

Patrol boat *Nunivak* off Haiti for Uphold Democracy.



U.S. Air Force (Val Gempis)

The Fifth Service Looks at Doctrine

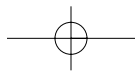
By JOHN S. CLAY

EDITOR'S *Note*

For the Coast Guard, establishing a doctrine system is a momentous project. The thoroughgoing review of doctrine currently being conducted by the fifth service justifies serious consideration by every service. Under this examination the Coast Guard regards doctrine development as a process that standardizes how it thinks about and does its job, how it acquires dynamic feedback, and how it articulates its image as an institution. In this, the Coast Guard sees doctrine as a unifying vision. It must link its strategy and daily operations and facilitate development of acquisition requirements. This highly rational effort is thrusting our fifth service toward the desired systematic end-state.

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The Coast Guard, having no doctrine command, chartered a field commanders' concept of doctrine team in 1994. Directed by operational flag officers, the team presented its findings to the commandant the following year. Common areas identified by the team as needing improvement were distilled into seven themes: unity of vision, efficiency, external links, training links, focus, unity of effort, and empowerment. These themes emerged as doctrine drivers. The team reported the need for a doctrine system and recommended that one be established. But



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Port security for USS Iwo Jima during Desert Shield.



C-130s on flight line at Barbers Point, Hawaii.

U.S. Coast Guard

no publication describes the unique contribution of the Coast Guard

because findings by other teams (training and streamlining) were pending at the time, and the form of the Coast Guard was thus unclear, the doctrine team recommended that a focus group be appointed to develop and analyze specific options and costs of implementing such a system. The following article represents a status report on efforts by the doctrine focus group that was chartered by the commandant under the Directorate for Reserve and Training.

An inventory of Coast Guard publications and directives reveals that its

current guidance is poorly organized. There is no standard approach to developing guidance throughout the service or across programs. Manuals are dated, and information and advice that logically should be included in them are often written into instructions to circumvent a cumbersome review process. Moreover, guidance is neither linked to higher level strategy nor connected to critical programs. Areas such as search and rescue, law enforcement, marine safety, and alien migration incidents are not treated in comparable ways. We have developed specific sets of guidance for each mission without

looking for common ground. Operators must carry a library of manuals with them on patrol.

In addition, as the field commanders' report warned,

... there is no established mechanism to cycle the valuable knowledge accrued through operational experience and experimentation back to academia and training centers. . . . operational experience and experimentation tend to remain within local circles as opposed to becoming updates in the service as a whole, sub-optimizing operational procedures and preventing unity of effort.

The Current State

Organizational and system improvements occur only after failure. Lessons learned by one unit are not applied by others. How would the commanding officer of USCGC Juniper (the latest 225-foot buoy tender) prepare for a catastrophe such as the downing of TWA flight 800? Does he know the underlying priority of people, environment, and property? Where does he seek guidance during that critical period between stimulus and response to incidents? The answers are not readily available. There is no collection of documentation that fully explains what our daily business is, how we do it, or how everything fits into an integrated system. There is no publication for internal or external consumption that describes the unique contribution of the Coast Guard to the public.

The inability to link daily business to a strategic vision also further complicates the process of generating requirements for system acquisitions. We

face the formidable task of developing a deep-water mission area analysis from scratch. The result is a series of directives, publications, and indexes that meets program needs but fails to capture the linkages and common features inherent in many of these processes. This leads to problems in both efficiency and effectiveness.

Does this mean we cannot do our jobs or that we anticipate operational failure? Not at all. But the current decremental budget environment and the reduction of 4,000 personnel is a cause for concern. Increasingly we encounter overlap among our programs in operational events such as the North Cape spill, escort of the Cuban-American flotilla, and defense operations in Haiti.

How did we get into this position? As the Coast Guard assumed more and more missions, guidance was written from a narrow, programmatic viewpoint. Time and exigency forced program managers to develop highly focused, specific guidance that gave little thought to a service strategic plan. While the guidance was often good, it failed to step outside the program's view and explain the larger impact daily actions have on the Coast Guard as a whole.

The long-term planning and budgeting process appears to drift among three main strategies: activities-based, resource based, and outcome-based. Activities-based, long-term planning focuses on missions that provide the most money in our budget. Concentrating counternarcotics operations in the Caribbean is a good example. Resource-based program managers compete for available funds for hardware. Those who promise the greatest savings may get the most money. Outcome-based, long-range planning utilizes risk assessments to formulate strategic planning. Outcomes are achieved when unit level tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) are linked to our strategic plan. This is the most effective way to ensure long-term resource support.

In recent years the Coast Guard, recognizing its historical ties to the defense establishment, has exploited joint and naval doctrine activities by

having the unique non-redundant capabilities that it brings to national military strategy included in both joint and naval doctrine publications. Indeed, the Chairman has acknowledged the important role of the Coast Guard on his team by including the Coast Guard seal on the covers of all joint doctrine publications. In addition, the commandants of the Coast Guard and

a good doctrine system will increase intellectual capital

Marine Corps along with the Chief of Naval Operations will sign version 1.0 of the universal naval tasks list in which all three sea services incorporate their military operational and tactical essential tasks under one cover.

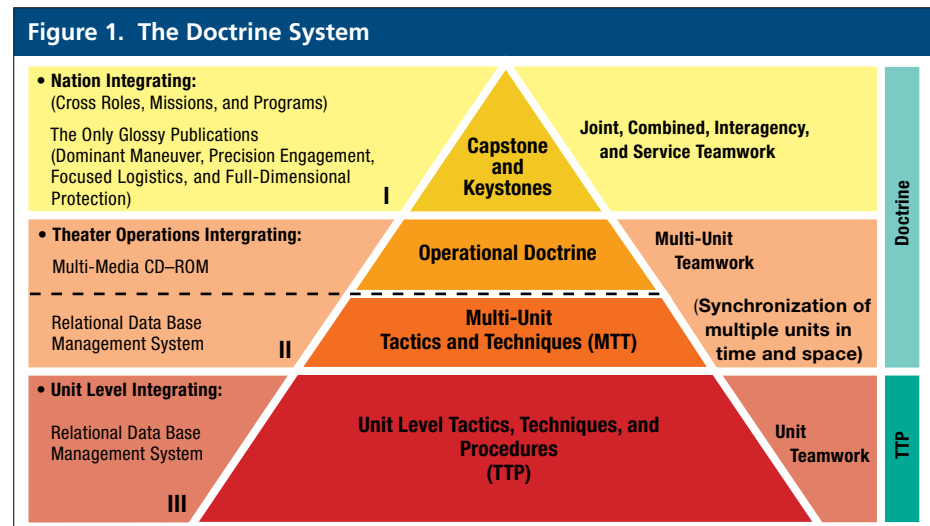
Desired State

Our vision is a system that facilitates the effective management of intellectual capital and improves the organization's speed of learning. We must replace the current stovepipe system with an outcome-based process of policy and procedures that integrates high level strategy documents and low level unit TTP. Some parts of this system are already in place, having proven their worth in several national and international crises. The focus is on developing a doctrine system to forge the horizontal and vertical links that will join these "islands of guidance" into a coherent system. We do

not advance scrapping current guidance but rather seek to better organize and understand it. Simply stated, we are not trying to grow another bureaucratic arm but to connect the dots.

Doctrine can mean different things to different people. First one must understand what it is not. Doctrine is not a collection of weighty tomes designed to sit prominently on a sagging shelf. Nor is it a decree, proclaimed but never updated. It is a body of fundamental principles that guide service actions in support of national objectives. A doctrine system captures the best knowledge available about how to do things yet still accommodate judgment, innovation, and change. A good doctrine system will increase intellectual capital. The three levels shown in figure 1 illustrate such a system: level I, strategic; level II, multi-unit or force; and level III, individual unit.

Keystones are functionally derived from the capstone. The Coast Guard is currently in the process of writing its capstone together with the Center for Naval Analyses. Keystones define the way we function across other services and other Federal, state, and local organizations. Level I, national, contains strategic direction. Capstone and keystone documents translate national policy and budgetary guidance of government agencies into applicable strategic direction for our service. That direction identifies strategic policy above the Coast Guard and provides a



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broad interpretation of how the service should implement it. The guiding principle of level I is joint, combined, and interagency teamwork to achieve national objectives.

Level II is the operational tier of doctrine where multi-unit tactics and techniques (MTT) are defined. It deals with specific movements and synchronized coordination of multiple units in time and space. At present, the closest examples of this level of guidance are portions of the search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, and marine safety manuals. The guiding principle of level II is intra-service teamwork to achieve service essential task objectives.

When the level of detail focuses on unit actions and tasks instead of multi-unit employment, a break is made to level III. As we transition from operational doctrine and multi-unit tactics and techniques (level II) to single-unit TTP, we no longer must operate with other units. Commanding officers are empowered and responsible for carrying out these TTP as they see fit, but consistent with service regulations and directives, safety considerations, and assigned missions. Guidance ceases to be doctrine at level III. The principle here is unit empowerment and intra-unit teamwork to achieve unit essential task objectives.

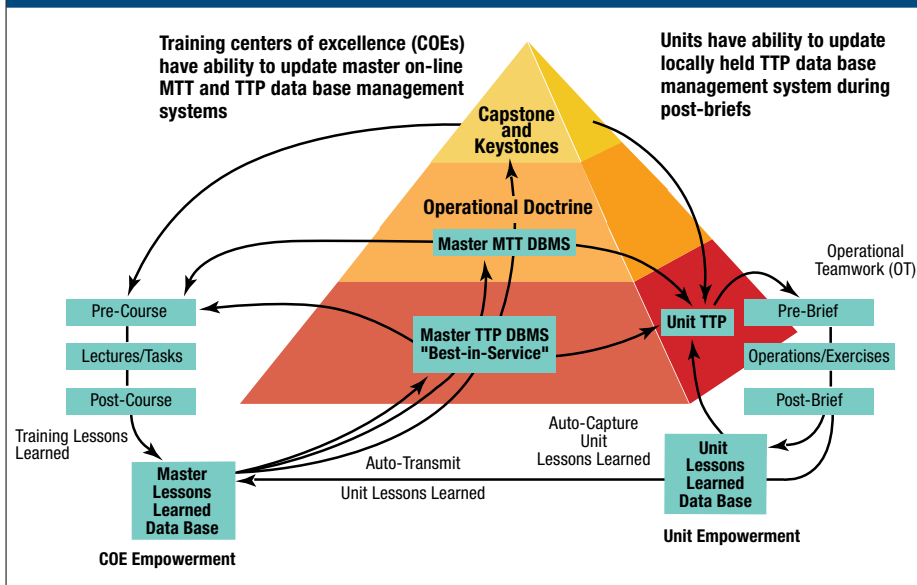
However, a doctrine system does not exist until another active ingredient is added, the near real-time feedback loops seen in figure 2. The current migration by the Coast Guard to a standard, Windows-NT based operating system, the availability of software applications, and pressing need for information sharing make this an ideal time for such an initiative. We envision a Coast Guard doctrine system in which after-action reports and doctrine/TTP lessons learned are captured during hot washups and automatically forwarded without operator intervention into an information system that permits the efficient review and updating of doctrine and "best-in-service" MTT and TTP data bases. Under such a system, lessons from Somalia, for example, extend beyond the participants. Cutters share tactics and techniques in executing a mission and strategic planners have access to a feedback mechanism based on real data.



HH-60J Jayhawk dropping litter basket.

U.S. Coast Guard

Figure 2. Real-Time Feedback Loops



The Benefits

A doctrine system is intended to achieve four objectives. First, it will standardize how we think about and do things as an institution. Since the 1980s the Coast Guard has undergone three transformations in its image. Early in that decade we were good guys. We were known for search and

rescues and for helping the boating public through an extensive safety program. That image changed dramatically when our law enforcement program was greatly expanded and we earned the moniker "Smokies of the Sea." By the early 1990s our image became softer and environmentally more responsive because of our role in several highly publicized environmental crises. Two things are worth noting

Removing suspected drugs from freighter in Miami.



U.S. Coast Guard (Steve Strupp)

about these images of the Coast Guard. First, the transformations did occur and, second, they just happened. A doctrine system provides a forum for managing such changes.

Second, the doctrine system will standardize a methodology for doing the business of the Coast Guard. Without a direct link between the strategic and tactical, operators respond to crises based on whatever ad hoc knowledge and procedures are available in their immediate environment.

Third, it will provide a dynamic feedback system that allows us to capture the best methods and continuously improve, better manage our intellectual capital, and increase the speed of learning within the Coast Guard. Today we represent one of the most highly educated and trained services in American history. Countless operations are performed flawlessly every day. Given that, what does doctrine add? In a word, efficiency. Feedback loops are designed to capture new experience and innovations which furnish best-in-service data bases and an operational level doctrine library that links essential local tasks with strategic, long-term objectives.

Lastly, this system will enable us as an institution to clearly articulate the qualities, values, and principles that define the Coast Guard.

Implementation begins with developing capstone and keystone doctrine, then integrates all operational

the doctrine system will standardize a methodology for doing business

guidance to strategic level and finishes by fielding an on-line database to automatically capture lessons learned. It ensures the identification, capture, and availability of the best-in-service practices. It empowers multi-unit operational commanders to download best-in-service MTT and improve it as their own MTT, unit commanders to download best-in-service TTP and improve it as their own TTP, and training centers to automatically capture the deltas between best-in-service and modified MTT/TTP and own the process of updating and training to best-in-service MTT/TTP.

The ultimate value of the system will be to create unity of purpose. It does this by directly linking strategic guidance to practical, day-to-day operations. It integrates prevention and response processes regardless of the mission and establishes horizontal and

vertical linkages for guidance. It considers the unit people on-scene as key elements of the strategic process by empowering them to own TTP and automatically capturing their changes for consideration in future updates to TTP, MTT, and higher level guidance.

Finally, such a doctrine system is necessary in order to obtain the information superiority described in *Joint Vision 2010*.

Since the commandant's doctrine focus group has not completed its work, it is premature to speculate on options and potential costs; but as this article goes to press the results will likely have been briefed to both the chief of staff and the commandant of the Coast Guard. The bottom line is that the doctrine focus group confirmed the findings of the earlier work by the field commanders' concept of doctrine team, added value, and will recommend a doctrine system for the Coast Guard. If approved by the commandant, this effort will be expanded to include other critical constituencies within the Coast Guard and focus on a detailed implementation plan with cost estimates. **JFQ**