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TODAY'S AIR OFFICER, A PIONEER AT A MILITARY CRAFT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: Today's Air Officer, A Pioneer at a Military Craft

THEME: The development of the Forward Air Control and the Air Officer within the Marine Corps grew from the basic staff liaison officer systems. As the Marine Corps grew and evolved since World War II, the Marine Corps' FAC and AO program grew away from the liaison officer concept. It is time to make the education of these officers commiserate with the liaison officer concept.

THESIS: The Forward Air Controller and Air Officer training/education process was designed to prepare a liaison Officer to serve with a Marine Ground Combat Unit. As the Marine Corps has evolved and grown, the education/training of these officers has not kept pace. Additionally, the current education process is focused on what duties are to accomplished rather than how to accomplish those duties.

DISCUSSION: When the Marine Corps foresaw a use for an aviation unit to operate with Marine ground troops as part of an advance base force, the initial aviators began looking for ways to use aviation in support of ground troops. Throughout World War II the use of air support in close proximity to ground troops necessitated the growth and development of an Air Liaison system to promote the use of aviation, assist the ground commander in requesting air support, and assist in command and control of aviation. Following the close of World War II, the Marine Corps combined two systems of air control that had evolved during the war (one was a formal system which featured centralized control, and the other was a less formal system which featured decentralized control) into a formal centralized command/decentralized control air support system. Forward Air Controllers or Air Liaison Officers were placed at each echelon of command to coordinate or control air support operations. The education/training of these FAC's/AO's was developed, and the program was proven during three years of combat in Korea. Since the mid 1950s, the education/training of the Corps' FAC's/AO's has changed very little as the Marine Corps has grown and evolved. Now in the early 1990s, our FAC's/AO's are working in a joint/combined environment using the same staffing concept and training/education process which was used in the early 1950s. The Marine Corps should evaluate the FAC/AO's staffing and the assignment sourcing policy of those same FAC's/AO's to ensure the best possible system of support is being provided to a Marine Air Ground Task Force.

CONCLUSION: The training/education of the Marine Corps FAC's/AO's has not kept pace with the Corps growth and development over the past few decades. There is a need to adapt, update, and where appropriate develop a FAC/AO) education/training process for today's MAGTF.

Introduction

The black of night had just enquired the unique compound when an eerie torch-like light drenched the night. The unusual light unveiled a flat, barren land seemingly void of vegetation and human life. It was land long distant from the forested hills of 1918 France, from the tropical hills of 1927 Haiti. From the volcanic islands of 1942-1945, and from the mountainous wastes of the Chosin Reservoir in 1951. Yet, the Air Officers (AO's) at I Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters (MEF HQ) seemed to be reliving the same trial and error, on-the-job-training experiences as their forerunners had during the development of Marine Close Air Support procedures/AO and Forward Air Controller (FAC) duties during previous campaigns. But, why would theses AO's, who were tolling in a 1991 MEF HQ lit by that 150 foot tall flaming torch from the nearby oil field, feel like pioneers in a military craft that essentially had not changed for the past forty years? The Marine Air and Ground Team was working together just as it had for the past four decades. Had these Air Officers attended FAC School? Had these AO's been in the FMF for ten years or longer? Were these AO's MOS qualified in their respective type model series aircraft? Had these AO's completed TBS, AWS, and the field grade CSC? The answer to all of these questions for all of the assigned AO's was "yes". As the flame died and the oily, black night again settled over MARCENT/I MEF HQ the puzzle remained. Had that glaring torch in the dark, desolate desert revealed and enigma in the education system that prepared these Marine Air Officers?

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

To begin understanding what might have been illuminated in that desolate

Arabian desert, one must grasp how the Marine Corps developed a need for Air Officers. The AO role began as a simple 1914 recommendation for an aviation unit to operate with Marine ground troops as part of an advance base force.[1] Early use of aircraft by Marines in exercises included reconnoitering of terrain as well as the enemy. But, it was during those early exercises that two Marine flyers "gathered valuable data on spotting possibilities and on the ease with which a force attempting to land in small boats might be bombed from the air".[2] Some of the first attempts at bombing from a naval plane were conducted by Marine flyers. Following the outbreak of World War I, the "1st Marine Aviation Force" was ordered to France and assigned as the day wing of the Northern Bombing Group. The Marine squadrons of the 1st Marine Aviation Force participated in raids that attacked such targets as railway junctions, etc. However, on October 5, 1918, Marine aviators flying nine DeHaviland 4's and 9's dropped ten and twenty-five pound bombs on two German gun positions and strafed the supporting infantry. These planes bombed and strafed as close as four hundred feet in front of U.S. Marine ground forces. The need and desire to control and coordinate air support operations were present even in those early days as this bombing and strafing was controlled from the air by a tenth DeHaviland.[3]

Although the October 1918 attack was but a single event and probably did not foreshadow the integrated Marine Air Ground team, the Marine Corps' interest and desire to provide close support for its ground troops remained evident. The interwar years found Marine Aviation supporting ground troops in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Nicaragua.[4] Marine Aviators performed reconnaissance medical evacuation, resupply, bombing and strafing missions. Several firsts were recorded during these "Banana Wars." In 1919 the Marines found they could hit a target more often by pointing the plane

toward the target and releasing the bomb from a makeshift rack after diving to a low level (about 250 feet) at about a 45^0 angle. In 1927 a five plane formation briefed and attacked the enemy from a booming column using the dive bombing technique. This has been dubbed the first organized dive bombing attack.[5] Again, in 1927 ground troops laid out panels indicating the direction and range of the enemy and asked for an air attack. Because of the subsequent correction of this bombing and strafing attack, it has become known as the first instance of an air attack being directed by ground troops. The techniques of controlling and coordinating were refined slowly. The slow but sure systems of passing messages via cloth panels laid on the ground or via a pilot snatching a message suspended between two poles became more difficult and often impossible as higher performance, closed cockpit aircraft were introduced. The control techniques needed to achieve the desired precision of close air support lay in reliable communication that would permit quick liaison and a complete understanding between the pilot and the front line commander. Since the air-ground radio was not yet reliable in me 1930's, an aviator was assigned as an air liaison officer to the 1st Marine Brigade staff to help promote coordination, understanding, and standardization of communications. Later, that air liaison officer would ride in the back seat of a plane and direct pilots onto targets by means of an air-to-air radio.[6] As the Germans drove around the Maginot Line, Marines with their special air-ground team were working on the idea of placing radio equipped 'observers" on the front lines to control air support. But, the first standardized Navy-Marine Corps instructions had not appeared when the Corps found itself on Guadalcanal participating in Operation Watchtower (Shoestring) in order to aid in the containment of Japanese advances toward Australia.

The Marines deployed on Guadalcanal received air support by sending air support request messages from the front line Ground Force Commander to the Division CP (Air Liaison Officer) then to Henderson Field. The pilots were briefed prior to the flight on front line markings, target type and location, and the best attack direction. Later, when time permitted, pilots would walk up to the front and look at the targets to be attacked. After a time, these pilot visits to the front became Known as Air Liaison visits and the groups of pilots became known as Air Liaison Parties while the air officer assigned to the Division was known as the Air Liaison Officer.[7] The specific choice of the term "liaison' speaks to the duties or the officer as well as to why he was sent and whom he represented.

The command and staff liaison system has existed throughout military history. Commanders at every level nave used aides-de-camp in early times or liaison officers in more modern times. These highly qualified and trusted officers act as special agents or observers for commanders. These agents were and still are used to obtain or pass information, communicate critical orders, and assist in command and control of widely separate units. Napoleon's aides need to possess savoir taire and an ability to get along with and be trusted by commanders and start officers or higher ranks. The aides also had to master the operational philosophy or the emperor, understand his intent, and provide answers to any questions asked them by commanders. [8]

In the late 1930's and throughout the early Pacific campaigns, close support of ground troops by aircraft had drawbacks; and, in some cases, the new tactic was thought to be impractical or too dangerous.[9] Marine Aviation was attempting to promote the acceptance and use of Marine Aviation and its close support capability. The Air Wing Commander needed trusted agents to

keep him informed, communicate his intent, promote the use or aviation, and assist in command and control. The Air Liaison Officer and Air Liaison Parties who were sent to teach and exploit the capabilities or close air support were Marine Aviations trusted agents.

Although the New Georgia campaign saw the first use of dedicated air liaison parties who were issued command cars and supplies with radios and other equipment, the first significant progress made in close air support occurred during the Bougainville campaign.[10] Pilots and radiomen reported to the division three months prior to L-Day for air liaison party duty. The Division Air Liaison Officer organized an air liaison party school to teach the capabilities and limitations of CAS, procedures for requesting such support, and details of air-ground communications. An officer from the -3 section of each battalion and regiment was ordered to attend the school. Other improvements included use of colored smoke, a dedicated air command to coordinate requests for close air support with commands which could deliver such support, and authorization for the ALP to control the attacking aircraft, if necessary. The results were such that during the Bougainville campaign for perhaps the first time in World War II, the pilots were credited with a close support mission beyond the scope of artillery.[11]

Admiral Kelly Turner left the Soloman Campaign and took command of the Central Pacific trust. Turner, who had observed the progress of close air support in the Solomans, developed an elaborate organization of ship-based air support control units who worked with trained air-liaison parties that were attached to the Marine Divisions for the Tarawa landings.[12] In the Marshalls the Navy introduced the command ship with an excellent communications network. At Kwajalein a Joint Assault Signal Company (JASCO) was introduced. The JASCO was comprised of an Air Liaison Officer and

enlisted technicians who were assigned to each battalion, regiment, and division. All ALO's were schooled in intelligence and aviation procedures. Their duties were to relay requests for air support missions back to the Command Air Support Control Unit aboard ship and to keep the unit commander informed. In relaying air missions back, they were to specify the nature of the target, its location, the time for air to be on station, and the location of friendly troops.[13]

By late 1944 there were two distinct systems being developed to request and control close air support. The Southwestern Pacific system, which provided ALP's to forward units, utilized direct communications between the ALP's and the Support Aircraft Commander which was monitored by the Division Air Liaison Officer, and then utilized the ALP's to talk planes onto a target by direct communications. Marine Aviators in the Southwest Pacific adopted a principle which both the Army and the Navy had been reluctant to concede: "close support aviation is only an additional weapon to be employed at the discretion of the ground commander.[14] It was this system that was used so effectively by Marine Aviation in the Philippine Campaign. The commander of the 1st Cavalry Division exclaimed that "the Marine live bombers of the First Air Wing have kept the enemy on the run. They have kept him underground and enabled troops to move up with fewer casualties and with greater speed. I cannot say enough in praise of these men of the dive bombers…for the job they have done in giving my troops close ground support in this operation."[15]

The Central Pacific system was more complex. There were ALP's at each echelon of command from front in companies to the Division CP. The Navy had developed a complex organization or ship-based air support control. In addition to the more complex system, the philosophy of air control was more

centralized. ALP's did not communicate nor control the air support they requested. The Iwo Jima landings saw the introduction of a Landing Force Air Support Control Unit (LFASCU) which would take over all air support control when the amphibious phase ended. Its function was to receive air support requests, request aircraft from the Support Aircraft Commander, and then direct the air strikes. Also introduced on Iwo was a Supporting Arms Center within the 3d Marine Division G-3. The Air, Naval Gunfire, and Artillery Officers worked, planned, and coordinated within this section. Targets were freely interchanged according to the method of attack best suited.

As the Philippine Campaign was reaching its final phases, Operation Iceburg, a landing on Okinawa, commenced on 1 April 1945. For Marine Aviation, Okinawa was the culmination of all that had been learned. The Target Information Center (TIC) replaced the Supporting Arms Center. The TIC was a centralized fire support coordination agency that placed all supporting arms under artillery control. Aircraft control during the attack phase was to remain under LFASCU vice adopting the more flexible system used in the Philippines. The Central Pacific's system of ALP's at each echelon of command was selected to aid in relaying air support requests and in keeping the ground commanders informed. The Okinawa/Central Pacific system of close air support and fire support coordination was selected for Operation Olympic, the landing on Kyushu, with one exception. The V Marine Amphibious Corps took exception to that portion of the TIC organization which made all supporting fires the possession of the artillery officers. The V Phib Corps believed through hard-won amphibious experience, particularly on Iwo, that the G-3 must, somehow, coordinate supporting fires.[16]

The Pacific war ended with two systems of controlling close air support

and with two systems of coordinating supporting fires. The Fleet Marine Force Pacific made the first real progress in rationalizing these air control and fire support coordination systems when in 1946 they published an SOP which reached Washington in time for inclusion in doctrinal instructions. Air control would use the Central Pacific system of ALP's and air request procedures but would utilize the Southwestern Pacific system of allowing the forward ALP's to communicate with and control the supporting aircraft. Fire support coordination had a deep jurisdictional valley to bridge in becoming a doctrine. One system subscribed to the partisan view that fire support coordination is a command function and supporting fires should be coordinated. The opposing system's partisans subscribed to the belief that all supporting fires should be controlled by the artillery officer. The position finally adopted by the Marine Corps in 1949 was that fire coordination is a commander's responsibility. The Marine Corps' thinking in taking this position was that coordination means just that, and coordination cannot give way to fire support control of three diverse arms each with its own techniques, communication, and characteristics. “Control would give way to bottlenecking, underemployment of air and naval gunfire and considerable delay." [17]

The air control system which evolved during the Pacific campaign and became accepted by war's end incorporated the flexibility of the Philippine system with the coordination of the Okinawa system. The request for air support would go directly to a center called the Tactical Air Direction Center. Intermediate echelon ALP's would monitor the request and indicate approval by silence. When air support was approved, it would be controlled by the forward ALP's who were now called Forward Air Controllers. Air liaison officers of the ALP's at intermediate echelons worked in the

supporting arms center to coordinate air support and were special staff officers to that echelon's commander.[18] Thus was the air control concept when the Marine Air-Ground teams first Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) reached Pusan Harbor in early August 1950. The MAGTF's ground element not only had a control organization, but the 1st Provisional Brigade Headquarters also had an air section. It consisted of an Air Officer and six enlisted men and was responsible for the planning as well as the tactical control and coordination of supporting aircraft. An innovation to air control within the new MAGTF command element was the Tactical Air Observation net which allowed observation aircraft to keep the Brigade CP (Air Section) informed of developments in the second echelon's troop area of the enemy.[19]

When the X Corps was disbanded and Marine Ground Forces were assigned to the Eighth U.S. Army, the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing came under control of the Firth U.S. Air Force. [20] The Marine close air support system had come of age. The system which was born in years of combat was proven at the Pusan Perimeter, during the long trek from Chosen, and during the years of frustration near the 38th parallel.

CURRENT BACKGROUND

Today's air support system within the ground combat element consists of thirteen organic Tactical Air Control Parties (TACP's). A TACP is resident at each echelon of command from the battalion to the division. There are two types of TACP's. Those organic to an infantry battalion and those organic to the regiments and division. The principle difference between the two types of TACP's is that the battalion TACP has two forward air control parties while the regiment and division TACP's have none. Each TACP is

equipped to provide communications with appropriate command and control agencies. All officers in the TACP are Naval aviators or Naval flight officers, and the enlisted personnel are communicators. The general duties of all AO's within a TACP, regardless of echelon of command, are to provide liaison and communications, keep the commander informed on employment and availability of aircraft assigned to support his unit, advise the commander and his staff on matters concerning air support, prepare and forward requests for air support, relay pertinent information to the appropriate tactical air control agency, and exercise control of aircrafts.[21]

The battalion AO is the chief advisor to the battalion commander on air matters: he supervises the training and operation of the two battalion FAC parties, he coordinates and consolidates all preplanned air support requests with the battalion Fire Support Coordinator, he coordinates immediate air support requests from subordinate TACP's, and he develops the battalion air support plan. The regimental AO's duties are similar to those of the battalion AO's except he is a special staff officer to the regimental commander and his planning, coordination, and consolidation of air support involve the three subordinate maneuver battalions. The division AO does have duties similar to those of both the battalion and regimental AO's, but he also supervises the division air section, does target and air planning in the division commander's area of influence as well as area of responsibility, communicates with the Direct Air Support Center (DASC) to coordinate air support for the Ground Combat Element (GCE), plans air space integration for the division, and envisions requests for joint assets to satisfy division/GCE air support requirements.[22] The MAGTF Command Element AO performs duties similar to those of the GCE AO's with the additional duties of coordinating the MAGTF's Deep Air Support plan, coordinating the

MAGTF's air apportionment plan, coordinating the MAGTF's air targeting plan, negotiating the MAGTF's air employment in the joint environment, coordinating the air component's use of GCE and CSSE terrain for aviation related facilities, and coordinating aviation requirements and aviation support for the MAGTF. [23]

While AO's generally are located in a command post and plan/advise air matters, the FAC generally accompanies the frontline companies and controls aircraft. The duties of a FAC are to operate well forward with assault units and locate targets, to advise the supported company commander on proper employment of air, to direct air strikes against targets, to assess target damage after an air strike, to gather and report intelligence, to stay abreast of support unit's plans, to stay abreast of the enemy situation, to stay abreast of friendly unit locations, and to stay abreast of supported unit's needs. The FAC duties center around locating targets, recommending the employment of air, controlling that employment, while keeping abreast of information to enhance that employment air support. That is contrasted to an AO's duties of advising, coordinating, planning, facilitating, and integrating air support. [24]

THE EDUCATION/DUTY DELTA

Since the duties of the FAC and AO differ, a quick look at the training and education process that prepares these key links of the Marine Air and Ground team is in order. The training/education process is not complex. Once a Marine pilot or a Marine Naval Flight Officer (NFO) has completed training in the Naval Air Training Command and at a Replacement Squadron, he is normally assigned to a fleet squadron to complete his primary Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) training. Following attainment of a primary

MOS and, normally, a twelve month tour in a tactical squadron only the time-on-station question would preclude a pilot or an NFO from being assigned to fill set of FAC/AO orders. Both the prospective FAC and AO would be sent to the TACP course taught by the landing Force Training Command. The TACP course of instruction lasts three weeks. Week one includes background information such as "Organizational Structure of the Marine Air-Ground Task Force", "Doctrinal Concepts for Amphibious Operations", etc. But, the intended focus of the first week is the battalion AO. Introduction to Artillery, Calling and Adjusting Fires, Introduction to Naval Gunfire, The Fire Support Coordination Center, Offensive and Defensive Fire Support Planning, The Requirements for the Fire Support Annex, Targeting and Weaponeering, Aviation Planning for Amphibious Operations, The Naval Air Control System, and The Marine Air Command and Control System are many of the class titles which make up the remainder of the prospective FAC/AO'S first week of school. Week two involves classes which would prepare the FAC to plan, request, and control air support operations. Tactical Air Control Party Communication, Assault Support Fundamentals, FAC Procedures, CAS in a Sophisticated Threat Environment, Night and All-Weather CAS, Introduction to LASER Principles, etc. comprise the bulk of FAC specific classes. Week three is a practical fire exercise when the prospective FAC/AO controls artillery fire and air support. [25]

The FAC/AO is now trained/educated and is ostensibly prepared to report to any Marine unit from a company to a Marine Expeditionary Force command element. To quote Capt Keith Miller from his May 1987 Marine Corps Gazette article, "a rather quick transformation when you consider that many FAC's have no experience with bombs, fixed-wing CAS, etc."[26] This comment doesn't even address the fixed-wing pilot's capability of planning, coordinating,

and controlling helicopter operations. Another article which appeared in May 1987 in the Gazette mentioned Capt Bradley Lapiska's check-in conversation with his battalion commander when after "90" minutes any fleeting thoughts he had about "knowing more about Marine aviation than anyone else in the battalion (after all, my job was to 'advise' the battalion commander on employment of Marine Aviation) were shattered."[27] What had these Captains discovered early in their FAC/AO tours? An examination of the classes given at the TACP course reveals that some pieces of the FAC/AO education/training puzzle may have been mislaid. The FAC must know how the CAS process works within all treat environments not just in the sophisticated environment. He is required to collect, report, and make use of intelligence information; yet, he has received no training on now to perform these duties. A closer examination of each class outline within the TACP course might adress these of the FAC/AO's feelings of inadequacy. The TACP course is a course comprised of what the FAC/AO needs to accomplish rather than one which instructs him how to accomplish his FAC/AO duties. In Major Jerry Anderson's May 1987 Gazette article, he quoted the Potomac General Research Group's conclusion that "division and regimental TACP's appear to be deficient in capability to perform air support functions in the FSCC, and the battalion TACP's were similarly deficient."[28] Additionally, the TACP course does not teach classes on the Target Information Section; the AO-DASC interface; how an AO validates an air request from subordinate units (preplanned or immediate); aviation information flow within the battalion, regimental, division, and MEF COC/FSCC; air planning after the amphibious assault; what is a FAC(A) and now to use him; and processing air requests when the MAGTF is operating within a joint/combined command. The list goes on and on, but that is not the point. The point is the courses

taught in 1943 prior to the Bougainville Operation with additional classes added for the Central Pacific innovations such as the FSCC, the Navy Air Control System, and an AO at each level of command are essentially what is being taught today to the Corps' FAC's and AO's. Yes, the terms have changed as the vocabulary has changed, and a class or two has been added when new weapons have been introduced; but the basic course content remains the same.

C O N C LU S I O N

Since 1945 the MAGTF has developed through evolution. The CE of the MAGTF have AO's assigned as a part of the Table of Organization. Yet, the TACP course has not yet included classes for the AO's assigned to this headquarters. In fact, the TACP course primarily focuses on the battalion TACP and its functions. The duties, which are similar at the regiment and division, are directly transferable; but for those duties which are not the AO is left to a trial and error and on-the-job training experience. The division and MAGTF CE AO's must be taught the Marine Corps targeting process, the specifics of the air targeting process in a joint/combined command structure, the deep air support planning process, the types and functions of deep air support, and most importantly their working relationship with the Air Combat Element.

At the same time, today's Marine Corps must start recognizing what armies throughout history and what the Marine Corps through the 1950's understood. Those organizations understood and used the liaison officer program. As an illustration, the MAGTF Air Officer at the MEF level of command is not the junior officer assigned to the MEF's Commanding General's staff, rather he is the Marine Aircraft Wind Commander or MAGTF Air Combat

Element Commander who is the MEF air officer. All FAC's/AO's assigned to the MAGTF GCE and CE are in effect liason officers. As liaison officers, they should be highly trained, qualified, and trusted officers who would act as special agents or observers for the Wing CG. These agents would obtain or pass critical information, communicate critical orders, and assist in command and control of air operations in support of the MAGTF. And, as liaison officers from the Wing, they would understand the MEF AO's (Wing CG's) intent, rather than providing a separate, additional opinion. The use of liaison officers is most critical on the MAGTF CE staff. The wanting relationship between the ACE and the CE air section must by sychronized to ensure an air plan that supports the MAGTF Commanders intent as well as the ACE commander's intent for support.

Additionally, the growth and development of long-range weapon systems requires the MAGTF CE to be capable of coordinating deep fires as well as deconfliction of airspace in the deep battle area just as Marines learned to coordinate and deconflict fire in the close battle. Deep Air Support, Remotely Piloted Vehicles (RPV's), TLAM's, ATACMS, and MLRS are all competing for target information and target intelligence as well as for airspace. To this point, the prosecution and coordination of the deep battle has been left to the ACE. But, the ACE currently receives information concerning only deep air support operations and within the joint/combined arena that information would be funneled through the MAGTF CE. The MAGTF CE must develop a deep support coordination center and use its available information to coordinate/manage the MAGTF's deep battle. Since the MAGTF's current deep striking arm is the aircraft, strong consideration should be given to staffing, as well as heading, the deep support coordination center with trained air liaison officers to ensure

coordination as well as deconfliction in the MAGTF and the joint/combined deep battle area.

Working in conjunction with the deep support coordination center should be the MAGTF Target Information Center. Coordinating, processing, analyzing, validating, and forwarding targets for attack, neutralization, or destruction should be some of the functions of this center. The MAGTF CE target information center, like the MAGTF CE FSCC, is not a doctrinal part of each MAGTF headquarters. But, the center has been used and is needed to provide the MAGTF with this vital faculty. Currently, the majority of the targets processed for attack at the MAGTF CE and almost all targets passed to the joint targeting board by the MAGTF are air targets. Therefore, it would make sense that the head of this center or, at the very least, representation in the center should be another of the ACE's liaison officers.

The enigma in the training/education process that prepared I MEF's AO's was that it essentially stopped developing forty-five years ago. As the Marine Air Ground team, evolved in the decades following World War II, the education/training of that team's vital links has not kept pace. Additionally, any course of instruction preparing tactical operators/planners must focus not only on what duties are to be accomplished, but it must also focus on how those duties are to be accomplished. Lastly, the training/education process must encompass and target those AO's who serve at higher echelons of command because these billets require specific or unique preparation.

Once the vital air ground team links have been trained and educated, they should be employed so they can support in the same operational manner as the unit they are there to support. The ground combat element is capable of planning and operating on a twenty-four hour cycle. Yet, each FAC and

battalion/regimental AO is only one deep. The FAC/AO can only function so many hours per day, and then his expertise is lost until his battery is recharged. Similarly, while a FAC/AO is supporting operations his capability to plan future support is limited. Only the division air section is staffed to support and plan twenty-four hours per day. It is time to evaluate the Marine Corps starring concept of these liaison officers.

A well trained, well educated officer best serves his commander by knowing his CO's intent and acting appropriately. The Marine FAC/AO needs to know his supported unit commander's intent; and, at the same time, he must know the ACE commander's intent for support. The current assignment policy sends a FAC/AO on one year permanent duty status to the GCE or MAGTF CE. It is easy for the FAC/AO to spend that entire one year tour and never attend training at the Marine Air Control Group let alone receive the ACE commander's intent for support or have that intent updated. As members of the ACE air command and control system, as well as officers from the ACE, the FAC/AO must feel the close bond to the ACE commander and to the air control system of which they are a part. This closeness could be accomplished by assigning the thirteen TACP's from the GCE and the MAGTF CE TACP to the MACG where the remainder of the air command and control system is assigned. Each FAC/AO would fill a T/O line number associated with a specific battalion, regiment, or division air liaison officer billet requirement. The assignment would be for one year or longer as appropriate. This arrangement would make the TACP responsible to the MACG for their performance as part of the air command and control system and responsible to the specific ground unit commander whom they support for their overall performance. The division air section and the MAGTF air section both would be part of the MAGTF - 3 section for a tour of one year or

longer. Each air liaison officer would fill a specific line number at the appropriate headquarters, but he would maintain direct access to the ACE -3 section and the ACE commander as appropriate. Each TACP and air section ALO would spend his routine work day at his supported unit performing daily duties. His air planning, coordination, and control training would now be the responsibility of the ACE, and he would integrate with the ACE's training. However, the most compelling aspect of this arrangement would be unity of command. The ACE commander would be responsible for the performance of the entire air command and control system, the air support plan, and the integration of that plan into the MAGTF concept of operations. There are specific points to this proposal which would require detailed explanation or coordination between the supported commands and the supporting command to ensure the responsiveness and the support that each unit deserves. But, that discussion exceeds the scope and intent of this paper!

The proposals to examine the staffing requirements of the FAC's/AO's who support the MAGTF and the assignment policy of those same FAC's/AO's intended to be food for thought and discussion. The need is to adapt, update, and where appropriate develop a FAC's/AO's education/training process for today's FAC's/AO's which will allow the oily black of future nights to be lit by the enlightened minds of the Marine Air Ground team's vital links.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Robert Sherrod, The History of Marine Corps Aviation in World War II. (Washington: Combat Forces Press, 1952), p. 5.

[2]Ibid., p. 3.

[3]Victor J. Croizat, Close Air Support Procedures in the War Against Japan. (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1967), p. 45.

[4]Sherrod, pp. 23-25.

[5]Ibid., pp. 25-26.

[6]Benis M. Frank and Henry I. Shaw, History of the U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II, Vol. I. (Washington: Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1968), p. 18.

[7]Sherrod, p. 292.

[8]Major Gary B. Griffin, "The Directed Telescope: A Traditional Element of Effective Command," Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Start College, 20 May 1985, p.1.

[9]Sherrod, p. 151.

[10] Ibid., p. 150.

[11]Ibid., p. 189.

[12]Ibid., p. 292.

[13]Ibid., p. 293.

[14] Ibid p. 294.

[15]Ibid., p. 303.

[16]LtCol R. D. Heinl, Jr., "FSCC Two Schools of Thought," Marine Corps Gazette, January 1953, pp. 43-45.

[17]lbid., p. 46-47.

[18]Kennetn J. Clifford, Progress and Purpose: A. Developmental History of the United States Marine Corps, 1900-1970. (Washington: History and Museums Division, Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, 1973), p. 69.

[19] Lynn Montross and Captain Nicholas A. Canzona, The Pusan Perimeter, Vol. I. (Washington: Historical Branch. G-3, Headquarters. U.S. Marine Corps, 1954), p. 247.

[20]Ibid p. 238.

[21]US Marine Corps, Marine Aviation, FMFM 5-1 PCN 139 000354 00. (Washington: Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1979, p.50.

[22] Ibid., p. 60.

[23] LtCol John F. Goodman, "Duties of the MEF Air Section," Outline prepared for I MEF Air Section, January 1991.

[24] U.S. Marine Corps, FMFM 5-1, p. 60.

[25]Tactical Air Control Party Course Syllabus, February 1991, United States Marine Corps, Landing Force Training Command, Atlantic, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Norfolk, Virginia.

[26]Captain Keith Miller, "Making the FAC Formula Work," Marine Corps Gazette, May 1987, p. 24.

[27]Captain Bradley C. Lapiska, "The Education of a Naval Aviator," Marine Corps Gazette, May 1987, p. 25.

[28] Major Jerry S. Anderson, "Defining the Air Liaison Officer," Marine Corps Gazette, May 1987, p. 27.

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