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MOS MERGER:

INFANTRY AND COMBAT ARMS ONE IN THE SAME

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: The 0302/1802/1803 MOS Merger: Infantry and Combat Arms one in the same.

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Thesis:

Marine Corps FMF commanders require a more flexible and experienced ground combat arms officer who is able draw on a variety of assignments to meet the challenges of today's operating environment. Manpower has never been more challenged than it is today, Growing the Marine Corps to meet the Commandant's goals requires out of the box thinking and innovation. The Marine Corps should provide its commanders with this innovation by combining the skills inherent in Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) 1802, 1802 and 0302 into a single entity. The aggregate result of this merger will provide commanders with a multi-talented ground combat officer thereby capitalizing on the Marine Corps' scarce manpower resources. This merger will also afford flexibility for ground combat officers' careers that otherwise contributes to the attrition of first term' officers.

Problem: Specialization within the combat arms officer MOS's is detrimental to combined arms operations; such specialization restricts flexibility in assignments and under utilizes the talented Marines who strive for challenge.

Conversely, the infantry community enjoys the flexibility in assignments and experience broadening diversity of Light Armored Reconnaissance (LAR) battalions. The infantry model of two distinct organizations and tactics, theory of employment should be broadened to include armor and Amtracs.

Infantry officers assigned to LAR battalions without prior experience are sent to the LAR Leaders course. Infantry officers assigned to armor or Amtrac battalion also sent to short "leaders" course to prepare them for the specific requirements. Six weeks of LAR Leaders Course is sufficient to train an officer to be competent operating a vehicle that has armor protection, long-range radio equipment and substantial firepower, the same attributes a tank and an Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAV) has. The ability to master quickly the technical aspects of operating mechanized equipment does not require over four months of training as the current Armor Officers Basic (AOB) requires. In fact, the AOB at Fort Knox, Kentucky, is a combination of The Basic School and MOS qualifying school for Army officers. Half or more of the curriculum is review for Marine officers attending AOB. LAV's, Tanks, and AAV then designed for ease of use; the tactics of employment are different for each vehicle and to be taught in a short time. The maintenance system, supply, and gunnery are all integrated. With the fielding of the new AAV, gunnery qualification for all three platforms will be nearly identical.

Assignment requirements in the Long War have only accelerated the need to address this requirement. While infantry officers take the brunt of deployments, armor and AAV officers have had significantly less operational requirements within their MOS's. The draw for individual augments (IA) has been significant across the board; those IA billets can be filled by wide variety officers.

While the Marine Cops is growing to 202,000 Marines under the Manpower plus up, a hard look must be taken at the way assignments were done in the past and a better way to make the most of the manpower available.

Discussion:

Marine Officers attending The Basic Course (TBS), a six-month course on officer essential skills, such as land navigation, leadership and tactics, is a basic and breadth college for new officers. Near the end of TBS's six months of instruction, a selection process for follow-on specialization occurs. The class of 250 students is broken into thirds, top, middle and bottom, based on the graded events throughout the six months. Military Occupation Specialty (MOS) selection based on several factors, student preference, lineal standing, and Student Platoon Commander (SPC) (a junior to mid-grade Captain input. From this point on, the students' career is set on a specific path and only rarely branched in a different direction.

Officers selected for infantry, usually 25% of the student class, are assigned to an infantry regiment, or to an LAR battalion.ⁱ Those selected for LAR upon graduation from the Officer Infantry Course (OIC?), which is ten-weeks long, then sent to follow on training at the LAV Leaders Course, which is six weeks long.ⁱⁱ Officers selected to become armor officers then sent to Armor Officer Basic Course (AOB) that is over four months of training. Officers selected to the AAV community attend Assault Amphibian Officers Course for seven weeks.ⁱⁱⁱ

Combining these three MOS's into a Combat Arms MOS would have several positive effects the Officer Corps, Manpower assignment, and streamlined training to fleet time and expense. The benefit to the individual officer would be a career in which he would have an expanse of assignments and challenges. The parochialism of infantry, armor, and AAV's would disappear in a generation of officers and a spirit of cooperation and balance would emerge. The Marine Corps is not a balanced force as cited by the current Commandants' appeal to ground managers to "balance the force" when those ground managers met to discuss the Commandants' request bargaining, dispute and a furthering of disproportionate force structure proposals were the best that could be achieved. In fact: Since 1991, the Marine Corps has reduced its total armor structure by 30%, yet the number of tanks to be manned and maintained remains the same. LAV structure has increased since 1991, and the infantry structure under the Plus Up proposal will also increase. The requirement for armor in Desert Storm and the invasion of Iraq demanded significant augmentation from the reserve component to round out active component tank battalions. Armor representation has been reduced significantly; armor advocates have not been vocal, or assigned to positions that would allow for a properly balanced force. With introduction of a combat arms MOS the parochialism of desperate MOS influence would not be a factor, officers from the combat arms MOS would have a sense of ownership in all of the platforms that offer capability to the fight and balance that capability to fit their requirements. Assignment issues would be reduced significantly by increasing the population of officers to fill billets, regardless of their specialty.

Conclusions:

1. The Marine Corps should emphasize flexibility in the officer corps to aid manpower shortages by de-specializing combat arms MOSs.
2. The Marine Corps should combine MOSs 0302, 1802 and 1803 into a single and more capable entity at the entry-level grade, 2nd Lieutenant.
3. The Marine Corps should reevaluate and combine the Individual Training Standards (ITS) for MOSs 0302, 1802 and 1803 as a composite listing of skills required for the new hybrid MOS.
4. The Marine Corps should combine and restructure its entry level Combat Arms Officer Course to produce the newly combined MOSs.

DISCLAIMER

THE OPINIONS AND CONCLUSIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN ARE THOSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT AUTHOR AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF EITHER THE MARINES CORPS COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE OR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCY. REFERENCES TO THIS STUDY SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOREGOING STATEMENT. QUOTATION FROM, ABSTRACTION FROM, OR REPRODUCTION OF ALL OR ANY PART OF THIS DOCUMENT IS PERMITTED PROVIDED PROPER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT IS MADE.

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The 0302/1802/1803 MOS Merger:
Infantry and Combat Arms one in the same

Introduction

The thesis proposed in this paper draws its inspiration from a Command and Staff paper discussing the merger of two communications occupational specialties, the basis for a change that has greatly benefited the communications field as well as the Marine Corps. The format, discussion topics, and research in this proposal are inspired from that successful paper. The benefit of taking this approach is that the Marine Corps should follow the same line of logic for the merger of ground combat arms occupational specialties in the same way that it did in merging Data System officers with Communication officer occupational specialties.¹

Thesis:

Marine Corps FMF commanders require a more flexible and experienced ground combat arms officer who is able draw on a variety of assignments to meet the challenges of today's operating environment. Manpower has never been more challenged than it is today, Growing the Marine Corps to meet the Commandant's goals requires out of the box thinking and innovation. The Marine Corps should provide its commanders with this innovation by combining the skills inherent in Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) 1802, 1802 and 0302 into a single entity. The aggregate result of this merger will provide commanders with a multi-talented ground combat officer thereby capitalizing on the Marine Corps' scarce manpower resources. This merger will also afford flexibility for ground combat officers' careers that otherwise contributes to the attrition of first term' officers.

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While considering technological advances over the last 20 years in the Marine Corps, ground equipment is more advanced and training has become more intensive. Assigning manpower in this more specialized environment requires intensive manpower management. Before the Marine Corps Manpower Plus Up to 202,000 is achieved, a hard look must be taken at whether the Marine Corps is going to continue to specialize or try to consolidate MOSs into less specialized branches. The recent consolidation of communications officer and data management officer MOSs, manpower specialists analyzed the two distinct MOSs and recognized that two distinct MOSs were not required. By consolidating the two into one, the Marine Corps was able to adapt to the changing technology and manpower requirements. In the same way, the Marine Corps should recognize that combat arms should not be broken into specialties, but rather placed into one MOS.

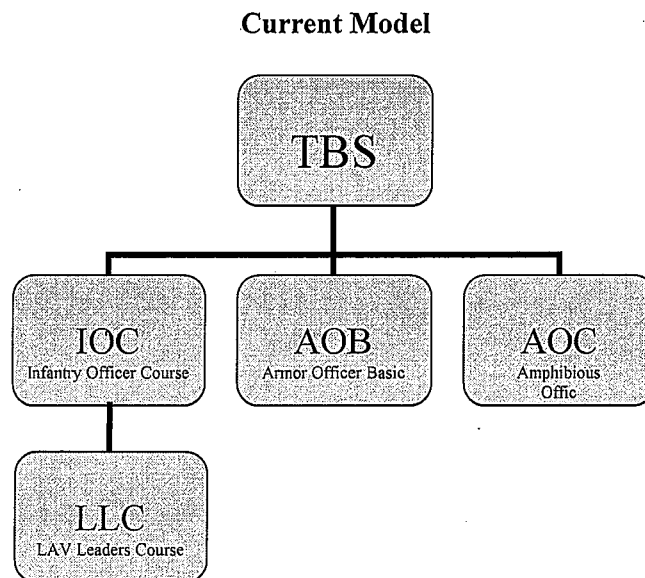
Two Marine Corps ethos, that every Marine is a rifleman, and that every officer is an infantry platoon commander first; it is not too much of a leap to consider that armor, infantry, and AAV officers require many of the same skill sets. While every officer must be proficient at his skill set, he is not expected to be the technical expert in his MOS. In a long tradition that the enlisted Marines are the technical experts and that the officer is the tactician and leader of the unit. This tradition is

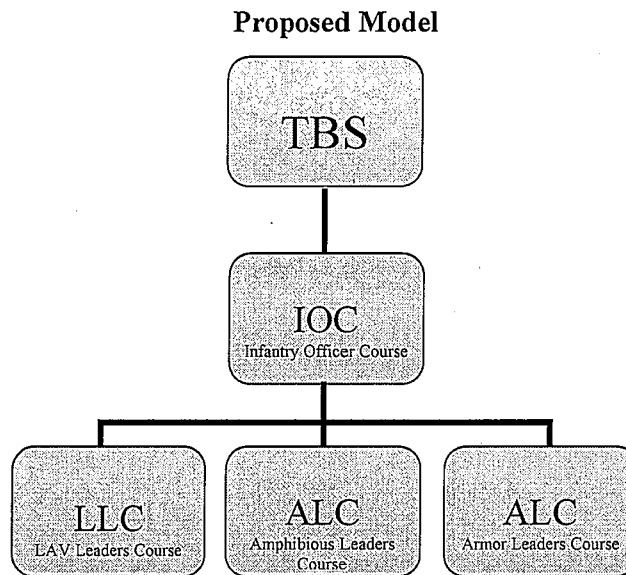
demonstrated particularly in the armor community as the enlisted Marines are sent to master gunner school and are considered the technical expert of the tank, while the officers are required to be able to fight, communicate, and lead their Marines in the field, and garrison.

Comparing armor and light armored reconnaissance communities, gunnery qualification for armor and light armored reconnaissance is much the same, vehicle commanders must issue fire commands, control their platoons, and direct fires against enemy targets. In practical terms, the only difference in those communities during the gunnery training is the equipment. With fielding of the new AAV, Marines in that community will go through a similar gunnery qualification semiannually. Requiring enlisted master gunners, and vehicle commanders; who are capable of shooting, moving, and communicating. As infantry officers are required to transition from light armored reconnaissance battalions to infantry regiments and back, it is evident that the infantry community is comfortable with having the officers transition between equipment and tactical changes. Should combat arms officers and communities be comfortable transitioning between infantry armor and light armored reconnaissance assignments?

Examining the armor community and the initial training that officers receive. Armor Officer basic course is approximately 4 ½ months of training at Fort Knox Kentucky. This training consists of land navigation leadership map exercises and armor specific training. For U.S. Army Officers, this school is much like the basic school for U.S. Marine officers in that it consists of many of the initial training requirements that Marine lieutenants receive at the basic school in Quantico, Virginia. Much of this training is duplicated with the training received at TBS, making that duplication a wasted effort. An armor leader's course that consisted of armor specific tactics and equipment A training period consistent with that of the light armored reconnaissance leaders course would be a much more efficient use of the Marine Corps training dollars and a shorten the time lieutenants require from training to fleet commands. During the course of instruction at Fort Knox, many of the classes are U.S. Army specific. Marine lieutenants are not required to attend, during this time Marine lieutenants are encouraged to visit

the enlisted tank school co-located at Fort Knox. Marine lieutenants are also paid TAD for the full for a half months of school By transitioning to an armor leader's course for duration of six weeks of intense armor specific training the Marine Corps would reduce the training to fleet time of the lieutenants and save an enormous amount of money that is currently being paid in TAD dollars. Interestingly, infantry mid-grade officers are assigned to the advanced armor course many of those infantry officers are then assigned to light armored reconnaissance battalions upon graduation. Clearly, a direct line between light armored reconnaissance and armor tactics is recognized, and addressed by assignment of infantry officers to the advanced armor course at Fort Knox. So again it is not too much of a leap to transition from two distinct military occupational specialties infantry and armor into one.





One of the many benefits of this consolidation would be the reduction in of specific billets in which to assign infantry and armor officers. Creating a larger pool of officers in which to assign, promote, and screen for command. Under the current structure and armor officers only compete against other armor officers for command of first tanks, second tanks, and a fourth tank battalion. With the consolidation of those two military occupational specialties would compete against each other where the best commanders selected regardless of their military occupational specialty. Within a generation or two of officers under this new military occupational skill a breadth of experience in multiple platforms would create an officer corps with the ability to quickly transition from one equipment platform to another thereby decreasing the chasm between infantry and armor communities the byproduct of which would be a new breed of officer with flexible and broad experience-based decision-making abilities.

Considering manpower management during the long war it is clear that combat arms MOSs had taken the brunt of the deployments. Deploying unit billet assignments have taken precedence, leaving

stateside assignments including Inspector instructor, training and education billets gapped in some cases. While monitors are challenged to fill, deployment billets first units that are out of rotation for deployment and many gapped billets. An example in point, consider first tank battalion with one company deployed to Iraq, one company working up for Iraq, IA billets consumed to out of three Field grade Officer positions' within the battalion. Under the proposed combat arms and the MOS, monitors would be able to move a greater population of officers to key billets thereby making the assignment process more efficient.

Another consideration for combat arms MOS is the broadening as an officer's career opportunities. Currently infantry officers are assigned to fleet positions in straight-legged infantry battalions and light armored reconnaissance battalions. Armor officers can be assigned at the company grade level to tank battalions only, at the field grade level they can be assigned to tank battalions occasionally as the executive officer for a light armored reconnaissance Battalion or as a infantry Regiment operations officer. AAD officers at the company level can be assigned to a ADV battalions for fleet assignments only. With the new, combat arms highbred both company grade and field grade officers are assigned to any number of fleet billets. This would open professional opportunities to officers that would otherwise be geographically limited to Camp Lejeune North Carolina, or Twentynine Palms California. This highbred MOS will allow flexibility in geographic and billet specific assignments, over the course of career as an officer will have the opportunity to serve and armor, light armored reconnaissance, straight leg infantry, or and AAV Battalion. On the battlefield it is apparent that this hybrid MOS would help coordination between adjacent units and understanding how supporting arms can benefit mission accomplishment. Much time it money and training are dedicated to task organization, cross attachments, and equipment capabilities. As an example, consider Battalion standard operating procedures between infantry regiments and how different they must be from standard operating procedures from tank battalions and AAV battalions. With a common military

occupational skill, the standard operating procedures would have a common vernacular thereby reducing the friction on the battlefield, training, and Garrison.

When looking at division organization of infantry regiments consist of three infantry battalions a regimental headquarters, with several independent battalions. One tank battalion, one AAV Battalion, and one light armored reconnaissance Battalion. With a highbred MOS, the organization of the division is revised to make armor, reconnaissance, and amphibious vehicles organic to the infantry Regiment. Much consideration in the past, focused on into a combined arms Regiment however, this is not come to pass because of different unit training, education, and equipment. The Marine Corps teaches its mid-grade officers that they should consider themselves MAGTAF officers. A combat arms MOS would be a doctrinal establishment of that very mindset.

While many officers may believe that the current structure, organization, and manning of the Marine Corps is sufficient, it would be ignoring the simple truth that the old ways are not sufficient for the rigors of a long war and beyond. It is apparent particularly in the armor community that there is no need for an armor specific military occupational skill. As noted, too much time spent at Fort Knox Kentucky for entry-level officers and the training they receive is not worth the cost, and is more efficiently within the Marine Corps. Looking more closely at how entry-level officers would be trained initially to become combat arms officers. Upon completion of the basic school, officers elected to combat arms would proceed to infantry officers' course, at that point the company grade ground monitors would select billets for the pool of officers graduating from infantry officers' course. Officers elected to armor units would attend armor leaders course, officers selected to light armored reconnaissance would attend LAV leaders course, officers selected to AAV battalions would attend AAV leaders' course all approximately 6 weeks in length. Upon completion of their initial tours, officers assigned to B billets in nearly any field. Upon completion of B billets combat arms officers

would then be selected to attend resident advanced courses based upon their follow tours in infantry, armor, light armored reconnaissance or AAV's.

Ground combat arms monitors often times at a difficult task in signing appropriately trained officers and low density MOS's. An example of this difficulty is Inspector instructor billets. With the reduction of armor structure over the last 20 years there has been very little change to the reserve armor structure creating a significant shortfall of armor officers to fill active and independent duty billets. During the long war this problem is exacerbated, leaving monitors little choice but to assign armor officers multiple Inspector instructor duties, and sometimes assignment of lieutenants to the majors billet. Representation of armor officers in resident professional military instruction is under staffed, denying Sr. military occupational skill officers to gain useful insight understanding armor capabilities. These same issues are also found in the AAV community, tracked vehicle officers consist of only a small portion of the officer corps. Frustration between infantry and tracked vehicle commander officers goes back to a study in 1985. AAV command doctrine hinges largely on the extent to which knowledge of AAV maneuver kept in his dream of command this is in direct contrast with the tactics infantry officers often times would choose. Again, under this hybrid MOS these issues would no longer cause friction between supporting and supported units. Tank and infantry tactics are a skill sets that are found in task organized infantry armor units. The integration of infantry and armor is a critical skill set and directly linked to mission success and low casualty rates, but there is no doctrinal tank infantry organization. Only during times of war and prolonged field exercises do armor and infantry units train to this standard. Under the hybrid, combat arms MOS; officers would transition from armor and infantry units creating an organic understanding of how to integrate armor and infantry. Within a generation of officers holding a Combat Arms MOS. Infantry, armor, as well as AAV's would all have a common operating viewpoint.

The importance of these skill sets cannot be understated; it is long past time to take a proactive step to eliminate the timeless friction between infantry, armor, and tracks. The Marine Corps has low density MOS's that are in high demand during peace time, during times of war these low density MOS's are in higher demand, operational commitments obligate them to more frequent deployments, shorter periods at home and subsequently a lower re-enlistment rate. MOS's tasked to wear dual hats during the long war are facing the same challenges. In the tank battalion, there are 0352 infantrymen with a anti-tank specialty. These Marines have been deploying at a much higher rate than the other MOS's in the battalion. Recently in an effort to relieve this pressure, 1st Tank battalion deployed one of its tank companies as a provisional anti-tank platoon. In the reserve forces tank companies from 4th Tank Battalion deployed to Iraq as provisional military police. There are many examples of artillery units deploying as both provisional military police and civil affairs units. Every Marine is a rifleman first has been a long-standing ethos; every Marine officer is an infantry officer, is another. These are time-tested practices, nowhere more prevalent than in the reserve component. Officers move from one unit to another frequently changing primary MOS's from air defense to infantry, then to armor. Combat arms officers are not restricted to those specific billets as they are in the active component. Logistics officers can move in and out of combat arms, the needs of the Marine Corps, units, and the individual Marine are important.

Officer assignment in the reserve component has required flexibility as officer shortfalls is felt nowhere more than Marine Forces Reserve (MARFORRES). Mid-grade officers moving between different units have challenged the MOS qualification requirements. In the armor community a 19 day MOS qualification school was created to relieve the pressure of new officers to the armor community attending the four and a half month long AOB. This demonstrates the ability of officers to grasp the basic skills required to shoot, move and communicate from the M1A1 platform. Many of the officers attending the 19-day course had infantry backgrounds, those officers with combat arms experience grasp the tactics and communications requirements with greater ease than those without. The 19-day

course would be a good starting point when considering the curriculum of a six week armored leaders course.

United States Army Calvary officers have a broad assignment pool that is very different from the current United States Marine Corps assignment process. Calvary officers are assigned to armor units (in the same manner as Marines) they can also be assigned to mechanized infantry units, particularly Bradley fighting vehicle units. Armor officers also found in operations officer assignments in light infantry units. This flexibility in assignment has proven valuable to detailers (manpower monitors in Marine vernacular), as well as to the fighting ability of armor and mechanized infantry units. Officers with experience in armor and mechanized infantry units have a broader understanding of employment of the tank/infantry team as well. The U.S. Army is currently looking at further breaking down the barriers that branches within the U.S. Army currently restrict assignments and warfighting efficiency.

Armor officers in the U.S. Army are both armor and mechanized infantry vehicle commanders, they are assigned to armor units, Bradley fighting vehicle units (Calvary), and also light infantry units as Calvary (HMMWV) mounted. U.S. Army armor officers can also be assigned to operations billets in light infantry, Calvary and armor. This system of assignment offers flexibility to both the officers, and manpower personnel. This system of flexibility in assignment has bred a camaraderie in combat units that is not currently found in the United States Marine Corps.

Marine infantry commanders have been at odds with AAV commanders for years, doctrine between the two community's conflicts as to who is in command of the vehicle when infantry are aboard. While AAV doctrine dictates the AAV vehicle commander is in command of the operation of the vehicle, the infantry doctrine dictates that while troops are being transported the infantry commander is in charge.⁵ This age-old conflict has to be revisited during every training exercise and combat operation with frustration and friction that is unnecessary and creates a further gap between the

two communities. Uniting these officer MOS's would go a long way to clear up the doctrinal fracture and bond the communities into a cohesive combat force.

Compared to its sister services, the Marine Corps is a minute organization. Because of its small size, personalities play a major role in the politics of any proposed change within the organization. When polling officers within the 0302 and 1802 MOS fields it became clear that mid-grade officers, Majors and LtCols believed merging MOSs made allot of sense however, all agreed that the largest hurdle to overcome would be the Marine Corps culture. Cultural influence in this case has a significant probability of suppressing innovation. Traditional designations of infantry, armor and tracks has little meaning while re-structuring the Marine Corps to meet the challenges of the 21st century and the Long War.

The Marine Corps has fewer personnel but more capable equipment today than it did 20 years ago. The Corps must also perform the same national defense role with the additional challenge of doing it with less money and manpower. While a merger of MOSs in occupational fields 1802, 1803 and 0302 is not a panacea to the Marine Corps' manpower requirements; the need to investigate the merger seems timelier now than ever before. The Marine Corps should adapt to its new high-operating tempo environment by more closely matching the capability of its personnel with the capability of its organizational structure.

Thesis:

Marine Corps FMF commanders require a more flexible and experienced ground combat arms officer that is able draw on a variety of assignments to meet the challenges of today's operating environment. Manpower has never been more challenged than it is today, growing the Marine Corps to meet the Commandants goals requires out of the box thinking and innovation. The Marine Corps should provide its commanders with this capability by combining the skills inherent in MOSs 1802, 1802 and 0302 into a single entity. The aggregate result of this merger will provide commanders with a

multi-talented ground combat officer thereby capitalizing on the Marine Corps' scarce manpower resources. This merger will also afford flexibility into ground combat officers careers that otherwise contributes to the attrition of 1st term officers.

Growing the Corps capability, as well and personal end strength

While a great deal of energy is being spent on how to meet the commandants manpower goal, it seems that less is being exerted on how re-structuring can free-up manpower to accomplish other vital tasks. Assessing the balance of the force was one of the commandant's greatest concerns on par with the plan on how to achieve the new manpower cap. General Conway and his staff generated a plan to incorporate that balanced force, it was subsequently sent out to the infantry and armor leadership. Instead of taking a parochial stance, the armor leadership submitted to the infantry commanders and accepted a further reduction of armor structure, from the commandant's proposal. General Conway proposed that a 3rd tank battalion be added to the active duty structure, after the infantry and armor leadership meeting, that battalion was reduced from adding four tank companies in a new battalion (essentially unfurling 3rd Tank Battalion colors and re-standing the battalion up),⁶ instead they agreed to add one additional tank company to the existing tank battalions. While this plan may seem to be innovative, it is nothing more than adding to a traditional mindset. General Conway and his staff recognized that there is a need to add to armor structure, but when sent to subordinate leadership; his plan was modified, diluted to a more acceptable form of what exists today. Bold innovation is in the Marine Corps culture, but is harder to capitalize on than ever. This anecdote is meant to help illustrate how difficult change can be if it is not recognized and overcome.

Arguments against the merger

Change for the sake of change alone does not correspond to improvement and is not automatically a wise decision. Gaius Petronius, 66 AD, once said, "We trained hard, but it seems that every time we were beginning to form up into teams, we would be reorganized. I was to learn later that

we tend to meet any new situation by reorganizing and what a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency, and demoralization."⁷

The Marine Corps must reflect on a merger of occupational fields 0302, 1902, and 1803 with the same degree of thought. Change without practicality and improvement would only serve to squander energy. If the Marine Corps decides to change its manpower management philosophy as it relates to the employment of combat arms officers, this new attitude should help to create an atmosphere more profitable than the status quo and better suited to address today's challenges and those of the future.

Seemingly the most cumbersome argument against the merger is that of tradition or culture. Infantry officers are fiercely protective of the infantry community, guarding against the mechanized mindset. Examples of military forces that became too dependant on mechanized assets are many. The Israelis in the 1976 Yom Kippur War initially over-estimated the combat effectiveness of mechanized pure units and their losses are historic. The Russians more recently in Grozny in their fight against the Chechnyan's attacked into Grozny with mechanized pure columns and were decimated by dismounted forces. This merger is not an argument for mechanized formations or doctrine, it is an argument for exactly what the infantry officers are dedicated to protect, infantry first, and platform trained officers that will close the gap in ground combat units.

Some infantry officers have made the argument for a specific MOS for LAVs', the premise of this argument is that LAV's are a technical vehicle and the tactics involved in employing them effective are so different from the traditional infantry missions that training new officers to the LAR battalion takes time that could be better spent operating. This argument is for the specialization of LAR into it's own occupational specialty, allowing for better proficiency in it's officer corps. This argument limits the flexibility that the infantry community enjoys as well as limiting the monitors ability to assign any

officer with the 0302 designator to LAR. Second order affects would be a community of officers that would become parochial, slicing out a niche and dividing what is now a united branch.

Some may argue that the merger will produce a population of generalists and move away from officer specialists if the merger is approved. Today, MOSs 1802 and 1803 are considered specialty MOSs and are technically oriented. An argument of generalist verses specialist contends that the Corps will be forced to dilute the proficiency base of the officers born to the new combined MOS. The argument continued states that officers in the new combined MOS will be "Jacks of all trades and masters of none." Despite the points of contention and cultural baggage that accompanies them, the merger has many more compelling arguments in its favor. There is a great deal of practicality and supporting rationale that the Marine Corps should consider as well.

Arguments for the merger

Many officers in favor of the merger maintain that combining occupational fields 0302, 1802 and 1803 is an innovative idea that makes perfect sense, that is to say that specialization in ground combat arms does not add to the Marine Corps ethos of do more with less. Our everyday practices with units deploying to Iraq both active and reserve show that specialization is counter productive to the requirements for general purpose Marines. The merger is a solution to codify our common practices into a doctrinal innovation for efficiency. The second order affect of the merger is an officer Corps that is better suited to fight combined arms and maneuver warfare. Third order affects are an officer Corps that has flexibility in assignments and challenges that will be an incentive to continue their active service.

By merging three ground combat arms occupational specialties into one, the culture differences of those occupational specialties would be merged over time into one. This would remove the friction that exists in the current system. Trackers and tankers that have a death before dismount mentality would be forced into the reality that officers lead from the front regardless of which platform they are

fighting from, the critical element of leadership that is founded at TBS. Coordination between these occupational specialties in combat would be more seamless than it is today. The impact of this shift in philosophy would effectively remove an us verses them mentality, one that creates a negative perception between the three occupational specialties today.

Manpower assignment flexibility would be improved threefold, from officers initial assignment throughout his career manpower would have the ability to place the officer that best fit the billet opening regardless of his past assignments. This would have its greatest impact on assignment of officers to deploying units; manpower is forced today to send units to combat short of its line table of organization requirements. Manpower management efficiencies is more important today than ever, the merger offers a solution to the restrictions that limit monitors ability to place qualified officers in vacant billets that are critical to mission success. Currently armor officers are restricted to armor specific billets, yet the demand for the capabilities and effectiveness of those officers is above the supply. Infantry officers have enjoyed flexibility in assignments and it has added to the health and vitality of their corps of officers.

Exploring the Options

- (1) The Marine Corps could maintain the status quo and do nothing.
- (2) The Marine Corps could combine MOSs 0302, 1802 and 1803 at the entry level (Second Lieutenant).
- (3) The Marine Corps could combine only MOSs 0302, 1802 and 1803 at the mid-career level (Captain-Major).

Course of action number one: This course of action is contrary to the purpose of this study and offers no opportunities for improvement. The Marine Corps manpower establishment must look at innovative methods to glean efficiencies where possible. Maintaining the status quo does not meet the

challenges facing the Marine Corps. Organizations must adapt to changing environments, and keeping old systems in spite of clear evidence that a new course would make improvements is not wise.

Course of action number two: This is the course of action that is recommended, by combining infantry, armor and tracks at the entry level. By merging three occupational skills into one at the entry level, all efficiencies and affects are realized. Cultural divides between occupational skills will diminish within a relatively short time. Assignment flexibility will be most greatly realized by manpower, and the entry level officers will have a common bond. Infantry officers are the key component to the history of the Marine Corps, by broadening their experience the Marine Corps fighting efficiency will be greatly improved.

Course of action number three: This is the most recognizable course of action as it most closely pertains to the day to day operation in the Marine Corps. Reflected most closely in the reserve component; as 1st term officer leave active duty, and join reserve units that are different from their initial occupational skill. After completing occupational skill training that is commensurate with the unit that they have joined, they are integrated into the new community. Course of action three does very little to address the most common combat organization and the friction that exists at the company level, concerning combat, attachments and task organization of tracks and infantry.

The New MOS

Marines have a legacy of doing more with less; this legacy has been the driving force behind the innovation that keeps the Marine Corps viable. Old paradigms of organization need to be critically analyzed from time to time to ensure the current way of doing business is appropriate to the current environment. Officers are capable of doing more technologically than ever before, Marine Corps equipment is advancing beyond historic organizational lines. Demanding more of our officer corps by combining combat arms MOS's into one, accomplishes altruistic and pragmatic innovation together.

The new MOS, an infantry officer that has a broader experience base, broader opportunity for assignments, and a fighting force that discards the friction that reduced it's fighting ability. While pitching this idea to a retired armor officer, he responded back with an objection, he said "do you think you can train a tanker to operate an Amtrac in six weeks and keep him from sinking it?"⁸ The current training period for an entry level Amtrac officer is 54 days long. This highlights the lack of knowledge of highly comparable MOS's, in fact the only two tracked vehicle MOS's in the Marine Corps. Of course officers can train to standard on new equipment, the problem in today's high technology environment, is the officers making organization level decisions enlisted 20 to 30 years ago, and have no comparable experiences to the entry level officers of today. Technology is not viewed as a hurdle to young officers, as it is career officers. Concerns about proficiency should be addressed to field grade officers and above, company grade officers are ready for the challenge.

Transition:

General Conway stated in his planning guidance, "To meet the inevitable crises that arise, our Corps must be sufficiently manned, well trained, and properly equipped. While we must seek to capitalize on advances in technology, regardless of task, it is our magnificent Marines who will invariably decide the outcome; our successes will be borne on their very capable shoulders"⁹. Cold War era MOS organization is not practical for contemporary challenges. Marine Corps legacy of innovation, and adaptability is being applied to technology in many areas, however, the Marine Corps has taken short cuts to adapt to manpower and MOS shortfalls, the time has come to assess the best way to make changes to the combat arms MOS mindset.

Thesis (revisited):

Marine Corps FMF commanders require a more flexible and experienced ground combat arms officer that is able draw on a variety of assignments to meet the challenges of today's operating

environment. Manpower has never been more challenged than it is today, growing the Marine Corps to meet the Commandants goals requires out of the box thinking and innovation. The Marine Corps should provide its commanders with this capability by combining the skills inherent in MOSs 1802, 1802 and 0302 into a single entity. The aggregate result of this merger will provide commanders with a multi-talented ground combat officer thereby capitalizing on the Marine Corps' scarce manpower resources. This merger will also afford flexibility into ground combat officers careers that otherwise contributes to the attrition of 1st term officers.

Summary:

As with the Masters Thesis advocating the combination of Data Systems and Communication Officer military occupational Skills, and its subsequent formalization, this study has made a similar case for change within the ground combat arms military occupational skills. The Marine Corps has transitioned away from traditional assignments in the face of challenges incurred from the Long War. The time has come to formalize those changes in a rational thought out process. This study is an attempt to start that process; change is startling and induces resistance regardless of how that change might benefit an individual or an organization. Cultural bias will play an important role in the ability to accept the proposed change. The author hopes that the culture of innovation and adaptability will override the organizational resistance to this proposed change. Clearly the Marine Corps requires flexible officers, with an ability to accept challenges that are outside of the formalized schoolhouse education they receive, this proposal is aimed at re-focusing that education in a more viable direction, in order to better suite the challenges that the Corps faces today.

(1) The Marine Corps should explore a more accessible and structured education opportunity for combat arms officers to acquire the skills they need.

(2) The Marine Corps should explore a means to provide adequate numbers of Properly trained combat arms officers to units fighting the Long War.

(3) The Marine Corps should accept the proposal to merge the military occupational skills of 0302, 1802 and 1803.

(4) The Marine Corps should analyze the practices that enable IA assignment regardless of experience or training as a parallel to the MOS issue.

The merging of 0302, 1802, and 1803 will provide fighting organizations with officers that are formally trained to accept the challenges they face during the Long War. This proposal address several contemporary issues the Corps faces: flexibility in its officer corps, broadening career opportunities for young officers and the retention of those officers, and formalizing the plug and play process that places officers in billets they have not been properly trained for. Resistance to change must be overcome with intellectual integrity, cultural biases of "that is not the way we do business" have no place in an innovative organization with a tradition of adaptation. Merging ground combat MOS's into one flexible MOS is the right decision, and must be advocated in order to meet the challenges of the Long War and an ever changing global environment.

¹ Merger of Data System and Communication officer MOSs C&S paper

² TBS assignment info, manpower

³ MOS School info, IOC and LAR

⁴ MOS School info, AAV Officer Course; <http://www.tecom.usmc.mil/aasbn/index.htm>

⁵ AAV Doctrine and Infantry Doctrine reference who is in charge?

⁶ Commandants planning guidance for a balanced force.

⁷ Augustine, Norman R.. Augustine's Laws. Reston: Aiaa (American Institute Of Aeronautics & Ast, 1997, Petronius Arbiter

⁸ Col Wilkinson email 2-2-08 Ground Combat Arms MOS proposal

⁹ Commandants planning guidance Nov 2006;
<http://www.marforres.usmc.mil/Archive/2006.11/CPG.html>

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