Warrior-Maverick Culture
The Evolution of Adaptability in the U.S. Marine Corps

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Abstract

U.S. Marines place great pride in their organisational heritage and culture. But 240 years after its inception, the Marine Corps had yet to offer a precise description of its organisational culture. Instead, Marines argued that their culture cannot be understood, and observers of the Corps used the term "magic" to describe the Marines' norms. This thesis identifies the existential centre of the Marine Corps' culture: it is success-driven adaptability that results from externally and internally influenced dualisms. Marines are expected to succeed, but are presented with a series of unresolved dualisms as "tools" to achieve success. They are simultaneously expected to be top-notch warriors—courageous, self-sacrificing, and tightly disciplined—and also maverick individualists who think independently and are prepared to disobey orders when necessary. Each Marine is required to negotiate these dualisms in every situation to find a way to succeed. The norm for adaptability exists in the nexus between the simultaneous, unresolved expectations for warrior and maverick behaviour. This mostly informal norm for adaptability is central to the Corps' success in and out of war.

Unravelling the Marine Corps' evolutionary embrace of adaptability revealed strong connections between the "internal" Marine culture and the popular literature, films, and other artefacts that constitute "external" culture. Warrior-maverick dualisms are equally present in both internal and external culture, and there is evidence that external culture both influenced and has been influenced by the evolving Marine Corps culture of warrior-maverick adaptability. This finding is reinforced by the near total absence of official efforts to reinforce the norm for adaptability for nearly 50 years (1940-1989), even as adaptability became the organisation's dominant norm. Evolution of the central element of the Marine Corps' culture took place primarily at the grass-roots level and in the cultural artefacts that reflected and influenced the development of Marines' cognitive schemas. These findings suggest a modest shift in the way military change analysts examine organisations: future studies should seek to incorporate both external cultural influences and a deeper understanding of the collective value of the individual experience in the formation of military organisational norms.

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Chapter 1: Understanding Marine Warrior-Maverick Culture

> Following the rules to follow the rules is often the single most obstructive
> thing you can do… Rules are static, war is not.
>
> *- A U.S. Marine Corps warrant officer, 2013*[1]

This thesis describes and analyses the evolution of the organisational culture of the U.S. Marine Corps between 1916 and 2015. It proposes that Marines have evolved a deep, collective norm for adaptability over the course of the past century in great part because they inculcated a pair of dichotomous cultural archetypes—warrior and maverick—into their organisational culture. While it is currently impossible to explain why any individual Marine adapts in war, it *is* possible to describe the complex evolution of the cultural norms that both influence and encourage adaptation. This thesis contributes to general knowledge by helping to broaden the ways in which researchers and practitioners can seek to understand adaptability and military change more broadly. By exploring the imagined, permeable barrier between internal organisational cultures and external cultural influences, and by leveraging insights and trends from nearly 100 years of rich individual narratives and new survey data, it is possible to more fully understand how military organisations change and how the norm for adaptability might evolve in any organisation.

The present analysis draws from and expands on literature from distinct yet complementary literatures on military change and on military culture, and on the large historical literature on the US Marine Corps. Relevant military change literature includes analysis of transformation, innovation, military organisations, and most recently, adaptation.[2] Cultural studies literature relevant to this thesis includes military organisational studies, anthropology, and organisational management studies; this literature also encompasses the

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[1] This quote was obtained from the survey data collected for this thesis. Full citation and context are presented in Chapter 8.

[2] Transformation literature analyzed and cited includes, but is not limited to: Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 1997; Blaker, 1997; Cebrowski and Gartska, 1998; Hundley, 1999; Owens, 2000; McMaster, 2003; Kagan, 2006; and Shimko, 2010. A subset of this field is innovation literature, exemplified by: Posen, 1984; Rosen, 1991; Murray and Millet, 1996; David E. Johnson, 1998; Jon T. Hoffman, 2009. Adaptation literature includes: Kier; 1997; Bickel, 2001; English, 2004; Nagl, 2005; Grissom, 2006; Russell, 2011; Serena, 2011; Farrell, Osinga, and Russell, 2013.

full range of cultural artefacts that may have influenced Marine Corps organisational culture.[3] Historical analyses of the Marine Corps include campaign and battle narratives, biographies and autobiographies, and interviews.[4] This thesis specifically addresses two significant gaps in the literature: 1) inadequate explanation of the nature of the Marine Corps' organisational culture, specifically with regard to a central feature of this culture, namely, the norm for adaptability; and 2) the inadequate headway made by military culture and military change literature (what we may call, the military culture-change literature) to offer a holistic understanding of how external culture and combat experience influence organisational norms. Crossing the first gap will offer an initial step towards crossing the second.

The Marine Corps' Central Cultural Characteristic Goes Unexplained

It is a great irony that a military organisation known for taking immense pride in its history and culture has thus far failed to explain what may be its existential cultural narrative and ethos: how a dualistic warrior-maverick identity helped establish and evolve the norm for adaptability. Similarly, external literature touches on but fails to explain how and why U.S.

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[3] National and organisational analyses include: Weigley, 1973; Cameron, 1996; Kier; 1997; Gray, 1999; Bickel, 2001; English, 2004; Hull, 2005; Farrell, 2005; Nagl, 2005; Adamsky, 2010; Russell, 2011; and Serena, 2011. Ethnographic studies include: Marcellino, 2013; Tortorello (undated), and Ruppert, 2003. Anthropological and other cultural studies include: Pierson, 1938; Kitses, 1969; Bourdieu, 1970; Geertz, 1973; Spiro et al, 1974; Anderson, et al., 1978; Levi-Strauss, 1979; Fiske and Linville, 1980; Hofstede, 1980 (et al.); Stephen Wilson, 1980; Boski, 1988; Claudia Strauss, 1992a, 1992b; D'Andrade, 1992; Kerr and Stanfel, 1993; Mayer, et al., 1993; Hannerz, 1996 and 1997; Kendzierski and Whitaker, 1997; Pieterse, 2001; Baev, 2002; Kraidy, 2002; Ekstrom, 2004; Medovoi, 2005; Fischer, 2010; Hyde, 2010; Webb, 2012; and Kirndorfer, undated. Business literature addresses organisational culture and also examines adaptation, innovation, and cultural influences on change. My review of applicable business literature included, but was not limited to: Allair and Fisirotu, 1984; Saffold, 1988; Meek, 1988; Walsh and Ungson, 1991; Hatch, 1993; Miller and Blais, 1993; Denison and Mishra, 1995; Glenn, et al., 1997; Moorman and Minor, 1998; Crawford, 2001; Kickul and Gundry, 2001; Bond, 2002; McSweeney, 2002; Oyserman et al., 2002; Baskerville, 2003; Kirkpatrick and Ackroyd, 2003; Bing, 2004; Vincent, 2005; Jones, 2007; Rehak, et al., 2007; Taras et al., 2007; Cook and Rousseau, 2008; Schein, 2010; and Alami and Mondo, 2011.

[4] Marine Corps literature analyzed and cited includes but is not limited to: Gibbons, 1918; Catlin, 1919; MacLellan, 1920; Thomason, 1926; MacLellan, 1930; Edson, 1936a, 1936b; Thomason, 1935; 1936a; 1936b; and 1936c; Edson, 1937; McGurk, 1947; Hough, 1950; Montross and Canzona, 1954 and 1955; Leckie, 1957; Nalty, 1958; Davis, 1964; Leckie, 1965; Shulimson, 1966; Corson, 1968; Stolfi, 1968; Allnutt, 1969; Shore II, 1969; Ringler and Shaw, 1970; Walt, 1970; Donnelly, Neufeld, and Tyson, 1971; Moran, 1973; Boyington, 1977; Fails, 1978; Charles M. Johnson, 1978; Webb, 1978; Millett, 1980; Sledge, 1981; Clark, 1984; Ross, 1985; Henderson, 1986; Hammel, 1987; Hans Schmidt, 1987; Camp and Hammel, 1989; Hammel, 1989, 1990, 1991; Heinl, 1991; Melson and Arnold, 1991; Nolan, 1991; Norton, 1991; Ross, 1991; Nolan, 1994; Alexander, 1996; Asprey, 1996; Hallas, 1996; Murphy, 1997; Nolan, 1997; Shulimson, et al. 1997; Clark, 1999; Kugler, 1999; Michael West, 1999; Chapin, 2000; Russ, 2000; Culbertson, 2003; Bing West, 2003; Astor, 2005; Warren, 2005; Groen, 2006; Wukovits, 2006; Axelrod, 2007; Brady, 2007; Gilbert, 2007; Haynes and Warren, 2008; Nevgloski, 2008; Simmons and Alexander, 2008; Camp, 2009; George R. Hoffman, 2009; Coram, 2010; Fixler, 2010; Fox, 2011; Cone, 2012; Holiday, 2012; O'Connell, 2012; Short, 2012; Jewett, 2013; Bing West, 2014. Also see: U.S. Marine Corps, undated-a; undated-b; 1921, 1940, 1980, 1991, 1995, 1996, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c, 1997d, 1997e, 1997f, 1997g, 1998a, 1998b, 2001, 2014.

Marine Corps culture evolved to emphasize the demonstrably crucial performance of adaptability. This gap is most apparent in the significant catalogue of published works that treat the emphasis on adaptability in US Marine Corps culture as something to be assumed rather than explained.

Collective literature and other content on the Marine Corps are expansive: a cursory survey identifies well over 30,000 distinct items.[5] A comprehensive survey is impossible, particularly considering the rapid pace of daily online publishing in 2015. But a holistic survey that samples representative items from the major categories of material shows that no single volume adequately addresses the warrior-maverick dynamic central to Marine culture, or the interrelated Marine norm for adaptability. Cultural artefacts relevant to Marine culture can be broken down into nine broad categories: 1) battle histories; 2) institutional histories; 3) organisational cultural analyses; 4) biography and autobiography: 5) official training and education literature; 6) films and television programming; 7) novels; 8) online content including unpublished videos, weblogs (blogs), videologs (vlogs), online-only articles; and 9) other cultural artefacts like paintings, photographs, songs and poems.

Battle histories of the Marine Corps fall into three general sub-categories: timeline overviews in larger anthologies or volumes that span entire wars, like Robert Leckie's *Strong Men Armed*; single battle narratives like Bill D. Ross's *Peleliu: Tragic Triumph*; and micro-narratives like Clavin and Drury's *The Last Stand of Fox Company* and Bing West's *One Million Steps*. In each of these four examples the authors describe how the Marines at the heart of each narrative adapt in battle, inclusively showcasing warrior heroism and maverick behaviour. None explores in sufficient depth how these Marines were influenced to behave in these ways, or why they might adapt when they do. Broad institutional histories like Allan R. Millett's *Semper Fidelis* and Robert Debs Heinl's *Soldiers of the Sea* make a concerted effort to describe the evolution of Marine Corps culture, weaving in historical examples and narratives of back-room bureaucratic warfare. When they describe "the Marine Corps," it is often as a superorganic entity that exists with human-like characteristics, but neither of these specifically targeted histories explains how this anthropoid Marine Corps evolved to be an organisation that cherishes both warrior aggressiveness and maverick independence.

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[5] This estimate is based on sampled searches and it is grossly inadequate. It is obtained from combining the total number of artifacts in Moran (1973) and Hemenez (2001a and 2001b) and then adding a random sample of Internet searches for post-1973 online articles, as well as a search of the *Marine Corps Gazette* archives totaling post-1973 articles in the *Gazette* and *Leatherneck*.

Surprisingly, there are only a few scholarly organisational cultural analyses of the Marine Corps. This may be due to the intimidating mass of well-researched literature on Marine culture and history; a cursory review of extant works might suggest little room for meaningful contribution. Yet some do try. Terry Terriff's collective articles on Marine Corps innovation offer valuable insight into the variance between the Corps' professed cultural norms and institutional action. Terriff's analyses and other organisational analyses such as T.X. Hammes' *Forgotten Warriors*, James Russell's *Innovation, Transformation, and War*, Richard Shultz' *Organisational Learning and the Marine Corps*, Craig Cameron's *American Samurai*, and Jack Shulimson's *The Marine Corps' Search for a Mission, 1880-1898*, tend to focus on internal institutional change against a backdrop of war history, inter-service rivalry or interwar reorientation. Some of these studies explain adaptation and adaptability in specific context, but thus far none fully explains the evolution of the Marine Corps' norm for adaptability. Other organisational culture analyses include narrative observational works like Victor Krulak's *First to Fight* and earthier efforts like H. John Poole's *Gung Ho!* and Marion F. Sturkey's *Warrior Culture of the U.S. Marines*. Krulak lists characteristics of Marines without explaining their evolution or sources, and Sturkey's book is surprisingly comprehensive but workmanlike list of all the monikers, myths, legends, and clichés associated with Marines. In each case the most important overarching characteristics—really, cultural norms—are described but only traced from their myriad sources in historical terms; they do not explain the dynamic, complex process of norm evolution. Neither do they explain how a successful military organisation can simultaneously embrace traditional norms for discipline and obedience alongside irreverence and individualism.

Biographies and autobiographies provide the richest insight into Marines' transmission, interpretation, and agentic use of cultural archetypes and cultural norms. Hans Schmidt's *Maverick Marine*, Anne C. Venzon's *From Whaleboats to Amphibious Warfare*, and John Wukovits' *American Commando* shed light on the wartime and bureaucratic heroics of critical Marine Corps change agents. More usefully for this thesis, both books also trace the influences of external culture on the development of the main characters, Smedley D. Butler, H.M. Smith, and Evans F. Carlson. Autobiographies like Eugene Sledge's *With the Old Breed*, William Manchester's *Goodbye Darkness*, Robert Leckie's *Helmet for My Pillow*, Ron Kovac's *Born on the Fourth of July*, Ernest Spencer's *Welcome to Vietnam, Macho Man*, Phillip Caputo's *A Rumor of War*, Karl Marlantes' *What It Is Like to Go To War*, and Barry Fixler's *Semper Cool* offer similar insights. Both biography and autobiography allow for a tracing of early external cultural influences—religion, civil organisations, literature, family,

region, sports—through Marine Corps training and education, and then into combat and then institutional influence. These books have little more than anecdotal value to scientific research as independent volumes. Analysis of the collective mass of these anecdotal threads, however, does constitute relevant insight. When incorporated into a holistic analysis they show how external cultural influences can influence norms, and how individual Marines process both external and internal culture in ways that might influence collective adaptability.

Official and semi-official literature generated by Marines from 1916 through 2015 is useful in showing the evolution of norms in formal expectations for behaviour. Periodic iterations of books like the *Marine Corps Manual*, the *Handbook for Marine NCOs*, and the *Marine Officers Guide* provide snapshots of the official take on Marine Corps culture at various points in time.[6] Individually these snapshots provide leadership expectations for performance, but they provide very little insight into how these expectations evolved, if individual Marines routinely accept them at face value, or more importantly, follow them as practice. However, when traced through 2015, and when placed in context with historical experience and the other available literature, these manuals and semi-official guides show how significant trends in culture and performance are adopted and evolve to be stored and reflected in the institutional memory and official norms of the organisation. This thesis shows how a gradual, official evolution of Marine adaptability from 1916 took on near-revolutionary characteristics with the late-1980s publication of Fleet Marine Force Manual number one (FMFM-1), *Warfighting*.

Of the remaining material, the fictional work in films, television, novels, and graphic novels (formerly: comic books) provides some of the best insight into Marine Corps organisational culture. Whereas the official and semi-official literature is tightly controlled within the organisation, fictional work is all but unrestricted in tone and content. The earliest films featuring Marines as central protagonists, like *What Price Glory?* and *Tell It to the Marines* are viscerally anti-establishment, mocking central tenets of military culture like discipline and obedience. This anti-establishment trend in Marine Corps filmography is consistent through the most heavily censored period of filmmaking in WWII. *Gung Ho!* and *Sands of Iwo Jima*, two of the most blatantly propagandistic, officially influenced films in American cinema, also boast flamboyant, idiosyncratic characters who bear little resemblance to the mechanistic toy soldiers reflected in some of the other official Marine

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[6] The *Marine Officers Guide* and the *Handbook for Marine NCOs* are semi-official publications that have official endorsement. Active and retired officers endorse each successive volume of the Guide in writing, and all Marine officers are either given or are required to purchase a copy.

iconography (e.g. recruiting posters) intended for public consumption. Even the most blatantly anti-establishment Vietnam War films about Marines like *Coming Home*, *The Boys From Company C* and *Full Metal Jacket* simply fit within a longstanding trend: counter intuitively, fictional film portrays U.S. Marines as nontraditional misfits. Setting aside differences in themes, it would not be much of a stretch to transplant several of the minor and central protagonists from the government-sanctioned *Sands of Iwo Jima* to the anti-war *The Boys from Company C,* and back.

This trend of portraying Marines as warrior-mavericks is equally reflected in novels and short stories like Leon Uris' *Battle Cry*, William Styron's *The Long March* and *Suicide Run*, Karl Marlantes' magnum opus *Matterhorn*, and Jere Peacock's brilliant but unsung *Valhalla* and *To Drill and Die*. These novels and stories dwell more on the struggle of nonconformist characters to adapt against illogical orders and stifling regulations than traditional norms for discipline and obedience. Because all of these novels were written by Marines about Marines, they reflect specific interpretations of Marine culture. In turn, the survey data in this thesis shows that these popular novels influence the ways in which other Marines think about their organisational culture. This cyclical transformation of cultural interpretation is only exposed by surveying trends in novels across a significant period of time; this effort is rewarded with glaring consistencies.

It is one thing to trace the maverick, anti-establishment, and irreverent tone central to most of these cultural artefacts, but understanding how they emerged in a military culture that places high value on the more traditional military cultural values cherished by Marines—warrior courage, honour, selflessness, etc.—is more difficult. Independently all of these fictional films, books, and television programs (like *Gomer Pyle, USMC* and *Baa Baa Blacksheep/Blacksheep Squadron*) are entertaining because they fit within a broader American anti-establishment cultural motif. Cursory examination might lead one to chalk up these maverick themes to some perceived anti-military bias in Hollywood or anti-organisational resentment by the Marine authors. Indeed, the anti-war and (perhaps less aggressively) anti-military *Coming Home* used the Marine Corps as little more than a messaging vehicle, and some authors like Gustav Hasford (*The Short Timers*) probably had an axe to grind. But the collective mass of Marine-centric fiction from 1916 through 2015—as yet unexplored for its holistic value—reveals remarkably consistent trends that are reflected in all of the other sources of cultural material. Major trends in fictional cultural artefacts are crucial to understanding the evolution of the Marine norm for adaptability. The

next section and Chapter 3 explain how both external and internal cultural artefacts influence Marine norms for adaptability.

Common use of the term "magic" further suggests the Marine Corps' central cultural ethos and norm—the warrior-maverick ethos and the concomitant norm for adaptability—remain unexplained. In his 2012 *Underdogs*, retired Marine Aaron O'Connell uses "magic" to describe what he and other observers of the Marine Corps see as an intangible and generally inexplicable element of Marine culture, one that is central to the Corps' success in war.[7] Currently this "magic"—really just the nonmystical but as yet undefined element of Marine behaviour and Marine Corps organisational culture, or the Marine ethos, that appears to lead to continual successes in war—is either intentionally or intentionally left open to individual interpretation in nearly all literature and films that describe Marines. There is a mystique to the Marine Corps that the Marines themselves cherish and have aggressively perpetuated over the years. While the Marines describe leadership traits and other desired characteristics of individual Marines in great detail, there is a deeper Marine ethos that is only hinted at in writing, ceremonies, and films. In observing the British Royal Marines, an organisation often considered both a sister and parent service to the U.S. Marines, Anthony King noted that:[8]

> Ethos is regarded as something magical or sacred, which somehow binds
> Royal Marines together but about which nothing can be said. Indeed, nothing
> should be said lest this magical mystery is profaned; [and quoting Royal
> Marine literature]'we should not let daylight in on the magic', 'ethos itself
> cannot be dictated, it can only be felt.'

U.S. Marines also attach mystical value to their ethos. In response to a 2013 survey question asking the respondents to describe an ideal, "good" Marine, one Marine responded with a catchphrase: "There are only two kinds of people that understand Marines: Marines, and the enemy. Everyone else has a second-hand opinion."[9] Figure 1.1, below, iconizes the belief perpetuated by the U.S. Marine Corps, and by some individuals, that the Marine ethos is something both magnificent and inexplicable. According to this oft-repeated truism, Marines intuitively "get it," while non-Marines can never understand Marine ethos or culture. The statement in Figure 1.1, which is repeated elsewhere in various forms, implies that it is simply impossible to understand why Marines fight, adapt, and win. This belief is helpful in

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[7] O'Connell, 2012, pp. 27-29.

[8] King, 2004, p. 1.

[9] Survey response 2013, Marine captain.

perpetuating the mystique of the Marine Corps, which in turns draws in new recruits and sustains high organisational standards.[10]

Figure 1.1: Motivational Poster – Earning the Title
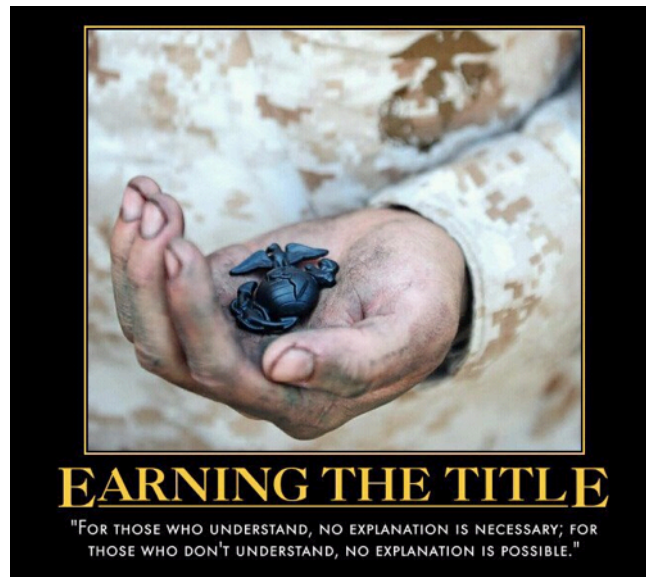
Source: multiple unattributed Internet posts

Yet this kind of mystification can also backfire because it actively discourages impartial external examination of Marine Corps culture. The dearth of scholarly efforts to decode Marine organisational culture may be testament to an active reluctance to confront the apparently irresolvable dichotomy in what is now an only tangentially recognized warrior-maverick paradigm. O'Connell contributes valuable insights and rich narrative to existing efforts like Krulak's, Heinl's, Cameron's, Hammes', and Keith Bickel's (more on Bickel below). But ultimately we are left with the term "magic" to explain the culture of one of the most significant military organisations of the 20th and 21st Centuries. A different research approach is required to help explain Marine Corps organisational culture. But just as the various efforts to explain Marine Corps culture and adaptability have left unanswered questions, so do the current approaches to understanding military culture and military change (or military culture-change) more broadly.

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[10] The text in this image is: "Earning the Title: 'For those who understand, no explanation is necessary; for those who don't understand, no explanation is possible.'"

Organisational Norms, External Culture and Military Adaptation

Theo Farrell defines *adaptation* as a "change to strategy, force generation, and/or military plans and operations, undertaken in response to operational challenges and campaign pressures."[11] This thesis proposes that *adaptability* is the combined inclination and ability to deviate from standardized practice in order to succeed.[12] This thesis explains how a norm for adaptability evolved to occupy a central place in Marine Corps culture. This section shows that the current literature on military change and military culture have not yet given us a *holistic* understanding of how a norm—a standard for individual and group behaviour—gains traction and becomes so deeply ingrained in the culture of a modern, large-scale military organisation. It then describes how these gaps can be addressed within this thesis, and in future studies, while at the same time expanding the current scope of military change studies.

A curious dichotomy emerges in this proposed barebones definition of adaptability: "norming" such a widely sought-after military trait entails practiced deviation from what are often termed the traditional norms that military organisations tend to hold dear.[13] An adaptable U.S. Marine, or soldier or sailor or airman from any modern state military force, is purposefully socialised through training and military education in norms of discipline and obedience.[14] If an organisation also embraces adaptability as a norm, then logically members of the organisation must be conditioned to occasionally change or disobey orders when appropriate, to adjust from standard practice to succeed in each emerging, idiosyncratic military event, and to interpret doctrine loosely rather than with doctrinaire rigidity. This dichotomy begs an obvious question, and one that has not yet been answered satisfactorily: how could a modern military organisation like the U.S. Marine Corps—one that so closely modelled itself on its circa 1775 traditional British Royal Marine counterpart—evolve a norm that seems to be so anti-traditional?[15] Answering this question requires a better understanding

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[11] Farrell, 2013, p. 2.

[12] This is my definition, synthesized from tens of others identified in the diverse literature cited herein.

[13] "Norming" is a common statistical term, but in this non-statistical context it is meant to convey both the evolutionary development of norms within an organisation, and the process of influencing members of an organisation to adopt norms. The term has been frequently used in this context across a range of business culture literature. For example, see Tuckman, 1965.

[14] See both Hull, 2005, and Farrell, 2005.

[15] The British Royal Marines evolved a similar norm for adaptability, and are perhaps even more suited to adaptability within their comparatively smaller and more special missions focused organisation. See King, 2004, for a detailed analysis of the British Royal Marines ethos and insight into their organisational norms.

of the fundamental approaches researchers have thus far taken to understand military cultural norms for adaptability and other behaviours at the level of the organisation.

Most efforts to explain organisational adaptability have produced insightful but inward looking service-level analyses, or mixed national and organisational studies fixed within an imagined sphere of a tangible, national-level "military culture." Recent efforts, all part of a new wave of literature on both military culture and military change, include Paddy Griffith's exploration of organisational adaptation in World War One (WWI), Elizabeth Kier's analysis of French and British interwar organisational cultures, Isabel Hull's detailed study of the German military in Southwest Africa in the early 20th Century, Alan D. English's study of the Canadian military, Craig Cameron's exploration of cultural influences on behaviour in the U.S. Marines First Division in World War Two (WWII), James Russell's analysis of the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Army in Iraq, and Williamson Murray's broader exploration of military adaptation in war. Griffith, Nagl, and Russell explain how experience in war does or does not lead to adaptation in the field and, ultimately, to some kind of organisational change. These studies of *internal* military culture accurately describe how wartime experience feeds military adaptation, but by necessary omission (for space and scope) they unintentionally suggest a closed-loop cultural system in which cultural influences external to the organisation have either limited or negligible impact on adaptation or cultural norms; the complexity of specific internal military cultural change tends to fully consume these organisational-level efforts.

On the other hand, to varying degrees Hull and Cameron seek to explain how *external*, or extra-organisational cultural influences affect military behaviour. Hull and Cameron focus on the intersection between national racism and doctrinaire military behaviour in an effort to show how traditional military norms like discipline and the impetus to violence can breed the least adaptable and most unethical types of behaviour in war. Yet while both of these studies inform the processes of internal norming, and of external influences on norming, each of these studies limits its exploration of external cultural influences like literature, music, oral narratives, ceremony, and iconography to narrow, targeted purposes: Hull uses them to argue that German military culture was remarkably rigid and unnecessarily brutal, and Cameron uses them more fully in an attempt to argue that Marine Corps culture was racist, overly violent, and then increasingly impotent. Neither offers a generalizable way to link external to internal culture.

National level military cultural studies like Dima Adamsky's *Culture of Military Innovation* seek to bridge the external-internal influence gap, but at this meta-level of

analysis the connections are often diffuse. Adamsky approaches the problem at the national level with a smooth blending of external and internal culture, but his analysis neither examines external cultural trends in depth nor does it speak directly to the evolution of service-level organisational norms; the level of analysis proscribes meaningful organisational-level insight. In a short book chapter entitled, "The U.S. Military's Two-Front War," Craig Cameron suggests a strong connection between socio-political trends during the Vietnam War period and contemporaneous military change, but the result is historical narrative that offers little generalizable insight into culture's influence on organisational change.[16] Murray explains adaptation in a historical context and draws some connection between external culture and internalized military culture, but he too (certainly without intent) leaves the reader with the impression that military culture is a phenomenon generally independent from the non-military world. Collectively, the organisational-level and the national-level studies deliver sections of the puzzle. But even when viewed holistically, this multi-layered collection of military culture and military change literature fails to sufficiently explain how culture writ large influences military norms, or more specifically norms for adaptability.

Individual roles in transmitting and shaping military cultural norms are also inadequately explained or integrated into the discourses on military culture and military change. Within both overlapping genres—change and culture—individual experience and influence are reduced to the level of anecdote or, in most cases, confined to the exceptionally narrow category of change actors or status quo defenders. In the first approach, individual narratives are demonstrative rather than explanatory. For example, in the otherwise deeply insightful "Mission Command Without a Mission," Thomas Rid and Martin Zapfe briefly refer to the experience of a Lieutenant-Colonel Jared Sembritzki to demonstrate how German military culture changed through its experience in Afghanistan, but we learn little of Sembritzki, the range of external and internal cultural influences on his behaviour, or if and then how Sembritzki might have gone on to influence cultural norms in the German Army. In the latter approach, favoured by macro analysts like Barry Posen and Stephen Peter Rosen, individuals matter only when they are perceived to have influenced the adoption of a specific technology, or pushed through a shift in service policy or national strategy. Change agents are perceived as rare, nearly idiosyncratic creatures within what most authors assume to be an unbending military hierarchy; indeed, B.J.C. McKercher and A. Hamish Ion include them in the

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[16] Cameron, 2002.

category of "military heretics."[17] Both approaches—individual as descriptive vehicle or change agent—make good and purposeful use of individual experiences, but neither helps to explain the role of broad ranges of *individuals* in organisational cultural norming. Nor do they explain how external cultural artefacts might directly and indirectly influence combat adaptations and then, more gradually, the evolution of adaptability.

One analysis stands out in its synthesis of individual experiences with evolutionary organisational change, and conveniently this work focuses on the U.S. Marine Corps. Keith Bickel's *Mars Learning: The Marine Corps' Development of Small Wars Doctrine, 1915-1940*, describes how *many* individual Marines experienced war's complexities as junior officers, how they transmitted these experiences into the organisation's culture as they progressed in rank, and how they collectively influenced organisational adaptation over the course of more than two decades in and out of war. Bickel offers an alternative to the common binary interpretations of individuals' roles in adaptation, and he lays the empirical groundwork for one major component of this thesis. He shows that at least in the case of the Marine Corps in the early 20th Century, many individuals, at all levels of command, were needed to effect, ingrain, and continuously reinforce paradigm shifts in organisational norms (in this case towards a small wars doctrine). Top-level change agents mattered, but they were only part of the puzzle. More importantly, Bickel traces the career experiences and development of Marines who went on to become those top-level change agents. This narrative arc shows how their perspectives were shaped along the way. Throughout, these individual Marines served as conduits of their collective experiences. This suggests that a deeper understanding of the individual experience—when placed in both internal and external context, and when aggregated—can explain organisational cultural change more fully than the exploration of specific individual change agents alone. But Bickel does not address the influence of external culture on change or norm development.

At least as of mid-2015, therefore, the compound question posed in this thesis has gone unanswered. Most military cultural and military change studies—like Russell's and like Nagl's—address the organisation primarily at the level of the organisation, describing services or units in systemic terms and transferring characteristics of individuals to groups. This parallels, and in some cases (e.g. Hull, Kier, and English) directly borrows from the literature on business culture exemplified by the work of Edward Schein. Following an approach that can in the extreme mirror an electrical engineer's interpretation of Ludwig von

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[17] McKercher and Ion, 1994.

Bertalanffy's General Systems Theory, military cultures are systematized, anthropomorphized, and isolated to the point that within each separate analysis they lose connection with much broader, influential and dynamic external culture.[18] At least as of 2015, no current approach successfully taps into the collective breadth of individual experiences to further our understanding of how adaptability takes root as a military organisational norm.

While the gap between external and internal culture has not yet been adequately bridged in the latest waves of military change and culture studies (through mid-2015), Theo Farrell offers a map that shows how it might be. Figure 1.2, below, shows a layered model of norms from organisation to civil-strategic at the state level, and then to international and transnational levels beyond the state. Farrell argues that this model represents norm traffic as "two-way: military culture may shape national strategic culture as well as vice versa; likewise, international norms are constitutive of and constitute state beliefs, form, and practice."[19] Further, in this model both states and organisations are "open systems" that allow norms to transmit from layer to layer (or level to level) freely and as a matter of course. Note the dotted line around "organisational culture" denoting inherent permeability.[20]

Figure 1.2: Farrell's Levels of Norm Analysis

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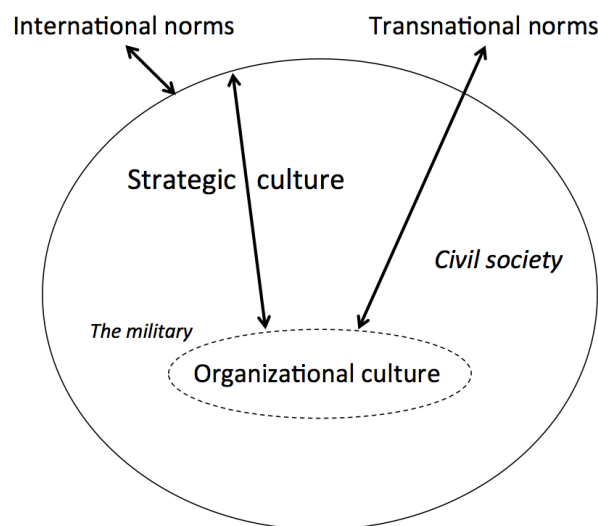
[18] Serena (2011) takes this systemic approach, although he does so with the relevant, useful, and specific purpose of examining the U.S. Army's internal process of change. My argument is that the connection between this purpose-driven systems analysis has not yet been matched up with a broader cultural analysis. See Bertalanffy, 1974; and Serena, 2011.

[19] Farrell (2005), p. 6.

[20] Here Farrell draws on the open systems approach to organisation theory. See W. Richard Scott, *Organisations: Rational, National, and Open Systems* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1992).

If this model is correct, then as military organisational cultural norms evolve they are influenced by many factors external to the organisation. It follows that any study of organisational norm development would *at the very least* benefit from an integral examination of civil, strategic, and international norms. To anthropologists this argument would be patently obvious. Anthropological literature has settled into a deeply contested debate over *how* cultural norms are transmitted through necessarily permeable organisational barriers, each of which is at best a conceptual, non-physical ideation interpreted differently by members, leaders, and non-members. For example, Robert Young's and Ulf Hannerz' work on hybridity and Edouard Glissant's work on creolization seek to explain how different, permeable, cultures blend and merge at their edges, or as one internalizes another.[21]

Another relevant field, systems analysis, centers on exploring the internal workings of contained systems. Yet highly esteemed systems analysis theorist Russell Ackoff argued that organisms and social organisations (organisations of people) are necessarily and routinely influenced by externalities. Ackoff goes further and argues that analysis of externalities *must* be included in any examination of social organisations like a military service: "Organismic systems are necessarily open, subject to external influences; therefore, they can only be understood when considered in connection with their environments." So like Farrell and others, systems analyst Ackoff views organisations as inherently 'open.'[22]

Outside the fields of international relations and the most popular business literature (e.g. Schein), which had tended to treat organisations as "cultural islands", analysis of internal organisational norms *requires* analysis of external culture. Even the Marine Corps makes official recognition of this dynamic, acknowledging that it recruits from a pool of men and women shaped by a wide array of influences:[23]

> Marines bring with them when they enter the Corps their own set of Core Values. Personal Core Values are instilled in Marines by their parents, families, religious beliefs, schools, peers, and other influences upon their lives. These individual sets of values may be strong or they may be weak. Regardless of background, every Marine should understand that being a Marine entails embracing and adhering to Marine Corps Core Values [of Honor, Courage, and Commitment].

[21] See Young, 1995; Hannerz, 1996 and 1997; Kraidy, 2002; and Kirndorfer, undated.

[22] Ackoff, 1994, p. 175-176. Ackoff's description of an organismic system is incorporated into his definition of social system: they are one and the same but at different levels of complexity and analysis. Ackoff describes

[23] U.S. Marine Corps, 1997, p. 2. The Marine Corps capitalizes Core Values as an official term.

If military culture-change studies are to succeed in explaining cultural norms for change or other behavioural characteristics, then this IR-centric, business and systems theory influenced paradigm must be expanded or modified to acknowledge what organisations like the Marine Corps recognize in their own membership and culture. This thesis brings theory from anthropology to bear in order to help explain cultural norming for adaptability in the Marine Corps, and it leverages this literature to show how international, national, or organisational level approaches alone are inadequate to the task. This holistic approach incorporates insights from each of these levels and shows how each level is interrelated. This in turn reveals connections between external and internal culture. In one way, individuals are "batteries" and conduits for cultural storage and transmission: Marine Corps norms for adaptability exist in writing (in evolving forms over time), but they only have meaning as they are consumed, processed, modified, articulated, and enacted by individuals at all levels of command.

Broadening and refining the ways in which IR can be blended with the other social sciences to build towards a more holistic understanding of military organisational culture and military change requires a new conceptual model. It is impossible to physically model the precise and manifold pathways through which culture is transmitted and transformed, certainly not in a two-dimensional drawing that must encompass the entire world of available influences. It is also impossible to account for every possible influence on organisational culture and change; this would be a fool's errand. Instead, this new model seeks the more modest objective of eroding the barriers between the individual, the organisation (internal), and the rest of the world (external) that are thus far assumed or only recently broached at a rather macro level of analysis (e.g. Figure 1.2, above). Figure 1.3, below, is an effort to align our understanding of organisational norm transmission and development more closely with established explanations of cultural learning, dynamism and hybridity found in Young, Hannerz, Geertz, Bourdieu, and Spiro.

Figure 1.3 shows the internal culture of the Marine Corps in the inner "ring," and all external cultural influences on the outer ring. The intermediary ring of shaded ovals depicts most of the ways in which cultural information passes back and forth; these cultural artefacts and categories of experience are the "transmitters" of cultural information. The barriers in this figure are permeable and also interwoven. All cultural information *can be* interrelated, and often merges and transforms through individual interpretation. Individuals who constitute an organisation are immersed in both internal organisational and external culture at all times.

As they are influenced by both internal and external culture, they influence in both directions with their actions and articulations.

Figure 1.3: A New Conceptual Model
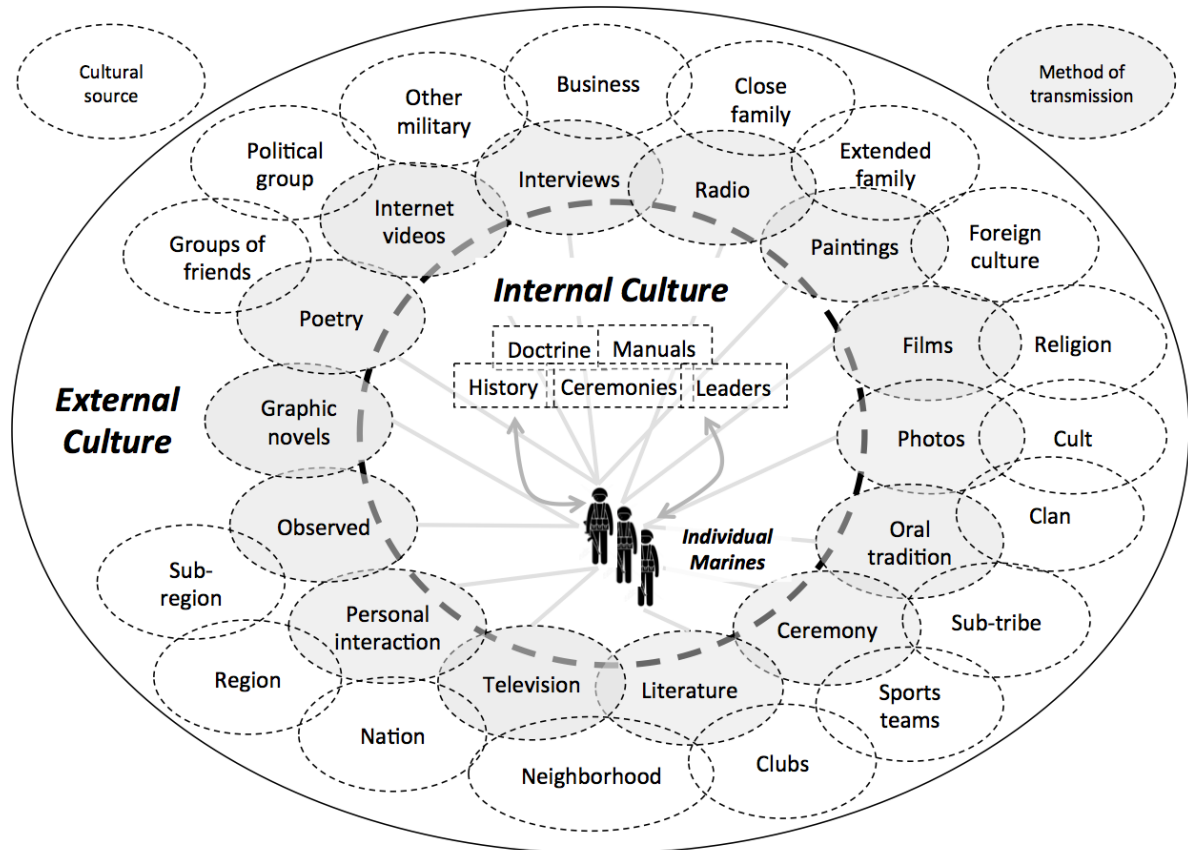
Source: Ben Connable

In this model individual Marines—each of who enters the Marine Corps having been exposed to at least 17 years of cultural artefacts and experiences external to the Marine Corps, living on the *outside* of the organisational ring—are absorbers, retainers, and transmitters of organisational norms to each other and to the external world. At the smallest scale, a Marine fresh out of recruit training and home on leave transmits his recently absorbed norms to his civilian friends through his altered bearing, mannerisms, speech patterns, and dress. These verbal and visual messages influence their understanding of the military and in a very small way hybridize this microcosm of civilian culture with military cultural influences. In turn, his civilian friends remind him of the comforts of civilian life, reinforcing the external portions of the civil-military hybridity that occurred when the Marine was normed by non-commissioned officers in training. Similarly, a Marine who reads both external and internal literature before entering combat is influenced by these exposures in combat, and afterwards talks or writes about combat to influence both other Marines and

external audiences. Because individual Marines are never fully isolated from external cultural artefacts, this thoroughly transparent process of osmotic hybridization between external and internal culture is constant. Each of the millions of Marines who served in the Marine Corps from 1916 through 2015 was both a conduit for this two-way process, and also a potential agent for small or large-scale organisational cultural change.

It is not necessary to claim causality between culture and the behaviour of any individual Marine, or to broaden such a causal claim to Marines more generally, in order to demonstrate the viability and usefulness of this conceptual model. Indeed both IR and the social sciences have generally failed to offer causal proof or draw clear causal linkages between cultural norms and individual behaviour.[24] Instead it is enough to say that individual experience is useful in helping to show how organisational cultural norms are formed and how they change over time. Similarly, narrative examples of individual experience linked to trends in organisational norms describe this continuously iterative process; that is not to say that any individual narrative necessarily had a causal impact on organisational change. At both the individual and organisational levels, this is an effort to understand process and trends rather than to establish causality or causation. At the same time, correlations between individual experience, culture, norms, and organisational change in the U.S. Marine Corps are made clear in the following analysis and historical narratives. The concept of cognitive schemas both facilitates the understanding of the individual as an absorber, retainer, transformer, and transmitter of organisational cultural norms and offers a broader framework for understanding norms at the level of the organisation.

Cognitive Schemas and Cultural Norms

In his 2013 analysis of Danish military culture and adaptation in Afghanistan, Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen leverages psychologist Jean Piaget's concept of "schemas" to help explain the ways in which a norm for adaptability obtained in Danish military culture and played a role in Danish adaptation in war. He defines a schema as a "routine for successfully manipulating one's environment."[25] Likewise, I leverage analysis of *cognitive schemas*, an advancement on Piaget's concept now in use by established cognitive anthropologists like Roy D'Andrade, to stand in for stored knowledge that can be accessed by agency, or individual choice. Like Rasumussen, I use the concept of schema to help explain individual

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[24] See, for example, Yee, 1996.

[25] Rasumussen, 2013, p. 139.

norming and also to stand in for the larger collective: as a loosely intended metaphor, it can help describe how the organisation writ large retains complex experiences and concepts in what Charlotte Linde would call its "institutional memory."[26] Using the concept of schemas in this way helps to bridge the existing gap between individual experience and organisational norms. *Understanding how individual Marines process cultural influences and physical experiences helps explain the ways in which norms evolve at the level of the organisation.*

D'Andrade describes building and accessing schemas as "a procedure by which objects or events can be identified on the basis of simplified pattern recognition."[27] In other words, they are templates for situations that can be accessed, modified, or discarded by each individual Marine in each specific circumstance. Arguably, most human behaviour consists of adaptations from cognitive schemas, and each new experience changes or hardens an individual's behavioural proclivities. Noted anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu (1977) calls these "cultivated dispositions."[28] Clifford Geertz described schemas as "cultural control mechanisms."[29] Here Geertz describes cultural control mechanisms as the cultural drivers of action:[30]

> [C]ulture is best seen not as complexes of concrete behaviour patterns—
> customs, usages, traditions, habit clusters—as has, by and large, been the
> case up to now, but as a set of control mechanisms—plans, recipes, rules,
> instructions (what computer engineers call "programs") —for the governing
> of behaviour.

Describing his concept of *habitus*, or culturally learned habituation, Bourdieu asserts that schema-guided action is the "intentionless invention of regulated improvisation."[31] In other words, every action, from second to second throughout a person's life, is an adaptation bounded by previous observation and experience. In this interpretation a person's options for action are limited by the situational knowledge and experience he or she has schematized up

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[26] Many anthropologists cringe at the use of biological analogies to help explain organisational culture. Those concerns are relevant: the analogy is imperfect and if drawn too closely, misleading. Nothing more than a loose analogy is intended here.

[27] Professional debate over the definition, scientific relevance, and general utility of schemas is cross-disciplinary and quite complex. For some insight into both specific, varied uses and interpretations of schemas, and also the debate over their role in understanding culture and behavior, see (in addition to D'Andrade, Geertz, Spiro, and Bourdieu) Fiske and Linville, 1980; Boski, 1988; Anderson, et al., 1978; Kendzierski Whitaker, 1997; Mayer, et al., 1993; and Kerr and Stanfel, 1993.

[28] Bourdieu, 1977, p. 15.

[29] D'Andrade addresses this debate and cites competing claims in his various works, as does Bourdieu.

[30] Geertz, 1973, p. 44.

[31] Bourdieu, 1977, p. 79. Also see p. 73.

to that point. Adaptation lives on a cutting edge between schema, physiology, environment, and the complexity of human action.

For example, over time a person might develop, through both conscious effort and various kinds of passive absorption, a schema for driving on an expressway. They will be able to quickly and efficiently recognize patterns in traffic—everyone is going fast, but at the same speed and in the same direction—and they will then act in a way that is appropriate to that situation: they will drive at the same speed and the same direction. There might be two primary schemas, say "be safe" and "get there," that, together with a complex web of other schemas shape the way in which the driver drives. These might include a schema for a speeding ticket, a traumatic accident, or the thrill of going fast. Figure 1.4 presents a simplified schema map that in reality would be multidimensional, dynamic, and spider-webbed with fluctuating linkages of differing strength and relevance for each connection, that would contain many other schemas (e.g. accelerating, braking, steering, road signs, using a rear view mirror), and that would differ for every person in each individual driving circumstance:[32]

Figure 1.4: Notional Driving Schema Map

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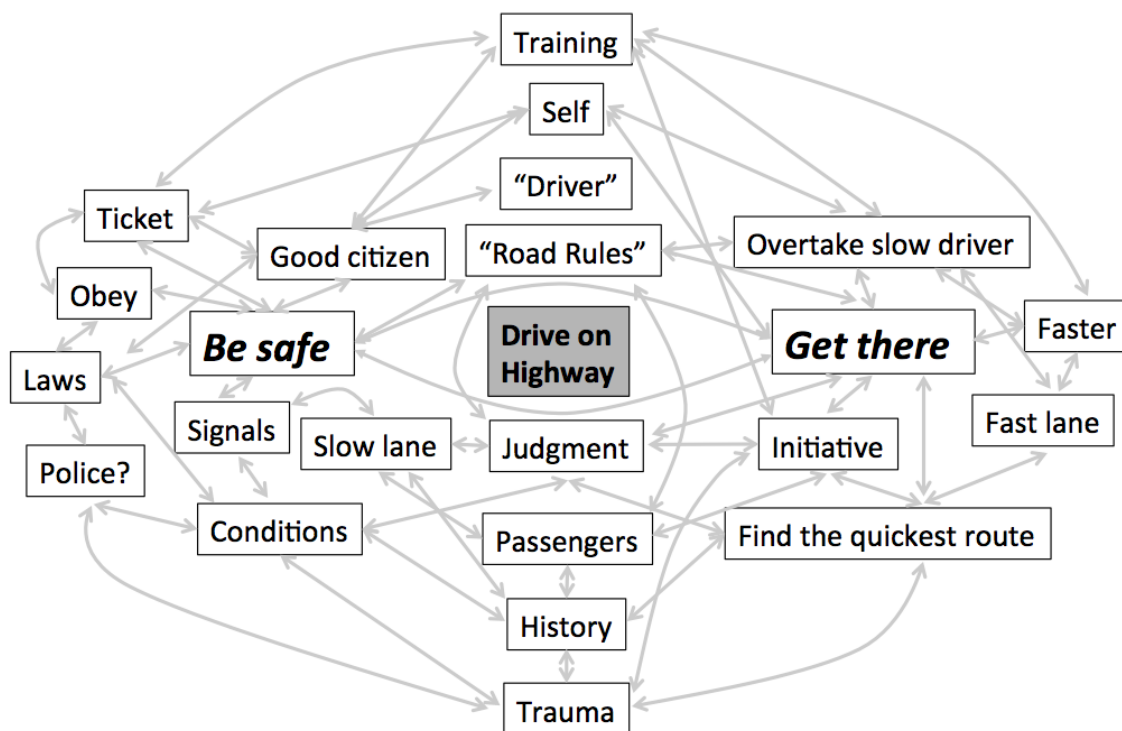
[32] Each schema might be a simple recognition pattern (e.g. I know what a slow lane is and why I might use it) to a more powerful motivational program.

This is not to imply a dependence on dualism to explain human cognition or organisational culture; this is not a binary problem. I address dualism and its relevance to adaptive behaviour in the next chapter. For now it is necessary to assume that all of the available schemas might be relevant, and any one might have more or less power to motivate behaviour at any one time.[33] For example, the imprint left from a previous trauma like a car accident could overwhelm both "be safe" and "get there," leading to some kind of erratic driving behaviour like unusually cautious lane changes. And as I and many others interpret them, schemas do not just exist in a cognitive vacuum removed from physiological inputs, environmental inputs, neurological architecture and activity, and other non-cultural factors; these inputs all exist, they are all are relevant, but they all fall outside the bounds of my analysis. Nor are schemas fixed in form. As Catherine Lutz argues, "cultural models of mind are 'emergent' in on-going social life rather than rigid or mechanical apparatus that exist independent of practice."[34]

Clearly, schemas do not form in a vacuum. Marines are exposed to persistent or acutely compelling cultural artefacts, such as narratives and ideograms, about what it means to be a Marine, about what Marines are expected to do in combat, and how they are supposed to achieve their objectives. These all affect the way in which newly indoctrinated Marines form cognitive schemas. Many cultural influences on the development of cognitive schemas are observable and describable; artefacts are typically physical or aural manifestations. These include Marine Corps training and the use of personal narratives by fellow Marines. All of these artefacts can have a normative effect. This thesis substantiates the existence of influential cultural themes through literature review, and provided some insight into internal schemas through a review of published interviews (e.g. Hammel's *Khe Sanh: Siege in the Clouds*) and through original interviews and a survey.

Describing cultural artefacts and archetypes is relatively straightforward; they are readily perceptible, and they are often codified as character traits like courage or initiative. Identifying the interplay between the warrior and maverick themes as schemas, and showing how they engender adaptation is more challenging.

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[33] This "chart" might also consist of hundreds or perhaps thousands of interrelated schemas, most of which would overlap somehow. This graphic depiction is necessarily simplistic.

[34] Lutz, 1992, p. 182, in D'Andrade and Strauss, 1992.

Schematic Tension and Adaptability: Warrior-Maverick Interplay

The idea of a healthy schematic tension that facilitates adaptation is substantiated not only in the analysis of Marine culture and history, but also in the culture and histories of other military forces historians have described as particularly adaptive. Murray identified the same tension in the German Wehrmacht:[35]

> [A German staff report] suggested that more senior officers needed to encourage subordinates to act as the situation demanded, while not ignoring their stated orders. Over the course of the war, this tension between initiative and obedience would be a major factor in German combat effectiveness.

One could certainly dispute the effectiveness of the WWII-era German Wehrmacht, particularly towards the end of the war as replacements were thrown into the lines and poor strategic decisions blunted operational flexibility. But it is generally accepted that in the mid to late-1930s the Germans had developed a purposefully adaptable force, and that much of this adaptable spirit remained intact from unit to unit through at least the first few years of combat. It is also possible to trace the same dynamic in Israeli military culture through at least the late 1960s, and in many special operations sub-cultures (e.g. British Special Air Service, Russian Special Forces, U.S. Army Special Forces, U.S. Navy SEALs, etc.).[36]

Modern military organisations that embrace and foster the notion that they are elite tend to manifest some form of this tension: they are both elite and disciplined warriors, but they are also smart, savvy, and proudly unorthodox. Individuals in these organisations tend to harbour some degree of insouciance and irreverence because these services tend to attract and encourage bold, independent, and aggressive people. Because the Marine Corps is a relatively large organisation compared to even the active Israeli Ground Forces, because it has existed for over 235 years, and because it has been so richly chronicled, it offers perhaps the most obtainable example of the warrior-maverick interplay.

If there is a dynamic set of schemas that establish various motivational tensions for highway driving, there is a similar set that crafts this generative tension for adaptable action. Figure 1.5 is a simplified, ideational representation of the warrior and maverick schemas. It shows the warrior and maverick schemas reinforced by a range of complementary schemas like discipline or initiative. Each of these complementary schemas manifests in Marine

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[35] Murray, 2011, p. 134.

[36] For example, see Gil-li Vardi's (2008) examination of the negative aspects of this tension in Israeli military culture. Also see Anna Simons (1997), particularly the interplay and comparison between "Team 300" and "Team 309, " pp. 121-123.

doctrine, historical literature, and fiction, and they can be loosely associated with warrior or maverick. However, as with the "drive on highway" schematic, this graphic is not intended to imply a clear-cut delineation. "Make do" could easily be associated with the warrior schema, and "courage" (either moral or physical) could be associated with the maverick schema. Those along the centreline, like the individual's concept of "Marine," are intended to be more generalizable.

Figure 1.5: Notional Warrior and Maverick Schemas

Training
Self
"Marine"
Courage
Discipline
Mission Orders
Find a Way to Win
Obey
Rebel
Orders
Warrior
Adapt
Maverick
Outsmart
Tactics
Doctrine
Judgment
Initiative
Winning
Decisiveness
Leadership
Improvise, Adapt, Overcome
History
Trauma

Source: Ben Connable

Inherent tension between the schemas is made obvious in this notional diagram. Marines are drawn to be strong, courageous, disciplined, and proficient, and they are also drawn to be improvisational, to take initiative, and to be individuals. Each of what might be termed a "set" of motivational schemas associated with warrior and maverick is closely tied to, and reflected in, each Marine's understanding of the centreline schemas. To some degree, all Marines consciously and unconsciously build their identity as Marines by drawing on examples of combat behaviour in books, articles, movies, stories from relatives or friends, television shows, doctrine and training material. This process starts with their first introduction to this material, in most cases probably long before the individual joins the Marine Corps. These schemas form first as abstract notions and then, over brief or long

periods of time firm into the kinds of schemas that can be accessed as individual behavioural models. Marines learn to emulate both warrior and maverick, incorporate this learning in schemas, and in doing so learn to adapt.

Summary of Research Approach and Structure of This Thesis

Based on my 21 years of experience as a Marine, and a further six years of research observation of Marines while at the RAND Corporation, I formed a tentative hypothesis that both warrior and maverick archetypes influenced Marine culture and adaptability.[37] Elements of both archetypes and their associated norms—all to be explored herein—were clearly present in official Marine Corps artefacts like the *Marine Officers Guide*, and initial literature review showed evidence that external cultural artefacts influenced the ways in which Marines imagined their roles. There was sufficient evidence to warrant a further exploration of the interrelated, perhaps even cyclical reinforcement of the hybrid archetypical norming taking place between individual Marines and the organisation, and how external culture influenced the development of the Corps' internal norms. In order to most fully describe and explain this phenomenon I conducted an intensive review of military literature and a survey of non-military, popular literature between 1916 and 2015, a review of extant interviews with Marines across the same timespan, and an analysis of Marine Corps organisational culture as evinced in training manuals, official histories, and battle reports.[38] Overwhelmingly these reviews and analyses lent weight to my hypothesis: there was some (thus far poorly explained) nexus between warrior and maverick schemas that was influencing the cultural norm for adaptability within the U.S. Marine Corps.

My extensive personal experiences as a Marine and as an informal participant-observer of Marine Corps organisational culture gave me considerable insight into how and why Marines behave, both in and out of combat. I recognize that my personal experience also generates bias. To help offset this bias I conducted an online survey of 230 Marines to obtain their views on adaptation and to identify the cultural artefacts that influenced their cognition and behaviour. My interpretation of these semi-structured survey responses is also partly subjective—and therefore vulnerable to confirmation bias—but these anonymous survey

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[37] This research observation period informed but was not associated with this thesis.

[38] Interview literature includes Ehrhart, 1999; Ruppert, 2003; Marcellino, 2013; Makos, 2013; Tortorello, undated; and tens of online interview videos of interviews with Marines in Afghanistan and Iraq accessed from YouTube.com.

responses from Marines with a collective 4,855 months of time deployed in warzones reinforces my findings. These 2013 data also show the degree to which the Marine Corps' norm for adaptability has evolved over time, and how deeply it has taken hold in the schemas of individual Marines.

Analysis of this problem addresses Marine Corps culture from 1916 through 2015. There is a rising narrative curve to the historical sections of this thesis leading from 1916 to the sudden, overt adoption of manoeuvre warfare theory in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It is highly likely that Marine Corps embraced adaptability in some respects well before the 1916 cut-off date for this research. However, the insufficient quality and quantity of literature addressing the Marines' organisational culture prior to 1916—the first year the Corps' professional journal, the *Marine Corps Gazette* was published—precludes extending the analysis further.[39] Therefore, evidence of the existing yet underdeveloped norm for adaptability in WWI-era literature establishes an analytic start point.

Chapter 2 examines the pathways through which culture influences, and is influenced by Marines to form the norm for adaptability. This chapter also introduces the concept of cultural archetypes, dualisms, and their prospective influences on norms. Chapters 3 and 4 describe the complex warrior and maverick archetypes and explains why they are important to military organisational culture. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 are historical-cultural analyses that link external culture with internal culture and experience. Chapter 7 also describes the culturally significant *Warfighting* publications. Chapter 8 presents findings the survey on adaptability, showing how the cultural evolution and experiences in the previous three chapters culminate in the post-9/11 Marine Corps. Chapter 9 concludes with an assessment of the Marine Corps' organisational culture and recommendations for future military culture-change studies.

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[39] Initial literature review did include analysis of pre-1916 material, including material from the Marine Corps archives at the Marine Corps Research Center at Quantico, Virginia.

Chapter 2: External Cultural Influences on Marine Adaptability

This thesis argues that external cultural artefacts influence Marines, who in turn influence Marine Corps organisational culture in a multifaceted, cyclically-reinforcing process evolving gradually over time. If this is accurate then the concept of culture is plainly central to understanding the organisation and its norm for adaptability; it is therefore necessary to at least offer a definition of culture. This chapter briefly explores what is meant by culture, then explains cultural archetypes and the dualisms that create the warrior-maverick tension that influences the norm for adaptability in Marine Corps organisational culture. It concludes with two representative examples of external cultural archetypes and dualisms that reveal both the stark nature of archetypical warrior-maverick characters and their essential complexities.

Culture Described

There is broad disagreement regarding the definition and scope of the term *culture* in professional literature, and many anthropologists abjure its use.[1] In 1977 renowned anthropologist Clifford Geertz wrote, "The term 'culture' has by now acquired a certain aura of ill-repute in social anthropological circles because of the multiplicity of its referents and the studied vagueness with which it has all to often been invoked." Even though Edward Schein embraces and deploys the term liberally throughout his work, he believes that, "Culture as a concept is…an abstraction."[2] Despite these high profile cautions, *culture* remains in common use and appears to have increasing relevance for military historians and military change studies. Weigley (1973), Carroll and Baxter, et al. (1993), Cameron (1994), Kier (1997), Lynn (2003), English (2005), Hull (2005), Terriff (2006), Adamsky (2010), Russell (2011), and others propose culture as a necessary, overarching, and in many cases a specific term: it helps them to orient their readers to the ways in which the observable and conceived arrangements of human interaction shape the conduct of war. Culture provides a useful peg upon which to hang only slightly less complex, contested, and diverse terms like

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[1] Geertz, 1973, p. 87.

[2] Schein, 2010, p. 14. Rachel Baskerville, a critic of national culture indexing, writes "In the human sciences, the concept of culture itself is elusively all-embracing but contradictory…" Baskerville, 2003, p. 2.

myth, legend, norm, motivation, practice, and belief. Despite excoriating the term culture, Geertz offers a succinct yet effective definition:[3]

> [I]t denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about attitudes toward life.

There are problems with all definitions of culture: Geertz' use of the word "system" implies something far more mechanistic than probably exists. Also, the perhaps unintentionally Jungian use of the term "inherited" detracts from the ongoing dynamism in living culture and from the concept of human agency. Melford Spiro (1994) helps to narrow this definition a bit and align it with the concept of schemas. He sees culture as a "cognitive system"—also an over-mechanized interpretation—that consists of both descriptive and normative "propositions," (perhaps themes, or schemas) and places culture in the public domain: it is both collective (shared) and observable.[4] In theory, then, the collective symbols and themes of an entire nation might constitute a national culture that would be external to an organisation.

In some vague sense national cultures might exist, constituted by the collective whole of artefacts most closely associated with an imaginarily bounded state system. But just as organisational cultures are notional, constructed, and even in their most reified depictions still highly permeable, national cultures represent interpretations of fixed boundaries and characteristics rather than an empirical reality. Defining or even loosely circumscribing national cultures is an act more of subjective insight than of objective scientific analysis. For the purposes of this study, though, it is not necessary to define the U.S. national culture that would have the strongest influence on U.S. Marines. Instead it is only necessary to identify the dominant trends in cultural artefacts that are likely to both influence and reflect cultural norms. These external trends can then be linked to the internal culture of the Marine Corps leveraging the model in Figure 1.3. One of the most common ways that cultural norms are conveyed is through archetypes along with a seemingly antithetical exploration of human complexity.

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[3] Geertz, 1973, p. 89. To bring Geertz' work into contemporary context, replace "men" with "people."

[4] Spiro, 1994, pp. 32-33.

Archetypes and Culture's Influence on Adaptation

Writers, directors, poets, storytellers, and others who create cultural artefacts often employ archetypes to emphasize character traits or to set up conflicts between protagonists and antagonists. Archetypical characters are abundant in popular and organisational culture. They are the vehicles for the transmission of ideas, and they can be powerful enough to influence individual behaviour. I show that both separately and when combined the warrior and maverick archetypes, both from within and without the organisation, have strong and enduring influences on individual Marines and on the Corps' institutional memory as recorded in official and semi-official literature. They have helped to shape, and are reflected in the enduring values and norms of Marine Corps organisational culture.

The simplest archetypes are tremendously useful for conveying a narrow idea or establishing a desired behavioural standard. The common archetypical hero reflects all that is good and strong, while the archetypical villain represents evil and, at least as envisioned in popular mythology, the oft-hidden weakness inherent in wrongdoing. The archetypical fictional character Superman may be the most widely recognized, Manichean hero archetype in 20th and 21st Century American, and perhaps in all of western culture.[5] He has been presented in thousands of comic books (or "graphic novels"), several children's cartoons and television series, a number of movies, and countless derivative fan-generated artefacts. His archetypical, undeviating honour, courage, and drive to succeed were, at least in the mid-20th Century, intended to set a behavioural example for American youth: be honest, take a stand against evil, and never quit.[6] One student of Superman's cultural influence, Glen Weldon, described Superman as not only a standard bearer for American idealism, but also as a representation of idealized American culture: "[Superman] reflects our noblest ideals, truth, justice, compassion. He is a very flattering mirror because he shows us how we want to be."[7]

It is not necessary to believe that Superman is real in order to internalize the values he represents. Even clearly fictional archetypical characters like comic book superheroes can influence the development of cognitive schemas by providing a normative template for belief and behaviour. Ray Davies of The Kinks expressed his desire to emulate Superman in "(Wish

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[5] This is a subjective interpretation but this argument is made often and rebuttals are rare. For example, see Chambliss and Svitavsky (2008); Karp (2009); Chambliss (2012); and So (2013). Superman is also an internationally recognized fictional figure.

[6] In more recent incarnations, Superman is a darker and more conflicted character. This shift in tone makes Superman more complex and perhaps realistic, but less powerful as a strict hero or warrior archetype.

[7] Glen Weldon, interview remarks, 2013.

I Could Fly Like) Superman." Davies' escapist lyrics describe Superman as far superior to a sickly "weakling with knobby knees," presumably a self-styled protagonist. He imagines becoming Superman to escape his own weaknesses and also the global despair of the late 1970s:[8]

> Surely there must be a way...For me to change the shape I'm in...Dissatisfied is what I am...I want to be a better man...Superman Superman wish I could fly like Superman...Superman Superman I want to be like Superman…If I were Superman then we'd fly away...I'd really like to change the world...And save it from the mess it's in

Desire to emulate archetypical characters, and to incorporate their examples into cognitive schemas, is powerful,. Advertising experts Margaret Mark and Carol S. Pearson (2001) argue that the most effective way to sell products like Marlboro cigarettes or Harley-Davidson motorcycles is to leverage archetypes.[9] They provide a range of anecdotes and cite empirical evidence from the consulting firm Young and Rubicam that showed how branding products with either "hero" or "outlaw" archetypes (other terms for warrior or maverick archetypes) had a positive increase on sales.[10] Here they describe how archetypes significantly improved two key measures of business performance—*market value added* (MVA) and *economic value added* (EVA) —for hero or outlaw branded companies between 1993 and 1999:[11]

> The [Young and Rubicam] analysis showed that the MVA of those brands strongly aligned with a single archetype rose by 97% more than the MVA of confused brands. Also, over the six-year period under the study, the EVA of strongly aligned brands grew at a rate of 66% greater than that of the EVA of weakly aligned brands.

Therefore associating a brand like Marlboro cigarettes with an archetypical hero, outlaw, or hero-outlaw amalgam cowboy would evoke a deep-rooted emotional reaction that would in turn compel people to like and purchase Marlboros; archetypical cultural artefacts would influence behaviour. The general notion that a fictional character like Superman or the Marlboro Man can influence one-off behaviour or perhaps shape cognitive schemas is also in line with scholarly understanding of the influence of myth and meaning on behaviour. W. J.

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[8] Ray Davies, 1979.

[9] Mark and Pearson, 2001.

[10] The methodology for this research is presented in general terms and it is not clear if it is replicable or verifiable.

[11] Mark and Pearson, 2001, pp. 29-30. In very general terms they describe MVA as a measurement of higher rates of return, and EVA as an estimate of net operating profit (p. 29).

T. Mitchell, Christopher Coker, and Roland Barthes describe how individuals take unique meaning from imagery, written word, and spoken word; ample groundwork has been laid to demonstrate that each person will be motivated to varying degrees and in different ways by any cultural artefact like a movie or a story, or by the archetypes presented therein.[12] In other words, archetypes can serve as de facto behavioural templates that might be emulated, modified, or discarded.[13]

Superman is a straightforward archetypical fictional character. But warrior, or hero, and villain, or maverick archetypes typically represent both extreme archetypical behaviour and more nuanced character development. For example, there are heroic mavericks like Frank Serpico, a police officer who battled endemic corruption in the New York Police Department and who was glorified in Sydney Lumet's 1973 *Serpico*, or the mythical Prometheus who defied the overbearing Greek gods to give fire to man. Other types of mavericks are shadowy, deceitful tricksters like the Norse shape shifter Loki, popularized in the contemporary *Thor* and *Avenger* movies, and not archetypical outsiders. Archetypes are often extreme, but in the best and most popular works of fiction and non-fiction their internal struggles reveal the greyer shades of humanity.

If (as my research suggests) most of the fictional and historical warrior and maverick archetypes in American popular culture are at once obtuse and nuanced, then it is impossible to draw strict meaning from the term archetype. Superman represents a nearly consistent extreme, but American cinematography and literature are replete with amalgam characters that demonstrate both the extremes of archetypical behaviour and behavioural nuance. A survey of top American movies of the 20th and 21st Centuries shows both the overt use and the complexity and interrelated nature of these two seemingly antithetical character types. At quick glance, *Shane* (1953), *Patton* (1970), and *Rocky* (1976) might illustrate the warrior archetype, while *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), *Easy Rider* (1969), and *M*A*S*H* (1970) illustrate the maverick.[14] Yet the heroic characters in *Shane, Patton,* and *Rocky*—a cool-headed cowboy, a top WWII general, and a tough Philadelphia boxer—are also outsiders who challenge the system. Shane takes up the cause of late-1800s era, underdog homesteaders

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[12] See Barthes, 1957, particularly pp. 109-137; Christopher Coker, 2014; and W.J.T. Mitchell, 1986, particularly Part Three.

[13] As with all cultural influences, it is not necessarily possible for the individual to control the degree to which he or she incorporates or rejects archetypes, or how those archetypes are incorporated.

[14] Each of these is included in the American Film Institute's *100 Years…100 Movies* awards. These are selected based on seven criteria, including popularity and cultural impact. Available: http://www.afi.com/100years/movies10.aspx [12 July 2013]

fighting against cattle barons; Patton is an anachronism who in cliché movie parlance 'plays by his own rules to win;' and Rocky Balboa is the consummate underdog battling against social expectations and the system of unsavoury boxing promoters and officials. Similarly, the lead characters in the "maverick" films—rebel without a cause Jim Stark, hippy bikers Wyatt and Billy, and Korean War doctors Hawkeye and Trapper—all bear the hallmarks of archetypical heroes who risk their lives or careers to do what they believe is right. American cultural artefacts—the primary source of external culture to the Marine Corps' internal culture—present what might be called an American warrior-maverick archetype

There are countless ways that Marines access warrior, maverick, and amalgam archetypes and incorporate them into cognitive schemas. Nearly all external and internal influences can be described as cultural in that they constitute what Geertz called the "significant symbols" that transmit understanding. People use cultural artefacts like spoken stories, images, literature, and film to transmit their interpretations of historical events, their individual beliefs, their critiques of humanity, and also to establish behavioural norms for others. All of these purposes converge in the creation of archetypes, which are idealized models or representations of type. Archetypes can manifest in all kinds of cultural artefacts and are ubiquitous in nearly all aspects of daily life. Archetypes are the concrete manifestations of cultural norms. These representations are often extreme sometimes one-dimensional representations, but I show how they are most often blended and nuanced in a way that generates thematic tension in Marine Corps organisational culture.

As I show in this and in the following chapters, Marines profess to take many extreme archetypical notions seriously and sometimes at face value. They may treat both culturally transmitted ethos and service standards as behavioural norms, and so the *culturally transmitted* archetypes have endured for centuries even though individual behaviour necessarily and routinely varies and falls short. Archetypes influence the development of cognitive schemas that in turn contribute to the evolution of organisational culture. There is evidence that Marines draw from both extreme and dualistic warrior-maverick archetypes throughout their lives, and that these observations influence the development of their cognitive schemas.

Drawing from their lifelong exposures to external and internal cultural artefacts, and from their personal experiences, Marines identify, generate, and sustain their own Marine-specific archetypes through training, education, ceremony, and official literature. Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller is the most recognizable Marine archetype. Sturkey described Puller as the ultimate

Marine warrior.[15] Puller's heroics are discussed and debated at all levels of Marine professional education. He is nearly omnipresent in Marine cultural artefacts, appearing as either an exalted hero or absurd comic foil. He is often recognized as irreverent, and some Marines believe he was not promoted beyond his third general star due to his refusal to conform. In Figure 2.1 the writer and artist of the *Terminal Lance* comic (a former Marine) depicts the ghost of Chesty Puller descending from the heavens to exhort Abe, a young Marine Lance Corporal, to use his power of "bullshit."[16]

Figure 2.1: Comic—The Ghost of Chesty Puller

Source: *Terminal Lance,* online comic strip

The ways in which these archetypes—warrior, maverick, and the American warrior-maverick—are repurposed and represented by Marines reveal the ways in which Marines have incorporated these archetypes into their understanding of Marine organisational culture. In this comic Maximilian Uriarte depicts Puller as an ethereal and therefore eternal presence, hovering above Abe in the role of heroic guardian; he draws a clear parallel between Puller and Obi Wan Kenobi from the ubiquitous *Star Wars* film series. Yet Uriarte's Puller is also irreverent. He encourages Abe to undermine or bypass the system by lying, a tactic that would be in clear violation of the official Marine exhortation to never "lie, cheat, or steal."[17]

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[15] Sturkey, 2002, pp. 118-121.

[16] Uriarte, 27 December 2013.

[17] In the 1990s era tripartite Marine "values" of honour, courage, and commitment, Marines "never lie, cheat, or steal." This phrase is essential in Marine Corps recruit training and is found across official and unofficial literature. For a recent version of the values see, as of 17 March 2014: http://www.hqmc.marines.mil/hrom/NewEmployees/AbouttheMarineCorps/Values.aspx

Here, and perhaps in the historical literature, Puller is the eternal representation of the part warrior, part maverick Marine archetype.

Development and evolution of a Marine warrior-maverick archetype is part of the process of translating culture and experience into an organisational norm. Various reinterpretations of Puller's character, or of any of the prominent Marine or fictional Marine characters described in this thesis, gives Marines a way to express their understanding of their organisational standards for behaviour and a way to judge their own behaviour and the behaviour of their fellow Marines. Understanding the complexities of a "non-archetypical archetype" like the hybrid warrior-maverick requires examination of the complex middle ground between the two polar characterizations.

Incorporation of antithetical archetypes would seem to generate inherent tension, which in turn would create a more complex space within which to resolve disparate schemas. This competition between archetypes is commonly referred to as a dualism. At first the notion of dualism is compelling, and apparent dualisms emerge in all aspects of Marine culture. As I show here the concept of dualism is important to the development of cognitive schemas that in turn influence organisational cultural norms for adaptability. Yet the concept can also mislead in its simplicity and therefore distract from the important complexities that encourage adaptation: dualisms are often explored only at the edges, leaving the tensions generated in the middle to loose and ineffectual interpretation.

Duelling Archetypes and the Framing of Marine "Magic"

A dualism is the simultaneous existence of interrelated opposites. Dualisms are commonly used to convey both stark contrast and complex intermingling. Perhaps the most commonly recognized symbol of dualism is the Chinese *yin-yang*, depicted below in Figure 2.2. It shows stark yet fluid white and black elements simultaneously moving into each other and away from each other. Smaller dots of the opposite colour are embedded in either side, further emphasizing complex interrelation. It would be unwise to see *yin-yang* as anything more than grossly simplified representation of human complexity. Taken at face value its stark symbolic contrasts are insufficient to convey the nuance that is hidden even to most expert students of behaviour. Yet *yin-yang* gracefully represents a core theme in the cultural artefacts that influence Marines' behaviour: complex, interrelated, dualistic archetypes create a natural tension that encourages adaptation.

Figure 2.2: Yin-Yang Symbol of Dualism

Source: commons.wikimedia.org

Yin-yang is central to many eastern philosophies, and the broader concept of dualisms can also be found in western social sciences. Controversial psychologist Carl Gustav Jung brings together the concepts of archetype and dualism in a way that helps inform understanding of Marine adaptations. Many critics dismiss Jung as a mystic crackpot, or more kindly as outdated and scientifically irrelevant. An even more kindly interpretation is that Jung developed an idiosyncratic approach to understanding human thought and behaviour. He fixated on character archetypes and existential dualisms, both of which evolved as the basis for his part mystical, part empirical process of analytic psychology.

Like many of Jung's detractors I find it difficult to rationalize the Jungian approach as either rational or empirical.[18] I see little scientific value in what Jung claims to be his empirical findings: *these references to Jung are in no way intended to endorse his theories or findings on culture, and I explicitly reject his notion of inherited cultural archetypes*. If he did not have such clear influence on the cultural artefacts that in turn influence Marines I would not engage his work. Yet even when they are not clearly related to Jung, Jungian concepts—particularly archetypes and dualisms—undergird some of the most noted books and films about Marines. Therefore, whatever one may think of Jung as a scientist, his work has both overt influence on 20th Century films and literature about Marines, and his writings also indirectly (or perhaps inadvertently) describe the basic themes that filmmakers and writers use to explain or examine Marine culture.

Former Marine and historian Stephen Pressfield interprets Jung's concept of archetype as inherited, primal forces within each person that direct behaviour. Pressfield describes the

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[18] E.g. Noll (1994), Neher (1996), and Pietikäinan (1999). See Jones (2001) for an examination of Jung's critics.

collective set of Jungian archetypes as the computer software that guides actions and defines the individual through various stages of life:[19]

> The Collective Unconscious, Jung said, contains the stored wisdom of the human race, accumulated over thousands of generations. The Collective Unconscious is the software we're born with. It's our package of instincts and pre-verbal knowledge. Within this package, Jung discovered what he called the archetypes. Archetypes are the larger-than-life, mythic-scale personifications of the stages that we pass through as we mature. The youth, the lover, the wanderer, the joker, the king or queen, the wise man, the mystic. Legendary tales like that of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table are populated by archetypes. Movies are full of archetypes. Even a deck of cards has archetypes: king, queen, joker, jack.

While there are clear limits to the scientific merit of mystically inherited type theories, Jung's concepts of archetype, collective unconscious, spontaneous belief, and particularly of dualisms or duality, emerge and re-emerge in the literature and films on warfare and the Marine Corps. Stanley Kubrick and Michael Herr used *Full Metal Jacket*, a translation of Gustav Hasford's *The Short-Timers*, as a vehicle to deliver an interpretation of Jung's Shadow, or the dark alter ego hidden in all people. In some interpretations the film is an almost obtuse series of Jungian dualities wrapped in the overarching duality of a bifurcated storyline. *Full Metal Jacket* even contains an overt reference to Jung. In the original screenplay, the protagonist—Marine Sergeant "Joker"—tries to explain to an angry and rather dull-minded Marine colonel why Joker is wearing a peace symbol on his flak jacket and has written "Born to Kill" on his helmet cover:[20]

COLONEL: Well, what is it supposed to mean?

JOKER: I don't know, sir.

COLONEL: Answer that question, corporal, or you'll be standing tall before the man.

JOKER: Well, sir…I suppose...I was trying to suggest something about the duality of man.

COLONEL: The what?

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[19] Pressfield, 2011, p. 84.

[20] Kubrick and Herr, 1985, p. 43 (p. 68 of the screenplay). This interplay was altered during filming. In the released version of the film Matthew Modine (Joker) simply states "I think I was trying to suggest something about the duality of man. [The what?] The duality of man. The Jungian thing, sir." For an interesting discussion on the Jungian dualities in *Full Metal Jacket* see: The Kubrick Site. (Undated). "The Jungian Thing: Duality in Full Metal Jacket (A Discussion)." As of 29 July 2013: http://www.visual-memory.co.uk/amk/doc/0093.html

JOKER: The dual nature of man?... You know, sir, the Jungian thing about aggression and xenophobia on one hand, and altruism and cooperation on the other?

The image of the words "born to kill" and a peace symbol coexisting on a Marine camouflage helmet cover is cemented in both popular and Marine culture. Figure 2.3 depicts an image of this helmet used for the *Full Metal Jacket* movie poster.

Figure 2.3: Helmet Cover Dualism *Full Metal Jacket*

Source: Warner Brothers

For many Marines who served in the Corps in 1987, or entered after 1987, *Full Metal Jacket* was and remains a highly influential film.[21] Of the 225 current and former Marines who responded to written, free-text response survey questions about the cultural artefacts that influenced their concept of a Marine, more than 30 identified *Full Metal Jacket* as a significant influence on their decision to become a Marine, and on the way they behaved as a Marine.[22] Hasford, a Marine photojournalist who had served in Vietnam, wrote *The Short-Timers* in an almost metronomic series of dualisms; this same rhythm of dualisms marks nearly each scene in *Full Metal Jacket*. Nearly all other films about Marines from the 1920s through the 2010s contain overt dualisms and critical examinations of archetypes. I describe

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[21] See the following chapters for an analysis of *Full Metal Jacket* and for my survey results.

[22] These responses were made to Questions 1 and 2, described in full in Chapter 11.

these in greater detail in the following chapter, but even a sample of films from the early 1900s shows the consistent influence and use of archetypes and dualisms.

Table 2.1, below provides a representative sample of films about Marines spanning 1926 through 2013.[23] There is a consistent series of motifs throughout this sample and throughout the full catalogue of films about Marines: they depict Marines in extremes of loutishness and criminality on one hand, and terrific heroism on the other, and at the end the viewer is left to contemplate what lies between. Themes of heroic courage and self-sacrifice, and maverick individualism and rebelliousness are the most clearly prevalent in these examples.

Table 2.1 Archetypes and Dualisms in Films About Marines

Title	Year	Synopsis of characters and dualisms
The Marines Are Coming	1935	Lt. "Wild Bill" Traynor is an unruly, disrespectful, brawling officer who is kicked out of the Marine Corps for bad debts. He re-enters the Corps by enlisting. In the final battle a disgraced, drunken Bill singlehandedly saves his Marine rival, defeats the enemy bandits, and captures their leader.
Sands of Iwo Jima	1949	Sgt. John M. Stryker, a heavy drinker demoted from Sergeant Major, is a brutal task-master who generously gives money to a woman in need, saves his Marines' lives many times over, and is ultimately killed in combat.
What Price Glory?	1952	Captain Flagg and his First Sergeant, Quirt, both heavy drinkers and brave fighters, struggle for the affections of a French woman. Their contest leads to a drunken card game that ends with Flagg shooting Quirt in the leg. Minutes later, the unit is called to the front, and they march off together, side-by-side, Quirt limping from Flagg's bullet.
The Boys in Company C	1978	Tyrone Washington is a tough, hard-charging enlisted Marine battling an illogical system, weak officers, and a drug-addled fellow Marine. A former pimp, he plans to smuggle heroin back to the U.S. in body bags. In one scene he attempts to kill his commanding officer. In the end he stands up for what he believes is right, drops the heroin scheme, and gives up a chance to avoid combat. He then dutifully heads back to the front.
Siege of Firebase Gloria	1989	SgtMaj Hafner is a tough, caring leader, and Cpl. Di Nardo—like Stryker from *Sands of Iwo Jima*, busted from Sergeant Major—is a crazy, tough Marine who at one point says, "Fuck the Marines, fuck the Corps, and fuck the war."[24] Hafner and Di Nardo help save an Army firebase from being overrun, and Di Nardo dies in combat after heroically killing tens of assaulting North Vietnamese soldiers and fending off their attack.

Source: Summaries of cited films

Archetypes and dualisms are also common in novels about Marines and even in non-fiction descriptions of Marine combat history. Often the exploration of dualisms is used to provide insight into the space between the archetypical extremes. Tensions generated by dualism make for some of the most interesting and realistic examinations of culture. Here

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[23] A complete table and analysis of films is presented in the next chapter. The 1926, silent movie version of *What Price Glory?* is the earliest example I could identify that was both widely distributed and specifically about Marines.

[24] Siege of Firebase Gloria, 1:17:25.

Robert Young explains how the dualistic nature of English culture allowed for creative interpretations of "Englishness" in the blurry middle ground:[25]

> For the past few centuries Englishness has often been constructed as a heterogeneous, conflictual composite of contrary elements, an identity which is not identical with itself. The whole problem…for Englishness is that it has never been successfully characterized by an essential, core identity from with the other is excluded. It has always, like the Prime Meridian, been divided within itself, and it is this that has enabled it to be variously and counteractively constructed.

This dynamic is reflected in Marine culture and literature about Marines. Marine and Korean War veteran Jere Peacock's novel about Marines serving in Japan after the Korean War (*Valhalla*, 1961) is built around dualisms and archetypes. In both *Valhalla* and his follow-on work, *To Drill And Die* (1964), Peacock's Marines and civilian characters are whipsawed from one extreme to another. They contemplate fate and self-determination, lockstep duty and individuality, and then find their own paths somewhere down the middle. Peacock excels at finding the grey areas between the archetypical hero and maverick, but he uses the dualistic extremes to paint the grey.[26] Of all the former Marines-turned-novelists, Peacock was perhaps the most adroit at exploring and explaining the ways in which Marines could simultaneously act out the warrior and the maverick archetypes, yet embody something more human and perhaps more powerful interlaced between the two. Both of his main characters in *To Drill and Die* (1964), Sergeant R.E.B. Vonner and Captain Jochen Holland, obey orders yet hold on tightly to their individuality and fight tenaciously against the Marine Corps system.

Archetypes and dualisms help thoughtful and educated Marine combat veterans like Jere Peacock and Karl Marlantes to interpret their own experiences, and Marines turned historian like Stephen Pressfield to interpret the wartime experiences of others. And as Pressfield points out in *Warrior Ethos*, the movies that help to form motivational schemas both portray and reinforce archetypes.[27] Therefore, the value of dualistic archetypes is not necessarily in their empirical scientific value—Jung's questionable claims aside—but instead is in helping to place and energize the kind of culturally transmitted myths and legends that do influence Marine behaviour. In their own words, in books, interviews, surveys, and videos spanning the

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[25] Young, Robert J.C., 1995, p. 3.

[26] See Chapter 6.

[27] Pressfield continues to examine the Shadow and other Jungian themes in *The Profession*. E.g., see Pressfield, 2011b, p. 14.

period from 1916 through 2015, Marines from the most junior enlisted ranks through senior officers describe the ways in which their behaviour is motivated by the examples of those who have gone before them, by images in movies, and by archetypical characters in books. In this interpretation of the term "archetype," the cultural themes and archetypes of the warrior and the maverick provide notions of what a Marine should be and should do, rather than mystically guide their behaviour through a primordial collective unconscious.

There are in fact many ways to interpret and employ the term *archetype*. Systems engineers use archetype to describe various models of technical or physical systems like computer networks. Marlantes suggests that there is at least some spiritual, even healing value in the notion of mystical, inherited archetypes, while Pressfield and others tend to interpret archetypes as enduring and universal cultural standards derived from mythology and iconology; these can be internalized or emphasized through exposure and training. Petteri Pietikäinan (1999) reinterprets Jungian archetypes as historically transmitted cultural symbols that can influence behaviour, jettisoning the assumption of a genetic inheritance. In this more grounded, less mystical interpretation, archetypical behaviour can be transmitted, taught, parroted, and to varying degrees inculcated as cognitive schema. Archetypes and associated cultural influences and standards are described in absolutes—e.g. courage as a complete domination of fear in battle—but they are only normative when rationalized with all other inputs to organisational culture.

Therefore, even if one accepts Jung's collective unconscious and inherited archetype—*which I do not*—the archetype and its associated dualisms emerge and are altered through the filter of individual experience and the environment. Turning Jung's questionable mystic interpretation on its head and rejecting the idea of mysterious generational transition allows for a more logical and scientifically defensible argument. This is the argument made by Pietikäinan and others: that people collectively generate archetypes over time, that these archetypes have enduring historical and cultural significance, that they can have normative and even generative power for individuals like ancient Spartan warriors or modern-day U.S. Marines. But archetypes and dualisms have different meaning for each individual and will influence each individual differently (or not at all) over time.

Rather than emerging as a series of absolute dualisms, Marines judge, gauge, and value each other and themselves in subjective increments of courage, honour, improvisation, irreverence, and selflessness rather than absolute success or failure. And every Marine will filter the meaning conveyed in the warrior and maverick archetypes (traits, etc.) differently based on the full range of their life experience. These interpretations are rarely if ever

dualistic despite the near binary descriptions of ethea by Marines and in official Marine literature. This returns us to the "Marine magic," or the nebulous intersection between warrior and maverick that, I argue, influences the norm for Marine adaptability. Ultimately the binary archetypes and dualisms, extant in both Marine culture and in the cultural artefacts that describe the Marine Corps, are like magnetic poles between which the norm for adaptability evolves.

Real Marines, Marine Fiction, and the Dualistic Warrior-Maverick Loop

Over the next several chapters I also describe how archetypes appear in literature and film *about* Marines. Characters created by former Marines like Peacock and Marlantes are modelled partly on Marines they knew in real life. These characters reflect their understanding of the 'Marine archetype,' and then in turn affect other Marines interpretation of the Marine archetype. This section presents two detailed examples of these Marine archetypes in fictional literature. Both show how warrior and maverick archetypes are deployed in fiction, yet how they also reflect and generate the unresolved friction that encapsulates the so-called Marine magic.

Former Marine Leon Uris created the iconic fictional Marine Lieutenant Colonel Sam "High Pockets" Huxley, portrayed in both a novel and film version of *Battlecry!*; the novel is still a staple on the Commandant of the Marine Corps' reading list. Former Marine William Styron created Marine Lieutenant Colonel Timothy "Happy" Halloran. Alliteration of h's aside, both characters are remarkably similar in their dichotomous, archetypical personalities and behaviour. Huxley is a consummate warrior and disciplinarian, while Halloran is an unorthodox and rebellious maverick. Huxley commands "Huxley's Whores," a wayward battalion of Marines. Uris paints Huxley as a serious, dedicated man driven to build the most effective infantry battalion in the Marine Corps. He relentlessly drives his Marines through gruelling training exercises as they prepare to face Japanese. When his communications chief complains about their old, shoddy radios, Huxley drives home the need to overcome any obstacle placed in their path:[28]

> We're also using rifles from World War One. Until we're issued new gear
> we'll get one hundred percent efficiency out of every piece we've got now.
> And what's more, we'll train these men in such a manner as to overcome any
> faults in the equipment.

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[28] Raoul Walsh, Battlecry, film, 1955, 36 minutes and 30 seconds from opening credits.

Huxley pushes his men beyond their preconceived points of exhaustion, proving to each of them that they can drive themselves beyond self-imposed limitations. The men harden over time and form tight bonds under Huxley's leadership, becoming excellent jungle and island fighters. Yet in campaign after campaign they are prevented from going ashore with the invasion force. Instead they are stuck with the nasty and dangerous job of mopping up residual Japanese resistance on Guadalcanal and Tarawa, frustrating Huxley's ambitions to lead his men in high-intensity combat. At the end of Uris' story, Huxley is mortally wounded, left lying in the open and exposed to enemy fire. One of his Marines tries to rescue him, but Huxley keeps him back at the point of his pistol, threatening to shoot the Marine if he comes forward from behind cover.[29]

This self-sacrifice is Huxley's ultimate act, and one that cements his reputation as a warrior within the milieu of *Battlecry* and also in the annals of Marine Corps fiction. Uris modelled Sam High Pockets Huxley on Marine Raymond L. Murray, his real-life commanding officer in Second Battalion, Sixth Marine Regiment during World War Two. Raymond Murray was twice awarded the Navy Cross, the second highest award for valour in the U.S. naval service, once for extraordinary heroism under fire during the battle of Saipan, and then again for leading his 3,000 Marines out of the Chosin Reservoir. Murray was a calm yet aggressive fighter who stayed at his post on Saipan even after being seriously wounded.[30]

This thread between the real life heroics of Marine officer Murray, the interpretation of Murray's actions by Marine-turned-author Uris, the reflections of Uris' interpretations in fictional Marine character Huxley, and then the appearance of *Battlecry!* on the official reading list of the Marine Corps is a glaring example of the complex, circular loop between internal and external culture. This type of thread is remarkably common in cultural artefacts generated by Marines from WWI through the lingering conflicts in both Iraq and Afghanistan. It is also present in William Styron's work about Marines.

Happy Halloran exists for only 10 pages in a short story nested within Styron's *The Suicide Run: Five Tales of the Marine Corps.* Styron, like Uris a former Marine officer, places himself in the first person as a lieutenant in Halloran's unit as the unit awaits orders to invade the Japanese homeland at the end of World War Two. He describes Halloran as a rogue with a "carefully cultivated, corny Irish brogue and a waxed handlebar moustache." In

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[29] Walsh, 1955, 2 hours, 15 minutes, and 50 seconds from opening credits.

[30] Williams, Jack, "Major General Raymond L. Murray, 91; led the breakout at Chosin," *Leatherneck*, online obituary, 13 November, 2004. Also see Brown, 2001, pp. 4, 10, 24, and 25.

a line that closely mirrors the Marine Officers Guide's description of Marines as "flamboyant individuals and irradiant personalities," Styron writes:[31]

> Unlike the other services, the Marine Corps has always harbored flamboyant characters and nonconformists, and Happy Halloran filled that bill; we loved him for his slightly wacky heterodoxy, always playfully challenging the system.

In a memorable scene framed on a remote Pacific island, Halloran and his Marines sit out in the open air listening to Navy Rear Admiral Crews briefing them on the invasion plan. Pipe-smoking "Good News" Crews attempts to reassure the assembled Marines that the Japanese defenders will be obliterated by naval gunfire before the Marines land, an argument they had heard prior to getting mauled by the surviving Japanese defenders in the battle for Tarawa. An incredulous and increasingly irate Halloran not so quietly belittles Crews to his Marines, and then begins "clowning around in the shadows, mimicking the admiral's pipe gestures and delighting the younger officers who, like me, were as much in awe of his maverick brashness, his contempt for the brainless minutiae and hollow trumpery of military life."[32] Halloran then asks a question of Crews, just loud enough for the Marines to hear yet just low enough to leave the Admiral holding a hand to his ear: "Are you aware, sir, that you are full of *ostrich shit*?"[33]

> It was wonderfully deft in its controlled daring: a lieutenant colonel baiting a rear admiral in public was a scary tightrope act even in a community as notably hostile to navy brass as the marines. The impertinence was astounding, courting severe punishment. But somehow Happy Halloran pulled it off; a ripple of laughter rolled through the crowd of officers, then became a sustained roar as the admiral persisted with the puzzled, "What did he say? What did he say?"

Huxley, with his focused dedication, courage, and aggressive spirit epitomizes the Marine warrior. Halloran with his "wacky heterodoxy" epitomizes the maverick. Yet Uris and Styron were knowing and careful authors able to convey subtlety and dissonance. They both imply that their characters' effectiveness came not from an easily stratified and obtuse set of character traits, but instead from a more complex interplay and tension between warrior and maverick. For all of Huxley's orthodoxy, he always wore his shirt half unbuttoned in the field, flaunting organisational discipline to cool off in the hot tropical air. Frustrated by the

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[31] Styron, 2009, p. 151. Literary reviewer Elizabeth Samet calls Halloran one of Styron's "most authentic" characters in *Suicide Run*. See Samet, Elizabeth D., "Marine Dreams," *The New York Times*, 08 October, 2009.

[32] Styron, 2009, p. 155.

[33] Styron, 2009, pp. 156-157, emphasis in original.

Harlots' backseat position in the Second Division's campaigns, he paid a visit to the division's commanding general to demand a front line role. When the general rebuffed the request, showing Huxley the book of carefully drawn battle plans for the coming invasion of Saipan, Huxley rebelled:[34]

> You can take that book and throw it in the ocean. You and I know that book
> is dead with the first shot fired. It wasn't a book that won us Guadalcanal.
> We want that beachhead...You might as well court martial me.

Neither is Halloran a simple, one-sided character. For all of his shocking rebelliousness, Halloran is also Styron's ideal warrior. He describes him as a winner of the Navy Cross at Tarawa where, "badly wounded, he'd led an assault on a Jap [sic] pillbox, killing a slew of the enemy with their own machinegun." Halloran was a Marine who had an "intuitive sense of leadership that allowed him to wield strict authority without losing the common touch." Styron's fictional doppelganger, Lieutenant Paul Whitehead, loved Halloran for his unorthodoxy, but that love also hung on his respect for Halloran's warrior mystique.[35]

> The single feature that made tolerable my vision of D-day, if there was such a
> feature, was having Happy Halloran lead me into the jaws of death.

Huxley and Halloran are only complete and memorable characters because they are realistically complex. The men lionized by the Marine Corps in official battle histories and in training manuals reflect both the warrior and maverick themes, yet they are equally complex. Getting to the heart of this complexity first requires examination of the warrior and maverick archetypes that form the opposite poles of the Marine dichotomy. The following chapter describes the warrior archetype, while Chapter 4 describes the maverick archetype. Both describe the archetypes that influence Marine adaptability as simultaneously Manichean and nuanced, bringing us two steps closer to understanding the practicalities of the so-called Marine "magic."

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[34] Walsh, 1955, 2 hours, 3 minutes, 45 seconds from opening credits. In the book version of this conversation, Huxley tells Army Brigadier General Pritchard, "…you can take the whole goddamn Army and shove it you know where." Uris, 1953, p. 240.

[35] Styron, 2009, p. 155.

Chapter 3: Warrior...Marine

In 1989 then-Commandant of the Marine Corps Alfred M. Gray made a simple statement about Marines: "We are warriors and those who support warriors…We're not too fancy. We're not a whole bunch of other things. What you see is what you got [sic]."[1] A year earlier Gray had implemented the Basic Warrior Training (BWT) program to ensure that every Marine—infantryman, cook, or aircraft mechanic—would be able to serve as a front-line rifleman. Gray's initiative was designed to get the Marine Corps back to its roots and avoid the kind of overspecialization that was, in his belief, eroding the combat mindset of the Marines.[2] Gray and other leaders conflate *Marine* with the term *warrior* for a very specific purpose: to elicit the archetypical image of the warrior and relate it directly to Marine in an effort to build and sustain the notion that Marines exist first and foremost to fight.

Nearly ten years after Gray initiated BWT, then-Commandant Charles C. Krulak made another simple statement about the Marine Corps: "We make Marines and we win battles."[3] Krulak reinforced the idea that the Marine Corps was an organisation designed solely for fighting. In this simple, direct interpretation of the Marine Corps' *raison d'être*, the Corps makes strong, capable Marines who dominate the enemy and either kill him or force him to flee or surrender. Winning battles requires Marines to be expert and aggressive fighters, or warriors. Krulak and each commandant since Gray has continued the tradition of training all Marines to fight like riflemen, and they have sustained the use of the term warrior as a synonym for Marine.

On its face *warrior* is a simplistic term. Ancient archetypical images of warriors convey both a sense of raw power and individualism; warriors fight man-to-man for their own survival and glory. Yet for some the term warrior is inapplicable to Marines. In a 2010 article Marine Luis G. del Valle argued that "Marines are not warriors" because they fight as part of

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[1] Molly Moore, 1989. One might interpret Gray's definition of non-infantry Marines ("people who support warriors") as both an unintended sleight against non-infantrymen and also as an unintentional counter to the essential argument in the BWT program, that all Marines are warriors.

[2] See Turley, 2010, pp. 302-304 et al. Turley also notes that Gray was concerned about rear area attacks against non-infantry Marines.

[3] Charles C. Krulak, 1997. This quote is listed on an official Marine Corps website. Available: https://www.facebook.com/marines/posts/10151352988905194 [17 March 2014]

a team rather than as individuals.[4] Former Commandant John A. Lejeune referred to Marines as soldiers. Lejeune further situated the term Marine at the highest plane of what he termed "soldierly repute," and in his own terms rejected the idea of heroic individualism.[5] According to del Valle (2010) and Lejeune (1921), Marines are premier soldiers more akin to the Roman legionnaires who fought in close-knit and carefully coordinated units, than with Robert E. Howard's fictional Conan the Barbarian.

Understanding the impact of the warrior archetype on Marines' cognitive schemas, and on adaptation, requires examination of both this prima facie notion of the individual warrior of myths and of more complex, subtler interpretations of soldierly repute and group cohesion. Both analyses of the warrior are compelling. Marines hold raw fighting power in high regard and they are inundated with cultural artefacts that highlight and often exaggerate individualistic, primal combat. Yet Marines function within a hierarchical military organisation designed around teams that range in size from four men—a *fireteam*—to expeditionary forces of around 30,000. These teams are nested within each other like compounded Russian *matryoshka* dolls. Marines work, fight, survive, and succeed in part because they replicate elements of the ancient warrior archetype, and in part because they are able to concentrate their collective power through teams.

Here I focus on the warrior as a member of a team, but retain the context of individual warrior spirit that Coker and others believe separate warriors from mere soldiers.[6] I explore the more primal elements of individual warrior archetypes by examining the crucial and delicately balanced relationships between Marines operating in collective units. The primal elements of the warrior archetype are all present, yet their meaning and impact on cognitive schemas matter most because they matter to fellow Marines. Individual Marines can be great fighters and terrible Marines because they might not channel their prowess in a way that helps the team succeed. Conversely, some Marines might be weak fighters yet still help propel the Marine team to victory by exhibiting other elements of the warrior archetype, or ethos.

Underlying this analysis is the antithetical notion that while Marines are often called upon to fight like ancient legionnaires, they are perhaps just as often asked to channel warrior-like behaviour in ways that avoid or obviate violence. Iconic images of Marines going over the

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[4] Del Valle, 2010, pp. 78-79.

[5] Lejeune, 1921.

[6] Coker, 2007, location 123 (Kindle).

seawall at Tarawa in WWII, or Inchon during the Korean War are matched by descriptive images of reconnaissance teams in Vietnam avoiding enemy contact and by young Marine leaders engaging with tribal elders in Iraq and Afghanistan with the purpose of reducing violence. Marines must win battles but their real purpose is to succeed at any task placed before them. This interpretation elevates the warrior archetype and ethos above primal, *mano-y-mano* combat. For Marines, being a warrior is about success, and acting out the warrior archetype means finding a way to overcome any obstacle and to bear sometimes-horrible burdens to achieve that success. It is these schemas—the more esoteric, team-oriented warrior schemas—that influence the Marine Corps' norm for adaptability.

Warrior Archetypes and Warrior Ethea

As of 2013, Pressfield's *Gates of Fire*, the story of Spartan warriors at Thermopylae, is required reading for all new enlisted Marines, and *The Warrior Ethos* is required reading for all U.S. Marines, private to general.[7] In practicality, Pressfield officially defines "warrior" for the Marines in the post-9/11 era. He writes that the warrior ethos, or a complex set of characteristics incorporated by individuals as motivational schemas, is a product of both individual and group survival:[8]

> The Warrior Ethos evolved from the primary need of the spear-toting, rock-throwing, animal-skin-wearing hunting band—the need to survive. This need could be met only collectively, as a group working in unison. To bind the band together, an ethos evolved—a hunter's ethos.

This ethos is commonly defined by the traits that nearly all observers of military forces rely upon to deconstruct and examine fighting men and women. Pressfield's list, which he developed from his Marine experience and from his historical research, is anchored in his examination of the ancient Spartan warrior culture: a warrior then and now must exhibit "courage, selflessness, love of and loyalty to one's comrades, patience, self-command, [and] the will to endure adversity."[9] Recomposed, these traits form a warrior ethos and, embodied in a historic, mythic, or mythologized persona, a warrior archetype. Pressfield sees the

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[7] U.S. Marine Corps (2013) Commandant's Professional Reading List. Available: http://guides.grc.usmcu.edu/usmcreadinglist [19 May 2013]

[8] Pressfield, 2011a, p. 8.

[9] Pressfield, interview with author, 30 July 2013.

warrior as a Jungian archetype: pervasive, enduring, and nearly invariable across time and space:[10]

> Archetypes are larger-than-life, mythic personifications of the stages that we pass through as we mature…Archetypes serve the purpose of guiding us as we grow…One of the primary archetypes is the warrior. The warrior archetype exists across all eras and nations and is virtually identical in every culture.

For Pressfield, cultural archetypes evolve over time yet remain anchored by the "larger-than-life, mythic personifications" of the warrior. Individual warriors like the Spartan king Leonidas and WWII-era U.S. Army soldier Audie Murphy are warrior archetypes.[11] Karl Marlantes writes that he was motivated to seek a medal for valour in Vietnam based on Murphy's self-portrayal in *To Hell and Back*, in which Murphy single-handedly defeats a German infantry company thereby winning the Medal of Honor.[12] And while individuals like Audie Murphy can reflect warrior archetypes, so do the entire class of Japanese Samurai, Native American Apache warriors, and European Knights like the Knights of St. John. Contemporary warrior archetypes include U.S. Marines (and individual Marines described in this and the following chapters), U.S. Army Special Forces and Rangers, British Royal Marines and Special Air and Boat Services (SAS and SBS), Russian *Spetsnaz*, and, albeit uncomfortably for many in the west, the Taliban, Islamic State, and Al Qaida.

I found it interesting that the most oft-mentioned warrior groups in western literature are increasingly specialized groups like the U.S. Navy SEALs, the U.S. Army Special Forces or the SAS or SBS. [13] Whereas in previous eras an entire army could cast a compelling warrior archetype (e.g. the Spartans or the Apache) now it seems the bar has been raised and that "warrior" is defined primarily by groups that consist of those hand-picked from larger formations. Even the Israeli military, once considered an archetypical warrior organisation, has fallen out of favour or is no longer mentioned as an elite force. Many argue that the Marine Corps is not an elite organisation; this argument has merit considering large size of the Marine Corps and that the official recruiting standards for Marines are similar to those of

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[10] Pressfield, 2011a, pp. 84-85. Pressfield also writes (p. 85) that, "A new archetype kicks in at each stage. It makes the new phase 'feel right' and 'seem natural.'"

[11] After WWII, Murphy played a maverick in the movie *Bad Boy* (1949).

[12] See Marlantes, 2011, p. 163. Marlantes also attributes this motivation, which he recalls ruefully, to several other factors including seeing his father's medals from World War Two.

[13] Throughout The Armed Forces Officer (1950), S.L.A. Marshall writes about the strength that American servicemen draw their belief in a good cause. F.M. Richardson (1978) argues that British soldiers also fight more effectively when they fight for what they believe to be a good cause.

other large U.S. forces. However, few seem to dispute that the Marine Corps has a distinct warrior culture.[14]

There are many themes and elements that are consistent to the warrior archetype and ethos across time and space.[15] Jung deserves criticism for his loose and often contradictory interpretation of empirical science, but he was a formidable scholar of myth. His hero archetype is the collective sum of centuries of culturally transmitted myth. In Jung's *Man and His Symbols*, Jungian disciple Joseph L. Henderson describes the universality of the hero myth, or the pattern of historically transmitted hero stories that constitute the individual warrior archetypes like Leonidas, Joan of Arc, or Audie Murphy:[16]

> Hero myths…have…a universal pattern, even though they were developed by groups or individuals without any direct cultural contact with each other – by, for instance, the tribes of Africans or North American Indians, or the Greeks or the Incas of Peru.

No two stories—mythical or mythologized—follow precisely the same form or format. And yet patterns of hero myth and warrior ethos do emerge in even a superficial cross-cultural analysis of warrior traits.[17]

Comparative Warrior Traits and The Marine Warrior Ethos

Every observer of warrior culture has his or her own list of warrior traits that feed a universal or specific archetype, and most military followings or services have a list of organisational traits or a detailed ethos. Famed WWII reporter Robert Sherrod believed Marines fought for two reasons (ideals and esprit de corps), the Japanese *bushido* code has at least eight warrior virtues, the British Royal Marine Commandos have 10 "group values," and the Marine Corps requires each Marine to memorize and adopt an official list of 14 distinct leadership traits.[18] Table 3.1, below, offers a sample of warrior traits drawn from a range of ancient and modern warrior cultures. Rooted in historical case studies, philosophy, and also in combat narratives, these lists of warrior traits collectively inform our

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[14] Pressfield argues that the Marine Corps is an elite organisation not because it draws in elite people, but because it takes normal people and makes them elite. Pressfield, 2013, interview with author.

[15] Andrew Neher describes how archetypes like the hero or warrior can be similar across time and space while also retaining contextual idiosyncrasies. See Neher, pp. 68 and 86.

[16] Henderson, 1964, p. 101.

[17] Pietikäinan makes a strong argument for this kind of externalized, narrative universality. He leans on Ludwig J. J. Wittgenstein's concept of "families" of commonality in narrative (e.g. myth-related) language across cultures. See Pietikäinan, pp. 53-54, and Wittgenstein, 1964.

[18] See: Sherrod, 1944, p. 35; Yamaguchi, 2007, p. 472; and U.K. Royal Navy, 2013, State of Mind.

understanding of the universalized warrior archetype and ethos. The inclusive traits in these various lists matter because they are cultural interpretations of behaviour and, more importantly for our purposes, because they influence the development of behavioural schemas that in turn influence the norm for adaptability.

Note the similarities between traits across even this small table: many standards like honour, courage, discipline, loyalty, and self-sacrifice recur and are interrelated. For example, in these nine sets of ethea the word *honour* appears six times, and one could interpret traits in the remaining three sets to reflect honour. *Courage* (or valour) appears eight of nine times, and it is clearly implied in the ninth (the U.S. Navy SEALs). Most importantly for purposes of understanding the universal warrior archetype, group values are emphasized across the table, either explicitly or implicitly. For example, the British Royal Marines explicitly list *group values* and *unity* as part of their ethos, while other groups list *unselfishness, loyalty, never leave a fallen comrade, self-sacrifice, mission first, selfless service*, and *duty*.[19]

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[19] This set is a non-random sample of lists based on my subjective selection. Each set of traits listed in this table represents formal lists provided on official websites or in official documents, but also a blend of various lists. For example, I added the Marine Corps "core values" to the list of Marine Corps leadership traits, and the Japanese Samurai code is a combination of traits from two different sources. Further, none of these lists is necessarily all-inclusive of values or ethea that each organisation embraces. For example, in addition to the traits listed here, Marines also officially embrace the traits of adaptability, improvisation, flexibility, aggressiveness, technical and tactical proficiency, amongst many others. The source for the list of the generically-termed "European Knights" is a example of the kind of secondary source aggregation available on the subject; this one may reflect a modern and perhaps inaccurate interpretation of an historic primary source document. However, it is sufficiently similar to other lists of Knights' values that it is suitable for reference here; it also reflects Shannon E. French's detailed research on the subject of warrior traits. The lists in this table represent a singular interpretation of traits at one point in time, or an aggregation of traits from various points in time or from various sources; each list is a subjective interpretation. I avoid interpretations of various tribal warrior groups like the Yanomami (Yanomamö) because the interpretations of their warrior ethea are often generated by external observers and these are highly controversial and contested.

Table 3.1: Traits From Selected Warrior Cultures

Group	*Traits*																
U.S. Marines[20]	Courage[21]	Honor	Endurance	Unselfishness	Decisiveness	Integrity	Tact	Loyalty	Bearing	Initiative	Justice	Knowledge	Enthusiasm	Dependability	Judgment	Commitment	Always Faithful
U.S. Army Rangers[22]	Courageous	Honor	Never Surrender	Esprit de Corps	Physically Strong	Morally Straight	Courteous	Never Leave a Fallen Comrade	Energetic	Mentally Alert							
U.S. Navy SEALs[23]	Steadfastness	Honor	Discipline	Self-Sacrifice	Integrity	Leadership	Humility	Loyalty	Innovation	Proficiency							
U.S. Army[24]	Personal Courage	Honor	Never Quit	Selfless Service	Integrity	Duty	Respect	Loyalty	Mission First	Never Leave Fallen Comrade							
Japanese Samurai[25]	Courage	Honor	Character and Self-Control	Loyalty	Honesty and Sincerity	Rectitude of Justice	Modesty	Benevolence of Mercy	Frugality	Politeness	Guardianship	Discretion					
European Knights[26]	Valour	Truth	Diligence	Charity	Justice	Resolution	Temperance	Sagacity	Liberality	Prudence	Hope	Faith	Mercy				

[20] Derived from the 14 Marine Corps Leadership Traits, the Marine Corps Motto, and the Marine Corps' Core Values. These are presented in a way most Marines would consider "out of order" because they do not fit the acronym "JJDIDTIEBUCKLE;" the purpose of this order is to align ethea across rows where possible. Derived from, for example: U.S. Marine Corps. Available: http://www.marines.com/history-heritage/principles-values. [06 June 2013] Note that this list does not include the 11 Marine Corps Leadership Principles or other lists of desiderata that might be included here.

[21] This includes both moral and physical courage.

[22] Derived from the Ranger's Creed, 2013.

[23] Derived from the Navy SEALs Ethos, 2013.

[24] Derived from The Army Values, 2013.

[25] Derived from various works on Bushido including French, 2003, 199-229, but summarized in McKay, 2008, and Cleary, 1999.

[26] Derived from multiple sources: French, 2003, pp. 115-137; and *The Knight's Code of Chivalry*, attributed to the Duke of Burgundy.

British Royal Marine Commando[27]	Courage	Professional Standards	Determination	Unselfishness	Professional Standards	Group Values	Humility	Unity	Cheerfulness	Adaptability	Commando Humour	Fortitude
Romans[28]	Courage	Honor	Fortitude	Friendship	Ethical Behaviour	Duty	Self Reflection	Loyalty				
Chinese Shaolin Monks[29]	Courage	Strength	Endurance	Willpower	Justice	Discipline	Humility					

Source: See footnotes

My inductive, subjective analysis of the literature that describes Marines in battle—that written both by observers and by Marine participants—revealed five consistent themes, traits, or more accurately, norms, that were relevant to the Marine warrior ethos.[30]

The Five Marine Warrior Norms

With one noted exception, each term I identified turned out to be loosely consistent with one of the official Marine Corps Leadership Traits or core values. These are the terms commonly used in the literature to describe "good" Marines, and particularly those Marines who are held up as good combat Marines. Only one of these—*calmness*—is not officially recognized as a warrior trait by the Marine Corps. The quotes are collective representations and not direct citations. This is an informed, subjective analysis and not derived from empirical coding of all available text. This approach is taken for several reasons. First and foremost, computer-aided coding of all texts cited herein would be impossible due to the high percentage of hard copy and video vs. soft copy sources. Second, this coding would require so much subjective interpretation that it would render computer-aided coding all but meaningless. Some might associate the Marine Corps Leadership trait "Bearing" with *calmness*. However, none of the descriptions of bearing I could find in official Marine Corps

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[27] Derived from: U.K. Royal Navy, 2013; and also from King, 2004.

[28] Derived from multiple sources: E.g. French, 2003, pp. 63-91; and Sherman, 2005.

[29] Derived from Shahar, 2008, and French, 2003, pp. 179-198.

[30] I describe this analysis in greater detail in the following chapter.

publications approximated *calmness* as it is described in autobiographies and histories by and of Marines.[31]

Toughness: Demonstration of a Marine's ability to complete a mission – to *succeed* – despite enduring great amounts of physical pain or psychological pressure, or to simply endure hardship without complaint ("he's hard," "he refused to quit")

Calmness: Maintaining a calm, cool demeanour and a steady tone of voice even in the most intense combat situations; sustaining level-headed decisionmaking despite incredible stress, pain, or imminent threat of death ("his voice remained calm," "he kept a cool head")

Self-Sacrifice: Willingness of a Marine to sacrifice for his fellow Marines but without the overt purpose of obtaining praise; this ranges from giving up portions of food when food is scarce, to leaping on a live hand grenade ("he drew fire away from the wounded")

Courage: Demonstrated control of fear in the face of mortal danger; setting aside or overcoming the need for self-preservation to succeed, even in the face of near-certain maiming or death ("with total disregard for his own safety," "he ran right at them")

Honor: Doing what other Marines consider to be the "right thing" in any particular situation, even if that action violates written rules; consistent, honest treatment of fellow Marines; following through on any promised action ("we could count on him")

Collectively these five norms represent my interpretation of the Marine warrior ethos, or the warrior archetype. Each of these is emphasized in the literature and film that depict and describe Marines and is firmly established as a cultural norm in organisational and unofficial literature and film. All five are central to descriptions of heroic fictional and historic Marine characters. It is difficult to prove the normative influence of these descriptions and depictions, but it is clear that a great many Marines attempt to emulate these and purposefully

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[31] For example, one instructional guide defines bearing as "Creating a favorable impression in carriage, appearance, and personal conduct at all times." U.S. Marine Corps. Undated 1.

shape their own behaviour to meet these standards. Two examples, one fictional but based on observation of Marines, and one autobiographical, demonstrate how important one of these traits—calmness—is important to Marines.

Calmness as a Critical Warrior Trait

William Styron, a Marine and incisive (if sardonic) observer of his fellow officers, describes here how a fictional Marine colonel has practiced and perfected the art of calmness in the face of calamity. In this scene a mortar round fired during routine training has landed short into a group of Marines standing in line for food, killing and wounding many of them. The surprising and dispiriting news is relayed by a radioman named Hobbs just moments after the rounds land and just moments before the chaos of the aftermath unfurls:[32]

> The Colonel had said nothing at first. The brief flicker of uneasiness in his eyes had fled, and when he put down his messkit and looked up at Hobbs it was only to wipe his hands on his handkerchief and squint casually into the sun, as if he were receiving the most routine of messages. It was absolutely typical of the man…Too habitual to be an act yet somehow too faintly self-conscious to be entirely natural…how many years and what strange interior struggle had gone into the perfection of such a gesture?

Styron's fictional colonel, like his Halloran character surely modelled on a man or perhaps men Styron had observed during his time in the Marine Corps, had over many years purposefully altered his own behaviour to at least give the appearance of calmness in the face of chaos. Former Commandant Thomas A. Holcomb believed that calmness was not only practical but that it also reflected confidence and courage; it was an outward manifestation of warrior prowess:[33]

> A Marine…is therefore a man who…has practiced and learned self-control. Some of the best Marines I have known are soft-spoken, quiet men. They are usually the qualities of the man with the most resolve and the most courage.

Calmness can help stabilize fellow Marines to fight more effectively, but calmness is also a form of determined passivity. Calmness helps to focus Marines to kill, or to refrain from killing, or to survive bombardment, or to think through a complex problem while under great stress. Calmness can set the stage for adaptation by creating space and time to think, to adapt, and to succeed. It is both a state of mind and a process for filtering out distractions and, probably, for dampening the kind of physiological reactions like increased adrenaline flow

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[32] Styron, 1952, p. 9.

[33] Holcomb, 1943, p. 37.

that might reduce complex thought. In this way the least obvious and most esoteric warrior trait is relevant to adaptation. Calmness, like panic, is contagious and can help steady Marines in a fight, thereby improving their chances for success.

In another example real-life Marine lieutenant Ernest Spencer was in charge of an exposed, dangerous hilltop outpost during the siege of Khe Sanh, Vietnam. Here he describes the importance of calmness, toughness, and courage, and how important it is that the unit—the immediate, close-knit group of Marines—sees these traits emerge in both combat and non-combat situations. Spencer and his Marines were practicing with their weapons, shooting across a gully:[34]

> I pick up an M-79, a 40mm grenade launcher. After I load a round I casually aim off into the gully. Cool, just cool, you know? I pull the trigger…But I hadn't noticed a branch about 30 feet in front of me. The round hits the branch and explodes. Guys go down, dive down, squat down. I'm shocked…I look around and everyone's eyes are on me. Eyes, undecided eyes. I reach down, pick out another round…I raise the weapon, aim one handed, and fire…I deliberately hit the tree again. I'm the only one standing. Everyone's got an I-don't-believe-this-guy look on their faces. I say casually, 'Blast only goes straight forward when you hit like that.' I'm lying my ass off...I turn a fuck-up right around and achieve two things: I make them doubt I'm a goof, a klutz, or an idiot, and—more important—they are not sure if I am crazy or reckless or what.

Spencer's mix of warrior calmness and courage, combined with more than a bit of what Styron described as "wacky heterodoxy," feed adaptation because Marines tend to see both warrior and maverick archetypes as offering some key to success. Spencer's anecdote is particularly relevant because warrior and maverick are also linked by their connection to the group, and by the power that the group represents or exerts over individual behaviour. For Marines, warrior behaviour and the rewards of successful warrior behaviour are closely tied to the notion of group influence and self-sacrifice.

The Power of the Group to Influence Adaptability

With the exception of *calmness*, the five warrior traits I have identified are remarkably consistent not only with the Marine Corps' own organisationally-approved traits and values, but also with other warrior ethea. Stepping back and looking at this selection of traits listed and immortalized since the Roman period reveals something more useful than simple word coding: the true normative and generative power of each and *every* trait, or subset of traits,

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[34] Spencer, 1987, p. 32. Also see Ohman, 2004, and McGurk, 1947.

lies in its connection to the group. Anthony King makes a broad argument for the importance of *cohesion*, or group bonding, in modern infantry and describes the effects of its presence or absence in combat.[35] I argue that the connection to the group—or for Marines, the immediate unit like squad or platoon—anchors all warrior cultural influences to behavioural schemas that, in turn, encourage adaptation.

Courage, Self-Sacrifice, and Fellowship

Battlefield courage provides clear insight into the collective value and power of warrior traits. J. Glenn Gray believed that "war...glorifies courage above all other virtues."[36] A warrior can be courageous in battle, but his courage has little meaning or purpose in a vacuum. A courageous act is generally understood to be an act that requires one to overcome fear of physical or moral injury; it demands that the individual subsume his learned recourse for self-preservation to do something others judge to dangerous and *also* good or useful. Coker believes that "Sacrifice is the key to the warrior ethos."[37] In his semiotic analysis of courage in the Marine Corps, Frank Tortorello contends that all parts of a courageous act— the act itself and the outcome—are meaningful only in the context of fellowship or societal judgment:[38]

> Courage constitutes the exercise of personal agency not for oneself but for others or for prized cultural values in contexts presenting a risk of moral degradation and physical death. Such selflessness is a critical component of courage that defies our cultural expectations.

The same is true for the moral courage required to disobey an illegal order, and even the simple warrior-like self-discipline required for daily, mind-numbing tasks like showing up on time to a military formation.[39] All warrior behaviour, from the greatest act of battlefield courage to the most basic act of individual self-discipline is, in some way, simultaneously self-serving and also self-sacrificial. The warrior archetype takes these acts to extremes, paring self-interest away from group interests. The warrior archetype is unfailingly a man or

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[35] King, 2013.

[36] Gray, 1959, p. 111. While Pressfield argues that self-sacrifice is the greatest virtue, these two traits are so closely intertwined that the difference is all but meaningless.

[37] Coker, 2007, location 149 (Kindle).

[38] Tortorello, 2010, p. 4. Tortorello outlines a general argument against human agency and then provides a counterargument. Tortorello, 2010, pp. 4-5.

[39] Moral courage is generally conceived to be the courage to act appropriately when doing so would entail risk (e.g. refusing to obey an illegal order from a superior officer), and physical courage is the act of placing ones body in harm's way to accomplish a mission or to save a fellow Marine.

woman (e.g. Joan of Arc) who consciously places the needs of the group—sometimes a nation, a religion, a military service, a unit, but most often a small inner circle of fellow warriors—above immediate selfish needs. Because archetypes tend to be exaggerations of reality, the stories that describe archetypical characters tend to end in highly dramatized wounding or death; I describe several such endings in this thesis. At least in their own descriptions, the greater the sacrifice made, the deeper the warriors feel the satisfaction of fellowship. J. Glenn Gray believes that some warriors come to view self-sacrificial death as an ultimate good.[40] Certainly the WWII-era interpretations of *bushido* emphasized the good of self-sacrificial death.

Whether or not it requires self-sacrificial death, warrior fellowship is a powerful behavioural motivator. In his ethnography of Marine lieutenants, Marcellino (2012) identified this kind of "friendship love," or *philia* love, as perhaps the greatest positive motivator for Marines both in and out of combat.[41] Gray describes the power of fellowship in comparison to friendship:[42]

> The essential difference between comradeship and friendship consists, it seems to me, in a heightened awareness of the self in friendship and in the suppression of self-awareness in comradeship...Comradeship wants to break down the walls of self.

Gray's intimate exploration of cowardice is equally helpful in understanding the normative and generative power of courage, selflessness, and fellowship. For Gray, and also for F.M. Richardson (*Fighting Spirit: A Study of Psychological Factors in War*), physical cowardice in battle is the ultimate rejection of fellowship.

Cowardice and Fellowship: Manichean Archetypes of Coward and Hero

Physical and moral cowardice offer a point of antithesis that helps demonstrate the value of fellowship, teamwork, selflessness, and courage. Cowardice is the failure to perform necessary acts that might result in personal harm, either through passivity (not moving forward under fire) or action (running away, suffering an emotional breakdown). Cowardice is punished with overt shaming or, perhaps more painfully, with quiet contempt. Gray, a

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[40] Gray, 1959, p. 116.

[41] Marcellino, 2012, pp. 33-36. *Philia* is a transliteration from ancient Greek.

[42] Gray, 1959, pp. 89-90. Gray's observations are drawn almost solely from his personal experience in WWII. While they are often deeply insightful and broadly meaningful, they are in some places quite limited. For example, Gray contends that comradeship, or fellowship, cannot last longer than the battle and that comrades cannot become lifelong friends. Most of the Marines I have interviewed and interacted with in the course of my research would, I think, hotly contest this assertion.

former soldier, paints the physical coward as a pitiable soul who is incapable of contributing to or benefitting from warrior fellowship:[43]

> The coward's fear of death stems in large part from his incapacity to love anything but his own body with passion. He is an egoist because he does not possess enough self-assurance to be an egoist. The inability to participate in others' lives stands in the way of his developing any inner resources sufficient to overcome the terror of death. His is a truly pitiable figure in combat, for fear and danger drive him more and more into the confines of his own skin and make him more and more into a mindless body.

In his officially-sanctioned 1950 interpretation of the American military ethos, S.L.A. Marshall wrote that courage is one of the "very highest of the military virtues" while cowardice is "inexcusable."[44] These admonitions have real, practical meaning in combat. Here Otto Lehrak, a Marine company commander in Vietnam, talks about the cost of cowardice in combat. Lehrak's company moved forward against an enemy regimental headquarters under heavy artillery fire:[45]

> It was thick brush, almost impossible to move through, and we were getting almost constant artillery from the north and west and mortars from the south. I had wounded lying in the grass and brush, which was burning furiously, and more casualties every minute…[O]ne of my platoons, which was leading the right front of my assault, just fell apart. The platoon commander went to pieces and crawled into a hole. I had heard a few rumors about him being a coward and had dismissed them…I wish I'd listened. His leadership failure, and therefore mine, was responsible for many of my casualties…

Warriors fear cowardice because it can be deadly, and also because they fear rejection by their fellows. They fear being cut away from the close, life-affirming bonds that Pressfield, Gray, Marcellino, E.B. Sledge, William Manchester, and nearly all other observers of war, associate with *love*. Membership in the warrior band demands selflessness and duty to others, or at least genuine, demonstrated efforts to place the needs of others above the individual. In this personal reflection Manchester, a WWII Marine combat veteran, sums up the meaning of the small Marine unit to the individual Marine while earnestly capturing the motivational power of *philia* love:[46]

> And then, in one of those great thundering jolts in which a man's real motives are revealed to him in an electrifying vision, I understand, at last,

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[43] Gray, 1959, p 115. Also see Tortorello, 2010, p. 238-240 for his analysis of Gray.

[44] Marshall, 1950, pp. 16 and 260.

[45] Lehrak, 1992, p. 271.

[46] Manchester, 1979 (2002), p. 391. French (2003) also uses this quote from Manchester, found on page 451 of the original 1979 publication. See French, pp. 12 and 18.

> why I jumped hospital that Sunday thirty-five years ago and, in violation of
> orders, returned to the front and almost certain death. It was an act of love.
> Those men on the line were my family, my home. They were closer to me
> than I can say, closer than my friends had ever been or ever would be. They
> had never let me down, and I couldn't do it to them. I had to be with them,
> rather than let them die and me live with the knowledge that I might have
> saved them. Men, I now knew, do not fight for flag or country, for the Marine
> Corps or glory or any other abstraction. They fight for one another. Any man
> in combat who lacks comrades who will die for him, or for whom he is
> willing to die, is not a man at all. He is truly damned.

What does this tell us about the power of the warrior archetype and *philia* love to shape and motivate actions? Scientific process and extant knowledge of human behaviour does not allow us to take Manchester's revelation as unquestioned evidence that either an enduring warrior standard or an idiosyncratic, organically generated *philia* love motivated his behaviour. Many other factors, including perhaps other cognitive schemata, a neurological process, or some combination of environmental conditions, affected Manchester's decision to give up the security of the hospital to re-join his fellow Marines in combat. And perhaps 35 years after the fact, Manchester was ascribing motivations to his behaviour that he imagined ex post facto. The idea that men "fight for the man next to them, not for their country" is oft-repeated and even cliché. Yet the way Manchester describes the generative power of *philia* love closely matches similar descriptions offered by thousands of his fellow Marines in the historical interviews presented in books like Otto Lehrak's *No Shining Armor*, Eric Hammel's *Khe Sanh* and *Ambush Valley*; Laura Homan Lacey's *Stay Off the Skyline*; James Brady's *Why Marines Fight*, and many others. It also matches long standing institutional standards set by iconic Marines like former Commandant of the Marine Corps General John A. Lejeune, who in 1920 wrote:[47]

> The spirit of comradeship and brotherhood in arms which has traditionally
> existed throughout the ranks of the Marine Corps is a vital characteristic of
> the Corps. It must be fostered and kept alive and made the moving force in all
> Marine Corps organisations.

In this brief excerpt and in countless other documents, the Marine Corps officially emphasizes the value of *philia* love and of self-sacrifice for fellow Marines and for the successful completion of any mission. I found little evidence in any of the literature written by Marines or about Marines of any negative association with self-sacrificial acts. The very few disparaging comments I found about self-sacrifice (e.g. remarks that the Marine who sacrificed was "dumb" or a "lifer" for doing so) were made by real-life Marines or fictional

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[47] Lejeune, 1920.

Marine characters in films or novels who seemed embittered about a great many things, and even their comments are often made with an unmistakable undertone of respect and envy; the self-sacrificial act seemed in some way to highlight the other Marine's shortcomings, or perceived shortcomings. For example, in *The Short-Timers*, all acts of valour represent futility and stupidity, and they are ultimately wasteful and unnecessary even within the context of the small unit. *The Short-Timers* is devoid of the kind of redemption present in Jere Peacock's anti-war writing or in Stanley Kubrick's otherwise wholly anti-war interpretation of Hasford's novel.

Ultimate acts of self-sacrifice are recognized with the highest awards. Here is an excerpt from the Medal of Honor citation for Marine Corporal Jason L. Dunham who died from wounds he sustained in Iraq, in 2004. The Medal of Honor is the highest award for valour in the U.S. military.[48] Highlights are mine:[49]

> For ***conspicuous*** gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as Rifle Squad Leader…Corporal Dunham's squad was conducting a reconnaissance mission in…Iraq…[A]n insurgent…attacked Corporal Dunham. Corporal Dunham wrestled the insurgent to the ground and in the ensuing struggle saw the insurgent release a grenade…Aware of the imminent danger and without hesitation, Corporal Dunham covered the grenade with his helmet and body, bearing the brunt of the explosion and shielding his Marines from the blast. In an ***ultimate and selfless act of bravery*** in which he was mortally wounded, he saved the lives of at least two fellow Marines. By his ***undaunted courage, intrepid fighting spirit, and unwavering devotion to duty***, Corporal Dunham gallantly gave his life for his country, thereby reflecting great credit upon himself and ***upholding the highest traditions of the Marine Corps***…

Reading this citation one can only conclude that his aggressive, courageous, self-sacrificial behaviour was motivated in great part by his desire to save other members of his immediate group, his squad of Marines.[50] Absolutist language in the award citation like *ultimate*, *selfless*, *undaunted*, and *unwavering*, helps the Marine Corps achieve the central purpose of the award: to respectfully and reverently use Dunham's act to reinforce an archetypical standard of warrior behaviour. This is the kind of opportunistic "heroic creation" that John W. Roberts (1989), an expert on African-American heroic folklore, believes is both

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[48] Each service has a different version of the Medal of Honor, but it is the highest award for valor in all U.S. armed services and has been since well before the first year of my inclusive period of research (1916-2013).

[49] Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps. Available: http://www.hqmc.marines.mil/News/NewsArticleDisplay/tabid/3488/Article/77433/medal-of-honor-citation-for-cpl-jason-l-dunham.aspx [17 July 2013]

[50] This conclusion reaches beyond my subjective interpretation. Medals of Honor are only awarded after a rigorous review of the available evidence, interviews with witnesses, detailed command recommendations, and a review by a selected board.

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natural and necessary for the establishment of heroic archetypes.[51] The idea of being recognized by fellow Marines as wholly selfless and undaunted in the face of near certain death motivated Karl Marlantes to rush forward to save his fellow Marine in Vietnam. In retrospect Marlantes describes his desire to earn a medal as more selfish than selfless, but the power of the warrior archetype and the norms for warrior behaviour influenced him nonetheless.

For Marines, then, interpretations of the warrior archetype are complex. Primal warrior actions like single-handedly charging an enemy position or smashing a man's face in with a rock are highly respected, and in some cases these singular acts contribute to broader success. But the more pervasive and more relevant interpretation of the warrior archetype is the one of collectivism purposed for success. Each individual Marine has value as a warrior *primarily* through his relationship to his fellow Marines. Courage, honour, integrity, and other parts of the warrior ethea are most relevant when they contribute to collective success, and they matter even when they are channelled through non-violent behaviour.

Discipline and the Drive to Succeed

Two additional elements of a generalized Marine archetype, and of the Marines' organisational culture, emerged during this research. The first is the recurring debate over the meaning of discipline, a behavioural trait commonly associated with soldierly repute and warrior success. This dialectic over the meaning of discipline for Marines mirrors and also helps to explain the meaning of the unresolved dualism between warrior and maverick archetypes in Marine Corps organisational culture. The second element is the drive to succeed, a norm required in any good military organisation but one that has special and perhaps unique meaning within the Marines' organisational culture. This overarching norm for success is at once a classic warrior trait, and also an important part of the intangible bridge that links warrior and maverick archetypical norms.

The Discipline Dialectic and Its Reflection on Adaptability

Professional articles in the Marine Corps Gazette, the service's semi-official professional journal, and in other forums reveal an ongoing and often heated debate between those Marines championing adherence to traditional, warrior-like disciplinary standards

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[51] E.g. Roberts, 1989, p. 5.

(increasingly over time conflated with the term *professionalism*) and those calling for a looser, more flexible interpretation of the Marine Corps' standards for behaviour and dress. Quoted in a 2007 article, First Sergeant Edward Kennedy attributed the success of his Marines in Iraq to "the basics of discipline." For Kennedy, success stemmed from maintaining standards of formal conduct in the field, like proper uniform wear. The rest (success in combat) "takes care of itself." The article ends by comparing his company of Marines with the superbly disciplined and ascetic warriors of ancient Sparta: "[L]ike the Spartans, the level of discipline in Kilo Company will bring the unit…unparalleled success."[52] Yet in a separate 2007 article, Marine Lieutenant Colonel Michael D. Grice writes, "Blind adherence to regulation and rule without temper of maturity is not leadership; it is autocracy."[53] Grice pushed back against the doctrinaire application of uniform regulations in combat. Nearly a century earlier, in 1916, "F.I." argued for giving more leeway to subordinates, arguing in the Gazette that, "Without decentralization, initiative—that factor which so often has determined victory—is impossible."[54] Two years later, in 1918, C. H. Brittan continued the dialectic in the Gazette, writing, "failures in operation may usually be traced to a lack of discipline." Using his own, unofficial terms, he defined discipline as:[55]

> A constant condition of order in a military body maintained by the submission of the wills of many to the will of one, in the observance of established rules, and by acts indicating respect for constituted authority for the attainment of a common purpose.

This debate, one that probably began well prior to 1916, shifts in tack and tone from decade to decade. It establishes a clear tension between the desire to be adaptable and the need to sustain and perfect the more traditional, warrior-like characteristics of military order. Nowhere is the tension between these two nearly polar standards more apparent than in this official Marine Corps definition of discipline, which emphasizes both "prompt obedience" and, simultaneously, personal initiative:[56]

> Discipline is the individual or group attitude that ensures prompt obedience to orders and initiation of appropriate action in the absence of orders.

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[52] Hurt, 2007.

[53] Grice, 2011, p. 20.

[54] F.I., 1916.

[55] Brittan, 1918.

[56] U.S. Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Values and Leadership*, 1997, pp. 16-17. The Marine Corps uses discipline in a wide spectrum of contexts.

In a few late 20th Century documents the Marine Corps officially recognized the obvious dissonance within this definition and throughout its doctrine, proposing that a tension between nearly dichotomous tenets is somehow central to both its culture and its success in battle. *Leading Marines* defines Marine leadership as, "a unique blend of ethos and standards not found anywhere else in the world" and that it is "more than simple obedience to orders."[57] But more often than not, official doctrine, training manuals, semi-official manuals, and other records from the early 1900s onward have simply presented two seemingly contradictory expectations for behaviour—obedience alongside improvisation, orthodoxy alongside heterodoxy—without acknowledging the dichotomy or explaining to Marines how this tension could or should be resolved. For example, in the Marine Officers Guide, an officially endorsed manual issued to or purchased by each new Marine officer, Marines are said to stand for several traits and values.[58] In successive iterations of the *Guide* from 1956-1996, these included discipline, which "Of all the principles of the Marine Corps…is the most unvarying and the most uncompromising."[59] Yet on the following page in the 1956 version of the *Guide* we find that the Marine Corps also stands for "*The Individual*," described here:[60]

> The Marine Corps cherishes the individuality of its members, and although sternly consecrated to discipline, has cheerfully sheltered a legion of nonconformists, flamboyant individuals, and irradiant personalities. It is a perennial prediction of dreary annalists that colorful characters are about to vanish from the Corps. They never have, and never will. No Marine need fear that the mass will ever absorb the man.

Then, after devoting chapters to the virtues of strict military tradition, esprit de corps, and teamwork, the Guide adds, "There is probably no military group in the world where social and professional individuality are more applauded. 'If you've been in the Marine Corps ten years and you're not a character,' runs a Marine Corps saying, 'you're a failure.'"[61] Quite a few Marines would probably argue that, from their individual perspective, the Corps only pays homage to individualism while working hard to exert tight control. Yet these exhortations to individualism run in sharp contrast to Hull's description of military organisations as tightly controlled. The 1990s-era Marine Corps recruiting poster in Figure

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[57] U.S. Marine Corps, 1995, p. 82.

[58] The Marine Officers Guide is published privately but officially recognized by the Marine Corps.

[59] Thomas, Heinl, and Ageton, 1956, p. 3.

[60] Thomas, Heinl, and Ageton 1956, p. 4, italics original.

[61] Thomas, Heinl, and Ageton 1956, p. 458. The 1975 version softens this a bit: "There is probably no military group in the world where social and professional individuality are more applauded even when not always fully rewarded." Thomas, Heinl, and Ageton, 1975, p. 540.

3.1 iconizes both the priority the Marine Corps places on the individual Marine as its most important organisational asset, and also on the inherent tension between self-sacrificial discipline and individuality:[62]

Figure 3.1: Marine Corps Wolf Pack Poster
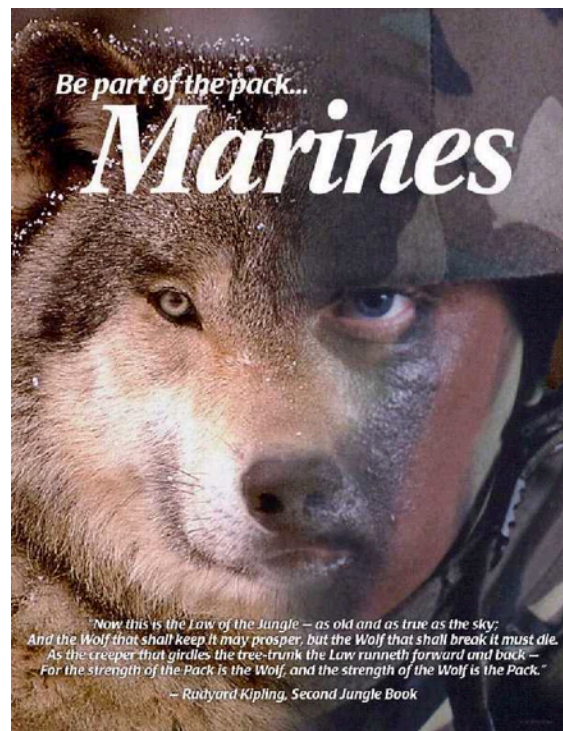
Source: U.S. Marine Corps

One could only imagine a young Marine, newly indoctrinated into the ways of not only military life but also Marine culture, attempting to rationalize the need for uncompromising discipline and unity of effort with these rather blatant winks and nods to nonconformity. In the ongoing discipline dialectic, proponents like C.H. Brittan describe strong "traditional" discipline as a military virtue while detractors associate it with thoughtless and counterproductive rigidity. Meanwhile, proponents of heterodox discipline like Michael Grice associate the looser definitions with flexibility and adaptability, while their opponents conflate looser control and decreased emphasis on obedience to ineffectiveness in combat. The Marine Corps has to varying degrees over time encouraged adaptation in training and in combat through its doctrine and methods, but it does not seriously attempt to justify this inherent dichotomy in its principle values until the introduction of the manoeuvre warfare doctrinal series in the 1990s.

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[62] This undated poster was created sometime in the 1990s. It was quickly removed from print due to a possible copyright issue with the quote from Rudyard Kipling's *Second Jungle Book*.

While the discipline dialectic helps us understand the potential value of inherent cultural tension in a military organisation, the words "discipline" and "flexibility" have little explanatory power when considering the vicissitudes of human behaviour. Even as an approach to leadership, the presence or absence of discipline fails to provide a satisfactory basis for analysis. Success in war depends to some extent on the kind of traditional discipline associated with obedience and unified purpose: without discipline a military unit would be hard-pressed to operate collectively and to accomplish necessary tasks under fire. Individual discipline, or self-discipline, is crucial to a whole host of tasks and reactions in combat. General James F. Amos, 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps, wrote that the Marines owed their past and continuing success in battle to self-discipline and combat excellence.[63] Marine veteran Karl Marlantes provides more detailed and practical reasons why discipline is so important in combat:[64]

> Lacking discipline on an ambush or losing concentration on a listening post by slapping a mosquito…can get you and everyone else killed. At the very least, lack of discipline under extremity will make the whole organisation less effective at killing. And killing is what we are asking these kids to do.

But having more or less of this unquantifiable kind of traditional discipline does not provide an explanatory key to understanding the evolution of the norm for adaptability. Instead, this dialectic reveals the long-standing and ongoing tension between standards for traditional warrior archetypical behaviour and the practical need for maverick-like flexibility.

The Drive to Succeed

The point of commonality that makes the formula of contradictory themes and schemas particularly useful, and perhaps existential for the Marine Corps is the imputed and often shared belief that *success* is a universal requirement for every effort a Marine undertakes from mundane tasks like filling out an administrative form to physically overcoming an enemy combatant. This warrior characteristic is crucial to military adaptability because it motivates the kinds of adaptations that contribute to victory. For Marines, the drive to succeed is an enduring norm that overrides all other aspects of organisational culture. Obtuse military sayings like "failure is not an option" are motivational but cliché and ultimately nonsensical; a subversive and more humorous cliché favoured by some Marines— "failure is

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[63] Amos, 2013.

[64] Marlantes, 2011, pp. 11-12.

always an option" —is more practical. Nonetheless, the idea that failure is *unacceptable* is woven into Marine Corps standards, beliefs, and norms. Clichés like "failure is not an option," while often impractical in combat, serve the quite practical purpose of establishing an unequivocal standard, or norm for success.[65] Hyperbolic standards for success may only be achievable in rare circumstance, but the Marines relentlessly reinforce these standards through ceremony, literature, and oral tradition. Marine General James N. Mattis (Retired) argues that this drive to succeed stems in great part from the Marines' naval heritage. In my interview with Mattis he stated:[66]

> Our naval character means that you can't fall back, the Navy doesn't hold
> "sea ground." We're very much a naval force, we go forward. I don't give a
> shit about the guys on our flank. That's why we went straight to
> Baghdad...As naval troops we can't carry everything we need, we don't try to
> solve problems with mass, we can't carry enough gear on the ships. I think
> that the bias for action, the bias for output, means that Marines are a step
> above others.

While surviving expeditionary naval combat has shaped the Marine Corps norms for aggressiveness and success, so has the continual process of existential institutional defence. The Marine Corps, and therefore individual Marines, must be highly successful in great part because nearly since its inception in 1775 the Corps has been a service under siege.[67] Periodic waves of Army, Navy, and national political leadership have sought to eliminate the Marine Corps, or to so reduce its capabilities that it would wither into irrelevance. These efforts continue through at least 2015 as the U.S. Army considers building its own amphibious force in the Pacific theatre.[68] Here two Marine colonels, both who commanded Marines in multiple combat deployments since 9/11, describe what they believe to be the essence of Marine Corps service culture. In their words the Marine Corps has a "productive institutional paranoia" that drives Marines to innovate and succeed:[69]

> Driven by a historically justified and productive institutional paranoia, this
> culture evolved from a unique blending of the American national, naval, and
> military cultures. Recognizing that the Marine Corps exists only because the
> American public wants one, Marines are constantly seeking innovative means

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[65] E.g. see Cooling and Turner, undated, p. 10: "To Marines, failure is never an option."

[66] Mattis, 2014.

[67] See Millett (1980), Victor Krulak (1984), Heinl (1991), Twining (1996), and Hammes (2010) for examples of the various Army, Navy, executive, and congressional efforts to denigrate, undermine, and eliminate the Marine Corps. For example, in 1829 President Andrew Jackson attempted to merge the Marine Corps with the Army artillery or infantry, writing that Marine service and skills required "no peculiar training…" Heinl, 1991, p. 37.

[68] E.g. see Chandrasekeran, 2013.

[69] Cooling and Turner, undated, p. 10.

> to remain relevant in emerging operational environments while preserving
> scarce national resources and guaranteeing a win when committed to battle.

I show in this thesis how this organisational-level paranoia has had real, practical meaning for individual Marines throughout the Corps' history. Service paranoia and the concomitant lack of resources attributable to externally imposed and internally pre-emptive cost cutting fed the evolutionary development of a strong cultural norm for success. Acting like a warrior, a maverick, or like a warrior-maverick hybrid is irrelevant for Marines in combat if the act does not lead to success. The formula of schematic hybridity does not work without the essential motivating element of an existentialist drive to succeed.[70] This drive, or organisational norm, permeates all Marine Corps training, education, and cultural artefacts. The drive to succeed ties together the combination of warrior and maverick influences.

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[70] Hybridity and also "creolization" are terms used by anthropologists to describe the effects of mixing different cultures, particularly at the edges of geographic cultural boundaries. I use the term here to describe the blending of cultural archetypes. See Hannerz, 1996 and 1997; Pieterse, 2001; Kraidy, 2002; Webb, 2012; and Kirndorfer, undated.

Chapter 4: Maverick...Marine

The maverick archetype suggests normative standards for Marines in the same way as the warrior archetype. Depictions of mavericks establish the notion that strong, successful men and women will push back against an illogical and oppressive system, disobey orthodox rules and norms, and find unorthodox ways to succeed. Adaptations are most likely to occur when individual Marines think and behave in heterodox or unorthodox ways, so many elements of the maverick archetype are critical to the Marines' organisational goals of adaptable thinking.

It would be overly simple to state that Marines adopt maverick schemas because Americans covet rugged individualism; I will show in this chapter that Americans do not have the market cornered on archetypes of individualists. However, maverick archetypes are omnipresent in American cultural artefacts from 1916-2015, and the Marine Corps officially covets the notion of individualism. *Maverick* is an imprecise term that simultaneously conveys a range of images and behaviours. Therefore this chapter is as much about the grey area between, and the *fusing* of, warrior and maverick archetypes as it is about mavericks alone. Where the warrior archetype can in some instances be monolithic and polarizing, the maverick archetype is commonly multifaceted and liminal. Various incarnations of the maverick archetype—like outlaw, trickster, rebel, and ronin—set a standard for individualism and irreverence while exploring the limitations of individualism. Just as very few warriors succeed wholly alone, very few maverick-like characters in popular film and literature survive or succeed without the help of others. Teamwork and partial sublimation to institutional systems are just as important to understanding the complexities of the maverick as they are to understanding the warrior.

Explaining the maverick archetype and making it relevant for organisational norms is difficult because the archetype is far more diffuse and nuanced than the warrior archetype. But the term maverick repeatedly appears in the literature on political change, business growth, innovation and adaptation.[1] The debate over the nature and role of "military mavericks" in strategic innovation helps to pin down a more useful definition for individual adaptation. Two experts on military innovation, Barry Posen and Stephen Peter Rosen, have

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[1] E.g. Ugbah, 1985; Josty, 1990; Miller and Blais, 1993; Shane, 1995; Ray, et al., 1997; Crawford and Hays, 2000; Crawford, 2001; Kickul and Gundry, 2001; Vincent, 2005; and Tavits, 2009. Bickel describes a military maverick as someone of relatively low rank who risks their career to implement change. Bickel, 2001, p. 13.

similar, only subtly different views of the role of the maverick in effecting strategic military change. Like Victor Krulak, both Posen and Rosen use the term maverick as a definitive and indelible label to distil individuals into categories: one is either a maverick or they are something else.

Posen (1984) sees mavericks as people who force organisations to alter or break *status quo ante* paradigms. He tends to view military organisations and military leaders as hidebound victims of their own organisational momentum. They "abhor uncertainty" and cannot effectively channel innovative ideas through their hierarchical structures. Some military mavericks play a supporting role in forcing change: British Chief Air Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding, a WWII-era fighter pilot in an air force dominated by bomber men, helped the British to develop the integrated air defence network that turned out to be essential in fending off German bombing raids. But for Posen mavericks are mostly powerful non-military outsiders who force change on an unwilling system.[2] Rosen (1988 and 1991) also sees little role for military mavericks in effecting positive change. Rosen describes mavericks as "isolated and masterless men." They choose to place themselves outside of the system and in doing so lose their ability to influence the system.[3] Strategic innovation occurs when strong civilian outsiders influence and support a select set of military leaders who are firmly within the system and who are amenable to change that they can control. Some middle ground between Posen and Rosen may be adequate to help frame the term *maverick* for grand-scale military innovation, the highest level of military change.

Yet this distillation of people into neat categories fails to inform the understanding of the Marine Corps norm for adaptability. If a maverick is an "isolated and masterless" person who plays outside of the system, then no one who has ever served a full career in the military is a maverick. The simple acts of putting on a uniform or obeying transfer of station orders are acknowledgements of collective order and obedience. An isolated and masterless Marine would be unlikely to survive a single term of service; indeed many Marines are drummed out because they cannot conform to service regulations or culture. Some—perhaps many—Marines play loosely within the system but bend the rules or periodically reject authority in order to address problems that require irregular, non-doctrinal solutions. Marines who can operate at this threshold between blind obedience and outright rebellion are often the most

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[2] Posen, 1984, pp. 173-175 and 224-227.
[3] Rosen, 1988, pp. 139 and 142.

successful adapters and, based on my reading of Marine Corps history, some of the most successful Marines.

So far I have referred to maverick behaviour as disobedient, disrespectful, loutish, and irreverent. Indeed, the way official historians, filmmakers and annalists represent these behaviours tells us something about the perceptions of Marines and about expectations for Marine behaviour in and out of combat. Poster-perfect Marines are rare or non-existent, and they are not even the ideal. According to the semi-official Marine Officers Guide, the ideal Marine retains his or her individuality despite efforts in recruit training and officer candidate school subdue it or to wipe it clean; they remain "flamboyant individuals and irradiant personalities." Chesty Puller is revered both for his combat leadership and for his irreverence. Smedley Butler is feted rather than expunged from official narratives even though upon retirement he wrote the counter-cultural, anti-militarist *War is a Racket*. Threshold disobedience and disorder are part and parcel of Marine culture.

But Maverick-like behaviour is at once accepted and encouraged, and also rejected and discouraged. For every Chesty Puller, Smedley Butler, and Leland "Lou" Diamond there are thousands of Marines who have been marginalized or expelled for their irreverence. A great number of Marines have mistaken unnecessary disobedience for culturally acceptable irreverence. Total rejection of the system is anathema to good order and discipline and it undermines success in and out of battle. Luckily for the Marines, one does not need to drink, voice loud dissent, or even disobey orders to engage in the kind of maverick-like behaviour that encourages adaptation. The Marine Corps' *Warfighting* publications encourage Marines to view doctrine and even more stringent regulations as guides rather than irreversible edicts; this kind of thinking harkens back to the 1917 French *Manual for Commanders of Infantry Platoons*.[4] In its most common form, maverick-like behaviour can be the simple acknowledgment that life is unpredictable and that the most effective decisions are often contextual.

This chapter examines how maverick images in popular culture and in organisational culture help to shape maverick-like cognitive schemas in Marines. There are, unfortunately, no neat comparisons between warrior ethea and maverick ethea. Maverick archetypes are more difficult to define and characterize, and distilling the archetype into describable cognitive schemas requires more subjective interpretation than distillation of the warrior

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[4] Here I refer specifically to the French acknowledgment that orders should be disobeyed if they are inappropriate to the situation.

archetype. And the contemporary American interpretation of the maverick is different in many ways than ancient myth and legend, or non-American interpretations. It is nonetheless possible to describe maverick in a way that is understandable and relevant to adaptation. Without maverick influence, adaptation would be infrequent and probably far less effective.

The Complex Maverick Archetype: Cattlemen, Outlaws, Tricksters, and Rebels

Definitions of maverick range from the one suggested by Rosen—an isolated and masterless man—to ones with a bit more subtlety, like "an unorthodox or independent-minded person."[5] The etymology of maverick is clear but its original meaning is still open for interpretation. Modern use of the term is derived from the last name of Texas-based lawmaker, landowner and cattleman Samuel A. Maverick. This section describes how the real, original Maverick was actually as much of an organisation man as he was a maverick, and how two archetypes related to maverick—trickster and rebel—reveal further complexities within type. Each of these complex descriptions helps to bring us closer to understanding the evolution of adaptability between the notional poles of archetypical dichotomy.

The Original Maverick: Samuel A.

Samuel Maverick was a tremendously successful businessman and a self-styled champion of individual rights. During one period prior to the American Civil War he refused to brand his cattle according to what was then common practice. He let them roam free across his own land and (probably) onto others' land. Maverick, therefore, was someone who didn't follow laws and norms like cattle branding.[6] But Samuel Maverick was also a Texas legislator and judge who argued both against, and then for secession from the United States. At the end of the U.S. Civil War he was pardoned for his civilian service with the Confederacy. He went on to help further *post-bellum* reconciliation.[7] Samuel Maverick, then, was a man who rejected some rules and norms while serving within, and working with, the state-organised system of law. The real, original Maverick was neither a self-styled outcast nor a reject from society.

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[5] This example is the top result from a search using www.google.com on 30 March 2014.

[6] For example see: Texas State Historical Association, undated; Marks, 1989; and Schwartz, 2008. Maverick also refers to an unbranded calf, cow, or bull.

[7] Texas State Historical Association, undated, and Marks, 1989.

Instead he was a strong-willed man who found a way to successfully operate in the grey area between systemic control and spirited individualism.

Here Maverick biographer Paula Mitchell Marks describes Samuel A. Maverick's observed personality. Marks portrays Maverick as complex but also resorts to simple dichotomies to bookend the complexities of his character. This is consistent with dichotomous simplifications of legendary Marines, and particularly of complex characters like Evans F. Carlson and Smedley D. Butler:[8]

> [A]s real, complex human beings, the two [Samuel and Mary] do not fit any categories. Sam Maverick came to the Texas frontier at thirty-one, with his character already firmly molded. He was a prudent, rational lawyer who nonetheless delighted in adventure and thrived on hardships, a reserved man who nonetheless could pour forth in fervent eloquence…. He disdained the fortunes of the world and possessed a strong sense of public duty whetted by a Jeffersonian and Jacksonian belief in democratic equality. At the same time, he was a highly acquisitive businessman building an empire when land ownership was the surest measure of wealth and status.

Archetypes and mythologies of maverick-like characters are also complex, yet on the surface they are as simple or dichotomous as warrior archetypes and myths. Both outlaws and tricksters are commonplace in American cultural artefacts.

Outlaws

Outlaw archetypes compete on a nearly one-for-one basis with hero-warrior archetypes in American literature, film, and television, with the most tangible trends in film and television.[9] The outlaw is a lawless person, or someone who is "unconventional or rebellious."[10] In a country founded on the rule of law, the consistent and overt worship of outlaws like gangsters, mobsters, thieves, drug kingpins, and now other than white-hat hackers, betrays a powerful dualism in American cultural artefacts. In the popular films and television shows that are most likely to have influenced Marines since the beginning of the 20th Century, outlaws emerge in many forms. Straightforward, unredeemable, and strictly archetypical black-hat outlaws in early Western films were used as foils for white-hat cowboys and lawmen. More nuanced, protagonist outlaws have been a staple in American cinema since the silent film era. Positive portrayals of outlaws in early films may or may not have been

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[8] Marks, 1989, p. xiii.

[9] This assessment is derived from the analysis of trends in American literature, film, and (later) television from the early 20th Century through 2015.

[10] This definition is drawn from the Merriam-Webster dictionary, accessed 07 February 2016: http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/outlaw.

intentional, but the American appetite for outlaw behaviour established a strong demand signal for Hollywood.

The popular portrayal of real-life outlaw Henry McCarty, or Billy the Kid, offers the clearest lineage of outlaw worship in American cinema.[11] From 1911 through 2015 there have been at least 48 full-length, feature movies that portray the robber, murderer (or perhaps "killer"), and fugitive Billy the Kid in a mostly positive light.[12] Some of the most popular films of the 20th Century featured outlaws as flawed but endearing protagonists.[13] Outlaw films come in and out of vogue between 1916 and 2015, but in many years a straightforward outlaw (or gangster) movie like *Scarface* (1932), *For a Few Dollars More* (1965), and *Goodfellas* reaches the top ten or twenty of all films for annual gross income.[14] More importantly, for the (primarily) young men who have served in the Marine Corps since 1916, outlaw films are traditionally more enticing than top grossing films like *The Sound of Music*; national ticket sales statistics can hide the strength of the cultural influence of outlaw films on Marines and prospective Marines.[15]

Tightening the loop between the external outlaw archetype and the internal Marine Corps culture is the frequency with which characters identified as former Marines are portrayed as outlaws. In two of the most popular and influential films in American cinematic history—*The Godfather* (1972) and *The Godfather, Part Two* (1974)—protagonist outlaw Michael Corleone is a former Marine officer. Similarly, the protagonist outlaws in *Taxi Driver* (1976), *Rebel* (1985), *Heat*, *Dead Presidents* (1995), and *Payback* (1999) are also Marines. Television provides similar examples, although the popularity of the *Homeland* series—with a Marine-turned-terrorist as protagonist—stands out. Further connections are drawn as real-life Marines-turned-actors take on the role of outlaws and villains, including former Marine Harvey Keitel in *Mean Streets* (1973), *Taxi Driver*, *Pulp Fiction*, and *Bad Lieutenant* (1992),

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[11] McCarty is also known as William H. Bonney. See the Texas State Historical Association website for a summary of McCarty's life and exploits. As of 07 February 2016: https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fmccd.

[12] See, for example: www.aboutbillythekid.com. As of 07 February 2016: http://www.aboutbillythekid.com/filmography.htm. All of these films are described individually at www.imdb.com.

[13] Familiar examples include *The Outlaw Josie Wales* (1976), *Scarface* (1983), *Goodfellas* (1990), *Unforgiven* (1992), *Carlito's Way* (1993), *Menace II Society* (1993), *Pulp Fiction* (1994), *Heat* (1995), *Snatch* (2000), *A History of Violence* (2005), *The Departed* (2006), and *The Town* (2010).

[14] See data from www.imdb.com.

[15] This assessment is drawn from the analysis of autobiographies and biographies identified in the literature review and references, as well as the acquired survey data.

former Marine Lee Marvin in *Point Blank* (1967) et al., Steve McQueen in *The Thomas Crown Affair* (1968), and now Adam Driver in *The Force Awakens* (2015).

This glaring trend of outlaw worship in popular culture is probably driven in great part by the dualism between the desire to preserve a rule-bound state and the broad American cultural emphasis on individualism. Such a broad assessment of American culture would require a separate thesis and a great deal of subjectivity, and it is unnecessary here: the trend of outlaw worship in the popular cultural artefacts that influence Marines is clear and strong. These outlaw, or gangster themes in American culture have roots both in the American experience, but also in the culturally universal archetype of the trickster.

The Universal Trickster

Tricksters are found in nearly every regional mythology, from the Koreas to Latin America to Africa. Trickster characters often represent the negative aspects of human behaviour in written and spoken word, and on film and television. Simple interpretations of the trickster archetype are Manichean: tricksters represent evil, sin, filth, idiocy, and disorder. They are often typecast on one side of a grand morality play. Tricksters are sometimes represented as devious foxes, malicious insects, or deformed humans. In other incarnations they are more sympathetic humanoid or godly beings like Prometheus who have been cast out by respected authority figures, or they may simply be insidious men or women.[16] Unsurprisingly Jung tends to see tricksters representing complex dualisms; Jung wrote that in man the trickster is akin to the shadow, a kind of unseen and darker half of human nature. But Lewis Hyde and others make the case that the trickster plays an even more complex role both in ancient myth and in modern cultural artefacts. Hyde interprets tricksters as "boundary crossers" who can both represent one side of a dualistic ideal but more typically help connect one extreme to another:[17]

> We constantly distinguish— right and wrong, sacred and profane, clean and dirty, male and female, young and old, living and dead— and in every case trickster will cross the line and confuse the distinction. Trickster is the creative idiot, therefore, the wise fool, the grey-haired baby, the cross-dresser, the speaker of sacred profanities… Trickster is the mythic embodiment of ambiguity and ambivalence, doubleness [sic] and duplicity, contradiction and paradox.

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[16] E.g. Aeschylus, est. 479 BCE, p. 1; and Hyde, 2010, p. 34.

[17] Hyde, 2010, p. 5.

Hyde's trickster, then, is a liminal cultural artefact and vehicle for change rather than a simple, or even complex antagonist. Tricksters help to leverage the transcendence of purpose and being that, in Simone Weil's articulation, results from contradiction.[18] Tricksters fill a more subtle and shadowy role than warriors in ancient myth, and contemporary interpretations of tricksters are equally murky. In the Marvel's *Thor* and *Avenger* films series, Thor's brother Loki, a mythical trickster archetype and cultural artefact widely known from at least the 13th Century, is at once loving and vengeful, honourable and deceitful, thoughtful and angry. Loki evokes empathy and gradually "leverages transcendence" even as he intentionally and unintentionally wreaks havoc on the protagonists. Over the course of three movies, *Thor* (2011)*, The Avengers* (2012), and *Thor: The Dark World* (2013), Loki's outbursts and struggles encourage the viewer to not only judge Loki's actions but also the recklessness of his father and brother, the heroes or warrior characters whose aggressiveness, selfishness, and unbending natures had seeded and fed Loki's inner turmoil. Ultimately Loki is redeemed in an act of warrior self-sacrifice, crossing over from partly evil to liminal to reformed. He dies not as an archetype but as a complex blend of evil and good.

Trickster myths reveal some of the important and endemic complexities of the maverick archetype, but tricksters are only one of the maverick-like archetypes that have influenced mid to late-20th and early 21st Century American Marines. Traditional tricksters appear in American folklore. The coyotes in Native American spoken word stories and literature, Br'er Rabbit in African-American literature, and the impish Mister Mxyzptlk in the *Superman* comics are all traditional tricksters. Tricksters appear as key characters in books and films from 1916 through 2015 (e.g. Loki 2011-2013). But not all mavericks are *prima facie* tricksters.[19] It would be inaccurate to describe the original American maverick, Samuel A. Maverick, or most outlaw or rebel characters as tricksters. At least in the more surface-level treatments of his life Maverick was neither deceitful nor shadowy. Instead he sometimes rebelled against cultural norms and laws and he worked within the system as often as he worked outside the system. Maverick was more part time rebel than an "isolated or masterless" man.

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[18] Hyde, 2010, p. 275; and Weil, 1970, p. 134.

[19] E.g. John W. Roberts (1989) describes the trickster in African-American folklore and the use of trickster, hero, and "bad man" archetypes during the evolution of African-American culture from the time of American slavery.

American Rebels

Rebel is just as difficult and complex a term as maverick, outlaw, and trickster. One can be a fully independent, system-rejecting rebel (noun) and *rebel* (verb) against the system, or one can simply rebel (v.) by degrees while not fully rejecting the system. Samuel A. Maverick and most of the Marines cited in this thesis chose the latter path: they rebelled in varying increments rather than in totality. Rebel (n.) is in many ways similar to the term maverick, but rebel has distinct meaning in American cultural artefacts. The United States is a country founded on rebellion (1776), and even in defeat the Confederate rebels of the American Civil War (1862-1865) remain archetypical heroes to a significant portion of American citizenry. R.E.B. Vonner, the Marine protagonist in Jere Peacock's *To Drill and Die* (1964) is a rebellious American southerner whose name clearly evokes a Confederate hero-maverick archetype.[20] For many reasons the theme of rebellion against systems and organisations is ubiquitous in American film and literature, and the term rebel (n.) is ubiquitous in American common vernacular. For example, thousands of modern American sports teams from the professional to the elementary school level incorporate the term rebel in their names. Arguably most of the American cultural artefacts that might influence Marine behaviour either draw on or are clearly rooted in some kind of rebel mystique.

Modern, 2015-era interpretations of rebel are anchored in 18th and 19th Century history but more immediately in mid-20th Century cultural artefacts. Leerom Medovoi's *Rebels* (2005) is a scholarly examination of the Post-War (1945 to ~1960) cultural rebellion against the stifling *Organisation Man*, the archetype of the hard working, obedient, ladder-climbing white middle-class male of the 1940s and 1950s.[21] In Medovoi's interpretation, many of the cultural artefacts of this time period, primarily movies, music, books, and poems, reflected and encouraged the rejection of the Organisation Man and the new assembly-line American character described as Fordism.[22] Medovoi summarizes the suffocating fear that Fordism elicited in many Americans:[23]

> In the popular forays against the Fordist world, a consistent theme appears:
> the new system of mass consumption was depriving Americans – and most

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[20] Confederate Soldiers, or rebels, were sometimes referred to as "Johnny Reb." "Reb" is a derivation of that term.

[21] The term Organisation Man is derived from William H. Whyte, *The Organisation Man*, 1956, New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

[22] Medovoi, 2005, pp. 20-23. Fordism is drawn from the corporate industrial model of the Ford Motor Company.

[23] Medovoi, 2005, p. 20.

vitally its men – of their hitherto distinctive autonomy, and thus diminishing the very value of freedom held to distinguish the first world from the second. Suburbia, in one of the jokes that [William] Whyte quotes, was 'a Russia, only with money.' [This paranoia] imagined that powerful yet invisible new structures were coming to determine the self's every action.

American adolescents of the time wanted to succeed, but they also wanted to choose their own identities in the tradition of a romanticized pre-corporate and freethinking America. They wanted to be "flamboyant individuals and irradiant personalities," but they lived in an era of domestic and systemic conformity. Medovoi acknowledges that angst and rebellion are perhaps universal and timeless themes in adolescence, but they stand out in the cultural artefacts of mid-20th Century America. American identity was challenged, and was changing, from the late 1940s through the early 1960s.[24] During this same post-War period the Marine Corps was fighting to maintain the hard-won identity and reputation earned in critical WWII battles like Tarawa (1942) and Iwo Jima (1945). The cultural shifts in the mid-20th Century affected Marines who fought in Korea and Vietnam and influenced all of the senior officers and non-commissioned officers who trained and educated Marines for the intervention in Lebanon (1981-1983), the invasions of Grenada and Panama (1983 and 1989), the Persian Gulf War (1991), and the wars in Afghanistan (2001-2014) and Iraq (2003-2011). These cultural shifts played out in the movies, song, and literature of the time.

The late 1940s through the early 1960s is a period of American history that is often referred to as simple and idyllic. But post-War America was anything but simple and the rebel archetypes of this period were nuanced. The fictional Holden Caulfield (*The Catcher in the Rye*, 1951), James Dean as Jim Stark (*Rebel Without a Cause*, 1955), and Elvis Presley as Danny Fisher (*King Creole*, 1958) represented a halting, complex, and often frustrated rebellion against an increasingly repressive American system. The ultimate 20th and 21st Century American rebel, and the "single most famous and lasting avatar" of the 1950s-era bad boys, is James Dean's character Jim Stark.[25] Stark, and in real life, James Dean, represented a rejection of the contemporary American system. But both Stark and Dean only pushed back gently. Stark rejected his father but also rejected the extreme and violent gang members who represented the true outsiders in the film. And Dean's real-life rebellion consisted for the most part of overly fast driving; Dean was a high school graduate, a Quaker, and an actor who worked within the Hollywood film and television system. In popular

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[24] Medovoi, 2005, pp. 54-55.

[25] Medovoi, 2005, p. 177.

cultural artefacts the mid-Century American rebel—the rebel character that probably had the most influence on modern Marines—was an angst-ridden, misunderstood teenager who was rarely an all-out rebel against society. He was more often someone who made small and (usually) safe forays into anti-Fordist behaviour. In other words they gently rebelled (v.) without becoming true rebels (n.).

While the term rebel may be both ubiquitous and embraced by American popular culture, its practical meaning is elusive. Even in 2015, a full 60 years since the distribution of *Rebel Without a Cause*, rebel is only rarely used at face value to mean someone who completely rejects the present social system. The "good guys" in the iconic *Star Wars* movies, books, fan literature, and graphic novels and short films are the Rebels. Very few rebels in *any* American popular fiction ever fully rebel against 'the system,' and very few well-known 20th and 21st Century Americans have fully rebelled against the nation or its institutions. Even Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., one of the greatest and best-known rebels of the American 20th Century, felt he could be most successful by working within the system than by rejecting it wholesale. He accepted the rule of law and went to jail willingly in order to give weight to his philosophy of non-violent resistance, at once rebelling and accepting in order to succeed. Like mavericks and tricksters, then, rebel characters in fiction and in reality tend to be something less than true rebels.

This does nothing to detract from the power of the term rebel (n.). As with the warrior archetype, rebel serves two purposes: it sets a polar archetypical, yet impracticable, unachievable, and typically undesirable standard for behaviour; and at the same time the narratives of rebel fiction and reality describe a more practical middle ground. And as with warrior, both of these purposes and descriptions are important to understanding how rebel terminology, archetypes, and artefacts influence the development of cognitive schemas. This also applies to the term *ronin*, another oft-misunderstood subset of the maverick archetype.

The Ronin Myth and the Two Sides of the Successful Maverick

In modern America *ronin*, a transliteration from the original Japanese, has come to mean a rogue warrior who fights against an unfair and overbearing system; in essence, a storybook maverick. In this interpretation ronin are a modern combination of traditional axe-wielding barbarians and cowboy-like rebels. The ronin character is common in American film and literature. In its original Japanese use the term ronin was often pejorative, but Marines often show fondness for the ronin mystique: one Marine platoon took the radio callsign Ronin "in

homage to the samurais without masters of ancient Japan."[26] And like maverick and rebel, the idealized traits associated with ronin establish an archetypical standard for independence, purposeful disobedience, and heterodox or unorthodox thinking.

Idolization of fictional masterless fighters is common in both 20th and 21st Century American cultural artefacts, particularly in Western genre films. Amongst the thousands of Western films and television shows produced available since 1916 (the first point of data for this study), the standout protagonists have either been lawmen operating in one or two-man offices in isolated frontier towns, or lone gunslingers. Clint Eastwood's *man with no name* character is perhaps the best-known and most popularized ronin-like Western archetype. In films like *A Fistful of Dollars* and *High Plains Drifter* Eastwood rides into town alone, takes on the system, wins by his own rules, and then leaves on his own terms.[27] It was Eastwood who played the character of maverick Marine Gunnery Sergeant Thomas Highway in *Heartbreak Ridge* (1986) who stated, "You're Marines now. You improvise, you adapt, you overcome."[28] Other films and books also attempt to capture the ronin myth and situate its mystique in western culture. For example, in the popular 1998 film *Ronin*, Robert De Niro's protagonist is a mercenary, another rogue and individualist archetype.

At first glance the ronin myth seems to reinforce the Posen-Rosen description of mavericks as isolated and masterless men; they are the *man with no name*, or perhaps maverick detective Dirty Harry Callahan from Eastwood's San Francisco-based film series (*Dirty Harry*, *Magnum Force*, *The Enforcer*, *Sudden Impact*, *Dead Pool*). But while modern interpretations of the original Japanese ronin archetype are interesting, they are not true to the original Japanese folktale. The story of the 47 ronin is indeed about 18th Century samurai warriors who fight without a living master, but it is also a story of *philia* love, loyalty, obedience, group influence, and self-sacrifice. It is a story of human complexity, not simplistic archetype.

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[26] Tucker, 2008, p. 2. Surprisingly, *The Book of Five Rings* by ronin Miyamoto Musashi has never made the Commandant of the Marine Corps' reading list. There are some indications online and in various other books cited in this thesis that *The Book of Five Rings* is popular with some Marines.

[27] Typically the *man with no name* character is identified with three Sergio Leone-directed films: *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964); *For a Few Dollars More* (1965); and *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (1966). However, Eastwood reprised various versions of his archetypical *man with no name* in *Hang 'Em High* (1968); *High Planes Drifter* (1973); *The Outlaw Josie Wales* (1976); *Pale Rider* (1985); *Unforgiven* (1992); *Gran Torino* (2008); amongst others. His entire "Dirty Harry" Callahan series revolved around a semi-rogue police officer who was a quintessential Western maverick lawman situated in contemporary San Francisco.

[28] Heartbreak Ridge, 1986.

The protagonists are samurai and vassals who become ronin. The modern English-language interpretation by John Allyn, *The 47 Ronin Story*, is the story of Oishi, the chief retainer of Lord Asano of Ako Province, Japan.[29] The much-respected Asano is baited into committing an attack against the devious Kira, the Master of Ceremonies for the high court at the corrupt Japanese capitol of Edo. Asano's attack is a personal affront to Kira, but it also represents Asano's contempt for the court and his rebelliousness against what he perceives as a systemic weakness in Edo. As punishment for the assault Asano must commit ritual suicide and his land and title are taken away. The faithful Oishi and his comrades are forced to choose between accepting a new master or fleeing and becoming ronin; they choose to become ronin. Oishi describes the status of a ronin as a "despised position."[30]

But Oishi's life as a ronin is one of purposeful loyalty to his dead master, Lord Asano. Every action he takes, from giving up his position of honour within the Japanese military hierarchy to making a fool of himself in public, is designed with the ultimate purpose of exacting revenge on Kira and redeeming the name of Asano. A teetotaler, Oishi takes on the role of a drunken buffoon to mislead Kira's minions.[31] He sets out spies to gather intelligence on Kira to help further his planned revenge. Oishi plays out the role of a despised ronin, using deception—or trickery—to gain an advantage. But he realizes that he cannot defeat Kira without the aid of his comrades-in-arms. It is these parts of the ronin story, the parts of loyalty, duty, and self-sacrifice, which are so often lost in modern derivations and simplifications. While Oishi and his fellows act like isolated and masterless men and they behave like tricksters and rebels, their actions are motivated foremost by schemas or behavioural objectives that are common to the warrior archetype ethea in Table 5.2.

This convergence of archetypes and ethea—ronin and samurai, maverick and warrior—makes the story of the 47 ronin a near perfect allegory for the concept of Marine "magic." The ronins' transcendence of being occurred at the intercourse between warrior loyalty and self-sacrifice on the one hand, and rebellion, trickery, and unorthodoxy on the other. While the *man with no name* is often successful without help, other ronin-like fictional characters act more like Oishi. They recognize the need for teamwork, they place value on duty and honour, and they succeed because they operate brilliantly within, or in some cases fumble through, the grey area between archetypes: warrior schemas motivate success and anchor

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[29] Carl Rinsch directed a 2013 version of this story with lead actor Keanu Reaves, *47 Ronin*. The American movie was highly stylized yet true to the story's themes of rebelliousness, loyalty, warrior courage, and honor.

[30] Allyn, p. 163.

[31] E.g. Allyn, pp. 127-131.

characters in collective purpose, while maverick schemas allow for the freedom of thought and action that are so critical to adaptation.

Even Hollywood cannot hold fast to the Americanized notion of ronin as masterless, rudderless men.[32] Robert De Niro's "Sam" in the 1998 film *Ronin*, a character intended to epitomize the ronin mystique, turns out to be a loyal friend to his fellow mercenaries. He freely adapts, risks his life, and eventually reveals the fact that he is a CIA officer, or quite literally a "company man."

The "Insider Maverick" Marines and the Irreverent, Professional Generals

> One thing I found when I joined the Marines: under their ramrod straight backs and Prussian haircuts they have the damndest appreciation for mavericks, more than anywhere I have ever seen.
>
> *- General James N. Mattis, USMC (Retired), June 2014*[33]

Earlier I proposed that the most successful Marines have been those who walk a fine line between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, or between obedience and rebellion. When the Marines adopted the French *Manual for Commanders of Infantry Platoons* in 1917 they used it to build the foundation for their modern unit structure, doctrine, and training. This manual called for disciplined teamwork, but also suggested the idea of *necessary disobedience*.[34] Leaders would inevitably be faced with circumstances that did not meet doctrinal criteria, and they must be ready to think and act on their own in order to find a way to succeed. This French doctrinal passage may have met and reinforced existing Marine ethos, or perhaps it introduced a new way of thinking. Perhaps at the time these passages in the French manual were irrelevant to Marines, or perhaps they simply reflected existing norms in the Marines' organisational culture. Whatever the manual's impact, and whatever the source of this concept of practiced disobedience, the concept is replicated throughout 20th Century literature and films by and about Marines. It was also sustained in practice. Here Marine Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) John David Kuntz writes about necessary disobedience:[35]

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[32] One might argue that the "man with no name" series belies this assertion. However, these Clint Eastwood films were made and produced in Italy, not Hollywood.

[33] Interview with General James N. Mattis (Retired), June 2014.

[34] U.S. Army, 1917, p. 13.

[35] Kuntz, 1986, p. 38.

> There is a strong bias in the military for obedience and that is how it should
> be. All Marines have a duty to obey orders. Obviously, the Marine Corps
> could function in no other way. But Marine officers have a duty in addition to
> merely obeying orders: they must also exercise professional judgment.
> Officers must do more than merely pass orders from one hand to the other.
> There come times – not all that rarely – when an officer must use his
> professional judgment and disobey.

Successful Marines follow and obey when it is practical and necessary, and they do so for many reasons. For example they see the unquestionable requirement for discipline and obedience in a military organisation that is modelled around teams. They recognize the fact that modern combat is incredibly complex, confusing, and frightening, and they see the need for clear orders that can cut through complexity and sustain a team's focus on crucial military objectives. Yet the sharpest, most effective of these Marines also recognize the contextual, dynamic, and unpredictable nature of war as it is described in the *Small Wars Manual* (1940) and in *Warfighting* (1989). They see a need to adapt, modify plans, and in some cases disobey orders to ensure success in all situations, including those not envisioned or specifically described in manuals or mission statements. And these Marines tend to believe that heterodoxy and measured disobedience are necessary from time to time, but more importantly that these predilections to free thinking must be integral if carefully managed parts of a Marine's professional character. These are the *insider mavericks*.

Legacies of the insider maverick generals strongly influence Marine Corps organisational culture. These general officer legacies form the backbone of professional education on Marine Corps history for most of the junior and mid-grade enlisted and officer ranks. Insider maverick general officer legacies not only help explain the integration of warrior and maverick. They also serve as powerful and enduring cultural artefacts that influence the ways in which Marines develop their own conceptions of the ideal. Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller is the best-known influential insider maverick general in Marine Corps history.

Puller has been feted for his warrior-like aggressiveness and battle sense, and yet also condemned for following orders blindly. For example, during the assault on Peleliu Island in 1944, Puller followed orders to attack into the teeth of a strong enemy defence that his commanding general (William Rupertus, see below) had not predicted the Marines might face. These orders, and Puller's refusal to ease back, led to the inexorable destruction of his regiment with few gains made. However, in many other cases Puller adapted and allegedly even disobeyed orders to the betterment of the mission. Here Kuntz (1986) describes how

Puller disobeyed orders during the withdrawal from the Chosin Reservoir during the Korean War:[36]

> Puller received orders to destroy or abandon all equipment and vehicles and bring his men out. Puller selectively obeyed the order. He did bring his men out, but he refused to abandon vehicles and equipment. Not only did he bring out every working Marine vehicle, he also brought vehicles that the Army had previously abandoned. Puller brought out almost all his men, equipment, and vehicles, including his wounded and dead. He did it not because he had been ordered to do it—in some ways his orders were nearly the opposite— but because in his professional judgment that was the way it should be done. He obeyed part of his orders, part he did not…

The most well noted Marine general officers from both the 20th and 21st Centuries have for the most part been insider mavericks. Other Marine generals were strictly orthodox, ineffectively staid, and in some cases so incapable of adaptation that they broke in the face of adversity. Major General William H. Rupertus, the commanding general of the First Marine Division at the battle for the coral-rock island of Peleliu in WWII, failed to evince "Marine magic" when his predicted three-day time table for seizing the island turned into a month-long debacle. Rupertus, a distinguished veteran of WWI, the Haiti campaign, and the WWII battle for Guadalcanal, failed to accommodate the fact that his regiments were being systematically destroyed as they attempted to fight into the teeth of rock-hard Japanese defences. Even after Puller's entire First Marine Regiment was decimated and was pulled off the line, Rupertus left his ineffective orders unchanged.[37]

Rupertus did not adapt or, apparently, even consider alternatives to his original plan. At one point during the battle he was found in his tent crying, unable to continue his command. Several weeks into the invasion Rupertus ordered Colonel Walter "Bucky" Harris to visit him in his tent: "When I arrived I was told to come in. There was no one else present. Tears were coursing down the general's cheeks when he said, 'Harris, I'm at the end of my rope. Two of my fine regiments are in ruins.'" Later, Colonel Harold O. Deakin, the division's adjutant, visited the general's tent. Rupertus told him, "This thing has just about got me beat…[I told him] 'Now General, everything is going to work out.'"[38] Rupertus had broken as a warrior, had insufficient reserves of mental flexibility, and had failed to adapt or to succeed. In

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[36] Kuntz, 1986, p. 38. This story is partly apocryphal. In fact Puller's commander, General Oliver P. (O.P.) Smith, was the one who refused the order of the Corps commander to abandon equipment; Puller was following Smith's orders to bring everything and everyone home. See Simmons, 2002.

[37] E.g. see Ross, 1991, and Gayle, 1996. Gayle's official history is quite kind to Rupertus. Gayle all but overlooks Rupertus' failings and glosses over his questionable mental state.

[38] Ross, 1991, pp. 270-271. The second quote is also available in the Marine Corps historical archives.

official histories he is mentioned in passing or sometimes highlighted because he authored the Marines Corps Rifleman's Creed, but he will never hold a place in the pantheon of great Marine general officers.[39]

The harsh realities and the chaotic vagaries of combat inject inconsistencies into the Marines' performance of adaptability over time. Just as no enlisted Marine or lower-ranking officer fits to type across the course of an entire career, no general is wholly consistent. If it had not been for Peleliu, Rupertus might have gained greater stature. There is no empirical evidence to show that most, or even many of the Marines who have reached the general officer rank since 1916 have been successful insider mavericks. However, most of the well-noted, feted, and therefore the most culturally significant and influential Marine generals in official and unofficial histories have evinced the insider maverick's traits: the warrior's drive for success, the maverick's irreverence and mental flexibility, and the professional's ability to find a way to adapt without casting aside all vestiges of military order and discipline. These include, but are by no means limited to:[40]

Archibald Henderson – Henderson was the longest-serving commandant of the Marine Corps. During his tenure he aggressively and successfully staved off presidential efforts to eliminate the Corps. He placed his body at the muzzle of a cannon about to be fired at his Marines during a riot in New York.

Smedley D. Butler – Butler served in the counterguerrilla campaigns in the early 20th Century where he was renowned for his irreverent and adaptive behaviour. He won three Medals of Honor but refused one of the three. Just after retiring Butler, an avowed Quaker, wrote antagonistic articles about the U.S. and its wars in Central America.[41]

Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller – Puller won five Navy Crosses for valour and was a pivotal figure in nearly all mid-Century Marine campaigns in WWII and Korea. Puller was at once irreverent and highly disciplined. He obtained his third flag-level rank despite his repeated clashes with higher headquarters throughout his career.

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[39] The Rifleman's Creed is also known as "My Rifle" or "The Creed of the United States Marine."

[40] All of these biographical summaries are drawn collectively from the sources that mention each individual, cited in the Bibliography section of this thesis.

[41] See Hans Schmidt, 1987.

Joseph J. Foss – Foss led a severely overmatched squadron of Marine fighter planes on Guadalcanal and eventually shot down over 70 Japanese planes during the course of his career. Foss grew a goatee on Guadalcanal against regulations. He won the Medal of Honor, was the commissioner of the American Football League, and a long career in television and politics.[42]

Two of the Three Great Smiths – Three Marine generals called Smith—Oliver P., Holland M., and Julian C.—are central to Marine historical lore. O.P. and H.M. "Howlin' Mad" Smith were well known for courting bureaucratic and political controversy in their pursuit of wartime victory and interwar innovation.[43]

Lewis W. Walt – A decorated veteran of WWII, Korea, and Vietnam, Walt pushed for an (at the time) unorthodox population-centric campaign in Vietnam against the wishes of MACV commander General William C. Westmoreland.[44] Walt was the father of the innovative and highly successful Combined Action Program (CAP) that Mattis revived in Iraq.

Alfred M. Gray – When in command of the Second Marine Division, Gray developed his own military doctrine. In the face of significant opposition Gray went on to impose this doctrine, *Warfighting*, onto the entire Marine Corps during his term as commandant.[45]

Anthony C. Zinni – Throughout his career Zinni was outspoken about the Marine Corps' and U.S. shortcomings. He was an aggressive advocate for adaptive, non-traditional military measures in places like Somalia in the early 1990s. Zinni often spoke out publicly against U.S. foreign policy decisionmaking but succeeded in obtaining four stars.

John F. Kelly – In 2003 Kelly, on six hours notice, led a joint regimental task force to attack the city of Tikrit, Iraq by driving the attack at night in a single column of hundreds of

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[42] Foss achieved his general officer status with the Air National Guard after leaving the Marine Corps in 1947.

[43] See Simmons, 2002; Venzon, 2003, and La Bree, 2001. "Gentle Warrior" O.P. Smith once openly dismissed a corps commander's orders during a joint staff meeting. He disobeyed so calmly and so firmly that he got away with what amounted to legal insubordination. La Bree, 2001, p. 126.

[44] MACV: Military Assistance Command Vietnam.

[45] I write about this doctrinal development process in more detail in Chapters 11 and 12.

vehicles up a rutted back road. This surprise attack caught the pro-regime forces in the city off-guard. Kelly is well known for his subtle irreverence and his generally unorthodox nature. He was also promoted to full general.

James N. Mattis – Mattis' radio callsign, "Chaos," exemplified his approach to warfare. A strict adherent of the Marines' manoeuvre warfare tenets, Mattis was known to work around orders that did not make sense in the fast moving context of combat in Afghanistan and Iraq. See Chapter 7 for detailed examples of his activities in Iraq.

Many of the other Marine general officers who served in the 20th and 21st Centuries have legendary and therefore culturally influential status. This is unsurprising considering the relatively few number of Marine generals in comparison to the other, larger U.S. services, and also considering the amount of effort the Marine Corps invests in recording and recounting its historical legacies. Some of these legends had insider maverick mindsets but many fit a more traditional soldierly mould. Widely revered general officers like John A. Lejeune, Lemuel C. Shepherd, Alexander A. Vandergrift, Julian C. Smith, David M. Shoup, James T. Conway, and Joseph F. Dunford all had subtle streaks of heterodoxy but are culturally influential because they exhibited remarkable professionalism, warrior leadership, and military discipline.[46] While they are well known and highly successful these more traditional officers may not have the same enduring cultural cachet of the warrior-mavericks. Lejeune, Shepherd, Vandegrift, J.C. Smith, Shoup, Conway, and Dunford are central to Marine history, but Butler, Puller, Foss, O.P. and H.M. Smith, Walt, Gray, Zinni, and Mattis probably have, and will continue to have, more influence on the degree to which irreverence, unorthodoxy, and adaptability play a role in the Marine ethos. In this Marine Corps Gazette essay, Eric S. Downes, a retired Marine officer, describes the impact of these senior mavericks on the institution of the Marine Corps and the need to protect and foster adaptable and innovative thinking. Downes describes the warrior-maverick dualism, the near omnipresent fear that the Marine Corps will be eliminated, and the influence of "legendary" figures on the organisation's culture:[47]

> Scattered throughout our history is a small collection of daring personalities
> who were intent upon permanently changing the Marine Corps. [Holland M.]

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[46] Lewis M. Walt might fit on either list. The other general officers who could fit within either category are too numerous to mention here.

[47] Downes, 1994, p. 37.

> "Howlin' Mad" Smith, [John A.] Lejeune, Earl ["Pete"] Ellis, and [Alfred M.]
> Gray, to name a few, dared to challenge the status quo and left indelible
> marks on the organisation. They made their contributions to progress with a
> remarkable combination of genius, courage, relentless energy, and
> stubbornness….Legends about these leaders are as full of their unique
> characteristics as they are of their accomplishments…[We are] indebted to
> their superiors for allowing their bold and unorthodox ideas to mold us into
> the world-renowned force we are today.

Notably missing from my list, above, and Downes' list are Merritt A. Edson and Evans F. Carlson. Both of these Marine officers commanded Raider battalions in WWII, and both had lasting influence on the way that the Marine Corps incorporated lessons from distributed operations into its modern doctrine. Understanding how general officers like Edson and Carlson evolved their understanding of Marine Corps cultural norms, and then tracing their influence on the Corps' institutional memory, helps to explain the role of the individual in the evolution of the Marine Corps' norm for adaptability. The next three chapters describe the Marine Corps' path from informal doctrine and a loose emphasis on adaptability to formal doctrine that embraced distributed operations, mission orders, and purposeful adaptability.

Chapter 5: Adaptability Emerges—1916-1941

This chapter and the two that follow unwind the story of Marine adaptability from 1916 through the development of manoeuvre warfare doctrine from 1979 to the mid-1990s. Each chapter is broken into sections according to timeline, and each describes cultural influences on Marines, examples of adaptations in combat, and then cultural artefacts generated by the most intense or relevant periods of combat. For example, in the early parts of this chapter I describe cultural influences on Marines who were preparing to fight in WWI, then describe how Marines adapted and failed to adapt in large battles like Belleau Wood, and then how organisational lore about the term *teufel hunden* (an English transliteration of the German "devil dogs") and movies like *What Price Glory?* have influenced future generations of Marines and the Marines' organisational culture.

These chapters focus on anecdotes of successful adaptation by individual Marines in combat, and on the increasing emphasis on adaptability in Marine organisational culture. I purposefully highlight the successes because these high-profile adaptations have been incorporated into Marine Corps cultural lore; they influenced and continue to influence Marine behaviour. Certainly there were hundreds of thousands of incidents from 1916-2015 in which individual Marines had the opportunity to adapt and did not do so, or tried to adapt and failed with sometimes-disastrous consequences. A few of those examples are recorded and amplified in a way that would reflect or shape the Marines' organisational culture, but they are unsurprisingly deemphasized in popular culture and official narratives.

This chapter presents evidence to show that the Marines placed value on adaptability at the beginning of the 20th Century, and how a simple form of adaptability was central to their success in WWI. Interwar small unit action set a standard for both dispersed operations and individual adaptability; this standard was recorded in the *Small Wars Manual* of 1940. The large, conventional operations of WWII to some degree masked the role of individuals in the process of cultural evolution; I highlight the influential exception of Evans Carlson. Gradually over the next forty years, as the Marines struggled through Cold War reorganisations, small wars deployments, and Vietnam, the Marines built towards the groundbreaking publication of the *Warfighting* series that not only enshrined but demanded adaptability as a cultural norm. These publications set the backdrop for a post-9/11 Marine Corps that, as I show in Chapter 8, is led by many Marines who view adaptability as essential

to their profession and their service. Moreover, they place special value on the freethinking and independent mindset that is so closely associated with maverick archetypes.

Pivoting from Small Wars to Industrial Wars and Back Again

This narrative begins with WWI and the small wars-era Marines who were thrust into the industrial battlefield in France. Some Marine Corps units fought in the large-scale battles of the War of 1812 and the American Civil War (1861-1865), but prior to WWI the Marines were best known as a naval security force, as light infantry, and as irregular warfare fighters. Even as late as 1940 the Marines stated that small wars (or limited irregular wars and incursions) represented "the normal and frequent operation of the Marine Corps."[1] In 1916 the Corps had fewer than 20,000 men on active service, less than a fifth of the U.S. Army's end strength, and it had no formation larger than an ad hoc regiment.[2] Marine training and operations through the beginning of WWI tended to emphasize semi-independent, small-unit actions rather than conventional, large-scale manoeuvres that at the time demanded highly centralized command and control. Millett (1980), Heinl (1991), and Bickel (2000) describe how this "small wars" mentality affected the organisational culture of the Marine Corps: it was allowed to grow in its own direction like a patch of ivy in the shadows of the larger, more conventional Army and the Navy. While there were many efforts to eliminate the Marine Corps through 1917, the Marines were also able to retain considerable independence in thought and action because they were generally considered inconsequential in the power and budget battles waged between the services. The Marines' debut as a conventional force on the killing fields of France brought the service out of the shadows and marked the first of several pivot points for both the organisation and for the way that individual Marines would come to envision their purposes and actions.

This time period (1916-1941) encompasses the two most defining periods in Marine Corps history. WWI tested the Marines' ability to operate on a modern battlefield and generated some of the most enduring and influential organisational cultural artefacts in the service's history. Historian Craig Cameron wrote that WWI "marked for the Marine Corps a rite of passage to maturity."[3] Following WWI, the interwar period ensured that the Marine Corps would build upon, retain, and institutionalize its emphasis on small wars and

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[1] U.S. Marine Corps, 1940, p. 2.

[2] Heinl, 1991, p. 186; R.W. Stewart, 1995, p. 382.

[3] Cameron, 1994, p. 24.

distributed operations that demanded continual adaptation. WWI established the Marines'
warrior bona fides but also fed a popular belief that Marines were non-adaptable and were
instead predisposed to unimaginative "straight up the middle" attacks into the face of
withering enemy machinegun and cannon fire. As with most generalizations this one is
rooted in half-truths and a few misinterpretations; in reality this period was crucial to the
development of organisational norms that encouraged adaptability. I also examine how the
Marine Corps retained its focus on semi-independent operations in the irregular combat of the
interwar period, and how these helped to both reinforce emerging norms for adaptability and
also to shape the cognitive schemas of some of the Marines most influential senior leaders.

From the early 1900s through 1941 the degree to which Marines were influenced by
diverse external cultural artefacts increased significantly due to the introduction of mass-
distributed films and newsreels, and the increasing accessibility of national and local radio
broadcasts. The Marines who went in to France in WWI were mostly in their late teens to
early-30s, many with only a few months of service.[4] Based on a survey of available cultural
artefacts from the period, they were probably most influenced by regionally popular songs,
religious texts like the Christian Bible, orally-transmitted folktales, by observing or playing
organised sports, or by popular books. Books, like films, saw increasing distribution and
more nuanced messaging and influence in the U.S. in the first half of the 20th Century.
Christopher Coker writes: "Novelists are now even more central to our understanding of war
than they were in the nineteenth century…"[5] Novels and non-fiction books from the period
were deeply influential at the time. Books that were most likely to affect the cognitive
schemas of young Marines include Samuel Clemens' *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
(1884), Frederick Jackson Turner's *The Frontier in American History* (1893), Stephen
Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, Jack London's *Call of the Wild* (1903), and Edgar Rice
Burroughs' *Tarzan of the Apes* (1914).[6] All of these books, and most of the storylines
associated with these other cultural artefacts emphasized warrior and maverick archetypes to
varying degrees. By the 1930s movies and newsreels began to proliferate, but as I show here
the storylines, the archetypical portrayals, and the use of dichotomies in storytelling remained
consistent.

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[4] E.g. Owen, 2007, p. 88.

[5] Coker, 2014, location 177 (Kindle).

[6] Gavin, 2013. The Boy Scouts, created in 1910, may also have directly or indirectly influenced some Marine
recruits. See notes on Merritt Edson in the next section. Also see Blanke, 2002, p. 25. The first female Marine
recruit did not enter the service until 1918.

Belleau Wood 'Devil Dogs' and the Myth of the Warrior Automatons

Marine units were deployed piecemeal to France as part of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF). Nearly all of the Marine units fighting against the German forces in WWI did so under command of U.S. Army leadership.[7] Both the 5th and 6th Regiments of Marines fought under the command of Army Brigadier General James G. Harbord at Belleau Wood during the Aisne Defence, helping to hold the line and protect Paris from being overrun as the French Army was routed by advancing German divisions.[8] Even though the Marines served under strong Army leaders like "Blackjack" Pershing and James Harbord, Marine actions at Belleau Wood did more to establish the cultural identity of the Marine Corps, and to build its organisational cohesion, than any battle to that point or through the beginning of WWII.

Contemporary news articles and some historians paint the Marines at Belleau Wood as nearly thoughtless and wholly non-adaptable warrior automatons, marching in formation into the face of German guns to 'be mown down like wheat.' Indeed the Marine Corps suffered its greatest single day losses to that point at Belleau Wood.[9] Former Marine Craig Cameron suggested in *American Samurai* that the Marines fought not for tactical or strategic gain, but instead to prove their virility and soldierly aptitude against what was then considered a superior German foe.[10] In other words, Belleau Wood was little more than a warrior macho contest in which the Marines threw themselves into the guns to prove their manhood.[11] In this interpretation of the battle there was no Marine "magic," no unresolved dichotomy between warrior and maverick archetypes, only relentless frontal assaults and bloodshed. Both these surface-level analyses and more nuanced understanding are critical to understand the impact that Belleau Wood had on future generations of Marines.

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[7] Millett, 1980; Heinl, 1991; Asprey, 1996; Clark, 1999; Axelrod, 2007; Simmons and Alexander, 2008, pp. 129-131.

[8] For order of battle information see Asprey, 1996, pp. 74-75, and Clark, 1999, pp. 431-434. For a map of the battle including maneuvers see Asprey, 1996, p. 158. Cameron (1994) disputes the criticality of the battle, but nearly all other analyses emphasize the desperate and strategically crucial nature of the Chateau Thierry defense and counterattack.

[9] Clark, 1999, pp. 100-101.

[10] Cameron, 1994, pp. 23-24. Cameron also perpetuates the misperception that all of the casualties suffered by the Marines at Belleau Wood occurred during offensive charges into German machineguns. Determining accurate percentages is impossible, but a more careful analysis shows a sizeable percentage of these casualties were caused by shelling of the Marines' fighting holes, chemical attacks, and by German infantry assaults against fixed Marine positions or on their consolidated objectives in the ebb and flow of battle.

[11] This is a theme throughout *American Samurai* and one of Cameron's central contentions about the Marine Corps.

Certainly all elements of the warrior archetype were on display at Belleau Wood. A few Marines exhibited cowardice or failed in their leadership roles, but the battle was pivotal for the Marines in great part because of the Marines' 'macho' display of warrior prowess. Analysis of the battle is in great part an analysis of the warrior archetype and its influence on cognitive schemas most associated with linear, face-to-face combat. Awards for valour praised the calmness of the Marines who stood out for their exceptional bravery.[12] The most prominent Marine officer at Belleau Wood, Colonel Albertus W. Catlin, was described fondly by his Marines as "a man who was never known to get rattled."[13] This calmness under fire, coupled with physical courage, toughness, selflessness, and honour would all be crucial as the Marines worked to secure Belleau Wood in the chaos of the German advance.

Fighting at Belleau Wood invoked the crisis of warrior discipline at the heart of Crane's *Red Badge of Courage*, a book read by many Marines before WWI and then again by Marines who served on the front lines in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan.[14] At the time the Americans were thrust into the lines at Chateau Thierry in 1918 the U.S. had not benefitted from four years of intense combat as had their French and British counterparts. Marines were industrial war innocents in comparison to the European infantrymen. Marines who were most familiar with small wars combat, or who were entirely new to the Corps yet indoctrinated by small wars veterans, found themselves subjected to intense heavy shelling, then under aggressive infantry attack by veteran German troops, then chemical gas attacks that caused hundreds of casualties before finally being thrust into the offensive against superior German forces employing brutally effective Maxim machineguns.[15] BGen Harbord, otherwise praised by Catlin and others for his strong and effective leadership, counter-intuitively ordered the Marines *not* to dig in against heavy artillery fire and committed them to frontal attacks across open fields *without* friendly artillery support.[16] Some wavered but like Crane's hero Henry Fleming they eventually acquitted themselves well. By all accounts

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[12] Calmness was emphasized in many post-war reports and historical analysis. For examples, see Asprey, 1999, p. 169; Clark, 1999, pp. 92, 93, 126, 199, and 206; and Clark, 2001, p. 176.

[13] Clark, 1999, p. 126.

[14] *Red Badge of Courage* is a perennial requirement on the Commandant of the Marine Corps' Reading List. E.g. see Amos, 2013. See Coker, 2014, locations 1447-1626 (Kindle) for a detailed analysis of *Red Badge of Courage*.

[15] Owen, 2007, pp. 94-97; Clark, 1999, pp. 50-51.

[16] Asprey, 1996, p. 157; Axelrod, 2007, p. 62; Owen, 2007, p. 76. Catlin comments on Harbord: Catlin, 1919, pp. 57-58. Harbord acknowledged these actions as mistakes and apparently learned from them quickly enough to improve his later decisionmaking.

the Marines stood their ground and then attacked relentlessly, moving forward despite serious casualties. A German intelligence report stated of the Marines:[17]

> The...attacks on Belleau Wood were carried out with bravery and dash. The moral effect of our gunfire cannot seriously impede the advance of American riflemen.

Marine units first advanced in neat "line of section" formations as they were trained to do by French officers prior to the battle.[18] On the surface this was a more than respectable display of warrior élan, but also one of unforgivable dull-mindedness. Deeper analysis reveals a bit more imagination on the part of the Marines, and also examples of adaptability. The maverick was also present at Belleau Wood. Some Marines altered their orders on the fly, in keeping with their recent training with the French *Manual for Commanders of Infantry Platoons*, and in many cases the Marines withdrew rather than advance in order to preserve their lines and avoid decimation.[19] As Marine historian Bing West would note in 2014, "Contrary to public image, Marines do have some common sense."[20] In some cases the Marines at Belleau Wood delayed to gain advantage rather than rush into the attack. This official history of the 4th Marine Regiment describes this kind of simple yet crucial display of tactical flexibility. In the following excerpt an officer describes his decision to delay an attack on a well-defended German knoll based on the advice of a subordinate:[21]

> Report was made to me late this afternoon that while the [commander] of the troops on the ground believed that he could force this position in a few minutes, yet he realized that it would mean a considerable loss of life and felt certain that with a little more time these men could be taken or driven out without much loss of life, so I ordered him to carry out the plan he had in mind, and matters are now in that state.

There were also simple "technical" adaptations like a Lieutenant Timmerman's use of his steel toed boots to knock two enemy machinegunners unconscious during a rapid trench assault.[22] Most of the adaptations at Belleau Wood were, like in the example above, quite straightforward. Marines thrust into the chaos of the scattered advance, often without maps or the benefit of reconnaissance, had to make snap decisions about where to shift forces or

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[17] Heinl, 1991, p. 204.

[18] Asprey, 1996, p. 169. The Marines trained under French tutelage, some for months, prior to entering the line.

[19] E.g. Clark, 1999, pp. 117 and 132.

[20] Bing West, 2014, p. 52.

[21] McClellan, 1920, p. 373.

[22] Asprey, 1996, p. 180.

change their objectives on the fly. Here Alan Axelrod describes Marine improvisation at Belleau Wood:[23]

> [T]he Marines on the ground did what insufficiency and unreality of [military] plans required. They improvised. They improvised to survive. They improvised to achieve victory. And whereas a plan may be the product of many minds, combat improvisation typically depends on a single man… As history sees it, World War I—the Great War—was a struggle of titanic forces. Viewed from ground level, these forces were neither more nor less than the sum of the mind, will courage, and muscle of the individual men, each becoming intimate with the same abyss.

Axelrod's interpretations of the Marines' success at Belleau Wood emphasizes the criticality of individual adaptation to success of the group in combat. From a bird's eye view the Marines moved in toy-soldier formations, and colonels and generals settled the day by aggressively manoeuvring large units. Axelrod, Asprey (1996), Clark (1999), and Owen (2007) all argue instead that it was the warrior prowess and the adaptations of individual Marines from private through lieutenant colonel that decided the outcome. While the truth may lie in a complex grey area between the bird's eye view and the level of the individual Marine, all of the histories of Belleau Wood establish the criticality of the Marines' warrior drive to succeed, the vital flexibility found in their maverick, small wars attitudes, and in their burgeoning yet still-immature emphasis on adaptability. Marines who fought at Belleau Wood and stayed in the Corps carried their experiences forward into the interwar period and in to WWII thereby helping to reinforce and transform vital organisational norms.

Catlin provides what may be the best perspective on Marine Corps norms at the time the 4th Brigade attacked Belleau Wood. His unquestionably biased yet first-hand account reinforces the assessments of Axelrod, et al. An experienced small-wars fighter, Catlin trained and led about half of the Marines in the fight. While he praised them for their disciplined, straight line attack into the German guns, in *With the Help of God and a Few Marines*—a book that also influenced future generations of Marines—he was insistent that intelligence and free thinking were traits of equal or greater importance than straightforward courage. He did not use any variation of the term adapt or adaptable, but he essentially defined ideal Marines in terms of their adaptability: "The United States Marine…is prepared…for anything that may happen. He is ready for the unforeseen emergency."[24] He

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[23] Axelrod, 2007, p. 122.

[24] Catlin, 1919, p. 10.

also sets the baseline for what would become the century-long, public discipline dialectic in the *Marine Corps Gazette* and other publications. For Catlin:[25]

> The discipline of the Marines is thorough…unquestioning obedience to orders is taught from the beginning, but we proceed on the principle that we are dealing with intelligent men. We believe in leaving something to their own initiative and resourcefulness, and the theory has panned out on a hundred occasions. It is the discipline of a trained football team, which would go to pieces if the signals were not followed, but which would do but sluggish work if each man were not on his toes…

Marines, therefore, were ideally suited to the semi-controlled chaos and seeming hopelessness of industrial war. Their success in turn fed a powerful reinforcing feedback loop of positive press and literature. Belleau Wood took place just as Americans were looking to a war-torn Europe for some sign of hope. Eager newspapermen exaggerated the Marines exploits with grandiose language, and shortly recruiting for the Marines in New York jumped up one hundred percent.[26] Lore from Belleau Wood, apocryphal or not, became essential to Marine Corps organisational culture and to the Marines' identity. The Germans nicknamed the Marines "devil dogs," a sobriquet that was quickly adopted and that has maintained cultural relevance for nearly 100 years. As French leaders told the Marines to retreat, one Marine officer was reported to have said, "Retreat hell! We just got here."[27] This quote, a simultaneous display of both archetypical warrior bravado and maverick disobedience, and it is also now central to Marine Corps organisational lore and is highlighted in official histories. These kinds of extreme iconography and movie-quality one-liners were, from 1918 through 2015, routinely used to establish cultural norms for combat behaviour in literature about Marines and in organisational training and education.

Literature and (later) film emerging from the Great War provided a cultural anchor for the Marines of the interwar and WWII generations. Eric Maria Remarque's anti-war classic *All Quiet on the Western Front* and other artefacts of popular culture had if anything a greater influence on the interwar generation than similar works would have on future generations; distribution to the masses was more difficult but choices were far more limited in the late 1910s and early 1920s than in the 1950s and 1990s. The post-WWI period in U.S. culture paralleled the rapidly emerging dichotomy of dominance and discipline versus individualism

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[25] Catlin, 1919, pp. 10-11. He claimed that 60% of his regiment, including the enlisted Marines, were college graduates. Catlin, 1919, p. 19.

[26] Asprey, 1996, p. 218.

[27] Clark, 1999, p. 94. Gibbons claims to have been an immediate witness: Gibbons, 1918, p. 184.

and egalitarianism in Marine organisational culture. Nineteen-twenties American culture was marked by increasingly domineering industrial capitalism, neo-racism, and religious fundamentalism, but also an incipient grass-roots rebellion against industrialization and racism, a celebration of non-traditional jazz music, women's suffrage, and the flaunting of strict prohibition laws.[28] Some chroniclers of 20th Century American culture also labelled this period the beginning of the "Century of cool," during which Americans abandoned emotional Victorianism and were increasingly encouraged to be calm and to restrain their emotions.[29] Whether or not these claims on a national-level 'American culture' can be empirically defended, the 1920s marked a starting point for an increasing emphasis on cool, or *calmness* in American literature and cinema about Marines.[30]

Popular postbellum literature *about* Marines like Floyd Gibbons' *And They Thought We Wouldn't Fight*, and *Fix Bayonets!* (1926) provided first hand accounts but were generally considered exercises in warrior chest thumping; bibliographer and former Marine John M. Moran called Gibbons' book "propaganda."[31] Films about Marines in the WWI era, however, leaned more towards the rebellious, anti-hero, maverick archetype. The first film version of *What Price Glory?* (1926) was at least passively anti-war and something of a send up of the Marines, and *Tell It To The Marines* (1926) featured a borderline miscreant named "Skeet" Burns as a leading Marine character. Both official and over-the-top press accounts of the Marines at Belleau Wood were in many ways counterbalanced by the depictions of the war, and of Marines, in popular film. The generation of Marines who transitioned into, or joined the Corps in the interwar period were fed images, literature, and oral stories of the Marines as elite "devil dogs" and also as irreverent drunkards who more often flaunted than followed orders and regulations.

The Great War deployment also jump-started an era of professional journal writing in the *Marine Corps Gazette*. Through mid-1918 the *Gazette* was laden with stilted, mind numbing articles about administrative minutia and best practices in military supply. By 1920, the same year that the Marine Corps Institute began broad publication of *Leatherneck* newspaper (aimed more at enlisted Marines than officers), the *Gazette* had become a focal point for

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[28] Drowne and Huber, 2004, pp. 3-47;

[29] Stearns, 1994, p. 5 (et al.); and Fischer, pp. 223-224.

[30] I propose this is due in part to the shift from silent film to film accompanied by embedded sound. Silent films tended to require histrionics to convey even the simplest sentiments or actions, while the new media allowed for more subtlety.

[31] Gibbons, 1918; Thomason, 1926; Moran, 1973, pp. 98-104;

debates over the meaning of discipline and best practice in tactical assaults. Over the next twenty years these would evolve further into examination of complex, at the time unorthodox issues like advanced base operations, amphibious warfare, and small wars doctrine. The interwar, or the "small wars" period of 1919 to 1940, was a quiet yet intensely formative time for Marine Corps organisational culture and for the Marines who would fight in WWII and later in Korea.

The Small Wars Years and the Run Up to WWII: 1919-1941

After WWI the Marines returned to fighting "small wars" and performing expeditionary security duties in Cuba, Hispaniola, Nicaragua, and China. Marines seasoned by the fighting in France devolved back out of their large formations to conduct squad and platoon-sized (~12-50 Marines) patrols or raids in deep jungle terrain. This meant a return to distributed operations, with junior and mid-grade officers leading Marines and local forces in remote areas, often out of radio contact and certainly far from higher headquarters. Deep in the jungles and river valleys of the Caribbean islands and Central America, constant adaptation was a matter of necessity and therefore a matter of course. The interwar period was also one of considerable organisational change within the Marine Corps. Most of these changes constituted what I characterize as innovations rather than combat adaptations: they were institutional in nature and necessarily enduring. These include the development of modern amphibious warfare doctrine and the advance base concept, both of which have survived through 2015. More importantly for the present analysis, this period also culminated with the publication of the *Small Wars Manual*, the first and most lasting official testament to the Marine Corps' institutional emphasis on adaptability.

Most of the most notable and culturally influential Marines in the Corps' history cut their teeth and helped shape the "Marine archetype," or an overarching representation of collective behavioural norms, during the interwar period. Merritt A. "Red Mike" Edson, Evans F. Carlson, jungle fighter Herman H. Hannekan, hallmark organisational innovator Earl Hancock "Pete" Ellis, future Commandant Alexander A. Vandegrift and Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller all deployed in what were termed the 'Banana Wars' in Central America and the Caribbean in support of contentious American stabilization campaigns. Edson, Carlson, Puller, and Vandegrift, as well as future Commandant Thomas Holcomb also deployed to China where they gained a first-hand appreciation for both the Chinese and Japanese ways of war. Edson and Carlson would go on to command the First and Second Raider Battalions in

WWII, and Puller would carve out the single most notable legacy in Marine Corps history. All of these culturally significant Marines would be strongly influenced in their outlooks on warfare and adaptability by their years deployed at the edge of the American empire as the vanguard of the Corps' distributed small wars force. Merritt Edson is particularly important to the development of the Marines' focus on organisational adaptability because he was so influential in cementing the lessons of the interwar years in the *Small Wars Manual*.

Like Evans Carlson, a central character in the next chapter, Edson was the son of a rural New Englander. His farming years in Vermont, located in the far northeast of the United States, gave him a physical hardiness essential to warrior élan. According to biographer Jon T. Hoffman, Edson's early influences were the Christian church, the Boy Scouts, and the sectarian Knights of King Arthur, a boys group that emphasized adventurism and warrior virtues.[32] Both Edson and Lewis Puller were influenced by the tales of G.A. Henty; Henty's works were paeans to adventuring and individualism.[33] All of the recorded early cultural influences on Edson established a sense of idealism, adventurism, and desire to succeed.[34] He was also what would now be described as a "partier," staying out late and letting his grades suffer.[35] For the most part, though, his irreverence was quieter than Butler's and Carlson's. Edson hewed more closely to institutional lines as a liminal insider maverick. Marines who served under Edson in WWII described him as "cool," epitomizing one of the five core warrior traits identified in the literature.[36] Yet subtle streaks of rebellion also emerged in garrison and during deployments: during his patrols of the Coco River in Nicaragua in early-to mid-1928 Edson flaunted regulations and grew a full, red beard that would help cement the nickname "Red Mike."[37] The Coco River patrol remains one of the best examples of the kind of distributed small wars operations that influenced Marine Corps organisational emphasis on adaptability.

Edson deployed from the *U.S.S. Denver* to the mouth of the Coco River in order to conduct a series of long-range reconnaissance patrols and to help subdue guerrillas led by Augusto C. Sandino. In early 1928 Edson imagined, planned for, and then led the first patrol

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[32] Hoffman, 1994, p. 4.

[33] In contemporary perspective many have criticized Henty's work as racist and colonialist. I am neither endorsing nor condemning Henty here, only pointing out his influence on the adventurism and individualism of important Marines. See Hoffman, 2001a, p. 11.

[34] Hoffman, 1994, pp. 2-7.

[35] Hoffman, 1994, pp. 5-9.

[36] Alexander, 2001, p. 19.

[37] Hoffman, 1994, p. 55.

up the Coco, and by the summer he had established a permanent patrol base at Poteca, approximately 400 travelled miles from the mouth of the river.[38] The entire series of patrols, from inception to culmination, was nothing less than a continuous series of adaptations. Connected to his superior officer only through a single radio and an occasional aerial patrol, Edson was responsible for leading an austere combat expedition (and later many subordinate units) into a dense jungle inhabited by people who generally supported Sandino. This would not be the first time in the history of warfare that a military expedition of inexperienced men would charge into a foreign wilderness, but the Coco patrol was a purely Marine expedition that would have great influence on Marine organisational culture over the next 90 years.

Before his deployment to the *Denver*, Edson had served most of his time as an aviator; he had little preparation for combat patrolling in jungle or river terrain.[39] In 1928 there had been little to no transmission of lessons from decades of small wars experience in the Army and Marine Corps to men like Edson who were about to depart on their first guerrilla warfare patrols.[40] As he and his Marines stepped off into the unknown, Edson was probably armed only with his basic Marine officer training and all of his cumulative life experiences and cultural influences.[41] Other Marines who deployed to Nicaragua during this period lamented their lack of small wars knowledge.[42] Nearly everything that could go wrong on Edson's patrols did, and both he and his Marines suffered from jungle diseases, lack of fresh water, inadequate food, oppressive heat, and equipment failures while facing an elusive and determined guerrilla opponent.[43] Because Edson was intensely wilful and driven to succeed, and because his cognitive schemas were conducive to adaptability, he adapted his way forward rather than succumb to defeat. The Coco River patrols were so improvisational and successful that they are a worthy and comparable precursor to Carlson's Long Patrol on Guadalcanal.[44]

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[38] For full descriptions of the patrol see a combined summary in Jon T. Hoffman, 1994, and Edson's own multi-part accountings in the *Marine Corps Gazette*: Edson, 1936a; Edson, 1936b; Edson, 1937. Also see: McClellan, 1930; Hoffman, 1990; Clark, 2001; and Bickel, 2001, pp. 169-172. Most of these descriptions reprise Edson's first-person narratives in the *Gazette*.

[39] Hoffman, 1994, pp. 17-46.

[40] Bickel, 2001, pp. 93-94, 128-130,

[41] He may or may not have read C.E. Calwell's *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* (1896), or Samuel Harrington's early 1920s effort to write informal small wars doctrine for the Marine Corps. Bickel points out that material in the *Marine Corps Gazette* on small wars was, to this point, paltry.

[42] Bickel, 2001, p. 144.

[43] Clark, 2001, describes the expedition in similar terms.

[44] See Chapter 9 for a description of the Long Patrol.

Adaptations were a daily necessity. When engines failed the Marines had to learn how to use poles to propel and guide their boats.[45] Each of Edson's alterations to Marine orders had a purpose, including his beard, which he claimed was useful for fending off insects and sunburn.[46] Faced with deceptive, inaccurate, and misleading reports on guerrilla movements, Edson had to learn on the fly how to conduct mobile human intelligence operations as he shifted from inland trails to the river and back. Absent structured Marine logistics, Edson created his own ad hoc logistics network that would eventually stretch by river, trail, and air nearly 300 nautical miles from the shore to the most distant inland post. More importantly, Edson began to conceptualize guerrilla warfare in a way that ran contrary to contemporary methods. Bickel (2001) shows that even with some informal guidance on population engagement, the Marines for the most part spurned civil development and hearts and minds tactics in Nicaragua.[47] But Edson found little use for repression of the local population or harsh reprisals for those who supported Sandino. Instead he believed that, "if we were to succeed in our mission of eradicating the bandit element in Nicaragua, we should make every effort to gain the friendliness and cooperation of the peaceful citizenry."[48] Hoffman (1994) rightly points out that this was not a revolutionary theory even in 1928, but he then goes on to write of Edson:[49]

> A relative newcomer to guerrilla warfare, [Edson] had perceived the key to victory in such a contest. Many others with greater experience…would fail to grasp that salient fact.

The emergence of a hearts and minds counterguerrilla warfare campaign from a near blank slate on the subject such as Edson was only possible because of the leeway accorded Marine officers in the field in Central America. With his mind on the distant prize, or in military parlance the strategic objective, Edson envisioned an operational and tactical approach that was arguably more difficult to execute than repression and reprisals, one that might not pay dividends until days, weeks, or months after each positive interaction with the population. Edson's hearts and minds approach appears even more adaptive when considering the influence of colonialist and racist books like the G.A. Henty series had on Edson as a young man. Edson, his commander Harold H. Utley, and other Marine officers

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[45] Edson, 1936a, p. 24.

[46] Hoffman, 1994, p. 67.

[47] Bickel, 2001, pp. 160-161.

[48] Edson, 1936a, p. 40.

[49] Hoffman, 1994, p. 67.

would take these lessons and incorporate them into the 1935 and 1940 versions of the seminal *Small Wars Manual*, a comprehensive doctrine that reflected nearly half a century of both Army and Marine small wars actions in Asia and the Americas.

Keith Bickel's analysis of the development of the *Small Wars Manual* shows how the Marines' organisational culture evolved during the interwar period. Bickel's research centres on the development of the *Marine Corps Gazette* from a tentative newsletter-like publication to a focal point for organisational change between about 1919 and 1935, and on how Marines like Edson and Utley implanted their experiences in distributed small wars operations into enduring Marine Corps doctrine.[50] The institutionalization of small wars doctrine was both an informal and formal process: the real-life experiences in small wars shaped both grass roots and formal organisational culture.[51] The years between WWI and WWII were critical in recapturing, and then cementing the pre-WWI focus on distributed operations that not only encouraged but also necessitated adaptive behaviour. Here the *Small Wars Manual* (1940) describes the requirements for training Marines prior to distributed operations deployments:[52]

> In small wars, the normal separation of units, both in garrison as well as in the field, requires that all military qualities be well developed in both the individual and the unit. Particular attention should be paid to the development of initiative, ***adaptability***, leadership, teamwork, and tactical proficiency of individuals composing the various units.

Barring a brief mention in the 1921 *Marine Corps Manual*, this was the first treatment of adaptability in a broadly distributed Marine doctrinal publication. Here adaptability is nestled in with other traits that fit the more realistic, less archetypical desiderata from both warrior and maverick. Initiative is emphasized but individualism is not, and teamwork is desirable but courage, honour, and traditional military discipline are not highlighted. Desiderata in the small wars context are basic, practical, and tuned to the operational environment. The *Small Wars Manual* lists adaptability in the context of military change 15 times, describing the need for Marines on distributed operations to adapt everything from campaign planning to unit structure to methods for instructing militias to the layout of railroad cars.[53] It makes an

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[50] Earl Hancock "Pete" Ellis stood out as a figure within these larger institutional movements. Ellis' adaptable, heterodox mindset, his successful and proactive thinking, and his enduring impact on the modern Marine Corps set him apart as a cultural artifact of adaptability in the same vein as Evans Carlson. Ellis is a fascinating character but he was more relevant for institutional change than for a study of individual adaptive behavior.

[51] Bickel, 2001.

[52] U.S. Marine Corps, 1940, p. 4-1 (page 3 of Chapter IV), emphasis added.

[53] The manual contains nearly 500 pages of content, so this averages to approximately one mention per 30 pages.

indirect but important argument about adaptability outside of the context of small wars: "These qualities [including adaptability], while important in no small degree in major warfare, are exceedingly important in small wars operations."[54] In other words, adaptability is a *generally* desirable attribute for Marines. By the end of the interwar period it becomes clear that the Marines' extensive experience with distributed, small wars operations will have a lasting effect on the Corps' norm for adaptability.

Many of the officers who led the Corps through WWII shaped their thinking on adaptability in the interwar period. They were also shaped by the cultural influences from the 1900s through the 1930s. The hundreds of thousands of draftees and volunteers who would serve as Marines in WWII were primarily influenced by cultural artefacts from the mid- to-late 1920s and 1930s. These younger Marines, mostly in their late teens and early 20s, experienced the dramatic fall from the highs of the 1920s to the depression-era lows of the next decade. A great number of them experienced adaptation first hand as their parents were impoverished.[55] Many films and books from this era were escapist, like Ellery Queen detective novels, or irreverent comedies like the Marx Brothers' *Duck Soup* (1933) or the Three Stooges' *Woman Haters* (1934).[56] Young men could also count on a steady stock of unintentionally anti-establishment, outlaw-gangster crime films like *Little Caesar* (1931), *The Public Enemy* (1931), and *Scarface* (1932), as well as adventure films like *Captains Courageous* (1937) featuring individualists who—true to a then-evolving Hollywood format—learn the value of teamwork over time.

"Western" books and films had significant influence on the young men who would go on to join the Marine Corps in the interwar period. Hundreds of western films were produced and distributed from the 1920s through the end of the 1930s, and nearly all of these centred on story lines targeted at boys and young men. Themes in the early films often depicted simplistic archetypical caricatures in which the "good guys" wore white and the "bad guys" wore black. Overt archetypical dualisms permeated the genre, particularly in the era of silent film when the task of conveying storylines required clear, direct visualization. But scholars of western films argue that a deeper, more complex message emerged from the higher quality "talkie" examples like *Stagecoach* (1939).[57] Jim Kitses contended that westerns were cultural

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[54] U.S. Marine Corps, 1940, p. 4-1 (page 3 of Chapter IV).

[55] Young and Young, pp. 6-11.

[56] Young and Young, pp. 148, 196-197.

[57] See Grant, 2003, for a detailed analysis of *Stagecoach*.

explorations of the dualism between individualism and collectivism, with the broad, open, and dangerous expanses of the west representing individual freedom and pragmatism (et al.), and the urbanizing and constricted east representing community, social responsibility, and idealism.[58] Both of these dichotomies—hero vs. villain, and individual vs. collective—reflect and feed the warrior-maverick dichotomy in Marine Corps organisational culture.

Books about the Marine Corps during the interwar period included more about Belleau Wood heroics, but also novels and fictionalized short stories in prominent journals like the "John Houston" serial in the widely read *Saturday Evening Post*.[59] The Houston stories (in addition to being overtly racist) had little to do with the Marine Corps; these are simply rather tame episodes of drinking, romance, and street adventures in and around Beijing.[60] Marines in these stories act independently with seemingly little formal military control. Films about Marines from this period, including *The Leathernecks* (1929), *The Marines Are Coming* (1934), *Leathernecks Have Landed* (1936), and *Come On, Leathernecks!* were vehicles for stock and usually corny Hollywood story lines rather than examinations of the Marine Corps or Marine culture.[61] Lead characters in these films might as well have been any average men of the same time period; the uniforms were ancillary props. American men who might have seen these films (and then joined the Marine Corps) saw irascible, rough-hewn, yet ultimately brave and redeemable characters, not parade ground automatons. These stories revolved around Marines who did not want to serve, were expelled from the service or facing court martial, or otherwise found ways to make mischief while stumbling their way to a courageous and honourable denouement; they were mavericks with a bit of warrior thrown in for good measure. This insouciance and irreverence in American literature and films about Marines was consistent through and beyond WWII.

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[58] Kitses, 1969. Also see Rushing, 1983; and Grant, 2003.

[59] All are listed in Moran, 1973, p. 113. These stories are based on the personal experiences of the author (also the author of *Fix Bayonets!*) who served with the Marines in China in the interwar period.

[60] For example: Thomason, 1935; 1936a; 1936b; and 1936c.

[61] "Leatherneck" refers to the leather collars worn by Marines through most of the 1800s to deflect sword slashes.

Chapter 6: Adaptability Evolves—1941 to 1965

WWI marked only the beginning of a series of conflicts and deployments that led the Marine Corps from a distributed operations, naval infantry force to a modern, full-spectrum combined arms military service that now officially embraces adaptability. This chapter brings to light the changes in external and organisational culture and the battle experiences between beginning of WWII and the first year the Marines deployed *en masse* to Vietnam. I first describe how the Marines regressed from a focus on individual adaptability in the large scale combat of WWII, but also how this focus on individualism and adaptability was kept alive by key personalities who tucked it away in special units like the Marine Raiders. Marine action in the Korean War, and particularly in the opening defence of the Pusan Perimeter, shows how the Marines were able to retain a focus on adaptability and even inculcate schemas for adaptability in Marines who had little or no indoctrination. After Korea the Marine Corps struggled to find a Cold War role even as it returned to small wars actions in places like Lebanon, Thailand, and the Dominican Republic, and how the organisation extended its global reach via naval shipping and increasingly prolific and sophisticated Marine aviation.[1]

All of this change happened before the dramatic cultural shifts that occurred both during and after the Vietnam War. Patriotic fervour during WWII was drummed up by, and in turn generated literature, films, and images that sometimes drove the notion of warrior archetypes to new extremes. Newsreels portrayed Marines as near supermen, even after the first images of dead Americans were allowed to be shown to the public.[2] These positive portrayals carried forward through the beginning of the Vietnam War. Korea and the small wars deployments took place when Americans generally supported the way their country was prosecuting the Cold War along the periphery of the American empire. There was a receptive audience for warrior archetypes that could counter the growing fear of Soviet military superiority.

Yet despite the best efforts of the WWII- and post-WWII-era U.S. government and supporters in Hollywood to portray the Marines and other elements of the U.S. military as

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[1] See for example: Shulimson, 1966; Ringler and Shaw, 1970: Donnelly, Neufeld, and Tyson, 1971; George R. Hoffman, 2009.

[2] See Cosgrove, 2014 for a discussion of the first image of dead American troops. Newsreels about the Marines were so over the top that they were often dishonest. In one clip the narrator claims, falsely, that the Marine Raiders killed the entire Japanese garrison at Makin Island and that all Marines came home. In fact nearly a full squad was left behind, captured by the Japanese and beheaded. Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQATlXMTaL0 [04 March 2015]

poster-perfect warriors (or soldiers), irreverence survived as a central theme even in some of the most over-the-top propaganda pieces. The balance between warrior and maverick in American and Marine organisational culture remained relatively consistent even as American popular culture evolved and shifted between 1941 and 1965.

World War Two: Adaptation Survives and Evolves in Conventional War

Marines serving in WWII fought on the ground and in the air primarily in large-scale, joint, conventional amphibious operations in the Pacific theatre.[3] Pacific theatre commanders used the Marines to first try to defend, and then to take or retake Japan's advance bases on the islands of Corregidor, Wake, Guam, Midway, Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Peleliu, Bougainville, Saipan, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa.[4] Marines conducted straight-up-the-middle amphibious landings, but also fought intense and more complex battles deep in the jungles against highly aggressive Japanese infantry. Dramatic successes in the "island hopping" campaign, and particularly the battles of Tarawa, Peleliu, and Iwo Jima, came at high cost. Wartime newsreel film and depictions of these battles would reinforce the WWI-era assessments of Marines as highly successful "soldiers of the sea" capable of operating on large scale, but also as little more than warrior-automatons capable only of grinding frontal assaults into the strength of enemy defences.[5] Warrior traits like courage, toughness, calmness, selflessness, and honour were all on display and were emphasized as the Marines' greatest strengths in post-war literature and film.

Some might interpret WWII as a metronomic tick away from the Marines' small wars legacy. In some ways it was, although as with Belleau Wood the story of the Marines in WWII is more nuanced than the hyperbolic news reports or anecdotes. While organisational emphasis on adaptability may have been uneven in WWII, the legacy of the small wars years was generally kept alive in institutional memory. Elements of the maverick archetype so

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[3] Marine Corps History Division has listed and described all of these minor and major actions in a series of detailed monographs; I cannot do justice to the full history of Marine adaptation in WWII in this short section. Available: http://www.mcu.usmc.mil/historydivision/Pages/Staff/Publications.aspx [11 February 2015]

[4] There were many other battles or raids on smaller islands in the Pacific, including Makin. These are listed in the Marine Corps History Division monograph series on WWII.

[5] For example, see *With the Marines at Tarawa* (Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JolhiCbU_u8) and *US Marines Intense Combat Footage Battle of Peleliu and Ngesebus Island WW2 w/ Sound* (Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iEZCNTedeEk).

essential to adaptability were in many ways retained and even (perhaps counter intuitively) reinforced during the WWII years.[6]

The vast majority of the hundreds of thousands of WWII-era Marines were wartime volunteers and draftees with no previous Marine Corps experience.[7] Everything they learned about warrior and maverick archetypes, adaptability, and about the Marine Corps prior to induction into the industrial recruiting process was learned from personal experience and probably from many of the cultural artefacts described in the previous chapter. Those who joined in the first year of the war received their organisational indoctrination from Marines who had fought in, or learned from the experiences in both WWI and the pre- and post-WWI small wars deployments. Each subsequent group of enlistees and officers was in turn trained by Marines who were, or who had been trained by pre-WWII Marines and been exposed to the same cultural artefacts. In this way the Marine Corps' small wars legacy of adaptability was carried forward.

Some of the lessons of the small wars era were subsumed or even lost to daily practice as hundreds of thousands of Marines formed up in battalion, regimental, and division formations to fight against Japanese infantry and air forces. The nature of most of the fighting in WWII meant less emphasis on complex individual adaptations and more emphasis on straightforward adaptations necessary for combat survival. Nonetheless, the Marines' sense of irreverence present through the interwar period was for the most part retained during WWII. While the new inductees may not have had any small wars experience, and while they may have had more respect for American institutions than their post-Vietnam counterparts, interviews, biographies, and autobiographies cited in this thesis showed that many had a respect for individualism and a belief that their opinions mattered. Many were influenced by American interwar film and literature that gently (or in the case of *Duck Soup* brutally) lampooned traditional hierarchies. Very few of the Marines who were drafted or volunteered to fight the Japanese had plans to make a career in the Marine Corps, so they were often inclined to test the limits of organisational discipline. Career Marine Evans F. Carlson also

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[6] Examples of Marine adaptability in WWII are too numerous to even tabulate here. Nearly all of the enduring WWII-era characters whose legacies continue to influence Marines were in some way associated with adaptation. For example, "Manila" John Basilone, one of the most recognizable Marines from WWII, made a simple tactical adaptation that led not only to a technical innovation (a machinegun barrel grip) but also to a minor sub-plot in the 2000s-era television miniseries *The Pacific*.

[7] In 1939 there were fewer than 30,000 Marines all told and by the end of the war there were approximately 450,000 Marines on active duty, while hundreds of thousands more had served in the interim. Hough, Ludwig and Shaw, 1958, p. 48. Marine Corps History Division states that the exact number of Marines inducted and trained is unknown. Frank and Shaw, 1968, p. 682.

tested these limits and in the process helped to refine and even reshape the Marines'
understanding of discipline and adaptability.

The Ultimate Marine Adapter: Evans F. Carlson

Evans Fordyce Carlson offers the single best example of a warrior-maverick Marine from
1916 through 2015. Dichotomies in Carlson's personality mirror the *yin-yang*,
simultaneously pulling in opposite directions and flowing together to form a complex and
holistic cognitive schema for adaptability. If a warrior-maverick interplay shapes and drives
an adaptable Marine "magic" then Carlson is the embodiment of that dynamic; for a short
time on the island of Guadalcanal in 1942 he *was* the Marine magic. While many Marines
serving in the WWII period retained or gained an appreciation for adaptability, I argue that
Carlson was in great part responsible for retaining and furthering the Marines' emphasis on
adaptability across the mid-Century. Perhaps the greatest value of Carlson's legacy is that it
offers insight into the nature and criticality of adaptation in combat. Carlson demonstrated
how adaptation can be based on an *imagined* and forecasted challenge and not just as an
adjustment to previous or ongoing experience. He did this both before and during combat,
improvising brilliantly at the pinnacle of his career.

Carlson was one of two commanders of the new Marine Raider Battalions, a kind of
special commando unit created during the early days of WWII.[8] The Raiders were a
specialized unit but each member was a Marine recruited from across the Corps; they stood
out from the regular Marine Corps but were still *of* the Marine Corps. John Wukovits, a
chronicler of Carlson's WWII exploits, described him as simultaneously "guided by his
father's spiritual dictates" and a "longing to smash through the boundaries that restricted his
world."[9] Here he describes Carlson's complex character:

> Rarely has a person combined such diverse qualities—an intellectual who
> loved combat; a high school dropout who quoted Emerson; a thin, almost
> fragile-looking man who relished fifty-mile hikes; an officer in a military
> organisation who touted equality among officers and enlisted; a kindly
> individual with the capacity to kill; the product of small New England towns
> who sought adventure in the vast reaches of the world; a man who believed in
> decency and love and fairness, but whose actions generated bitterness and
> hatred and antipathy…Carlson was the American T.E. Lawrence…"[10]

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[8] Carlson, James Roosevelt, the Marine Corps Commandant and others adapted both British commando and
Chinese Communist infantry concepts to develop a new and unique Marine Corps unit.

[9] Wukovits, 2009, p. 3.

[10] Wukovits, 2009, p. 2.

Carlson's concept of an ideal Raider was a perfectly dichotomous mix of warrior and maverick. Here Carlson describes the equally split requirements for Raider candidates. The three warrior traits he listed are in **bold** while the three maverick traits are in *italics*:[11]

> Their specialty is offensive operations which require **top physical condition**, **fortitude**, **daring**, *initiative*, *resourcefulness*, [and] *wile…*

Demands for self-control amongst Raider candidates revealed the valuation of another juxtaposition between maverick and warrior: independence tempered by calmness. Raider Ken McCullough called the Marine Raiders "as calm bunch of people as you would ever want to know."[12] Even in his worst moments, and in the heat of combat, Carlson himself was "so calm that he calmed [others] down."[13] As I wrote in Chapter 3, calmness is a quality that is rarely itemized in the many lists of Marine Corps desiderata but is highly prized by Marines of all ranks as a warrior virtue. By seeking out calm Marines who were also especially tough, Carlson was intentionally seeking out men who were comfortable with their own capabilities and were less likely to require either intense supervision or artificial motivation in combat.

While Carlson is best known for his controversial raid on Makin Island, he and the Second Raider Battalion saw their greatest success later in 1942 on the south Pacific island of Guadalcanal. His month-long guerrilla campaign on Guadalcanal stands as one of the most brilliant Marine operations of the war. It was not only the apex of Carlson's career, but also (I argue) the single greatest demonstration of adaptability by Marines in WWII. After Makin, Carlson volunteered his battalion for Guadalcanal where the Marines were already weathering aggressive and numerically superior Japanese troops as well as intractable jungle, widespread disease, and lack of adequate supply. The fight became so desperate that at one point Major General Vandergrift, the First Marine Division Commander, burned the unit's combat records to keep them from falling into the hands of the Japanese.[14] Carlson and the Raiders would help to turn the tide of the battle. Carlson was tasked to conduct an amphibious landing deep into enemy territory and then patrol through the jungle towards the tight Marine perimeter at Henderson airfield. Figure 6.1 shows an overview of the entire

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[11] Wukovits, 2009, p. 35.

[12] Wukovits, 2009, p. 35.

[13] Wukovits, 2009, p. 120.

[14] Twining, 1994.

patrol beginning with the first landing by boat to the south at Aola Bay on 04 November 1942
and continuing on a march north through 30 November ending north of Lunga Point.

Figure 6.1: Evans F. Carlson's Patrol on Guadalcanal
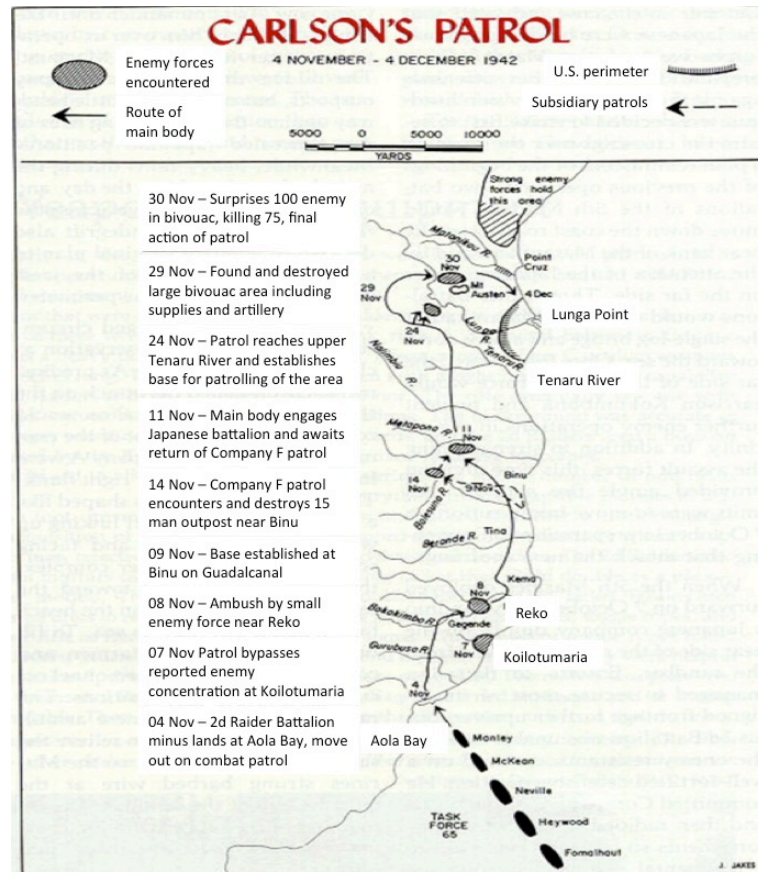
Source: Updegraph, Jr., 1972, p. 20. This is a U.S. Government image.

Note: Key wording has been re-typed from original for clarification.

Between their landing site and the Marine perimeter lay thick jungle and approximately
1,500 Japanese troops whose exact location was unknown. Carlson would feel his way
through 150 miles of the Guadalcanal jungle with poor maps, spare rations, and only the
intelligence information he could collect in the field.[15] His men were initially outnumbered 6
to 1.[16] This mission called for tremendous courage, which the Raiders would display with
consistency. Both physical courage and the courage to deviate from standard Marine tactics
were necessary to feed the kind of adaptability that was to become a hallmark of the Raiders

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[15] Wukovits, 2009, pp. 179-256; Updergraph, 1972, pp. 19-22; Zimmerman, 1994; and Richardson, 1977.

[16] Carlson took approximately 250 men on the first leg of his patrol, while the rest of the battalion joined up
with his command at intervals as they were shipped in from their staging area.

and, later, the Marine Corps more broadly. Here Wukovits describes the maverick in Carlson unleashed:[17]

> …Carlson, unhampered by operational plans or formal orders, orchestrated a dynamic guerrilla campaign. Flanking moves, hit-and-run attacks, speed, stealth, and surprise earmarked this stage [of the Long Patrol], as Carlson disappeared into the jungles in pursuit of [the Japanese]. Uncertain and hesitant at Makin, Carlson relished his independence on Guadalcanal, where he waged war the way he envisioned. Turned loose on the Japanese and guided only by his own rules, Carlson tore into the jungle with a vengeance.

Carlson freely adapted from standard Marine tactical procedures to overmatch the Japanese commanders. His Marines, trained and educated by Carlson to be tough, mentally flexible, and relentless, in turn adapted from standard procedures and overmatched the Japanese soldiers. Foreseeing the inability to tightly control his subordinate units in the thick Jungle, Carlson broke his companies down into nonstandard individual patrols. He sent these out with very brief mission-type orders or no orders other than to find and kill the Japanese soldiers while moving north. These patrols formed impromptu and non-doctrinal satellite constellations, winding stealthily through the jungle in mutually supporting but independent teams until they encountered a Japanese unit.[18] Patrol leaders adapted *during* combat, finding the best and often non-doctrinal techniques to destroy pockets of enemy troops along the north-south trail. The engaging patrol would often fix the Japanese in place with heavy direct fires while the other patrols would swarm in from the flanks and rear.[19] These adapted guerrilla-style tactics allowed the Raiders to surprise, overwhelm, and wipe out entire isolated Japanese units while suffering relatively few casualties.[20]

The Marines succeeded on Guadalcanal primarily because they fought hard and did not succumb to lack of supply, the deadly jungle environment, or even deadlier Japanese bombers, warships, artillerymen, and infantrymen. Carlson's Long Patrol may have been an operational sideshow (it is not even mentioned in some histories of Guadalcanal) but he

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[17] Wukovits, 2009, p. 203.

[18] As of 2013 this practice is referred to as satellite patrolling, and it is common practice in many western militaries. What is not clear is the origin of satellite patrolling. See Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2009, and Evelegh, 2007.

[19] Carlson lobbied heavily and successfully to adapt the standard Marine Corps table of equipment so his Marines would have heavier firepower at lower levels of command. This paid off on Guadalcanal as his small units were able to obtain and maintain fire superiority over what were sometimes larger Japanese infantry units.

[20] Wukovits, 2009, pp. 211-212. Over the course of the entire Long Patrol the Second Marine Raider Battalion lost 16 killed, 18 wounded, and 255 evacuated due to debilitating tropical diseases. The Marines killed approximately 500 Japanese soldiers. Jon T. Hoffman, 1995, p. 22. The official toll of Japanese casualties inflicted is 488, but it would have been impossible for the Raiders to develop such an accurate count in the deep jungle of Guadalcanal.

deeply influenced many aspects of the Marines' organisational culture and the Corps' burgeoning emphasis on adaptability.[21] But unlike Walt, Gray, Zinni, Mattis, and Kelly, Carlson was not able to walk the thin line required of insider maverick adapter general officers.[22] Carlson's reputation within the Marine Corps would never match his public popularity. For many years official Marine Corps training and education ignored or downplayed his legacy.[23] Despite these active efforts to bury Carlson's adaptations his legend survived. The Raiders' impact on Marine Corps organisational culture is nearly ubiquitous.

Carlson directly contributed to the Marine Corps dialectic on discipline and its role in both combat success and in adaptability. By the late 1930s he had spent decades reading about self-reliance and observing irregular forces like Nicaraguan and Chinese rebels in action. He came to believe that "military discipline [as interpreted by conventional military organisations in the early 20th Century was] oppressive, a Moloch of narrow-minded dictation from above."[24] Carlson unofficially refined the definition of discipline for the Marine Corps more effectively, and with greater impact than any other Marine notable even considering the informal interpretations of Albertus Catlin.[25] In his proposal to create the Marine Raiders, Carlson and James Roosevelt wrote, "Discipline should be based on reason and designed to create and foster individual volition…[Marines] should subordinate self to harmonious team-work."[26] He enforced this interpretation in Raider training and education, much of which carried over into conventional Marine Corps organisational culture. While Carlson and the Raiders managed to safeguard and even enhance the Marines' focus on distributed operations

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[21] Publicly Evans Carlson was lionized as a hero. The Randolph Scott version of the Makin raid was accepted as fact, and the movie *Gung Ho!* became a powerful cultural artifact that influenced Marines for several generations after the raid. But right after Guadalcanal and Saipan, senior Marine Corps officers quietly ended Carlson's command and his career due to the perception that Carlson was a glory seeker, a maverick, and a communist. Carlson lost command of the Second Raider Battalion prior to his wounding on Saipan. See Wukovits, 2009, pp. 266-268 for a summary.

[22] Carlson probably went too far in using his personal influence with the President and the President's son. His decision to leave the Marine Corps in the 1930s demonstrated his at least temporary unwillingness to accept organisational realities and work within the system. Arguably Puller did not walk this line either and was promoted to 3-star (Lieutenant General) rank over the quiet objections of many of his peers and superiors.

[23] It is difficult to find mention of Carlson in many post-WWII lists of Marine legends, and it is equally difficult to find Marines who know Carlson and his legacy as well as they know the legacy of Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, Merritt "Red Mike" Edson, Smedley D. Butler, Dan Daley, and others more frequently mentioned in official material.

[24] Blankfort, 1947, p. 251, presumably quoted or paraphrased from Carlson during an interview or from a letter. "Moloch" refers to an Ammonite idol, or god, and has been used as a literary term for a domineering figure.

[25] Albertus W. Catlin contributed to this debate in 1919 in *With the Help of God and a Few Marines*.

[26] Wukovits, 2009, p. 30. The letter was drafted by Roosevelt but, according to Wukovits, was all but ghost written by Carlson. Roosevelt was Carlson's protégé as well as being his second in command.

and adaptability, the Marines built their most enduring WWII legacies by fighting division-sized battles against regular Japanese forces during the island hopping campaign.

Sustaining Adaptability in a "Frontal Assault" Organisation

Nearly all of the best-known Marine Corps-led battles in WWII, including Tarawa, Peleliu, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa, were what many Marines would call "slugfests."[27] Terrain restricted tactical options and the Marines found themselves driving into the teeth of well-prepared Japanese defences. Planning options were also limited by the U.S. Navy, which had considerable say in how the Marines conducted their landings and even their operations ashore.[28] Within these constraints the Marines still adapted. Quick thinking and quick learning were practical necessities in the micro-terrain of the Umurbrogol ridges on Peleliu or at Sugar Loaf Hill on Okinawa. Post-war assessments that described the Marines as *preferring* frontal assaults into strong enemy defence were as exaggerated as they had been after WWI.[29] Amphibious landings on small and often denuded atolls did require frontal assaults, and some Marine leaders probably lacked the imagination to adapt when opportunities presented themselves. However, the island hopping campaign also offers many credible examples of more flexible thinking, as well as group and individual adaptation. Many Marine leaders sought to avoid costly frontal assaults. This was Major General Lemuel C. Shepherd's directive to the Marines advancing against the Japanese on Okinawa: "Don't try to outslug the Jap [sic]; outflank him."[30] Examples of adaptation and normative emphasis on adaptability are common in nearly all contemporary and modern historical narratives of the ground side of the island hopping campaign. Marine fighter squadron commander Gregory "Pappy" or "Gramps" Boyington demonstrated how Marine aviators could also embrace the warrior-maverick dualism and remain adaptive in conventional war.

Boyington grew up a wrestler and a good student, and he had a near-fanatical love of flying. In 1941, before the U.S. entered the war, he flew for Claire Chennalut's American

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[27] See: Hough, 1950; Leckie, 1957, 1965; Davis, 1964, pp. 168-210; Millett, 1980, pp. 345-441; Sledge, 1981; Ross, 1985; Hammel, 1987; Heinl, 1991, pp. 324-493; Ross, 1991; Alexander, 1996; Hallas, 1996; Astor, 2005; Wukovits, 2006; Haynes and Warren, 2008; Camp, 2009.

[28] This even affected ground maneuvering. For example, on Okinawa Marine leadership wanted to conduct a secondary landing to come in behind Japanese defenders. Navy officers rejected this option and the Marines instead had to throw themselves into hardened defenses at Sugar Loaf Hill, losing hundreds of dead and wounded. Hallas, 1996, pp. 10-11. Also see: Frank, 1978, pp. 106-114

[29] The terms "frontal assault" and "hey diddle diddle, straight up the middle" have often been attributed to Marines after WWII, even by the Marines themselves.

[30] Hallas, 1996, p. 22.

Volunteer Group ("Flying Tigers") where he was considered a good pilot but a troublemaker who didn't like to follow orders. When Boyington took over command of squadron VMF-214 in the Pacific theatre in WWII he continued this trend. He eventually shot down a total of 26 Japanese planes and won the Medal of Honor, but his alcoholism and drunken antics often got the best of him. During WWII Boyington sometimes flew with a bad hangover, and perhaps once or twice actually drunk.[31] He had a long-standing feud with his group commander, Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Smoak.[32] Boyington's entire squadron had a reputation for being misfits. While their wild sides were exaggerated in the 1980s television series *Baa Baa Blacksheep* (*Black Sheep Squadron*), in reality most had been bounced from one squadron to another before winding up with VMF-214. John Wukovits said of Boyington, "…superior officers who had to corral him must have felt as if they had grabbed an electrical wire."[33]

As wild as Boyington was, he was also a brilliant pilot and squadron commander. He rewarded boldness and daring, one time writing up a pilot for the Navy Cross after the Marine had disobeyed Boyington's orders and flown his airplane singlehandedly, and at a great distance, to attack Japanese ships using only his wing-mounted machineguns.[34] Boyington's squadron flew under Marine aviation group orders but Boyington typically led his flights without much of a plan at all. He would improvise, relying on the skill of his fellow pilots to defeat larger formations of Japanese planes. On at least two occasions Boyington led VMF-214 over the airfield at the Japanese stronghold island of Rabaul and taunted the Japanese pilots to climb up to meet them. He was shot down during one of these missions while trying in vain to protect a fellow Marine pilot against overwhelming odds. Boyington was a prisoner of war in Japan until 29 August, 1945.[35]

Many of the Marines who served prior to WWII continued their careers after the war. Chesty Puller would go on to serve with distinction in Korea, where the Marines would carve out another benchmark legacy at what is commonly called the battle for the Chosin

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[31] E.g. see Gamble, 2000, pp. 198-199, and 324.

[32] Boyington referred to the overweight Smoak as "Colonel Lard" in his autobiography. Stephen J. Cannel named Smoak's fictional character 'Colonel Lard' in the television series *Baa Baa Blacksheep/Blacksheep Squadron*.

[33] Wukovits, 2011, p. xi.

[34] Boyington, 1977, p. 179.

[35] Gamble, 2000, pp. 372-373.

Reservoir.[36] The withdrawal from Chosin is historically significant, but the Marines' transition from post-WWII malaise back to full combat strength in the early stage of the Korean War is more relevant to understanding how the Marine Corps was able to carry forward its institutional memory and regain its emphasis on adaptability.

Post-War, Korea, Then the Return to Distributed Operations (1945-1965)

The sheer magnitude of events from 1941-1945 guaranteed prolific filmmaking and literary publication about the Marine Corps, and also more generally about Americans in war.[37] Between 1941 and 1965 Hollywood churned out hundreds of films, Marines and Soldiers generated thousands of first-hand accounts in articles and books, and many historians recounted the fine-grained details of every battle Pearl Harbor to Okinawa. Young men who joined the Marine Corps after WWII had been deluged with American propaganda about the war and about the Marines. These men were also coming of age at the midpoint of the "century of cool." Anti-Victorianism permeated American culture and young men were increasingly coming to respect calmness in the face of adversity.[38] Level-headed leaders often had central roles in WWII and post-WWII films and books, and particularly in those with official sanction.

Despite efforts by the U.S. Government to control war film themes and messages, even the enduring, high-quality war films about Marines from the early- to late-1940s, including the propagandistic *Wake Island* (1942), *Gung Ho!* (1943), and *Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949), were shot through with irreverent behaviour and anti-establishment dialogue. Marine public affairs officers could not, or chose not to tamp down most of the irreverence in *Sands of Iwo Jima* despite having near total control over the script.[39] In *To the Shores of Tripoli* (1942), a film titled to resonate deeply with Marines' respect for organisational history and tradition, the Marines openly mock their commander during close-order drill. This kind of Bud Abbot and Lou Costello-esque chicanery, and also more serious anti-establishment dialogue and

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[36] A better transliteration from the Korean language is *Changjin*. Fighting took place east and west of the reservoir, but also south along the route to the port of Hungnam.

[37] The *Marine Corps Gazette* became a focal point for open and often contentious organisational debate between Marines of all ranks. *Leatherneck* devoted more space to recording the historical record or highlighting Marine successes.

[38] This is the core of Stearns' (1994) argument. Similar themes emerge in Medovoi, 2005, and are also consistent in my review of film and literature from the 1940s through the 1960s.

[39] See O'Connell, 2012, pp. 91-96, for a full description of the filming of *Sands of Iwo Jima*.

behaviour, were common cinematic themes even at the height of the Frank Capra era of filmography.[40] WWII may have pushed the Marines (and also the U.S. Army) closer to conventional, centrally-controlled, "traditional" warfare, but even the most jingoistic Hollywood directors were loath to portray Marines or American Soldiers as poster-perfect straight men. Throughout WWII and up to the start of the Vietnam War, Americans and American Marines celebrated and sustained warrior virtues and irreverent individualism in equivalent measure.

War against North Korea and then the Chinese Army came very shortly on the heels of WWII. Most histories describe a smooth transition from the Marine Corps' high water mark in the Pacific to the equally legendary exploits at Pusan, Inchon, Seoul, and then Chosin in the early 1950s.[41] In these accounts Marines who had been battle-hardened in WWII carried the fight for the Marine Corps in Korea.[42] In reality the post-WWII period was one of significant organisational retrenchment. The Marines were faced with another existential threat as the other services and some members of Congress sought to reduce or eliminate the Marine Corps, reinvigorating the service's "institutional paranoia." Marine training and readiness had been eroded in the five years after WWII, so their often ad hoc successes in Korea were all the more remarkable. Following Korea the Marine Corps again repurposed itself to survive, this time as an adaptable, forward-deployed naval infantry force designed to deal with a full range of military operations from civilian evacuations to conventional war. From 1953-1965 the Marines returned to their distributed operations roots, working with the U.S. Navy to create an organisation and a methodology that would gradually evolve into a formal approach to adaptable military operations: the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) and the Rapid Response Planning Process (R2P2).

A Victory of Organisational Culture Amidst Disorganisation at Pusan

With the Pusan Perimeter about to collapse under the onslaught of North Korean armour and infantry in mid-1950, the Marine Corps threw together the First Provisional Brigade and

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[40] William A. "Bud" Abbot and Louis F. "Lou" Costello were comedic actors who featured in a range of films from the 1930s through the 1950s, including send-ups of the military like *Buck Privates* (1941), *In The Navy* (1941), *Keep 'Em Flying* (1941), and *Buck Privates Come Home* (1947). Frank Capra was an acclaimed director who produced propaganda films for the U.S. Government during the war.

[41] For examinations of the post-WWII period through the end of the Korean campaign see: Montross and Canzona, 1954 and 1955; Millett, 1980 (through Pusan: pp. 445-485); Toland, 1991; Heinl, 1991, (through Pusan: pp. 532-547); Chapin, 2000; Russ, 2000; Hammel, 2001; Simmons, 2002; Iglesias, 2010; Hammes, 2010; Coram, 2010; pp. 160-221; and O'Connell, 2012.

[42] See Chapin, 2000.

launched them into combat. Many of the Marines in the brigade were reservists, some were entirely new to the Corps, and even the experienced Marines tended to come from non-infantry backgrounds. No more than 50% of the brigade's leaders had any relevant infantry combat experience in WWII.[43] T.X. Hammes describes how the Marines essentially built the brigade from smaller units and then padded it with individuals who flowed in from around disparate bases and stations. Many of these individual Marines came from sentry duty or other non-infantry duty and had not had any infantry-like training since boot camp (recruit training). Worse, the brigade was formed in the summer when personnel are traditionally rotated to new stations and billets; assignments were chaotic and haphazard. Many of the subordinate infantry units that made up the core of the brigade had only 50% of their allotted manpower when the order to deploy came down from Fleet Marine Force Pacific, the headquarters overseeing the Marines' fight in Korea.[44] Aviation units also suffered from shortages in equipment and personnel disarray. To top things off, the Commandant of the Marine Corps had just ordered many of the experienced non-commissioned officers to leave the brigade's infantry units.

Thus, contrary to what Hammes calls the "ingrained myths" of the Marines' remarkable preparations for the Korean War, the First Provisional Brigade was really an ad hoc, hastily assembled group of some experts but many very young, half-trained, non-infantry Marines who barely knew each other and had only rudimentary training. These Marines would be thrown into the gap to halt and reverse an ongoing U.S. retreat that seemed on the verge of collapsing into a withdrawal by ship from the port of Pusan at the tip of the Korean peninsula.

The Marines of the First Provisional Brigade landed at Pusan on 02 August 1950. Four days after landing from their troop ships they had assembled, moved north by truck and train, passed through U.S. Army lines, and had begun attacking the elite North Korean People's Army 6th Division. By 10 August, a little over a month after receiving the order to deploy and just over a week after landing in a war zone, the First Brigade was driving the North Koreans back in what would be called the Sachon Offensive. By 15 August, just two weeks after landing in Korea, the First Brigade had pushed the North Korean 6th Division back by 26 miles and had inflicted nearly 2,000 reported North Korean casualties. Next the Marines

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[43] Hammes, 2010, examines the records of the brigade in detail. See Hammes, 2010, pp. 84-124.

[44] Hammes, 2010, pp. 89-118.

shifted to the Naktong Bulge, the critical point of the Pusan defensive line, to help the U.S. Army break and then reverse the North Korean offensive.

Marines of the brigade matched their ad hoc organisation with combat adaptation. Because they had done little formal planning and had barely adequate maps, the Marine leaders felt their way forward and shifted positions as they saw fit.[45] Brigade Commander Brigadier General Edward Craig applied what today would be called manoeuvre warfare tactics, using personal reconnaissance to identify key terrain and enemy gaps and ordering his units forward with brief verbal commands. In one instance Craig personally stole a U.S. Army jeep in order to move to the forward most lines.[46] The Marines' first weeks in Korea amounted to pre-WWII distributed operations on a larger scale, with a general in charge of what historians call the "Fire Brigade."[47]

Marine aviators led the way in adaptation. Prior to the outbreak of fighting the Marine Corps created an experimental helicopter squadron, making these new aircraft integral to Marine aviation. Incorporation and development of the helicopter airframe was technical innovation at the level of service organisation. The way the Marines conceived of employing the helicopters in combat was also innovative. In the mid-1940s a small Marine Corps board led by then-Major General Lemuel C. Shepherd created from whole cloth the concept of amphibious vertical assault, or using helicopters to move from ship to shore in offensive operations. Marine officers at Quantico imagined and developed this concept *before* the Marine Corps had purchased its first operational helicopter.[48] Marines threw the helicopters into combat in Korea just as they had formed adequate squadrons. The rapid-fire adaptations Marine aviators made during combat were made possible by the Marine Corps' aviation innovations between WWII and the Korean War.

Significant adaptations by Marine helicopter pilots were reported with great frequency during the outset of the Korean deployment. Just days after landing the forward-most Marines were in desperate need of water. Marine helicopter pilots—pilots from what had only weeks earlier been an experimental squadron and who had never deployed their aircraft in combat—flew in water cans and evacuated heat casualties in one of the first ad hoc uses of

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[45] The commander, Brigadier General Craig, flew to South Korea shortly before the Marines arrived by ship. He drew up a rough plan after meeting with Army counterparts and conducting a quick reconnaissance of the battlefield.

[46] Hammes, 2010, p. 140.

[47] Hammes, 2010; Chapin, 2000.

[48] Millett, 1980, p. 454; Brown, 2003, p. 2.

the helicopter for resupply and medical support. Very quickly the Marine aviators altered their aircraft by fitting them with casualty litters, formally and permanently adapting helicopters for medical evacuation. In short order the Marines adapted their helicopters for command and control, for calling in artillery fire, and even for laying communication wire from the air.[49] Each adaptation resulted either from an obvious physical requirement like the need for water or medical evacuation, or from more creative improvisation. The idea of laying long strands of wire from a helicopter required imagination motivated by the overarching, collective purpose to find the most expedient and effective way to defeat the North Korean army; it would have been *possible* to lay the wire on the ground by foot or truck to accomplish the mission, but it was faster and smarter to do it from the air.

Standing back from the tactical adaptations made by individual Marines, the entire process of cobbling together and deploying the "Fire Brigade" could be viewed as an exercise in adaptation. All of the Marines involved, from combat experienced leaders like then-Lieutenant Colonel Raymond L. Murray to the most junior and barely trained private, were thrown together as an ad hoc team and then deployed into a desperate combat scenario with almost no formal planning or preparation. Success in the Pusan Perimeter demanded tight unit cohesion, aggressive and relentless warrior behaviour, but also the willingness to operate with minimal guidance and to think freely as the volatile battles at Sachon and Naktong evolved from minute-to-minute. Almost fifty years before the Corps' doctrine would call on Marines to operate like "members of a jazz band who can improvise freely without losing their cohesion," the Marines of the First Brigade were doing so without the prerequisite investment in pre-deployment training and teambuilding.[50] Their success at Pusan and their demonstrated ability to both fight hard and freely adapt with such minimal preparation are testaments to the influence of Marine Corps organisational culture on individual behaviour. Here T.X. Hammes summarizes his research findings on the First Brigade:[51]

> The Corps' culture made up for the serious deficiencies in individual and unit training and conditioning...The brigade's incredible record of only nine missing in action during the tumultuous first month of combat is a solid measure of its cohesion. What makes it even more remarkable is that the cohesion was achieved without the men having trained together as a unit or served together for any significant period. The cohesion came from the common culture based on education, doctrine, and training…the

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[49] Brown, 2003.

[50] U.S. Marine Corps, 1996, p. 115.

[51] Hammes, 2010, pp. 200, 215.

> brigade…validated the Corps' cultural emphasis on esprit de corps, readiness, and even paranoia.

Good leadership by Brigadier Generals Edward Craig and Thomas Cushman and by regimental and battalion commanders clearly had a role in the rapid establishment of the cohesion necessary for group adaptability, and also in transferring and sustaining organisational cultural standards for warrior aggressiveness and maverick individualism and irreverence.

It is impossible to measure the effect that external cultural influences from popular literature by Jack London, Stephen Crane, Audie Murphy (*To Hell and Back*, 1949) or films like *Gung Ho!*, *Sands of Iwo Jima*, and *Wake Island* on the cognitive schemas of the individual Marines who deployed to Korea. But the individual Marine's perception of the Corps prior to joining and then deploying almost certainly played a role in shaping both expectations for combat behaviour and also the cognitive schemas that would allow for such loosely structured adaptation. Preconceived notions of what it meant to be a young American male, an American at war, and what it meant to be a Marine, affected the individuals' proclivity to adapt towards success. Hammes' research, as well as many interviews with Marines who served in Korea, offer anecdotal evidence that external cultural artefacts influenced Marines, and the survey data in Chapter 8 describes this dynamic in a modern context. All of these influences and the lessons of Korea fed and sustained the Marine Corps' focus on adaptability through the beginning of Vietnam War.

An Adaptable Force in Readiness: 1945-1965

After the three-year interlude in Korea the Marines returned to the post-WWII interwar period typified by increased service paranoia, scrambles for relevant innovation, and the return to distributed operations that pushed responsibility and authority down to junior officers.[52] Driven in great part by the need to stay relevant in the nuclear-centric Cold War era, the Marines pressed hard for increased procurement of U.S. Navy amphibious ships that could deploy Marines forward. Through the 1950s and early 1960s, national leadership deployed the Marines at a frenetic pace. Table 6.1 is a brief sample of the type and range of missions Marines were called upon to execute at short notice from 1953-1965:[53]

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[52] Arguably the Korean War initiated yet another interwar period, but the trends in U.S. defense policy, in Marine Corps organisational policy and culture, and in the increasing push for distributed, forward operations began in late 1945 and were only altered by the Vietnam War.

[53] Donnelly, Neufeld, and Tyson, 1971; Neufeld, 1971.

Table 6.1: Sample of Expeditionary Operations 1953-1965

Date	Type of Operation	Brief Description
August 1953	Humanitarian Relief	Battalion landing team deploys from amphibious ships to provide rescue and relief to earthquake victims in Greece
September 1955	Firefighting	Infantry training regiment Marines help put out forest fires in the Los Padres National Forest, California, U.S.
October 1956	Reinforcement	One company deploys to Morocco to reinforce a Marine barracks when political friction threatened base security
March 1957	Rescue	Marine light helicopters help evacuate victims from the plane crash involving Philippine President Magsaysay
Mid-1958	Peacekeeping	Three reinforced battalions deploy from amphibious ships into Lebanon to help stabilize the country
January 1960	Spaceship Recovery	Marine helicopters assist in recovering the nosecone from a U.S. Project Mercury spaceship
1961	Support Covert Action	Marine helicopter support unit deploys to Thailand to support covert action by Air America in Laos
May 1963	Show of Force	Marine battalion landing team positions off the coast of Haiti in Navy ships in preparation to land and stabilize
November 1964	Flood Relief	Marine helicopters rescue 1,700 Vietnamese flood victims and deliver supplies from amphibious ships
April-May 1965	Stability Operations	Marines land in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic to secure U.S. personnel and engage Dominican rebels

Source: Donnelly, Neufeld, and Tyson, 1971; Neufeld, 1971.

Between these many diverse operations the Marines were in constant motion, executing large and small amphibious exercises across the world and pushing Marines further and further abroad. This effort to forward deploy Marines to position them for rapid response culminated in the creation of the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) concept, and then the task-organised Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU).[54] The MAGTF concept was little more than a formalization of long running Marine Corps practice of cobbling together ad hoc air-ground teams to conduct combat operations, and the MEU was envisioned as the smallest and most agile standing MAGTF. A MEU typically consists of several amphibious ships with an embarked command element, infantry battalion, aviation squadron, and combat logistics detachment. This self-contained unit, led by a colonel, could be given any mission from humanitarian operations to conventional war. Often a MEU would detach subordinate task-organised elements for specific purposes, just as Merritt Edson detached from the *USS Denver* in 1928 to patrol up the Coco River. These formal organisational changes reflected

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[54] Early 2015 conversations with researchers at the Marine Corps History Division and Marine Corps Research Center at Quantico, Virginia, revealed that there has been little to no formal historical research conducted on the establishment of the MEU structure. Provisional MAGTFs were formed in the early 1900s, in 1917, in the 1920s, and again in the 1950s. See Michael West, 1999, p. 21. The Marine Corps passed order 3120.3 in December of 1962 formalizing the MAGTF concept. Official records identify the creation of the 24th MEU at Camp Lejeune, NC, on 15 November, 1960. See Donnelly, Neufeld, and Tyson, 1971, p. 47.

the Corps' historically flexible approach to structure and mission planning dating back to at least the early 1900s. Formalization of ad hoc organisation, and the concurrent establishment of a pattern of constant forward deployment of small units, cemented this flexibility into organisational cultural norm. From the early 1960s onward individual Marines would have to be adaptable because the Marine Corps' loose organisation and steady state of forward operations *demanded* near-constant adaptation. The landings of the 6th MEU in the Dominican Republic in 1965 are a case in point.

In April 1965 Marine forces landed to help prevent the complete disintegration of the Dominican political system, as well as to protect the U.S. Embassy and to forestall growing Communist influence.[55] The MEU was a task-organised unit operating in the Caribbean Sea. As the Marines were withdrawing from a training exercise at Vieques Island they were given short notice to move offshore from Santo Domingo, the Dominican capitol. Even though a broad plan for intervention had been written earlier in 1965, the Marines deployed with approximately one-day notice into a complex political-military situation.[56] They were simultaneously tasked with evacuating American citizens to Navy ships, with securing the U.S. Embassy compound, and with restoring order in Santo Domingo. All of these simultaneous joint Marine-Army missions were done with minimal tactical planning and with the only real source of information coming from the U.S. Ambassador, not from thorough operational reconnaissance.[57] Here a U.S. Army officer describes what it was like for both the Marines and the Soldiers who prepared to land in the Dominican Republic in April of 1965:[58]

> Hurried planning, poor intelligence, inadequate briefings, and unfounded rumors created in the combat soldiers' minds a simplistic perception of what would confront them once they arrived in the objective area. When the complex reality of the Dominican civil war became apparent to the soldiers and their superiors, they had to demonstrate flexibility and common sense in adapting to the situation.

Within hours of being issued the order to assist in the evacuation—but without authorization to land troops on foreign soil—the Marine ground commander, Colonel George W. Daughtry, exceeded his mandate and put a platoon of Marines at the dock at Santo

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[55] There were certainly elements of cold *Realpolitik* in the decision to intervene in the Dominican Republic. The political reasoning behind this military action is beyond the scope of this thesis. For a critical internal government report on the crisis see Weapons Systems Evaluation Group (WSEG), 1966.

[56] Ringler and Shaw, 1965, pp. 10-17.

[57] Marines from the 6th MEU conducted some quick visual reconnaissance via helicopter and on foot just prior to the landing of the first battalion landing team. These efforts were insufficient to inform the full operational plan. Army forces were flown in from the U.S.

[58] Yates, 1988, p. ix.

Domingo to provide security.[59] This kind of *necessary disobedience*, as subtle as it may have been in the absence of a direct order *not* to land ground troops, was critical in keeping the Marines ahead of events in the rapidly deteriorating situation. In other events leading up to the full landing Marine officers and non-commissioned officers travelled around the country alone or in small groups to identify problems, engage with Dominican leaders, and to prepare the ground for the infantry. Nearly all orders given were by necessity the kind of brief, mission-type orders that required considerable maturity and independence from junior leaders.[60] Once fully ashore for direct stability operations the Marines found themselves in an all-out gunfight with Dominican rebels, and they immediately (within two days of landing) transitioned from evacuation and stability operations into a full-scale offensive combat under strict rules of engagement. From the first shot fired the Marines had to simultaneously fight house-to-house but also provide security for American citizens, support evacuation, deliver civil assistance, conduct psychological operations, negotiate with local leaders, and provide what amounted to police support in the streets of Santo Domingo. There was no script to follow, no clear objective, and no clear U.S. chain of command.

In both Lebanon in 1958 and in the Dominican Republic in 1965, every action from the moment the Marines went ashore demanded considerable adaptability. Each individual Marine had to be ready to conduct what Commandant Charles E. Krulak would in 1997 call the "three block war," in which "Marines may be confronted by the entire spectrum of tactical challenges in the span of a few hours and within the space of three contiguous city blocks."[61] In practice Marines could find themselves doing a great many things at once and all on the same block, and often without sufficient guidance or resources.[62]

Planning for and executing short-notice evacuations and amphibious landings with minimal intelligence, often-conflicting orders, and ambiguous responsibilities ashore also demanded considerable adaptability from Marines at all echelons from commander to fireteam member. Beginning at the end of WWII Marines started to actively practice short cycle planning while aboard ship in order to offer near-total mission flexibility to the U.S.

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[59] WSEG, 1966, p. 42. These actions also required adaptable thinking and behavior by both U.S. Navy and U.S. Army officers, as well as members of the U.S. Embassy staff.

[60] WSEG, 1966; Ringler and Shaw, 1970; et al.

[61] Charles E. Krulak, 1999. Krulak initially described the three block war concept in a 1997 speech at the National Press Club in Washington, DC.

[62] Some proponents and some critics of Krulak's three block war concept appear to have taken the "three block" concept at face value rather than as it was intended: as a conceptual description of the complexity of modern warfare. For example, see Dorn and Varey, 2009.

national commanders. Marines had to conceptualize—or imagine—ways to succeed with minimal guidance or intelligence across a wide spectrum of possible operations and under very tight time constraints. Within the first twenty years after WWII the Marine Corps had made ad hoc organisation, rapid response planning (later known as R2P2: Rapid Response Planning Process), and short-notice execution a norm in the form of the MEU. Because the MEUs were the focus of attention for resources and deployment, and because MEU commanders would often go on to flag rank promotion, duty at a MEU was coveted and the forward-deployed expeditionary construct became the focal point for Marine Corps training and education. The MEU, and more broadly the concept of the ad hoc MAGTF, shaped organisational culture, and in turn the organisational culture and distributed operations influenced cognitive schema development of Marines who served from 1945-1965.

Evolution of Adaptability from 1941-1965

Conventional combat in WWII changed the Marine Corps' organisational size and structure, and to some degree its organisational culture. From 1942 onward the Corps' leadership became much more conscious of structure and hierarchy, and more focused on establishing formal protocols for combined arms operations. These changes, necessitated by large scale, high intensity, joint warfare occurred as the rest of the U.S. defence establishment also matured and formalized in order to prosecute global war. The almost haphazard small unit Marine deployments of the 1918-1941 interwar period were by the early 1950s tightly controlled under the direction of layered theatre and national commands. Nonetheless, two factors prevented the Marine Corps from transforming into a staid and unimaginative conventional force. First, the cultural emphasis on success through independent thinking was sustained and improved upon by long-serving Marines like Lewis Puller, Alexander Vandegrift, Merritt Edson and Evans Carlson. Individual Marines, reservists, and draftees who had become accustomed to thinking freely and adapting as civilians simply continued to do so under the tutelage of Marine leaders who had served prior to WWII. Many of these newcomers and old hands then collectively struggled to ensure conventional mindsets did not wipe out the Corps' cherished pre-WWII legacy. Second, the Marines' return to distributed operations and the formalization of task-force driven "ad hocery" as normal practice ensured sustainment of pre-war warrior-maverick behaviour. Both the individual and organisational efforts to sustain and formalize adaptability moved the Marine Corps closer to the adoption of manoeuvre warfare theory in the 1980s.

Individual adaptations, and the individual focus on adaptability were perhaps the most important factors in sustaining and evolving adaptability from 1941 through 1965. Many of Evans Carlson's adaptations, including those drawn from the Chinese Communists, were adopted as institutional innovations and gradually adopted as practices throughout the Marine Corps. Carlson has been given credit not only for inspiring the modern fireteam, but also with helping to break down some of the barriers of military formality between officers, staff non-commissioned officers, and enlisted Marines.[63] Table 5.2 lists standing Marine Corps practices and policies through 1942 in the left-most column, then Carlson's 1940s-era adaptations in the centre column, and then signs of enduring influence on Marine Corps culture in the right-hand column. This table is not meant to imply causal inference: Carlson alone is not wholly responsible for any shift in Marine Corps organisational culture. His emphasis on adaptability was in turn strongly influenced not only by cultural artefacts, but also by the Marines he served with and for in the years leading up to Guadalcanal, including "Maverick Marine" Smedley D. Butler.[64] Certainly Merritt Edson, commander of the 1st Raider Battalion, and many other Marines between 1942 and 2015 deserve a great deal of credit for helping to increase emphasis on adaptability and relaxations in strict, parade-ground field standards.

As early as 1921 the Marine Corps had already codified adaptability as a desirable trait for junior officers.[65] However, these links to Carlson's writings, tactical organisation, and adaptations are too distinct to ignore.[66] The consistent theme across all of these adaptations and changes in organisational culture is the emphasis on the kinds of distributed, small unit operations that demand a greater degree of self-reliance, initiative, and adaptability than in larger conventional units that rely on more centralized command and control. Restructuring for smaller-unit operations has reinforced the need for adaptable thinking at all levels of

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[63] Carl Von Clausewitz with his rule of threes, Mao Tse-Tung with his cellular command structure, and many others deserve credit for inspiring the idea of small, mutually-supporting teams. I show in the following section that Merritt Edson used small, independent teams during the Coco River Patrol prior to WWII. However, Carlson is often credited for inspiring the modern Marine Corps fireteam. See Edson, 1929; Jon T. Hoffman, 1994; and Alexander, 2000.

[64] Schmidt, 1987, p. 132. Butler was an early proponent of egalitarian relationships with enlisted Marines. See Schmid, 1987, p. 109.

[65] U.S. Marine Corps, 1921, p. 2-1. There was no mention of adaptability in the original 1885 version of the *Marines' Manual*. See Gilman, 1885.

[66] There are many examples that show that the Raiders had direct impact on the broader organisation. For example, Hammes, 2010, describes how infantry captain Houston Smith transferred the concept of the fireteam from his experience in the Raiders to alter the formation of his conventional infantry unit in 1943. See: Hammes, 2010, p. 64.

command: Marines *have to* adapt in the absence of immediate, centralized command and control.

Table 6.2: Carlson's Adaptations and the 2015 Marine Corps

Through 1942 Condition	*Evans Carlson's Adaptations*	*Signs of influence as of 2015*
Lowest level of tactical formation is squad[67]	Break squads down into Chinese-style fireteams of 3 or 4 Marines	Fireteams form the basis for all modern combat formations
Automatic weapons only at the platoon level, not squad	*Fireteams* have organic automatic weapon to build distributed power	All infantry fireteams include a light machinegun[68]
Discipline is typically described in terms of constraints and restraints	Discipline is redefined for the Raiders to include emphasis on self-reliance and personal initiative	Discipline is defined as equal parts warrior-like constraint/restraint and self-reliance and initiative.
Officers eat before enlisted in the U.S. Navy tradition	Carlson preaches equanimity and has the most junior Marines eat first	Marines are fed in rank order from junior to senior at most meals[69]
Operations in conventional combat are typically centralized, tightly controlled	Carlson proactively enforces a distributed model of command and control, devolving authority down	Marine doctrine emphasizes small unit, distributed operations with devolved command and control
Organisational cultural slogans emphasize only warrior élan and competence	Carlson introduces the term *gung ho* to the Marine lexicon, emphasizing collectivism	*Gung ho* is now synonymous with Marine, but it is reinterpreted as both teamwork and aggression

Source: Derived from all sources cited in this chapter

These evolutionary changes were already taking hold by the time the Marine Corps deployed to Vietnam in 1965. The next chapter describes the impact of the war in Vietnam on the Corps' organisational culture, and the ways in which Marines once again retained their small wars values through a period of high-intensity and often conventional combat. This third and last historical chapter cements the argument that incorporation was a steady, evolutionary process rooted in longstanding organisational norms and not, as some argued in the 1980s, as a result of a revolutionary breakthrough.

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[67] Informally, Merritt Edson experimented with "fire groups" of three or four Marines during his work in Nicaragua. Formal changes did not emerge within the Marine Corps' infantry table of organisation until after WWII.

[68] As of 2015 the Marine Corps has transitioned from the high ammunition capacity M-249 Squad Automatic Weapon to the M-27 automatic rifle, a throwback to the low ammunition capacity Browning Automatic Rifle found at the platoon level in the 1941 tables of organisation. This move still retains an automatic rifle capability with the fireteam.

[69] There are exceptions to this rule, and it is almost impossible to enforce at large all-ranks, first come-first serve mess halls on large installations. This rule is most tightly enforced at unit functions or within small units.

Chapter 7: Adaptability Ingrained—1965-2001

Two major events affected individual Marines' perceptions of adaptability between 1965 and the beginning of the era of constant, global, irregular conflict dating from the terror attacks of 2001. The first of these was the Vietnam War, a part-conventional, part-irregular campaign that would put the entire spectrum of Marine capabilities to the test across dramatically varied terrain every day for over half a decade. The second event was the formalization of adaptability as a standard for Marine behaviour in the *Warfighting*-series publications in the late 1980s through the mid-1990s. By 2001 the Marine Corps had fully embraced adaptability as a central, philosophical tenet, formally recognizing what had been a burgeoning but mostly informal organisational cultural norm from at least 1916. This chapter is partly about organisational change and its impact on the individual Marine. But like the previous chapters, it is equally or even more so about the consistency of the way individual Marines conceptualized their roles, selected their behaviour in combat, and then influenced the organisation from below. Further, Marines were influenced by cultural artefacts with underlying thematic approaches that, despite vast and complex shifts in format, tone, and subject matter, were surprisingly consistent from 1916 through 2001.

Vietnam 1954-1972: Deepening Standards for Adaptability

Marines first entered Vietnam as individual advisors in 1954, and then in force to defend the airfield at Da Nang in South Vietnam in 1965. Regular forces were gone by 1971, and the last few Marines in Vietnam departed during the 1975 evacuation of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon.[1] Marines landing in South Vietnam in the mid-1960s found themselves in a confusing, hostile environment with nebulous orders and no real strategic military purpose.[2] Little would be done to alleviate this confusion over the next seven years, during which

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[1] Melson and Renfrow, 2009, pp. 11-15. By July 1971 there were only 500 Marines serving ashore in Vietnam: Melson and Arnold, 1991, p. iii. See Shulimson and Johnson, 1978, and Henderson, 1993 for a full description of the initial deployment of Marine conventional units into Vietnam in 1965.

[2] For more information on the Marine Corps experience in Vietnam, including historical narratives, biographies, autobiographies, and novels see: Corson, 1968; Stolfi, 1968; Allnutt, 1969; Shore II, 1969; Walt, 1970; Fails, 1978; Charles M. Johnson, 1978; Webb, 1978; Millett, 1980, pp. 559-606; Clark, 1984; Henderson, 1986; Camp and Hammel, 1989; Hammel, 1989, 1990, and 1991; Melson and Arnold, 1991; Nolan, 1991, 1994, and 1997; Norton, 1991; Murphy, 1997; Shulimson, et al. 1997; Kugler, 1999; Culbertson, 2003; Gilbert, 2007; Nevgloski, 2008; Fixler, 2010; Cone, 2012; Holiday, 2012; Short, 2012; Jewett, 2013; et al. Marine Corps History Division's chronological series contains nine volumes.

perhaps 500,000 Marines would deploy to Vietnam in conventional infantry line units and as aviators, tankers, engineers, communicators, maintainers, logisticians, advisors, reconnaissance specialists, and cooks.[3] Combat ranged from massive slugfests with the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in the north to deadly guerrilla war in the centre and south. Marines with the Special Landing Force (SLF) bounced along the coast conducting quick-hit and full-scale amphibious assaults, while small advisor teams lived tenuous existences in villages and with the South Vietnamese military.[4] Marine helicopter crews flew combat assault support for the infantry up and down the length of Vietnam while fighter pilots flew close air support and deep interdiction strikes over the DMZ. As the Marines struggled to adapt to the half-conventional, half-irregular war in Vietnam, shifts in American military and popular cultures would begin to impact the Marine Corps and also each individual Marine's view of the war. In the midst of the Vietnam miasma the Marines racked up several notable innovations and short-term, purpose-driven organisational adaptations.[5]

It would be impossible to do justice to the breadth and depth of the Marine experience in Vietnam in only one part of a single chapter. Building on the survey of national (external) cultural artefacts above, here I focus on the adaptation of the Combined Action Program (CAP) and then focus on the experiences of then-Captain John W. Ripley to access the individual-level experience in greater detail. It is also necessary to acknowledge that thousands of Marines did not adapt, or did not adapt successfully in Vietnam, and in some cases these failures to adapt led to battlefield setbacks and the loss of Marine lives. In some of the most brutal conventional fights, particularly along the DMZ, there was little room for creative adaptation: survival-level adaptation, warrior toughness, and firepower took on greater importance. At the end of the Vietnam War, many Marines would feel that their service writ large had settled in to a staid, ineffective, and wholly nonadaptable mindset in which showing incremental progress to gain temporary approval was of greater importance than success.[6] Accepting these shortcomings and limitations, and accounting for the fact that

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[3] There were hundreds of individual Marine Corps specialties and operational mission purposes during this period. Marine experiences were incredibly diverse even taking into account the distributed nature of most operations.

[4] See Nevgloski, 2008, for a description of the SLF activities from 1965-1969.

[5] For example, see: Corson, 1968, pp. 174-198; Stolfi, 1968; Shulimson and Johnson, 1978; Millett, 1980, pp. 571-601; West, 2003; and a forthcoming book by Jeannie Johnson entitled *Lessons Learned and Lost: US Marines and the Problem of American Counterinsurgency*.

[6] Damian, 2008, pp. 7, 16, 31; Millett, 1980, pp. 607-609; et al.

the Corps as an organisation may have in parts stagnated by the end of the war, Vietnam gave the Marines space to experiment with a range of adaptations and to evolve the norm for adaptability.

External Influences on Vietnam-Era Marines

As the Marines who fought in WWI, WWII, and Korea, the Marines who fought in Vietnam and then served in the post-Vietnam period were influenced by the sum of cultural artefacts prior to their service. This section focuses on popular literature and film from 1945-1971 (the last year considerable numbers of Marines served in Vietnam), while the next chapter describes the cultural artefacts that affected the post-9/11 generation of Marines. While there are distinct differences within and across the 1945-1971 and the 1971-2001 time periods, three consistent themes emerged in most of the influential cultural artefacts of both fiction and historic non-fiction: heroic success or self-sacrifice, the value of individual agency (or independence), and anti-establishment irreverence. Collectively these three themes influenced cognitive schemas for warrior heroism and sacrifice, individualism and self-reliance, and a desire or even a duty to reject or undermine Molochian government agents. As the Corps' organisational culture evolved to formalize adaptability through 1971, national culture evolved in gentle shifts that did not substantively alter the way Marines conceptualized warrior and maverick archetypes or the meaning of American military service. Even during and after the social upheavals of the 1960s and early 1970s, the three themes appeared and reappeared with remarkable consistency. Books, films, songs, and (and by the late 1950s) television programming that reached tens of millions of Americans retained the dichotomous examinations of warrior and maverick, good and evil, ordered and disordered, individual and group that fed the cognitive schemas for adaptability of Marines from the 1910s through the late 1930s.

The top-selling fiction and non-fiction literature and films from 1945 through 1971 most likely to be read by the young men who would go on to become Marines centred on all three of these themes.[7] Many examples contained motifs that encapsulated and advanced warrior

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[7] I did not identify any empirical data describing the reading habits of Marines, Marine recruits or officer candidates during this or any time period prior to 2001, although anecdotal data on Marine reading habits exists in autobiographical non-fiction from this period. Therefore, this assumption is based on a year-by-year review of best-selling fiction and non-fiction literature. The most widely available, most popular books were probably the most read. This also assumes that reading levels varied considerably from Marine to Marine, so some literature was more accessible to better-educated enlisted and officer Marines than to less well-educated Marines. Marine war correspondent Keys Beech describes how Marines stuck on long deployments had

and maverick archetypes, and the best and some of the most popular works explored the complex dualities generated by these archetypes. As teenage boys these prospective Marines may have read C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe* (1950) or Harold Keith's *Rifles for Watie*, both of which championed adventurism and independence while exploring the complexity of moral and ethical choices that lie between archetypical good and evil. Young men growing up from 1945-1971 may have read any one of hundreds of fiction or non-fiction war stories published from the late 1800s onward, including all of the literature described in the previous two chapters. They were most likely to have been exposed to the kinds of complex explorations of individual struggle both in and out of war like Thor Heyerdahl's *Kon-Tiki* and Richard McKenna's *The Sand Pebbles*, or aggressively anti-establishment or anti-authority works like Herman Wouk's *The Caine Mutiny*, James Jones' *From Here to Eternity* and Bill Mauldin's hundreds of irreverent WWII comics (sampled and explained in *Up Front*).[8] Films during this period also focused on individual struggles against the elements and oppressive enemies and institutions. Table 7.1 is a sample of popular films from 1945-1971 that Marines were most likely to have seen:[9]

Table 7.1: Themes in Popular Films from 1945-1971

Title	*Year*	*Themes*
On the Waterfront	1954	Heroic priest and an equally heroic ex-prize fighter battle for justice against a powerful and corrupt longshoreman's union
The Ten Commandments	1956	Heroic, rebellious Moses fights against long odds to lead his people to freedom, chooses justice over safety and security
Rio Bravo	1959	Heroic Sheriff takes a brave and honourable stand against corrupt ranchers, adaptive use of dynamite to force gang's surrender
Spartacus	1960	Heroic slave turned gladiator leads a revolt against corrupt Rome, fellow slaves try to sacrifice themselves to save him in the end
The Magnificent Seven	1960	Heroic, maverick gunmen try to save villagers from powerful Mexican bandits, individuals fight as a team and win at great cost
Dr. No	1962	Heroic, irreverent British secret agent saves the world from powerful evil, relying on his wile, courage, and adaptability
The Great Escape	1963	Heroic, imaginative, and irreverent allied military men work as a team to try to escape from German prison camp
True Grit	1969	Drunken, irreverent lawman helps a young girl track down deadly killers, overcomes great odds and reveals his good character
*M*A*S*H*	1970	Irreverent, morally courageous doctors fight against dull-witted

voracious appetites for popular literature like Betty Smith's *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* and J.P. Marquand's *So Little Time*. See Beech, 1944, p. 8.

[8] All four of these books were best sellers in the year (or shortly after) they were published. See the full compilation of annual best-selling literature at The Books of the Century website. Available: https://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/%7Eimmer/booksmain [29 March 2015].

[9] I judged "most likely" subjectively based on my literature review, the trends indicated in my survey, and personal observation of Marines for 27 years.

		military bureaucrats in a critique of the military and war
Dirty Harry	1971	Irreverent, heroic police detective fights overbearing police bureaucracy to track down and kill a serial murderer

Source: Summaries of cited films

From 1916 through 1971 young American men were influenced by cultural narratives that emphasized strength, honour, courage, self-assessment, independence, irreverence, and a healthy scepticism for government and military bureaucracy. Lead characters ping-ponged back and forth between warrior and maverick ideals, continuously exploring the unresolved middle ground. By the middle of the 20th Century many of the lead characters in popular American books and films were exceptionally calm; the few quiet, sometimes brooding heroes of the 1950s and 1960s presaged the Clint Eastwood action-cinema era of super-calm lead characters working for justice in a gritty, grey era of social decay.

All of these themes, motifs, and longitudinal trends held true in 1950s and 1960s television series like *Gunsmoke* (1955-1975), *Bonanza* (1959-1973), *Have Gun Will Travel* (1957-1963), *Sea Hunt* (1958-1961), *Bat Masterson* (1958-1961), and *Hogan's Heroes* (1965-1971). Steady, independent lead and supporting characters—some like Bat Masterson based on real-life American legends—struggled to keep their honour and succeed in often nebulous, dangerous situations. These themes, motifs, and trends also held true in 1945-1965 movies and television series about Marines like *Flying Leathernecks* (1951), *What Price Glory?* (1952), *Battle Cry* (1955), and the comedic *Here Come the Marines* (1952), *Marines, Let's Go* (1961), and even to some extent in *Gomer Pyle, USMC* (1964-1969). There were clear elements of pastiche in films about Marines in the 1950s and 1960s as the central dichotomies and iconography from previous eras of film carried over into the present.

The scenes in Figure 7.1, below, depict the repeating motif of irreverent, ill-disciplined behaviour common to nearly all films about Marines through the early 1970s. From left to right, top to bottom: Characters Captain Flagg and First Sergeant Quirt from *What Price Glory?* (1926) carry on their drunken antics in the sequel *The Cock-Eyed World* (1929); the dishonourable Marine lieutenant "Wild Bill" Traynor drinks his fill with Nicaraguan bandits in *The Marines Are Coming* (1934); in the 1952 version of *What Price Glory?* Flagg and Quirt set for the first of many skirmishes; in the 1961 *Marines, Let's Go*, two tough, aggressive Marines are about to fight each other, while an irreverent wise guy with his cover (hat) cocked back intervenes. These are not images the Marine Corps would want on a

recruiting poster, but they were quite common even in films approved by the Marine Corps Public Affairs office in Hollywood:[10]

Figure 7.1: Motifs in Marine Films: 1920s-1970s

Source: Films cited in previous paragraph, screenshots

Many of the Marine-centric films like *None But the Brave* (1965) lightly explored the hopelessness and pointlessness of war, just as the 1926 version of *What Price Glory?* had (half-heartedly) in a previous era.[11] Hollywood films intentionally or unintentionally created an overarching dichotomy to wrap around all of the plot and character-driven dichotomies within: war was and is at once glorious and hopeless, beautiful and unimaginably ugly, eminently sellable and wholly repugnant. Hollywood writers, producers, and directors challenged—again, often half-heartedly or disingenuously—any young American man who wanted to see a war movie to think about the meanings of honour, courage, self-sacrifice,

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[10] Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5I2hIMu-1LY [01 April 2015]. Robb, 2004, provides a detailed description of the military public affairs relationships with Hollywood.

[11] The primary Marine character in *None But the Brave*, Lieutenant Blair played by Tommy Sands, is an over-the-top caricature of a traditional Marine.

toughness, calmness, independence, irreverence, adaptability, and even necessary disobedience.

Increasing proliferation of all media through mass production and distribution steadily increased exposure to most types of cultural artefacts across the United States.[12] Young men in rural areas that may not have had access to cinema or even diverse literature in the 1920s had much more exposure by the 1950s and 1960s. Therefore, as the concept of adaptability evolved and was hardened in Marine organisational culture, increasing quantities and varieties of external cultural influences that fed adaptable cognitive schemas began to have influence on the individual Americans who would go on to serve as Marines. Many of the young men and seasoned veterans who would fight in Vietnam watched films and television, studied ancient religious scripts, listened to some gently counterculture rock and roll music, absorbed their fathers' recounted stories from WWII, read late 1800s classics like *Red Badge of Courage*, and gleaned what they could from world history. Gregory V. Short indirectly reveals and then describes the various influences on his decision to join the Marine Corps in 1967. Short joined knowing full well he was likely to deploy to Vietnam:[13]

> I always imagined myself charging the barricades with a sword in one hand and the shield of Pericles in the other…The fact that my father was a career military man probably had a lot to do with it…[he instilled] an unswerving devotion to serving one's country…my father took me to visit a [U.S.] Civil War battlefield…I was completely humbled by the thought of a group of people actually sacrificing their lives for a common cause.

Short was clearly influenced by Greek mythology, and also by his father's personal anecdotes, and by directly observing historical cultural artefacts. His collective influences, and his interpretation of those influences, were necessarily unique. Many of the rural or inner city draftees who entered the Marine Corps in 1967 would have been hard pressed to associate with Short's personal narrative. Yet all Marines like Short retained their generative will, and to varying degrees and in various ways they could access warrior and maverick schemas influenced by 190 years of Marine Corps history, the organisational and cultural upheavals of two world wars, and many of the collective artefacts of all humanity.

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[12] Professional live theater was available in some rural areas but was confined mostly to large urban areas. Television proliferated gradually and unevenly, and radio became less important as television and cinema became more available.

[13] Short, 2012, p. xv.

The Combined Action Program

The Combined Action Program (CAP) is often described as the most relevant and culturally enduring of these adaptations.[14] Arguably, CAP helped to ingrain adaptability as a Marine Corps cultural norm. Marines of Third Battalion, Fourth Marine Regiment (3/4) created CAP to generate local forces to defend rear areas as their battalion was spread thin around Phu Bai in 1965. This program integrated squads of Marines into irregular Popular Force (PF) units to build up what are typically called civil defence forces. CAP was an adaptation because it was non-doctrinal and temporary in nature; the short-lived program was not mentioned in doctrine until 2006, and then only as a nod to distant history.[15] On its face CAP was a practical but not necessarily interesting adaptation: by 1965 generating civil defence forces was common practice in irregular war, and Marines had been building civil defence forces in irregular wars since at least the early 20th Century. What was interesting about CAP for the purposes of this thesis is that it represented both evidence of the power of institutional memory to influence individual behaviour, and it demonstrated the adaptability of individual Marines from multiple specialties and at all levels of the chain of command, and also support for adaptations from Marine leaders up to flag rank.

Institutional memory constituted by formal professional education, external reading about irregular warfare, 25-year old doctrine, and personal experience gave the Marines of 3/4 a baseline for the decision to create CAP. Marine leaders who helped create and foster CAP in the mid-1960s cited the *Small Wars Manual* and referenced the Marine Corps' experiences with civil defence in Nicaragua, Santo Domingo, and Haiti.[16] Considering the circumstances presented to the staff of 3/4 in Phu Bai in 1965, including the lack of clear guidance, a diffuse operational purpose, and insufficient rear-area forces, the Marines could have sat out their deployment by "turtling up" in a protective shell inside their compounds. Instead they were able to observe their nebulous tactical situation in historic context, and then unaided by external direction *select* a situation-appropriate alternative to their given orders and standing practice.

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[14] CAP is featured in most of the holistic histories of the Marine experience in Vietnam and is often singled out in more targeted analyses.

[15] The 1980 version of the Marine Corps counterinsurgency manual, FMFM 8-2, barely mentioned irregular forces and did not mention CAP. See U.S. Marine Corps, 1980, pp. 25-26. The 2006 version of the Army-Marine Corps Manual explicitly mentions CAP in Vietnam within a tone box and recommends combined action as a counterinsurgency method. See U.S. Marine Corps, 2006, pp. 5-23 to 5-25.

[16] E.g. Shulimson and Johnson, 1978, pp. 133-135.

The decision to create CAP came not from an experienced infantry officer or a long-serving small wars practitioner but from Captain John J. Mullen, Jr., an adjutant and civil affairs officer on the infantry battalion staff.[17] The executive officer, a major, liked the idea and suggested it to the battalion commander, William Taylor. Taylor liked the idea and suggested it to the regimental commander, Colonel Edwin B. Wheeler, who also approved. Then the Marines' equivalent of corps commander, Major General Lewis M. Walt, approved CAP as a program. The next senior Marine, Lieutenant General Victor H. Krulak, commander of Fleet Marine Forces Pacific and a then-candidate for Commandant, became an instantaneous and strong proponent of CAP. There was evidently no pushback within the Marine Corps chain of command.[18] Every officer from the adjutant captain to commander of the entire Pacific theatre Marine force saw promise in this non-doctrinal, historically-informed, adapted concept because they understood both its historic relevance and its immediate practical value.[19]

Understanding and acting are discrete events. All of the Marine officers in position to implement the program were able to rapidly envision CAP. But each Marine also had the willingness and willpower to put the program into action or provide the initial support needed up the chain of command.[20] Taylor, Wheeler, Walt, and Krulak did not hesitate to create from whole cloth and support this nonstandard program, even as General William C. Westmoreland, the overall commander in Vietnam, actively disapproved.[21] Taylor borrowed Marine First Lieutenant Paul Ek, previously on loan to U.S. Special Forces, and placed him in charge of the first CAP unit. Ek created the first company of CAP Marines and established a flexible chain of command and engagement program based on establishing mutual understanding with Vietnamese PF leaders. Ek and all of the Marines in his unit freely adapted to turn CAP into a functioning and then highly successful program, all without

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[17] Peterson, 1989, pp. 23-24: Shulimson and Johnson, 1978, p. 133. Walt is unequivocal that Mullen thought up, tested, and then sold the concept to his superiors. Walt, 1970, p. 105. Krulak, 1984, was reluctant to assign credit to any individual Marine. Allnutt, 1969, also distributes credit: Allnutt, 1969, pp. 9-10.

[18] Walt and others describe complete and immediate support throughout the chain of command. Walt, 1970, et al.

[19] Krulak and others explain their reactions in either autobiographical or interview references. Some circular citation is evident in these various accounts, but there is repeated reference to historical record and Marine Corps culture.

[20] By 1967 General Westmoreland had threatened and cajoled senior Marine leaders into abandoning the program.

[21] See William C. Westmoreland (1968) "Msg, COMUSMACV 1011 to CJCS, 22 Jan 68, sub: Visit to Washington by Richard E. Cavazos, LTC Inf, USA," Westmoreland message files, U.S. Army Center for Military History.

formal doctrine or instruction. Each Marine team leader, operating under CAP leadership but functioning independently on a day-to-day basis, had to adapt and then adopt its own idiosyncratic approaches in order to match local conditions.[22] Marines assigned to the most conventional and ostensibly hierarchical unit in the Corps—the infantry battalion—found a way to employ distributed operations and break down their own chain of command by task organising at the lowest levels.

Some write CAP off as a limited experiment with equally limited operational or strategic impact.[23] Peterson states that the whole effort was "tokenism" on the part of Marine leadership.[24] These are debatable assessments. While the U.S. did lose the war in Vietnam, Marine leadership nurtured and grew the CAP from a single platoon-level experiment in 1965 to a Combined Action Force of thousands of Marines before the program was disbanded.[25] It helped to establish, train, and support hundreds of thousands of civil defence forces, which in turn probably helped to stave off Viet Cong control of South Vietnam.[26] Whether or not CAP was an operational success or fed strategic success, the process of conceptualizing and implementing CAP in the face of stern bureaucratic resistance from MACV had an enduring impact on the Marine Corps' organisational emphasis on adaptability. It also helped to build and reinforce organisational and individual preference for distributed operations. From 1916 through 1971 (the last year of CAP) a great number of Marine leaders demonstrated a desire to move "away from the flagpole," or to get far as possible from senior leadership and stifling command and control measures. Sending squads led by non-commissioned officers in their late teens or early twenties to operate semi-independently not only made sense to Marines, but it seemed like the best option to succeed in Phu Bai and then across South Vietnam. Most importantly, CAP was a standout example of individual adaptability by Marines.

Whatever its record in Vietnam, the CAP model captured Marine imaginations. Historians like Allan R. Millett (1980) and analysts like Bruce Allnutt (1969) admired the program and recorded its tactical successes for later generations.[27] While the Marine Corps was preparing to invade Iraq in early 2003, an official Marine think tank at the combined

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[22] Bing West's *The Village* (1972), while fictional, provides a good description of life in a CAP unit. See Allnutt, 1969, p. 20; et al.

[23] For example, see Peterson, 1989. Also see personal interview data in Katie Ann Johnson, 2008.

[24] Peterson, 1989, pp. 123-125, et al.

[25] Shulimson, 1982, pp. 239-245; Charles R. Smith, 1988, pp. 288-295.

[26] Charles R. Smith, p. 295.

[27] Millett, 1980, pp. 571-601; Allnutt, 1969.

arms centre in Quantico, Virginia held a wargame to examine the viability of CAP.[28] When General Mattis held a stability and support operations (SASO) conference in late 2003 to prepare to re-enter Iraq in early 2004, he directed the establishment of one CAP platoon per battalion and directly referenced the Marine experience in Vietnam.[29] The program had limited impact in Iraq for many reasons.[30] Nevertheless Mattis and other Marines ensured it was incorporated into the 2006 Army-Marine Corps manual on counterinsurgency because—I argue—it had come to represent Marine individual initiative, bottom-up adaptability, operational independence, and (perhaps ironically) their drive to succeed in any circumstance.

There were many broader dynamics at play in the background as Captain Mullen imagined and proposed CAP. Just as it did during WWII, to fill the ranks for Vietnam the Marine Corps brought on board thousands of often-irreverent draftees and reservists who left the service when their commitments were over. This temporary injection of citizen-soldiers helped keep the Marine Corps' organisational culture and also individual Marines somewhat in tune with the churning national cultural events occurring on college campuses and in urban centres across the United States. Citizen-soldiers further opened some of the always-permeable conceptual barriers between the Marines' organisational culture and the rest of the world, thereby increasing the influence of some of the more maverick elements of external culture on Marine Corps organisational culture. Simultaneously, Marines who might have then been called "lifers" helped to carry over the full range of organisational cultural norms from the pre-Vietnam War era. These ranged from the overarching emphasis on success, to warrior traits like courage and self-sacrifice, to maverick independent-mindedness, and to the hybrid warrior-maverick norm of adaptability. Marines like John W. Ripley, a career infantry officer who spent over two years in Vietnam as a reconnaissance leader, infantry leader, and advisor, absorbed, carried forward, and transferred norms for warrior performance, success, and independent yet solution-focused thinking.

Lifer-Adapter John W. Ripley

John Ripley, like Carlson before him, is a study in only partly resolved character dichotomy. He was a mischievous boy who, as a young teenager, stole strawberries and used

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[28] CETO, 2003.

[29] First Marine Division Staff, 2003.

[30] See West, 2008, and Katie Ann Johnson, 2008, p. 7.

his rifle to blow up jars full of gasoline for fun. Ripley admitted to being a poor student through high school; he was more interested in sports than academic achievement.[31] Yet he was also a devout Catholic raised in a family and community that emphasized moral and ethical values commonly associated with traditional discipline. He was, according to Admiral James B. Stockdale, aware that "he had ancestors who fought in every American war…including five in the Revolutionary War and some on both sides of the civil war."[32] Norman Fulkerson's biography of Ripley describes the other cultural artefacts that influenced Ripley to join the Marine Corps. A family friend gave Ripley a Marine Corps jacket at the age of twelve, and he often saw Marines returning home from the Korean War passing through his town. At 17 he was given a copy of Leon Uris' *Battle Cry* and, according to Fulkerson, "By the time [Ripley] finished [the book] he knew what he wanted to do with his life."[33] We know that Ripley was influenced to join the Marine Corps by a combination of shared family tradition passed by oral narratives, literature, and personal observations, and that perhaps the dichotomous warrior-maverick "High Pockets" Huxley from *Battle Cry* had some kind of influence on Ripley's perception of Marine officers.

Ripley possessed the same preternatural calm as Carlson, and he was consistently and personally aggressive in combat.[34] In Vietnam he commanded both conventional infantry and reconnaissance units, thereby experiencing both the seemingly staid and conventional, and also the highly unconventional, more obviously distributed parts of the war. While he was in a more freethinking and adaptive environment in Force Reconnaissance, there are indications his conventional experience was anything but staid. His orders while commanding Lima Company, Third Battalion, Third Marines (L 3/3) were typically the briefest kind of mission-type orders that more than 20 years later would be recommended in the first version of *Warfighting*. For example, on 07 November 1966, the 3/3 battalion staff issued "Frag Order 3-66" to Ripley and the Marines of Lima Company:[35]

> Conduct recon in force operations to detect, attack, and destroy enemy forces in assigned AO [area of operations]. Provide security for division/regimental outpost and communications relay station. Be prepared on order for deployment by air or surface means for operations outside assigned AO.

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[31] Bout, 1986.

[32] John Grider Miller, 1989, Foreword (Kindle)

[33] Fulkerson, 2011, pp. 1-40.

[34] Fulkerson, 2011; Bout, 1986.

[35] Jewett, 2013, no page number.

> Minimum three [reinforced] squad ambushes per night…[Submit] situation
> reports [every six hours and] spot reports as they occur.

This Frag Order, or "fragmentary" order (also: FRAGO) of the kind typically issued in both the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Army, would be the only recorded official guidance for Ripley and his Marines from 07 November of 1966 through 10 January 1967.[36] Under this system, a baseline order of perhaps hundreds of pages of minute detail is given at the beginning of a campaign, and then all orders given thereafter are fragmentary.[37] Since Ripley joined 3/3 after the unit's initial deployment, in all likelihood neither he nor other replacement officers had time to read the baseline order.[38] Therefore, the most formal guidance he received came in one-paragraph snippets during the course of his deployment.[39]

With this single paragraph from Frag Order 3-66 (above) Ripley knew that he should seek out and destroy the enemy, provide local security, and send out patrols. Perhaps his commanding officer or the operations officer would provide more detail by radio or in person, but sometimes they would not. Therefore Ripley was free to interpret and apply this order with great latitude to fit the sometimes rapidly changing situation in his AO, without other written guidance, for three full months until the next "FRAGO" was issued. More importantly, Ripley had to be ready at a moment's notice to move his entire company by air or ground to an entirely new and unfamiliar area to conduct any and all possible missions a Marine infantry company might perform. This kind of operational latitude and the expectations for immediate, completely flexible crisis response placed Ripley—the commander of a line infantry company serving under a regimental, division, and corps commander—in the role of a distributed operations leader and rapid response planner. His Marine patrol leaders, typically men in their late teens or early 20s, received similarly vague orders and had similar leeway to adapt. For all the Marines of Lima Company 3/3 adaptability was both a directed operational paradigm and a daily existential necessity.

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[36] It is possible that other orders were issued but not recorded, or were recorded but not published in searchable format. My review of compiled operations orders and reports for 3/3 in Vietnam in Jewett (2013) showed no official change in orders from 3-66 to 1-67.

[37] This system is still in place in 2015 and was used extensively in both Afghanistan (2001-) and Iraq (2003-2011).

[38] In any event few officers or enlisted Marines ever read an entire operations order. Instead they pull out the parts that are immediately relevant to their role in the operation. Often this may constitute only one or two pages of detail.

[39] A review of nearly all of the other FRAGOs during Ripley's deployment showed the level of detail to be equivalent in each one. Jewett, 2013.

While Ripley adapted and succeeded in combat during his early tours in Vietnam, he is best known for his defence of the bridge at Dong Ha during the North Vietnamese Army's 1972 Easter Offensive. This first major Communist invasion of South Vietnam sought to take advantage of the ongoing American withdrawal: Ripley was one of only a handful of advisors and technical support staff left along the DMZ. The NVA's main effort, a large armoured column spearheaded by perhaps 200 light and main battle tanks, moved south towards the Dong Ha Bridge. If they could seize and cross the bridge they would be unleashed to cut off South Vietnamese units and manoeuvre towards Saigon. This was what contemporary analysts would call a "strategic inflection point." At this point, four days into the Easter Offensive, Marine Lieutenant Colonel Gerald H. Turley, Ripley's commander, made the dramatic and unplanned decision to destroy the massive concrete bridge at Dong Ha to stop the NVA armour. When he conveyed his decision to the U.S. headquarters he was directly ordered not to destroy the bridge. Turley acknowledged the order and, in an act of what he viewed as necessary disobedience, moved ahead anyway.[40] As the North Vietnamese Army pushed south, Ripley crawled hand over hand under the Dong Ha Bridge under sometimes intense tank and machinegun fire to place several 180-pound crates of explosives. Absent the needed electric blasting caps, Ripley courageously adapted by crimping detonators with his teeth, an act that could have resulted in accidental decapitation.[41] Ripley blew the bridge and temporarily saved South Vietnam from being savaged by columns of NVA armour supported by heavy Soviet-style artillery.[42] Ripley summarized his views on adaptability in the framework of Napoleon-esque adaptive audacity:[43]

> My formula, my view is to be decisive. When something needs to be done,
> do it. If you truly believe something is right, seize the opportunity within the
> confines of your authority. I think an individual's nature…is important. Don't
> sit down and wait for an opportunity or for perfect conditions. Achieve your
> goals. Launch on them. Or you'll wait forever.

Ripley's actions at Dong Ha would be a last hurrah for the Marine Corps in Vietnam. The next major strategic inflection point would be Operation Frequent Wind in which Marines

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[40] Turley, 1985, pp. 142-143.

[41] This method is called "jawboning." Miller, 1989, location 1159 (Kindle). Ripley found some electric caps once he had employed the time fuses. E.g. Bout, 1986, p. 19. Turley provides some of the best detail on the events at the bridge, including diagrams. Turley, 1985, pp. 177-191.

[42] NVA invasion in 1975 succeeded in seizing South Vietnam. Ripley is feted in official and unofficial Marine Corps histories as a legendary hero, and a diorama of the events at Dong Ha—a cultural artifact that may have influenced thousands of Marine officers—is on display at the U.S. Naval Academy.

[43] Bout, 1986, p. 19.

would help evacuate the U.S. Embassy in Saigon as the NVA rolled south in 1975.[44] Despite some dramatic tactical and operational success during the war, the strategic failure of Vietnam, the unsettling and ineffective focus on battle damage assessment statistics over real combat success, grass roots and congressional anti-military sentiment, and a lack of a clear Cold War role set the Marine Corps into a post-war doldrums.[45] A survey of *Marine Corps Gazette* articles from 1972-1977, the first five years after the Marines had effectively withdrawn from Vietnam, shows very little interest in learning from the war.[46] This was probably the lowest point for the *Gazette* since the two limp years after its inception in 1916. Because the *Gazette* is in some ways a reflection of the thinking in the junior to mid-rank officer corps—the group most likely to stir and sustain lively debate—the glaring absence of meaningful debate up to the late 1970s either revealed a genuine intellectual torpor or it hid a roiling yet unarticulated discontent.[47] Open debate would not flourish until a crop of young intellectual officers championed by dissatisfied Vietnam veterans emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s to spur the debate over manoeuvre warfare.

From 1972 through 1979 the Marine Corps struggled to reorient from what its senior leaders viewed as the mostly land-locked, jungle combat of Vietnam to return to the amphibious force in readiness envisioned in the post-WWII period.[48] In "Innovate or Die" Terry Terriff describes this as a period of both philosophical and existential doubt. In historical context the 1970s were not much different than any previous interwar period for the organisation: institutional paranoia was revived as politicians, budgeters, and other service chiefs unsheathed their knives to cut the Marines down to size, and the Marines scrambled to adjust to new strategic contexts.[49] As in previous eras the Marines survived. By the late 1980s the Marine Corps had been reinvigorated and repurposed with a new doctrine: manoeuvre warfare as spelled out in FMFM-1, *Warfighting*. By the end of the 1990s the Marines had

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[44] Millett, 1980, p. 605; Carey and Quinlan, 1976.

[45] For an assessment of the negative impact of the Vietnam-era assessment process see Connable, 2012.

[46] The search parameters were: Keyword: Vietnam; Date Range: 01 April 1972 to 01 April 1977. The results were stultifying.

[47] I think the latter possibility is more likely. While many officers who served in Vietnam might have been mindless "lifers," many more were thoughtful, intellectual leaders who were dismayed by the direction their service had taken and wanted to see improvements. This is evident in contemporaneous literature and was evidenced in the later forward-leaning actions of the Vietnam veteran officers. Also see analysis on this point by Terriff: 2006, p. 485.

[48] Millett, 1980, pp. 607-626; Terriff, 2006, pp. 486-487.

[49] Krulak, 1984, et al. At the same time the U.S. Army struggled to develop its new post-Vietnam doctrine called AirLand Battle. This would be first codified in the 1982 version of U.S. Army Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*.

adopted the entire MCDP series of publications that enshrined the overarching doctrine and philosophy of manoeuvre warfare, but also the Marines' emphasis on adaptability. But there is both less and more to this story than current analyses reveal.

Both the lead-up to *Warfighting* and the publications themselves are critical to understanding the evolution of adaptability in the Marine Corps. For 214 years the Marine Corps only gradually and haltingly encoded and transferred explicit edicts for adaptability in its official documentation, or the physical core of its institutional memory. If *Warfighting* was not reflective of an evolutionary process it would have rightly been assessed as revolutionary: a large, state-level military organisation renowned for its discipline suddenly embraced adaptability as a central organisational cultural norm, and as a practical standard for behaviour. The following section briefly describes the process through which the Marines arrived at the *Warfighting* series, and the next section describes how *Warfighting* reflected a revolutionary, overt embrace of adaptability.

Adaptability Ingrained: Adoption of Manoeuvre Warfare

In the late 1970s the Marine officer corps began to debate the merits of manoeuvre warfare theory. Fideleon Damian describes how young captains and some senior Vietnam War veteran officers started to explore U.S. Air Force colonel John Boyd's writings on high-tempo warfighting as well as a range of German operational and strategic concepts designed to defeat an enemy military force through flexible, high-tempo combat.[50] Civilian enthusiast and "outsider maverick" William S. Lind, perhaps the most forceful and influential proponent of manoeuvre warfare, described it as an operational theory designed for moral rather than physical victory: force is used to rapidly break the enemy's will, not to cause gradual attrition. Tempo is critical to keep ahead of the enemy within Boyd's "OODA-loop."[51] Mission-type orders are necessary to ensure junior leaders can find ways to "ooze through and around enemy defenses" with maximum flexibility. All resources are put towards the main effort in a singular (yet flexible) overwhelming gambit for victory rather than spreading resources to hedge bets and protect flanks. Lind and other proponents drew on non-U.S.

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[50] Both Damian and Terriff, 2006, trace the first mention of maneuver warfare by Marines to years prior to 1979. Both acknowledge the first meaningful article did not appear until 1979. Damian (2008) is a masters thesis but it is exceptionally well-written and researched and relies heavily on primary source interviews with key players.

[51] OODA stands for Observe-Orient-Decide-Act, a cycle that to Boyd and his followers offers a template for envisioning direct combat as a contest of tempo as well as one of will.

examples to show how operationally adaptive militaries like the German *Wehrmacht* and the Israeli Defense Forces had successfully used manoeuvre warfare, and Lind in particular advocated the use of German terms like *Auftragstaktik* (mission-type orders) to link the proposed doctrine to terms long associated with operational success.[52]

Development of manoeuvre warfare resulted in the publication of the *Warfighting* publications series. This series is the culmination of an evolutionary process, but with revolutionary characteristics. The degree to which adaptability and unorthodox behaviour are embraced in these official military publications is remarkable. *Warfighting* is one of a set of Marine Corps Doctrinal Publications (MCDPs) that collectively describe the Marine Corps' contemporary "philosophy" towards warfare, intelligence, operations, campaigning, etc.[53] All of the Marines' doctrinal and training publications are rooted in, and derive from *Warfighting*. In 1997 General Charles C. Krulak, then Commandant of the Marine Corps, wrote:[54]

> Very simply, this publication describes the philosophy which distinguishes the U.S. Marine Corps. The thoughts contained here are not merely guidance for action in combat but a way of thinking. This publication provides the authoritative basis for how we fight and how we prepare to fight.

In other words *Warfighting* is the official line on how the Marines prepare to fight wars and how they are supposed to act and react in combat. *Warfighting* and the derivative MCDPs deliver a clear and readily accessible contribution to the cultural themes and schemas that shape Marine organisational norms. In *Warfighting*, the Marines acknowledge the uncertain, chaotic, and dynamic nature of war, which they propose to deal with "by developing simple, flexible plans; planning for likely contingencies; developing standing operating procedures; and fostering initiative among subordinates."[55] In other words, when they are following their own doctrine, the Marines *plan* to adapt once they are engaged. Further, *Warfighting* describes how to foster a culture of *initiative* and *boldness*, which are traits and cognitive schemas that could be closely associated with adaptation:[56]

> The Marine Corps' style of warfare requires intelligent leaders with a penchant for boldness and initiative down to the lowest levels. Boldness is an

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[52] Lind, 1980; G.I. Wilson, et al., 1981.

[53] *Warfighting* was originally published as *Fleet Marine Force Manual 1* (FMFM-1) in 1989. See Damian, 2001, for a description of the doctrinal development process, and also Terriff, 2006, and Connable, 2006.

[54] U.S. Marine Corps, 1997.

[55] U.S. Marine Corps, 1997, p. 8.

[56] U.S. Marine Corps, 1997, pp. 57-58.

essential moral trait in a leader for it generates combat power beyond the physical means at hand. Initiative, the willingness to act on one's own judgment, is a prerequisite for boldness…We will not accept lack of orders as justification for inaction; it is each Marine's duty to take initiative as the situation demands. We must not tolerate the avoidance of responsibility or necessary risk.

Warfighting demands that Marines be ready and willing to adapt in the absence of orders. By calling for initiative, boldness, and a willingness to take risks, the Marine Corps seeks to encourage creative thinking.[57] This mandate is reinforced in *Leading Marines* (1995), a Marine Corps doctrinal "warfighting publication," or MCWP.[58] A warfighting publication is intended to be a practical guide and is more focused on specific actions, while a doctrinal publication provides overarching guidance and service philosophy on war.

Leading Marines includes a section entitled Adaptability. Here the Marine Corps identifies the need to adapt in war; stakes a claim as having the most adaptive leaders of any in the world; and, validating the maverick theme, openly acknowledges the need for Marines to deviate from standard operating procedures:[59]

> Adaptability has long been our key to overcoming the effects of friction and its components… The ability to adapt enables Marines to be comfortable within an environment dominated by friction… Marine leaders are the most adaptive of any in the world. Marine leaders are trained to go forward and adapt to situations, circumstances, and missions not known when they deployed. [Adaptability] means a willingness to deviate from the normal, accepted practices—even from doctrine—if that is what it takes.

This claim of adaptive supremacy parallels the Marines' claims of warrior supremacy, the latter of which are made repeatedly throughout official literature. Their assertion of elite status rests perhaps as much on adaptability as it does on blunt fighting prowess, and manoeuvre warfare demands a great deal of both adaptability and basic fighting prowess from the Marines' junior leaders. *Warfighting*, *Leading Marines*, and other doctrine build on the demand for initiative, boldness, and risk taking, channelling these concepts into a framework for practice. For the Marines, adaptability is a trait necessary to support *decentralized* operations and *mission-type orders*.[60] Decentralized operations are purposefully intended to press authority to the lowest levels of decisionmaking, giving Marine leaders the

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[57] Mission-type orders, or mission orders are those that simply identify a clear end state and a general path to that end state but do not dictate a specific approach or set of actions to achieve that end state.

[58] Commandant of the Marine Corps' Reading List. Available: http://guides.grc.usmcu.edu/content.php?pid=408059&sid=3340953 [05 May 2013]

[59] U.S. Marine Corps, 1995, pp. 66-67.

[60] *Leading Marines* refers to both as decentralization. U.S. Marine Corps, 1995, p. 75.

leeway to act and adapt in ways appropriate to local context. Here Marine Sergeant Dominic Esquibel who describes how he conducted his patrols in Sangin, Afghanistan under orders from his senior officer, Lieutenant Victor Garcia:[61]

> Lieutenant Garcia tells me what he wants…and I get it done my way.

This kind of distributed, mission-orders approach dated back at least to the small wars periods. Small wars deployments from the early 1900s to the 1930s, in which junior officers led Marines on nearly autonomous missions far from higher headquarters, were the precursors to the modern theory of distributed operations.[62] Mission-type orders are military orders presented with only the most essential, bottom line details; the men and women executing the orders are expected to find the most efficient and effective way to achieve the end state condition. To be able to function in relatively small, decentralized units without constant micromanagement, the Marine Corps expects its subordinates down to the lowest enlisted ranks to not only be "technically and tactically proficient," but also to exercise judgment and initiative to determine the best way to accomplish the mission. Training in the LRC is a means to achieve this end.

The sixth book in the MCDP series, *Command and Control*, elevates this approach to warfare to the level of operational command. Eschewing the normally dry, literal tone of doctrinal prose, *Command and Control* devotes its first 32 pages to a combat vignette written to showcase the need for a healthy tension between the desire of senior officers to exert control and the need to command with a loose hand, allowing and encouraging subordinates to adapt. The vignette ends with a corny, stilted, yet purposefully open-minded exchange between two fictional senior leaders:[63]

> Colonel: "Thank goodness for staff officers, pilots, and subordinate commanders who exercise initiative and quickly adapt to changing situations."
>
> General: "Yes," the general said with obvious satisfaction, "don't you love it when the system works to perfection?"

The "system" is the Marine Corps' system, in this notional case operating as intended according to the 1990s doctrinal publications. This same manual describes the process of

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[61] Bing West, 2014, p. 49.

[62] These kinds of distributed operations also were common in the Marine Corps well prior to the early 1900s. Twenty-nine year old Lieutenant Presley O'Bannon's famous overland raid to seize the city of Derna, Tripoli in 1805 stands out as an example of early distributed Marine Corps operations. See Heinl, 1991, pp. 15-16.

[63] U.S. Marine Corps, 1996, p. 32.

command and control as a series of fluid, herpetine adaptations rather than the linear, mechanistic functioning of a well-oiled machine:[64]

> We can thus look at command and control as a process of continuous adaptation. We might better liken the military organisation to a predatory animal—seeking information, learning, and adapting in its quest for survival and success—than to some "lean, green machine." Like a living organism, a military organisation is never in a state of stable equilibrium but is instead in a continuous state of flux—continuously adjusting to its surroundings.

Training activities like the LRC, open-ended tactical war-gaming, and other training and education events with loosely structured scripts and end-states are intended to inculcate the doctrinal *philosophy* of adaptability in Marines. The immediate purpose of the training event—perhaps attacking a small position or crossing a water obstacle—is often less important than the ways in which the challenge of the event exercises adaptive thinking. By forcing Marines to think adaptively and to overcome obstacles using unorthodox measures, Marine leaders are shaping expectations for combat behaviour and refining the motivational schemas of their individual Marines.

Despite this focus on boldness, initiative, risk taking, adaptability, distributed operations, and mission-type orders, the Marine Corps remains at its heart a military organisation. *Warfighting* does not abandon the longstanding organisational norms for traditional military behaviour. Just as *Leading Marines* contains a section on adaptability, it also contains a section on followership, which it depicts as a foundation of leadership: "Followership is the backbone of any effective organisation because without loyal, dedicated followers there can be no leaders…'good followers...may be depended on to carry out their instructions precisely.'"[65] Sections like this, alongside calls for Marines to "deviate from normal, accepted practices" represent a culmination of the discipline dialectic.

Table 7.2 shows the number of times six words—three relevant to unorthodox and adaptable behaviour, and three relevant to what Hull (2005) and others describe as more traditional military behaviour—appear in post-1990 Marine Corps doctrine. I chose the words based on approximately 20 sample word searches within MCDP documents; the samples tested similar words from both categories. I selected the words that I assessed as most representative of each category and that appeared in a sufficient number of instances. This search included words that appear repeatedly across the MCDP and MCWP documents and

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[64] U.S. Marine Corps, 1996, p. 46.

[65] U.S. Marine Corps, 1995, pp. 37-38. This section quotes an unnamed former Commandant of the Marine Corps.

that are relevant to adaptation or that might represent the antithesis of adaptable thinking. Those words included in the search but not used are: lead; control; command; decentralize, centralize, flexible, dynamic, and discipline. Counts in the table represent the number of times the words I did select appeared in a meaningful context within the selected publications. Coding for "meaningful" context also required some subjective interpretation that I explain below and in the footnote.[66]

Table 7.2: Language in MCDPs

Publication:	Adapt	Innovat*	Improvis*	Follow	Direct	Obey	Ratio	Pages
Warfighting	9	0	1	1	7	1	**10**-9	113
Marine Corps Operations	27	13	4	3	31	0	**44**-34	323
Campaigning	14	0	0	0	4	0	**14**-4	120
Tactics	42	0	6	0	6	0	**48**-6	145
Expeditionary Operations	18	0	5	0	2	0	**23**-2	153
Logistics	32	0	2	0	2	0	**34**-2	130
Planning	39	0	1	0	21	0	**40**-21	107
Command and Control	17	0	2	3	58	1	19-**62**	154
Leading Marines	13	11	2	18	4	5	26-**27**	121
Totals:	169	24	23	25	135	7	**216**-167	

Source: United States Marine Corps, MCDP series

Adapt(*) appeared in context and in section headings a total of 169 times compared to 167 instances of follow(*), direct(*), and obey(*) combined. And in many cases direct(*) was used to emphasize the need for less direction and more adaptation. In this example, the Marines describe top-down military **direction** as incompatible with modern war:[67]

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[66] Asterisks denote the use of an open-ended search pattern used for each of the six words. For example, a search for "improvis*" includes improvise(s), improvised, improvising, improviser(s) improvisation(s), and improvisational, and obey* includes obeys, obeyed, obedience, and obedient(ly). I removed references in tables of context and bibliographies, but kept section or chapter headings since they conveyed import (e.g., if a chapter is titled "Adaptation," then the authors must consider adaptation to be important). I did not count "adapt*" or "direct*" when used out of context. For example, I would not count "the Marines *directed* their fire at the enemy," but would count "the commander *directs* his unit." I excluded *Intelligence*, MCDP-2, entirely because it had insufficient instances of any of the selected words. I selected the "traditional" words, associated with top-down control, based on analysis of the publications and of older Fleet Marine Force publications, training manuals, and other military manuals that contained more instances of these words. I also searched for "shall," a directive word that appears in an administrative context quite frequently but not often in the context relevant for this table.

[67] U.S. Marine Corps, 1996, p. 43, emphasis added.

> The turbulence of modern war suggests a need for a looser form of influence—something that is more akin to the willing cooperation of a basketball team than to the omnipotent **direction** of the chess player—that provides the necessary guidance in an uncertain, disorderly, time-competitive environment without stifling the initiative of subordinates.

At the same time as the Marine Corps codified adaptability in its doctrine, it also began to direct Marines towards literature that for the most part emphasized adaptability. Combat Development Command's *Book on Books* (1991), an annotated bibliography of recommended reading for Marines of all ranks, would quickly evolve into the Commandant of the Marine Corps' Reading List.[68] This list both mandates and recommends reading for Marines. From its inception in 1991 the list has always included standard narrative histories but also some generally anti-war novels like James Webb's *Fields of Fire* and harsh critiques of the military like Neal Sheehan's *A Bright Shining Lie* and Andrew Krepinevich's *The Army and Vietnam*. Of the several books that have endured on the list since 1991, Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game* (1991) stands out as a study of the mysteries of adaptability. In this science fiction classic Ender Wiggins, a teenager, is recruited to train for a leadership role in defeating an alien space fleet. Card explores Wiggins' spirited, aggressive side and his irreverent, individualist side, both of which Wiggins' calls upon to execute a highly adaptable approach to combat. Card's message is that adaptability and success are born of both aggressiveness and freethinking, or warrior and maverick archetypical traits.

By 2001, the year the Marine Corps entered the fight against the Taliban in Afghanistan, and two years before Marines would invade southern Iraq, the Marine Corps had fully ingrained adaptability as both an informal and formal cultural norm. Chapter 8 describes how the Marines who fought in, and continue to fight what has been called the Long War against terrorism perceive, describe, and select adaptable behaviour in modern combat. More than any other figure in the post-9/11 world, General James N. Mattis stands out as a standard bearer for Marine adaptability, and a reflection of the Marines' *Warfighting* philosophy.

Capping the Evolution of Adaptability: "Chaos" in Iraq

General James N. Mattis is the most compelling modern example of an insider maverick leader. His one-page biography is a dry read: Mattis commanded as an infantry officer at every level of the Marines' organisation. He conformed to, and helped to reinforce Marine

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[68] U.S. Marine Corps, 1991. Also see official videos of Marines talking about their reading habits. Available: http://archive.marinecorpstimes.com/article/20140714/NEWS/307140025/Marine-legends-talk-about-their-favorite-reads-new-video-spots [19 April 2015].

Corps organisational culture over 40 years in uniform. A voracious reader, he owns a library of thousands of books on military theory and history. Mattis was a consummate professional officer. Yet Mattis' strong will and his belief in the primacy of military success often overrode his respect for regulation and doctrine. His unofficial (and perhaps unwanted) nickname was "Mad Dog." His own chosen radio call sign was "Chaos," a reference to Mattis' strong belief in the Marines' philosophy of manoeuvre warfare and the need for unpredictable, adaptable thinking in combat.

Mattis led the First Marine Division during the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Throughout the invasion Mattis pressed the Marines forward as quickly as they could go in order to build the tempo that would keep the Iraqis on their heels; this was in keeping with Marines' operational philosophy described in *Warfighting*. As the entire First Marine Division lined up to move across the border in March 2003, Mattis received intelligence reports that the Iraqis were moving in reinforcements to defend, and perhaps destroy the critical gas-oil separation platforms (GOSPs) that were considered to be the "crown jewels" of the southern Iraqi oil infrastructure. Without hesitation, and in showcase of adaptive behaviour, Mattis changed the entire invasion plan. Here Michael Groen, the author of the official division history of the invasion, describes Mattis' reaction to the intelligence reports showing that the Iraqis might be on the move:[69]

> The Division's [Mattis'] reaction to this crisis was a perfect example of the aggressive and proactive spirit [Mattis] had built into the Division. There was no way that the fog of war surrounding this incident would be lifted before the Division planned to launch its attack, and many might have recoiled from that uncertainty…Within hours, the Division [again, Mattis] made the necessary changes to the base plan. In a tribute to the flexibility of the Marines, a plan that had been carefully worked for months was quickly adjusted to meet the realities on the battlefield within hours.

Later in the invasion, as the First Marine Division was strung out along the highways leading to Baghdad, Mattis was ordered to pause for several days so logistics could catch up with the fast moving coalition forces. Mattis bristled: "I didn't want the pause. Nothing was holding us up."[70] Later the Marines were held up again as the U.S. Army positioned units to seize Baghdad. Mattis was ordered by the coalition's Combined Forces Land Component Commander (CFFLC) not to seize any territory in the city but instead to conduct a series of raids into its outskirts to erode the Iraqi defences and, incidentally, to provide a diversion

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[69] Groen, 2006, pp. 143-144. Groen was also the Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff G-2 (Intelligence) under Mattis during the invasion and through mid-2004.

[70] Grossman, 2003.

from the main Army thrust that would come from the southwest. A raid is purposefully swift and temporary: a military force breaches enemy territory, conducts its mission, and then withdraws. Groen (2006) writes:[71]

> By the plan [to raid into Baghdad], CFLCC forces from the outer cordon would then conduct raids into the city against selected targets. This pattern would continue until conditions in the urban area would permit a more deliberate and long-term presence in the city without prohibitive casualties.

Mattis determined that raids would be costly and would ultimately fail. He found the CFLCC plan to be timid and unimaginative. Groen noted that, "Withdrawals from portions of the city after seizing raid objectives would embolden the enemy and lessen the 'dominating effect' the Division wanted to portray to the enemy and to the international media." Mattis rebuffed this notion. He turned to his staff and told them to plan and execute a raid without a withdrawal.[72] In other words, they would ignore a strategic order and find a way to win in the context of fast moving events. The Marines moved into Baghdad with few maps and only a cursory plan to attack west. Nonetheless the Marines secured half of Baghdad with minimal losses; Mattis' purposefully yet carefully disobedient plan succeeded.[73]

In 2004 Mattis returned to Iraq, still in command of the First Marine Division. This time the Marines went to Anbar Province, the heart of the growing Sunni insurgency. Here Mattis aggressively adapted. In late 2003 he saw that the aggressive tactics employed by some units in Anbar were generating popular hostility that was in turn undermining support for the coalition. Mattis held a Stability and Support Operations (SASO) conference with his division and issued an 80-point guideline paper for Marines preparing to go into Anbar. The Marine's population-centric plan was designed as a major change of course from current practice. It included the reintroduction of Vietnam War-era Combined Arms Platoons (CAP) as embedded advisors with local units, and it focused on showing respect and kindness towards the population. These are some paraphrased points from Mattis' SASO conference. These were issued at a time when cultural training and counterinsurgency training were all but non-existent, and also three years before the issuance of the joint Army-Marine Corps manual on counterinsurgency:[74]

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[71] Groen, 2006, p. 258.

[72] Direct observation by author, 2003.

[73] Groen, 2006, pp. 287-331.

[74] First Marine Division, "Points from SASO Conference," unpublished conference proceedings, 19 December 2013.

- "Division is raising one CAP per battalion. The idea is that this platoon, similar to Vietnam, will live and work with police and Iraqi Civil Defense Corps forces.
- Dignity and distance is the best way to treat Iraqi women. Do not, unless under extreme circumstances, search women. Never separate women from partners.
- The Qur'an is holy…it should not be placed face down. It should not be picked up with unclean hands…The words in the Qur'an are holy."

When the division arrived in Anbar the Marines were quickly faced with a disaster in Fallujah. The death and dismemberment of four U.S. contractors in late March forced the Marines to conduct an all-out, short-notice assault on the city. Mattis lodged a rapid-fire series of complaints but, given new executive-level orders he quickly jettisoned the division's "gently, gently" approach in Anbar. Mattis concentrated his combat power at Fallujah and went into the attack. Unfortunately for the Marines the U.S. was defeated in Fallujah by Iraqi propaganda that exaggerated civilian casualties. Within days the attack had become politically unpalatable. Mattis withdrew his forces and then again quickly redirected his efforts towards the population, engaging frequently with tribal elders in order to reduce violence. At each turn of events Mattis was prepared to immediately adapt his plans and actions to find a way to succeed in complex circumstances.

His personal narrative, as portrayed to the Iraqi leaders, was asynchronous and often dichotomous. Mattis would tell Iraqi tribal elders that he was not only a Marine general, but also part Native American and that he had been arrested and jailed as a teenager. He therefore understood what it was like to be alienated like the young Iraqi men who were fighting the Marines. He wanted peace, but was prepared for violence.[75] After his last tour in Iraq Mattis was quoted as saying it was "fun" to kill the most irreconcilable Afghan insurgents.[76] He overcame this public relations *faux pas* to be promoted to the highest general officer rank and he retired as the Commanding General of U.S. Central Command, a highly sought-after joint posting.

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[75] Direct observation by the author, 2004.

[76] Shanker, Thom, 2010.

Chapter 8: Marines Explain the Magic

> I wish I thought life imitates art. Don't you suspect it just imitates Hollywood blockbusters?
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> *- Gail Collins, New York Times columnist, March 2014*[1]

This chapter presents findings from a 2013 survey on adaptability. I undertook the survey to expose what I believed would be a rich narrative that would provide insight into the formulation of Marine Corps organisational culture, and to add empirical validity to my research. This was also an opportunity to explore the impact of both cumulative national and organisational cultural artefacts on Marine cognitive schemas, which in turn feed and sustain the Marine Corps' organisational norm for adaptability. Responses in this survey were provided by the Marines who, in 2013, constituted the essential living elements of the Corps' institutional memory.

Most of the Marines who responded to the survey entered the service after the Vietnam War, and most either acceded as officers or enlisted as recruits during or after the publication of the MCDP series. If my hypothesis and my historical analysis were correct and accurate then the responses would reveal influences of warrior and maverick archetypes, a focus on small wars concepts, and an emphasis on adaptability. I also expected to elicit dichotomous explanations of the Marine "magic" and of the nature of adaptation in combat. All of these assumptions bore out, and the survey also revealed one surprising result, described below. Because my research focuses on the cultural influences on adaptability this chapter is weighted towards describing and analysing data that help explain why Marines adapt, though it does also discuss some examples of adaptation in combat.

Survey of Marines: Purposes and Methodology

In 2013 I surveyed current and former U.S. Marines to obtain their thoughts on adaptation and the cultural influences on their behaviour as Marines. The survey of nine questions was specifically intended to accomplish three research objectives: it would 1) identify Marines' perceptions of the Marine archetype to establish an ideal against which behaviour could be

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[1] David Brooks, March 2014.

judged; 2) identify specific cultural artefacts that influenced Marines to join the Marine Corps and artefacts that influenced the ways in which Marines behaved while serving; and 3) to obtain insights into combat adaptation and anecdotes from recent combat experiences.[2] I used the SurveyMonkey online survey tool to elicit responses from a non-random, self-selected, voluntary sample of Marines. I recruited respondents via email and over the phone, and depended heavily for additional respondents on the snowball effect that might be achieved from enthusiastic participants; they had a survey link they could forward to other Marines and they did so frequently.

Because the recruiting process was unstructured, respondents could have been from all ranks from private to general, and from any military occupational specialty. The survey was anonymous, although many of the respondents contacted me directly to comment on the survey mechanism and on the subject of the survey itself. Therefore, while I was not able to confirm that all respondents were, in fact, current or former U.S. Marines, approximately 1/3d of respondents self-identified voluntarily; all were current or former Marines. Further, I was able to use expert judgment to discriminate between Marine and non-Marine respondents based on the content of the responses; I did not detect any overtly false responses in the data. Of the 293 Marines who responded to the survey, 225 provided what I considered to be substantive responses.

These 225 Marines served an average of 19.5 years and reported an average of 21.5 months deployed in combat. Some of them probably saw direct combat with the enemy, while others plainly stated in follow-on questions that they had staff jobs and did not see direct combat. However, this mix of experiences is important to understanding how adaptation works, and why it matters, across the entire battlefield. Individual adaptations in combat that were not directly related to fighting, like the creation of improvised radio antennae to facilitate communications, are just as germane to this study as adaptation in direct combat. Collectively, the Marines who responded to this question about combat service had 4,855 months, or about 145,650 days, deployed in combat theatres like the Panama (1989), the Persian Gulf War (1991), Somalia (1993), Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), with the bulk of experience probably concentrated in Afghanistan and Iraq.

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[2] I only address six of the nine questions here. The last three questions were: 7) Provide additional comments about adaptation. Do you have anything else to add about adaptation, or adaptability in combat? 8) Provide additional comments about cultural influences. Do you have anything else to add about the ways in which culture influences(d) your behavior as a Marine, or influences(d) the behavior of Marines more broadly? 9) Do you have any comments for the researcher? I do not address these questions since they generated only a few, generally idiosyncratic answers.

While the sample was non-random and non-stratified in that it was untargeted, I was able to obtain responses from a fairly broad swath of Marines from junior enlisted through general officer ranks. Of all the respondents 65—approximately 29%—were lieutenant colonels. This rank clustering corresponds to the average age of all respondents at 42 years, and an average time in service for all respondents at 19.5 years.

These data are rich in qualitative value. Rather than simple, disconnected anecdotes they are (in many cases) deep insights from the very individuals who constitute the subjects of this thesis. I make the same argument that William M. Marcellino and Frank Tortorello, Jr. made about the real, tangible value of their semi-structured, qualitative interview data from Marines: "Qualitative research methods like interviews do not produce anecdotes [a pejorative word in research], but rather relevant data for the object of inquiry: people." While a more structured survey process—perhaps one directed by the Marine Corps—might have provided a good stratified random sample, I believe that this less structured process encouraged open and honest responses by willing (rather than not-so-subtly coerced) participants. Some of these responses seemed perfunctory, but many were complex, deeply thoughtful, and compelling. Even many of the perfunctory responses had considerable resonance. For example, when asked which films, books, and ceremonies influenced them to join the Marine Corps, many Marines responded simply and surprisingly, "none." I describe some of the clustering in responses to show emphasis within these data. For example, the relatively large number of respondents who cited *Full Metal Jacket* as an influence at least draws attention to the cultural value of the film and its themes.

Questions for the survey were derived from the central research questions and were tested with a sample group of four respondents. These test questions were then modified based on this test and based on input from four external experts, including the principle research advisor. Each question was designed to elicit insight into the ways in which the Marines conceptualized warrior and maverick archetypes, and how they viewed adaptation. They also elicited examples of successful adaptation, unsuccessful adaptation, and missed opportunities for adaptation in combat with the purpose of describing how and why adaptation can impact success. The following sections list the questions and provide a sample of responses for each question of the first three questions, as well as my analysis of these responses.

Making a Good Marine: The Marine Archetype and Its Influences

These first three questions were designed to elicit an understanding of what the respondent thought a "good Marine" was, and to determine what cultural artefacts might have influenced respondents' decisions to join the Marine Corps and influenced how they behaved during their periods of service.

What is a "good Marine?"

First I asked, "What is a 'good Marine? Move beyond the official definition and describe your ideal Marine." I asked this question to elicit an impression of the Marine archetype. Evoking the ideal will help explain the individual Marines' understanding and internalization of cultural norms for Marine behaviour. If they believe (for example) that the ideal Marine is strong, aggressive, tough, thoughtful, and honourable, then it follows that they would strive to conform to this archetype and achieve any associated standards: they would try to embody all of these traits. In doing so they would exercise their human agency to shape their own behaviour towards the norm, in turn shedding light on and reinforcing the norm. The follow-on questions (2-3) were designed to understand the more indirect influences on the Marines that perhaps helped them to create their own interpretation of the "good Marine" archetype. Collectively this agency and the influence of cultural artefacts, contributes to the development of cognitive schemas that in turn contribute to individual adaptation.

There was an emphasis in the responses on core warrior traits, with particular focus on honour, courage, loyalty, aggressiveness, fitness, military talent and professionalism, selflessness, and discipline. Some version of *honour* appeared 19 times. There was also emphasis on mental flexibility and adaptation: some version of *adapt** appeared 39 times out of 225 responses. However, the frequency of the *adapt** responses may have been influenced by the title and opening description of the survey. Some version of *flexible* appeared 9 times while *disobey* appeared just once. Many of the Marines who responded simply listed character traits from Marine Corps organisational training material, while others articulated their answers more independently. One corporal gave a common, straightforward response: "Reliable, mentally and physically tough, adaptable, and resourceful."[3] Other Marines took more time or were more articulate in their responses, and they were willing to step away from the important but formulaic lists of character traits. A gunnery sergeant wrote:

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[3] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of corporal.

> The ideal Marine is humble yet self-assured possessing the courage to do
> what is right in the face of adversity or when no one is looking. Integrity lies
> at his core and is the basis for all decisions and actions. He is mission
> oriented and genuinely cares for his fellow Marines and will fight with a
> dogged determination to protect the sanctity of those with which he serves.[4]

Discipline was emphasized in many responses, and clear evidence of the discipline dialectic emerged both between and within various responses. For example, this lieutenant colonel believed that a good Marine should be disciplined and should adhere to orders, but at the same time should be able to adapt:

> One that is disciplined, motivated, adheres to orders and regulations, is
> proficient, displays initiative, is capable of leading peers and subordinates
> and that is able to think outside the box.[5]

Other respondents were more comfortable identifying adaptability and free thinking as crucial to success. Yet even in most of these cases success depended in great part on sustaining basic warrior competence, including discipline:

> A good Marine in my opinion is one that thinks out of the box, isn't afraid to
> show initiative, [has a] good tactical mindset, [is] morally strong, physically
> fit and someone who has a thirst for knowledge…A Marine that can
> multitask, delegate and coordinate. [He is] someone who understands the
> second and third order effects of their decisions. Compassionate always, but
> ruthless and aggressive in the appropriate moments. Any Marine that
> subscribes wholly to the idea of manoeuvre warfare but knows how to show
> appropriate restraint; a perfect balance between humanitarian and warrior.[6]

Morality, ethics, honour, and integrity emerged in some form in over 50% of the 225 responses. In many cases these traits were paramount while all others were merely expected (hinted at but not explicitly listed). This mirrors the Marines' organisational emphasis on integrity, which is often listed in official and semi-official material as the most important of the fourteen Marine Corps leadership traits.[7] Integrity is essential to discipline but it is also used in leadership discussions as a basis for necessary disobedience. This major emphasized both a "rock solid moral foundation" and physical toughness, but also adaptability:

> A Marine whose foundation is built on a rock solid moral foundation and an
> upbringing filled with competition, both in athletic and academic settings.

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[4] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of gunnery sergeant. This rank usually is achieved at about 10 years of service.

[5] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of lieutenant colonel.

[6] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of sergeant.

[7] For example, the Marine Corps' official website states that "Nothing you can learn about leadership is as important as earning the trust of your Marines." As of 29 June 2014: https://www.marines.com/videos/-/video-library/detail/video_integrity

> Further, the "good Marine" is one who embraces MCDP-1 [*Warfighting*],
> who is morally, mentally, and physically tough, and who appreciates that one
> of the Corps' key strengths has always been its willingness to learn and to
> adapt.[8]

The Marines who responded to this question did so without obvious equivocation. Some fell back on well-known organisational lists of traits and ethea, and it was evident that the lists mattered to the Marines. In some cases they listed traits that were not on the Marine Corps lists but were on other lists. For example, some desired humour, a standard for the British Royal Marines. While each selected different traits from various lists, many emphasized and carefully described the value and necessity of individual traits. Therefore, while organisationally manufactured lists of traits and ethea are insufficient to understanding behaviour, they cannot be simply dismissed as irrelevant organisational desiderata. Instead some are adopted and adapted by individual Marines as real standards for behaviour. The value of the traits, however, is in the way in which and the degree *to* which these Marines embrace and attempt to embody them as archetypical Marine standards.

Many responses were less formulaic and offered standards distinct from even the broad array of Marine Corps organisational sources. For example, respondents emphasized the need to care for fellow Marines, to have the capacity to understand a commander's mission intent, to be intellectually curious, and to be quick thinking. This lieutenant colonel sets a particularly high standard for Marines, describing them as elite renaissance men and women:[9]

> A Marine is intelligent, a critical thinker, and educated; he follows orders but
> can adapt or influence others to adapt to the needs of unforeseen situations to
> complete any mission. He stands up for beliefs that are fair, just, and he
> impartially applies them without prejudice, favouritism, or politics. He has
> the ability to make good decisions and take independent action if necessary.
> A good Marine is non-pretentious, and not a robot…not afraid to
> intellectually and calmly discuss an opposing view point, even if unpopular
> or if it goes against commonly held positions of seniors within the command
> or Marine Corps. Confident, strong, compassionate, and open minded.
> Worldly and knowledgeable beyond warfighting...must know Marine
> manuals, doctrine, etc., but also knows about the arts, history, world, other
> cultures, and literature.

One master sergeant wrote that a good Marine should be "Batman in mind, Tarzan in body, and Robin Hood at heart!" In other words, a good Marine should be heroic, cunning, physically dominant, and moral. One captain put it even more succinctly: "Must be a good dude." Even this statement is deceptive in its simplicity. At least based on the other responses

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[8] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of major.

[9] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of lieutenant colonel.

to the survey and my literature review, "good dude" is high praise and probably a high standard for both warrior-like, and maverick-like behaviour.

These responses show the same descriptive quandary evident in the official definitions of a "good Marine." For most of the 225 respondents, a Marine is at once tough, physically fit, mentally strong, and honourable, but at the same time thoughtful, mentally flexible, and willing to oppose the system when justified by circumstances. There was little compromise on one end or the other: the good Marine needs to uphold both ends of the unresolved dichotomy. Three consistent themes stood out from the responses to Question 1: a good Marine is driven to succeed without excuse; a good Marine is an aggressive, calm, tough, and talented warrior; and a good Marine is mentally flexible and adaptive.

Influences on the Decision to Become a Marine

Next, in order to better understand the influence of external cultural artefacts on Marine perceptions of organisational norms, I asked, "Which movies, books, commercials, radio ads, songs, ceremonies, stories, videos, and/or television programs influenced you to join the Marine Corps, if any? Why?" The most remarkable trend in these responses was the frequency of "none" or "nothing" as a response. A sizeable number of respondents—80 out of 225—stated that no movie, book, commercial, radio ad, song, ceremony, story, video, or television program influenced them to join the Marine Corps. For example, one lieutenant colonel stated, "None, it was just the right thing to do." While these respondents could not or would not identify cultural artefacts that influenced their decision, it is clear in many of their responses that they were influenced in ways that may not have registered with them overtly. For example, one staff sergeant stated, "None, I always knew I would be a Marine." It follows that the respondent was strongly influenced to respect and admire the Marine Corps; this longstanding desire to be a Marine did not spring into existence by divine providence. Culture influences and helps to shape cognitive schemas overtly, but also more subtly.

Many of these "none" respondents identified no other influence on their decision to join, but some of the "none" respondents contributed to another significant trend in responses to this question: they stated that they had been influenced by the example of relatives (usually parents or grandparents) who had served, or by oral narratives passed down from one generation in a family to the next. One staff sergeant stated, "My grandfather told me stories of WWII," and a master gunnery sergeant stated, "My dad and brothers were Marines. I wanted to be part of the best." So while many respondents state that they joined on a whim,

many others described their decision as deeply personal. They felt a strong sense of duty not only to the United States, but also to the legacy of their families.

This sentiment lends itself well to the Marine Corps' emphasis on history and the organisational value of narrative storytelling. In turn, the cultural artefacts that make up these narratives, including oral and written histories, probably influence these Marines in ways they either do not fully comprehend or simply have not fully explored. One Major sums up this point: "I joined because of family role models and the belief that the Marines are the toughest fighting force in the world. This belief was reinforced by many aspects of popular culture." Here is a range of other exemplary responses to this question:

> *Full Metal Jacket* was a clear influencer. [Physical fitness chants] were also a big influencer in that they captured the essence of the fraternity in a catchy, male-bonding song associated with sacrifice and hardship. *Top Gun* and *An Officer and a Gentleman* were big, too, when I thought I wanted to be an aviator. Finally, believe it or not, [television series] *Gomer Pyle, USMC*, was a pretty good influencer. It positively influenced my image of Marines as clean-cut, disciplined, good-hearted guys who had each other's back.[10]

Full Metal Jacket (25 instances) was the most oft-mentioned film that influenced respondents to join. One corporal wrote that the only artefact that influenced him was "*Full Metal Jacket, Full Metal Jacket,* and *Full Metal Jacket*." *Top Gun* (9 instances) and *Heartbreak Ridge* (11 instances) also made strong showings. All three films feature lead characters who are successful insider mavericks: "Joker" in *Full Metal Jacket*, "Maverick" in *Top Gun*, and Gunnery Sergeant Highway in *Heartbreak Ridge*.

Artefacts about Marines were important, but so were films, books, and stories that either had moral lessons or that glorified successful military service. This next quote describes the impact of oral tradition:

> I had a close friend who joined the Marine Corps and his tales of basic training…were the greatest influence in my choice to enlist. I needed something to fully develop my potential as a person and the regimented lifestyle of the Marine Corps appeared to be a good fit.[11]

While books, movies and other popular artefacts did overtly influence many of the respondents, it is clear that informal artefacts like oral narratives and just common, personal observation of Marines in daily life had as much influence on the decision to join. Some of the reasons given were quite esoteric. One major was greatly impressed after seeing Marines

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[10] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of lieutenant colonel.

[11] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of gunnery sergeant.

at a U.S. pavilion in a 1967 exposition in Montreal, Canada, and was also influenced to join the Marine Corps because of the lessons he learned from the television show *Star Trek*. Another Marine, a colonel with 26 years of service and 20 months deployed in combat theatres, describes a complex web of influences on his decision to join, ranging from John Wayne movies to recruiting posters, to seeing his father's old uniform, to a small but powerfully influential book:

> [I] grew up on John Wayne, WWII movies, and "we didn't promise you a rose garden" posters [Marine recruiting poster]. My Dad was a Marine before I was born but in our hall closet he kept his dress blues jacket and a pair of 1950's combat boots with speed laces. I used to try on the jacket when I was young and wore the boots while goofing off in the local woods. Also I had a couple cloth USMC emblems tacked to my lamp. While Dad was a civilian by the time I was born, that indirect influence in the house was no doubt a large influence on my decision and heightened my awareness of the Marine Corps writ large, along with a love of history. I watched Gomer Pyle frequently and loved it. I was fascinated by a relatively short book on the Tarawa battle and thumbed through it frequently.

Many other responses also indicated motivations from several quarters. Another colonel describes a mix of oral narrative and public artefacts as key influences:

> Stories told by friends that were in the Marine Corps or the Marine Corps reserve were the most influential as they described a group of hard-fighting and hard-drinking men that never flinched. Stories by my grandfather that served on Guadalcanal with the Marines as a Seabee [naval construction]. *Battle Cry* by Leon Uris, *A Few Good Men*, *Heartbreak Ridge*, *Sands of Iwo Jima* all reinforced my idea of what Marines are and ought to be, flaws and all.

The trends in the types of cultural artefacts cited are significant within these responses. Of these 35 influential cultural artefacts listed by respondents, 25 were about the Marine Corps while 8 (e.g. *Top Gun*) provided some other warrior or maverick archetypical influence. Of the 23 artefacts about the Marine Corps that can be clearly described (e.g. *Battle Cry* vs. relatives' stories), 17, or about 74%, described either maverick or some kind of counterculture behaviour by the Marine characters or authors. *All* of the 23 Marine-related artefacts described successful warrior behaviour in combat and depicted the Marines as tough and aggressive. Therefore most of the Marine-related artefacts depicted both warrior and maverick archetypes, typically in some complex mix. Nearly all of the films, television series, and books described by the survey respondents referenced or highlighted some kind of adaptive action. *Heartbreak Ridge* is the source of 'Improvise, adapt, overcome.'

Influences on Marines in Service

I wrote the third question to determine how cultural artefacts, either external or internal to the organisation, influenced Marines' understanding of their roles and responsibilities and in turn helped to shape perceptions of archetypes and adaptation: "Which movies, books, songs, stories, commercials, ceremonies, videos, and/or television programs influence(d) your self-image as a Marine while you were/are on active duty? Why?" Some of the influences from Question 2 (what influenced you to join the Marine Corps?) recurred in responses to Question 3. For example, *Full Metal Jacket* was once again an important cultural artefact, again influencing 25 of the respondents. And many of the Marines stated that no cultural artefact influenced their self-image as a Marine, although as with Question 2 these negative response were sometimes qualified. Some of those who denied being influenced by media—films, books, commercials—were adamant that no external cultural artefact shaped their self perception. One major wrote:[12]

> None. I really do not care about media portrayals. I read history, but it does not impact my self-image. It is the issue of internal or external locus of control.

All told 30 respondents out of 225 stated that no cultural artefact influenced their self-image as a Marine. A major wrote, "I am not really influenced by media."[13] A lieutenant colonel wrote, "None, I define my own image by treating others as I would like to be treated." Some of these negative responses gave the impression that the respondent felt that the very notion than an external cultural artefact might influence ones' self perception as a Marine was, in and of itself, insulting. This may reflect either a dissatisfaction with cultural portrayals of Marines (e.g. "None, I try to be my own person, in spite of [the way that] media portrays the Marine Corps") or the sense that the Marines' relationships with each other were more important than fictional or even historical portrayals (e.g. "None really; I was influenced most by the Marines around me."). One lieutenant colonel took the opposite position: "Every book or movie influences our development."[14] And a major took the middle ground: "They [cultural artefacts] all have a mild effect. The strongest influences have been personal relationships over the years."[15]

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[12] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of major.

[13] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of major.

[14] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of lieutenant colonel.

[15] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of major.

A few of the Marines were unimpressed with the excitement of war movies after having served a few years, but often still hove to the same films and books as they did before they joined. One master sergeant wrote:[16]

> I can tell you about *Full Metal Jacket*. Before I joined I thought it was intimidating. After I joined it became a comedy.

Marine Corps recruiting commercials motivated many of the Marines to join, but they also served as a touchstone to many of them throughout their careers. These commercials tend to focus on the Marine Corps' organisational core values, emphasizing toughness, teamwork, and success. Most are oriented towards warrior archetypes, and the survey respondents described how the commercials kept them focused on maintaining the Marines' warrior ethea. One colonel wrote:[17]

> The Marine Corps recruiting command has been nailing commercials for as long as I can recall. They always capture the intangible qualities that really define Marines. [They] always makes me feel proud to be a Marine and they provide that sanity check that "yep, I'm up to the task and good to go" or "yikes, might need to up my game just a bit."

A lieutenant colonel respondent was so enamoured of the recruiting commercials that he could name each of the recruiting campaigns by name (e.g. "America's Few," or "Right of Passage").[18] Another lieutenant colonel was influenced in part by commercials to join the Marine Corps, and also used commercials as a personal touchstone:[19]

> All USMC commercials provide a prism on how we are presenting ourselves to the younger generation and therefore how they see me to some degree…My self-image as a Marine has only slightly changed as I've grown in my career based on my experiences.

Some found the Marine Corps' medieval fantasy commercial series of the 1980s and early 1990s to be inspiring. One of these portrayed a Marine officer being knighted by a medieval king; another portrays a Marine officer as a knight on a chessboard defeating an evil queen; and yet another portrays a Marine officer struggling through a dungeon-like maze and defeating a giant lava monster with his officer's sword. Each of these commercials

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[16] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of master sergeant/first sergeant.

[17] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of colonel.

[18] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of lieutenant colonel. This respondent may have worked for the Marine Corps Recruiting Command at some point in his or her career.

[19] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of lieutenant colonel.

emphasized warrior traits like honour and courage, and each was purposefully archetypical.[20] One major simply wrote: "I liked the Marine chess knight commercial." At least one other Marine found these commercials to be too archetypical and, apparently, a bit corny. Yet all told, 29 of the 225 respondents singled out Marine Corps recruiting commercials as having a strong influence on their self-image as Marines. This means that while poster-perfect Marine archetypes are not the norm, and are sometimes rejected, they can and do have some influence on Marines' perceptions. Others respondents focused more on films and books, and even some who were not influenced by these artefacts to join the Marines believe they were influenced by them while serving. One lieutenant colonel listed a series of influential movies:[21]

> *Heartbreak Ridge, Sands of Iwo Jima, Wake Island, Windtalkers, The Siege of Firebase Gloria, Taking Chance, Rules of Engagement, Full Metal Jacket, Flying Leathernecks, and Born on the Fourth of July…*They showed me some of the ups and downs when it comes to expectations of life in the Corps.

One captain who could not identify any films that influenced his decision to *join* the Marines provided a long list of films, television shows, commercials, events, and ceremonies that influenced his self-image as a Marine. This captain provided brief commentary on many of these artefacts:

> *Full Metal Jacket*—best over exaggerated boot camp with GySgt R. Lee Ermey; *A Few Good Men*—Colonel Nathan R. Bishop; *Hot Shots*—the sarcasm of it all; *Major Pain*—the comedy we all need to laugh at what we do; *Stripes*; *Spies Like Us*—I was an intelligence officer…in Afghanistan, so I could relate; *Jarhead*—some true stories, but stupid movie; *Saving Private Ryan*—the righteousness of risking a platoon to save the one survivor of the family; *Zero Dark Thirty*—again, after serving in Afghanistan, it is good to see that it was worth something; *Killing bin Laden*; *The Pacific*; *Band of Brothers*. As for commercials, Toys for Tots [a Marine charity program] and the USMC recruiting commercials. I have read too many books to list them all, but top three are *Where Men Win Glory*, the story of Pat Tillman, *The Long Walk* by Slavomir Rawicz, and MCDP 1 *Warfighting*.

Many of the films and television series identified were about other U.S. military services, primarily the U.S. Army. These include *Zero Dark Thirty*, *Saving Private Ryan*, and the *Band of Brothers* miniseries about a platoon of the 101st Airborne Division during WWII. Marines drew on these artefacts because, in their own words, they found in them the same kinds of values that they sought out in Marine culture. More respondents cited *Band of Brothers* than

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[20] Many of the Marine recruiting commercials dating back to the 1960s can be found online at Youtube.com.

[21] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of lieutenant colonel.

the Marine-oriented miniseries *The Pacific*. One captain describes the crosscutting nature of these cultural narratives, and also how the soldierly emphasis on brotherhood is universally relevant to those in his profession:[22]

> Notably, I never saw the TV series "The Pacific" but I did watch the entire "Band of Brothers" series while I was in Al Qaim [Iraq] during the summer of 2004. Although it was a TV show about the Army, it made me proud to be a Marine and proud to be part of a "brotherhood" that would do anything for each other in the midst of chaos and conflict.

Several Marines found that the films and books about Marines were overly archetypical and therefore insufficiently real or powerful. One captain thought that most movies about Marines "made them look silly and foolish."[23] Others shared this sentiment, particularly several respondents who felt that no cultural artefacts influenced their self-image as Marines.

While commercials, films, and books influenced the respondents' self-images as Marines, ceremonies, ceremonial songs, or ceremonial experiences had the greatest influence. Out of 225 respondents, 52 stated that ceremony had influence on their self-images as Marines. Of these 52 responses, 20 identified the Evening Parade at the Marine Barracks at 8th and I Streets, Washington, DC, or the similar event—the Sunset Parade—at the Iwo Jima memorial in Arlington, Virginia. One colonel wrote: "Every time I've seen the 8th and I Evening Parade or the Sunset Parade it feels like I am seeing it for the first time, so that has been a strong influence on me." [24] A lieutenant colonel was even more enthusiastic:[25]

> The top of the list has to be the Friday Evening Parade at the Marine Barracks. Even though I hated drill, I was so impressed with the bearing and discipline of the 8th & I Marines when I saw the parade shortly before my commissioning. I still like formal ceremonies - changes of command, retirements, promotions, etc. - because you see the love, dedication, and esprit that Marines hold for what truly is their [sic] Beloved Corps.

For many respondents the routine ceremonies of promotion in rank, or the annual Marine Corps Birthday Ball, or the conduct of military funerals induced powerful connections with the Marine ethea. One master gunnery sergeant who did not feel influenced by films or songs stated, "Marine Corps Ball and funeral ceremonies, as they focus on the institutional heritage."[26] The Marines' Hymn was also listed frequently, appearing 16 times. One colonel

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[22] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of captain.

[23] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of captain.

[24] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of colonel.

[25] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of lieutenant colonel.

[26] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of master gunnery sergeant/sergeant major.

wrote, "The Marines Hymn, it covers it all," while another colonel wrote, "The Marines'
Hymn always reminds me of the pride that we all have when we first begin. It is my
touchstone for remembering why I continue to serve."[27] The Hymn is a recital of Marine
Corps history and it makes extensive claims on Marine prowess and success ("Our flag's
unfurled to every breeze from dawn to setting sun…In many a strife we've fought for life and
never lost our nerve…"). It is, in dry and practical terms, a lyrical manifestation of the
Marine Corps' ethea. Most military services have a service song or hymn, and the Marines
use theirs frequently in order to achieve the effect described by these two colonels. All
Marines are expected to memorize at least the first stanza. The hymn is sung at the annual
Marine Corps Birthday Ball, at promotion ceremonies, and at many other events; it is
ubiquitous for Marines on active duty and it has enduring value for all reservists, former
Marines, and retirees, so it is unsurprising that it is listed as a strong influence.

Of the 52 cultural artefacts that influenced Marines once they had joined, 45 were
Marine-centric. These included movies like *Sands of Iwo Jima* and *Born on the Fourth of
July*, television shows like *Baa Baa Blacksheep/Black Sheep Squadron*, ceremonies like the
Marine Corps Birthday Ball and military funerals, and books like *The Great Santini* and
Guadalcanal Diary. Just as they were in their responses to Question 2, Marines were
influenced by, or at least were most cognizant of being influenced by either polar archetypes
or complex, warrior-maverick stories. These more complex stories had themes consistent
with the warrior-maverick ideal. The archetypical cultural artefacts, like the imputed
organisational commercials or parades, connected Marines to the ideal manifestations of their
ethea. Comparing Marines to medieval knights touched a chord for some because it
reinforced the idea that Marines are (at least in the archetype) extremely honourable and great
individual warriors. Some may interpret Patriotic songs like *God Bless the USA* as jingoistic
or sappy, but for one respondent it reinforced the Marine ideals of service and loyalty to the
nation; this also appeared to be the case for the 52 respondents who placed value on
ceremonies and the Marines' organisational hymn.

The consistent themes in the grittier historical narratives and fictional literature align
closely with the complex warrior-maverick dualism. Qualitative trends draw attention to
three recurring themes: Marines place value on success, warrior virtues, and the maverick
mystique. Films like *Full Metal Jacket* and *The Great Santini* fulfil all three of these
requirements for Marines, as do books like *Battle Cry* and television series like *Baa Baa*

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[27] Survey respondents, 2013, ranks of colonel.

Blacksheep. And in most of these films, books, and series, the lead characters have to adapt in order to succeed.

What can be drawn from the responses to Questions 1-3?

The 225 Marines who responded to Question 1 placed great value on the Marine Corps' organisational desiderata, sometimes in rote replication of official trait lists and sometimes by mimicking well-known organisational clichés or training lessons. These rote responses may give the appearance of simplicity, but parts of several lists had value to respondents of all ranks. Moreover this parroting revealed the degree to which the Marine Corps as an organisation had imputed its standards on its membership, and perhaps also the degree to which responding Marines valued these standards. Personal experiences also shone through, as did exposure to non-organisational cultural artefacts. The longer, more complex responses showed some equivocation between the overwhelmingly warrior-oriented organisational trait lists (e.g. Marine Corps Leadership Traits) and the more maverick-like characteristics described in the deeper organisational and unofficial literature (e.g. MCDP-6, *Command and Control*, or perhaps *Fields of Fire*). The dualism that emerged in many of the responses to Question 1 (what is a good Marine?) were, for the most part, left unresolved. There was simply expectation that Marines would be tough, disciplined, professional, aggressive, and also freethinking and adaptive. Underlying all responses was the necessity to succeed; no trait mattered absent success.

The respondents to Questions 2 and 3 described the dualistic archetypes of warrior and maverick, and cited cultural influences that represented both. For example, *A Message to Garcia*—a long-time favourite on the Commandant of the Marine Corps' reading lists—is a study in archetypical warrior traits, while *Kelly's Heroes* is mostly a study in maverick traits. But the vast majority of popular cultural artefacts cited in the responses presented the complex middle ground between the polar archetypes. Even many of the propagandistic 1940s-era films like *Wake Island* portrayed the Marines as great warriors (or more accurately, great soldiers) and also as blatantly irreverent.[28] This trend of complex dualism was consistent across a significant majority of popular cultural influences cited. Either the respondents were drawn to the more realistic, complex middle ground or there simply were not many examples of polar archetypes to draw from.

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[28] See Farrow, 1942. Several of the central Marine characters were presented as irreverent.

Most of the respondents placed some value on either freethinking or specifically on adaptation.[29] Adaptive thinking was often associated with education, intelligence, and thoughtfulness. Adaptation was described as a cerebral process and was associated with several traits from the Marine Corps Leadership Traits list, including judgment and initiative. At a broader level the respondents closely associated adaptation with basic problem solving. This major's response was typical of this subset of responses: a good Marine should have "great initiative, judgment and intuition and adapt to meet any environment or leadership challenge."[30] Many described adaptability as the zenith of military prowess, and some respondents described a "good Marine" based *solely* on their ability to adapt. These responses seemed derived from the basic assumptions about warfare described in *Warfighting*: that war is unpredictable, and that friction and the fog of war demand adaptability. One chief warrant officer exemplifies these responses:[31]

> Leadership and the ability to adapt and overcome. The one thing I learned is a truism…'No plan survives the first shot fired in battle." In addition, I have found 'Murphy's Laws of Combat', although exceedingly funny, to be exceedingly true: if anything can go wrong, it WILL go wrong. My ideal Marine exhibits leadership, flexibility, and adaptability under the most trying of circumstances. He [or she] is able to function effectively even in the middle of chaos.

The very fact that these Marines volunteered to respond to a survey about adaptation in combat demonstrated they placed *some* value on adaptability. The next chapter describes the respondents' views on the value of adaptation for Marines, and examples of adaptation in combat.

Why Does Adaptability Matter for Marines, and What Does it Look Like?

I designed the next three questions to reveal how the respondents thought about adaptability and to elicit vignettes that would inform my research. Answers were equally as

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[29] This finding is based on the use of some variation of words or phrases that I identified by both deductive (based on my assumptions and literature review) and inductive (I expanded my search based on the appearance of phrases associated with adaptation) analysis. These include, but are not limited to: adapt, flexible, innovate, creative, problem solve, thinks fast, independent, make quick decisions, only needs mission orders, outside the box, initiative, apply non text book solutions, commander's intent, mental agility.

[30] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of major.

[31] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of chief warrant officer four. "Murphy's Laws of Combat" are collective witticisms about the likelihood that anything that can go wrong will go wrong in combat. They also include a number of simple cliché phrases like, "Friendly fire isn't."

robust as those to the first three questions, and collectively the vignettes painted a picture of individual adaptability in the post-*Warfighting* era.[32]

In Question 4 I asked, "In your opinion, what is adaptability and why does it or does it not matter for Marines? What role does it play in combat for Marines?" Of the 293 Marines who responded to this survey, 222 answered Question 4. These answers tended to be more detailed and explanatory than most of the answers for Questions 1-3; this was the "meat" of the survey for many of the voluntary respondents. Most of the respondents emphasized the relevance of adaptation to Marines by using terms like "vital," "imperative," "essential," and "crucial." Nearly all of the responses linked the value with adaptation to success, and also described either or both adaptation and success as a necessity for Marines. For example, one Marine stated: "It is vital that Marines are adaptable in order to ensure success."[33]

These kinds of statements link adaptations to expectations for behaviour. Marines are *expected* to adapt. The word "must" appeared in 34 responses, typically describing the necessity to adapt and succeed (e.g. "we *must* be adaptable and flexible…" and "one MUST adapt, or be easy pickings for a merciless enemy").[34] Another Marine wrote: "Adaptability is crucial for a Marine and for the Corps. Marines *must* be able to react to ever-changing circumstances and carry on with the mission. That is what the nation expects of its Marines."[35] In this context expectations for behaviour can be characterized as cultural norms, and specifically as organisational cultural norms. Not only are Marines expected to adapt and succeed—and to adapt *in order to* succeed—but at least for this respondent the entire nation is counting on the Marines to adapt and succeed. Many other Marines described the need to adapt as not only existential to individual Marines in combat, but also for the Marine Corps as an organisation. If the Marine Corps loses its adaptive spirit it will lose its edge and eventually wither away, linking adaptability to the Marine Corps' longstanding institutional paranoia. Another Marine wrote:[36]

> Failure to adapt will cause stagnation and we will be bypassed by other units
> and individuals.

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[32] Some respondents cited experiences

[33] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of gunnery sergeant.

[34] Emphasis added in the first quote, capitalization original in the second.

[35] Emphasis added. Survey respondent, 2013, rank of major.

[36] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of master sergeant/first sergeant.

Another Marine wrote that adaptability was "essential for Marines" and that in combat the enemy is always adapting. Therefore:[37]

> If we do not do the same [adapt] we will fall into their traps and will quickly become irrelevant as a force.

Many respondents also believed that Marines have a particular need to adapt because they are, in the words of the Marines' Hymn, many Marine commercials, and Victor Krulak's eponymous book, "first to fight." Respondents expected that Marines would enter combat without sufficient resources, that they would be expected to operate in austere environments, and that their *organisation* was specifically purposed for particularly desperate and fast-paced combat. One major wrote:

> As Marines we do more with less. In order to achieve this, we must be adaptable and flexible...[Adaptation means] hasty solutions to unique problems in austere environments.

Adaptation, therefore, is central to Marine culture in great part because the Marines have always fought in austere environments and because the Marine Corps has typically had fewer resources than the other three U.S. armed services. This aligns closely with Krulak's assessments in *First to Fight*, and also with Cooling and Turner's description of "inherent" Marine austerity. It also aligns with General Mattis' belief that Marines are driven to high-tempo operations and the overwhelming need for success because of their naval character. The organisational history, and organisational culture of the Marines imputes the notion that aggressive attacks and overwhelming success are essential to survival because there is no haven if the beachhead falls or the landing zone collapses.

Several other important themes emerged in the responses. First, combat is chaotic and pre-combat plans do not "survive first contact" with the enemy. Therefore, adaptation is critical to success in combat. Second, adaptability is part and parcel of Marine Corps organisational culture. And third, adaptability is a critical individual trait and also a leadership trait. I address each of these in turn, but they are all closely interrelated. Collectively all of these points speak to the value of adaptation in combat and the value of adaptation to individual Marines.

'*The enemy gets a vote.*' This phrase is drawn directly from Marine oral and narrative histories and training manuals, and it is a catchphrase within Marine Corps circles. It is a cautionary note intended to remind Marines, and particularly any Marine planning an

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[37] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of brigadier general.

operation, that they are fighting against a living, thinking, foe who not only wants to survive the Marines' efforts to kill them, but also to overwhelm and kill the Marines. Another phrase, '*no plan survives first contact with the enemy*' offers similar cautions. Some version of both of these phrases emerged in many of the survey responses to emphasize the *need* for adaptation in combat. Collectively the responses to this question convey the sense that the responding Marines had internalized the Clausewitzian understanding of war as chaotic and unpredictable; these are also the assumptions underlying the Marine doctrinal and warfighting publications. One master sergeant/first sergeant provided an almost lyrical summary of these points, adding the point that the unpredictable and uncontrollable environment also 'gets a vote' in combat:[38]

> Adaptability is absolutely crucial to Marines, particularly in combat. Since the beginning of time, no battle has gone precisely as planned. The enemy gets a vote, as the saying goes, and perhaps more so, the weather. The record cold of Chosin [Reservoir, Korea], "The Bulge" [Ardennes Forest, WWII], Stalingrad [Russia, WWII]; The unrelenting heat and rain of the Pacific isles and Vietnam; The dust and heat of Iraq and Afghanistan…No amount of firepower can subdue a typhoon, settle a dust storm, warm the winter snows, or cool the desert dunes. One MUST adapt, or be easy pickings for a merciless enemy.

Another respondent, a Marine colonel, also uses the catchphrase "the enemy gets a vote in combat" in his description of adaptation and its value to the Marines:[39]

> The ability to think on your feet…the ability to take the knowledge, skills, guiding principles and training provided by the Corps and use those tools to adapt a solution to the rapidly changing battlefield situation. It is an essential skill for Marines in combat. The enemy gets a vote in the outcome of any battle. Our Marines must be flexible and adaptable, within certain confines, to outsmart said enemy.

This colonel's description of Marine knowledge, skills, principles, and training as a kind of toolkit offers an interesting analogy for adaptation in combat. At least in the mind of this respondent the Marine Corps provides Marines with a wide variety of tools that can be applied, tried, combined, and perhaps if necessary set aside in order to succeed. This kind of thinking would be at least familiar to most ground combat officers from any western military service, but it would probably be anathema to former Soviet servicemen or anyone from a more stratified and centralized organisation. While this ideal of an adaptive toolkit is probably more ideal that real since there are some templates Marines follow, it has value as a

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[38] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of master sergeant/first sergeant.

[39] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of colonel.

conceptualization of successful individual Marine behaviour in combat even if behaviour falls short of the archetypical norm. This is the kind of thinking that reflects and helps to impute adaptive norms. This lieutenant colonel believed that adaptive thinking was directly related to, and embodied the Marines' core values, and that these are integral to the officially trained Marine Corps decision-making process:[40]

> Adaptability is flexibility in an ever-changing situation. We train to a sound foundation of a decision making process based on our core values. Regardless of a changing situation, if we rely on making the right decision based off our values, we can adapt to any situation.

We also see in this second response the idea that Marines view all aspects of their organisational ethea, education, and training as a jumping off point for action rather than a template. Yet another lieutenant colonel speaks directly to the idea that Marine doctrine, as defined in *Warfighting* and other doctrinal publications, both directs Marines to adapt but also directs Marines to diverge from the self-same text as needed. There are some elements of dualism in this response that mirror those of the discipline dialectic: doctrine is a good foundation for behaviour, and manoeuvre warfare doctrine is good because it tells us not to blindly follow doctrine.[41]

> Adaptability is the single most important aspect in combat. Doctrine provides a Marine the foundation [for behaviour] which is why the Marine Corps invests…six months of basic training for its officers, etc. [T]raining…allows better integration and better adaptability then the other services. If one understands doctrine…they are better able to make decisions based upon the situation as opposed to blindly following doctrine.

Each Marine interprets archetypes, values, and norms differently, but the Marine Corps' emphasis on leadership means that leaders from the lowest ranks have the ability to influence the development of cognitive schemas for combat behaviour. One major with 20 months deployed in combat theatres wrote:

> Adaptability is critical for Marines. [There are] three clichés [that are relevant]: "no plan survives first contact;" "doctrinally sound not doctrinally bound;" "thinking outside the box." You must be confident to do this. Confidence comes from upbringing, success, experience. For example: I think I was successful and adapted well as a company commander as a battlespace owner in Iraq. My previous intelligence tours gave me experience and confidence. Good staff and platoon commanders also gave me confidence.

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[40] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of lieutenant colonel.

[41] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of lieutenant colonel.

Adaptability was deemed so integral to the Marine archetype that it emerged in its own Marine-ized catchphrases. The Marine Corps' organisational motto is *Semper Fidelis*, which translates from Latin as "always faithful." Marines have modified this to *Semper Gumby*, a reference to an animated television series character made from mouldable clay. The phrase Semper Gumby appeared in five responses to this question. This response by a sergeant with 20 months of time in a combat theatre weaves together the threads of the need to adapt to succeed, the Marine ethos, training, and leadership:[42]

> Adaptability is the ability to meet a new challenge in a different way in order to achieve success. I believe it is why the Marine Corps is so good at winning battles. Marines are given leadership roles early on and learn to make due with little resources while still accomplishing the mission. Those who are best prepared to adapt to tough situations survive, while those who cannot adapt perish. Marines adapt, Semper Gumby!

Finally, this lieutenant colonel summarizes adaptability within the "Marine Corps context," describing how and why individual adaptations are developed and why they matter at varying levels of command and action in combat:[43]

> Adaptability in the Marine Corps context is the ability to recognize a situation for what it is, and determine the appropriate response within the context of a mission, task, and resources available. At its broadest, adaptability would even include recognizing when the mission should change. In more discrete or tactical situations, it may be more limited to recognizing when the tasks or tactics should change to accomplish the mission. It implies making adjustments within constraints (time, resources) to accomplish a desired end. To be successful, it implies judgment, confidence, and initiative. This is inherent to mission-type orders and the essence of mission accomplishment in the proverbial fog-of-war and friction against a hostile, independent will.

The next questions describe how these ideas about Marine adaptability and combat adaptation played out in the real world. Responses to Questions 5 and 6, below, exemplify the culmination of responses to Questions 1-4: we know what a good Marine is and what he or she should do, we know from where (at least in part) they generated their Marine archetype, and we know how Marines conceive of adaptation. As these next questions show, sometimes the Marines lived up to the ideal and sometimes they failed.

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[42] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of sergeant.

[43] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of lieutenant colonel.

Examples of Successful Adaptation in Combat

To elicit examples and vignettes I asked, "Describe a way in which you, or a Marine you observed directly, adapted in combat in a way that supported your mission success. You may provide multiple examples." I expected to receive a long list of great stories from the 221 Marines who responded to this question. Many respondents replied with simple statements: they went into combat, things were difficult, and they adapted. A great number of Marines described the speed and comfort with which they or their commanders completely reshaped their units to meet changing combat conditions. Unit structure was viewed as more of a starting point for an operation that could and should be changed on the fly, much in the way lengthy operations orders were written and then quickly reshaped informally or through fragmentary orders. One Marine wrote:[44]

> [Our] battalion commander recognized that our troop-to-task needed to be totally unconventional and non-doctrinal to get the job done. We created maneuver units out of hide, used [headquarters and service] company as a maneuver element, and created mini adviser teams for ad hoc police units that were popping up due to the populace finally cooperating with us.

Some Marines attributed their adaptability to training: "We are trained from day one to adapt to the situation to accomplish the mission."[45] For others, successful adaptation may have resulted in part from training but in combat it was simply a matter of course. They adapted because it was necessary and because they were expected to succeed no matter what obstacles they faced. One lieutenant colonel wrote, "[Examples are] too numerous to mention. In Iraq [and Afghanistan] I have long observed that Marines are usually and naturally very adaptable."[46] Many described adaptation within the context of General Krulak's "Three Block War," explaining how they or their Marines "got it" and were able to shift quickly from full-bore combat to advising to civic action without skipping a beat. A former platoon commander described coming under fire while passing out soccer balls to children, chasing the insurgent shooters, and then having to repair a broken truck all in the span of a few minutes.[47]

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[44] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of major.

[45] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of major.

[46] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of lieutenant colonel.

[47] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of captain.

One Marine spoke directly to a strong trend that emerged in the literature review.[48] While Marines are admonished not to lie, cheat, or steal, they gleefully report stealing equipment and other goods when they are deployed. Typically they admit only to stealing from other services, and most often the U.S. Army because they are in the closest proximity. Here one Marine openly shares his transgressions:[49]

> We needed gear for our aircraft and the Army had some so we took theirs
> without asking. We needed buses and Marines on an Air Force/Army base
> get no support so we took a few of theirs with out asking. We needed parts
> for our trucks and we found Army and Air Force trucks abandoned, so we
> stripped them for what we could. We used Air Force pallets to build bunkers
> and they did not like us doing that...

Theft of U.S. Government property is illegal, and Marines look down upon thieves, yet some Marines proudly steal when they believe the need justifies the requirement.[50] This derives in great part from the perception that the Marine Corps is perennially underequipped, an issue I addressed in the first few chapters. It also speaks to the unresolved dichotomies of warrior and maverick archetypes and the discipline dialectic. Warriors do not steal but need to accomplish the mission, mavericks do what needs to get done, so Marines lean to the maverick side to fill the warrior requirement to succeed. Discipline does not allow for law breaking, but discipline demands initiative to succeed, so discipline demands what the aforementioned Marine might call "necessary theft." This might be described as ethical flexibility, but Marines might describe necessary theft as ethical: why let all that good gear go unused when the Marines can use it to succeed?

Other adaptations are a bit more straightforward. In the next two responses a Marine sergeant with 20 months of combat experience presents two vignettes about adaptation. In this first example the Marines adapted to the Taliban's use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in compound doorways in Afghanistan:[51]

> Initially, during operations in some Afghan villages we cleared command
> directed us to carry heavy or bulky and impractical ladder. The reason why?
> Taliban were putting IEDs near entrances and doorways. Blowing your way
> in through a wall was the safest bet, but not always a viable option. Our
> alternative idea was to utilize the large stakes that came with the big tents.
> We had two Marines per squad carry three or four stakes and a mallet. We

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[48] See for example: *The Pacific*; and Hammes (2011).

[49] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of warrant officer.

[50] I found considerable anecdotal evidence of this kind of "justifiable theft" in autobiographies, biographies, and historical interviews with Marines dating back to WWI.

[51] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of sergeant.

could then hammer the stakes into the walls and make a makeshift ladder that
allowed us to scale high walls and get over without blowing up a wall.

This sergeant and his fellow Marines saw the threat of the IEDs and adapted in order to
both avoid getting killed and to gain advantage over the enemy. There was no mention of
simply avoiding the mined compounds; it was understood that the Marines would adapt to
find a way through or around the obstacle. In this next example the sergeant relates a story
from the assault on Fallujah, Iraq, and then describes how he leveraged this example to adapt
in Afghanistan:

> [M]y platoon Sergeant told me during Phantom Fury they had major issues of
> assaulting houses and walking right into machine gun bunkers inside.
> Grenades weren't very effective at this point so they took mortar rounds and
> added C4 to the rounds. Then they would throw them into the buildings like
> footballs and it was much more effective at taking out barricaded insurgents
> inside. We used a similar effort to destroy a Taliban machine gun bunker in
> Afghanistan. After hitting it with a Hellfire rocket from a Cobra the bunker
> was still intact. The rocket only collapsed the entrance. So we used a SMAW
> rocket [attached to] C4 [explosives]. [I] ran up to the firing port of the bunker
> and shoved the rocket and C4 inside. It blew the top right off the bunker and
> we were surprised to see how well fortified the position was.

Table 8.1 lists a sample of adaptation drawn from the survey responses. The left-most
column summarizes the type of adaptation, the right-most provides the description.

Table 8.1: Sample Adaptations from the Survey Results

Improving conditions	In my case there is no "big bang" story, just countless little tales of "jury rigged" shelters, workarounds for faulty computers, and a million little ways Marines made their lives a little easier.[52]
Setting up elections on the fly	In Al-Anbar [Iraq] in 2005, the Marine Division staff had to support elections by designing and emplacing election sites…no more than 72 hours prior to elections being held...with no Marines being visible from the election sites on election day. You can't "teach" that. Marines certainly aren't trained how to do this. It comes from recognizing political (strategic) realities, identifying what needs to be accomplished and transitioning objectives into…tasks.[53]
Jury-rigging machineguns	During the invasion of Iraq Marines in my company after our first contact with Iraqi forces, managed to acquire an extra M2 .50 calibre machine gun and rig it to the port side of an [Amtrac] to provide additional automatic heavy weapons fire on that side of the vehicle. [54]
Changing roles	During combat we lost a lot of grunts due to injury or KIA so drivers become heavy gun support and train heavy gun support become grunts. Cooks became drivers.[55]
Modifying trucks	Armour weighed down the front of the vehicles so we put heavier rear springs on

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[52] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of master sergeant/first sergeant.

[53] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of major.

[54] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of corporal.

[55] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of gunnery sergeant.

	the front.[56]
Adaptive campaign execution	As a [battalion commander] I was given a mission and an area of responsibility [AOR]. I analysed my initial mission and set the battalion in motion to achieve our mission. And then daily and weekly I analysed the situation to ensure I understood the circumstances and my bosses desired endstate. From that we designed a living campaign to systematically destroy our enemy's ability to operate or even influence action in our AOR. At the end of the day it is always about the will to win. Understanding the Boyd cycle is at the heart of adapting to new realities.[57]
Modifying rations	We ate field mice for a few days until the main body found us because our lieutenant got us lost in the desert.[58]
Creating a non-doctrinal team	Insurgents being freed from prison because of a lack of evidence? Start a District Attorney section to build cases against them. [We created] the Joint Prosecution and Exploitation Cell (JPEC). Find *that* in pre-2006 doctrine. Adapt and overcome.[59]

Source: Survey data

Failure to Adapt: The Cost of Inflexibility

In the final substantive question I asked, "Describe a way in which you, or a Marine you observed directly, failed to adapt in combat and thus undermined your mission success. You may provide multiple examples." I received 192 responses to this question. Of these, 26 could think of no examples or stated they could provide no examples; some stated plainly that their Marines had always successfully adapted. One Marine wrote, "I don't recall ever witnessing a Marine in my unit fail to adapt in combat."[60] Many of the 166 respondents who provided examples complained about "old school" and "traditional" discipline overwhelming common sense. They believed that some Marines were so rigid in their behaviour that they undermined combat effectiveness. In some examples, including in one below, Marines were killed because of the failure to adapt. One warrant officer wrote: "Following the rules to follow the rules is often the single most obstructive thing you can do… Rules are static, war is not."[61] These responses contained nearly verbatim language to the maverick side of the discipline dialectic. Several respondents believed that experience was the key to adaptability. Marines had to learn that the schoolhouse rules didn't always apply:[62]

> In some cases there was rigid, almost robotic adherence to doctrine when it
> came to approaching a given situation in regards to new officers. Many of
> them lacked experience and therefore imagination or the ability to adapt to a

[56] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of gunnery sergeant.

[57] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of colonel.

[58] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of warrant officer.

[59] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of colonel; emphasis added.

[60] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of corporal.

[61] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of warrant officer. This quote was slightly reduced in length from the original.

[62] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of sergeant.

situation. Many of them could not fathom altering the way business was done because it didn't fit with notions drilled into them during training.

Many commanders were highly self-critical, and former battalion commanders seemed to take their perceived failures to adapt quite seriously. Other Marines were critical of their leaders, peers, or subordinates. Table 8.2 presents a sample of these vignettes and observations in direct quotes from the survey data:

Table 8:2: Sample Failure to Adapt from Survey Results

Following rules when they make no tactical sense	Once broke off a close air support mission when my [wingman] had to make an emergency landing. Though we could have supported with one plane, it violates attack aircraft tactical doctrine…[It] did not feel like the right thing to do.[63]
Inflexibility leads to Marine deaths	During 2004, we started receiving add-on armour kits for the [trucks]. Higher headquarters [HHQ] wanted Marines to drive their trucks to a centralized location despite our requests for tractor-trailers to carry the trucks to the centralized location. The request was denied and Marines were killed while attempting to drive trucks to the centralized location. The logistics decision-makers at HHQ failed recognize that the operating environment changed and that soft trucks were specifically targeted because they were easy to kill. HHQ logistics decision makers approved transportation support only after Marines were killed.[64]
Frozen by fear	A Sergeant I had on my first tour couldn't release the idea that he would be blown up by an IED every day—even after months of inactivity. His high-strung personality hindered our ability to relate and work with the Iraqi Police, as he remained suspicious of them and very tense on all of our patrols.[65]
Fixed in place by anger and fear	When ignorance, fear or hate betrayed a Marine's ability to adapt to the mission in supporting or training the local security forces to take the lead. The negative emotions became the spark of every intra-unit conflict from duty schedules, patrols, etc.[66]
Overly aggressive	I witnessed many commanders, both ground and aviation, who couldn't stop trying to "take the fight to the enemy," constantly trying to get approval to drop bombs or destroy things. These actions were counterproductive. It was a certain "Henry Fleming" desire [reference is to Stephen Crane's *Red Badge of Courage*], in each to see combat, which undermined missions success.[67]
Fixed in an "old school" mentality	I personally saw older Marines…with 10+ years of experience consistently resist new ideas based on a parade ground concept of how an army should run. They did not want individual gear that would be fitted to a Marine's personal desire, they wanted each vehicle to look the same and worse-they preached doctrine or "this isn't what we did [in training]" when improvised, task-organised plans were called for.[68]

Source: Survey data

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[63] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of major.

[64] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of major.

[65] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of captain

[66] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of lieutenant colonel.

[67] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of lieutenant colonel.

[68] Survey respondent, 2013, rank of staff sergeant.

Collectively the 192 responses to this question drove home the point that while the modern Marine Corps values and teaches adaptability, Marines are not adaptable automatons. Some are consistently adaptable or nonadaptable, while others adapt or fail to adapt from time to time. Fear and trauma learning appear to inhibit some Marines from accessing the warrior and maverick cognitive schemas necessary for adaptation. Failure to overcome fear in combat prevents Marines from remaining calm and from accessing schemas for moral and physical courage necessary to choose unorthodox measures and behaviour called for in the uncertain context of combat. Fear also prevents Marines from accessing schemas for independent, flexible decisionmaking. In other cases Marines chose to cling tightly to their own interpretation of traditional warrior discipline and were at least temporarily incapable of accessing—or were incapable of conceptualizing—the opposite side of the Marine cultural dichotomy.

Survey Data Strongly Correlate with Hypothesis and Analysis

These 225 anecdotal responses revealed how both historical and doctrinal emphases on warrior archetypes, maverick archetypes, and adaptability had deeply entrenched themselves in Marines' cognitive schemas. Marines in 2013 described their organisational culture in the same way it had been described in cultural artefacts for the previous century. Also consistent with existing analyses of Marine Corps culture, these respondents left the warrior and maverick dichotomy mostly unresolved. However, when they honed in on the descriptions of adaptability they were able to clearly and precisely describe what they expected of themselves and of their fellow Marines. They cited not only Marine doctrine but also an array of Marine and non-Marine historical analogies. While some pushed back against the notion of external cultural influences on the development of their cognitive schemas, most accepted and embraced the idea that their thinking and behaviour had been influenced to varying degrees over time by a wide array of cultural artefacts. In turn these artefacts reflected the themes and motifs identified in my analysis with remarkable consistency.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Fully and accurately describing the Marine Corps' organisational culture requires an approach that is perhaps as dualistic as the culture itself. One part of this approach is narrative. Examination of the Corps' history and the evolution of the norm for adaptability shows how small wars philosophy was not only retained after the publication of the 1940 *Small Wars Manual*, but also how it was repurposed for a broad range of military operations. Standing alone, this narrative approach would be akin to a traditional organisational-level analysis within the existing genre of military change. It shows how an organisation's purpose and combat experience shapes its culture. According to this narrative, small wars required semi-independent operations, which required Marine adaptability, which in turn fostered independent thinking. This in turn helped sustain a small wars mindset even while the Marine Corps was periodically repurposed for full-scale, conventional war. Continual efforts to decentralise into adaptable, forward-deployed, task-organised teams, and then the embrace of a decentralized, adaptable warfighting philosophy are indicative of the power of the small wars, distributed operations legacy on the Corps' organisational culture.

Many of the historians and organisational analysts cited in this thesis, including Millet, Heinl, Bickel, Terriff, and Hammes, have either purposefully or incidentally laid the groundwork for this conclusion. Evidence to support the impact of this reinforcing small wars, distributed operations, adaptation-centric feedback loop is sufficient for an interesting stand-alone analysis of the Corps' organisational culture. Yet while this analysis may be accurate, it is incomplete without an examination of external cultural influences and the role of the individual in the evolution of the norm for adaptability. Analysis of the small wars narrative does not resolve the glaring dichotomy in the discipline dialectic or in the competing norms for adaptability and obedience. It fails to explain how the Marine Corps has embraced both warrior and maverick behaviour in nearly equal measures, repeatedly succeeding in war while avoiding martinet staleness or debilitating inchoateness. Most critically, this single level or scope of analysis would perpetuate the broad status quo of military change analyses by reifying and sealing the non-existent boundaries between the members of organisations and the external world, and by minimizing the value of individual experiences. Organisational narrative offers *an* insight into the organisational culture of the Marine Corps. Understanding that culture demands at least a strong effort towards cultural

holism that includes and examination of individuals. This conclusion summarizes the efforts to build such a holistic approach to understanding the Marine Corps' culture, and then suggests new approaches to military change studies.

Small Wars Norms

Many observers of the Marine Corps note that the Corps is a large, modern, conventional military organization with a small wars, distributed operations soul. This is as much a practical observation as it is an interpretation of the Marine Corps' organisational culture. From its inception in 1775 to 1916—the first year covered by this study—the Marine Corps participated in *at most* a collective 15 years of conventional and semi-conventional war compared to 126 years of distributed operations and small wars.[1] For 206 out of 240 years, or nearly 90% of its total existence as of 2015, the Marine Corps embraced and subsisted almost explicitly on the kinds of small unit, distributed activities—small wars and small-scale training deployments—that demanded adaptability.[2] In 1940 the authors of the *Small Wars Manual* wrote for the whole Marine Corps, and for the collective Marine experience over the 165 years since the Corps' inception in 1775. Their interpretation of small wars represented common experience in distributed operations from the first Marine amphibious raid in the Bahamas in 1776 to the Philippines to Haiti to Santo Domingo to Nicaragua.[3] Their emphasis on adaptability reflected inductively developed, individually reinforced, organisation-wide norms rather than a top-down, doctrinal effort by "maverick change agents" to impose new organisational behavioural standards.

All of the individual Marines who were thrust into the distributed, freewheeling world of small wars operations and distributed deployments from 1775 through 2015 learned first-hand the necessity of adaptation. Dropped onto remote foreign shores with few resources, little chance of reinforcement or rescue, and only remote supervision, Marines adapted to survive and succeed. In amphibious assaults or small unit operations conducted in the hinterlands of Nicaragua, their only other options were abject failure, surrender, or death. In training activities like those carried out on a daily basis from the 1960s through 2015 by

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[1] Millett, 1980; Heinl, 1991. Even in conventional fights like the U.S. Civil War (1861-1865) the Marines often played small, distributed roles.

[2] From 1916-1917, 1918-1941, 1945-1950, 1953-1965, 1975-1991, and 1991-2015 the Marines tried to be, and usually were, distributed operators and small wars fighters.

[3] Pre-1916 small-scale, worldwide deployments not addressed in this thesis were nearly constant after the appointment of Archibald Henderson as the Marine Commandant in 1820. See Heinl and Millett for details.

MEUs, Marines from the rank of colonel down to private adapted because they had to and because they could; even the most mundane expeditionary naval activity demands ad hoc, independent thought and decisiveness. Marines came to cherish the freedom to make decisions without constant, top-down supervision, and they enshrined independent decisionmaking in their organisational culture. Historical analyses of wartime deployments show that far more often than not Marines agentically selected adaptation and success, and then transferred these adaptation-driven successes into the Corps' organisational culture.

Evolution of the norm for adaptability in the Marine Corps was in keeping with any other evolutionary process: it was gradual. This was not the kind of single-war adaptation cycle like the ones experienced by the British military during WWI or by the Israeli military during its war for independence. The Marine Corps never experienced a revolution in adaptable affairs. When the maneuverists introduced the concepts of distributed operations, mission orders, and small-unit adaptability in the 1980s they were describing the longstanding, centre-rest, small wars position of Marines' organisational culture. If they had stripped away some of the German catchphrases and fanciful, nearly mystical language of operational art, they may well have found immediate acceptance. The fact that the Marines did quickly accept the most practical elements of manoeuvre warfare—distributed operations and mission orders—indicates that concepts closely related to adaptability already had enduring organisational value. James Carabatsos, author of the *Heartbreak Ridge* script, observed and wrote in 1986 that Marines 'improvise, adapt, and overcome,' three years *before* the 1989 publication of *Warfighting*. The Marine Corps' 1988 survey on manoeuvre warfare indicated that many Marines were quite familiar with distributed operations and mission orders one year before the publication of *Warfighting*.[4] This was in great part because the language of adaptability in *Warfighting* was directly reflective of the language in the *Small Wars Manual*, and of the Marines' small wars, distributed operations centred institutional narrative.

The small wars heritage is essential to understanding the Marine Corps' organisational culture, but these experiences alone were not sufficient to have built and sustained the norm for adaptability in the modern Marine Corps. Adaptability learned in small wars and distributed operations survived three paradigm shifts from to conventional war in the 20th Century: the Corps was temporarily yet almost wholly thrust into industrial war from 1917-1918; it saw explosive growth, mostly conventional combat, and forced systematization from 1941-1945; and it fought in a complex large-scale war in Vietnam while absorbing tens of

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[4] *Heartbreak Ridge* was released in late 1986 and this line may have been written earlier.

thousands of draftees from the early 1960s through the early 1970s. Each of these three events could have moved the Corps towards a more conventional and perhaps less adaptable mind-set, but they did not.

Smoothing the curve to iron out many notable ebbs and flows, the Marines who led the Corps from 1940 through 1989 became increasingly fixated on adaptability over time.[5] Yet no analyst has made a convincing argument that the official parts of the Corps' institutional memory—doctrine, military training, professional education, or historical documents—were sufficient by themselves to carry over organisational norms from the small wars, distributed operations experience, even after wide publication of the *Small Wars Manual* in 1940. While the *Manual* was influential before WWII, it was not officially reprinted until 1987.[6] After 1940 the *Manual* was tightly controlled and then generally absent from official discourse or formal instruction.[7] Other Marine Corps doctrinal publications between the end of WWII and the publication of *Warfighting* did not place any particular emphasis on adaptability, and even some manuals that directly addressed small wars issues made no mention of adaptability.[8] If adaptability did not prominently reside in the official literature of the organisation, then it had to have been sustained and developed in nonofficial cultural

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[5] For example, while the U.S. Army reorganized to fight large-scale wars on a nuclear battlefield, the Marine Corps developed MCO 3120.3 to formalize task organization and distributed operations. See Bacevich, 1986; and Michael B. West, 1999.

[6] Even this reprinting under the designation NAVMC 2890 was done reluctantly, possibly because the 1940 *Manual* contained some language that might have been offensive in the context of the 1980s. The foreword to this reprint stated that the manual was being reissued for informational purposes only and was not officially endorsed by the Marine Corps. Available: 13 February 2016 [http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/swm/front.pdf]. In 1990 it was republished as FMFRP 12-15, with a more positive endorsement. Available: 13 February 2016. [http://www.marines.mil/Portals/59/Publications/FMFRP%2012-15%20%20Small%20Wars%20Manual.pdf]

[7] This assessment is drawn from the review of 1940-1990 unit narratives, official histories, autobiographies, biographies, and semi-official historical narratives undertaken for this research. It is possible that copies of the *Manual* were used to train Marines in the Basic Officers Course or in enlisted training courses. However, Donald F. Bittner's review of advanced Marine officer training curricula showed that small wars education was all but abandoned between 1945 and 1988, and Allen S. Ford showed that the *Manual* was treated as a restricted document and then rarely used for training and education after publication. See: Bittner, 1988; Ford, 1989.

[8] See, for example, the Marine Corps' 1980 doctrine on counterinsurgency, ostensibly containing lessons learned from all Marine Corps experience in small wars dating from the 1800s through Vietnam. This manual does not call for adaptability in any form. It does prescribe CAP on page 95. See: U.S. Marine Corps, 1980. Also see: U.S. Marine Corps, 1978. In an interview discussing the CAP program in Vietnam, Marine colonel John E. Greenwood stated that no Marine doctrine or official history had any influence on the development of CAP, and that Marines were mostly learning from Army doctrine and training. See Shulimson and Johnson, 1978, p, 133. As of 2015 the Marine Corps still relies on some Army doctrinal and training publications.

artefacts and in the collective mass of individual Marines who constituted the organisation for the nearly 50 interim years between 1940 and 1989.[9]

Unresolved Dualisms and the Informal Norm for Adaptability

It is understandable that Marines embrace terms like "magic" to explain their organisational culture when considering the number of unresolved dualisms therein. The Marine Corps is at once a small wars, distributed operations organisation and a large-scale, national-level military service designed by law to prepare for joint warfighting at the division level and above.[10] Marines are "sternly consecrated to discipline" yet encouraged to improvise "like members of a jazz band." At all times they are trained to respect their superiors and obey orders, but also to be prepared to execute necessary disobedience. The most popular Marines are "irradiant personalities" rather than parade ground martinets, but many Marines love to cultivate a parade ground appearance to demonstrate their soldierly repute. These unresolved dualisms are more than just curious elements of this 240 year-old military culture: they constitute the culture.

Whilst codified in doctrine and captured in organisational artefacts and rituals, Marine Corps culture exists primarily within individual Marines. Because the many internal Marine Corps cultural dualisms are unresolved in writing, they must be negotiated and resolved on a daily basis by each Marine. From 1916 through 2015, every Marine who entered and served in the Marine Corps had to interpret these dualisms on his or her own terms, guided by other Marines undergoing the same daily negotiations. To do this, each Marine leverages cognitive schemas influenced by both external and internal cultural artefacts and personal experiences.

Throughout their lives Marines are exposed to "external" cultural artefacts that, to varying degrees in each Marine, influence their cognitive schemas. All of the most influential artefacts in American culture, and particularly ones *about* Marines, centre on the warrior-maverick dualism. For their entire lives Marines are exposed to these dualisms in literature, film, spoken word, and now television. Their understanding of a diffuse "American culture" is strongly influenced by artefacts that suggest Americans are at once courageous, driven, and selfless, and irreverent and free-minded. Adaptability is a central theme throughout all of

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[9] Because the Marine Corps uses U.S. Army doctrinal publications, it is also possible that some elements of adaptability were retained and transmitted through the Army. However, there are no consistent indications that the U.S. Army influenced or encouraged the Marine norm for adaptability from 1916 through 2015.

[10] See: Hittle, 1947.

these artefacts. From the early 20th Century through 2015, fictional and mythologised Marines in popular artefacts are presented in dualisms, and their narratives describe their struggles to resolve conflicting needs for discipline and followership on the one hand, and independence and necessary disobedience on the other. These fictional and mythologized Marines set a normative example for warrior, maverick, and adaptable behaviour.

In training like Marine boot camp or the basic officers course, and in professional education, individual leaders impute their various interpretations of the Marine dualisms on each Marine.[11] These Marines interpret and incorporate elements of the dualisms into their cognitive schemas, merging them with all other learned schemata from external and internal culture. They apply this same process as they observe the behaviour of fellow Marines. They then leverage these schemas as they train and execute military operations, continuously altering the schemas as they learn by experience. As they progress through the Corps these Marines actively and passively impute their interpretations of the dualisms on fellow Marines, and some go on to train, educate, and formalize their interpretations of the dualisms in the tangible, official literature of the organisation. These Marines go on to influence external cultural interpretations of the internal Marine Corps culture, either through direct personal interaction or through writing, film, or other artefacts.[12] Understanding this progress of schematic influence and interpretation is central to understanding the Marine Corps' organisational culture.

While this process culminated in the publication of the *Warfighting* series, the norm for adaptability that emerges from this process is predominantly informal and unwritten. Adaptability exists in the grey space between warrior and maverick, between small wars and conventional wars, between traditional discipline and irreverent individualism. Marines are presented with one clear, overarching, and undeviating norm that helps them resolve these dualisms: Marines are expected to succeed in all tasks, all the time, and under any circumstance. Presented with this undeviating norm, they *must* find a way to succeed or risk humiliation, loss of *philia* love, expulsion from the group, or in times of war, wounding or death. Because they are encouraged towards warrior ethea and maverick free mindedness, they are often able to negotiate a middle ground approach that results in adaptability. This is a general observation and not an argument for causality, but it is an observation born out by the

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[11] These imputations are both formalized and personalized.

[12] For example, former Marine Anthony Swofford wrote the book *Jarhead* about his experiences in the 1990-1991 Gulf War. This book was later made into an eponymous film that was mentioned by some of the Marines who responded to the 2013 survey.

present research. The heart of the Corps' organisational culture, or the Marine "magic," is the success-driven adaptability that results from externally and internally influenced dualisms.

External Culture and the Individuals' Roles in Organisational Norms

This research proposes a change in the study of military organisational culture. These changes do not generate an approach that is intrinsically "better" than any current approach. Instead they are intended to deepen the relationship between International Relations and more intimate social sciences like anthropology. The immediate and practical intent of this research, other than explaining Marine Corps organisational culture, is to facilitate the incorporation of external culture into the generally internal narratives of military culture-change studies.

Even when ensconced within fenced-off compounds, military organisations like the U.S. Marine Corps possess no actual physical boundaries. Long before the advent of the Internet or cellular telephones, all individual Marines were exposed to external culture. They served as the middlemen in the multidirectional process of cultural transmission and hybridity that has been deeply established in the literature of the social sciences. Yet most of the military change analysts cited in this thesis often, to varying degrees and in different ways, reify organisational boundaries to explain major trends in internal culture. In doing so they take a calculated risk. Describing internal culture is exceptionally difficult even when the analysts are able to isolate their subjects, so reification and bounding are done with the understanding that thoughtful readers will later be able place the organisational analysis in broader context. Versions of this approach have become standard practice for military culture-change studies. There is an argument to be made that reification and isolation of the organisation help to separate internal from external trends, exposing the variables most important to military change research. There is a healthy, on-going debate over this argument in business and other organisational culture literatures.[13]

An alternative argument is suggested by Farrell and amplified here: inclusion of external cultural influences is both possible and necessary to bring our understanding of military organisational culture and change closer to reality.[14] Military culture-change studies can

[13] Schein takes on this issue, as do Hofstede, Baskerville, Allair & Firsirotu, and Denison and Mishra. Davies, et al. (2000) provide a good overview of the modernist vs. post-modernist approaches to the reification or more removed observation of organisational culture.

[14] Both Cameron and Hull took this approach to varying degrees, but for specific purposes and, I argue, without the holism necessary to bring their findings closer to practical reality.

benefit from the mostly isolating approaches in business literature, but they would benefit more from a deeper inclusion of anthropological theories that resist reification and bounding. The finding in this thesis—that Marine adaptability evolved *without* concrete reinforcement in the internal artefacts of the institution, and in the face of intense pressures to ossify along traditional military lines—presents a strong case that military organisational norms can and do exist in boundless space.

If this is the case, then future military culture-change studies would benefit from two interrelated approaches: the inclusion of external cultural influences and analysis of the individual experience beyond selected anecdotes. Ethnographers like Tortorello and Marcellino present exemplars for the collective individual approach, but most analysts cannot afford the time or resources required for ethnography. Nonetheless, incorporating this kind of ethnographic information, and other collective individual data like the concentrated interviews in Eric Hammel's *Ambush Alley* and *Khe Sanh: Siege in the Clouds*, would be useful. Leveraging existing and emerging individual-level data would make it possible to employ concepts like cognitive schemas to link external and internal culture, and to bridge the notional boundaries between the two. This holistic approach would help to move the assessments of military organisational cultures, innovation, adaptation, and evolutionary cultural change closer to real experience.

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