



MARINE CORPS Gazette

Professional Journal of U.S. Marines

NOVEMBER 2022 Vol. 106 No. 11

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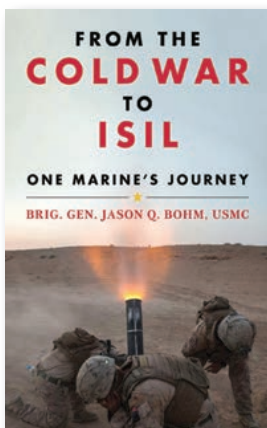


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The synergy of combined arms in the MAGTF remains the Corps' greatest contribution to naval expeditionary campaigns. (Photo by MSgt Michael Schellenbach.)

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The *Marine Corps Gazette* (ISSN 0025-3170) is published monthly by the Marine Corps Association to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas that will advance knowledge, interest, and esprit in the Marine Corps. Periodicals postage paid at Quantico, VA, USPS #329-340, and at additional mailing offices. • OPINIONS expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the attitude of the Department of Defense, Navy Department, or Headquarters Marine Corps. "Marine Corps" and the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor are trademarks of the U.S. Marine Corps, used with permission. • MEMBERSHIP RATE: Annual \$42.00 • MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION & CUSTOMER SERVICE: Contact Member Services, 1-866-622-1775. • ADVERTISING QUERIES: Contact Valerie Preletz at advertising@mca-marines.org/703-640-0107 or LeeAnn Mitchell, VP Sales at 703-640-0169. • COPYRIGHT 2022 by the Marine Corps Association. All reprint rights reserved. • EDITORIAL/BUSINESS OFFICES: All mail and other queries to Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134. Phone 703-640-6161. Fax 703-640-0140. Location: Bldg #715, Broadway St., Quantico, VA 22134. • E-MAIL ADDRESS: gazette@mca-marines.org. • WEB ADDRESS: www.mca-marines.org/gazette. • CHANGE OF ADDRESS: POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Marine Corps Gazette*, Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134 or e-mail: mca@mca-marines.org. • For credit card orders, call 866-622-1775. PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT: Publication of advertisements does not constitute endorsements by MCA except for such products or services clearly offered under the MCA's name. The publisher reserves the right to accept or reject any advertising order at his absolute discretion.

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GEN ROBERT E. HOGABOOM LEADERSHIP WRITING CONTEST



Gen Robert E. Hogaboom.

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

DEADLINE: 31 January, 2023

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

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Background

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

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

Instructions

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



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NOVEMBER 2022

Editorial: Happy 247th Birthday!

The approach of 10 November, the date we Marines mark as the anniversary of the founding of our Corps, always provides an opportunity for reflection. We reflect on the storied history and long legacy of “Marines grown gray in war.” We reflect on our brothers and sisters-in-arms who made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of Corps and country. We reflect on those still serving and the challenges they will face in the future. The content in this month’s *Gazette* is intended to inform and promote critical thinking and reflection in all three of these areas.

In addition to the Commandant’s 247th birthday message on page 4 and the articles highlighted on our cover, including the winners of this year’s LtGen Bernard E. “Mick” Trainor Writing Award, we offer a broad range of writing on today’s most salient topics. Reflecting back on the history of the Corps and how it may be used to educate Marines and leaders going forward, you will find “It’s Not Either/Or but How” on page 8 by Dr. Paul Gelpi and Dr. Bradford Wineman of the Marine Corps University faculty. Other articles in this combined area of history informing PME include “Trained to Go on Liberty” by Mr. Peter S. D’Arpa on page 14 and “Providing Your Own AI” by Dr. Matthew J. Flynn on page 20.

Sections dedicated to leadership, talent management and the spiritual health and resilience of the Marines who make up our Corps form the majority of this month’s articles. Highlights covering the first areas include on page 36 “Social Media and the Fragility of Public Perception” by 1stLt Cameron Edinburgh, “Creating a Pathway for Lateral Entry” by Capt Kevin N. Byington on page 42, and “The Accidental Marine Corps Commander” by frequent contributor Maj Brian Kerg on page 44. Spiritual fitness insights are highlighted in “Neglecting the Spiritual and Mental Fitness of the Force” by Maj Shawn F. Carian on page 70 and “Spiritual Readiness in the Age of EABO” by CDR David A. Daigle, et al. on page 72. The manpower management policies and practices that make ideas like leadership and talent management manifest in the lives of Marines fall under the functional area of personnel administration. Rounding out this material we offer “Administration in the Reserves” by LtCol Adam Bonifant on page 88 and “Fixing Correspondence” by Capt Charles Borinstein on page 91.

Reflecting on the challenges and opportunities facing Marines in the future, we continue the ongoing discourse on Future Force Design and Modernization and the related area of Naval Integration. Highlights here include on page 55 “Force Design and Operational-Level Logistics” by LtCol Kevin Chunn and on page 63 “Integrating into the Naval Fight” by 1stLt Jonathan Denner.

On behalf of your Professional Association and the staff of the *Gazette*, we wish all Marines and friends of the Corps a Happy 247th Birthday. Semper Fidelis!

Christopher Woodbridge

MCA President and CEO, LtGen Charles G. Chiarotti, USMC(RET); VP Foundation Operations, Col Tim Mundy, USMC(RET); VP Strategic Communications, Retail Operations & Editor, Leatherneck magazine, Col Mary H. Reinwald, USMC(RET); VP Professional Development, Publisher & Editor Marine Corps Gazette, Col Christopher Woodbridge, USMC(RET); VP Corporate Sponsorships, Events & Advertising, Ms. LeeAnn Mitchell.



10 November 2022

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

70 years ago, Army Major General Frank E. Lowe was quoted as saying, “The safest place in Korea was right behind a platoon of Marines. Lord, how they could fight.” That testimonial rings as true now as it did then, and will remain so tomorrow. As we celebrate the 247th anniversary of our Corps’ founding, we reflect on nearly two and a half centuries of exceptional prowess, while also taking objective stock of where we are today and how we will prepare for future battlefields. Our birthday provides us a chance to focus on the one thing common to our success in the past, present, and future: the individual Marine. Victories are not won because of technology or equipment, but because of our Marines.

Since 1775, Marines have fought courageously and tenaciously in every conflict our country has faced. Through the Revolution, the Spanish-American War, World Wars in Europe and the Pacific, conflicts in Korea and Vietnam, and operations in the Middle East, Marines consistently earned a reputation as the world’s elite fighting force. We inherit and take pride in this reputation, evolved over time by Marines acquitting themselves with honor and distinction on every battlefield in every clime and place. Battlefields change, and Marines have always adapted to the environment and the changing character of war—but the reason we fight and win is immutable. It’s the individual warfighters, and their love for each other, that makes our Corps as formidable a force today as it has been for the past 247 years. It’s our ethos and our unapologetic resolve to be the most capable and lethal fighting force that sets us apart from the rest.

Current events around the world remind us that peace is not guaranteed. While we are justifiably proud of our past and pay tribute to the remarkable warfighters who came before us, we understand that the stories of yesterday cannot secure our freedom tomorrow. We must be ready to respond when our Nation calls. It falls on Marines who are in uniform today to write the next chapter of our Corps. The solemn responsibility of maintaining our illustrious warfighting legacy rests upon your shoulders. I know that you are up to that task. The battlefields of tomorrow are uncertain. The future characteristics of warfare are uncertain. But one thing is certain—wherever Marines are called, they will fight and win—today, tomorrow, and into the future

Happy 247th Birthday, Marines!

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. H. Berger".

David H. Berger

General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps

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“The MSSLG, A Hybrid LCE for the Future”

■ Maj Parker does an excellent job providing a template for the MLG reorganization, addressing concerns related to both personnel and equipment readiness shortfalls. However, the proposal fails to identify how the organization is tailored to support the *Commandant's Planning Guidance* and Force Design objectives. Developing an improved organizational construct must first and foremost consider the operational units being supported, the missions assigned, the command relationships, and once this baseline is determined, then and only then, developing the construct of those individual units. I argue that Maj Parker's position changes based on additional strategic guidance received from the time the article was written. Focusing on sustaining a 3.0 Marine Littoral Regiment and 3.0 MEU presence while achieving a 1:3 deployment to dwell pushes the reader toward a different solution.

The proposed 1st and 2d MLG (attached) construct, created as a result of the CMC-directed Force Design Integrated Planning Teams, answers many of the concerns outlined by Maj Parker. This alternative includes a headquarters battalion to provide internal support to the MLG, allowing the other battalions to focus outward on support to the Marine Littoral Regiment and MEU missions. This recommended approach focuses on the primary unit of employment, the 2030 Combat Logistics Battalion (CLB). The CLB has an increased capability providing for all six functions of tactical logistics. It is a more senior, second-term Marine heavy battalion with intermediate maintenance and supply capabilities. Additionally, the CLB has a significant EOD component and a larger, more capable health services element. Understanding this construct is necessary to then develop the MLG that supports this primary unit of employment. There are eight CLBs in both 1st and 2d MLG, four designated as MLR CLBs and four as MEU CLBs. Each of these groups falls under an O-6 CLR command, allowing adequate span of control and focus on their specific roles.

The Distribution Support Battalion, a combination of the existing Transportation Battalion and Landing Support Battalion, provides the building blocks for future distribution capabilities within the CLB. Additionally, the Material Readiness Battalion, combining Supply and Maintenance Battalions, fills the same function allowing for a training ground to build the more experienced force, assigned to the CLB in subsequent tours. The Engineer Support Battalion construct is under development, pending outputs from the upcoming Naval Expeditionary Force Engineering Integrated Planning Team. The Integrated Planning Team will consider how the Engineer Support Battalion supports the Pioneer Battalion and other engineering requirements for the MAGTF.

The success or failure of any future MLG construct is dependent on implementation of Logistics MOS Talent Management initiatives, ensuring a minimized footprint without sacrificing capability. Furthermore, the realization of a 100 percent manning for FMF units with a managed staffing process executed by Manpower and Reserve Affairs is required. It will become necessary for logisticians to serve initial tours in the reimagined functional battalions, gaining the experience necessary to fulfill future assignments within the primary unit of employment, the CLB. Failure to employ in this manner will relegate the MLG to continued task organization rather than units achieving unity of effort and continuity through all phases of their employment: pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment.

Marc J. Godfrey

More on Armenia and Azerbaijan

■ I visited Armenia ten years ago. This area was and remains a complex region having complicated regional and international ties and underlying cultural divides. Fighting in this environment is difficult. Drone warfare is a linch-pin capability. Azerbaijan has leveraged new technology and training. Armenia, on the other hand, has relied on legacy systems

and training. The Armenian Government needs to invest in emergent technology and training capabilities if they are going to continue to compete and contest recent Azeri gains in what will inevitably be an ongoing conflict.

Mike Janay

Dissent

■ I am impressed with 2ndLt Daly's piece in the September 2022 edition of *Dissent Done Right*. I'm not aware of any large institution organization that not only allows but encourages the newly hired (private or 2nd lieutenant) to offer opinions, recommendations, or thoughts on how better the company could run and operate. COL Yingling USA (Ret) had sobering writing about not to challenge authority. It worked both ways in my career. The very sad thing here is that it effects our politicians, mainly Senator Lindsey Graham. He stated recently that he had “to try to be relevant.” This regarding his switch from having nothing to do with the former president to fawning over him. The troubling part here is that he, and all Marines, take the required, very similar oaths. Sometimes you know the price you might pay, sometimes you don't. Col Gordon Batcheller (Ret) wrote years ago in this magazine that we should not worry about doing what's right if assigned to HQMC just as we would not worry about doing what's right in a firefight. That stayed with me all these years.

Maj John H Thompson, USMC(Ret)

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

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It's Not Either/Or but How

A “war studies” approach to history in PME

by Dr. Paul Gelpi & Dr. Bradford Wineman

“Wisdom in war comes from experience, and the greatest source of experience for an officer is military history.”¹

—LtGen Paul K. Van Riper (Ret)

>Dr. Gelpi is a Professor of Military History, the War Studies Department Head, Communications Program Coordinator, and former Operational Art Course Director at Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University.

>>Dr. Wineman is a Professor of Military History and former War Studies Department Head and Operational Art Course Director at Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University.

In 2004, then Professor of National Security at Command and Staff College, Janeen Klinger published an article entitled, “Academics and Professional Military Education,” in which she advocated for “the renewed urgency for broader liberal arts education at professional military schools (PME) for mid-level officers.”² This broadening should include an extended variety of disciplines to include political science, history, as well as anthropology to better comprehend the context in which war is fought. The faculties of PME institutions should also be recruited from an equally broad intellectual background to overcome the rigidity of “disciplinary boundaries” for the overall educational experience.³ Providing students with different lenses through which to view issues, therefore, should facilitate learning, and with-it critical thinking and creative problem solving while educating students on the complexity of modern war.

Almost two decades later, in May 2020, the Joint Staff released *Developing Today's Joint Officers for Tomorrow's Ways of War: The Joint Chiefs of Staff Vision and Guidance for Professional Military Education & Talent Management* and a revised Officer Professional Military Education Policy. Along with *MCDP 7*,

Learning, issued in February 2020, these documents renewed the conversation on the appropriate curricula for and role of history in professional military education. The liveliness of the conversation suggested an eagerness within PME to take up the task identified by the Joint Chiefs in their conclusion that, “the profound and rapidly changing character of war in the 21st century compels us to transform our leader development to maintain our competitive advantage and successfully prepare for the emerging ways of war our Nation could face.”⁴

Yet much of the discussion focused on the role of history within PME with commentators suggesting that PME needed both less and more history as well as weighing in on how history is taught.⁵ Irrespective of the arguments made and conclusions reached, the discussion underscored the centrality of history to PME curricula and highlighted the importance of finding an intellectually responsible approach to how it is taught. We propose that framing discussions of PME curricula in an either/or dichotomy of history or social science is counterproductive, as both are needed to develop the well-informed, continually inquisitive, critically thinking professionals the Nation requires to win its wars in an ever-changing, complex national security environment. The discussion, instead, should focus on how history and the social sciences are most effectively and appropriately

incorporated into PME curricula. As an interdisciplinary approach with a foundation in history, War Studies offers a way forward.

Central to War Studies is an examination of the socio-cultural, economic, and political contexts for conflict from insurgencies and terrorism to limited and total wars, whether they be those of great powers or the more common ones between lesser powers. In this regard, a War Studies approach reflects the intellectual premise of Command and Staff College, and the Marine Corps writ large, that while the nature of war is immutable, the character of war evolves.⁶ War Studies, in turn, considers conflict within an interdisciplinary framework that incorporates the humanities and social sciences.

All too often military history is equated with the study of battles and campaigns in an intellectual vacuum outside the surrounding social and political context. And any history without context is incomplete. The “new military history” of the 1980s shifted the intellectual focus away from battles and campaigns to the larger socio-cultural and political context for conflict and war.⁷ Yet such an intellectual shift did not occur concurrently in PME.

Likewise, military history is used often to validate a contemporary argument, concept, or doctrine. In an educational environment in which the primary focus is the preparation of mili-



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When we're thanked for our service
we reflect on how we served.

The way we had to break in boots.
The times we gathered up our nerve.

The nicknames that made us laugh.
The smell of chili mac MREs.

The pride we felt with that first oath.
The friendships that came to be.

So, at the game, when we're asked to stand,
it's not applause that's in my sight.

I'm looking around for you, my friend,
to see who's on my left and right.



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tary professionals to fight and, hopefully, win the Nation's wars, the temptation is ever present to focus on specific events that offer analogies to the present. Doing so, it is argued, suggests solutions to contemporary problems and demonstrates the relevance of history. Yet the knowledge of the intricacies of a single battle or campaign in a war without a corresponding knowledge of the sociopolitical and cultural context of the war will do little to facilitate the student's understanding either of that war or war and conflict more broadly.

As war is inherently a personal and political endeavor, the value of history to the military professional is in understanding the cultural, economic, political, and social context in which military operations are conducted and wars are fought, as absent that understanding victory may prove elusive. The importance of history, therefore, is in facilitating an individual's acquisition of a historical mind for as Eliot Cohen, in his 2005 *Orbis* article, "The Historical Mind and Military Strategy," offered, "it is a well-traveled mind that appreciates the variability of people and places, conditions and problems; it avoids overreliance on 'lessons learned.'" Cohen, moreover, correctly argued that "the historical education of civilian and military strategists is more, not less, important in an age of rapid change."⁸

When Command and Staff College began a zero-based curriculum review in 2012, the conversation evolved into an intellectual discussion among faculty on the utility and application of history within PME that led to the establishment of the War Studies Department.⁹ A foundational concept for a War Studies curriculum is the idea of the historical mind or "thinking historically." In his *Orbis* article, Cohen observed, "as important as the study of history for military strategists is the acquisition of the historical mind—that is, a way of thinking that uses history as a mode of inquiry." For Cohen, "the historical mind will detect differences as much as similarities between cases, avoiding false analogies, and look for the key questions to be asking. It will look for continuity but also for more important discontinuities; it will look for linkages between data

points, but not be too quick to attribute causation."¹⁰ A holistic consideration of war, therefore, is necessary to develop a military professional's historical mind.

A historical mind should not be confused with George Santayana's oft-quoted observation from *The Life of Reason: Reason in Common Sense* (1905), "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."¹¹ History does not repeat. The past and present may have similarities, but those similarities mask greater differences and a historically minded military professional thinks critically and, in doing so, will see past the similarities to the differences, and avoid false analogies. Most importantly, they will seek solutions appropriate, as the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Vision emphasized, to the problems faced as they "fight under conditions of disruptive change."¹²

... all too often military history in PME reinforces myths ...

In his landmark 1961 lecture, "The Use and Abuse of Military History," Michael Howard assessed the pitfalls that may accompany the study of military history within professional military education. More than sixty years later, Howard's assessment continues to ring true. He noted that academic historians may have a skeptical view of military history due to the perception of it as a tool of mythmaking, "the creation of an image of the past, through careful selection and interpretation" either to, "to create or sustain certain emotions or beliefs."¹³ With its propensity to look to the past for answers to the present and future through the study of battles and campaigns, all too often military history in PME reinforces myths—positive and negative—rather than develop a student's historical mind. Howard reminds us that it is a historian's duty "to discover and record what those complicated and disagreeable realities are" through the "critical examination of the 'myth,' assessing and discarding its patriotic basis

and probing deeply into the things it leaves unsaid."¹⁴ He warns us that "the lessons of history are never clear. Clío is like the Delphic oracle: it is only in retrospect, and usually too late, that we can understand what she was trying to say." To avoid perpetuating myths and facilitate a necessary acceptance of uncertainty, Howard offers "three rules of study" for military professionals in advising them to study military history in width, depth, and context.¹⁵ A War Studies curriculum, within PME, endeavors to do so within the parameters of a time-constrained academic program of which history is a component rather than the focus of students' professional education. In this framework, War Studies curricula should focus on the first and third of Howard's "three rules of study" with an emphasis on the latter: context.

To do this, within a PME school, a War Studies approach should focus temporally on the rise of the nation-state from the wars of the sixteenth century onward. Such an approach is pedagogically premised in history as a mode of inquiry. History does not provide answers to problems whether simple or complex. The study of history offers an understanding of the trends and forces that influence the present, but it does not offer readymade solutions to the problems that arise from the influence of those trends and forces. Through the study of history, the military professional may develop the intellectual framework to enhance their cognitive capacity to "defeat competitors in contests we have not yet imagined" in accordance with the JCS Vision.¹⁶ War Studies does not present history as an *ex post facto* validation of doctrine and viewpoints for history's value is not in providing timeless answers to timeless questions or validating contemporary doctrine. The value of history is in the context for the present and future it may provide. B.H. Liddell Hart observed in his unfinished manuscript, *Why Don't We Learn from History?* that, "there is no excuse for anyone who is not illiterate if he is less than three thousand years old in mind."¹⁷ The study of history, therefore, should develop an individual's historical mind. As Gen James N. Mattis

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(Ret) remarked, “thanks to my reading, I have never been caught flat-footed by any situation, never at a loss for how any problem has been addressed (successfully or unsuccessfully) before. It doesn’t give me all the answers, but it lights what is often a dark path ahead.”¹⁸ The objective of a War Studies approach is to provide the light to which Mattis referred.

The utility of history in the military profession is not to reinforce “how to fight.” Analyzing military campaigns of the past, especially successful ones, without their broader context will only light the darkness partially. Often case studies and campaign analyses devolve into binary assessments of right versus wrong, and its many variations. Using military history in this way may reinforce a proclivity to a programmatic approach to warfighting in which an attempt is made to replicate the successes of the past and its nostalgic judgment of the present by past standards and the desire for the character of war to remain unchanging. This is manifest in looking to history for lessons to be learned or guidance for how to *be like Napoleon at Jena but not at Waterloo*, as well as in *if only we declared war formally like in World War II* with its implicit assessment that there is a timeless recipe for success.

... wars are not necessarily won by the ... most technologically advanced militaries, but by those ... who grasp the more holistic changes occurring in the world ... more quickly than their adversaries.

Moreover, there is a potential misdiagnosis of the ailment in the military profession. Despite recent failures, the U.S. military remains the gold standard for tactical and operational prowess in the modern world and continues to be the envy and model for all military forces in this regard. The U.S. military knows and excels at “how to fight” and “how to plan.” The ailment, consequently, may be whether it can connect the use of military force to broader strategies and non-military contexts.



It is imperative that all PME faculty and even the most senior visiting lecturers and seminar leaders continually assess and revise the insights they share on the changing character of war.
(Photo by Cpl Demetrius Morgan.)

This is where history writ large comes in. In a War Studies curriculum, students analyze both the evolution of war and warfare over time and, more importantly, the integration of both into the social, political, cultural, and economic context of where and when military force is used. Instead of focusing on battles or campaigns, the curriculum utilizes history to examine

A War Studies framework, therefore, seeks to demonstrate that wars are not necessarily won by the smartest generals or the most technologically advanced militaries, but by those nations and militaries who grasp the more holistic changes occurring in the world and shape their use of violence to these new realities more quickly than their adversaries. Consequently, it is imperative that faculty, as part of a continual assessment process, evaluate, revise, and refine the curriculum to reflect changes in the character of war and the scholarship. As Michael Howard observed in his 1973 lecture “Military Science in the Age of Peace,” “I am tempted indeed to declare dogmatically that whatever doctrine the Armed Forces are working on now, they have got it wrong. I am also tempted to declare that it does not matter that they have got it wrong, so long as it can be corrected quickly.”¹⁹ Within a time-constrained curriculum, spending time on a lesson analyzing how Napoleon recognized and leveraged the phenomena of the French Revolution that could permanently change the reality of war itself is more valuable to a military professional today than analyzing Napoleon’s decision making at the Battle of Austerlitz.

how nations and militaries reacted to uncertainty about war in the future and how it connected to national aims and how was military shaped by national priorities, politics, and even cultural imperatives. History demonstrates that war is not confined to the battlefield or the operational planning team. It is a broader human experience that the military professional needs to comprehend and appreciate in how the use of their violence fits into the wider dynamic of this human experience.

The JCS Vision offers that “the 21st century demands American officers be far better educated and more capable of directing and integrating the Nation’s military instrument.”²⁰ History is an invaluable tool for developing the intellect needed to answer the question of how military professionals may connect their decisions to macro-level operational and strategic concerns within the social, political, cultural, and economic environment in which they are operating. Indeed, the study of history in a War Studies framework highlights the differences rather than the similarities between eras and, as such, facilitates military professionals in thinking critically about the past, present, and future. In doing so, War Studies enable the development of the “strategically minded, critically thinking, and creative joint warfighters skilled in the art of war and the practical and ethical application of lethal military power” that the JCS and Nation demand.²¹

As the former Chief of Staff of the Army, GEN Erik K. Shinseki (Ret), once observed, “if you don’t like change, you’re going to like irrelevance even less.”²² To be sure, PME needs to change to meet the challenges of the 21st century and the role of history in its varied curricula should be evaluated lest either or both become irrelevant. The JCS Vision reminds the Nation that “we cannot afford to be complacent, nor can we afford to shortchange PME institutions.”²³

Importantly, there is not a one-size fits all method to incorporate history into PME curricula. What is needed in a staff college is different from what is needed in a war college or in enlisted professional military education; likewise, each Service has its own unique requirements across the PME continuum. What is certain, nonetheless, is that military history is *essential* to PME and that the broader historical context for that military history *must* be incorporated into curricula to best prepare military professionals to “discern the military dimensions of a challenge” while anticipating and leading, as the JCS Vision calls for, “rapid adaptation and innovation during a dynamic period of acceleration in the rate of change in warfare under the

conditions of great power competition and disruptive technology.”²⁴

A War Studies approach to military history in PME facilitates the maturation of historically minded military professionals who may understand best the trends and forces that drive change from the battlefield to the National Security Council to the boardroom and, in so doing, prepare them to meet the complex and interconnected challenges their nations’ face.

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Trained to Go on Liberty

Leadership, survival, and the 4th Marine Regiment in the Philippines

by Mr. Peter S. D'Arpa

The Marine Corps prizes numerous characteristics, chief among these are the role of leadership, esprit de corps, and *every Marine a rifleman*. While these characteristics are present in many of the Marine Corps' brightest moments, one wonders what happens when Marines lack these characteristics. The experience of the 4th Marine Regiment in the Philippines from 1941–1942 is a strong example of this.

The 4th Marine Regiment sailed for the Philippines in late November 1941.¹ Prior to serving in the Philippines, the 4th Mar was stationed in China at Shanghai, Peking, and Tientsin. Their service here earned them the nickname of “China Marines.” By 1940, the Marine garrisons in Peking and Tientsin were eliminated, leaving only the Shanghai group. ADM Thomas C. Hart, Commander in Chief, U.S. Asiatic Fleet, fearing Japanese aggression ordered the removal of the remaining China Marines to Manila in the Philippines on 27 and 28 November 1941. They served in Manila peacefully for one week. From 24 to 26 December 1941, the Marines were transported to the island of Corregidor where they would make their last stand.² The island fell on 5 May 1942, Marines became prisoners of war (POWs), and the 4th Marine Regiment ceased to exist.³

It is important to note here that 29 Marines who served during that time were interviewed between 1983 and 1996 at the reunions of the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor. The men involved doubtlessly knew each other. Their familiarity likely led to the creation of informal agreements of their collective experience. Whether these Marines had an agenda, or whether they were simply trying to fill in their own memories, does not make their testi-

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mony useless. Instead, this acknowledgment allows one to give both credence and healthy skepticism to their words. This balance, a hallmark of oral history, is completely necessary in order to respect both the veterans and the profession. Thus, this study did not take the accounts literally and the analysis and synthesis that follows are better for it.

The overseas experience of the China Marines was often characterized as a “good duty.”⁴ Despite the abundance of stories recounting their experiences out on liberty, many Marines said they were not prepared for combat. On the surface, this can be attributed to America's general lack of military readiness on the eve of World War II. Some of these Marines certainly hoped to record the reality of their plight for posterity. However, this obscures the fact that in 21 interviews, every Marine felt let down by the 4th Marine Regiment. Thus, their experiences are powerful given the weight contemporary Marines place on their training, leadership, esprit de corps, and readiness.

Marines reported that they received little to no weapons training in Shanghai. 1stSgt Robert E. Costello of Baker Company, 1st Battalion (B/1/4) remembered that “[our] training consisted of little shooting practice, but lots of parade marching.”⁵ Other Marines remembered that their most recent rifle firing exercises occurred in boot camp. For all the Marines interviewed, their most recent boot camp experience was in the summer of 1940. This meant that many members

of 4th Mar had not fired their weapons in at least a year. In response to a question about weapons training, Fred E. Koenig of F/2/4 bluntly stated that the 4th Marine Regiment was “trained to go on liberty.”⁶

Not only did the 4th Mar feel they lacked sufficient rifle training but they also felt they lacked clear and consistent communications with their superiors. Michael Sofranoff and Charles C. Sweatman, of B/1/4 stated that a “caste system” existed within the 4th Marine Regiment stationed in Shanghai, suggesting a hierarchy that existed outside the Marines' chain of command.⁷ This was problematic because enlisted Marines perceived themselves as being isolated from their officers and non-commissioned officers. Sgt Wendell Garden of Headquarters Company, 2d Battalion blamed this caste system on the “class division between officers and enlisted [Marines]” outside of what could be expected. Enlisted Marines expected their officers to be present, to physically lead their men in their daily tasks, whether it was physical training, informative briefings, or simply being seen around base. Enlisted men also expected the respect of their officers. Despite military hierarchies, they were all still Marines. The officers of 4th Mar did not seem to live up to the expectations of their men. The interviewees often described officers as “booze hounds,” disdainful of enlisted Marines, and generally negligent in their various leadership responsibilities.⁸ While some of these statements depict

typical enlisted grumblings, later experiences in the Philippines and as POWs reinforce the notion that the enlisted men of 4th Mar felt isolated and unprepared for combat.

Upon their arrival in the Philippines, the 4th Marine Regiment was dispersed between Olongapo Naval Yard, Cavite Naval Yard, the city of Manila, and the Maquinaya Rifle Range. Despite being stationed at a rifle range, none of the Marines interviewed recalled practicing on it. These positions required little work prior to the outbreak of war. Many Marines recalled a daily routine of guard duty followed by idleness.⁹ They only had a week to acclimate to their new surroundings before the war began.

Around 0400 on 8 December 1941, the men of 4th Mar woke to air raid sirens, though on this morning no bombing followed for the Marines. Many simply ignored the puzzling sound and rolled over.¹⁰ Others asked, “what the hell is that?” To which Michael Sofranoff replied, “it’s the general alarm.”¹¹ Upon staggering out of their makeshift barracks, the Marines formed up in front of their battalion commander. They wore half-put-on uniforms, undershirts, or no shirts. Their ranks were staggered and lazy. Their commanding officers kept the meetings short. They spoke long enough to tell their men that the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and war was declared. Arthur Beale, a sailor attached to 4th Mar at that time, noted that after the formation everyone “went about [their] business as though nothing was happening.”¹²

Starting on 10 December, flights of Japanese bombers began attacking Marine Corps positions. The bombers flew in three large v-shaped formations of eighteen planes each. The bombers circled the island of Luzon once, then moved in to hit their targets.¹³ Marines on the ground remembered looking up and seeing “sticks of bombs” fall noiselessly through the air.¹⁴ Initially, the American forces were caught by surprise. Paul Graham remembered a sailor who asked him what the Japanese planes dropped. Upon seeing several explosions at the naval yard, Graham remarked, “they aren’t pennies from heaven!” and dragged the sailor into the nearest slit trench.¹⁵



An aerial photograph of the rocky island of Corregidor in 1941, home to the underground headquarters of Fort Mills. This view from the east shows the narrow peninsula on which Japanese invasion forces landed. (Photo: U.S. Army DVIDS.)

In that first strike, both naval bases at Cavite and Olongapo were hit. In addition, a squadron of PBY Catalina flying boats stationed in Manila Bay was swiftly annihilated.¹⁶ Ammunition bunkers detonated, and fuel reserves burned bright into the night. Marines tried to fire back with rifles and machineguns to no avail. Even the four anti-aircraft batteries of 4th Mar were ineffective.

Initially, the American forces were caught by surprise.

These guns were obsolete and unable to hit the Japanese aircraft.¹⁷ PFC Jerome Perlman remembered manning the range finder for Battery C, 4th Mar. Perlman’s anti-aircraft gun could fire shells out to a maximum range of 14,000 feet, but Japanese aircraft flew well above that.¹⁸ On occasion, Japanese fighters came down to lower altitudes to conduct what Wilfred Mensching of Battery C (M/3/4) referred to as “glide bombing.” Glide bombing, as Mensching explained, was when a Japanese fighter made a shallow dive toward an American

position. This stood in stark contrast to the higher, steep angled dives, common to dive bombers of the period.¹⁹ Mensching remembered one instance where his gun in Battery C scored a direct hit on a “glide bombing Zero.” The plane turned into “a literal ball of flame” and crashed. That was the last of the Japanese glide bombing.²⁰ Despite achieving minor victories across the island of Luzon, the Marines knew their efforts were futile. On 24 December, as GEN Douglas MacArthur invoked War Plan Orange 3, the commanders of 4th Mar gathered their forces at Manila Bay and shipped their men to the port of Mariveles on the Bataan Peninsula or to the fortress island of Corregidor known commonly as “the Rock.”

The island of Corregidor is shaped like a tadpole with the tail facing east, toward Manila, and the head facing west toward the open ocean. Between the head and the tail runs a small mountain with two tunnels. The larger of the two tunnels, the Malinta Tunnel, became headquarters for the remainder of the U.S. Forces in the Philippines. West of Malinta Tunnel, the island had three plateaus referred to as Topside, Middleside, and Bottomside. The men of 4th Mar were garrisoned at the Middleside Barracks. The Marines were promised

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by their officers that these barracks were “bomb proof,” though few Marines believed them. Many Marines instead chose to sleep in their foxholes.²¹

While the Marines were idle in their positions on Luzon and Bataan, things were not so on Corregidor. Throughout March and April 1942, Marines maintained a flurry of activity to prepare defenses. Despite their work ethic many Marines perceived themselves to be leaderless.²² PFC Ernest J. Bales of H/2/4 stated that 4th Mar leadership “hid in Malinta Tunnel.”²³ Paul Graham reinforced Bales’ statement saying “we didn’t see very much of the officers at all.” Graham added that it was a common sight to see groups of officers standing just outside Malinta Tunnel smoking. Marines would take bets as to which officer would be the first to run inside the tunnel upon hearing a Japanese plane. This performance was not unique to Marine officers. Several Marines remembered seeing GEN MacArthur’s car leave Malinta Tunnel at the first sign of an air raid. MacArthur would pick up his wife and child then return to the tunnel in a cloud of smoke. It seemed all military leadership on Corregidor was negligent and selfish.²⁴

Robert W. Ehrhart of M/3/4 stated that while the Malinta Tunnel was supposed to protect general officers like MacArthur and his senior commanders, company and platoon commanders also preferred the protection of the tunnel to their command posts.²⁵ Moreover Ehrhart and other Marines remembered the demoralizing effect of passing by vacant command posts which were prepared for their officers by enlisted Marines. In addition, Ehrhart stated that not only did the officers hide in Malinta Tunnel, but they did not give out any orders to the Marines in their charge. As a result “they [the Marines] were pretty much on our own” in constructing beach defenses.²⁶

In the absence of officers Marines acted on their own, laid out barbed wire, dug fox holes, set up machineguns, and created ammo caches. In spite of this, some Marines, like Leland H. Montgomery of the 4th Mar Band, felt that “a troop of Girl Scouts could beat their way through something like that” when referring to the beach defenses.²⁷ 1stSgt

Costello noted that several positions, notably Denver Battery on the eastern end of the island, were positions in name only.²⁸ They lacked equipment, manpower, and ammunition well before the Japanese invasion. In Shanghai and the Philippines, the men of 4th Mar felt isolated from their command structure; on Corregidor, they saw the manifestation of their isolation firsthand.

Isolation from their commanders was not the only issue affecting the men of 4th Mar. The island of Corregidor was under constant bombardment from 27 January to 5 March 1942. The shelling destroyed many of the island’s fortifications, buildings, and communications networks. The bombardment also destroyed Marines’ foxholes. This is significant given the commentary of LtCol Orval J. Corriveau who stated, “You’ve lost everything when you lose your foxhole. You figure that’s your safe place and you go there and it’s not there anymore.”²⁹ The reference to the foxhole as a “safe place” is important because it suggests that the foxhole provided Marines a sense of security and purpose at a time when their commanders were not doing so. In losing the foxhole, Marines began to lose what little security they had left. Thus, the breakdown experienced by 4th Mar was not solely driven by poor leadership. Men at all regimental levels contributed to the regiment’s lack of combat effectiveness. Despite all of this pressure and isolation, the men of 4th Mar attempted to fight on.

On 5 May 1942, Japanese forces conducted a night landing on the eastern end of Corregidor. Fighting was fierce, yet brief. The defenders of Corregidor were preparing for a full day of combat when, on the morning of 6 May, they received a simple order: “Execute Pontiac.”³⁰

Execute Pontiac meant that the island had surrendered to the Japanese. The order itself told the Marines to dismantle or destroy their weapons and wait for surrender. In the ensuing minutes and hours, the Marines became depressed by their situation.³¹ “In the aftermath we blamed everyone,” Ernest Bales said. Upon their surrender, the Marines became POWs. They were marched to a central holding area before

being shipped off to the city of Manila. In Manila, the Marines endured a 90-mile march to their prison camps in the northern end of Luzon. Unlike the Bataan Death March, which occurred simultaneously, the Marines encountered what George Burlage of (L/3/4) referred to as “sporadic violence.”³² This is interesting given the volumes of studies that reveal Japanese atrocities. The Marines tried to explain the lack of violence in their interviews. PFC Truman Dickeson said that “the guards treated us accordingly” and that “you were treated based on your actions.”³³ If a Marine chose to escape, attack a guard, or refuse orders, they could expect severe punishment. However, if a Marine did as he was told, the Japanese guards seem to have left them alone. Paul Graham believed that “the Japs were under orders to deliver us someplace. I don’t think they deliberately killed people for the joy of it.”³⁴ George Fox took a more neutral position, stating that “sometimes the Japanese were loose with you and other times they were apparently just the opposite.”³⁵ While this experience is notably different from the Bataan Death March, there are also numerous similarities. Marines were not fed, given water, or taken care of in any way by their captors. Marines were expected to scrounge for food and water. Robert Costello remembered that scrounging was in fact “a standing order” from the Japanese high command.³⁶ In addition, there was little attempt at organization from Marine officers. Leland Montgomery remembered that the march was really “a mob-like column” with men, enlisted and officers alike, strewn about the road.³⁷ Ernest Bales, Bobby Bacon, Joseph Romanelli, and Melvin Routh, a sailor attached to the 4/4, remembered that Marines gathered in small groups to survive. Officers and non commissioned officers tended to be “disheveled, detached, and lonely” despite their proximity to fellow Marines.³⁸ Romanelli remarked that many officers were “objects of ridicule” in prison camps. “Pity,” Romanelli noted, “was saved for yourself or your buddies.”³⁹ Bobby Bacon stated the reason for the prison camp division between officers and enlisted stemmed from the officers’ “lack of showing up”

on Luzon, Bataan, and Corregidor.⁴⁰ For Bacon, the officer's prior ineffectiveness did not endear them to other Marines during their time as POWs.

Without traditional leadership, the Marines looked after themselves in pairs or small groups of three to four Marines. Together they worked to create mindsets for survival. According to Melvin Routh, a sailor attached to 4th Mar on Corregidor, one could not spend time worrying about the present. Routh's mindset was that of living for tomorrow "because today, you know what you've got."⁴¹ Other Marines, like Bales, survived on "guts and luck" alone.⁴² Regardless of one's mindset, many Marines noted that "to get through of it, you've got to have the will to live."⁴³

Ultimately, many of the men of 4th Mar survived their experience as POWs in spite of the fact that they felt isolated from their regiment due to a lack of training, lack of leadership, low morale, and a lack of readiness. What their experience shows us is that while an individual Marine is strong, a Marine unit needs leadership. While strong non commissioned officers are a hallmark of the Marine Corps, commissioned officers are also necessary to a unit's survival. As seen through the experience of 4th Mar, a unit without leadership is not a unit at all.

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Providing Your Own AI

History setting the limits of wargaming

by Dr. Matthew J. Flynn, PhD

Artificial Intelligence (AI) pulls all those weighing the value and pitfalls of this new technology in the direction of foreboding but fictional reckonings to come. The main task is determining when such calamity will reach the battlefield based on developments in computer programming. When this occurs, and it surely will according to most observers, the machines will out-think a human counterpart, and further, chart a computer-based intelligence and revolutionize war in its wake.¹ Always a promise that disappoints, the thesis of this article is that any looming AI "revolution" impacting military realities meets a reality check when wargaming historical scenarios quickly show the limits of the technology. AI will not emerge as a dominant feature anytime soon, perhaps never if the aim is to overcome or outpace human decision-making on the battlefield. To impart this insight to students participating in professional military education helps reinforce the effort of the Command and Staff College (CSC), Marine Corps University, to render sobering judgment of AI's potential and, in so doing, help better anticipate warfighting in 'future' war.² Avoiding exaggeration and wild conjecture, particularly in the realm of technology, reminds one of the oldest lessons of war and perhaps the most important: war remains a human endeavor.

CSC implements wargames to help meet the CMC's intent and direction to test student skills against a thinking and reacting enemy.³ This curriculum-wide effort got a first look in academic year 2020–2021 and soon registered the fact that human ability matters most on a battlefield. Students played a host of wargames over the academic year, peaking in mid-year with a game conducted

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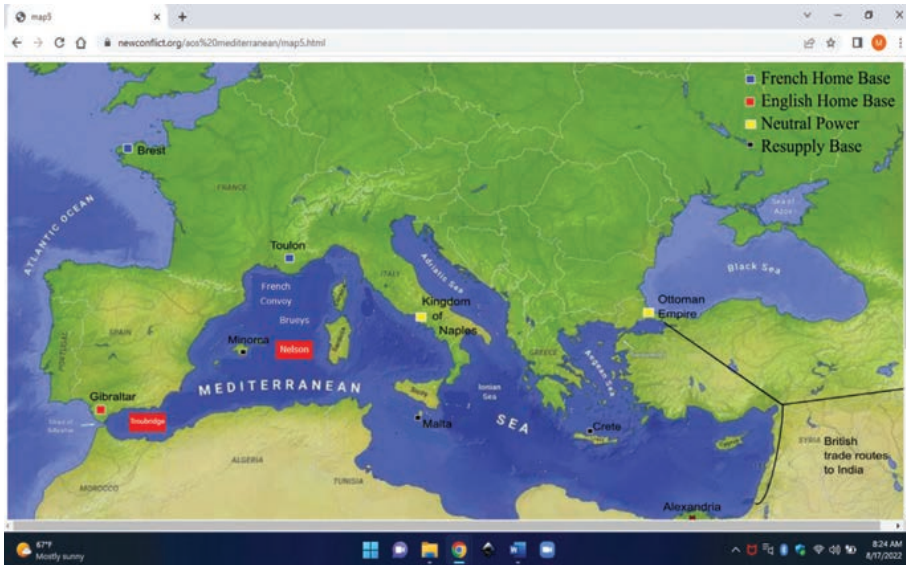
during the elective period of instruction, "Assassin's Mace," that looked at possible U.S.-Chinese confrontation in the Pacific area of operations.⁴ This very current application of wargames to net lessons that may carry forward into tomorrow found deep roots in the past: during the Age of Sail. CSC launched its first wargame for the academic year as one that captured a strategic confrontation between France and Britain during the Napoleonic era, 1789–1815. Here the Age of Sail came into focus as a means to test assumptions that past warfare remained less complex compared to current operations: fewer domains—clear evidence of past simplicity. The logic followed that surely a wargame relying on AI could capture the likely moves and options given the narrow parameters of such a time in the past. In this way, the evolution of war—and of warfare—could confirm the growing impact of AI.

AI never got a chance. To construct such a confrontation of human versus machine during the Napoleonic era warped the game to such absurd proportions that a demonstration of human aptitude, particularly when acting in crisis, became of foremost importance. A game of human versus human subsumed any value from human versus machine, rendering AI an outmoded concept forced to bow to the paramount role

of humans waging war. That a technology can be obsolete before fully matured arrests much of the polarized conjecture over AI and its future impact on war as either dire or overblown.⁵ Whatever comes next in war will defy many predictions, as always, thereby reaffirming the need to treat war as a bane of human existence but not a preordained, always present reality. Humanity has a duty to eradicate this practice, without looking to machines to either save them or damn them to continued war and therefore excuse humanity from asking why they believe the sum of their activities on earth amount to a shared misery from conflict.

The Scenario

The first scenario presented in *The Age of Sail*, "The Eastern Mediterranean 1798," puts one team in charge of French naval forces massing in the western Mediterranean Sea. The opponent controls a British screening detachment under the command of famed ADM Horatio Nelson (rear admiral at this time), and a second British naval force at Gibraltar ready to reinforce Nelson once that forward-deployed admiral locates and discerns French movements. The hoped-to-be combined British fleet would muster thirteen ships of the line, or warships, and three frigates. These smaller ships were crucial to scout,



A simple setup can turn into a complex operation from the onset. (Map provided by author.)

mask, and coordinate action among disparate fleets. In this case, the British were deficient with but three of these vessels; at least two more would have better served the British cause. Such as things were, Nelson stood watch just off the French port of Toulon, ready to intercept any French fleet to emerge from that large station, that location more than likely dictating the size of

the force the French could muster.

The opening disposition of the opposing sides (fleets) looks as follows: (See Map).

The French order of battle also consists of thirteen ships of the line protecting a large number of transports holding 35,000 troops under the command of Gen Napoleon Bonaparte; the fleet, obviously, answered to an admiral, VADM

François-Paul Brueys d’Aigalliers. This force represented a maximum French effort at the time, the combined force destined to strike Alexandria, Egypt, and so threaten British trade with India by promising an overland advance toward India or possibly by striking the Ottoman Empire. It was a threat the British could not ignore, but to counter it required a presence in the eastern Mediterranean, something the empire lacked given a paucity of bases in the region. Nelson’s primary purpose was to keep French naval forces in the Mediterranean from uniting with other ships from other ports, particularly near the English Channel at Brest but also from Bordeaux on France’s western coastline. Such a concentration could possibly challenge British mastery of the sea.

This is the historical situation defining 1798. For the purposes of the game, the French can strike in any direction, toward Egypt, toward Constantinople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, toward the islands of Malta or Minorca in the Mediterranean to create a base and expand French naval reach in this area, toward moving on Spain, possibly Gibraltar, and finally, of course, toward the Atlantic Ocean to enjoy complete freedom of movement: from there, a move on the channel, the West Indies (Caribbean Sea), or another destination—all merit consideration.

The possible French moves justify British force dispositions in the Mediterranean—Nelson forward-deployed to intercept the French, determine their movement, and bring them to battle as soon as possible to simplify the British decision-making process. Nelson, already having proven himself a leader preferring combat to all other actions, assumed command for that very reason: the necessity of destroying the French fleet sooner rather than later.

The map captures the variety of choices but does so with very few playing pieces. In this scenario, simplicity of action is at a premium. A player can add some more units to the fray: the French transport fleet can be broken into two, three, or four sections, and both sides can add one additional independent commander (ship captain). But even with such additions, there are

The Age of Sail

Scenario 1: The Eastern Mediterranean, 1798

May 1798: Britain and Revolutionary France are at war and battling for control of the Mediterranean.

A French fleet has sortie from Toulon and neighboring ports. It totals some 400 transports with 40,000 troops. General Bonaparte, having just conquered northern Italy, is onboard and in command of the expedition. The convoy is escorted by 13 warships and 3 frigates under the command of Admiral Brueys. Destination is unknown.

In this theater of operations, the British admiralty has assigned Lord Nelson to command a fleet totaling 13 ships of the line. Nelson stands off Toulon near Minorca with 3 of these battleships. The additional 10 battleships are under the command of Admiral Troubridge at Gibraltar to safeguard access to the Atlantic. Only 3 frigates are available, all under Nelson’s command.

The French win a decisive victory if their fleet and convoy make it past Gibraltar. If the French land their troops in Egypt and Turkey allies with France, and Naples also capitulates to French authority, AND if 8 of the 13 warships remain intact after completing both landings, the French also win a decisive victory. Should France only force one neutral power to its side, and still possess 8 of 13 warships at the end of the scenario, the French player wins a marginal victory.

The British win a decisive victory by destroying the convoy. If the British force the French back into Toulon, OR if they destroy a large portion of the French warships (9 ships) even after the French have completed a landing, they win a decisive victory.

The game continues until one side achieves their victory conditions.

The Age of Sail Scenario 1. (Image provided by author.)

few pieces to move. However, there is much to weigh. The wide-ranging options stemming from possible French actions, and a corresponding British reaction, bring us to our first deficiency of AI when looking to computer thinking to carry the day in this scenario. The programmer could well list a number of actions, allowing a computer selection. But the creativity of doing something else, something not so confining intellectually, is completely lost.

The actual course of events underscores the limits of such AI. As the French emerged from Toulon and several other ports, a storm arose and crippled Nelson's flagship and his frigates failed in their chief function—scouting to locate the enemy. In part because of this development, the French escaped his detection while portions of the fleet from Toulon and ports in Italy united at sea and set sail for Alexandria. It had been a fortuitous escape, one largely stemming from the weather. The game captures this element of weather, a random die roll at the start of each turn to declare weather conditions. While uncertainty is captured, the chance of repeating a weather event is unlikely. This divergence from history, in turn, means the British could well intercept the French at the very opening of the game.

What this potential change also means is that the historical baseline accompanying this scenario immediately collapses. From there, the players are forced to make a strategic decision for their respective sides, something AI cannot possibly fathom. To contest the Mediterranean can be accounted for, to reach the Atlantic and seek other options can be accounted for, but the rationale to do either remains entirely a human calculation. What do France and England want at this point in their confrontation? A choice to remain in one body of water or another, something a machine can make, means little beyond the sheer conclusion of waging war in one sea or another. And should a machine choose, the decision becomes 50/50, a poor capture of chance to hope to simulate a decision meriting playing the game. One could compound the AI by capturing that first decision of 50/50 and then have the computer as-

French Mission Card

The Age of Sail

Scenario 1: The Eastern Mediterranean, 1798

Orders

Admiral Brueys: Your task is to accomplish one of three missions:

1. Invade Egypt to strike British trading routes
2. Deny English access to the eastern Mediterranean by establishing bases at Naples, Malta
3. Move past Gibraltar and join the French fleet at Brest to then threaten England itself

Select one of three objectives. Your 13 ships of the line and 3 frigates match any British fleet in numbers in the area of operations. The convoy you escort is highly vulnerable to attack.

You have provisions to remain at sea for 30 days, whereupon you will need to find a base to replenish supplies, refit your crews, rest the troops in convoy—if you have not already reached your objective.

Decision Point 1

What are your orders?

French Mission Card Scenario 1. (Image provided by author.)

sign specific actions once staying in the Mediterranean or reaching the Atlantic, but again, the AI would merely run a random result; the program can weigh the choice, even choices, but there is no thinking here, only random selection. The computer would keep the human opponent/player guessing, but not for long and not in any way replicating what a human player might contemplate. At best, the programmer's assigned percentages governing predetermined options account for any computer decision taken. In short, AI makes a poor general (commander).

One can argue that only humans can be in charge. In this scenario, the decision where to fight clearly must take one to the continent and ask, what is the state of French arms in 1798? The same can be asked of England—where to fight and what of its allies on the continent? Here “naval integration” as a Marine Corps concept and related to the Napoleonic era comes to the fore as a measure of action at sea to accomplish a goal on land.⁶ Really, what is the policy, and what is the national security objective? This scenario ends with a French victory if the French reach the Atlantic. British forces, as in fact was the case historically, are well-positioned to meet this threat by fronting Gibraltar. After those broad calculations, the playing field is wide open.

A great many things come down to chance in war, and such is the case in this scenario. Certainly, the British must con-

centrate their forces prior to meeting the French in battle. While British ADM Sir Thomas Troubridge, in command of the fleet at Gibraltar consisting of ten warships, may fare well in a confrontation with the French fleet of thirteen men of war, Nelson would be overwhelmed given he has but three warships in his possession. That British concentration is likely but not guaranteed in the game (a die roll of one-four out of six means a united fleet, with Nelson subtracting one from such a die roll). Something similar happens when attempting to intercept an enemy fleet at sea. The game *facilitator* may deem the opposing fleets within striking distance of one another, but actual combat rests on an “intercept” die roll (that roll must be one-three out of six to intercept, with various modifiers for Nelson being present, for an advantage in frigates, for weather, and for the size of a fleet [the bigger the fleet the easier it is to find]). All things depending, an intercept is likely for a British fleet, less so for the French. Disengagement (avoiding battle) faces a similar roll for evasion.

This measure of chance is something a machine could emulate if one is willing to constrict the battlespace into a measured area based on an incremental basis. But that act defies realities at sea; the very openness of the sea makes such a board measure absurd. Still, it can be done with a grid imposed on the map to tell the computer where such a location is given the metrics of the moving piece.

The counters, in turn, are fixed with a movement radius to expend points as they move across the now-defined playing surface. Sea movement becomes a plotted experience, no matter where the machine decides to move.

What could be considered passable on land—moving in such determined fashion—completely breaks down when hoping to track movement at sea in the Age of Sail. How strong of a wind is present, for how long, in what direction, and what other weather might accompany even favorable winds? The ship, a wooden creation of certain dynamics that sought uniformity but did not always deliver with exactitude, had its own reaction to sailing at sea and did not always prove responsive as hoped for to winds. Too many variables made connections and rendezvous at sea uncertain, tracking an enemy, even more uncertain, and a grid imposed on this map absurd. A human must make these calculations—in the game, the facilitator.

Should one seek a computer-imposed precision on movement and combat at sea anyway, AI cannot account for the reasons why one is fighting in the first place, let alone the consequences of taking an action leading to combat. Even with some confidence that policy decisions impacting naval forces could produce the hoped-for results in a window of time, the larger picture always grated against the orders and results. A fluctuation in time of days, weeks, or even months before a fleet reached its destination, or failed to do so, could well mean an ordered naval action no longer mattered as it did when the order was issued, and this means a resultant naval action could help or hurt a cause. The need to recalibrate policy depending on outcome—at sea or land—ensured a great deal of anxiety shaping actions and reactions.

The example of this scenario makes plain such causality. The French move against Egypt enjoyed support in Paris, with Bonaparte and minister Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand, among others, backing the attack. The prospect of upending British trade appears more wishful thinking under present examination, even if a convincing rationale at the time. The damage to be done from

British Order of Battle

Scenario 1: The Eastern Mediterranean, 1798

Rear Admiral Nelson

Man of War

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13			

Frigates

1	2	3		
---	---	---	--	--

The Age of Sail

Admiral Troubridge

Man of War

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10		

Frigates

1	2	3		
---	---	---	--	--

British Order of Battle Scenario 1. (Image provided by author.)

a French base of operations in Egypt could amount to something, but only in a long-term outlook.⁷ So the attack amounted to more projection, less actionable policy even should all go according to plan. Other motives drove the decision. Bonaparte needed additional military successes to continue his climb to fame, and conquest in the mythical “east” fulfilled that purpose for him. The French government, the Directory, hoped to get the general away from Paris and away from any chance of plotting against it. Talleyrand appeared the lone

human ambitions and willful expectations are a hard measure in retrospect, let alone when unfolding in the present. Any AI seeking that human quality of self-delusion, but also a conceit possibly birthing greatness or great things at one and the same time, is impossible to conjure up when programming a machine-based intelligence to assume a human configuration. It cannot happen.

The context of 1798 continues to offer this complexity and the same conclusion, that clear decisions to attain goals are anything but that. Delusions,

... AI cannot account for the reasons why one is fighting in the first place, let alone the consequences of taking an action leading to combat.

believer in the project, a sincerity that countered his usual multifaceted decisions. His narrowmindedness in this respect was unusual, unless one saw it as a move to dismember the Ottoman Empire, a goal the other powers in Europe would have to support once initiated and so back France.⁸ In this way, a war in the eastern Mediterranean could bolster France’s diplomatic position in Europe. But so it goes, motives reflecting

greed, idealism, and wishful thinking all cloud the needed sobering analysis to lead to a positive result when making military decisions affecting state policy. With Bonaparte gone, the Austrians advanced into Italy, a region just “liberated” by the French general. Russia moved to broker an agreement with the Turks and pass a fleet from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, an unheard-of act of conciliation between them.⁹

England, while partnering with Russia, hardly welcomed this Russian intrusion into its area of influence.¹⁰ Again, the need to project power into the eastern Mediterranean represented a new responsibility for the Royal Navy, and one received with mixed acceptance. To add to its defense requirements entailed further responsibilities added onto commitments in the West Indies and elsewhere too, and therefore, further strain. These operations, already demanding resources, ships, personnel, and maintenance to keep as many vessels at sea as possible, meant the navy feared negative repercussions from defeat in any way, anywhere, and in any measure. That tremendous burden represented near folly, and only humans would consider the risks of such commitments and render a decision of continuation, even expansion, in order to achieve the greater good—whatever that might be. In sum, irrationality too often drives humans to action, something a machine can never duplicate.

The geopolitical picture of 1798 can well be further explicated and complicated, but enough has been said to make clear the inadequacy of programming a response to the needs of the belligerents in this scenario. One could argue that the computer could cut through the irrationality and lead the way to sound policy decisions, particularly if the machine were to “win” the game. But any result would be shallow in the extreme, a measure of success again colliding with human fallibility and therefore producing artificial results in the extreme. A rational outcome amounts to simplicity and therefore a myopia pointing to mistakes on a growing scale as one act bounds forth across space to impact still more factors defying control. The game of human versus computer means one hopes the human wins merely to redeem the idea that machines are not infallible. Even should the machine win, that conclusion is the same.

It falls to the facilitator to orchestrate this scenario between players to render results that better reflect the human dimension defining the era represented in the game. That mediator receives orders from the opposing sides—orders that demand clarity and comprehensiveness

to then move the pieces on the board. The players must realize the backdrop to any action when writing orders passed to the facilitator, whether hoping to contest control of the Mediterranean or to escalate the battle for control of the Atlantic. In fact, any decision must be measured against the history that did unfold, a facilitator reviewing the game at its conclusion and with such knowledge is able to judge the sound, or unsound, nature of the actions chosen by the players. The outcome yields a naval-centric result; the game assures that output. But what that result means for the larger contest in Europe, and that struggle’s impact on global relations, that measure requires a discussion based on analysis only a human can deliver, ideally done so by the facilitator after much deliberation. This cognitive step a machine cannot fathom, and certainly not to decree a judgment in the present as to what that verdict means going forward. When a machine reaches the time limit of a scenario, the game is finished.

It falls to the facilitator to orchestrate this scenario between players to render results that better reflect the human dimension ...

When a facilitator declares a game over, the next action a state may have to take becomes all too necessary and foreboding. Such is always the end result of war.

The History

In the *Age of Sail*, the scenario addressed in this article, and any other scenarios—the struggle to control the Baltic in 1800 another clear case of irrationality centered on the naval integration concept—means a game where a change may be at hand to create a new history defining an old problem. But the purpose is not to change history, more to recognize its narrow verdict and how much things could be different should things fall out in other ways than they did. The “Eastern Mediterranean” scenario defines a struggle in one sea that does not have to be that way. In fact, in playtesting, most French players opted to seek the Atlan-

tic as the end goal. To get there meant the game ended, but the larger consequences merely got underway. When France did, in fact, take this option in 1805, the fleet it mustered from Toulon headed to the West Indies before meeting disaster back in European waters off Trafalgar in October 1805. But victory at sea in late 1805 left England facing more war, not enjoying a resolution of its conflict with France. Scholars debate the decisive results of Trafalgar, stipulating that while England was not again seriously challenged at sea, Britain did face another ten years of war minimizing Trafalgar’s impact.¹¹ David Syrett argues Britain maintained dominance after 1805, and Jeremy Black concurs, making that naval victory decisive.¹² Other historians maintain that France’s ability to conquer states in Europe allowed a massive ship-building program to unfold after 1805, straining Britain’s sea power although the island power prevailed.¹³ Richard Glover said something similar. Sheer numbers of French ships

after 1805 could possibly overcome Britain’s superiority in seamanship, leaving the outcome uncertain.¹⁴ The debate stresses that one summation, one game, clearly means a larger game, something only a human can appreciate.

The Royal Navy’s success in 1805 still required Britain to continue the struggle, a favorable result best indicated by the alternative—defeat at sea would only stress British continuity and open a path to defeat. Here was the ultimate irrationality, success in battle at sea pointing to a narrower margin of failure in the next battle. To win meant a requirement to not encounter any setback, a burden to shoulder to be sure. But the hope that such a struggle is worth it always captivates humans making decisions in war. In this case, Britain’s ultimate defeat of France achieved that very end: unprecedented global power. With that



A historical depiction of the actual events that led to the destruction of the French fleet at Alexandria. (Map provided by author.)

outcome came further need for another successful application of military force and power projection, a requirement only collapsing in the wake of World War I. To go forward always means facing an uncertain reckoning, something a machine can never “learn.”

French success in this scenario came more often than not. Nelson repeatedly had trouble uniting his fleet. That perverse result from history, when in fact he easily met Troubridge, grew largely from the facilitator being able to divorce themselves from the historical outcome. Movement at sea, the distance covered in an uncertain period of time, and the chance of meeting engagements, or avoidance, came easy enough to arrange on the board (screen). Player orders prompted movements that required die rolls to resolve actions, and the always present English concern to safeguard axis to the Atlantic meant the French could well gain a head-start to the eastern Mediterranean. But no game reproduced the clash at the Nile when Nelson did catch up with the French fleet and destroy it, leaving Bonaparte stranded in Egypt. That action came in about a month’s time, a rapid rate though such a pronouncement too easily passes by Nelson’s overriding ambition to meet the French at sea and destroy the enemy before any land battle proved necessary. Should that have happened, the campaign would have been over in a couple of weeks, and so too in all probability

Bonaparte’s career. Nor did the weather account for the French escape and the ability to prolong the campaign. Nelson, though delayed, repaired his ship damaged from the gale, absorbed Troubridge, and set off to find the French. He outpaced them, guessing correctly the French destination of Alexandria but arriving before the French did. Such happenstance can be replicated in a game, less so in Nelson’s subsequent move to depart Egypt and continue his search. Only weeks later did he return there acting on a tip that the French had made Egypt their destination after all. He attacked immediately and did not lose a ship while destroying or capturing ten French men of war. End results can often come out the same as the history, a British victory, but how one gets there matters a great deal; a computer can only applaud the final tally, a poor substitute for victory indeed.

Finally, it needs to be stated to make this same point (that the means to victory always puts a vital context on the results of combat) that the French player most often wished for an immediate showdown with their divided opponent, a bid to overwhelm Nelson prior to him being reinforced. That smart—if obvious—effort usually paid off, albeit the facilitator having to render judgments of space traveled, of intelligence gathered, of command relations secured, and of a gauntlet of battle to see Nelson delay this clash at sea to gain favor at a later

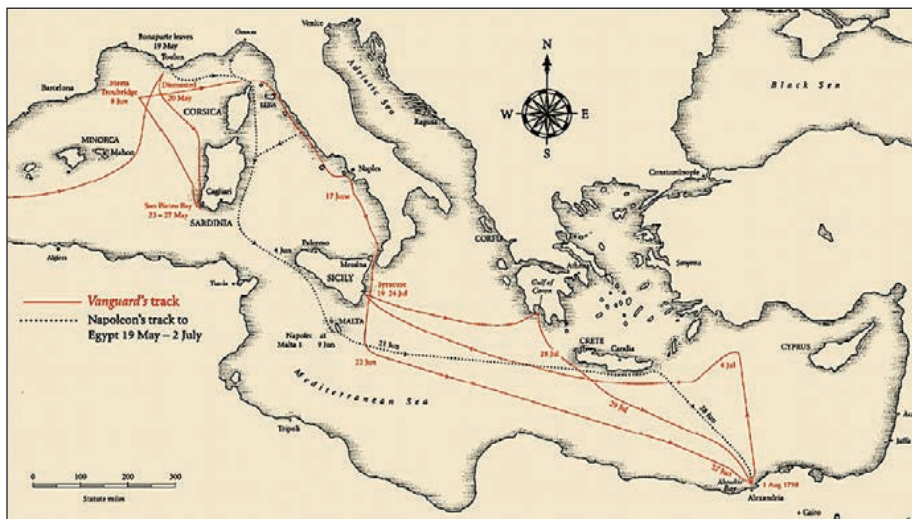
date when uniting all British forces. The variables defy computer calculation; a facilitator is best equipped to make these calls. The battles that followed in each case witnessed a bludgeoning of the opposing fleets, this was the outcome even with so many factors leaning in favor of Britain, most of all Nelson’s presence and a corresponding jump in combat power as is well-deserved of the admiral so bent on this very determination. But at sea, in the game, the French held their own and often could bash their way into the Atlantic. Their transport fleet came with them, the destination of Ireland, England, or the West Indies a footnote to the game, but a strategic problem now starring England in the face. This outcome certainly suggested defeat.

Given the contrast to the historical outcome, one may be tempted to label these results factitious. That is the case only when measured against history. To presume an English victory at sea and

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An overlay of the “chase” onto a historical map. (Map provided by author.)

not to get there in the game reminds one that assumptions always plague the defeated, a worthy lesson in its own right. Larger still, to hold up history as a guide produces its own limits, and here

only humans, a machine merely a tool to gain this promised land. Ultimately, wargaming points to human sagacity as a measure defying reason, a positive limit on war to be sure.

Future war points to this dilemma, a hope to measure strengths only to be reminded that the outcome could still disappoint.

wargames come into their own, much as this game does. One can want a battle to get a result and act to make this happen, but the only assurance one has to that end is to fight that battle in the present, a decision fraught with hazard. Future war points to this dilemma, a hope to measure strengths only to be reminded that the outcome could still disappoint. To move forward from the Age of Sail to the present, to an age of nuclear weapons, terrorist attacks, mass migration, a forfeiting of natural resources, an invented cognitive realm of cyberspace that reignites interest in space as a war-zone, to think of these realities impacting chance, fills one with trepidation. Wargames in this respect reminds one to fear that trivial label of *wargaming*—match is unnatural and the suspension of the reality of war is more a warning than a game. That dynamic speaks less to prophecy and more to human agency. To get to that place of reflection welcomes

Notes

1. Kate Crawford, *Atlas of AI: Power, Politics, and the Planetary Costs of Artificial Intelligence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2021); James Bridle, *New Dark Age: Technology, Knowledge, and the End of the Future* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2018); Paul Scharre, *Army of None: Autonomous Weapons and the Future of War* (New York: WW Norton, 2018); and Kai-fu Lee, *AI Superpowers: China, Silicon Valley, and the New World Order* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018).
2. See Disruptive Technology Lecture Series, #2 “Artificial Intelligence,” October 15, 2021, presentation at Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University, Quantico, VA.
3. See “Wargaming,” in Gen David H. Berger, *38th Commandant’s Planning Guidance* (Washington, DC: July 2019), 18–20.
4. That game was played during the CSC elective courses period of instruction, the class: “Sea Power in War, Thucydides to ‘Thucydides’

Trap’: The Far Side of the Pacific.” The USMC’s Wargaming Division created the game, “Assassin’s Mace.”

5. See the polarization that comes from this conversation, best typified by James Barrat, *Our Final Destination: AI and the End of the Human Era* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2013); and Erik J. Larson, *The Myth of Artificial Intelligence: Why Computers Can’t Think the Way We Do* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021).

6. See naval integration as a Marine Corps concept and in relation to the Napoleonic era in Matthew J. Flynn, “The Unity of the Operational Art: Napoleon and Naval Integration,” *Journal of Advanced Military Studies* Vol. 11, no. 2 (2020): 12.

7. Charles Esdaile, *Napoleon’s Wars: An International History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2007), 64; and N.A.M. Roger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain 1649–1815* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 448.

8. Esdaile, *Napoleon’s Wars*, 65.

9. Best here is Paul Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 18–82.

10. *Ibid.*, 197.

11. Michael A. Palmer, *Command at Sea: Naval Command and Control since the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 206.

12. David Syrett, “The Role of the Royal Navy in the Napoleonic Wars after Trafalgar, 1805–1814,” *Naval War College Review* 32, no. 5 (1979): 82; and Jeremy Black, *Britain as a Military Power, 1688–1815* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 231.

13. Lawrence Sondhaus, “Napoleon’s Shipbuilding Program at Venice and the Struggle for National Mastery in the Adriatic, 1806–1814,” *Journal of Military History* 53, no. 4 (1989): 349; and Clark G. Reynolds, *Command of the Sea: The History and Strategy of Maritime Empires* (New York: William Morrow, 1974), 315.

14. Richard Glover, “The French Fleet, 1807–1814: Britain’s Problem; and Madison’s Opportunity,” *Journal of Military History* 39, no. 3 (1967), 236.



The Comparative Advantages of Humility with Marine Corps' Pride

Finding the balance

by LtCol Nickolas Aionaaka

"Watch him, the only thing more dangerous than the enemy is pride."

—GySgt William Pierson, Call of Duty WWII

It has taken me more than twenty years—nine enlisted and eleven more as an officer—to try to socialize the comparative advantages of humility within an environment dominated by pride, skepticism, and criticism. Unlike any other leadership model, the components of humility within a culture of pride introduce the ability to balance and connect operators at the tactical level, professional subject-matter experts at the operational level, and strategic planners at the strategic level.¹ A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis in Figure 1 and throughout this article proposes the benefits of assessing measurements of humility within the structure of the Marine Corps.

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DESIGN AND PROPOSED MODEL FOR PRIDE COMBINED WITH HUMILITY		
	CAPABILITIES	LIMITATIONS
INTERNAL	<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops trust and quality interactive feedback within organizations Reduces miscommunication and misinterpretation within organizations Provides responsive feedback and dialogue navigation within matrixed organizations Provides ambidextrous and hybrid capabilities that integrates Operators, Functional Subject-Matter Experts and Planners/Policy makers Improves data input via rich human input through data feeds in information technology 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cognitively time-consuming Humility may override the capabilities of pride (competitiveness, confidence/arrogance and institutional pride) Low attraction to humility in environments dominated by egotistical pride Dominant environments of short-term objectives Requires commitment and resilience during experiences of humiliation and failure
EXTERNAL	<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective among Professionals, Subject-Matter Experts and Peer Groups End-to-end capabilities Positive high Quality Connections and Rich Feedback Good data. Quality data feeds through information and communication technologies Motive root cause analysis through Emotional Intelligence Reverse role thinking through Empathy Dialogue navigation for root cause analysis through Compassion 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age/Maturity and brain cognitive development Population - 80% 18–22 years old Normal 26 years old Egotistical pride behaviors Empire development Self-centered motives and agendas Self-survival motives Time-constraints and Manpower shortages Anger and Rage Revenge and Hate Monetary incentives to comit illegal acts

Figure 1. This model provides a SWOT analysis of pride combined with humility. (Figure provided by author.)

The current applications humility can be applied to within the Marine Corps are fitness reports, proficiency and conduct marks for corporals and below, promotion boards, command selection boards, and human resource hiring panels. At an individual level, humility has the ability to assess selfless actions and resilience during periods of failure and humiliation. At a group level and organizational level, humility has the ability to influence timely feedback, systematic engineering, and decision processes within time-constrained and resource-constrained environments while identifying gaps, risks, and capacities within complex networks.²

Research and studies have shown that humility has the ability to heal organizations, stimulate positive growth, and overcome adversity.³ Additionally, humility has proven to stimulate technologies in leadership through emotional intelligence, empathy, and compassion.⁴

Current training opportunities for self-reflection and development of humility within the Marine Corps are leadership seminars, resident professional military education, community volunteer/mentorship programs, marriage retreats, transition programs, Marine of the Quarter and promotion boards, and through professional platforms that share information.

Painting the Picture

To paint the picture of the capabilities of humility, think of a quarterback taking a knee in public view while competing against social pressures and human dynamics on the football field. To the public, this game may be the most important game of the quarterback's life, but to him, he is concerned with the welfare of his team, purpose and goals, and the need to find common ground in order to connect with his teammates. It is an example of servant leadership, strategy, and strategic communication within the pressures of hard timelines and demanding requirements. A mistake has occurred, and the ball is on the one-yard line. There are two minutes left and they need a touchdown. Manpower cuts and monetary bonuses are on the line and the owner demands a win. The crowd is shouting and on their feet. The

quarterback takes a knee. At this critical time of the game, a leader's true character is displayed.

Cultural Pride

Pride is a strong cultural value within the Marine Corps. "The Few, the Proud, the Marines," is not just a slogan but also a way of life. The structure of pride identifies those within the circle of trust and those outside of the group.⁵

The problems with pride are the opposing definitions of pride. On one hand, pride is described as pleasure, joy, altruism, self-esteem, dignity, and honor. While, other descriptions define pride as arrogance, self-importance, egotism, snobbery, and conceit. The definitions

ternally defeated and in desperate need of help. Proud memories are highlighted but regret always seems to linger. Within regret, egoistic pride seems to be a subtle culprit in many of those decisions. The proposal of humility hopes to reduce egoism and regret.

Strengths

The strength of humility is deep within the foundation of fair-minded critical thinking.⁷ Fair-minded critical thinking, unlike weak self-centered critical thinking, provides the opportunity for open feedback and communication. Humility and fair-minded critical thinking further compliments elements of Emotional Intelligence, which

At an individual level, humility has the ability to assess selfless actions and resilience during periods of failure and humiliation.

describe the same word however, the behaviors of pride conflict with each other.

Proud moments are extreme levels of humility that promote altruistic behaviors of selfless acts of heroism and bravery for the welfare of others.⁶ However, the concern is extreme levels of egotistical pride that exhibit selfish motives for selfish agendas. Egotistical pride may provide short-term benefits for self-survival nonetheless cultural acceptance of egoism threatens the integrity of the Marine Corps' values.

Self-Reflection

The Marine Corps has given me the opportunity to self-reflect on my decisions over the last few years. The advantages of self-reflection are the capabilities it brings to transparency and analysis of historical decisions. As I look back, some of my memories elevate me, while others reflect my times of humiliation and defeat. The problem with self-reflection is our inability to choose or control the timing. Gift or curse, it is both the proud memories and regrets that are deeply connected to our past. During these times, our true family and friends are remembered when we are in-

assesses competencies in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills.⁸

Humility also compliments meaning that leads to empathic emotion and compassion. Gentry, Weber, and Sadri's research determined that empathic emotion plays an important role in creating a paternalistic climate of support and protection to promote successful job performance in these high power-distance cultures.⁹ They further concluded that empathy can be learned, leaders may need time, training, and coaching to develop the capability to demonstrate empathy and active listening skills, and managers should put themselves in the other person's place in order to encourage genuine perspective-taking, support managers should go beyond the stand-issue value statement and allow time for compassionate reflection and response, and the ability to be empathetic is important for global organizations or across cultural boundaries (disaggregated operations and deployments) that have very different perspectives and experiences.¹⁰ Their study determined that empathy is positively related to job performance and managers were given higher evaluations

when they showed more empathy toward their subordinates.

Humility has proven to enable mid-level managers in absence of the executive leadership and empowers leaders within matrix organizations.¹¹ As face-to-face interaction decreases, the need to connect and collaborate through information and communication technologies has also increased. Humility provides insight and the ability to listen and connect while preventing miscommunication and misinterpretation.¹² The capabilities of humility ask hard questions, validate assumptions, and accept risk where it is appropriate. This allows commanders to meet objectives with minimal requirements while allowing supporting entities to align and prepare limited resources for time-phased planning of current and future engagements.¹³

Weaknesses

Humility is weak within an environment of anxiety and egoistic pride. Egoism is prejudiced behaviors generated after traumatic events of loss and low resources.¹⁴ For some, traumatic events occur during combat while, for others, low resources identify with individuals supplying materiel, supporting logistics, and providing information technology. During periods of limited time, funding, and materiel, hostile environments develop egoistic behaviors among individuals when reputations, competency, and credibility are threatened after failing to produce or perform their required duties.

Ethical egoism may be necessary for self-preservation and self-survival to prevent death for the benefit of others.¹⁵ The negative personality traits of egoism are related to arrogance and self-centeredness but also paternalistic patterns of behavior for self-survival, especially in environments of constrained resources and hostilities.¹⁶ Within these environments, groups or organizations may want a strong egotistical leader with high levels of confidence to survive. Others may argue that altruism or those that are concerned for the welfare of strangers or outsiders is the right approach. However, altruism may not be applicable to environments where resources are low.¹⁷

Opportunities

The Marine Corps provides a rich environment for leaders, problem solvers, and innovation. Humility provides a model for leadership boundaries, limitations, and capabilities. However, the application of problem-solving, long-term initiatives, and cognitive feedback requires an investment of time into mistakes. An article by Whartb College provides insight into their discovery of GORE-TEX, through failure and openness:

Failure is part of innovation. Yet today's culture places such a strong emphasis on excellence that admitting to failure of any kind is avoided. Thus, many opportunities to learn from and transform failure are missed. The June 1, 2012, Mack Center conference, Learning from Failure in Innovation: Turning Setbacks into Advantages, featured speakers from a wide spectrum of industries—from health care to toys—who shared how their firm's appropriate value from paying attention to mistakes and taking risks on new ideas that at first glance may seem



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counterintuitive. Developing a culture of learning rather than stressing excellence helps break down the resistance to looking at and learning from mistakes. Companies can gain from hosting “innovation contests” that elicit ideas from the people who know their business best—their employees.¹⁸

The best place for any leader to self-reflect and develop humility is at residential programs, retreats, and promotion boards. I was given the honor and opportunity to prepare and brief candidates with over twenty years of experience into three minutes of fame. A Marine’s package was the science and the promotion board was the art of how Marines are promoted. But, beyond the boundaries of the boardroom, the elite and respected are those that demonstrate resilience and personal humility during periods of hardship.

Threats

Low resources, low proficiency, and limited responsibility set the conditions for hostile environments. Within these environments, egotistical pride threatens humility by destroying a Marine’s will, self-worth, confidence, moral courage, and integrity. Toxic environments of hatred and coercion can create survival-of-the-fittest style competitive environments if not monitored or dissolved in a timely manner.

Maturity and the absence of leadership also present problematic threats to humility. During periods where leaders are focused on metrics, measurements of effectiveness, and resource constraints, the investment of time into the development of humility would not be considered until requirements are met, productivity is sustained, or leadership oversight provides guidance and purpose.

Summary

Today, the gaps in subject-matter expertise, low resources, and shortages in manpower will require the help of humble leaders. Forecasting, sustainment, life-cycle management, and strategic planning are elements of the past. We will need leaders that can ask the hard questions and ask for training in hopes of generating time-phased plans,

awareness of execution, and the level of trust and confidence to align limited resources to time-phased plans that support.

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The Problem with Semper Fu

How the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program can be changed to benefit Marines and the Marine Corps

by 1stLt Bryson A. Curtin

Close combat is an inseparable part of the Marine Corps mythos. Numerous young Americans have stared in reverent awe while seated in the chairs of recruiting offices at the painted scenes of bayonet fighting in Belleau Wood by Georges Scott, depicting Marines ferociously gutting the terrified Imperial German troops with bayonets, who seemingly melt away like snow under the onslaught of advancing Marines. This mythos stands in stark contrast with the world of today's youth. Raised in an educational culture that abhors any violence and, under the well-meaning but foolish "mutual combat" rules of many public-school districts, they are severely punished for any physical altercation no matter the circumstances. This shift in culture is not a 50 or 75-year one, as one might believe, but rather a 16-year one. According to statistics kept by the National Center for Education Statistics, the percentage of students who engaged in some kind of physical fight on school property or otherwise decreased from 33 to 24 percent from 2001 to 2017.¹ This means that, while schools are safer now, the average young American that they are producing is much less acquainted with violence and much more fearful of its application. Consequently, they come to the Marine Corps seeking, among many other things, a way to toughen up, gain combat skills, and prove themselves worthy successors of those nearly mythical men who fought hand-to-hand in France over 100 years ago.

The Marine Corps' answer to their longings is the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program—or MCMAP. A com-

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Command support and the standardized quality of MCMAP instructors and instructor trainers are the foundations of the program. (Photo by LCpl Tia Dufour.)

bination of many different martial arts that pulls from the close combat system taught to Marines in World War Two and earlier, MCMAP provides a common functional system to teach Marines how to fight and win in a hand-to-hand combat situation. While this system fills the required role of teaching a large group of people (some of whom have never been in a physical altercation of any sort in their lives) how to come to terms with personal violence and gives

them a few basic survival tools in such a situation, it has several flaws that result in the program being derided as a waste of time by the very people it is supposed to serve. With the new Junior Enlisted Performance Evaluation System accounting for MCMAP performance as a factor of a Marine's promotion, there is no better time than the present to make these changes. The program could be vastly improved if the following simple changes are made: remove rank-based belt limita-



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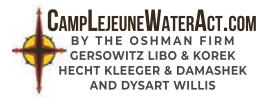
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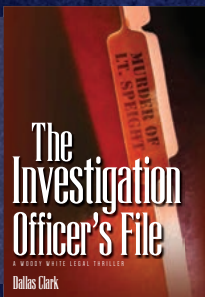
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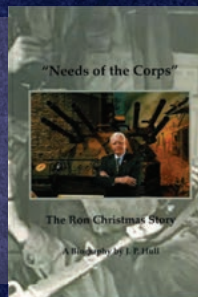
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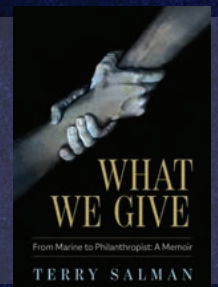
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tions, incorporate more MCMAP training into Marine Corps schools, require Marines to test out at their current belt level every year to retain their belt, and expand the syllabi of all belts to include more ground fighting techniques based of martial arts such as jiu-jitsu.

Per the current *MCMAP Order, 1500.59A*, belt advancements are capped in accordance with the specific Marine's rank, with lance corporals being prohibited from advancing past Green Belt and corporals prohibited from advancing past Brown.² This recent change is rather arbitrary (only being in effect since 2019) and has no stated reason for its inclusion. Why apply this limitation to this one skillset? Will the Marine Corps next restrict expert rifle qualifications to only non-commissioned officers and above? First Class Physical Fitness Tests and Combat Fitness Tests, perhaps? All such restrictions do is bar Marines interested in hand-to-hand fighting from accessing a training resource that will make them better. Perhaps this was done to limit the ability of instructors to quickly belt up their buddies with minimal work or prevent commands from pushing through Marines unwilling or uninterested in training. The solution to those problems, however, does not lie in locking out the thousands of other Marines interested in these skills in the name of preventing the lazy from obtaining a free pass. The solution lies in holding those instructors who cheapen the value of the program by watering down the training accountable. This restriction should be removed if the MCMAP program is to retain any sort of value.

Currently, only the basic Tan Belt is required to graduate from the basic level of Marine Corps training with no other levels of Marine Corps training requiring an increase in belt level. This leads to a gap in knowledge, delaying the learning of valuable skills needed by Marines who may someday find themselves in close combat. The root cause of this is ostensibly that Marine Corps training finds itself under increased demands to deliver a more knowledgeable and competent product that has been trained more than their predecessors while doing so in the same amount of time as before. Consequently, programs

like MCMAP fall by the wayside, as commanders must increasingly shift their schedules to accommodate more training. A solution to this issue is to count the MCMAP program as physical training, for which all entry/basic level Marine Corps schools have time, for at least two sessions a week, if not more. Usually blocked for the morning hours after reveille, this would minimize the scheduling issues facing many commanders today. Marines leaving the School of Infantry, Marine Combat Training, or The Basic School should be a minimum of a Gray Belt level of proficiency, as the Tan and Grey Belt levels will provide a Marine with the basic fundamentals of both striking and ground fighting.

The solution lies in holding those instructors ... watering down the training accountable.

Another unfortunately unique feature of the MCMAP program is the "one-and-done" nature of the current system. Once a Marine passes their final belt test for their course, they are never again required to demonstrate those skills, other than demonstrating five "sustainment techniques" from their past belts if they seek to ascend to the next belt level.³ This is a foolish way of doing business and does not demonstrate much actual retention of practical skill. People in violent or stressful situations fall to their lowest level of training, not to their peak ideal of training, as much as they would wish for the opposite. The Marine Corps recognizes this and has made another vital skillset a yearly requirement: the rifle and pistol range. Every year, Marines must go and prove that they still understand and have retained the fundamentals of good marksmanship, demonstrating this with their qualification shoot, in which a previous expert qualification does not guarantee that they will achieve another one. No one would suggest with any se-

riousness that a Marine who qualified expert in boot camp or TBS is a shoo-in to score as such again, especially if they have not practiced those skills for some time. However, the Marine Corps allows this for the MCMAP program qualifications system. A Marine who qualifies as a basic Tan Belt would, unless he wanted to advance in belt level, never has to demonstrate proficiency in those skills again. Those skills would consequently go by the wayside, and the moment they would be useful is often too late to think about them. The Marine Corps should require that every year a Marine should have to pass the proficiency test for the belt that they currently hold, just like it does for the rifle range qualification system. If the Marine cannot pass, he should be reduced in belt level to the lowest level of proficiency that they can demonstrate. Marines should be allowed sufficient time to practice the required techniques, similar to the "grass week" and pre-qualification shoots that they are allotted for rifle and pistol marksmanship. This could be as little as two days or as many as four, depending on the belt level. Such a system would ensure that Marines are retaining the close combat skills that they are taught.

In the current construction of the MCMAP Program, all ground fighting is done at the mid-level (Grey and Green) belts, the second and third belt levels. This should change to reflect a more realistic approach to personal combat. As both mixed martial arts coaches and many of those who have been in violent altercations will attest, many fights will end up on the ground in some form or another. Consequently, the "ground game" is a vital part of fighting skills. Currently, the MCMAP program only teaches a few basic ground fighting maneuvers at the lowest belt level. Tan Belt Marines are taught only the rear choke, also known as the rear-naked choke. Gray belts are taught to counter two ground positions, mount (the aggressor is on top of the Marine's torso on their knees) and guard (the aggressor is on their back with the Marine in between their legs), by getting back to their feet as quickly as possible. Only the Green Belt level has any sort of practical technique from a ground position that a Marine

may find themselves in: the Arm Bar, a technique that will break an aggressor's arm if executed properly. This technique is a practical one, but it is wrongly placed in the Green Belt level, as is the Gray Belt counters to mount and guard. All of these should be taught at the Tan Belt level, as they are at their core very basic tools that will let a Marine be successful if a fight goes to the ground. Both counters teach Marines good defensive skills, and the Arm Bar is taught from both the mount and from the guard, which makes it an especially effective technique. Further, the Arm Bar was taken from the Japanese martial art of Jiu-Jitsu, in which the arm bar is one of the more basic holds used. In fact, it is usually one of the first techniques students learn when beginning their study of Jiu-Jitsu. MCMAP seemingly leaves all the effective ground fighting to the higher belt levels, Black and Brown, with techniques such as the Triangle Choke and Guillotine Choke being their purview alone. Neither one

is difficult enough to warrant waiting until the Black Belt level and only takes tools out of the toolkits of Marines who find themselves in dangerous situations. MCMAP should be adjusted to address this fact, with the Triangle Choke, Guillotine Choke, and Arm Bar being taught to Grey Belt level Marines, giving them solid ground fighting fundamentals.

I am not advocating for the total removal of the MCMAP program, nor am I advocating for the Marine Corps to become a martial arts-focused organization. What I am advocating for is practical, realistic reform that enhances our combat power and builds the skills of individual Marines. The way of the future demands that every Marine increase his or her proficiency across all skills, and hand-to-hand combat is not exempt. The Marine Corps frequently discusses the need for stronger junior leaders and for building resiliency in individual Marines. There are few better tools to build the desired confidence and

resiliency than martial arts, and the Marine Corps should make these suggested MCMAP reforms part of its vision for a more effective and lethal fighting force.

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Social Media and the Fragility of Public Perception

Leading Marines in an age of information overload

by 1stLt Cameron Edinburgh

It is 0430 and the familiar, intrusive sound of your alarm fills your ears. You reluctantly lumber to the side of your bed in the dark, searching for your phone to turn off the alarm. The second you find the button that puts an end to the noise, your screen confronts you with the fourteen push notifications and news alerts you missed in your six hours of sleep.

You have not even left your bedside and already are inundated with information from various news sources, social media accounts, and advertisements from around the world. With every online search and social media scroll, you contribute to the efforts of the corporations looking to sell you products and data-collection companies looking to assess and monetize information about your consumer habits.

The Threat from Within

You are as much a contributor to this environment as you are a consumer. Just as your search data informs companies on what to sell you, the sum of your public activities online informs the broader public on who you are. Somehow in this environment of constant data collection, when it comes to online risk, the individual Marine is often his biggest threat—and all this in a world that also includes collections capabilities of various potential adversaries.

The day begins and you roll out of bed with your primary weapon in hand. It is not an M4 or M9, but rather your smartphone of choice. This morning

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routine is not unique. Long before Marines ever unlock their rifles in the morning, they engage their smartphones.

Unlike a live fire range, where the chaos is carefully controlled, a Marine's activities in this online realm are usually outside the watchful eye of leadership—at least, assuming the Marine's activities do not go viral.

However, a Marine's actions on social media can have long-lasting consequences that reverberate throughout the community and the Corps—and if official Marine Corps policy is an indicator of the focus of our leadership, we as an institution are failing to keep pace with the activities of our Marines.

To be clear, approved guidance does constitute a meaningful step in the right direction. The CMC *White Letter I-17* outlines social media misconduct, but the focus rests on Marines attacking one another via social media.¹ While essential, this provides only a partial picture of the harm one can do online. Similarly, *ALMARS 008/17, Social Media Guidance—Unofficial Military Posts*, contains robust information on how Marines can discuss the Marine Corps in a personal capacity on personal social media accounts but does little to address personal posts on non-military mat-

ters. The Marine Corps *Social Media Principles Handbook* provides by far the longest and most comprehensive guide, but even this only goes as far as the “use your best judgment”² approach. This strategy, if it can be referred to as such, is not helpful to Marines, particularly at a time when societal norms for online activity are shifting while the Marine Corps standard remains constant. As new Marines enter the fleet, they need to be properly instructed if they are expected to adhere to a higher standard than their civilian peers.

If we are unable to elucidate this standard for proper social media conduct—in a way that prizes both the organization's image and the privacy of the individual Marine—then we are hardly prepared to expect Marines to adhere to the standard.

Societal Shift

Social media has, perhaps inadvertently, multiplied the number of watchdogs in our society. More often than not, these new watchdogs are not dedicated professionals focused on ensuring proper accountability of our society's institutions but rather other consumers who have become engulfed in the social media scene of information shar-

ing and self-promoting. With this spread of user-generated content, so come new opportunities and risks.

In this dynamic information environment, the conduct of the individual Marine must be beyond reproach. This is especially true when Marines are out in their communities, whether those be physical or virtual. Leaders must consider both categories when developing weekend safety briefs and when assessing the overall health of their unit. Commands with Marines who become part of viral scandals inevitably find their unit's name attached to the scandals by extension, which can undermine unit credibility and smear a unit's reputation for years to come.

In case it is sometimes lost in this era of misinformation, our credibility matters. It matters to our allies whom we support, it matters to our potential adversaries whom we seek to deter, and it matters to the American electorate who pays our salaries. Credibility is

the capital of our organization, and it can be erased from the actions of a few individuals who fail to uphold the standards our Nation expects of its Marines. We build credibility not just through our operations and training exercises, but also through constantly churning out Marines who prove to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars and valuable contributors to their communities. Nowhere are these contributions more evident to members of the community than through the information they consume about Marines both in the news and on social media.

According to a Pew Research Study conducted in 2018, 80 percent of American adults surveyed said they "have confidence in the military to act in the best interests of the public."³ By way of comparison, the survey found that business leaders, the news media, and elected officials only reached 45 percent, 40 percent, and 25 percent, respectively.

As Marines, we pride ourselves on the standards we set. Gen John A. LeJeune noted that leaders are "responsible for the physical, mental, and moral welfare" of the Marines under their charge.⁴ Our Nation trusts our Marine leaders. This major selling point continues to drive recruiting and keep our trust rating high.

So, when Marines do miss the mark by failing to uphold our core values of honor, courage, and commitment, their actions often generate news and social media stories that in turn become phone notifications for fellow consumers to read as they rise from bed in the morning.

Our Commitment

Being trusted as an institution comes with responsibility. Invariably, it seems to be a newsworthy event anytime a Marine is perceived to have failed to uphold the standard. Because of the reach potential of social media, a Marine facing backlash over comments made online can face far greater scrutiny than a Ma-

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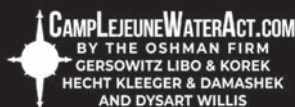
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rine who has been formally convicted in a court-martial for violating the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

The weight that public perception plays must not be underappreciated. President Dwight D. Eisenhower taught us that “public opinion wins wars.”⁵ This rule has obvious applications for the wartime setting, but it is just as strong a maxim in peacetime. When Marines misbehave on the international platform that social media provides, they needlessly foster doubt and foment dissent about our organization from the public at large.

As Marines, our personal opinions can become conflated, either as official positions of the Corps or as the underlying sentiment behind the official positions of the Corps. Increasingly it seems, that “the lines between Marines’ personal and professional lives often blur in the online space.”⁶ When this occurs, individual Marines can undermine our efforts to communicate effectively as an organization.

In his 2019 *Commandant’s Planning Guidance*, Gen Berger articulates a need to improve strategic communication, stating, “We must communicate with precision and consistency, based on a common focus and a unified message.”⁷ Social media misconduct has the potential to upend this goal, as no amount of careful messaging on the part of the organization can undo the potential damage resulting from just one post that showcases a Marine in a way that runs contrary to our core values.

Through social media, a simple off-the-cuff remark uttered by a disgruntled Marine has the potential to become a news story of local or national interest. But we must remember that in this respect, social media is not in itself the problem but rather a forum where problems come to light. Commands must encourage candid discourse and place a premium on in-person, group discussions to mitigate Marines taking to social media to air out their grievances.

Whether or not leaders take the time to listen to their Marines, without a doubt, the public will. As some of the most trusted and well-respected professionals in our society, our Marines are constantly in the spotlight. Lead-

ers must recognize this fact and plan accordingly.

We need not jump the gun here. We do not need to hastily change our iconic creed of “Every Marine a rifleman” to “Every Marine an influencer.” We do, however, need to ensure all Marines understand the appropriate forums to speak candidly.

A Call for Action

While the future of the information environment is unclear, it is all but certain that it will continue to grow more complex. While a select group of professionals in our cyber, intelligence, and communication strategy communities wrestle with keeping our organization ahead in the information environment, it is the responsibility of leaders from all communities throughout the Corps to properly counsel their Marines on the appropriate use of social media. For the vast majority of Marines, winning in the information environment simply means ensuring professionalism in one’s personal conduct and the conduct of the Marines under one’s charge.

This is not a call for radio silence on social media. We must recognize that increasingly, basic communication in this era often involves social media. This is not a call for a high-tech solution to mitigate the risks that come with new technology. Rather, this is a call for discourse and attention where it is due.

Commanders need not keep up with every social media trend and development. They must, however, understand the role social media plays in the shaping of public opinion, and be able to provide enduring guidance to their Marines, as dictated by both institutional policy and local circumstances. Moreover, they should seek to imbue Marines with the framework to make decisions based on clear, applicable guidance.

In keeping with the Marine Corps’ firm belief in leadership by example, commanders should ensure their own social media pages reflect the same privacy settings and type of public content they would recommend for their Marines.

Commanders should facilitate unit discussions that address dominant social media trends particular to each unit, paying respect to duty station and unit

history with social media misconduct. Commanders should also encourage their Marines to perform self-audits of online and social media activity early and often. If a Marine would not be comfortable seeing their post on a nightly TV news show, then they should not be posting it.

These unit discussions should also include enduring topics of concern in the information environment. These may include tactics for identifying misinformation online or techniques for understanding the biases of news organizations.

Our Corps needs its leaders to treat online conduct with the attention it demands, not for the sake of saving face but to ensure we are worthy of the title *Marine* in all the physical and virtual settings we encounter. By prioritizing this, we can mitigate unforeseen risks to public perception while ensuring our Marines keep their honor and the honor of our organization clean.

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Introspection Among Leaders

A neglected discipline

by CAPT Michael E. Foskett

“In my experience—and in the research my co-authors and I did ... —there is one quality that trumps all, evident in virtually every great entrepreneur, manager, and leader. That quality is self-awareness. The best thing a leader can do to improve their effectiveness is to become more aware of what motivates them and their decision making.”¹

—Anthony Tjan, Harvard Business Review

A dark joke circulating among Marine leaders is that they measure success as staying off the front cover of a military newspaper because most who make the front cover usually do so for egregious reasons. Ethical failure tops the list. The typical response is to shake one’s head in disbelief and say to oneself, “How could this Marine have been so stupid?” which is followed by a quick dismissal that they would *never* make such an ill-advised decision.

Such a dismissal may reassure, but it does little to explain the steady stream of successful, intelligent leaders—many of them moral—who end their careers through catastrophic ethical failure. It does not make sense. There must be more to the story.

This article will argue that Marine leaders neglect to develop the discipline of introspection primarily because they do not understand or see little value in it. As a result, they leave themselves at significant risk of failing to recognize their drift toward ethical failure until

it is too late. The key to mitigating this drift, then, is to develop the discipline of introspection. This article will conclude with a two-fold application: first, tips on the personal development of introspection, and second, why the Marine Corps should formally train their “middle managers” to be introspective.

What is introspection? According to the Oxford Dictionary, *introspection* is “the examination or observation of one’s own mental and emotional processes.”² Throughout this article the terms, “self-reflection” and “introspection” will be used interchangeably.

Great military thinkers find value in reflection. In his memoirs during his tenure at CENTCOM, then-Gen Mattis admitted that “in our military, lack of time to reflect is the single biggest

deficiency in senior decision makers.”³ A popular proverb collected by Sun Tzu observed “if you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles.”⁴ The context of the former is the need for reflection on strategic objectives, whereas the latter is tactical. Yet, with both, honest reflection on one’s own strengths and weaknesses is a necessary part of this process, whether strategic or tactical. This reflection, then, should also include *self*-reflection, since knowing and mitigating against weaknesses of one’s character improve the chance for success. For example, knowing that one tends toward overconfidence can mitigate the tendency to underestimate the enemy.

The Marine Corps says it values self-reflection. The first leadership principle is to “know yourself and seek self-improvement.” *MCTP 6-10B* gives practical guidance on how this should be done: Compare your character against the 14 Marine Corps Leadership Traits. In other words, ask yourself, “Am I just, tactful, enthusiastic?” identify shortfalls, then work to shore up deficiencies.⁵ The assumption is that if one simply looks, one can accurately identify one’s character weakness.

Yet in 24 years, first as an enlisted reserve Marine and then as an active-duty Navy Chaplain to Marines and sailors, the author has never seen this guidance modeled or taught. Why is this? The

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Promotions are opportunities for reflection and self-examination, but they should not be the only times leaders practice introspection. (Photo by Cpl Ana S. Madrigal.)

answer, in part, must be there is no demand signal for it. Most leaders think that they know themselves pretty well (so no need for further self-reflection), and most leaders perceive themselves as morally sound—certainly not perfect, but morally better than most.

Clinical Psychologist Dr. Henry Cloud challenges the former assumption. When it comes to self-awareness, Cloud asserts that most people don't know themselves very well at all. In fact, they don't even know what they don't know. What they do perceive about themselves is skewed in a positive direction, since, according to Cloud, the default human tendency is to "not see ourselves as we actually are."⁶ There is historical precedent for Cloud's assertion: "The heart [the internal center of one's moral will, emotions and intellect] is deceitful above all things," warns the ancient Jewish prophet.⁷ The heart says what one wants to hear rather than the hard truth one *needs* to hear.

If Cloud is correct, this is both revealing and troubling. This may explain why many toxic leaders do not know that they are toxic and why they are oblivious to character flaws that are so painfully obvious to others. This also explains in part the resistance leaders encounter from their subordinates because subordinates perceive the character flaws in leaders

that leaders do not see in themselves and thus lose respect for those leaders.

Most importantly, Cloud's assertion reveals a key element missing in the explanation for the ethical failure of a successful leader in the excellent article, "The Bathsheba Syndrome." The authors of this article quote Ariel Durant's observation that "power demented even more than it corrupts."⁸ They specify this "dementia" as the inflated belief in personal ability (emotional expansion, inflated ego, etc.).⁹ They go on to attribute this dementia to the dark side of success.¹⁰ But success is no more a reason for this dementia than a deployment causes infidelity. In both cases, success and deployments simply present a test to see how an individual will act when external ethical guard rails lessen and institutional power increases.

The authors of "The Bathsheba Syndrome" also fail to adequately explain why a successful leader does not readily identify this dangerous dementia in himself and take appropriate countermeasures. After all, no successful leader would invite self-sabotage and subsequent humiliation. Cloud's assertion better explains *how* this dementia leads to self-sabotage: The successful leader failed to see these expanding character flaws because she deceived herself to thinking that they did not exist—until

it was too late. This is the rest of the story.

The danger of this dementia cannot be overstated. This tendency towards self-deception in a positive direction is not just a hazard to the oblivious or the arrogant; it is a present danger for any leader with institutional power. President Lincoln observed, "Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power."¹¹ Lincoln knew how the accumulation of power—when not checked by strong moral character—often led to the dementia of abuse of power and subsequent self-sabotage.

A strong character must be more than just moral will; it also requires the ability to accurately identify character flaws before correcting them. This ability to look through the dementia of self-deception and see these flaws is the discipline of introspection. Developing introspection, then, is essential for leaders to mitigate against self-sabotage.

Developing introspection begins with the humility to face reality. Leaders should assume they fall prey to the default tendency to see themselves better than they actually are. They should also assume that they have blind spots in which character flaws can fester without them even realizing it. Successful leaders—no matter how confident they are in themselves or their abilities—dare not dismiss the need for introspection by assuming they are above these dangerous tendencies.

Dismantling misconceptions is also foundational to the development of introspection. Stoicism, the mastery of emotional response in any given situation, is highly prized as a leadership trait among Marine leaders—as it should be. However, Stoicism unintentionally creates an underlying suspicion amongst the rank and file about any discipline involving reflection on emotions. After all, emotions must be mastered, not understood.

To be clear, introspection is not naval-gazing or self-loathing—nor does it encourage a victim mentality. It is a discipline that leverages emotions as clues to detect hidden character flaws to see oneself clearly. For example, disproportionate negative emotions can

point to unobserved and unresolved emotional wounds that, left untreated, make a leader vulnerable to poor ethical decisions. The end state of a discipline of introspection, then, is the emotional intelligence to see the *true you* that mitigates self-sabotage.

Aristotle taught, “Whatever we learn to do, we learn by actually doing it.”¹² So it is with leaders who desire to be more introspective. Learn by doing. One tried-and-true means of learning to be more introspective involves journaling, especially when one experiences disproportionate negative emotions that are difficult to understand. The clarity that comes out of a pen may never come out of one’s mouth. Journaling—and later analyzing what one wrote—brings insight and transparency into one’s inner world. “Talking it out” with a competent sounding board can also illuminate.

Reading widely across genres of literature is another means of developing introspection. One better understands the universal reality, complexity, and contradictions of human nature from great works of the past. A better understanding of the operations of human nature, in turn, leads to better self-understanding. For example, a major theme of Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment* explores whether great men are above morality or do they suffer the same consequences as ordinary men when they break the law? Leaders should not shy away from reading religious and philosophical material, since many world religions and philosophies offer valuable insights into the dementia of self-deception to believers and unbelievers alike. Granted, some religious teachings and philosophies are esoteric, subjective, and even coercive. But much of the knowledge found in many world religions and philosophies is simply the accumulation of wisdom from thousands of years of observing human behavior. For example, Buddhism offers an insightful connection between clinging to selfish desires and the suffering it causes to self and others.

Mitigating against self-deception and subsequent self-sabotage also requires self-care. Studies show that chronic fatigue can impair a person’s judgment to the same level as being legally drunk.¹³

Self-reflection, then, needs to include an internal barometer to accurately gauge when pushing through fatigue becomes counter-productive—even dangerous. Self-care must also include a regular regiment of time, rest, and mental space to get away from the tyranny of the urgent and effectively self-reflect. Additionally, one can reach out to chaplains and other providers for other means of self-care (CREDO retreats, spiritual practices, etc.).

Journaling, reading widely, and self-care are a good start, but they are not enough. Leaders should surround themselves with honest brokers who will truthfully answer the question, “What is it like to be on the other end of me?”¹⁴ Mattis recommends that “leaders at all ranks ... must keep in their inner circle people who will unhesitatingly point out when a leader’s personal behavior or decisions are not appropriate.”¹⁵ This requires the courage and humility to invite constructive criticism necessary to perceive ethical drift that a leader cannot see on her own.

The Marine Corps needs to be more intentional about teaching its leaders how to *know yourself and seek self-improvement*. Introspection and topics in its orbit (emotional intelligence, mindfulness, the relationship between power and character corruption, etc.) should be taught to middle management leaders of the Marine Corps, enlisted, and officers alike. This is best done at resident SNCO academies and Command and Staff Colleges. To be effective, instruction needs to be in small groups and interactive, where leaders can grapple with concepts and work them into their respective leadership styles.

No Marine leader wants to become a cautionary tale on the cover of a military newspaper, nor does the Marine Corps want its leaders to fail. Individuals should, then, view introspection as a daily discipline that mitigates self-deception and consequent self-sabotage. The Marine Corps should augment this individual effort by teaching introspection to its middle managers.

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>Author’s Note: I am writing on my own behalf, and the thoughts and opinions expressed are my own and not necessarily those of the U.S. Government, DOD, the Navy, or the Navy Chaplain Corps.



Creating a Pathway for Lateral Entry

Borrowing a proven idea from the Army

by Capt Kevin N. Byington

Our current Marine Corps is wrestling with the reality of low retention and an incredibly demanding recruiting mission while being unable to fill critical skills gaps in highly technical military occupational specialties. This has spurred discussion on how to create paths to a lateral entry for civilians who possess the critical skills we need but do not view the military as an option because of certain realities, such as compensation commensurate with skills and experience, and an unwillingness to start at the bottom of the military hierarchy with peers who may be a decade younger in age, experience, and maturity. Further complicating this issue are rightful concerns that most strategies for implementing lateral entry will have the unintended consequences of degrading our most competitive advantages: esprit de corps, unit cohesion, and the overall fighting spirit of the Marine Corps. This article serves to propose a path forward that mitigates those concerns while enabling the Marine Corps to acquire the talent we seek.

To enable success for lateral entry, we need to take a play out of the Army's book and explore the usage of a "Specialist" E-4 rank. The Army utilizes this rank not only in their usual promotion cycle but when enlisting applicants with a college degree. Not only does a college degree holder get whatever lavish bonuses the Army offers at the time but they also get a permanent increase in rank and monthly pay. Given the current constraints of the military pay and rank system, this is likely the best path forward to compensate for the type of talent we are looking for in lateral entry applicants who already make significant-

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ly more than the average private and are not willing to take a 60 percent pay cut. We can take this concept a step further and create a "Technical Sergeant" E-5 rank for lateral entry applicants. This will allow them to have a higher rank and monthly pay while also signifying that they are not a non-commissioned officer (NCO) and do not have the usual responsibility of giving and enforcing orders that an NCO has.

To enable success for lateral entry, we need to take a play out of the Army's book and explore the usage of a "Specialist" E-4 rank.

The benefit of these new ranks ensures that those lateral entry applicants are distinctly *not* NCOs but highly paid technical specialists whose job is to be good at their job, not immediately lead others without the relevant experience. By making someone a non-NCO but increasing their rank to ensure they are compensated for their expertise, we are not allowing poor leaders to lead Marines; we give them a space to gain the relevant experience to join the ranks of NCOs and SNCOs at a later point in time while leveraging their skills now

and compensating them appropriately for it.

Assuming that these technical experts with relevant experience in their fields are much smarter, more mature, and more inclined to be successful in the Marine Corps than the average high school student, how do we ensure that they too have a clear career path and that we invest training and education in them to enable them to be successful? Consider the following scenario:

A technical specialist with a college degree and relevant experience in their field expresses interest in joining the Marine Corps. For their civilian experience, they rate a bonus of \$15,000. Upon contracting, they are an E-4 Specialist with "X" years of "constructed service credit" (like we already do for lawyers), with a

guaranteed promotion opportunity to E-5 Technical Sergeant at the two-year mark. Their street-to-fleet pipeline includes a modified PME course at their first duty station (before they check in to their unit) that combines Lance Corporal Seminar and Corporal's Course into a hybrid course that will give them some education on leadership prior to entering the fleet. Upon completion of two years' time-in-service, and after being recommended by their unit's promotion panel, they are promoted to E-5 technical sergeant.

At this point, that Marine has a choice: after four years in service, they are eligible to “augment” to a regular E-5 Sergeant and assume NCO responsibilities after being recommended by their unit’s NCO promotion panel. In this case, they have joined ranks with their non-specialist peers and fall into the normal promotion timeline for their MOS. Alternatively, they can remain as an E-5 technical sergeant and be considered for promotion to staff sergeant with their peers when they come in-zone for their MOS. Or they could opt out of promotion and determine that they would like to remain as a non-NCO for the remainder of their time in service.

By utilizing these two newly created ranks in the Marine Corps, we solve the following problems:

1. How do we appropriately compensate technical specialists who are unwilling/unable to start at the very bottom?
2. How do we refrain from diminishing the importance of what it means to be an NCO and ensure that those who were civilians thirteen weeks ago are not squad leaders tomorrow?
3. How do we integrate these lateral entry applicants into the regular force and ensure that they also have a clear career path forward if they choose to remain in the military past one enlistment?

For those lateral entry applicants who are worth more than what an E-4 with “X” years of service makes monthly, we can authorize a “critical skills pay” that is similar to Special Duty Assignment pay. The amount could be set across the board or be individualized to the applicant and their experience, but could be distributed similarly to current Special Duty Assignment options (large bonus with small monthly pay increase, no bonus with large monthly pay increase). In the event of reenlistment, this bonus amount can be reassessed based on the individual, their qualifications, and their propensity to reenlist.

In addition to the above, there are options outside of monthly pay and allowances for lateral entry. For example, for those working professionals who have a house full of household goods and are in their late twenties, should we force them to live in the barracks with a bunch of



Reestablishing the historical rank of technical sergeant (1941 rank insignia) may be one method for managing the lateral entry of technical experts into the Corps. (Image: History Division.)

teenagers, or could we authorize BAH and a government-funded move when they enter the Service, so they can continue to maintain a similar quality of life? For those with a family, could we also offer them duty station preference, so the family can be at a location they desire to ease the transition? Could we offer a reduced time period to become eligible to transfer a G.I. Bill to family members? Could we bring back college student loan repayment options? I argue these additional benefits can help ease the transition between professional civilian life and military life, emulate a civilian equivalent “relocation package” when transitioning jobs, and further solidify to these prospective applicants that military service is a good fit for their current life.

What do we do with a technical sergeant who really enjoys doing their job, is good at it, but has no desire to become a staff sergeant and lead a platoon of Marines? We have already invested plenty of time and money into their technical and professional development. It makes no sense to let that Marine exit the service because we force them out. For this rare case, we should consider lengthening service limitations. For an E-5 Technical Sergeant, allow them to stay in for

twenty years until retirement if they so choose (assuming they continue to meet all standards). Allow them to conduct higher-level professional military education. Allow them to attend higher-level MOS advancement/credibility courses. Allow them to be as technically savvy as they desire to be to retain that skillset, knowledge, and experience within our organization.

What I am *not* advocating for is allowing civilians to laterally enter the Marine Corps without attending Recruit Training, Marine Combat Training, or MOS School. I am also not advocating for them to be exempt from PME requirements. In fact, I agree with those in opposition that the principle underpinning any lateral entry scheme should be that we are Marines first, Marines always. Every Marine will still be a rifleman. Every Marine will still be subject to an annual physical fitness test and combat fitness test. Every Marine will go to the field and be worldwide deployable. For those who do not live up to our core values, processes like non-judicial punishment and administrative separation are still on the table (as well as recoupment of any bonuses paid to them). But we can maintain what it means to be a Marine while simultaneously entertaining common-sense solutions to filling our talent gap.

We have heard the concerns of those Marines (active duty, veteran, and retired) who rightfully question whether a lateral entry at a higher rank will serve to degrade our NCO and staff NCO ranks and diminish our *esprit de corps* with leaders who lack the relevant experience to effectively lead Marines. To those naysayers, I ask you this: In the above scenario, is there really a grave danger with lateral entry? There will always be a risk in whatever course of action we pursue. But the largest risk is in maintaining the status quo.



The Accidental Marine Corps Commander

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by Maj Brian Kerg

What kind of commander does the Marine Corps want? The significance of this question cannot be overstated. Officers selected for O-5 command have immediate and career-long effects on the hundreds of Marines in their units, consequently impacting the quality of the force for years after command is relinquished. More critical, these battalion and squadron commanders are personally charged with building the warfighting capability and combat readiness of Marine Corps forces deployed across the globe. As the Marine Corps transforms itself to more thoroughly integrate with the Navy and develop naval expeditionary forces, the best leaders are needed in command positions. Finally, O-5 command is all but a prerequisite for continued promotion and command at more senior levels. Very few lieutenant colonels not selected for O-5 command are promoted to colonel, and none who fail selection for O-6 command are promoted to the general officer ranks.

The Marine Corps *wants* “the best and most fully qualified for command.” But what it wants and what it gets may not be in alignment. The more compelling question, again, is what kind of commander does the Marine Corps *select*? The troubling answer is that the commander it selects is often determined by a crapshoot.

Though command board precepts provide some guidance to board mem-

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bers, the selection statistics show that board members often use selection heuristics that do not align with the precepts. In turn, assignments officers (monitors) and career counselors must infer career guidance from the selection statistics, providing advice that might be contrary to policy or even unachievable. Officers attempt to shape their career paths by playing a game of *Go Fish!*, in which picking the wrong card by chance often negatively affects their careers and the Marine Corps.

“to ensure that Marines receive the best possible leadership and to provide all eligible officers with a fair and equitable opportunity to command.” In addition, the program seeks to formalize “an objective system that eliminates subjective bias from the process” using a standard of “best and fully qualified” for all officers screened for selection.

The CSP issues more specific guidance to board members through command selection precepts prior to each board. These precepts state the board

Officers attempt to shape their career paths by playing a game of Go Fish!

Command selection must not rely on examining records that were largely determined by a guessing game. Commanders must be selected through deliberate processes that ensure the intent of command selection is met.

The Commanders We Ask For

Marine Corps commanders are selected through the Command Screening Program (CSP), an order implemented

will select those officers “whom a majority of the board consider the best and fully qualified for command.” Further, board members are reminded that “the Marine Corps has not established an expected or preferred career pattern for officers.” The precept directs board members to screen officers based on their performance in any given assignment, rather than on the types of billets to which they were assigned.



Commanders have a direct influence on the lives and readiness of their Marines. We need to make the selection process more deliberate. (Photo by LCpl Enrique Barcenascortes.)

The only special consideration given for past assignments is one for successful tours with Marine Corps Recruiting Command (MCRC). Notably, the precept declares, “A successful tour of duty with the Marine Corps Recruiting Command should be viewed as a significant accomplishment in an officer’s career.”

To summarize, the precept calls for selections based on this simple guidance: select the *best and fully qualified, don’t discriminate based on career path, but do give special consideration to those who succeeded in MCRC tours*. According to this criteria, command selectees as a group should have incredibly diverse career paths, with a slight preference for those who had successful MCRC tours. But the data show this is not the case.

The Commanders We Get

To determine what the average battalion or squadron commander looks like, one can review the results of recent command selection boards and identify common traits.

Despite very broad guidance and the admonishment to avoid giving preference to assignment types, the Marine Corps selects a very specific type of officer for command—one who held company/battery/detachment command in their primary military occupational

specialty as a captain, a “key” billet as a major, and attended resident professional military education (PME) at least once, either as a captain or a major. A key billet is understood by board members as a battalion/squadron executive officer or operations officer in the FMF or a

This career profile, or “commander’s career path,” is not new and has been the trend in command selection for at least the past decade. Determining *why* this trend exists is difficult, given the contrary precept language. But the trend is observable in the data, which is used by monitors in the guidance they publish. Aside from the explicitly required preference for MCRC alumni, why such a career path exists remains a mystery. However, former board members have repeated two key trends in briefs on command selection and through informal mentoring, and these trends correspond strongly with the data.

First, board members were far more likely to select for command those officers whose career paths matched their own career paths, even with middling performance evaluations, than officers whose career paths did not match—even if the latter had much higher performance evaluations. That is, *assignment type was preferred over performance*, despite the precepts’ prohibition against this voting behavior.

Second, board members were far more likely to select those who attended

... board members were far more likely to select for command those officers whose career paths matched their own ...

MEU, regimental primary staff officer, O-4 company commander, or department head tour. In FMF tours, selectees generally had experience in more than one MEF. Finally, there was a strong preference for those with successful MCRC tours.

Board members generally assigned less value to joint tour fitness reports and those from special education program (SEP) utilization tours that prevented the officers from having a command tour as a captain or a key billet as a major. These observations are not categorical. There were outliers, but the profile described above is the statistically significant career path one should pursue to be competitive for command.

resident PME than those who completed nonresident PME. That is, *PME residency was strongly preferred*, despite Marine Corps policy requiring resident and nonresident PME to be considered equivalent. This trend is confirmed by comparing data on selection to resident PME with rates of selection to command. For example, I examined the FY2017 Marine Corps O-5 command list and found that those who attended resident PME were selected for command over those who attended nonresident PME at a rate as high as 9-to-1.

Regardless of other factors, those who aspire to command are left with the lesson that they should model their careers to match a more narrowly defined career

path, despite board precept language, and they should attend resident PME. Yet, this is simply impossible for many officers.

Choosing to Match the Profile Is An Almost Impossible Task

It is no secret that Marines have very little control over their assignments. Generally, officers identify their assignment preferences to their monitor. Monitors, in turn, attempt to meet the mandate of putting the right officer in the right assignment to support the needs of the Marine Corps. But when one monitor is slating orders for hundreds of individuals while managing inventory and vacancies to support the needs of the force, it becomes almost impossible to accommodate assignment preferences.

Moreover, orders send Marines to commands and not to specific billets. The receiving commander determines which individual is assigned to which billet. Based on manpower taxes (such as headquarters staff positions that are on the table of organization but not on the staffing goal, general's aides, individual augments, and other requirements), it is not uncommon for officers to go an entire three-year tour without filling a key billet.

Finally, selection by the Commander's Education Board (CEB) is completely out of an officer's control, and the program to which a CEB selectee is slated—resident PME, SEP, or another program—is largely arbitrary, based on comparing officer preferences with available CEB assignments. Furthermore, although CEB also uses a “best and fully qualified” standard, those already assigned to the national capital region (NCR) when screened for CEB are selected for resident PME at significantly higher rates than those who are not, presumably as a cost-saving measure because they will not have to relocate to attend resident PME schools located in Quantico, VA, or Washington, DC.

In other words, officers have almost no control to model their careers to match the commander's career path or increase their chances for selection for resident PME attendance. Whether they can hit the wickets that make them most

competitive in the eyes of any board becomes a matter of luck. Consequently, many Marine Corps officers are selected for O-5 command not by design, but by accident.

Deliberate Commander Selection

How can the Marine Corps change this?

Prioritize performance over billet assignment. Officers cannot control their assignments, but they can control their performance. This is why the CSP and command board precepts make it clear that boards should prioritize performance over billet assignment. However, board member behavior shows little adherence to this CSP guidance.

... it is imperative that those selected to command are selected deliberately, not accidentally.

This can be better controlled by withholding billet assignment history from board members, compelling them to select commanders based on fitness report relative values and key comments from evaluators.

Control for PME bias. While policy is clear that resident and nonresident PME are equivalent for purposes of promotion and command selection, board member behavior shows a bias for officers who attended resident PME at rates as high as 9-to-1, as previously mentioned. The CEB selects for education and not for command, yet command board members use resident PME selection as a proxy for excellence, a flawed method to apply when selecting commanding officers. If these schools truly are equivalent, there should be no distinction between resident or nonresident PME in an Official Military Professional File (OMPF), and board members should be blind to the type of PME completed by the screened population.

Leverage the Army's Battalion Command Assessment Program (BCAP). Though not a one-to-one comparison, the Army and Marine Corps share similar processes for battalion command selection. Recently, the Army conducted a

pilot for the new BCAP, which included evaluations on written communication skills, cognitive assessments, peer and subordinate assessments, a double-blind panel interview, and other new metrics. Command selection using the BCAP, when compared with the original process using only evaluations from supervisors, saw a radical shift in who was selected, including an average change of 35 percent up or down the order of merit list for command. Notably, the officer who was rated “worst” in the old system was rated “first” in the new system, illustrating that more holistic evaluations can drastically change who is selected. Such shifts will incentivize new leadership, learning, and performance behaviors

among officers throughout their careers, creating an even more competitive pool of potential commanders. The Marine Corps should assess the BCAP and identify if it has aspects that can be adopted to better select the commanders it wants.

Best and Fully Qualified

Given the incredible responsibility commanders have in executing the Marine Corps' responsibility to the security interests of the Nation, it is imperative that those selected to command are selected deliberately, not accidentally. By prioritizing performance over assignment type, controlling for PME bias, and identifying positive results from the BCAP, boards will be better empowered to select the “best and fully qualified” officers for command. This, in turn, will position the Marine Corps to have the best leaders at the helm as it moves down the path of naval integration and builds combat readiness for future threats.



Protecting and Ensuring the Legacy of our Corps

The stronghold of warrior culture

by BGen Matthew Reid

Wise leaders in any organization avoid a cult of personality and develop values-based units that embody a commitment to a core set of ideals as well as to the unit's overall mission.

The Marine Corps is a stronghold for a modern American warrior culture that combines a unique value system with a combat mindset. The clearly articulated values of honor, courage, and commitment encourage the relentless pursuit of mission accomplishment even at the risk of life or limb. To avoid any confusion or misunderstanding over the true meaning of these values, each tenet is painstakingly defined and outlined both online and in print, easily accessible to every Marine.

The dedicated defense of these values does not come without a cost. Indeed, the Marine Corps is first and foremost a warfighting organization dedicated to defeating our Nation's enemies in the air, on land, and at sea—and, of course, in any clime and place. Cliché yet nevertheless true, this fact often requires Marines to directly participate in life-threatening combat. Notwithstanding the brilliant execution of all combat operations, it is not uncommon for the Marine Corps to lose Marines in battle, and this sacrifice is acutely felt throughout the entire organization, from fire teams to regiments.

The high-stakes nature of the Marine Corps as well as its holistic conditioning—including draining mental, physical, and emotional training designed to adequately prepare Marines for real-world combat—necessitate thoughtful, selfless, and fearless *ductus exemplo*, or leadership from the front. In the profes-

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sion of arms, history has proven time and again that the right leader can make all the difference. While conducting his military campaigns through the ancient Anatolian and Grecian peninsulas, Alexander the Great affirmed: "I am not afraid of an army of lions led by a sheep; I am afraid of an army of sheep led by a lion." Centuries later, Napoleon Bonaparte echoed these words, proclaiming: "If you build an army of 100 lions and their leader is a dog, in any fight, the lions will die like a dog. But if

you build an army of 100 dogs and their leader is a lion, all dogs will fight like a lion." Ultimately, judicious leadership is the most important trait an individual can bring to and promote within the Marine Corps.

Thus, it is incumbent upon a commander to develop depth in his chain of command to propagate this storied type of leadership and help craft the next generation of Marine leaders. One of the truest tests of leadership a commander will face is whether he can ensure his unit's continued success in the face of unexpected events that result in his disappearance. Whether in combat or peacetime, it is always possible a dynamic leader will be killed or injured, or else issued orders for a permanent change of station. What happens, then, when such



It is essential that the foundations of leadership are firmly rooted in institutional values. (Photo by LCpl Phuchung Nguyen.)

a leader leaves command or abruptly disappears? Does the organization continue to succeed, or does it fade into obscurity and mediocrity?

In the realm of Marine Corps leadership, there exists a delicate dichotomy. On one hand, the Marine Corps thrives as a “command-driven” organization. An enthusiastic and engaging leader can quickly garner the love and admiration of his unit and propel them to new heights of achievement. On the other hand, this top-down structure can also unwittingly encourage the rise of leaders prone to fostering harmful cults of personality. These overbearing leaders use their authority as a platform for self-promotion, oftentimes replacing the organization’s ideals with their own. They also foster an intimidating environment in which subordinates struggle to make even the simplest of decisions and are instead encouraged to develop a dangerous dependency on the charisma of a single individual. This can lead to serious consequences. Following the departure of

a leader who has hitherto monopolized decision making and morale, a unit can become utterly ineffective and lose its cohesion. In such a scenario in which Marines have lost sight of the core val-

“Chesty” Puller, to name a few. Yet, it is incumbent upon all Marine leaders to foster an environment in which the sudden departure of a leader does not result in widespread anxiety and chaos.

Learning to balance an inspiring personality with a commitment to developing unit-wide core values and depth of leadership is truly an art.

ues of honor, courage, and commitment that exist above and beyond any single individual, the foundation of the entire organization is threatened.

By contrast, an organization founded upon well-defined ideals with strong subordinate leaders can survive the reign of any individual, whether he be overbearing or ineffectual. Marines have a rich history of inspirational heroes who are rightly honored and celebrated—John Bolt, Lou Diamond, and Lewis Burwell

Many powerful nations and the warrior cultures that protected them have vanished over the course of human history; their defeat was usually preceded by the slow, imperceptible relaxing of standards and values over several years. The Marine Corps is as distinctive, storied, feared, ultimately victorious, and as lethal as any historical warrior culture. Marines must continue to safeguard the foundational strengths of their Service and ensure the Corps remains truly the most ready when our Nation is the least ready.

Learning to balance an inspiring personality with a commitment to developing unit-wide core values and depth of leadership is truly an art. All Marine Corps leaders, down to even the most junior Marine, are responsible for understanding and applying strong, effective leadership firmly rooted in the values of the Marine Corps. This requires constant mentoring as well as dedicated study, practice, and application. Only by truly embodying our values of honor, courage, and commitment will we successfully carry them with us to and from deployments all over the world and pass on their true meaning to the next generation.



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Making a Massacre

Factors of the social environment that contribute to wartime atrocities

by 2ndLt Timothy Walls

War is hell. Even in its simplest form, it is arguably one of the worst endeavors made possible by the human dimension. In nearly every major conflict across history, participants—both as individuals and groups—have demonstrated the ease with which sanctioned acts of war can turn into hideously immoral crimes against humanity. Sadly, the U.S. military is no exception. Events such as the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre, the 1968 My Lai Massacre, the 2003 maltreatment of detainees at Abu Ghraib, the 2006 Mahmudiyah massacre and rape of a fourteen-year-old girl, and many others clearly demonstrate that, with the right conditions, excessively violent and deviant behavior can occur in any unit.

Although clear ethical violations are typically subject to a thorough investigation, there are often components of the contributing conditions that are minimized or completely dismissed by observers and investigators. Investigations commonly focus on leaders, or the effects of their decisions, that enable heinous acts to occur because of the responsibility of leadership in a hierarchal organization. Similarly, few question the strong influence that prolonged exposure to combat can have on a person's psychological and emotional well-being. What is less widely understood, however, is what factors of group dynamics cause acts that contradict with the values of their larger organizations and cultures. What follows is not a detailed review of any one event, nor is it a comprehensive explanation of every factor that has ever led to an atrocity. Rather, it is an attempt to explain, from a sociological perspective, how problematic unit cohesiveness, group acceptance of deviant circumstantial norms, and diminished relevance

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of organizational sanctions can cause wartime acts of unethical violence.

It is incredibly difficult for the average individual to take the life of another person without hesitation or remorse. This can be attributed to strong cultural values and beliefs, learned through primary socialization in childhood, that discourage murder, rape, and other atrocious acts.¹ Yet, to be successful in combat, a military unit must be capable of destroying its opponent, and this requires the removal or alteration of some cultural safeguards. However, it is critical that

this deviance from cultural norms be balanced by aligning the values of the military individual with the values of their organization. To this end, recruits must undergo intense resocialization in the form of basic training which instills organizational values and serves as the initial foundation that emphasizes the importance of unit cohesion and teamwork. This function creates in military members a propensity toward forming groups that sociologists refer to as “primary groups.” This type of social group is characterized by close emotional attachment among its members and is commonly described as something akin to a family unit.² The cohesive nature of the primary group is one of the intangible qualities that serve as the foundation for successful military units. The cohesive unit fights with zeal, its members mutually support one another, and the group will move toward the common goal in relative unison. Generally, these



Marines form cohesive social groups to succeed in combat, and social norms must be reinforced throughout the group in the combat environment. (Photo by Cpl Reece Lodder.)

qualities allow for improved command, control, and responsiveness. The military primary group's strength lies in its ability to manipulate the behavior of its members. However, this can just as easily become a pitfall if not well understood by leaders.

Morris Janowitz states, "It is necessary to bear in mind that cohesive primary groups do not just occur but are fashioned and developed by complex military institutions. At most, primary groups operate to impose standards of behavior."³ To impose and maintain standards of behavior, it follows that primary groups must be able to internally regulate values and beliefs and have the capacity to influence the behavior of group members. This internal regulation is a byproduct of cohesion and is a force, either direct or indirect, that influences the actions of unit members. Studies show that social cohesion and unit effectiveness in primary groups increases in the presence of danger and while executing an important mission. However, units can become cohesive to the point that they impede the goals of a military organization.⁴ Unit cohesion, is strengthened in situations where the values, beliefs, and goals of members become more homogenous (i.e. surviving a dangerous situation). Paradoxically, this solidarity can prove problematic for the organization if the salient values, beliefs, and goals of a small unit come to contradict approved behaviors.⁵ As a group's values diverge from the organization's, exceedingly deviant behaviors can be expected to occur—in part because of individual choices, but more so because of a shift in perception of "normal" or acceptable behavior within the group.

It would be difficult to understand deviance without first understanding how normalized behaviors become approved or disapproved, or more importantly, how social norms come to guide group behavior.⁶ Robert B. Cialdini, Raymond R. Reno, and Carl A. Kallgren explain that there are two characterizations of norms: on one hand, the *injunctive* norms constitute morally approved or disapproved conduct (what "ought" to be done) regulated through social sanctions; and on the other hand, *descriptive* norms (what "is" done) which imitate

the observed circumstantial actions of others regardless of morality.⁷ These norms are the basis by which individuals interpret their social environment and provide the rules of the game by which members of a group agree to follow. As solidarity in the group is achieved, members assess the values of the group to which they subscribe, consider expectations of how other members will or will not cooperate, and act in a way that they believe to be in accordance with the group's norms or "group identity."⁸ Of note, social norms do not exert a constant influence on behavior but first must be brought to the participant's attention. In other words, context is key.

Group dynamics can be considered as a system of control (from the group to the individual) and compliance (from the individual to the group).

To determine how norms affect behavior, Cialdini, Reno, and Kallgren conducted a series of studies that measured the likelihood that subjects would litter in a setting that was clean versus already littered and what may cause subjects to deviate from the "antilittering" cultural norm. They found that subjects were more likely to litter if they observed "prolittering" cues in the environment such as an actor littering or seeing trash already present. Subjects were further shown to increase or decrease littering tendencies based on how semantically close a message placed on a planted handbill was to littering.⁹ This suggests that individuals use observable cues from the environment and actions of other individuals to determine whether injunctive or descriptive norms are more applicable to base their own behavior on. A variant of this study examined how deviant or disruptive behaviors may spread and found that negative environmental cues

can compound their influence and cause increasingly deviant behavior.¹⁰ These findings suggest that units that commit war crimes do not suddenly become murderers or rapists but instead progressively accumulate deviant tendencies. As the deviant tendencies increase, the influence of injunctive norms that are in alignment with organizational goals and values weakens. Of course, littering is a far cry from massacre, but can the studies be generalized?

As the violence of war and killing become normalized behavior, the distinction between sanctioned acts of war and war crimes may become semantically proxemic. If left unchecked, this could spell disaster when coupled with a cohesive unit that adopts deviant values. For example, consider the 2006 Mahmudiyah massacre in which four Army soldiers that were nearly peers in rank left their post on their own accord to rape a fourteen-year-old girl and murder her three family members. In the weeks leading up to the event, members of the unit, including the rogue group, were known to consume alcohol and drugs, exercise physical violence against unarmed civilians, and conducted patrols while intoxicated during which they frequently abused noncombatants.¹¹ While not condoned or encouraged by unit leadership, it is apparent that the deviant soldiers had been on a path to disaster for some time. Clearly, they incrementally engaged in increasingly deviant behavior over time and did so as a collective group because of their solidarity. The group identity became deviant as their values failed to be realigned with the organization or culture and ultimately resulted in a heinous crime. However, to the members, this act seemed like acceptable behavior at the time even if only temporarily. The question then becomes: what social processes failed to regulate such behavior?

Group dynamics can be considered as a system of control (from the group to the individual) and compliance (from the individual to the group). In a healthy military unit, the efficient function of the small unit requires that members remain compliant and the group maintains control. However, Heckathorn explains that an internally increasing

cost of compliance or weakening of external sanctions can cause groups to fall into extremes of “over-control” and “over-compliance.” These systems may mandate compliance despite individual costs exceeding collective gain. In such an environment, to defect is to create new social norms and those that cooperate will allow defectors to act unopposed even if they disagree.¹² For example, some of the soldiers at My Lai demanded others participate or face sanctions. Others were able to recognize the behavior as immoral but chose to neither participate nor intervene. Cialdini and Trost argue that as norms become preferred responses to specific situations and as the cost of deviance from these norms is known, members of a group regulate behavior through various forms of sanction.¹³ By this logic, it may be assumed that for a unit to deviate together, individual members must value avoiding internal group sanctions more than they value sanctions that come from sources outside the group, such as those from the organization. If this is true, it clearly reinforces how important the alignment of values becomes from the institutional level down to the smallest group. These influences become especially relevant as units deploy in more disaggregated and decentralized postures.

In the military or any judicial system for that matter, legal sanctions are levied against those who commit excessively deviant acts. Stevenson asserts that in the Vietnam War, “Bad Paper Discharges” were distributed at a higher rate than in each of the two previous major conflicts. His analysis also found that during this period there were considerably more college-educated enlisted personnel than the historical average.¹⁴ Yet, these sanctions, a severe legal punishment for deviance, did not succeed in negating war crimes in Vietnam. Heckathorn would argue that this should come as no surprise due to the disproportionate time it takes for the for legal processes to occur compared to only “fractions of a second [that] may elapse between a faux pas and looks of disapproval.”¹⁵ Timeliness of sanctions seems to be a critical factor when injunctive and circumstantial descriptive norms conflict. The implication being that when de-

viating in favor of a descriptive norm, defectors and cooperators in a unit may consider the immediate sanctions from their primary group more salient than the military sanctions that come months later.

To summarize, primary groups in the military can collectively commit acts of extreme or unnecessary violence because of the strength of their solidarity, shared agreement with deviant circumstantial norms, and a weakening of external sanction relevance. However, this information cannot be effective if it is given without purpose. The U.S. military is an esteemed and elite institution dedicated to protecting the freedoms of U.S. citizens and confronting evil and oppression wherever it may hide. The vast majority of its members serve their country with dignity and respect. Yet, as terrible an endeavor war may be, there is no excuse for immoral or unjust behavior. Under the right conditions, and left unchecked, some participants are capable of committing acts that are undeniably evil in any culture. By understanding what these conditions are, some effort can be made to appreciate how group dynamics, the influence of norms, and the emergence of deviance can directly contribute to horrible, yet preventable, events. Abandonment of organizational values and rogue behavior does not happen overnight. Leaders must be in tune with the dynamics of their unit and the ramifications of neglecting signs of deviant behavior.

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Challenging the Status Quo in the Future Operating Environment

Addressing shortfalls in Marine Corps TacAir

by Maj Daniel Belet

If you were to turn your attention to the Combat Aircraft Loading Area at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma during the most recent Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) Course, you would find an interesting sight. A newly built concrete ramp, designed to accommodate the Marine Corps' emerging F-35 fleet during the WTI course, is instead filled with Air Force F-16 Vipers. In fact, if one were to casually count the number of aircraft belonging to each Service, you would find the majority share belonging to the Air Force. A strange sight, and this peculiar arrangement represents a concerning harbinger for the future operating environment of Marine Corps TacAir.

Force Design 2030, released several years ago, ushered in a radical shift in thinking, methodology, and force structure. This document represents a necessary step forward to transform the Marine Corps from its 1950s force design.¹ However, this evolutionary document fails to capture the dire situation of one area of the force. Marine Corps TacAir, too, has persisted on archaic force designs, tactical employment, and personnel and professional force structure. Without action, the current vector of TacAir employment will put us behind the very threat the *Commandant's Planning Guidance* calls us to prepare for and win against. The contents of *Force Design 2030* have caused a considerable ruckus amongst pundits, specifically with regards to the divestment of Marine Corps tanks, artillery,

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amphibious vehicles, infantry battalions, and the restructuring of fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft. These divestments, juxtaposed with the addition of emerging and stretch capabilities to increase future survivability and lethality in INDOPACOM, have missed the mark on TacAir. To fully realize the transformational change we have been directed to achieve, Marine Corps TacAir must address and correct deficiencies in how it addresses personnel and training.

Marine Corps TacAir squadrons mirror the design and methodology of a rifle company. A squadron is broken into maintenance divisions that fall under the maintenance department. These divisions replicate a typical ground component platoon structure. Though not perfectly analogous, rank, responsibility, and training are similar to a rifle platoon. What's more, life support and sustainment divisions in the form of admin, intel, operations, logistics, and communications are comparable in form and function as the support components of a rifle company and battalion. This structure, although convenient in form, is reducing material readiness and siphoning talent from highly skilled

maintenance occupational specialties. To point, extremely talented, second enlistment Marines are being plucked from squadrons to fill special duty assignments exactly when their experience and know-how are most beneficial to a squadron. It takes years to transform a young Marine from civilian to avionics technician. Only after several years of continuous attention to their craft do they represent an artisan in their trade. It is at this exact moment that corporals and sergeants leave. These Marines may, or may not, return to squadrons post-special-duty assignments, having not worked on aircraft for three or more years, and are now asked to both complete the myriad of requirements of a staff NCO and retrain and relearn their intricate tradecraft. In the past twelve months, I have seen five Sergeant Collateral Duty Quality Assurance Representatives, the highest qualification attainable in a squadron maintenance department, deny orders so they do not have to fill a special-duty assignment. These Marines want to keep doing what they love to do: fix and fly aircraft. So let them. This issue is a significant brain drain on our maintenance departments. Lost expertise leads to reduced mission-

capable aircraft, fewer flight hours, and less capable and lethal pilots.

To provide a comparison, we must look at our sibling branches that employ a more career-oriented professional cadre of maintenance sailors and airmen. The Navy, for example, has several—if not three or four—chief petty officers in each maintenance division. This allows enlisted staff to complete staff requirements while also ensuring younger maintainers are supervised and trained appropriately. The Air Force employs an even more robust skill-oriented design. When you walk into an Air Force maintenance division, you will find individuals who have worked on their respective aircraft for ten, fifteen, or even twenty years. There is no gripe that these maintainers have not seen and no fix that they cannot perform. The personnel structure differences can be clearly seen in the mission readiness rates of respective aircraft, and the Marine Corps falls short. Talent is equally distributed. However, if talent is not managed effectively, the mission suffers.

There is a parallel and equally degrading analogy in pilots. I heard a commander recently refer to their pilot cadre as platoon commanders. This identifier is a typical Marine Corps perspective, but one that clearly paints priorities. Piloting is a skill set that requires dedicated professionals, the likes of which peer nations are training, equipping, and employing. To call pilots platoon commanders subordinates the profession of aviation to that of being a platoon commander. In this methodology, pilots are platoon commanders with a hobby of piloting. This model will not work in the modern battlefield of near-peer parity. Russian and Chinese pilots are not concerning themselves with being platoon commanders, they are practicing, honing, and experimenting with employing their machines as professionals.

Recently, in response to an incorrect answer to a question about Sustaining the Transformation, a commander recently proposed that the operations department order Marine Corps doctrinal publications for pilots to read. These publications are excellent dogma and good foundational publications. How-



The Marine Corps does not have a school equivalent to the Navy's Fighter Weapons School.
(Photo by Sgt Victoria Decker.)

ever, a pilot's primary occupation is being a lethal aviator. Being a Marine always comes first, but pilots should be studying the intricacies of TOPGUN publications, Air Force Weapons School papers, and knowing their own series-specific employment tactics. To try to be proficient at both is a farce. The Marine Corps must choose whether it wants to have a cadre of professional aviators or a half-baked collection of hobbyists. The enemy has chosen, and their intent is clear. We must respond in kind.

Personnel is unquestionably the Marine Corps' greatest and most critical asset. However, it is not the only area in which Marine Corps TacAir is failing to meet the mark. Effective and relevant training is the only suitable substitute to combat. In this regard, the Marine Corps falls short in its approach and conduct of training. With no organic pilot-specific tactical training school of its own, the Marine Corps stands in the shadow of the Navy and Air Force's vaunted institutions. TOPGUN, the Navy's coveted and heralded fighter weapons school, unequivocally produces the best fighter pilots in the world. The school includes a rigorous twelve-to-thirteen-week curriculum replete with ground school classes taught by subject-matter experts whose sole job is to be an expert in one niche subject. Additionally, the flying phase includes fervent repetitions of dog fighting and aerial engagements, assur-

ing the highest level of proficiency. For perspective, the number of flight hours a typical TOPGUN student receives during their course is the same number of flight hours that a typical Marine Corps aviator receives in an entire year.

The Air Force conducts an even more intensive and comprehensive tactical aviator school in its bi-annual Weapons School. This six-month program is the longest and most in-depth TacAir school in the world. Like TOPGUN, students at the Air Force Weapons School conduct extensive force-on-force exercises to prepare for, and wargame against, the best fighter pilots in the world, validating or invalidating Air Force tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). Additionally, the academic rigor bests even TOPGUN, with students producing graduate-level and sometimes even doctoral-level dissertations on a range of tactical topics. These working papers are so in-depth, well researched, and impactful that many times the conclusions and products developed from their research influence and are the basis for future TTPs.

The Marine Corps has no such school. It does receive several seats to the Navy's TOPGUN school but too few to inculcate Marine fleet squadrons with the trained cadre of professionals seen in our sibling branches. WTI, the closest analogous the Marine Corps has to the two aforementioned schools, is a

process in integration, not a process in expertise. The school does an acceptable job in introducing advanced concepts but lacks the repetition or joint integration to make it on par with TOPGUN and the Air Force Weapons School. Even more than that, the staffing and cadre of WTI instructors are too small and too overworked to have the kind of influence needed to infuse the entire fleet with evolutionary TTPs called for in *Force Design 2030*.

This lack of a professional-level TacAir school represents a severe capability gap that must be closed. Seats at TOPGUN are good but to close this gap the Marine Corps would need a substantial increase in seat availability. Implementation of this concept would undoubtedly have additional ramifications on funding and support. Another option is to provide seats to Marine aviators at the Air Force Weapons School. The inclusion of an additional advanced school would broaden diversification and increase the number of pilots in fleet squadrons with this level of training. This unprecedented inclusion, however, would require a radical shift in priorities from Aviation Branch. A third option would be to stand up an organic school in the Marine Corps that would mimic TOPGUN in its depth and breadth. This seems highly unlikely based on the funding and cadre required to run such a robust school. The gap seen in graduate-level pilot training must be addressed, however, and can only be rectified through a commitment to producing aviators that are on par with our sibling branches.

The lack of a graduate-level aviation school is not the only area in which the Marine Corps is falling short in training. The Marine Corps has no organic large force exercise (LFE) that it hosts apart from WTI. The Navy and the Air Force both leverage LFEs extensively. For example, the Navy Carrier Strike Group deployment workups leverage LFEs in multiple venues over broad mission sets. Air Force flag-sponsored exercises are conducted all over the world throughout the year, renowned for their joint and combined flavor that includes squadrons from all over the world. These flag exercises augment and accompany

their Weapons School in validating, invalidating, and training aircrew in the modern operating environment. The Marine Corps does send squadrons to participate in flag exercises, but rarely. An aviator in some communities would be lucky to attend one or two flag exercises in a career, flying one to two sorties per exercise. This exposure influences a small group of pilots and does not advance Marine Corps TTPs. As such, when the Commandant says, “A much more comprehensive follow-on effort must be made to wargame and analyze all aspects of our force design conclusions,” Marine Corps TacAir has

This approach would require MAWs to fully invest in pre-WTI exercises or produce MAW-level exercises that are complex, dynamic, and in-depth ...

no way to do so.² To fully understand where we currently stand, we must test our mettle in environments that represent the modern operating environment. This approach would require MAWs to fully invest in pre-WTI exercises or produce MAW-level exercises that are complex, dynamic, and in-depth enough to truly challenge conventional tactics. Without the beneficial training these LFEs provide, Marine Corps TacAir is merely living a world dreamt of our own reality. It does not challenge the force in what we will face in the power struggle we have been tasked to prepare for.

A pivotal aspect of training is the support services provided to squadrons. To maximize training output, support services must serve to advance the combat capability of fleet squadrons. For example, when a squadron goes to Naval Air Station Key West, they see professional civilian support given to their Tactical Combat Training System, which is indispensable in execution and debriefing.

Similar organizations at Marine Corps Air Stations do not provide the same level of professional aid. In fact, some such services act to inhibit training. For example, in a recent phone conversation with a support agency that simulates surface-to-air threats, I received no less than ten “Nos” on why they could support. When you call support services like the Key West TCTS facility mentioned above, you receive “Yes’s” and “How can we help?” Another example is an experience I had with a Marine Corps Air Station combat camera. As a training officer, I was in search of printouts for our aircraft’s performance and maneuvering diagrams. These diagrams are basic to understanding combat capabilities. Similar printouts are ubiquitous in TOPGUN lectures and briefing rooms. When I contacted the base combat camera to see if they could print them, I received “No” after “No.” A parade of excuses accompanied their no’s: the air conditioning was broken, the laminator was down, or the plotter printer was not working. These small, yet impactful examples of a lack of aid to training represent a clear message to priorities in the Marine Corps. This level of support is suitable for a hobbyist contingency force. However, to confront the near-peer threats in *Force Design 2030*, this lethargy will prove deadly.

The Marine Corps has been given clear guidance: prepare for the future. The way we manage personnel and train them to fight today will not suffice in the future operating environment. If the Marine Corps does not address the deficiencies TacAir possesses in these regards, we will not win a great power struggle in 2030 and beyond. We must break the status quo and rededicate to the profession of aviation. If we do not, others will.

Notes

1. Gen David H. Berger, *Force Design 2030* (Washington, DC: March 2020).
2. Ibid.



Force Design and Operational-Level Logistics

Prepare the long game

by Col Kevin Chunn

“In the future operating environment, logistics will be the pacing function for the Marine Corps.”¹ At present, *Force Design 2030 (FD2030)* may not be ready to completely define future logistics requirements. The Marine Corps must reimagine how the Supporting Establishment will deliver Operational-Level Logistics (OPLOG) and begin gradual steps to divest duplicative command and control (C2) structure in order to reinvest permanent structure in OPLOG capability to support *FD2030* efforts. One approach is to return the alignment of Marine Corps Logistics Bases to Marine Corps Logistics Command (MARCORLOGCOM) and reinvest the harvested duplicative structure to support a Force Design-conceived MARCORLOGCOM Forward Command.

Marine Corps Operational-Level Logistics

OPLOG is broadly defined as the art of applying available military resources to operating forces in a theater or area of operations and facilitating the accomplishment of the Marine Forces’ commanders’ assigned missions in a military region, theater, or campaign to achieve national military objectives (Figure 1).² Service doctrine identifies MARCORLOGCOM as the integrator and synchronizer of strategic-level logistics to support tactical-level requirements for logistics beyond the capacity or capability of the MAGTF.³ When

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requested by the Service component commander, *MARCORLOGCOM assembles and deploys a Forward capability to provide operational-level sustainment, maintenance, distribution, and prepositioning support to Marine Forces, other Services, and supportive organizations.*⁴

In the absence of a traditional process to drive *FD2030*, the logistics community must pursue capabilities it knows will enable the future force. Invariably, Force Design outputs consistently identify the need for a standing, Service-level requirement for forward maintenance, supply, and storage above the capability and capacity of the MEF and Marine

Forces.⁵ Nevertheless, as Force Design methodically registers future OPLOG requirements, it becomes clear the status quo “ad hoc OPLOG capability” is not sustainable; however, if additional personnel structure is necessary, it must be purposefully harvested for reinvestment.

Strengthen Marine Corps Organic Industrial Base

“Modernizing our force structure requires a deliberate review of our installations and a deliberate plan to invest, divest, and reset.”⁶ The installation and logistics enterprise must collectively identify areas to consolidate

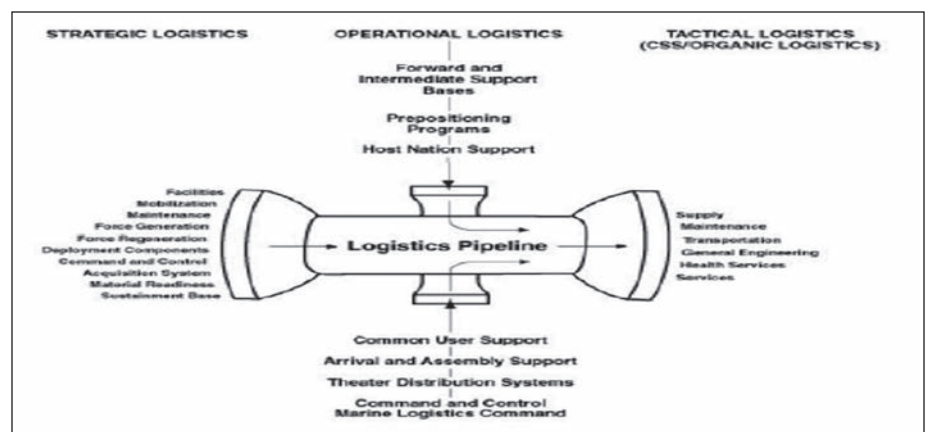


Figure 1. Logistics system. (Figure provided by author.)

duplicative structure while preserving the Marine Corps Organic Industrial Base (MCOIB) if Force Design requires a significant departure from the OPLOG status quo. The MCOIB resides within the Supporting Establishment—chiefly consisting of MARCORLOGCOM and three Service-Level Logistics Installations (SLLIs). Therefore, one area for consideration is realigning the SLLIs under MARCORLOGCOM. The Marine Corps has three SLLIs: Marine Corps Logistics Base (MCLB) Albany, GA; MCLB Barstow, CA; and Marine Corps Support Facility, Blount Island, FL. SLLIs exist for the sole purpose of providing support to MARCORLOGCOM. However, SLLIs are currently aligned under the command of Marine Corps Installations Command (MCICOM) and their respective regional commanders: MCLB-Albany to Marine Corps Installations East (MCIEAST) and MCLB-Barstow to Marine Corps Installations West (MCIWEST). One might consider this bifurcated and duplicative command alignment ripe for reassessing.

From 1990 until 2005, MARCORLOGCOM maintained unified C2 of both the Service-level logistics command and the associated SLLIs under a single commander. In 2005, MCLB Barstow, CA, realigned from MARCORLOGCOM to the newly formed MCIWEST because of the regionalization of Marine Corps Bases and Stations. Concurrently, MCLB Albany, GA, and Marine Corps Support Facility Blount Island, FL, realigned to MCIEAST. In 2011, MCICOM stood up in order to become the single activity responsible for all installation matters. However, exceptions to regionalization remain for Marine Forces Reserve and Training and Education Command (TECOM). (See Figure 2.)

Justification to support the reunification of MCOIB C2 is best supported by understanding why TECOM retains control of Service-Level Training Installations (SLTI). In the case of TECOM, MCICOM provides installation support to four SLTIs under the C2 of Commanding General (CG), TECOM. They include Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) San Diego,

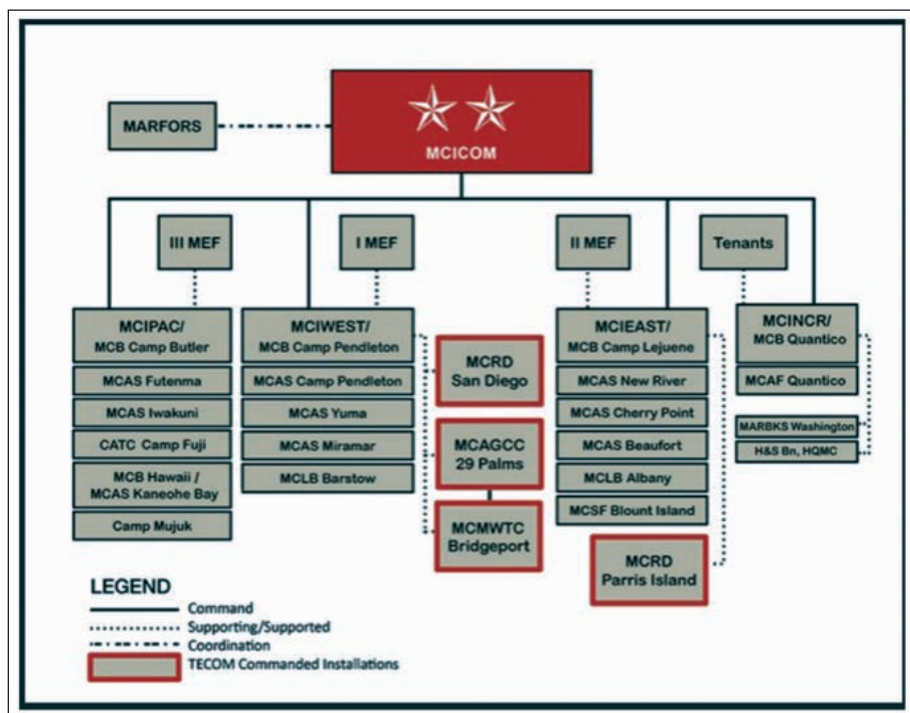


Figure 2. MCICOM regional structure. (Figure provided by author.)

CA; MCRD Parris Island, SC; Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command (MAGTFTC)/Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) Twentynine Palms, CA; and Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center (MCMWTC).

The installation and logistics enterprise must collectively identify areas to consolidate duplicative structure ...

relationship establishes TECOM as supported and MCICOM (MCIEAST/MCIWEST) as supporting.

The Marine Corps and the MCOIB would benefit if MARCORLOGCOM's command relationship with MCICOM mirrored the relationship between TECOM and MCICOM. TECOM's C2 of SLTIs aligns priorities to support Title X responsibilities for training forces. Parallel logic should apply to MARCORLOGCOM, the SL-

LI, and the Title X responsibility for equipping forces. Opportunity exists to create greater alignment of priorities, unity of command, and thus, focused purpose across the SLLIs and MCOIB by eliminating the dual chains of command for MCLB Albany, GA; MCLB Barstow, CA; Marine Corps Support Facility Blount Island, FL; and MARCORLOGCOM. Specifically, realignment would consolidate duplicative staff capabilities in the same geographic location; buy down MCOIB operational risk through assiduously prioritizing the procurement, maintenance, and service of critical Military Handling Equipment;⁷ and succinctly implement MCOIB prioritized facility investments to meet the Congressional mandate for modernization.⁸ Realigning MCLBs to be part of the Service-level C2 structure for equipping the force will efficiently deliver the needed capability at a more affordable cost and more effective use of resources.

Force Design Decision Space

In his planning guidance and subsequent Force Design decisions, the 38th CMC refocused the Marine Corps toward smaller and lighter, but more

capable, force packages. These “inside forces” will deploy in support of the naval/Joint Force against a peer competitor. The Marine Littoral Regiment will employ Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations tactics to fill gaps across the find, fix, target, track, engage, assess continuum to provide critical warfighting capability for employment in high-end fights, and support activities in the competition space. *FD2030* will refine requirements for globally deployable prepositioned force and sustainment packages to enable rapid force closure, deployment, employment, sustainment, and regeneration of Marine Littoral Regiments, crisis response force packages, expeditionary advanced bases, advanced naval bases (ANBs), and other naval expeditionary forces.

In addition to defining new capabilities, units, and employment methods, *FD2030* also identifies legacy capabilities and elements of the MAGTF for divestment. Similarly, Force Design and later CMC statements highlight the challenges faced by the legacy MARCORLOGCOM Forward (FWD) structure to meet the needs of the 2030 force. MARCORLOGCOM is comprised of three standing and one provisional subordinate commands: Blount Island Command, Marine Depot Maintenance Command, Marine Force Storage Command, and MARCORLOGCOM (FWD), respec-

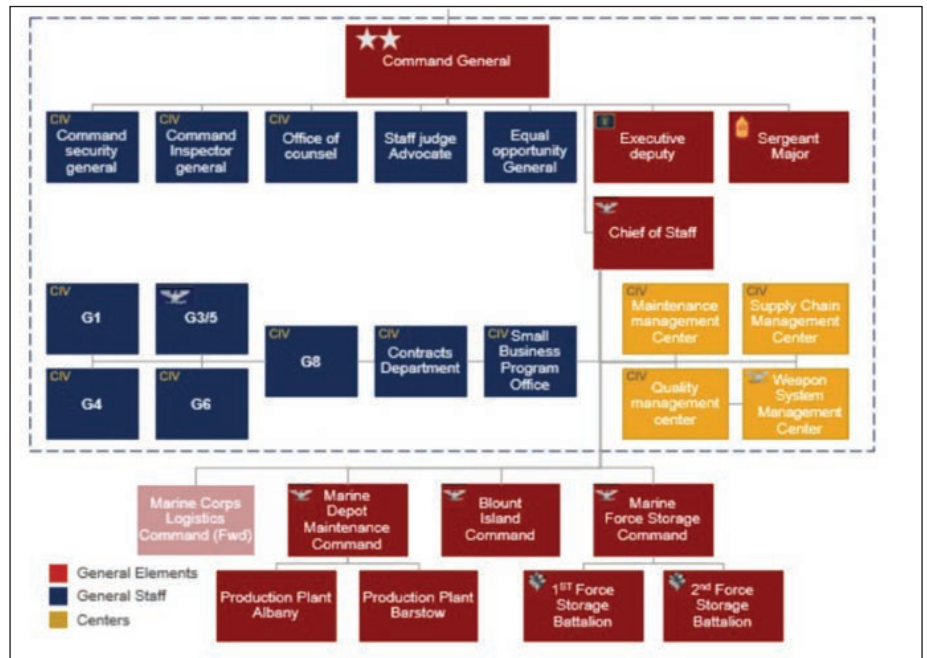


Figure 3. LOGCOM structure. (Figure provided by author.)

MARCORLOGCOM provides the core competencies of supply, maintenance, distribution, and prepositioning in order to deliver a range of materiel readiness (Figure 3). Yet, MARCORLOGCOM FWD has no Table of Organization or Table of Equipment, thus requiring every deployable rotation to be built and stripped “out of hide.”

Since MARCORLOGCOM FWD’s maiden deployment, the commander

model exposed the command and Service to unforeseen audit and accountability risks across the enterprise.

Constant displacement of commanders and Marines from their commands led to an accumulation of risk in audit readiness and accountability, thus jeopardizing the MCOIB enduring mission.⁹ Multiple Force Design integrated planning teams recommend increasing the Service-level OPLOG capability by permanently assigning a FWD deployed capability. Such a capability should be pre-established during competition and capable of sustaining a competitive advantage for formations inside the weapons engagement zone.¹⁰ This revised model will require the Supporting Establishment to rethink its structure, support concepts, maintenance and sustainment requirements, and overall approach to how it contributes to OPLOG in the *FD2030* environment.

Gradualism

The Supporting Establishment must embrace gradualism to posture for the Force Design transition without knowing all future requirements. Uncertainty is a pervasive trait of war, and it is a pervasive trait of *FD2030*.¹¹ One way to combat uncertainty is through the use of gradualism; taking small steps that will

Multiple Force Design integrated planning teams recommend increasing the Service-level OPLOG capability ...

tively. However, only Marine Depot Maintenance Command, Marine Force Storage Command, and Blount Island Command have permanently assigned O-6 Commanders. MARCORLOGCOM FWD, the primary synchronizer for deployed OPLOG, does not have a permanently assigned Commander.

Readiness Blind Spot

The legacy MARCORLOGCOM FWD model will require modification to meet *FD2030*’s sustained requirements. As the operational-level logistics solutions provider for the Marine Corps,

and staff of this operational-level logistics capability have been plucked from the existing MARCORLOGCOM personnel structure without compensation for the command’s enduring Equipment Life Cycle sustainment mission. Specifically, from January 2007 through June 2014, MARCORLOGCOM assembled and deployed fourteen separate MARCORLOGCOM FWD commands led by either a colonel or lieutenant colonel assigned to MARCORLOGCOM. Supporting the Service component commander’s OPLOG requirements without change to the status quo deployment

eventually result in reaching the goal (Figure 4).¹² By taking the salami slice approach of gradualism, the Supporting Establishment will meet the Force Design OPLOG challenge as a fait accompli. This cycle begins by putting forth a Win-Win theory about how we can grow the Service-OPLOG capability without degradation to MCOIB. Realigning the MCLB Albany and Barstow command structure under a single CG is the first step to flexible, agile, and resilient OPLOG support that will simultaneously result in strengthening the MCOIB and its contribution to OPLOG. First, restoring the alignment of MCLBs to MARCORLOGCOM is a pragmatic reformation—efficiently and holistically unifying investment efforts and fiscal priorities for critical infrastructure modernization for the common MCOIB. Second, realigning MCLB commanders to MARCORLOGCOM ensures two additional O-6 Commanders to the existing MARCORLOGCOM FWD rotation model, thus expanding dwell time. Subsequently, as *FD2030* requirements mature, MARCORLOGCOM can surgically consolidate and harvest command and staff savings across the MCOIB for reinvestment in a permanent, forward-positioned Service-level OPLOG capability.

The logistics community remains challenged to develop a concept of support without clear Force Design concepts. However, *MCDP 1-4, Competing*, endorses developing capability to enable what we know: use gradualism to combat uncertainty and seek a positive-sum win.¹³ The Installation and Logistics enterprise should consider the merits and challenges of right-sizing the MCOIB by taking the first step of returning the MCLB command authority to MARCORLOGCOM.

Conclusion

The Marine Corps Supporting Establishment must reimagine how the Service will deliver Operational-Level Logistics to support *FD2030* efforts and begin taking gradual steps, where possible, to meet future requirements. Force Design is not ready to completely define future OPLOG requirements, but there are enough data points to support

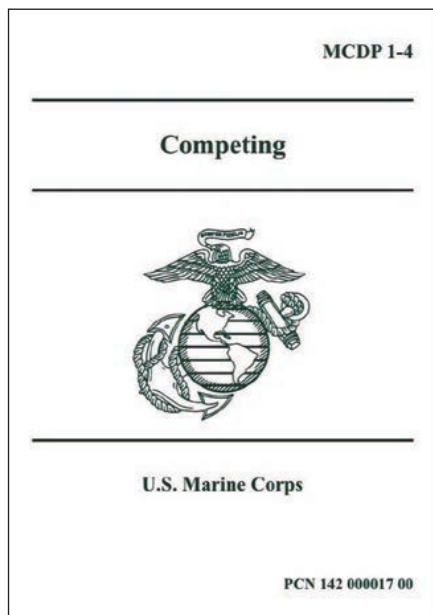


Figure 4. MCDP 1-4, Competing. (Figure provided by author.)

The logistics community remains challenged to develop a concept of support without clear Force Design concepts.

gradualism and set a positive-sum trajectory for Service-level OPLOG while preserving decision space.

The recommended opening move is to return the alignment of MCLBs to CG, MARCORLOGCOM in an effort to strengthen the MCOIB and set the condition to harvest duplicative structure. Gradualism supports maintaining and reinforcing Fight Tonight OPLOG capability during the Force Design transition while protecting end-game decision space. This allows for the preservation and fortification of an MCOIB capable of meeting Title X mandates and projecting a synchronized and coordinated OPLOG capability that is aligned with Force Design. Now is the time to review the current construct of SLLI command alignment.

Notes

1. Gen David H. Berger, *Sustaining the Force in the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: May 2019).
2. Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 4-0, Joint Logistics* (Washington, DC: 2019).
3. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCTP 3-40C Operational Level Logistics* (Washington, DC: 2018).
4. Ibid.
5. Headquarters Marine Corps, *Tentative Manual for Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations* (Washington, DC: 2021).
6. Gen David H. Berger, *38th Commandant's Planning Guidance* (Washington, DC: July 2019).
7. Marine Corps Logistics Command, *Commander's Organizational Risk Estimate* (Albany: December 2020).
8. U.S. Senate, *United States Senate Report, On the Readiness of the Marine Corps Organic Industrial Base* (Washington, DC: July 2019).
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13. Ibid.



Maritime Enabling Capabilities Command

Integrating the Naval Service's reserve components in support of the Joint Force

by Maj Thomas M. Dunaway Jr.

ADM David Dixon Porter, the grandfather and namesake of Marine Corps Medal of Honor recipient MajGen David Dixon Porter, in 1863 said, "A ship without Marines is like a garment without buttons." The degree of interaction and interoperability among the Navy and Marine Corps is again at the forefront of our current great power competition 159 years later. The Service chiefs have prioritized integration across the maritime force and moved toward opportunities that focus on the core competencies of the two Services. The ebb and flow of the supporting-supported roles between Services have reached a point where the fusion of skillsets developed in both the Navy and Marine Corps must be fully coherent. Naval integration through tandem versus redundant efforts requires both Services to examine operational roles with a clearly defined, standardized, and aligned mission set.

The creation of a Maritime Enabling Capabilities Command (MECC) would offer a clear way to establish a persistent naval presence and capture talent already in service, capitalizing on high-demand, low-density skillsets that underpin naval operational objectives. Specific to global all-domain fires, the creation of a MECC would capture an additional layer of crucial coordination from the total force of both Services through the integration of the Active and Reserve Component in support of Maritime Operations Centers (MOC). Maritime fires

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and effects doctrine at the operational level of war is a known gap requiring the integration of all-domain effects by both Services. By staffing the MECC with Active Component personnel during the steady state of competition with surge capacity via the Reserve Component, global forces would be better managed when conflicts arise.

Marines are trained in combined arms via the MAGTF concept early in our careers, whereas these unique experiences are only acquired through the circuitous, atypical career paths of naval reserve officers veering away from designated career milestones. A well-trained MECC could fill the Naval Service gap and add reserve capacity in support of the nine Echelon II and Echelon III MOCs and the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander (JFMCC). With a focus on kinetic and non-kinetic fires to achieve lethal and non-lethal effects, the MECC would add subject-matter expertise to support ill-trained and understaffed MOC fires cells. (Of note, joint doctrine defines fires as, "The use of weapons systems or other actions to create specific lethal or nonlethal effects on a target.")¹ Noticeably absent is the word *kinetic*,

which remains undefined in joint doctrine but is widely used throughout the joint operating forces.²

BGen John Kelliher, Deputy Commander, Marine Forces Command recently remarked, "Total Force integration of the naval services into the MOC weapons system provides the RC the opportunity to support the joint fight via the JFMCC. The MECC could standardize the support with a cadre of professional fires officers, cleared, trained, and administratively ready to aid Echelon II and Echelon III efforts."³ The need for robust and professionalized Navy/Marine Corps and Active/Reserve Component integration is particularly evident within the fires communities that often operate in silos within each Service and within the Services' full-time and part-time communities. As a result, MOC targeting processes for lethal and non-lethal fires are simultaneously planned but not coordinated via a standardized process and lack unity of effort to maximize combat power. A lack of synchronization is not optimal for analyzing targeting priorities and does not support the notion that "A nation's or navy's 'influence' can be judged by

how well it deploys its fleet across its global portfolio of interests⁴ in ongoing acts of deterrence to prevent wars, support a strategy of containment, and win.⁵

The Marine Corps has the unique opportunity to define service in support of the Joint Force to a degree not enjoyed since the post-World War II era. The current Force Design and campaign plans within the Marine Corps point to the year 2030 as the measure of full implementation and potential success. Utilizing existing personnel structure and meeting the commander's priorities, the MECC could stand up within a year. A variety of MOS backgrounds from the Navy side (131XX, 132XX, 181XX, 182XX, 183XX, 184XX, 187XX, and 2000P) coupled with a mix of (02XX, 03XX, 05XX, 08XX, 17XX, 72XX, and 75XX) Marines offers a tailorable source of augmentation with purpose-built capabilities for surge capacity to meet the Joint Force commander's intent and guarantee that "when needed, the right talent is readily available and accessible to compete and win in any conflict."⁶

Armed with an array of fires professionals, MOCs can be employed as interconnected weapons systems. Pairing well-rounded officers with a variety of MAGTF experience with career Navy Fires officers in MOCs captures resident fires knowledge and collectively joins the ethos of each Service. The pairing also provides a vessel for relaying Marine Corps capabilities and limitations to the JFMCC to ensure they nest with naval requirements. Doing so counters past tendencies where "the Navy and Marine Corps develop systems independently then retrofit integration in the finished product."⁷ As RDML Carols Sardiello, Director, N3, Joint and Fleet Operations, U.S. Fleet Forces Command recently stated:

The U.S. Fleet Forces Command in conjunction with MARFORC/FM-FLANT Maritime Fires and Effects Center (MFEC) establishes a standardized capability within the Maritime Operations Center to synchronize and integrate all-domain global maritime fires and effects. Naval integration of fires empowers Navy and Marine

Corps personnel serving side-by-side on a MOC staff to more effectively meet the global requirements of Joint Force Maritime and other Component Commanders. This future-looking pairing of personnel and capabilities will further operationalize the MOC as a weapons system and significantly enhance warfighting functions aligned to meet the challenge of today's strategic competition.⁸

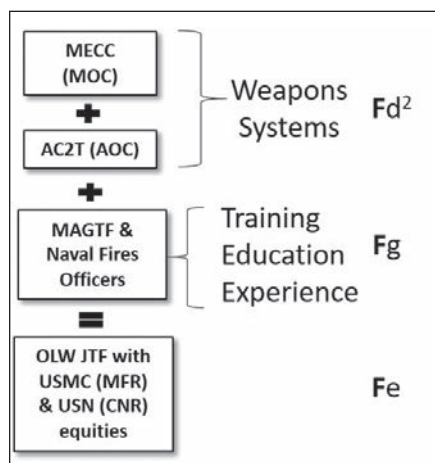


Figure 1. Structure that would ensure integration of fires across the Navy and Marine Corps team. (Figure provided by author.)

Creative thinking and emerging technology will enable fires in the future and delineate high-value targets across Service equities. Also, the development of individual targets should include holistic analyses to support a full spectrum of

lery, intelligence, cyber, special technical operations, space, information/influence operations, and naval surface warfare is clear; however, Naval Service units at the Echelon III and Echelon IV levels do not have the tools to integrate kinetic and non-kinetic fires. The same is true across the Blue-Green team at the operational level.⁹ While "it is hard to imagine that Mahan could have predicted the integration of space and unmanned systems into the nautical battle world,"¹⁰ the contested maritime spaces of the next generation fight require investment in people and informational systems with personnel trained and educated in fires where we "accept the short-term risk of exchanging staff members to achieve long-term success in building a blue/green organization."¹¹

The Marine Corps Reserve Component already provides approximately fifty percent of the Marine Corps precision fires capability, making Marine Forces Reserve (MFR) the natural fit for the MECC. A logical command relationship for the MECC would be under the MFR Force Headquarters Group. Commanded by a brigadier general, the Force Headquarters Group already commands other units unique to MFR such as Civil Affairs Groups, Advisor Companies, and Air-Naval Gunfire Liaison Companies, among others, along with MFR's Communications and Intelligence Support Battalions—all of which share skillsets employable in the MECC concept. An additional unit unique to MFR with

... the contested maritime spaces of the next generation fight require investment in people and informational systems with personnel trained and educated in fires ...

potential capabilities. Then, coupled with discouraging stove-piped planning, an edge in asymmetrical information could be expanded throughout the targeting process leveraging the speed of our decisions against those of our foes. The complementary nature of kinetic and non-kinetic fields like aviation, artil-

the capabilities to contribute to the joint fires fight but under a different MSC, 4th MAW, is the Aviation Command and Control Team. The Aviation Command and Control Team brings strike coordination and air liaison elements to the fight and consistently supports Air Operations Centers much the same

way the new Maritime Fires and Effects Center at U.S. Fleet Forces Command provides integrated all-domain fires and effects processes to achieve critical U.S. Naval Forces Northern Command and Marine Forces North objectives.¹²

The battlefield is changing with sea control, sea denial, littoral maneuver, and future naval forces designed, developed, generated, and employed with the ability to project distributed maritime operations around the globe. A generation of Marines enjoyed a measure of pre-ordained stand-off from enemy fires unlikely encountered in the next fight. The emergence of competitors capable of erasing previous advantages increases the need for synchronized fires across the Navy and Marine Corps enterprises. The MECC allows for a purpose-built structure to support the JFMCC and other joint operations. With a cadre of fires professionals employing MOCs as weapons systems, the JFMCC can coordinate fires across the Joint Force



Figure 2. Global all-domain fires and effects integration. (Figure provided by author.)

and create a specific lethal and non-lethal effect, “to share capabilities for the greater good.”¹³ As an extension of the fleets, MECC personnel ready for unit mobilization or individual activation, and follow-on integration, could deploy to any MOC across all fleets and add another element to the MOC weapons system toward deterrence and

in support of contingency operations. Additionally, “The push for greater Marine integration with the Navy under a JFMCC construct must continue, not just in the Pacific but across the globe”¹⁴ because the battlefield is changing with sea control/denial, littoral maneuver, and future naval forces designed, generated, and employed with the ability

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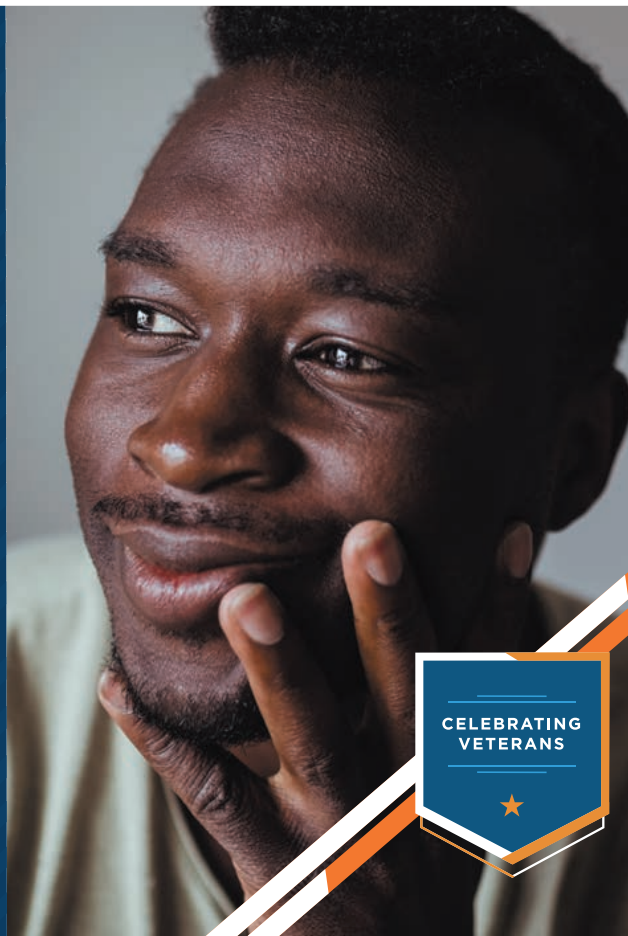


ARMY
MARINE CORPS
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to project distributed maritime operations.

British soldier and noted military historian B.H. Liddell Hart once said, “The only thing harder than getting a new idea into the military mind is to get an old one out.”¹⁵ The difference is in today’s terms the Naval Services are rapidly evolving to outpace peer and near-peer adversaries. Ongoing integration should not exist as a single step in our planning processes, rather the open exchange between Sea Services should be steeped in the respective service’s cultures.¹⁶ Though containing a variety of skillsets and backgrounds, the objective of the MECC would not be an effort to go a half-inch deep and two miles wide in the Maritime Domain. The MECC could integrate naval service reserve support to Echelon II and Echelon III MOCs with the in-depth and broad support of the JFMCCs, specifically regarding fires. Utilizing the MOC as a weapons system, Echelon II fires could be the enabler for warfighting tenets of initiative, speed, and tempo to orient on and dislodge any adversary threatening sea lines of communication or overall freedom of movement.

A professionalized fires career path in the Navy united with the variety of career fires backgrounds found in the Marine Corps and reinforced by the right mix of clearances, training, and fires exposure would create bona fide subject-matter experts at the operational level of war. These experienced officers could leverage understanding built during fleet tours to aid the MECC in avoiding the identity crisis of being everything to everyone, which falls in line with the current brand management and operational objectives of the Corps writ large. The interoperability desired begins with trust born during the initial training of naval officers and bred throughout careers at regular touchpoints. Integration begins at Pensacola, Quantico, and Annapolis and goes beyond familiarization tours to create a standardized path toward naval certification.¹⁷ Loss prevention of the perishable skills could be utilized in the RC to give the Services a better return on investment.

Myriad paths potentially leading to a qualified naval-fires officer emphasizes

the need for and underscores the fact that “a professional career track, focused on kill chain disruption from inception, affords the opportunity to gain and maintain knowledge and progression through various echelons of command while providing value to the naval service and joint operational planning.”¹⁸ An added benefit in the MECC is the inherent flexibility derived from a spectrum of occupational fields. Blazing the naval fires trail not only develops capabilities “in all domains supporting maritime campaigning and joint operations”¹⁹ it harbors low-density, high-demand skillsets that often erode or leave the service due to challenges inherent in MFR billet availability.

The MECC fills a much-needed gap at the operational level of war, provides a reserve naval-integration solution for talent management, and enhances the synchronization of fires and effects in support of the Joint Force commander’s objectives. Moreover, the MECC offers an innovative way to regain and maintain the competitive edge naval services enjoyed for years. The criticality of this advantage is imminent. Why does this unit not already exist?

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Integrating into the Naval Fight

Targeting ships as groundbased observers

by 1stLt Jonathan Dennler

Launched from small ships and fires-capable expeditionary advanced bases instead of aircraft carriers and island airfields of the past, long-range precision munitions have become the over-the-horizon strike capability of modern naval forces. Despite the range of these systems, it is still impossible to shoot what you cannot see. Traditional fire support assets overcame the observation limitations of indirect fire with the creation of the forward observer, and I argue that the groundbased human observer is still relevant to a future fight in the Indo-Pacific and can even train to target ships over the horizon.

The observer has not become obsolete as Marine Corps artillery shifts focus to over-the-horizon Anti-Ship Missiles; common thought conceptualizes National Strategic-Level assets as filling the observer role. No matter how well we

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talk up our advanced capabilities, one thing is very clear: that is a long and complicated kill chain. What happens when satellites or aircraft are either unavailable

The observer has not become obsolete ...

or shot out of the sky by a peer adversary armed with modern weapons? Those are not acceptable reasons for allowing an enemy fleet to transit unharmed

within range of our weapons systems. The human observer on the ground is not subject to such issues and therefore still has a role to play in the modern fight if trained to target ships both before and beyond the ocean's horizon.

There are three basic skills required to spot and target ships at sea: (1) identify and target ships before the horizon, (2) do the same for ships beyond the horizon, and (3) transmit targeting data while minimizing signature. None of these three requirements differs greatly in practice from what observers currently do. For signature minimization, I propose the use of a single transmission as the means of sending the anti-ship missile call for fire, with a requirement for the team to relocate after the transmission is complete. This will theoretically increase the survivability of teams by sending fewer traceable signals into the atmosphere and by making them harder to hit should an enemy ship manage to target their original position.

Targeting Ships Before the Ocean's Horizon

In theory, it is relatively straightforward for an observer on land to derive the location of a ship at sea. To establish a reference distance in relation to the target, the observer first calculates the distance to the horizon. This is because there are no other terrain features on the open ocean that can be used to "sanity



Inherent to strategic-level assets are long kill chains. Organic fires at the tactical level can alleviate that challenge. (Courtesy Photo, Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet.)

check” estimated target distances. If an observer on the beach calculates the horizon to be 5km away, then he knows that any target before the horizon line has to have a distance of less than five km. The Mil-Relation formula, Width of Object in meters (W) = Range in thousands (R) x Object Width in mils (m) and known enemy ship information help estimate the distance to the target. A compass shows the Observer-Target direction. The target altitude is sea level or zero meters. The observer has just derived target location data to an enemy ship and can now transmit it to a firing agency of a fire support coordination center.

To calculate the distance to the horizon, an observer needs to know how high above sea level his current vantage point is; this is his Height of Eye (H). A simple equation for distance to the horizon in kilometers and H in meters, $Horizon (km) = 3.57\sqrt{H}$, comes from Professor Andrew Young of San Diego State University’s Astronomy Department.¹ This is an easy way to find the distance to the horizon without considering atmospheric refraction and allows for a quick, basic reference line calculation.

Targeting Ships Beyond the Ocean’s Horizon

The process of targeting ships that appear beyond the visible horizon at ground level is similar to the before-horizon process. The observer will need a higher Height of Eye to see farther; this is done by moving to higher ground or with the use of UAS or simple quadcopter drones. If the observer is physically moving to higher ground, then he needs to calculate the horizon at his old H and new H’. If he is using video from a drone, the observer calculates the horizon at his current H as a reference and then calculates the extended horizon at the drone’s H’. Now the observer has the minimum and maximum target reference distances. If the observer sees a target from the higher H’ that is not visible from the lower H, then knows that his target distance must lie somewhere between those two numbers.

There are two possible scenarios regarding drone/UAS video. The first possibility is the use of a basic drone



Fusing emerging systems with existing capabilities will enhance the effectiveness and lethality of stand-in forces executing EABO. (Photo by Cpl Luke Cohen.)

with a simple camera attached. The observer flies the drone up to a specified height where it would record or take pictures of the horizon and then comes back down for the observer to review the footage. The second possibility is a more advanced drone or UAS platform with video downlink capability.

moved one full ship length during the sixty-second video, giving him enough information to calculate the ship’s speed. With polar coordinates and the target’s speed and direction in hand, he transmits an anti-ship call for fire and moves to a new position.

With polar coordinates and the target’s speed and direction in hand, he transmits an anti-ship call for fire and moves to a new position.

In the former scenario, the observer on the beach with a visible horizon of 5km flies a drone up to an H’ of 100 m, giving the drone a horizon of 36.7 km. After a minute of video recording, the observer flies his cheap quadcopter drone back down. Reviewing the footage, he spots an enemy aircraft carrier on the screen. The observer knows that the ship must be between 5km and 36.7km away since it is not visible from the beach. He estimates the number of mils that the ship takes up on screen and using known dimensions of enemy ships, he calculates the ship’s distance from shore with the Mil-Relation Formula. Additionally, he noticed that the ship

Implementation and Conclusion

The previous scenarios found the horizon line in the most straightforward way possible. Refraction and weather over the ocean mean that the actual visible horizon can differ greatly in practice.² However, meteorological information is nothing new to the artillery community. Proper utilization of meteorological information data for horizon calculations will result in an accurate horizon distance for groundbased observers. Additionally, these scenarios only used polar coordinates. Grid coordinates could theoretically come from plotting the arc on the horizon and then plotting the direction and distance to the

target if it fits on a map. Conversion to or from latitude and longitude on nautical charts could complicate the process for observers, but that is a learnable skill.

Effective implementation of this skillset into the Marine Corps requires: (1) finding and testing the most effective Horizon-Distance Equation, and (2) fire direction centers able to accept the targeting data for Remotely Operated Ground Unit Expeditionary fires vehicles with the Navy Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System. The Marine Corps would need to reach out to experts on the most accurate way to calculate horizon distance and incorporate meteorological information data. After that, the artillery community needs to come up with the most effective way to process this data for use with its new anti-ship missile batteries or even HIMARS rocket batteries. There is nothing stopping traditional cannon assets from firing at enemy ships that wander too close to shore, either, so long

as they are able to receive proper targeting data.

After that, all that remains is introducing the skillset to units in the fleet experimenting with Expeditionary Advanced Base Operation concepts. Doing

Doing so would shorten and simplify the kill chain ...

so would shorten and simplify the kill chain and push a powerful tool down to commanders on the ground in the spirit of maneuver warfare: the ability to target ships over the horizon without national-level assets. Armed with intent, the Marines manning expeditionary advanced bases could control maritime terrain over the horizon with solely organic

assets, lowering their signature, increasing their survivability, and making them overall more lethal.

Notes

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Expeditionary Religious Ministry

It's time to take the Marine Corps' Religious Ministry Teams littorally

by LCDR Jeremy Blythe, CHC, USN & Maj Robert Boudreau, USMCR

The Problem: Units in the Future Will Face Constrained Religious Ministry Resources

“Leaders must ensure Marines are well-led and cared for physically, emotionally and spiritually, both in and out of combat.”¹ These words, spoken by the 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen David Berger, drive home the importance for commanders and leaders at all levels to ask critical questions about how to ensure the total fitness of their Marines and sailors will continue to be a top priority within an increasingly distributed force as the Marine Corps implements the bold vision for future operations laid out in *Force Design 2030*. How will the vital resources now available on most military bases continue to be accessible to a force that will be systematically disaggregated into smaller teams, dispersed across a large area of operations, each expected to persist independently, with limited communications, minimal logistical support, and while seeking to maintain a reduced footprint within the weapons engagement zone (WEZ)? How will service members receive adequate access to medical services, religious ministries, substance abuse counseling, and a host of other services currently available for the total fitness and resilience of the Marine and sailor?

One of the most important of these services is the free exercise of religion among service members deployed and serving overseas, which the Navy Chaplain Corps is sworn to uphold as its primary mission. Provision of religious services is a commander's responsibility. He owns this responsibility as carried

“Forces conducting [Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO)] persist forward by moving with a high degree of flexibility within areas of key maritime terrain, presenting a light posture, sustaining themselves in an austere setting, and protecting themselves from detection and targeting. EABO diminish the reliance on fixed bases and easily targetable infrastructure.”

—Tentative Manual for Expeditionary Advanced Based Operations

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>>Maj Boudreau is a Reserve Judge Advocate with Marine Corps Forces Pacific. At the time of article submission, he was deployed as the Civil Affairs Detachment Commander for the 31st MEU.

out through the Command Religious Program, and its execution is entrusted to the Chaplains assigned to their command.² Military Chaplains, charged by oath and ordination to ensure the religious needs of their Marines and sailors, must find ways to minister to those at the front lines of military engagements. Military lore is filled with stories of chaplains, no less military heroes in their own right, who have held worship services in the heat of battle. But those stories often come from stories of full-scale frontal assaults, such as the Battle of the Bulge during World War II. This battle burned through the latter half of December and most of January with no “Christmas Truce,” yet there are ample

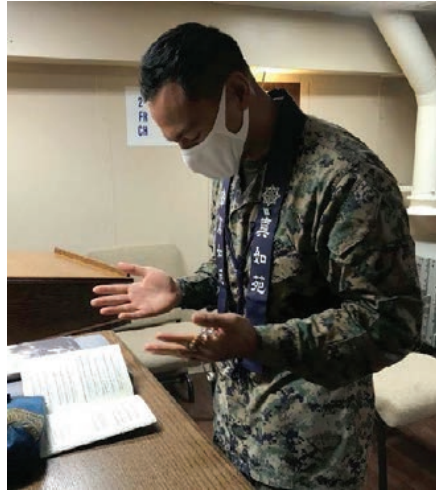
accounts from veterans who still managed to attend Chaplain-led Christmas services even as the battle raged, which greatly infused these warriors with hope and resolve to stay in the fight.

The Current Religious Ministry Program Structure

In a Marine Corps infantry battalion, the table of organization calls for one Navy chaplain and one Navy enlisted religious program specialist (RP) who provides logistical support and coordination for religious programming as well as force protection to the Chaplain during combat. Together, the Chaplain and RP make up the core of a command's religious ministry team (RMT). An RMT

may be proactive in going forward and making meaningful connections with their deployed force, but they will be limited in their ability to meet the needs of units operating across the WEZ under the highly distributed, Expeditionary Advanced Based Operations (EABO) model, where significant distances between units of action will often put them out of travel range. How should RMTs adapt to this model in order to adequately fulfill the Commandant's charge to ensure Marines are cared for "both in and out of combat?"

The Navy's Religious Lay-Leader program (RLLP) holds the key for commanders and their Chaplains to expand their reach in providing religious services to forward-deployed service members. As mentioned above, a Chaplain and RP make up the core of an RMT, but in cases where a Chaplain is unavailable, or where Religious Needs Assessments (RNA)³ have identified a faith group that exists within the command, which is different from the Chaplain's own faith, the RLLP allows for a volunteer from that faith to come forward and seek eligibility to meet that religious need.⁴ The Navy's *Lay Leader Handbook* provides for the appointment of all Marines and sailors to serve as lay leaders to represent their faith group in this capacity once they have met all of the requirements for command appointment.⁵ The *Handbook* provides guidance on the traits someone should possess before being considered for this position, counseling that "[t]he appointments should be based on volunteerism, high moral character, motivation, religious interest, and with the respective religious organization's (RO) authorization that the lay leader is qualified to deliver religious services."⁶ Once it is clear that a service member embodies these traits, the process for becoming a certified lay leader is fairly simple. First, they are given a standardized interview by the command chaplain or, if there is no chaplain, the immediate superior in command chaplain. Second, their chain of command gives approval or disapproval. Third, the prospective lay leader's religious organization must officially authorize them to serve as a lay leader. This authorization usually comes in the form of a letter of recommenda-



Capt Litthideth Phansiri, Buddhist Lay Leader for 31st MEU, delivers a traditional chant before service aboard USS America.
(Photo provided by author.)

tion. After the Chaplain has confirmed the appropriateness of the endorsement to conduct religious services, the chaplain or RP will provide RLLP Command Religious Program training with the candidate, which consists of four lessons on the responsibilities and limita-

The Navy's Religious Lay-Leader program (RLLP) holds the key for commanders and their Chaplains to expand their reach ...

tions of lay leader service. Finally, upon successful completion of the training, the chaplain will route a recommendation to the commander for a letter of appointment.⁷

This appointment allows the lay leader to represent their faith by leading services and providing other opportunities for fellow members of their faith to grow spiritually. The appointment is also time-specific, usually during a deployment or operational period when other options for worship are harder to come by and is not to exceed a year.⁸ This process for becoming a lay leader,

then, must be repeated each time a service member moves to a new command under the current requirements. With each move, a lay leader can learn the religious needs of the command by inquiring about RNAs, which are kept by the command's RMT. Then, if there is no available Chaplain endorsed by their particular religion, they can consider seeking an RLLP re-appointment.

Limitations to the RMT may lead to Ministry Shortfalls

Lay leader appointments are best accomplished during a pre-deployment workup cycle. However, given the new environment envisioned in *Force Design 2030*, deploying units often may not have information as to where their deployments will lead or how they may be tasked to conduct EABO missions or otherwise be dispersed throughout an area of operations. As a result, one of the predicted shortfalls under this model is that RMTs preparing for deployment may not have access to the mobility and logistics needed to conduct adequate battle force circulation to provide religious services to all of the small units being ordered to execute distributed operations.

Gratefully, lay leaders, who are organic to the command, can close the gap in this shortfall. However, a second shortfall exists in the RLLP because, while it is unlikely that previously appointed lay leaders will become *unqualified* to serve with their commands, their ability to serve will lapse after the standard one-year appointment limitation or based on the likelihood that they could be moved under the authority of new leadership.

It stands to reason that most previously appointed lay leaders would embrace the opportunity to serve in the distributed environment inherent in the EABO setting, but in this new battlespace, it will be less likely that they will have access to an embedded RMT. Also, experience shows that lay leaders often do not seek an appointment with every new command, even though their qualifications likely remain the same. The process of seeking re-appointment as a lay leader at every command undoubtedly dissuades some otherwise available service members from continuing to serve,

due to time constraints, unfamiliarity with new leadership, and inability to see where gaps in meeting religious needs may arise in a deployed environment.

Recommended Improvements to the RLLP

To address this shortfall, the Department of the Navy needs to consider two changes to the RLLP: first, previously appointed lay leaders should be permitted to serve with any new command, provided they give updated endorsements on a regular (perhaps annual, bi-, or triennial) basis; and second, the Chaplain Corps should maintain a means of tracking lay leaders' appointments across the force, so that qualified lay leaders can easily be identified to provide services to units dispersed throughout the WEZ.

The first change, allowing streamlined recertification to facilitate continued RLLP service, could follow the model that the Marine Corps uses to maintain judge advocates' certification under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. A Marine Administrative Message is published annually, directing that all judge advocates provide proof of bar membership and good standing to Headquarters Marines Corps Judge Advocate Division.⁹ Judge advocates obtain appropriate paperwork from their respective state bars and send it to an organizational email address, where the receipt is acknowledged and appropriate follow-up actions, if any, are taken. Likewise, lay leaders could periodically (perhaps every three years, following a typical rotation to a new assignment) obtain updated endorsements from their religious organizations and submit them to the Chaplain Corps. As an alternative, periodic recertification could be required within a specific time window after checking in to a new unit, such as within 90 days of joining the new command.

The second, and more robust change, is to create and maintain a database that provides (1) lay leaders' names and rank; (2) their religious organization, along with the religious services that their particular institution allows them to provide; and (3) their current duty station. This database could be made available to RMTs serving across the FMF so that they could easily pinpoint who is available to provide religious services within



Chaplain Blythe and RPSN Ezekiel Fernandez prepare to insert with the 31st MEU's Forward CE during a certification exercise. (Photo by author.)



Capt Danyiel Brustmeyer, Jewish Lay Leader for 31st MEU, blows the shofar aboard USS America during the Jewish month of Elul. 3. (Photo provided by author.)

their commands' distributed forces. RMTs, now armed with a magazine of lay leaders ready to serve, will be able to facilitate religious ministry over a much broader area of operations and empower lay leaders to provide religious ministry at forward, remote outposts where physical access to an RMT is severely limited. Currently, when a lay leader's appointment expires and they move to a new command, it is often the case that the Chaplain Corps' awareness of that person as a valuable, potential resource becomes lost; however, because this

database would make information on lay leaders available until they end their service, it would generate a pool of likely candidates for an RMT to draw from that is not yet at their fingertips.

In a typical scenario, a battalion chaplain would be called to a staff planning meeting where the staff learns that two platoons will execute EABO missions and be inserted at two separate locations where the RMT cannot schedule visits. Thinking proactively, chaplains would refer to RNAs and ask, "What are the religious needs of Marines in those platoons?" Once identified, he would then ask, "Who within the battalion can serve those needs? The RNAs may indicate that a particular Marine within this faith group desires to serve as a lay leader, but assuming there is not enough time to get a lay leader appointed in this short-fused situation, a simple database query could provide the force multiplication needed at that moment by pinpointing a lay leader that is already trained and available to those Marines. "Great! Sgt Jones with Bravo Company 1st Platoon can provide a service for the upcoming Easter season, but 2nd Platoon doesn't have any lay leaders right now." Now, the chaplain has a decision point with several possible courses of action: should the battalion send him forward as an augment? Should the command seek out a new lay leader and try

to scramble through the command appointment process? Or should chaplains recommend that the battalion pull a lay leader from 3d Platoon to send to the field with 2d Platoon?

Conclusion

EABO across the WEZ will inevitably disrupt not only the RMT's ability to ensure the free exercise of religion among the Marines and sailors entrusted to their care but may also curtail a host of other services currently accessible. Nevertheless, these disruptions can be greatly alleviated through streamlining the administrative process to ensure lay leaders are available at the greatest point of impact to be *where it matters, when it matters, and with what matters*. As the Marine Corps adapts to meet *Force Design 2030*, the faithful efforts of our Chaplain Corps should likewise adapt to build increased flexibility and reach into the RMT. As Marines persist at forward operating bases, their spiritual needs can

still be met through the RLLP as a valuable extension of our increasingly limited RMTs across the WEZ.

Notes

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3. The Religious Needs Assessment is a standard assessment tool used by the RMT for all new check-ins to the command in order to assess the religious needs and sincerely held beliefs of all service members attached.
4. The *MILPERSMAN 1730-010/MARCORMAN* gives this warrant for lay leaders and gives parameters for the Religious Lay Leader Program.

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Neglecting the Spiritual and Mental Fitness of the Force

What is the damage?

by Maj Shawn F. Carian

The Marine Corps is known for its history, traditions, and camaraderie. Marines are a different breed. We fight hard and play harder, which makes us unique. Marines are known for their physical fitness and legendary performance on battlefields throughout history. There is more to fitness than simply physical fitness. The Marine Corps breaks fitness into the following categories: physical, mental, spiritual, and social fitness. Each element is essential to a Marine's fitness, but we will focus specifically on the spiritual and mental aspects. Spiritual and mental fitness are essential elements to a Marine's overall fitness and are even more critical to our force than physical fitness. The famous collegiate basketball coach Bobby Knight once said, "Mental toughness is to physical as four is to one." Spiritual and mental fitness are imperative to our Marine Corps and readiness for combat. With the onset of COVID, our organizational leadership unevenly applied restrictions to Marines' and other military members' spiritual and mental fitness.

One analogy that has been used to represent the damage we have been inflicting on ourselves is the spiritual and mental cup. We all begin with a cup full of our determination, drive, and desire. The contents of the cup are what we use to conduct day-to-day operations, with different endeavors requiring different amounts of effort and will. To meet the different demands of our daily duties, we pour from our cup into a late-

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night planning meeting, an extended separation from our family because of an Integrated Training Exercise or Unit Deployment Program, or the stress that comes with raising our young Marines into the future leaders they need to be to meet *Force Design 2030* demands. We can only fill our cup through activities that increase the morale of ourselves and our units. A small gathering will help

to fill the cup, but it will not fill it as much as mess night or a Marine Corps Ball. When our cup runs dry because we are unable or not allowed to refill it, we are the most susceptible to disparaging thoughts, loss of faith, or unspeakable actions against ourselves or others.

The *Spiritual Fitness Leaders Guide* for Marines defines spiritual fitness as "the ability to adhere to beliefs, principles, and values needed to persevere and prevail." Many new Marines build their beliefs, principles, and values through their entry-level training and education. A large part of our desired outcome of entry-level training is providing the Marine with a "new" Marine



Grieving loss. (Photo by LCpl Ryan B. Busse.)

Corps-centered values system. There are Marines who join that have established beliefs that they retain throughout their career, but we also strive for a common baseline exemplified through our motto of *Honor, Courage, and Commitment*. By instilling these values and neglecting to allow Marines to see the fruits of their work—through socialization and celebration of their achievements—we fail to provide Marines with the necessary tools to persevere and prevail throughout COVID.

The Marine Fitness portal has a “Total Fitness Self Check Tool,” which allows a Marine to grade themselves across physical, mental, spiritual, and social fitness.¹ I have yet to see this tool utilized throughout the force. Now would be an excellent time to use the tool. Mental fitness consists of components regarding the Marine’s emotional state and value to the unit and whether the Marine knows where to get help when needed.² This tool should not be used in isolation nor extremis but should be part of an engaged approach and part of normal mentorship or counseling. The most memorable and notable impact that leaders can have in getting to know their Marines and understanding how they operate is to build sweat equity. We as leaders must seek every opportunity to work alongside our Marines and engage in candid conversations while sharing the burden of whatever task is at hand. You can pretend to care, but you cannot pretend to be there. The Marine Total Fitness Check Tool is an excellent aid but cannot be viewed as the solution, only as part of the larger equation to address our Marine’s overall fitness. One of the most rewarding aspects of becoming a Marine is sharing the accomplishment with your family and friends. New Marines are not getting that opportunity or emotional boost like they did in the past.

COVID created new difficulties and challenges for our Corps and the military. The suicide rates last year were 29.6 per 100,000; thus far, in 2021, we have a staggering number of 31.6 per 100,000.³ The numbers reflect a 25-person increase since pre-COVID. We have lost 75 active-duty service members out of 1.347 million; 2,272 service members have been hospitalized from COVID.⁴

As visible from the numbers, the unfortunate truth is COVID presents a minimal risk to our force (0.17 percent, not even 1 percent hospitalization), whereas suicides presented a significant concern for over a decade and continue to do so. Mental health issues afflict many across the force. Isolation, combined with limiting unit functions, does not promote better mental health but further isolates everyone, specifically impacting those who should not be isolated.

Currently, Marines enter our Marine Corps without the same welcome to our Corps as in the past. Younger Marines go to boot camp, Marine Combat Training/School of Infantry, and Military Occupational Specialty School before ever having the opportunity to take leave. In some cases, these new Marines cannot leave base on liberty through all entry-level training. Taking leave and liberty may sound trivial; however, leave affords the individual Marine the opportunity to show off what they have accomplished and share that accomplishment with family and friends. We argue that this is an integral piece of sustaining the transformation, receiving positive feedback and further solidifying pride in service and the Marine Corps. Entry-level Marines will now have nearly two years in the Marine Corps without the opportunity of experiencing a Marine Corps Birthday celebration. Understanding the mental and emotional strain these Marines endure for six months (or more) before they have an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on their accomplishments which provides crucial insight into the importance of balancing spiritual and mental fitness.

Not only are entry-level Marines suffering during these periods, but the incongruent and sometimes conflicting decisions on what activities are allowed and what activities are not allowed affect life-long Marines as well. Retirees or Marines separating from active duty are leaving our Corps without the customary and well-earned honors and festivities. These Marines lived and sacrificed as Marines, for one enlistment or decades, are now separating and not able to enjoy a Marine Corps Ball in their final years. Some Marines have had to scale down retirement celebrations, which

serve to recognize the Marine and their family. History dictates Gen Lejeune would not have accepted the antics of today.

All these challenges lead to mental and emotional implications that likely will not surface in the near term but will come back to haunt us—through mental conditions or suicides. Future studies and research will determine the emotional and psychological toll COVID has had on the force. Although we do not have the data now, reason indicates the correlation between the military COVID environment and suicides. The data mentioned above, and overall appearances, suggest the military has sacrificed our forces’ mental and spiritual health at the altar of political optics, and our future generations of Marines and service members continue to suffer the consequences. Spiritual and mental fitness directly contribute to the force’s social and physical fitness. The military needs to maintain independence from political issues. We also need to ensure we do not present an optic of fear from a virus that our demographic should not fear.

Notes

1. Staff, “Marine Total Fitness Check Tool,” *Marines*, 2016, <https://www.fitness.marines.mil/Portals/211/Resiliency%20Videos/Total%20Fitness%20Self%20Check%20V1%20Automatic%20Scores.pdf?ver=2Y1rBoN2oz9q0R7nk0iXDw%3D%3D>.

2. Ibid.

3. Caitlin Kenney, “Active-Duty Suicide Rate Hit Record High in 2020,” *Defense One*, October 6, 2021, <https://www.defenseone.com/threats/2021/10/active-duty-suicide-rate-hits-record-high/185882>.

4. Department of Defense, “Coronavirus: DOD Response,” *Department of Defense*, n.d., <https://www.defense.gov/Spotlights/Coronavirus-DOD-Response>.



Spiritual Readiness in the Age of EABO

Closing the gap between the Commandant's intent for spiritual fitness and the commander's implementation at the small unit level

by CDR David A. Daigle, CHC, USN, LCDR William M. Schweitzer, CHC, USN, & Maj Marianne C. Sparklin, USMC

***"America's military has no preordained right to victory on the battlefield."*¹**

—Secretary of Defense James Mattis

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The Marine Corps is America's "force-in-readiness," manned, trained, and equipped "to respond quickly to a broad variety of crises and conflicts across the full range of military operations anywhere in the world."² As such, the Corps has long recognized spiritual fitness to be a critical component of developing the warrior ethos.³ Indeed, Gen John A. Lejeune articulated this point nearly one hundred years ago with his famous statement, "there is no substitute for the spiritual in war."⁴ Sensing a progressive decline in the priority given to spiritual fitness in more recent times, the 37th CMC, Gen Robert A. Neller, tasked then-Chaplain of the Marine Corps RADM Brent Scott to revitalize Gen Lejeune's vision through a spiritual fitness initiative.⁵ Since then, this initiative has begun to take root. The current CMC, Gen David H. Berger, joined his predecessor in authoring an ALMAR reaffirming the significance of spiritual fitness for force readiness and effectiveness. At the institutional level, this affirmation has resulted in the

spiritual being formally incorporated into the framework of total fitness under the aegis of the Marine Corps Human Performance Branch.⁶ These developments make perfect sense not only in general terms of the Corps' historical trajectory but especially in light of Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations. Gen Berger's concept of Marines operating in small units dispersed throughout the battlespace demands a force that is not only physically and mentally fit, but also spiritually ready to stay in the fight in the face of prolonged adversity in isolated environments. The problem-set is, in this way, akin to that of special operations forces formations, and their collective experience over the past two decades only underscores the need to attend to the spiritual.

Despite all these recent developments, however, there remains a considerable gap between the CMC's clear grasp of the importance of the spiritual component in force readiness and what actually happens at the typical small unit level.⁷ The purpose of this article is to highlight and analyze this gap. Although specific

recommendations are beyond the scope here—this article is not intended to be a how-to guide—we are primarily focused on sketching out a conceptual framework that could be used to close it. To do so, we begin with our analysis of the problem, considering lessons learned from a parallel example (i.e., MCMAP), and conclude by exploring what it might look like to apply these concepts to spiritual fitness to optimize force readiness to achieve the commander's intent.

Problem Analysis

With the emergence of Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations as the Marine Corps' guiding principle, we begin with a simple, yet significant point: spiritual readiness will be more, not less, vital for the Marine Corps in the years ahead. The future operating environment will be characterized by uncertainty and global competition with peers or near-peers across the spectrum of warfare.⁸ Accordingly, Gen Berger released his *Commandant's Planning Guidance (CPG)* in 2019 for the Marine Corps to ready itself to meet this

“While the importance of physical, mental, and social fitness are more recognizable, spiritual fitness is just as critical, and specifically addresses my priority to build character and instill core values in every Marine and Sailor.”⁹

—Gen David A. Berger

challenge.¹⁰ Five priority focus areas dominate his narrative and provide a framework from which Marines can provide measurable outcomes in the future fight in any clime and place.¹¹ Of these five pillars, Gen Berger mentions that command and leadership remain foundational elements of ensuring mission success across the spectrum of conflict and that leaders must care for Marines physically, emotionally, and spiritually, both in and out of combat.¹² Whereas caring for Marines’ physical and emotional well-being is already ingrained in leadership curricula throughout the professional military education (PME) spectrum, the spiritual component remains elusive for most Marine Corps leaders. As the Marine Corps modernizes and transforms itself to fight the wars of the future, spiritual leadership and resiliency will become even more imperative throughout all levels of the Marine Corps.

Leaders at the highest echelons clearly understand the significance of spiritual fitness to force readiness. Gen Neller points out the importance of spiritual fitness in *ALMAR 033/16*, stating that

[r]esearch indicates that spiritual fitness plays a key role in resiliency, in our ability to grow, develop, recover, heal, and adapt. Regardless of individual philosophy or beliefs, spiritual well-being makes us better warriors and people of character capable of making good choices on and off duty.¹³

Four years later, Gen Berger released

ALMAR 027/20, titled “Resiliency and Spiritual Fitness.”¹⁴ In his message, he discussed how spiritual fitness is at the core of individual character and resiliency and indicated how this component of total fitness aligns with his *CPG*. Moreover, he urged leaders to serve as models to their subordinates while “championing” efforts to instill spiritual fitness “in order to advance character development across the Marine Corps and in support of [his] *CPG*.”¹⁵ The intent of both the 37th and 38th CMCs is clear: Marines and sailors must optimize their spiritual fitness if they are to increase readiness by building and maintaining “the toughness and resiliency necessary to adapt to, overcome, and recover from every situation Marines and sailors face in their careers.”¹⁶ However, what is less clear is how leaders *champion* spiritual fitness when they themselves have not been

Therefore, it is critically imperative that Marine leaders be able to instill resilience in Marines at every rank to improve warfighting capability

...

deliberately trained to do so. Spiritual fitness is not currently integrated in any systematic or thoroughgoing way into the curricula of officer and enlisted PME schools. It is not an element by which new Marines are evaluated at Officers Candidate School, The Basic School, or the recruit depots. Not surprisingly, there is a significant gap between the CMC’s intent regarding spiritual fitness and execution at the small-unit level.

Gen Berger laid out a bold new vision for the Corps in his *CGP*.¹⁷ Focusing on expeditionary naval warfare, he stresses the need for a proficient and resilient force, dispersed into small units operating within the range of precision enemy fire across archipelagos in a contested littoral environment.¹⁸ *Force Design*

2030 edits force structure to support a more agile and flexible force designed to operate in contested spaces. Shifts in rank structures, MOS composition, and mission essential task lists of traditional Marine Corps formations and echelons speak to how the Marine Corps is adapting to the required changes needed to operate and remain resilient in these developing complex environments. For example, staff non-commissioned officers will replace non-commissioned officers as the squad leaders of the traditional infantry squad, while 21st-century foraging classes and practicums are becoming part of the core curriculum at The Basic School. These changes, among many others currently in play, represent the CMC’s mandate to increase agility, maneuverability, and lethality while remaining resilient to adversarial actions across all warfighting domains.

Resiliency, therefore, is not merely a matter of hardening networks and enhancing weapon systems to defend against kinetic or cyberattacks. Rather, resiliency must be present at every level and in every human warfighting machine to be able to rebound from blows that impact the human spirit. Without resiliency in the austere, isolated, and dispersed environments envisioned by the CMC, Marines and sailors may easily fall victim to things that degrade and erode the character and combat effectiveness of the individual, as well as the fighting ability of the unit as a whole. Therefore, it is critically imperative that Marine leaders be able to instill resilience in Marines at every rank to improve warfighting capability on present and future battlefields. Just as the Marine Corps prepares its most junior officers and junior NCOs to ensure their Marines and sailors are physically and emotionally fit to accomplish the mission, so too must the Marine Corps prepare their most junior leaders to be comfortable addressing and championing spiritual fitness among their peers and the Marines and sailors in their charge. To succeed and win battles in the future, the Marine Corps must continue setting up leaders for success at the small-unit level in order to prepare the Marines and sailors to be resilient and thus spiritually ready and fit for the fight. After all, *America*

*has no preordained right to succeed on the battlefield.*¹⁹

This is the point, however, where we encounter a disconnect. Although there is no large-scale, peer-reviewed study to draw conclusions from, consistent observations from the Fleet suggest that the mandate to generate a spiritually fit and ready force is not being met at the small-unit level. An informal survey of a few dozen battalion and squadron commanders suggests that the typical unit commander is not aware of the CMC's ALMARs and, more importantly, is not yet the champion of spiritual fitness that Gen Berger envisioned. Few are the Marines that are fully cognizant and comfortable with the concepts espoused by the CMCs, and fewer still have incorporated the content of their ALMARs into the daily life of their units. For instance, even when a commander was intimately familiar with all the relevant documents and had completely embraced them, spiritual fitness had never explicitly been mentioned as a discussion topic at any of this commander's meetings with subordinate leaders. Likewise, although the subject is given some amount of formal instruction time in PME schools from the Lance Corporal's Seminar on up, it disappears in the day-to-day life of the average FMF unit because of a myriad of "higher priority" tasks and demands.

It is not hard to imagine why this disconnect might exist. There are at least two identifiable problems. The first is the hard reality of competing priorities. In the contemporary DOD universe filled with an innumerable and ever-growing list of policies and programs, all of which are formally tracked, inspected, and reported on, something has to give. Units often struggle to complete the long list of required annual training events in addition to completing their basic mission. In other words, there is simply not enough bandwidth left, and the nice-to-haves of being able to focus on spiritual fitness give way to the mandatory reporting items. With a thousand administrative tasks, training and equipment readiness, and concerns over force preservation, it is not surprising that commanders are less than ideally focused at the small-unit level on the spiritual fitness of their Ma-

lines, let alone fitting in specific training to close the gap between the CMC's intent and small-unit reality.

The other problem is that the subject matter is inherently challenging. However real are its effects upon Marines and their units, the spiritual element is essentially intangible. It is fairly obvious when a Marine is *physically* unfit

... there is simply not enough bandwidth left, and the nice-to-haves of being able to focus on spiritual fitness give way to the mandatory reporting items.

to fight battles but much less so when he is *spiritually* unfit. As well, the subject of spiritual fitness is wrapped up in the constitutional freedom of religion and any discussion of it can become a matter of undue legal concern regarding the Establishment Clause.²⁰ As a result, many commanders simply shy away from speaking about spiritual fitness for fear of offending someone. Can a commander, for instance, point to his own example of faithful church attendance and daily devotions in the Bible as an example of spiritual fitness? The answer happens to be yes, but hesitancy on such matters remains, nevertheless. Finally, there is also some confusion regarding the relative roles of the chaplain and the commander in this domain. This uncertainty was addressed in the *2016 ALMAR* where spiritual fitness was formally identified as the commander's responsibility, with support from chaplains. Indeed, longstanding policies make clear that even a specifically religious entity such as the Religious Ministry Program is ultimately the responsibility of the unit commander; however, much of the day-to-day supervision and delivery of religious ministry is delegated to the chaplain.²¹

“MCMAP is a synergy of mental, character, and physical disciplines with application across the full spectrum of violence. In concert with proven Marine Corps leadership, rigorous training in these three disciplines enhances the Marine both on and off the battlefield.”²²

—Marine Corps Order 1500.54A

Lessons Learned from MCMAP

What, then, would it take to close the gap we have identified between the Commandant's intent and reality regarding spiritual readiness?²³ To begin to imagine what would be involved, consider an example of how the institution has done this sort of thing in the past: the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP). Clearly, there are similarities and dissimilarities involved in the MCMAP analogy but our intention here is primarily to provoke thought and move the needle on getting spiritual fitness more widely known and practiced in the Marine Corps.²⁴

The Marine Corps has always understood the importance of close combat and the need to teach combatives. Indeed, the title “Leatherneck” is directly related to the Corps' engagement with the issue—in this case, protection from slashing attacks—in its early history. However, this focus waxed and waned over the decades. Formally introduced to the Marine Corps in 2002, MCMAP “aims to strengthen the mental and moral resiliency of individual Marines through realistic combative training, warrior ethos studies, and physical hardening.”²⁵ As a successor to the Marines Corps' previous combative training, Linear Involuntary Neurological

overriding Engagement, MCMAP aims to combine and emphasize the importance of the physical domain as well as the mental and spiritual domain of warfighting. In 2002, MCMAP's goal was to create physically and mentally ready Marines of strong character given the current state of world affairs and the anticipated demand of the force at the initial onset of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Now two decades later, the Marine Corps is once again at a pivotal state of change requiring a mindset change in leaders and Marines across all ranks. Where the Marine Corps developed a program to test the physical, mental, and character disciplines in a holistic martial arts program twenty years ago, the Marine Corps must once again look for creative and revolutionary ways to emphasize spiritual discipline.

Before the official establishment of MCMAP, Marine combative proficiency was only as good as the unit leader's desire to incorporate Linear Involuntary Neurological overriding Engagement training into its daily training programs. Senior leadership occasionally reminded all hands that close combat was important, and some individual small unit leaders took the initiative to promote hand-to-hand combat proficiency in their units, but this was more the exception than the rule. Corps-wide, there was a considerable gap between the commander's intent and the reality on the ground.

Once MCMAP was formally established and gained momentum as a valuable tool for developing combat-ready Marines, the program gained more and more traction with unit leadership and reflected in the physical, mental, and character abilities of the individual Marine. What began with the physical MCMAP belt was soon enough translated into other incentives in terms of promotion points and performance measures for a combat-ready Marine and unit. Like every other reportable and tracked program, MCMAP proficiency is subject to reporting and inspection. The net effect of this effort, formalization, and incentivization of a program is that MCMAP has successfully become part of the modern-day Marine Corps organizational culture. Moreover, MC-

MAP promotes Marines who are already not only physically disciplined but also mentally and characteristically disciplined as well. When formalizing how to incorporate a spiritual discipline into daily Marine life, MCMAP provides an example of how the Marine Corps developed and instituted a new strategy to revolutionize the way Marines thought about individual and unit combat readiness.

If Marines are to be distributed across the battlefield ... it is incumbent ... to train an appropriate number of lay leaders to support these formations.

"To ensure the continued health of our collective character and identity and maintain our reputation as elite warriors, I am reaffirming the importance of spiritual fitness. All Marines and Sailors must tend to their individual character in order to keep the ethos and reputation of our Marine Corps intact."²⁶

—Gen David A. Berger

Framework

What could the Marine Corps do to implement spiritual readiness in such terms? Obviously, we must acknowledge

the inherent complexity of this subject as we discussed briefly above. One cannot test for spiritual fitness in garrison conditions in the same way that military knowledge or physical fitness can be tested. There is no one, simple pathway to attaining spiritual readiness, and we therefore cannot merely cut and paste a solution from another program like MCMAP. However, we can use this example to understand some of the essential elements for the successful and sustainable implementation of such programs.

First and foremost, if the Marine Corps wanted to elevate spiritual readiness to the level of the physical in terms of organizational priorities, there would have to be a comprehensive buy-in among company- and battalion-level commanders. Apart from this buy-in, all other efforts would ultimately prove ephemeral. Thankfully, all Marines now have some basic introduction to the concept of spiritual readiness in initial and subsequent formal training. What is lacking, however, is the champions of spiritual fitness the CMC imagined. Sustained advocacy by senior leaders toward junior officers and SNCOs would go a long way toward accomplishing this goal.

Secondly, the spiritual element would have to be incorporated in a far more thoroughgoing way across the PME spectrum. Currently, the subject is included *in* the curricula as a stand-alone instructional item; it ought to be *integrated* across the curricula as a recurring and persistent element of how battles have been won in the past and how they will be won in the future. Young officers at The Basic School, for instance, could be evaluated on their ability to lead their Marines into greater spiritual readiness.

Thirdly, there would need to be staffing infrastructure enhanced or created to support this development. The obvious starting point is to revitalize the use of religious lay leaders.²⁷ If Marines are to be distributed across the battlefield in smaller and more numerous formations than ever, making it even more difficult for chaplains to be present in person, it is incumbent upon the Religious Ministry Program to train an appropriate number of lay leaders to support these formations. Of course, this only covers the

specifically religious aspect of spiritual fitness. So, as there are MCMAP and force fitness instructors in every small unit, perhaps there might be something like spiritual fitness instructors to augment lay readers in the non-religious spiritual realm.²⁸

Fourthly, there would have to be a mechanism to monitor progress. At this point, even those who are completely comfortable with religion and spiritual matters might object that these things are simply not capable of being measured.²⁹ Yet, all real things are capable of being measured somehow, if only indirectly. In the case of spiritual readiness, the ultimate test of the human spirit happens only on the battlefield. However, one can work backward from that to take note of the factors that could rightly be expected to produce a spiritually-ready Marine. Along these lines, the Marine Corps already has a reasonably useful self-assessment tool for spiritual fitness that includes various elements such as regular participation in religious services or non-religious spiritually enriching activities. Marines could potentially take this self-assessment on an anonymized online database, and commanders could then be given a basic indication of where their unit is spiritually. Whether this tool or something like it could be appropriated for use as an organizational metric is a controversial question for others to decide. However, one thing is clear: if spiritual readiness is as important as we think it is, there must be some means—however indirect—for commanders to gauge whether their units are spiritually fit or not.

Finally, there would have to be an inducement to move the needle on the dashboard. No doubt, this is an even more difficult issue, fraught with legal complexities. At this point, however, we are simply imagining what a thoroughgoing organizational embrace of spiritual readiness might look like rather than making specific recommendations. The Marine Corps in its relevant publications already speaks as if spiritual fitness is expected of all Marines. It simply does not yet act as if we meant it. In general terms, what this might look like could be along the lines of physical fitness. If a Marine joins as an elite athlete in some sport,

we are thankful for it. Marine Corps PT is not a challenge to them, and they achieve outstanding PFT scores simply as collateral. We do not discourage them, but without sacrificing the mission, we give them the opportunity to continue training and competing at whatever level they are capable of. On the other hand,

What remains is for the Marine Corps to furnish them also with the framework to make this happen in the spiritual arena ...

if someone is not already an athlete, we teach them generic fitness. Likewise, if Marines already belong to a specific religious tradition when they join, they would be encouraged to participate in the activities related to it. If they had no religion, they would be encouraged to cultivate a non-religious spirituality or else explore options in terms of religion.

Conclusion

In 2018, Secretary Mattis stated with typical forthrightness that “America’s military has no preordained right to victory on the battlefield.” His blunt assessment provides the point of departure

“The soldier’s heart, the soldier’s spirit, the soldier’s soul, are everything. Unless the soldier’s soul sustains him he cannot be relied on and will fail himself and his commander and his country in the end.”³⁰

—GEN George C. Marshall

for this discussion on the importance of spiritual fitness to ready Marines for future battles against peers/near peers in expeditionary advanced base environs. Simply put, to address the rapidly changing dynamics of future warfare and to remain a viable force capable of defending against malign actors across all domains, the Marine Corps must produce Marines and leaders capable of carrying on the fight far away from higher echelons.

The Marine Corps is America’s “force-in-readiness,” manned, trained, and equipped to respond quickly to a broad variety of crises and conflicts across the full range of military operations anywhere in the world. As such, the Corps has long recognized spiritual fitness to be a critical component regarding warfighting prowess and resiliency. However, while the Marine Corps has always understood the importance of physical fitness as a component of total fitness and been willing to take the necessary steps to ensure that this component of total force readiness is maintained at a high level, the same cannot yet be said for spiritual readiness. As discussed above, the recent CMCs have recognized very clearly the critical importance of the spiritual not only to win the Nation’s battles but to win wars. However, a variety of issues have prevented this from being implemented at the small unit level. To close this gap, the institution must be willing to take the kind of steps it has done to implement other challenging, multi-faceted programs such as MCMAP. Small-unit leaders already know how to eliminate deficiencies in all manner of training priorities, as they bring to bear their leadership training and use the tools the institution gives them. What remains is for the Marine Corps to furnish them also with the framework to make this happen in the spiritual arena because, as GEN Marshall rightfully points out, *the warfighter’s heart, soul, and spirit are everything.*

Notes

1. See James N. Mattis, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: 2018).

2. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCDP 3, Expeditionary Operations* (Washington, DC: April 2018).
3. Ibid. For a definition of spiritual fitness, see the Marine Corps' webpage on resilience at <https://www.fitness.marines.mil/Resilience/>. Spiritual fitness is described as an "[i]dentification of personal faith, foundational values, and moral living from a variety of sources and traditions help Marines live out Core Values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment, live the warrior ethos, and exemplify the character expected of a United States Marine."
4. Gen J.A. Lejeune, *The Reminiscences of a Marine*, (Philadelphia: Dorrance and Company, 1930).
5. See Hope Hodge Seck, "Corps to Add 'Spiritual Fitness' to Professional Education," *Military.com*, October 18, 2016, <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2016/10/18/corps-to-add-spiritual-fitness-to-professional-education.html>.
6. Ibid. See Staff, "Marine Corps' Top Enlisted Leader Presents Human Performance at Tactical Athlete Summit," *Marines* November 9, 2021, <https://www.marines.mil/News/Press-Releases/Press-Release-Display/Article/2838109/marine-corps-top-enlisted-leader-presents-human-performance-at-tactical-athlete>. Human performance is maximized by improving the "physical, mental, social and *spiritual* fitness—total fitness—of Marines." [*Emphasis added.*]
7. See Maj Andrew P. Kettner, "Spiritual Fitness: An Unseen Element of Fitness," *Marine Corps Gazette*, June 2020, <https://mca-marines.org/wp-content/uploads/Spiritual-Fitness.pdf>.
8. See i.e., Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operating Environment 2035: The Joint Force in a Contested and Disordered World* (Washington, DC: July 2016); Department of Defense, *2018 National Defense Strategy* (Washington: 2018); and Raphael S. Cohen, Nathan Chandler, Shira Efron, Bryan Frederick, Eugeniu Han, Kurt Klein, Forrest E. Morgan, Ashley L. Rhoades, Howard J. Shatz, Yuliya Shokh, *The Future of Warfare in 2030 Project Overview and Conclusions* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2020).
9. See General D. A. Berger, *ALMAR 027/20, Resiliency and Spiritual Fitness* (Washington, DC: December 2020).
10. Gen David H. Berger, *38th Commandant's Planning Guidance* (Washington, DC: July 2019).
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Gen R.A. Neller, *ALMAR 033/16 on Spiritual Fitness* (Washington, DC: October 2016).
14. Resiliency and Spiritual Fitness.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. David Barno and Nora Bensahel, "A Striking New Vision for the Marines, and a Wakeup Call for the Other Services," *War on the Rocks*, October 1, 2019, <https://warontherocks.com/2019/10/a-striking-new-vision-for-the-marines-and-a-wakeup-call-for-the-other-services>.
18. *38th Commandant's Planning Guidance*.
19. *2018 National Defense Strategy*.
20. Legal Information Institute at Cornell Law School definition of the Establishment Clause: "According to The First Amendment's Establishment Clause prohibits the government from making any law 'respecting an establishment of religion.' This clause not only forbids the government from establishing an official religion, but also prohibits government actions that unduly favor one religion over another. It also prohibits the government from unduly preferring religion over non-religion, or non-religion over religion." Available at https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/establishment_clause.
21. Department of the Navy, *OPNAVINST 1730.1E* (Washington, DC: April 2021); and Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCO 1730.6f* (Washington, DC: August 2018).
22. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCO 1500.59A, Marine Corps Martial Arts Program* (Washington, DC: September 2019).
23. According to CAPT Steven Moses, CHC, USN in a June 28, 2021 email, the Chief of Chaplain's Office has developed a definition for Spiritual Readiness that is expected to be used in the Professional Navy Chaplain Instruction and eventually in OPNAV, MCO, and SECNAV Instructions. The definition is as follows: "Spiritual Readiness (RS) is the capacity for mission accomplishment that results from the warfighter's connection to the transcendent, defined by (1) a connection to the divine; (2) participation in a community of faith; (3) sacrifice for the greater good; and/or (4) the pursuit of meaning, purpose, value, and service. SR is an element of military readiness that is created, increased and sustained by Professional Naval Chaplaincy. SR is measured in commands by access to a chaplain; service member's engagement with the Command Religious Program; and the training, equipment, facilities, and resources of the Religious Ministry Team."
24. Capt Jamison Yi, "MCMAP and the Marine Warrior Ethos," *Military Review* 84, no. 6 (2004).
25. *MCO 1500.59A*.
26. *Resiliency and Spiritual Fitness*.
27. Department of the Navy, *NTTP 1.05.1M/MCRP 6-12B, Religious Lay Leader* (Washington, DC: May 2016).
28. See e.g., *Spiritual Fitness: An Unseen Element of Fitness*, supra note 7.
29. Jeff Schogol, "'Spiritual Fitness' is Not Just about God, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Says," *The Marine Corps Times*, November 27, 2017, <https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2017/11/27/spiritual-fitness-not-just-about-god-sergeant-major-of-the-marine-corps-says>.
30. *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall*, ed. Larry I. Bland, Sharon Ritenour Stevens, and Clarence E. Wunderlin, Jr. (Lexington, VA: The George C. Marshall Foundation, 1981). Electronic version based on *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall*, vol. 2, "We Cannot Delay," July 1, 1939–December 6, 1941, (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).



Spiritual Fitness Revisited

Where do we stand?

by CDR John J. Bombaro

It has been nearly three years since *ALMAR 033/16* sounded a clarion call that elevated the status and visibility of spiritual fitness. Anticipating the influx and integration of Generation Z with Generation X and Millennials within the Corps, *ALMAR 033/16* poised itself to engage an array of societal values from the first “screen” generations reared within the Internet Age and also to fortify the character of seasoned Marines and senior leaders. Spiritual fitness was positioned to aid in leaders aligning the personal values of individual Marines with those of the Corps and the Nation. The *ALMAR* did not issue a particular program of spiritual fitness but underscored the need to develop Marines inclusive of a spiritual framework, whereby spiritual fitness would serve as an engagement strategy in the development of Marines. How then has the Corps fared during these intervening years employing spiritual fitness as an engagement strategy? Or, put differently, what is the state of the Corps today with respect to the spiritual fitness initiative?

Essential to Training

From 2016, spiritual fitness, along with physical fitness, has been emphasized as “essential to the well-being of each individual Marine” and playing “a key role in resiliency,” that is, in the Marine’s ability to “grow, develop, recover, heal, and adapt.”¹ In the face of adversity and coming from a culture increasingly associated with moral relativism, consumerism, and entitlement, the 37th Commandant charged Marines to “steel your spirit so that you can better deal with adversity.”² Softness was to be transformed into toughness.

“Spiritual fitness,” defined as “the ability to adhere to beliefs, principles and values needed to persevere and prevail,

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advanced three main elements to assist Marines in achieving an optimal level of spiritual well-being.” *Personal faith* was the first of these elements, characterized as “a recognition of, belief in, trust in, or relationship with someone or something greater than one’s self.” It spanned both religious and non-religious notions of faith. *Foundational values*, the second element, are those values “Marines choose to live by that guide their choices, actions and the character they display on and off duty.” Thirdly, *moral living* called for Marines to be “equipped with a mechanism for reflecting on the past and recognizing behavior and decisions as moral or immoral.”³ All three elements are understood to be necessary for instilling grit and virtue in the modern American warfighter.

By July 2017, spiritual fitness had been integrated into *MCO 1500.61, Marine Leader Development (MLD)*. MLD is a comprehensive approach to leadership development that seeks to foster the development of all aspects of Marines’ personal and professional lives so that warriors may be, uniquely, Marines and so fulfill their vocational warfighting purpose. There are six Functional Areas of Marine Leadership Development: Fidelity, Fighter, Fitness, Family, Finances, and Future. Spiritual fitness is housed within the functional area of Fitness. In this way, *MCO 1500.61* pivoted leadership development in a fresh, although not entirely new, direction by advancing spiritual fitness as an essential training

dynamic related to the total fitness of the Marine.

With the purpose of the Marine Corps in the fore of his thought (i.e. “make Marines, win battles and ultimately return quality citizens to society”), Gen Neller stated in *MCO 1500.61* that the Marine Corps warfighting philosophy required “leaders of high moral character and professional competence who demonstrate sound and timely judgment in all situations.”⁴ The scope of the Commandant’s order addresses all personnel and envelopes every moral judgment related to the domestic and social life of the Marine. Honor, courage, and commitment are to be a lifestyle, a worldview, and the Marine mindset.

Significantly, *MCO 1500.61* correlated the *identity* of a Marine (*who* is a Marine) with the *vocation* of being a Marine (*what* a Marine does) to the *purpose* of being a Marine (*why* or for *whom* a Marine does it). In other words, identity, vocation, and purpose were brought together and pinned to character. Spiritual fitness would address character since character rested on a foundation of values—values manifested through moral judgments informed by personal faith. In this way, the approach to Marine training became holistic and was to be embedded within every domain of the Marine Corps. MLD was the template for achieving this objective, yet without programmatically stipulating exactly how it was to look in every command. Within the categories of MLD, the spiritual fitness enterprise emphasized intentionality, flexibility, and opportunity.

Through MLD all Marines were to encounter and integrate spiritual fitness elements in training and mentoring, to the end that Marines would individually cultivate their faith, values, and moral living in order to fortify adherence to



The chaplain's "ministry through presence," especially in challenging situations, is a fundamental to spiritual fitness. (Photo by Cpl Anna Albrecht.)

the institution's core values and optimize their warfighting readiness. MLD was not just about instruction to commands but prompting initiative within commands. The Marine's lifestyle was to manifest consistency on and off duty *because* Marines have a moral purpose, a moral vocation, and a moral identity. To be moral is to be a Marine and to be a Marine is to be moral. All Marine Corps training was to emanate this ethical standard to which it had been summoned while every individual Marine was to embody that ethical standard on duty and off.

Necessary for Life and Victory

While *MCO 1500.61* issued a summons for a fresh approach to holistic training and moral living, the 37th Commandant's strategy unmistakably mirrors the 13th Commandant's (John Archer Lejeune) century-old tenets to cultivate transformation.⁵ Gen Neller, in this sense, proposed nothing new but rather took the Corps back to the fundamental roots of its success—*morale*. Lejeune put it this way:

Esprit de corps and morale are kindred subjects; in fact, some writers consider them as synonymous. This, however, is not the case, as esprit de corps is only one of the factors which go to constitute morale. Morale is three-fold—

physical, mental or professional, and spiritual.⁶

Lejeune's tenets, or pillars, consist of self-awareness, ethical voice, spiritual resiliency, and inspiration. They constitute the main elements of what is called today "spiritual fitness." For John Lejeune, they comprise the warrior's spirit and are necessary for success and victory. There can be no Marine Corps without morale. Maurice Buford summarizes Lejeune's understanding of spirituality as "the irreplaceable higher force that ignites afire the being of a warrior to walk out self-sacrificing love, other-centeredness, to crush fear and to constantly purify one's soul from unworthy motives as they execute their purpose."⁷ Simply put, Lejeune promoted a dynamic concept of morale far more expansive than today's connotation of "the capacity of a group of people to pull together persistently and consistently in pursuit of a common purpose." Rather, Lejeune understood morale as, above all, the moral principles, teaching, and conduct of a person that fortified their mental and emotional ability to achieve a stated vocation or goal. Whether talking about the individual Marine or a group of Marines, Lejeune saw self-discipline as basic to morale and morale as necessary for success and victory. It was morale, he

believed, that provided each Marine and the Marine Corps itself with its edge.

Gen Neller restated Lejeune's principles in today's values-depleted cultural context by grounding morale—that is, the art of values-building, self-discipline—in the identity and purpose of a Marine, saying, "The Marine Corps is built on discipline and it is a rock. It is the foundation of the Corps." Again, to be a Marine is to be moral and disciplined, disciplined regarding moral decisions and response to duty. Put differently, Marines possess morale, and they must do so to fulfill their warfighting vocation. The result of inculcating and practicing morale is a virtuous, gritty warfighter, who returns to civilian life an exemplar of morality and patriotism. Thus, from both Lejeune and Neller come the vocabulary and concepts for spiritual fitness amidst efforts to rehabilitate institutional morale and personal self-discipline.

Common Language

George Lindbeck has noted that a community particularizes itself through its distinctive vocabulary. What makes the Marine Corps distinct from, say, the Navy begins with vocabulary. Consequently, the dissemination of a common language for spiritual fitness within the Marine Corps has been essential for universalizing the desired objectives of its engagement strategy. Terms immediately associated with spiritual fitness—such as personal faith, foundational values, and moral living (the main points of spiritual fitness)—are becoming common parlance alongside resilience, core values, and character, according to findings from the Chaplain of the Marine Corps. The employment of a shared lexicon throughout the Corps suggests both ownership of nomenclature and the establishment of the overarching spiritual domain. Thus, the term "spirit" can be said to be at home within the Marine Corps, finding considerable usage and tradition as an idiom ranging from esprit de corps to mind, body, and spirit. Relatedly, spirit plays favorably with the current high percentage of Marines who maintain proclivities toward religious affiliation. The aforementioned terms possess adequate specificity of meaning

and requisite flexibility for use in non-religious and religious contexts.

It has been further observed that “warrior toughness,” “warrior mindset,” and even, simply, “mindset” are now ubiquitous as spiritual fitness referents within Marine Corps communities. However, “grit,” a newcomer, is not well established but finds rising usage at the Marine Corps Recruit Depots and The Basic School, Quantico, training communities. Its usage is anticipated to become more prevalent as scholarly research substantiates the concept and popular media outlets standardize the term.

One indicator of the state of the spiritual fitness engagement strategy pertains to the consistency of term definitions. How well terms retain specified definitions through time and across a spectrum of geographical locations and communities indicates penetration and prevalence. Terminology uniformity goes hand in hand with universalizing a spiritual fitness vocabulary, but also standardizing it within the Corps, as members move from platform to platform. Initial findings from the Chaplain of the Marine Corps are promising in this regard. For example, the term “tough” and its derivatives are widely employed beyond narrow physical associations to include mental states and dispositional references. These latter references commonly stand at the forefront of both use and understanding among all Marines. Toughness aligns with the state of being strong enough to withstand adverse conditions, hardships, rough handling, and to cope with the same through an uncompromising approach. Beginning at MCRDs, Recruit Training Command Great Lakes, U.S. Naval Academy, and The Basic School, toughness has taken on a distinctive moral quality as opposed to a physical quality. The same can be said for the terms “mindset,” “values,” “discipline,” and “fidelity.”

Evidencing less consistency is the term “morale,” which does not enjoy the liberality of use and explicit ethical association outside of command localities. The richness and serviceability of the term warrant greater usage beyond command climate surveys and the mood

of the troops’ connotations, which give it an antiquated characteristic and limited range. Morale pertains to more than mere welfare, garnering ideas of *esprit d’ corps*, fighting spirit, and troop welfare or mood. The historic importance of moral should be recovered and can be so, especially when coupled with notions of discipline and morality promoted within MLD.

While recruits at boot camp may not be found routinely speaking in spiritual fitness terminology, notwithstanding an April 2019 survey of MCRD WRR 2Bn Phase 4 Marines confirmed that one hundred percent of recruits found the three main elements of spiritual fitness—personal faith, foundational values, and moral living—emphasized and extolled as necessary for developing resilience, personal success, and warfighting advantage. Significantly, the MCRDs are equipping new Marines with spiritual fitness concepts and familiarizing them enough with vocabulary that all Phase 4 Marines heading to their specialty schools knew about the importance of spiritual self-care heading into the fleet.

Sample Communities

The present state of spiritual fitness indicates a certain, but by no means comprehensive, maturation. When the engagement strategy was first announced in 2016, it did so with disclaimers that disassociated it from straightforward religious programming, especially since the Chaplain Corps played, and continues to play, a prominent role in the promotion of spiritual fitness. Spiritual fitness is to be practiced by all, with all leaders having stock in its advancement. As the Corps increasingly recognizes and appreciates spiritual fitness as both a fixture of its history and necessary for its success, spiritual fitness strategies are no longer subject to a battery of disobliging qualifications (spiritual fitness is *not* a philosophy, is *not* religion per se, is *not* metaphysics, is *not* a program, etc.). Instead, enclaves throughout the Marine Corps may be found speaking more by way of affirmation than negation about spiritual fitness initiatives. The place of religion and religious content seems, on the whole, to be well-understood and need not be artificially nor unneces-

sarily over-explained. Here, again, is a healthy indicator regarding the current state of spiritual fitness within the Marine Corps, namely its assertive features directing conversations and strategies rather than disclaimers, important as they may be.

An example of comparative maturation may be found within the MCRDs. The influential Core Values Guided Discussions, principally led by senior drill instructors, employ tie-in narratives to affect a convergence of Marine Corps core values with personal faith and member values. Senior drill instructors show considerable savvy and discretion when teaching on matters ranging from sexual conduct and pornographic consumption to financial responsibility and social media in order to align values toward moral living. The three main elements of spiritual fitness feature prominently in Core Values Guided Discussions. Senior drill instructors and “Green Belts,” as well as company commanders and chaplains, have shown remarkable initiative in making spiritual fitness their own through laudable, idiosyncratic applications and do so without reticence. The frank, personalized approach from drill instructors allows them to tell their values-laden stories while serving as examples of physical, mental, spiritual, and social fitness and passing on the expectation of the same to the Marine Corps’ newest would-be leaders and mentors. The adaptations present at the MCRDs evidence the malleable nature of spiritual fitness and therefore its complexion as an engagement strategy, agreeable to *ALMAR 033/16* and *MCO 1500.61*.

Relatedly, the Drill Instructor Schools’ curriculum is replete with spiritual fitness vocabulary, concepts, and initiatives promoting drill instructor ownership of values-based training, indoctrinating core values, mentoring, and belief in something greater than self to foster toughness, resiliency, discipline, and virtue. Recruits, in turn, are the direct beneficiaries of this values-rich curriculum.

The value of instilling the Marine Corps’ core values in terms of yielding a higher quality Marine from boot camp has recently initiated the implementation of similar character-building ele-

ments into the Delayed Entry Program, beginning the transformation process before even arriving at boot camp. Physical fitness expectations and training in the pooling phase have been shown to increase the confidence and preparedness of incoming recruits. The same thinking is now being applied to spiritual fitness, namely to communicate and train to the moral standards of the Marine Corps even before seeing the yellow footprints. Thus, spiritual fitness engagement strategies in this case reach across no less than four domains (The Basic School, Drill Instructor School, MCRD, and Delayed Entry Program) in a concerted effort to *steel the spirit* of developing Marines.

Reserve assets are a community that presents challenges associated with time and opportunity limitations. Organized leadership development enterprises struggle to be sustained for any duration. Consequently, as with active-duty components, opportunities for mentoring, school-circle instruction, hip-pocket classes, and tie-in morality shop talks should be continually implemented by leaders who often do so more informally. Within the reserves particularly, intentional mentoring and close relations between peers and near-peers are indispensably important since opportunities for developed spiritual fitness initiatives are few. There can be no morale without it. Non-commissioned officers are spiritual fitness' greatest asset among the reserves since they are the most connected both up and down the chain of command.

Where communities link together to sustain the transformation or facilitate morale saturation, spiritual fitness offers the probability of lasting impact—enhancing the character dimension of Marine Corps culture.

Religious Marines

Compared with its Navy counterparts, the Marine Corps owns a greater per capita concentration of religious adherents. For recruits and Marines whose religion is valued, provision for particular religious observation has ascended in priority as spiritual fitness envelops the personal faith element of Marine morale. Command Religious Programs, facilitated by the Chaplain and religious

program specialists (Religious Ministry Team), have increased the profile, presence, accessibility, and serviceability of the Religious Ministry Team in both active duty and reserve components. As the spiritual fitness initiative engages the Chaplain Corps with increased responsibilities and opportunities for service (e.g. Force Preservation Councils and the implementation of chaplain initiatives), Marines encounter a broader and more purposeful integration of their personal faith with the core values of the institution.

The 2016 spiritual fitness initiative has so impacted the Chaplain Corps that the Department of the Navy revised “Strategic Plan for Religious Ministry” (FY19) to integrate the three main ele-

Fitness, Spiritual Resiliency, and Spiritual Care flipbooks sat idly on shelves or chaplains awaited invitations to address the spiritual welfare, moral judgments, and the warrior toughness of Marines and sailors (in short, morale), now Command Religious Programs and Marine Leadership Development infuse spiritual fitness opportunities and components into unit training plans, professional military education, and other training regimens. Religious Ministry Teams are taking beneficial materials like the *Spiritual Fitness* flipbook and *Marine Mindset Values Builder* to where Marines are living, training, and working. This development is not only welcome but necessary, albeit it cannot be said to be universal. There is room for expan-

Such integration requires not only external commitment to champion the spiritual readiness and toughness of sailors and Marines but internal Chaplain Corps character development ...

ments of spiritual fitness into each of its four stated goals to operationalize to support ministry in combat; sharpen core capabilities; develop chaplain corps leaders with intentionality; and champion the spiritual readiness of sailors and Marines. Such integration requires not only external commitment to champion the spiritual readiness and toughness of sailors and Marines but internal Chaplain Corps character development and professionalization so that they may advise and lead with integrity and know-how.

Active Not Passive Engagement

Scores of localized endeavors evidence the fact that spiritual fitness is shifting from a state of *passivity* on the part of commands to *activity*. No longer is spiritual fitness something that the individual Marine may be assumed to be privately doing but rather the Marine's spiritual fitness is something about which he can expect to be routinely challenged by peers and near-peers, as well as leaders. Where once copies of *Spiritual*

sion and more intentional saturation.

Tools such as the *Spiritual Fitness* tie-in flipbook, developed in 2018, FIRE Chats initiated within the 2nd Tank Battalion, *Marine Mindset Values-BUILDER* modules (Internet-based) initiated within 2MEF, iRelate, and other programs, seminars, and engagement strategies proactively bring leaders, near-peer mentors, and religious ministry teams into workspaces without unduly taxing training cycles or hampering operations. Yet much more can be done to instruct and aid commanders in the implementation of *ALMAR 033/16*.

Spiritual Fitness Drop-Off

In 2019, spiritual fitness does not enjoy uniform application or implementation through Marine Leadership Development endeavors. Not all commands are intentional about spiritual fitness. Not all leaders are intentional. There are gaps.

The most oft-reported drop-off of spiritual fitness intentionality follows boot camp. While the MCRDs should

be commended for their conscious employment of spiritual fitness engagement strategies and integrating the same through Drill Instructor School and delayed entry programming, the Marine Corps itself remains challenged by the drop-off in sustaining the transformation following MCRD training. And yet, all newly minted Marines departing from MCRD report, according to an April 2019 Chaplain of the Marine Corps survey, a resolve to sustain their transformation by practicing spiritual fitness. However, it is at the next stages in a young Marine's career that spiritual fitness resources frequently prove to be thinnest and opportunities for undesirable behaviors tend to be thickest or, simply, relapsing into patterns of behavior and thought held by the Marine prior to boot camp—not the least of which being personal device usage, pornography, alcohol consumption, idleness, inadvisable relationships, sexual indiscretion, and general lack of self-discipline. Marines have been produced so successfully through boot camp that they possess and confess resolve to sustain their transformation and further their spiritual fitness. The Marine Corps needs to rise to this challenge.

MOS schools, SOI, and MCT facilitate excellent occupational and combat skills training, producing the world's best fighting force. Important at this juncture in a Marine's tour of service is near-peer values-building purposed to reinforce a culture of morale—ethical living, grit, and fidelity—such that resonates with the three main elements of spiritual fitness. Without engendering a culture that safeguards morale at the level of junior Marines, the opportunity to sustain the transformation has not been thoroughly developed. Corporals can and should be leaders of junior Marines teaching values-building materials to establish an accountability climate in which they both convey the expectation and resource the ability to meet the expectation while at the same time are themselves accountable to their sphere of responsibility.

Episodic culture workshops are rightly prized by commands to stimulate change or enhance desired outcomes. For sustained and systemic change to take

place, however, patterns of habits and mindsets need to conform to institutional standards, be it moral or otherwise. This happens by formally reinforcing the culture from within the culture on a weekly basis so that it continues to take place informally on a daily basis. Junior Marines are capable of leading junior Marines in modules exploring personal faith, foundational values, and moral living, thereby fortifying a moral culture within an accountability loop. With useful tools, corporals and sergeants can accomplish this in various settings, including barracks environments and deployment or mobilization.

Marine Leadership Development intends for Marines to lead in some capacity. Notwithstanding, the Marine Corps recognizes that some Marines are not natural leaders, nor do they adapt well to leadership cultivation. The Corps does not operate with homogenous leadership potential throughout its ranks. It never did and it never will. Instead, there exists a portion of Marines who may be characterized as servant-leaders or given to “bold followership” by way of personal disposition (which is itself a kind of leadership that, curiously, does not respond well to leadership training per se). There are Marines who lead and there are Marines who follow. Diversifying the range of MLD to consciously include Marines with dispositions to be bold followers may yield yet unexplored opportunities to further transformation and heighten grit, resiliency, and fighting spirit. Bold followership, too, is an essential dynamic of Marine Corps morale.

Knowing one's purpose matters and it is directly related to spiritual fitness. It matters because it supplies meaning and a sense of belonging. Each Marine, be it the resolute leader or bold follower, should have the purpose of his or her vocation communicated to them. Marines are worthy of knowing *why* their specialization is purposeful. Each Marine should routinely be informed as to how their occupation is connected to the total mission, the greater good, the purpose of their unit, and even the purpose of the Marine Corps. Furthermore, in keeping with spiritual fitness concepts, Marines should understand that they have a vocation, a calling from

the nation that is purposeful. Jobs have menial associations. They solicit shallow commitment and are easily quit. Vocations, however, are callings infused with meaning and significance, giving each and every Marine a purpose in the Corps, a purpose by our Nation, and a purpose in life. Leaders work along the lines of spiritual fitness when purpose is communicated and connected to the Marine's vocation. Purpose, as John Lejeune noted, is a major factor in the recruitment and retention of Marines since it is bound to notions of patriotism. And patriotism, he said, is manifest through a Marine's “self-sacrificing love for each other, for their unit, for their division, and for their country.”⁸ That is the heart of the spiritual fitness initiative.

ALMAR 033/16 set a lofty goal in late 2016 but one that Marine Corps history has shown is necessary for success and victory. There must be morale. And that is why spiritual fitness engagement strategies will continue to be an essential component of MLD and why additional endeavors are needed now and into the future.

Notes

1. Headquarters Marine Corps, *ALMAR 033/16* (Washington, DC: October 2016).
2. Headquarters Marine Corps, *Message to the Force: 2017 “Seize the Initiative”* (Washington, DC: 2017).
3. Headquarters Marine Corps, *Spiritual Fitness* (Washington, DC: 2018).
4. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCO 1500.61, 1, Marine Leader Development* (Washington, DC: July 2017).
5. Maurice A. Buford, *The Servant Way: Leadership Principles from John A. Lejeune* (BookBaby).
6. John A. Lejeune, “A Legacy of Esprit and Leadership,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 97, no. 2 (2013).
7. *The Servant Way*.
8. John A. Lejeune, *The Reminiscences of A Marine* (Philadelphia: Dorrance and Company, 1930).



From Character to Courage

The importance of spirituality in maximizing combat readiness and warfighter resiliency of Marines in the 21st century

by CDR David A. Daigle, USN, LtCol Daniel V. Goff (Ret) & LT Bradley Lawrence, USN

“There is no substitute for the spiritual in war.”¹

—Gen J.A. Lejeune

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In his article, “From Character to Courage: Developing the Spirit of the 21st Century Warfighter,” the Chaplain of the Marine Corps, RADM Gregory N. Todd, asserts that “spiritual fitness [is] a critical aspect of readiness.”² He explains that readiness “is the heart of the spiritual fitness effort in the Marine Corps—preparing the warrior for today’s competition and any future conflict.”³ The article argues that spirituality is a vital component of character development that demands the same intentionality and focus by leaders as mental, social, or physical fitness do.⁴ Todd writes that character, as it relates to spirituality, is “such a critical element of combat success that all leaders must deliberately approach character development as integral to combat readiness.”⁵ His article also serves as a reminder of the vital role and place that spiritual fitness plays in character development and combat readiness of Marines.⁶ As such, Chaplain Todd’s article echoes principles that are deeply embedded within the DNA of the Marine Corps. This fact is underscored by consecutive ALMARs on resiliency and spirituality by the 37th and 38th CMCs as well as doctrinal publications speaking on this topic. These official pronouncements are all rooted in one of the

oldest truths of the Marine Corps: *there is no substitute for the spiritual in war.*⁷ Notwithstanding this continuity with authoritative guidance and received wisdom, Chaplain Todd’s position has been the subject of controversy.⁸ Nonetheless, this article continues the discussion by considering the value, role, and place of spirituality in the Marine Corps within the context of the 21st century.⁹

Accordingly, we begin with a brief discussion of the two recent ALMARs on spirituality as well as an overview of the Marine Corps’ main publications pertaining to spirituality or spiritual fitness. Following this, we recommend how current Marine Corps leaders can approach spiritual fitness as a basic component of resiliency that strengthens force readiness and warfighting capabilities. This section will focus on practical ways leaders can implement spiritual fitness training within their units to develop the moral character of Marines. Because one of the practical avenues is how to use chaplains effectively, this section will touch upon the proper role of Professional Naval Chaplaincy in the development of Marine Corps character, as it pertains to spiritual fitness.¹⁰ This article concludes that as the age of Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO), Distributed Maritime Opera-

tions (DMO), and near-peer warfare surfaces and unfolds, commanders must successfully implement spiritual fitness training within their units to maximize combat readiness, warfighter resiliency, and the tactical proficiency of Marines in the 21st century.

“Regardless of individual philosophy or beliefs, spiritual well-being makes us better warriors and people of character capable of making good choices on and off duty.”¹¹

—Gen R.B. Neller

When Gen Lejeune made his famous statement, “*there is no substitute for the spiritual in war,*” he was essentially restating what had been understood by the greatest military leaders throughout the history of human conflict.¹² When spirituality is afire within a unit, those in it will work hard, suffer long, and even lay down their lives in combat, should it

be required.¹³ Gen Lejeune thus believed that spirituality was essential to winning battles. Carry on this tradition to the present day, the Marine Corps continues to espouse the vital importance of spiritual fitness to combat readiness and resiliency.¹⁴ Indeed, consecutive ALMARs on the matter by both Gen Robert B. Neller and Gen David H. Berger attest to the enduring importance of spiritual fitness.¹⁵ In this regard, the 37th CMC embraced spiritual fitness as essential to both the well-being of individual Marines as well as the Marine Corps as a whole.¹⁶ As well, in his 2016 ALMAR, Gen Neller stated that “[r]esearch indicates spiritual fitness plays a key role in resiliency, in our ability to grow, develop, recover, heal, and adapt. Regardless of individual philosophy or beliefs, spiritual well-being makes us better warriors and people of character capable of making good choices on and off duty.”¹⁷ For his part, Gen Berger echoes his predecessor on the importance of spirituality and builds upon Gen Neller’s statements in his own 2020 ALMAR on resiliency and spiritual fitness. In speaking on the notion of spiritual fitness as a component of character development, he emphasized the importance of “leaders at every level to communicate the importance of faith, values and moral living inside the Marine Corps culture of fitness.”¹⁸ In sum, it is significant that both CMCs are united in their fundamental messaging on the importance of spirituality within the Marine Corps. In addition, they do this not by pushing out a program but rather by emphasizing spiritual fitness as an engagement strategy for leaders at every level.¹⁹ This is noteworthy in that both Commandants signal their intention that spiritual fitness should be considered on the same level of importance within the Marine Corps as mental and physical fitness.

Keeping this in mind, Chaplain Todd’s article cannot be regarded as a mere paean to spirituality, calling for some type of chaplain-led spiritual fitness program to be implemented in the Marine Corps and imposed on Marines.²⁰ Rather, his article is a critical reminder to leaders of the historical and timeless role that spirituality plays in warfighter development.²¹ Furthermore,

while not excluding the components of God and religion, spiritual fitness in RADM Todd’s article is oriented toward the broadly conceived definition adopted by the Marine Corps.²² This conception is articulated clearly in the *Spiritual Fitness Notebook*, which notes that “[s]piritual fitness is a component of overall fitness within Marine Leader Development. It is the role of every Marine leader to develop future leaders who are mentally, physically, socially, and spiritually fit. Chaplains work alongside to give voice in this endeavor, but they are NOT the owners of spiritual fitness.”²³ Substantively, the Marine Corps is aligned with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other Services in its approach to spiritual fitness.²⁴

To be clear, the role and importance of spiritual fitness in character development are grounded in *Marine Corps Order 1500.61, Marine Leader Development*.²⁵ *MCO 1500.61* states that, as found within one of the six functional areas of Marine character development, leaders are to focus training and their coaching/counseling sessions on “Fitness”—to include “[p]hysical, mental, *spiritual*, and social health and well-being.”²⁶ In so doing, leaders are ensuring the formation of “holistic well-being, boost[ing] morale, cohesiveness, and resiliency—enabling Marines to execute the toughest challenges and recuperate in a shorter time,”²⁷ and are advancing official resiliency initiatives.²⁸ That is to say, the current Marine Corps leadership engagement strategy relating to resiliency and spiritual fitness falls under the auspices of the Human Performance Office in Quantico, VA.²⁹ Established in 2020, the Human Performance Office’s mission is to conduct “service-level coordination of human performance and resiliency policies and programs to enable the achievement of the Training and Education Command (TECOM) mission to train and educate the force.”³⁰ It views and leverages spiritual fitness as a subset of resiliency, alongside mental and social fitness.³¹ The Human Performance Office’s official stance demonstrates that the Marine Corps sees spirituality as a resilience component standing in equal value alongside mental and physical resilience.³² Accordingly,

the *Spiritual Fitness Leaders Guide Notebook* stipulates that “[s]piritual fitness is a component of overall fitness within Marine Leader Development.”³³ As such, “[i]t is the role of every Marine leader to develop future leaders who are mentally, physically, socially, and spiritually fit.”³⁴ Indeed, “fitness” within the Marine Corps is best understood as “a total concept” approach with spiritual fitness as one of several components aimed at promoting resiliency and wellbeing. In the end, the Corps has “a holistic approach to physical, mental, spiritual, and social fitness. Truly ‘fit’ Marines have far more than just high Physical Fitness Test and Combat Fitness Test scores. Ensuring holistic wellbeing boosts morale, cohesiveness, and resiliency—enabling Marines to execute the toughest challenges and recuperate in shorter time.”³⁵

As the DOD wrestles with Force Design and incorporates new technologies into viable warfighting concepts and strategies, spiritual resilience can-

“To ensure the continued health of our collective character and identity and maintain our reputation as elite warriors, I am reaffirming the importance of spiritual fitness. ... In addition to serving as models for their subordinates, leaders must champion efforts to instill spiritual fitness in order to advance character development across the Marine Corps and in support of my CPG.”³⁶

—Gen D.H. Berger

not be considered an outdated afterthought from a bygone era of warfare. While many agree that mental and physical fitness are indicators of warfighter readiness and resilience, much less attention and focus have been paid to the critical importance of spiritual fitness. Uniformed leadership at all levels have a vested interest in utilizing force multipliers to prepare and enhance their warfighting personnel assets to handle the human stress factors associated with combat inasmuch as they emphasize tactical proficiency and professional knowledge of various combat domains. Simply put, a warfighter who is more resilient is more hardened against the human stress factors of war and thus is more disciplined in their craft, adaptable to all conditions, and proficiently lethal. Shaping an operational mindset and readiness posture for spiritual resiliency and toughness responds to the anti-access/area denial and EABO conceptual challenge: *how U.S. forces perform defending U.S. vital interests in the future depends upon how we think, invest, and prepare today.*

As America prepares for an era marked by renewed great power competitions and a new technological generation of warfare, many lessons learned during the preceding two decades will simply not apply to future combat. America will no longer have an overmatch against near-peer competitors and will be at a disadvantage in some domains. Engaging in kinetic warfare with strategic competitors has the potential to produce mass casualties hitherto unseen since the days of World War II and the Korean War, disproportionate to what was experienced during Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Facing the potential for horrific casualties and an uncertain advantage in a military engagement against a peer competitor, the importance of spiritual fitness cannot be relegated to a leader's back burner. Nor should spiritual fitness be relegated to a DOD policy or program that becomes part of an annual training requirement—another General Military Training or PowerPoint brief where the training requirement is meant, the box checked, and the topic of spiritual resiliency relegated to the dustbin

for another year. This would surely signal the death of meaningful dialog and honest spiritual introspection, growth, and hardening. However, incremental touchpoints along a service member's career would be a solid foundation from which to better develop spiritual resilience. Spiritual resilience education needs to be integrated into Officer Candidate School, boot camp, Career Level Professional Military Education, Staff Academy, and the Commander's Course. However, spiritual reliance should not be addressed as a separate topic for individual contemplation but rather as a component that reinforces our core values and the responsibilities of commissioned and noncommissioned officers assume as they progress through their careers. Spiritual resilience, core values, and leadership should form the virtuous cycle that serves as the foundation of leadership within the Marine Corps.³⁷

To achieve spiritual fitness that supports unit and personal purpose, a warfighting spirit, and mental and physical toughness, unit commanders and leaders need to set a positive example and be willing to engage those in their charge about what is spirituality, how it has personally provided strength, and why it is an important facet of military service. Leaders need to be open and honest about their struggles as they relate to spirituality, the actions taken, and describe their ultimate successes and failures as a means to cultivate spiritual resilience in the Marines they lead. As a fighting force, America regularly prepares for and tests to physical standards, performs medical readiness checks, inspects physical material readiness, and evaluates tactical combat proficiency skills. But the warfighter is also a complete human—with mental and spiritual components—who needs to be spiritually prepared for the rigors of deployment cycles, kinetic combat, and eventual re-entry into society and family life.

The chaplain is the subject-matter expert on spirituality and possesses the programmatic and administrative oversight of the spiritual resilience programs on behalf of commanders. The Navy Chaplain Corps requires its accessions

to hold a master's degree in theology and possess at least three years of practical ministry in their faith prior to being considered a candidate for active duty. Many chaplains come into the Navy older and with more life experience than their rank would suggest to a concomitant line officer colleague. Chaplains and Religious Program Specialists form the core of command religious programs and religious ministry teams (RMTs). While many finely trained and adept chaplains oversee the spiritual resilience of their sailors and Marines, today's chaplains and commanders face the challenge of utilizing the limited resource of RMTs to maximize effect in DMO and EABO environments and operational forward-deployed force laydowns.

There are essentially three elements of tactical consternation to deploying a chaplain in DMO and EABO environments. First, at the command level in DMO and EABO tactical scenarios, there may be at any given time multiple lines of effort with smaller force projections augmenting a ship, MEU, or ashore components: Landing Craft Utility, Landing Craft Air Cushioned, V-22s, and UH-60s shuttling men and materials to and from the afloat and ashore units, force recon elements conducting forward intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions, infantry units securing landing zones, HIMARS batteries executing fire missions, and F-35B air defense penetration sorties flown all within a compressed time frame and over a large swath of the battlespace. All the while, there is only one or perhaps two RMTs from an afloat command to support such operations: one from the ship's company and one from the MEU's Battalion Landing Team, Combat Logistics Battalion, or CE. There simply are not enough RMTs to go around in such operations. The second element of RMT limitation shows itself in the aforementioned DMO and EABO scenarios from the logistical perspective of the desire to move the RMT about the battlespace. Can a commander reasonably spare a "Holy Helo" to ferry the RMT around amid a busy flight deck and the bustle of tactical operations ashore? Thirdly, and most importantly, the chaplain is uniquely trained and commissioned

for their job—no one else can offer religious services, have the utmost confidential counseling, and enable spiritual readiness like the chaplain can. So, in a kinetic environment, operating ashore or afloat far from reinforcements in an anti-access/area denial contested area it is reasonable to assume that if the chaplain is killed or wounded, there is no immediate replacement ready to fill that void at the command level. Hence, most commanders would likely be reticent to risk a fundamentally limited asset such as their chaplains by sending them ashore or sending them on “Holy Helo” rides in a DMO or EABO environment.³⁸

Thankfully, there is another tool in the spiritual resilience kit that can be leveraged in DMO and EABO environments to provide continued and sustained forward-deployed spiritual capability to strengthen and sustain the warfighter’s spirit: the lay leader. Lay leaders can be selected from servicemembers who exemplify spiritual toughness and can model and champion spiritual resiliency at the small-unit level while providing the limited religious services they are authorized to offer in disbursed and forward-deployed areas. The lay leader can act as an extension—albeit a limited extension—of the command RMT as a collateral responsibility without adding or subtracting from the risk factors associated with shuttling around a one-of-one chaplain in a kinetic environment or adding to logistical transportation congestion. The lay leader can reinforce the spiritual resiliency of their comrades-in-arms.

To be sure, the lay leader is not a substitute for the chaplain: they cannot provide counseling, they are limited in the scope of religious services by their religious organization and the chaplain’s oversight, and they usually do not possess the theological training and experience that the chaplain does.³⁹ However, the lay leader can add significant capability in the DMO and EABO environments and can communicate with the RMT as to the religious and spiritual needs of the sailors and Marines. If and when the chaplain and religious program specialist can move about the battlespace in a distributed forward area, it would be vital to have information from lo-

“During times of peace, the most important task of any military is to prepare for war. Through its preparedness, a military provides deterrence against potential aggressors. As the nation’s expeditionary force-in-readiness, the Marine Corps must maintain itself for immediate employment in “any clime and place” and in any type of conflict. All peacetime activities should focus on achieving combat readiness. This implies a high level of training, flexibility in organization and equipment, professional leadership, and a cohesive doctrine.”⁴⁰

—MCDP 1, Warfighting

cal company-grade leadership and their lay leaders exactly where that limited, one-of-one spiritual asset needs to go to address resiliency needs.

Since its inception in 1775, the Marine Corps has emphasized the importance of passing on professional knowledge to its members.⁴¹ RADM Todd’s “From Character to Courage” article follows suit with this time-honored convention in speaking to the importance of spiritual fitness. He is not so much breaking new ground as offering a timely reminder that spiritual fitness

is a part of the DNA of the Marine Corps’ vital component of character development and resiliency, tracing its roots to Gen Lejeune, and beyond to other military leaders throughout history. With the *Commandant’s Planning Guidance* emphasizing the concepts of EABO, the Marine Corps now finds itself at an inflection point with its approach to spirituality. It is the spirit of the warfighter that makes them formidable, more so than the weapon they employ or the technology they bring to bear against the Nation’s enemies. For some time, there has been some inhibition in talking about the importance of spirituality and have instead turned to address the physical and mental concerns of our Marines. The coming conflicts will test our military in ways we may not fully understand at present. However, at the core of the conflict, our spirit must not falter. Warfighters are more than instruments and means to accomplish missions and operational objectives, bereft of mind and souls. Rather, a truly integrated and ready warfighter is one whose mind, body, and spirit are sharpened, honed, and prepared for the trials and challenges ahead of them and can forge the next generational global and strategic challenges into battlefield success: tactical victories and triumphs of the human spirit. In the past, spiritual fitness has been an oft-neglected component of resiliency. However, as the age of EABO and DMO dawns, it is more important than ever to implement spiritual fitness training within units to maximize combat readiness, warfighter resiliency, and the tactical proficiency of Marines in the 21st century.

Notes

1. Gen J.A. Lejeune, *The Reminiscences of a Marine* (Philadelphia: Dorrance and Company, 1930).
2. RDML G.N. Todd, “From Character to Courage: Developing the Spirit of the 21st Century Warfighter,” *Proceedings*, April 2021, <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2021/april/character-courage-developing-spirit-21st-century-warfighter>.
3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. *The Reminiscences of a Marine*.
8. H.H. Seck “Group Threatens to Sue Over Corps’ Spiritual Fitness Initiative,” *Military.com*, October 20, 2016, <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2016/10/20/group-threatens-to-sue-over-corps-spiritual-fitness-initiative.html>.
9. Cf., D.A. Daigle & D.V. Goff, “Beyond Lawyer Assistance Programs: Applying the United States Marine Corps’ Concepts and Principles of Spiritual Fitness as a Means toward Increasing the Health, Resiliency and Well-Being of Lawyers-While Restoring the Soul of the Profession,” *The Journal of Catholic Legal Studies* 59, no. 1 (2021).
10. Department of the Navy, *SECNAVINST 1730.7D* (Washington, DC: August 2008).
11. Gen R.B. Neller, *ALMAR 033/16*, (Washington, DC: October 2016).
12. See CDR Maurice A. Buford, “The Lejeune Ethical Arming Project (L.E.A.P.): Building Resilient Warriors in the Informational Age,” *Marines*, n.d., [https://www.hqmc.marines.mil/Portals/61/Users/254/50/4350/Building%20Resilient%20Warriors%20in%20the%20information%20Age_The%20Lejeune%20Ethical%20Arming%20Project%20\(CH%20Buford\).pdf](https://www.hqmc.marines.mil/Portals/61/Users/254/50/4350/Building%20Resilient%20Warriors%20in%20the%20information%20Age_The%20Lejeune%20Ethical%20Arming%20Project%20(CH%20Buford).pdf).
13. Ibid.
14. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCWP 6-10 Leading Marines* (Washington, DC: June 2016).
15. Gidget Fuentes, “What’s the Commandant Talking About When He Says Marines Need to Be ‘Spiritually’ Fit?” *We Are the Mighty*, April 2, 2018, <https://www.wearethemighty.com/articles/whats-the-commandant-talking-about-when-he-says-marines-need-to-be-spiritually-fit>.
16. Ibid; and *ALMAR 033/16*.
17. Ibid.
18. Gen David H Berger, *ALMAR 027/20, Resiliency and Spiritual Fitness* (Washington, DC: December 2020).
19. See *Fuentes supra* note 15. See also, J. Schogol, “‘Spiritual Fitness’ Not Just about God, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Says,” *Marine Corps Times*, November 27, 2017, www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2017/11/27/spiritual-fitness-not-just-about-god-sergeant-major-of-the-marine-corps-says.
20. Ibid; and Headquarters Marine Corps, *Spiritual Fitness* (Washington, DC: May 2019). The potential misconception that the chaplain is in charge of spiritual fitness is addressed within this Marine Corps resource in the first entry under “Common Misconceptions.”
21. “From Character to Courage.”
22. Spiritual fitness can broadly be construed as that which connects with the transcendent and thereby increases the readiness, resiliency, and combat effectiveness of warfighters. Although there can be a religious aspect to spiritual fitness, it is a broader construct and is not limited to or constrained by religion in general. See e.g., D. Yeung, M.T. Martin, *Spiritual Fitness and Resilience: A Review of Relevant Constructs, Measures, and Links to Well-Being* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2013). See also Staff, “QPME: Fitness for Marines,” *Marine Corps University Research Library*, n.d., <https://grc-usmcu.libguides.com/pme/qpme/fitness-for-marines/spiritual-fitness>.
23. *Spiritual Fitness*.
24. The Marine Corps does not stand alone among the military services as to its beliefs on the value of spiritual fitness. The Joint Chiefs of Staff and other Services take a similar approach to spirituality and spiritual fitness. See Staff, Joint Chiefs Say Mind Body Spirit All Part of Total Force Fitness,” *Health.mil*, January 7, 2020, <https://www.health.mil/News/Articles/2020/01/07/Joint-Chiefs-say-mind-body-spirit-all-part-of-Total-Force-Fitness>.
25. See Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCO 1500.61, Marine Leader Development* (Washington, DC: July 2017).
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid. As *MCO 1500.61* notes, “The development of Marines and Sailors is a deliberate process, driven by commanders and leaders, and includes all Marines and sailors. Regular teaching, coaching, counseling, and mentoring between Marine leaders and subordinates is vital.”
28. Ibid; and Staff, “USMC Human Performance Branch, Quantico VA,” *Marines*, n.d., <https://www.fitness.marines.mil>. Marine Corps resiliency initiatives include mental fitness, physical fitness, and spiritual fitness under the Human Performance Branch, Quantico, VA. See also *Spiritual Fitness*.
29. “USMC Human Performance Branch, Quantico VA.”
30. Ibid. As the official website for the Marine Corps Resiliency Program, the Human Performance Office is the repository of mental, social, and spiritual fitness training to include as well mental and physical fitness initiatives.
31. Ibid. One of the stated functions of the Human Performance Office is to “Explore, coordinate, implement, and oversee Marine Corps resiliency initiatives.”
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. See Staff, “Fitness Resources,” *Marine Corps University*, n.d., <https://www.usmcu.edu/mld-fitness>. The fitness resource page contains information and practices to aid Marines in promoting, sustaining, and restoring fitness.”
36. *ALMAR 0027/20*.
37. Ibid. The focus on spiritual fitness is not simply an idealistic goal hearkening back to a bygone era. See generally *USMC’s Concepts and Principles of Spiritual Fitness*. The available evidence supports the hypothesis that spiritual fitness creates better outcomes and individual behaviors during combat.
38. Ibid. See also Staff, “Dictionary of Navy Slang Compiled From Various Sources,” *Goat Locker*, n.d., <http://goatlocker.org/resources/nav/navyslang.pdf>.
39. Department of the Navy, *NTTP 1-05M and MCRP 6-12B, Religious Lay Leader*, (Washington, DC: May 2016).
40. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCDP 1, Warfighting* (Washington, DC: 1993).
41. Ibid; Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCRP 6-11B W/CH 1, Marine Corps Values: A User’s Guide for Discussion Leaders* (Washington, DC: October 1998); and Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCDP 7, Learning* (Washington, DC: 2020).



Administration in the Reserves

When “good enough” isn’t

by LtCol Adam Bonifant

The trust we place in our Marines results from our confidence in their abilities, and those abilities develop from a combination of rigorous training and repetitive, on-the-job execution. Would you trust a scout sniper who had only two days of sniper training to execute a Hathcock-style, solitary mission in enemy territory? Would you trust a team of food service specialists with 48 hours of schoolhouse training to feed your entire battalion while deployed to an area with no contracted dining facility? If not, then why do we entrust the administrative readiness of Marine Forces Reserve (MFR), comprising one-fifth of the total force, to Administration Specialists (MOS 0111) who receive only two days of Reserve-specific training at their MOS-producing school?

“Competence is having sufficient knowledge, judgment, and skills to perform a particular duty, job, or function. Marines improve competencies through formal and informal learning opportunities.”

—MCDP 7, Learning

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policies and one organizational reality of the independent duty construct. The first faulty training policy is that the schoolhouse training lacks sufficient focus on reserve-specific topics for reserve Marines and for the active-duty Marines who will serve on independent duty supporting the Reserves. Second, approved reserve-specific training is conducted in an *ad hoc*, best-effort style vice being designed deliberately to create independent duty-ready 0111s. Finally, an MFR reorganization initiated in 2016 was based on an active-duty troop-to-task calculation, not those based on independent duty. The aggregated result of these three shortfalls is an MFR-wide problem on whom the burden to overcome it is placed on the shoulders of each reserve unit’s admin chief.

Let us begin by examining the two training shortfalls, starting with the dearth of reserve-specific training at the schoolhouse at Camp Johnson, NC. The 0111 career path starts at the Administration Specialists Course (ASC). Logically, this course focuses on administrative actions and policies that were written with active duty (which is 81 percent of the Marine Corps) in mind. ASC currently dedicates two days (out of the eight-week course) to reserve-specific training. These two days are not enough to train the students on the *Marine Corps Reserve Administra-*

tive Management Manual, the primary reference publication for 0111s serving in a Selected Marine Corps Reserve (SMCR) unit. Moreover, if most 0111s coming out of Personnel Admin School are going to active-duty units, and the two days of reserve admin “fam-fire” is not enough to adequately train students going to a reserve unit, then why include that reserve training at all? It is irrelevant training for the vast majority of 0111 students, and it is insufficient training for those active duty and SMCR Marines headed to a reserve unit. *Note: Until recently, the Intermediate and Advanced Administration Specialists Courses each dedicated seven days out of their eight- and six-week curricula, respectively, to reserve-specific training. With the newest version of these courses, all reserve-specific training has been eliminated.*

The second training shortfall concerns the only reserve-specific training course available: Reserve and Independent Duty Administration Course (RIDAC). The Commander, Marine Forces Reserve (MARFORRES) ordered the creation of this course in 2017 because he “acknowledged that reserve and independent duty administration is a very diverse and complex form of administration and that no formalized educational platform existed to provide administrators with the requisite knowledge to succeed on independent duty.” If RIDAC accomplished its goal, this article would not be necessary. Despite the correct intentions behind RIDAC’s genesis, it has become a check-block. Four sessions are offered quarterly, each instructed by the senior enlisted 0111 from each of the three Major Subordinate Commands (MSCs) and Headquarters Battalion in

MARFORRES. Each course accommodates up to twenty students and is intended for only those students who are currently serving in, or heading to, units within their MSC. Additionally, there is a prioritized categorization for potential students which leaves Reserve 0111s relegated to Priority 5 (out of 6). A recent inquiry to one of the MSC instructors to allow reserve Marines to occupy available class seats was dismissed with the explanation that reserve Marines did not need the training.

On the surface, this sentiment would seem misguided, but when one speaks to those Marines who have completed the course, one becomes aware that RIDAC has become a Marine Corps Reserve Administrative Management Manual orientation course. If RIDAC cannot offer training that is any more relevant than the two days offered at ASC, then perhaps RIDAC truly is unnecessary for reserve Marines. But if that is the case, then RIDAC is irrelevant for all Marines and should be eliminated. *Note: Active-duty Marines who are serving on independent duty in support of an SMCR unit have a higher priority to attend RIDAC.*

To resolve the training insufficiencies (and considering the changes already in progress), a new, two-week training course should be created. It should be conducted at the schoolhouse and scheduled to occur immediately before filling an independent duty billet (for Active Duty 0111s) or a Reserve Admin billet (for SMCR 0111s). The curriculum should stress Applied Reserve Administration, building off the ASC and Intermediate and Advanced Administration Specialists Courses coursework.

To maintain relevance, this course should be informed, and continuously refined, by trend data collected at the MSC G1 level which identifies deficiencies or delinquencies in administrative problem areas. The senior enlisted 0111s throughout MARFORRES should also ensure that the refined curriculum includes any new policies or MARADMINs that have reserve-specific applications or nuances to ensure that training focuses on current issues, policies, and orders that affect the reserve community.

“Those commanders who properly organize, task, and equip their reserves are usually the ones with the capability to finish the enemy when the opportunity arises.”

—MCDP 1-3, Tactics

The last shortfall is organizational. To understand this issue, one must first understand the force laydown of the reserves and the array of non-MET-related tasks levied on the Inspector-Instructor (I-I) staff who support them. (The I-I are the active-duty Marines who support the SMCR units.) With a budgeted end-strength of 38,500 per the 2020 NDAA, the SMCR mirrors the active-duty MEFs, containing an HQ Bn, 4th MarDiv, 4th MLG, and 4th MAW. These MSCs are all headquartered in New Orleans, LA. Regiments, wing groups, battalions, and squadrons are

the SMCR is supported by Inspector-Instructor (I-I) staff and led by another command-slated lieutenant colonel (for battalions). I-I staffs are skeleton crews of active-duty and active-reserve Marines comprised of approximately 25 percent of the strength of a standard active component battalion-level staff. The primary role of the I-I is to manage all equipment, facilities, and administrative programs to facilitate the training, readiness, and mobilization capacity of the reserve battalion.

Additionally, the I-I must deliver on non-mission essential task missions. Toys for Tots, a MARFORRES-directed mission, monopolizes the time of the I-I staff (with some SMCR volunteers) throughout November and December. Casualty Assistance Officer duties have diminished since the reduction in overseas forces in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, but it is still a persistent requirement that requires training and hair-trigger response times. The most time-consuming non-mission essential task mission is the Funeral Honors Detail (FHD). Per Veterans' Affairs, 130,000 FHDs are conducted every year. Our I-I staffs may perform

Because the SMCRs serve in uniform only 38 days in a calendar year, the SMCR is supported by Inspector-Instructor (I-I) staff ...

scattered around the United States and are rarely collocated. Line companies are also rarely collocated with their battalion headquarters. A battalion's subordinate units can span a dozen states.

Battalions are led by a command-slated SMCR lieutenant colonel located at the Headquarters and Service Company site with the command staff. Each of these subordinate companies and detachments is led by an SMCR company commander or detachment officer-in-charge. The table of organization of each reserve company and detachment is similar to their active-duty counterparts.

Because the SMCRs serve in uniform only 38 days in a calendar year,

dozens of these each week for veterans who have served our Nation honorably. These FHDs require six to eight Marines, dressed in Dress Blues and trained in the protocols of the FHD, to travel up to three or four hours one-way to perform their duty. For many funerals, the FHD team is out of the office for the entire day. As you can imagine, this puts a strain on the remaining I-I staff to accomplish their day-to-day tasks.

For those wondering why the SMCR Marines are not used for these missions, let me explain. SMCR Marines are usually working a civilian job or are in school during their SMCR contract. Although FHD duty is offered to SMCR



When mobilized and deployed, SMCR Marines must be just as combat-ready as their active component counterparts. (Photo by Sgt Anthony L. Ortiz.)

Marines as paid time, few can get the time off work or school, so the burden falls to the I-I staff. FHDs are a no-fail mission. Toys For Tots is an odd issue. Despite that it is a MARFORRES no-fail mission, there is no budget to pay SMCR Marines to participate. Some volunteer, but as Christmas draws close each year, Marines usually spend their time trying to make money to support their families and buy Christmas gifts instead of volunteering time. And as with the FHD duty, this mission falls to the I-I to accomplish.

Why is this a shortfall that affects the Administration community? It's all about on-the-job training. When schoolhouse training ends, on-the-job training begins. Senior enlisted Marines train (or coordinate training for) their Marines to enhance the MOS training they received at the schoolhouse. During an independent duty tour, though, senior-enlisted Marines do not have sufficient time and opportunity to conduct classes for their active-duty (I-I) Marines during the week or even for the reserve Marines who serve one weekend each month. For the 0111s, that responsibility will fall to the senior enlisted 0111 at every reserve site. Headquarters and Service Company sites have a master sergeant admin chief. Company- and detachment-level sites have a gunnery

sergeant admin chief. The concern is that the quality of training may vary greatly by site, based on the expertise of the admin chief as well as the time available to conduct that training. When FHDs, Toys for Tots, casualty assistance, community relations, and daily admin requirements take priority, training will be deprioritized, having a knock-on effect.

Any current success in the Marine Forces Reserve admin community is a testament to the sheer force of will ...

Although the aforementioned issues result in late pay, late promotion and Marine-of-the-Quarter boards, inconsistent travel reimbursements, and ineffective school seat applications (amongst a litany of other ankle-biters) that kill unit morale, the knock-on effect is played out most visibly (for leadership) during MCAAT inspections. Prior to the BLAM initiative beginning in 2016, the average MCAAT score in MFR was 61.14 percent with 80 percent of units

assessed at Non-Mission Capable. Since Battalion-level Administration Management (BLAM) was initiated, the average score rose to 76.08 percent. The second lowest score in MFR was 67 percent (5 points higher than the previous average)! Whereas BLAM went a long way to structuring the Reserve forces for success, that's merely the first step. Civilian organizations that focus on positive organizational change use the concept of People-Processes-Tools. The first step is to ensure the *people* aspect is optimized. Address any shortfalls in organizational structure, ensure the correct people are filling the correct billets, and train those people. Only then should an organization proceed to the next step, which is to analyze and refine *processes*, and then create *tools* to support those refined processes. MARFORRES and Training Command need to come together on the proper training to support this new force laydown resulting from BLAM.

“The reserve represents our bid to achieve a favorable decision or to prevent an unfavorable one.”

—MCDP 1-3, Tactics

Any current success in the Marine Forces Reserve admin community is a testament to the sheer force of will of those admin chiefs and their independent duty staffs distributed across reserve units around the country. Consequently, the nineteen percent of the Marine Corps who rely on these under-trained but very motivated teams are not receiving the best administrative support the Marine Corps can offer. Moreover, commanders (like myself) risk combat and mobilization readiness due to administrative shortcomings. I argue there is danger in proceeding “as we always have.” The solution is actually very simple: realistic, timely training.



Fixing Correspondence

Small changes to make a cumulative difference

by Capt Charles Borinstein

The purpose of formal correspondence in any organizational setting is to make a position, opinion, or request known to its recipients by communicating information clearly and effectively. Today's naval correspondence norms, and more specifically Marine Corps correspondence norms, do not bring about peak clarity and delivery. Many of our modern correspondence habits are anachronistic byproducts of the pre-digital age and in turn have become time-honored inconveniences instead of methods by which we make communication clear and effective. While seemingly trivial at first glance, our failure to adapt to modern practices for written communication likely costs the Marine Corps thousands of hours and millions of dollars each year in productivity, supplies, and miscommunication. Our document routing and records management systems continue to waste tremendous amounts of time, effort, and resources. A few minor changes to our current correspondence practices could yield exponential returns on our force's productivity and ability to adroitly communicate data and information. The following recommendations are intended to modernize our way of generating, distributing, and storing official correspondence.

Abolish the use of the Courier New font. According to the *Naval Correspondence Manual* "Times New Roman 12-point is the preferred font style and size for official correspondence, but Courier New may be used for informal correspondence."¹ Despite the manual's clear intent on making Times New Roman the primary font of use, Courier New remains very popular and even standard among Marine Corps units, including Headquarters Marine Corps. The Courier New font is unique in that it

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allocates the same amount of paper to all characters, including punctuation symbols. Fonts that do this are known as monospace fonts.² For instance, the Courier New period at the end of this sentence and the space following it both take up the same amount of line space as this Courier New letter M. While the characters themselves are clearly different sizes, the amount of space they are each allocated on paper remains the same.

Today's naval correspondence norms, and more specifically Marine Corps correspondence norms, do not bring about peak clarity and delivery.

Monospace fonts are relics of the typewriter era and have been largely replaced by proportional fonts. With the rise of digital word processors like Microsoft Word and the advent of digital typography (the study of fonts), monospace fonts are largely obsolete today. Proportional fonts, on the other hand, assign each character a given width that is proportional to its size.³ In a proportional font, the space that a period consumes is much narrower than that which an "M" does.

So why does this matter? Proportional fonts have long been shown to be much easier to read than monospace fonts. Whereas monospace fonts are agnostic to a symbol's size, proportional fonts have been specifically designed to increase readability for their users and allow the reader to subconsciously focus on whole words instead of individual letters.⁴ In addition to being more difficult to read, the Courier New font takes up much more space than most variable fonts, including Times New Roman. For context, I repeatedly copied and pasted the above paragraphs (merged without newline spacing) until they filled nine unbroken pages in Times New Roman. After converting the font to Courier New, the document totaled 14 pages—a 55 percent increase in paper use. While Courier New typically uses less ink than Times New Roman, it takes up far more space.⁵ Although uninformed by an in-depth cost analysis, I find it safe to conclude that a switch from the Courier New font has a strong likelihood to serve the Marine Corps positively when considering savings on paper costs, reduced paper waste, and improved individual productivity.

Eliminate the "double space" following periods. The double space is another remnant of the typewriter age and serves no purpose except to create cause for otherwise well-written documents to be marked up and returned to their originators. The double space was originally used when monospace fonts made it difficult for readers to quickly recognize the end of one sentence and the beginning of another. With modern proportional

fonts, the extra effort is no longer a necessity but an inconvenience. Today, very few credible style guides recommend using two spaces between sentences, including the APA, Chicago Manual of Style, AP, and Harvard University Information Technology's Design for Readability.⁶ Even the U.S. Government's very own Publishing Office Style Manual mandates that "a single justified word space will be used between sentences (key one space when typing). This applies to all types of composition."⁷ By eliminating its requirement for double spaces between sentences in conjunction with abolishing the use of the Courier New font, the Marine Corps will invariably reduce any given document's average number of quality control iterations as it proceeds through its routing process, saving valuable time and resources.

Stop corresponding in all-caps. Our tradition of communicating formal correspondence in all-caps dates to 1850, when the Navy's teletype machines only included uppercase letters.⁸ Today, there is no sensible reason to do so. Some argue that all-caps should be used to emphasize a message's importance. In reality, all-caps *de-emphasizes* a message and substantially reduces its readability—especially with monospace fonts—because each word loses its distinct shape and takes on a similar rectangular form.⁹ Moreover, Microsoft Word by default does not spell-check capitalized words because it assumes they are acronyms. These two facts alone probably account for most citation mistakes in the Marine Corps' awards archives. To emphasize a word or phrase, one should instead use **bold** or *italics* (underlining now indicates a hyperlink and should be avoided as a tool for emphasis), and we should reserve using all-caps exclusively for acronyms.

Teach Marines to use active voice when writing and speaking. While less about productivity and more about responsibility, the absence of active voice in institutional (especially government) literature and dialogue at large is generally common practice. Although it certainly has its proper place in all forms of writing and discussion, passive voice is excessively used in bureaucracies like

ours because it helps individuals to avoid blame and responsibility. We are almost all guilty of this. For instance, when asked why a shipment of supplies has not yet arrived, we are far more prone to respond with "the open purchase request was not submitted on time" instead of "we did not submit the open purchase request on time." Active voice also makes orders and directives clearer to recipients. Instead of saying, "the quarterdeck needs to be cleaned by the Marines in the S-4 on Tuesday," we can be much clearer by speaking in active voice: "the Marines in the S-4 are responsible for cleaning the quarterdeck on Tuesday." By restructuring the sentence to make the Marines in the S-4 its subject, we have established more clear ownership over the task at hand.

... there is a more efficient way to review and manage documents and records ...

Digitize and automate the document routing process. The recently published *MCBul 5210* begins with "the Federal government recognizes the need to improve agencies' efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness to citizens by converting paper-based processes to electronic workflows, expanding online services, and enhancing management of government records, data, and information."¹⁰ The highest levels of our organization clearly realize that there is a more efficient way to review and manage documents and records, but even despite the forces of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have yet to digitize our records management system. There is no longer any reasonable basis for units to continue routing, reviewing, and signing paper copies of orders, directives, and miscellaneous documents requiring a signature. Known for its creation of excessive and unnecessary paper waste, our manual records management process is unacceptably inefficient. Although simple in theory, the process of preparing a request

or appointment letter for signature by a commander can take weeks or even months—often long enough to render the document obsolete by the time it is returned to its originator. Many units use routing sheets to clearly outline a document's originator, reviewers, approvers, and signers to make such a process "fool-proof." Yet time and again, our documents find themselves returned months later after having been mishandled, lost, corrected, or forgotten about. There is no reason that we cannot generate, route, edit, sign, and return documents in an entirely digital environment given the technology available to us today. Instead of printing new copies each time documents are "red-penned" throughout the routing process, we should take advantage of Microsoft Word's reviewing capabilities, such as comments and trackable changes. Not only do these tools allow more physical space to make comments on the document, but they are also more efficient for both the originator and the editor. Originators can more easily implement recommended and required changes because they do not need to transcribe handwriting into digital print. Editors, on the other hand, benefit from digital editing because it allows them to communicate their intent more specifically, insert changes as they see fit, and more precisely observe the intricate measurements and spacing conventions associated with Naval Standard Letter Format.

To prevent documents from being lost, mishandled, and forgotten about, the Marine Corps should acquire a digital ecosystem that allows users to seamlessly generate, route, edit, sign, and return documents to their originators without ever having to print a document on paper. In addition to making our organization more capable and resilient in emergency circumstances such as global pandemics, such an ecosystem would substantially reduce the amount of time Marines spend on the trivial details of document formatting, creating more time for Marines to train and for leaders to lead. There are numerous existing commercial applications that accomplish this already, including some native to the private sector versions of the Microsoft 365 suite, such as the Flow app in Mi-

Microsoft Teams. Regardless, such an application should be capable of allowing the originator and follow-on reviewers to map the document's "route" digitally and should automatically return the document to the originator once it is signed. It should also notify users when their action is required and allow originators to see the status of their submissions. Such a system would bring transparency to our records management processes (likely improving morale and reducing finger-pointing), encourage compliance with *MCBul 5210*, and save the Marine Corps tremendous amounts of time and resources.

Despite its reputation as trivial in the minds of many Marines, correspondence is a critical function of the Marine Corps' ability to command and control. As they currently stand, our common practices and norms surrounding correspondence are antiquated vestiges of the pre-digital era which make little sense in today's digital environment. To reduce

the substantial toll of our outdated conventions and ineffective records management system, the Marine Corps must more seriously consider modernizing the way it creates, manages, and distributes correspondence at all levels. Doing so will generate notable returns on time, money, and productivity.

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2022 LtGen Bernard E. Trainor Military Writing Award Winner: First Place

Robo-Call (For Fire)

Overcoming PRC A2/AD degradation of naval air support through lethal autonomous weapons

by Capt W. Stone Holden

Marines across the Corps are working to adjust the tools and capabilities in their arsenal in the face of historic challenges, as demonstrated by the changes of *Force Design 2030*.¹ The threat landscape is changing with the rise of China as a peer competitor, the resurgence of Russian aggression, and the proliferation of technologies that put capabilities in the hand of a wide range of actors.² These new threats demand an adjustment of time-honored tactics and operational tenants to remain lethal. Lethal autonomous weapons (LAWs) have the potential to reshape some battlefield fundamentals. These “killer robots” are defined by the DOD as “a weapon system that, once activated, can select and engage targets without further intervention by a human operator.”³ Perhaps their greatest impact will be seen when they are integrated into unmanned aerial systems (UAS) and loitering munitions (LMs). This combination possibly holds the key to giving Marines the edge in achieving combined arms effects in some of the most challenging operations that the future holds.

One of the most pressing scenarios shaping Marine Corps investments and planning is the possibility of a conflict with the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in the first or second island chains of the Western Pacific.⁴ Planning documents envisage a tough fight, characterized by widely dispersed battlespaces among isolated islands, supporting Expeditionary Advanced Basing Operations. The Marines have a deep historical understanding of the challenges this will present, as the Pacific

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campaign of World War II stands as a well-known testament to the difficulty of conducting such a fight. Much of the terrain is punishing jungle, the distances make timely support and relief of forces a critical consideration, and the dispersion of the potential areas of conflict mean that many assets traditionally support-

ing a maneuver force may be out of range to assist. Further complicating this conflict is the 21st-century arsenal of weapons that the PRC has invested in to deny the United States an ability to bring traditional power projection to a conflict like this without significant risks, usually referred to as anti-access/



Air support is an essential element to successful combined-arms amphibious operations, but A2/AD systems create a dangerous gap in support. (Photo by MSgt Michael Schellenbach.)

area denial capabilities (A2/AD). Systems like DF-21D anti-ship missiles, anti-submarine weapons, and densely integrated air defense systems threaten to strip the Marines of the future of a key ingredient to their success: air superiority projected from naval platforms.⁵ The PRC is keenly aware of the reliance of U.S. forces on air support. It can be guaranteed that they will do everything in their power to deny that to Marines in the event of a conflict, primarily by putting naval assets at risk if employed. Suppose the Navy cannot safely move assets into a range that provides fire and air support. In that case, the Marines will be forced to find other ways to compensate for this degradation of available airpower to support operations.

The Marine Corps fights in a way that is dependent on the ability of their aviators to provide support to ground maneuver forces. These air platforms are essential in producing the combined-arms effects, which are a key tenant of Marine Corps warfighting philosophy, enshrined in the most foundational doctrine.⁶ Combined arms involves using different weapon systems and capabilities to offset the inherent weaknesses of each platform while putting the adversary in the horns of a dilemma. An enemy soldier facing direct fire may have the option to remain behind cover, but if the safety of that cover is taken from them by using indirect fires as well, then an adversary only has the choice to stay in place and die or move and die. The mutually supporting nature of combined arms, when applied successfully, allows an adversary to choose *how* he accepts his fate, not *if*. Air power is a staple of this not just for the Marines but for the modern U.S. military in general. During operations in Iraq and Afghanistan during the 2000s, it was common for tens of thousands of close air support sorties to be flown annually. This figure does not even take into account the tens of thousands of ISR, refueling, airlift, and personnel recovery sorties that were required as part of support to that.⁷ If the Marine Corps is unable to guarantee the airpower, which is so important for creating the combined-arms effects that underpin their warfighting style, it will be a significant challenge in a future

conflict. There must be a way to mitigate the potential loss of this capability.

The ability of China to push back the naval platforms that would typically provide this air support certainly has its limits. It is unlikely that the PRC could effectively deny the vast spaces of the Pacific to all U.S. naval assets. Furthermore, seized or expeditionary airstrips on U.S.-controlled islands could act as unsinkable aircraft carriers, but this course of action also poses unique risks and considerations. Not all potential ar-

While the United States still has a technological lead on long-range sensing, the PRC launched over 70 space assets in 2020 alone with over 250 total satellites in orbit by 2022.⁸ Many of these are assessed to be dual-use civil-military

reas will have the landmass to support a modern airstrip or will be in range of one. Additionally, the Marines will need to either maintain facilities that they currently hold or have access to, establish expeditionary facilities, or seize those that can support their air assets. This will be a tall order without air support and, once completed, may not be a truly permanent solution. Any such expeditionary airstrip will be a major target for the PRC, especially given their increased capabilities in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, which will allow them to detect such facilities or the presence of U.S. aircraft at them. While the United States still has a technological lead on long-range sensing, the PRC launched over 70 space assets in 2020 alone with over 250 total satellites in orbit by 2022.⁸ Many of these are assessed to be dual-use civil-military, with

many of the same sensing capabilities now extending into the Pacific, which have aided the United States in executing actions against distant adversaries for so long.⁹ Furthermore, if an island or airstrip needs to be taken from enemy control before establishing a location for air support, there is still a significant period during the maneuver actions where there is a gap in air capabilities. That gap could well mean the difference between successfully taking the area or being pushed back, and it must be compensated for. Seizing and holding existing airstrips or creating expeditionary airstrips will be a critical element of any operation in a conflict of this type, but the growing capabilities of the PRC to sense and act against those facilities means there are significant drawbacks.

Emerging technologies hold the potential to greatly enhance the capabilities of the forces which can adopt them most effectively, most quickly. LAWs are one such technology (or more accurately, combination of technologies) that potentially hold the solution to this gap. This technology involves a combination of advanced robotics (air, ground, or maritime) and broad artificial intelligence (AI). The Second Nagorno-Karabakh War in the Fall of 2020 offers a glimpse of the potential benefits these types of systems can provide. Azerbaijan, having lost the first conflict with Armenia in 1994, invested heavily into UAS technologies and LMs in the lead-up to the war.¹⁰ The Azeris used their UAS and LMs to compensate for a lack of traditional airpower and achieved impressive combined-arms effects against well-entrenched personnel, armor, and logistical support of the Armenians.¹¹

Three of the most important systems used were the Bayraktar TB2 (Turkish), the Harop, and the Orbiter (LMs made by Israeli companies) were integrated into the battle plans and allowed Azerbaijan to compensate for a small conventional air force at a fraction of the cost or support required.¹² These UAS and LMs provided a significant advantage over the Soviet-styled capabilities of their adversaries and demonstrated some key advances of UAS technology when paired with broad AI capabilities. The Azeris used LMs produced



Experimentation with UAS and other forms of lethal autonomous weapons (LAWs) now may hold the key to future Marines maintaining air support in areas denied to traditional assets by adversary A2/AD. (Photo by SSgt Jordan E. Gilbert.)

by Israel and Turkey with devastating effects on the battlefield. Part of their effectiveness was a limited AI interface which allowed a human-in-the-loop or human-out-of-the-loop relationship with the weapons, providing a level of control but also relieving personnel of monitoring the weapons full time until a target was identified.¹³ Once fired, the munitions would loiter over a designated zone until targets matching pre-set parameters were identified, which notified a human controller who could decide to engage. This early type of AI integration to weapon systems was incredibly effective.¹⁴ In addition to the immediate battlefield success, the combat application provided invaluable long-term training in the AI systems and algorithms. These underpin the weapons' ability to accurately identify and engage targets while proving the value of attritable systems which used technological advances in AI to act as LAWs.¹⁵ The opportunity to train AI algorithms in a conflict and to apply changes to make the capabilities more robust will only enhance their capabilities in the future.

The Marine Corps should begin developing, testing, and integrating LAW UAVs and LMs to help maintain the ability of maneuver units to conduct long-range precision strikes in areas that

may be potentially denied to traditional aircraft. While the algorithms and technologies that underly the capabilities witnessed in Nagorno-Karabakh are still relatively new, the sustained rate of technological change means that these capabilities will likely mature in a relatively short timeframe.¹⁶ UAS and LM LAWs would help mitigate the potential

The Chinese military is already actively experimenting with AI-based technologies, seeking to integrate them into their overall defense strategy at every echelon while gathering data that will refine these initial AI efforts along the way.¹⁹

degradation of the U.S. ability to project air support from naval platforms and provide maneuver units with the ability to conduct precision fires at a relatively low cost in terms of manpower and equipment. Israeli Harop systems are designed to be fired from a launcher, similar to a HIMARs, and travel a thousand kilometers or nine hours to a target or loitering. Much of the flight can be preprogrammed and requires much less

hands-on support from an operator than a traditional UAS platform because of its automated functions. If it is not expended, it can be recovered and reused. The Orbiter LMs have similar recovery capabilities but are smaller and cheaper.¹⁷ The combination of portability, cost-effectiveness, and low manpower requirements are all areas that the Marine Corps is notorious for emphasizing when developing new capabilities.

Whether the Marines move to develop and integrate these capabilities, adversaries are already making strides. While the Israeli and Turkish systems demonstrated in the Nagorno-Karabakh War are commercially produced systems, other nations are working towards their own platforms. The PRC is moving ahead in the development of systems with these capabilities and has shown a sharp interest in the technologies which underpin LAWs themselves, such as AI. Defense writer Christian Brose has documented the PRC's efforts toward developing AI, a fundamental element of effective LAWs. His analysis examines some of the benefits the PRC enjoys in the race for AI, derived from their top-down authoritarian structure. This concentration of power allows them to marshal resources, direct private and government collaboration, and access data from the

world's most populous country without the democratic concerns over privacy and human rights.¹⁸ The Chinese military is already actively experimenting with AI-based technologies, seeking to integrate them into their overall defense strategy at every echelon while gathering data that will refine these initial AI efforts along the way.¹⁹ The PRC has accelerated AI development under President Xi Jinping, directing efforts

to clarify AI development and implementation policies, including military applications.²⁰ The 2015 policy “Made in China 2025” clearly codified the acceleration and described the plan to make China a leader in advanced technologies (foundational to AI) by 2030. In 2017, the PRC issued its “Next Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan,” explicitly laying out a path to the national development of AI in a dedicated policy document.²¹ This plan included a raft of government support, including research subsidies, venture capital, incubators for technology, and the creation of special zones for the development of AI.²² The PRC has conducted tests of swarms of autonomous UAVs, and Chinese weapons manufacturers have advertised systems with LAW capabilities, such as the machinegun-armed Blowfish A3 helicopter UAS by Ziyun.²³ These systems are coming to a battlefield near you, with the potential to reshape the pace and conduct of fighting.

While the United States does not currently have a prohibition against LAWs, they also do not publicly acknowledge to fielding any yet.²⁴ A variety of Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, DOD, and other government programs at the publicly available level have invested in the technological foundations that are required for LAWs such as AI and a wide range of unmanned systems.²⁵ The Marine Corps has a unique mission that will require the types of advantages provided by LAWs, compensating for highly contested airspace, increasing the organic lethality of maneuver units, and helping to bridge the gap between going ashore in the islands of the Pacific and establishing enough control to allow friendly aircraft to begin supporting operations. Perhaps the Marines need a few good *killer robots* to support a few good men in their next fight

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2022 LtGen Bernard E. Trainor Military Writing Award Winner: Honorable Mention

Assured C2

Pivoting the 06xx community

by LtCol Arun Shankar

At present, the role of the 06xx communicator is primarily focused on operating and maintaining equipment. The highly dynamic and technical nature of this occupational field (occfld) has previously allowed little room for responsibilities beyond the fundamental activities of network storage, transport, and security. However, the consolidation of this complexity to cloud network management, commercial satellite service rentals, and web-based software applications will transform this setting.

Moreover, today's communicators are charged with the overarching responsibility of *Assured Command and Control (C2)*—setting the optimal conditions for a commander to issue orders, receive feedback, and make decisions. Consequently, network capabilities only cover only a fraction of this task. The management of knowledge and information also underpins this definition, but communicators do not yet embrace this role.

The combination of these emerging circumstances requires a significant adaptation of our occfld. In particular, manpower gained from centralized and outsourced capabilities can be shifted to information management, truly fulfilling the mission of Assured C2. The subsequent sections further develop this premise.

Current State

Assured C2. Command is the lawful authority and influence a commander has over his subordinates; control is the feedback loop that occurs between the issuance of the commander's orders and the assessment of their effect. Of these

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two elements, *assured control* should most interest communicators. Control can be boiled down to a science and largely delegated to a staff for action. Information and knowledge management drive the feedback loop that creates Control.

Following this logic, the assurance of control, through information management, goes far beyond the mere provision of a tactical network. The goal of information management is to create knowledge and shared understanding, eventually leading to the end state of decision making. This is done through the advancement of raw data along a cognitive hierarchy, using filters and fusion within the staff. It includes the establishment of battle rhythms, reports requirements, meaningful staff collaboration, and data management. Specifically, this management includes the storage, categorization, analysis, manipulation, and transit of the data. At present, communicators largely only focus on storage and transmission, passively enabling C2 but *not* actively assuring it.

Network consolidation. The consolidation of cloud storage, network infrastructure, data centers, and application servers is emerging across all three MEFS. Today, when units exercise or deploy, they often reach back to the local communications battalion for these

services rather than build them from scratch in the field. Moreover, some units even temporarily procure these capabilities *as-a-service*, where setup and maintenance are centralized and outsourced to commercial vendors. As a result, few units build servers anymore, relegating many data systems administrators to helpdesk tasks focused on user account paperwork and the configuration of end-user devices. The same is true for transmission systems operators in units where satellite communications are procured as-a-service.

The emergence of the Marine Corps Enterprise Network (MCEN) in field environments has reinforced this centralization effort. The MCEN contends to be the single network solution, with a seamless user transition from garrison to deployed environments. This cloud capability significantly reduces the complexity of server architectures in the field, shifting this burden to predominantly civilian organizations that are better trained and resourced for this role. Upcoming tactical exercise testing and experimentation will likely iron out the remaining hurdles in this endeavor.

This reliance on resilient satellite links for cloud reachback has been criticized because it cannot be depended upon during high-intensity phases of warfare. During these periods, enemy forces will

likely jam and/or geolocate these satellite signals, reducing their ability to transmit data. However, most regimental-sized units have adapted to this challenge, relying on resilient, line-of-sight radio networks in the absence of full mesh secure and non-secure internet. Consequently, short-burst communications are, once again, becoming an adequate method of controlling a unit.

Kill chains. Information flows along a kill chain, from *sensor* to *shooter*. A sensor draws raw data from the operating environment. Examples can include an intelligence asset, an aerial reconnaissance platform, a social media site, or a forward observer. A shooter places an effect on a target, whether it be kinetic or non-kinetic. A kill web is a two-dimensional kill chain with multiple sensors and shooters, forming a web of exponentially greater options for a commander.

Communicators are charged with enabling the shortest kill chains to commanders, where length is determined by time, not physical distance. The kill chain is akin to the OODA loop, where commanders observe and orient (sense), then decide and act (shoot). This model is conceptually synonymous with information management, where data is collected and processed into information, knowledge, and wisdom (sense), then presented for a decision (shoot).

Presently, communicators see kill chains as strings of transmissions systems, firewalls, network switches, routers, servers, and end-user devices that allow the efficient and reliable flow of information, but they do not see a role in optimizing and processing the information itself. Instead, this secondary role is stovepiped among the various warfighting functions in the kill chain, likely without oversight or synchronization, resulting in inefficiency, suboptimal tempo, and subpar decision making.

Information Environment. The newly established warfighting function of Information, as certified by the release of *MCDP 8*, includes cyber, space, and influence operations. Specific MOSs in the 17xx occfield were already established to tackle the tasks within these missions. The cyber-MOSs are focused on offensive and defense cyber operations, the space MOSs are dedicated to



The “iron mountain” of C2 equipment, once required to operate and manage information, is being replaced by lighter, more capable systems. (Photo by Sgt Jacob Wilson.)

space control activities, and the influence MOSs are rebranded combinations of the former psychological and information operations. However, the mission of Assured C2 remains with the 06xx community. It neatly serves as the foundation for all warfighting, to include information maneuver and its subcomponents; the information feedback loop that underlies control is the essence of decision making. For this reason, Assured C2 is the most vital component of the information environment.

Future State

The 06xx occfield should capitalize on the opportunities that lay ahead. First, the community must accept the emergence of commercial, *as-a-service* solutions for tactical networks and embrace the opportunity to export network complexity to an outsourced solution. This includes the use of the MCEN as the warfighting network in tactical environments. Our MEFs are already poised for this transition, as they have each now centralized domain ownership within the senior communications node. The MCEN still needs to prove ready and regular responsiveness to helpdesk matters, and it must allow flexible network permissions to appropriate leaders at the tactical edge. Further experimentation should be conducted during full-scale

GCE exercises, where network complexity and friction are at their highest. Once this is achieved, the MCEN should be adopted as the warfighting network. Without the MCEN fully serving its central purpose, efforts to run tactical networks continue to be duplicated at each MEF, creating a manpower tax that prevents investment in vital assured C2 and information management roles.

Second, the force structure gained from these outsourced solutions, particularly within the 067x community, should become information managers. These Marines should be trained in the use of data categorization, manipulation, and analysis tools, as well as basic application development. This includes a familiarization of popular C2 applications that provide the common operational picture, chat messaging, and fires deconfliction. These Marines must have a cursory understanding of staff processes and have a curiosity for owning and improving these processes without being summoned to do so. The newly formed 0673 application developer MOS can likely serve this purpose.

Third, communications chiefs should be introduced to staff processes, information management, and modern data science tools in career-level training. Without this, S-6 shops will fail in this mission, depending solely on the

enthusiasm of a young company-grade or field-grade officer to drive this effort. Information management is as much art as it is science, and it requires an understanding of people and culture, largely gained through years of experience, to ensure success. Our senior enlisted leaders provide this function.

Lastly, officers holding the 0602 MOS should be skilled in the true meaning of Assured C2, fully grasping the underlying concepts of staff roles and responsibilities, shortening kill chains, and optimizing decision making. They should also have a basic understanding of data science and associated software tools. Within C2, these officers should be focused on control, rather than command, since this is the element of C2 that is chiefly owned by the staff. This role goes beyond equipment strings; it requires a strong understanding of all seven warfighting functions and how a staff works to help a commander make decisions. Additionally, this G-6/S-6 officer should have the authority to optimize this information flow across the staff.

In this future state, communicators would be responsible for establishing the entire staff's battle rhythm, ensuring huddles and meetings are optimally scheduled to enhance and refine information flow. Collaboration would be planned and outlined prior to execution. Reports would be formatted, transmitted, and stored efficiently. The staff would use C2 applications interactively, with appropriate permissions and ground rules set by the G-6/S-6. Customized applications and spreadsheet tools would be developed by the G-6/S-6 to assist with this fusion. Data conditioning and curation could be delivered in hours or days rather than through the current, multi-year acquisition process. Automated tools would mine free text reports for data correlations across all warfighting functions. For instance, a tool might be developed to scour all safety incident reports from the last year, discovering a correlation between a lack of tactical vehicle training (G-4), inaccurate map data (G-2), and unserviceable tactical radios (G-6).

Marines in the 062x and 063x fields would continue establishing

and maintaining the transport layer of tactical networks. This includes local area switches, both wired and wireless. It also includes satellite terminals (when not outsourced), as well as the employment of single-channel radios, particularly during times of degraded communications. Fully trained 0671s could provide manpower to the MCEN hubs and spokes, while 0673s could serve as information managers under G-6/S-6 leaders, enhancing information flow and decision making across entire command staffs. In this manner, Assured C2 would be met in its fullest meaning.

... mobile, lightweight footprints that reach back to server farms and data centers are now becoming customary.

Concluding Remarks

Remaining in our current state is not an option. The burdensome, iron mountain tactical networks that we haul to the field and establish as our own zip code will no longer support the demands of our Corps. Instead, mobile, lightweight footprints that reach back to server farms and data centers are now becoming customary. Moreover, an aggregated cybersecurity effort at the Marine Corps Cyber Operations Group is much preferred over our ailing, haphazard security efforts in the field. This is best accomplished with one network—the MCEN.

Contrarians have also resisted commercial cloud and satellite solutions to tactical networks under the premise that they would not be reliable during a high-intensity conflict. This would likely be true inside the weapons engagement zone of the conflict, but not outside of it, where much of the decision making is happening. Tactical commanders inside the weapons engagement zone are trained and prepared to use resilient, line-of-sight links to pass critical information during short, designated time intervals. The consistent need for large

data pipes at these positions is no longer expected or justified.

Moreover, the longstanding resistance to inheriting the role of information management in the 06xx community must end. Chiefs of staff and executive officers are overwhelmed with modern legal and administrative obligations and, therefore, cannot also ensure effective information management throughout the staff. Assigning the task to a short-timer in the G-3/S-3 is also no longer sufficient. The role must be adopted by a primary staff officer that understands all warfighting functions with the skills and authority to impact the commander's decision making. This is especially important as we adopt *Force Design 2030* and the *Commandant's Planning Guidance*, where decentralized control underpins nearly every premise. The 06xx community is poised to take on this role.

Furthermore, a full inheritance of information management, killchains, and tactical network transport reinforces our occfield's status as warfighters, not just enablers. Success in this future environment demands a holistic understanding of MAGTF operations, building more versatile leaders within our MOS community. This, in turn, could lead to higher retention and better opportunities for career advancements. The time is right to make this bold, but necessary, change in our community.

>Author's Note: Credit is due to BGen Joseph Matos for sharing his thoughts on the future of our occfield. I equally thank Col Joe Broome for his fierce position on reenergizing our community. Lastly, thanks to my dear friend, LtCol Charlie Babk, for his efforts in developing the 0673 MOS and blazing a trail for its future.



Drive on Suez

The principle of maneuver

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

Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations*, states (1) *The purpose of maneuver is to place the enemy in a position of disadvantage through the flexible application of combat power.* (2) *Maneuver is the movement of forces in relation to the enemy to secure or retain positional advantage, usually to deliver—or threaten delivery of—the direct and indirect fires of the maneuvering force. Effective maneuver keeps the enemy off balance and thus also protects the friendly force. It contributes materially to exploiting successes, preserving freedom of action, and reducing vulnerability by continually posing new problems for the enemy.*

Wargame designs tend to reflect maneuver in straightforward ways. First, they can assign higher movement rates to faster units, or give those faster units the potential to move after combat. Players can group those faster units together to outflank enemy forces or to exploit gaps in the enemy line. These maneuver threats can lead the enemy to weaken their overall position by attempting to respond to all the potential threats. Maneuver can also be about getting to and controlling key terrain, especially terrain that blocks enemy units and provides avenues of rapid movement for friendly forces.

Wargame designs also reflect indirect uses of the principle of maneuver. One example is through supply and logistics rules. A game may include rules for the use of supply units, markers, or points to enhance movement and combat. This translates into player focus in how to maximize their use for maneuver (and for mass). Another simple mechanic is rules regarding “line of supply” where units must trace a series of hexes from units to supply sources to their full movement and combat (or may suffer attritional losses), either locations on the game map or supply, or command units. Maneuver can then be used by players to interdict supply lines and thus weaken or eliminate the enemy units that are then out of supply. The threat of maneuver to supply lines pushes the enemy to secure those supply sources and lines.

Decision Games’ **Drive on Suez** wargame (*World at War* #78) provides the player with decisions about maneuvering along lines of communications. The game is solitaire where the player takes command of Erwin Rommel’s *Panzerarmee Afrika*, a combined German-Italian force in the 1942 Axis offensive. The objective is to advance the *Panzerarmee* from the Libyan-Egyptian frontier, break through the British defenses at the El Alamein position, and then drive to the strategic objectives of Alexandria, Cairo, and the Suez Canal.

The game is solitaire because in the period the game covers, June to September 1942, the British military in the Western Desert was in a state of chaos. Eighth Army had been shat-

>**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.**

tered in the wake of Rommel’s Gazala offensive and the Axis sweeping into the port of Tobruk on the northeast Libyan coast. The game map shows the main axes of advance: the roads, tracks and desert trails that stretch from Tobruk across Egypt and east to the Canal. A major decision for the player is which of these routes to exploit for movement.



Most of the Axis units are at the division level, including both mechanized and non-mechanized formations, with some additional special regiments. Moving along the Coast Road (the red lines between spaces and red arrow) provides the advantage of faster movement. However, your spearheads are more likely to run into enemy forces on the only paved road. Tracks (the grey lines/green arrow) swing inland through the desert to the south. They slow down movement but there will likely be fewer British units in the way.



One decision is in exploiting deep desert operations. You can push south along the tracks to Siwa Oasis and then dispatch light armor reconnaissance battalions across the Desert Tracks (orange dashed lines/blue arrow) eastward across the Qattara Depression, a vast salt marsh. If they make it through, they can swing north along the Nile River and potentially take Cairo by surprise. By maneuvering along the far southern route, you can avoid a frontal assault on the British El Alamein line

of entrenchments. However, there's a tradeoff: the force that can pass through the deep desert route may not be strong enough to defeat the Cairo defenders and will require significant diversion of logistics.

Logistics are a major factor in maneuver operations. The Axis receives a randomly determined number of supply units each turn, this based on the current strength of the British Desert Air Force. Supply units come in at ports and can be placed in one of two modes: mobile (truck convoys) and non-mobile (depots). Depots have a greater support radius but cannot move. They are useful in static situations. Truck convoys can keep up with the mechanized spearheads but have limited logistical support abilities. This is critical because by expending supply units you can enhance the movement of your forces *or* conduct combat at full strength. Getting supply up front is another exercise in maneuver since they too must move along the various axes of advance.

Another way to enhance maneuver is by using air supply. The Axis has a limited number of air supply missions which, by being flown in at the right

time and place, can be decisive. This means control of airfields.

Axis control of airfields allows for local tactical air support. This can be critical because this provides up front combat support in situations where your forces might be otherwise outgunned. Maneu-

Logistics are a major factor in maneuver operations.

ver slated toward taking airfields will pay off in more mobility down the line.

One function of the game system is that it generates enemy counterattacks. British forces sweep in out of the desert to attack Axis columns. Counterattacks can place your forces in a bind and bring a deep movement to a halt. One way to counter this situation is to retain air-strikes in reserve to be committed to enhance the defense.

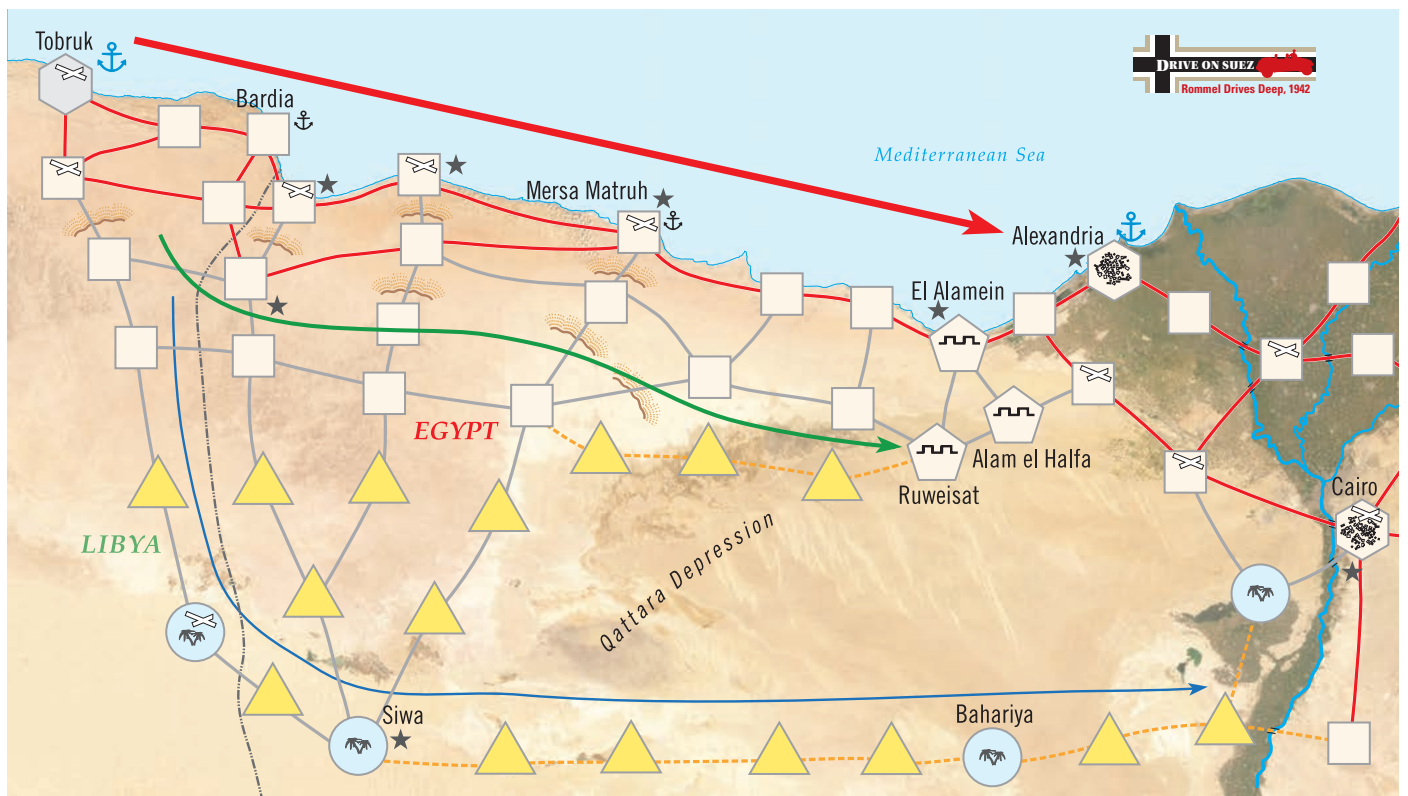
Airpower provides the Axis with a theater-level maneuver force. You can

use it to support your forces on the map, as noted above. You can also employ it against the Desert Air Force to reduce the effects of enemy bombers against your lines of supply.

The Axis has a limited capability to execute airborne and amphibious operations. These require some advance planning but pay off in deep maneuvers, seizing critical airfields and ports behind enemy lines.

Finally, there's a marker representing Erwin Rommel. His leadership bonus enhances the movement and combat of one friendly unit. Of course, Rommel can be only in one place at any one time, so you must determine where you want to commit the Desert Fox himself.

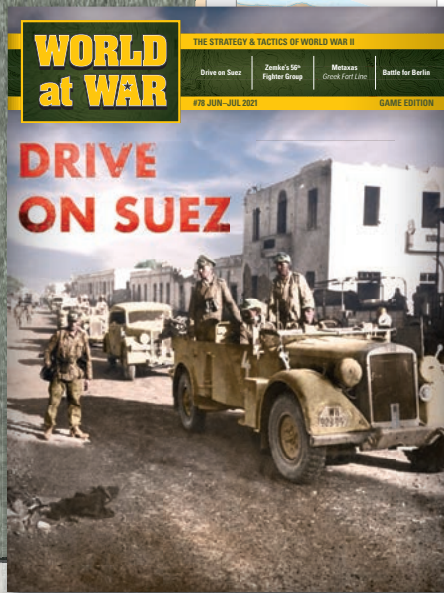
It's all there in the maneuvers on the desert roads to Suez in 1942.



World at War Issue #78

Drive on Suez: Maneuver

PAA Control Units Reinforcement	PAA Support Units Reinforcement	Desert Fan Tables	Terrain Effects Chart	Supply Unit Experience Chart
PAA Units & Support	PAA Units Reinforced	Desert Fan Parity Table	PAA Movement Value Chart	PAA Support Unit and Special Marker Summary Chart
PAA Units Reinforced	Command Support Tables	Air Superiority	PAA Supply Reinforcement Table	PAA Rules & Supplement Landing Table
PAA Units Reinforced	Command Support Tables	Come Turn Record Table	PAA Supply Reinforcement Table	Tactical Air and Sea Operations



Drive on Suez puts the player in command of the German-Italian Panzer Armee Afrika (PAA) during the 1942 campaign in Egypt as Rommel drives on the Suez Canal. The game begins immediately following the PAA capture of Tobruk in June 1942 and continues through to the August battle of Alam el Halfa. Your goal is to seize strategic objectives such as major cities on the Nile Delta and the Suez Canal. You will have to deal with a wide variety of situations, from battling against fierce counterattacks to finding ways to extend your supply lines. While Suez is a solitaire game, multiple players can play as the PAA team, making decisions by consensus, or each managing operations along one of the routes of advance.

Map: 22x34 inch, **Counters:** 176 5/8-inch, **Players:** Solitaire, **You Control:** Panzer Armee Afrika, **Opposing Forces:** Middle East Command, **Level:** Battalions–Divisions, **Map Scale:** 1 inch = 45 km, **Turn Scale:** Variable **Time Span:** Late June–October,



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Victors of the Great War

by Capt Alexandre Shivnen

In 1918, France fielded the largest, most advanced army the world had ever seen. She forged her forces with the intense fires of the First World War and so in the end stood as the victor of the Great War. By the end of the war, the French Republican Army was the most motorized, tank-integrated, and combined-arms-supported force in the world; however, 22 years later she was completely defeated by a force that was inferior on paper. There are many reasons why the defeat occurred, but prominently, the old guard from the First World War failed to adapt to the novelties of Blitzkrieg. Intense debate among theorists about the direction of the armed forces did occur during this time, but the tried and tested methods won out in the end. While the Axis adapted to Allied tactics, France stood still in her pride. The result was the largest defeat ever suffered by the French since Sedan and the guarantee of a long war to the forming Allied powers.

All of this is to say that not all experience, even combat experience, is applicable from one conflict to the next without continuous re-examination of tactics and operations. Some experiences can even be detrimental when re-applied carelessly to incompatible scenarios. The Global War on Terror is just such a conflict. Iraq and Afghanistan have shown themselves to be only distantly related to other modern conflicts. They are relevant in so far as one firefight is much the same for a Bavarian grenadier in 1872 as for an American Marine in 2011. Beyond that, tactical-level, Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) are aberrations. More useful to modern strategists would be the conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Donbass (2014–2021), and of course the current war in Ukraine.

These conflicts all consisted of large regular forces bringing to bear the full power of states on one another. What is striking in each is which units had primacy: battles in all three of these were primarily fought with fires. Enormous fires were applied that forced one side or the other to withdraw before engagements at rifle range could be initiated. In Nagorno-Karabakh, riflemen did not come into significant play until the end phase of the conflict when the Azerbaijanis started to run low on loitering munitions. In the Donbass, the infantry only closed when Ukrainian air assets were threatened by advanced SAMs, and even then artillery was still the primary weapon. In the current Ukraine conflict, Russia relies almost entirely on artillery for its combat power.

This contrasts greatly with OIF and OEF where foot mobile troops did the bulk of the fighting. The reason why is not hard to see, after all, fires are hard to direct without collateral damage when insurgents are using the population as cover and concealment. The rifleman was center stage, and our leadership was now gaining a different sort of experience. While that tactical-level experience has value, OIF and OEF combat does not translate well to the expected operational requirements of future conflicts. The big footprint, static command and control nodes that became routine are out of place. Where insurgents had little recourse against American forces in their compounds, peer adversaries will not be so restricted. The new norm of “to be seen is to be targeted, to be targeted is to be killed,” demands serious adaptation. Nothing is so easily seen as a big tent with a significant radio frequency signature. Commanders need to discount

>Capt Shivnen is an 0602 Communications Officer studying at the Naval Post Graduate School to be a Foreign Area Officer. He has deployed with CLB-31, 31st MEU as the S-6 and Combat Logistics Company Commander for the 20.2, 21.1, 21.2, and 22.1 rotations.

their experience appropriately, understanding what is relevant and what has become anachronistic.

Looking at recent conflicts the infantry is not obsolete, riflemen are still fielded in large numbers, but such units have moved to a supporting role. They still represent the bulk of personnel in combat but are no longer the decisive arm. Battles are centered on fires and armored vehicles. Combatants move to dominate the AO with their long-range fires and anti-aerial assets. Inside of this anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) zone, they can impart fires with impunity on unsupported forces. Nagorno-Karabakh was fought almost exclusively with long-range fires, where direct fire assets were continuously forced to withdraw when their supporting arms became unable to counter adversary effects. Future conflicts are only more likely to play out like this, as the technological trend is predominantly toward more lethal fires and precise intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.

The TM EABO recognizes this shift and lays out broad mindset adjustments to successfully compete in an A2/AD environment. Its emphasis on dispersed operations and acknowledgement of adversary capabilities is a strong step in the right direction. The problem as it stands is that it is only being seriously considered for INDOPACCOM operations. EABO should be considered the foundational document not just for conflict in the Pacific but in all areas where adversaries rival American capabilities. A complete disassociation with big footprint operations must be implemented as soon as possible. Further, this concept must be practiced in realistic scenarios to prove new tactical and operational principles.

Going forward, the Marine Corps should practice all combined arms exercises with the assumption that the adversary can direct fires on them at any point in the AO. The course of exercises must include more than the traditional combat-arms assets currently central to showpiece events. Fires, C2, and logistics assets are underutilized in training despite being central to the new interplay observed in ongoing and recent global conflicts. Exercises should center on demonstrating the ability to persist in and overcome enemy A2/AD environments. This will mean that small footprint C2 nodes will have to spring up to coordinate the massing of troops for short bursts of high-intensity battle before dispersing in the face of retaliatory fires. Logistics trains will have to practice persisting under hostile observation and fires, with meaningful feedback on how to adjust survivability.

The American military adapted superbly to the needs of the Global War on Terror, doing everything the nation asked of it and more. It must not however let the pride of good and gallant service, impede adaptation; even if that adaptation repudiates lessons learned. To avoid being the next outmoded victors of the Great War, the Corps must maintain a constant willingness to adapt—even if it means abandoning hard-won lessons.

AT HOME AND AT THE BALL



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From the Cold War to ISIL

reviewed by Col Gregory C. McCarthy

I met MajGen Jason Bohm on my first day of Naval ROTC in Chicago in August 1987. I have followed my friend's subsequent career with great interest. Previously unbeknownst to me, he has written a solid autobiography: *From the Cold War to ISIL: One Marine's Journey*. It would surprise virtually no one who has crossed paths with the author in the intervening three-plus decades that this Marine's Marine has led a model career and written a textbook memoir.

His story is worth reading. He has been to nearly every global hotspot since his commissioning in 1990. He is an infantryman who has commanded at every level and been to every stage of formal professional military education. He has either a photographic memory and/or meticulous records of his every operation, exercise, training event, and engagement—to include key players and their hometowns and subsequent Marine careers. He was twice triple-hatted, including as Special Purpose MAGTF-Crisis Response commander in 2015.

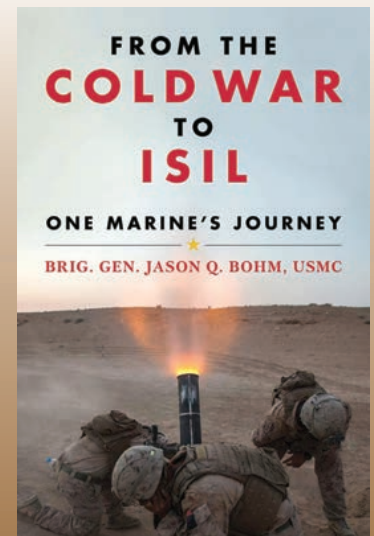
From the Cold War to ISIL is a thorough yet readable after-action review of every main Marine-related event of his career. The book is strengthened by relevant photos, usually from the author's collection. Chapters are arranged sequentially, and he carefully footnotes his background research that precedes many of his discussions. This is an operational expert, and the narrative is a nuts-and-bolts perspective on a Marine career. He is glad to discuss his methodical preparation and thought process, offering a useful window into staff planning and operational preparation. Accordingly, there may be excess detail for the average reader. Its

>Col McCarthy, USMCR (Ret), is a civilian historian for the Air Force at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, D.C. He is a previous Gazette contributor and holds a PhD in American Politics. His views are his own.

primary audience would likely be students at Expeditionary Warfare School (where the author was once director) and Command and Staff College.

He is an organized, disciplined leader with understated droll humor. He had sticky situations, including being invited without notice to address large public gatherings at the West Virginia state capitol and then years later at an Indonesian mosque. He has been literally snake-bitten (at Camp Pendleton). His Marines had gear confiscated at the Port-au-Prince airport in a tense exchange with the Haitian military then governing via a coup. On recruiting duty, he was kicked out of a Virginia high school for the offense of being a "Yankee." His poignant retelling of a Marine's death to an IED in Iraq is especially gripping.

He paints the picture of a life familiar to Marines: substantial workups, abrupt reassignments, aborted missions, contradictory orders, multiple bosses, and long family separations. But one example is the excruciating frustration his Marines face awaiting (but only barely getting) the call to assist the South Asian tsunami recovery in early 2005. He regularly lauds the flexibility and skill of his subordinates in their adapting to the unforeseen. My only slight objection might be the lengthy discussion of his role in the Anbar Awakening of 2006–2007. Un-



FROM THE COLD WAR TO ISIL: One Marine's Journey. By Jason Bohm. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press: Annapolis, 2019.

ISBN: 978-1682474570, 280 pp.

questionably, it was a significant breakthrough, but one seemingly erased in a few short years with the rise of ISIS. All senior leaders must reckon with the lack of national or strategic victories since DESERT STORM in early 1991 and why scores of tactical and operational successes in multiple theaters, like the ones recounted here, did not win the War on Terror.

Gen Bohm is a diplomat whose tact is on display. We learn from his example that leaders not only act but think and reflect. He only barely and without names mentions the rare toxic leader he encountered or the occasional poor guidance he received. He does not name-drop seniors, who wisely recognized his great skill. He generously shares credit downward. He confesses his own (minor) shortcomings. He states he "had received his first choice" of infantry, leaving out the fact that he was the honor grad of his Basic School class. Somewhat counter-intuitively, he calls West Virginia recruiting duty "some of the hardest [years] for me professionally." Present throughout

is his Christian faith and humility, as well as his dedication to his wife and family.

The work is not overly lengthy, and I found myself wanting more. Like the man, Gen Bohm’s book is all business. He wades into no controversies, does not identify many mentors, does not evaluate his superiors, and does not

critique the overall state of the Marine Corps or DOD. Why? Perhaps the last chapter has not been written. If country and Corps are wise, he may have another decade of service ahead of him. For now, a Marine audience would particularly benefit greatly from this remarkable leader and his well-written story.

Disclaimer: a portion of the author’s proceeds go to the Marine Corps Association.



Quote to Ponder:

“Out of every one hundred men, ten shouldn’t even be there, eighty are just targets, nine are the real fighters, and we are lucky to have them, for they make the battle. Ah, but the one, one is a warrior, and he will bring the others back.”

—Heraclitus of Ephesus

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Always Faithful

reviewed by Maj Christopher M. Davis

In August 2021, the world watched America's stunning withdrawal from Afghanistan, signifying the final chapter of America's longest war. Simultaneously, Afghan citizens were corralled by the Taliban into a small section near the airport in Kabul as they attempted to flee from their homeland, an implicit acknowledgment of the dim future that awaited once the last American aircraft lifted off from the tarmac. As the Afghans physically pushed their way into the airport, a small contingency of American service members—including members of the 24th MEU—provided security for the quickly deteriorating situation. While service members collapsed their security perimeter around the airport, throngs of desperate Afghans attempted to escape aboard any available flight, destination unknown, praying for a ticket to a new life and the freedom they once believed possible for their own country when American troops first arrived in 2001. Nearly two decades earlier, after the events of September 11th set into motion the Global War on Terror, Maj Thomas "Tom" Schueman and Zainullah "Zak" Zaki's lives were sent on a collision course. Forged in the fires of battle, Tom and Zak's unbreakable bond epitomizes the Marine Corp ethos of "Semper Fidelis"—always faithful.

Their story, *Always Faithful*, brilliantly tracks the parallel lives of these two warriors who each spent their anxious childhoods filled with fear, poverty, and misfortune. Eventually, both men were drawn to the same war in an attempt to build a meaningful future for Afghanistan. Within the pages of this book, an intensely personal and uniquely told story, Tom and Zak's alternating first-person accounts explore their individual experiences, the legacy of the war in Afghanistan, and the question: "was it all worth the twenty-

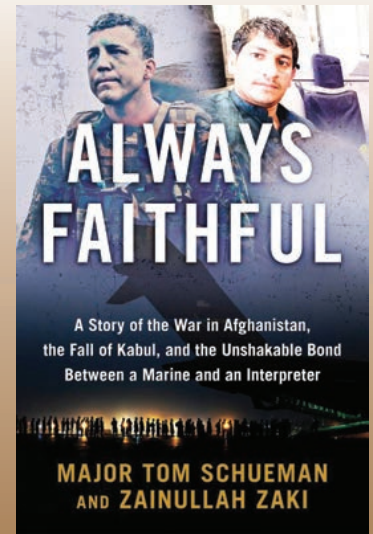
>As part of his selection on the Commandant's Professional Intermediate-level education Board (CPIB), Maj Davis is presently studying National Security Law at Georgetown Law School, in Washington, DC.

year price," in a painfully real exposition.

In *MCDP 1, Warfighting*, Marines are taught, "War is among the greatest human horrors to humanity; it should never be romanticized ... its immediate result is bloodshed, destruction, and suffering." But, the archetypal hero story (a title that neither Tom nor Zak would proclaim), from the *Iliad* to *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, involves a painful journey of growth.

... both men were drawn to the same war in an attempt to build a meaningful future for Afghanistan.

Always Faithful is such a story and shares the re-birth of two men: Tom through the cauldron of combat, running from the self-destructive tendencies of his personal life, seeking meaning and purpose; and Zak who chose to fight alongside Marines in order to achieve the future that he believed was possible for his country, then ultimately his harrowing escape from Kabul, bound for America and seeking the dream of a future for his family and himself. As is the case of any yet-to-be-written epoch, neither man fully appreciated the potential cost of their



ALWAYS FAITHFUL: A Story of the War in Afghanistan, the Fall of Kabul, and the Unshakable Bond Between a Marine and an Interpreter. By Tomas Schueman and Zainullah Zaki. New York: William Morrow, 2022.

ISBN: 978-0063260610, 320 pp.

journey at the outset, only to be later realized after enduring the complexities and everlasting human impacts of war.

The authors place the reader on those white-knuckling patrols in Sangin, Afghanistan, in 2011 and face-to-face with the unspeakable tragedy found in the loss of comrades. However, it is in Afghanistan's deadly Helmand Valley where a bond and brotherhood are forged between the two that transcends the mission. As Tom would later share of Zak's tale, "No one who didn't believe in the fundamental values of freedom and liberty that our Nation holds as self-evident truths would risk the things Zak did." Zak was not a soldier, but he put himself on the line with Marines to fight for those beliefs which became readily apparent on a patrol in which Tom was injured. As Tom awoke from the concussive effects of a blast, he recalls "Zak standing over me, ready to kill to protect me." Together—in service to

their respective countries—their deep-abiding affection and commitment to one other ends up saving both of their lives.

Even though this chapter of their story is written, for neither Tom nor Zak is their journey over. For Maj

ity to remain in the country which, to him, symbolizes the ideals he had once hoped for in his own country.

This book is published at a time in which our country and our Corps sit at crossroads. Partisan rancor rules the day and stifles meaningful prog-

and future design. Yet, here emerges a story that confirms it is worth it. “It” being the ethos and motto upon which the Marine Corps has built its reputation. The book is a stark example of the strength of our motto, *Semper Fidelis*, and our ethos. This book demonstrates, in a deeply personal account, that those values we share and cultivate can, in measurable ways, have deep and lasting impacts on the entire world. It symbolizes that there is literally nothing that can stop a Marine committed to being *Semper Fidelis*. Someone just has to walk point.



This book demonstrates, in a deeply personal account, that those values we share and cultivate can, in measurable ways, have deep and lasting impacts on the entire world.

Thomas Schueman, he is headed back to the Fleet Marine Force as Operations Officer of 3/5 Mar—the famed “Darkhorse” Battalion where he was coincidentally assigned when he first met Zak in Sangin, Afghanistan. For Zak, he continues to fight for his abil-

ress. Similarly, the Marine Corps, not actively engaged in combat operations for the first time in two decades, now epitomizes the criticisms of a “garrison” force, under-employed and now in-fighting from within its ranks and outside of its ranks over its identity

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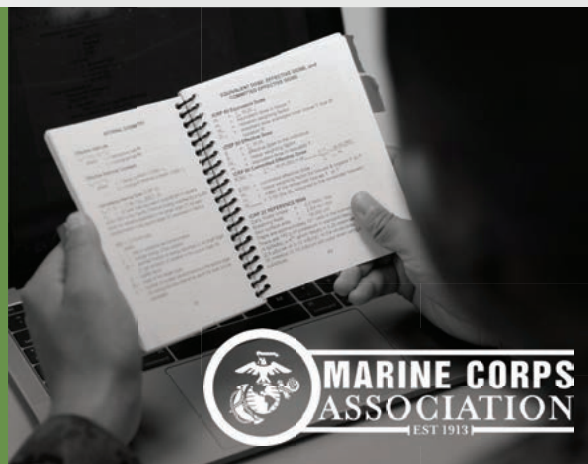
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**Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation
(All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)**

1. Publication Title Marine Corps Gazette		2. Publication Number 2 5 3 - 1 7 0		3. Filing Date August 2022	
4. Issue Frequency Monthly		5. Number of Issues Published Annually 12		6. Annual Subscription Price \$42.00	
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®) Marine Corps Association 715 Broadway St Quantico VA 22134				Contact Person Jaclyn Baird Telephone (include area code) 703-640-0150	
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer) Marine Corps Association 715 Broadway St Quantico VA 22134					
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)					
Publisher (Name and complete mailing address) Col Christopher Woodbridge USMC (Ret) 715 Broadway St Quantico VA 22134					
Editor (Name and complete mailing address) Col Christopher Woodbridge USMC (Ret) 715 Broadway St Quantico VA 22134					
Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address) Col Christopher Woodbridge USMC (Ret) 715 Broadway St Quantico VA 22134					
10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)					
Full Name		Complete Mailing Address			
Marine Corps Association		715 Broadway St Quantico VA, 22134			
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None					
Full Name		Complete Mailing Address			
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13. Publication Title Marine Corps Gazette		14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below 08/01/2022	
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		10,188	10,518
b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail)	(1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	82	82
	(2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	8,827	9,294
	(3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®	634	667
	(4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)	12	10
c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4))		9,555	10,053
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)	(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	0	0
	(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	131	129
	(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail)	81	71
	(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)	413	260
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3), and (4))		625	460
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)		10,180	10,513
g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))		7	5
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)		10,187	10,518
i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100)		93.86%	95.62%

* If you are claiming electronic copies, go to line 16 on page 3. If you are not claiming electronic copies, skip to line 17 on page 3.



**Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation
(All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)**

16. Electronic Copy Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Paid Electronic Copies	22,035	20,537
b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	31,590	30,590
c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15e) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	32,215	31,050
d. Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16b divided by 16c x 100)	98.06%	98.52%

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17. Publication of Statement of Ownership
 If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed Publication not required.
 in the **November 2022** issue of this publication.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner _____ Date _____

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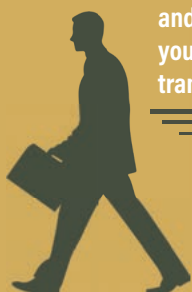
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Editorial Policy and Writers' Guidelines

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 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. 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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