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89Subjects of Work at the Naval War College.

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When war was declared the belligerent powers recruited their forces with more or less deliberation and hostilities usually began on a small scale. As the armed forces ashore and afloat increased, a series of secondary operations gave them some experience of war and developed leaders, until at last in the second or third year of war the belligerents began to exert their full combatant strength.

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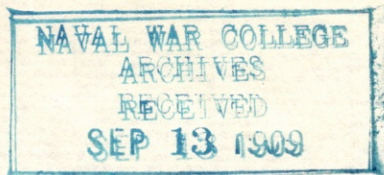
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the antecedent preparation for war has been developed to such an extent by the great military nations that a few days' notice enables them to utilize the whole armed strength of the nation and strike their heaviest blows at once.

(4) War deals with both moral and physical factors and is directed by experience and intelligence; and all these points must be considered in the preparation for war.

To the physical side belong the preparation and accumulation of men and material, their organization and administration.

To the moral side belongs (among other factors) the development of a war-like attitude of mind on the part of the leaders in contradistinction to the peaceful attitude of mind and temper fostered by years of inaction. Finally the preparation for war involves the accumulation of personal experience of war (so far as may be) by various forms of study whose bases and methods rest upon the collated experience and data of actual warfare.

(5) In our country, as in others where the nation makes no special point of maintaining its armed forces in a high state of readiness for war, the accumulation of men and supplies, the development of suitable organization and methods of administration, the change of the mental attitude of the leaders from a peace to a war standard, and the acquirement of warlike experience all take place after the outbreak of hostilities. The provision of men and material belongs to the financial and supply sides of the naval and military establishments; but all the other branches of preparation mentioned above are not physical, but moral and educational, and as such are proper subjects for a War College to deal with in time of peace, because during such peace, necessarily there can be no development of warlike experience. So to guide us aright, we must

depend upon study and forethought to be ready for war, instead of waiting upon costly experience to correct us, perhaps too late, after war has begun.

(6) During peace, a military or naval service tends to establish standards which are very distinct from those of war and entirely unsuited to it. In the first place, war seems remote and effort to be ready is somewhat relaxed, the methods of preparation and the drills and exercises come into prominence as ends in themselves rather than merely as means to success; further, treasury requirements and the routine of the supply departments hamper the organization and the whole system of administration becomes ponderous, inflexible and inefficient, and the outbreak of war is not unlikely to find the combatant services in a very unsatisfactory condition.

It is said that at the beginning of our war with Spain the head of one of the great supply departments of our army was heard to complain of his hard luck that after years of labor, just as he had succeeded in placing his department in perfect working order, the war came to strike everything into confusion. The idea that his department, in common with the rest of the army should make the transition readily from peace to war and remain efficient seemed beyond his imagination. In the second place, a long peace develops a frame of mind and character very unsuited to war. In peace there is an organization to be administered and no enemy to be thought of. Discipline and subordination are the standards of duty which form men's characters, and there is a strong tendency to establish a standard of efficiency whose distinguishing characteristics are caution, a wish to avoid responsibility by reference to higher authority and a desire to economize and to get large returns for small expenditures.

A character formed under such influences and dominated by such ideals is not suitable for war.

War is a conflict of volitions no less than of physical strength, and characters molded, matured and petrified by the influence of long years of peace are unfitted to assume at once, or perhaps at all, the boldness, resolution and fearlessness of responsibility which general experience shows to be most successful in war.

(7) To counteract the unfavorable influences of peace upon naval administration and character, it is necessary constantly to keep in mind the conditions of war and to work to the demands of these conditions. To maintain these conditions before the service and to assure them due influence in the development of the Navy is the object of this War College.

It should never allow itself to fall into details of administration, since that would make it an executive office, but the principles of organization and administration of the ^{Department} Navy and all its allied offices are proper subjects for discussion and recommendation by the War College, because during peace both organization and administration have a tendency to become cumbrous and unsuitable for war. As it is a great part of the national preparation for war to have administration working smoothly if the nation is to develop its resources as quickly as modern conditions require, therefore the War College must examine the system in use to see that it is satisfactory.

It is equally the duty of a War College to train and develop in officers the cast of character which is most suitable for war and for dealing with warlike conditions, so that when it comes they will not find themselves incapacitated by new conditions, which have never been contemplated; like a tourist from the sea level wandering in the mountains who falls exhausted, more from the unaccustomed rarity of the atmosphere than from the severity of his exertions.

(8) This duty of a War College to keep the methods and standards of war before the leaders of the service is a part of that general preparation for war while yet at peace whose development we owe to Prussia. On the other hand, the whole of preparation for war is matter for the consideration and study of the War College. This development of peace preparation and consequent readiness as the basis of successful war includes the following branches.

1. The organization and training of reserves of men for augmenting the armed forces.
2. The accumulation of sufficient warlike material in readiness.
3. The accumulation of military information and data.
4. The preparation of plans of campaign.
5. The training of battle leaders (or in other words, the acquirement, as well as may be, of warlike experience in time of peace).
6. The training of character to meet the demands of war.

(9) Of these branches the first two are administrative and executive in their functions and only the organization and results of the work of the departments dealing with them are proper subjects for the consideration of the War College, which should never burden itself with administrative details of any part of the service organization.

The second two branches form another group closely allied to each other, and at the same time quite distinct from the third two branches, which latter are matters of education to be dealt with after the manner of other educational subjects and being directly educational in their nature, they are particularly the field of a war college.

(10) It is appropriate here to glance over the educational methods of our Navy and see how they fit our needs.

To train our officers we have a Naval Academy where prospective officers are given general education as well as courses in the technical branches belonging to the sea, to naval mechanics and to naval drills, but the Academy makes no pretense to teach the conduct of war.

After graduation the midshipmen practice those branches of their profession which relate to the safety and efficiency of their commands, and the examinations at promotion are assumed by the authorities to direct postgraduate study in desirable directions. But here again little or nothing is done to promote the education of officers in war.

Further, there are certain postgraduate schools which teach some technical branches of the naval business, but these branches deal with problems of mechanics and physics rather than with war.

Finally, we come to the Naval War College which is concerned chiefly with the art of war, but with other professional branches only as subordinate to the art of war.

(11) Let us now review in a little fuller manner how these different schools and examinations educate and instruct the Navy.

Every profession embraces a science and an art. The science deals with principles, with the accumulation of facts, and with history. Its end is solely knowledge.

The art deals with the application of the science to concrete cases and its object is the accomplishment of useful work.

The science is only a preliminary acquirement by way of secure foundation; the art is the objective of all professional education.

In former times education was held very nearly to cease with the acquirement of science and the art of a profession was picked up haphazard by undirected practice. Recent develop-

ment has brought the art of professions more within the domain of formal education and the usual method of instruction is that of dealing with concrete cases under skilled criticism and direction.

(12) A century ago naval education left much wanting and our Naval Academy was founded to give a sound education to young officers, but the professional branches covered at the Academy teaches only the technique of arts subordinate to and allied with naval war, as the arts of seamanship, navigation, engine driving, gunnery, etc., and in these branches not only the science is taught but the art as well. Of warfare nothing or next to nothing was or is taught.

(13) When we come to post-graduate examinations as a means of enforcing officers to acquire and maintain an education, we find that the subject of war is introduced into the naval curriculum; but while the examinations in the subordinate branches are conducted not only as inquiries into the candidate's knowledge of the science, but also as to his ability in the art; in the subject of warfare, the examination is in the science only, to the neglect of the art.

Thus in navigation, the examinee may be told to explain Mercator's projection which tests his science, but he also may be told to work a time sight which is a trial of his art.

But in an examination in warfare it may be asked "What is a line of communication"? which touches the science of war, but an officer is never told "Under such and such conditions, choose a line of communications from the United States to the Philippines," which would test his art of war.

Therefore, we can not hope that examinations as at present conducted in naval tactics and strategy will do anything to

improve our conduct of war when the time comes, for the reason that such examinations test the examinee's memory only, not his skill. As Doctor Beyer pointed out in his recent lecture, art is to be acquired only by practice and we must practice the forms of mental activity which arise in war in order to be successful in it. Reading and scholarship alone cannot form a successful leader in war. There must be practice as well and the duty of a war college is to afford opportunity for practice in the mental exercises of war. The army endeavors to afford this practice. In an examination the examinee has actually to handle a battalion or a regiment. He is taken out in the field and he demonstrates his ability there.

Of course, such a demonstration is not proof of one's fitness for one's profession, but it may demonstrate unfitness, and in so far it is good.

(14) In the military profession, Prussia was the first to undertake formal instruction in the art of war, as distinct from the science, and the method was that of dealing with concrete cases of war; a method now common in many other arts and professions.

Definite military situations were given out for consideration in many forms, and solutions were made under skilled supervision and criticism, whereby the students acquired military experience ~~in~~ that conflict of volitions which has been alluded to previously.

But these ^{it}suppositions situations were necessarily unaccompanied by physical conflict and bloodshed and the development of the various moral forces and effects which play such important parts in war.

When in the solution of a strategic situation one of the contestants forms a resolution, it is a real act of war. The consequences of such a resolution in real war is in some physical situation such as a maneuver or a battle, whose solution lies

in the action of the combatant forces. In the map maneuver, however there can be no physical outcome to the resolution of the player and the situation immediately becomes unreal. In this dilemma recourse is had to the umpire, who refers to his knowledge of history to select a situation similar to the one which has arisen in the maneuver and then renders a probable solution based upon the case of actual war as a governing precedent. The umpire having thus cleared the ground, the way is open for the contestants to form new resolutions and thus the action moves on to another phase of physical contact of the opponents and a new appeal to the umpire for a new solution of the situation based on the history of actual war. In this way, the student is led to experience in his own person that part of the conduct of war which relates to the moral conflict of the leaders, and by such experience his character is braced to meet the responsibility of command. At the same time, the constant reference to history to learn what result may be expected from his resolutions makes his conclusions sound, gives him a training in war second only to experience in actual war, and makes the course of study practical in the highest degree.

Thus a student makes a great part of the art of war his own. The remarkably successful results which follow from studies so prosecuted and the disasters which follow their neglect are evident in the two great wars of this century (Boer War and Russo-Japanese).

(15) Let us now see what is done by our Naval War College to improve our conduct of war. When the College was first established it dealt only with the science of war. Captain Mahan's lectures on Naval Tactics and Strategy established for the first time the science of naval warfare on a sound basis. This was much, and when his works were published as

Naval Histories they were appreciated by the whole civilized world; much more indeed abroad than by his own country.

With this accomplishment the War College rested for some years until under the presidency of Captain Taylor it undertook to deal with the art of naval war by adopting "Kriegsspiel" from Germany and modifying it to meet naval requirements. But at that time the staff of the College was not prepared to instruct. The work of the students was unguided, for both they and the staff were groping in darkness together, the blind leading the blind. Accordingly progress has been slow. Nevertheless, at the present time some progress has been made; certain points in naval warfare have been definitely cleared up. Besides, it is now becoming recognized, just as Mahan pointed out in his lectures with regard to the science of war, so also in regard to the art of war, much work done by the army is available for the use of the navy.

Hitherto the War College has said to those attending its courses "find the path for yourselves," but all the considerations just mentioned show that it is now the duty of the College to avail itself of the prestige it has gained to point out the proper path of progress and aid the people to walk in it. The next step in the development of the War College is to assume authority and teach.

(16) For many years the Germans have been teaching their army two great doctrines, the doctrine of the "offense", and the doctrine of the "initiative". These two doctrines are just as necessary in naval warfare as in land warfare and evidence is not lacking that the German Navy has been as thoroughly imbued with them as the army. It is the more necessary for these doctrines to be systematically taught to the naval service because the influence of peace routine

opposes their growth and development in the mind and character of officers.

(17) The doctrine of the "offense" which the Germans take such pains to inculcate is the result of much experience of war and much study of military history. In war, there is both attack and defense; and each student is made to recognize that while defense is the stronger form of warfare, it is merely negative in its results. An attitude of defense is properly taken up only to delay the enemy and allow the conditions to change until there is a prospect of successful attack. If a combatant expects to remain permanently on the defensive, peace at once is better and less expensive.

On the other hand, offense is the weaker form of warfare but it is positive in its results. If one is strong enough to attack, he expects to gain something by his battle. Even in a defensive battle, if the defender repels the attack, he cannot profit greatly by his repulse of the enemy, except by passing to the offensive.

Thus the doctrine of the "offensive" teaches that only by attack at some stage of the strife (war or battle) can real success be won.

Nothing else is effective, yet after long peace the outbreak of war is apt to find leaders, who not having had proper training during peace, seek success by some other means than attack, who try to defeat the enemy by stratagems, deceit, maneuvers, or any other means which refrain from bloodshed.

The doctrine of "offense" teaches that such pitfalls are to be avoided and that ultimate success is only to be found in striking the enemy. This lesson is one the German army has learnt and teaches as the result of profound study of history, and the military world accepts it as true.

Although we know less of German naval views, yet what we do know warrants the belief that in the navy also the same doctrine is based on the facts of naval history.

Unfortunately, our Naval War College does not teach the doctrine of "offense" and if we look at the records of "Strategic situations" as solved by officers attending the College, there is abundant evidence to be seen in them that the doctrine is not a matter of intuition.

If our training for war is to keep pace with the most advanced nations our War College must teach this doctrine and impress it on the characters of naval officers.

(18) The doctrine of the initiative is the second great German doctrine of war. The usual meaning of the word is a starting or beginning, but in the military technical use, it has two shades of meaning.

As between two hostile forces, the initiative means the beginning of a course of action on the one side, while the other side remains in a state of expectancy.

As between a commander and his subordinate in the same force, initiative refers to the duty and privilege of the subordinate to begin a course of action without specific reference to his superior. This is so contrary to the usual idea of military discipline as exemplified in the familiar gospel story of the Roman centurion and the soldier that it calls for clear explanation.

The military art calls for the highest degree of cooperation between man and man to secure success. Discipline and the formation of character to ready obedience have always been the recognized means of obtaining such cooperation. But this literal obedience is desirable only where the

commander is actually present at the point where the order is to be executed and cognizant of existing circumstances, and usually it is less necessary the larger the command of the subordinate.

If conditions change between the issue of the order and its execution, it may no longer be advantageous to proceed; or suddenly arising circumstances may require a subordinate to act without instructions. In either case, opportunity occurs for initiative; by which is meant action according to the general intention of the commander rather than according to the exact letter of instructions. This is the highest form of cooperation. It is not license for the subordinate to do as he likes, but calls for entire loyalty to the commander and is possible only to subordinates who are completely informed as to the general plan of the commander and their own part in it. But as it allows freedom to the subordinate, so it demands responsibility from him and it is compatible with and indeed requires a high state of discipline to yield its greatest value. It is most necessary in the highest commands. In the lowest ranks initiative is least needed because the immediate superior sees the same facts at the same time, and can decide for himself as to the proper course.

Thus "initiative" is a question of the interpretation of orders; and consequently, of the formulation of orders, since they must be so framed as to give to subordinates both the necessary information and the necessary latitude to meet the situation intelligently. In teaching "initiative" as a part of the military art, the army relies largely upon the formulation of orders to meet specific situations known as "map problems". In solving such map problems, the student first makes a thorough analysis of the situation which serves to

develop his intention and then he formulates his order to convey necessary information, explain his intention and assign to each subordinate his part in the general plan. Such orders are then carefully examined and compared to expose omissions, superfluties and errors, and the class then undertakes to discuss and compare the various solutions in order to satisfy themselves as to what the proper course of action really is. When an officer can formulate a sound order he has made a long step in the art of leadership, because to write a good order, he must first study the situation and form a plan suitable to it. Next he must communicate his news and wishes in the order, yet he must not limit the proper discretion of his subordinates by entering into unwise details.

The German army has originated a form of field orders which has been copied by all the principal armies, which form confers upon subordinates the proper opportunity for initiative. The map problems which furnish the occasions for these lessons in initiative also call forth the proper views on offense, and in each case it is the due formulation of orders and their subsequent comparative criticism which gives the lesson.

It is an easy matter to adapt these map problems to naval use and make them the means of teaching the navy the same essential doctrines of the "Offense" and the "initiative".

(19) Not until after students have thus learnt a first lesson in initiative and offense does the army find it profitable to go further on the same road by exercises in "map maneuvers"; where, after formulating orders suitable to the situation, the students proceed to develop the action by the progressive contest of mind against mind, which in the navy we still call a "war game" after the German fashion. It is scarcely necessary to urge that this orderly development and progression of

instruction which the army finds most advantageous promises as much for the navy, and that here also it should adopt and adapt the army methods without the labor and aid of originating others for ourselves.

We are much behind the army, however, in our accumulation of tactical, strategic and administrative data in a form suitable for use in naval map maneuvers. As was remarked just now, in this form of maneuver, it is the duty of the umpire to solve each physical situation arising in a maneuver in a way which both contestants acknowledge to be possible and practicable in war. If the time required for the solution of a map maneuver is not to be very long, the umpire must have at hand actual precedents of every sort to guide him, if not to govern him in his decisions.

We may procure these precedents from three sources, first from history, second from the practical work of the fleet in its current drills and maneuvers and thirdly from the College solutions of minor situations on the tactical "map maneuver" table. But this third method itself is of course based on the other two, so that the War College work is based on the study of history and of our own fleet.

If its conclusions are not sound, the fault lies in the workmen, not in the materials or methods.

(20) But the development of "initiative" as between two opponents is also a matter of German solicitude. In this sense, it is a part of the general doctrine of the "offense" and broadly means either surprise or striking before the enemy has completed his preparation.

The whole German plan of mobilization is intended to secure the advantage of "initiative" by mobilizing first and gaining the advantage of material and moral success at the outbreak

of war. This the Germans did in 1866 and 1870, and this they believe themselves able to do today, not only with their army but with their navy also. The whole of "initiative" is to support the "offense", by instant continuous action of all the powers of the nation, and by all the component parts of the national armed forces. This generally accepted view of the advantage of the "initiative" is one which our government and people have never been able to take; and to those who have studied the matter it is the most threatening danger point whenever we are confronted with war. It is the duty of the War College to see to it that at least the Navy understands all the advantages of the initiative and the offensive and profits by them to the greatest extent possible.

(21) As was remarked a few pages back, the duties of a War College are to hold the methods and standards of service necessary for the successful prosecution of war constantly before the leaders of the Navy. As the work of this War College has developed in the course of years, it accomplishes this work along two different routes.

(22) One objective which it undertakes is to aid the Navy Department as an organization in arriving at correct solutions of the various questions of policy relating to war with which the Department is confronted. The individual officials of the Navy Department are overwhelmed with administrative details of work and they have little time available for the consideration of broad questions of policy. The War College is unembarrassed by the necessity of dealing with administration and is free to devote itself wholly to questions of policy. Its work and that of the General Board bears the same relation to that of the Department that a drafting room in a manufacturing establishment bears to the shops. The work for the shops is laid out in the drafting

room and different shops work in harmony because the work of each has been coordinated in the drafting room with that of others. Similarly, the War College considers the necessities and possibilities of war in solving the questions which are annually submitted to the Conference. It works out its views by study of history, and by the map maneuvers and by discussion of the experience of its own members, and arrives at well considered solutions of large questions of policy which the Department cannot well manage for itself in regard to organization, supply, ship building, etc., on one hand and in regard to war plans, theaters of war and bases therein, on the other hand.

The Department's duty is administrative. After the War College and the General Board have determined the requirements of war in various directions mentioned above, the other Bureaus and Offices of the Navy Department should convert the suggestions of the War College into reality. But the condition of harmonious cooperation between the General Board and the War College on one side and the Executive Bureaus of the Navy Department on the other is that neither shall trench upon the business of the other. The War College should study and formulate the requirements of successful war; the Executive Bureaus of the Department should execute the suggestions of the War College after approval by the Secretary.

The Bureaus must not revise the findings of the War College, neither must the War College criticize the executive methods employed by the Bureaus in filling its requirements.

(23) The second objective which the War College undertakes to accomplish is to train and develop officers as individuals to assume satisfactorily the duties and responsibilities of command in war. In the early days of the College it dealt mainly with officers as individuals. More recently, it has paid greater attention to its relations with the Navy Department

as an organization, and it seems advisable once more to develop the training of individuals.

As has been said previously, this is done abroad chiefly by map problems and map maneuvers and we can and should follow the same methods. But it is necessary that the College should hold fast all the ground that it once gains. At present, it is very much handicapped by the small number of officers assigned to duty at it as well as by the short time spent there. In any institution a continuing tradition of work and aims is highly important and here we have it in a slight measure only. A conference assembled on the first of June spends some time in finding itself and then in October it breaks up, leaving such a small staff to attend to much work laid out by the Department that it cannot maintain itself in proper touch with and develop the College work of previous years. The regrettable result is that a new Conference opens again in June, beginning at the beginning of all things instead of carrying on from the point reached by the last conference. The remedy is in larger and longer Conferences, and in a larger staff. The Navy is increasing in size and the efficiency of the Navy demands that the War College should have a very full share of the general increase.

As for the rank of officers who are sent here, it seems that in the past the proportion of Commanders and Captains in the whole number has been too high. For the discussion of matters in conference regarding the general policy of the Department it is desirable to have a large proportion of officers of experience, but on the other hand younger people will profit more by individual study. For elderly officers, as a body, are not as receptive, impressionable or industrious as the same men would have been had they attended the College earlier in life. Moreover, owing to their years, such officers

go off the active list very soon, having done comparatively little to indoctrinate the service at large with their views acquired at the College. So the service profits relatively little from their stay at the War College.

(24) I propose therefore that in future that the College should have a staff of not less than twelve or fifteen members and that each conference should number forty or fifty members. Of these members ten or a dozen should be captains or commanders taking a four months' course. Ten or a dozen lieutenants and lieutenant-commanders should come at the opening of each Conference to remain more than a year until the close of the following conference. Thus the new comers would always break joints with an older class; tradition would be maintained and there would be no slipping backward as at present.

It should always be held in mind that just as the specialties of the post graduate schools of engineering, of ordnance and construction are to produce good engineers, good ordnance men, and good constructors, so the specialty of the War College is to produce good Admirals, and it should have adequate opportunity to do so.

(25) No reference has hitherto been made to an important feature of the War College, and that is its work in international law. The College owes a great deal of its reputation both in and out of the service to its international law studies which have been of great advantage both to the Navy Department and to individual officers. Nevertheless, inspite of the importance of this branch of the law, its position in the curriculum is no more than that of a desirable and highly profitable by-product; which on no account should be neglected. It is no longer really essential as it was when the College was struggling for existence, and was seeking to find a proper direction for development.

(26) To summarize this memorandum, it may be said that there are three principal points urged in it as conducive to the due progress of the War College.

First; It has established its prestige sufficiently to afford to abandon its "laissez aller" policy and to assume to speak and teach with authority, and the lines on which it should move are those indicated by our Army War College, which has taken up the methods of the Germans in educating individual officers, while continuing the Conferences of our Naval College for the guidance of the Department. The Naval War College should teach the doctrines of offense and the initiative.

Second; As modern war depends very largely for success upon proper organization, administration and preparation before the outbreak of war, and as the duty of any war college is to hold before the service the conditions of war, and prevent the routine of peace from injuring military efficiency, it is therefore necessary for the War College to examine and study methods of organization and administration not only in order to keep those in use from deteriorating but also to improve them, so that departmental administration will leave nothing lacking to effect a prompt mobilization and subsequent supply of the fleet.

Third; It is necessary for the War College to get in touch with the great body of officers of the Navy. Only so can its works become really fruitful, and this demands young officers in large numbers at the College. Youth and progress go together. Moreover, much of the work done here annually might well be brought to the attention of the service at large instead of being locked up in the archives-room. Then the navy in general would recognize that much useful work is done here.

With the prospective rapid increase in the numbers of officers opportunity is now afforded to take up the work in earnest of educating the whole Navy in the art of war in the same thorough way that the Army does. This can only be done by taking up larger classes each year and holding them until after the next class has arrived and begun to understand the College. This should in no way be allowed to interfere with the summer conference as at present in which officers of more advanced rank and greater experience, although perhaps of less pliability of mind take the most prominent parts.

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*War College
Sept 8. 09,
Lecture delivered.*