

EXPEDITIONARY WARFARE SCHOOL

“Today’s Rifleman”

EWS Contemporary Issues Paper
Submitted by Captain Zeb Beasley
to
Major Thiele

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Introduction

In 1988, the Marine Corps formalized training for non-infantry Marines with the creation of Marine Combat Training Battalion (MCT). The creation of MCT Battalion was designed to be the culminating step in establishing the Marine Corps ethos “Every Marine a Rifleman” ethos.¹ Since its inception, MCT has undergone four radical shifts that have altered the number of individual skills taught and the amount of time devoted to teaching each individual skill. These changes have been so rapid and dramatic, that the MCT of today would be in every respect unrecognizable to a 1988 graduate. However, the basic definition of what a Marine rifleman is and his place on the battlefield has not changed since the programs inception. The changes that have taken place at MCT reflect not mere refinement of an existing program, but a change in philosophy and an attempt to “specialize” an “every Marine” concept for today’s current operating environment. These changes have not made today’s rifleman any more relevant and have come at the high price of inconsistency within our entry-level training pipeline.

Background

The “Every Marine a Rifleman” concept owes its inception to the Korean War during which Marine units were forced by necessity to form entire infantry companies from combat support and combat service

¹ MCT History Page. www.lejeune.usmc.mil/SOI/MCT

support units.² This concept was formalized in 1988 with the establishment of Marine Combat Training Battalion under then Marine Corps Commandant General Alfred Gray. The mission of the Marine Combat Training Battalion can be expressed in simple and straightforward terms: "Make Riflemen." The definition of "riflemen" used at the Chosin Reservoir was, "any Marine who is proficient in the use of his weapon to the point where he can effectively defend himself or other members of his unit (survivability)." Moreover, a rifleman was expected to be ready to integrate in an infantry unit and be an effective contributor immediately. The current mission statement, adopted by MCT in 2006, reflects this same expectation. Nevertheless, in practice, training has broadened in scope to include tasks and standards that are unique in their application to the Marine Corps current Operating Environment. While these unique skill sets are without argument important to grasp, they have taken time and resources away from skills that might be considered more "basic."

Changes

With the rapid changes that have been made to Marine Combat Training Battalion since 1988, the Marine Corps has transformed Marine "riflemen" from the masters of a small set of common skills into the "jack of all trades." The table in Appendix B is an abbreviated lay-out of the skills taught at SOI from 1993 to 2005.³

² MCT History Page. www.lejeune.usmc.mil/SOI/MCT

³ Between 1998 and 1993 both Infantry and Non-Infantry Marines went through an 28-Day POI together at MCT. Following this training block, Infantry Marines went on to receive more advanced training while non-infantry Marines reported to

Appendix A is the Marine Corps Common Skills Order Volume I that identifies what skills are to be taught and to what level of mastery. In 2005, the first wave of major change since 1993 came during the annual Course Content Review Board⁴. The Review Board stated its purpose as:

- "a. Analyze current training requirements
- b. Reduce training inefficiencies
- c. Add new training initiatives based on lessons learned from OEF/OIF in accordance with CG TECOM guidance given at the 2005 Entry Level Continuum Conference.
- d. Migrate, Suspend or delete portions of the MCT POI IOT accommodate new training initiatives based on OEF/OIF lessons learned."⁵

As a result of this purpose, the following skills and training hours were added:

Skill	Hours Added: ⁶
Individual Action While Mounted	5.25
Improvised Explosive Devices	4.25
Combat Marksmanship	19.00

their individual MOS Schools. In 1997, in an effort to include female Marines and add time for the MCRD Crucible, the MCT POI was shorted to 22-Days. This decrease in time also lead to a decrease in number and type of resources available to train non-infantry Marines. Although this process may have been more efficient for the Marine Corps at that time, the shift is in contrast to the "Every Marine a Rifleman" ethos.

⁴ Record of Proceedings, Course Content Review Board, August 2005

⁵ Ibid

⁶ It is important to note that at the time these skills were added, the School of Infantry was not quite sure how long these skills would take to teach and to what level of proficiency was reasonable to try and achieve. These times were added with the understanding that they would be modified during the 2006 CCRB if required.

Guardian Angel	0.5
Total Hours	29.00

In order to add an additional 29.00 hours without adding additional training days, the following skills were suspended⁷ from the POI or migrated to the Operating Forces:

Skill	Hours Deleted:
Ground Pyrotechnics (Migrated)	2.00
Field Telephones (Migrated)	3.75
Claymore Mine (Migrated)	3.75
NBC (Suspended)	7.50
Total Hours:	17.50

Although the removal of 17 hours did not make up completely for the addition of 29 hours it did lessen the impact. In August of 2005, there was no tangible evidence that pointed to a correlation between the skills taught at Marine Combat Training and the performance of Marines on the battlefield. There was also no time or effort devoted to analyzing what impact these new additions might. The assumption

⁷ Skills that are suspended are not taught, however, the subject matter expertise and the equipment to teach these skills must be retained. This allows formal schools to make adjustments to training without making those changes permanent.

that adding more skills to MCT would result in more capable Marines was purely subjective. These changes were also made without first making changes to the two overarching documents that govern entry-level training: The Marine Corps Common Skills Order and the Infantry Training and Readiness Manual. In fact, until these documents could be altered, Marine Combat Training Battalion would operate outside the established norms of formal Marine Corps training doctrine.⁸

Current Training

Changes that began in 2005 continued until the summer of 2007 when an additional training week was added to Marine Combat Training Battalion. Along with more time came the addition of eighteen additional tasks from five separate duty areas and the deletion of six tasks.⁹ These additional changes have all been incorporated to produce a better “riflemen” who will perform with enhanced capability sets and confidence on today’s battlefield. The ability of Instructors at MCT to teach a new variety of skills to a level of mastery and the ability of students to retain the added information will be pushed even further. Although time has not yet produced conclusive proof that the added skills will make retention more challenging, it is well accepted that there has to be a balance between how much MCT teaches and how much it can expect students to retain. Instead of redoubling efforts to further ingrain time tested

⁸ MCRP3-0B How to Conduct Training and MCO 1553.2A “Management of Marine Corps Formal Schools and Training Detachments”

⁹ Appendix C is the current POI.

skill sets that MCT taught prior to 2005, the Marine Corps has invested additional time and resources into broadening how much more can be taught.

Counter Argument and Conclusion

One obvious counter-argument is that the Marine Corps must be flexible and willing to change in order to keep pace with a rapidly changing environment. This reality certainly cannot be ignored however; the formal training institutions such as MCT must be grounded on established doctrine. The Operating Forces have the responsibility to sustain and further develop the skills taught during the entry-level training pipeline. Part of this sustainment and development includes; unit standard operating procedures, unit tactics and procedures, and collective task training. Most of the skills added to MCT over the past three years fall into the realm of either collective training tasks or unit specific skills. MCT must focus its training on principles that are applicable to any Marine Corps unit. The training schools are careful not to teach skills that may contradict unit standard operating procedures.

Another possible argument is that intuition, not the burden of proof, has been an integral ingredient in decision making for the past 225 years. Often, decisions made by experienced commanders are more effective and certainly timelier than those decisions made on analytical data. Therefore, a commander's instinctive decision making does not require tangible data to support. After all, warfare is both

an art and a science. This also is a valid argument. However, there is an establish venue for this type of change. That venue is a combination of the Marine Corps Center for Lessons learned (MCCLL) and the MAGTF training facility at 29 Palms, California. These institutions have the capacity to respond to rapid change. Without tangible data, and in the absence of some understanding of the impact changes will have, the “riflesman” program should remain unaltered; even if it appears to ‘lag’ behind the latest trends. According to the Marine Corps order governing common skills, formal schools such as MCT should focus on teaching to a level of mastery. Not to a level of exposure.¹⁰

This argument is not meant to discourage change and refinement inside the Marine Corps entry-level schools. In fact, over the last ten years, several positive changes have occurred. In 1997 for example, an additional exercise was added to MCT that would simulate a tactical training exercise¹¹. This addition created an opportunity to train the basic skills to a level and in an environment that did not exist previously. In 2002 the MCT POI was increased by four days. This added time did not introduce “new” skills but, instead, increased the time allotted to further refine and sustain the current skill set¹².

¹⁰ MCO 1510.89A Individual Training Standards for Marine Corps Common Skills

¹¹ ALMAR Message 157/97 dated May 9 1997

¹² MARADMIN Message 138/02 dated March 13 2002

Appendix A

Functional Learning Center (FLC) and MCCS Task Alignment

DUTY AREA	TASKS	MCRD's	MCT	ITB	OCS	TBS	NAVACD
01 Military Just. and Law of War	9	All			All	All	All
02 MC Org, Hist, Cust, & Court	9	All			All	All	All
03 Close Order Drill	3	All			All		All
04 MC Uniform, Cloth, & Equip	9	All			All	All	All
05 MC General Leadership	1	All			All		All
06 Substance Abuse	5	All			All		All
07 Troop Information	19	All			2,5-8, 14-19	1,3,4, 9-13	2,5-8, 14-19
08 MC Leadership	4	All				All	
09 Force Protection & Interior Guard	8	All			1-5	5-8	1-5
10 Code of Conduct	3	All			All		All
11 Individual Weapons	19	1-11	12-19	12-19	1,2	3-19	1,2
12 Crew Served Weapons	1		All	All		All	
13 Scouting and Patrolling	7	1	2-7	2-7	1,7	All	1,8
14 Tactical Measures, Offensive	3		All	All	All	All	All
15 Tactical Measures, Defensive	3		All	All		All	
16 Munitions	4		All	All		All	
17 Combat Conditioning and Continuing Actions	9	1-6, 9	1,2,7,8	1,2,7,8	1-6	7-9	1-6
18 Land Navigation	4		All	All	All	All	All
19 Communications	2		All	All		All	
20 NBC Defense	12	2,3	1, 4-12	1, 4-12		All	
21 First Aid	8	All				All	
22 Physical Fitness	1	All	All	All	All	All	All
23 Martial Arts	16	All			1-7	8-16	1-7
24 Combat Water Survival	1	All				All	

Appendix B

IDENTIFIER	TASK	HOURS	
		POI HOURS	SCHEDULE HOURS
ANNEX A 16A2 SERVICE RIFLE			
CS 0101	M16A2 FIELD EXPEDIENT ZERO	4	4
CS 0102	INTRODUCTION TO COMBAT MARKSMANSHIP	7	15.75
CS 0102P1	COMBAT MARKSMANSHIP (KD) PE1	6	6.25
CS 0102P2	COMBAT MARKSMANSHIP (KD NIGHT) PE2	3	3.25
CS 0102P3	COMBAT MARKSMANSHIP (UNKD) PE3	2	2
	OPTICS (AN/PVS-7B)	0	0.5
ANNEX B LESSON PURPOSE CLASSES			
CS 0103	NIGHT OBSERVATION TECHNIQUES	0	0.5
CS 0104	NIGHT VISION DEVICES	0.5	0.5
CS 0105	RANGE ESTIMATION TECHNIQUES	0.5	0.5
CS 0905	GUARDIAN ANGEL	0.5	0.5
ANNEX C M240G MEDIUM MACHINE GUN			
CS 0201	CHARACTERISTICS OF MACHINEGUNS	2	2
CS 0201P	CHARACTERISTICS OF MACHINEGUNS PE	1	1
CS 0202	M240G MACHINEGUN HANDLING AND MAINT	4.25	4.25
CS 0202P1	M240G MACHINEGUN HANDLING PE1	1.25	1.25
CS 0202P2	M240G MACHINEGUN MAINTENANCE PE2	1.5	1.5
CS 0203	M240G MACHINEGUN TARGET ENGAGEMENT	3.5	3.5
CS 0203P	M240G MACHINEGUN TARGET ENGAGEMENT PE	2.25	2.25
ANNEX D- M203 GRENADE LAUNCHER			
CS 0204	RANGE CARDS	0.5	0.5
CS 0301	M203 GRENADE LAUNCHER HANDLING AND MAINT	1.75	1.75
CS 0301P1	M203 GRENADE LAUNCHER HANDLING PE1	1.5	1.5
CS 0301P2	M203 GRENADE LAUNCHER MAINTENANCE PE2	1	1
CS 0302	M203 GRENADE LAUNCHER TARGET ENGAGEMENT	1.75	1.75
CS 0302P	M203 GRENADE LAUNCHER TGT ENGAGEMENT PE	2.25	2.25
ANNEX E- MUNITIONS			
CS 0401	HAND GRENADES	3	3
CS0401P1	COMBAT THROWS (HAND GRENADES) PE	1.25	1.375
CS 0401P2	HAND GRENADES PE	1.25	1.375
CS 0402	M136 LIGHT ANTI-ARMOR WEAPON (AT-4)	2.25	2.25
CS 0402P1	M136 LIGHT ANTI-ARMOR WEAPON (AT-4) PE1	1	1.75
CS 0402P2	M136 LIGHT ANTI-ARMOR WEAPON (AT-4) PE2	3	3
ANNEX F- LAND NAVIGATION			
CS 0501	LAND NAVIGATION	7	7
CS 0501P1	DAY LAND NAVIGATION PE1	6.25	6.25
CS 0501P2	NIGHT LAND NAVIGATION PE2	3	3
ANNEX G- COMBAT CONDITIONING			
CS 0601P1	CONDITIONING HIKES - 5K (8K)	1.5	3
CS 0601P2	CONDITIONING HIKES - 10K	2.75	3.25

CS 0601P3	CONDITIONING HIKES - 15K	4.5	4.25
CS0602	PHYSICAL FITNESS	9	8.5
CS0603	MCMAP	7	1
ANNEX H- COMMUNICATIONS			
CS 0701	COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES	0.5	0.5
CS 0703	AN/PRC-119 FIELD RADIO	1.75	1.75
CS 0703P	AN/PRC-119 FIELD RADIO PE	2	2
ANNEX I- OFFENSE			
CS 0901	SEARCH AN ENEMY PRISONER OF WAR	2.75	2.75
CS 0901P	SEARCH AN ENEMY PRISONER OF WAR PE	2.25	2.75
CS 0902	HAND AND ARM SIGNALS	1.75	1.75
CS 0902P	HAND AND ARM SIGNALS PE	1	1
CS 0903	SQUAD FORMATIONS	1.5	1.5
CS 0903P	SQUAD FORMATIONS PE	0.5	0.5
CS 0904	FIRE AND MOVMENT	10	10.75
CS 0904P	FIRE AND MOVEMENT PE	3.25	3.5
ANNEX J- DEFENSE			
CS 1002	PREPARE A FIRE TEAM FIRE PLAN SKETCH	1	1
CS 1002P	PREPARE A FIRE TEAM FIRE PLAN SKETCH PE	0.5	0.5
CS 1003	DEFEND A POSITION	10.5	10.5
CS 1003P1	CONSTRUCT A FIGHTING POSITION PE	1	1.25
CS 1003P2	DEFEND A POSITION PE	6.25	6.25
ANNEX K- SCOUTING AND PATROLLING			
CS 1101	PATROLLING FUNDAMENTALS	1.5	1.5
CS1101	PATROLLING FUNDAMENTALS PE	1.75	1.75
CS 1102	REPORTING INFORMATION	0.5	0.5
CS 1102P	REPORTING INFORMATION PE	0.5	0.5
CS 1103	CROSSING A DANGER AREA	1.75	1.75
CS 1103P	CROSSING A DANGER AREA PE	1.75	1.75
CS 1104	IMMEDIATE ACTION DRILLS	2	2
CS 1104P	IMMEDIATE ACTION DRILLS PE	1	1
CS1105	SECURITY PATROLS	4.75	4.75
CS1105P	SECURITY PATROLS PE	6	6
ANNEX N- MILITARY OPERATIONS ON URBAN TERRAIN			
CS 1201	INTRODUCTION TO MOUT	5.5	5.5
CS 1201P	INTRODUCTION TO MOUT PE	2.75	2.75
TOTAL ACADEMIC HOURS		177	185.25

Appendix C

IDENTIFIER	TASK	HOURS	
		POI HOURS	SCHEDULE HOURS
ANNEX A 16A2 SERVICE RIFLE			
CS 0101	M16A2 FIELD EXPEDIENT ZERO	4	4
CS 0102	INTRODUCTION TO COMBAT MARKSMANSHIP	7	15.75
CS 0102P1	COMBAT MARKSMANSHIP (KD) PE1	6	6.25
CS 0102P2	COMBAT MARKSMANSHIP (KD NIGHT) PE2	3	3.25
CS 0102P3	COMBAT MARKSMANSHIP (UNKD) PE3	2	2
	OPTICS (AN/PVS-7B)	0	0.5
ANNEX B LESSON PURPOSE CLASSES			
CS 0103	NIGHT OBSERVATION TECHNIQUES	0	0.5
CS 0104	NIGHT VISION DEVICES	0.5	0.5
CS 0105	RANGE ESTIMATION TECHNIQUES	0.5	0.5
CS 0905	GUARDIAN ANGEL	0.5	0.5
ANNEX C M240G MEDIUM MACHINE GUN			
CS 0201	CHARACTERISTICS OF MACHINEGUNS	2	2
CS 0201P	CHARACTERISTICS OF MACHINEGUNS PE	1	1
CS 0202	M240G MACHINEGUN HANDLING AND MAINT	4.25	4.25
CS 0202P1	M240G MACHINEGUN HANDLING PE1	1.25	1.25
CS 0202P2	M240G MACHINEGUN MAINTENANCE PE2	1.5	1.5
CS 0203	M240G MACHINEGUN TARGET ENGAGEMENT	3.5	3.5
CS 0203P	M240G MACHINEGUN TARGET ENGAGEMENT PE	2.25	2.25
ANNEX D- M203 GRENADE LAUNCHER			
CS 0204	RANGE CARDS	0.5	0.5
CS 0301	M203 GRENADE LAUNCHER HANDLING AND MAINT	1.75	1.75
CS 0301P1	M203 GRENADE LAUNCHER HANDLING PE1	1.5	1.5
CS 0301P2	M203 GRENADE LAUNCHER MAINTENANCE PE2	1	1
CS 0302	M203 GRENADE LAUNCHER TARGET ENGAGEMENT	1.75	1.75
CS 0302P	M203 GRENADE LAUNCHER TGT ENGAGEMENT PE	2.25	2.25
ANNEX E- MUNITIONS			
CS 0401	HAND GRENADES	3	3
CS0401P1	COMBAT THROWS (HAND GRENADES) PE	1.25	1.375
CS 0401P2	HAND GRENADES PE	1.25	1.375
CS 0402	M136 LIGHT ANTI-ARMOR WEAPON (AT-4)	2.25	2.25
CS 0402P1	M136 LIGHT ANTI-ARMOR WEAPON (AT-4) PE1	1	1.75
CS 0402P2	M136 LIGHT ANTI-ARMOR WEAPON (AT-4) PE2	3	3
ANNEX F- LAND NAVIGATION			
CS 0501	LAND NAVIGATION	7	7
CS 0501P1	DAY LAND NAVIGATION PE1	6.25	6.25
CS 0501P2	NIGHT LAND NAVIGATION PE2	3	3
ANNEX G- COMBAT CONDITIONING			
CS 0601P1	CONDITIONING HIKES - 5K (8K)	1.5	3
CS 0601P2	CONDITIONING HIKES - 10K	2.75	3.25

CS 0601P3	CONDITIONING HIKES - 15K	4.5	4.25
CS0602	PHYSICAL FITNESS	9	8.5
CS0603	MCMAP	7	1
ANNEX H- COMMUNICATIONS			
CS 0701	COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES	0.5	0.5
CS 0703	AN/PRC-119 FIELD RADIO	1.75	1.75
CS 0703P	AN/PRC-119 FIELD RADIO PE	2	2
ANNEX I- OFFENSE			
CS 0901	SEARCH AN ENEMY PRISONER OF WAR	2.75	2.75
CS 0901P	SEARCH AN ENEMY PRISONER OF WAR PE	2.25	2.75
CS 0902	HAND AND ARM SIGNALS	1.75	1.75
CS 0902P	HAND AND ARM SIGNALS PE	1	1
CS 0903	SQUAD FORMATIONS	1.5	1.5
CS 0903P	SQUAD FORMATIONS PE	0.5	0.5
CS 0904	FIRE AND MOVMENT	10	10.75
CS 0904P	FIRE AND MOVEMENT PE	3.25	3.5
ANNEX J- DEFENSE			
CS 1002	PREPARE A FIRE TEAM FIRE PLAN SKETCH	1	1
CS 1002P	PREPARE A FIRE TEAM FIRE PLAN SKETCH PE	0.5	0.5
CS 1003	DEFEND A POSITION	10.5	10.5
CS 1003P1	CONSTRUCT A FIGHTING POSITION PE	1	1.25
CS 1003P2	DEFEND A POSITION PE	6.25	6.25
ECP/VCP OPERATIONS		0	8
ANNEX K- SCOUTING AND PATROLLING			
CS 1101	PATROLLING FUNDAMENTALS	1.5	1.5
CS1101	PATROLLING FUNDAMENTALS PE	1.75	1.75
CS 1102	REPORTING INFORMATION	0.5	0.5
CS 1102P	REPORTING INFORMATION PE	0.5	0.5
CS 1103	CROSSING A DANGER AREA	1.75	1.75
CS 1103P	CROSSING A DANGER AREA PE	1.75	1.75
CS 1104	IMMEDIATE ACTION DRILLS	2	2
CS 1104P	IMMEDIATE ACTION DRILLS PE	1	1
CS1105	SECURITY PATROLS	4.75	4.75
CS1105P	SECURITY PATROLS PE	6	6
ANNEX L CONVOY OPERATIONS			
CS 1106	CONVOY OPERATIONS	3.25	3.25
CS 1106P	CONVOY OPERATIONS PE	2.5	2.5
ANNEX M- IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES			
CS 1107	IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES	2.75	2.75
CS 1107P	IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES PE	2.75	2.75
ANNEX N- MILITARY OPERATIONS ON URBAN TERRAIN			
CS 1201	INTRODUCTION TO MOUT	5.5	5.5
CS 1201P	INTRODUCTION TO MOUT PE	2.75	2.75
TOTAL ACADEMIC HOURS		188.25	204.5

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