



# MARINE CORPS Gazette

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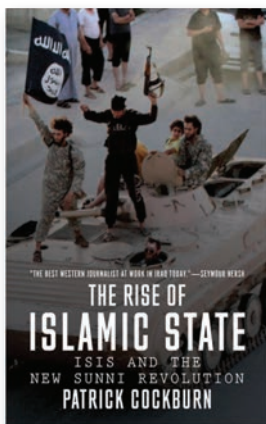




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(Photo by PFC Ulises Salgado.)

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# 2022 LtCol Earl "Pete" Ellis Essay Contest



The Ellis Contest Awards are made possible through the support of Google.

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



Loitering munitions, semi-autonomous drones, and cyberspace operations are changing the character of war in the 21st century. How does this change drive a new approach to combined arms and how can the MAGTF retain a competitive advantage in the future operating environment?

Contest runs 1 July to 31 October

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Contest is open to all Marines and Friends of the Corps.  
Participants associated with the *Gazette* editorial advisory panel may not compete.





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JULY 2022

**Editorial: Trending Topics**

This month, we present articles on a range of current “trending topics.” In addition to the articles featured on our cover, I draw your attention to the following standouts. On page 14, “Information-Age Talent Management” by Maj Tyler C. Quinn looks at modernizing the manpower management system. In “Confessions of a Cold War Warrior” by Col Paul A. Hand on page 22, the author reflects on innovations and changes in force design through the lens of his decades of service during the last prolonged period of great-power competition. Capt Will McGee examines the synergy achieved by integrating Marine and Navy intelligence capabilities in a maritime campaign in his article “In the Same Boat” on page 27. Other highlights in our ongoing study of maneuver warfare include an example of practicing our warfighting doctrine at the tactical level against a Soviet-era armored/mechanized force in “Bozhee Dopomozhee. Here They Come!” by Mr. Brendan B. McBreen on page 49. We also present the first two articles in a three-part series examining emergent changes in the character of war and close combat driven by the strategic threat’s employment of new technology and tactics titled “Reconnaissance-Strike Tactics and Maneuver Warfare” by Maj B.A. Friedman beginning on page 54

Finally, regular readers will notice the absence of a monthly installment of the “Maneuverist Papers” by “Marinus.” In my May editorial, I referred to the ongoing public criticism of *Force Design 2030* led by a group of retired general officers. “Maneuverist #19” became a lightning rod in what has devolved into a zero-sum argument. The original purpose of the “Maneuverist Papers” was to share insights and generate renewed scholarship and discussion of the philosophy of warfighting as expressed in the Corps’ capstone doctrine *FMFM 1* and *MCDP 1*. Therefore, the group of authors writing under the pseudonym “Marinus” will take a brief hiatus and return to the pages of the *Gazette* in the coming months with articles analyzing Russia’s invasion of Ukraine through the lens of maneuver warfare as well as further discourse on the origins and future of the Corps’ warfighting doctrine. Regarding professional dialogue on *Force Design 2030*, I encourage all *Gazette* readers and members of the MCA to stay abreast of the argument, think critically, and focus their creative problem-solving on proposing solutions to the challenges facing Marines employing the EABO and Stand-in Forces concepts in the future operating environment. Recommendations about access/entry, tactical mobility, sustainment, casualty care and medical logistics, emissions control and signature management, and winning the reconnaissance/counter-reconnaissance and targeting fights will be welcome additions to improve the operational model.

Christopher Woodbridge

# »»»» SPECIAL NOTICE



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# With the Young Breed

Insights gained through unlikely sources

by CWO2 Robert S. Jevning

**A**s a prior gunnery sergeant, I, like many other staff non-commissioned officers, had multiple encounters with some of the newest members of our officer corps—second lieutenants. As such, I have had my preconceived (and often misguided) opinions regarding their value as Marine officers and their worthiness of the institution’s respect. Upon selection for an appointment to warrant officer, I was set upon an unconventional path that both opened my eyes and changed my perspective on these young, dedicated Marines.

The process of becoming an officer serving in the FMF is often veiled in mystery by the enlisted ranks. My route to becoming a Marine officer, while enduring the often-misunderstood challenges associated with the training regimen, was unconventional to say the least, but life has a way of thrusting unforeseen circumstances upon you. This is especially true when establishing

*>CWO2 Jevning is an Ammunition Officer currently serving as the Officer in Charge of Marine Corps Liaison Office Charleston in support of the Maritime Prepositioning Force. He was previously assigned to Ammunition Company, 2d Supply Battalion aboard Camp Lejeune serving in numerous billets and has multiple deployments in support of Operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and East Africa.*

a career in the Marine Corps; however, as professionals, we thrive in chaos, accepting the situation for what it is and adapting to the requirements forced upon us. This was a highly unusual case in 2018 when a group of nineteen warrant officers—along with more than two hundred second lieutenants—reported to Marine Corps Base Quantico to attend The Basic School (TBS), Basic Officer Course (BOC) as part of Delta Company. For those unfamiliar with TBS, it is a rite of passage that is required of all Marine Corps officers, and it is responsible to:

Train and educate newly commissioned or appointed officers in the high

standards of professional knowledge, esprit-de-corps, and leadership to prepare them for duty as company grade officers in the operating forces, with particular emphasis on the duties, responsibilities and warfighting skills required of a rifle platoon commander.<sup>1</sup>

Warrant officers are no exception: they are required to complete TBS but normally attend an abbreviated course curriculum as part of the Warrant Officer Basic Course (WOBC). Because of their enlisted years and operational experience, many of the field exercises and training events required of lieutenants are simply omitted from the WOBC curriculum. In total, WOBC, normally assigned to India Company, is scheduled for eighteen weeks of training; BOC requires more than six months of training.<sup>2</sup> Never in recent history has a mixed company, comprising both warrant officers and lieutenants, attended the same training as an integrated company. Within this mixture would be friction and comradery with success and failure, but at the end of the training cycle, TBS would accomplish what it set out to do—mold Marine officers capable of leading America’s finest in future operations along with providing some unexpected lessons.

With the publication of *MARAD-MIN 695/17*, BOC 4-18 received nineteen unusual students, myself included.<sup>3</sup> We, the saltier (and much older) warrant



**WO Jevning, 2ndLt Chris Maginnis, and 2ndLt Brandon Whelan celebrate the completion of a hike through Camp Barrett. (Photo by 1stLt Nicholas Royer.)**





**WO Jevning recovers following an intense combat condition event. (Photo by 1stLt Nicholas Royer.)**

officers, were set to attend the entire course of training with greener (and much younger) lieutenants, many of whom were more than a dozen years younger than ourselves. This composite company was obviously met with many mixed feelings and emotions, with most of the lieutenants not understanding how to interact with us and many of the warrant officers feeling like they were once again babysitting junior Marines who did not even know how to properly clean their weapon or wear their service uniforms. From May to November 2018, both unique groups would learn to live, thrive, and grow together. Many lessons were learned, normally for the benefit of the newly minted lieutenants but often for the warrant officers as well. Yes, these old dogs could in fact be taught new tricks, and I can personally attest that the impact these young Marine officers left on me has stayed with me to this day. While the prospect of attending TBS for more than six months was a concept horrible enough to make any warrant officer sick to their stomach, the truth is, looking back I would not have had it any other way.

To truly understand the complicated dynamic that Delta Company had found itself in, you must first understand the warrant officer's mindset. Warrant officers are technical experts in their respective fields.<sup>4</sup> They pride themselves on being the smartest person in the room, being able to solve the most

complex challenges, and providing the commander with unique resolutions to difficult circumstances. This pride is not without merit; most warrant officers have more than ten years of service in the Marine Corps prior to their appointment, with many having achieved the rank of staff sergeant or gunnery sergeant. The Red Bar Community has proven over the decades that their technical acumen mixed with real-world experience is a tool that can make the difference between failure and success.

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***You are never too good for the basics. The idea that you have arrived and mastered all there is to be a Marine is ridiculous, at any rank or billet.***

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Now, contrast this with the 22-year-old lieutenants, who have never fired a weapon, still wear web belts, do not understand the basic Marine jargon, and encompass a general state of confusion or panic at any moment they are confronted with adversity.

It is easy to see how Red Bar pride can quickly transition to arrogance and complacency. Painfully obvious during the initial phases of training were the dangers associated with the *I have arrived* mentality. As part of Delta Company, we were attending the entire BOC curriculum, meaning we were starting from the basics alongside the lieuten-

ants. To many, the training seemed trivial and redundant as they trained on concepts long ago mastered: the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program, weapons handling skills, and basic land navigation. Very quickly, many of the warrant officers began deciding what was and what was not important enough for their attention. Some took shortcuts or believed that going through the motions was beneath them—the results were telling. Many of the young lieutenants, with some who had never held a weapon before in their lives, began to outperform the warrant officers on the range. Basic tasks that were previously thought unworthy of their full attention, started highlighting some of the warrant officers' ineptitude. I can still recall watching as it took three seasoned warrant officers to help a peer put on a gas mask while the rest of the lieutenants stood by and watched. You did not have to be a mind reader to predict the thoughts that were likely going through the young lieutenants' heads.

This scene led to my first observation. *You are never too good for the basics.* The idea that you have arrived and mastered all there is to be a Marine is ridiculous, at any rank or billet. Even seasoned leaders need to review the basics at times,

especially for tasks not normally associated with your day-to-day specialty. The lack of humility that some of my peers displayed, unfortunately, identified a problem within the warrant officer ranks. It is one thing to exude pride for what you have accomplished, but do not get that pride confused with arrogance, or you and your Marines will likely suffer for it. At times, you must actively step out of the expert mentality and once again embrace being a student.

A lieutenant is unique. If I had to summarize in one word how to characterize their nature, it would be *eager*. The vast majority arrive straight from

college striving to soak up as much knowledge as possible. To the outsider, this can almost come off as childlike as they ask countless questions which have seemingly obvious answers and require constant validation as they attempt to comprehend the course material. I am not proud to admit that I found myself exceedingly frustrated with them at times, especially during the early months of training. But as time progressed and the course material grew more complicated, I realized these lieutenants had the right mental approach. Most were willing to swallow their pride and ask as many clarifying questions as necessary to gain comfort with the subject matter, regardless of what others in the room thought of them. This is not always the case in the FMF as often our harshest critics are the Marines sitting to the left and right of us. The constant competition to be the best can create roadblocks to learning, but I was witnessing an environment in which this did not seem to be the case. As such, I grew more confident in asking questions and quickly realized I had not mastered as much as I had previously thought. This led me to the realization that to grow as a competent Marine, *you must be smart enough to know what you do not know and be willing to admit it.* We are often our own worst enemies. We have cultivated an environment of success under any circumstance but at the same time have created a by-product that turns its nose down at those who might need additional guidance. Often, the highly competitive nature of Marines has created circumstances in which only closely guarded relationships exist. This atmosphere is not conducive to the critical training and education aspect of serving as a leader of Marines. Seeing these collegiate students operate naturally in a training environment was refreshing. I can only hope their mindset is not altered by their future experiences in the FMF.

As the curriculum progressed, we endured many field training exercises designed to challenge our leadership and tactical thought processes while pushing our mental and physical stamina to its limits. Many, if not most, of the challenges were stacked against the stu-

dents to test their abilities under highly adverse conditions and circumstances, with each student being assigned specific roles and responsibilities. During these periods, I initially perceived correcting the lieutenants' way of thinking as my responsibility and altering their plans while showing them the best way to complete a task. I did not realize how flawed this approach can be in a training environment. Each time I pushed a lieutenant to alter his course of action was a learning opportunity that I robbed from them. Issuing directives without allowing for critical thinking completely negates the point of the training event. As training progressed, I found that failure was often a better teacher than success, providing more profound insight. I began to back off and was surprised by the results. As the Marines (myself included) became more proficient with the course material, they began to experiment and

in a training environment. Under these circumstances, your Marine's failures are not necessarily a reflection of your leadership, but an example of their potential growth and the development of their thought processes.

This is not to say that a leader's experience and knowledge are useless. I am confident that given the right leadership, the Marine Corps can solve nearly any problem put in front of them. This is a result of our institution's ability to identify those ready for additional roles and responsibilities and place them in impactful positions. We do this to ensure the next generation is prepared for future battlefields by providing insight from past challenges. Often during the training exercises, many situations presented themselves that only one or two people in the room had any expertise in managing. For instance, when learning how to call for fire, we had the unique opportunity to pull from the knowledge



**WO Jevning, 2ndLt Brandon Whelan, and 2ndLt Tyler Hubbs discuss defensive tactics in preparation for FEX II. (Photo by 1stLt Nicholas Royer.)**

take some risks. Often these risks failed, but many times they proved to be the key to success. This experience led me to another tenet that I have added to my leadership philosophy: *allow your Marines (and yourself) to fail.* Failure is an excellent teacher. It can leave us with impactful lessons and provide us insight into future operations. While we cannot tolerate this mentality when forward deployed, it is often critical we maintain this mindset while operating

of one of the warrant officers serving as a target acquisitions officer. This resource was not normally available to lieutenants when completing the BOC and learning complex fire plans but was a resource accessible to this mixed cohort and one that was routinely relied upon. I watched firsthand as that technical expert was able to convey information to the students in a less formal method than that of the instructors while simultaneously providing real-world opera-



# THE MARINE CORPS ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION'S COMMANDERS' FORUMS



"The conversations had during the PME forced me to think in different ways that I normally wouldn't in regards to signature management. I was able to come back from the PME and bring the discussion up to my Marines, which forced them to think differently during a very productive (almost heated) debate between some of my team leaders. I am grateful for the Marine Corps Association's support to the 22nd MEU's PME opportunity."

— 1stLt Thomas Mitchell (SIGINT officer)

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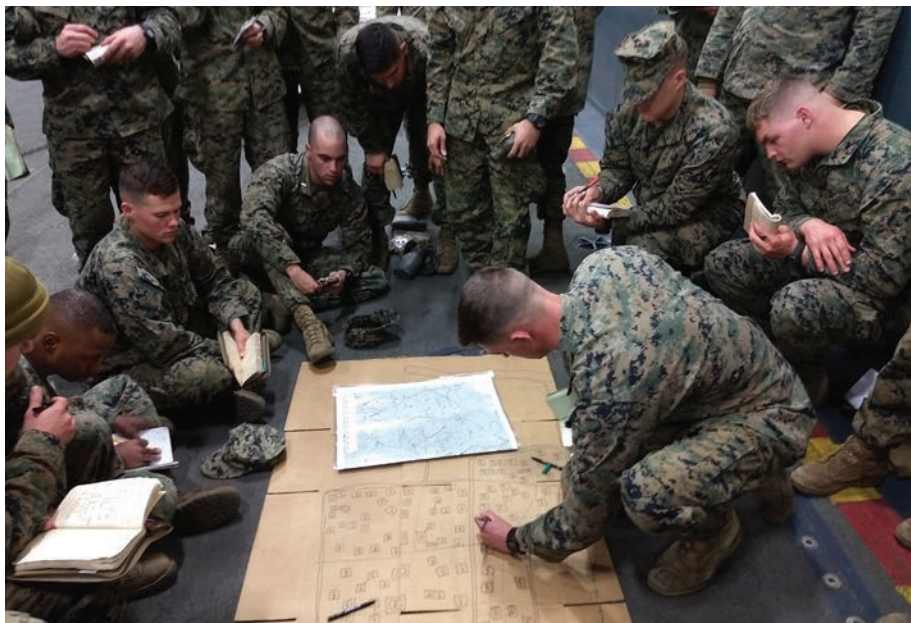
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tional insight into the methodology of indirect fire support. The result was a highly effective and well-trained group of young leaders who had an informal resource to whom they could ask questions without fear of appearing inept to their instructors or fellow students. This scenario highlights a paramount tenet of basic leadership. *Do not hoard knowledge for yourself; seek to improve those you lead.* As technical experts, being the resident specialist can be a rewarding feeling. To be the go-to guy validates your experiences and commitment to your craft, but it can be tempting to keep information to yourself in an attempt to remain the only go-to guy. This temptation must be fought at every level. From general officers to senior lance corporals, we all have experiences and knowledge that can aid in developing those coming up behind us. Failing to disseminate this information as widely as possible is a disservice to the Marines we lead and the Marine Corps as a whole. Leaders should not gauge their success by their personal ability to master a skill, but by the degree to which those they influence have been improved.

Ironically, the most profound lesson I learned while a member of Delta Company revolved around what attributes and actions define a professional



**WOs and 2ndLts of Delta Co, 6th Plt aboard USS George H.W. Bush prepare for insertion during WAR-FEX. (Photo by 1stLt Nicholas Royer.)**

either through a Marine Corps Recruit Depot, an Officer Candidate School, or both. Lack of experience and judgment skills are attributes that can be improved upon with time and opportunity. Understanding this, I tried not to view the lieutenants as incompetent, simply raw, and in dire need of cultivation. Astonishingly, they seemed to view themselves the same way as I had. As a prior schoolhouse instructor, I know the

about them has fundamentally changed my perspective on professionalism. Simply put, *a profession is not what we do, but who we are.* You must consider the fact that several, if not most, of these young officers had spent years working towards the goal of becoming a Marine, through whichever commissioning program they entered the Marine Corps. Many have a long lineage of service and always knew this was their path, some were members of the Platoon Leaders Course at college or the Reserve Officer Training Corps, while others were prior enlisted. Nearly none of them had simply graduated college, woke up, and then decided to join the Marine Corps. In fact, most had been working towards that goal for years. This created a level of commitment seldom found within the junior enlisted ranks. When not enduring a field exercise or immersed in classroom lectures, often you would find these young leaders honing their physical fitness, studying maneuver warfare, researching potential military occupational specialties, and discussing Marine Corps philosophy or current events. Meanwhile, many of the older warrant officers, myself included at times, were enjoying the comforts of garrison, relaxing, or executing liberty. The lieutenants' commitment and drive to becoming Marines directly resulted

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***Leaders should not gauge their success by their personal ability to master a skill, but by the degree to which those they influence have been improved.***

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and the level of dedication it takes to achieve that coveted status. Generally, lieutenants do not get much respect in the fleet, often serving as the punchline to any number of jokes. The jeering they receive may simply be a result of their inexperience and unconventional ways of thinking. At this point, the institution often has not had enough time to completely forge them into what we, the seasoned leaders, view as competent Marine Corps officers. I do not hold this inexperience against them; at some point, we all entered Service

struggles of motivating initial ascension Marines and often developing personal buy-in is the most significant hurdle. No such struggle existed among these future leaders. They were self-motivated and truly dedicated to mastering the skills they were learning, appearing to comprehend the seriousness of their responsibilities that they were inheriting. I was curious as to why these young men and women were so self-starting compared to junior enlisted Marines, so I sat down and had a conversation with a few. What I learned from them and



in many of them outperforming their seasoned counterparts in several training events. In truth, I was astounded by the amount of effort they put into improving their status as Marine Corps officers. They were Marines in all facets of their lives, living up to the ideal that a professional cannot turn off who they are. Being Marines is not something they do; it is something they live and something that I will never forget.

In an organization like the Marine Corps that highly covets operational experience, it would appear on the surface that the older, more seasoned warrant officers had more to offer the students of Delta Company; however, in my experience, it was about even. The lessons learned, insights gained, and friendships established have created memories that I will not soon forget. More importantly, these experiences established within me a respect for young lieutenants that I did

not previously possess. Having lived, learned, and thrived under these highly unique circumstances, I have developed a significant respect for the younger leaders of the Corps and know they will help us all accomplish whatever challenges we may encounter in the future. My time spent with them has made me a better Marine officer, made me more prepared for what lies ahead, and provided many leadership insights from the most unlikely sources.

3. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MARADMIN 695/17 FY18 Warrant Officer Basic Course (WOBC) Deferments to Basic Officer Course (BOC) 4-18*, (Washington, DC: December 2017).

4. Headquarters Marine Corps, *Ranks: A Complete Break Down of all Enlisted, Warrant Officer and Officer Ranks and Their Associated Grades*, (Washington, DC: 2021).



### Notes

1. Mission Statement for The Basic School.
2. Staff, *The Basic School (TBS) Master Projection Plan (MPP) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018*, (Quantico, VA: February 2017).

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# A Damn Good Marine

The conversation to consider eliminating sanctuary

by GySgt Raul Rojas

For those that may have seen the movie *Windtalkers*, you may be familiar with the title of this article. It contains an expletive, but I think the message remains the same: once a Marine reaches a certain time in service, no matter what they do, they are given clemency because they are a “damn good Marine,” and we take care of our own. One constant argument I hear about the Marine Corps is how impossible it is to fight the culture. I have heard, been a part of, and observed many folks from different ranks (officer and enlisted) talk about how the culture needs to change. My time as an Equal Opportunity Advisor in the Corps has taught me one thing: the culture protects the culture. Most would ask, “What does that mean?” Once a service member reaches eighteen years of service, they are considered in the “sanctuary” part of their career and are protected from being involuntarily discharged. They are allowed to reach their twenty years of service to attain their retirement eligibility time—un-

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am not outing anything that is not already public information—just look up their names and you will see what they have done. Yet, each of them is receiving their retirement benefits. Granted, sanctuary is not the only reason senior leaders act as if the rules do not apply to them, but I can safely presume it played a role in their decision to move forward with their misconduct.

The Marine Corps prides itself on honor, courage, and commitment; at times, it seems as though it does not recognize those values in the face of those who are allowed to retire when misconduct is substantiated. Of course, there are many more Marines who do the right thing, but they are often cast to the side of the ones who have a shad-

the many circumstances of misconduct within the ranks during my time as an equal opportunity advisor and many of the overt behaviors were from those that were past eighteen years of service. You have the occasional one with less than eighteen years who also does it, but they are not as overt as their seniors. They usually try (although not always) to be more subtle with their advances.

Now that the retirement system has changed to the Blended Retirement System, it is time to visit the antiquated rule of sanctuary. When the punishment for misconduct is being “forced retired,” does it really count as a punishment or are you simply parting with a silver parachute, not a golden one? Sigmund Freud wrote in one of his publications about the subconscious: “The subconscious mind drives the conscious body.” I can even discuss how the promotion system uses this same behavior to continue the culture that exists, even if it is indirectly. When a promotion board does not select the best qualified because they did not check a box that each board member did, that is the subconscious driving the conscious body. That box was not a requirement; however, that best-qualified person was not picked because if he was, then those board members would be solidifying that they have wasted their time in taking that professional military education course that got someone who did not complete it promoted. It is a culture issue that uses these processes as shields to pick those that harbor similar behavioral traits. You need another ex-

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***Once a service member reaches eighteen years of service, they are considered in the “sanctuary” part of their career and are protected from being involuntarily discharged.***

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less they do something malicious to get punitively discharged. Even then, they can still retain their retirement benefits. Therein lies the conundrum of what this rule under *Title 10* does. It is because of this rule that Marines like Col Daniel Wilson, Col T. Shane Tomko, SgtMaj Darryl Cherry, and SgtMaj Kenneth Lovell all enter into the conversation. I

ow my history. They are often walking around their units with the halo effect on them—a cognitive bias that occurs when an initial positive judgment about a person unconsciously colors the perception of the individual as a whole. In other words, *this Marine has done (insert preferred accomplishment here), there is no way they did that!* I looked at



ample of this behavioral trait, just read Capt Justin Rose's article from the *New York Times*: "I Was Sexually Assaulted by Another Marine. The Corps Didn't Believe Me."

Retirement should be for those that maintain honorable service throughout their entire career, not just the first eighteen years of their active time. This can be a controversial conversation because the victim-system focus of those who are accustomed to pointing fingers elsewhere will come up with a variety of reasons why it should not change. As I have said many times before, tradition is the biggest impediment to evolution. I consider myself a catalyst for change because that is how my first staff non-commissioned officers taught me to see things. Take care of the Marines, and the Marine Corps will take care of you. I have carried those words with me throughout my time in the Service. Changes I have proposed seldom benefit me or those in my peer group. Rather, they benefit the ones who were coming up behind me because inevitably I (and my peers) will leave the Service. It is our responsibility to ensure we leave an environment that is more productive and less toxic than the ones we were left with. Removing the sanctuary clause of *Title 10* would help in this cause.

Sanctuary is the shield that the culture uses to continue preserving those that project similar behavioral traits, which ensures that the process continues as long and as much as possible. Now, this does not mean it is all bad, but when you are trying to pinpoint an element in an organization that is contributing to—or in this case creating—a toxic culture, then you have to take away its shield so that you can penetrate the core of the proactive process. While it may not be the only thing needed to tackle the cultural struggle, it is certainly one element that can help in ensuring honorable, courageous, and committed men and women continue to serve in their respective branch. There are many more individuals than the four examples I provided, and they all have one thing in common. They are in positions to discharge disciplinary and promotion actions. Knowing that you cannot lose your benefits certainly, I suspect, plays

a role in creating the toxic leaders that roam through the Services. When you have articles that your Service leads in hazing cases, then I think it is time to take a hard look at what keeps those that embody this misbehavior. The leadership is what creates and harbors these activities, not the junior service member that is learning how things work.

Inevitably, I will get that *this generation is soft* or the *back in my day* line from those that disagree with any type of change. I do not expect everyone to understand what must happen for evolution to take place. This generation is not soft; rather, they are committed and want to contribute as service members just like anyone else. We owe them a culture that empowers their talents and good values, so they can elevate the Services to another level of performance. Removing the sanctuary clause from *Title 10* can help in ensuring that those who have served honorably remain long enough to not only develop their

replacements correctly but earn and receive their well-deserved retirement. The key part of this process is having an independent body make those decisions when the time comes to review whether retirement is warranted when misconduct occurs as a senior leader. A culture is hard to detect, even if there are tangible points made, but I also argue that a culture can be tackled by focusing on the driving mechanisms that allow that culture to thrive. There are many initiatives already taking place that seem to be going in the right direction. Going away from the sanctuary clause will help strengthen some of those initiatives so that the best and brightest in fact do get retained and retired, not the subjective and biased ones.



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# Information-Age Talent Management

Some opportunities to jumpstart change

by Maj Tyler C. Quinn

Regardless of the place in history or the technologies employed, the “human dimension is central in war.”<sup>1</sup> The 2018 *National Defense Strategy (NDS)* recognizes this fact and establishes clear objectives with supporting lines of effort.<sup>2</sup> The Marine Corps has begun several efforts and the *38th Commandant’s Planning Guidance (CPG)*, supplemented by *Force Design 2030*, aggressively marks several organizational and technological objectives. However, the *CPG* plants the flag firmly by stating, “Everything starts and ends with the individual Marine.”<sup>3</sup> Therein lies the problem: as the Marine Corps rapidly changes its structure, develops innovative concepts, and acquires advanced equipment and munitions, the personnel system is still based on an Industrial-Age model. The current personnel system assumes a linear approach and focuses on a standard career track resulting in opportunity costs. The Marine Corps can best implement the strategic guidance in the *NDS* by applying an Information-Age talent management system to recruitment, training and education, and assignments.<sup>4</sup>

The Marine Corps must find potential applicants with both the physical grit and mental dexterity necessary to win in complex and uncertain environments. It should pursue individuals with skills and aptitudes critical to operating in dynamic operations where tactical means and ways often result more directly in strategic impacts. The current Industrial-Age model seeks individuals with skills and attempts to align those with a particular specialty. Instead, the Marine Corps needs to investigate the model proposed by investigative report-

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***This is not to say that the Marine Corps does not need specialists ... we need to be more purposeful about finding generalists ...***

er David Epstein. In his recent book, *Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World*, Epstein posits that we need “more people who start broad and embrace diverse experiences and perspectives while they progress.”<sup>5</sup> This is not to say that the Marine Corps does not need specialists; rather, we need to be more purposeful about finding generalists—people with broad experiences who are more agile in an increas-



***The Marine Corps requires individuals with the mental dexterity, physical toughness, and—above all—the skills critical to operating in complex, dynamic, and uncertain environments. (Photo by Cpl Thomas Mudd.)***



ingly complex world. This concept will achieve two of the key lines of effort identified in the NDS, increasing lethality and agility as well as achieving greater performance and affordability.<sup>6</sup> By changing the way it recruits, the Marine Corps will develop a greater pool of talent to mature through more innovative training and education.

The Marine Corps' recent publication of *MCDP 7, Learning*, demonstrates a recognition of the need to adapt toward an Information-Age model through focusing on the learner.<sup>7</sup> Marines need to have a broader scope of common abilities (e.g. marksmanship, vehicle operator, etc.). By generalizing

organization needs to encourage informal societies, put the controversial problems into their hands, and resource them to conduct research and experimentation. An example of leveraging grassroots initiatives is the Marine Maker program, which uses crowdsourcing to design and refine schematics for three-dimensional printing parts. These plans are then approved by Headquarters Marine Corps Systems Command, and units are then authorized to print replacement parts on station versus waiting on a slow supply chain. Marine Maker is a very practical example, but it serves as a success story for flattening the organization to achieve tempo and connect end-user

is highly complex, and the suggestions made here are cursory at best. Time and resources need to be leveraged, and quickly, to move the Marine Corps into the Information-Age and implement the NDS with the best and most fully qualified individuals possible.

The NDS adroitly points out, "The creativity and talent of the American warfighter is our greatest enduring strength, and one we do not take for granted."<sup>12</sup> Humans invent and employ the tools or design and deploy the teams. We have been in the Information Age for nearly four decades, but the Marine Corps personnel systems remain in the Industrial-Age. The greatest way the Marine Corps can contribute to achieving competitive advantage, and implementing the NDS is through aggressively adjusting recruitment, training and education, and assignments to an Information-Age model.

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## ***The Marine Corps could achieve greater lethality and agility by moving to a training model more similar to special operations forces.***

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more broadly, they can fulfill multiple roles and adapt to a rapidly changing and complex environment. The *CPG* recognizes, "We must be equal or better than this threat by pushing combined arms to the squad."<sup>8</sup> The Army special operations forces provide a good example of this model. Their teams are comprised of highly trained individuals, and each one fulfills more than one key billet on a team. The Marine Corps could achieve greater lethality and agility by moving to a training model more similar to special operations forces. In practice, this would be lengthening entry-level training and localizing some training and qualifications. The future operating environment and NDS objectives require a more versatile individual to be able to operate in much smaller teams with greater roles and responsibilities than the U.S. military has been accustomed to. Education is the other side of the same coin and supplements training by ensuring Marines know how to think. The Marine Corps should seek to "deliver performance at the speed of relevance" by encouraging and resourcing informal innovation groups through the Marine Corps University.<sup>9</sup> The or-

solutions more directly with higher authorities. The final element to implementing the strategic guidance in the NDS is how the Marine Corps assigns individuals.

The current Industrial-Age model is highly centralized and results in too much opportunity cost. The Marine Corps can leapfrog the Army as they refine the Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army. The commander and the unit require more influence in the assignment process to achieve greater lethality, performance, and affordability.<sup>10</sup> Using civilian hiring models, like *ZipRecruiter*, the Marine Corps can allow units to conduct a cursory screening process of available candidates who submit their resumes to a central database with oversight from Headquarters Marine Corps Manpower Branch. The *CPG* discusses using financial incentives, but that is not the only, nor the main motivator for individuals.<sup>11</sup> The main goal should be to recognize skills, place people in an area to contribute, and not try to force a parochial vision of growth and development that often leads to high rates of turnover and burn-out. The issue of talent management

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### Notes

1. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCDP 1, Warfighting*, (Washington, DC: 1997).
2. Department of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy*, (Washington, DC: October 2018).
3. Gen David H. Berger, *38th Commandant's Planning Guidance*, (Washington, DC: July 2018).
4. *Summary of National Defense Strategy*.
5. David J. Epstein, *Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World*, (New York, NY: Riverhead Books, 2019).
6. *Summary of National Defense Strategy*.
7. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCDP 7, Learning*, (Washington, DC: 2020).
8. *38th Commandant's Planning Guidance*.
9. *Summary of National Defense Strategy*.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Summary of National Defense Strategy*.



# Making Good Marine Officers

Leadership reflections from a Marine officer instructor

by Maj Kyle McCarley

What makes a good Marine officer? I spent a lot of time thinking about this question while serving as a Marine officer instructor (MOI) at a Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) unit. For three years, I had the privilege of leading midshipmen and Marine Corps Enlisted Commissioning Education Program Marines through a challenging curriculum that would earn them a commission as a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps. After spending seven years as a company grade officer prior to assuming this position, I felt that there was a lot of good I could do by sharing a variety of leadership experiences and modeling a set of behaviors expected of Marine officers. Having earned my commission through the NROTC program in 2009, I knew some of the key expectations for the billet but struggled during my first year to visualize and implement a clear direction for the mentorship that I wanted to provide. I quickly realized that influencing college students was a lot different than influencing fleet Marines, something I had grown accustomed to as a platoon and company commander. If I was to be successful at making good Marine officers, I would need to look at leadership from a different perspective.

Each NROTC unit operates differently, but a primary responsibility of the MOI is to prepare Midshipmen for Officer Candidate School (OCS). Despite OCS being a critical step in the commissioning process, this training should not be an MOI's primary focus. A good officer candidate does not always become a good Marine officer.

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*The University of Arizona NROTC Unit's Marine Platoon. (Photo by MSgt Josiah Moreno.)*

A midshipman will only be an officer candidate for six weeks but a Marine officer for 4 to 40 years. Thus, should the focus not be teaching Marine Corps officership fundamentals? Knowing the type of training that our students would receive at The Basic School (TBS), I conducted an analysis of the values, attitudes, and behaviors that I wanted our students to possess upon graduation. I wanted their experience to reinforce the leadership fundamentals required for success at TBS but without placing

the sole emphasis on OCS training standards. These considerations shaped the leadership principles that I prioritized while preparing the next generation of Marine officers.

## Be Authentic

A leadership lesson that every Marine learns early in their career is the importance of setting the example. It is one of the leadership principles taught in our institution's entry-level training pipeline, but Marines old and new can



all remember the first time this principle rang true from an actual experience. No one likes a leader who says one thing but does another. Leaders often fail at this principle because they are afraid of making mistakes and embarrassing themselves in front of their Marines. I remember being cautioned by my TBS instructors regarding the perils of letting Marines see your weaknesses, almost as if there was some mysticism necessary to effectively lead Marines. As a young officer, this advice too frequently influenced my decisions. I was afraid of making mistakes because I did not want to be labeled as a weak leader. Attitudes like these negatively impact officer/enlisted relationships; good officers should do their best at everything but be comfortable owning up to deficiencies and learning from their Marines. Despite having firsthand knowledge of this important principle, I started MOI duty as a mid-grade captain with a high opinion of my capabilities, but my ego got in the way of setting the example for our students.

Being authentic is an essential component of demonstrating what good leadership looks like. For many midshipmen, their MOI is the first Marine officer they will have daily interaction with and the person they will compare all future officers to—good or bad. Like young Marines, they are always watching. Concern over earning their credibility early on clouded my judgment, and I became overly concerned with perfection. By faking it, I was creating a phony leadership narrative that had the potential for long-term negative impacts on their development. If I did not show them that I was a human who made mistakes, they might develop a false impression and emulate similar behavior in front of their Marines. This realization caused me to start sharing the mistakes I had made in the past and what I had learned from them. I never stopped demonstrating the discipline that was expected of a Marine officer, but I was no longer afraid of being vulnerable. I promoted an environment that encouraged authentic leadership. After a short period of time, I noticed changes in our students' behavior—leading became more than just regurgitating Marine



**The Assistant Marine Officer Instructor is a critical role within the NROTC program and seen here coaching a fireteam as they navigate a low-crawl obstacle. (Photo by author.)**

Corps leadership traits and principles. Student billet holders led with more passion and experimented with leadership and management techniques that they had learned in the classroom without fear of failure. More students stepped up to assume responsibility and the unit became more productive.

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***Being authentic is an essential component of demonstrating what good leadership looks like.***

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### **Inspire Intellectual Curiosity**

I did not gain a full appreciation for the importance of professional military education until I was a junior captain. I enjoyed the monthly case studies and topical discussions that my battalion conducted during staff and officer calls when I was a lieutenant. I was impressed by the tactical and intellectual prowess of the more senior officers and desired to possess these traits. When I had time to read, it was usually spent on doctrinal publications, MOS-specific

instructions, and range regulations. At that time, smartphones were not that prevalent, social media had not yet taken hold of society, and podcasts were listened to on computers. I desired more leader development but did not have the direction to know where to look. I thought that field exercises would teach my Marines and me everything we would need to know to succeed on deployment. As time progressed and technology changed, I discovered various professional military education outlets, internal and external to the Marine Corps, that served as a catalyst for my professional development.

While on MOI duty, I made it a personal passion to promote an attitude of intellectual curiosity. Officers should possess a slight bit of skepticism for why things are the way they are. Without this skepticism, we become an institution of yes-men who blindly follow orders. Curiosity leads to discovery and discovery leads to knowledge, which in our profession generally results in better performance. In our line of work, success and failure are measured in blood; we need our officers to perform well. It is naïve for leaders to think they will provide their Marines with the sole source of professional growth. Leveraging alternate resources for this endeavor became a best practice for me

as an MOI. By sharing details of my own self-study and promoting leadership videos, podcasts, social media accounts, and professional reading, I sparked a desire for intellectual curiosity and diversity of thought. Our students started to realize that their professional development was in their hands, and they did not need to wait until TBS or the fleet to start unlocking leadership secrets that would facilitate their success.

### Teach Critical Thinking

During entry-level training, there is often one correct answer to a problem. This breeds a checklist-type approach to decision making where a leader seeks out one solution. Many officers are surprised when they hit the fleet and find that the most common challenges cannot be solved with a single formula. After several years of training in the fleet, I observed that the quality of training conducted was closely correlated to the creativity of a unit's leadership. Just because a unit goes to the range and shoots machineguns does not necessarily mean that the unit improved its ability to employ



**Land navigation skills are critical for success at TBS and can be during NROTC training events. (Photo by author.)**

like the five-paragraph order or land navigation, but an eventual transition must occur that incorporates dynamic application. In many cases, this transition is overlooked. Midshipmen may need to learn how to move tactically in a squad formation to pass OCS, but

an officer's career. MOI duty was very rewarding and surprisingly spurred the most significant professional growth I have experienced. I grew as a leader because my focus every day was on the leadership development of our students. I was faced with new and unique challenges that forced me outside my comfort zone. Although the leadership concepts discussed were applied specifically in an NROTC environment, they have application across the entire Marine Corps. Every officer should have a stake in developing the next generation of our officer corps. To be effective, this task may require a new approach to old leadership habits. The Marine Corps requires its leaders to be flexible and adapt to changing circumstances. Emphasizing authenticity, intellectual curiosity, and critical thinking will prepare Marine officers to face the challenges that they will encounter in the fleet. Better yet, these skills will influence the training they create for their Marines, which will impact the future of the Marine Corps.

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### ***Emphasizing authenticity, intellectual curiosity, and critical thinking will prepare Marine officers to face the challenges that they will encounter in the fleet.***

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machineguns. Marines must be placed in a variety of situations that force them to demonstrate a deeper understanding of their profession; they must be taught to think critically. In part, these training deficiencies stem from a procedural approach to training that is emphasized in our entry-level schools that bleed over to the fleet. Although critical thinking is best developed through experience, our profession requires critical thinkers on day one. More can be done to teach critical thinking early in an officer's career to bridge the gap.

Midshipmen need to receive procedural training initially, especially when it comes to learning concepts

more importantly, they should know why a certain formation is used over another. By prioritizing the instruction of the why over the how, our students demonstrated adaptability when faced with new and unique problem sets. After implementing this training style, I saw a significant improvement in their confidence, decision-making abilities, and implicit communication. These leadership skills were developed through creative training scenarios and varied problem sets that encouraged critical thinking.

Officer development should not start and stop at TBS. It needs to be a continual process that evolves throughout





# An Operationalized Approach to Battalion Command

Reflections on Communications Training Battalion

by LtCol Arun Shankar

I had the great privilege of serving as the commander of the Communications Training Battalion in Twentynine Palms, CA, for the last eighteen months. During this time, I have been able to overlay my experience as a MAGTF planner with my time in command to portray lessons learned within the framework of the operations cycle. This process encompasses the sequential activities of planning, execution, and assessment, and loosely frames the actions of any military unit on a daily basis. In the subsequent sections, I describe what

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is science. Command involves seasoned judgment and experienced decision making, while control is a process that can be distilled into procedural steps and actioned by a staff. Control only encompasses planning (orders issuance) and assessment, implying that execu-

establishment of a command culture, as well as the input into operations planning. Moreover, the tenets of the Marine Corps Planning Process that demand planning be top-down, integrated, and within a single battle framework absolutely apply in this context as well.

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***... command is the lawful authority and influence a commander has over his unit ... control is the feedback loop that occurs between the issuance of the commander's orders and the assessment of their effect.***

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I have learned about battalion command across these three elements of the operations cycle.

The operations cycle is a subset of the greater warfighting function of command and control (C2), where command is the lawful authority and influence a commander has over his unit and control is the feedback loop that occurs between the issuance of the commander's orders and the assessment of their effect. Commanders C2 their organizations—this is their fundamental function. Command is art; control

tion is not a part of control, and then perhaps not a significant role for a commander. A deeper look at the relationship between C2 and the operations cycle follows.

## **Planning**

Planning includes all the actions a commander performs to set the conditions for successful execution within the unit. It is the most important element of command because it demands the unique experience and judgment of the commander. This includes the

## *Top-Down Planning*

The battalion commander, through the use of his senior-enlisted advisor and his subordinate commanders, drives the culture and the operational planning for the unit. This role is singularly owned by the battalion commander and cannot be delegated. Cultural norms are established by the commander, to include a warfighting mindset oriented on service and sacrifice. An enduring operational approach is also developed, providing subordinate commanders with lines of effort that clearly focus their daily actions. This mindset is not intended to stifle creativity or shut out subordinate input, but it does rightly give *teeth* to the commander's responsibility for the organization's success or failure. When commanders are formally charged with establishing an operational vector and setting the culture of the organization, the word "responsibility" is no longer nebulous.

### *Integrated Planning*

Climate and culture should be integrated across all the subordinate organizations within the battalion and presented by a common philosophy that is repeated and reminded regularly. This command philosophy is the guiding document that gives overall purpose, regardless of mission. Similarly, battalion commanders should ensure that operations planning is appropriately integrated with higher, lower, and adjacent commands through the issuance of planning guidance. This guidance is more specific and oriented on the mission, often within the confines of an operational approach defined by enduring lines of effort. Again, like top-down planning, the assurance of this integration is the responsibility of the commander. When this becomes habitual, these actions force the development of relationships that later reinforce trust, implicit communication, decentralized control, and tempo.

### *Single Battle Concept*

The battalion commander should always be keenly aware of the effects of changes in culture and operations planning across the entire unit. The interrelated, cascading effects that can occur when changes are not deliberate and thoughtful can have lasting damage to the effectiveness of the unit. This is especially common during periods of high personnel turnover, where decisive shifts in culture and daily operations will undoubtedly upset executors that do not fully understand the reasons for change. Consequently, the operations officer should be the clearinghouse for all operational planning in a battalion, ensuring a shared understanding across the unit. Similarly, the battalion senior enlisted advisor should serve the same purpose with respect to unit culture. In most cases, the single battle encourages incremental shifts in culture rather than swift, wholesale changes in an effort to keep the unit aligned and oriented at all times. Single battle fails most often when information management is not deliberate or centralized, resulting in uninformed, uncorrelated initiatives across the unit.



**Communications Training Bn focuses on training Marines at every level of the C2 community to operate in a denied and degraded environment against a strategic competitor. (Photo by PFC Ulises Salgado.)**

### **Execution**

Execution is the least important role of command because it almost solely depends on the actions of subordinates, not the actions of the commander. In general, a commander should not be in a close fight with daily tasks and staff roles where execution primarily resides. In fact, commanders should usually only play a role in execution during unplanned chaos, where unique wisdom and access to otherwise inaccessible resources are required to continue progress. If this is happening often, it is probably because the commander is not investing enough time in the planning stages of command and not setting conditions for success during execution. It also means that guidance and intent may not be calibrated optimally, restricting essential creativity or allowing reckless freedom.

Commanders also serve during execution when unique authority is needed, mainly in administrative functions. Examples include endorsements, awards, punishments, promotions, recommendations, and other approvals. However, if the staff and subordinate commanders fully understand how the battalion commander processes information and makes decisions, much of this administrative legwork can be boiled down to a

science, only requiring the commander's wisdom during atypical scenarios.

Execution should also be as decentralized as possible, in the spirit of Expeditionary Advanced Based Operations. This means commanders should minimize communication with subordinate commanders to only what is essential and train those commanders to distill the greater intent across the unit. This is in contrast to some legacy models of command, where large formations, boilerplate speeches, aimless meetings, and manifesto philosophies are commonplace traditions. Commanders that are often at the center of execution with these antics are misunderstanding the goal of developing and empowering subordinates to be leaders.

### **Assessment**

Assessment is the most ignored step of the operations cycle, and consequently, the most overlooked element of command. Planning and execution have little purpose without assessment. It is a crucial function because it assesses if a plan is achieving a given mission and endstate. It also closes the feedback loop of control, allowing planners to continually adjust and reframe the problem and the plan as circumstances change. Assessment fights tendencies to



remain stale and resist change. Instead, it encourages a culture of adaptation and flexibility that is in line with the intent of Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations.

Measures of Performance (MOP) are a common metric within an assessment plan. They assess the precision of execution and the success of completing tasks. These measurements can include test scores, climate surveys, or qualitative reports. Data collection and analysis are usually simple, straightforward, and objective. Moreover, MOPs are in the commander's control, so short-term adjustments can easily result in more favorable MOPs. For example, a commander can raise test scores by changing teaching methods or making tests easier. Climate survey results can be addressed similarly, with a deliberate focus on key elements of the survey results. Many commanders confuse MOPs with Measures of Effectiveness (MOE), incorrectly informing failure or success through only one of these metrics. When this happens, subordinates are often incentivized to improve MOPs, but usually at the cost of MOEs.

MOEs, on the other hand, assess the accuracy of execution. They are focused on purposes and endstates, not tasks, and are therefore difficult to establish and measure. MOEs can reveal if a plan's mission statement is not aligned with the endstate, or if the problem statement has changed because of dynamic circumstances. In the case of MOEs, data collection and analysis are usually qualitative and subjective, where the analytical rigor is often in question. For this reason, some commanders avoid collecting against this metric. In general, MOEs are not well studied and largely disregarded at the tactical level, but they are more important than any other measure of success in a command.

Those commanders that do measure effectiveness often rely on their judgment and experience to make these assessments, with little assistance from others. At the battalion level, this might make sense because the battalion commander (and his senior enlisted advisor) is likely much more experienced than anyone else in the command. If the

MOEs are qualitative, only a seasoned leader can understand the interaction between variables and determine the assessment. Data collection might also be reserved for the role of a senior leader, particularly if subordinates are unable to sort between bad and good data. Commanders that focus on MOEs usually do so with aggressive battlespace circulation efforts, both internal and external to their commands. This combination of observations allows a commander to understand if actions within the command are properly addressing higher and external intent.

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### *... decentralized control ruled the day ...*

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#### **Concluding Remarks**

The role of a commander can be operationalized in any environment, whether it be a headquarters, supporting establishment, or operational unit. This is because a commander's function is agnostic to the mission of the unit. No matter what the circumstances, commanders C2 their units across the operations cycle. They set culture and drive operational planning, perform essential roles during execution, and then assess success or failure through the use of MOPs and MOEs.

The act of setting conditions for the right culture during the planning phase differs between company commanders and battalion commanders. Though I am convinced that the majority of risk in our Corps is managed by O-5 level commanders, I also stand by my longstanding assertion that the toughest command job in our Corps is company command. This is because company commanders are at the point of friction, leading large populations of junior Marines and junior officers that have not crossed into a careerist mindset. They spend the majority of their time convincing this young population to buy into our culture, and this is no easy feat. In cases where the company commander is also part of this youthful population, the battalion commander's job may have an element of this responsibility as well.

Fortunately, in my position, all three of my company commanders are field-grade officers, so our relationship is far more collegiate than authoritative.

The pandemic provided me with an unsolicited set of MOEs that revealed opportunities for improvement and forced me to trust and decentralize far more than my initial comfort allowed. Social distancing, teleworking, and isolation protocols were just a few of the nonstandard circumstances that plagued my first year of command in this schoolhouse of more than 1,500 students. Initially, teleworking was unproductive, revealing a MOE that I was not running my organization in a way that promoted initiative and accepted risk instead of one where Marines were likely risk-averse and awaited tasking. It also highlighted flaws in my ability to decentralize control of the organization. This was not unique to my unit—much of the Corps initially struggled with this paradigm shift. However, in a short time, my instructors found creative ways to teach classes via online platforms, and my staff members began to have virtual touchpoints and progress updates, just as if they were at work in person. In most cases, productivity actually increased, since leaders began associating merit with achievements rather than just physical presence. Hungry prospects with imaginative minds emerged from the pack. Moreover, decentralized control ruled the day, allowing unprecedented freedom and creativity throughout the organization.

I conclude my time as a battalion commander with the fondest memories. Disciplinary issues are at a relative all-time low, and instructional efficiency has probably never been better. All credit goes to my fantastic staff and instructors who have been on a relentless pursuit to make our organization the finest schoolhouse in our Corps.

I will miss my Marines. Command is truly the greatest honor a Marine can have.



# Confessions of a Cold War Warrior

Lessons for the rest of the 21st century

by Col Paul A. Hand (Ret)

As of this writing, the military has, at long last, left Afghanistan. In fact, the last time I was there as a SOCOM division head and head of the SOCOM Assessment Team was 2002—almost twenty years ago. America has grown weary of war. Our desire to get into another protracted war is probably well into the future. The combat veterans of this era, like mine, will now become the Illuminati of the current generation of leaders, as it is highly likely that we will enter into a long period of peace. Yet, “the Originals” of the Cold War have not gone away. In fact, China and Russia are more economically stable and more powerful militarily than they have been for some time. China, according to the *CIA World Fact Book*, in 2017 emerged as the largest economy in the world using purchasing power parity (that adjusts for price differences). Their military is estimated at two million. Combine that with a militant and adventurist Russia, which has another 800,000 or so, and the scene is set for another Cold War. What is different about this one and why does it matter?

## The New Cold War

Arguably, if there is a second Cold War, it will be as dangerous and in many ways more unpredictable than the first. Technology is no longer the sole advantage of the United States and its allies. The transfer of technology from U.S. companies to Chinese companies is so commonplace that we are truly jaded as to the underlying danger to American security that this poses. While we still have a clear edge in defense technology, it is also clear that Russia and China are becoming near-peers. If Cold War I

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**“The nation that makes a great distinction between its scholars and its warriors will have its thinking done by cowards and its fighting done by fools.”**

**—Sir William Francis Butler  
in Charles George Gordon (1889) p. 85**

was bipolar, Cold War II is multipolar. The *Dramatis Personae* now include the Originals—the United States, Russia, and China—joined by a host of new Great Powers such as India (a growing ally of the United States), Iran, and North Korea. A modern China and Russia pose so profound a risk to the

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***If Cold War I was bipolar, Cold War II is multipolar.***

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United States and its allies both militarily and economically that we must recognize the immediate and future danger that we are in.

President Biden has already issued his *National Security Strategic Guidance*. This guidance will become the *National Security Strategy*. From the *National Security Strategy*, the *National Military Strategy* will then be written. These two

documents are of fundamental importance to the Marines as it shapes defense spending well into the century. In the *National Security Strategic Guidance*, President Biden articulates the direction that the military will take when he writes:

In the face of strategic challenges from an increasingly assertive China and destabilizing Russia, we will assess the appropriate structure, capabilities, and sizing of the force, and, working with the Congress, shift our emphasis from unneeded legacy platforms and weapons systems to free up resources for investments in the cutting-edge technologies and capabilities that will determine our military and national security advantage in the future.<sup>1</sup>

It is of vital importance that Marines, not just the senior leadership but the rank and file, begin to take part in this process. Can we learn lessons from the last Cold War? The answer is most assuredly yes. The Marines all but reinvented themselves during the first Cold War as they adapted to changes



in technology, doctrine, and tactics. We should review and analyze that process as we move into a possible second Cold War.

### **Begin at the Beginning**

In 1947, George F. Kennan under the pseudonym “X” penned arguably the most influential article on foreign affairs ever written. The article was entitled “The Sources of Soviet Conduct” and was published in *Foreign Affairs*. Kennan had previously sent an official telegraph under his State Department number “511” (the telegraph was informally called “The Long Telegraph”) from the American Embassy of the USSR where he outlined the concepts. In the X article, Kennan introduced, for the first time, the concept of containment:

This would of itself warrant the United States entering with reasonable confidence upon a policy of firm containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counter-force at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world.<sup>2</sup>

In 1950, a top-secret document called *NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security* (National Security Council 68) was sent to the President (around 14 April 1950) and became the most important antecedent document of the Cold War. Generally, *NSC 68* was an expansion of what Kennan had opined in the X article. In the summary, the authors clearly delineate the policy that would occupy most of the free world and certainly this author’s military career:

In summary, we must, by means of a rapid and sustained build-up of the political, economic, and military strength of the free world, and by means of an affirmative program intended to wrest the initiative from the Soviet Union, confront it with convincing evidence of the determination and ability of the free world to frustrate the Kremlin design of a world dominated by its will. Such evidence is the only means short of war which eventually may force the Kremlin to abandon its present course of action and negotiate acceptable agreements on issues of major importance.<sup>3</sup>

In most respects, the policy of containment was predicated upon how not to go to war with the Soviet Union but how to contain their aims. While the notion of war with the Soviet Union was not desired, the U.S. military would eventually develop an entire ecology around this idea that would dominate military thinking until the second Gulf War.

In many respects, these two documents could have been published yesterday. Russia is as aggressive as it has ever been and, it appears, does not respect the ability of the United States to stop them. China continues its unprecedented rise on the world stage while enhancing its economic and military might. It is likely that neither China nor Russia sees the United States as the massive counter that the United States always was able to pose to the Russians during the last century. Additionally, we now add a new and insidious weapon to the arsenal of our enemies and that is cyberwar. Paradoxically, China and Russia’s policies seemed to be aimed at a doctrine of containment of the United States and its allies in an ironic twist.

### **Early Days: Education of a Tactician**

Since the initial phases of the Cold War the Marine Corps developed the basic concepts that would eventually reflect how, during the latter part of the Cold War, we would evolve. There were two important concepts that are as important to build upon now as they were then—namely, training and the underlying tactical framework. How we arrived at our concepts of maneuver warfare and training will, in many respects, reflect what direction we need to go now.

### **The Officer In Charge (OIC) of Infantry Officers Course (IOC)**

I began my training (after The Basic School [TBS]) at the fledgling Infantry Officers Course (IOC) in 1977 and was among the very first graduates in the second iteration of that course. It can be argued that IOC was the beginning of a marked shift in the post-Vietnam era to a new, and maybe different, infantry officer. Make no mistake, this shift was driven by several very competent

combat veteran infantry officers who envisioned a place where officers would spend time perfecting their knowledge of basic platoon and company tactics and weapons employment. The forward-thinking combat veterans of the era were savvy, thoughtful mentors who dreamed up this idea. LtCol Vic Taylor, the first officer in charge of IOC, became, in many respects, my first role model in the Marines (after my dad a three-combat tour Marine). He was and is the very epitome of a Marine officer. Suave, intellectual, funny, and courageous (as evidenced by his Silver Star, which we were in awe of). Every lieutenant at IOC wanted to grow up and be like him—certainly, I did. His recollections of his combat experiences were masterclasses in tactics. The lesson for everything I said or wrote in my 27 years became: use the resources assigned to you, outsmart your enemy, and preserve your most precious asset—your Marines.

As I wended my way through my first tour at 2/7 Mar another sea change in the Marine Corps would fundamentally change how we trained forever. This sea change was the Systems Approach to Training. It was 1978, and the Marine Corps Combat Readiness Evaluation System had just come out. Reams of pages of tasks, conditions, and standards were published and disseminated throughout the Marine Corps. As a platoon commander for a rifle platoon, 81mm mortar platoon, and a weapons platoon, I saw the relevance of this approach as we were still *making it up as we go* during this time. As a weapons platoon commander, I had each of my Marines carry their portion of the MCCRES in their right cargo pocket. I would question them on tasks, conditions, and standards throughout the week. I built a training program wholly around the MCCRES handbook. It was the first time that I felt I had a solid foundation to build training around. At the 1st MarDiv weapons competition in 1979, my platoon swept all three events that we entered in: M-60 machineguns, mortars, and assault weapons (LAAWs and M202 MPFW). I was now convinced that this systems approach to training worked and Marines were

smarter than we gave them credit for. I was already considering myself one of the Young Turks, however presumptuous I might have been. Marine Corps thought in 1979 was stale and ready to break out of the post-Vietnam blues.

I returned to Quantico to TBS in 1982. It was here that I met and had the great pleasure of serving under the tutelage of the late Maj Lawrence Livingston (later MajGen Livingston) who was then the Chief of the Tactics Division and the first Navy Cross winner I had met. Under his tutelage, tactics became my calling. I spent every evening with soup cans and other props on my kitchen table wargaming tactical scenarios for my lessons the next day. I can say without equivocation that I finally got it. My takeaways from TBS were to become an expert in tactics and become a lifelong student. The Marine leader defeated the enemy with his mind as much as his physical resources.

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***As the battalion commander was the most experienced tactician in the battalion ... the tactical plan should be driven by him. I published that process in the Marine Corps Gazette in December 1995 ... "Planning the Battalion Attack: A New Paradigm for An Old Process."***

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After attending the Amphibious Warfare School, I headed to Camp Lejeune for eventual assignment as CO, Kilo Company 3/6 Mar. It was there that I finally took everything I learned about tactics and training and tried to apply it on a broader scale. I focused on three things as commander. First, Marines have to be physically tough and lethal. I introduced my own version of close combat based on my taekwondo training as a black belt. My goal was to create confidence in each Marine that, in addition to his primary weapon, he could bring to bear his own physical body to defeat the enemy in close combat. Marines loved it and started calling themselves "Band of the Hand" after a movie that was popular at the time.

Philosophically, the most successful concept that I finally understood was that the lead Marine in a unit is the commander yes, but also, and more importantly, the head tactician and certainly well-schooled in all the other martial arts including close combat and weapons. I encouraged my Marines to approach me at any time if they wanted to talk squad tactics. These are some of my fondest memories of my time in the Marine Corps.

**Sea Dragon: Maneuver Warfare Goes Mainstream**

In 1995, Gen Krulak had taken the helm and started a series of brilliant initiatives that would shape the Corps for many years. Gen Krulak wasted no time in trying to change the culture of the Marine Corps. He moved key headquarters personnel to the Pentagon into spaces that we had previously ceded to the other Services. His goal was to

encourage HQMC to cooperate regularly with the other Services. In 1995, Gen Krulak also stood up the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab and gave it the moniker of Sea Dragon. The goal was to ride the Dragon into the next century. During this time, Gen Krulak published numerous articles that continued to accentuate the new thinking.

This spirit of innovation permeated the Marine Corps. After recruiting duty and the Naval War College, I went back to Quantico to the Expeditionary Warfare School, first as a tactics instructor and faculty advisor and then as Head of Tactics. Immersed in Krulak's Marine Corps we taught maneuver warfare as if it were a religion. For me, the cult of tactics finally came to its logical conclu-

sion as I tried to master tactics above the battalion level. It was where I finally codified my view of maneuver warfare and how it was incorporated into tactics and the planning process—not the Marine Corps planning process at the time but a more fluid and flexible process and one that was focused on finding and exploiting critical vulnerabilities. Moving away from multiple throw-away courses of action to the development of a couple of courses of action initially articulated by the head tactician in the battalion, namely the battalion commander. As the battalion commander was the most experienced tactician in the battalion, it made sense that the tactical plan should be driven by him. I published that process in the *Marine Corps Gazette* in December 1995 in an article entitled "Planning the Battalion Attack: A New Paradigm for An Old Process." My opening line was:

*FMFM 1 trumpeted a new era in the art of war for the Marine Corps. It is a warfighting philosophy that seeks to disrupt the enemy's cohesion through the use of maneuver—both physical and mental. It seeks to identify and strike the enemy's critical vulnerability.<sup>4</sup>*

It should be noted here that I also talked about the process being iterative and the importance of the entire staff participating in the wargaming process and the improvement of the course of action.

The final piece to the puzzle for me was the standardization of a Marine Corps close combat system that worked and could be taught to all Marines. So, it was also during this time that I had a face-to-face meeting with MajGen Tom Jones (then-Col Tom Jones, Director of EWS) about this subject. I had published a scathing letter on that subject in the *Gazette* about the so-called LINE Training (Linear Involuntary Neurological Overriding Engagement) and Combat Hitting. The first was a wholly impractical self-defense system then being taught in the Marine Corps and the second was a misguided attempt by well-meaning Marines to instill the ability to take a punch. I also told Gen Jones at that time that Marines joined the Marine Corps to be elite warriors and that it was time to develop a Marine Corps-based martial arts system.



Gen Jones later followed that advice and ultimately the MCMAP program was born with the help of many players and most recently my good friend LtCol Joe Shusko—who ran the program for many years.

### The Puzzle Comes Together

In June 1997, I had assumed command of 2/4 Mar and applied everything I learned about training, tactics, staff planning, and close combat training. First at the Combined Arms Training Exercise in Twentynine Palms, CA. Then at the National Training Center (NTC) in Fort Irwin, CA as the aggressor battalion, and finally as the Battalion Landing Team Commander of Operation DESERT FOX in Kuwait. During DESERT FOX, the battalion staff and the company commanders applied everything we had learned during our training period to develop a comprehensive engagement area that took what we learned from EWS wargames (I brought those with me from EWS), our stint at the NTC, and certainly our time at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms.

Serendipitously, during this time, I had the opportunity to send my Marines to the very first Marine Corps martial arts course. I had selected both experienced martial artists and excellent Marines who had no martial arts experience. They returned after the grueling course, and we rolled the program out in the battalion. It was a spectacular success. After a month or so of training, we challenged all comers to come to Camp San Mateo and train and spar with us. It was like a scene from a martial arts movie where competing schools meet to spar—only more collegiate. We ultimately gave a demonstration for all of the commanding officers and their sergeants major at a gym at Camp Pendleton. That demonstration was even more successful than I thought it would be as we proved that even initial untrained personnel could become lethal through the use of the techniques being taught. We rolled this out to the entire battalion to rave reviews from the Marines who saw in the program what they had joined the Marine Corps for.

### Riding the Dragon-Again

As my Naval War College instructors would always ask after a long dissertation, “So what?” What does this all mean and is there a lesson for today. In LtCol Timothy Lupfer’s seminal work *The Dynamics of Doctrine: The Changes in German Tactical Doctrine During the First World War*, he discusses how the German Army made thoughtful changes to their tactics during the war. Lupfer discusses how German successes in World War I with respect to tactical changes were a result of a thorough and well-codified process.<sup>5</sup>

- Perception of a need for change.
- Solicitation of ideas, especially from the battlefield units.
- Definition of the change.
- Dissemination of the change.
- Enforcement throughout the army.
- Modification of organization and equipment to accommodate the change.
- Thorough training.
- Evaluation of effectiveness.
- Subsequent refinement.

Doctrine must be reviewed and redeveloped as the Marine Corps rides the dragon. Over the next several years, we must develop doctrine, tactics, and training that reflect the new reality. Our enemies are making step functions in ability, and for us not to recognize this will most assuredly imperil our great Nation. This iterative process must continue until we collectively understand the direction that we must go and then write it down and train to it.

The spirit of the 90s must come back and entail no less than a complete mobilization of thought to prepare for the next war. As Lupfer wrote more eloquently than I:

The process of developing principles to obtain this objective was a collective or corporate effort. Individual talents and personalities were essential, but the doctrine emerged in an atmosphere where ideas were discovered and shared, not invented and arbitrarily imposed.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, as this collective effort articulates new tactics and procedures, our training must keep up so that as Lupfer also noted, German tactics were always paired with German training

to ensure that the new tactics could be executed.<sup>7</sup> A new wave of Young Turks must spawn articles, study groups, and manuals to bring about the type of doctrine needed for the next war. *FMFM I* must still remain the basis of new tactics as we ride the dragon. Arguably, the current cadre of combat vets, both officers and enlisted, now tempered by multiple combat tours, are in a position to be the wizened leaders of the next wave of doctrine and tactics.

### Three Lessons for the Rest of the Century

First and foremost, Marines have to be warriors who are able to fight with their weapons brilliantly and fight with their hands, feet, and any weapon of opportunity: “One Mind, Any Weapon.” Marines are warriors, and the four numbers after their name that we call a MOS is just what they do for the Marine Corps. On the asymmetric battlefield, they must be able to fight whenever and wherever they are. The Marine Corps Martial Arts Program must continue to be fully funded and ubiquitous throughout the Marines. Confidence only comes from knowledge, both physical and mental. Commanders must train with their Marines and be seen and recognized. Marines, both male and female, must embrace this. Having trained with Arline Limas, Olympic Taekwondo Gold Medalist, at Power Kix Karate in Stafford while I was an instructor at the Expeditionary Warfare School, I can assure you that she proved to me that men and women can and should be trained to the same high standard. She is a fearsome warrior in her own right. This is why MCMAP techniques must always be useful, practical, and coed.

Second, Marines must remain students of their own tactics and their potential adversaries’ tactics. When I was the Head of Tactics at EWS after one of the wargames, the Ukrainian Naval Infantry Officer, Sergei, came to my office and complained that we Americans assumed that all enemy officers would fight strictly by their doctrine and would exercise no initiative. He was also a graduate of the Frunze Military Academy. Moreover, Sergei was one

of the toughest human beings I have ever met as evidenced by his unbelievable daily physical routine. I thanked him for his comments. During the next wargame, I assigned Sergei as the commander of the opposing forces. He soundly defeated the Blue Forces. I gave an impassioned plea to the class during the after-action that we underestimate our enemy at our own peril. I learned this lesson again at the NTC where my battalion joined the Motorized Rifle Regiment as opposing forces to an Army Brigade. We too soundly defeated the Blue Forces even though we deliberately gave them clear indications of where our attack was coming from. Despite these clues, they blindly followed their plan of attack. Our potential adversaries are training their combat leaders now, and we should expect tough, competent leaders like Sergei.

Third, the Marine Corps must continue to nurture the notion that all Marines are part of the team. That team is the MAGTF. It is the fundamental fighting unit of the Corps with the motto of “One Team, One Fight” because in the end, it is not just our physical prowess or our mental prowess that makes Marines what they are. I served three and a half years at SOCOM and had the occasion to compare Marines to the very fine “quiet professionals” that I had the great pleasure to serve with. An individual ethos permeates their culture by the very nature of the mission of special operations. They are quite simply the best at what they do. Marines, on the other hand, thrive in the team and understand their place in the larger team. It is that *esprit de corps* that makes all Marines brothers and sisters. As we cross the line of departure, we are secure in the knowledge that I will lay down my life for you if I have to, and I know that you will lay down your life for me if you have to. This has been proven over and over on every battlefield the Corps has fought in. It is this unwritten and always unsaid understanding that nurtures us and emboldens us to be more than we were when we started.

With the lack of actual, armed combat, the only crucible is one of ideas. As we transition into a period of troubled

peace, one of our weapons must be the mind. Like the Germans during the interwar period, resources may be limited so our imagination must be weaponized. New ideas must be also tempered by the last generation of experienced warriors (Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns) who, like the Vietnam veterans of my era, become the warrior mentors as they become the leaders of the Corps and guide our new Young Turks. But one must not overtake the other, and they coexist in intellectual equality.

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***If I was once a Young Turk, I am now more the aging Obi-Wan Kenobi***

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**Final Thoughts**

So as the Marine Corps rides the sea dragon into the middle of the century, what is it that the Marine Corps can learn from the past? As the Marine Corps prepares for the future, it must adapt to changing technologies and the geopolitical situation. Indeed, technology today has the opportunity to make each and every individual Marine more lethal than he has been in the history of our Corps. Single companies armed with drones, computers, and Javelins can surprisingly defeat an enemy tank company without ever being seen. In spite of this technology, or because of it, the requirement for every Marine to be physically and mentally superior to the enemy is more important now than it has ever been.

If I was once a Young Turk, I am now more the aging Obi-Wan Kenobi (to mix my metaphors). I spent my career training to be a warrior of our great Republic and honing those skills necessary to outsmart and outfight any enemy on any battlefield. Sadly, with the exception of Operation DESERT FOX as the battalion landing team commander and a short foray into Afghanistan as a SOCOM staff officer; I was never tested. The fact that I did not stand at the Fulda Gap or roar through the

deserts of North Africa or the streets of Iraq my mission never changed and all of my mental, physical, and spiritual energy was mobilized to this effort. Perhaps I cannot claim to be a “Genius for War,” but I stayed true to my mission. So perhaps as I amble off into the sunset, they will not name a building after me (Hand Hall at TBS?), no prizes will be awarded in my name (the Colonel Paul A. Hand Leadership Award?), but perhaps my words will spark some lightning somewhere (with apologies to Dylan Thomas). In the end, I am buoyed by the words of Milton and remember: “They also serve who only stand and wait.”

*That murmur, soon replies, “God doth not need  
Either man’s work or his own gifts; who best  
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state  
Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed  
And post o’er Land and Ocean without rest:  
They also serve who only stand and wait.”*

—John Milton

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**Notes**

1. President Joseph Biden, *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance*, (Washington, DC: March 2021).
2. George F. Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs*, (New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations, July 1947).
3. *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance*.
4. Paul A. Hand, “Planning the Battalion Attack: A New Paradigm for an Old Process,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: December 1995).
5. Timothy T. Lupfer, *Leavenworth Papers, No. 4. The Dynamics of Doctrine: The Changes in German Tactical Doctrine During the First World War*, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and Staff College, 1981).
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.





# In the Same Boat

## Integrating naval intelligence

by Capt Will McGee

In March 2020, the Commandant of the Marine Corps released *Force Design 2030*, the strategy outlining structural changes to the Marine Corps operating forces. It is intended to reorient the Marine Corps toward its traditional role as a naval amphibious force working in tandem with the Navy to project power ashore after two decades of expeditionary non-maritime campaigns. The major changes outlined in *Force Design 2030* primarily deal with investment/divestment decisions for the ACE and GCE, driven by the modern warfighting concepts articulated in the joint Navy and Marine Corps' Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment, and the Marine Corps' Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations.<sup>1</sup> *Force Design 2030* does not contain specific guidance for the Marine Corps intelligence community as it deals mostly with altering the structure of the major components of the operating forces to

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act as “a landward complement to Navy capabilities” through the provision of “mobile, low-signature sensors.”

At the crux of these concepts is the development of a network of sensors to provide battlespace awareness to the fleet, and so it implies that naval integration: the ability of the Navy and Marine Corps information warfare communities is a prerequisite for the operating concept's success. This integration cannot be surged once the war begins. Instead, systemic change is required of both Services to engrain habits of cooperation in peacetime garrison operations so that they can be relied upon to seamlessly work together when

deployed. How can the Marine Corps intelligence community better integrate with the Navy to create a joint naval intelligence enterprise?

### Operating Concepts Review

As noted in the joint 2017 *Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment (LOCE)*, since at least 2006, successive Chiefs of Naval Operations and Commandants of the Marine Corps have called for closer cooperation and integration between the two Services.<sup>2</sup> *LOCE* outlines supporting concepts to facilitate this integration: MAGTF integration into the Composite Warfare Construct, possibly as the Expeditionary Warfare Commander or Strike Warfare Commander; creation of joint blue-green fleet/Joint Force Maritime Component Command staffs; the development of Littoral Combat Groups tasked organized with additional capabilities based on an assessment of projected employment; and additional areas of exploration for future experimentation—specifically, expeditionary advanced bases. Inclusion of the Marine Corps in the composite warfare construct would allow for the MAGTF to be used as another element of the maritime force, tasked by the warfare commanders like any other Navy asset.

The Marine Corps corollary to *LOCE*, *Expeditionary Advanced Basing Operations*, envisions the emplacement of expeditionary advanced bases to provide “landbased options for increasing the number of sensors and shooters beyond the upper limit imposed by the



**MAGTF integration into the composite warfare construct can leverage the Navy's battlespace awareness capabilities. (Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Markus Castaneda.)**

quantity of seagoing platforms available.” Put more generally, the idea is that groups of Marines would be emplaced onshore to support fleet operations by providing a base from which to collect information, conduct follow-on actions like act as a refueling/rearming facility, or (once counter-ship systems have been acquired) control areas of key maritime terrain.<sup>3</sup>

By distributing forces across geographically disparate locations, these concepts hope to increase the capability of the Naval Services to survive and project power in less-than-friendly environments. Both concepts call for close integration between the Navy and Marine Corps and both use “sensor” emplacement as one of the reasons for the new operating concept. LOCE calls for “[the creation of] *a modular, scalable, and integrated naval network of seabased and landbased sensors*, shooters, and sustainers that provides the capabilities, capacities, and persistent yet mobile forward presence necessary to effectively respond to crises, address larger contingencies, and deter aggression in contested littorals.”<sup>4</sup> EABO, likewise, uses landbased sensors as an argument for the emplacement of expeditionary bases, specifically to “position *naval* ISR assets”<sup>5</sup> and “provide expeditionary surface scouting/screening platforms.”

The structural changes outlined in *Force Design 2030* were driven by these operating concepts, with the stated purpose to “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.” The CMC specifically calls for future planning and experimentation to “focus on capabilities required to satisfy approved naval concepts of DMO, EABO, and LOCE.”<sup>6</sup>

These concepts envision the use of platforms (Distributed Maritime Operations), bases (EABO), and a combination of the two (LOCE) to emplace sensors creating a network of information-collecting devices that develop battlespace awareness and inform the estimate of the naval commander. Information Warfare Community, and

particularly intelligence, officers might be a little more familiar with this idea if its authors referred to it as “collection operations” instead of “sensor emplacement” but the gist is the same. While there are kinetic operational reasons for expeditionary bases and distributed platforms, increased ability to collect intelligence is one of the most significant arguments articulated for these joint and Service concepts. Each document calls for a Navy/Marine Corps amphibious team, optimized for the future operating environment, that can create a network of collection assets to inform decision makers of the situation. The creation of a seamless network of inter-Service intelligence assets will require community-wide integration between the two Services. Members of the Navy and Marine Corps must develop habits of action in peacetime garrison operations to enable frictionless employment forward. What is the state of current integration and how can the Services be brought closer together?

**State of Current Integration: Same Department, Different Services**

A brief description of the author’s career will provide a useful example of the current state of integration between the naval intelligence enterprises.

I attended the Ground Intelligence Officer Course at the (then named) Navy and Marine Corps Intelligence Training Center in the fall of 2015. Even though the Marine Corps instructors were a part of a Marine Detachment in a Navy command and the inherently naval nature of the Marine Corps, the curriculum focused on intelligence support to the Marine Corps Planning Process in the context of primarily ground campaigns, and there was little communication with the Navy instructors or students during the course. Although all training literally occurred in the same building, the only interactions I had with Navy personnel occurred because my younger brother happened to be in the Navy’s intelligence officer’s course.

Four years later, I attended the MAGTF Intelligence Officer Course at the (tellingly) now-retitled Information Warfare Training Center. During this course—the last formal training

required of a Marine Corps Intelligence Officer—the only formal interaction with Navy Intelligence personnel was a three-hour lecture by an Amphibious Ready Group N-2. It was a great briefing but nowhere near enough to prepare students to seamlessly operate with the Navy. At no point in the course did we discuss naval operating concepts, Navy intelligence collection assets, or any of the other topics that would prepare the student to quickly and seamlessly integrate with the fleet intelligence enterprise.

When I arrived in the fleet at 2d MarDiv, there were three deployment opportunities: the MEU, the Unit Deployment Program, and the Special Purpose MAGTF-Crisis Response-AFRICOM (SPMAGTF-CR-AF). Only one of these, the MEU, involved interaction with Navy personnel or Navy Intelligence. I deployed on the Special Purpose MAGTF-Crisis Response-AFRICOM, a rotation with tasked mission sets of crisis response and theater security cooperation. This deployment did not require substantive interaction with the Navy or Navy Intelligence personnel. The expectation was that Intelligence Officers in 2d MarDiv deploy once during a three-year tour. So, this means that roughly only one in three Marine Corps intelligence officers had any experience working in an operational setting with the Navy.

This experience gap was the norm during garrison training also. I participated in four major exercises at the MEF, division, and regimental levels: MEF Exercise 2016, BOLD ALLIGATOR 2016 and 2017, and 2d MarDiv’s Large Scale Exercise 2017. Two of these exercises did not include the Navy whatsoever. While BOLD ALLIGATOR was intended to be an amphibious exercise, in neither iteration did I ever interact with the Navy’s intelligence personnel. At the completion of my tour, I rotated to the supporting establishment.

So, to summarize, none of this training or education has substantively addressed naval intelligence subjects, nor has my operational experience provided the opportunity to support maritime operations. Had I returned to the operating forces after my supporting



establishment tour, I would have become a field-grade officer who has spent (exponentially) more time underway as a midshipman than as a Marine and worked far more extensively with the Royal Marines than the U.S. Navy.

My experience is anecdotal and as such limited to the time and place in which it occurred—II MEF from 2015 to 2018. I am sure I have peers with significantly more naval operating experience than I. The fact, however, that this experience is derived from specific operational employment is indicative of the broader problem: neither of the standard training or career pipelines is deliberately structured to provide joint experience with the other Naval Service, and as a result, this experience is the exception rather than the norm. Greater integration is required.

### **Integrating the Naval Intelligence Enterprise**

If the stated intent is that the future Marine Corps and Navy operating forces operate seamlessly with one another, the intelligence warfighting function is no different from the rest of the force. Systemic changes are required to further integrate the naval intelligence enterprises. The following are suggestions for ways to more closely align the Navy and Marine Corps efforts.

#### *Service Intelligence Centers*

The *Commandant's Planning Guidance* describes the separation of the Navy and Marine Corps into two Services with distinctly different priorities by stating,

The 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act, however, removed the preponderance of the [Fleet Marine Force] from fleet operational control and disrupted the long-standing Navy-Marine Corps relationship by creating separate Navy and Marine Corps components within joint forces. Furthermore, Navy and Marine Corps officers developed a tendency to view their operational responsibilities as separate and distinct, rather than intertwined.<sup>7</sup>

Nowhere is this more evident than at the Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (MCIA). MCIA was created in 1987 and intended to bridge the gap

between the (newly separated from fleet control) FMF and the national intelligence community.<sup>8</sup> Located in Quantico, VA, it currently operates three lines of effort: production of intelligence estimates as required by the supporting establishment, support to the operating forces and Intelligence Community, and facilitating/coordinating efforts of the Marine Corps Intelligence Enterprise.<sup>9</sup> None of these responsibilities seem to be dissimilar

person collaboration. It would also ease interaction with other members of the intelligence community and the other Services' intelligence centers, most of which are located inside the beltway.

Since the operating services call for an integrated network of sensors, and the Marine Corps plans to double the number of unmanned aerial vehicles it operates, the cell responsible for processing, exploitation, and dissemination of intelligence gathered by these vehicles



**Marines collect and report information throughout the battlespace.** (Photo by Cpl Abraham Lopez.)

from those of the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), except that the institutional separation between the two likely limits coordination. Structure drives function. Establish MCIA as a tenant command under ONI and integrate our Service-level intelligence centers. Space is available. Is the old ONI building being used?

Doing so would benefit both organizations. ONI would gain subject-matter expertise on intelligence support to ground operations and amphibious operations. MCIA's production responsibilities involve inherently naval concepts and would likely be better served by close coordination with the Nation's premier maritime intelligence authority. Moving MCIA onto the ONI campus and into its structure would allow for routine interaction by reducing the 90-mile round trip required for in-

formation. It should operate in this proposed structure.<sup>10</sup> In the LOCE and EABO constructs, information collected by sensors informs decision makers of both Services, and so locating the PED for new Marine Corps ISR at a joint command would represent each Service's equities equally.

Marine Corps and Navy Intelligence Officers assigned to the proposed MCIA/ONI combination would operate in an integrated naval intelligence structure and return to the operating forces with an understanding of the other Service's threat concerns and enterprise structure, creating a subset of officers with joint naval expertise as a part of their shore tours. Integrating the Service-level intelligence centers would shift the bifurcated efforts to a mutual comprehensive focus on the maritime domain beginning with the littorals and



**Analytic exchange can enhance the quality of tactical intelligence at the close-combat level.**  
(Photo by LCpl Sarah Hediger.)

stretching to the blue-water ocean. Our interests are intertwined; why not our intelligence centers?

#### *Personnel Exchange in Equivalent Billets*

Since Marine Aviators attend Navy schools, use Navy-funded aircraft, and are held to Navy maintenance and readiness standards, why not standardize the training and employment of Marine Corps air intelligence officers and Navy intelligence officers assigned to squadrons? Once standardized, these personnel could be exchanged for tours with the other Service. Marine intelligence officers could deploy as part of a carrier strike group and learn the Navy intelligence structure; Navy intelligence officers could integrate into the MAGTF. Precedents exist as every Marine unit deploys with Navy medical and religious personnel.

Interservice billeting would be most easily implemented in ACE billets, as these are the most similar between the two Services. A Marine Corps ground intelligence officer, for example, qualifies as an infantry officer as part of the pipeline and so has very different expertise than one could expect of a Navy intelligence officer. But, with some cre-

ative thought and crosstraining, this idea could be expanded to other billets as well. Since the Marine Corps uses Navy standards and funding for its aviation, it should not be too much trouble to formally integrate our intelligence support systems, creating a permanent reserve of junior officers who have operational experience in the other naval Service.

#### **Analysis Exchange**

Formalizing a structure for analytic exchange would integrate the two Services by allowing analysts to access products across the integrated enterprises. The Marine Corps already uses the Marine Corps Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance Enterprise Knowledge Gateway (MKG). The MKG is an internet portal that resides on secure networks on which analysts upload their products. It allows an intelligence analyst at III MEF in Okinawa to read the work of analysts in, say, 6th Mar in Camp Lejeune. Either the Marine Corps could add Navy operational units to the MKG or together the two Services could develop a joint architecture for sharing tactical intelligence, enabling seamless integration

in garrison and while deployed. Threats are Service agnostic. Why is our systems not architecture?

According to the Services' operating concepts, the Navy and Marine Corps intend to operate together seamlessly in a future naval campaign. Since one of the main arguments for these concepts is the creation of a network of sensors to inform decision makers, the Services' intelligence and information warfare communities are vital to this effort—and can be leaders by deliberately making structural changes to involve the other Service in its enterprise. We may be two separate Services, but when the next war kicks off, we will be in the same boat.

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>Editor's Note: A version of this article was originally published on the CIMSEC blog in Dec 2021.





# “To Frozen Shores”

## Preparing for Arctic competition

by Capt Peter H. Shelton

The Marines need to prepare for Arctic competition by establishing bases and conducting training that will lay the foundation for success in the Arctic littorals.

The United States has a perfect record of not predicting our next war. Consider that the Nation desired to stay out of World War I, was caught unaware at Pearl Harbor, did not expect a conventional fight in Korea, and most Americans still cannot point out Afghanistan on a map.<sup>1</sup> To prepare for future military conflicts, we must look for strategic blind spots. The Marine Corps in particular, as the force that promises to be most ready when the Nation is least ready, must examine the macro trends that will drive policy and strategy in the maritime domain in order to develop operations and tactics suitable to our Nation’s needs.

The most talked-about macro trend is the possible Thucydides trap between the United States and China. Territorial disputes, shifting economics, and the revisionist powers at work in the South China Sea make it a boiling cauldron of potential conflicts. Much ink has been spilled on that sea, to the point where “near-peer adversary” is a thinly veiled code for China, the primary expected antagonist. Counterintuitively, the Corps’ attention and force design efforts for that region will likely create a deterrence that should prevent war. Nothing is certain, but by preparing for a conflict with China, the Marines signal to our competition and allies that we can and will fight, and they must pursue their interests in manners other than war.

>Capt Shelton is a UH-1Y Pilot assigned to Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 469. His opinions are his own.

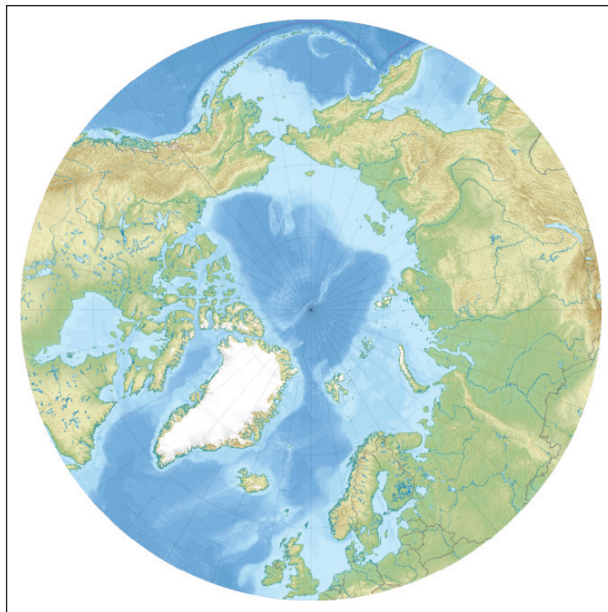
To this end, the *Commandants Planning Guidance* is heavily focused on developing forces for that type of war. Unfortunately, focusing on one type of war leaves one vulnerable to a more unexpected war.

Examining the macro trend of trade may shed light on unexpected fights.

how small countries in the Middle East along the Persian Gulf carry outsized influence in the affairs of the world. It is how the city-state of Singapore punches above its weight class in the international arena. It drives territorial expansion and disputes. It is why the Suez and Panama Canals and the Straits of Malacca, Hormuz, and Gibraltar are the loci that connect and shape the world. The value of these trade chokepoints has not changed since antiquity as the history of Troy, Constantinople, and Istanbul demonstrates. Naval trade builds and ends empires.

Most naval battles in history happen in or around sea lane chokepoints much in the same way that geographic chokepoints on land will force land battles. Trafalgar was right by the Pillars of Hercules. Actium, Salamis, and Lepanto were all at bay openings around Greece. The blue water Pacific fights in World War II, though pleasingly Mahanian, are a historical exception. Most naval battles happen within a cannon shot of land. In predicting future conflict, looking at where these sea lanes converge and what national interests are at play gives the best promise of predicting future hotspots.

For most of history, these sea lane intersections have remained constant. Geography today is the same as it was thousands of years ago, with perhaps the opening of the Panama and Suez Canals being the notable exceptions.



**Holding almost 25 percent of the world’s hydrocarbons, massive quantities of untapped fishing grounds, unmined minerals, and the potential to cut trade routes by 40–60 percent of their time, Arctic sea lanes will be impossible for nations to ignore. (Photo: wikimedia.org.)**

Trade, which is simply access to resources, has been a perennial driver in the international arena. A quick look at the largest and oldest cities of the world reveals that they are all situated at an intersection of land or water trade routes. Trade, specifically naval trade, is

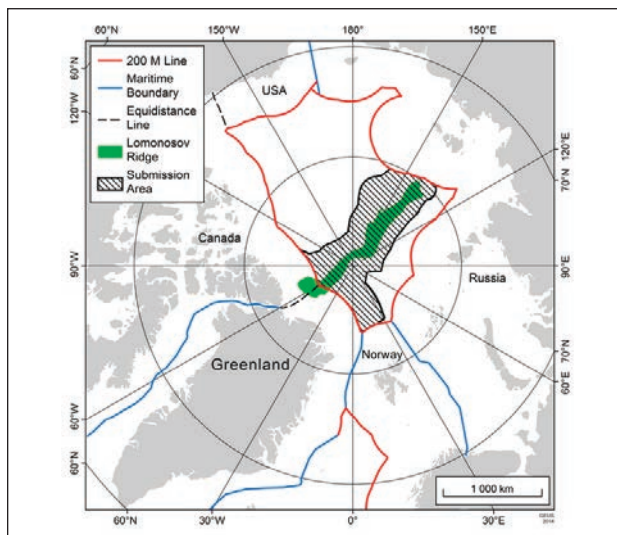
This is about to change. Geography is shifting. In a few short decades, Arctic trade routes like the Northwestern Passage through Canada and the Northern Sea Route along the Russian coast will be open. This tectonic shift will enable access to a usually ignored corner of the globe: the Arctic Ocean.

Whether or not climate scientists are right or wrong is well beyond the scope of this article. All that is needed to note here is that since 1500, explorers tried and failed to navigate the Northwest Passage. It was not until 1906 that the first successful transit was made.<sup>2</sup> Starting in 1978, it was monitored continuously with no reported opening in the ice or successful transit until 2007.<sup>3</sup> In 2016, the transit was made sixteen times.<sup>4</sup> Maybe the Arctic Ocean will completely melt, maybe it will not. How, why, and to what extent are worthy debates. For this article, it is only necessary that the observable thawing combined with modern icebreakers means that by 2050 new sea lanes will be open twelve months a year.<sup>5</sup>

This new frontier will be a flashpoint of international competition. Access to trade routes as well as access to resources will drive nations to frozen shores. Holding almost 25 percent of the world's hydrocarbons, massive quantities of untapped fishing grounds, unmined minerals, and the potential to cut trade routes by 40–60 percent of their time, Arctic sea lanes will be impossible for nations to ignore.<sup>6</sup> The Arctic trade intersections and chokepoints in the North Atlantic and the North Pacific will become as important to global trade as the Suez Canal, with any island near the route serving as a potentially lucrative trading post or military base. It is encouraging that all countries involved except Finland and Russia are NATO allies, but internal to the alliance, there is already a myriad of territorial disputes. This will require careful diplomacy to prevent an escalation of tensions.

The greatest challenge of the Arctic with the most potential to start a shoot-

ing war will be a land rush of conflicting national claims. Because of the historically worthless economic value, most of these conflicting territorial claims are ignored and neglected. This will change as the major Arctic stakeholders establish trade and economic hubs in previously inaccessible terrain.



**Russia, Canada, and Denmark all claim this 1000-mile-long underwater ridge and all the resources around it. Currently, the United States claims it is an oceanic ridge and belongs to no one. (Photo: wikimedia.org.)**

Although there are many islands around the Arctic claimed by multiple nations, the underwater claims may carry more weight since they contain more resources. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is the international law that defines who owns what on the ocean. Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, each nation has a 12nm territorial waters boundary, with the ability to file for a 200nm Exclusion Economic Zone (EEZ).<sup>7</sup> EEZs include the water, the sea bed, and everything underneath it. It is possible to expand the EEZ of a nation beyond 200nm by including underwater continental shelves.<sup>8</sup> Claiming a single island attached to a continental shelf allows a nation to massively increase its claim on Arctic waters.

To understand the problem, one should examine the Lomonosov Ridge. This 1000-mile-long underwater ridge bisects the Arctic Ocean and runs roughly from Greenland to Russia. Russia, Canada, and Denmark all claim

it as part of their continental shelf.<sup>9</sup> Proving their claim would greatly increase their EEZ and enable any of those countries to claim huge swaths of the Arctic Ocean and the north pole itself. Currently, the United States claims it is an oceanic ridge and belongs to no one.

Perhaps the most important of these territorial disputes is the one involving the Northwest Passage itself. Is the Northwest Passage internal Canadian waters, or is it going to be classified as an international strait? Canada claims it is an internal zone, but other nations, including the United States, claim it is an international strait, meaning that foreign vessels can transit it.<sup>10</sup> There is no easy answer to this, and America will need to balance a close working relationship with the de-facto owner of the Northwest Passage and her own interests.

The new Arctic routes will have secondary and tertiary effects that are hard to predict, but first-order effects should not be surprising. The primary, most lasting, and dramatic effect will be a shift in trade from southern routes to northern routes. A correlated effect of that shift will be a reduction in the value of other routes. In the same way that rounding South Africa fell out of vogue once the Suez Canal opened, many important trade routes will lose their relevancy.

The biggest loser from the shifting routes will be the South China Sea. One of the reasons that the South China Sea is such a hotbed is because it is where the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Ocean trade routes all converge. With an Arctic route available, the South China Sea will lose much of the trade transiting from the Pacific to the Atlantic. It will still be a contested world trade route as the connector of the Indian and Pacific oceans, but historical relevance will diminish. Even with only a third of that trade transiting through the Bering Strait, either bound for the Russian coastal route or for the Northwest Passage, the South China Sea territory will be devalued, with difficult to predict tertiary effects.



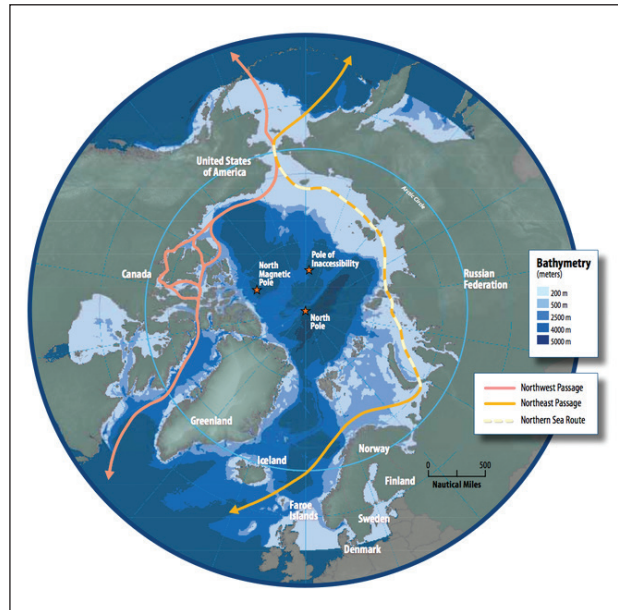
The second-biggest loser will be the Straits of Hormuz, but for very different reasons. A hydrocarbons rush in the Arctic will increase supply causing economic reductions or crashes in energy-exporting countries. This will severely damage Middle Eastern countries economically since most of their GDP is based on oil. Furthermore, access to hydrocarbons that do not have to run through the Gauntlet of Hormuz will incentivize Arctic production, further devaluing Middle Eastern oil. With decreasing oil prices, production, and trade, the Straits of Hormuz will no longer hold its current place in international politics.

Between diplomatic show-downs and economic shifts, it is hard to predict where the first Arctic conflict will occur. Strangely though, the first Arctic crisis may not be over territorial claims but rather overfishing. In 2015, roughly 30 percent of the world's fish stocks were overfished with another 60 percent reported at maximum sustainability.<sup>11</sup> With population increase, demand on the ocean will only continue to increase. The last unfished waters in the world are underneath the Arctic Ice Cap, there is a fortune to be made there. As the ice recedes, industrial fishing trawlers will go north. For geopolitics, the concern is what happens if overfishing damages safe havens and creates a food shortage. Although this is unlikely to start a war outright, the effects of bread prices on the French Revolution ("Let them eat cake") and the Arab Spring where rising food prices created local instability is a cautionary tale. Even without full-on revolution, nations with internal problems are more likely to start a war or look for scapegoats to distract their suffering populations. It may not be *causus belli*, but it could be the canary in the coal mine.

So, what does this mean for the Navy and Marine Corps Team? Where our national interests go, so too, go Marines. The future operations of the U.S. Naval and Marine Corps team will include the Arctic littorals. America's strategic goal

in the Arctic should be conventional deterrence in order to make it a zone of international cooperation. To that end, the Navy and Marine Corps should focus on deterrence and compliance with international law through forward naval bases.

Before examining Marine Corps solutions, here are more strategic suggestions:



**America will need to balance a close working relationship with the de-facto owner of the Northwest Passage and her own interests.** (Photo: wikimedia.org.)

- *Establish a new geographic command centered on the Arctic to create unity of command.* It is difficult to determine which geographic combatant commander controls the Arctic. It seems to be split between EUCOM, PACCOM, and NORTHCOM.
- *Start disentangling territorial claims with our NATO allies and Russia as well.* We have time now. Diplomacy that does not take place in a time-compressed environment will be more equitable, lasting, and defuse future conflicts.
- *Build icebreakers.* Currently, Russia has 30 icebreakers and America has 3.<sup>12</sup> We are behind, and these will be key enablers. History belongs to those who show up.

Now for some more Marine-centric solutions:

- *Get maps.* Navigation in the Arctic when magnetic north is down, true north is up, and the lines of longitude converge will be challenging. Mercator projections work well in lower latitudes, not so in the Arctic. New maps and means of navigation may be needed.

- *Joint operations with the Coast Guard.* Historically, the Coast guard is deployed "round here" while the Marines are sent "over there." That paradigm will change because of the United States possessing territory in the Arctic. Integrated operations with the Department of Homeland Security will need to become a new normal. Training exercises now will give an early look at capability gaps and synergies but also legal gaps of operations in homeland waters.

- *Send an MEU through the Northwest Passage accompanied by Canadian escorts.* There is an opportunity here to set an early precedent of Arctic cooperation in those lanes. Waiting for someone else to do so forfeits the chance of the first narrative.

- *Expand Marine presence in Greenland and Alaska.* Right now, the Army and the Air Force each have three Alaskan bases, with the Air Force also possess-

ing one base in Greenland. The Navy has none in Alaska and shut down its base in Iceland in 2006. The Marine Corps currently has no permanent presence in these places.

- *Get cold-weather gear and cold-weather training.* It seems obvious but as Napoleon and Hitler can attest, cold weather catches you unaware. It seems silly to include this suggestion, but after one too many training exercises in sunny Twentynine Palms, it is worth bringing up.

- *Continue international exercises with Scandinavian countries.* Time spent there is a worthy investment for both near-term and long-term challenges.

- *Continue modernizations.* EABO, wargames against near-peer adversaries, solving how to survive in the threat ring of precision-guided muni-

tions absolutely apply. We should be able to transplant much of it to frozen northern shores.

As the American unipolar moment fades and intrastate competition returns, America will need to balance our national interests with our national character, and our historic allies with historic isolationism. The opening of a major trade route right over our territory could catch us unprepared if we are not watching it closely. It is not too early to plant the seeds of future success.

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# Specified Narratives

The importance of “storytelling” in modern military endeavors

by Maj Robert Benda III

The world of storytelling has been around since humans first started gathering together; it has evoked emotions within a populace to unite, divide, challenge the norm, and support the latest craze. One of the singular universal aspects is the nesting of a specific narrative within a story and its focus on an identified audience or consumer. It is this consumer that will take the ideas and concepts presented in the story through the narrative and act upon them ideally in a manner the author desires. Mark Laity describes narrative as “more than just a story. Rather, a narrative contains many stories, and—more importantly—it is an explanation of events in line with an ideology, theory, or belief, and one that points the way to future actions.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, a specific narrative ties the past, present, and future together for the consumer of information and can shape the way in which that consumer acts upon the information provided. On a mathematical level, the following could be used to break down a specific narrative into its most simplified form:

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of their own, exercise planners from the strategic through tactical level appear to fall in the “rinse and repeat” methodology for OAI that are conducted in countries without answering the key questions of *why* and *what*. *Why* are we conducting this particular type of exercise in this country as opposed to its neighbor? *Why* is this country allowing us to repeatedly come back and do the same event year after year? *Why* are engagements with the same group of host nation individuals each time? *Why* do we not engage more with the local populace outside of the training areas? *What* is the overall mission we are shaping our partnership to achieve? *What* is the desired end state (focused more on the country we are conducting the OAI in than with us)? These are all very

ability,” “enhanced global partnership,” and even “deterrence” miss the mark if the planner cannot clearly articulate who the consumer of the OAI developed is intended for. Planners are too quick to point out the specific U.S. unit coming in, the mission essential tasks, or training and readiness standards a specific OAI will help that unit achieve, and fail to make the linkage to an outside entity our presence is intended for.

In its simplest form, planners develop and shape OAI around the validation of Measures of Performance (MOP) vice Measures of Effectiveness (MOE). *Joint Publication 5-0* defines MOP as “An indicator used to measure a friendly action that is tied to measuring task accomplishment,” and MOE as “An indicator used to measure a current

**Narrative = (specific Message + identified Consumer + desired Effect) or, (N=M+C+E)**

**Time**

**T**

The message(s) are the supporting bits of information that reinforce the overall specific narrative and keep it resonating within the cognitive elements of the consumer in order to support a specific effect.

Looking at the above in the context of military operations, activities, and investments (OAI) in the modern setting, being able to clearly articulate the specific narrative around each entity can reinforce standing country plans, integrated country strategies, long-term plans, and short-term executions. Against no fault

simple questions that can be answered if there was a clearly defined specified narrative that was directed toward a specified consumer(s) and linked to an effect that was measurable, observable, quantifiable, and specific.

The joint force as a whole looks to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of military power across the entire range of military operations but struggles to properly synchronize the informational aspect of OAI to assure the intent behind each event is achieved. High-level buzz words like “interoper-

system state, with change indicated by comparing multiple observations over time.”<sup>2</sup> If every OAI friendly element participates in can only answer MOP, then the OAI is a failure, which means the associated country strategy fails, the theater campaign order that directed the specific OAI fails, and the Service interests and integrated country strategies all fail.

One could argue that if MOP is what a unit is after, then why travel to a foreign country to operate and validate a mission essential task or train-



**Multinational Marine and naval forces conduct an amphibious assault exercise during UNITAS LXII in Salinas, Peru, in October 2021. An effective narrative must address why Marines are conducting this exercise and what is the destined end state of the engagement. (Photo by Sgt Lauren Brune.)**

ing and readiness standard? There is a cultural shift that needs to transpire in order to ensure OAIs are more than just a Service patting itself on the back and saying they went out and did stuff that enhanced their respective Service. There is an element of influence that needs to be incorporated to properly synchronize and validate the purpose of friendly activities across the globe.

The beginning portion of this article addressed the strategic level and need to plan OAIs with the desire and intention of having a narrative resonate amongst a specific consumer. On the other end of the spectrum at the tactical level, planners and executors can provide a bottom-up refinement to the process through interactions with locals during sight surveys and planning conferences. It is during these events that specific groups or individuals who can further reinforce a friendly presence in a region can be identified and leveraged for follow-on messaging. Concurrently, information environment key terrain can be identified in order to access entry points for both friendly and adversarial messaging/propaganda. With these key pieces of information in hand, exercise planners can work with essential staff elements (Public Affairs, Civil Affairs, Operations in the Information Environ-

ment, etc.) to shape the specific messages needed across a defined time horizon and against the desired effect to ensure the purpose of the OAI is achieved and resonates with the intended consumer. If properly executed in the planning and development portions, when it comes to the overall execution (pre, during, and post) of an OAI, friendly forces can shape tactical level actions across the collective information environment. These actions will facilitate the delivery of the specific message(s) to defined consumers which can support the operational to strategic level specified narrative identified during the OAI development.

The final part of the equation is the identification and linkage of the desired effect back to an apparatus that can properly evaluate, and validate the task given to the executing agency in order to ensure the overall goal of the specific narrative is achieved. There is a fine balance between Operations in the Information Environment (OIE) and Intelligence, but this union can aid in the planning, preparation, execution, and post-execution assessment feedback loop needed in validating the desired effect is achieved against the identified consumer. OIE and Intelligence can both provide the most likely and

most dangerous courses of action a unit might face and how an adversary may manipulate the identified consumer to become desensitized to friendly messaging. Additionally, both can provide amplifying higher classification information that could directly shape how a specific narrative is incorporated across identified key terrain within the IE.

During execution, a well-developed information environment running estimate can provide the necessary situational awareness on how messages are being received by the intended consumer(s) as well as any second or third echelon consumers who may not have been the intended individual but are persuaded by what is being discussed. These second and third-tier consumers could be the source of any counter-messaging currently taking place which could prevent the established friendly specific narrative from properly resonating with the intended consumer and, in fact, ensure what we are promoting is seen as misleading or false. This last portion is critical when it comes to supporting higher's overall end state because gaps and seams could become apparent for future exploitation.

All of this is for not if planners are not looking toward the future and shaping OAIs around a MOE-based end state. Being able to incorporate into a long-range plan the need for five to ten-year goals nested within a synchronous strategy that allows for specific narratives to be developed along the way is ideal. Realizing that every action or inaction can have a lasting effect within a specific region is the driving force behind why there needs to be a focus on the importance of specified narratives in modern-day military endeavors and OAIs.

#### Notes

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# Expansion

An analysis of China’s military consolidation and how it relates to junior officers

by 1stLt Thomas Sun

It is no secret to the world that China has been aggressively expanding its military and economic presence throughout the South China Sea. Through the construction of industrial-scale islands, military airstrips, and secret submarine bases, China’s continual efforts to expand its sphere of influence give away the ultimate goal: regional dominance. Alliances, coalition freedom of navigation voyages, and multinational joint military exercises have shown that countries such as the United States, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, and India are unwilling to roll over and accept China’s inflammatory territorial claims. To better understand China’s long-term goals, the maritime territorial disputes must be looked at in conjunction with the recent reorganizations occurring within the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). Over the last two decades, the PLA has undergone a significant reshaping driven by the ambition of China’s President, Xi Jinping. The consolidation of the military’s leadership into theater commands, the updating of professional military education requirements for non-commissioned officers (NCO) and officers, and the strengthening of the relationship between military and civilian institutions are a few changes that comprise China’s 21st-century military enlightenment. The first task of this article is to discuss the wide-scoping implications of these changes. What is the driver behind them? What types of operations does the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) want its military forces capable of conducting? In our analysis, we will compare and contrast the PLA to the doctrine and organization that characterizes the U.S. military. The second purpose of this article is to discuss why it is critical for junior of-

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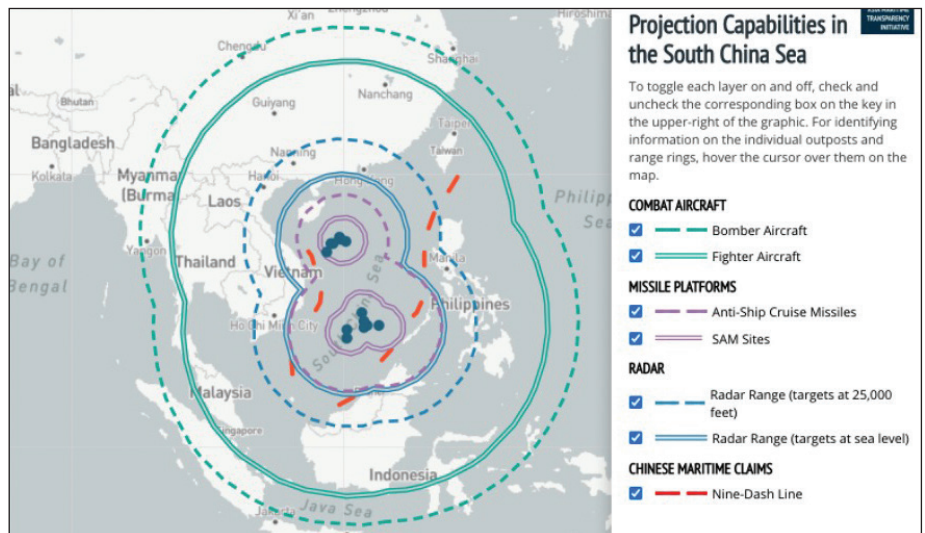
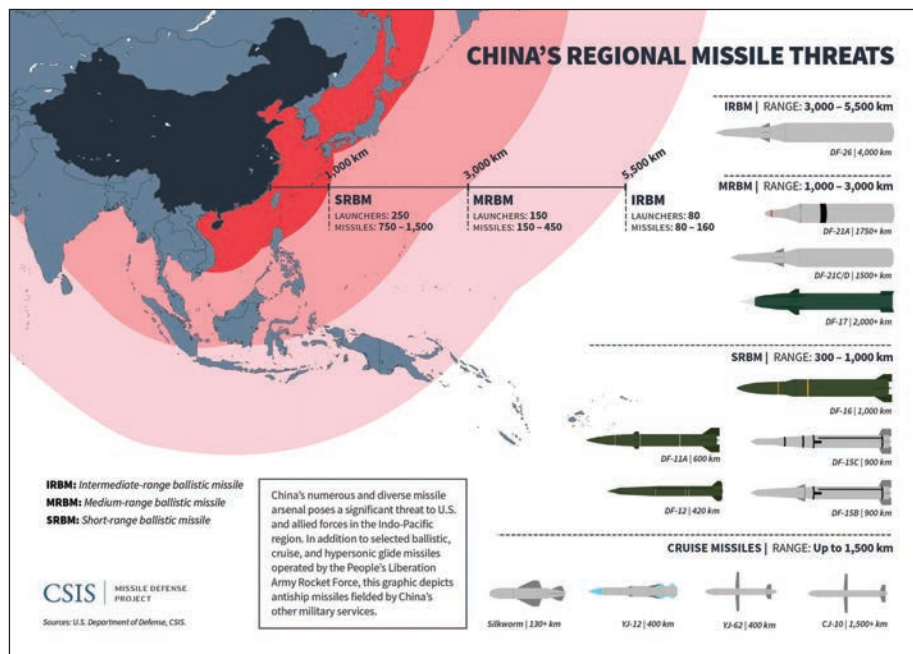


Figure 1. Projection Capabilities in the South China Sea.<sup>1</sup> This graphic depicts the offensive and defensive capabilities of the PLA specifically within the South China Sea. (Photo credit: CSIS Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative.)

ficers to continually educate themselves on China’s military progress. We will accomplish this by drawing connections between a junior officer, regardless of MOS, and the PLA, specifically discussing how doctrinal understanding can have tactical implications.

In line with previous communist trends, one of Xi Jinping’s priorities is to conduct an “anti-corruption” campaign to not only consolidate his personal power over the party but to solidify the control he retains over the PLA. According to Beijing, the only way for the CCP to achieve the Chinese dream is to have full authority over the PLA.<sup>2</sup> The purging of questionable party members in military

positions has been simultaneous with the restructuring of the military. In the early 2000s, the PLA was separated into seven military regions, each with overlapping responsibility. One example of why this structure was inefficient was the unclear theater responsibilities between the Jinan and Shenyang military regions. Both commands bore responsibility for a Korea contingency, even though they are entirely separate units in different geographical areas.<sup>3</sup> Post-reform, the PLA has been separated into five theater commands with unique areas of responsibility assigned to each based on geography. China’s theater-level organization is not dissimilar to the U.S. military in that we have different



**Figure 2. Medium and Intercontinental Range Ballistic Missiles.**<sup>4</sup> The above graphic puts into perspective the geographical reach of China's nuclear arsenal. From the graphic, the reader can see China retains the capability of striking the mainland United States with nuclear weapons. (China's Ballistic and Cruise Missiles, Missile Defense Project, Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2020 available at <https://missilethreat.csis.org/country/China/>.)

commands (i.e. PACOM, AFRICOM, CENTCOM) for specific regions of the world. Notably, the United States' combatant commands have expanded not just to cover geographic regions but different domains as well, specifically including space and cyber. Although China's theater commands are different in scope in that they only cover regions in close proximity to China and not the entire world, this shift highlights China's goal of being able to project power *beyond* its borders. This has implications for strategic military thinkers around the world, especially looked at in combination with China's increasingly wide-reaching ballistic missile programs. Understanding the PLA's shifting goals of being able to project power and military strength beyond China's borders is a good first step; however, the picture is not complete until we understand the changes being made *internally*. The PLA has made minute changes all the way down to the level of the junior NCOs and officers actually executing the CCP's orders, with an emphasis on information.

In line with the preparation and anticipation of most top-tier militaries

and senior leaders around the globe, it is almost certain that the next major war will be conducted in the cyber and space realms just as fiercely as on the ground. As one of the world leaders in technological and scientific development, China has also recognized the crucial role of information warfare. Although Beijing has identified its priorities, there exists a rift between the CCP's long-term military goals of being on par with Russia and the United States in the information environment and the current capabilities of the PLA, especially in terms of the tactics and techniques employed by the young leaders that comprise their bid for success. Much like the United States, the PLA, as a professional military, utilizes professional military education (PME) to train its forces. In order to meet Beijing's intent of training a more information-centered force, the PLA is restructuring its officer development programs, with the goal of creating well-educated, "New Type Officers capable of conducting informatized warfare through mastery of high technology."<sup>5</sup> For its NCO corps, the PLA's goal is to have every senior-level NCO be educated to the

level of a three-year college or technical school.<sup>6</sup> From analyzing the Chinese army's restructuring of both NCO and officer PME, it is clear that their long-term goals of having a highly educated, technically proficient force centered on information have taken center stage amongst the highest level of the PLA's chain of command.

The Chinese army's newfound commitment to educating both its officers and NCOs is noteworthy, but it is not without fault. Something glaringly absent from the army's renewed fervor for education is an aspect critical to all war: leadership. Army LTC Mark Snakenberg, a graduate of the School of Advanced Military Studies and Command and General Staff College, characterizes the PLA and its lack of emphasis on leadership development as a force "still a prisoner to its tradition of creating technicians."<sup>7</sup> This is a stark difference from the U.S. military in that we utilize leadership to enable *decentralized* control with centralized command, whereas China seeks to centralize both command and control (C2) for the conduct of war. Instead of a streamlined, efficient process of sending leaders at specific points in their careers to follow on education, the Chinese army utilizes over 35 different PME institutions for NCOs and a seemingly randomized selection process.<sup>8</sup> China's rapid orientation on operations in the information environment is particularly eye-opening when viewed against the backdrop of China's impressive and well-established technological culture and infrastructure. Although there are critical problems and deficiencies in the PLA's crusade to achieve information dominance, it is imperative that the United States stay on par both in cadence and intensity. Otherwise, China's development prowess, not limited by the constraints of a moral government or a free-thinking populace, will rapidly expand and far exceed our capabilities within a few decades. In total war, the United States may be strong enough to handle China by itself, but a combined Russia-China team may be more than we can handle both on the ground and in the electromagnetic spectrum.

Thus far, we have taken a wavelong overview of major changes taking place



within the PLA, both in terms of institutional organization and what types of missions Beijing wants its future military capable of conducting. But do the intricacies of the PLA's PME process really matter to a junior lance corporal or a supply officer stationed thousands of miles away? The short answer is yes. As is the case with any essay written by a lieutenant, we would be remiss if we did not pay homage to two individuals, both famed military generals: Carl von Clausewitz and James Mattis. One of Clausewitz's more famous quotes pertains to the relationship between war and politics. He states that "war is merely the continuation of policy by other means."<sup>9</sup> Armed conflict is one of the primary means by which nations pursue policy objectives, with the military being the executing agency. Thus, we can conclude that how a military is organized, trained, and postured is a reflection of the policy objectives of that country. Simply put, military organization and training are a manifestation of a government's goals that cannot be achieved through other means. Herein lies the reason why it is critical for even the most junior military members to understand other militaries, especially one as threatening and capable as China. Understanding China's military provides information on the CCP's strategic areas of focus, geopolitical goals, and how they view other countries on the world stage. These areas of interest not only provide senior military and government leaders with a focus and direction for strategic-level thinking that results in publications such as *JP 3-0, Joint Operations*, or our Nation's *National Defense Strategy*, but it also provides guidance to lower levels. Through continual education of the force, junior military members can orient to the higher-level missions of both the Marine Corps and the country. Drawing connections between a mission at the tactical or operational level, regardless of whether it is direct combat or combat service support, and the strategic objectives of the nation is critical to building cohesion and unity of effort throughout all levels of the chain of command. It allows service members to see that their individual

actions do indeed have strategic ramifications, a concept famed Marine Corps Gen Victor Krulak entitles "strategic corporal." The mechanism through which we build these connections is by developing the mental acuity and skill set necessary to be able to translate strategic-level knowledge of our adversaries into a tactical level of perspective. As Sun Tzu says, "if you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles."<sup>10</sup>

The second reason why it is critical for military members to study and understand the Chinese military pertains to understanding the culture of the organization, with an emphasis on how decisions are made. There exist numerous fundamental differences between the United States and

the invisible connection between a military's culture and tactics on the ground, we look at a hypothetical of a seasoned company commander who finds himself in the middle of expeditionary advanced base operations. After several years of self-study and a year of rigorous coursework at resident Expeditionary Warfare School in Quantico, VA, this captain is well acquainted with the PLA's bias toward centralized C2. Despite not having the full picture of the battlefield at any moment in time, he is presented with a choice: utilize his company's combat power to destroy an enemy convoy an overhead RQ-11B Raven identified, or attempt to destroy a likely enemy communications node being used to C2 PLA forces. Falling back on his knowledge of how the PLA

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***While one of these cultures values equality, patriotism, and individual liberties, the other values loyalty to the state, social credit, and harmony—government instituted or not.***

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China's views of how a military and society ought to function. While one of these cultures values equality, patriotism, and individual liberties, the other values loyalty to the state, social credit, and harmony—government instituted or not. Organizations are reflective of culture and understanding how an institution is organized can be very revealing in regard to how senior leaders want their subordinates to think and act. Education and the gathering of intelligence allows us to make educated guesses about how Chinese military officers make decisions in tactical, operational, and strategic environments. This has obvious battlefield ramifications in terms of being able to anticipate enemy decisions and schemes of maneuver. Referring back to doctrine, having a better understanding of how the enemy thinks allows us to increase tempo, potentially disrupt or even shatter the enemy's OODA loop, and overall gain advantages both in time and space.<sup>11</sup> To better understand

fights, he decides to pursue the communications node using the logic that the potential destruction of a C2 facility would have disparate impacts across the battlefield and will likely have a better chance of disrupting the enemy's system than targeting the convoy. While this example is wholly too simplistic for an actual wargaming scenario or a real-life conflict, it highlights that knowledge, applied at a decisive time and place, has the potential to generate temporal, positional, or other types of advantage on the battlefield.

When describing the epic naval battle between England's Royal Navy and the Spanish Armada, Max Boot concluded that a "crucial element of English success was their commanders' ability to learn on the fly, make adjustments, and attempt new tactics."<sup>12</sup> The foundation for implementing novel tactics and making quick adjustments to outmaneuver our enemy is education combined with the experience to recognize when the situation dictates such action.

The final reason it is paramount to understand the PLA is because the United States and China are incredibly interconnected globally, especially economically and militarily. China's actions in one part of the globe (for instance, moving military forces toward Taiwan or new trade agreements with North Korea) affects how the United States responds. On the flip side of the coin, our freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea elicit a response from China. Because each chess move ultimately has some type of effect on the opponent, having a grasp on the amorphous relationship allows us to appreciate the ramifications of each action and event across the spectrum of nation-to-nation interactions. The gravity of this deepens when we take a brief look at who China associates with on the world stage. Deeply connected to nations such as Russia and North Korea, both of whom we oppose existentially and both of whom consistently attempt to undermine our global interests; China is not to be taken lightly in any form.

In conclusion, the re-organization of the PLA into consolidated theater commands as well as the CCP's shifting goals to the information realm and operations beyond Chinese borders are definitive areas of interest for militaries around the world. It is imperative the United States keep up with China's rapid development to not only be able to counter them in a potential conflict but to also stay current on China's long-term goals in all areas of the world, whether these goals are being actively pursued or not. To sum up the importance of understanding our adversaries, whether we are actively engaged with them or in peace, we refer to the warrior monk James Mattis. The U.S. military as a whole, *especially* its officer corps, needs to take the approach of "be polite, be professional, but have a plan to kill everybody you meet." Whether one is engaged in combat against a lone, bedraggled enemy soldier using his last ounces of life to charge with a bayonet or an entire nation, one fact remains unchanging: preparation is paramount.

Notes

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# Our Own Worst Enemy

Improving maneuver warfare in 2025 and beyond

by Maj Joshua B. Gibbs

The central tenets of the maneuver warfare mindset are shock, disruption, and flexibility. These actions are used cooperatively in order to hinder the enemy's decision making and ultimately their will to fight. The Marine Corps went a step further in one of its premier warfighting publications, *FMFM 1*. It describes the concept of maneuver warfare as a philosophy of warfighting itself:

Maneuver warfare is a way of thinking in or about war that should shape our every action ... It is a state of mind born of a bold will, intellect, initiative, and ruthless opportunism. In short, maneuver warfare is a philosophy for generating the greatest decisive effect against the enemy at the least possible cost to ourselves—a philosophy for “fighting smart.”<sup>1</sup>

The three greatest impediments to maximizing the attributes of maneuver warfare as the Marine Corps prepares to face the challenges of 2025 and beyond are *complacency, confusion, and misunderstanding*.

## Complacency

After the world entered the Atomic Age in 1945, U.S. military doctrine was dominated by the assumption that prior lessons learned were no longer relevant in the face of such destructive power. This led to drastic attempts from American leadership—including President Harry S. Truman—at cutting the budgets of conventional forces such as the Navy and Marine Corps. Secretary of Defense Louis A. Johnson believed the United States to be the sole owner of this new technology and thus began a campaign to reduce our naval footprint. In a conversation with ADM

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Richard L. Connally, the Commander of U.S. Naval Forces Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean, Johnson stated:

Admiral, the Navy is on its way out. There's no reason for having a Navy and a Marine Corps. General [of the Army] Bradley tells me amphibious operations are a thing of the past. We'll never have any more amphibious operations. That does away with the Marine Corps. And the Air Force can do anything the Navy can do, so that does away with the Navy.<sup>2</sup>

History would affirm this notion to be wildly incorrect, but it must be understood that these statements were made in the shadow of a mushroom cloud. The United States had used a weapon whose power was thought to be unmatched and prevented even the most ardent military veteran from realizing that, for all of its bluster, our future attempts at using a nuclear deterrent had one glaring flaw: other countries soon realized we would not strike first.

That we have become complacent and steadfast in regard to our thinking about maneuver warfare (and our own amphibious landing doctrine) is not surprising when we look at our strategy since the Korean War, which proved the post-World War II budget cuts to be a costly mistake. These cuts were the cause of initial setbacks when North Korea invaded the South less than five years later as well as ill-equipped and in-

adequately trained U.S. military forces making their way into Asia. President Truman called for a naval blockade of North Korea shortly after the invasion, but his order could not be carried out because the Navy no longer had an adequate number of warships to do so. Only the Marine Corps was prepared to deploy because its commanders had stored and maintained equipment and weapons used in World War II.

The Corps' successful amphibious operations would be echoed in our framework for Vietnam, Grenada, Somalia, and the Middle East. Bolstered by our readiness, the Marine Corps' planning for future conflicts was largely the same in that one of the keys to victory lay primarily with forcible entry operations that would control the seaports and allow for follow-on forces. The reliance on nuclear weapons had been replaced by the idea that guerrilla warfare should be met with a complex and strategic counterinsurgency campaign that relied heavily on rapid strikes from the sea.

In 1972, shortly before the United States ended its involvement in Vietnam, Marine Corps Commandant Gen Robert E. Cushman stated, “We are pulling our heads out of the jungle and getting back into the amphibious business.”<sup>3</sup> Despite the Commandant's statement, we swapped the jungles of Vietnam for the deserts of the Middle East. The Carter Doctrine of 1980 formally stated that oil supplies in the Persian Gulf were of vital American interest and thus we dedicated a significant portion of our doctrine into specializing in this region.

This is not to suggest the Marine Corps should abandon its amphibious

operations altogether; rather, it should embrace regional specialization and scenario-dependent flexibility within our structure so as to keep our forces truly mobile. This could have been accomplished without betraying our identity as the *first to fight in every clime and place* instead of becoming a rotating, sedentary unit as we have predominantly been since 2003. The Marine Corps has steadily maintained a significant presence on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan, a directive that stands in stark contrast to our naval heritage. No more is this exhibited by reports that in 2009 Helmand Province in Afghanistan was frequently referred to as “Marineistan.”<sup>4</sup>

We have become so complacent in regard to our successful ability to meet the challenges presented to us that we occasionally confuse mission accomplishment with mission preparedness.

**Confusion**

The reason for the Marine Corps’ existence is to conduct amphibious, forcible entry operations. Our ability to successfully accomplish these missions on short notice is what separates us from the other Services but does not necessarily limit our roles to combat.

Our continuous refinement of both the MAGTF and Maritime Prepositioning Force concepts is what keeps us at the forefront of other important missions such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The Navy and Marine Corps are led primarily by senior officers and senior enlisted personnel who still retain visions of conventional landings on foreign shores because that is what we have been taught in our professional military institutions. These experienced leaders have been exposed to the lessons learned in the post-Vietnam and DESERT STORM eras of the Marine Corps and used this as justification for primarily focusing on not just the concept of amphibious landings but committing significant portions of our mindset in doing so.

The unintended consequence is that we have placed unrealistic readiness demands on some of our units. In 2016, the Marine Corps reported only 31 percent of F/A-18 Hornets and

29 percent of CH-53Es were mission capable.<sup>5</sup> These issues were attributed to the 2013 budget cuts and increased air operations against the Islamic State which were being conducted with fewer experienced pilots, fewer skilled maintainers, and aircraft without adequate spare parts. In the spring of 2018, it was reported that manned aviation accidents across the Services had increased almost 40 percent, killing 133 service members since 2013.

In Fiscal Year 2018, aviation accident deaths hit a 6-year high, with another 38 pilots or crew killed, bringing the total to 177. For the Marine Corps, aviation accidents rose almost every year from 2011 to 2017.

of U.S. Special Operations Command, Gen Richard D. Clarke. The investigation concluded in January 2020 and determined the current Special Operations Forces (SOF) culture placed its importance on combat deployments above all else. In the wake of these findings, GEN Clarke and Command Chief MSgt Gregory A. Smith, USAF, the Command’s Senior Enlisted Leader, wrote a letter directed to the SOCOM community: “The bottom line is that we have disproportionately focused on SOF employment and mission accomplishment at the expense of the training and development of our force,” they said. “In some cases, this imbalance has set conditions for unacceptable conduct



**Figure 1. Marine Corps Aviation mishaps.** (Source: Tara Copp, “Marine Corps Aviation Mishaps on the Rise, up 80 Percent,” *Marine Corps Times*, [April 2018], available at <https://www.marinecorpstimes.com>.)

A sobering reminder of our focus on mission accomplishment over mission preparedness came at the expense of six Marines who were killed in December 2018 when a F/A-18D Hornet from Fighter Attack Squadron 242 (VMFA(AW)-242) collided with a KC-130J during a nighttime refueling exercise off the coast of Japan. Personnel shortfalls, unreasonable daily schedules, and unclear objectives from senior leaders outside the squadron had slowed the repair of jets, resulting in fewer training hours.

This lack of training affects all communities, even the most elite of our warfighters. In 2019, an internal review was ordered by the Commander

to occur due to a lack of leadership, discipline, and accountability.<sup>6</sup>

Another factor the Marine Corps may be more reluctant to admit is that few Commanders are willing to tell their superiors their unit is not ready to “fight tonight” or even more disturbing, that these warnings may go unheeded. Despite personally submitting such concerns years before their incident, LtCol James Compton, the Squadron Commander for VMFA(AW)-242, was relieved in April 2019 and spoke about the incident several months later:

The hard reality is that this unit under my watch was not prepared for combat. Because we could not do a basic thing. That’s hard. That’s a hard



reality to face. I do blame myself and I'll always blame myself. The only reason I'm talking now is because I'm not convinced that we're going to change anything. The United States Marine Corps, an organization to which I loved and had devoted my life to, I want to make sure that it learns from this tragedy. It has to.<sup>7</sup>

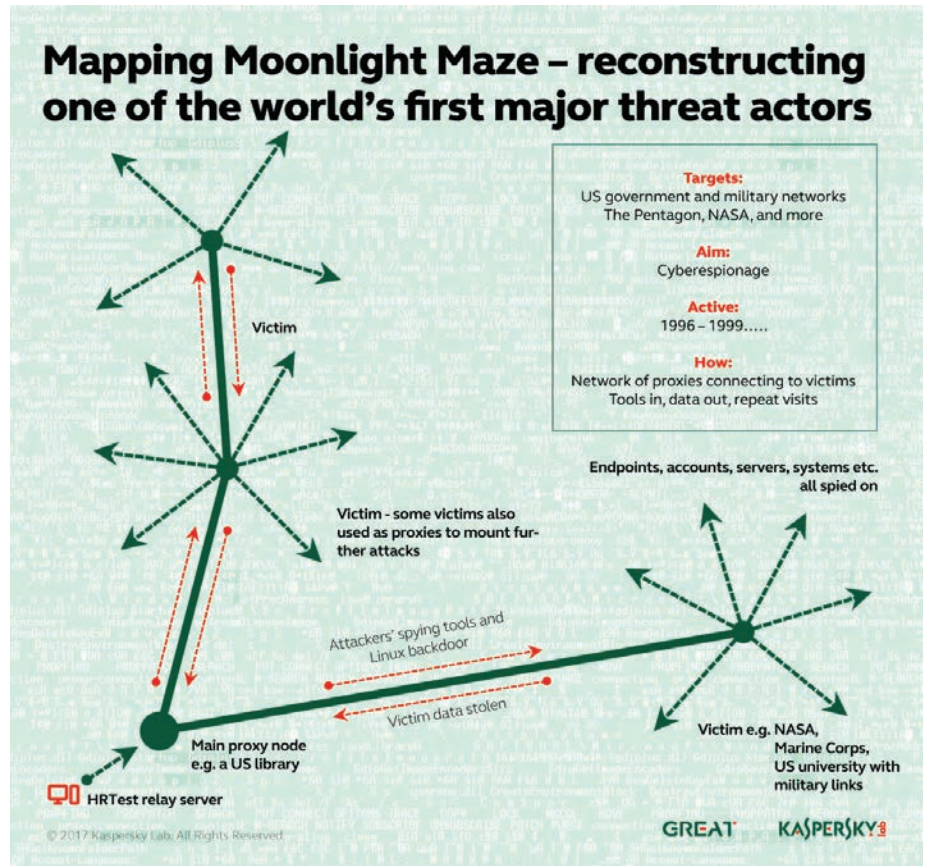
The Marine Corps can shoot, move, and communicate in physical domains when given the proper training and equipment, including sea control and sea denial within a littoral operating environment. However, the future of warfare will be fought in a new, ever-evolving domain, and it is one that not enough of our leaders understand.

### Misunderstanding

Studying our history is essential to adhere to our core missions of “making Marines and winning battles,” but we should not ignore social and scientific changes that directly affect the modern battlespace. To say the lessons we learned at Iwo Jima, Inchon, and Hue City are entirely relevant today is true only in the broadest sense and more often invokes the nostalgia of our illustrious history rather than providing specific examples that could be used in contemporary warfare.

In 1996, Russian hackers infiltrated the computer systems of NASA, the Pentagon, the Department of Energy, and several other government agencies around the world as they stole tens of thousands of files containing technical research, military maps, troop configurations, military hardware designs, and encryption techniques. This attack remains one of the most devastating breaches of U.S. military computers in our history and is one of the first instances of cyber espionage. The U.S. Government's investigation into these attacks was designated *Moonlight Maze* and concluded their findings in 1999.

Despite the threats and vulnerabilities uncovered by *Moonlight Maze*, the attacks of 11 September 2001 would once again focus our national defense priorities on conventional warfare in the Middle East. It was not until 2008 when the destructive computer worm known as *Agent.BTZ* forced the U.S.



**Figure 2. Mapping Moonlight Maze.** (Source: Pierluigi Paganini, “Joining the Dots between the Ancient Moonlight Maze Espionage Campaigns and the Turla APT,” *Security Affairs*, [April 2017], available at <https://securityaffairs.com>.)

Government to take decisive action.

The spyware was so devastating and widespread within U.S. Central Command that, once discovered, it took almost fourteen months to clean up classified and unclassified networks. Subsequent analysis would reveal *Agent.BTZ* not only originated from Russia but also contained the same code uncovered by *Moonlight Maze* two decades earlier. As a result of this attack, U.S. Cyber Command was established in 2009 but would not be elevated to a full and independent unified combatant command until 2018.

In 2017, researchers from cybersecurity provider Kaspersky Lab and Kings College London announced they had discovered a connection between *Moonlight Maze* and several other high-profile cyberattacks directed at governments and defense contractors around the globe, including *Agent.BTZ*. Juan Andres Guerrero-Saade, a Senior Security Researcher at Kaspersky Lab,

issued a warning about their findings. “In the late 1990s, no-one foresaw the reach and persistence of a coordinated cyberespionage campaign,” he said. “It is also a reminder that well-resourced adversaries aren’t going anywhere, it’s up to us to defend systems with skills to match.”<sup>8</sup>

War drives technology, and to combat our misunderstanding, one of our primary maneuver warfare focuses should be on cyber warfare. It should not be an after-thought—taking a back seat to conventional troop deployments—but rather a series of dedicated offensive and defensive actions. This ties in with the priorities of the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen David H. Berger, especially when we consider his emphasis on unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), which he believes will be paramount in the wars to come.

In the 1980s, the Marine Corps led the way in UAV development but now lags behind the other Services. As such,

Gen Berger has directed more attention to UAVs but will undoubtedly face resistance from decades of aviation culture who believe manned aircraft will always be the best option. It would be difficult to envision any Commandant who would advocate for the outright replacement of our aviation fleet with UAVs but their increased use should come

out proper cyber-security measures in place at multiple levels, one competent computer hacker can cripple an entire regiment or squadron of combat-ready resources. A 2020 testing report released by the Pentagon found 873 software issues within the F-35, as well as cybersecurity vulnerabilities identified in previous reports, remain unresolved.<sup>11</sup>

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***The future of warfare will be defined by technologies that include artificial intelligence, quantum-based computing, and the evolution of space-based internet infrastructure.***

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with two important distinctions: they are less expensive than both fixed- and rotary-winged assets and the destruction of a drone does not cost American lives. Additionally, it does not always require search and rescue/retrieve operations, which puts more lives at risk.

The increased use of UAVs means an increased use of wireless capability and thus a dramatic increase in the necessity for secure networks across the Internet of Things (IoT), which refers to any device that connects, transmits, and receives data across the internet. In the digital domain, targets are not simply limited to files on a server but expanded to linked networks, systems, and control grids. The use of cloud services and the expansion of the IoT are expected to reach more than twenty billion devices in 2020 (including military hardware), which means a cyber-attacker from anywhere in the world has numerous targets from which to choose.<sup>9</sup>

As our technology becomes more complex, our physical vulnerabilities grow. A 5th generation fighter jet—those developed during the first part of the 21st century—contains thousands of computerized components, and without proper security measures, it is susceptible to devastating compromise. Lockheed Martin describes the wireless capabilities of the F-35 Lightning II as “an information and communications gateway, sharing its operational picture with the ground, sea and air assets.”<sup>10</sup> With-

**Conclusion**

The *National Defense Strategy* describes an emphasis on a “lethal, resilient, and agile”<sup>12</sup> Joint Force that can not only exploit technology but operate across multiple domains within denied environments. It places a focus on long-term, strategic competition with Russia and China and makes clear the priority is a forward presence in the Indo-Pacific region. Both Russia and China have spent decades placing a priority on developing superior electronic and cyber warfare capabilities, but we must be cautious not to use the “nuclear model” and concentrate solely on major nation-states to analyze the cyber threat. There are numerous nations and organizations capable of cyber-terrorism and any one of them who finds a vulnerability in our network can cause massive disruption or destruction.

The Marine Corps can respect our heritage as soldiers of the sea while simultaneously acknowledging the water is now digital. The future of warfare will be defined by technologies that include artificial intelligence, quantum-based computing, and the evolution of space-based internet infrastructure. China has already executed an aggressive multi-billion-dollar investment into artificial intelligence because they consider the space dominance a prerequisite for information dominance. China regards the ability to use space-based systems and to deny them to the enemy as “cen-

tral to modern warfare.”<sup>13</sup> As proof of this investment, China launched the world’s first quantum communications-enabled satellite in 2016.

At the risk of sounding like GEN Bradley, this author would never go so far as to call amphibious landings a thing of the past because we will always have a need for a strong, physical force, but we must also understand how the overall battlespace has expanded. Few countries around the world can match American firepower in a traditional conflict and this is widely understood, despite the saber-rattling from certain despotic leaders.

This is also why so many persistent attacks occur within the cyber domain. We are simply not adequately equipped to respond to these threats because the United States has lost its technological advantage over near-peer military rivals.

As Gen Cushman said in the 1970s, “We are pulling our heads out of the jungle and getting back into the amphibious business.” In 2025 and beyond, the Marine Corps needs to pull our heads out of the desert and move forward into the cyber business. This necessity for experimentation is precisely why the Brute Krulak Center for Innovation and Creativity was opened at the Marine Corps University in 2019. Congress, U.S. Cyber Command, and an engaged private sector must coordinate and expeditiously integrate space/cyber capabilities to meet the cross-domain challenges posed by 21st-century threats. A waiting period of ten to twenty years from experiment to employment is simply unacceptable.

In the future fight, we cannot depend on disparate solutions developed in functional Service stovepipes. Future [adversaries] will have profound information and access to capabilities providing cross-domain effects, maneuver, and fires. Combat capabilities conceived and procured as disparate packages will be torn apart by peer adversaries, no matter how well they are put together on a future battlefield.<sup>14</sup>

These future adversaries are not looming over some distant horizon; they are here, and they are ahead of us. We must regain the advantage.



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>Author’s Note: The opinions expressed are those of the author alone and do not reflect those of the Marine Corps, the DOD, or the U.S. government.



The Brute Krulak Center for Innovation and Future Warfare Presents

# 10 YEARS OUTSIDE

## A CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST

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

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2,500-3,500 words

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# The Soviet-Japanese Conflict of 1939

Impacts on advances in tactics and technology in Europe

by Dr. Elliott Hurwitz

**C**ritical advances in tactics and technology improved the performance of European military forces in key land battles of World War II. The best-known of these was the *blitzkrieg*, the use of tanks to penetrate and surround enemy infantry, trucks, and artillery. This was used by the *Wehrmacht* in the invasion of Poland in September 1939 and France in May 1940, and its success very much caught the world's attention.

While the *blitzkrieg* had been developed in Europe by Field Marshals Heinz Guderian and Erwin Rommel, *concurrent with these advances in Europe were the improved tactics and technology of the Red Army based largely on lessons learned in Soviet conflicts in Asia during the late 1930s.* These advances greatly improved Soviet performance against the *Wehrmacht* in European World War II campaigns and achieved an important and largely unrecognized influence.

## Decisive Advances

These advances included: *Combined arms*, or collective use of fighters and bombers in conjunction with motorized artillery, infantry, and tanks. For example,

- In August 1939, under the command of Gen Georgy Zhukov, the Soviets launched massive artillery and air attack on the Japanese. Deploying approximately 50,000 troops to cross the *Khalkhyn Gol* river in Mongolia, the Russians attacked elite Japanese forces with infantry, tanks, massed artillery, and over 550 Soviet Air Force fighters and bombers.

## Improved tactics:

- Zhukov used mobile battle groups

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**The Soviet-Japan (Manchukuo) border areas of the 1930s. (Map provided by author.)**

***These advances greatly improved Soviet performance against the Wehrmacht ...***

to encircle the Japanese Army in Manchuria in 1939 and capture vulnerable supply areas. He later used similar double envelopment tactics (as had been used by Hannibal at Cannae in 216 BC) at Stalingrad in 1942–43 to hold the *Wehrmacht* fixed in the center, build an undetected mass of force in lateral areas, and launch a pincer attack on the wings to trap the enemy.

- Zhukov was the principal Soviet advocate of tactics of “deep operations” and armored assaults also championed by Marshals Mikhail Tukhachevsky and Konstantin Rokossovsky.
- Rokossovsky was among the first Russians to realize the potential of armored assault. He was an early supporter of the creation of a strong armored core in the Red Army as championed earlier by Marshal Tukhachevsky in the theory of deep operations.

## Improved technology:

- Ingenious underwater bridges used by the Soviets at the *Battle of Khalkhyn Gol* would later take the Germans by surprise in the European conflict.
- Development of the T-34 tank based on Asian events in the 1930s. The T-34 Soviet medium tank later achieved a very high profile in Europe, was produced from 1940 to 1958, and has been credited as the most effective, efficient, and influential armored design of World War II. By 1958, 84,000 T-34s had been produced.

The battle experience gained by Zhukov at *Khalkhyn Gol* was used in December 1941 in the Battle of Moscow where Zhukov launched the first successful Soviet counteroffensive against German operations in *Operation Barbarossa*. A year after repulsing the Germans from the capital, Zhukov planned and executed the offensive at Stalingrad using a double-envelopment technique



similar to that used at *Khalkhyn Gol* in which Soviet forces held the enemy fixed in the center, built up a mass of force in undetected areas, and launched pincer attacks on the flanks to trap the enemy.

### Background in Asia

While Korea had been a Japanese colony since 1910, by 1931 the Japanese had occupied Manchuria, the large Chinese province adjacent to the Soviet and Outer Mongolian borders (see map on previous page). Outer Mongolia was dependent on the USSR for security, and after occupying Manchuria, Japan turned its interest to Siberia, Mongolia, and other bordering Soviet-controlled territories that contained large volumes of the raw materials needed by the Japanese empire.

From May to September 1939, an undeclared border war was fought between the Soviet Union, Outer Mongolia, and Japan. While the Japanese stated that the border between Manchuria and Outer Mongolia consisted of the Khalkhyn Gol River, the Soviets and their allies maintained that the actual border was ten miles to the east. *The Battle of Khalkhyn Gol was the decisive engagement of the Soviet–Japanese Border War.*

The principal Japanese army occupying Manchuria in 1939 consisted of elite units of the Kwantung Army. The incident began on 11 May 1939 when Manchurian cavalry drove Mongolian forces across the Khalkhyn Gol River. On 13 May, Mongolian forces returned in greater numbers, and the Manchurians were unable to dislodge them. However, on 28 May, Soviet-Mongolian forces surrounded the Japanese forces and destroyed them.

### Advent of a New Soviet Commander

In June 1939, the Soviets dispatched a new Corps commander to the region, Gen Georgy Zhukov. Zhukov also brought additional motorized and armored forces to the combat zone, including Army Group I troops from the Transbaikal and Siberian districts responsible for the defense of the Siberia-Manchuria border. Zhukov was the most outstanding Soviet commander of World War II and was later named



*Japanese soldiers crossing the Khalkhyn Gol in May 1939. (Photo provided by author.)*

a Hero of the Great Patriotic War. He commanded Soviet forces against the *Wehrmacht* in the battles of Moscow in 1941 and Stalingrad in 1942–43 and was appointed Defense Minister after the war. It was in these crucial European campaigns that Zhukov used the lessons he had learned in Central Asia that achieved important—and largely unrecognized—advantages for his forces.

ments that would attack Soviet troops on the East bank of the river with the two Japanese thrusts meeting on the wings. The Japanese first prong succeeded in crossing the river driving back the Soviets and advancing south along the West bank. However, Zhukov detected the threat and launched a counterattack with 450 tanks. The Soviet armored force, despite being unsupported

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***... Zhukov used the lessons he had learned in Central Asia that achieved important—and largely unrecognized—advantages for his forces.***

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### Soviet-Japanese Border War

Throughout June 1939, there were reports of Soviet and Japanese activity on both sides of the river. On June 27, the Japanese Air Force struck the Soviet airbase at Tamsak-Bulak in Mongolia, surprising the Russians. At the end of the month, the Japanese army commander was given permission to “expel the invaders.” The Japanese planned a two-pronged assault, with the first consisting of three infantry regiments advancing across the Khalkhyn Gol River, destroying Soviet forces on the West bank and then advancing south to the Kawatama Bridge. The second prong was comprised of three tank regi-

by infantry, attacked the Japanese on three sides and nearly encircled them. Meanwhile, the Japanese second prong attacked on 2 July, moving in darkness to avoid Soviet artillery. A pitched battle ensued in which the Japanese detachment lost over half its armor but still could not break through Soviet forces. After a Soviet counterattack on 9 July repulsed the battered Japanese force, the Japanese withdrew. The two armies continued to clash over the next two weeks on a front running along the east bank of the Khalkhyn Gol River. Zhukov, whose army was 465 miles from its base of provisions, assembled a fleet of 2,600 trucks to supply his troops

while the Japanese suffered severe supply problems because of a lack of motor transport.

On 23 July, the Japanese launched another large-scale assault, sending two infantry regiments against Soviet forces defending the Kawatama Bridge. Japanese artillery supported the attack with a massive artillery barrage that consumed more than half of their ammunition over two days. The attack made some progress but failed to break through Soviet lines and reach the bridge. The Japanese disengaged on 25

artillery, and Soviet Air Force planes. Once the Japanese were pinned down by the advance of Soviet center units, armored units swept around the flanks and attacked them in the rear, cutting lines of communication and overcoming desperate Japanese counterattacks. This achieved a classic double envelopment and on 25 August when the two wings of Zhukov's attack linked up on the river, Japanese forces were trapped. On 26 August, a Japanese counterattack to relieve surrounded infantry troops failed, and on 27 August, a Japanese

Hitler launched an invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939, and World War II in Europe began. Stalin, free of worry of a second front on his western border, approved the Soviet invasion of eastern Poland, which began on 17 September.

### Cessation of Conflict and Implications for the United States

Regarding their conflict in Asia, the Soviets and Japanese signed a cease-fire on 15 September. The defeat of the Japanese by Zhukov at Khalkhyn Gol had convinced the Japanese Imperial General Staff that the North Strike Group Strategy was untenable. This strategy had been favored by the Army to seize Siberia as far as Lake Baikal and gain access to its resources, but *instead, the South Strike Group strategy favored by the Navy gained ascendancy*. This was intended to seize Southeast Asian resources—especially those of the petroleum and mineral-rich Dutch East Indies—and led directly to the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

### Conclusion

While *Wehrmacht* Field Marshals Heinz Guderian and Erwin Rommel had been the main architects of the development of the *blitzkrieg*, there had been important concurrent advances in the tactics and technology of the Soviet Army based largely on its conflicts in Asia during the late 1930s. These advances greatly improved Soviet performance against the Wehrmacht in critical European World War II campaigns and achieved an important—and largely unrecognized—influence.




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## ***The agreement signed in Moscow permitted the Soviet Union to occupy eastern Poland and provided spheres of influence in Finland, Latvia, and Estonia.***

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July as a result of mounting casualties and depleted artillery stores. They had suffered over 5,000 casualties but still had 75,000 men and several hundred aircraft facing Soviet forces and the battle drifted into a stalemate. Zhukov massed an armored force of three tank brigades and two mechanized brigades (armored cars with attached infantry support) allocated to the Soviet left and right wings. In addition, he had three infantry divisions and large air wings to deploy, while his Mongolian allies committed two (horse-mounted) cavalry divisions. The Japanese Kwantung Army, in contrast, could muster only 2 light infantry divisions at the point of attack, most of which had trekked over 100 miles to the battle site. Japanese intelligence also failed to detect the scale of the Soviet buildup.

### Utilization of Improved Tactics

On 20 August 1939, 2 weeks before the start of World War II in Europe, Zhukov launched a massive artillery barrage accompanied by attacks by over 550 fighters and bombers—the first fighter/bomber offensive in Soviet Air Force history. Deploying around 50,000 Soviet and Mongolian troops to cross the the Khalkhyn Gol, on 20 August, the Russians attacked elite Japanese forces with infantry, tanks, massed

attempt to break out of the encirclement also failed. When the surrounded forces refused to surrender, Zhukov hit them again with artillery and air attacks. By 31 August, battered remnants of Japanese infantry were on the contested Soviet side of the border but the commander prepared a counteroffensive. However, this offensive was canceled, and the battle ended.

### Concurrent (Political-Military) Events in Europe

Throughout the interval during which Zhukov had “expelled the aggressors” from Soviet territory, great events had taken place 4,000 miles to the west. Zhukov's opening success at *Khalkhyn Gol* had given the Russians freedom to sanction German Foreign Minister Joachim Ribbentrop's trip to Moscow on 23 August. By 24 August, Russia and Germany had signed a “nonaggression pact” pertaining to the European war. The agreement signed in Moscow permitted the Soviet Union to occupy eastern Poland and provided spheres of influence in Finland, Latvia, and Estonia. These territories gave the Soviet Union the buffer it needed to feel secure from an invasion from the West. The day after Zhukov's victory at Khalkhyn Gol, with the Germans reassured of Soviet intentions in Europe,



# “Bozhee Dopomozhee. Here They Come!”<sup>1</sup>

Defending against a mechanized force

by Mr. Brendan B. McBreen

“E cho-two!” I yelled into the radio, but the net was dead. Artillery detonations, overwhelmingly loud and close, pounded in my eardrums. I tried to look for our weapons positions over on the next finger, but great gouts of black earth were being thrown in the air and smoke clouded everything.

On the muddy road below, dozens of squat dark armored vehicles, ugly and lethal, surged forward, firing at us as they moved. Three of them stopped and turned, raking the buildings where 3d Platoon was positioned, trying to fire back, overwhelmed.

In minutes, the enemy was through us. The violence and speed of their attack were a shock. I had thought that close air support and artillery would kill the enemy long before he got to us, but I was wrong, especially in this weather. Denied of all support, my company *still* needed to *block* this road.

What had I done? My defensive preparations were sloppy. I had units, guns, and missiles in position, but they were not coordinated. Some were badly sited on wide forward slopes. Some had no mutual support. I should have forced better integration. I had failed my Marines, and I had failed my mission.

“Sir?” My eyes blinked open in the sunlight. The corporal said, “Sir? Wake up. The OpsO, Maj Nette, is here to see you.”

“Good afternoon, Captain!” Maj Nette boomed, “Col Swinton sent me up here with a det from the heavy ma-



Enemy mechanized vehicles. (Photo provided by author.)

**>Mr. McBreen is a former Infantry Officer who retired in 2012 after 25 years of service.**

**“How do we stop the invasion? With concentrated antitank and machinegun fires.”**

chinegun platoon. I want to look over your positions, so grab a notebook and let’s take a walk. While I talk, you can draw me a picture.”

**Maj Nette Holds a Seminar**

“It looks to me,” the major said, “like

you placed your platoons first and then *they* positioned their own weapons afterward. That’s backward. You’ll be overrun—like Task Force Smith! What do you know about engagement areas?”

“Not much,” I said, “I was going to reorganize my antitank weapons this afternoon.” I did not want to mention my dream about the Russians.

He looked at me and said, “An engagement area [EA] is an area where the commander intends to contain and destroy an enemy force with the massed effects of all available weapons and supporting systems.<sup>2</sup> And it’s not just for tanks, but for any enemy attack.” We walked together down the hill.

“There are seven steps. Each step is a lot of work for you and your Marines. Let me walk you through them and then we’ll discuss *your* units and *your* EA.”

**“One. Identify enemy avenues of approach.”**

Study the dirt. This is IPB [intelligence preparation of the battlefield] steps 1 and 2, pure and simple.<sup>3</sup> If battalion gives you an MCOO [modified combined obstacle overlay] and terrain effects matrix, good, but *you* need to think through the military aspects of *your* terrain in *your* area of operation—key terrain, observation and fields of fire, cover and concealment, obstacles, and avenues of approach—KOCOA!

**“Two. Identify the most likely enemy course of action.”**

“This is IPB step 4. Imagine the enemy’s attack. Think! Where is he going to come? How will his reconnaissance come? Does he know where we are? Will he set up an SBF [support by fire]? Will he fire artillery?”

**“Three. Determine where to kill the enemy.”**

“Pick an EA where the enemy is exposed to mass fires. Draw a box. Select a TRP [target reference point] in the middle of each EA, and two or three more so you can control fires.<sup>4</sup> Record TRP grids. Identify a trigger line to initiate fires. Pick one EA for each approach.”<sup>5</sup>

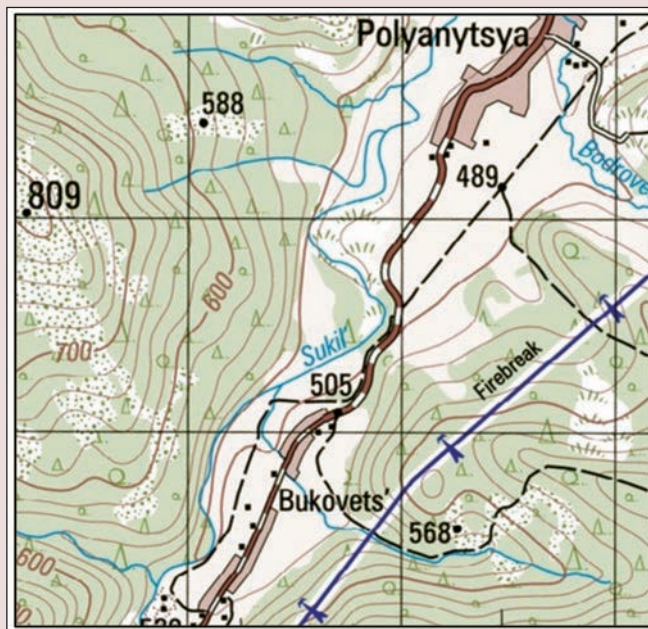
**“Four. Position weapons.”**

“Big to little. This is the hard part. What kills enemy vehicles? Missiles and machineguns. Put them in *first*. Mass heavy fires in the EA by assigning interlocking sectors of fire and flank shots. And every weapon needs *defilade*—something solid between them and the enemy.

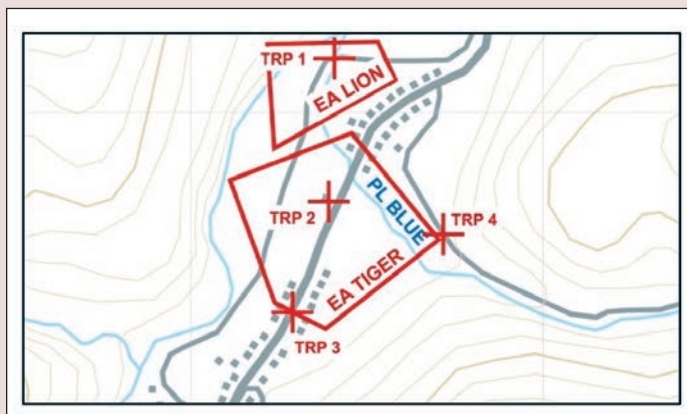
*Then* you put down your infantry battle positions to protect your weapons. You can’t do it on a map. You have to walk the dirt and draw the sectors with your people. During your leader’s recon, confirm all lines of sight before your Marines dig in.”

**“Five. Integrate obstacles.”**

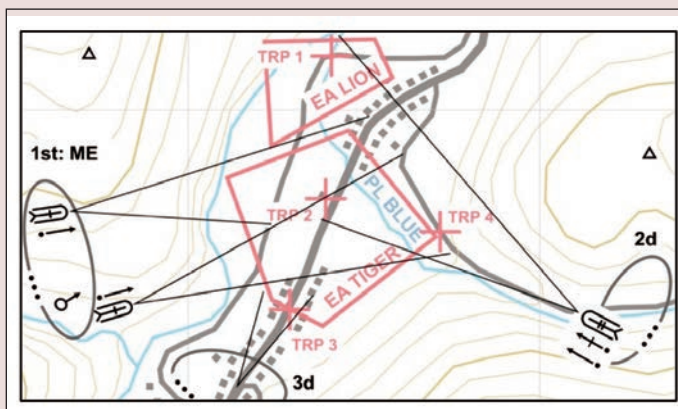
“You have to block that road. He’s already canalized by the terrain, so you’re exploiting the natural obstacles. But you need to trap him inside the EA with a man-made obstacle. If you had engineers, they could build an obstacle



The chokepoint at Bukovets. (Map provided by author.)

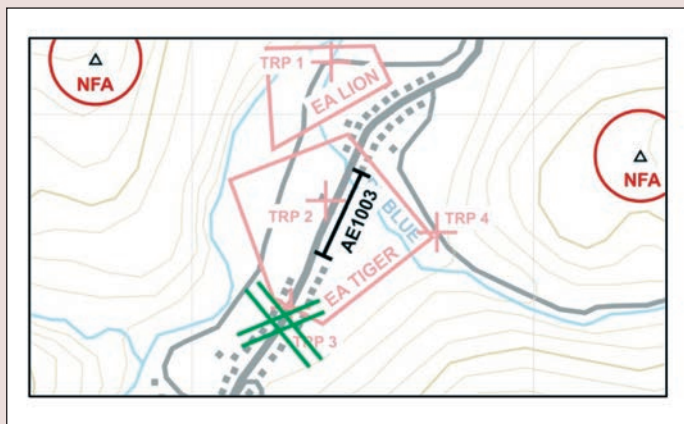


Two EAs. (Map provided by author.)



Interlocking sectors of fire for anti-tank weapons. (Map provided by author.)





**An obstacle and a pre-planned artillery target in the EA.** (Map provided by author.)



**Column of enemy vehicles traveling along a main supply route entering into a potential EA.** (Photo provided by author.)

or minefield to block, disrupt, fix, or turn. You don't, so drag a vehicle out there—something heavy. Cover your obstacle with direct fire to slow down his breaching efforts."

#### **"Six. Plan indirect fires."**

"Issue essential fire support tasks. Distant targets attrit the enemy, disrupt his reconnaissance, hide your exact location, and enable CAS. Near targets—inside your EA—defeat the enemy and protect you with FPFs [final protective fire].<sup>6</sup> Your fire support team should come back to you with a target list and the fire support coordination measures that protect your OPs [observation posts] and battle positions. Make sure your fire plan has redundant observers and nets."

#### **"Seven. Rehearse."**

"Have the XO [executive officer] drive your vehicles through the EA

from the enemy direction.

Rehearse indirect and direct fire commands—you, the FAC [forward air controller], the FOs [forward observers, and your leaders: reporting, calls for fire, trigger lines, opening fire, and shifting fire between TRPs. Make adjustments. When you're done, rehearse again at night, and then move to alternate and supplementary positions."

"Seven steps!" Maj Nette smiled, "Easy! Show me what you've got. What are your thoughts?"

I handed the major my sketch and pointed north. "The valley narrows here. Less than 500 meters. It's a natural defile," I said, "Bukovets is key terrain, and so are these two flanking hills that control it. I think more than a dozen vehicles will come south here on Route 5. It won't be the main attack, just a probe on our northern flank. He'll be in a hurry, so I doubt he'll put reconnaissance in front. I've drawn two EAs, one

for each approach. TRPs 1 and 2 divide each of the EAs into quadrants. The river, Phase Line BLUE, is our trigger line. With six machineguns, two M2s, two Javelins, and two TOW SABERS, we're going to tuck pairs of guns into the draws on each flank, behind the shoulders of these hills. Main effort on the left covers EA TIGER. Long-range weapons on the right interlock on TIGER and also reach LION."

"That's good," the major nodded, studying the hills, "We may have to adjust your battlefield geometry and move those OPs. Plus add sUAS."

"I have a question," I said, "We don't emphasize anti-tank training, and we don't have many anti-armor SOPs [standard operating procedures]. Where did you learn all this?"

"From the manual!" said the major, "The seven steps of EA development are in the *Infantry Company* manual. It should also be in our *Infantry Battalion* manual, but it's not. Unpreparedness! The *Machine Guns* manual explains range cards for single guns, but *not* how to integrate multiple guns in an EA. It's the same for our *Antiarmor* manual. That text is thirty years old—1992—which shows how much we care about this mission! I prefer the Army manuals," he said, "The Army is serious about fighting armored threats. Look at the Army's *Infantry Company* and *Infantry Battalion* manuals for EA development. The best EA graphics are actually in the *Stryker* manual."

#### **The Problem with Integration**

"Here's the bigger problem," continued Maj Nette, "None of these manuals explain how the company commander integrates direct fires. What is the *process*, and what is the *product*? The *process* starts at the bottom where each weapon completes a range card, DA Form 5517. With twelve weapons—twelve range cards—you get twelve sets of targets, all numbered the same: 1, 2, and 3. So there are twelve things labeled 'Target 1' plus your own TRP 1! The *Machine Guns* manual states that for every gun, 'the FPL is always Target 1.' So, when you say 'Fire Target 1,' you do *not* get concentrated fires on one target, you get chaos!"

“Then what do we do with them, sir?” I asked.

“Someone at the platoon or company level has to consolidate these range cards into one master target list, eliminate duplicates, ignore minor targets, renumber, and add company TRPs. Then the new numbers need to be pushed back to the gunners to update their range cards. Targets outside a gunner’s sector of fire are added to his card so he can report enemy activity or shift his sector of fire. The *product* is a direct fire plan.<sup>7</sup> What does it look like? I don’t know. The manuals don’t say. They use the terms *direct fire plan*, *fire plan sketch*, *fire plan*, and *sector sketch* interchangeably, with no definitions and no descriptions. And their example fire plan sketches are incomplete and inconsistent! So, let’s agree that a direct fire plan is a fire plan sketch *plus* a master target list. If you’re going to ruthlessly concentrate combat power, integrate weapons, and mass fires into your EA then you need a single company-level fire plan sketch *and* a target list to track what weapons cover what targets. And let’s integrate only the larger weapons that will accomplish your mission. Leave the SMAWs, MAAWs, and AT rockets for platoon defense.”

**Company Direct Fire Plan**

“Now I know you’re going to ask, ‘What’s the difference between a TRP and a target?’”

I nodded, making a note on my fire plan sketch.

“Machineguns and antitank missiles have actual targets, specific points on the deck with azimuths and T&E data on the guns. But a TRP is just an offset, a general location requiring an adjustment, a talk-on. Sometimes, when there’s no time, TRPs are enough. But if you don’t want to fire blindly in the dark or through smoke, you *need* actual targets, listed on a deconflicted master target list. This level of precision requires preparation and registration.”

I was frustrated. “I’ve never consolidated multiple range cards onto a single fire plan sketch in my life,” I said, “I’ve never even watched it done. I don’t think I’ve ever even seen a properly-completed range card!”

**Sectors of fire, each with the same target numbers.** (Map provided by author.)

**Direct Fire Plan: Fire Plan Sketch with renumbered targets.** (Map provided by author.)

TGT	Description	MG	HMG	Javelin	TOW	Note
TRP 1	Bridge 094 322	1,2	1,2	N/A	1,2	Trigger Line: LION
TRP 2	Barn 094 318	1,2,3,4,5,6	1,2	1,2	1,2	Center: TIGER
TRP 3	Obstacle 093 314	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3d Pit PDF
TRP 4	Signpost 097 316	1,2 / 5,6	1,2	2	1,2	2d Pit PFF
TGT 11	Bridge 095 318	1,2,3,4,5,6	1,2	1,2	1,2	Trigger Line: TIGER
TGT 12	Silo 093 318	1,2,3,4	1,2	1	1,2	Secondary AA
TGT 13	Red Roof 094 316	5,6	N/A	2	N/A	
TGT 14	Farm House 096 315	1,2 / 5,6	1,2	2	N/A	
TGT 15	Turnaround 094 320	1,2	1,2	N/A	1,2	Obstacle: LION

**Direct Fire Plan: Master Target List with renumbered targets.** (Photo provided by author.)

“Then you’re going to get plenty of practice,” the major said, “and maybe some live-fire training. Now let’s make it happen! When I come back tomorrow, we’ll have a lot more to talk about:

engagement criteria<sup>8</sup> and engagement priorities, night and thermal TRPs, supplementary positions, single EA commanders, and target numbering SOPs.<sup>9</sup> Then I want you to talk me onto a target



using EA quadrants. Remember! In Europe, *half* the line-of-sight ranges are under a thousand meters. One grid square! Ninety percent of your targets will be closer than two thousand meters!”

“Thanks, Sir,” I said. “My direct fire plan needs some work. I’ve got to combine my direct fire, my indirect fire, and my obstacle plans. And I still need to coordinate with adjacent units before dark.”

“Good,” Maj Nette said, “It looks like we’ve all learned something new today! Back at Pendleton, it would have been easy. You could have done this company direct fire plan drill in an afternoon with a handful of gunners and your lieutenants!”

### Notes

1. *Bozhee dopomozhy nam*—Ukrainian curse: *God help us!*

2. Engagement area (EA): An area where the commander intends to contain and destroy an enemy force with the massed effects of all available weapons and supporting systems.

3. IPB (intelligence preparation of the battlefield): The systematic process of analyzing the mission variables of enemy, terrain, weather, and civil considerations in an area of interest to determine their effect on operations. See Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCRP 2-10B.1, Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace*, (Washington, DC: May 2016).

4. TRP (target reference point): A predetermined point of reference, normally a permanent structure or terrain feature that can be used when describing a target location.

5. Trigger line: A phase line located on identifiable terrain that crosses the engagement area that is used to initiate and mass fires into an engagement area at a predetermined range for all or like weapon systems.

6. PPF (final protective fire): An immediately available prearranged barrier of fire designed to impede enemy movement across defensive lines or areas.

7. Fire plan: A tactical plan for using the weapons of a unit or formation so that their fire will be coordinated.

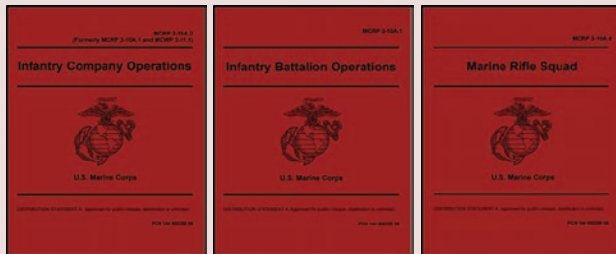
8. Engagement criteria: Protocols that specify those circumstances for initiating engagement with an enemy force.

9. Engagement priority: Specifies the order in which the unit engages enemy systems or functions.

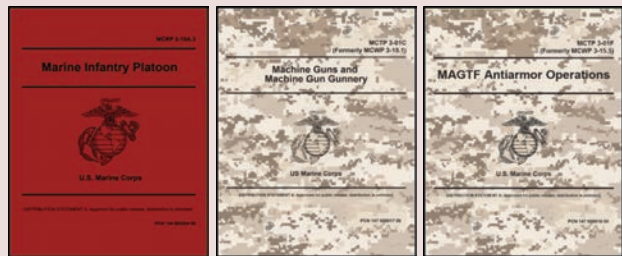
\* "Some Ukrainian citizen-soldiers have now killed more tanks than the entire Marine Corps. Ever."



### Marine Corps References for EA

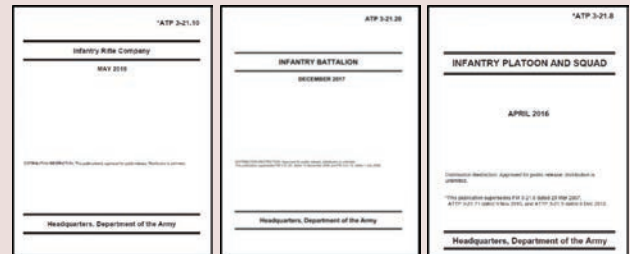


- MCRP 3-10A.2 Infantry Company Operations. Chapter 7 explains the seven steps of EA development.
- MCRP 3-10A.1 Infantry Battalion Operations. Mentions EAs but does not explain EA procedures.
- MCRP 3-10A.4 Marine Rifle Squad. Chapter 4 directs gunners to draw a range card and squad leaders to draw a fire plan sketch.



- MCRP 3-10A.3 Marine Infantry Platoon. Chapter 7 explains the seven steps of EA development.
- MCTP 3-01C Machine Guns and Machine Gun Gunnery. Page 6-49 explains machinegun range cards.
- MCTP 3-01F MAGTF Antiarmor Operations. Page 3-26 explains antiarmor range cards.

### External References for EA



- ATP 3-21.10 Infantry Rifle Company. Chapter 3 is EA development. Appendix C is direct fire planning.
- ATP 3-21.20 Infantry Battalion. Chapter 3 is EA development. Appendix D is weapons employment.
- ATP 3-21.8 Infantry Platoon and Squad. Chapter 3 is EA development. Appendix B is direct fire planning. Proponent for range cards: DA Form 5517.



- ATP 3-21.11 Stryker Brigade Combat Team Infantry Rifle Company. Chapter 3 explains EA development. Chapter 8 is direct fire planning.
- K.A. Nette, “The Rise, Fall, & Rebirth of the ‘Emma Gees.’” The classic article on company-level machinegun integration and employment.”
- W. Mills & M. Rasmussen, “Bringing Anti-Armor Back: Fixing a Critical Capability Gap in the Marine Corps.”

# Reconnaissance-Strike Tactics and Maneuver Warfare I

Theory and practice

by Maj B.A. Friedman

*“Long range precision strike weapons coupled to systems of sensors and to command and control systems will fairly soon come to dominate much of warfare. The critical operational tasks will be destroying or disabling elements of an opponent’s forces and supporting systems at a distance. Defeat will occur due to disintegration of command and control capacities, rather than due to attrition or annihilation.”<sup>1</sup>*

*—Andrew W. Marshall, 1999*

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is due, not just because of the current Marine Corps force design and reform effort. *MCDP 1, Warfighting*, the last update to our warfighting philosophy, was published before the current century began and just as the information revolution was about to take off. Now that our philosophy is over a quarter of a century old, and the 21st century has seen more than enough conflict for us to examine as data, it is time for reflection.

Lost in the discussions of the latest version of multi-domain, all-domain, or omni-domain operations and marketing hype about the capabilities of technology is an emerging set of tactics enabled by the information-enabled fusion of highly capable sensors, multi-spectral reconnaissance, and precision-guided munitions. These reconnaissance-strike tactics have been extremely potent when married to organizations capable of exploiting them. But until recently, the Marine Corps has not begun that process. Some of the angst and criticism about Gen Neller and Gen Berger’s efforts to do so are the result, in my opinion, of a lack of understanding of the modern tactical regime, reconnaissance-strike tactics, and how they can fit into a maneuver warfare philosophy.

This article series will attempt to describe them even as the Marine Corps continues to conduct experimentation to make them a reality.

It is important to reexamine maneuver warfare considering these new tactical possibilities. The introductory quote was clearly more prescient than anyone could know at the time, and it occurred after the publication of *MCDP 1, Warfighting*. The central task facing the Marine Corps today is how to apply maneuver warfare to the reconnaissance-strike tactical regime in an information-pervasive operating environment.

## The Marine Corps’ Conception of Maneuver Warfare

First, we should be clear about what we mean by maneuver warfare. We are talking here about the Marine Corps’ vision of maneuver warfare as captured in *FMFM 1* and *MCDP 1* specifically. Other groups, including military theorists and the Army, use these terms differently and these views do not concern us.

The Marine Corps’ maneuver warfare philosophy is not terribly difficult to sum up. Both documents present

**O**f late, there has been a healthy and lively debate on maneuver warfare in the pages of this publication and on the internet. Such a reexamination



an understanding of war from a high perspective (“War Defined”) and gradually brings it down to how the Marine Corps specifically should put it into practice (“The Conduct of War”). It views the phenomenon of war through a Clausewitzian lens: war is the extension of politics with the addition of violent means and its expression in practice is complex, uncertain, and unpredictable, affected as much by intangible mental and moral forces as it is by physical force alone (captured in Chapter 1). It stresses that the expression of that phenomenon takes a number of forms and styles such as maneuver warfare, a concept heavily inspired by John Boyd, which is predicated on speed, focus, surprise, boldness, and the exploitation of opportunities to strike enemy critical vulnerabilities as opposed to the simple application of massed combat power against the enemy’s massed combat power (captured in Chapter 2). It delineates how the Marine Corps should be organized, manned, trained, and equipped to provide forces that can execute such a vision of maneuver warfare, one that necessarily places greater reliance on people than platforms (Chapter 3). Lastly, it captures how such forces should execute maneuver warfare and, importantly, how they must employ a decentralized command and control (C2) schema sometimes called mission command (Chapter 4).<sup>2</sup>

It is important to focus on this conception of maneuver warfare because it is tailored to the roles, responsibilities, strengths, and weaknesses of the Marine Corps. Applying maneuver warfare theory to a different organization, such as the Army that has different roles and responsibilities and can draw on more mass and firepower would, if done properly, produce a different conception.

The creation and promulgation of this philosophy is portrayed best in Maj Ian Brown’s *A New Conception of War: John Boyd, the U.S. Marines, and Maneuver Warfare*. Importantly, that process was as much a codification of lessons the Marine Corps had learned up until its publication in 1989 as it was a new conception (although it certainly was that as well). As such, seeing as it was created as the sun set

on the Industrial Age and began to rise on the Information Age, evaluating the philosophy against its suitability for Information-Age warfare is called for.

What the philosophy doesn’t address very much is the role of information and Information-Age technology in warfare. Given the nascent nature of the information revolution in 1989, this can be forgiven. Nor is it necessarily a shortcoming: it would detract from

the philosophy’s timeless nature if it were rooted too deeply in technology. However, given what we know now in 2022, this subject cannot remain unaddressed. Although a rewrite or revision may not be necessary, the Marine Corps should develop a vision of what maneuver warfare means as the information revolution accelerates.

### **The Beginnings of 21st Century Maneuver Warfare**

This has been done before. In 1998 Robert Leonhard, an Army officer and accomplished writer on maneuver warfare, published *The Principles of War for the Information Age*. In it, he reexamined the principles of war in light of what was then known about Information Age tactics. He developed a tiered system of laws, the most important of which was that “conflict will always be partially knowledge-based and partially ignorance-based.”<sup>3</sup> In reality, this has always been true of all warfare. Plans, tactical employments, future actions, goals, the definition of winning and the decision to withdraw all exist and take place in the minds of the combatants and the mind of the opponent can never be reliably known. There is always a competition to acquire information and decrease uncertainty in warfare.

Since that book was written, the ways and means in which humans can acquire, analyze, communicate, and

exploit information to increase their knowledge/decrease their ignorance has only expanded. Yet, the truth that the mind of the adversary cannot be truly known is no closer to changing. Since the mind of the opponent is the target of maneuver warfare, the means of information exploitation that indirectly affect it are of vast importance.

There is also a long running debate here in the *Gazette*. Maj Ian Brown’s

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## ***It is important to focus on this conception of maneuver warfare because it is tailored to the roles, responsibilities, strengths, and weaknesses of the Marine Corps.***

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*Maneuver Warfare 3.0*, published in April 2016, proposed a number of revisions, including some based on the realities of the Information-Age.<sup>4</sup> The *Gazette* also published a series of articles by the Ellis Group beginning with “21st Century Maneuver Warfare” in November 2016, an attempt to reimagine maneuver warfare given the realities of the 21st century.<sup>5</sup> The current Maneuverist Papers series and its respondents, delving into a number of important maneuver warfare concepts, is exactly the kind of reinvigoration of maneuver warfare called for by MajGen Mullen in the July 2020 issue. Marinus also makes the point that the bulk of maneuver warfare concepts were developed before the advent of the Information-Age.<sup>6</sup> Especially important is the concept of non-linearity, but non-linearity is just one aspect of war’s inherent complexity (in the scientific sense of the term).<sup>7</sup> This subject could be a series all on its own.

### **The Marine Corps Operating Concept**

The institute-wide reexamination, however, began with the Marine Corps Operating Concept (MOC) in 2016.<sup>8</sup> The MOC examined five major trends of Information-Age warfare in general identified in the *Future Operating Environment: 2015–2025* document (produced by the Marine Corps Intelligence Activity): 1) complex terrain; 2)

technology proliferation; 3) information as a weapon; 4) the battle of signatures; 5) an increasingly contested maritime domain.<sup>9</sup> Two of these, information as a weapon and the battle of signatures, are directly related to information warfare.

The MOC found the Marine Corps wanting:

The Marine Corps is currently not organized, trained, and equipped to meet the demands of a future operating environment characterized by complex terrain, technology proliferation, information warfare, the need to shield and exploit signatures, and an increasingly non-permissive maritime domain.<sup>10</sup>

In order to address the Marine Corps ability to fight in an operating environment characterized by these five trends, the MOC laid out five efforts: integrate the naval force to fight at and from the sea, evolve the MAGTF, operate with resilience in a contested network environment, enhance our ability to maneuver, and exploit the competence of the individual Marine.<sup>11</sup>

However, finding the Marine Corps wanting is not the same as finding maneuver warfare wanting. In fact, Gen Neller explicitly reaffirmed the primacy of maneuver warfare as the Marine Corps' warfighting philosophy. Essentially, the MOC identified that the Marine Corps of 2016 was not manned, trained, and equipped to execute maneuver warfare in the 21st century.

The prime reform instituted by Gen Neller to enhance the Marine Corps ability to execute maneuver warfare in the Information Age was the creation of the MAGTF Information Groups (MIG). Currently, the MIGs are tasked to coordinate, integrate, and employ Information Environment Operations (IE Ops) capabilities to ensure the MAGTF Commander's ability to facilitate friendly forces maneuver and deny the enemy freedom of action in the information environment as well as provide communications, intelligence, supporting arms liaison, and law enforcement capabilities in support of MAGTF operations. The creation of an information-focused organization like the MIGs was not a priority in 1989, when *FMFM 1* was written. Now, however, the capabilities of 21st-century weapons such as

information warfare, cyber warfare, and electronic warfare, not to mention information-dependent weapons like precision-guided munitions, cannot be ignored. As the capabilities of information technology will only increase, the MIGs will grow in both capability and importance, perhaps becoming an information combat element in their own right. Tying the MIGs to precision fires enables reconnaissance-strike tactics.

Reconnaissance-strike tactics are not new. During World War II, LTG George Patton created not one but two non-doctrinal, information warfare focused units as part of his Third Army: the Army Information Service and the Signal Intelligence Service. These staff sections closely coordinated with the G-2 but were independent of it. These were proto-MIGs: they managed the information-flow that enabled Patton's maneuver-style of warfare.<sup>12</sup>

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***... the Marine Corps should base its philosophy more on the "Boyd branch" ... and less on the "Lind branch."***

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Reconnaissance-strike tactics were later conceptualized by the Soviet Army in the form of what they called reconnaissance-strike and reconnaissance-fires complexes. A reconnaissance-strike complex was an organization "designed for the coordinated employment of high-precision weapons linked to realtime intelligence data and precise targeting provided to a fused intelligence and fire direction center."<sup>13</sup> A reconnaissance-fire complex was an equivalent organization at a lower level. Put in Marine Corps terms, a reconnaissance-strike complex is a MIG with organic precision fires such as HIMARS and fixed-wing aircraft, plus organic ground reconnaissance elements. The potency of such an arrangement were seen in Russian combat operations in Ukraine after 2014, although at the time of this writing the

Ukrainians seem to be turning the tactics against the Russians as well.

Whereas in Industrial-Age warfare, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets were primarily dedicated to identifying objectives and movement corridors for maneuver forces, in the Information-Age intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets will mostly be dedicated to finding and locating targets for precision munitions and information-related capabilities (IRCs). Maneuver forces will then exploit the effects of these combined fires and IRCs. The "strike" part of reconnaissance-strike tactics does not necessarily mean a kinetic strike in the form of munitions. Emergent capabilities such as electronic attack and offensive cyber operations can and should be employed as well.

#### **A New Conception of Boyd**

At *themaneuverist.org* in an article called "Maneuver Warfare: Epistemological Rocket Fuel," Maj Matthew Tweedy has proposed that, going forward, the Marine Corps should base its philosophy more on the "Boyd branch" of maneuver warfare and less on the "Lind branch."<sup>14</sup> It undoubtedly should: Lind's fetishism for the forces of Nazi Germany is based on beliefs about the German Army that have proven to be myths, namely the concept of "blitzkrieg" and the operational level of war (not to mention his own ideological affinity for Nazi Germany).<sup>15</sup> Another pervasive myth that this school promulgates is the poor performance of the Soviet Army in World War II, as pointed out by Capt Zachary Schwartz in January 2022.<sup>16</sup> Even were this not the case, the "Boyd branch"—based more on the science of cybernetics, thermodynamics, and decision making—is more relevant to the 21st century and reconnaissance-strike tactics that leverage information and rapid decision making.

Epistemological rocket fuel is an apt phrase: maneuver warfare depends on attacking an opponent where and how they are weak rather than strong. That is impossible unless one knows where and how the enemy is strong and how they are weak. Epistemology, the study of knowledge, is therefore central to

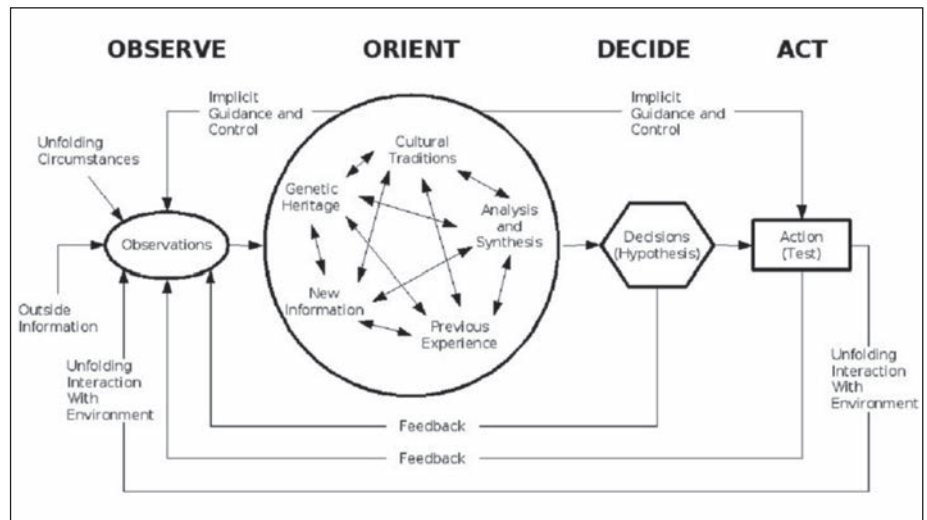


maneuverist thinking. Additionally, in the 21st century, strategic actors have ever increasing ways of knowing what the opponent is doing and how the opponent operates. If 21st-century warfare is characterized by pervasive information warfare, complexity, chaos, and higher operational tempos driven by reconnaissance-strike tactics, then we need a modern model for how information interacts with warfighting organizations to drive tactical action. Fortunately, we already have one—right under our noses.

Although rarely presented as such, Boyd’s OODA Loop is a cybernetic model of how an organization acquires information (Observe), analyzes information (Orient), exploits information (Decides), and acts on information (Act). The action changes the environment, for good or ill, thus requiring more information which is fed back as new observations. The OODA Loop is fundamentally a model of how information is acquired, analyzed, and exploited in warfare.

While most applications of the OODA Loop focus on the creation of a C2 system that can outpace the opponent’s OODA Loop, the Information Age offers new opportunities to do more than just that. Information-related capabilities (not to mention traditional kinetic weapons) can be used to corrupt, disrupt, and deceive the opponent’s OODA loop and must simultaneously be used to protect and preserve the friendly OODA loop. The central problem facing the Marine Corps is how to execute maneuver warfare in an operating environment where information drives operations, where all decisions are made through a lens of how the adversary will perceive and react to them—rather than solely whether the friendly force achieves its objective—and in an operating environment where almost everything except the mind of the opponent itself can be surveilled and detected.

Thus, information is at the heart of Boyd’s concept of maneuver warfare. Frans P.B. Osinga, who has extensively studied Boyd’s work, has written that the point of maneuver warfare is to “create and exploit an information differen-



**A complete rendition of the “OODA Loop.”** (Figure provided by author.)

tial.”<sup>17</sup> The point of the OODA Loop is not just about faster decision making, but about better decision making. There is no benefit to making poor decisions faster. The primary goal is to protect the orientation step—the analysis of information—and corrupt the orientation of the opponent. That can be accomplished through targeted information acquisition, information analysis, and information dissemination, and by deceiving, disrupting, and polluting the opponent’s perceptions. The creation of the MIGs to manage this fight is thus a vital element for Marine Corps maneuver warfare.

Since information warfare takes as its primary target the adversary’s information-processing system (C2) and maneuver warfare seeks asymmetric, opportunistic ways of attacking critical vulnerabilities and weaknesses, the marriage of the two has the potential to be a potent form of warfighting. Where traditional maneuver warfare might seek positions of weaknesses in the adversary’s physical array, Information-Age maneuver warfare would similarly take the C2 system of the adversary as its target, employ indirect and advantageous ways to disrupt, corrupt, and deceive it through communicative and cognitive weaknesses as well as physical weaknesses through both kinetic and non-kinetic means. Once accomplished, the resulting paralysis would need to be exploited, but the adversary’s system—like an Industrial-Age army in head-

long retreat—would be unable to resist that exploitation. In such an operating environment, advantages in information-focused warfighting functions of information (in the form of surveillance, reconnaissance, and counter-reconnaissance), intelligence (the analysis of information from multiple sources), and C2 (the dissemination of information and the decisions made because of it) will be more important than advantages in mass, maneuver, or firepower.

Lastly, these ideas fit well with Dr. Frank Hoffman’s description of defeat mechanisms in the February 2022 issue of the *Marine Corps Gazette*. Maneuver warfare and reconnaissance-strike tactics would enable the Marine Corps to employ combinations of degradation, dislocation, and disorientation defeat mechanisms while avoiding the trap of focusing too much on the ability to employ a destroy mechanism (which requires a level of mass and resources beyond the reach of an organization the size of the Marine Corps).

What might a maneuver warfare campaign employing reconnaissance-strike tactics look like? We have an unfortunate example: it would look like the Taliban’s summer campaign in 2021 that resulted in their complete and rapid takeover of the entire country. During the Taliban’s summer offensive in Afghanistan in 2021, the Taliban sent intermediaries ahead of their fighters to convince key Afghan government and military personnel not to resist Taliban

offensives using threats and bribes.<sup>18</sup> This served the dual purpose of identifying strong points and weak points as well as shaping objectives for follow-on forces. As a result, those Afghan Security Forces that did resist were swiftly overwhelmed as their allies and leaders abandoned the fight. The Taliban, of course, had no reason to commit maneuver forces to key points where surrender had already been agreed, allowing them to mass against other points. The Taliban certainly employed reconnaissance to ascertain advantageous maneuver corridors, but they also used information to create them. The flow of the Taliban's offensive was not primarily driven by preplanned objectives but rather by perception and reaction of the opponent followed by exploitation of the opportunities that

will become a major focus of operational art. Clearly one might wish to be more effective, more skillful in the acquisition and communication of information with respect to targets or with respect to the intentions and moves of an opponent. Indeed, in the early stages of an engagement, one would take measures to widen this advantage through the protection of one's own information systems while partially destroying, disrupting, manipulating, or corrupting the information processing and gathering of the opponent. This full range of activities which may become an integrated area of military strategy and operations could be called information warfare.<sup>19</sup>

This is a lengthy definition, but its pre-science now is almost beyond debate. Importantly, this vision of Information-

its own. It is the environment. Even the application of camouflage paint to a Marine's skin, by denying information to the opponent, can be considered an application of information warfare.

Alternative conceptions of future warfare, usually prefaced with "all-domain" or "multi-domain," remain wedded to a traditional view of warfare that occurs in discrete domains. This has not been true for quite some time, and the cognitive stovepiping that will follow is fundamentally unsuited for the future. Marine Corps maneuver warfare, with its focus on creating advantages and opportunities wherever and however that may be accomplished regardless of domain, is better suited to the future. Lastly, one could argue that maneuver warfare has always been information-driven, given its focus on the mind of the opponent and the use of deception and asymmetry. This may be true, but do Marines understand it as such? If not, a revision of *MCDP 1* may indeed be needed.

The principles of maneuver warfare therefore are sound but must be practiced in different ways to address the pervasive information warfare and reconnaissance-strike tactics that will characterize the future. Perhaps the future holds a synthesis of the two. This will necessarily cause a reorganization of Marine Corps forces to optimize the application of emergent applications. Part II of this series will look at historical examples of these as well as the ongoing force design effort.

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***The principles of maneuver warfare ... must be practiced in different ways to address the pervasive information warfare and reconnaissance-strike tactics that will characterize the future.***

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perception created. This information preparation for maneuver forces is a key component of 21st-century warfare and can be seen in a combined-arms context. Just as supporting arms can disrupt and suppress enemy forces at key objectives, so too can the right information. Nor does it require an undue reliance on advanced technology, as the Taliban unfortunately proved. The Taliban reconnaissance-strike tactics consisted of human intelligence and "fires" in the form of targeted threats and bribes, which were then exploited by maneuver forces.

**Conclusion**

Andrew Marshall defined information warfare as,

The information dimension or aspect of warfare may become increasingly central to the outcome of battles and engagements, and therefore the strategy and tactics of establishing information superiority over one's adversary

Age warfare, which is simply another aspect of warfare which maneuver warfare principles can be applied to, is not limited to non-kinetic or technological means. The fight for information will be just as bloody and destructive as any other.

Fortunately, the Marine Corps' philosophy of maneuver warfare is well-suited for this operating environment. Its focus on the recognition or creation and exploitation of opportunities in any domain, the ability to maneuver in and through any domain, and the mission command ethos means that the Marine Corps is well-postured to execute information-driven reconnaissance-strike tactics. Additionally, the principles of decentralized C2 are now a prerequisite to survival as the use of communications systems will have to be minimized for signature management and will inevitably be disrupted by the opponent. Lastly, information warfare is not a domain or an environment of

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**Notes**

1. Zalmay M. Khalilzad and John P. White, eds, *The Changing Role of Information in Warfare*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1999).
2. To be clear, the concept of mission command captured in *FMFM 1* and *MCDP 1* is vastly different from the more recent conception currently in vogue in other services. These two ideas share little more than a name.
3. Robert R. Leonhard, *The Principles of War for the Information Age*, (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1998).
4. Ian Brown, "Maneuver Warfare 3.0," *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: April 2016).



5. The author was on the writing team for these articles in a previous assignment. See “21st Century Maneuver Warfare,” November 2016, “21st Century Reconnaissance,” January 2017, “21st Century Maneuver,” February, 2017, and “21st Century Fires,” April 2017.

6. Marinus, “Maneuver Warfare in Cyberspace,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: June 2021).

7. For more on war and complexity science, see B.A. Friedman, “War Is The Storm,” Forthcoming Summer 2022 in the *U.S. Naval War College Review*.

8. The author was also on the writing team for the MOC.

9. Gen Robert B. Neller, *Marine Corps Operating Concept: How an Expeditionary Force Operates in the 21st Century*, (Washington, DC: 2016).

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Spencer L. French, “Information Forces and Competitive Approach to Information Enabled Operational-Level Success in August 1944,” *Military Review*, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army University Press, March–April 2022).

13. Lester W. Grau and Charles K. Bartles, “The Russian Reconnaissance Fire Complex Comes of Age,” *CCW*, (May 2018), available at <http://www.ccw.ox.ac.uk>.

14. Matthew Tweedy, “Maneuver Warfare: Epistemological Rocket Fuel,” *The Maneuverist*, (January 2020), available at <https://www.themanueverist.org>.

15. For more myth-busting about German military history, see Gerhard P. Gross, *The Myth and Reality of German Warfare: Operational Thinking from Moltke the Elder to Heusinger*, (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2016); and B.A. Friedman, *On Operations: Operational Art*

*and Military Disciplines*, (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2021).

16. Zachary Schwartz, “Thinking Beyond Dead Germans,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: January 2022).

17. Frans P.B. Osinga, “The Enemy as a Complex Adaptive System: John Boyd and Airpower in the Postmodern Era,” in John Andreas Olsen, ed, *Airpower Reborn: The Strategic Concepts of John Warden and John Boyd*, (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2015).

18. Bill Roggio, “Taliban Doubles Number of Controlled Afghan Districts since May 1,” *Long War Journal*, (June 2021), available at <https://www.longwarjournal.org>.

19. Andrew W. Marshall, *Office of Net Assessment Memorandum: Some Thoughts on Military Revolutions- Second Version*, (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 1993).



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# Reconnaissance-Strike Tactics and Maneuver Warfare II

## Marine Corps 3.0

by Maj B.A. Friedman

Perhaps the least understood aspect of the Marine Corps warfighting philosophy is the non-linearity of warfare. The idea gets a paragraph in *MCDP I*, which describes it as a source of war's inherent uncertainty. This is undoubtedly true, but it is also an aspect of war's complexity (in the scientific sense) as a competition between two or more complex adaptive systems. Scientists have learned more about complexity in the years since *MCDP I* was written. In fact, we now understand that all military forces are complex, adaptive systems and many aspects of complexity and chaos apply to war as a whole.

Air Force Col Eric Michael Murphy, for example, has examined force design through the lens of complex adaptive systems and has identified seven aspects of complexity that military forces exhibit. These include diversity, interdependence, adaptation, nonlinearity, emergence, coevolution, and path dependence.<sup>1</sup> Warfighting organizations display all of these characteristics. Although Col Murphy applied his analysis to the Air Force, the conclusion equally applies to the Marine Corps.

Complex adaptive systems that are composed of human agents are sometimes referred to as complex adaptive social systems. All warfighting organizations, whether armies, navies, or insurgent groups, are complex adaptive social systems. Complexity science tells us that as new behaviors—tactics—emerge, organized agents will adapt, creating new forms of organization to optimize



*The Marine Corps has an established track record of adaptation as new tactics and technologies emerge. (Photo by GSgt Ismael Pena.)*

>See page 54 for bio.

for the new actions. Change and continuity will coexist: some aspects of the organization will remain relevant while others will not and will be replaced. Any force design effort, deliberate or not, is an application of this adaptation to the operating environment and subsequent emergence of new behaviors.

Through this lens, we can examine Marine Corps history to gain insights into its future. As a complex adaptive social system, the Marine Corps has gone through this process of adaptation before as new tactics emerged. Examining

this history can lend insight as to how the Marine Corps should evolve for emergent reconnaissance-strike tactics.

### The First Two Marine Corps

In my ongoing post-graduate research, which focuses on Marine Corps amphibious operations prior to World War I, I have identified two stages or phases of Marine Corps organization, which I term Marine Corps 1.0 and Marine Corps 2.0

Marine Corps 1.0 is the original, modeled on the 18th century Royal Marine Corps. Marine Corps 1.0 was optimized for pre-industrial naval warfare during the age of sail. It was composed of ship's detachments made up of professional (as in, not conscripted or



part-time militia) Marines that fought alongside the Navy at sea and ashore. It was thus composed of distributed, modular, self-sufficient units that could be employed individually or combined for larger-scale operations. It was a Marine Corps tailored to its amphibious platform: the sailing vessel. Of course, the Marine Corps was not static during this period. Tactics and concepts evolved slowly, but it remained an institution based around ship's detachments throughout this period.

As a result of the industrial revolution, new technology allowed new types of tactics to emerge in a rapid burst. After the Marine Corps' baptism by fire into industrial warfare in World War I, the Marine Corps went through a sustained period of modernization during the interwar years. The reforms were based on ideas that had been developed

German tactics as the war went on. While the Army abandoned such amphibious capabilities by the late 1960s, the Marine Corps has remained until very recently optimized for industrial-era amphibious warfare and its amphibious platform: the amphibious warship.

Through this transition, as new adaptations emerge, new organizations emerge to perform them as efficiently and effectively as possible. Tactics constantly evolve but periodically rapid revolutionary changes are called for, a pattern called punctuated equilibrium. This does not mean that old organizations and components thereof are completely abandoned. Aspects of older organizations that are still relevant are retained. This explains why Marine Corps 1.0 and 2.0 overlapped. The ship's detachments continued to be employed long after World War II. But the

*1, Warfighting*, far ahead of its time. It is analogous to the ideas developed by Pete Ellis and their appearance decades before true implementation became possible. The equivalent of the tactical schema that informed the force design of that time, infiltration tactics, are the emerging reconnaissance-strike tactics of today.

If so, the commandancies of Gen Neller and Gen Berger have begun the process of true implementation. Gen Neller's 2016 *Marine Corps Operating Concept* identified the problem: the Marine Corps was not organized to implement maneuver warfare on an Information-Age battlefield. Gen Berger has promulgated a number of changes necessary for it to do so. This continuity between the two was made explicit on the first page of the 2018 *Commandant's Planning Guidance*. The *Commandant's Planning Guidance* is analogous to Gen Lejeune beginning the implementation of ideas.

We see the same mix of change and continuity in Gen Berger's reforms as we did with Gen Lejeune's. For example, distributed operations have always been an aspect of Marine Corps operations, even during Marine Corps 1.0. The Marine Littoral Regiments are an update of the Marine Defense Battalions of Marine Corps 2.0. Components of the previous version of the organization are retained if they are useful, even if their role within the organization changes.

Recall the discussion from the first article in this series about information-driven reconnaissance-strike complexes and reconnaissance-strike tactics. Marine Corps 3.0 has the potential to leverage the strengths of the Marine Corps to provide the joint force with a forward, resilient, maritime reconnaissance-strike complex. It may not be able to outright defeat adversary forces, but it also does not have to do anything other than set follow-on forces up for success, degrading and disrupting the enemy prior to the arrival of follow-on forces. When surge forces from the rest of the joint force and the Marine Corps arrive, they do so armed with high-quality, actionable information about an adversary that has already taken a punch or two from forward-based Marine stand-in

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## ***By World War II, [the Marine Corps] was optimized for industrial warfare: built for the efficient application of mass and firepower against an objective ashore.***

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even before Gallipoli, the infamous failed amphibious operation carried out by the British in World War I. Sources for inspiration included the works of LtCol Pete Ellis, who wrote about modernized amphibious warfare as early as 1912, and lessons learned from Gallipoli and Operation ALBION: a successful amphibious operation carried out by the Germans against the Russians in 1917.<sup>2</sup> Many of the lessons learned and applied built on the infiltration tactics developed by Germany in World War I. These reforms began with the commandancy of John Lejeune.

By World War II, it was optimized for industrial warfare: built for the efficient application of mass and firepower against an objective ashore. It goes without saying that the concepts and tactics developed during the interwar years served the Marine Corps well, as it did the Army units that used the doctrine and equipment that developed—even as both Services had to adapt them to changing Imperial Japanese and Nazi

modular nature of ship's detachments took new form under the MAGTF system of MEUs, MEBs, MEFs, and Special Purpose MAGTFs (albeit in a more complex form).

Lastly, the transition from Marine Corps 1.0 to 2.0 shows that ideas are the vanguard of the emergent form of organization. Marine Corps 2.0 was built on a foundation of ideas that Pete Ellis began developing in 1912 and 1913 before the Marine Corps' participation in World War I in 1918. The commandancy of John A. Lejeune began the process of implementation that continued right up until World War II and beyond.

### **Marine Corps 3.0**

If Marine Corps history can be categorized into a pre-industrial Marine Corps 1.0 and an industrial Marine Corps 2.0, then we may be on the cusp of an Information-Age Marine Corps 3.0. The leading edge of the vanguard idea for Marine Corps 3.0 is *FMFM*

forces. Moreover, this mission falls well within the joint definition of amphibious operations. Fast-moving stand-in forces will be executing amphibious raids to establish, move, and withdraw expeditionary advanced bases at times and places driven by opportunity and the employment of reconnaissance-strike tactics. These can then be transitioned to amphibious support to other operations as the rest of the joint force arrives.<sup>3</sup>

The transition to Marine Corps 3.0 will take some time, and we are perhaps only in the beginning stages. The *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* of World War II, for example, was first issued in 1934. Still, we can start

metric advantage. The modular, flexible MAGTF system can and should continue, providing MEUs for crisis response and MEFs as part of a surge force alongside Marine Littoral Regiments and MEBs to execute maritime reconnaissance-strike tactics. Of course, as the joint force transitions to all-domain and multi-domain operations, the inherent multi-domain nature of the Marine Corps will serve it just as well as it has for over a century.

Some old communities will have new relevance. The reconnaissance communities will have to take on a multi-spectral character, integrating electronic and signals reconnaissance alongside physical reconnaissance. Air

Special Operations Command, Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company, Marine Corps Advisor Company, and Civil Affairs Group communities, then placed alongside *MCDP 1* as a foundational philosophy. As LtCol Chris Graham pointed out in the February 2022 issue, all warfare will contain varying proportions of irregular warfare (in fact it always has).<sup>4</sup>

The Marine Corps has a long history of irregular conflicts as both advisors and partners. Going forward, it should lean into the latter, not the former. The Marine Corps does not have the end strength necessary to provide full-time advisors at scale as the Army does with its Security Force Assistance Brigades. Rather than just advising, the Marine Corps should focus on being the force of choice for partnering; integrated units working alongside each other under one chain of command. By partnering as units rather than advising as individuals, partner forces can be tied into and integrated underneath the MAGTF. Liaison officers and liaison staff sections in every unit, organized on an Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company and Marine Corps Advisor Company-like model, can enable partner forces to plug and play with Marine forces at any level. Doing so will create another Marine Corps capability that is unique across the joint force and yet rooted in our history, traditions, and strengths.

Lastly, as vital as naval integration is, the Marine Corps also needs better aerospace integration. Marine stand-in forces will be far more potent if they are able to achieve synergy with the nascent intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities of the Space Force and the unmatched firepower of the Air Force. Better Marine Corps aerospace integration will be just as important as naval integration. It is an as yet untapped relationship that would benefit both Services. Marine stand-in forces can provide data from ground-based sensors and reconnaissance, terminal attack guidance, and forward arming and refueling to the Air Force while the Air Force provides data from its sensor grid, advanced command and control, assured air control, and of course additional firepower.

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***The Marine Corps has a long history of irregular conflicts as both advisors and partners. Going forward, it should lean into the latter, not the former.***

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to identify some things that are new, some things that are old but will still be relevant, and some things that are still missing.

As mentioned already, the MEF Information Groups are new and may prove to be both the most prescient and important reform. Both Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations and Stand-In Forces concepts are new even as they are rooted in older ideas such as distributed operations and advanced base operations. Both envision more active and offensive participation in sea control than was envisioned for the Marine Defense Battalions of World War II, which performed a similar mission. A Marine Corps-led maritime reconnaissance-strike force will be built around the MEF Information Group finding, fixing, and shaping, the MAGTF CE executing a rapid response planning process to keep up with the increasing pace of warfare, the GCE and ACE striking adversary forces via precision-guided strikes exploited by maneuver forces, and the LCE sustaining and supporting the whole.

As for what is old, Marines as ever continue to be the Marine Corps' asym-

metric advantage. Naval Gunfire Liaison Companies will be in extremely high demand as forward operations will require both operating alongside partners and extremely complex fire support coordination of joint and organic precision-guided munitions fire. Others will have new challenges, especially the artillery community as it masters more complex processes and longer-range platforms.

As for what is missing, the current reform efforts lack a vital focus on security cooperation and irregular warfare. There will be no operating forward except alongside allies and partners, and coalition-building is an American strength that adversaries cannot hope to match. In lieu of coalitions, adversaries will seek to limit their operations below the threshold of open conflict by employing irregular warfare. The Marine Corps should draw on its centuries-long strength in irregular warfare and recent experience in Iraq and Afghanistan to formulate a new *Small Wars Manual*. The *Small Wars Manual*, which at its core is about how to work with partners during low-intensity strategic competition, should be modernized by the Marine Forces





**Force Design 2030 optimizes the Marine Corps for reconnaissance-strike tactics. A Marine launches an RQ-20 Puma sUAS during Mountain Warfare Training. (Photo by Cpl Eric Tso.)**

Additionally, the logistical challenges associated with the Expeditionary Advanced Base Operation concept and the Air Force Agile Combat Employment concept are so similar that dual solutions can be found. The Services can begin to establish this synergy by bringing Air Force Tactical Air Control Party personnel back to the Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company, which traces

the German Army of that era. Their tactical success was not a result of pioneering the tank or motorized operations; they did not. It was not a result of pioneering close air support; they did not do that either. It was not a result of inventing radio communication. Again, they did not. What they did do was organize themselves to exploit all of those advancements in combina-

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***But the enemy gets a vote. In part III of this series, I will examine another vision of an Information-Age warfighting organization, that of the People's Liberation Army.***

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its lineage to the Joint Assault Service Companies of World War II, which combined Marine, Navy, and Army Air Force liaison personnel to coordinate joint combined-arms support.

### **Conclusion**

In part I, we talked theoretically about how a warfighting service should organize for maneuver in the 21st century. We also mentioned that an older version—blitzkrieg—was a myth. But there is one lesson we should take from

tion by basing their structure around the panzer division and infiltration tactics. It is not about innovating any new capability; it is about organizing in such a way that you can exploit an emergent tactical schema. In the early 20th century, the key was organizing around armor-infiltration tactics. In the early 21st century, the key is organizing around reconnaissance-strike tactics.

Part II has been about how the Marine Corps has succeeded in organizing for the emergent tactical schema in the

past, and how it may be on the cusp of doing so again. Marine Corps 1.0 was organized for the line-of-battle tactics of the 19th century. Marine Corps 2.0 was organized for the armor-infiltration tactics of the 20th century. Marine Corps 3.0, whether through *Force Design 2030* or something else, must be organized for the reconnaissance-strike tactics of the 21st century that exploit the combined-arms of pervasive intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance, unmanned platforms, and precision strike weapon systems. Complexity theory offers an explanatory framework for how the Marine Corps has organized around these emergent tactical regimes when necessary to perform its missions in any given era.

But the enemy gets a vote. In part III of this series, I will examine another vision of an Information-Age warfighting organization, that of the People's Liberation Army.

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### **Notes**

1. Eric Murphy, *Complex Adaptive Systems and the Development of Force Structures for the United States Air Force*, (Montgomery, AL: Air University Press, 2014).
2. See B.A. Friedman, *21st Century Ellis: Operational Art and Strategic Prophecy*, (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2015); Angus Murray, "The U.S. Marine Corps and Gallipoli," in T.G. Heck and B.A. Friedman eds. *On Contested Shores: The Evolving Role of Amphibious Operations in the History of Warfare*, (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2020); and Bruce Gudmonsson, "Ambiguous Application: The Study of Amphibious Warfare at the Marine Corps Schools, 1920–1933," in Heck, T.G. and B.A. Friedman eds. *On Contested Shores: The Evolving Role of Amphibious Operations in the History of Warfare*, (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2020).
3. For doctrinal definitions, see Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 3-02, Amphibious Operations*, (Washington, DC: January 2019).
4. Chris Graham, "Readiness for the Irregular Future," *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: February 2022).



# Water for Sheep

UH-1Y training in the desert southwest

by Maj Evan Nordstrom

In late August of 2021, a section of UH-1Ys supported four days of operations in Southern California to help ensure the preservation of desert bighorn sheep. At face value, this would appear to be an inconsequential event or a puff piece to bolster the Marine Corps' image. It certainly was not standard, and there was no weaponry involved. Regardless, what occurred was significant and may serve to provide an example of the opportunities the Marine Corps has to shape and prepare itself for the next fight. If we train as we fight and we are not sure of what the next fight will be, then acceptance of the standard training profiles will leave the Corps in mediocrity.

## The Mission

The unprecedented drought in the American Southwest this year has threatened the survival of desert bighorn sheep including the federally endangered subspecies peninsular desert bighorn sheep.<sup>1</sup> Many individuals and groups are doing their best to prevent the extirpation of this animal including Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (BHA). BHA is known for its support of public lands for hunting and fishing and has recently added an Armed Forces Initiative (AFI). It was through Camp Pendleton's BHA AFI chapter that a request for helicopter support was raised. Camp Pendleton's BHA AFI coordinator reached out to HMLAT-303, the training squadron for H-1 aircrew, to ask if there were any chance UH-1Ys would be able to fly water into the mountains where these sheep needed it. The experience was worthwhile from a training perspective and the squadron was granted permission (more on this later) from the chain of command.

Planning had started before the approval was given and continued in



Bucket being emptied into guzzler. (Photo by Mr. Brian Schwab.)

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earnest for several weeks. The requirements for delivering external equipment in the mountainous terrain during the severe heat of mid-summer warranted the most senior crews available with two pilots and two crew chiefs per aircraft. Additionally, it was decided to have Marines in a support role on the ground for the aerial delivery of water. A captain from the 1st Marine Raider Support Battalion and another captain from Fleet Replacement Squadron Training at HMLAT-303 qualified as a forward air controller were chosen, bringing the total to ten Marines. This number does not include the Marines who were required to reposition to one of the

fields where the helicopters would remain overnight so routine maintenance could be performed without the aircraft having to return to the home field.

Three distinct areas needed water. With no natural water left, manmade sources known as "guzzlers"—which come in various shapes and sizes—have been established in these areas. In order to fill the guzzlers, the utility helicopters would first drop off ground personnel at the guzzler. They would then externally carry a ten-foot diameter pool made out of metal and a pump and drop them with the ground personnel. As the ground personnel set up the pool and pump, the helicopter would fly back to a "dip site" where external agencies had trucked water in and transferred the water to a "pumpkin" (a larger pool colored orange). The pilots would then utilize a "bambi bucket" (a large container externally carried and filled with 225 gallons of water normally used in a



firefighting role) to carry water from the pumpkin at the dip site to the awaiting pool that ground personnel had set up by the guzzler. Once they dropped the water at the guzzler, the water would either be pumped or gravity fed to the long-term containers, which are a part of the guzzler.

The operation went on schedule over the planned four days with the helicopters working in unison with all other agencies. Though there were several setbacks throughout the long weekend, the sheep in all three areas were provided with enough water to last them through the Spring.<sup>2</sup> The experiences had during this operation lend themselves as a lens to consider the different facets of Marine Corps planning and training during a time when the biggest concern is the near-peer fight and the changing roles of legacy platforms in *Force Design 2030*.

### Planning

This operation offered a unique exercise in planning to the Marines involved. Evolutions such as Service-Level Training Exercise (SLTE), Raven, and Summer Fury all provide Marines the ability to better themselves at planning. However, *MCDP 1* warns against the danger of “dictated” or “canned” scenarios, and while exercises like SLTE



**UH on final to Guzzler.** (Photo by Mr. Brian Schwab.)

the part of the Marines planning it and tested the veracity of the Marine Corps Planning Process. In the lead planner’s own words, “This mission fell within the framework for USMC doctrinal planning, just in a non-standard way. Frankly, this showed the doctrinal planning works (primarily the contingency piece).”<sup>4</sup>

Roughly 30 hours of planning occurred led by a captain and a former Marine who works in his off time as

in the area of operations as well as the diversity of participants.

A large part of the planning involved confirmation of the efficacy of a UH-1Y as a delivery platform for water to the required sites. As a result of the time of year, the heat and orographic winds, and the amount of water necessary the helicopter was operating at its limit. Additionally, it was determined the most critical site requiring water could not be serviced utilizing the standard firefighting equipment. The site was in an area which required the use of a “long-line” (a reinforced 120’ rope as compared to the standard 15’ pendant). The aircrew determined unless one of the NGOs would be able to procure one for use on the UH-1Y the mission was not possible. Fortunately, one of the crew chiefs decided to go to the Marine Air Logistics Squadron (MALS) on Camp Pendleton and dig through the parts there. He found a long line that not even the MALS personnel knew existed. Acceptance of the standard configuration had led H-1 crews and MALS personnel to forget a capability they had the entire time. After the aircrew confirmed the configuration was indeed legal, a proof of concept was required for this mission to succeed. While the long-line was effective at heavier weights, there was equipment that would be required to be carried in that was too light to safely fly

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***Roughly 30 hours of planning occurred led by a captain and a former Marine who works in his off time as a Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep (SCBS) board member.***

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provide a useful training tool, its size and complexity require it to be scripted to a significant degree in order to mitigate the serious risk involved with the live-firing of ordnance.<sup>3</sup> There are no easy solutions to this problem as we as an organization require this magnitude of combined-arms exercise in order to be proficient as a larger fighting force. The novelty of this mission coupled with the unfamiliarity between all players provided real friction and uncertainty. It required a concerted effort on

a Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep (SCBS) board member. In addition to SCBS, the other agencies/organizations involved included Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation, Desert Wildlife Unlimited, and another contingent of Marines located at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms. The challenge for the captain was complex both



**UH utilizing the long-line with specialized weight.** (Photo by Mr. Brian Schwab.)

using the long-line. The apparatus to add weight did not exist but, the captain worked with SCBS and the California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation to garner funding for a specialized weight to be made by a civilian company. Through diligence and attention to detail, a problem worth thousands had been fixed for hundreds all while adding another capability to the already capable UH-1Y.

Once all sites had been thoroughly studied and the theoretical ability of a section of UH-1Ys to deliver enough water to be of sufficient use to the parties involved was confirmed, a timeline was determined and the next hurdle was addressed: Approval from higher. Risk management is important for the preservation of lives, assets, and capability. However, risk aversion can become crippling and lead to atrophy of the abilities of a Marine, a unit, and a force. The media attention this mission would incur and the austere environment within which it would be conducted left its planners skeptical of approval. It would be quite easy to lay blame on lower commanders if a mishap were to occur with admittedly high stakes. Fortunately, the Marines involved did a phenomenal job thinking through and planning for each contingency to include reconnaissance of the zones and trial runs with the new gear. The thoroughness of the prepara-

tion made it relatively easy for both the O-5 and O-6 commanders to approve the mission.

### Training

The value afforded the Marines involved with this mission was predominantly in the form of experience doing something most of them had rarely done in their careers with people and agencies unfamiliar with each other. Secondly,

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***If the crew involved in this mission had not been at the top of their game, there were many pitfalls that could have ended in mission failure if not disaster.***

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the rugged terrain reflected the same environments that groups such as ISIS operate in and where small teams of Americans are forced to root them out. The environment and long days alone were challenging enough even to crews as senior as those chosen. Coupled with the unfamiliar long-line, the aircrew were well aware of the care necessary to ensure a safe and effective plan as the risks added up. The contingencies were planned for, extra aircraft were allotted, bump plans were created and all players were prepared by the time the mission began.

As *Warfighting* instructs, and similar to the planning, the conduct of the training was decentralized.<sup>5</sup> After take-off, the crews were on their own with no expectation of reporting except for safe on deck at the end of the day. Within hours of launch, the section of UHs had each made a precautionary landing for separate emergencies and the backup UH had been found with problems on startup. The lead aircraft was able to correct the gripe on deck and continue to the landing site to conduct the face-to-face planning with the civilian agencies mentioned previously which, to this point, none of the Marines had ever seen in person. This unknown situation with the variability of human interactions alone makes this operation effective in its training experience. The innovation required and the coordination conducted just on day one was enough to make the entire evolution worth it from the Marines' training perspective.<sup>6</sup>

All real-world missions will inherently involve dealing with friction. This often is not able to be duplicated by training during SLTE or other similar evolutions as the result is contrived whereas, if the sheep do not get water, they die regardless of the personalities and capabilities involved. Decentral-

ized execution will only work with well-trained Marines. If the crew involved in this mission had not been at the top of their game, there were many pitfalls that could have ended in mission failure if not disaster.

The next three days had one or both helicopters flying to the max of their crew day. During the first day of water delivery, the lead UH flew solo while the second UH returned to Pendleton to retrieve a fourth aircraft to help on the final two days of water delivery. Since the mission was planned for two UHs, the aircrew and their civilian partners



had to decide on where only half of the planned water would go. While the second day saw both UHs successfully delivering water, the third day saw one of the apparatuses required for water delivery break so that it was unable to be fixed that day. Regardless of the issues faced, the Marines were able to work through the problems and successfully supply the Southern Californian populations of Bighorn Sheep with sufficient water to save them from the interminable drought. To further substantiate the significance of the Marine UH capability, one of the sites where water was successfully delivered would not be considered by the civilian contractors who are normally hired to deliver this water. To be clear, this is not to sully their reputation or to exaggerate the Marines' own. Simply, the Marine Corps exists to be able to do what others cannot. In this case, the crews looked at the problem, determined the risk, developed controls in the form of very small "work-ups" and safely executed the complex and dangerous task.<sup>7</sup>

The Marines on the ground also received experiences neither had ever had before. Being dropped into unfamiliar terrain in the extreme heat and constant battering downwash from the UH main rotor was taxing. The coordination piece again became a point of learning as while the Marines were familiar with the helicopter, the civilians who were on the ground with them were not. The civilians were volunteers who wanted to help but their eagerness became a liability. The Marines on the ground had to manage both the helicopter and the unfamiliar civilians who did not have an appreciation for, nor the training required to work in tandem with the aircrew. As professionals, they were able to do it safely and successfully.

### Implications Based on the CPG and Historical Use of H-1s

The general tendency of the H-1 community, from the author's experience, is to concentrate on Force Design and its implications for the future of said community. While it is the number one priority, the Commandant states plainly the importance of warfighting and education as well. It is clear China

is the pacing threat and the planning guidance is geared toward ensuring the Marine Corps is prepared to defeat them. However, as Gen Krulak pointed out, "The war you prepare for is rarely the war you get."<sup>8</sup> This is not the first article in recent history to suggest an alternative concentration for the H-1 community. An article printed in this publication about two years ago argues stand-off capability (a tenet of the Commandant's plan for the fight with China) isn't something H-1s bring to the table and should therefore be utilized in low to medium threat environments where they have proven their mettle over the last two decades.<sup>9</sup> While capability in a low to medium threat environment is important, preparing to fight for the last war is as grave a mistake as assuming the next war has been preordained.

The UH-1Y will always have a use regardless of the foe. As the pilots who cut their teeth in Iraq and Afghanistan transition to senior staff positions or ride off into the sunset, the lack of combat experience in the company-grade officers leads to training becoming the end-all for preparing for the next war. The development of the next generation must be of primary concern. If training is all there is, then the efficacy of that training is of the utmost importance. As *Warfighting* states, "Experience under fire generally increases confidence, as

can realistic training by lessening the mystique of combat."<sup>10</sup> While training can only come so close to being "under fire" there are real-world scenarios in which the UH-1Y can train as shown by this sheep mission. The most obvious tasks trained during the sheep mission include CASEVAC as well as insert/extract practice but there is another facet to consider.

Consider the Marine Corps' actions in the smaller wars and disputes it has been a part of. Many of them provide examples of small units dealing with local populations and having a significant effect on the outcome of global power struggles. This is why the Commandant can say with certainty we are a force that, "ensures the prevention of major conflict and deters the escalation of conflict."<sup>11</sup> The first night of the sheep mission had the Marines camping near a road that local civilians frequented. The locals saw the grey helicopter land on the edge of state land and, their curiosity piqued, they drove out to see what the situation was. The Marines on this mission were professional and friendly and were happy to interact with the people who came to ask what they were doing. After talking with a particular group, the Marines were taken aback by the locals' opinion of Marine helicopters. From the perspective of the Americans who live in the Southern



UH with standard configuration drawing water from the pumpkin. (Photo by Mr. Brian Schwab.)

California desert, the grey helicopters that are always overhead are, at best, an enigma. To talk with the helicopter aircrew and hear about the positive impact they are having in this one small instance left the local populace pleased and welcoming to the otherwise aloof and vaguely intimidating presence of the helicopters.<sup>12</sup>

This is not a novel occurrence. The importance of winning the loyalty of the people has long been a key to military victory and is perhaps best summarized by Sir Robert Thompson:

The peoples' trust is primary. It will come hard because they are fearful and suspicious. Protection is the most important thing you can bring them. After that comes health. And, after that, many things—land, prosperity, education and privacy to name a few.<sup>13</sup>

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**... Marines helping to save the endangered sheep made a lasting and positive impression on a population that was admittedly uncertain ... about the constant presence of the grey helicopters.**

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After the initial combat and destruction, Marines must be able to lift up and support, through both goodwill and more concrete things such as infrastructure, those who are victim to but not the cause of whatever war is happening around them.<sup>14</sup> This is not always agreed upon but many examples provide at least an argument for the consideration of and planning for Marines to bolster civilian support.

**Conclusion**

The Marine Corps' focus is on preparing for victory in a war with the pacing threat and it will be this way for the foreseeable future (as it should). Training will follow suit and the scenarios within the training will reflect what we think will occur in places like the South China Sea and its surrounding areas. The requirements of the Marines during that fight will pertain to much more than the direct attack of the enemy and those of us whose jobs involve combat

arms would do well to keep an eye out for how to keep the other capabilities that will lead to victory sharp. The mission to deliver water to an endangered species provided the Marines involved with an unparalleled experience. GySgt Jared Tape, a crew chief with eight deployments and over 4,000 hours in UH aircraft stated without hesitation, "This was the most varsity training I have ever participated in CONUS."<sup>15</sup> The mutual benefit between all parties has precipitated planning for the next round of water delivery. What other opportunities might exist within this country for Marines to work in actual situations and interact with various agencies and individuals who are not familiar with the military?

It is the direction of the Commandant for the Marine Corps to be, "A

force that can prevent small disturbances from becoming regional conflicts."<sup>16</sup> The essence of war is lost oftentimes in large-scale exercises, and in order to be effective, the Marine Corps must look for other opportunities which allow for the practice of decentralized execution.<sup>17</sup> With just one overflight and a little bit of positive interaction, the Marines helping to save the endangered sheep made a lasting and positive impression on a population that was admittedly uncertain as to how they felt about the constant presence of the grey helicopters. The positive attributes of this mission are extensive and could take up much more than this article but, the takeaway must be individual circumspection as to how and where Marines may be able to train the full complement of essential tasks assigned to their MOS. Do not settle for the standard. Strive to look for new ways to train and new experiences to develop the next generation.

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**Notes**

1. Interview between author and Scott Gibson in September 2021.
2. Ibid.
3. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCDP 1, Warfighting*, (Washington, DC: 1997).
4. Interview between author and Capt John Zimmer in October 2021.
5. *MCDP 1, Warfighting*.
6. Headquarters Marine Corps, *Force Design 2030: Annual Update*, (Washington, DC: April 2021).
7. Interview between author and Capt John Zimmer in October 2021.
8. Victor H. Krulak, *First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps*, (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1999).
9. B. O'Donnell, "Standby Five Line: The Future of Marine Light Attack," *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: February 2021).
10. *MCDP 1, Warfighting*.
11. Headquarters Marine Corps, *38th Commandant's Planning Guidance*, (Washington, DC: 2019).
12. Interview between author and Capt John Zimmer in October 2021.
13. Victor H. Krulak, *First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps*, (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1999).
14. Ibid.
15. Interview between author and GySgt Jared Tape in September 2021.
16. Headquarters Marine Corps, *Force Design 2030: Annual Update*, (Washington, DC: April 2021).
17. *MCDP 1, Warfighting*.





# Jungle Warfare Exercise

Joint force large scale exercise in Okinawa, Japan

by Maj Charles H. Richardson IV

**M**aneuver Warfare Exercise (MWX), held in Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center and at Mountain Warfare Training Center in Bridgeport, CA, has been remarkably successful in providing a means for units to conduct all-domain force-on-force; however, it fails to incorporate the expected environment against our adversaries in a future conflict. Simply put, MWX is executed in high deserts and mountains, which are strikingly different than the littoral environments found in the First Island Chain (FIC). If the Marine Corps is to remain a relevant force, it must learn to fight and persist against our pacing threat within the FIC. This necessitates preparatory training that supports the *Commandant's Planning Guidance* and supporting documents by integrating the joint force and partnered militaries while being conducted within a littoral environment. The training venue exists in Okinawa, Japan, with representation across the joint forces but resource shortfalls in the form of infrastructure and equipment capabilities prevent the area from reaching its full potential. If properly resourced, the Marine Corps has the unique opportunity to utilize an exercise location that increases capability, understanding, and proficiency to operate in a joint, multi-domain, littoral jungle environment while assuring regional partners and deterring adversary aggression.

The joint force is well represented in Okinawa, Japan, to include III MEF, all other Services, and special operations force units. While many of these units are permanently forward-deployed, a significant number rotate from the

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United States and have undergone a demanding workup schedule that provides a foundational understanding of operating in a multi-domain contested environment. These units arrive in Okinawa fully manned, trained, and equipped for an all-domain fight; however, they are not necessarily prepared for joint and allied force integration in a littoral jungle environment.

In 1998, III MEF addressed this shortfall in environmental-focused training by formally establishing Jun-

gle Warfare Training Center (JWTC), previously marketed as a counter-guerrilla school, through 3d MarDiv. As a division-sponsored school, 3d MarDiv does not currently receive the funding or manning typical of a TECOM school and makes do with a limited staff that is mainly sourced by III MEF for one-year rotations through the fleet augmentation program. In the recent past, JWTC conducted a two-week jungle environmental training package for infantry units and one week for non-infantry units. This proved useful in giving units a cursory respect for operating in a littoral jungle environment but fell short in creating unit-level capabilities.

To address this shortfall 4th Marine Regiment, a permanently forward-deployed infantry unit in Okinawa, partnered with JWTC and III MEF's Expe-



**Marines employ a mobile combat operations center during JUNGLE WARFARE Exercise 22 in the Northern Training Area of Okinawa. (Photo by 1stLt Marianne Mangrum.)**

ditionary Operations Training Group to create unit-level capabilities to operate in a littoral jungle environment. For jungle operations, this included sending junior leaders through JWTC's recently created Jungle Leader's Course, a four-week formal period of instruction focused on creating small unit leaders able to train their unit. Once jungle leaders are created, units are given time to conduct environmental familiarization and mobility training in jungle operations.

Military forces training on islands in the Pacific should embrace opportunities to train in the surrounding oceans. A small-unit boat capability is sustained within 3d MarDiv forward-deployed through III MEF's Expeditionary Operations Training Group amphibious raids branch Coxswain's, Maritime Navigation, Incidental Coxswain's, and Scout Swimmer's courses. These capabilities traditionally reserved for MEU operations are practiced and rehearsed with select rotational infantry units at the platoon level. These learned skills lay the groundwork for larger exercises and experimentation in employment concepts that allow flexibility and modulation for a wide range of boat employment options loosely outlined in the CMC's recently released guidance document, *A Concept for a Stand-In Forces (SIF)*, which—among other topics—outlines the importance of having a small unit boat capability,

Marines will need to be capable of using a variety of small craft, such as patrol, coastal, and commercial craft. To enable seaward littoral movement, this concept envisions SIF employing organic craft, coordinating for such support from allies and partners, or leasing and operating commercial craft found in a host nation.<sup>1</sup>

As a culminating event to test these recently developed capabilities, III MEF with joint forces conducted JUNGLE WARFARE Exercise (JWX). This exercise seeks to pick up where the MWX leaves off in the training continuum. The primary objective is to conduct a doctrinal and operationally informed joint and partnered, force-on-force exercise in an all-domain environment, across warfighting functions throughout Okinawa's sea, air, and ground train-



**Marines training to use small boats in the first island chain. (Photo by LCpl Gosun.)**

ing areas to better prepare for conflict within the FIC. Objectives are scalable but largely focus on operationally informed Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) concepts such as denial of key maritime terrain, establishing forward arming and refueling points, dispersal of forces, logistics, and joint and partnered naval strike integration against maritime and landbased targets in a multi-domain contested environment. The cornerstone of this exercise is synchronizing efforts with III MEF, 7th Fleet, special operations forces, Space Force, and the other elements of the joint force to practice the actions of a stand-in and outside force working together to deny and control critical sea lines of communication during distributed operations.

Given that most units reside on or rotate through Okinawa, the exercise significantly reduces transportation costs normally associated with aggregating a diversity of exercise participants to a single training venue. For comparison, in 2020, 4th Marine Regiment's participation in MWX cost well in excess of \$6 million in transportation costs to and from the United States while this past JWX was executed for around \$250,000—with most of the funds being allocated to aviation fuel cost. For the remainder of the joint and allied forces, it is a pay-to-play exercise

that is supported by unit funds. JWX is scalable in both size and scope and can be reduced to accomplish limited objectives with smaller budgets in a fiscally constrained budget or expanded to include training areas in mainland Japan, outlining islands, or combined with other regional exercises in the Philippines, Thailand, or South Korea. After rotational units return to the United States, this newly acquired knowledge and tactics can cross-pollinate within the Marine Corps and joint force to significantly decrease institutional learning curves in jungle littoral operations.

An additional benefit to conducting large-scale exercises in Okinawa is proximity to key regional partners. The Japanese Ground Self Defense Force's (JGSDF) Western Army is distributed from the southern tip of mainland Japan to the lower Ryukyu Islands including Okinawa with infantry, artillery, and an increasing number of anti-ship missile defense units.<sup>2</sup> These units, particularly the anti-ship missile elements, complement the Marine Corps during EABO. III MEF enjoys a habitual relationship with JSDF units to include conducting both command post and field training exercises on an annual basis such as KEEN EDGE/SWORD, RESOLUTE DRAGON, and MARITIME DEFENSE Exercise-AMPHIBIOUS RAPID DEPLOYMENT BRIGADE. The field training



portion of these exercises is conducted with a rotation of regional Japanese armies, predominately in mainland Japan, to evenly spread training throughout the country. Conducting a large-scale exercise on and around Okinawa with the Western Army on a consistent basis will drastically increase key leader relationship building, interoperability, and opportunities to experiment and refine with practical application of EABO concepts between the two militaries. Fixed-wing assets with the Japanese Air Self Defense Force and destroyers from the Japanese Maritime Defense Force participated in JWX 2022. COVID mitigation measures have prevented Western Army's involvement to date, but participation is anticipated for future iterations.

Partnered and joint exercises within the FIC have the benefit of shaping and influencing the intelligence and information space. In information operations, conducting exercises within the FIC has an outsized effect in demonstrating resolve with allies and deterrence to current and would-be aggressors. In consideration of intelligence gathering, these exercises help to normalize larger operations and create baselines from which our adversaries will struggle to distinguish between exercise posturing and the actual distribution of forces.<sup>3</sup> These operations can also be layered onto "intelligence-led operations" and elicit a targeted response to better understand adversary collections methods and assets within the region while monitoring "Own Force Signature Assessment" is vastly different in the littorals than what is common in most inland United States' training venues.<sup>4</sup>

### Challenges

Okinawa maneuver training areas encompass a vast archipelago area but were originally designed with small-unit-readiness training in mind and not necessarily large-scale force-on-force exercises. Given the mountainous jungle terrain, many of these areas are difficult to traverse by vehicle or lack suitable helicopter landing zones for rotary-wing



**USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN-72) supports JUNGLE WARFARE Exercise 22 with carrier-based fixed-wing strikes.**  
(Photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Aleksandr Freutel.)

assets supporting a causality evacuation. This can potentially delay medical responses unless helicopters are outfitted with special equipment, such as a penetrator, to extract casualties in inaccessible terrain. Marine Corps Installations Pacific and engineering units have efforts underway to improve training area access roads, but this must be a deliberate and well-supported effort given the jungle's inherent ability to reclaim any improvements through erosion and vegetation growth.

For safety communications infrastructure and exercise control, there are limited radios available, and the range of these assets is degraded by a lack of relay stations to facilitate effective communications across the island. As an example, handheld range control radios cannot communicate directly between the northern and central training areas of Okinawa's numerous outlying islands. For Okinawa to reach the full potential of becoming a premier training venue, Marine Corps Installations Pacific needs to be provided the resources to improve

the existing communication infrastructure between these training areas via radio procurement and investment in relay stations.

As a result of limitations of the Instrumented Tactical Engagement Simulation System force-on-force systems, adjudication of direct and indirect fire engagements during force-on-force is accomplished through the use of observer controllers using radios and global positioning satellites. This information is aggregated and fed into an analog or input-based digital common operating picture for battle tracking and after-action purposes. To increase the efficiency in adjudication, Marine Corps Systems Command's Program Manager for Training Systems—the training systems acquisitions arm for the Marine Corps—must tailor any Instrumented Tactical Engagement Simulation System II replacement to operate in a jungle environment and compatible with the Japanese Self Defense Force's force-on-force system, the Battle Training Apparatus Type II. Marine Corps Installations Pacific should be provided the

resources to invest in exercise control infrastructure to include command and control buildings and relay stations between training areas for these systems to have the capability to build a common operating picture for adjudication and aid in the after-action process.

Employing small unmanned aerial systems (sUAS) in Japan requires a detailed frequency request for each system that must be completed well in advance of training. The frequency request must be routed through U.S. INDOPACOM and subsequently the Japanese government for final approval. Though the sUAS frequency request process has recently received favorable outcomes for the requesting unit, it is a timely procedure that requires significant coordination with inconsistent results. Current policies are antiquated and lack the flexibility to accommodate the speed at which we procure and experiment with new systems.<sup>5</sup> Given that sUAS employment in training is the new normal and not the exception,



**USS Spruance (DDG 111) sails in formation with a Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyer while supporting JUNGLE WARFARE Exercise 22. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Aleksandr Freutel.)**

U.S. INDOPACOM Joint Frequency Management Office and U.S. Forces Japan Joint Frequency Management Office must work with the DOD and Japanese government to reform policies and streamline the request process.

Lastly, the culmination of these capabilities does not come to fruition until later in the unit deployment pro-

gram cycle and at the expense of losing Marines during conflicting training schedules—to include regional exercises. The earlier that units can garner a foundational understanding of the unique skills inherent to a jungle and littoral environment, the more options the supported commander will have to utilize these capabilities during the



**USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), USS Mobile Bay (CG 53), and USS Spruance (DDG 111) sail in formation with Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force ships during Exercise JUNGLE WARFARE 22. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Aleksandr Freutel.)**

deployment cycle. MEF commanders providing forces should explore every opportunity to build these capabilities prior to deployment by conducting mission essential tasks and jungle mobility-related skills, sending troops in advance to JWTC hosted or similar courses, and building small boat capabilities through Expeditionary Operations Training Group-sponsored courses.

### Conclusion

JWX represents not just an exercise but a comprehensive approach to learning how to fight and operate within a littoral jungle environment. Understanding the lessons learned; creating tactics, techniques, and procedures; and procuring the appropriate equipment are the foundation to our success in both the competition space and the future fight. This must be properly resourced, done in conjunction with the joint force alongside partnered nations, and within view of our adversaries. Ultimately, this will aid in the creation of doctrine and operational plans that support our ability to conduct distributed operations with joint and partnered forces within the FIC while contributing to deterrence against our Nation's pacing threat.

### Notes

1. Gen David H. Berger, *A Concept for Stand-In Forces*, (Washington, DC: December 2021).
2. Steven Stashwick, "Japan Confirms New Missile Deployments to Ryukyu Islands: Anti-air and Anti-ship Missiles Will Be Sent to Ishigakijima in 2022," *The Diplomat*, (August 2021), available at <https://thediplomat.com>.
3. Headquarters Marine Corps, *Tentative Expeditionary Advanced Operations Manual*, (Washington, DC: February 2021).
4. Ibid.
5. Department of Defense, *DOD Instruction 4650.01 Policy and Procedures for Management and Use of the Electromagnetic Spectrum (9 January 2009); Incorporating Change 1*, (Washington, DC: October 2017).





# Rio Grande War

## Offensive in Expeditionary Operations

by Mr. Joseph Miranda & Dr. Christopher R. Cummins

**J**oint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations*, comments about the offensive: Joint Forces “seek the earliest opportunity to conduct decisive offensive operations. ... Defensive operations enable [joint forces] to conduct or prepare for decisive offensive operations.”<sup>1</sup>

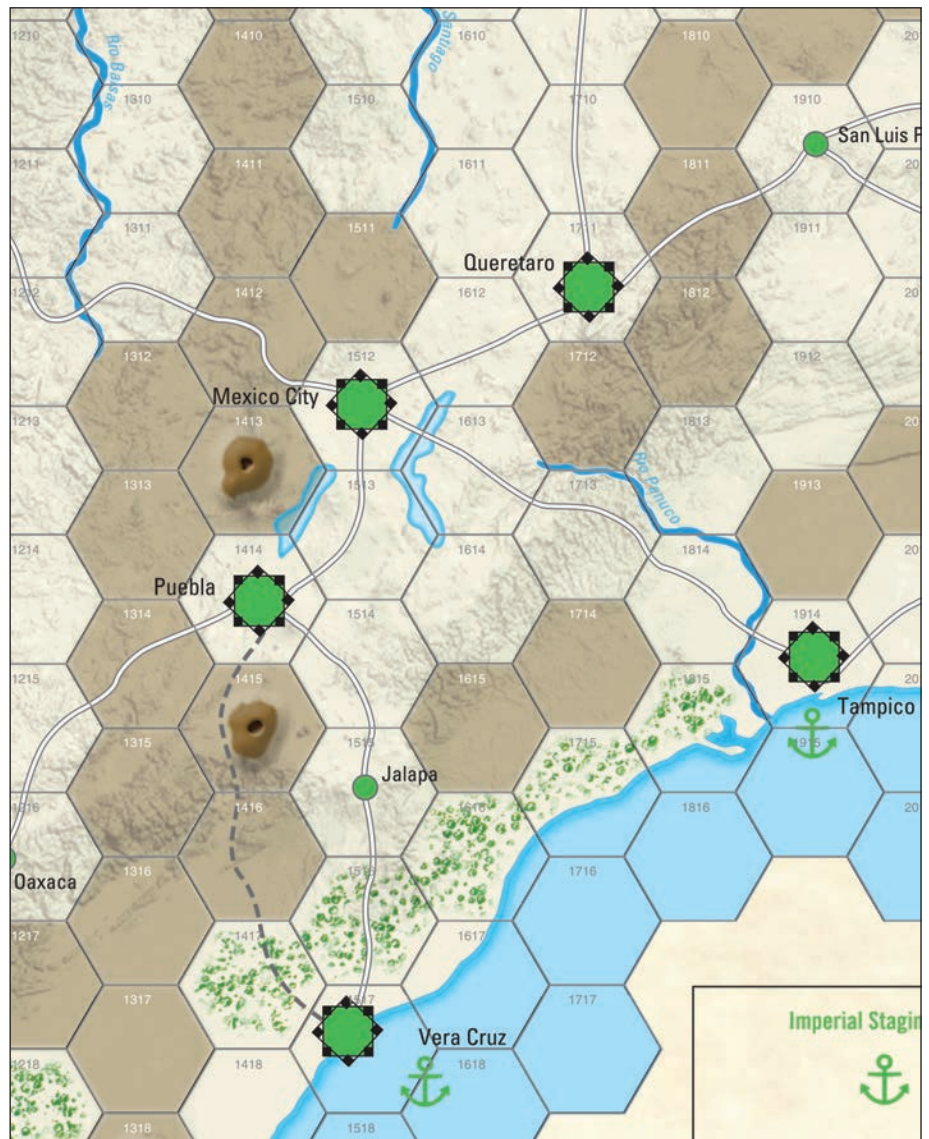
Wargames on historical battles and campaigns often present a predetermined side on the attack—and often the side that won the battle. Thus, wargames are often a case of whether the players can do better than the historical outcome. Players should analyze the historical course of action and determine whether a different course of action (e.g. a change of strategy or operational focus) or executing the course of action differently (e.g. better tactics or force deployments) would produce a better result. Wargames on topics where both sides had historical offensive operations provide the best training for understanding how to prepare for shifting from defensive to offensive operations. Wargames on the Battle of Shiloh provide a good starting point as the battle is split nicely into a first-day contest of whether the Confederate forces on the offensive can push the Union units away from Pittsburg Landing versus the Union preparing for a decisive second-day offensive.

As players, wargamers should ask themselves where they are on the offensive/defensive spectrum at each point in the game, and what they need to do to maximize their current offensive operations or what they are doing to prepare for future decisive operations by defensive operations such as trading space for conserving combat strength/building reserves.

*Rio Grande War* in *Strategy & Tactics* #334 (designed by Joseph Miranda) puts offensive operations onto the

**>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.**

**>>Dr. Cummins, PhD, MBA, is the publisher of Strategy & Tactics Press and CEO of Decision Games. He has led a team in publishing over 400 board wargames and 600 magazine issues over the past 32 years. He is a former Army psychologist and continues to practice part-time specializing in assessing, testing, and treating individuals with stress disorders.**



wargame board in a non-linear operational environment. *Rio Grande War* models a hypothetical U.S. war with Maximilian's Empire of Mexico in 1866–67.

In 1863, the Second French Empire had set up the Empire of Mexico under Maximilian of Austria. A French-Imperial Army soon found itself facing the Mexican Republic led by Benito Juarez. With the end of the U.S. Civil War in 1865, Washington, DC pressured the French to withdraw from Mexico, in part by dispatching an army of veteran troops under the command of Gen Phil Sheridan to the Rio Grande Valley. Louis Napoleon III, the French Emperor, decided it was not worth the risk of war, so he withdrew his army from the country. Maximilian fought on gallantly with his loyal followers but was defeated by the Republic and ended his days before a firing squad. Juarez reestablished the Republic.

However, the game assumes that Napoleon III did not back down, and the United States did intervene militarily in Mexico. It is expeditionary warfare with all that concept entails on the strategic and operational levels. It is a situation where players need to take the offensive in order to win. There are two reasons for doing this: one is to destroy enemy forces, and the other is to seize critical objectives such as fortress cities.

The central system of the game can be called a "war of columns." Each player has a designated number of action points (AP), which represent overall command control and logistical capabilities. Players expend AP to mobilize forces and conduct offensive operations, marching columns of combat units, leaders, and supply trains, then fighting enemy forces in contact. Game units are based on historical formations—including French, Mexican Imperial, United States, and Mexican Republican—at the brigade and division echelon.

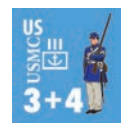
Players can conduct operations continually as long as they have AP available to expend. Effectively, you can march a column from the Rio Grande Valley down to Mexico City as long as you concentrate AP for a single offensive. The dilemma is, as usual, there is never sufficient AP to do everything the commander wants.

Mobility is a major factor. This is a theater of operations that includes deserts, mountains, jungles, and even some inactive volcanoes. There is a limited road network, channelizing major movements. Players have to consider their axes of advance and lateral routes to shift columns.

By concentrating your forces into a small number of columns, you can get more from your offensive operations. But this is at the potential cost of being outflanked by enemy columns. You have options on how to set the pace of operations.

Players can compose columns entirely of cavalry for rapid movement. But you need to follow up with infantry for major battles. There are some special composite units representing combined arms with enhanced movement and combat. Many of the units are colorful, including the French Foreign Legion, Mexican brigades armed with the new repeating rifles, U.S. Army Scouts, and counter-guerrillas, the latter an early example of special forces. There is also a contingent

of ex-Confederates who signed up to fight for the Mexican Empire.



There are other ways to facilitate offensive operations. One is by having engineers accompany a column. Engineers facilitate river crossings and are useful in assaulting enemy-held fortresses. Another way is to exploit naval power to conduct amphibious landings along Mexico's coastlines, thereby conducting strategic outflanking maneuvers. There are Marine units to enhance landings.

Contemporary technologies enhance offensive mobility. Players can build riverine flotillas for transporting forces on the Rio Grande. Another way is by building a planned railroad from Mexico City to the Caribbean coast.

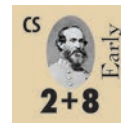
Further, "During nonlinear offensive operations, attacking forces must focus offensive actions against decisive points, while allocating the minimum essential combat power to defensive operations."<sup>2</sup>

A basic dilemma for both sides in the game is there are never enough brigades and divisions to defend everything while having enough in reserve to go over to the offensive. Players have to balance the needs of campaign operations against covering their bases and cities. Loss of too many of these strategic points means depletion of AP, undermining your campaign. Fortresses such as Mexico City, Veracruz, and Tampico become centers for operations.

Often in the game, the best defense is offense, keeping the enemy off-balance and forcing his columns to cover his bases. Another factor is the tradeoff between recruiting versus operations. Often, it makes sense to go on the defensive (an operational pause) for a turn or two in order to build up forces and logistics.

Asymmetrical operations are part of the game. Players can mobilize partisans for operations in the enemy rear area. They provide a means to take the offensive without having to march across the map. This brings in those counter-guerrilla units for rear area security.

The human dimension is a factor. Players receive leaders representing major military-political figures—examples include Phil Sheridan, Marshal Bazaine, George Custer, Benito Juarez, and even Emperor Maximilian himself. Leaders provide bonuses in combat and for AP mobilization. Put your





leaders up front to enhance offensive operations but risk losing them in battle!

Finally, there is the political dimension. Random events bring in a wide range of effects, including additional outside intervention, crises on the home front, and morale checks. One is fighting on shifting sands, and it is up to the players to bring order to the situation. It is all there in that great expeditionary campaign that might have happened south of the Rio Grande.

### Notes

1. The Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-0, Joint Operations*, (Washington, DC: January 2017).
2. COL Thomas S. Fisher, *The Planner Handbook*, (Tampa, FL: Military Strategist, LLC, 2002).



# Strategy & Tactics Game Editions

## Issue 323

## Issue 334

**Rangers: Lead The Way** is a solitaire simulation of the US Army Ranger assault on the Pointe du Hoc on D-Day that challenges the player to do better than the actual Ranger attack up the cliffs that historic morning and additionally allows the player to fight the battle using the planned, rather than the actual, forces and landing beaches. The scenarios cover action through 0300 June 7, a span of 24 hours.

**Rio Grande War** is a wargame on a hypothetical war between the United States and the Empire of Mexico following the American Civil War. The assumption is that France's Napoleon III decided to maintain a French army in Mexico to back up Emperor Maximilian, and the US responded with an invasion. At stake: the fate of North America!



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# “Lissa and MWX”

by Capt Peter Shelton

In 1866, the Austrian and Italian fleets fought one of the most influential but now overlooked battles in naval history. As one of the few ironclad fleet battles during an era of accelerated naval development, it carried undue weight in professional circles. It was an awkward battle. Half of each fleet used iron plating, but armor-piercing rounds to penetrate that iron did not exist. The disadvantage of firepower resulted in ships ramming each other, ultimately deciding the battle. From that moment, a renaissance of ramming took over naval shipbuilding around the globe. Even the infamous USS *Maine*, later destroyed in Havana harbor, was built with a ram and offset turrets to allow forward-firing while ramming. Such designs were badly misled. Increased firepower resulted in the final obsolescence of ramming, and eventually the untested doctrine of ramming was quietly put aside along with all the unused rams. A flawed lesson from a one-off battle.

## Onto Current Events

For a hot week in May 2021, nearly ten thousand Marines went toe to toe with each other in Twentynine Palms in one of the largest force-on-force exercises in years. Maneuver Warfare Exercise (MWX) was characterized by mechanized attacks against stubbornly held passes while tube and rocket artillery wreaked havoc in the rear areas. Both sides played a game of cat and mouse, carefully camouflaging their supply nodes and command and control (C2) centers to disappear into the desert as enemy air scouted overhead.

At face value, MWX provided three lessons

1. We need tanks. Without tanks, breaches of fortified positions are impossible.
2. Tubed artillery is king. Any unit caught out inside the range of a 155mm cannon was dead.
3. C2 on the modern battlefield works.

The reality is that every single one of these initial lessons learned is dead wrong.

We train for mountain warfare in mountains, jungle warfare in jungles, and naval warfare 200 miles inland at a land-locked base. Since the *Commandants Planning Guidance* has come out, the Marine Corps has struggled to actually test littoral warfare. Every unit generally solves the problem by filling the map around the base boundary blue, thereby making an island—at least on PowerPoint. When presented with this fashionable solution in a planning brief leading up to MWX, a gunnery sergeant was overheard muttering “everything’s a f\*\*\*\*\* island now.”

>Capt Shelton is a UH-1Y Pilot assigned to Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 469. His opinions are his own.



**The Marine Corps trains for naval warfare 200 miles inland in the high desert of California. (Photo by LCpl Colton Brownlee.)**

The salty gunnery sergeant poked perhaps the biggest hole in MWX: it was not a naval fight. The reality is that we fought a land engagement with ourselves and got land solutions from it. For that reason, let us reevaluate lessons learned:

1. We do not need tanks. Tanks are designed for open warfare. They excel at bringing firepower and mobility to the battlefield. In a naval fight, Marine bases will be tactically and locally defensive as they support long-range fires. The need for major breaches of battalion-held positions is unlikely. Logistically, how do we even plan on getting those tanks ashore in the first place? Or for that matter, how did the ten thousand Marines get ashore on the “island” of Twentynine Palms unmolested? Tanks will not be tactically necessary nor logistically viable during expeditionary warfare in support of the fleet.
2. Tubed artillery is not king. In an open battle with terrain to hide in and objectives well within range of most artillery,



our trusty M777s and the Marines manning them acquitted themselves well. However, if the target is 100km away or more, it becomes a moot point. Tube artillery will play a role in localized fights to come, but most battles happen at the maximum range of their weapon systems. The 155mm round is simply outranged by modern missiles.

3. C2 networks need more work. The main communication network in use by both sides at MWX is satellite-based. Although universal coverage is incredibly useful, we cannot hang our future on satellites that may not be there. As a result of their position in orbit out of the public view, a rival power could destroy our satellites, deny doing so, and expect little public outcry since no one would be killed. Since destroying satellites is a high payoff with low political risks, the Corps needs to be ready to communicate without satellites. This will mean high frequency, very high frequency, and ultra-high frequency with all their bandwidth and range limitations. Additionally, battery supplies will need to last longer than one week.

This does not mean that MWX was a waste of time or effort. Marines involved gained valuable experiences in camouflage, decoys, and executing their missions within a

higher mission. Opportunities for regimental- or division-level staff to plan and execute an exercise of this scale are few and far between. MWX, with all its warts, provided much-needed experience and valuable lessons to all participants. However, as we learn from this exercise, observers must acknowledge that this was a land fight and that many of the tactical lessons learned are not relevant to the fight we are preparing for.

This is not to say those efforts are not being made. In December 2020, Exercise STEEL KNIGHT tested communicating and coordinating with the fleet. Implementation of the new Amphibious Combat Vehicle is renewing basic questions of sealift and how we get to shore. 11th Marines' Littoral FIREX, also in 2020, moved forward discussions of modern fires. The LAR community as a whole and 1st LAR, in particular, is experimenting with conducting all domain reconnaissance in a littoral environment. In fits and bursts, the Corps is developing toward a new construct, more able to fight the wars of the future. We just need to make sure we are not building rams.



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# The Rise of Islamic State

reviewed by 1stLt Walker D. Mills

**T**he *Rise of Islamic State* by Patrick Cockburn, initially published in 2014 as *The Jihadis Return: ISIS and the New Sunni Uprising* and then updated in 2015, was the first major book to document and describe the rise of ISIS in the Middle East. Cockburn is generally regarded as one of the first observers to realize the importance of early developments in the group's rise. The timing as one of the first books to discuss ISIS and the author's unique perspective as a journalist make the author's book stand out among a large and young field of books on ISIS.

Patrick Cockburn is an Irish journalist who has worked in and around the Middle East since 1979 and has written eight books, five of which are on Iraq and the Middle East. He has also received multiple awards for his books and his coverage of the Iraq War.

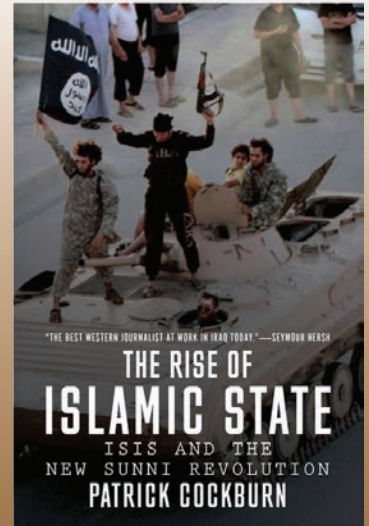
Cockburn starts his narrative with the fall of Mosul in June of 2014 to ISIS forces, a pivotal moment in the rise of ISIS. Mosul is Iraq's second-largest city, 200 miles North of Baghdad with a pre-war population of over a million residents. Guarded by 60,000 Iraqi soldiers and police, the city fell to the ISIS militants in less than a week. Most of the Iraqi soldiers and policemen left without a fight. Army divisions in Mosul simply melted away, with their senior officers evacuating by helicopter. Taken at face value, this would rank as one of the worst military disasters in history. A force trained and equipped by the United States, fighting on its own territory, is routed by a ragtag, unconventional force only a tenth of its size in a few days. After Mosul, the international community was forced to reckon with ISIS, who President Obama had famously referred to as

**>1stLt Mills is a Rifle Platoon Commander, 2/1 Mar and currently pursuing an Master's of Arts in International Relations and Contemporary War at King's College London.**

the terrorist junior varsity team in an interview with the *New Yorker*.

For the rest of the book, Cockburn traces the arc of ISIS's rise and astonishing victories in 2014 and 2015. Most valuable is his unique understanding of Iraq and Syria, which he likens to "a Middle Eastern version of the 30-years war in Germany of the 17th century. All sides exaggerate their own strength and imagine that temporary success on the battlefield will open the way to total victory." He leaves the reader wondering how Western leaders and Washington are so out of touch with the situation. For example, Cockburn describes how the lightning advance of ISIS was a result of how the Iraqi Army manages and pays personnel. He outlines an officer corps that views positions in the army as investments rather than occupations and has little or no interest in fighting the rampant corruption throughout the ranks. He is also acutely aware of the differences and the relationship between the Sunni and Shia in Iraq, a division that is often overlooked or underemphasized in Western studies of Iraq.

In his conclusion, Cockburn lays responsibility for the birth of the Islamic State on the United States through the complete dissolution of the Saddam-era Iraqi Army in 2003, which released hundreds of thousands of relatively well-trained and equipped soldiers and officers from the military into unemployment, destabilizing the region which allowed militant groups to grow,



**THE RISE OF ISLAMIC STATE: ISIS and the New Sunni Revolution.** By Patrick Cockburn. New York, NY: Verso Books, 2015. ISBN: 1784780401, 172 pp.

and upsetting what had been a tenuous peace between the Sunni and the Shia in Iraq before the war. He quotes former U.S. special representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke, "We may be fighting the wrong enemy in the wrong country." In his most damning assertion, he argued that the United States should have held Saudi Arabia and Pakistan accountable for 9/11 instead of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The weakness in the book is two-fold. Its length of only 172 pages means it can be read in a single sitting, and because the war against the Islamic State is ongoing, the work is quickly dated. Last updated in September 2015 when the Siege of Kobani was still ongoing, Cockburn is writing at a time when ISIS is still at high tide. Iraq had not yet launched its offensive to recapture Mosul and seems incapable of stopping ISIS. But these weaknesses do not diminish the value of *The Rise of Islamic State*. Cockburn still offers a portrait of ISIS and the conditions of its rise at the apex of the group's ascendancy by a long-time student of the region that is both an excellent introduction and a quick look at ISIS in 2013–2015.







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## Editorial Policy and Writers' Guidelines

Our basic policy is to fulfill the stated purpose of the *Marine Corps Gazette* by providing a forum for open discussion and a free exchange of ideas relating to the U.S. Marine Corps and military and national defense issues, particularly as they affect the Corps.

The Board of Governors of the Marine Corps Association has given the authority to approve manuscripts for publication to the editor and the Editorial Advisory Panel. Editorial Advisory Panel members are listed on the *Gazette's* masthead in each issue. The panel, which normally meets as required, represents a cross section of Marines by professional interest, experience, age, rank, and gender. The panel judges all writing contests. A simple majority rules in its decisions. Material submitted for publication is accepted or rejected based on the assessment of the editor. The *Gazette* welcomes material in the following categories:

- **Commentary on Published Material:** The best commentary can be made at the end of the article on the online version of the *Gazette* at <https://www.mca-marines.org/gazette>. Comments can also normally appear as letters (see below) 3 months after published material. BE BRIEF.
- **Letters:** Limit to 300 words or less and DOUBLE SPACE. Email submissions to [gazette@mca-marines.org](mailto:gazette@mca-marines.org) are preferred. As in most magazines, letters to the editor are an important clue as to how well or poorly ideas are being received. Letters are an excellent way to correct factual mistakes, reinforce ideas, outline opposing points of view, identify problems, and suggest factors or important considerations that have been overlooked in previous *Gazette* articles. The best letters are sharply focused on one or two specific points.
- **Feature Articles:** Normally 2,000 to 5,000 words, dealing with topics of major significance. Manuscripts should be DOUBLE SPACED. Ideas must be backed up by hard facts. Evidence must be presented to support logical conclusions. In the case of articles that criticize, constructive suggestions are sought. Footnotes are not required except for direct quotations, but a list of any source materials used is helpful. Use the *Chicago Manual of Style* for all citations.
- **Ideas & Issues:** Short articles, normally 750 to 1,500 words. This section can include the full gamut of professional topics so long as treatment of the subject is brief and concise. Again, DOUBLE SPACE all manuscripts.
- **Book Reviews:** Prefer 300 to 750 words and DOUBLE SPACED. Book reviews should answer the question: "This book is worth a Marine's time to read because..." Please be sure to include the book's author, publisher (including city), year of publication, number of pages, and the cost of the book.

**Timeline:** We aim to respond to your submission within 45 days; please do not query until that time has passed. If your submission is accepted for publication, please keep in mind that we schedule our line-up four to six months in advance, that we align our subject matter to specific monthly themes, and that we have limited space available. Therefore, it is not possible to provide a specific date of publication. However, we will do our best to publish your article as soon as possible, and the Senior Editor will contact you once your article is slated. If you prefer to have your article published online, please let us know upon its acceptance.

**Writing Tips:** The best advice is to write the way you speak, and then have someone else read your first draft for clarity. Write to a broad audience: *Gazette* readers are active and veteran Marines of all ranks and friends of the Corps. Start with a thesis statement, and put the main idea up front. Then organize your thoughts and introduce facts and validated assumptions that support (prove) your thesis. Cut out excess words. Short is better than long. Avoid abbreviations and acronyms as much as possible.

**Submissions:** Authors are encouraged to email articles to [gazette@mca-marines.org](mailto:gazette@mca-marines.org). Save in Microsoft Word format, DOUBLE SPACED, Times New Roman font, 12 point, and send as an attachment. **Photographs and illustrations must be in high resolution TIFF, JPG, or EPS format (300dpi) and not embedded in the Word Document. Please attach photos and illustrations separately.** (You may indicate in the text of the article where the illustrations are to be placed.) Include the author's full name, mailing address, telephone number, and email addresses—both military and commercial if available. Submissions may also be sent via regular mail. Include your article saved on a CD along with a printed copy. Mail to: *Marine Corps Gazette*, Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134. Please follow the same instructions for format, photographs, and contact information as above when submitting by mail. Any queries may be directed to the editorial staff by calling 800-336-0291, ext. 180.



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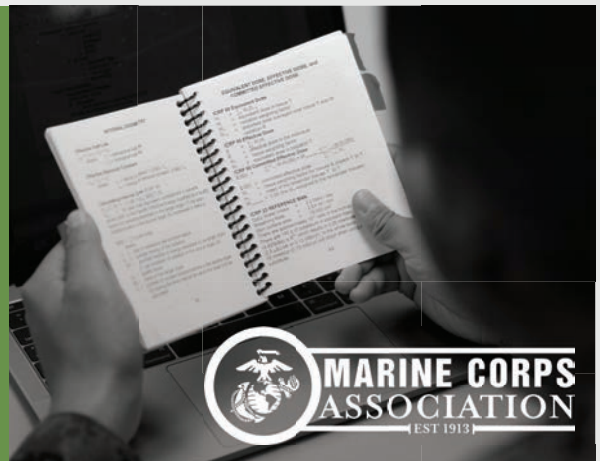


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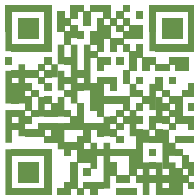
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