

# Making History: The Army War College Curricular Collection

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*The extensive files from the Army War College Curriculum collection fill many hundreds of feet of shelving in Ridgway Hall, and provide the richest archival source anywhere on the intellectual history of the College and the Army.*

While history is an enduring theme enriching the course of instruction at the Army War College, the rich past of the institution itself also provides invaluable insights to guide the future course of the nation and its Army.

Among the many treasures housed in the Army Heritage and Education Center archives in Ridgway Hall, are the extensive holdings dealing with the history of the College. They provide not only a rich narrative of the growth and evolution of the Army's senior service college; they also offer a unique intellectual history of the service itself.

The USAWC archives are generally in three separate collections. There are more than 800 boxes filling more than 350 linear feet of shelf space that cover the era before World War II when the USAWC was at Fort McNair. These holdings cover the lectures given to students and course content, along with general records. These are the resources mined so expertly by author Henry Gole in his groundbreaking study *The Road to Rainbow: Army Planning for Global War, 1934-1940*. His book describes the extensive strategic planning carried out by students and faculty at the USAWC in coordination with the Army's General Staff in preparation for coming conflict.

The bulk of the USAWC materials at AHEC cover the period after the school reopened at Carlisle Barracks in 1951. There are more than 1,000 boxes covering almost 500 linear feet of shelf space of a general USAWC archives series.

This collection includes administrative files, various lecture series, important studies and reports, special programs, various assessments, and many educational and accreditation studies. Related to these holdings is a similar sized Army War College Curricular collection, which covers specific courses, both core and elective. These files reveal the issues deemed most important by the USAWC and the Army, and the evolution of thought and policy concerning them.

Another unique source from this period of the USAWC contained in the AHEC archives are 15,000 student research papers. After its move to Carlisle Barracks, the college changed its academic requirements from reports prepared by student committees to projects written by individuals. These papers are another rich source often consulted by current students, scholars, and official researchers. Brian McAllister Linn relied heavily upon them for his influential book, *The Echo of Battle: The Army's Way of War*. The author used the writings of USAWC students to illuminate different trends and traditions in the way the service has envisioned and prepared for contemporary challenges future conflicts. USAWC students today must be aware that they are not only studying and using history in their classrooms, they are also creating valuable historical resources themselves in the curricular and research products they leave behind.

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