



MARINE CORPS Gazette

Professional Journal of U.S. Marines

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*Maj Elliott Arrington &
Col David C. Emmel*

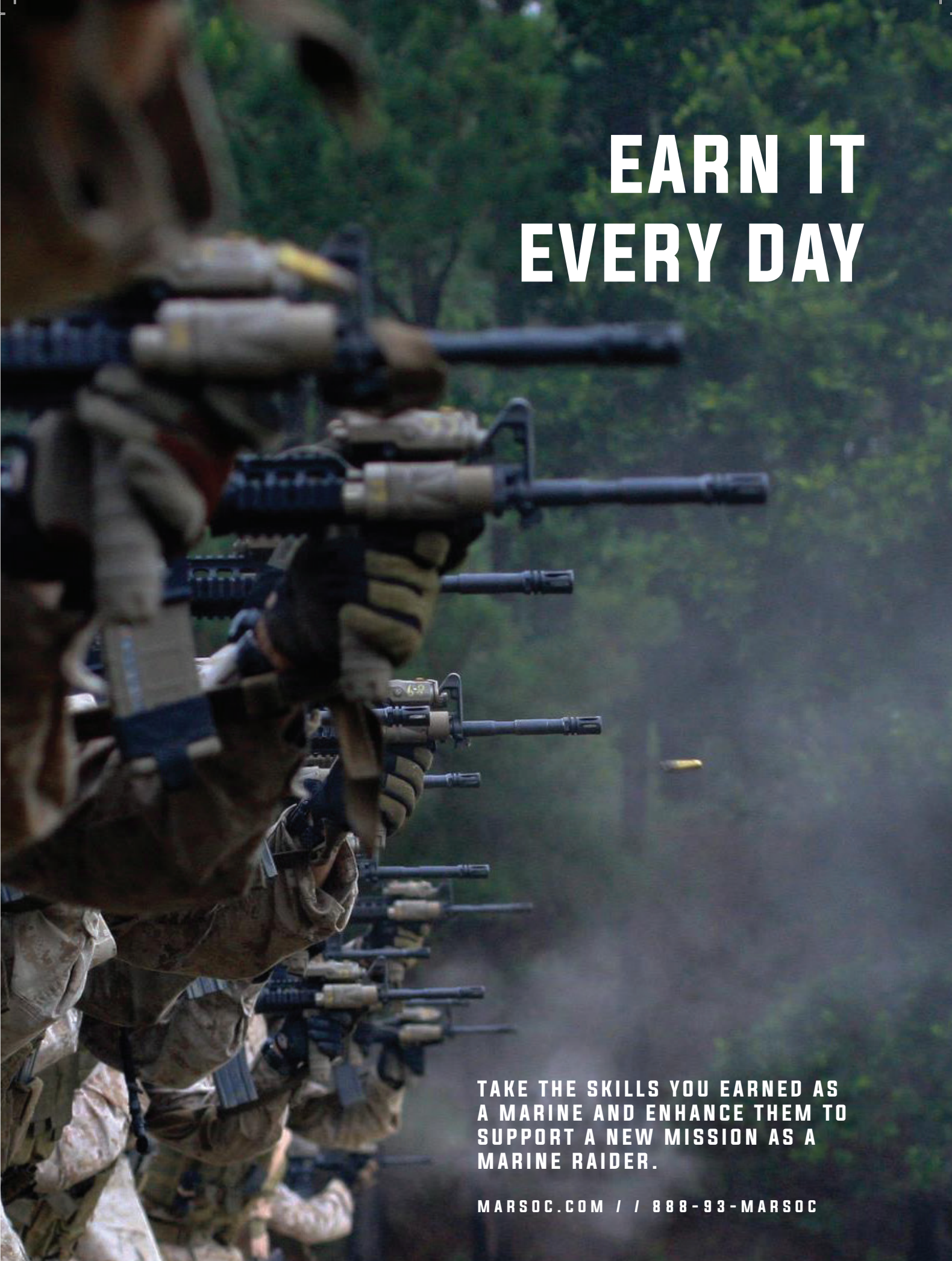
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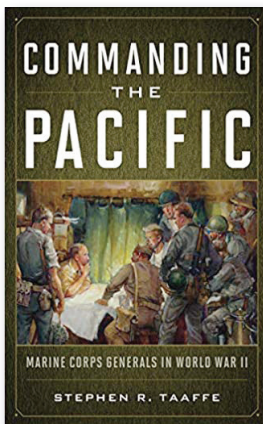


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The future force requires a modernized approach to training infantry Marines. (Photo by Cpl Christian Ayers.)

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JUNE 2022

Editorial: Focus on PME and Training

June's *Gazette* is dedicated to the future of training and professional military education and the Corps' culture of learning. These activities represent a significant part of the Commandants' responsibilities under Title X that produce the Marines needed to fight as the Nation's force-in-readiness. Beginning on page 8 with a letter from the President of Marine Corps University and Commander of Education Command, BGen Walker M. Field, we present some ten articles discussing various PME initiatives from across the Training and Education enterprise and other authors in the field. Of note, the PME initiatives described touch both officer and enlisted education, the use of wargaming to develop the cognitive skills of decision makers, and extending beyond the Corps to the Department of the Navy's new U.S. Naval Community College (USNCC) program. Other noteworthy articles from the broader PME community of interest include, "An Intellectual Maginot Line" by Dr. James Herndon on page 54, "Run More, Read Less" by Mr. Brendan B. McBreen on page 56, and "A Different Approach for Similar Results" by the former Commanding General of Training and Education Command, MajGen Bill Mullen on page 59.

Training shares our focus this month, specifically the changes in infantry training necessary to produce the multi-disciplinary infantry Marine of the future and the complementary initiatives in Marine Combat Training to ensure every Marine possesses the requisite skills and mindset required to operate as a rifleman now and in the future. Highlights include "The 21C Infantry Marine" by Mr. Bob George & Col David C. Emmel on page 36 and "Enhancing the Infantry Training Continuum" by LtCol T.L. Hord, et al. on page 44. Special thanks to Col Emmel and the staff of the School of Infantry-East for their diligence in adding to this month's content. One final highlight comes from MajGen Austrin E. Renforth on page 80 titled "The Marine Littoral Regiment." Here the Commanding General of MAGTF Training Command, Twentynine Palms, CA offers options for integrating the Corps' developmental Stand-in Force into the C2 architecture of the Navy's Composite Warfare Commander concept.

Our series on maneuver warfare, "The Maneuverist Papers," continues this month with the first of a two-part analysis of ongoing combat operations in Ukraine in "The Russian Invasion of Ukraine" on page 100. In addition to this latest installment from the authors writing as "Marinus" we also present two articles presenting divergent views in the discourse on the subject in "The False Demon of Attrition" by "Marinus Dubius" on page 90 and "The Institutional Impact of Maneuver Warfare" by "Contrarius" on page 94.

This debate on the theories underpinning the Corps' warfighting doctrine and the continued relevance of maneuver warfare is one of the foundational purposes of our professional journal and participation in this debate is a testament to the dedication of Marines to the profession of arms. The Corps' professional association is committed to sustaining this intellectual health in our Corps and the continued support and participation of all MCA members is crucial to this effort.

Christopher Woodbridge

“The National Intelligence University”

■ Kudos to an excellent intelligence and information-focused September 2021 *Gazette*. I am writing in reaction to the piece by retired Maj Toby Collins about the National Intelligence University (NIU). As a 2015 alumnus of the part-time Master of Science of Strategic Intelligence program at NIU, I was happy to see such a descriptive article run in the magazine extolling the university’s many virtues. I especially liked and agreed with his discussion of the university’s unique interagency strengths on pages 55–56, a topic I also touched on in a piece for the December 2015 edition of the *Gazette*.

But despite the article’s level of detail, it excluded two crucial things about NIU. First, Collins failed to mention the NIU Research Fellowship. Whereas many NIU academic programs have become relatively well-known amongst Marine Corps Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Enterprise personnel in recent years, the Research Fellowship remains comparatively unsubscribed by Marines. I believe that is partly because few people know about it—all the more reason it deserved mention in Maj Collins’s article. The fellowship provides a Marine or civilian who already possesses a master’s degree a full calendar year to research a topic of their choosing full-time. Deliverables include a written piece for publication by NIU’s in-house press and briefings on the studied issue to senior Intelligence Community decision makers. During the fellowship, Marines benefit from mentorship and guidance from research methodologists at the university’s Ann Caracristi Institute for Intelligence Research and subject-matter experts from NIU’s faculty. Unfortunately, only a handful of Marines have participated in this program over the past fifteen years. See more about it at <https://ni-u.edu/wp/caracristi/research-fellows-program>.

Second, despite increasing participation in NIU programs by Marines over the past several years, as documented in the article, the Marine Corps Senior Service Representative billet at NIU has

only been sporadically filled in recent years. This is, in my view, a grievous oversight. Lack of representation by an active-duty Marine from within the MCISRE on the NIU faculty means that the Service lacks representation as NIU self-actualizes as the Intelligence Community’s burgeoning hub of advanced intelligence education. Filling this position with the right Marine is crucial to the continued professionalization of the MCISRE workforce, which as Maj Collins pointed out is an essential aspect shaping how the MCISRE will effectively contribute to the changes taking place within our Corps as a part of *Force Design 2030*. Accordingly, I recommend that the NIU Senior Service Representative billet be a hand-selected fill by the Director of Intelligence.

LtCol Gary J. Sampson

“A Force-in-Readiness, or in Stasis?”

■ Bing West has thoughtfully analyzed significant Marine Corps issues for decades and seems to have a nose for what is critical with the direction taken by its policy and operational issues. His observations on Marine *Force Design 2030* in the August 2021 *Gazette* continue his important contributions and guidance. His conclusion that: “There is no policy that firmly supports island-hopping in the South China Sea,” should be an alerting call for Marine Corps leadership.

To further that discussion, we could step back and attempt to clarify what a war with China will look like and, more important, what will winning that war look like. Certainly, there are many planning documents and war games, published and secret that address these two issues. Unfortunately, there has been no clear statement on either issue that the American people can clearly understand and buy into. Seemingly, repeating the path of all recent U.S. military efforts that, without clear objectives and methods, did not end well and lost the support of the electorate.

America is at an evolving crossroads in its relationship with China. To simplify, there seem to be two paths,

one of which will eventually have to be chosen. The path taken will dictate how our military and the Corps will have to prepare.

First, the *can’t we all just get along?* path leads us to recognizing that there is no reasonable way (non nuclear) to defeat Chinese ambitions and military strength. China is following in the footsteps of earlier great world powers in recent history, all of whom were focused on expanding their world power using economic clout and military threats. France, Spain, Portugal, and England all had their time as dominant world powers, and America followed with our bullied expansion—including The Monroe Doctrine. Maybe if we look at China’s South China Sea, Belt Road, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other expansionist actions as expressing their Monroe Doctrine, it would be easier to put our response in context. Additionally, maybe we can learn to view the change of dominant world powers as a evolving process rather than a tragic terminal result. The colonial European powers were forced to this recognition by realities on the ground and seas. Choosing this appeasement path leads us to generations of posturing, delaying, less-than-war confrontations and eventually capitulation. China becomes *the* world power, until, like those great powers who preceded it, it runs out of steam and the world settles into a new order. Not the end of the world.

Choosing this appeasement path, there will be no major military confrontation with China. Therefore, no need to radically restructure the Corps from its “any clime any place” battle proven structure

Second, the alternate path is refusal to accept China’s irredentism and expansionism by investing in making America and its allies the world’s clear and absolute dominant military power. That would require stepping up our game dramatically. To be successful, Americans and our allies will need a straightforward explanation of how we will fight such a potential war with China, what winning will look like, and the costs and sacrifices attendant to this path. All of which must

Letters of professional interest on any topic are welcomed by the *Gazette*. They should not exceed 300 words and should be DOUBLE SPACED. Letters may be e-mailed to gazette@mca-marines.org. Written letters are generally published three months after the article appeared.

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be explained to the electorate and allies in terms and concepts that are clear and relevant. Reiteration of fuzzy Pentagon studies and wargame results, followed by photo ops and cheery pronouncements from leadership will not suffice. They have failed us in the past. All must have a clear vision of the road ahead—including China.

Noted military analyst, Michele Flournoy recently made a striking observation that did not get the attention it merits:

For example, if the U.S. military had the capability to credibly threaten to sink all of China's military vessels, submarines, and merchant ships in the South China Sea within 72 hours, Chinese leaders might think twice before, say, launching a blockade or invasion of Taiwan; they would have to wonder whether it was worth putting their entire fleet at risk.

That is exactly how we should choose to conduct a war with China, on our terms, not theirs: easy to understand and decisive. Once the Chinese fleet is destroyed, China becomes a far less threatening enemy, especially if we leave them undisturbed in their mainland home. Not stirring that hornet's nest.

What are our options for being able to credibly prosecute such a 72-hour war plan? Well, recall Ronald Reagan's Star Wars program that was, at the time, easily the most elaborate and complex defense system ever conceived:

I call upon the scientific community in our country, those who gave us nuclear weapons, to turn their great talents now to the cause of mankind and world peace, to give us the means of rendering these nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete, President Ronald Reagan said on 23 March 1983. The speech announced the creation of a new missile defense called the Strategic Defense Initiative, which quickly became known as Star Wars. Americans and our allies bought in to this effort. It won the Cold War without firing a shot. Simply substitute China for nuclear weapons and a plan is formed.

Choosing this military dominance path, a military confrontation with China will be decided in the first 72 hours. There will be no time or need for

island hopping. Again, no need to radically restructure the Corps from its "any clime any place" battle proven structure.

Our Corps has been serving the needs of our Nation for centuries. Today's challenge is especially difficult when our Nation has not clearly defined that need and has not yet spelled out either what a war with China will look like or what winning it will be. This clear national direction regarding war with China is critically and urgently needed.

The discussion above offers alternate possible national strategies that do not require an island hopping Corps. Bing West reaches the same conclusion for other reasons.

Retaining our Corp's "every clime and place" structure should be reconsidered. Most important, island hopping is and has been a part of the Marine Corps tool box since its inception. Just not the only tool in the box.

Robert Koury

"The Next Fight"

Regarding LtGen Wise's article "The Next Fight" in the September 2021 *Gazette*, he makes a couple of historical errors.

First, Light Carriers (CVLs) were not nicknamed "jeep carriers." That nickname only applied to Escort Carriers. Second, all CVLs the Navy commissioned/deployed in World War II were built on cruiser hulls. Fortunately, while CVLs only carried 33 aircraft (24 F6F Hellcat fighters, 9 TBF Avenger torpedo planes), they could make 33 knots and thus keep up with the big deck carriers. LtGen Wise is spot-on when he states, "Admirals of the 1920s and 1930s were battleship men, and the idea of any other ship as centerpiece of naval strategy was anathema." The Carrier Admirals would not assume control of the Navy until after World War II.

Maj Skip Crawley, USMCR(Ret)

Maneuverist Paper No. 20

Marinus discusses how "the employment of large numbers of unmanned aerial vehicles will change the ways in

which Marines fight," and having done so, "raises the question of the relevance of maneuver warfare philosophy in wars in which flying robots abound."

Marinus provides a succinct answer to this first question:

The most obvious lesson for Marines to draw from the forty-four day war for Nagorno-Karabakh is the importance of being able to thrive in situations where we no longer enjoy control of the air. That is, in order to defeat an opponent who is well supplied with flying robots, we will have to master the arts of fighting at night, exploiting heavy cloud cover, and operating in places that are well supplied with trees.

From the above, it is obvious Marines will have to learn to fight and be comfortable fighting in smaller units than typical. It is only a matter of time before electronic warfare drones are put in the air to disrupt communication links. So Marines will also have to become comfortable with not being able to contact higher headquarters as much as they are used to. Both what Marinus discusses and how drones will be used in future combat point to a *greater* need for Marines to know and practice maneuver warfare on the battlefield—not *less*.

Maj Skip Crawley, USMCR(Ret)

Marine Corps Gazette

Upcoming 2022 Monthly Themes

September Edition

Themes: MCISRE and OIE

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Marines and Sailors,

“World class leaders are world class learners.” Former Clorox executive and Marine, Don Knauss, spoke these words earlier this year at a ribbon cutting for the AI and Jan Gray study at Marine Corps University. The Marine Corps has long valued professional military education (PME) as a critical and fundamental enabler inherent in the profession of arms. Yet, in today’s challenging world of near-peer competition, we understand now more than ever that the discriminator on the battlefield will not be determined by the pace of our muzzles but by the pace of our minds. Unfortunately, we are not alone in our efforts to transform the force. Near-peer competitors like China are also pivoting toward a highly technical military force-in-readiness. Our 38th Commandant noted, “As our technical advantage continues to erode, it will become even more critical for our forces to maintain our edge in both individual decision-making and unit competence.” Our aim is to produce the most professionally competent, critically thinking warfighter as possible.

The Marine Corps’ educational enterprise is in a period of transition because of the DOD, the Joint Staff, the Department of the Navy, and the Marine Corps’ educational efforts. The *Commandant’s Planning Guidance* was clear in tasking Marine Corps University (MCU) to expand enlisted PME, bolster individual self-study and self-improvement opportunities, increase coverage of naval integration and wargaming, as well as to make PME as academically rigorous as possible and no longer consequence free—all of which have been successfully implemented and or expanded upon over the past two years. As you will see in the articles to come, MCU is pursuing big changes in PME not only across the Service but across the entire DOD enterprise.

Talent Management 2030 further expounds on the need to broaden educational opportunities to develop the force. Today, MCU is moving forward with several initiatives to modernize enlisted PME to include completely revamping promotion requisite E8 PME and establishing a brand new E9 course for sergeants major and master gunnery sergeants serving for the first time at the general-officer level. Regarding the need for self-study and individual improvement, MCU has also expanded its opportunities for our top performers to truly challenge themselves, ranging from extracurricular enrichment activities and fellowships to micro-credentialing and broader scholars’ programs.

The *Commandant’s Planning Guidance* underscores the imperative for creating a comprehensive wargaming capability at MCU. In the pages to come, you can read about MCU’s build out of a world-class wargaming capability via the Wargaming Cloud that will be delivered to all resident and non-resident PME. In his planning guidance, the Commandant wrote, “wargaming needs to be used more broadly to fill what is arguably our greatest deficiency in the training and education of leaders: practice in decision making against a thinking enemy.” MCU’s wargaming program exercises military judgment and decision making that is grounded in an understanding of the principles of war, the dynamics of modern warfare, and the application of military capabilities across the range of military operations and scenarios. Cultivating this judgment through experiential learning and educational wargaming is one of the most effective ways we can serve our future warfighters.

MCU is honing its officer and enlisted PME continuum to promote rigorous standards for achievement, value superior instructional capacity, build professional military leaders, and ensure Marine cognitive and intellectual talents are maximized, documented, and leveraged to the greatest extent possible throughout the force. For the first time at MCU, fitness reports were observed for resident PME and fellowships this past academic year. MCU is a key stakeholder for identifying high intellectual performers and future strategic leaders. PME is an iterative touchpoint along the entirety of a Marines' career, which means we possess the opportunity to capture academic profiles over time and assess not only academic performance but feedback from the commanders and supervisors of our graduates.

Finally, an initiative catapulted by the Secretary of the Navy's directed educational oversight is a widened role for the University in naval integration. As of November 2020, MCU is now part of the Naval University System, comprising the U.S. Naval Academy, the Naval Postgraduate School, the Naval War College, MCU, and the recently established Naval Community College. There is potential for this to be a significant step forward in cross-service Blue/Green interoperability and broadened educational opportunities for enlisted Marines and sailors to attend programs in support of the *Naval Services'* warfighting and leadership development needs.

Our PME programs provide rich curriculum that cognitively prepares students for war; preparation for war always has been and will remain MCU's focus. This means active, realistic, and experiential learning to develop critical thinking and sound military judgment. As we prepare the next generation of warfighters, it is crucial that we seize the opportunity to widen the intellectual gap between us and our adversaries. This means a focus on active learning with ample opportunity to fight (and fail) against a thinking enemy. The 29th Commandant's comprehensive reforms to professional military education created what has become *DOD's premier warfighting university*. Still, MCU must continue to evolve to keep pace with an ever-changing operating environment. We will.



Brigadier General Walker M. Field
Commanding General, Education Command
President, Marine Corps University

PME

Navigating a new course

by The Staff of Marine Corps University

The Marine Corps has long valued professional military education (PME). However, in response to what has been characterized as weakness across the entire PME enterprise by senior leaders, significant attention has been brought to bear by the DOD, the Joint Staff, the Department of the Navy (DON), and the Marine Corps on the Services' educational efforts. As a result, the Marine Corps' educational enterprise is in a period of transition; this article describes some of the major changes affecting the way the Corps educates the force and details the road ahead.

DOD initiatives

The DOD is developing *DOD Instruction 1322*, composed of several volumes, each containing direction and guidance on various aspects of DOD educational efforts. This DOD Instruction requires Marine Corps University (MCU) to incorporate outcomes-based military education (OBME) in its programs and requires annual reporting for all MCU schools—officer and enlisted, resident and distance.

ing graduates who can *do and know* certain things. We assess student performance on those outcomes (related to leadership, warfighting, military history, planning, communication, and critical and creative thinking) and revise our curriculum regularly to ensure that our educational programs are teaching to those outcomes effectively.

Additionally, in an effort to enhance PME as a strategic partnership building tool, the Secretary of Defense has directed a 50 percent increase in international military students within Service PME programs by 2026, along with developing an alumni engagement capability. MCU is working to develop the capacity needed to support this growth and welcomes the valuable contributions our allies and partners make to our educational environment.

Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) Initiatives

In May 2020, CJCS revised *CJCSI 1800.01, Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP)*. This latest OPMEP mirrors the change to OBME in the development, delivery, and assess-

College provides JPME-II credit. As would be expected, the Marine Corps is “first to fight,” and MCU’s JPME programs have successfully met the first milestone in the new joint accreditation process. The revised OPMEP begins implementation of the goals expressed in *The Joint Chiefs of Staff Vision for Professional Military Education & Talent*. The joint vision describes the critical linkage between officer development via PME to create intellectual overmatch against adversaries, and proper utilization via talent management to reward intellectual development and recognize performance with challenging assignments. These changes are applied to the Marine Corps as articulated in *Talent Management 2030*.

Similarly, in November 2021, CJCS released a new *CJSCI 1805.OIC, Enlisted Professional Military Education*, which also shifts enlisted JPME to an OBME approach with emphasis on student achievement of course learning outcomes in support of the enlisted PME and Talent Management Vision, *Developing Enlisted Leaders for Tomorrow’s Wars*.

DON Initiatives

In the last three years, the DON has made significant changes to the way it oversees and manages education, to include PME, within and across the Department. Informed by the Secretary of the Navy (SecNav) Education for Seapower study, the DON has engaged in extensive efforts to strengthen its officer and enlisted educational efforts.

As a result of the Education for Seapower study and initial efforts to implement its recommendations, SecNav has assigned oversight of the department’s educational efforts to the Assistant Secretary for Manpower and

... the Marine Corps' educational enterprise is in a period of transition; this article describes some of the major changes affecting the way the Corps educates the force and details the road ahead.

While the reporting requirements are new for some MCU programs, MCU has taught to outcomes since it became accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges in 1999. This means that MCU’s curricula are geared to produc-

ment of curriculum and student achievement and establishes a new process to gain and maintain joint accreditation. MCU has three JPME programs—the Command and Staff College resident and distance programs provide JPME-I credit and the Marine Corps War



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Reserve Affairs. A developing concept is the Naval University System, comprising the U.S. Naval Academy, the Naval Postgraduate School, the Naval War College, MCU, and the recently established Naval Community College (NCC). In February of this year, SecNav established a Naval Education Task Force consist-

Marine Corps Initiatives

Marines are already aware of the emphasis the Commandant has placed in his Planning Guidance on increasing academic rigor within PME programs. *Talent Management 2030*, published in November 2021, further expounds on the need to broaden educational op-

... the NCC is developing several associate degree programs in support of the Naval Services' warfighting and leadership development needs.

ing of senior retired naval (Navy and Marine) personnel and experienced civilian members from academia and management fields to examine how to improve PME across the Naval Services, with an emphasis on reducing duplication of effort and improving graduates' performance. The task force owes its report to SecNav in June.

The establishment of the NCC is a significant step forward in enhancing educational opportunities for enlisted Marines and sailors. Headquartered within MCU's main campus aboard Marine Corps Base, Quantico, the NCC is developing several associate degree programs in support of the Na-

portunities to develop the force. A complementary publication, *Training and Education 2030*, is under development and when promulgated will further refine the approach the Marine Corps will take in achieving the JCS vision described above.

MCU Response

MCU has been heavily engaged with all these efforts and, in some areas, has even been ahead of the other Services and departments. As noted above, MCU has long used an outcomes-based approach to assessing all of its educational programs, and thus the shift to OBME has not required a major adjustment

MCU has long used an outcomes-based approach to assessing all of its educational programs, and thus the shift to OBME has not required a major adjustment to its practices.

val Services' warfighting and leadership development needs. Initially, those degrees will be conferred by partner institutions, but the NCC has received Congressional approval to grant degrees and upon achieving accreditation will become the degree-granting institution. Enlisted Marines are already enrolled in the NCC's pilot programs and early indications suggest that this will provide a valuable learning opportunity for the enlisted force.

to its practices. Whatever challenges are presented by these initiatives, and however, they may develop in the future, the focus of effort will remain on addressing the intellectual and professional development needs of the Marine Corps and the joint force in support of the Nation's defense and interests.



CJCSI 1800.01, Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP).



CJCSI 1805.01C, Enlisted Professional Military Education.



Talent Management 2030.



Education for Seapower.

The Future of Marine PME

Supporting future Force Design and talent management

by LtCol Erin Berard

With the accelerating pace of change in the 21st century, Marine lethality requires life-long learning and the ability to acquire new skills quickly. *Force Design 2030* calls for change in response to the shift in the Marine Corps' mission focus to great power/peer-level competition, with special emphasis on the Indo-Pacific. The shift necessitates a comprehensive review of not only our Service's size, configuration, and technological capacity but also has prompted us to take a hard look at our individual warfighter's core cognitive characteristics. The physical and mental toughness, tenacity, initiative, and aggressiveness required to win in close combat have long been a prerequisite to earning the title of Marine. In recent decades, the technological boom forced us to build on technical skill sets and add occupational specialties that can concentrate power to innovate, adapt, and succeed. Today, the focus is increasingly on prioritizing our intellectual strategic edge against competitors and adversaries.

Force Design 2030 set the tone for how the force would transform to adapt, remain relevant, and outmaneuver our adversaries. In November 2021, the Commandant published his *Talent Management* report, charting a new course for personnel management. *Talent Management 2030* describes a system of institutional processes and policies designed to attract, develop, retain, and incentivize the most talented and best performing Marines. Similarly, *Force Design 2030* requires a meaningful change in how the Corps educates Marines. In response, we will reinforce and modernize the Marine

>LtCol Berard is currently serving as the Operations Officer for Academic Affairs, Marine Corps University.

Corps' education enterprise to maintain our effectiveness as the Nation's naval expeditionary force-in-readiness while simultaneously transforming the force for the future operating environment. Professional military education (PME) is an investment in our people and provides the service with the architecture necessary to build Marines who are cognitively agile, intuitive problem solvers equipped with the knowledge and broad range of skills required to thrive in a complex multi-domain battlespace. To this end, Marine Corps University (MCU) is honing its officer and enlisted PME continuum to promote rigorous standards for achievement, value superior instructional capacity, build professional military leaders, and ensure Marine cognitive and intellectual talents are maximized, documented, and leveraged to the greatest extent possible throughout the force.

The Marine Corps relies on MCU to guide the long-term direction of PME. Guided by the *Commandant's Planning Guidance* and vision, as well as *Force Design 2030* and *Talent Management 2030*, MCU's Strategic Plan places the university on a common trajectory to deliver PME and training through resident and distance learning programs while also preserving and presenting the history of the Marine Corps. The responsibility of the university is to guide the professional growth and development of Marines by providing educational

opportunities that are grounded in the development of higher-order habits of mind associated with the analytic and creative skills foundational to decision-making.

The Marine Corps must be in the business of creating highly flexible and adaptive areas of study that promote the needs of the individual warfighter, ensure non-traditional career paths exist for the military strategist, and enable the discovery and utilization of cognitive talents to meet the demands of future warfare. MCU must maintain and enhance a learning environment for Marines that promotes four key elements of Marine Corps education: transformation, application, relevance, and feedback. These key elements of Marine Corps education are part of a robust process of continuous improvement to make already excellent educational programs even better.

Transformation

Educational transformation looks toward a future of information age learning, rigorous and responsive teaching methodologies, global access to e-learning platforms, and the talent management needs of our corps.

Information-Age learning requires a deep understanding of how people learn and empowers critical and creative thinking through learner control and autonomy. Outcomes-based education depends on rigorous assessment practices, strong feedback loops from the FMF to the education enterprise and connects to the Commandant's emphasis on academic rigor and accountability in his planning guidance. MCU's resident and distance educational programs have led this transformation effort with the



The Marine Corps sends top-performing officers to teach in resident PME programs. (Photo by LCpl Yasmin Perez.)

support of its institutional effectiveness program. In Fiscal Year 2022, MCU launched an automated tool known as TK20 for collecting and analyzing institutional effectiveness data. This new technology is strengthening the university's capability to access data more efficiently and improve decision making both inside the classroom and out in the FMF. To better evaluate academic performance and improve the data repository of student portfolios, TK20 will also enhance the university's ability to adapt the best practices of major civilian universities by making accreditation, micro-credentialing, collaboration, and talent management data needs better defined and readily available.

MCU's faculty is made up of carefully selected military personnel and civilians who are directly involved in the development, delivery, assessment, revision, and adaptation of the curricula to ensure its standards, quality, and relevance. MCU is proud of its faculty. A common misperception (perhaps true fifteen years ago) is that our teaching faculty is made up of second-tier Marine officers. The reality is that our military faculty at Expeditionary Warfare School and Command and Staff College promote at a rate higher than their peers. The Marine Corps sends its top performers to teach in our programs.

Our civilian faculty have PhDs from Harvard, Georgetown, the University of Chicago, and other premier universities. As leaders in their academic disciplines and the profession of arms, civilian and military faculty are involved in the research, service, and professional development in their areas of competence in support of MCU's educational programs. Additionally, MCU's Faculty Development Program provides robust training and development opportunities with an emphasis on learning as well as the currency of subject-matter expertise in their fields of study. Opportunities to collaborate with sister Service universities, Naval Postgraduate School, civilian institutions, industry, and other federal agencies is an intentional process that continues to improve the quality of education delivered to our students.

The e-Learning Ecosystem (eLE) is a system of systems containing multiple application platforms and Learning Management Systems providing a digital learning environment that supports the creation, distribution, tracking of digital content, as well as monitoring and reporting of student performance. Digital content such as interactive media, video, audio, virtual classrooms, file storage and sharing, and social communities are provided through a single point of access for all Marine learners.

Today's highly dispersed global environment coupled with the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic further showcased eLE as a significant enabler within Training and Education. The ability of eLEs to simplify the end user's experience as a one-stop shop for distribution and tracking of digital content has a direct connection to talent management. Enabling student performance data to become more accessible and better synchronized with training and personnel databases can improve the realtime visibility of academic performance metrics both inside and outside the boardroom.

As the Marine Corps looks to improve talent management systems and applications, MCU is postured as a key enabler for identifying high intellectual performers and future strategic leaders. PME is an iterative touchpoint throughout the entirety of a Marines' career. As a result, MCU has the advantage of capturing academic profiles over time and assessing not only academic performance but feedback from the commanders and supervisors of our graduates.

In Fiscal Year 2021, MCU implemented two major initiatives to better align academic performance with talent management. The first is the change to the master's degree policy at resident Command and Staff College (*MARADMIN 434/20*), which requires all U.S. students to enroll in the degree program. Graduates of the resident program now earn a master's degree recognized easily in today's promotion boardroom. The second initiative is the implementation of observed Academic Fitness Reports (*MARADMIN 412/20*). In close coordination with M&RA, MCU continues to support efforts to develop long-term initiatives that will increase the effectiveness of the academic reporting and tracking system over time. Expanding this initiative to non-resident students and the development of a comprehensive tool to track and compare a Marine's PME and professional development accomplishments—both in grade and over the course of their career—is also being explored at this time to widen the visibility of all program graduates.

Talent Management 2030 also describes the expansion of other educational opportunities as a valuable contribution to the Marine Corps' talent management goals. These opportunities exist as military and civilian graduate and doctoral degree-granting programs, fellowships, educational enhancements such as the Gray Scholars Program, and course certifications granted via MCU's College of Distance Education and Training. In Fiscal Year 2021, MCU transitioned the Marine Corps' PhD track from its pilot phase to a program of record. This program allows Marines to compete for a small number of opportunities to enter PhD programs at prestigious civilian universities and earn doctorates. The intent of this program is to provide the Marine Corps with a cohort of advanced strategic and technical thinkers to support senior leader decision making and assist in developing defense and Service strategies. As these highly specialized military leaders begin to graduate and return to the fleet, MCU is developing the means to assess and evaluate the program's return on investment. The Marine Corps' need for these critical thinkers who can advise from a position grounded in both operational experience and deep academic expertise is critical.

Application

Education without application is a non-starter. Without meaningful opportunities to put problem-solving skills to work, student learning suffers. MCU provides a valuable intellectual architecture for analyzing battlefield success. Education by its nature "raises all boats" by maximizing brainpower within our Corps. MCU provides the application of cognitive might by leveraging the Brute Krulak Center for Innovation and Future Warfare, professional outreach, and the newly created Wargaming Directorate.

MCU's Brute Krulak Center for Innovation and Future Warfare enables an interdisciplinary approach to complex problem solving, fosters an environment that enhances our collective warfighting capability, and facilitates and encourages novel solutions to current and future warfighting challenges to



The Corps broke ground on the Marine Corps Wargaming and Analysis Center at Quantico in May 2021. The facility will support dozens of wargames annually, including those conducted in MCU's colleges and schools. (Photo by LCpl Ann Bowcut.)

expand the Corps' competitive edge and improve our warfighting effectiveness. The center provides general support to all academic programs and maintains several academic chairs that serve as outside subject-matter experts from other Marine Corps organizations, sister Services, other governmental agencies, and

of other audiences through podcasts, annual roadshows, scholarly research, and industry forums. The community of interest includes over 8,000 social media followers on 5 platforms, 600 email subscribers, and allied militaries on 4 continents. Furthermore, MCU provides a central repository for regional

In response to the Commandant's Planning Guidance, MCU moved out quickly to develop educational wargaming expertise and build opportunities for both resident and nonresident students.

through volunteer service from private individuals. Such support allows MCU to enhance its educational programs beyond the minimal requirements of Service and joint professional military educational outcomes and broaden the range of expertise to which MCU's students have access.

MCU's outreach program provides opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to collaborate with external groups and build linkages within the innovation and future warfare ecosystem. MCU connects its ideas to the efforts

and cultural subject-matter expertise through contracted staff, and the resident resources of our Middle East Studies and the Center for Regional Security Studies.

In response to the *Commandant's Planning Guidance*, MCU moved out quickly to develop educational wargaming expertise and build opportunities for both resident and non-resident students. In 2021, a Wargaming Directorate was created to synergize the efforts across the university and ensure a wide range of wargaming platforms—from tabletop

to Cloud-based gaming—are available to students around the globe to gain decision-making “reps and sets” in an unclassified environment. Additionally, in Academic Year 2020 (AY20) and AY21, MCU students supported *Force Design 2030* through participation in analytical wargames with Marine Corps Warfighting Lab to test and evaluate force design concepts related to the infantry battalion and Marine Littoral Regiment. These parallel initiatives have been mutually beneficial and will remain a part of educational wargaming in the future.

Relevance

To prepare for the future fight, Marines must deepen our understanding of our Nation’s security environment, improve our connections to allies and partners, and advance our interoperability with our navy brethren. MCU’s focus on great power competition (GPC) and naval warfighting along with bolstering the International PME program are major highlights our warfighters will need to be relevant going forward.

The DOD expects that GPC and the potential for conflict will be defining characteristics of the international security environment for 2030 and beyond. In response to this rising challenge, the Secretary of Defense directed all Service and joint PME institutions to expand their International-PME programs as well as develop learning outcomes at the intermediate and senior PME level with a focus on GPC. From AY19–AY21, MCU hosted multiple curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular events focused on GPC. In AY22, MCU will complete the second biennial officer CRB in a row that focuses on great power competition.

MCU maintains an International Program responsible for all eligible allied and partner students and plans to increase IMS participation by 50 percent during the Future Year Defense Program 22–26. MCU’s IMS program is designed to build long-term enduring relationships between Marine Corps officers and international officers. On average, MCU receives approximately 72 international students per year who attend the resident PME programs, with

30 students enrolled in distance learning. The Marine Corps’ plan to increase IMS participation not only ensures additional quotas within resident PME programs are available but also increased the IMS participation in the Blended and Distance PME programs, providing our allies and partners with a significant increase in capacity and more affordable and flexible options.

Training and education that expand Blue/Green staff relationships foster our ability to plan and manage naval operations. As a part of the Enlisted and Officer PME 2020–2022 Curriculum Review Boards, MCU’s focus on the integration of naval concepts such as sea control, amphibious assaults, expeditionary strikes and raids, and expeditionary advanced base operations has been at the forefront of curriculum design. Integrating naval perspectives into wargaming creates better unity of effort, increases the speed of action, and improves our ability to plan to achieve combatant commander goals. To foster Naval/Marine understanding, MCU has a standing seat at the table in several cross-Service Naval Education Working Groups, is structured for naval officer teaching faculty on our staffs, and maintains a senior Naval Chair within our ranks.

Assessments and Feedback

Assessments and feedback are an essential part of effective learning. MCU has taken enormous strides in building data repositories and building out analytical surveys that have greatly helped students understand course materials and have shown to improve their learning.

MCU’s Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning department supports the collection and analysis of information supporting systematic assessment and evaluation of both resident and non-resident programs. Included in their mission are research services that promote relevant, timely, and accessible data to gain a deeper understanding of issues and conclusions that support decision making, resource allocation, and institutional effectiveness. MCU’s institutional effectiveness program obtains the assessment industry’s best practices

and the tools needed to codify, record, and evaluate the effectiveness of learners, faculty, and teaching environments. These efforts greatly enhance MCU’s ability to make data-driven decisions about its curricula and programs.

MCU conducts surveys of all OPME graduates and their supervisors approximately eighteen months after graduation and is expanding this effort to include interviews. The Qualitative Program Evaluation initiative to gain feedback on MCU programs directly from senior leaders in the FMF and joint force. These tailored sessions should provide more meaningful feedback on the university’s success in preparing its graduates to meet the Marine Corps’ needs. By obtaining quantitative and qualitative data on the quality and perceived value of our programs, the student’s preparedness for follow-on assignments, and supervisor feedback, the university gains an honest assessment of the utility and impact of our programs. Analysis of these data supports making informed decisions about the future of professional military education to strengthen the connection between what we teach and how we fight.

In the challenging world of near-peer competition, the pace on the battlefield will not be determined by the pace of our muzzles but by the pace of our minds. Bottom line, we can have the best concept, equipment, and tactics, but the discriminator will always be our people. Unfortunately, we are not alone nor unique in our efforts to transform the force. Near-peer competitors like China are also ramping up their focus on building an advanced and highly technical military force-in-readiness. As predicted, the gap between the United States and China is shrinking on all fronts and China’s economic steam is not expected to significantly slow any time soon. More than ever before, the urgency to transform and improve the applicability, relevance, and feedback of Marine Corps PME is paramount.



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Modernizing Enlisted PME for the 21st Century

Five initiatives

by The Staff of Marine Corps University

The past three decades have seen considerable changes to the enlisted professional military education (PME) continuum—mainly within the grades of lance corporal to gunnery sergeant. As Gen David H. Berger, the 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps, noted in his *Commandant's Planning Guidance*,

Few developments within the Marine Corps during my time in service have been more revolutionary than those undertaken in PME—the most important of which were initiated by the 29th Commandant. PME is not something reserved solely for officers; rather, something expected and

sought-after by our non-commissioned officers and staff non-commissioned officers (SNCOs).

Included in these changes were requirements to complete a non-resident PME course and either a resident course or a seminar led by Marine Corps University's College of Distance Education and Training (CDET). With attention focused on the largest part of the enlisted force—namely lance corporals through gunnery sergeants—the PME needs of the senior enlisted community have largely gone unaddressed. Currently, the last required PME for enlisted Marines who serve a 30-year career occurs at a week-long first sergeant and mas-

ter sergeant regional seminar around 15 or 16 years before retirement. The first halves of their careers include five required PME schools, with none in the second half, despite an exponential increase in their responsibilities, scope, and influence. It gives one pause to consider the last time a Marine serving as the senior enlisted leader for a MEF or combatant commander last attended a Marine PME course over a decade ago.

To address the needs of the senior enlisted force, Marine Corps University is now focusing on modernizing the enlisted education continuum. To that end, the University is moving forward with five initiatives: the creation of the Senior Enlisted Blended Seminar Program, which would replace the current First Sergeant and Master Sergeant Regional Seminar as the promotion requirement to sergeant major and master gunnery sergeant; the development of a Slated Enlisted Leaders Orientation Course for sergeants major and designated master gunnery sergeants assigned for the first time to the general officer level; the expansion of the Executive Education Program, currently exclusive to general officers and Senior Executive Service officials, to include sergeants major and master gunnery sergeants serving as the senior enlisted leaders to general officers; the establishment of the Marine Corps Senior Enlisted Academy (MCSEA) as a stand-alone academy separate from the College of Enlisted Military Education; and the evolution of the Career and Advanced Schools to the blended seminar program model.



The modernized approach to enlisted PME targets lance corporals through gunnery sergeants in addition to the Corps' senior enlisted Marines. (Photo by Chief Petty Officer Alexander Gamble.)

Senior Enlisted Blended Seminar Program

Gen Berger continues to direct the development of a highly educated enlisted force prepared for the increasing rate of change and complexity of the modern battlefield. However, recent improvements to enlisted professional military education have yet to reach the most senior levels of enlisted education.

Currently, attendance of the five-day First Sergeant and Master Sergeant Regional Seminar at the various staff non-commissioned officer academies (SNCOA) is the PME requirement for promotion to E-9. Unfortunately, this compressed timeline fails to foster the intellectual edge required of senior enlisted leaders for success in increasingly complex, distributed, and fluid operating environments. A letter to the CG, Education Command, the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, and the Force Level Sergeants Major reinforced that this in-grade PME requirement lacks the educational rigor and depth necessary for meaningful professional development. Meanwhile, the six-week resident Senior Enlisted Professional Military Education (SEPME) program aboard MCB Quantico began challenging senior enlisted Marines in 2008. SEPME has been consistently lauded as an exemplary PME experience and achieves the MCU-designated learning outcomes for E-8s. Unfortunately, SEPME is neither available to the majority of the target population nor a PME requirement for promotion. Still, many believe that SEPME attendance is a *de facto* promotion requirement. Now, the PME requirement for first sergeants and master sergeants will be updated to deliver a SEPME-like curriculum in a blended format available to all E-8s across the total force.

Marine Corps University's CDET, in close coordination with the College of Enlisted Military Education and the MAGTF Instructional Group, has developed the Senior Enlisted Blended Seminar (SEBSP) program. The SEBSP leverages lessons from the CDET-delivered blended programs for Expeditionary Warfare School and Command and Staff College Distance Education Programs. The mutually complemen-

tary effects of resident and non-resident education provide a more significant academic experience and minimize operational and family turbulence. Students remain on station, available to family, and spend less time away from their commands.

The design of SEBSP calls for delivery in two stages: an eight-week non-resident period followed by a two-week resident period. Stage one, the non-resident seminar (NRS) period, will be accomplished as an onsite or online seminar of up to fifteen students facilitated by an instructor. Students will complete the NRS during off-duty hours at or near their primary duty station or online; NRS cohorts will meet one night per week, in person or virtually via the Adobe Connect virtual classroom. Each cohort will then transition to stage two, the final resident seminar. The final resident seminar will occur over two weeks at one of the big SNCOAs at the following MCU regional campuses: Camp Pendleton, CA; Camp Lejeune, NC; Quantico, VA; and Okinawa, Japan. The curriculum for this new SEBSP will replicate the student learning outcomes and many of the class subjects of SEPME and replace the First Sergeant and Master Sergeant Regional Seminar as the PME requirement for promotion to E-9.

MCU piloted the SEBSP in the spring of 2022 at Camp Lejeune. A second pilot is planned at MCB Quantico from January to March 2023. A separate eighteen-week, all-online version will be available by exception to ensure all E-8s have the opportunity to complete their PME regardless of assignment. Once SEBSP is at full operational capability, projected by the end of Fiscal Year 2024, the current First Sergeant and Master Sergeant Regional Seminar will phase out. Those who have already attended the First Sergeant and Master Sergeant Regional Seminar will continue to meet the PME requirement for promotion.

Slated Enlisted Leaders Orientation Course

SgtMaj Clifford "Wayne" Wiggins, the Training and Education representative for senior enlisted education and development, sought out his peers to

determine the need for additional PME for senior enlisted leaders to identify the differences between serving as the senior enlisted advisor to colonels and general officers. He received comments to include:

- "I quickly realized that the method in which I thought and communicated needed to change. General Officers think and communicate very differently. ... Failure to do so (think and communicate as they do) would mean I would get out cycled and become irrelevant."
- "There was a deliberate shift in the direction that I looked and where my vision was. I was no longer looking down and in; instead, I was looking more up and out in order to enable other leaders."
- "At the O-6 and even O-5 level, you were likely the oldest and most experienced member of the unit besides maybe the commander or operations chief. That's no longer the case. It can be intimidating at the General Officer level to be in the room and participating at that level of conversation where you are now more likely to be younger, less experienced, and less educated than those sitting around the table. We must have the right training and education opportunities to set our nominative E-9s up for success going forward."

With only one continuing education program (Keystone) available with just three seats allotted for approximately 70 slated E-9s serving at the GO level, it was clear to SgtMaj Wiggins and others that there is a PME deficit for those sergeants major and master gunnery sergeants serving as O-7 level command senior enlisted leaders for the first time. To fulfill the vision of the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, SgtMaj Troy Black, SELOC will be analogous to the Brigadier General Select Orientation Course and the General Officer Warfighting Program and will fill that deficit.

"When you're on a task force, you're asked to hit the ground running and be involved in conversations with three-letter agencies," said Wiggins, "You're on the staff of an organization with 15,000 people—several hundred of them are

not in uniform—who are expecting you to take care of them.”

SgtMaj Aaron McDonald, Sergeant Major, Marine Corps Forces, Europe and Africa, noted that these initiatives support the Commandant’s vision to disaggregate to the lowest level. Having senior enlisted Marines who can advise their commanders at the strategic level “puts our money where our mouth is.”

Expansion of Executive Education Program

“For far too long, there has been a segregation between officers and enlisted because of education,” said Col Seth Ocloo, director of the Lejeune Leadership Institute (LLI), “That’s not a distinction now.” With increasing numbers of enlisted Marines with bachelor’s degrees, graduate degrees, and even PhDs, a tremendous amount of intellectual capital exists in the enlisted ranks. For general officers, the Senior Leader Development Program was born in 2004 to provide structure to the professional growth and assignment strategy of general officers and senior executive personnel. In 2017, it was redesignated as the Executive Education Program in *Green Letter I-17*. Annually, LLI has made more than 30 different opportunities available to general officers. Beginning in 2022, many of those offerings will be available to command senior enlisted leaders (CSELs). Each year, LLI will publish the offerings available to general officers and CSELs such as “Leadership at the Peak” and programs at Harvard University, Cornell University, the Wharton School, and other esteemed organizations. In addition to general officers, CSELs who participate will interact with executives from Fortune 500 companies and other government agencies.

Participation in the Executive Education Program will not be open to all sergeants major and master gunnery sergeants; it will be by invitation only. The Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, LLI, and MCSEA will determine who will participate and which of the offerings they may pursue (based on billet); however, those admitted will be required to complete one of the programs each year.



Lance Corporal PME seminars and Corporals Courses are conducted at the until level and supported by MCU’s College of Distance Education and Training. (Photo by Cpl Santiago G. Colon Jr.)

Marine Corps Senior Enlisted Academy

The Marine Corps Senior Enlisted Academy will fill the void in the education continuum while furthering the professional development of senior SNCOs. The stand-alone academy will be separate from the College of Enlisted Military Education and will focus on the operational and strategic levels of war and leadership at the unit and organizational levels. Also housed within MCSEA will be the First Sergeants Course and the Senior Enlisted Blended Seminar Program. It will also share in oversight of enlisted participants in the Executive Education Program, SELOC, and the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Symposium. This move enables unity of effort at the senior enlisted level and more closely resembles officer PME, which is organized into schools by rank.

Career and Advanced Schools Blended Seminars

While most of the University’s initiatives will focus on the senior enlisted leaders, some changes are coming for the Career and Advanced Schools at the Enlisted College. Citing the need of the FMF to keep its SNCOs in their units as much as possible, the Career and Advanced Schools will also move to a blended seminar program (like the

SEBSP) in which students will participate in a non-resident seminar before attending a final resident seminar. “We’re not fixing a deficient curriculum,” said BGen Walker Field, President, Marine Corps University, “We’re modernizing our delivery method to better reach our students and support the Fleet.” While the learning analysis for such a structure is still in its infancy, BGen Field has set Fiscal Year 2025 as the date for initial operating capability.

Conclusion

There has been a seismic shift in the enlisted PME continuum—but primarily only through the rank of gunnery sergeant. These initiatives will bring forth a level of PME for senior enlisted leaders never seen before to prepare them for their roles as leaders to general officers and Senior Executive Service personnel. More will come in the future as these programs mature. Collectively, these initiatives have made remarkable progress toward the vision laid out in *MCDP 7, Learning*, to create a culture within the Corps that “cultivates the belief that learning is a priority and an enabler for more effective warfighting.”



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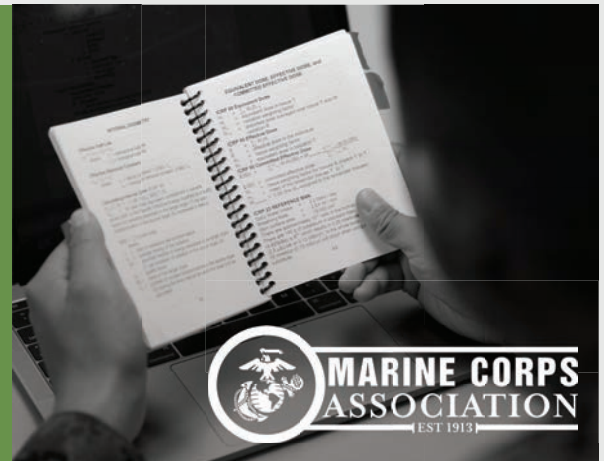
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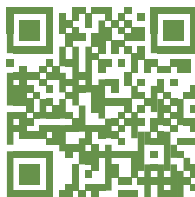
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Mastering the Art of War

Wargaming and professional military education in an era of great power conflict and competition

by Col Tim Barrick (Ret)

2022 opened with the largest war in Europe since World War II with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The unwarranted violence unleashed against Ukraine has catapulted Russia and NATO into a new era of competition and potential conflict. In the Western Pacific, China's similar territorial ambitions to gain sovereignty over Taiwan and the South China Sea raise the specter of a potential great power war on both ends of the Eurasian landmass and its surrounding waters. Coupled with China's massive investments in military modernization and advanced technologies, along with a heightened sense of nationalism, China has matched capability with intention to pose a very real threat to security in the region. Amidst this political and historical backdrop, advancements in space technologies, cyberspace, computing and artificial intelligence, stealth aircraft, hypersonic missiles, the internet and social media, and unmanned systems dramatically increase both the sophistication and complexity of modern warfare. With the speed at which war is now conducted, failure can come fast, from unexpected directions, and be unforgiving. Even 80 years ago, in 1943, frustrated by his own hesitancy in a close-in engagement with Japanese destroyers, ADM Arleigh Burke (commanding a destroyer squadron at the time) commented, "The difference between a good officer and a poor one is about ten seconds."¹

Now, more than ever, our officers and enlisted must be capable of making effective military plans and decisions that account for the opportunities,

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challenges, threats, and risks associated with the complexities of modern all domain, joint and combined warfare. This quality can only come from effective military judgment and decision making that is grounded in an understanding of the principles of war, the dynamics of modern warfare, and the application of military capabilities across the range of military operations and scenarios. This judgment must be cultivated through experiential learning. For professional military education (PME), wargaming is the optimal means to gain this "synthetic" experience. Through multiple iterations in wargaming, our officers and enlisted students can sharpen their military judgment and better understand the complex dynamics of modern, all domain, great power conflict and competition. At Marine Corps University (MCU), an increased focus and investment in wargaming over the past two years is now starting to come to fruition. As these wargaming initiatives gain momentum, our PME schools will produce officers and enlisted Marines with a greater appreciation for the complexities and decision-making requirements of contemporary and future warfare, thereby increasing our preparation and readiness for the challenging demands that potential future conflicts will place upon us.

These wargaming investments are focused on the educational goal to

produce graduates with multiple experiences during their course of study in applying military capabilities and making decisions that achieve tactical, operational, and strategic objectives. Iteration in the practice of military decision making is often cited as the key to honing professional military judgment. In their recent article on wargaming titled "Promise Unfulfilled: A Brief History of Educational Wargaming in the Marine Corps" in the *Journal of Advanced Military Studies*, Maj Ian Brown and Sebastian Bae paraphrased Admirals Nimitz and Sims and concluded,

Leaders can only hone decision-making skills for future wars when they are given repeated opportunities to make, and learn from, decisions. Moreover, wargaming's full value for the operating forces comes from giving as many Marines as possible as many opportunities as possible to sharpen their critical thinking.²

The key to learning from wargaming is the opportunity to make decisions and see those decisions play out. Unfortunately, most of the learning experiences that occur in today's PME courses across the joint force are focused on gaining knowledge in the planning process, military theory, and historical case studies. While these are all valuable and increase knowledge, they are not the same as requiring our officers and enlisted to weigh the critical factors of a specific situation, decide, and see the consequences of that decision over time. Furthermore, in most PME practical exercises, there is the absence of an opposing will seeking to defeat or destroy

the student in a contest of arms. This is the dynamic of war. Yet, this dynamic tends to be a rare experience in many PME courses. This gap was called out by Gen Berger in his *Commandant's Planning Guidance* in July 2019 when he stated,

In the context of training, wargaming needs to be used more broadly to fill what is arguably our greatest deficiency in the training and education of leaders: practice in decision-making against a thinking enemy.³

MCU is on the pathway to correcting this deficiency by expanding wargaming significantly within all MCU PME programs.

Marine Corps University Wargaming Initiatives

MCU's approach to wargaming is multi-faceted.

The Wargaming Cloud

Coming online in Spring 2022 is MCU's new Wargaming Cloud. This new capability has the potential to completely revolutionize wargaming and PME by delivering a set of tools that make it easier to integrate wargaming into curriculum and extra-curricular activities. There are two key aspects to this capability that promise a significant return on the investment: the ability for faculty and students to play a digital wargame from anywhere from almost any device at any time and the ability to tap into a government-provided digital wargame library with a wide range of wargames and scenarios spanning tactical, operational, and strategic requirements. Neither of these capabilities has existed in the past. Beginning with Academic Year 2022–23, MCU faculty and students can start tapping into this new wargaming capability. Like any new technology, it will take time to fully leverage this new wargaming potential. One of the keys to long-term success with this Wargaming Cloud will be the availability of a wide range of wargames and scenario content that is easy to learn, challenging to master, and relevant to student learning. If students see and experience the value of playing these games, they will return to them for more of the proverbial “reps and sets”

of virtual experience in tactical, operational, and strategic decision making.

Expanding the Wargame Toolkit

In the near term, MCU will leverage a mix of government and commercial off-the-shelf wargames to populate the Wargaming Cloud's virtual game library. While many of these will prove of value, there are limited options on the market for games that are oriented toward contemporary and future conflicts that model all domain warfare and present opportunities to practice new methods of war and joint warfighting. It will take time to adapt promising wargames to meet specific PME requirements. In the meantime, faculty and students will be presented with opportunities to leverage the best digital games that the government and the commercial game industry offer for both historical and contemporary scenarios. These games still offer excellent opportunities to practice decision making versus both computer and human opponents and to apply the principles of war. MCU will also promote extra-curricular opportunities for students and faculty to wargame via tournaments in this Wargaming Cloud. Ideally, this new capability will enable students to graduate with far more reps and sets in military decision making than ever before.

In addition to creating opportunities for computer-based wargaming, MCU is focused on delivering a set of tabletop wargames optimized for PME requirements in all domain, joint warfighting. A primary game in this effort is the Operational Wargame System (OWS). Originally developed by wargame designers in the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab and then collaboratively beta tested and refined with professional wargamers from across the Services and allies, OWS is focused on modeling joint and combined campaigns at the theater level and has game modules that cover a hypothetical war in the Western Pacific (*Assassin's Mace*), a potential war in Europe between Russia and NATO (*Zapad*), and specific regional scenarios for NATO's Northern Flank (*Sever: War in the Arctic*), and most recently *Ukraine: War on the Steppes*.

Mastering Military Capabilities

In mastering the art of war, to recognize opportunities and risks, one must first understand the capabilities in play. In Wayne Hughes' book *Fleet Tactics & Naval Operations*, he comments, “To know tactics, you must know weapons.” In addition to joint warfighting concepts and all domain warfare, another valuable learning aspect that wargames bring is an immersion in capabilities—both friendly and adversary. Knowledge of weapons systems and sensors is foundational to being an effective military planner or decision maker. Yet, a solid grounding in Russian and Chinese capabilities is not a common attribute in our officer corps. Through immersion in wargaming, as players plan and make decisions and are attacked by threat capabilities, their knowledge grows. Current wargame tools that MCU is leveraging to help provide this grounding in modern weapons systems and all domain warfare include on the computer wargame side *Command Modern Operations* [also known as *Command Professional Edition*] and *Flashpoint Campaigns* (a Germany 1980s World War III commercial game that has been adapted to modern scenarios). And, on the tabletop side, in addition to the OWS, MCU has used *FMF INDOPACOM* developed by Sebastian Bae (soon to be released commercially as *Littoral Commander: Indo-Pacific* by the Dietz Foundation) and the Next War game series published by GMT (*Next War Korea*, *Next War Poland*, *Next War Taiwan*). As we look to the future, MCU plans to expand the wargame portfolio of both digital and tabletop wargames, not only leveraging historical games but focusing on wargames that enable player decisions set in contemporary and future battlefields.

MCU Individual School Initiatives

While this article cannot cover the full scope of MCU wargaming initiatives, to give a sense of the overall effort, a few of the individual schools' efforts are highlighted here. At the School of Advanced Warfighting, there is a concerted effort to inculcate the students in wargaming and to challenge them with force-on-force campaigning. Two

examples are their Gothic Wildcat and Singapore Sling wargames, which explore some alternative historical campaigns from World War II using *The Operational Art of War* computer game. The School of Advanced Warfighting infusion of wargaming now builds to the granting of a Wargaming Certificate to graduates, with the vision that they have the skills to run a staff wargame upon arrival at their next assignment. At Expeditionary Warfare School, the staff is actively experimenting with wargame tools such as *Command PE* to identify the best capabilities to support student wargaming at the MEU level. At Command & Staff College, the Pacific Challenge series of games continues to be updated to better model threats and to take advantage of wargaming tools such as *Command PE*. College of Enlisted Military Education is also exploring wargaming options to include *FMF INDOPACOM* to better enhance student understanding of MAGTF and joint operations. Furthermore, the Marine Corps War College incorporates a series of historical board games, the *Hedgemony: Game of Strategic Choices* strategy game developed by RAND and an end of year Global War simultaneous conflict wargame based on OWS. MCU also runs an annual Sea Dragon wargaming tournament that includes teams competing from across all schools.

MCU and Wargaming Future Warfare

In addition to producing graduates steeped in tactics, operational art, and strategy, MCU seeks to contribute to advancing ideas on future warfare, joint warfighting, and future force design via wargaming as a research method. Over the past few years, the University developed a close partnership with the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab to support Service-level wargames and iterative research games. This was initially done via the Command and Staff College's Gray Scholars Program initiative and has evolved into multiple efforts over the course of the academic year. With a player pool of students and faculty across all MCU schools who can take a relatively unbiased and academic approach to wargaming and who are

local to Quantico over the span of the year, MCU is in an ideal position to enhance futures focused wargaming.

In 2024, the new Marine Corps Wargaming & Analysis Center (MCWAC), currently under construction right next to the MCU campus, will become operational. This new wargaming center will represent the state of the art in wargaming capability. MCU is working with the MCWAC program office to identify ways for MCU to export some of this capability into MCU wargaming efforts at the unclassified level. The full MCWAC capability will certainly be leveraged to support classified advanced research wargames conducted by small groups of students and faculty.

Exporting Wargaming to the Operating Forces

Another byproduct of these wargaming efforts is that students emerge from these PME courses with a degree of familiarity with wargaming—including specific games like *Command PE* and OWS. These graduates can then leverage these games once back in the operating forces to help inform problem framing, course of action development, and plan rehearsals. By leveraging these games and educating students on how to play them, and demonstrating their potential as tools to refine plans, tactics, operations, and strategy, MCU not only makes graduates better planners and decision makers but directly contributes to enhancing the overall planning capabilities of each operating force unit as they in-turn leverage these same wargaming tools for planning. The groundwork for this is already being done through wargaming partnerships between MCU, the MAGTF Staff Training Program, and each of the MEF staffs. This partnership has already led to wargame efforts in Academic Year 2021–22 at both I MEF and II MEF.

Conclusion

The need for wargaming inside our PME programs is more critical now than ever. The increased sophistication of war, the demands of all domain warfare, and the wide range of joint capabilities (both friendly and adversary)

require that military planners and commanders become diligent students of war beyond just their individual areas of expertise. As integrated joint warfighting is pushed to ever more tactical levels, it is incumbent upon all to look beyond the capabilities residing within their Service and gain an understanding of how to leverage capabilities from across the joint force. Since our future adversaries will try to gain their own advantages across all domains, understanding the array of threat capabilities across domains is just as important. There is perhaps no better quote appropriate to mastering the art of war than this one from Sun Tzu:

If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.⁴

The mandate for PME is that our graduates emerge from our courses with a foundational knowledge of the joint force, joint warfighting, allied warfighting, and the capabilities, tactics, and strategies of our potential adversaries. It is through the means of wargaming that these ends will be achieved.

Notes

1. Roger Misso, "Ten Seconds," *U.S. Naval Institute Blog*, (March 2016), available at <https://blog.usni.org>.
2. Maj Ian Brown and Sebastian Bae, "Promise Unfulfilled: A Brief History of Educational Wargaming in the Marine Corps," *Journal of Advanced Military Studies*, (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, Fall 2021).
3. Gen David H. Berger, *38th Commandant's Planning Guidance*, (Washington, DC: July 2019).
4. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, (Minneapolis, MN: Filiquarian, 2007).



High-Impact PME

Scholarship programs at Marine Corps University

by Maj Ian T. Brown

This past January, Gen David Berger, Commandant of the Marine Corps, noted that “we have to incentivize superior performance” in professional military education (PME).¹ A necessary element of incentivizing such performance is by providing opportunities for superior performers to truly challenge themselves. Fortunately for the FMF, the schools at Marine Corps University (MCU) already offer several options for those high performers to both challenge themselves and generate useful research and insights that can benefit the fleet. Many of these options are in the form of extracurricular academic programs, in which students immerse themselves more deeply in an area of study and have that immersion guided by subject-matter experts both within and outside of the MCU environment. This article highlights some of the programs available at each school and how those programs allow already high-performing students to be even more impactful on their return to the FMF.

Expeditionary Warfare School—Enrichment and Fellowship

For career-level officers, Expeditionary Warfare School (EWS) offers two options for extracurricular academic enhancements: the Enrichment Activities Program and the Fellowship Program. The EWS Enrichment Program grants students and faculty numerous opportunities for academic, professional, and personal development beyond the school’s core curriculum and allows participants to broaden their academic experience while building lifelong learning habits. EWS uses a tiered approach to its enrichment programs. Tier I are those formal programs that either offer elective credit or have the potential to reinforce the EWS curriculum. Examples

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include Dr. Williamson Murray’s “Seminar on War” and “Greek Seminar on War” electives, Dr. Kirklin Bateman’s “Irregular Warfare” and “Gettysburg Campaign Staff Ride” electives, the “Beyond Boyd” seminar, “Wargaming Exploration,” “21st Century Leadership,” and the “Captains’ Combat Leadership Seminar.” Tier II programs more indirectly reinforce the EWS curriculum and include the Futurist Forum and Quatrefoil Society. Finally, Tier III programs are more informal, focusing on camaraderie, esprit-de-corps, com-

Traditional Fellowship. A Traditional Fellowship allows students to write papers that go beyond what is required of every student at EWS. These longer papers encourage original research and give students the opportunity to stretch their creative abilities. Over the past five years, Fellows have produced papers on suicide awareness programs, unmanned aerial systems, and returning service members with amputations to active duty. The Non-Traditional Fellowship requires students to present a final project in some form besides an essay.

The EWS Enrichment Program grants students and faculty numerous opportunities for academic, professional, and personal development beyond the school’s core curriculum ...

munity service, and physical fitness. Examples of these programs include Dr. Todd Holm’s woodworking program, orienteering, and the EWS basketball team.

EWS developed its Fellowship Program in 2017 under guidance from Maj-Gen Jason Bohm (then-Col Bohm). The intent was to provide a deeper challenge beyond the school’s required 2,000-word Argumentative Research paper for top students who wanted to explore subjects of which they were passionate. Fellowship projects can take two forms: a Traditional Fellowship and a Non-

Such projects have included the development of an additive-manufactured square water bottle, which increased the volume of a shipping container by 60 percent; using augmented reality to assist field medics; a unique art exhibit exploring youth in combat; a social media tool kit for Marine recruiters to leverage during COVID restrictions; and children’s books designed to help children of service members adapt to permanent-change-of-station moves. In addition to creating a final product for a grade, students also present their projects to the EWS student body at the



Capt Valerie Krygier presents her EWS Non-Traditional Fellowship project, the “Social Media Prospecting Playbook,” as part of the AY 2021 Innovation Summit. (Photo provided by author.)

end of the year, with the top projects also featured in the annual cross-school Innovation Summit hosted by the Brute Krulak Center for Innovation and Future Warfare.

Command and Staff College—Gray Scholars Program

The Command and Staff College’s (CSC) Gray Scholars Program (GSP) is an advanced studies program of multiple academic lines of inquiry (LOI) organized as individual courses taught by CSC faculty. GSP provides a space for a group of competitively-selected CSC students to complete their Master of Military Studies degree while challenging many of the assumptions about war, strategy, operations, history, policy, and international and domestic politics. Classes are small (4:1 student-teacher ratio) and meet throughout the entire academic year (AY). GSP scholars receive a certificate and two additional credit hours on their transcripts, with some GSP LOI linked to the CSC electives program as well.

Demand for the GSP exceeded expectations, prompting CSC to grow the program from one line of inquiry to five. The current AY21/22 list of LOIs offered includes: “The 5,000-Year-Old-Mind,” led by Dr. Lon Strauss, Dr. Paul Gelpi, and LtCol Brian McLean; “Social and Political Conflict Lab,” mentored by Dr. Craig Hayden and Dr. Claire Metelits; “Educational Wargaming,”

The Command and Staff College’s Gray Scholars Program is an advanced studies program of multiple academic lines of inquiry organized as individual courses ...

led by Dr. Paul Gelpi and Dr. Hayden; “Naval and Maritime Strategy,” led by Dr. Douglas Streusand; and the “Strategic Dialogue,” mentored by Dr. Gelpi and Dr. James Joyner.

While the themes of specific LOIs have changed across the years, the GSP is constant in its opportunity to provide CSC students with chances to collaborate with outside entities such as the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory (MCWL), present their findings to audiences outside of CSC—such as MCCDC and the Innovation Summit—and distinguish themselves academically (44 percent of GSP students were Distinguished Graduates last year).

Marine Corps War College—Advanced Studies Program

Students at MCU’s top-level PME school, the Marine Corps War College (MCWAR), all partake in MCWAR’s Advanced Studies Program (ASP). Initiated in AY13, the ASP supplements the core courses taken by the students—“Warfighting and Economics,” “Diplomacy and Statecraft,” “National Security, Leadership and Ethics,” and “Joint Warfare”—by providing unique methods for a deeper analysis of each course’s content. As noted by Mr. Tim Barrick in “Mastering the Art of War: Wargaming and PME” (also found in



GSP students explore wargame mechanics in the “Educational Wargaming” LOI in AY21/22. (Photo provided by author.)

this *Gazette* issue), students in the AY22 ASP used the “Assassin’s Mace” module of the Operational Wargame System (OWS) to plan and execute a simulated joint campaign in the Western Pacific. The OWS focuses on hypothetical conflicts in the 2025 timeframe and helps students understand the relationship between operational time and distance factors, the rapid tempo of decision-making, and the complexities of joint warfare in the future operating environment.² As MCWAR students go on to positions of Service-level leadership, the ASP, utilizing tools like the OWS, is a crucial program for developing leaders able to inform strategy, joint warfighting concepts, and Marine Corps force design efforts.

Cross-School Scholars Programs

In addition to the school-specific programs outlined above, MCU also hosts several cross-school programs open to all PME students. Beyond offering opportunities for high-performing students to more deeply explore key research areas, these programs create a unique environment in which students from different ranks and backgrounds can share their perspectives and learn from each other in a way not normally found inside standard PME curricula. These programs are described below.

Van Riper Scholars

The kernel of what would become the Van Riper Scholars program formed near the end of AY20/21, when a request came to MCU from MCWL to provide players for a wargame focused on force design. The collaborative game was a success and resulted in BGen Benjamin Watson, commanding general of MCWL, seeking support in AY21/22 for a series of iterative force design wargames. To both formalize and streamline student participation, MCU stood up the Van Riper Scholars program. Taking the GSP as a model, the Van Riper Scholars was opened to students from all MCU schools and incentivized students signing up by granting credit for extracurricular enhancements: EWS students got credit for their Enrichment Program, CSC students received credit for the elec-



Mr. Tim Barrick explains the outline of a scenario in the OWS. (Photo provided by author.)

tronic program, and MCWAR students earned credit toward the ASP. In return, MCWL gained a trained and experienced wargaming cadre for its iterative Force Design wargame series, with students playing through an Infantry Battalion 2030 game in the fall of 2021 and a Marine Littoral Regiment wargame in the spring of 2022. Thus, the Van Riper Scholars received a unique opportunity to directly impact

ter has generated several of its own scholar’s programs to achieve this goal. Since AY19/20, the Center’s flagship programs include the General Robert H. Barrow Fellowship and Lieutenant General Victor H. Krulak Scholars. In addition to resident PME students at MCU, a unique aspect of the Krulak Center’s programs is that they have also included interagency students from national security and law enforcement

Charted to ... provide opportunities for innovative thought and creative problem-solving ... the Krulak Center has generated several of its own scholar’s programs ...

the dynamic force design process, as well as gleaned valuable insights on the future force that they took with them when they returned to the FMF.

Krulak Center Scholars Programs

The final category of cross-school scholars programs is run by the Brute Krulak Center for Innovation and Future Warfare. Charted to cultivate and provide opportunities for innovative thought and creative problem-solving to all MCU schools, the Krulak Cen-

ter has generated several of its own scholar’s programs to achieve this goal. Since AY19/20, the Center’s flagship programs include the General Robert H. Barrow Fellowship and Lieutenant General Victor H. Krulak Scholars. In addition to resident PME students at MCU, a unique aspect of the Krulak Center’s programs is that they have also included interagency students from national security and law enforcement entities in the National Capital Region, as well as Marine Corps distance education students. Coursework includes immersive lectures and discussions from subject-matter experts, culminating in a final written product with the specific goal of having it published professionally. Covering themes from the strategic competition with China, the space domain, alliance dynamics, and the national security implications of climate change, Barrow Fellows and Krulak Scholars have enjoyed unique



LtGen Lori Reynolds (Ret), former Deputy Commandant for Information, talks to students in the Women, Peace, and Security Scholars program. (Photo provided by author.)



Dr. Amin Tarzi, Director of Middle East Studies, provides a lecture on security issues in the eastern Mediterranean to the Krulak Scholars. (Photo provided by author.)

opportunities to influence the broader discussion and policy framing of these topics by briefing their research to Service chiefs, Marine Corps deputy commandants, and senior civilian leaders within the Defense Department. They have enjoyed significant success in the publication realm as well, with essays featured in the *Marine Corps Gazette*, presented at the International Studies Association and Strategic Command's Academic Alliance Conference, and

elsewhere.³ Thanks to a growing demand signal for additional programs, in AY21/22 the Krulak Center added a Women, Peace, and Security Scholars program in conjunction with Dr. Lauren Mackenzie, Professor of Cross-Cultural Competence at MCU.

Conclusion

While there are myriad approaches to “incentivizing superior performance” in PME as Gen Berger challenged, creat-

ing opportunities for superior performance is a vital one. Moreover, MCU has looked beyond the framework of standard educational curricula and generated unique programs that engage all OPME schools. The scholarship programs described allow those students who want to maximize the benefits of their time in resident PME the chance to do so and do so in a fashion that lets them impact the Fleet beyond their transient time in Quantico. For those students of all Services about to come on deck at MCU: welcome aboard, and if you hunger for a deeper challenge during your months here, we have an opportunity for you!

Notes

1. Gen David H. Berger and Ryan Evans, “Gen David H. Berger on the Marine Corps of the Future,” *War on the Rocks*, (January 2022), available at <https://warontherocks.com>.
2. Georgetown University Wargaming Society, “Wargame Design: The Marine Corps’ Operational Wargame System,” YouTube video, 1:59:06, (July 2021), available at <https://youtu.be>.
3. For *Gazette* contributions, see: Maj Robert Manuel, LTC Jeremy Glauber, and LtCol Christopher Jones, “Yes, They Can Hear Us Now,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: September 2021); LCDR Timothy Polyard, Capt Adam Fountain, CAPT Andrew Folt-ermann, and Capt Edwin Latrell, “Fighting From the Ultimate High Ground,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: September 2021); and Maj Jared Cooper, “Marines in the Space Domain,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: September 2021). International Studies Association and Strategic Command Academic Alliance contributions by Capt Casey Lamar with Dr. Leah Windsor can be found on the organizations’ respective websites.



Rethinking Enlisted Education

Supporting force modernization

by Randi R. Cosentino, Ed D & Mr. Robert Kozolski

In the past, many viewed college education for enlisted Marines as a distraction from unit training or operations. It was often considered a benefit or perk—an endeavor only to prepare Marines for a successful transition to civilian life. However, as society, technology, and geopolitics changed, so did the character of warfare. The Marine Corps recognized the need to adapt to these external changes as described in *Force Design 2030*. A critical part of this bold force modernization effort must include rethinking how the enlisted force's academic and intellectual contributions could be used beyond their traditional roles in combat.

Force Development and Education

Gen Charles Krulak wrote about the strategic corporal and leadership in the three-block war.¹ While the three-block war did not envision the resurgence of strategic competition, it did identify the increasingly complex decisions made by small-unit leaders. Gen Krulak's article reinforced the need for small-unit leaders to recognize opportunity and seek advantage by seeing both the enemy's actions and their own actions in a broader context. This is not a new concept and remains the center of success in maneuver warfare. Time is a weapon; a unit that is able to identify what is important and act on it at the lowest level is a quicker, more lethal unit. *MCDP 7, Learning*, refers to *MCDP 1, Warfighting*, a dozen times. In one reference, it states, "Maneuver warfare requires intelligent leaders at all levels who possess a bias for intelligent action."² The link between learning and maneuver warfare is clear: expeditionary advanced base operations will only

push further down in rank the need for small-unit leaders to understand the larger context of their decisions, possess the skills to operate in communication constrained environments, thrive as a smaller organization with less support, and employ weapons of greater reach.

Additionally, the evolving character of war places a premium on the total force's cognitive abilities and advanced technical skills. Yet, the Marine Corps is faced with several strategic challenges that it must address to succeed on the modern battlefield. First, modern warfare places a greater emphasis on cyber, big data, and other advanced weaponry. Different skillsets and the ability to process information quickly and accurately are required to take full advantage of these emerging capabilities. Second, in the information age, competition occurs in the cognitive domain. Therefore, enlisted Marines need to develop advanced critical-thinking skills as a force protection measure to defend against the misinformation, deception, and propaganda of our adversaries. Finally, despite the demand for high-tech skills on the battlefield, those same tech skills are in great demand in the American private sector. This reality creates a retention problem in certain enlisted career fields. It also creates a situation where the best and brightest Americans may choose more lucrative career opportunities in the private sec-

tor over joining the military Services. These problems must be addressed by placing more emphasis on the professional development of enlisted Marines, including academics.

In February 2019, the Department of the Navy issued its Education for Seapower (E4S) Report, calling for reform and improvement of the naval education system and in particular for enlisted forces.³ The E4S Report provides recommendations stemming from the Education for Seapower Study, which found that the majority of the naval Services (the enlisted forces), while provided training, were generally excluded from the myriad of educational opportunities afforded to naval officers. Unlike the officer corps, there was no clear connection between college education and improved leadership skills, technical competency, or operational readiness for enlisted service members. To solve this problem and a call to action in the E4S Report, the Secretary of the Navy established the U.S. Naval Community College (USNCC) specifically to provide enlisted sailors, Marines, and coast guardsmen an academic institution that provides college-level education designed around the needs of the naval operating forces.

In the two years since its inception, the USNCC leadership team engaged with naval officers and enlisted leaders from the Services to design and launch

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outstanding online, naval relevant academic programs that service members can complete on their own time that directly contributes to the FMF.

Naval Body of Knowledge

Most professions, such as accountants, project managers, or lawyers, operate from a common body of knowledge, and the naval profession should be no different. A common body of knowledge promotes a shared understanding of the profession and provides a general foundation for specific competencies. To date, only naval officers have had access to the study of naval

opportunity for active-duty enlisted members to build the knowledge and relationships they need early on to integrate internally, which provides a stronger foundation for mastering the joint environment as a senior enlisted leader.

As a member of the Naval University System, the USNCC reinforces existing efforts of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard to maintain partnerships across all three Services and ensure that our continuing education opportunities are relevant to the needs of the Services and the future of the naval forces. All USNCC students must complete five

thinking skills to match their physical combat skills. As the in-residence, brick-and-mortar, online, and hybrid learning options grow within and between military and civilian entities, our junior enlisted forces have increased access to develop the increasingly determinant sharp critical-thinking skills they need to optimally leverage training and educational opportunities to boost professional learning outcomes and force readiness.

Today's enlisted forces are required to assess the credibility and relevance of incoming information under the suppressing fire of a wide range of sources, including the increasingly complex technologies they operate and monitor, the social media sources they have access to, and the interpersonal communications they have with friends, family, and the chain of command. Naval relevant online enlisted education is uniquely positioned to provide enlisted forces with rigorous learning activities to make sense out of complex environments and to boost their resistance to misinformation. This education also sharpens their discernment as it relates to quickly analyzing situations and deciding when to apply previous training versus when to leverage education to formulate and effectively communicate a better course of action informed by the ambiguous and continuously changing threats they face.

The USNCC students engage with the five naval relevant courses designed to boost their critical-thinking skills, analytical skills, good judgment, and effective communications that they need to maximize operational effectiveness and warfighting advantage. Critical thinking comprises the intellectual ability and metacognitive skills to continuously monitor and refine their own understanding of the world while evaluating and synthesizing new insights into reasoned judgements and actions to maximize operational effectiveness and warfighting advantage in rapidly evolving contexts.⁵

Marines enrolled in the USNCC Naval Studies Certificate program will engage with sailors and coast guardsmen to sharpen their critical-thinking abilities, including information literacy,

Marines equipped with the USNCC education will develop the skills to frame complex and rapidly evolving issues, develop multiple hypotheses ...

matters at regular intervals throughout their career, leaving the largest portion of the workforce (enlisted service members) without the same foundational academic grounding and opportunity to better understand how the Naval Services operate in the complex maritime environment. This artificial bifurcation was appropriate for the Industrial Age; however, it is no longer optimal for a modern military. The USNCC, in collaboration with faculty from other schools in the Naval University System, designed a Naval Studies Certificate to expand the knowledge base across the entire force.⁴

The USNCC Naval Studies Certificate is designed to supplement—not substitute—the Services' enlisted professional military education. Its purpose is to provide a voluntary education pathway reinforcing existing efforts and providing an opportunity to bring the Naval Services together and increase technical skills in the fleet, as well as an understanding of the context in which they operate. The USNCC provides space for active-duty enlisted members of the Naval Services to sharpen skills and prepare better for small-unit leadership challenges. Additionally, the USNCC provides a much-needed

courses in USNCC's Naval Studies Certificate program to complete their associate degree. These courses bring together students across the Naval Services to:

- discuss and learn moral deliberation, draw upon the case studies of naval history,
- recognize how Naval Services meet the Nation's security requirements,
- consider the military Services in the U.S. Government, and
- understand the challenges of strategic competition.

These skills provide the “reps and sets” for critical thinking, the context for the larger operating environment, and the exposure for small-unit leaders to understand how the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard come together to support the interests of the Nation. Small-unit leaders are able to tap into this foundation to recognize opportunity and advantage more quickly, thus increasing the unit's efficacy.

Thinking Critically

Critical-thinking skills are as important in modern warfare as physical fitness and marksmanship. The Marine Corps needs to take deliberate efforts to ensure the force has the critical-

analytical rigor, adaptive awareness, ethical leadership, and effective problem solving. These Marines will also develop effective written communication skills through short and long form essays citing and integrating insights from credible sources while they deepen their understanding of naval-relevant topics spanning disciplines such as history, political science, ethics, leadership, and geopolitics.

Marines equipped with the USNCC education will develop the skills to frame complex and rapidly evolving issues, develop multiple hypotheses as well as evaluating alternatives, and clearly communicate insightful recommendations to their peers and chain of command to influence solving complex problems in rapidly evolving and ambiguous circumstances.

Relevance

College-level general education courses are valuable to achieve both

critical-thinking rigor and versatility among learners. Learners develop the discernment they need to frame problems and quickly formulate context-informed solutions in rapidly changing environments by applying the critical thinking, problem solving, and communications skills they learn to a variety of disciplines and knowledge domains. The combination of general education along with professionally relevant courses significantly improve learning outcomes and relevancy to the target audience. The U.S. Naval Academy has been successfully blending general and naval-relevant courses to boost learning outcomes for its graduating officers. The USNCC will leverage similar insights and adapt these approaches to the needs of the enlisted forces in the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.

Specifically, the USNCC is continuously engaging with subject-matter experts from the naval operating forces to develop and optimize cross-disciplinary

programs and learning objectives that maximize learning outcomes toward naval relevant professional concentration areas such as data analytics, military studies, cybersecurity, and organizational leadership.

By collaborating with partner institutions who are experts in providing education in important disciplines such as those noted above, the USNCC can develop and support the delivery of education aligned to the custom outcomes that the naval services require. A standard logistics program takes on the emphasis of maritime logistics; a data analytics program can emphasize the application and understanding of data in contextualized examples that are relevant to the Naval Services. The USNCC will capitalize on the theoretical and applied learning in which leading higher-education institutions specialize while ensuring that service members can apply that learning to their service environments.

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Access

The sea Services must prioritize transitioning enlisted education from Industrial Age-based education platforms to technologically and information age-based formats. One opportunity that directly links *Force Design 2030* to improved educational opportunities is the USNCC. Naval forces are seeking better venues to develop warfighting capabilities at a low cost while incorporating a return to naval integration and amphibious operations. The USNCC links to naval integration by providing educational opportunities based in naval tradition integrated with technology through the delivery of online and competency-based education programs, allowing students—sailors, Marines, and coast guardsmen—to achieve higher levels of education without leaving their home station or ship.

The increased access to educational opportunities creates an environment where the desire to allow learning increases as learning does not interfere with training or readiness, resulting in the flourishing of individual learning. This advancement of a flexible and accessible learning environment develops critical thinkers and lifelong learners. However, this requires the naval forces to remember that learning encompasses both training and education.⁶ The USNCC provides education in naval integration, amphibious operations, and critical thinking, which assists the naval forces to achieve an understanding of the integration of force design into warfighting. This is achieved by the USNCC’s focus on technology and information-based platforms integrated with adult learning concepts that develop the service member’s warfighting capabilities.

Leadership Support for Education

Intrusive leadership is as essential to achieving the desired critical thinking outcomes as it is for any individual warfighting readiness, such as physical fitness. However, education and other aspects of cognitive development are often left to the individual. The following actions can help improve the success of enlisted students:

Opportunities: Leaders balance a host of priorities when considering the professional development of the men and women in their charge. Leaders consider education important and therefore block off or schedule time within an operational schedule for students to participate in academic programs. This provides stability for students to focus on academic work with minimal disruption.

Engagement: Leaders who engage students in discussions about what they are learning in the classroom play an important role in demonstrating the relevance of the knowledge acquired by the students and providing the students with the feedback that the work they are doing in the classroom matters to the unit.

Application: Leaders should identify opportunities for students to apply the knowledge learned in the classroom to operational missions, as this demonstrates the ultimate test of naval-relevant education. As more knowledge is acquired by the enlisted force, effective leaders will find innovative ways to harness this knowledge and apply it to all aspects of warfighting readiness.

Conclusion

When considering military readiness, renowned defense scholar Richard Betts observed, “the aim of strategy and policy is not to achieve readiness in a single sense but rather to answer three key questions over a long period of time: Readiness for when? Readiness for what? Readiness of what?”⁷ While training prepares Marines for what is known, *education* helps prepare for the unknown. The Marine Corps must strike a balance between training and education to maintain a high state of readiness across the force as a hedging strategy to deal with the uncertainty inherent to modern warfare.

The Marine Corps faces a significant challenge: to succeed in modern warfare, it must have an educated force with finely-honed critical thinking skills to create an intellectual overmatch against potential adversaries.⁸ Given the changes in society, technology, and geopolitics, the onus is on the Marine Corps to develop cognitive capacity and

skills of enlisted Marines. The Marine Corps excels at providing service training for specific jobs skills and developing the leadership skills within the enlisted force. However, until now, it did not have an accredited institution to educate the enlisted force in naval relevant topics. Developing our emerging enlisted Marine leaders early in their career, through the combination of naval studies, general education (21st century skills), and naval-relevant concentration-related courses, will help to develop more agile and effective units that can respond to challenges as they emerge. The USNCC is a valuable resource for the Marine Corps as it provides the unmatched venue to educate sailors and Marines to succeed in modern warfare and places them on a path for lifelong learning.

Notes

1. Gen Charles C. Krulak, “The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: January 1999).
2. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCDP 7, Learning*, (Washington, DC: March 2020).
3. Department of the Navy, “Education for Seapower Report,” (Washington, DC: May 2018).
4. The Naval University System Consists of Marine Corps University, Naval War College, United States Naval Academy, and the Naval Postgraduate School.
5. Angelle Khachadoorian, Susan Steen, Lauren Mackenzie, “Metacognition and the Military Learner: Pedagogical Considerations for Teaching Senior Officers in Professional Military Education,” *Journal of Military Learning*, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army University Press, April 2020).
6. Ibid.
7. Robert Kozloski, “Understanding the Naval Learning Ecosystem,” *CHIPS*, (July–September), available at <https://www.doncio.navy.mil>.
8. Ben Werner, “Focus on Critical Thinking is Key in New Navy Education Study,” *USNI News*, (August 2018), available at <https://news.usni.org>.



The Infantry Marine

A multidisciplinary perspective

by Maj Elliott Arrington & Col David C. Emmel

With the current and projected geopolitical challenges posed by peer and near-peer competitors, the Commandant of the Marine Corps declared a need for change to ensure the Marine Corps' continued relevance to the Nation. As he states, the "defining attributes of our current force design are no longer what the nation requires of the Marine Corps."¹ Discussions spurred by the Commandant's *Force Design 2030 (FD2030)* have fostered emergent ideas such as the *arms-room concept* and *multidisciplinary infantry Marine* as potential ways for the Marine Corps to adapt to meet the varied challenges inherent in the future operational environment. Although these ideas merit exploration, they must be grounded in reality, specifically regarding the constrained duration of entry-level infantry training, acquired levels of weapons proficiency, service resource limitations, and the advantages of weapons specialization.

The arms-room concept and desire for multidisciplinary infantry Marines emerged based on the need for decentralized operations where small, dispersed infantry elements, as part of stand-in forces, require individual Marines who can employ multiple weapons systems to meet mission requirements. Given the limited resources available in distributed operations, Marines must be able to do more with the finite resources available to them. In the arms-room concept, as then-BGen Watson, head of Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, states, "Your Marines would be trained in all [weapons] ... and then you pick the weapons suited to the mission. It's producing a more mature, sort of multidimensional utility infilder as an infantryman."² In other words, the

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"SOF-like" and "MARSOC-like" are effective descriptions of the capabilities envisioned for future infantry Marines; however, the training requirements are difficult to achieve. (Photo by Cpl Patrick Crosley.)

arms-room concept affords commanders greater flexibility in task organizing and equipping their forces based on specific mission needs, given their Marines' multidisciplinary skillset and increased weapons qualifications.

To address the significance of these changes, some may offer similes such as "SOF-like" or "MARSOC-like" to illustrate the additional leverage conventional infantry battalions could draw from in the future. These adages are most often applied to the expected flexibility afforded to commanders when a unit's infantry Marines qualify on multiple weapons systems. In theory, this allows

their employment to be based on specific mission requirements. Such a construct conjures up images of small groups of Marines streaming through the armor and outfitting themselves with the weaponry their leaders identified for an upcoming mission that may—for the sake of illustration—weight machine-guns and mortar employment over anti-armor capabilities.³ While undoubtedly beneficial and certainly aspirational, the notion of every basic infantryman receiving specialized training on the preponderance of weapons systems organic to an infantry battalion (without significant resourcing increases) proves

problematic.⁴ Ongoing Service-level experimentation is currently assessing this multidisciplinary Marine construct through the Infantry Battalion Experiment 2030 initiative. Nevertheless, the Marine Corps' mass production model for entry-level infantry training naturally conflicts with the development of a broad variety of weapons-related competencies, especially when the available duration of training time and the number of resources is constrained.

For reference, the current Basic Infantry Marine (BIM) course taught at the Schools of Infantry (SOI) takes just over two months to complete. All infantry Marines train together for approximately four weeks covering individual infantry skills and then separate into specific groups to conduct four more weeks of specialized weapons courses, thereby gaining their respective MOS.⁵ Applying this production model to train the desired multidisciplinary infantry Marine (qualified in all entry-level infantry MOSs) would take the SOIs more than five months to achieve. This drastic increase in training time proves problematic for multiple reasons. The longer duration of the training pipeline and the lower output of graduates resulting from fewer course iterations each year creates throughput issues at the SOIs. This situation results in an ever-increasing population of Marines awaiting training until the start date of the next course; consequently, Marines will not have enough time to operationally deploy twice on a first-term enlistment.

In response to *FD2030*, while also recognizing resourcing realities, the SOIs developed a fourteen- and eighteen-week option for transforming infantry training based on the perceived skillset required of future infantrymen. These two variations build upon the existing BIM course to improve the proficiency of graduates in weapons-related training as well as other infantry competencies. With fourteen weeks, Marines receive additional training on medium machineguns, anti-armor weapons (minus the Javelin), and 60mm mortar employment (in handheld mode only).⁶ The eighteen-week course progresses this process further and includes training on

heavy machineguns, the service pistol, and the Javelin system. Each of these options ultimately endeavors to increase the combat lethality of infantry Marines. However, despite the longer duration of these courses, Marines still do not attain the skills many envision necessary to be a multidisciplinary Marine—at least as it relates to specialized proficiency in all infantry weapons systems.

... Service-level experimentation is currently assessing this multidisciplinary Marine construct ...

Beyond the ramifications of limited training time and the varying degree of proficiency for entry-level infantry Marines, the Service must also contend with the subsequent and substantial increases in resources each course requires. Irrespective of the fourteen- or eighteen-week option, there exists a need for supplemental staff and support personnel in addition to the current SOI organizational structures. These personnel serve as additional combat instructors, training company staff, and regimental enablers like motor transport drivers, optics technicians, and corpsmen. Longer, overlapping courses with increased time spent in the field also drive a corresponding growth in logistical needs, most notably transport vehicles. Furthermore, the influx of permanent and student personnel along with expanded training requirements necessitate the construction of new berthing and training facilities in addition to other fiscal increases to cover costs of training consumables, maintenance, and weapons replacement.

Taking all these factors into consideration, the SOIs are in the process of transitioning to the fourteen-week Infantry Marine Course (IMC) which—in relation to developing multidisciplinary infantry Marines—emphasizes proficiency with the light variants of an infantry company's weaponry (i.e.,

M240, rockets, 60mm mortar). The SOIs are currently in their eleventh IMC iteration, and the results indicate that the effort and investment produce a significantly more proficient infantry Marine who possesses a broader skill set when compared to graduates of the BIM course.⁷ However, the further investment of five and a half weeks of training, while beneficial, is not sufficient to produce a Marine skilled enough to employ all infantry weapons systems who could be assigned a unitary infantry MOS. Achieving this goal at IMC requires the Corps to invest even greater amounts of time, money, and resources.

In addition to the aforementioned realities of the entry-level infantry training pipeline, the current infantry construct in the FMF promotes the specialization of riflemen, machine gunners, anti-tank assault men, and mortarmen to meet mission requirements. Similar to the challenges of entry-level training, resourcing limitations such as ammunition and equipment shortfalls coupled with demanding and high-tempo pre-deployment training timelines help explain why weapons training and MOS specialization currently exist. Although not necessarily bad, especially in a resource-constrained environment, such actualities regarding MOS specialization impede the goal of creating and sustaining a multidisciplinary infantry Marine in the FMF.

Aggressive deployment schedules aligned to specific mission sets sometimes preclude units from investing adequate time to reinforce skills beyond the basics. With weapons-specific proficiency, this proves especially problematic as high-demand and low-density equipment along with limited ammunition inhibit routine training opportunities, such as anti-armor infantry Marines who are fortunate to shoot a single live-fire Javelin missile during their enlistment. As a result, even when focusing on fewer Marines to receive specialized MOS weapons training, FMF units remain hard-pressed to ensure sustained proficiency—let alone to effectively advance weapons skills.

Assuming that commanders will be able—and have the desire—to system-



The SOI-East, Infantry Marine Course is a fourteen-week program designed to modernize infantry training by improving efficiency and lethality. (Photo by Cpl Christian Ayers.)

atically rotate Marines to train them on all infantry weapons systems, this runs counter to the natural proclivity to assign the most proficient Marines to specific weapons systems. Commanders incur greater risk when spread loading limited time and resources to train all infantry Marines in all 03XX MOSs by potentially achieving a lower baseline of proficiency than would be realized if Marines concentrated on just one. In resource-constrained environments, specialization should not necessarily be viewed negatively. While the preferred course of action may be to thoroughly train multidisciplinary infantry Marines, the heavy resourcing implications indicate this training methodology may not be feasible with today's force. This brings into question the viability of teaching, resourcing, and training every Marine on every infantry weapon system, especially with the current fiscally-constrained environment.

Addressing the potential issues surrounding the anticipated development of multidisciplinary Marines and the arms room concept highlights the key (and uncontested) point that the status quo must change. The current BIM course graduate does not meet the requirements for tomorrow's battlefield in which the infantry must rely on well-rounded, critical-thinking Marines able to employ multiple weapons systems. With that in mind, the SOIs have developed and

implemented improved training methodologies incorporating adult learning tenants that, along with a longer duration course, better prepare infantry Marines for service in the FMF. With the new IMC, the SOIs produce more proficient and lethal infantry Marines trained on the light variants of all infantry weapons systems. These combat-capable, "multidisciplinary-light" Marines are better poised for continued development as they progress along the infantry training continuum, building upon the SOI's introductory weapons training.

The current reality as the Service implements *FD2030* illustrates that there remains an ongoing need for specialized, weapons-related, MOS training—at least in the near to midterm. As a result, the SOIs are currently revising follow-on four-week weapons MOS courses focused on the heavier variants of the infantry weapons systems. This additional training will produce even better results and progress skills beyond the current state based on IMC graduates who are more tactically-proficient, critical-thinking Marines capable of higher level, independent thought, and action. Fewer Marines conducting this specialized weapons training following their graduation from IMC also maximizes the use of limited resources to meet current FMF needs.

As part of the training continuum, infantry units receiving these entry-level

Marines must focus efforts to effectively build upon this foundation, advancing the proficiency of Marines on multiple weapons. Besides training in the FMF, Marines must still return to the SOIs to attend advanced infantry courses and realize even greater levels of skill acquisition needed to be multidisciplinary.⁸ This partnership between the FMF and the SOIs, informed by Service-level experimentation and supplemented with Marines' self-directed learning, provides a path to creating the multidisciplinary Marine needed to overcome the inherent challenges as stand-in forces and keep the Nation's adversaries at risk.

Notes

1. Gen David H. Berger, *Force Design 2030*, (Washington DC: March 2020).
2. Gina Harkins, "The Marine Corps is Experimenting with a Concept that Could Reshape the Infantry," *Military Times*, (April 2021), available at <https://www.military.com>.
3. MajGen Julian D. Alford, "Implementation of the Hunter Killer Platoon," *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: February 2022).
4. Some skillsets and weaponry require specialized training beyond entry-level training (e.g., scout sniper and 81mm mortar weaponry/employment).
5. These additional four weeks qualify Marines for specialized MOSs of 0311, Infantrymen; 0331, Machine Gunners; 0341, Mortar Men; and 0352, Anti-Armor Assault Men.
6. The specialized training needed for the mortar systems coupled with the low density of systems in operational units requires dedicated follow-on training for both the 60mm and the 81mm mortars.
7. This number reflects eight completed IMC courses with an additional three iterations in progress between the SOIs as of 1 April 2022.
8. The courses offered at the SOI's Advanced Infantry Battalion encompass training on advanced infantry skills to include infantry weapons systems and small-unit leadership.



The 21C Infantry Marine

A modernized approach to training

by Mr. Bob George & Col David C. Emmel

The mass-production approach to training that inundates Marines with overwhelming amounts of information in a short period of time, with an expectation that additional knowledge and skills will be obtained while on the job, does not effectively meet the challenges of the future. The Commandant explicitly states in his planning guidance that, “we will not train without the presence of education; we must not educate without the complementary execution of well-conceived training.”¹ Therefore, the Marine Corps can no longer afford to train infantry Marines as if they are a product coming off an assembly line. Instead, it must align well-conceived infantry training efforts along a continuum to better foster the development of critical thinking Marines who can excel in tomorrow’s more complicated operational environment. To better meet future operational challenges and serve 21st-century infantry Marines, the Marine Corps must evolve its training approach by focusing on outcomes while emphasizing the acquisition of skills within specific infantry competencies that are aligned to the infantry training continuum.

This infantry training continuum begins at the Schools of Infantry (SOI), continues throughout a Marine’s time in the FMF, constantly linking back to the SOIs and other training centers. As knowledge repositories, these schools facilitate a modern, holistic approach to development where students are responsible for their learning. Leaders then must embrace and reinforce this learning to further long-term retention and promote a life-long pursuit of knowledge in

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their Marines. To maximize the benefits of this continuum, the Marine Corps must first discard antiquated and less effective training techniques and methods.

The training approach that relies on passive learning—where an instructor stands in front of the students and tells them what they need to know—combined with demonstrations on what they need to do, followed by supervised practical application of those skills, falls short in meeting the needs of the student, both physically and cognitively. Physically, they are simply performing muscle memory movements, and cognitively they are memorizing just enough facts to pass a test. They are not responsible for their learning in this type of training; rather, they are viewed as just sponges that are supposed to absorb all of the information presented to them, regardless if it makes sense or not. This is a short-term tactic where knowledge and skills are more often than not forgotten shortly after they are acquired.

This training methodology usually assesses the skills Marines learn in isolation by executing steps on a checklist to demonstrate mastery. This proves problematic in that the term “mastery” implies in-depth or comprehensive levels of proficiency. In reality, this moniker is awarded to those who simply complete tasks on a prescribed checklist, not even accounting for how well or how poorly a Marine demonstrated a skill.

In the mastery paradigm, Marines fail to demonstrate an ability to perform multiple skills at once, which is essential to building context and long-term retention. Furthermore, this approach to training typically relies on the false premise that Marines will continue to progress those learned skills during on-the-job training and that the memorization of multiple acronyms assist a Marine in recalling important information.

To illustrate, when company-level units plan training, the unit references the infantry training and readiness

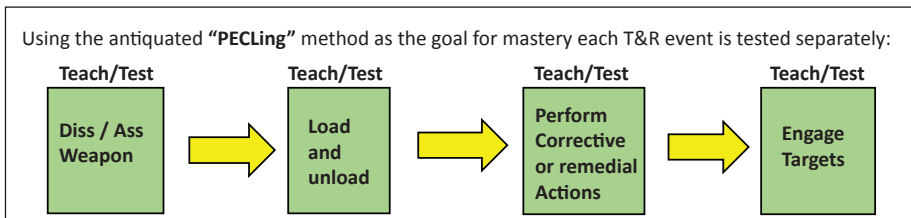


Figure 1. (Figure provided by author.)

(T&R) manual to identify those company-level tasks that align with their mission and the ambiguous criteria required to demonstrate mastery of those tasks. Training then takes the form of practice sessions with those vague standards of company-level T&R events as goals. Like football practice, the unit runs multiple sets and repetitions of prescribed scenarios to demonstrate completion of those indistinct standards established in the T&R manual. Often, this occurs with modest increases in how the unit performs those tasks, negating the need—and even desire—for any further development or refinement.

Unfortunately, when Marine leaders use a checklist to assess their unit's proficiency or readiness, the approach only focuses on the overall company-level outcome and fails to account for—and instead promotes—a lack of understanding by Marines as to their roles and responsibilities within the unit, as well as the effects they have on the overall success of the unit. In other words, Marines often lack context. Despite some who believe and even argue that this checklist model served the Marine Corps well enough in the past and does not require change, it no longer best supports the needs of current and future infantry Marines who must understand their detailed role within the unit to be truly successful.

This poses a serious problem when training warfighters for the 21st century and beyond because they will be expected to think critically, make decisions, perform their learned skills, and operate as members of a team. Transitioning from telling Marines what they need to know and how they will be tested to active-learning environments where they instead apply skills in situations that resemble future operating environments is a challenge that must be accepted and embraced. No longer must lecturing and talking *at* the students be the mainstay for instructors to impart knowledge to passive students. Rather, Marines must be active and willing participants in their role as life-long learners.

To effectively meet this challenge, the current infantry training paradigm must adapt. Rather than force-feeding

knowledge to those who often do not even recognize that they are hungry, leaders must focus heavily on the development of Marines who are responsible for their own learning, sustainment, and progression as they perform their duties in the FMF. This training approach takes the form of student-centered, active-learning environments where

... the SOIs utilize an approach that moves from training in isolation to one that applies T&R events within collective environments ...

Marines seek out information and assume ownership of their learning. It also relies on the students' ability to relate the skills and knowledge they acquire to what they already know, rather than simply absorbing what is presented by subject-matter experts. Another key tenant of this approach is that it requires Marines to reflect on and learn from their prior experiences. Reflecting on what was learned and how it was applied enables Marines to be more flexible and

of requiring additional time-consuming training that the gaining unit cannot afford. *MCDP 7* describes this learning continuum as:

Institutional processes such as recruit training and formal schools set[ting] the conditions for a culture of learning. Commanders in the fleet reinforce those initial processes, setting the conditions for a culture of learning that encourages Marines' adaptability, problem solving, initiative, reasoning, and innovation while maintaining structure, discipline, and readiness.²

Embracing the tenets of *MCDP 7*, the SOIs utilize an approach that moves from training in isolation to one that applies T&R events within collective environments in support of an essential competency. Marines perform the multiple skills (T&R events) associated with each competency, simultaneously or throughout an event, allowing them to gain an understanding of how those skills affect each other, as well as how they affect lower- and higher-level skill-sets.

To facilitate this change, the SOIs, in concert with multiple representatives from the FMF and higher headquarters, developed 39 infantry competencies. Each competency depicts the skills a Marine must know and perform and is inclusive of the T&R events required to demonstrate that knowledge and skills.

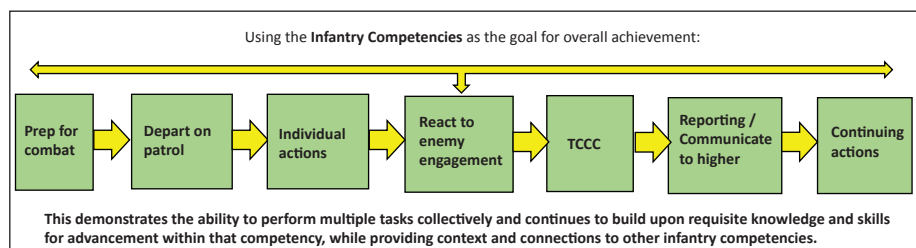


Figure 2. (Figure provided by author.)

adaptable when those skills are applied again in the future and also promotes critical thinking, communication, and innovation.

As part of the infantry training continuum, the SOIs developed, and are introducing, a competency-based approach to training that focuses on preparing Marines to perform as contributing members of their team instead

The use of these competencies differs from relying solely on T&R events because they go beyond describing the conditions and the standards that must be met. Rather, they identify all the skills that must be performed collectively. To illustrate, employing the rifle is not limited to just achieving effects on target for a single T&R event. It encompasses all aspects of employment

#	Infantry Competencies	#	Infantry Competencies
1	Employ the Service Rifle	21	Employ C4I
2	Optimize Human Performance	22	Operate in Compartmentalized Terrain
3	Embody the Marine Corps Philosophy of Warfighting	23	Operate from a Combat Platform
4	Employ Observation Devices	24	Conduct Rope Suspension Techniques
5	Employ Target Designators	25	Conduct Breaching
6	Conduct Fire and Movement	26	Employ Organic Indirect Fire
7	Employ Demolitions	27	Employ Mortars
8	Employ Pyrotechnics	28	Handle Small-Arms Threat Weapons
9	Employ Grenade Launchers	29	Employ Counter sUAS
10	Employ Machineguns	30	Employ sUAS
11	Employ Anti-Armor	31	Employ Organic Precision Fires
12	Employ the MAAWS	32	Employ Aviation Delivered Fires
13	Tactical Combat Casualty Care	33	Employ Non-Organic Direct Fires
14	Conduct Field Craft	34	Operate a Tactical Platform
15	Manage Signature	35	Operate in an Aquatic Environment
16	Navigate to an Objective	36	Conduct Austere Environment Sustainment
17	Perform Individual Actions in a Patrol	37	CBRNE
18	Conduct Surveillance	38	Employ the Service Pistol
19	Defend a Position	39	Support Non-Kinetic Engagements
20	Process Combat Orders		

Figure 3. (Figure provided by author.)

including disassembly and assembly, loading and unloading, zeroing, range estimation, corrective action, optics, target engagement, and continuing actions. This now allows for multiple T&R events to be used in support of the skills required instead of simply concentrating on one. By focusing on performing multiple skills at the same time, Marines have the opportunity to put all of the skills in context and recognize how they relate to other skills. Twenty-one of the infantry competencies listed in Figure 3 are trained and assessed in the new Infantry Marine Course, and thirteen of those are trained and assessed within the Marine Combat Training (MCT) course as part of the rifleman continuum.³

This alignment of competencies and T&R events works well for Formal Learning Centers, but what does this mean for the operating forces? It means that Training and Education Command needs to develop T&R tasks that support a competency and the progression of skills and knowledge throughout the infantry training continuum. This does not mean that T&R standards are ignored. Just the opposite. They are essential building block skills that must be learned, practiced, and assessed prior to demonstrating them collectively to achieve the overall outcome of training. Instead of focusing on the mastery of T&R events to demonstrate perceived knowledge and skills that are specific

to each event, the focus changes to assessing the skill acquisition level (SAL) a Marine attains for each infantry competency.

This approach provides a more complete measure of a Marine’s abilities compared to that of simply demonstrating the elements of a checklist associated with a single T&R event. The five skill levels starting with novice and progressing through advanced beginner, competent, proficient, and expert allow for a holistic assessment and align with the infantry training continuum. Much like a fitness report, each SAL contains a descriptive narrative highlighting what the Marine must demonstrate to achieve that specific level (see Figure 4 for a general description of the different levels).

On the surface, this approach appears to be nothing more than the use

of T&R events all conducted together, just like the company-level training described earlier. That would be a fair assessment, and to some extent the point, if it were not for the focus on the competency and the inclusion of SALs. By changing the focus from demonstrating steps on a checklist to infantry competencies, the T&R events become the steppingstones to greater knowledge and skill retention. With a competency mindset, lower-level skills must be learned, practiced, assessed, and consistently maintained to demonstrate them collectively.

Utilizing SALs removes the checklist mentality of *one and done* and the progression of those skills in time and proficiency then becomes the focus. In other words, a Marine can use the infantry training continuum as a road map for skills progression and the SALs to identify their strengths and weakness within each competency for future focus and development. This collective application of events also continues to build upon requisite knowledge and skills for progression while providing connections to other infantry competencies. Marines received from the SOIs no longer require months of additional training just to perform as a contributing member of a team. Contrary to the past when infantry students at the SOIs demonstrated skills taught but still lacked a general understanding of where and when to apply them, they are now more “plug and play,” having been introduced to skills that enable them to continue their personal and professional learning and development.

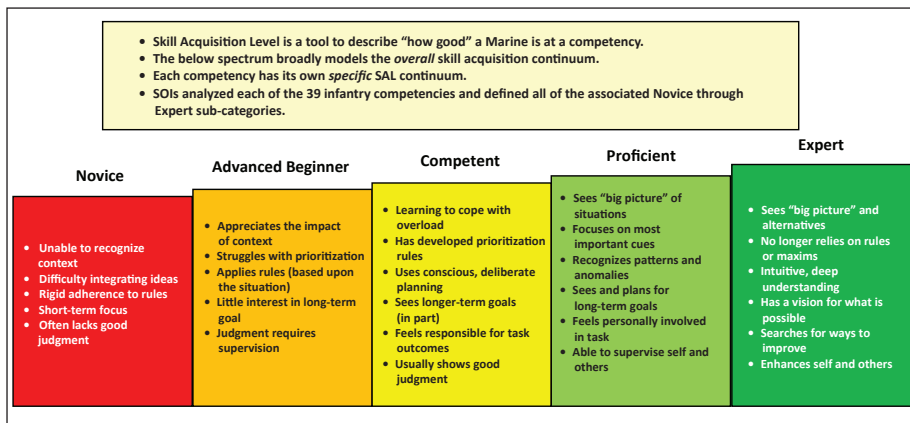


Figure 4. General overview of skill acquisition levels. (Figure provided by author.)

This ability to perform skills when and where required is essential to continued success on the battlefield and the ability of the organization to sustain and thrive in future resource-constrained operating environments. Marines must understand how they fit into the bigger picture and how it changes and evolves as they progress through the infantry training continuum and rank structure because their actions have effects on the

the educational outcome for the learner, vice content to memorize.²⁴ The SOIs responded and developed this methodology to better achieve the *38th Commandant's Planning Guidance* and move toward a combination of training and education to achieve a higher level of understanding and proficiency.

However, these changes must go beyond just increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of training in the infantry,

way ahead by developing essential skills in concert with critical thinking, decision making, and personal ownership. These self-directed behaviors facilitate lifelong learning that will continue throughout a Marine's career with the necessary reinforcement. In this way, Marine leaders can effectively develop more proficient and lethal Marines able to operate independently on tomorrow's battlefield.

As part of the infantry training continuum, the SOIs developed ... a competency-based approach to training ...

mission of the unit. By focusing on how to develop Marines and units utilizing the infantry competencies, training no longer resembles a "practice session" that checks off events associated with training. Instead, training establishes opportunities to assess Marines' units by utilizing the infantry competencies and focusing on the sustainment and development of knowledge and skills they acquired.

For training to adapt and progress for the 21st century, the infantry T&R manual must also evolve and take on a new and intuitive form. Competencies, SALs with descriptive narratives, and alignment of T&R events then become the means to better assess a Marine's capabilities. This allows the T&R manual to become the resource that aligns the infantry training continuum and that furthers the development of a Marine's knowledge and skills.

These proposed changes are not novel or unique; they exist in current doctrinal publications, such as *MCDP 1* and *MCDP 7*. They require the Marine Corps to embrace them and make the required policy modifications within training commands and operational forces that ensure their application, adherence, and longevity. As Col Joel R. Powers (Ret) states in his article on 21st Century Learning, Training Command recognizes the need for learner-centric experiences that "Incorporate outcomes-based learning, focused on

they must also facilitate the organization's ability to operate in future decentralized environments where decisions are made at the lowest level no matter a Marine's MOS. As previously mentioned, this process has already begun in MCT as part of the rifleman continuum and can be continued throughout the training pipeline for every MOS of the Marine Corps. All MOSs must adopt this way ahead by identifying their own essential competencies, the SALs and accompanying narratives, and alignment of T&R events to achieve them. Obviously, it is not a panacea, but it is currently addressing the organization's

Notes

1. Gen David H. Berger, *38th Commandant's Planning Guidance*, (Washington, DC: July 2019).
2. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCDP 7, Learning*, (Washington, DC: 2020).
3. The Marine Corps Recruit Depots introduce three of the infantry competencies as well. Collectively, the MCRD and MCT train Marines to the advanced beginner skill acquisition level in the employment of the service rifle competency; all other competencies are taught to the novice level.
4. Joel Powers, "21st Century Learning: Professionalizing How We Train and Educate Marines to Sustain a Competitive Edge in the Future Security Environment," *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: June 2020).



[Competency]: Employ the Service Rifle: Marines are skilled in the handling, operation, maintenance, and engagement with the service rifle suite to include optics, associated SL-3 gear, and aiming devices. Marines instinctively engage threats in a range of combat environments. While engaging threats at varying distances, levels of protection, and formations, Marines reduce threats in support of commander's intent.				
Novice	Advanced Beginner	Competent	Proficient	Expert
Has an introductory understanding of the fundamentals of rifle marksmanship. With the aid of coaching can operate the service rifle, aiming device, and optic. Struggles to conduct basic operator level maintenance and struggles with immediate and remedial actions. Through coaching can apply the fundamentals of rifle marksmanship within a controlled environment.....	Has a basic understanding of the fundamentals of rifle marksmanship. With the aid of coaching can operate the service rifle, aiming device, and optic. Can conduct basic operator level maintenance and immediate action. With coaching can conduct remedial action. Without coaching can apply the fundamentals of rifle marksmanship within a controlled environment.....	Has a knowledge of the service rifle, aiming device, and optic. Supervises conduct of user level maintenance. Understands and applies immediate and remedial actions. Will be able to identify when higher echelon maintenance is required. Possesses the fundamental knowledge and skills of rifle marksmanship required to move beyond the need for coaching.....	Has an in-depth knowledge of the service rifle, aiming device, and optic. Has a basic understanding of ballistic theory. Possesses the fundamental knowledge and skills of rifle marksmanship while still being able to perform at an advanced level. Has experience and intuitive knowledge in the employment of the service rifle in most situations.....	Has deeply rooted knowledge of the service rifle, aiming device, and optic. Has a firm understanding of ballistic theory. Possesses the fundamental knowledge and skills of rifle marksmanship while still being able to perform at all levels and environments. Has experience and intuitive knowledge in the employment of the service rifle in all situations.....
T&R Events that support this SAL: 0300-RFL-1001 0300-RFL-1002 0300-RFL-1003 0300-RFL-1004	T&R Events that support the SAL: 0300-RFL-1005 0311-M27-1003 0311-M27-1001 0311-M27-1005 0300-WPNS-2009 0300-OPTS-1001 0311-M27-2002	T&R Events that support the SAL: 0300-WPNS-2001 0300-WPNS-2002 0311-TRNG-2001 0931-RNGE-2003 0931-TRNG-2005 0931-TRNG-2006 0931-TRNG-2007	T&R Events that support the SAL: 0931-MARK-2001 0931-RNGE-2001 0931-RNGE-2002	T&R Events that support the SAL: 0931-RNGE-2004

Note: This figure is purely illustrative and does not contain all elements of this competency.

Figure 5. (Figure provided by author.)

21st-Century Rifleman

Marine Combat Training Battalion
developing tomorrow's leaders today

by Capt Ryan J. Love & LtCol Stephen E. DeTrinis

Since the summer of 2019, the Marine Corps has rapidly evolved to meet the challenges that peer competition and the future operating environment present. The Marine Combat Training Battalion (MCT Bn) at School of Infantry–East overhauled its culture, teaching methods, and curriculum, following the *38th Commandant's Planning Guidance*. Directing change to the training and education continuum, Commandant Gen David Berger explained, “We must change the Training and Education Continuum from an industrial age model, to an information age model.”¹ Since October 2020, MCT Bn created a student-centered, outcome-based information age learning program of instruction that resulted in entry-level riflemen who are more lethal and better prepared for future challenges.

The future operating environment requires critical thinkers and problem-solvers at all levels. Understanding that it is impossible to predict the next conflict and that competition is continuous, MCT Bn realized it needed to develop a challenging training program that improved thinking and decision making while also placing the student at the center of the experience. The Marine Corps needs riflemen with an expeditionary mindset, a bias for action, and a foundational understanding of leadership because today's entry-level Marines are tomorrow's leaders. To do this, MCT Bn adapted its culture from an instructor-centric one that focused on instructional output to one that concentrated on the learner's experience. Changing culture required a singular

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focus on the battalion's main effort—the combat instructor.

Since its inception in the 1990s, the Marine Combat Training Battalions have successfully prepared riflemen by exposing them to infantry individual training standards in a challenging environment. Each of the combat training battalions typically train between 18 and 20 thousand Marines per year in approximately 40 classes. With a maximum class size of 420 students,

it is more manageable to divide course content up so that each instructor is responsible for one or two classes delivered to the entire company in a large classroom followed by practical application and a performance evaluation. The combat instructors were adept at teaching via the Industrial Age model. It was seen as effective and easier. When the Commandant explained that the Marine Corps needs Marines that can adapt to an ever-changing operational



MCT Bn prepares Marines to serve as riflemen by exposing them to infantry individual training standards in a challenging realistic training environment. (Photo by Cpl Andrew Koppers.)

environment, he did not qualify the statement by noting rank or MOS groups. Planning teams quickly identified that the best way to ensure Marines possessed the qualities the Commandant highlighted was to focus on laying a foundation of skills and experiences during entry-level training. As a result, Combat Instructors had to change the way they delivered course content. To do that, the battalion had to change itself.

For the entry-level training continuum to challenge students with active learning strategies, the battalion had to convince its people that this would result in better-trained riflemen that are more lethal. Battalion leaders had to challenge their instructors with active learning strategies and teach them how to lead learning using methods more akin to a field grade officer professional military education conference group than an entry-level squad. MCT Bn implemented active learning strategies throughout instructor development to demonstrate value and to ensure the instructor experienced learning in a student-centered environment.

In early 2021, instructors transitioned from troop handlers to squad leaders. In a brief amount of time, the combat instructors prepared to teach all the classes at the squad level (as opposed to platoon or company level) and shifted their focus from how they taught the classes to how the student best learned and retained the information. As the squad leaders for their student squads, the combat instructors became a coach to their entry-level Marines. To complete the transition, these coaches focused on specific outcomes rather than specific processes.² Much like a coach for a football team leads practices (training) throughout the week with a focus on the specific outcomes he or she desires in the weekend's game, this technique emphasizes the practical application of new skills concurrently in varied environments. When effectively applied, this technique improves recall when outside of a sterilized training or educational environment. By focusing on student outcomes, the combat instructor helped create an environment for active learning.

Another fundamental change MCT Bn made was to maintain squad and squad instructor integrity for the entirety of the course. Remaining in the same small group increases the combat instructor's ability to better know the needs of each learner, adapt instructional approaches and problem-scenarios to the needs of the squad, and interleave content based on learner proficiency and aptitude. The smaller groups allow squad instructors to gauge learner understanding and identify problem areas that require focus. By focusing the curriculum on fewer tasks and improving the instructor's position to observe their squad execute tasks in a variety of circumstances, the battalion improved consistency as compared to previous programs that delivered instruction to larger groups in a less personalized manner.

MCT Bn implemented active learning strategies ...

Simultaneous with preparing the combat instructors, MCT Bn transitioned the curriculum to a more focused program of instruction that creates better riflemen. Counterintuitively, the new program is shorter than past versions. Previous programs of instruction trained entry-level Marines in over 35 individual training standards during 29 training days. The new MCT program covers 16 learning outcomes, defined as competencies, in 21 training days.³ The combat instructors evaluate them using skill acquisition levels (SALs). The evolution to competencies and SALs is not a replacement for the *Training and Readiness Manual* but an evolution to "Training and Readiness Manual Next" that migrates away from checklist-based performance standards being the sole metric to achieve mastery. Instead, the SAL describes *how well* a Marine performs the outcome and provides a structure to evaluate skill development throughout a career.

Competencies did not replace the *T&R Manual* individual training stan-

dards (ITS). On the contrary, each one encompasses multiple ITSs. The SALs include five categories that explain a Marine's maturation from novice to expert across a career continuum. Each level along the continuum considers Marines' tactical acumen as well as their leadership and ability to apply the skill in varying environments.⁴ Adopting this approach to deliver course content allowed the battalion to focus on Marine learning needs as opposed to training Marines to an institutionalized checklist or overly prescriptive qualification.

Evolution on this scale required assistance. Key contributors to success included Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island (MCRD PI) and Infantry Training Battalion. MCT Bn worked closely with MCRD PI to ensure entry-level training reflected a continuum that begins at recruit training and continues through the Marine's career. In addition to its already full schedule, MCRD PI adopted 12.5 rifleman hours into its program to ensure the next stop on the entry-level pipeline could develop Marine riflemen with the requisite SAL—novice and advanced beginner—in the 13 rifleman behaviors (See Note 3). In return, MCT Bn included the "5 Marine Attributes" that MCRD PI uses as outcomes during the crucible.⁵ Incorporating the attributes as additional outcomes for each of the rifleman competencies enhanced the training outcomes and problem-based scenarios the combat instructors use during the program while reinforcing the importance of a rifleman career continuum.

In response to the Commandant's direction and intent, MCT Bn transitioned to a program of instruction that fosters an active learning environment. The combat instructors adopted student-centered, outcome-based teaching techniques developed and refined in athletics and academia. As a point of differentiation from the most experienced lecture method, an active learning environment primes the learner by continuously requiring the student learner to recall knowledge and practice skills throughout training. The new program included learning techniques designed to improve recall in diverse environments analogous to

what Marines experience in competition and conflict. Techniques such as scaffolding, interleaving, stacking, and quizzing help improve retention by forcing the learner to recall information throughout the program, whereas previous iterations required learners to recall information during prescribed blocks and the subsequent evaluation. In the new curriculum, instructors creatively pose problems to entry-level students, who then solve them using effortful thinking. This typically begins with the instructor-coach offering the students options but progresses to the students generating their own solutions free of instructor input.

A key characteristic of the student-centered model is that the learner has access to all course material and is encouraged to review the material ahead of meeting with their “coach.” In support of putting students in control of their education, the battalion’s academics section created interactive course content using an online module (MOODLE) (hosted on MarineNet) that entry-level Marines use during non-training hours to prepare for upcoming events and to learn on their own. On MOODLE, the learners interact with course content in a variety of ways including via live action videos, games, recorded classes, and source documents. The entry-level Marines also gain an appreciation for mission-type orders and commander’s intent in conjunction with the online material. Combat instructors deliver orders that include how to prepare for the next training day, the intent of the training, and information relevant to a tactical scenario culminating in the final exercise. This indoctrination to the orders process builds understanding and fosters decision making throughout combat training while providing a foundation relevant to service in the FMF.

Once training commences, the combat instructor squad leader (coach) reviews material with the squad by asking questions. This is the first quiz the students conduct with the material. The quiz primes learners by requiring them to recall information, which exercises the pathway from long- to short-term memory. Following the brief discussion, the combat instructor assigns billets and



The tough, realistic training MCT Bn provides builds basic infantry competencies in all Marines. (Photo by LCpl Anthony Quintanilla.)

directs student leadership to apply the material practically. For example, students may participate as members of a patrol tasked with crossing a linear danger area. The student squad leader assigns the student fire team leaders their tasks, and they execute the crossing. Once complete, the coach debriefs the action through a combination of leading and open-ended questions. By asking the students what went well, what did not go well, why they made certain decisions, and guiding them as they recall the online material, the coach is leading a third quiz. (The practical application counts as the second quiz since the students had to recall and apply the material they learned the night prior.) The squad instructor (squad leader/coach) highlights areas the squad performed well and the squad’s areas for improvement. This style of questioning is designed to highlight student thinking and decision making and to codify their experience. Most entry-level student squads will not practically apply new material flawlessly. However, failure is an important learning component that helps make learning stick. It builds retention and, as Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger III, and Mark A. McDaniel allude to in their book, *Make It Stick*, retention is learning.⁶ By permitting the student to solve problems, fail to solve problems, and

apply new skills in various scenarios, the Information-Aged model facilitates effortful thinking, generates the skills necessary to learn, and improves recall over time.

As an additional technique to enhance training and knowledge retention, MCT Bn introduced squad instructor time. Previous MCT programs did not include dedicated time to ensure the students learned new material. Following performance evaluations on a topic, the students filed back into the classroom to learn the next material. Now, training days culminate with time purposefully built for debriefs, ethical thinking, and resiliency training. In the new program, instructors lead students through reflection exercises that recall events from the day, apply the events in context, and explore the events in potential future applications. Over time, this effort creates improved retention because the student consistently transfers new skills and knowledge from long-term to short-term memory and back. This recall solidifies the new knowledge and improves recall over time as opposed to sequential, block training programs.

All these purpose-driven changes created an active learning environment for entry-level Marines, improved retention skills (by teaching them how to absorb information), challenged their think-

ing and built a foundation for sound decision making and problem solving. Historically, military training included a sequential, building-block approach to knowledge and skill development. The learning approach MCT Bn adopted varies information and skill delivery and practice by interleaving, stacking, and scaffolding skills and knowledge. To create more lethal riflemen capable of being critical thinking leaders, MCT Bn placed the student at the center of the learning equation and modified the means and methods it used to deliver new information and skills. By focusing on fewer behaviors, MCT Bn improved entry-level Marines' ability to recall skills and knowledge. MCT Bns' evolution to a student-centered, outcome-based program of instruction exemplifies a method for improving training, retention, and preparation for the future operating environment.

Notes

1. Gen David H. Berger, *38th Commandant's Planning Guidance*, (Washington, DC: July 2019).
2. MajGen William Mullen, "TECOM Vision and Strategy for 21st Century Learning," (Quantico: VA: Training and Education Command, July 2018).
3. The 17 Rifleman competencies are derived from the competencies that comprise the new Infantry Marine Course. The Marine Corps Recruit Depots are the initial trainers for three competencies, while MCT Bns are the primary trainers for 13. MCT Bns sustain and evaluate three of the four competencies that the MCRDs train. MCT Bns do not sustain or evaluate "operate in an aquatic environment."
4. A novice in the "employ the service rifle" behavior requires supervision when conducting immediate and remedial action. An "expert" in the same behavior can design and supervise training for others to enhance their skill acquisition level.

5. The Marine Attributes are defined as "the manifestation of competencies and traits required of all Marines to meet the challenges of the present and future operating environments." See Headquarters Marine Corps, *NAVMC 1510.18D*, (Washington, DC: December 2018). The attributes are physical and mental toughness; leadership; decide/act/communicate; war-fighting; and exemplary character. The attributes help with the transformation by providing focused outcomes for training events.

6. Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger III, and Mark A. McDaniel, *Make It Stick*, (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2014).



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Enhancing the Infantry Training Continuum

MOS training in support of *Force Design 2030*

by LtCol T.L. Hord, Majs J.T Snelling & T.W. Fields

LOCATE, CLOSE WITH, and DESTROY: the mission of Marine Corps infantry is to move toward the sound of guns and win our Nation's battles. Stirring images of past and recent conflicts are replete with dusty, bruised, and exhausted combat hardened "grunts" in the heat of storied battles with rifle in hand and determination in eye. The evolving character of conflict requires the constituent elements of the infantry mission statement embrace new methods and techniques to meet the challenges of combat in the modern era.



AITB seeks to maximize individual weapons skills and prepare units to employ weapon systems to create a combined-arms effect. (Photo by author.)

Central to Force Design 2030, how is the Infantry Training Continuum enhanced to meet the requirements of emergent concepts while retaining the fighting spirit of and ability to fight and win in close combat?

As new capabilities and formations are being developed, it is essential the infantry training continuum is enhanced and synchronized concurrent with Service-level force development activities to ensure the best training is

provided to the FMF. Without linkages to updated entry-level training outputs and coordination between experimental organizations, the potential exists for divergences within the infantry training continuum and suboptimal integration of future capabilities and emergent tactics, techniques, and pro-

cedures in support of maritime campaigning.

Seat of the Purpose and the Landward Element of a Fleet

It is well understood decisive battles at sea are not fought for their own sake and are often connected in direct and

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immediate ways to events on land.¹ The tactical interaction of the landward element of a fleet must also be recognized as a key factor in fleet design and the means by which to fight and be sustained in distributed methods. In an era marked by the proliferation of long-range precision guided munitions coupled with advanced sensors, the requirements of the FMF to contribute to maritime domain awareness, close naval and joint kill-chains, and conduct sea denial missions come to the fore in support of the Navy.

Developing naval concepts such as Distributed Maritime Operations and Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations place a premium on maritime campaigning throughout the spectrum of competition. This focused effort along with the creation of experimental formations optimized to generate effects in the seaward space has left the infantry community racing to determine its value proposition in the application of

novel operational concepts and capabilities. For some, defining the value proposition of the infantry in light of change becomes dogmatic and past successes cloud future opportunities. However, with the experimental formations under development, namely the Marine Littoral Regiment (MLR) and the Infantry Battalion Experimentation, the past *is* the exact place to explore roles of the infantry in formations not expressly designed to project combat operations ashore in a landward campaign.

The Past as Prologue: “Force Design 1933” and the Marine Defense Battalion

Before entering into the Second World War, the Marine Corps underwent dramatic changes to fulfill its role with the War Department. Coming out of two decades of irregular conflict in the Caribbean and Central America, sufficient forces became available to experiment with newly developed

concepts and equipment in partnership with the Navy. Envisioned as “a striking force, well equipped, well armed and highly trained, working as a unit of the Fleet under the direct orders of the Commander-in-Chief,” the Fleet Marine Force concept was created in 1933 in an ongoing effort to implement a more structured purpose for the Corps in an integrated naval strategy.² The following year the *Tentative Manual of Landing Operation* was compiled and thus solidified the Corps’ role to support naval operations in the seizure, holding, and defense of advanced bases. With both the amphibious doctrine and the FMF to carry it out, the Marine Corps still needed to develop its procedures and validate the tenets through experimentation. Practical application to achieve these objectives began in 1935 and continued annually until 1941 with the Fleet Landing Exercises taking place at Culebra, Puerto Rico as well as San Clemente Island, CA. Each Fleet Land-

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ing Exercises focused on refining the functional aspects of landing operations, naval surface fire support, aerial support, and sustainment operations ashore. Key in all of the exercises was naval integration of the FMF focused on the exploration of new formations to enable fleet operations and the projection of combat power ashore.

The Marine Defense Battalion was just one of several experimental formations the Corps put forth in the 1930s as ongoing fleet experimentation occurred to enable concepts and contingencies within the RAINBOW Plans. These battalions were designed and equipped to operate within key maritime terrain and “hold area for the ultimate offensive operations of the Fleet” in task organized elements from the landward side of littoral areas.³ The structure of the unit consisted of a headquarters element, antiaircraft batteries, seacoast batteries, ground and antiaircraft machinegun batteries, and supporting logistic elements. The battalions boasted impressive surface and air fires systems aided by specialists with an array of the latest technological capabilities in the way of RADAR and sounding devices. The combined arms capability of the formation made it ideally suited for being a first line force able to secure advanced bases and adjacent key maritime terrain against a multi-domain threat. These battalions task organized detachments around critical capabilities required by the supported fleet and the geographic nature of their location. Their ability to morph commensurate with the enemy surface and air threat made them a highly dynamic unit in support of the fleet during the course of the war.

The example of the defense battalions stands as a worthy parallel study to the development of the MLR and larger force design efforts relating to the infantry. While the battalions served well in their intended missions, they initially lacked the structure of an organic infantry element to provide local security or an offensive capability on their own right. After the Battle of Wake Island, in which the valiant defenders from the 1st Defense Battalion were eventually overrun and captured by enemy landing forces, composite infantry units were in-

cluded in various detachment locations. In subsequent offensive campaigns, infantry elements from division units became common place in locations where defense battalions operated. Though we institutionally remember little of the infantry’s contribution to the defense battalion’s mission, they were essential to ensuring the tempo of fleet operations. While the analogy is no doubt imperfect, the inclusion of infantry units to enable the roles and missions of a landward formation optimized to generate effects in the seaward space can be explored. The inclusion of the Littoral Combat Team within the MLR structure is parallel in thought. This is not to say the infantry is required to change to enable one concept or be able to operate effectively in a single theater. Rather, as the FMF experiments with

a result of the greater emphasis placed on entry-level infantry training and the enhanced output of IMC, the AITB are evolving to support and build upon this superior foundation.

AITB is a combat leadership and hard skills training unit that reinforces the infantry training continuum along recognized touchpoints of a Marine’s career. As such, maximizing those touchpoints is a study in both enhancing individual weapons skills and an understanding of training and preparing units to employ weapon systems at echelon to generate combined arms effects. Ongoing planning efforts to enhance the course offerings at AITB are informed by the output of the IMC. Further, structural feedback mechanisms from division units, and, where appropriate, linkages to Service-level

... the inclusion of infantry units to enable the roles and missions of a landward formation optimized to generate effects in the seaward space can be explored.

new concepts and formations, recognizing how the infantry contributes to evolving missions and defeating global threats present tremendous opportunity for enhanced threat informed training.

The Way Ahead

In line with *Force Design 2030* and current experimentation efforts with emergent concepts, the Marine Corps is investing heavily in the infantry by lengthening and enhancing the entry level training pipeline.⁴ What was an eight-week MOS producing program of instruction (POI) following basic training is now an enhanced fourteen-week Infantry Marine Course (IMC). The goal of the fourteen-week POI laid out in *Force Design 2030* directed Training Command to produce a more capable and lethal infantry Marine. After the IMC pilot courses were introduced, evaluated, and adopted it is clear the updated POI will produce a more skilled infantryman ready for follow-on weapons MOS courses (0331, 0341, 0352) or introduction to the FMF as an 0311. As

advances in experimentation are also key inputs to future course design. The desired end state is to fully align AITB within the infantry training continuum while also synchronizing concurrent Service-level force development activities to ensure the best training for the FMF.

Building Institutional Knowledge by Linking Experimentation and Training

Updating the infantry continuum is not merely a function of course lengths and alignment alone. As experimentation efforts continue the opportunity at Service-level schools to accelerate the adoption of new capabilities and tactics, techniques, and procedures are presented. Exposure to emergent concepts and formations is key to developing infantry non-commissioned officer and staff non-commissioned officers who are the small-unit leaders that will refine and execute these concepts in the near future. The simulation center at AITB-East is working to link its systems



Figure 1. Use of the AITB-East simulation lab to contribute to live, virtual, and constructive experimentation. (Figure provided by author.)



Figure 2. Electro-magnetic planning tool from PROTEUS. (Figure provided by author.)

with the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab (MCWL) and II MEF to participate at the small-unit level in Service-level wargaming exercises. This will provide squad- and platoon-level insights to Marine Corps Warfighting Lab and the MEF while simultaneously exposing aspects of force development activities to the students of AITB. Through the use of various simulations and planning tool software, the AITB students will, in effect, assist in the development of modern tactics, techniques, and procedures for operational concepts and emergent formations. This integration will greatly impact the effectiveness of live, virtual, and constructive experimentation while building institutional knowledge within the Service-level schools and leaders at the small-unit level.

Small UAS and Infantry Integration

Arguably one of the most profound developments in the modernization of the Marine infantry is the integration of organic small unmanned aerial systems (sUAS) and loitering munitions. The Services' first MOS producing sUAS School will stand up under the structure of AITB-East in 2023. This school will produce Marines of the 7316 MOS that will operate Group 1 and 2 systems organic to ground unit Tables of Equipment. This represents a unique opportunity to fully realize the potential of our current and forthcoming systems to extend the lethality of the rifle squad. As sUAS platforms continue to mature, it is essential that the capabilities become as natural to the infantry as the

employment of medium machineguns and mortars while conducting various missions and tasks. By having the sUAS School within AITB, the 7316 student will be fully trained and integrated to operate within infantry formations. In light of the usage of these systems in recent conflicts, the creation of the 7316 MOS and integration of sUAS capabilities represents a fundamental evolution in modern combat where the Marine Corps is poised to lead the way.

... one of the most profound developments in the modernization of the Marine infantry is ... sUAS ...

Conclusion

Recent commentary from retired senior leaders portends a future where the ability of the Marine Corps to fulfill its global crisis response role is in jeopardy. Unfortunate to that commentary, the views expressed reinforce the status quo force while ignoring the changing ways and means of our pacing threats and other threat actors with modern capabilities. To meet these challenges the Corps is adapting, as it always has, to be the most ready when the Nation is least ready. The Marines' history of innovation stands as a testament to the

ability to meet emergent threats while retaining the ethos and fighting spirit of generations past. Today, the infantry training continuum is benefiting from the aggregate of force development activities. While the methods and techniques to LOCATE, CLOSE WITH, and DESTROY have changed, the infantry training continuum will continue to imbue each Marine with tactical fundamentals and the knowledge to employ the new capabilities required to fight and win in any clime and place.

Notes

1. CAPT Wayne Hughes and RADM Robert P. Girrier, *Fleet Tactics and Naval Operations Third Edition*, (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute, 2018).
2. David J. Ulbrich, *Thomas Holcomb and the Advent of the Marine the Corps Defense Battalion, 1936–1941*, (Quantico, VA: History and Museums Division Marine Corps University, 2004).
3. Maj Charles D. Melson, *Condition Red: Marine Defense Battalions in World War II*, (Washington, DC: Marine Corps Historical Center, 1996).
4. Gen David H. Berger, *Force Design 2030*, (Washington, DC: 2020).



Investing in Lethality

The Marine Corps' need for combat instructors

by Capt Marc S. Martinez

As Gen Berger stated in his initial *Commandant's Planning Guidance*, "We need to determine the best way to effect the desired change, which includes the way we select, train, and evaluate instructors throughout the continuum."¹ Regardless of MOS, the three years of experience as a combat instructor is a great investment the Marine Corps makes for the individual Marine and the institution. The aim of this article is to provide information and education on combat instructor duty to result in leaders informing and recommending top-tier Marines to serve as combat instructors. Investment in the combat instructor through opportunities to gain small-unit leadership experience and improve their tactical and technical abilities to shoot, move, and communicate will result in more lethality throughout the Marine Corps. Their positive influence extends beyond the Marines they train in their three years during combat instructor duty to the capabilities they bring to their future unit and continue the training continuum with the units they serve. Serving as a combat instructor is challenging and requires a strong work ethic, but it is equally rewarding in both experience and impact on the Service. The material resources committed to the upfront investment and training of Marines have contributed to advancements within the Schools of Infantry, but there is no greater resource than top-quality Marines serving as combat instructors to increase lethality in the Marine Corps.

Invest in the Marines

The beauty of a formal learning center is the ability to gain experience, reflect, adjust, and apply new ideas or fine-tune the training for a new and improved experience in future courses.

>Capt Martinez is an Infantry Officer currently serving as Director of Combat Instructor School at SOI-E.

This allows instructors and leaders the ability to exercise creativity and innovate to accomplish an established learning outcome. This environment builds a natural leadership laboratory for small-unit leaders to learn through failures and success and carry these experiences with them for future assignments. The role of teacher, coach, and mentor to a squad of entry-level Marines fosters a learning environment where students, entry level and advanced, are not afraid to make decisions, learn from their mistakes, and take ownership of their own training and education. A focused effort on developing Marines in knowing *how* to think instead of *what* to think allows for the future leaders of the Marine Corps to improve problem-solving skills. One of the factors that have influenced this success is through maintaining a smaller student to instructor ratio for these relationships to form. A requirement to maintain this ratio is ensuring there are enough combat instructors to support small-unit instruction. Three years of experience as a small-unit leader sets combat instructors up for success when they return to the FMF or supporting establishment (SE) with recognition-primed decision-making skills and the knowledge on how to train Marines to shoot, move, and communicate.

These experiences all feed into the progression of a combat instructor's technical and tactical abilities. Combat instructors become subject-matter experts in warfighting skills, marksmanship coaching, human performance,

and 21st-century learning approaches to transfer knowledge and skills to the student population attending every course at the Schools of Infantry. Combat instructors receive fundamental and advanced marksmanship training through the Marine Combat Instructor Course which results in the additional MOS of 0933 Combat Marksmanship Coach. These marksmanship techniques when applied to entry-level Marines ensure they can achieve a vital hit on a target under stress and provides a strong foundation in marksmanship fundamentals they can build on as they move on to the FMF/SE.

Marines who serve as combat instructors receive several individual benefits from serving in a tier-1 screenable billet in addition to the privilege of creating warfighters. Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP) is a stipend that Marines receive after graduating from the Marine Combat Instructor Course and beginning their 36-month tour as a combat instructor. The amount authorized per month is \$300 or a \$9,800 lump sum.² The amount of AIP combat instructors receive is double the amount of AIP other Special Duty Assignments receive. Combat instructors have additional meritorious promotion opportunities through Training and Education Command and boast a selection rate of 91 percent in regular promotion boards for staff sergeant and gunnery sergeant for the past three years. This result comes from the opportunities presented to non-03XX MOSs to perform and grow outside of their community, as well as infantry Marines continuing to improve their technical and tactical abilities as experts within their community. Marines receive the Combat Instructor Ribbon after a successful 36-month tour of duty. From the Marine's perspective, a benefit of

volunteering for combat instructor duty removes them from consideration by the HQMC Special Duty Assignment Selection Team process. This gives the Marines another option to shape their careers depending on what they desire, geographical location, job fulfillment in developing combat skills in Marines, or the certainty of support systems that come with the major installations of Camp Lejeune and Camp Pendleton.

The Return on Investment

In return for sending the Marine Corps' best Marines to serve as combat instructors, the FMF/SE receive better-trained and more lethal war-fighters. This occurs with the entry-level Marines but also the advanced-level infantry skills Marines receive from the Advanced Infantry Training Battalion (AITB). Some of the Corps'

will permeate throughout the Service.

Marine professionals that understand the guidance from *Talent Management 2030* can lay the foundation and inspire entry-level Marines in a way that increases retention in the Marine Corps. Positive learning experiences in entry-level and advanced-level training lead to retention of our best Marines, for both instructors and students. The goal is to create lifelong learners that enjoy what they do. This falls in line with changing the paradigm of a "recruit and replace" personnel model to an "invest and retain" model.⁴ The benefit of a post-combat instructor duty leader is lost if the Marine does not make the decision to re-enlist to return for service with the FMF/SE. The incentives listed throughout this article should be targeting our best Marines with the aim to mature the force.

Combat instructors serve an essential role in the mission of the Marine Corps in training entry-level and advanced-level Marines in combat skills to win future wars.

most tactically and technically proficient infantry Marines serve in AITBs because of the nature of their occupation. Imagine the return on investment for future Marines that attend their infantry advanced courses when you know the best infantry Marines that you recommended are providing the mentorship and guidance to the students. Combat instructors serve the essential role of ensuring that Marines attending their advanced infantry training progress across the training continuum and possess the ability and maturity to lead their units in combat. This accomplishes the Commandant's desire to make "modifications to advanced infantry training to develop quality, maturity, and capabilities."³ The Marine Corps enjoys these long-term gains from placing an emphasis on combat instructor duty. Surging leaders with a drive to train entry-level and advanced-level skills ensure the increase in lethality

Combat instructors have the ability to make an immediate impact on their units when they return to the FMF/SE. The majority of combat instructors complete their Professional Military Education Course and MOS Advanced Course. Combining PME completion and their small-unit leader experiences, combat instructors arrive ready to serve as a mentor and coach to the Marines in their units throughout the entire battalion lifecycle. This minimizes the amount of time small-unit leaders spend attending school instead of leading and developing their Marines through training exercises or field events, improving the interpersonal relationships and the tangible/intangible attributes of their units. This is applicable to not only the ground combat element but within the wing squadrons and combat logistic battalions. The non-03XX Marines that return from combat instructor duty provide the capability to maintain and

progress Marines' combat skills through the training continuum. Past programs like the Basic Skills Training (BST) failed to fulfill this function because they lacked significant expertise to conduct the program. The intention of the BST was right, and combat instructors are qualified to ensure the success of a program like the BST to progress Marines' combat skills across the training continuum.

Combat instructors serve an essential role in the mission of the Marine Corps in training entry-level and advanced-level Marines in combat skills to win future wars. Commanders do not make an investment to receive an immediate return to their units while in command. They make the investment of informing and recommending their best Marines to serve as combat instructors for the benefit of the individual Marines and the Marine Corps. Combat instructors gain experience as small-unit leaders and progress their abilities to shoot, move, and communicate. They help produce better and more lethal Marines and serve as force multipliers when they return to the FMF/SE. Marines make the Marine Corps.⁵ The best investment to prepare for combat and future conflicts are the best Marines the Marine Corps has to offer to serve as combat instructors.

Notes

1. Gen David H. Berger, *38th Commandant's Planning Guidance*, (Washington DC: July 2019).
2. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MARDAMIN 039/22, Special Duty Assignment Pay, Assignment Incentive Pay, and Volunteer Supplemental Incentive*, (Quantico, VA: February 2022).
3. Gen David H. Berger, *Force Design 2030*, (Washington, DC: March 2020).
4. Gen David H. Berger, *Talent Management 2030*, (Washington, DC: November 2021).
5. Ibid.



Improving our Learning Environment

A proposal to modernize education command

by Capt Eli J. Morales

Education Command must improve its learning environment to reduce the dissonance between what we are doing regarding education and what we need to be doing based on the evolving operating environment. Through an evaluation of Marine Corps University's methods, resources, and peer groups, it is evident that Expeditionary Warfare School (EWS) and Command and Staff College (C&S) require greater naval orientation, that programs of instruction lack the resources and the ability to provide a common understanding of pacing threats in the future operating environment, and that student populations display limited allied and naval integration. Education Command will reduce the gap between education and the evolving operating environment if it integrates classified content into programs of instruction and increases the allocation of allied and naval unrestricted officers within its cohorts.

Background

In the 2019 *Commandant's Planning Guidance*, Gen David H. Berger identified that "the current force is not organized, trained, or equipped to support the naval force."¹ Gen Berger further went on to conclude that within Training and Education Command, he has noticed "over the past several years that there is an increasing dissonance between what we are doing with regard to training and education, and what we need to be doing based on the evolving operating environment."² Gen Berger's guidance directs the need to modernize Marine Corps training and education programs of instruction and institutions. He concludes that

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we need an information-aged approach that is focused on active, student-centered learning using a problem-solving methodology where students are challenged with problems that they tackle as groups to learn by doing and

also by each other."³ Specifically, Gen Berger identified that we must change the learning environment within our formal learning institutions.

In the recently published *MCDP 7, Learning*, the learning environment is defined as "encompassing all the factors that influence instruction, such as methods, resources, technology, culture, instructors, peers, and the social elements of learning."⁴ *MCDP 7* identifies the learning environment

Education Command will reduce the gap between education and the ... operating environment if it integrates classified content and increases ... allied and naval unrestricted officers ...

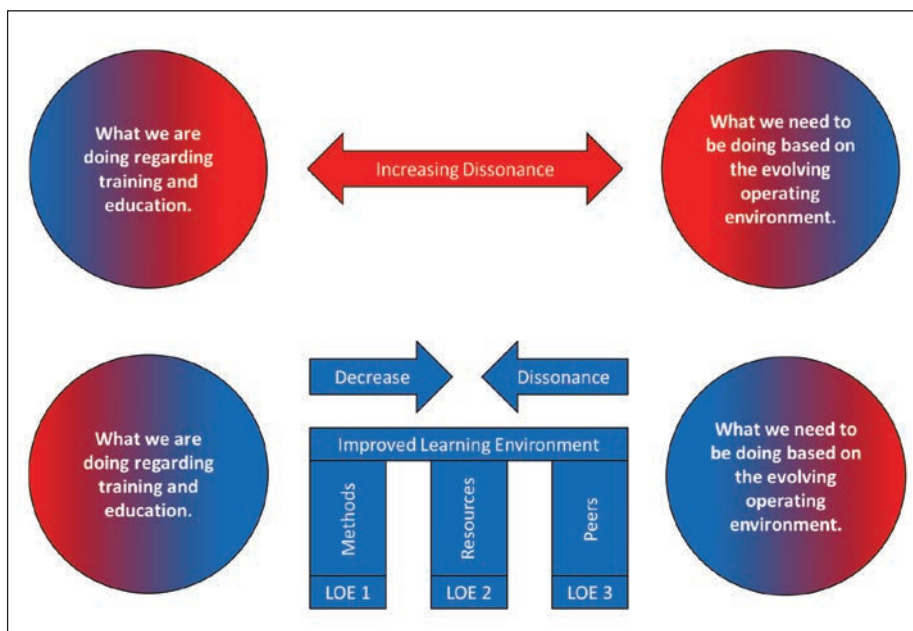


Figure 1. Implementing learning environment lines of effort. (Figure provided by author.)

as much more than just the physical space where learning occurs. Therefore, to determine what change is required within the learning environment of our formal learning institutions, it is necessary to evaluate our current model with the criteria established by the Commandant and the elements that define the learning environment. As shown in Figure 1 (on previous page), *methods*, *resources*, and *peers* are three elements used as lines of effort to decrease dissonance and improve the learning environment.

The criteria established by the Commandant to evaluate each of these elements is the requirement that “all formal schools must and will change their programs of instruction to include a greater naval orientation.”⁵ Additionally, to evaluate *methods*, the Commandant called for the building of a wargaming center on the campus of Marine Corps University. This wargaming center is required to handle all levels of classification and be responsive to changing technologies.⁶ To evaluate *resources*, the Commandant reminds us that the *National Defense Strategy* directs the Marine Corps to focus on new areas along with our Navy counterparts to share a common understanding of pacing threats within the future operating environment. Additionally, the Commandant directs us to focus on “those capabilities that provide the greatest overmatch for our Navy.”⁷ Lastly, to evaluate *peers*, the Commandant reminds us that our alliances are an essential factor in achieving success.⁸ Specifically, he emphasizes their importance when he states, “our wargames have shown that in any great power conflict, our alliances are an essential factor to achieving success.”⁹

With these criteria in mind, we can determine that within the element of *method* Marine Corps University became compliant after it established the Brute Krulak Center for Innovation and Creativity in 2019. Today, the Krulak Center facilitates and encourages novel solutions to current and future warfighting challenges. Working alongside the Wargaming Division at the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, wargaming at all levels of classification

AY2017-2020 MCU Demographics	2017				2018				2019				2020	
	CSC	CSCDEP	EWS	EWSDEP	CSC	CSCDEP	EWS	EWSDEP	CSC	CSCDEP	EWS	EWSDEP	CSC	EWS
Joint	97	538	182	852	99	587	185	856	99	548	182	848	103	164
USMCR	5		3		8		3		7		3		6	3
USA / USAR / NG	22	1	23	5	23	2	22	1	22	5	23		22	23
USAF / USAFR	17	9	6	1	19	7	6	3	20	4	13	2	19	12
USN / USNR	18	26	11	3	9	22	3	1	11	21	6	1	12	2
USCG	2	4			2	2			2	1				
Allies	1				1				1				1	
Australia														1
Canada			1				1				1			1
New Zealand	1				1				1				1	
United Kingdom	1	UNK		UNK	1	UNK		UNK	1	UNK		UNK		
Japan	1		2		1		2		1		2		1	2
Republic of Korea	1		1		1		1		1		1		1	1
Total International Students	32	26	23	5	32	28	23	1	31		20	1	30	25
OSD / Civilians	17				19				15	31				19
USMC SgtMaj / MGySgt	2				2				6					
Total Students	212	604	248	866	213	648	242	862	213	610	247	852	212	229

Figure 2. Academic Year 2017–2020 Marine Corps University demographics. (Figure provided by author. Source: Marine Corps University Factbook 2020.)

AY2017-2020 MCU Percent Integration	2017				2018				2019				2020	
	CSC	CSCDEP	EWS	EWSDEP	CSC	CSCDEP	EWS	EWSDEP	CSC	CSCDEP	EWS	EWSDEP	CSC	EWS
Total Students	212	604	248	866	213	648	242	862	213	610	247	852	212	229
USN / USNR	18	26	11	3	9	22	3	1	11	21	6	1	12	2
% Naval Integration	8.5%	4.3%	4.4%	0.3%	4.2%	3.4%	1.2%	0.1%	5.2%	3.4%	2.4%	0.1%	5.6%	0.9%
% FVEY Integration	1.4%	UNK	0.4%	UNK	1.4%	UNK	0.4%	UNK	1.4%	UNK	0.4%	UNK	1%	0.4%
% JPN/ROK Integration	1%	UNK	1.2%	UNK	1%	UNK	1.2%	UNK	1%	UNK	1.2%	UNK	1%	1.3%

Figure 3. Academic Year 2017–2020, Marine Corps University percent integration. (Figure provided by author. Source: Marine Corps University Factbook 2020.)

is conducted in accordance with the Commandant’s guidance.

Within *resources*, it is important to note that the programs of instruction for resident and non-resident EWS and C&S are taught at the unclassified level. As a result, scenarios during practical applications are fictitious. Although they are based on attributes of our real-

Lastly, within *peers*, the 2020 edition of the Marine Corps University Factbook indicates resident and non-resident EWS and C&S courses achieved limited allied and naval integration. As indicated in Figure 2, allied integration for resident EWS and C&S is primarily achieved through single student participation from countries like the United

Marine Corps University academic chairs and scholars are used by the institution to provide simulated geopolitical and military considerations of our adversaries.

world adversaries, in many cases these attributes are a misrepresentation of our pacing threats’ real capabilities. Training against a fictitious threat inhibits our ability to understand our competitors within the future operating environment and the capabilities that will provide the greatest overmatch for our Navy. To help bridge the gap between fiction and reality, Marine Corps University academic chairs and scholars are used by the institution to provide simulated geopolitical and military considerations of our adversaries. However, this instruction is also being provided at the unclassified level and is still fictitious in nature.

Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia.¹⁰ In addition, for our Korean and Japanese allies in the Pacific, we are only seeing a small increase of one or two students annually.¹¹ By achieving a limited amount of allied integration within resident and non-resident EWS and C&S, Marine Corps University is stymieing the potential to enhance our relations with our closest strategic allies from around the world.

Also contained within *peers* is the distinct lack of naval integration that occurs within the student population. As indicated in Figure 3, the emphasis and synthesis of naval concepts will degrade

if the participation of Navy students attending resident and non-resident EWS and C&S continues to reduce. Specifically, for resident EWS, Navy student participation has decreased from 4.4 percent to .9 percent (11 to 2 students).¹² For resident C&S, Navy student participation has decreased from 8.5 percent to 5.6 percent (18 to 12 students).¹³ This lack of Navy student participation within resident and non-resident courses significantly reduces the potential for Marine Corps University to achieve the Commandant’s vision of including greater naval orientation within our formal learning institutions.

Proposal

To begin improving the learning environment within Marine Corps University resident and non-resident EWS and C&S, I recommend that—in the short term—modeling and simulation be conducted on a variety of student cohorts and their associated content. Simultaneously, I recommend that the programs of instruction begin eliminating fictitious content and begin utilizing current and relevant real-world naval challenges and threats. Table 1 displays several examples of how modeling and simulation can combine a variety of student cohorts and their associated content. These groups can be tailored and designed to address specific problem sets from the FMF that require urgent assistance in the development of concepts, plans, and strategies with our strategic allies. The tradeoffs provided in Table 1 range from Five Eyes Alliance (FVEY) nations, NATO, or INDOPACOM only cohorts to reducing Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps allocations in an effort to increase Navy student participation.

Based on the results of modeling and simulation, if appropriate and feasible, I recommend that in the long term Marine Corps University begins to integrate more classified content into resident and non-resident EWS and C&S. As these changes are implemented, Marine Corps University must make staffing and physical security modifications. Displayed in Table 2 are proposed modifications that Marine Corps University can implement that

Modeling & Simulation Examples

1.	One USN unrestricted officer per EWS and C&S cohort. Reduce Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps allocations as required.
2.	Only FVEY international officers placed in resident courses. Course content is taught at the S//REL FVEY level of classification.
3.	Non-FVEY International officers participate in non-resident seminars with USM non-resident students. Utilize unclassified course content.
4.	Only NATO international officers placed in resident courses. Course content is MARFOREUR / Russia focused.
5.	Only INDO-PACOM international officers placed in resident courses. Course content is MARFORPAC/China-focused.

Table 1. Modeling and simulation examples.

Proposed MCU Modifications

1.	Increase USN instructors at EWS and C&S. Preferably, Amphibious Warfare Weapons and Tactics Instructor qualified USN Surface Warfare Officers.
2.	Increase the manning of FVEY instructors at EWS and C&S.
3.	Establish structure within MCU for a S//REL FVEY Intelligence Production and Analysis Cell to support all MCU Colleges and Schools.
4.	Augment Academic Chairs and Scholars with intelligence community subject-matter experts to provide current intelligence within resident geopolitical and adversary briefs.
5.	Establish a closed secret network within Geiger and Warner Hall.

Table 2. Proposed Marine Corps University modifications.

I recommend that in the long term Marine Corps University begins to integrate more classified content into resident and non-resident EWS and C&S.

will enable the successful execution of these long-term modifications. These include increasing the manning of Navy Amphibious Warfare Weapons and Tactics Instructors, establishing an intelligence production and analysis cell within Marine Corps University, and establishing a closed secret network within Geiger or Warner Halls.

Modeling and simulation will present challenges to modifications attempted at Marine Corps University. Any attempts to modify a program of instruction, change instructor staffing, adjust student cohorts, or revisit security protocols will require deliberate planning and wargaming. Changes

made must be in compliance with the Commandant’s guidance and ensure Marine Corps University maintains its capacity to develop and deliver professional military education and training through resident and non-resident learning programs. Therefore, any changes made must not degrade Marine Corps University’s mandate to provide Joint Professional Military Education Phase 1 Accreditation through C&S. The intent behind these recommendations is to adjust the focus of discussion and practical applications to include greater naval integration while considering real-world maritime challenges. Formal instruction and evaluation on the history

and fundamentals of our joint doctrine must not and will not change.

Conclusion

Education Command must modernize its learning environment within EWS and C&S to meet the Commandant's guidance of becoming a highly trained and educated corps that is capable of supporting the naval force. Using the Commandant's guidance as criteria along with our doctrine published within *MCDP 7*, we are able to determine that our *methods, resources, and peers* must change within our resident and non-resident programs of instruction. Modifications within each learning environment indicate that greater naval orientation can be achieved through the integration of threat-based classified content into programs of instruction, as well as an increase in allied and naval unrestricted officers within the student population. Modeling and simulation, wargaming and experimentation, and

deliberate planning are required to implement necessary changes to each program of instruction. Ultimately, the effects of these changes will have positive impacts on the future Navy and Marine Corps force. By modernizing Education Command, the Navy and Marine Corps team will be better prepared to fight and win in the future operating environment.

5. *38th Commandant's Planning Guidance*.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Staff, *Marine Corps University: Factbook 2020*, (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University, 2020).

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

Notes

1. Gen David Berger, *38th Commandant's Planning Guidance*, (Washington, DC: July 2019).

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid; and Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCDP 7, Learning*, (Washington, DC: 2020).



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The Marine Corps is in the midst of a paradigm shift as it conducts Force Design to prepare for the future fight. The character of warfare is constantly evolving and there is opportunity to learn about the changes to the operating environment through an analysis of recent conflicts, particularly those that did not directly involve the U.S. military. Select a recent conflict from the past 10 years that did not directly involve the U.S. military, analyze the relevant aspects of the conflict, and assess its implications to the Marine Corps and force design.

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An Intellectual Maginot Line

Professional reading to overcome “conventional wisdom”

by Dr. James Herndon

When the dictator’s crimes threatened the safety of other nations, a far stronger state launched a pre-emptive invasion. Battle-hardened and emboldened by recent victory, their overwhelming superiority in technology and firepower allowed them to take the enemy capital within weeks. Evidence of the regime’s crimes littered the landscape. Never mind the cynical maneuvering at the UN, this was clearly a humanitarian intervention. However, their plans for the occupation of that impoverished country soon fell awry. The populace resented foreigners and rejected the figurehead leadership of the new government. Soldiers from the old army faded into the countryside or found sanctuary in bordering nations. The insurgents’ guerrilla tactics stymied the static occupiers. After much trial and error, a second generation of generals settled on a counterinsurgency strategy that relied on local troops fighting close to their homes. A frustrating and indecisive decade passed before they finally withdrew. Only then did the real battle for power ensue.

Who could have foreseen in 2003 how Operation IRAQI FREEDOM would play out? Perhaps someone familiar with the Vietnam-Cambodia conflict of 1978–1989, the war described in the preceding paragraph. In retrospect, the Cambodia analogy seems obvious: an economically backward society with no history of effective central government is a much better template than, say, Japan or Germany, two ethnically homogeneous countries with a coherent national identity, educated middle classes, and experienced bureaucrats capable of delivering public goods. Nevertheless, in

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his 2006 memoir, Paul Bremer—head of Iraq’s Coalition Provisional Authority—made five references apiece to post-war Japan and Germany but not one to Cambodia.

This happens because even the smartest and most experienced men and women are subject to cognitive blind spots. Most people are familiar with confirmation bias, which makes us prone to highlight evidence that supports our preferred conclusion while

... the Marine Corps strives to overcome the inertia of human bias ...

ignoring what contradicts it. Unfortunately, this bias is much easier to spot in someone else than in ourselves. Because we are so ill-equipped to understand random events, our narrative bias compels us to postulate causes and impose patterns where none exist. Norman Mailer captured this in *The Naked and the Dead* when a commander found glory in having the good fortune to attack an enemy on the verge of collapse. Most pernicious of all might be what Nassim Taleb calls “silent evidence.” We see the wars that diplomacy fails to stop but not the ones they prevent.

Perhaps more than any other organization, the Marine Corps strives to overcome the inertia of human bias and conventional wisdom. Think of Gen Mattis’ aphorism that “the most important six inches on the battlefield is between your ears,” Gen Neller’s call for “disruptive thinkers,” or Gen Berger’s recent comment, “We are better than anybody else, primarily because we don’t all think exactly alike.”¹ To that end, Marines have a newly revised professional reading list issued in 2020.

In many ways, that list of 53 books could scarcely be improved. The authors’ credentials are impeccable: George P. Shultz on diplomacy, Jim Collins on organization, Daniel Kahneman on thinking, and a bevy of other Ivy League graduates besides.² And that is before we even consider writing by flag officers such as Jim Mattis and James Stavridis. Beyond military history, subjects include business, psychology, management, and technology. But this apparent diversity belies meaningful commonalities. All were originally written in English, 47 by U.S. citizens and 18 by Marines.

Why could this be problematic? Because psychologists have known for generations that people rarely change their minds in response to new evidence.³ Moreover, past a certain threshold, exposing experts to more information makes them more confident without increasing their accuracy.⁴ I witnessed this firsthand in Ramadi in 2008. The commander of my military transition team attached to the Iraqi Army invariably reported progress up to his chain of command, but I never forgot a corporal rolling his eyes when we surveyed the new Iraqi base: “Sir, we’ll be bombing



The Marine Corps' approach to professional reading does not support diversity of thought or "disruptive thinking." (Photo by MCA.)

this building in ten years." It is clear who possessed a better sense of Iraq's trajectory. After years immersed in social science research, today I believe my commander was wrong not despite his experience but because of it.

Absent a draft, people self-select into the military. That goes double for those who make it a career. In general, those who spend decades in the Marines do so because the mission gives them a sense of purpose and because they love being around Marines. They tend to see the Corps as a force for good, capable of doing almost anything given appropriate support from the government and the American people. That mindset may be essential for sustaining a force that can fight and win wars, but it also makes us especially vulnerable to the biases listed above.

How can you "turn the map around" if you have never seen the world through our enemies' eyes? If you spend decades hearing that we always win, how could you recognize a losing war? These are not hypothetical questions. Bureaucratic evasions delayed a comprehensive study of the Iraq war even as ISIS ran amok.⁵

Having one's core beliefs challenged is uncomfortable. But if we fail to do it, then much of our professional education will have been wasted. We may laugh at Marxist professors unable to

acknowledge history after 1989. But how different are they from the officers who spent twenty years extolling progress in Afghanistan? The price we pay for being wrong is far higher than the ridicule of undergraduates. If we want leaders to better appreciate the context and consequences of their decisions, we should make three changes to our professional reading list.

First, we need to study a wider range of wars, especially those not involving the United States. I have no idea which conflict will be the best precedent for America's next major war, but I suspect that a commander is more likely to apply the right lessons if his staff officers have all read broadly about dozens of wars and not deeply about the same handful. Gen Nhem's *The Chronicle of a People's War* would be a great place to start.

Second, we need to read more works by authors from outside of our worldview. Most books about America's wars written by service members, journalists, or historians rely on interviews and documents from domestic sources. For example, Patrick K. O'Donnell provided a superb account of the Battle of Fal-lujah in *We Were One*. But Nir Rosen, a journalist who speaks Iraqi-accented Arabic, offered a very different take on that fight in *The Triumph of the Martyrs*. Both books offer lessons for Marines.

Third, we need to acknowledge the trade-off inherent in any professional reading list: by requiring everyone to read certain books, we increase the risk of groupthink. One possible solution would be for the Commandant to delegate the assembly to the list to subordinate commanders. In that scenario, Marines would encounter a much wider range of ideas as they move through their careers while still achieving the intent found in *ALMARS 023/20*: "To ensure the Commandant's Professional Reading Program (CPRP) remains relevant, current, and promotes professional discussions amongst all Marines."

"Victory does not necessarily go to those who have the largest or most modern forces, but to those who are able to recognize the need to adapt, generate intelligent decisions, and execute them more quickly than their enemy." Those words, from *MCDP 7, Learning*, could well serve as an epitaph on the war in Afghanistan. To prevent similar fiascos in the future, we must start with the "six inches between our ears."

Notes

1. Emma Bowman and Rachel Martin, "The Marine Corps Is Reinventing Itself to Reflect America, Says Top General," *NPR*, (November 2021), available at <https://www.npr.org>.
2. Although Eric Greitens' continued presence on the list is inexplicable in light of the circumstances that led to his resignation as Governor of Missouri.
3. Peter C. Wason, "On the Failure to Eliminate Hypotheses in a Conceptual Task," *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, (Routledge: Taylor and Francis, April 1960).
4. Stuart Oskamp, "Overconfidence in Case-Study Judgments," *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1965).
5. Michael R. Gordon, "The Army Stymied Its Own Study of the Iraq War," *The Wall Street Journal*, (October 2018), available at <https://www.wsj.com>.



“Run More, Read Less”

Professional military education is on you

by Mr. Brendan B. McBreen

The Marine Corps can only teach you 25 percent of what you need to know. *You* need to drive the majority of your professional military education (PME). Years ago, Marine cynics would say, “Run more, read less!” But today’s battlefield—and today’s Marine Corps—demands professional, well-educated leaders.

The Marine Corps order on PME, *MCO 1553.4B* (2008), tasks each of us to “assume responsibility for your own professional development.” Of the four types of PME, two are provided by the institution and two are provided by individual Marines.

Resident Instruction is school. Formal schools are excellent resources that standardize the education of Marine leaders at each grade. Non-Resident Instruction is also school. Using similar curricula, our remote learning programs educate Marines who do not attend resident school and provide other online courses. Unit PME is military education conducted inside units, and professional self-study is the work done by individual Marines to educate themselves.

Unit PME

Unit PME—events run *by* the unit *for* the unit—builds strong and cohesive teams. In some ways, this is more important than school. Commanders, who are responsible for mentoring their Marines, should conduct most unit PME events. Leaders teaching leaders directly increases the combat capabilities of our deployable units.

Unit PME should be a regular event, ideally weekly, at a regular location away from the office: “PME is Friday at 1430 in Building 7.” An aggressive quarterly

>Mr. McBreen, a retired Infantry Officer, is on the faculty at the Marine Corps Intelligence School in Dam Neck, VA.

training plan might schedule six to eight PME events in a twelve-week quarter.

Officers and staff noncommissioned officers can hold combined or separate PME events. The unit leaders selected to facilitate, and their dates and subjects, are best coordinated at the beginning of the quarter so that facilitators have time to prepare. Conducting PME on ship or while deployed is challenging but rewarding—your captive audience can focus on your specific conflict and specific geography.

Unit PME should not be diluted by social events or administrative briefings. The focus should be on tactical education—that essential knowledge required by Marines. Commanders who are too

busy for regular unit PME are not fully developing their leaders.

Professional Self-Study

The main effort for you—and every Marine leader—must be professional self-study. Everyone needs his own individual PME plan with a set of specific goals for each year.

Ever since I was a lieutenant, I have kept an annual set of fitness, financial, and professional goals. These lists evolved each year as I grew professionally. Clearly-stated written goals help you to prioritize your time and ignore Netflix and the NFL.

When I talk to young officers today, I ask them, “What are your goals? What

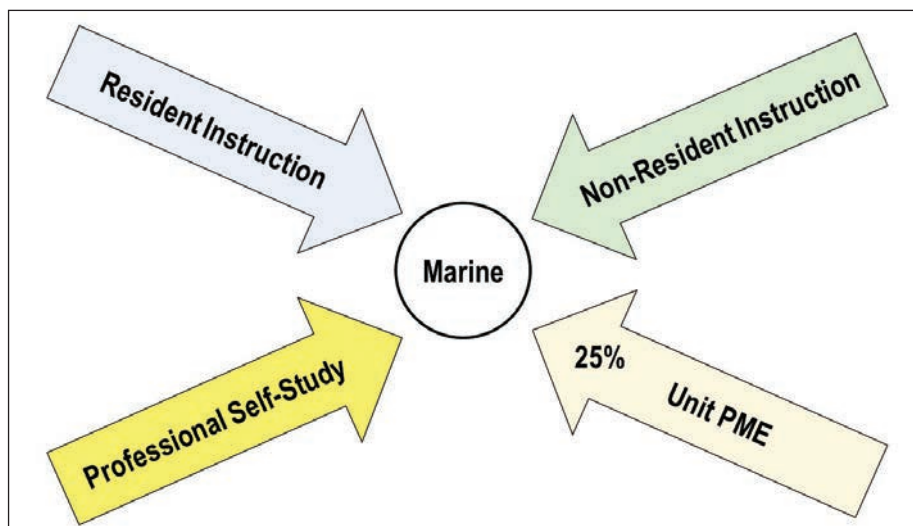
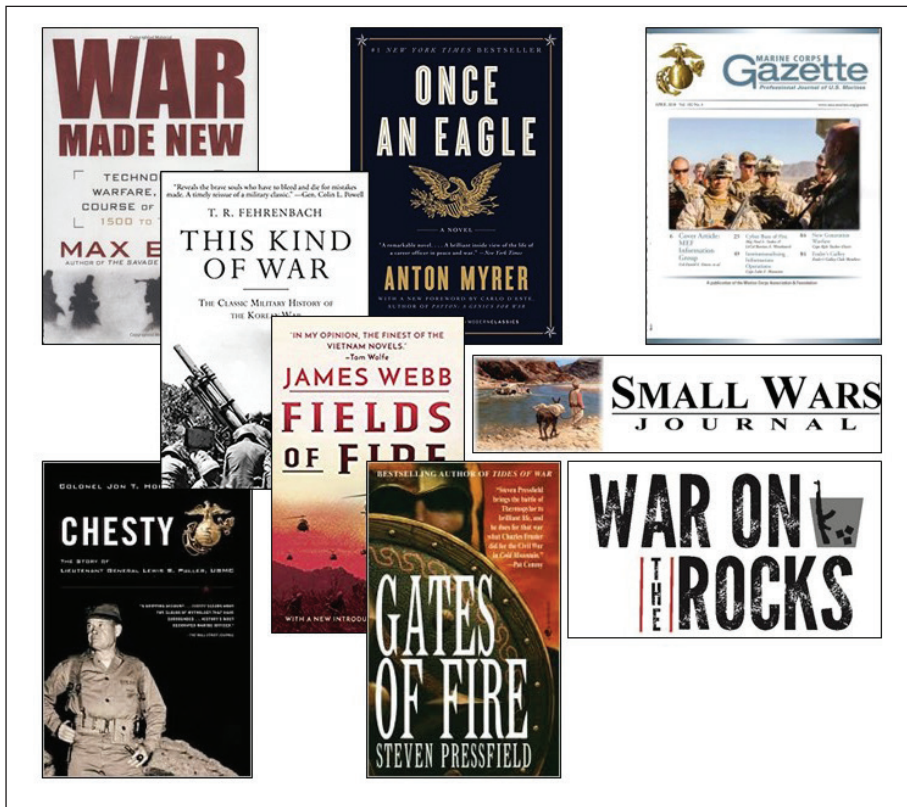


Figure 1. Two of the four types of PME are the responsibility of the individual Marine. (Figure provided by author.)



Reading is the cornerstone of professional self-study. (Photo provided by author.)

is your PME plan?” This is mine:

- Read one book every month.
- Read one article every month.
- Fight one adversary every month.

Books

If you read ten books a year, you will consume 100 texts by the time you make major. Keep one book in your office, one in your briefcase, one by the bed, and one on the toilet. Listen to one in the car. Know the 100 standard authors, works, and ideas that you are expected to understand—the *canon* of the profession.

The Commandant’s Professional Reading Program, *ALMAR 023/20*, is a great place to start, but you should seek other recommendations from your peers, instructors, and other authors. Do not ignore fiction. Life’s truths are often best understood through stories.

Articles

Regularly read one or two online military sites. Subscribe to the *Marine Corps Gazette* and another journal. Recent and relevant ideas and issues as

well as new challenges and concepts are all introduced and debated in military journals.

Fights

The Marine Corps fights. Regardless

of your MOS, you need to fight to appreciate the challenges of conflict and develop the skills of a combat leader. Every month, you should make an assessment, make a decision, and issue an order.

For ten years, I submitted a monthly tactical decision game (TDG) order to the *Gazette*. We fought TDGs with our noncommissioned officers in the platoon and company. I fought wargames with my peers on ship, at EWS, and on Okinawa. In the battalion, in addition to field training, our unit PME included map exercises and tactical planning problems. Then, deployed to crises and combat, my peers and I issued real-world orders face-to-face to our Marines with life or death consequences. I probably made 300 tactical decisions by the time I was a major. This was my fanatical pursuit of tactical excellence.

Fighting makes you comfortable with ambiguity, imperfect intelligence, and changing situations, and forces you to develop good habits for estimates, decision making, and orders. Fighting should be, but is not, a common activity in the Marine Corps. You must forge ahead by yourself because decision-making opportunities during field training are so rare. Fight yourself, fight the computer, and fight your peers in wargames, computer simulations, map exercises,



“Fights” in the form of multiple TDGs provide essential cognitive “reps and sets” to develop and practice decision making as a combat skill. (Photo provided by author.)

tactical problems, and TDGs. Learn to facilitate decision-making exercises for your Marines. Learn to create your own map problems. It is not that hard.

As you gain professional experience, you can expand your annual PME goals:

- Write one article every year.
- Study one battle every year.

An Article

Writing makes a Marine precise. We are all obligated to improve the organization, so we need to hear your ideas. Writing an article forces you to think clearly about a subject and then communicate your recommendations. You are not writing a novel. News reporters write paragraphs every day—useful information explained clearly to others. Every Marine leader is a communicator, and everyone should be a writer.

A Battle Study

Professional Marines should understand how their ancestors fought. Why? Because the human side of battle never changes, because the fog of war teaches us to expect uncertainty, and

because some battlefield lessons are the shorthand of our profession: *“Just like Buford’s decision on the first day.”*

Pick a battle that interests you. Focus on one small section—a *key* leader of a *key* unit making a *key* decision at a *key* hour. Narrow specificity is the key to understanding a complex event.

We now need to squeeze twenty years of wisdom into ten years of service.

Read the standard account, and then read two more texts to get a more rounded view. Draw a map, list the units, and write the order. Assemble your own list of insights and lessons learned. You are not regurgitating history; rather, you are analyzing specific decisions. Prepare your research as if you are going to present it to your Marines at PME. Field-grade officers should know multiple battles.

When you want to dig deeper, link your battle to the institutional decisions that built that army. There are some great books on British, German, French, and U.S. Army policies and how those policies affected battlefield competence.

Why PME?

The Marine Corps needs old heads on young shoulders. We emphasize PME because: our leaders face new and growing challenges, our smaller combined-arms teams require skilled decision makers at lower echelons and at greater distances, technology and communications are revolutionizing conflict, the operational range of precision weapons and the worldwide range of information operations now make all of our units more vulnerable, and because future joint, urban, counterinsurgency, and expeditionary advance base operations require educated, capable, and flexible leaders.

Our leaders must be *educable*: “able to be educated.” Like all executives, we must be able to evolve, learn, and change over the course of our careers. The ability to expand our knowledge and the willingness to change our opinion are the hallmarks of true leaders.

“Run more, read less” *cannot* be our philosophy, prioritizing pull-ups—easily-measured fitness scores—over professionalism. A recent report on company commanders gushed at their scores as if running was the most important skill for a commander.

We now need to squeeze twenty years of wisdom into ten years of service. PME builds this professional knowledge so our leaders can fight smarter. The future battlefield demands leaders with solid insights on the environment, the adversary, and tactical solutions. The American people expect high levels of competence from our small-unit commanders—leadership, experience, war-fighting skills, and most importantly, education.

PME is critical. Professional self-study is your main effort. The Marine Corps cannot adequately prepare us all, so *you* must drive your own professional development.

Op COBRA: 1944	CCA, 3rd AD
Naktong Bulge: 1950	2 / 5
Goose Green: 1982	2 Para
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Battle Summary 2. Map 3. Task Organizations – Annex A 4. HHQ OpOrder 5. Key leader, key unit, key decision, key hour 6. Lessons learned 7. Bibliography 	

Battle studies. (Photo provided by author.)



A Different Approach for Similar Results

Changing the transformation

by MajGen Bill Mullen (Ret)

I spent the last 34 years of my life in the organization that I started to love as a teenager in the late 1970s. That organization paid my way through college and then enabled me to have the best (and worst) experiences of my life. Most of those experiences centered around the most precious assets in the organization—the individual Marines. Some only stayed for short durations either because they failed to live up to all that is expected of being a Marine or because they were either killed or seriously injured. Many of the latter category more than lived up to all that is expected of a Marine. Others served their one enlistment and returned to civilian life, hopefully, better for the experience of having served. Others, like myself, spent decades in the organization and thoroughly imbibed the culture and ethos of that organization. I can truly say that I love Marines and the Marine Corps and want to do everything in my power to help despite having taken the uniform off last fall. It is for these reasons that I am writing what I can anticipate will be a controversial article.

In this article, I want to propose a change to how we bring in civilians and transform them into Marines. For many, especially those who have served as drill instructors, touching on this subject is like touching the third and highly electrified rail of a subway line. I know that this article will provoke a great deal of outrage but have long felt that it needs to be written because of the challenges we have experienced in the past and will continue to experience until we decide to do something different. In essence, the current way we transform civilians into Marines gener-

>MajGen Mullen served as an Infantry Officer and retired as CG, Training and Education Command in 2020.

ates risk for the institution and can be detrimental both to those who undergo the process as well as those who implement the process. The negative effects of this suboptimal process then echo on into the operating forces in the form of unlawful hazing as well as negative and sometimes abusive leadership. I know these things are realities because I have been observing or dealing with them for many years.

All of the above is not to say that we have not produced hundreds of thousands of great Marines over the past decades using this system. It is also not meant to disparage the performance of the majority of those who have served as drill instructors who did their job exceptionally well and to the best of their ability. Many of them are some of the finest Marines I have ever served with. That said, I argue that if you take the time to think about this issue objectively, and with an eye toward what is best for the Marine Corps in the years ahead, I think you will find what I say in the remainder of this article to be compelling.

The last two years of my time in the Marine Corps were spent as the Commanding General of Training and Education Command. In that capacity, both Recruit Depots, as well as Officer Candidate School (OCS), were subordinate to that command. I spent a decent amount of time at both depots as well as OCS and talked to the leaders

in each location. Everything I saw and heard reinforced my belief that the way we transform civilians into Marines is problematic. It is this way because we place too much power in the hands of drill instructors who seek to live up to the legacy and reputation of the rock-hard taskmaster whom all the recruits or candidates live in fear of. The results have been a mixed bag of good and bad, with the bad effects placing our institution at serious risk several times in our history.

In the attempt to eliminate the more negative aspects, we have developed thick standard operating procedures over the years and significantly increased the number of officers and senior staff non-commissioned officers providing supervision, but none of these things have been able to completely stop recruit abuse events. We have even had cases of junior drill instructor abuse. The actual incidents, that we know about, are relatively rare, but each one has enormous ripple effects that place the institution we love at serious risk. As stated earlier, the majority of drill instructors do exactly what we need them to do, but it only takes one or two events such as a Ribbon Creek or what happened with Recruit Siddiqui to undermine the efforts of all involved in the entire process. The amount of power placed in the hands of a drill instructor team is immense and scientific studies such as the Stanford Prison Experiment of 1971 prove that it takes some very special people to be able to resist turning that amount of power to negative ends.¹ We put a great deal of effort into screening and training our drill instructors to be able to resist this phenomenon but continue to place



The current model of recruit training may place too much power in the hands of drill instructors who can transfer negative behaviors learned from past recruit training and impart those negative behaviors into the next generation of Marines. (Photo by LCpl Carlin Warren.)

them in very difficult circumstances that cause constant temptation to cross the line between productive training and sadistic vindictiveness. I personally believe that we are doing them a disservice.

To complicate matters further, the amount of stress placed on drill instructors during a training cycle is immense and further erodes their ability to make good decisions regarding training and the welfare of recruits or candidates. Drill instructors, especially junior ones, average three to four hours of sleep a night during the early stages of Recruit Training or OCS, and then drive back and forth to work in the darkness. While on duty, they are constantly on edge to perform as a drill instructor. They scream and yell at recruits or candidates, especially early on, and this must have negative effects on the psyche and mental health of drill instructors. They must always be seen by the recruits or candidates as the perfect specimen of a Marine—someone who does not sleep, barely eats, and always looks immaculate regardless of the weather. They are under constant pressure to cause the recruits or candidates to perform well at drills, inspections, and other events. All of this combines together and can generate a jaded attitude regarding recruits

or candidates because of the difficulties they routinely deal with in transforming civilians into Marines. When you top all of this with rarely seeing their families during a typical cycle, the stress has proven to be overwhelming in some cases. The fact that it does not prove overwhelming to more Marines is because of the screening and preparation we put into making drill instructors as well as the fact that many of them are our finest Marines.

Next, we need to look at the effect of this process on our young Marines in particular. We are recruiting much smarter people than we ever have in the past but are using essentially the same process used during and after World War II to indoctrinate large numbers of poorly educated and, in some cases, recalcitrant individuals to make them become Marines. The verbal and physical abuse scared most into line and was best exemplified in the movie *Full Metal Jacket* where the actor R. Lee Ermey was just doing what he had done when he was an actual drill instructor a few years earlier. This has given the Marine Corps a well-deserved reputation for tough recruit training that some in today's day and age may still be seeking. Thankfully, the physical abuse has been eliminated, but the verbal abuse has not.

Do we really need to “scare” today's civilians into becoming Marines? Do they need to be turned into automatons who only do what they are told to do when they are told to do it? Our recruiters are bringing in much smarter and more capable civilians, so why would we not want to change the way we turn them into Marines? Granted, we have started down this path with the implementation of the 4th phase, which has toned everything down toward the end of Recruit Training in the effort to help the new Marines understand the differences between Recruit Training and the rest of the Marine Corps, but the first three phases still rely on these negative training methods.

Perhaps the worst aspect of this is that when these new Marines move on to the operating forces, they are susceptible to hazing because they are still under the influence of their first formative experience in the Marine Corps. Again, 4th phase is helping with this, but it is not enough. Echoes of this negative form of training continue in the careers of our young Marines in the form of those “Senior Lance Corporals” who believe that they have to “properly train” the new joins and fall back on their memories of their drill instructors, except with no screening and little training as to what should and should not be done. This is especially true for those who were hazed themselves upon joining their units. We have all seen the fallout from the more egregious activities of this nature, and despite the best efforts of leaders everywhere, it continues to occur. A little later in their career, when they become actual leaders, the methods they rely on to “lead” their subordinates tend toward uttering “F” bombs with every other word, yelling and using the knife hand to influence their subordinates—all watered-down echoes of what they remember from Recruit Training. Clearly, not all our young leaders do these things. Many are exceptionally good, but from my experience, they are not the norm. A vivid example of this was when we made a video comparing the activities of a U.S. Marine squad leader and a U.K. Royal Marine squad leader at Twentynine Palms. The U.S. Marine performed

exactly as described above in the negative example. The U.K. Royal Marine by comparison calmly issued the squad order and delegated tasks with a sense of complete confidence in himself and his squad. Which squad would you want to serve in?

I have had the privilege of serving with or visiting the U.K. Royal Marines several times in my career, and though they are a great deal smaller than the U.S. Marine Corps, they still have a great deal to offer us in the way they transform civilians into Royal Marines. In essence, they use difficult training, weather, time, and role model leadership to enable the transformation. The instructors in their equivalent of Recruit Training are split into different categories. One set gets the recruits up and moving in the morning and puts them in the rack in the evening. Another set provides Physical Training Instruction. Another set provides tactical training or specialized technique instruction. They do not focus on drill until near the end of Recruit Training, and then it is only in preparation for their Pass Out Parade, which is the equivalent to our recruit graduation. This alleviates most of the stress that is placed on the instructor teams and generates self-reliant, capable, and thoroughly motivated Marines. Is this not what we are truly after?

I know we are making changes to the process for producing infantry Marines in particular, and that 4th phase has alleviated some of the concerns addressed above, but neither is enough. We need to produce Marines who can take individual initiative and who have been inspired, instead of being coerced, into living up to our core values of honor, courage, and commitment. We want them inspired by role model leaders in every aspect of their Marine Corps career—but most especially in their transformative stage when their first experiences on the path to becoming a Marine are seared into their hearts and minds. Role model leadership that mentors them through difficult training will give them the self-confidence to succeed in any environment. It will also enable them to continue to have all important *esprit de corps* that has ensured the success of our Corps since it was first established. Given the considerations of the anticipated operating environment that we are currently reorganizing and equipping for, these are exactly the types of Marines we need to succeed. Self-motivated, resilient Marines who are willing to take the initiative and accomplish any mission assigned regardless of how difficult.

The challenge with all this is that the culture of the Recruit Depots as

well as all the nostalgic retired Marines will resist the approach described above with vehemence. The cries of *it will ruin the Marine Corps*, and *we are being too soft on new Marines* have already started with just the implementation of 4th phase. Asking drill instructors to take off their campaign covers and act like normal Marine leaders during the 4th phase was a significant emotional event for some of them. Is it really too much to ask that they perform as the role model leaders I am sure they would like their sons or daughters to have if they were joining the Marine Corps? Over the past almost 250 years of service to the country, we as a Marine Corps have made many changes to the way we have organized trained and equipped Marines. The ethos of the Marine Corps has always enabled us to succeed on any battlefield and it will continue to do so in the future. Changing our method of recruit and officer candidate training to better reflect the realities of what we need in the operating forces, better enable the success of those we entrust with the training by placing less stress on them, and taking into consideration the considerably better material we have to work within this 21st century all seem to be wise choices when looked at dispassionately. That is the root of the matter. If we can clear away all the emotions and strong opinions not based on actual facts, I argue we can get to a place where we are able to make the changes that I believe are required. I also argue that they will make for a much more effective warfighting organization which should be the only goal of any changes we seek to make to how we transform civilians into Marines.

Note

1. Information on the Stanford Prison Experiment is available at <https://www.prisonexp.org>.



Role-model leadership that mentors recruits through tough realistic training will be needed to make the Marines required in the future operating environment. (Photo by Sgt Nathan McKittrick.)

Trust Decay

Institutional distrust in the Marine Corps

by LtCol Thaddeus Drake Jr.

The military has a problem. One of the most important underpinnings of the modern all-volunteer force is trust.

Trust in the institution is an essential part of the compact agreed to by those who volunteer to serve; an enlistment or commission as a part of a volunteer force necessarily includes an implicit understanding that the institution one joins can be trusted. In the most extreme case, members joining the institution assume that it can be trusted not to squander their lives; however, even in less dire circumstances, there is an implicit assumption that the institution will take care of its members. For decades, economists, social scientists, and researchers in other related fields have documented steadily declining trust in institutions within American society and particularly in the cohort that provides the majority of military recruits.¹ Although not a problem that Marines and the larger DOD ecosystem have devoted a great deal of study to in the recent past, as this issue continues to increase society-wide, it will necessarily have downstream effects on the military. Despite being somewhat insulated from the problem because of its self-contained nature, it is nonetheless not immune. The symptoms of decaying institutional trust have begun to show more in recent years within the Services, and paradoxically the solution leaders often attempt to institute instead contribute to a feedback loop that exacerbates the problem. It is important for leaders to consider the crucial problem that if this phenomenon continues to increase throughout society; many recruits will be likely to enter the Service with a preexisting and reflexive distrust of institutions. Any percentage of Marines who distrust the greater institution is antithetical

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to the values and assumptions underpinning our force; the simple fact that individuals volunteered will not and cannot obviate eighteen or more years of socialization within a society that no longer believes that large institutions—government, business, philanthropic, or otherwise—will act in honorable or trustworthy ways. The Service must recognize, understand, and act to counter this “trust decay” while recognizing that the often-reflexive institutional impulse of centralizing authority and control is likely to be counterproductive.

The Problem of Societal Trust

By almost any metric, trust in American institutions has been consistently decreasing for at least the past half-century.² Pundits, analysts, and researchers have often addressed this issue in print and research during this time period; despite the broad variety of efforts and ideas proposed to address it, the phenomenon has nonetheless continued apace. Many thinkers have posited wildly different reasons for (and potential solutions to) the problem, ranging from a marked decline in voluntary associations to changing norms around parenting, changing religious mores, and increased loneliness, to the modern American experience of so-called “vicarious warfare,” all of which probably have at least some element of truth to them.³ One of the most convincing explanations for the 21st century’s increasing discontent comes from former CIA analyst Martin Gurri, who claims that the drastic increase in information availability in the 21st century has eliminated elite or

institutional monopolies on the perception of truth—what others have called the “narrative.” In Gurri’s telling, this lack of coherent institutional narratives (and the concomitant development of multiple competing truth claims) leads to a sort of nihilism; members of various groups that he refers to as “publics” have stopped trusting institutional leadership and instead seek to attack, fight against, and ultimately destroy it instead. His term for this is the “revolt of the public” (also the title of his book).⁴ He forecasts this issue to continue for years to come and suggests that institutions lacking a deliberate mitigation strategy will not fare well. Just doing what we have always done will not work. As a society-wide problem that generally transcends political affiliation or other group relationships, this is sure to be a critical issue for the U.S. military.⁵ Trust in the institution is essential to the effectiveness of the joint force, and the Services are ill-prepared to mitigate a significant degradation thereof.⁶

Nearly every Marine who has spent time in a leadership position knows that Marines have long had a tongue-in-cheek disdain for the institutional Marine Corps and senior leadership—the much maligned “they.” (They as in “who made this dumb policy?” “They did,” or “Why do we have to do this thing I find stupid?” “They said we did,” etc.). Indeed, references to the “green weenie,” comics such as *Terminal Lance*, and more recent criticisms such as *Vet TV* are almost universally popular amongst the ranks, as similar depictions like Bill Maudlin’s *Willie and Joe* were hugely popular in previous eras. This sort of mildly disgruntled or sarcastic griping is far from the concern this article intends to highlight. Instead, it considers that there is a more significant undercurrent of

mistrust that has become increasingly manifest in the past decade. There are many examples, from the recent actions of LtCol Stuart Scheller, an active duty (former) battalion commander who broadcast his distrust for senior leadership on multiple social media forums (his associated popularity with many in the so-called “lance corporal network” is a separate indicator), to the multiple aggressive and often openly disrespectful social media campaigns circa 2011–2014 attacking then-Commandant, Gen Amos.⁷ One might see a different manifestation of the same reflexive distrust of the institution in the way Marines—particularly more senior ones—often talk about their monitor. It is far from unusual to hear Marines tell each other something like *don't tell the monitor your real plans; if you do, he is certain to screw you*. This is a common sentiment across the force, and valid or not, it nonetheless highlights a widespread perception that the institution does not or will not provide for the best interest of individual Marines.⁸

Today, the clearest example of institutional distrust is glaringly obvious: despite consistent messaging and direct orders to Marines and sailors in the force that they are required to get the COVID-19 vaccine and that it is for their health and the overall benefit of those around them, a large number of Marines, sailors, and civilians in the force neither believe this nor trust the Service and DOD narrative surrounding vaccination. Regardless of their reasons for either obeying under duress or actually disobeying the requirement, the fact that these Marines and sailors would prefer to disobey it shows very clearly that they do not trust the direction coming from the highest echelons of the Service, instead placing trust in whatever other information source they prefer. This is Gurri's information availability problem at work. The Marine Corps, as an institution, no longer has a monopoly on the information it provides to its members; instead, they prefer to trust other (potentially inaccurate or incorrect) information sources and show limited fealty to the leadership, guidance, and overall health of the institution.

Complementing this general distrust many Marines feel for the Service is a vast number of requirements that are known to be unnecessary, impossible to accomplish, or simply wastes of time—what a recently published article characterized as “bulls**t.”⁹ As Leonard Wong and Stephen Gerras showed several years ago in their seminal study *Lying to Ourselves*, the Army both inadvertently and sometimes knowingly fosters an environment of dishonesty throughout the chain of command because of its large number of unachievable training and reporting requirements.¹⁰ Is there evidence that the Marine Corps is different? Despite many efforts to rein in the multitude of higher headquarters requirements in the last several years, modern Marines are nonetheless expected to navigate a vast number of extraneous orders, directives, and training requirements that often have little obvious value or utility.¹¹ What this leads to is a phenomenon just like that shown by Wong and Gerras—if Marines do not perceive the requirement as important, many regularly seek to circumvent it. Examples of this abound: Marines regularly find workarounds for required web-based training that provides essentially no useful instruction, it is common for commands to “backdate” rosters and documents to prepare for various inspections that often have a host of requirements for documentation that may or may not actually be germane to unit readiness, and they recognize that in many cases the Service bureaucracy considers proper documentation associated with equipment readiness more important than actual readiness.¹² More importantly, perhaps, they also generally recognize one of two realities about these sorts of requirements: either senior leaders understand that many of the things they require Marines to do have extremely limited value, or worse, leadership believes they *are* useful! Either one is catastrophic for trust, as the natural conclusion is that leaders require Marines to waste time as a *CYA mechanism* or they are too blind to reality to understand that many requirements provide minimal realistic value.¹³

A final manifestation of institutional distrust is a perception—primarily in the lower ranks—that there is a punishment double standard for individuals who violate the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Indeed, almost any time a senior officer or non-commissioned officer violates the Uniform Code of Military Justice, one can be sure that the *different standards for different ranks* opinion pieces and articles are soon to follow.¹⁴ LtCol Paul Yingling articulated the best example of this sentiment when he wrote in 2007 in *Armed Forces Journal*, “As matters stand now, a private who loses a rifle suffers far greater consequences than a general who loses a war.”¹⁵ Accurate or not, this perception is rife throughout the military Services. Indeed, this is precisely one defense that the aforementioned LtCol Scheller applied in public and at his recent special court-martial, and one that appears to be increasingly common in the general public sphere.¹⁶

This problem is far from new. It was quite a common concern for U.S. military leaders during the conventional wars on which we still base the majority of our force design, doctrine, and education. Just as this article suggests is common in the current Marine Corps, Brian Linn shows that after World War II many soldiers “drew a sharp distinction between the individual officers they had served under and ‘the brass,’” trusting immediate leaders while showing significant disdain for the greater institutional leadership.¹⁷ Draftee members of the military profession (or those who volunteered in order to avoid the draft) often had a different conception of military service than we expect from the professionals of our modern force. They did not necessarily trust the larger institution but instead were “men who would rather not be there, but either felt a call to serve or realized they had no choice and would therefore do their best.”¹⁸ Because of this, the military was centralized, bureaucratic, and impersonal—it treated short-term draftees as interchangeable parts of the larger enterprise and not as trustworthy agents who share a desire to accomplish the same goals as the overall Service.¹⁹ Institutional memory suggests that as

trust corrodes within the Service, it is likely that this sort of centralization will occur again as a knee-jerk reaction to the symptoms described above; counterintuitively though, this is likely to be exactly the wrong approach.

The Instinctive Reaction

Hierarchical organizations under threat instinctively seek to *increase* centralization and control.²⁰ Although most who make this point frame it in terms of external threats to the organization, it is entirely reasonable to suggest that an organization would react in a similar manner to threats from within. Indeed, this is exactly the instinctive reaction of the Marine Corps to the degrading trust environment and associated “revolts of the public” within the Service. There are many examples of this sort of reactive centralization. The infamous letter published by the CG, 2d MarDiv, in 2018 provided detailed guidance to every Marine in the division regarding when they should wake up, mandating the schedule for the remainder of their day, and intimating that the subordinate leaders of the division were not doing their jobs is a clear example.²¹ The Commandant and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps showed a similar tendency toward centralization with their “Heritage Brief” and “Reawakening” circa 2012 that provided directive guidance to the force in great depth about issues many Marines felt were important but also not something the Commandant should have been lecturing them about.²² A recent example of this sort of extraneous yet burdensome requirement is the recently released *MARADMIN 255/21*, requiring reporting seniors to add a directed comment to all fitness reports stating that they have verified a Marine’s height and weight.²³ This appears to be in reaction to a perception that reporting seniors or Marines were falsifying information they entered into fitness reports and adds to the already existing requirement to verify the information in a fitness report Section A (that includes height and weight information) and certify it when electronically signing the document. Instead of fixing a perceived problem by addressing the

culture that fosters the behavior and punishing individual violations, the Service has instead added requirements that are both unnecessary and serve to show explicitly that it assumes reporting seniors, Marines reported on, or both are untrustworthy.

Senior leaders communicating directly to the most junior Marines is obviously a useful tool, and it is completely reasonable for leaders at all echelons to desire Marines to maintain the discipline and standards that the Service expects of each of us. The key issue with these efforts is the way many within the force *perceive* them. They often breed additional mistrust, as junior leaders can interpret this sort of guidance as a lack of confidence from their senior commanders and the Service as a whole; although direct communication can often provide useful guidance, it can also come with significant drawbacks. The U.S. military has a long history and culture of not entirely trusting junior leadership. The evidence is clear that it culturally prefers centralized leadership and control, and although the Marine Corps espouses a different doctrine, it nonetheless continues to fall short of its claims in this regard.²⁴ Directive communications from senior leaders that generate feelings of mistrust down the chain of command exacerbate this problem, as they continue to perpetuate the significant say-do gap between our current doctrine and actual practice.²⁵

Paradoxically, senior leaders’ efforts to re-establish the discipline that they see we need are likely to continue to degrade trust within the ranks; junior leaders throughout the force often perceive a lack of confidence in their abilities while individual Marines recognize an obvious lack of faith in their judgment. Additionally, the centralized direction cannot take into account the specific circumstances encountered by junior leaders on a daily basis.²⁶ For example, every year units in northern climates suffer through at least several weeks of rolled uniform sleeves despite outside temperatures sometimes below freezing. Is there a clear reason the authority to deviate from the standard uniform changeover time rests at an echelon higher than the lowest indepen-

dent duty station? There is a lack of trust in subordinate commanders to properly manage it.²⁷ This creates a feedback loop where Marines and commanders alike recognize that the Service does not trust them to make a basic common-sense decision regarding uniform wear and also see that the Service is unable to understand their specific circumstances. This sort of centralized control is directly contrary to our doctrine of mission tactics, which assumes local units to have “more accurate local knowledge ... and are therefore better able to adapt to changing circumstances and demonstrate the appropriate creativity and initiative.”²⁸

Restoring Trust

The fundamental paradox is that for the institution to restore trust in itself, it must do less. An environment of trust is a two-way street; in order to foster and restore a culture in which junior Marines believe in the Service and trust it as an institution, senior leadership must deliberately fight the desire to manage and control every aspect of a Marine’s life both on duty and off. This is inextricably linked to an existing atmosphere of low-risk tolerance: leaders are often loathe to accept the risk inherent in allowing junior Marines to make the wrong decisions in both their personal and professional lives.²⁹ Fail they will! This is a necessary component of trust-building—individuals must be allowed to practice decision making without direct supervision, make poor decisions at times, and when they do, they must also believe that the system will treat them fairly. It must address poor decisions without the intent to punish for punishment’s sake but instead to correct behavior and thus make better decision-makers; the only way to inculcate this belief is to demonstrate that it is true. The first method to restore trust is to create a culture that deliberately encourages Marines to make decisions and supports them when they do.

Beyond doing less, the Service must seek to make its reasoning transparent and obvious throughout the chain of command. Although there are always going to be requirements for secrecy and events that require because-I-told-you-

so reasoning, they are far fewer than the current hierarchy makes it appear. A second way to foster trust is to explain decisions, thought processes, and requirements with honesty and transparency; if something does not make sense at the lowest echelons, yet also does not meet the bar for because-I-told-you-so reasoning, then the Service should either seek to eliminate it or improve the transparency of the requirement. Simultaneously, the Service must strive to inculcate a culture in which the personal opinions or quirks of a commander or senior enlisted leader are unacceptable reasons for this sort of lack of transparency or reasoning. “Because I don’t like it” cannot be a standard for decision making that the Service culture allows if we desire to build trust in the institution as a whole.

A final method to begin to recover trust in the institution is to aggressively eliminate the glaring number of requirements that are completed throughout the Service with a “wink and a nod,” knowing that they are a complete waste of Marines’ time yet still required. Long recognized as a problem, the Marine Corps’ approach to this issue has previously been an incremental one, although in recent years some Service-level headquarters have begun to take a more aggressive approach.³⁰ Continuing to eliminate requirements, orders, and directives that do not directly relate to Marines’ battlefield competence will serve as a useful first step in restoring trust. At the Service-level, a potential recommendation to help manage this problem would be to create a service directive similar to Executive Order 13771, which directed any federal agency desiring to establish a new requirement to repeal two existing regulations.³¹ This could be a useful model for the management of the various Marine Corps bureaucracies; for every new regulation, rule, or training requirement any of them desired to create, they must first eliminate two others. Allowing a far larger degree of autonomy for lower echelon leaders to manage the specifics of requirements is also important. To build additional trust, the Service could decentralize authority for waiving many requirements, pushing that

approval authority far lower in the chain. Indeed, we expect Marine sergeants and lieutenants to make decisions with strategic implications on the future battlefield, but somehow they are not mature enough to make basic uniform decisions or determine the applicability of extraneous training requirements.³² This must change. Although many will claim a lieutenant or sergeant does not have the perspective or experience to determine the applicability of uniform standards or training requirements, this is precisely the point. If the Service desires to develop a culture of trust, it must accept this possibility.

Conclusion

Just as American society has lost a great deal of trust in the government writ large, many Marines appear to have begun to lose trust in the institutional Marine Corps. There has always been a mild current of cynicism amongst the force—and to some degree, this can be healthy. Adding to this, however, is a modern environment in which trust in institutions continues to decline amongst all portions of the population, access to near-infinite information (true and false alike) has eliminated the monopoly on narrative that hierarchies and organizations once held, and senior leaders often continue to reflexively attempt to exert control through increased centralization and elimination of subordinate leaders’ freedom to make significant mistakes without career-ending repercussions. In the framing of *The Revolt of the Public*, this effort is almost guaranteed to fail if pursued in this manner. It will instead create an increasing feedback loop as the Service tries to exert control and by so doing corrodes the trust our doctrine claims is necessary for successful operations in modern war. The Service must recognize that any percentage of Marines who distrust the institution will be harmful to our warfighting capabilities and are likely to corrode good order and discipline while simultaneously pushing leaders to reflexively centralize control as a mitigation measure. Instead of allowing this to happen, there must be a deliberate effort to understand the problem and work to minimize it. The only way to create an

environment that fosters trust amongst the ranks is for leadership at all echelons to relax attempts to legislate Marines’ lives and instead allow them to make their own decisions. The only possible solution to restore trust is by doing less: decentralize decision-making authority, trust Marines to use their judgment, and allow them to fail often and without permanent repercussions.

Notes

1. Jean Twenge, W. Keith Campbell, and Nathan Carter, “Declines in Trust in Others and Confidence in Institutions among American Adults and Late Adolescents, 1972–2012,” *Psychological Science*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, September 2014).
2. For examples, see: Staff, “2021 Trust Barometer,” *Edelman*, (2021), available at <https://www.edelman.com>; Jonathan Perry, “Trust in Public Institutions: Trends and Implications for Economic Security,” *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Decade of Action*, (June 2021), available at www.un.org/; and Staff, “Two Stories of Distrust in America,” *More in Common*, (2021), available at www.moreincommon.com.
3. Francis Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues & The Creation of Prosperity*, (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1995); Adam Garfinkle, “The Darkening Mind,” *American Purpose*, (December 2020), available at <https://www.american-purpose.com>; and Thomas Waldman, *Vicarious Warfare: American Strategy and the Illusion of War on the Cheap*, (Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2021).
4. Martin Gurri, *The Revolt of the Public: And the Crisis of Authority in the New Millenium*, (San Francisco, CA: Stripe Press, 2018).
5. Staff, “Reagan National Defense Survey,” (Simi Valley, CA: Ronald Reagan Institute November 2021). As an example, this recent survey shows a sharp drop in trust in the military society-wide in 2021; Republicans, Democrats, and Independents alike lost trust in the military as an institution.
6. One recent paper called trust the “Sine Qua Non” of Joint Operations. See Stanley A. Springer, John A. Schommer, and Sean S. Jones, “Trust: The Sine Qua Non of Effective Joint Operations,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, January 2017).

7. Aaron Maclean, “What’s the Matter with Jim Amos?,” *Washington Free Beacon*, (October 2014), available at <https://freebeacon.com>.

8. The Commandant has clearly noticed this problem and is working to fix it with his recently released *Talent Management 2030* plan. This effort is too new to tell if it will pay dividends in this regard. See Headquarters Marine Corps, *Talent Management 2030*, (Washington, DC: 2021).

9. David Devine, “The Trouble with Mission Command: Army Culture and Leader Assumptions,” *Military Review*, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army University Press, September–October 2021).

10. Leonard Wong and Stephen J. Gerras, *Lying to Ourselves: Dishonesty in the Army Profession*, (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, 2015).

11. A brief scan of the Marine Corps Publications Electronic Library shows more than 5,000 current Marine Corps Orders, each of which includes roughly 20 or more requirements for the Marines it applies to (obviously oversimplification for the purposes of illustration). There are hundreds more NAVMCs, MCBULs, and other publications (not including doctrinal pubs)—if only a tenth of these applied to each individual Marine, one might still assume that individual Marines would be responsible for knowing the specifics of ten thousand Service-level specified tasks. Add an equal number (at least) of subordinate headquarters requirements, and the magnitude of this problem begins to become apparent. Every Marine is almost certain to violate scores of orders and directives every day *without even knowing it*. More importantly, they often do know it and are forced to “pick and choose” which orders they ignore and which they treat as important.

12. One of the most tragic examples of this is the recent AAV mishap in which 9 Marines lost their lives. Department of the Navy, *Command Investigation into the Facts and Circumstances Surrounding the 30 July 2020 Assault Amphibious Vehicle Mishap during Integrated Operations between the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit and the USS Somerset (LPD 25)*, (Washington, DC: September 2021).

13. This article recognizes that there is a case that implementing training and requirements that do not have an obvious value to individual Marines may still generate a tangible value “to the Service.” This sort of reasoning, although potentially sound, nonetheless engenders a lack of trust from Marines who do not see it that way.

14. For example, see: Carl Castro, “From Our Director: Double Standards in the Military,” USC Suzanne Dworack-Peck School of Social Work Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans and Military Families, (October 2017), available at <https://cir.usc.edu>; Stephen Losey, “‘Different Spanks for Different Ranks’: Lawmaker Questions Lack of Courts-Martial for Air Force Generals,” *Air Force Times*, (February 2018), available at <https://www.airforcetimes.com>; and Tom Vanden Brook, “Senior Military Officials Sanctioned for More than 500 Cases of Serious Misconduct,” *USA Today*, (October 2017), available at <https://www.usatoday.com>.

15. Paul Yingling, “A Failure in Generalship,” *Armed Forces Journal*, (May 2007), available at <http://armedforcesjournal.com>.

16. Rebekah Koffler, “Stuart Scheller Court Martial for Afghanistan Pullout is Double Standard,” *New York Post*, (October 2021), available at <https://nypost.com>.

17. Brian McAllister Linn, *Elvis’s Army: Cold War GIs and the Atomic Battlefield*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

18. Robert L. Goldich, “American Military Culture from Colony to Empire,” *Daedalus*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, Summer 2011).

19. Andrew Bacevich, *The Pentomic Era: The U.S. Army Between Korea and Vietnam*, (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1986).

20. Ori Brafman and Rod A. Beckstrom, *The Starfish and the Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations*, (New York, NY: Penguin, 2006).

21. For an example of the general feeling this letter engendered amongst junior Marines, see: Paul Szoldra, “This Two-Star Marine General Has Turned Micromanagement into an Art Form,” *Task and Purpose*, (April 2019), available at <https://taskandpurpose.com>.

22. Hope Hodge Seck, “The Amos legacy: How the First Aviator Commandant will be Remembered,” *Marine Corps Times*, (October 2014), available at <https://www.marinecorps-times.com>.

23. Headquarters Marine Corps, *Marine Administration Message 255/21 ANNOUNCEMENT OF HEIGHT AND WEIGHT VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS ON FITNESS REPORTS FOR ALL MARINES*, (Washington, DC: May 2021).

24. Andrew Milburn, “Losing Small Wars: Why U.S. Military Culture Leads to Defeat,” *Small Wars Journal*, (October 2021), available at <https://smallwarsjournal.com>.

25. Thaddeus Drake, “The Fantasy of MCDP-1,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, (September 2020), available at <https://mca-marines.org>.

26. F.A. Hayek, “The Use of Knowledge in Society,” *American Economic Review*, (Nashville, TN: American Economic Association, September 1945).

27. For example, an independent duty O-5 commander does not have the authority to determine if the local climate in his home state warrants rolling uniform sleeves down. Instead, they must request an exception from an O-6 commander who might live a thousand miles away, who is then required to request an exception from an O-8 commander who might live on the other side of the country. This is obviously a bit of a silly example—does it really matter? Not much. But that is exactly the point—distrust in the institution comes from the steady accumulation of this sort of thing.

28. Antoine Bousquet, *The Scientific Way of Warfare: Order and Chaos on the Battlefields of Modernity*, (London: Hurst and Company, 2009).

29. Chris Tsirlis, “Give Marines the Freedom to Assume Risk,” *Proceedings*, (April 2019), available at <https://www.usni.org>.

30. Valerie O’Berry, “Annual Training Requirement Hours Reduced, Trend Is Toward Leader-Led Discussions,” Marine Corps, (May 2017), available at <https://www.hqmc.marines.mil>; and Headquarters Marine Corps, *Marine Administration Message 694/20: CHANGES TO MARINE CORPS ANNUAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS*, (Washington, DC: November 2020).

31. Executive Office of the President, “Reducing Regulation and Controlling Regulatory Costs: Executive Order 13771,” *Federal Register*, (January 2017), available at <https://www.federalregister.gov>.

32. Perhaps the most famous and disheartening example of this phenomenon was Tobacco Cessation annual training—a congressionally mandated requirement that applied to all service members—whether they had ever used tobacco or not. This training was eliminated by endnote 21; however, it is nonetheless an instructive example.



Desegregate MCU

The integration of officer and enlisted PME

by Maj Jonathan Bowman

The marriage between a commander and their senior enlisted advisor is not always a happy one. Unlike a legal marriage, each union of officer and enlisted comes with an expiration date before “til death do us part.” This relationship as seen in the U.S. armed forces can be traced back to then-General George Washington at Valley Forge. His appointment of a Prussian officer, Baron Friedrich Wilhelm Von Steuben, established the first written plan for standards, discipline, and duty for this fledgling country’s army. In establishing standards for non-commissioned officers, Von Steuben, in effect, became the founder of the senior enlisted advisor (SEA).¹ The role and definition of the SEA has been a tumultuous one since that December day in 1777 and has often led to conflict between the SEA and their officer counterpart. By analyzing the developmental path for both officer and enlisted, a potential preventative measure to this conflict presented itself in the form of education. The Marine Corps can achieve positive change in the relationship between its officers and senior enlisted through the desegregation of officer and enlisted schools within the Marine Corps University (MCU) system. By combining the schools, each community can better understand the roles, attributes, and skillsets of the other to increase communication and shared understanding between commanders and their senior enlisted advisors.

The relationship between officers and their enlisted advisors is at times doomed to failure, not because either party lacks character or maturity but because its genesis is too late in the officer’s development. Young officers enter the Marine Corps with a very narrow sense of what their lives will be like or

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the role they will play in the lives of others. This ignorance involves a dramatic learning curve. One day he will lead a group of Marines while knowing very little about how that relationship is supposed to work. For example, in the early 2010s, The Basic School (TBS) possessed a significant backlog of lieutenants, leaving some newly commissioned second lieutenants waiting up to nine months before they could begin training. After arriving at TBS, the young officers began their Marine existence in a sterile, nearly officer-pure environment for the entirety of the six-month course. If that young officer was then selected for a longer MOS school, the operating forces ended up receiving lieutenants who had never seen an enlisted Marine in anything other than a supporting role for the nearly two years since their commissioning. The resulting lack of mutual trust and respect that all too often occurs can have lasting negative effects on the individuals, the units, and the Marines.

The lack of exposure created by the sterile nature of officer training, as well as the segregation of officer and enlisted professional military education (PME), are the root causes of the issues seen between officers and SEAs. Throughout their respective schools, the relationship between an officer and their SEA is continually described as being of the utmost importance. This two-sided coin comes as the result of more than two centuries of segregation between the two groups within the U.S. military.

While this is the core of the issue, it is simultaneously the source of its salvation. Desegregating MCU by integrating the education of both officers and enlisted Marines will eliminate many of the contributing factors to the often broken relationship.

There are enlisted advisors associated with every officer rank within the Marine Corps. Lieutenants typically have staff sergeants and gunnery sergeants, captains have first sergeants, and field-grade/general officers have sergeants major. Each of these ranks, officer and enlisted, have a corresponding school under the MCU umbrella. Integration of these schools could take many forms, but the focus should be on indoctrinating officers into this relationship and its importance from the start of their careers. Thus, the most important relationship to cultivate is that between staff sergeants and lieutenants. Those Marines assigned to a career course at MCB Quantico should have, as part of their instruction, time spent with young lieutenants at TBS in an advisory role. From tactical scenarios to ethical decision games, these young officers should lean heavily on the wisdom of the more experienced enlisted Marines. Lieutenants rotate through leadership roles within the platoon and company throughout the course. This is where the staff sergeants should be inserted as platoon sergeants to the young officer. The staff sergeant, as well as the captain staff platoon commanders, should evaluate how well they integrate and lean on their enlisted advisor throughout their time in Quantico. Similar integration should occur at Expeditionary Warfare School with first sergeants and captains as well as sergeants major at the Command and Staff and War Colleges. Corresponding increases in rank and level of dependence on a SEA should occur

with each successive level of authority and responsibility.

Officers would not be the only beneficiaries of this plan. Staff sergeants and above would have the opportunity to practice, grow, and develop trust in their officers. Officer education in its present form is often a mystery to enlisted Marines. Lifting that veil through integration will provide greater understanding to enlisted Marines on how officers are taught, how they are trained to think, and how they can best advise them in the future. Learning how to tactfully challenge your boss has been demonstrated as an invaluable skill for subordinate leaders and can serve as a learning objective for staff sergeants.² Additionally, placing a fresh set of eyes on the processes utilized by the Marine Corps to train its officers could provide a more effective critique of each school and enrich the education of both officers and enlisted simultaneously. The most adept and capable individuals to advise TBS on how to train an officer in SEA relationships are those who will fill that role in the future.

The idea of integration between officer and enlisted PME is not a new one and is even being incorporated elsewhere in the DOD. A 2018 article from *War on the Rocks* by Army MSG Matthew Reed, entitled “Rethinking Enlisted Education,” details how the Army has not only conceived this idea but is in the process of implementing it. Reed says, “The Army should ensure its leaders speak the same language. It can accomplish this by co-locating and synchronizing the content of its officer and NCO professional education.”³ He continues by describing how every school from the Captains Career Course to the War College could easily be integrated with the corresponding enlisted school. As proof of concept, the Army has already installed a satellite campus for their sergeant major course at the War College in Carlisle, PA.⁴ Expeditionary Warfare School, as well as Command and Staff and War Colleges, are conveniently located on the same base as their corresponding enlisted Schools, making them ideally placed to begin integration. Additionally, the Quantico chapters of senior

enlisted schools should become board selected, just as the officer schools are, in order to ensure the best and brightest amongst the enlisted ranks are given greater opportunity for education and advancement.

Inevitably, there will be resistance and dissension regarding this plan. Many will say that the schools should remain separate, that officers should teach officers, and enlisted should teach enlisted. Others will bring up challenges such as facilities, funding, and the ever-present mantra: *this is the way we have always done it*. Fear of change historically has stood in the way of progress, and while it has been generally associated with a positive connotation, “progressive” has become a four-letter word. All of these potential objections are symptomatic of the way in which Marines love to speak out of both sides of their mouths. While resistance is inevitable, change is ultimately necessary for successful development. In the *Marine Corps Gazette* article “Investing in our Enlisted Leaders,” Col Williams writes about the steps the Marine Corps has taken to modernize the enlisted college, such as renaming it and adopting a “collegiate-style curricula.”⁵ While these changes constitute an incremental approach to modernization, they ultimately represent the molasses-like pathways toward change traditionally selected by the institution. As times continue to change and the Marine Corps moves firmly into the future, fear of the new cannot be what holds us back from the improvements we stand to gain. Exponential growth in readiness and efficiency can be gained by focusing on the officer/senior enlisted relationship that stands at the core of everything the Marine Corps does or fails to do.

The U.S. military has many colloquialisms within it relating to the place of the officer such as “Officers eat last,” “Horse, saddle, rider,” “The Mission, the Men, and Me,” and “Take care of the Marines and they will take care of the mission.”⁶ As I sought supporting material for the issue at hand, few resources were available. While the quantity of available literature related to or authored by officers is practically limitless, few books or periodicals champion

or even refer to the SEA. Officers eat last, except as it seems when it relates to professional military education. If the education for all Marines is a priority, as the Commandant has stated it will be, then make the integration of officer and enlisted education a priority.⁷ Correcting the sterile and segregated nature of both officer and enlisted PME is necessary, and as it turns out, a relatively easy fix for the Marine Corps Positive change is possible in the relationship between officers and their senior enlisted advisors through the integration and desegregation of Marine Corps University. If we are to move forward as a Corps, we must do so through shared learning and growth.

Notes

1. Staff, *The Noncommissioned Officer and Petty Officer: Backbone of the Armed Forces*, (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2014).
2. Michael Useem, *Leading Up*, (New York, NY: Crown Business, 2001).
3. Matthew Reed, “Rethinking Enlisted Education: Expanding the Professional Military Education Debate,” *War on the Rocks*, (November 2018), available at <https://warontherocks.com>.
4. Ibid.
5. Christopher Williams, “Investing in our Enlisted Leaders,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: July 2018).
6. Pete Blaber, *The Mission, the Men, and Me: Lessons from a Former Delta Force Commander*, (New York, NY: Dutton Caliber, 2017).
7. Gen David H. Berger, *38th Commandant’s Planning Guidance*, (Washington DC: July 2019).



Risk to U.S. Military Plans in the Indo-Pacific

Assumptions about host-nation access and the case for strategic communication and key enablers

by Maj Paul Smith

As identified by guiding strategic documents, China poses the most critical challenge currently facing the United States.¹ For U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM), countering China largely hinges upon leveraging the region's geography. Yet, concepts that envision fighting with distributed elements throughout the region hinge upon one critical assumption—namely that allies and partners will allow their sovereign territory to be accessed by U.S. forces. Given host-nation political sensitivities and the proclivity of allies and partners to hedge amidst Beijing's overwhelming regional influence, this assumption is far from certain and threatens to unravel U.S. military plans to counter the pacing threat. While the military instrument will always be at a positional disadvantage in the absence of robust economic and diplomatic engagement, the military must more effectively promote interagency and bilateral coordination to shore up this assumption.

America and the Indo-Pacific

The Indo-Pacific region is of the utmost consequence for U.S. interests. With nearly \$2 trillion in two-way trade, the Department of State (DOS) maintains that American and Indo-Pacific futures “are inextricably intertwined.”² The Indo-Pacific remains the DOD's primary theater and the “most consequential region for America's future.”³ Against this backdrop, it follows

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Figure 1. First and Second Island Chains.
(Figure provided by author.)

that U.S. military plans to deter China and maintain stability in the region are likewise among the most significant issues facing the joint force today. In line with this purpose, ADM Davidson testified that “USINDOPACOM must field an integrated Joint Force with precision-strike networks along the First and Second Island Chains,”⁴ with key geographical features depicted in Figure 1.

Marine Corps force design efforts and the Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) concept coincide with these plans, as the Corps envisions fighting from key maritime terrain to support the larger naval campaign.⁵ The stakes are high as the Pentagon crafts plans to leverage this vital terrain and as T.X. Hammes rightly observes, “since geography is the key to East Asia, allies are the key to accessing the first island chain.”⁶

A U.S. Ally in Beijing's Backyard

Notwithstanding the strong regional partnerships that Washington maintains, the assumption that allies and partners will allow access for U.S. forces to counter China during a crisis is tenuous at best. The United States may have deep diplomatic and military ties within the region, but as summarized by the RAND Corporation in Figure 2 (on following page), China wields greater economic influence than the United States on almost all metrics with Indo-Pacific countries.⁷ This influence continues to grow as China inked the world's largest trade deal in 2020, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which serves as a Chinese-led alternative to the Trans-Pacific Partnership that Washington abruptly withdrew from in 2017.⁸ Moreover, China's

current bilateral trade with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations is more than double that of the United States (\$591 vs. \$272 billion), and the trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative dwarfs the \$60 billion commitment of Washington's Better Utilization of Investment Leading to Development Act and similar initiatives.⁹

Washington would do well to remember the mantra, *it's the economy, stupid*, as partners largely place more value on economic concerns; thus Beijing holds considerable sway in the neighborhood.¹⁰ This translates to a region that is loath to pick sides in the game of Sino-American competition and explains why Indo-Pacific nations often hedge to stay below the threshold of Beijing's ire.¹¹

Perhaps nowhere are these dynamics more apparent than with a longstanding treaty-ally: the Philippines. Under the Duterte administration, Manila cozied up to China and even threatened to nullify the Visiting Forces Agreement that underpins military cooperation with the United States.¹² Moreover, despite Manila's victory in the 2016 United Nations Convention for the Law of the Sea arbitration ruling, the Duterte administration ostensibly surrendered its South China Sea claims and largely sought to bandwagon with Beijing in pursuit of Chinese beneficence.¹³ Thus, China's coercive economic power helps to enable its military gains in the region as Beijing continues to fortify its South China Sea territorial claims.¹⁴ Further, as depicted in Figure 3 (on following page), China's "capacity to exercise influence and leverage through economic interdependencies" already far exceeds that of the United States.¹⁵

While the robustness of Philippine-American ties will likely endure and U.S.-Philippine relations are on the upswing with Manila recently recommitting to the Visiting Forces Agreement, there is no guarantee that American forces would be allowed access during a crisis that might provoke China. Indeed, as Manila and regional partner nations calculate their policies, Beijing's geographic proximity and economic power loom large, threatening to thwart potential U.S. bids for EABO access or otherwise. As stated in a

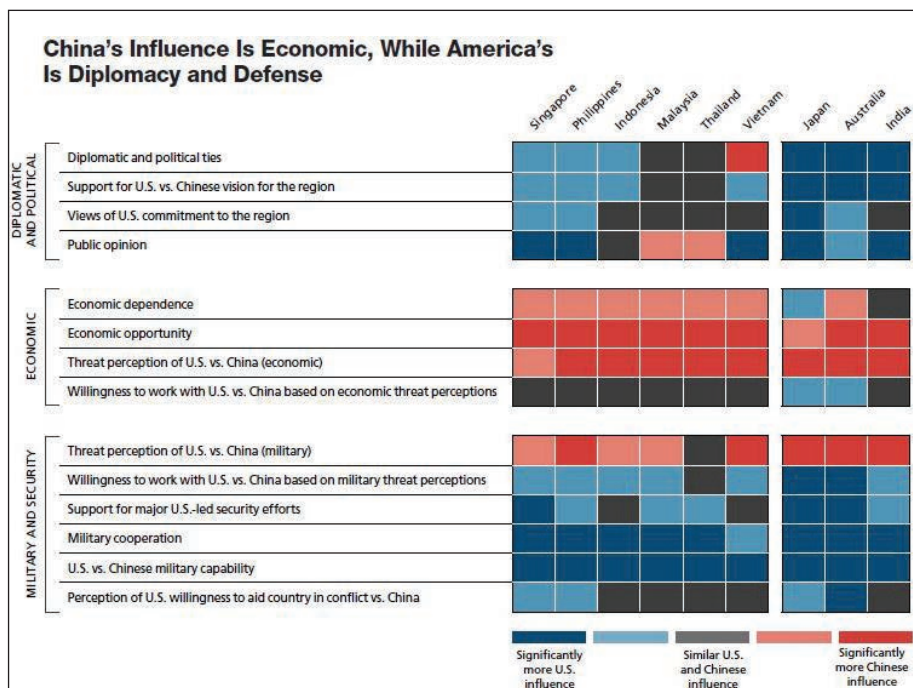


Figure 2. Comparison of U.S. and Chinese influence in the Indo-Pacific region. (Figure provided by author.)

2019 Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments report, Washington "should not adopt a strategy that succeeds or fails based on access to the Philippines."¹⁶

... the assumption of assured access to ally and partner-nation territory is not guaranteed ...

Understanding Limitations in Japan

Most observers would accept that the assumption of assured access to ally and partner-nation territory is not guaranteed; however, the difficulty of moving the needle to turn this assumption closer into a fact may be underappreciated. T.X. Hammes acknowledges the legitimacy of questioning this assumption while also suggesting that partners would be more amenable to allowing small EABO units ashore as opposed to a larger force.¹⁷ This statement is true, but even small units can provoke host-nation political sensitivities and diplomatic backlash, especially when carrying missiles and the potential to

plunge the host nation into war with its largest trading partner.¹⁸

Amidst a lack of viable options, Japan stands out as "America's most important ally in the Asia-Pacific."¹⁹ As seen in Figure 4 (on following page), Japan has already established a string of new bases along its portion of the first island chain, with key capabilities that complement the U.S. joint force such as surface-to-ship missile batteries.²⁰

Yet, although the U.S.-Japan alliance is the "cornerstone of peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific," expectations for further U.S. access are nonetheless problematic.²¹ As stated by former Marine Forces Pacific Liaison Officer to the Japanese Ministry of Defense Col William Hendricks, the *Commandant's Planning Guidance* "has one critical vulnerability. It does not account for ... Okinawan and Japanese political sensitivities."²²

Indeed, both U.S. and Japan Self-Defense Force (JSDF) actions are severely constrained by politics. For example, in April 2019, local opposition to the Miyakojima base prompted then-Defense Minister Iwaya to make a public apology regarding ammunition storage and temporarily remove ordnance from the island.²³ On Yonagunijima, where

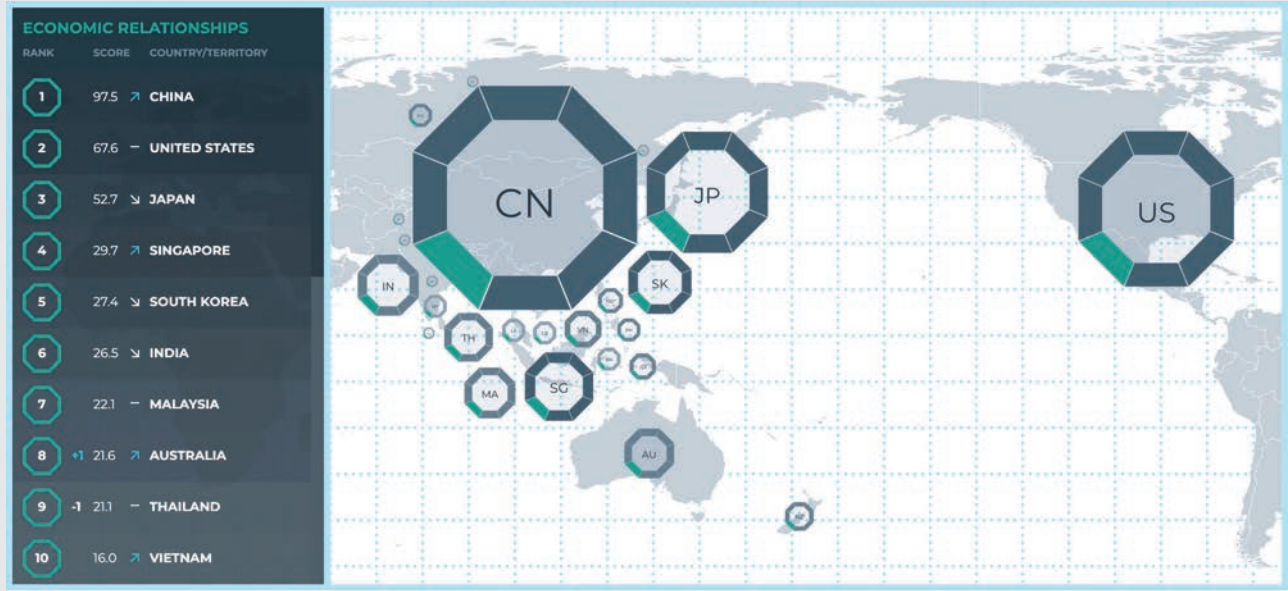


Figure 3. Current economic relationships (2019). (Figure provided by author.)

JSDF rather effectively integrated into the local community, it should be noted that the mayor who welcomed the JSDF also rejected the idea of U.S. military training.²⁴ Additionally, while EABO concepts are now a common feature of exercises and staff talks with the JSDF, political sensitivities have precluded bilateral field training exercises on the islands southwest of Okinawa. Citing both local opposition and the diplomatic repercussions of provoking Beijing, *Nikkei Asia* calls the plan to emplace U.S. missiles on Japanese soil “fraught with difficulty.”²⁵

Recommendations and Conclusion

What then should the U.S. joint force and Marine Corps do to turn the shaky assumption of assured access into a more solid planning factor? To start, it must be acknowledged amidst an over-militarized foreign policy that a whole-of-government approach with robust economic and diplomatic engagement is sorely needed—without which the limits of what the military instrument can accomplish are even more constrained.²⁶ U.S. military activities during competition can only go so far while China holds a relative competitive advantage in terms of regional economic influence.

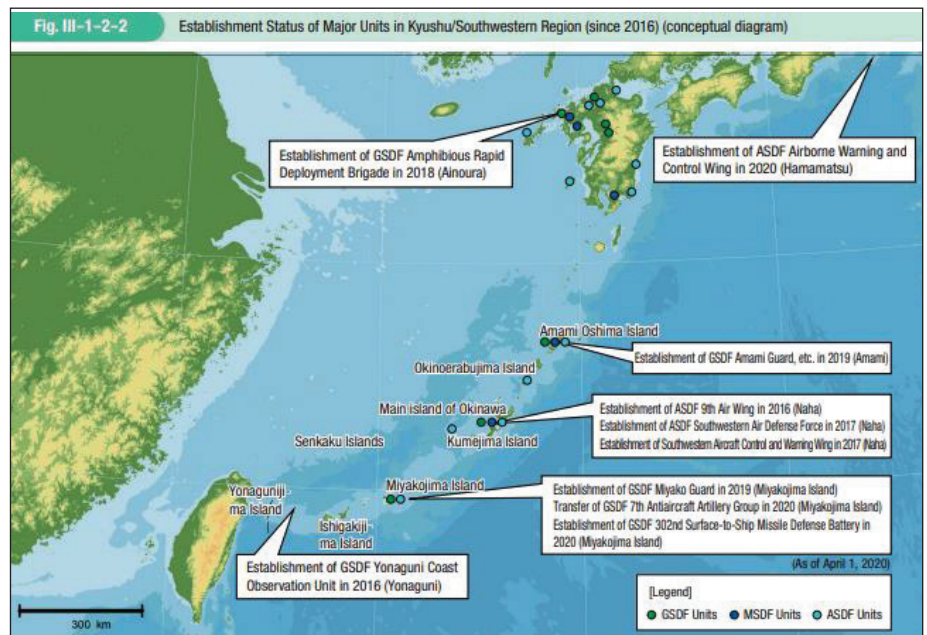


Figure 4. Status of new JSDF units in the southwest islands. (Figure provided by author. Source: Japan Ministry of Defense, Defense of Japan 2020.)

But considering what the military can directly control, access requirements must be effectively communicated to DOS and Congress while a boost to the key enablers that facilitate both inter-agency and bilateral coordination and perceptions should be considered. The Defense Attaché Offices and Security

Cooperation Organizations throughout the region—especially in Japan, the Philippines, and other key partners such as Vietnam—should be fully leveraged, as they play a vital role in building relations, creating access, and supporting interagency coordination through their respective embassies. Strategic

communication is likewise critical to fostering host-nation public support. In Japan, for example, strengthening and aligning DOD and DOS strategic communication efforts in conjunction with the Government of Japan could have an impact.²⁷ Finally, Foreign Area Officers (FAO) that fill a variety of roles such as liaison officers can also be force-multipliers to navigate the complexities of host-nation relationships and garner support for U.S. access and missions.

From the Defense Attaché Offices and Security Cooperation Organizations to public affairs and FAOs, the creation of additional billets and better utilization of these enablers in specific countries that support USINDOPACOM plans should be considered. Challenges to the creation of a new billet structure must be overcome, as must the hurdles to proper staffing and management of the resource pool. In some cases, this is no easy task. In the Marine Corps, for example, FAO is a secondary MOS that entails three years of education and training—and it is not uncommon for utilization tours to be interrupted or forestalled altogether because of career timing or other priorities. Yet in an era of sweeping divestment and overhaul, augmenting and leveraging the aforementioned enablers could be a small investment that yields big dividends. Even without taking into account the military plans discussed herein, if allies and partners are America’s “strategic center of gravity,” then boosting the enablers that best bring this “unique American advantage” to bear should already be a no-brainer.²⁸

In the pursuit of assured access, there is no panacea. Beijing’s relative competitive advantage of regional economic influence makes unfettered access unlikely in the current geopolitical environment. Given this tenuous assumption of access and the stakes at hand, the DOD can ill afford not to pursue measures that could increase the odds that the military has a chance to get into position before and during a crisis. Whether force design efforts are on track and if the envisioned capabilities would actually deter China is also up for debate and warrants consideration.²⁹ Nonetheless, if the U.S. military cannot credibly bring its forces to

bear for lack of access, U.S. deterrence will be all the more hollow. The premise of access to partner-nation territory, therefore, “represents a single point of

In the pursuit of assured access, there is no panacea.

failure.”³⁰ The military must effectively communicate its access requirements to DOS and Congress while augmenting and leveraging key enablers on this front before this tenuous assumption sinks U.S. military plans in the Pacific.

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In Our Future

Competing below armed conflict in the Pacific

by Maj Carl Berger

Post-conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. military has pivoted to focus on the Pacific and encroaching Chinese influence. This pivot led the Marine Corps to review doctrine and publish the Commandant's *Force Design 2030 (FD 2030)* to describe force restructuring and new ways to look at an old problem: island hopping in the Pacific via contested environment. *FD 2030* incorporates changes for the Marine Corps to pursue maritime strategy within the gray zone while operating in a peer or near-peer environment. This falls in line with *Joint Doctrine Note 1-19*, which states the lines between war and peace are now blurred and the force must adopt a "competition continuum."

The Marine Corps will need to blend a new form of operations into a competition continuum in which our adversaries will use non-violent measures against us and our allies to push us into a violent response for the world to see. The United States and our allies need to be prepared for the introduction of civilians into the battlespace to deter or escalate our response. While civilian involvement in a Three-Block War environment is not new, the purposeful use of information operations (IO) and social media by adversaries to work against our efforts does present new challenges.¹ The Marine Corps needs to be ready for these challenges and mitigate threats with non-lethal weapons (NLW) to avoid escalation of conflict and reduce IO risks.

Clear guidance is given that the Marine Corps will be ready at the direction of the President to operate in foreign humanitarian assistance (FHA), disaster relief, and non-combatant evacuation operations. While these are a small subset of missions within the range of military operations (ROMO), history

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Marines need to prepare for a collision course with a near-peer adversary across the ROMO.
(Photo: DVIDS.)

shows that prioritization and successful execution of FHA, disaster relief, and non-combatant evacuation operations deter the escalation of conflict within the ROMO. This article first describes future missions the Marine Corps is readying itself for and presents a high-level approach to the integral role NLWs will play in mission development. This article concentrates on how adversaries will use our delineation of warfare, our doctrine in the competition continuum, and the gray zone to escalate violence in an information environment against us globally. The Marine Corps needs to ready itself against an evolving information environment by incorporat-

ing NLW into its operations to prevent our adversaries from influencing us into armed conflict against unarmed people.

Marine Corps Future

The *FD 2030* contains four phases. Phase I consists of the initial planning team. Phase II is comprised of working groups developing recommendations for the MEU configuration, Marine Littoral Regiments, Maritime Pre-positioning Force, and many others to include logistical support of the FMF. Phase III is the analysis, experimentation, and wargaming of the phase II outputs. Phase IV is implementation. It is important to note that phase II

determined divestiture of all three active law enforcement battalions from the Marine Corps as typically NLW expertise has resided in these battalions. This divestment forces traditional infantry battalions to fill the void of deployed NLW expertise. Managing within the competition continuum against our adversaries will place infantry battalions at the front of operational strategy dictated by our foreign policy.

FD 2030 will enable a light, more maneuverable Marine Corps to operate in contested environments. Operations include seizing, holding, and moving to new objectives through joint fires and maneuver with the Navy in multiple areas of operations with sea denial probability and in a contested littoral environment. The Marine Corps' Pacific area of operations focus areas contains nearly 60 percent of the world's total population. The likelihood that forces will interact with civilians and ambiguous forces is certain. The Marine Corps must prepare for contingencies around FHA, refugee support, and managing large masses of civilians.² These ambiguous forces may be intentional actors creating friction against allied forces, small groups inciting larger civilian groups, or large groups of refugees.

The Marine Corps will need to ready itself to win without fighting. Along with amphibious doctrine and tactics, the Marine Corps needs to prepare for political warfare against the People's Republic of China (PRC). Political warfare is another form of armed conflict though low intensity and is below the line of armed conflict in the competition continuum. Protecting our forces by spreading false narratives or misinformation and pushing the force into armed conflict against an unarmed force will play into the PRC's efforts to make the United States the aggressor. Instead, the Marine Corps should use NLWs to protect forces targeted by the PRC. Further NLW development, training, and doctrine need to be defined for the Marine Corps to implement across ROMO in civil unrest, humanitarian support, and general littoral support operations. The Marine Corps prides itself on its ability to fight, but in the competition continuum, not fighting at

times will win the competition against our adversaries.

Using the *FD 2030* and moving to the littoral concept, the Marine Corps will need to prepare for our adversaries to use non-combatants and civilians against us on the battlefield. Equipping forces with NLW tools to combat an enemy below the competition continuum is critical for the Marine Corps and joint allies in the Navy and Coast Guard. For example, NLWs such as the Active Denial System can manage crowds and provide standoff distance. Systems such as Escalation of Force Common Remotely Operated Weapons Systems are mounted on existing vehicle inventory within the force and provide hail/warn capabilities, dazzlers, and lethal options enabling users to escalate with appropriate methods. Incorporating systems like these into the training and inventory will enable MEUs to leverage for operations while also mitigating adversary efforts to create an information campaign against us. The uniqueness of Escalation of Force Common Remotely Operated Weapons Systems and NLW munitions lie in the Marine Corps' ability to integrate into the warfighter table of equipment and supply. This complements the scheme of maneuver and the ability for units to move within ROMO. The NLW portfolio needs to fit into the basic load seamlessly via munitions and

a small footprint to allow for embarkation, integration, and deployment.

Our Adversaries

We know our adversaries; however, hostilities not openly declared, such as prior to the Berlin Wall, complicate our current competition. Concerning the Pacific, the PRC is the main belligerent aggressively expanding its resource allocation and defense policy. This land grab—or revanchism—is bringing the two countries together in a collision, and the PRC is creating new doctrine and civilian groups to operate.³ The PRC is using the spectrum of competition continuum to find/push the gray areas to operate in and expand the doctrine within their force to develop a gray-zone strategy as their strategy versus head-on engagement.

The PRC has been using its Coast Guard and fishing fleets to create friction within the maritime space as they aggressively expand. For example, the PRC is attempting to pull the Philippines into a violent confrontation by using non-violent measures of swarming Philippine forces with fishing vessels and the Coast Guard. The aggressive swarming and intimidating acts of these fleets past the nine-dash line have pulled the Philippines into this dispute and influenced their ability to operate within their own waters and supply their forces.



For EABO to be successful, Marines will have to be creative. (Photo: DVIDS.)

The Philippine Navy could make use of NLWs, such as vessel incapacitating power effect radiation, which is a form of Active Denial System, or a small naval arresting rope entangler to restrict the ability of PRC vessels to operate around the Navy.

Our adversaries have knowledge of our doctrine, playbook for phases of warfare, and spectrum of competition continuum. Our adversaries will continue to push us into armed conflict in an attempt to propagate the narrative that the United States and its allies are instigators and violent protagonists. We need to recognize that our adversaries will not want to meet us head-on in open, violent conflict. They will continue to push us and use proxy forces, unarmed instigators, and civilians to create paper cuts in hopes of forcing us to make a mistake. Our first response to these actions should not be with violence but rather a controlled response with NLWs to allow adversarial engagement while keeping our forces safe but outwardly responsive.

Information Space

The focus on designing the forces also includes the information environment for IO, which focuses on the human-centric cognitive dimension with the tangible physical dimension.⁴ The United States and its allies must prepare for adversaries who can achieve greater success in non-military measures than military ones through submission of will. Our adversaries are integrating tactics and methods to combat the United States and its allies by pushing gray-zone limits while incorporating social media and general information campaigns. Adversarial IO against us are just as real as kinetic operations and have a much broader impact on the United States and its allies when it comes to values and the home front. The value and home front align with Clausewitz's secondary trinity via the people, government, and military.⁵

The PRC's new doctrine, "Three Warfares," consists of public opinion warfare, psychological warfare, and legal warfare. The PRC is actively using this new doctrine within their military strategy to control and influence percep-



FD2030 is moving the Marine Corps toward being light, flexible, and adaptable. (Photo: DVIDS.)

tions and discourse as they advance their agenda and actively combat the United States. This approach to information and targeting the public derives directly from the Clausewitz trinity. The Three Warfares doctrine will be used to induce U.S. violent escalation against unarmed civilians, drive public opinion in the United States to adversely respond to foreign policy through the media, and weaken our will to fight without firing a shot.

The takeaway from the Three Warfares doctrine is our adversaries pursuing a violent response from the United States and its allies. Adversaries will use our response against our coalition and homeland via public opinion. The United States, and particularly the Marine Corps, needs to politically prepare for this and train to avoid violent escalation when a non-violent response can be provided. Limiting violent escalation and inclusion of our partners and allies must be developed and trained in larger exercises. This is a physical and virtual game we are playing with our adversaries; NLWs afford us flexibility in the physical response and IO comprises (most of) our virtual response.

Partners and Allies

The Marine Corps and the United States will not operate within the Pacific alone. U.S. forces will operate jointly

as well as with partners and allies providing various levels of support. These coalitions are only as strong as the weakest link such as the unnecessary use of force against a civilian/non-combatant population. Adversaries will project our weakest links across the globe via IO. The entire coalition needs to be ready for misinformation and be wary of provocation into violence. This concern with our allies and ourselves will be top of mind, especially when considering Article 5 with NATO; appropriately using an economy of force when and not escalating against the very people we are trying to help will require training, constant rehearsal with the expectation that mistakes will be used against the allied force.⁶

The United States must continue working closely with the Australian Defence Force which is vested in Pacific peace and have experience with stability and civilian interaction.⁷ Collaborating with other forces, training on the same NLW equipment through scenarios, and leveraging partner experience will enable allies to learn faster while also readying themselves against PRC encroachment and the Three Warfares doctrine. Strengthening our training with other allies within the region such as Japan, South Korea, and Indonesia will broaden our influence. We must also expand with new countries such

as India, Vietnam, and others in traditional political ways while training to mitigate the PRC expansion.

The United States is not the only one building allies and partners. Russia and the PRC are building closer relationships by working together and finding common goals. In Vostok 2018, the two countries worked and trained together for the world to see. China sent 3,200 personnel and 1,000 vehicles to the military exercise.⁸ Our adversaries and their coalitions will continue to develop increasingly effective doctrine and strategies that target the U.S. and others with IO to spread false narratives.⁹ The United States, allies, and partners must continue to operate with the mindset that peer competition countries are conducting similar planning and coordination against us.

Why NLWs Fit

The DOD began focusing on NLWs in 1996 after Operation RESTORE HOPE and the National Defense Authorization Act directed central NLW development via the Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Directorate in Quantico, VA. With time, the focus has shifted to Intermediate Force Capabilities, which aligns the conversation across the Services succinctly and fits into strategic risk mitigation when viewing the phases

of warfare and the competition continuum. NLWs fit into the discussion of warfare and the efforts of the Marine Corps as they reshape their mission to operate in competition below armed conflict and prevent escalation.

Working backward from strategic risk mitigation, the Marine Corps will need to equip the force with civilian mitigation as expeditionary advanced base operations and small amphibious units to operate within the littoral environment via littoral regimental teams. Equipping Marines to manage the between phases of warfare and avoiding unnecessary escalation to violence is strategically critical. Instilling this training in key schools and professional military education programs will develop critical thinkers in this space. The Marine Corps must also devise tactics, techniques, and procedures for operations via small units within the MEU. First addressing threats via smaller, MEU-based units will set the tone strategically.

Operating in an ambiguous environment ready for force domination while leveraging NLW will support broader, strategic national security efforts. Marine Corps corporals will continue to be the *strategic corporal* as their decisions could escalate tensions or remove the aggressor's active play to create escalation between the forces and promulgate via

IO. The Marine Corps is updating its doctrine and shedding equipment that does not align with the new strategy. NLW equipment and training must be injected into force design and integrated with competition continuum management. Now is the time to experiment and innovate in this space across the force and drive continuous improvement in this area.

Conclusion

While the Marine Corps is not putting the last twenty years in the rear-view mirror, we are preparing for the next war which will likely occur in the Pacific and on a collision course with the PRC as well as strategically placed/influenced civilians or non-combatants. The process is underway to ready doctrine and equipment as experimentation and force design efforts are ongoing. While manpower changes are started across the force, the Marine Corps must integrate NLW and IO into maneuver elements. NLW and IO integration will enable the Marine Corps to ready itself within the competition continuum and plan for negative public perception via adversarial IO.

The Marine Corps must develop tactics, techniques, and procedures surrounding civilians and other non-combatants on and around the battlefield. The definition of the battlefield and non-combatants will be hazy and ill-defined making it imperative that the Marine Corps is ready to contend with this ambiguity. The Marine Corps must expand NLW inventory and training as well as prepare for adversary IO campaigns. This will enable flexibility within the ROMO and avoid adversarial attempts to draw us into unnecessary armed conflict. Our adversaries will continue to take advantage of the ambiguity between armed and unarmed conflict while looking at the opportunity to create an escalation of force.

IO will need to be tightly coupled with NLW training, planning, and legal ramifications. This includes media strategy with the forces so that misinformation and our adversary's forms of Three Warfares cannot be employed against Marine forces. This will not be limited to the Pacific. Our adversaries are



Success in the Pacific will depend on both lethal and non-lethal weapons systems. (Photo: DVIDS.)

knowledgeable of our doctrine via the delineation of competition continuum and developing gray zone coupled with IO against us.

U.S. forces need to ready equipment and training while pursuing exercise opportunities with our allies. With the Commandant being the executive agent of the DOD NLW program and representing Joint Intermediate Force Capabilities Office, the Marine Corps is uniquely positioned to work throughout the DOD to develop and sustain an NLW joint force plan for the U.S. military supporting the global strategic vision.¹⁰ Commanders across all forces must consider NLW as they ponder force design and concept of operations while managing the competition continuum. As they ponder this, thinking about how our adversaries will use IO to push us into unnecessary and avoidable armed conflict will be a shift from the last twenty years but not new to the Marine Corps.

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MARINE CORPS POLOS

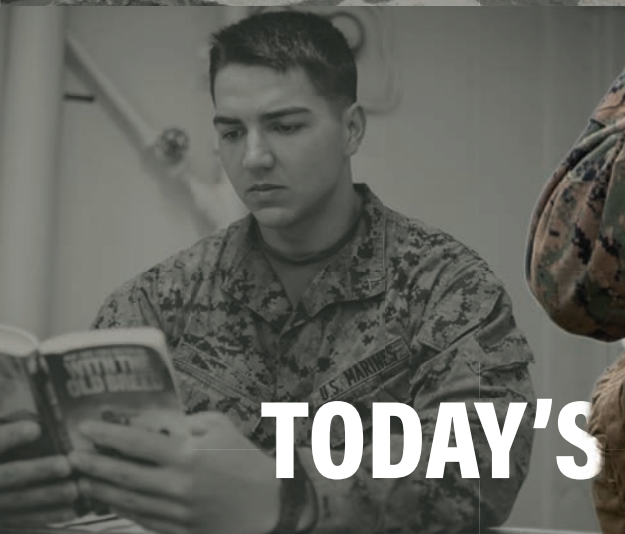
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The Marine Littoral Regiment

Opportunities within the naval command framework

by MajGen Austin E. Renforth

As the Marine Corps works diligently to meet the Commandant's *Force Design 2030* (FD2030) approach, it must take into account that the pacing threat is not the only threat Marines must prepare for. This duality of building a force of the future while maintaining a readiness to "fight tonight" focuses the Service on those tasks that are most important to the Marine Corps. In Service doctrine, it highlights, "We also see that sometimes the threshold is crossed for a short time, only to jump back down into a state of competition below the violence threshold."¹ This volatile action, along the competition continuum, will have a direct impact on the task, size, and command relationship required to satisfy the mission. This vulnerability brings with it opportunities for the newest formation, the Marine Littoral Regiment (MLR). The draft mission of an MLR is to prepare the maritime environment and conduct operations to support maritime campaigning in a contested littoral environment. The MLR is the ideal stand-in force because of its ability to win the all-domain reconnaissance battle and develop an understanding of the environment and adversary capabilities.² Figure 1 represents the competition continuum and how the MLR will operate the competition space by establishing forces that persist forward alongside allies and partners within a contested area to provide the fleet, joint force, interagency, allies, and partners more options for countering an adversary's strategy.³

As a stand-in force, the MLR command relationship with a higher headquarters may vary based on where the

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joint staff is on the competition continuum. The command relationship options identified are not made to be controversial but instead are ideas to drive a dialogue on what relationship supports the MLR success. It is through the application of naval command arrangements that the MLR can best support naval warfare. Naval doctrine highlights that integrating warfighting excellence across all areas of naval warfare is the best approach to secure sea power.⁴ Applying the MLR in a composite warfare construct through

the lens of naval warfare makes solving a command relationship problem easier. The MLR in a composite warfare construct is ideal as a task group or task unit in a fluid competition continuum because of its flexibility and scalability. Successful employment of an MLR in support of a naval campaign requires simple, clear command relationships that enable unity of effort, synergy, and understanding among friendly forces. As stated by the Commandant, "The overall thrust of our *FD2030* program is to produce a Marine Corps that is prepared to operate inside actively contested maritime spaces in support of fleet ops." These fleet operations will nest within overarching joint campaigns. The MLR can anticipate employment in a manner that extends the sensing capability of the fleet.

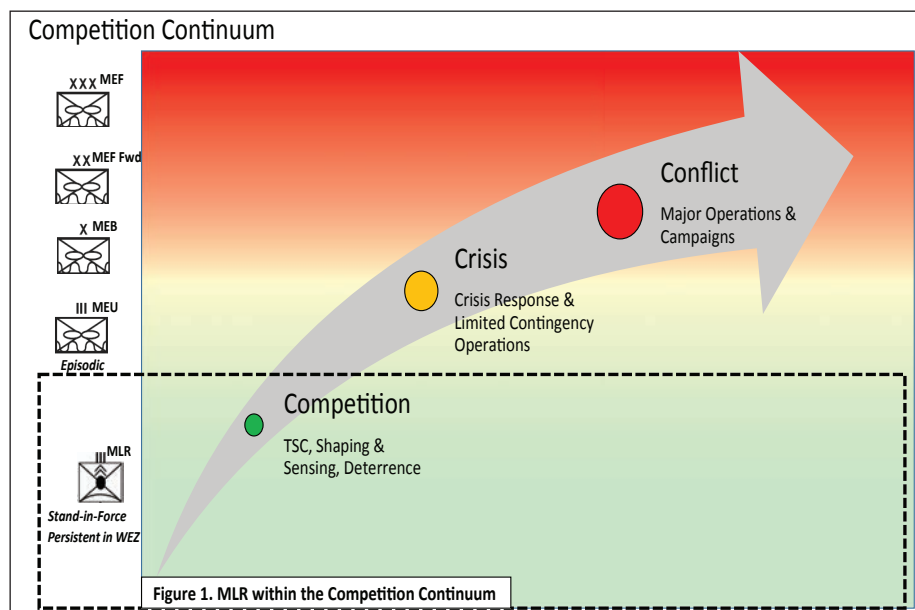


Figure 1. (Figure provided by author.)

The purpose of this article is to explore the two most likely MLR command relationships: the MLR as a task unit subordinate to a Marine Corps division or as a stand-alone force that provides capability directly to the Joint Forces Maritime Component Commander (JFMCC). If the joint force is operating in the crisis to conflict zones of the competition continuum, then an MLR is best positioned as a Task Unit under a Marine division. If the joint force is operating within the competition zone, then the MLR is best situated to provide capabilities directly to the Composite Warfare Commander (CWC). Figure 2 (MLR Tasks) outlines draft MLR tasks and provides a brief definition of each potential assignment.

The CWC concept shares similarities with MAGTF employment models. Both models include various warfare commanders who incorporate group command functions and are responsible for threats in an assigned domain. Both ensure unity of effort by leveraging mission-type orders and the commander's intent. CWCs may form temporary or permanent functional groups within the overall organization. Functional groups are subordinate to the CWC, can support numerous commanders, and perform duties limited by duration and scope.

In order to better appreciate the CWC concept, a general understanding of naval force organization at the tactical level is required. *Naval Doctrine Publication 1, Naval Warfare*, states the following:

Within the Navy, the fleet is the highest tactical echelon. Whether conducting operations in a maritime component, Service component, or fleet context, the commander normally task-organizes assigned tactical forces into formations with the capabilities to operate throughout the maritime domain—air, surface, subsurface, ashore, space, and the information environment—associated with their anticipated mission(s). These formations may remain at the fleet level or be scaled to provide the right mix of capability and capacity through various combinations of task forces (TFs),

Task	Description
Conduct Network Engagement	Engage with friendly, neutral, and threat networks across the battlespace. Operate with multiple services, partners, and nations.
Conduct Expeditionary Base Operations (EABO)	Maneuver and persist inside a contested maritime environment through the establishment and displacement of multiple expeditionary advanced bases in support of a naval campaign.
Support Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)	Process and synthesize joint and external intelligence products.
Conduct Expeditionary Strike	Deliver synchronized and effective lethal and non-lethal fires, including EW fires, deep air support, shore-based fires, offensive cyberspace, and integrated joint fires.
Support Surface Warfare	Employ massed fires against maritime targets from multiple distributed elements. Enable attacks against maritime surface targets by providing coordination, Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance, and Targeting (ISRT) and MDA.
Support Operations in the Information Environment (OIE)	Support actions to gain access to adversary C2 networks, build support for U.S. presence, deter adversary aggression, disrupt adversary confidence, expose and counter malign behavior, and protect and defend friendly forces.
Coordinate air/missile defense actions	Manage ground based air defense (GBAD) engagements, expenditures, and employment. Run airspace surveillance, early warning systems, and control joint/naval air and missiles.

Figure 2. MLR Tasks. (Figure provided by author.)

task groups (TGs), task units (TUs), or task elements (TEs). Coast Guard forces, when assigned, integrate into the TF structure.⁵

Scenario #1: The MLR as a TU under a Marine Corps Division

Each Geographic Combatant Command is responsible for one or more numbered naval fleets. Each numbered fleet has subordinate commands subdivided by naval warfare and functional area. Fleet composition and organization are slightly different and depend on the unique mission sets inherent to each Geographic Combatant Command. TFs form the foundation of any fleet. Figure 3 provides an example of fleet TF numbering and associated functions.

In this scenario, the MEF CG would take on the role of Deputy TF commander. Elements of the MEF would then blend with the fleet staff and integrate with their fleet counterparts to form the required task force staff.

This gives the overall naval force full access to the inherent capabilities of the entire MAGTF and provides support for the MLR to close the kill chain. In situations where a MEF CG serves as the deputy TF commander, a Marine division or MAW may be assigned as a TG commander. Figure 4 graphically

Task Force Number	Function
TF X0	Battle Force
TF X1	Surface Warfare
TF X2	Patrol and Reconnaissance
TF X3	Logistics
TF X4	Submarine
TF X5	Naval Expeditionary Force
TF X6	Amphibious Force

Figure 3. Example Fleet Task Forces. (Figure provided by author.)

depicts these operational command relationships.

Within TG XXX.1 (X MarDiv), TU MLR supports expeditionary advanced base operations and provides additional capabilities to the other TGs, warfare commanders, functional commanders, and coordinators. TU MLR's Major Subordinate Element, X Littoral Anti-Air Battalion, performs the duties of Air Missile Defense Commander. The Littoral Combat Team of TU MLR provides capabilities to the Surface Warfare Commander via a battery of Remotely Operated Ground Unit for Expeditionary fires vehicles employing the Navy-Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System. TU MLR's inherent capabilities and structure, O-6 level command, and understanding of Marine Corps operations make it an ideal choice for supporting expeditionary advanced base placement under a multi-mission TG like TG XXX.1. Figure 5 graphically depicts these tactical command relationships within a CWC construct.

Scenario #1: Advantages and Disadvantages

Employing an MLR as a TU within a Marine Corps TG provides certain advantages within the CWC construct. The TG has a greater ability to employ the full power of the MAGTF—Marines supporting Marines. Common language, shared experiences and culture, and an inherent flexibility based on training and education allows Marine Corps forces to focus efforts in support of CWC objectives. Disadvantages to this employment model arise when the presence of multiple missions creates resource competition. These factors drive units to jockey for limited resources and force the TG commander to evaluate priorities.

Scenario #2: The MLR as a Stand-alone Capability to the JFMCC

In this scenario, the MLR provides support directly to the JFMCC as a stand-alone capability. Figure 6 provides a graphical depiction of what this command relationship might look like.

MLR participation in a CWC construct while working directly for the

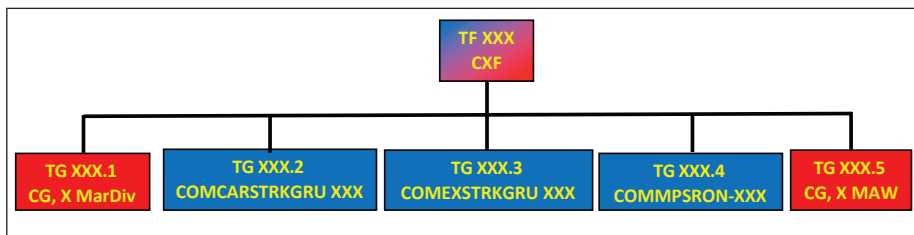


Figure 4. Operational Command Relationships. (Figure provided by author.)

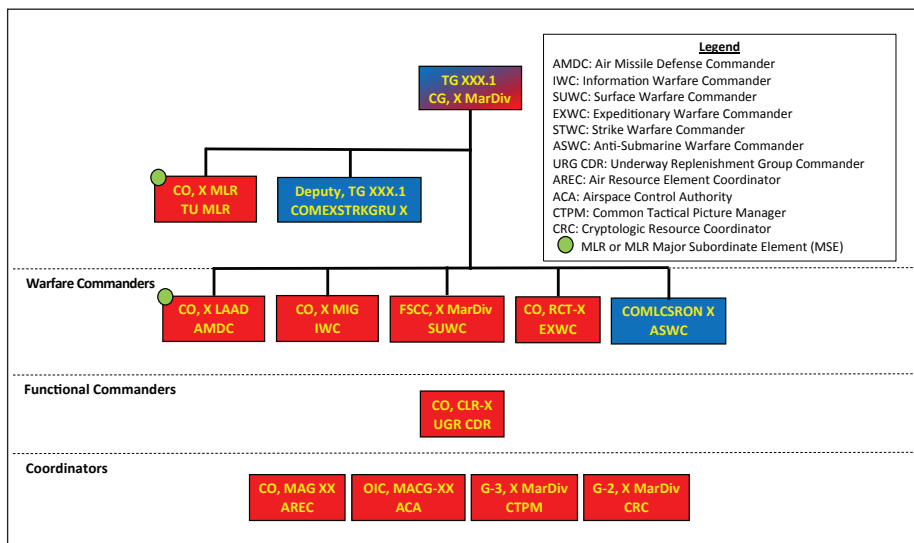


Figure 5. CWC Construct. (Figure provided by author.)

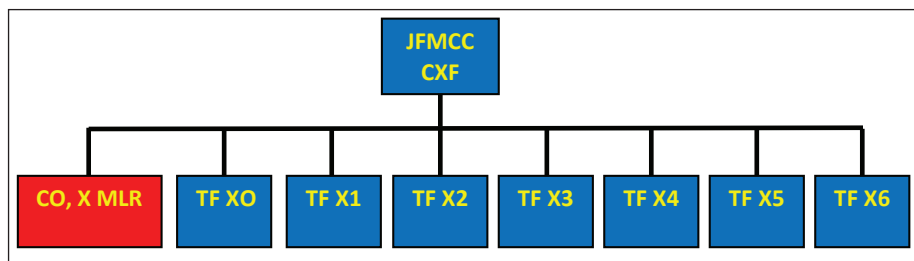


Figure 6. Scenario #2 Command Relationships. (Figure provided by author.)

JFMCC requires further clarification. In this instance, an MLR may participate in a CWC construct as the Expeditionary Warfare Commander operating in a non-continuous battle space, within the littorals, supporting broader fleet objectives (such as sea denial). Figure 7

(on following page) graphically depicts this CWC construct.

In this scenario, an MLR located on land within close proximity to key maritime terrain receives support from the JFMCC in order to accomplish a broader fleet mission. A modified Ex-

... an MLR may participate in a CWC construct as the Expeditionary Warfare Commander operating ... within the littorals, supporting broader fleet objectives ...

peditionary Strike Group composed of five ships and augmented by a replenishment vessel conducts actions within a designated operating area. This command relationship highlights some of the key tenets of naval command arrangements: flexibility and scalability. This command relationship allows the MLR to support multiple elements of the fleet without having to rely on tactical control or operational control shifts. The application of liaison cells to both JFMCC and Expeditionary Strike Group are options to ensure communication across the JFMCC is informing decision making. An increase in the command structure and the associated authorities provides more responsiveness than traditional supported/supporting relationships. The scalability of this command relationship and the small size of the MLR allows the fleet commander to adjust task organization, sub formations, and composition of units to fit specific missions, geographical areas, or threats.

Scenario #2: Advantages and Disadvantages

Employing the MLR as a stand-alone capability to the JFMCC provides certain advantages. The small force structure is easier to control, maneuver, and posture within a given space/area of operations. The tighter command relationships allow for quicker decision making

The MLR in a composite warfare construct can be effective as either a task group or task unit in a fluid competition continuum because of its flexibility and scalability.

at the fleet level. Disadvantages to this employment model derive from the requirement to leverage outside support to complete the kill chain. The resource competition previously described will happen at a higher level. Other elements controlled by the JFMCC will request the same assets required to support kill chain closure. This creates a decision at the fleet commander level based on

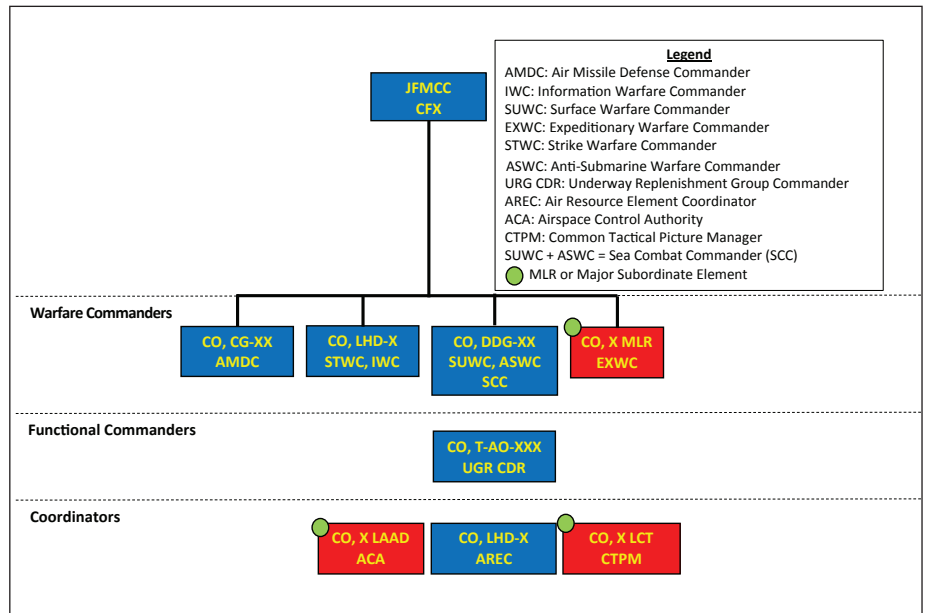


Figure 7. (Figure provided by author.)

asset/capability availability and prioritization.

Conclusion

The Commandant stated in his planning guidance,

Composite Warfare empowers subordinates to execute decentralized tactical operations—independently or integrated into a larger Naval or Joint Force—through mission command and flexible supporting relationships responsive to ever-changing tactical situations.

highlights the size and power of the MAGTF. If the MLR is a stand-alone capability to the JFMCC, then the MLR will require joint enablers to make it a full MAGTF, but if the MEF and division are overtop of the MLR, then a true MAGTF will be built.

Notes

1. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCDP 1-4, Competing*, (Washington, DC: 2020).
2. Headquarters Marine Corps, *Tentative Manual for Stand-in-Force*, (Washington, DC: 2019).
3. Ibid.
4. Department of the Navy, *Naval Doctrine Publication 1, Naval Warfare*, (Washington, DC: 2019).
5. Ibid.



The Marine Scout Sniper

Force Design's most needed critical capability
by the Marines of Weapons Training Battalion-Quantico

Gen Berger's *Commandant's Planning Guidance* challenges the Marine Corps to focus on future deterrence and the possibility of conflict in the Western Pacific. Marine leaders not only need to shift attention toward the Pacific but also ruthlessly examine the current force and shed vestiges of the existing structure that are not postured to be advantageous in the next anticipated fight. *Force Design 2030* provides a proposed future infantry battalion structure optimized to succeed in Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) within the Future Operating Environment. However, *Force Design 2030* does not identify a home for Marine Corps Scout Snipers and does not provide data points or experimentation to justify their exclusion. The Marine Corps

>Weapons Training Battalion-Quantico is the Marine Corps proponent for all facets of small-arms combat marksmanship and serves as the focal point for marksmanship doctrine, training, competition, equipment, and weapons.

Scout Sniper is the infantry's organic all-weather ground reconnaissance and surveillance (R&S) asset that collects information for intelligence purposes and is highly skilled in fieldcraft and marksmanship, delivering long-range precision fire on selected targets from concealed positions in support of combat operations. Without the Marine Corps Scout Sniper, the infantry will have shortfalls in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), targeting, and precision-fire capabilities. This article will propose a modest solution to the projected future Marine Corps

infantry deficit in R&S assets. The Marine Corps Scout Sniper is imperative for the infantry to remain competitive within the contact layer and tactical zone of the future fight.

History

Over the last century, Marine Corps history has repeatedly proven the essential need for possessing an organic sniping capability. For example, when the Marine Corps entered combat operations in 1918 during World War I, the organization lacked sniping capability. Early in the conflict, it became apparent that specially trained and equipped snipers were necessary to counter an enemy sniping capability.¹ The well-trained and equipped German sniper imposed high costs upon Marine leadership and key personnel.

Although a successful sniping program provided functional combat capability, the Marine Corps rapidly divested the sniper program upon post-war demobilization. It is vital to note that during this same period, the British military created their first formal sniper school known as the School of Sniping, developed by Maj Hesketh Prichard of the British Army.² While both nations utilized the asset during the war, the British maintained their sniping program while the United States' branches divested theirs.

Upon the onset of World War II, the Marine Corps entered combat against two capable foes who possessed a snip-



Scout sniper team conducting over watch outside FOB Shukavani, Helmand, Afghanistan, circa 2013. (Photo by Capt Najieb N. Mahmoud.)



Scout sniper conducts guardian angel operations near Baghdad, Iraq, circa 2021. (Photo by Capt Najieb N. Mahmoud.)

ing capability. Senior Marine leadership assumed that every Marine could provide a sniper-like ability because of advances in weapons and training. Fortunately for the Marine Corps, the service maintained a robust competitive marksmanship program during the inter-war period. The Marine Corps marksmanship program provided training and equipment to infantry regiments that could adapt to provide much-needed precision fires capability to provide a counter-sniper ability, target key leaders, command and control elements, and weapons crew members.

Five short years later, combat experience against trained North Korean and Chinese sharpshooters forced the Marine Corps to yet again adapt and create a sniping capability—again relying upon skills and equipment available for competitive marksmanship programs. A pattern emerged that snipers were essential for combat, and when deployed, combat-experienced commanders immediately established sniper configured formations to complement their ground forces.³ As a result of the restricted and compartmentalized nature of the Korean terrain, Marine Corps Scout Snipers grew their traditional roles. Marine Corps Scout Snipers evolved from providing their mission set within a combat formation to deploying troops beyond

the forward line to provide their commanders depth via observation. While still supporting their units, Marine Corps Scout Snipers began to operate independently to create a standoff for their commanders. While beyond the forward line of troops, Marine Corps Scout Snipers provided persistent observation of enemy composition, disposition, and perceived intentions. Following the Korean War and adhering to the usual cycle, the termination of hostilities resulted in the disestablishment of formal sniping.

The Vietnam War saw the usual pattern of reinstating Marine Corps sniping programs because of jungle and urban combat demands. When the Marine Corps deployed to Vietnam, the CG assigned Capt Edward “Jim” Land Jr., from the Marine Corps Shooting Team to establish a scout sniper school in Vietnam to develop the assets for service in the new conflict. Sniper companies formed at the regimental level, and the snipers were employed based on the Area of Operation (AO) requirements. Once again, Marine Corps Scout Snipers demonstrated their adaptability by changing their mission profile based on Vietnam’s dense terrain and the Viet Cong’s fleeting nature. From hunter-killer missions to overwatch for the infantry to R&S missions, scout

sniper teams quickly established the continuous need for a team of well-trained marksmen who could operate independently from massed formations. Adding to their versatility, scout snipers also provided psychological effects within an AO; the mere threat of a sole scout sniper team would constrict an enemy’s freedom of movement and limit their operations.⁴ Even after scout snipers departed an AO, there would be substantial time before an enemy returned to its normal operations.

The Vietnam War resulted in scout snipers providing R&S as a part of their mission set. As the Marine Corps emerged from the Vietnam War, the Service began the ordinary course of a warfighting organization in a post-conflict period, attempting to determine the future environment, shaping the force to be relevant, all while experiencing post-conflict funding and resource drawdowns. The United States pulled its military out of counterinsurgency in the jungle and focused on great power competition/conflict with the Soviet Union. The Marine Corps saw the value of scout snipers in a peer-on-peer conflict and established a formalized scout sniper program that would provide doctrine, equipment, manning, and training. In the post-Vietnam War era, the formal scout sniper concept became known as the Surveillance and Target Acquisition (STA) Platoon. Scout snipers, ground sensors, and night observation devices were placed into one unit to effectively man, train, equip, and employ the asset beyond the Marine Corps formal school. This program served the Marine Corps well in Lebanon, Operation DESERT STORM, and the Global War on Terror (GWOT). The modest standing force of scout snipers has evolved little in size since but has expanded immensely in capability. Marine Corps Scout Snipers have continued to significantly augment the combat power available to commanders via their collection capability and economy of force in the targeting cycle.⁵

Partner and Enemy Snipers

U.S. partner nations are investing in scout sniper capabilities even in a resource-constrained environment and

against significant competing priorities. The United Kingdom, particularly their Special Forces and Royal Marines (RM), have been developing to deal with a more capable insurgent sniper and a peer threat such as Russia. The RM created a Scout Sniper Specialization/Branch from the entry-level Marine up to warrant officer class 2/sergeant major. An indicator of how the Royal Marines value the importance of scout snipers and countering modern threats is that they have also created a thirteen-week RM Scout Sniper Officer Course. The officer course ensures these Marines are employed and managed adequately, and that their utility/capability is knowledgeable at the highest level of operations.

The Royal Marines have not only created a scout sniper career specialization, but they are acquiring new sniper rifles, new calibers, new optics, communications systems, and they are also increasing their scout sniper table of organization by 400 percent. Per doctrine, RM Scout Snipers carry out their three main functions of find, fix, and strike on behalf of the commando strike company commanders. Additionally, the RM Scout Snipers are assigned to conduct surveillance, provide reporting that supports the intelligence cycle, and destroy selected targets via organic precision or joint fires. Their capability to infiltrate small teams beyond the forward line of troops while utilizing minimal communications presents a minimal footprint for the enemy to find and target. Additionally, since the units are equipped with various all-terrain vehicles (Skidoos in Arctic environments), they possess the ability to provide self-lift and retrograde quickly, which mitigates the effects of an enemy response/counterattack. The command of the RM recognizes the need for an enhanced sniper capability against any peer enemy threat because of its cheap production and the economy of force it provides.⁶

Like U.S. partners, potential U.S. adversaries are heavily investing in sniping capabilities. Russia has acquired western rifles, optics, and ballistic computers from western organizations through neutral nation straw purchases. Rus-

sian tactics in Eastern Ukraine have demonstrated their continued sniping capability investment.⁷ One can logically attribute this to the Russian's experience against the Chechnyan snipers they faced during the multiple battles of Grozny. The Russians view this warfighting capability as an effective economy of force asset that has provided them success and military/political opportunities. The Russians prefer en-mass sniper employment and routinely utilize their snipers in a tiered system. A large sniper unit employed en-mass between a platoon and company-level formation allows commanders to build cost-effective depth into their offensive and defensive formations. Before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russian-backed separatists had effectively used en-masse tactics with precision weapon systems to combat Ukraine Infantry formations in the Donbas and Crimea region since 2014.⁸ Separatist fighters equipped with sniper rifles, such as the ORSIS T-5000, and match-grade ammunition in all calibers outperform what is available to Marine Corps Scout Snipers. The Russian and separatist combination of tiered en-masse sniper formations and modern precision weapon systems/ammunition will put Marine Corps infantry formations at significant risk without a credible counter-sniper capability.

The Russian snipers leveraged multi-spectral imaging technology and signals intelligence assets at the tactical level to present a combined-arms dilemma across the electromagnetic spectrum, which had devastating effects on the Ukrainians. Russian employment of small unmanned aerial surveillance devices within their organic sniping units exceeded that of any DOD sniping program while also freeing up Russian combat power with their ability to bring a more significant force into a smaller unit. As Ukrainians attempted to match a sniper with a sniper, the Russians birthed their tiered employment system where their more novice snipers were stationed on the immediate forward line of troops. More senior snipers carrying weapons with greater standoff would observe the first tier and provide overwatch. This more advanced level of cat and mouse allowed the Russians to evolve their programs and capabilities well beyond the United States. In addition, as they were intimately familiar with our weapon systems, they ensured their most recent sniper rifle was capable of outranging any modern fielded sniper rifle within the DOD's arsenal (a method once utilized by the United States against the Soviet Union).

China's sniping programs have also sought to outrange the Marine Corps'



Scout sniper uses advanced optics to assist in close air support missions. (Photo by Capt Najieb N. Mahmoud.)

capability. Both Russia and China's sniping programs had unfettered access to the Marine Corps' sniping doctrine, which has been on open-source forums for over a decade. They perfected the manning, training, and equipping to a much higher degree than the Marine Corps was ever able to achieve and focused further on increasing the asset's lethality and integration across their infantry formations.⁹ Heavy bore rifles with armor-defeating cartridges define the Chinese threat as a relatively large, mechanized force. It is critical to note that U.S. adversaries have a trend of assessing Marine Corps capability very seriously and investing in developing a counter to it through their organic means. They have surpassed their development phase and are now producing snipers to not merely counter the Marine Corps' formation but rather enable Chinese larger-scale tactical operations against a peer adversary. Our highest-priority adversary takes sniping seriously, and the Marine Corps needs to take appropriate action before a critical capability is gone.

In Iran, their sniping program best exemplifies where snipers originated from—necessity born from limited resources. Commanders seek to cultivate their best infantrymen and house them in a sole platoon where they could be effectively trained and equipped at a pace that suited their performance. As Iran faces economic hardship and remains a developing nation, snipers allow flexibility through economy of force—match a more capable infantry by utilizing their snipers in delaying methods to provide their commanders time/space to achieve a decision. While not as robust as Russia or China, Iranian snipers are frequently and continuously used in their asymmetric warfare doctrine. Snipers are propagated throughout the Iranian ranks to provide a cheap and easy-to-use asset against Western powers' more robust and expensive technology. They supported and arguably participated as an antagonist during the GWOT against coalition forces and saw the efficiency of snipers against U.S. friendly formations. Most importantly, they observed the psychological impact a sniper had

on troop morale and its effects on the country's society. In the psychological realm, Iran took sniping a step further during the GWOT as circulating videos of insurgent snipers executing coalition targets were essential in their recruiting campaign. Young males throughout the Middle East were inspired by the video footage of jihadi snipers fighting American forces and seen as more valuable to the recruiting and psychological effort than just pure combat power alone.

Force Design 2030 Requirements

A force conducting maritime EABO will have to possess an all-weather ground ISR asset in a multi-spectral denied environment, protect itself from an enemy sensing and targeting capability, and destroy selected targets with decisive precision and speed. It will still be the responsibility of a highly trained professional to achieve the capability of all-weather ground R&S, increase the speed of the Marine Corps' targeting cycle, and maintain the ability to provide precision fire. The ability to man, train, and equip a unit for this task will ensure that the Marine infantry battalion that emerges from *FD2030* can integrate with the joint force and initiate

periment 2030 campaigns highlight a lack of all-weather ground ISR assets to serve as the base unit for the targeting cycle (ground ISR assets are the first utilized and most reliable sensor at the tactical level).

Currently, the legacy infantry battalion can better incorporate this new targeting cycle because they possess an organic Scout Sniper platoon to serve within this facet.¹⁰ Because of the perceived nature of an EABO environment within a peer competitor's weapon engagement zone, the efficacy of the targeting cycle above the tactical level will be highly scrutinized due to the signature it will emit once utilized. The ability to affect an enemy system from a concealed position is critical when discussing the denied environment and adversarial advancements in reconnaissance, sniper, and counter-battery radar capabilities.¹¹ Weapons to target match will be vital. Scout snipers can prosecute selected targets with minimal signature while allowing commanders to mask their more expensive and less available assets/resources. Scout snipers can provide R&S of a commander's priority intelligence requirements, employ indirect fires and

A force conducting maritime EABO will have to possess an all-weather ground ISR asset ... protect itself from an enemy sensing and targeting ... and destroy selected targets ...

the targeting cycle at the tactical level. Proprietary multi-spectral equipment, overhead ISR, remote measurement and signature collection assets, and Marines trained in the operation of this equipment will be essential. The targeting cycle being developed in concert with *FD2030* is impressive but overly reliant on unmanned technology and the command, control, computers, communications, cyber, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C5ISR) ecosystem. Current after-actions from the MAGTF Warfighting Exercise and the Divisions' Infantry Battalion Ex-

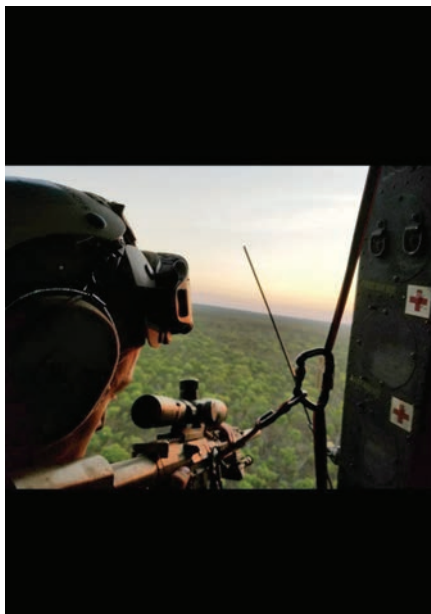
close-air support, communicate to adjacent units separated by distance or significant terrain, and deliver precision fires from 1.5km to 2km. Scout sniper employment will play a key role for commanders executing EABO who can utilize scout snipers in this capacity by masking the critical assets that allow a competitive advantage. Masking critical assets is not a new operating concept. Marine Corps Scout Snipers have regularly masked various weapon systems on high-value targets, which creates gaps within an adversary's ground and defensive air system for

Marine Corps and joint DOD assets to exploit.

In the Donbas region of Ukraine, separatist snipers have honed their masking techniques. They routinely utilize their precision fires and military deception techniques to illicit an impulsive response from the Ukrainian military, which compromises the location of their indirect fire assets or guided missiles. Consequently, Ukrainians have employed their snipers with devastating psychological and physical effects against Russian troops. Reportedly on 3 March 2022, the Deputy Commander of the 41st Combined Arms Army of Russia's Central Military District, MGen Andrey Sukhovestsky, was killed by a Ukrainian sniper on the battlefield. At the time of this article, MGen Sukhovestsky has been the highest-ranking of three general-level officers killed in the conflict, which confirms that a sniper in a modern and future battlefield can instantaneously affect the area of operations in places that regular infantry and technology cannot, despite Russian forces' technological advances and superiority.

Regarding R&S, the application of proprietary optics and observation methodologies in the surveillance of an objective for specific information requirements is equally important as the ability to enable a targeting cycle and provide precision fires. Today, long-range, multi-spectral observation devices are too expensive for mass fielding but incredibly effective at locating and targeting enemy formations. Many observation devices can identify people or equipment based on short-range infrared, mid-range infrared, long-range infrared, optical augmentation, the electromagnetic spectrum, or even the radiance of human skin. The Marine Corps can acquire advanced observation devices in limited quantities and field these devices to scout snipers as utilization as an advanced sensing capability. During the GWOT, the DOD, through the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization, fielded scout snipers long-range thermal video systems during the GWOT, and scout snipers effectively matched the observation capabilities of tanks, light

armored vehicles, and combined anti-armor teams at a fraction of the cost and in a man-portable configuration. As signature management continues to gain momentum within the Service, a focus needs to be placed on signature detection. The Marine Corps is beginning to lose the competitive advantage in this category at the tactical level. One example of signature detection tools is the optical augmentation device that can be fielded to scout sniper units.



Scout sniper engages multiple targets from aerial platform during a multinational exercise in Darwin, Australia, circa 2021. (Photo by Capt Najieb N. Mahmoud.)

The optical augmentation device is a high-powered laser that can detect high-density glass or high-resolution devices typically in the form of high-powered optics owned by ground R&S assets, mechanized assets, small unmanned aerial surveillance devices, and ships.

The 2021 infantry ground board specifically identified the need for a manned organic, all-weather, day and night ground R&S capability that thoroughly understands the elements of maneuver and fires. Decision makers from across the Marine Corps say that technology will enable the average infantry Marine to observe large areas and engage targets with the effectiveness of a well-trained and well-equipped scout sniper. However, the realities of

the anticipated future operating environment, proven lack of lethality in the M27 Infantry Automatic Rifle, and the limitations of the Squad Combat Optic will quickly instruct them otherwise. Theories like the Arms Room Concept are often remised from an understanding of ballistics, small arms cartridge composition, and the overall characteristics of a person required to conduct R&S. Scout snipers, who are birthed from the infantry Marine, take infantry skillsets to the next level by training to sustain for longer duration and with a higher degree of concealment than that of the infantry squad. The current equipment utilized by scout snipers projects sensory and combat power to over twice the effective range of the infantry squad. When integrated into a fires plan, scout snipers become the ultimate force-multiplying asset, freeing up infantry maneuver elements to do what they do best, close with and destroy the enemy. Future investments in developing the scout sniper will only increase the lethality and depth of the Marine Corps weapon engagement zone.

Solution

While adhering to the established littoral battalion design and size limitations, the scout snipers' capability should be organic at the Littoral Combat Regiment level in a Reconnaissance, Surveillance, Target Acquisition Company (RSTAC). The RSTAC will comprise a small headquarters consisting of a company commander, executive officer, operations chief, and senior enlisted advisor that can plan, control, and advise commanders on R&S operations. Past the headquarters section, the RSTAC will comprise a Scout Sniper platoon(s), a Ground Sensor platoon, a small unmanned aerial surveillance section, signal intelligence electronic warfare platoon(s), long-range targeting devices, and C5ISR system operator(s) with the introduction of the terrestrial collection system. In this design, commanders from the unit of action up to the unit of employment may employ R&S assets against specific priority intelligence requirements in developing plans, policies, and operations or as a

force protection measure. Commanders would maintain the benefit of enhanced lethality and target acquisition with highly trained Marines for targeting initiatives.

RSTAC Marines, and specifically the scout snipers, may be employed in force to extend the supported unit's area of influence and deny adversary collections through counter-sniper and counter-reconnaissance operations. The RSTAC would be a transition from a scout sniper platoon to an STA concept updated for modern technological advancements and adversary capabilities. RSTAC would facilitate targeting and assist in the establishment of local networks and communications relays in a distributed littoral environment. The Marine Corps C5ISR ecosystem and infrastructure will be critical to maintain but at an opportunity cost. Its signature and ability to be targeted are no different from a physical signature. Communications redundancy across the electromagnetic spectrum will be essential, and high-frequency communications will be a contingency net with which scout snipers are highly experienced in operating and conducting relay.

Conclusion

Scout snipers need to be holistically evaluated and accredited by testing future formations to identify necessary skills associated and the integration of these skills in the coming fight. Scout snipers have been employed across the range of military operations conducting R&S, precision targeting with direct fire weapons, and execution of supporting arms throughout significant exercises with little to no inclusion of their effects within. Notable examples include the Integrated Training Exercise, Twentynine Palms, CA; MountainEX conducted in Bridgeport, CA; and a myriad of MEUs executing training operations overseas. Specific gaps identified through testing of future formations may identify certain requirements on scout snipers to determine their direction in future employment.

The Marine Corps cannot afford to sit still and hope that the status quo will suffice in the future fight merely because it did in the past. Nor can we

rest on established norms, programs, and occupational fields that are well established. We must retain capabilities that are still relevant and will be undoubtedly helpful in the future fight. Scouting and sniping will be critically important in the next battle, and the Marine Corps needs to continue to restructure to support training initiatives and future combat employment. It is key to note that our adversaries have invested heavily in the formation of sniper programs along with their scalable growth over time. Our adversaries' heavy investment in the professionalization of a sniping community and additional military schooling for its senior enlisted and officers has resulted in snipers' understanding and advocacy continuing to grow within their ranks. The Marine Corps has trended in the opposite direction and now potentially faces a future force with no organic scouting or sniping capability, which makes the Marine Corps the only first world power without scout snipers in its infantry formations. Limited education on the capabilities and employment of scout snipers within the officer and enlisted ranks has led to mixed opinions and ineffective utilization of the asset, which could be a contributing factor as to why it was so quickly removed during the Infantry Battalion Experiment 2030 initiative. The Marine Corps was the first branch within the DOD to formalize and sustain a scout sniping program. However, we are now poised to be the only DOD entity without the capability because of years of misunderstanding and mismanagement at the tactical level. It is perplexing how quickly the Marine Corps Scout Snipers' heavy utilization during the GWOT was forgotten, despite the repeated requests for support by the joint force and attaching directly to United States Special Operations Command. This trend sadly falls in line with the past 100 years of Marine Corps history. However, there is a future scalable model for the infantry to efficiently and effectively grow an organic ground R&S asset via an already existing one. Minor and cost-effective measures can be taken to retain a time and combat-proven asset while expanding into capability gaps

that must be filled at the tactical level for the Commandant of the Marine Corp's vision of EABO via *FD 2030*.

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8. Vera Zimmerman, "The Role of Snipers in the Donbas Trench War," *The Jamestown Foundation*, (February 2020), available at <https://jamestown.org>; and Jonathan Ferguson & N.R. Jenzen-Jones, "Raising Red Flags, An Examination of Arms & Munitions in the Ongoing Conflict in Ukraine," *ARES*, (November 2014), available at <https://armamentresearch.com>, 2014.
9. Charlie Gao, "Chinese Snipers Are No Joke," *The National Interest*, (May 2021), available at <https://nationalinterest.org>; and Kenneth Allen and Mingzhi Chen, Kenneth Allen and Mingzhi Chen, *The People's Liberation Army's 37 Academic Institutions*, (Montgomery, AL: China Aerospace Studies Institute, n.d.).
10. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCWP 3-15.3, Scout Sniping*, (Washington, DC: 2019).
11. Headquarters Marine Corps, *Tentative Manual for Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations*, (Washington, DC: 2021).



The False Demon of Attrition

Challenging deeply held beliefs

by Marinus Dubius

“The unexamined doctrine is not worth fighting.”

**—Socrates
(probably not)**

Do the gods know everything?
Yes.
Do some gods disagree with others?

Yes.

Can gods disagree about truth?

There is no reason to think they cannot.

So the gods can be wrong?

I suppose they can.

Then the gods do not know everything.¹

Socrates was unremitting in his lines of questioning which challenged beliefs through what has become known as the Socratic method. Though likely irritating, his intent was not to simply embarrass or confuse people but rather to expose assumptions and contradictions in ideas in order to refine those ideas. Similarly, the intent here is not to merely criticize Marinus; indeed, their breadth and depth of maneuver warfare knowledge are detailed and admirable. Though their identities are unknown, they clearly have a firm grasp of maneuver, and the imprimatur of the *Gazette* can be taken to mean that their views are representative—or should be—of how Marines think about maneuver warfare.

I seek to refine this conception by extending the maneuver warfare

dialectic, specifically how maneuver is related to its supposed opposite: attrition warfare. Perhaps through critical reasoning, we can arrive at a more complete conception which will serve our practical purposes by allowing us to waste less time on the artificial debate between two warfare styles that are almost indistinguishable from one another. It is not new to say that one need not choose between the two styles, nor even that they exist in degree—but here I submit that it is fruitless to attempt an objective split between the two anyway.² And it seems difficult to practice something which we have difficulty defining.

Imagine that an enemy infantry platoon has been completely destroyed by a Marine unit. Did the Marine unit practice maneuver warfare or attrition warfare? Here we need more details, maybe the relative proportion of forces, or how the Marine commander planned and executed the defeat. These missing details convey how we, including Marinus, actually define maneuver warfare: through its application, not through its results. So far, this is not misaligned with most Marines’ conceptions of the maneuver philosophy as a way of conducting war—not a singular method in and of itself. The issue though, as presented by Marinus, is there is no way to differentiate attrition warfare from maneuver warfare short of knowing the thoughts of the practitioner. In fact, their attrition warfare almost seems to be describing an instance of maneuver warfare. Further, the positive definition of maneuver warfare as “systemic disruption” is so broad that it effectively has no

meaning. Consider this hypothetical dialogue:

Are maneuver warfare and attrition warfare different things?

Yes, or we would not have different names for them.

And the goal of maneuver warfare is systemic disruption?

Maneuver warfare attacks the relationships between those components to break the coherent functioning of the system.”³

Is it also true that the goal of attrition warfare is physical destruction?

“Attrition works by physically eroding an adversary’s human and material resources until they are eliminated or, as is usually the case, the enemy retreats or gives up the fight.”⁴

If you have physically destroyed part of a system, have you disrupted it?

Physical destruction is a type of systemic disruption, though the degree of disruption can be argued. Boyd called disruption the “state of being split-apart, broken-up, or torn asunder.”⁵

Then attrition warfare also aims to achieve systemic disruption.

Furthermore, maybe attrition warfare is the same kind of thing as maneuver warfare. At the very least, it is exceedingly difficult to say where one ends and the next starts. But it is time to go beyond the recognition that the separation is not so distinct and realize that this vagueness implies that our definition of maneuver is incomplete. Maneuver cannot be defined as the antithesis of attrition unless we can cleanly separate the two styles.

Maneuver warfare has often been defined negatively. That is, mainly by what it is not (attrition), with many compet-

ing claims as to what it is (a mindset, a method, a recognition of nonlinear warfare, etc.).⁶ Yet, maneuver certainly *seems* different from attrition, at least from within our own paradigm. This leads to a separation, or demarcation, problem: how do we distinguish attrition from maneuver? More importantly for the practitioner, how do we know we are practicing maneuver warfare and not attrition warfare? Marinus and Era Novum (and most Marines) are aware of this demarcation problem, but while Marinus proposes a few solutions, none of them solve the issue.⁷

Much emphasis is placed on distinguishing the two forms of warfare on the basis of their applicable domains. “Where attrition works in the physical dimension, systemic disruption [maneuver] can operate in the physical, mental, and moral dimensions.”⁸ This does not preclude attrition from being maneuver, only maneuver from being attrition. But even this distinction is incomplete, as Marinus later states that attrition’s physical effects are actually subsumed by mental or moral ones:

Attrition works by physically eroding an adversary’s human and material resources until they are eliminated or, as is usually the case, the enemy retreats or *gives up the fight*. ... It operates in the physical dimension and is triggered by means of cumulative physical destruction—although the enemy usually is defeated psychologically before he is destroyed.⁹

In other words, physical incapacitation is the exception to the usual rule of mental erosion, even in attrition warfare. This suggests that attrition works not only in the physical domain as stated but in the mental or moral domains as well. So, knowing the domain in which we operate could be necessary but is always insufficient to distinguish the two.

Another attempt at this demarcation problem is to consider the two styles’ differences in actions or effects, what may be called targeting: “Where attrition warfare attacks the components of the enemy system to degrade them, maneuver warfare attacks the relationships between those components to break the coherent functioning of the system.”¹⁰ Later, they posit that maneuver actions

are designed to “disrupt, or literally, to ‘dis-integrate’ the coherent functioning of the system rather than grinding it down from the outside.”¹¹ Here we could say that a loose analogy might be that attrition attacks nouns, somewhat indiscriminately, while maneuver attacks verbs.

But this must be incorrect because both Marinus and *MCDP 1* emphasize that maneuver includes physical destruction of enemy elements—nouns, as it were: “disruption succeeds by interrupting the interactions among those components—whether those components are enemy units” from Marinus, or from *MCDP 1*: “In fact, at the critical point, where strength has been focused against enemy vulnerability, attrition may be extreme and may involve the outright annihilation of enemy elements.”¹² Even Boyd explicitly defines the role of attrition in maneuver: “pull adversary apart and isolate remnants for mop-up or absorption,” which is a euphemism for the destruction of smaller, more isolated units.¹³ So then we cannot say that attrition is distinct from maneuver on the basis of what they target because maneuver can target system components just as attrition exclusively does.

Although we cannot separate attrition from maneuver based upon domain or targeting, Marinus also suggests that we delineate the two based on the intent or aim of the practitioner. The subjective implications of this approach notwithstanding, this is closest to how Boyd originally defined the concept as presented in his “Patterns of Conflict” briefing. He saw the effect of attrition as the “frightful and debilitating attrition *via widespread destruction*” and its aim as compelling the “enemy to surrender and sue for peace,” while the aim of maneuver was to “[g]enerate many non-cooperative centers of gravity, as well as disorient or disrupt those that the adversary depends upon, in order to magnify friction, shatter cohesion, produce paralysis, and bring about his collapse.”¹⁴ What is interesting in these two definitions is that the description of attrition explicitly references psychological effects which sound like maneuver. Here, suing for peace is a mental or

moral action while a “collapse” suggests the decoherence of a system, physically or otherwise. Marinus seems to explicitly acknowledge this ambiguity and substantiate it. Consider the explicit claim that maneuver is based upon intent: “systemic disruption is most often triggered by destruction, just as attrition is. The difference is the *purpose that the destruction serves*—whether the grinding down of material might or the interruption of coherent functioning.”¹⁵ The weak interpretation means that you must know or infer purpose to judge actions as “maneuver-esque,” while the stronger interpretation means you are doing maneuver warfare whenever you are trying to disrupt a system—which is always, in combat. Call this the “we know it when we see it” split.

Then we have that attrition is a method of waging war where the intent of the practitioner is to focus on the physical destruction of things with no regard to their relationship in the larger system. But this leads to a paradox: how can we attack parts of the system without affecting that system’s coherence? This is somewhat like the observer effect such that it is impossible to interact with, let alone to attack, a system without changing it. We have to know at least some aspect of the system (i.e., the components) to even target it, as Marinus discusses.¹⁶ This destruction is cast as an end (“a pervasive and essential result”) toward the even greater end of attrition (“a process of defeat itself”).¹⁷ So it seems attrition is a way or an end, but I will take attrition as the means by which we achieve the end of defeat. Maneuver simply leaves open many means to achieve the same end, whereas attrition can only use physical destruction. Intent-based claims will always be subjective and vague, making this criterion to distinguish the two styles of warfare less than ideal, although consistent.

Another Marinus suggestion is that the demarcation between attrition and maneuver is not in the domain nor the targeting but in the way in which we achieve victory. The difference lies in something called a defeat mechanism. Explicitly, “the issue is what you choose as the mechanism by which you pro-

pose to impose defeat on the enemy.”¹⁸ Further, “attrition and annihilation are not strategies but are better described as defeat mechanisms,” and “we have the notion of attrition and systemic disruption as defeat mechanisms.”¹⁹ This contradicts an earlier assertion that attrition is not a mechanism (remember that physical destruction was) but a process of defeat itself (an end). But it seems reasonable that attrition is actually a defeat mechanism. Which begs the question: what exactly is a defeat mechanism? To quote Marinus: “A defeat mechanism is an internal process by which defeat is triggered within an enemy”; that is, it operates in the mental or moral domains.²⁰ This definition is too narrow because it excludes the possibility of obviating the mental domain altogether through destruction; something that no longer exists also no longer has a will.

So, what is defeat? We never quite know because it is relative: “defeat can mean different things in different situations,” and “whatever defeat means in any particular case.”²¹ It can be characterized by a loss of adaptability: “a function not directly of cumulative losses (that is, attrition) but of loss of adaptability through the loss of organizational cohesion.”²² It looks like a system being knocked out of equilibrium, but both the adaptability and equilibrium characterizations are incompatible with the earlier assertion that war is nonlinear. Complex adaptive systems can adapt, and if they do it poorly through loss of cohesion, they can become entirely different systems borne of the destroyed ones. Moreover, complex adaptive systems by definition never operate at equilibrium: they operate at the “edge of chaos,” far from equilibrium. Maybe the loss of cohesion tends to dominate the physical elimination of units and material. This is certainly what Marinus’ appeal to Brown, May, and Slater suggests: “disruptive effects of combat losses will trigger before attritive effects ever do.”²³ The enemy cannot fight before he no longer wants to, but this is hardly an explanation at all because it conflates the two styles. Now, we have come full circle. It is claimed that combat losses cause disruptive effects before attritive effects. But then what are the attritive

effects if not combat losses? The two styles have been described using the same language! The only way to preserve the distinction is to say “combat losses” can be caused by something other than physical destruction. Destroy something and it is attrition—incapacitate something without destroying it, and it is maneuver.

By this point, it seems very difficult to distinguish between attrition and maneuver. This is because as the terms are described in “The Maneuverist Papers,” the terms are essentially interchangeable. They have created a strawman out of attrition, which insofar as it exists, seems only to exist as a poorly executed or rote instance of maneuver warfare. Is this only a semantic issue of tortured language? Why does it matter at all? It matters because we define maneuver most often by what it is not—attrition. Attrition is a kind of maneuver, or at the very least, it is very difficult to say exactly why it is different. We have no objective way of distinguishing the two at present, at least certainly not on the bases of domain, targets, or defeat mechanisms—but only in relativistic intent. We will struggle to apply doctrine that we have not yet truly defined.

It is not so easy to clearly distinguish the two styles of warfare. Where we have defined maneuver positively, we have framed it in such sweeping terms—all dimensions, any target, unclear defeat mechanisms—that it seems to suggest it can be almost anything. Yet, most Marines would probably agree that *we know it when we see it*, and perhaps the best we can do at present is to view it as relative and intent-based—a form of creativity in warfare. *Warfighting* acknowledges that it is a “way of thinking” and a “state of mind.” It does seem clear that it furthermore focuses on disproportionate effects—leverage points to achieve outsized results, to use the parlance of nonlinear systems. Certainly, the set-piece battles of yesteryear seem formulaic attempts to linearize a nonlinear phenomenon, with “results proportional to the quantity and volume of the effort expended, and conversely cannot yield success without material superiority.”²⁴

Additionally, there is an observable difference in execution between the wholesale slaughter of World War I, for instance, and the canonical German blitzkrieg campaign of World War II, despite the violence found in both. Yet, the main difference could be said to be creative thinking which prizes efficiency. Then to say maneuver warfare is just creativity is not really useful to split the two styles. This may be the best we can do, and any attempt to objectively disentangle maneuver from attrition generates only confusion from too many contradictions within our warfighting paradigm. In fact, we often practice what is termed attrition while conducting maneuver. Practically, we typically have no choice but to attack physical objects because that is often all we can know about an enemy system, especially initially, as Marinus acknowledges.

If maneuver warfare is just creativity, its application should be guided by a method that helps enable that creativity. Usually, the trinity of decentralized command, main effort, and commander’s intent is offered as the hallmarks of maneuver.²⁵ The extent to which the Marine Corps has actually practiced these is debatable. This argument has been broached in the pages of the *Gazette* and will not be considered here.²⁶ If we take *MCDP 1* to be describing an ideal state of maneuver as Marinus does, would any of these concepts help us tease out the intent, which seems to be the only real way to judge creativity and thus distinguish attrition from maneuver?²⁷

Decentralized command enables rapidity through fast “OODA-looping,” but such a C2 style does not force creativity nor even the aim to be systemic disruption.²⁸ Designation of or even flawless execution in using and shifting main efforts could be used to simply destroy an enemy “from the outside,” so can also be present in attrition. As the name implies, the commander’s intent comes the closest to solving the intent problem. It is supposed to lay out what the commander thinks and how they envision defeat while giving subordinates wide latitude in how to get there. But any tool can be misused, and intent could be used to simply

destroy enemy units for destruction's sake. It seems intent is necessary for any split, but calling it sufficient feels incomplete.

This argument goes beyond frequent clarifications about the history of maneuver warfare declaring “maneuver good, attrition bad” because I claim that it is not very clear how to tell the two styles apart. They vary in degree as suggested in *MCDP 1*, but maybe not so cleanly as Marinus would have us believe. Ultimately, they refer to the same end: the use of violence to change or destroy a will. It seems the best that we can say is we admire the quality of creatively applying force to achieve disproportionate effects, and we kind of just know this creativity when we see it. Judging intent certainly helps us tease it out. At least this allows us to hold certain values in higher regard, like creativity, efficiency, and disproportionate effects, though these start to sound suspiciously like much-maligned principles of war, which should always be avoided, according to Boyd.

Ultimately, we should use creativity to one end alone: to reconcile “irreconcilable wills” by either removing the enemy's will or changing it through the enemy's internal acceptance of a new reality that we impose, not just to achieve disproportionate effects. Rather than continuing to pile up inconsistencies and contradictions, perhaps it is time we accept a modification to our paradigm: maneuver warfare may be a style of warfare marked by creativity and disproportionate results, but it should not be defined as the opposite of attrition warfare unless we can separate the two distinctly.

Without consistent beliefs and definitions free from contradictions, it is difficult to practice our own doctrine because it was never completely defined in the first place. Our definition of maneuver warfare, to say nothing of our execution of that conception, is incomplete. But I do not want to suggest that it is not useful. Born as it was with this dichotomous defect, it is still a powerful way to think about war, especially when used by an undersized force. Together with writers like Marinus, I hope that we can come to a more complete un-

derstanding of our own doctrine, starting with reconsidering the necessity to perpetuate some imagined duality of attrition and maneuver.

Notes

1. An adaptation of a classic Socratic method example as typified in Plato's dialogues.

2. Ian Brown, *A New Conception of War*, (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2018). Part of the problem in the maneuver debate came from misinterpreting Boyd's position on maneuver and attrition.

3. Marinus, “Marine Corps Maneuver Warfare,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: September 2020).

4. Marinus, “On Defeat Mechanisms,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: July 2021).

5. Dan Glazier, “Patterns of Conflict Pt 11,” YouTube video, 27:13, (December 2015), available at <https://youtube.com>. Dan Glazier has uploaded an excellent rendition of the video and briefing slides, which were apparently briefed to a group of congressional staffers sometime in the 1980s.

6. William Lind, “Defining Maneuver Warfare for the Corps,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: March 1980). “Maneuver warfare refers to an overall concept or ‘style’ of warfare. It has an opposite, the firepower-attrition style.”

7. Marinus Era Novum, Response to Marinus “Marine Corps Maneuver Warfare: A Historical Context,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: December 2020). Era Novum gives a nod to Marinus in this piece: “all warfare will contain some elements of attrition,” and his own assertion that “we should not look at maneuver and attrition in such juxtaposition” seems to hint that perhaps they are more similar than dissimilar. See also, Marinus, “A Response to Marinus Era Novum,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: March 2021). Here Marinus refers to a flaw of *MCDP 1* being “that it never fully resolves the maneuver-attrition issue.”

8. “On Defeat Mechanisms.”

9. Ibid.

10. “Marine Corps Maneuver Warfare.”

11. Marinus, “Maneuverist No. 3,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: November 2020).

12. “On Defeat Mechanisms”; and Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCDP 1, Warfighting*, (Washington, DC: 1997).

13. “Patterns of Conflict Pt 11.”

14. Ibid.

15. “On Defeat Mechanisms.”

16. Ibid. “For that matter, we acknowledge that, absent a systemic understanding of the enemy, you have little choice but to pursue defeat by attrition.”

17. “On Defeat Mechanisms.”

18. “Marine Corps Maneuver Warfare.”

19. Marinus, “Annihilation vs. Attrition,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: August 2021).

20. “On Defeat Mechanisms.”

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid; and “Patterns of Conflict Pt 11.”

23. “On Defeat Mechanisms.”

24. “On Defeat Mechanisms.” Here Marinus is quoting Luttwak.

25. Daniel Coetzee and Lee Eysturid, *Philosophers of War: The Evolution of History's Greatest Military Thinkers*, (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2013).

26 Thaddeus Drake Jr., “The Fantasy of *MCDP 1*,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: October 2020).

27. “On Defeat Mechanisms.” “We see the passage in question, like much of *Warfighting*, as aspirational, describing maneuver warfare in its theoretically pure form, in much the same way that Clausewitz described ‘absolute’ war in *On War*.”

28. William Lind, *Maneuver Warfare Handbook*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Special Studies in Military Affairs, 1985). “Maneuver means Boyd Cycling the enemy, being consistently faster through however many OODA Loops it takes until the enemy loses his cohesion—until he can no longer fight as an effective, organized force.”



The Institutional Impact of Maneuver Warfare

Maneuverist No. 18 rebuttal
by Contrarius

My dear brother, your recent paper, *Maneuverist No. 18*, was yet another enlightening and brilliant addition to your published discourses. Whether the analysis, more precisely—your logic, was correct concerning the maneuverists is another matter. Entertain me now as you once did in our youth when you lectured me about logic, philosophy, war, and science. Your ideas are worth revisiting, but the lens to which we approach the events referenced in your writings requires further discussion, hence my writing to you. Indeed, the role of a younger sibling is to challenge the elder in a contest of the minds.

We should start by declaring my displeasure with depicting maneuverists as guided by doctrine while impeded by institutional incrementalism. In fact, their actions illustrate equal culpability in the undoing of the very principles they seemed destined to implement and protect.

The establishment of a centralized professional military education system seems contradictory. I anticipate you citing Clausewitz and the ever-growing complexity and contradictory nature of human beings and war, but first, we must analyze the logic of the maneuverists. In one case, you depict the maneuverists as successful in establishing a centralized body—in another, their worst failure.

First, understanding maneuver warfare and having a common definition is needed, “Maneuver warfare is a war-



The Maneuverists understood early on that it was not sufficient merely to change warfighting doctrine, although doctrinal reform was central. They understood that meaningful change required institutional reform as well. Based on the premise that anything that was not the actual conduct of war constituted preparation for war, they believed that the way the Marine Corps functioned institutionally must be made to support and reinforce the way it needed to fight. In retrospect, the Maneuverists were more successful in some areas than in others in accomplishing the goals they set out for themselves.

Doctrine

There is no question that doctrinal reform—at least in terms of formal, written doctrine—was a lasting success of the maneuver warfare movement. This is understandable, as doctrinal reform was Commandant Gen Alfred M. Gray's focus of effort. *FMFM 1.1, Warfighting* was published in 1980, followed by *FMFM 1.1, Campaigning* in 1990, and *FMFM 1.3, Tactics* in 1991. Those manuals were revised as Marine Corps Doctrinal Publications (MCDPs), and the entire series of nine MCDPs was completed in 1998. The maneuver warfare doctrine they espouse remains in effect and unchanged today.

That high-level philosophy, however, did not always carry through to the follow-on warfighting, tactical, and reference publications that are meant to translate that philosophy into tactics, techniques, and procedures. Many of those manuals continued to describe a methodical approach to warfare. In that sense, the maneuver warfare reform of formal doctrine lacked depth and was not completed.

The even greater issue is the question of how thoroughly, widely, and lastingly that doctrine has been put into practice by the operating forces. Opinions vary greatly. Some argue that the Marine Corps never succeeded in adopting maneuver warfare in any meaningful way at the Corps-wide level. Others have argued that the Marine Corps did successfully adopt maneuver warfare in the 1990s but has since backslid as a result of various internal and external pressures. Still others argue that the Marine Corps continued to practice maneuver warfare effectively throughout the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. From our observations, evidence could be cited

The Marine "Maneuverists" gained mixed results in the efforts to institutionalize Maneuver Warfare across the entire Marine Corps enterprise. (Photo by USMC Jackson Decker)

www.mca-marines.org/gazette Marine Corps Gazette • March 2022

This article questions the logic behind Marinus' argument regarding the Corps' limited institutionalization of maneuver warfare (see *Maneuverist Paper No. 18 MCG, Mar22*).

fighting philosophy that seeks to shatter the enemy's cohesion through a variety of rapid, focused, and unexpected actions which create a turbulent and rapidly deteriorating situation with which the enemy cannot cope."¹ Why brother would the maneuverists turn a warfighting philosophy that seeks to shatter the enemy on the institution they serve? The encouragement of such opportunistic behavior, usually aimed at outmaneuvering another, should be discouraged when implemented across echelons of the same institution sharing common goals. This

mindset yields parochial practices encouraging and rewarding a focus on the self at the institution's expense. Such logic marginalizes the broader consonance mentioned in *MCDP 1*.

The maneuverists encourage the Service to organize and act mirroring the warfighting philosophy reflected in your writing, “they believed that the way the Marine Corps functioned institutionally must be made to support and reinforce the way it intended to fight.”² If the Marine Corps intended to fight centrally, which it does not, a centralized body to dictate learning would be anathema to the maneuverists. Still, you acknowledge it as an event to be celebrated. The centralized education establishment to which the Marine Corps, specifically the maneuverists, erected does not agree with the fighting mentality or structure of the institution it was designed to serve. How then, brother, did the maneuverists improve education? Do you not depict the contrary by stating,

the Maneuverists would argue that professionally competent officers should be trusted to prepare their units for deployment without the need for an onerous, centralized evaluation system that leaves too little time for actual training.³

If professionally competent officers are responsible for preparing for combat, are they as leaders and commanders absolved of the responsibility to “consider the professional development of their subordinates a principal responsibility of command[?]”⁴ Logic would determine

that every unit within the whole would mirror the same if the whole seeks to decentralize in warfare. It seems the maneuverists were willing to contradict their own doctrine for reasons I am unable to elucidate. This would support your recognition that cases for centralization and decentralization exist. My determination thus far is the maneuverists were more for decentralization in thought than practice—more in word than action. Or perhaps, there is more benefit in centralization than the maneuverists failed to mention or appreciate.

One would be foolish to ignore how a centralized body, similar to the central nervous system of a human being, is required to function subordinate parts in concert with one another to yield benefits. If the brain is removed, the body ceases to function. There is a role and importance to a centralized entity controlling various echelons and functions in a coordinated effort. One can assume the maneuverists understood this from their comprehensive studies. However, it still does not answer why they would seek a maneuverist framework in all things while creating a singular body that contradicted the tenets they believed. The benefits of a centralized entity can be illustrated when amputating a single body part.

How can one claim, “reforming the personnel management system arguably was the Maneuverists’ greatest institutional failure”?

When amputated, the central entity, or brain, will continue to function, and so will the remaining parts while providing unity of effort to the remaining appendages. Removal of the central entity immediately dooms the subordinate elements to failure, illustrating it makes little sense to prioritize the saving of a part while sacrificing the whole.⁵ A centralized body ensures subordinate elements function equally, in consonance to the larger situation described in *MCDP 1*, not favoring one entity over

another, creating imbalance. Should such a system, aimed at achieving balance across multiple echelons and parts, not benefit an organization more than a system that rewards individual ac-

Are centralized systems not equal when acting as parts of a whole?

tions while encouraging parochialism? Are the benefits provided to individual Marines through a centralized institution for education recognized by the maneuverists as beneficial, not equally applicable for personnel management?

If the maneuverists were against centralized bodies, it seems they were against them more in rhetoric than action. How can one claim, “reforming the personnel management system arguably was the Maneuverists’ greatest institutional failure?”⁶ The personnel management system remains centralized, mirroring the education system created by the maneuverists. How, if the bodies are similar in organization, is one a success and the other a failure?

Let us revisit the principles you taught me as a young boy. Euclid’s first

entire institution, avoiding imbalances that favor a single individual or entity.

My dear brother, these ramblings of mine are just that. As father once allowed us to voice our arguments through fact and logic, I hope you entertain me now as he did in our youth. Is there no value in centralization? Did the maneuverists truly embody the principles they wished to permeate throughout our organization? Are these principles not subject to further examination by those who serve today to ascertain their current value in today’s world? Is a new *MCDP 1* or warfighting philosophy not required?

As always, my dear brother, you afford me a patient and respectful audience to which I am in your debt and undeserving. You, my greatest teacher, have taught me not to go blindly with the words of other men but to find my own truth through critical thought and sound logic. I have spent much time thinking over the logic of the argument that two centralized bodies can be both commended and criticized determined solely by function. Thank you again, dear brother. I hope my words are to your approval, even in disagreement.

Notes

1. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCDP 1, Warfighting*. (Washington, DC: 1997).
2. Marinus, “The Institutional Impact of Maneuver Warfare Maneuverist Paper No. 18,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: March 2022).
3. Ibid.
4. *MCDP 1, Warfighting*.
5. Abraham Lincoln to Albert G. Hodges on 4 April 1864, in Staff, *Lincoln Speeches and Writings II*, (New York, NY: Library of America 1989).
6. “The Institutional Impact of Maneuver Warfare Maneuverist Paper No. 18.”



Operation Causeway: Simplicity in Major Amphibious Operations

by Mr. Joseph Miranda

Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations*, comments about simplicity: “When other factors are equal, the simplest plan is preferable.” The military principle of simplicity calls for clear, uncomplicated plans and concise orders to ensure a thorough understanding by subordinates and thus facilitate execution of operations.

Finding the principle of simplicity in board wargaming will take us in two directions. First is the topic of the wargame. Is it a battle or campaign in which one side executed a plan which failed due to being too complex? Consider Gen George Washington’s plan at Germantown: four columns marching for hours on different roads and encountering obstacles and fog were supposed to all arrive at Germantown at the same time. One column ran into another and engaged in friendly fire, and another column did not arrive in time to have any effect. Granted, a similar plan had worked at Trenton, but over far shorter distances and time. Gen Robert E. Lee also failed to coordinate his attacks at Gettysburg on both the second and third day, giving the Union time to move reserves to counter each attack. In games on these battles, does the game force the player into executing the complex plan, or can the player change to a simpler plan?

The second level is the player approaching any wargame. Does he develop a straightforward plan of attack or does the plan get too complex to carry out effectively? This does not mean one should engage purely in a frontal assault because it is simple, but perhaps a straightforward fix and flank operation will accomplish the objective rather than a complex multi-prong envelopment. Another wargame situation is a player confronted with three geographically separated objectives. Trying to take all three at the same time may be beyond capabilities whereas focusing on one objective first may very well make taking the other two easier.

Consider a wargame covering a major amphibious operation. Joint operations are by their nature complex operations, so keeping the operations plan simple is key.

In mid-1944 ADM Chester Nimitz, the commander of the Pacific Ocean Area, called for making Formosa a target

>Mr. Miranda is a prolific board wargame designer. He is a former Army Officer and has been a featured speaker at numerous modeling and simulations conferences.

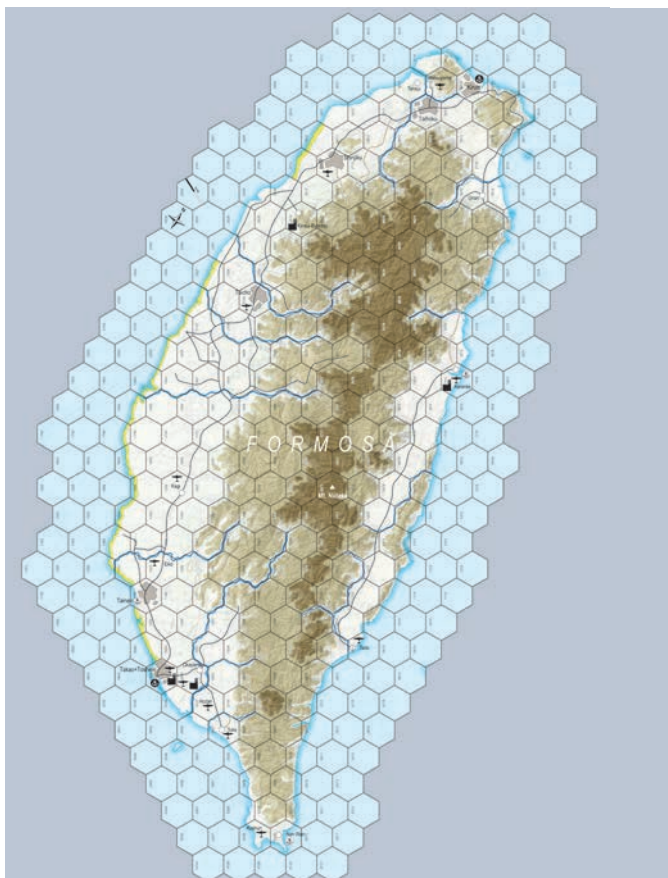
for invasion as the culmination of his Central Pacific drive. There were several reasons for selecting Formosa, mainly because the island would serve as a forward base for the invasion of Okinawa and from there the assault on the Japanese home islands. Capture of Formosa would also open lines of communications with Allied forces in China.

In opposition to Nimitz was GEN Douglas MacArthur, commander of the Southwest Pacific Area, who wanted to invade the Philippines for a variety of political and military reasons. In the end, MacArthur won out and so in October 1944 the United States headed for Leyte Gulf. But what would have happened if they had instead chosen to invade Formosa?

Operation Causeway, appearing in *World at War* magazine #83, covers the planned but never executed US invasion of the island of Formosa (today’s Taiwan) for 1944. Tokyo had acquired Formosa in the 1890s following the First Sino-Japanese War. While in control of Formosa, the Japanese made considerable efforts to build up the island’s industries and gain some modicum of living with its inhabitants. Throughout the Pacific War, Formosa was a major staging point for Japanese naval, air and land power. This was another reason for the US to consider the invasion of the island.

Now to the outside observer, an amphibious invasion might appear simple. Concentrate your landing craft, embark the troops, call in naval gunfire and air support, and then get the troops ashore. But as the old saying goes, “Everything in war is very simple, but the simple thing is difficult.”

One major factor is in choosing your landing beach. The western coast is screened by mudflats making big over the beach operations prohibitive. There are numerous landing sites on the northern, eastern, and southern parts of the island. For invasion planning, there are reasons to land at multiple



Clear terrain hexes are the only hexes that can be targets for amphibious assault. This rules out any of the coastal hexes with the yellow (mud flats) coast line as well as the light or dark brown (rough and mountain) hexes. (Photo provided by author.)

points because the island's vital port and industrial objectives are close to the coast.

The downside is that dividing the invasion force leads to a situation where the Japanese can counterattack and defeat each beachhead in detail. The loss of even one beachhead can mean the elimination of sufficient American units so that further advances inland will not be feasible. A better strategy is to hit one beach and then make a concerted drive to clear the rest of the island. There's a tradeoff insofar as you are running against the clock.

Another factor is the island's geography. There's a central mountain range which divides operations along a north-south axis. This means that if the U.S. lands on different coasts it can be difficult to link up forces. Meantime, the Japanese will have the advantage of central position.

The enemy gets a vote. The Japanese player has several operational level weapons to disrupt the U.S. timetable. One of these is Kamikaze airstrikes to take Allied amphibious landing and naval gunfire units temporarily out of play. The second is a final sortie of the Imperial Japanese Fleet to potentially cause more damage to U.S. amphibious capacity. The trick is in figuring the best time to launch these attacks.

Another factor is logistics, quantified as logistics points (LP). These account for a wide range of supply, maintenance, trans-

portation, medical and administrative factors. Rather than show each of these logistics functions separately and overwhelming the player with excessive detail, they are integrated into a single game function—the LP. Logistics become a built-in staff planning factor. Think of the LP index as being your chief of staff. Issue concise orders in terms of how you allocate your LP.

ALLIED LP EXPENDITURE CHART		
Unit Type	LP Cost (Recruit)	LP Cost (Replace)
Headquarters, Heavy Weapons	4	2
Armor, Artillery Group, Airborne, Ranger	3	2
Marine, Infantry, Engineer	2	1
Naval Gunfire, B-29	3	3
Airborne Supply	2	2
TAC Air Point	1	1
Markers		
	LP Cost (Recruit)	LP Cost (Replace)
Amphibious	3	3
Airborne Drop Zone	1	1
Other Allied LP Expenditure		LP
Convert Engineer to a Base in a Port hex		3
Convert Engineer to a Base in an Airfield hex		1
Convert Engineer to a Base in a Port + Airfield hex		4
Ground Attack Shift		1 or 2
Ground Defense Shift		1

The U.S. player can expend LP to recruit units, to enhance combat, and build infrastructure. You build infrastructure by placing an engineer in a position containing a port or airfield, expending the designated number of LP, and then turn over the engineer counter to show a base. Bases provide the United States with additional LP, representing additional shipping brought in to support operations on the island, as well as enhancing air support. There are any number of ways this could have been modeled but making it all a function of logistics points makes for simplicity. And, again, this gets back to the nature of the game design, to keep things manageable for a tabletop game.

The Japanese have a different supply system. They had numerous supplies stockpiled on the island, plus a relatively well-developed infrastructure in place. Also, Allied naval and airpower cut off most enemy reinforcement of Formosa. So, the Japanese logistics situation is fixed. Again, this could have been shown in a much more complex fashion in the game, but I chose to keep the design simple, so the Japanese gain local logistical support.

The game comes down to each side identifying and then exploiting their own advantages. The situation is one of easily identifiable tradeoffs. The United States has the edge when it comes to determining the initial locations of engagement with amphibious landings. The Japanese must determine the best place to counterattack. Both sides then carry through with their decisions to gain victory in an amphibious operation which might have been.



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The Russian Invasion of Ukraine

Part I: The Physical Campaign Maneuverist Paper No. 21

by Marinus

John R. Boyd, the premier theorist of maneuver warfare, often argued that wars are waged on three levels. At the physical level, units and formations move, occupy, attack, and defend in order to frustrate, isolate, weaken, and destroy hostile forces. At the mental level, belligerents employ various combinations of strategy and stratagem to sow confusion, conundrum, and cognitive dissonance in the minds of their foes. At the moral level, actors strive to convince all concerned that they are more truthful, humane, just, and reliable than their adversaries.¹

In any given struggle, observers will often find that it is easier to track the movements of columns, the extent of deployments, and the damage done by fire than observe changes taking place in minds and hearts. Thus, even when the effects achieved in the mental and moral arenas prove more powerful than those wrought by flesh and steel, people trying to make sense of a particular conflict will often begin with an examination of purely physical phenomena. Thus, the first part of this two-part article will deal with the concrete aspects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the second will attempt to identify the effects of those actions on the mental and moral planes.

Missile Strikes

In the Russian invasion of Ukraine that began on 24 Febru-

ary 2022, the first great act to take place in the physical realm consisted of a series of strikes, carried out by as many as 300 guided missiles against fixed installations. Some of these were short-range ballistic missiles, mostly (if not exclusively) of a type (Iskander-M) introduced in 2005. Others were cruise missiles of the Kalibr family. (While the ballistic missiles were normally fired from ground vehicles, the cruise missiles seem to have been launched by a combination of ships at sea and bombers in flight.)

Many, if not most, of the targets struck in the initial missile bombardment were things, such as runways and radars, that supported the employment of Ukrainian military aircraft. The purpose of such strikes, however, seems to have been less a matter of ensuring Russian control of the skies than of depriving Ukrainian jets, helicopters, and drones of the ability to hamper the movement of Russian ground forces. That is, while some of the Russian missiles destroyed elements of the Ukrainian air defense system, the relative absence of Russian manned aircraft in the skies over Ukraine in the first few days of the invasion suggests that some Ukrainian anti-aircraft missile batteries survived the initial onslaught.²

In the days that followed, the missile strikes continued, albeit at a somewhat reduced pace. Nearly all the targets

Miniature loitering munitions such as the Switchblade Drone being used here by a Marine from 2nd MARDIV during a training exercise in 2021 are increasing the lethality of small ground units against armor and other concentrated targets in Ukraine. (Photo by PFC Sarah Pysher.)

struck, with unprecedented degrees of precision, were either buildings used exclusively for military purposes or facilities, such as those found at civilian airports, that could easily be converted to military use. (The great exception to the general rule of the purely military character of the targets of Russian missile attacks took place on 1 March 2022, when a guided missile destroyed the main television broadcasting tower in the center of the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv.³)

Operations Northwest of Kyiv

The second major event of the first day of the war took the form of a helicopter-borne attack against the Antonov Airport, a testing facility for aircraft located on the northwestern outskirts of the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv. Made possible by an exception to the general rule of Russian reluctance to put manned aircraft into the air, this descent resulted in the immediate capture of the airfield. This, in turn, made possible the reinforcement of the heliborne attackers with soldiers carried in transport planes. Before long, however, a counterattack by a Ukrainian brigade forced the *desantniki* to seek refuge in a nearby forest. There they awaited the arrival of the Russian mechanized forces that, having departed their assembly areas in Belarus and crossed into Ukraine near the site of the Chernobyl nuclear accident of 1986, were due to arrive at the airfield in the very near future.

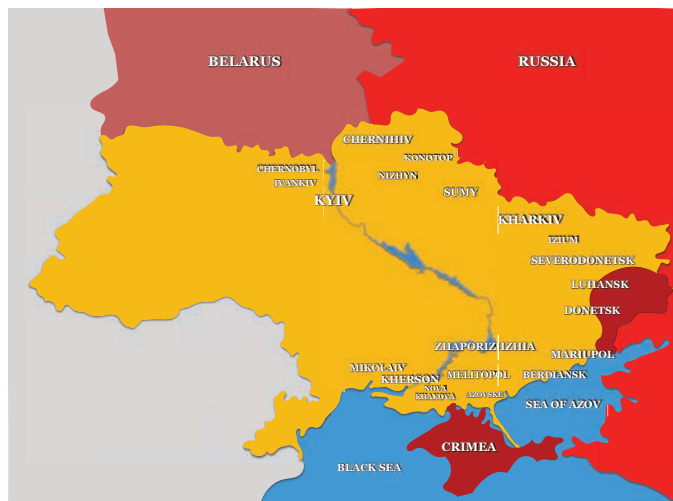
The aforementioned mechanized forces, which would link up with the paratroopers on the following day and recapture the Antonov Airport, were part of a long column, consisting of as many as 16 battalion tactical groups, that drove along the 125 or so kilometers (75 miles) of hardtop highway that connected the Chernobyl region to the suburbs of Kyiv. (If we assume that a Russian battalion tactical group consists of 142 vehicles and travels with a gap of 20 meters between each vehicle, each such formation in single file would take up 3.5 kilometers—a little more than 2 miles—of road space. However, as the last half of the journey was made over a four-lane expressway and the last quarter of the trip made use of an additional two-lane highway, the columns formed by battalion tactical groups may well have become shorter toward the end of the movement.)

Rather than pushing further into the suburbs of Kyiv, the Russians who had fought at the Antonov Airport took up defensive positions. The remainder of the Russian units that had crossed into Ukraine near Chernobyl moved through the 2,000 or so square miles of sparsely populated land along the west bank of the Kyiv Reservoir. (With a length of 80 kilometers, the Kyiv Reservoir divides the area north of Ukraine's capital into two very different regions. While the west bank is rural, swampy, and poorly supplied with roads, the east bank is home to substantial urban areas, forested nature preserves, and a network of hardtop roads, railroads, and modern highways.)

The high-water table and paucity of roads on the west bank of the Kyiv Reservoir made the Russian forces in that area dependent upon a single all-weather overland route that ran for 85 kilometers (50 miles.) Knowing this, the Ukrainian ground forces located northwest of Kyiv made at least two

attempts to cut the Russian lifeline. The largest of these attacks took place at Ivankiv, a town with a peacetime population of some 10,000 people, located at the place where the two-lane highway from Chernobyl met the four-lane expressway to Kiev. None of these enterprises, however, managed to achieve more than the creation of traffic jams. Thus, by the end of the first week of the war, the Russians enjoyed full control of the west bank of the Kyiv Reservoir and, what was more important, the single overland line of communications that ran through it.

Russian success on the west bank of the Kyiv Reservoir during the first week of the war owed much to the absence of Ukrainian military aircraft overhead. More specifically, long columns of Russian vehicles would not have been able to conduct road marches in the face of large numbers of Ukrainian ground attack aircraft, whether manned or unmanned, operating in the armed reconnaissance mode. That this did not happen seems to have been a function of two things. First, the missile strikes of the first day of the war, which were continued (albeit on a somewhat smaller scale) on the days that followed, deprived Ukrainian aviation units



Ukraine and the surrounding area of interest. (Map by author.)

of much of their ability to send aircraft into action. Second, the *zenitchiki* who maintained the multi-layered air defense umbrella over the west bank of the Kyiv Reservoir made it difficult for the small number of Ukrainian aircraft that managed to take to the skies to reach their intended targets.

Operations East of Kyiv

Strange to say, the ten or so Russian battalion tactical groups deployed to the east of the Kyiv Reservoir adopted an approach that differed considerably from that employed by their counterparts to the west. Despite the presence of a road network that was much more congenial to operational movement and a railroad line that could have facilitated logistical support, the eastern movement covered much less ground. Conducted on several routes, this advance stopped short of Chernihiv, a city of some 300,000 inhabitants located

some 55 kilometers (35 miles) south of the border between Ukraine and Belarus.

In the days that followed, the Russian forces north of Chernihiv extended their positions to the east and west, turning what an earlier age would have called “an army of observation” into a semi-circle of strongholds. Several days later, the purpose of these initially puzzling positions became clear when twelve or so battalion tactical groups belonging to a different Russian field army moved in from the east. This field army, which quickly reached the northeastern suburbs of Kyiv, cut off all remaining connections between Chernihiv and the capital.

The Russian field army that completed the isolation Chernihiv had crossed into Ukraine at points some 200 kilometers (120 miles) due east of that city. They thus traveled a much greater distance than their counterparts that had entered Ukrainian territory on either side of the Kyiv Reservoir. In the course of doing this, elements of this field army surrounded, and, after a brief firefight, accepted the surrender of Konotop, the largest city along their route. (The terms of capitulation, agreed to by a Russian officer and the mayor of Konotop, kept Russian troops out of the city, left the civil administration in charge, and permitted the flag of the Republic of Ukraine to continue to fly above public buildings.)⁴

The field army that passed through Konotop made no attempt to occupy all of the countryside in the vicinity of the roads over which it travelled. One of the largest of the rural pockets created by this practice, which measured more than 45 miles (72 kilometers) from north to south, and 75 miles (120 kilometers) from east to west, could be found south of Chernihiv. (The Russians declined to occupy the largest urban center in this pocket, the city of Nizhyn, even though it was home to both a military airfield and a facility for the repair of armored engineer vehicles.)⁵

Southeast of Chernihiv, four more Russian field armies, each organized in much the same way as those already described, crossed the long frontier that separated the heartland of European Russia from the northeastern quarter of Ukraine. The northernmost of these advanced the furthest, following an east-west axis that ran parallel to that of the army that had completed the encirclement of Chernihiv. The southernmost of the four armies, which also seems to have been the smallest, made the least progress. None of its 8 battalion tactical groups advanced more than 100 kilometers (60 miles) beyond the border and some made movements that were even more modest.

Each of two field armies in the middle of the force that crossed from central Russia into Ukraine followed a path that was blocked by a large urban area. In the case of Sumy, this was a city of half a million people. In the case of Kharkiv, it was the second most populous city in Ukraine, with three times as many inhabitants as Sumy. In both cases, the Russian field armies made no serious attempts to take control of the built-up areas. Rather, after the failure of the delegations dispatched to convince local authorities to surrender, the Russians posted guards on the routes leading into the cities and continued their advance.

Operations in the Donbass

Southeast of Kharkiv, the southernmost of the four Russian field armies in northeastern Ukraine cooperated directly with the forces of the Luhansk Peoples’ Republic, the smaller of the two pro-Russian protostates formed in the Donbass region of eastern Ukraine in 2014. While the militiamen of the Luhansk Peoples’ Republic advanced, slowly and methodically, in the direction of Severodonetsk, Russian battalion tactical groups created a series of pockets in the area between that city and the Russian border. (The second largest city in the Luhansk *oblast*, Severodonetsk served as the temporary capital of that part of the *oblast* that remained loyal to the government of Ukraine.)⁶

The militia of the Donetsk Peoples’ Republic resembled, in many respects, that of the Luhansk Peoples’ Republic. Both organizations consisted of self-recruiting units, some of which embraced particular ideologies, others of which maintained strong links to specific localities, and most of which followed charismatic commanders.⁷ These idiosyncratic tendencies, already much in evidence upon the creation of these private armies in 2014, seem to have been strengthened during the seven years in which they fought against comparable organiza-

Each of two field armies in the middle of the force that crossed from central Russia into Ukraine followed a path that was blocked by a large urban area.

tions in the service of Ukraine. Like the pro-Russian militias, the armed non-state actors on the Ukrainian side acquired considerable experience with infantry-intensive battles for control of villages, towns, and urban neighborhoods.

While many men skilled in the arts of fighting on foot, especially in built-up areas, served in the ranks of the militias of the pro-Russian protostates, the dismounts of Russian battalion tactical groups of the Russian Army were both few in number and oriented towards close cooperation with armored fighting vehicles. Similarly, where the logistics infrastructure supporting the protostate militias had been built up over the course of seven years of position warfare, the truck convoys that supported battalion tactical groups had to deal with a limited road network, drone attacks, and partisans. Thus, while the self-propelled howitzers and multiple rocket launchers of a battalion tactical group were limited to a small number of brief fire missions, the improvised artillery batteries of the militias often possessed the ability to conduct bombardments more extensive in both time and space.

The characteristics of the two basic types of ground forces on the Russian side led easily to a division of labor in which militia units *fixed* while battalion tactical groups *flanked*. In the many towns and cities of the Donbass, the somewhat smaller cauldrons created by such tactics proved much more

difficult to reduce than the larger encirclements formed by the rapid passage of battalion tactical groups through rural regions. At the same time, commanders of private armies were rarely in a position to bypass such pockets, especially when they sheltered similar forces fighting for the other side. (This phenomenon could be seen, not only in the epic struggle for control of the city of Mariupol but also in the shorter, smaller, but no less ferocious fights for towns like Volnovakha.)

The three-week struggle for possession of Iziium, a town of some 60,000 people about 75 miles (120 kilometers) southeast of Kharkiv, provides an interesting exception to the Russian policy of bypassing built-up areas. During the second week of the campaign, Russian forces entered the northern part of this town. At the same time, more or less, Ukrainian forces entered Iziium from the south. After a brief encounter battle, position warfare set in, with the Russians holding the north bank of the river that ran through the middle of the town and the Ukrainians defending the south bank of that obstacle. This stalemate ended the last week of March when a Russian task force moved into the open ground south of the built-up area. Complicated by the need to assemble pontoon bridges under fire, this maneuver failed to completely isolate the defenders of the southern part of Iziium. It did, however, convince the Ukrainian leadership to withdraw its forces from the town.

The Russian decision to occupy, rather than merely bypass, Iziium seems to stem from a desire to use that town as a starting point for one of the two wings of the single most important operational maneuver of the invasion of Ukraine, the encirclement of the many Ukrainian formations fighting in the Donbass. In particular, possession of Iziium gave the Russians free use of the five highways that met in the town, a railroad line that ran all the way to Kharkiv (and, from there, all the way to Moscow), and an area well-suited to the creation of a large logistics base. (Iziium sits on the western side of the Oskil Reservoir, which protects it, and several hundred square miles of its environs, from overland attacks coming from the east.)

Operations along the Sea of Azov

In the southwest corner of the Donbass, the war began with an attack, conducted largely by armed non-state actors based in territory controlled by the Donetsk Peoples' Republic, in the direction of Mariupol. Ukraine's largest port on the Sea of Azov, Mariupol was home to nearly half a million people, nine-tenths of whom spoke Russian as their first language. Nonetheless, in the great crisis of 2014, the city had managed to avoid incorporation into the pro-Russian protostate being formed in the territory of the Donetsk *oblast*. It thus became a symbol of Ukrainian resistance to Russia, as well as home to private armies, such as the infamous Azov Battalion, allied to the government in Kiev.

The first attack upon Mariupol, and the many other attacks that followed over the course of the first eight weeks of the war, took the form of methodical attempts to seize particular pieces of terrain. They thus proved more costly to the fighters involved, more destructive of urban infrastructure, and

more dangerous to civilians than the operations conducted by battalion tactical groups elsewhere in Ukraine. Depending, as they did, on large amounts of ammunition, these attacks also placed greater demands upon the Russian supply system.

On 27 February 2022, Russian forces attacking from Crimea took control of Berdiansk, the second largest Ukrainian port on the Sea of Azov.⁸ As the port facilities were captured intact, the Russians quickly transformed Berdiansk into a supply base for the many battalion tactical groups that were then moving through the oblast that lay just west of Mariupol, that of Zaporizhzhia. (While some of these formations were moving to the east, to link up with the pro-Russian forces in the vicinity of Mariupol, others were moving north, to the south bank of the greatest of Ukraine's many rivers, the Dnipro.)

The Russian army formations in Zaporizhzhia, all of which had started the war in Crimea, had entered Ukraine by means of three corridors. The widest of these, which accommodated both road and rail traffic, sat atop the only isthmus connecting the Crimean Peninsula to the mainland of Ukraine. The second took the form of a single two-lane highway interrupted by a narrow strait. The third corridor, the narrowest of all, consisted of a country road that served the many little vacation villages situated upon a sandbar that ran along all 70 miles (112 kilometers) of the northeastern coast of Crimea. (Reaching the Ukrainian mainland by means of the latter two corridors required the crossing of bridges. One of these bridges, which spanned the aforementioned strait, marked the border between Crimea and Ukraine. The other, which crossed a river at the north end of the sand bar, lay entirely within Ukrainian territory.)

The ease with which these corridors could have been blocked suggests that the Russians attempted to gain control of chokepoints early on the first day of the war. In two cases, these attempts seem to have succeeded, for nothing seems to have impeded the rush of battalion tactical groups across either the isthmus or the strait. However, the Russian Marines who came ashore at the village of Azovske, just north of the terminus of the third route, proved unable to prevent Ukrainian engineers from blowing up the bridge that connected the sandbar to the mainland.

History has yet to record whether or not the Russian naval infantry units that landed at Azovske had been given the task of securing the bridge.⁹ Indeed, we do not yet know if the Russians made any use at all of a route that was, at once, vulnerable to interruption and poorly suited to heavy traffic. What is certain, however, is that the Russian Marines, who were mounted in armored personnel carriers, spent very little time on the beach. Instead, they drove towards the city of Melitopol, some 53 miles (84 kilometers) inland from their landing site.¹⁰

Operations in Kherson and Mykolaiv

Not all of the Russian formations that had entered Ukraine from Crimea moved into Zaporizhzhia. Substantial forces headed northwest, to the two places in the oblast of Kherson where highway traffic was able to cross the Dnipro. Before

the end of the first day of the operation, one of these columns had captured the easternmost of these crossings, which ran along the top of the dam at Nova Khakovka. At the same time, another column captured but failed to hold the bridge at Antonivka, an industrial suburb of the city of Kherson. In the days that followed, while the Russian forces at Antonivka engaged in a see-saw battle for control of the bridge, several battalion tactical groups crossed the Dnipro at Nova Khakovka and surrounded the city of Kherson.

While some of the Russian formations that had crossed the Dnipro blocked the routes out of Kherson, others pushed west. By the time that Kherson surrendered (1 March 2022), these latter forces had reached the outskirts of Mykolaiv, Ukraine's second largest port on the Black Sea. Notwithstanding the importance of that city to the Ukrainian Navy, the Russian formations operating in the vicinity of Mykolaiv made no attempt to take it.¹¹ Rather, they took control of routes leading into the city, sent battalion tactical groups on reconnaissance-in-force missions, and left the task of destroying the many military and naval facilities in the area to guided missiles and aircraft.¹²

To put things another way, the withdrawal of a substantial portion of the Russian invasion force created the possibility of the assembly of a powerful operational reserve.

Attacks on Ukrainian Logistics

Over the course of the month of March, the Russian campaign of missile strikes against static targets changed its emphasis from facilities associated with Ukrainian military aviation to installations, such as depots for motor fuel, ammunition warehouses, and workshops, that supported ground forces. On the night of 19–20 March 2022, for example, Kalibr cruise missiles fired from Russian ships in the Black Sea, struck the engineer vehicle factory in Nizhyn, some 40 miles (64 kilometers) southeast of Chernihiv. (The Russian press release describing this strike characterized the factory as a place where Ukrainian armored vehicles damaged in combat were being repaired.) On that same night, hypersonic missiles hit a fuel storage and distribution center in the town of Kostyantynivka, about 40 miles northwest of Mykolaiv.

The shift in emphasis of the guided missile campaign coincided with a substantial increase in the number of ground attack missions flown by Russian military aircraft. While a small proportion of these struck the same sort of targets as missiles, most of the ground attack sorties seem to have been directed toward strong points and areas of military equipment concentration.¹³ (Surprisingly, there are no reports of Russian aircraft operating in the armed reconnaissance mode.

It remains to be seen whether this is a function of a change in practice or merely an artifact of a paucity of major road movements on the part of Ukrainian ground forces.)

Redeployment

During the first three days of April 2022, all of the Russian ground forces that had been operating on either side of the Kiev Reservoir, as well as those in the northeast corner of Ukraine, returned to their assembly areas in Belarus and Russia. As a result of this grand movement, somewhere between 60 and 65 percent of the Russian ground forces in Ukraine became available for redeployment. To put things another way, the withdrawal of a substantial portion of the Russian invasion force created the possibility of the assembly of a powerful operational reserve.

During the second week of April, some of the Russian formations that had been withdrawn from northern Ukraine, as well as a number of fresh formations, arrived in the vicinity of Izium. There they took part in an advance towards Severodonetsk that, if completed, would create a pocket north of the territory controlled by the militia of the Luhansk Peoples' Republic.

>Author's note: This article was delivered to the editor on 14 April 2022. It was thus written without knowledge of any events that took place after that date.

Notes

1. For a concise explanation of Boyd's three levels of war, see William S. Lind, "John Boyd's Art of War," *The American Conservative*, (August 2013), available at <https://www.theamericanconservative.com>.
2. Justin Bronk, "The Mysterious Case of the Missing Russian Air Force," *RUSI*, (February 2022), available at <https://rusi.org>.
3. Ryan Merrifield and Sam Elliot-Gibbs, "Kyiv TV Tower Explodes after Russia Warns of Missile Strikes in Ukraine Capital," *Mirror*, (March 2022), available at <https://www.mirror.co.uk>.
4. Natalia Gurkovskaya, "Fighting in Sumy Region: Konotop Authorities Hold Talks with Occupiers after Ultimatum [Бої на Сумщині – влада Конотопа провела переговори з окупантами після ультиматуму]," *RBC.UA*, (March 2022), available at <https://www.rbc.ua>.
5. Staff, "Nizhyn Repair Plant of Engineering Vehicles" [Нежинський ремонтний завод інженерного вооруження], *Guns.UA*, (n.d.), available at www.guns.ua.
6. Often, though not invariably, named for the city that serves as its capital, an *oblast* is an administrative district that corresponds, more or less, to an English county or a French department.
7. For a detailed description of the component units of the New Russian militias, see Tomáš Šmíd and Alexandra Šmídová, "Anti-Government Non-State Armed Actors in the Conflict in Eastern Ukraine," *Mezinárodní Vztahy: Czech Journal of International Affairs*, (Prague: Institute of International Relations, June 2021).

8. Staff, "Russian Forces Seize Port of Berdyansk," *The Maritime Executive*, (February 2022), available at <https://www.maritime-executive.com>.

9. Some observers have confused the Azovske where the landing of Russian Marines took place with another village of the same name in the environs of the port of Berdiansk, some 95 miles (150 kilometers) to the east. This mistake, in turn, has led to the often-repeated assertion that the landing of the naval infantry units took place 70 miles (112 kilometers) west of Mariupol. For an example of the latter error, see Staff, "Russian Navy Carries Out Amphibious Assault Near Mariupol," *The Maritime Executive*, (February 2022), available at <https://www.maritime-executive.com>.

10. Staff, "Russian Troops Welcomed with Flags in Ukraine's Melitopol," *Tass*, (February 2022), available at <https://tass.com>.

11. The absence of Russian attempts to take Mikolaiv led to many tales of small Ukrainian detachments stopping much larger Russian forces.

For some colorful examples, see Yaroslav Trofimov, "Ukrainian Counteroffensive Near Mykolaiv Relieves Strategic Port City," *The Wall Street Journal*, (March 2022), available at <https://www.wsj.com>.

12. For an account of one of the many missile strikes upon targets in Mikolaiv, see Michael Schwartz, "Russian Rocket Attack Turns Ukrainian Marine Base to Rubble, Killing Dozens," *New York Times*, (March 2022), available at <https://www.nytimes.com>.

13. For examples of Russian reports of the results of such attacks, see the daily briefings on the official Telegram channel of the Russian Ministry of Defense (t.me/mod_russia_en).



Battalion Tactical Groups

The basic building block of the Russian ground forces that invaded Ukraine on 24 February 2022 is the "battalion tactical group" [batal'onnyaya takticheskaya gruppya]. As their name suggests, these combined-arms formations are often used for tactical purposes. Nonetheless, there were occasions during the first few days of the Russian invasion of Ukraine of 2022 when battalion tactical groups were given missions of direct operational significance. These included the seizure of bridges and "fighting for intelligence" [razvedka boyem]. The latter, which can also be translated as "reconnaissance by combat," involved the conduct of attacks on a relatively small scale to locate exploitable gaps in Ukrainian defenses. It thus has much in common with the classic maneuver warfare technique of "reconnaissance pull."

In terms of organization, battalion combat teams have much in common with the battalion combat teams employed by the Army and Marine Corps for the past eighty years. Like American battalion combat teams, Russian battalion tactical groups consist of an infantry battalion that has been reinforced with smaller units of other arms. Battalion tactical groups, however, tend to have much more in the way of artillery than their American analogs. Where the normal American battalion combat team has long been provided with a single battery armed with the standard direct support field piece of the day, the artillery of a typical Russian battalion tactical group consists of a battery of self-propelled 152mm howitzers, a battery of truck-mounted multiple rocket launchers, and a battery of short-range anti-aircraft missile launchers.¹

Notes

1. This description of the organization of a typical Russian battalion tactical group is taken from an infographic posted on the (currently inaccessible) website of the Russian Ministry of Defense.

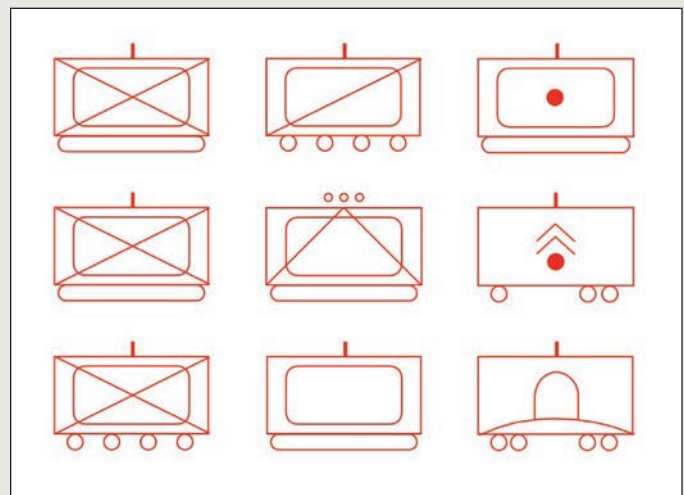


Figure 1. The combat elements of a typical Russian battalion tactical group. (Figure by author.)



On Clausewitz

by Col Marcus Bowers, USMCR (Ret)

Perhaps the intent of the Manueverist Paper No. 7 (*MCG*, April 2021), “On Criticality and Vulnerability,” is to maintain a singular track and limited critique applied to traditional battlefield operations. In either case, the article implies but stops short of exploring the broader scope of Clausewitz’s intended learning and contemplative strategy. To that end, there is a broader consideration of what Clausewitz was trying to convey. Though much debated in the Marine Corps at many levels over these many years, I argue that the true intent and interpretation of Clausewitz’s *Center of Gravity (COG)* concept is not so complicated. In no uncertain terms, he made his argument linguistically complex, and the literal English interpretations alone have challenged many. Moreover, these varied interpretations, though well-intended, exacerbate the complexity. The truth in lending, however, from this great strategist, thinker, and author of *On War* is in the conceptual interpretation of his theory and philosophy. The implication is how to fight *not* just on the battlefield but to win in every domain. Conflict today and the battlefield of the future have become even more complex, but Clausewitz’s approach and theory are no less applicable. The strategy and philosophy are timeless. Defining the battlefield itself has become as complex as interpreting Clausewitz’s words. However, endeavoring to do so encourages innovative thinking, a broader sense of strategic study, and most importantly the development of multiple options to defeat and win across the spectrum of conflict. To that end, here are a couple of thoughts on just that.

Over time and through endless discussion on Clausewitz’s theory, the central debate remains around *COG* versus *Critical Vulnerability (CV)*. The point should be clear that *COG* is not just physical strength, military firepower, or positional advantage. *COG* may also be intangible: the *will* to fight, the *condition* of a particular unit, or the *force* of political/social support. These can also be the *COG*, or they may even be the *CV* depending on the situation at hand and the commander’s intent. A commander and his strategist must consider the view from all angles including the enemy’s and as such apply exercises in planning and decide the intended order of battle. This must be done for all orders of effect imaginable as well and within the time one has to consider the possibilities. Our challenge today is an asymmetric environment and the exponential evolution of domains outside traditional battlefields. Cyberspace, info-space, and space itself are complex domains and clearly require leadership to examine strategies beyond the physical engagement of forces.

>Col Bowers is recently retired and currently serving as the civilian Deputy Director, Agency Synchronization Operations Center (ASOC), Defense Logistics Agency (DLA).

Considering Clausewitz’s own words, “strength on strength,” is but an option and not always the best course of action. For today’s conflicts and in a future context, Clausewitz is no less applicable, and in fact, I propose is arguably more relevant.

A preconceived Clausewitz interpretation is that a *COG* is defined by the enemy. However, the *COG* as noted is relative and the opposing force in the sense of decided strategy must define the respective *COG* for itself: “What and where can we affect in a way to provide advantage and succeed defeat upon the enemy?” “Why is a particular target or area of focus relevant to mission success?” These are the types of questions commanders and strategists must be asking in every phase of a conflict. They must be asked repeatedly and followed by timely and constructive thought not just when the situation changes, but every opportunity one has to redress the current situation and expected circumstances. As inferred in No. 7’s reference to Sun Tsu, the application of Clausewitz is mutually supporting in that the goal is having the enemy react to your action and not you to his. The timeless thought of such strategic endeavor is inherent in Clausewitz’s teaching. There is no rocket science here but merely applied Socratic methodology toward interpreting what is known, defining the playing field, and developing a focused unity of effort toward what is anticipated.

In further consideration of defining the *COG*, it must be decidedly informed but can be interpreted and decided as any number of targets or areas of focus. However, it must not always be defined as “where to strike.” Defining it and identifying it may simply show “where *not* to strike,” thus contrasting and identifying the *CV* of the enemy as opposed to the *COG*. Additionally, a *COG* should not be defined in a linear manner. Determination exists beyond the physical dimension and is interlaced throughout the many layers of strategic considerations. This should be the interpretation of Clausewitz’s intent. *COGs* can be as intangible as the motivation of the enemy, why he fights, why his country fights, and justification and rationalization—whatever the causation may be. These can be both the *COG* and the *CV* as is interpreted by the commander through situational awareness, intelligence, or desired end state. The lesson is that

a COG must not be defined in a singular linear manner but systemically and within a hierarchy of focused areas. There is a combination of decided points over time, yes—but well beyond the physical pieces on the field of battle. To that end as well, the COG and the CV may change over time or in fact may be transposed.

Thus, flexibility in our approach to planning is critical. Timely battlefield response is key in our development in the order of battle and overtime in applying commander's intent. Flexibility and timeliness are the critical underlayments of our authority to adjust on the battlefield. This is again inherent in the Clausewitz characterization and relationship of COG and CV. Linear thinking was not Clausewitz's intent. "Shoot and destroy the big gun" is *not* the end-all to his concept of COG, though it has too often been interpreted as such. The complexity of his delivery in German and the challenge of interpretation has provided too many opportunities to miss the essence of his teaching—I dare say as well interpreted to support personal narrative throughout history The ability to

adjust, however, and change or flex to the battle of guns or the battle of wills as the case may be is the essence of Clausewitz lesson. Clearly, this is timely in the application of our modern battlefield and the asymmetrical domains of the future.

I agree the final conclusion of No. 7 is on track, though I somewhat disagree with the simplification of Clausewitz's concepts as a way to get there. I will concede that if we are keeping in the limited realm of physical engagement and traditional battlefield conflict, a simplistic interpretation is mostly applicable. The bit of irony here is getting caught on the words themselves while attempting to remove the discussion away from a "two- or three-word label," I do agree the final quote from *Warfighting* does "keep it simple," but just like Clausewitz, it too can be applied not only to the street fight but in a broader context and interpreted for all once and future conflicts. The article itself should inspire all readers, and as I have been, to be motivated to dust off their tattered, ear-shorn copies of Clausewitz, lean in, and read on with fresh eyes.



Quote to Ponder:

"... determinations continue to be assailed incessantly by fresh experience; and the mind, if we may use the expression, must always be under arms."

—Carl von Clausewitz

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Commanding the Pacific

reviewed by Col Eric L. Chase, USMCR (Ret)

In *Commanding the Pacific: Marine Corps Generals in World War II*, Stephen R. Taaffe focuses on the Corps' wartime leadership and seizes a fresh niche among the innumerable published histories of the Pacific War. His previous books span U.S. military leadership from the American Revolution to the Korean War. *Commanding the Pacific* reveals how fifteen Marine generals led their commands or influenced the action during the Pacific War from 1941 to 1945. He describes the ferocious combat that brought out the best and, on occasion, the idiosyncrasies of the small coterie of Marine generals who led combat in the Pacific.

Two Marine Commandants served during World War II: Gen Thomas Holcomb and Gen Alexander A. Vandegrift. From Washington, DC, both continuously influenced the assignments of generals in the Pacific, pro-

>Col Chase, an attorney in private practice in New Jersey, served as an Infantry Platoon Commander in Vietnam and retired from the Marine Corps Reserve in 1998 after more than 30 years of active and reserve service. His father, the late MGen Harold W. Chase, served as a First Lieutenant on Iwo Jima and was wounded twice.

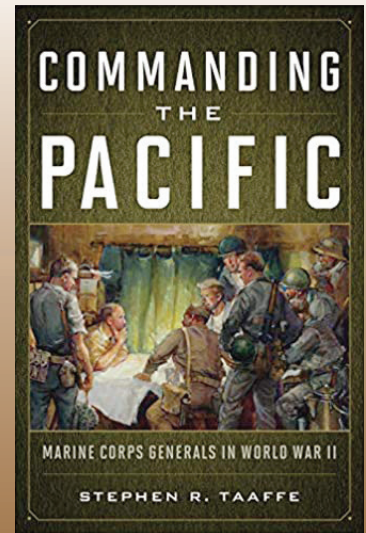
D. Roosevelt delivered the Medal of Honor to Vandegrift for "his tenacity, courage and resourcefulness" on Guadalcanal where he demonstrated "inspiring leadership." As Taaffe makes plain, Guadalcanal was one of those battles that might have been lost but for exceptional leadership from Vandegrift and exceptional determination and courage from Marines of all ranks. How the Marine generals led,

As Taaffe makes plain, Guadalcanal ... might have been lost but for exceptional leadership from Vandegrift and exceptional determination and courage from Marines ...

motions, and—surprisingly—their combat strategies. Holcomb's distinguished combat record was already complete when he became Commandant in 1936. However, it was Vandegrift who set the Pacific's highest standard as a warfighting general on Guadalcanal before succeeding Holcomb on 1 January 1944. Only a month into that office, President Franklin

fought, and interacted with each other and leaders of other Services for the duration of the Pacific conflict is the heart of the story.

Taaffe introduces his theme by quoting GEN Dwight D. Eisenhower's view that "infallibly the commander and the unit are almost one and the same thing." Agreeing with Eisenhower, Taaffe concludes that



COMMANDING THE PACIFIC: Marine Corps Generals in World War II. By Stephen Taaffe. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2021.

ISBN: 978-1682477083, 213 pp.

"the Marine Corps could not have won its war against the Japanese without the particular leaders in charge of its divisions and corps during the conflict." *Commanding the Pacific* should thus compel the attention of all military professionals, especially in the Marine Corps but also those in other Services.

First, initially concentrating on the sudden U.S. immersion from peace into war on 7 December 1941, Taaffe shows that Marine generals (and leaders of units below them) had to learn and adapt quickly to overcome the incomparable hardships of serial vicious combat arenas in Pacific islands defended by dug-in Japanese, nearly all of whom would fight to the death. The Corps rightly laid claim to the development and deployment of yet untested amphibious warfare doctrine, as it took the main role in conducting island mission after island mission. The pervasive attitude of the Marine generals was one of unbridled confidence, regardless of the deadly rigors they shared with their men that included not only a ruthless and

capable enemy and the grave risks of assaulting hostile shores but also the elements of disease-ridden tropical islands and daily deprivation of basic supplies, ammunition, potable water, and rations. They kept their doubts to themselves, even when the odds favored the entrenched enemy.

Amphibious landings against occupied islands with a well-prepared enemy defined Marines' movements to combat in the Pacific. Just getting ashore generated horrific casualties. The landing craft were primitive and vulnerable. Prep fires were always inadequate. The Navy was not always available for supporting fires, resup-

ply, or evacuation of casualties. Mistakes were costly, and Marine leaders learned to adjust their tactics accordingly. Even then, casualties mounted—too high, many argued at the time, notably including an enraged public after Tarawa's casualty losses during three days of combat. As the island combat neared the end in 1944–1945, the casualty tolls on islands like Saipan (15 June–9 July 1944), Peleliu (15 September–27 November 1944), Iwo Jima (19 February–26 March 1945), and Okinawa (1 April–22 June 1945) saw ghastly spikes. In those circumstances, Taaffe's telling of how the Marine generals coped with such carnage and prevailed is poignant and inspirational, yet heartbreaking.

Second, Marine generals often shelved their egos to abide by orders of more senior commanders when there was disagreement. This was especially true in the Pacific where Marine generals were subordinate to certain admirals aboard ships and, ultimately, to Fleet Commander Chester W. Nimitz. It was not until after the war that

the Commandant gained the equal say with the other Service chiefs that it has today.

In the first chapter appropriately called "SEMPER FI: An Anomalous Organization in Search of a Mission," Taaffe places the "small and insular group" that led the Marine Corps in a pre-World War II perspective:

In July 1941 the Corps had five major generals, 9 brigadier generals, and 70 colonels. The service fortunes in World War II depended as much on the abilities of these men as on anything else. They constituted the only source for the Corps' division, and Corps' commanders, department chiefs, senior staff officers in the field

out their commander. They were resourceful and inspiring, leading Marines to fight their tenacious Japanese rivals with equal fervor. Yet, some carried quirks of personality that created controversies, small and large. No one personified the combination of talent and ability with a prickly personality more than Gen Holland "Howlin' Mad" Smith. His firing of an Army general on Saipan for moving too slowly in the offensive mode ascended into a Marine Corps versus Army legendary dispute that continues in history's written 75 years after the battle.

Commanding the Pacific is an indispensable read for anyone aspiring to any leadership level in the Marine Corps. It portrays the numerous trials by fire that Marine generals endured to bring the hardest-fought victory to American forces in United States history. Together, these generals personify a "winning attitude" and fortitude that overcame the worst combat conditions conceivable. Taaffe ends his important contribution to the studies of history and leadership this way:

There was nothing preordained about the war's outcome and the Marine Corps' role in it. At the conflict's start, the Corps possessed an untested amphibious doctrine, an uncertain relationship with the Army, and limited resources. ... The Marines could have ended up spending the conflict as a tiny organization providing shipboard security, guarding Navy bases, and undertaking reconnaissance missions. Fortunately for the Marines, their equipment, doctrine, tactics, and especially commanders proved the Corps' ability to successfully storm hostile beaches. Holcomb and Vandegrift deserve credit for finding enough good combat commanders among their limited pool of high-ranking officers to lead their divisions and corps to victory. In doing so, these generals not only helped to win the Pacific War but also secured for the Marine Corps a prominent postwar role in the U.S. military.

and at HQMC, liaison officers with the Army and Navy, and high-ranking logistical personnel. As it turned out, there were never enough of them to go around because no one else could do these important jobs.

The Marine Corps faced challenges in the war against Japan that "proved to be unlike anything the U.S. Military had ever encountered." The vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean, distances from U.S. staging areas and ports to Pacific islands, and the conditions ashore proved daunting and unprecedented realities. Although American forces leveled a stinging defeat on the Japanese navy in the Battle of Midway in June 1942, it was not until the victory at Guadalcanal (7 August 1942–9 February 1943) that the United States truly turned the war's tide.

Taaffe brings out the great strengths of the Pacific's small fraternity of Marine generals. To a man, they were physically courageous to a fault, sometimes endangering themselves, upsetting nearby subordinates who feared the enemy would take

The Marines could have ended up spending the conflict as a tiny organization providing shipboard security, guarding Navy bases, and undertaking reconnaissance missions ...



Dying to Learn

reviewed by Mr. William J. Treuting

One only has to read the *38th Commandant's Planning Guidance and Force Design 2030* to know that the Marine Corps—in concert with the other Services—is reorienting to face the realities of great power competition. As recent actions by Russia in Ukraine and China in the South China Sea demonstrate, the threat of war with a peer or near-peer competitor is closer on the horizon than many would like to think. In the face of this real prospect for armed conflict with a major power, it helps to look to the past in order to find answers to the problems of today. As one of my favorite quotes attributed to Mark Twain goes, “History doesn’t repeat itself, but it does rhyme.” With this threat of a major war with great powers looming, it would be helpful for Marines to look back to the First World War as a starting point to best contextualize the problems our Nation is facing today

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row’s wars.” He notes in particular that the rate of technological change, the extent to which technological change is driven by the private sector, and the absence of formal great-power wars in recent memory are all similarities that our current military leaders share with their predecessors from over 100 years ago.

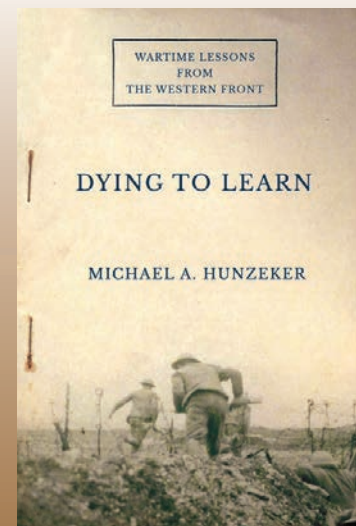
Specifically, Hunzeker’s book tries to address “why some militaries are better at learning than others” by using the Western Front of the First World War as a case study. He compares and contrasts the Western Front’s three major powers—Germany, Britain, and France—noting how each went to war with similar organization, weap-

As recent actions by Russia in Ukraine and China in the South China Sea demonstrate, the threat of war with a peer or near-peer competitor is closer on the horizon than many would like to think.

and understand why this war amongst great powers evolved as it did.

In *Dying to Learn*, Dr. Michael Hunzeker—a Marine Corps veteran and assistant professor at George Mason University’s Schar School of Policy and Government—makes the case that the First World War “is uniquely relevant to the challenges that today’s leaders face as they prepare for tomor-

ons, and doctrines. However, the crux of his analysis is how each nation’s experiences diverged following the outbreak of war and later converged by the end as Germany, Britain, and France eventually embraced “modern assault tactics, combined-arms infantry and artillery operations, and the elastic defense in depth.” This brings up the central question of the book: “Why



DYING TO LEARN: Wartime Lessons from the Western Front. By Michael Hunzeker. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2021.
ISBN: 9781501758454, 245 pp.

did the British, French, and German armies pursue roughly the same solutions ... to the same tactical problem (stalemate) *but at different speeds and varying degrees of success?*” Hunzeker argues that the “German Army learned faster than its competitors.” To support this argument, he presents the assessment, command, and training (ACT) theory, wherein the extent to which wartime learning is successful is predicated on: “[t]he degree to which a military delegates command on the battlefield, [w]hether it possesses a particular type of doctrinal assessment mechanism, and [t]he degree to which it controls training in the classroom.” As Hunzeker argues, the German Army was the most successful in implementing wartime learning because it “moderately delegated command on the battlefield,” possessed an “independent, prestigious, and rigorous doctrinal assessment mechanism,” and “maintained centralized control over training.”

Dying to Learn should be read by Marines for three principal reasons. First, it provides Marines a detailed

assessment of how great powers with similar strength, assets, and doctrine were forced to overcome the same obstacles while under the same conditions. A war between great powers has not been fought in several decades, and the memory of the human costs of these types of conflicts has almost faded. On the Western Front of the First World War, critical lessons were learned by the lives of hundreds of thousands of men. It is reasonable to believe that these casualties rates—given the newest generation of weapons—could happen in future wars. Thus, a great power that can be prudent to facilitate wartime innovation would best have a structure in place to avoid the attrition associated with molding prewar doctrines to the realities of war. Second, using the ACT theory, Hunzeker offers three case studies comparing and contrasting the military learning of the German, British, and French militaries on the

Western Front. Each study provides the reader a litany of examples of how tactics and strategy evolved throughout this theatre—demonstrating the extent to which each power was successful in developing, assessing, and

... Hunzeker has armed his reader with the tools to pursue their self-study and apply these principles to whichever conflict they wish.

implementing military innovation. By presenting the process through which wartime innovations arise, the case studies provide a template for leaders to implement their own—should the

necessity arise. Finally, following his primary argument, Hunzeker applies the principles of the ACT theory into the U.S. Army's experiences in Vietnam and Iraq to demonstrate how his theory can be applied to other conflicts. By demonstrating how the principles of the ACT theory can be applied outside of the Western Front of the First World War, Hunzeker has armed his reader with the tools to pursue their self-study and apply these principles to whichever conflict they wish. Given the uncertainty of our Nation's future and the ever-increasing potential of conflict with a peer or near-peer adversary, *Dying to Learn* allows Marines to address the problem of wartime innovation by learning from the experiences of our predecessors.



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