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## From the Chief of Naval Operations

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*U.S. Navy*

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## From the Chief of Naval Operations

This issue of the *Naval War College Review* celebrates the centennial of our Naval War College. In a very real sense, it also commemorates the centennial of American naval power and thought, for Captain—later Admiral—Alfred Thayer Mahan was among the first faculty members of this college. Most of his memorable lectures and writings on the history and theory of sea power originated in his work as a teacher in Newport.

Mahan's ability to envision the future political, economic and military effects of sea power led to a fundamental understanding of what sea power could contribute to the security and well-being of the United States and its allies. His work and that of other founders of the Naval War College, such as Admiral Luce, articulated the very essence of our profession of maritime arms.

Since its founding in 1884, the Naval War College has had—and still possesses today—a very substantive role in developing our profession. An intellectual cauldron in which our officers develop “The Right Stuff,” the Naval War College sharpens and focuses vital qualities of intellect and judgment, which otherwise might remain untapped resources.

In Newport, seasoned and carefully selected officers of high intellectual and moral character, as well as superior technical ability, are exposed to great vistas of naval thought. They develop wider perspectives and new senses of direction, which they then share with fellow naval officers. In short, these officers develop into the consummate professionals required to ensure our legacy of American sea power. This has been the mission of our Naval War College since its founding. This continues to be the Naval War College's *raison d'être* today.

In this centennial year, we see a world embroiled in more than 30 conflicts. Traditional distinctions between peace and war are breaking down, with state-sponsored terrorism increasingly employed as a coercive instrument by those who oppose legitimate, peaceful political evolution. We now live and work in an era of “violent peace,” in which our interests, our diplomats, our citizens, our friends and our deployed military forces are routinely at risk.

We have spent a generation since World War II learning to cope with evolution in the nature of war. This has been brought on by rapid and profound technological change, the pace of which shows we will continue to face generations of change. Our efforts to respond to these sometimes vexing changes in the nature of war—and of peace—must run apace.

Seldom in our history has there been a greater imperative for nurturing a strong Navy. This is a matter of the highest priority, for in recent years our country's military strategy has increasingly relied upon a Navy possessing sea power. President Reagan affirmed at the recommissioning of the USS *New Jersey* in 1982, "The United States is a naval power by necessity . . . . We must be able . . . to venture in harm's way, controlling air, surface and subsurface areas to assure access to all oceans of the world. Failure to do so will leave the credibility of our conventional defense force in doubt."



Realization of these goals is embodied in our growth to a 600-ship fleet by decade's end; however, numbers of ships are not the final test of sea power. It will be—and has always been—the sea service professional, officers well-versed in knowledge of their craft, which will provide our nation with the sea power this island nation needs.

As President Reagan aptly noted, "Today, you've got to do more than just want peace." We in the profession of arms, who have responded so tirelessly to calls of national security, know the deep-rooted truth behind the President's words. In our calling, and our professionalism, rests the hope of maintaining peace and preserving vital national interests. It is this special mission and purpose which requires a strong, vibrant Naval War College to help officers join tactical, managerial and technical proficiency to a strategic and political-military perspective. In this difficult age, there is no task more essential to our security and that of the free world's.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James D. Watkins". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.

JAMES D. WATKINS  
Admiral, US Navy  
Chief of Naval Operations