means. Vincent Davis sees this as a heritage of Mahanism—the intellectually satisfying, comprehensively doctrinaire, and unassailable strategic guidelines behind which naval leaders could devote their energies to the practical details of ship design, training, weaponry, and tactical planning.[18]

The over-concentration on technology isolates military strategy from political ends.[19] Technology in the Navy, and to an even greater extent in the Air Force, became an end in itself. Unlike in the Air Force, however, technical specialization in the Navy contributed to the degradation of excellence in military staffing roles, and also facilitated the near exclusion of educational preparation for duties in broad policy making obtained through concentration in the liberal arts and social sciences. The ends of action, that is, policies or goals, are seen as externally set. The concentration is on the *weapons* of war rather than the *purpose* of war. We are thus led to the reasonable but rather perverse conclusion that the heritage of Mahan actually contributed to the decay of strategic thinking in the Navy. To continue the Davis argument, "The Mahan strategy was intellectually satisfying not only because it was a masterful tying together . . . of complex factors . . . [but because it] seemed to obviate the need for further intellectual effort. . . . His strategic ideas provided final-sounding answers for the hardest questions confronting any military strategist, thus appearing to free subsequent Navy planners from further consideration of these basic and difficult matters."[20]

History showed that command of the sea was essential to the greatness of a maritime power; a large navy was essential to command of the sea and hence to national greatness. Consequently, the Mahan doctrine was "politically satisfying because it provided an established body of thought sufficient to attract budgetary support. It met the three tests of any strategic theory in this century necessary to stand a chance of gaining primary congressional endorsement: (1) the promise to meet and defeat any enemy at a point well removed from the continental United States; (2) the promise to do this decisively and quickly; (3) the promise to do it primarily with machines and presumed technical superiority rather than with ground troops."[21]

Mahan's success in providing unquestioned doctrinal guidelines for the Navy, therefore, operated largely to discourage serious challenge or reexamination of those doctrines. The Naval War College had been the birthplace of his own studies of sea power doctrines; so well had he succeeded that he seriously retarded further study by his disciples, even when a changing world made such study mandatory. Because Mahan was too convincing, the genius of the Navy was deflected from the study of strategy to the marvelous vistas opened by modern technology. Most scholars today agree that the man in uniform has not made a significant contribution to the study of modern war. The best thinking even in the halls made famous by Luce and Mahan is done largely by civilians—many quite outstanding, but who may never have benefited from operational experience or executive responsibility. Organized programs for the advanced study of strategy by sailor-scholars has been attempted twice at the Naval War College: the Advanced Study in Seapower and Strategy group, established in 1951, and the Strategic Studies Group, in 1981. The first failed for lack of support by the Bureau of Naval Personnel; for the second, judgment is still premature.

Despite the clear and obvious need for graduate-level study in the art of war and modern military decision making, many prominent and well-intentioned individuals have opposed the Naval War College for a wide variety of reasons, few of which can be evaluated as legitimate. Hence the effect on the College has been less fatal than one would assume from the notoriety such actions generally receive. Second, the obsession with technological wonders had a more deleterious influence by capturing our interest and enthusiasm, whereas the study of war and modern strategy seems less important, if not largely irrelevant. A third factor limiting the natural growth of the war college idea can be suggested, and again was realized by Admiral Luce from its swaddling days. More than any of his contemporaries, Luce had the genius to recognize the preoccupation of the Navy with technology and the practical side of the profession. Yet at the same time,

> there was an undefined feeling in the Navy that in the matter of education there was something wanting. The daily routine of man-of-war life was, after the novelty had worn off, not very inspiring, and to many that seemed all the profession had to offer. . . . Young officers of intellect and love of their profession were quick to specialize in one branch or another of their calling and thus rise above the dead level of mediocrity. . . . But no one of that day, as far as known, ventured to explain how these various studies, valuable as they were of themselves, prepared the young officer for the higher branches of his profession. That there were higher branches seems to have been but dimly perceived by the profession itself. . . .
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> The war college is a means to that end[:] . . . to attain the highest ideal of education—in "peace a statesman, in war a militant seaman—in all times, on all occasions, acute to judge and resolute to act."[22]

Luce had shrewdly placed his finger on the dilemma the superior naval officer faces in seeking education to attain the ideal of the maritime profession, the warrior-statesman. On one hand was the universally recognized need for "the discernment of the true principles of the science of war" and of its prevention; on the other were the practical matters, the priorities of money, people and resources which limit its realization. The top-notch naval officer is a highly sought commodity for assignment at sea or ashore. The inability to spare these officers for a course of contemplative study, possibly of limited immediate value to fleet operations at sea, is understandable.

The personnel bureau always has the problem of too few "walking on water" types and too much water to cover in the way of top assignments. To what degree can the bureau be expected to aggravate the immediate problem by sending such officers off to meet routine quotas for a sabbatical year of schooling? The detailing officer realizes that an officer cannot complete his professional study at lower rank; he needs the experience gained at sea and ashore in positions of responsibility to bring maturity of judgment to the study of war, to develop the qualities of statesman and militant seaman so vital to the highest potential responsibilities of the profession. But he gains this maturity at a time when he is most unlikely to be available for schooling. Understanding the dilemma brings him no closer to its resolution, however. The detailing officer faces strong pressures to delay or kill the war college assignment.

Because the value of the College experience varies from year to year with the quality of the instruction, the teaching faculty, and the students themselves, the necessity has not always been fully appreciated in the bureaus and the operating forces. Hence the need exists for firm policy guidelines to give detailing officers the backing they need, a requirement rarely met. Worse, as Admiral Rickover indicated, war college quotas were sometimes used as a parking lot for officers largely unassignable elsewhere. Lacking firm guidelines, the quality of both the Naval War College student and faculty member suffers—as does their success in future promotions and career assignments. The intellectual environment so vital to academic integrity, to respect for new and unorthodox ideas, to the freedom to challenge controversial doctrine and habits of thought, to [placing a] high value on elasticity of mind and intellectual creativity, also declines. Without replenishment and renewal each succeeding year, the College loses its intellectual "yeasting," and its arteries begin to harden.

When an officer on a war college quota is also requested for a choice duty assignment elsewhere, he may aggravate the natural conflict between the needs for contemplative study and highly selective career assignments. The potential student must decide between his long-term educational needs, the perceived needs of the service, and his immediate employment. If he is chosen for a highly competitive assignment when his name also comes up for the War College, is he likely to lean on his detailing officer to send him to college for his long-term good and the good of the service, and thereby run the risk of failure to get another comparable assignment after his sabbatical? Or is he likely to take the bird in hand and risk getting a later quota to the Naval War College? The record suggests the latter.

External constraints also influence the quality and quantity of war college students. During times of fleet buildup, war, and civil emergency, officer talent is too scarce to go around, and the war colleges suffer. In the lean years of post-emergency cutbacks, the fleet suffers and quality officers become available for the war colleges. The golden age of the Naval War College came in the 1920s and early 1930s, when the Navy was skeletonized in postwar reductions and the subsequent deep Depression years. The era ended when the fleet buildup commenced under President Franklin D. Roosevelt after 1933. As a direct result, the golden era brought the War College into its closest ties with the fleet. Most of the great leaders to emerge in World War II had spent a year or more in Newport. Where only 24 percent of Navy captains had a war college diploma in 1920, by 1941 the figure had risen to 50 percent; 85 percent of the rear admirals and 100 percent of three and four-star admirals held war college diplomas. Of the 543 senior line officers in the Navy, 77 percent were graduates.[23] Never again was the Navy leadership so clearly a product of the Naval War College. The war again vindicated the course of instruction but brought apathy more than enthusiasm for the College experience as an essential element of professional education. Why did the College fall so far short of its potential in the decades immediately following World War II?

A number of factors come readily to mind. First, the war itself substituted in real life for the War College. If officers practiced war rather than studied it, the lessons were learned, sometimes the hard way, and introspection was not a high priority in the postwar generation. Second, the technically minded officer corps found itself deluged in guided missiles, atomic power, electronics, and nuclear weapons, from inner space to the great cosmos. In both war and weapons, the study of strategy seemed increasingly irrelevant; modern weapons offered such great power and versatility that they dominated all strategic thought. Third, social changes in American life toward earlier retirement affected the military by reducing the average full career by about 6 to 8 years, accelerating promotions and leaving much less time to cover vital career training assignments. Fourth, national policies for mutual security via a worldwide network of alliances after World War II created demands, particularly for senior officers, unprecedented in peacetime. Quotas of top-notch officers for newly established joint colleges directly reduced the pool of available officers. A fifth factor is now emerging, the acute need for officers to man the new 600-ship Navy. Each of these factors generates both short and long-term effects on graduate-level education and particularly on the war colleges.

The obvious short-term consequence of expanded duties in a compressed career was a reduction in Naval War College students below previous averages. They also fell well below the Army and Air Force in both numbers and quality. Those services shared the same problems but placed far higher priorities on education. Even the Marine Corps frequently surpassed its sister service in numbers and has never been outclassed in quality. The drop in both quality and quantity was measurable by many yardsticks.

Educational backgrounds of Naval War College students showed that Army and Air Force students, in a typical ten-year sample, averaged 54 percent attainment of master's level and 3 percent the Ph.D. In contrast, Navy students—who prior to World War II averaged 50 percent master's degrees in technical fields— averaged 24 percent M.A. level and 0.5 percent Ph.D.[24] And the declining number of students falls far short of the oft-repeated standard that 50 percent of all officers should attend a command-and-staff-level course and that of these officers, 50 percent should be given the opportunity to attend a senior war college. Demands for joint school quotas, much more inflexible because they were under JCS control, reduced the Newport quota to less than 30 percent.

The quality of Navy students, indicated by success in promotions, in the 1950–1970 time frame reached the lowest point of the century. Fewer Navy students went to the Naval War College; of those who did, fewer were promoted. Navy promotion requirements are traditionally based on the view that practical sea experience is more important than intellectual preparation. The best Navy students went to the National War College, where their promotion success to flag rank, though inferior to the other three services, was still five times as high as for graduates from the Naval War College.[25] Obviously the prestige at Newport seriously declined and brought the Naval War College to its nadir. So many Navy student seats were vacant that Army students actually outnumbered the men in blue.

Thus the real opponents of the College finally emerge. The eternal competition of educational needs over operational requirements pits supply and demand, quality and quantity, policy and implementation, each in a continuous struggle among the various Navy fiefdoms. The College fared well in the manpower wars only when the demands of the fleet were low. Those engaged in fleet manning and career planning—from the CNO, the bureaus, the detailers, the operational commanders ashore and afloat, to the student trying to shape his own destiny—these competing elements largely marched to their separate drummers. These elements constitute the major opponents of the Naval War College. In the practical wisdom of the comic pages, "The enemy is us." Where the War College is concerned, *we* are our own worst enemies.

To enhance the stature of the War College throughout the Navy, several recent Chiefs of Naval Operations took strong and direct action. The War Gaming Center in particular vastly expanded its capabilities to serve the fleet in complex tests of operational plans. Most imaginative of the educational changes are those instituted by the current CNO, Admiral James D. Watkins. The Watkins plan seeks to fill the void in strategic thinking by making the Naval War College the premier school in the Navy, the center for development of naval thinking for decades to come. His first action sought to raise both the numbers and quality of students. As an interim, all Navy commanders completing successful tours as skippers of ships or squadrons for the past two years have been ordered to the Naval Warfare class for special post-command courses of six weeks' duration. Starting with the centennial class, which entered in August 1984, all students coming from command will attend the regular ten-month course. Second, to give detailing officers further leeway, a new trimester plan will allow students to enter in the fall, winter, or spring terms, coinciding with the three phases of the course: Strategy, Defense Economics and Decision Making, and Naval Operations.

The new philosophy is interpreted to mean that orders to Newport are a signal that students have made the first cut to flag selection. Admiral Watkins acted quickly to establish the new system so that it will be tried and tested before he completes his tour as CNO. The acid test of the new plan will soon be upon us. A great many quality officers must be found to man the 600-ship Navy. Can it be done without sacrificing the quality or quantity of the annual

300-student quota headed for the Naval War College? Once again, will the bureaucracy make or break a plan promising for its second century a new deal which at long last will terminate the growing pains of the first century?

Three recent presidents of the Naval War College—Vice Admirals John T. Hayward, Richard G. Colbert, and Stansfield Turner—made key contributions toward building a fine university. One found support in Congress for a major building program—over objections of much of the Navy—surpassing the construction programs of the entire previous history of the College. The second brought to fruition an initiative of Admiral Arleigh Burke, [his] enthusiastic support and years of encouragement for the foreign officers' course, [in] the Naval Command College. The numbers of foreign Chiefs of Naval Operations and other senior military leaders who cherish their Command College experience added enormously to the prestige of the Naval War College internationally, far surpassing its repute in the United States. The third revolutionized the curriculum into a sound graduate-level experience. Of key significance, the installation of a core of highly qualified civilian professors on long-term contract provided stability, continuity, and academic prestige to the new curriculum to protect it from bureaucratic meddling long after the departure of the head revolutionary.

In sum, the Naval War College now offers a superior educational program in the higher direction of war, a superb campus, and great prestige in the outside world. The Watkins plan promises to regain its internal prestige and its key role within the Navy itself. The current era offers bright promise to equal or surpass previous pinnacles. The hope is brightest because the turbulent era of the seventies produced a prestigious new educational program with one essential feature: it is uniquely impervious to opposition to any of its elements, in whatever form that opposition may come. Perhaps at long last, we, as our own worst enemies, can concede that the growing pains of the first century were merely preliminary to rededication of the College to the vision of Admiral Luce, as a "place of original research on all questions relating to war and the statesmanship connected with war, or the prevention of war."[26]

Notes

1. Stephen B. Luce, "The U.S. Naval War College," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, June 1910, p. 559.
2. Quoted in John T. Hayward, "I Had a Dream," *Shipmate*, October 1974, p. 16.
3. Quoted in John D. Hayes, "Stephen B. Luce and Beginnings of the U. S. Naval War College," *Naval War College Review*, January 1971, p. 58.
4. Stephen B. Luce, "The U.S. Naval War College," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, June and September 1910, pp. 573, 683.
5. A.T. Mahan, *From Sail to Steam: Recollections of Naval Life* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1907), p. 313.
6. John M. Ellicott, "Sidelights on Mahan," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, 1948, p. 1247.

7. Alexander W. Rilling, "The First Fifty Years of Graduate Education in the U.S. Navy, 1909–1959," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Southern California, 1972, p. 138.
8. *Naval Affairs Hearings of 1920,* Vol. II, p. 1823.
9. Ibid., William S. Sims testimony, 14 October 1925.
10. E.L. Katzenbach, "The Decline of Professionalism at the War Colleges," U.S Naval Institute *Proceedings,* March 1965, pp. 34–41.
11. H.G. Rickover Memorandum for Director, Naval Officer Professional Development Study, 29 May 1974, in HR Subcommittee on Appropriations *Department of Defense Appropriations for 1975,* 93rd. Cong., 2nd Sess., Part 8, pp. 138–42.
12. *Naval War College Review,* Fall 1977, pp. 138–40; and Winter 1978, p. 92. [*Editor's note:* This quotation now regularly appears at the beginning of the journal's book review department.]
13. Lawrence C. Allin, "The Naval Profession: Challenge and Response, 1870–1890 and 1950–1970," *Naval War College Review,* Spring 1976, p. 76.
14. Philip Selznick, *Leadership in Administration: A Sociological Interpretation* (Evanston, Ill.: Row Peterson, 1957), p. 74.
15. Robert S. McNamara graduation address, Chatham College, Pittsburgh, Pa., 25 May 1966.
16. Asa A. Clark IV et al., eds., *The Defense Reform Debate: Issues and Analyses* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1984), p. 246.
17. Charles Walton Ackley, *The Modern Military in American Society* (Philadelphia: Westmininster Press, 1972).
18. Vincent Davis, *The Admiral's Lobby* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1957), p. 112.
19. General Sir John Hackett maintains that "only a liberal education can produce the sort of mind we need in combat officers." General Sir John Hackett, *The Profession of Arms* (New York: Macmillan, 1983), p. 212.
20. Davis, p. 113.
21. Ibid.
22. Luce, June 1910, pp. 559, 561. Luce identifies the inner quote as from Bulwer's *Athens.*
23. S.M. Barnes et al., "The United States Naval War College," staff study, September 1953–February 1954, pp. 12–13, D-11.
24. John Tucker Hayward, "The Second Class Military Advisor: His Cause and Cure," *Armed Forces Management,* November 1968, p. 69.
25. Nepier Smith, "Historical Analysis of the Organizational Success of the Naval War College during the Twenty-five Years Following the Second World War," thesis, Naval War College, 1974, p. 59.
26. Stephen B. Luce, "An Address Delivered at the United States Naval War College, Narragansett Bay, June 2, 1903," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings,* vol. XXIX, no. 3, 1903, p. 537.

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