

THE MARINE CORPS SCHOOLS: DRIVING INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE TOWARDS THE SECOND WORLD WAR

A Monograph

By

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ABSTRACT

THE MARINE CORPS SCHOOLS: DRIVING INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE TOWARDS THE SECOND WORLD WAR, by Major Neil D. Whitney, 44 pages.

The establishment and development of the Marine Corps Schools transformed the Marine Corps from a group of small war specialists to an institution geared toward innovative thinking, developing new capabilities, technologies, and operational concepts. The continued adaptations laid the foundation for the Marine Corps and validated its existence and continued relevance as an element of the nation's armor.

This monograph conducted a chronological review of the Marine Corps' education system from 1775 to 1941, and viewed those changes through the theory of institutionalization and legitimation as outlined by Berger and Luckmann in *Social Construction of Reality* in order to analyze the needed evidence of the influence of the Marine Corps Schools.

The first section reviews the Marine Corps education system from 1775 to 1898. It focuses on the Marine Corps' approach to education and the professional development of Marines. It covers the method education and training of Marines by commanders and veterans through the establishment of the School of Application.

The second section reviews the Marine Corps education system from 1899 through the end of the First World War. It focuses on the establishment of the Advanced Base Force School and the major shift in U.S. policy that repeatedly pulled Marines into several small interventions at home and abroad, and ends with the Marines Corps participation in the 'War to End All Wars'.

The final section covers the period following the end of the Great War through 1941, commonly referred to as the Interwar Period. This era witnessed the greatest evolution of the Marine Corps with the establishment of the Marine Corps Schools and a multi-tiered approach to the education of Marines throughout their career.

This monograph concluded that the continual development of the Marine Corps Schools especially during the period of the interwar years 1920-1941 created a common narrative for the roles the Marine Corps played during the Second World War and into the present day.

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ACRONYMS

AEF	American Expeditionary Forces
CMC	Commandant of the Marine Corps
FLEX	Fleet Landing Exercise
FMF	Fleet Marine Force
FTP	Fleet Training Publication
LCVP	Landing Craft Vehicle and Personnel
LVT	Landing Vehicle Tracked
MAGTF	Marine Air Ground Task Force
MCA	Marine Corps Association
MCDP	Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication
MCS	Marine Corps Schools
USMC	United States Marine Corps

INTRODUCTION

“War is both timeless and ever changing. While the basic nature of war is constant, the means and methods we use evolve continuously. Like War itself, our approach to warfighting must evolve. If we cease to refine, expand, and improve our profession, we risk becoming outdated, stagnant, and defeated.”

— General Alfred M. Gray, USMC, *MCDP 1: Warfighting*

In the morning hours of 15 June 1944, a large fleet of United States Navy transport ships gathered near the southwest shores of Saipan, a small inconspicuous dot of land part of the Marianas Islands archipelago. Marines offloaded the ships and boarded hundreds of amphibious landing vehicles and began their long grueling journey toward the heavily fortified beaches. In the days and hours before the landing, battleships, destroyers and planes pounded key targets in a coordinated pre-assault bombardment designed to subdue the opposition and allow the Marines to come ashore unmolested. Despite the fierce Japanese resistance, the Marines landed approximately 20,000 troops ashore and established a beachhead. Within three weeks, the island of Saipan was under complete control of allied forces and cleared of Japanese resistance.¹ The successful execution and coordination of naval gun fire, air bombardment, and amphibious landing have their origins in the Marine Corps Schools in Quantico. It was there that the Marine Corps transformed from a group of small war specialists to an organization geared toward innovative thinking, developing new capabilities, technologies, and operational concepts.

Since its creation on 10 November 1775, the Marine Corps never found a single coherent mission to justify its existence. For most of its history, the Corps’ diverse yet disjointed duties included serving as ships’ guards, consular guards, military police, and shore parties, guarding mail and, serving as infantry alongside the U.S. Army. The institutional history of the Marine

¹Francis A. O’Brien, *Battling For Saipan* (New York: Ballantine Publishing Group, 2003.)

Corps created multiple competing narratives on the Corps' role, making it difficult to objectify a single mission accepted by the Marines and society. The Marine Corps Schools, being the traditional gateway to educate and train Marines, became the perfect setting to develop a sociology of knowledge built up in the course of a shared history. Led by a group of farsighted, politically adept officers, the Marine Corps Schools became the impetus and driving force that enabled the Marine Corps to develop from a small constabulary force focused on small wars and advance base force operations to a cohesive force wed to amphibious warfare theory and doctrine.

After commanding the U.S. Army's Second Infantry Division in the First World War and returning to the United States, Major General John A. Lejeune assumed the duties as the Commander of Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia.² Upon assignment, Lejeune began large institutional reforms in the officer's education program at Quantico, Virginia.³ Drawing from his experiences during the Great War, Lejeune saw a need for a more formalized education system within in the Marine Corps. He understood that if the Marine Corps were to survive the fiscal conservatism of the Interwar Period, it needed to establish a system that continued to emphasize a role of the Marine Corps and maintain its legitimacy.⁴ Lejeune's ideas on a military educational system developed prior to the First World War and shaped by his attendance at the U.S. Army War College in 1909.⁵ Lejeune specifically claimed as one of his goals, "the establishment of

²John A. Lejeune Major General USMC, *The Reminiscences of a Marine* (Philadelphia: Dorrance and Company, 1930), 284-285, 460. Hereafter referenced as Lejeune, *Reminiscences*.

³Charles A. Fleming, Lieutenant Colonel USMC, Robin L. Austin, Captain USMC, and Charles A Braley III, Captain USMC, *Quantico: Crossroads of the Marine Corps* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, February 1978), 39-40. Hereafter referenced as Fleming, Austin, and Braley III, *Quantico*.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Lejeune, *Reminiscences*, 187.

Quantico as the Fort Leavenworth of the Marine Corps.”⁶ Called the Marine Corps Schools, he gave the schools the mission of educating officers throughout their career.⁷ The Schools became the nucleus and the stimulus for shared learning and development in the Marine Corps and help institutionalize a common narrative within the scope of Lejeune’s vision. His ambitious efforts set the stage for future Marine Corps leaders’ further development of the schools’ organization and curriculum and continued with his assignment as Major General Commandant on 20 June 1920.⁸

Several Marine Corps Officers made improvements to the Marine Corps Schools, but no one officer had the impact of General James C. Breckinridge.⁹ During his tenure as the Commandant of the Schools, 1932-1935, the direction of the curriculum changed considerably. Breckinridge recognized the current methodology for the Marine Corps Schools was to present material to students, have them commit the information to memory and then regurgitate it on examinations. He viewed this method as counter to the true nature of education.¹⁰ Breckinridge, codifying Lejeune’s vision, moved to recast the Marine Corps Schools on the task of teaching officers to analyze problems and find solutions rather than merely relying on memorized book answers. The most substantial changes occurred when Breckinridge suspended traditional courses

⁶Merrill L. Bartlett, *Lejeune: A Marines Life, 1867-1942* (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 120.

⁷Fleming, Austin, and Braley III, *Quantico*, 41.

⁸Lejeune, *Reminiscences*, 460.

⁹Anthony A. Frances, First Lieutenant, USMCR, *History of the Marine Corps Schools*. Unpublished manuscript (Archives and Special Collections Branch, Marine Corps Historical Library, Quantico VA: 1945), 37-41. Hereafter referenced as Frances, *History of the Marine Corps Schools*.

¹⁰J.C. Breckinridge, Colonel USMC, “Some Thoughts on the Service Schools,” *The Marine Corps Gazette* 14 no. 4 (Dec. 1929), 230-238.

and directed the Marine Corps Schools faculty and students to rewrite the course material and develop it around Marine Corps organizations and equipment.¹¹

The Marine Corps Schools became the cornerstone of doctrinal development, aiding in the redefining the Corps from a group of ship riders and small war specialist and bonding it to an institution of amphibious warfare experts. In 1934, the Marine Corps Schools published the culmination of amphibious research in the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*.¹² The U.S. Navy accepted it as official doctrine in 1938 under the title of *Landing Operations Doctrine, Fleet Training Publication (FTP) 167*, and in 1941 the U.S. War Department put the Navy text between U.S. Army covers and issued it as *Field Manual 31-5, Landing Operations on Hostile Shores*.¹³ The manual established the basic doctrinal foundation for the prosecution of amphibious operations in the Pacific and guided the planning for amphibious landings in Africa and Europe during World War Two.¹⁴ In 1935, the Marine Corps Schools captured the collection of experiences and lessons learned from years of fighting in small wars and produced the *Small Wars Manual*.¹⁵ The information conveyed in the manual allowed Marines to address the inherent

¹¹Frances, *History of the Marine Corps Schools*, 37-41.

¹²Frances, *History of the Marine Corps Schools*, 49. I have been unable to locate a copy of the Tentative Manual for Landing Operations. The Navy's *Landing Operations Doctrine FTP-167* is the revised edition adopted by both the Navy and Marine Corps.

¹³Office of Naval Operations Division of Fleet Training, *Landing Operations Doctrine FTP-167* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1938). War Department, *Basic Field Manual 31-5 Landing Operations On Hostile Shores* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1941).

¹⁴Frances, *History of the Marine Corps Schools*, 49.

¹⁵The original manual published in 1935 was entitled *Small Wars Operations* and was used for instruction at the Marine Corps Schools. United States Marine Corps, *Small Wars Manual* (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1940). Kenneth J. Clifford, Lieutenant Colonel USMCR, *Progress and Purpose: A Developmental History of the United States Marine Corps 1900-1970* (History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington DC, 1973), 37. Hereafter referenced as Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*.

flexibility and agility given their experience of small wars, while using an organization fundamentally developed around a U.S. Army arrangement.¹⁶ Both manuals, written by the instructors and students of the Marine Corps Schools helped integrate many of the officers attending the Schools and were the byproduct of the educational changes brought to the Schools.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the establishment and development of the Marine Corps Schools and how it transformed the Marine Corps from a group of small war specialists to an institution geared toward innovation, new capabilities, technologies, and operational concepts. While the study of institutions provides an overview of how they develop, the study of individuals and the roles they play opens the doors to understanding why they evolve and become legitimated in the eyes of the members of the institution and the society it serves.¹⁷ Therefore, this study examines the roles of a few Marine Corps officers in creating a common narrative and directing major institutional changes in the curriculum and goals of the Marine Corps Schools and how their efforts created legitimation. Evaluating individuals and their roles in the development of Marine Corps Schools contributes to a richer understanding of events, ideas, and debates in the path of establishing legitimation of the Marine Corps mission and continued existence. The development of theory and doctrine expands the legitimation of an institution by effectively asserting what things are and how they are accomplished.¹⁸ By examining the role the Marine Corps Schools played in theory and doctrinal development and how that created an

¹⁶Allan R. Millet, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 262-64. Hereafter referenced as Millett, *Semper Fidelis*.

¹⁷Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 94-95. Hereafter referenced as Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 69-70.

institution bound to a tradition of flexibility and adaptation further explaining and validating the Marine Corps' acceptance by the American public and its continued existence as the nations' expeditionary-force-in-readiness.

This study conducts a chronological review of the Marine Corps education system from its inception in 1775 through 1941 and examines that history through the theory of institutionalization and legitimation introduced by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann in *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966).¹⁹ According to Berger and Luckmann, as social institutions progress throughout history they develop norms, rules, and orders which stabilize their social structures. As stability increases, institutions become stronger and gain more control, and acceptance of the role of the institution within the society perceived and understood in theory as legitimation.²⁰ The purpose of legitimation is to “explain and justify” the existing institutions so that their presence is seen by individuals as “subjectively plausible and acceptable.”²¹ Institutions objectified in the reality of everyday life become fully manifested when knowledge is transferred to the next generation and learned as objective truth and internalized as subjective reality.²²

Through more than a decade of the Marine Corps' existence, legitimation of the organization both internally and externally in society was directly tied to the U.S. Navy as the ship riders. The transmission of knowledge within the Marine Corps passed from the commanding officers and veterans to the next generation of Marines socially – no formal education existed. As the Marine Corps' roles and responsibilities grew, the need for a formal

¹⁹Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*.

²⁰Ibid., 54-59.

²¹Ibid., 60-61, 92-93.

²²Ibid., 66-67.

education system became apparent. The Marine Corps Schools became the institutional body of knowledge that distributed objectified meaning to the next generation of Marines. However, the Marine Corps' role as an institution became bifurcated internally over time as its missions expanded beyond its legitimated role as ship riders. This is not an uncommon occurrence in the continual progression of institutions. The increase of permanent personnel, tasked with maintaining legitimation inside an institution, often gives rise to social conflict.²³ Conflict is typically between those individuals claiming to know the ultimate definitions of reality – experts – and basically everyone else within the institution – practitioners.²⁴ Major General John A. Lejeune, as an expert, addressed this conflict by forming a single vision for the future legitimation of the Marine Corps – amphibious warfare. General Lejeune made his vision a subjective reality by establishing a three tier education system to distribute that knowledge, and by transmitting that knowledge to multiple generations, he created objective truth. These concepts defining the transmission of social knowledge in the form of objectivation and legitimation are the lens through which the evidence for the powerful role played by the Marine Corps Schools passes in the evaluation and examination which forms the core of this investigation.

The research for this monograph required synthesis and analysis of primary and secondary sources of historical information linked to the theories of institutionalization and legitimation introduced by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann in *Social Construction of Reality* (1966).²⁵ Primary resources, such as First Lieutenant Anthony Francis's, USMC, *History of the Marine Corps Schools*, provided a historical backdrop on the development and progress of the

²³Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 118.

²⁴Ibid., 116-117.

²⁵Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*.

education of Marines and the constant challenge the Marine Corps' faced in defining its reason to exist. This study relied heavily on the *Marine Corps Gazette* archives section to document first-hand accounts of the events discussed and add relevance of the struggles the Marine Corps faced. Secondary resources, such as Allan Millet's, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps*, and numerous other books and articles on the history and development of the Marine Corps brought this study a greater understanding of the historical events occurring and how those events affected the direction and development of the education system. Official military doctrinal publications such as the *Tentative Landing Operations Manual, Fleet Training Publication (F.T.P.) 167* (1938), *Landing Operations Doctrine* (1934), and the *Small Wars Manual* (1940) supplied a source to help illustrate the constant development of the Marine Corps Schools and how it created a common narrative that identified a mission for the Marine Corps and defining its purpose.

The first section reviews the Marine Corps education system from 1775 to 1898. It focuses on the Marine Corps' approach to education and the professional development of Marines. It covers the establishment of the School of Application, designed to assist Marine officers with passing a promotion examination, through the Marine Corps participation in the Spanish-American War. During a majority of this period, the Marine Corps had no formal system established in order to train and develop Marines professionally.

The second section reviews the Marine Corps education system from 1899 through the end of the First World War in 1919. It covers the establishment of the Advanced Base Force School and the major shift in U.S. policy that repeatedly pulled Marines into several small interventions at home and abroad, and ends with the Marines Corps participation in the 'War to End All Wars'. During this period, a collective group of Marine officers established the Marine

Corps Association (MCA) in 1911, whose primary purpose was to preserve the traditions and status of the Marine Corps for future generations.²⁶

The final section covers the period following the end of the Great War through 1941, commonly referred to as the Interwar Period. This era witnessed the greatest evolution of the Marine Corps with the establishment of the Marine Corps Schools and a multi-tiered approach to the education of Marines throughout their career. The Marine Corps Schools became the impetus of the development of amphibious warfare theory and doctrine and produced two key documents – the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* and the *Small Wars Manual*. Inextricably linked to theory and doctrine, the Marine Corps began testing theories and equipment associated with amphibious warfare through a series of Fleet Landing Exercises. On 10 November 1775, the Second Continental Congress meeting in Philadelphia passed a resolution stating "two Battalions of Marines be raised" for service as landing forces with the fleet. This resolution established the Continental Marines and marked the birth of the United States Marine Corps as an institution and thus where this investigation begins.

SECTION ONE: MARINE CORPS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION 1775-1898

“There's a mindset of flexibility and adaptability that comes with us. We don't mind hardship. We don't mind somebody saying, 'Go in and do this nasty job.' Whatever the job is, we can do it. That's why the nation has a Marine Corps.”

— General James F. Amos, 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps

For over the first century of their existence the Marine Corps' functions became well defined. At sea, Marines maintained good order and discipline and were responsible for the ships internal security. In combat, they became the ship's small-arms fighters: sniping from the fighting tops, and on deck spearheading boarding parties in close action or repelling enemy boarders.

²⁶Anonymous, “The Marine Corps Association. Its Formation and Objects,” *The Marine Corps Gazette* 1 no. 1 (March 1916), 73-76.

Ashore they guarded naval installations, both at home and abroad, and upon occasion conducted small incursions on land. Marines were also available as trained landing parties, either to seize positions on hostile shores, or to protect the lives and property of nationals in foreign countries.²⁷ The ships guard responsibility, inexorably linked to the U.S. Navy and objectified by society, established a narrative that the Marine Corps generally accepted as its reason to exist.

However, the Marine Corps had no formal education system designed to train new members or continually develop Marines professionally.²⁸ The task of instructing new Marines fell upon the post commanders and veterans, who provided on the job training, guidance, and direction. This method of teaching built a shared history and sociology of knowledge passed from one generation of Marines to another, but also created a wide-ranging variation in education and the intellectual abilities of Marines throughout the Corps.²⁹ The lack of formal schooling did not prevent the Marines Corps from being successful in battle. Marines educated in the hard school of combat, successfully took Tripoli, helped capture Chapultepec, aided in the capture of Fort Fisher during the Civil War, conducted an amphibious landing at Kwang Fort in Korea in 1871, and quelled rebels in Panama in 1885.³⁰

Even with its proven record in battle, the Marine Corps consistently suffered from slow promotion rates, stagnation, and small numbers. Advancement in rank took decades, giving the Marines little incentive to be proactive, creating morale problems and giving little incentive to

²⁷Millet, *Semper Fidelis*, 52-57. Timothy Moy, *War Machines: Transforming Military Technologies in the U.S. Military, 1920-1940* (Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2001), 100-103.

²⁸Frances, *History of the Marine Corps Schools*, 3.

²⁹Dion Williams, Brigadier General, USMC, "The Education of a Marine Officer," *Marine Corps Gazette* 18 no. 1 (May 1933), 16. Hereafter referenced as Williams, "The Education of a Marine Officer".

³⁰Millet, *Semper Fidelis*, 43, 77-80, 98-99, 105-107.

excel beyond a minimum standard.³¹ Commissioning was typically cronyistic, a system in place since the founding of the Corps. Many officers served in the Marine Corps to fulfill military service obligations directly tied to family and political connections or because they could not gain a commission in the U.S. Army or Navy.³² Unlike the other two military services, the Marine Corps did not have a service academy to produce officers specifically for duty in the Marines. Complicating issues further, very few political appointees remained in service for long and had little to no impact on the future development of the Corps. The Marine Corps purpose only becomes objective truth in the course of transmitting the required body knowledge – the knowledge that defines its existence – to the next generation.³³ With only a few dedicated Marines staying in the Corps, it struggled to pass down the necessary knowledge of traditional roles and skills to a new generations of Marines.³⁴ More importantly, traditional knowledge became highly fragmented, as information shared by some groups within the Corps, but not institutionalized by the Marine Corps as a whole.³⁵ Due to its small size and limited responsibilities, the Marine Corps managed to operate effectively.

The political appointment process of Marine officers ended with an Act of Congress dated 5 August 1882. The Act instituted a selection of Marine officers from the graduates of the U.S. Naval Academy. This new process of procurement created a more committed officer corps that possessed a standard education and formed a solid base to begin building a professional

³¹Ibid., 87-88.

³²Williams, “The Education of a Marine Officer,” 16.

³³Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 65-68.

³⁴Dirk Anthony Ballendorf and Merrill L. Bartlett, *Pete Ellis: An Amphibious Warfare Prophet, 1880-1923* (Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 21.

³⁵Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 79-81.

group of officers.³⁶ It also helped to form a commonality of knowledge and some institutional order in the distribution of that knowledge. However, it did not produce a system of instructing officers into soldiers of the sea – a traditional term for Marines with direct ties to the U.S. Navy. The Marine Corps still lacked a formal school system to educate newly commissioned officers and one that professionally developed officers throughout their career.

School of Application

On 1 October 1890, Congress passed an Act requiring all U.S. Army officers, below the rank of brigadier general, to pass an examination before consideration for promotion.³⁷ After becoming Commandant, Major General Charles Heywood (at the time a colonel) directed that the Marine Corps establish a similar system. Accordingly, the Corps established the School of Application at Marine Barracks, Washington D. C. on 1 May 1891.³⁸ Published as Marine Corps Order number One, Commandant Heywood announced the schools' establishment as follows:

The Colonel Commandant takes pleasure in formally announcing to the Marine Corps the establishment of a School of Application at the headquarters of the Corps, with the approval of the Secretary of the Navy, as contained in the following Communication:

Sir: The Department is in receipt of your communication of the 13th instant, submitting for its consideration an outline of the course of instruction for a School of Application, at the headquarters of the Marine Corps, for officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates of the Corps; and the course of instruction for the School, as proposed, is in accordance with your Recommendation, approved.

Very Respectfully,
B.F. TRACY
Secretary of the Navy.³⁹

³⁶Williams, "The Education of a Marine Officer," 17.

³⁷Frances, *History of the Marine Corps Schools*, 3.

³⁸Ibid., 4.

³⁹Williams, "The Education of a Marine Officer," 17.

Designed to integrate newly commissioned officers and give them the first real taste of life in the Marine Corps, the School of Application provided a foundation of military and naval principles required for their careers. Because this was the first school of its kind in the Marine Corps, its first director, Captain D. Pratt Mannix only had a simple outline of requirements by Commandant Heywood in preparation for teaching the course. However, Captain Mannix spent several tours at sea, previously attended the U.S. Navy's torpedo and U.S. Army's artillery school, and spent time as an instructor to the Chinese Army on torpedoes.⁴⁰ His broad experience gave him a good background to form a basic curriculum for the school. Captain Mannix developed a nine month course of instruction, divided into seven departments: Infantry, Artillery, Administration and Sea Service, Law, Torpedoes, Engineering and Military Art. At the end of the course was a 214 question exam comprised from the entire course of study. Although originally created to instruct Marines and to assist officers with promotion examinations, the School of Application began experimenting with new developments in weapons, tactics, theory, and technique, and developed initial concepts in amphibious operations.⁴¹

From its inception, the School of Application, plagued by constant disruptions, repeatedly lost attendees drawn to support expeditionary operations, a general lack of interest from prospective students, and an overall deficiency in the necessary funding and material. In 1898, the school closed due to the need for Marines in the Spanish-American War, though the conclusion of the war did not reduce the growing demand for Marines at home and abroad. In 1903, the school moved to Annapolis, Maryland and reopened, but due to unsatisfactory conditions and very few officers for training, the school closed again in 1907. During this time, the school was moved to Naval Station Port Royal, South Carolina (now Parris Island) and was renamed the Marine

⁴⁰Frances, *History of the Marine Corps Schools*, 4-12.

⁴¹Ibid.

Officers School. In 1910, the school moved to Marine Barracks Norfolk, Virginia and, finally moved to its permanent location in Quantico, Virginia in the spring of 1917. The Marine Officers School, with the United States entry into the First World War, became the Officer's Training Camp.⁴²

For over the first century of their existence, the Marine Corps had a clear and universally accepted purpose, inexorably connected to the U.S. Navy as ship riders and duties generally related to ship functions and landing parties for minor incursions ashore. These roles constituted the objective reality of a Marine Corps known both internally and externally by the legitimated restrictions to a naval-oriented world view. The procurement of officers for service in the Marine Corps, from the U.S. Naval Academy and the creation of the School of Application initiated a process of formal, vice the previous social, transmission of knowledge surrounding the naval character of the Marine Corps, helping to institutionalize that body of knowledge, and set the stage for future generations of Marine officers that would carry the Marine Corps forward.

SECTION TWO: MARINE CORPS EDUCATION SYSTEM 1899-1919

“It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than a new order of things.”

— Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*

Following the end of the Spanish-American War the United States foreign policy interest began a major shift. America's overseas empire had grown significantly with acquisitions of land and interest in the Pacific, Caribbean, and Latin America. New lands meant a new frontiers for American idealism and business expansion. For the Marine Corps it meant the development of an additional narrative, the Corps became identified and legitimated externally in the broader society as small war specialists. As American commercial and missionary interest expanded into these

⁴²Frances, *History of the Marine Corps Schools*, 13-23.

regions, the United States government felt obligated to intervene militarily and protect those interests.⁴³ Observing U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America and China provide an excellent example of the expanding global influence of the United States and the legitimation of a new mission for the Marine Corps.

In Latin America President Theodore Roosevelt faced a difficult challenge. He could allow the European powers to intervene in Latin America to recover their debts, he could deny the European powers access to Latin America and stay out of Latin American affairs, or he could intervene into Latin America and ensure payment of their debts. Intervention into Latin America and the Caribbean was justified by the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine.⁴⁴ During his annual address to Congress on 2 December 1904, President Roosevelt stated:

“Any country whose people conduct themselves well can count upon our hearty friendship. If a nation shows that it knows how to act with reasonable efficiency and decency in social and political matters, if it keeps order and pays its obligations, it need fear no interference from the United States. Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power.”⁴⁵

President Roosevelt’s speech, primarily aimed at the preservation of the Monroe Doctrine and preventing European encroachment into Latin America. However, the issuance of the Roosevelt

⁴³Millet, *Semper Fidelis*, 147, 267.

⁴⁴Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with The World Since 1776* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 112-121. Hereafter referenced as McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*.

⁴⁵President Theodore Roosevelt, “Theodore Roosevelt’s Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine” (Theodore Roosevelt’s Annual Message to Congress, Washington, D.C., December 2, 1904), accessed December 4, 2013, <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=56&page=transcript>.

Corollary, in essence, turned the United States from a mere protector of the Western Hemisphere to a global policing agent designed to protect U.S. interest worldwide.

The policy proposed to keep China open to trade with all countries on an equal basis; thus, no international power would have total control of the country. It called upon foreign powers, within their spheres of influence, to refrain from interfering with any treaty port, and to permit Chinese authorities to collect tariffs on an equal basis, and to show no favors to their own nationals in the matter of harbor dues or railroad charges.⁴⁶ In order to do this, the United States entered an ‘Open Door’ trade policy that led the United States to work in conjunction with European nations to ensure equitable trade and safeguard lives and possessions abroad.⁴⁷ The Marine Corps, riding on Navy warships provided a perfect ready force to go ashore and protect United States policy and interest. For the next half century, Marines intervened in Latin America, Caribbean, and China to help stabilize governments and protect American lives and property.⁴⁸ The Marine Corps used these various ‘constabulary force’ missions and the successes achieved for continued legitimation as Americas small war specialists and continued relevance.

Responding to the new national policy of the United States, the Navy established a General Board in 1900.⁴⁹ This newly formed board, a general staff designed to look at strategic issues concerning the Navy, saw a need for Marines to defend recently added naval bases in Cuba, Guam, and the Philippines. To support the Navy in its progress across the ocean required

⁴⁶Walter LaFeber, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations Volume II: The American Search for Opportunity, 1865-1913* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.), 234-238. Hereafter referenced as LaFeber, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations*.

⁴⁷Ibid., 234-238.

⁴⁸Millet, *Semper Fidelis*, 147-263.

⁴⁹McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*, 103-105.

advanced bases. These bases served as a vital link in the sea lines of communication and helped ensure freedom of maneuver for maritime activity. However, the forward naval stations required a security force to guard and defend them. The Marine Corps, primarily ground based, having naval experience and under the control of the Navy, was the logical choice. Additionally, garrisoning the bases with Marines capable of repelling hostile assaults protected the base while freeing the fleet for action.⁵⁰ The increasing consciousness of the U.S. Navy's widespread commitments and responsibilities brought the Marine Corps into the Advanced Base Force Mission. Once again, the institution of the Marine Corps, confronted with a new role, found, through its schools, the means to pass and to objectify a new tradition, providing through education a means to legitimate the new form into the old.

Advanced Base Force School

Initially, with the exception of a handful of officers, the Marine Corps showed little interest in the new advanced base force mission.⁵¹ Competing narratives began to create arguments within the Marine Corps on its true purpose – ship riders, small war specialist, or an advanced base force. A second problem stemmed from the post-war reduction in the size of the Corps and a constant pull on manpower for expeditionary duty continued to threaten the development of advance base force mission. Without enough Marines to meet the needs of the Marine Corps' operational commitments, it proved difficult to support this new mission. Despite disagreements on its role and manpower issues, in 1901, Commandant Heywood agreed to form two battalions of Marines to begin training for the new responsibility. The Marine Corps

⁵⁰Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 8-10.

⁵¹Millet, *Semper Fidelis*, 271-275.

conducted several advanced force base exercises in the Culebra, Puerto Rico, and Subic Bay, Philippines with some moderate success.⁵²

Almost ten years after the General Boards recommendation, on 18 April 1910, Major General Commandant George F. Elliot submitted a memo to the General Board detailing the establishment of the Advanced Base School. In July 1910, the Marine Corps opened the doors of the Advanced Base School in New London, Connecticut, but moved the following summer to Philadelphia Navy Yard in order to work with new equipment acquired for the advanced base force. The curriculum for the school concentrated on both theoretical and practical aspects of defending naval bases on foreign shores. The school included education for officers and enlisted and focused on four sections of instruction. The first, Gun Defense, taught the use and placement of naval guns and artillery and communications. Second, Mobile Defense Studies included building obstacles and field fortifications, lessons of the Russo-Japanese War, the use of artillery in infantry operations, and map reading. The third section, Mine Defense, trained officers on the proper employment of mines, use of submarines in the defense, torpedoes and water obstructions. The final section, General Governing Considerations, included classes on organization and supply, use of bases, historical studies, and the creation and use of war plans.⁵³ The advanced base force mission matured both as a concept and to a lesser extent, as an operational element of the Marine Corps. By opening the doors of the Advance Base Force School, the Marine Corps institutionalized the new mission, but failed to drop any of the other missions, creating multiple competing narratives that continued to create tension within the Marine Corps as to its true purpose and threatened its future existence.

⁵²Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 10-11.

⁵³Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 11-15.

In addition to the Advance Base School, Marines had the opportunity to attend the U.S. Army Schools for Submarine Defenses and Signal School. Along with instruction in the use of weapons, officers received training in theoretical exercises allowing them a chance to develop their knowledge on the best methods for defending the advance bases. Field grade officers (major and above) would also be given the opportunity to attend the U.S. Army and Navy War Colleges.⁵⁴ Officers who attended these courses returned with a working knowledge of planning troop movements, combat operations, logistics, and time compression. These factors proved invaluable in the forthcoming development of the Marine Corps Schools following the end of the First World War.

As described by Berger and Luckmann, “the institutional world requires legitimation that is way by which it can be “explained and justified.”⁵⁵ The Marine Corps ability to adjust to a changing national policy helped to legitimate their existence as an important and the capable military force to accomplish those identified strategic objectives. Information socialized externally with support of the U.S. Navy and internally by the establishment of the School of Application and the Advanced Force Base School became the first attempts to institutionalize the conduct of Marines and transmit that body of knowledge to new generation. However, it only had an impact on those Marines that actually attended the schools, and multiple competing narratives continued to exist throughout the Corps creating disagreements as to the true mission of the Marine Corps. Marines continued to debate whether they were ship riders, small war specialists, or an advanced base forces.

⁵⁴Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 11-15.

⁵⁵Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 61.

An Association Born

In 1911, ninety-three Marine officers (nearly twenty-five percent of the officer strength at the time) of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade conducting training at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba formed the Marine Corps Association.⁵⁶ Its stated goal was to preserve the existence and status of the Marine Corps and contribute to its professionalism by acting as a self-education medium.⁵⁷

Outlined in the initial Constitution set forth the purposes of the Association as follows:

"The purposes for which the Association is formed are to disseminate knowledge of the military art and science among its members, and to provide for their professional advancement; to foster the spirit and preserve the traditions of the United States Marine Corps; to increase the efficiency thereof; and to further the interests of the military and naval services in all ways not inconsistent with the good of the general government."⁵⁸

Funds raised for the Association allowed for the creation of the *Marine Corps Gazette* in 1916. The *Gazette* became the primary vehicle for discussing and debating Marine Corps policy, new military equipment, and innovative developments in tactics, techniques, and procedures. The Marine Corps Association and the *Marine Corps Gazette* helped band the officer corps together presenting the knowledge and experience of each officer and presented an internal system of debate for the Marine Corps' future legitimation. It became another great advance in socializing a common narrative throughout the Corps. In essence, the Association and the *Gazette* is a personification of the wisdom, initiative, dedication, and loyalty of a group of outstanding officers such as John A. Lejeune, George Barnett, and Ben H. Fuller, and many others whose vision led the Marine Corps forward.

⁵⁶R.D Heinl Jr, Colonel USMC, "An Association Was Formed," *The Marine Corps Gazette* 47 no. 4 (April 1963), 14-17. The Marine Corps Association was not officially formed until 25 April 1913, but its origins are based in 1911. Hereafter referenced as Heinl, "An Association Was Formed."

⁵⁷Heinl, "An Association Was Formed," 14-17.

⁵⁸Anonymous, "The Marine Corps Association. Its Formation and Objects," *The Marine Corps Gazette* 1 no. 1 (March 1916), 73-76.

The War to End All Wars

While the a portion of the Marine Corps experimented with the advanced base force mission, the remainder of the Corps spent the majority of its efforts as a constabulary force in the West Indies and Central America, enforcing the Roosevelt Corollary, with minimal consideration given to its role in the nation's defense. This changed, however, upon the U.S. declaration of war on April 6, 1917. The tactical, operational, and technical innovations that characterized the Great War had a direct and lasting impact on the institutional framework of the Marine Corps and proved to be one of the most decisive and institutionally pivotal events in Marine Corps history.⁵⁹ The triumphs of the battles of Belleau Wood, Soissons, St. Mihiel, Blanc Mont Ridge, and the Muese-Argonne were reflections of both professional steadiness and personal valor. The press reports from the front lines brought wide spread recognition to the Marine Corps and marked a significant change on how the American viewed the Marine Corps and its role.

Thanks to the Naval Appropriations Act of 1916, the Marine Corps' manpower increased to over 17,000 personnel, reaching over 80,000 by the end of First World War.⁶⁰ Despite the demands for manpower resulting from sending an expeditionary force to France, the Advance Base Force remained at full strength throughout the war. However, Major General Commandant George Barnett believed in order to justify enlargement, and to maintain relevance the Marine Corps had to participate in the Great War.⁶¹ A new narrative developed that forever changed the future legitimation of Marine Corps, one that tied it to participating in world wars. With a recruiting program in full swing, the Marine Corps had no problems achieving the necessary quotas to meet manpower requirements. The remaining issues existed as to where and exactly

⁵⁹Millet, *Semper Fidelis*, 317.

⁶⁰Lejeune, *Reminiscences*, 228-233. Millet, *Semper Fidelis*, 247, 287-288.

⁶¹Millet, *Semper Fidelis*, 289.

how to prepare for battle in Western Europe.

Up to the declaration of war, the Marine Corps lacked sufficient facilities to host a manpower increase and leadership training did little more than mirror that of the basic recruit training or duties specific of the advance base force mission. The Corps lacked the fundamental training in small unit leadership tactics that prepared them for a large land campaign and the ordeals they faced in the French countryside.⁶² However, it quickly adapted to these deficiencies and instituted organizational and infrastructure changes that would carried them through the war and drove future reforms following the war.

The Marine Corps formed the Fourth and Fifth Marine Brigades under the U.S. Army Second Division in support of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF). Initial duties included mostly security assignments not associated with front line roles. Responsibilities quickly changed as the war carried on and the need for fresh forces became imminent. The battles of Belleau Wood, Soissons, and Mont Blanc soon occupied newspaper headlines in the United States celebrating the Marines combat skills and marking “an important watershed in a century-long search for military respectability and public approval.”⁶³ The Marine Brigade’s participation in the fighting in France, as part of the AEF, introduced an entire generation of Marine officers to the requirements and lessons of modern warfare.⁶⁴ For the Marines, the Great War marked the birth of the modern day Marine Corps.⁶⁵ The Great War provided perhaps the greatest change to date in the institution’s role and expectations in the wider society of the United States. Suddenly, with the spotlight cast onto the Marines’ combat prowess, a new reality and expectation became

⁶²Millet, *Semper Fidelis*, 291.

⁶³Ibid., 302, 317.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

objective reality for the Marine Corps. How to legitimate and fold in this new role became the task of the post World War I leaders of the Marine Corps and the new Marine Corps Schools was the tool to define, discuss, and bring about the legitimation of that role internally and externally.

SECTION THREE: MARINE CORPS SCHOOLS 1920-1941

“The future success of the Marine Corps depends on two factors: first, an efficient performance of all duties to which its officers and men may be assigned; second, promptly bringing this efficiency to the attention of the proper officials of the government, and the American people.”

— Major General John A. Lejeune, 13th Commandant of the Marine Corps

Following the end of the First World War, nothing appeared different, but delegates of the Great Powers, meeting at Versailles to write the peace treaty ending the war, had already taken an action that had far-reaching consequences for a future generation of Marines. In the general distribution of spoils, Japan now owned the former German island possessions in the central Pacific and now possessed a deep zone of island outposts.⁶⁶ Fortified and supported by the Japanese fleet, that constituted a serious obstacle to the advance of the U.S. Navy Fleet across the Pacific. At one stroke, the strategic balance in the Pacific radically shifted in favor of Japan.

Marines returning from the Great War recognized the current organization and Marine Corps education system inadequate to prepare Marines for the rigors and complexities of modern warfare. Several Marines realized the war had changed the Corps but they did not understand exactly how it had changed. Captain Earl Jenkins wrote in the *Marine Corps Gazette* in the fall of 1920 and put to words what many were experiencing at the time.

“The war expanded the human mind, it has incited it to thoughts which heretofore lay hidden in the recesses of the brain. The men are thinking. The officers must think, too – and think

⁶⁶Jeter A. Isely and Philip A. Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War: It's Theory, and It's Practice in the Pacific* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1951) 24-25. Hereafter referenced as Isely and Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*.

hard that the same relationship as of old...The same qualities of leadership be maintained...The war was a stimulus to thought – it was an awakening – a renaissance.”⁶⁷

The First World War forced the Marine Corps to train and equip to fight alongside the U.S. Army in the trenches of France. New technological advancements in warfare, such as the tank, radio, and airplane, changed the face of warfare forever. These new experiences required the Corps to change how it viewed itself, its capability, and value as an element of the U.S. Armed Forces. An adjustment in the current organization and education systems to adapt to these new and rising developments became essential.⁶⁸ It exacerbated the Marine Corps’ competing narratives and legitimation of its true mission, but it also delivered a potential solution. Shortly after returning from the War to End All Wars, the Marine Corps received one of its most talented and experienced leaders to guide the Corps forward – Major General John Archer Lejeune.

General John Archer Lejeune

By the time of General John A. Lejeune's appointment as Commandant on June 30, 1920, a revulsion to all things military had risen throughout the country.⁶⁹ Externally, this meant a falling number of enlistments and a sharp decrease in Congressional appropriations. Internally, it meant a loss of veteran Marines, and apathy among those who chose to stay in the Marine Corps.⁷⁰ In the new Commandant's mind, internal reforms were necessary to restore esprit, while strategic thought and planning were vital if the proper mission of the Corps were to emerge.⁷¹ While these problems were treated, Lejeune somehow had to preserve the very existence of the

⁶⁷Earl H. Jenkins, Captain USMC, “The New Marine Corps,” *The Marine Corps Gazette* 5 no. 3 (September 1920), 258.

⁶⁸Frances, *History of the Marine Corps Schools*, 24-25.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Lejeune, *Reminiscences*, 460-463.

⁷¹Ibid. Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 25.

Corps, not an easy task considering the in-fighting for appropriations that had become a daily feature of Washington political life. In his nearly nine years as Commandant, he guided the Corps toward a new role fashioned to his vision, and convinced three Presidents, Congress, the Navy, the public, and the conservative officers within the Corps itself the necessity for reforms.⁷²

Prior to his appointment as Commandant, while commanding officer at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia following the end of the First World War, Lejeune already launched a Corps-wide scheme of education, perhaps the most imaginative self-improvement program ever designed in America's armed forces.⁷³ Major General Commandant Lejeune himself simultaneously employed the full power of his amazing personality in three different directions ensuring legitimation for the future of the Marine Corps and attempting to isolate the competing narratives that existed throughout the Corps. First, by a series of informal letters to his officers, he put across many of his desires and ambitions for the Corps. Second, by making hundreds of civic addresses, he won the active support of large segments of public opinion for the Corps' continued existence. Finally, by building and maintaining friendships with Presidents, cabinet officers, and Congressmen, he often induced them by irrefutable logic and plain common sense to ignore the arguments of the more powerful services when they tried to benefit by cutting down the Marine Corps.⁷⁴

⁷²Lejeune, *Reminiscences*, 460-463.

⁷³*Ibid.*, 463.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 461-462. Millet, *Semper Fidelis*, 322-327

Articulating his vision for the future of the Marine Corps Schools before the House of Representatives Committee on Naval Affairs on 26 February 1920, Major General Commandant John A. Lejeune commented:

“A great many of us have had a desire for a long time to see a school established where officers will learn their duties as captains and field officers. Our officers have to be self-educated. Few of us have had the opportunity of going to Fort Leavenworth or the Army War College or the Navy War College, and the average officers have had no opportunity to learn anything in regard to their higher duties except by studying themselves or what they have learned from practical experience. It is our aim for all of our officers to have as good opportunities to obtain a military education as the officers of the Navy and the Army. Education is absolutely essential: An educated officers makes for educated men and an ignorant officer makes for ignorant men.”⁷⁵

Such was the stated goal, but of course achieving it took time, effort, analysis, and change. What resulted were a consolidation of all current schools at Marine Barracks Quantico, Virginia and the formation of a three-tiered education system.

The first tier, for newly commissioned officers, The Basic School, the second tier for specially selected officers, the Company Officer Course (starting its first class in 1921), and the third tier, the Field Officers Course (starting in 1920).⁷⁶ This new system of education trained Marine officers at different stages throughout their career. As stated in Frances’ History of the Marine Corps Schools, “For the first time in the history of the training of Marine officers, the school assumed the structure and tenure of and institutions of higher learning in the military arts and sciences.”⁷⁷

⁷⁵Donald F. Bittner, Lieutenant Colonel USMCR, *Curriculum Evolution Marine Corps Command and Staff College 1920-1988* (Occasional Paper, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S Marine Corps Washington DC, 1988.), 2-3. Hereafter referenced as Bittner, *Curriculum Evolution*.

⁷⁶Dion Williams, Brigadier General, USMC, “The Education of a Marine Officer, Part II,” *The Marine Corps Gazette* 18 no. 3 (August 1933), 17-28

⁷⁷Frances, *History of the Marine Corps Schools*, 30.

Birth of the Marine Corps Schools

In constructing the second and third tiers of its professional military education system, the Marine Corps drew upon the experience of the service that already had one, the United States Army. The curriculum of instruction articulated some Marine Corps subjects (specifically the Advance Base Force), but primarily drew upon materials and text from the U.S. Army War College or the Command and Staff College of the Army. This seemed understandable considering the Marine Corps' recent experiences with the U.S. Army in the 'Great War' and one of two formal schools established for professional military education (the other being the U.S. Navy). Though the Army instruction was a good source for learning, Marines returning from the schools found themselves in an organization that differed significantly from the education they just received.⁷⁸ The majority of issues did not stem from the U.S. Army led curriculum, but rather the multiple competing narratives that still lingered within the Marine Corps on its specific role.

What was the role of the Marine Corps? Since its inception, the Marine Corps missions diversified heavily: fighting alongside the U.S. Army in the trenches of the French countryside, seizing and defending small islands, controlling governments, fighting bandits overseas, guarding legations around the world, providing detachments for Navy ships and protecting the U.S. Mail.⁷⁹ The multiple missions and duties of the Corps created competing narratives and opened a serious debate on the legitimization of the Marine Corps. What the Corps needed was a single narrative that guided the future planning and education and that could affect how the rest of the world objectified the Marine Corps. Marines continued to debate throughout the 1920's with a few Marine officers maintaining that they possessed the answer for the future of the Corps.

⁷⁸Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 36-37.

⁷⁹Ibid.

Brigadier General Smedley Butler believed an independent Marine Corps with little or no ties to the Navy was the future of the Corps. To Butler, pursuing missions similar to those assigned during the Great War in Europe and combating the Caribbean insurrections made a stronger Corps and reduced its reliance on the Navy.⁸⁰ Others, like Colonel Henry Davis, believed that focusing on small wars provided the Marines with a tailor-made mission. Always aboard Navy vessels, Marines responded quickly to numerous insurrections in Latin America and Asia. Even while fighting in the First World War, Marines continued to fight various small wars in Latin America.⁸¹ A third group believed the mission of the Corps tied directly into the mission of the Navy. Major General Commandant Lejeune held this belief after the war and recognized the conflict with other officers over the direction of the Corps.⁸²

“It caused, too, every effort to be made to convince officers and men of the soundness of the doctrine that the future of the Corps would be determined by their ability to serve efficiently with the Fleet in the conduct of the shore operations which are essential to the successful prosecution of naval campaigns in war, and which are essential to the successful conduct of the foreign policy of our country in peace.”⁸³

In these few sentences, Major General Lejeune conveyed a vision to the institution in order to achieve legitimation of his understanding of the role of the Marine Corps. Essentially, for continued relevance, the Marine Corps needed to maintain close ties with the Navy and be able to fight alongside the U.S. Army in a major conflict. The Marine Corps could, with advanced base training and extensive amounts of expeditionary experience, work out a mission tailored made for the Marine Corps.

⁸⁰Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 325.

⁸¹Henry C. Davis, Colonel USMC, “The Sea School,” *The Marine Corps Gazette* 10 no. 2 (September 1925), 103-109.

⁸²Lejeune, *Reminiscences*, 465.

⁸³Ibid.

To support this belief, Marines examined the wholesale failure of the British amphibious campaign at Gallipoli in the Dardanelles during the First World War. The majority of the world's military theorists largely discounted amphibious assault as being too difficult, indeed almost impossible. Still, there were others who did not share this pessimism. Major General Commandant Lejeune and other high ranking Marines shared these views. He stated in a lecture before the Naval War College in December 1923, "The seizure and occupation or destruction of enemy bases is another important function of the expeditionary force,"⁸⁴ he continued to say, "On both flanks of a fleet crossing the Pacific are numerous islands suitable for submarine and air bases. All should be mopped up as progress is made...The maintenance, equipping and training of its expeditionary force so that it will be in instant readiness to support the Fleet in the event of war."⁸⁵ Some Marine officers understood that the balance between a defender and an attacker was a dynamic relationship based on relative strength and tactical doctrine, not an absolute advantage to the defender. The early attempt to force the fleet through the Dardanelles failed when the combined fleet could not reduce the Ottoman coastal batteries. Marines developed a theory based on effectively landing force a shore to reduce the coastal defenses to allow the freedom of maneuver and preserving the strength of the fleet.⁸⁶

The Navy Departments' drafting its portion of War Plan Orange in 1921 and the Washington Naval Treaty in 1922 generated the need for a well-trained force of seaborne infantry.⁸⁷ War Plan Orange detailed the strategy of the United States if they went to war with

⁸⁴John A. Lejeune, Major General Commandant, USMC, "The United States Marine Corps," *The Marine Corps Gazette* 8 no. 4 (Dec. 1923), 252-253.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 26-27. Isely and Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, 17.

⁸⁷Millet, *Semper Fidelis*, 319-322.

Japan. The Washington Naval Treaty limited the number of ships possessed by the navies of the United Kingdom, United States, France, Italy, and Japan. It also restricted the construction of permanent fortifications in the Pacific. This created an ideal situation for the development of the advanced base force.⁸⁸ The number of ships required and wide-ranging possessions surrounded by the Japanese fleet required the U.S. Navy to devise a method to keep the sea lines of communication open and protect advanced bases. A force of Marines, under the control of the U.S. Navy fleet, trained to take and hold these islands supplied the best answer to the problem.

Attempting to educate officers on these possible multiple roles proved difficult for the leadership and instructors of the Marine Corps Schools. What set of courses should be taught at and at what level? What training should be emphasized? Should the focus be small wars and expeditionary duties, large land battles as an adjunct to the U.S. Army or advance base force operations with the U.S. Navy? As mentioned previously, General Lejeune and a few far sighted officers developed a vision of the future legitimization of the Corps, formed a single narrative, and helped institutionalize that narrative by incorporating the vision inside the curriculum of the Marine Corps Schools creating a sociology of knowledge that informed Marines throughout their career. The decade following advanced General Lejeune's vision and proved to be one of the most radical transformations in the Marine Corps history.

Institutional Reforms

Starting with the assignment of Brigadier General Randolph C. Berkeley, in August 1930, the Marine Corps began to focus its efforts on necessary changes that carried the Marine Corps well into the future.⁸⁹ Shortly after taking command, General Berkeley directed

⁸⁸Millet, *Semper Fidelis*, 319-322.

⁸⁹Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 44. Frances, *History of the Marine Corps Schools*, 38.

formation of several boards. The “special boards” began work on a text for landing operations, reviewed the current curriculum taught at the Marine Corps Schools, and began to look at experimental landing craft for amphibious operations.⁹⁰ Initial progress was slow, but the boards planted the seed that soon blossomed into a single narrative and new legitimation and continued relevance for the Marine Corps.

Brigadier General Berkeley’s work, along with the increased emphasis on landing operations as part of the curriculum at Marine Corps Schools created momentum required to move the Schools forward and was seized by the new leadership of Brigadier General James Breckenridge in 1932.⁹¹ General Breckinridge proved to be one of the most influential individuals in the development of the Marine Corps Schools. During his tenure as Schools commandant, he facilitated the development of a new education curriculum and doctrine necessary to institutionalize a single narrative and the legitimation of the amphibious warfare mission in Marine Corps, thus objectifying Lejeune’s vision. Writing to the *Marine Corps Gazette* in December 1929, General James C. Breckenridge (at the time of the writing he was a Colonel) attacked deficiencies he saw in the current education system. He believed the schools repeated themselves, did not allow for fresh thought, and only allowed officers to respond with “the book” answer rather than develop the ability to analyze situations critically.⁹² Having students memorize instructions and manuals showed only solutions for set problems. Students did not learn how or why these solutions worked nor how to alter them when the situation changed. Breckinridge’s own experience in his previous thirty years of service created an understanding that no amount of

⁹⁰Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 44. Frances, *History of the Marine Corps Schools*, 38.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Breckinridge, J.C., Colonel, USMC, “Some Thoughts on Service Schools,” *The Marine Corps Gazette* 14 no. 4 (Dec. 1929), 230. Hereafter referenced as Breckinridge, “Some Thoughts on Service Schools”.

memorization prepared an officer for the diverse duties assigned. Having previously served as the commander of the Marine Corps Schools, General Breckinridge had extensive experience in the Schools.⁹³ In a discussion about the lack of intellectual development in the Marine Corps, he once wrote, “Curiosity leads to investigation, which opens discussion, which gives rise to opinion, which breeds criticism, which results in improvement. All of this bespeaks a wide freedom in thought and an acute divergence from the arbitrary.”⁹⁴ General Breckinridge believed the schools did not allow for improvement and no ability of critical analysis developed because of the existing school methodology.

Leading this change with General Breckinridge was his Executive Officer, Colonel Ellis B. Miller. Colonel Miller, having recently completed the U.S. Naval and Army War Colleges, brought a great amount of service school experience. Colonel Miller identified the problems plaguing the Marine Corps Schools: “The prolonged use of this Army material, now taken from all the Army schools, has so saturated the entire Marine Corps Schools system that its foundation is still resting on Army principles, Army organization, and Army thought.”⁹⁵ This had to change, for Colonel Miller the Schools’ courses must involve, “Marines organizations, Marine equipment, Marine problems, Marine operations, with Naval, not Army, background.”⁹⁶ With the permission of General Breckinridge, Colonel Miller began to redirect the Marine Corps Schools away from U.S. Army centric training to one geared toward the Marine Corps. Under the direction of Colonel Miller directed, instructors removed of all the courses developed by the U.S. Army

⁹³General Breckinridge served as the Commandant of the Marine Corps Schools twice throughout his career: 1929 and 1932.

⁹⁴Breckinridge, “Some Thoughts on Service Schools,” 231.

⁹⁵Bittner, *Curriculum Evolution*, 18-19.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*

schools began to producing all new material based on Marine Corps organizations and equipment.⁹⁷ In addition to curriculum changes, instructors conducted a review of the landing operations manual and established a closer connection with the Naval War College to work closer with the Navy on seizing and defending an advanced base.⁹⁸ These changes aptly marked a revolution that had extensive influence throughout the Marine Corps. As so succinctly stated by first Lieutenant Frances in *History of Marine Corps Schools*, “This and other revolutionary measures...had a far-reaching effect upon the schools, and constituted the greatest changes made at one time.”⁹⁹

While the implementation of the structure and curriculum of the Marine Corps Schools continued, a significant change followed in the organization of the Marine Corps. For a number of years the Corps leadership sought to establish a force especially designed to integrate expeditionary forces into the fleet’s organizational structure, helping the Marines Corps to receive additional funding and encourage the Navy to train for amphibious warfare.¹⁰⁰ On December 7, 1933, the secretary of the Navy signed General Order No. 241 designating the Fleet Marine Force (FMF). It became the first order of business and significantly influenced curriculum development at the Marine Corps Schools.¹⁰¹ With the formation of the FMF, the Marine Corps possessed an organization linked to naval service capable of seizing and defending advanced bases. At first

⁹⁷Frances, *History of Marine Corps Schools*, 40. Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 44. C. H. Metcalf, Major USMC, “A History of the Education of Marine Officers,” *The Marine Corps Gazette* 20 no. 2 (May. 1936), 52.

⁹⁸Frances, *History of Marine Corps Schools*, 41. Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 45. The link between the Marine Corps Schools and the Naval War College worked on what would become the Advance Base Problem, a series that started in 1931.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Frances, *History of Marine Corps Schools*, 44-49. Millet, *Semper Fidelis*, 330-331.

¹⁰¹Ibid. Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 45-46.

glance, it appeared that the Marine Corps had surrendered autonomy to the Navy, but, by creating an organization tied to the Navy's mission, the Marine Corps further institutionalized its chosen narrative and ensured that the Navy had a vested interest in the continued development of amphibious warfare, which the majority of Marines generally approved of.¹⁰² However, the Marine Corps still required a theory and doctrinal foundation to guide its actions that allowed for the institutionalization of knowledge and continued legitimation.

The Development of Theory and Doctrine

A critical task for the longevity of any organization is to develop original thought and analytical ability while balancing the necessary theory and doctrine to maintain a common narrative. It also creates a shared body of knowledge within the institution, allows for the social transmission of that knowledge, and helps construct objective truths about the institution.¹⁰³ The Marine Corps Schools development of doctrine institutionalized theory and codified internal legitimation by effectively asserting what things are and how they are accomplished – a common narrative shared throughout the Marine Corps.¹⁰⁴ The Marine Corps Schools role in theory and doctrinal development created an institution bound to a tradition of flexibility and adaptation further legitimating the Marine Corps' reason for existence.

The work on a doctrinal publication for landing operations, as mentioned previously, began at the Marine Corps Schools in 1931, but a constant drain on personnel, both staff and students caused significant delays. In order to produce the doctrine necessary for the Marine Corps, General Breckinridge requested permission from the Commandant to suspend all classes

¹⁰²Frances, *History of Marine Corps Schools*, 44-49. Millet, *Semper Fidelis*, 330-331. Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 45-46.

¹⁰³Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 66-67.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 61-74.

and devote the full energy of both the instructors and the students to produce a landing operations manual. The Commandant approved the request on October 30, 1933 and ordered General Breckenridge to “to prepare a manual on landing operations as expeditiously as possible and to commence work not later than 15 November.”¹⁰⁵ On 14 November, classes were suspended and work commenced on the manual.

Committees assembled in order to construct an outline and to formulate the number and types of chapters written for the manual. Using a chronological approach helped identify the components of a landing operation from inception to completion. In January 1934, a conference held with seventy officers of all ranks from the Fleet Marine Force, including four Navy officers and one Army officer, to review the outline. After agreeing upon the outline, students formed into groups led by an instructor to write a specific chapter based on personal knowledge and past experience. The insight gained from the Marine Corps Schools’ detailed analysis of the Gallipoli Campaign and the initial work completed by the Landing Operations Text Board contributed to this process. In addition, exchanges with officers from the Naval War College also provided needed refinement to the final products and more importantly further legitimated the amphibious warfare mission to the Marine Corps.

The labors of Marine Corps Schools’ students and instructors culminated on 13 June 1934 with production of the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*.¹⁰⁶ The importance of this publication cannot be overstated, as fittingly stated by Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth J. Clifford, “The Tentative Landing Operations Manual [sic],...is perhaps the most important contribution to military science the Marine Corps had made to date in the 20th century; certainly it is one of the

¹⁰⁵Frances, *History of Marine Corps Schools*, 44-49. Millet, *Semper Fidelis*, 330-331. Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 45-46.

¹⁰⁶Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 45-46.

landmarks in its history.”¹⁰⁷ In 1935, during a revision process, inclusions of constructive comments, as well as photographs and sketches produced the *Tentative Landing Operations Manual*. Finally, in November 1938, the Navy incorporated the Marine effort into the *Fleet Training Publication 167* (FTP-167).¹⁰⁸

The Tentative Manual furnished detailed guidance on command relationships, naval gunfire support, aviation support, ship-to shore movement, securing the beachhead, and logistics. As a naval operation, the Navy commander was in charge of the task force composed of the landing force, designated from units of the Fleet Marine Force and naval support groups. Thus, the amphibious operation relied on unity of command under the naval task force commander. To facilitate the movement and supply of the landing force once ashore, the Manual identified the importance of combat loading the ships based on the requirements of the landing force. The priority of embarkation of both personnel and equipment reflected the loading requirements based on the ground scheme of maneuver – those employed first were loaded last.¹⁰⁹ The *Tentative Landing Operations Manual* marked a consolidation of past experience and guidance disseminated in previous manuals with the technical details necessary to form an enduring doctrine that endured throughout World War II.

The Small Wars Manual

Shortly following the release of the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*, the Marine Corps Schools began to consolidate the numerous collections of articles written in the *Marine Corps Gazette* and other scholarly journals on the experience and conduct of small wars.

¹⁰⁷Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 48. Millet, *Semper Fidelis*, 330-331.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 47-48.

Although, a majority of the collected works became a part of the School's curriculum, no official doctrinal publication existed.¹¹⁰ The Marine Corps Schools did not effectively close to produce a manual, but General Breckinridge did establish a formal board and directed it to produce a consolidated manual on small war operations.¹¹¹ In 1935, the Marine Corps Schools published the manual entitled *Small Wars Operations* for use in in the school curriculum. In 1940, after several revisions, the Schools published the more commonly known version entitled *Small Wars Manual*.¹¹² The manual provided the reader with basic knowledge yet relies on the intellect of the Marine to decide how to use this knowledge. The manual is not a set of instructions; it is an intellectual tool kit for fighting small wars.

Putting Theory into Practice: Fleet Training Exercises

When first introduce, the amphibious doctrine developed was largely theoretical. In order to further, institutionalize and legitimate the amphibious warfare mission, the Marine Corps needed to generate a sociology of knowledge and form the basis for legitimation. Throughout the 1930's the FMF took part in the maneuvers of the fleet, called Fleet Landing Exercises (FLEXs). These exercises educated a generation of Marines and Sailors on the importance and relevance of the amphibious warfare. In the Pacific, such maneuvers held off the coast of California and Hawaii, while similar landing exercises conducted in the Caribbean. The experimental problems used for FLEXs involved a landing attack by the FMF embarked on Navy vessels moving from ship to shore. In the course of the exercises, the Navy and Marine Corps experimented with

¹¹⁰Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 37.

¹¹¹Keith B. Bickel, *Mars Learning: The Marine Corps' Development of Small Wars Doctrine* (Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 2001.), 213-215. Hereafter referenced as Bickel, *Mars Learning*.

¹¹²Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 37. Bickel, *Mars Learning*, 214. Millet, *Semper Fidelis*, 263. Frances, *History of Marine Corps Schools*, 55.

several amphibious techniques and tactical approaches.¹¹³ They tried day and night landings, smoke-screens, varieties of air and naval gunfire support, concentrated assaults, and dispersed infiltrations, the firing of all sorts of weapons from landing craft, and array of demonstrations, feints, subsidiary landings, and broad-front attacks. These exercises put theory into practice and helped further refine the development of doctrine. Conducted annually until the start of World War Two, FLEXS tested the theory and equipment necessary to conduct an amphibious assault.¹¹⁴

Equipment Development

After the First World War and throughout the 1920's, appropriations for the United States Navy were small. Ships fitted as troop transports were not priorities for the Navy in fact or in theory, so as a stop-gap measure the responsibility fell to battleships and cruisers to carry Marines forces designated to conduct landings on the beach. Along with the refinement in landing techniques, the Marine recognized a need for suitable vessels that moved an assault force from the troop transports to its objective. Consequently, with the development of theory and doctrine, research began in pursuit for special equipment designed to support landing operations. Established in 1933, the Marine Corps Equipment Board tasked to research, test, and recommend equipment required to support landing operations.¹¹⁵ The identification and continued development of the equipment helped facilitate legitimation for the amphibious warfare theory and doctrine. Despite the austere budgets and a fiscally conservative Congress, the Marine Corps lobbied for increased funding for continue exploration of equipment that supported the seizure of

¹¹³Millet, *Semper Fidelis*, 337-349. Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 48-57.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Millet, *Semper Fidelis*, 340.

advanced bases, thus proving that the Marine Corps slowly became an objective reality outside the Marine Corps. Initially testing modified fishing boats, the Board became responsible for developing several types of vehicles that supported an amphibious landing. First, the Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel (LCVP), designed to carry troops from ship-to-shore, developed from the Higgins “Eureka” boat. Next, the Landing Craft Mechanized (LCM) designed to carry heavy equipment ashore, such as tanks and motor vehicles. Lastly, the Landing Vehicle Tracked (LVT) or “amphibian” designed to be a fire support system able to operate on water and land. Throughout the 1930’s, the Marine Corps continued testing and evaluating potential vehicles and equipment to support an amphibious operations, but never received full support until war in the Pacific appeared imminent.¹¹⁶

CONCLUSION

Institutions are real only in the minds of the people who have constructed them, and continue to be real as long as people learn and properly make use of their roles. For this to occur, the shared knowledge of their roles requires a transmission to future a generations. This requires some form of an “educational process” or system. The education process or system allows for potential actors to be thoroughly familiar with the meaning and purpose of ‘institutionalized actions’.¹¹⁷ According to Berger and Luckmann, “...there must be explanations and justifications of the salient elements of the institutional tradition. Legitimation is this process of explaining and justifying.”¹¹⁸ Simply stated, in order for the Marine Corps to survive it must continually “explain

¹¹⁶Millet, *Semper Fidelis*, 337-342. Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 38-57.

¹¹⁷Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 69-70.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, 93.

and justify” its existence and have an educational system that can convey significance and remain “plausible and acceptable” and desired by society.

Throughout its existence, the Marine Corps performed many diverse and demanding duties, creating multiple competing narratives, and making it difficult to define its purpose. This left the Marine Corps continuing to fight for its existence and create legitimacy inside the Marine Corps and an identity with the American public. In 1920, the Marine Corps established the Marine Corps Schools in Quantico, Virginia, aimed at creating a more professional and viable commissioned officer corps prepared for the rigors of modern warfare. The Marine Corps Schools would be the center for the development of amphibious warfare theory and doctrine and the development of equipment specifically designed to support amphibious operations, ultimately acquiring the assignment of the amphibious assault mission and defining the Marine Corps’ reason to exist. The continual development of the Marine Corps Schools serves that purpose; an education process that offers introduction and continual professional development for all Marine Corps leaders and an institution that insistently strives to find new purpose and meaning for the Marine Corps’ continual existence and remain relevant and legitimate in the eyes of the Marines that serve and to the American people.

Despite austere budgets, personnel reductions and constant deployments, the Marine Corps gathered the experiences and lessons learned from years of fighting in Latin America, the Caribbean, and China, to innovate significantly and help build a war fighting institution prepared to fight on the modern battlefield. In a relatively short period of time, the Marine Corps established, developed, and refined its professional military education system, while also continuing to send Marines to sister service educational and training schools, and a selected few to France.

Guided by a few Marine Corps visionary leaders, who foresaw a direction and projected future of the Corps and instituted a series of organizational and educational changes, ensured that

vision became a reality. In January 1940, the leader who had help shape the Marine Corp Schools through multiple tours of duty at Quantico, Lieutenant General James C. Breckinridge, wrote “It has been my belief for years that the schools shape the Corps...the schools are the cause and the Fleet Marine Forces...are the effect.”¹¹⁹ In so many ways Breckinridge was indeed correct, the Marine Corps Schools had developed into a center of innovation and training, not only cultivating its future leaders, but also helping define a mission and write the theory and doctrine used to justify and explain the Marine Corps’ continued existence and ensuring it remained a relevant institution in the eyes of the American people and a respected element of the nation's armor.

¹¹⁹Bittner, *Curriculum Evolution*, xiii.

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