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**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
Newport, R.I.**

**MARINE RAIDER BATTALIONS:  
A CASE STUDY IN DISTRIBUTED OPERATIONS**

by

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**Major, U.S. Marine Corps**

**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

**1 May 2010**

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## **Abstract**

*Marine Raider Battalions: A Case Study in Distributed Operations* - Distributed Operations (DO) offers the potential for Combatant Commanders to employ speed, flexibility, and agility, in a Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF). Since 2004, its proponents have included Marine Corps Generals M. W. Hagee, J. N. Mattis, R. E. Schmidle, and E. Hanlon Jr. Key conceptual documents of DO include *A Concept for Distributed Operations* (2005) and *Distributed Operations* (2006). Due to the lack of published historical DO case studies, this essay utilizes the history of the Marine Raider battalions from 1942-1944 in the Pacific War to provide context to distributed operations as a future operational concept. It applies those lessons to three DO options in the Fleet Marine Forces, the Marine Expeditionary Unit, and the Marine Special Operations Command.

## INTRODUCTION

General James N. “Chaos” Mattis has become the most recognized proponent of a new developmental step for the U.S. Marine Corps – a theory dubbed “distributed operations” (DO).<sup>1</sup> DO is proposed as an evolutionary change made possible primarily by technological innovations.<sup>2</sup> Proponents often use historical examples of light infantry to illustrate DO in infancy, such as the Finnish enveloping and flanking attacks used against the Russians in 1939-140, the British and Indian "Chindit" tactics employed against the Japanese during the Burma Campaign, and the Marines Combined Action Program (CAP) in Vietnam.<sup>3</sup> Of greater applicable value, the history of Marine Raider battalions in the Pacific War provides a better case study regarding the Marine Corps’ current endorsement of distributed operations.

Throughout its history, the Marine Corps has evolved from soldiers at sea (1775-1909), to colonial infantry (1899-1941), to amphibious assault (1900-1945), and finally to a force in readiness (1945-present).<sup>4</sup> Paradoxically, amphibious assault became a Marine Corps trademark in the Pacific War yet was perceived as an unlikely future mission. Consequently, the Corps concentrated its efforts toward “first to fight” and America’s “911” force. In the 1990s, the Marine Corps adopted maneuver warfare theory – in which a smaller, lighter, and more mobile force could attack enemy weaknesses through concentration of strength using fire and maneuver.<sup>5</sup> This style was juxtaposed with the attrition style of the U.S. Army – where strength was pitted against enemy strength. Meanwhile, the Corps continued to strengthen its combined arms expertise and maritime operational art with *operational maneuver from the sea*, *ship-to-objective maneuver*, and *seabasing*.<sup>6</sup> Still, there remained little to distinguish the Corps’ line infantry from that of the U.S. Army.

In the early twenty-first century, Mattis and others endorsed an extension of maneuver warfare dubbed DO. Mattis defined DO as an “operational approach that enables influence over larger areas through spatially separated small units, empowered to call for and direct fires, and to receive and use real-time and direct ISR [intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance].”<sup>7</sup> In other words, DO emphasizes the dispersion of small infantry units, enabled to gather intelligence and conduct battlespace shaping by leveraging enhanced communications systems, vertical and horizontal lift, intelligence surveillance and collection assets, and employment of precision fire support.<sup>8</sup> DO offers the potential for Combatant Commanders to employ speed, flexibility, and agility, using a Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF), ready to conduct simultaneous and multilevel attacks over great distances. DO’s application generates friendly tempo while simultaneously disrupting enemy operations.<sup>9</sup> While forces are separated over greater distances than conventional operations, DO theory proposes that these small maneuver units can “disperse and re-aggregate seamlessly” from squad to company level formations and beyond, depending on the mission and threat level.<sup>10</sup> With DO, Marine units self-organize for linear and non-linear, conventional and nonconventional combat.<sup>11</sup>

So what has the evolution of Marine Corps operational theory to do with Raider battalions? At its core, it has everything to do with it. The Raiders battalions are the primary historical example of the Marine Corps attempting to break the mold of line infantry as well as institutionalize maneuver warfare using small unit tactics. The Raiders background, doctrine, training, employment, and disestablishment provide key insights into dynamics that continue to influence the Corps’ current bid for DO.

## **BACKGROUND**

Long before his current espousal of DO, General Mattis endorsed a Raider capability within the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF).<sup>12</sup> Other Marines who bang the drum of DO trace its origins to World War II and the Raider battalions.<sup>13</sup> Organized in 1942, the Raiders were developed as a Marine Corps special mission force based example of the British commandos and Chinese guerillas operating in China against the Imperial Japanese Army.<sup>14</sup> Although many contributed to the institutionalization of the Raider battalions, one of its most influential fathers was Lieutenant Colonel Evans F. Carlson who used his political connections with President Franklin D. Roosevelt to push forward their birth.<sup>15</sup> During 1942, the Marine Corps established 1<sup>st</sup> and 2d Raider Battalions under Lieutenant Colonel Merrit A. Edson and Carlson respectively. Although these two innovative commanders held dissimilar ideas on how the units should operate, some common innovations developed.

## **DOCTRINE**

Although 1<sup>st</sup> and 2d Raider Battalions embraced diversity of thought during their experimental beginnings, their combined innovative ideas introduced some novel doctrinal concepts. The Raiders were arguably the first American military force to attempt the institutionalization and development of doctrine regarding unconventional operations within the interior lines of a conventional enemy. Their triad mission consisted of spearheading an invasion by a larger force, conducting raids within on the enemy interior, and performing guerilla-type operations behind enemy lines.<sup>16</sup> The idea of independent operations without access to conventional protection, sustainment, and communications required embracing a light infantry philosophy with pioneering organization and equipment.<sup>17</sup>



The Raiders realigned both their tables of organization and concepts of employment for small maneuver elements to operate independently and to provide the greatest firepower as far forward as possible.<sup>18</sup> To empower the squad leader, 2d Raider Battalion increased the size of the rifle squad from eight to ten Marines. Simultaneously, it created three additional maneuver elements within the squad called fire teams, each with a fire team leader. This concept proved so effective that both the Marine Corps and the Army later adopted its organization into their line battalions.<sup>19</sup> To thrust fire power as far forward as possible, 2d Raider Battalion disbanded its weapons company and placed all organic fire support in the line companies through “weapons platoons.” In the view of one historian, the Raiders flexibility to realign forces for each objective reflects one of their greatest aptitudes.<sup>20</sup>

### **TRAINING & RESOURCES**

Needing to operate beyond protective fires and sustainment support organic to a division, Raider training focused on physical prowess and technical proficiency. Enduring long hikes and practicing nighttime operations enhanced the battalions’ abilities to move and fight independently against superior enemy numbers. Significant practice in hand to hand fighting increased individual confidence and enhanced a warrior ethos. Raiders were also expected to master marksmanship of every weapons system in the battalion and spent considerable time honing these skills.<sup>21</sup> 2d Raiders, in particular, emphasized persuasion versus coercion and the value of each Marine as a technical expert more than their rank or position. The tough training required extraordinary talents, and the process of selecting personnel took its toll on constrained Marine Corps resources in a wartime environment.

Raiders received first priority in men and equipment over Marine line battalions.<sup>22</sup> Average men were not considered good enough. The battalions recruited the best volunteers

from their respective divisions, garnering the angst and resentment of many other commanders.<sup>23</sup> Equipment procurement included anything deemed necessary, whether standard Marine Corps issue or not. Yet the overarching theme consisted of increasing firepower and simultaneously decreasing weight. For purposes of autonomous movement and maneuver, heavy machine guns and mortars were exchanged for lighter ones. Meanwhile, purchase of specialized equipment included antitank rifles, automatic pistols, submachine guns, sniper rifles, Browning Automatic Rifles (BAR), M-1 semiautomatic rifles, and the infamous Raider stiletto.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, the Raiders were equipped for short duration engagements and without the organic support for sustainment

### **EMPLOYMENT**

The Raiders received their first opportunities to conduct operations behind enemy lines during the Solomon Island campaign in 1942. The equilibrium of U.S. and Japanese forces contesting on and around Guadalcanal offered excellent opportunities for use of commando forces. Admiral Chester Nimitz ordered Carlson's 2d Raiders to raid Makin Atoll in the nearby Gilbert Islands – over a thousand miles from the Solomon Islands. This was an operational feint, designed to divert enemy attention and possibly reinforcements from the main effort –the risky invasion of Guadalcanal. The operation yielded mixed results. On the one hand, the battalion made the first insertion and extract via submarine in history. It successfully accomplished its objective by independently destroying enemy forces and facilities within the enemy's interior lines. On the other hand, the failed initial withdrawal via rubber boats in heavy surf demoralized the unit to such an extent that Carlson attempted to surrender to the enemy. Fortunately, the Raiders had unexpectedly done so well in destroying the garrison that surrender proved impossible. In the successful second attempt to depart,

Carlson inadvertently left nine Marines behind, who were later captured and beheaded.<sup>25</sup>

Although not strategically significant, promotion of the Makin Raid served to inspire the American public at a time of apprehension in the Pacific.<sup>26</sup>

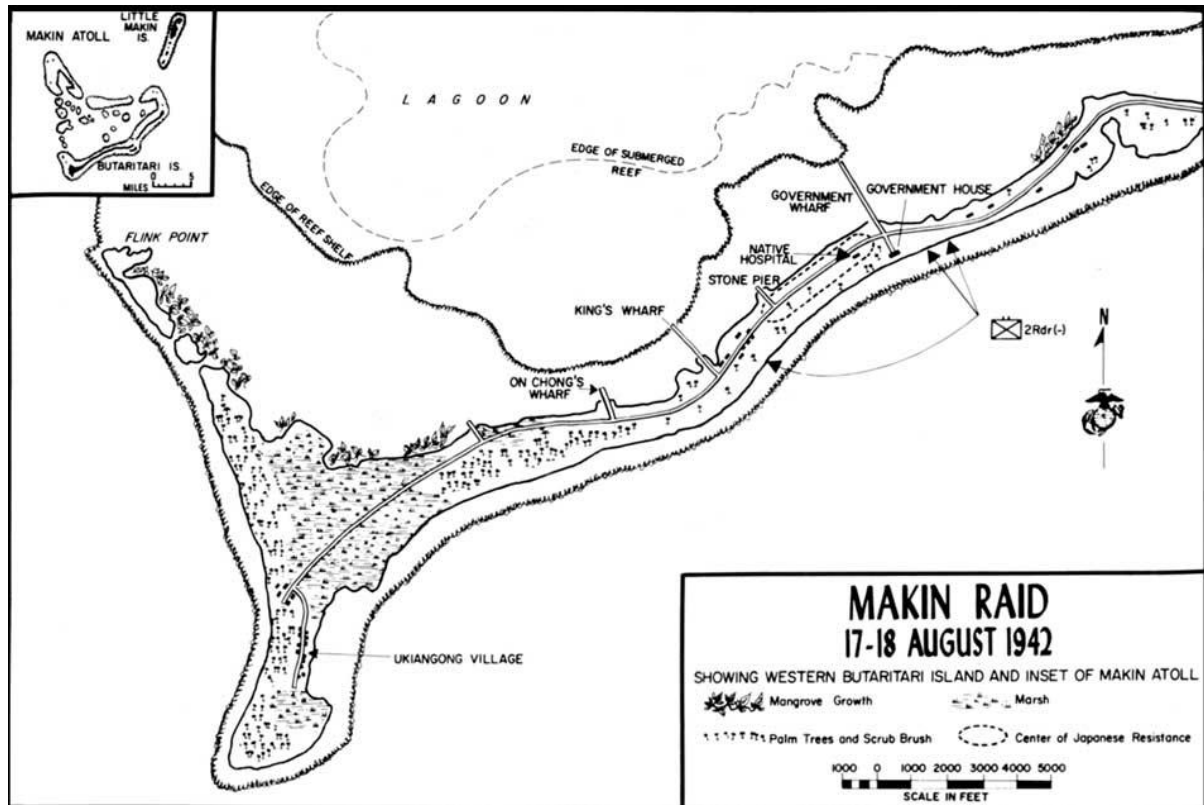


Figure 1: Makin Raid<sup>27</sup>

Following combat operations to seize the airfield on Guadalcanal, the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division ordered Edson's battle-tested 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion to raid over 10 miles behind enemy lines near the village of Tasimboko. Due to earlier combat losses, 1<sup>st</sup> Raider Battalion was reinforced with the remnants of 1<sup>st</sup> Parachute Battalion. Intelligence assessed that Japanese utilized the village as a reception and staging area for reinforcements originating from neighboring islands. Although shipping was at a premium following the U.S. Navy's defeat at Salvo Island, Edson improvised an amphibious insertion using two high speed transports along with two converted tuna boats. At Tasimboko, he quickly discovered a rear area of a

far superior enemy force whose rearguard consisted of an infantry battalion with artillery support. Undeterred, Edson utilized fire and maneuver to force the Japanese retreat, then destroyed enemy communications and supplies while gathering documents for intelligence. While a minor tactical victory, the raid had much larger significance on the six month battle on Guadalcanal by making a “serious dent in Japanese logistics, fire support, and communications.”<sup>28</sup>

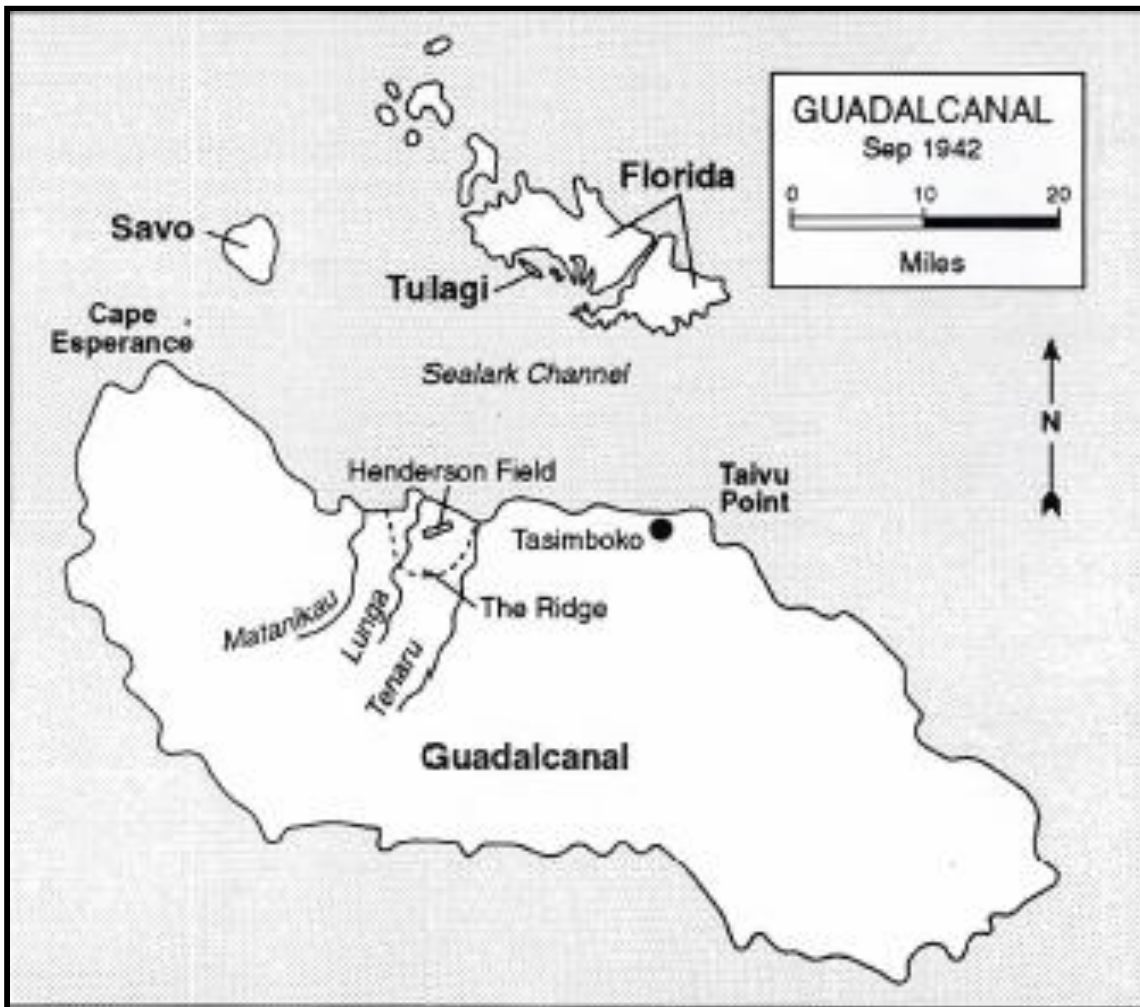


Figure 2: Raid at Tasimboko<sup>29</sup>

Late in the battle for Guadalcanal, the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division ordered Carlson’s newly arrived 2d Raiders on a long patrol to harass enemy forces from Aola Bay to Lunga Point, through 30 miles of thick jungle. In a series of engagements from 4 November to 4

December, the Raiders attrited superior Japanese forces operating within the same area. When the Japanese withdrawal from the area became disorganized through failing logistics and poor morale, the Raiders killed nearly 500 while sustaining only 16 killed in action. Key components to 2d Raiders' success included reliable radio communications, as well as artillery fire support and aerial resupply from the division at Lunga point. The operation proved that through stealth and aggression Raiders could autonomously operate against a numerically superior enemy and beyond friendly interior lines. Conversely, the tropical environmental conditions and austere conditions required evacuation of 225 men during the same period, demonstrating some limits to independent light infantry operations.<sup>30</sup>

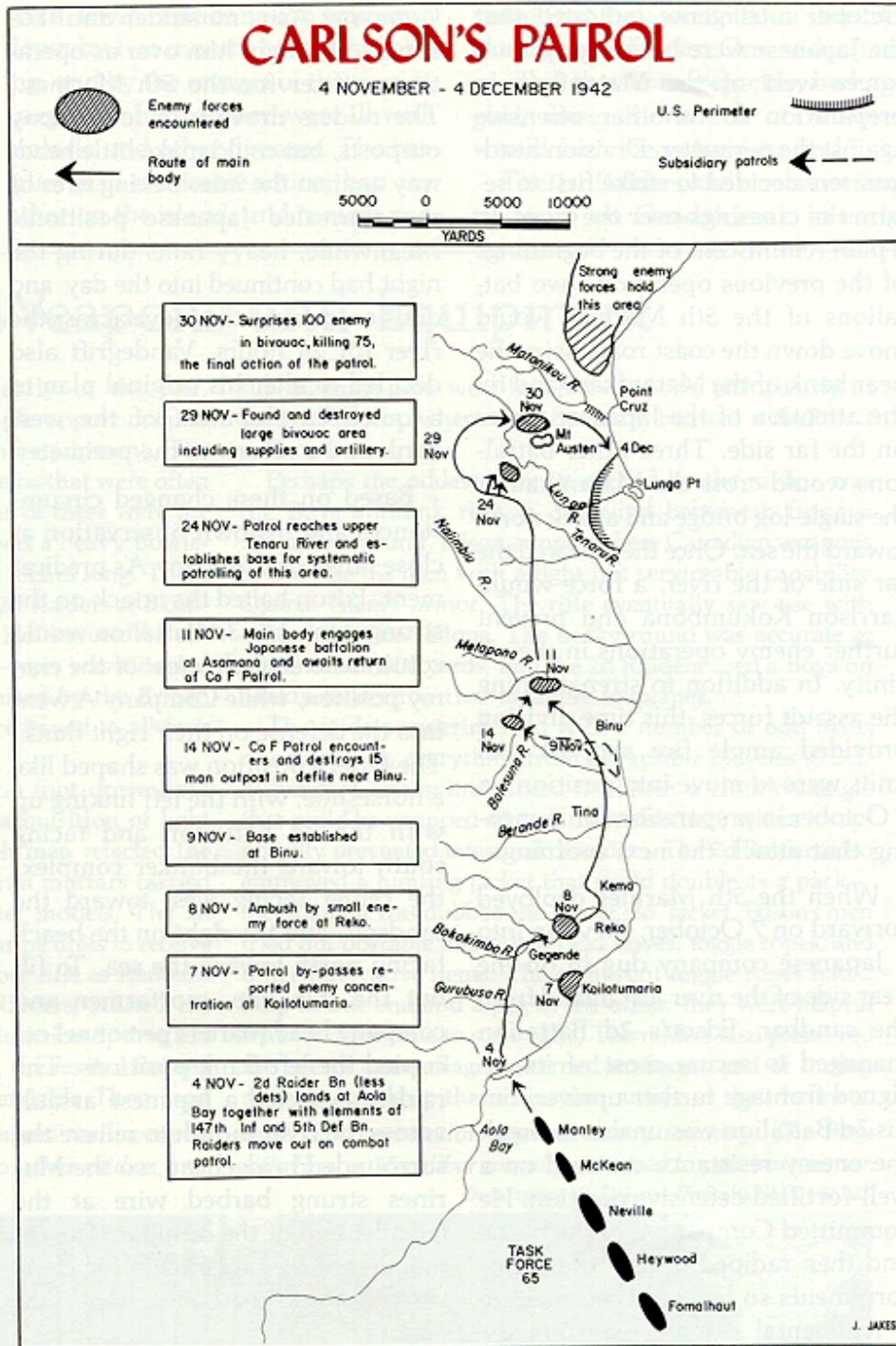


Figure 3: Carlson's Patrol<sup>31</sup>

### DISESTABLISHMENT

By 1944, the Marine Corps had created four Raider battalions, but their existence proved short-lived. They had proven adaptable to both conventional and special operations.

But as the Corps' size approaching half a million, these battalions noticeably competed for scarcities in personnel and equipment with the conventional forces. Simultaneously, advances in fire support and assault craft emphasized the use of regular line units for amphibious assaults without the need for introduction of special operations. Essentially, the raid, which evolved from American weakness in 1942, was replaced with assaults generated by American strength by 1944.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, by 1943 the Raiders were rarely assigned the special missions for which they had trained – instead increasing being used in conjunction with and alongside other Marine units. Nevertheless, the principal issue with the Raider battalions undoubtedly developed from their “elite” position within an already elite Corps. Despite their illustrious record, they gained the enmity of other Marines and never held favor with the majority who believed regular Marines could accomplish anything assigned to the Raiders. Others would argue that American commanders had failed to utilize the Raiders' unique capabilities properly to achieve operational effects.<sup>33</sup>

### **LESSONS LEARNED**

What lessons can now be ascribed to the Raiders' doctrine, training, employment, and disestablishment? Their equipment and preparation certainly enabled the Raiders with the ability to conduct all three of their special missions, indicated by their successful independent operations at Makin, Tasimboko, and Carlson's long patrol. Nevertheless, their commando capabilities proved superfluous. In 1963, Don K. Wyckoff skillfully articulated the lessons of the Raiders and other special forces in his essay “Super Soldiers.”<sup>34</sup> Despite unique doctrine, training and equipment, the Raiders eventually fought as line battalions. In fact, the Makin Raid could arguably be categorized as the only true special operation ever assigned to the Raiders.<sup>35</sup> Due to their lack of supporting arms and logistics in comparison to line battalions,

the Raiders were challenged to perform the sustained combat missions of conventional forces. When assigned conventional operations, which inevitably occurred, the Raiders evolved to “become basically indistinguishable” from other line units.<sup>36</sup> Although the Raiders were dissolved in 1944, the debate over the use of light infantry versus line infantry as a basis for Marine Corps evolution was far from resolved.

For decades following World War II, the Marine Corps wrestled over this dispute. One writer summarizes the difference as “the mechanized, motorized, or larger well-armed dismounted units typical of recent wars – and light infantry, a nimble, lightly equipped force with a more flexible tactical style.”<sup>37</sup> In the 1990s, this debate took shape in the *Marine Corps Gazette* as proponents of light infantry declared line infantry archaic to the Corps’ recent adoption of maneuver warfare.<sup>38</sup> Proponents argued to rid the imaginative, aggressive, and free-thinking Marine from the obtrusive burdens of rear operating areas, supply lines, support units, and centralized command and control. As Jon T. Hoffman convincingly argued in 1990, until light infantry proponents figured out how Marines would interact with the required support of aviation, artillery, tanks, and transportation, line infantry remained critical to the majority of missions.<sup>39</sup> Twenty years later, the proponents of DO believe the leverage of technology will finally “realize the full potential of the small unit leader in carrying the Marine Corps’ legacy of innovation forward.”<sup>40</sup>

## **RECOMMENATIONS**

The lessons of Raider battalions have applicability to three options of DO implementation in the Fleet Marine Forces (FMF), the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), and the Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC). DO differs from the commando mission of the Raiders in that it embraces coordinated and integrated dispersion of forces



rather than independent light infantry operations. One of the principle concepts is that close combat for U.S. forces has moved beyond the range of direct fire weapons, and embraces a lighter, more dispersed ground footprint in the application of indirect fires.<sup>41</sup> Hence, the light infantry versus line infantry debate is addressed through integration of combined arms with forward deployed rifle squads using technological advances in communications. By advocating DO for the entire FMF proponents have avoided controversy in creation of a specialized combat unit like the Raiders. Nevertheless, there are two major difficulties to implementation on this broad scale. First, proponents have generally ignored the substantive challenges associated with DO's implementation for three infantry divisions.<sup>42</sup> Second, they oversimplify the theoretical tension between organization for and control of DO in addition to conventional line battalion operations.<sup>43</sup>

A number of articles in the *Marine Corps Gazette* have discussed the fiscal, manpower, and logistical challenges associated with transforming three DO divisions. As the key enabler, the squad's ability to successfully implement DO requires significantly greater training, resources, and experience than a conventional force. In particular, the squad leader's competence to make tactical time-sensitive decisions requires increased aptitude for ISR employment, control of fires, cultural awareness, and logistics.<sup>44</sup> Proponents argue that the average squad used for line operations does not match DO requirements.<sup>45</sup> To perform DO every squad must be super. Unlike the Raiders, the entire Corps does not have a larger force to select qualified infantry volunteers from. As a result, establishing three DO divisions requires a considerable increase in squad professionalization, beginning with training.

Training for conventional or specialized operations often entails differing philosophies. Two viewpoints are categorized by military theorist Richard E. Simpkin as

either “gung-hoism” or “Hahnism.”<sup>46</sup> Marine Corps training since World War II has focused on “gung ho” – dehumanizing a recruit, motivating him with esprit de corps, and rebuilding him as a Marine! The Marine Corps makes a mold (in this case an eagle, globe and anchor), melts the recruit with physical and mental conditioning, and forcefully imparts a Marine psyche. This proven method has garnered the Marine “elite” status over soldiers, but only through the prioritization of indoctrination training over many other efforts.<sup>47</sup> Importantly, training, and not specialized equipment sets, enabled the Marines to maintain that elite image. As the youngest American service, three out of four Marines served only a single tour. However, these were readily replaced through the vigorous training pipeline.<sup>48</sup> This constant infusion of fresh Marines imparted a forceful and sustained intensity into the active force.

Contrast the traditional method of making Marines with “Hahnism” – a German or Israeli system of creating long service soldiers through extended professionalization training.<sup>49</sup> This method resembles the techniques emphasized by Carlson in 2d Raider Battalion, in particular, and Raider battalions as a whole. It emphasizes persuasion verses coercion and ability over rank. It allows for a force led by fewer officers by leveraging experienced noncommissioned officers. It permits commanders intent to take precedence over strict adherence to directives. Mattis apparently endorses this “Hahnism” approach by proposing higher standards for infantrymen: increased intelligence, experienced cultural awareness, advanced skills combat training, and retention well beyond the typical four year service contract.<sup>50</sup> Of course, “gung-hoism” and “Hanism” are not mutually exclusive and the latter becomes more prevalent in later ranks of all services. However, DO proponents ideas of aging and professionalizing the infantry force indicates a shift in training priorities to

“Hanism,” which can only be achieved at the expense of traditional Marine indoctrination programs.

Procurement and logistics solutions to enable 729 active duty rifle squads for three DO divisions appear daunting.<sup>51</sup> DO requires an exponential increase in communications, ISR, and vertical transportation assets, as well as horizontal lift. For example, conventional battalions with 175 radios will need 1220 sets to conduct DO.<sup>52</sup> As battalion support and communication functions shift downward, the squad will become much heavier in required equipment and more challenging to logistically maintain, requiring a number of proposed new technologies like unmanned helicopters, hybrid-electric vehicles, and squad command and control systems. The squad’s inherent vulnerability created by greater dispersion entails increased fire support from aviation, precision guided systems, and artillery. This exceptional growth of decision making organizations in the battlespace necessitates systems and procedures for prioritizing supported efforts in a complex environment.<sup>53</sup> A dense DO equipment set for squads and platoons will not likely marry well with conventional operations, as the battalion cannot effectively retain both a specialized and line battalion set simultaneously. Accordingly, transforming the line battalions of all three divisions to DO might not be prudent.

The theory of DO as an extension of maneuver needs to justify its applicability to the full spectrum of future warfare.<sup>54</sup> The Marine Corps should consider that DO’s light infantry focus poses a “wicked problem” in the challenges it presents to recruiting, training, equipping, organizing, and employing conventional line infantry.<sup>55</sup> The Corps maneuver warfare method sets to pin strength against selected enemy weakness in order to maximize advantage. That strength is normally achieved by applying mass in the right space and at the

opportune time.<sup>56</sup> As Clausewitz states, “there is no more imperative and no simpler law for strategy than to keep the forces concentrated.”<sup>57</sup> Despite abilities of the U.S military to mass indirect and precision fires, dispersion of ground forces risks the concentration of force required for many operations. A DO force that can fight both concentrated and dispersed, as light infantry or line infantry, within the time, space, and material complexity of that transformation, will not do so efficiently.<sup>58</sup> As the Raiders experience demonstrates, specialized combat units have proven less flexible and sustainable than line units, while line battalions have proven adaptable to the majority of missions.<sup>59</sup> One might consider that DO’s extension of maneuver warfare might encompass only a portion of the overall infantry force instead of the whole.

In the near term, General Schmidle proposes that DO development and testing should focus on the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU).<sup>60</sup> The DO capable MEU offers the Combatant Commander forward-deployed maritime forces which can conduct “early joint operations with persistent surveillance.”<sup>61</sup> With its reinforced infantry battalion, composite helicopter squadron, logistics battalion, and command element, the time-tested MEU can readily focus combined arms around distributed squad, platoon, and company sized units. Deployed from amphibious assault ships and ready at a moment’s notice, the MEU provides the Combatant Commander the capability to influence large littoral regions or occupy key infrastructure for follow-on joint forces. The addition of a Carrier Strike Group (CSG) adds fixed-wing air support and precision strikes in support of dispersed forward deployed Marines. New platforms like the V-22 Osprey greatly increase the operational reach of the MEU hundreds of miles from the coastlines. Most importantly, these capabilities have existed for a decade.<sup>62</sup>

By concentrating additional resources at the MEU, the Marine Corps might more easily man, train and equip units for DO. It can procure needed systems to enable a single reinforced battalion with manned and unmanned vehicular transportation systems, as well as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) for both ISR and logistical support. More importantly, the Marine Corps can extend the MEU's training cycle to certify the infantry squad for the increased requirements in decision making, communications, control of fires, and casualty care. By prioritizing the manning of its three MEUs, the Corps can ensure the proper mix of seasoned career and junior Marines in the DO unit. As the MEU rotates infantry battalions into its organization, the DO training will diffuse that knowledge and experience into the rest of the force with each rotation. In this scenario, each unit could work toward achieving DO as a special mission yet perhaps be only fully equipped for this purpose while assigned to the MEU. Conversely, DO might sound like a capability already resident in the armed forces.

Current special operations units may make more efficient and effective use of national resources for Combatant Commanders to conduct DO. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) Strategy 2010 states that its future will be defined by “executing global, *distributed operations*” in irregular warfare.<sup>63</sup> USSOCOM already has special procurement, training, and retention pipelines specifically designed to accommodate the challenges of equipping and manning a DO capable force. Additionally, USSOCOM specifically tailors itself to seamlessly integrate and enable its capabilities across the four services and other U.S. Government agencies.<sup>64</sup> As demonstrated in northern Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom, Special Forces dismantled the Taliban and Al Qaeda forces by leveraging the power of DO.<sup>65</sup> They did so again spearheading the invasion of northern Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom against Iraqi Army and Al Qaeda forces.<sup>66</sup> In

both instances, and notwithstanding many lessons learned in the art of combined arms, Special Forces proved flexible and responsive in the face of difficult political and logistical challenges while remaining integrated with U.S. military and other instruments of national power as well as our allies.

The U.S. Marine Corps might consider pursuing an agenda of DO with the Raider capability in Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC).<sup>67</sup> With the recent addition of MARSOC to SOCOM, this DO opportunity may have yet to be fully realized. MARSOC subdivides each of the three Marine Special Operations Battalions (MSOB) into four companies (MSOC) with four Marine Special Operations Teams (MSOT) each. These units are seasoned with a captain leading each MSOT, while other positions are filled by experienced career enlisted Marines. The MSOT can fight as small DO teams or combine into companies, battalions, or within a Joint Task Force. On the one hand, the assets and training allocated to the MSOBs allows them to conduct DO and perhaps leave more conventional expeditionary operations to the FMF. On the other hand, unlike the FMF or the MEU, MARSOC does not have the organic fire support and logistics capabilities required for DO without substantial external support. Additionally, its small size and high operational tempo likely limit its ability to provide Combatant Commanders with a standing DO capability.

## **CONCLUSION**

Many proponents of DO trace its history to Raider battalions of World War II, and their history present some excellent lessons on the subject. The Raiders were light infantry commando battalions designed to fight independently from conventional division and service support in logistics and firepower. The Raiders' organization remained flexible and allowed

for uniquely decentralized control to the squad level. During the Solomon Islands campaign of 1942, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2d Raider Battalions successfully executed both amphibious raids and patrols behind enemy lines. However, by 1944, the emphasis on conventional operations gave rise to questions regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of these specialized forces. The units were disbanded in favor of Marine line battalions which could train and adapt to any mission.

Proponents have stated that DO is the future of warfare when perhaps it is simply an extension of maneuver warfare. As the Marine Corps seems bent on DO implementation, it might better articulate a how that transformation will occur and to which extent of the overall force. Some options include a full three DO infantry divisions, or three capable DO MEUs, or perhaps MARSOC. In all three choices above, the Corps should adhere to lessons of the Raiders by not evolving too far from line infantry. Simultaneously, not concentrating resources and efforts for any particular organization has left implementation of DO by the operating forces and supporting establishments frustrated.

Instead of too quickly declaring DO the future of the Corps, we might pause to consider the Combatant Commanders' needs. Do they foresee a need for three DO divisions, a DO brigade, a DO regiment, or a DO battalion? Once determining the requirement, resources might better be prioritized without detrimentally affecting the rest of the Marine Corps' conventional efforts in line infantry capabilities. The MEU may provide the optimal DO platform, without the need to designate a specialist combat unit. This rotation into the MEU allows the DO training and experience to infuse into the rest of the FMF. For any case, the best place to begin discussion on the future of DO lies in the Raider battalion past.

## ENDNOTES

1. James N. Mattis and John C. Sommerer, "Distributed Operations," Powerpoint, Arlington, VA: Naval Research Advisory Committee, 23 June 2006.
2. As General Hanlon argues, "we are fast approaching the operational threshold on a number of technologically enabled new capabilities that will dramatically enhance the combat power, speed, and reach of our Operating Forces." Edward Hanlon Jr., "Distributed Operations: The Time is Now," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Jul 2004, 7.
3. *A Concept for Distributed Operations*, Department of the Navy, United States Marine Corps, Government Printing Office, Washington DC, 25 Apr 2005. Also see James Ladd, *Commandos and Rangers of World War II*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), 208-219.
4. Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps*, (1980, reprint New York: Free Press, 1991).
5. For an excellent discussion of maneuver warfare and historical context of its implementation, see Richard E. Simpkin, *Race to the Swift: Thoughts on Twenty-First Century Warfare*, (Oxford: Brassey's Defense Publishers, 1985), 19-36.
6. Hanlon.
7. *Ibid.*, 4.
8. Robert E. Schmidle, "Distributed Operations: From the Sea," *Marine Corps Gazette*, July 2004, 37.
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12. James N. Mattis, "Amphibious Raids : An Historical Imperative for Today's Marines," Research Paper, Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Command and Staff College, 1985.
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16. Charles L. Updegraph Jr., *U.S. Marine Corps Special Units of World War II*, (1972, Washington D.C.: History and Museums Division, 1977), 3-4.
17. Martin J. Sexton, "Raider Response," *Marine Corps Gazette*, January 1991, 55-56.
18. Updegraph Jr., 6.
19. Later adoption of the rifle squad in 1944 expanded it to thirteen men in three fireteams with one squad leader. For Raider squad evolution see Jon T. Hoffman, *From Makin to Bougainville: Marine Raiders in the Pacific War*, (Washington, DC: Marine Corps Historical Center, 1995), 5. For Marine Corps adoption later in the war see Jeter A. Isely and Philip A. Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War: Its Theory, and Its Practice in the Pacific*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951), 341.
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31. Map courtesy of Hoffman, *From Makin to Bougainville*, 20.
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34. Don P. Wyckoff, "Super Soldiers," *Marine Corps Gazette*. Nov 1963, 20-31.

35. Ibid., 25.

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37. William S. Lind, "Light infantry tactics," *Marine Corps Gazette*, 1 Jun 1990, 42-47.

38. In addition to Lind, see Thomas C Greenwood, "Stay Line Infantry! A Response to Mr. Lind," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Sept 1990, 18-19. For the use of Raider battalions in the debate, see Sexton.

39. Jon T. Hoffman, "The Limits of Light Infantry Doctrine," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Sept 1990, 19-23.

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48. See Aline O. Quester, Anita U. Hattiangadi, Lewis G. Lee, and Robert W. Shuford, *Marine Corps Deployment Tempo and Retention in FY 05*, (Alexandria, VA: CNA Corporation, Mar 2006).

49. Simpkin, 227-225, 314-315.

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<sup>1</sup> James N. Mattis and John C. Sommerer, "Distributed Operations," Powerpoint, Arlington, VA: Naval Research Advisory Committee, 23 June 2006.

<sup>2</sup> As General Hanlon argues, "we are fast approaching the operational threshold on a number of technologically enabled new capabilities that will dramatically enhance the combat power, speed, and reach of our Operating Forces." Edward Hanlon Jr., "Distributed Operations: The Time is Now," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Jul 2004, 7.

<sup>3</sup> *A Concept for Distributed Operations*, Department of the Navy, United States Marine Corps, Government Printing Office, Washington DC, 25 Apr 2005. Also see James Ladd, *Commandos and Rangers of World War II*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), 208-219.

<sup>4</sup> Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps*, (1980, reprint New York: Free Press, 1991).

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