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The Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) and Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) both published guidance in 2019, directing changes to how we train and educate every member of the naval service. Naval Service Training Command (NSTC) is in a unique position to implement this guidance at the deckplate since it provides entry-level education for a significant portion of the naval officer corps. The Education for Seapower Strategy (ESS) implements the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV), CNO, and CMC-directed changes across the naval service but does not address NSTC or the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) Program directly. This thesis fills that gap in the ESS by examining the information in the Commandant's Planning Guidance (CPG) pertinent to NSTC, addressing three ways the education and training of midshipmen do not align with the CPG and recommending cost-effective methods for alignment.

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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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**TITLE:** Implementing the 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps' Planning Guidance  
into the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Program

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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## Executive Summary

**Title:** Implementing the 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps' Planning Guidance into the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Program

**Author:** Donald W. Meyer, Jr., United States Marine Corps

**Thesis:** The Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) and Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) both published guidance in 2019, directing changes to how we train and educate every member of the naval service. Naval Service Training Command (NSTC) is in a unique position to implement this guidance at the deckplate since it provides entry-level education for a significant portion of the naval officer corps. The Education for Seapower Strategy (ESS) implements the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV), CNO, and CMC-directed changes across the naval service but does not address NSTC or the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) Program directly. This thesis fills that gap in the ESS by examining the information in the Commandant's Planning Guidance (CPG) pertinent to NSTC, addressing three ways the education and training of midshipmen do not align with the CPG and recommending cost-effective methods for alignment.

**Discussion:** The CPG identifies problems in the education and training of the Marine Corps Total Force, to include formal training commands. One of the main issues the CMC discusses is the dissonance between what the Marine Corps is doing in education and training when compared to what it should do, given the evolving operating environment and threat. He provides guidance in what he expects from formal training commands. From this guidance, the specificities most applicable to NSTC include training and education continuum, naval integration, and naval education program. Three reasons explain why the current education and training of Marine option midshipmen in the NROTC Program is unaligned with this guidance. First, Marine option midshipmen do not complete all mandated requirements within the Officer Professional Core Competencies (PCC) Manual, nor the requirements particular to Navy option midshipmen. Second, Naval Science Instructors spend the preponderance of their time performing administrative tasks and lack educational training in adult learning. Third, Marine option midshipmen complete the Evolution Warfare (EOW) and Fundamentals of Maneuver Warfare (FMW) naval science courses that do not support the aggressive naval education program desired by the CMC.

**Conclusion:** NSTC must not delay in aligning the education and training of Marine option midshipmen in the NROTC Program to the CPG. Alignment is essential to produce Marine Corps Officers envisioned by the CMC. It would also optimize the Marine Corps for naval expeditionary warfare and help create a more integrated, lethal, and capable Naval Service, supporting America's current strategic position.

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## **DISCLAIMER**

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## **Preface**

I would like to first thank God for giving me the strength, knowledge, ability, and opportunity to complete this thesis and persevere over the last year. Without Him and His blessings, this achievement would not have happened. Next, I would like to thank my wonderful and beautiful wife and our two children for their unconditional love and selfless support. They will never know how much they mean to me and how thankful I am for them.

I served as the Marine Officer Instructor (MOI) at the Tulane NROTC Unit, in New Orleans, Louisiana, from May 2016 to May 2019. I supported the unit's commanding officer, a Navy captain, and the executive officer, a Navy commander, and worked with three junior officers from the surface, submarine, and aviation warfare communities. As an Assistant Professor of Naval Science, I taught EOW and FMW, two required naval science courses for Marine option midshipmen, and assisted my fellow Naval Science Instructors with their courses. In addition to these duties, I augmented the Marine Corps Officer Candidates School as an academics instructor in the summer of 2017 and as a platoon commander the following summer.

During my time on MOI duty, I helped the Tulane NROTC Unit develop and implement the Battalion Restructure Plan in January 2018. The goal of the plan was to provide midshipmen with better, more challenging, and realistic training, and to make the Midshipmen Battalion structure comparable to a traditional Navy command. As a direct result of this plan, midshipmen were exposed to the Navy and Marine Corps Planning Processes and applied them throughout two unit-level events each year. Complimenting this initiative, the unit's staff and I incorporated the expertise of Navy and Marine Corps units into the education and training of our midshipmen. Special Boat Team 22, Naval Construction Team Two, Marine Light Attack Helicopter

Squadron 773, and various units from the Marine Corps Forces Reserve and Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center each contributed to our training.

To prepare myself and establish a culture of naval integration among the midshipmen at the Tulane NROTC unit, I attended optional lectures and training from various Navy warfare communities, including the Naval Nuclear Power Training Command, and encouraged the unit's Marine Platoon to do the same. I took midshipmen to various military installations, such as the Naval Aviation Schools Command, located in Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola, and the Ingalls Shipbuilding located in Pascagoula, Mississippi. These trips provided midshipmen with valuable knowledge and exposed them to a cross-section of the naval service.

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## Introduction

*“We are not a second land army, nor do we aspire to be anything other than the world’s premier naval expeditionary force. While these are intended as statements of fact and conclusions vise empty assertions, our actions haven’t always supported our statements. This will change”.*<sup>1</sup>

General David H. Berger  
*Commandant’s Planning Guidance*

In July 2019, General David H. Berger, the 38th CMC, issued his planning guidance, known as the CPG, to the Marine Corps. It is the authoritative document for service-level planning, provides strategic direction to the Marine Corps, and supports the National Defense Strategy (NDS) and the Secretary of Defense’s Defense Planning Guidance (DPG).<sup>2</sup> The CPG is a road map describing where the Marine Corps is heading and why, what the Marine Corps’ priorities are and are not, and in a few instances, how and when the Marine Corps will implement prescribed actions.<sup>3</sup> The CMC outlines five priority focus areas in the CPG: force design, warfighting, education and training, core values, and command and leadership.<sup>4</sup> While not all-encompassing, the CPG provides sufficient guidance for how the Marine Corps will translate these focus areas into action with measurable outcomes over the next five to fifteen years.<sup>5</sup>

The CMC and CNO both published guidance in 2019, directing changes to how we train and educate every member of the naval service. NSTC is in a unique position to implement this guidance at the deckplate since it provides entry-level education for a significant portion of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Commandant’s Planning Guidance*. 2019. Washington, District of Columbia: United States Marine Corps, 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

naval officer corps. The ESS implements the SECNAV, CNO, and CMC-directed changes across the naval service but does not address NSTC or the NROTC Program directly. This thesis fills that gap in the ESS by examining the information in the CPG pertinent to NSTC, addressing three ways the education and training of midshipmen do not align with the CPG and recommending cost-effective methods for alignment.

NSTC must not delay in aligning the education and training of Marine option midshipmen in the NROTC Program to the CPG. Alignment is essential to produce Marine Corps Officers envisioned by the CMC, who have a foundational-level understanding of requisite naval concepts, programs, and warfare upon completion of entry-level training. Such naval leaders would enhance the Navy and Marine Corps' ability to fight at sea, from the sea, and from the land to the sea.<sup>6</sup> It would also optimize the Marine Corps for naval expeditionary warfare and help create a more integrated, lethal, and capable naval service, supporting America's current strategic position.<sup>7</sup>

## **Commandant's Planning Guidance**

### **Relevance to Naval Service Training Command**

NSTC, headquartered in Great Lakes, Illinois, is responsible for the NROTC Program.<sup>8</sup> This program comprises 77 units and consortiums, services over 160 colleges and universities from across the United States (U.S.), and runs concurrently with a student's academic course of

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<sup>6</sup> *Commandant's Planning Guidance*. 2019. Washington, District of Columbia: United States Marine Corps, 12, 17.

<sup>7</sup> John Kroger, "Charting the Future of Education for the Navy-Marine Corps Team," Commentary, War on the Rocks, November 4, 2019, <https://warontherocks.com/2019/11/charting-the-future-of-education-for-the-navy-marine-corps-team/>

<sup>8</sup> Naval Service Training Command. Regulations for Officer Development, NSTC M-1533.2D, December 18, 2019, 15.

study leading to a bachelor's degree.<sup>9 10 11</sup> The NROTC Program provides officer accessions for the Navy and Marine Corps and qualifies students for appointment as ensigns or second lieutenants.<sup>12</sup> Five types of students receive education and training at NROTC Units: NROTC Scholarship Program Midshipmen, NROTC College Program students, Seaman to Admiral-21 Officer Candidates, Marine Enlisted Commissioning and Education Program Officer Candidates, and Strategic Sealift Officers.<sup>13</sup> These students attend naval science laboratories and classes, participate in NROTC Unit events and activities, and receive valuable knowledge and experience in leadership.<sup>14</sup>

### **Problems in Education and Training**

There is a dissonance between what the Marine Corps is doing in education and training when compared to what it should do, given the evolving operating environment and threat.<sup>15</sup> Formal training commands reinforce the industrial age model, where students learn what to think and what to do instead of how to think, decide, and act.<sup>16</sup> The programs of instruction these commands use do not help the Marine Corps fulfill its charter as the world's premier naval expeditionary force-in-readiness.<sup>17</sup> Most Marines, as a result, lack the requisite naval education and training to operate in contested maritime spaces, facilitate sea control, and execute

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>10</sup> "About the NROTC Program," Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps, Naval Service Training Command Officer Development, Accessed February 25, 2020, <https://www.nrotc.navy.mil/about.html>

<sup>11</sup> United States Naval Academy, and Naval Service Training Command, Officer Professional Core Competencies Manual, April 2019, 20.

<sup>12</sup> Naval Service Training Command. Regulations for Officer Development, NSTC M-1533.2D, December 18, 2019, 15.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>15</sup> *Commandant's Planning Guidance*. 2019. Washington, District of Columbia: United States Marine Corps, 16.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 6, 13.

distributed maritime operations.<sup>18</sup> The next fight will place heavy demands on the U.S. naval service to project power and influence beyond the shores.<sup>19</sup> A war against the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in the East and South China Seas, as an example, will be unlike anything of the recent past.<sup>20</sup>

### **Mandated Changes in Education and Training**

The CPG directs formal training commands to change their training and education continuum from an industrial age model to an information age model, where education and training focus on active, student-centered learning, and incorporates and uses problem-posing methodologies.<sup>21</sup> An information age model makes students solve challenging problems in teams or groups, incorporates practical applications to improve learning and creates an ideal educational environment where students learn from each other.<sup>22</sup> It even pushes them to think more critically, cycle through the Observe, Orient, Decide, and Act (OODA) loop faster, recognize the need for change, and develop a bias for intelligent action.<sup>23</sup>

Naval integration is among the main takeaways in the CPG.<sup>24</sup> The CPG is refocusing the Marine Corps from counterinsurgency operations to naval expeditionary warfare and wants to reinvigorate the Fleet Marine Force (FMF).<sup>25</sup> As an organization designated to integrate with the

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 2, 17.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 1, 4.

<sup>20</sup> *Commandant’s Planning Guidance*. 2019. Washington, District of Columbia: United States Marine Corps, 9.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 13, 16.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 16-17.

<sup>24</sup> Todd South, “New in 2020: Marines Move to Greater Naval Integration, Starting with Training Changes,” *Your Marine Corps*, Marine Corps Times, December 29, 2019, <https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2019/12/29/new-in-2020-marines-move-to-greater-naval-integration-starting-with-training-changes/>

<sup>25</sup> *Commandant’s Planning Guidance*. 2019. Washington, District of Columbia: United States Marine Corps, 2, 17.

Navy during the prosecution of naval campaigns, the CPG directs that the Marine Corps be educated and trained as a naval expeditionary force-in-readiness prepared to integrate into the naval force.<sup>26</sup> Marines will no longer be passive passengers on ships.<sup>27</sup> Instead, they will maximize their relationship with the Navy and contribute to the mission with their shipmates from the moment they embark.<sup>28</sup> The CPG intends to reestablish the Marine Corps' identity and enhance relationships with the Fleets by the summer of 2023.<sup>29</sup> In the coming years, the Marine Corps will educate, train, and prepare "to fight at sea, from the sea, and from the land to the sea; operate and persist within range of adversary long-range fires; maneuver across the seaward and landward portions of complex littorals; and sense, shoot, and sustain while combining the physical and information domains to achieve desired outcomes".<sup>30</sup>

The CPG requires formal training commands to incorporate an aggressive naval education program into their programs of instruction.<sup>31</sup> The CPG does not provide details on this program but mentions naval-related subjects Marines will, must, or should know, listed in Table 1.

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<sup>26</sup> *Commandant's Planning Guidance*. 2019. Washington, District of Columbia: United States Marine Corps, 1, 10.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 10, 17.

**Table 1: Naval-Related Subjects Mentioned in the CPG**

#	Subject	Page
1	Denial Operations	2
2	Joint Force Maritime Component Command	2
3	Sea Control	2
4	Coastal & Riverine Forces	4
5	Mine Countermeasure Forces	4
6	Naval Construction Forces	4
7	Naval Expeditionary Forces & Capabilities Not Resident to the Marine Corps	4
8	Anti-Access & Area Denial (A2AD) Threat Capabilities	5
9	Joint Forcible Entry Operations (JFEO)	5
10	Maritime Prepositioning Force	5
11	Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO)	9
12	Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment (LOCE)	9
13	Composite Warfare	10
14	Naval History	10
15	Naval Theory	10
16	Navy's Distributed Maritime Operations (DMO) Concept	10
17	Stand-In Forces	10
18	Operations in the Information Environment (OIE)	12
19	Naval Expeditionary Warfare	17
20	Naval Operating Concepts	17
21	Naval Programs	17
22	Naval Warfare	17

Among these navy focused subjects is composite warfare (CW), the Navy's method for decentralized command and control at the tactical level, and emphasized in the CPG.<sup>32</sup> This form of command and control empowers subordinate leaders to execute decentralized tactical operations, either independently or integrated into a larger force, through mission command and

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<sup>32</sup> *Commandant's Planning Guidance*. 2019. Washington, District of Columbia: United States Marine Corps, 10.

flexible supporting relationships.<sup>33</sup> CW is responsive and effective in an ever-changing tactical environment and does not overwhelm the decision-making capacity of commanders or their staff.<sup>34</sup> The CPG directs formal training commands to educate, train, and prepare students to operate within this doctrinal construct, and considers this form of command and control a prerequisite for the successful execution of amphibious operations.<sup>35</sup> Integrating CW into the force, the CPG enables the Marine Corps to integrate and operate with the Navy, increases the Fleet’s lethality and resiliency, and contributes “to all domain access, deterrence, sea control, and power projection”.<sup>36</sup>

### **Officer Professional Core Competencies Manual**

The Officer PCC Manual draws from various sources, including the Navy Leader Development Framework (NLDF), and establishes the foundational standards, based on fleet requirements, for all officer accession programs in the Navy.<sup>37</sup> This manual specifies the knowledge, skills, and abilities trained naval leaders entering the Navy and Marine Corps must possess upon earning a commission.<sup>38</sup> PCCs comprise the following six major competency areas: 1) Naval Orientation and Officership; 2) Leadership and Ethics; 3) Seapower and Naval History; 4) Programs and Policies; 5) Technical Foundations and Naval Warfare; and 6) Seamanship and Navigation.<sup>39</sup> Navy option midshipmen in the NROTC Program complete sub-

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<sup>33</sup> *Commandant’s Planning Guidance*. 2019. Washington, District of Columbia: United States Marine Corps, 10.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>37</sup> United States Naval Academy, and Naval Service Training Command, *Officer Professional Core Competencies Manual*, April 2019, iv.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, vi.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, vi.

requirements within areas one through six, excluding 5.H., and Marine option midshipmen complete sub-requirements within areas one through five, excluding 5.B.<sup>40</sup>

The Officer PCC Manual drives the curriculum and instruction the NROTC Program uses to educate and train midshipmen and contains what the CMC wants in an aggressive naval education program for Marine option midshipmen. The issue and reasoning for lack of alignment are twofold: Marine option midshipmen in the NROTC Program do not complete the preponderance of the requirements within Technical Foundations and Naval Warfare, and NSTC does not require them to complete Seamanship and Navigation.

### **Technical Foundations and Naval Warfare**

Technical Foundations and Naval Warfare is the fifth major competency area in the Officer PCC Manual and includes “basic characteristics and capabilities of the major weapons systems and platforms of the U.S. Naval forces”; “basic threats potential near-peer maritime competitors can employ against Navy platforms”; and components of naval warfare contributing “to the basic sea control and power projection missions of the Naval Service”.<sup>41</sup> These core competencies support naval integration and an aggressive naval education program. Navy option midshipmen complete these requirements in Naval Ship Systems I (Engineering), Naval Ship Systems II (Weapons), and Naval Operations and Seamanship; whereas, NSTC expects Marine option midshipmen to do so in EOW and FMW. The issue is the latter midshipmen do not complete two-thirds of these requirements due to the disconnect between what the Officer PCC Manual mandates when compared to what is in the EOW and FMW course guides and what

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<sup>40</sup> United States Naval Academy, and Naval Service Training Command, Officer Professional Core Competencies Manual, April 2019, 20.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 11-13.

MOIs teach.<sup>42</sup> Both of these courses, as discussed later in this paper, serve other purposes and do not support this major competency area or the CPG.

### **Seamanship and Navigation**

Marine option midshipmen in the NROTC Program do not complete the requirements within Seamanship and Navigation, the sixth major competency area, designed to give Navy option midshipmen a basic understanding of how to perform various duties while shipboard. Midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy (USNA) complete these requirements before commissioning into the Navy or Marine Corps.<sup>43</sup> Midshipmen learn about shipboard damage control, theory and practice of navigation, basic ship handling, steering and sailing rules for collision prevention, and how to understand and calculate relative motion between maneuvering ships within this major competency area.<sup>44</sup> Navy option midshipmen in the NROTC Program complete these requirements in the Naval Navigation and Naval Operations and Seamanship naval science courses. The latter course is an ideal setting to introduce Marine option midshipmen to naval integration. It explores “naval operations and operations analysis, ship behavior and characteristics in maneuvering, applied aspects of ship handling, afloat communications, naval command and control, naval warfare areas, and joint warfare”.<sup>45</sup> The Seamanship and Navigation major competency area provides midshipmen with valuable

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<sup>42</sup> United States Naval Academy, and Naval Service Training Command, Officer Professional Core Competencies Manual, April 2019, 11-13.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>45</sup> Naval Service Training Command. Regulations for Officer Development, NSTC M-1533.2D, December 18, 2019, 49.

education and training and supports naval integration and an aggressive naval education program.<sup>46</sup> Figure 1 illustrates which naval science courses midshipmen must complete.

Typical Timing		Scholarship or Advanced Standing					
		Navy	USMC	Nurse	MECEP	STA-21	SSMP
4/C	Introduction to Naval Science	•	•	•		NSI	•
	Sea Power and Maritime Affairs	•	•	•		NSI	
3/C	Leadership and Management	•	•	•		•	
	Navigation	•				NSI	
2/C	Strategic Sealift Officer Course						•
	Naval Ship Systems I (Engineering)	•				NSI	
	Naval Ship Systems II (Weapons)	•				NSI	
	Evolution of Warfare		•		• <sup>1</sup>		
1/C	Naval Operations and Seamanship	•				NSI	
	Fundamentals of Maneuver Warfare		•		• <sup>1</sup>		
	Leadership and Ethics	•	•	•	•	•	•
All terms	Naval Science Laboratory	•	•	•	•	•	•

•: Required  
 NSI: Course requirement met by completion of NSI  
<sup>1</sup> PNS may waive course under conditions in 3-5 4.d. (2)

**Figure 1: NROTC Naval Science Course Requirements<sup>47</sup>**  
**Naval Science Instructors**

Naval Science Instructors do not perform their duties and responsibilities to the standard and expectations outlined in the CPG, nor at the level comparable to professors at colleges or universities in the U.S. This is for three reasons: they spend the preponderance of their time performing administrative tasks; most lack the requisite knowledge, education, and experience in young adult learning and with the naval science subjects they teach; and the Navy and Marine

<sup>46</sup> Megan Eckstein, “Marine Planners Using Commandant's Guidance to Start Crafting Future of the Corps,” USNI News, U.S. Naval Institute, September 18, 2019, <https://news.usni.org/2019/09/18/marine-planners-using-commandants-guidance-to-start-crafting-future-of-the-corps>

<sup>47</sup> Naval Service Training Command. Regulations for Officer Development, NSTC M-1533.2D, December 18, 2019, 50.

Corps inadequately select Naval Officers and Marine Corps Officers to serve as Naval Science Instructors.

### **Administrative Tasks and Additional Duties**

Naval Science Instructors work ten to twelve-hour days, five to six days per week, teach one to two different naval science courses each calendar year, and perform a wide range of administrative and collateral duties. Their primary professional development task is to advise and develop future Naval and Marine Corps Officers.<sup>48</sup> The advising function “includes academic instruction, professional training, monitoring of progression in university and Navy requirements, counseling on academic, personal, and professional standards, and motivating students in preparation for careers in the naval services”.<sup>49</sup> Almost every Naval Science Instructor advises and mentors an entire midshipmen class, and counsels his or her midshipmen twice per semester and as needed.<sup>50</sup> These instructors also advise and mentor a number of midshipmen in billets within the Midshipmen Battalion and oversee the planning and execution of midshipmen events and activities, including physical training sessions and laboratories.

As part of their advising duties, Naval Science Instructors evaluate their midshipmen’s performance using the Navy Fitness Report each semester. They update various forms and documents in each student’s performance file and ensure their midshipmen’s information is current each semester in the Officer Program Management Information System (OPMIS), an online program NSTC uses to monitor the progress and status of midshipmen at each NROTC

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<sup>48</sup> Naval Service Training Command. Regulations for Officer Development, NSTC M-1533.2D, December 18, 2019, 39.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 39.

Unit.<sup>51</sup> Naval Science Instructors create and submit award packages for deserving midshipmen, write letters of recommendation for midshipmen pursuing various programs, and help non-scholarship college program students create and apply for the NROTC or side-load scholarship.<sup>52</sup> They participate in Performance Review Boards (PRB) and create and complete the paperwork and actions for the command, to include when the unit's commanding officer places midshipmen on probation or leave of absence, or when NSTC disenrolls midshipmen from the NROTC Program.<sup>53</sup> PRBs can be time-consuming and inundate Naval Science Instructors.<sup>54</sup>

The MOI is responsible for the Marine Platoon and for working with the Marine Corps Recruiting Command (MCRC) to satisfy various Marine-specific requirements. This Marine prepares and sends MCRC the required paperwork for his or her Marine option midshipmen when they request an assignment as a Marine Aviator or Naval Flight Officer, when they attend the Platoon Leader's Course-Seniors (PLC-Seniors) or The Basic School (TBS), or when they graduate from college and commission into the Marine Corps.<sup>55</sup> The MOI helps make his or her non-scholarship college program students more competitive for the NROTC Marine Option Scholarship, the Frederick C. Branch Marine Leadership Scholarship, or the Pedro Del Valle Marine Leadership Scholarship and supports these students with completing and submitting the required paperwork to the Marine Corps Recruiting Station in that state and MCRC.<sup>56</sup> He or she works with the Officer Selection Officer assigned to his or her college or university to host

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<sup>51</sup> Naval Service Training Command. Regulations for Officer Development, NSTC M-1533.2D, December 18, 2019, 39.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-40.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 166-184.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 166-184.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 120-121.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-29.

recruiting-specific events on the campus, plans and executes at least one field exercise per semester, and does his or her best to prepare midshipmen for PLC-Seniors, Navy SEAL Officer Assessment and Selection, and the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Warfare First Class Summer Cruise.

NROTC Units are official military commands, regardless of size and location, and must have and maintain the Managers' Internal Control Program (MICP), encompassing various programs required at traditional Navy commands.<sup>57</sup> Programs include Anti-Terrorism and Force Protection (ATFP), Command Managed Equal Opportunity (CMEO), the Drug and Alcohol Program (DAPA), and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program.<sup>58</sup> Naval Science Instructors manage these programs, and the number of MICPs assigned to each individual varies from unit-to-unit. Some programs, like ATFP, can be a full-time job, requiring a Naval Science Instructor to create and manage random antiterrorism measures plans and perform duties as directed by his or her Navy Region, including when force protection conditions have increased. The MICP requires NROTC Units to conduct self-assessments of its programs annually. Once every 36 months, a Command Assessment and Training Team (CATT), composed of various personnel from the NROTC Program, visit and inspect the programs of these units.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Naval Service Training Command, Mission, Functions and Tasks of Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Units, NSTC Instruction 5450.4A, November 26, 2019, 1.

<sup>58</sup> Naval Service Training Command, Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Command Assessment and Training Team (CATT) Program, NSTC Instruction 5040.2, May 10, 2019, 8.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-4.

Naval Science Instructors perform a host of other duties.<sup>60</sup> They serve as safety officers at unit events and activities, participate in university events to build relations with other departments, and provide high school and college students in the area with information on the NROTC Program.<sup>61</sup> They meet and speak with prospective students interested in joining their units or the NROTC Program at large. Naval Science Instructors conduct scholarship interviews with applicants applying for the NROTC National Scholarship or to the USNA each semester.<sup>62</sup> Most of these individuals leverage and incorporate the expertise of external military units and civilian organizations into unit operations to enhance the education and training provided to midshipmen. Almost every Naval Science Instructor augment and supports summer training: New Student Indoctrination (NSI), Career Orientation Training of Midshipmen (CORTRAMID), or Sea Trials. Training lengths for each vary. MOIs and AMOIs do the same and may augment and support the PLC-Seniors aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico, in Virginia, for eight-weeks.<sup>63</sup>

Naval Science Instructors spend most of their time on administrative requirements and not on educating and training future naval leaders – a legitimate and significant problem in the NROTC Program. Complicating the issue is these instructors have limited time at work to research, read, and study the subjects they teach and to pursue intellectual and professional

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<sup>60</sup> Naval Service Training Command. Regulations for Officer Development, NSTC M-1533.2D, December 18, 2019, 133.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 133-134, 140.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 2019, 39-40.

growth in adult learning. Each is important for them to perform their assigned academic responsibilities to the highest standards of the teaching profession.<sup>64</sup>

### **Inadequate Selection Process**

An institutional problem preventing NSTC from aligning the education and training in the NROTC Program to the CPG is that the Navy and Marine Corps inadequately selects officers to serve as Naval Science Instructors. The Navy uses its detailers to select Naval Officers to serve on NROTC duty.<sup>65</sup> Applicants must be Unrestricted Line Officers, Navy Lieutenants, who have completed an operational assignment as a division officer.<sup>66</sup> They must have a bachelor's degree with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher, with no D or F grades on their transcripts.<sup>67</sup> Some colleges and universities require prospective Naval Science Instructors to meet additional requirements: have a higher cumulative grade point average, have a master's degree, be recommended by senior Naval Officers, and pass an interview or series of interviews.<sup>68</sup>

The Marine Corps conducts an NROTC Selection Board annually for company and field grade officers wanting to serve as Naval Science Instructors in the NROTC Program.<sup>69</sup> It considers these individuals essential in mentoring, leading, and shaping prospective Naval and

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<sup>64</sup> Naval Service Training Command. Regulations for Officer Development, NSTC M-1533.2D, December 18, 2019, 40.

<sup>65</sup> Department of the Navy, Education for Seapower Final Report, Washington, DC, December 2018, 304.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 314.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 314.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 304.

<sup>69</sup> Commandant of the Marine Corps, Fiscal Year 2020 Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Billet Vacancies (Professor of Naval Science/Executive Officer/Marine Officer Instructor), MARADMIN 427/19, August 5, 2019, <https://www.marines.mil/News/Messages/Messages-Display/Article/1925432/fy20-nrotc-billet-vacancies-pnsxomoi/>

Marine Corps Officers.<sup>70</sup> The board screens and selects high caliber role models possessing strong academic and physical fitness skills for this duty.<sup>71</sup> Officers come from unrestricted military occupational specialties, have a bachelor's degree with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0, and have high first-class physical fitness test scores.<sup>72</sup> Applicants provide the board with a personal statement, including their perceived strengths, their desire to serve on NROTC duty, and their duty station preferences. Included in this package is a command endorsement, letter of recommendation, current official photograph, and official college transcripts.<sup>73</sup>

The Navy and Marine Corps use inadequate criteria in selecting officers to serve as Naval Science Instructors in the NROTC Program. Neither service screens applicants for prior knowledge, experience, and training in adult learning, nor seeks to understand an applicant's desire to educate and train future naval leaders. Most officers applying to serve as Naval Science Instructors will not have prior knowledge or experience in education, and failing to acknowledge this, the Navy and Marine Corps do not require applicants to discuss how they intend to prepare themselves in advance if selected. Do they plan on enrolling in a 12-credit hour teacher preparation program focused on adult learning offered by regionally accredited colleges and universities? The Marine Corps, instead, focuses on an applicant's perceived strengths, desire to serve on the NROTC duty, and physical fitness.

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<sup>70</sup> Commandant of the Marine Corps, Fiscal Year 2020 Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Billet Vacancies (Professor of Naval Science/Executive Officer/Marine Officer Instructor), MARADMIN 427/19, August 5, 2019, <https://www.marines.mil/News/Messages/Messages-Display/Article/1925432/fy20-nrotc-billet-vacancies-pnsxomoi/>

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

## **Requisite Knowledge and Experience in Education**

Naval Science Instructors lack the requisite education, training, and experience in adult learning and the subjects they teach compared to the professors at their colleges and universities. Despite their title and having attended the 45-contact hour “Teaching in the University Environment” course aboard NAS Pensacola, the majority of them are not certified or specialized in education.<sup>74</sup> Naval Science Instructors do not have educational degrees in adult learning, have not taught adult learners in formal academic environments, neither have they completed a 12-credit hour graduate-level teacher preparation program at regionally accredited colleges and universities. The subjects Naval Science Instructors teach range in complexity, with some naval science courses requiring an advanced understanding of the subject.

### **Marine-Specific Naval Science Courses**

The NROTC Program requires Marine option midshipmen to complete EOW and FMW. Marine Corps Officers commissioning through the PLC Juniors and Seniors Program, Officer Candidates Course, and the USNA, do not complete these courses.<sup>75 76</sup> Neither course supports an aggressive naval education program. This requirement prevents these midshipmen from taking naval science courses pertinent to the CPG: Naval Operations and Seamanship, Naval Ships Systems II (Weapons), and Navigation.

## **Evolution of Warfare**

EOW is an introductory warfare course, intended to expose midshipmen to “the causes of continuity and change in the means and methods of warfare,” beginning with the 1500s and

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<sup>74</sup> Department of the Navy, Education for Seapower Final Report, Washington, DC, December 2018, 305.

<sup>75</sup> Naval Service Training Command, *Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Evolution of Warfare Course Guide*, October 7, 2016, 6.

<sup>76</sup> Naval Service Training Command. Regulations for Officer Development, NSTC M-1533.2D, December 18, 2019, 47-50.

ending in the present day.<sup>77</sup> Midshipmen learn how a country's politics, economy, and society influence the conduct of war and the role technological innovation has in changing the battlefield.<sup>78</sup> The curriculum explores preeminent military theorists and battlefield commanders and their contributions to the military's current understanding of the art and science of war.<sup>79</sup>

MOIs teach twenty-four lessons in EOW.<sup>80</sup> Each lesson is between one to one-and-a-half hours long.<sup>81</sup> Fifteen of these lessons are redundant compared to what Marine Corps Officers receive throughout their careers, with the nine remaining lessons supporting the CPG. PLC-Seniors teaches Marine Corps Officer Candidates the content in lessons one through five, and TBS and Expeditionary Warfare School exposes second lieutenants and captains to the information in lessons six through fourteen, and twenty-four. Majors at Command and Staff College explore the content and subjects of these lessons at a more advanced level. The nine lessons supporting the CPG include lessons fifteen through twenty-three.

### **Fundamentals of Maneuver Warfare**

The purpose of FMW is to expose midshipmen to maneuver warfare doctrine and how the Marine Corps, as an Expeditionary Force in Readiness, performs its mission; however, the NROTC Program uses FMW, instead, to satisfy requirements in chapter four of NAVMC 3500.18C.<sup>82</sup> <sup>83</sup> There are eighteen lessons in FMW. Fourteen support twenty-three PCCs

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<sup>77</sup> Naval Service Training Command. Regulations for Officer Development, NSTC M-1533.2D, December 18, 2019, 48.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>80</sup> Naval Service Training Command, *Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Evolution of Warfare Course Guide*, October 7, 2016, 11.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>82</sup> Naval Service Training Command. Regulations for Officer Development, NSTC M-1533.2D, December 18, 2019, 48-49.

specific to NAVMC 3500.18C, three align with the CPG, and one, particular to the Marine Corps Operational Concept, is no longer relevant to the Marine Corps.<sup>84</sup> Midshipmen complete many of the requirements in FMW each semester during unit training, in other naval science courses, and at PLC-Seniors. The course is inconsistent across the NROTC Program, does not satisfy PCCs in Technical Foundations and Naval Warfare, and does not align with the CPG.<sup>85</sup>

### **Recommendations**

Aligning the NSTC role in educating and training Marine option midshipmen in the NROTC Program with the CPG could be a viable solution to the challenges and concerns highlighted in this paper. NSTC should incorporate the appropriate naval-related subjects listed in Table 1 into the Officer PCC Manual and corresponding naval science courses; require Marine option midshipmen to complete the PCCs within Seamanship and Navigation and work with the Marine Corps to exempt them from completing the requirements in chapter four of NAVMC 3500.18C; and terminate EOW and FMW and require Marine option midshipmen to complete Naval Operations and Seamanship, Naval Ships Systems II (Weapons), and Navigation. NROTC Units could integrate MOIs and AMOIs into these courses and others.

NSTC must re-evaluate administrative requirements placed on NROTC Units, remove MICPs and other requirements not mission-critical, and facilitate creating the ideal environment at NROTC Units. Changes would reorient Naval Science Instructors to their primary mission of taking civilians from the streets and transforming them into basically trained Naval and Marine Corps Officers. They would have the time to research, study, and prepare undergraduate-level

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<sup>83</sup> Naval Service Training Command, *Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Fundamentals of Maneuver Warfare Course Guide*, August 29, 2017, 8-14.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 15-16.

<sup>85</sup> Department of the Navy, Entry-Level Training (ELT) Training and Readiness (T&R) Manual, NAVMC 3500.18C, July 1, 2013, 142-143.

classes and training for midshipmen and to pursue intellectual and professional growth in adult learning.

The Navy and Marine Corps should screen prospective Naval Science Instructors for prior knowledge, experience, and training in adult learning. They could require applicants to submit an unclassified digital recording in DVD playable format of him or her teaching a subject to a group of service members. The video would give services an understanding of who these individuals are and how they educate and train adults. Along with getting better instructors, NSTC should focus on changing the training and education continuum at NROTC Units from an industrial age model to an information age model.

### **Conclusion**

NSTC must not delay in implementing the vital changes to the education and training of Marine option midshipmen in the NROTC Program mandated in the CPG. This implementation produces Marine Corps Officers envisioned by the CMC, who have a foundational-level understanding of requisite naval education concepts, programs, and warfare.<sup>86</sup> Such decision enhances the Navy and Marine Corps' ability to fight at sea, from the sea, and from the land to the sea; optimizes the Marine Corps for naval expeditionary warfare; and supports the creation of a more integrated, lethal, and capable naval service, supporting America's current strategic position.<sup>87 88 89</sup> This comes as the PRC seeks to become the world's wealthiest economy and

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<sup>86</sup> Brian Kerg, "What Does the Navy Need from the Marine Corps?" Proceedings, U.S. Naval Institute, November 2019, <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2019/november/what-does-navy-need-marine-corps>.

<sup>87</sup> *Commandant's Planning Guidance*. 2019. Washington, District of Columbia: United States Marine Corps, 12, 17.

<sup>88</sup> John Kroger, "Charting the Future of Education for the Navy-Marine Corps Team," Commentary, War on the Rocks, November 4, 2019, <https://warontherocks.com/2019/11/charting-the-future-of-education-for-the-navy-marine-corps-team/>.

expand its global reach and influence, and as the U.S. falls behind in technological superiority while facing challenges to its democracy.<sup>90 91</sup> Providing Marine option midshipmen with a world-class, challenging, and relevant education strengthens and accelerates intellectual development and supports the Department of the Navy with creating a naval service able to deter, out-think, and outfight peer competitors – the ultimate strategic advantage.<sup>92 93</sup> Failing to do this creates “unacceptable risk for American citizens, who have long relied on the Navy and Marine Corps to be at the intellectual forefront of national-security concerns” and jeopardizes U.S. naval dominance.<sup>94 95</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> John Kroger, “Ten Takeaways: The Education for Seapower Report,” Inside the Navy - The Official Blog of the U.S. Navy, United States Navy, October 17, 2019. <https://navylive.dodlive.mil/2019/10/17/ten-takeaways-the-education-for-seapower-report/>.

<sup>90</sup> John Kroger, “Charting the Future of Education for the Navy-Marine Corps Team,” Commentary, War on the Rocks, November 4, 2019, <https://warontherocks.com/2019/11/charting-the-future-of-education-for-the-navy-marine-corps-team/>

<sup>91</sup> United States Department of Defense. *2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2018), 1-3.

<sup>92</sup> John Kroger, Chief Learning Officer Reporting Aboard, Marine Corps Gazette, Marine Corps Association, October 2019, <https://mca-marines.org/wp-content/uploads/Chief-Learning-Officer.pdf>

<sup>93</sup> Honorable Thomas B. Modly, Acting United States Secretary of the Navy, the Department of the Navy, to the Department of the Navy, memorandum, February 28, 2020, 1.

<sup>94</sup> “Navy Transforms Naval Education, Hires First Chief Learning Officer,” Navy News Service, United States Navy, September 10, 2019, [https://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story\\_id=110830](https://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=110830)

<sup>95</sup> John Kroger, “Charting the Future of Education for the Navy-Marine Corps Team,” Commentary, War on the Rocks, November 4, 2019, <https://warontherocks.com/2019/11/charting-the-future-of-education-for-the-navy-marine-corps-team/>

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