

TRAINING VS. EDUCATION AT THE ARMY WAR COLLEGE: THE BENEFITS OF A RETURN TO THE PAST

A Monograph

by

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ABSTRACT

TRAINING VS. EDUCATION AT THE ARMY WAR COLLEGE: THE BENEFITS OF A RETURN TO THE PAST, by MAJ Robert E. Petty V, U.S. Army, 56.

Secretary of War Elihu Root founded the Army War College (AWC) in 1901, but it was General Tasker Bliss who provided the vision for its operations through the Second World War. When directed to design the curriculum for the AWC, Bliss asked himself three questions; what should the college teach, how should it teach, and how could the Army maximize the value of this new institution? He answered these questions by asserting that the College should work on practical problems that prepared officers for the General Staff or high command, and accomplished this by using war plans as the focus for the hands on training that the College provided to its students. Working in faculty/student committees, students prepared real-world solutions that analyzed the available instruments of national power and how the Army could accomplish its assigned missions. To inculcate the knowledge gained at the AWC throughout the entire Army, AWC students performed staff functions for the Secretary of War and General Staff and the AWC made class lectures available to any visiting officers. The War Plans Division of the War Department also relied on this annual student analysis of real-world war plans to keep them up to date and ensure they stood up to critical analysis.

This method of learning differed significantly from the method used at most military schools both then and now. It did not focus on individual scholarship, instead it focused on creating a collegium, or group of men working together, to solve the Army's most important question: how to prepare for and execute war. In this manner, the AWC groomed officers for World War I and World War II, and this paper seeks to demonstrate a causal link between this form of instruction and the extraordinary success of War College graduates during both World Wars.

After World War II the Department of the Army changed the learning model to an educational model that focused on individual scholarship and attainment of a masters degree. Today's AWC seeks to teach its students theory, history, practice, and communication skills necessary to clearly articulate options for solutions to complex strategic problems and to immediately be of value to any organization. Although the AWC and War College equivalents provide a valuable education under this new model, this paper argues that the Department of Defense should consider establishing a single course that continues to prepare a select group of students in the methods originated by Bliss and modified by AWC Presidents through World War II.

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ACRONYMS

AEF	American Expeditionary Forces
ANSCOL	Army-Navy Staff College
AFSC	Armed Forces Staff College
AWC	Army War College
CARL	Combined Arms Research Library
CGSC	Command and General Staff College
CGSS	Command and General Staff School
COCOM	Combatant Command
CONPLAN	Concept Plan
DIME	Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic
DOD	Department of Defense
ICAF	Industrial College of the Armed Forces
IGO	Inter-Governmental Organization
IR	International Relations
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
MMAS	Master of Military Art and Science
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PME	Professional Military Education
SAMS	School of Advanced Military Studies
U.S.	United States
USACAC	U.S. Army Combined Arms Center
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II

“Not to promote war, but to preserve peace by intelligent and adequate preparation to repel aggression, this institution is founded.”

-Secretary of War, Elihu Root

INTRODUCTION

The Army War College (AWC), which played an instrumental role in preparing America’s senior military leaders for WWII,¹ was established in 1901, but can trace its genesis to the decade after the American Civil War. In 1875, following the war, Major General Emory Upton was sent on a tour of the world’s leading armies to examine their tactics, procedures, and training methods. Although the North won the Civil War, the U.S. Army was concerned that it might be falling behind the innovations occurring in the European armies. Upton agreed, and when he returned he recommended a series of changes including the development of “a War Academy to educate officers in the art of war, and to prepare them for the [General] staff and high command.” He believed in order to keep abreast of European innovations the United States needed to change the way it organized its forces, and – more importantly – prepared its leaders for combat command.² Although he did not live to see the implementation of these ideas, when Secretary of the Army Elihu Root spoke at the cornerstone laying ceremony for the AWC he praised Upton for his foresight in recommending the establishment of the AWC, and the General Staff to which it was so closely tied.³

¹Michael R. Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy: American Operational Art to 1945* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011), 254.

²George S. Pappas, *Prudens Futuri* (Carlisle Barracks: The Alumni Association of the U.S. Army War College, 1967), 8.

³Elihu Root, “Address of the Secretary of War at the Ceremonies at the Laying of the Cornerstone of the Army War College” (speech, Washington Barracks, Washington, DC, February 21, 1903), <https://archive.org/stream/ceremonieslaying00unit#page/n0/mode/2up> (accessed November 29, 2013).

While Upton planted the seed that made American military leaders begin to see the value in a war college, it was Root, in response to the uproar that followed the Spanish-American War, who ultimately ordered the establishment of the AWC in 1901. Although the United States achieved its strategic aims during the war, in large part because of the Army's successes, the poor preparation of the Army's combat units prior to war, and the generally poor senior leadership during the war, led President McKinley to replace Secretary of War Russell Alger with Elihu Root. Root, an accomplished lawyer with no military or executive experience, possessed both the motivation and fresh perspective necessary to break the Army free of its ossified state. After his appointment as the Secretary of the Army, he decided the Army needed radical organizational reform, and based on advice from Lieutenant Colonel William Carter and the writings of General Upton; he developed a plan for the establishment of both the AWC and a General Staff. These as well as the other reforms he instituted in his four and a half years profoundly affected both the mission of the AWC and the Army's combat effectiveness through the first half of the twentieth century, including its participation in two world wars.⁴

While Root spearheaded the creation of the AWC, Brigadier General Tasker Bliss provided its focus. In June of 1903, Root named Bliss President-designate of the Army War College. Bliss' experience as an instructor at West Point, as a lecturer at the Naval War College where he toured many of Europe's military schools, and as a member of the War College Board, effectively prepared him for his role as the first Army War College President.⁵ When asked by Root to provide his concept for the operation of the AWC, Bliss asked himself three questions: what should the college teach, how should it teach, and how could the Army maximize the value

⁴Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 8-14; and Harry P. Ball, *Of Responsible Command: A History of the U.S. Army War College* (Carlisle Barracks: Alumni Association of the United States Army War College, 1983), 48-53.

⁵The Naval War College and National War College are both identified by the acronym NWC. To prevent confusion both names will be spelled out throughout this paper.

of this new institution?⁶ The answers to these questions provided the foundation for the school's curriculum and teaching methods throughout its first four decades of existence.

Although the leaders at the AWC modified the organization and instructional methods many times between 1903 and 1940, the basic format remained focused on the answers to Bliss' three questions. In developing the curriculum's content he favored practical solutions that would prepare graduates for positions on the General Staff or high-level command. Regarding the manner of teaching, Bliss advocated learning by doing. He had the faculty build each year's curriculum around actual plans or contemporary real-world scenarios that provided a focal point for each phase of instruction. This provided students a foundation upon which they learned to prepare for and execute war. Bliss also believed in the power of the collegium and therefore taught his students in committees that conducted group work, rather than emphasizing individual performance. He believed individualized work encouraged students to attempt to best their peers rather than learn how to work effectively as a member of a team. Finally, Bliss extended the reach of the school by establishing a direct link between the school and the soon to be formed but under-manned General Staff. This enabled the students to support the needs of the Army while gaining from the institutional knowledge resident within the General Staff.⁷

The U.S. Army achieved the United States' strategic goals in both World War I and World War II even though it began each war significantly understrength, under funded, and poorly equipped, and Winston Churchill, in an address to the General Staff after WWII, expressed his amazement that the United States, which had maintained such small staffs during the interwar years, managed to contribute so significantly to the defeat of the Nazi regime and the

⁶Ball, *Of Responsible Command*, 79-83; and Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 34.

⁷Colonel J. Dewitt, "Orientation, The Army War College Course, 1928-1929" (lecture, Army War College, Washington, DC, September 4, 1928), 13; Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 84-88 and 135-138; Ball, *Of Responsible Command*, 243-253.

Japanese Empire.⁸ In fact, the ability to expand from a small and minimally functional force to a massive military machine in a very short time emerged as a hallmark of the U.S. Army's performance in both world wars. Analyzing the early twentieth century AWC's contributions to the success of the U.S. Army in WWI and WWII establishes a basis for comparison to the modern AWC, with the goal of offering recommendations for the content and delivery of senior service college curriculum as the U.S. military recovers from, and reflects on its experiences, in Iraq and Afghanistan.

If the AWC was integral to the success of the U.S. Army during WWI and WWII, one should see, upon examination of the curriculum and instruction, common threads that connect the learning experienced by the students between its opening in 1903 and its temporary closure in 1940. Although leaders and methods changed between the AWC's initial term from 1903 to 1917, and its second term between 1920 and 1940, these threads should provide future leaders the opportunity to emulate the college's successes. The foregoing analysis highlights three key threads common to the school's early-twentieth century approach that contributed significantly to its success: aligning the school directly under the General Staff and making it an integral part of Army planning staff; organizing the students into committees in which they benefited from their peer interactions; and using contemporary real-world scenarios as the focus of their study. These methods enabled the AWC to improve the ability of its students to serve successfully in senior command and staff positions during both World War I and II, and successfully execute what today's Army refers to as operational art in the defeat of the Germans and Japanese during WWII.⁹ The efficacy of these methods indicates that the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) should consider ways to recreate the teaching methodology used by the early-twentieth century

⁸Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy* 253-259; Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 137-138.

⁹Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy*, 78-82.

AWC, to reap the benefits they provided while at the same time keeping the curriculum relevant to the current security environment.

The following analysis of the early-twentieth century AWC begins with a brief history of the U.S. military's participation in the Spanish-American War and its aftermath to establish the context within which the U.S. Army established the AWC in 1902. It continues with a history through the beginning of WWII to demonstrate that while changes in the economic, political, and security environment affected the evolution of the AWC's curriculum, it maintained its focus on the three threads developed by General Bliss. Examination of the logic for the establishment of the AWC and General Staff, and an examination of the working relationship between these two organizations – closely interwoven with the course of study at the War College – supports an evaluation of the impact of the AWC on the success of the Army in WWI. A similar examination of the AWC between 1920 and 1940 enables a similar analysis of the AWC's efforts to prepare officers for WWII. By scrutinizing these efforts and describing the changes implemented at the AWC after WWII, the study both establishes the efficacy of the early-twentieth century AWC curriculum, and identifies changes in the content and delivery of the curriculum after WWII. This establishes the foundation for a comparative analysis that highlights applicable lessons for today's U.S. military gleaned from the methods used by the AWC prior to WWII.

BACKGROUND

In 1898, the United States and Spain, after unsuccessful negotiations to solve disagreements over the issue of Cuban independence, declared war and started a conflict that foreshadowed a significant change in America's international status. The war emerged as a seminal moment for the United States because of its lasting effects on U.S. foreign policy and the

way the United States prepared for war.¹⁰ The United States entered the conflict ostensibly for the purpose of granting the Cuban people their freedom, but according to Herring, the war was a natural extension of the United States' expansionist designs. These designs, which led to a significant expansion in U.S. overseas territories, then required the U.S. Army and Navy to prepare extensively for overseas wars. The Spanish-American War also became a turning point for the services, and the way they planned and cooperated. For the U.S. Army, the victory was bitter; it started with a public call to arms and an explosion of American pride, but it ended with an examination of the Army's missteps in Cuba, followed closely by the Army's deployment in response to the Philippine Insurrection. For the U.S. Navy, the war demonstrated their growing strength, and ended with a celebration of its successes in the Caribbean and Far East. Ultimately, although the United States was victorious, the Spanish-American War led to a crisis in the War Department and a change in its leadership, and a new U.S. way of preparing for conflict.¹¹

The Spanish-American War

In 1897, as he recognized the increasing likelihood of war with Spain, President McKinley requested a special appropriation for national defense. The appropriation, known as the "\$50 Million Dollar Bill," served the explicit purpose of preparing the Army and Navy for war.

¹⁰Samuel Flagg Bemis, *A Diplomatic History of the United States*, 4th ed. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1955), 463-475. Bemis asserts that the annexation of the Philippines was Pyrrhic victory for the United States because it limited the countries options when dealing with Japan. Successive Presidents were required to negotiate with Japan with the recognition that the Japanese could easily threaten the Philippines. If the United States had not annexed Japan, they would have been able to confront the aggressiveness of Japan in a more forceful manner and possibly affected the course of the early twentieth century.

¹¹George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 299-314; Allan R. Millett, Peter Maslowski, and William B. Feis, *For the Common Defense* (New York: Free Press, 2012), 218-219 and 252-273; Brian McAllister Linn, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 1-17; David F. Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898* (New York, Macmillian Publishing Co., Inc., 1981), 484-486; Ball, *Of Responsible Command*, 45-47.

Based on a plan prepared by Lieutenant Commander Charles Train while studying at the Naval War College in 1894, the Navy purchased additional ships and lift capacity, and pre-positioned supplies and ships in both the Caribbean and the Western Pacific oceans.¹² This preparation was essential and ensured the Navy was primed for conflict when Congress declared war on April 25, 1898. In contrast, the Secretary of War, Russell Alger, used the Army's portion of the appropriations from the "\$50 Million Dollar Bill" not to prepare for a war with Spain, but to pay for long-unfunded projects. The bulk of the Army's funds went to build coastal defenses, while the rest was distributed between the Medical, Signal, and Quartermaster Departments. This focus on defensive measures did little to prepare for the upcoming conflict, and it prevented the Department from purchasing supplies the troops needed when they went to Cuba.¹³

When war came, the services also executed differently. The Navy capitalized on its effective preparation almost immediately, and On May 1, Commodore Dewey defeated the squadron of Admiral Montojo at Manila Bay in the Philippines – an overwhelming success that led the McKinley administration to increase its aspirations. With the success in the Philippines, the President ordered the Navy Department to seize Guam and on June 20, a squadron under

¹²David F. Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898* (New York, Macmillian Publishing Co., 1981), 33-34 and 72-83. Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt expected war with Spain, but the Secretary of the Navy John Long did not want to provoke the Spanish. Although the Secretary allowed general preparation, he did not preposition supplies for a possible war. On Feb 25, 1898, Long left Roosevelt in charge, and Roosevelt used the opportunity to issue orders that prepared the Navy for war. These included prepositioning ships and supplies throughout the Caribbean and Far East. Although Long rescinded a few of the orders, he left most in place including the order for Commodore Dewey to reposition his squadron to Hong Kong and remain prepared for action against Spain in the Philippines.

¹³Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 83-94 and 145-149; Millett, *For the Common Defense*, 254; Ball, *Of Responsible Command*, 45-48; Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 5-14. The authors describe the War Department of 1898 as dysfunctional and unprepared for war. Secretary of War Alger and Major General Miles, the Commanding General, didn't like each other, and this exacerbated the problems with the structure of the Army. There were ten specialized Bureaus in the War Department and they reported to the Secretary, but not the Commanding General. This meant that the senior officer in the Army essentially had to go hat in hand to ten Brigadier Generals when he wanted support for the line units because he had no authority over them. General Sherman, the Commanding general after the Civil War, became so disgusted with this arrangement that he moved his headquarters to Saint Louis to be away from the Secretary and Bureaus.

Captain Glass entered Agana harbor, fired two shots, and the Governor surrendered. In support of the Army's invasion of Cuba, the Navy secured Guantanamo Bay, and destroyed the Spanish Caribbean Fleet under Admiral Cervera. These actions prevented the Spanish from contesting the waters in the Caribbean and resupplying their stranded ground forces and led to the celebration of the Navy's efforts.¹⁴

While the Navy quickly executed the President's plans, the Army began the war essentially unprepared. At the onset, the Army was undermanned and had poorly developed plans for an invasion of Cuba. Alger and Commanding General of the Army, Major General Miles, initially proposed a force of 162,000 men for the conflict, but after negotiations with the Congress this number was reduced to 65,000, from a pre-war strength of 28,000. However, after President McKinley approved a significant call-up, the Army ended up with 274,717 troops supporting the war effort. This number far exceeded the Army's capability for basic personnel support, and was a basis for some of the recriminations after the war. Additionally, the first plan contemplated a seizure of Marial and a march to Havana. Unfortunately, the President ordered the Army to direct its focus on Santiago and although Major General Shafter quickly adjusted, his plan for 25,000 troops had to be scuttled when he discovered that lift capacity could only support 17,000. Fortunately, this smaller-than-planned force faced an unopposed landing, after which V Corps proceeded to Santiago and charged up San Juan, El Caney, and Kettle Hills and was able to force the Spanish to surrender.¹⁵

¹⁴Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 96-105, 261-269, 385-386; Millett, *For the Common Defense*, 261.

¹⁵Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 146-155, 162-177; Millett, *For the Common Defense*, 261-264. The Dodge Commission that President McKinley formed after the war examined the actions the War Department took prior to and during the war. The commission was formed to answer allegations of mismanagement placed by the Congress and Commanding General of the Army, General Miles.

The campaign, although successful, also evidenced poor inter-service cooperation. In addition to the confusion over troop transport capacity, Army and Navy leaders failed to develop a common understanding of objectives and priorities.¹⁶ For example, Shafter considered Santiago his primary target, while the Navy focused on the harbor, which accentuated the poor cooperation and created unnecessary casualties. When Shafter conducted his initial attack upon Santiago he did not request naval gunfire support, even though Rear Admiral Sampson's ships were well within range of the city. Shafter's failure to coordinate naval gunfire for his operations to seize Santiago caused Captain Goodrich, of the *St. Louis*, to compare the Army's actions to those of a "spoiled child," which resulted in an unnecessary loss of life.¹⁷

Repercussions of the Spanish-American War

The war with Spain had two significant outcomes. It secured Cuba's independence and the United States' acquisition of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines. It also revealed the U.S. military's limited ability to conduct expeditionary operations, primarily due to inter-service rivalry, and poor planning. These problems led President McKinley to form a commission to evaluate the performance of the services and determine the reasons for their differences. The investigations highlighted the dichotomy in the ways the services prepared as a significant cause for their divergent performance. In particular, the investigators asserted that a lack of leadership

¹⁶Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 484-486; Millett, *For the Common Defense*, 264-273. Although Shafter was successful, the aftermath was devastating for the Army and led to the investigations that followed. In 1898 there were 5,462 deaths in the armed services but only 379 came from combat. Most of the rest were caused by the diseases that were rampant in the V Corps and volunteer camps, and caused by a lack of preparation on the Army's side. By late July over a quarter of V Corps was seriously ill and Shafter had to stop rifle volleys and bugle calls at burials for fear of further undermining morale.

¹⁷Steven T. Ross, *American War Plans, 1890-1939* (Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 2002), 17-19; and Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 230 and 302-303; Millett, *For the Common Defense*, 264-266. Although Admiral Sampson's squadron was within range of Santiago throughout the attack and siege upon the city, the Navy, and listed authors, argued that Shafter never used them properly. He did not request Naval Gunfire support for the initial attack and once the siege began he placed restrictions upon naval gunfire support and halted shelling on the 11th prior to the Navy using their largest guns.

within the War Department significantly affected the Army's performance, both leading up to and throughout the conflict. Although the commission did not find evidence of corruption or intentional neglect, it did find an organization ill prepared for war.¹⁸

Motivated by the Commission's report the President replaced Secretary Alger with Elihu Root, and directed him to make a full assessment of the Department and to implement the necessary corrections. During his initial evaluation, Root found the Department's problems did not stem primarily from poor leadership; rather, it suffered from systemic flaws in the Department's organization. By the end of the Civil War, the War Department had developed into a highly effective organization that supported an Army of over 1,000,000 men. However, between 1866 and 1898 the staff progressively degraded to the point that it could no longer support large-scale or expeditionary wars. He identified the Army's dysfunctional staff and lack of formalized planning processes as the key issues, and realized that he would need to make significant changes to the way the Department operated in order to fix them.¹⁹

The key to the dysfunction was the fact that the individual bureau chiefs reported to the Secretary and not the Commanding General. Thus, chiefs were primarily focused on their individual bureaus and not with supporting front line troops. These findings, supported by Major General Emory Upton's *Military Policy of the United States*, led Root to recommend the reorganization of the War Department bureaus into a General Staff along the lines of the Prussian Military's.²⁰

¹⁸Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 314-325; Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy*, 18-20; Millett, *For the Common Defense*, 268-273; and Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 484-486.

¹⁹Francis T. Julia, *Army Staff Reorganization* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1987), 1; Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 11-14; and Millett, *For the Common Defense*, 218.

²⁰Julia, *Army Staff Reorganization*, 1; Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 5-14; Emory Upton, *The Military Policy of the United States*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2007), vii-xv. Washington: U.S. G.P.O General Upton, died before his book was published. In part due to the interest of

To overhaul the planning process, Root directed the establishment of the AWC with the primary responsibility of preparing the Army for war. He recognized that for the Army to be successful in war it needed trained senior officers who understood how to develop war plans, who grasped the complexities of warfare, and who were able to lead large armies. He believed the failure to properly plan fomented many of the mistakes in the war with Spain, and if the Army had instead fought one of the better European armies, the results might have been disastrous. Additionally, to perform the functions of a staff until he could get Congress to approve his recommendation for a General Staff, he relied on the AWC. Although the AWC only served as his General Staff until 1903, this connection to the War Department would remain a key function of the AWC through the commencement of WWII.²¹

The Joint Board

Although the United States emerged from the Spanish-American War victorious, military and civilian leaders also recognized that there had been significant problems with Army-Navy synchronization. Thus, both services began the twentieth century with the directive to improve the way they worked together and developed plans. The Navy capitalized on the planning that had been taking place at the Naval War College since 1884, but the Army waited until the AWC was created in 1902 to firmly establish its war planning processes. While both services readily acknowledged a need to improve their planning processes, the lack of synchronization they experienced in 1898 remained a significant problem for integrated planning efforts.²²

To overcome these problems, the Departments established the Joint Army and Navy Board on July 17, 1903. Commonly referred to as the Joint Board, it was composed of four

Secretary Root, the War Department sponsored the editing and publishing of his book in 1904.

²¹Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 16-31; Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy*, 24-25, 254.

²²Ross, *American War Plans, 1890-1939*, x.

officers from each service, personally selected by the War and Navy Department Secretaries to develop a recommended method for synchronization of issues that required inter-service cooperation. Although it had no directing power, the Joint Board served as an advisory committee for the Secretaries, and recommended plans for approval. When the Board reached an agreement, it would forward its recommendations to them for approval, although recommendations that required particularly important decisions went directly to the President. Between 1903 and 1913 the board met 125 times to discuss issues ranging from the security of the Philippines, and the Panama Canal Zone, to the intervention in Mexico. Despite this promising start, disagreement over Pacific strategy resulted in only eight meetings between October 1915 and June 1918, and almost no Board role during the First World War.²³

After WWI, the Departments recognized the evolving geopolitical environment and knew the nation required significantly better inter-service coordination. The War Department believed the dysfunction of the Board was one of the primary reasons for this problem because since June 1918, the board had barely continued to exist, and even functioning it had no power to direct the examination of issues. Therefore, the War Department recommended a reinvigorated Board that could also act as a joint planning agency. Thus, on July 24, 1919 the Secretaries signed an order imbuing the Joint Board with new powers and guidelines. They gave the revitalized Joint Board the authority to not only review plans, but also the authority to direct their creation. To support this new authority, the Secretaries created a Joint Army and Navy Planning Committee to receive direction from the Joint Board and prepare detailed reports on issues of significance to the Departments. Next, the Secretaries reduced the board from eight to six members with positions

²³Steven T. Ross, ed. *Peacetime War Plans, 1919-1935*, vol. 1 of *American War Plans, 1919-1941* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1992), vii. The Services disagreed sharply over the feasibility of defending the Philippines. The Army relied on the garrison in the Philippines to hold out until reinforced from the United States. The Navy assumed a quick strike by the Japanese Army and Navy that would overwhelm the Philippines followed by a rapid American counterattack at sea. Both plans were unrealistic and the disagreement undermined the solidarity of the Board.

filled *ex officio* rather than as personal assignments. Between the World Wars, the Joint Board became a very important strategy-making tool and in July 1939, President Roosevelt placed it directly under his supervision.²⁴

One of its primary functions became directing the planning efforts of the Departments and the Joint Planning Committee. Although the Departments had been developing war plans prior to the Spanish-American War, it was only after the war that they commenced the development of systematic and directed practices. To help formalize U.S. military planning processes, the Board created the color planning system in 1904. This system designated a color for each country or area that concerned the United States. The Board created the color codes to give the United States deniability in case an adversary acquired these plans. Instead of a war plan to counter Japan, the services created Plan Orange that looked at a conflict between Japan (Orange), and the United States (Blue). Other colors included Red for Britain, Black for Germany, Violet for South America, and Grey for Central America and the Caribbean. Before WWI, the plans were all single color because the Board believed the United States would never wage war against an enemy coalition. After the war, the plans began to envision both allied and enemy coalitions. The Navy's primary planning organization during this time was the General Board, formed in 1900, with support provided by the Naval War College, while the AWC, as part of the War Plans Division, was the Army's primary planning organization until WWI and the

²⁴Ross, *Peacetime War Plans, 1919-1935*, viii; Henry G. Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, 20,22; *Army Planning for Global War 1934-1940* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2003), 24-25. Three members from each of the services planning staffs made up the Joint Planning Committee. They would direct experts from the service staffs to answer questions put forth by the President, Department Secretaries, or the Joint Board itself. This allowed the Joint Board to directly access the experts from throughout the Departments. The Joint Board also created a Joint Economy Committee, a Joint Munitions Board, Joint Aeronautical Board, and a Selective Service Committee to deal with issues that affected both services.

War Plans Division in concert with the AWC until WWII. Thus, each service relied heavily on the expertise and support offered by their respective War College.²⁵

Between the World Wars

After the Great War, several obstacles limited the growth and technological development of the U.S. military. One was the fiscal restraint imposed by the Congress, which sought to use the limited federal budget to strengthen the American economy, and later to recover from the Great Depression. Government officials and citizens also desired to avoid another war, and believed that by limiting the size of the Army and signing numerous peace treaties the United States would be protected from large conflicts. Finally, most Americans believed that, because of the AEF's success in the war, no nation would challenge U.S. interests by force of arms.²⁶

With the onset of the Depression in 1929, the U.S. government concentrated on economic recovery, leading to an even greater increase in the fiscal restraints already limiting military spending and led to the government's focus on joining international treaties to ensure its security. At the Washington Conference in 1921-1922, the five leading naval powers established strictures that governed Naval Policy for most of the next two decades. The treaty created a limit on the amount of a nation's tonnage, but in the process created tensions between the United States and Japan, when the United States was given preferential treatment. To lessen the threat of war in the Asia-Pacific region, the major powers designed the Four and Nine Power treaties, but in the end,

²⁵Ross, *American War Plans, 1890-1939*, ix and 38; Henry G. Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, 33-36; *Army Planning for Global War 1934-1940* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2003), xix and 25; Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy*, 26; Edward S. Miller, *War Plan Orange - The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897-1945* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 15.

²⁶Dupuy, *Military Heritage of America*, 403-406; Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, 4-8; Millett, *For the Common Defense*, 341-342; Ross, *American War Plans, 1890-1939*, 93.

these efforts at diplomacy didn't solve the tension that was building in the Pacific; it only delayed the timeline.²⁷

The United States believed the primary result of WWI was the establishment of the United States as a significant player on the world stage. The treaties its leaders ratified, and even the Treaty of Versailles, which they did not, placed the United States on par with Great Britain and ahead of the rest of the world in terms of military strength (whether tangible or intangible). The U.S. government used this prestige to argue that no one would presume to threaten the country and if they did, the oceans separating the United States from its adversaries would give the United States time to rearm and defeat the threat. This American overconfidence, combined with the severe limitations imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles, resulted in the conviction that neither Germany nor Japan would dare to threaten America, and the United States therefore did not require a large standing army for its security. This also meant that when the United States began protective mobilization in 1940, it had to start almost from scratch, much like it did in 1917. In former Army Chief of Staff, Peyton March's book, *The Nation at War*, he provides an example of the depths the U.S. military reached during the interwar period. He asserted that after the reorganization of the Army following WWI, the Congress made the U.S. Army "impotent" when it reduced the service to a strength of just over 100,000, which he explained was the same number the German Army was limited to in the Treaty of Versailles.²⁸

²⁷George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 453-455 and 479-480; Bemis, *A Diplomatic History of the United States*, 690-703. The Washington Naval Treaty created a 5-5-3 ratio for capital ships between the United States, Great Britain, and Japan. Although the moderate Japanese government agreed to this, due to a need to "only" protect one ocean, the hardliners and Japanese people believed they had been insulted. The Four Power Treaty dictated that Japan, the United States, Great Britain, and France, would not interfere with each other's Far-East possessions, and the Nine Power Treaty restricted nations with some interest in China from interfering with its political and territorial integrity.

²⁸Ross, *American War Plans, 1890-1939*, 93-117; Peyton C. March, *The Nation at War* (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran, and Company, Inc., 1932), 341.

At the end of WWI, the United States had both a powerful Army and Navy, however, due to fiscal restraint, an unfounded belief in the invulnerability of the United States, and a reliance on treaties, the United States significantly reduced its military capability. When war with Germany and Japan appeared inevitable in 1940, the United States found itself again needing to significantly catch up in both the acquisition of materiel and personnel. The President and Congress had believed the United States only needed to prepare for a defensive war, and because of the benefits of geography a small Army was sufficient. Consequently, when war loomed in Europe, both the amount and the quality of American military equipment proved insufficient for the effort required. Despite its lack of materiel preparedness, America benefited significantly from the efforts of the revitalized Joint Board, which had ensured that the Army and Navy developed and revised war plans for various scenarios since the 1920s. This at least ensured military leaders had some idea of the relative advantages of various strategies, and the military-economic effort required to support them. The standing war plans, which had increasingly focused on the threat of a European coalition led by Nazi Germany aligned with an increasingly imperialist Japan, proved instrumental in teaching the United States' political and military leaders how to plan for and react to the war to come. Franklin Roosevelt's aide, Harry Hopkins said that even though neglected from 1919-1938, it was a miracle that the U.S. military was able to produce "so large and so brilliant a group of World War II military leaders, competent to deal with complex and unique problems that were as much political as military." Although the Army had been "shamefully" neglected, the efforts at the AWC went a long way to explaining America's success in WWII.²⁹

²⁹Mark S. Watson, *U.S. Army in World War II: Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparation* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1950), 16-56; Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray, eds., *Military Effectiveness: Volume 2 The Interwar Period – New Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 70-78; Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, xv-xxi; Stephen E. Ambrose, review of *Lucius*

THE ARMY WAR COLLEGE THRU WORLD WAR I

General Order 115 established the AWC, and it began operations on 1 July 1902. Root created it to instill the professionalism, analytical analysis, and institutional knowledge that were missing in the run-up to the Spanish-American War. From the very beginning he saw the AWC not as another place to learn tactics and procedures, but as the place that would produce the leaders for the future and help to establish the course for Army affairs. The College was only staff for its first thirteen months, during which it acted almost exclusively as a general staff for the Secretary. Root was attempting to get the General Staff codified by the Congress, but until then, the AWC supported his growing demands. During the thirteen months the College supported the Secretary, it focused extensively on the creation of war plans, which it continued to do even after the General Staff was officially established. In August 1903 the General Staff Act created a Chief of Staff of the Army, who replaced the Commanding General, and a General Staff to support senior Army leadership. It also decreed that the War College would become part of the Third Division of the General Staff in order to continue the planning and special research projects it had

D. Clay – An American Life, by Jean Edward Smith, *New York Times*, July 29, 1990. As of 30 June 1919, the Army had 846,498 men. From 1920 through 1935 that number would average 135,000. In 1936 it began a slow build up, which resulted in 267,767 men by June 1940. For reference to the mood of the day, in 1924 the Republicans boasted at their convention that the U.S. Army, which had been reduced to below 125,000 men, now had the smallest Army of any great power. During this time expenditures were also consistently funded below the level they requested. This resulted in very few equipment purchases, or funds for research and development. In the 20s, tanks could only train a few hours per day, because fuel was deemed too expensive. When General Marshall, then Chief of Staff, testified before the Senate in 1940 on why the Army had not asked for money if he knew they were unprepared for coming threats, he said appropriations request were based more on “what we might be permitted to do rather than merely a question of what should be done on a basis of national defense.”

been performing. This cemented the relationship between the General Staff and the AWC and had profound effects on the way Brigadier General Bliss designed the initial curriculum.³⁰

Secretary Root and General Bliss – Their Vision

When Root established the AWC, he laid out six general duties for the college. Develop reports on the efficiency of the Army, direct the service schools, provide advanced instruction to its students, synchronize efforts across services in case of mobilization, coordinate efforts with the Naval War College, and incorporate the Adjutant General's office into its structure. Most of these requirements were more fitting for a general staff than for a higher institution of learning, but even after the General Staff was established in August 1903, the College continued as the Army's primary war planning agency, and provided the Secretary input on contingencies too politically sensitive for the General Staff to evaluate.³¹

As the College continued its research for the Secretary, it evolved into an integral part of the Staff. As the Third Division of the General Staff, it immediately began supporting the production and evaluation of war plans. From November 1903 through October 1904, before the arrival of students, the permanent staff reviewed numerous contingency plans including a withdrawal of forces from the Philippines, a war with Great Britain, a war with Mexico, and numerous projects with the Naval War College involving service interoperability.³²

This growing relationship between the War College and Staff led Bliss, in his first report to the Army Chief of Staff, to make two recommendations that significantly affected the AWC.

³⁰Ball, *Of Responsible Command*, 68-76; William Frye, *Marshall: Citizen Soldier* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1947), 89; Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, 17; Ross, *American War Plans, 1890-1939*, 27.

³¹Ball, *Of Responsible Command*, 91-92; Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, 25.

³²Dewitt, "Orientation, The Army War College Course, 1928-1929," 13; Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 37.

First, he argued that the AWC should be located in Washington, DC, close to the General Staff to facilitate cooperation between faculty, students, and the General Staff. Second, he intended to create a curriculum that was not a follow-up to the Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, but one that molded the students, the General Staff and the Army as a whole. To accomplish this, he envisioned a “collegium,” or body of men working together to do something, rather than to learn how to do something. This meant that although students would work on individual reports, they would spend the majority of their time working as part of committees, reviewing plans and completing reports of interest for Army leadership. For example, Bliss envisioned that they would complete contingency plans to such detail that in a time of crisis the General Staff could use these reports to issue initial orders. Bliss intended to supplement this very practical core of the curriculum by instituting a system of lectures on widely disparate subjects. Whether they were lectures on International Law by the Adjutant General, or History by a professor from Harvard, Bliss wanted to provide information not regularly found in Army schools. To inculcate this information throughout the Army, he invited the General Staff and officers in the vicinity to attend. This then shaped both the men who attended and the Army as a whole.³³

When the College opened its doors to students in October 1904, it started with nine students and included the first “exchange” student to the Naval War College. Like the permanent staff the year before, the initial class was primarily focused on real world contingencies its students might execute. As Root said when he dedicated the new College building in 1908, the faculty and staff were “brought together to do the thinking of the Army,” and this focus on

³³Ball, *Of Responsible Command*, 85-90; Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 46 and 77; Frye, *Marshall: Citizen Soldier*, 90. Captain John J. Pershing was a member of the first class and has the distinction of being the first student to drop the course. He was relieved from the class on 27 December 1904 for special assignment as military attaché to Japan.

understanding the requirements of the Army and the needs of the General Staff continued through WWI, and profoundly affected the College's mission as it went forward.³⁴

To support Bliss' goals, the College required a curriculum that provided a significantly different education than the instruction provided at the service schools and General Service and Staff College. The AWC course of instruction was designed around the creation of a war plan, realistic and complete enough to form the basis for the plan executed in the event of an actual conflict. The 1912 class started in September working on individual projects in their areas of expertise. From October through December they consulted with fellow students on their ideas, leading to committee work that consumed January through March, and involved fellow students, faculty, and, if necessary, General Staff officers. The committees synthesized the reports, added required detail, and then developed a plan that served as the basis for a class exercise conducted in May. By using this "applicatory method of instruction," students learned the principles of war through practical application. This method was considered integral to the College's goal of molding leaders who could command large formations, and it included the "great war game," broad based lectures, and learning by doing.³⁵

The classes of 1906 and 1908 serve as two examples of the benefits of the planning component of the curriculum. After the 1906 class departed, the Secretary directed the staff to develop a plan for an expeditionary force to secure Cuba. The plan included draft letters to chiefs of supply, designation of troops required, draft movement orders, and execution orders for the operation. The plan was quickly approved and used for the expedition that left in October where Secretary of War Taft's "Army of Cuban Pacification," reestablished security and allowed the

³⁴Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy*, 24-28; *Prudens Futuri*, 46, 62 and 84-86.

³⁵Memorandum by Major J. Leitch, "Army War College Session 1911-1912," September 1, 1911, Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, KS; Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 33-35 and 71. Until 1911, students were not awarded diplomas; instead, orders to the War College were considered "sufficient recognition of ...professional attainments."

Cuban Provisional Government to oversee elections. The core of this plan existed in the output of the 1906 class, and required only situation-specific augmentation before serving as the actual plan of campaign. The 1908 class began the year by developing a scenario for a war with Japan (Plan Orange). Students and faculty working together and looking at each aspect of the plan developed the scenario, and once completed created a strategic exercise to validate their approaches. They started with the strategic setting, looked at the operational variables, and then defeated the threat. This plan, reviewed and updated annually, was a stepping-stone for the U.S. Army's war in the Pacific during WWII. These examples demonstrate how the College supported the War Plans Division, while educating future Army leaders.³⁶

When Root replaced Alger, he sought to accomplish a number of tasks, including resolving the lack of inter-service cooperation at the AWC. This led to the creation of one of the College's original mandates – the requirement to synchronize efforts with the Navy Department and solve inter-service issues. From the start, the AWC worked on projects of joint interest with the Naval War College including a revision of the rules governing joint operations, a uniform system of symbols, and joint maneuvers in the Chesapeake. In addition to working closely with the Naval War College on projects, in 1906 the college received its first Naval students, and in 1907 its' first Marine. These officers represented the beginning of a long inter-service relationship, and the beginning of the College's reputation for molding joint force leaders – not just senior Army leaders. Major General John A. Lejeune, a member of the Class of 1910 and later the 13th Commandant of the Marine Corps said,

In looking back on my career, it is perfectly apparent to me that the fourteen months at the War College constituted a very marked dividing line in my professional life, and that during the years that have followed the completion of the course I have been conscious that I possessed greater mental power than I before realized, and have felt able to meet

³⁶Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 50-55; Millett, *The Politics of Intervention*, 113-125; Ross, *American War Plans, 1890-1939*, 80-81.

successfully any difficulty which might confront me, or to overcome any obstacle which I might find in my path.

Additionally, while at the College, Lejeune built relationships that were instrumental in his selection to command the Army's 2nd Infantry Division during WWI. These types of relationships exemplified the spirit of inter-service cooperation that Secretary Root sought to instill in AWC graduates when he originated designs for the College in 1898.³⁷

Preparing for War

Between 1909 and 1914 the College continued to prepare students for any conflicts the United States might enter, but in 1915 it began to look intensively at ensuring the Army was prepared for war in Europe. Although the curriculum still contained some of the classes that had remained consistent since 1903, in early 1917 the course changed significantly – largely through the replacement of hypothetical studies for committee work driven by intelligence reports coming from Europe. As was normal by then, the staff and students were divided into committees, and then each studied an issue that would affect the Army's ability to respond to a declaration of war. When President Wilson declared war on 6 April 1917, the students soon found themselves reassigned to deploying units, and the AWC was closed until the end of WWI.³⁸

Between 1903 and 1917, the AWC built a reputation as the leading educational institution within the U.S. Army. The work the students did provided them an excellent practical education, and helped to answer the Secretary and General Staff's most vexing questions. The small class sizes also ensured the selection of only the best and brightest officers, while enabling frequent and useful interaction with the faculty. The first class in 1905 had eight students, and the last in

³⁷Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 51-55; John A. Lejeune, *The Reminiscences of a Marine* (Philadelphia: Dorrance and Company, 1930), 190; Edward M. Coffman, *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1968), 276-277.

³⁸Ball, *Of Responsible Command*, 114-119; Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 80-83.

1917 nineteen. In the thirteen classes between 1904 and 1917 there were 234 graduates from the Army and its sister services, and these students were recognized for the crucial part they played during World War I. Although the AWC closed from 1917 to 1919, it reopened after the Great War with its legacy of excellence already firmly established.³⁹

World War I

Upon declaration of war, the Army needed men, equipment, and leadership in order to support the Allies. In April 1917 the Army had 5,791 regular officers, 121,797 regular enlisted, and 80,446 Guardsmen. This meant it lacked the personnel required to provide adequate support to the Allied effort in Europe. In addition to personnel shortages, the Army suffered an extreme shortage of supplies and equipment – an issue that remained unresolved throughout the war, compensated by equipment loaned from Allied armies. The United States did have a few advantages however; available manpower, industrial might, and a small, well-trained group of General Staff officers.⁴⁰

Just prior to closing down during mobilization, the War College worked on a detailed plan for raising and training a force of four million men. The plan included a program of universal conscription and sixteen divisional training areas; “a nationwide war structure all ready for the selective draft to fill.” The War Department used this plan as the basis for its buildup, and by the end of 1918 the draft had provided over 3,250,000 personnel.⁴¹

Although the United States was able to quickly generate a large force, it took significantly longer to acquire the supplies required; in particular rifles. The military ameliorated

³⁹Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 46-92.

⁴⁰Coffman, *The War to End All Wars*, 18-19.

⁴¹Coffman, *The War to End All Wars*, 24-29; Ball, *Of Responsible Command*, 137; Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 86-87.

the initial lack of modern rifles by utilizing older models still in stock, available spares from Allies, and the limited numbers domestic industry could provide. This was not a viable long-term solution, but it was a serviceable stopgap until domestic industries established full-scale production. As with rifles; the Army also initially lacked sufficient numbers of artillery pieces, machine guns, pistols, steel helmets, gas masks, and winter coats. However, by the end of the war, as a result of the coordination between the War Department, War Industries Board, and business leaders, U.S. manufacturing capacity had expanded to the point that it was at, or near, providing the requisite amounts of supply.⁴²

The final requirement was leadership. After the selection of Major General Pershing to lead the American Expeditionary Force (AEF), the Army still required numerous senior leaders and staff officers. The War College and its graduates filled an otherwise gaping void in skilled senior Army officers. In September 1917, Army Chief of Staff General Hugh Scott wrote,

Since war was declared the demand for officers having this [the War College experience] has been enormous; the supply wholly inadequate. But these few officers have worked with a devotion and skill worthy of great praise, and it is without fear of contradiction that I record the belief that had this small category of officers educated in general-staff work never been created the confusion, delay, and disappointments of 1898 would have been repeated and magnified in 1917.⁴³

By the end of the war the AWC and its graduates had made an impact on the AEF's effectiveness that went beyond merely providing knowledgeable staff officers; it served as the source of a significant portion of the senior leadership as well. Of the 3,885 officers at the time of the armistice, only 4.2% of them attended the War College, but 30% of them were general

⁴²Coffman, *The War to End All Wars*, 31-42.

⁴³War Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1917 vol. 1 – Report of the Chief of Staff* (Washington DC: September 22, 1917), 127-128.

officers, 45% of them held division or higher commands, and by the time they retired 57% of the members of the 1905-1917 classes rose to the general officer ranks.⁴⁴

In the two decades before America's participation in WWI, the AWC firmly established its key position within the Army's military education system. It relied on a novel curriculum and educational method, focused on groups working together to create a shared understanding of the real-world problems of the day and developed solutions to those problems for the War Department to incorporate into its war plans. The students did not spend most of their time looking at others' solutions; instead, they sought to solve the problems the Army was dealing with by working with the faculty, their peers, and the General Staff. As Frye wrote in his book about General Marshall, "class solutions were more than apt to show up in print as executive orders and Army Regulations." Therefore, Bliss' method of learning by doing, which was a hallmark of the early years at the College, became evident in both the ringing endorsements of the College graduates and the significant improvements in the Army between 1898 and 1917.⁴⁵

THE ARMY WAR COLLEGE AND WORLD WAR II

After the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, which officially ended the Great War and established peace terms, Secretary of War Newton Baker evaluated the Department's efforts during the war. Although he recognized significant improvement since the Spanish-American War, he believed senior leaders still lacked a clear understanding of national power. Along with leaders such as General Pershing and George C. Marshall, he understood that success in WWI had taken a significant portion of the United States' political, economic, industrial, and military capacity, and wanted to ensure that future leaders understood these requirements. Additionally, if

⁴⁴Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 83-87.

⁴⁵Frye, *Marshall: Citizen Soldier*, 90; Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 35 and 86.

leaders such as Marshal Foch who said, “This is not peace. It is an armistice for twenty years,” and General Bliss, who believed war would return within thirty years, were right, the importance of national power increased significantly. With this as a backstop, Baker believed the AWC needed to adjust its curriculum in order to prepare its students for service at the highest levels and to prepare them for the possibility of new conflict. The adjustments he put in place modified the way the students were taught, but the basic concept of focusing on real-world contingencies, working with the War Department General Staff, and utilizing faculty-student committees to perform the preponderance remained.⁴⁶

Return of the War College and the One Big Problem

When Baker decided to reinstitute classes at the AWC, he designated Major General James McAndrew as its next Commandant. McAndrew, while still in Germany serving with the AEF, began to contemplate the changes he would make to the focus and structure of the curriculum. He saw a strong correlation between the ability to function as high-level General Staff officers and the ability to command large units. He therefore planned to focus the curriculum not on command itself, but on the skills and responsibilities of exceptional General Staff officers. To prepare his students, he decided they would answer the same “one Big Problem” that the General Staff was responsible for: how to prepare for war. He did this by building the curriculum around the United States’ most dangerous potential enemies.⁴⁷

Next, McAndrew examined the training structure, and here he turned to the AEF for his solution. He developed his curriculum around the organizational model of the AEF staff. He had

⁴⁶R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy, *Military Heritage of America* (Fairfax: Hero Books, 1984), 403-405; Frye, *Marshall*, 178-184; Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, 3; War Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1919, vol. 1, pt.1- Report of the Chief of Staff* (Washington DC: November 11, 1919), 27-30.

⁴⁷Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 90-93; Ball, *Of Responsible Command*, 153-155.

classes that focused on G-1 (personnel), G-2 (intelligence), G-3 (operations and training), G-4 (supply), War Plans, and Conduct of War. Each class supported the student's efforts as they worked toward developing a plan that would prepare the Army for war. As opposed to the pre-war courses that initially utilized individual study to create reports that would be used by the student committees in the second half of the year, McAndrew used student committees from the outset. This system closely mimicked the methods by which staff officers would conduct their daily duties after graduation; accordingly, it met McAndrew's goal of preparing students to be General Staff officers.⁴⁸

For the 1920 class, the decision was made to use a Red-Orange scenario, or war against Japan and Britain. Although unlikely, this was a worst-case scenario for the United States, and it allowed for coordination with the Naval War College. This scenario also supported two important goals; increased joint service interoperability, and national mobilization. The students began the year with the G-2 course, which lasted about a month, during which time they received an initial intelligence brief that each committee used throughout the year to develop its plan. The G-3 course followed and each committee developed its own concept for defending the United States. The faculty chose the best concept and the student committees used the remainder of the course to develop a detailed plan that served as the basis for the war game it conducted in late May. During the G-1 and G-4 courses the students examined topics including national mobilization and industrial production. In this way the students became well versed in the responsibilities of a General Staff officer, and developed a war plan that the War Department could use to support planning in the case of conflict.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy*, 58; Ball, *Of Responsible Command*, 154-157.

⁴⁹Ball, *Of Responsible Command*, 155-158.

On June 3, 1920 Congress passed the National Defense Act (NDA) of 1920. The NDA changed the status of the AWC in a few key areas. It officially designated the AWC the highest-ranking school in the Army education system, and stated that service on the General Staff would henceforth be limited to those who were selected to an initial General Staff eligibility list or graduates of the AWC. This formalized the position of the AWC within the Army educational system, and the fact that service on the General Staff was an unwritten prerequisite for senior leadership in the Army significantly increased the school's importance. General of the Armies, Dwight D. Eisenhower, affirmed this when he said, "To graduate from the War College had long been the ambition of almost every officer."⁵⁰

Over the next few years the AWC continued to focus on the "one Big Problem" and its instruction again garnered praise beyond the confines of the War Department. In 1922 Captain Ridley McLean, the Navy liaison to the AWC, wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Navy emphasizing the unique value of the practical education AWC graduates received:

There is a prevailing impression throughout our service that that the course here [Army War College] is similar to that at the Naval War College except that it applies to land warfare where the other applies to the sea. It therefore seems necessary to state definitively that this is not the case. The Army War College goes much further. Instead of the study of assumed problems, the study here embraces the study of actual problems involved in the preparation for and the conduct of war under existing conditions...The idea of Command in its highest sense runs through the entire course....I can conceive of no better course of study for the Navy than that offered at this institution.....It is therefore recommended that this be regarded as the Senior War College Course as provided for in the educational system as already approved by the Department [of the Navy].⁵¹

Between 1922 and 1933, the AWC refined the methods and subjects taught, and although the "one Big Problem" remained the focus, it changed from a single problem, to multiple scenarios

⁵⁰War Department, *The National Defense Act as Amended to Include March 4, 1927* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1927), 17; Ball, *Of Responsible Command*, 166-174; Edward M. Coffman, *The Regulars: The American Army 1898-1941* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 284.

⁵¹Ridley McLean, Letter to the Secretary of the Navy (3 January, 1922): quoted in *Prudens Futuri*, 116-117.

that different committees would evaluate. Additionally, the students continued to work primarily in committees, and used their individual reports to answer questions of importance to the War Department. They also continued the lectures that Bliss started with a heavy focus on lessons learned from WWI.⁵²

Starting with the 1929 class, Major General Fox Connor, appointed Commandant in November 1927, introduced a new format for the College after designing and testing it over the previous two years. The format, which remained unchanged through the suspension of classes during the mobilization for WWII, involved breaking the academic year into two distinct sessions: “Preparation for War” and “Conduct of War.” The first half of the year included the “G” courses, and prepared the foundation for the students to execute the second half of the year. The G-2 class presented scenarios, and the committees evaluated each to begin planning for a possible conflict. The G-1, G-3, and G-4 courses helped the students understand the issues involved with mobilization, and the second half of the year was used to fight the plans. Although similar to McAndrew’s “one Big Problem,” Connor’s method emphasized the difference between planning for and executing war.⁵³

Fighting With Allies

With the commencement of the 1934 class the AWC added a significant change to its curriculum. For the first time, the “Big Problem” included how the United States would fight with

⁵²Dewitt, “Orientation, The Army War College Course, 1928-1929,” 13; Honorable New D. Baker, “The Secretary of War During the World War” (lecture, Army War College, Washington, DC, May 11, 1929); Field Marshal Viscount Allenby, “The Future of Cavalry” (lecture, Army War College, Washington, DC, October 29, 1928). Secretary Baker discussed issues with mobilization and “his education” during the World War, and Field Marshal Allenby discussed the role of reconnaissance in a modern army.

⁵³Colonel J. Dewitt, “Course at the Army War College Course, 1928-1929, Conduct of War” (lecture, Army War College, Washington, DC, February 18, 1928); Dewitt, “Orientation, The Army War College Course, 1928-1929”; Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 113-127; Ball, *Of Responsible Command*, 189-219.

allies. This was an important step for the AWC because it recognized the United States would likely have to fight with allies in the future. This changed both the way the nation would fight a war, and the manner in which it would plan for one. To some this would seem natural after the experience of WWI, but guided by George Washington's admonishment to steer clear of foreign entanglements, the United States government and people had traditionally demonstrated an aversion to fighting alongside others. Thus, many within American society, including the government and the military did not readily embrace the idea that the United States must prepare to fight with partners in a future conflict. Regardless, when the class of 1934 analyzed a potential future struggle including allies, it added complexity to the problem while acknowledging the new reality.⁵⁴

The first "fighting with allies" scenario examined a conflict between a coalition of Orange (Japan) and Carnation (Manchuria), and an alliance of Blue (United States), Pink (Russia), Red (Great Britain), and Yellow (China). The conflict began when Orange and Pink began fighting, without a declaration of war, over contested land in and around Manchuria. The Allied powers, after trying to mediate a solution, entered the war in support of Pink.⁵⁵

As with previous scenarios, the College relied on committees that initially analyzed the individual issues, and then evaluated the problem as a whole. In this way, the students began with an understanding of each of the powers' political goals, capabilities, and limitations. To achieve this, individual committee members represented the views of each state and this information was then used to develop viable courses of action. The Operations Committee put forth two options; a

⁵⁴Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, 39-40; Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy*, 80-82.

⁵⁵Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, 39. To increase the realism of the problem, the College used the available up-to-date information and intelligence. For example, from 1931 to 1935 there was an ongoing debate within the pages of *Foreign Affairs* between the American, British, and Japanese Admiralty over the appropriateness of the limitations on naval construction within the Five-Power Treaty. This information, as well as contemporary news articles and political statements, was used to frame the problem for the students, and to establish the limitations on their efforts.

quick strike deep into the heart of Japanese waters or a methodical advance from Hawaii to Japan establishing bases along the way. The quick strike was necessary because contrary to stated U.S. policy; the class recognized it was extremely unlikely the Army garrison in the Philippines could retain the islands after a Japanese invasion. Capt. Halsey, future Fleet Admiral Halsey, dispatched the first idea, however, when he categorically stated that the lift capacity of the allies was insufficient for such an effort. If the United States and its allies wanted to effectively face the Japanese in their territorial waters they must first establish bases in the Pacific. This meant that instead of a quick decisive war, a conflict in the Pacific would be a long drawn out affair, even if ultimately successful.⁵⁶

Although Halsey eliminated the first option as impossible, the work he performed at the AWC broadened his perspective to not just the Army's view of campaigning, but also the perspective of the nation's political leadership. In his 1947 autobiography he wrote,

“At Newport we had studied the strategy and tactics of naval campaigns, with emphasis on the problems of logistics. At Washington we studied larger scale-wars not campaigns - and from the viewpoint of the top echelon.”⁵⁷

Once the course of action was determined, the committees began their examination of the myriad of issues facing the parties. They looked at everything from the financial resources that both China and Russia might require, and how the United States and Britain would be able to

⁵⁶Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, 40-42. The year prior to his attendance at AWC, Capt. Halsey attended the Naval War College where he worked on an Orange – Blue scenario. He represented the Orange side at the AWC, and had a detailed knowledge of Japanese thinking. The Naval War College 1933 class assessed that if the United States attempted a quick strike, the Japanese would establish a defensive posture and use their lighter forces (submarines, destroyers, torpedo boats, mine layers, and cruisers) to attrite U.S. forces as they advanced on Japan. Without fortified bases en route, the U.S. Navy could not repair ships in the Western Pacific – instead it would have to evacuate them to Hawaii for repairs. Thus, by the time the U.S. arrived off the Japanese coast, their forces would have been significantly weakened through attrition and mechanical breakdowns. Then in one major capital ship engagement, with the support of aircraft from the Japanese mainland, the Japanese would defeat the U.S. Navy.

⁵⁷William F. Halsey, and J. Bryan, III, *Admiral Halsey's Story* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1947), 54.

share the costs; to how long it would take the United States to ramp up industrial production and what this would do to the labor pool; and to how domestic politics would affect the war effort. One key conclusion was the need for realistic goals that could be explained to the public. Public disillusionment after WWI had significantly soured Americans on the prospect of renewed American conflict and unless the planners could produce realistic goals, they feared the U.S. public would not support American military action in support of Russia.⁵⁸

Once the committees finished the plan of operations they looked past the combat to develop a post-conflict plan for peace. They determined the aftermath of the Treaty of Versailles was leading to renewed militarization in Europe and an increase in tensions, and sought a plan that would prevent this from occurring. They therefore needed a plan that punished Japanese aggression while concurrently establishing conditions for lasting peace. At this time the United States was extremely concerned with the security of China and did not want to replace one aggressor with another. One committee even recommended the United States consider whether supporting Russia might generate an even more dangerous power in the region. The Russians had natural resources roughly equal to the United States and if they defeated the Japanese they might be able to dominate the region.⁵⁹

In 1937 the “Big Problem” looked at a coalition between the Nazi aligned nations in Europe, and Japan in the Pacific. The scenario required the students to prepare for a multi-front war and to decide how to approach the conflict. The committees evaluated likely enemy courses of action and considered two scenarios for the German led coalition: the first a defensive posture to contain the French while the combined German and Japanese armies defeated Russia, and the

⁵⁸Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy*, 68-70; Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, 40-47.

⁵⁹Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, 45. By 1934 the Treaty of Versailles was commonly referred to as a Carthaginian peace. A Carthaginian peace is commonly defined as a peace treaty so severe that it means the virtual destruction of the defeated contestant. In this case the Treaty of Versailles had so devastated the Germans that it sowed the seeds for the next war.

second a quick defeat of France followed by air attacks and blockades against Britain. The committee believed the Germans would choose the second. The committee then examined two allied options. The first involved offensive operations against the Japanese while containing the German led coalition in Europe, and the second the reverse. Again the committee chose the second, which mirrored Roosevelt and Churchill's ultimate strategic calculations.⁶⁰

The 1938 and 1939 classes switched their focus back to the Americas, and in early 1939, Army Deputy Chief of Staff, Major General George C. Marshall, requested the War College conduct two highly secret studies on the forces needed to protect Brazil and Venezuela from Axis influence. The faculty segregated the committee assigned to the project from the rest of the students, and the even the majority of the General Staff did not know of the study.⁶¹

One of the final plans assigned before the school suspended operations was Rainbow-X. This plan, created in the winter and spring of 1940, looked at a war involving a Berlin-Rome-Tokyo coalition. After evaluating the threat and assuming German domination of the continent before the United States could enter the war, the committee recommended the following:

1. Put pressure on Germany by opening up "additional theatres on the German flanks, so as to disperse German efforts and force the expenditure of resources and reserve supplies."
2. Employ "economic strangulation" against Germany concurrently with the pressure upon its flanks.
3. "The Allies will avoid decisive military operations until Germany becomes over-extended or weakened, at which time they will strike a coordinated blow in a decisive direction."
4. "It is intended that all Allied measures will be continued until the German Army is defeated, the country occupied, and the people subjugated."
5. "The Allied attitude in the Pacific will be purely defensive, based on a strategy of first concentrating every effort toward the defeat of Germany."

⁶⁰Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, 72-78.

⁶¹Mark S. Watson, *U.S. Army in World War II: Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1950), 94.

These recommendations foreshadowed key aspects of the Victory Plan developed upon America's entry into the war, and demonstrate that the students were looking at not just how to win campaigns, but how to develop all-encompassing strategy.⁶²

World War II

Between 1920 and 1940 the Army War College grew significantly in both size and significance following its post-WWI reopening. From McAndrew's "Big Problem" through Connor's "Preparation for War" and "Conduct of War" models for organizing the curriculum, and finally incorporating considerations related to fighting with allies, the AWC remained focused on training officers that could serve on the General Staff. Thus, even though the War College closed its doors in the summer of 1940, its graduates, serving in key senior staff and command positions, continued to shape Army decision making and effectiveness throughout the coming years of worldwide conflict.⁶³

In 1940 the Army remained relatively small with approximately 230,000 men, but by 1945 it had expanded to over eight million. The officer corps grew from 14,000 to almost a half million. Even though the AWC graduated only slightly more than 2,000 officers between its inception and its temporary closure in 1940, and these graduates made up significantly less than one percent of the officer corps at war's end, they formed the core of senior Army leadership. Of the approximately 1,000 general officers serving at war's end, over 600 were AWC graduates. According to Eisenhower, the War College helped him to understand all of the aspects of national

⁶²Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, 107-109; Steven T. Ross, ed. *American War Plans 1919-1941: Vol. 5 – Plans for Global War: Rainbow-5 and the Victory Program 1941* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992), 168-176. Section IV of the September 11, 1941 Joint Board Estimate of the United States Over-All Production Requirements, Major Strategy of the United States and its Associates (para. 21-28), mirrors many of the recommendations of the Rainbow-X planning team.

⁶³Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy*, 88-91.

power that were needed to fight the war. Later in life when reflecting on his War College experience he said,

The War College marks a great change in [your way of] thinking... Formal education up until the time of the War College had been concerned with the techniques, the tactics, the logistics of battle... Now you are thinking about war and about victory in war, or better about keeping us out of war. The strength of a nation can never be measured merely in guns, planes, tanks, and ships. The real influence of a nation in the world is measured by the product of its spiritual, its economic, and its military strength. And so, realizing that war involves every facet of human existence and thinking, every asset that humans have developed, all of the resources of nature, here [at the Army War College] education deserts the formerly narrow business of winning a tactical victory on the battlefield; it is now concerned with the nation.⁶⁴

Although classes at the AWC were suspended for the war, the college had once again provided the Army with a cadre of senior officers who could provide effective leadership in a range of duty positions throughout the United States Army during a world war.

Winston Churchill focused on America's ability to generate great leaders from such a small pool in his remarks to the Army General Staff in 1946.

It remains to me a mystery as yet unexplained how the very small staffs which the United States kept during the years of peace were able to not only build up the armies and air force units, but also to find the leaders and vast staffs capable of handling enormous masses and of moving them faster and farther than masses have been moved in war before... I think it is a prodigy of organization, of improvisation. There have been many occasions when a powerful state has wished to raise great armies, and with time and money and discipline and loyalty that can be accomplished. Nevertheless the rate at which the small American Army of only a few hundred thousand men, not long before the war, created the mighty force of millions of soldiers is a wonder of history.⁶⁵

It remained to be seen whether the War College, upon its reopening after the war, would continue to demonstrate this remarkable effectiveness.

⁶⁴Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, 180; Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 136-137. Between 1920 and 1940, 52% of all AWC graduates achieved flag rank. These included four of the nine officers who received five-stars: Generals of the Army Eisenhower and Bradley, and Fleet Admirals Nimitz and Halsey. As war approached the percentages increased so that between 1934 and 1940, 65% attained flag rank.

⁶⁵Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 135-138 and 155; Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy*, 254-264; Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, 180.

THE ARMY WAR COLLEGE AND JOINT EDUCATION POST WORLD WAR II

During WWII, the AWC again suspended classes, but when the Department of the Army reopened the school, due to changes in the organization of the U.S. military and increased emphasis on joint training, its curriculum differed significantly from that of the pre-war years. The first change came when the services moved from two departments – each responsible for relatively autonomous execution of America’s wars – to a Joint Staff and later Department of Defense, which sought to integrate planning and execution between the services. The second occurred within the Army and changed the underlying philosophy of the AWC. From its inception in 1903 the War College focused on creating outstanding staff officers who could serve on both the General Staff and at high levels of command. This goal was supported by placing the AWC directly under the Secretary, by focusing on collective and practical education to improve student learning and contributions to the continually under-resourced Department, and by using the development of executable war plans as the basis for the practical components of the curriculum. When the AWC reopened in 1950, its focus changed from the training model created by Bliss to that of an institution focused primarily on education, where ultimately students earned a masters and worked primarily alone.⁶⁶

When Bliss completed his analysis of Root’s goals for Army reform dealing with the AWC, he made two proposals that he believed would enable it to develop the General Staff officers and senior leaders the Army required. He recommended keeping the College in Washington, close to the General Staff, so that faculty and students could easily coordinate with the General Staff on research projects and the creation of war plans. He also envisioned the school as a “collegium,” or body of men working together to do something rather than

⁶⁶Ball, *Of Responsible Command*, 257-277 and 485-494; Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 33-40; Army War College, “U.S. Army War College Academic Programs,” AWC, <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/about/academicPrograms.cfm> (accessed November 23, 2013).

individually learning how to do something. In its post-war incarnation, the College lost both of these fundamental strengths, moving to Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania (hours away from the Department of the Army Staff), and focusing more on individual projects than on men working together as a staff to achieve a common goal. Although these changes may have appeared modest at the time of their implementation, they created a ripple effect that significantly altered both the focus and type of instruction at the AWC after 1950.⁶⁷

The Joint Schools

As WWII continued into its third year, the Army Air Forces recommended the departments establish a joint school to train officers from the different services. Enthusiastically endorsed by the War Department, and begrudgingly by the Navy, the Army - Navy Staff College (ANSCOL) formed in 1943 to support the integration of the services and developed ANSCOL along the lines of the AWC. Students worked in committees to analyze issues and each class worked as a whole on one major problem. After the war, however, the focus gradually changed and although they continued to use committees, the focus shifted towards a college-like education that emphasized individual scholarship.⁶⁸

⁶⁷Ball, *Of Responsible Command*, 85-90; Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 77; Frye, *Marshall: Citizen Soldier*, 90; Joan Johnson-Freese, *Educating America's Military* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 113-125. Dr. Johnson-Freese is a Professor of National Security Affairs and past Department Chair at the Naval War College and critically evaluates the current PME system within the US military with a focus on the War Colleges. She asserts that academic rigor at the War Colleges is lacking and that currently many consider a year at the War College as a rest period. In her recommendations she highlights General Petraeus' experience at Princeton with the War Colleges and believes that all of the Colleges should strive to achieve that level of academic rigor and graduate scholarship.

⁶⁸Armed Forces Staff College, *Command History: the Armed Forces Staff College, 1946-1981* (Norfolk: Armed Forces Staff College, 1982), 3; Ball, *Of Responsible Command*, 257-258; Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 139 – 140; Franklin M. Davis, Jr., “The Dilemma of Senior Service Colleges – A Commentary,” in the *System for Educating Military Officers in the U.S.*, ed. Lawrence J. Korb (Pittsburgh: International Studies Association, 1982), 107-115; Frederick H. Hartmann, “The War Colleges in Perspective,” in *System for Educating Military*, 129-132; Howard J. Wiarda, *Military Brass vs. Civilian Academics at the National War College – A Clash of Cultures* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), 149-156. The common theme running through these writings is that the War Colleges are attempting to

Upon its formation in 1943, ANSCOL's student body included colonels and lieutenant colonels from the Army Ground Forces, the Army Air Forces, the Navy, and the Marines. These men went on to plan and lead the execution of the final campaigns of the war. The school graduated twelve classes during the war, and the last five included the State Department. The twenty-one week course included training in Leavenworth, Orlando, Newport, and Washington, where the students worked in committees to plan major amphibious landings. The course followed a modified AWC curriculum that focused on collectively solving one major problem based on guidance received directly from senior leaders. ANSCOL closed after three years, but served as the initial blueprint for the DOD joint schools.⁶⁹

With the end of the war, and the transition to peace, the U.S. military rethought how it trained its servicemembers. Generals Marshall and Eisenhower discussed reinstating the AWC, but they agreed that the establishment of a Joint Army and Navy War College eliminated the need for a separate AWC. They both supported the idea of joint education and believed America's participation in WWII, and the lessons it drew from that experience would lead to significant changes in both the training and structure of the military. With the strong backing of the U.S. Army, the National War College was established in 1946 with the mission of preparing,

“selected personnel of the armed forces and the State Department for the exercise of joint high level policy, command and staff functions, and for the performance of strategic planning duties in their respective departments; and to promote the development of understanding of those agencies of government and those factors of power potential which are an essential part of a national war effort.”

simulate a University learning environment, but because of their unique differences they are unable to function as a fully independent “educational” facility. This environment includes a broad based education that is designed to expand the students knowledge base at it is not an institution where practical hands-on information is trained.

⁶⁹House Armed Services Committee, *Panel on Military Education of the One Hundredth Congress*, 101st Cong., 1st sess., 1989, 43-44; The National War College, *The National War College – Academic Year 1959-1960* (Washington, DC: National War College, 1960), 5-6.

The National War College focused on all the elements of national power and was initially contemplated as the pinnacle of U.S. military education. Although the National War College continues to focus on educating individual senior leaders in the application of national power, it failed in its goal of remaining as the pinnacle of the military's officer education system. Although the Navy and Army Air Forces sent students to the National War College they both maintained their own war colleges, where they sent the majority of their students, and the Army, which had given up its war college, reversed its decision and reestablished the AWC in 1950.⁷⁰

In 1954, after the Korean War, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) established the National War College and Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) Survey Board to analyze the National War College and the ICAF by evaluating their roles, missions, and curricula in order to recommend how they could make the "most effective contribution" to senior military education. The Board analyzed the separate war colleges to see if the curricula at the National War College and the service war colleges overlapped. They found that the service colleges delved deeply into their areas of expertise and provided only a broad overview of national strategy while the National War College provided great depth in national strategy and only minimal analysis of individual service capabilities. Although the Board found that the war colleges worked in concert toward a common goal, it recommended changes. These involved the addition of combined training at the AWC that emphasized the joint aspect of military operations and included coverage of the elements of national power; and that students at the National War College include

⁷⁰House Committee, *Panel on Military Education*, 44-45; and National War College, *The National War College*, 14-15; National War College, "About NWC: What We Do – and How We Do It," NWC, <http://www.ndu.edu/nwc/AboutNWC/AboutNWC.cfm> (accessed November 21, 2013); Department of Defense. *Report to the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the National War College and Industrial College of the Armed Forces Survey Board*, prepared by the National War College and Industrial College of the Armed Forces Survey Board, 1955, 6-7.

prior graduates from the services' war colleges. This would return the National War College to the pinnacle of U.S. military education while broadening the education of its attendees.⁷¹

Today the National War College trains senior O-5s and O-6s, but it has not achieved the level of distinction held by the AWC prior to the war. Instead of serving as the premier War College within the DOD system, the National War College provides merely one of many options for senior service college selectees. During the 2013 academic year, Army selectees could attend one of thirty-five different American military senior service colleges, ranging from the AWC with 158 seats down to Yale University's Jackson Institute for Global Affairs, with only one. Thus, although the National War College remains an important part of the DOD education system, it serves as merely one of its many interrelated elements. The other significant difference between the National War College and the pre-WWII AWC exists in its focus on educating officers as opposed to training them. Students who attend the National War College pursue a Masters Degree in National Security & Strategic Studies. This requirement to meet academic standards set by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association prevents the College from focusing all of its efforts on a single "Big Problem", or from acting as an adjunct to the JCS while it answers questions from the highest levels of the DOD.⁷²

⁷¹DOD, *Report to the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 5-18.

⁷²National War College, "Students," NWC, <http://www.ndu.edu/nwc/Students/Students.cfm> (accessed November 21, 2013); U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, *Senior Service College College/Fellowship/Foreign School Information Ay 2012-2013*, USACAC, http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/IPO/repository/SSC_Schools_%20Info_Catalog_AY12-13%5B1%5D.pdf (accessed November 21, 2013); House Committee, *Panel on Military Education*, 48; USACAC, *Senior Service College College Ay 2012-2013*; NWC, "Students"; and National Defense University, "NDU Accreditation," NDU, <http://www.ndu.edu/aa/accreditation.cfm> (accessed November 22, 2013). The House Committee recommended the National War College become the pinnacle of military education system by changing the student body and including attendance as a prerequisite for some three and four-star billets. They recommended that the student body include fifty O-6s through O-8s with potential for three and four star rank, twenty-five senior government civilians involved in national security policy (primarily from the State Department, DOD and CIA), and twenty-five senior civilians in and outside of government who are not involved in national security policy. They also recommended that attendance at

The Army War College, 1950 – 2014

In 1948 General Bradley convened a board led by Lieutenant General Eddy, the Commandant of the Fort Leavenworth schools, to assess the Army education system with specific focus on the need for a “war college like” institution. The Eddy Board recommended the Army create a CGSC Advanced Course, which would be the highest school within the Army educational system. They further recommended that the National War College remain the highest school that Army officers could attend within the military education system, thereby placing the National War College on the pedestal that Eisenhower had envisioned after WWII.⁷³

General J. Lawton Collins, who replaced Bradley, implemented the recommendations of the Eddy Board with the following modifications. He changed the CGSC Advanced Course to the AWC, and decided to locate them separately. The AWC reopened in 1950 at Fort Leavenworth but moved a year later to Carlisle Barracks, and the College’s mission changed from the pre-war mission of preparing officers to serve on the General Staff to preparing graduates to “understand the lessons from WWII and prepare students for the bipolar environment of the Cold War.”⁷⁴

Graduates who demonstrated higher-level capacity for command continued their education at the National War College in classes that included officers from all of the services, combining their service specific knowledge to learn how to operate in a joint environment. In 1968 the DOD officially changed the status of the National War College so that it no longer

the War College become a “desired” qualification for theatre and other critical jobs identified by the Chairman of the JCS.

⁷³Department of the Army. *Department of the Army Board on the Educational System for Officers Report to the Army Chief of Staff*, prepared by the Department of the Army Board on the Educational System for Officers, 1949, <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/cgsc/carl/docs/EddyBoardMHI.pdf> (accessed November 26, 2013) 1-8 and 16; House Committee, *Panel on Military Education*, 44-47.

⁷⁴Army War College, “History,” AWC, <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/about/Historic.cfm> (accessed November 26, 2013).

served as the pinnacle of military education. The National War College became just one of several war colleges, each equivalent to the other – officers who attended one would not attend another. In fact, in recent years officers have managed to attain high command without attending any war college, as demonstrated by senior leaders like General David Petraeus, who replaced his senior service college requirement with a Masters from Princeton.⁷⁵

Currently the war colleges face a crossroads in their development. The AWC started as an institution intended to prepare a select few officers to serve on the General Staff, but today the AWC serves as a DOD version of civilian graduate schools with a focus on military matters. This crossroads has led to an animated debate between those individuals who believe that a lack of rigor at the war colleges means they no longer fulfill a necessary function, and those who believe that the war colleges are a necessary part of an officer's education. Both sides appear to agree that senior officers require additional education on the intricacies of international affairs as they move into higher levels of command, but their views differ on the method by which officers should receive that education. It seems likely that future AWC classes will continue to receive an education focused primarily on strategic leadership and international affairs, rather than a practical, collaborative learning experience that includes significant opportunities to work as a staff on contemporary real-world problems, as advocated by Bliss.⁷⁶

⁷⁵House Committee, *Panel on Military Education*, 45; Johnson-Freese, *Educating America's Military*, 10.

⁷⁶Tom Ricks, "Need budget cuts? We probably can start by shutting the Air War College," *The Best Defense: Tom Ricks's Daily Take on National Security*, entry posted April 11, 2011, http://ricks.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/04/11/need_budget_cuts_we_probably_can_start_by_shutting_the_air_war_college (accessed November 26, 2013); Dr. George E. Reed, "What's Wrong and What's Right with War Colleges?" *DefensePolicy.org*, entry posted July 1, 2011, <http://www.defensepolicy.org/george-reed/what's-wrong-and-right-with-the-war-colleges> (accessed November 26, 2013); David H. Petraeus, "Beyond the Cloister," *American Interest* vol. 2, no. 6 (July/August 2007): 16-20; Ralph Peters, "Learning to Lose," *American Interest* vol. 2, no. 6 (July/August 2007): 20-28; Johnson-Freese, *Educating America's Military*, 8-12; and Wiarda, *Military Brass vs. Civilian Academics*, 149-156; Army War College, "About the US Army War College," AWC, <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/about/aboutUs.cfm> (accessed

CONCLUSION

When Elihu Root established the AWC he envisioned a school where a select group of officers prepared for service with the General Staff and higher-level commands. This school would act as an adjunct to the General Staff and supplement their efforts by coordinating on the development of real-world war plans and by providing research on queries generated by the General Staff. When General Bliss was ordered to organize the school, he made two key recommendations that he believed necessary to ensure its long-term relevance: keep the school in Washington, in close proximity to the War Department, and keep it under the direct control of the General Staff. The experience of the Spanish-American War scarred the Army, leaving both Root and Bliss determined to prevent the Army from entering its next conflict unprepared – particularly in the training of its senior leaders. Therefore, they wanted a school that emphasized hands-on training of senior officers to prepare them for large-scale operations. Bliss developed his curriculum around the idea of a collegium, or group of men working together to learn, and believed that the best environment to train these officers would focus on teachers and students working together. Although the AWC evolved between its introduction in 1903 and the beginning of WWII, it retained several key characteristics throughout this period. Learning occurred primarily through studying real-world scenarios and war plans based on potential conflicts the nation might find itself in. These scenarios served as the focus for learning throughout the year and allowed the students to study the myriad of issues associated with war. The students worked in committees, which fostered the development of friendships while preparing them for the give and take necessary in joint operations, and finally, the AWC's close association with the General Staff allowed the General Staff to identify specific research projects for each class and the

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students to reach out to the General Staff for support when their needs exceeded the capabilities of the AWC faculty.⁷⁷

This method of instruction and the AWC's close relationship with the General Staff led it to become the pinnacle educational institution within the U.S. military prior to WWII. In Admiral Halsey's words, "at Newport we had studied the strategy and tactics of naval campaigns, with emphasis on the problems of logistics. At Washington we studied on a larger scale – wars not campaigns – and from the viewpoint of the top echelon." After WWII, Eisenhower and Marshall intended for the National War College to become the pinnacle of DOD education, but by 1968 it had evolved into merely one of five equivalent war colleges. Additionally, once the AWC moved to Carlisle Barracks it lost the close connection to the Department of the Army that Bliss and Root viewed as essential to maintaining its relevance and grounding in real-world problems.⁷⁸

Today the war colleges represent one of many paths to further senior officer education, and they no longer center on the learning by doing methodology that Bliss developed. With this in mind, the DOD might consider evaluating whether it should reinstitute a course based on the foundational principles in the pre-WWII AWC's curriculum, recreating a learning experience that supports the goals that Bliss developed, but updated based on the National War College and Industrial College of the Armed Forces Survey Board's and the Skelton Committee's proposals.

Representative Skelton's Committee recommended a change in the National War College's mission to educating colonels to major generals in preparation for three and four star commands. The National War College and Industrial College of the Armed Forces Survey Board recommended that the National War College maintain a position as the pinnacle of DOD

⁷⁷Ball, *Of Responsible Command*, 89 and 248.

⁷⁸William F. Halsey, and J. Bryan, III, *Admiral Halsey's Story* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1947), 54; House Committee, *Panel on Military Education*, 45-48; Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 151-167.

education, and Bliss recommended a facility located in Washington, where students worked directly for the War Department and used a “Big Problem” to learn how to prepare for, conduct, and recover from war. To combine these recommendations the DOD could consider creating a new course that each year brings together a select group of senior leaders within the national security establishment, that utilizes current intelligence to allow the students to analyze real world contingencies, and that works directly for the JCS to guarantee the students work on the most consequential threats currently facing the United States. This course’s purpose would not be to educate these leaders in strategy, which according to academics like Dr. Andrew Bacevich, can only be done correctly at civilian institutions. The course’s purpose would be to train leaders in the execution of operational art to ensure that when the next conflict arises our senior leaders understand all of the instruments of national power that are available to successfully execute their mission.⁷⁹

In accordance with the Skelton Committee the course should be limited to approximately fifty military students, twenty-five government civilians involved with national security policy, and twenty-five students from academia and private enterprise. This mixture would support the goals of Bliss and the Skelton Committee to create a place where students could develop the professional connections that would support the implementation of the United States’ strategic goals during the student’s future assignments. The Skelton Committee believed the services should select senior colonels through major generals that they believed had the potential to attain senior flag rank, and request that the Departments of State, Homeland Security, and the Defense Civilian agencies choose students they believe would most likely serve in comparable positions in

⁷⁹House Committee, *Panel on Military Education*, 130; Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy*, 267; DOD, *Report to the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 3-7; Pappas, *Prudens Futuri*, 94; Army War College, “2010 Teaching Strategy Conference- Dr. Andrew Bacevich,” YouTube video, 8:35, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X6K6aagV9KU&list=PLBA15ADDE22B06CFB> (accessed January 23, 2014).

the future. The remaining twenty-five students could come from amongst prestigious academics, and members of private industry in order to add significant value to the student body.⁸⁰ Staff from the National War College and liaison officers from the Joint Staff could facilitate the course, to maintain the close connection with the JCS and to provide support and direction. Bringing together this wide diversity of students would build the collegium that Bliss believed in, and enable the senior leaders of tomorrow to have previously worked together in an academic setting that prepared them to coordinate all of the United States' national instruments of power.

Working for the JCS, the school could receive the latest intelligence available to the U.S. government, and insight into DOD and Administration policies. This close working relationship would allow the Joint Staff to quickly update assessments as the situation changed while also allowing students to coordinate with experts on the Joint Staff and gain both an appreciation for the institutional knowledge within the Joint Staff, and increase their understanding of the intelligence assets available at the highest levels within the DOD.

To enable students to create fully developed plans for dealing with anticipated real-world scenarios, the course should last about ten months, in keeping with the trends established by the war colleges and the recommendations of the Skelton Committee. Similarly, the focal point of the training should remain potential real world conflicts the students might face within the next five to ten years. The region of interest would provide a focus for learning during the course, enabling students to look at issues associated with pre-conflict preparation, conflict execution, and post-conflict restoration of peace in a very practical, hands-on manner, in keeping with the pre-WWII AWC. As the students progressed through the course, they would evaluate each phase of a potential conflict to ensure they understood not only their responsibilities in case of conflict, but also the contributions they could expect from the different instruments of national power. As

⁸⁰House Committee, *Panel on Military Education*, 130.

Gideon Rose argues in his book, *How Wars End*, it is not the execution of war that America needs to improve upon, it is the execution of the peace afterwards. At the completion of the course the students would brief the JCS, and other interested senior government officials on the results of their studies. This would provide the JCS with the Skelton Committee's "non-service-oriented military and civilian strategic thought."⁸¹

If implemented, this plan might recreate the pinnacle institution that Root, Bliss, Eisenhower, Marshall, the National War College & ICAF Survey Board, and the Skelton Committee proposed. In 1899, when Secretary Root began developing his concept for the AWC, he recognized the need for a school where the best and the brightest could prepare for future threats through the process of learning by doing. Today, the war colleges' missions involves providing continuing education across a broad array of topics affecting national security.⁸² This broad, strategic, education-focused approach, while effective at introducing senior officers to strategic thinking, represents a significant divergence from the views upon which AWC's founders based its curriculum. This new course could offer the DOD an opportunity to revive Secretary Root's vision and renew the concepts that led to success in WWI and WWII.

⁸¹Gideon Rose, *How Wars End – Why We Always Fight the Last Battle* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2010), xi-xiv; House Committee, *Panel on Military Education*, 131.

⁸²Center for Strategic & International Studies, *Professional Military Education: An Asset for Peace and Progress*, chaired by Dick Cheney (Washington, DC: CSIS, 1997), 41-43.

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