

Annual Year 2014 - 2015
Marine Corps University Research Topic Nominations

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Research Topic Title: National Capital Region Command Structure

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: Marine Corps Order 5400.54 dated 19 April 2013, created Marine Corps Installations National Capital Region (MCINCR) as a subordinate command of MCICOM. The intention of creating this command was to streamline and rationalize the C2 functions for multiple Marine Corps staffs, units and agencies in the region. The current organization, command relationships, roles and responsibilities, however, may not be optimal. The project purpose is to determine how the Marine Corps should organize in the National Capital Region to best carry out its roles and responsibilities.

Extended Topic Description: The Marine Corps' legacy units and headquarters agencies, combined with relatively new agencies and commands, create complexity in NCR command relationships that may not be effectively managed under the current command structure. The study will focus on optimizing the Marine Corps' command structure in the NCR. It will address the command relationships between MCINCR-MCBQ, Marine Corps Air Station Quantico, Marine Barracks Washington, HQSVCBN Henderson Hall, and other Marine Corps organizations within the NCR. The project should address the MCINCR-MCBQ regional functions and responsibilities, particularly regarding legal and administrative implications as well as the alignment of resources needed to support those functions. An important question to address in the study is: How can the Marine Corps best align the NCR command structure to support Deputy Commandants and Directors while meeting the responsibilities assigned to the designated NCR commanders?

Desired Objectives of the Research: The study should produce a notional Marine Corps command structure for the NCR. Consideration should be given to the draft MCBUL 5400, Designation of UIC M30004 Headquarters Marine Corps Base Quantico as Marine Corps Installations National Capital Region and Marine Corps Base Quantico.

Requesting Organization: Marine Corps Base Quantico

Point of Contact: Col Chris Edwards

Email Address: Christopher.b.edwards@usmc.mil

Telephone Number: 703-784-5911

Mailing Address:
Marine Corps Base
Quantico, VA 22134-5001

Research Topic Title: Information Operations through USMC history

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: IO is an often misunderstood topic and its utility is practically unknown. The proposal is a study of USMC history. Various periods of USMC history would prove useful. The idea is to explain the USMC definition of IO and then demonstrate times when that was successfully accomplished. Success means IO providing tactical advantage to Marine commander.

Extended Topic Description: The Definition of IO from MCWP 3-40.4 is “the integration, coordination, and synchronization of all actions taken in the information environment to affect a relevant decision maker in order to create an operational advantage for the commander.” These actions may include any MAGTF or Joint capability (e.g. Infantry, Arty, Electronic Warfare, and Military Information Support Operations---AKA MISO). The bottom line is that IO is the integration of any of these capabilities to achieve an IO objective ISO the MAGTF mission. The current litany of USMC schools, PME, IO school, etc. are lacking relevant historical examples of IO in action.

Desired Objectives of the Research:

-Compendium of IO related narratives that may serve as associated reading for Small Wars Manual, PME pubs etc.

-Source document for development of IO related curriculum for PME (EWS, Command and Staff) Joint Phase II and Enlisted.

-Source Document for update of IO case studies used in USMC IO schools (Intermediate IO Practitioners Course and the Advanced IO Course) at EWTG-LANT.

Requesting Organization: TECOM G-3 FOPS

Point of Contact: Major Curtis A. Lineweaver

Email Address: Curtis.lineweaver@usmc.mil

Telephone Number: 703-432-1427

Mailing Address:

1019 ELLIOT ROAD
QUANTICO, VA 22134-5001

Research Topic Title: “Informatized” Warfare

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: - The term information warfare is not new, nor is awareness of any of the many components of information in warfare, such as deception operations, propaganda, signals intelligence, et cetera.

- What is new about Information Warfare? What do people describe it as? Why is it significant?
- Describe American uses of Information Warfare, Chinese uses, allied uses.
- Propose ways that the USMC should think about Information Warfare and how it should be incorporated into the structure of the MAGTF.
- Is it possible that there is something about Information Warfare that is as important as kinetic warfare? How do the two relate?

Desired Objectives of the Research: - An Understanding and more precise definition of what is meant by war under “informatized” conditions.

- Concepts that will educate force structure in the MAGTF – how and why should information operations be incorporated into the MAGTF?

Point of Contact: E. Jeep, LtCol USMC

Email Address: edward.l.jeep.mil@mail.mil

Research Topic Title: Marine Forces North– Support to Civil Authorities

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: How Far Should Reserves Go in Defense Support of Civil Authorities

Desired Objectives of the Research: The Marine Reserve is often requested to engage in a National Guard capacity – walking up to or asked to cross the Title X line in support of our Homeland. How can; how should the Commander, Marine Forces North provide support to our Nation’s Governors particularly during extreme emergency conditions, i.e. Hurricane Katrina, Sandy, etc.?

Requesting Organization: MARINE FORCES RESERVE

Point of Contact: R. McGuiness, GS-14

Email Address: robert.mcguiness@usmc.mil

Telephone Number: 504-697-4433

Mailing Address:

Marine Forces Reserve IM/KM
2000 Opelousas Street
New Orleans, LA 70114

Research Topic Title: Connectors

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: Marine Corps operations require the reliable rapid transport of Marines and equipment from ocean going vessels to all types of littoral interfaces, beach, tidal flats, sea walls, marshes, etc. Traditional platforms include LCU, LCAC, AAV, INLS, and expeditionary causeways. What are the viable alternatives, given the likelihood that resource constraints will continue to limit the number of traditional platforms the Navy and Marine Corps can acquire?

Extended Topic Description: The study will focus on operational integration of the UHAC and other connector alternatives in supplementing the missions of traditional connectors. It will address the operational implications and the implications of integrating such platforms into the existing ARG/MEU framework. A likely important question to address in the study would be: How can the Navy/Marine Corps best integrate new, partially developed technologies into synthetic exercises, in order to reduce associated risk and cost while still determining future benefit? The study should test a new connector (and/or AAV replacement) and its integration within a synthetic MEB/MEU.

Desired Objectives of the Research: The study should produce notional CONOPS while evaluating comparative benefits of alternative platforms with current connectors (LCAC/LCU). Consideration should be given to both Phase 0 and OPLAN requirements.

Requesting Organization: MARFORPAC

Point of Contact: BGen Richard L. Simcock

Email Address: N/A

Telephone Number: 808-477-8612

Mailing Address:

Camp H.M.
Smith, HI 96861-4139

Research Topic Title: Quasi Autonomous Combat Systems

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: - The world has had robots, and quasi-autonomous systems for a very long time. What factors have driven their incorporation and use within society? Within warfare?

- How should we think about the continued integration of Quasi-Autonomous systems within our warfighting force? What functions will never be automated? Which ones should be? What technologies are apparent that lend themselves to automated logistics, decision making, destruction, killing? Which should we avoid?

- Pay attention to cost and ease of implementation. Are some systems too expensive and too delicate? Where is the trade off?

Point of Contact: E. Jeep, LtCol USMC

Email Address: edward.l.jeep.mil@mail.mil

Research Topic Title: Amphibious Joint Forcible Entry

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: Over the past two decades the advancement in technology, speed, range, and lethality of anti-ship missiles and small boat tactics have driven the fleet farther off shore, up to 30 NM. The Marine Corps continues to search for individual vehicles and connectors which can operate from ship to shore from over the horizon. In today's high threat AD/A2 environment are joint forcible entry (JFE amphibious operations still relevant or has the enemy threat become too great for Combatant Commanders to employ the option.

Desired Objectives of the Research: Examine the geographic areas and scenarios where MEB level JFE amphibious operations are relevant. Make a case for most the most likely scenario and how the MEB should be organized to support the most likely mission. Take a position regarding the relevance JFE operations and support the hypothesis.

Requesting Organization: I MEF G-5

Point of Contact: Col David Casey

Email Address: david.p.casey@usmc.mil

Telephone Number: 760-725-9246; DSN 365-9246

Mailing Address:

I MEF G-5

PO Box 555321

Camp Pendleton, CA 92055-5025

Research Topic Title: Anti-Access, Area Denial Strategies

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: - Much has been written about the phrase A2AD (Anti-Access, Area Denial). Does the term describe something unique, or new? If not, what are some examples of A2AD in the past? Attempt to break the concept down into component parts, some of which may have been replicated in the past.

- Referencing China, what weapons or capabilities are the Chinese using to conduct A2AD. Is A2AD a strategy or a “bucket” of systems that enables some other strategic vision?

- Describe a specific list of Chinese systems that brings A2AD to life. Investigate their operational and tactical performance in broad terms. Make the reader understand the state of the art (at the UNCLASS level) in these systems.

- Investigate the amount of insight available in the open source regime on these systems.

- Discuss conclusions about likely or possible counters to these systems and what the USMC could bring to that effort.

Desired Objectives of the Research: - Reduce the “fog” in our thinking about A2AD. Bring the reader to an understanding of what these systems really do, what they cannot, and thus engender a discussion of how to defeat them.

Point of Contact: E. Jeep, LtCol USMC

Email Address: edward.l.jeep.mil@mail.mil

Research Topic Title: Combined Amphibious Maneuver Capability

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: The vast distances and surface area in the Pacific require the U.S., and the USMC, to work with partner nations in training for amphibious operations in order to be ready for naval operations across the ROMO. No ally is as potentially consequential in this regard as Japan.

Extended Topic Description: The purpose of this research topic will be to investigate and provide recommendations on how the USMC can best work with Japan's Ground Self Defense Force (GSDF) to assist in developing their amphibious capabilities and partner/ work with US amphibious forces. Consideration will be given to all aspects of DOTMLPF spectrum. As part of the study, the USMC will provide an active duty LNO (Intermediate Level School student) to the planned Japanese Amphibious Brigade Headquarters in order to serve as an adviser while collecting data for the study. This would be in lieu of sending such an officer to Command and Staff College. The officer would take distance learning classes during his/her time as LNO and still receive a degree. (An MCU or NPS "study abroad" program.) The student would produce an independent analysis of his/her observations while deployed, specifically on the topic of US/Japan combined interoperability and amphibious integration.

Desired Objectives of the Research: The study will produce recommendations for Japanese and US amphibious forces on doctrine, organization, training, capabilities, leadership, personnel, interoperability, and facilities that will maximize US and Japanese amphibious capabilities throughout the Pacific.

Requesting Organization: MARFORPAC

Point of Contact: BGen Richard L. Simcock

Email Address: N/A

Telephone Number: 808-477-8612

Mailing Address:

Camp H.M.
Smith, HI 96861-4139

Research Topic Title: Amphibious Maneuver Capability

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: MARFORPACs mission in the Pacific Theater requires amphibious lift capability in order to support PACOM's Phase 0 Theater Security Cooperation objectives and to be prepared for higher level phase contingency operations. MARFORPAC has had a difficult time articulating the requirement for a "10th Amphibious Ready Group" and directly relating it to current requirements.

Extended Topic Description: It is imperative that this requirement be articulated in a quantitative fashion in order to gain support for funding for the additional ships and locating them as far west as possible. Using the DPRI Distributed Laydown concept and a typical annual schedule of training and security cooperation events for Marines in the Pacific, the study do three things. First, it will determine what US Navy Amphibious capability is required to support. Second, it will examine this capability compared with using High Speed Vessels considering their limitations. Finally, it will baseline the requirement on a 1.0 presence afloat, meaning an amphibious capability afloat of some form 12 months out of the year.

Desired Objectives of the Research: The study will produce a framework for a future operational concept for employing amphibious shipping for maneuver capability in the Pacific.

Requesting Organization: MARFORPAC

Point of Contact: BGen Richard L. Simcock

Email Address: N/A

Telephone Number: 808-477-8612

Mailing Address:

Camp H.M.
Smith, HI 96861-4139

Research Topic Title: Crisis Response in the “New Norm”

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: A study outlining the threat to US national interests in the form of state-sponsored and non-state actors, capable of hostile action against “soft targets” such as the attack on the US Embassy in Benghazi; and potential joint, combined, and service organizations and concepts to deter and respond.

Extended Topic Description: The study should focus on an in depth analysis of potential threats, from Al Qaeda and other organizations hostile to the United States – motives and methodologies; and explore synergistic capabilities that may be leveraged to deter and counter threats to national interests. The study should consider integration of host nation capabilities, joint capabilities, and USMC unique capabilities such as those outlined in Expeditionary Force 21.

Desired Objectives of the Research: The study should produce an understanding of the threat presented to US national interests abroad; and produce notional organization options integrating joint, combined, and USMC capabilities such as the MEU, FAST, and SPMAGTF crisis response organizations.

Requesting Organization: II MEF

Point of Contact: Mr. Hayes

Email Address: N/A

Telephone Number: (910) 451-8248

Mailing Address:

PSC

Box 20080, Bldg H1

Camp Lejeune, NC

Research Topic Title: Implications for MEU/SOF integration

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: What will combined operations consist of with MEU/SOF integration? How will this affect the way in which the Marine Corps deploy?

Extended Topic Description: The study will address composition of force structure, billeting, and types of operations the MEU and SOF units can conduct together. It will evaluate which kinds of capabilities could complement each one in a crisis. Likewise, it will evaluate which kinds of operations could be complicated given the way in which MEUs and SOFs operate. Finally, it will offer a set of findings and recommendations for commanders to consider in addressing the complications of MEU/SOF integration.

Desired Objectives of the Research:

1. Help the Marine Corps think about how to optimally plan for future MEU/SOF deployments and operations
2. Address issues that have not been addressed since the Marine Corps and SOF community have been at war on land for the last 13 years.

Requesting Organization: MARFORPAC

Point of Contact: BGen Richard L. Simcock

Email Address: N/A

Telephone Number: 808-477-8612

Mailing Address:

Camp H.M.
Smith, HI 96861-4139

Research Topic Title: Role of the US Army in Asia

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: - What role should the Army play in an Asian Pivot strategy? What roles and missions is it uniquely prepared or equipped for, and which ones should it avoid?

- What relationship should the Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force have in operational theaters in PACOM? Propose some scenarios or general operational concepts that would join the services. Try and invent them theoretically instead of building on existing thinking or existing projects like Air Sea Battle.

- What changes should the Army make to adapt to the Pacific Pivot?

Point of Contact: E. Jeep, LtCol USMC

Email Address: edward.l.jeep.mil@mail.mil

Research Topic Title: The Marine Defense Battalions of the 1930s

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: - In the 1930s the USMC fielded the Defense Battalion concept. This concept was fielded in the context of a certain collection of operational, political, and geographical factors.

- Study the background of the concept, what its aims and purposes were as well as its advantages and disadvantages. How well did it perform? What similarities do today's circumstances share with those of the 1930s?

- List the TTPs, weapons, and equipment that brought this concept to life.

Desired Objectives of the Research: - Understand the context for the development of the Defense Bns

- Explore the difference between "strategic seapower" and "strategic landpower" roles for the Corps

- Analyze and draw conclusions about the concept's usefulness today

- Understand the Advance Base Force generally and the Defense Bn's utility to the Marine Corps institutionally, for interservice conflicts specifically as well as warfighting.

Point of Contact: E. Jeep, LtCol USMC

Email Address: edward.l.jeep.mil@mail.mil

Research Topic Title: The role of the USMC as the Land Component of Seapower

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: - The Marine Corps has performed many tasks for the nation since its inception. As a land force, attached to the Naval establishment, we are capable of extended operations ashore alongside the Army, though that is not our primary mission. From our earliest role as sharpshooters in the rigging of Navy Ships and as landing parties, our role is closely related to the influence, firepower, and projection of the Navy.

- We are the Land component of Seapower. This is our primary duty – though for ten years this has been a second priority behind COIN in Afghanistan and Iraq. What should our future hold? How should we think about our status as primary practitioners of Seapower? What does this mean for the average Marine and how he looks at strategic, operational, and tactical challenges?

- What are the historical examples of the Corps' missions? Why have we performed one mission or another mission at the expense of others? What is the role political influence, world situation, and international strategic realities play on the missions we “advertise” we are good at? What should our unchanging orientation be? What do restricted budgets mean for this history? For this future?

Desired Objectives of the Research: - The ability to place the Corps in context with the other services, understanding why the nation pays for a Corps, considering the challenges in the future of our Nation and our Defense Establishment.

- The ability to understand the Corps' historical trajectory of missions and what that means to our future.

Point of Contact: E. Jeep, LtCol USMC

Email Address: edward.l.jeep.mil@mail.mil

Research Topic Title: Precision Weapons against Ship to Shore Movement

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: - Discuss, list, and analyze the most proliferated weapons that make the ship to shore movement dangerous. Concentrate on precision munitions that are low cost, and whose relative complexity allows their fielding at the Bn level.

- Analyze the concepts of operation that opposing militaries use to field these weapons, such as China and Russia, if such information exists.

- Discuss the potential for countermeasures to these weapons. How would the MAGTF/ARG defeat these weapons on a collective or individual basis?

Desired Objectives of the Research: - A more precise understanding of what the risks are to ship to shore movement.

- A start at quantifying the risk and qualifying our response to it.

- A start at understanding the composition and organization of the JFEO force in relationship to the most lethal and most proliferated precision weapon systems available.

Point of Contact: E. Jeep, LtCol USMC

Email Address: edward.l.jeep.mil@mail.mil

Research Topic Title: Disaggregated ARG Aviation Operations Doctrine

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: Currently, Amphibious Ready Groups (ARGs) deploy using a disaggregated operational distribution. This includes air-wing assets departing amphibious ships and deploying to locations where the ship cannot support, smaller ships leaving the larger ship where the larger ship cannot support, or the ships will leave the area of operations, leaving aircraft to seek support ashore.

Extended Topic Description: This study will build a strategy that can be used by ARG's while deployed in order to support aircraft that fly forward and cannot be supported by the ARG. The study should address four questions: (1) What are the most likely COAs an ARG will use while deployed? (2) What is the proper aircraft mix to support the COA's? (3) What are the support packages that are needed to support these COA's? (4) What is the maintenance concept needed to support each of these COAs?

Desired Objectives of the Research: The study should produce a disaggregated operations doctrine with Courses of Action based on mix of aircraft, and appropriate support packages to support the COA's (PCSP, FISPC, etc).

Requesting Organization: MARFORPAC

Point of Contact: BGen Richard L. Simcock

Email Address: N/A

Telephone Number: 808-477-8612

Mailing Address:

Camp H.M.
Smith, HI 96861-4139

Research Topic Title: Intelligence Support to USMC and Joint Planning Process

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: Conduct an analysis of the current doctrinal publications w/in the USMC and Joint library to determine whether currently described processes are outlined in enough specificity/detail for intelligence personnel to support the various planning processes (deliberate, R2P2, APEX, MCPP, etc.). Survey USMC and Joint planners to assess the USMC and Joint communities abilities and success in meeting planners and Commander's expectations or necessities for plan development.

Desired Objectives of the Research: A more detailed refinement of intelligence processes, products, analysis reflected in doctrinal USMC and Joint publications which improves the intelligence communities ability to anticipate Intel support requirements for planning as well as finished intelligence production which meets planners and Commanders expectations for intelligence in support of the decision making process.

Requesting Organization: I MEF G-2

Point of Contact: LtCol Brian Simon

Email Address: Brian.d.simon@usmc.mil

Telephone Number: 760-725-9269; DSN 365-9269

Mailing Address:

I MEF G-2

PO Box 555321

Camp Pendleton, CA 92055-5025

Research Topic Title: Operational Logistics

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: The Marine Corps in most recent years has taken great risk in their GS logistics capability. Emerging amphibious concepts speak of ship to objective maneuver without giving credence to the time and effort to establish the lodgment area. How far have we really come in being able to execute our sea basing concepts and sustain forces ashore?

Desired Objectives of the Research: To understand if the Navy and Marine Corps team have actually made exponential strides in their capability to operate from over the horizon. An assessment of our current over the shore logistics capability correlated with an amphibious MEB size force. What do we need, if anything to sustain the amphibious MEB ashore?

Requesting Organization: I MEF G-5

Point of Contact: Col David Casey

Email Address: david.p.casey@usmc.mil

Telephone Number: 760-725-9246; DSN 365-9246

Mailing Address:

I MEF G-5

PO Box 555321

Camp Pendleton, CA 92055-5025

Research Topic Title: The implications of the new Marine Corps Amphibious Combat Vehicle (ACV)

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: The Marine Corps has decided to forgo pursuing a tracked high water speed amphibious vehicle to replace the current AAV. The new wheeled ACV has significantly different operating parameters and load capacity to the current AAV. What is the new ACV's potential impact on manning, organization, employment, and sustainment on amphibious mechanized infantry forces?

Desired Objectives of the Research: Identify optimum fielding and organization of the ACV and or infantry squad. Assume a mixed AAV – ACV fleet of vehicles can be used, if required. The ACV will not have a recovery or C2 variant. Adjustment to the organization of infantry squads should be considered if it is an optimum solution.

Requesting Organization: I MEF G-5

Point of Contact: Col David Casey

Email Address: david.p.casey@usmc.mil

Telephone Number: 760-725-9246; DSN 365-9246

Mailing Address:

I MEF G-5

PO Box 555321

Camp Pendleton, CA 92055-5025

Research Topic Title: COAs if a Recruit Depot is Unable to Train Recruits

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: Develop COAs to continue recruit training if MCRD PISC or MCRD SDCA is unable to train recruits for more than 6 weeks.

Extended Topic Description: If MCRD PISC is unable to train recruits for more than 6 weeks, where should recruits be shipped and trained? MCLB Albany is a safe haven for recruits for up to 6 weeks. For periods longer than that, funds must be spent to develop temporary facilities at Albany or other installations. What are the operational impacts and costs of the various COAs?

Desired Objectives of the Research: Provide TECOM/ MCICOM/ MCRC with detailed COAs for alternate recruit training locations.

Requesting Organization: TECOM G-3/5/7

Point of Contact: Michael J. Blaine

Email Address: Michael.blaine@usmc.mil

Telephone Number: 703 784-9578

Mailing Address:
2079 Barnett Ave
Quantico VA 22134

Research Topic Title: BLOCK II & III TRAINING ASSESSMENTS

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: How are Block II & III training assessments conducted in the OPFOR (i.e. I, II & III MEF)?

Extended Topic Description: The Service conducts formal training and assessments at Block I (entry level) and Block IV (mission readiness exercise). The OPFOR conducts Block II & III assessments primarily through MCCRE. However, how does the OPFOR conduct Block II & III assessments and are they standardized enough across the MEFs to allow the Service to identify systemic trends for incorporation throughout the Block I-IV pipeline?

Desired Objectives of the Research: Determine if Block II & III training assessments are being conducted by the OPFOR in a sufficiently standardized manner to analyze systemic trends and provide feedback throughout the Block I-IV pipeline. Provide recommendations for standardization across the OPFOR of Block II & III assessments that will improve the efficiency & effectiveness of training programs through which individuals & units prepare for assigned missions, per TECOMO 3503.1A (Trend Reversal & Reinforcement Process).

Requesting Organization: TECOM G3/5/7 FUTURE OPERATIONS

Point of Contact: LTCOL JOHN B. ADAMS

Email Address: JOHN.B.ADAMS1@USMC.MIL

Telephone Number: 703-432-1126 / DSN 278-1126

Mailing Address:
1019 ELLIOT ROAD
QUANTICO, VIRGINIA 22134

Research Topic Title: MARINE CORPS TRAINING PRINCIPLES

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: Is the Marine Corps still adhering to its' training principles, specifically that commanders are responsible for developing their own training?

Extended Topic Description: There has been a great deal of discussion among Marines that the Marine Corps has overly prescribed training and should return this responsibility to commanders IAW the Marine Corps Training Principles. The Pre-deployment Training Program (PTP) is frequently cited as an example of training that is dictated for commanders vice allowing them to develop their own training plans. Proponents of a more prescriptive approach cite resource & dwell time constraints, as well as the need for a more consistent product for the combatant commanders. However, Expeditionary Force (EF) 21 envisions squads and platoons distributed over large areas, conducting missions that include security cooperation, but prepared to re-aggregate for crisis response and combat operations. Several training initiatives (Squad Leader Development Program, etc.) have been implemented or are underway to develop our small unit leadership & their ability to operate in a distributed, decentralized manner.

Desired Objectives of the Research: Determine if Marine Corps training is still adhering to its principles, specifically if commanders are responsible for developing their own training.

Determine if Marine Corps training needs to become more or less prescriptive and the level of decentralization necessary.

Determine if Marine Corps training initiatives & programs are properly preparing small unit leaders for decentralized operations per EF 21.

Requesting Organization: TECOM G3/5/7 FUTURE OPERATIONS

Point of Contact: LTCOL JOHN B. ADAMS

Email Address: JOHN.B.ADAMS1@USMC.MIL

Telephone Number: 703-432-1126 / DSN 278-1126

Mailing Address:
1019 ELLIOT ROAD
QUANTICO, VIRGINIA 22134

Research Topic Title: Post-Separation Efficacy of the USMC Transition Readiness Seminar (TRS)

Classification: For Official Use Only (FOUO)

Topic Description: The research will determine the efficacy of the newly implemented Transition Readiness Seminar (TRS) by comparing outcome measures of the new program with the old Separation and Transition Assistance Program (SEPS/TAPS). This research is critical for the United States Marine Corps and for the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) since all branches of the military adopted a standardized transition program (i.e., Transition Goals, Plans, Success (GPS)) in November 2012.

Extended Topic Description: The research will determine the efficacy of the newly implemented Transition Readiness Seminar (TRS) by identifying success metrics of the new program and comparing outcome measures of the new program with the old Separation and Transition Assistance Program (SEPS/TAPS). Specifically, costs will be determined and evaluated as well as the value of the increased costs. Other objectives will include identifying improvements to the current TRS, identifying success metrics of TRS, and developing a system of accountability to ensure compliance with Marine Corps regulations.

Desired Objectives of the Research: The five objectives of this research program are:
(1) Determine the start-up costs and annualized financial increase compared to SEPS/TAPS including manpower, equipment and supplies, Information Technology (IT), and facilities;

(2) Determine the value of the increased costs by measuring the following:
(a) clients' improved retention of information taught in the five-day TRS;
(b) utilization of the individualized one-on-one advising sessions;
(c) clients' testimonials for the efficacy of TRS, including those individuals who have completed both SEPS/TAPS and TRS;
(d) comparison of deliverables (Individualized Transition Plan (ITP), resumes, budgets, interviewing skills, specific pathway deliverables) between TRS and SEPS/TAPS; and,
(e) comparison of annualized unemployment compensation.

(3) recommend improvements to the current TRS program to include adopting a web-based data/case management system which incorporates a TRS registration and job matching portal; standardized curriculum and advising protocol; facilities, Information Technology (IT), and manpower needs; supplies and equipment; and, other pertinent areas.

(4) identify success metrics of TRS, to include measuring successful placement of separating Marines in each of the four pathways: Employment, College/University Education, Career Technical Education, and Entrepreneurship.

(5) develop a system of accountability for senior leaders to ensure Marines attend TRS in compliance with Marine Corps regulations.

Requesting Organization: MCB Camp Lejeune Personal and Professional Development

Point of Contact: Dr. Beth Barton

Email Address: bartonba@usmc-mccs.org

Telephone Number: 910-451-5340

Mailing Address:

ATTN: P&PD/M&FP (Blg 40)
1401 West Road
Camp Lejeune, NC 28547

Research Topic Title: Warfighter Performance

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: Warfighter performance requirements are most commonly centered on infantry Marines, but enhancements in performance, related to cognitive skills could benefit the entire force as well.

Extended Topic Description: During all aspects of military operations, improved cognitive ability and critical thinking provides a critical advantage to the warfighter, especially when fatigued. This study will address psycho/social-related issues and identify areas of the human psyche that might be able to be enhanced during training, in order to produce improved cognitive reception (decreased cognitive dissonance) under tactical crisis conditions. The fundamental questions to be addressed are: (1) What are the best investment initiatives to make human performance more “enduring”, with a focus on cognitive performance under stressed and fatigued conditions? (2) How can critical decision making be improved and optimized under fatigued conditions? (3) What approaches can best reduce the situational awareness (SA) burden and increase information processing?

Desired Objectives of the Research: The study will provide an assessment of concepts and an evaluation of existing and possible new initiatives related to human performance focused on improving cognitive ability and decision making under stress and fatigue.

Requesting Organization: MARFORPAC

Point of Contact: BGen Richard L. Simcock

Email Address: N/A

Telephone Number: 808-477-8612

Mailing Address:

Camp H.M.

Smith, HI 96861-4139

Research Topic Title: Alternate Military Scenarios in PACOM

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: - For the past many years, discussions of military strategy in the Pacific have hinged around the defense of Taiwan and the Korean Peninsula. While there is certainly nothing wrong with this, obviously history and strategy do not “pan out” the way conventional wisdom dictated beforehand. There are always surprises. It is perhaps because our thinking becomes tightly enmeshed in one or two scenarios that we miss other dynamic possibilities.

- Formulate two to three alternate scenarios that involve military confrontations in the PACOM AOR. Try not to replicate the operational and/or tactical considerations of a Taiwan or Korea scenario, and merely place them in a different location. Looking at the whole region, attempt to envision scenarios based on other likely or emerging possibilities. Though kinetic warfare scenarios and the attendant challenges and questions are the main intent of this topic, HA/DR or hybrid scenarios are also of interest.

- Try and divorce yourself from merely finding scenarios to fit weapon systems (current or proposed) and inventing far flung possibilities merely to fulfil some kind of preordained goal of the US or her allies (such as a dictator in country X who must be overthrown in a COIN related fight). Try to move forward to identify some nugget of insight wherein we could envision a need or an opportunity for US military force to fulfil.

Desired Objectives of the Research: - Broadening regional strategic thinking

- Attaining a wide awareness of trends and drivers

- Understanding of the general principles guiding the use of military force

Point of Contact: E. Jeep, LtCol USMC

Email Address: edward.l.jeep.mil@mail.mil

Research Topic Title: ASEAN Military Capabilities

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: - Over the past 5-10 years, ASEAN militaries have been innovating, upgrading, and widening their capabilities.

- Some change in these militaries is due to the emergence of China, others are due to their neighbors' increased arming, and still other initiatives are due to internal politics or economic factors.
- Study the development in ASEAN militaries either in a broad view, or a concentrated look at one, such as Malaysia and Japan (starting to develop Marine Corps).
- Understand the internal political and exterior strategic regional considerations and how they affect these developments.

Desired Objectives of the Research: - An understanding of the changing nature of the national militaries that make up the strategic landscape of the Pacific.

- Derive some insight on how the US can best aid and contribute to the development of mutual security capabilities, through TSC and BPC.
- Identify potential areas wherein US could collaborate in FID with our partner nations.

Point of Contact: E. Jeep, LtCol USMC

Email Address: edward.l.jeep.mil@mail.mil

Research Topic Title: Case Study – Falkland / Malvinas Island War

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: - In 1982 Argentina and The United Kingdom fought over the Islands in the South Atlantic known as the Falklands to the UK and the Malvinas to Argentina (The South Atlantic War). The combat, spread over approximately two months, involved every domain, in the most recent fight between two modern and approximately equivalent militaries.

- The South Atlantic War involved standoff weapons such as the Exocet missile, as well as every possible combination of weaponry and equipment imaginable: surface to surface fire, surface to air, air to air, submarine to surface, fixed and rotorcraft operations, amphibious assault, land combat, deception operations, long-distance logistics, all in a complex and evolving political environment.

- In a case study, considering material from both Argentine and UK sources, analyze the conflict for similarities and contrasts between it and a US/China/Japan scenario in the East or South China Seas.

Desired Objectives of the Research: - What lessons were learned through the War that are applicable to our pivot to the Pacific?

- What weaponry or TTPs emerge as key or central to the conduct of the war?

- What lessons are the Chinese likely to take from the conduct of the war?

Point of Contact: E. Jeep, LtCol USMC

Email Address: edward.l.jeep.mil@mail.mil

Research Topic Title: Economic Warfare and Blockades

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: - Nations that are economically inter-dependent are hypothesized to avoid war due to the obvious cost to their economy. Recently this idea has come into debate, with the example of WWI as a prominent example of an exception.

- Recent scholarship has shed light on the Economic Warfare and Blockades the British embarked upon at the start of WWI. Other scholars are following; this area is current and much talked about.

- Several defense thinkers, TX Hammes, for example, espouse a distant blockade as a part of a China deterrence theory.

Desired Objectives of the Research: - Study historical examples of blockades and Economic Warfare, arrive at a good definition of the two that encompasses the understanding of historical examples.

- Consider the advent of bitcoin, dark banking, internet commerce, cyber warfare and other economic disruptions/innovations. What does this suggest for the conduct of Economic Warfare? Do they reduce its effectiveness? Do they increase its lethality? Do they change the playing field?

- What is the relationship between Economic Warfare and Conventional Warfare? Does one stand in for the other? Instigate the other? Is one more "total" than the other?

Point of Contact: E. Jeep, LtCol USMC

Email Address: edward.l.jeep.mil@mail.mil

Research Topic Title: Land Wars in China

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: - Conduct a historic review of land interventions into China by western or Asian powers

- Discuss briefly the challenges, rationales, and successes of those interventions in gaining the policy advantages or changing the Status Quo desired. Discuss the utility of a land invasion of China in the past, through the perspectives of those who conducted them.

- Analyze the strategic thinking behind invasions of China, discuss the conventional wisdom behind land invasions, and critically analyze the potential for strategic or operational advantage to be gained by a land invasion of China by a western or Asian power.

Desired Objectives of the Research: - A more precise insight of the past history of land interventions into China and background that would make a discussion of today's strategic situation possible. Is this something that should be taken off the table? If not, why? Who else faced similar challenges and resolved them, or attempted to resolve them, by a direct land intervention into China?

Point of Contact: E. Jeep, LtCol USMC

Email Address: edward.l.jeep.mil@mail.mil

Research Topic Title: Norway Air-Landed MEB and the Maritime Strategy of the 1980s

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: - NATO's Northern Flank, centered on Norway, sought to limit the effectiveness of the Soviet military buildup on the Kola Peninsula. DoD and the Naval Services collaborated upon a military strategy that served to curtail this force; it included Marines and Navy forces.

- Some might describe this Soviet military strategy as a kind of early A2AD. Therefore, the maritime strategy that was created to defeat it could serve as a model for our A2AD challenges in the Pacific.

- Study the origins of our Norway strategy, find evidence of what the Soviets thought about it, how they reacted to it. List operational and tactical components of the Marine Corps' and Navy contributions to the strategy.

Desired Objectives of the Research: - Insight as to the components in land, air, and naval forces, within the maritime strategy of the 1980s.

- Understanding of the larger strategic configuration of NATO/Warsaw Pact then as they apply to US / ASEAN and China today.

- Ideas of operational and tactical concepts that could be useful today in the South and East China Seas and approaches to the Asian mainland.

Point of Contact: E. Jeep, LtCol USMC

Email Address: edward.l.jeep.mil@mail.mil

Research Topic Title: Prospects for increasing amphibious ship presence in Japan

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: What are the infrastructural, technological and political challenges to increasing amphibious ship presence in Sasebo, Japan?

Extended Topic Description: The study will address three overarching areas of concern when thinking about amphibious ship presences in Japan: Infrastructural, technological and political. It will test each of these variables against one another and present an evaluation of the likelihood of increasing ship presence. It should consider both individual ships (in order to augment the current ARG presence in Sasebo), as well as a full additional ARG. Data collection should consist of discussions with C7F, CTF 76, OPNAV, the JMSDF and the Japanese Ministry of Defense.

Desired Objectives of the Research:

1. Present a proposed implementation plan
2. Solutions to challenges in each of the three areas
3. Notionally comment on the strategic and operational benefits and challenges in considering additional presence.

Requesting Organization: MARFORPAC

Point of Contact: BGen Richard L. Simcock

Email Address: N/A

Telephone Number: 808-477-8612

Mailing Address:

Camp H.M.
Smith, HI 96861-4139

Research Topic Title: UCP Boundaries: Continents or Cultures?

Classification: Secret

Topic Description: Is the UCP boundary between CENTCOM and AFRICOM in the correct location?

Extended Topic Description: There is a boundary between CENTCOM and AFRICOM's AOR that divides the two geographic areas of responsibility. MARCENT and NAVCENT forces operate along and across this boundary under various authorities, memoranda of agreement and EXORDS. It is of interest to naval components of CENTCOM as to whether the boundary and the current authorities, MOAs and EXORDS are sufficient to support the ops expected in a post-OEF CENTCOM AOR.

Desired Objectives of the Research: Provide additional research-supported data to inform discussions of the UCP.

Requesting Organization: Command Element, Marine Forces, Central Command (FWD)

Point of Contact: BGen Olson

Email Address: Gregg.olson@marcent.usmc.mil

Telephone Number: DSN 318-439-6073; Commercial 973-1785-6073

Mailing Address:

PSC 451

Box 820

FPO AE 09834-2800

Research Topic Title: Case Study – Viet Nam

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: - Viet Nam is in an interesting position vis a vis their ever stronger and more bellicose northern neighbor, China. Conduct a broad strategic overview of the Vietnamese case.

- Describe the Vietnamese status quo, strategically.
- Describe the changing pressures on the Vietnamese leadership, analyze the rate of change in their military posture, equipment, and readiness. Analyze recent events in the South China Sea and hypothesize future scenarios by which Vietnam would be forced to act.
- Depict scenarios wherein greater partnership with Vietnam would be seen between ASEAN and US. What weapons, roles, and missions would provide deterrent and credible military advantage while not provoking Chinese responses?

Desired Objectives of the Research: - An understanding of a future relationship between US and Vietnam that is different than the one in the past or even today.

- Understand the key nature of Vietnam in the SE Asian region, in ASEAN, and PACOM

Point of Contact: E. Jeep, LtCol USMC

Email Address: edward.l.jeep.mil@mail.mil

Research Topic Title: Marine Forces Reserve – The Reserve Role in the “Fight Tonight Force”

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: The transition from the Global War on Terrorism coupled with the crushing vice grip of sequestration is once again challenging the very existence of the Corps. In his 2013 SASC testimony, CMC stated, “In order to maintain our forward deployed “fight tonight” units at acceptable readiness levels, we will fall well below the minimum number of flight hours at home necessary to retain minimum safe flight standards and warfighting capabilities. We will have to reduce our Theater Security Cooperation and exercise support by 30% in the Asia Pacific region, opening the door to those who would gladly take our place in global leadership. In doing so, we will markedly limit bilateral and multi-lateral engagement opportunities, thus putting our credibility at risk with our allies and partners. The void left by our “actual absence,” where we may be needed most, will be filled by somebody...some other nation or entity.” Examine this situation and how the Reserves Fit Into the Fight Tonight Force – directly or indirectly.

Desired Objectives of the Research: Strategic Reserve, Operational Reserve, Defense Support to Civilian Authorities, Theater Support Cooperation, Security Cooperation, Stability Operations

Requesting Organization: MARINE FORCES RESERVE

Point of Contact: R. McGuiness, GS-14

Email Address: robert.mcguiness@usmc.mil

Telephone Number: 504-697-4433

Mailing Address:
Marine Forces Reserve IM/KM
2000 Opelousas Street
New Orleans, LA 70114

Research Topic Title: Marine Forces Reserve – Stability Operations

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: Marine Forces Reserve: The Stability Operations Force of the Marine Corps". (how reserves could/should focus on man, train, equip and mobilize for these specific missions and not be focused on additive forces to active component.

Desired Objectives of the Research: Conduct an operational Reserve employment strategy analysis in the Stability Operations mission area. Analyze the joint mission requirement, variations across the combatant commanders and services and assess how the Marine Reserve Component is currently utilized in the most effective way. Offer recommendations on employing the Reserves and what, if anything, must be done to enable and sustain the necessary operational readiness of the Marine Reserve Component for this mission.

Requesting Organization: MARINE FORCES RESERVE

Point of Contact: R. McGuiness, GS-14

Email Address: robert.mcguiness@usmc.mil

Telephone Number: 504-697-4433

Mailing Address:

Marine Forces Reserve IM/KM
2000 Opelousas Street
New Orleans, LA 70114

Research Topic Title: Marine Forces Reserve – Security Cooperation

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: Marine Forces Reserve: The Security Cooperation Arm of the Marine Corps

Desired Objectives of the Research: Conduct an operational Reserve employment strategy analysis in the Security Cooperation mission area. Analyze the joint mission requirement, variations across the combatant commanders and services and assess how the Marine Reserve Component is currently utilized in the most effective way. Offer recommendations on employing the Reserves and what, if anything, must be done to enable and sustain the necessary operational readiness for this mission.

Requesting Organization: MARINE FORCES RESERVE

Point of Contact: R. McGuiness, GS-14

Email Address: robert.mcguiness@usmc.mil

Telephone Number: 504-697-4433

Mailing Address:

Marine Forces Reserve IM/KM
2000 Opelousas Street
New Orleans, LA 70114

Research Topic Title: Marine Forces Reserve – Operational Logistics

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: To provide analytical support in the establishment of the United States Marine Corps policy and employment concept for the Marine Component Operational Logistics (OpLog) Command. Provide a critical analysis of the mission, characteristics, core capabilities, mission essential tasks, and coordinating instructions of the Marine OpLog Command as well potential baseline structures and notional major end-item composition.

Desired Objectives of the Research: Historical utilization of Operational Logistics Command Elements and their reported effectiveness. The capability or capacity of various Marine Corps organizations (Active and Reserve Component MLGs and Marine Corps Logistics Command) to assume this mission across all theaters or in specific theater requirements.

Requesting Organization: MARINE FORCES RESERVE

Point of Contact: R. McGuiness, GS-14

Email Address: robert.mcguiness@usmc.mil

Telephone Number: 504-697-4433

Mailing Address:

Marine Forces Reserve IM/KM
2000 Opelousas Street
New Orleans, LA 70114

Research Topic Title: Marine Forces Reserve – The Cost of the Reserves

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: Reserves Cost More – Fact or Fiction

The Marine Corps takes great pride in rightfully claiming that the Nation gets the biggest bang for its buck with the Corps. The Marine Corps Reserve costs even less to operationally employ. Marine Forces Reserve has facilities in 47 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. This includes approximately 30 owned sites and roughly 150 tenant sites. There are many costs associated with maintaining this infrastructure. In addition, there are operational costs associated with occupancy that are often deemed as “must pay” bills. Current and future budgetary challenges create risk taking and readiness tradeoffs in order to maintain acceptable levels of service and facility conditions.

Desired Objectives of the Research: Examine the total costs of utilizing the Marine Corps Reserve during the Global War on Terror. Conduct a cost accounting analysis of manpower, operations and maintenance costs utilized to bring the Reserves to the fight and to bring them back home. Compare these costs to the active component and to the sister service reserve components.

- Conduct cost benefit analysis of the post-cold war reserve geographical footprint of today to a reduced geographical footprint that implements a centralized and regionalized model. Consider all the roles of the Reserve Sites to include Casualty Assistance Calls, Funeral details, and Toys for Tots.
- Compare the footprint and cost of the Marine Reserve component to the reserve components of the other Armed services. Are there any potential savings or cost avoidance that can be realized when compared?

Requesting Organization: MARINE FORCES RESERVE

Point of Contact: R. McGuiness, GS-14

Email Address: robert.mcguiness@usmc.mil

Telephone Number: 504-697-4433

Mailing Address:

Marine Forces Reserve IM/KM
2000 Opelousas Street
New Orleans, LA 70114

Research Topic Title: Marine Forces Reserve – Finance

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: 1106 and 1107: Force Multipliers" (how have authorities assisted readiness and execution?)

Marine Forces Reserve budgets for and executes the Operations and Maintenance, Marine Corps (OMMC-1106) and Operations and Maintenance, Marine Corps Reserve (OMMCR-1107) appropriations. OMMC is authorized as Overseas Contingency operations (OCO) funding. This funding is used to provide support to Active Duty deploying units. OMMCR is authorized to support baseline requirements.

Desired Objectives of the Research:

- What effect on readiness, if any, is a result of creating separate appropriations for the Active and the Reserve Components?
- What is the impact on the ability to execute funding given the Reserve component receives multiple appropriations?

Requesting Organization: MARINE FORCES RESERVE

Point of Contact: R. McGuiness, GS-14

Email Address: robert.mcguiness@usmc.mil

Telephone Number: 504-697-4433

Mailing Address:

Marine Forces Reserve IM/KM
2000 Opelousas Street
New Orleans, LA 70114

Research Topic Title: Marine Forces Reserve/North – Procurement

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: Procurement Strategy(ies) for the RC in a Total Force Construct

Desired Objectives of the Research: The Marine Corps procurement strategy is a Total Force strategy. Historically, the Reserve Component suffered through a vertical fielding procurement reality, i.e. waiting at the end of the line for new equipment. Over the past five years, the Marine has moved much closer to a horizontal strategy providing new equipment to the Reserves concurrent with the Active Force. Dynamic operational priorities often result in changes to fielding plans leaving the Reserves with a gap in capability, older equipment and unable to seamlessly integrate upon mobilization and deployment. The Reserve Component has become reliant on the annual National Guard Reserve Appropriation (NGREA) to bridge reserve-specific short falls, but NGREA does not cover all the shortfalls. What strategies can the Reserves utilize to approach their procurement requirements –in both Aviation (Blue Dollars) and Ground equipment programs?

Requesting Organization: MARINE FORCES RESERVE

Point of Contact: R. McGuiness, GS-14

Email Address: robert.mcguiness@usmc.mil

Telephone Number: 504-697-4433

Mailing Address:

Marine Forces Reserve IM/KM
2000 Opelousas Street
New Orleans, LA 70114

Research Topic Title: Marine Forces Reserve – Manpower Entitlements

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: Reserve Entitlements - A Cost-Benefit Analysis

The Marine Corps Reserves often attract well-qualified volunteers, largely because of the resources and benefits available to them. Benefits include financial assistance for education, competitive edge in future jobs, insurance plans, a retirement fund and discounts on public goods and services. Analyze the return or effectiveness each entitlement provides as an incentive to become and stay a Marine Reservist. An examination of the totality of increased reserve benefits in the last ten years and whether these entitlements have increased the effectiveness of the force. Have metrics been established to track entitlements and is there demonstrated correlation to retention/accessions based on those entitlements.

Desired Objectives of the Research: Education Benefits, Insurance – life, medical and dental, Retirement Fund, Marketable Job Experience

Requesting Organization: MARINE FORCES RESERVE

Point of Contact: R. McGuiness, GS-14

Email Address: robert.mcguiness@usmc.mil

Telephone Number: 504-697-4433

Mailing Address:

Marine Forces Reserve IM/KM
2000 Opelousas Street
New Orleans, LA 70114

Research Topic Title: Marine Forces Reserve – Policy

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: Total Force Fallacies - Where Active and Reserve Policies and Processes Clash and What Should Be Done about It. Examine DOD, DON, and Marine Corps Reserve policies and whether they enable the Marine Reserve Component to effectively accomplish its mission to augment and reinforce the active component. If not, identify the most significant gaps and what policy changes can be made to close these gaps. Examine the Policies written by HQMC that apply to "total force" without adaptation to the MFR unique make up and geo location/dispersion and the impact on the I-I staff, the SMCR Bn trying to execute primary task of METLS based training, and the time/funds/manpower/professionalization of the force implications. Examine the different factors that influence what should be like processes having different outcomes/effects, i.e. SMCR promotion trend of deep selection for 05s not seen on active force, command slate having to repetitively call for applicants and or choose from a very limited few for each command consideration.

Desired Objectives of the Research:

Manpower Mobilization Policies and processes - Involuntary vs. voluntary

Navy Mobilization Policies and processes - Corpsmen, surgeons, psychiatrists, dentists

Requesting Organization: MARINE FORCES RESERVE

Point of Contact: R. McGuiness, GS-14

Email Address: robert.mcguiness@usmc.mil

Telephone Number: 504-697-4433

Mailing Address:

Marine Forces Reserve IM/KM

2000 Opelousas Street

New Orleans, LA 70114

Research Topic Title: Marine Forces Reserve – Reserve Attrition

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: Reserve Attrition - The Cause, Affect, and Cost of Reserve Separations – Manpower. Develop list of main reasons for Reserve attrition and how each can be addressed. Provide analysis on policies and strategies, feasibility of goals and recommendations on how to close the gap between the goals and the current attrition.

Desired Objectives of the Research:

Reserve Manpower Retention policies, goals, and strategies

Reserve Manpower demographics and separation statistics – particularly company grade officers

Requesting Organization: MARINE FORCES RESERVE

Point of Contact: R. McGuiness, GS-14

Email Address: robert.mcguiness@usmc.mil

Telephone Number: 504-697-4433

Mailing Address:

Marine Forces Reserve IM/KM

2000 Opelousas Street

New Orleans, LA 70114

Research Topic Title: Marine Forces Reserve – Total Force Overload

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: Total Force Over Load - Impact of growing Total Force Training and PME Requirements on a One Weekend a Month and Two Weeks A Year Force . Examine the current approach to reserve drill periods and compare it to the ever-growing list of annual requirements. Is it time for a new approach? What would it be? - A time, resource, analysis of actual ability to achieve required training/classes/screening/mentoring and lead unit

Desired Objectives of the Research:

Annual training requirements

Distant Learning

Reserve Drill Policies

Reserve Drill Approaches – past and present

Requesting Organization: MARINE FORCES RESERVE

Point of Contact: R. McGuiness, GS-14

Email Address: robert.mcguiness@usmc.mil

Telephone Number: 504-697-4433

Mailing Address:

Marine Forces Reserve IM/KM

2000 Opelousas Street

New Orleans, LA 70114

Research Topic Title: Marine Forces Reserve – Reserve Officer Professionalization

Classification: Unclassified

Topic Description: - Challenges and Solutions for Senior Reserve Officer Professionalization in the Post War Environment. Examine, compare and contrast the relative career paths and professional development of the active duty and reserve officer. Provide gaps between the two, if any, and offer specific strategies to narrow or close them.

- Decrease in IA requirements for OIF/OEF that provided many SMCR/IRR officers opportunity to gain joint/coalition/MAGTF exposure.

-Examines post war population demographics for field grade officers and available billets and process for filling most value added billets and pme for force and officers. What new initiatives should be taken?

Desired Objectives of the Research:

- Reserve Officer training and professional military education opportunities

- Reserve Officer Billet assignment opportunities

- The Role of Senior Reserve Officers in Marine Corps strategy, doctrine, and policy development

Requesting Organization: MARINE FORCES RESERVE

Point of Contact: R. McGuiness, GS-14

Email Address: robert.mcguiness@usmc.mil

Telephone Number: 504-697-4433

Mailing Address:

Marine Forces Reserve IM/KM
2000 Opelousas Street
New Orleans, LA 70114