

# “Wounded” Admin

Modernizing support to the warfighter

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**M**arine Corps administration (admin) is wounded. If we do not address it, we will continue to execute *requirements management* instead of *talent management* and be ill-prepared to mobilize the skills and talent needed to win major combat operations against a peer competitor. Its doctrinal support structure, organization, automation, training, and processes are not optimized to meet the manpower and support demands of the next major combat operation. The pacing global threats will require a Vietnam-era sized Marine Corps, and we are not prepared to efficiently support its mobilization. Success will require a Service-level effort, imagination, research, analysis, experimentation, design, development, program/policy realignment, and resources in order to meet the pacing threat. We have not modernized the way we support the warfighter (active, reserve, and civilian), nor have we employed a “combined arms-support effect.”

## Legacy General Admin

Microsoft Professional, Adobe Acrobat, and message traffic are hardly optimal ways of communicating a topic or request to achieve a decision. Do we need naval correspondence or message traffic for everything or anything? Is there a better way to communicate something, capture the discussion, and finalize an actionable decision? Think of the radio transmission and how quickly an issue is articulated and decided on. How many man-hours are wasted on trivial bureaucratic requirements, such as AA Forms, correspondence/message traffic, formats, decision papers, routing sheets, evaluations, and the recycling of these for correction? Do we truly need appointment letters for primary and collateral duties, or could we accom-

*>LtCol Almazan's current bio information was unavailable.*

plish this in a different way; perhaps a Service-level online ledger that reflects (all) appointments and reminders when they are about to expire?

## Legacy Manpower

The *MCTFS/3270 Command Staffing Report* has been used for decades, which gets converted to local command excel spreadsheets and triggers local leadership discussions for local assignment decisions. Meanwhile, the Service uses systems like WebMass and (legacy) ODSE to exploit manpower data for Service-level decisions. Why are

was directed over two decades ago, remains insufficiently resourced. The decision and execution to consolidate admin came without a doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities analysis. How can an IPAC deliver efficient Marine/commander support, when it is working out of multiple buildings, across the installation(s), at different camps, and without a facilities plan in sight? Where was the central plan (doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities or otherwise) to transition the service to consolidated general/personnel administration (with three Force Structure Review Group directed 01XX personnel cuts, in two decades)? Installation and base commanders have had to fend for themselves

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we so reluctant to grant access across the force? But even those systems are outdated when other off-the-shelf systems/programs can produce exponentially more, such as Defense Ready and Power BI. If future sea control is in question, what are the chances that internet-based systems will even work at sea or forward-based units? Should we be exploiting data transmission technology over secure radio frequencies, so that we can move data across the battlefield (garrison, deployed, sea, or land)?

## Legacy Personnel Admin

The Installation Personnel Administration Center (IPAC) construct, which

for solutions (no facilities or funding). Personnel administrators have been forced to provide distributed admin, thinning the pool of available subject matter experts in one place and creating unbalanced workloads in order to meet the commander’s support needs and steady-state workloads.

## Legacy Operational Admin

What tool(s) have we given the administrator to do his work in the field or on deployment in the past five to twenty years? Admin reach back has been the answer for over two decades; however, it is dependent on unclass internet access, which is not always a priority afforded

to administrators. Since the deactivation of Mobilization Command, the reserve component has suffered from C2 issues, support issues, and admin support disparity from the active component. Until 2020, the reserves were still processing manual-type travel claims when the active component has been on DTS since 2007. Today's activated reservist still struggles with convincing an active duty IPAC, disbursing office, or unit admin to affect any personnel or pay reporting—as their Home Training Center asserts that it is not their responsibility anymore.

### Legacy Infrastructure

The Commandant asserted, “forward bases and legacy infrastructure within the adversary's weapons engagement zone are now extremely vulnerable,” and I tend to agree. Our ranks are filled with patriots, but would those Marines/sailors keep coming to work if their pay was affected for multiple pay periods because our adversary compromised our pay and personnel systems? We are still using MCTFS/3270 after more than three decades! Our system of systems routinely does not talk to one another. Deputy Commandants own policy, programs, and system decisions—but sometimes those systems have multiple stakeholders. How can we create efficiencies and improve effectiveness, when programs and resources are misaligned? Unity of effort and span of control are compromised when we fail to align policy, programs, and systems.

### Combined Arms-Support Effect

We have to stop thinking in stovepipes and duplicating support efforts. We cannot keep basing our support decisions on whether we are being inspected or not. We would never turn a service member away at a chow hall. Why do we accept denials of support, when a Marine's Reporting Unit Code or disbursing station symbol number (DSSN) does not align with where the Marine is on the ground (active or reserve)? Imagine reporting to a Resource Command (Bn), company, or platoon (three to five commands overseen by a regimental HQs), prior to joining or leaving your unit, where most (if not

***“We will not allow a failure of imagination to define this period of our collective naval or Marine Corps history. We will continue to challenge the status quo and continue to ask all the hard questions—regardless of the discomfort they produce.”***

***—Gen David H. Berger, 38th Commandant***

all) of your support needs could be met: general admin (Marine Corps/Navy), diary reporting, unreported training data, passenger travel, distribution of household goods, travel cost reconciliation and reimbursement, government travel charge card (GTCC) enrollment/transfer, base vehicle registration, disbursing, identification cards and dependent enrollment, network access/

IPAC Reporting Unit Code; or no, that is the parent command that is responsible would no longer monopolize inbound and outbound processes because these issues could all be handled at a single point of friction.

We need a plan now, much like the need for force design. If we are to be trained and equipped as a naval expeditionary force-in-readiness that

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data migration, security clearance requirements, postal, Tricare enrollment/updates, medical readiness/limited duty oversight, Marine Corps Community Service transition, Civilian Human Resources, and miscellaneous career planner issues could be addressed. Alternately, Marines would be able to get support from this command regardless of the parent unit.

This Resource Command team would be comprised of subject matter experts from administration, disbursing, distribution management, and cyber; and the unit would be cross-trained to prevent disruptions/gaps in support. It would have the authority to direct all pay/personnel actions affecting Marines/Sailors/deployed civilians (active and reserve), regardless of parent command. The finger-pointing would be over. Common refrains such as, *no, that is the East Coast disbursing DSSN; or no, that is MARFORRES Alamo travel office; or no, that is a West Coast*

is prepared to operate inside actively contested maritime spaces in support of fleet operations, then we need to pay attention to the simple things: warfighter support. A Marine/sailor (active or reserve) focused on pay or GTCC delinquencies are not solely focused on the mission. They need premium administrative support, which can only be delivered through a combined arms-support effect. This is the Manpower, Personnel, and Administration modernization the Corps needs.

