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The benefits of mentoring are well documented in almost 40 years of academic research and publication. However, the Marine Corps has invested little effort in studying the mentor/protégé relationship or how to encourage mentoring. The concept of a senior Marine assisting in the personal and professional development of a junior Marine is often referred to as simply good leadership. While good leadership does include mentoring, grouping the two together ensures little understanding of both. Policymakers in the Marine Corps must understand how adults develop and the dynamics of the mentor/protégé relationship in order to develop a force strategy for mentoring.

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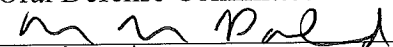
A Force Strategy for the Marine Corps

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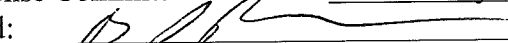
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Executive Summary

Title: Mentoring to Support the Marine Operating Concept: A Force Strategy for the Marine Corps

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Thesis: In order to support the Marine Operating Concept, the Marine Corps must have a common understanding of mentoring and adult development, and develop a force strategy for mentoring company grade officers.

The most valuable and versatile tool in the Marine Corps is the individual Marine. In an infantry battalion, company and platoon commanders are the officers that have the most direct influence on Marines. In addition to training Marines and leading them in combat, these officers also have an opportunity to develop subordinates personally and professionally. Having a mentor, a senior or more experienced Marine, to teach, coach, and guide a junior Marine both personally and professionally, can be a major factor in the success of a career. The benefits of mentoring are well documented in almost 40 years of academic research and publication. However, the Marine Corps has invested little effort in studying the mentor/protégé relationship or how to encourage mentoring. The concept of a senior Marine assisting in the personal and professional development of a junior Marine is often referred to as simply good leadership. While good leadership does include mentoring, grouping the two together ensures little understanding of both. Policymakers in the Marine Corps must understand how adults develop and the dynamics of the mentor/protégé relationship in order to develop a force strategy for mentoring. Only then will the Marine Corps be able to capitalize on the benefits of mentoring to develop officers.

Published in September 2016, the Marine Corps Operating Concept (MOC) defines the problem facing Marine Corps as "the Marine Corps is currently not organized, trained, and equipped to meet the demands of a future operating environment characterized by complex terrain, technology proliferation, information warfare, the need to shield and exploit signatures, and an increasingly non-permissive maritime domain." Furthermore, one of the five critical tasks listed in the MOC is to "exploit the competence of the individual Marine." This task must be a focus of effort if the MOC is to succeed.

The future operating environment as described in the MOC's problem statement will put a premium on decision-making, resilience, and education at the platoon and company level in the infantry. Future platoon and company commanders will need to possess the education, experience, and confidence to make decisions that will affect operational and strategic goals. The Marine Corps must look beyond the formal education provided to infantry officers and operationalize mentoring in order to take advantage of knowledge and experience resident in the current officer population. Infantry officers will require more education than they received in college in order to meet the challenges of technology proliferation and the complexity of the future operating environment. Relying on the personal initiative of officers to conduct their own research or simply good leadership will be insufficient.

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Preface

"Let me know if I can do anything for you," is a phrase that should be erased from the lexicon of every leader in the Marine Corps. It is weak leadership. This phrase is a substitute for leadership, for getting to know your Marines, and leaves the recipient confused and skeptical. As Marine officers, we have all used it and most of us really mean it, myself included. Marines will almost never come to their leadership with a problem, be it professional or personal. Marines get the job done, adapt, and overcome. Asking an officer for assistance professionally is difficult for most, asking for help with a personal problem is even more difficult. So how can we do better than "let me know if I can do anything for you?" The Marine Corps is in jeopardy of losing the teacher/scholar dynamic among officers due to a lack of meaningful personal and professional relationships. The problem we face at present is the erosion of officer esprit de corps, camaraderie, and a lack of mentoring.

A Marine Corps infantry officer is one of the more capable, motivated, and well-trained officers in the military. Company and platoon commanders in infantry battalions are succeeding, however, they could be doing much better. What I am arguing is that the Marine Corps could retain more high-quality officers, increase the performance of officers currently serving in infantry battalions, and create a stronger officer corps in the infantry through effective mentoring.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank everyone that contributed to my research on this topic. Brigadier General Julian D. Alford, thank you sir for your candor and wisdom on this subject, you are a true mentor to many. Colonel William McCollough, thank you sir for taking the time to discuss leadership and your experiences developing officers. I came away from our conversation convinced that you made a difference in many young officer's lives and continue to do so. LtCol Derek Snell, thank you for your work with the Lejeune Leadership Institute, keep providing that invaluable resource! LtCol Benjamin Pappas, a true warrior scholar, thank you for being an example and for your confidence in me throughout this year. Dr. Kathy Kram, thank you ma'am for sharing your 40 years of knowledge on mentoring, the Marine Corps will benefit from your work. Dr. Nathan Packard, my mentor for this thesis, thank you sir for your feedback and your support. Finally, thank you to all of the Captains I served with in FAST and the Captains from Expeditionary Warfare School, your input and enthusiasm for my thesis was inspiring. Keep fighting the good fight!

"Without genuine concern, this is all worthless." Col B.P. McCoy

Published in September of 2016, the Marine Operating Concept (MOC) provides specific direction for the Marine Corps to meet the challenges of warfare in the twenty-first century. If the MOC is to succeed, the development, coaching, and mentoring of company grade officers must improve in Marine Corps infantry battalions. The professional development, training, education and retention of company grade officers would be improved if the Marine Corps developed and supported a more robust mentoring program. However, the responsibility to develop and coach captains and lieutenants, specifically platoon and company commanders, has not been the focus of our field grade officers over the past 15 years for a variety of reasons, to include operational tempo and tour length in certain key billets. Currently, officer development in an infantry battalion is dependent upon the personality and priorities of the commander. However, senior officers are seldom held accountable for developing and mentoring junior officers. With the exception of section F in the annual fitness report, there is very little accountability for the development of platoon and company commanders. This lack of focus and accountability for officer development has eroded the Marine Corps tradition of mentoring and officer camaraderie. The Marine Corps does not have a common understanding of effective mentoring at the organizational and individual levels. In order to support the Marine Operating Concept, the Marine Corps must have a common understanding of mentoring and adult development, and develop a force strategy for mentoring company grade officers.

The Marine Corps prides itself on making Marines and winning battles. In making Marines, the Marine Corps also makes leaders, and by default, these leaders are expected to be mentors to

their subordinates. However, little research or scholarship on mentorship exists in the Marine Corps. Experts in the field of mentoring such as Daniel Levinson and Kathy Kram can facilitate better understanding and help inform mentoring practices in the Marine Corps. Published work on adult development and mentoring in the civilian workplace provides a deeper understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the mentor and protégé. Moreover, scholarship on mentoring in the civilian workplace provides specific benefits for the mentor and protégé. Understanding roles, responsibilities, and benefits of mentoring will improve officer development. A survey conducted for this paper of more than 20 infantry captains currently attending Expeditionary Warfare School (EWS), revealed that only three of those surveyed had what they considered a mentor. Interviews with senior officers including BGen Julian D. Alford, Commanding General Marine Corps Warfighting Lab, and Col William McCollough, Director USMC Command and Staff College, confirmed the importance of mentoring and provided insight into how commanders built relationships with junior officers before September 11, 2001. Current mentoring practices are insufficient to meet a future operating environment that is Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous (VUCA). Senior leaders must prepare platoon and company commanders to think critically, manage uncertainty, and solve complex problems as described in the MOC. Improved mentoring practices will better prepare officers to operate in a VUCA environment and support the MOC.

The word "mentor" comes from Homer's *Odyssey*. Odysseus, king of Ithaca, departs to fight the Trojan War and entrusts his household and his son Telemachus to his friend Mentor. While his father was away fighting the Trojans, Telemachus grows under the tutelage and guidance of Mentor. Thus, the word mentor is now associated with a trusted advisor, wise elder, friend, and teacher.¹ I would also argue that a mentor/protégé relationship is much more personal than a

teacher/scholar relationship. A mentor connotes a deeper understanding and concern for the welfare of the protégé. The mentor/protégé relationship is forged out of trust and mutual respect, which takes time and effort to attain. The Marine Corps has a tradition of camaraderie in a relatively small population of infantry officers. This tradition is in jeopardy due to a lack of focus on developing junior officers and a lack of strategy and accountability for mentoring.

The genesis of this thesis was my own experience as an infantry officer. From my experience as a lieutenant and captain, I was able to determine how I wanted to lead as a major. So when I arrived to command a Fleet Anti-terrorism Security Team (FAST) company as a major, I had my own ideas about how to develop company grade infantry officers. A FAST company consists of six or more platoons, each commanded by a junior captain. In my two-and-a-half years as a FAST company commander I served with upwards of 20 captains. My goal was first to make them good FAST platoon commanders, then to ensure they departed FAST ready to command a rifle company in an infantry battalion.

I began to see a problem while conducting my initial counseling with the captains. When a new captain checked in, I would go through the FAST platoon commander billet description, my command philosophy, and expectations. Every captain that reported to me stated that this was the first time a commanding officer had given them an initial counseling on their billet description. The same reaction came when I counseled the captains on their annual fitness reports. If a relatively small group of 20 captains from various units throughout the Marine Corps are not receiving directed counseling, surely they must be getting informal counseling or mentoring? I asked each of them if they had a mentor and only a few of them said they had. The captains I served with in FAST came from all over the Marine Corps, holding platoon commander, company executive officer, and assistant operations officer billets in infantry

battalions. A few served on Military Transition Teams or came to FAST from Expeditionary Warfare School (EWS) or Maneuver Captain's Career Course (MCCC), but the majority came from East or West coast infantry battalions. What concerned me was that almost none of them considered an officer from their former commands a mentor. Furthermore, few of the captains in FAST kept in contact with senior officers from their previous units.

The cynical among us would probably argue that the captains who come to FAST are most likely poor or underperforming officers. This would explain the lack of attention from senior officers in previous units. Another explanation would be that this sample size is not representative of the Marine Corps as a whole. If field grade officers are assuming that lieutenants and captains do not need feedback or mentoring then there is a problem. Furthermore, senior officers are missing a valuable opportunity when they only mentor the top performers. It is simple to enable the top performers and identify the underperforming officers for transition back to civilian life after their initial tour. However, this method misses a large portion of junior officers that are in the middle, not top performers, but not underperforming either. With some focused mentoring for this middle population of officers the Marine Corps could develop and retain some real talent. Battalion commanders need to take the time to conduct directed counseling on their subordinates. Directed formal counseling, whether it be initial, semi-annual, or annual fitness report, provides commanders and subordinates an opportunity to develop a closer relationship. This relationship, begun during formal counseling, could and should lead to a deeper more personal one, that of a mentor and a protégé.

As field grade officers, how are we holding ourselves accountable for the development of platoon and company commanders? As a relatively small community, field grade infantry officers serving in battalions should be held accountable for the relationships, or lack thereof,

with their subordinate officers. The only tangible metric for holding them accountable is one section in the annual fitness report, entitled developing subordinates. A battalion commander could have a successful command tour without mentoring or counseling captains or lieutenants. Field grade officers must have a better understanding of the mentor/protégé relationship and the Marine Corps must have a force strategy to mentor officers in order to retain the best talent and increase the proficiency and effectiveness of current infantry officers.

The MOC describes how the Marine Corps will operate, fight and win in 2025 and beyond in order to shape the development and capacity of the future force.² Guidance for the future force is driven by an analysis of the future operating environment that includes complex terrain, technology proliferation, information as a weapon, a battle of signatures, and an increasingly contested maritime domain. For the Corps' future infantry platoon and company commanders, the MOC presents a VUCA operating environment. Most of the current company grade infantry officers do not have combat experience, little to no experience working with foreign militaries, or experience operating independently from a higher headquarters. While the Basic School (TBS) and Infantry Officer Course (IOC) produce tactically sound platoon commanders for rifle companies, and Expeditionary Warfare School (EWS) produces solid Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) officers, these institutions only provide a base of knowledge to build upon.

The MOC begins with an after action review of a fictional Operation Littoral Resolve (OLR). OLR is a fictional operation set in the near future that includes employment of the largest naval force since Inchon. A Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) is deployed to assist an ally as part of a larger combined/joint effort to repel an aggressive neighbor country and quell an insurgency. Implied operations during OLR include forcible entry, amphibious operations, Ship To Objective Maneuver (STOM), and counterinsurgency. The first speaker is a company commander

(captain) who reviews his participation in OLR to include his company conducting an amphibious assault to establish an Expeditionary Advanced Base (EAB) on an island close to the objective country. The company commander goes on to describe using Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) to destroy enemy crew served weapons positions and his squad leaders "tapping an app" to guide precision mortar rounds onto targets. He concludes by stating that within 45 minutes he had aircraft landing at his established EAB. While this fictional scenario describes some of the Marine Corps' emerging technologies (armed UAS, precision mortar rounds), it also indicates that future companies will operate more independently and dispersed in austere environments.

The MOC contains five critical tasks for the Marine Corps: integrate the Naval force to fight at and from the sea, evolve the MAGTF, operate with resilience in a network contested environment, enhance our ability to maneuver, and exploit the competence of the individual Marine. The last critical task, exploit the competence of the individual Marine, seeks to develop Marines for complexity, develop leaders at every echelon, and ensure quality leaders are assigned throughout the force. While the MOC does emphasize developing the individual Marine, it does not mention mentoring as a key means to that end. If the Marine Corps is to improve professional development, critical thinking, decision-making, and leadership skills among company grade officers, senior leaders must leverage traditional and peer mentoring.³

The Marine Corps infantry battalion does not currently have a standard plan to continue the education and professional development of platoon and company commanders beyond IOC for lieutenants and EWS for captains. The mentor/protégé relationship specific to an infantry battalion's platoon and company commanders should be a focus of effort and a means to support a critical task in the MOC. However, senior commanders rarely focus on quality mentoring of

company grade officers despite the proven effectiveness of mentoring in private industry. A lack of continued focus on officer development, especially in infantry battalions, has led to a generation of officers in the Marine Corps who have not developed mentoring skills. If lieutenants and captains are not mentored, they are less likely to mentor subordinates as they progress in rank and responsibility.

Since September 11, 2001, the Marine Corps lost the part of its leadership culture that developed mentors through camaraderie amongst the officers in an infantry battalion. In an interview with BGen Julian D. Alford, who began his Marine Corps career in 1987, he described mess nights in the field, officer Tactical Decision Games led by the battalion commander, and senior officers that focused on developing their platoon and company commanders.⁴ For example, BGen Alford's first company commander was then Captain Stephen Davis, who would eventually command 2d Marine Regiment as a Colonel and retire as a Brigadier General. BGen Alford listed BGen Davis as one of his key mentors throughout his nearly 30-year Marine Corps career. Somewhere in the past 16 years, as Marine infantry battalions rotated in and out of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, the focus on developing platoon and company commanders and on establishing mentor/ protégé relationships was lost.

Factors that influenced the decline in officer mentorship include the high operational tempo of an infantry battalion and the directed focus from successive commandants on safety issues most relevant to junior Marines such as motorcycle accidents, sexual assaults, drunk driving, and suicides. The operational tempo of an infantry battalion in the early 2000s included a fast-paced and relentless pre-deployment training cycle followed by a six-month combat deployment to either Iraq or Afghanistan. Establishing lasting relationships became difficult due to the operational tempo and the rotation of battalion and company commanders, especially if those

relationships were not encouraged by the commander. Moreover, required training to prevent motorcycle accidents, sexual assaults, drunk driving, and suicides became a focus of effort beginning in 2006. An unintentional side-effect of these requirements was focusing attention almost exclusively down to the junior Marines, specifically sergeants, corporals, lance corporals, privates first class, and privates. With the attention of most battalion commanders on Sergeants and below, establishing a mentor/ protégé relationship or promoting peer mentoring between lieutenants and captains was not a priority.

In their study *Formal Mentoring in the US Military*, conducted for the Naval War College Review, W. Brad Johnson and Gene R. Andersen argue the words mentor and mentorship evoke a strong reaction among military officers and are often misunderstood.⁵ A mentor is a trusted counselor or guide, mentor can also be used in the verbal form with synonyms that include: coach, counsel, guide, lead, tutor, pilot, shepherd, and show. Moreover, mentoring is often conflated with leadership, which leads to confusion and a lack of understanding. Quality leadership does include mentoring subordinates, however, enmeshing mentoring and leadership prevents accountability for understanding the specific mentor/protégé relationship and benefits of effective mentoring. Therefore, if senior leaders are to understand mentoring, they must not simply group it with leadership, the term requires further understanding as a separate concept.

Marine Corps Order (MCO) 1500.58 (Marine Corps Mentorship Program) was published in 2006 under General Hagee, then Commandant of the Marine Corps. The six-page order begins with a quote from General John A. Lejeune, "One must put himself in the place of those whom he would lead; he must have a full understanding of their thoughts, their attitude, their emotions, their aspirations, and their ideals; and he must embody in his/her own character the virtues which he would instill into the hearts of his/her followers." This quote highlights the importance of

close relationships between seniors and subordinates and puts the impetus on the senior to understand and encourage that relationship. The intent of the MCMP was to preserve and protect the force, support readiness, and ensure Marines meet their full potential.⁶ Commanders were tasked to impliment the MCMP with some latitude as to how the program would be executed at the unit level. Furthermore, the MCMP would become part of the Commanding Genearal's Inspection Program which would hold units accountable for maintaing the program during annual command inspections. The basic tenet of MCMP is the formal assignment and documentation of the mentor/ protégé relationship focused primarily on junior enlisted Marines. Specifically, a Marine's direct supervisor would be automatically assigned as his or her mentor. The supervisor, or reporting senior, is directed to conduct an initial mentoring session in a format provided by the order and subsequent follow-on sessions as needed.

In his study entitled *Assessing the Marine Corps Mentorship Program: Planned versus Actual use and Percieved Effectiveness*, USMC Captain Douglas Rauschelbach surveyed nearly 300 Marines from Private to Colonel and found that nearly all were aware of the MCMP (99.7%). However, Rauschelbach found the MCMP lacked effectivness and uniformity in implementation. The respondants in the survey preferred a less formal or unassigned mentor to the formal MCMP assigned mentor (64% to 39% respectively). The chief complaints in Captain Rauschelbach's study included the amount of formal documentation required by the MCMP and the automatic assignment of reporting seniors or supervisors as mentors. Junior Marines especially did not want to go to their supervisor for guidance regarding personal issues or family problems. One of Rauschelbach's final conclusions is the most prescient, "senior leaders and junior mentors, especially during IG inspections, require their subordinates to participate in mentoring, yet may fail to conduct mentoring sessions themselves. Leading by example is a must

if the MCMP is to be successful. If a young Staff Sergeant (SSgt) or Gunnery Sergeant (GySgt) is never mentored in a formal manner by his or her Lieutenant (Lt) or Captain (Capt), why would they mentor their subordinates? Leaders must hold themselves accountable for implementing the MCMP if it is to succeed." ⁷ If lieutenants and captains are not being mentored by majors and lieutenant colonels why would they feel the need to mentor their own subordinates? The MCMP does not adequately educate Marine officers on the mentor/protégé relationship. Moreover, the directive nature of the MCMP and focus on the traditional mentor protégé (one on one) relationship fail to harness the potential of senior leaders as mentors and the potential of peers to fulfill mentoring roles.

Drafted by the Lejeune Leadership Institute, MCO 1500.61, Marine Corps Leadership Development (MCLD), is currently awaiting the Commandant's signature and is meant to replace the MCMP. The new program specifically addresses all Marines from Private to General and is much less formal than the MCMP. MCLD's mission is to "equip commanders and subordinate leaders with the training and resources to develop their Marines and Sailors personally and professionally for future success."⁸ Lieutenant Colonel commands and above are directed to establish a MCLD program and publish a MCLD order in their respective units. The program further directs commanders to designate key leaders to facilitate coaching and counseling throughout the unit in six functional areas of leadership development that include fidelity, fighter, fitness, family, finances, and future. While MCLD provides a loose framework for commanders and gives them latitude to develop their own program and order, it is artificially restrictive. MCLD gives Marines an effective set of tools to develop leaders, however, it does not provide the necessary guidance or education to build the teacher/scholar or mentor/ protégé relationship.

The MCLD order provides definitions for mentoring, coaching and counseling that are useful and give a baseline for expectations of the program. Coaching is a process of on-going observation and encouragement of a Marine's personal and professional growth. Counseling is a process of two-way communication between a senior and junior to help achieve or maintain the highest possible level of performance. Mentoring is a less formal process than coaching and counseling. It involves a voluntary, developmental relationship, between a person of greater and lesser experience characterized by mutual trust and respect. The focus of MCLD is clearly on coaching and counseling, as mentoring is only mentioned once when it is defined. The nature of a mentor/protégé relationship makes it difficult to operationalize. A formal mentor/protégé relationship involves family, religion, personality, and a level of emotional connection that evolves over time and experience. Therefore, it is difficult to establish a directive program that mandates the establishment of a close, personal relationship among officers. However, MCLD will be a step in the right direction for the Marine Corps in two ways. First, coaching and counseling promote interaction between senior and subordinate, specifically, if field grade officers in an infantry battalion are now forced to coach and counsel their platoon and company commanders, it will lead to more interaction between the officers and a better chance of establishing a more personal and lasting mentor/protégé relationship. Second, if platoon and company commanders are getting coaching and counseling, they will be more likely to do the same among their subordinates in the battalion. While the Lejeune Leadership Institute is a great resource, and MCLD a step in the right direction, both will not reach their full potential until they are continually supported by senior officers in the Marine Corps. Currently, the Commandant of the Marine Corps personally selects Colonels for command of Expeditionary Warfare School, Command and Staff College, School of Advanced Warfighting, and the War

College. Most of the Colonels selected to command the above schools recently commanded a regiment or a Marine Expeditionary Unit. If the Lejeune Leadership Institute is to reach its full potential, it needs to be commanded by a Colonel that was personally selected by the Commandant.

Before the Marine Corps revises the MCMP or replaces it with the MCLD program, senior leaders must understand adult development, mentor/protégé relationship, and specific career and psycho-social benefits of mentoring. A better understanding of mentoring should inform a force strategy for mentoring prior to any programs or orders. Research in adult development and mentoring reveals lessons in the civilian workplace that directly translate to the Marine Corps. A more informed, educated, and supported mentoring strategy will have a better chance of success and will support a critical task in the MOC.

The most relevant work for the Marine Corps regarding the field of adult development is Daniel J. Levinson's *The Seasons of a Man's Life*. Levinson's model of adult development contains five primary stages: pre-adulthood stage (age 0 – 22), the early adulthood stage (age 17 – 45), the middle adult stage (age 40 – 65), and the late adulthood stage (age 60 – 85).⁹ Levinson argues that each stage contains a major life event or decision that is a transition to the next stage. This relates directly to a Marine's decision to enlist or attend Officer Candidate School (OCS) as a major decision that transitions them from pre-adulthood to early adulthood. Furthermore, the average age of platoon and company commanders in the infantry places them in the early adulthood stage. Levinson and Kram argue that most people in the early stage of adulthood require career and psycho-social support in order to make a successful transition.¹⁰ It is important for commanders and senior leaders to remember that while lieutenants and captains are well-trained and motivated, they are also still in their mid to late twenties.

In the early adulthood stage, Levinson argues that we must form a life structure, make key choices, and pursue our values and goals within that structure.¹¹ For Marine officers, a large part of our life structure includes indoctrination and acceptance of life in the Marine Corps. Levinson describes life structure as a person's relationships with an external entity to include people, institutions, religion, and places, that are a significant part of their life. The significant relationship a Marine officer has with the Marine Corps as an institution requires commitment and evaluation as their career progresses. The presence of a mentor during the early adulthood stage has great influence on life choices, career success, and psycho-social development.¹² This key aspect of early adult development is addressed in MCRP 6-11D *Sustaining the Transformation*. The "transformation" refers to a Marine's indoctrination and acceptance of Marine Corps training, culture, and ethos. This transformation that occurs after boot camp or officer candidate school is what Levinson would refer to as a transition into early adulthood. In *Sustaining the Transformation*, the Marine Corps focuses on the unit as the key entity that provides mentorship vice any one individual. Examples of unit or organizational mentorship include command involvement in welcoming new Marines, unit sponsored events, and recognition of individual accomplishments by the command.¹³ Unit or organizational mentorship provides company and platoon commanders a sense of stability and belonging. Moreover, organizational mentorship provides opportunities for field grade officers in an infantry battalion to build deeper relationships with junior officers. It is this deeper relationship that can and should lead to a lasting mentor/ protégé relationship.

Prior to revising the Marine Corps Mentorship Program, or developing a similar program, Marine Corps policymakers must understand the mentor/protégé relationship. In a traditional mentor/protégé relationship, a senior more experienced officer forms a connection with a more

junior officer through significant personal interaction. The mentor provides career support by sponsoring the protégé, coaching, facilitating exposure and visibility, and providing opportunities for challenging billets. The mentor also provides psycho-social support to the protégé through role modeling, friendship, career validation, and confirming the officer's professional identity in the Marine Corps. The mentor receives satisfaction from passing on knowledge, experience, and ideally, recognition for developing the next generation of officers. Moreover, the mentor will benefit from increased technical and psychological support through teaching, coaching, and interacting with the protégé.¹⁴ The traditional mentor/protégé relationship can provide career and psycho-social support to company and platoon commanders. However, the Marine Corps' force strategy for mentoring must also include peer interaction in order to capitalize on recent research in the field of mentoring.

Peer mentoring can be more effective than traditional senior/subordinate models. For a Marine infantry battalion, peer mentoring needs to be the focus of effort for the commander. Ensuring captains and lieutenants work together and form connections will build a strong officer corps and speed up the professional and personal development of young officers. However, peers must be willing to establish an environment of trust, build relationship and inter-personal skills, and form deeper relationships. Senior officers must ensure that peer mentoring remains voluntary and evaluate the experience level and relational skills of each participant.¹⁵ Establishing a healthy environment for peer mentoring in an infantry battalion is crucial. If a healthy environment is not established then implementation of any mentoring program will suffer as it did with the MCMP. The benefits of a healthy environment for mentoring include a more positive command climate and demonstrating to junior officers that mentoring is a focus of effort for the commander.

Battalion commanders must encourage and facilitate peer interaction in an infantry battalion. Competition among officers, training schedules, and limited time can prevent meaningful peer interaction. However, by establishing peer mentoring as a commander's priority, an infantry battalion can greatly increase mentoring capacity. Peer mentoring must include equal status among participants and a focus on personal and professional development. Moreover, peer mentoring must promote dialogue versus conversation, the former leading to deeper relationships and trust among peers. Dialogue that promotes thoughtful questioning and feedback is key to peer mentoring. Company grade officers must form close relationships to facilitate information sharing and mutual professional development. The last critical element for a successful peer mentoring effort is emotional connection. Multiple studies on mentoring conclude that when peers share an emotional connection, they are more likely to trust and develop genuine concern for each other which leads to more positive mentoring outcomes.¹⁶ For peer mentoring to work in an infantry battalion, peers must have a say in who participates, develop trust, emotional connection, and mutual respect.¹⁷

Many of the career and psycho-social benefits of mentoring can come from peers in an infantry battalion. A typical infantry battalion has five company commanders, three line companies and one weapons company, and 15 platoon commanders, four in each line company and three in weapons company. Consequently, there is a great opportunity for peer mentoring among company and platoon commanders. Both groups are in the early adult stage of development according to Levinson's model, however, key differences must drive the approach to each peer group.

As first and second lieutenants, platoon commanders are just beginning their careers as Marine Corps officers. Most are also just transitioning into early adulthood, a time when

mentoring can shape both their careers in the Marine Corps and how they will function as adults. Furthermore, platoon commanders in the infantry share many personal characteristics, college degree, physically fit, leadership ability, and graduation from Infantry Officer Course (IOC). Therefore, career support could come in the form of sharing professional knowledge and experience or pooling best practices. However, due to inexperience, platoon commanders will gain more psycho-social benefits from peer mentoring. If all 15 platoon commanders in a battalion were to get together regularly they would undoubtedly foster friendships and a sense of acceptance in the organization which would promote more job satisfaction and retention. Moreover, after having a positive peer mentoring experience, these platoon commanders are more likely to foster peer mentoring in their future units.

Company commanders would benefit the most from peer mentoring in an infantry battalion. The five company commanders in an infantry battalion possess more knowledge and experience than their platoon commanders. A typical company commander has between five and eight years in the Marine Corps and is deciding whether or not to make the Marine Corps a career. Furthermore, they are typically married with children or thinking about starting a family. These officers are still in the early adulthood stage but have more responsibilities professionally and personally than a platoon commander. Peer mentoring in this group would assist in career progression (what job to take next) and tactical and technical proficiency. The psycho-social benefits would include friendship, emotional support, and personal feedback. The company commander's job can be very lonely, without peer interaction, they become isolated because they are the ranking officer in their company. In the Marine Corps it is taboo to become too friendly with subordinates, even if the subordinate is only one grade lower. Therefore, it is imperative that company commanders work together and mentor each other as peers.

Not everyone is a mentor, not everyone is a leader. So do all platoon and company commanders in an infantry battalion deserve to be mentored? The uncomfortable answer is no. Can all battalion and company commanders be mentors? Again, the uncomfortable answer is no. Both of these points underscore the need for training and identification of mentors and the responsibility inherent in being a protégé. Mentoring is difficult for some because it takes time and effort, it also takes education and training. The protégé must conduct enough self study and display enough leadership potential early in his or her career that a senior officer or officers, recognize their talent and become willing to spend the time and effort to mentor them. In *Formal Mentoring in the US Military*, W. Brad Johnson, and Gene R. Anderson argue that while mentoring is effective, it is only a part of what makes individuals successful. They argue that in addition to being a protégé, officers "who have more need for achievement, intelligence, goal orientation, career motivation, self-confidence, and flexibility are likely to achieve greater career success than those with lower scores on those variables."¹⁸ These traits must be instilled in junior officers early and specifically related to their responsibility to choose and cultivate a relationship with a mentor.

Recommendations:

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

-Maya Angelou

In order to support the MOC, the Marine Corps must develop and support a force strategy for mentoring that specifically addresses company grade officers. The strategy must be informed

by academic research and input from junior officers. In an interview with Kathy Kram conducted for this paper, she stated that peer mentoring would be a good fit for the Marine Corps due to the rank structure and similar age and experience among Marine officers. However, she also stated that formal programs like MCMP or any other directed program will only be moderately successful until an overall strategy for mentoring is supported by senior leaders. MCO 1500.61, Marine Corps Leadership Development, is well-intended and provides some great resources, but without support from senior officers it will be poorly implemented and misunderstood. Multiple studies on formal and informal mentor relationships indicate that informal relationships are both preferred and enduring once established.¹⁹ Moreover, Marine Corps doctrine already emphasizes the importance and benefits of effective mentoring in publications such as *Leading Marines* and *Sustaining the Transformation*. Therefore, in order to ensure battalion commanders foster quality mentoring amongst their officers, particularly platoon and company commanders, senior officers, to include the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Marine Expeditionary Force and Division Commanding Generals, and Regimental Commanders must emphasize officer mentoring.

Furthermore, junior and senior officers must understand the dynamics of mentoring, to include the mentor/ protégé relationship, different mentoring outcomes, and how to create an environment where mentorship thrives. Entry-level training must teach lieutenants and captains to seek out senior officers as mentors and instill in them the culture of officer camaraderie and community that is mostly lost in present infantry battalions. At Officer Candidate School, The Basic School, Infantry Officer Course, and Expeditionary Warfare School officers must learn how to be a good mentor and a good protégé. As discussed in MCO 1500.58, Marine Corps Mentorship Program, to be a mentor, an officer must possess empathy, listening skills,

questioning techniques, and feedback skills. Majors at Command and Staff College must also practice these mentor skills in order to support their future battalion commanders. Senior leaders from the Commandant to MEF and Division commanders must provide consistent support, education focused on mentoring in officer Professional Military Education, and facilitate an environment where mentorship thrives.

In 1995, the 30th Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Carl E. Mundy, published white letter 10-95 entitled *Another Leadership Tool*. The letter was directed to all commanding generals, commanding officers, and officers in charge. In the letter, General Mundy emphasizes the importance of passing along professional knowledge to subordinates and defines a mentor as a trusted counselor or guide. He goes on to say, "I view mentoring as another leadership tool that can benefit both the individual Marine and the organization." This view of mentoring highlights a key balance between too much emphasis on mentoring (MCMP), which creates unrealistic expectations, and not enough emphasis, which creates the cynical view that mentoring is just part of Marine Corps leadership. General Mundy outlines his vision for mentoring in the Marine Corps as an informal, voluntary program that is born out of a personal and professional connection between mentor and protégé. General Mundy believed in the initiative, dedication, and sense of duty in every Marine officer. Moreover, he emphasized the mentor/protégé relationship should be voluntary and formed out of shared interests, common background, and personality. His vision for mentoring in the Marine Corps sought to capitalize on a sense of duty senior officers should feel to pass on professional knowledge and develop future leaders in the Marine Corps. In order to realize General Mundy's vision, the Marine Corps must reinvigorate this sense of duty and educate our current officer corps on traditional and peer mentoring.

To facilitate both traditional and peer mentoring, Marines must be educated at every rank. For officers, that education would begin at The Basic School (TBS) where they could begin to explore the mentor/protégé relationship and peer mentoring. At TBS, lieutenants already receive mentoring from their faculty platoon commander and the staff. Moreover, study groups and exercises encourage peer mentoring. However, mentoring is not specifically addressed in the curriculum; Marine officers are assumed to possess the skills to be good mentors.

The Marine Corps stresses leadership as an indispensable part of being a Marine officer. While attending OCS, candidates are evaluated on their leadership ability and leadership potential. Furthermore, at TBS, Marine officers receive instruction and practical application on leading subordinates and peers. Good leadership includes mentoring subordinates and creating an environment of trust and mutual respect that encourages peer mentoring. However, mentoring is not simply good leadership, and the Marine Corps must not rely on tradition or mere expectation to ensure quality mentoring of junior officers. The MCMP largely failed due to a lack of support from an overall strategy. Moreover, it was too prescriptive, and did not educate the force on mentoring.

For the MOC to succeed, the Marine Corps must develop a force strategy for mentoring that educates officers on mentor/protégé relationships, capitalizes on peer mentoring, and receives continued support from senior leaders. Education must begin with senior leaders understanding the psychosocial and career benefits of traditional and peer mentoring. Furthermore, senior leaders must publicly support the benefits of mentoring with a campaign similar to Protect What You've Earned (PWYE). The PWYE campaign includes required training, videos and signs on Marine Corps bases, and endorsement from the Commandant of the Marine Corps and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps. Kathy Kram, considered a leading

expert on mentoring, notes that mentor relationships benefit the mentor and protégé. The mentor gains technical and leadership experience by instructing the protégé while also gaining the psychosocial benefits of increased competence, confidence, and effectiveness. Moreover, the mentor will also gain recognition and career advancement if mentoring receives continuing support from senior leaders. The protégé benefits are similar to the mentor with the addition of gaining new knowledge and expertise, increased visibility in the command, and more opportunity for advancement. The psychosocial benefits for the protégé are the most important and include increased acceptance and validation within the organization, increased confidence, and more job satisfaction.²⁰ All of these benefits apply to the mentor and protégé in traditional and peer mentoring relationships. If senior leaders can publicly support the benefits of mentoring, bringing them out into the open, then Marines will have a better understanding of mentoring.

Mentoring instruction and practical application must be included in officer entry level training at The Basic School (TBS) and throughout Professional Military Education (PME) at Marine Corps University. Instruction at TBS should include mentoring skills such as active listening, emotional intelligence, interpersonal communication, empathy, and providing constructive feedback. Moreover, lieutenants must learn the career and psychosocial benefits of mentoring in traditional and peer mentoring relationships. If lieutenants can understand the skills required and benefits of being a mentor, they will be more likely to seek a mentor and more likely to foster mentor/protégé relationships in their units. Moreover, introducing new officers to mentoring at TBS will produce mentors that are more effective and able to use peer mentoring to their advantage.

Expeditionary Warfare School (EWS) and Command and Staff College (CSC) should include mentoring instruction and practical application. Educating captains at EWS, and majors at CSC, on career and psychosocial benefits of mentoring can facilitate a practical application exercise during the academic year. CSC and EWS could pair a captain and major to form a mentoring relationship where the major would perform a traditional mentoring role. This mentoring practical exercise would benefit the mentor and protégé throughout the academic year. A major could assist the captain with career and psychosocial support. For example, after receiving instruction on the mentor/protégé relationship, the major could provide career advice to the captain, share professional knowledge and experience, and provide assistance with academic work. This mentor/protégé relationship would also benefit the mentor, giving him or her a sense of satisfaction, professional validation, and enabling them to take their refined mentoring skills to their next unit. Moreover, the students at CSC and EWS should practice peer mentoring in the academic environment in order to carry a positive example to their next unit. Organized study groups, Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) specific discussion groups, and social events would provide career and psychosocial benefits. EWS and CSC need to evaluate students understanding and practice of peer mentoring. Students attending EWS and CSC have a unique opportunity to practice mentoring in an academic setting where instructors and subject matter experts can manage the environment and coach their efforts.

To promote a common understanding of the mentor/protégé relationship, commanders and senior leaders should have mentoring instruction inserted at Top Level School (TLS) and the Commander's Course. Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels selected for command attend the commander's course in Quantico, VA where they receive guidance and instruction to assist them with a successful command tour. The commander's course should provide future commanders

with a deeper understanding of mentoring, tools to establish positive mentoring relationships, and most importantly highlight the importance of mentoring in developing company grade officers. With support from the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and experts in the field of mentoring such as Kathy Kram, commanders would arrive at their new units with a solid understanding of mentoring relationships. Furthermore, if the Commandant of the Marine Corps supports a force strategy for mentoring, commanders will be more likely to establish lasting and effective mentoring programs for their officers.

The Marine Corps must encourage, facilitate, and support mentoring company grade officers if the MOC is to succeed. To establish a positive environment conducive to mentoring and encourage mentors and protégés to participate, MEF and Division commanders should begin hosting mentoring workshops. Commanders at the battalion level and above can organize a mentoring workshop for lieutenants and captains. This workshop must have the full support of the commander, be voluntary for the officers attending, and include a highly influential guest speaker. The guest speaker must be able to speak about mentoring, either through experience or through academic study. A list of possible guest speakers include current or retired General officers, professional athletes, business or industry leaders, academic scholars, and politicians. The guest speaker should peak interest with a recognizable name or specific area of expertise. An example of a quality guest speaker would be retired Lieutenant General (LtGen) Paul VanRiper, USMC. LtGen VanRiper could provide insight on effective mentoring and connect attendees with authors and other successful military professionals and academics. While teaching elective courses at Command and Staff College, LtGen VanRiper facilitated guest speakers that included John Schmitt, author of MCDP 1, Dr. Gary Klein author of *Sources of Power*, Col (Ret) Richard Sinnreich author of FM 100-5 *Operations*, and Dr. Antulio J.

Echevarria II, a leading Clausewitzian scholar. Officers attending the mentoring workshop would benefit from the guest speaker's experience while also gaining an opportunity to connect with others in a learning environment. Moreover, the commander has the opportunity to educate junior officers about the benefits of traditional and peer mentoring relationships. The mentoring workshop would educate officers, provide an opportunity to network among peers, and give potential mentors an opportunity to connect with protégés.

The Lejeune Leadership Institute (LLI) should be the lead organization for mentoring in the Marine Corps. In order to inform a force strategy for the Marine Corps, the LLI should conduct a survey of every infantry battalion's company and platoon commanders. The survey should ask about the level of mentoring the officer received, what they believe is good mentoring, and what they expect out of a mentor/protégé relationship. Moreover, the LLI could collect some valuable data on peer mentoring; does the battalion have a Lieutenant Protections Association? Do the company commanders work together? Do company executive officers work together and share ideas? If the LLI can conduct a wide survey of infantry officers, it will be able to collect best practices and make sound recommendations to the Commandant of the Marine Corps for mentoring officers. The LLI can also facilitate mentoring workshops by developing a framework for the workshop, leveraging existing relationships for influential guest speakers, and providing mentoring resources for officers. By facilitating mentoring workshops, the LLI would build a repository of best practices for mentoring while also giving the Commandant a direct way to influence mentoring in the Marine Corps.

The MOC describes a future operating environment that is Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous (VUCA). Moreover, the MOC requires lieutenants and captains who can solve complex problems, operate independently, and thrive in uncertainty. The current education and

training for these officers is inadequate to support the MOC and the Marine Corps does not have a plan to bridge the education and training gap. A force strategy for mentoring company grade officers, supported by senior leaders and informed by education, can bridge the gap. Over 40 years of academic research and publication supports the enormous benefits of mentoring in the civilian workplace. The Marine Corps must invest the time and effort to educate the force and ensure officers understand the mentor/protégé relationship. If the MOC is to succeed, the Marine Corps must rediscover its tradition of officer mentoring.

¹ Gordon F. Shea, "Story of Mentor," *Emory University*,

http://www.learningservices.emory.edu/mentor_emory/mentorstory.html.

² Headquarters US Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Operating Concept*, (Washington DC, Headquarters US Marine Corps, September 2016), 8.

³ Headquarters US Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Operating Concept*, (Washington DC, Headquarters US Marine Corps, September 2016), 28.

⁴ BGen Julian D. Alford, (Commanding General, Marine Corps Warfighting Lab, Futures Directorate) discussion with author, 19 January, 2017.

⁵ W. Brad Johnson and Gene R. Andersen, "Formal Mentoring in the US Military: Research Evidence, Lingering Questions, and Recommendations," *Naval War College Review* Vol. 63, no.2, (Spring 2010): 118.

⁶ Headquarters US Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Mentoring Program*, (Washington DC, Headquarters US Marine Corps, 13 February 2006), 2.

⁷ Douglass Rauschelbach, "Assessing the Marine Corps Mentorship Program: Planned vs Actual Use and Perceived Effectiveness" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2013), 69.

⁸ Commandant of the Marine Corps. *Marine Corps Leadership Development*. (MCO 1500.61, February 24, 2016) 3.

⁹ Daniel J. Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1978), 18-38.

¹⁰ Daniel J. Levinson, "A Concept of Adult Development," *American Psychologist* Vol. 41, no. 1, (January 1986): 2.

¹¹ Daniel J. Levinson, "A Concept of Adult Development," *American Psychologist* Vol. 41, no. 1, (January 1986): 6.

¹² Daniel J. Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1978), 40-55.

¹³ Headquarters US Marine Corps, *MCRP 6-11D: Sustaining the Transformation*, (Washington DC, Headquarters US Marine Corps, 28 June 1999), 59-66.

¹⁴ Kathy E. Kram and Lynn A. Isabella, "Mentoring Alternatives: The Role of Peer Relationships in Career Development," *Academy of Management Journal* Vol. 28, no. 1, (March, 1985): 111.

¹⁵ Kathy E. Kram, Douglas Hall, Polly Parker, "Peer Coaching: An Untapped Resource for Development," *Organizational Dynamics* Vol. 43, (2014): 123-124.

¹⁶ Kathy E. Kram, Douglas Hall, Polly Parker, "Peer Coaching: A Relational Process for Accelerating Career Learning," *Academy of Management Learning and Education* Vol. 7, no. 4, (2008): 499.

¹⁷ Kathy E. Kram, Douglas Hall, Polly Parker, “Peer Coaching: A Relational Process for Accelerating Career Learning,” *Academy of Management Learning and Education* Vol. 7, no. 4, (2008): 499.

¹⁸ W. Brad Johnson and Gene R. Andersen, “Formal Mentoring in the US Military: Research Evidence, Lingering Questions, and Recommendations,” *Naval War College Review* Vol. 63, no.2, (Spring 2010): 119.

¹⁹ W. Brad Johnson and Gene R. Andersen, “Formal Mentoring in the US Military: Research Evidence, Lingering Questions, and Recommendations,” *Naval War College Review* Vol. 63, no.2, (Spring 2010): 118.

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