

Rediscovering Interwar American Theorists

A Monograph

by

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Abstract

Rediscovering Interwar American Theorists, by MAJ Russell McKelvey, United States Army, 46 pages.

US Army officers in the interwar period prepared themselves for victory, at least in part, by broadly studying European and American military theory and applying it as a lens to history. Despite this, there seems to be a common perception that Americans contributed little to military theory between world wars. This monograph argues that there was substantial development in American military theory during the interwar period, it covered strategic and operational theory, and it was influential in doctrine and practice. The small amount of literature on American military theory prior to 1945 is scattered, comprised of parts and pieces, and not taken very seriously. This paper addresses this gap by analyzing the theories of Brigadier General William K. Naylor and Colonel Oliver P. Robinson, examining their influences, and assessing their influence on doctrine and leaders of the Second World War. Additionally, this paper contains recommendations to improve the integration of military theory into officer education.

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Acronyms

ADP	Army Doctrine Publication
ASC	Army Staff College
AWC	Army War College
ADRP	Army Doctrine Reference Publication
AEF	American Expeditionary Force
CARL	Combined Arms Research Library
CGSC	Command and General Staff College
CGSOC	Command and General Staff Officer Course
FM	Field Manual
FSR	Field Service Regulation
GSS	General Staff School
MMA	Michigan Military Academy
MMAS	Masters of Military Art and Science
NDA	National Defense Act
SAMS	School of Advanced Military Studies
USMA	United States Military Academy
WDGS	War Department General Staff

Introduction: Rediscovering Interwar American Theorists

The shelves are full of them! In serried ranks they march down through the decades each one calling itself a treatise on “modern war.” Omitting those away back there in the dim, misty light, here stalk Clausewitz, von der Goltz, and Bernhardt; Napoleon, Jomini, Foch, and Castex; Hamley, Byrd, Maurice, Fuller, Hart, and Corbett; Bigelow, Wagner, Mahan, Naylor, Meyers, and Robinson.

—Colonel Ned B. Rehkopf, to the Army War College, 1939

On the eve of the Second World War, students of the Army War College sat through Colonel Ned B. Rehkopf’s introductory lecture on strategy. His remarks indicate students would study strategy building upon the ideas of prominent military theorists. There were the Prussians, the French, and the British whose names fill out history and theory curricula today. However, there were also, treated with equal weight and prominence, the American theorists: Bigelow, Wagner, Mahan, Naylor, Meyers, and Robinson. The officers in that lecture prepared themselves for victory, at least in part, by broadly studying European and American military theory and applying it as a lens to history. Despite this, there seems to be a perception that Americans contributed little to military theory between world wars. This monograph argues that there was substantial development in American military theory during the interwar period, it covered strategic and operational theory, and it was influential in doctrine and practice.¹ An intellectual history of the theories of Brigadier General William K. Naylor and Colonel Oliver P. Robinson illustrates this claim, examines their influences, and assesses their influence on doctrine and leaders of the Second World War.

Contrary to common perception, the early 20th century was a period of significant intellectual development in American military theory. Organizational changes in the American military such as the creation of the War Plans Division of the General Staff indicate an institutional recognition of the importance of planning for war and theater level campaign planning. During the

¹ For the purposes of this study, operational theory describes the operational perspective of war that concentrates on coordinating the activities of the military to attain national objectives. Clayton R. Newell, *The Framework of Operational Warfare* (London: Routledge, 1991), xii, 10.

same period, faculty at Fort Leavenworth synthesized European theories of warfare with American operational experiences and taught an American way of war to their students. General John J. Pershing and the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) tested the emerging strategic and operational theories during the First World War and found them a sufficient base to build on.

American officers, like their contemporaries in Europe and Soviet Russia, assimilated lessons from the war and wrestled with the space between strategy and tactics now recognized as operational art. Some of these officers were faculty at Leavenworth and played a significant role in developing American strategic and operational theory. While official doctrine did not capture their efforts until 1942, it is evident they influenced officers who led divisions, corps, and armies in the Second World War.² Overshadowed by the preeminence of World War II in the American military narrative, the ideas of Naylor and Robinson are nearly lost to history.

Naylor was an instructor at Leavenworth before and after World War I. Naylor taught and wrote primarily about how commanders and staffs of large units pursue strategic objectives through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose.³ He synthesized European and American military thought and developed operational theory applicable to the American strategic context. Naylor theorized about how large units of citizen-soldiers would conduct joint campaigns supported by expeditionary logistics.

Robinson was an instructor of history and strategy from 1923 to 1927. Robinson's intellectual efforts focused primarily on the strategic level. He expanded upon the ideas of other American theorists and began to differentiate between national and military strategy. Robinson was

² Doctrine, for the purposes of this study is defined as, "the core statement of the army's view of war and serves as a common guide for the conduct of operations. This shared view facilitates communication, enhances flexibility, and fosters confidence throughout the force, and it provides the basis for supporting doctrine, force structure, training, and education." William O. Odom, *After the Trenches: The Transformation of U.S. Army Doctrine, 1918-1939* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1999), 3.

³ Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 9.

primarily concerned with how to prepare for war, raise field forces, train and deploy armies, and sustain large unit operations at the end of long supply lines.

Naylor and Robinson provide illustrative examples of developments in American military theory, but their contributions to theory have not been studied comprehensively. The small amount of literature on American military theory is scattered, comprised of parts and pieces, and not taken very seriously. Foundational academic works about military thought contain little about American theory before the beginning of the Cold War.⁴ The preponderance of literature on American military thought focuses on strategy (Millis, Weigley, Linn, and Echevarria), operational art (Matheny, Brusolino, and Naveh) and counterinsurgency (Birtle). What little else there is exists in works on military education (Nenninger, Schifferle), doctrine (Bonura, Odom, and Kretchik), and papers written by students in military courses.⁵

⁴ Azar Gat, *A History of Military Thought: From the Enlightenment to the Cold War* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Peter Paret, Gordon Alexander Craig, and Felix Gilbert, *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986).

⁵ On American strategy see Walter Millis, *American Military Thought* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966); Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*; John I. Alger, *The Quest for Victory: The History of the Principles of War*, Contributions in Military History, no. 30 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982); Antulio Joseph Echevarria, Army War College (US), and Strategic Studies Institute, *Toward an American Way of War* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2004); Antulio Joseph Echevarria, *Imagining Future War: The West's Technological Revolution and Visions of Wars to Come, 1880-1914* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007); Brian McAllister Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army's Way of War* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2007); Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory* (London; Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1997); Thomas Brusolino, "A Reader in American Operational Art Theory" (School of Advanced Military Studies, 2010); Thomas Brusolino, "Naturally Clausewitzian: US Army Theory and Education from Reconstruction to the Interwar Years," *Journal of Military History* 77, no. 4 (2013): 1251–76; Michael R Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy: American Operational Art to 1945* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011); A. J. Birtle and Center for Military History, *US Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1921* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, US Army, 2001); Timothy K Nenninger, "The Fort Leavenworth Schools: Post Graduate Military Education and Professionalization in the U.S. Army, 1880-1920" (1974); Timothy K. Nenninger, *The Leavenworth Schools and the Old Army: Education, Professionalism, and the Officer Corps of the United States Army, 1881-1918* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978); Peter J Schifferle, *America's School for War: Fort Leavenworth, Officer Education, and Victory in World War II* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010); Odom, *After the Trenches*; Walter E. Kretchik, *US Army Doctrine: From the American Revolution to the War on Terror*, Modern War Studies (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2011); Michael A. Bonura, *Under the Shadow of Napoleon: French Influence on the American Way of Warfare from the War of 1812 to the Outbreak of WWII* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

Historians writing about American military strategy have taken a broad view by capturing the consensus of the institutional Army over time rather than focusing on individual theorists.⁶ In the 1970s literature on strategy provided sparse details about theories of individuals but did associate Naylor with the US Principles of War and Robinson with a growing integration of Clausewitz's theories into American officer education.⁷ In the 1980s, a history of the principles of war paid slightly more attention to the roles of Naylor and Robinson in interwar discourse on the principles, but went too far in depicting Naylor as overly dogmatic and Robinson as his chief critic in this regard.⁸ After the introduction of AirLand Battle doctrine in 1982 historians began to trace the history of operational art, exploring theories bridging strategy and tactics. A small segment of this literature covers American concepts of operational art and expresses four dominant views. The first is that American theory at the operational level did not exist at all until the 1980s.⁹ The second is that Americans blatantly copied French theory until WWII.¹⁰ A third view is that American operational theory existed in education but not in practice.¹¹ A fourth view places the roots of

⁶ One of the best known early works in this category set this initial expectation. In it Millis states, "It is here taken to include the way in which not only American professional Soldiers but also Americans generally have tended to think about war, military policy, and the military factor in their free society." See Millis, *American Military Thought*, xvi.

⁷ Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*, 214, 220, 519.

⁸ Alger, *The Quest for Victory*, 136–41.

⁹ Naveh's assessment is that Soviet Military theorists played an almost exclusive role in developing an, "operational perception," in the 1920s and 1930's. Shimon Naveh completely dismisses American operational theory before the 1980's. He maintains that Americans failed to perceive the, "operational field as a new and distinct cognition," until the publication of *AirLand Battle* doctrine in 1986. See Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence*, 12.

¹⁰ Michael A. Bonura makes the case that Americans directly imported and fought using the French way of war until 1940 when France fell to Germany. Bonura, *Under the Shadow of Napoleon*, 2; This general idea is reinforced by William Odom in his analysis of Army operations doctrine. Odom describes the 1935 Manual for Commanders of Large Units as a translation of French doctrine that lasted until 1939. See Odom, *After the Trenches*, 123.

¹¹ Bruce W. Menning claims that American operational mastery in WWII derived from on the job training and schools of hard knocks due to, "scant intellectual, doctrinal, and organizational precedent." See Bruce W. Menning, "Operational Art's Origins," in *Historical Perspectives of the Operational Art*, ed. Michael D. Krause and R. Cody Phillips (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, US Army, 2010), 12; See also Antulio Joseph Echevarria, "American Operational Art, 1917-2008," in *The Evolution of*

American operational art in the interwar period.¹² Of this last group, Michael R. Matheny makes the case that Leavenworth instructors, including Naylor and Robinson, played key roles the developing American operational art and preparing leaders to apply it prior to World War II.¹³

Literature about interwar officer education provides important contextual information but little regarding individual work of instructors. A history of Army schools from 1880 to 1920 describes the selection of Leavenworth students and faculty noting the expectation for the latter to present theoretical ideas and their practical applications.¹⁴ A more recent history of Leavenworth schools provides rich detail about their missions, culture, and educational methods. It also credits Naylor and his colleagues with setting the educational foundation for officer education after World War I.¹⁵ The remaining literature is limited to student papers describing the ideas of Naylor and Robinson only as they relate to the research subjects.¹⁶

Operational Art: From Napoleon to the Present, ed. John Andreas Olsen and Martin Van Creveld (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 137–65. Echevarria outlines general developments in operational theory across five periods including the interwar period. He generally discusses broad developments in operational theory, but values evidence of practice above theory. He contends that Americans failed to benefit from advances in operational theory due to lack of operational experience.

¹² Harold W. Nelson acknowledges that doctrine and training produced by Leavenworth faculty suggest American theorists derived insights about the implications of extended operations resulting from industrialized warfare. Nelson claims these insights contributed to the success of interwar student officers in all theaters during WWII. See Harold W. Nelson, “The Origins of Operational Art,” in *Historical Perspectives of the Operational Art*, ed. Michael D. Krause and R. Cody Phillips, 2010, 333–48; Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy*, 16.

¹³ Specifically, Matheny points out that Naylor and Robinson taught concepts similar to elements of operational art such as culmination, lines of operation, phasing operations, centers of gravity, and linking tactical actions to strategic objectives. See Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy*; Michael R Matheny, “Origins of Modern Operational Art,” (Ph.D., Temple University, 2007) 74-77.

¹⁴ Nenner, “The Fort Leavenworth Schools,” 123, 235. Nenner only briefly mentions Naylor as an instructor of an inaugural logistics course that emerged from the Army’s recognition of the changing scale of war.

¹⁵ Schifferle, *America’s School for War*, Chapter 4.

¹⁶ There are twelve student papers referencing Naylor and Robinson. For the monograph pre-dating his book see Michael R. Matheny, “The Development of the Theory and Doctrine of Operational Art in the American Army, 1920-1940” (Masters, School of Advanced Military Studies, 1988); Paul E. Melody, “The Principles of War and Campaign Planning: Is There a Connection?” (Masters, School of Advanced Military Studies, 1990) Melody’s paper provides information about Naylor’s involvement in the development of principles of war; Jonathan M. House, “Do Doctrinal Buzzwords Obscure the Meaning of Operational Art?” (Masters, School of Advanced Military Studies, 1989) House’s monograph uses Naylor’s definitions of strategy and operations to describe pre-WWII context; J. Marc Legare, “Mass: Evolving Tool of the U.S.

Ample research explains how the Army school system prepared interwar students for WWII and how American theory emerged from its European beginnings. However, none of the existing literature provides a detailed account of the contributions Naylor or Robinson made to American theory and doctrine. Providing a historical account of these officers' influences, experiences, and theories about warfare will help us understand how officers participate in evolving theory, updating doctrine, and preparing leaders for warfare during interwar periods.

This section provides context and a survey of current literature written about American military theory, specifically literature describing theory in the interwar period. The second section describes Naylor's background and establishes his credibility as both theorist and practitioner. It explores Naylor's efforts to synthesize European theory, capture the lessons of WWI, and adapt emerging theories to the American context. The third section studies the work of Robinson providing an overview of his background, influences, and influence. It illuminates Robinson's efforts to account for factors associated with an American citizen-army and the growing awareness of the interdependence between national political objectives and military strategy. The fourth section traces the ideas of these two officers into capstone doctrine used in WWII. Specifically, it suggests the inclusion of large portions of their ideas into the 1936 *Principles of Strategy for an Independent Army or Corps in a Theater of Operations*, which fed the 1942 Field Service Regulations (FSR), *Larger Units*. The conclusion provides a summary of how Naylor and Robinson synthesized their education, self-development, and experience to develop operational and strategic thinking in the US Military. This approach will increase understanding of the American military theory during the interwar period and highlight the role officers play in developing military thought.

Operational Artist," (Masters, School of Advanced Military Studies, 1993); Charles O. Hammond, "Does the Culminating Point Exist at the Tactical Level?" (Masters, School of Advanced Military Studies, 1990); Chad M. Nangle, "The American Way of Warfare," (Masters, School of Advanced Military Studies, 2012).

William K. Naylor: Synthesis and Adaptation

Early Career: Education, Training, and Experience

William K. Naylor, like most officers during the early 20th century, spent most of his career on duty at military schools. Commissioning from the Michigan Military Academy in 1884, Naylor spent the first four years of his career with the Volunteer 14th Minnesota Infantry while earning a law degree from the University of Minnesota.¹⁷ Immediately after graduation, Naylor had an opportunity to test his initial education and training while serving as a Lieutenant in the 9th Infantry Regiment during the Philippines campaign of the Spanish-American War. The next year Naylor led a company in the China Relief Expedition after which the Army awarded him a Silver Star for “gallantry in action” near Tientsin, China.¹⁸ After these conflicts, Naylor reported to Leavenworth for the Infantry and Cavalry School of the Line, graduating with distinction in 1904.¹⁹

This opportunity provided a platform for Naylor to reflect on his experience and refine his understanding of military art. As a student, he wrote and delivered a lecture titled “The Infantry in the Defense.” Although the content of this lecture was tactical, its contents suggest Naylor was a serious student of military history and theory.²⁰ Naylor evoked theories of Henri Jomini in his

¹⁷ The Michigan Military Academy was a commissioning source modeled after the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point. Students used the same curriculum and experienced a similar culture and environment. It is likely that they read USMA textbooks written by James Mercur and Gustave Fieberger. See “Development of Orchard Lake, Michigan History,” accessed March 9, 2017, <http://michiganhistory.leadr.msu.edu/orchard-lake-development/>.

¹⁸ During this campaign, 1LT Naylor commanded Company F of the 9th Infantry Regiment during the Battle of Tientsin and the subsequent advance on Peking (Beijing). Alfred E. Cornebise, *The United States 15th Infantry Regiment in China, 1912-1938* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2004), 63-64.

¹⁹ “Beginning in the class of 1904, all officers graduating with a grade of 95 per cent or better were distinguished graduates, and the first five men honor graduates.” Aristides Moreno, “Command and General Staff School,” *Infantry Journal* XXII, no. 1 (January 1923): 22; Naylor’s class standing and experience resulted in him being one of approximately fifteen officers from his class chosen to attend the Army Staff College (ASC), which he graduated in 1905 along with twenty-two others. Five years later, he graduated from the AWC for the first time. He attended the updated versions of both courses in 1921 and 1923, respectively.

²⁰ Naylor’s lecture referenced tactics used by Austrian, Italian, English, French, Russian, and German Armies. To highlight modern effects of technology such as machine guns and trenches, Naylor used illustrations from the American Civil War, Russo-Turkish, Austro-Prussian, Franco-Prussian, Boer, Russo-Japanese, and Balkan Wars.

lecture, but also referred to a Prussian military theorist named Colmar von der Goltz, who became a significant influence on Naylor. Continuing the tradition of early American theorists such as Arthur Conger and Eben Swift, Naylor thought the best application of theory was to develop the military mind through study of history.²¹ Supporting this claim, Naylor closed with a quotation from General George Washington's final annual message:

Whatever arguments may be drawn from particular examples, superficially viewed, a thorough examination of the subject will evince that the art of war is both comprehensive and complicated; that it demands much previous study, and that the possession of it in its most approved and perfect state is always of great moment to the security of a nation.²²

It is worth pausing here to note just how closely entwined Naylor's personal and professional lives were. In December of 1904, Naylor married the daughter of Arthur L. Wagner. Wagner was the Director of the Military Arts Department at Fort Leavenworth from 1892 to 1896.²³ Wagner authored the foundational textbook for the military art course, *Organization and Tactics*, and other important works on strategy that influenced American officers.

Due to Naylor's knowledge of theory and history, and the influence of his father-in-law, Naylor spent five years as an instructor of strategy and military history before World War I. During this period, he authored two publications. The first was a student text to assist students in their study of campaigns of the American Civil War.²⁴ The second, *Operations of the Japanese Supply Services in Manchuria and Korea 1904-1905*, Naylor wrote in preparation for instructing his new

²¹ Brusino, "Naturally Clausewitzian," 1258-1259.

²² William K. Naylor, "The Infantry in the Defense" (Lecture, School of the Line, 1904), 29. Located Combined Arms Research Library, Special Collections.

²³ For a detailed account of Wagner's contributions to the Army during his career see T. R. Brereton, *Educating the U.S. Army: Arthur L. Wagner and Reform, 1875-1905* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000). Regarding the influence of Wagner, T.R. Brereton asserts that "Naylor's important 1921 work, *Principles of Strategy*, closely resembled his father-in-law's *Organization and Tactics* with a heavy emphasis on historical examples and the works of American and European authors." See *ibid.*, 129.

²⁴ William K. Naylor, "The Principles of Strategy and Tactics as Illustrated by the Campaigns of the Civil War" (Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1915).

logistics course.²⁵ This monograph exhibits how Naylor applied theory to the study of history to broaden his understanding of war and improve his ability to evaluate doctrine.

On May 16, 1916, the service schools shut down to support the mobilization and deployment of American Forces to Europe.²⁶ During the war, the Army placed Naylor in division and corps chief-of-staff positions and promoted him to Brigadier General. He received the Army Distinguished Service Medal for his actions as the Chief of Staff of the 33rd Division during the Somme offensive in September and October 1918.²⁷ After the Meuse-Argonne offensive, General Naylor became Chief of Staff, 3rd Corps.

The Interwar Period: The Creative Process of History, Theory, and Doctrine

Following World War I, Naylor became Director of the General Staff School. Reverting to the rank of major, Naylor was part of a faculty team in which every member had served in a division or higher headquarters during World War I.²⁸ Responding to a demand for American authored textbooks, Naylor published *The Principles of Strategy* as a replacement for Colmar von der Goltz's *Conduct of War*. Although some have described this work as essentially a translated copy of von der Goltz, this shortchanges important intellectual developments. Naylor synthesized ideas of French, Prussian, British, and American theorists with American campaigns and battles throughout his work. In the process, uniquely American theories of war, warfare, and operational art began to solidify.

The principles of war inculcated into Army regulations in 1921 were another area of interest for Naylor. He was one of the first to lecture on the principles and *Infantry Journal*

²⁵ Nenninger, "The Fort Leavenworth Schools," 235.

²⁶ W. K. Naylor, "Annual Report, 1919-1920" (Fort Leavenworth, KS: General Staff School, 1920), Combined Arms Research Library, U.S.A.C&G.S.S, Annual Reports of the Commandant, 1920-1936.

²⁷ War Department, General Orders No. 59 (1919).

²⁸ Schifferle, *America's School for War*, 66.

published his edited lectures as a three-part series in 1923.²⁹ Naylor further added to this dialogue with his 1923 book, *The Marne Miracle: Illustrating the Principles of War*.³⁰ Naylor served in various command and staff position for the remainder of his career.³¹ However, a 1935 report indicated that Naylor continued to lecture on “the development of American Military Art” until just before his death in 1938.³²

European and American Influences: Synthesis and Adaptation

Despite arguments that American military theory during the interwar period was essentially a translation of European theory, Naylor made significant intellectual developments. His primary contribution was to synthesize European military thought and American experience into a coherent theory of how to study and fight wars at the operational level. Theories exist as a constellation of ideas making it important to identify theorists that influenced Naylor. Naylor’s tendency to omit in-text citations makes this difficult, but he explicitly acknowledged the influence of Colmar von der Goltz, Emilien Cordonnier, and Victor Derrecagaix. Naylor also provided a list of theorists and published works that he drew on for ideas. This list includes an additional six Prussian, three French, seven British, and three American books on war.³³

²⁹ William K. Naylor, “The Principles of War,” *Infantry Journal* XXII, no. 2 (February 1923): 144–63; William K. Naylor, “The Principles of War,” *Infantry Journal* XXII, no. 3 (March 1923): 297–306; William K. Naylor, “The Principles of War,” *Infantry Journal* XXII, no. 4 (April 1923): 416–25.

³⁰ William K. Naylor, *The Marne Miracle: Illustrating the Principles of War* (Washington, DC: United States Infantry Association, 1923). This book was an American analysis of the Marne Campaign of 1914 using the lens of contemporary American operational principles.

³¹ From 1921 until 1924, Naylor alternated between positions on General Staff and service schools. Naylor attended the post-war versions of the General Staff Course and the Army War College in 1921 and 1923 respectively. In 1922 and 1924, he served as the assistant Chief of Staff of the War Department and Director of Intelligence, General Staff.

³² James W. Seltzer, “Cincinnati Chapter Very Active,” *Coast Artillery Journal* 78, no. 2 (April 1935): 147; “New Commander to Arrive Today,” *Indianapolis Star*, December 4, 1933, <https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/105280840/>.

³³ Prussian authored books: *War of Today* by von Bernhardt, *On War* by von Clausewitz, *The Nation in Arms* by von der Goltz, *Letters on Strategy* by Hohenlohe Ingelfingen, *Napoleon as a General* by Count Yorck von Wartenburg, and *Germany in the Next War* by Bernhardt; French authored books: *The Principles of Strategy* by Foch, *La Conduite de la Guerre* by Foch, and *Art of War* by Jomini; British authored books:

Naylor's primary foreign influence was von der Goltz who was widely read and broadly considered an authority on military thought.³⁴ Goltz considered himself a pupil of Clausewitz and was likely the primary indirect source of Clausewitz's ideas into American military thought before World War I.³⁵ In 1896, Naylor's father-in-law commissioned Joseph T. Dickman to translate Goltz's *Conduct of War* for use as a textbook for the service schools.³⁶ Naylor largely kept the format of *Conduct of War* intact when he wrote *Principles of Strategy* as a replacement text in 1921. In fact, Naylor titled his book *Conduct of War* in its 1920 draft form, possibly explaining why Matheny claimed the book was a virtual translation of Goltz.³⁷

Key ideas about the character and conduct of war from Goltz's theories permeate Naylor's writing. Skeptical of international peace movements, Goltz believed war between states was inevitable. Future wars would require the total mobilization of societies, and after victories on the battlefield, war would continue amongst the people. Goltz maintained that the main enemy army is the first objective of war, but recognized its destruction alone would not always result in achieving political aims. Thus, it was necessary to plan for several successive actions before and after the

Organization by Foster, *Operations of War* by Hamley, *Military Operations in Maritime Preponderance* by Callwell, *Germany in Defeat* by de Souza, *Dardanelles Campaign* by Nevinson, and *Campaign in Thrace* by Howell; American authored books: *American Campaigns* by Steele, *Organization and Tactics* by Wagner, and *Military Memoirs of a Confederate* by Alexander. William K Naylor, *Principles of Strategy, with Historical Illustrations* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: General Service Schools Press, 1921), iii.

³⁴ Von der Goltz was a veteran of the Austro-Prussian and Franco-Prussian wars. He was assigned to the General Staff and published several books. His works on modern war were read by German, British, and French officers. He died in Mesopotamia in 1916. Gat, *A History of Military Thought*; Christopher Bassford, *Clausewitz in English: The Reception of Clausewitz in Britain and America, 1815-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Baron Colmar von der Goltz, *Conduct of War*, trans. Joseph T. Dickman, 1896. Reprinted by the Art of War Colloquium at the US Army War College, 1983, ii-iii.

³⁵ Bassford, *Clausewitz in English*, 75, 87, 155.

³⁶ Ibid., 78, 135; Baron Colmar von der Goltz, *Conduct of War*, Foreword; Kretchik, *US Army Doctrine*, 110. Dickman later became the principle author for the first Field Service Regulations published in 1905.

³⁷ Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy*, 51. Naylor, *Principles of Strategy, with Historical Illustrations*; William K. Naylor, *Conduct of War* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: General Service School Press, 1920). The books are almost identical, changes are non-material to organization or main ideas.

decisive battle to convert battlefield success into a political victory.³⁸

Although Goltz largely echoed Clausewitz, he disagreed with the idea that defense was a superior form of war. Goltz and Naylor believed that the offensive was superior if one could coordinate heavy artillery, maintain large strategic reserves, and perfect the strategical or wide envelopment. This firm belief in the offensive carried over naturally into Naylor's work as it was an intellectual match with Naylor's lessons from the AEF in WWI. According to Matheny, Goltz is also the source of Naylor's descriptions of the center of gravity, campaigns, and culmination.³⁹ It is also worth mentioning that Goltz illustrated several of his ideas by referencing the American Civil War, suggesting Americans had more influence on European theorists than typically recognized.⁴⁰

From the French school of military thought, Naylor recognized the influence of Jomini, Cordonnier, Derrecagaix, and Foch. Naylor explicitly stated a chapter on war and finance "follows closely Emilien Louis Victor Cordonnier's *The Japanese in Manchuria*."⁴¹ Naylor primarily drew from a section titled "War and Finance" that explores the interrelationships between finance and war preparation, the conduct of war, and ending war. He demonstrated that the nature of professional armies and size and scale of conflict had made wars increasingly costly.⁴² Naylor updated the section with data from WWI and used it to challenge the anti-preparedness movement arguing that the dollars spent during two years in WWI could have funded a larger professional army for 38 years.⁴³ This infers that Naylor believed a larger standing army might have either

³⁸ Gat, *A History of Military Thought*; Gunther E. Rothenberg, "Moltke, Schleiffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopment," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 296–325.

³⁹ Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy*, 50–55.

⁴⁰ Baron Colmar von der Goltz, *Conduct of War*, 5, 12, 13, 19, 53, 75.

⁴¹ Naylor, *Principles of Strategy, with Historical Illustrations*, iii; Emile Louis Victor Cordonnier, *The Japanese in Manchuria, 1904*, trans. C.F. Atkinson, vol. 1 (London: Hugh Rees, n.d.) v–vi. The authorized translation of this work by a British military officer, notes that the author drew freely on the journals of British General Sir Ian Hamilton.

⁴² Cordonnier, *The Japanese in Manchuria, 1904*, 1:57–69.

⁴³ Naylor, *Principles of Strategy, with Historical Illustrations*, 83–91.

prevented the WWI or shortened its duration. Reinforcing beliefs already held by Naylor, Cordonnier described strategy as the use of the means policy provides it to achieve political aims in wars of total mobilization.⁴⁴

Victor Bernard Derrecagaix was another source of French, and ironically, German influence on Naylor.⁴⁵ He wrote *Modern War* to make sense of the devastating French loss to Prussia in 1870-1871.⁴⁶ Derrecagaix was originally a promoter of Jomini, but quickly became a proponent of Clausewitz and often quoted Goltz.⁴⁷ Derrecagaix's description of projects of campaigns and projects of operations influenced Naylor and carried over to his work.⁴⁸ Again proving that European theorists were studying the American Civil War, Derrecagaix described Sherman's March to the Sea Campaign to illustrate the uses of railroads for lines of communications and the concept of changing lines of communications during operations.⁴⁹ Both of these ideas appeared in Naylor's work as early as 1916.

In addition to European theorists, Naylor also read American military theory in books, professional journals, training texts, and doctrine. During his institutional education, he likely became familiar with James Mercur's *Elements of the Art of War* (1889) and John Bigelow's *The Principles of Strategy* (1894).⁵⁰ Additionally, in the introduction to *Principles of Strategy*, Naylor listed three American books that he drew ideas from; Matthew F. Steele's two-volume *American*

⁴⁴ Cordonnier, *The Japanese in Manchuria, 1904*, 1:70.

⁴⁵ Gat, *A History of Military Thought*, 389–90. Derrecagaix was a veteran of the French General Staff during Franco-Prussian war of 1870. He later became a General and Deputy Chief of the Ecole de guerre in Paris in the mid-1880s. During his assignment, he wrote *La Guerre Moderne* (translated to English in 1885 as *Modern War*.)

⁴⁶ Victor Derrecagaix, *Modern War*, trans. C.W. Foster (Washington: James J. Chapman, 1888), vii–viii, 18.

⁴⁷ Gat, *A History of Military Thought*, 389–90.

⁴⁸ Matheny, "The Development of the Theory and Doctrine of Operational Art in the American Army, 1920-1940." 51.

⁴⁹ Derrecagaix, *Modern War*, 324–31.

⁵⁰ Michael R. Matheny, "The Roots of American Operational Art," 4, accessed January 26, 2017, http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/army-usawc/modern_operations.pdf.

Campaigns (1922), E.P. Alexander's *Military Memoirs of a Confederate: A Critical Narrative* (1907), and Wagner's *Organization and Tactics*.

John Bigelow Jr. was a graduate of the USMA and a veteran of the Indian Wars, the Spanish-American War, and World War I.⁵¹ Although Bigelow was not a school instructor, he frequently wrote about strategy and tactics. Much of Bigelow's work resembled the concepts of military bases and lines of operation common to followers of Jomini. However, Bigelow wrote to extract the methods used by Generals William T. Sherman and Ulysses S. Grant in the US Civil War. He also explained strategy in an American context, making adjustments for the realities of less developed theaters of war and war amongst the people. In his words, "It is the purpose of the author of this book to discuss the subject of strategy in the light of American warfare, and thus furnish instructions for Americans, not only in the theory of the subject but also in the military history and geography of their own country."⁵² Naylor continued this effort two decades later. Bigelow's ideas about operating independently of a base, changing a base during operations, and the utility of designs and plans of operations to ensure that military actions accomplish the political objectives resonate throughout Naylor's work.⁵³ Drawing on the American Civil War Bigelow defined three types of strategy. Regular Strategy, aimed at isolating the enemy from his supplies; tactical strategy, aimed at achieving numerical superiority during battle; and political strategy, aimed at

⁵¹ During the Indian Wars Bigelow fought at the Battle of Tularosa against the Apache in 1880 and the campaign to capture Geronimo that ended in 1886. During the Spanish-American War, he was involved in three battles as part of 2nd Brigade, 10th Cavalry Division earning a Silver Star and the Purple Heart for his actions at San Juan Hill in Cuba. Interestingly, Lieutenant John J. Pershing assumed command of Bigelow's troop after the latter was wounded a fourth time. After returning from Cuba, Bigelow retired and became an author and foreign language instructor at the Michigan Institute of Technology. During WWI, Bigelow reentered the service and served in the history divisions of the War Department. For additional information about John Bigelow Jr. see the following; Marcos E. Kinevan, *Frontier Cavalryman: Lieutenant John Bigelow with the Buffalo Soldiers in Texas* (El Paso, TX: Texas Western Press, 1998); Carol Reardon, *Soldiers and Scholars: The US Army and the Uses of Military History, 1865-1920* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1990).

⁵² John Bigelow, *The Principles of Strategy, Illustrated Mainly from American Campaigns* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), 6.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 7, 262, 265.

embarrassing the enemy government. Much of his description of regular strategy focused on logistics required by larger armies.⁵⁴ Resonating with Naylor's ideas about potential military objectives, Bigelow wrote that while it was necessary to defeat the enemy's main army, success might not be sufficient to achieve the outcome of the war. One must also be ready to attack the enemy government and, if necessary, the general population of the enemy state.⁵⁵ Foreshadowing Naylor and Robinson, Bigelow also described the American challenge associated with building and fielding a citizen-military after war has commenced.⁵⁶

Matthew Steele was another widely read soldier that influenced Naylor. Steele was also a veteran of the Indian Wars and the Spanish-American War.⁵⁷ He was an instructor at Leavenworth and the AWC between 1903 and 1909.⁵⁸ Naylor likely took classes from Steele and certainly read Steele's *American Campaigns*, used at West Point and Leavenworth until after World War II.⁵⁹ Naylor would later borrow the idea from Steele that "the study of the military history of one's own country is of greatest benefit."⁶⁰

American Theories of War, Operational Art, and Warfare

In both the *Principles of Strategy* and "The Principles of War," Naylor creatively synthesized various parts of European theory through the lens of the American experience and strategic context. In the former, Naylor provided two definitions of war as a point of departure. The

⁵⁴ Bigelow, *The Principles of Strategy, Illustrated Mainly from American Campaigns*, 105-123.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 222-232.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 259.

⁵⁷ In the latter, he was an aid to General Wheeler during the Santiago Campaign including the Battle of San Juan Hill and then served as a major in the Philippine Campaign.

⁵⁸ Matthew Forney Steele, "Matthew Forney Steele Papers, 1899-1907, 1920-1952," October 8, 2008, <https://library.ndsu.edu/repository/handle/10365/327>.

⁵⁹ "Military History: Is It Still Practicable?," accessed January 9, 2017, <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/luvaas.htm>.

⁶⁰ Naylor, "The Principles of War," April 1923, 424.

first, Naylor quoted, was that war, “is the endeavor to gain by violence an object which cannot be attained by other means.” The second was an American doctrinal definition from 1863, which stated, “public war is a state of armed hostility between sovereign nations or governments.”⁶¹ Three of Naylor’s ideas about war can be inferred from his use of these definitions. War is a phenomenon occurring between sovereign states, it is violent, and it is a political instrument wielded by states to pursue political objectives. Naylor provided his own definition in 1923 writing, “War is the court of last resort whereby international difficulties, politically and commercially, are finally adjudicated.”⁶² Two things are important about this definition. The first is that Naylor captured the international character of war by not reducing it to a conflict between two actors. Second, Naylor’s description suggests he saw war as a means to resolve not only political, but also economic disputes. Naylor concluded this section echoing Clausewitz’s notion that each war is a particular phenomenon of its own, and that one must understand the unique circumstances of a particular war to be able to apply general principles of war.⁶³

Naylor described a constraining effect of politics on war. Once war is declared, Naylor wrote, “we should like to have everything carried out according to the demands of the military situation.” Taken out of context, this might lead one to believe that Naylor agreed with Moltke regarding the undesirability of political interference with military operations. However, Naylor describes a reality in which political demands always constrain military operations in war. Naylor argued successful commanders must anticipate these constraints and plan accordingly. He also noted, “The Supreme Commander is subject to more non-military influence than any other part of the command, and as one approaches the front the application becomes less and less affected, and we find the corps and divisions operating under what might be called purely military principles.”⁶⁴

⁶¹ Naylor, *Principles of Strategy, with Historical Illustrations*, 30–32.

⁶² Naylor, “The Principles of War,” February 1923, 147.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 148–49.

A theory of warfare should explain how an Army intends to fight in the next war and how it plans to ensure its fighting contributes to achieving the ultimate aim of the war. In *Principles of Strategy* Naylor provided a concise literature review of classical and contemporary definitions of strategy before declaring that Wagner provided the best definition. Wagner defined strategy as, “the art of moving an army into the theater of operations, with a view of placing it in such a position, relative to the enemy, as to increase the probability of victory, increase the consequence of victory, and lessen the consequences of defeat.”⁶⁵ This definition implies that Naylor’s use of the word strategy describes a process of using campaigns and operations to achieve the aims of war.⁶⁶

Naylor borrowed from Goltz and Derrecaigaix to describe his conception of how war planning should work.⁶⁷ “In the study of a possible war between one country and another, one of the first things if not the first, is to make a careful study of the probable theater of war, the resources of the enemy, and the adoption of a possible *project of operations*.”⁶⁸ From this study, one derives a choice of lines of operations and various combinations of the campaign.⁶⁹ His choice of the word ‘combinations’ indicated an understanding that planners would have to arrange multiple tactical actions in time, space, or purpose to pursue the aims of the war.⁷⁰

Making this case more forcefully, Naylor explained that there will be groups of actions, in the

⁶⁵ Naylor, *Principles of Strategy, with Historical Illustrations*, 40.

⁶⁶ Ash Irwin of the Strategic and Combat Studies Institute (Great Britain) describes campaign planning as the business of operational art what you actually do, see Ash Irwin, *The Levels of War, Operational Art and Campaign Planning* (Camberley: Strategic and Combat Studies Institute, 1993), 10, 24.; Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, 2-1. Current joint doctrine defines operational art as, “the cognitive approach by which commanders and staffs develop strategies, campaigns, and operations to organize and employ military forces by integrating ends, ways, and means.”

⁶⁷ Naylor, *Principles of Strategy, with Historical Illustrations*, 18–19.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁶⁹ Naylor, *Principles of Strategy, with Historical Illustrations*, 14.

⁷⁰ Naylor also uses the word combinations when discussing a continuum between offensive and defensive operations indicating that offensive defensive approaches are not mutually exclusive and that he sees them as being used simultaneously in varying combinations.

same theater of war that follow each other in logical order. This group of actions comprises an operation and the plan is the plan of operations.⁷¹ Hinting at his perception of the immense scale of modern warfare, Naylor uses an illustration from World War I to discuss that Germany had separate plans of operations for the Eastern and Western fronts and that there was a higher-level plan of campaign that synchronized operations.⁷²

Naylor's visualization of future American warfare captured a unique mix of experience, historical reflection, and social trends. Naylor believed large units of American citizen soldiers would fight wars of an expeditionary nature as part of a joint force and likely fight with allies. He believed Americans would need the ability to endure through multiple operations to win victory. For an indication of Naylor's ideas about the size of deployed armies consider the following statement. "In case the great size of the entire land force of a state necessitates the formation of several groups ... several of these bodies will receive instructions looking to mutual actions."⁷³ The massive size of the armies Naylor envisioned led him to consider the possibility of simultaneous offensive and defensive operations foreshadowing concepts like full spectrum operations and decisive action.

Naylor, perhaps influenced by Goltz's emphasis on endurance, thought about how logistics systems influenced outcomes of operations. Naylor quoted the often-repeated Napoleon maxim regarding the importance of studying the campaigns of the great captains to obtain the secrets of the art of war, and stated that this maxim is, "doubly appropriate for the supply officer."⁷⁴ He argued the nature of supplying an Army in the field precludes the utility of rigid rules and principles.

⁷¹ Naylor, *Principles of Strategy, with Historical Illustrations*, 18.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 18.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁷⁴ Naylor, *Operations of the Japanese Supply Services in Manchuria and Korea, 1904-5*, 1.

Therefore one can only learn logistics of an army from the study of past campaigns. This contrasts assertions that Naylor was a fierce advocate of warfare as science and accepted principles as dogma.⁷⁵

Indicative of the growing overseas character of the American Army, Naylor expanded the concept of basing arguing the classical definition of a base of operations as a geographical line from which to operate was no longer sufficient by 1921.⁷⁶ Naylor asserted that realities of supply rather than commanders are the primary cause of sluggish campaigns. Naylor wrote, “the supply factor had become more than ever one of the most important to be dealt with by the supreme command in considering plans of campaign.”⁷⁷

Naylor adapted ideas about railroad communications to undeveloped theaters like the American west. He showed increasing interest in the use of rivers as bases of operations and lines of communication. Quoting von der Goltz, Naylor wrote, “Of two belligerent powers, the one stronger by sea retains, under all circumstances his rear free and his communications with the outer world open, and is thus able to bring means of resistance from all quarters.”⁷⁸ Adapting this theory to the Civil War, Naylor observed that river control allowed McClellan to transfer his base multiple times during the Peninsula campaign.

Continued reflection on the relationship between logistics and operations pushed him to consider cooperation between the Army and the Navy presaging concepts such as joint operations.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Melody, “The Principles of War and Campaign Planning: Is There a Connection?,” 17; Alger, *The Quest for Victory*, 134–42.

⁷⁶ Naylor, *Principles of Strategy, with Historical Illustrations*, 20. Naylor argued that in modern war, the base of operations identifies the zone from which the Army gets its supplies and the base of supply refers to the home country or what we now call the industrial base.

⁷⁷ Naylor, *Operations of the Japanese Supply Services in Manchuria and Korea, 1904-5*, 18.

⁷⁸ Naylor, “The Principles of Strategy and Tactics as Illustrated by the Campaigns of the Civil War.” Peninsula Campaign Section.

⁷⁹ Students of the School of the Line in 1904 and 1905 often attended lectures by distinguished visitors. One such lecture was “Influence of Navy on Land Operations” by LTCDR William L. Rogers from the National War College.” Naylor was also reading the works of Alfred Thayer Mahan who he references in most of his work. But beyond these direct influences, Naylor was in a position to theorize about joint

Naylor credited Mahan with describing the interdependence between command of the sea and national power, but argued that contemporary theory failed to explore the relationship between naval and land forces in operations.⁸⁰ Naylor theorized about six “*great assistances*” the Navy could provide to the Army: clearing the sea of enemy vessels, troop movements, reducing requirements for coastal defense, advancing or changing the base, blockading an enemy, and protecting a flank in battle.⁸¹

Many of Naylor’s concepts bear a resemblance to intellectual tools used by current operational planners such as Elements of Operational Art.⁸² Using different terms and having slightly nuanced interpretations, Naylor wrote about end state and conditions, center of gravity, decisive points, lines of operations and lines of effort, basing, tempo, phasing and transitions, culmination, operational reach, and risk. He also theorized about the importance of operational logistics, communications and mobility in undeveloped theaters, and joint operations that remain important planning concepts today.

Oliver P. Robinson: Evolution of American Interwar Theory

Education, Training, and Experience

Like Naylor, Oliver P. Robinson spent a significant amount of time at Leavenworth. Robinson graduated the Army Signal School in 1911 and worked as an instructor until 1914 when he became an Honor Graduate of the School of the Line. As a member of the 1914 class, Robinson became a “Morrison Man” studying influential instructor John F. Morrison’s “five parts of tactics”

operations because of a combination of intellectual curiosity, an exposure to new ideas, operational experience, historical reflection, and having the time and responsibility as an instructor to reflect and capture his thoughts into a textbook for students. See Nenner, “The Fort Leavenworth Schools,” 208.

⁸⁰ Naylor, *Principles of Strategy, with Historical Illustrations*, 328.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 330–35.

⁸² Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016).

and learning via the applicatory method. In addition to reading European theory, his education included reading American authored problem-solving books and reports of American observers on foreign wars.⁸³ In 1914, Robinson's class graduated early to participate in the Mexican interventions, providing him his first experience with larger formations.⁸⁴

Robinson performed well among his peers and attended the Army Staff College (ASC) the following year. Upon completion of the staff college, Robinson returned as an instructor at the Infantry school until 1917. As the United States prepared to enter World War I, Robinson was ordered to the War Department General Staff and later assigned as the Chief of Staff for 8th Division. In this capacity, Robinson served as Chief of Staff for the AEF in Siberia from 1918-1919. His experience with AEF in Siberia was obviously different from those who served with the AEF in Europe, but it provided large unit experience that informed his later theorizing and doctrinal work.

Post-war, Robinson taught military history and strategy at the Command and General Staff College (CGSC). Afterwards, he attended the Army War College (AWC) in 1928 and served as Professor of Military Science and Tactics at Indiana University. In 1928, Robinson published *The Fundamentals of Military Strategy*. *Fundamentals* was published by the US Infantry Association and was intended not for instruction in Army schools, but ostensibly for the citizen-soldiers that would swell officer ranks in event of war.⁸⁵ In the book's foreword, Army Chief of Staff Charles P. Sumerall wrote

It must be remembered that every officer may qualify himself for high command or staff assignment regardless of his rank. The study of strategy is, therefore, appropriate to all grades. There is no more effective way to acquire sound judgment and logical reasoning in

⁸³ Nenninger, "The Fort Leavenworth Schools," 204.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 320. See Appendix I. 40 graduates.

⁸⁵ Robinson wrote, "In this text, I have made the attempt to place before the busy man in a readable sized book, and in simple form, the substance of the mass of strategic literature available, in order that he may get, in the minimum time, a clear understanding of the part strategy plays in war. Oliver Prescott Robinson, *The Fundamentals of Military Strategy* (Washington, DC: US Infantry Association, 1928), ix.

military problems than a mastery of the enduring elements of strategy.⁸⁶

Robinson describes his book as a “revision and elaboration on lectures,” he delivered at the CGSS on the subject of the principles of war. Sensitive to critiques about whether or not principles can exist in war, Robinson used the word “idea” instead of principle to avoid arguments about the existence of principles of war. Robinson contended that methods for waging warfare change, but that larger ideas about war and warfare do not. Robinson wrote that because methods are different, the application of ideas and theories are also different.⁸⁷ Continuing in the traditions of Clausewitz and Naylor, Robinson argued the best method for studying strategy is through critical analysis of history, although he also acknowledged limitations of this approach.⁸⁸

Key Influencers

Supporting Weigley’s claim that American officers had become widely aware of Clausewitz by the late 1920s, Robinson described *On War* for military strategy as the equivalent of the bible to religious study.⁸⁹ However, it would be an error to carry this claim to the point of believing that Clausewitz was Robinson’s primary influence. The truth is closer to that described by Bruscano’s assertion that Clausewitz was but one voice in a chorus of many voices. As evidence, consider that Robinson provides a list of over three hundred written works as references. Naturally, some voices were louder than others and Robinson specifically mentions several in his preface.

The evidence does not support the common misconception that any one particular thinker unduly influenced Americans during the interwar period. Robinson references Prussian works such as Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen’s *Letters on Strategy*, von der Goltz’s *Conduct of War*, and the works of Friedrich von Bernhardi. He also mentions key French works of Jomini, Cordonnier, and Foch.

⁸⁶ Ibid., iii.

⁸⁷ Ibid., v–vi.

⁸⁸ Ibid., vii.

⁸⁹ Ibid., vii.

British influence came through the writing of Sir Frederick Maurice, W.D. Bird, and George Francis Robert Henderson. American influence came indirectly in instances in which European military writers analyzed the American Civil War in cases like *Stonewall Jackson and the American Civil War* written by Henderson. More importantly, significant American influence came directly from the ideas of Americans. Robinson specifically mentions A.T Mahan, W. K. Naylor, John F. Morrison, Stuart Heintzelman, A.L. Conger, and George Meyers in his preface. Other American authors referenced are Charles R. Howland, author of *Military History of the World War* (1922) and Douglas Johnson.⁹⁰

Not surprisingly, Naylor was a major influence on Robinson and their works contain many similar ideas. What set them apart was Robinson's focus on national preparedness for war, setting conditions for war termination, and inserting a stronger dose of Clausewitz. Another difference between the two is that Robinson was more comfortable drawing lessons from World War I than Naylor had been, perhaps because of the publication of *The Report of the First Army, 1923* and new histories published by Americans Charles Howland and Robert Albion.⁹¹

Theoretical Evolution of American Military Strategy

Robinson's major contribution to American theory came in clarifying levels of war by differentiating between policy, national strategy, military strategy, and tactics. Although Robinson organized his book around the principles of war, it is more informative to view his ideas in a cascading nature from policy down to tactics.⁹²

⁹⁰ Johnson was the author of several books on military history and art: *Battlefields of the World War*, *The Corsican*, *Bull Run Its Strategy and Tactics*, *Topography and Strategy in the War*, and *Napoleon*.

⁹¹ John I. Alger, *The Quest for Victory: The History of the Principles of War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), 141.

⁹² Robinson wrote, "The fundamental ideas or factors with which strategy deals may be grouped under the headings: security, the objective, the offensive, superiority, economy of forces, movement, surprise, simplicity, cooperation, and war planning." Robinson, *The Fundamentals of Military Strategy*, vi.

Robinson's implicit theory of war was not significantly different from Naylor's. He believed that war was a political instrument used to resolve conflicting interests of nations when they become impossible to resolve diplomatically. Robinson's interpretation of Clausewitz was evident in the following statement about the relationship between policy and war. "In short, war is the result of a conflict of national policies and is the effort to maintain by force the national policies that it has not been able to maintain by peaceable means."⁹³

Robinson wrote that national security policy considers the ability of a state to protect itself from internal and external threats and its ability to secure freedom of action to pursue its interests abroad.⁹⁴ Robinson stated that a nation's ability to provide national security is a function of its policies, ability to conduct war, and the character of its people.⁹⁵ He further explained that national resources such as, "armed forces, merchant marine, suitable leaders, statesmen, and a corps of military officers to train the people for war and direct military operations," are vital to a nation's ability to wage war.⁹⁶

Robinson captured an American, or at least democratic, context when he wrote, "The national authorities, when deciding upon strategical security measures, must consider the psychological reaction such measures will have upon the people."⁹⁷ Later, while writing about economy of force, Robinson stated, "Nationally, a security system which bases its defense on a large standing army is wasteful in manpower and national resources and is thus contrary to the idea of economy of force."⁹⁸ He goes on to claim the United States has historically relied on a system of unpreparedness that has been extremely costly during times of war. The solution, argued Robinson,

⁹³ Robinson, *The Fundamentals of Military Strategy*, 56.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 29–30.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 36–37.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 105.

was that economy of force at the national level means maintaining a “reasonable degree of preparedness.”⁹⁹ Elaborating on this idea, Robinson described the ideal American system of war as a nation-at-arms system in which most people were not preparing for war during peacetime. In this system, the regular army was a covering force that buys time for the nation to mobilize its citizen-soldiers and industry. This covering force, maintained even during peace, provided strategic security by fighting for time for mobilization, and operational security by fixing enemies while forces concentrate.

Regarding national mobilization, Robinson exceeded Naylor at exploring the implications of the increasing scale of war. At the national strategy level, Robinson explained, cooperation required that all government agencies and all people unite in support of the “war-making machine,” once policy becomes war.¹⁰⁰ Expanding this further, he explained, “cooperation requires that the component parts of the civil government and the armed forces, the army and the navy, as well as these agencies themselves, work harmoniously with and in support of each other.” This disputes arguments by Weigley who claims American officers saw strategy as narrowly military until after the Cold War.¹⁰¹

Showing refined understanding of the relationship between political and military objectives Robinson also separated national and military objectives. He charged the soldier with understanding the national objective, international relations, and military principles. As the military advisor to the public official, the soldier needed understand how the national interest and nature of the conflict would shape the forces employed and intensity of the effort. Going further, Robinson wrote that the commander must also understand how the military situation affects political affairs.¹⁰² Very

⁹⁹ Ibid., 105.

¹⁰⁰ Robinson, *The Fundamentals of Military Strategy*, 153.

¹⁰¹ Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*, xi.

¹⁰² Robinson, *The Fundamentals of Military Strategy*, 58–60.

insightfully, Robinson realized that politics not only guides war, but war also guides politics. This was expressed in his argument that the success or failure of military operations may result in changes in national objectives which could increase or decrease during a conflict.¹⁰³

Further complicating the art of strategy, Robinson, recognized that after World War I, the scale of future wars would require alliances with other nations. As such, he explored the difficulties associated with Allied warfare. Closely paraphrasing Henry Cabot Lodge, Robinson wrote, “The successful management of allies and allied forces is one of the severest tests of statesmanship and military leadership.”¹⁰⁴ Understanding that nations would have different policy aims, he explained that cooperation, “means agreeing to a course of action even if this means a compromise.” This could lead to changes in operational plans and sometimes violate the principles of cooperation and simplicity. Acknowledging impossibility of predicting all changes in political aims and the environment of war, Robinson believed plans should change during a campaign, but not during operations.¹⁰⁵

In his handling of strategy, Robinson used Clausewitz’s definition as a point of departure. Paraphrasing Clausewitz, Robinson wrote, “Strategy is the employment of the battle to gain the end of the war.”¹⁰⁶ Robinson agreed that battle must always be the dominant feature in a discussion of strategy. However, Robinson added that the strategist must also consider all the things leading up to the battle and the use of the threat of battle as part of strategy. Robinson incorporated this idea, by declaring that, “strategy is the use of the ‘operations of war’ to gain the end of the war.”¹⁰⁷ Updating Naylor’s insistence that Americans fight as a joint force, Robinson expanded this to a

¹⁰³ Ibid., 57.

¹⁰⁴ Henry Cabot Lodge, *George Washington* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1917), 234; Robinson, *The Fundamentals of Military Strategy*, 162.

¹⁰⁵ Robinson, *The Fundamentals of Military Strategy*, 1.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 1.

¹⁰⁷ Robinson defines ‘operations of war’ as, “All those things which precede and lead up to the battle and the threat of battle, as well as the battle itself. Ibid., 1–2.

definition of military strategy:

Strategy deals with war or preparation for war. It has to do with the planning for the whole, and the reaping of the results of battles, or threat of battle brought about by all the various combinations, movements, and uses of *all* the armed forces of a power or of *all* the forces in a given theater of operations.¹⁰⁸

Robinson then bridged the essence of current definitions of military strategy and operational art by explaining that, “It is the purpose of strategy to attain the national or political object through the complete, partial or threatened achievement of the military aim, under existing political, economic, and military conditions.” Describing operational art, Robinson wrote, “In the theater of operations, cooperation requires the coordination of the efforts of all the forces for a designated objective.” Scaling down to the tactical level, Robinson described his conception of combined arms maneuver by explaining that the various arms compliment and supplement each other to maximize mobility and striking power. Each arm must understand its part and be trained to play that part.

Building on this link between strategy and tactical actions, Robinson expanded on Naylor’s work about the need for nested and successive objectives. He wrote, “Objectives thus selected must assure the accomplishment of the national purpose or aim (of the war).”¹⁰⁹ The author’s use of the word objectives versus objective is important and connects to the following idea about offensive campaigns.

The strategical offensive consists of the employment of aggressive military effort for the direct object of the war. It is not confined to one single act, as war does not consist of a single instantaneous blow, and it is not homogenous as a whole but is incessantly mixed up with the defensive. The strategical offensive is therefore, a perpetual alternating and combining of attack and defense.¹¹⁰

Robinson provided a list of possible military objectives from which the commander might choose: the hostile forces, important strategical points (material or moral), transportation centers, fortified

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 56.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 77.

places, communications junctions, enemy resources, and capital cities.¹¹¹ Maintaining some of the same historical examples used by Naylor, Robinson discussed operations aimed at the destruction of enemy war resources.¹¹² Considering American history in Mexico and the American Civil War as well as the European experience during the Franco-Prussian War, Robinson wrote, “The attainment of the national objective is assured when public opinion of the hostile state forces the government to sue for peace on terms of unconditional surrender.”¹¹³

At the operational level, Robinson argued that the principle of *economy of force* is easy to understand, but that its application requires, “the real genius of the military man.” Differing from Naylor and aligning with Clausewitz, he believed defense was the stronger form of war and that a *strategical defense* was the foundation of the principle of economy of force. Robinson believed one should use the strengths of the defense to attain superiority at the point of attack.¹¹⁴ This allowed field forces to avoid decisive engagement until conditions were more favorable and promised a reasonable chance of success. The conditions Robinson referred to were aid from other governments, favorable balance of power due to losses of the enemy, securing of a more advantageous position, and the arrival of new forces. Although Gideon Rose argues that Americans have often failed to think clearly about how wars end, Robinson clearly did.¹¹⁵ Robinson stated that in defeat, a *strategical defense* used to maintain an Army in being could allow a belligerent to secure more favorable peace terms.¹¹⁶ Along these lines, he highlighted the Japanese failure to

¹¹¹ Robinson, *The Fundamentals of Military Strategy*, 70.

¹¹² Ibid., 70, “The use by Grant of Sherman’s Army, in 1864, is an illustration of an operation against the enemies resources. On April 4, 1864, Grants instructions to Sherman were: You, I propose to move against Johnston’s Army, to break it up, and to get into the interior of the country as far as you can, inflicting all the damage you can against their war resources.”

¹¹³ Ibid., 57.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 106.

¹¹⁵ Gideon Rose, *How Wars End: Why We Always Fight the Last Battle*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 4.

¹¹⁶ Robinson, *The Fundamentals of Military Strategy*, 107.

destroy the Russian Navy in the Russo-Japanese War which left the loser with a “potent weapon to be used at the peace negotiation table.”¹¹⁷

Acknowledging how technological context of his times was changing warfare, Robinson described how land, naval, and air forces could work together to increase overall effectiveness. Robinson described security as a function of the composition the columns to include air, cavalry, infantry, and intelligence. Accepting the growing complexity of military technologies and operations, he also indicated the need for an information service designed to manage intelligence collection, which he claims, was the essential element of security.¹¹⁸

Despite the increasing complexity of warfighting, Robinson added the idea of simplicity to the discussion of cooperation. “Simplicity has to do with the basic idea or plan, while cooperation deals with the execution of that idea or plan.” This relationship supports historian John Alger’s argument that the US principle of simplicity was a reaction to the long and complex nature of orders written by the French, and the Americans themselves, in World War I.¹¹⁹ Robinson’s conception of *simplicity* applied not only to planning, but also to mission command and organization of field forces. He wrote of the need for adequate staffs, simple chains of command, and reasonable spans of control. Robinson argued for the necessity of army groups, armies, and necessary intermediate commands to ensure cooperation. He also discussed the importance of universal doctrine and training to achieve similar ideas and approaches to war as the basis for effective cooperation.¹²⁰

Tying all of these concepts together and providing the method to apply them during conflict were the range of plans that support strategy and operations. Increasing the level of detail regarding

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 71–75.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 30, 31, 36–37, 48–50, 53, 55.

¹¹⁹ John I. Alger, *The Quest for Victory: The History of the Principles of War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), 140.

¹²⁰ Robinson, *The Fundamentals of Military Strategy*, 155–60.

plans, Robinson discussed various levels of planning and steps for each. In the estimate of the situation, Robinson described the broad understanding of the possible operational environment including considerations of politics, international relations, and economics, military geography, and climate.¹²¹ Next Robinson outlined the steps for preparing war plans: determination of the mission, the joint plan, the Army plan, General headquarters plan, theater of operations plan, and plans of campaigns or operations of armies in the field.¹²² In his depictions, Robinson linked the operational concepts of Naylor with national policy and national military strategy elucidating the idea that national policy, national aims, and means available drive the determination of mission. Importantly, he explained that these variables determine where, to what extent, and to what purpose leaders apply military forces in pursuit of those policies.

Working down through the joint and service plans, he described a theater of operations plan. This plan is, “the plan of the commander of the theater of operations for utilizing the forces immediately or subsequently available for carrying out the mission assigned to him.” This plan required establishing the battlefield framework, allocating troops to its various parts, organizing forces, and assigning missions to each component. It also included determining the location of strategic reserves and implications of the interaction of operations with the civilian population. Finally, Robinson concluded with plans for armies in the field connecting with Naylor’s start point.

The evidence suggests that Robinson’s primary intellectual contribution to American military theory was to illustrate the differences between national and military through the lens of principles of war. This process, in large part, resulted in taking Naylor’s synthesis of European theory and linking it to the realities of American society and strategic context. Robinson also made the implications of changing technologies, the lessons of World War I, and the increased scale of warfare explicit to a generation of officers through his lectures and writing.

¹²¹ Ibid., 177–84.

¹²² Ibid., 185–88.

Influence of Theory: Following the Thread

Theory into Doctrine

To understand how the ideas of Naylor and Robinson made it into US Army doctrine before World War II it is necessary to understand how military theory works. Theorists examine available history and generate theories to explain observed phenomena in their area of interest. Their theories evolve through a process of synthesis, reflection, and discourse amongst other theorists and practitioners. It follows that it should be possible to identify the thread running between theories over a period of time. The epigraph excerpted from Russell F. Weigley's *The American Way of War* leaves a breadcrumb trail of American military thought listing Naylor and Robinson. A later footnote surmised that the evolution of the term strategy in the American military up to the Second World War can be traced from Naylor to Robinson and then to the 1936 General Service School Publication *The Principles of Strategy for an Independent Corps or Army in a Theater of Operations*.¹²³ Walter Kretchik has described the process of tracing the evolution of doctrine and ideas as a "thorny proposition," complicated by the existence of unnamed authors, difficulty of judging the amount of influence of one or more writers, and an incomplete understanding of the context framing the writing of specific manuals.¹²⁴ However, it is reasonable to assume that Naylor and Robinson captured the consensus of the collective thought of the Leavenworth crowd during the interwar period, and by codifying the ideas into their books facilitated discourse and acceptance.

¹²³ Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*, Introduction, 479.

¹²⁴ Kretchik, *US Army Doctrine*, 6.

Field Service Regulations, United States Army (1923)

To understand the development of a particular doctrine, it is important to have an appreciation of doctrine that came before it.¹²⁵ In 1923, the Army updated its capstone doctrine based on its experiences in World War I. Retired General and historian William Odom stated the 1923 *Field Service Regulations (FSR)*, “was the single best available description of how the Army believed it should wage war.”¹²⁶ That the Army did not replace it for sixteen years indicates that it accurately captured the predominant ideas of American officers regarding warfare. *FSR 1923* was the first capstone doctrine written after Naylor published *Principles of Strategy* in 1921. As such, the FSR serves as a good place to start looking for Naylor’s resonance with American doctrine.

The development of instruction at Army schools and Army doctrine proceeded in a parallel fashion during the interwar period. In both areas, there was a general movement to replace European ideas and practices with books and doctrine written by Americans.¹²⁷ The opening paragraph of Naylor’s *Principles of Strategy* indicates this was, in fact, one of his primary motivations for writing his book.¹²⁸ Naylor wrote the textbook for instruction in both the School of the Line (focused on the tactical division) and the General Staff School (focusing on corps and armies).¹²⁹ Simultaneously, the Army Chief of Staff, General Pershing, pushed for an Americanization of doctrine. Odom identified Army schools as one of three primary sources for

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ William O. Odom, *After the Trenches: The Transformation of US Army Doctrine, 1918-1939* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1999), 7.

¹²⁷ Ibid.; US Army Command and General Staff College, *Annual Report of H.A. Drum, Commandant the General Service Schools, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1921* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: General Service School Press, 1921).

¹²⁸ Naylor, *Principles of Strategy, with Historical Illustrations* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: General Service Schools Press, 1921), i.

¹²⁹ W.K. Naylor, “Annual Report, 1919-1920,” (Fort Leavenworth, KS: General Staff School, 1920), U.S.A.C.&G.S.S., Annual Reports of the Commandant, 1920-1936, 15. Naylor recommended renaming the latter to the School of Command and General Staff, Corps and Army.

FSR 1923 and the “focal point for the development of new doctrine.”¹³⁰ It is feasible that doctrine writers injected Naylor’s ideas, and the ideas of Leavenworth faculty he amalgamated, into the doctrine designed to govern large unit operations.

Although the preponderance of *FSR 1923* is tactical, a chapter on combat discusses war and combat more generally. The chapter begins with a list of general principles of combat, several of which bear a resemblance to ideas presented in Naylor’s *Principles of Strategy (1921)* and “The Principles of War” (1923). In 1921, Naylor wrote that the first principle of strategy is to, “make the hostile main army the objective.”¹³¹ He reiterated the point in 1923, writing, “having determined that in the event of war the object of a combatant is to destroy the main forces of the enemy, we now come to the point of selecting objects for the various detachments of the army.”¹³² Compare this to the opening paragraph of *FSR 1923*, “The ultimate objective of all military operations is the destruction of the enemy’s armed forces by battle.”¹³³

The War Department published principles of war for the first time in *Training Regulations 10-5* in 1921. Naylor was one of the first officers to lecture on and write about the principles. He published his lectures in the *Infantry Journal* in 1923. It should not be surprising that the remainder of the general principles read almost like a summary of his lectures describing principles of the offensive, mass, economy of force, surprise, security, and simplicity. Beyond the principles, other similarities exist.

¹³⁰ Odom identifies three major sources for *FSR 1923*: previous FSRs, lessons from WWI examination boards, and the schools. Odom, *After the Trenches*, 26, 29; Kretchik summarizes the effects of the Elihu Root reforms on doctrinal production writing, “the War department now controlled two essential elements of doctrinal production: an educational system to furnish officers with intellectual grist and an army staff “brain trust” to write the manuals.” Kretchik, *US Army Doctrine*, 109.

¹³¹ Naylor, *Principles of Strategy, with Historical Illustrations*, 49.

¹³² Naylor, “The Principles of War,” February 1923, 151.

¹³³ “Field Service Regulations, United States Army, 1923” 11, accessed January 14, 2017, <http://cgsc.cdmhost.com/cdm/ref/collection/p4013coll9/id/126>.

Naylor published *The Marne Miracle* in 1923 in which he evaluated Moltke's performance in the first battle of the Marne in 1914. Naylor claimed that Moltke misapplied the principle of cooperation by attempting to achieve concentration spontaneously among his subordinate commanders. Demonstrating an AEF perspective, Naylor affirmed that, "cooperation can never replace *unity of command*."¹³⁴ Knowing that one of the critical responsibilities of instructors at Leavenworth was to write American doctrine, it is interesting that the 1923 *Field Service Regulations* contained the statement, "Unity of command is essential to success. All troops assigned to the execution of a distinct task must be placed under one command."¹³⁵ More interestingly, that statement follows the previous paragraph charging the large unit commander with maintaining close personal touch with subordinate units. In many of these cases, it seems *FSR 1923* serves to summarize theoretical ideas collected by Naylor before outlining the science necessary for their practical application.¹³⁶ Naylor's work embodied the ideas of the "key educators" who influenced the blending of theoretical and practical into the 1923 FSR.¹³⁷ Robinson, once Naylor's student and later his successor in the department of military art at Leavenworth, had *FSR 1923* and Naylor's work as a foundation for his work. Supporting this notion, Robinson organized *The Fundamentals of Military Strategy* (1928) around the principles of war.

1930s: Divergent Doctrines and the Competition of Ideas

In *After the Trenches*, Odom described a theoretical split in army doctrine during the 1930s.¹³⁸ During an effort to modernize doctrine, the War Plans Department of the General Staff

¹³⁴ Naylor, *The Marne Miracle; Illustrating the Principles of War*, 183.

¹³⁵ "Field Service Regulations, United States Army, 1923," 4.

¹³⁶ The 1923 FSR was to consist of general principles and concepts, leaving elaboration and rationale for textbooks and instructional materials such as those produced by Naylor and Robinson. See Kretchik, *US Army Doctrine*, 133.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 138.

¹³⁸ Odom, *After the Trenches*, 118–23.

provisionally published *A Manual for Commanders of Large Units (MCLU)* in 1930. Odom accurately describes the *MCLU* as largely a translation of a French large unit manual.¹³⁹ Odom acknowledged that senior leaders of the Army school system objected to the *MCLU*, but did not explore their competing set of ideas about large unit doctrine. The 1936 *Principles of Strategy for an Independent Corps or Army in a Theater of Operations* captures these ideas. This school text bears such a striking resemblance to the works of Naylor and Robinson that some have described it as combination of their work.¹⁴⁰ A side-by-side analysis of the documents suggests that the ideas of Naylor, Robinson, and the Leavenworth incubator influenced the manual writers.

The most obvious evidence is in the similarities of the titles of the works. Another indication is the purpose of the documents. The authors wrote the documents for the student who was being trained to apply principles in the conduct of warfare as a staff officer or commander in a large unit (division or higher). Continuing to move from the general to specific, a comparison of the tables of contents of the three leads one to believe that the first part of the 1936 text was a revision and elaboration of the ideas of Robinson's book and the second part virtually mirrors the organization of Naylor's 1921 book.

In *American Army Doctrine for the Post-Cold War*, John L. Romjue argues that Army doctrine largely ignored the operational level of war and campaign planning. However, he credits the Leavenworth schools with teaching the operational level of war and campaign planning in the 1920s and 1930s under the subject of strategy. As evidence, he cites the 1936 text and provides a

¹³⁹ Ibid., 120.

¹⁴⁰ An AMSP monograph by Jeremy Easley contains a crucial thread linking ideas of Naylor and Robinson to official doctrine used in WWII in a footnote. *The Aleutian Islands Campaign: The Strengths and Weaknesses of Its Planning Process and Execution*, 2014, 7n14, accessed April 5, 2017 <http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?&verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA612209>. Responding to concerns that planners in WWII might not have used the 1942 version of Field Manual (FM) 100-15 due to its late publication, Easley makes the case that the 1942 FM is the doctrinal codification of the 1936 *The Principles of Strategy for an Independent Corps or Army in a Theater of Operations*. Easley argues that the 1936 Leavenworth textbook is a combination of Naylor's *Principles of Strategy with Historical Illustrations (1921)* and Robinson's *The Fundamentals of Military Strategy (1928)*.

useful cross-reference for current and interwar period terminology of the levels of war. “The Leavenworth school instruction recognized three levels: conduct of war (today’s strategic), strategy (today’s operations), and tactics.¹⁴¹ This stratification appears to be a clarification of Robinson’s structure.

The second chapter of the 1936 text is titled “The Conduct of War in General.” This chapter contains several sections that closely resemble work by Naylor and Robinson including principles of war, military history, future wars, the relation of politics to the conduct of war, the plan of the commander, the military objective, the art of strategy and bases and lines of operations.¹⁴² The future war section described three categories of participation in war including fighting as part of a coalition in a world war. The character of future war required that “unity and cooperation in such wars are based largely on political and not strategic reasons.”¹⁴³ Readers of Robinson’s descriptions of interface between politics and military operations should find this a familiar concept. Next, the text captures a primary difference between French and American views on warfare regarding wars of maneuver versus methodical battle. This is the very essence of the competing philosophies of war underlining the 1930 *MCLU* and the 1936 service school text.¹⁴⁴ The idea that victory in modern war will require more than a single stroke adhered to Naylor’s theory that wars consist of a succession of phases.¹⁴⁵ Like Naylor’s *Principles of Strategy*, the 1936 textbook discussed offense and defense at strategic and tactical levels, discussed the transitions

¹⁴¹ John L. Romjue, *American Army Doctrine for the Post-Cold War* (DIANE Publishing, 1998), 6.

¹⁴² US Army Command and General Staff College, *The Principles of Strategy for an Independent Corps or Army in a Theater of Operations*. (Fort Leavenworth, KS.: The Command and General Staff School Press, 1936).

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁴⁴ Odom, *After the Trenches*, 120–23.

¹⁴⁵ US Army Command and General Staff College, *The Principles of Strategy for an Independent Corps or Army in a Theater of Operations*., 16.

back and forth between the two forms of warfare, and then covered special forms of warfare. While these are broad concepts, the similarity of some passages indicate specific linkages.

The first such linkage is in a paragraph about air raiding in future wars. The 1936 text discusses the concept and theory behind strategic bombardment but warns against the indiscriminate destruction of noncombatants. “Any nation employing such means will be condemned by the civilized world. Air raiding amongst civilized nations will have to be confined to military or semi-military objectives.” Consider the similarity in words and ideas of Robinson in 1928.

No nation will use its air forces to bomb cities, just for the purposes of destroying the morale of the people by instilling them with fear...because *strategy* knows that such action could only bring on the active resentment of the civilized world, a thing no nation can afford.¹⁴⁶

In *Clausewitz in English*, Christopher Bassford identified another unique thread that between Naylor, Robinson, and the 1936 text. Regarding the relationship between political and military leaders, Robinson wrote critically about the negative impact of interfering with military operations. This view, which ran counter to Clausewitz, Bassford argues is, “essentially the same opinion expressed,” by Naylor in 1921 and the General Staff School text in 1936.¹⁴⁷ Other examples of ideas that carry through are ideas about the selection of objectives, the use of specific historical examples to describe the principle of surprise, and the descriptions of various types of plans. Subsequent chapters about offensive and defensive operations share a structure very similar that of Naylor’s work in 1921. Built on the foundations of General Staff School curriculum and textbooks, including the work of Naylor and Robinson, the 1936 text comprised the Leavenworth

¹⁴⁶ Robinson, *The Fundamentals of Military Strategy* (Washington, DC: US Infantry Association, 1928), 4.

¹⁴⁷ Bassford, *Clausewitz in English*, 157; Naylor, *Principles of Strategy, with Historical Illustrations*; US Army Command and General Staff College, *The Principles of Strategy for an Independent Corps or Army in a Theater of Operations.*; Robinson, *The Fundamentals of Military Strategy*.

consensus and represented a conception of warfare that was in competition with the European flavored *MCLU*.

FM 100-5 Field Service Regulations “Operations” (1941) and FM 100-15 Field Service Regulations “Larger Units”(1942)

The War Department published its new capstone manual on operations on May 22, 1941 as a melding of its 1939 tentative version, service discourse, response to German *Bewegungskrieg*, and lessons from the Louisiana maneuvers.¹⁴⁸ Signifying the Leavenworth crowd had considerable influence on its content, the principle author was Edmund L. Gruber, the commandant of the CGSS.¹⁴⁹ The FM 100-5 superseded the tentative 1939 FSRs, providing official institutional approval of the content and mandating the Army to implement its ideas about warfighting.¹⁵⁰ The FM is primarily tactical and well nested with ideas of the advantage of the initiative, the primacy of the offensive, and an objective of annihilating the enemy.¹⁵¹ The first chapter describes the organization of theaters of war and armies similar to those envisioned by Naylor, with a recognition that wars will consist of multiple theaters of operation.¹⁵² Also acknowledging the scale of armies of national mobilization, the manual defines large units as division and larger and includes discussions of corps, armies, and groups that conduct offensive and defensive operations simultaneously.¹⁵³ The FM 100-5 (1941) also captured ideas expressed by Robinson such as the consideration of national strategy and the utility of using defensive operations to buy time for

¹⁴⁸ Kretchik, *US Army Doctrine*, 148.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 142, 314.

¹⁵⁰ “FM 100-5: Field Service Regulations, Operations, 1941,” accessed January 14, 2017, <http://cgsc.cdmhost.com/cdm/ref/collection/p4013coll9/id/24>; Kretchik, *U.S. Army Doctrine*, 5.

¹⁵¹ US Army Command and General Staff College, *The Principles of Strategy for an Independent Corps or Army in a Theater of Operations*; “FM 100-5.”

¹⁵² “FM 100-5,” 1.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 3.

developing favorable conditions to support taking the offensive.¹⁵⁴ Similarities between the 1936 GSS text and the 1942 *FM 100-15 Larger Units* are also telling of the considerable influence of the Leavenworth consensus. A section of *Larger Units* entitled “The Plan of Campaign” is strikingly similar to the 1936 textbook section “The Plan of the Commander.” In fact, both explained, “decisive action results from clear-cut comprehensive plans based on a full utilization of all available strength.”¹⁵⁵ Sections about selections of successive objectives, strategic concentrations, and strategic maneuvers do not deviate significantly from the same descriptions in the 1936 textbook.¹⁵⁶

Doctrinal histories often omit school texts from consideration due the fact that the army has not explicitly stated they are representative of the way the institution anticipates it will conduct warfare or mandated its use. However, for those who argue that the GSS texts did not constitute doctrine consider the following comment from an interwar thesis. “Since our Field Service Regulations were written in 1923 it is thought that the current texts of the Command and General Staff College will be more up to date and, except for the definition already given, will be quoted as the more advanced military thought in our army.”¹⁵⁷ The evidence suggests the 1936 GSS text represented the dominant conception of warfare during the interwar period until the publication of *Larger Units* in 1942 codified many of its ideas.

¹⁵⁴ Kretchik, *US Army Doctrine*, 144, 150.

¹⁵⁵ US Army Command and General Staff College, *The Principles of Strategy for an Independent Corps or Army in a Theater of Operations*, 25; United States and War Department, *Field Service Regulations, Larger Units*. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1942), 11.

¹⁵⁶ United States and War Department, *Field Service Regulations, Larger Units*. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1942).

¹⁵⁷ Franklin L. Rash, *Critical study of the fundamentals involved in the allotment of forces to decisive and secondary missions, with a statement of the principles governing such allotment* (Fort Leavenworth, KS : the Command and General Staff School, 1936), 2, accessed <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/u?p4013coll14,614>.

Influence on the Officer Corps of World War II

The goal of military theory as held by Naylor and Robinson was that officers would use it to learn from history to supplement their own experience and prepare them for war. As such, theory was an ongoing dialogue between theorists, instructors, and practitioners. A survey of all of the interactions between colleagues would be far larger than this project allows, but acknowledging some of the relationships between Naylor and Robinson and their colleagues and students helps to quantify their influence on the officers that fought successfully at the operational level in World War II.

As mentioned previously, Naylor became the director of the General Staff School amongst a group of peers that re-established the Leavenworth school system after World War I. Some of Naylor's distinguished colleagues were Hugh Drum, Stuart Heintzelman, A.L. Conger, and John F. Morrison. Dr. Schifferle wrote the following about this group's influence. "The influence of the first faculty, its production of texts and doctrinal manuals, and its establishment of the curriculum set the standards at the school for the next twenty years."¹⁵⁸ During this period, thirty-three of the thirty-four officers who commanded corps during the Second World War attended courses at Leavenworth.¹⁵⁹ Robinson, a student of this group of instructors, recognized Naylor, Conger, Heintzelman, and Morrison as formative influences while he was a student. Continuing the instructor-student linkage, twenty-four of the corps commanders attended CGSC between 1923 and 1927 when Robinson was an instructor at the school. Among these generals were Omar N. Bradley, Leonard T. Gerow, Troy H. Middleton, and George S. Patton. Another student of this group was Ned B. Rehkopf who later taught strategy at the AWC in the 1930s.¹⁶⁰ While the influence from

¹⁵⁸ Schifferle, *America's School for War*, 99.

¹⁵⁹ Robert H. Berlin, "United States Army World War II Corps Commanders: A Composite Biography," *The Journal of Military History* 53, no. 2 (1989): 147-68.

¹⁶⁰ US Army Command and General Staff College, *Annual Report of Colonel H.A. Drum, Commandant the General Service Schools, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 1921*, 18; Russell Frank Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (New York: Macmillan,

instructor to student is obvious, influence also travels among students.

There are several notable examples of peer-to-peer influence, especially when looking at the relationships between Robinson and those who were influential during the interwar years and World War II. Most notably, Robinson attended the AWC in 1927 and 1928 with Dwight D. Eisenhower where they worked together in a group that authored a report titled “War and Its Principles, Methods, and Doctrines.”¹⁶¹ Few would contest that Eisenhower’s rise to the position of Supreme Allied Commander in World War II marks him as the archetypal Leavenworth success story. Historian Grant Jones, calling attention to the often-understated importance of Eisenhower’s historical and theoretical education, described this co-written paper as “the most theoretical work that (Eisenhower) had a hand in on the subject of the fundamentals of military strategy.”¹⁶² Jones argues that the ideas Eisenhower studied at Leavenworth and the War College became “part of his consciousness for the remainder of his military career.”¹⁶³ Robinson and Eisenhower clearly shared ideas and influenced each other as colleagues and co-authors of this theoretical paper, as indicated by the predominance of Clausewitz in their report.

Bassford also points out that US Navy Captain George J. Meyers was the naval liaison at the AWC while Robinson and Eisenhower were students. Although Bassford found no evidence of cross-fertilization, but Robinson specifically names Meyers as an influence on him at the AWC.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, it is unlikely that both published books on strategy in 1928 without being aware of each other's work. In another example, George Meyers attended and taught at the AWC during the same time as Naylor, between 1921 and 1923 and possibly contributed to some of Naylor’s ideas about

1973), ix.

¹⁶¹ Bassford, *Clausewitz in English*, 160; “War and its Principles, Methods, and Doctrines” (Carlisle Barracks, PA: The Army War College, 1928).

¹⁶² Grant W. Jones, “Education of the Supreme Commander: The Theoretical Underpinnings of Eisenhower’s Strategy in Europe, 1944-1945,” *War & Society* 30, no. 2 (August 2011): 111–13.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 113.

¹⁶⁴ Robinson, *The Fundamentals of Military Strategy*, xi; Bassford, *Clausewitz in English*, 162.

Army and Navy cooperation.¹⁶⁵ It would be difficult to establish definitive linkages between ideas and actions based on these anecdotes; however, it should be clear that institutions of military education are critical sources of theoretical and doctrinal innovation. When staffed and run correctly, they are the nexus between intellectuals, practitioners, students, instructors, and the art and science of war.

Once military instructors return to formations and directly influence their organizations the Army benefits from another mechanism of influence. In 1924, Naylor took command of the 15th Infantry Regiment in China replacing General George C. Marshall who became his Executive Officer.¹⁶⁶ Historians have referred to the 15th Infantry Regiment as the “regiment the stars fell on,” due to the high number of future general officers that rotated through the unit while it was in China.¹⁶⁷ During this assignment, Naylor was exceedingly popular with his subordinates. Articles in *The Sentinel* lauded him for his vast knowledge of military history and his series of lectures on World War I indicating that Naylor continued his life’s work of educating and preparing Soldiers for war.¹⁶⁸

Conclusion: Implications for the Continued Evolution and Use of American Military Theory

The accounts of William K. Naylor and Oliver P. Robinson support the claim that there were American military theorists and significant theory development during the interwar period. Naylor synthesized a broad range of European military thought and theorized about the application of those ideas in modern war. Focused on the operations of large field armies, Naylor theorized

¹⁶⁵ Bassford, *Clausewitz in English*, 162; Weigley, “American Strategy from Its Beginnings through the First World War,” in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, eds. Peter Paret, Gordon Alexander Craig, and Felix Gilbert, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 442.

¹⁶⁶ Cornebise, *The United States 15th Infantry Regiment in China, 1912-1938*, 77–78; Forrest Carlisle Pogue, *George C. Marshall, Vol. 1* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1964), 228, 235, 238.

¹⁶⁷ Cornebise, *The United States 15th Infantry Regiment in China, 1912-1938*, 76.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 63–64.

about concepts that provide the foundation of operational art. Naylor explained that planning large operations required planners to arrange a series of successive operations, each comprised of various combinations of tactical actions, unified under the single purpose of achieving the political aims of the war. Naylor brought French conceptual tools such as lines of operation and basing together with German ideas about objectives, mass, and culmination. He also captured emerging ideas about phasing and transitions while teaching that success in future wars required an emphasis on logistics and cooperation between services.

Building on Naylor's foundation, Robinson sought to explain the linkages between national policy, national military strategy, and campaigns and major operations. His broader views about warfare clarified American understanding of levels of war and the relationship between policy and warfare in the American context. Robinson expanded ideas about cooperation to the national level and to the unique challenges of allied warfare. At the operational level, Robinson anticipated the ways in which technological developments such as air power, chemical weapons, and mechanization would change the conduct of future wars.

In "Naturally Clausewitzian," Bruscano argues, "each of the major powers: France, German, Russia, Britain, and the U.S. interpreted Clausewitz differently based on their strategic context."¹⁶⁹ Similarly, American context influenced Naylor and Robinson's interpretations of the theories they drew from. The books written by Naylor and Robinson, even if one accepts the critique that they were just surveys of current military thought, are thus unique interpretations of war and warfare. Both authors read a wide variety of contemporary theory before choosing pieces and parts that resonated with their understanding of war and warfare and arranging them in unique combinations. Their theorizing took a similar approach to what we expect from an operational artist in the conduct of war. We expect the operational artist to create a unique combination of tactical

¹⁶⁹ Bruscano, "Naturally Clausewitzian," 1254–55.

actions to achieve the larger purpose of the operation given consideration to a concrete context.

Accepting the argument that Naylor and Robinson theorized about warfare, we turn to the factors resulting in their development as theorists. Both became familiar with military theory during their professional military education. This introduction was not merely an esoteric familiarization with well-known theorists, but foundational to the entire educational experience. Throughout their military education, their instructors expected them to apply theoretical ideas and principles to past campaigns to develop professional military judgment and supplement operational experience. They were routinely required to write papers and prepare lectures integrating theory, history, and doctrine in one product versus considering each separately.

Naylor and Robinson both spent a significant portion of their careers as instructors at military schools. This aided in their individual development as theorists, but also allowed the institution to benefit from this intellectual development. Instructor duty provided both officers the time and impetus to review contemporary theory and operations and synthesize relevant ideas into lectures and textbooks. Further, the expectation they would publish books and articles for service journals ensured their thoughts generated dialogue among the Army officer corps.¹⁷⁰ Critiques from the field and interactions with students ensured that their theories remained grounded in reality.

Both theorists also benefitted from assignments to key positions in large formations immediately following periods of military education or instruction. These experiences allowed them to apply their theories to concrete cases. Both officers served in the AEF during WWI as chiefs of staff at the division level or above. These experiences provided them with opportunities to test their theories in action. More importantly, the Army increased its return on investment moving them from instructor duty directly into key staff positions in field forces. The Army expected them

¹⁷⁰ Nenninger, "The Fort Leavenworth Schools," 276.

to have strong intellectual and doctrinal foundations, be effective teachers and trainers, and to increase the overall effectiveness of staffs made up largely of citizen-soldiers. Historians Allan Millet and Williamson Murray contend that evolutionary innovation depends on organizational focus over a sustained period rather than on one particular individual's capacity to guide the path of innovation for a short time.¹⁷¹ If the Army is to continue to evolve its theory and doctrine, these lessons have important implications for officer education and career management.

Dr. Milan Vego, of the Naval War College, observes that many officers have a poor understanding of the importance of military theory and lack knowledge about the relationship between theory and practice.¹⁷² In other words, they do not understand how a firm basis in military theory benefits them. To correct this, professional military education courses should challenge their officers to integrate theory, history, and doctrine in all of their coursework. Going a step further, CGSC could focus the efforts of its students by focusing more individual and group assignments on the application of theory, doctrine, and recent operational experiences to explore solutions for Army Warfighting Challenges and items on the Key Strategic Issues List. As the Army considers changes in talent management systems, we should examine how to change cultural incentives and disincentives to increase the value placed on instructor assignments. For theories to continually evolve and remain useful, we must ensure that we teach our officers how to use theory effectively. Then we must repeatedly challenge them to apply theoretical and doctrinal concepts to anticipated military problems throughout their careers.

Many people think of theory as one book, the proper application of one book, or question whether militaries at various points in time have used the right book. As suggested by the evolution

¹⁷¹ Williamson R. Murray and Allan R. Millett, *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 309.

¹⁷² This is a partial list of benefits developed from Milan Vego's discussion of the practical value of military theory in practice: Milan Vego, "On Military Theory," *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 62 (Quarter 2011): 59, accessed April 7, 2017
<http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?&verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA546600>.

of American interwar theory and illustrated through the ideas of Naylor and Robinson, military theory is a constellation of ideas, all of which prepare military minds to be better strategists and operational artists. Nevertheless, considerations specific to different things at different times bound these theories. Naylor and Robinson brought together many ideas, edited them for Americans, and made the theory work for Americans.¹⁷³ They were intellectually curious officers and consumers of military theory. Their careers serve as illustrative examples of the uses of military theory and the benefits accruing to the officer corps with a firm grasp on it. Both officers used theory to develop and teach ways of thinking, analyzing and assessing fundamental components of war. They also used theory and application of ideas to identify strengths and weaknesses of contemporary doctrine.¹⁷⁴ Both officers continued to emphasize these benefits after the crucible of World War I indicating that they found practical value in a thorough grounding in theory and history. The success of leaders at the division, corps, and army staffs during World War II suggests that education and training grounded in this method is a low cost, high payoff investment. The history of the interwar period shows the importance of creating an officer corps that is educated with theory and encouraged to innovate.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Paraphrased from a conversation with Dr. Thomas Bruscino, December 12, 2016.

¹⁷⁴ Vego, "On Military Theory," 60–61.

¹⁷⁵ Murray and Millett, *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period*, 326.

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