MARINE CORPS
Gazette
Professional Journal of U.S. Marines

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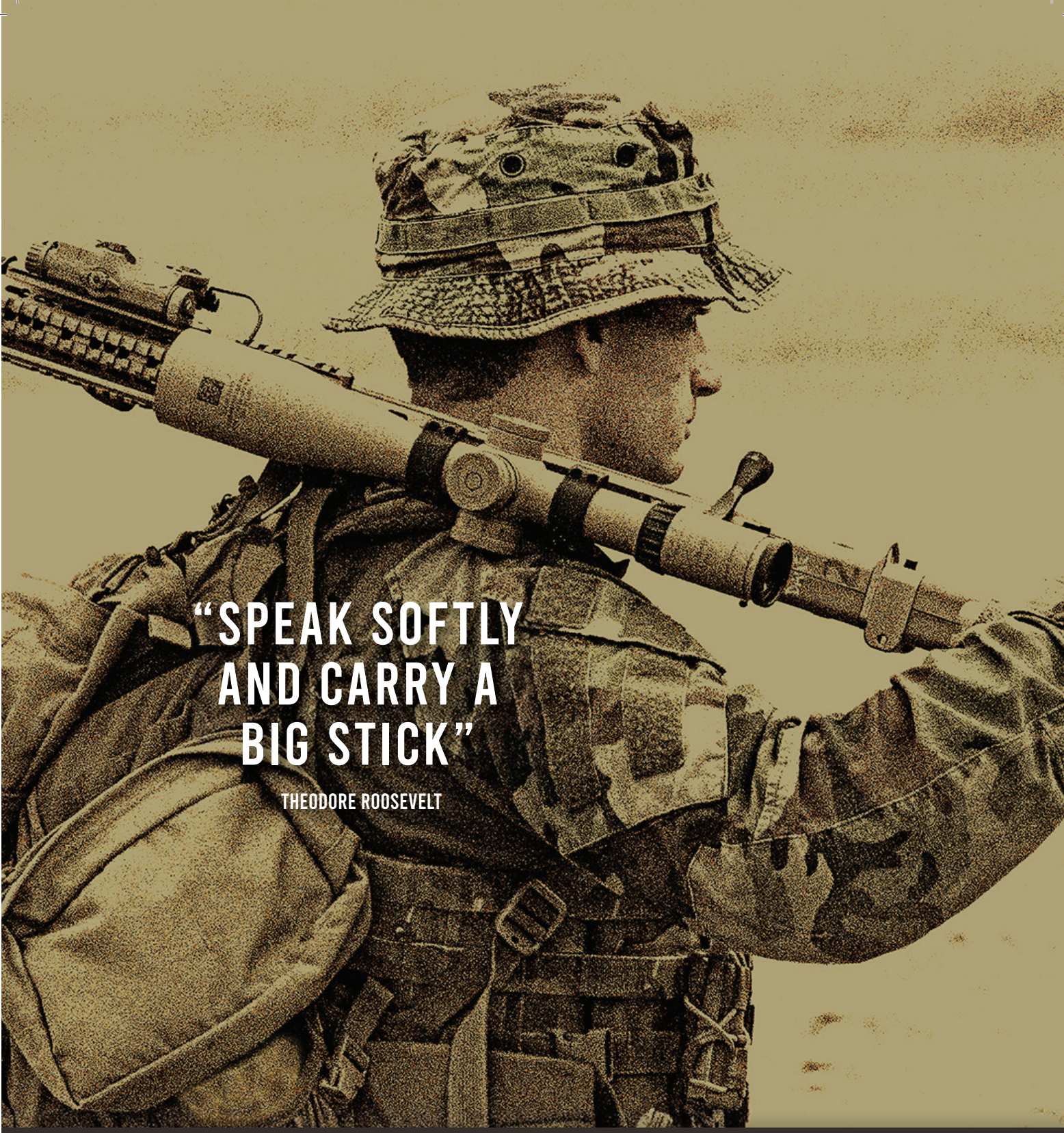

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LtGen Vincent R. Stewart, May 11, 1958–April 28, 2023. (Photo by LCpl James Bourgeois.)

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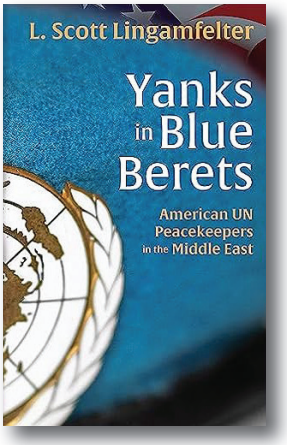

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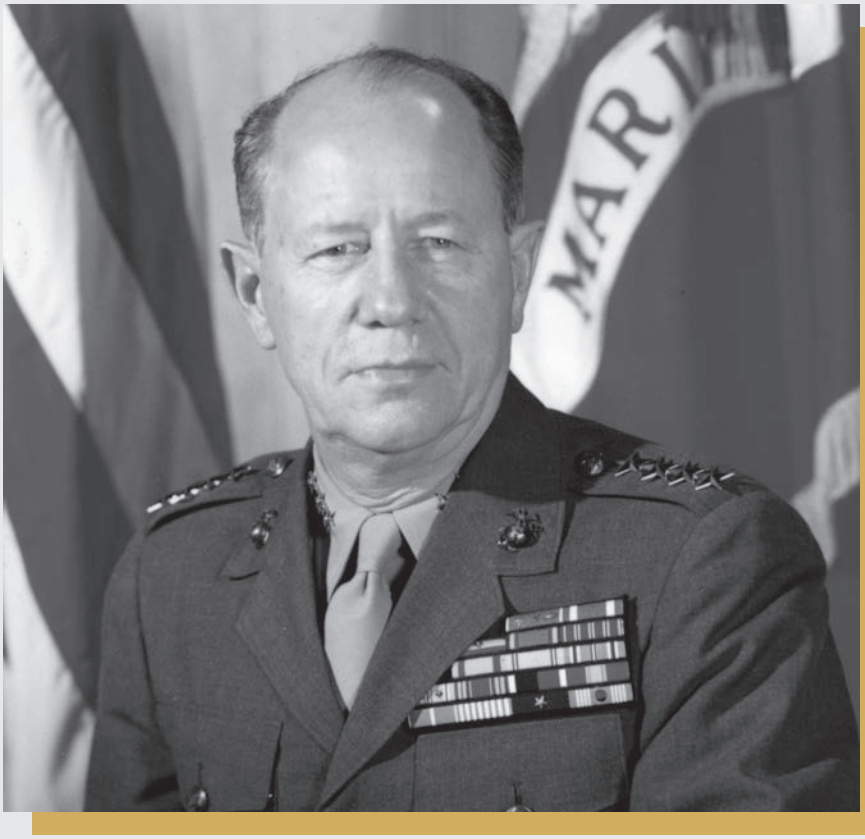
GEN ROBERT E. HOGABOOM LEADERSHIP WRITING CONTEST



Gen Robert E. Hogaboom.

The Marine Corps Gazette's annual Gen Robert E. Hogaboom Leadership Writing Contest is here. The contest honors the essay that is the most original in its approach to the various aspects of leadership. Authors should not simply reiterate the 11 Principles of Leadership or the 14 Leadership Traits of an NCO addressed in the Guidebook for Marines. Authors must be willing to take an honest, realistic look at what leadership, either positive or negative, means to them and then articulate ways and methods of being an effective leader of Marines.

E-mail entries to: gazette@mca-marines.org

Mail entries to: Marine Corps Gazette
Hogaboom Writing Contest
Box 1775
Quantico, VA 22134

DEADLINE: 31 January, 2024

Background

The contest is named for Gen Robert E. Hogaboom, USMC(Ret), who served the Corps for 34 years. Upon graduating from the Naval Academy in 1925, Gen Hogaboom saw service in Cuba, Nicaragua, and China. Following action in a number of key Pacific battles in World War II, he later served first as assistant division commander, then division commander, 1st Marine Division, in Korea in 1954–55. Gen Hogaboom retired in 1959 as a lieutenant general while serving as the Chief of Staff, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, and was subsequently advanced to the rank of general.

Prizes include $3,000 and an engraved plaque for first place; $1,500 and an engraved plaque for second place; and $500 for honorable mention. All entries are eligible for publication.

Instructions

The contest is open to all Marines on active duty and to members of the Marine Corps Reserve. Electronically submitted entries are preferred. Attach the entry as a file and send to gazette@mca-marines.org. A cover page should be included identifying the manuscript as a Gen Robert E. Hogaboom Leadership Writing Contest entry and include the title of the essay and the author's name. Repeat title on the first page, but author's name should not appear anywhere but on the cover page. Manuscripts are acceptable, but please include a disk in Microsoft Word format with the manuscript. The *Gazette* Editorial Advisory Panel will judge the contest during February and notify all entrants as to the outcome shortly thereafter. Multiple entries are allowed; however, only one entry per author will receive an award.

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OCTOBER 2023

Editorial: Focus on Intelligence and Information

Our themes this month are the related areas of intelligence and information. The impacts of emergent surveillance, detection, and targeting technologies on the dynamic reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance (RXR) fight and the Corps' expeditionary capabilities in targeting and C2 point to an evolving role for Marines in the Joint Force. In the future, the success of worldwide crisis response and naval operations will most likely be determined by the Marines' capabilities and readiness to contribute to winning the RXR competition and to *target forward* in multiple domains. Also, as our cover highlights, this edition recognizes the loss of one of the leaders in the intelligence community and an architect of today's Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance Enterprise (the MCISRE), LtGen Vincent Stewart. The *Gazette* rarely memorializes an individual Marine; however, in this case, the contributions of LtGen Stewart to the Marine Corps and national intelligence communities were significant enough to warrant special consideration. On page 8, LtGen Matthew G. Glavy, the Deputy Commandant of Information, pays tribute to LtGen Stewart in his opening message. On page 52, Mr. Ben Closs provides a uniquely personal recollection of working for DIRINT in "Remembering Vincent Stewart."

Stand-out articles in our focus areas this month address the conceptual underpinning of the Corps' approach to the intelligence warfighting function in "A Brief Concept for MCISRE" by Mr. Ben Closs on page 9; the role of intelligence analysis in threat-based capability development in "Know the Threat, Inform the Future" by the Staff of the Marine Corps Intelligence Activity on page 14; and the convergence of domains and functions in "Information and Intelligence" by Mr. Eric Schaner and Dr. Christopher Paul on page 48.

Other highlights this month include a variety of views on the implementation of future force design such as the requirements for assault bridging capabilities on page 66 in "Bridging the Looming Gap" by MSgt Jonathan Hackett and an analysis of the proposed structure of the infantry battalion on page 74 in "An Alternative" by Colonels Andrew MacMannis and J.J. Carroll Jr. In our ongoing studies of strategy and policy, on page 80 we present "The Challenge for Japan's Self-Defense Force" by Capt Ryo Nakano of the JSDF, the winner of the 2023 Rapicault Memorial Award, presented in memory of Capt Patrick Rapicault by the *Marine Corps Gazette* for the best paper written by an international military student in Expeditionary Warfare School. A final highlight is the winner of *the Marine Corps Gazette* Writing Award from the EWS class of 2023, which examines the Corps' future requirements of rotor-wing close attack aviation in "The Evolution of Light Attack" by Capt John Delekto on page 58.

To close, I draw your attention to our Special Notices announcing the re-establishment of the *Gazette's* Distinguished Authors Certificate Program. The leadership of the MCA and the *Gazette* intend to grow this program and we invite all frequent *Gazette* contributors who believe they meet the established criteria to contact the *Gazette* Editorial Offices. Recognition in this exclusive group of authors is an incentive to continue the Corps' tradition of professional discourse and to inspire future thought leaders to contribute to the intellectual side of the profession of arms.

Christopher Woodbridge

MCA President and CEO, LtGen Charles G. Chiarotti, USMC(Ret); *VP Foundation Operations,* Col Tim Mundy, USMC(Ret); *VP Professional Development, Publisher & Editor-in-Chief* Marine Corps Gazette & Leatherneck *Magazine of the Marines*, Col Christopher Woodbridge, USMC(Ret); *VP Corporate Sponsorships, Events & Advertising,* Ms. LeeAnn Mitchell.

24 August 2023, The* Marine Corps Gazette *Distinguished Authors (from left to right): Maj Paul Stokes, LtCol Jon Hoffman, LtCol Arun Shankar, Capt Walker Mills, Capt Michael Hanson, LtCol Frank Hoffman, Col Scott Cuomo, Col Eric Chase, Col Mark Cancian. (Not pictured: Col T.X.Hammes, LtCol Brian Kerg, Maj John Schmitt.) ***(Photo by Andrew Noh.)***

THE *MARINE CORPS GAZETTE* DISTINGUISHED AUTHORS CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

On 24 August 2023, at the 4th Annual Meeting of the Marine Corps Association as a National Military Association, the *Marine Corps Gazette*'s Distinguished Authors Program was re-established after a hiatus of over 20 years. The original program was started in July 1995 by Col John Edson Greenwood, who retired in 1980 after 30 years commissioned service followed by more than 20 years as the editor of the *Gazette*. In October 1995, Col Greenwood sought to establish a program to "salute some of our younger authors who are making significant and continuing contributions to the intellectual side of the Corps," and the Distinguished *Marine Corps Gazette* Authors group was first announced. Col Greenwood was dedicated to advancing the professional journal as a forum for the exchange of ideas concerning the continuous evolution of Marine Corps capabilities and this program was meant as an incentive to grow this exchange.

To reestablish stewardship of the Distinguished Authors Program, the MCA and the *Gazette* have formalized the criteria, and created certificates for the recipients, and a commemorative "perpetual award" to be maintained in the *Gazette*'s offices. The criteria to qualify for the certificate are to have published a minimum of 10 articles in the *Gazette* and to have accomplished one of the following achievements: placing in one of the *Gazette's* annual writing contests, having at least one article published in another professional military journal, or publishing a book as either the primary author or as a contributing author, or editor.

The new program will become a fixture of the MCA's Annual Meeting. The leadership of the MCA and the *Gazette* fully expect this program to grow, and we invite all frequent contributors to the *Gazette* who believe they meet the established criteria to contact the *Gazette* editorial office. Our intent is that recognition in this exclusive group of authors serves as an incentive to continue the Corps' tradition of professional discourse and to inspire future thought leaders in our Corps.

The current recipients of the *Marine Corps Gazette* Distinguished Author Certificate are:

LtCol R. Scott Moore *
LtGen Bernard E. "Mick" Trainor †
Col Mark F. Cancian
Col Eric L. Chase
Col Scott A. Cuomo
Col Thomas X. "T.X." Hammes
LtCol Jon T. Hoffman
LtCol Frank G. Hoffman
LtCol Brian A. Kerg
LtCol Arun Shankar
Maj John F. Schmitt
Maj Paul L. Stokes
Capt Michael A. Hanson
Capt Walker D. Mills

* LtCol R. Scott Moore was the first author to be recognized in 1995.

† LtGen Trainor passed away on June 2, 2018. He is memorialized in the *Gazette*'s annual LtGen Bernard E. "Mick" Trainor Writing Award sponsored by the MCA and the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion Association.

For more information on the *Gazette* Distibguished Authors Certificate Program and the authors visit: https://mca-marines.org/gazette-distinguished-authors-program/.

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"Logistics Operations in a DDIL Environment"

I read the article on the use of Global Combat Support System-Marine Corps (GCSS-MC) in a denied, degraded, intermittent, and low-bandwidth environment with great interest. This challenge has existed since the beginning of GCSS-MC and has been an abject failure that resulted in two acquisition breaches over the life of the program. Thus, I applaud the continued work to solve this critical issue, but I think it provides an overly optimistic view that the current efforts will yield positive results. If there is one thing we have learned after nearly a one billion dollar investment in this program, nothing has ever been delivered as promised (sadly). However, even with such horrendous past performance, we continue to invest and try to make it work on the backs of our Marines. It is time we recognize that the GCSS-MC foundation of the Oracle Enterprise Resource Planning system is not able to meet the requirements of the future operating environment. Unequivocally, it has struggled to meet the basic functional requirements of the past, so why do we continue to think it will meet the even more arduous requirements of the future? We need a new logistics system strategy and should stop trying to put lipstick on a pig.

BGen K.J. Stewart (Ret)

"Marines Awaiting Training"

When I was a young lieutenant, I remember my late father, a Marine aviator and 30-year officer, telling me, "Son, there are no new lessons learned, just old ones we keep relearning. There are no new mistakes, just old ones we keep repeating." As I read, "Marines Awaiting Training" in the June issue of the *Gazette*, I realized just how prescient he was. The article's three authors note, "From commissioning to winging as a fleet aviator, Marine student pilots can spend two years or more in a Marines Awaiting Training status." Grandpa Pettibone would not be saying, "This time must be used wisely," as the authors profess. He would instead be saying, "Jumpin' Jehoshaphots! How'd we get ourselves into this mess yet again?"

In the mid 90s, the typical F/A-18 aviator was checking into his or her first fleet squadron 54 months after being commissioned as a second lieutenant. Most had been pinned captain over a year prior to reporting for duty. In December 1997, the *Gazette* published my article, "How We Are Robbing the Careers of Our Young Aviators," wherein I proposed a solution to this problem. In a nutshell, I recommended that all prospective aviators first serve in a ground MOS for 12–24 months prior to going to flight school. Doing so would give Manpower and Training Command personnel a twelve-month window within which to react and respond to ebbs and flows in the training pipeline and mitigate backlogs.

When I graduated from TBS Hotel Company '85, the Marine Corps was experiencing a similar backlog in the aviation training pipeline—albeit the pools were only one year back then. To fix this issue, Manpower pulled all the lieutenants from Hotel, Alpha, and Bravo Companies '85 who were slated to go to flight school and sent them into the fleet in a ground MOS for 18 months. When my fellow TBS aviators and I eventually reported to NAS Pensacola for flight training, we were all qualified in a ground MOS. We had a year-plus of experience leading Marines and, just as importantly, observed fitness reports in our official military personnel files. With the backlogs cleared out, we sailed through flight training without delay and promptly reported to our first fleet squadrons.

While the authors of "Marines Awaiting Training" offer interesting responses to the training pipeline backlog issue, these are mere band-aids applied to major lacerations. Surgical intervention is required. Perhaps the *Gazette* will re-publish my 1997 article. It seemed to attract attention back then, winning the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation's General Roy S. Geiger Award for best aviation issue article of the year. Perhaps someone in Manpower will dig out the 1997 *Gazette* archives, read my article, and implement a long-term solution such as the one I proposed.

Simply accepting two-year backlogs is unacceptable. It is truly sad to see that, as my late father said, we are just repeating the mistakes we made in the past, and the ultimate casualty of those mistakes is our young officers.

Mr. Patrick McGinn

Second to Fight

In the May *Gazette*, Col Gary Anderson (Ret) stated that he sees major problems with the *Force Design 2030* (*FD2030*) concept. Like the other naysayers, he provided no recommendations for how the Corps should respond to the National Command Authority's clear direction to focus on China. He offers no suggestions for how the Corps current organization can support the INDOPACOM commander during the early phases of a war with China. In short, instead of constructive criticism, the naysayers ignore the directives from the President and the Secretary of Defense. It appears that they want to preserve a dated model suited to crisis response and 20th-century wars.

In contrast, early employment of *FD2030* capabilities have already supported COCOMS in both Europe and Asia. This is probably why ADM John Aguilino endorsed *FD2030* in general and the Marine Littoral Regiment, in particular, to the Armed Services Committee in April.

FD2030 is not perfect—no concept or force design is, particularly in times of rapid political and technical change. However, it responds to the National Command Authority's specific direction while maintaining the capability to field a combined-arms team as large as any the Corps has deployed since Desert Storm. It can fight 21st-century wars *and* respond to crises in more scenarios. Like our interwar predecessors, today's Marines are developing solutions to new challenges from a rising Pacific power.

The naysayers also express concern that *FD2030* will destroy the culture of our Corps. Yet, doctrine states that amphibious landings require air and sea superiority. If the Corps fails to update its concepts and organization, the Navy, Air Force, and Army will have to arrive first to establish the conditions to permit amphibious operations.

In effect, the critics would make our Corps "Second to Fight." We can think of few ideas more detrimental to our Corps' culture and legacy.

Col T.X. Hammes (Ret) &
LtCol Frank Hoffman USMCR(Ret)

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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October 2023

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR INFORMATION

No discussion about our Service's intelligence or information warfighting functions would be complete without a grateful nod to the deep and lasting impact the late Lieutenant General Vincent Stewart, USMC (Ret.) had upon these critical fields. His bold leadership and vision expanded the reach and value of intelligence and information capabilities across the Marine Corps, the joint force, and the national intel and cyber communities. Through his steady guidance and tireless advocacy, LtGen Stewart established these functions firmly within our Corps' future and purpose.

As a colonel, and then as a brand new one-star on the HQMC staff, I watched Vince build the framework for the Marine Corps ISR Enterprise, and then advocate for it until his vision grew from an idea into a reality. His vision and inexhaustible energy became the catalyst that drove the development and meteoric rise of MARFORCYBER while I served as the Deputy J3 at US CYBERCOM. Vince put MARFORCYBER front-and-center in our Nation's global campaign against violent extremist organizations. His Marines came to the cyber domain ready to fight, their calling card a potent mix of intensity and technique that reflected their commander's aggressive spirit. When ISIS rose to power in Syria and then drove into Iraq, the Marines he trained formed the foundation of Joint Task Force ARES, leading the charge to counter that threat, just as they counter other threats today.

Guided by a keen understanding of technology and its implications for the modern warfighter, Vince secured the funding to build the state-of-the-art cyberspace weapon system we call Lasswell Hall. Planning and executing a military construction project is no task for the faint of heart, but the "Fighting Leatherneck from Western Illinois" would have it no other way. Today, Lasswell Hall is a critical node within US CYBERCOM, and vital to our nation's power projection.

Vince was the Deputy Commander at US CYBERCOM when I took command of MARFORCYBER. I quickly lost count of the number of times I saw his icon appear on my TANDBERG, signaling that Vince had yet another critical insight or instruction to pass. The "Godfather" of Marine Corps intel and cyber was always in overwatch. As I transitioned to HQMC, I conferred often with Vince. Though already retired, he still managed somehow to impart exactly the right advice or perspective, just when I needed it the most. He may have become my friend, but he never stopped being my mentor. Most of all, Vince was tough, through-and-through. He was guided by principle, not popularity, in everything he did. He always reached for the stars. He never backed down, and he always came through, for his Nation and for his people. He will be long remembered, and sorely missed. Especially by me.

Matthew G. Glavy
Lieutenant General, U.S. Marine Corps
Deputy Commandant for Information

A Brief Concept for MCISRE

Support to RXR

by Mr. Ben Closs

Purpose

Russia's failure to secure an early victory against Ukraine—despite its much larger force and greater resources—suggests strongly that numerical superiority and 20th-century operational art are no longer enough to assure military success in the Information Age. The Ukrainians have fought bravely and well, but they have managed to resist, in no small part, because they have made far better use of their intelligence and information resources than Russia has. In the Information Age, even a relatively small force—Ukraine—supported by the right messaging and a steady stream of timely targeting data can offset some fairly significant disadvantages in numbers and supply. If this conflict is any indication of those yet to come, future battlefields promise to be heavily slanted in favor of the nation with the best relationships and the best situational awareness. These lessons, presaged by recent publications like *MCDP 1-4, Competing*, and *A Concept for Stand-In Forces* make it clear that our Corps can no longer afford to organize, train, and equip itself as a *break glass in case of war* forcible-entry force to be used only once diplomacy has failed.

Today's Marines recognize that, even during peacetime, each engagement, operation, and exercise they conduct must achieve two essential tasks: sending the right messages to America's allies and would-be adversaries and satisfying our national leadership's intelligence requirements. Both efforts promise to become significantly more difficult once the shooting starts, however. Future, *informationized* fights between technology-enabled peer competitors threaten to escalate and culminate much more rapidly than past conflicts, offering the Joint Force no time to build, let alone move, the industrial-age mountains of iron and steel upon which America's previous victories relied.

>Mr. Closs is a retired Marine Intelligence Officer. He works for FGS, LLC supporting doctrine, strategy, and policy development for the Deputy Commandant for Information's Intelligence Division.

Data has become our new iron mountain. The vast quantities of information that nations and governments can collect and generate during competition will direct, and become, the ordnance with which the next conflict must be won. To enable friendly success in combat or deterrence, Marines must tailor all their operations, activities, and investments with an eye toward reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance (RXR) efforts that fulfill the Joint Force's information requirements and messaging objectives. The Marine Corps does not yet have the capability or capacity to perform these feats quickly or efficiently enough to meet the Joint Force's future requirements, but it does have an organizational construct tailormade to enable the aggregation, organization, and delivery of intelligence data, products, and capabilities. The Marine Corps Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Enterprise (MCISRE) is that construct. Though its current posture is focused on Title 10 support to force development and headquarters decision making, the MCISRE can, and perhaps must, evolve to become the unified, Service-level base of intelligence support our Nation's maritime RXR forces need to turn peacetime operations into continued deterrence or eventual wartime advantage. As we strive to implement the transformative changes of *Force Design 2030*, the entire Marine Corps must challenge itself to reconsider what it means to conduct intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) operations, and the MCISRE must modernize and expand to integrate itself into the Service-wide RXR effort.

This concept is a broad, initial look at how the Marine Corps can approach intelligence support to RXR operations against a peer competitor. It aims to highlight key ideas related to future requirements and recommend the examination of capabilities that can support them. It may also stimulate and facilitate some of the conversations our Service must have while plotting the course. To win the "hider-finder" competition on tomorrow's battlefield, Marines must organize, train, and equip the entire Service with an eye toward enabling it as a reconnaissance capability. This maritime RXR force must continue to evolve while remaining focused on the Joint Force's problem set and integration with the Navy. Finally, the Marine Corps must design enough mass and flexibility into the unit's housing and employ its ISR assets to effect time-sensitive, operationally driven shifts in the way it tasks and supports its low-density technical and analytic capabilities.

Background

The past century's events—and especially the last 25 years—make clear that any effort to tailor the U.S. military for a changing environment or mission set must begin with a detailed examination of those capabilities and functions, which have changed most since the last benchmark in its evolution. The compact disc and the first-generation Macintosh were the pinnacles of information technology in 1986 when the Goldwater-Nichols Act reorganized the DOD's structure. In a time of crisis, our country can choose to enter a conflict very quickly, but the DOD can only move so fast in its efforts to prepare itself for the next fight. The Marine Corps, recognizing an unfulfilled need for joint scouting and battlespace awareness capabilities tailored toward great-power competition, is now tailoring its own structure and capabilities toward winning the RXR battle for America's maritime and Joint Forces. To succeed in this venture, our Corps must build and learn to employ all Marine units, not just the Marine Littoral Regiments, as all-domain, 21st-century reconnaissance forces.

A Concept for Stand-In Forces (SIF) calls on the entire Marine Corps to focus its capacity and capabilities on a relatively small, forward-deployed force that will operate continuously, throughout all forms of competition and conflict, inside the threat envelope of our competitors' standoff weapons systems. These forces will *stand in* against potential threats, learning everything they can about their nature and operations from up close. They will also show our country's friends and competitors alike that the United States cares enough about its allies to stand by them—no matter what the threat may be. These forces' messaging and maneuvers will stimulate adversary military and political systems and either influence them to adopt a less aggressive posture or force them to reveal crucial information about their intentions and capabilities through their responses to our operations, activities, and investments.

Context/Future Operating Environment

Should a competitor seek to threaten or coerce our allies, the initial U.S. response would likely include the SIF already in theatre, at least part of which would become the inside force, if open hostilities were ever to break out. We must assume that our adversaries can hold U.S. assets throughout the space and information domains at risk throughout the continuum between competition and conflict and that they can threaten surface and landbased forces and facilities of almost any sort with very little warning. Although the threat forces' access to, and awareness of, the maritime and air domains may exceed our own within their sphere of influence, their degree of control will, like ours, remain incomplete, iterative, and potentially vulnerable to certain forms of disruption.

The electromagnetic spectrum will remain a contested space likely to see shifts in adversary activity long before any hostile act occurs in the physical domains. Given the trajectory of ongoing improvements in threat capabilities, we must assume that most of the communications technologies we currently use will be perceptible and, to some degree, locatable by our adversaries at key points within the battlespace. Any capability which generates a recognizable cyber or electromagnetic signature will be subject to detection, disruption, destruction, or some other form of vulnerability at unpredictable intervals throughout the conflict, and both threat and friendly forces will be able to locate and target adversary units that generate a prominent enough signature throughout their areas of influence—even while they are on the move. The task of sensing and processing adversary signals and signatures, and differentiating them from the local baseline, is sure to challenge the threat's ISR apparatus in certain parts of the area of operations, just as it will our own. Commanders will nevertheless have to weigh the potential cost of expanding their units' signatures at critical times and locations and choose in a very conscious and deliberate manner how or whether to alter the timing, method, volume, or subject of their units' operations and communications.

Operational Challenge

SIF must remain keenly aware of both adversary and third-party dispositions and intentions, as well as the characteristics of a complex, uncertain, and potentially hostile littoral operating environment. The MCSIRE's challenge will be to enable secure, effective RXR operations by providing deep battlespace awareness and enduring target intelligence support for a widely distributed naval and Joint Force across the spectrum of competition and conflict. To achieve this goal, the enterprise will have to leverage all available sources of intelligence as well as other forms of friendly, neutral, and adversary-related information generated throughout the theatre and across the globe. Meeting this challenge will require the enterprise and the Service to consider epochal shifts in their design and operational patterns. All Marine units now own some type of reconnaissance role—in addition to their other warfighting responsibilities—and must be able to plan and direct reconnaissance, intelligence, and counterintelligence operations at speed without disrupting the tempo and harmony of their other essential tasks. Whatever else Marines do, all their key missions in the coming years will include:

- Identifying, validating, and prioritizing intelligence requirements.
- Planning and integrating reconnaissance, intelligence production, and dissemination efforts.
- Issuing requests and tasking reconnaissance and analytical resources.
- Maintaining continuous supervision over a vast enterprise of joint, national, and coalition intelligence capabilities to ensure its responsive and effective support to their own, and their higher's, operations and requirements.

Central Idea

The MCISRE, though without a formal chain of command or hierarchical structure, has remained an essential and enduring Service community by virtue of its purpose. It is composed of

everything and everyone who performs, supports, or directs intelligence, surveillance, or reconnaissance functions for Marine units across the globe. This enterprise relies on the contributions of a multitude of individuals, networks, and communities, all of whom must combine and coordinate their efforts to deliver fused, integrated intelligence products and capabilities to Marines and, by extension, the Joint Force.

Theory of Success

The MCISRE must develop the capability to receive and process all the data and reporting of intelligence value that Marines, and other SIF, collect and generate during competition. The MCISRE must then be prepared to store this information, make sense of it, and push all the relevant analysis and targeting data to theatre and national decision makers before, during, and after any potential crisis or contingency. This enterprise of Service, joint, national, and combined resources and manpower must be able to do for the Joint Force what numerous individuals are doing in and for Ukraine but on a longer-term basis and, potentially, under even more challenging circumstances. Recent and ongoing operations suggest that information and intelligence overmatches—while they cannot guarantee success by themselves—are key factors to both national and military resilience and serve as force multipliers that can offset many of the more traditional advantages America's competitors are working to build within their respective spheres of influence.

In the era of great-power competition, every Marine must become much more than just a collector. Today's Marines must all rise to the challenge of operating as fully engaged members of our Nation's maritime RXR force. On tomorrow's interconnected, digital battlefield, the entire force must focus on sensing the environment, understanding the threat, and frustrating the adversary's targeting effort.

Supporting Ideas and Planning Considerations

1. Focus on the Joint Force's Problem Set and Integration with the Navy

Maritime Reconnaissance and Counter-Reconnaissance. In today's competition, as in tomorrow's conflict, all Marine operations must contribute meaningfully to the Joint Force's battlespace awareness. MCISRE personnel and systems must be able to network and cooperate with combined, joint, and naval intelligence capabilities, both embarked and ashore, even in disrupted, disconnected, intermittent, and low-bandwidth signals environments. To provide the kind of insight and deterrence potential theatre campaign plans will require, the enterprise will have to support maritime reconnaissance and sea control efforts, along with a host of other missions the COCOMs may allocate to their naval and Joint Forces.

Distributed Analysis. To utilize a modern, networked approach to ISR, SIF must be able to coordinate and integrate intelligence requirements and operations seamlessly between all their subordinate elements, the Joint and combined force, their Service component, and the COCOM headquarters. Their MCISRE components must also be able to share data, plans, and products with reach-back elements at their home station(s), as well as with any other MEF, component, Service, or joint organizations upon whom they rely for distributed analytical support. To provide that support, Marines must appreciate the operational context surrounding each requirement they hope to answer, and they must be able to do so across the great distances that will likely separate deployed units from those forces trying to support them from garrison. Managing the effort to fulfill its decision makers' information requirements is a complex but vital job for any staff: doing so at a distance, in a denied, degraded, intermittent, or low-bandwidth communications environment raises that challenge to another level. This capability will be critical to enable distributed operations in the 21st century, however, as SIF may not be able to afford the luxury of concentrating their forces or analytical resources while they operate in theatre.

Support to, and from, units in garrison. In response to a significantly expanded version of the requirement for which the MCISRE was once conceived, each MEF must enhance its ability to provide intelligence support to deployed units while simultaneously fulfilling all the planning and training-related requirements for whatever portion of its force remains in garrison. This support must continue without interruption while those units in the rear continue to perform the many steady-state Title 10 functions necessary to ready the force for its next mission. Given the significant strain this tension between competing Title 10 and Title 50 requirements can place on the MEF, the Service or Marine Forces headquarters may need to become more than simple administrative entities. They may need to support deployed forces as well, either by receiving or developing organic analytical capabilities of their own, or by coordinating long-term MAGTF, Service-wide, or multi-Service liaison with, and augmentation to, the theatre joint intelligence operation centers along with other theater and national support organizations.

2. Organize, Train, and Equip the Entire Service as a Reconnaissance Capability

Every Marine a Reconnaissance Operator. Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance are much more than a particular set of personnel, units, staff sections, or occupational fields. They are essential functions that all military organizations and personnel perform every day. In a far-flung fight or during everyday competition, Marine units will distribute their various components and resources, both to enhance their survivability and expand their spheres of influence while simultaneously reducing the signatures they project into the operating environment. Infantry Marines, logisticians, and other personnel operating as members of small, isolated detachments or aboard expeditionary advance bases will perform ISR functions right alongside, and often in the place of, their intelligence and

signals intelligence brethren to enable their unit's contribution to the COCOM's intelligence and targeting efforts. Every Marine may have been a collector in the past, but going forward, each Marine, as well as much of his gear, will have to become proactive and fully engaged reconnaissance assets. Whether their mission focus is on the air or ground domains, at sea, in space, or in cyberspace, every Marine's central task will be to help the Joint Force sense, understand, and influence events within their area of operations.

Every Marine a Counter-Reconnaissance Asset. Marines' responsibilities to the Joint Force's counter-reconnaissance mission are no less vital than their reconnaissance efforts. Our adversaries and competitors are working to better integrate their all-domain, multi-INT ISR efforts. Though they may have to refrain from physical violence until authorized or forced to apply it, Marine units operating as SIF must be able to go kinetic at a moment's notice to disrupt or dismantle our competitors' ISR networks before they can complete their kill chain. The effort to build and maintain the kind of granular situational awareness and long-term target custody that enable this wartime capability will require SIF to engage in constant target development throughout competition. Marines will acquire, update, and hand off targeting data for the full range of adversary military capabilities, especially ISR capabilities, on an ongoing basis long before any physical conflict begins. Constant, intensive, peacetime ISR activity will be necessary to deter or blunt aggression, break adversary comm links and kill chains, and blind or deceive their decision makers to prevent their forces from seizing the initiative. Not only must all Marines enable the success of friendly counter-reconnaissance targeting efforts, but each Marine must uphold his responsibility to the entire force's effort to manage its signature and further frustrate or deceive adversary ISR. The war in Ukraine has already provided innumerable examples of why Marines must discipline themselves and their peers to maintain an unshakeable commitment to all-domain operational security. There will be no off-duty from this duty.

3. Using ISR to Weight and Shift the Main Effort

There are more than 7,000 intelligence billets within our Marine Corps, with more to come in the years ahead, but they are of little use to the Joint Force right now because so many of them remain scattered across smaller, tactical-level units. We can both optimize the value of Marine ISR support to the current joint requirement and facilitate the flexibility necessary to reallocate or reapportion it when necessary by building, training, and fielding cohesive, multi-intelligence support teams and detachments for key unit deployments, (e.g. the MEU S-2 [intelligence] and Marine Special Operations Command distributed support team models) drawn from regionally, functionally, or theatre-aligned pools of intelligence manpower and resources, (e.g. Air Force intelligence squadrons and the Army's theatre military intelligence brigades) with facilities that enable them to deliver reach-back support, even while in garrison. By providing the MCISRE's constituent units with the critical mass and authority to task-organize all the high-demand/low-density ISR skills and resources within the Marine Forces, MAGTF Command Element, or major subordinate command and then push tailored, integrated units, products, and capabilities down to supported units, Marines can maximize the synergistic value of team training, and get the most value out of their best analysts and operators. This flexibility will also contribute to the MAGTF, Marine Forces, and Joint Force commanders' ability to weigh the main effort with additional battlespace awareness resources when appropriate or necessary. This ability to rapidly and dynamically task-organize ISR capabilities, including manpower and equipment, as well as all other necessary forms of physical, cyber/electronic, and cognitive support, will enable SIF to respond to swiftly changing battlespace conditions and requirements in both the physical and information domains.

Conclusion

The foregoing thoughts outline an initial set of considerations to stimulate and facilitate conversation as the Marine Corps continues to plan, develop, support, and leverage the MCSIRE and other RXR capabilities. Each of the ideas in this concept will require the description and refinement of numerous specialized sub-functions to plan and direct ISR operations, to collect, process, and exploit information, to produce fully integrated intelligence and decision-support products, and to transmit them all to the Joint Force in a manner that supports security, signature management, and tempo. All our efforts to build the future MCSIRE can achieve greater efficiencies and better effects if they adhere to these principles: a focus on the Joint Force's problem set and integration with the maritime force; viewing, training, and equipping the entire force as a reconnaissance capability; and building enough ISR concentration and organizational agility into the force to redirect our least-engaged collection and analytical resources toward the main effort. Many of you may disagree with one or more of the statements within this concept, and even more of you probably have ideas you think are missing from it. Bring them on! Please join in the conversation and the subsequent analysis that will be necessary to make the MCISRE and the Marine Corps everything they must become. We are still at the beginning of a very long road toward having the force we want and may need for 2030, but with a common set of goals and a cooperative mindset, we can cover this great distance and answer the challenge our Nation has set before us. Now let's get to work.

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2023 LtCol Earl "Pete" Ellis Essay Contest

In an essay of 2500 to 3000 words, answer the following question:

Logistics is identified as the pacing function for Force Design 2030 and Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations. The "tyranny of distance" and challenges to operational reach present limitations for the sustainment of the future force. What new capabilities, innovative methods, or novel organizations are required to extend operational reach and overcome the challenges of sustaining Marines as Stand-In Forces?

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Know the Threat, Inform the Future

MCIA in the era of great-power competition

by the MCIA staff

The Evolving Operating Environment

The operating environment is constantly changing, and new developments are emerging daily. China is advancing its military capabilities with the development of hypersonic missiles. Meanwhile, Russia is repurposing decades-old tanks into vehicle-borne improved explosive devices, which it is deploying against Ukrainian forces. Cyber threats are omnipresent; actors are relentlessly targeting every accessible DOD network. Insurgent groups are leveraging readily available resources and constructing intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) and strike platforms from parts procured via online retailers. Critical decisions will be increasingly influenced by artificial intelligence. While the nature of warfare remains unchanged, the characteristics are evolving. Factors such as technology, culture, geopolitics, economics, and our perception of time and distance are converging to create a chaotic landscape that will shape the future operating environment over the next decade.

These developments require a paradigm shift, driving the Marine Corps to adapt and innovate to face the future threat.[1] Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (MCIA), along with its partners in the intelligence community (IC) and FMF intelligence elements, is ensuring that the Service has the strategic understanding of the future operating environment necessary to prepare for the next fight. MCIA will need to be fully prepared, postured, resourced, capable, and oriented to the needs of the Service, the Joint Force, and the IC.

"In this decisive decade, it is important to understand the contours of the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) way of war, survey its current activities and capabilities, and assess its future military modernization goals. In 2021, the PRC increasingly turned to the PLA as an instrument of statecraft as it adopted more coercive and aggressive actions in the Indo-Pacific region. Having purportedly achieved its 2020 modernization goal, the PLA now sets its sights on 2027 with a goal to accelerate the integrated development of mechanization, informatization, and intelligentization of the PRC's armed forces. If realized, this 2027 objective could give the PLA capabilities to be a more credible military tool for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to wield as it pursues Taiwan unification."

—U.S. Department of Defense Annual Report to Congress, Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2022

As the Nation has transitioned from the Global War on Terrorism to great-power competition, the focus and the methodology for supporting Service requirements across the organizational capabilities spectrum have subsequently adapted. During any interwar period, organizations go through a metamorphosis as they transition from the previous fight and prepare for future challenges.

During the Global War on Terrorism era, MCIA reduced its support to Service-level functions in favor of increased direct support to the operating forces. MCIA was decisively engaged in support of tactical formations and provided a variety of products and services, including all-source analysis, geospatial intelligence, identity intelligence, and full-motion video processing, exploitation, and dissemination.[2]

As we continue transitioning from Global War on Terrorism and refocusing on great-power competition, MCIA continues to develop product lines designed to prepare the Marine Corps for emerging threats. Although MCIA has renewed its emphasis on its core mission of supporting the force development enterprise (FDE), MCIA remains an agile organization that is ready to respond to

crises and support the evolving needs of FMF units tied to the pacing threat.

Understanding How the Pacing Threat Thinks, Acts, and Fights

MCIA's command strategy and campaign plan are aligned with *Force Design 2030* and the *Deputy Commandant for Information Campaign Plan* to ensure that MCIA is optimized for great-power competition. To this end, the command's primary focus is to understand how the pacing threat thinks, acts, and fights, with emphasis on operations in the littoral environment; command, control, communications, computers, cyber, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and targeting (C5ISRT) systems; and the FDE. This focus drives the command's organizational structure, as well as its recruiting, training, and production priorities. To meet these demands, MCIA combines the operational experience of its Marines with the topical and analytical expertise of its career IC professionals. MCIA has adapted to support a highly mobile naval expeditionary force postured forward in littoral areas with the ability to find and track high-value targets such as reconnaissance platforms, scouting units, and Chinese C5ISRT systems.[3] Recognizing that understanding China's C5ISRT systems and how to protect the Marine Corps' networks is a critical requirement to mission success, MCIA has partnered with other IC elements and other Service intelligence centers to ensure that the Marine Corps is ready to fight and win.

To outpace our pacing threats timeline, MCIA has aligned personnel and finished intelligence production to best serve the Marine Corps' needs, formalize the consistent provision of training and professional development across the blended civilian and military workforce, evolved the ability to disseminate intelligence products across all domains and to allies and partners, and is ensuring readiness for crisis and contingency response to meet Service-level intelligence requirements during 24/7 operations.

Delivering Decision Advantage

To meet MCIA's campaign plan end state, MCIA must deliver the necessary all-source intelligence products that characterize available threat tactics and options. To this end, MCIA is building a library of finished intelligence products focused on what the blunt, contact, and communication layers will look like in crisis and conflict. MCIA is working with the FDE to anticipate key events that require tailored intelligence production and deliver a repository of assessments that drive material and non-material capabilities development. As solutions are tested, evaluated, and implemented in the FMF, the library of assessments is improved.

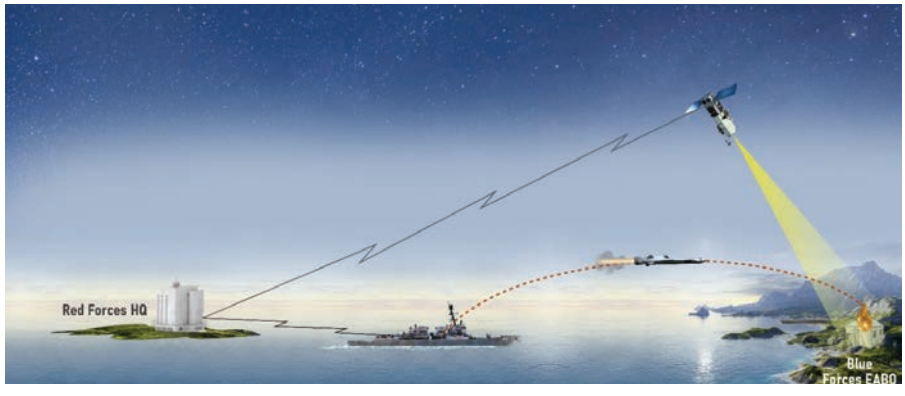
It is imperative that the FMF understands those assessments to evaluate the current operating environment and implement advantageous capabilities. MCIA characterizes its quarterly analytic developments in its Force Design running estimate. This update brief informs Combat Development Division, the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, and Marine Corps Systems Command on the critical characteristics of threat capabilities that are central to immediate development initiatives. These update briefs characterize the aspects of key terrain that are central to FMF employment in crisis and provide the war library with comprehensive information for future contingencies.

Although warfare is increasingly technologically driven, the importance of geography in military planning remains. The littoral and maritime geography of the INDOPACOM AOR is at the epicenter of joint, allied, and threat actors' conflict preparation. MCIA's Marine and civilian geospatial experts are creating products to address this challenge. The characterization of the littoral environment product line visually depicts multiple data layers that focus on factors that drive expeditionary operations in the littorals. These geospatial data layers expose new insights and can easily be incorporated into the planning process.

MCIA and Littoral Intelligence

The world's littoral regions play a pivotal role in global trade, economic development, energy resources, military strategy, environmental conservation, and human habitation. Recognizing and addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by these regions is crucial for ensuring global security. Intelligence plays a key role in understanding the complex and dynamic nature of these environments. This intelligence is essential for planning and operating within the littorals.

The evolving littoral operating environment presents multifaceted challenges, including an increasingly contested maritime domain, complex terrain, advanced weapon proliferation, the use of information as a weapon, the battle of signatures, and climate change's impact on the frequency, types, and complexity of littoral operations. The United States' naval forces face increasingly lethal land- and sea-based threats employed by state and non-state actors who seek to implement sea-denial strategies. Armed with anti-ship/coastal defense cruise missiles, manned and unmanned aircraft, submarines and surface craft, naval mines, and improvised explosive devices, future adversaries pose an unacceptable risk to U.S. naval forces at ever-



Notional kill chain. *(Photo provided by author.)*

Chinese Marines operating in the littorals. *(Photo provided by author.)*

increasing ranges. These adversaries will seek to control choke points, hold key maritime terrain, or deny freedom of action and maneuver within the littorals and across critical sea lines of communication.

Integrating and Enhancing the Mission

Marine Corps stand-in forces and MAGTFs require enhanced battlespace awareness to win the all-domain reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance fight in both current and future operating environments. To ensure that the Marine Corps FDE remains threat-informed, MCIA is planning for the development of a Littoral Intelligence Center of Excellence, which will be a modern, secure, purpose-built facility. It will create an operating capacity to support emerging missions and enhance collaboration; improve efficiency through built-in, specialized functional areas that meet emerging technical requirements; and ensure 24/7 operational capability with redundant systems and infrastructure. The Littoral Intelligence Center of Excellence will integrate, coordinate, and collaborate with Service, joint, national, Five Eyes, and partner nations. Furthermore, it will leverage ISR and information-based capabilities to generate strategic-level analytical products and services and deliver time-critical, multi-discipline analysis and battlespace awareness that will fully inform Marine Corps capability development and serve as a catalyst for world-class littoral and expeditionary intelligence.

Conclusion: Preparing for the Future Operating Environment

In a rapidly changing and technologically advanced threat landscape, MCIA's value proposition of providing critical intelligence and counterintelligence to the FDE ensures that the Marine Corps operating forces of tomorrow are equipped to maintain a decisive advantage against potential adversaries. MCIA's strategy and campaign plan establish the key elements of transition from the vision of the future state toward collective performance. MCIA's current and future lines of effort provide resource guidance, set quarterly priorities, and focus the command's effort on its objectives and initiatives as MCIA's diverse workforce provides timely, relevant, and accurate intelligence. MCIA will continue to leverage this diversity by serving as the link between the FDE, the MCISRE, and the IC. Ultimately, MCIA's core vision of *knowing the threat and informing the future* ensures that Navy and Marine Corps teams, the DOD, and the IC are optimally prepared for the current and future operating environments.

> ***"History is a cruel tutor. It hammers a lesson into our minds so sternly that no one dares to mention the many exceptions that must be allowed. Yet as soon as we have learned that lesson—and ignored its exceptions—history punishes us for not following another rule that posits the very opposite."***
>
> ***—Fred Charles Iklé,***
> **Every War Must End**

Notes

1. Justin Katz, "Marine Commandant Berger Talks Ukraine, Taiwan and Force Design When He Leaves," *Breaking Defense*, December 9, 2022, https://breakingdefense.com/2022/12/marine-commandant-berger-talks-ukraine-taiwan-and-force-design-when-he-leaves.

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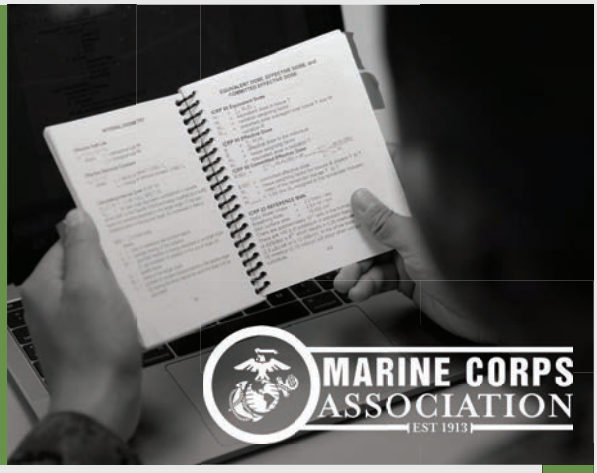

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Executing RXR

A MCISRE for intelligence operations

by Col George J. David

>Col David is the Deputy Director for Intelligence Division under the Deputy Commandant for Information / Director of Intelligence.

The *Force Design 2030* (*FD2030*) initiative and its supporting concepts, *Stand-In Forces* (SIF) and especially the *Functional Concept for Reconnaissance and Counter-reconnaissance* (RXR), require an exceptionally robust, networked, and resilient intelligence capability. The Marine Corps Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance Enterprise (MCISRE) must transform into a dynamic, professional mesh network that can provide the Marine force with two-way access to National, theater, adjacent, and supporting intelligence and enable it to realize the RXR concept. Furthermore, the Marine Corps' decision to adopt information as a warfighting function, complete with a new Marine Corps doctrinal publication, requires that the Service reevaluate the intelligence capability Marines will need to accurately discern the perceptions, attitudes, capabilities, opinions, and intent of any given target audience. As the Service strives to implement the transformative changes of *FD2030*, it must consider how it will execute reconnaissance and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) operations as a Service-wide RXR and ISR enterprise.

The Joint Force defines reconnaissance as the "military endeavor to gain information about the enemy, terrain, and other factors to characterize the operational environment." Reconnaissance involves the systematic observation and collection of intelligence to support decision making, targeting, and planning. Counter-reconnaissance protects friendly forces, maintains operational security, and preserves the potential for surprise through intimate knowledge and, when necessary, the neutralization, degradation, or destruction of adversary intelligence collection and reconnaissance capabilities and activities. Marines have typically viewed reconnaissance through a tactical lens as the forward element of the units in contact rather than as an operational-level activity that serves as a main effort for the Joint Force in competition. While the joint definition includes this tactical focus, it can also include activities aimed at supporting operational- and strategic-level decision making.

The functional concept for maritime RXR implies that the Marine Corps will become an operational-level reconnaissance force: "During competition, Marines will conduct M-RXR [Maritime RXR] operations in contested littorals supporting U.S. integrated deterrence strategies with allies and partner nation forces to help them maintain their sovereignty against the adversary's malicious coercion and gray zone activities."[1] This statement implies that Marine forces will serve as autonomous reconnaissance forces that provide a theater-directed asset for the warfighter—the combatant commander. That level of RXR will require the FMF to integrate its organic intelligence capability with the Joint Force and intelligence community across all operational levels. Only thus can Marines achieve the necessary capability to enhance situational awareness, decision-making processes, and overall operational effectiveness not only for themselves but for the Joint Force.

Force Design 2030 concepts further recognize that effective intelligence and ISR capabilities require integration with adjacent units and Services, collaboration with intelligence agencies, and close coordination with partners and allies. At the same time, however, the concepts emphasize the need for decentralized decision making and empowered junior leaders. An integrated intelligence capability, understood at the highest and lowest levels of leadership, will be critical to the achievement of these goals. Intelligence-driven planning enables agile and responsive decision making down to the lowest level to which it is possible to extend it. These attributes correspond directly to Marine Corps doctrine: "Success in fluid environments demands leaders and organizations that can understand the nature of a given situation and adapt to it faster than their opponents."[2] This, and other forms of Service doctrine and strategic guidance, describe and recommend conducting Marine Corps operations for the purpose of intelligence. Intelligence operations, especially the conduct of ISR as an autonomous force at the operational level, revolve around collection and collection management functions, the execution of missions with the objective of intelligence, and the ways and means to manage data at scale.

Marines have typically viewed reconnaissance through a tactical lens ...

In addition, the Marine Corps recently followed the Joint Staff in declaring information a warfighting function ("Joint Function" for the Joint Staff). Doing information as a warfighting function, however, is subtle and complex work. First, the military in a republic is never charged with generating messages on its own but only with reflecting those messages given to it by the civilian political leadership. Second, the military has always existed to achieve a cognitive effect "to win without fighting is the acme of skill," according to Sun Tzu. Any examination of history makes it clear that all militaries have always sought to persuade a target audience—adversarial, friendly, or neutral—through the projection of informational power by means of military operations and activities. Modern information warfare requires not only specialists in the mechanics of military operations but masters of the tactical delivery of Information Age messaging, a capability whose requirements continue to evolve at a dazzling pace. Finally, achieving the desired cognitive effect on the targeted audience with the appropriate modern means requires superlative, even exquisite, intelligence. Intelligence personnel must first discern, and then contribute to the assessment of how the force's target audience receives information and what messages will resonate with it, all while adjusting to account and compensate for the developing ISR capabilities of adversaries and competitors. This is a reconnaissance of the human terrain. In an era of autocratic peer competitors, our audience's perceptions may be deeply hidden behind layered state security, requiring Marines to return to some Cold War methods and sharpen intelligence skills grown dull in disuse. Any attempt to "do" information in accordance with *MCDP 8* will, like doing RXR, require a deep professional basis in the intelligence disciplines.

Becoming the RXR force, therefore, means executing the commander's business by planning every operation, including exercises, to an underlying collection and information plan. The operations section must do all its work with an eye toward carrying out a theatre intelligence collection plan as part of a campaign to provide maritime intelligence collection and other ISR capabilities to the Joint Force's warfighter—the combatant command (CCM). Moreover, to receive meaningful priority treatment from the U.S. intelligence community (IC), all Marines' ISR and collection plans must correlate to the requirements of the relevant CCM and the agency representatives at that CCM. This kind of operational planning and execution demands a whole-of-Service adjustment towards intelligence as well as a backbone of deeply knowledgeable professionals to lead it. That cadre of professionals will not be easy to cultivate.

The Marine Corps has only a few occupational fields accustomed to planning with, and integrating into, the Joint Force at the theater and national levels ...

The Marine Corps has only a few occupational fields accustomed to planning with, and integrating into, the Joint Force at the theater and national levels or working alongside national agencies. Numerous Marines working within the intelligence fields do so on a regular basis, however. Because the IC and the DOD maintain functional managers for the intelligence disciplines, intelligence Marines learn early in their careers to use agency sponsors to enhance their various capabilities and functions. The functional manager at each agency facilitates stakeholder coordination and, in many cases, serves as an approval authority for their concepts of operations. Any geospatial intelligence Marine knows how to utilize links with the National Geospatial Agency to gather more discoverable and usable images or data. Every signals intelligence Marine, down to the NCO level, is accustomed to working his signals intelligence concept of operations through theater and the national cryptologic representatives back to the agency. Additionally, every human intelligence Marine knows the primacy of the chief of station's approval for their operations and the need to coordinate with both Defense and Central Intelligence Agencies. The same is true for all intelligence disciplines and sub-disciplines. For the commander seeking to plan or execute RXR operations, these Marines provide the notable advantage of experience working with their theater and national counterparts, often in coordination with adjacent units and Services.

Another set of specialties where this kind of experience with theater and national integration is common is special operations. Marine Special Operations Command exists to be the Service component of a functional CCM with global responsibilities. By design, every special operations command unit and mission must integrate into the Joint Force through the geographic combatant command. The first and most basic step in the operational preparation of the environment is, of course, ISR and intelligence coordination. Often, special operations forces conduct the very same type of national and theater coordination for intelligence as Marines do to fulfill their mission requirements. Special Operations Command must work through geographic combatant command requirements to make sure that its units receive sufficient priority from national entities to prepare for missions. Every special operations command operator, therefore, is conscious of the need to integrate into the Joint Force to conduct advanced force operations, deep reconnaissance, foreign internal defense, and other activities that resemble, or require, RXR. The Marine Corps generally sets Marine Special Operations Command aside in force design discussions as a CCM component, however, rather than a Service entity, and often fails to exploit the experience and perspective Marine

Special Operations Command Marines bring to the table.

The Marine Corps, as a member of the IC, also has no choice but to conform to the rules, constraints, and restraints of the functional managers for intelligence disciplines and the direction of the Director of National Intelligence and the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security. The IC agency functional managers work hard to restrict knowledge of sources and methods so that they can continue to produce useful reporting. The Digital Age's proliferation of potential intelligence collection capabilities brings with it new levels of complexity and the necessity of sorting through the authorities, responsibilities, and security limitations imposed by the IC. Marine commanders, accustomed to having the final word on their operations, may find schemes of maneuver restricted or expanded by direction from the theatre or even the national level. Moreover, the recent trend toward hyper-compartmentalization (by no means exclusive to intelligence, given the proliferation of special access programs throughout the DOD) means that various national agencies may be doing things on behalf of commanders who know very little about the support, or requirements, they receive. The results of these efforts, moreover, may not be disseminated widely enough to engender common understanding in the FMF. Like special operations, RXR operations have the potential to render the commander beholden to a host of non-CCM entities external to, and not very knowledgeable about, the Corps as a Service—sometimes forcing subordinate units to operate like unowned subsidiaries. Given the IC's tendency to generate novel, unfamiliar, or uncomfortable command relationships wherever it interfaces with the military, it is little wonder that the Marine Corps continues to have an ambivalent attitude toward intelligence operations, which often seems much akin to, or even informed by, its perspective on special operations.

Yet the Stand-In Forces and RXR concepts paint the picture of a forward-deployed Marine Corps able to enhance CCM situational awareness and hold adversarial potential targets at risk throughout the continuum between competition and conflict. Gaining and maintaining detailed awareness of adversary units and systems remains the fundamental aim of military intelligence efforts, as reflected in the Defense Intelligence Agency's Military Intelligence Database and its successor systems. Every step of the joint targeting cycle, whether for a kinetic or non-kinetic end state, requires continuous monitoring and the provision of sufficient, target-quality intelligence. Intelligence must inform command objectives, priorities, target development, capabilities for reconnaissance and surveillance of the target, the means required to accomplish desired effects, and efforts to assess whether that effect was achieved. For the RXR force supporting competition and deterrence against peer adversaries, especially opaque autocracies that control their internal information environment, national and theater-integrated intelligence for an RXR force becomes even more crucial. Organic resources will never be enough to provide the depth, scope, and detail required for RXR.

For all these reasons, despite its misgivings, the Service needs to reinvigorate and transform its MCISRE. *FD2030* and its updates, however, make almost no mention of intelligence, discussing it only obliquely using terms such as "hider-finder." Until lately, the MCISRE has been nothing more than a loose-knit group of interested parties associated with the intelligence fields, providing some overarching themes, management (previously advocacy) for specialties, and guidance for force development. The Director of Intelligence, a position without clearly defined Service authority, sat atop the enterprise at the Service headquarters. Some minor successes, such as Service-wide support to processing, evaluation, and dissemination, were registered, but little sustainable action followed. Theater and national IC integration largely fell to the individual specialists at units and those authorities defined to support them, generally in channels specific to a collection discipline, such as signals intelligence. The advent of cyber capabilities and operations, the adoption of information as a warfighting function, as well as the proliferation of special access programs throughout the Service, obscured the enterprise for the FMF (as to who does which part of these sets of tasks) while consuming many of the Service resources associated with overlapping portfolios. Despite having cultivated many high-quality officers and noncommissioned officers, the MCISRE suffered notable losses of personnel making lateral moves into these new career fields. These are some, but not all the challenges the MCISRE faces. By all appearances, MCISRE has been in decline for several years at the very moment the Marine Corps, given *FD2030* with all its concepts and requirements, needs it most.

To reverse the trend, the Corps needs three things: defined headquarters principal staff, Service leadership interest and direction, and buy-in from operations and operators. The headquarters issue has already been addressed by the Deputy Commandant for Information who, in June of 2023, assumed the mantle and responsibilities of Director of Intelligence. That means that the Service Director of Intelligence is now also one of the commandant's principal staff officers, explicitly able to set policy, orders, instructions, and guidance for the entire Service. For leadership direction, the mention of the MCISRE or, at the very least, intelligence, in foundational documents and statements for the record such as the *Commandant's Planning Guidance*, as well as interest in MCISRE entities, (units, OAG, etc.) could provide a key vector for Service guidance and course correction. Most important of all, however, would be operations officers and planners who can find ways and means to use operations and exercises to position their units to do intelligence collection/RXR. Supporting a Service-wide demand signal would require engaging all elements of the MCISRE to properly plan and task, integrate FMF activities with theater and national agencies, and establish their units' priority within those frameworks. When the operations officers and infantry squads of the Marine

Corps seek to apply their MCISRE to conduct RXR, their efforts to find or enhance collection capabilities to reach out across the Service into the IC and CCMs (and to make the Marine Corps' concept for RXR functional and complete) will transform both the MCISRE and the Service.

Force Design 2030 is a visionary initiative that can ensure the adaptability and effectiveness of Marine Corps forces as they seek to overcome future challenges. At the core of this forward-thinking approach, however, lies the need for an exceptionally strong intelligence capability. The MCISRE will be crucial for the Marine Corps' success in modern competition, deterrence, and warfare with peer adversaries. The RXR concept cannot be executed without the critical approach to fully integrated, enterprise-based intelligence and intelligence processes. By engaging the MCISRE as a critical enabler for all Marine operations, especially non-kinetic information operations and operational planning, Marines will enhance situational awareness, and decision-making processes, and greatly expand their overall operational effectiveness. The entire Corps is now trying to teach itself to conduct RXR and intelligence operations, with all the complexity and dependencies that come with multidirectional interactions with the theater CCM, adjacent and partner-nation units, and national agencies. The Marine Corps has thousands of Marines who have spent entire careers doing just that; it is time to put them to use.

The MCISRE will be crucial for the Marine Corps' success in modern competition, deterrence, and warfare with peer adversaries.

Note

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National Instruments and Warfighting Functions

A view of information

by Col George J. David

Military power, throughout history, has existed to send a message to adversaries, observers, and allies. Leaders, nations, and states assemble military power to intimidate, challenge, and cognitively alter the behavior of target audiences. They also assemble military power to reassure, reinforce, and empower other target audiences. At the most fundamental level, military organizations exist to send these messages—the uniforms, the ceremonies, the "presence missions"—to show and emphasize power and power potential. Consequently, the contemporary debate about the role of information appears historically esoteric. The characteristics of conflict and competition have rapidly shifted, leading to the possibility of tactical adjustments, but that does not equate to a fundamental shift in warfare or the purpose of military power. Marine doctrine, as a result, does not need to describe new phenomena and invent processes to support them; it must instead reaffirm the fundamental purpose of military power and all military actions: to adjust the will of a target audience.

Defeating the enemy psychologically has been the essence of military theory since Sun Tzu; only in this way could any fighting force, in any era, "subdue an enemy without fighting," which he described as the acme of skill.[1] Julius Ceasar's Gallic campaigns were fought just as much to send a message to Rome as to expand the Roman Empire by impressing the tribes in Gaul. He wrote his war commentaries to advance his political career between 58 and 50 BC and kept the defeated Gallic chief, Vercingetorix, alive for years to demonstrate power.[2] Over time, the projection of information through military operations assumed many forms, including the moral effect on adversaries, observers, and conquered peoples. Napoleon observed that: "In war, moral power is to physical as three to one."[3] The military theorist to emerge from the Napoleonic struggles, Carl von Clausewitz, agreed, "the moral forces are amongst the most important subjects in war," devoting a whole chapter to the subject.[4] All military theory has always sought to manage what would now be called the cognitive effects of military operations on participants, observers, and politics. Thus, it cannot be more clear that *information* in military operations is not new.

>See bio on page 18.

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Warfighting functions as a conceptual approach to managing the activities of command are comparatively new, however, emerging in the last few decades as a means to describe the responsibilities of a commander. The Joint Force uses "joint functions" defined in *JP 1-02* as, "Related capabilities and activities ... to help joint force commanders synchronize, integrate, and direct joint operations," categorizing *Information* as a new function in 2017. To explain adding a seventh function, the Joint Staff Director called for the Joint Force to "rapidly build information into operational art and design in order to deliberately leverage the informational aspects of military activities."[5] Yet, according to military theory from time immemorial, any military force ought to have been doing just that. For the Army, "a warfighting function is a group of tasks and systems (people, organizations, information, and processes) united by a common purpose that commanders use to accomplish missions and training objectives."[6] The Army has hesitated to change from six to seven warfighting functions along with the Joint Force because information touches everything all the time. In deterrence and competition, information is in effect often all the force is doing.

Non-combat operations arguably have three basic purposes: to train the force, to improve readiness, and to demonstrate that readiness for combat.

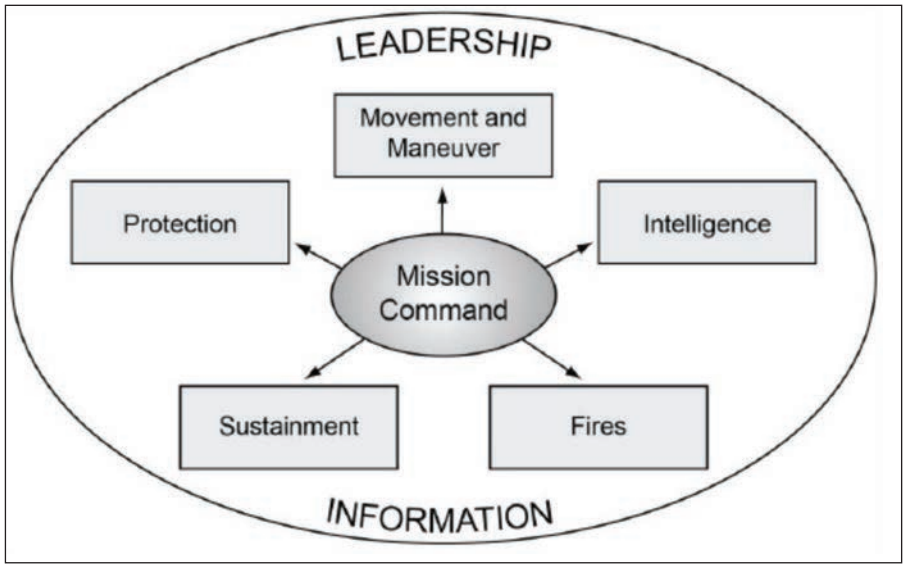

Figure 1.[7] ***(Figure provided by author.)***

Demonstrating readiness for combat is certainly used for budgets and domestic consumption. But, arguably more important, every exercise in any country in the world is also conducted to convey the message of readiness for combat to all observers, allied, adversary, or neutral. In 1955, an observer may have required traditional print media to obtain information about the exercise. In 2025, an observer may use social media. Either way, managing that message is a military end state and/or objective, not a new and unique element of the operation. What is historically unique is the perceived need to explain that this is the case for the military. Also unique are the media employed to send the message—so detailed and involved that information practitioners are to the digital era what specialists were to the production line of Henry Ford. Just because an information specialist merely exercises the equivalent of turning a cog on each wheel that goes by does not, however, lessen the impact on the finished Model T. The whole operation has to prepare and consider the Model T end state in order for everything to go well.

Information does hold a well-accepted place as an instrument of national power, alongside diplomacy, economics, and military, also known by the acronym DIME. These instruments of power certainly interact and can be used to mutual effect. Some theorists, particularly those associated with defense, have added other instruments including finance, intelligence, and law enforcement.[8] Generally, while an instrument can be used to forward an objective that belongs to a different instrument—economics to build military forces, military diplomacy, operations for intelligence—that usage does not connote control. In a republic, much of the information end state falls outside the purview of a commander as well. Military commanders may conduct operations that contribute to the information space associated with missions, but they do so under a message established and conveyed by the political leadership. It is not for even the four-star commander of INDOPACOM to set the tone for freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea. The commander and his staff, however, are tasked to convey the message: the message is the military task or objective for the whole staff, not for some select cadre of separate information professionals.

The Joint Force has opted to view information as a joint function.

In the confusion over an ill-defined information warfighting function, the observer turns to doctrine. The Joint Force has opted to view information as a joint function. At the same time, however, the Joint Force has characterized information not as special, but simply as an aspect of operations. *The Joint Concept for Operating in the Information Environment* indicates the possibility of information as the main effort under unity of command. In its central idea, *Joint Concept for Operating in the Information Environment* states: "To address this challenge and achieve enduring strategic outcomes, the Joint Force must build information into operational art to design operations that deliberately leverage the inherent informational aspects of military activities."[9] Furthermore, information can be what the force is exclusively doing: "the Joint Force must shift how it thinks about information from an afterthought and the sole purview of information professionals to a foundational consideration for all military activities."[10] These assertions certainly reflect a balanced approach in keeping with military theory. Notably, the Joint Staff has not constructed a new J-Code to manage information for the chairman.

Marine Corps doctrine, conversely, has sought to re-explain information using rebranded phraseology. In its new flagship publication, *MCDP 8, Information*, the Marine Corps first describes "other relevant uses of the word" before launching into a treatise on the importance of information: "Marines apply the information warfighting function to create and exploit information advantages in pursuit of mission objectives."[11] Marines do everything in support of mission objectives so that affirmation does not clarify what must be done differently. Rather than addressing the nature of warfare and information, the publication dwells on the "characteristics of the information environment." Profound and deep changes in these characteristics are richly described. These characteristics do convincingly detail the need for change in practices while describing the benefit of "information advantage" but do not give much of a framework for what to

do. That is because the link between the depth of all military theory—impacting the will of a target audience—is not explicitly connected in the discussion.

Setting aside these specific characteristics does not yield any observations that would be different for 21st-century warriors than for those of the 1st-century: "The ultimate aim of creating and exploiting an information advantage is to influence our opponents' will and cause them to act in ways favorable to our objectives."[12] As that statement is the essence of all military theory back to Sun Tzu, it can be nothing other than obvious. The missing dictum is perhaps the most relevant: even in fully kinetic combat operations, all of what is happening is about the cognitive effect on target audiences. Information professionals are there to handle the detailed characteristics of specific parts of the modern information space, but everyone present sends the message. "This is a fight for everyone."[13]

There is a risk of overemphasis on the new characteristics of the information aspects of the modern battle or competition space. Separation of information from other operations and effects impedes the military ability to message rather than enhance it. Information cannot be the sole province of selecting professionals because the very purpose of a military operation is, and has always been, to achieve a specified cognitive effect, whether by destruction or other means. Compartmenting information capabilities into specialists apart from the broader force may consequently place a fundamental impediment to the operational design of military action. Also, the term "information" applies so broadly to so many endeavors that it can generate too many disparate impressions to enable unity of effort unless the commander emphasizes the information nature of the military activity. The Marine Corps must reconcile its conceptual framework with these realities to enhance and amplify its information impact. Information outcomes are every commander's business and always have been—so commanders must focus on those outcomes.

The Marine Corps has also chosen to blur the new function of information with established functions such as intelligence and command and control (C2) to provide a framework for it when that framework may not be necessary. "Information's value is a function of many factors, including timing, accuracy, situational relevance, cultural context, and trust,"[14] says almost the same thing as: "intelligence products must be: anticipatory, timely, accurate, usable, complete, relevant, objective, and available."[15] *MCDP 8* declares that, "Marines should expect competitors to engage in information systems confrontation and destruction to shape the strategic competitive environment and manipulate or deny access to critical communications."[16] This declaration, however, is the same as C2 and its preservation in the face of an adversary: "Given the criticality of information, the security of the communications system is paramount to ensuring the commander can trust the information provided and received."[17] But because the information effect is why military forces exist, all other warfighting functions should lead to an information effect. If *MCDP 8* restates the long-standing doctrine of other warfighting functions with an emphasis on technological and societal characteristics, it is because of the attempt to approach the most basic truth—every action undertaken by a military force will happen under the scrutiny of observers of varying interests.

With such a confusing doctrine, should information be considered a warfighting function? The Joint Force has declared it to be so but has given little guidance on it other than to tell the force to do it at all times. The Army declined because they do it anyway at all times. The answer likely lies somewhere between these two solutions: while a warfighting function of sorts needs practitioners for some specialized tasks (for example, cyber), it does not need its own separate or new processes because information is what the force does anyway.

The Marine Corps has furthermore set up the MEF Information Group (MIG) at each of its three Corps-level commands. Most of the commanders of the MIGs have been career intelligence officers with some exceptions from artillery and communications. Adapting to the new conception, they have constructed information operations centers to manage the fusion of information from disparate capabilities of their subordinate units with each other and from non-organic systems and producers. That activity, however, also falls neatly into the definitions of C2 for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. The MIG construct provides a resource of subject-matter expertise and equipment somewhat like other MAGTF elements. Given the specialization required for many supporting information activities in the digital age, such a construct is reasonable.

Under the concept of a separate information warfighting function, however, the MIG construct might also encourage the notion that other major subordinate commands can leave the information part of what they are doing to a separate unit while appearing to subordinate two existing warfighting functions (intelligence and C2) to a new third function; that is precisely opposite the direction of the joint doctrine quoted earlier. There is nothing inherently wrong with grouping units whose purpose and mission essential tasks related to the acquisition, management, transport, analysis, and dissemination of meaningful data. The problem lies in declaring that their mission is something new by virtue of the grouping. Several other concepts, including the *Functional Concept for Reconnaissance*

The MIG construct provides a resource of subject-matter expertise and equipment somewhat like other MAGTF elements.

and Counter-reconnaissance and the *Concept for Stand-In Forces*, do encourage all units to consider their reconnaissance and surveillance potential.[18] The stand-in force and reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance lexicon, however, evolve established doctrine and warfighting functions. The MIG can and does give these efforts an organizing entity; but that entity is exercising C2, conducting intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, and having information impacts like every other unit.

In the Information Age, the means and characteristics of information in association with military power have rapidly changed. That change does require tactical adaptation, in method, training, and equipment (physical or software application) to meet the challenge. Those changes, however, must not be misconstrued as a change in the nature of competition, confrontation, and conflict. The new means and tactics must adapt to the same military purpose: to have a cognitive impact on a target audience. The commander remains the ultimate military authority in exercising that cognitive effect: engaging and influencing a target audience in accordance with the command's intent. On the opening page of Chapter 1 of *MCDP 1*, Gen Vandegrift is quoted as, "Positions are seldom lost because they have been destroyed, but almost invariably because the leader has decided in his own mind that the position cannot be held."[19] An instrument of national power, information might also be a warfighting function, but whether it is or not is less important than the notion that everything a military organization does has a purpose for the effect sought on a target audience. That effect can only occur through the information that the target audience receives and perceives. That argument, rather than the characteristics of information in the Digital Age, should be the thrust of information doctrine.

In the Information Age, the means and characteristics of information in association with military power have rapidly changed.

Notes

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2. Julius Caesar and Rex Warner, *War Commentaries of Caesar* (New York: New American Library, 1987).

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13. Lori Reynolds, "DC I Letter," *Marine Corps Gazette* 105, No. 4 (2021).

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15. Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 2-0 Intelligence*, (Washington, DC: 2013).

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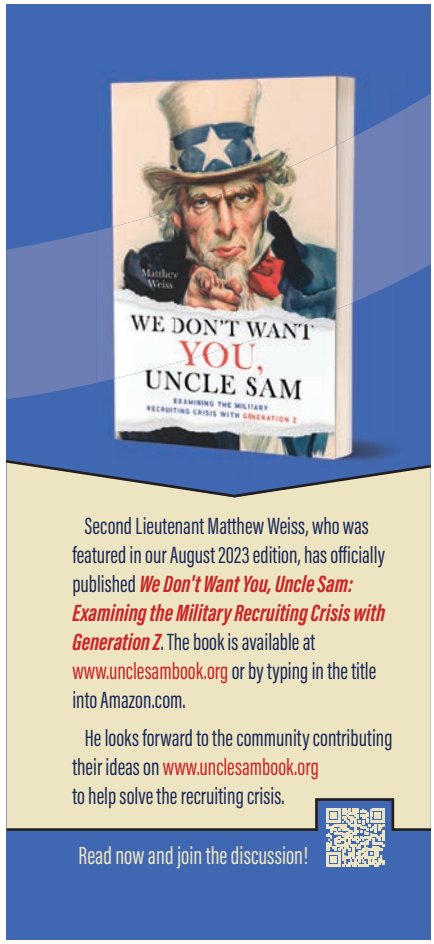
19. Gen C.C. Krulak, *MCDP 1, Warfighting*, (Washington, DC: 1997).



Beyond Awareness

Information environment battlespace understanding

by LtCol Paul Croom II

>LtCol Croom is an Intelligence and Information Operations Officer currently assigned as the Assistant Chief of Staff G-2 for Marine Corps Forces Central Command. He authored this article while a student in the AY23 Army War College's Carlisle Scholars Program in direct response to Deputy Commandant for Information and Marine Corps Information Command's urgent requirements on intelligence and information operations integration.

"Deterrence depends in part on competitors' understanding of U.S. intent and capabilities. [...] To strengthen deterrence while managing escalation risks, the Department will enhance its ability to operate in the information domain—for example, by working to ensure that messages are conveyed effectively."

—2022 National Defense Strategy

Non-Violent Competition: By, With, and Through Influence in the Information Environment

Integrated deterrence is the centerpiece of America's strategy for national defense and a key component of the Biden Administration's *National Security Strategy*.[1] As the DOD describes it, integrated deterrence, "using every tool at the Department's disposal, in close collaboration with our counterparts from across the U.S. Government and with Allies and partners, to ensure potential foes understand the folly of aggression," is fundamentally an exercise in psychological influence. In particular during day-to-day campaigning in competition below the level of armed conflict, non-violent application of the military element of national power seeks to influence human behavior in ways advantageous to national security interests. While these human behaviors by definition must occur in the physical environment, the decision to act is arrived at in the information environment (IE) where the human minds of individuals and groups of individuals reside. Recognizing that competition also occurs during armed conflict, this article explores considerations for the development and application of information environment battlespace awareness (IEBA) specifically in the competition milieu below the level of armed conflict.

On 5 November 2022, *Marine Corps Bulletin 5400* established the Marine Corps Information Command (MCIC) to "integrate, synchronize and enable operations in the information environment in the conduct of naval, joint, and combined campaigning in order to deter adversaries and set conditions for the Fleet Marine Forces (FMF) across the range of military operations." The most current *Marine Corps Task List 2.0* published in February 2023, *Marine Corps Task 5.14.3, Conduct Information Environment Battlespace Awareness,* was assigned to the MCIC as a core mission essential task, and the MCIC has inferred producing an IE common operating picture (COP) as the operationalization of this task. Of the 30 evaluative measures under this task, the first (M1) assesses the capability to "produce, receive, display and disseminate an information environment running estimate of mission relevant threats, vulnerabilities and opportunities."[2] The next eight measures (M2-M9) consider the capability to produce, receive, and display data overlays from the legacy information related capabilities onto the conventional COP normally managed by unit operations sections (S/G/J-3).[3] Still other measures are analytic in nature. Some, like "analyze the physical dimension of the information environment" (M13) and "capable of identifying terrain or [meteorological and oceanographic] conditions restricting or preventing [operations in the information environment]" (M20) are explicitly intelligence functions. Measures such as "percent of target audience or vulnerabilities correctly identified" (M16) are, ostensibly, non-intelligence analytic functions. Still, other measures like, "target audience or vulnerabilities in the information environment have been identified within the intelligence cycle," (M10) seem conflated or assume a level of collaboration between information operations and intelligence planners only nominally supported in doctrine.[4]

As written, this IEBA task and the implied IE COP task raise numerous questions as stakeholders at all echelons across the Marine Corps attempt to operationalize its underpinning theory and doctrine. As the current plank-owner for an IE COP effort as a component of IEBA, three chief considerations should be of interest to the MCIC: What should it do? At what classification level should it reside? Who should own it?

What Should the IE COP Do?

For the MCIC, their IEBA platform initiative is charged with delivering a non-intelligence-based software-as-a-service IE visualization solution (IE COP) that will "drive analysis to facilitate understanding in support of joint and service commanders [in order to] inform operations in the IE for information advantage."[5] Stated another way, the IE COP must support the planning, execution, and assessment of military operations, activities, and investments intended to influence human behavior toward information advantage objectives in competition below the level of armed conflict.

What is unclear is the intent of the relationship between the IE COP and the analysis it will drive. Will the IE COP software itself possess automated or limited user-directed data analytic capabilities so analysis is conducted within the IE COP's graphic user interface? If so, to what breadth and depth? If not, how will users extract information from the platform to pull into their own analytic tools, whether digital, mechanical, or purely mental?

The Marine Corps has employed various software and platform products for battlespace visualization and analysis over the last twenty years. Some, like Palantir and Fusion Analysis and Development Effort/Multi-INT Spatial Temporal Toolsuite, have considerable analytic functionality that optimized user workflow by automating big data tasks and enabling advanced pattern analysis. Most of these analytic tasks are quantitative though, and critical qualitative analysis that produces course of action assessments, alternative futures comparisons, and other context-heavy valuations still requires a human combining non-automated structured analytic techniques with subject-matter expertise, experience, and judgment.

In developing an IE COP solution that seeks to leverage automation, careful consideration should be given to avoid risking analytic error associated with human-on-the-loop models by favoring the perceived efficiency of artificial intelligence and machine learning while those technologies are not yet sufficiently evolved to rival the intangible advantages of "authentic intelligence" humans in the loop present.[6]

At What Classification Level Should the IE COP Reside?

The classification level at which the IE COP is generated versus the classification levels to which it is shared or exported should depend fundamentally on who needs to employ it and what data they require to optimize its use. In competition below the level of armed conflict, influence is singularly psychological; advantage is gained and lost through manipulating decision making and will to act without the use of violence. Both human behavior (actions) and human sensing occur in the physical dimension of the IE. When tied to a particular influence activity, these behaviors become indicators. While some of these indicators may only be observable using exquisite collection means, much human activity in the IE's physical dimension manifests as open-source or publicly available information, especially regarding groups of individuals. Because the unclassified data environment is so deep and expansive as to defy accurate quantification, basing an IE COP there in the largest data pool eliminates the requirement to move important data to a higher classification once identified.[7]

An IE COP at the unclassified level would provide the most extensive accessibility to users and contributors, though this aspect also presents security concerns. A clear disadvantage to an unclassified IE COP is that it inherently would not support enrichment by intelligence information or other classified data that may be critical to the analytic process underpinning military decision making. As an indispensable component of military planning, execution and assessment, comprehensive analysis, and synthesis of all available and relevant data must necessarily occur. Accordingly, an unclassified IE COP, in whole or in part, would require its exporting to an appropriate classification enclave to support this analysis. Anecdotally, over the last almost quarter-century of military operations, the DOD at large has struggled to identify and implement enduring cross-domain solutions for big data transfer and curation that are able to keep pace with the pace of change in technological development and security threats.[8]

Even exquisite data enrichment of the IE COP has a point of diminishing returns. In its most complete configuration, the Joint Force's COP is a top-secret, heavily caveated visualization with numerous special access program (SAP) restrictions because of the aggregation of sensitive data itself and the sensors that collected it. The resulting small cadre of authorized viewers and users of the SAP-level COP may be sufficient for operations in conflict, but campaigning to compete in day-to-day operations below the level of armed conflict demands interaction with the IE COP by a far broader range of users.

... the IE COP must support the planning, execution, and assessment of military operations, activities, and investments intended to influence human behavior ...

For better or worse, the Marine Corps fights on the Secret Internet Protocol Router Network in the steady-state non-crisis/conflict environment. Secret information is infused with

unclassified information as needed and means for moving data from the Non-classified Internet Protocol Router Network to Secret Internet Protocol Router Network are the most mature among unclassified-to-classified cross-domain solutions. When necessary, secret information is enriched with top secret and SAP information in the appropriate secure spaces by and for authorized individuals with a documented and adjudicated need to know. Generating and maintaining the IE COP at the secret level would best balance the need for cross-domain efficiency, wide user accessibility, optimization of data enrichment, and information security. Whatever the case, a parallel version at the unclassified level is likely required for necessary collaboration across the U.S. government agencies and with allies and partners.

Who Should Own the IE COP?

A strong case can be made for a functionally assigned combatant command owning and managing the IE COP on behalf of the Joint Force. The technical aspect of cyberspace is a foundational underpinning of today's IE, and U.S. Cyber Command is already the DOD center for understanding and operating in the cyberspace environment. Similarly, the U.S. Strategic Command's mission priorities of providing strategic deterrence through a combat-ready force would both contribute to and support the maintenance of an IE COP. As trans-global commands, assigning IE COP responsibility to U.S. Cyber Command and U.S. Strategic Command could empower national unity of effort, particularly in integrated campaigning. Ultimately though, the geographically assigned combatant command should own and manage the IE COP. They are the chief stakeholders in IEBA since it is the Joint Force within an area of responsibility that is existing in, operating in, and is being targeted within the IE. Irrespective of ownership at the combatant command level, a defensible argument can be made that the Marine Corps component commands at the combatant commands should be the stewards of the Marine Corps' IE COP, to include input and validation authority. Since it is their assigned forces executing operations, activities, and investments within the theater, the Marine Corps component commands are uniquely positioned to both understand where they fit in their higher headquarters' competition campaign and see and appreciate the nuances of their forces' competition operations, activities, and investments objectives and effects at the tactical level.

Under this construct, the MCIC would remain the IEBA proponent for the Marine Corps, as it is now, but would largely shed any responsibilities for generating IEBA or publishing and maintaining an IE COP. However, the MCIC would still be the clearinghouse for synergizing, synchronizing, and de-conflicting IEBA and the IE COP across the Marine Corps. With Marine Corps Information Operations Command as an integrated subordinate command, MCIC would remain the lead advocate for program acquisition and distribution, doctrine, training, force offering, and IE planning and reach-back support. The MEFs and their information groups as force providers for IE operations would be consumers/users of and contributors to IEBA and the IE COP.

Analytic support is potentially the area of greatest deficit in operationalizing IEBA that has no clear solution. This issue is discussed at length in the following section, but the enormity of the analytic task facing the Marine Corps in understanding the human decision-making and behavioral terrain that permeates every facet of the IE cannot be understated. As the Service information operations and intelligence centers respectively, Marine Corps Information Operations Command and Marine Corps Intelligence Activity both would require significant reimagining across personnel, capability, and mission lines to meet this burgeoning challenge.

IEBA 2.0: Information Environment Battlespace *Understanding*

Within the Marine Corps and across the DOD, "battlespace awareness" is an accepted term of art with no extant official or doctrinal definition; it does not appear in any current or recent joint or Marine Corps doctrine. The *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* references the phrase "situational awareness" several times but does not provide a definition. *Marine Corps Reference Publication 1-10.2*, *Marine Corps Supplement to the DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms,* defines "situational awareness" as:

> Knowledge and understanding of the current situation that promotes timely, relevant, and accurate assessment of friendly, enemy, and other operations within the battlespace in order to facilitate decision-making. An informational perspective and skill that fosters an ability to determine quickly the context and relevance of events that are unfolding. Also called "SA."[9]

In simple terms, awareness and understanding are not analogous concepts. Awareness indicates knowledge of something—the perception that something exists or is happening. Understanding implies the contextualized meaning of that knowledge (wisdom) and the consequent ability to or status of applying that contextualized meaning toward hypothesizing or even forecasting its impact on conditions, behaviors, actions, options, or outcomes.[10]

The Marine Corps recognizes that awareness and understanding are more than semantically different in defining "situational understanding" as:

> The product of applying analysis and synthesis to relevant information to determine the relationship among the mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available—time available variables to facilitate decision-making.[11]

Applying this rubric to the IE battlespace discussion, the IEBA evaluative measures involving the determination of behaviors and behavior drivers, analysis and estimates of vulnerabilities and opportunities, and the forecasting of actions, events, or conditions in IE seek to build off awareness to produce understanding. Since decision-making based on understanding is inherently better informed than that from awareness alone, information environment battlespace *understanding* (IEBU)

should be the terminal objective, enabled by a steady diet of IEBA.

Here again, though the evaluative measures exist, whether the Marine Corps is postured to achieve them across the doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities, and policies framework is unclear. Uncertainty is particularly acute with respect to analytic tasks involving the IE's cognitive dimension. For both the Marine Corps and the Joint Force, the psychological operations functional area's analytic capacity is insufficient for the scope, breadth, and tradecraft rigor of IEBU's requirements, and the intelligence analytic community does not possess the nuance and bent to collect on, analyze, and assess the human cognition—affect—conation system to effectively support the planning, execution, and assessment of military operations aimed at behavior change without a kinetic component.

Social marketing, traditionally employed for behavior change in public health and environmental conservation intervention, presents useful frameworks for analyzing human cognition, affect, and conation in support of approaches to behavior change that could be adapted to support the intelligence analytic requirements IEBU for competition below the level of armed conflict. At U.S. Central Command, the J2's Intelligence Operations and Analysis Divisions and the J3's Information Operations Division are currently exploring collaboration with the University of South Florida's public health and business/marketing schools and marketing industry partners to identify how social marketing might be leveraged to meet some of the challenges of IEBA and IEBU in competition below the level of armed conflict.

Information Advantage Main Effort: Prevailing Narrative

Joint doctrine speaks of information advantage as "operational advantage gained through the Joint Force's use of information for decision making and its ability to leverage information to create effects in the IE."[12] *MCDP 8* goes further, defining information advantage as "an exploitable condition resulting from one actor's ability to generate, preserve, deny and project information more effectively than another."[13] Marine Corps doctrine also parses information advantage into three distinct types: force resiliency, systems overmatch, and prevailing narrative. Just as with the ownership or classification level of the IE COP, discussion across the Marine Corps on primacy among the information advantage types should be deliberate, comprehensive, and robust.

While assessing and prioritizing the information advantage types by echelon of forces may produce interesting and useful conclusions, framing the question in terms of main and supporting efforts might also prove beneficial. Whether in the offense or defense, military efforts, regardless of echelon, require a main effort—unit or task, normally weighted with the preponderance of combat power and directed against a center of gravity through a critical vulnerability, that at a given point in time is most critical to overall mission success.[14] In particular in competition below the level of armed conflict, force resiliency in the IE is a contributor to information advantage by hardening the individual Marine against direct and indirect assault on their psychological (cognitive/affective/conative) and functional components. Similarly, systems overmatch in the IE, whether quantitative or qualitative, manifests as an absolute or relative advantage *of technical means* to generate, preserve, deny, or project information. Similar to force resiliency, systems overmatch is an IE combat power enabler; it is a condition that facilitates the targeted application of information power to achieve objectives.

Neither force resiliency nor systems overmatch are decisive because they are inherently enabling advantages; however, prevailing narrative can be precisely because narrative influences the human cognition—affect—conation complex at every turn, and it is this complex that defines and drives behavior and actions. When Marines reject disinformation because they have been attuned to identify it, that resiliency contributes to the narrative defensively and offensively. Being able to showcase the combat credibility of Marine Corps forces by highlighting or even demonstrating technical capability and capacity overmatch is equally a building block for the narrative. Under the ends-ways-means construct of military strategic planning and campaigning, generating, defending, and applying prevailing narrative in the IE is the sole way to influence behaviors in the physical environment that can achieve tactical, operational, and strategic objectives in pursuit of protecting national interests. Particularly in competition below the level of armed conflict where brute force is not an option, the prevailing narrative is the only logical main effort in the information advantage fight.

When Marines reject disinformation because they have been attuned to identify it, that resiliency contributes to the narrative defensively and offensively.

Climbing the Mountain to Plant the Flag

The task in front of the MCIC and the Marine Corps seems daunting—and it should. Attempting to generate awareness that yields an understanding of everything in the physical dimension that influences the thoughts, feelings, and will of every human or group of humans on the planet whose behaviors might have a role to play in achieving or maintaining conditions in the operating environment advantageous to Marine Corps, theater and national security objectives sounds as fanciful as it is grave. Even significant Service or even DOD progress in generating and maintaining IEBA and IEBU in sup-

port of information advantage cannot and will not be decisive so long as no organization is tasked or empowered to be the lead for U.S. information competition comprehensively. Although the National Security Council is the centralized organization for advising presidential decision-making on national security and foreign policy matters, it is not staffed, equipped, or tasked to coordinate and unify IE activities and approaches across the government. Where the U.S. Department of State and Departments of Treasury and Commerce are responsible and accountable for the diplomatic and economic elements of national power, there is no (longer a) Department of Information or Influence. The Department of State's Global Engagement Center comes closest, though distantly, to addressing this requirement but remains largely reactive.[15] America's adversaries and chief competitors understand this and have been exploiting their relative advantage through gray-zone operations, political interference, and targeted disinformation campaigns.

Still, the Corps is not only on the right track but leading the Services and the Department in shifting the paradigm of information's importance. New doctrines like *MCDP 8* and *MCDP 1-4, Competing*, the creation of the MCIC as a two-star level Service organization dedicated to the information warfighting function, the continuing evolution of the information maneuver occupational field, the creation and implementation of information advantage as an operational concept are, even if incremental, all necessary and momentous steps that enable the Marine Corps to better harness the power of information. Under a national security strategy that, rightly, emphasizes competing short of violence and conflict, information power is the coin of the realm. Difficult discussions like those above, engaged in without hubris or agenda, will only serve to fill the Corps' coffers, enabling Marines to pay it forward in competition to tilt the fight in their favor in crisis and conflict.

America's adversaries and chief competitors ... have been exploiting their relative advantage through gray-zone operations, political interference, and targeted disinformation ...

Notes

1. White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of Americ*a (Washington, DC: 2022).

2. Headquarters Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Task List 2.0,* (Washington, DC: 2023).

3. Ibid. Legacy information-related capabilities include military information support operations/psychological operations, cyberspace operations, civil affairs, public affairs/communications strategy and operations, electromagnetic spectrum operations, military deception, space operations, and physical attack.

4. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCWP 3-32, Marine Air Ground Task Force Information Operations*, (Washington, DC: 2018). This doctrinal publication mentions that intelligence support to psychological operations includes "identifying target audiences and other groups, their locations, conditions, strengths, vulnerabilities, susceptibilities, political environment, cultural environment, cultural norms, values, perceptions, attitudes, public opinion, tribal connections, alliances, beliefs, ideology and behaviors." However, none of the Marine Corps' intelligence doctrine provides detailed guidance on how the intelligence function should collect on or analyze psycho-ideational aspects like vulnerabilities and susceptibilities.

5. Adam Bryson, "Information Environment Battlespace Awareness Project Senior Leader Cross Leveling" (PowerPoint presentation, Marine Corps Information Operations Command, Quantico, VA, April 28, 2023); and John Hoffner, "White Paper: IEBA and an Information Environment Common Operating Picture" (white paper, Marine Corps Information Command, 2022).

6. David De Cremer and Garry Kasparov, "AI Should Augment Human Intelligence, Not Replace It," *Harvard Business Review*, March 18, 2021, https://hbr.org/2021/03/ai-should-augment-human-intelligence-not-replace-it.

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9. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCRP 1-10.2, Marine Corps Supplement to the DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, (Washington, DC: 2020).

10. American Psychological Association Dictionary of Psychology, s.v. "understanding," https://dictionary.apa.org/understanding.

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12. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 3-04, Information in Joint Operations*, (Washington, DC: 2022).

13. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCDP 8, Information,* (Washington, DC: 2022).

14. *Marine Corps Supplement to the DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms.*

15. Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of State, *Inspection of the Global Engagement Center,* (Arlington, VA: U.S. Department of State, 2022), https://www.stateoig.gov/uploads/report/report_pdf_file/isp-i-22-15.pdf.

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Forged in Fire

The Marine Corps must invest in the Navy's hunter/killer capability

by LtCol Jay Whalen & CDR Pete "Two Times" Salvaggio

In March 2003, then Lt Peter "Two Times" Salvaggio was conducting Operation Southern Watch missions from his EP-3E Aries II platform. While on this deployment, he was quickly thrust into full combat operations supporting pre-D-Day and D-Day activities against a robust integrated air defense system; the last actual suppression/destruction of enemy air defenses in a rolling combat campaign. What he experienced over the next several months and years shaped his development, from the ground level up, of the Maritime Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (MISR) Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) Course in 2018. As an EP-3E WTI, CDR Salvaggio became increasingly frustrated with the lack of understanding amongst theater-level component commanders—to include the geographic combatant commanders' intelligence and operations staffs—on how to task and process, exploit, and disseminate the Navy's collections aircraft servicing national, theater, and Service-level intelligence and operations requirements. From his bar-napkin concept sketch in 2016 to developing a cadre of newly "patched" MISR WTIs employment into forward-deployed contingency operations in 2022, the MISR capability is exactly what the Marine Corps needs to truly invest in to make *Force Design 2030* Stand-In Forces around the globe truly survivable and lethal.

MISR is a team of trained and qualified individuals focused on optimizing sensors in support of the carrier strike group/carrier air wing objectives, strengthening the integration of intelligence (N2) and operations (N3). MISR executes as a team for a variety of reasons, including unity of effort/unity of command, communications redundancy, and distribution of labor. There are three main groupings of tasks, usually driven by proximity to the supported commanders. A MISR coordinator (MISR-C) is co-located with the maritime operations center (echelon equivalent) working with the N2 and N3 fires directorates to develop the MISR mission tasking order in conjunction with the supported unit or units. A MISR afloat works as a special staff officer to bridge the information warfare commander and the N3. He is co-located with the tactical mission planners and focuses on developing a phased sensor game plan, initial contracts, and communication structure to support the find-fix-track-target-engage-assess targeting cycle and process. He also works in conjunction with the MISR coordinator in development of the MISR mission tasking order.

The MISR package commander (MISR-PC) is ideally co-located with forward-deployed manned or unmanned ISR assets that will support the tactical mission—executing the sensor management game plan as developed by the MISR coordinator/afloat and the commander's approved MISR mission tasking order. By design, each MISR position should be ready to absorb the duties of the other, especially during execution, due to the communications limitations or other mission requirements and indicated in the primary, alternate, contingency,

>LtCol Whalen has served in the Marine Corps for over 32 years. He is a career Intelligence/Information Warfare Officer having served in multiple information warfare billets spanning MEUs, joint, naval, and special operations task forces, and Tactical Training Group-Pacific and is a Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron One Intel Weapons and Tactics Instructor graduate (1-00). He currently serves as the Joint/Naval Information Warfare Integration Officer at the I MEF G-2.

>>CDR Salvaggio has served in the Navy for 26 years as an EP-3E Naval Flight Officer. He is a graduate and former staff instructor of the EP-3E Weapons and Tactics Instructor course and a plank owner of the inaugural Maritime Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance WTI Course. He is the founder and current Director of the Maritime Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Weapons School and Exercise Resolute Hunter.

"MISR enhances and operationalizes sensors from seabed to space in order to support and execute kinetic and non-kinetic fires by developing and managing all-domain kill web/kill chain employment in both the operational and tactical levels of war."

—MISR Mission Statement

The EP3-E Aries II is a landbased multi-intelligence reconnaissance aircraft based on the P-3 Orion airframe providing fleet and theater commanders with near-realtime tactical signals and full-motion video intelligence. *(Photo by Dan Rachal.)*

and emergency communications plan. MISR roles, responsibilities, and assigned authorities can be filled by the same individual when circumstances require. During support to contingency operations and geographic combatant commanders' and fleet-level exercises, MISR WTIs, with concurrence from the MISR Weapons School director, have deputized a myriad of Marines from forward deployed MAGTFs and other supporting activities.

Currently, all MISR WTIs are trained at the Naval Aviation Warfighting Development Center (NAWDC), MISR Weapons School located at Naval Air Station Fallon, NV, alongside the Fighter Weapons School (TOP GUN/F18, F35), Carrier Airborne Early Warning Weapons School (CAEWWS/E2), Airborne Electronic Attack Weapons School (HAVOC/EA18G), Rotary Wing Weapons Schools (Sea Hunter/MH60R and Sea Wolf/MH60S), the Navy Targeting Program Office and the Naval Special Warfare Joint Terminal Air Controller School. MISR is a 17.5-week course—the longest WTI course in the Navy—and is conducted twice a year (March–June and July–November). The course breakdown is as follows: weeks 1–2: baseline academics; weeks 3–4: fleet, joint, and Coalition integration; weeks 5–6: MISR TTPs; weeks 7–14: labs/simulations; weeks 15–17.5: capstone event—Exercise RESOLUTE HUNTER (also serving as the United Kingdom's Royal Air Force Qualified Weapons Instructor–ISR) course capstone event).

While the focal point of the course is to turn out MISR WTIs to the operational fleet forces, NAWDC has opened up the course to the joint and coalition forces, mainly the Air Force, the Australian Defense Forces, Royal Australian Air Force, the Royal Australian Navy, and the UK's Royal Navy. The Australian Defense Forces continue to build a cadre of MISR WTI throughout their force. Additionally, they provide unique and exquisite capabilities to support RESOLUTE HUNTER. The Marine Corps, as of this writing, has had two successful WTI graduates: one currently serving at 3rd MEB and the other at Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron Two. The Army has yet to send a soldier through the MISR WTI course.

While the Marine Forces components and MEFs have expressed interest to build out this MISR capability with their fires and effects coordination cells and/or their over-the-horizon-targeting elements, none are aggressively pursuing it thus far. The overall length of the course is proving to be problematic for Marine Corps commands as they are hesitant to send a qualified Marine away for that amount of time nor use unit funds to resource this capability without a registered requirement, *nice to have versus must have*, and the possibility of not completing the WTI curriculum. Additionally, outside of the Chief of Naval Operations/Commandant-chartered Maritime Working Group, there have been no discussions within the Headquarters Marine Corps Manpower Branch, Deputy Commandant for Information, or Deputy Commandant for Aviation (Aviation Hallway) levels to send Marines on a temporary instructions en route to their permanent change of station or permanent change of assignment because there is currently no billet identification code structure to support this course of action. In order to achieve a zero-sum game from a manpower perspective, the Marine Forces and MEFs need to advocate for the restructuring of the current billet structure within the G3 fires sections to convert the current Naval Officer billet code 9272 naval gunfire liaison officer at the MEFs and divisions to the MISR additional qualification designation DZS and Navy enlisted code G05A. Furthermore, within the MEF and Division tables of organi-

... all MISR WTIs are trained at the Naval Aviation Warfighting Development Center (NAWDC), MISR Weapons School located at Naval Air Station Fallon, NV ...

NAS Fallon hosts multiple training exercises and qualification courses to include building combat proficiencies and integrating advanced capabilities across the entire carrier air wing. *(Photo by Lt Cmdr Lydia E. Bock.)*

zation and equipment, any officer or staff non-commissioned officer that has a desired/required necessary-military occupational specialty of tactical air control party or joint terminal attack controller should incorporate the MISR additional qualification designation or Navy enlisted code into the billet MOS column.

The aforementioned scenario directly aligns with Commandants Dunford's, Neller's, and Berger's *Commandant's Planning Guidance* as it relates to naval integration as well as *Force Design 2030* efforts,

> along with the intellectual and technical skills required to innovate, adapt, and succeed in the rapidly changing 21st-century operating environment. We will equip our Marines with mobile, low-signature sensors and weapons that can provide a landward complement to Navy capabilities for surface warfare, antisubmarine warfare, air and missile defense, and airborne early warning. And in partnership with the Navy, our units will possess littoral maneuver capabilities to include high-speed, long-range, low-signature craft capable of maneuvering Marines for a variety of missions. [1]

Chapter 4 of the *Tentative Manual for Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations* is titled, "Information Activities in Support of EABO." Within it is a subsection (4.7.2) highlighting the importance of naval integration.[2] As the Marine Corps continues to build out over the horizon, precision-strike capabilities in the maritime domain and the littorals, such as HIMARS (with GMLRS) and the Navy/Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System, we will need a quarterback to manage the robust sensor to shooter gameplan in a counter command, control, computing, communications, cyber, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and targeting environment. To date, MISR is that quarterback, regardless of the plethora of automated tools within the joint fires networks. The MISR is your dynamic targeting subject-matter expert from cradle to grave, and it is time the Marine Corps embraces this capability against a peer adversary; as former Air Boss, VADM Miller stated at the 2021 Air Warfare Commander's Conference, "The next fight is a left side kill chain fight, and the first to figure it out will have the tactical advantage and win. It's the purple shirts [MISRs] who can and will make that happen. We must invest in them."[3]

The MISR is your dynamic targeting subject-matter expert ...

We recommend that NAWDC and the Marine Corps Training and Education Command conduct a conference to determine the feasibility of developing a career path that would allow for initial training to baseline personnel and then combine with advanced trained MISRs who already have fleet experience in this critical warfighting area, thus creating an experienced team to conduct operations. This combined effort between NAWDC and Training and Education Command to develop a way forward will enable the Navy and Marine Corps team to expand the officer and enlisted MISR capability; further enabling and enhancing fleet and MAGTF survivability and lethality in the peer, contested, multi-domain operational environments at both the operational and tactical levels of war. Additionally, this would match the overall vision of establishing the MISR as a community, a primary naval officer billet code for naval officers, and the roadmap to qualifying and attending the MISR Weapons School and receiving the WTI certification.

Notes

1. Gen David H. Berger, *Force Design 2030 Report Phase I and II*, (Washington, DC: 2020).

2. Headquarters Marine Corps, *Tentative Manual for Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations. 2nd Edition*, (Washington, DC: 2023).

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Training the Intelligence Marine of 2030

Developing smaller more capable intelligence sections

by Col Seth E. Anderson

The way that Marine Corps intelligence operated in Iraq and Afghanistan is no longer effective for the current and future fights. We need to change how we train intelligence Marines to allow them to operate effectively under the new threats we face. In both the Iraq and Afghanistan fights, we had intelligence centers with dozens or even hundreds of personnel. Moreover, we could usually rely on stable communications capable of disseminating intelligence across the battlespace. However, with the proliferation of medium- to long-range precision-strike weapons, we will no longer have large intelligence centers anywhere close to the enemy. Also, with the increasing ability of our adversaries to jam communications, we can no longer rely on our ability to consistently communicate.

We will have to adapt to using small intelligence sections that move around the battlespace to avoid being targeted. These teams will need to be able to provide a maneuver commander with the wide variety of intelligence needed without relying on communications for reach-back support. This means that intelligence sections will need *brilliance in the basics*, an often-used cliché but the best descriptor of the requirement.

Officers have already started receiving a better grounding in the fundamentals. New intelligence officers attend the nine-week Tactical Intelligence Officer Course, and upon graduation, they receive the 0202 MOS. After graduation, they attend six weeks of follow-on training, where they earn a Necessary Military Occupational Specialty (NMOS)—either the Air Intelligence Officer Course (NMOS 0207), the Ground Intelligence Officer Course (NMOS 0203), the Signals Intelligence Officer Course (NMOS 0206), or the Counterintelligence (CI) Officer Course (NMOS 0204). Officers with 0203 status also attend the Infantry Officers Course, while 0204s attend an additional 28-week course that all Marine Corps counterintelligence Marines attend.

The Marine Corps initiated this training plan, often called the Van Riper Plan, in the 1990s. It created specialists versus generalists. Entry-level lieutenants were given a bitesize amount of intelligence to know whether it was intel support for aviation operations or ground operations or whether it was signals intelligence or CI. Over time, the need for a better understanding of the fundamentals led to the creation

>Col Anderson wrote this article while he was the Commanding Officer of Marine Corps Intelligence Schools. He is an Intelligence Officer with over 25 years of service and numerous deployments. He also has extensive experience in training having previously served as the Intelligence Department Head at Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group and as an Intelligence Instructor at Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron 1.

For the future force, small multi-disciplinary intelligence sections, like the MEU-level staff pictured here, may be the standard. *(Photo by Sgt Austin Hazard.)*

of the Tactical Intelligence Officer Course, although separate NMOSs remained.

This training design has served its purpose, but it is no longer the best strategy to prepare for today's fight. For officers to truly have a broad understanding of intelligence, we need to switch from starting officers as specialists to starting them as generalists. All the officers' entry-level intel MOS would best be combined into 0202, with no more specialists at the entry-level. The Tactical Intelligence Officer Course can be expanded to cover the material from Air, Ground, CI, and Signals Intelligence Officer Courses. This training will create officers who can achieve *brilliance in the basics* of intelligence.

A few select 0202s could still attend IOC as 0203s have in the past. This would enable them to become effective ground reconnaissance and surveillance leaders in the context of ground combat. For example, future 0202s could be screened at The Basic School, and those who wanted to could attend IOC and then be sent to a GCE unit after MOS school.

Another major change is that there would no longer be second lieutenant 0204 CI officers. These lieutenants were often given the same billets as 0210 warrant officers, making them somewhat redundant. Because there is still a need for officers to have CI credentials, they could complete this type of training later in their careers. For example, after their first fleet tour as 0202s, officers could apply to attend the CI course. This would ensure some credentialed officers. More importantly, these experienced intel officers would be much better prepared to integrate CI into the overall intelligence effort.

A similar training concept could be implemented for enlisted personnel in both the 02XX and 26XX career fields. From the start, their MOS training should focus on a common core of intelligence knowledge that all intelligence Marines should have. For example, the first month of all enlisted intelligence training could be the same, focusing on intelligence fundamentals. Then, the courses could diverge into tailored training for the different enlisted intelligence MOSs.

Another proposed major change for the enlisted intelligence MOSs is reducing their number so that there are fewer specialists. For example, the 0241 imagery analyst and 0261 geospatial intelligence specialists could be combined into one MOS. This way, when a commander needs imagery and topo support, they can rely on a smaller team.

Most entry-level Marines are eighteen or nineteen years old, and it can be difficult for someone that young to absorb all the intelligence fundamentals. Training in the necessary core skills can be spread over a few years. While their entry-level school will provide some of the fundamentals, they will need additional instruction later. A course can be added for Marines who are starting their second enlistment that provides leveling and advanced training for the intelligence functions; all 02XX and 26XX Marines entering their second enlistment would be required to complete this course.

A common complaint about intelligence Marines is that they are too stovepiped ...

While this plan will provide a stronger foundation for intelligence Marines, they will still need to acquire additional areas of expertise throughout their careers. To do this, the Van Riper Plan can be modified and laid on its side. This means that instead of frontloading NMOSs, different NMOSs can be added throughout a Marine's career. Also, unlike today's Van Riper Plan, this new plan would apply to enlisted Marines as well as to officers.

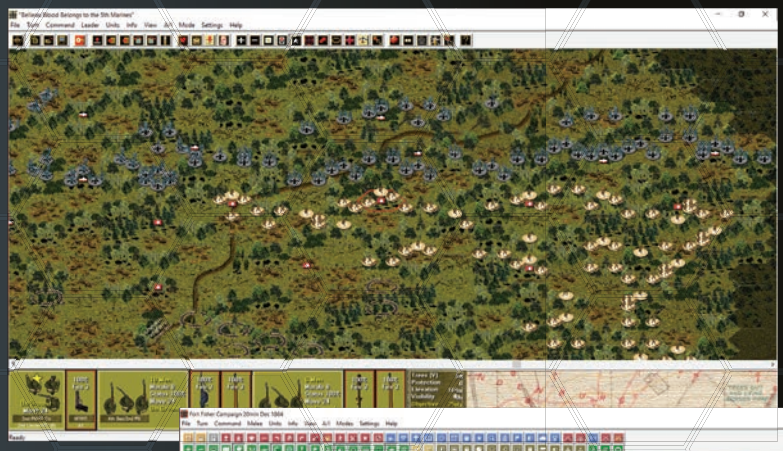
Adding areas of expertise is already happening to some extent; it just needs to be expanded. Currently, intelligence graduates from Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron 1 (NMOS 0277), Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group (NMOS 0233), and the Collection Managers Course (NMOS 0275) all receive NMOSs recognizing the areas of expertise they have acquired in these courses. This could be expanded further. For example, NMOSs could be developed for intelligence support and targeting, as well as for cyber, space, and numerous other areas.

Providing these NMOSs throughout a Marine's career has two main goals. First, it would allow a Marine's expertise to be tracked so that when a unit needed a target intelligence chief or a collection manager and would be able to find those Marines who have the specific NMOS. The right Marines could be put in the right jobs for which they are properly trained.

Second, this gives Marines a training roadmap for future development. Younger Marines often do not know what they need to do to expand their knowledge. A series of NMOS that they could work toward would help in their professional development.

A common complaint about intelligence Marines is that they are too stovepiped and do not know how they fit into the larger intelligence effort. Building a common core of intelligence knowledge from the start that focuses on analysis, collection, targeting, and systems would help these Marines break out of their stovepipes. This new training plan would result in junior Marines who can perform a wide variety of intelligence functions. With additional NMOSs, we would still be able to develop experts, and with their solid understanding of intelligence fundamentals, these experts would be better able to use their skills to contribute to the overall effort. Maneuver commanders at every level would be able to count on their S-2 section to provide them with the intelligence they need to make decisions. As our adversaries continue to improve, we must change our intelligence training to meet the threat.

USMC



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Intelligence You Can Breathe

Treating the natural environment as an intelligence function

by Capt Jason R. Tyx

>Capt Tyx is a Meteorological and Oceanographic Officer currently assigned as the II MEF Meteorological and Oceanographic Officer. He has deployed to CENTCOM three times in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Inherent Resolve. He is a Limited Duty Officer, having previously reached the ranks of Gunnery Sergeant and Chief Warrant Officer 3.

The Long and Sinking Road

Tanks descended into the mire, some sinking so deep that only their turrets remained visible. Roads disintegrated or were destroyed by the long lines of heavy, tracked vehicles that passed over them. Many vehicles remained trapped amid the miles-long convoy, hampered by broken-down tracked and wheeled vehicles in front of them. With extreme mud flanking the roads and precluding them from simply bypassing their static comrades, vehicles frequently ran out of fuel with no effective or efficient means of resupply. The early days and weeks of the Russian invasion resembled a prevent defense much more than the blitz they had intended.

The Russian military had gone toe-to-toe with *rasputitsa*, a term roughly translated to mean "when the roads stop existing."[1] This is not news to anyone who has spent any time in Russia, Ukraine, or Belarus; the mud asserts itself every spring as the snow melts, returning in the fall as torrential rains dominate the local climate. *Rasputitsa* had such a devastating effect on the Russian invasion of Ukraine that a Dartmouth professor dubbed it one of the "Four Horsemen of the Ukrainian Army."[2]

Act Naturally

What the Russians lacked in this instance was not knowledge of the environmental conditions near the border with Ukraine. *Rasputitsa* has been credited with helping to repel the invasions of Napoleon and Hitler in previous centuries and is a semiannual mainstay in the region. Perhaps due to hubris or an underestimation of their foe's resolve, the Russians appear to have ignored or underestimated the impact the environmental conditions would have on their invading forces—suffering debilitating consequences as a result.

So why did Russia fail in its own backyard, and why might the Marine Corps have a similar concern? The methods in which meteorological and oceanographic (METOC) information is determined, developed, and presented—and the philosophy underpinning how METOC Marines are trained, equipped, and employed—are archaic, a vestige of the pre-Information Age that must be scrutinized and updated to meet the Marine Corps' emerging requirements.

The most important aspect of the environment to a commander is not the *what* but the *why*. This is not to imply that the why behind the forecast—high or low pressure, a passing front, a sea breeze—aids a commander's decision cycle. Instead, METOC Marines must be able to communicate the answer to the leader's most critical question: *why should I care*? This article will explore ways in which organic METOC capabilities can be made leaner and more relevant to the warfighters they support from the initial training pipeline to combat zones across the globe.

The methods in which meteorological and oceanographic (METOC) information is determined, developed, and presented ... are archaic, a vestige of the pre-Information Age that must be scrutinized and updated ...

Stuck Inside a Cloud

Many volumes could be filled with analysis of battles won and lost due to the environment. Before the space race and the introduction of meteorological satellites, much of this could be attributed to the primitive nature of the sciences of meteorology and oceanography. Carl von Clausewitz addressed this uncertainty, writing:

> This tremendous friction, which cannot, as in mechanics, be reduced to a few points, is everywhere in contact with chance, and brings about effects

that cannot be measured, just because they are largely due to chance. One, for example, is the weather. Fog can prevent the enemy from being seen in time, a gun from firing when it should, a report from reaching the commanding officer. Rain can prevent a battalion from arriving, make another late by keeping it not three but eight hours on the march, ruin a cavalry charge by bogging the horses down in mud, etc.[3]

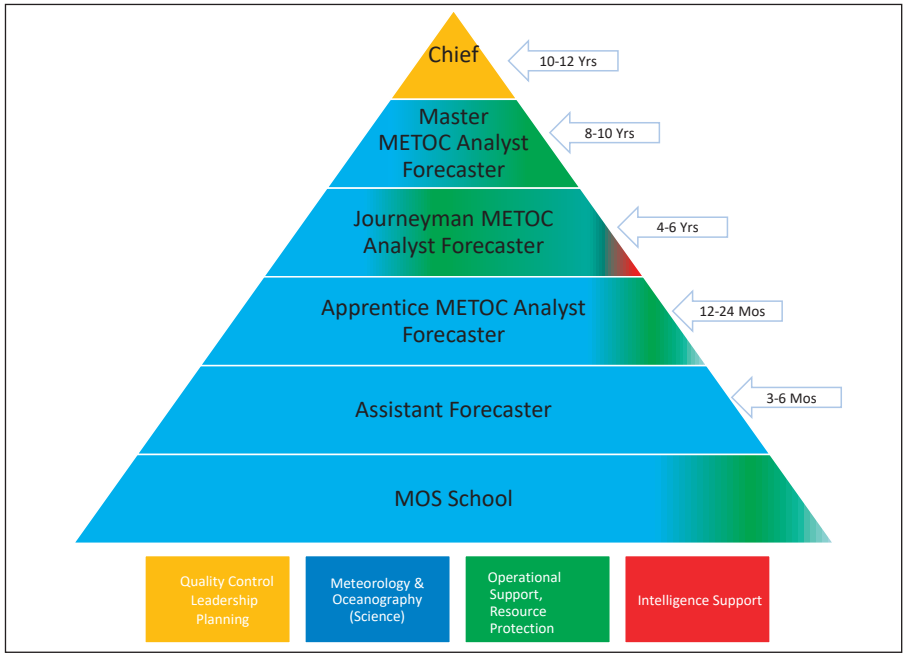
The current and future states of the environment are, of course, no longer the coin flip that they were in Clausewitz's time. Rather, science has evolved to the point where reliable predictions of the atmosphere, oceans, and even solar and ionospheric activity can be provided well in advance. Climatological study can provide valuable averages and extremes, giving planners right and left lateral limits to aid in the development of planning outputs including but not limited to individual gear lists, transportation plans for personnel and equipment, and schemes of maneuver for combat operations.

In the decades preceding the 2010s, ocean and atmospheric models were nascent and often unreliable. While they provided a good opportunity for a forecaster's first look at the environment, they did not provide sufficient accuracy or precision required to support a Marine Corps commander's decision making. Instead, METOC forecasters received intensive meteorological training over the course of eight to nine months that was designed to provide checks and balances to the models through techniques such as initialization and verification. Further, many capabilities that may now seem ubiquitous (e.g., worldwide data assimilation, passively receiving large quantities of data, high-resolution environmental models) did not exist as they do today. Even if environmental models had been able to provide a 100 percent solution in the mid-2000s, data and communications technology had not yet matured to the point where that information would be available across the globe in near-realtime. But that time has arrived, and it is imperative that the Marine Corps adjusts to the new paradigm.

It is very difficult, if not impossible, for a recent high school graduate to master two or more disparate skills in a single enlistment when one of them routinely confounds practitioners with doctorate-level degrees. If we want our METOC Marines to excel at meteorology, then we must treat them as meteorologists and pour our efforts and resources into developing scientists—with the same logic applied to the sciences of hydrology and oceanography. If, however, we want our METOC personnel to provide relevant, actionable intelligence that aids a commander's decision-making process, then we must reassess how much time we spend teaching and reinforcing highly technical concepts such as vorticity analysis and geostrophic wind.

Accordingly, the Marine Corps must capitalize on the opportunity to transform the way it views its METOC analysts. Instead of nine months of grueling instruction in atmospheric physics, dynamics, satellite interpretation, radar analysis, and other scientific concepts, the time is right to shift focus. Environmental models, including numerical weather prediction models, have evolved to the point where it is extraordinarily difficult to train a Marine to consistently outperform them before the first enlistment ends. This is exacerbated when one considers the lengthy, arduous certification process that immediately follows initial schooling for METOC Marines.

The *METOC Training and Readiness Manual* allows up to 24 months for Marines to attain their apprentice-level certification, the first milestone in the training progression that allows them to work independently.[4] This certification, however, includes very little training in operational support, tactical decision aids, or other concepts relevant to the current and future fight. When viewed in conjunction with the length of the initial training pipeline (approximately 12 to 15 months) and end-of-enlistment events such as terminal leave, even a 5-year enlistment is left with roughly 18 to 24 months of useful time. This can be further reduced by popular programs such as SkillBridge. The current METOC training archetype produces a poor return on investment, which in turn provides limited value when existing technological tools are considered.



The current, overwhelmingly science-based enlisted training progression model for METOC Marines almost entirely neglects intelligence concepts. Represented by the sliver of red on the fourth level, only one training and readiness event and one academic module in the entire syllabus focuses on intelligence. *Months/years indicated are training time, not calendar time. ***(Figure created by author.)***

Advocacy for the METOC occupational field recently moved from the deputy commandant for aviation to the deputy commandant for information. While this may appear to be administrative in nature, it represents an opportunity for growth and change: *predicting the future state of the environment provides intelligence, and METOC is an intelligence discipline*. METOC support and day-to-day operations no longer require the meticulous analysis they once did. Additional focus on tactical decision aids—software that assists in analyzing the effects of the environment on friendly and adversary capabilities such as targeting and electromagnetic propagation—can and should replace the toilsome initial training offered today, decreasing the time spent in initial schools and on-the-job training but with a corresponding increase in the return on investment from our young Marines.

To treat METOC information and products as intelligence, we must train Marines in intelligence practices from the beginning.

Don't Pass Me By

To treat METOC information and products as intelligence, we must train Marines in intelligence practices from the beginning. Instead of painstakingly working through one of the most difficult and complex applied sciences in the world, we instead need to ask ourselves why we spend so much time analyzing the environment and what value that analysis brings. Assuming they arrive at similar solutions, is a lance corporal who can explain the atmospheric dynamics, prognosis rules, and climatic judgment behind a forecast providing more value to a commander than a fellow Marine who knows just enough to interpret model output and translate it to a briefing slide—but is able to provide operational context?

The latter Marine will have much more time available to train on, examine, and deliver what truly matters to the commander: the impact of the environment on friendly and enemy capabilities. *Can we fly today? What sensors will be impacted? Will they cause blind spots for either side? How has the adversary typically reacted to thunderstorms, heavy rain, or other significant conditions? Where will the environment create gaps for the adversary that we can exploit?* By bypassing the protracted processes required to simply verify a model solution, that Marine can spend more time assessing how the adversary reacts to environmental conditions or working with planners to mitigate and exploit those conditions.

Of course, there will still be situations in which a Marine with a scientific background remains necessary. A system that delayed the creation of full-fledged METOC forecasters until the second enlistment or later would ensure the return on investment that we need to remain relevant while acknowledging the fact that no model will ever be perfect. Technology certainly will not meet every need or requirement; a combination of talent management for reach-back support and operational employment, utilizing more robustly trained forecasters, could prevent a self-imposed capability gap.

Equipment and concepts of employment must follow this logic as well. Consider the convolutedly but aptly named Meteorological Mobile Facility (Replacement) Next Generation (colloquially known as the NEXGEN). Among its outsized logistical footprint, it counts a primary MOS of about 60 meteorological equipment maintenance Marines whose principal role is to maintain and repair the NEXGEN. This large, cumbersome system requires multiple dedicated C-130 flights to transport its many components, support items, and consumables. Once it arrives on site, it demands unique communications support, a team of six or more METOC Marines, three meteorological equipment maintenance Marines with limited ability to perform *in situ* repairs, persistent presence on the electromagnetic spectrum, multiple air conditioning units, and a concept of maintenance that involves mailing any broken component back to the program

A Marine emplaces an advanced micro-weather sensor during Exercise Cold Response in Norway. Alongside its temperature, barometric, wind speed/direction, and visibility measurements, this sensor can measure cloud height up to 10,000 feet. *(Photo by Sgt Megan Roses.)*

office for (hopefully) eventual replacement. The NEXGEN is the basis for one of the primary methods of operational METOC support in the Marine Corps. What commander is signing up to use this demanding, antiquated equipment to support expeditionary advanced base or distributed maritime operations against a near-peer adversary?

We must prioritize smarter, leaner equipment solutions that do not encumber leaders with logistical headaches. The value added by the NEXGEN—a marginally better environmental prediction capability and an uptick in data being ingested by Navy and Air Force numerical weather prediction models—is not worth the price paid. Marine commanders are accustomed to operating in the gray area, with 70 to 80 percent solutions being the norm. Adding value in this context means giving them as much actionable information and intelligence as possible while simultaneously avoiding burdening the commander and staff with support requirements. Two Marines, with one computer per network used and the right quantity of micro-weather sensors, can provide close to the same level of support as the resource-intensive system described above.

If we train our METOC Marines to provide decision support first—giving commanders an environmental perspective on the problem they must solve—we realize savings across the board: manpower, equipment, training time, *useful* time in the fleet, and a reallocation of the uniformed technicians who are trained to maintain a system that was designed during Operations IRAQI and ENDURING FREEDOM and optimized for similar conflicts. Consequently, we must leverage the incredible technological tools at our disposal to enhance the commander's lethality.

Notes

1. David Hambling, "Mud Season in Ukraine Leaves Russian Tanks Stuck in Mire," *The Guardian*, April 12, 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/news/2022/apr/12/mud-season-in-ukraine-leaves-russian-tanks-stuck-in-mire.

2. Jason Lyall, Twitter post, March 4, 2022, 10:23AM, https://twitter.com/jaylyall_red5/status/1499767414338342919.

3. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Pate, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

4. Headquarters Marine Corps, *NAVMC 3500.38D*, *Meteorological and Oceanographic Training and Readiness Manual*, (Washington, DC: October 2021).

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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

Rebranding Reconnaissance

A change of identity

by Maj Kyle W. Wilmouth

The Marine Corps is approaching a situation in which the tenets of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) are being rebranded from their traditional appreciations. If formally adopted by the Service, such changes will be critical to understand since ISR actions primarily contribute to the accomplishment of the commander's intelligence mission, as defined by *MCDPs 1* and *2*.[1] Concepts, capabilities, and employment models are being introduced as new without due consideration for their applicability with existing doctrine or the notion that they may only be perceived as new in the context of a changed landscape. While these efforts are undoubtedly in line with *Force Design 2030* initiatives, certain change efforts are generating confusion and creating second and third-order effects that if left unaddressed and on their existing trajectories will foster (in some cases, are already fostering) misunderstanding(s) of primary functions and responsibilities of the commander's intelligence mission and undermine the Marine Corps ISR Enterprise.

The Marine Corps has been in a period of change since the release of the *Marine Corps Operating Concept* in 2016. Recognizing shortfalls in existing Service organization and preparation for combat, then-Commandant Gen Neller provided the Service a base for rigorous examination, planning, and experimentation that Gen Berger has continued within the *38th Commandant's Planning Guidance* and built upon with the *Force Design 2030* campaign. These efforts are justified and necessary to ensure the Service is prepared for tomorrow's conflict(s). However, as any organization endeavors to change, narratives or understandings of the organization's purpose, capabilities, and function may also change. A change in identity may be an important aspect of the process, but misinterpretation and misunderstanding of the new narratives can be counterproductive to the change itself. Such change can cause organizations to lose focus and momentum, leading to greater skepticism from members of the organization and their external audiences.

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This article aims to identify friction points in the Service's new approaches to the understanding and execution of reconnaissance.

The private sector contains a multitude of lessons learned about the dangers of rebranding. The *old wine, new bottles* idiom may surface when examining new narratives—its use aims to identify that change did not occur, but previously existing ideas were simply repackaged and advertised as new ideas. This article aims to identify friction points in the Service's new approaches to the understanding and execution of reconnaissance.

Rebranding Reconnaissance

During their calendar year 2022 deployment, the 22d MEU and the KEARSARGE Amphibious Ready Group were commanded and controlled by the commander of Task Force 61/2 (CTF 61/2); both the 22d MEU and the KEARSARGE Amphibious Ready Group were designated as subordinate task groups (CTGs) under the CTF (CTG 61/2.2 and CTG 61/2.1, respectively). For a portion of this deployment, a dedicated reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance (RXR) formation was also designated under CTF 61/2 (CTG 61/2.4) and was tasked with conducting experimentation to advance the Service's developing RXR employment models. The command relationship diagram on page 43 provides an overview of the relationship between CTF 61/2, its subordinate CTGs, the U.S. Sixth Fleet, and Marine Forces Europe/Africa.

The 2021 *Force Design 2030 Annual Update* discussed RXR and specified that within the forthcoming "Stand-In Force Concept ... a detailed explanation of reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance"[2] would be included. This document mandated the creation of a corresponding functional concept "describing reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance capabilities that support

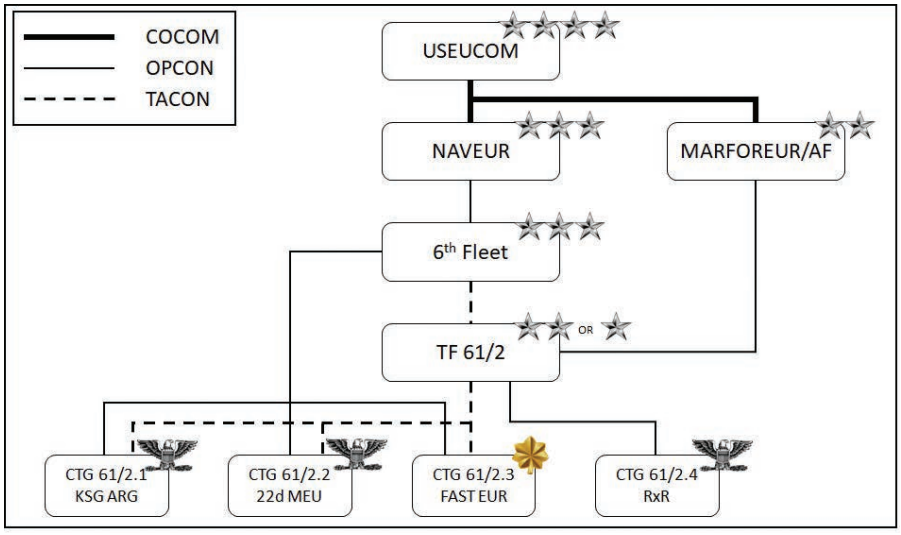

Diagram 1. Command relationship for CY22 deployment of CTF 61/2, KEARSARGE Amphibious Ready Group, 22d MEU, and RXR detachment. *(Diagram provided by author.)*

naval campaigning and competition."[3] The December 2021 *Concept for Stand-in Forces* satisfied the first task by contextualizing the RXR activities of the Stand-in Forces.[4] Combat Development and Integration satisfied the second task by publishing the *Marine Corps Functional Concept for Maritime Reconnaissance and Counter-reconnaissance* in March 2022.

Comparing the verbiage of these new documents with the existing definitions of reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance from *MCDP 1-0*, the new definitions became longer and more broadly descriptive but add little additional clarity regarding their functional employment. The new counter-reconnaissance definition more aptly conveys how counter-reconnaissance activities relate to those of reconnaissance, but the definition of reconnaissance has remained largely unchanged.[5] The inserted chart contrasts the definitions of reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance across the referenced source documents.

With the aforementioned guidance, FMF units conducted operations and experimentation to advance, develop, and refine future methods for how the Service will execute RXR. During the introduction of these experiments and initial lessons learned, debate arose as to whether RXR represented a new capability or simply relabeled well-established ISR operations. More specifically, one of the first questions that surfaced was whether the use of the term "RXR" represented a noun or a verb. CTF 61/2's employment of CTG 61/2.4) initially seemed to embrace the former definition and perceived that a specific formation would be responsible for these activities (RXR is a noun). CTG 61/2.4 executed several operations during their four-month deployment to employ experimental sensing capabilities (e.g. Simrad radars) and complement program of record system sensing capabilities to support maritime targeting and maritime domain awareness of the fleet as well as allies and partner nations. Within that same CTF formation, the 22d MEU's intelligence section executed unilateral and bilateral, multi-disciplined intelligence collection operations throughout the entirety of its seven-month deployment. These collection missions constituted "OAIs conducted to attain battlespace awareness and prepare the operational environment" and operations "undertaken to deny and frustrate the adversary's ability to obtain by visual observation, electronic sensing, or other detection methods."[6]

	MCDP 1-0 (updated July 2017)	Force Design 2030 Annual Update (April 2021)	Marine Corps Functional Concept for Maritime Reconnaissance and Counter Reconnaissance (March 2022)
Reconnaissance	A mission undertaken to obtain, by visual observation or other detection methods, information about the activities and resources of an enemy or adversary, or to secure data concerning the meteorological, hydrographic, or geographic characteristics of a particular area. Also called RECON.	SIF operate forward in partnership with other nations to identify malign behavior and gain knowledge regarding the potential adversary and environment through all-domain reconnaissance.	a mission or activities undertaken to obtain by any detection methods, information about the activities of a force, group, or populace, or to secure data concerning the meteorological, hydrographic, or geographic characteristics of a particular area, and to report that information to a commander and their forces. *(Additional Examples of Reconnaissance provided in source document)*
Counter Reconnaissance	All measures taken to prevent hostile observation of a force, area, or place.	Deny an adversary or potential adversary the ability to gain advantage in any domain through passive and active counter-reconnaissance.	the set of missions and activities undertaken to deny and frustrate the adversary's ability to obtain by visual observation, electronic sensing, or other detection methods, information about activities and resources of friendly force, group, or populace, or to secure data concerning the meteorological, hydrographic, or geographic characteristics of a particular area. This includes all measures taken to prevent hostile forces from locating the fleet by uncovering, disrupting, defeating or denying the adversary's collection ways and means.

Chart 1. Comparison of the terms "reconnaissance" and "counter-reconnaissance" across* MCDP 1-0, 2021 FD 2030 Annual Update, *and the* Marine Corps Funcional Concept for Maritime RXR.** ***(Chart provided by author.)

In a limited comparison of the activities of both formations (much of their detailed descriptions remain classified), both formations executed sensing operations in support of their respective commander, the fleet commander, and the combatant commander's intelligence requirements and directly contributed to maritime domain awareness of the same. If multiple formations (e.g. both CTG 61/2.4 and the 22d MEU S-2) can, by definition, execute "R" and "XR" activities, the latter of the aforementioned argument (RXR is a verb) is favored. This singular example illustrates that there is clearly room to define RXR as both a noun and a verb. However, where confusion remains is when RXR activities are to be employed, how will these activities tie into existing traditional reconnaissance and ISR activities (if they are to be considered different), and who is the functional area responsible for doing so.

If we are to understand that RXR activities can be conducted by a specific

formation, MEU intelligence sections, or the Stand in Forces formation, the requirements justifying these activities should then remain consistent with the doctrinal processes that have driven all Marine Corps, joint, and national intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance activities—priority intelligence requirements (PIRs). Doctrinally, the employment of reconnaissance, scouting, sensing, and other ISR is justified and governed through PIRs and the constituent elements of PIRs: essential elements of information or indicators, specific information requirements, and specific orders or requests, as generated by the formation's collection plan. If this holds true, future RXR activities would be operational actions executed to answer existing intelligence requirements. If this is a false assumption and operational requirements alone will drive RXR activities, clarity is needed for the force to better understand the employment of RXR/the RXR force.

Adding terminology to this discussion, additional terms that have been introduced in recent planning circles are those of multi-domain reconnaissance (MDR) and all-domain reconnaissance (ADR). Attempting to understand these terms with the same doctrinal and etymological approach, activities associated with these employment models would be defined as reconnaissance missions or activities that are executed across multiple and potentially all domains, respectively. Should MDR and ADR also be considered as new employment models for reconnaissance? Doctrinally, intelligence collection plans already account for collection through multiple intelligence disciplines and require collection managers to prioritize the mixing and cueing of organic and external ISR assets. Ultimately, if the intelligence collection plans that currently drive ISR activities already account for all collection in all available domains, then it is difficult to envision RXR, MDR, and ADR concepts ever amounting to more than *old wine in new bottles*. Moreover, because these terms have no grounding in doctrine it seems unlikely that they will stand the test of time or scrutiny from the joint community.

Also, Marine Special Operations Command is developing a new approach to executing reconnaissance in the form the strategic shaping reconnaissance (SSR). While this capability is still in development, SSR offers capabilities that will enable the clandestine collection, special operations-related intelligence operations, advanced-force operations, and support to seabased inshore special operations raids. These activities are supported by existing practices and doctrine for reconnaissance and intelligence support to special operations. While it is important to clearly identify and maintain the distinction between conventional force reconnaissance and intelligence activities and SSR, it is worth noting that SSR activities will complement and overlap with conventional force intelligence and reconnaissance activities:

- Mutually conduct operations from advanced bases in denied and contested environments.
- Develop and maintain multi-domain situational awareness.
- Conduct operational preparation of the environment.
- Map adversary networks.
- Monitor adversary and provide indications and warnings.
- Emplace sensors and collection tools.

Here too, we can begin to identify overlap with new concepts and those that have existed with Service doctrine for quite some time. If SSR is to exist as a Service concept independent of RXR, the term "reconnaissance" at the heart of both acronyms would effectively take on different meanings when describing Marine Special Operations Command's support to the special operations community and the conventional Marine Corps' support to numbered fleet commanders.

In historical context and agnostic of technological advances, the doctrinal principles of reconnaissance endure despite the conventional vernacular we apply to describe and classify the activities. Scouting and sensing ahead of the formation to gain awareness of the terrain, adversary, and other aspects of the operational environment are as relevant now as they have been in the history of conflict and sustain the same timeless nature as do our Service principles within *MCDPs 1* and *2*. What has changed—significantly—is the landscape on which conflict is waged. The traditional domains of the operational environment have evolved exponentially and will continue to do so in concert with the effects of the ever-changing use of the electromagnetic spectrum and the information environment. While the execution of reconnaissance, sensing, and scouting may appear different on changed landscapes (e.g. within cyberspace, throughout the information environment, and from the terrain of sovereign nations vice terrain taken by force as in Iraq and Afghanistan), time-tested, doctrinally supported approaches to reconnaissance, sensing, and scouting requirements endure. It is worth noting that the conceptual development of the RXR, MDR, ADR, and SSR employment models all stemmed from the 2020 Marine Corps ISR Enterprise Capabilities-Based Assessment for requirements/justification.

While the intelligence warfighting function will remain responsible for planning collection operations, intelligence sections should not necessarily assume responsibility for functional and detailed planning of all other types of reconnaissance operations. Justifiably, not all formations that perform reconnaissance functions exist for

While the execution of reconnaissance, sensing, and scouting may appear different ... time-tested, doctrinally supported approaches ... endure.

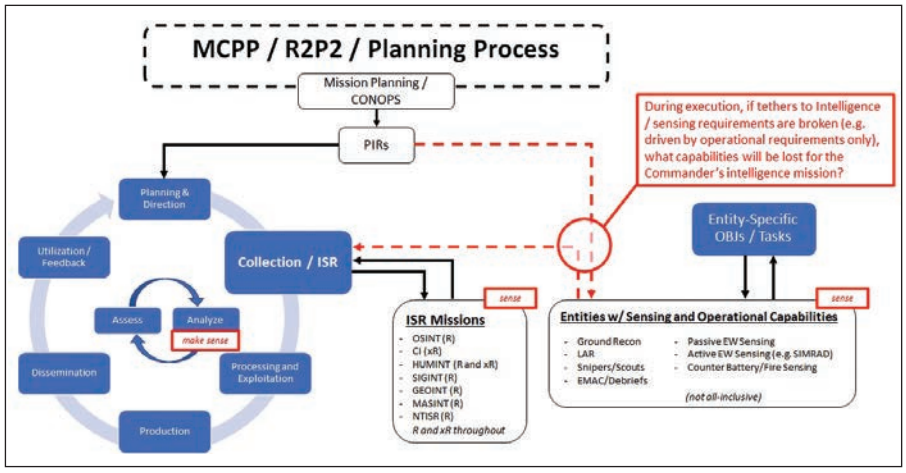

Diagram 2. Visualization of how a formation's sense-and-make-sense activities affect collections, the intelligence cycle, and operational planning. *(Diagram provided by author.)*

the sole purpose of sensing and can retain entity-specific missions, tasks, and objectives. For example, ground reconnaissance teams and snipers *can* sense, but sensing is not their sole purpose. Functional and detailed planning considerations aside, however, when employed in a sensing capacity these formations should sustain at least a conceptual tether back to the sensing requirement(s). If sensing teams and formations (of existing, future, or experimental types) are not founded within intelligence requirements and no longer inform the collections mission, what is their purpose? How will intelligence *make sense* of disparate and/or independent *sense* activities? If the Service finds itself in this future state, the worth of intelligence will be brought into question.

Countering Reconnaissance

Especially against a peer adversary, the counter-reconnaissance missions and activities will be incredibly important to the survival of the force. Although today's use of the term counter-reconnaissance may allude to it being a relatively new idea, we should credit ourselves for the critical thought we have done in recent years that has contributed to this end, whether we called it counter-reconnaissance or not. The development and adoption of signature management strategies to harden the force; the evolution of the Combined Arms Exercise, Mohave Viper, and Integrated Training Exercise training environments to advanced force-on-force maneuver warfare exercises; and reduction in the reliance on the use of unclassified mediums are just a few examples of how the Service is transitioning from fighting within the confines of the previous two decades to *being hunted* with greater awareness and agency on the battlefield.

We should also recognize that, cognitively and operationally, *we have been here before*. When we consider how we can contribute to the modern definition(s) of counter-reconnaissance, we may find ourselves identifying skills that are already within existing inventories. Counterintelligence operations are all types of military deception operations (tactical deception, deception in support of operational security, and joint military deception); feints, demonstrations, ruses, and displays; and camouflage, concealment, and deception are all existing tools that contribute to counter-reconnaissance. Existing Service efforts such as the pursuit of decoy capabilities and secure terrestrial communications methods absolutely need to be sustained to improve our counter-reconnaissance inventory.

Consistent with the above observations of new reconnaissance methods, with counter-reconnaissance we also need to examine how current doctrinal and operational approaches may help us better incorporate new ideas and employment models. Existing tools; knowledge; and tactics, techniques, and procedures—especially those which we may have been overlooking—could give us a significant head start to develop a better counter-reconnaissance mindset in planning circles. Having the best tools is a good step forward, but an apprentice tradesman may fail to maximize their utility without at least a journeyman's mindset.

Within the Marine Corps' planning processes, essential elements of friendly information (EEFI) were once incorporated as the commander's critical information requirements. Previous doctrine identified the PIRs, friendly force information requirements, and EEFIs comprised a unit's commander's critical information requirements, but recent publications have omitted EEFIs. EEFIs identify information about the friendly force that is critical to protect from adversary collection efforts. These elements of friendly information, if known by the enemy, could subsequently compromise, lead to failure, or limit the success of the operation.[7] If a list of EEFIs were present within the initial steps of our planning processes, planners would be immediately primed to apply counter-reconnaissance principles and techniques to safeguard friendly force information from adversary collection. It is worth noting that the above definition of EEFIs is cited from *Army Doctrinal Publication 5-0* and *Naval Warfare Publication 5-01*—not from any of our existing Marine Corps doctrinal publications.

To provide operational context for developing a counter-reconnaissance

... against a peer adversary, the counter-reconnaissance missions and activities will be incredibly important to the survival of the force.

mindset, the reader is encouraged to briefly think like a drug runner:

> *We cartels have been running drugs, contraband, and other illicit materials via the waterways of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico for many years. Within the past several decades, however, operations have become increasingly difficult. Our waterways have become a littoral environment in which the adversary (the DEA and other U.S. national agencies; U.S. DOD entities such as JIATF South and SOCSOUTH; etc.) is persistently reconnoitering–staring at us through all domains (land, maritime, air, space, cyberspace, the EMS, social media, etc.) and it is complicating our ability to move product, sustain ourselves, and complete our mission. Our existing maritime running routes need to change, they often identify them before we even use them. Our use of navigation radars and radio and cellular communication reveal our locations, nearly immediately. Our own people are selling us out and providing information to the enemy for compensation. Placing beacons on the drops tell them where to look. Losing the occasional product is the cost of doing business, but we are also losing too many of our people from arrests and raids. We need to change the way we are doing business.*

When adopting the mindset of the hunted, it is easier to understand why drug cartels have adopted decoys, GPS spoofing, plexiglass semi-submersible vessels obscured from overhead surveillance, and other elaborate and costly tactics, techniques, and procedures. Aside from provoking thoughts about expeditionary advanced base operations and littoral operations in a contested environment, the above thought experiment demonstrates why a counter-reconnaissance mindset is both important for the survival of the force and the mission. It also illustrates how learned behaviors emerge as codified procedures when a formation is under the constant stare of an equally or a more capable adversary sensor network. In our case, we can learn from those we sustain parity with and overmatch against and how they adapt—we may need to do that ourselves in tomorrow's fight.

Questions to Consider

- *RXR, ISR, Both, or Neither?* Would the Service's desired definition of RXR lose context if it were labeled ISR/counter-ISR to align more closely to established Marine Corps, joint, and NATO doctrinal definitions? If RXR is determined to be different than ISR, what is the relationship between RXR, ISR, and command, control, computing, communications, cyber, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and targeting/counter command, control, computing, communications, cyber, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and targeting (C5ISR-T/Counter-C5ISR-T)?
- *What are the tasks for RXR?* Currently, the use of Simrad radars, a commercial navigational radar used as an active electronic warfare sensing asset in concert with a host nation's existing radar network to provide additional tipping is closely associated with the RXR narrative. Are these and other RXR activities substantively different from traditional reconnaissance and ISR activities? If RXR is comprised of a specific list of activities that differ from the activities of traditional ISR, what are they? Existing and emerging RXR activities are extremely akin to those of traditional ISR activities, but a dichotomy between the two remains.
- *Who owns RXR?* Is RXR an intelligence function or an operations function? Alternatively, should certain functional areas be responsible for RXR planning, or does RXR ultimately belong to the commander as with the intelligence mission? Knowing the difference will help inform future planning decisions and conceptual studies.
- *When RXR formations sense, how is that accounted for?* Regardless of the advent of new ISR functions and activities, should there be no cause for concern regarding terminology? After all, however, the Service modernizes its sensing capabilities, would they not still be accounted for as lines on the collections sync matrixes of future operations to inform decision-makers, as the Marine Corps ISR Enterprise has done for decades?
- *How will "RXR" resonate within the Joint Force?* According to the current joint doctrine, collection managers are responsible for both collection requirements management and collection operations management. While the Marine Corps can choose a different path, that decision will involve some intra and inter-Service friction. Are Marines prepared to explain the discrepancy in definitions and procedures?

Considerations for the Way Forward:

- *Without Intelligence Requirements, ISR has no foundation.* There is merit in the argument that planning for reconnaissance does not directly equate to planning other forms of intelligence collection operations. While true at the functional and detailed levels, planners need to be reminded that reconnaissance and intelligence collection missions are still missions at the end of the day—both will still require the concept of operation approvals, tasking to execute, and priorities that drive the mission requirement. Similarities between the two exist at the conceptual level as all sensing missions will be driven by the sensing requirement.
- *Reintroduce EEFIs as Commander's Critical Information Requirements.* EEFIs are not listed within any current Marine Corps doctrinal publication or the *MCWP 5-10* but are listed within *ADP 5-0* and *NWP 5-01*. A review of Service planning processes

... learned behaviors emerge as codified procedures when a formation is under the constant stare of an equally or a more capable adversary sensor network.

and planning support products (e.g. intelligence preparation of the battlespace, decision support templates, etc.) to determine where EEFIs can be included is warranted. In addition to existing efforts to minimize and mask signatures, incorporating EEFIs into planning forces staffs to consider and identify adversary collection priorities and plan to implement some degree of counter-reconnaissance measures.

• *Sustain the aggression to experimentation but remain grounded in doctrinal approaches.* Our Service needs to continue to adapt to meet the demands of tomorrow's conflict(s) and analyze existing capabilities, address the threat, and adapt as required. In that same line of thought, however, we need to use caution for how much we let our expectations for tomorrow's landscape drive adaptation. It may be helpful to ask, *do all of our existing planning approaches and employment models need redressing?* If we assume a different vantage point respective to the operational environment (e.g. operating within competition versus conflict), we may find that existing approaches and models sustain applicability across different portions of the competition continuum.

Notes

1. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCDP 1, Warfighting*, (Washington, DC: 2018); and Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCDP 2, Intelligence*, (Washington, DC: 2018).

2. Gen David H. Berger, *Force Design 2030, Annual Update*, (Washington, DC: 2021).

3. Ibid.

4. Headquarters Marine Corps, *A Concept for Stand-In Forces*, (Washington, DC: 2021).

5. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCDP 1-0, Marine Corps Operations*, (Washington, DC: 2017); and MCCDC, CD&I, *Marine Corps Functional Concept for Maritime Reconnaissance and Counter Reconnaissance*, (Quantico: 2022).

6. Ibid.

7. Headquarters, Dept.s of the Army, *Army Doctrinal Publication 5-0, The Operations Process*, (Washington, DC: 2019); and Naval Warfare Development Command, *Navy Warfare Publication 5-01, Navy Planning*, (Norfolk: 2021).

Information and Intelligence

Distinct and necessary warfighting functions

by Mr. Eric Schaner & Dr. Christopher Paul

Intelligence has been a joint function and a warfighting function for the entire history of functions in doctrine. Information was added to the list of joint functions in 2017 and became a Marine Corps warfighting function in 2019. Since the addition of the information function, there has been debate about the distinction and relationship between information and intelligence. Is intelligence not just a higher form of information? Why do we need an information warfighting function when we already have an intelligence warfighting function? Do we not already account for information as part of all other warfighting functions? To help resolve concerns about possible overlap and conflation between information and intelligence, and by extension information and other warfighting functions, we discuss these two warfighting functions from three perspectives.

First, we discuss information and intelligence as they appear in two different hierarchies; second, we explain the purposes of the information and intelligence warfighting functions; and third, we discuss the mutually supporting nature of these warfighting functions, including their shared roles contributing to combined arms. The article concludes that intelligence and information, as warfighting functions, are distinct by *purpose* but share complementary *tasks* to help fulfill these distinct purposes; thus, they are both necessary, distinct, and mutually supporting warfighting functions.

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>>Dr. Paul is the LtCol Kevin M. Shea Deputy Commandant for Information Chair at the Naval Postgraduate School. He received his PhD, MA, and BA in Sociology from the University of California, Los Angeles.

A Tale of Two Hierarchies

What is information? While the word information is used in conjunction with a range of concepts—such as power (informational power), an environment (information environment), and a warfighting function (information warfighting function)—the most common meaning of the word information is as a representation of an idea or thought in a tangible form such as a symbol, word, image, number, or pattern. These building blocks are the raw material of communication, human understanding, and decision making. Not all information is of equal value. The information hierarchy is a common way to illustrate variations of relative value, building upward from raw materials (signals or raw data) at the bottom, through knowledge, and ultimately into the full complexity of understanding at the top.

The information hierarchy is sometimes presented in slightly different forms, which may contribute to concerns and confusion within the Marine Corps about the relationship between information and intelligence. Figure 1 illustrates two variations of the information hierarchy as used in Marine Corps doctrine.

The Information Hierarchy from an Intelligence Perspective

MCDP 2, *Intelligence*, describes information as "unevaluated material of any kind ... [used as] raw material

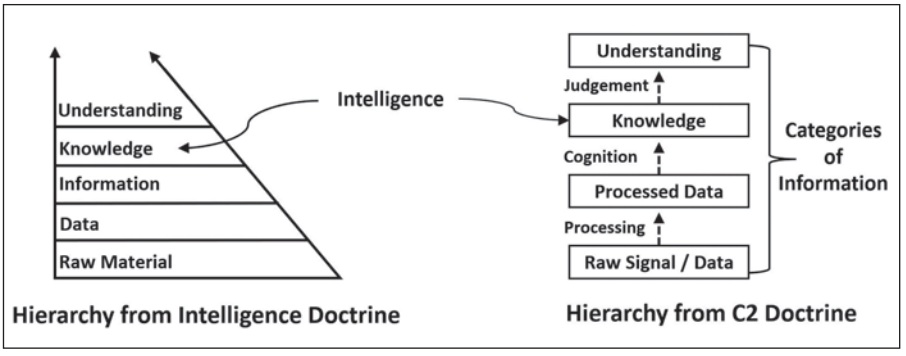

Figure 1. Variations of the information hierarchy in Marine Corps doctrine. *(Figure provided by author.)*

from which intelligence is derived." From this perspective, information is data in a context that can be analyzed and put into an understandable and actionable form. From an intelligence perspective, information is one of the levels in the hierarchy. Information in this hierarchy is the level subordinate to knowledge—with knowledge at the level where *intelligence* resides. *MCDP 2* states that "intelligence is knowledge—knowledge about the enemy or the surrounding environment needed to support decision making." Intelligence production generally involves gathering information about the enemy and environment from any source, then synthesizing it into meaningful knowledge to inform decision making. In other words, intelligence is the product of combining, analyzing, and synthesizing information into a higher and more useful form.

The Information Hierarchy from a Command and Control Perspective

In contrast to intelligence doctrine, *MCDP 6, Command and Control*, describes information as "all manner of descriptions or representations from raw signals on the one hand, to knowledge and understanding on the other." According to Marine Corps command and control (C2) doctrine, information categories range from data—raw or unprocessed signals—to more highly developed forms evaluated and integrated into meaningful knowledge and understanding. It is important to note that all of these nesting layers in the hierarchy are *categories of information*. From this view, intelligence itself is therefore a category of information.

To summarize: from an intelligence perspective, *information is a building block of knowledge and therefore a building block of intelligence*; however, from a C2 perspective, each rung of the hierarchy is a *category of information*. Neither perspective is wrong, and Marines should note that the information warfighting function's doctrine logic draws from the C2 version of the information hierarchy.

To avoid confusion, it is important for Marines to understand both hierarchies and not take unintended meanings from them. These hierarchies represent a relationship between the relative values of each layer in the hierarchy—*where each layer is rooted in the common meaning of the word "information" as previously discussed—and nothing else*. It would therefore be a mistake to infer that these hierarchies represent a relationship between the information and intelligence warfighting functions, or between named professional communities within the Marine Corps. Warfighting functions, communities, and occupational fields are not described or delineated by these hierarchies.

Distinct Warfighting Functions

Warfighting functions encompass the activities performed in the battlespace and are all distinct by *purpose*. So, what are the purposes of the intelligence and information warfighting functions? According to *MCDP 2,* there are two purposes of intelligence. The first is to *support decision making* by reducing uncertainty about the hostile situation to a reasonable level, and the second is to *assist in protecting friendly forces* through counterintelligence.[1] The intelligence warfighting function is—at its core—the effort to identify, understand, and anticipate those mission-related factors that lie beyond friendly control.[2] The purposes of the intelligence warfighting function are different than the purpose of the information warfighting function.

The purposes of the intelligence warfighting function are different than the purpose of the information warfighting function.

According to *MCDP 8, Information*, the purpose of the information warfighting function is to *create and exploit information advantages* as a means to achieve objectives as effectively as possible. An information advantage is an exploitable condition resulting from one actor's ability to generate, preserve, deny, and project information more effectively than another. Marines apply our maneuver warfare philosophy to gain and maximize advantages, including information advantages, over competitors or adversaries across the competition continuum. Marines seek to create and exploit three types of information advantage: *systems overmatch*, *prevailing narrative*, and *force resiliency*, along with other decision, temporal, spatial, or psychological advantages—through rapid, flexible, and opportunistic maneuver.[3]

Mutually Supporting Warfighting Functions

All warfighting functions are mutually supporting. The paramount example of this is the Marine Corps' combined-arms concept. Combined arms involve integrating supporting arms and organic fires to create dilemmas for our enemies in battle. This idea can be extended to describe an approach that integrates multiple warfighting functions to create dilemmas for our competitors and adversaries across the competition continuum.[4] Figure 2 (on following page) provides a model to illustrate information, intelligence, and all other warfighting functions in a combined-arms approach that is applicable above or below the threshold of armed conflict.

At the model's core are the fires, maneuver, and information warfighting functions. These functions are central because they provide direct first-order effects when applied in operations. Intelligence sits at the left side of the model to indicate its role in identifying opportunities to create dilemmas, thus effectively driving or critically enabling the activities of the other warfighting functions. C2 sits atop the model because it is the function used to orchestrate and harmonize the timing, tempo, and focus of the other warfighting func-

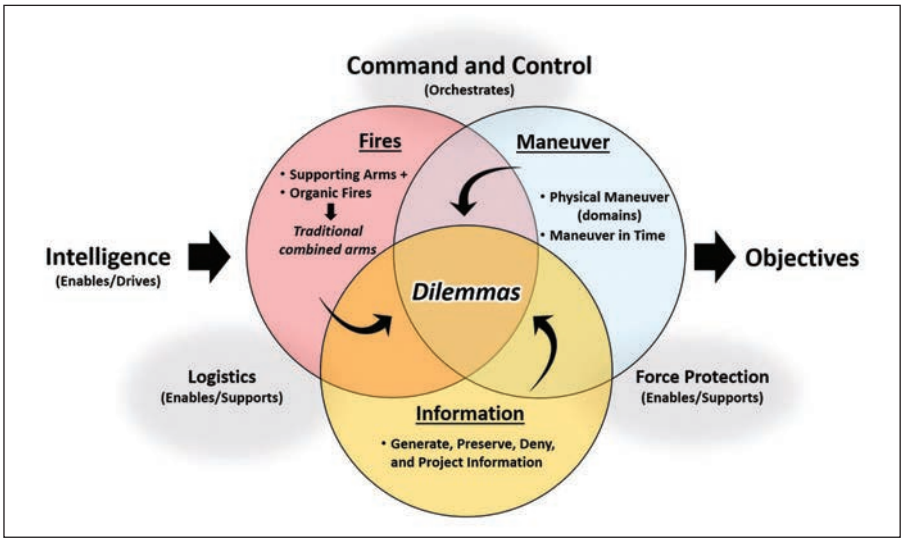

Figure 2. Warfighting functions in a combined-arms approach. *(Figure provided by author.)*

tions in combination to create dilemmas. Logistics and force protection sit at the flanks of the model to illustrate their enabling and supporting roles in creating dilemmas. Objectives are indicated at the right side of the illustration to denote the purpose and orientation of the entire effort.

Note that both intelligence and information play critical and complementary roles in this updated combined-arms model and in the creation of dilemmas, but their contributions are distinct because they serve different purposes: *the intelligence warfighting function is used to produce intelligence that reveals opportunities to act (e.g., support to targeting); the information warfighting function is used to apply information capabilities to create effects (e.g., specific influence activities).*

Conclusion

Information and intelligence are two words that are closely related—especially when applying the common meanings of these words as found in the dictionary. However, in the military context, these two words have specific meanings as they define distinct warfighting functions. Warfighting functions encompass the activities performed in the battlespace. Just as we conduct fires or maneuver, Marines also conduct information and intelligence. What makes information an activity are the four functions of information (generate, preserve, deny, and project). What makes intelligence an activity are the six steps of the intelligence cycle. These activities are performed to support distinct purposes, and it is these purposes that allow the functions to be integrated in mutually supporting ways—which makes them both necessary.

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Notes

1. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCDP-2, Intelligence*, (Washington, DC: 2018).

2. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCWP 2-10, Intelligence Operations*, (Washington, DC: 2018).

3. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCDP 8, Information*, (Washington, DC: 2023).

4. See LtGen Matthew G. Glavy and Mr. Eric X. Schaner, "21st-Century Combined Arms: Gaining Advantage Through the Combined Effects of Fires, Maneuver, and Information," *Marine Corps Gazette* 106, No. 9 (2022).

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Remembering Vincent Stewart

A personal reflection

by Mr. Ben Closs

The Director of Intelligence (DIRINT) had been in office a little over a year when I arrived at Headquarters Marine Corps Intelligence Department (I-Dept). He had spent most of that time developing and then marketing his MCISRE Roadmap to the rest of the Marine Corps. It had been a tough sell, but Vince Stewart was never one to back down from a challenge. Once he had cleared that hurdle, he promptly set his sights on a new objective.

Analysis turned out to be his next target. The DIRINT's vision involved providing every Marine Corps unit with a top-notch set of analytical capabilities and training and certifying every analyst in the Service to the highest standards using the latest tools and techniques. Ever the Marine's Marine, he chose to lead this effort from the front. -

If he was going to ask everyone else in the Corps to get better at intelligence analysis, the DIRINT decided he would have to polish his own executive support section first until he felt confident that its work could compare favorably to any other organization within the intelligence community. He had no intention of micromanaging things. He would first make sure the section's officer in charge understood his intent and the standard of performance he was looking for and allow him to teach his Marines and crack the whip until they met it. I did not know it yet, but he intended to reshape Marine intelligence by beginning right next to the flagpole—starting with me.

It was not really me, personally, he sought to improve (or so I thought, until years later). I had no idea what he had in mind at the time. I was just his briefer: the young major charged with delivering a passable intelligence brief to pretty much any senior executive who worked in the Pentagon and, for whatever reason, wanted an intel brief from a Marine. Little did I know I had just become the Service headquarters face of his new push for analytical greatness.

>See bio on page 9.

LtGen Vincent R. Stewart retired in April 2019 as the Deputy Commander of United States Cyber Command after more than 40 years of service. From 2015 to 2017, he had served as the 20th Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency–the first African American, first Jamaican American and first Marine to hold that position. ***(Photo by LCpl James Bourgeois.)***

The call came down a little before 1600. How fast could I get up to the Navy Annex to show the DIRINT tomorrow's CMC presentation, and why was my section officer in charge not answering the phone? Most of the section had been at work since about 0430, or earlier, so they could read through the intelligence community's daily intel products in case something urgent needed to go in the morning update. My boss had just reviewed the Commandant's slides to close out his twelve-hour workday and was now on his way home. He did not have a cell phone, let alone a command Blackberry, and there was no way I was going to reach him before he hit the Stafford County line. He would not be able to join me in the DIRINT's office. I stuffed a few copies of my slides and notes into a courier bag and headed up the hill. The DIRINT had never murder-boarded (intel slang for conducting a monitored dress rehearsal, or MDR) any of the section's other briefs in the few months I had been there, so I felt confident he just had a few questions he wanted to ask or some additional point of emphasis he wanted to be inserted into the brief. I could not have been more wrong.

Vince Stewart tore my brief to shreds, in every imaginable way, all while in front of my reviewing officer—my boss's boss. I felt like I had been cast down into an enormous chasm that divided where my entire section stood and whatever good enough might have looked like. Since he was not there, I would have to carry the water back to my section

head myself and let him know how very, very, pitifully *unprepared* I was to brief the Commandant in the morning.

I had not had my behind handed to me like that since flight school. I had been nervous about my first CMC brief, to be sure, but I had still expected to perform—at least adequately—in the morning. The DIRINT had shattered that expectation. I left the Navy Annex and went back to my office on the first floor of the Pentagon with a lengthy list of corrections and general gripes, feeling like I had several wicked, maybe even insurmountable, problems to solve that evening. It was going to be a very long night, and I was not even sure I would get to brief tomorrow morning. I figured that, most likely, I would get the hook and be shuffled off to do some other Headquarters Marine Corps job for the next two and a half years. My fear was not entirely unrealistic.

The last officer they had assigned to my billet was an old friend who had been a squad mate of mine at The Basic School. According to his story, he had somehow misplaced his service uniform trousers on the day of his inaugural CMC brief. Our officer in charge, the very same man who had so narrowly missed facing the music with me this afternoon, had promptly taken off his own pants and handed them over, sitting down to wait in just his "Charlie" shirt, socks, and boxer shorts (with his shirt-stays still firmly attached, of course) while my friend went upstairs to brief the Commandant and his staff. Rattled by his brush with failure, my friend felt the brewing tension in his stomach build with each step as he made his way up to the fourth floor in his reporting senior's borrowed trousers. He was an emotional wreck by the time the hour for his brief rolled around. He ended up stumbling and stuttering his way through his presentation, the words from his carefully prepared notes somehow evaporated magically as they traveled between his brain and his mouth. No sooner had he arrived back downstairs and given the boss back his trousers before a colonel from I-Dept called down to instruct our officer in charge, "That Marine will never, ever, ever set foot in front of the Commandant again." My friend spent the rest of his tour at headquarters standing duty in the Marine Corps' Service watch center in the Pentagon's basement. In retrospect, it probably did not help that, although my friend was more-or-less the same height as our boss, he outweighed him by at least 20 pounds.

This story ran through my mind like a pro fullback in a pee-wee football game, and I sat down to revise my presentation when my phone rang once again. "Please hold for General Stewart," I heard the aide-de-camp say. The DIRINT's voice came on immediately. I braced myself.

"Do you want to be the briefer?" he asked me abruptly. "Yes," was all I managed to get out, my heart racing. "Good," he said. "I want you to be the briefer. Just make the changes we talked about on your slides, and you'll do fine tomorrow. Don't worry about anything else. Do you understand?" I told him I did, and he hung up. I turned back to finish my corrections and then went home and tried to get some sleep.

"Good brief," was all it said on the first page.

The next morning, I walked my boss through the changes I had made, rehearsed as best I could, and printed off an extra copy of the slides for the DIRINT before I went upstairs to the Smith Conference Room. I handed the slides to BGen Stewart as I walked in. (His chair was always right next to the door.)

"You'll do fine," he told me again. I could feel his eyes boring into me as I crossed the room and awaited my turn to brief, under no impression that the DIRINT had just voiced his confidence in my ability. It had been an order. I cannot recall a single word I said during my presentation. The only thing I remember from the rest of the day is that, as soon as I was done, just before I walked out the door, BGen Stewart handed me back the folder with my slides in it.

I made my way downstairs and sat back down at my desk to settle my nerves before I was able to bring myself to look inside that folder, expecting to find notes, questions, or further criticism inscribed upon the pages within.

"Good brief," was all it said on the first page. For emphasis, the DIRINT had drawn a cartoon smiley face just below his words.

That was all he wrote.

The DIRINT never murder-boarded my brief again. He did, however, provide me with many other lessons throughout the course of those three years. I can still hear the Marine Corps' Leadership Principles echoing in my head: "Employ your command in accordance with its capabilities ... Know your people and look out for their welfare ... Ensure that the task is understood, supervised, and accomplished." Thinking back, I can tie every one of those concepts to some memory about my interactions with Vince Stewart, most positive, some less so. I'll admit I had my doubts on that day but am now certain that he understood much, much more about how his Marines felt, and how they would respond to his words than I ever suspected at the time. More important than that, he knew how and when to shift gears to get the most out of them or keep them on the right track. The things he said, both painfully harsh and unexpectedly compassionate, often ended up being just what I needed to hear to push me over whatever mental or emotional hurdle I was facing and raise my performance to the next level.

He rarely offered any criticism of my subsequent presentations, and he and his staff gave me startlingly little guidance about how, or what, to brief the rest of the time I spent at I-Dept. Often, he returned my notes virtually untouched—just a smiley face.

USMC

Battalion Air Officers

Overtasked and undertrained

by Maj Peter Shelton

The lack of training for forward air controllers (FAC) in air liaison officer, or Air-O, billets at the battalion level is a lost opportunity and greatly increases the risk of failed operations and fratricide. These risks can be mitigated by mandating a short and focused course for rising battalion air officers.

The Marine Corps prides itself in air-ground integration. This is best demonstrated in how our Service-level exercises are tailored to focus on the integration of air, indirect, and direct fires. Composed properly, the symphony of simultaneous attacks by aircraft, artillery, and machineguns can create tactical dilemmas for our enemies who cannot react to maneuvering infantry. Our tactical ethos expands to our structural design as we build MAGTFs of various sizes and shapes based on the idea that air and ground forces should be closely linked to gain tactical and operational advantages.

The seam between air and ground is the formal representative for aviation to the ground battalion: the Air-O. An Air-O is a winged aviator, usually a captain, who is at the battalion for one or two years. Their responsibilities include clearing fires, planning air assaults, and advising the battalion commander on aviation matters. The only requirement to be an Air-O is to be a pilot who successfully completed Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) school—a six-week course qualifying them to call in air strikes. Beyond that, there are no prerequisites or follow-on training.

Semantics in this discussion matter, since the difference between a FAC, a joint terminal air controller (JTAC), and Air-O is usually confused. A FAC is a pilot who has gone through TACP school. A JTAC is someone who is not a pilot and went through TACP school.

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Both become qualified to give terminal control. Oversimplified, terminal control is the qualification needed to say *cleared hot* to an aircraft on the radio during an air strike in close proximity to friendly forces. Both JTACs and FACs tend to work at the company level. The reason for the two names for the same qualification started because the role of FAC predates JTACs by several decades, but the high demand for terminal air controllers pushed the Joint Force to open the ranks up beyond winged aviators. The Air-O is the senior FAC at a battalion, at least on paper. In practice. the Air-O is randomly selected out of the FACs checking into the battalion.

There are multiple problems with the current model. First, there is no additional training, qualification, or time in billet requirements for the job. Typically, if a group of FACs goes to a battalion, the Air-O is whoever checks in first. Secondly, there are no time requirements for FACs in the flying squadrons before the Wing allows you to become a FAC. Very frequently, FACs will have only two years of operational experience in a flying squadron before checking into the battalion. Although already captains, most of their time in service has been spent in flight school, learning aviation basics, not tactical operations. Thirdly, the billet of Air-O is MOS agnostic. While allowing administrative flexibility, this leads to varied results. Assault support pilots who are just learning about fires could

A FAC is an aviator who has completed TACP school. A JTAC is a non-aviator who has completed TACP school. The Air-O is the senior FAC in a ground unit. *(Photo by Sgt Josue Marquez.)*

now be responsible for clearing fires in close proximity to friendly forces. Alternately, fixed-wing pilots could be planning air assaults with no previous experience. Lack of training, unclear qualifications, and poor personal management practice lead to a greatly increased risk of botched air assaults and air-ground fratricide.

Creating a key billet and providing no additional training is a time-honored Marine Corps tradition. On-the-job training is prolific in any community, and there is much to be said about the Marine Corps' *can-do attitude* allowing us to use this method. The problem is that when it comes to air integration, we are incurring excessive risk. Compounding this problem is new systems, larger ranges, and distributed operations. Air-O's today must manage UAS programs and a mountain of command-and-control systems although they have never worked with those systems before. The range of the MV-22 and rocket artillery has greatly increased the size of the airspace a battalion could need to manage, with more deconfliction required. Finally, under expeditionary advanced base operations construct, units will need to disperse to survive. The modern battalion Air-O will be more isolated with more responsibility and reduced ability to reach back to coordinate than in previous eras. The responsibilities of air officers will only increase.

The Marine Corps does possess one of the highest quality air-ground integration courses—but only at the graduate level. The Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) Course is the premier school in teaching air-ground integration to include fires and air assault planning. Unfortunately, the course timing does not support battalion air officers. To go to WTI as a FAC, one must be a JTAC instructor. Before qualifying for a JTAC instructor, a FAC must be a FAC for at least a year. Most air officers will not be in the billet long enough to be qualified to go to WTI. Of those who are, giving up two months of their last year in the battalion is not worth the investment of time. Additionally, WTI is an advanced-level course. Going from a nonexistent entry-level course to an advanced course would be a disservice to all involved. Even with the current barriers to entry, two out of nine JTACS/FACs in the fall 2022 WTI class did not pass. WTI would give the Air-Os at the battalions the training they need, but their timing simply does not support it.

What is needed is an intermediate-level training course for prospective air officers ... Such a course should focus ... on the actual* planning *of fires and airspace.

What is needed is an intermediate-level training course for prospective air officers before they check into the battalion. Such a course should focus not on a picture-perfect nine-line that TACP school teaches but instead on the actual *planning* of fires and airspace. A relatively simple course giving incoming air officers basic repetitions at these skills would immediately start paying dividends. If air officers are deficient in fires, air assault planning, SUAS operations, and JTAC program management, then the course needs to address this without spending two months of a short tour gaining those skills.

A battalion air officer course should be two weeks long, consisting of an academic week and an execution week. The academic week would include JTAC program management, SUAS classes, and a fires integration module focusing on fire support coordination measures. The academic week would round out with a focus on assault-support planning to include air space management. Following the academic week, an execution week consisting of two air assaults with a planning day before each would put the new skills to the test. The air assault need not be larger than a platoon of Marines with a section of assault support aircraft and close air support aircraft. Although this course would not make them subject-matter experts, it would be a solid repetition for prospective air officers and set them up for success.

The course should be hosted by individual MEFs. MEF hosting it would enable it to be appropriately resourced from both the air and ground side, emphasizing the importance of that integration. Additionally, an in-house course that is not a joint course would enable the Marines to tailor the course to the needs of the battalions. Perhaps most importantly, a course hosted by MEF could pull air officers from all over the force to instruct and mentor the new battalion air officers, strengthening the network and providing them with valuable know-how.

Air-Os need more training. Ground commanders are taking on a lot of risks when they randomly choose a FAC to be their air officer. Complexity at the battalion level is only increasing. It is not enough to stand on a hill and say cleared hot into the radio. The hard work of true integration requires professionals who can coordinate maneuver with fires and be able to assist with the command and control of it all. Air integration is too important and too high risk to be left to amateurs. A short course could greatly improve the quality of integration and lethality of the ground commanders.

USMC

The Reconnaissance Officer's Mandate

A reconnaissance officer's role as both a small-unit leader and subject-matter expert on a supported commander's staff presents challenges in ensuring effective and efficient employment of his unit

by Maj Matthew Thomas

>Maj Thomas served as a Platoon Commander at 1st Reconnaissance Battalion and a Company Commander at 3d Reconnaissance Battalion. He is currently a student at the Naval Postgraduate School in pursuit of a Master's in Operations Analysis.

If I had a nickel each time I heard the phrase, *commanders do not understand how to employ reconnaissance Marines*, I would have a lot of nickels.

Over the past six years serving as a reconnaissance platoon and company commander, this seems the go-to gripe when a peer feels that their unit is employed incorrectly by a supported commander. However, truly analyzing this phrase leads to the damning conclusion that officers who have not completed the Basic Reconnaissance Course cannot effectively employ reconnaissance units. This is categorically false.

Understanding the basics of reconnaissance-unit employment is not difficult. Every commander establishes critical information requirements. The critical information that pertains to the weather or enemy is called priority intelligence requirements. Multiple indicators and named areas of interest accompany each priority intelligence requirement. If reconnaissance Marines possess the ability to collect the type of information sought at the named areas of interest, they will be sent there to do so.

In just those four sentences, I explained the basics of employing reconnaissance units along with the basics of the collections requirements management process. This process rates a dedicated staff officer called the collections manager, many of which are not reconnaissance officers.

This false conclusion, and the sentiment it stemmed from, also insults the institution. The Marine Corps is a meritocracy that subjects its senior leaders to an extremely competitive process for selection to O-5 and higher commands. Consideration for this responsibility indicates a level of competency and intelligence that dispels the notion that they cannot handle the mental gymnastics involved with the employment of a small, niche unit. Those chosen for this responsibility are recognized to be experts in leading, not experts in every function of their future unit; that is why the staff exists.

So, if this conclusion proves so blatantly false, why is it a relatively common sentiment among reconnaissance officers? There is a valid argument that reconnaissance units have been misused, whether being assigned to local security patrols in the name of counter-reconnaissance or assignment of missions to collect information for which another asset is more aptly suited.

The answer requires a slight, but significant, rewording of the original complaint. Instead of the phrase, *commanders do not understand how to employ reconnaissance Marines*, the accurate phrase is: commanders may be unfamiliar with the proper command and control (C2) of reconnaissance units to effectively and efficiently accomplish their mission. Most O-5 and above commanders possess more experience leading infantry Marines than reconnaissance Marines, purely based on the number of infantry units available to command and the traditional career path of senior leaders. The C2 of an infantry unit, which can exceed 180 personnel in a company, necessitates regular communication and positional updates for battle tracking, deconfliction of fires, and coordination of support. Although possible to maintain a degree of speed and stealth in movement for a unit of this size, those principles are not paramount, as their organic capabilities can quickly put any enemy into a combined-arms dilemma that they have no desire to experience.

Reconnaissance units do not have that luxury; a team usually consists of six to eight Marines—not 180. Speed and stealth for these units *are* paramount, as they ultimately equate to security since they lack the organic capability to defend themselves from any significantly-sized enemy formation. To facilitate security, communications when moving are limited, as the unit is most safe and in the best position to accomplish the supported commander's mission once established in a properly camouflaged hide site. To mitigate risk associated with lack of communication, a good reconnaissance officer ensures that infiltration and exfiltration routes

include checkpoints and time distance analyses to provide relatively accurate estimates of friendly locations for deconfliction of fires and battle tracking in the absence of positive communication.

Once at their objective communication from a reconnaissance team looks different, and occurs less often, than communication from an infantry unit. That team does not have the luxury of 180 bodies or a company gunnery sergeant resupply vehicle to spread load or refresh depleted batteries. Given the fact that batteries, aside from water, are the biggest limiting factor for a reconnaissance unit's operational duration, every transmission must be deliberate and serve a purpose. The more transmissions, the quicker the batteries are drained and the sooner the commander must extract or resupply that reconnaissance unit. This incurs additional risk to an already risky mission, as they are often employed past the forward edge of the battle area or in outright enemy-controlled territory.

Ways to mitigate this issue exist, the most important of which is the establishment of communication windows when the team is expected to report on their activities and provide the information they gathered. Reconnaissance units will have a SOP for the duration and separation of these windows, balancing battery conservation and information flow. However, this is the first SOP that warrants a deviation once a detailed mission analysis is complete. If a reconnaissance unit is reporting on an objective that may quickly be actioned by follow-on forces, a constant flow of information is crucial to the planning process of that follow-on mission. This may necessitate communications windows every hour or keeping their radios on at all times in their hide site, even at the expense of reducing the overall operational duration. When units conduct zone or area reconnaissance missions or look to establish a pattern of life, that information is likely still timely if reported every 8, 16, or even 24 hours. If the situation changes, then the leaders in the reconnaissance operation center should adjust communication windows accordingly to facilitate mission accomplishment.

The detailed analysis of the establishment of communication windows becomes more important in a fight against a peer adversary, where transmission may result in the targeting of the team. All these considerations must be balanced with those pieces of information that the supported commander needs to know immediately to drive decision making. Whether they are codified in the priority intelligence requirements or not, that reconnaissance unit must understand what the commander finds important enough to warrant breaking a communication window given the operational implications and potential loss of that team.

With these considerations in mind, the question now becomes: how do reconnaissance officers ensure the proper C2 of their unit to effectively and efficiently achieve the supported commander's mission? First and foremost, a paradigm shift must occur in the mind of the reconnaissance officer. Although their title may include platoon or company commander, they must also see themselves as a staff officer whose primary job is to provide recommendations on the best employment of their unit. This nomenclature exists in all reconnaissance officer billet descriptions but often takes a back seat to manning, training, and equipping their unit while establishing a baseline of proficiency. This results not from ignorance or ego, but a lack of meaningful opportunities to work with an unfamiliar supported commander during their pre-deployment workups.

As previously mentioned, the commander is not an expert on all functions of his unit but must leverage his staff for inputs to allow him to make correct decisions. If the commander is then to be viewed as a decision-making machine, then the reconnaissance officer must recognize their role in providing inputs in a language and format that the machine can understand, process, and use to effectively employ the reconnaissance unit. This must take place before any mission confirmation brief. It requires dedicated conversations concerning unit SOPs, capabilities, limitations, different employment strategies, deviations to SOPs, specialized skills, training sustainment requirements, and more. In an ideal world with no competing interests to occupy a commander's time, they ask for this upfront, but it is ultimately the reconnaissance officer's mandate to ensure these conversations take place. Without it, the commander will be missing critical inputs when making the decision on how to effectively employ the reconnaissance unit.

Although titled "The Reconnaissance Officer's Mandate," these opinions hopefully provide value for current and future commanders as well. It is important to understand what right looks like and what they should expect from their junior leaders in charge of small units tasked with high-risk missions. Additionally, not all reconnaissance officers have had experience working as a staff officer; they must be developed and mentored as such.

MCDP 1, Warfighting states, "While the basic nature of war is constant, the means and methods we use evolve continuously." The same could be said of reconnaissance operations. Developments at reconnaissance battalions over the past three years and the increased emphasis on multi-disciplinary intelligence teaming ensure this truth. While the experience of a reconnaissance officer in today's Marine Corps may look different from what it did six years ago, the basic nature of their job is constant. Reconnaissance officers must guard against a victim mentality if they feel their unit is used incorrectly. Reconnaissance officers must early and often provide the correct inputs to the commander to facilitate the efficient and effective C2, employment, and mission accomplishment of their unit.

Although it is usually the allure of being a platoon commander that drives interest in the reconnaissance MOS, those officers looking to begin that journey, or currently experiencing it, will be well served to embrace their staff responsibilities.

USMC

The Evolution of Light Attack

Ensuring the future of vertical lift supports the future fight

by Capt John Delekto

As *Force Design 2030* rapidly becomes a reality, the attention is quickly turning toward Marine aviation. To address this shift, the *2022 Marine Aviation Plan* identifies the Future Vertical Lift (FVL) and the creation of a family of systems to modernize the Marine Corps' rotary wing aircraft.[1] One of these systems, categorized in the joint realm as "FVL Capability Set #3," is the Attack and Utility Replacement Aircraft (AURA). Implied in the name, the AURA aims to replace the AH-1Z and UH-1Y currently fielded in Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadrons (HMLA). Due to a limited budget, the Marine Corps has expressed interest in commonality with other joint FVL programs, specifically, the Army's Future Long Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA), which will replace the Army's UH-60 with its vision of the FVL Capability Set #3.[2] Joint Service cooperation complicates this solution because it intends to provide multiple branches with a similar airframe to conduct Service-specific mission sets, which inherently require different capabilities. Competing requirements and a tight budget create risk in a joint FVL program producing an inadequate or fiscally problematic solution for the Marine Corps' AURA program. Rather than develop the AURA under a joint concept, the Marine Corps Department of Aviation should independently refine AURA requirements to support future operations. This will allow for the prioritization of future Marine-specific mission capabilities, the incorporation of required weapon profiles, and the consolidation of attack and utility capabilities into a single multi-role platform to ensure the retention and optimization of light attack squadron capabilities in future conflicts.

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The Army's FVL requirements are inconsistent with HMLA missions, resulting in a less capable and costly FVL solution for the Marine Corps. In 2019, the Army, with input from the Marine Corps and Special Operations Command, submitted the *Future Long Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA) Request for Information (RFI)* to set requirements for its refined vision of FVL Capability Set #3 for government contract bids.[3] In December 2022, the Army independently selected the Bell V-280 Valor as its FLRAA platform based on a tiltrotor design similar to the Marine Corps' V-22 Osprey.[4] The Army's selection is significant because its assault support mission varies vastly from the current missions of the HMLA, which include providing "offensive air support, utility support, armed escort, and airborne supporting arms coordination" to a MAGTF commander.[5] Although the Marine Corps submitted its requirements in the *FLRAA RFI,* the Army, most likely, did not consider these criteria in its selection of the V-280 Valor. Because the Army sees this FVL capability as purely an assault support platform, there is risk in the Marine Corps basing its replacement for the AH-1 and UH-1 on the FLRAA design. While the V-280 Valor improves speed

The Marine Corps has examined commonality with the Army's Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft program. *(Photo courtesy of Industry.)*

and range compared to H-1s, other Marine-specific requirements—offensive air support, low-altitude maneuverability, and low-signature capabilities—risk being ignored or will add significant costs associated with modification of the Army's version.

Furthermore, the lack of specificity in the current AURA program requirements allows for broad interpretation, creating the risk of accepting an aircraft that cannot support current and future offensive air support missions. In the *FLRAA RFI,* the Marine Corps presents intended Marine Corps-specific mission profiles, such as escort and offensive air support.[6] However, these profiles focus purely on technical aspects, such as distances, speeds, and fuel flows, rather than tactical employment. When discussing weapons employment, the methods of how the AURA should employ its weapons are vague by only focusing on requirements to *carry* specific ordnance. Additionally, the portion of the profiles that account for offensive air support state nothing more than to "off load expendable ordnance, retain launchers."[7] This description oversimplifies the complex aerodynamics of employing aviation-delivered ordnance, leaving weapon delivery profiles open to interpretation and at risk of not aligning with current or future tactics. This lack of specificity creates a risk of reduced offensive air support capability. By adopting a joint design built to support other branches' missions, the Marine Corps is at risk of rendering current weapon delivery tactics and, more significantly, its ordnance inventory obsolete due to incompatible employment methods. Failing to include specific tactical and weapon employment characteristics in the AURA requirements can lead to Marine Corps selecting an AURA platform that, on paper, meets all listed requirements but cannot effectively provide offensive air support.

Lastly, due to joint design constraints, the current AURA program requirements include the creation of separate attack and utility variants, which will sustain current manning issues in the attack and utility helicopter community. Another Marine Corps request in the *FLRAA RFI* is creating "both an attack and utility variant" similar to the current construct of the AH-1 and UH-1.[8] While a separate attack and utility variant of the H-1 currently exists, this has created a manning issue within the HMLA. The *2022 Marine Aviation Plan* states that as of FY22 both AH-1, and UH-1 pilots are overmanned at 105 percent and 108 percent, respectively, as well as decreased flight hour funding in the coming years.[9] With limited flight hours for training, this imbalance creates a risk to HMLA squadrons regarding pilot readiness. By accepting a joint FVL aircraft, such as the Army's V-280 Valor, the Marine Corps is unnecessarily raising costs and sustaining a fleet readiness issue by doubling the assets and flight hours required to maintain pilot proficiency.

Offensive air support at low altitudes is a key aspect of Marine light attack. *(Photo by SSgt Artur Shvartsberg.)*

While building on specific concepts, such as increased speed and range, AURA program requirements must remain independent of joint influence and tailored to address future Marine Corps operations. In his planning guidance, the Commandant identifies the expeditionary advanced based operations (EABO) concept as a priority to "inform how we approach missions against peer adversaries" as well as the requirement to build a force capable of EABO that is "enabled by organic air."[10] According to the *Tentative Manual for Expeditionary Advanced Based Operations*, the basic foundations of EABO include the ability to operate in a "potentially contested maritime area" while stressing the necessity for "low-signature, persistent, and relatively easy to maintain and sustain" assets to support naval expeditionary operations.[11] The AURA should aim to provide these capabilities, which H-1s currently lack. While not a priority for other Services, adding specific requirements for low-signature capabilities and prioritizing maritime design features listed in the *FLRAA RFI* will ensure that the AURA can effectively support future EABO missions. Failure to include these requirements or by attempting to apply a joint solution to the complexity of EABO will result in a new aircraft that may quickly become obsolete the future Marine Corps operations.

In addition to focusing on future operations, the AURA program constraints should include more specific weapon employment profiles and low-altitude flight characteristics. As Scott Trail, a former Marine Corps V-22 test pilot and staunch opponent to the V-280 Valor, describes, helicopters are "more agile at low altitudes" and "can maintain tighter formations" than tiltrotor aircraft.[12] This distinction is essential because H-1s often conduct offensive air support from low altitudes for weapon accuracy and surface-to-air

Avoiding a Joint Future Vertical Lift program can ensure Marine light attack requirements in support of future concepts like EABO are met. *(Photo by Cpl Camille Polete.)*

threat avoidance. This specific example exposes the risk of possibly accepting a joint platform like the Army's V-280 Valor and losing significant and existing aviation-based fires capabilities. Dictating weapon employment requirements will ensure the aircraft design prioritizes these nuances, such as the required delivery profiles, altitudes, and airspeeds. Additionally, rather than focusing on higher altitudes traditionally flown by tiltrotor aircraft, placing a more significant emphasis on low-altitude flight and maneuverability will ensure the AURA is survivable in the predicted higher-threat, contested environment while supporting EABO.

Finally, the AURA program requirements should include consolidating attack and utility variants into a single, multi-role platform to alleviate future readiness concerns. The idea of consolidating attack and utility capabilities is not new, as the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment uses this concept with its MH-60L Direct Action Penetrator. As an upgraded UH-60 capable of carrying standard attack-aircraft munitions, the Direct Action Penetrator can reconfigure for utility-style missions when required.[13] While the MH-60L still lacks the speed and range required for the proposed AURA requirements, it can serve as a valuable example in designing the AURA as a purpose-built, multi-role aircraft capable of both attack- and utility-style missions. By independently designing the AURA rather than attempting to modify a joint design, the Marine Corps should include the ability to modularly reconfigure the aircraft as an independent design requirement. A unified approach allows the HMLA to limit the number of total aircraft and aircrew required while retaining both attack and utility capabilities and preventing future readiness issues.

Admittedly, a joint FVL program may be appealing due to its apparent cost-saving benefits. The *2022 Marine Aviation Plan* mentions the joint alignment of all FVL family of systems aircraft, including the AURA, in an attempt to "reduce developmental and life cycle costs for new vertical lift air vehicles to drive down development and future sustainment costs by creating commonality throughout the services."[14] Although it may cost less in the short term, designing a common airframe that multiple Services can use for various purposes has proven unrealistic and costly in the long term. The Joint Strike Fighter program, which resulted in the F-35, produced one of the most expensive aircraft in the DOD inventory.[15] This example demonstrates that commonality between Services does not necessarily guarantee a cheaper solution. By tailoring the AURA program to face the challenges presented by EABO, the Marine Corps can explore other cost-saving options, such as retaining detachments of H-1s to help further minimize cost. While limited in speed and range, H-1s are currently scheduled to receive upgrades such as LINK-16 and Joint Air-to-Ground Missile, which "will ensure H-1s remain lethal, networked, persistent, and risk worthy."[16] These capabilities are still required in non-EABO environments. These legacy assets can help offset the higher initial cost of the research and development required in not adopting a joint program. Ultimately, the Marine Corps Department of Aviation should recognize that cheaper is not better, especially when it may lead to decreased combat effectiveness in future conflicts.

To ensure the Marine Light Attack Squadron is postured to support the future fight, the AURA program must independently tailor its requirements to support future missions. As the Marine Corps prepares for new and challenging operations in relatively unfamiliar environments, it must ensure its aviation assets can meet the mission. By avoiding a joint FVL program, the AURA program can focus on supporting these future concepts, such as EABO. Independently designing and funding the AURA to prioritize requirements, including low-signature characteristics, naval integration, specific tactical flight regimes, and consolidation of attack and utility airframes into a single multi-role platform, will ensure this new aircraft will be effective, both in terms of cost and capability. If adopted, these adjustments will help ensure that Marine Aviation is ready to support its future missions and retain its relevancy for years to come.

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Crossing the Rubicon

Lessons learned from a failed Russian river crossing in Ukraine

by Capt Cooper J. Strand

In early May of 2022, Russian forces attempted to cross a river in eastern Ukraine but were quickly thwarted by a much smaller Ukrainian force. This operation, referred to doctrinally as "gap crossing," resulted in the loss of dozens of armored vehicles, numerous bridging assets, and perhaps hundreds of personnel. The Russian Army's dismissal of the risk and complexity of a contested gap-crossing operation led to the destruction of a mechanized brigade tactical team and resulted in operational failure. If the Marine Corps plans to avoid a similar fate, commanders must apply a renewed focus to the fundamentals of gap crossing: surprise, extensive preparation, flexible planning, traffic control, organization, and speed.

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Background

Since it invaded Ukraine in February 2022, the Russian military has experienced a number of embarrassing, high-profile failures in its military's performance. These failures at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels can be traced to several basic mistakes which compounded into a total military disaster. Failure to anticipate the fighting will of the Ukrainian people, poor training and leadership at every level of the Russian military, poor employment of military personnel and assets, and the failure of Russian tactical logistics to keep up with operations just 100 short miles from their border are some of the many issues encountered by the invading force.[1] At the macro level, these issues resulted in the strategic failure of the initial Russian invasion of Ukraine. At the micro level, they led to tactical defeats such as the May 2022 gap-crossing operation at the Siverskyi Donets River.

Military gap-crossing operations are projections of combat power across linear obstacles. Gap-crossing operations are very similar in principle to amphibious operations and breaching operations. These operations are employed to support a commander's scheme of maneuver, and they pose considerable risk to military forces because they require a unit to break formation and concentrate their personnel and assets into narrow lanes at the points of crossing.[2]

For success, a gap-crossing operation requires tightly coupled synchronization of four task-organized elements. Initially, the assault force will seize the near and far-side objectives, which lie on the banks of the gap, eliminating direct fire threats. Once these objectives are secured, the assured mobility forces move to the gap and begin establishing the means of crossing (i.e., the bridge) as well as traffic control measures and obscuration on the gap. Once the bridge assets are established and the gap is obscured, the bridgehead force assaults across the bridge and seizes the enemy side of the gap. Finally, the breakout force crosses the gap and continues the assault to capture enemy objectives beyond the crossing point. A number of tactical control measures are used to control traffic before and on the gap. These include the assembly area, various holding areas offering concealment or cover, the call-forward area used to

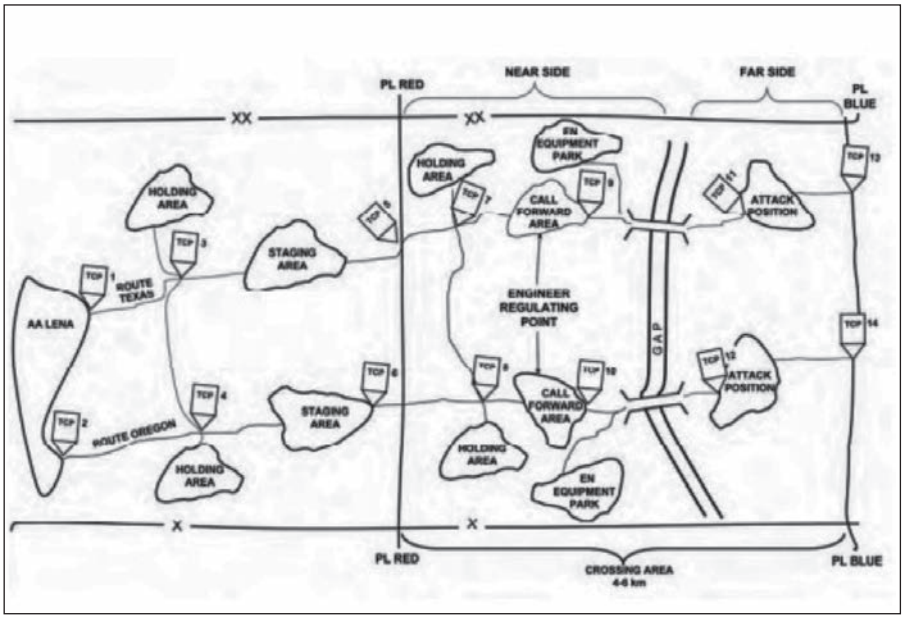

Figure 1. Graphic control measures shown during a gap-crossing operation.[3] ***(Figure provided by author.)***

make final pre-crossing preparations, and the attack positions occupied by the assault force.

In this specific operation, a Russian battalion tactical group, identified as the 74th Motorized Rifle Brigade, utilized a tactical bridge asset to attempt a crossing of the Siverskyi Donets River in the Luhansk state of eastern Ukraine.[4] This river forms a natural blocking obstacle separating the Russian-held eastern bank from the Ukrainian-held western bank. The river itself winds lazily from its headwaters in Russia, through the states of Kharkiv, Donetsk, and Luhansk, and snakes back into Russia where it feeds into deeper waters.

The 74th Motorized Rifle Brigade is a mechanized infantry battalion composed of approximately 500–1,000 soldiers equipped with armored fighting vehicles, combat engineers, and pontoon bridging assets. It is assessed that the 74th Motorized Rifle Brigade's mission in this operation was to establish a military bridge on the Siverskyi Donets River in order to facilitate the flow of personnel and equipment across the river. By ensuring mobility across the river, they could allow for continued territorial gains and the planned seizure of Lysychansk.[5]

The Operation

Modern technology and social media enabled realtime tracking of Russian forces during the gap-crossing operations, providing valuable data to external observers. A Ukrainian combat engineer identifying himself as "Max" on Twitter posted detailed accounts of the attempted Siverskyi Donets River crossing.[6] Max's reporting on the tactical movements is corroborated by major Western news outlets but provides firsthand reports and battlefield tracking that enable an analysis of specific failure points.

On 6 May, Max was tasked with conducting engineer reconnaissance of the Siverskyi Donets River, acting on intelligence that stated Russian forces were preparing to assault westward across the river and envelope the Ukrainian-held city of Lysychansk. Max utilized rangefinders and aerial drones to reconnoiter the river in the Hryhorivka and Bilohorivka areas to locate possible locations the Russian forces may use to cross the river. He determined a probable location for crossing and predicted that Russian forces would attempt to cross using standard pontoon bridge assets due to the width of the gap and depth of its waters. Max used this information to assist in the development of pre-planned artillery targets at the expected crossing locations.

Modern technology and social media enabled real-time tracking of Russian forces during the gap-crossing operations, providing valuable data to external observers.

Separate open-source intelligence has identified the attempted crossing point along the Siverskyi Donets River in Luhansk Oblast, just 2,000 feet from the Donetsk Oblast border and less than 10 miles from the city of Severodonetsk in eastern Ukraine.[7] The attempted crossing point is approximately 100 feet across, and the river is wooded on both sides. The area of operations includes farmland and wetlands just outside of the contested Ukrainian cities of Severodonetsk and Lysychansk.

According to Max, the Russian forces began their gap-crossing operation early in the morning on 8 May. The estimations Max had gleaned from his engineer reconnaissance were correct, and Ukrainian forward observers began calling for fire using the pre-planned targets Max had designated. When the first rounds began impacting on the crossing points, the Russian forces had established a bridgehead force on the Ukrainian side of the river in an attempt to secure the crossing point and assist in building the bridge. The Russian bridgehead forces were caught in the open and experienced heavy casualties during the bombardment. Max stated that it was "the loudest and most intense combat he had ever heard."[9]

Figure 2. Approximate location of the crossing point, showing the Siverskyi-Donets River which divides Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts. The attempted crossing point is annotated on the edge of where vegetation meets farmland. Accessed 27 September 2022 via Google Maps. Geolocation coordinates: 48.950476177039604, 38.22676689461408.[8] ***(Figure provided by author.)***

Figure 3. Destroyed pontoon and Russian forces on near and far bank can be seen. *(Figure provided by author.)*

In the subsequent bombardment, Russian losses included "dozens" of destroyed vehicles and perhaps hundreds of personnel.[10] The Ukrainian Army's official Twitter account produced a rather tongue-in-cheek report of the operation, stating that "Artillerymen of the 17th tank brigade of the #Uaarmy have opened the holiday season for [Russian forces]. Some bathed in the Siverskyi Donets River, and some were burned by the May sun."[11] While reliable statistics are hard to obtain, it appears that the 74th Motorized Rifle Brigade suffered 485 casualties and the loss of 80 vehicles and 8 bridge pontoons.[12]

The Ukrainian Army's official Twitter account produced a rather tongue-in-cheek report ...

Lessons Learned

1. Surprise. Russian forces failed to capture the element of surprise during this operation. As a result, Ukrainian reconnaissance units were able to accurately predict the crossing points the Russians were preparing to use. This allowed them to devise pre-planned target points to support the defense of the far side using fire support. Employing a deception plan (as doctrine advises) to confuse Ukrainian forces could have resulted in fewer fires being concentrated on the objective.

2. Failures in Planning. Flexible planning is another fundamental of gap-crossing operations. Russian forces failed to build flexibility or redundancy in their crossing points. This prevented them from diverting their crossing to another point when they realized they had been compromised.

3. Failures in Task Organization. Ukrainian forces effectively task-organized to create a perfect combined-arms dilemma utilizing intelligence, forward observers, and fires. It appears that the Russian Army had done a thorough troop-to-task, assigning their personnel to each of the four elements (assault, assured mobility, bridgehead, and breakout forces). During execution, they attempted to utilize this doctrine with mixed results.

a. Assault forces were able to seize both the near-side and far-side objectives to eliminate the risk of direct fire.

b. Assured mobility forces assembled their bridge quickly but did not provide effective obscuration of the crossing point.

c. The bridgehead force was able to seize the enemy side of the gap but did not eliminate Ukrainian observers. As a result, indirect fire achieved maximum effects on the objective.

Figure 4. Destroyed Russian armored vehicles, which appear to have had very little cover, concealment, or dispersion.[13] This appears to be the bridgehead force, which was waiting for the completion of the bridge on the Russians' near bank. *(Figure provided by author.)*

d. The breakout force was not employed because the bridge was never fully assembled. However, it can be assumed that the mechanized infantry was the breakout force, and they were not properly covered or concealed prior to crossing the gap.
e. The crossing area commander is tasked with controlling all crossing units, assault units, and support forces located directly in the crossing area. This individual failed to control traffic effectively, resulting in a traffic jam of armored vehicles grouped in the open rather than concealed in a staging area a minimum of one terrain feature from the planned crossing point.

4. Security is Constant. Photos suggest that Russian forces treated this operation as administrative vice tactical. They appear to have had no concern for force protection, no means of providing counterbattery fires, and failed to conduct effective reconnaissance prior to the beginning of their operation. Additionally, Russian forces failed to control the airspace in their area of operations. As a result, their awareness of the battlespace/enemy situation and ability to respond to Ukrainian actions was drastically reduced.

5. Timing. Ukrainian forces waited for their Russian adversaries to fully commit to the operation before beginning their attack. This meant that the Russians had seven of eight pontoons assembled and most of their forces on the objective. As a result, maximum casualties and destruction of equipment were achieved.

Conclusion

The current phase of the Russo-Ukrainian War gives observers an opportunity to witness peer-to-peer conflict and learn from its harsh realities. Although we do not have a full understanding of the tactical situation on the ground and the friction encountered by both Russian and Ukrainian forces during this engagement, it appears that the Russians abandoned tactical sense. They neglected the foundational tenets of cover, concealment, and understanding of the enemy threat. In short, they abandoned the foundations of gap-crossing operations. The future threats posed by U.S. adversaries carry significant risks, and these will require the MAGTF to work as a well-synchronized team in order to win. As the Marine Corps engineering community innovates and prepares to operate in a peer environment, it should continue learning from the myriad of realtime sources made available to it online. Additionally, this engagement serves to bolster the need for the Marine Corps to invest in lighter, smaller, and more easily transportable bridging assets (as directed in the Commandant's *Force Design* guidance). Military doctrine is written in the blood of past generations of warfighters. Commanders must commit to studying gap-crossing operations and continue developing further bridging capabilities.

... this engagement serves to bolster the need for the Marine Corps to invest in ... bridging assets ...

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Bridging the Looming Gap

Achieving integrated deterrence with Marine advisors

by MSgt Jonathan Hackett

>MSgt Hackett has two decades of experience working with foreign partners while executing clandestine intelligence operations and special activities in combat zones, sensitive locations, and denied areas in over a dozen countries. He teaches security cooperation and advising at the Marine Corps Security Cooperation Training Detachment. He is the author of* Theory of Irregular War *(McFarland & Company 2023).

Papua New Guinea Defense Force service members provide perimeter security while moving past a building during a military tactics exchange conducted alongside Marines with the 11th MEU. *(Photo by Cpl Devan K. Gowans.)*

While wars end, partnerships endure. As such, Marine Corps advisors are caught at a crossroads. Should the force deliberately divest this long-held competency or instead seize the opportunity to carve out a unique place in a new era of security cooperation? Marines have a long history of advising foreign partners who support American national security interests, whether those partners are state military forces, internal security elements, or irregulars. Marines have advised in every clime and place, from Tripoli to Central America, from Vietnam to Afghanistan. Despite a long and storied tradition of working with allies and partners, the end of the Global War on Terror has prompted Marine leaders to reexamine the role of the Marine foreign security forces advisor. Although the *2022 National Security Strategy* calls for a major shift toward increasing security cooperation activities with allies and partners, the Marine Corps is unprepared to accomplish that strategic vision in part due to capacity divestments that impact capabilities, failures to invest in a strategic reserve of cultural expertise across the total force, and a fixation on defining a new future for a Marine Corps lumbering out of two decades of sustained ground combat far from that faint dream of littoral operations in a contested environment.

The *2022 National Security Strategy* placed unprecedented emphasis on security cooperation, mentioning allies 68 times and partners 145 times in just a few dozen pages of text.[1] At the same time, the Marine Corps has been rapidly divesting itself of security cooperation and advisor expertise, first eliminating regional culture and language familiarization requirements for the total force in 2020, then closing the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning shortly thereafter, and finally deactivating the Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group in 2021. The latter was reduced from a regiment-sized group of advisor instructors, evaluators, and trainers down to just nine uniformed Marines in May 2022 when it was redesignated the Security Cooperation Training Detachment. The strategic capability of advising and assisting foreign security forces risks falling victim to the inevitable negative externalities stemming from major cuts in security

cooperation capacity across the Joint Force in general, and the Marine Corps in particular, following the 2022 sunset of the Global War on Terror.

Divesting Capacity, Impacting Capability

The Marine Corps claims it has retained advisor capability while reducing capacity, but this is a fallacy. There are real reductions in capability when capacity is reduced—the correlative effects cannot be separated because institutional knowledge is also reduced as the number of professionals with advisor training and experience filling structure for those roles is removed and reclassified into unrelated fields in the Marine Corps. Capacity rapidly reduces while the capability to conduct conventional force security forces assistance, foreign internal defense, and general security cooperation with partners diminish faster than doctrine can keep pace. These changes are apparent in the 2021 deactivation of the Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group after eight years in operation training thousands of Marine advisors, followed by the May 2022 activation of its successor organization, the tiny Security Cooperation Training Detachment now under Marine Corps Intelligence Schools, which has struggled to scrounge together the funding needed to train even a few dozen Marines in fiscal year 2022.[2] While the latter still delivers the most basic advisor skills like force protection and planning partner force training schedules, the other core advisor skills of foreign language proficiency, regional focus, and tailored evaluations of forces aligned regionally to maintain institutional knowledge were cut. Other vital training, such as foreign weapons, specialized survival training, and detailed range operations for partner forces were also discarded due to costs that the Training and Education Command determined were too high for a mission of diminishing importance.

Just as the Marine Corps began reducing security cooperation capacity in 2015, the Army acknowledged that partner engagement was valuable enough to be integrated into each warfighting function. Additionally, allied forces emphasized and prioritized regional expertise for their senior leaders, with a high proportion of allied general and flag officers commanding United Nations missions and key leadership assignments throughout NATO.[3] While allies and partners were sending out renewed demand signals for engagement with the DOD as a whole, the executive branch decided that critical senior defense official/defense attaché positions at dozens of embassies should be downgraded from 1- and 2-star ranks to O-6-level positions in 2021. The Marine Corps' reductions in capacity, coupled with larger DOD-wide cuts to advisor capabilities, have contributed to the trend of loudly emphasizing alliances and partnerships while ignoring the hard skills and career progression necessary to work with those forces.

An Atrophying Strategic Reserve

The Marine Corps' approach to advisor skills acquisition during the Global War on Terror followed a model known as "salting the force"[4] through programs like the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning, regional cultural and language familiarization, and the Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group. The new Security Cooperation Training Detachment provides a more targeted advisor skills acquisition platform for teams and individual augments deploying on advisory missions, such as the Marine Corps Training Mission in the United Arab Emirates and, until recently terminated, the Georgia Liaison Teams.

Other advisor organizations or activities in the Marine Corps have survived the end of the Global War on Terror. These include Marine Forces Special Operations Command, some Special Purpose MAGTF formations, a Marine Expeditionary Force office called the Advisor Training Branch, and two Marine Corps advisor companies staffed with Reservists. While Marine Forces Special Operations Command conducts advising, this is done to support the special operations forces' core activities such as foreign internal defense, unconventional warfare, and security force assistance operations rather than as a main effort. Meanwhile, general-purpose forces are terminating the decades-long advisor mission in Georgia and the Jordan Armed Forces task force deployments to places like Afghanistan while the Black Sea Rotational Force has been eliminated in the midst of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.[5]

Some Marine units are attempting to regionally align their advisor missions, such as in MARFORSOUTH and MARFORPAC, but the reduction in advisor capacity makes this effort almost imperceptible as the lack of required higher-level assessment, monitoring, and evaluation teams permeates every MARFOR staff. In the Joint Force, regional alignment has been one solution to increase advisor team depth of expertise, but the concept has met with mixed results. The Army Security Forces Assistance Command, for example, has suffered from a lack of buy-in and commitment from senior leaders.[6]

The disparately assigned advisors surviving across the total force could temporarily overcome the looming gap by emphasizing interoperability with one another. For example, interoperability between Marine Forces Special Operations Command and Naval Special Warfare on one hand, and conventional Marine Corps advisor teams on the other, could provide a scalable, efficient, unified option for planning and executing advisor missions.[7] In this scenario, advisor task elements dispatched rotationally from a regionally-aligned Marine Littoral Regiment could conduct persistent Phase 0 foreign internal defense and security forces assistance missions with conventional police and security forces in the host nation, while Marine Raiders and other special operation forces elements conduct simultaneous partnered advise and assist missions with host nation special operations and national-level forces, along with military information support operations and civil-military support element engagements. This construct could be overseen by a single task force leader, preferably composed of liaisons from the Theater Special Operations Command, the relevant embassy security cooperation office, and interagency partners such as the State Department,

Department of Justice, USAID, and others, depending on specific mission parameters. The key here is the unity of effort: all the aforementioned advise, assist, and accompany activities are already underway, but there is a disunity between conventional, joint, combined, and special operations approaches to these tasks.

Afterthoughts and Post-Scripts: Allies and Partners in the Future Warfighting Concept

Advisor missions are not only about generating partner capabilities but also ensuring access and exerting influence while ideally stifling a competitor's efforts to access and influence. The ability of U.S. forces to influence partners in the human domain is key to achieving grand strategic aims as security cooperation cuts across the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic instruments of national power. In 2013, the Marine Corps, Army, and Special Operations Command initiated a Strategic Landpower Task Force to study, generate, and posture in the human domain. The initiative faced immediate frictions from a lack of resources, focus, and interest against the small circle of scholars and practitioners supporting it.[8] Within a year of publishing the seminal white paper on the Strategic Landpower Task Force, the Army had already declared the initiative dead at the very moment that advise, assist, and accompany missions with partners against ISIS were mounting toward a global crescendo.[9]

While some within the DOD, and indeed the Marine Corps, recognize the importance of achieving interoperability with allies and partners in future warfighting concepts, those key assets are afterthoughts in practice. The centrality of allies and partners to fighting and winning wars has a long history, even if the DOD does not always take this type of mission seriously. Access provided by advisor teams corresponds to adversary denial: the Marine Corps Combined Action Program teams denied Viet Cong tax collectors and recruiters from being able to target protected villages while desertion in areas with advisors was near zero, contrasting significantly with non-advisor areas.[10] Numerous other examples of how persistent advisor missions have provided otherwise impossible access, basing, and overflight in places like Lebanon, Mali, and Colombia. Such successes can be replicated if only the Service chooses to capitalize on and preserve them. Instead, advisor missions like the Combined Action Program are often abandoned in favor of a conventional approach favoring firepower over people.

Marine Advisors as Strategic Enablers

The U.S. Government invests in security cooperation efforts such as International Military Education and Training, Foreign Military Sales/Foreign Military Financing, theater security cooperation events, and enduring physical infrastructure investments such as the King Abdullah Special Operations Training Center in Jordan and Camp Spartan in Twentynine Palms, CA. This type of resident and mobile training cost U.S. taxpayers $15 billion from 1999 to 2016. In 2019 alone, this assistance reached 71,000 foreign military students coming from 157 countries at a cost of $905 million.[11] Marine advisors have been at the forefront of training partner forces over the past two decades under these programs.

Great-power competition has supplanted the dominant operations of the last two decades such as counterterrorism and counterinsurgency, operations in which Marine advisors invested significant blood and treasure. Despite this operational shift, the *2022 National Security Strategy* calls for sustained, goal-oriented, and forward-looking advisor relationships at the strategic level. To that end, Marine Corps advisor teams are manned, trained, and equipped to support the core security cooperation activities of security forces assistance, foreign internal defense, internal defense and development, and security sector reform—but only if advisor capacity and capabilities are at a sufficient equilibrium to provide achievable, realistic, and sustainable relationships with key allies and partners.

Advisor skills can only be retained and successfully employed in the Service if enduring institutional knowledge is accessible, robust, and rigorously evaluated. Advisor skills are poorly retained in the Service relative to those larger security cooperation programs and conventional lessons learned such as the development and transfer of persistent institutional knowledge in military decision-making processes, maneuver concepts, or direct-action engagements. At the height of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, a sweeping study found that "the ad hoc approach to [Security Force Assistance] efforts during persistent conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan has been, at best, inefficient and slow."[12] A 2014 study on regional alignment across the DOD found that the Global Force Management process produced friction points in personnel management, force management, and training and education, all feeding a department-wide deficiency in consistently and sufficiently matching qualified advisors with advisory missions.[13] The Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning and the regional culture and language familiarization program were designed to reduce such frictions with assigning Marine advisors to foreign partners while enhancing existing unit capabilities during mission planning and execution. In the post-Global War on Terror Marine Corps, these solutions are not only no longer required but have been eliminated.

Advisor skills enhance much more than the general-purpose forces where those skills reside. These skills complement special operations forces, foreign area officers, foreign area staff non-commissioned officers, attachés, operations non-commissioned officers at embassies, the Personnel Exchange Program, security cooperation staff, and individual augments, to name a few. Advisor missions have generational effects on U.S. national security and partner nation stability and this skillset cannot be brushed aside.[14] Indeed, scholars and practitioners have long advocated for retaining advisor skills following major conflicts such as Vietnam, Operation Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom.[15] Marine advisors have consistently enabled enduring partnerships,

influenced competitive adversary behaviors, provided a platform for operations, and maintained access for crisis response.[16] These strategic effects can only be achieved through top-down support for Marine advisor capacity across the total force.

A Web of Solutions: Capabilities, Investments, and Partnerships

There are three ways the Marine Corps can address this looming gap in advisor capability and capacity across the total force. Addressing the gap requires understanding the dependent relationship that capacity wields over capability when capacity is at extremely low levels. Part of the connective tissue linking capacity and capability is comprised of strategic reserves of language, cultural knowledge, and other perishable skills. The final component will be found not within the force but outside it: allies and partners are the keys to enabling a smaller, leaner Marine Corps to continue to execute advisor missions critical to our national security, whether in the littorals or anywhere.

The Marine Corps must stabilize and deliberately grow its capacity to buoy specific advisor capabilities. Security cooperation planners working after the end of the Global War on Terror have much to learn from the myriad failures of that era. For example, mission requirements were not a priority for selecting personnel for provincial reconstruction teams, advisor teams were predominantly ad hoc or nonstandardized, while training was not uniform across the various types of advisor assignments in missions such as Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands vis-à-vis their partnered police advisory teams.[17] One study looked back upon the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to determine why adequate preparation for the advisor missions in those wars took over a decade to set up. The answer should concern those planning the next fight: "The Services either thought that they were providing adequate training or had been resisting requests to improve it."[18] A 2013 Government Accountability Office report on Security Forces Assistance in Afghanistan found that the two greatest deficiencies across these missions were lack of access to information needed for mission success and insufficient time spent in pre-deployment training and site surveys for specific missions. The capacity-capability problem therefore cannot be solved until mechanisms to understand the specific mission are coupled with buy-in and open minds from the highest levels of Marine Corps leadership. Lessons learned are useful, but the ways to win tomorrow's fight are not solely strewn across the fields of yesterday's battlefields.

The Marine Corps must bring a broad array of allies and partners into the train, advise, and assist construct to ensure training is precise, focused, and necessary.

The Marine Corps must invest in strategic language, culture, and advisor skills reserves across the force to open doors with partners, whether conventional or irregular. Although SOCOM conducts advisory missions under unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, security forces assistance, and counterinsurgency operations, the underlying concepts within these core activities are not SOF-peculiar despite a commonly held perception within the Service that these activities are special.[19] In fact, Marine advisors in the general-purpose forces are well-suited for enduring conventional advisory missions such as the current Marine Corps Training Mission in the United Arab Emirates, the recently abandoned Georgia Liaison Team construct, the Marine Security Cooperation Team in Jordan, and the terminated Black Sea Rotational Force partnerships.

The Marine Corps cannot limit its options to only working with state actors toward this end. Indigenous militias have often been motivated to work with advisor teams to secure people and property under the purview of those militias, such as the *rondas* in Peru and *firqat* in Oman, along with the more well-known combined action platoons in Vietnam or police advisory teams in Afghanistan.[20] Irregular forces are a security institution even if they are not necessarily involved with the host nation, such as the Syrian 8th Brigade in Dara'a and the Syrian Defense Forces. Likewise, groups such as Jordan's Royal Desert Forces, harkening back to a camel corps, are aligned to the government via their tribal affiliation but are not official state security forces. For those security cooperation planners concerned that Title 10 § 333 monies cannot fund such forces, one need only look to Title 10 § 127e to find an annual sum of 100 million dollars to train them. The common thread linking all these unique forces is the enduring partnerships built with Marine advisors that also enable access to denied areas or contingency platforms during crises and conflicts.

The Marine Corps must bring a broad array of allies and partners into the train, advise, and assist construct to ensure training is precise, focused, and necessary. The operating environment inside contested littorals, island chains, and coastal denied areas requires access, which advisors can build during the Phase 0 shaping and competing activities that security cooperation enables. Critical thinking and initiative are essential in this environment, more so at the lowest echelons of command, from the squad down to an individual Marine able to rapidly conduct integrated operations with allies and partners.[21] The 38th Commandant envisioned, "Marines acting as stand-in forces [who] will be positioned forward, shoulder-to-shoulder with our allies and partners."[22] Advisor skills are necessary to achieve that vision.

Standing alongside allies and partners inside an adversary weapons engagement zone is the culminating act

of the advisor-enabled persistent forward presence. That presence denies adversary freedom of action in the littorals, sets conditions to introduce Joint Forces, and enables complementary capabilities in the combined force. Advisor missions are a key component of enduring power projection in areas of strategic value to great-power competitors, such as in the South China Sea, the Sahel-Maghreb, or NATO's eastern flank.[23] Force reductions require increased reliance on partner forces to strengthen U.S. defense and security interests in areas of potential vulnerability. Those vulnerabilities range from natural or humanitarian disasters all the way through to conventional armed conflicts with near-peers.

Advisor missions following the Global War on Terror's end require long-term commitments of small footprint forces before successes can be observed and quantified—no short-term advisor engagement, perhaps under a decade, should be expected to produce sustainable results.[24] Focus areas include not only unit training management and skills sustainment, but also NCO development, force professionalization, and linking small-unit leadership advisory missions to larger security cooperation engagements at ministries of defense and interior in host nations. Partners should be insulated rather than isolated as the Marine Corps readies itself to fight in any clime and place and beside any like-minded ally or partner when the time comes—and come it will. Will we be ready to cross the gap?

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Bring Back the Foot Cavalry

What is the realistic assault load?

by Capt Michael Hanson

Marines train for all possible contingencies across the range of military operations, from high-intensity to low-intensity warfare to humanitarian assistance operations. Marines train to fight near-peer adversaries that wear uniforms and serve constituted governments as well as non-state actors such as insurgents, terrorists, and criminal organizations. The document that guides training for infantry Marines is *NAVMC 3500.44D*, the *Marine Corps Infantry Training and Readiness* (T&R) *Manual*. However, errors exist within the *T&R Manual*. One of these errors is the composition of the assault load. This error is apparent in the standards for a forced march as specified in the May 2020 version of the *T&R Manual*. The standards are unrealistic because the mandated combat load associated with the task of a forced march is too heavy to complete the task in the time required. The Marine Corps should significantly lower the weight that Marines are required to carry on a forced march by eliminating body armor from the load. By eliminating body armor from this load, Marines will be better able to meet the required standard for distance traveled and time to complete the event.

The current Infantry *T&R Manual* prescribes four loads that an infantry Marine may carry in certain situations. The supposedly lightweight assault load is intended for short-term operations requiring a single day of sustainment. The *T&R Manual* details this load comprising the Marine's clothing, helmet, body armor (consisting of a vest with Small Arms Protective Insert plates), hydration source, assault pack, three MREs, and an entrenching tool. The manual defines the assault load as weighing 70.06 lbs.[1] According to the *T&R Manual*, the plate carrier and Small Arms Protective Insert plates weigh 28 lbs, making this single item 40 percent of the total prescribed assault load.[2] This item is disproportionately heavy for a single piece of equipment, and the elimination of this item will have a significant impact on reducing the assault load.

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The *T&R Manual* only establishes load requirements for the assault load when conducting foot movements. The manual lists five specific tasks related to this load, each with the goal of completing a forced march. Though the manual does not provide a definition of a forced march, the five T&R tasks associated with it clearly set the standard for such a movement by specifically prescribing the speed (rate of march), distance, and load requirements.[3] The verbiage is almost identical in each task. Whether targeted to the individual Marine or the unit, the load is the common precondition to all and consists of "an assault load of 70 pounds (+/- 10 percent), as-

The heaviest loads carried for training and conditioning hikes in challenging terrain like the Mountain Warfare Training Center should differ from actual combat and assault loads. *(Photo by Cpl Ryan Ramsammy.)*

signed weapon and mission essential equipment."[4] Additionally, there are two standards for speed and distance that require Marines "to move 20 kilometers in under 5 hours," and "to move 32 kilometers in a time limit of 8 hours."[5] Both of these standards equate to a four-kilometer per hour pace (henceforth km/hr). Though the distances required are appropriate, this pace is unrealistic for this required load because it is too fast for this amount of weight at these distances.

When reviewing figures such as these, a historical example offers some perspective. A look back at history can help illustrate results achieved by troops in similar combat situations as the T&R task seeks to prepare for. One example, in particular, offers a quantifiable distance, pace, time, and tangible effect on the battlefield. This example, from the Civil War, is perhaps the most famous forced march in American military history and occurred on 17 September 1862 at the Battle of Antietam. Confederate MajGen Ambrose Powell Hill's division conducted a 27.35-kilometer movement from Harper's Ferry, VA, to Sharpsburg, MD, in 8 hours. Beginning their march at 0730, they arrived after 1430 and went straight into action to hit the exposed left flank of Union Ninth Corps under MajGen Ambrose Burnside, who had finally crossed the lower bridge over Antietam Creek and was close to breaking through the Confederate line.[6] Hill's timely arrival, undoubtedly enabled by the speed with which his men moved, checked Burnside's advance and saved the outnumbered Confederate army from certain defeat.

This vignette makes for an interesting historical example to compare to the T&R standard for a forced march. As noted, Hill's troops moved 27.35 kilometers, a distance almost right in between the two distance standards in the *T&R Manual*. Hill's men covered this distance in 8 hours, for a speed of 3.42 km/hr. This is .58 km/hr slower than the pace required by the *T&R Manual*. Thus, the Marine Corps expects modern-day Marines to move a similar distance at a significantly faster pace, more than .5 km/hr faster. However, this is unrealistic because the load carried by modern-day Marines is significantly heavier than that carried by Hill's troops.

One veteran of the Army of Northern Virginia estimated the average load of a Confederate soldier was somewhere between 36 and 40 lbs.[7] This is about half the weight of the assault load of 70 lbs. What is striking then is that Hill's soldiers marched at a .58 km/hr *slower* pace with roughly *half* the weight that the T&R standards require modern-day infantry Marines to march. Thus, it seems that the T&R standard is unrealistic when compared to this example.

A detractor might argue that Confederate soldiers were not as physically fit as modern-day Marines and this is why their performance on this forced march is below the current Marine Corps standard for forced marches.

The mere suggestion of removing body armor ... may seem heretical to some ...

A Confederate soldier in 1862 might not have been able to run as fast or do as many pull-ups or crunches as a modern-day Marine, but rebel infantrymen were far from being out of shape. If there was one physical activity they were proficient at, it was conducting foot movements, especially A.P. Hill's men.

A.P. Hill's division was a part of MajGen Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson's wing of the Army of Northern Virginia. Jackson's command was legendary for the speed and great distances they traveled and were thus affectionately known as "Foot Cavalry."[8] Time and again, Jackson's men demonstrated an uncanny ability to complete impressive movements. Perhaps Jackson's greatest accomplishment in this regard was his 1862 Shenandoah Valley Campaign. In the valley, Jackson's men routinely marched 19 to 35 kilometers a day and marched 38.6 kilometers before going straight into action at the First Battle of Kernstown on 23 March 1862.[9] During the Second Manassas Campaign in August of 1862, Jackson's troops covered similar distances. In the approach to the Second Battle of Manassas, Jackson's men marched 90 kilometers in 48 hours and initiated the battle the following day.[10] Thus, the forced march to Sharpsburg on 17 September 1862 was not a rare or random task for Hill's troops. Finally, one of the major keys to success for the Foot Cavalry was their incredibly light loads, something uncharacteristic of modern infantry Marines.

Other detractors will recoil at the prospect of eliminating body armor from a Marine's kit. The mere suggestion of removing body armor from the assault load may seem heretical to some, especially in the extremely risk-averse military and the society it serves. However, the removal of this item is not without unique opportunities that may in fact outweigh the supposed risks. Removing body armor from the Marine's load will better aid the individual Marine's ability to move further and faster, will give him more energy to go straight into action after a forced march, and will better prepare him to keep moving over multiple successive days like the historical examples highlighted.[11] The demand to achieve tempo in fast-paced modern maneuver warfare may require Marines to be able to move great distances and fight continuously over successive days.

Modern infantry Marines carrying the current *T&R Manual's* definition of the assault load cannot effectively complete a forced march in a combat situation similar to the one that Jackson or Hill's troops did. With the prescribed load, distance, and speed, this requirement appears significantly more challenging than Hill's famous march. Additionally, upon completion of a forced march defined under the current standard, due to the fatigue induced by such a demanding movement, modern Marines will not arrive at their destination in a sufficient enough state to go straight into action effectively like Jackson's troops at Kernstown or Hill's at Antietam. Throwing exhausted troops directly into battle is a recipe for disas-

ter, and the T&R standard for a forced march is a recipe for exhausted troops. Under the current standard's load and march pace, modern infantry Marines would struggle to replicate these famous forced marches and would struggle if thrown directly into action afterward as well. The results could be disastrous. However, a different and more realistic standard can train Marines to more achievable results.

To attain a more realistic expectation, the Marine Corps needs to change the T&R standard assault load. It can easily achieve this by eliminating body armor. Doing so will reduce the assault load to 42.06 lbs, which puts the load almost on par with the higher end of what the historical Foot Cavalry carried. The target distance is reasonable. However, the rate of march has been demonstrated in this paper as being too fast even for troops carrying significantly less weight. Reducing weight is the best solution to achieve the required distance in the mandated time. History seldom proves anything but often indicates noticeable trends. When it comes to forced marches, history does not appear to be on the side of the current *T&R Manual's* assault load. The ghosts of Stonewall Jackson and A.P. Hill would agree.

Notes

1. Headquarters Marine Corps, *NAVMC 3500.44D, Infantry Training and Readiness Manual,* (Washington, DC: 2020).

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Of note, Hill rode ahead of his division and linked up with General Lee in Sharpsburg at around 1430. See Daniel Vermilya, *That Field of Blood: The Battle of Antietam, September 17, 1862* (El Dorado Hills: Savas Beatie, 2018).

7. Philip Katcher, "Traveling Light," *Civil War Times Illustrated* 38, *No. 6* (1999).

8. David G. Martin, *Jackson's Valley Campaign, Revised Edition* (Conshohocken: Combined Books, 1994).

9. Ibid.

10. A. Wilson Greene, *National Park Civil War Series: The Second Battle of Manassas* (Fort Washington: Eastern National, 2002).

11. Michael. Hanson, "Towards A New Mobility," *Marine Corps Gazette* 104, No. 10 (2020).

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An Alternative

Recommended changes to the infantry battalion

by Col Andrew MacMannis (Ret) & Col J.J. Carroll Jr. (Ret)

"To err is nature, to rectify error is glory."
—George Washington

>Col MacMannis was an Infantry Officer who is currently a Research Fellow at the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies supporting the Center for Emerging Threats and Opportunities at the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab.

>Col Carroll was an Infantry Officer who is currently a Research Fellow at the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies supporting the Center for Emerging Threats and Opportunities at the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab.

Commandants Gen Neller and Gen Berger both said the Marine Corps is not organized, trained, equipped, or postured to meet the demands of the rapidly evolving future operating environment. In Berger's 2019 *Commandant's Planning Guidance,* he outlined his focus areas for change under the banner of *Force Design 2030*. In support of *Force Design 2030*, the Marine Corps stood up an integrated planning team (IPT) to review and recommend changes to the infantry battalion. The IPT identified what they perceived to be gaps and vulnerabilities of the current infantry battalion fighting in the future environment and concluded that the new battalion must be smaller; more technology-enhanced; MARSOC-like; multi-domain at echelon; more lethal by using precision fires, sensing, and engaging at greater ranges; and able to operate on a distributed battlefield.[1]

The IPT's recommendation was that "Marine infantry must be able to absorb and deliver multi-domain effects at echelon." To do this, it must trade mass for depth and the ability to distribute. It must better balance the volume of fire with precision fire while increasing sensing capabilities to extend the battalion's ability to provide and/or enable effects at operationally relevant distances in support of naval expeditionary and MAGTF operations. Finally, it must be manned and trained with sufficient experience and expertise to successfully operate against a peer adversary across five domains."[2]

Today, the IPT draft report remains the conceptual reference of record guiding the exploration and development of the future infantry battalion by the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab, Capabilities Development Directorate, and FMF.

Since the publication of the report, Marine Corps Warfighting Lab has made the future infantry battalion a focus of effort, conducting several infantry battalion wargames and numerous infantry battalion experiments to gain insight into future required capabilities.

In support of* Force Design 2030*, the Marine Corps stood up an integrated planning team (IPT) to review and recommend changes to the infantry battalion.

An examination of observations from these events reveals some common themes: the fundamental employment of the infantry battalion is changing; sensing and combined-arms teaming can be the decisive effort in accomplishing the mission while operating at greater distances; the battalion lacks a dedicated all-weather reconnaissance capability; the battalion lacks capacity in all-weather sensing and fires; overall capacity in sensing and fires is deficient; the infantry battalion requires improved mobility to retain agility and tempo; the IPT 2030 staff structure doesn't fully account for the increased complexity of the battlespace; the effective employment of crew-served weapons is at risk; and the logistics capability required for distributed or independent operations is not well understood.[3]

In 2022, after Infantry Battalion Experimentation Phase I, the Commandant made a few "low-hanging fruit" changes. He reconstituted the scout platoon structure, increased headquarters and service company capacity, increased 81mm mortar platoon and battalion organic precision fires section structure, reorganized elements of the rifle company into a hunter-killer platoon, and added machinegunner, mortarman, and anti-tank missile gunner primary MOS structure to that platoon. However, Phase I was an incomplete look at the organization and equipment of the new battalion. Much of the new equipment has yet to be fielded. In 2022, the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab started Infantry Battalion Experimentation Phase II with a goal to have a complete battalion organized and

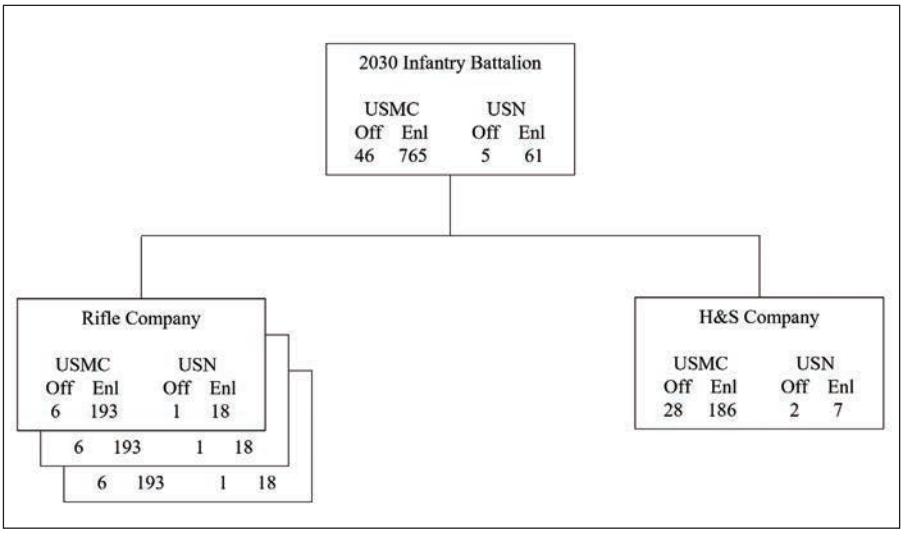

Figure 1. *(Figure provided by author.)*

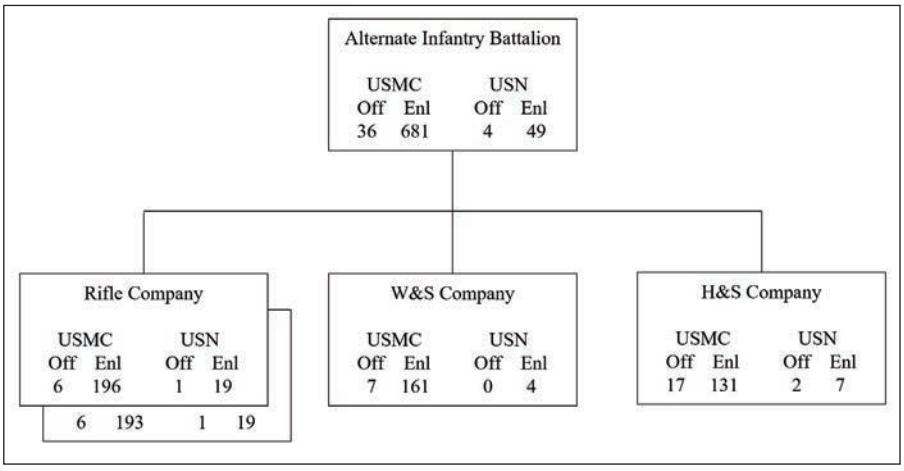

Figure 2. *(Figure provided by author.)*

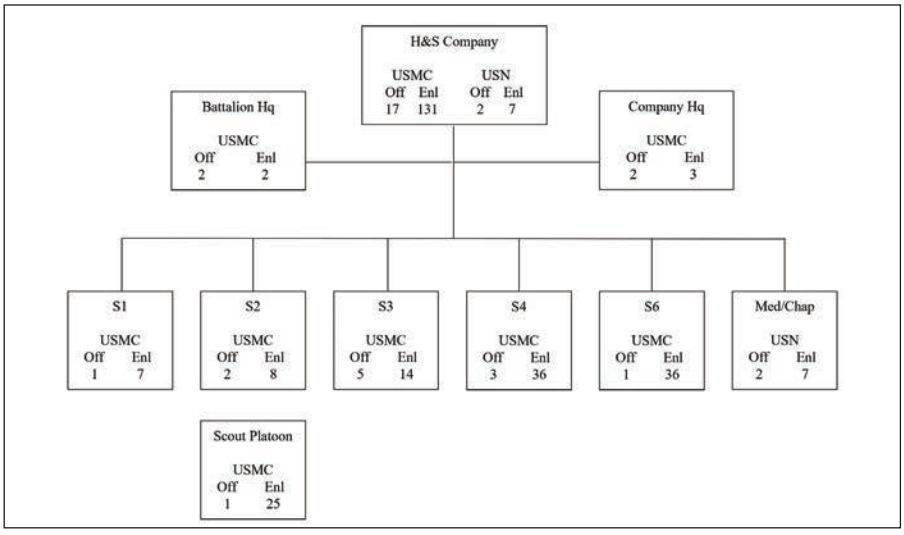

Figure 3. *(Figure provided by author.)*

equipped according to the *Force Design 2030* concept.

Having observed or participated in many of the aforementioned wargames and experiments, we argue that the current 2030 infantry battalion structure and organization will not solve many of the original gaps and vulnerabilities nor completely address common themes found in Infantry Battalion Experimentation Phase I. The following proposal (Figure 2) is an alternate that better addresses all concerns. This alternative reduces complexity for infantry company commanders by moving external support, expertise, and consolidated training out of the infantry company commander's daily purview. Next, it simplifies and facilitates structural adjustments to new technologies. Furthermore, it increases the capacity of specialized functions and puts an appropriate level of subject-matter expertise in support of the company fire-support teams and the battalion fires and effects coordination center (FECC). Finally, it allows for hunter-killer teams to be decisive at both the battalion and company levels and ensures all-weather capability.

This alternative proposes a battalion with a headquarters and service company and three maneuver elements: two infantry companies and a weapons and sensor company (W&S Co). Of the two infantry companies, one is light, while the other is mobile. The light company trains to be on foot or supported by assault support aircraft. The mobile company trains with organic transportation. The W&S Co can be the battalion's decisive effort or provide direct support or general support to the line companies. This company consolidates new technology training and maintenance allowing the infantry companies to reduce their burden for oversight of complex, and changing systems, and balancing the span of control while managing complexity.

Headquarters and service company (Figure 3) has the traditional staff (administration, intelligence, operations, logistics, and communications) and includes the scout platoon. The operations section includes the FECC manned by operations personnel

and subject-matter experts from the W&S Co. The FECC is managed by the W&S company commander. The scout platoon provides all-weather reconnaissance and in conjunction with the battalion arms room has a sniper capability.

The infantry companies (Figure 4) are comprised of a small staff, three infantry platoons, and a weapons platoon, which includes machinegunner, mortarman, and anti-tank missile gunner primary MOSs. Training and competency in these MOSs provide all-weather machinegun, suppressive and anti-armor fires. The infantry platoons include three squads with three fire teams each providing flexibility while managing the span of control. There is also increased organic medical capability to provide prolonged casualty care. The organizational difference between the light company and the mobile company is the organic vehicles and three mechanics.

The W&S Co (Figure 5) includes five functionally specific platoons. All platoons can provide direct support or general support to the line companies while they can also provide multi-domain battalion or company-level decisive actions. The platoon commanders and platoon sergeants provide subject-matter expertise to the FECC while section or squad leaders provide expertise to the company fire support teams. The W&S Co can support both vehicle and foot mobile employment.

The 81mm mortar platoon provides all-weather suppressive and precision fire support. The platoon consists of six tubes that can split into three sections. The organic precision fires platoon provides mounted or foot mobile precision fires. The organic precision fires platoon carries 385 munitions which can be employed in support down to the squad level. The unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) platoon employs and maintains unmanned sensing capability while also providing squads and platoons with maintenance and training in the employment, coordination, and deconfliction of UAS. The platoon can employ 80 UAS in support of the battalion down to the squad level. The air defense/counter unmanned aircraft systems platoon provides air defense and counter-UAS capability across the battalion employing four pairs of Marine Air Defense Integrated System teams.

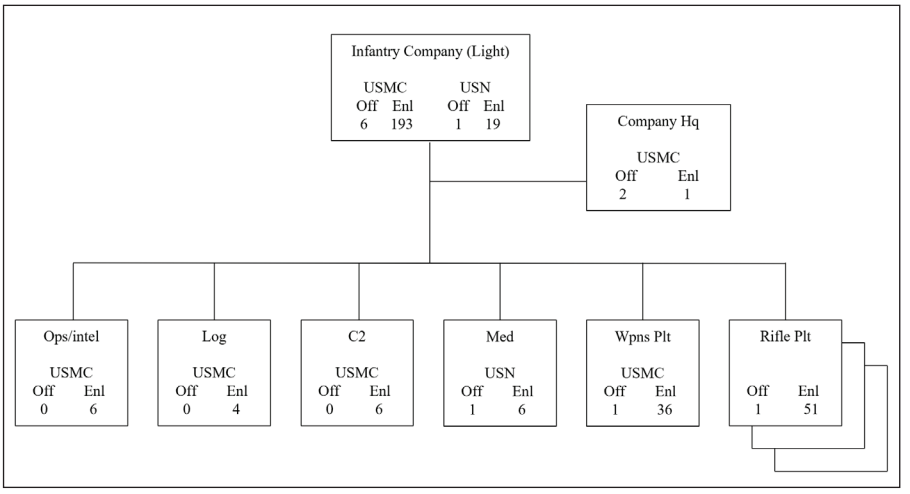

Figure 4. *(Figure provided by author.)*

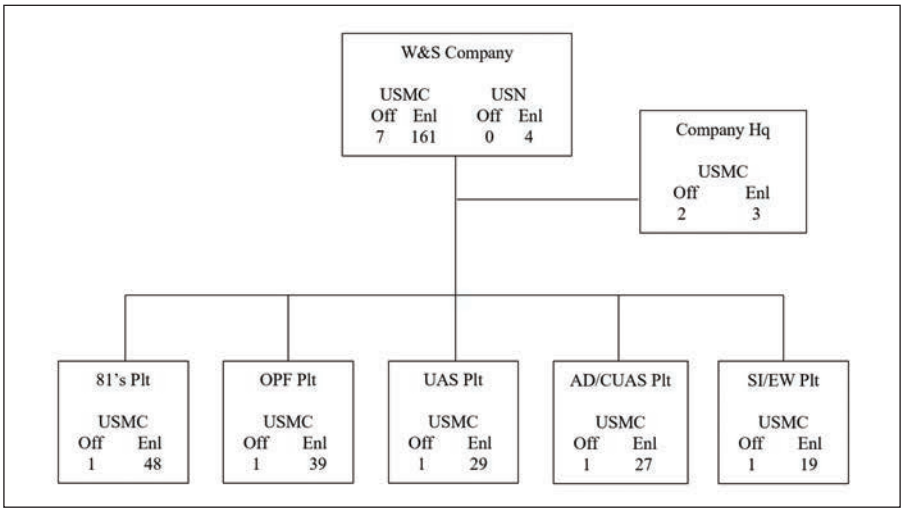

Figure 5. *(Figure provided by author.)*

units. With subject-matter expertise at the platoon, section, or squad level, they can support a wide variety of schemes of maneuver.

The signals intelligence/electronic warfare platoon can employ three different teams in support of the battalion or its subordinate units.

The signals intelligence/electronic warfare platoon provides sensing and non-kinetic fires capability. The signals intelligence/electronic warfare platoon can employ three different teams in support of the battalion or its subordinate

As we construct the infantry battalion for the future, new technologies are going to continue to force an evolution of kit and methods of employment. Most evolving technologies will apply especially to the W&S Co requiring

flexibility to onboard, employ, train, and maintain the evolution.

The original IPT stressed smaller, lethal, mobile, agile, and flexible. The Commandant-modified battalion makes strides toward fulfilling the characteristics of the original IPT. The alternative course of action proposed here better optimizes the characteristics of the original IPT battalion and reduces structure without designing an entirely new battalion. It provides focused subject-matter expertise at the company and battalion level to deliver multi-domain effects. It balances the all-weather volume of fire from mortars and machineguns with a greater capacity for precision fires. It increases sensing capability and capacity to enable effects at relevant distances. It adds air defense and counter-UAS capability to protect the force against peer adversary capabilities. Thus, while the battalion looks different, it is really a refinement that increases critical capacity and placing capability where the battalion can best command and control the employment of the unit and best weigh the main effort.

It balances the all-weather volume of fire ... with a greater capacity for precision fires.

Notes

1. Headquarters Marine Corps, *Draft Infantry Battalion Design 2030 Integrated Planning Team Report*, (Washington, DC: 2020).

2. Ibid.

3. These common themes are derived from personal observation and reports from two infantry wargames and thirteen infantry experiments embedded in exercises.

Inspector General Evaluations and Institutional Readiness

Facilitating efficiency

by the Inspector General of the Marine Corps Staff

In his book *The Mind of the Strategist*, Kenichi Ohmae states, "Analysis is the critical starting point of strategic thinking."[1] As a warfighting organization, we are keenly aware of the importance of analysis in our profession of arms. The Inspector General of the Marine Corps (IGMC) must ensure analysis is a key tenet of its mission to facilitate efficiency, integrity, and the institutional readiness of the Marine Corps. For that reason, IGMC maintains an organic research and analysis capability within its team to address issues that may impact the readiness of our Corps.

The Analysis and Evaluations Division supports the IGMC mission through the identification, research, and analysis of issues of special interest across the Marine Corps to provide leaders with timely information and actionable recommendations. In essence, the division provides targeted analysis and evaluation for formal assessments and/or reviews of programs beyond the traditional inspector general (IG) functions. These projects typically maintain a compliance and/or oversight view; however, they apply a systematic approach to the issue with a defined scope and methodology. This deliberate and focused root cause analysis enables a holistic examination of programs to best inform leaders on areas of concern and potential for efficiencies and improved performance.

The better-known IGMC functions (e.g., inspections, hotline complaints, and investigations) tend to be focused on a specific command, issue, and/or individual at a precise moment in time. In contrast, the Analysis and Evaluations Division typically reviews programs across a wide range of commands and considers data collected over several years. It applies quality standards established by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency as a framework to provide timely, credible information that is useful for managers, policymakers, and others.[2] The intent is to provide leaders with a thorough and credible sight picture of the issues or challenges faced and recommendations that address or remedy these concerns.

"Most decisions are not binary, and there are usually better answers waiting to be found if you do the analysis and involve the right people."
—Jamie Dimon, CEO JPMorgan Chase

So, what exactly is a *program evaluation* and how can it benefit organizations within the Marine Corps? First and foremost, according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), there is no standard government definition of a "program." A program can include an activity, project, function, policy, or any combination thereof. Further, GAO defines a program evaluation as "a systematic study using research methods to collect and analyze data to assess how well a program is working and why."[3] Such an evaluation answers specific questions about program performance and may be used to assess its effectiveness, identify how to improve performance, or guide resource allocation. They can be conducted internally or externally by an independent consulting firm, research institute, or oversight agency such as the GAO or an IG. Similarly, where an agency lacks specialized expertise to perform program or data analysis, such support can be contracted out or brought in through other entities. While there is often coordination between the evaluator and the organization or program being evaluated, independence is important and is established by the evaluator having control over: 1) the scope, methods, and criteria of the review; 2) full access to agency data; and 3) control over the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.[4]

The benefit derived from any evaluation will vary depending on its purpose or goal. For example, evaluations may be conducted to ascertain the program's implementation progress; assess the program's effectiveness in achieving desired outcomes; identify effective practices for

achieving desired results; identify opportunities to improve performance; ascertain the success of corrective actions; and/or help guide resource allocation.[5]

Just as preparation is necessary prior to conducting military operations and deliberately conducted through the Marine Corps Planning Process, the same is true for developing a programmatic evaluation. The benefits of a systematic planning effort are twofold: it enhances the quality, credibility, and usefulness of the evaluation, and it ensures time and resources are used effectively. A basic evaluation design includes the following five key steps: 1) clarify understanding of the program's goals and strategy; 2) develop relevant and useful evaluation questions; 3) select an appropriate evaluation approach or design for each evaluation question; 4) identify data sources and collection procedures to obtain relevant, credible information; and 5) develop plans to analyze the data in ways that allow valid conclusions to be drawn from the evaluation questions.[6] The evaluation design can be scaled depending on the size of the program and the resources available to the organization.

Generally, IGMC-level assessments (or program evaluations) are initiated upon a request from Department or Service senior leaders as well as Congressional mandates or inquiries. Alternatively, the IGMC can initiate an assessment based on inspection results, hotline trends, or other issues identified through its core functions. Marine leaders and subject-matter experts across all levels of command are critical to our work and will typically be called upon to provide insight, coordination, and expertise to these assessments.

Marine Corps Order 5430.1A defines an IG assessment as "actions that test the efficiency of a program or functional area via review of the standards and/or orders to determine if it achieved the intended results."[7] It further describes specific evaluations that fall within this scope:

- *Functional Area Assessment.* An evaluation of the effectiveness, efficiency, and integrity of a functional area through the analysis of standards or compliance with directives.
- *Readiness Assessment.* Those actions dealing with conducting evaluations to validate the preparedness status of subordinate organizations based on their mission, structure, equipment, or other areas of importance.
- *Special Assessment.* An evaluation of a specific issue or concern across multiple commands or down through a single chain of command. While these are often executed by the IGMC, they may also be directed by a commander within the scope of his authority.
- *Technical Assessment.* An evaluation related to a specific functional area within a command. Technical assessments are usually required by a Service order, not by federal law. These specialized assessments are often conducted by designated teams from higher headquarters staff to include HQMC. The results of a technical assessment reflect only the specified functional area, not the overall command.
- *Review.* The evaluation of organizational processes and procedures in view of standing orders, policies, documentation, and other evidence with the purpose of reporting on the efficiency of a program, or more clearly defining an issue.

Typically, there are three phases of an IG assessment: preparation, execution, and completion. The purpose of the preparation phase is to build a solid plan with a defined scope and methodology within the assessment. This process incorporates the considerations and processes discussed in GAO's guidance above. During the execution phase, the team conducts the assessment within the defined scope and methodology and identifies recommendations for the improvement of a program and/or institutional readiness at large. Upon completion, a report is prepared to provide findings, conclusions, and recommendation(s) to the IGMC or the commander/requesting entity in a manner that is understandable and attainable. IGMC may also maintain close liaison for the implementation of recommendations and track the progress through follow-on analysis.

An IG assessment can be conducted at any level of command provided leadership is willing to allocate the resources. To maximize the utility of any such effort, a deliberate planning process that applies the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency quality standards should be the first step. For assistance in designing an assessment or evaluation, the IGMC's Analysis and Evaluations Division is available to support.

As the eyes and ears of the Commandant, thorough and accurate analysis is critical for the IGMC's mission. Through a systematic approach to evaluations, as described by GAO and maintaining the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency quality standards, IG assessments are a key function in achieving the IGMC vision to "preserve the Marine Corps' values, standards, and readiness as the Nation's naval expeditionary crisis response force."

Notes

1. Kenichi Ohmae, *The Mind of the Strategist: The Art of Japanese Business* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1982).

2. The standards include: 1) independence, 2) competence, 3) planning, 4) evidence collection and analysis, 5) reporting, 6) follow-up, and 7) quality control. Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation, (Washington, DC: 2020).

3. United States Government Accountability Office, *Designing Evaluations*, (Washington, DC: 2012).

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCO 5430.1A w/Admin Ch., Marine Corps Inspector General Program*, (Washington, DC: 2019).

The Challenge for Japan's Self-Defense Force

Jointness

by Capt Ryo Nakano

>Capt Nakano is currently the Intelligence Officer at 39th Infantry Regiment in Hirosaki-city, Aomori-prefecture, Japan. He is an Infantry Officer with overseas deployment to United Nations Mission in South Sudan in 2016. He is a graduate of Expeditionary Warfare School and he will be a student at Command and General Staff Course in Tokyo starting this August 2023.

The Indo-Pacific, recognized as the world's center of gravity, is a vast biogeographic region that houses more than 50 percent of the world's population, roughly 66 percent of the world's economy, and seven of the world's largest militaries.[1] To the west of the Indo-Pacific is Japan, an ally of the United States since the signing of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security in 1951, which faces challenges to the status quo from its neighbors to the west: China, Russia, and North Korea.[2] Both Japan and the United States are committed to an Indo-Pacific that is free and open.[3] With the annual bilateral military-level exercises, which recently extended participation from other partner nations including Australia, India, and the United Kingdom, Japan and the United States are showing their commitment and will in deterring antagonistic nations within the Indo-Pacific theater.[4] However, deterrence relies on two distinct factors: capability and will.[5] Although Japan has been strengthening its force posture through the Defense Strengthening Acceleration Package, it still lacks a critical capability—jointness.[6] Jeffery W. Hornung, a senior political scientist at the RAND Corporation who specializes in Japanese security and foreign policies, also criticizes that Japan Self-Defense Force (JSDF) has a shortfall in jointness.[7] Therefore, JSDF must strengthen its joint capabilities by forming a joint command, publishing a joint capstone doctrine, and realigning the three Services area of responsibility (AOR) sectors. Taking these steps will ensure that JSDF possesses the necessary capabilities to fight across multiple domains together with the United States and will strengthen its deterrence posture throughout the Indo-Pacific region.

Marines train with the Japan Self-Defense Force Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade during Keen Sword 23: a bilateral field-training exercise focused on interoperability and combat readiness of the U.S.-Japan Alliance. *(Photo by Cpl Scott Aubuchon.)*

Currently, with its stove-piped Service organization, JSDF lacks a joint command that integrates its ground, air, and maritime components. This presents a challenge where JSDF is not force-structured to fight in multiple domains against a near-peer adversary. The 21st century, highlighted by the information revolution and emerging technologies, has shown the character of war to change to competition in multiple domains. As seen in the 2020 Second Nagorno-Karabakh War and the 2022 Russo-Ukrainian War, competitors and adversaries will leverage multiple dilemmas through a gray-zone competition, hybrid warfare, cognitive warfare, or even China's Three Warfares making a multi-domain integrated

Joint Force that can counter simultaneous dilemmas a necessity.[8] Despite the presence of the joint staff, JSDF does not have a joint command within its organization.[9] Moreover, any kind of joint operation during a contingency is planned to be commanded by an ad hoc component commander from one of the three Services as seen during the Disaster Relief Operation in 2011.[10] The current structure makes all peacetime training a responsibility for each respective Service branch with no clear integrated joint capability expectations being set. With no unity of effort in training, administration, and command and control, it questions the capability and readiness of JSDF to fight and integrate jointly across multiple domains.

JSDF also does not have a joint capstone doctrine publication. JSDF, a self-defense force in accordance with its constitution and Self-Defense Forces Act, is a force that has not experienced combat since its establishment in 1954.[11] All of its Services rely heavily on their respective military doctrine, a fundamental set of principles articulated from military history, to guide and set a common framework for each Service. Without a joint capstone doctrine that philosophically integrates and unifies how JSDF should fight together, it creates a single-domain mindset within its Services that further hinders joint operations where interoperability and integration are necessary.[12] Moreover, when an adversary leverages multiple domains to challenge the status quo, JSDF will lack the initial response to counter the threat. Without a joint capstone doctrine, JSDF has not taken the necessary measures to foster a joint mindset within the leadership and has failed to foster unity of command/effort among its Services.

The final problem concerns the different AORs for each JSDF Service. Currently, the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force has five regional army AOR sectors, Japan Air Self-Defense Force has four regional AOR sectors, and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force has five district AOR sectors with none of these AOR sectors aligning with each other.[13] To promote coordination among the commands responsible for the respective AOR sectors, each Service has been exchanging liaison officers. Unfortunately, these liaison officers are used for briefing their respective Service's capabilities and are not used to mitigate the stove-pipe problem. The difference in how the AOR sector of each Service is currently established mirrors the situation during World War II when Imperial Japanese Army focused on the Indo-China theater and Imperial Japanese Navy focused on the Pacific theater.[14] This is in contrast to the United States, which had Chester Nimitz and Douglas MacArthur each command a Unified Command within the Pacific theater.[15] Differences in AORs create a difference in how each commander and leadership view the operational environment (OE). Without a shared OE, each commander will prioritize his unit training and organization differently. This will inevitably add unnecessary friction to efforts among the Service in any joint training and operation that attempts to span numerous AOR sectors from each Service.

Without a change, JSDF will fail to become a credible force with a capability that will deter adversaries in the Indo-Pacific. The ally and partners of Japan, however, exemplify applicable solutions the JSDF should adopt. In particular, the U.S. military shows the steps forward for JSDF in strengthening its joint capabilities. These ideas include creating a joint command, publishing a joint capstone doctrine, and realigning each JSDF Service's AORs similar to those of the U.S. Unified Commands. Implementing these changes will increase JSDF's joint capabilities to deter adversaries in the near and distant future.

The U.S. Armed Forces have an organizational structure with a unified combatant command that is formed from two or more Services to conduct broad missions in a joint environment. The United States currently has eleven unified combatant commands to provide effective command and control of all U.S. military forces, regardless of Service, during peace or wartime.[16] Moreover, each unified combatant command is led by a combatant commander who is entrusted with nontransferable operational command authority over assigned forces, regardless of Service.[17] JSDF can utilize a similar construct to create a joint command directly under the Minister of Defense. The designated joint commander will have the responsibility and authority to train forces regardless of the Service. Implementing such changes will allow the joint commander to assess the OE with his staff and task subordinate components with specific expectations. This will help integrate the different Services' capabilities and mitigate each Service's weaknesses to create an environment where the whole will be more powerful than the separate component parts.

Without a joint capstone doctrine, JSDF has not taken the necessary measures to foster a joint mindset ... and has failed to foster unity of command ...

The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff has published Joint Publications Capstone Series to enable all Services to come together, combine resources and reach a common goal. The U.S. joint capstone doctrine promotes a common perspective from which decision makers and leaders can plan, train, and conduct military operations.[18] JSDF also has its own Joint Staff and Joint Staff College that have military planners with expertise to create a joint capstone doctrine. JSDF can task these organizations with writing joint capstone doctrine publications to provide insight and wisdom to future joint operations. With a joint capstone doctrine being published, it shows the commitment that JSDF has taken to integrate its Services. Even though the initial joint capstone doctrine may be conceptual or philosophical, this critical step forward will push each Service

to become more cognizant of jointness. Moreover, this foundational base of how to execute joint operations will strengthen JSDF's ability and increase its timeliness to respond to a multi-domain crisis.

The U.S. Armed Forces have a Unified Command Plan that establishes the missions, command responsibilities, and geographic areas of responsibility of the unified combatant command.[19] JSDF should take measures to assess its boundaries and relationships against its OE to mitigate risks in joint integration across the domains. Realigning each Service's AOR sectors according to the OE will ensure that each Service has a shared OE. This will help the joint commander task expectations to each Service's AOR commander as well as unify each Service's lines of effort within the assigned AOR sector. Coupled together with the increase in the defense budget for the coming fiscal years, JSDF will have an opportunity to rapidly reorganize its Services' AOR sectors to create the foundation for effective integration and interoperability.

Experts who understand Japanese culture may argue these changes will not work given the tendency to accept historic organizational structures. Moreover, because there is no apparent immediate problem caused by a lack of jointness, decision and policymakers may lower the priority of creating frameworks to promote jointness. With increased tension not only in the Indo-Pacific region surrounding Japan but throughout the world, including the European theater, a near-conflict has become more apparent to Japan. Identifying these external pressures can act as a stimulus to prompt changes. JSDF also has seeds of jointness incorporated throughout its organization including the establishment of a joint staff (formerly called Joint Staff Council) in 1954 and Joint Staff College in 1961, which can be tasked to create the necessary frameworks for jointness. Japanese culture, although slow to change, once (and if) it gains consensus for change, it is a culture that unites to make the change happen.

Japan, with its geopolitical disposition, plays a pivotal role in the free and open Indo-Pacific concept together with its ally and partners. Unfortunately, with potential adversaries within the Indo-Pacific with hostile intent to change the status quo, JSDF must implement changes to fill the gap in joint capabilities and has to appear as a credible force to deter these adversaries. JSDF should create a joint command, publish a joint capstone doctrine, and realign each AOR sector to set the foundation for strengthening its joint capabilities. Implementation of these steps forward will ensure that the JSDF will be able to deter adversaries in the Indo-Pacific together with its allies and will prepare JSDF for any future conflict across multiple domains.

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Competition Not Conflict

The Marine Corps' need for a competition campaign plan

by Mr. Doug Rose

For the past twenty years, the Marine Corps has focused all the institution's time, effort, and energy on the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Countless deployment cycles, unit workups, and pre-deployment efforts have been spent in support of these ongoing operations. However, in our efforts to focus on the fight, our Nation's adversaries have increased their own military strengths in an effort to compete with U.S. supremacy. Presently, the Corps' attention has turned from CENTCOM to the Far East where we find ourselves confronting a rising power in the Indo-Pacific region and to the west where a revanchist power undermines stability on the European continent. We have collectively focused our efforts on developing numerous operations plans, contingency plans, and campaign plans to enable organization across combatant commands and Joint Forces in a conflict, but this focus has left us with a significant blind spot, competition. This focus on conflict runs counter to the direction of the *2018 National Defense Strategy*, which explicitly stated that "Inter-state strategic competition ... is now the primary concern in U.S. national security."

Faced with the return of great-power competition, the Marine Corps must also retool its thinking when it comes to engagement with our adversaries. Our recent *Force Design 2030* issued by Gen Berger, underscores the need to redevelop ourselves for future conflict but does little to address the current strategic competition in which our Nation finds itself.[1] The Marine Corps has taken a step in the right direction with

>Mr. Rose's bio was unavailable.

Partnerships and access are crucial to effective deterrence. Marines teach a class on the M224 60mm lightweight mortar to Philippine Marines on Palawan, Philippines. *(Photo by LCpl Keegan Jones.)*

the release of *MCDP 1-4, Competition,* but must build on this momentum to develop a comprehensive campaign plan for competition. This campaign plan should be organized along three primary lines of effort: influence, information, and innovation. To achieve our goal, we must adequately define our planning efforts, identify opportunities for our lines of effort, and find our place within the traditional *Diplomatic Informational Military Economic* construct.

Begin the Plan

The Joint Force employs a *competition continuum* to describe this world of ongoing competition conducted through a mixture of competition, cooperation, and armed conflict.[2] A campaign plan for competition should focus its efforts on the lower end of this continuum. The emphasis would serve to support the steady state of operational planning: shaping. We as an institution do not traditionally view Phase 0 as necessarily being a state of conflict. However, it is in this phase of planning that our adversaries are conducting military operations, along with other instruments of their national power, with the end goal of deterring and ultimately defeating the United States.[3] The dynamic nature of the geopolitical environment necessitates a change in our views on traditional operational planning, hence, a need to develop a more comprehensive plan for approaching competition with peer-level adversaries. This plan must have clear and measurable objectives. Understanding what the steady state of this competitive environment will be is critical and will underpin our planning efforts as we seek to identify how best to define success. The process of defining success itself is an ontological undertaking, one that will likely occupy the bulk of the planning time.

Influencing Our Environment

The importance of influence on competition cannot be understated. Perhaps of the most effective definition of influence's significance in competition is found in the 1996 U.S. Department of Defense Report, "To protect and achieve U.S. interests, the U.S. Government *must have the capability to influence the policies and actions of other countries*. This requires the United States to maintain its overseas involvement, *especially in those areas in which the most important interests of the United States are endangered*."[4] Given the importance of influence as a line of effort to a proposed competition campaign plan, it would make sense to place it at the leading edge of this construct.

In order to apply influence on a proposed campaign plan, we must first ask and answer a basic set of questions:

- What objectives defined by the *National Security Strategy* and *National Defense Strategy* are we seeking to achieve?
- Who are the critical decision makers within the operational environment and how much influence over relevant groups and populations do they have?
- What methods of influence do we have available to us?
- Whose influence are we competing with, and how do they wield that influence in the operational environment?

We must also break away from the traditional views of influence through force as the default method for engaging in environments where we are competing. Instead, the selective applications of force as a mechanism for influence must be carefully considered, weighed, and applied only where no other strategy yields a favorable outcome. It is more likely that negotiation, partnership, and support to humanitarian projects will be viewed more favorably by the populations and states we seek to draw to our side. This "softer power" approach will undoubtedly enable the Marine Corps to compete in a wide variety of environments more effectively while simultaneously denying support to our adversaries' advances in the regions where the competition is occurring.

The information space presents a critical center of gravity ...

Competition in the Information Space

Competition in the information environment is inextricably linked to influence. Ezra Cohen, speaking at the "2020 Virtual SO/LIC" stated, "To compete in the information environment, the United States must accept that influence is an integral aspect of modern warfare, not just a niche capability."[5] In an effort to compete against adversaries who have weaponized disinformation to sow chaos and undermine democratic processes, the Marine Corps must employ a comprehensive strategy that accounts for competition in the information space. An outline of this strategy is provided, in part by Robert Bebber, and requires an introspective look into our capabilities asking:

- How do we measure our own capabilities?
- How do we compare to our adversaries?
- Have our capabilities prepared us for Phase 0?
- How can we create/seize a better position to support our narrative?[6]

The information space presents a critical center of gravity for U.S. operations worldwide. While failure to control the information environment would not necessarily preclude the Marine Corps' ability to operate, it is, nevertheless, an area where our adversaries can compete to prevent nations and populations from supporting our presence, thereby denying us ready access to theaters of operation. Barry Watts, in *U.S. Combat Training, Operational Art, and Strategic Competence,* identifies the mastery of joint information operations as a critical operational and strategic competence for the United States' key adversary in the Indo-Pacific region. He goes on to suggest that the task before us hinges on "developing the comprehensive analytic framework to analyze, assess, and master the impact of information on operations."[7] The importance of performing such a task should underline its necessity as a line of effort when considering a competition campaign plan.

Innovation as a Driver of Change

Developing a new form of campaign

plan simply cannot occur without significant consideration for the impact innovation plays in competition. Innovation has repeatedly appeared as a key cornerstone in our adversaries' long-term plans to compete with the United States. This drive to innovate enables these adversaries to potentially alter the balance of power and strategic alliances through growing arms exports, technology transfers, and inter-military cooperation.[8] Given a declining competitive advantage with our rivals, it becomes even more critical for the Marine Corps to develop plans for innovation to support competition to keep pace with the rapidly advancing technological capabilities of our adversaries.

These plans should address two key aspects. First, we as a Service must rethink the way we employ innovative technological advancements to support our competitive efforts. Utilizing technologies such as onsite additive manufacturing would support expeditionary air base operations with ready-made parts reducing supply lines. The employment of new microgrids can further support expeditionary operations in a variety of environments while maintaining a smaller logistical footprint. In the context of competition, enabling self-sufficient Marine Corps forces to be first on the scene to support regional partners increases our capacity to provide a favorable alternative compared to other less-democratic regional powers.

Secondly, the Marine Corps must rethink the antiquated acquisitions process which was developed to purchase high-priced monolithic weapons systems over smaller modular systems with greater operational flexibility. The time, effort, and financial resources consumed for the large-scale systems preclude smaller more iterative projects, which can rapidly develop, prototype, and field systems which are better suited to tactical and operational requirements. Simply put, speed in innovation matters across all levels of operations.

Finally, there should be a significant overhaul of the manpower system. The ongoing reluctance to revamp an outdated and outmoded system of personnel assignment contributes to the attrition of talented performers who, frustrated with the inability to control their own careers, exit the Marine Corps depriving it of the necessary innovative perspective it so critically requires. We are left then with an older analog generation who does not fundamentally understand the new digital environment we occupy. A solution for this issue is readily visible in the Navy's and to a lesser extent the Army's methods for managing their manpower. Utilizing an online system that shows available positions by duty station, rank, and occupational specialty fails to adequately take into consideration specialized skills which can be used to fill critical needs within the Marine Corps. A potential solution to this issue is readily visible with the systems employed by both the Army and Navy. There, enlisted members can bid for potential assignments based on their rank, specialty, and by duty station. Employing a system like this would enable the Marine Corps to retain talented performers in critical fields necessary to the long-term strategic plans outlined in both *Force Design 2030* and guidance found in the *National Defense* and *National Security Strategies*. Understandably, utilizing a system like this may have long-term implications for advancement for Marines who seek multiple tours within supporting commands such as cyber. Those members may be viewed less favorably for promotion due to a perception of not being well-rounded. However, the alternative to the Marine Corps is the continual attrition of necessary talent who take with them years of experience and thousands upon thousands of dollars in training and certification. As budget crunches loom in our future, the Marine Corps can ill afford to continue to mismanage its manpower resulting in a less than favorable return on investment from its personnel.

Completing the Plan

The continual focus on planning for a potential future conflict distracts the Marine Corps from competition currently underway. Should we as an organization continue to fail to address the competitive environment we now face, we risk allowing our adversaries to more effectively set the conditions should a conflict arise. We must internalize the need to develop a comprehensive plan for competition against our Nation's adversaries. Focusing on influence, information, and innovation provides a framework for developing a campaign plan for competition to address this shortfall from our perspective. It is imperative that we develop such a mechanism to accurately survey and assess competitive methods to secure our Nation's strategic objectives, lest we miss the opportunities to seize the advantage in a future fight.

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Getting Ashore and Staying Ashore

Narvik 1940

by Mr. Joseph Miranda

>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.

One contingency encountered in littoral operations is when an invading force must suddenly defend itself against a counter-invasion. This was one reason the Marine Corps included defense battalions in its World War II organization: to counter enemy landings on their own beachheads. While such landings did not happen in the Pacific Island battles of 1942–45 (though it came close on Guadalcanal), one did occur in the European Theater of Operations during the German invasion of Norway in 1940. Decision Games' *Narvik*, appearing in *World at War* issue #92, shows the situation of an invading force having to defend its own beachhead.

Narvik is a Norwegian iron ore port located above the Arctic Circle. The Germans seized it with a surprise attack on 9 April 1940. German forces included a regimental-sized *kampfgruppe* (task force) from the elite 3rd *Gebirgs* (Mountain) Division led by Gen Eduard Dietl. The Allies responded quickly. The Royal Navy defeated a German destroyer squadron covering the Narvik fjord and then landed contingents from British, French, and Polish expeditionary forces. In cooperation with local Norwegian forces, the Allies launched a counterattack and retook Narvik itself.

But Dietl and his men held onto the hills east of the town, reinforced by airborne units as well as Luftwaffe airstrikes. Dietl counterattacked and fighting ensued for two more months. In the meantime, a relief column was marching up from the south toward Narvik. Finally, with the German invasion of France in June, the Allied position in Norway proved untenable, so they withdrew their forces from Norway. Dietl and his men claimed a credible victory at Narvik.

Narvik 1940 is a two-player wargame that models the battle on a grand-tactical scale. Each game turn equals around one week. Each hexagon on the map represents 1.5 miles (2.4 kilometers) from side to opposite side. The game units of maneuver range from platoons to battalions. Air units represent variable numbers of sorties. The armies involved are fighting in Arctic conditions of weather as well as long daylight hours, and the game system models all this. Both sides are facing some challenges when it comes to seizing, expanding, and defending beachheads.

Arctic Beachhead

The game scenario starts in mid-April 1940, after the Germans seized control of Narvik and with the Allies initiating their own attack. It continues through to the historical conclusion of the battle in June. The central design system is in command control. The Allies had a difficult time in coordinating their different national contingents. The Germans were under a unified command, but Dietl's forces were overextended and cut off from their normal lines of supply. Both sides' communications could be dismal owing to Arctic conditions. This is modeled in the game by dividing each side's forces into four sub-commands. A game turn is divided into a series of operational impulses. In each impulse, a player can activate one sub-command to engage in one of several different types of actions (movement, combat, regrouping, recon, and more).

The number of impulses each player receives in a turn is a function of their basic command ability, enhanced by leadership, control of mountain peaks (as these provide observation posts), and occupying locations with wireless stations with signal units. Players find themselves fighting for these objectives which, if they are successful, translate into more actions.

The impulse system leads players to allocate their operational priorities. Do you engage in offensive operations, entrench for the defensive, or regroup to recover from losses? These decisions are critical when operating in tenuous positions, whether defending a beachhead or attacking in the restricted terrain of northern Norway.

In the bigger picture, the Germans at Narvik are in a difficult situation given their isolation from friendly lines (their main forces are much further south off the map). On the positive side, they are being supported by the Luftwaffe based elsewhere in Norway, which conducts airstrikes and provides aerial reinforcement. The airstrikes add long-range fires, thus countering Allied numbers on the ground. The Luftwaffe will also be flying in paratroopers amounting in

Allied amphibious counter-landing. British land a battalion group (brown counters) reinforced with tanks to the southwest of Narvik. The landing force is supported by naval gunfire. To the north, Allied Norwegian ski units (white units) have seized a mountain peak to interdict German reinforcements from other parts of the area of operations. German defenses around Narvik include a battalion from Kampfgruppe Windisch. A German ski patrol is on a mountain peak behind Narvik to enhance command control. Units of KG Berger hold the other side of the fjord. In reserve at Bjornfjell is Dietl with signal and antiaircraft units.

strength to a couple of battalions. (Interestingly enough, one of the battalions was a German mountain unit which was given a quick course in airborne!)

The Allies have some air support, but it is only a fraction of what the Luftwaffe can bring to bear. The Allies also have some naval gunfire support, but its appearance is subject to the randomness of operating up in the Arctic and in the face of German airpower. The game shows how airpower can turn around an otherwise unbalanced situation on the ground.

The Allies have an edge in amphibious warfare. They can conduct landings along the coastlines and inlets, which provides operational maneuver across the map. However, amphibious capabilities are limited as there is a lack of large landing ships. Mainly we are talking here about troops loading onto small boats and then disembarking on largely undefended stretches of shoreline; there are no Tarawa- or Normandy-style assaults. The British also have a Royal Marine unit which enhances amphibious capabilities, making them the point unit for landings.

It is an asymmetrical situation with each side having its own advantages.

Attack and Counterattack on the Perimeter

The numbers on the counters are Firepower (lower left), Movement (lower right), and Range (middle, right of unit type). Certain units are *elites* (indicated by a plus sign). Elites receive additional advantages in close assaults and when regrouping from combat losses. The presence of elite units can make a major

German air-ground counterstrike. A battalion of French Foreign Legion 13th Demi-Brigade has landed at Oyjord and is moving inland. Germans launch a counterattack with 2/2nd Airborne Battalion, supported by two airstrikes. To their immediate north, two more German units screen against a further French drive inland.

difference in critical tactical situations.

Combat resolution in Narvik is quasi-tactical with units firing on enemy forces within range. Infantry and engineers can conduct special close assaults to seize terrain features. Given the distances on the map, calling in airstrikes is vital for concentrating fires. Again, this is where the Germans hold the advantage.

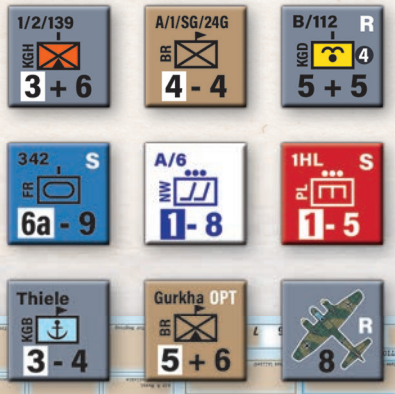
Since each side's sub-commands cannot operate together in the same impulse, it is vital to allocate units to sectors where they can act as part of a single force. An agile German player can maneuver to create situations of local superiority. The unit representing Dietl can combine units within a certain radius, so up-front leadership is vital. For their part, the Allies can with some planning launch a series of converging drives to trap German forces. It is a matter of coordination.

Players can utilize some specialized units. Engineers are major players. They can build entrenchments, an otherwise difficult task given the frozen ground around Narvik. Engineers can also construct pontoon bridges and demolish certain types of structures. Getting engineers to the right place at the right time can be a considerable force multiplier.

There is also the fog of war factor. Both sides are operating under conditions of limited visibility. Reconnaissance is useful for determining the strength of enemy forces. Ski units are especially valuable given their ability to move fast across otherwise inhospitable terrain.

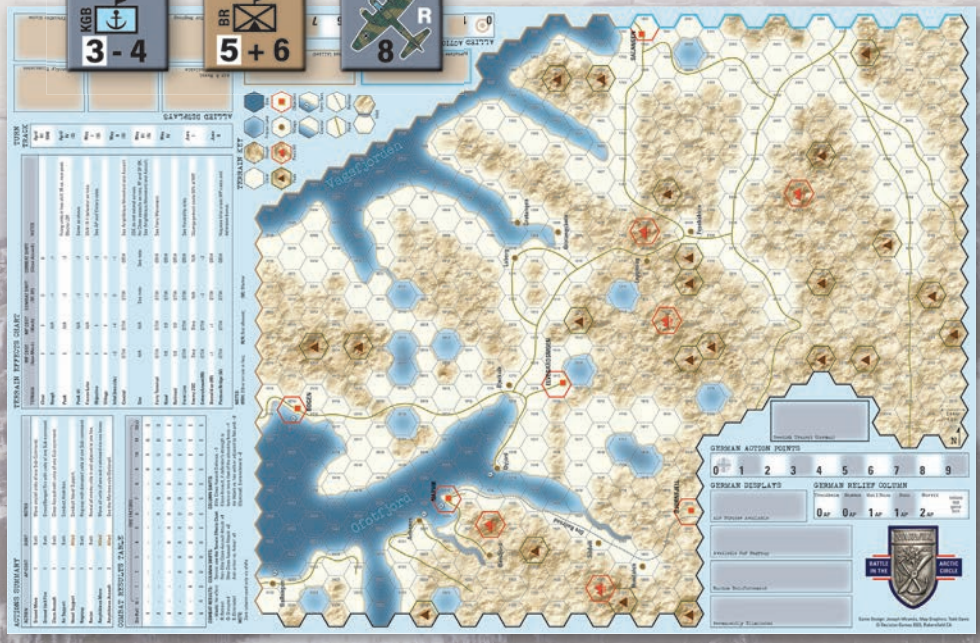
Overall, the Germans are fighting a delaying action while the Allies are trying to clear the map before the clock runs out. The game includes an index representing the German relief column marching up from the south. Various random events will bring the relief force closer to Narvik, and when it marches in the game comes to an end. If the Germans have held onto sufficient objectives, they win. Otherwise, the Allies can claim victory. It is a race against time in the battle for Narvik. USMC

WORLD at WAR #92



This wargame of low to intermediate complexity simulates the battles around Narvik, Norway in 1940. To control complexity and present an overall force commander's view of the battle, the game uses a tactically scaled map and units of maneuver coupled with an operationally scaled turn length. The Allied player is normally on the offensive, trying to clear the Germans from the Narvik area, but the German player has opportunities for counterattacks. The game starts in mid-April, after the Germans seized control of Narvik and just as the Allies have made their initial landings to begin their counteroffensive. **Narvik** models a battle fought in Arctic conditions with extremes of weather and long daylight hours. There was a chaotic command system on the Allied side and an overextended force on the German.

Players: 2 (Allied coalition vs. Germans)
Counter Level: Platoons–Battalions
Hex Scale: 1.5 miles (2.4 km)
Turn Scale: 1 week
Map: 22×34-inch
Counters: 176 ⅝ inch counters



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Inspector General Marine Corps Ethical Decision Game No. 2 (10-23)

Multiple "landmines"

by the Inspector General of the Marine Corps Staff

Scenario

You are just promoted to lieutenant colonel and assigned to a chief of staff billet under BGen Ford, a decorated general with years of combat experience, in a headquarters command. You are excited to work for a war hero and eager to impress him. You also believe that if you play your cards right this will not be your last promotion.

BGen Ford is less than excited about being back in the Pentagon working as a desk jockey. On deployment, BGen Ford was personally involved in the development and execution of a covert operation. Now BGen Ford is dealing with a mountain of paperwork while dealing with a deluge of inspector general (IG) complaints and request masts.

Morale is low in the command, and there are a lot of conflicts between junior and senior-level Marines. BGen Ford is fed up with these petty rivalries and will not allow a few bad apples to compromise the mission (or his promotion). On your first day on the job, BGen Ford pulls you aside and tells you to develop a plan to improve morale and to identify the troublemakers so they can be stopped.

To improve morale, you decide the command should host a 4th of July celebration. You invite the entire team to the event, including Marines, civilians, and contractors. It is also BGen Ford's birthday, so you ask everyone to contribute $35 ($20 for the cost of the event and $15 toward a gift for BGen Ford). To control costs, you assign some Marines to prepare meals and others to work as servers during the event.

Now that the party planning is nearly complete, you get down to your main task, finding the root cause of the command's morale issues. After talking with the staff, including the command inspector general (CIG), you discover that two young Marines, Sgt John and Sgt Doe, have filed a dozen IG complaints, none of which were substantiated. The sergeants have raised allegations against multiple officers in the command for what they perceive as unfair treatment. The officers on the other hand are tired of being questioned regarding petty slights and complain that these young Marines just need to grow thicker skin.

You review the complaints filed by Sgt John and Sgt Doe and the subsequent investigations into the alleged misconduct and conclude their complaints were in fact meritless.

Sgt Doe files another IG complaint with the CIG and names YOU as the subject. The CIG quickly contacts you and informs you that Sgt Doe is alleging that you improperly assigned him to work as a server during the upcoming 4th of July celebration. Sgt Doe lists Sgt John as one of his witnesses.

The last thing the command needs is another investigation, what do you do next?

Scenario Questions

1. Have you done anything wrong?

2. What about the CIG?

3. Do you approach Sgt Doe to try to resolve the matter informally rather than through the CIG? After all, you are both Marines, and these issues should be resolved face-to-face.

EDGs involve real-world leadership challenges that usually have a significant ethical or legal component. They are typical of challenges that have confronted Marines in the past and could easily be encountered in the future. Readers should analyze the problem carefully and decide what action they would take.

Answers to the EDG Questions Presented on Page 90

Potential Answers

1. Yes. Your office party plans could potentially violate multiple ethics rules.

- For example, asking subordinate employees to donate $15 toward BGen Ford's birthday gift violates 5 CFR § 2635.302, which states that generally an employee may not: (1) directly or indirectly, give a gift to or donate toward a gift for an official superior; or (2) solicit a contribution from another employee for a gift to either his own or the other employee's official superior.
- There are exceptions to this rule, including a gift exchange exception (applies only to gifts with an aggregate market value of $10 or less per occasion) and a special, infrequent occasion exception (e.g., marriage, illness, or the birth or adoption of a child, NOT birthdays), but these exceptions would not apply in this case (See 5 CFR § 2635.304).
- You also asked contractors to donate $30 toward the festivities, in violation of 5 CFR § 2635.202–2635.204, which prohibits employees from soliciting ANY gifts from contractors or accepting unsolicited gifts having an aggregate market value over $20.
- Further, by assigning subordinate Marines to serve as cooks or servers during the event, you also likely violated 5 CFR § 2635.705(b), which states that an employee shall not encourage, direct, coerce, or request a subordinate to use official time to perform activities other than those required in the performance of official duties.

2. The CIG violated his duty as an IG by failing to protect the identity of the complainant and of a witness in this case. *Marine Corps Order 5430.1A* states that the identity of complainants and witnesses will be protected to the extent possible under applicable laws and regulations. There is no apparent reason here for the CIG to tell you about any information regarding the complaint, especially when you are the subject of the complaint.

3. If you answered yes to question #3, you likely just bought yourself a substantiated restriction finding. Title 10 U.S.C. § 1034 prohibits anyone from restricting a member of the Armed Forces from making lawful communications to a member of Congress or an IG.

Always consult your local counsel when faced with a potential ethics question.

- Proving restriction requires establishing, by a preponderance of the evidence, that a responsible management official (RMO) prevented or attempted to prevent a member of the Armed Forces from making or preparing to make a lawful communication to a member of Congress or an IG.
- The determination is always case-specific and must take into consideration the totality of the circumstances in that case. Restriction can be substantiated even if the RMO's attempt at preventing a lawful communication failed to deter the member of the Armed Forces from subsequently contacting a member of Congress or an IG.
- When analyzing such a fact pattern, your focus should be on whether a reasonable person could believe the RMO's action was an attempt to deter the member from talking to a member of Congress or an IG.
- In this case, the lieutenant colonel's offer to handle the matter outside of IG channels could reasonably be perceived as an attempt to restrict the sergeant's communication with the CIG.

Final Thoughts

- Avoid ethical landmines—even well-intentioned actions may run afoul of the ethical midlines. Always consult your local counsel when faced with a potential ethics question.
- Respect the IG process, do not try to identify complainants or subjects, do not interfere with a Marine's access to an IG, and cooperate with all IG investigations.
- Do not prejudge a complaint based on the complainant. In the scenario detailed above, the complainant had filed numerous meritless complaints; however, his most recent complaint identified multiple incidents of misconduct. Even a broken clock is right twice a day.

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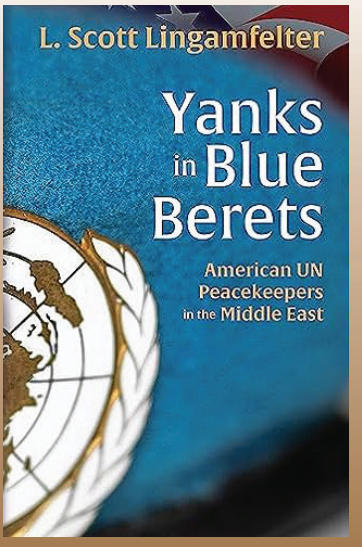
Comments are welcomed. Discussion will be posted on the Gazette LinkedIn group: https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/marine-corps-gazette.

Yanks in Blue Berets

reviewed by Col Len Supko (Ret)



YANKS IN BLUE BERETS: American UN Peacekeepers in the Middle East. By L. Scott Lingamfelter. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2023. ISBN: 978-0813197630, 320 pp.

I was one of many Marines who, since 1948, were assigned to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) as unarmed United Nations military observers (UNMO) stationed in the Middle East. As combat arms Marines, it was the last assignment we thought we would ever experience—unarmed combat.

It is an experience that all Marines should be aware of and learn from as we confront the possibility of future peacekeeping operations that may call upon our talents. Those lessons can be found in *Yanks in Blue Berets: American U.N. Peacekeepers in the Middle East* authored by retired Army colonel L. Scott Lingamfelter. The book, written under the auspices of the Association of the United States Army and published by the University Press of Kentucky, chronicles the stories and experiences of Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine officers who served in UNTSO—particularly in southern Lebanon from 1978 to 1982.

Lingamfelter, a 1973 graduate of the Virginia Military Institute who also served in UNTSO as a young Army captain and field artilleryman, aptly notes that southern Lebanon was "the wild west without a good saloon." Yet, American officers from all Services, many of whom were combat-experienced Marines, would sally forth each day to "prove the cynics wrong" as they did their best to promote and maintain peace in a war-torn country.

In full disclosure, I was one of those Marines, and this review is not to highlight my role but to point to the remarkable effort Lingamfelter undertook to tell the stories of many U.S. officers from all Services as they put their lives on the line for peace—and peace was not something we were trained to do. War fighting was. But it was the training, experiences, and wit that we had to instinctively rely upon as we engaged in the very unnatural role of peacekeepers that kept us alive.

The stories in *Yanks in Blue Berets* create a tapestry of experiences that all our Services should retain and recall as we go forward. To be sure, in the years following Somalia and 9/11, the United States has withdrawn from many peacekeeping operations. But should we reengage in such, *Yanks in Blue Berets* must be on our reading list. To miss the lessons Lingamfelter cites would be military malpractice. Frankly, every Marine should read this book, particularly those who might find themselves engaged in peacekeeping or combat operations in the Middle East.

In that regard, Lingamfelter walks the reader through not only his personal experiences, but those of us who served before, during, and after him in UNTSO. Lingamfelter also introduces his book to the reader logically, proceeding from the complexity of the conflict in the Middle East to the legacy of wars there and the culture of U.S. peacekeepers among almost 290 UNTSO officers from various nations. The reader not only is exposed to the texture and complexity of the conflict in the Middle East but also to the positive role of U.S. officers in leavening professionalism into

>Col Supko is a retired Artillery Officer who was lucky enough to command five companies/batteries, a battalion, a regiment, and was the Chief of Staff of 1st and 3rd MarDivs.

It is an experience that all Marines should be aware of and learn from as we confront the possibility of future peacekeeping operations ...

UNTSO's critical peacekeeping mission.

Drawing on his diaries, official U.N. documents, and the direct testimony of other UNMOs, Lingamfelter tells the story, indeed a Marine story, of the inherent dangers of peacekeeping in an environment of armed conflict, criminality, and distrust among contending sides in the Arab-Israeli legacy of conflict. In this environment, we dealt with the horror of war inflicted on innocent people and violence directed at UNMOs every day. From kidnappings to artillery bombardment, to small-arms fire, and even mock executions, UNMOs put their lives on the line every day in the hope to advance peace.

The lessons Lingamfelter cites, as he weaves a compelling narrative history of UNMO experiences, truly must be used by military leaders who deploy U.S. forces to war-ridden areas with the expectation that those troops will engage in peacekeeping operations. Moreover, for the Marine Corps, this is a vital and important chapter in our accomplishments, little known, not often referred to, but nonetheless revealing.

Yes, my role was addressed in this book, but so too were others. Collectively, Lingamfelter has highlighted why all our Services brought honor and dignity to what was a very dangerous undertaking. Read about it in *Yanks in Blue Berets* and take pride in those who were willing to engage in this effort. This is truly a must-read for all Marines.

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The lessons Lingamfelter cites ... must be used by military leaders who deploy U.S. forces ... with the expectation that those troops will engage in peacekeeping operations.

Yanks in Blue Berets

reviewed by Maj Skip Crawley, USMCR (Ret)

Yanks in Blue Berets, by L. Scott Lingamfelter, contains numerous lessons learned from the author's experience being a U.N. peacekeeper 40 years ago in Syria and Lebanon that apply to today's Marines. Lingamfelter was hand-picked to be a U.N. peacekeeper while wearing a "sky-blue beret," as the book's title suggests. It was quite a change from his previous military experience:

> In 1981, as a young Army captain trained in the arts of combat, I was assigned to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) as a military observer along with 35 other American military officers. We observed and supervised peace arrangements between Israel and its Arab neighbors in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria ... There, in a region steeped in history and conflict, I would discover that peace was a difficult thing to keep, particularly when the parties to the conflict were bitterly divided over unresolved issues of land, life, and world views. My colleagues from the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps and I found ourselves wedged between contenders and their respective combatant allies who were intent on fighting until one side emerged as the victor and the other as the vanquished. We had been sent to encourage peace in a place where, in some cases, none was desired. How did this peacekeeping mission come about?

Like the reality on the ground in the Middle East itself, the U.N. peacekeeping infrastructure resulted from a series of wars between the Israelis and the Arabs and their aftermath:

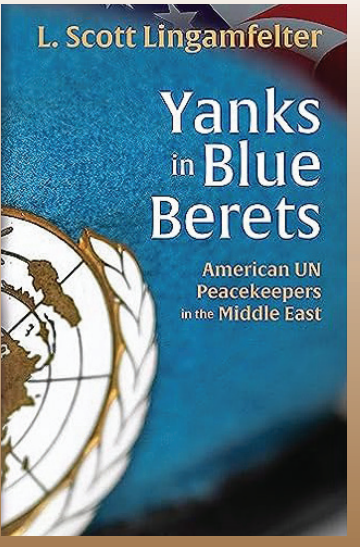
> UNTSO['s] ... birth followed the creation of the modern state of Israel in 1948 amid significant opposition to Jewish statehood by neighboring Arab nations.

After the initial conflict subsided in 1949, what followed was a series of conflicts that served as a continuum in the struggle over Israel's right to exist ... Arabs and Israelis would fight in major wars in 1956, 1967, and 1973, as well as during invasions of southern Lebanon in 1978 and 1982. After each of those wars, UNTSO would adapt its mission to support additional peacekeeping efforts, including support for UN armed peacekeeping organizations in the Sinai Desert of Egypt, the Golan Heights of Syria, and in southern Lebanon.

... UNTSO was established following the first Arab-Israeli War ...

In short, UNTSO was established following the first Arab-Israeli War and evolved due to the various wars, peace treaties, and other Middle Eastern dynamics until it was organized and managed as it was when CPT Lingamfelter arrived in 1981.

>Maj Crawley is a former Infantry Officer who served during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. He is currently the Central Region Network Coordinator for the Marine for Life Program.



YANKS IN BLUE BERETS: American UN Peacekeepers in the Middle East. By L. Scott Lingamfelter. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2023. ISBN: 978-0813197630, 320 pp.

Being an (Unarmed) U.N. Peacekeeper

Lingamfelter's first major adjustment to his new duties was that the "Blue Berets" were unarmed. The U.N. *did* have armed peacekeeping forces, but the members of UNTSO were not armed. As Lingamfelter notes:

> Beyond the danger of being unarmed in places where fighting was on-going, most of us had no earthly appreciation for what we would eventually face as peacekeepers. Nonetheless, we embraced the mission and soon would learn that it was one of the most challenging and dangerous things we would ever do aside from armed combat. Moreover, peacekeeping was fraught with frustration as we dealt with warring sides who thought the best way to attain peace was at the end of gun barrels, or with cannons, rocket launchers, land mines, demolition devices, or in the cockpits of combat aircraft.

If being unarmed was not enough, UNTSO peacekeepers were in observation and report mode, reporting violations to higher headquarters but unable to take positive action to fulfill the UNTSO charter to "supervise cease-fires and peace agreements." According to Lingamfelter:

> But most among us were fundamentally combat officers, infantrymen, tankers, field artillerymen, aviators, and sailors. Those skills—especially our survival ones—would be essential, as we encountered much danger. We were young and inexperienced at making peace. Indeed, we were more suited to compelling it with weapons of war. Those would not be the skills we would be called upon to exert. Our task would be to supervise while encouraging and promoting peace.

Another major adjustment was that while American officers (and others from traditional American allies such as Great Britain, Australia, etc.) were "hard-charging leaders," the UNTSO mindset was much more informal, with a normal duty day being five hours. There was definitely a clash of cultures:

> Our culture, as very capable military officers, was at odds with our need to be diplomatic and not overbearing toward our international colleagues. We were well-trained and competent hard-chargers used to a full day's work. That could become an impediment if we did not meter our attitudes and avoid being domineering in performing our duties. We had to take upon ourselves a diplomatic restraint in order to work effectively within UNTSO. Regardless of how disjointed, seemingly arcane, slow-paced, and resistant to change UNTSO was, we were compelled to work within that culture. Inside Government House we would learn that the UNTSO heartbeat thumped ever so slowly, yet resolutely. It was not interested in any heart surgery we might be capable of doing.

Connected to the above issue, some officers from other countries gave Americans the cold shoulder. Lingamfelter tells the story of MAJ Joseph A. Serviss manning his first observation post in southern Lebanon with three other U.N. military observers:

> Serviss's teammates gave him the unmistakable cold shoulder in the initial hours on the OP. He was flatly surprised that his three colleagues had virtually nothing to say to him, not a single word. It was as if they were giving him the silent treatment for some unarticulated offense. He found it curious, and after a full day of complete quiet, he asked them at dinner, "Hey fellows, what did I say to offend all of you? If I said something, I'm sorry. I simply want to contribute my share to this tour of duty. Let me know what I did so I won't do it again." After a short pause, one of the UNMOs declared that they all "despised" the U.S. contingent in UNTSO because they were "arrogant know-it-alls." Serviss quickly explained that he was not of that persuasion and just wanted to be part of the team. Serviss was wise. He was aware that there were some American UNMOs—mostly "hard chargers" with a high degree of self-confidence—who were inclined to be braggadocious or demanding.

But having said all of the above, Lingamfelter makes the interesting observation that the American presence in UNTSO was overall seen as beneficial because it signaled U.S. commitment to the UNTSO mission and the obvious competence demonstrated by U.S. military officers in "planning and executing military operations" was valued by the senior UNTSO leadership—so much so that the United States "permanently held ... the chief operations officer's position in UNTSO."

Lastly, Lingamfelter learned that despite the reality on the ground, Israelis and Arabs had a tendency to find "a way forward when there was a mutually advantageous economic benefit, especially one appropriately disguised." In Lingamfelter's favorite Damascus restaurant, the beer "was actually brewed by an Israeli company, relabeled with an Arab name, exported to Lebanon, then reexported to Damascus." The profit motive sometimes triumphed over the political realities on the ground!

Lessons Learned That Are Applicable Today

Any potential reader of *Yanks in Blue Berets* might question the book's relevance since it is highly unlikely any Marine officers will be assigned this sort of duty given, as Lingamfelter explains, "the waning support for U.S. participation in peacekeeping" following the Battle of Mogadishu. The answer: being an unarmed U.N. peacekeeper is a lot like conducting counterinsurgency operations/irregular warfare. Much of the time your primary weapon is persuasion, not coercion. Some people will approve of you; some will not. But more importantly, you need to know and understand the people and cultural realities on the ground to conduct effective counterinsurgency operations/irregular warfare.

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