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THESIS

2002- ANALYSIS OF THE MARINE CORPS ENLISTED ASSIGNMENT PROCESS

by

Ly T. Fecteau

June 2002

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13. ABSTRACT ***(maximum 200 words)***

The mission of the Manpower Management Enlisted Assignment Branch (MMEA) is to enact 'Marine Corps policy to classify, assign, and counsel all active duty enlisted Marines to effectively staff the active duty enlisted requirements of all worldwide Marine Corps Activities, by retaining only the most qualified Marines. Special attention is given to balance the needs of the individual Marine with the needs of the Marine Corps.' However, balancing the Corps' needs and individual Marines' needs is particularly difficult given the current hierarchical planning method that MMEA is using to match Marines with billets.

Ultimately, MMEA accomplishes its mission: assigning Marines to billets; however, it may do so without optimizing efficiency or effectiveness. The assignment process could possibly be made more efficient using web-based markets and intelligent agents to more effectively plan and assign Marines to billets. Additionally, a thorough understanding of the Marine Corps Human Resource Development Process (HRDP) provides crucial insights ensuring the Marine Corps focuses on improving operational readiness, maintaining fleet balance, and retaining quality Marines. This thesis evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the current Marine Corps' assignment process and its outcomes, and makes recommendations for improvement.

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2002- ANALYSIS OF THE MARINE CORPS ENLISTED ASSIGNMENT PROCESS

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requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

The mission of the Manpower Management Enlisted Assignment (MMEA) Branch is to enact 'Marine Corps policy to classify, assign, and counsel all active duty enlisted Marines to effectively staff the active duty enlisted requirements of all worldwide Marine Corps Activities, by retaining only the most qualified Marines. Special attention is given to balance the needs of the individual Marine with the needs of the Marine Corps.' However, balancing the Corps' needs and individual Marines' needs is particularly difficult given the current hierarchical planning method that the Enlisted Assignments Branch is using to match personnel with billets.

The current top-down assignment system consisting of centralized and labor-intensive processes leaves many Marines, monitors and commands dissatisfied and frustrated. A FY 2001 USMC Retention Survey reveals that 45.46 percent of Marine respondents indicate that control or lack thereof over job assignments have influenced their decision to leave the Marine Corps.

Ultimately, MMEA accomplishes its mission: assigning Marines to billets; however, it may do so without optimizing efficiency or effectiveness. The assignment process could possibly be made more efficient using web-based markets and intelligent agents to more effectively plan and assign Marines to billets. Additionally, a thorough understanding of the Marine Corps Human Resource Development Process (HRDP) provides crucial insights ensuring the Marine Corps focuses on improving operational readiness, maintaining fleet balance, and retaining quality Marines. This thesis evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of MMEA's current assignment process and its outcomes, and makes recommendations for improvement.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. OVERVIEW

This thesis investigates and analyzes the Marine Corps' current enlisted assignment process. It details the Marine Corps Human Resource Development Process (HRDP) and the Manpower Management Enlisted Assignment (MMEA) process step-by-step, identifies key stakeholders involved and their concerns, and the policies that guide the process. It examines strengths and weaknesses of the current assignment process. Recognizing where the current assignment system is working well and discerning its shortfalls, indicates how electronic-based assignments might improve the process. The assignment process efficiency, effectiveness, and pathology are analyzed, followed by conclusions and recommendations for improving the overall process.

When the battle cry to 'Send in the Marines!' is heard, many have visions of combat hardened Marines storming onto a battlefield to annihilate enemies and seize the objective. However, after a thorough study of the Marine Corps HRDP and MMEA's functions within the process, most will have a much different image of this battle cry. For many commands throughout the Corps, this battle cry often means something other than enlisting a group of hard-charging Marines to advance upon enemy territories. Instead, it is a plea from the unit commanders to higher headquarters, specifically Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA), to assign much needed Marines to the unit. Marines that are essential to accomplish all assigned missions.

Many commands within the Corps, like other units throughout the armed services, suffer from the same fate: do more, with less. The subject of the armed services' readiness level was an issue during the 2001 presidential campaign. While politicians have differing opinions concerning the status of military affairs, nearly all military leaders would submit that the armed services' readiness level is dangerously low. Some have doubts about the military's ability to effectively commit forces and achieve victory across the full spectrum of requirements.

The military's readiness level is measured by multiple factors, e.g., the status of personnel readiness, and the status of equipment and material readiness. Steady increases in operational tempo that require frequent deployments of troops and equipment abroad, combined with persistent declines in the military budget, have severely reduced personnel and material readiness. This thesis addresses the issue of personnel readiness in the Marine Corps and discusses the organizational factors that contribute to lower levels of personnel readiness as they relate to the enlisted assignment process.

A portion of this document will analyze the organizational design strengths and weaknesses impacting personnel readiness in the Marine Corps. While the problems with personnel readiness may be evident, the possible remedies for the issues are not as apparent. Attempts to rectify one problem with personnel readiness may haphazardly present another problem that needs redress in other areas.

B. BACKGROUND AND REASONS FOR STUDY

The Marine Corps currently uses a centralized and hierarchical planning process for matching Marines with billets. This process relies upon monitors reaching a balance between the command's requirements and the Marine's professional development needs and personal preferences, which is innately difficult to obtain. As a result, this labor-intensive assignment process often leaves many stakeholders (e.g. Marines, monitors, and commands) dissatisfied and frustrated. Frequently, Marines have chosen to separate from the Marine Corps rather than accept undesirable assignments. A 2001 USMC Retention Survey reveals that 45.46 percent of Marine respondents indicate that control or lack thereof over job assignments have influenced their decision to leave the Marine Corps (Ref 1).

Monitors are overburdened with manual and tedious tasks in making assignment decisions while many Marines are frustrated with duty assignments not of their choosing. Commands, on the other hand, anxiously await qualified Marines to fill billet vacancies, which reduce mission readiness.

The current Marine Corps assignment process may be enhanced by evolving information technology (IT) developments that can give Marines increased options and

access while better accommodating commands' needs. Furthermore, monitors could be able to devote more of their time dealing with exceptional requirements and less time making ordinary billet assignments.

With IT innovations, the assignment process could be more efficient and equitable using web-based markets and intelligent agents to assist Marines and commands in finding one another in a distributed, electronic system. A web-based, electronic assignment system, where commands can convey their specific personnel requirements and individual Marines express their personal desires, has the potential to increase stakeholders' satisfaction through better job-matching approaches. Developing an electronic assignment system that will satisfy the needs of all stakeholders requires a thorough understanding of the current assignment process's positive and negative facets. Knowledge of stakeholders' satisfactions and dissatisfactions with the current process will facilitate constructing and implementing a practical electronic assignment process that can lead to higher personnel readiness levels.

C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Primary Research Question

What is the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Marine Corps' current assignment process?

2. Subsidiary Research Questions

Who are the stakeholders in the assignment process, and what are their concerns?

What positive aspects of the Marine Corps' assignment process should be leveraged or expanded for future use?

What pathologies, or deviations from an efficient process exist, and what are their micro and macro effects?

What comparisons can be made between the Marine Corps and Navy assignment processes?

D. SCOPE, LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Scope: The scope includes: 1) a literature and document review of the current Marine Corps HRDP and enlisted assignment process, related policies and procedures; 2) phone/personal interviews and PowerPoint reviews detailing steps within and flow of the current Marine Corps enlisted assignment process; 3) a review of survey data concerning Marine monitors' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the current assignment process; 4) phone and personal interviews with Marine Corps enlisted monitors; 5) a brief preview of the Monitor Assignment Support System (MASS) and the Monitor Contact Page in the Marine OnLine (MOL) Network to determine their implications for a web-based assignment process; and 6) analysis and thorough assessment of the Marine Corps' assignment process to identify positive facets that should be included in a new web-based assignment system.

Limitations: Every effort was made to collect the most accurate and relevant data concerning the current Marine Corps enlisted assignment process; however, in the absence of a prescribed method to gather this information and garnering only objective data, the majority of the information collected comes either directly or indirectly from personal interviews. As of consequence, information and quantitative data obtained will inherently be subjective. In addition, Information gathered on the current assignment process came, exclusively, from the monitors' and MMEA personnels' perspectives. Data was not available from Marines' standpoint for analysis.

At the time of this writing, the Marine Corps enlisted assignment process is in the midst of change. The current assignment process is currently in flux with the introduction of the Monitor Assignment Support System (MASS). While MASS could prove to be a great tool for monitors in accomplishing their task of assigning Marines to billets, this thesis only briefly previews MASS' objectives and outlines the current enlisted assignment process without the aid of MASS.

Career Planners and Career Counselors will play a key role if a web-based assignment process is implemented to augment assignment monitors' roles. Career Planners are assigned throughout Marine Corps commands while Career Counselors are

stationed at Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC). Career Planners generally aid first-term Marines, typically those of Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) ranks and below, as well as career Marines, those above NCO ranks, in completing and submitting re-enlistment and/or current tour extension requests. Career Counselors assist only career Marines with professional development pertaining to career counseling and performance evaluation. It was beyond the scope of this thesis to review the Career Planners and Career Counselors' current involvement in the assignment process and the extent to which their roles will be expanded with the introduction of a web-based assignment process.

Assumptions:

1. This thesis assumes that the reader has a general understanding of the current Marine Corps enlisted assignment process. While the reader is not expected to know the specific process, it is assumed that the reader has basic knowledge about the assignment system so that common acronyms and verbiage are not confusing.
2. It is also assumed that the author's personal interviews and questionnaires yielded opinions and feelings representative of typical monitors.
3. It is further assumed that the author's interpretations of interview and questionnaire responses represent the actual issues encountered by monitors and MMEA personnel.

E. BENEFITS

This study identifies the pathologies of the Marine Corps' assignment process. It is part of a larger study, currently conducted by Professors Bill Gates and Mark Nissen at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), that examines proven intelligent agent technologies to improve the assignment processes in the U.S. military services. Several studies were previously completed by other NPS graduates detailing the Navy, Army and Air Force enlisted assignment process. In the same vain, this thesis will closely resemble the methods used and organization of past theses to facilitate side-by-side comparisons of all the services' assignment process.

The end-state of this thesis is a thorough map and understanding of the Marine Corps HRDP and the enlisted assignment process, its stakeholders, and their issues and concerns. Analyzing stakeholder issues and concerns as well as identifying positive facets and pathologies will help identify assignment process improvements.

F. CHAPTER SUMMARY

As the premier expeditionary 'Total Force in Readiness,' the Marine Corps must stand ready to accomplish all assigned missions. In order to successfully carry out mission requirements, the Marine Corps must maintain a high level of personnel readiness. Attaining this objective, in the presence of various external influences and organizational constraints within the Marine Corps HRDP, is a daunting task. However, a thorough understanding of the entire HRDP process coupled with a detailed outline of the current enlisted assignment process can offer insights for possible improvements. By leveraging scarce resources and evolving technologies such as web-based job matching technologies, the Marine Corps can possibly attain a higher level of personnel readiness by executing an assignment process that is efficient and effective in satisfying the interests of all involved.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. OVERVIEW

This thesis is part of a larger study currently conducted by Dr. William R. Gates and Dr. Mark Nissen of the Naval Postgraduate School to explore the possibilities of using web-based technologies to improve the Navy's enlisted detailing process. Part of the study includes examining enlisted assignment processes among the military services. Investigating the Army, Air Force and Marine Corps enlisted assignment processes is intended to provide valuable insight to help identify areas that might benefit the Navy. At the same time, the information gathered could prove useful to the Marine Corps and other military services for improving their own assignment processes.

The following steps were taken in preparing this thesis:

- Conduct a literature review of books, magazine articles, the Internet, PowerPoint briefings and other library information resources.
- Conduct a thorough review of Marine Corps policies and procedures as delineated in manuals and regulations relating to the Corps' enlisted assignment process.
- Conduct a thorough review via phone and personal interviews regarding the Marine Corps HRDP and enlisted assignment process.
- Gather data regarding monitors' reactions to the current enlisted assignment process.
- Analyze the current assignment process using systems theory, labor market economics and job-matching theory.
- Compare and contrast the Marine Corps' assignment process with the Navy's enlisted detailing process.

Investigating the Marine Corps' assignment process entails researching through numerous orders, publications, manuals and regulations dealing with assignment policies. The enlisted assignment process is a small, but vital function in the entire Marine Corps manpower system. It is within this process that Marines' lives are affected and the Corps' personnel readiness posture is at stake. The Marine Corps' assignment process and its relationship to the HRDP are presented in Chapter III.

After outlining the assignment process, further research for this thesis included analyzing the Marine Corps assignment process using systems theory, labor market economics and job-matching theory, and comparing the Marine Corps' assignment process with that of the Navy detailing process. In addition, 33 out of 38 enlisted monitors responded to a tailored survey conducted during May 2002 as part of this research; the survey template is included as Appendix B. Along with the survey, personal interviews between the author and monitors, and other MMEA administrative personnel provided additional details. These revealing discussions contributed to the assessment, conclusions and recommendations in this thesis.

B. SYSTEMS THEORY

It is critical for an organization to continually assess its dynamic external environment and complex internal order to determine its fit or congruence among an array of open system factors. A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis and a stakeholders audit are assessment tools used to analyze an organization's external and internal operating environment.

1. SWOT Analysis

Organizations have particular requirements, mandates, and policies propelling the organization to an intended array of goals, outcomes and consequences. Before assessing any outcomes, the organization's internal and external environment must be thoroughly reviewed to determine the feasibility of the desired end. A SWOT analysis is a useful indicator of the organization's present situation as well as a valuable tool in determining possible scenarios that face organizations as they implement certain decisions affecting their future state of affairs. The SWOT analysis coupled with continuing stakeholders audit, can provide an insightful overview of the organization's current success or failures and future outcomes.

A SWOT analysis basically examines an organization's internal strengths and weaknesses, and its external opportunities and threats. It is a general tool designed in the preliminary stages of decision-making and as a precursor to strategic planning in various applications (Ref 2). Table 2.1 outlines some of the factors pertaining to the internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats in an organization's

environment. This table is adapted to better fit the Marine Corps enlisted assignment process.

Internal Environment		External Environment	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**	**Opportunities**	**Threats**
A distinctive competence?	No clear strategic direction?		Complacency among complement organizations?
Adequate Resources?	Lack of managerial depth and talent?	Enter new technology markets?	Take over by competitors/ contractors/civilian firms?
Special Expertise?	Missing key competencies?	Services broader stakeholder base?	Slow market/demographic growth?
Good communication with stakeholders?	Weak public image?	Diversify into related missions?	Competitive (Legislative) Pressures?
Innovative Programs or operations?	Unable to finance changes in process?	Expand services to meet a greater range of stakeholder needs?	Vulnerability to stakeholder's expectations?
Cost Advantage?	Plagued with internal operating problems?		Bargaining power of stakeholders
			Changing tastes and needs of stakeholders?

Table 2.1. SWOT Analysis Factors.

a. Internal Survey of Strengths and Weaknesses

Generally, managers may seek to maintain efficiency and attain effectiveness in their processes without explicit attention to their organization's strengths and weaknesses. However, given adequate consideration and proper internal audits, areas requiring change can be identified. In addition, the potential and possibilities for new services and programs may surface.

Noting internal weaknesses could expose areas that can be changed to improve the organization as well as matters that are beyond the organization's control. Additionally, examining internal weaknesses can point to pathologies that exist within the organization's current processes. Pathologies that ultimately impact the organization's ability to effectively and efficiently manage its practices. The following are examples of possible weaknesses in the Marine Corps assignment process: low staff and personnel

morale; sub-standard infrastructure support; outdated technology or legacy systems; and scarce instructional resources (Ref 3).

Weaknesses and strengths may occur in tandem, thus, it is important to also ascertain the organization's strengths. Some examples of potential strengths include: a reasonable amount of expertise within the organization; strong and dedicated leadership/champion; ability to use the services on a broader spectrum; a strong reputation for the training required to get entry-level employees; and diversity among the professional staff (Ref 4). Implementing changes in any system is difficult and tumultuous at best, doing so requires careful review of all organizational functions and processes that can enable maximum productivity while, at the same time, meeting the organization's needs.

Surveys, focus groups, interviews with current and past employees, and other knowledgeable sources facilitate an organization's assessment of its strengths and weaknesses. Once weaknesses and strengths are identified, it is important to use them to assess and develop strategies for improvements. Perceptions of strengths versus weaknesses are influenced by the perspectives and idiosyncrasies of the representative groups consulted, e.g., objectivity and openness must occur for the tool to be of any value.

b. External Survey of Threats and Opportunities

An assessment of the organization's opportunities and threats complements the internal assessment. National influences and local interests must be considered when deciding what new programs to add or which existing programs to modify or remove (Ref 5).

Opportunities and threats come in many forms. The point is to systematically assess these factors in relationship to what the organization is trying to accomplish, e.g., act on opportunities and take steps to mitigate threats. Most evident are scarce resources as a result of continuing restrictive congressional budgets that all military services have had to endure since the 1990s. Lack of adequate funding is

distinctly related to both personnel and material readiness issues, particularly as funding shortfalls remained persistent for over a decade.

It should be noted that opportunities and threats are not definitive. What might at first appear to be a threat to the organization may, through further examination, emerge as an opportunity. By the same token, what might at first appear to be an opportunity may, with additional analysis, become a threat for the organization. For example, additional budgetary funds for military weapon system X may at first seem to be an opportunity; however, these funds may have simply been diverted or depleted from military weapon system Y to cover the costs of military weapon system X. The ultimate challenge in the SWOT method is to use the assessments to make decisions to achieve desirable outcomes.

2. Stakeholders Audit

- What is a Stakeholders Audit?

In addition to the SWOT analysis, stakeholders audit can be useful for aligning strategies to meet the expectations of important stakeholders. A stakeholders audit identifies key stakeholders impacted by and impacting an organization. The audit is a useful method for leaders to assess the organization's surrounding environment in terms of the expectations of key stakeholders. Stakeholders include individuals and groups who have an interest (stake) in what the organization is trying to accomplish.

- Why do a Stakeholders Audit?

A project or plan to alter an organization's processes can benefit from a stakeholders audit. The audit allows leaders, and change agents/administrators to systematically assess key personnel and groups in terms of roles, relationships, and strategies around ongoing changes. In an attempt to predict potential outcomes due to possible organizational process/system changes, relationships must be identified and nurtured among relevant actors. More specifically, a stakeholders audit can:

- Draw out the interests of stakeholders in relation to the problems which the project is seeking to address or the purpose of the project
- Identify conflicts of interest between stakeholders, which will influence assessment of a project's risk before funds are committed
- Expose relations between stakeholders that can be built upon, and may enable "coalitions" of project sponsorship, ownership, and cooperation
- Help assess the appropriate type of participation by different stakeholders, at successive stages of the project cycle

 When Should it be Done?

Stakeholders audits should be carried out prior to altering a current process/system. A list of stakeholders along with their concerns and issues regarding the potential system changes should be assembled and risk conflicts addressed. Because change is an evolutionary and dynamic process, audits can be useful snapshots to assist decision makers with actions to satisfy influential stakeholders. Audits can also be used in evaluating the outcomes of various changes.

 Who Should Do the Audit?

The audit can be performed using a team approach. It is not practical for one individual to assess expectations of key stakeholders. A team, on the other hand, can identify an array of stakeholders around a change effort, and formulate alternatives for addressing stakeholders concerns. It is critical for the team to be sensitive to the varying interests of stakeholders. There are often hidden agendas around important issues and expectations should not be assumed.

 How is a Stakeholders Audit Conducted?

Stakeholder audits can be carried out in assorted ways. An example of a stakeholders table is shown in Table 2.2. The table explains how various areas of interest can be found among all the stakeholders. Stakeholders are listed and categorized as primary, secondary, and external interests. Primary stakeholders are the individuals, groups or organizations most likely to be affected by the project or change in process. Secondary stakeholders can best be described as intermediaries in the process of delivering goods or services to the primary stakeholders. External stakeholders are people or agencies that may have some indirect impact on the change process or

influence over other groups of stakeholders. This thesis addresses only primary stakeholders.

Primary Stakeholders	**Interest**
Employees Minority Groups Other Organizations	• Freedom of choice • Loss of Status • Fairness • Reduced/Increased Responsibility
Secondary Stakeholders	
Local Agencies Staff Contractors	• Performance Metrics • Additional Responsibilities • Budget Control • Public Image • Liability
External Stakeholders	
Taxpayers Competing Agencies	• Costs • Reliability • Available Information • Necessity

Table 2.2. Example of Stakeholder Table
for Proposed Project in a Public Organization
After: Bryson, J., *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*, Jossey Bass:San Francisco, 1995

C. LABOR MARKET ECONOMICS

Dr. William R. Gates and Dr. Mark Nissen's paper, "Designing Agent-based Electronic Employment Markets," provided a significant background for analyzing the Marine Corps assignment process. Their paper illustrates problems with current employment approaches resembling those currently used in the U.S. military services. In addition, the paper outlines labor market fundamentals such as market-based labor markets, hierarchical labor markets and two-sided matching markets. Lastly, it discusses intelligent agent technology and possible advantages of using it for matching personnel

with jobs, or Marines and duty assignments. The following sections draw from the Gates and Nissen paper and present the theoretical framework for the findings and analysis of the Marine Corps assignment process in Chapter VI.

1. Hierarchical Planning and Distributed Markets

There are two general processes for matching individuals with jobs. One method is hierarchical planning, and second is distributed markets. Socialist governments (e.g. Chinese government) and command-and-control (e.g. military) organizations normally use hierarchical planning systems to match personnel to job assignments internal to the organization. Characteristically, U.S. military services use a centralized and hierarchical process to assign their members to duty assignments, and they typically place service needs before those of the service members. The use of such methods and priorities does not satisfy the personal needs of the individual service members, which results in poor job performance and decreased morale while the organization tends to suffer from lowered retention and personnel readiness.

Unlike organizations that use hierarchical planning to match personnel with jobs within the organization, distributed markets match potential employees and external employers. Distributed markets are found in open labor markets where potential employees are able to move from one employer to another. In sizeable or complex distributed labor markets with vast amounts of information available about and to employees and employers, information overload can be problematic and make it difficult to achieve stability in the system.

Evolving information technology makes it possible to accomplish the job-matching process more effectively and efficiently. Intelligent agents offer excellent potential to help both potential employees and employers find one another in a distributed, electronic marketplace. To realize this potential requires that corresponding markets and technologies be designed together to mutually accomplish the desired results of effective and efficient matching, and conform to the necessary condition that the markets must clear.

2. Two-Sided Matching Markets

In distributed markets, market wages make it possible to achieve the difficult task of balancing labor supply and demand. The market wage reflects complex interactions between supply and demand forces to achieve supply and demand efficiencies. However, in the military, wages are determined by fiat (e.g. by Congress) and respond very slowly to supply- and demand-driven pressures. Consequently, the Marine Corps and other U.S. military services rely on a hierarchical planning process to assign their personnel where administrative procedures replace wages as the market-clearing mechanism. Yet, the Marine Corps could possibly benefit from the efficiencies that are associated with market-based systems, and achievable in two-sided matching markets.

A two-sided matching market assigns individuals to jobs when there are several possible employers and employees. The matching algorithm balances the employers' and employees' preferences, but it can produce assignments that give priority to either employers or employees. As such, the algorithm specifically addresses both demand and supply efficiency. Two-sided matching algorithms are currently used successfully in assigning medical students to residency programs and pledges to sororities at some colleges and universities (Ref 6).

3. Market Efficiency

In the assignment process, efficiency refers to having properly trained Marines assigned to jobs. There are two components of efficiency: supply and demand.

Supply efficiency involves Marines who are supplying labor to the commands, and assigning them to jobs that best suit their professional needs and personal desires. When Marines are satisfied with their duty assignments, their morale, performance and retention are generally raised. The idea of compromising the requirements of the Marine Corps to accommodate a Marine's personal desires can seem unsettling for a command-and-control system. However, it can be shown that the benefits to the Marine Corps can outweigh the costs and do not necessarily compromise Marine Corps readiness. On the contrary, more satisfied Marines are likely to be more productive and contribute to higher readiness levels than is currently noted under the present process.

Demand efficiency concerns commands/units that demand the labor, or Marines. Demand efficiency implies that the commands receive properly trained Marines when

required for mission accomplishment to meet national security strategy. Ideally, the Marine Corps assignment process would achieve supply and demand efficiency simultaneously. Ultimately, efficiency affects the Marine Corps' personnel readiness posture. The Marine Corps operates efficiently when properly trained Marines occupy appropriate billets as required to maintain mission capability.

4. Market Effectiveness

In the assignment process, effectiveness refers to timeliness. The process operates effectively when Marines occupy billets at the desirable time. Effective assignments occur where: staffing precedences are being met; the assignment process quickly adjusts to changes; and Marines receive their orders promptly and without error. Ineffective assignment processes that result in delays and/or modifications frustrate both Marines and commands. However, effective processes satisfy both the individual Marines and commands. Thus, the assignment process can directly and significantly affect the Marine Corps' readiness by efficiently assigning the 'best fit' Marines to the appropriate billets and effectively assigning Marines at the desirable time.

D. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

In December 2000, Navy Lieutenant Melissa Short completed her graduate thesis, "Analysis of the Current Navy Enlisted Detailing Process." Her thesis was conducted under the guidance of Professor Gates with Navy Commander Bill Hatch, an expert in the Navy's manpower processes and a military manpower instructor at the Naval Postgraduate School. Comparing the Marine Corps' and Navy's enlisted assignment processes revealed notable and substantial insights regarding the two systems. Both services and their members have similar concerns and could benefit from a more effective and efficient personnel assignment system. The results of this comparison are presented in Chapter V.

E. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The methodology used to prepare this thesis provided the background, theoretical framework and tools necessary for analyzing the Marine Corps enlisted assignment process. They will be used in the following chapter to examine components of the

Marine Corps assignment process that contribute positively to its efficiency and effectiveness, and those that do not.

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III. OVERVIEW OF THE MARINE CORPS HRDP

A. THE MARINE CORPS HRDP

The Marine Corps HRDP is complex and crosses multiple organizational boundaries. Its purpose is to provide the fleet commanders with the appropriate number of trained and experienced Marines to ensure mission accomplishment. Key organizations within the Marine Corps HRDP are: 1) Manpower & Reserve Affairs (M&RA); 2) Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC), Total Force Structure Division (TFSD); and 3) Programs & Resources (P&R), Program Objective Memorandum (POM). The HRDP process is depicted below in Figure 3.1.

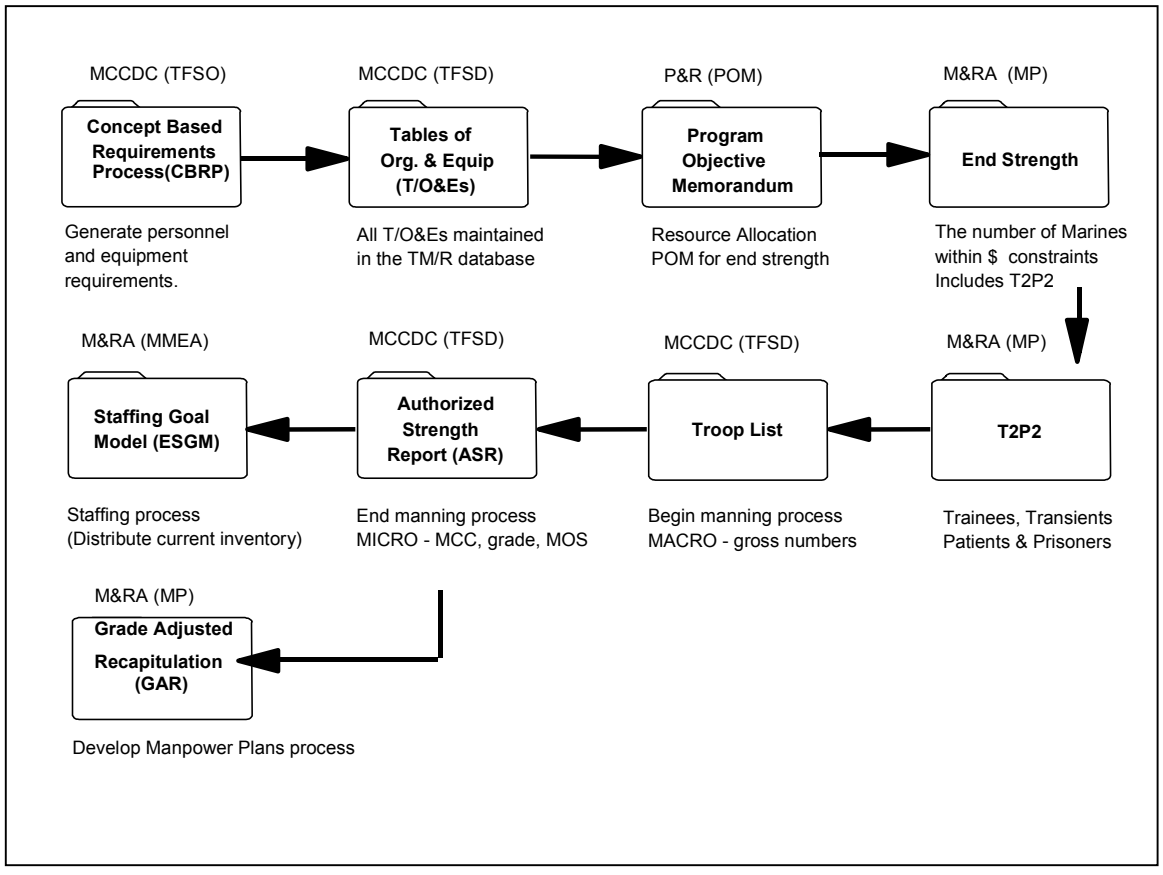

Figure 3.1. The Marine Corps HRDP
After: Manpower 101 PowerPoint Brief, MMEA (2000)

1. Concept Based Requirement Process (CBRP)

The Marine Corps Concept Based Requirements Process (CBRP) determines the capability requirements of the Marine Corps. Specifically, the CBRP collects and develops concepts and requirements generated and validated through experimentation, Marine Corps Lessons Learned, Fleet operational needs statements, mission area analyses, and directed requirements from external agencies (e.g., the Department of Defense directed requirement for force protection), and forwards those requirements to the Total Force Structure Division (TFSD) (Ref 7).

The TFSD takes input from the CBRP to develop a detailed force structure subject to limitations by doctrine, support and facilities, and budgetary constraints. The requirement for Marines, by grade and skill, and equipment are documented in the Tables of Organization and Equipment (T/O&E). The T/O&Es prescribe the mission statement, organizational structure, billet description (grade and MOS), and personnel strength for each Marine Corps unit. Appendix C is a sample of a T/O&E for H&S Company, Reconnaissance Battalion.

All Marine Corps T/O&Es are managed by MCCDC, TFSD and maintained in the Table of Manpower Requirements (T/MR) database. The word(s) T/O, billets, and structure spaces are used interchangeably. It is important to note that the TO&E represents "unconstrained" or wartime manpower and equipment needs.

2. Fiscal Constraints

The Marine Corps must pay for its personnel and equipment cost. Since the Marine Corps budget is constrained and cannot afford all of the manpower and equipment needed to completely satisfy all TO&E requirements, needs must be prioritized.

The resource allocation process is known as the Program Objective Memorandum (POM) process and is managed by the Programs & Resources P&R. The POM is a DOD-wide process during which the Marine Corps and other services decide how to prioritize their fiscal resource requirements. The POM resource allocation process runs on a 2-year cycle. In addition, the POM cycle encompasses an 8-year planning horizon.

For example, in FY99, a POM was created for the FY00 budget; that POM also dealt with years FY02-07.

Marine Corps end strength is determined and fixed within the POM. Essentially, the POM injects fiscal reality into the manpower process. Manpower cost is by far the largest single expense, accounting for over 60 percent of the Marine Corps' annual budget (Ref 8).

3. End-Strength

Although Congress sets the end-strength target for the Marine Corps, end-strength is based largely upon what the Corps can afford (as determined through the POM process). Congress also sets an end-strength floor and ceiling by setting 1 percent (plus or minus) variance that must be achieved by 30 September of each fiscal year.

FY99 data will serve to illustrate the impact of this process on personnel strength. The active duty end-strength for FY99 was 171,508 Marines (153,658 enlisted and 17,850 restricted and unrestricted officers). Although the Marine Corps may need more than 171,508 Marines, this is all it can afford based upon the prioritization of resources (e.g., investing in modernization). M&RA's MP (Manpower Plans) section has the responsibility for ensuring the Marine Corps executes its end-strength target.

Not all Marines in the total end-strength are available for assignment to T/O billet spaces. T2P2 is a DoD mandated measurement tool that accounts for Marines not assigned to billets or structure spaces. T2P2 includes trainees, transients, patients, and prisoners. The T/Os at the Marine Corps Recruit Training Depot in San Diego and Parris Island, for example, contain billets for drill instructors, other training and support staff but not for recruits. Thus, recruits in training to become Marines and Marines attending technical schools as well as academic institutions, represent the largest contingent in the T2P2 population, averaging about 12 percent of enlisted and 15 percent of officer end-strength (Ref 9).

Transient Marines are those in transition from one duty station to another. The P2 portion of the T2P2 population accounts for Marines who are either sick/injured (patients) or incarcerated (prisoners) and unable to perform duties as required for mission accomplishment.

4. Manning Process

The manning process has three principal inputs: T/O; end-strength; and T2P2 to produce two outputs, the Troop List and the Authorized Strength Report (ASR). Table 3.1 shows a schematic of the manning tally as a result of the inputs in the HRDP process so far. Again, FY99 data is used for illustrative purposes. T2P2 accounted for 29,588 Marines in FY99. Subtracting 29,588 Marines from an end-strength amount of 171,508 leaves only 141,900 Marines to fill 154,181 billets. That is a delta of 12,281 billets that will not be filled (manned).

	OFFICERS	ENLISTED	TOTAL
BUDGETED ENDSTRENGTH	17,850	153,658	171,508
P2/T2	3,500	26,088	29,588
AVAILABLE MANNING	14,350	127,570	141,920
T/O	16,192	137,989	154,181
DELTA	**-1,842**	**-10,439**	**-12,261**
MANNING %	88.62%	92.43%	92.03%

Table 3.1. Requirements vs. Reality
After: Manpower 101 PowerPoint Brief, MMEA (2000) MMEA

With only 141,920 Marines available to fill 154,181 billets, manning becomes a challenging exercise to designate the appropriate billets. The first concrete output of the manning process is the Troop List. The Troop List determines how many officers and enlisted Marines a unit is allocated each year of the POM planning horizon (8 years). The Troop List does not list the Marine's grade or MOS, but only provides gross numbers, e.g., Unit X will be manned with Y officers and Z enlisted Marines. For example, there are 24 infantry battalions, each with 847 enlisted T/O structure spaces; however, the Troop List would allocate only 775 enlisted Marines to each T/O (91.5%) because of T2P2 losses.

Of the 141,920 Marines now available to man billets, they are then further divided and distributed among the following Marine elements: Supporting Establishment (SE); Ground Combat Element (GCE); Aviation Combat Element (ACE); Combat Service Support Element (CSSE); and the Command Element. Figure 3.2 shows the target fair

share manning percentage for each element. Note that Figure 3.2 depicts the percentage of manning applied against the T/O, e.g., the SE receives 100% of its total T/O requirements whereas the GCE receives 91.5% of its total T/O requirements.

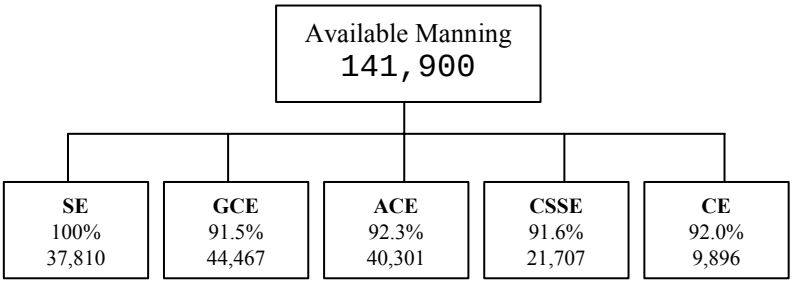

Figure 3.2. Manning Percentages by Element

The second output from the manning process is the Authorized Strength Report (ASR). The ASR converts the MACRO Troop List manning numbers into MICRO details. Specifically, the ASR allocates manning to units (MCCs) by grade and MOS. The ASR is the linking document between MCCDC (TFSD) and M&RA (MP and MM/MMEA). The ASR is passed to MMEA for use in the staffing goal models and staffing process to distribute current personnel inventory while MP uses it for input into the Grade Adjusted Recapitulation (GAR) to build future personnel inventory.

It is the ASR that specifies which of the billets will be manned and which will be left unfilled. For example: while an infantry division's T/O may show that it rates 20 captains, the ASR may only allocate 18 captains to the unit. The ASR is normally updated semi-annually, in February and August, and incorporates the most recent decisions affecting the Marine Corps' structure.

As defined in MCO 1300.31B, the GAR reflects the objective grade and PMOS requirements needed to support the billet structure listed in the ASR. The GAR accommodates end strength allocations and grade constraints that have been imposed by higher authority. The GAR is published annually and updated as required to reflect total Marine Corps manpower requirements by rank and PMOS as of the end of the projected fiscal year.

5. Staffing Process

Herein lies the heart of this thesis and the tail end of the HRDP process, the staffing process. In this process, MMEA strives to match current personnel inventory with manning levels identified in the ASR. Through the manning process, the Marine Corps has determined which billets it will man. Filling those billets with a Marine, by name, is the job of the enlisted assignment monitors (MMEA-8). However, before describing the specifics of the monitors' assignment decision process, it is critical to first discuss how other enlisted classification and assignment (C&A) documents help MMEA manage the enlisted personnel assignment process.

There are various enlisted classification and assignment (C&A) documents that draw on data from various Marine Corps manpower files to help manpower planners, managers, and assignment monitors perform their duties. As stated in MCO 1300.31B, the purpose of C&A documents is to: 1) provide HQMC (M&RA) and field commands with a common point of reference in the manpower process; 2) provide manpower managers with statistical information to develop manpower plans and policies; and 3) provide field commanders with information regarding their enlisted personnel status as reflected in the Joint Uniform Military Pay System/Manpower Management System (JUMPS/MMS), billet authorizations, and enlisted staffing goals.

What is JUMPS/MMS? It is the only source of personnel data found in the enlisted C&A documents. Most of this data is updated daily by units throughout the Marine Corps via unit diary entries. Each week, selected data elements are extracted from assorted JUMPS/MMS records and loaded to the Headquarters Master File (HMF). The most current HMF is used in each C&A process and that file contains data submitted to and accepted by JUMPS/MMS.

The various C&A documents include: 1) Command Distribution Report (CDR); 2) Enlisted Assignment Listing (EAL); 3) Enlisted Personnel Availability Digest (EPAD); and 4) Special Enlisted Assignment Listing (SEAL). The CDR and the EAL are both organized by and oriented to commands, and thus distributed to commands throughout the Corps, while the EPAD and the SEAL are both reviewed and used

exclusively by MMEA personnel. The specifics concerning these documents are summarized in the following paragraphs.

The CDR is organized by and oriented to commands and provides gross-number, statistical manpower summaries for every monitored command code (MCC). Each report includes authorized billet counts reflected in the current ASR, staffing goal data provided by the ESGM, and on-board population counts derived from the most recent HMF.

The EAL is like the CDR and is organized by and oriented to commands with information listed in MCC sequence and displayed within MCC by PMOS. However, in addition to what is given in the CDR, the EAL contains a by-name listing of all enlisted Marines assigned to that particular MCC. Organized by PMOS and sorted alphabetically within grade, this by-name roster lists over 30 data elements for each Marine extracted from the HMF and displayed by the Marine's name. Command personnel losses are displayed by the month of loss and are identified by type: on orders out of command; expiration of active service (EAS) losses; and rotation tour date (RTD). In addition, by-name gains to the command are listed by the month of gain and are identified as either on orders or en-route to the command.

The EPAD provides statistical tabulations of Marine Corps manpower requirements, authorized billets, and current personnel inventory. The document is organized in PMOS sequence, summarized by occupational field (OccFld), with a total Marine Corps summary printed at the end of the document. Each report is displayed by grade and is divided into four categories that reflect the manpower requirement data provided by manpower planners and the current inventory information taken from the HMF. These categories are: 1) Manpower requirements expressed as GAR; 2) Authorized billet information as reflected in the current ASR with counts by grade regarding how many billets are authorized for Excepted, Priority, and Proshare commands; 3) B-Billet Allocations derived from the ESGM; and 4) Current enlisted population information extracted from the most current HMF.

The SEAL is organized by commands and contains all data listed in the EAL; however, the information is listed in PMOS sequence and displayed within PMOS by

MCC. As noted previously, this document is distributed exclusively to enlisted assignment monitors for use as a notebook to record assignment actions. This report and its role as a primary assignment tool for the monitors will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

B. MMEA'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

While MMEA is responsible for distribution planning, career management, retention, and assignment of all active enlisted Marines, this thesis will focus on the enlisted monitor section, MMEA-8. However, a brief discussion of each section within MMEA is warranted to fully comprehend the complete assignment process. Figure 3.3 is MMEA's flow chart.

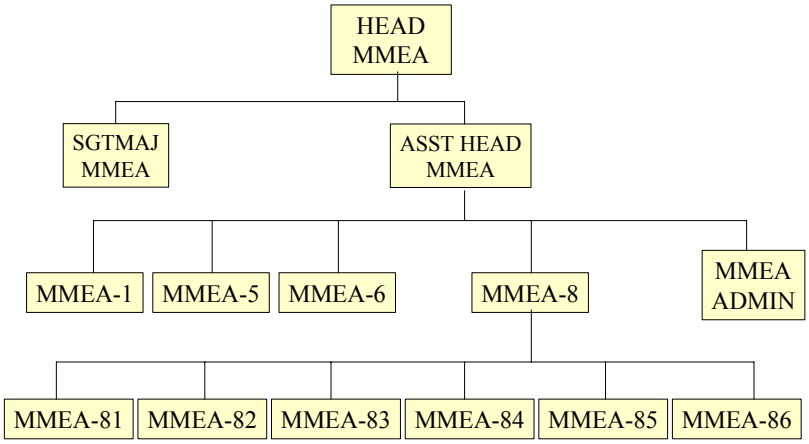

Figure 3.3. MMEA's Organizational Chart
From: MMEA SOP (2001)

1. MMEA-1 Enlisted Distribution Section

This section contains three sub units that serve distinct purposes. The MMEA-11 Recruit Distribution Unit is responsible for classifying and distributing all enlisted recruits. This unit classifies first-term Marines and assigns them to their PMOS producing school. It is only near completion of the PMOS schools that the enlisted monitor section is given a by-name listing of pending graduates that need follow on assignments to the operational commands. The MMEA-12 Command Distribution Unit oversees MMEA assignment operations by observing overall staffing distribution at the unit level. This unit creates composite views of units to compare like-sized units to

identify any disparity in staffing. Finally, the MMEA-13 Enlisted Readiness and Analysis Unit serves to monitor the impact of staffing distribution plans and execution as on unit readiness

2. MMEA-5 Systems Support Section

This section provides direct support to MMEA for branch information systems and serves as a liaison to higher echelon IT and systems support when required. This section manages the ESGM, the EAM, and the AOWP.

3. MMEA-6 Enlisted Retention Section

This section consists of three sub units to perform the following tasks: a) MMEA-61 Reenlistment Unit is responsible for active reenlistments and extensions; b) MMEA-62 Career Planning Unit selects and directs the assignments of Marines to Career Planning duty; and c) MMEA-64 Enlisted Career Counseling and Evaluation Unit provides performance counseling to career Marines, typically those in the ranks of sergeant and above.

4. MMEA-8 Enlisted Monitor Section

This section is responsible for the assigning all active duty Marines and is roughly organized to represent the components of a Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF). There are six sub units within this section: a) MMEA-81 Sergeant Major/First Sergeant Monitor Unit assigns and manages careers for all Marine first sergeants and sergeants major; b) MMEA-82 Combat Arms Monitor Unit assigns and manages careers for about 51,000 active enlisted Marines within the combat arms field; c) MMEA-83 Service Support Monitor Unit assigns and manages careers for about 45,000 active enlisted Marines within service support fields; d) MMEA-84 Aviation/Communication Monitor Unit assigns and manages careers for about 45,000 active enlisted Marines within aviation and communications fields; e) MMEA-85 Special Assignments Unit assigns and manages careers of Marines for special assignments such as Marine Security Guard Duty, Marine Security Forces, Recruiting Duty, and Drill Instructor Duty; and f) MMEA-86 Humanitarian Unit is responsible for the management, application, and coordination of humanitarian transfers. It is important to note that Marines that are assigned to special duty by MMEA-85 are 'borrowed' from another MMEA-8 unit. For example, a supply

sergeant desiring to serve as a recruiter is assigned by MMEA-85, but only with the concurrence of MMEA-83, who normally assigns and manages the supply sergeant's career.

C. THE STAFFING PROCESS

The Marine Corps staffing process begins with the ESGM for particular billets to fill and ends with the monitors for assignment and eventual PCSO issuance to a specific Marine. In addition to the enlisted C&A documents that help MMEA manage the enlisted personnel assignment process, MMEA also uses decision support systems to manage the enlisted assignment process.

1. Enlisted Staffing Goal Model (ESGM)

The ESGM tells monitors 'the places to put the faces.' It is a decision support system used by MMEA to produce staffing goals for optimally distributing the current personnel inventory, by grade and PMOS, among authorized billets in accordance with Marine Corps staffing policies. In essence, this model resolves the basic problem of an inherent mismatch between the enlisted assignable inventory and the billets authorized throughout the Marine Corps. Additionally, this model may also be used in a gaming mode to assess the impact of assignment policy changes on unit staffing.

2. Enlisted Assignment Model (EAM)

The EAM is another decision support system that helps monitors by producing by-name assignments for billets. The EAM was originally designed in the late 1970s and written in FORTRAN-77; the model consists of some 16,000 user-defined logical expressions that makes the model extremely flexible but difficult to manage (Ref 10). As a result, the monitors find this model too complex to run and frequently disregard its recommendations. As of this writing, the EAM is not a viable assignment tool for the monitors.

3. Potential of the Monitor Assignment Support System (MASS)

It should be noted that MMEA has recently implemented an IT upgrade, the Monitor Assignment Support System (MASS). According to the 'MASS Business Vision,' MASS is intended to create "a streamlined monitor assignment system via

automated processes and centralized toolsets." A sample listing of MASS' objectives include (Ref 11):

- Provide an automated and integrated method to access information essential for making assignment and career management decisions.
- Develop a single, easy-to-use graphical interface integrating various information sources and allowing the users to perform queries.
- Provide an avenue whereby a monitor has to enter Marine management information only once, thus reducing reliance on additional unit diary entries and entries into other automated systems.
- Improve the quality or 'fit' of Marine assignments by identifying all billet vacancies and all qualified Marines to fill those vacancies.
- Make the Marine assignment system interoperable, portable, and not dependent on proprietary hardware and software.

Based on the objectives of MASS, it holds great potential to assist monitors in their assignment functions and warrants further analysis; however, as of this writing, MASS is still in development and not a regular tool for monitors performing their current assignment duties.

D. THE ASSIGNMENT PROCESS

Here is where 'the rubber meets the road,' so to speak, and the focus of this thesis. Monitors in the MMEA-8 section 'put the faces in the places' where decision support systems have indicated 'the places to put the faces.' Currently, there are 38 monitors managing the distribution of approximately 154,500 enlisted Marines.

The assignment process involves two basic functions. One function is the assignment decision-making process where monitors match Marines to billets, and the second function is the issuance of assignment orders by means of the Automated Order Writing Process (AOWP). While monitors spend considerable time dealing with the AOWP system in their daily routine, issues related to this system will not be covered as this thesis' primary focus is on the decision- making process.

There are two approaches to making assignment decisions, one is proactive in nature and the other is reactionary. Reactionary assignment decisions occur when unforeseen or unpredictable events causes billet vacancies and/or when situations dictate transferring a Marine from one billet to another. For example, an event such as a sudden illness of a Marine's family member that necessitates transferring the Marine to a station near a particular medical facility. In this case, not only must a MMEA-86 Humanitarian Unit monitor promptly identify a billet to which to assign that Marine, another MMEA-8 monitor must also identify and assign another Marine to fill the billet that is vacated by the Marine needing a humanitarian transfer. While reactionary assignments happen, it is not the norm and will not be discussed further in this thesis.

Proactive assignment decisions involve identifying projected billet vacancies and making Marine assignments in advance to avoid billet gaps, attaining a higher state of readiness as a result. It is this end that the Marine Corps HRDP process seeks to achieve. Because proactive assignments are the norm at MMEA, it is the focus of this thesis and will be outlined in greater detail in the following section.

1. The Requirement

The monitors use the Special Enlisted Assignment Listing (SEAL) as a primary tool to proactively manage billet requirements and as a notebook to record all assignment actions. Recall that the SEAL is a C&A document listed in PMOS sequence and displayed within PMOS by MCC. It contains a by-name listing of all enlisted Marines assigned to a particular MCC. Appendix D is a sample extract from a SEAL.

The SEAL is the monitors' working document. It is 'usually' printed monthly and is manually managed by the monitors. Specifically, the monitors spend countless hours scanning through this listing, page by page, and making hand-written annotations identifying assignment actions required for each billet requirement. The SEAL allows the monitors to see current billet vacancies as well as projected vacancies for 3 and 7 months out.

In accordance with MCO 5320.12C, Staffing Precedences for Officer and Enlisted Billets, the monitors will first look to satisfy requirements for excepted commands. Once

all billet requirements are identified, the monitors' next step is to search for Marines to fill the requirements.

The search for the 'best fit' Marine will be covered in a later section. Continuing with the SEAL, once a Marine is identified to fill a specific requirement, the monitor annotates the Marine's name next to the identified billet requirement, in pencil (in the event of changes).

The tedious task of manually identifying and annotating billet vacancies continues for every billet requirement until a new SEAL is printed, and the process of reconciliation begins to transfer hand-written annotations, representing assignment actions, from the working SEAL to the newly printed SEAL. Reconciliation between the two SEALS is also necessary for the monitors to ensure that noted assignment actions have been properly posted in the Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS) database.

2. The 'Best Fit' Marine

After identifying a billet requirement from the SEAL, the monitor can also use the SEAL as an information source to find the 'best fit' Marine to fill the requirement. In addition, the monitor can also sort through a variety of other loosely integrated information resources, such as the EPAD, the MCTFS and the HMF, to view personal data on individual Marines.

Prior to a detailed discussion of the monitors' assignment decision process, a note about the level of Marines' input and desires throughout the assignment process is necessary. With the exception of the MMEA-86 Humanitarian Unit where all assignment decisions are made to accommodate Marines' and their families' special needs, all other MMEA-8 monitors' assignment decisions are driven by organizational requirements and routinely void of inputs from Marines regarding billet preferences.

There are several reasons why there is virtually no input and participation from Marines regarding their duty preferences. First and foremost, there is no system in place where Marines can survey billet vacancies in which they may be interested. While Marines can view a 'Billet Hotfills' web page that posts a limited number of billets requiring immediate transfer, only monitors have knowledge of all billet vacancies.

Secondly, the current manpower system allows limited communication from the Marines concerning their billet preferences. At present, the only input that Marines have regarding duty choices can be found in the MCTFS where Marines can specify their geographical as well as particular unit (MCC) desires; however, MCTFS does not capture specific billet requests.

Yearly, monitors and Marines have the opportunity to meet face-to-face. With great anticipation, the monitors leave the confines of their cubicles at MMEA for "monitors' visits" throughout the fleet three times per year, once for scheduled visits with west coast units, another for east coast units and a third for OCONUS units. During these events, monitors arrange private meetings with individual Marines to discuss assignment options.

The discussions between the monitors and Marines are considered to be 'short and sweet.' Though brief, the meetings are scheduled in 15 minutes blocks, Marines do get a chance to voice their preferences and concerns. Consequently, Marines feel that they have greater influence over their next duty assignment The monitors, on the other hand, feel that they are making 'more informed' assignment decisions as a result of the dialogue exchange with Marines.

Recently, MMEA offers a Monitor Contact Page resident in the Marine OnLine (MOL) Network where Marines can update their personal data and correspond directly with their respective monitor. It is a step toward ensuring that the geographical and command preferences are correct as well as providing a venue for Marines to communicate with monitors; however, monitors report that this system is currently under utilized by Marines.

Thus, with limited input from Marines, the monitors make assignment decisions based, almost exclusively, on the billet requirements. In essence, the Marine Corps assignment process is a one-sided job matching process. Consequently, most Marines learn of their new duty assignments only after the monitors have already made the assignment decision. In many instances, monitors discover a variety of reasons why Marines' cannot execute their PCSO's. A case can be made that this might be a

contributing factor for MMEA's canceling or modifying up to 25% of all PCSO's issued (Ref 12).

The assignment decision is a difficult and encompassing responsibility for enlisted Marine monitors. At present, there is no comprehensive method to help monitors cope with the myriad of policies, procedures, and information in making billet assignments. Though not inclusive, Figure 3.4 illustrates this point. The monitors heavily rely on their personal knowledge and experience within their respective MOS community to direct Marines into appropriate billets that best serve Marine Corps readiness needs while at the same time balancing the Marines' professional and personal situation, with limited input from Marines.

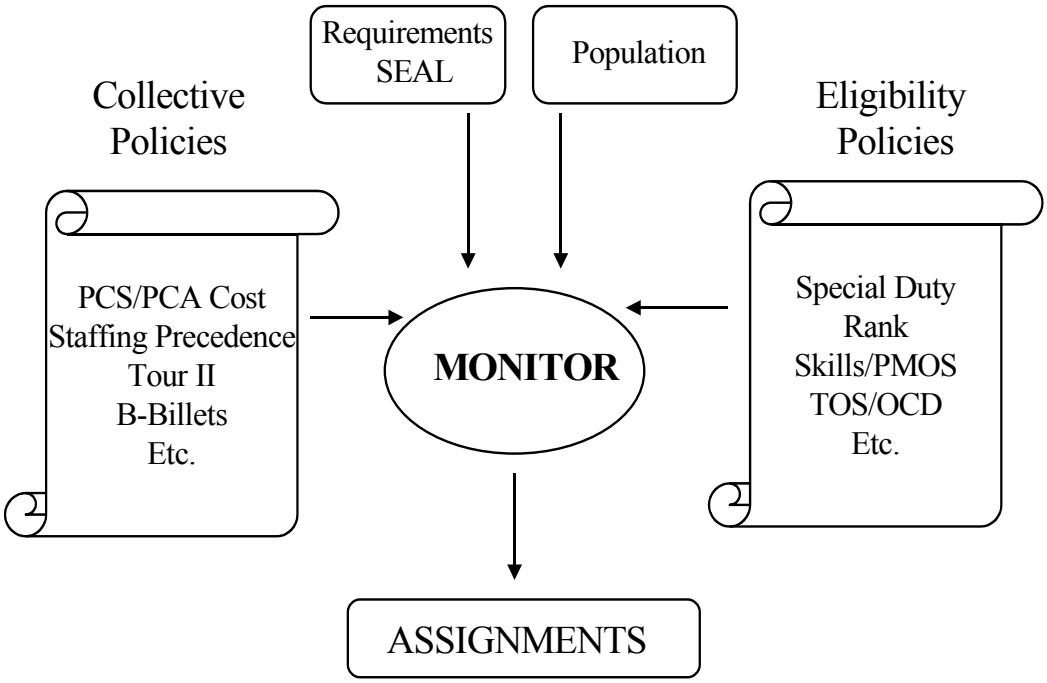

Figure 3.4. Monitor's Considerations

A monitor's primary concern in making assignments is 'the needs of the Marine Corps.' Figure 3.5 lists other factors that monitors must also consider in making assignment decisions, this list was extracted from MCO P1000.6, the Assignment,

Classification, and Travel System (ACTS) Manual, paragraph 1200. The factors listed are not necessarily in order of significance.

a. Qualified volunteer
b. The Marine's preference
c. The Marine's capabilities/qualifications
d. The impact of the assignment on the Marine's career development
e. The recommendations of reporting seniors
f. The possibility of personal hardship
g. The Marine's time on station and obligated service
h. The assignment is made without regard to race, creed, or gender (unless otherwise prohibited by the provisions of MCO P1300.8)

Figure 3.5. Assignment Factors

To ensure that Marines possess the requisite occupational skills and appropriate rank for an intended billet, the monitors refer to the MCTFS, via an emulator known as '3270,' verifying a Marine's qualifications and revealing other pertinent personal data. Figure 3.6 shows a sample 3270 Extract.

In keeping with the ESGM's output, monitors must ensure that Marines are equitably distributed among all commands by grade and PMOS. Furthermore, monitors must act with utmost responsiveness to fill billet vacancies for the excepted and priority commands.

The concern to assign the 'best fit' Marine should also be aligned with the TOS requirement, as outlined in MCO P1300.8R, 'to limit the number of Permanent Change of Station (PCS) moves to those required to achieve/maintain combat readiness or to ensure equitable treatment and career development of individual Marines. Compliance with this policy improves combat readiness by controlling personnel turnover, reducing travel costs, and increasing the stability of Marine families. As such, a key eligibility criteria for reassigning a Marine is whether or not he/she has met the Time On Station (TOS) requirements.

In directing Marines' assignments, the monitor is also their career manager. In this capacity, the monitors must ensure that Marines are given equal opportunity for career enhancing billet assignments that will allow professional advancement. To accomplish this, the monitors take great care to alternate Marines' duty assignments among Fleet Marine Force (FMF/non-FMF), special duty, and B-billet tours.

```
NAME:  MARINE AM I               SSN:  0123456789  MOS:  1341
PGRD:  E3       SGRD:            DOR:  20011201    BMOS: 1341  IMOS:
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------
MCC:    1R2     RUC:  12016     DCTB:   20010930  DJPU:   20010930 DUTYST:  1
FMMCC:  K68     TCF:  36        GLCDCTB:  200109  CMBDT:           SCAT:    0
LMCC:   J9Y     RTD:            OCD:    19960407  DRD:             DULIM:   0
FMCC:           EDD:            EDA:              PERSTEMPO:       DSC:     0
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------
DOB:     19830101  SEC:         MARST:           S  HOR:      04   RIFLE:   S49
AFADBD:  20010327  SECINV:      FAMMBRS:        00  CSEC    ADBA   PISTOL:
ECC:     20050326  LENL:     4  SPSSN:              PFT:  200106   SCORE:   243
EAS:     20050326  RERFLAG:     SPSVC:              W/C:           EFMP:    N/A
PDU:               SEX:      M  DCC:
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------
YRSEDUC:  12   GCT:  111   EL:  96    CL:  95    MM:  113          COMP:    11
SCHOOLS:  13B M92 808
DATES:    01  01  01
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------
SRUC:         SFMCC:       SEDD:            SEDA:            SRFT:     SMAC:
STCF:         STTC:        SPCSC:           SMAD:            SAPRF:    SAWPF:
AOWP-CODES:                REF:                              SOSMF:    SNOAF:
Enter-PF1---PF2---PF3---PF4---PF5---PF6---PF7---PF8---PF9---PF10--PF11--PF12---
            MAIN  EXIT        BACK  DEL
```

Figure 3.6. Sample 3270 Extract
After: MMEA (2002)

For FMF tours, the monitors must 'marry' up Marines' deployment status with that of the command's deployment cycle. For quality of life issues, it is important that monitors do not haphazardly assign a Marine who has recently returned from a deployment only to be assigned to another unit in the queue for an upcoming deployment.

In addition to balancing the Marines' career needs, the monitors are also cognizant of family concerns. For Marines with school age children, monitors try to issue orders for execution during the summer months to minimize study disruptions.

Particular attention is given to family members' needs when considering an overseas assignment. Military couples are co-located as much as possible. Gender is another issue requiring a monitor's careful attention. There are many units which rates Marines with MOS' that are assignable to female Marines; however, if the unit's primary mission is to engage in direct ground combat, they cannot be assigned female Marines in that MOS.

The considerations cited above are just a sampling of a multitude of issues that monitors must juggle in their attempt to assign the 'best fit' Marine. An assignment decision that will support the Corps' readiness requirements entails the monitor's sincere concern and thorough deliberation. Even with the best intentions and considerations, the 'best fit' Marine is not always the optimal choice for the unit.

E. CHAPTER SUMMARY & THE NEED FOR AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

The Marine Corps HRDP process and the enlisted assignment process are unavoidably complex to properly man Marine forces for mission accomplishment. At the tail end of the HRDP process are the monitors at MMEA who are burdened with making assignment decisions. While their decisions have long-lasting affects on the Marines as well as the commands to which they are assigned and ultimately affect Marine Corps personnel readiness, they have limited resources to perform this task.

Can the Marine Corps realize increased effectiveness and efficiency by leveraging evolving technology in its assignment process? Chapter II of this thesis, Methodology, defines effectiveness and efficiency as they apply to the assignment process. Essentially, effectiveness refers to how the process is conducted, whether it is cost-effective, and whether it is aptly labor-intensive. Efficiency refers to how well the system provides a quality match between personnel inventory and open billets. Preferably, the process should be managed in a cost-effective manner that is not excessively labor-intensive and results in beneficial matches between Marines and billet assignments.

The Marine Corps' current enlisted assignment process is a one-sided process that relies heavily on the monitors' tedious manual effort to detect billet vacancies and search for the right Marine by sorting through a variety of loosely integrated information

systems. The process is far from being effective. Additionally, the monitors' assignment decisions resulting from 'mentally juggling' a myriad of policies, procedures and information is less than efficient. In effect, the monitors are ill-equipped for the task at hand. Furthermore, the current system provides little ability to satisfy Marines' personal desires. Leveraging evolving technology by introducing a two-sided matching process might better satisfy Marines' preferences while continuing to meet the Marine Corps' staffing requirements and personnel readiness.

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IV. STAKEHOLDERS AUDIT

A. OVERVIEW

This chapter identifies key stakeholders within the Marine Corps assignment process. Reasons for performing a stakeholders audit were presented in Chapter II of this thesis. Recall that a stakeholder is defined as 'any person, group, or organization that can place a claim on an organization's attention, resources, or output or is affected by that output.' At a macro level, this definition would include 'taxpayers' and 'Congress' who can and do influence the assignment process; however, to reasonably manage the stakeholders audit, only key stakeholders, those directly affecting the assignment process, are considered. Thus, a stakeholder may either affect or be affected by the assignment process; therefore, identifying key stakeholders reveals which players would have the most influence for any changes or are most affected by any changes in the process.

First, this section will present a map of key stakeholders affecting the assignment process. Then a review of each stakeholders' interest and/or concerns is presented. And lastly, mandates that control these stakeholders will be summarized.

B. STAKEHOLDERS MAP

A stakeholders audit begins by identifying each key stakeholder and examining their interest in the process. The individuals, groups, and organizations that have a direct interest, or stake, in the enlisted assignment process and its outcomes include:

Process Originators (POR)

1) Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC)
2) Commanding General, MCCD as Total Force Structure Owner (TFSO)
3) Deputy Chief of Staff, Programs & Resources (DC/S P&R)

Process Facilitator (PF)

4) Commanding General, Training & Education Command (CG, TECOM)

Process Operators (POP)

5) Deputy Commandant, Manpower & Reserve Affairs (DC M&RA)
6) Director, Manpower Plans & Policy Division (MPP)
7) Director, Manpower Management Division (MM)
8) Enlisted Assignment Monitors (MMEA-8)
9) Career Planners and Career Counselors

10) Unit administrative shops (S-1)

Process Customer/Supplier (PC/S)

11) Unit Commanders

12) Marines

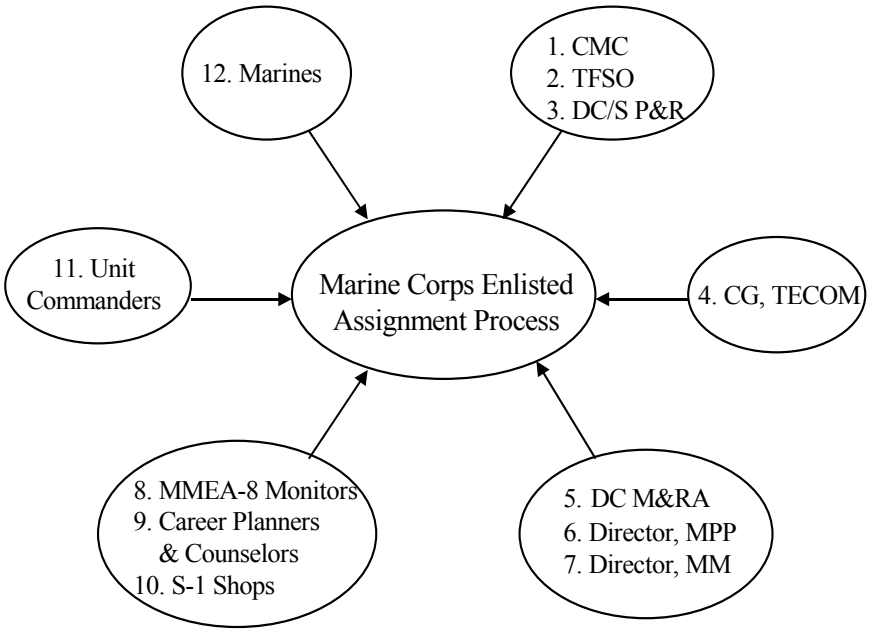

Figure 4.1. Stakeholders Map

The above stakeholder map depicts the key stakeholders in the enlisted assignment process. The stakeholders fall into several main categories and are positioned to show their relationship to the process, and not to each other. Doing so helps to focus the audit on how each stakeholder affects, or is affected, by the process rather than on the bureaucracy of reporting relationships and other hierarchical organizational structures. Additionally, some stakeholders may not have as profound or immediate an impact on the assignment process, but each does affect the process to some degree.

C. STAKES

Each of the above listed stakeholders has different 'stakes' or concerns about the assignment process: their stakes are discussed below.

Process Originators (POR)

1. Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC)

The Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) is responsible for accomplishing specified and implied tasks as determined in the National Security Strategy by providing the National Command Authorities (NCA) and combatant commanders with Marine forces that promote peace and stability through forward presence and peacetime engagement (Ref 13). As such, the Commandant must ensure that manpower policies effectively promote personnel readiness goals to meet Marine Corps mission requirements.

Leading Marines toward mission accomplishment is clearly stated in the Commandant's Guidance, "Saying 'yes' to our Marines' requests, whenever possible, is part of good leadership. We demand a great deal from our Marines and they respond magnificently. In return, the Corps should strive to help them fulfill their needs and aspirations. When we focus on how we can say 'yes' to our Marines, they can concentrate on mission accomplishment, because they will be confident that the Corps' first instinct is to work for their benefit." (Ref 14)

2. Commanding General, MCCD as Total Force Structure Owner (TFSO)

As the developer for a detailed force structure to meet the capabilities requirement as established by the Concept Based Requirements Process (CBRP), the Total Force Structure Owner (TFSO) is the originator of billet requirements within the assignment process. In designing units to meet the capabilities requirement, the TFSO specifies billet and equipment needs in the Tables of Organization and Equipment (T/O&E). The billet requirements are later refined in the manning process to produce the Authorized Strength Report (ASR), which is the linking document between the Total Force Structure Division and Manpower & Reserve Affairs (M&RA.)

3. Deputy Chief of Staff, Programs & Resources (DC/S P&R)

As the Resource Allocation Process owner, the DC/S for P&R affects the assignment process by establishing the personnel end-strength available for allocation. Through the Program Objective Memorandum (POM) process, which is necessitated by

fiscal constraints to prioritize fiscal resources, the DC/S P&R injects economic reality into the manpower process and makes recommendations to the CMC on total resource allocation and provides the TFSO and the DC/S M&RA with the total end-strength of personnel that the Marine Corps can afford.

Process Facilitator (PF)

4. Commanding General, Training & Education Command (CG, TECOM)

The Training & Education Command (TECOM) develops, coordinates, resources, executes, and evaluates training and education concepts, policies, plans and programs to ensure Marines are prepared to meet the challenges of present and future operational environments (Ref 15). As such, TECOM supports the assignment process by providing appropriately trained and schooled Marines for duty assignments. A few subordinate commands within TECOM include: Marine Corps Combat Service Support Schools (MCCSSS), Marine Corps Communication & Electronics School (MCCES), Schools of Infantry (SOI)- East and West, and Marine Corps Recruit Depots (MCRD)- San Diego and Parris Island.

Process Operators (POP)

5. Deputy Commandant, Manpower & Reserve Affairs (DC M&RA)

The Deputy Commandant, Manpower & Reserve Affairs' mission is to assist the Commandant by planning, directing, coordinating, and supervising both active and reserve forces. As the designated Human Resource Development Process owner, The DC M&RA is responsible for ensuring that manpower policies effectively promote personnel readiness goals to meet Marine Corps mission requirements (Ref 16).

6. Director, Manpower Plans & Policy Division (MPP)

The Director, Manpower Plans & Policy Division is responsible for formulating Marine Corps force manpower plans and determining total manpower needs to implement the Commandant's polices and decisions relating to manpower matters. The MP Director's duties include: determining the allocation, distribution and use of all Marine Corps military and civilian personnel; preparing manpower budget estimates and justifications, and maintaining liaison with external agencies regarding manpower issues;

and administering and coordinating the overall Marine Corps productivity improvement and total quality leadership efforts (Ref 17).

7. Director, Manpower Management Division (MM)

The Director, Manpower Management Division assists the DC/S M&RA in planning the distribution of all active Marines and in managing the following: assignments; retention; career counseling; records management; separations and retirements; and promotions (Ref 18).

8. MMEA-8 Enlisted Monitors

Enlisted monitors at MMEA represent the human touch in the assignment process as they combine personal experience and professional skill to implement Marine Corps assignment policies. Recall the myriad of policies, procedures and information that the monitors must sort through to make an assignment decision.

Because the monitors' primary mission is to meet the Corps' needs by filling billet vacancies, meeting the needs of individual Marines and their preferences are secondary. However, as much as possible, monitors want to accommodate Marines' station or command choices, as reflected in the MCTFS. With the introduction of a web-based assignment process, the monitors will likely be an overseer of assignments to ensure that Marines are qualified for the duty assignments that they request.

Monitors are concerned about their job performance and want to be highly regarded for professional integrity and service by their Marines. In addition, monitors career progression is affected by their performance, thus they are motivated to perform well and make duty assignments that are error free and suitable to their constituents.

9. Career Planners & Career Counselors

Career Planners are stationed in commands throughout the Marine Corps. A Career Planner is a special staff officer, responsible directly to the unit commander for all aspects of retention. As cited in the Marine Corps Planning and Retention Manual, Career Planners' primary mission is to take care of Marines in the unit by assisting them in improving their performance and competitiveness for promotion and retention. This includes advising Marines on the following: Enlisted Career Force Controls (ECFC) such as promotion tempos, service limits, and First Term Alignment Program (FTAP); required Professional Military Education (PME); Performance Evaluation Review Board

(PERB); B-billets and special assignments; selection zones for promotion; remedial promotion boards; involuntary separation pay; and the use of the enlisted career counseling service.

Career Counselors are stationed at Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC) to assist enlisted career Marines to improve their performance for retention and their competitiveness for promotion through Performance Evaluation and career counseling. Career Planners generally deal with junior enlisted Marines for reenlistment and special duty assignment issues, while Career Counselors work with senior enlisted Marines on promotion and career concerns. Both Career Planners and Counselors can advocate various types of duties to address reenlistment or career progression concerns; however, they generally do not influence monitors' assignment decisions.

Introducing a web-based assignment system will likely increase the importance of the Career Planners and Counselors' role. When Marines recognize that a web-based assignment system might increase their chances of receiving their desired duty assignment, they would want, and should seek more counseling and assistance from Career Planners and Counselors to submit assignment choices that best fit their professional needs and personal desires.

10. Unit Administrative Shops (S-1)

Unit administrative shops (S-1) provide personnel administrative services to Marines and unit commanders. Marines must go to their respective S-1 shops to change or validate any personal data resident in the Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS) database. Changes ranging from ordinary address corrections to re-designating life insurance beneficiary can only be processed through the S-1 shop. For duty assignment purposes, it is crucial for Marines to ensure that their training data and duty station preferences are correct to reflect their current status and present desires; therefore, it is vital that S-1 personnel correctly update Marines' records.

The Marine OnLine (MOL) Network is available for Marines to view their personal and training information via web access to ensure record accuracy. Most data changes cannot be made online; however, a handful of personal data can be updated in the Monitor Contact Page within MOL. In general, MOL provides Marines with greater

visibility of their records and helps S-1 personnel maintain accurate records, thus contributing to higher personnel readiness.

Process Customer/Supplier

11. Unit Commanders

Unit commanders throughout the Marine Corps are both customers and suppliers of the assignment process. They are consumers in the process as they need and anxiously await incoming Marines to fill vacant billets for mission accomplishment. On the other hand, they are also suppliers in the process as they are current owners of out-bound Marines (those awaiting or in receipt of new assignment orders.)

Unit commanders are responsible for complying with assignment policies to ensure that Marines within their commands are properly assigned and utilized. As a consumer of the assignment process, their concern lies in the quantity and quality of the Marines assigned to their unit. Sufficient number and aptly trained Marines are essential to a unit's ability to accomplish its assigned missions. While unit commanders seek too attain their stated T/O requirements, reality dictates otherwise. Recall the HRDP process where fiscal constraints restrict manning end-strength and T2P2 further reduces the number of Marines available for unit allocation. Unit commanders benefit from having motivated Marines who are appropriately trained with demonstrated levels of performance. On the other, unit commanders suffer from decreased personnel readiness and mission capability when the assignment system falls short of promptly placing an adequate number of properly trained Marines in their unit.

12. Marines

Marines are both customers and suppliers within the assignment process, and are affected most by its outcomes. Marines are customers in the process as they desire duty assignments that benefit their professional development and meet their personal desires. As suppliers in the process, Marines are essentially 'commodities' to be exchanged among different units.

Marines who are motivated and excel in their billet assignment are normally those who are satisfied with their duty assignment and related factors such as: tasks, assignment location, leadership, and quality of life issues affecting them and their

families. With the exception of the assignment location preference and particular MCCs, these considerations are not captured in the current enlisted assignment process. While it is not possible to encapsulate intrinsic factors, evolving technology is available to obtain other measurable variables that can positively influence a Marine's satisfaction level, thus raising performance and ultimately enhancing unit readiness.

D. MANDATES

All stakeholders within the enlisted assignment process are guided by a myriad of policies and procedures in performing their duties. Figure 4.2 lists varied publications that affect assignment decisions. Additionally, compliance is also required with supplementary letters of instruction, policy letters and memorandums. The monitors refer to the Marine Corps Personnel Assignment Policy Order (MCO P1300.8R) most often in their daily tasks.

E. CHAPTER SUMMARY

A stakeholders audit identifies key stakeholders and reveals which groups would be most affected by any changes in the assignment process. Accounting for stakeholders' interests or concerns has implications for improving the current assignment process' efficiency and effectiveness. Because stakeholders are concerned about the assignment process from their own perspective, highlighting their perceptions provides insight for their motives and actions in the assignment process. Recognizing and discerning these concerns reveals what consideration any change to the assignment process must incorporate.

Reviewing mandates that regulate the stakeholders shows which policies and procedures are significant to and mandatory by the current assignment process. These policies and procedures should be carefully considered to ascertain what changes could be made to improve the assignment process' efficiency and effectiveness.

MCO P1300.8R	Marine Corps Personnel Assignment Policy
MMEA	Standard Operating Procedures
MCO P1000.6	ACTS Manual
MCO P1040.31G	Enlisted Career Planning and Retention
MCO P1040.3F	Career Planning
MCO P1070.12k	Individual Records Administration Manual (IRAM)
MCO 1070.14A	Official Military Personnel File (OMPF)
MCO P1080.20M	MCTFS Codes Manual
MCO P1080.40A	Personnel Reporting Instructions Manual (MCTFSPRIM)
MCO P1200.7W	MOS Manual
MCO 1220.5J	Enlisted Lateral Move
MCO 1326.5C	Automated Orders Writing Process (AOWP)
MCO P1326.6D	Qualifications for Special Duty Assignments
MCO 1326.7D	Selection for HMX-1
MCO 1560.15K	MECEP
MCO P1610.7D	Performance Evaluation System (PES Manual)
MCO 1740.13A	Family Care Plans
MCO P1754.4A	Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)
MCO P1900.16E	Separations Manual (SEPS Man)
MCO 5000.12D	Marine Corps Policy on Pregnancy and Parenthood
MCO 5216.19	Administrative Action (AA) Form Instructions
MCO 5320.12C	Staffing Precedence Regulations for Officers and Enlisted
MCO 5311.1C	Total Force Structure Process
MCO 6100.10B	Weight Control
MCO 7130.1J	Issue/Modification of PCS Orders by Field
MCO 7301.104	Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR)
MCO 7220.24M	Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB) Program
NAVMC 2766	List of Marine Corps Activities
NAVMC 2771	Marine Corps Formal Schools Catalogue
MCO P7100.11	Budget for HQMC
MCO 1306.18	Enlisted Aide Order
MCO 5354.3A	Equal Opportunity Advisor (EOA)
MCO 1560.21D	SNCO Degree Completion Program
MCO 1560.24D	BOOST Program

Figure 4.2. Assignment Mandates
From: MMEA web page

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V. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

A. OVERVIEW

The Marine Corps Human Resource Development Process (HRDP) is necessarily complex to support the Corps' manpower management objectives. At the tail end of the hierarchical HRDP process sits the Manpower Management Enlisted Assignment (MMEA) section, where the difficult and challenging assignment process begins and monitors distribute personnel. This chapter presents the findings of this research and analysis as it pertains to labor market economics. A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis is presented analyzing relevant external and internal organizational factors. The study compares the Marine Corps enlisted assignment process to the Navy detailing process to conclude with findings of best practices used by both services.

B. LABOR MARKET ECONOMICS

Like all other U.S. military services, the Marine Corps relies on a hierarchical planning process to match personnel with billet requirements. Chapter II discussed the principles of market efficiency and effectiveness. It is clear that the current Marine Corps enlisted assignment process suffers from supply inefficiency. Marines are often not assigned to their preferred duty assignments as unit requirements and the 'needs of the Marine Corps' routinely supersede Marines' personal desires.

Ineffective processes also plague the current assignment system. The specific ineffective processes will be discussed in greater detail in the SWOT analysis section. When considering personnel for billet assignments, monitors primarily focus on the 'needs of the Marine Corps,' while Marines' personal preferences are secondary. As a result, assignment decisions are heavily biased in favor of commands. In addition, data and communication with enlisted Marines is insufficient to convey their preferences. Lastly, monitors' decision processes rely on loosely integrated information systems that require manual, labor-intensive means to identify billet requirements, search for the 'best fit' Marine, and 'mentally juggle' all relevant personnel policies and mandates. This makes the assignment process far from effective.

C. SWOT ANALYSIS

1. Process Strengths

The most substantial strength relates to institutional culture, in that dedicated and resourceful personnel (monitors) do link individual Marines with billets such that readiness remains characteristically high. However, there are still considerable areas for improvement.

a. Marines

Simply stated by the Commandant, "For the strength of the Corps is the Marine, and the strength of the Marine is the Corps" (Ref 19). Marines accept the primacy of accomplishing the Corps' mission, and thus often accept assignments different than those desired or expected. "We demand a great deal from our Marines and they respond magnificently. In return, the Corps should strive to help them fulfill their needs and aspirations" (Ref 20). Marines are valuable assets and should be treated as such.

While Marines consistently 'put Corps before self,' it is important that leadership strive to negate bureaucratic inertia that can overwhelm the assignment process and focus on individual Marine's personal preferences. Worth noting is that 15 of 33 monitors perceive that between 51-75 percent of Marines' are assigned to billets of their choosing. (Monitor Questionnaire)

When matched efficiently with assignments they prefer, Marines' expectations are met about operations tempo and quality of life issues affecting them and their families. Thus, Marines more willingly accept the frequency of deployments, resources available for training, quality of leadership and perceived opportunities for personal and professional development. Simply meeting a Marine's expectations increases his or her satisfaction with the assignment process and eventual duty assignment; therefore, positively affecting individual and organizational performance to enhance unit readiness.

b. Monitors

Despite seemingly unsatiable demands for personnel, continuous information systems problems, and unremitting policy and procedural constraints, monitors somehow manage to accomplish their mission and maintain the Corps'

personnel readiness goals. The monitors' incessant drive, diligent and conscientious efforts, along with personal knowledge and experience within their respective MOS community, are the linchpin within the Corps' complex personnel assignment process.

Of interest is that 24 of 33 monitors consider the current assignment process efficient: when Marines have the required grade, MOS and prerequisite training for an intended billet assignment. In addition, 22 of 33 monitors cited that the current process is effective: when Marines are sent to operational units in a timely manner. (Monitor Questionnaire)

c. Monitors' Visits

The yearly "monitors' visits" pay great dividends for both monitors and Marines. While the visits are limited in time and duration, they are popular and highly anticipated by the monitors and Marines. A number of monitors report that the "monitors' visits" is the one positive aspect of the current assignment system that should be preserved. (Monitor Questionnaire) These visits facilitate one-on-one discussions allowing both monitors and Marines to survey current duty assignment possibilities. As a result of these meetings, monitors are more confident that their assignment decisions are better fitted for their Marines. At the same time, Marines feel that they have active input with their duty preferences and a better understanding of the assignment process and the limitations that are placed upon monitors in making assignment decisions. While the eventual assignment may not be a Marine's primary choice of duty preference, both parties are satisfied with its outcome.

Monitors report that during these visits they meet mostly with Marines that are within 6 months of their duty rotation. The monitors state that they, as well as Marines, want more opportunities for open communication with each other. This suggests that the current system lacks adequate information exchange between the monitors and Marines.

2. Process Weaknesses

a. Policy and Procedure Issues

The assignment process is bureaucratically overloaded, e.g., excessive organizational constraints and paperwork, and technologically out-of-date. These macro

factors generate frustration on many levels and contribute to a non-productive cycle for accomplishing the assignment process. Monitors conscientiously strive to balance unit requirements with Marines' professional needs and personal desires; however, they often lack the authority to remove barriers and to develop policies or procedures to continually improve.

On the other hand, monitors are often required to cancel or modify orders they have already issued, based on painstaking considerations of all standing personnel policies and mandates. For various reasons, derived from personal needs or organizational requirements, either the individual Marine or the command request exemption from current policies or regulations. In addition, many monitors report that the presence of conflicting and confusing policies, as a result of supplementary letters of instruction, policy letters and memorandums, often provide Marines and commands reasons to dispute assignment decisions. (Monitor Questionnaire)

Conflicting and confusing personnel assignment policies also give way to multiple interpretations. A number of monitors state that too many commands, Marines and their advocates are guilty of "trying to do the monitors' job". This further complicates the monitors' daily task as they are beseeched with requests to "validate" their assignment decisions. (Monitor Questionnaire)

Fiscal constraints and personnel shortages created by legislative mandates and Marine Corps established priorities further complicate the monitor's assignment challenge. Meeting the fleet's needs and satisfying Marines' personal preferences are often contradictory, and monitors often perceive they satisfy no one in the process. Daily, assiduous monitors struggle with many difficult issues realizing that their assignment decisions ultimately affect Marines' lives and commands' readiness concerns.

Timeliness of the assignment process is particularly trying for Marines, monitors and commands. Marines and commands are typically unaware of policy and procedural constraints to which monitors must adhere in making duty assignment decisions. Marines and commands customarily expect quick responses from monitors when requesting initial orders and order modifications. Consequently, untimely responses from monitors are the source for much discontent amongst Marines and

commands, which creates friction between them and the monitors. This lack of understanding concerning the effects of time-lag leads many Marines and commands to inundate monitors with special requests for immediate responses that exacerbate the monitors' daily effort.

b. Information System Concerns

The assignment process is difficult to manage for the following reasons: monitors must rely on loosely integrated and outdated information systems that require manual labor-intensive means to identify billet requirements; searching for the 'best fit' Marine; is timely; and policies and mandates are cumbersome. Furthermore, the monitors' manual transcriptions in the Special Enlisted Assignment Listing (SEAL) require vigilant reconciliation that usually takes place monthly, to ensure proper posting in all related records.

Systems reliability is another source of daily frustrations for monitors. Specifically, the 3270 system is reported to be inoperable one to two times per week. (Monitor Questionnaire) The monitors routinely query this system to validate Marines' qualifications and personal information. When inoperable, the monitors' search for the 'best fit' Marine is severely hampered.

All Marines suffer the consequences when information systems contain incorrect critical personal data due to improper or incomplete data entry. When incorrect data is used to make the assignment decisions, Marines feel as though the monitors are not looking out for their best interest. Additionally, monitors may not recommend Marines for particular assignments if they appear ineligible, even though they are actually fully qualified. Time and efforts expended in correcting these errors contribute to assignment process inefficiencies.

While Marines can passively indicate their geographic and command desires in the Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS) database, there is no interactive communication system in place for Marines to convey their personal preferences. Again, should this information be incorrectly entered or omitted in the MCTFS, Marines would not receive proper consideration for certain billet assignments.

Recently, MMEA established a Monitor Contact Page resident in the Marine OnLine (MOL) Network, where Marines can update their personal data and correspond directly with their respective monitor. It is a step toward ensuring that the geographical and command preferences are correct as well as providing a venue for Marines to communicate with monitors; however, it remains another piece of information amongst many other data systems that the monitors must consider in making assignment decisions.

c. Career Planner Matters

Career Planners may need to take a more active role in Marines' careers. The Career Planners' role in the fleet should be expanded to answering Marines' career questions and explaining various career options to all Marines, not just those requiring assistance in completing and submitting re-enlistment and/or current tour extension requests. Complete Career Planner involvement would also alleviate the monitors' need to field numerous phone calls requesting answers to basic questions from Marines and commands. This could also improve Marines' perceptions of leadership within the Corps, as they would see someone directly within their chain of command showing a genuine concern in their professional development and personal desires.

d. Monitor Considerations

While monitors are the linchpin within the assignment process, subject to human limitations, it is not possible for them to make assignment decisions that are consistently favorable for both commands and Marines. Depending on the MOS population, each individual monitor could be responsible for assigning billets to as many as 2,000-12,000 Marines. Leveraging evolving technology, such as intelligent agents or a two-sided matching algorithm could alleviate the monitors from many ordinary assignment decisions; in turn, offering them more time to deal with exceptions and emergent requirements.

Establishing a real time interactive system allowing Marines to view and submit assignment requests could empower Marines to make their own assignment selections and take a more active role in their careers. This would make them less

dependent on monitors, whose personal attention is limited given the number of Marines that each monitor is responsible.

3. Process Opportunities

Riddled with supply inefficiency and ineffective processes, the Corps can benefit from evolving technology to better manage its personnel assignment system. The following section briefly describes how intelligent agents and two-sided matching process could possibly resolve some of the Corps' personnel assignment challenges.

a. Intelligent Agents

The Office of Naval Research (ONR), through Naval Personnel Research, Science and Technology (NPRST), is sponsoring research at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) and elsewhere to redesign the Navy's enlisted distribution management system. The NPS research effort, of which this thesis is a part, involves two research aims: 1) designing a Web-based virtual marketplace to replace the existing labor-intensive assignment process, and 2) developing an assignment algorithm (e.g. two-sided) to match enlisted personnel with commands (Ref 21). The virtual Web-based marketplace, referred to as the Personnel Mall, will exploit existing intelligent mall concepts, in which intelligent software agents serve as information brokers between buyers (e.g. commands) and sellers (e.g. Marines). Software agents representing the Marines will interact with software agents representing the commands, through broker agents, to determine the job assignments that match the Marines' preferences and the Corps' needs as closely as possible.

b. Two-Sided Matching Process

Marines have much to gain from improving the efficiency of the assignment process. A two-sided matching process would give greater emphasis to individual Marine's preferences, improving their satisfaction with assignments. A two-sided matching process determines assignments according to rank order preferences for Marines over commands and commands over Marines.

The Marine-biased approach begins by tentatively assigning each Marine to his or her preferred command. When there are conflicts (multiple Marines to the same command), the commands' rank-ordered preferences are used to break ties (the Marine

that the command ranks highest, among those tentatively assigned, remains tentatively assigned). Any unassigned Marines are then tentatively assigned to their next choice, again with command preferences breaking ties. This process continues until all Marines are either assigned to a command or are unassigned but have exhausted their preference list, and there are no conflicts. This outcome is stable and has the highest utility for the Marines as a group.

Stability implies that both the Marine and command consider the centrally determined match to be at least as desirable as matches that could be arranged outside the two-sided matching process. A match is unstable if a Marine and command both prefer one another to the respective command and Marine with which they are centrally matched; the Marine and command would both prefer to form their own agreement (e.g. the commander might call the monitor to request the Marine). Stable equilibrium can emphasize the Marine's preferences, the command's preferences, or potentially provide an intermediate solution (Ref 22).

4. Process Threats

The Marine Corps' recruiting and retention efforts could suffer if the Corps does not consider ways to better accommodate the personal preferences of their constituents and Marines. The Corps should look to other services currently exploring various means to incorporate personal desires in their assignment processes. Doing so will enable the Corps to remain competitive with other services in attracting potential members and retaining current service members.

D. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

In December 2000, Navy Lieutenant Melissa Short completed her graduate thesis, "Analysis of the Current Navy Enlisted Detailing Process," in support of the research being conducted by Professors Gates and Nissen at the Naval Postgraduate School. Objectives of their research include examining the enlisted assignment processes of all the U.S. military services, identifying the best practices of each, discovering the most effective and efficient methods which best supports the services' assignment objectives. This section compares the best practices of the Marine Corps assignment process and the Navy detailing process. All information pertaining to the Navy enlisted assignment

process was obtained from Lieutenant Melissa Short's thesis, "Analysis of the Current Navy Enlisted Detailing Process" (Ref 23). For reference, the Army and Air Force enlisted assignment process were analyzed by Todd Wasmund (Ref 24) and Kim Hill (Ref 25), respectively.

Unsurprisingly, the Marine Corps and Navy systems are similar in many respects. Both services use centrally planned hierarchical systems designed to serve large and complex command-and-control military organizations. Additionally, their stakeholders are similar, including their service chiefs and other policy-makers, personnel commands that operate the systems, commands, and Marines and sailors who are matched in the assignment process.

The Marine Corps and Navy, according to legislative mandates and established priorities, are similar in determining personnel requirements and allocating their manpower resources to commands. Both services depend greatly on their assignment personnel, monitors and detailers to make assignment decisions. However, the Marine Corps and Navy differ in one key area: obtaining and attempting to satisfy individual preferences. The following section describes the services' similarities and differences.

1. Process Similarities

The Navy's Enlisted Personnel Requisition System (EPRES) and the Enlisted Assignment Information System (EAIS). EPRES and EAIS serve functions similar to those of the Marine Corps' Enlisted Staffing Goal Model (ESGM). EPRES generates requisitions when a command's projected manning in a particular rating (MOS) and rate (pay grade) falls below projected Navy Manning Plan (NMP) levels. Requisitions are then downloaded into EAIS where they appear according to priority, and detailers review them. Like the ESGM, EAIS does not provide by-name nominations to fill billet vacancies (requisitions). Both Marine Corps monitors and Navy detailers must manually select Marines and sailors for duty assignments.

Figures 3.4 (in Chapter III) and 5.1 (below) illustrate the similarity between the need for Marine monitors and Navy detailers to 'mentally juggle' a myriad of factors when matching sailors (Marines) to requisitions (billet vacancies). Like the Navy, the Marine Corps has no single tool to help detailers and monitors cope with diverse policies,

procedures and information to ensure that their personnel are optimally matched to their duty assignments. Like Marine Corps monitors, the Navy detailers continually struggle to manage the Navy's (Corps') requirements and the sailors' (Marines') personal preferences.

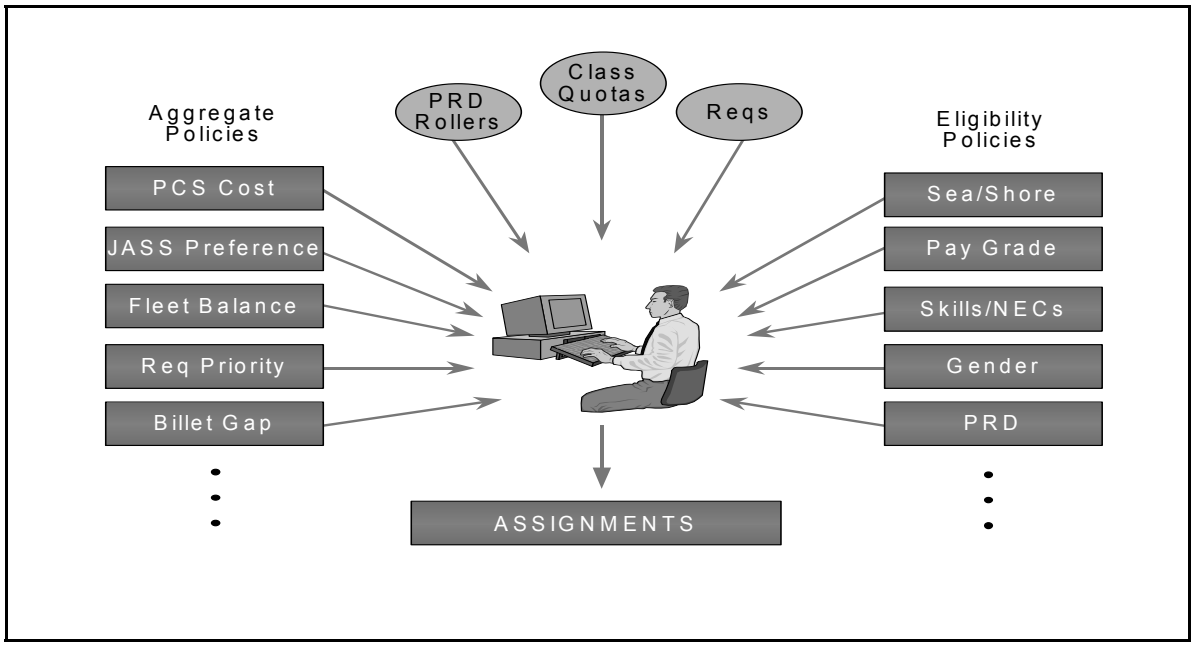

Figure 5.1. Navy Detailer's Considerations.
From: Navy Personnel Research, Studies and Technologies (March 2000)

2. Process Differences

The Navy commits far more resources than the Marine Corps in trying to satisfy enlisted sailors' individual preferences. In addition to detailers, who are the equivalent of Marine Corps assignment monitors and responsible for matching sailors to billets, the Navy uses Command Career Counselors (CCC) and the Job Advertising and Selection System (JASS). JASS is an online information and decision support system for sailors, CCCs and detailers. CCCs are assigned to commands and assist sailors in selecting available jobs that are best suited to their personal and professional interests. At their convenience, sailors around the world view posted prioritized billets, and apply for them through their CCC. Prior to JASS, sailors had to negotiate orders with detailers

telephonically. Before the introduction of JASS in 1995, the Navy had no automated means for matching the Navy's priorities and sailors' desires.

JASS permits sailors to view jobs available in their pay grade and or Navy Enlisted Code (NEC) rating (grade and MOS in the Marine Corps). View-only JASS allows sailors to see, but not apply for, all available jobs in the current requisition cycle. This initiative allows sailors to go on-line, in the comfort of their homes or work areas, to explore available jobs. Sailors can see available positions, research alternatives, and discuss assignment options with their family. As a result, this information system allows sailors to make informed and astute decisions regarding their next duty assignment.

Only CCCs, or those designated by their Commanding Officer as career counselors, have the required access to make job applications. CCCs are involved for two reasons: 1) to ensure that sailors are eligible and qualified for the positions for which they are applying, and 2) CCCs are fully engaged in the advisory role for sailors' careers. View-only JASS offers sailors flexibility and convenience.

Most significant, JASS offers sailors an interactive way to directly input their assignment preferences. JASS is more dynamic than the Marine Corp's current system, which allows Marines only to indicate a preference for geographic regions, major Marine Corps bases and particular commands.

MMEA recently began offering a Monitor Contact Page in the Marine OnLine (MOL) Network, where Marines can update their personal data and correspond directly with their respective monitor. It is a step toward ensuring that the Marines' geographical and command preferences are stated correctly as well as providing a venue for Marines to communicate with monitors; however, it does not contain billet listings whereby Marines could 'apply' for the 'jobs' that interest them.

E. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter draws conclusions on the relative strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the current Marine Corps' enlisted assignment process, and compares the Navy's personnel detailing process with the Marine Corps' assignment process. Essentially, the Corps' assignment process depends on the persistence and resourcefulness of monitors to fulfill billet requirements, in spite of a process plagued by

bureaucracy and inefficient technology. Readiness as a blanket term is obtained, but at what may be excessive costs, e.g., frustration, inefficiencies, and retention impacts. The current assignment process likely subordinates individual Marine's professional and personal needs, which could and does impact aspects of readiness, e.g., Marines under-performing due to skills, service and timing mismatches.

Like the Navy's detailing process, the Corps' assignment process is mired with numerous policy and procedural constraints, combined with inadequate information system resources, making it difficult for their detailers (monitors) to make consistent and timely assignment decisions. However, the Navy differs from the Corps in its systematic attempt to accommodate sailors' duty preferences.

With the introduction of the Navy's Job Advertising and Selection System (JASS), an interactive on-line decision support system, sailors can do the following not available to Marines: 1) view current billet openings, and 2) submit requests, albeit with Command Career Counselor (CCC) assistance, for specific duty assignments. The Corps, however, has recently offered a Monitor Contact Page resident in the Marine OnLine (MOL) Network where Marines can update limited types of personal data and correspond via e-mail with their respective monitor.

Opportunities exist with evolving technology, such as intelligent agents or a two-sided matching process, that efficiently mimics the market forces normally captured in wages. These tools could be used both to increase efficiency and to improve job satisfaction of monitors and individual Marines, as well as positively impacting personnel readiness. The Marine Corps, along with the Navy and other services, could benefit from using intelligent agents or a two-sided matching process to attract and retain service members.

VI. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

A. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Primary Research Question

What is the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Marine Corps' current enlisted assignment process? The Marine Corps' current enlisted assignment process accomplishes its basic mission: assigning Marines to billets. However, its assignment process suffers from inefficient and ineffective processes that do little to accommodate Marines' personal preferences and possibly compromise Marine Corps personnel readiness.

Developing a real-time, online, interactive tool enabling Marines to view available billet openings and submit assignment preferences would enhance the efficiency of the enlisted assignment process. Additionally, implementing a single decision support system, designed to support monitors in 'mentally juggling' numerous requirements of the Marine Corps and Marines would improve the effectiveness of the current assignment process.

2. Subsidiary Research Questions

Who are the stakeholders in the assignment process, and what are their concerns? The twelve stakeholders are: 1) the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC); 2) Commanding General, MCCD as Total Force Structure Owner (TFSO); 3) Deputy Chief of Staff, Programs & Resources (DC/S P&R); 4) Commanding General, Training & Education Command (CG, TECOM); 5) Deputy Commandant, Manpower & Reserve Affairs (DC M&RA); 6) Director, Manpower Plans & Policy Division (MPP); 7) Director, Manpower Management Division (MM); 8) Enlisted Assignment Monitors (MMEA-8); 9) Career Planners and Career Counselors; 10) Unit administrative shops (S-1); 11) Unit Commanders; and 12) Marines. Their collective primary concern is ensuring and enacting manpower policies promoting personnel readiness goals to meet Marine Corps mission requirements. They are also concerned about Marines' career progression and retention. Commands are particularly concerned with the assignment process' output, and receiving sufficient quality and quantities of Marines for mission

accomplishment. Marines are mostly concerned with the system satisfying their professional needs and personal desires.

What positive aspects of the Marine Corps' assignment process should be leveraged or expanded for future use? The yearly "monitors' visits" allow for face-to-face communication between monitors and Marines. Both parties benefit from the meetings and want to have more opportunities for information exchange and to survey available assignment possibilities. Fiscal, spatial and time limitations prevent monitors and Marines from meeting more than once a year; however, video tele-conferencing technology might allow for more 'personal' contacts between monitors and Marines.

Though merely previewed in this thesis, the ESGM, MASS and the Monitor Contact Page within the MOL Network hold the potential, by leveraging information technology, to assist monitors with their assignment decisions. MASS' objectives hope to streamline the current assignment system with 'automated processes and centralized toolsets,' and the Monitor Contact Page is a step towards open communication between Marines and monitors. Each of these systems warrants further study to realize their full potential for improving the assignment process' efficiency and effectiveness.

What pathologies, or deviations from an efficient process exist, and what are their effects on readiness? Analysis of the assignment process revealed four distinct areas of pathology: policy and procedure issues, information system concerns, career planner matters, and monitor considerations. Each is reviewed below.

- Policy and Procedure Issues

The assignment process is hindered with bureaucracy, red tape, and excessive paperwork that frustrate Marines, monitors and commands. Often, obstacles created by the myriad of policies and procedures prevent monitors from meeting anyone's needs. In addition, monitors overburdened with administrative functions result in untimely responses to Marines and command that instigate additional inquiries to exacerbate the monitors' daily requirements.

- Information System Concerns

The Marine Corps assignment system does not have a comprehensive assignment system software with compatible interfaces for complete information integration to help

monitors cope with all the issues necessary for making assignment decisions. The lack of an all-inclusive assignment information system results in monitors having to rely on loosely integrated information systems that require manually labor-intensive means to identify billet requirements, search for the 'best fit' Marine, and 'mentally juggling' all relevant personnel policies and mandates.

Dependence on correct data entry of Marines' duty preferences into the MCTFS is of concern. Missing or incorrect data entry would jeopardize Marines' opportunities for various duty assignments. While the Monitor Contact Page offers another venue for Marines to express their desires and communicate with monitors, it is not clear as to its usage by Marines and impact on assignment decisions.

- Career Counseling Matters

Career Planners need to take a more active role in Marines' careers and duty assignment selections. There should be a contact within a Marine's chain of command that is accessible and knowledgeable of the assignment process, to counsel and advise Marines on reassignment issues. Doing so would offer Marines better insight on career matters to make duty preference selections that best fit their particular needs and desires. This will also lead Marines to greater understanding and appreciation of the assignment process. Additionally, commands will benefit from the knowledge resident within their staff to enhance communication to and from MMEA.

- Monitor Considerations

Depending on their respective MOS population, monitors could be responsible for as many as 12,000 Marines. Consequently, it is difficult for monitors to provide complete and personal attention to all Marines. Human limitations coupled with reliance on loosely integrated information systems that require manually labor-intensive means to reach an assignment decision make the monitors' job all the more complicated.

What comparisons can be made between the Marine Corps and Navy assignment processes? The Marine Corps and Navy assignment processes are alike in many respects, and share similar manpower objectives. Both services experience related information system concerns as monitors and detailers struggle to make assignments using loosely

integrated information systems and mentally considering a myriad of policy and procedure mandates.

There is a substantial difference between how both services incorporate individual preferences within their assignment processes. The Navy's JASS enables sailors to view available jobs and submit for specific duty preferences. In addition, the Navy's CCCs are active participants in the assignment process counseling and assisting sailors with job selection and application that best suits sailors professional needs and personal desires.

The Marine Corps, on the other hand, has Career Planners that do not actively counsel Marines on routine assignment decisions; however, they do assist Marines who are interested in special assignment duties, e.g., Marine Security Guard (MSG) duty, with administrative requirements. The Marine Corps is also void of an online assignment information system like JASS. Only monitors are aware of billet availabilities. Additionally, Marines' duty preferences, which are limited to geographic locations and particular commands, are passively indicated in the MCTFS.

In keeping with the Commandant's Guidance, 'When we focus on how we can say 'yes' to our Marines' requests, they can concentrate on mission accomplishment, because they will be confident that the Corps' first instinct is to work for their benefit.' The Marine Corps can benefit by bringing an online system similar to the Navy's JASS for satisfying Marines' preferences. Both services could improve their assignment processes' efficiency and effectiveness by considering intelligent agents and using a two-sided matching model.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a need for a more efficient and effective enlisted assignment process in the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps should immediately respond to how it gathers and uses Marines' assignment preferences. Increased satisfaction with the assignment process directly leads to improved morale, performance and increased readiness levels. Additionally, a single decision support system is needed to assist monitors in matching Marines to billets. Using intelligent agent technology or a two-sided matching model will enable the Marine Corps to more effectively balance its requirements and readiness

with Marines' professional needs and personal preferences. Specifically, to improve the assignment process, the Marine Corps should:

- Develop an online, real-time, interactive tool enabling Marines to view available billet openings and submit assignment preferences.
- Implement a comprehensive assignment system software with compatible interfaces for complete information integration.
- Consider video tele-conferencing technology to facilitate open and interactive communication between monitors and Marines.

C. AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Is it cost effective to implement an online, real-time, interactive tool enabling Marines to view available billets and submit assignment preferences?
- Can monitors and Marines meet via video tele-conferencing means in place of "monitors' visits?" Would this produce considerable time and cost savings that could enable more personal communication and interaction between monitors and Marines.
- How will the advent of a web-based assignment process affect the monitors, Career Planners and Counselors responsibilities?
- Can the ESGM, MASS and/or the Marine Contact Page within the MOL Network be expanded to incorporate an intelligent agent system or a two-sided matching model to raise process efficiency and effectiveness?

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APPENDIX A: ACRONYMS

ACE – Aviation Combat Element
ACTS – Assignment, Classification, and Travel System Manual
AOWP – Automated Orders Writing Process
ASR – Authorized Strength Report
C&A – Classification & Assignment
CBRP – Concept Based Requirements Process
CCC – Command Career Counselors
CDR – Command Distribution Report
CMC – Commandant of the Marine Corps
CONUS – Continental United States
CSSE – Combat Service Support Element
DC (M&RA) – Deputy Commandant, Manpower and Reserve Affairs
DMDC – Defense Manpower Data Center
DoD – Department of Defense
EAIS – Enlisted Assignment Information System
EAL – Enlisted Assignment Listing
EAM – Enlisted Assignment Model
EAS – End of Active Service
ECFC – Enlisted Career Force Controls
EPAD – Enlisted Personnel Availability Digest
EPRES – Enlisted Personnel Requisition System
ESGM – Enlisted Staffing Goal Model
FMF – Fleet Marine Force
FTAP – First Term Realignment Program
GAR – Grade Adjusted Recapitulation
GCE – Ground Combat Element
HMF – Headquarters Master File
HQMC – Headquarters Marine Corps
HRDP – Human Resource Development Process

IT – Information Technology

JASS – Job Advertising and Selection System

JUMPS/MMS – Joint Uniform Military Pay System/Manpower Management System

M&RA – Manpower and Reserve Affairs

MAGTF – Marine Air-Ground Task Force

MASS – Monitor Assignment Support System

MCC – Monitored Command Code

MCCDC – Marine Corps Combat Development Command

MCO – Marine Corps Order

MCTFS – Marine Corps Total Force System

MMEA – Manpower Management, Enlisted Assignment Branch

MOL – Marine OnLine

MOS – Military Occupational Specialty

MPP – Manpower Plans and Policy

NCA – National Command Authority

NCO – Non-Commissioned Officer

NEC – Navy Enlisted Code

NMP – Navy Manning Plan

NPRST – Naval Personnel Research, Science and Technology

NPS – Naval Postgraduate School

OCONUS – Out of Continental United States

OMPF – Official Military Personnel Files

ONR – Office of Naval Research

P&R – Programs & Resources

PAC – Personnel Action Center

PCA – Permanent Change of Assignment

PCS – Permanent Change of Station

PCSO – Permanent Change of Station Orders

PERB – Performance Evaluation Review Board

PME – Professional Military Education

PMOS – Primary Military Occupational Skill

POM – Program Objective Memorandum

R^4 – Right sailor, with the Right skills, in the Right job, at the Right time

RTD – Rotation Tour Date

RUC – Reporting Unit Codes

SE – Supporting Establishment

SEAL- Special Enlisted Assignment Listing

SOP – Standard Operating Procedures

SORTS – Status of Resources and Training System

SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

T2P2 – Training, Transient, Patient and Prisoner

T/MR – Table of Manpower Requirements

T/O&E – Table of Organization & Equipment

TFSD – Total Force Structure Division

TFSO – Total Force Structure Owner

TFSP – Total Force Structure Process

TIS – Time in Service

TOS – Time on Station

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APPENDIX B: MONITOR QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is being distributed to support my thesis research for the Naval Postgraduate School. My thesis topic suggests developing an electronic based assignment system for Marine Corps enlisted personnel.

Current intelligent agent technology is available to better match existing personnel inventory with organizational needs. This can prove to be a powerful tool in assisting manpower assignment processes to attain higher readiness level while attempting to satisfy individual Marines professional development as well as personal desires.

My primary purpose is to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the current enlisted assignment process and determine implications for an electronic based assignment process.

Questionnaire results are confidential and unclassified. Results will be used for academic analysis only. Your careful input will provide crucial information regarding current enlisted assignment processes. ***Your time and effort in completing this survey is greatly appreciated.***

MMEA's Perspective:

1. What is your current position (job title)?

2. If you are a monitor, which MOS communities are you responsible for assignment?

Approximately how many Marines are within your population?

Specifically how many are within the ranks of E-5 and below: _____

How many are within the ranks of those of E-6 and above: _____

In your estimate, what is the percentage of time that you spend dealing with assignment issues for the above grades?

E-5 and below: _____%

E-6 and above: _____%

3. How long have you served in this position? Years_____, Months_____

4. The current assignment process is efficient (circle one).

Efficient: The right Marine for the job, does the Marine have the required grade and MOS for an intended billet assignment?

Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

5. In the event that a Marine is assigned to a billet where he/she does not have the required grade and MOS, what was typically the reason for such an assignment?

6. The current assignment process is effective (circle one).

Effective: The right Marine at the right time- is the Marine sent to operational units in a timely manner (within 30-60 days of a billet vacancy)?

Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

7. What key policies and mandates positively affect your ability to assign a Marine to a billet?

8. What key policies and mandates negatively affect your ability to assign a Marine to a billet?

9. What would you change (the dissatisfactions and/or frustrations) about the current assignment process?

A. Describe any human/ personal interactions difficulties.

B. Describe any systematic (technical) problems.

10. What would you not change (the positive aspects) about the current assignment system?

A. Describe any current favorable human/ personal interactions.

B. Describe any advantageous systematic (technical) aspects.

11. Did you attend the monitor school? _____Yes _____No

If "Yes", was the training helpful? _____Yes _____No

12. As a monitor, how do you deal with filling the "less desirable" billets?

13. As a monitor, how do you decide who gets the "more popular" billets?

Marines' Perspective

1. As a monitor, in your opinion, how would you characterize the perceptions of the Marines' within your population regarding the fairness of their billet assignment. Fairness in terms of getting the billet assignment that best suits their professional needs and personal desires (circle one).

Outstanding, Excellent, Average, Poor, Unsatisfactory

2. In your estimate, what percentage of Marines are assigned billets of their choosing (circle one)?

A. 0-25%, B. 26-50%, C. 51-75%, D. 76-90%, E. 90-100%

3. Again, based on your opinion and dealings with Marines, what top three desires for a Marine should be incorporated into an electronic based assignment process?

A.

B.

C.

Future Web-Based Assignment Considerations

1. Do Marines within your population have adequate access to computers for a web-based assignment system?

2. Do you think that Marines would welcome the opportunity to personally look on-line for their next billet assignment (circle one).

Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

3. Do you think that a web-based assignment system where Marines could view, on-line, actual billet openings and also apply for that particular billet would be too "institutional" (less personal and responsive) for Marines? Why or why not?

4. What recommendations do you have regarding a web-based assignment system?

5. What concerns do you have regarding a web-based assignment system?

Again, your time and effort is greatly appreciated.

T/O CHECKLIST

T/O: 1424B H&S COMPANY, RECONNAISSANCE BATTALION
T/E: N1411 N1421

LINE NO.	ENGLISH DESCRIPTION	BLT CRD	ALPHA GRADE	MOS	BRY	TPA	S T	MARINES OFF	MARINES ENL	CIV	OTHER SERVICES OFF	OTHER SERVICES ENL	NON-CHARGEABLE OFF	NON-CHARGEABLE ENL	CIV	SWC	WPN	EDU	SPS	CLNG	SERV SCH	FTN
32	MAGTF ENLISTED PLANNER		CPL	0511	M	E			1								M					
33	NBC NCO		SGT	5711	M	E			1								M					
34	NBC MARINE		LCPL	5711	M	E			1								M					
35	S-3L		CAPT	0302	M	O	U						1				P					
				9953	D																	
36	AIR OFFICER		CAPT	7502	M	O	U						1				P					
		SECTION TOTALS																				
		MARINE						2	6													
0																						
37	TRAINING CADRE																					
38	SNCOIC		GYSGT	8654	M	E			1								P					
				0369	N																	
39	INSTRUCTOR		SSGT	8654	M	E			2								P					
				0369	N																	
		SECTION TOTALS																				
		MARINE							3													
0																						
41	AMPHIB EQPT SECTION																					
42	AMPHIB EQPT CHIEF		SSGT	8654	M	E			1								P					
				0369	N																	
43	SMALL CRAFT MECH		SGT	1342	M	E			1								M					
44	SMALL CRAFT MECH		CPL	1342	M	E			1								M					
45	SMALL CRAFT MECH		LCPL	1342	M	E			1								M					
46	SMALL CRAFT MECH		LCPL	1342	M	E			1								M					
47	SMALL CRAFT MECH		LCPL	1342	M	E			5								M					
		SECTION TOTALS																				
		MARINE							10													

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Special Enlisted Assignment Listing (SEAL) **PMOS 1341 as of 09 May 2002** **Shop 83** **Page: 1**

MCC 1R2 2ND RECON BN CAMP LEJEUNE NC

	E9	E8	E7	E6	E5	E4	E3-E1	Total
Total Rqrmnt	0	0	0	0	1	1	6	8
ESG	0	0	0	0	1	1	6	8
Actual	0	0	0	0	1	1	11	13
3Mo Proj	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	12
7Mo Proj	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	12

Staffing Goals Derived from other MOS's

MOS	E9	E8	E7	E6	E5	E4	E3-E1	Total
1342	0	0	0	0	1	1	6	8

Last Name	IN	MID	PS GG	BMOS	AMOS	IMOS	DJCU	GDTB	TF	RTD	AFAD	EAS	R E R 1	DCC 2	DCC 3	S E C	OCD	DRD	D S C	DTY 1	PRF 2	F L	D S	M S	FMM	FMC	EDD
MARINE1	IM	000000000	50	1341	1342	00000	0108	0108	36		9508	021009	AD			B			0	1F1	122		1	S	124	J33	0208
MARINE2	IM	000000000	40	1341	1342	00000	0108	9906	36		9810	021022				A	9310		0				1	M	175		
MARINE3	IM	000000000	3	1341		00000	0112	0112	36		0106	050625				A			0				1	S	K68		
MARINE4	IM	000000000	3	1341		00000	0202	0202	36		0107	050729				A			0				1	S	K68		
MARINE5	IM	000000000	3	1341		00000	0112	0112	36		0106	050610				A			0				1	S	K68		
MARINE6	IM	000000000	3	1341		00000	0202	0202	36		0107	050729				A			0				1	S	K68		
MARINE7	IM	000000000	3	1341		00000	0109	0109	36		0103	050326				A	9604		0				1	S	K68		
MARINE8	IM	000000000	3	1341		00000	0203	0203	36		0108	050827				A			0				6	S	K68		
MARINE9	IM	000000000	2	1341		00000	0112	0112	36		0106	050610				A			0				1	S	K68		
MARINE10	IM	000000000	2	1341		00000	0202	0202	36		0106	050617				A			0				1	M	K68		
MARINE11	IM	000000000	2	1341		00000	0203	0203	36		0104	060408				A			0				1	M	K68		
MARINE12	IM	000000000	2	1341		00000	0112	0112	36		0106	050610				A			0				1	M	K68		
MARINE13	IM	000000000	20	1341		00000	0112	0112	36		0102	050211				A			0				Q	M	K68		

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