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Modernization of officer manpower systems serve to retain highly skilled individuals whom may otherwise separate due to feelings associated with improper use of his or her talents. An online talent marketplace serves to provide transparency to the officer assignments process, and lessens the information processing burden for monitors, allowing them to focus on customer service, vice mass data absorption. The Marine Corps can capitalize on successes made by the other Services in order to "leap frog" toward the latest manpower software systems. In addition to network-based approaches, the current WebMASS system can be revamped to include BICs. This allows officers to understand which billet they will fill prior to arrival to their next duty station. BIC alignment to officers' biographical data also allows the monitor see the billets that the officers in his or her MOS population are filling. Naval integration is a cornerstone requirement within the CPG. As such, the Marine Corps will likely increase the number of Fleet billets, especially in the INDO-PACOM AOR. Re-nominating key naval staff assignments as "OpFor" within a revised Manning and Precedence Order, as well as widespread dissemination of the importance of these assignments serve to change the current officer career progression paradigm.

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in an Era of Great Power Competition

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Executive Summary

Title: Modernizing Marine Corps Manpower Processes in an Era of Great Power Competition

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Thesis: In an era of great power competition whereupon retention of innovative critical thinkers is essential towards maintaining a competitive advantage, the Marine Corps requires modernization of its officer human resource processes to fulfill the CMC's vision for quality over quantity, and an efficient and flexible workforce.

Discussion: Modernization of officer manpower systems serve to retain highly skilled individuals whom may otherwise separate due to feelings associated with improper use of his or her talents. An online talent marketplace serves to provide transparency to the officer assignments process, and lessens the information processing burden for monitors, allowing them to focus on customer service, vice mass data absorption. The Marine Corps can capitalize on successes made by the other Services in order to "leap frog" toward the latest manpower software systems. In addition to network-based approaches, the current WebMASS system can be revamped to include BICs. This allows officers to understand which billet they will fill prior to arrival to their next duty station. BIC alignment to officers' biographical data also allows the monitor see the billets that the officers in his or her MOS population are filling. Naval integration is a cornerstone requirement within the CPG. As such, the Marine Corps will likely increase the number of Fleet billets, especially in the INDO-PACOM AOR. Re-nominating key naval staff assignments as "OpFor" within a revised Manning and Precedence Order, as well as widespread dissemination of the importance of these assignments serve to change the current officer career progression paradigm.

Conclusion: The current officer human resources systems are antiquated and require modernization in order to successfully adhere to the CPG's talent management mandate. Additionally, cultural perceptions of assignment to naval staffs will need to change in order to attract and retain talent across the Fleet Marine Force.

Introduction

During the past decade, Great Power competition has prompted new military initiatives ranging from innovative platforms to new organizational processes within the Services. Both US national security strategy and military strategy proclaim a shift in focus from non-state actors to competition with near peer States. The December 2017 National Security Strategy laid out the need for modernization across the Department of Defense in order to contest continued future conflict along the Competition Continuum. Simultaneously, the 2018 National Military Strategy echoed the National Defense Strategy by highlighting China and Russia as the most difficult security challenges.

Consequently, the Marine Corps, along with the other branches of Service, published guidance prioritizing Force Design. Within the 2019 Commandant of the Marine Corps Planning Guidance (CPG) General David H. Berger reiterated the need to conduct modernization efforts across the warfighting functions. The modernization of manpower models and processes is highlighted as a critical enabler towards retention and future talent management. In an era of great power competition whereupon retention of innovative critical thinkers is essential towards maintaining a competitive advantage, the Marine Corps requires modernization of its officer human resource processes to fulfill the CMC's vision for quality over quantity, and an efficient and flexible workforce.

The CPG also calls for better talent management across the Force. Indeed, talent management has become a major contemporary buzzword for military and business leaders, oftentimes raising eyebrows due to the amorphous meaning of a non-doctrinal term that engenders multiple interpretations. Nevertheless, aligning individual officer skillsets to a unit's mission requirements will better retain the much-needed talent across the Force. Additionally,

there is currently a lack of literature and general knowledge on manpower processes, reflecting a need for organizational change in this era of great power competition with near peer adversaries.

Existing persistent problems within current officer manpower processes includes the lack of staffing solutions across units within the Marine Corps (gaps), excess centralization of the officer assignments process within Headquarters Marine Corps, and antiquated systems that were established “in the industrial era to produce mass, not quantity.”¹ Although all institutions experience human resource shortfalls and inefficiencies, the Marine Corps can capitalize on the successes of best practices in order to meet fiscal year staffing requirements and mitigate a myriad of institutional, fiscal, and organizational inefficiencies. This paper will examine factors related to these inefficiencies and present potential solutions from both a staffing and talent management perspective.

Moreover, the CPG directly defines the Marine Corps’ top priority as the Indo-Pacific Area of Responsibility due to China’s rising influence as a global economic and geopolitical influence. This paper will examine potential upcoming force structure changes based on past years’ Authorized Strength Reports and make recommendations in regards to naval integration. Although cultural norms associated with following a standard officer career path may inhibit naval integration among the officer Corps, this thesis posits that both force structure changes and the realities of great power competition will necessitate change in perceptions of officer career competitiveness.

The primary methodology for data collection was based on interviews with staff officers currently working within the following organizations of Headquarters, Marine Corps: Manpower Management Officer Assignments, Manpower Management Integration Branch, and Total Force Structure Division, Command Development & Integration Division. Additionally, case studies

of past officer manpower issues reflecting hindrances within current manpower processes were analyzed to emphasize present inefficiencies.

Background

Officer Manpower Overview

The manpower system responsible for recruiting, training, and retaining the officer Corps is not a singular process, but rather, a collection of several processes that is managed by multiple organizations within Headquarters Marine Corps. The generation of officers is monitored by Manpower Plans and Programs, Manpower and Reserve Affairs (MPP, M&RA), however, MPP does not supervise the other processes in that they do not dictate how and when things happen on a daily basis. Rather, MPP produces quotas per rank for the officer Corps in order to fulfill Congressional mandates for the minimum and maximum numbers of officers within the Marine Corps. The latest Congressional requirements were established via the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY19, made public law in August 2018.²

Based on the MPP quotas, Marine Corps Recruiting Command executes initial recruitment and manages ascension until the officers graduate from Officer Candidate School or the US Naval Academy. Manpower Management Officer Assignments (MMOA) ultimately assigns officers to valid Staffing Goals, which are derivatives of the Marine Corps Table of Organization (T/O). T/O is also known as “structure.” It is the responsibility of Total Force Structure Division to finalize and publish the T/O of the Marine Corps every fiscal year for both officer and enlisted strength³. For FY19, the total number of officers as dictated by Congress was 21,312 officers; see Figure 1⁴. Prior to the publishing of the annual T/O, TFSD coordinates within the Service to accurately shape the needs of the Marine Corps. Occupational Field Sponsors, commands, the Joint Staff, and various other agencies across the Department of Defense coordinate with TFSD in order to request, staff, and approve structure changes.

Consequently, people cost money as evidenced by the fact that each billet identification code (BIC) within the Marine Corps T/O has a specific monetary value assigned to it.

Due to fiscal reasons, not all pieces of structure within the T/O is purchased by the Marine Corps. The billets that are purchased are labeled as “Authorized Strength.” The annual Marine Corps Fiscal Year (FY) Authorized Strength Report (ASR) depicts all billets that TFSD purchases within the respective fiscal year. Per MCO 5320.12H, (Precedence Levels for Manning and Staffing) this process, known as manning, occurs within the ASR and serves as a reflection of how many billets the Marine Corps can afford to buy.”⁵ Because of the need to balance requirements across the Force during any particular year, TFSD will typically gradually increase ASR for emerging capabilities or new units. For example, Marine Forces Cyber Command (MARFORCYBER) was initially established in 2012. However, the entire organization’s personnel did not fully constitute its Authorized Strength upon establishment but rather, it gradually increased during the subsequent years. This gradual increase allows for the spread loading of the finite Marine Corps budget.

Once the ASR is ready for publishing during the fall, it is provided to Manpower Management Integration Branch (MMIB), M&RA. MMIB injects the ASR data into the Officer Staffing Goal Model (OSGM), an algorithmic database housed in a web-based application within Manpower Management. MMIB serves as the OSGM manager and provides technical support to web-based systems that the monitors utilize for issuing orders. The Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS) feeds biographical data into the OSGM, resulting in the model identifying officers as potential inventory (either assignable or non-assignable) within the model. MMIB inputs algorithms that directs rulesets into the model. These algorithms are based on feedback from the monitors within Manpower Management Officer Assignments. An example of an

algorithmic ruleset may be that aviators are limited in the number of FMOS (free MOS) 8006/7 billets that they are assigned. The purpose of the OSGM is to generate staffing goals based on inventory for billets within the ASR. Once the OSGM is run by MMIB, the monitors will communicate with their populations, commands, and other stakeholders to assign each officer that is executing orders to a valid staffing goal. The monitors utilize a web-based interface, aptly called web-based Monitor Assignment Support System (WebMASS), to generate orders and view relevant information pertaining to their populations, such as Physical Fitness Test scores, marital status, past assignment history, and Master Brief Sheets. Since the OSGM simply aligns inventory (officers) to units, it is the monitor’s responsibility to analyze intangible factors such as career progression, personal situations, and operational requirements at vacant commands. This forces the monitors to play a central role and asserts a dominant human element in the officer assignments process. In summary, fiscal constraints, ad hoc requirements, and individual/personal issues, result in the Marine Corps’ inability to staff commands to full T/O. For MMOA, SG defines the actual goal, as implied by its nomenclature (*staffing goal*).

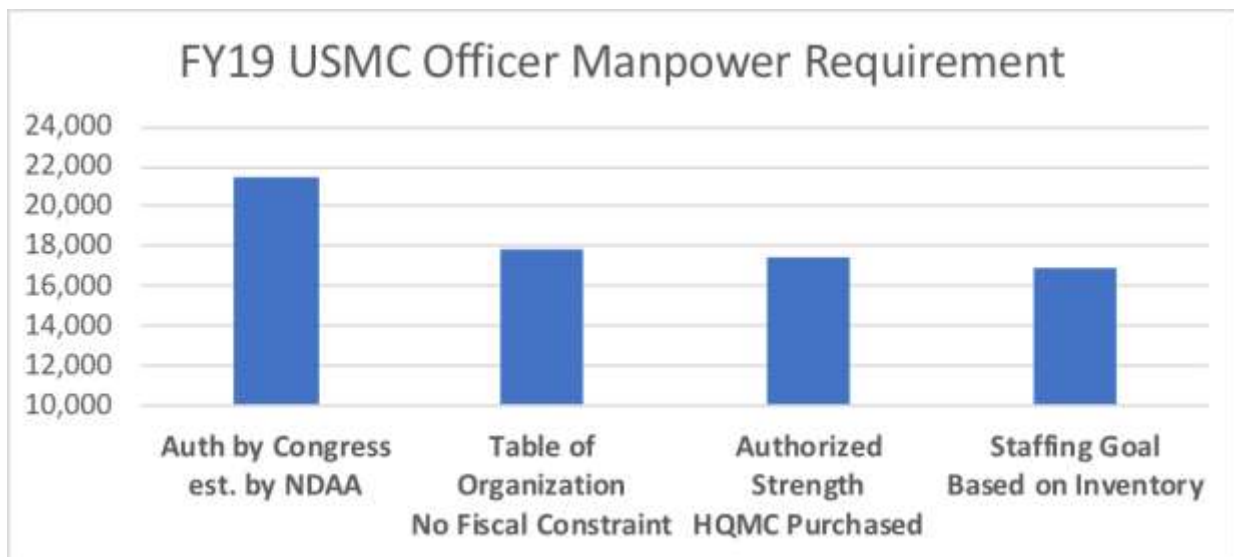


Figure 1⁶

Staffing Gaps

Based on interviews with staff officers within Headquarters Marine Corps and analysis of the CY19 and CY18 ASRs, officer staffing gaps are the result of T/O force structure inconsistencies, inaccurate assignable inventories within the OSGM, and emerging requirements.⁷ Additionally, complexities such as officers newly appointed on legal hold and ad hoc overstaff requirements result in an inaccurate depiction of assignable inventory within the OSGM, resulting in MMOA's inability to staff to SG across the Marine Corps.

In general, gaps exist due to the sheer volume of manning and staffing requirements within the Marine Corps, leading to an inability to resource all pieces of structure and staffing requirement. Per MCO 5320.12H, "frequent changes to structure, policy, cyclical recruiting trends, training constraints, and unanticipated personnel losses constrain the inventory available for staffing. The net effect is that most organizations are staffed with fewer Marines than prescribed in the unit's T/O or ASR process."⁸ TFSD manages the Total Force Doctrine, Organization, Training and Education, Materiel, Leadership and Communication Synchronization, Personnel, Facilities (DOTMLPF) Process, a systematic approach toward analyzing materiel and personnel solutions.⁹ Stakeholders submit requests for additional manning (BICs within the T/O) which are then staffed within TFSD. A Table of Organization/Equipment Change Request (TOECR) is the standard vehicle for requesting a change to a unit's T/O. Typically, units will garner input from Occupational Field (OccField) Sponsors involving the MOSs within the TOECR prior to submission to TFSD. For example, an infantry unit submitting a TOECR requesting an additional MOS 0302 (Infantry Officer) would solicit input from the Infantry OccField Sponsor staff, prior to forwarding the request up the chain of command. This implies that units must closely monitor their T/O every year in order to ensure

alignment with its mission sets. Force structure inconsistencies within the officer Corps arise when a T/O is insufficiently resourced, excessively resourced (resulting in another unit's shortage in officer strength), or capabilities (MOSs) do not match the units' emerging mission sets.

An example of a T/O inconsistency is depicted in Figure 2 (MCRD Parris Island T/O). The CY19 ASR depicts First Lieutenant BICs (ie: structure) with Billet MOS (BMOS) of 8006 assigned to Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) Parris Island. MCRD Parris Island is one of the Marine Corps' two locations whereupon new recruits are trained and transformed into Marines. As highlighted in the previous section, the ASR data is injected into the OSGM, resulting in a possible SG requirement, depending on junior officer inventory. This signifies that MMOA should assign First Lieutenants as staffing solutions. This is inconsistent with the career path of Marine Corps officers in that officers must establish PMOS credibility during their first tour subsequent to graduating from MOS school. Monitors may assign officers coming off of their first tour to MCRD Parris Island, however, the vast majority of officers en route to their second tour will be promoted to Captain within months of arrival. The existence of these BMOS 8006/ BGRD O2 BICs depletes from Captain inventory since MMOA must fill these billets with Captains and Captain selects. Major Norman Renfro, Center Desk MMOA, asserts that TFSD is in the process of fixing this misalignment in order to correctly reflect the realities of assigning officer to MCRD Parris Island.

												12	11
												STR	ASR
MCC	RUC	MAGTF	MPL	KLB_CD	UIC	BIC	TOE_NAME	BILLET_DESCRIPTION	N_GRADE	A_GRADE	2020	2020	
↓T	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓T	↓	↓	↓	
016	32001	SE	FRI	0	M32001	M3200101027	H&S BN MCRD PISC	RECRUIT LIAISON OFFICER	O2	1STLT	1	0	
016	32001	SE	FRI	0	M32001	M3200101055	H&S BN MCRD PISC	ADJUTANT	O2	1STLT	1	1	
016	32001	SE	FRI	0	M32004	M3200400187	1ST RECRUIT TRNG BN RTR MCRD PISC	LOGISTICS OFFICER	O2	1STLT	1	1	
016	32091	SE	FRI	0	M32009	M3200900020	SPT BN RTR MCRD PISC	LOGISTICS OFFICER	O2	1STLT	1	1	
016	32091	SE	FRI	0	M32009	M3200900026	SPT BN RTR MCRD PISC	SERIES COMMANDER	O2	1STLT	1	1	
016	32091	SE	FRI	0	M32009	M3200900033	SPT BN RTR MCRD PISC	SERIES COMMANDER	O2	1STLT	1	1	
016	32091	SE	FRI	0	M32009	M3200900063	SPT BN RTR MCRD PISC	EXECUTIVE OFFICER	O2	1STLT	1	1	
016	32091	SE	FRI	0	M32009	M3200900095	SPT BN RTR MCRD PISC	OIC (SWIMMING POOL)	O2	1STLT	1	1	
016	32091	SE	FRI	0	M32009	M3200900118	SPT BN RTR MCRD PISC	EXECUTIVE OFFICER	O2	1STLT	1	1	
016	32111	SE	FRI	0	M32005	M3200500187	2D RECRUIT TRNG BN RTR MCRD PISC	LOGISTICS OFFICER	O2	1STLT	1	1	
016	32121	SE	FRI	0	M32006	M3200600187	3D RECRUIT TRNG BN RTR MCRD PISC	LOGISTICS OFFICER	O2	1STLT	1	1	
016	32170	SE	FRI	0	M32008	M3200800028	4TH RECRUIT TRNG BN RTR MCRD PISC	LOGISTICS OFFICER	O2	1STLT	1	1	

Figure 2¹⁰

Inconsistencies within the system are also prevalent outside of force structure misalignment. Inventory inaccuracies can result from the OSGM misidentifying officers as assignable inventory. Officers that are placed on legal hold subsequent to the publishing of the OSGM cannot execute orders. New staffing requirements brought forth from major geopolitical events, such as increased North Korean provocations or Eastern European sovereignty crises, are ad hoc in nature and quickly tasked by the Service leadership. A drastic increase in officers requesting tour extensions (if approved by MMOA) during a given fiscal year that surpasses the initial OSGM’s algorithmic estimates may also deplete assignable inventory. These measures convolute the monitor’s ability to determine appropriate staffing solutions, given the scarcity of inventory.

Beyond external requirements, the monitors are charged with providing all officers with an opportunity to remain competitive toward future promotion and potential command. MMOA conducts an annual “roadshow” during the fall months, during which the monitors travel to installations all over the world in order to interview the officer population. Subsequent to the end of the MMOA roadshow (November) and promotion results (December to January) the monitors must synthesize collected information in order to issue orders for their MOS populations, the majority of whom execute orders during the peak summer months. Each

monitor is responsible for a population size of 1,100 to 1,800 officers, depending on MOS communities, and recruitment and training cycles.¹¹ The centralized nature of the current officer assignments process hinders transparency and requires that monitors process vast amounts of data in a relatively short period of time.

Force structure inconsistencies can be remedied via the current TF DOTMLPF process. MCO 5311.1E stipulates the stakeholders and action offices for submission of structure changes. The existence of periodic Operational Advisory Groups, OccField T/O reviews, and senior/ executive level discussions mitigate the need for an overhaul of the process in which the Marine Corps establishes manning levels. Additionally, due to Congressional mandates of officer end strength, the Marine Corps must operate within the confines of statutory quotas. In essence, the current processes of changing force structure exist, albeit, they are tedious and bureaucratic.

On the other hand, staffing and officer assignment processes subsequent to the publishing of annual Authorized Strength Reports can be modernized. By analyzing other Services' approaches towards the officer assignment process, upgrading antiquated Manpower software systems, and incorporating unconventional talent management tools, the Marine Corps can improve its methods for officer retention and assignment. Lastly, although the Services' promotion processes can be viewed as separate than that of the assignments process and therefore, seemingly irrelevant to the scope of this thesis, promotion is directly tied to talent management. As the CMC stated, "While performance is factored into promotion selections, it is narrowed to a slim cohort, roughly based on year groups- an antiquated model."¹² Flexible and innovative approaches within the Marine Corps promotion system will reward high performing officers, leading to institutional incentivization of human capital.

Modernization

The release of the FY19 NDAA was a cornerstone moment for officer manpower modernization. It highlighted the need for new and improved retention tools necessary for retaining highly qualified officers within the context of the current security environment. Talent management mechanisms such as merit-based reorder of promotion processes and the authority for officers to opt-out of promotion boards, specifically targeted the officer Corps, thereby providing the Services additional flexibility to provide incentives for continued Service and promotion. As the CMC states within the CPG, “The essence of all manpower systems is to encourage those you need and want to stay, and separate who are not performing to standards.”¹³ Analysis of Sister Service methods provides insight into the way forward for the Marine Corps.

Overview of Sister Service Approaches

The Army initiated a revamped method for assigning officers during the FY19 slating season, dubbed the “Army Talent Alignment Process”¹⁴. According to the Army Talent Management Task Force, “the Army Talent Alignment Process (ATAP), is a decentralized, regulated, marketplace-style hiring system which aligns officers with jobs based on preferences. Army officers log onto a web-based interface, Assignment Interactive Module (AIM) 2.0, allowing them to peruse available units and learn more about the organizations. Additionally, the interface provides a means for direct communication between units’ leadership and individual officers.¹⁵ The Army Talent Management Task Force put forth an article in November 2019, whereupon one officers’ experience was described. The officer stated that he first learned about AIM-2 via his branch manager (similar to a MMOA, HQMC monitor), whom explained how to use the interactive module. The officer describes a transparent process that

allowed him to highlight his resume across the marketplace, resulting in a “match” with his future command.¹⁶ According to the Army’s Talent Management Task Force website, 14,482 officers participated in the marketplace last year, resulting in 6,598 one-to-one matches, equating to a 45 percent initial match rate.¹⁷

In addition to the officer assignment process overhaul, the Army is authorizing merit-based reorder of promotion, in the same vein as the Marine Corps. Merit reorder “allows an officer to be placed higher on a promotion list, based on his or her top performance.”¹⁸ Lastly, the Army is authorizing officers to opt-out of promotion boards based on fulfillment of “special assignments, advanced educational opportunities, or the [pursuit] of developmental milestones.”¹⁹ Sections 504 and 505 of the FY19 NDAA provided guidance and authority for the Services to initiate merit reorder and opt-out initiatives.²⁰

The Navy is similar to the Marine Corps in that the officer assignments process is much more centralized by higher headquarters than the Army. Officer detailers reside within the Navy’s Bureau of Personnel. Detailers coordinate between officer populations and commands in order to make assignments. The Navy did recently implement a web-based interface to support enlisted assignment, conveniently titled “MyNavy Assignment,” but it is unclear whether or not the Navy plans to establish an online officer marketplace similar to the Army.²¹

The Navy is also implementing processes for promotion merit reorder and promotion opt-out, in line with the other Services. In a February 2019 testimony to the Senate Armed Service Committee’s Military Personnel Subcommittee, Vice Admiral Robert Burke, then Chief of Naval Personnel, stated that the Navy began development of several incentivizing officer programs to include the expansion of merit promotion authority, ... and the relaxation of the requirement that original appointments be granted only to individuals able to complete 20 years commissioned

service by age 62.”²² In addition, according to the US Naval Institute, the Navy is seeking a means for “offer[ing] new commissions up to the rank of captain (O-6) if warranted by civilian experience or other high-demand skills. The hope is individuals who have acquired skills and leadership roles in the civilian sector, especially highly sought-after cyber skills, would be encouraged to join the Navy...”²³ Direct commissioning routes for civilians with highly technical skills is intended to combat the significant cyber threats stemming from near peer adversaries.

Lastly, the Air Force is perhaps the most advanced when it comes to the establishment of a modernized officer manpower process. Immediately upon the 2018 publication of the FY19 NDAA, the Air Force initiated its own web-based mechanism for officer assignment. According to Air Force Personnel Center Public Affairs, the platform is “inspired by the Nobel Prize-winning National Residency Matching Program” and is called the “Talent Marketplace.”²⁴ Similar to the Army’s approach, the online interface matches officers with units based on individual capabilities and a multitude of unique parameters. Initially, the talent marketplace incorporated a limited scope of MOSs to include cyberspace operators, force supporters, and health services administrator officers.²⁵ The Air Force then expanded availability of the program in 2019 to include all officer MOSs. The interface is hosted by a program called “myVECTOR”, allowing officers transparency and direct communication with units during the assignments process.²⁶

As described previously, the Marine Corps method for assigning officers is based on monitors within MMOA communicating between their given populations and gaining/ losing commands. Historically, the monitors will provide information pertaining to billet openings and a list of all movers in the late fall. This requires monitors to process vast amounts of information

regarding their moving populations, and determine staffing solutions that balances individual preferences with the institution’s human resource needs. Adding further friction, only 50 percent of the moving officer population has historically filled out the online questionnaires that the monitors require to gain insight into individual preferences for assignment.²⁷ From a systems perspective, WebMASS, the web-based interface that MMOA utilizes for individual queries and orders issuance, was first introduced in 1990.²⁸ Since then, little has changed in regards to its use as well as functionality. The main theme has remained that monitors collate data on their populations en masse.

A new interface that mimics the Army’s AIM-2 or Air Force’s myVECTOR allows for a both transparency as well as lessens the data collection burden on the monitors. Figure 3 summarizes the key aspects of each Services’ current officer assignments approach. The goal of a new interface would be to reduce HQMC involvement in the assignments process (lessening the data burden on monitors), increasing accessibility to open billets, and enable better communications between moving populations and gaining commands.

	Level of HHQ (monitor) involvement	Accessibility of knowledge regarding billet/ unit openings	Existence of Population-focused Web Interface	Accessibility of direct comms b/t units & officers
Army	Medium	High	Yes	High
Air Force	Medium	High	Yes	High
Navy	High	Medium	No	Medium
Marine Corps	High	Low	No	Low

Figure 3

A web interface with an operating concept based on matching individuals skill sets with unit requirements would also enable an interactive feature, empowering the officer population with their own careers. MMIB is currently in the nascent phases of creating a modernized

officer assignment tool. MMIB has requested aid in researching the way forward from Naval Post Graduate School (NPS). NPS is analyzing ways in which the Marine Corps can capitalize on other Services' successes, as well as promulgate best practices among all the monitors as it pertains to data management and the determination of optimized staffing solutions.²⁹ Given today's "Internet of things" environment, the Marine Corps should invest in an interface that allows populations to engage Commands directly. While monitors must continue to arbitrate and finalize orders, open communications between unit leaders and assignable inventory allows greatest transparency in the assignments process, and advances the Marine Corps on par with the other Services.

Internal Measures

Irrespective of software-based solutions, the Marine Corps can refine its ability to staff officers through internal measures within the institution. Measures such as staffing to BICs as opposed to SGs, and an emphasis on non-traditional career paths will create better staffing solutions, as well as prepare the Marine Corps for conflict in the era of great power competition.

A prevailing consensus among the monitors interviewed for this thesis was that the current model does not provide clarity to officers regarding the exact position (billet) that he or she would fill. The abovementioned online marketplace would mitigate confusion and provide better transparency. However, an internal mechanism that can be put in place until such a system is established is for monitors to assign officers to BICs rather than Staffing Goal (SG). Within WebMASS, SGs are homogenous, meaning units are expressed in the interface without BIC numbers. Figure 4 shows an example entry for a fictitious unit, Monitored Command Code (MCC) ZZZ.

UNIT: MCC ZZZ	BGRD: O4	BMOS: 0202	SG: 5	On Hand: 4
	JONES O4	0202		
	SMITH O4	0202		
	LEE O4	0202		
	REYES O4	0202		

Figure 4

The SG requirements is for (5) Majors with MOS of 0202 (MAGTF Intelligence Officer). One additional Intelligence Major is required. When the monitor issues orders, he or she is unable to differentiate which billet the officer will fill. Although MMOA has the major responsibility of assigning officers to units in order to keep them competitive for future advancement, Commands (unit leaders) are responsible for assigning officers to positions once he or she arrives.

There are drawbacks to BIC assignments within WebMASS. Injecting BICs into the current interface, WebMASS, will be time-intensive due to the added data manipulation required so that all SGs register to a purchased BIC within the ASR. This will also require monitors to scrutinize specific BIC job descriptions prior to issuance of orders. Conversely, the benefit of increased transparency in the orders process and the monitors' ability to easily track billets for their officer populations (without the need to open an officer's record on yet another system), will ultimately save time and increase monitor productivity.

The Marine Corps can also benefit from emphasizing a shift away from traditional officer career paths, in favor of naval staff integration. The CPG calls for naval integration from not only a capabilities perspective but also from a force structure viewpoint. The Fleet Marine Force (FMF) of the future requires integrated staffs within each Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF). The MEFs are aligned to Number Fleets as such: I MEF to Pacific Fleet, II MEF to Second and Sixth Fleet, III MEF to Seventh Fleet. Alignment allows for prioritized efforts between the Navy

and Marine Corps within each respective Area of Operations. The CMC has prioritized III MEF as the main effort due to China's regional hegemonic rise and continued provocative behavior within the South China Sea.

The major manpower implication of naval integration is that the Marine Corps must find ways to attract top performers to naval staffs. However, assignment to a Number Fleet, Naval Headquarters, or Expeditionary Strike Group has been met with angst due to the perception that these billets diverge from more competitive assignments within the Supporting Establishment. Additionally, promotion zones only allow for approximately four years time-in-grade (TIG) as a Captain, Major, and Lieutenant Colonel.³⁰ This forces officers to establish PMOS credibility in the Operating Forces during either their initial tour in-grade, or their backend tour. With standard tour lengths established as three-years for CONUS tours, and 1-3 years for overseas tours, officers are reluctant to serve in naval staffs for fear that such an assignment would brief negatively on future promotion or Command boards.

A top-down approach towards changing this sentiment is already underway. MARADMIN 018/20, Guidance in Support of Staffing the Force, reiterated III MEF/ Seventh Fleet as the priority, in support of INDO-PACOM. The CMC's mention of both III MEF and Seventh Fleet reinforced the need for top talent in the Pacific. Further institutional change can be implemented by categorizing naval staff billets as Operational Force (OpFor) tours in-grade. Present Marine Corps norms dictate that officers must establish PMOS credibility in each grade in order to remain competitive towards advancement. Although there is no policy or written guidance on what constitutes "credibility", the traditional viewpoint has been at least one-year service in a Marine Corps OpFor billet at the MEF level or below.³¹ MCO 5320.12H categorizes all of the Marine Corps' units into one of four categories: Excepted, OpFor, Priority, and

Proportionate Share. Although it would be logical to deem service within units that fall under the Excepted and OpFor categories as establishing MOS credibility, this is not always the case. These categories drive manning and staffing levels, as opposed to distinct cultural measures of career progression.

TFSD is currently finalizing the CY20 ASR this spring. A review of the CY18 and CY19 ASRs depict naval staff BICs increasing in response to near-peer capabilities described in earlier strategic guidance, such as the National Security Strategy and National Military Strategy.³² For example, during the FY19 slating year (CY18-19), Second Fleet (Norfolk, VA) increased its manning and staffing of Marine Corps officers. The monitors were able to issue Permanent Change of Assignment (PCA) orders for Marines already serving within Marine Forces Command (MARFORCOM), which is headquartered in Norfolk. This was a temporary remedy given the officers issued orders to Second Fleet had to be backfilled upon immediate availability of inventory. Given the force design directives laid out in the CPG, it is likely that naval staff billets within the other Number Fleets will increase in the coming years.

The naval staff force structure increase, coupled with the Marine Corps prioritizing the Pacific, requires a new look at what constitutes appropriate career progression in the near-peer adversarial security environment. Institutional perception changes are extremely difficult to overcome. However, hard-coding select naval staff billets as “OpFor” within a revised Manning and Staffing Precedence Order, as well as strategic communication initiatives communicating the need for quality talent within the Numbered Fleet billets will increase officer Corps interest in Naval billets. Additionally, graduates of Resident Professional Military Education (PME) programs would be ideal candidates for service within the Naval Staffs given their year-long education in various military planning processes. Rather than traditional billets of Executive

Officer, Operations Officer, or Department Head, Majors serving in naval staff assignments will foster a revival of Fleet Marine Force, and establish ties within “Big Navy” early in their careers. These endeavors will require the support of both Marine Corps’ senior leadership, as well as officers serving in a career management capacity, such as MMOA, MMPR (Promotion Branch), and Command Boards.

Conclusion

Modernization of officer manpower systems serve to retain highly skilled individuals whom may otherwise separate due to feelings associated with improper use of his or her talents. An online talent marketplace serves to provide transparency to the officer assignments process, and lessens the information processing burden for monitors, allowing them to focus on customer service, vice mass data absorption. The Marine Corps can capitalize on successes made by the other Services in order to “leap frog” toward the latest manpower software systems.

In addition to network-based approaches, the current WebMASS system can be revamped to include BICs. This allows officers to understand which billet they will fill prior to arrival to their next duty station. BIC alignment to officers’ biographical data also allows the monitor to see the billets that the officers in his or her MOS population are filling.

Naval integration is a cornerstone requirement within the CPG. As such, the Marine Corps will likely increase the number of Fleet billets, especially in the INDO-PACOM AOR. Re-nominating key naval staff assignments as “OpFor” within a revised Manning and Precedence Order, as well as widespread dissemination of the importance of these assignments serve to change the current officer career progression paradigm.

Finally, the recommendations set forth within this paper merely serve as portions of a necessary comprehensive review of force design and talent management. It highlights processes that are currently either antiquated or require changes in cultural perceptions. As force design is finalized by CD&I and other major stakeholders, these recommendations are provided as a means of improving efficiency rather than panaceas. Manpower processes will require regular review in order to better align future operating concepts with human resource requirements. Modernization of manpower software systems, network-based processes, internal administrative

procedures, and cultural norms regarding navel integration will allow the Service to truly fulfill the mandates set forth within the CPG. Getting the right officer to the right unit will not only enhance future retention, but also serve as a force multiplier in the Services' efforts to dominate near peer adversaries in a contested environment.

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