



MARSOF

**Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command
Camp Lejeune, North Carolina**



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FOREWORD

I applaud the purpose and content of this publication. It captures the ethos, spirit, and philosophy of Marine Corps Special Operations Forces and establishes the philosophical underpinnings for continuing development. This document is timely and essential.

Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC), in its relatively brief existence, has proven its great value to the joint special operations community. Bringing a unique culture and skills, Marines have performed magnificently in both combat and non-combat environments. They have earned the respect of their Army, Navy, and Air Force counterparts within the United States Special Operations Command.

I urge every MARSOC Marine to not just read this publication, but to study, discuss, and absorb it. It is essentially important to understand what makes us uniquely capable of answering our Nation's special operations needs.



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22 March 2011

FOREWORD

This document is the foundational publication for MARSOC. It is the overarching and comprehensive document that sets the philosophical tone for Marine Special Operations Forces (MARSOFF). It describes how we recruit, assess, select, educate, train, and transform Marines from all backgrounds into Multi-Dimensional Operators to meet current and emerging Special Operations Forces (SOF) missions. It outlines the MARSOC approach to taking care of our Marines and families from a “pro-habilitative” approach.

Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC) has provided MARSOFF to the Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCC) since our activation in February 2006. In order to bring unique capabilities to the special operations community, the Marines of MARSOC leverage their Corps ethos as agile expeditionary war fighters to provide the Commander of United States, Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) with an enhanced capability to conduct full spectrum special operations world-wide. This enhanced capability is derived from our foundational concept as scalable air-ground-logistics teams capable of executing independent operations with unprecedented speed and versatility in austere conditions against a wide range of adversaries. The core capability of MARSOFF is its command and control philosophy founded on the ability to frame the nature of complex issues and the ability to understand, decide and act within multiple nested levels of intent. This philosophy makes us

rapidly relevant to emerging situations, and our command and control technologies support this philosophy.

Our Marine history allows us to appreciate both kinetic and non-kinetic solution sets. Our training results in leaders with a wide variety of skills that are made useful and have purpose only with an understanding of the nature of the problem set.

We are often asked what our niche is in SOF. Many would like to portray our purpose by a unique environment or capability. To describe ourselves as such would be to narrow our relevance. So we say “Special Operations are what we do, Marines are who we are.”

At this writing, we have been at war for ten years. Predictions would have us increasing our SOF role over the next several years. Our sustained wartime footing requires that we address the associated pressures on the force and families. This is difficult work and our relationship with sports professionals with extensive background in Humanics – development of spirit, mind and body - has given us insight into a program focused on resiliency: Resiliency is so important to us that it has taken on the equivalency of a battlefield operating system.

My goal for this publication is that it serves as the initial resource to answer questions such as: “Who are Marine Special Operations Forces?”; “what does MARSOC do?”; “how do I become part of MARSOC?” and most importantly, “what does it mean to be MARSOF”?

This document begins with a glimpse into the history of the Marine Special Operations, starting with the Marine Raiders. The Marine Raiders are one of the Marine Corps’ most storied units and for good reason; they were a select organization that optimized the Marines’ values and warrior ethos to provide our

country with unique capabilities to achieve operational and strategic effects during a time of great national crisis. MARSOF of today are no different; they are multi-dimensional operators with an unconquerable spirit capable of executing SOF missions in the most complex environments under the kinetic and non-kinetic actions. Most importantly, they possess the discipline, ethical values, intellect, and mentality agility to ascertain the dynamics of a given environment and incrementally apply the tools of their trade to win the war before it starts.

Our numbers are few; our contributions are numerous; our results are substantial. Our most significant contributions to national security are often unquantifiable and unspoken. We pride ourselves in serving our Country as scholars and practitioners of the profession of arms, studied of the past, understanding the current, and shaping the future. We are and will always be consummate professionals, knowing we are representatives of the Marine Corps, Special Operations Forces, and most profoundly as citizens of the United States of America.

I challenge every member of MARSOC to read, understand, and demonstrate through their example and actions, the values and ethos we believe in as Marine Special Operations Forces.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul E. Lefebvre". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "P" and "L".

Paul E. Lefebvre
Major General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commander

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Chapter 1

History of Marine Special Operations Forces

“My reason for volunteering for the Raiders, it was not that I had a death wish. I felt that if I were to go into combat, it should be in the best trained and led unit that was available. My feelings were gratified.”

-PFC Ervin Kaplan, Co E, 2d Marine Raider Bn

MARSOC was officially activated on 24 February, 2006. Looking back to some of the most important events that serve as the foundation and legacy of our Corps, one can see the many similarities in the genesis, intent and purpose of MARSOC from its



earliest involvement in special operations-type engagements. Beginning with Lieutenant Presley O'Bannon's battle against the Barbary Pirates at Derna, Tripoli in 1805, to the early years of the 20th century, the Marine Corps was widely seen as the nation's initial response force for national strategic interests. This role was reinforced in the 'Banana Wars', a

series of occupations, police actions, and interventions in Central and South America, circa 1898-1934. The experiences gathered here engaging in psychological and guerrilla campaigns and other non-conventional engagements prompted the Corps to begin systematically analyzing the character and requirements of operations short of war proper, resulting in the publication of the Small Wars Manual in 1935. Many of those original premises are still valid for special operations today.

The complex global environment preceding the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor prompted the U.S. political and military leadership to consider the development of commando type units that would assist the Allies in stemming the continued successes of the Axis by conducting clandestine operations. The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was formed to answer the need for reliable intelligence behind enemy lines. The OSS needed people who could speak the language and maintain their calm in an environment fraught with Nazi spies, saboteurs, and collaborators. Fifty-one Marines would serve with distinction in these clandestine special operations missions.

The Marine Corps' actual participation in special operations missions began during World War II with the formation of the Marine Raiders established in January 1942 as small Marine units designed to deliver operational and strategic effects with minimal external support in the most austere environments. The Raiders consisted of specially screened and assessed Marine volunteers who received unique training and equipment to perform the most challenging missions in remote, ambiguous, and complex environments with little to no support. Due to the nature of the missions they were called upon to execute, the Marine Raiders, very similar to MARSOF today, were required to be intellectually dynamic, morally disciplined, and physically fit operators with an irrepressible sense of duty, loyalty to one another, and can-do-spirit in the face of adversity.

Despite significant doubts and opponents to the idea of a U.S. commando unit, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and other influential political and military leaders within the United States, were determined to establish an organization of small teams that could bring the war to our enemies as rapidly as possible with a minimum of manpower and maximum effect. The Marine Corps was the ideal parent organization for this new commando unit

because of the Marines' historical successes in small wars and the recent development of amphibious operational concepts. The Commandant of the Marines designated the formation of Marine Raiders the first Marine Special Operations Forces.

The Marine Raider battalions and amphibious reconnaissance units developed during the Second World War play an influential role in the Marine Corps' special operations lineage. The Raider battalions, first created in 1942, were designed primarily as a small, amphibious strike force capable of taking the war to Japanese-held islands throughout the Pacific. The Raider battalions played a small, but significant, role in such notable actions as the Makin Island raid in August 1942 and the Battle of Bloody Ridge during the Guadalcanal campaign. Concurrent with the Raiders, Marine amphibious reconnaissance also had its origins during the Second World War. First utilized in the Gilbert Islands in 1943, Marine reconnaissance provided specialized hydrographic and terrain information about potential beach landing sites, in conjunction with their naval counterparts the underwater demolition teams, and were critical throughout the remainder of the drive across the Central Pacific. Amphibious reconnaissance units remain an active part of the Marine infantry divisions to this day.

Helicopters and nuclear weapons changed warfare in mid-20th Century, thus Marine Corps Commandant, Alexander A. Vandegrift, activated Marine Corps Test Unit 1 to develop tactics associated with helicopter assault and distant reconnaissance. As part of this, the Recon Platoon developed and refined many innovative insertion and extraction methods even before those used by the Navy SEALs or the Army Special Forces, such as: submarine locking in and out, underwater blow and go ascents, High Altitude Low Opening, and High Altitude High Opening parachute insertions. This set the stage for the beginning of the deep reconnaissance assets that were to follow, but it was in Vietnam where Marine reconnaissance created

much of its well known history. Marine recon teams in Vietnam were used throughout the war to conduct both Key Hole (information gathering) and Stingray (direct action) operations. Throughout the war they refined their specialized insertion and extraction techniques as well as the use of supporting fires to provide the foundation for many of today's tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP). Just as the complex global environment preceding U.S. involvement in World War II prompted the development of the Marine Raiders, the complex global environment of the Global War on Terror prompted the need for additional capacity of small teams capable of achieving operational and strategic effects. The attack on the World Trade Center on 11 September 2001 stretched the nation's special operations forces extremely thin and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld called for the Marines to be part of USSOCOM. The Marine Corps/USSOCOM Detachment 1 or Det One was activated on 20 June 2003 and deployed to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2004. Det One proved to the other USSOCOM components that the Marines could perform special operations missions such as Direct Action (DA), Special Reconnaissance (SR), Foreign Internal Defense (FID), counterterrorism (CT), and other special activities.



On, 24 February, 2006, MARSOC was activated at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina with a small staff from 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade and the Foreign Military Training Unit (FMTU) which had been formed to conduct foreign internal defense.

The FMTU was later re-designated as the Marine Special Operations Advisory Group (MSOAG). In the months following the activation, MARSOC rounded out its operating forces with the transfer of structure and personnel from 1st and 2d Force

Reconnaissance Companies. These companies would form the nucleus of 1st and 2d Marine Special Operations Battalions (MSOB). The Marine Special Operations School (MSOS) was activated to conduct and oversee the functions of assessment, selection,

MSOS**MSOSG**

and basic individual training for MARSOF. In addition to the MSOS, the Marine Special Operations Support Group (MSOSG) was created to provide combat support to deploying units as well as limited logistical support to the MARSOC headquarters. Even with the creation of the MSOSG, MARSOC units remained dependent upon the Marine Corps and Theater Special Operations Commands for combat service support.

Intel Bn

In July 2006, Secretary Rumsfeld formally designated MARSOC as a special operations force. Six months after its initial activation in August of 2006, MARSOC deployed its first operational teams in support of USSOCOM and the Geographic Combatant Commands (GCC). The first company-sized deployments began in 2007 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Since then, MARSOC, with a total strength of less than 2,600 Marines, Sailors, and civilians has been continuously deploying MARSOF to Central, Pacific, Africa, and Southern Command Areas of Responsibility.

As part of an internal reorganization effort, the MSOAG was re-designated as the Marine Special Operations Regiment (MSOR) in April of 2009 with cognizance over 1st, 2d, and the newly created 3d MSOBs.

MSOR

1st MSOB2^D MSOB3rd MSOB

In 2009, MARSOC began a larger reorganization in an effort to gain increased structure to match the organization's growing operational requirements. The reorganization created a uniform, world-wide deployable capability across the MSOBs from the team through the battalion-level. This balanced force is comprised of one regiment, 3 battalions, 12 companies, and 48 teams along with all the required Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS) necessary for distributed expeditionary special operations.

In just five short years MARSOC Marines have carved a secure niche for themselves as distributed, expeditionary SOF; whether it be through the crucible of battle in Afghanistan or the accomplishments of the foreign militaries they have trained world-wide. These silent professionals are always faithful to the Corps – Marines first - and always eager to go forward into austere environments; be self-sustaining and, by incorporating the lessons learned from their Raider and Det One predecessors, continue to bring the fight to the enemy on today's asymmetric battlefield. In his after action review to the commander of Naval Special Warfare Command, Colonel Robert J. Coates, the Detachment One Commander, stressed the value of the detachment's task organization by emphasizing that Det One brought capabilities to USSOCOM that it did not otherwise possess in a stand-alone unit. The detachment could perform all six warfighting functions: command and control, fires, maneuver, logistics, intelligence, and force protection. The detachment also had the depth to field effective liaison officers to various commands and agencies, and could operate either as a supporting

effort or a main effort with equal facility.

Just as the hard lessons learned of the Marine Raiders were absorbed, so too did MARSOC incorporate those learned by Detachment One into what MARSOC Companies and Teams now provide, with our Marine-Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) mindset and scalable command and control capability, as an integral part of USSOCOM. Always faithful.... always forward.

The Marine Raider and Det One foundational concepts, legacies and values are represented within the MARSOF ethos. The foundation of MARSOC is our people. Organizationally, MARSOF collectively builds upon the Marine ethos of:

- Marines dedicated and imbued with the idea of selfless service to our Nation.
- A Force, expeditionary in nature, deploying anywhere in the world with responsive scalable and adaptable forces prepared to “live hard” in uncertain, chaotic, and austere environments, yet capable of sustaining expeditionary operations.
- Units, forged and task organized to be lean, agile, and adaptable.
- Units trained and equipped to lead joint and multinational operations and enable interagency activities.
- Marines educated and trained to think critically about complex environments and empowered with the judgment and initiative to defeat our adversaries regardless of the conflict.

- A command structure committed to the resilience of our Marines and their families.

MARSOC selects only the most qualified Marines and builds upon their foundation of Marine Corps Values and Warrior Ethos by imbuing in them a mentality of “Spiritus Invictus” an unconquerable spirit; providing them unique SOF training and equipment; and instilling a holistic – body, mind and spirit - approach to resiliency. The MARSOC ethos enables us to deploy small, lethal, expeditionary teams capable of executing complex, distributed operations to teams capable of executing complex distributed operations to achieve strategic and operational effects.

Chapter 2

MARINE SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES - MARSOF

“You know what I like about MARSOC Marines, they’re Marines!”
-Unknown

MARSOF consist of specially screened, assessed, selected, and trained Marines and Sailors to serve as MARSOF **Multi-dimensional Operators (MDO)**. The MDO is a mentally agile member of the ultimate adaptable team. The MDO is capable of operating from the tactical to strategic levels simultaneously, holistically evaluating problems and challenges, comprehending the situation, and making critical decisions in a timely and effective manner. MDOs execute missions in largely unstructured and ambiguous environments, often including rapid and diverse changes in terrain, enemy, and climate. MDOs understand the impact of their actions, their non-actions, the environments they operate in, and how to achieve desired effects ranging from tactical to strategic (Figure 2-1). They comprehend the value of doing the right thing for the right reasons, the nature of complex issues, and have the ability to understand, decide, and act within

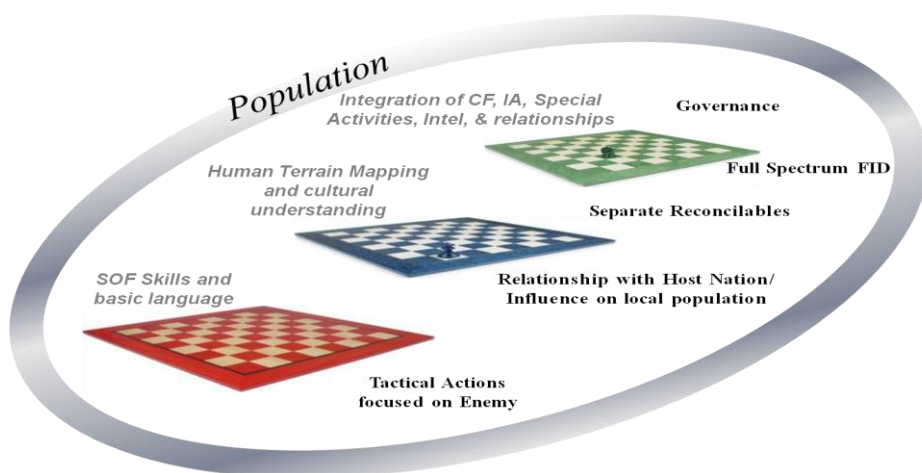


Figure 2-1

multiple nested levels of intent. They possess an attitude of “Spiritus Invictus” that enables them to achieve success whatever the challenge, based upon this mindset of unconquerable spirit.

MARSOF are unique among Special Operations Forces because they maintain a shared heritage and correspondingly strong bond with our parent service as “soldiers from the sea.” They possess the inherent Marine Corps Values and Warrior Ethos of all Marines. They demonstrate and subscribe to the mindset that makes them unique as United States Marines. Their foundation as Marines, combined with our belief in the SOF truths, an unconquerable spirit, and focus on resiliency of the Warrior make MARSOF unique among SOF. Their relationship and shared identity with the Marine Corps enables interoperability between MARSOF and other Marine Forces with an emphasis on the skills necessary to expeditiously project special operations capabilities anywhere in the world. The Marine Corps’ foundational concept as an expeditionary scalable air-ground-logistic team capable of conducting the full spectrum of operations in any clime and place is in unison with USSOCOM’s philosophy of deploying for purpose. In an era where engagement is vital to shaping the environment, the Marine Corps and USSOCOM, through a combination of special operations and forward deployed forces create a synergistic effect for stopping wars before they start.

The Marine Corps’ philosophy and mindset of integrating the six war fighting functions, combined with MARSOF’s enhanced Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Intelligence systems and unique ability to task organize facilitate our core capability for Command and Control of small lethal expeditionary teams capable of executing complex distributed operations to achieve strategic effects. MARSOF operational platforms include individual submersibles, inflatable maritime surface platforms, unmanned aerial systems, and the family of SOF ground mobility

vehicles. MARSOC’s unique ability to task organize the CS and CSS Marines enables MARSOC to provide infinitely adaptable SOF with unmatched agility capable of conducting sustained expeditionary distributed operations in austere environments.

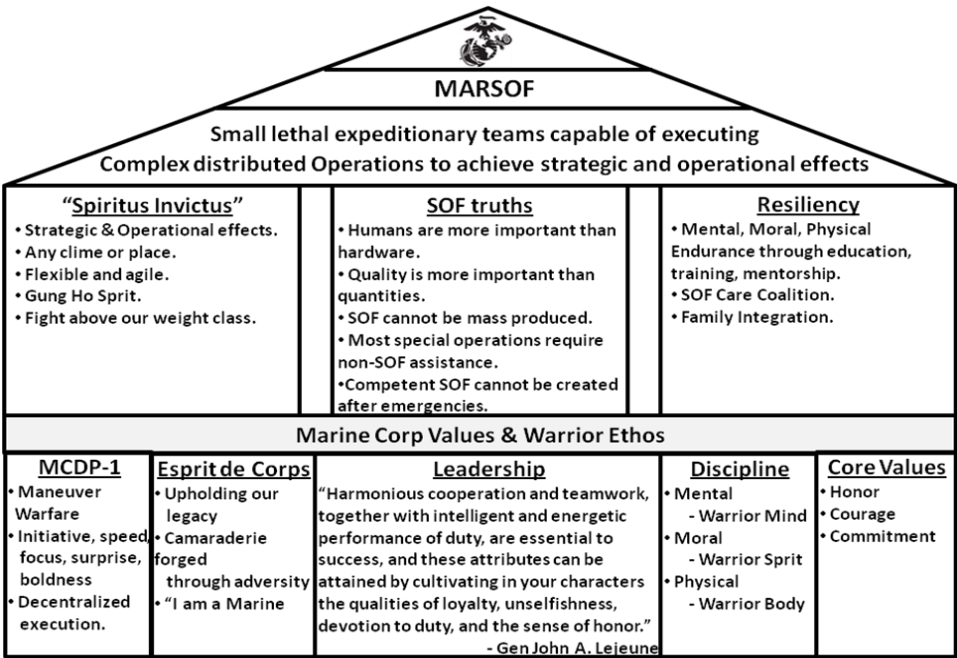


Figure 2-2

MARSOF conducts tactical operations to achieve operational or strategic-level effects. MARSOF are specially selected and trained Marines that conduct SOF core activities and operations to include DA, SR, preparation of the environment (PE), security forces assistance (SFA), CT, FID, and counterinsurgency (COIN), while supporting counter proliferation (CP) and unconventional warfare (UW) in hostile, denied, and politically sensitive environments.

Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC)

Mission. To recruit, organize, train, equip, educate, sustain, maintain combat readiness, and deploy task-organized, scalable, expeditionary MARSOF worldwide to accomplish special

operations missions assigned by the Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command (CDRUSSOCOM) and/or GCCs employing SOF.

Our missions demand that MARSOC develop Marines to operate across the range of military operations under any conditions. MARSOC must organize and equip Marines to succeed when employed in austere environments with limited external support and under mission orders. MARSOC must continue to develop and refine skills and equipment to operate as a MAGTF and reinforce our core strength of MAGTF Command and Control. MARSOC must develop force projection capabilities from land and sea-based platforms to provide unique MAGTF-like SOF capabilities to CDRUSSOCOM for global rapid response for crisis situation with strategic effects. A key strength of MARSOC is our organizational agility, adaptability, and expeditionary natures which enable us to more rapidly deploy for the unexpected in the protection of our national security.

MARSOC's VISION is to be America's force of choice to provide expeditionary, task-organized, special operations forces for worldwide SOF operations. The Marine Corps' MAGTF concept provides the foundation for MARSOC's organizational structure and capabilities; scalable air-ground-logistics SOF capable of executing independent operations against a wide range of adversaries, in any environment, under various conditions to include time-sensitive crisis situations of a strategic nature. Our unique capability to integrate and task-organize MARSOF units with enhanced CS and CSS structure, combined with our core strength of MAGTF Command and Control provides the CDRUSSOCOM with rapid response SOF capable of independent distributed operations. Our MAGTF integration mindset and robust command and control systems enable MARSOF HQ units to integrate and synchronize joint, coalition, and interagency

forces into a single-battle concept for SOF operations within assigned areas of operations. MARSOF's HQ units vary in size ranging from Marine Special Operations Company, Special Operations Task Force, and Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force. These MARSOF HQs units are uniquely organized and equipped to integrate all the war fighting functions in a holistic manner that achieves effects well above our "weight class."

Our future relies upon the reality that our Staff Non-Commissioned Officer MDOs are standard bearers and keepers of our past and the directors of our future. They represent and demonstrate the Marine Corps ethos, SOF mindset, and MARSOC philosophy. They are and will be the centerpiece of our experience and intellectual repository. Through their leadership and mentorship of the next generation of MDOs, they will be the continuity of MARSOC, ensuring the next generation is prepared to critically frame the nature of the issues of their operating environments and how to meet the current and future complex challenges through reinforcing our core competencies of adaptability through task organization, cultural climate of mental agility, and unique ability to integrate the war fighting functions for a holistic approach to achieving effects at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. As MARSOC looks to the future, we remain dedicated to being agile and adaptable to providing our Nation with the most responsive SOF for employment in any clime and place against any adversary or threat.

Our expeditionary nature, ability to fight above our weight class, and enhanced command and control capabilities of the SOF MAGTF will remain our focus to deploy small lethal expeditionary teams capable of executing complex distributed operations to achieve strategic effects.

Chapter 3

MARSOF Recruiting

“I joined MARSOC for the same reason that I became a Marine—intense, determined people who aren’t afraid to win. MARSOC was the opportunity to work in a small group of capable individuals who are allowed to think and act with skilled creativity.”

—Corporal, 3rd MSOB

MARSOF Recruiting

Service with MARSOC is a highly demanding assignment because of the unique undertakings of SOF. MARSOF are expected to perform on several different levels, often in austere environments. MARSOC Marines must be individually mature, intelligent, mentally agile, determined, ethical, physically fit so they are able to contribute to and collaborate as part of an independent team. The MARSOC screening process is values-based in order to identify those Marines that demonstrate the potential to succeed as Multi-dimensional operators; steadfast in their resolution to accomplish the mission, and determined to excel as a valued member of the MARSOC community that embodies a Spiritus Invictus – an unconquerable spirit.

Who is a Multi-Dimensional Operator?

The MDO is a highly adaptable and mentally agile member of the ultimate adaptable and agile team – in essence a Combat Athlete. The MARSOC combat athlete transcends Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) and experience level. The MDO is the type of individual who, through training and targeted development of baseline attributes, has an increased capability to simultaneously operate in multiple domains in order to solve complex problems with the professionalism expected of a Marine and required of

SOF. This individual must conduct missions in a largely unstructured, dangerous, and ambiguous environment, often including rapid and diverse changes in human and physical terrain, weather and enemy force posture. MDOs appreciate the impact of their actions; they appreciate the various factors affecting underlying socio-economic and political situations in a particular environment, and formulate the best approach – kinetic or non-kinetic – through the integration of operations and intelligence and synchronization of organic and non-organic capabilities to achieve optimum effects. MARSOC's Multi-dimensional Operators fall into three categories:

Critical Skills Operators (CSO): Critical Skills Operators are assigned to MARSOC in operator billets at the Team, Company, and Battalion level. A Marine is designated a CSO upon completion of Assessment and Selection (A&S) and graduation from the Individual Training Course (ITC). CSOs deploy to an area of operation in order to plan and execute missions independently. Such missions can range from direct action and special reconnaissance one day to foreign internal defense or unconventional warfare based on intelligence gathered and opportunities identified. CSOs possess the training and agility to transition between these missions as requirements change.

Special Operations Capabilities Specialist (SOCS): SOCS Marines are assigned to MARSOC based on their specialized MOS skill and receive additional training and certification through a specialized MARSOC Force training pipeline. SOCS are strategic and tactical force multipliers. SOCS billet fields include, but are not limited to, Intelligence, Communications, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Dog handlers, and Fire Control Specialists. Marines assigned to SOCS billets in MARSOC will execute a 60 month tour,

during which they complete SOF specific training.

Special Operations Combat Services Specialist (SOCSS):

SOCSS Marines are primarily assigned to MARSOC to work in their Primary Military Occupational Specialty (PMOS) in fields such as Motor Transport and Logistics. In addition to their PMOS duties these Marines will gain additional SOF skill sets as required in support of SOF operations. SOCSS Marines are typically assigned to MARSOC for a period of 36 months.

SOCS/SOCSS Marines are frequently deployed alongside Marine Special Operations Teams; these personnel must meet basic screening and training criteria but are currently not required to attend a formal assessment and selection process. SOCS/SOCSS are self identified or assigned to MARSOC through standard Manpower Management – Enlisted Assignments Branch manning and staffing requirements based upon Permanent Change of Station/ Permanent Change of Assignment eligibility.

The search for the Critical Skills Operator

MARSOC uses MDOs as recruiters in order to best screen and evaluate Marines for their potential to become a CSO. Recruiters use Values Based Screening; the diligent screening of every applicant to ensure they meet mental, moral, and physical qualifications, based on established standards. Our recruiters screen to ensure a Marine has embodied the ethos of Honor, Courage, and Commitment. CSOs raise their hands as volunteers to become members of MARSOC. They can be called on to be: negotiators, advisors, teachers, problem solvers, and warriors. MARSOC operators must execute sound judgment at the tactical, operational, and strategic level of war, simultaneously. To be given this latitude, the CSO must have a solid moral

foundation and strength of character to support unquestioned trust and confidence.

MARSOF CSO Qualification Standards:

Mental

- Applicants must be able to excel in a dynamic learning environment. Applicants must possess a minimum General Technical score of 105 on the Armed Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery.
- Applicants will undergo a Psychological evaluation, which consists of a battery of written psychological exams, and interviews will be conducted in order to determine each Marine's Intelligence level and mental suitability.

Moral

- Moral character is vital. Candidates must show maturity, sound judgment, and honesty.
- MARSOF requires that all candidates obtain and maintain a minimum security clearance of Secret.
- Applicants will be screened for any civilian, military police, or Uniform Code of Military Justice involvement. Each incident will be reviewed in detail and the "Whole Marine Concept" is applied in determining if an individual has the moral fiber to be a part of MARSOF.

Physical

- Applicants must initially meet the following minimum physical screening requirements to attend the Assessment & Selection Program:
 - Minimum score of 225 on the Marine Corps Physical Fitness Test.
 - Demonstrate the ability to properly conduct abandon ship drill from a 6 meter platform, swim 300 meters

continuously in utility blouse and trousers without Combat Equipment or boots, and tread water in a utility blouse and trousers unassisted for ten minutes then transition to the survival float using the blouse and trousers for floating for five minutes.

- Perform an individual 12 mile hike with a fighting load of 45 pounds in a time of four hours or less.

- Applicants must be medically fit. For safety of the applicant, as well as the ability to successfully complete the training, it is required that the Marine must have a current Naval Special Warfare/Special Operations Duty Medical Examination Physical and be found qualified. Additionally the Marine must have a current Periodic Health Assessment and must be within Marine Corps height and weight standards.

Commitment to maintaining MARSOC's high standard is essential to maintaining the foundation of the organization, its people – the MDOs. Marines interested in becoming MDOs should be referred to a recruiter at 888-93-MARSOC or to the website www.marsoc.marines.mil.

Chapter 4

MARSOF Selection

“SOF Operators cannot be mass produced” - SOF Truths

“The ideal product of A&S is “The Marine who consistently demonstrates, under arduous and ambiguous conditions, those attributes that MARSOC has identified as fundamental in the process of building a Critical Skills Operator.”

—Anonymous

Assessment and Selection (A&S)

All members of MARSOC are recruited, screened, and assessed. The Assessment and Selection process varies for each MDO depending on their specific MOS. This chapter deals with the formal Assessment and Selection process for Critical Skills Operators. A&S is structured to determine whether or not a CSO candidate has the necessary attributes to successfully complete SOF entry level training and follow on assignment to an operational unit.

A&S is competitive and selective. CSOs must be mature, intelligent, mentally flexible, determined, and physically fit. They must be complex problem solvers who are comfortable working in an ambiguous environment. MARSOC recruiters provide potential candidates with a recommended training guide designed to physically prepare them for the rigors of the selection process but it is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that they are prepared to meet the challenges of A&S mentally, morally and physically.

Preparation for A&S

MARSOC applicants are presented with two valuable tools in order to prepare physically and mentally for A&S.

- 1) **The A&S 10 Week Preparation Guide.** This guide is designed to assist prospective candidates in attaining the appropriate level of physical fitness to be successful at MARSOC's A&S. Marines attending A&S perform physical tasks involving obstacles, swimming while wearing utilities, and traveling long distances cross country while carrying a rucksack. Applicants are advised to complete the entire program prior to reporting. Following the A&S guide helps every applicant prepare for these physical tasks. Total body strength and physical endurance is mission critical at A&S.

- 2) **Assessment and Selection Preparatory and Orientation Course (ASPOC).** MARSOC conducts ASPOC for all personnel applying for A&S. The primary goal of the course is to enhance an applicant's physical ability, confidence, and situational awareness prior to undergoing the formal A&S program. Additionally, this course will educate the applicant on the roles and missions of MARSOC as to ensure an understanding of the nature and level of commitment expected of a Critical Skills Operator. Each ASPOC is led by MARSOC CSOs who teach, coach, and mentor each participant. For Sergeants and below ASPOC is mandatory. For SNCO's and Officers, the course is voluntary.

MARSOC attributes

MARSOC focuses on ten key attributes during CSO assessment. The combination of all 10 attributes is felt to embody the type of Marine that will succeed at the ITC and as a future CSO. No single attribute carries more weight than the other during this process. MARSOC assesses candidates in individual and team events to ensure they possess the desired attributes that are required of a MDO. The 10 Attributes are as follows:

Integrity: Does the right thing even when no one is watching.

Effective Intelligence: The ability to solve practical problems when a “book solution” is not available. Learn and apply new skills to unusual problems by making sound and timely decisions.

Physical Ability: Having the necessary physical attributes and functional fitness to do one’s job and persevere under stress.

Adaptability: The ability to continuously evaluate information about the present situation and change your plans as the situation changes, continuously operating within Commander’s Intent.

Initiative: Going beyond the scope of required duties.

Determination: Ability to sustain a high level of effort over long periods of time regardless of adversity and complex situations.

Dependability: Can be relied on to complete tasks correctly, on time, and without supervision.

Teamwork: Working well within a team, large or small.

Interpersonal Skills: Ability to interact and influence others with a minimum of unnecessary strife or friction.

Stress Tolerance: Ability to deal with ambiguous, dangerous, high pressure and/or frustrating events while maintaining control of emotion, actions, composure and effectiveness.

Ethos and Whole Marine Concept

Candidates are required to continuously perform to their utmost ability in an ambiguous environment throughout the entire A&S program. The minimized personal interaction between the candidates and instructors allows the Marines to demonstrate the necessary attributes to solve problems on their own. This format allows for an objective observation of the candidate and their

demonstrated attributes within the event being conducted. MARSOC uses an evaluation tool known as the “Whole Marine Concept.” This ensures that candidates are objectively assessed and measured. The Whole Marine Program is a data based system that captures information on a candidate’s performance. Each event conducted has a performance grade sheet that reflects how well or how poorly a candidate did during that event.

The application of the grade is dependent on the candidate’s display of the desired attributes. Each candidate is measured statistically against their class and previous class performance to gauge where they stand amongst their peer group. This system helps to create an unbiased grading criteria.

Selection process

The data of the Whole Marine evaluation is provided to and aids the board members during selection. The results of each candidate’s performance are compiled and reviewed. After the review of the candidates’ packages by the Instructor Cadre, the Commander’s Board conducts another in depth review.

The board has an opportunity to interview the candidates and give recommendations to the MARSOC Commander on those candidates they feel possess the desired attributes of a CSO.

Marines selected for assignment to a CSO billet as a result of successful completion of A&S will be notified and their next step is to begin the CSO training pipeline. Marines who are not selected may be invited back to attend A&S at a later date.

Chapter 5

MARSOF Training

“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. These qualities, while important in no small degree in major warfare, are exceedingly important in small wars operations.”

-Small Wars Manual of 1940

Introduction

Skills, individual abilities, and operational capability sets, derived through training and education, are what sets apart SOF from conventional forces and enables SOF to conduct their assigned missions. MARSOC must develop and train adaptive, MDOs capable of understanding how actions at the tactical level can impact the strategic level. They must possess the capability to operate independently as well as integrate with inter-agency, coalition, and host nation personnel. MARSOC will deploy self-sufficient forces possessing regional, cultural, and linguistic expertise to employ unique capabilities across the full spectrum of special operations.

Leaders must utilize the training practices of continuous process improvement, thorough, continued and concurrent assessments, and the indispensable requirement for the connection of training to real world missions. Concepts such as the Systems Approach to Training and MARSOC Training Principles will guide the development of individual warriors and cohesive teams. Several themes stand out as hallmarks of the process:

- Train as you fight.
- Collaborative, centralized planning leading to decentralized execution.
- Assessment – the continuous empirical evaluation of our efforts so we can constantly improve.

Training Framework

We must develop Marines in light of the intended operational environment with a focus on his ultimate world-wide deployability across the full spectrum of special operations. Investment in training and educating our people—to sustain the current fight and to increase our knowledge and skills for the future fight—is vital to our success. MARSOF must understand and think critically about the global environment, link training to the tasks required for future areas of operation, and utilize the Systems Approach to Training for objective assessments of training and efficient feedback loops. MARSOC training creates a unique "MAGTF-like" mix of robust capabilities for MARSOC participation in Theater Security Cooperation Plans and combat operations. All training and education programs must prepare and empower our people to act in austere and complex environments against ever adapting enemies.

Training Objectives in Preparation for MARSOF Employment:

- **Field Expeditionary Special Operations Forces.** MARSOF must retain and exploit our shared Marine heritage as applied to Special Operations, including a MAGTF mindset and expeditionary approach to warfare. Specifically, MARSOF will train to be able to operate with all elements of USSOCOM and the General Purpose Force as well as integrate with United States Government and coalition entities at all levels within a theater of operation (whole of government approach).

- **Develop Distributable and Scalable Forces to Perform the Full Spectrum of Assigned Special Operations.** MARSOF will organize and train to deploy with integrated all-source intelligence fusion, communication, and logistics support for distributed operations.
- **Create Relevant Forces.** MARSOF will train to provide relevant capabilities from Phase 0 shaping actions to full spectrum combat operations, utilizing the full range of Irregular Warfare tool sets and appropriately balancing the indirect approach and direct action.
- **Cultivate Regional Expertise.** In order to achieve results in the contemporary operating environment, MARSOF must be capable of operating “by, with, and through” local forces and need to connect with the populace on multiple levels. Training and education programs must create culturally attuned personnel with relevant language fluency.
- **Focus on Persistent, Littoral Presence.** MARSOC will train, educate (and assign) personnel to facilitate sustained, relevant presence within the littoral areas of the arc of instability and institutionalize long term strategic partnerships with host-nation governments.
- **Embrace Resiliency.** The frequent and sustained global deployment of MARSOF demands a proactive approach to developing the mind, body, and spirit equally in all personnel. This “pro-habilitative” focus on personnel development “to the right of the bang” will ensure Marines and Sailors sustain peak performance through mission execution and rapidly rebound after injury or stress.

Training Principles

The following, time-tested training principles are adhered to by MARSOF leadership to ensure all MARSOC personnel receive the best possible preparation for global SOF operations.

Commanders are responsible for all training. Within the framework of the MARSOC Training Continuum, leaders provide guidance, set objectives, allocate resources, evaluate training effectiveness, and reduce or eliminate training detractors.

- **Mission Focus.** Training and education focus will correlate with assigned missions as directed by CDRUSSOCOM, the theater commander and METs derived from mission analysis.
- **Train the way you intend to fight.** Training is designed to reflect operational requirements, to include realistic conditions and standards based feedback (e.g. lessons learned) from currently deployed or returning SOF.
- **Train for Three Chess Boards.** Train to build Marines capable of operating on the “three chess boards.” Training events should include cognitively challenging, realistic scenarios incorporating language, cultural issues, and Law of War problems with strategic implications.
- **Detailed Planning, Decentralized Execution.** Detailed collaborative planning prior to decentralized execution provides organizational flexibility. Decisions are made where and when necessary by subordinate commanders, consistent with available resources and the commander’s intent, priorities, and mission objectives.
- **Prioritize.** Time is a critical factor associated with training and Quality of Life issues for our personnel. Training plans

that do not factor in available time are unrealistic and costly. Likewise, wasted or unused resources, whether school seats, contractor support, ranges and money, are often the result of poor training prioritization. MARSOB leaders will continuously review and revalidate training requirements in light of available time to ensure the skills produced are feasible and relevant to the overall strategic plan.

- **Training Resources.** Much like time prioritization, training program objectives will be structured to maximize the use of available and programmed resources. Whenever possible, subordinate commanders will integrate their training plans to reduce duplication of effort and waste.
- **Individual & Collective Training.** All training will be designed, developed, and delivered to achieve performance capability and competence for established and validated individual skills, collective skills, and Mission Essential/Joint Mission Essential tasks (METs/JMETs). All SOB task descriptions will feature a concise, observable, and measurable behavior necessary to perform the task; the conditions under which the behavior will occur; and standards of acceptable performance under the stated condition(s). Additionally, training will be conducted using a multi-echelon approach, i.e., individual, leader, and collective training tasks simultaneously focused on the accomplishment of a selected training event to achieve specified METs/JMETs Special Operations (SO) competency outcomes.
- **Evaluation and Continuous Process Improvement.** Accurately assessing training (the process as well as the result) is at times a very difficult task and is commonly

avoided. However, a process for reviewing and implementing feedback is not only vital, **but mandatory**.

- **Inculcate *Spiritus Invictus*.** The Human Performance Initiative is a USSOCOM program developed to enhance the performance and accelerate the recovery of SOF Warriors. Performance and Resiliency (PERRES) is not just a PT program—rather it is a holistic methodology focusing on the well being of the entire person – mind, body and spirit. The program changes the culture of physical, spiritual, and mental performance and resiliency among operators.
- **Train during Deployment.** Training doesn't end upon deployment. To sustain operational capability, MARSOF will train during deployment. This ensures we are prepared to provide world-wide deployable full spectrum special operations capability while also preventing the cycle of losing capability post-deployment and having to work back to that level before the next deployment.
- **Foster a Learning Organization.** Marine Corps history is replete with war fighting innovations: Advanced Base Doctrine, vertical envelopment, maritime pre-positioning, and the MAGTF concept. None would have been possible without an organizational framework and culture that empowers individuals and teams with openness to creativity, modernization and change from the bottom-up. The key characteristics of a learning organization are:
 - View failure as an opportunity to learn
 - Appreciate the complexities of a situation
 - Confidence to act with incomplete information
 - Open dialogue, encouraging team discussion, expecting everyone to offer solutions

- Consider training and education career enhancing
- Shared vision of end state

Encouraging learning within MARSOC empowers problem solving. *Visionary thought and imaginative design cannot be mandated—it must be nurtured.* Intelligent, talented individuals are attracted to open, creative organizations. These characteristics enable the formation of highly effective teams capable of increasing aptitude and thought.

Apply Joint & USSOCOM Doctrine and Best Practices. Effective training must be based on the concepts likely to be employed in operations. Joint and USSOCOM doctrine establishes the fundamentals of joint operations and provides guidance on how to best employ forces to achieve assigned objectives. MARSOC will leverage service and USSOCOM education institutions, like Joint Special Operations University, to ensure MARSOC leaders are equipped with the foundational knowledge to operate successfully at the strategic and operational levels of war. To remain relevant and useful, doctrine and Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures must be updated with current information and applied during training and education events. Training managers will identify and train to the tasks conducted in a joint/combined environment in accordance with USSOCOM and MARSOC directives and doctrinal publications. Tasks will be evaluated during the conduct of exercises and readiness evaluations in the same manner as all other METs.

MARSOC Training Continuum

In order to meet its mission to “organize, train, and equip” MARSOE for employment by CDRUSSOCOM and GCCs, the component has implemented a standard training continuum to efficiently generate force capability in concert with the training guidelines and principles in this chapter. Following recruitment,

assessment and selection, the MARSOC Marine will progress through a sequence of foundational, advanced, and collective training, all evaluated and reinforced during a rigorous full spectrum, mission rehearsal exercise prior to deployment. Upon return, this training and resultant operational effectiveness is evaluated via the lessons learned system and the cycle begins again with additional sustainment or advanced individual training.

Accessions Training

While the operational mindset and capability is initiated during assessment and selection, true foundational skills are first developed for MARSOC personnel during accessions training. Marines assessed and selected for assignment as CSOs attend the ITC.



Figure 5-1

conducted by Marine Special Operations School at Camp Lejeune, NC. ITC builds the multi-dimensional operator versed in diplomacy, development, and defense activities, capable of operating across the full spectrum of SO and possessing an understanding of the strategic implications of decisions. ITC focuses on producing a SOF operator well versed in SO skills sets: FID, Information Operations, IW, DA, SR, Security, Development and fitness. All SO skill sets are reinforced during multiple

practical exercises, including Derna Bridge, an exercise that challenges the students to accomplish SO tasks “by, with and through” a notional partnered nation force. SOCS and SOCCS Marines attend the SOF Training Course (STC) conducted by the MSOSG for their accession training. Like ITC, STC is guided by the Training Principles outlined previously, while preparing CS and select CSS Marines for the rigors of combat deployment with a Marine Special Operations Team (MSOT), Marine Special Operations Company (MSOC), or Special Operations Task Force (SOTF). Conducted in a formal school environment, STC provides unhindered, realistic, challenging training on basic and intermediate SOF war fighting skills.

Individual Training Phase

Following accessions training, CSOs and SOCSs report to their units and start to attain specialized skills in support of their MOS or anticipated mission. In this Individual Training Phase (ITP), Marines and Sailors focus first on billet MOS training and career progression skills before moving onto more advanced skills. MARSOF leaders, having conducted mission analysis of their future deployment, prioritize the remaining training time so select personnel can attain mission specific skills. MSOR and MSOSG supports subordinate units in ITP by allocating resources (material & non-material) to execute training in accordance with MARSOC Commander’s guidance, orders, and current tactical directives. MSOS supports units in ITP by providing advanced courses and skills training.

Unit Training Phase

Individuals receive either mission specific or career progression skills during the ITP that prepares them to conduct assigned special operations missions or baseline competencies. This phase is followed by a collective unit training phase (UTP) that focuses on integration of all assets, to include support and service

support, into mission profile scenarios in both direct and indirect operations specifically tailored to the assigned mission. At the beginning of this phase, select capabilities from training events prepare the unit to conduct full spectrum of SO missions. This standard training program is modified as appropriate based on the unit leader's mission analysis for the upcoming deployment. The end state of this phase is an operationally effective, task-organized MARSOF ready for deployment.

Exercise

Prior to deployment, each fully trained MARSOF unit participates in a Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRX) to validate the training received up to this point in the training continuum. The exercise is designed to certify that the unit can achieve its METs and effectively execute core and supporting tasks in a Joint SOF, Joint, interagency, coalition, and combined operations environment. Commander, Marine Special Operations Command oversees this certification process via the AC/S G-7 and, upon completion of the MRX, the AC/S G-7 recommends to COMMARFORSOC that the unit (MSOT/MSOC/SOTF) is ready to deploy.

Deployment

Training does not end upon deployment to the area of operations. All training is focused on MARSOF's ability to accomplish their mission essential tasks and the operational environment will provide MARSOF leadership the greatest assessment of their unit's ability to achieve those METs. Within the constraints of mission priorities, leaders must find the time to train their forces in relation to changes in enemy TTPs, the environment or unexpected tasking. As SOF are expected to be prepared for operational tasking across the range of SO activities in support of the theater commander, all available training time must be prioritized to maintain MARSOF in a state of high operational readiness.

Reintegrate, Rest, Refit

Upon redeployment, MARSOF leaders collect feedback from their personnel and units after completing post-deployment training and deployment After Action Reviews. This feedback (on both the training received prior to the deployment) and recommendations for future training based on unanticipated mission requirements can be incorporated into the next training cycle.

Assessment

Assessment is critical to ensuring training remains relevant and effective and is an integral component of MARSOC's Training Continuum. Assessment is the continuous *monitoring* and *evaluation* of the current situation and progress of an operation or training event.

Monitoring is the continuous observation of the current situation to identify opportunities for the force, threats to the force, gaps in information, and progress according to the plan or order. *Evaluation* is the comparison of relevant information on the situation or operations against criteria to judge success or progress. These definitions highlight four key aspects of assessment:

- Assessment is continuous throughout planning and execution. Assessment precedes, accompanies and follows all operations and training events.

Assessment occurs at all echelons and levels and applies to all aspects of the operation or training event while considering all elements of the force as well as the warfighting functions (*e.g. Command and Control, Intelligence, Fires, Maneuver, Logistics, and Force Protection*).

- Assessment focuses on the goals for the operation or training event. Foremost among the command's goal is the purpose of the operation or training event. Assessment must always link and ultimately reflect progress toward accomplishing the purpose.
- Assessment orients on the future. Current and past actions are of little value unless they can serve as a basis for future decisions and actions.

MARSOC has a comprehensive assessment process to assist the commander in answering the following questions. The first three questions are critical throughout the assessment process and provide the foundation for the fourth question, shaping and focusing follow on operations and training:

- *"Are we doing things right?"* (Are the operations appropriate for the environment? Are we executing tasks correctly and to the desired standard?)
- *"Are we doing the right things?"* (Are the operations achieving the intended effect? Is our training plan producing the necessary skill sets and capability?)
- *"How are we doing?"* (Measuring objectives against a baseline standard, like the operation order, campaign plan or training plan)

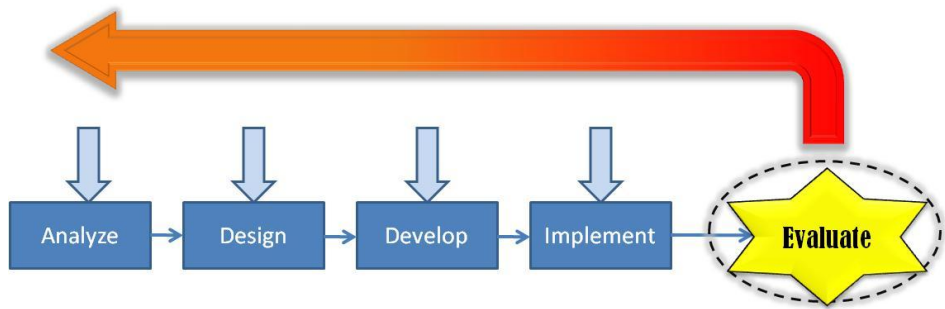


Figure 5-2

- *"What's next?" "When?"* (Future objectives, guidance and intent are derived from the first three questions for future planning of operations or training.)

Assessment should help the commander identify success or failure, determine the extent to which required conditions have been met for follow-on actions, and recognize whether a particular end state has commander to estimate the overall progress of an operation as it unfolds in the operational environment so he can make informed decisions for future actions, particularly for modifications to training. In training, assessment should validate a training plan, while also providing feedback in order to produce a better product or capability.

MARSOC's competitive advantage is our people. Investment in personnel and training is critical to attaining our goals and maintaining relevancy. Our primary sustainable advantage is our ability to collectively learn faster than others and build upon our basic core values and Marine culture as we add to our SOF mindset, operational experience and intellectual capital. Training supports both the accomplishment of operational objectives and sustains the MARSOC MDO throughout his career.

Chapter 6

“The moral is to the physical as 3:1” – Napoleon

MARSOF LEADERSHIP

Leadership is the key factor in any military organization. In the realm of Special Operations, the tenets of functional leadership are even more critical – due to the size of the unit and the nature of operations. Small units – often operating far forward in an extremely austere environment – often place high demands on leaders. The bedrock of MARSOF is its ability to develop leadership at all levels, while specifically leveraging the insights, experience and innovation of the staff non-commissioned officer (SNCO) as the backbone of MARSOC. SNCO leadership is integral to the effectiveness of the unit, as it is based on a multitude of skills, maturity and poise as a result of exposure to countless situations over many deployments in the special operations environment.

MARSOF personnel are assessed and selected due to maturity, latent ability, experience, and suitability for special operations. They are also selected for their leadership ability and compatibility to work in a small, cohesive team. While leadership is paramount in any military organization, its effects are magnified in special operations. Cohesion within units and between units is what is essential. The challenge is to maintain strong cohesion within the team but also with the company or SOTF as teams of teams - especially when these teams are from multiple USSOCOM components and/or partner forces.

There are three basic tenets of MARSOF leadership: 1) the leadership trust pyramid; 2) teaching, coaching, and mentoring; and 3) mission orders.

LEADERSHIP TRUST PYRAMID

Trust is a function of actions more than words. In today's competing environment, the tendency is to be "all in" regarding mission focus. Experience has demonstrated that this myopic approach is detrimental to cohesion and flies in the face of Napoleon's axiom. It is the intent of MARSOF leadership to become an enabler in operationalizing the elusive and many times difficult-to-define pillars of the "Trust Pyramid" (see Figure 6-1). Beginning with genuine care and concern for the individual and the individual's world, the leader and the led form a connection based on open and frank communication, combined with value and unit and individual pride. This leads to trust in each other that allows for better decisions and an awareness of the inner levels of the Trust Pyramid, more commonly known as the "Hope Card".

In this pyramid, the base layers of care/concern and connection and communication strengthen, leading to the drive for a higher purpose for both unit and individual. Deeper still is the need and quest for realizing how the individual and the unit are doing, both in terms of the physical - and perhaps more importantly, the moral/ethical. At the summit is the Hope Card – the intangible aspect of knowing that all the hard work, diverse aspects, and shared choices are leading to success in combat and in life. Each individual – regardless of rank or time in the Corps – must possess a hope card. This card is the individual's goal in life – and for many, it may lie beyond the Marine Corps. But that card - and its often wide-ranging parameters - must be allowed to meld into the fabric of everything he does, his relationship to the unit and the mission, and the bond it forms. This inner level completely cements the bond of trust – which is easily the most elemental dynamic of cohesion, be it in a combat engagement or the growing and nurturing of a family.

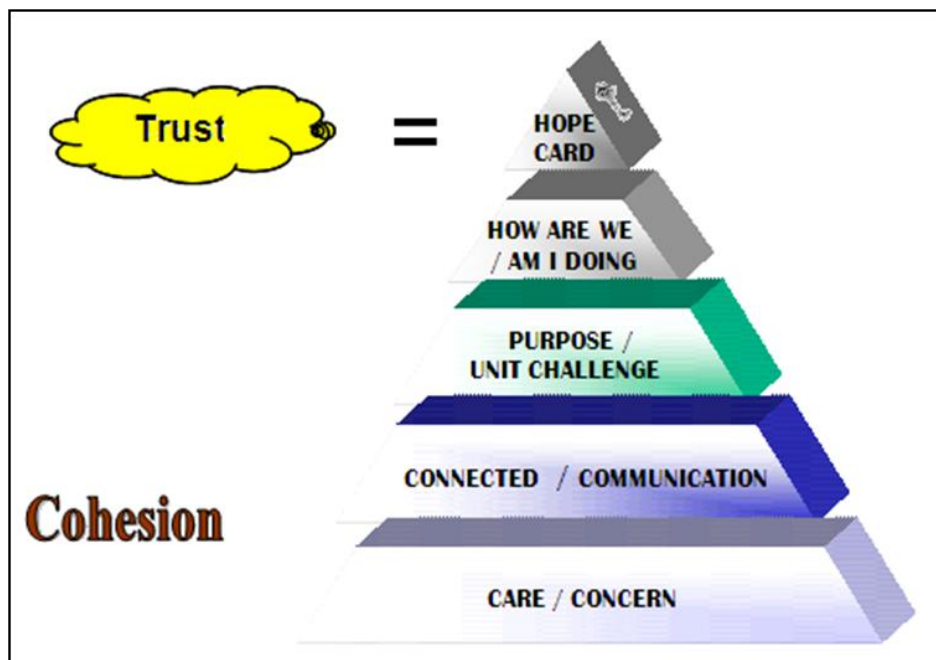


Figure 6-1

TEACHING, COACHING, MENTORING

The nature of MARSOF missions dictate the need for integrated leadership that includes a high degree of teaching, coaching, and mentoring. Rather than a more detached leadership posture, the MARSOF leader must serve in many capacities to fully integrate the high degree of varied skill sets and talent level of MARSOF.

Teaching is primarily concerned with the delivery of skills and knowledge to the unit members and attached assets, and it includes the science of MARSOC operations. In this role, the MARSOF leader must endeavor to develop a synergy of effort to instill an open and effective academic environment. This environment is rarely a formal classroom; rather, it will occur during all phases of training. In his role as a teacher, the leader must use his position as a knowledge base – but must be able to remain open to the influx of the unit member's ideas and innate effect a laboratory of intellect and practical experience. The MARSOF leader must endeavor to use his teaching skills to foster

a climate that encourages unit members to want to learn and continue to develop a knowledge base.

MARSOF leaders teach to inform and deliver knowledge – but also to instill confidence and enthusiasm in the individual unit member. Rather than endless lectures and practical applications, the MARSOF leader teaches in every aspect of performance. Once the knowledge base is established and nurtured, the second aspect – coaching – begins in earnest.

Coaching is the ability of the MARSOF leader to take the myriad skills and abilities of the unit and amalgamate the individual members to a functioning whole. The essence of coaching is the application of tools in the decentralized decision making environment. The centerpiece is Mission Orders. Using tried and true Marine Corps leadership principles, the leader uses personal example, experience, motivation, and inspiration to develop his unit and its tactics, techniques, and procedures. Rather than a traditional athletic coach, the MARSOF leader is – in effect – a “Player-Coach” who is on the field with his team. He must possess a skill base commensurate with the members of his unit and – concurrently – develop himself as well as bring cohesiveness and increasing skill progression to the unit. There is no set style of coaching; the leader will use his own developed style to deliver his message. Additionally, the leader should seek to develop subordinate unit leaders’ coaching tools.

Coaching is wide-ranging and uses aspects of teaching to develop a functional unit. The nature of both is group-oriented. The third aspect – mentoring – is individual.

Mentoring is the bedrock of the MARSOF Community. All MARSOF should aspire to both mentor and be mentored. This relationship – a hallmark of warrior cultures – seeks to develop an

open and cohesive bond between a duo with regard to professional development, personal interaction, and future aspirations. A mentor is a sage counsel to a younger and less experienced member of the unit; the aspect of General Lejeune's "Teacher-Scholar" is germane. In MARSOB, mentoring becomes the synthesis of teaching and coaching aspects of performance and further cements the bond between the leader and the led with open communication and concerned and connected leadership.

Teaching, Coaching, and Mentoring play elemental roles in MARSOB. The SOB axiom that "people are more important than hardware" dictates that the human dimension be given far more importance than any piece of equipment. Development of the cohesive aspects of the unit can only be accomplished by placing the highest emphasis on leadership. The leadership foundation creates an environment in which leaders can employ their units in a decentralized and distributed manner – fully taking advantage of the high degree of training and skill enablers. A high degree of latitude is given to unit leaders due to this trust. The facilitation metric – and eventually action beneficiary - is in mission-type orders.

MISSION ORDERS

A characteristic of MARSOB is its ability to break down into elements - fully capable of functioning independently - in a distributed operations setting. The high degree of training – coupled with small unit leadership and honor-bound cohesion – gives the MARSOB an innate ability to cover wide areas.

Due to the nature of special operations, mission sets will often range from highly kinetic to civil military operations. The leader and his subordinate elements will need to ensure execution is covered across the full-spectrum. The method for ensuring this

execution is based in mission orders.

Mission orders are the ultimate expression of decentralized execution; however they can only be fully optimized with an understanding and appreciation of Commander's Intent two levels up the chain of command, and the linkage to desired operational and strategic effects. MARSOF leadership enables this execution, even in missions of tremendous risk and importance. Given from higher headquarters, the mission order and accompanying Commander's Intent provide the subordinate leader at each level with an overarching mission – but leaving the planning and execution method to the subordinate leader. Much of the freedom of movement, specificity of effort, and specified and implied tasks are developed at the lowest level of execution. Significant effort and emphasis is placed on initiative, experience, and ultimately trust – both in the leader and in the training system – based on a comprehensive understanding of Commander's intent two levels up the chain of command.

In some instances, the MARSOC operator will find himself in situations where there is an absence of orders. These situations will often be beyond those encountered on the battlefield. It is in these situations where “trust” in leaders and the organization come into play as the Marine asks himself, “what would my team leader want me to do?”

MARSOF leadership calls upon a rich heritage in its tenets. From aspects of the WWII Marine Raiders to include the 2d Raider Battalion's Makin Island raid and Long Patrol on Guadalcanal; 1st Raider Battalion's meeting engagement on Tulagi and “hold at all cost” defense of Bloody Ridge; Amphibious Reconnaissance Battalion's clandestine hydrographic surveys in the South Pacific; and Force and Reconnaissance units “Keyhole” and “Stingray” operations in Vietnam, small units – aggressively trained and led –

have fought well above their weight in a wide variety of missions. While the basic constitution of the individual is certainly worthy of merit, it is the leadership in each of these units that galvanizes them to a higher level.

Chapter 7

Spiritus Invictus

MARSOC PERRES Program Intent, Methodology, Integration and Future

Today's dynamic and persistent environment of War on Terror has placed consistent and potentially life-altering demands on military personnel and their respective families. Perhaps more than in any other age, the Armed Forces *writ large* faces the prospect of years of continued high optempo and deployments. It is an undisputed fact that SOF have been, are, and will remain at the vanguard of this effort. For the United States Marine Corps, the Marines, Sailors, Civilians, and Families of the MARSOC will continue to train, deploy, return, and train and redeploy at a heretofore unprecedented rate.

MARSOC PERRES incorporates three aspects (mind, body, and spirit) into an overarching, principal-based ethos that is laser-focused at giving the MARSOC community the tools to obtain and maintain overall resilience of the force: the individual and unit's capacity to withstand mental, spiritual, and physical stress and hardship and remain functionally and holistically able to self and group renew. PERRES is an integral factor in its mission to give the MARSOC community a Spiritus Invictus – an unconquerable spirit.

The purpose of PERRES is to provide the MARSOC community with an integrated and holistic apparatus capable of providing physical, mental, and spiritual optimal performance throughout the individual member and his/her family's tenure with MARSOC and beyond. The method is a combination of tools and techniques, integrated with concerned and focused leadership, to weave the

PERRES methodology into all aspects of training and deployment. The end state is a Command that is, in effect, an integrated and resilient community both dedicated and able to withstand the rigor of a turbulent and uncertain period in our Nation's history.

The effort is far-reaching and dynamic. In essence, it is the ultimate team and individual experience, in which each member is taught, coached, and mentored to become a highly adaptable athlete on an ultimately adaptable team, in essence a combat athlete. Deeper in the program's ethos: a training and life-skills protocol that develops a multi-dimensional operator. That Marine, Sailor, Civilian, or a family member is a critical part of that protocol; each member of the community is an equal and integral participant. While much of the attention appears to be placed on the MARSOC CSO, PERRES is actually identical for each and every MARSOC Community Member. Rather than design and implement a program that has levels or terms to include operator-level, support-level, and civilian-level equivalent, PERRES is the lifestyle training program for the MARSOC Community.

The combat athlete must execute missions in a largely unstructured and dangerous environment, with no time limit, seasonal interlude, and often including the rapid and diverse changes in terrain, enemy, and climate. There is not an opponent but an enemy; there is no crowd but rather a populace of varying loyalty and allegiance; and most times an "off-season" of learning a completely new and ever-evolving set of rules, tactics, techniques, and procedures. In the integrated core of their existence, a family is forced to endure and attempt to keep pace with this highly trained but often stressed and pushed-to-maximum limit individual. This individual is the warrior. But over a career that will span from a four to 30 year period, time and rigor can and does erode even the most resilient and does erode even the most resilient and fortified. The warrior class, the

singular realm of the Military Combat Athlete, must have ever-evolving training for varied environment and mission; cannot “peak” but must be optimal at all times; and most of all execute in any arena. PERRES is unique in its approach in that it will take aspects of high-level athletic training (to include the extensive teaching, coaching, and mentoring aspects and cutting edge nutrition - and combine it with the values exhibited in the military combat athlete’s warrior class) dedication to family, country, unit, and mission to deliver the MARSOC community to a state of readiness for mission and resilience for life.

Methodology

PERRES synergizes the three aspects into a habitual and interactive tapestry (see Figure 7-1). In the mental sphere, aspects of mental health, stress screening, and warrior transition from combat to CONUS are all executed and integrated by



qualified professionals. In the physical sphere, strength and conditioning, athletic training, and physical therapy are conducted with Marines and their respective families. In the spiritual sphere, the aspects of pastoral care, positive experiences/life meaning, marriage enrichment, and religious services are all extensively brought to light for the community. Perhaps most relevant, all three disciplines deal with the following: sports psychology aspects, nutrition, stress coping, quality of life, and rapid recovery. And in this convergence, PERRES combines and galvanizes the MARSOC community to seek assistance and advice from qualified professionals solely focused on providing: 1) high-end performance in combat or contingency; 2) the often trying and tenuous transition from combat to family life and its

reciprocal; 3) coping with the loss of loved ones or the horror of past experiences or spectre of the unknown-to-come; 4) the often stressful realization of the degradation of performance due to prolonged exposure to the rigor of combat, separation from family members, and the pressures of balancing a personal and professional ethos.

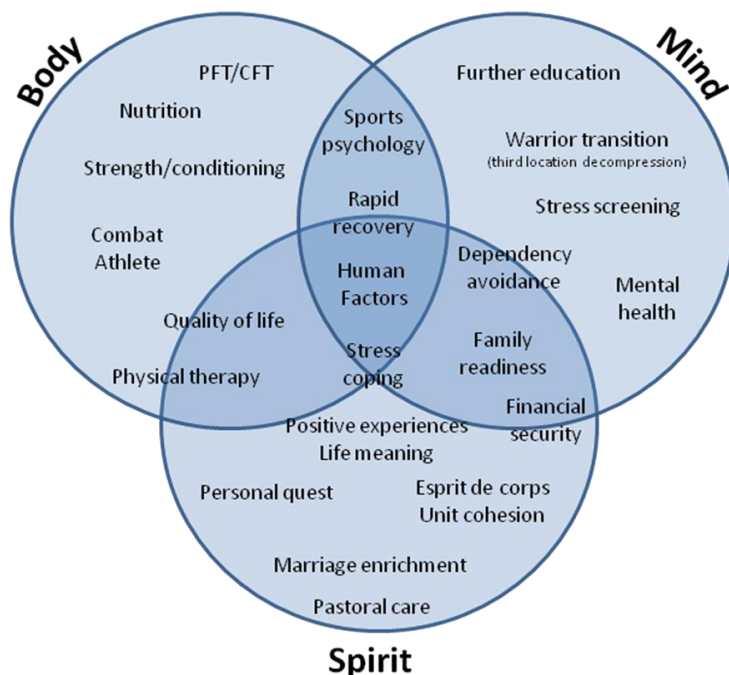


Figure 7-1

Pro-Habilitative Physical Training

Marines have always been fit; physical readiness and toughness have long been hallmarks of the Corps. Our individual Marine has done amazing things in athletic events, day-to-day performance, and most importantly on the battlefield. Professional sports and Division 1 athletic programs are fully integrated with strength and conditioning coaches and staffs and it is clear that specialization, in both exercise and coaching, is a mainstay of the performance industry. The Combat Athlete can be trained in this manner and PERRES will seek to provide the absolute cutting edge physical

environment. The PERRES coaching staff is well-qualified to plan, conduct, and integrate this training; beginning with a Functional Movement Screen and proceeding into an interactive program that is both individualized for the Marine but also adaptable for garrison and field conditions. PERRES staff members, by observing and charting actual operations and the rigor imposed on the Marine in the conduct of them, can design exercise regimens that are actually pro-habilitative in nature: that is, developing the tendon, ligament, and muscles to “callus” the individual for the high demands of combat. From increasing lower back work to allow for load bearing, to drills that provide ankle and knee strength and functional flexibility, the combat athlete is able to function in an environment that produces a physique and a type of “exo-skeleton” that makes him better able to work in combat and beyond.

Training at optimum also means having a nutritional base to work with. Unlike the professional athlete-performer, the combat athlete must in many of his endeavors eat what is available. But more in-depth knowledge of nutrition and its effects in various climates and environments give the Team a more knowledgeable and pro-active ability. Additionally, the incredible boom of nutritional supplements must be fully understood by the combat athlete. PERRES nutrition is designed to work within the available and most healthy foods and products that will deliver high end performance in combat.

Pro-habilitative conditioning is the desired end-state for PERRES physical training. A full understanding of the program for the individual joining MARSOC, throughout his/her career, and beyond is both necessary and critical to all members involved. Perhaps the most critical aspect is the teaching-coaching-mentoring. Each member must endeavor to provide this aspect, as well as function and develop as the combat athlete, whether in

an operational team, a staff support position, or as the family member.

The Complex, Critical-thinking Mind of the Combat Athlete

It is absolutely correct that, beyond physical ability and capability, the mind is the key to optimum performance. The confidence gained from repetition of tasks, integration of skill sets, and a full and effective support network is absolutely critical in any endeavor. Understanding of the environment, human factors, and outside influences all play a role in providing the individual a full and complete picture of the task he must accomplish. “Mindful practice” can be conducted in training to easily replicate the rigor of performance. However, even in the most controlled environments, the performer must deal with failure, pressure to perform, and the loss of status and ability over time.

The combat athlete has a far greater realm of difficulty. He must train for the certainty that he will go to combat. However, he knows, as do those who train him, that his environment shifts dramatically from moment to moment, his ability to deal with stress and rigor are literally life-changing, and the success or failure in most cases is never absolute or complete. His mental state is certainly the most complex of human endeavor.

Mental health, or the stress that degrades it, is an area that has in the past contained a stigma of weakness or inability to cope.

PERRES seeks to deliver closer working relationship and linkage with the individual, his chain of command, and the mental health care provider. Using an integrated approach, the individual must understand that there is no weakness in admitting that he/she is under stress. Concurrently, the chain of command must realize that adjustments to pre-conceived limits are constantly in flux and must

be considered in harmony with both medical recommendations and the day-to-day interaction with the individual.

While training the mind for optimal physical performance and resilient mental health is certainly stressed, an equally important mental aspect is that of the ability to develop critical thinking. A working definition of critical thinking is the identification and evaluation of evidence to guide decision-making. However, its aspects and ramifications are much more far-reaching and include a family of interwoven modes of thinking to include scientific, mathematical, historical, anthropological, economic, moral, ethical, and philosophical.

A Multi-Dimensional Operator must become a critical thinker due to the myriad skills that must be learned and the tremendous responsibility levied on each community member. Each community member must face the dynamic of “doing the right things vs. doing things right.” From the ever-growing requirements of the PTP, the priority decisions of what must be accomplished, to the more critical aspects of quality time with family and friends vs. the almost gravitational pull to the mission, and the seemingly endless array of specified and implied tasks related to mission success, the challenges of thought, balance, and evaluation are a swinging pendulum of stress and rigor.

Extensive tie-in to the unit Commander’s Human Factors Program is considered integral and vital to mental health and development of the community. This integrated program is a venue for the identification and tracking of at-risk Marines experiencing career or personal problems. The Human Factors Program ensures comprehensive treatment and solutions for the individual, and perhaps more importantly, it allows for consistent transparency between leaders and health care providers on mental health issues. As combat - and the associated stress and wear and tear

to family and overall health and wellness it festers – continues to test op-tempo, the MARSOC community's reliance on mental resilience will increase. The body and the mind must be tied together in everything from a daily physical training session to the high-end chaos of loss of life of a unit or family member. Asking for help from a mental health provider must become as common as asking a coach for assistance in a physical exercise. And underlying this fusion must be the most critical and elusive element: the spirit of the combat athlete.

The Unconquerable Spirit

The PERRES spirit is defined as “a tightly bonded community that, due to rigor, trust, and shared hardship, endeavors to seek and lead a life less ordinary.” In these simple words, the concept of spirit is based. It spans religion, yet it is not solely based on denominational connotation. It spans the human ethic, yet it has roots in the simple trust of the child in the parent, the led and the leader, and the past, the present, and the future to be conceived. It fosters dreams, goals, commitment, and ethos. In short, it is the connective tissue that has endeavored many of the great accomplishments of the human race and also the day-to-day workings of family, community, and friends.

It is an undisputable fact that every warrior culture has, as its underlying heartbeat, the resilient spirit. Resiliency cannot be accomplished if the spirit of the individual or the team is fractured, crushed, or diminished. The Marine Corps has, and will always have a strong and resilient esprit de corps. Each and every American who has claimed the title Marine has felt the esprit and its essence and eternal properties span our Corps to include families and friends of Marines. In the PERRES integrated approach, a combination of thought-provoking and candid topics ranging from everyday ethics to life's struggles in today's military for service members and their families, are discussed and evolved

as to best support the individual and his family, the unit, and the mission. There is an evolutionary aspect of this portion of PERRES and there is a requirement to remain flexible. The one aspect that is rock-solid is the steady presence of the teacher/coach/mentor, their continued input and ability to listen and design aspects to tailor to individual and unit needs always underpins the resiliency of the spirit.

PERRES “spirituality” is about leadership and care/concern. Unlike many aspects of mainstream society in which spirit falls into the realm of religion, the Chaplain is an integral participant but not the sole teacher. Rather, the community is both teacher and recipient with many members of the Community called to serve multiple roles. The MARSOC community is on a journey; and that journey is dictated by the call of the needs of a Nation-at-War and conducted by serving members and their families. In essence, this journey has been the life of the warrior class since the dawn of time. It is clearly “a life less ordinary.” And to lead this life “less ordinary,” there must exist a baseline touchstone. In PERRES, that touchstone is trust.

Leadership, Trust, Cohesion, and PERRES – The Institutional Heart and Soul

The intent of PERRES is to become an enabler in the operationalizing of the pillars of the “Trust Pyramid”, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 6 (see Figure 6-1). Beginning with genuine care and concern for the individual and his/her world, the leader and the led form a connection based on open and frank communication combined with value and unit and individual pride leading to the trust in each other that allows for better decisions and an awareness of the inner levels of the Trust Pyramid, more commonly known as the “Hope Card” (see Figure 6-1). Each individual, regardless of rank or time in the Corps, must possess a hope card. This card is his/her goal in life, and for many, it may lie

beyond the Marine Corps. But that card, and its often wide-ranging parameters, must be allowed to meld into the fabric of everything he/she does, his/her relationship to the unit and the mission, and the bond it forms. This inner level completely cements the bond of trust, which is easily the most elemental dynamic of cohesion, be it in a combat engagement or the growing and nurturing of a family.

The functional drive of PERRES is to synergize its three elements and integrate with the aspects described above. In effect, the individual mind, body, and spirit aspects are pieces of the skeletal structure of the MARSOC community. Its leadership and cohesion give it a functioning and active institutional heart. PERRES integration gives it a resiliency to remain intact, vibrant, and able to withstand rigor over time and turbulence. In effect, PERRES' recuperative end state is the institutional soul of the MARSOC community.

Catalyst, Integrator, and Mentor: The MARSOC Coach

If there is one "key player" in the PERRES architecture, it is the MARSOC coach. A member of the community who has walked the road and experienced the highs and lows of the military lifestyle, he is well-qualified and elementally-focused on developing the practices, procedures, and most of all the product: a Marine or Sailor who is functionally capable to perform and resilient enough to continue to grow, perform, and flourish in the community. He is the leader in excelsus; the backbone of his unit; the ultimate man in the arena.

The MARSOC coach is driven to synergize programs of various type (athletic training, life skills developing, etc.) for the benefit of those in his charge and in his case members of his team. Using proven leadership, an ever-evolving set of skills, and the bond formed by cohesive trust and honor, he is well-placed to take the

PERRES apparatus to levels that are commensurate with the unit capability at any given time and place.

The MARSOC coach has many responsibilities beyond the PERRES scope. However, in his capacity as a coach, he will continually refer to the following:

- Marines are family
- Family is community
- Community is a source of strength
- Community is sanctuary
- Coaches lead, teach, coach, mentor – and assess in spirit, mind and body

This unique individual is the catalyst for much of what his unit can and will do on a daily basis. Perhaps more importantly, he is the integrator of PERRES goals and efforts. The MARSOC coach is integrated into the fabric of the unit member's entire life; he is the ultimate "Coach on the Field." And in this case, the "Field" is the field of life.

Program Integration

It is the intent of PERRES to allow unit and even individual to work interactively with the PERRES apparatus, and perhaps most importantly the unit leadership to develop a program that fits the needs of the Community for a place, time, or event.

An example is PERRES integration during a deployment cycle. During the pre-deployment phase, PERRES physical training is designed to build mobility, stability, strength, flexibility and endurance with athletic training and medical care. PERRES mental aspects will include early inclusion of trained medical professionals to provide education of the rigor-to-come and assess past wear and tear of the individual. PERRES spiritual

aspects offer focused seminars and discussions to provide members with enrichment of their daily lives and the lives of their loved ones and the unbreakable bond of trust and genuine care and concern to a community and all members. During the deployment, the physical aspect will shift to integration of the principles taught and trained in CONUS. An adaptable training program designed to maintain performance is integrated for inclusion during combat operations. Mental aspects offer training to the unit leadership to be more aware of the indicators of mental trauma and treatment options. Spiritual aspects continue to focus on care and inclusion into providing an alternative to a solitary existence during the rigor of combat or awaiting a family member who is deployed. As the unit returns, events to include a Third Location Decompression, an interlude between combat and CONUS for the deployed members can be utilized. This event brings together all three PERRES aspects, designed and mentored by both the unit and PERRES personnel, to gauge individual posture for the return home. Concurrently, the family and unit are coached and mentored to anticipate, integrate, and execute the changes and transitional hurdles of the return to CONUS and family life. Our most precious natural resource is our people.

Summary

The ability to train them, sustain them, and retain them is critical to our ability to keep our country safe and prosperous. The key factors are the ability to perform and resiliency to continue to perform. The PERRES program is paramount in this endeavor. Combined with concerned leadership and foresight, a Spiritus Invictus is kindled, nourished, and maintained for Marines, Sailors, Civilians, and the families who support them.

Conclusion

This document is the foundational publication for MARSOC, and it sets the philosophical tone for Marine Special Operations Forces. Building on the legacy built by our Marine special operations forefathers, MARSOC will endeavor to provide a unique, highly capable, potent and effective force to the Geographic Combatant Commanders to address the challenges to our National Security now and in the future. While doing so, we will also be committed to the well-being of our Marines and their families, as they are our most precious resource. This document outlines just how we collectively will undertake that comprehensive effort. It is encouraged reading for anyone with an interest in MARSOF. Members of MARSOC are Marines first, always faithful, always forward.



**Special Operations are what we do,
Marines are who we are.**

Glossary

| | |
|------------|---|
| A&S | Assessment and Selection |
| ASPOC | Assessment and Selection Preparation and Orientation Course |
| CDRUSSOCOM | Commander, United States Special Operations Command |
| COIN | Counter-Insurgency |
| CP | Counter Proliferation |
| CS | Combat Support |
| CSO | Critical Skills Operator |
| CSS | Combat Service Support |
| CT | Counter Terrorism |
| DA | Direct Action |
| FID | Foreign Internal Defense |
| FMTU | Foreign Military Training Unit |
| GCC | Geographic Combatant Command |
| ITC | Individual Training Course |
| ITP | Individual Training Phase |
| IW | Irregular Warfare |
| JMET | Joint Mission Essential Task |
| MAGTF | Marine Air-Ground Task Force |
| MARSOC | Marine Special Operations Command |
| MARSOF | Marine Special Operations Forces |
| MDO | Multi-Dimensional Operator |
| MET | Mission Essential Task |
| MRX | Mission Rehearsal Exercise |
| MSOAG | Marine Special Operations Advisor Group |
| MSOB | Marine Special Operations Battalion |
| MSOC | Marine Special Operations Company |
| MSOR | Marine Special Operations Regiment |
| MSOS | Marine Special Operations School |

| | |
|---------|---|
| MSOSG | Marine Special Operations Support Group |
| MSOT | Marine Special Operations Team |
| OSS | Office of Strategic Services |
| PE | Preparation of the Environment |
| PERRES | Performance and Resiliency |
| PMOS | Primary Military Occupational Specialty |
| SFA | Security Force Assistance |
| SNCO | Staff Non-Commissioned Officer |
| SO | Special Operations |
| SOCS | Special Operations Capabilities Specialist |
| SOCSS | Special Operations Combat Services Specialist |
| SOF | Special Operations Forces |
| SOTF | Special Operations Task Force |
| SR | Special Reconnaissance |
| STC | SOF Training Course |
| TSOC | Theater Special Operations Command |
| TTP | Techniques, Tactics, and Procedures |
| USSOCOM | United States, Special Operations Command |
| UTP | Unit Training Phase |
| UW | Unconventional Warfare |

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