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History is important because it gives us a perspective from which to view our own concerns and problems which are frequently similar to those of other times. The naval profession faced similar problems in the two periods 1870-1890 and 1950-1970. In both periods the Navy had to develop a rational policy for the employment of the fleet as well as the means to make the fleet effective. Other problems concerned officer morale, organization, and administration. Professor Allin argues that the naval profession can be understood best in terms of the solutions its officers proposed for these problems.

THE NAVAL PROFESSION

CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE 1870-1890

AND 1950-1970

by

Dr. Lawrence C. Allin

In his creative essay "On the Study of Naval Warfare as a Science," Rear Adm. Stephen B. Luce encapsulated in 1885 the developmental methodology of the rapidly maturing American naval profession. He urged his fellow officers to adopt the comparative method of the 19th century natural and social sciences by which "it would be possible to classify and then to generalize about human experience in warfare."¹ By applying it to the facts of naval and military history, Luce believed that he and his contemporaries could create a truly professional science of naval warfare. Luce's method, espoused by many of his fellow officers, served as an important tool in the development of naval thought. Luce's approach is still valid, and it is useful to delineate the challenges and responses to American naval professionalism in the transitional periods 1870 to 1890 and 1950 to 1970.

Application of Luce's method to American naval circumstances in 1870 and 1950 yields a striking comparative contrast. At both times the Navy was only 5 years removed from fighting the greatest war in its experience. On both occasions the fleet had undergone drastic reductions in men and material from its wartime strength. The prewar navies had been outmoded by unprecedented technological and political changes. At both times the mission, capabilities, and limitations of the fleet were either misunderstood or poorly comprehended by the general public. The post-Civil War Navy was small and sought to fill a limited role as a protector of commerce with the reestablishment of the prewar cruising squadrons. It was a poorly organized fighting force. Its officers believed there was no proviso for the military direction of the fleet within the Navy Department's administrative structure. And, as the officers became

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increasingly aware, the Navy lacked a professional methodology.²

After World War II the U.S. Navy was the most powerful fleet the world had ever seen. It sought to fill an almost unlimited role as the policeman of the world. Functioning in a highly organized defense structure and sending task forces built around the aircraft carrier to the distant waters of the world, it was truly formidable. Capable officers and men manned the fleet, and they possessed a thoroughly professional corpus of attitudes and abilities.³

In both *post-bellum* periods the Navy faced similar and crucial problems. The first was the necessity to develop a rational policy for the employment of the fleet in changing circumstances. It also needed to develop credible tactical concepts through which the fleet could be made effective. Change also brought the demand to construct a responsive administrative framework for the direction of the fleet. It was also readily apparent that the morale of the officers and men who worked the ships had to be sustained.⁴ The development of the American naval profession can be understood best in terms of the solutions its officers proposed for these problems.

Since the beginning of the Republic, the naval profession has been distinct from the military profession. This differentiation is rooted in the national tradition of relying on volunteers recruited from the farm and forge to be officers and to fill the ranks of the Army. The militia, National Guard, and draftee *levée en masse* have been creatures of politics and the repository of the faith that any man can master the calling at arms. It has never been so with the Navy. Even when the shipping of a few guns could metamorphose a merchantman into a man of war, fighting at sea has demanded special qualifications of its combatants, such as the essential abilities to sail and navigate a ship. Unlike the abilities to hike and shoot, these skills were not widely dispersed

throughout the population of the fledgling democracy. These skills clearly set the naval profession apart from soldiering.⁵

The simple abilities to command the setting of sails, navigate a ship and work its guns were enough to distinguish the naval professional until the coming of the Civil War. Characterized by the wholesale production and utilization of steampowered vessels, new ordnance and torpedoes, the Civil War's accompanying technological revolution created a demand for technocrats, for engineers, who could design, produce, and maintain these systems. The unprecedented requirement for these weapons underscored the engineer's unique talents and gave him greater recognition within and without the Naval Establishment. The line officers, who had traditionally exercised command, saw the respect accorded the engineer and his newly won stature as a threat to their status and command prerogatives. This vague and qualifiedly real threat stimulated line officers to take the lead in developing a true naval profession in the 1870's and 1880's.⁶

To these officers the hallmark of the professional was his ability to command a man-of-war or fleets of warships in combat. To preserve this prerogative, their own identities, and their premier position in the naval hierarchy, the line officers formed the United States Naval Association in 1870. With Adm. David Dixon Porter at its head, this organization strove for several years to maintain line professionalism. Its efforts were short-lived and unsuccessful, which was undoubtedly due to its misapprehending the full meaning of the concept of the naval profession when it excluded staff officers, engineers, from its efforts.⁷

This concept was succinctly explained by Edward Chase Kirkland, who found professionalism a contributing factor to the rise of a new American middle class after the Civil War. This new class depended upon the univer-

sities, technical societies, and professional organizations for its self-definition and guidance. As the trained specialists in this class grew in numbers, they became aware of three components of the concept of the profession. These were their need for mutual education, their common interests in their specialties, and the need to systematize their knowledge. In the Navy even Porter knew that the line-exclusiveness of the Naval Association fell short of meeting these criteria. In 1873 he advocated dissolution of the organization and the adoption of a broader approach to the problem of professionalizing the Navy.⁸

Coincidentally with a widespread urge for a higher degree of professionalism within the officer corps, increasing mechanization and democratization affected the military. These conditions forced naval officers to define further the essentials of the military and naval callings. In so doing they came to three conclusions: they found that they needed to acquire greater expertise in their tasks; they felt a compulsion to heighten their sense of obligation to their society; and they recognized a need to develop a defined sense of corporateness.⁹

Naval officers embraced the concept of a profession when they formed a successor to the Naval Association: the United States Naval Institute. Founded in 1873, this organization's purpose was to spread professional and scientific knowledge throughout the Navy. Its members increased their professional expertise by writing and publishing historical, technical, and policy-oriented discussions in its journal *The Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute*. This new organization helped to mitigate line parochialism and gave the officers a clear opportunity to serve their society by obliterating the line/staff feud from its affairs. The Naval Institute also provided a focus for the members' sense of corporateness by giving them a servicewide forum.¹⁰

The Naval Institute's initial progress as a professional organization was slow. It held monthly meetings at Annapolis, and branches were established at the major naval stations. The papers read at these meetings were published in *The Proceedings*, which appeared at irregular intervals. In 1879 the character of the Naval Institute as a professional organization became more fully established. That year it began the regular, quarterly publication of its *Proceedings*. At the suggestion of Lt. Comdr. Allan D. Brown, it also established its annual Prize Essay contest. Under the direction of Comdr. Alfred Thayer Mahan and the supervision of Comdr. William T. Sampson, a cash award, a gold medal, and life membership in the Naval Institute were established as the prize. The contest's purpose was to elicit the best thinking and writing of the members on current naval problems. With the Naval Institute and its broad perspective on naval problems, its *Proceedings*, and its Prize Essay contest, the officers created a vehicle to help them meet the challenges of their profession which has endured to this day.¹¹

Among the challenges of the 1870's were the developments springing from a number of limited wars that the officers read about, fought in, or witnessed as official observers. Like their latter-day counterparts, they saw a Franco-Prussian war and fought in Korea. The first belligerent challenge to their new professionalism arose in the same month that the Naval Institute was founded. The Spanish captured an American vessel, the *Virginius*, which had been engaged in gunrunning to a Cuban rebellion. The captain and more than 50 of her passengers and crewmembers were summarily shot. What there was of the fleet was mobilized and dispatched to Key West for "maneuvers." The mobilization, near-fighting, and maneuvers resulting from "the *Virginius* affair" crystallized a number of issues for the officers. They ascertained that the

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civilian political and industrial establishments were unwilling and unable to support the Navy with money and technology. The Navy Department's organizational structure and administrative capacity proved inadequate to prepare the fleet to fight. The Department was organized around a number of technical bureaus, none of which had the responsibility for the fleet's direction in war. As a result, the officers had to develop their own tactical system for the occasion. In retrospect they found their tactics lacking in precision and efficacy.^{1 2}

One aspect of the officers' Civil War experience was refined in the Russo-Turkish war of 1876. Called "The First Torpedo War" by one historian, its technological highlight was the Russian employment of spar and Whitehead torpedoes. Scoring victories on Turkish heavy units and armorclads, the torpedo-torpedo boat combination proved effective, if not decisive. The Russian victories over Turkish heavy units and the economy of building such small vessels as the torpedo craft set off a naval race. These events gave the Americans food for thought as they evolved their strategic and tactical rationales for the defense of the Nation.^{1 3}

Three years after the Russo-Turkish war, Chile fought Peru and Bolivia in the War of the Pacific in 1879. Members of the Naval Institute were present in the theater and wrote several appraisals of the fighting. Torpedo and ramming tactics were notable features of the war, but the bombardment of Callao and the fight between the Peruvian *Huascar* and two Chilean ironclads were its most dramatic features. The United States had attempted to intervene on the diplomatic level, but the Navy, possessing no armorclads, was so weak that the Chileans were unimpressed. They exploited their victories in the face of American opposition by retaining the nitrate-rich Atacama Desert which they had seized.^{1 4}

Shortly afterwards, in 1882, Lt. Comdr. Caspar F. Goodrich served as an official observer of the British Egyptian Campaign. Its essential naval feature was the bombardment of Alexandria by a heterogeneous fleet of British armorclads. These vessels represented a mixed bag of naval designs which illustrated the confusion of the naval architecture of the day. Their ponderous and very slow-firing guns, while effective in reducing Alexandria, illustrated the limitations of ordnance technology at the time. Equally important, their efficacy in forcing the submission of the city graphically illustrated the dangers from bombardment facing American ports.^{1 5}

The superiority of Western technology and the utility of naval bombardment were again illustrated for the officers in 1884. Then the French employed torpedo boats and armorclads to destroy a fleet of Chinese wooden vessels, subdue the Foochow Arsenal, and silence the forts guarding the River Minh. Even though the American officers looked on the Chinese with disdain, this action made it clear that the torpedo boat and the armorclad had to be considered as the premier ship types of the day.^{1 6}

None of these limited wars provided clear insights into what could be the outcome of a full-scale naval action or war between European powers. Speculation on such a possibility and the need to provide a naval defense for the United States agitated the sailors' minds. To come to grips with the new technology, digest the lessons of these wars, and search for a defense for the Nation, naval officers made their most important response to the challenges of the day—the creation of the Navy's intellectual infrastructure. Led by members of the Naval Institute in this effort, they attempted to develop the Navy's capacity to think and they pursued Luce's development of the science of naval warfare.^{1 7}

Lt. T.B.M. Mason, who had reported on the War of the Pacific and was a competent linguist, built on the foundations of the Naval Institute to add to this infrastructure. He did so by urging the establishment of the Office of Naval Intelligence in 1882. The Secretary of the Navy acceded to his pleas and authorized the office that same year. A year later Ens. C.C. Rogers published his essay on "Naval Intelligence" which clearly spelled out the methods and value of the office and instructed others in its use.¹⁸

Also in 1882, Naval Academy Professor James R. Soley was given the responsibility of further developing the professional infrastructure. He was placed in charge of the Navy Department library and the Office of War Records. Under his direction these became the predecessors of the present Division of Naval History.¹⁹

The most important development of the Navy's intellectual growth occurred in 1884 when Luce, Sampson, and Goodrich submitted their report on the need for advanced education in the Navy. Following their recommendations, the Secretary of the Navy, William C. Chandler, created the United States Naval War College and appointed Rear Adm. Stephen B. Luce its first president. Under Luce, and later Capt. Alfred T. Mahan, the institution served to formalize the intellectual methodology of the Navy and give it the ability to think in the abstract.²⁰

In spite of these successes, these innovative officers failed to achieve all of their intellectual goals in this period. They considered their inability to create a naval general staff their most significant failure. With it they had hoped to achieve two aims: rationalization of the Navy's administration by placing the staff above the bureaus and under only the Secretary, and compensation for the Secretary's amateurishness, by having the staff advise him on the military direction of the fleet in wartime. These

goals were not achieved until 1915 when the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations was organized.²¹

The essence of naval professionalism in this early era was embodied in Luce who, more than any other man, developed the Navy's capacity to think. Authoring three major essays on the naval uses of history, he gave the Navy its essential professional methodology. In creating the Naval War College, he furnished the Navy with an institution in which this science could be developed and extended. In fighting for the naval general staff, he sought to give the fleet an organ which would translate his method into action. The essence of his professional thinking was that the comparative method, if applied to naval and military history, could teach valuable lessons of tactics, strategy, and national policy. Complementing Luce's thinking, Comdr. Norman H. Farquhar demonstrated how history could be utilized to assess the long-term maritime capabilities of other nations.²² The most prominent use of Luce's method was displayed in Alfred Thayer Mahan's great seapower trilogy which appeared at the end of the period.*

By applying Luce's comparative method to the broad sweep of history, a line officer could understand better how his discharge of command functions and responsibilities fitted into the larger picture. Two widely held beliefs among naval officers were the innate superiority of Atlantic civilization and their expectation that the wars of the future would be short, sharp, and fought with the material on hand at the beginning of the conflict. When laid against the technical realities of the day, these beliefs helped naval officers make operational

**The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1680-1783* (1890), *The Influence of Sea Power Upon the French Revolution and Empire* (1892), and *The Influence of Sea Power and Its Relation to the War of 1812* (1905).

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assumptions concerning the uses to which their new professionalism would be put.²³

When they laid the implications of steam technology against American patterns of oceanic trade, an old problem appeared in new dress. It was simply that the merchant marine had been severely damaged in every major American war and the fast new cruisers of other nations could now more easily overhaul and sink American merchantmen at the outbreak of a war. Thus, the officers concluded that their first duty was to protect American commerce. Their belief was not a result of their relationship with the Nation's mercantile and industrial leaders. Rather, it was a reciprocal of their assertion that there was a direct relationship between the well-being of the Navy and the merchant marine. To them, commercial prosperity, a vigorous merchant marine, and a strong Navy were equilateral sides of the national maritime triangle. It followed that the future prospects of the Navy, the officers, and their profession rested on the potentials of the merchant marine and overseas commerce.²⁴

Throughout this era the merchant fleet was in a decline. Officers concluded from its condition that the Navy would not fare well at the hands of the civilian political establishment which had permitted the carrying trade to reach its nadir. Their fears were exacerbated since they expected the dwindling merchant fleet to provide auxiliary, supply, and transport vessels in time of war as well as the officers and men for a Naval Reserve and for auxiliary cruisers to raid enemy commerce. Additionally, they knew a vigorous merchant marine would sustain and stimulate the shipbuilding industry which was laggard and could not meet the demands of war.²⁵

Naval officers were also concerned with the Monroe Doctrine. Consistently called upon to bring stability to Central America, they understood Western

Hemispheric problems and European attempts to meddle in them. In the early 1870's, members of the Naval Institute led the abortive expedition to find an isthmian route. The Americans defaulted on the opportunity while the French seized the initiative and began a canal in Panama. Given the demands made on the Navy, the dangers posed by the European thrusts, and the potential for war arising from a French canal, many officers called either for a retreat from the Monroe Doctrine or for the strengthening of the fleet. Yet they had even more important strategic problems to consider.²⁶

The length of the American coast, its prodigious maritime domestic trade, and the potentials of the new technology in bombardment and blockade formed this problem. Blockade had been a significant strategy in every American war. But the new technology permitted an enemy to come swiftly and to appear suddenly off American ports. He could then break up a portion of the coasting trade, ransom or bombard any port, and demand favorable terms. As demonstrated at Callao, Alexandria, and Foochow, the armorclad was the ideal weapon for such an attack. The outstanding technological achievement of the era, it was a highly mobile, long-range, and destructive weapon. Since the Navy possessed no armorclads, naval officers were obliged to devise both a scheme for defending the coast and to assist in creating the industrial capacity to build such ships.²⁷

The maturity of the naval profession and the efficacy of its intellectual infrastructure were demonstrated in the achievement of these goals. Commencing with the First Naval Advisory Board of 1881, many members of the Naval Institute were given the opportunity to serve on the *ad hoc* policy boards which "rejuvenated" the Navy and defined its essential mission. The overwhelming majority of the First and Second Naval Advisory Boards, the Gun

Foundry Board, the Fortification Board, and the Naval Policy Board were line officer members of the Naval Institute. In the aggregate these boards recommended building ships of steel, gun factories to supply ordnance, and an integrated system of land and water defenses for the coast and ironclads. These ironclads would carry the heaviest of batteries and yet sail on the shoal waters of the American seaboard. With the Congress approving much of what the sailors recommended, the United States received both a "new" navy and a rational strategy for the defense of the coast from these efforts.²⁸

The years 1870 to 1890 encompassed the creation of the American naval profession, the erection of the naval industrial establishment, and the completion of the planning for a new navy. The officers and fleet were not tested against a serious, capable enemy; nor were they so tested in the period 1950-1970. Prior to 1950, the Nation's natural resources, technological ingenuity, and productive capacity had furnished it with a superfluity of material with which to defeat Germany and Japan. But the challenge of the post-World War II era demanded the creation of another new Navy while a strong and credible enemy lurked off the coast and was ever present in the American mind. By 1950 that potential enemy, the Soviet Union, possessed the *sine qua non* naval officers were faced with new problems of defense and renewed challenges to their professional status.

As in the era of Luce, Mahan, and Sampson, officers in the modern period were compelled to deal with the impact of technology, the development of their profession, limited wars, strengthening the Navy's intellectual infrastructure, and a reexamination of the fundamentals of command. No longer could they function in the exclusive framework of surface war at sea. Rather, they had to think in terms of fighting from

under the sea, on the sea, and over the sea. These gross, novel technological dimensions of naval warfare created serious new professional problems for the officers and agitated old ones.

Among the most difficult of the perennial problems was the attraction and then retention of high-quality officers. Material incentives to a naval career were most often unattractive in both periods. In the earlier era, naval officers received 20 percent less pay than Army officers. In the latter era, young officers still left the fleet in search of greater material gains. Lack of material benefits were not the only disincentives which caused officers to resign. The proliferation of officer specialties in scientific, technical, logistical, and administrative fields gave them the training to leave the fleet and seek other employment. This multiplicity of career designators also tended to increase shore billets and to make an officer more a bureaucrat than a fighting man. Concomitantly, this proliferation of specialties tended to "civilianize" the Navy and to decrease opportunities to exercise command responsibilities.²⁹

Officer disaffection with the slim chances for command in the 19th century had resulted from both a simple decline in ship numbers and purposefully reduced career opportunities. During the latter period, such declines were also considerations in officer retention. The increase in officer strength from 1,200 in the first period to 60,000 in the second was not accompanied by a like increase in fighting units or major command responsibilities, which tended to inhibit professional development. Contrastingly, some first-rate officers of the 19th century spent more than 20 years in one grade before advancing to command, while many officers in the later period retired after 20 years of service. Between 1950 and 1970, rank proliferated to such an extent that its correlation to command and high

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command with their heavy professional responsibilities and opportunities was diminished. As a consequence, complaints were heard that officer duty assignments had little meaningful relationship to the authority supposedly represented by rank.³⁰

The creation of the Defense Department in the 1940's served to downgrade both the officers' professional status as decisionmakers and their self-esteem as fighting men. The once autonomous Secretary of the Navy and his Department were placed in the defense bureaucracy in a position subservient to the Secretary of Defense and the Department of Defense. The creation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff interposed a level of bureaucracy between naval officers and the highest levels of decisionmaking and thus affected their ability to act in emergency situations. Dramatic changes within the Defense Department occurred in the 1960's and further diminished an officer's value as a professional capable of advising on policy. Civilian "whiz kids," bringing complex but mechanical methods of thought and computer technology, came to the Defense Department and assumed many decisionmaking responsibilities. This phenomenon further contributed to the diminution of the officer's professional value. Even more irksome were the situations in which both the Secretary of Defense and the President bypassed the chain of command. Incumbents of both offices, especially during the Vietnam war, issued operational directives and orders to units in the field and at sea. This disruption of the chains of command, responsibility, and authority further damaged naval officers' professional status.³¹

A vague uneasiness within their own society contributed to a widespread malaise and led officers to question their professional values. No longer was the innate superiority of Atlantic civilization unquestionable. Competing forms of social, economic, and cultural

organization gained strength and vigor after World War II, without materially damaging the United States. The "monolithic block" of communism slowly crumbled as a result of internal strains. Simultaneously, a new alignment of "Third World" nations appeared. Its members were neutral in the great power struggle and desperately desired economic and social development. As a result, the 20th century officer could no longer think in terms of forcing aliens to accept his civilization as had his predecessors.³²

Beginning with the Rio Pact of 1947, the Nation began to integrate its security in peacetime with that of other nations. Following the Rio Pact, which had, in some ways, strengthened the Monroe Doctrine, the Nation entered into a series of defensive alliances. Among these were the NATO, CENTO, and SEATO pacts whose strengths rested on the American nuclear arsenal and naval capabilities. Naval officers in the earlier period had been cosmopolitan and at home in foreign ports, but these alliances added a new dimension to the officers' professionalism. They served in the military structures of these alliances, many in command positions. In these positions they had to acquire keen insights into the customs and military capabilities of their allies, and frequently they had to learn new languages. Within limits, they had to make decisions based on a higher, more complex professional appraisal of matters at hand.³³

Still, professional disenchantment troubled the officers. Dwindling opportunities for command, decreasing chances to affect policy, and public disinterest at home contributed to this phenomenon. The concept of the "short" war added to the uneasiness. With the advent of nuclear weapons the most difficult professional problem, annihilating the enemy's forces, had become the most simple. Short, sharp, nuclear war offered little hope for the

professional to exercise the skill, the judgment, and the wisdom gained from years of experience. It was evident that the officers would have to concentrate on other than total nuclear war if their profession was to have meaning.³⁴

Unlike their 19th century brethren, the officers of the 20th century were given several opportunities to test their theories of war. To an extent they could work out the limitations on the fleet inherent in nuclear war, show the fleet's value, and test themselves and their alternatives to nuclear holocaust in the limited wars of the period. The first opportunity was the war fought in Korea and on its surrounding waters.

The Korean Peninsula was the ideal place to apply seapower. Naval writers have taken pride in the fact that by its exercise of seapower the Navy brought in troops from all over the world and held the enemy at Pusan. Shortly thereafter, General MacArthur, relying on the Navy/Marine amphibious capability, executed a brilliant landing at Inchon and further demonstrated the fleet's utility. But in the air, Navy jets (and Air Force bombers) proved an uneven match for Russian-built MIG's. Air Force fighter craft served to provide air cover while the Navy worked to develop better aircraft. But after the cease-fire, it was evident that seapower had been utilized to do little more than preserve the status quo.³⁵

Thereafter the fleet stood guard between the two Chinas for several years and successfully executed the evacuation of the Tachen Islands. In 1956 another challenge arose halfway around the globe. In the British, French, and Israeli attack on Egypt, American seapower was put to a test. At the height of the 1956 elections, the entire fleet was combat loaded, sent to sea, and stood ready to intervene. The obvious lesson that the United States possessed a highly mobile striking force was not lost on the protagonists. The Anglo-French failure resulted in giving the 6th Fleet a

large share of the responsibility for maintaining Western power in the Mediterranean.³⁶

A more satisfactory application of seapower occurred in Lebanon 2 years after the Suez crisis. Civil war was imminent. Both Lebanon and its neighbor Jordan were also threatened with conflict with their Arab neighbors. A swift exercise of the Navy/Marine amphibious capability bolstered stability in Lebanon. Once seapower had done its work, British paratroopers were dropped into Jordan and an American Army regiment was airlifted to Beirut as a temporary stabilizing force.³⁷

The Navy dealt with a far more serious threat to American security in the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. Accurate intelligence revealed that the Soviets were deploying jet bombers and nuclear missiles on the island. The American heartland was directly threatened. An abortive anti-Castro invasion had been launched earlier at the Bay of Pigs, and some advisers advocated using the Navy's amphibious capability for another such invasion. But an alternative short of direct confrontation was needed. To provide the Soviets an avenue of disengagement, the Navy was called upon to employ the hoary strategy of blockade in that threatening situation. The quick reaction and effective response embodied in the 183 ships which sealed off Cuba convinced the Soviets that American seapower commanded the situation. Russian freighters carrying missiles reversed course at sea, and emplaced weapons were dismantled and shipped home. While some officers were not thoroughly satisfied with the negotiated withdrawal of the Russian weapons, the Navy had dramatically contributed to the solution of a severe problem by the application of seapower.³⁸

The story was far different in Vietnam. The President of the United States used the pretext of an attack on American men-of-war for a heavy

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commitment of ground forces to the conflict, and several nations were eventually drawn into a bloody morass. Again the Navy employed the blockade against enemy attempts to supply their forces. In "Operation Market Time," units of the fleet searched civilian craft and seized enemy supply vessels when they were found. Like their earlier brethren in the Civil War, the officers had to develop a system of riverine tactics in Vietnam. Employing a whole new technology, commanders of shallow draught units sought to use the country's inland waterways to disrupt enemy supplies, isolate his fighting forces, and achieve combat victories. Coastal bombardment as well as numerous airstrikes were also employed by the fleet in the conflict. While assault helicopters permitted precision deployment of infantry units, it was necessary to resurrect piston-engined Navy bombers and the World War II battleship *New Jersey* to achieve controlled precision bombardment in the war.³⁹

Despite the fleet's tactical success, it could not achieve one of the most important goals of the command of the sea, the isolation of the battlefield. The amazingly resilient enemy continued to push men and material into the combat zone. At home war weariness set in and various segments of the population strongly objected to what appeared to be a senseless slaughter. Disapprobation was heaped on both civilian and military leaders for fighting what appeared to be at best a brutal affair. Respect for military and naval professionals plummeted. Some officers reacted with introspection. Others reacted as their earlier fellows had done during the great rail strikes of 1877. They warned against the disruptive elements in society, demanded their disciplining, and concluded that the Navy would have to assume an additional duty—protection of the Nation against internal enemies.⁴⁰

The changing circumstances of

technology, administration, and the politics of war which accompanied these conflicts reinforced the Navy's need for an intellectual mechanism in the 20th century. After World War II, the Navy established its Postgraduate School at Monterey, Calif., only one of several new professional schools the military established. Originally it was intended to upgrade the academic skills of officers who had not graduated from the Naval Academy or civilian universities. Over the years it improved its faculty and offerings to become a respected educational institution. In another effort to give advanced training to the officers, the Navy sent senior officers to the National War College where they studied the concerns of higher policy. At the Naval War College, Lt. William McCarty Little's war gaming technique of instruction was revolutionized. Originally conceived when Mahan was president of the institution, Little's basic idea was computerized and a new era of simulated combat decisionmaking was introduced. Importantly too, civilians began to understand that there was a specialized body of knowledge which could be absorbed only at the Naval War College.⁴¹

The Navy reached out to the civilian universities to extend the officer's expertise in this era. It became possible for Naval War College students to earn a master's degree in conjunction with their studies. As Luce and Goodrich had wished, sailors were sent to civilian universities as regular students to undergo rigorous academic training. Enlisted men were also encouraged to utilize their intellectual capacities with the institution of programs permitting the best qualified of them to receive college training at Navy expense.⁴²

Naval officers received an additional opportunity to sharpen their intellectual skills and to refine their thinking on naval problems in 1948 with the appearance of the *Naval War College Review*. In its early years it was a rather skimpy

professional journal. During the 1960's its quality improved as outstanding officers and civilians addressed critical issues of policy and strategy in its pages. Today it stands as a respected journal.⁴³

While the management of increased destructive power, limited war, professional malaise, and the extension of their intellectual infrastructure occupied the officers, they were still faced with the basic problem which confronted Luce, Mahan, and Sampson—the development of a practical national naval policy.

Such men as Rear Adm. John D. Hayes and the civilian Lane Kendall, among others, concluded that the merchant marine was still vital to the Navy and the Nation. All of the arguments of the 19th century were invoked to modernize and to strengthen the merchant fleet. Its value in Korea and Vietnam was underscored, and its crucial role in maritime strategy was emphasized. But, as in the period after the Civil War, the merchant fleet shrank in numbers, increased in age, and carried a consistently decreasing share of American foreign trade. Concerned with the Nation's need for a readily available commercial fleet in war, officers decried the laws which allowed "flags of convenience." These laws permitted Americans to register their vessels abroad and operate them under the flags of other nations. The subsidized merchant fleet was condemned as unprofitable. It was pointed out that its real value lay in its ability to support military operations. The sailors concluded that its management should be a direct naval responsibility. As had been done in the 19th century, some naval officers argued that shipping interests should be represented on the Cabinet level in the National Government. Despite their concern, the merchant navy still retains its weak position as an implement of trade or a tool of war.⁴⁴

More important than their argument for control of the sealift was the profes-

sionals' acceptance of the challenges which grew from the establishment of the Defense Department, the creation of an independent Air Force, and the existence of nuclear weapons. Having seen their supercarrier the *United States* scuttled by the strategic doctrines implied in these events and having experienced the "Revolt of the Admirals," naval officers argued against the Strategic Air Command and the doctrine of massive retaliation. Such a strategy was unrealistic, they said. It offered an enemy the choice between two American military reactions—inactivity or all-out nuclear war. The strategy depended on SAC bombers, immobile airbases, questionable defensive screens, and a keen edge of readiness which could not always be maintained. Massive retaliation failed as a strategy, they maintained. It ignored the possibility that wars might break out which could be limited in their scope. It also failed to recognize the working of seapower and its efficacy as a flexible instrument of war.⁴⁵

While the Air Force increased its reliance on missiles in fixed sites to supplement the nuclear capacity of its bombers, the naval professionals proposed and built an alternative strategic mechanism. In doing so they mated the mobility and invisibility of the nuclear submarine and the reach of the long-range missile. The fast, mobile, and unseen craft of the Polaris fleet gave the United States several advantages. They widened the area from which the Soviet Union or other enemies could be attacked. They neutralized the "lightning rod" effect of fixed atomic weapons and defenses which would be mandatory targets for an enemy by putting these aiming points at sea. The missiles of the subsurface force could be employed singularly, selectively, and with prior warning as an alternative to the fruitless wholesale discharge of total war. The Polaris fleet could be likened to the first American armorclads which

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were authorized in 1890. In concept they defended the coast against enemy bombardment by threatening to limit his alternatives for action.^{4 6} The circumscribed usefulness of the doctrine of massive retaliation was replaced by older concepts of limited wars in modern semantic dress. As the Polaris fleet increased, it was possible to think in terms of deterrence as a strategy.

Even when the first units of the type were fitting out, the officers departed from the coastal defense mentality the Polaris represented and considered the full scope of atomic naval warfare. The essential attitudes and conditions which would permit such war were outlined by Comdr. Malcolm W. Cagle in a Naval Institute Prize Essay. His writing reflects an order of thinking of the officers of the 19th century. Steam had given them the power to control the movement and speed of their vessels with a precision unattainable in sailing ships. Improved mounts, breeches, powders, and steels had enabled them to make and work guns whose range and accuracy were unsurpassed. With such manageable instruments at their disposal, officers such as Dennis Hart Mahan, Horace Elmer, and Henry Clay Taylor strove to make tactics precise, while Luce, Sampson, and John F. Meigs labored to bring exactness to strategic thinking.^{4 7}

In grappling with the difficult issue of atomic naval warfare, Cagle attempted to give it a defensible rationale and a precise guide for its conduct. Such war, he wrote, had to be militarily sound, effective, morally right, and beneficial to postwar security. With these demanding criteria in mind, he stressed that the Navy should not hesitate to use atomic weapons. But, he stressed, again, their use should be calculated to have a positive effect on the postwar peace. The standards Cagle established for the use of nuclear weapons were demanding, and they required exactness in their fulfillment. They had to be delivered with precision.

They could not be scattered about the landscape like conventional explosives in area bombing. Their destructive yields had to be known with certitude, he emphasized, and they had to be "clean," leaving little radioactive residue. Finally, the fleet's ability and willingness to use such weapons with accuracy in localized wars had to be widely and clearly broadcast. With such qualifications, naval atomic warfare could be utilized for policy ends.^{4 8}

Underlying naval officers' strategic thinking on the nuclear level were two other distinct problems—fighting local wars and dealing with the Soviet submarine force. Reacting against the narrow possibilities of massive retaliation, the sailors argued that the Navy/Marine amphibious team should be utilized in local conventional or near-conventional war. In the material realm these thoughts were expressed in the construction of helicopter carriers. The use of such enveloping forces in constricted areas of conflict allowed precision in both application and strategic thought by permitting measured consideration of the policy aims to be achieved through the fighting.^{4 9}

The exactness the officers strove to achieve was similar to that which Sampson espoused when he wrote of coastal defense in 1889. He excluded the submarine from consideration in his classic work because it was an unknown quantity. In any realistic appraisal, he was justified in this omission. The submarine was slow, limited in range, even more limited in offensive power, and it was mechanically unreliable. Since Sampson's day, improvements in the type have been so complete as to constitute a change in kind, not in degree. Its speed, mobility, invisibility, and weapons array make it the most deadly warship in any fleet. As a result, it is one of the greatest strategic and professional challenges of the day. With limited war a reality and circumscribed atomic warfare a possibility, the professionals have been

unable to solve the problems of submarine warfare. Still, as with all weapons, the submarine has limitations. Its offensive nature and ability to conceal itself may be its greatest disadvantages. These characteristics make it a weapon of deadly surprise and deny the enemy the opportunity to fathom its intentions. Thus it invites its foes' best efforts toward its destruction and leaves little room for a measured reply to its use.⁵⁰

While sweeping technological and strategic challenges characterized their times, Sampson and his compatriots did not have to face such problems as the submarine. Nevertheless, these early members of the Naval Institute had established the foundations of the modern Navy by 1890. Their professional descendants had to face the same order of problems with which they dealt: professional enhancement, intellectual expansion, administrative readjustment, and internal politics.

As the 1970's began, technology, strategy, and policy were inextricably intertwined with disaffection with the war in Asia, the threat of nuclear annihilation, and the problem of the submarine. At that time a crisis occurred which did not face the 19th century professionals. This was the officers' loss of confidence in themselves and their abilities.

This malaise took several forms. One was the officers' realization that the Soviet Navy seriously challenged the West's command of the sea. Empha-

sizing their uneasiness, the officers complained of the deficiencies of the ships provided for them. They complained too that the detached professionalism of the officer corps had been seriously compromised during the 1950's and 1960's. Finally, they called for a modern Mahan to tell them what navies should be and do in the closing decades of the 20th century.⁵¹ This condition may be the greatest challenge facing the U.S. Navy today.

The strength to meet this uncertainty must be found in the officers' own professional perceptions. They must remember Goodrich, Luce, and Sampson who built the Naval War College, who encouraged Mahan to think and to write, and who were instrumental in laying the foundations for the "New Navy." Like their predecessors, the officers today must take the lead in solving these problems. Their solutions must be militarily sound, morally right, and truly effective.

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

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