



## **Data Explication**

I employed Groenewald's mode of inquiry for this study's data analysis, which in turn was based on Hycner's five-step explication process (Hycner, 1999, p.147).

Groenewald (2004) has suggested analysts not employ the phrase "data analysis" to describe their work when engaged in a phenomenological inquiry, as the descriptor could be misleading. The term analysis typically means a breaking into parts and therefore can mean a loss of the whole phenomenon. Instead, he prefers the phrase "data explication," which he argues implies an investigation of the constituents of an experience while keeping the context of the whole.

Hycner's first step in data analysis is bracketing and phenomenological reduction—the researcher's deliberate and purposeful "opening up" to the question or concern under investigation. The intent of bracketing is perhaps captured by the phrase "keeping an open mind" or as Groenewald has dubbed it, "bracketing means, in a sense, that no position is taken either for or against the phenomenon" (Groenewald, 2004, p. 22). In order to contain my biases for this study, I wrote an extensive reflexive account of my own experiences during basic training. Writing this document allowed me to remember some of the seminal moments from my basic training experience while also providing a context for my interviews. This auto-ethnographic exercise also allowed me to safeguard against any sub-conscious assumptions I might bring to the analytic process, by encouraging me to make those suppositions explicit.

Hycner's second suggested step is delineating units of meaning, during which the researcher extracts those statements that he or she believes illuminate the phenomenon under examination. To do this the analyst considers the literal content, the number of

times a meaning was mentioned and also how it was stated. I utilized the online qualitative research tool, Dedoose, to examine my interview transcripts and to parse my data in various ways. The software provided functionality that established the frequency of words and phrases in my transcriptions and also allowed me to group certain key phrases under descriptive labels.

Hycner's third recommended step in analysis is clustering units of meaning to form themes. He has remarked that this stage calls for considerable judgment and skill on the part of the researcher, stating, "Particularly in this step is the phenomenological researcher engaged in something which cannot be precisely delineated, for here he is involved in that ineffable thing known as creative insight" (Hycner 1999, pg. 150).

Hycner's third and fourth step are very similar to the coding process often employed in qualitative data analysis, which, according to Creswell, is the process of organizing material into chunks before bringing meaning to information (Creswell 2009, pg. 186). I employed Creswell's eight strategies for effective coding during this stage:

- 1) Get a sense of the whole. Read all the transcriptions carefully. Perhaps jot down some ideas as they come to mind.
- 2) Pick one document (i.e., one interview) – the most interesting one, the shortest, the one on top of the pile. Go through it, asking yourself, "What is this about?" Do not think through the substance of the information but its underlying meaning. Write thoughts in the margin.
- 3) When you have completed this task for several participants, make a list of all topics. Cluster together similar topics. Form these topics into columns, perhaps arrayed as major topics, unique topics, and leftovers.

- 4) Now take this list and go back to your data. Abbreviate the topics as codes and write the codes next to the appropriate segments of the text. Try this preliminary organizing scheme to see if new categories and codes emerge.
- 5) Find the most descriptive wording for your topics and turn them into categories. Look for ways of reducing your total list of categories by grouping topics that relate to each other. Perhaps draw lines between your categories to show interrelationships.
- 6) Make a final decision on the abbreviation for each category and alphabetize these codes.
- 7) Assemble the data material belonging to each category in one place and perform a preliminary analysis.
- 8) If necessary, recode your existing data (Creswell 2009, 186).

I undertook this effort for my data by means of an iterative process. I began by carefully reading and annotating each transcript to get a general sense of what the participants were trying to convey. I then returned to the interview texts, highlighting the key phrases that described the interviewee's meaning. Once I highlighted idioms for each individual conversation, I created categories to group similar statements. I followed this process for each of the study's 20 transcripts. Once I had preliminary codes, I looked for ways to combine similar concepts under more comprehensive designations. Several overarching themes began to emerge in this process that captured the majority of the relevant information for this study. I discuss these ideas and illustrate them with quotations from my interviews in the findings chapter.

The fourth stage in Groenewald's recommended explication process is to summarize each interview, validate the summaries through member checking and modify as needed:

Whatever the method used for a phenomenological analysis the aim of the investigator is the reconstruction of the inner world of experience of the subject. Each individual has his own way of experiencing temporality, spatiality, materiality, but each of these coordinates must be understood in relation to the others and to the total inner world (2004, p. 21).

I created brief summaries for each interview, based on my first reading of the transcripts. As I noted above, I also emailed my transcripts to my study participants to ensure their factual accuracy. As explained above, too, none of the interviewees requested changes or corrections.

Groenewald's final stage in data explication is to identify general and unique themes for all the interviews and to develop a composite summary. In this stage, the researcher looks for themes common to most or all of the interviews while also seeking to identify individual variations. Groenewald has argued that minority voices are important counterpoints to highlight regarding the phenomenon explored. The researcher finishes the analytic process by writing a summary, which should reflect the context from which the themes emerged. At this point the investigator "transforms participants everyday expressions into expressions appropriate to the scientific discourse supporting the research" (2004, p. 23). I discuss at length the summary, conclusions and implications of the research findings I developed by means of this process in Chapter 5. I also made a

special effort to ensure that I provided all discrepant information in the findings and conclusions chapters.

Groenewald has contended that good research is not generated from rigorously gathered data alone, but results from going beyond that information to develop ideas (Groenewald, 2004, p. 26). For this project, some of those reflections could further our understanding of the potential benefits of military training, how capacities are transferred from one institutional setting to another and may also yield pedagogical, curricular and program design insights that could contribute to more civically involved communities.

## Chapter 3

### The Political and Social Implications of Civic Engagement

This study was concerned with the potential formation of skills and values among a particular group (U.S. Marine Corps recruits) that purportedly contribute to civic engagement. In order to understand better what is known concerning this relationship, this chapter reviews the relevant literatures surrounding the importance of civic involvement to social and political life in the United States. To that end, I explore the salient insights of Alexis de Tocqueville, Robert Putnam (2000) and Theda Skocpol (1999) as well as important survey data regarding the current levels of civic engagement in the United States. In addition to examining whether U.S. Marine Corps Basic Training seeks to develop these dispositions, I was also interested in the mechanisms utilized by that service branch to teach those capacities. An interest in how civic dispositions are developed is a historically salient topic, seen in authors ranging from Aristotle to John Dewey to more recently, William Galston (2001).

This chapter does not address in detail the various theories (and their associated scholars) that constitute the civic engagement and civic education literatures.<sup>8</sup> Rather, this effort is intended to sketch differing perspectives on civic engagement and their importance for effective democratic governance. I purposively chose Putnam (2000) and Skocpol (1999) for consideration here because their work highlights how citizens can utilize the dispositions targeted for study here to achieve more effective governance. Similarly, I chose Fiorina (1999) as an example of an important scholar who has

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<sup>8</sup> Each of these topics would require extensive treatment, as seen in Skocpol's 1999 book *Civic Engagement in American Democracy* and Levinson's 2007 work *Reimagining Civic Education: How Diverse Societies Form Democratic Citizens*.

questioned the idea that civic engagement leads to more effective governance. This said, this study is first and foremost concerned with the development of civic skills and values, as these were defined by Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) and Kirlin (2003).

### **Political and Social Implications of Civic Engagement**

U.S. social scientists have amassed powerful empirical evidence that the norms and networks of civic engagement strongly influence public life and the performance of social institutions. Researchers in such fields as education, urban poverty, unemployment, crime and drug abuse and health have discovered that successful outcomes in these domains are more likely in civically engaged communities. (Putnam, 1995, p. 6) The norms and networks of citizen involvement also strongly affect the performance of representative governments. That, at least, was the central conclusion of Robert Putnam's 20-year, quasi-experimental study of subnational governments in different regions of Italy (1993).

Putnam argued that governance quality in Italy was shaped by longstanding traditions of civic engagement. He found that relatively high voter turnout, newspaper readership and membership in choral societies and football clubs were all indicators of a well-governed and economically successful region. The Harvard political scientist analyzed the efficacy of Italian government in such diverse fields as agriculture, housing and health services and concluded that patterns of association, trust and cooperation facilitated good governance and economic prosperity. Putnam's historical analysis suggested that such networks of civic engagement, far from being a phenomenon of modernization, were a precondition for it (Putnam, 1993).

The challenge is that civic engagement is arguably in decline in the United States. In *Bowling Alone* (2000) Putnam investigated the well-known drop in voter turnout in national elections during the past five decades. From a relative high point in the early 1960s, voter turnout had sunk by 1990 by nearly a quarter resulting in a situation in which, as Putnam observed, “tens of millions of Americans had forsaken their parents’ habitual readiness to engage in the simplest act of citizenship” (Putnam, 2000, p. 126). Although turnout did rebound in the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections, with 57.1 percent and 57.5 percent of registered voters casting ballots in those years respectively, these numbers are still significantly lower than the 63.1 percent of registered voters who voted in the 1960 presidential election. The percentage of citizens who vote in state and local elections is also historically markedly lower on average than those that exercise their franchise in national presidential elections.

Putnam also contended, “It is not just the voting booth that has been increasingly deserted by Americans” (Putnam, 2000, p. 127). A series of identical questions posed by the Roper Organization to national samples 10 times each year from 1970 through the 1990s revealed that since 1973 the number of Americans who report that in the past year they have attended a public meeting on town or school affairs has fallen by more than a third from 22 percent in 1973 to 13 percent in 1993 (Roper Social and Political Trends, 1973-1994). Similar declines were evident in responses to questions concerning attendance at a political rally or speech, serving on a committee of a local organization and working for a political party. By almost every measure, Americans' direct engagement in politics and government has fallen steadily and sharply in the last generation, despite the fact that average levels of education—historically the best

individual-level predictor of political participation--have risen briskly throughout this period.

In *Bowling Alone* (2000), Putnam illustrated this argument concerning declining civic involvement by examining trends in bowling league participation in the U.S.:

The most whimsical yet discomfiting bit of evidence of social disengagement in contemporary America that I have discovered is this: more Americans are bowling today than ever before, but bowling in organized leagues has plummeted in the last decade or so. Between 1980 and 1993 the total number of bowlers in America increased by 10 percent, while league bowling decreased by 40 percent. The rise of solo bowling threatens the livelihood of bowling-lane proprietors because those who bowl as members of leagues consume three times as much beer and pizza as solo bowlers, and the money in bowling is in the beer and pizza, not the balls and shoes. The broader social significance, however, lies in the social interaction and even occasionally civic conversations over beer and pizza that solo bowlers forgo. Whether or not bowling beats balloting in the eyes of most Americans, bowling teams illustrate yet another vanishing form of social capital (Putnam, 2000, p. 111).

Participation in faith-based organizations has also declined in the United States.<sup>9</sup> Although the United States is still a religious country, with 41 percent of its citizens regularly attending church services as compared to 15 percent in France and 10 percent in Great Britain, Americans' religious participation has also declined from 48 percent in the late 1950s to the current total (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2010).

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<sup>9</sup> While I am concerned about individual religious values, the associational dimension of participating in religious services and church life is most relevant to this study.

Furthermore, there are reasons to believe that this downward trend in the church-going population will continue. According to the 2010 Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 25 percent of young adults under the age of 30 declare themselves religiously unaffiliated. This number is significantly higher than those individuals in their 30s (19 percent), their 40s (15 percent) and their 50s (14 percent) who adopt this stance. Additionally, young adults now are roughly two times more likely to declare themselves religiously unaffiliated (25 percent) than was the case for young adults in the 1970s and 1980s (12 percent).

This decline in citizen engagement, whether with secular or faith-based institutions, affects the United States in both social and political terms. America has played a central role in studies of the links between democracy and civil society since publication of Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, in which the French nobleman highlighted that connection. When Tocqueville visited the United States in 1831, it was America's propensity for civic association that most impressed him as the key to its ability to make democracy work. He observed that Americans, "are forever forming associations. There are not only commercial and industrial associations, in which all take part, but others of a thousand different types - religious, moral, serious, futile, very general and very limited, immensely large and very minute. Nothing, in my view, deserves more attention than the intellectual and moral associations in America" (Tocqueville, 2011, p. 513).

While many scholars have examined the role associational life plays in U.S. society and politics, there are dissenting opinions regarding just how it operates as well as concerning its benefits. As Theda Skocpol has observed, "people may generally agree

that social dynamics are closely intertwined with the health of democracy ... but different clusters of scholars emphasize disparate aspects of democratic governance; and they are certainly exploring different possible causes of contemporary transformations” (Skocpol, 1999, p. 27). Skocpol highlighted three different theoretical frames of reference employed by scholars to investigate and describe civic engagement: social capital, historical-institutionalism and rational choice.

The social capital approach makes causal and normative assumptions along what she has referred to as “neo-Durkheimian” lines, stressing the socialization of individuals into shared norms and cooperative societal action. Historical-institutionalists probe changing organizational patterns and shifts in resources for collective social and political activity as well as transformations in the relationships between elites and ordinary citizens in American society and politics. Rational choice scholars meanwhile, have investigated the unintended effects for the American polity of transformed incentives for individual behavior. This group has injected a degree of skepticism into discussions concerning civic engagement. The following section examines each of these three analytic frameworks in greater detail.

### **Social Capital Theory**

As noted above, in *Making Democracy Work* (1993) Putnam concluded that varying levels of success in local governments throughout Italy were closely related to the vibrancy of associations in those regions. That is, he argued that governments are likely to be more effective in areas characterized by flourishing associational life. Putnam contended that northern Italy’s regional governments, serving provinces in which citizens actively participate in sports clubs, literary guilds, service groups and choral

societies are more “efficient in their internal operation, creative in their policy initiatives and effective in implementing those initiatives” than are Italian regimes without such social underpinning (Putnam, 1993, p. 13). In southern Italy, in contrast, associational ties are far weaker and those governments tend to be more corrupt and less effective than their northern Italian counterparts.

Putnam explained this correlation between associational life and successful governance with the concept of social capital, “the networks, norms of reciprocity and trust fostered among the members of community associations by virtue of their experience of social interaction and cooperation” (1993, p. 8). He argued that social capital provides citizens with the requisite experiences and trust necessary to overcome obstacles to collective action.

Like Tocqueville, Putnam contended that a civically engaged population accompanies successful democratic political regimes. Indeed, Putnam argued that civic engagement could causally shape political and social success. He employed voter turnout, newspaper readership and participation in choral societies and football clubs as indicators of civic involvement and suggested that when citizens are more socially engaged they are more likely to undertake community-relevant conversations.

Putnam’s insight regarding the likelihood of increased public dialogue through more personalized interactions presents the possibility of a more nuanced understanding of political problems and processes among citizens. In a 2014 *Soundings* commentary (retrieved February 23, 2014 from: <http://www.ee.unirel.vt.edu/index.php/outreach-policy>), Max Stephenson Jr. related a similar observation offered by John Steinbeck that

illustrated how knowing someone at an individual level can safeguard against acceptance of stereotypical assumptions. According to Steinbeck,

The whole problem seems to lie in generalities (about groups). Once you have made a generality, you are stuck with it. You have to defend it. Let's say the British and/or American soldier is a superb soldier. The British and/or American officer is a gentleman. You start in with a lie. There are good ones and bad ones. ... We get along very well as individuals. But just the moment we become the Americans and they become the British, trouble is not far behind (Folio Society edition, 2013, pp.69-70).

Putnam and Steinbeck's notion of civic conversations stands in stark juxtaposition to how a majority of U.S. citizens currently obtain their news and shape their civic perspectives. The majority of Americans (66 percent) now report they gain their political information through television news programs, such as those on offer from Fox News or CNN, rather than by means of discussions with their neighbors or from other sources (Pew Research Center for the People & The Press, 2010). Several scholars, including Mullainathan and Shleifer (2005), Baron (2004) and Gentzkow and Shapiro (2005), have argued that many major media outlets in the United States provide commentary with a partisan bias. Other scholars, including Ranney (1983) and Shoemaker and Reese (1996), have maintained that, if the news exhibits a bias, it results from structural economic causes; corporations seek ultimately to advance their own economic agendas through their media outlets. In any case, when one is receiving the news from a journalist or an opinion from a disembodied pundit, rather than through a personal social interaction, it is arguably easier to demonize opposing points-of-view. Such polarization, resulting in part

from civic disengagement, too, appears to have led Americans into an entrenched political landscape of sharply opposing ideologies and views, with the middle ground between these rapidly evaporating. The nation witnessed several consequences of this development in 2011 by losing its AAA credit rating as a result of congressional inability to address ongoing political conflict to find ways to address differences concerning the nation's budget and fiscal priorities.

### **Historical-Institutional Perspective**

The historical-institutional perspective provides another analytical framework for evaluating civic engagement. Historical-institutionalists, including Theda Skocpol, disagree with Putnam's stress on social trust as pivotal to democracy. As Skocpol has observed, "democracy, after all, grew up historically out of century-long struggles among social groups and between state authorities and their subjects. In a very real sense, first liberal-parliamentary regimes and then democracies were a product of organized conflict and distrust" (Skocpol, 1999, p. 31). According to Skocpol, the will to forge liberal and democratic regimes came when the U.S. population consolidated its misgivings about despotic political power. After much struggle, American institutions came to guarantee civil rights, allowing people to organize and speak out. From an institutionalist perspective, voluntary associations matter not simply as facilitators of individual participation and builders of social trust, but more importantly, as sources of popular leverage in the political process.

Skocpol provides an example of how scholars of the historical-institutionalist tradition regard the same sorts of voluntary groups differently than social capital theorists do. According to Skocpol, Putnam understood U.S. women's groups during the

Progressive Era as engaged in creating “dense” and relatively “nonpolitical” social ties. Social ties are fundamentally what matter in Putnam’s view, and he has argued American women historically played a key roles in creating and sustaining rich social connections and generalized trust in local communities.

Skocpol (1999), meanwhile, has assigned those same organizations a different place. These scholars have argued that the General Federation of Women’s Clubs, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union and the National Congress of Mothers (later the PTA) were doing a lot more than “discussing literature, holding tea parties, and supporting local schools” (Skocpol, 1999, p. 472). These vast women’s associations were also powerful shapers of local, state and national legislation to address family and community needs. For these historical-institutionalist theorists it is not the social capital generated by engagement that is of primary importance, but rather the fact that such involvement plays a large role in forging institutions that influence socio-political conditions.

Robert Wuthnow (1998) has also argued in favor of viewing institutions as critical actors in promoting civic engagement, “Civic involvement is being reshaped at the institutional level, as organizations imitate one another and as they attempt to adapt to the porousness of institutional life” (Wuthnow, 1998, p. 212). American society has been devastated by what Wuthnow has referred to as a “cultural earthquake” during the past 50 years resulting from major changes in its most basic institutions, within which he counts marriage, family relationships, employment and the community.

However, Wuthnow points out that even in a climate of porous social institutions, “a close look at civic involvement today reveals that many Americans still care deeply

about their communities and make efforts to connect with other people” (Wuthnow, 1998, pg. 17). Cultural changes, including worker mobility and modified family dynamics, combined with the American people’s desire to be involved in their communities, have led to what Wuthnow has labeled loose connections among citizens. Loose connections are temporary alliances formed to address a particular civic problem that typically do not endure after the concern has been addressed. The sociologist has argued that our civic organizations must adapt and learn to facilitate and deepen these loose connections in order to see a return to a sustainably civically engaged citizenry, “Successful civic organizations are ones that deliberately reconcile themselves to the porousness of their environment and capitalize on the loose connections of their participants” (Wuthnow, 1998, pg. 216).

### **Rational Choice Theory**

Rational choice scholars, including Morris Fiorina (1999), are more skeptical than are social capital and historical-institutionalist theorists concerning the benefits of citizen engagement in public affairs. Rational choice theorists argue that certain questions must be answered to ascertain what role civic involvement should play in American democracy. These analysts ask, what kind of engagement and by whom and to what ends? Rational choice scholars examine the ways in which institutions and organizations create incentives for individuals to engage in various kinds of behaviors. Then they ask whether the result(s), intended or unintended, constitute a socially optimal outcome. These analysts contend that often, civic engagement does not result in socially optimal outcomes. Skocpol too has argued that applying a dose of rational choice theory to the realm of civic engagement research can, “inject a healthy note of skepticism about any

romanticization of sheer participation or group activism in community and government affairs” (Skocpol, 1999, p. 14).

Fiorina (1999) has questioned the current preoccupation with civic engagement and social capital: “Where are the dependent variables? Has anyone demonstrated that variations in civic engagement are related to welfare measures of any interest? Thus far plausible argument substitutes for hard evidence” (Fiorina, 1999, p. 397). Indeed, he has gone so far as to suggest that civic engagement may not even be a positive for politics, “Put simply, at least in the political realm, I am doubtful that the relationship between civic engagement and social welfare is generally positive” (Fiorina, 1999, p. 399). Fiorina qualified his thesis by claiming, “We can stipulate that high levels of civic engagement are optimal, but I think that intermediate levels of civic engagement may well lead to outcomes that are inferior not just to outcomes produced by higher levels of engagement, but also to those produced by lower levels” (Fiorina, 1999, p. 401).

Fiorina has argued that in a climate of intermediate levels of civic engagement, the most extreme voices tend to dominate the forum, “In the old order, when ordinary Americans had less opportunity to engage in politics, they apparently were happier with government and what it did than they are today, when they have more opportunities” (Fiorina, 1999, p. 403). Fiorina argues that in our current era, which allows for more participation than 50 years ago, the composition of those who engage in politics has changed. Only small minorities of highly motivated citizens take advantage of the new participatory opportunities; minorities who are by and large extreme voices in the context of American politics and who have less reason to moderate their commitments than in the past. The participation of these highly motivated minorities has led to a polarization of

our political system, which has resulted in a majority of Americans often being dissatisfied with government, because these extreme positions do not reflect their views. Rational choice theorists focus attention on the mediating role of incentives to citizen engagement. Some of these may encourage involvement while others may promote the opposite behavior. All, strictly speaking, can be overridden by habits of mind and heart among citizens, but these may not be present. In their absence particularly, the mix of material costs and benefits of engagement will play a powerful role in shaping citizen civic behaviors. But in any case, these theorists rightly draw attention to the question of incentives for behavior, in this case, civic involvement.

While Skocpol, Putnam and Fiorina disagree about how increased civic engagement benefits democratic governance they all contend that high levels of citizen involvement are conducive to a more effective polity. One possibility for encouraging engagement is a civically conscious education.

### **The Importance of Civic Education**

In 2012, President Barack Obama's Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement National Taskforce published a report, *A Crucible Moment* that called for a reinvigoration of civic education in the nation's schools, as well as a search for additional pathways to educate citizens. According to the report,

As a democracy, the United States depends on a knowledgeable, public-spirited, and engaged population. Education plays a fundamental role in building civic vitality, and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, higher education has a distinctive role to play in the renewal of U.S. democracy. Although the National Commission on Civic Renewal overlooked higher education as a potential source of civic renewal, this report argues that

colleges and universities are among the nation's most valuable laboratories for civic learning and democratic engagement. The beneficiaries of investing in such learning are not just students or higher education itself. The more civic-oriented colleges and universities become, the greater their overall capacity to spur local and global economic vitality, social and political well-being, and collective action to address public problems (Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement National Taskforce, 2012, p. 2).

Verba, Scholzmann, and Brady (2012) have documented a correlation between higher levels of education and increased civic engagement.

For several reasons, we focus in particular on education as the engine for the socio-economic transmission of political activity from generation to generation, drawing out the consequences of the link between parents' education and the education of their offspring. Education plays a primary role among the factors that foster political activity. In passing on their higher levels of educational attainment to their children, educated parents also pass on many attributes that enhance later political activity. Not only does education have a direct impact on political participation, but also level of education affects the acquisition of nearly all the other factors that facilitate participation resources, among them, income and civic skills, motivation to use such resources for political purposes, and access to social networks through which requests for political activity are made. (Verba, Scholzman and Brady, 2012, p.185).

Historically, too, political thinkers have investigated and demonstrated the relevance of the connections between citizen education and effective governance. In the *Politics*, for example, Aristotle stressed the role that education plays in the maintenance

of the successful *polis*.<sup>10</sup> In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, John Dewey argued that education serves a crucial role in democratic societies. According to Dewey, “A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. . . . Education, in its broadest sense, is the means of this social continuity of life” (Dewey, 1916, p. 9).

Still more recently, William Galston (2001) offered four reasons why civic education is vital to democratic citizenship. First, he observed that civic knowledge helps citizens understand their interests as individuals and as members of a group. The more knowledge citizens possess, the better they can understand the impacts of public policies and the more effectively they can promote their interests in the political process. Second, civic knowledge increases consistency of political views over time. Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) found a strong relationship between political knowledge and the stability of political attitudes (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996, pp. 232-234). Third, unless citizens possess a basic civic capacity, it is difficult for them to understand political events or to integrate new information into their existing perspectives. To illustrate this point, Popkin and Dimock (1999) demonstrated that uninformed citizens are much more likely to judge officials according to their own assumptions of an official’s personal character, rather than taking the time to make a more informed judgment (Popkin and Dimock, 1999, p. 32). Finally, civic knowledge promotes political participation. All other things being equal, the more awareness citizens have of politics, the more likely they are to participate in public matters.

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<sup>10</sup> City-state

## **Military Training as a form of Civic Education**

The 2012 Obama administration report on civic engagement also called for a civic education that,

Uses the dual terms of civic learning and democratic engagement to emphasize the civic significance of preparing students with knowledge and for action.

Today's education for democracy needs to be informed by deep engagement with the values of liberty, equality, individual worth, open mindedness, and the willingness to collaborate—with people of differing views and backgrounds—towards common solutions for the public good (A Crucible Moment, 2012, p. 5).

Recently some scholars have argued that military training instills values that may promote democratic engagement and serve as a forum for civic education. In 2009, Yonkman and Bridgeland published results from the All Volunteer Force (AVF) survey, the first nationally representative study of United States Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) veterans. The authors aimed to provide those responding an opportunity to share their perspectives on their civic lives as they transitioned from military service (Yonkman and Bridgeland 2009, p. 3). Participants completed the OIF/OEF survey online. Seven hundred and seventy nine veterans completed the questionnaire. Sixty-seven percent of the 1,163 individuals who began the survey finished it. According to Yonkman and Bridgeland, “the primary purpose of [their] report [was] to spark an effort around the civic engagement of our nation's veterans. To support them not just with parades, yellow ribbons, job training and health care, but also by unleashing the civic talents of these extraordinary Americans for their

own benefit and the benefit of the American people” (Yonkman and Bridgeland, 2009, p. 8).

Existing research has focused on the importance of health care, employment and family support in aiding veterans’ transitions to civilian life. In so doing, what has been lacking is an understanding of ex-soldiers’ civic lives and the role that community organizations can play in their shift to non-military life. Veterans acquire values and skills while serving that arguably are valuable in the workplace and in communities. However, only 13 percent of OIF/OEF veterans responding to the AVF survey strongly agreed that their transition home was going well. Meanwhile, 9 of 10 returnees completing the national questionnaire strongly agreed or agreed that Americans could learn something from the example of veterans’ service. Nearly 7 in 10 respondents indicated that a community institution, local nonprofit organization or place of worship had not contacted them since their return. Although 54 percent of respondents had received some form of communication from a veterans’ service organization, only 21 percent reported being asked to serve in any way by any organization since their return<sup>11</sup> (Yonkman and Bridgeland 2009, p. 3).

According to the AVF survey, OIF/OEF veterans were united in their views on the obligation of Americans to serve their communities or nation in some capacity. Ninety-two percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that serving their community was important and 90 percent strongly agreed or agreed that such service was a basic responsibility of every American. Even while on active duty, 70 percent of

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<sup>11</sup> The AVF study did not explicitly say how long these veterans had been home. However, the survey focused solely on OIF/OEF veterans, so we can surmise based on the starting dates of those wars, and the timing of the questionnaire that the veterans had been home between 1-8 years, depending on their dates of service.

OIF/OEF veterans reported they had felt motivated to volunteer in their communities.

Fifty percent of veterans surveyed said they had volunteered since returning from Iraq or Afghanistan.

Veterans responding to the survey expressed concern about multiple community issues, with 95 percent indicating an interest in serving wounded veterans; 90 percent suggesting an inclination to aid other returnees and military families; 88 percent noting they were interested in participating in disaster relief efforts; 86 percent wanting to assist at-risk youth; 82 percent hoping to help older Americans and 69 percent aiming to aid with environmental conservation efforts (Yonkman and Bridgeland, 2009 p. 4).

AVF survey respondents identified many skills they believed they possessed that could be valuable to their communities. Sixty-four percent of responding OIF/OEF veterans, for example, cited their management and supervision proficiency; 61 percent referenced their capacity to lead diverse groups of people; 63 percent pointed to their team-building skills; 57 percent noted their operational capabilities<sup>12</sup> and 40 percent pointed to their logistics-related competencies. According to Yonkman and Bridgeland,

Nonprofits across the country need these very skills to fulfill and expand the basic services they provide every day. Whether they are operating food kitchens in a large urban area; helping at-risk youth clean up a polluted river that runs through their neighborhood; leading a home-build in a community struck by natural disaster; or driving a wounded veteran to a doctor's appointment; skilled volunteers are desperately needed to both coordinate and execute these essential

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<sup>12</sup> The George Washington University's Organizational Development and Effectiveness unit has provided several examples of operational skills, including administrative skills, judgment, courage, negotiation, risk taking and time management.

services (Yonkman and Bridgeland, 2009, p. 26).

Rebecca Nesbit (2011) has observed that military training instills values of duty, honor and loyalty to one's country and argued that these standards of behavior lend themselves well to civic engagement in a democratic society. Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) have contended that an important reason people do not volunteer is that they do not want to do so. This suggests that a person with the requisite skills to volunteer might still lack the motivation so to proceed.

According to Nesbit, "Institutional forces condition an individual's perceptions about the self, social action, and personal responsibility. Institutions can influence and determine what actions an individual considers necessary or important, and they can shape the goals and values that contribute to volunteering behaviors" (Nesbit, 2011, p. 69). For most members of the armed forces, military service occurs between the ages<sup>13</sup> of 18 and 26, which is a critical time for the formation of individual social, political and civic identities in the world (Damon 2001). That is, for young adults entering the military, the experiences they have in service can have a large influence on their identity development and value systems. Nesbit has argued that these formative occurrences can strengthen the desire and perceived imperative to serve one's country and that this aspiration is supportive of democracy.

According to Soeters, Winslow and Weibull, such values acculturation efforts begin when recruits undergo their basic military training, which is aimed at producing a new identity for participants (Soeters, Winslow and Weibull 2003). Successful military

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<sup>13</sup> Damon, William. 2001. "To Not Fade Away: Restoring Civil Identity among the Youth." In *Making Good Citizens: Education and Civil Society*, edited by Diane Ravitch and Joseph P. Viteritti, 122-41. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

socialization provides recruits with strong values of duty, honor and loyalty to country. Notably, each of these beliefs supports our nation's democratic regime (Lovell and Stiehm, 1989). After returning to civilian life, veterans may continue to act to realize or deepen these core concerns by volunteering.

In addition to this triad of primary values that appear to be important for later community service, Nesbit has explored how experience in the armed forces can help individuals overcome two additional barriers to civic engagement: a lack of necessary skills and the situation in which no one asks them to volunteer. Nesbit argued that military training provides veterans with capacities that arguably equip them well to engage in community service.

The military offers opportunities for education and training so that people can develop their communication and organizational skills. Because the military is a large bureaucracy, it also allows people to learn the skills necessary to function successfully in an organization. In addition, individuals serving in the military interact daily with people from different racial, geographic, socioeconomic, and religious backgrounds, and yet they all must strive toward a common goal. By integrating diverse individuals into a common social experience and network, military service teaches the necessity of working with others and the skills to do so (Nesbit, 2011, p. 69).

## **Summary**

This chapter briefly explored several different arguments or approaches to studying the social and political importance of civic engagement in the United States.

While there are differing views regarding how community involvement advances the public good, there is general consensus among scholars that high levels of citizen commitment are conducive to a well-functioning democratic society. Troublingly, recent reports have documented that the United States appears to be in a “civic recession” (A Crucible Moment, 2012) which, if true, could lead to less effective democratic governance in this country. All but one of the authors discussed in this chapter has argued vigorously that civically oriented education constitutes one key method for increasing civic engagement. Some scholars (Yonkman and Bridgeland, 2009; Nesbit, 2011) have contended that military training might develop skills and values that promote civic engagement, thus serving as a form of civic education. The next chapter explores the secondary literature (and to some extent, primary sources as well) concerning the didactic aspirations of Marine Corps basic training, one military branch’s training regimen, to discern their possible relationship to civic engagement.

## Chapter 4

### U.S. Marine Corps Culture and Basic Training

This study focuses on Marine Corps basic training as one form of military instruction that could potentially develop civic skills and values among its recruits. In order to contextualize the analysis effectively, I next review literature that treats the Marine Corps' entry training practices for enlistees. I do not pretend here to present a full-blown examination of Marine Corps training methods and pedagogy; such is well beyond the scope of the present investigation. Nonetheless, to explore how basic training "works" to instill civically relevant virtues, one must develop some general sense of how it is organized and undertaken and why. This chapter addresses that specific concern. I also discuss here some of the important cultural assumptions and practices that both distinguish and unite the Marine Corps with the other branches of the U.S. Armed Forces. This understanding will situate the study's findings and also permit consideration of whether and how the results of this research could apply more broadly. Finally, this chapter investigates in depth the culminating exercise of Marine Corps basic training, the Crucible. The Crucible seeks to instill many of the key lessons and values the Marines desire their recruits to adopt and therefore warrants close consideration.

#### U.S. Marine Corps Basic Training

Thomas Ricks (1997) has likely authored the definitive popular account of Marine Corps basic training. Ricks is a Pulitzer Prize winning former senior Pentagon correspondent for *The Washington Post* and currently a member of the Center for a New American Security and of Harvard University's Senior Advisory Council on its U.S.

Civil-Military Relations project. James Woulfe, a former drill instructor and former director of the drill instructor school at Parris Island, provided another definitive account of a key portion of Marine basic training in his 1998 book, *Into the Crucible*. I discuss Ricks' and Woulfe's books at length in this chapter for two reasons. First, there is a relative paucity of academic scholarship that directly addresses Marine Corps basic training. Second, based on my personal knowledge of that experience, review of the literature concerning it and the reports of this study's Marine veterans and instructors, I believe Ricks' and Woulfe's books accurately capture the culture and spirit of that service and its recruit preparation effort.

Ricks observed that the inspiration for writing a volume concerning the service's boot camp came from being embedded with a Marine unit in Somalia, and being impressed with those individuals' confidence and poise.

Over the last four years in Somalia, in a sniper's nest in Haiti, aboard amphibious assault ships in the Atlantic and the Adriatic, and at a Marine installation in the U.S., I consistently have been impressed by the sense of self that young Marines possess. In an era when many people of their age seem aimless, these Marines know what they are about: taking care of each other (Ricks, 1997, p. 6).

Ricks attributed the young Marines' sense of self to the distinct culture of the service of which they were a part. He declared, "Culture – that is, the values and assumptions that shape its members – is all the Marines have. Theirs is the richest culture: formalistic, insular, elitist, with a deep anchor in their own history and mythology" (Ricks, 1997, p. 10). Because of his positive impression of the Marines he

encountered, Ricks decided to study what it is that makes these servicemen and women distinctive:

Ultimately, I decided to look at boot camp, where American youths make the transition from civilian society to the military, bridging the growing gap. I wanted to see how an organization could take fifty or so American kids – a group steeped in a culture of individualism and consumerism, many of them users of recreational drugs, few of them with much education or hope of prospering in the American economy – and turn them into Marines who saw themselves as a band of brothers, overcoming deep differences of race and class (Ricks, 1997, p. 28).

The Marine Corps officially established recruit training in 1911. According to James Woulfe (1998), the Corps gained popular renown for the gallantry of its members during the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900 as well as in operations in Mexico (1842), the Philippines (1898) and Nicaragua (1932), resulting in a spike in recruits in each instance. When established, Marine basic training was comprised of eight-weeks of drill, physical training, close combat and marksmanship at recruit depots in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Norfolk, Virginia; the Puget Sound region in Washington and Mare Island, California. These locations made sense as all adjoined major naval stations and ports. Eventually, the Corps centralized Marine boot camp in 1915 at depots at Parris Island, South Carolina and Mare Island, California. In 1923, the Marine Corps moved the training center at Mare Island to San Diego. These locations continue to operate today.

Woulfe (1998) has argued that although both produce Marines, the characteristics of each training location are singular. He likens the two centers to fraternal twins who are complete opposites. Parris Island is isolated, located amidst the tidal swamps of Archer

Creek, S.C. The uniform of the day is usually camouflage utilities because of the severe weather conditions. San Diego, on the other hand, is surrounded by development, seems always to have a number of visitors and sits adjacent to that city's airport. Camouflage utilities are rarely worn in San Diego, with a version of the dress or service uniform preferred. Graduates of each program are wont to claim that theirs is better than the other, but Woulfe contends there has never been any truth to the assertions and that both employ the same curricula and are equally effective at creating Marines.

To learn about Marine Corps Basic Training from the vantage point of those experiencing it, Ricks embedded himself with a Marine Corps Recruit Training Platoon at Parris Island in 1995. He has described the organization of the enlistees' experience: "The recruits don't know it and won't be told, but the Marines' theorists of boot camp indoctrination break the eleven-week<sup>14</sup> process into five distinct phases" (Ricks, 1997, p. 28). First is the initial receipt of recruits, which lasts about four disorienting days. Next is a period of similar length, the forming of platoons, when the would-be Marines are assigned to drill instructors who will supervise them throughout the remainder of boot camp. Then comes the main body of the educational experience, training, which begins with close-order drill<sup>15</sup> and rudimentary fighting, proceeds to riflery and then combines these elements into basic combat training. Then, because Marine boot camp is three weeks longer than those offered by the other services,' comes a 10-day period called "Advanced Training," where not much appears to happen, but it is significant because it puts the final touches of indoctrination on the recruits, polishing the best and sometimes

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<sup>14</sup> Basic Training is now thirteen weeks, due to the addition of the Crucible, which had not yet been incorporated in the course in 1996, when Ricks witnessed the experience.

<sup>15</sup> Close order involves marching, maneuvering and arms handling in which the participants perform at close intervals.

reaching the recalcitrant.<sup>16</sup> The experience culminates with a series of ceremonies and rituals that constitute formal acceptance into the Marine Corps.

In the early 1980s the Corps identified five specific graduation requirements for successful completion of basic training to earn the title of Marine: rifle qualification, swim qualification, physical fitness, 80 percent on academic tests and the battalion commander's inspection (Woulfe, 1998, p. 5). In 1987, Marine Commandant Alfred Gray identified deficiencies in the then current program, including a lack of training in hand-to-hand combat and active conflict shooting and in the Corps' war fighting ability. He ordered the development and incorporation of Basic Warrior Training (BWT) into the boot camp experience to address those deficits. According to Woulfe, BWT contributed to the success in the wars in which the Corps would engage soon thereafter (Woulfe, 1998, p. 6). BWT involved training in basic tactics and weapons. In 1995, General Carl Mundy, commandant from 1991-1995, called on the program's drill instructors to incorporate core values – honor, courage, and commitment – in their curriculum to provide recruits with the tools to identify clearly the differences between right and wrong and presumably to complement the focus on skills consonant with Marine culture.

On average, about 14 percent of recruits do not complete boot camp, and many of those who drop out do so during the first three weeks. (Ricks, 1997, p. 57) Here is how drill instructor Staff Sergeant Rowland described the purpose of the training process to Ricks:

A lot of them have never been held accountable for anything in their lives. Here, they begin to understand and rely on each other, which is what the Marine Corps is all about. That's the heart and soul of the Corps, values. I still hold the values

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<sup>16</sup> The Crucible now occurs during this 10-day period.

my drill instructor instilled in me in 1985. Here they become brothers of the ones who died in the Beirut blast, of all the Marines who went before (Ricks, 1997, p. 58).

Ricks remarked in his account that “now” is the first word recruits hear on Parris Island. For the next 11 weeks, every order they hear will come with the implication that it must be executed immediately. Repetition of that single word locks recruits into a present-time orientation and that is where they will remain. For nearly three months, no one in a position to know will tell them anything about their schedule. Ricks also compared the physical layout of Parris Island to that of a French penal colony:

The Devil’s Island<sup>17</sup> atmosphere of the place is no accident. In the late nineteenth century, after a naval station and dry dock were established on the island, the Navy used the installation as a “disciplinary barracks” – that is, a military jail. This being the history-minded Marine Corps, the roads on Parris Island are named after the Corps’ greatest battles and campaigns (Ricks, 1997, p. 38).

Ricks observed in 1997<sup>18</sup> that an emphasis on behavior and language, not military training, formed the core of the boot camp experience. The Marine Corps recruit experience is more a matter of cultural indoctrination than of teaching military tactics, which are provided later at Marine Combat Training (MCT)<sup>19</sup> or the School of Infantry (SOI). In keeping with this orientation, drill instructors immediately begin to teach recruits a new language. Its peculiarly nautical tone grows out of the Marines origins as a

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<sup>17</sup> Devil’s Island was a part of the controversial French penal colony of French Guiana for 101 years, from 1852 to 1953. Devil’s Island was popularized by [Henri Charrière](#)’s 1970 memoir *Papillon*, which was made into a film (1973).

<sup>18</sup> Based on the reports of this study’s participants, this observation is still true today.

<sup>19</sup> Marine Combat Training is a 29-day course (prior to September 2007 it was 22 days) in which entry-level non-infantry Marines are taught the skills commonly needed in combat.

sea service: “We don’t call it a floor, we call it a deck. We don’t call it a door, we call it a hatch. For no apparent reason relating to the sea, pens are now called inksticks and sneakers are go-fasters” (Ricks, 1997, p. 41).

In Ricks’ telling, a receiving drill instructor for Platoon 3086, Sergeant Lewis, sought to disorient recruits by withdrawing their right to use the first person when speaking. In addition, Lewis admonished his unit members not to employ their first names, “From now on, you are no longer he, she, it, or whatever you was, you are now Recruit-and-your-last-name” (Ricks, 1997, p. 32). Coming from a society that elevates the individual, recruits find themselves enmeshed in a world in which the group is supreme. In addition, enlistees are exhorted constantly that the Marine Corps’ core values of honor, courage and commitment all come before the self (Ricks, 1997, p. 146). Boot camp is designed to press that point repeatedly with trainees until they accept it unquestioningly.

According to both Ricks (1997) and Woulfe (1998) instilling accountability is a key aspiration of Marine Corps basic training. As Ricks recounted,

Parris Island is the first place many of the recruits will ever encounter absolute and impersonal standards of right and wrong, of success and failure,” says Sergeant Pabon, a native of Puerto Rico who learned to speak English in boot camp. “When they mess up at home they don’t get punished, they get ‘explained.’” Here, you screw up; we stop you and penalize you immediately, before you forget it (Ricks, 1997, p. 52).

Ricks also noted that the Marine Corps, much more than the other services, places responsibility at the lowest levels of the organization. The Corps has one officer for every

8.2 enlistees. This is a much wider ratio than the other branches<sup>20</sup> (Department of Defense Demographic Report, 2012). “Every Marine is a rifleman” is a revealing meme of the Marines. In practice, it means that the essence of the organization resides with the lowest of the low, the person in the trenches. The Corps emphasis on placing responsibility at the lower ranks develops a culture in which even the lowest status Marine may be called upon to be a leader. In order for this orientation to succeed it is imperative that the Marine Corps develop a deep sense of accountability among its recruits. That process begins in basic training.

Woulfe (1998) has described how instilling a sense of accountability prepares recruits for combat, “Here, every action has a consequence, and a lack of action could, too. Some are good, some are bad, but everything requires thought, if one was to be successful. Though the recruits don’t know it yet, the same is true of combat” (Woulfe, 1998, p. 23).

A vital role of the drill instructors is to create stressful environments that mimic conditions likely to obtain in combat. As Woulfe observed:

All of the yelling, the ‘slinging stress’ as Marines call it, is an important part of being a drill instructor. It isn’t that they are nasty, violent, and uncaring human beings. Actually, they are sensitive and loving spouses and parents when they aren’t at work. The yelling and stress has a purpose. Marine Corps boot camp and the drill instructor are often misunderstood entities. Contrary to popular opinion, the drill instructors are not trying to break the recruits down. Instead they were building them up by constantly challenging them (Woulfe, 1998, p. 31).

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<sup>20</sup> Army – 1 to 4.8; Navy – 1 to 5; Air Force – 1 to 4; Marine Corps – 1 to 8.2.

This focus on accountability extends to the drill instructors as well. Ricks (1997) recounts Platoon 3086's Senior Drill Instructor, Staff Sergeant Sonny Rowland's delivery of a speech that all Senior Drill Instructors give to their platoons, "I am not going to threaten you with physical harm, abuse you, or harass you. Nor will I tolerate such behavior from anyone else, Marine or recruit. If anyone should abuse or mistreat you, I will expect you to report such incidents to me. Further, if you believe I have mistreated you, I expect you to report it to the Series Commander" (Ricks, 1997, p. 57).

Ricks argued that drill instructors are the keepers of Marine Corps culture. He quoted Major Stephen Davis, director of Parris Island's Drill Instructor School, as observing that being a drill instructor "isn't a job, it's a way of life" (Ricks, 1997, p. 97). Drill Instructors are acutely conscious that noncommissioned officers (NCOs) are the backbone of the Corps and that they are the priests of the Marine Corps way of life. Parris Island is the church where the culture is passed on and where recruits are acculturated to a new set of aspirations in life.

Instruction at the drill instructor (DI) school, which prepares both males and females for the role, is in many ways similar to basic training, but things must be done to absolute perfection. One theme dominates the teaching of DIs: These individuals hold the future of the Marine Corps in his or her hands, "Don't ask a recruit to do something you wouldn't do. Think of them like your sons and daughters. Change the way they think about life. Do your best or get out of the Marine Corps. And don't hurt my bunnies,<sup>21</sup> or I'll stomp you" (Ricks, 1997, p. 103). The oddity of DI school is that it is much less tolerant of mistakes, far less accepting, for example, than boot camp is of recruits' missteps. Its official motto is "The future of the Marine Corps begins here."

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<sup>21</sup> Recruits

Ricks argued that the mantra should be, “Don’t mess with my Marine Corps – and God help you, if you do” (Ricks, 1997, p. 103).

The extraordinary standards demanded in DI school arise from the pivotal role the instructors play in preserving the culture and image of the Marine Corps. Ricks recounted the most infamous incident of a drill instructor giving the Marine Corps a black eye in the public imagination. In 1956, at Parris Island’s Ribbon Creek, six recruits drowned due to the gross negligence of one drill instructor. On the night in question, drill instructor Staff Sergeant Matthew McKeon, on a night off from duty, had “not one, not two, not three, but four shots of vodka” at the Staff NCO club. That night, he decided that he wanted to “play games<sup>22</sup>” with his recruit-training platoon.

He marched his platoon into the swamp. It seemed like it was going to be a normal night swim, but the high tide was coming in and he was smart enough to know it. But there was a ‘trout hole’ twelve feet deep in the creek. And his tallest recruit was six foot, three inches (Ricks, 1997, p. 104).

The image of the Marine Corps changed that day and the service almost lost control of its own basic training in consequence. In the wake of the Ribbon Creek disaster, the Marines fired the commanding general of Parris Island and more than 100 drill instructors. To remind incoming leaders of the gravity of their roles, the Drill Instructor school at Parris Island was built on the spot on which the Corps court-martialed McKeon.

According to Ricks, of all the U.S. military services, the Marines also cultivate the most civil culture, starting at Parris Island. Recruits must say, “good day, sir (or ma’am),” each time they pass a superior ranking individual. This formality extends to

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<sup>22</sup> “Playing games” is a slang phrase sometimes utilized in the Marines that can mean unofficial hassling of other Marines as a type of initiation. The Marine Corps does not condone such actions, but young Marines sometimes may engage in the behavior.

drill instructors, who also extend such courtesies, especially when they are under the eyes of the recruits. Parris Island today can appear to be an outdated island of decorum in our generally casual society. First Sergeant Charles Tucker, a former company first sergeant at Parris Island, observed to Ricks that it is society, not boot camp, that has changed: “The Marines have simply preserved civilities abandoned by the rest of society. Its insistence that recruits be courteous to superiors and civilians is nothing more than good manners, being polite, and respecting your elders” (Ricks, 1997, p. 61).

Ricks argued that the U.S. Marine Corps was also likely one of the few parts of the federal government that retains the deep trust of most of the American people,<sup>23</sup> “the element of trust may be the biggest difference between the Marines and civilian life – and the biggest attraction the Corps holds for today’s youth” (Ricks, 1997, p. 164). The University of Michigan has surveyed the opinions of high school seniors for several years. One of the questions put to students is, “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people?” (University of Michigan, Monitoring the Future, 2013. Retrieved on January 2, 2014 from: <http://monitoringthefuture.org/>). In 1975, 40 percent of high school seniors agreed, “You can’t be too careful.” By 2011, that figure had risen to 54 percent.

According to Ricks, despite Parris Island’s reputation for brutality, most recruits, especially the African-American and Hispanic recruits, found it a “more trusting place than the neighborhoods they left behind” (Ricks, 1997, p.163). Luis Polanco-Medina, a former Marine who before joining had lived in a tough section of urban New Jersey, told Ricks that the Marine Corps was, “a healthier, safer environment. If America were more

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<sup>23</sup> According to a 2013 Gallup poll, the military is still the most trusted institution in the U.S., with 76 percent of Americans saying they trust the military “a great deal” or “quite a lot.”

like the Marines, there would be less crime, less racial tension among people – because Marine Corps discipline is also about brotherhood. Marines respect each other more” (Ricks, 1997, p. 163).

However, Ricks contended that the Marines have become ever more distinct in the broader society, as American culture has grown more fragmented, individualistic and consumerist. The Corps has moved from thinking of itself and its shared views as constituting a better version of American culture to a dissenting critique of it. According to Ricks, the Marines are “rebels with a cause, articulately rejecting the vague nihilism that pervades popular American culture. With their incessant emphasis on honor, courage, and commitment, they offer an alternative to the loneliness and distrust that today seems so widespread, especially among American youth” (Ricks, 1997, p. 27).

Zell Miller, former governor of Georgia, was also a Marine Corps veteran and therefore underwent Marine Corps Basic Training. He later recalled (1996) the social and political import of the lessons taught at Parris Island:

The basic lessons Marines teach their recruits are important ones. I believe that more of our citizens must learn these lessons if a democratic society and our republican form of government is to survive and thrive. I not only believe that with all my heart, but I also know it to be true from the lessons of my own life. I am as certain as the words on this page that I would not be in the position to write this book today had I not sought to “make a man of myself” by joining the Marine Corps as a troubled and insecure lad (Miller, 1996, p. 5).

Ricks argued that two individuals played a seminal role in shaping the current structure and character of Marine Corps Basic Training: former Secretary of the Navy

(1987-1988) and United States Senator (Virginia, 2007-2013) Jim Webb, and former U.S. Marine Corps Commandant, Alfred Gray (1987-1991). In many ways today's Marine Corps basic training can be traced to Webb's thoughts as he sat in Georgetown University Law School's classrooms in 1973, confused and angered by the attitudes of his classmates and stunned by the nation's handling of the Vietnam war and its veterans. His stewing led to a book<sup>24</sup> that would influence a generation of Marine officers, shaping their views of what they should be and what they should expect of the society they defend.

Robert Timberg (1996) has provided an account of the parallel lives of Webb and four other Naval Academy graduates (Oliver North, Robert McFarlane, John Poindexter and John McCain) and described how Webb returned from Vietnam with a distinguished combat record and shrapnel lodged in his head, back, kidney, left arm and left leg. In April 1969, less than a year out of Annapolis, Webb had exposed himself to enemy fire while rescuing a wounded Marine, earning the Bronze Star. A few weeks later he won the Silver Star for repeatedly risking mortal injury while rescuing casualties leading a counterattack. Two months after that he used his body to shield another Marine from a grenade blast. He then destroyed an enemy bunker with his own grenade. For this act of heroism, he was awarded the Navy Cross (Timberg, 1996).<sup>25</sup>

At the end of the Vietnam conflict, the Marines were arguably the most devastated of all the services. The Corps suffered more casualties in Vietnam – a total of 103,453 – than they did in World War II, in which they had 90,709 casualties (Ricks, 1997, p. 138). Calling the early part of the 1970s a debacle for the Marines, Jeffrey

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<sup>24</sup> Webb, James (1978). *Fields of Fire*. New York, NY: Bantam.

<sup>25</sup> The Navy Cross is the second highest award given by the Marine Corps. The Medal of Honor is the only higher honor.

Record related to Ricks that, “the Corps registered rates of courts-martial, non-judicial punishments, unauthorized absences, and outright desertions unprecedented in its own history, and in most cases, three to four times those plaguing the U.S. Army” (Ricks, 1997, pg. 77).

In his novel *Fields of Fire* (1978), Webb argued that he and his comrades (Vietnam veterans) had nothing for which to apologize. For him, those who avoided the draft and saw military service as dishonorable were deeply misguided. According to Webb, “Vietnam sowed the seeds of a class selfishness that still exists. The problem of the eighties and nineties isn’t that corporate America abandoned the people, but that elites have decided to pick up their pieces and protect each other at the expense of everyone else. The greatest problem in this country is the lack of a sense that we’re all sharing the problem” (Ricks, 1997, p.128).

Webb conveyed his argument through the voice of one of his novel’s characters: These people have no sense of country. They don’t look beyond themselves. We’ve lost a sense of responsibility, at least on the individual level. We have too many people that believe the government owes them total, undisciplined freedom. If everyone thought that way, there would be no society. We’re so big, so strong now, that people seem to have forgotten that a part of our strength comes from each person surrendering a portion of his individual urges to the common good (Webb, 1978, p. 422).

According to Ricks, this argument captures the way of thinking the Marine Corps now seeks systematically to inculcate at Parris Island in its training programs. The Marines’ sensitivity to building a shared cultural aspiration and disposition is not

surprising. Unlike the other services, the Corps is built exclusively on an ethos and an attitude. Former Commandant of the Marine Corps, Major General Charles Krulak, remarked to Ricks that “the United States does not need a Marine Corps, she wants one.” (Ricks, 1997, p. 178) That foundation makes the Marines conscious of the role that traditions, manners and beliefs play in a society and sensitive to changes in those values.

Webb’s powerful novel alone would have left a mark on the modern Marines. But the book also helped to catapult him to a position of influence in the Reagan administration that permitted him to shape the service more directly. In 1987, Webb became Secretary of the Navy, the top civilian overseeing the Navy and the Marines. At age 41, he was the youngest Navy secretary ever. At his swearing-in, Webb introduced 23 members of his old rifle platoon, noting that among them they had collected 27 Purple Hearts.

Webb made one appointment during his short tenure that would have a huge impact on the Marine Corps; he tapped General Alfred Gray, a 58-year-old former sergeant who had risen through the ranks and was on the cusp of retirement, to become the next Commandant of the Marine Corps. According to Webb, “Gray was the general most likely to make the Marines feel like the Marines again” (Ricks, 1997, p. 145). Gray was a native of New Jersey, who had enlisted in the Marines in 1950, fought in Korea and was later commissioned as a second lieutenant.

According to Ricks, Webb was not bothered by the fact that the barrel-chested, tobacco-chewing general did not have a college degree. “He knew how to fight, he knew how to lead, and he knew how to remember.” Webb recalled, “The Marines were shook up from Beirut. I never saw a memorial go up, anywhere, in some small town that lost a

Marine in Beirut that Gray didn't go to. He knew that you never leave behind your wounded and you don't forget your dead" (Ricks, 1997, p. 145).

In Ricks' account, Webb observed, "When I brought up his name, shit flew everywhere." (Ricks, 1997, p. 144) When the news leaked out of the Pentagon that Al Gray would be the next commandant, Gray informed Ricks that Marine Corps headquarters staff at first put out the word that the leak was incorrect. According to Ricks, Webb recalled, "we got eighteen retirements out of the sixty-seven generals then in the Marines" (Ricks, 1997, p. 146). Gray set the blunt tone of his term during his first moments as commandant, "We're warriors, and people who support warriors, and we must always keep that focus. Some people don't like to hear about war – people who fight don't like to have to do it, but that's what we're about" (Ricks, 1997, p. 143). After 19 Marines were badly burned in a collision between two helicopters in 1987, Gray flew to the military hospital in San Antonio, Texas, where they were hospitalized. Without any introduction, the general walked into the waiting lounge of the hospital where the parents of the burned Marines had gathered and said, "I'm Al Gray. I'm the commandant of the Marine Corps. I'm responsible for your sons being in a burn ward. I'm here to answer your questions" (Ricks, 1997, p. 146).

Gray also encouraged an independence of thought in the Marine Corps. Ricks quoted Larry Cable, a combat Marine in Vietnam who now teaches national security studies at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, as commenting, "one neat thing about Marine Corps culture is that it swings between knuckle-dragging knuckleheads and flexible intellectuals – and Gray managed to combine the two" (Ricks, 1997, p. 145). Soon after assuming his position as Commandant, Gray introduced a

formal reading list (the latest version is included as Appendix E) not just for officers, but also for members of all ranks.<sup>26</sup>

## **Graduation**

Graduation from Marine Corps Basic Training serves as official recognition of the transition that has taken place over three months. “Whether you like it or not, you have a purpose in life now,” Sergeant Carey, a drill instructor in Ricks’ book, shouts to the assembled platoon. “You’re representing the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion. Listen you need to be productive under stress! You need to not spaz out! You need to SNAP and POP!” Senior Drill Instructor, Staff Sergeant Rowland concludes that his work is done. “They are morally and ethically sane, basically trained Marines,” he pronounces. He turns serious. “Everything you learn here, carry it with you. These are your roots.” Sergeant Carey adds: “Never quit, never die, understand? It doesn’t matter what you do, just do it the best. You’ve got to test yourself every day” (Ricks, 1997, p. 213).

Colonel Humberto Rodriguez, commander of the recruit training regiment in 1996, and a Zeus-like figure for the drill instructors, based on his status as base commander, provided the remarks for the graduation ceremony Ricks described,

Marching before you are four hundred twenty-one success stories, each of them a testament to the physical courage, determination, and unyielding commitment to

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<sup>26</sup> The intent of the Commandant’s Reading List is stated as follows: “In an era of constrained resources, our professional reading program is designed to provide Marines with an intellectual framework to study warfare and enhance their thinking and decision making skills. The mind, like the body, grows soft with inactivity. All Marines must understand that mental fitness is as demanding and as important as physical fitness, for both require commitment and perseverance. In a world characterized by rapid change and great uncertainty, our reading program will act as a combat multiplier by providing all Marines with a common frame of reference and historical perspective on warfare, human factors in combat and decision-making. In so doing, the program will also strengthen the threads of cohesion that make our Marine Corps unique.” (MCBUL 1500)

excellence behind the title “United States Marine.” They now join the proud ranks of over one million Marines who have graduated from Parris Island. All Marines in every instance are expected to employ and live by the principle of responsibility. It means being personally responsible and accountable for one’s actions, particularly in relation to other Marines. Ultimately it is the acceptance of such responsibility that bonds all Marines throughout the world all their lives. (Ricks, 1997, p. 215)

After the graduation ceremony, the one-time recruits are Marines now and forever. According to Ricks, the Corps’ contention is that there is no such thing as an ex-Marine, except for Lee Harvey Oswald. Major General Krulak told Ricks a story of an elderly Marine suffering from Alzheimer’s disease who would respond to nothing but the orders of Marine Corps ceremonies. The Rev. J. Edwin Pippin, a Marine in the 1950s who was the rector of St. Anne’s Parish in Albemarle County, Virginia, just south of Charlottesville when Ricks wrote argued, “The Marine experience is lifelong.” Interestingly, he saw a common thread between serving in the Corps and serving in a church. In both, he says, there’s a camaraderie and male bonding. In the mid-1980s when he served in a parish in South Carolina, 14 of that state’s 83 episcopal priests were Marines (Ricks, 1997, p. 219).

Ricks also shared a story involving John Nolen, a Marine veteran of Beirut and the operations director in 1996 for the New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans. Nolen claimed to have modeled his organization after Marine Corps basic training observing, “It (Marine Corps basic training) has applied to every day of my life” (Ricks, 1997, p. 231). A visitor to the center, in downtown Boston, is met at the front door not by

a receptionist, but by a command post. Behind it is a mural of the Iwo Jima flag raising. Nolen explains that the resemblance is intentional, ‘A guy comes through the door, after maybe twenty or twenty-five years of substance abuse and says ‘fix me.’ We rely on the one common denominator they all have – recruit training, which may be the last time a lot of them felt pride in themselves’” (Ricks, 1997, p. 231).

According to Ricks, newly graduated Marines immediately sense the change in their values when they return home for leave after basic training. Ricks quoted one recruit, Eric Didier, who observed, “I think I matured a bit on Parris Island, because I look at what my friends are doing, and it seems dumber to me than it did before. They’re not getting anything accomplished” (Ricks, 1997, p. 229). New Marines also realize they are now part of a nationwide brotherhood. One new Marine, Nathan Weber, was exceeding the speed limit while driving through a residential district in West Chester, Pennsylvania when a police officer pulled him over. Weber produced his military ID because he had heard stories that it helped and recounted to Ricks that the officer smiled and said “Slow down Marine, and left it at that” (Ricks, 1997, p. 230).

In 1996, Marine Commandant Charles Krulak told the leaders of the Corps recruit training command that he wanted boot camp drill instructors to spend more time explaining to recruits how Marines serve the U.S. Constitution, “We don’t want our Corps to be separated from the people we serve” (Ricks, 1997, p. 261). Ricks contended that these changes would only make Marine boot camp more of an oddity in American society; a place that is sometimes brutal, but where standards are enforced, where unquestioning teamwork is the rule rather than the exception and where no excuses are accepted. As a rite of passage, Ricks argued that there are few if any other places like it

left in American society with, “the frontier long closed and the part of the economy that runs on muscle power dwindling to insignificance” (Ricks, 1997, p. 262).

In Ricks’ afterword<sup>27</sup>, he described the experiences of one Marine recruit, Charles Lees and his life as a civilian. Lees was on the 73rd floor of the World Trade Center when American Airlines flight 11 crashed into it on September 11, 2001, “There was chaos and fear all around me, but the Marine Sergeant I was came out and took over” (Ricks, 1997, p. 310). According to Ricks’ account, Lees helped people to safety and then stopped by his desk to collect his Marine bag, which he used as a briefcase and which held his bag lunch and a bottle of water. Then he began to exit the building, “I helped a few civilians and one firefighter in the stairwell. All four had heat exhaustion and I shared my water with them” (Ricks, 1997, p. 310). Once outside, he helped direct crowds across Church Street, away from the stricken pair of buildings, “I like to think that the Marine in me helped me and others survive that day” (Ricks, 1997, p. 310).

### **Marine Corps Culture**

Carl Builder, a Rand Corporation analyst has offered perhaps the most insightful analysis of U.S. military cultures to date (Builder, 1989). According to Builder, the three larger services are obsessed with self-measurement: the Navy with the number of its ships, the Army with the number of its troops, the Air Force with the performance capabilities and number of its aircraft. The Marines, by contrast, are not so much concerned with size as with their culture—that is, the preservation of an independent

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<sup>27</sup> The initial publication of Ricks book was in 1997, but this afterword was included in the ten-year anniversary edition, published in 2007.

identity and the capability of being self-sufficient, “taking more pride in who they are than what they own” (Builder, 1989, p. 23).

Builder also saw within the Corps culture a kind of steadfastness and focus on mission that might be summarized in the aphorism that “what completes the mission is good, what gets in the way is bad” (Builder, 1989, p. 36). The Rand analyst has argued that the phrase, “Every Marine is a Rifleman,” heavily emphasized by Marine commandant Al Gray, thereafter became more than just a common denominator. It emerged as an ethos encapsulated in a phrase, a way of looking at life and behaving. In management terms, the emphasis on the rifleman directs loyalty from the top down (Builder, 1989, p. 38). The rifleman is also anonymous: not seen as an individual, but as a member of a group. In the Marines, it is the group that matters. On a related note, Ricks (1997) observed that even in the most iconic Marine Corps image, raising the flag on Iwo Jima, you cannot see the faces of the majority of the individuals involved: “Two have their backs turned to the camera, two have their sides turned, and the fifth is hidden except for his arms and hands supporting the flag” (Ricks, 1997, p. 207).

According to Ricks, another driver of Corps culture is its sense of future vulnerability. Every Marine is taught that the very existence of their service is always in danger. Ricks recounted the story of Colonel Douglas Hendricks, commander of the Recruit Training Regiment in 1996, who during a scheduled meeting with a group of randomly selected recruits from each graduating company asked,

You know why America has a Marine Corps? Because she wants one. Never forget that. Because if she changes her mind, if she thinks we’re no longer able to deliver, then we’re out of here – and we should be, as should any organization

that has lost its usefulness to the larger society. That's why the Marines are so adaptable – we're constantly looking for that edge (Ricks, 1997, p. 196).

In Ricks' account, Hendricks proceeded to ask the recruits, "Anyone here hear of Aristotle?" The recruits typically and overwhelmingly said no. Thereafter, Hendricks pointed out that, "He was a smart guy who lived a long time ago. He said we are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then isn't an act, it is a habit." According to Ricks, "this abiding sense of vulnerability, and the consequent requirement to excel to ensure the survival of the institution, is the central fact of Marine culture" (Ricks, 1997, p. 196). Because of that sense of endangerment, the Corps long has sought to justify its existence to the American public. This has also made it far more publicity conscious than the other services. Ricks observed that Paramount Pictures' *Wake Island*, made with Marine assistance in 1942, was the first film to portray World War II combat action. In 1950, President Harry Truman furiously charged that the Marines operated "a propaganda machine that is almost equal to Stalin's." He eventually was obliged to apologize (Ricks, 1997, p. 197).

Another important element of the Corps' culture is its emphasis on frugality. The Marines pride themselves on making do, using hand-me-downs and addressing their mission (in 2010) on 4 percent of the Pentagon budget (FY 2010 DOD Agency wide Agency Financial Report). Ricks has argued that the culture the Marines have developed in this respect most resembles that of Japan, suggesting the Corps is almost a Japanese version of America—frugal, relatively harmonious, extremely hierarchical and almost always placing the group over the individual. According to Ricks, the U.S. military in general, and the Marines in particular, when looking at America, see a society weakened

by selfishness, indiscipline and fragmentation. He reported that then Parris Island Recruit Depot Sergeant Major Harold Moore, said this of U.S. society in 1996:

It's difficult to go back into a society of 'What's in it for me?' When a Marine has been taught the opposite for so long. When I came up, there was more teaching of patriotism. We prayed in school. In the Marines we still put an emphasis on patriotism, on being unselfish, on trying to serve society (Ricks, 1997, p. 237).

However, Ricks also observed that this view of the United States is flawed for what it does not see and contended that despite its emphasis on values, the Marine Corps might be undervaluing America and its strengths. Nonetheless, Ricks conceded that there is value in the Marine perspective on America, "The Marine view is accurate in assessing what the United States offers the kind of people who make up today's recruits" (Ricks, 1997, p. 201). Most of the Corps' enlistees are young people from the bottom half of society. The Marines offer them a chance to escape their limited futures.

For many young Americans, the military is a haven from abusive families or indeed, from the absence of family (Ricks, 1997, p. 202). In its separateness from the larger society, the Marine Corps particularly among the armed services, offers sanctuary. It is an institution that, at its best, urges its enlistees to make a habit of excellence, as Colonel Hendricks routinely did when serving as Commander of Recruit Training at Parris Island when he invoked Aristotle when meeting with recruits (Ricks, 1997, p. 204).

### **The Crucible**

The Crucible, instituted in 1996, is the culminating exercise of Marine Corps Basic Training. It attempts to distill and reinforce many of the lessons taught in three months into a 54-hour period. As noted above, James B. Woulfe, a former assistant

director of the Marine Corps Drill Instructor School, wrote *Into The Crucible*, to provide insight into this capstone recruit experience (Woulfe, 1998).<sup>28</sup> In 1996, Marine Corps Commandant Charles Krulak sought to strengthen the civilian-to-Marine training process by calling for the creation of a culminating training exercise, which the general dubbed “the Crucible.” This capstone made Marine Corps basic training more realistic and challenging by employing a defining series of experiences to bring all of an enlistee’s newly acquired capacities and knowledge into focus. Krulak’s stated aim for the Crucible was to create, “something so tough, so powerful, that unless you join together, you can’t accomplish the defining moment. Your team will not make it unless you pull together” (Woulfe, 1998, p. 7). As Woulfe observed,

The Crucible is intended to continue the tradition of Marines being better warriors through shared hardship and teamwork. It creates an experience to demonstrate to each recruit the limited possibilities of what they could achieve individually and how much more they could accomplish while working as a team (1998; pg. 7).

Woulfe argued that the addition of the Crucible represented the most dramatic change in the history of Marine Corps recruit training.

In practice, the Crucible is a 54-hour endurance course in which recruits conquer challenge after challenge in increasingly demanding conditions. Woulfe has suggested that the continuous operations demanded by the exercise push the Marines beyond their perceived limits and redefine the potential of their abilities (Woulfe, 1998, p. 56). The capstone experience features little food or sleep and demands 40 miles of hiking. Most importantly, the Marines must do everything as a team to succeed, as each of the 32

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<sup>28</sup> As noted above, the crucible had not yet been implemented at the time of Thomas Ricks’ book. It was incorporated in basic training in 1996, shortly after publication of his volume.

combat exercises requires effective collaboration; none can be accomplished alone.

Woulfe commented that it becomes obvious during the exercises that each Marine has something to offer and is in some way valuable to the team. Where size and strength might be important at one station, they could be liabilities at another obstacle that requires agility and a small frame.<sup>29</sup>

Woulfe noted that the role of the drill instructors changes notably during the Crucible. Marine Corps Drill Instructors do not use their campaign covers (hats)<sup>30</sup> during the capstone, but rather the utility cover that is worn with the camouflage utility uniform. Not using their campaign hats signals an important shift in roles for the drill instructors, as well as the recruits in the training regimen. According to Woulfe, the Marine Corps considers this change in the persona of the DIs to be an important part of suggesting to trainees that they are now different as they are about to become Marines. Recruits are also allowed to refer to themselves as Private, rather than recruit, during the Crucible. Woulfe observed, “that for a recruit to be allowed to call himself or herself ‘private,’ to be allowed to call his drill instructor by his rank, to see that his drill instructor wore the same uniform as he, all helped transform him into a Marine” (Woulfe, 1998, p. 27).

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<sup>29</sup> I participated in the Crucible exercise and can attest to its effectiveness in identifying team strengths and weaknesses.

<sup>30</sup> The campaign cover is a throwback to an earlier era. Although some form of campaign hat had been used since the Civil War, the Army adopted the modern form of the hat with its "Montana Peak" crown on September 8, 1911. The Army introduced minor changes in the hat's design in 1921. After World War I enlisted men used the cover for field service, post and fatigue. An advisory council meeting in 1956 introduced the pre-World War II campaign or field hat worn by Drill Instructors today. Senior Noncommissioned Officers at that gathering strongly recommended the hat as primary "headgear" for DIs. Further study found that DIs preferred the field hat. It shaded the neck and eyes well, but did not keep the head as cool as the pith helmet. The field hat was a bit of tradition going back to the "Old Corps" or pre-World War II days. It also was more suitable for year-round wear than the pith helmet. By early June 1956, the Depot had requisitioned 1,000 field hats for delivery on Sept. 1, 1956, but General Wallace M. Greene Jr., wanted to order 700 hats immediately. On Saturday, July 21, 1956 at 7:30 a.m. all 603 drill instructors of the recruit training command obtained their new hats. (Retrieved on January 28, 2014 from: [http://olive-drab.com/od\\_soldiers\\_clothing\\_combat\\_ww2\\_hats\\_campaign.php](http://olive-drab.com/od_soldiers_clothing_combat_ww2_hats_campaign.php))

The challenge of this phase of training is actually securing the change in relationship between the recruit and the drill instructor. Nothing can make the recruits believe they are different unless the DIs treat them differently and convince them of the “rightness” of the shift. Throughout basic training prior to the Crucible, enlistees are not allowed to refer to other Marines by their rank, but instead must address them as “sir” or “ma’am.” Allowing recruits to call the drill instructors by rank and last name signals an important shift in identity. As Woulfe has argued, “For a drill instructor to stop a recruit from saying ‘sir,’ and tell him he would have to act like a Marine soon, reinforced the purpose behind the Crucible. It strengthened the commitment that the recruits must have to Corps and country, highlighting the personal responsibility that came with the title ‘Marine’” (Woulfe, 1998, p.23).

In addition to facilitating the transition to full-fledged standing as a Corps member, the service designed the Crucible to reinforce the core values to which recruits had been exposed since the first week of their training. The Marine Corps Training Command named 11 of the Crucible’s obstacles after Marine Medal of Honor recipients, and a 12th honors a Marine hero who sacrificed her life while saving others from a fire in 1942. These challenges are called warrior stations and constitute the foundation of the basic training capstone experience. Woulfe claimed that, “the Crucible would be nothing but another endurance course if it were not for the emotional and spiritual effects of combining Marines’ experiences from the past (Medal of Honor recipients), present (drill instructors) and future (recruits)” (Woulfe, 1998, p. 24). Based on my personal experience, I certainly agree that this mix of past, present and future creates a powerful alchemy that greatly enhanced the sense of *esprit de corps* that existed among the

Marines with whom I experienced the Crucible. The Medal of Honor narratives each present an ideal; the drill instructors model behaviors consistent with that aspiration and the recruits attempt to realize each by overcoming the obstacles linked to them venerated individual. Woulfe argued,

Recruits do not have defective value systems, but some are deficient in their ability to distinguish between right and wrong. It is debatable whether this is anything new to American society. Marines from generations past were not that much different from the men and women joining today. The problem is that a Marine's misbehavior in a foreign country is more apt today to cause an international incident. The purpose of core values is to make Marines better warriors by making them better Americans, causing units in turn to be more effective (Woulfe, 1998, p. 23).

Woulfe observed that the Crucible reinforces Marine core values through the use of narrative storytelling: "At each warrior station, the drill instructor reads the Medal of Honor citation for the Marine the event was named after. The citations are then used during debriefs after the event to relate the actions of the recruits to the core values" (Woulfe, 1998, p. 24). According to Woulfe, the drill instructors use every opportunity to discuss honor, courage and commitment (Woulfe, 1998, p. 25). The DIs point out incidents that occurred during each phase of the capstone in an effort to encourage recruits to realize how full adoption of core values can make a unit better.

While narrative storytelling plays a critical role in the Crucible, it is also integral to the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program<sup>31</sup> (MCMAP) through the use of Warrior

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<sup>31</sup> Analysts often describe the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP) as consisting of three synergistic aspects—physical, mental and moral. The current program director, retired Marine Lt. Col.

Lessons. Marine Corps document MA-I. 01A, the official training guide for MCMAP, provides instructors the following information regarding Warrior Case Studies:

A Warrior Case Study is designed to tie together the spirit and character of a warrior with the technical skills of the Marine Corps Martial Arts. At a predetermined point during Martial Arts training for a hard discipline the instructor will present the case study. An optimum time to do this is during a break between drills or prior to teaching a follow-on technique. A Warrior Case Study can also be used at the beginning of a class or exercise as an attention gainer or the end of a class or exercise to reinforce Martial Arts training. The key to effectively using the Warrior Case Study is to show how the actions of the Medal of Honor recipient in the citation reflected a warrior spirit and was an example of the Marine ethos. Physically each recipient of the Medal of Honor had to overcome physical danger, human factors, harsh environmental factors, and in most cases physically overpower an enemy. At the same time he had to display honor, moral and physical courage, commitment, and selflessness; in each case knowing that his selfless actions would most likely lead to death. Stated simply, each put the mission and his fellow Marines before himself and in many cases made the ultimate sacrifice. At the conclusion of the presentation the instructor should have shown that the warrior in the case study accomplished his heroic actions through a combination of physical, mental and character disciplines (Marine Corps Regulation MA-I.01A).

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Joseph C. Shusko, remains adamant, however, that the primary aim of the training and each of its elements is an ethical Marine warrior.

## **The Warrior Stations**

This section provides detailed descriptions of each Crucible warrior station and its corresponding narrative to provide a greater understanding of the capstone exercise and its integrative aims. A deeper awareness of the aspirations and methodologies behind this portion of boot camp may provide important insights for educators who wish to encourage similar skills and values in their students.

The Crucible's first warrior station is called Staff Sergeant Howard's Maze. Jimmie Howard enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1950 and served as a forward observer in Korea and was awarded the Silver Star and two Purple Hearts.<sup>32</sup> Howard was later awarded the Medal of Honor in Vietnam for conspicuous gallantry:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as a Platoon Leader, Company "C", First Reconnaissance Battalion, First Marine Division (Reinforced), Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, in action against communist insurgent forces in Quang Tin Province, Republic of Vietnam, on 16 June 1966. During the night Gunnery Sergeant (then Staff Sergeant) Howard's platoon of eighteen men was assaulted by a numerically superior force consisting of a well-trained North Vietnamese Battalion employing heavy small arms fire, automatic weapons and accurate weapon fire. Without hesitation he immediately organized his platoon to personally supervise the precarious defense of Hill 488. Utterly oblivious to the unrelenting fury of hostile

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<sup>32</sup> The Medal of Honor is awarded for "gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty." The Silver Star is awarded for "gallantry in action." The Purple Heart is awarded for "wounds suffered in combat." (Retrieved March 8, 2014 from: <http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/support/uniforms/uniformregulations/Pages/NavyAwardsPrecedenceChart.aspx>)

enemy weapons fire and hand grenades he repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire while directing the operation of his small force. As the enemy attack progressed and the enemy fire increased in volume and accuracy and despite his mounting casualties, Gunnery Sergeant Howard continued to set an example of calmness and courage. Moving from position to position, he inspired his men with dynamic leadership and courageous fighting spirit until he was struck and painfully wounded by fragments from an enemy hand grenade. Unable to move his legs and realizing that the position was becoming untenable, he distributed his ammunition to the remaining members of his platoon and skillfully directed friendly aircraft and artillery strikes with uncanny accuracy upon the enemy. Dawn found the beleaguered force diminished by five killed and all but one wounded. When rescue helicopters proceeded to Gunnery Sergeant Howard's position, he directed them away from his badly mauled force and called additional air strikes and directed devastating small arms fire on the enemy thus making the landing zone as secure as possible. His valiant leadership and courageous fighting spirit served to inspire the men of his platoon to heroic endeavor in the face of overwhelming odds, and reflected the highest credit upon Gunnery Sergeant Howard, the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service (Woulfe, 1998, p. 29).

The drill instructors sort recruits into squads of 12 to complete the Crucible. The Howard's Maze scenario is that a building has collapsed on the team and the only way out is through a mangled array of ventilation ducts. A rope web, with holes of varying

sizes, is used to simulate the narrow conduits through which the group members must traverse. The entire team must make it through the web, but neither they nor their equipment can touch the rope. If anything or anyone touches the rope, all members of the squad must begin again. This stipulation is meant to simulate that any movement would cause loose debris and rubble to collapse on the duct system. As the squad navigates the obstacle, they discover that this challenge can be addressed only when they accept that they need to rely on each other to do so.

Drill instructors tell the teams during debriefing that this obstacle embodies the core value of courage. Staff Sergeant Howard's squad was surrounded on a hill with little hope of rescue. They were out of ammunition and wounded, but they did not quit and they did not surrender. Woulfe summarized the DI's message at this challenge,

Courage is the heart of core values. It is composed of mental, moral, and physical strength that are ingrained in all Marines to carry them through the challenges of combat and allow them to master their fears. It will help them to do what is right by adhering to a higher standard of personal conduct, leading by example, and making tough decisions under stress and pressure (Woulfe, 1998, p. 32).

The Crucible's second warrior station is called Corporal Mackie's Passage. John Mackie earned the Medal of Honor during the Civil War for almost singlehandedly maintaining his ship's defenses for countless hours. Mackie was the first Marine to earn the Medal of Honor:

On board the U.S.S. *Galena* in the attack on Fort Darling at Drewry's Bluff, James River, on May 15, 1862. As enemy shellfire raked the deck of his ship, Corporal Mackie fearlessly maintained his musket fire against the rifle pits along

the shore and, when ordered to fill vacancies at guns caused by men wounded and killed in action, manned the weapons with skill and courage (Woulfe, 1998, p. 37).

In the Crucible version of this scenario, the squad is aboard a ship that has been struck by enemy fire and is sinking. The only way out is through a porthole.<sup>33</sup> The objective is to get all the recruits through a suspended tire feet first without touching the tire. The obstacle is designed to encourage recruits to reflect on the value of teamwork while also recognizing the importance of individual ability. In the beginning, passing recruits through the tire is easy; however, when they reach the end, there is only one recruit remaining and he or she must discover a way to get through the tire alone. This is similar to Corporal Mackie's experience manning the ship's guns by himself. Woulfe argued that Mackie's actions modeled the Marine core value of commitment

Commitment is the spirit of determination and dedication within members of a force of arms that leads to professionalism and mastery of the art of war. It leads to the highest order of discipline for unit and self and is the ingredient that enables twenty-four hours a day dedication to the Corps and Country (Woulfe, 1998, p. 42).

The next Crucible challenge is called Sergeant Gonzalez's Crossing and honors Alfredo Gonzalez, who was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously during the Vietnam War for leading his squad through heavy enemy fire. Gonzalez was wounded three separate times within a four-day period. Refusing medical attention and evacuation, he not only continued fighting, but also remained in command of an entire platoon. Even

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<sup>33</sup> Naval term for window

more impressive, he had served only two and a half years in the Corps, was 21 years old, and was performing duties intended for a commissioned officer. Gonzalez' citation reads:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as platoon commander, 3d Platoon, Company A. On 31 January 1968, during the initial phase of Operation Hue City, Sgt. Gonzalez' unit was formed as a reaction force and deployed to Hue to relieve the pressure on the beleaguered city. While moving by truck convoy along Route No. 1, near the village of Lang Van Lrong, the Marines received a heavy volume of enemy fire. Sgt. Gonzalez aggressively maneuvered the Marines in his platoon, and directed their fire until the area was cleared of snipers. Immediately after crossing a river south of Hue, the column was again hit by intense enemy fire. One of the Marines on top of a tank was wounded and fell to the ground in an exposed position. With complete disregard for his safety, Sgt. Gonzalez ran through the fire-swept area to the assistance of his injured comrade. He lifted him up and though receiving fragmentation wounds during the rescue, he carried the wounded Marine to a covered position for treatment. Due to the increased volume and accuracy of enemy fire from a fortified machine gun bunker on the side of the road, the company was temporarily halted. Realizing the gravity of the situation, Sgt. Gonzalez exposed himself to the enemy fire and moved his platoon along the east side of a bordering rice paddy to a dike directly across from the bunker. Though fully aware of the danger involved, he moved to the fire-swept road and destroyed the hostile position with hand grenades. Although seriously wounded again on 3 February, he steadfastly refused medical treatment and continued to supervise his

men and lead the attack. On 4 February, the enemy had again pinned the company down, inflicting heavy casualties with automatic weapons and rocket fire. Sgt. Gonzalez, utilizing a number of light antitank assault weapons, fearlessly moved from position to position firing numerous rounds at the heavily fortified enemy emplacements. He successfully knocked out a rocket position and suppressed much of the enemy fire before falling mortally wounded. The heroism, courage, and dynamic leadership displayed by Sgt. Gonzalez reflected great credit upon himself and the Marine Corps, and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country (Woulfe, 1998, p. 45).

The Crucible version of this scenario calls upon squads to use a rope to swing from platform to platform, while wearing chemical decontamination gear. If a recruit, or their equipment, touches the ground, he or she is considered a casualty. While the obstacle sounds simple, it is challenging due to the difficulty of properly calculating the trajectory of the rope. Several fail on the first attempt, but when one recruit makes it to the second station, and is able to help guide the others, the task becomes easier. The core value embodied in this obstacle presents itself after the exercise, when the leader must assume responsibility for the casualties. Recruits learn to accept the consequences of their decisions and actions and the significance of honor as a core value. As Woulfe has observed,

Honor is the bedrock of a Marine's character, the quality that guides Marines to exemplify the ultimate in ethical and moral behavior. It means to never lie, cheat,

or steal and to abide by an uncompromising code of integrity; to always respect human dignity and have concern for others (Woulfe, 1998, p. 48).

The next three Crucible stations are physically challenging obstacles. The first hurdle is a bayonet assault course. Next, the squad hikes 1.5 miles to an infiltration route. A collection of barbed-wire obstacles and culverts, the path is intended to replicate the obstacles Marines meet when attacking a fortified position. A sprinkler system ensures the recruits must traverse mud to gain their goal. The third obstacle is a day movement course, in which participants must remove a casualty to an evacuation helicopter and drag their wounded comrades under wires, over walls and through water to safety. At this point in their capstone experience recruits have hiked about 10 miles and are only one-quarter finished. To a person, they are hungry, wet and tired.

The Marine Corps often teaches its lessons by confronting recruits with physical hardships. According to Woulfe, physical punishment for rules infractions and socialization is an integral part of Marine boot camp:

Incentive training is punishment through physical exercise. Incentive training is awarded to a recruit for several reasons: sometimes, as a response to a specific act; other times for no apparent reason. Unexpected adversity that seems to have no logic comes in much the same way that piece of shrapnel simply picks out one victim from a group, or the way a sniper shoots at someone just because he's there. Working through unexpected adversity is what separates Marines from the average human. Anyone can prepare for hardships he knows are coming, but it takes someone special to thrive through unexpected and seemingly unfair treatment (Woulfe, 1998, p. 62).

The next warrior station in the Crucible simulates such apparent randomness and honors Sgt. John Basilone who was awarded the Medal of Honor at Guadalcanal in WWII:

For extraordinary heroism and conspicuous gallantry in action against enemy Japanese forces, above and beyond the call of duty, while serving with the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division in the Lunga Area, Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, on 24 and 25 October 1942. While the enemy was hammering at the Marines' defensive positions, Sgt. Basilone, in charge of 2 sections of heavy machine guns, fought valiantly to check the savage and determined assault. In a fierce frontal attack with the Japanese blasting his guns with grenades and mortar fire, one of Sgt. Basilone's sections, with its gun crews, was put out of action, leaving only 2 men able to carry on. Moving an extra gun into position, he placed it in action, then, under continual fire, repaired another and personally manned it, gallantly holding his line until replacements arrived. A little later, with ammunition critically low and the supply lines cut off, Sgt. Basilone, at great risk of his life and in the face of continued enemy attack, battled his way through hostile lines with urgently needed shells for his gunners, thereby contributing in large measure to the virtual annihilation of a Japanese regiment. His great personal valor and courageous initiative were in keeping with the highest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service (Woulfe, 1998, p. 68).

In the Basilone exercise, recruits must use a fallen log to cross a barbed-wire fence, carrying ammunition cans and other gear. The scenario is that while conducting operations in a city the platoon comes under sniper fire while crossing the street and their

squad has discovered a route behind a nearby building that will reunite the two groups, but a barbed wire fence blocks the way. The team's leader notices a fallen telephone pole over one portion of the fence.

This obstacle is designed to teach the virtue of self-discipline. Basilone operated a machine gun for three days and nights without sleep, rest or food. According to one of the drill instructors in Woulfe's account,

He (Basilone) held himself responsible for the operation of the machine gun because he knew that it was important to his fellow Marines and his mission. He had the self-discipline to continually clean and maintain his machine gun so that it would function properly. Meticulous attention to detail was necessary, just like the attention to detail you (the recruits) had to put into preparing for an inspection (Woulfe, 1998, p. 74).

The next Crucible warrior station is Private First Class Garcia's Leap. Fernando Garcia covered a grenade with his own body in Korea to save his fellow Marines at the battle at Chosin Reservoir.<sup>34</sup>

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a member of Company I, Third Battalion, Fifth Marines, First Marine Division (Reinforced), in action against enemy aggressor

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<sup>34</sup> The battle of the Chosin Reservoir, Chosin also called Changjin, campaign early in the Korean War, was part of the Chinese Second Offensive (November–December 1950) to drive the United Nations out of North Korea. The Chosin Reservoir campaign was directed mainly against the 1st Marine Division of the U.S. X Corps, which had disembarked in eastern North Korea and moved inland in severe winter weather to a mountainous area near the reservoir. The campaign succeeded in forcing the entire X Corps to evacuate to South Korea, but the Chinese did not achieve their particular objective of isolating and destroying the 1st Marine Division. Instead, in a deliberate retrograde movement that has become one of the most-storied exploits in Marine Corps lore, the Marines turned and fought their way down a narrow vulnerable road through several mountain passes and a bridged chasm until they reached transport ships waiting at the coast.

forces in Korea on September 5, 1952. While participating in the defense of a combat outpost located more than one mile forward of the main line of resistance during a savage night attack by a fanatical enemy force employing grenades, mortars and artillery, Private First Class Garcia, although suffering painful wounds, moved through the intense hall of hostile fire to a supply point to secure more hand grenades. Quick to act when a hostile grenade landed nearby, endangering the life of another Marine, as well as his own, he unhesitatingly chose to sacrifice himself and immediately threw his body upon the deadly missile, receiving the full impact of the explosion. His great personal valor and cool decision in the face of almost certain death sustain and enhance the finest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country (Woulfe, 1998, p. 80).

Garcia's leap requires all recruits to jump a great distance to a bar, which they cannot reach alone. The remaining squad members line up under the bar, facing each other, with their arms extended. The scenario is that while crossing a bridge, the squad came under enemy air attack. There were no casualties, but the bridge was damaged, leaving a gap in it. A member of the team is on the far side. Some posts remain by the breach as well as some cables suspended over a hole. This obstacle requires enormous trust in the squad's members, because the jump is hopeless without the aid of the team, and there is no chance that an individual can reach the bar alone. The recruits' jump is literally a leap of faith. The squad's commitment to each of its individual members is designed to emulate Garcia's commitment to his fellow Marines.

The next warrior station on the Crucible course, PFC Jenkins' Pinnacle, honors Robert Jenkins, who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for shielding another Marine from a grenade blast at the cost of his own life:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a Marine Gunner with Company C, Third Reconnaissance Battalion, Third Marine Division in connection with operations against enemy forces in the Republic of Vietnam. Early on the morning of 5 March 1969, Private First Class Jenkins' twelve-man reconnaissance team was occupying a defensive position at Fire Support Base Argonne south of the Vietnamese Demilitarized Zone. Suddenly, the Marines were assaulted by a North Vietnamese Army platoon employing mortar, automatic weapons, and hand grenades. Reacting instantly, Private First Class Jenkins and another Marine quickly moved into a two-man fighting emplacement, and as they boldly delivered accurate machine gun fire against the enemy, a North Vietnamese soldier threw a hand grenade into the friendly emplacement. Fully realizing the inevitable results of his action, Private First Class Jenkins quickly seized his comrade, and pushing the man to the ground, he leaped on top of the Marine to shield him from the explosion. Absorbing the full impact of the detonation, Private First Class Jenkins was seriously injured and subsequently succumbed to his wounds. His courage, inspiring valor and selfless devotion to duty saved a fellow Marine from serious injury or possible death and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Navy. He gallantly gave his life for his country (Woulfe, 1998, p. 87).

The scenario recruits confront with this challenge is that during an amphibious assault, their landing ship ran aground on a sand bar just short of the beach. The water is too deep to exit over the sides of the craft, but to the front it is only waist deep. A sailor has constructed a ladder to scale the front of the vessel. The objective is to climb over the front of the ship, using a hastily constructed ladder and resupply the platoon with ammunition. An awkward and unstable-looking set of logs simulates the ladder. The first log is five feet above the ground, with the second another five feet up, 10 feet above the ground. The logs are suspended from two ropes, allowing them to swing freely.

If Jenkins had not saved his fellow Marine and the machine gun, the rest of his squad would likely have been killed. Similarly, in this scenario, the platoon desperately needs the ammunition that can only be made available via the ladder. If the team does not employ teamwork to address the obstacle successfully, their comrades could die.

The next Crucible obstacle is called Sgt. Timmerman's Tank and honors Grant Timmerman for his valor at the battle of Saipan during World War II. The Sergeant blocked the entrance to a tank with his body, thereby preventing a grenade from entering it. Timmerman's medal citation reads,

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as Tank Commander serving with the Second Battalion, Sixth Marines, Second Marine Division, during action against enemy Japanese forces on Saipan, Marianas Islands, on 8 July 1944. Advancing with his tank a few yards ahead of the infantry in support of a vigorous attack on hostile positions, Sergeant Timmerman maintained steady fire from his anti-aircraft sky mount machine gun until progress was impeded by a series of enemy trenches and pillboxes.

Observing a target of opportunity, he immediately ordered the tank stopped and, mindful of the danger from the muzzle blast as he prepared to open fire with the 75-mm., fearlessly stood up in the exposed turret and ordered the infantry to hit the deck. Quick to act as a grenade, hurled by the Japanese, was about to drop into the open turret hatch, Sergeant Timmerman unhesitatingly blocked the opening with his body, holding the grenade against his chest and taking the brunt of the explosion. His exceptional valor and loyalty in saving his men at the cost of his own life reflect the highest credit upon Sergeant Timmerman and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life in the service of country (Woulfe, 1998, p. 96).

In this Crucible challenge recruits must move through a contaminated area by walking on logs together and must coordinate their movements to move the timbers as they do so. The scenario is that the enemy has chemically treated an area a team must cross to attack an enemy position. The chemical used is not only deadly, but also corrosive and will eat through boots. There are several boards with ropes attached nearby. The mission is to cross the area by attaching two long boards to the bottom of several squad members' boots and coordinating movements to walk together across the contaminated area.

By this point in their capstone exercise, recruits are still more tired and hungry and communication has often broken down. Nonetheless, to navigate this challenge successfully requires effective and open information exchange and coordination. The obstacle is designed to simulate the difficulties that Timmerman faced when he exposed

his own body to enemy fire while communicating to his comrades the locations from which they were under attack.

Following Timmerman's Tank, the recruits complete a reaction course comprised of six obstacles similar to the warrior stations, but designed to require more decision-making. In describing this portion of the Crucible, Woulfe observed,

Developing the recruits' problem solving skills is important because Marines need to be capable of making decisions for the Corps' doctrine of maneuver warfare to be successful. Maneuver warfare is dependent on military judgment at all levels, as all Marines become capable of making decisions that lead to the unit's accomplishing its mission. A military decision does not have a mathematical answer. It requires both intuitive skill to recognize and analyze, and creative ability to devise a practical solution. To survive, and more so to thrive, Marines must not only possess discipline and the ability to work together, but also the ability to solve problems and distinguish between right and wrong. Training needs to be tough, include core values, require problem-solving, and utilize teamwork. In other words, it needs to be just like the Crucible (Woulfe, 1998, p. 107).

The reaction challenge is designed to break through the last vestiges of "the you don't get paid to think" mentality that some think characterizes Marine Corps Basic Training.

Failure to make good decisions not only has the potential for tragic consequences on the battlefield, but also for a Marine on liberty in the civilian world.

The next Warrior Station honors Louis Cukela who earned the Medal of Honor in the Battle of Belleau Wood during World War I.<sup>35</sup> Cukela climbed out of his trench, under heavy fire, leading his men to take a German machine gun position. Cukela's medal citation reads,

For extraordinary heroism while serving with the 66th Company, 5th Regiment, during action in Forest de Retz, near Viller-Cottertes, France, July 18, 1918. Sgt. Cukela advanced alone against an enemy strong point that was holding up his line. Disregarding the warnings of his comrades, he crawled out from the flank in the face of heavy fire and worked his way to the rear of the enemy position. Rushing a machine-gun emplacement, he killed or drove off the crew with his bayonet, bombed out the remaining part of the strong point with German hand grenades, and captured two machineguns and four men (Woulfe, 1998, p. 112).

This Crucible obstacle's scenario finds a platoon pinned down by enemy fire from a bunker. The team's squad was moving around the shelter to attack it from the rear when it encountered a large 15-foot wall. The mission is to use teamwork to get to the other side of the barrier to attack the enemy position. After 15 hours of continuous teamwork, the recruit group by now knows generally who is best at what. This obstacle is designed

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<sup>35</sup> Part of the 1918 German Spring Offensive, American forces won the Battle of Belleau Wood after twenty-six days of combat. Fought predominantly by U.S. Marines, the clash stopped the German offensive and began a counterattack in the area. Fighting in the forest was particularly fierce, with the Marines clearing the wood six times before it was finally secured. Following the Battle of Belleau Wood, Marines began calling themselves "Devil Dogs." While many analysts have suggested that German forces coined the term, its origins are unclear. What is known is that German troops highly respected the Marines' fighting ability and classified them as elite "storm troopers."

to demonstrate again the importance and effectiveness of collaboration. Cukela, although acting individually, actually demonstrated teamwork and courage, by taking the initiative to support his platoon.

The Marine Corps calls the next Crucible station PFC Anderson's Fall in honor of James Anderson, the first African-American Marine to earn the Medal of Honor. He did so by covering a grenade with his body to save his squad during the Vietnam War.

Anderson's citation reads,

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as a rifleman, Second Platoon, Company F, Second Battalion, Third Marines, Third Marine Division, in Vietnam on 28 February 1967.

Company F was advancing in dense jungle northwest of Cam Lo in an effort to extract a heavily besieged reconnaissance patrol. Private First Class Anderson's platoon was the lead element and had advanced only about 200 meters when they were brought under extremely intense enemy small arms and automatic weapons fire. The platoon reacted swiftly, getting on line as best they could in the thick terrain, and began returning fire. Private First Class Anderson found himself tightly bunched together with the other members of the platoon only 20 meters from the enemy positions. As the firefight continued several of the men were wounded by the deadly enemy assault. Suddenly, an enemy grenade landed in the midst of the Marines and rolled alongside Private First Class Anderson's head. Unhesitatingly and with complete disregard for his own personal safety, he reached out, grasped the grenade, pulled it to his chest and curled around it as it went off. Although several Marines received shrapnel from the grenade, his body

absorbed the major force of the explosion. In this singularly heroic act, Private First Class Anderson saved his comrades from serious injury and possible death. His personal heroism, extraordinary valor, and inspirational supreme self-sacrifice reflected great credit upon himself and the Marine Corps and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country (Woulfe, 1998, p. 121).

The obstacle situation is that while attempting to clear a building of enemy resistance, one member of the squad has become trapped on the second floor. The building is on fire and the endangered recruit has to jump to safety. The mission is to catch that individual as he or she escapes from the building. Before the team is a large table about five feet tall. The recruits stand on the table and fall backward into the arms of their squad members. Many Marines refer to this challenge as the “iced tea plunge” popularized by a Nestea television commercial aired in the late 1980s and early 1990s (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XhQJSo3mGpE>, accessed March 8, 2014).

In addition to instilling trust in the team, this exercise is also used to discuss racial issues in the Marine Corps, based on Anderson’s status in Marine history. A drill instructor quoted in Woulfe’s book observed, “remember, there isn’t any color difference among Marines because we’re all green. Before, all of you were different, but soon all of us will share a common identity and a common bond – that of a U.S. Marine” (Woulfe, 1998, p. 123).

Following PFC Anderson’s Leap, the recruits participate in an infiltration course identical to the endurance challenge the recruits had completed earlier, except undertaken in the dead of night to highlight the challenges of conducting an assault in darkness.

Recruits next address SSgt. Bordelon's Assault during the Battle of Tarawa during World War II. Congress awarded William J. Bordelon the Medal of Honor for assaulting a Japanese position, while mortally wounded.

For valorous and gallant conduct above and beyond the call of duty as a member of an Assault Engineer Platoon of the First Battalion, Eighteenth Marines, tactically attached to the Second Marines, Second Marine Division, in action against the Japanese-held Atoll of Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands on November 20, 1943. Landing in the assault waves under withering enemy fire which killed all but four of the men in his tractor, Staff Sergeant Bordelon hurriedly made demolition charges and personally put two pill boxes out of action. Hit by enemy machine-gun fire just as a charge exploded in his hand while assaulting a third position, he courageously remained in action and, although out of demolition, provided himself with a rifle and furnished fire coverage for a group of men scaling the seawall. Disregarding his own serious condition, he unhesitatingly went to the aid of one of his demolition men, wounded and calling for help in the water, rescuing this man and another who had been hit by enemy fire while attempting to make the rescue. Still refusing first aid for himself, he again made up demolition charges and single-handedly assaulted a fourth Japanese machine-gun position but was instantly killed when caught in a final burst of fire from the enemy. Staff Sergeant Bordelon's great personal valor during a critical phase of securing the limited beachhead was a contributing factor in the ultimate occupation of the island and his heroic determination reflects the highest credit

upon the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country (Woulfe, 1998, p. 136).

Recruits confronting the Bordelon obstacle are informed they are pinned down by fire from an enemy bunker and have maneuvered to a ventilation shaft leading to it. The team has one demolition charge and its mission is to destroy the bunker by lowering that explosive into the ventilation shaft. A truck tire represents the weapon. The obstacle involves getting the tire to the top of a telephone pole, and then down, then back up. According to Woulfe, this challenge is close to a no-win situation, and is designed to teach recruits to stay closely focused on the task at hand. Bordelon and the Marines at Tarawa faced what seemed to be a nearly unwinnable situation. The Japanese Commander on that island had said 1 million men could not take the island in 100 years. Nevertheless, the Marines captured the island in three days. The costs were terrible, however, as 1,000 Marines died at Tarawa (Woulfe, 1998, p. 138).

The Corps has named the penultimate warrior station on the Crucible course Corporal Laville's Duty. Catherine Laville enlisted in the Marine Corps during WWII, because there were no males of age in her family who could fight. She died rescuing Marines from a burning building. Although Laville did not receive the Medal of Honor, she was commemorated for her unselfish patriotic service to her country and her fellow Marines.

Laville's primary duty was as an aerial gunnery instructor in a large two-story structure called the Synthetic Training Building, or STB. On Saturday, June 3, 1944, more than 50 Marines were preparing to change duty shifts in the STB. Nine civilian cleaning men were also at work waxing the floors. At 2:51 p.m., the

highly liquid floor wax thrown by a buffing machine hit the worn wires of a flight simulation machine, in effect setting the entire first floor corridor and lobby ablaze. The devastating fire consumed the wooden building within minutes. Five Marines died and 37 were injured. Laville was last seen inside the burning building, where she gave her life trying to help others escape (Woulfe, 1998, p. 143).

The situation for the course obstacle is that a squad has secured the top floor of a burning building and the only way out is to cross to a neighboring structure. There are cables suspended between the two buildings, and the recruits must move from one to the other using tire swings. The mission is to move the squad and its equipment to the safety of the adjacent building. The recruits must transfer from tire to tire, timing their movement so that the other members will be able to catch the tire on its backward swing. This scenario is also employed to discuss the role women have played in Marine Corps history.

The recruits complete a combat course, designed to simulate warfare, following Cpl. Laville's Duty challenge. Carrying a 90-pound dummy to safety, firing weapons and pugil stick bouts occur during this phase of the exercise. Woulfe argued that this, "Crucible event is a response to uncertainty, because Marines need to be trained to handle any situation with which they are faced. They may have to evacuate civilians or kill a deadly enemy. For these situations, they need to be smart, disciplined, and tough" (Woulfe, 1998, p. 147).

The final warrior station honors LCpl Thomas Noonan and is called Noonan's Evacuation. Noonan was awarded the Medal of Honor in Vietnam<sup>36</sup> for recovering a wounded Marine and carrying him to safety, although he suffered a mortal injury in the process. Noonan's citation reads,

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a Fire Team Leader with Company G, Second Battalion, Ninth Marines, Third Marine Division, in operations against the enemy in Quang Tri Province in the Republic of Vietnam. On February 5, 1969, Company G was directed to move from a position that they had been holding southeast of the Vandergrift Combat Base in A Shau Valley to an alternate location. As the Marines commenced a slow and difficult descent down the side of the hill, made extremely slippery by the heavy rains, the leading element came under heavy fire from a North Vietnamese Army unit occupying well-concealed positions in the rocky terrain. Four men were wounded, and repeated attempts to recover them failed because of the intense hostile fire. Lance Corporal Noonan moved from his position of relative security and, maneuvering down the treacherous slope to a location near the injured men, took cover behind some rocks. Shouting words of encouragement to the wounded men to restore their confidence, he dashed across the hazardous terrain and commenced dragging the most seriously wounded man away from the fire-swept area. Although wounded and knocked to the ground by an enemy round, Lance Corporal Noonan recovered rapidly and resumed dragging the man toward the marginal security of a rock. He

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<sup>36</sup> One of every four individuals named on the Vietnam memorial was a Marine.

was however, mortally wounded before he could reach his destination. His heroic actions inspired his fellow Marines to such aggressiveness that they initiated a spirited assault which forced the enemy soldiers to withdraw. Lance Corporal Noonan's indomitable courage inspiring initiative and selfless devotion to duty upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country. The missions of the future will demand new skills of Marines (Woulfe, 1998, p. 152).

The Noonan challenge requires recruits to evacuate two wounded marines to safety. The scenario for this obstacle is that an enemy force has ambushed the unit and the team needs to move its casualties to a landing point for helicopter medical evacuation in thirty minutes. This task is designed to reinforce a sense of *esprit de corps* among the recruits. Woulfe claimed, "I don't know any of the Marines in Noonan's story, but I know what motivated their actions. When you find yourself in harm's way, patriotism and political rhetoric mean little. As in the case of Lance Corporal Noonan, in the end, it will always be for each other" (Woulfe, 1998, p. 156). The sense of camaraderie described by Woulfe plays a pivotal role in developing civic values among recruits and is explored in greater detail in the following chapter.

### **Summary**

This relatively brief description of Marine Corps culture, basic training and its culminating exercise, the Crucible, provides important contextual information that informs the research findings presented in the next chapter. Thomas Ricks (1997) has argued that Marine Corps basic training is essentially an acculturation process that seeks to instill the core values of the service. Ricks also discussed the fundamental role that

drill instructors play in instilling that set of beliefs (Ricks, 1997). James Woulfe (1998) examined how the concluding exercise of Marine basic training, the Crucible, has been carefully designed to appeal to past, present and future Marines to ensure that Corps values are inculcated deeply into recruits' characters. Chapter 5 investigates these arguments through the results of seven in-depth interviews with Marine Corps drill instructors and ten with recent Marine Corps veterans. Those 17 interviews provided additional insights into what skills and values are developed in Marine Corps basic training, why the Marine Corps aspires to teach those dispositions and how its representatives seek to do so.

## Chapter 5

### Research Findings

This chapter presents the major themes that emerged during my 20 interviews with Marine Corps veterans and drill instructors, 17 initial conversations and 3 follow-ups. To illustrate how my interview findings related to my research questions, I have grouped them under the general headings of skills, values, didactic aspirations and pedagogical strategies. The key research questions for this inquiry were:

- *Whether and to what extent do Marine Corps veterans perceive that basic training inculcates the seven values and civic skills outlined by Nesbit (2011) and Yonkman and Bridgeland (2009)?*
- *Assuming Basic Training does so, why does the Marine Corps seek to encourage these dispositions and capacities in its recruits?*
- *What specific pedagogies do Marine Corps Drill Instructors employ to develop these dispositions and capacities? Why?*

This chapter presents my findings in light of my original organizing questions. I do not seek here to generalize analytically from these results. I undertake that challenge in the following chapter. Table 4 lists interviewees by pseudonym and whether those named were U.S. Marine Corps' veterans or drill instructors.

**Table 4**

**Interviewee Pseudonyms and Status**

<b>Interviewee Pseudonym</b>	<b>Interviewee Status</b>
John Jameson	U.S. Marine Corps veteran
Mark Low	U.S. Marine Corps veteran
Richard Lyons	U.S. Marine Corps veteran
Rick Moody	U.S. Marine Corps veteran
Christy Myers	U.S. Marine Corps veteran
Carl Norton	U.S. Marine Corps veteran
Chris Price	U.S. Marine Corps veteran
Jim Roberts	U.S. Marine Corps veteran
Paula Smith	U.S. Marine Corps veteran
Marvin Thomas	U.S. Marine Corps veteran
Sergeant Adams	U.S. Marine Corps drill instructor
Sergeant Buchanan	U.S. Marine Corps drill instructor
Sergeant Carter	U.S. Marine Corps drill instructor
Sergeant Delano	U.S. Marine Corps drill instructor
Staff Sergeant Eisenhower	U.S. Marine Corps drill instructor
Staff Sergeant Ford	U.S. Marine Corps drill instructor
Gunnery Sergeant Grant	U.S. Marine Corps drill instructor

**Capacities**

One purpose of this study was to ascertain whether Marine Corps veterans and drill instructors perceived that they had sought to impart, in the case of the teachers, and had developed, in the case of the recruits, certain capacities that could facilitate civic involvement. As noted above, Yonkman and Bridgeland reported that veterans of OIF

and OEF claimed to possess management, leadership, team building and logistics capabilities (Yonkman and Bridgeland, 2009). Meanwhile, Verba, Schlozman and Brady argued in 1995 that civic skills in organization and communication were essential for civic engagement. Mary Kirlin (2003) contended that skills in collective decision-making and critical thinking should be added to the two categories first developed by VSB. This section presents interviewee perceptions regarding how, if at all, Marine Corps Basic Training related to their development of these capacities.

One of the major skills themes that emerged among interviewees concerning the purport of Marine training was the development of teamwork. Twelve of the Marines I interviewed (8 veterans, 4 instructors) discussed working in groups as a key capacity taught in Basic Training. One drill instructor, a Gunnery Sergeant, described the importance of teamwork to the Marine Corps:

Working as a team is extremely important to every aspect of being a Marine, from clearing a room to simply troubleshooting a communications error. Being able to trust your teammates to have your back and also provide input that you may not have thought of yourself. Most missions would be impossible without teamwork (Gunnery Sergeant, July 23, 2013).

Another drill instructor, Staff Sergeant Buchanan, described how the powerful sense of cooperation instilled in boot camp endures throughout one's life.

Teamwork is available to each recruit. Recruits will learn to rely on that buddy to his right and left to succeed at any task assigned. Recruits will develop lasting friendships over the trial and tribulations that each will go through with each other. So much so, that one will gladly give his life for the other. A sense of

camaraderie that other services just dream about (Staff Sergeant Buchanan, July 24, 2013).

Richard Lyons,<sup>37</sup> a Marine veteran, described his Basic Training experiences as “very team-based. I did my best in promoting that [later] in my squad (Lyons, September 17, 2013).” Another Marine veteran, John Jameson explained,

They build you up; they show you that if you work as a team, you can accomplish anything. During the Crucible, you do activities that you can’t do as an individual. You have to count on each other and that stuck with me. You have to count.<sup>38</sup> I can still count my Marine friends. Young Marines I meet out here, at ROTC, I talk to them. It’s a commitment I still have to help out other Marines. It’s all the teamwork, besides the rifle range. It’s about teamwork and counting on each other. You’re a family (Jameson, August 20, 2013).

Carl Norton described a boot camp training exercise during the Crucible that instilled teamwork:

We were in teams of three and we were going, saying hurry up, we’ve got to beat those other guys, because everything is a competition in boot camp. So, I got down and I started crawling and my two teammates were behind me. And one of my drill instructors walked up to me and said ‘bam, you’re dead.’ I was like okay. He asked if I wanted to know why I was dead and he told me to look behind me. My two teammates were 50 feet behind me and he was like ‘you’re all by yourself and you’ll get killed in a situation like that.’ You can’t just go off on your own; it’s all about teamwork (Norton, September 18, 2013).

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<sup>37</sup> I have assigned all interviewees a pseudonym to protect their identities.

<sup>38</sup> During every group activity undertaken in Marine Corps Basic Training, the drill instructors require the recruits to “count-off” to ensure that everyone is present.

One Marine veteran, Jim Roberts, offered a divergent perspective on the role of group cooperation in boot camp, which may, for different reasons, encourage the same outcomes. According to Roberts,

You're not really pulling for each other. It's like you're going to keep up with the group and do what's expected of you or we're going to treat you like shit. You're not really helping each other out. You're either stepping up and doing it, or not only are the drill instructors treating you like shit, but the other recruits are as well (Roberts, September 14, 2013).

Interviewees also discussed the ability to cooperate effectively, an integral team capacity, during their interviews. Two of the veterans with whom I spoke for this study, Rick Moody and Christy Myers, commented on how Marine Corps Basic Training developed collaborative abilities. Training camp staff assigned Moody the billet<sup>39</sup> of platoon lay leader during his Parris Island experience. According to Moody, "the lay leader is the church liaison. We would help, and I did help, a couple of guys who had troubles at home, while they were in Basic. I would go and talk to the chaplain and talk to people outside of the platoon to help those guys" (Moody, August 8, 2013). His position, Moody explained, encouraged him to develop active listening skills,

Going back to the [role of] liaison, my skills were to relate. To say, okay, I understand what you're saying and I know what's going on. Giving the guys someone to relate to on their own level instead of, no matter how human the DIs seem, they're never truly human until the last day of graduation (Moody, August

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<sup>39</sup> Drill instructors assign different recruits certain jobs during basic training, known as billets. These include the platoon scribe, who is tasked with keeping platoon records, such as medical records; the platoon guide, the leader of the platoon, carries the platoon guide-on; squad leaders; and the lay leader who is the religious liaison for the platoon.

8, 2013).

I asked Moody if he had developed these capacities before boot camp and he replied, “No, no, I picked them up there. Had to. I mean I was fresh out of high school. I didn’t pay attention to anybody. Didn’t want to, didn’t have to. I even gave my parents a hard time. It put me in the position where I had to learn it there” (Moody, August 18, 2013).

Christy Myers described how she learned to work with others in basic training in her interview:

It was tough working together. To have to work with people who don’t have good collaborative skills; that was really tough. And you can’t just walk away, you’re stuck. There were people who were bullies and would yell. And they would say this idea is stupid or you’re stupid. It’s arguing all the time; that’s what I remember. Having to collaborate with people who bring lots of different things to the table and listening to other people’s ideas (Myers, August 15, 2013).

Nine of the interviewees, three drill instructors and six Marine Corps veterans, also explicitly discussed leadership skills. One drill instructor, Staff Sergeant Ford, claimed that, “the Marine Corps is the epitome of instilling leadership to those who choose the path. There is no finer leadership school in the world than that of Marine Corps Basic Training” (Staff Sergeant Ford, July 23, 2013). When I asked Staff Sergeant Ford what it means to be a leader in the Marines, he replied, “they (the basically trained Marines) are true leaders who will lead from the front and will not be overcome by stressful situations or lack of decision making” (Ford, July 23, 2013).

*The Guidebook for Marines* dedicates an entire chapter to leadership principles and development and opens by stating,

Every Private in the Marine Corps serves as a potential squad leader. Every squad leader can become a sergeant major. These concepts have provided the Corps with the world's finest body of small-unit leaders since 1775. The backbone of the Marine Corps is its noncommissioned officers. Every one of them started as a private (Guidebook, 2009, p. 38).

The chapter goes on to list the 14 character traits of Marine leadership: Integrity, Knowledge, Courage, Decisiveness, Dependability, Initiative, Tact, Justice, Enthusiasm, Bearing, Endurance, Unselfishness, Loyalty, and Judgment. DIs teach recruits these qualities by requiring them to memorize the acronym: "JJ DID TIE BUCKLE." In addition to these characteristics, the *Guidebook* also lists 11 Marine Corps' leadership principles:

- 1) Set the example.
- 2) Develop a sense of responsibility among your subordinates.
- 3) Seek responsibility and take responsibility for your actions.
- 4) Make sound and timely decisions.
- 5) Employ your unit in accordance with its capabilities.
- 6) Be technically and tactically proficient.
- 7) Know yourself and seek self-improvement.
- 8) Know your Marines and look after their welfare.
- 9) Keep your Marines informed.
- 10) Ensure that the task is understood, supervised, and accomplished.
- 11) Train your Marines as a Team (Guidebook, 2009, p. 44).

Richard Lyons described how he sought to realize these leadership capacities in basic training by organizing individuals on his team to take action: “I did my best in promoting that in my squad. Things like field day. You had to take care of many different things in field day and I would delegate to the team leaders and tell them to delegate that way” (Lyons, September 17, 2013). Veteran Christy Myers described leadership as listening to the needs of your team

Just because you made it through, it’s your job to figure out how you’re going to get the rest of your unit through, especially if you’re the leader, and that takes humility. I think it takes a lot of courage and humility to ask for help. Real help. To say I’ve hit a wall here and I need help (Myers, August 15, 2013).

Richard Lyons also explained what he learned in basic training about being a leader:

You’ve got your ducks in a row; you take care of your own business. Where people don’t look at you and say this guy is in charge of me? You hear of people who get respect for their rank and not their character and I disagree with that principle. I learned that in boot camp (Lyons, September 17, 2013).

Lyons went on to say, “My favorite leadership principle is know yourself and seek self-improvement. When I was there one of the things that stuck with me was that to be a leader, you have to be able to lead yourself. It’s an internal thing” (Lyons, September 17, 2013).

Jim Roberts provided a somewhat divergent picture of leadership in Marine Corps Basic Training. He provided an example of what he perceived to be a leadership failure on his part:

For the guys that were having a hard time, I wish I had taken the high road and

offered friendship and support for them. It probably wouldn't have taken anything away from me and I don't think anyone would've looked down on me for it. I just didn't do it (Roberts, September 14, 2013).

Roberts also commented that, "I knew the squad leaders, and at least one or two of them were the instigators."<sup>40</sup> And I think that's poor leadership to allow that. To instigate it is definitely poor leadership. And some of those guys got meritoriously promoted for being squad leaders" (Roberts, September 14, 2013). However, Roberts' perception of these incidents as leadership failures indicates that he had some sense of how a leader should behave. Carl Norton (CN) also presented a different perspective on leadership in basic training in his interview<sup>41</sup>

CN - The whole leadership stuff in boot camp is kind of stupid. The leadership stuff gives the DIs an opportunity to screw the squad leader as well as the person who messed up.

EH - Do you think they're trying to teach you something by doing that?

CN - Yeah, they're teaching you to keep track of your Marines (Norton, September 18, 2013).

The interviewees also discussed two sub-themes that contribute to leadership development; planning skills and time management. The veterans whom I interviewed observed that planning skills are essential for leadership in the Marine Corps. They reported that Marine Corps Basic Training's focus on instilling attention to detail and the importance of formulating a mission blueprint were instrumental in developing their

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<sup>40</sup> Roberts was referring to squad leaders encouraging other recruits to torment individuals experiencing difficulty in adequately performing assigned tasks.

<sup>41</sup> I share excerpts of interviews here and in other sections to emphasize and illustrate relevant points. In these passages I identify the interviewee and myself by initials.

planning capacities. According to Rick Moody, for example, paying attention to details was his key take away from basic training.

But, seriously, I learned to pay attention. As insane as it sounds, there's always a logical reason for whoever is in charge to tell you what to do and how to do it.

Sometimes there's no second time. There's no second chance in combat.

Attention to detail. You don't clean your weapon right, guess what? You'll clean his and his and his (Moody, August 8, 2013).

In addition to constant DI encouragement to attend to careful planning the *Guidebook's* chapter on squad tactics teaches recruits to plan through the use of a system called a five-paragraph order, known by its acronym, SMEAC, for Situation, Mission, Execution, Administration and Logistics and Command and Control.

Knowing how to manage time also contributes to planning and leadership. According to Carl Norton, Marine Corps Basic Training teaches effective time management, "Every day in boot camp we did specific stuff from this time to this time, we had to make the time cuts, and everything you do. Out of boot camp too, they give you a time frame to do it in. It's rarely met but at least you try" (Norton, September 18, 2013). I asked Norton which skills acquired during basic training have helped him succeed in the civilian world, and he replied, "Keeping things in perspective, discipline, and time management, definitely" (Norton, September 18, 2013).

Another key capability discussed by six of the Marine veterans I interviewed was the ability to solve problems creatively, often in stressful situations. Carl Norton explained that Marine Corps Drill Instructors deliberately would place recruits in

stressful situations to test whether they could identify, analyze and think critically about a situation.

Sometimes they do it because they're bored, but most of the time they do it to make you think in a stressful situation about how you can do it more efficiently and get the job done. I think that's the main goal of that stuff. When you're panicking, in panic mode, you can stop and think, wait a minute; I can make a logical decision on how to get the task done (Norton, September 18, 2013).

Christy Myers described a frequently used phrase in Marine Corps Basic Training, "adapt and overcome" (Myers, August 15, 2013). The call to adjust and surmount encourages critical thinking by first identifying the current situation and analyzing it to ascertain whether the initial strategy still works and then thinking constructively to find a new approach if one should be necessary, "People have different gifts/materials to work with. With a task, figure it out. Adapt and overcome. Semper Gumby."<sup>42</sup> If it means getting stuff out of the trash can, that's what you do. It makes you get creative; creative problem solving" (Myers, August 15, 2013).

Marvin Thomas also described the adage, adapt and overcome, in his interview: Marines are known for not having the best gear and being the bumper of the Navy. It's created a Marine Corps where you have to network and improvise. Adapt and overcome. They say that *ad nauseum*. We have to work together because there aren't a lot of us, we don't have a lot of money, and we have to make things work (Thomas, September 26, 2013).

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<sup>42</sup> A modification of the Marine Corps motto, *Semper Fidelis*, which means "always faithful." *Semper Gumby* refers to the pioneering stop motion clay animation television character Gumby, created in the early 1950s. Gumby was extremely flexible.

Veteran Paula Smith said in her interview that her biggest take-away from Marine Corps Basic Training was a problem-solving mentality. She described how her difficulties in completing one stop on the Crucible's obstacle course served as an example for developing problem solving skills: "You hit that wall in the obstacle course. There were certain things I couldn't do. Some things are hard, but you can't just sit there and cry about it. I'm going to get over that wall in a different way than you are. I'm going to use different strategies" (Smith, September 4, 2013). Smith asserted that today when she is presented with a difficult situation, she always hearkens back to her Marine Corps training to assess the scenario and use her problem-solving skills to arrive at a solution.

Another key skill taught in Marine Corps Basic Training is the ability to maintain composure, even in the face of harsh conditions, referred to as bearing. The *Guidebook* describes this characteristic as,

How you conduct yourself, in or out of formation, ashore or on board, verbally and emotionally. Manage your voice and gestures. A calm voice and a steady hand are confidence builders in combat. Don't ever show your anxiety over a dangerous situation, even if you feel it. ... Dignity, without being unapproachable, that's what bearing is (Guidebook, 2009, p. 42).

Marvin Thomas described his understanding of bearing in his interview with me:

Composure. It's like a persona. There's a phrase 'lock it up.' This means turn on your bearing. It's like a switch. I could be telling a joke but lock it up turns the switch on. A deadening of face muscles, a refusal to laugh. It's a type of mental control. It's a mental switch from off to on. There are different levels to which

people pick it up. Everybody gets that lock it up means be quiet. The master level would be the British Royal Guards who never lose their bearing. I think that's the overall goal, to reach that level (Thomas, September 26, 2013).

Bearing helps Marines when they are faced with difficult decisions that do not have easy answers. Marvin Thomas described how composure he gained in the Marine Corps has helped him in the civilian world, "The patience, the idea of bearing and composure, and inexhaustible patience. Whether it's genuine patience or I just have to pretend to be patient. I think it's helped me deal with a lot" (Thomas, September 26, 2013).

Christy Myers also emphasized the importance of being able to deal with difficult situations and the rewards inherent in confronting difficulties successfully.

Some things are hard. The end. Some people think I need to quit because something is hard. I'm like get in line. Some things are hard, guess what, it's your challenge to get better at it. I don't know if that's particularly profound. You have to work through hard things and there are resources out there to help you, so go find them. Earning things is a big deal (Myers, August 15, 2013).

Interviewee John Jameson discussed how Marine Corps Basic Training teaches learning skills,

In your down time, it's non-stop training. Out here, I've been to several schools. I find it's not as difficult for me, because I've been through very difficult and rigorous training. I'm easily trainable because I've been through so much training. I've been an instructor and I've been a student. I learned how to learn. A lot of people have the assumption that Marines are dumb-asses. I was a designated marksmen instructor. The first week is all classrooms. How the

weather affects a bullet, the ballistics, all of this stuff is very difficult (Jameson, August 20, 2013).

Carl Norton echoed Jameson's sentiments by describing the role classroom learning played in basic training:

It is a big part. We'd have a couple of hours of class time throughout the day and then the drill instructors would make us say ditties to memorize the info and then we'd take the test. In the beginning, they'd teach us history of the Marines, like specific people, Smedly Butler, Opha May Johnson, first female Marine and Dan Daly. It's just like coming back, I don't even have to think about it, it just comes out. Then Tun Tavern, the place where the Marine Corps was founded and the general orders, rank structure, most of the knowledge is the foundation of the Marine Corps. Half way through they started teaching weapons systems, rate of fire, and caliber (Norton, September 18, 2013).

### **Values**

In addition to skills, Rebecca Nesbit (2011) has argued, as outlined above, that military veterans possess certain values, including duty, loyalty and honor that conduce to civic involvement. I was interested therefore in determining how a sample of Marines perceived the role of Marine Corps Basic Training in the development of their values and those beliefs especially. The Corps veterans I interviewed discussed at length the three core values of the Marine Corps emphasized in boot camp, honor, courage and commitment. Interviewees also commented on loyalty, which, while not one of the service's three basic values, is nonetheless arguably a prime moral directive of the Marine Corps. The Corp's embrace of loyalty is embodied in the Marine motto, *Semper*

*Fidelis*. The drill instructors discussed why and how they taught these values and the veterans reflected on their perceptions of these lessons.

Each of the DIs I interviewed discussed the paramount importance of instilling the Marine Corps' core values in recruits. Sergeant Buchanan, for example, said,

Recruit training starts with the foundation phase and it is intended to teach recruits the basics of basic, this is where they are introduced to our core values of honor, courage, and commitment. They learn these through historical examples, actions of Marines they interact with, and footlocker discussions with their Senior Drill Instructor (Sergeant Buchanan, July 23, 2013).

Staff Sergeant Ford also described why core values are so important to the Marine Corps,

The Marine Corps teaches these lessons because it is the bedrock of every Marine's character and what will guide every decision that they make throughout the world. Three simple words, honor, courage, and commitment are values and ethics we live by each and every day and are what we must develop in each recruit to maintain our proud heritage (Staff Sergeant Ford, July 23, 2013).

The senior drill instructor I interviewed described how instilling the service's core values would produce better citizens,

By introducing these young men and women to our core values and always holding these Marines to a higher standard allows these young men and women to see the bigger picture of life and allows them to grow up and mature faster, creating a better product for society and allowing them to be more successful once they enter civilian life (Gunnery Sergeant, July 23, 2013).

Richard Lyons observed in his interview that although recruits arrive at basic

training with a set of beliefs, the Marine Corps encourages acceptance of its core values either in addition to or in lieu of the candidate's own:

It's like the Corps supplants that (sic) on your life. If you already have values before you join the Marines, the Corps applies that template of honor, courage, and commitment on top of your current values. Honor in the way you treat yourself and your fellow man, commitment to what your values are, courage, man, courage is a funny thing (Lyons, September 17, 2013).

Christy Myers (CM) described the Honor, Courage and Commitment card given to all recruits to highlight the importance of these values:

EH - What are the values they try to teach you?

CM - They give you that little card for a reason.

EH - What card?

CM - The Honor, Courage and Commitment card (Myers, August 15, 2013).

Those I interviewed, whether instructors or former recruits, spoke at length about the value of honor. One of the drill instructors, Staff Sergeant Ford, for example, suggested, "Honor, to do what is right when nobody is watching, to never lie, cheat or steal, to look out for one another is taught each and every day" (Ford, July 23, 2013). Marine veteran Carl Norton defined honor as, "Doing the right thing even if no one's around you. Doing the right thing because you know you should. There's no ulterior motive" (Norton, September 18, 2013). Norton did have some reservations about whether the honor taught in the Marines applied to the external world, "It teaches it to an extent to where it's useful to the Marine Corps, but I don't think they really care that much about other stuff. I know other Marines who are kind of douche bags. They don't really care

about anybody else” (Norton, September 18, 2013). Norton also suggested that he believes the Marine Corps is now focusing more on instilling honor that extends not only to other Marines, but also to individuals outside the service:

They want you to be honorable in the Marine Corps, but it is getting better outside of the Marine Corps. Recently they started cracking down on sexual assaults and rape and suicide prevention. They’re getting really heavy on that stuff. I think they are starting to care more (Norton, September 18, 2013).

Veteran John Jameson shared how the sense of honor he developed in the Marine Corps helps in his current occupation:

To me it means doing the right thing when no one is looking. Honor what you do. You can’t go out and be a hypocrite. I believe in that, that’s why I got in this line of work.<sup>43</sup> I work by myself a lot in this job. I have a different task than most so I work by myself. They trust me, they know I have honor and that I’m not going to go out and do a drug buy, and then turn around and sell it (Jameson, August 20, 2013).

Marine veteran Marvin Thomas offered a slightly more philosophical stance concerning honor, describing the construct as a meta-concept that helps to shape the quality of other virtues:

It’s like having a moral compass. It’s more like acting in a concept. If you describe someone as honest, it’s pretty straightforward. When you describe someone as having honor, it’s more of a philosophical concept. It’s like the person did right or they were brave (Thomas, September 26, 2013).

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<sup>43</sup> Jameson is now an undercover police narcotics officer.

The senior DI Gunnery Sergeant I interviewed described how combat training is used to teach the importance of honor to recruits,

The Marine Corps Martial Arts Training is part of developing these young men and women into ethical warriors, it not only teaches them to defend themselves during a combat situation, but it also educates them to be ethical warriors by teaching them right from wrong and our core values: Honor, Courage and Commitment (Grant, July 23, 2013).

The Marines, both trainers and veterans, also had much to say about the core value of courage. Carl Norton described the idea as a type of endurance, which he learned in basic training and suggested it has stuck with him, “My email handle is ‘courage is endurance for one more second.’ Some Marine lieutenant said that. It starts when you first get there, you have to have the courage to keep going” (Norton, September 18, 2013). Christy Myers suggested that basic training teaches different types of valor, “Sometimes it takes different types of courage. Boot camp teaches you lots of different types of courage, moral courage, physical courage” (Myers, August 15, 2013).

Veteran John Jameson described his perception of bravery by discussing the various situations in boot camp that require the virtue

Just putting you in difficult situations. Going in with the pugil sticks against someone bigger than you. Doing martial arts, doing the slide for life, climbing the A-frame; doing that kind of stuff. Things I don’t think that everyone can do.

I’ll go out here and run through the O course,<sup>44</sup> just like we had in the Corps, but I

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<sup>44</sup> O-course stands for obstacle course. The military obstacle course is used to familiarize recruits with the tactical movement they will use in combat, as well as for physical training, building teamwork and evaluating problem solving skills. Typical courses involve challenges the participants must climb over,

know a lot of people who can't. Who won't climb the rope. They teach you, they're yelling at you, 'get your ass up the rope!' But they're doing it to prove to you that you can do it. I think they do it by putting you through difficult situations (Jameson, August 20, 2013).

As noted just above, former Marine Marvin Thomas (MT) discussed courage as a counterpart to honor, hinting at a possible unity of the three core values.

MT - When you describe someone as having honor, it's more of a meta-philosophical concept. It's like the person did right or they were brave.

EH - Does it mean they were moral?

MT - Yeah, like a morally grounded person. I would also put bravery in with honor.

EH - Like a type of moral courage?

MT - Yeah, you always see movies where the honorable person is faced with a challenge and they stick with their principles. Treating your fellow man rightly. [Courage is] the fortitude to rise above challenges (Thomas, September 26, 2013).

Interviewee Richard Lyons described how the DIs teach valor, along with the Corps' other core values:

[Drill instructors often discussed] honor, courage and commitment in ...[the] core values classroom. They'd say set up the classroom. Dudes would grab three footlockers and stack them up. The DI would step up to the lectern and start spitting knowledge about core values and scenarios about what you would do in this and that situation and why you don't do certain things, based on the history

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crawl under, balance, hang, jump, etc. Puddles of muddy water, ropes/nets, and "no touch" restrictions are often used to make the path more difficult.

of the Corps. They try to really put it into your heads that the Marine Corps is bigger than us. If you do anything to offend the Corps, the punishment is more than just NJP [non-judicial punishment], it reflects poorly on the Corps (Lyons, September 17, 2013).

The third core value DIs emphasize in basic training is commitment. Carl Norton defined this value as, “how you do your duty when you don’t want to. When you’re tired but you’ve got to get up because ‘I told them I was going to do it’” (Norton, September 18, 2013). Interviewee Jim Roberts similarly described commitment as following through with your promises, “When you start something you finish it” (Roberts, September 14, 2013). Roberts argued that commitment was the single most important value he took away from basic training:

I think commitment, I could apply it to the boot camp experience, but in my whole military experience, I think commitment was a big value. Because when you initially get there, and you’re laying in that cot and you’re like, ‘what the fuck did I just do? This is a terrible idea.’ And your immediate reaction is that I just want to leave here, this sucks. But I think if you just stick it out and stay committed to your goal and the long term, you start seeing the reward there for honoring your commitments. You probably grow, there’s personal growth that goes along there for not taking the easy way out. Sticking with things just because this is what I said I would do (Roberts, September 14, 2013).

Like Roberts, Carl Norton depicted commitment as a type of courage, once again raising the possible unity of the core values:

Commitment is like courage. I guess it's a little different, but they are very similar. ... It's like I've got to finish boot camp, got to become a Marine. I was committed to becoming a Marine and now I'm committed to doing my duties at my unit. They really do teach that in boot camp, it's one of the main things. I've got to do it, no matter how shitty it is (Norton, September 18, 2013).

Christy Myers also emphasized how basic training's focus on commitment helped her in her civilian life, "Things are hard. When I got out and was working and had two kids, I wouldn't have been able to balance that without the Marine experience" (Myers, August 15, 2013).

Paula Smith was hurt in basic training and explained that commitment was especially important to her in consequence, as her injury required that she spend five months, instead of three, in basic training, "Commitment is seeing something through even when it's hard, for example, when you are in boot camp for 5 months and want to quit, or when the drill instructors flip over your racks, you learn not to quit." Smith is also a survivor of sexual trauma during her service and shared her view in her interview that without the value of commitment she learned in basic training, she would not have been able to endure the emotional aftermath of the assault.

I was raped in the Marines and suffered PTSD from that experience. The only thing that got me through that experience was the sense of commitment and duty I learned from those five months in boot camp. I thought 'I'm a Marine dammit. If I can get through five months of basic training, I can get through this' (Smith, September 4, 2013).

John Jameson likewise described how the sense of obligation he gained in boot camp and later service in the Corps has influenced his relationships with fellow Marines.

When you make a commitment to something you don't back out for nothing. I still have a buddy I made in the Marine Corps, and if he needs me, I'd be there for him. And I know he'd do the same for me. I don't even see him that often, I don't talk to him, but I know that he would be there for me (Jameson, August 20, 2013).

In his interview, former Marine Marvin Thomas defined commitment as, "Sticking with it. It's hard to describe commitment with committing. When the going gets tough, you keep going. There are plenty of times when everybody wants to quit. I can see why that's a core value. This isn't like a civilian job where you can just quit" (Thomas, September 26, 2013).

If there were one other value taught in basic training that ranks in importance with these three core values, my interviewees suggested it would be loyalty. Time and time again, the former Marines and current DIs discussed loyalty as a defining value of the Marine Corps. Rick Moody described fealty to fellow Marines as a prime moral directive of the service, "I'm supposed to take care of my brother. The morality of the Marines is to take care of your brother. They're going to look out for you, and you look out for them. And you'll get anything done" (Moody, August 8, 2013). I asked Moody to explain what made loyalty to one's fellow Marines so strong,

Most guys there go from relying on their parents to being thrown into, when I was there, we were in a squad bay of 32 people. The guy who is supposed to be taking care of you is waking you up at 4 a.m. by throwing a trashcan on the floor. The

guy next to you may or may not snore. So, you learn to get a bond by the daily ordeals that you go through because you're all going through the same thing as a group. You go from a secure environment, to by yourself, to a place where you think we're all going to do this together (Moody, August 8, 2013).

Christy Myers compared being in the Marines to being part of a family.

Marines are a family. I have a special place in my heart for Marine veterans. I think that time was a really emotional time for us. A lot of highs and a lot of lows. And you all have that similar experience. Even a complete stranger. You see it in people who were born in the same town, they're like no way, I lived there, too (Myers, August 15, 2013).

Christy Myers described how loyalty to other recruits and instructors formed during basic training led to her Marine Corps Basic Training Company's<sup>45</sup> Facebook page: "A good chunk of our Series has a Facebook group and now it's all encouragement for each other's lives, happy birthdays, etc. Our Series Guns<sup>46</sup> is on there, our Guide is on there and our Heavy<sup>47</sup> is on there" (Myers, August 15, 2013).

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<sup>45</sup> Recruits are organized by regiment, battalion, company, platoon, squad and often fire team. A Recruit Training Regiment is composed of three recruit-training battalions (at Parris Island, there is an additional battalion to train female recruits). All three of the male battalions are made up of four companies, while the female battalion comprises three. Each company is broken down into two series, designated as Lead and Follow, which may be comprised of between one and four platoons, depending on the number of recruits in the company at the time the training cycle begins.

Each company is much like a class at a civilian education institution; each begins and finishes recruit training together (with the exception of those who are dropped for medical or personal reasons or who transfer to a different company). Thus, each of the thirteen companies will be at a different stage in the thirteen-week training cycle. Each series is broken down into a number of platoons, usually from two to four in each. These platoons serve as the basic unit for recruit training. Each is assigned a four digit number as identification. Drill instructors are assigned to each platoon, and will usually work with that group from the beginning to the end of training.

<sup>46</sup> Gunnery Sergeant.

<sup>47</sup> The Heavy is the second most senior drill instructor in the platoon and is often the strictest disciplinarian.

In his interview, John Jameson described how his feelings of loyalty have translated to the civilian world, “I look at it as I never want things for myself. I want to make the people I work with know that I’m here for you if you need me. You can count on me; I’ll do the right thing at the right time. I want to make my wife proud, I want to make my son proud. I do it for myself, too, but more so I do it for them” (Jameson, August 15, 2013). Jameson also described how this sense of loyalty led him to participate in this study, “The way I feel is that I would help out any Marine. That’s why I responded to your email. I said, I’m going to help him out; he’s a fellow Marine. They run it through your head that it’s a brotherhood” (Jameson, August 15, 2013).

Jameson also shared a story that he believed illustrated loyalty among Marines, My wife works out of Andrews (MD). Her boss that runs that place was a Marine. She was telling me a story that he told her, that there was one of their Marines that went to some battle and he got very sick in South Carolina. The whole group went down there to take care of him. I’m tearing up just thinking about it (Jameson, August 15, 2013).

Jim Roberts discussed how the concept of loyalty he developed in the Marines affects the way he interacts with civilian colleagues.

I’m way more willing to take the time to help friends and co-workers. Not just the people you really like. Little things, big things. Co-workers that are in the hospital. If your co-workers are in the hospital, you go visit them. If your friends’ kids are in the hospital, you go visit them. It’s important to provide moral support to people. It’s not just going to work and then going home (Roberts, September 14, 2013).

Rick Moody described a sense of loyalty to his community in his interview. You do it because of your love of community. You do it for the same reason that you go to fight in Iraq or Afghanistan. It's because of the people. If you, as a Marine, don't care then it doesn't make a difference. You can still be a Marine and learn the discipline of a trade to support the community. Does that make sense? (Moody, August 8, 2013)

Moody also described how his sense of loyalty acquired in basic training contributes to his sense of patriotism today,

I might not like the leader of my country but I love my country. I know what it means to have to go out and do the things; I have a friend of mine who's going to Afghanistan in a week. I know why he's doing that. I have a sense of pride for him and what's he doing. I've done the same thing. I know and respect that those things are important. I learned that family is not necessarily being there all the time, but doing and protecting what needs to be done (Moody, August 8, 2013).

### **Didactic Aims of Marine Corps Basic Training**

While Yonkman and Bridgeland (2009) and Nesbit (2011) argued that military service instills values and skills that contribute to civic engagement, they did not describe why the services seek to develop such temperaments and capacities. While the primary purpose of these dispositions must be to facilitate success in military conflicts, one might ask if the Marine Corps is concerned with creating better citizens as well. Furthermore, is there a connection between enabling unit cohesion among soldiers and creating more engaged citizens, with unit solidity arguably being the quintessential element that leads to military success. If so, what form does that tie take?

The Gunnery Sergeant interviewee, a Senior Drill Instructor, described the primary didactic aspiration of Marine Corps Basic Training in her interview, “The ultimate goal of Marine Corps Basic Training is to teach recruits all the skills necessary to become a basically trained Marine” (Gunnery Sergeant, July 23, 2013). Sergeant Buchanan, from Pennsylvania, defined what that phrase means, “Basic training is designed to create ... Marines who share our core values and have a firm understanding of our history and entry-level war fighting techniques” (Sergeant Buchanan, July 23, 2013). A Native-American Drill Instructor from Oklahoma, Sergeant Adams, echoed these sentiments in his comments, “Recruit training is intended to transform recruits into basic Marines by introducing them to our history, customs, and traditions” (Sergeant Adams, July 23, 2013).

Sergeant Delano, a drill instructor from Alabama, said that the overarching purpose of Marine Corps Basic Training goes beyond teaching service-specific lessons and strives to forge a way of life:

The lessons that are taught here at Marine Corps recruit training are not [merely] lessons. It’s a lifestyle that you live with every day. It’s the way you carry yourself, it’s not just a lesson that when you go to bed at night you forget about. You see Marines that were in the battle of Iwo Jima and the mannerisms and the way they carry themselves is a mirror image of the Marines that we make today (Sergeant Delano, July 23, 2013).

Former Staff Sergeant Eisenhower from Idaho said that the Marine Corps seeks to instill its primary dispositions to provide a foundation of values in an ever-changing world:

The lessons are taught because the world is ever changing. Through our three values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment, the recruits are taught to have integrity and those who do not exercise it, lose honor as well. There is mental and physical courage and each needs to be possessed by each Marine. And there is commitment, not only to the contract that they signed, but also to their family, friends, brothers and sisters in the Marine Corps (Eisenhower, July 23, 2013).

Drill instructor and Staff Sergeant Ford, from Ohio, echoed the sentiment that the Marine Corps teaches its boot camp lessons to instill a specific ethical foundation in recruits as well as to preserve the service's heritage:

The Marine Corps teaches these lessons because it is the bedrock of every Marine's character and what will guide every decision that they make throughout the world: three simple words; honor, courage and commitment. Our values and ethics are what we live by each and every day and what we must develop in each recruit to maintain our proud heritage (Ford, July 23, 2013).

One interviewee, John Jameson, observed that the ultimate purpose of basic training is to prepare you for war.

Preparing you for war. I think they're ultimately preparing you. If you have to go out and get in the shit, you have to count on your buddy next to you. You may not know him, but you know he's a Marine, and that means he's on your side. You know how he's been trained. We all go through the same training. I think that's why they teach those things, because you have to trust your fellow Marines (Jameson, August 20, 2013).

For his part, veteran Rick Moody said the Corps teaches these values to form a type of brotherhood, which also speaks to the importance of building unit cohesion:

Just like the police have a fraternity, there is a fraternity of the Corps. Period. Once a Marine, always a Marine. I don't care who you are. I drive a pick-up truck with a Marine sticker on the back. I would never disrespect anybody or anything that has done it and I will back up anybody who has done it. We have a bond because nobody else, unless they were in boot camp, has been through it (Moody, August 8, 2013).

Moody also suggested that one of the reasons the training is so intense, is that in war, one does not always get a second chance, "Sometimes there's no second time. There's no second chance in combat" (Moody, August 8, 2013).

In addition to the primary purpose of creating basically trained Marines, several drill instructors described boot camp's importance in creating better citizens. For example, the Gunnery Sergeant I interviewed said, "Additionally, our goal is not only to make Marines but to create better citizens of the world." I inquired what the senior DI meant by a "better citizen of the world" and her response was:

There is a bigger world out there. Most of these young men and women that join our Corps have never left their hometowns. The Marine Corps will expose them not only to different states and countries; it will also expose them to different cultures and ways of life (Grant, September 17, 2013).

Sergeant Carter also discussed the program's aspiration to create better citizens, "In my opinion it is possible to know that Marine Corps Basic Training has been successful due to the fact you can tell when they graduate recruit training the difference in their attitude,

their mannerisms and that they are changed overall as a better human being, a better citizen” (Sergeant Carter, July 23, 2013).

Rick Moody explicitly made the connection between creating unit cohesion in the Marines and serving in one’s community, arguing it comes down to love of other people, “You do it because of your love of community. You do it for the same reason that you go to fight in Iraq or Afghanistan. It’s because of the people” (Moody, August 8, 2013).

Nine of the 10 Marine Corps veterans interviewed demonstrated their desire to help others through their reported current community involvement. Paula Smith is the president of her local women’s Marine Corp auxiliary club and recently created a nonprofit to help victims of military sexual assault. Richard Lyons, currently a university student, serves as a mentor for underclassmen and is active in his university’s Student Government Association. John Jameson and his family deliver food for less fortunate children as part of a school lunch program. Jameson said that he participated in the nonprofit’s effort because,

It’s important to me but it’s also important for my son to see that we might not have the greatest things but there are kids less fortunate that need help. And if you are able to provide some kind of help, no matter what, you should. As a person, as a human, I feel it’s important to help each other out. You’re not going to get recognition for it. You do it to help this poor family out. I want my son to see that it feels good to help somebody out (Jameson, August 20, 2013).

I asked Jameson if the Marine Corps had contributed to his sense of altruism, and he replied, “Going over to Iraq, some of them hated us, but you’d see lots of little kids,

waving, happy to see you, giving you peace signs, and happy you were there. It feels good knowing that you're helping them out" (Jameson, August 20, 2013).

Christy Myers serves in her local Rotary Club organizing literacy drives and helping to teach others to read. Carl Norton indicated he had volunteered at the YMCA and participated in a "Homes for Our Troops<sup>48</sup>" project. Norton additionally described a more personal notion of service, when he shared a recent experience of helping a girl who had fallen off her bike, "I saw some girl and her chain fell off her bike and I stopped and helped her put her chain back on her bike. I don't have a problem helping people with things like that" (Norton, September 18, 2013). The Marine veteran suggested it was these types of activities that grew after basic training and his stint in the service, "After the Marine Corps it wasn't the volunteer work that was more important. It was more individual helping out. Like helping that girl fix her bike chain. I think that stuff grew" (Norton, September 18, 2013).

Rick Moody (RM) has participated in several construction projects through his church to help the needy. Moody described it this way in this interview excerpt,

RM - We've built a porch for a lady in [a nearby town] who was in a wheelchair.

We've built a roof for a guy in [a nearby town]. And all they had to do was come ask.

EH - Why? Why do you, you personally, give your time to go out and build a roof?

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<sup>48</sup> "Homes for Our Troops is a national non-profit organization founded in 2004 that is strongly committed to helping those who have selflessly given to our country and have returned home with serious injuries since September 11, 2001. We assist severely injured Veterans and their families by raising money, building materials and professional labor, and by coordinating the process of building a home that provides maximum freedom of movement and the ability to live more independently. The homes provided by Homes for Our Troops are given at NO COST to the Veterans we serve" (Retrieved January 26, 2014 from: <https://www.hfotusa.org/>).

RM - Because if I don't care, who will? If I don't show them that someone does care, then why should they?

Marvin Thomas, now a university student, described the importance of serving as a mentor for Upward Bound,<sup>49</sup>

It provided a tangible service to kids in the area. I was reading the synopsis and these kids were trying to get in to a college and they were at-risk youth whose parents hadn't gone to college and they struggled academically and socially. Here's such an awesome opportunity to have their program on campus. And I value education. And I wanted to help these kids. I don't really have more of a reason for doing things than that I just want to help this population (Thomas, September 26, 2013).

Jim Roberts was the only veteran I interviewed who had not volunteered since departing the Marines. Although Roberts had not given his time in this way, he expressed an interest in doing so, "I just haven't had time. I'd like to volunteer, but I work a lot and have kids, so I don't have time" (Roberts, September 14, 2013).

### **Pedagogical Strategies**

While Yonkman and Bridgeland (2009) and Nesbit (2011) argued for civic skills and values among veterans, they did not examine the mechanisms used by the military to instill these temperaments. One aim of this study was to explore Marine Corps methodologies for developing these capacities and values. A further aim of the research

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<sup>49</sup> "Upward Bound provides fundamental support to participants in their preparation for college entrance. The program provides opportunities for participants to succeed in their precollege performance and ultimately in their higher education pursuits. Upward Bound serves: high school students from low-income families; and high school students from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree. The goal of Upward Bound is to increase the rate at which participants complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from institutions of postsecondary education" (Retrieved on March 6, 2014 from: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/trioupbound/index.html>).

was to ascertain whether non-military civic educators could utilize any of these pedagogies.

One of the foundational teaching aims of basic training is to develop team spirit among the recruits. Staff Sergeant Ford described the process by which this goal is realized, “Teaching Recruits must begin by crushing all individualism. The habits that have been acquired over time are broken very quickly. Recruits will begin to understand the importance of teamwork in all tasks assigned” (Ford, July 23, 2013). Christy Myers agreed that it all starts with getting rid of the “me-first” mentality:

It’s that whole we break you down, so we can build you back up thing. It’s all about teamwork and instant obedience to orders. It’s not that you think you have a better way to do it. In order to put mission first, you have to get over yourself pretty quickly (Myers, August 15, 2013).

This notion was supported by the Gunnery Sergeant I interviewed: “The first phase being the most difficult, it concentrates on laying the foundation of Recruit Training and the way of life of the Marine Corps. It strips recruits from their individualism with the intent of making all of them equal, thus allowing the drill instructors to instruct the recruits more efficiently” (Grant, July 23, 2013).

One way the Corps tries to suppress individualism is through the use of Incentive Training. Jameson, a Marine veteran, described incentive training this way,

Physically, getting smoked<sup>50</sup> on the quarterdeck<sup>51</sup> for every little thing.

Something small, you’re going to get smoked for it. Physically, they’re going to

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<sup>50</sup> “Getting smoked” is Marine Corps slang for receiving incentive training.

<sup>51</sup> The quarterdeck is a raised area behind the main mast of a sailing ship. Traditionally it was where the captain commanded his vessel and where the ship's colors were kept. (In a Marine Corps recruit training squad bay, the platoon guide-on, or colors, is kept on the quarterdeck). This led to it being used as the main

smoke you. They get in your face, they make you do difficult things that you don't think you can do. I saw a lot of guys with a bad attitude, that didn't listen. I kept my mouth shut until it was time to talk. So, I didn't get smoked as much as everybody else. At the time I couldn't tell what they were doing, but looking back I can see what they did. They weren't just being assholes to me; there was a purpose behind it (Jameson, August 20, 2013).

In Marine Corps Basic Training, creating a team mentality is also accomplished through an appeal to *esprit de corps*, which represents the traditions and heritage of the Corps. This pride is self-consciously developed through the use of training exercises, such as the Crucible. Jameson described it this way in his interview: "They run it through your head that it's a brotherhood. We have such rich traditions in the Corps. You feel part of something" (Jameson, August 20, 2013). As outlined above, the drill instructors would often strategically share these stories during points of significance and high emotion for the recruits. Richard Lyons described how reading about Medal of Honor winners during the Crucible was very memorable.

The Crucible was huge for me. I was pouring water for the platoon. Then I heard the call to order and they read the Medal of Honor citations on top of that mountain and the sun was peeking through the clouds. And there were several times they would do that after key moments. It's passing down the tradition and the lineage (Lyons, September 17, 2013).

Rick Moody described repetition as another fundamental pedagogical tool utilized by the drill instructors.

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ceremonial and reception area on board and the word is still used to refer to such an area on a ship or even in naval establishments on land.

Looking back, I can tell you that repetition was a big part. Just like learning to march. It's straight up repetition. I had some JROTC experience, but they made sure we knew the Marine Corps way by intensely getting it in our head. As I said there were guys in my squad bay who would scream out in their sleep, "boot top high!" because during drill the DIs would go "how high? And we were supposed to repeat, "boot top high!" (Moody, August 8, 2013)

Marvin Thomas also emphasized that the drill instructors used repetition to teach patience

In boot camp we would do scuzz brush<sup>52</sup> to bulkhead.<sup>53</sup> You stand on line and take your scuzz brush and toot your way to the wall and back fast. They would say it so fast you would just run with it to the wall and back. We did that all the time. One thing I learned from that was numb-skulling patience. Oh my gosh, I've done this so many times, but they're telling me to do it and I have to do it. I don't think I had that before boot camp. It permeated other things (Thomas, September 26, 2013).

Close-order drill is another repetitious pedagogical method employed by the Marine Corps to teach discipline and teamwork. According to Staff Sergeant Ford, this exercise also enables recruits and instructors to see their progress,

Close Order Drill is a vital event that helps drill instructors instill discipline within the recruits and to see the transformation is amazing. Close Order Drill is a snapshot of the continued improvement made from the time, energy, and hard

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<sup>52</sup> A scuzz brush is a type of hand-held shower brush.

<sup>53</sup> A bulkhead is a Naval term for a wall.

work put forth by not only the drill instructors but also the recruits (Ford, July 23, 2013).

Marvin Thomas echoed these sentiments, “Discipline and bearing are the purpose of drill. We would drill a lot. We moved all the racks to one side and would march through the squad bay” (Thomas, September 26, 2013). John Jameson also explained how the drill instructors would combine learning Marine Corps knowledge with drill:

Drill and drill every day. They’re out there with you sweating on the parade deck. Little ditties, as you’re in formation, marching along to your next class, wherever you have to go, they’re singing songs and asking questions... Repetition is how they got things across (Jameson, August 20, 2013).

Rick Moody described role modeling as a fundamental teaching tool of Marine Corps Basic Training:

Sometimes you learn by example. But they are put on a pedestal. Even outside of boot camp, in the Corps, there is a level that certain people want to attain. They don’t care what rank they achieve, they just want to be a DI. So it’s hard to look away from someone who is put on a pedestal and you may or may not have put [him or her] there. You try to do what they’re doing and what they’re telling you (August 8, 2013).

Sergeant Adams also declared that DIs lead by example, “These lessons are taught in a classroom environment as well as demonstrated everyday by the drill instructors and Marines that the recruits interact with” (Sergeant Adams, July 23, 2013). John Jameson shared the powerful influence that his senior drill instructor, as a role model, had on his career.

They're almost father figures. You have your black belts, green belts. (Seniors and juniors) Senior is your daddy. I still remember mine. Staff Sergeant Metzger, I still remember him. Just the way they acted towards you, but you also knew that he was there for you, there to push you and help you. Get you through the difficult tasks they told you to go out and do. They're there early in the morning [and] after you went to sleep; they're mentors I think. I based a lot of my career after SSgt Metzger was with me. The way he trained guys. I felt he played a big role in my military career (Jameson, August 20, 2013).

Jim Roberts provided a measure of caution in viewing the drill instructors as role models:

I think that you have to make a differentiation between ... part of the way they act, and part of the way they treat you, is to make you hard. Or to put you through an experience that is mentally tough so you'll be able to deal with it when things aren't going your way. I don't think that's necessarily ... I don't think they're trying to teach you that you should act like that to other people (Robert, September 14, 2013).

Roberts also shared how viewing the drill instructors uncritically as models could be detrimental to recruits, since their roles are multi-faceted.

A lot of people try to emulate how they act, their good traits and their not-so-good traits. They treat you like shit. Let's be honest. I think other recruits pick up on that and then they emulate that as well. So, they treat each other like shit. And especially, like when one of your Marines falls out in boot camp. I was pretty immature. And a lot of people are young. So you adopt their ways, like they're

treating this person this way, so I should treat them this way also (Robert, September 14, 2013).

The primary pedagogical method used to instill values in Marine basic training is narrative storytelling. Marvin Thomas described it this way,

A lot of it would be telling us stories of famous Marines who displayed these traits. The Marine Corps worships Chesty Puller.<sup>54</sup> A lot of these famous Marines are intertwined throughout Marine Corps culture. They would tell us these stories all the time. We would say ditties. The only one I remember was the first female Marine, Opha Mae Johnson. Stuff like that. They also told us stories of Marines who were winning Medals of Honor and generals who had done stuff for the corps. It gives you something to aspire to as a Marine (Thomas, September 26, 2013).

The Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP) also uses storytelling as a primary pedagogical strategy. The Gunnery Sergeant with whom I spoke described MCMAP as, “developing these young men and women into ethical warriors is implemented by the martial arts program, it not only teaches them to defend themselves during a combat situation but it teaches them to be ethical warriors by teaching them right from wrong and our Core Values: honor, courage and commitment” (Grant, July 23, 2013). I inquired what Grant meant by an ethical warrior,

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<sup>54</sup> Lieutenant General Lewis Burwell "Chesty" Puller (June 26, 1898 – October 11, 1971) was an officer in the United States Marine Corps. Puller is one of the most, if not the most, decorated members of the Marine Corps in its history. He is the only Marine to be awarded five Navy Crosses. During his career, he fought guerrillas in Haiti and Nicaragua, and participated in some of the bloodiest battles of World War II and the Korean War.

Being an ethical warrior is being a well-rounded Marine/or warrior. The synergies of MCMAP are the physical discipline, mental discipline and the character discipline. All of them are equally important. They must be developed equally to ensure that your ethical development as warrior and person is successful. We as Marines must be able to fight wars today and then tomorrow be able to successfully give humanitarian support to others (Grant, September 17, 2013).

John Jameson, a former MCMAP instructor, described the use of warrior lessons, a type of narrative, during this training:

The warrior lessons are another thing. We're kind of like Spartans. They were such a small force but they were warriors. Like us being the smallest branch but we still have the reputation we have because we're warriors. We got the name *Teufel Hunden*.<sup>55</sup> I was a MCMAP instructor and we would always give warrior lessons before the training. It's telling a story. The Spartan example comes to my head. These guys who are fearless and courageous and like a Marine. We aspire to be that. We aspire to be warriors, no matter what, you face your enemies and you do what you have to do (Jameson, August 20, 2013).

The Senior Drill Instructor is often the person in charge of the moral education of the recruits. Staff Sergeant Eisenhower observed, "The Senior Drill Instructor takes the knowledge of what is gained from the class room and from other Drill Instructors, and harnesses it all in Core Values guided discussions. These discussions are designed to get the recruit to think about the ethics and ethos of the Marine Corps" (Eisenhower, July 23,

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<sup>55</sup> A name purportedly given to Marines at the Battle of Belleau Wood by German soldiers (noted above) who remarked that the Marines fought like *Teufel Hunden*, which translates to "Devil Dogs."

2013). Jim Roberts also discussed what is referred to as Senior Drill Instructor time, “I really liked the Senior Drill Instructor time, where the senior would come and talk to us about what was going on. There seemed to be some kind of moral or ethical discussion that occurred. I always liked that. To me, that was important” (Roberts, September 14, 2013).

In addition to narrative, classroom instruction, mostly lecture, plays a key part in recruits learning Marine Corps history and traditions. According to Staff Sergeant Ford, “academics are very important during the recruit training process. Classroom knowledge helps build the camaraderie and *esprit de corps* through the proud history that our Corps has shared. Academics help keep our proud history and traditions alive and well” (Ford, July 23, 2013). Staff Sergeant Eisenhower discussed how different teaching strategies are employed in the classroom to ensure learning, irrespective of a recruit’s specific abilities.

They use all three learning [teaching] techniques to teach recruits. The auditory learners repeat ditties that all recruits say so as to match key words with critical pieces of information such as, birth date of the Marine Corps; the recruits would then repeat birth date of the Marine Corps is 10 November 1775. The visual learners take multiple-choice tests with the same question as the ditty, but with several different answers. The kinesthetic learners get their practice on other recruits while saying ditties (Eisenhower, July 23, 2013).

The final training tool interviewees highlighted was the use of the capstone exercise, known as the Crucible (described in detail in chapter 4). Sergeant Delano described the importance of the Crucible as a pedagogical tool; “The Crucible is the defining moment in boot camp for the recruit to apply and work as a team and to show

the final evolution to earn the title of United States Marine” (Delano, 2013). The Gunnery Sergeant also emphasized the importance of the Crucible, “The Crucible is the culminating event of recruit training, testing the recruits on everything they have learned in the past 62 training days” (Grant, July 23, 2013). John Jameson described the challenges of the Crucible,

76 hours, maybe 3 hours of sleep each night, during the day, it’s non-stop obstacles. Move this ammo can over here, crawl through this, it’s just so physically demanding. They give you different types of missions. Get from one side to the other with little stakes and we had one 2x4. It’s a lot of team-orientated stuff. It’s 76<sup>56</sup> hours straight, go, go, go. I remember SSgt. Metzger falling asleep during a break. It was rough (Jameson, August 20, 2013).

Sergeant Adams described the Crucible this way,

The Crucible tests courage and commitment through the many obstacles that the recruits must maneuver throughout the evolution. Courage to face maybe a fear of heights on a certain obstacle and the commitment to your team so that the mission can be accomplished are just a couple of examples (Sergeant Adams, July 23, 2013).

In her interview Paula Smith described the Crucible as the most important aspect of her basic training experiences:

Definitely the crucible. It was very challenging. You must learn to work as a team. The Drill Instructors change roles and become more encouraging and supportive. They sort of switch from an enforcer to a mentor. I cried during the

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<sup>56</sup> Actually 54 hours.

Eagle, Globe, and Anchor (EGA) ceremony<sup>57</sup> at the Iwo Jima memorial.

Whenever I hear the song “Proud to be an American” it still chokes me up (Smith, September 4, 2013).

## **Summary**

This chapter presented the major themes that emerged during my interviews with Marine Corps drill instructors and veterans. I divided this material into four sections corresponding to the study’s research questions; skills/capacities taught in basic training, values taught, the teaching aims of the drill instructors and the pedagogical strategies DIs used to convey their lessons. Five major themes emerged in the skills section. The Marines most often reported capacities in coping with hardship, practicing teamwork, leadership and creative problem solving. The values interviewees most often cited were the Marine Corps’ core values of honor, courage and commitment. Interviewees also discussed the value of loyalty at length.

The drill instructors described the primary didactic aim of basic training as creating “basically trained Marines.” They defined this term to describe an individual who knows the history and customs of the Corps, adheres to its core values and possesses basic war fighting abilities. A further aim of basic training is to prepare recruits psychologically and emotionally for war, in as much as possible, by simulating the stresses and chaos that characterize combat. Finally, some drill instructors discussed their aspiration to create better citizens as well. The pedagogies most commonly employed by DIs were fostering a group mentality, through both punishment of

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<sup>57</sup> This ceremony marks the end of the 54-hour culminating event of training known as the Crucible and is the first time recruits are called Marines. The recruits are presented with the Marine Corps insignia, the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor. The Lee Greenwood song, “Proud to be an American,” is played over a loud speaker during the ceremony.

individuality and instilling a sense of shared purpose among the recruits; repetition, through the mechanism of close-order drill; role modeling; the use of narrative to instill core values; and the use of a capstone exercise. Chapter 6 explores the theoretical, policy and practical implications of these findings.

## Chapter 6

### Analysis of Findings and Implications

Analytically, this study was concerned with determining whether and how U.S. Marine Corps Basic Training jibes with arguments made by Yonkman and Bridgeland (2009) and Nesbit (2011) that military veterans possess certain skills and values that encourage civic engagement. I was also interested to explore whether Marine boot camp could serve as an additional adult institution that could develop civic skills, as Verba, Schlozman, and Brady have contended (1995). Furthermore, as a large part of this study addressed strategies utilized by Marine drill instructors to convey their didactic aspirations, I examined whether the techniques used by the Corps had any pedagogical import for civic educators. In this chapter, I discuss four possible strategies that interviewees discussed and that were outlined in Chapter Four that may prove beneficial to educators wishing to communicate similar skills and values. Finally, based on the study's findings, I suggest three practical ways to promote veterans as civic assets, in keeping with Yonkman and Bridgeland's (2009) original proposal of the same. These scholars' second recommendation concerned the integration of veterans into the National Conference on Citizenship's annual survey for the Civic Health Index. Finally, following Yonkman and Bridgeland, I sketch what role faith-based institutions appear to play in aiding veterans' reintegration into their communities and suggest that this concern merits further study.

## Analysis of Findings

Mary Yonkman and John Bridgeland's 2009 report, *All Volunteer Force: From Military to Civilian Service*, argued that military veterans possess both the inclination and the skills to serve in their communities. They reported that 92 percent of OIF/OEF veterans surveyed agreed that serving their community was important, and 90 percent of those responding believed that service to one's community was a basic responsibility of all Americans. AVF survey respondents cited several skills they possessed they believed would be beneficial for community service, including management capacities, the ability to lead diverse groups of people, teambuilding and logistics.

Haynes (2003) has provided one model of management skills, helpful in contextualizing Yonkman and Bridgeland's survey results. His framework appears as Figure 3 below. I then compare those abilities to my interviewees' comments concerning whether each was a focus in their boot camp experience.

**Figure 3**

**Management Skills Pyramid  
Adapted from K. Haynes (2003)**



I provide indicators for Haynes' management capacities below in Table 5.

**Table 5**

**Management Skills Indicators (Haynes, 2003)**

Management Skill	Skill Indicators
Leadership	Vision, action-oriented, integrity, effective communication, motivation, planning
Time Management	Use of planning tools e.g. lists, chunking, efficiency in planning and running meetings
Self-Management	Focus on important tasks rather than urgent ones, conscientiousness, Pareto principle
Motivation	Recognition that each team member's motivation needs is different. Recognition that motivating the team requires a different approach from motivating the team members. Not de-motivating the team.
Training and Coaching	Identify the training needs of your team, acquire appropriate training for them, coach all members of your team, even the well trained ones, to help them achieve their best levels of performance.
Involvement	Pay attention to individual work assignments, individual satisfaction levels, sense of being part of a great team, do not micro-manage, give clear goals and honest feedback, delegation, encouragement
Plan	Attention to detail, different levels of planning include: business planning, strategic planning, tactical planning, operational planning
Organize	Determine the roles needed, assign tasks to the roles, determine the best resource (people or equipment) for the role, obtain the resources and allocate them to the roles, and assign resources to the roles and delegate authority and responsibility to them.
Direct	Making sure the goal is clear to everyone on the team; Do they all know what their role is in getting the team to the goal; Do they have everything they need (resources, authority, time, etc.) to do their part?
Control	In the control step, you monitor the work being done. You compare the actual progress to the plan. You verify that the organization is working as you designed it. Take action to minimize negative impacts and brings things back to the desired goal as quickly as possible.

When their comments are compared with Haynes' indicators, it is clear the veterans I interviewed perceived that Marine Corps Basic Training teaches several management skills. I here offer examples of Haynes' various capacities as veterans shared their views concerning how each was treated in their boot camp experience. Starting at the top of the pyramid, both Marine Corps veterans and drill instructors highlighted the emphasis that basic training places on teaching leadership. Indeed, as noted above, one of the drill instructors, Staff Sergeant Ford, went so far as to say, "There is no finer leadership school in the world than that of Marine Corps Basic Training" (Ford, July 23, 2013). In the "Improve Self" portion of Haynes' pyramid, the Marine veterans and instructors alike explicitly discussed both time and self-management skills in interviews with me. Carl Norton described time management as one of the most important skills he acquired in boot camp. The Marine Corps Basic Training emphasis on bearing, which encourages individuals to stay focused on a mission despite obstacles and hardships, goes a long way towards developing the self-management skills highlighted by Haynes, such as maintaining focus on important tasks. Marvin Thomas described bearing as, "a type of mental control" (Thomas, September 26, 2013). Richard Lyons also remarked on the importance of learning self-management in boot camp (Lyons, September 17, 2013).

This inquiry's interviewees also perceived that Marine Corps boot camp endeavors to instill several management capacities included in Haynes' "Develop Staff" tier. Motivation plays an integral part in basic training and arises largely from the emphasis placed on building *esprit de corps* among recruits. John Jameson highlighted the importance of *esprit de corps* in his interview: "I'm honored to be a Marine. I'm

honored to have served with all these other Marines. It's a brotherhood. It's hard to explain this feeling that I got out of boot camp that these guys are my brothers and we all serve, we're all Marines" (Jameson, August 20, 2013).

Haynes' training and coaching skills relate to the role of drill instructors as role models, especially during the Crucible. As outlined above, James Woulfe (1998) has described well how drill instructors become more mentor than strict disciplinarian during the capstone phase of basic training and that the shift plays a pivotal part in recruits' transition from trainee to Marine.

The Involvement block of Haynes' third tier of management skills is captured by this Corps focus on leading by example, a premise and principle integrated into virtually all dimensions of recruits' Basic Training experience. DIs stress attention to detail in all phases of training, and instilling an understanding of teamwork is a critical pedagogical aspiration for the entire Marine Corps boot camp experience.

Marine Corps Basic Training also emphasizes the bottom tier of Haynes' pyramid, "Get it Done," involving skills in planning, organizing, directing and control. According to the *Guidebook*, one of the two pillars of Marine Corps leadership is mission accomplishment, with much of basic training oriented to that aspiration (Marine Corps Association, 2009, p. 22). Planning and organization skills are addressed through a relentless attention to detail, which interviewee Rick Moody, quoted above, described as of paramount importance.

Both the direct and control skills captured in the bottom tier of Haynes model are emphasized in Marine Corps Basic Training through discussions of the chain of command. According to a Marine Corps Leadership Directive taught to recruits, the

purpose of the chain of command is “To allow commanders to communicate, supervise, and maintain effective control of a unit's actions” (LDR 2049, Retrieved January 2, 2014 from:

[http://www.usnavy.vt.edu/Marines/PLC\\_Junior/Fall\\_Semester/LDR2049\\_Intro\\_to\\_MC\\_Leadership\\_Student\\_Outline.pdf](http://www.usnavy.vt.edu/Marines/PLC_Junior/Fall_Semester/LDR2049_Intro_to_MC_Leadership_Student_Outline.pdf)). Learning to delegate tasks effectively is also an important aspect of direction and control. Interviewee Richard Lyons explicitly discussed in his interview how he utilized his leadership role to direct his squad to complete a task.

The third capability that Yonkman and Bridgeland’s (2009) AVF respondents highlighted from their experience that they perceived as positive for civic involvement was their skill in leading diverse groups of people. Those interviewed for this research provided multiple illustrations of how Marine training encourages such capacities. During my interview with her, Christy Myers, for example, discussed the challenges of fostering collaboration among diverse groups. Marvin Thomas described Marine Corps Basic Training as, “ a platter of America. We had a very diverse DI team” (Thomas, September 26, 2013). Ricks (1997) also explored how race is not as divisive in the Marines as it often is in the broader American society, “partly because of its powerful commitment to the brotherhood of all Marines, and partly because black and white Marines find after a few years in the Corps that they have more in common with one another than they do with members of their races outside of the service (Ricks, 1997, p. 204).”

The third capacity AVF survey respondents emphasized they had acquired in the military that had purport for civic engagement efforts was teamwork. Very similarly, one of the key findings arising from this study was the centrality of collaboration in Marine

Corps Basic Training. Twelve of the 17 current and former Marines (DIs and veterans alike) I interviewed emphasized that boot camp stresses, indeed demands, teamwork. According to Woulfe the culminating exercise of Marine Corps Basic Training was designed first and foremost to highlight the importance of joint effort (Woulfe, 1998, p. 5).

The final skill conducive to civic engagement treated in Yonkman and Bridgeland's survey was logistics. Interestingly, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines logistics as "the branch of military science relating to procuring, maintaining and transporting material, personnel and facilities" (Oxford English Dictionary, Retrieved January 4, 2014 from <http://www.oed.com/>). However, the *New Oxford American Dictionary* defines logistics more generally as, "the detailed coordination of a complex operation involving many people, facilities, or supplies" (*New Oxford American Dictionary*, Retrieved January 4, 2014 from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us>). Many of the same capacities that enable logistical success are consistent with the bottom level of Haynes' management pyramid, Get it Done. I noted above the lessons taught in Marine Corps Basic Training that are conducive both to logistics and to getting it done, including the use of the planning tool SMEAC and an appeal to the chain of command.

As I observed above, too, Ricks has argued that the Marine Corps is tasked with, and prides itself, on doing more with less: "Another odd but important element to the Corps' culture is its emphasis on frugality. The Marines pride themselves on making do, using hand-me downs, and surviving on only 6 percent of the Pentagon budget" (Ricks, 1997, p. 46). Because the Marine Corps is the smallest of the four major military service

branches, it also has the smallest budget.<sup>58</sup> In consequence, the Marines seek to be logistically efficient. As cited above, Marvin Thomas discussed this point during one of our interviews: “Marines are known for not having the best gear and being the bumper of the Navy. It’s created a Marine Corps where you have to network and improvise” (Thomas, September 26, 2013).

Nesbit (2011) has gone further than Yonkman and Bridgeland to contend that not only do veterans possess capacities and values that facilitate civic involvement including those just outlined, but also that military training instills, or reinforces, those dispositions. According to Nesbit, the military offers opportunities for education and training that develop communication and organizational skills, which Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) have argued are essential for civic engagement. Furthermore, individuals in the Armed Services interact daily with people from different racial, geographic, socioeconomic and religious backgrounds and must work together with these individuals to identify means to attain shared goals. According to Nesbit, by “integrating diverse individuals into a common social experience and network, military service teaches the necessity of working with others and the skills to do so” (Nesbit, 2011, p. 68). She has also argued that the military’s emphasis on leadership fosters such capabilities and that armed forces training programs instill values of duty, honor and loyalty, which encourage civic involvement. Nesbit has suggested that upon returning to civilian life, military veterans might continue to act upon these values through volunteering.

Nesbit’s first contention implies that because military basic (and later) training offers educational opportunities, veterans will acquire the organizational and

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<sup>58</sup> In 2013, the Marine Corps’ budget was \$29B. The Army budget was \$245B, the Navy budget was \$150B, and the Air Force budget was \$171B.

communication skills necessary for civic involvement, while they are in service. Marine Corps basic training demands academic learning that spans history, customs and courtesies and core values, as well as general military subjects, such as weapons systems, combat maneuvers and planning skills. One of the drill instructors I interviewed, Staff Sergeant Ford, highlighted the importance of such coursework to boot camp, “Academics are very important during the recruit training process (Ford, July 23, 2013).

Nesbit also maintained that because military personnel interact with a diverse array of individuals who must nonetheless join together to address shared purposes, they are more likely to be able to lead diverse groups in the civilian world. Yonkman and Bridgeland also made this point (Yonkman and Bridgeland, 2009, p. 3). The analyst Thomas Ricks, as well as Christy Myers and Marvin Thomas among my interviewees, also highlighted the diversity of Marine Corps Basic Training recruits.

Nesbit’s third key argument was that military training generally focuses on developing leadership skill, and, as stated above, I found that Marine Corps basic training is no exception, as it focuses heavily on inculcating leadership skills in recruits.

Nesbit’s final contention was that military training develops values, especially duty, honor and loyalty that conduce to civic involvement. Just such values development is crucial to understanding Marine Corps entry training. Indeed, ultimately, Marine Corps boot camp is more about values acculturation than it is about developing hard skills.

The veterans and active-duty Marines I interviewed all spoke at length about the core values of the Marine Corps and how they have shaped their perspectives subsequently. While not a core value of the Marines, several of those I interviewed

discussed duty as a key concern they had adopted in Marine training. Carl Norton, for example, compared duty to honor, by saying, “I think duty is similar to honor, if you do the right duty” (Norton, September 18, 2013). Rick Moody also spoke at length about the various dimensions of duty, duty to take care of your fellow Marines, duty to your community and duty to your country. Overall, my interviewees suggested that honor is one of the three core values of the Marine Corps and is heavily emphasized during basic training.

The final value Nesbit (2011) discussed as arising in military training was loyalty. Of all the values discussed in my interviews, study participants spoke the most about this virtue. The sense of *esprit de corps* among Marines is powerful. Ricks (1997) argued that the idea of “once a Marine, always a Marine” sometimes leads to police officers looking the other way on speeding tickets and former Marines helping each other out when no longer in the service. Appropriately perhaps, the Marine Corps motto *Semper Fidelis* means always faithful—to country, to the Marine Corps and to your fellow Marines. The sense of loyalty to the Marine Corps and *esprit de corps* was powerfully expressed by one of the Drill Instructors, Staff Sergeant Eisenhower,

The Marine Corps is very successful at instilling the Corps Values. I know because I live them every day. It brings pride to see other recruits receive the Eagle Globe and Anchor and get choked up, because of how much it means to them. I know it is successful because when another Marine breaks our Corps values I feel as though I have been injured by their actions. The lessons still ring true for many retired Marines that still have the pride of belonging and will always say *Semper Fidelis* (Eisenhower July 23, 2013).

In addition to examining the claims of Yonkman and Bridgeland and Nesbit, a second aim of this study was to determine whether military training could fit into the Adult Institutional Involvement category of the civic skills model developed by Verba, Scholzman, and Brady (Verba, Scholzman, and Brady, 1995), shown in Table 6 below.

**Table 6**

**Stages/Factors Relevant for Political Participation in the Civic Voluntarism Model**

<b>Stage/Factor</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Initial Characteristics</b>		
Parents education	Educational attainment of both parents	Education is highly correlated with civic participation Parental education benefits are passed on to a child before the child's own education benefits take hold
Gender	-	Females are slightly less likely to participate than males
Race or Ethnicity	-	Whites are more likely to participate than other races and ethnicities
<b>Pre-Adult Experiences</b>		
Exposure to politics at home	Especially discussions of politics while growing up	Exposure generates awareness and political interest
Individual's education	-	Education is highly correlated with civic participation although recent research indicates that while education levels are rising civic engagement appears to be declining (Putnam 2000).
Extra-curricular activities during high school	Clubs and other groups other than sports – sports are negatively associated with civic participation	These are thought to teach civic skills necessary for later participation and develop interest in politics
<b>Adult Institutional Involvement</b>		
Job level	Rank in organization, types, and numbers of contacts with others	Higher-level jobs result in more contacts, better skills, and an increased need to understand and participate in public and civic life.
Affiliation with non-political organizations	Clubs, hobbies, special activities	Similar to extracurricular activities, affiliations provide civic-skills training organizations and opportunity to meet community leaders.
Religious attendance	Active member of religious organization	A significant relationship appears to exist between active religious participation and civic engagement, thought to be related to civic-skill training and exposure to community issues and leaders
Marine Corps Basic Training	Participating in the socialization process of Marine Corps Basic Training	Marine Corps Basic Training developed skills and values that facilitated community involvement within 90% of this study's Marine veterans.

As outlined above, Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) classified civic skills into two categories, organizational and communication. These scholars argued organizational skills were important for civic engagement and include the capabilities necessary for accomplishing tasks, for knowing “how to cope in an organizational setting” (Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995, p. 305). The specific capacities involved include organizing individuals to take action, planning and running meetings and preparing to take action. These abilities reflect the capabilities needed to understand the processes by which most organizations operate. Yonkman and Bridgeland’s AVF respondents’ reported skills in management, leadership and logistics that appear consistent with many of the abilities listed in VSB’s Organizational Skills category.

Many of the Marines interviewed for this study described acquiring capacities in boot camp that fit into the organizational skills category. Richard Lyons, for example, described organizing his squad to take action by delegating work responsibilities, a lesson he learned from watching his drill instructors. In his interview, Carl Norton described learning time management skills as an essential part of Marine Corps Basic Training (Norton, September 18, 2013). Time management is vital to planning and running meetings, as well as logistical operations. Six of the Marines I interviewed observed that Marine Corps Basic Training stressed operations planning as an integral part of leadership.

Communications capacities constitute another category of civic skills and according to VSB are “the most well-defined and consistently referenced capacities regarding civic involvement” (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). These capabilities include writing letters, being proficient in English vocabulary and making oral

presentations or speeches. Among my interviewees, Christy Myers emphasized how basic training teaches the importance of understanding an audience; “You get a pretty strong sense of audience when you are in the Marines. Who am I talking to? There are certain conventions you use to speak to certain ranks and peers” (Myers, August 15, 2013). Developing a sense of audience is a crucial skill for both written and oral communication. Additionally, Rick Moody said his experiences as the platoon Lay Leader encouraged him to develop active listening skills (Moody, August 8, 2013).

While recruits are not given specific training in English proficiency in basic training, all boot camp participants are required to possess high school diplomas to join the Marines. Those possessing Graduate Equivalent Degrees GEDs are allowed with a special waiver. However, that number is capped at 5 percent of incoming recruits. Academic learning also plays a key role in basic training during which recruits must master an entirely new vocabulary. Ricks (1997) observed that receiving drill instructors immediately begin to teach the recruits a new language, whose peculiarly nautical tone grows out of the Marines’ origins as a sea service.

Although not a skill explicitly taught in basic training, letter writing plays a vital role in helping recruits make sense of and relate their experiences. Letters are recruits’ only connection to the outside world and serve as an outlet to express the challenges they face. Recruits are given 15-30 minutes each night to write letters. Marvin Thomas described the importance of letter writing in basic training:

The ability to write letters provided a sense of connection and emotional support to loved ones and people of interest. I wrote to my sister, close friends and even my recruiter. It was a way for me to express both the pride I had in what I was

doing and to celebrate achievements within the training schedule. Since recruits aren't allowed to talk much it was also a way of using my voice to say whatever it is I wanted. Whether it was to vent about my DIs or my fellow recruits.

This fondness for letters carried over when I was deployed as well. There is something to be said about valuing the concept of waiting in an age where everything is instantaneous. Letters are personal, they require time and effort and end up being more valuable and meaningful than Skyping or emailing someone.

The hope [anticipation] of the response letter and the permanence of words written on paper end up being more personal and meaningful (Thomas, September 26, 2013).

Kirlin (2003) has argued, "Despite the significant number of scholars directly or indirectly referencing civic skills, very few have actually gone on to specify what civic skills are and even fewer have done empirical work specifically looking either for the presence or the impacts of civic skills" (Kirlin, 2003, p. 14). For her part, Kirlin has suggested four specific categories of community capacities based upon a review of the civic engagement and education literatures: organizational, communication (both drawn from the work of Verba et al.), collective decision-making and critical thinking (Kirlin, 2003).

Kirlin cited collective decision-making as one of the fundamental categories of civic skills. Some indicators of such decision-making are listening to the interests of others, identifying common problems, working in a team and dealing with difficult decisions for which there is no clear answer. Additionally, Kirlin has argued that exposure to differing perspectives, often accomplished through participation in

organizations, contributes to creating tolerance of different views (Kirlin, 2003).

Two of the veterans interviewed for this study, Rick Moody and Christy Myers, discussed explicitly how Marine Corps Basic Training developed their listening skills. Additionally, many of the Marines with whom I spoke cited teamwork as a key lesson of boot camp. Four of the seven drill instructors also described the importance of group cooperation as an element of Marine Corps basic training.

Another crucial component of collective decision-making is dealing with difficult situations for which there are no clear answers. Sergeant Adams claimed, “there is a greater understanding that a recruit can be taught to shoot straight and true, but the mental process behind pulling the trigger aimed at another person is just as crucial” (Adams, July 23, 2013). As highlighted above, Christy Myers also described how Marines often face difficult decisions with no easy answers. Bearing is also one of the key dispositions Marine basic training attempts to instill to help to address difficult decision scenarios.

Kirlin’s final category of civic skills is critical thinking, referred to in much of the relevant education literature as cognitive capabilities (Kirlin, 2003, p. 23). These capacities include identifying and describing, analyzing and explaining, synthesizing, thinking constructively and formulating positions on public issues (Center for Civic Education, 1994; Patrick, 2003). According to Kirlin, this set of abilities presents challenges because of its very general nature, but clearly represent important capabilities for civic involvement.

Marine Corps Basic Training emphasizes instilling critical thinking skills. Carl Norton highlighted how Marine Corps Drill Instructors deliberately placed recruits in stressful situations to help them learn to think diagnostically about a situation (Norton, ).

Christy Myers described a frequently used phrase in Marine Corps basic training, “adapt and overcome,” to highlight the importance of analytical thought in boot camp (Myers, September 18, 2013). This concept speaks to the critical thinking process by suggesting that recruits are taught to have a plan initially, but also to analyze the context of a situation to determine if that blueprint needs to be modified. Indeed, interviewee Paula Smith said that her biggest take-away from Marine Corps Basic Training was this problem-solving mentality (Smith, September 4, 2013).

In addition to teaching these civic skills in Marine Corps Basic Training, it appears that these lessons continue to play a part in the later lives of Marines. Nine of the 10 veterans I interviewed are currently serving or have served in their communities. Based on the relationship between this study’s findings concerning Marine Corps Basic Training and the civic skills described by Verba, Schlozman, Brady (1995), and Kirlin (2003) Marine Corps boot camp could qualify as an adult institution that plays a role for those who experience it in developing civic skills in organization, communication, collective decision-making and critical thinking. However, there are significant barriers to viewing Marine Corps Basic Training as such an institution. First, the Corps does not accept everyone. Second, one must possess or develop a high degree of physical fitness and mental toughness to become a Marine. Third, and more importantly, one must be interested in military service, which the majority of citizens are not. Finally, one should consider what role the hierarchical nature of the Marine Corps plays in facilitating civic involvement in a democratic society. This said, to the extent that Marines are acculturated successfully to the above capacities in their basic training, this study’s findings suggest

they can represent an important asset to American society generally and for civic involvement particularly.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

This study examined two concerns related to pedagogy. The first interest was to discover how drill instructors teach skills and values. Chapter five reported that the Marines seek to teach their recruits through creating a team mentality, repetition, role modeling, narrative and use of a carefully designed capstone exercise. The second aim, discussed in detail here, is whether those strategies have any pedagogical import for non-military educators.

This inquiry's interviewees described four pedagogies commonly used by the drill instructors to teach capacities and norms. Those four approaches, mentioned just above, were creating a team-learning environment, modeling behaviors, using narrative to instill values and implementing a capstone exercise. DIs sought first to create a shared team mentality, or *esprit de corps*. The interviewees nearly all highlighted that working together as a community is an integral part of learning in basic training. The team environment created in Marine Basic Training is similar to the idea of the learning community in higher education. The latter draws on a storied tradition of scholarship informed by the writings of John Dewey and Alexander Meiklejohn beginning in the 1920s. Paulo Freire's writings<sup>59</sup> on the importance of dialogic learning have also played a prominent role in the development of modern learning communities. Barbara Smith of Evergreen State College has provided a definition of learning communities:

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<sup>59</sup> Found, among other works in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) and *Education for Critical Consciousness* (1973).

The learning community approach fundamentally restructures the curriculum, and the time and space of students. Many different curricular restructuring models are being used, but all of the learning community models intentionally link together courses or coursework to provide greater curricular coherence, more opportunities for active teaming, and interaction between students and faculty (Smith: retrieved on January 12, 2014 from: <http://www.evergreen.edu/academics/home.htm>).

The three-year National Learning Communities Dissemination Project represents the most comprehensive research on learning communities and student outcomes to date. The study involved 19 institutions, including 7 community colleges (Minkler, p. 16, 2002) and the common lessons from all participating sites were:

- Participation in learning communities resulted in the same or better grades for cohort students than for those in respective stand-alone course comparison groups.
- Students who participated in learning communities – especially at community colleges – had significantly higher rates of retention than did their respective stand-alone counterparts.
- Student survey data indicated that the students perceived the learning community college experience to be inherently better than what they had experienced in stand-alone courses (Minkler, 2002, p. 17).

However, there are some criticisms of learning communities. According to J. Scott Armstrong,

People placed in groups (e.g., in classrooms or study groups) typically lose a sense of responsibility. When adults were asked to describe what important things

they learned and how they learned them, they typically mentioned things for which they had taken individual responsibility. They seldom mentioned learning in groups, especially in groups with leaders (Armstrong, 2012, p. 4).

This criticism seems to contradict the intention behind Marine Corps Basic Training's suppression of individualism. However, the Marines interviewed for this study expressed a complex notion of individual responsibility grounded in taking care of their fellow community members. This combination of individual responsibility and group well-being is highlighted in basic training by the repeated argument that a team's survival could depend on individual action.

One possible critique of this comparison between Marine Corps Basic Training and learning communities could be that the suppression of the individual in boot camp is too strongly emphasized since traditional academic learning communities are typically designed to encourage personal creativity. Nevertheless, the Marine Corps' emphasis on creative problem solving and leadership development, especially evident during the Crucible, suggests that individual perspectives and expressions are valued, especially in the latter stages of basic training. For those educators wishing to instill civic skills and values, Marine Corps Basic Training, along with much of the academic literature on learning communities, supports the notion that a community of learners that builds team spirit is conducive to developing civic capacities.<sup>60</sup>

A second prominent pedagogical theme among this study's participants was the Marine Corps' emphasis on leadership by example. According to the senior DI, "The

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<sup>60</sup> Virginia Tech has also sought to realize this possibility through its community learning collaborative known as Serve. The mission of Serve is to foster authentic civic partnerships by connecting the human and intellectual capital of Virginia Tech with local and global publics. The program seeks to cultivate social and ethical responsibility through engaged learning and reflection.

better way to teach recruits the intent of Marine Corps Basic Training is by demonstrating by your own example” (Gunnery Sergeant, July 24, 2013). The idea of *Ducto Exemplo*,<sup>61</sup> the motto of Marine Corps Officer Candidate School, is also heavily emphasized in Drill Instructor School, where new DIs learn, “Don’t ask a recruit to do anything you wouldn’t do” (Ricks, 1997, p. 42).

George Siemens is a leader in educational research on learning, networks, technology, analytics and visualization, openness and organizational effectiveness in digital environments. Siemens co-designed the first massive online open course (MOOC) and is the originator of connectivism theory. He has argued that the role of teaching is changing rapidly in our increasingly socially and technologically networked society:

Social and technological networks subvert the classroom-based role of the teacher. Networks thin classroom walls. Experts are no longer ‘out there’ or ‘over there.’ Skype brings anyone, from anywhere, into a classroom. Students are not confined to interacting with only the ideas of a researcher or theorist. Instead, a student can interact directly with researchers through Twitter, blogs, Facebook, and listservs. The largely unitary voice of the traditional teacher is fragmented by the limitless conversation opportunities available in networks. When learners have control of the tools of conversation, they also control the conversations in which they choose to engage (Siemens, 2004, p. 6).

Siemens has outlined seven roles that teachers must play in this more networked environment. One of those is that of the master learner, who models for students how to learn in an environment in which things are constantly changing and individuals are continually confronted with new knowledge,

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<sup>61</sup> Lead by Example

During CCK08/09,<sup>62</sup> one of Stephen's statements that resonated with many learners centered on modeling as a teaching practice: 'To teach is to model and to demonstrate. To learn is to practice and to reflect.' Modeling has its roots in apprenticeship. Learning is a multi-faceted process, involving cognitive, social, and emotional dimensions. Knowledge is similarly multi-faceted, involving declarative, procedural, and academic dimensions. It is unreasonable to expect a class environment to capture the richness of these dimensions. Apprenticeship learning models are among the most effective in attending to the full breadth of learning (Siemens, 2004, pg. 8).

Apprenticeship for contemporary students is not grounded in a trade or a profession, but rather in the process of becoming a learner. Based on Siemens' discussion, the modern teacher must model the processes of learning for students. Chris Lehmann, founder of the Science Leadership Academy, has argued, "we still need to be teachers but we need students to see us learning at every turn, using traditional methods of experimentation as well as social technologies that more and more are going to be their personal classrooms" (Lehmann, 2010: Retrieved from: <http://weblogg-ed.com/2010/teachers-as-master-learners/>).

Just as Marine Drill Instructors demonstrate how they expect their recruits to act and think, today's educators increasingly must also serve as master learners and exemplars for their students in order to help students learn how to process the flow of information that characterizes our age. This is perhaps especially true of civic educators, whose lessons often involve normative claims about the world and forms of government.

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<sup>62</sup> CCK08/09 was the first MOOC.

If these teachers do not model the values and skills that encourage civic engagement, these lessons arguably will be less potent.

Ruth Deakin Crick of the Graduate School of Education at the University of Bristol has introduced an assessment of 'learning power' through the Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory (ELLI). Crick and her colleagues have implemented and tested this instrument internationally and in the U.S. in Chicago and San Diego (Deakin Crick, 2003). One pedagogical theme that has emerged from the ELLI is the importance of modeling and imitation as an important learning mode.

The idea of teacher as master learner can also be seen in Paulo Freire's problem-posing pedagogy. The Brazilian thinker contrasted that teaching approach with the prevailing banking education theory of education, which he described as,

Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits, which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the 'banking' concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits (Freire, 1970, p. 73).

Freire criticized the banking method of education, arguing that it does not recognize or value students as critical thinkers with ideas of their own, but rather views them as empty vessels. In this pedagogical model, teachers justify their existence by presenting themselves as ultimate authorities on their subjects. Freire contended that this type of education quells critical thinking and enables oppression.

In contrast, the problem-posing model of education emphasizes critical thinking for the purpose of personal and intellectual liberation. Problem-posing pedagogies restructure the teacher-student relationship from one in which the teacher is absolute and

the student is meaningless, to one predicated on a recognition that knowledge is exchanged not through a transmission, but created through an exchange that occurs between students and teachers. As Shor (1987) has argued,

When teachers implement problem-posing education in the classroom, they approach students as fellow dialoguers, which creates an atmosphere of hope, love, humility, and trust. This is done through six points of reference. Dialoguers (students/teachers) approach their acts of knowing as grounded in individual experience and circumstance. They approach the historical and cultural world as a transformable reality shaped by human ideological representations of reality. Learners make connections between their own conditions and the conditions produced through the making of reality. Learners/Dialoguers consider the ways that they can shape this reality through their methods of knowing. This new reality is collective, shared, and shifting. Learners develop literacy skills that put their ideas into print, thus giving potency to the act of knowing. Finally, learners identify the myths dominant to discourse, and work to destabilize these myths, ending the cycle of oppression (Shor, 1987, p. 12).

The beginning of Marine Corps Basic Training arguably represents an example of Freire's banking system of education. Recruits are indoctrinated into a new world in which drill instructors are the ultimate authorities and participants are treated as largely ignorant. However, as the training progresses and enlistees begin to become more Marine-like, the pedagogical style of the drill instructors becomes much more problem-focused. This is especially (and symbolically) evident in the Crucible in which the drill

instructors relinquish their more authoritarian roles and begin to function as mentors who help the recruits work through various obstacles.

The third pedagogical strategy employed by the Marine Corps that could have import for civic educators is the use of narrative storytelling to instill values. Marine Corps Basic Training is rife with stories of former Corps members who embodied the service's core values of honor, courage and commitment. These recountings are intended to convey to recruits that as Marines they are part of a rich tradition of virtue and simultaneously demonstrate that if another individual, part of a group to which they now belong, can perform such noble actions, they also can perform similarly. These stories are shared during academic classes concerning the history and traditions of the Marine Corps, during the core values classroom sessions conducted by the Senior Drill Instructor, through the use of warrior stories in the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP) and as an integral part of the culminating Crucible capstone experience.

Nursing education is one field, along with law and business, which is increasingly employing narrative storytelling. A recent Carnegie Endowment report on nursing education (Benner, Sutphin, Leonard & Day, 2010) called for an educational renaissance in the field by infusing innovative pedagogical approaches that could replace undue reliance on PowerPoint presentations focused on medical model disease taxonomies. This report led to the creation of the Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN) project (Benner, Sutphin, Leonard and Day, 2010). The QSEN identified pedagogical skills necessary for providing a quality education for nurses (Cronenwett et al., 2007; Cronenwett et al., 2009). As nursing faculty have integrated the knowledge,

skills and attitudes that define these analytic capacities into their curricula, it has become clear that these pedagogical methods lead to more effective student preparation.

One of the major lessons learned from the QSEN thus far is that narrative pedagogy, particularly case studies, provides an effective way to close the gap between didactic classroom experience and clinical practice. Similar to Marine Corps basic training, classrooms based on real-world clinical experiences have used short sessions devoted to theory as the basis on which to examine unfolding case studies and simulated learning to stimulate learners' clinical imaginations.

The QSEN experience that narrative pedagogy can provide opportunities for praxis is very salient for civic educators. Arguably, the purpose of a civic education is not only to encourage students to learn and retain relevant theory, but also to be able to apply what they learn in their own communities. Narrative pedagogy, in the form of case studies, can help civic learners "see" theoretical lessons grounded in life experiences and encourage students to employ those lessons. This type of pedagogy is powerfully used in Marine Corps basic training to demonstrate abstract values, such as honor or courage, through the actions of former Marines.

Ryan (2000) has outlined six methods of character education. One of those strategies is the use of narratives that speak directly to particular values. Similar to a fable, these stories are embedded with lessons. Typically, the narrative will model the ideal behavior in situations in which a decision has to be made. Often in these stories "right" behaviors and actions are rewarded and "wrong" behaviors yield undesirable consequences.

Fables and parables have been used to teach moral values for thousands of years. This approach is most effective when the listener or reader is provoked to think by the story and then through discussion and thought discovers the embedded lesson(s). The Marine Corps employs active discussion of lessons learned from narratives during the Core Values classroom and MCMAP during basic training. Drill instructors also facilitate such discussions during the Crucible.

There are obstacles to using narrative successfully to instill civic dispositions. Obviously, it is possible that the lesson in the story can be too difficult to discern or too obvious. When either is true, the approach is not very fruitful. It also fails if a lesson runs contrary to the existing worldview of the audience and when the story seems to be an attempt to impose a belief that individuals simply do not want to accept (appropriately or not). According to Ryan, the narrative approach offers many possible advantages for the teacher. Most importantly, stories have plots, characters and settings—all factors that make them both interesting to listen to or read and, at the same time, memorable.

Nonfiction and fiction stories also provide a way to learn about different cultures, times and beliefs. Every folk narrative tells a great deal about the culture from which it came. It shows what those people believed and, more importantly, what they thought was worth teaching or passing along to succeeding generations. Narratives offer opportunity for discussion and thinking, for questions, for focusing on alternatives and for comparison both with other stories and with personal experiences. Some methods for using narrative pedagogy to instill values include dramatizing experiences, investigating character motivation, through examining alternative outcomes and beginnings and by explicitly investigating the author's viewpoint.

The capstone exercise is another pedagogical method employed by the Marine Corps that may have import for civic educators. The Crucible, designed to harness and reinforce all of the lessons recruits have learned, is the Marine Corps' basic training capstone. The twin foci of the Crucible are teamwork and reinforcing the core values of honor, courage and commitment. The basic training capstone also serves as an important rite of passage for Marine Corps recruits. Before beginning the exercise, participants are not considered Marines; however, upon completion of the challenge, enlistees are awarded the Marine Corps insignia, the Eagle, Globe and Anchor (EGA)<sup>63</sup> and are formally considered Marines. As noted above, this rite of passage is marked by the change in roles of the drill instructors, who symbolically wear the same soft covers (hats) worn by Marines in the Fleet Marine Force during the capstone<sup>64</sup> (FMF). At this stage, too, DIs serve as mentors who help guide the recruits through obstacles rather than figures who direct and criticize participants' every move.

Patsy McGill (2012) has collected student comments through focus groups, to better understand capstone efforts across U.S. campuses. According to McGill, higher education analysts have long recognized the merits of integrating capstone experiences

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<sup>63</sup> The Eagle, Globe, and Anchor (EGA) is the official insignia of the Marine Corps. The globe signifies USMC service around the world. The Eagle represents the United States of America and the Anchor represents the naval traditions of the Corps, which date back to its founding in 1775 and its continued association with the Department of the Navy. The emblem also represents the three locations in which the Marines serve, "On Land, In Air and [at] Sea."

<sup>64</sup> The United States Fleet Marine Forces (FMF) are combined general and special purpose forces within the United States Department of the Navy designed to engage in offensive amphibious or expeditionary warfare and defensive maritime employment. The Fleet Marine Force consists of both combative naval fleets and Marine Corps' forces components that would entirely make up the Fleet Marine Forces on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, or within its "designate(s)." While it serves directly under the Marine Corps organization, the FMF personnel, Marines and Sailors, are subject to the operational control of naval fleet commanders; the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) retains administrative and training control.

into curricula. Two 1998 publications have been particularly influential in establishing the value of such opportunities as a culminating experience for students in undergraduate education and in shaping the conversation about this form of learning experience since their publication: *Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities*, by the Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University (1998) and *The Senior Year Experience: Facilitating Integration, Reflection, Closure, and Transition*, by John Gardner and Gretchen Van der Veer (1998b).

The Boyer Commission report outlined the key attributes of the capstone experience and offered a strong endorsement of this type of learning opportunity as one element of a blueprint for improving undergraduate education. It officially recommended that “the final semester(s) should focus on a major project and utilize to the fullest the research and communication skills learned in previous semesters” (Boyer, 1998, p. 12).

Several recommended elements of a capstone experience are:

- Projects should be collaborative and team-based to prepare students for professional life;
- Scholar-teacher mentors who understand major projects should work with students;
- Each project should serve as a bridge to graduate school or to the workplace;
- Projects should serve as the culminating experiences in students' majors.

The Marine Corps' Crucible event incorporates all of these suggested elements to heighten participants' likelihood of learning.

The *Senior Year Experience* report set the tone for later academic conversation concerning the role of the capstone experience in the transition of seniors from college to “life beyond college” (Levine, 1998, p. 58) and helped define the importance and role of capstones in the collegiate experience. Research since publication of *The Senior Year Experience* has described these experiences variously as a bridge, “from the identity as an undergraduate to an identity of a university graduate” (Olsen et al., 2002, p. 74), as a climatic or culminating experience that applies and integrates previous learning (Brown and Benson, 2005; Kuh, 2008; Payne et al., 2002; Sill et al., 2009) and as a facilitator of the “transition from the undergraduate student role to the post-baccalaureate roles of employee, graduate student, civic-minded community member, and/or lifelong learner” (Rowles et al, 2004, p. 1).

According to McGill, “Students reported not only gaining knowledge in the capstone, but also learned how to apply the knowledge gained in other courses” (McGill, 2012). One student in McGill’s study responded, “I believe this is a great course for all students to pass through before graduating as it takes the theoretical knowledge one has gained from the different courses and has you apply it in a practical manner to a real business client” (McGill, 2012, p. 5). Another student expressed her surprise that “community members are willing to work with us” and perceived great value in the fact that they “have real clients” (McGill, 2012, p. 6).

The opportunity for praxis presented by capstone courses is particularly relevant for civic educators. Civic education is concerned not only with teaching theoretical concepts, but also with encouraging the critically grounded application of those lessons for public engagement. A capstone experience, modeled broadly on the Marine Corps

Basic Training's Crucible, which combines lessons from training and coursework while fostering teamwork and employing various pedagogical strategies could play a vital role in civic education efforts.

### **Practical Implications**

Yonkman and Bridgeland (2009) provided several practical suggestions to accompany their findings that veterans possess skills that facilitate civic involvement. I here examine three of those to compare this study's conclusions to their claims. I will also discuss how those recommendations have been implemented since publication of their analysis. Yonkman and Bridgeland's first proposal was

Veterans, policymakers, and leaders from various sectors should organize efforts around treating veterans as civic assets in their communities. All avenues to invest leaders in an understanding of veterans toward their civic lives and the common solutions to unleash their talents should be undertaken — including congressional hearings, White House conferences, summits of state and local officials, and public forums among veterans service organizations, non-profit and faith-based institutions, and communities (Yonkman and Bridgeland, 2009, p. 5).

This study found that Marine Corps Basic Training participants perceived they had acquired skills and values that led to public service and marked them as civic assets. Since publication of Yonkman and Bridgeland's effort some groups have launched programs aimed at harnessing the civic talents of veterans. Notably, former service members themselves have undertaken the majority of these activities. One such effort is an organization created by former Navy Seal, Eric Greitens, called The Mission Continues. According to the organization's mission statement,

The Mission Continues empowers veterans facing the challenge of adjusting to life at home to find new missions. We redeploy veterans in their communities, so that their shared legacy will be one of action and service. We focus the innate spirit of service demonstrated by the men and women of the U.S. military. We mobilize wide-ranging support from volunteers, non-profit organizations and donors. And together we are able to solve some of the most challenging issues facing our communities. Through this unique model that provides reciprocal benefit for the veteran and the local community, veterans volunteer to help others and, through their service, build new skills and networks that help them successfully transition home (Retrieved on January 26, 2014 from: <https://www.missioncontinues.org/about/>).

As noted in Chapter 1, two former Marines, Jacob Wood and William McNulty, founded Team Rubicon in 2010, another veterans' organization that provides civic service. Team Rubicon "unites the skills and experiences of military veterans with first responders to rapidly deploy emergency response teams" (Team Rubicon, Retrieved from <http://teamrubiconusa.org/>). According to McNulty and Wood, Team Rubicon pioneered the concept of veteran-focused disaster response.

Political leaders have also taken action since publication of *AVF* to recognize veterans as civic assets. Joining Forces, an initiative begun by First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden, wife of the Vice-President, recognizes and promotes the civic potential of veterans. The Joining Forces initiative:

- Brings attention to the unique needs and strength of America's military families.

- Inspires, educates, and sparks action from all sectors of our society – citizens, communities, businesses, non-profits, faith based institutions, philanthropic organizations, and government - to ensure veterans and military families have the opportunities, resources, and support they have earned.
- Showcases the skills, experience, and dedication of America’s veterans and military spouses to strengthen our nation’s communities.
- Creates greater connections between the American public and the military.

(Retrieved from: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/joiningforces>)

The *AVF* report also recommended:

The National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC), a Congressionally chartered nonprofit created after World War II to strengthen citizenship on the home front and that annually releases the Civic Health Index, should make returning veterans a central focus of its annual survey (Yonkman and Bridgeland, 2009, p. 6).

The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, signed by President Barack Obama in April 2009, directed NCoC to work in partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service on a Civic Health Assessment. The first co-produced assessment between NCoC and CNCS, “Civic Life in America: Key Findings on the Civic Health of the Nation” was released in September 2010 specifically addressed the issue of veterans’ civic engagement and argued,

Veterans are more likely than non-veterans to participate in all of the forms of civic engagement covered in the study,<sup>65</sup> with one exception: They volunteer at a rate similar to the rest of the population. They are especially more likely to vote

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<sup>65</sup> Service, participating in a group, social connectedness, political action and connecting to information and current news.

than non-veterans, with a difference in their voting rate of over 14 percentage points. Recent research shows that returning veterans want to serve their communities on the home front and that those who volunteer have easier transitions home than those who do not (NCoC, 2010, p. 15).

The 2010 report is consistent with this study's findings. Ninety percent of the small sample of Marine veterans I interviewed was civically engaged, according to the five criteria employed by the NCoC survey.

Yonkman and Bridgeland's third recommendation was that, "Faith-based institutions should intentionally reach out to veterans with meaningful service opportunities for them and their families" (Yonkman, 2009, p. 6). This study's results suggest affinities between some faith-based institutions and military veterans. Several Marines interviewed for this study, and much of the literature on basic training, discussed the importance of church in Marine boot camp. Some of those with whom I spoke also discussed their civic involvement through religious organizations. According to Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, engagement with a faith community can develop civic skills. I argue, based on the results of this study, that Marine Corps Basic Training, can serve a similar purpose.

While determining whether faith-based organizations have reached out to veterans is a massive undertaking, I discovered a toolkit published by The White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships<sup>66</sup> (WHOFBNP), which is charged with forming and supporting partnerships between the national government and secular and

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<sup>66</sup> The White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships coordinates 13 federal agency Centers of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships

faith-based nonprofit organizations to serve those in need. This work seeks to address the needs of veterans and military families

Faith and community-based organizations have long been at the forefront of supporting service members, veterans and military families. Just like military families and veterans, faith-based institutions are present in every community. Congregations help military families with everything from providing childcare, yard work, and transportation for doctors' appointments, to emergency financial support. During deployments, separations, and transitions between assignments, many congregations also provide counseling services. They can also offer meaningful service opportunities for veterans who want to continue serving even after they turn in their uniforms and transition into civilian life. Faith leaders play an important role in informing their communities about families that could use a little extra support, which provides them an opportunity to raise awareness in their congregations about the deployments and transitions happening in their neighborhoods. In short, faith leaders play a critical role as resources and connectors for their communities (*Joining Forces Toolkit* Retrieved on January 26, 2014 from:

[https://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/files/joining\\_forces\\_toolkit\\_draft.pdf](https://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/files/joining_forces_toolkit_draft.pdf)).

The toolkit was designed to help faith leaders learn about ways to support military families and veterans. It includes best practices and examples of such efforts. The second section lists a host of resources that can be leveraged to support veteran congregants and communities.

## Summary

This chapter investigated whether and how U.S. Marine Corps basic training conformed to the arguments offered by Yonkman and Bridgeland (2009) and Nesbit (2011) that military veterans acquire dispositions that facilitate civic involvement. I found that this study's participants did report that they possessed skills and values consistent with those observed by Yonkman and Bridgeland (2009) and Nesbit (2011). I also investigated whether U.S. Marine Corps boot camp could qualify as an adult institution that cultivates civic skills, as described by Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995). I found that, based on this study's interviewees' perceptions, Marine basic training could be so characterized, albeit in a limited fashion. Pedagogically, I found that Marine Corps basic training's use of team-based environments; role modeling, narrative storytelling and a culminating exercise could provide important insights for civic educators. Practically speaking, it seems clear generally that analysts are increasingly viewing veterans as civic assets and more particularly, the NCoC has begun specifically to include veterans in its Civic Health Index. As they do for citizens generally, faith-based institutions may play an important role in the civic acculturation of veterans. These organizations may also aid in the reintegration of veterans to civilian life following their service. This study's final chapter presents several possibilities for future research.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusions and Future Research

This study has explored claims presented by Yonkman and Bridgeland (2009) and Nesbit (2011) that military veterans report both skills and values that encourage civic involvement. Additionally, I was interested to learn if military training could serve as an adult institution, similar to religious organizations, for developing civic skills as described by Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) and later Kirlin (2003).

I examined these questions by investigating one service branch's basic training experience. According to Soeters, Winslow and Weibull (2003) values acculturation begins in the military when recruits undergo their basic training. I interviewed 10 enlisted Marine Corps veterans and seven drill instructors for this study to obtain their perceptions regarding skill and value development in that service's boot camp experience. As I was not concerned with statistically generalizing to a larger population, I chose this sample purposively and through the use of a snowball sampling method. The U.S. military is an extremely large and varied institution and the practical limitations of my doctoral research did not provide me with the time and resources to explore basic training across the different services. Therefore, I limited my inquiry to Marine Corps Basic Training. This chapter presents a synopsis of my study participants' responses to this project's major research questions. I conclude by sharing some possibilities for future study.

## Conclusions

This research suggests that Marine Corps Basic Training, according to this study's participants, did seek to instill the skills outlined by Yonkman and Bridgeland (2009) in their report, *All Volunteer Force*, and, based on the small sample of Marine veterans interviewed in this study, was notably successful in doing so. My interviews also indicated that Marine Corps Basic Training strongly emphasizes the three values that Nesbit (2011) highlighted as a likely result of military service: duty, honor and loyalty. As Ricks (1997) has observed, Marine Corps boot camp is essentially an acculturation process, intended to bring recruits into the value system of the Corps. Based on the individuals participating in this study, it appears that Marine Corps Basic Training was largely successful in encouraging recruits to adopt the values it promoted. Furthermore, this study supports Nesbit's conclusion that these values lend themselves to community involvement, as ninety percent of the Marines interviewed were civically engaged.

Additionally, based on Verba, Schlozman, and Brady's model of civic skills and the results of this study, Marine Corps Basic Training could fit, although in a limited fashion, into their category of adult institutions that can develop civic skills. Marine Corps Basic Training also teaches capacities relevant to Kirlin's two additional categories of civic skills and collective decision-making and critical thinking.

This study also identified several pedagogical strategies employed by Marine Corps Drill Instructors to teach recruits preferred skills and values. Drill instructors and veterans indicated that these included creating a team mentality, repetition, role modeling, narrative storytelling and the use of an integrative capstone exercise. Chapter 6 discussed how those pedagogies relate to established teaching methods and to civic

education. For example, creating a team mentality resembles the aspirations of learning communities and a teacher serving as a master learner is a type of modeling that may also have broad application. Civic educators could potentially strengthen their teaching efficacy by applying other pedagogical methods utilized by the Marine Corps, such as including a capstone exercise to allow opportunities for praxis and using narrative to instill civic values or to assist students in attaining related learning objectives.

The strongest critique of the argument that USMC basic training develops civic skills is that the Marine Corps, and the U.S. military for that matter, are hierarchical and that, therefore, the lessons learned in this environment do not translate well into a less-structured civilian environment. I presented my hypothesis to Kay Schlozman, co-author of *Voice and Equality*, and co-designer of the Civic Skills framework that I utilized for this study. She was concerned that the military was too hierarchical to develop the necessary dispositions to promote civic engagement.

Verba, Schlozman, and Brady made a similar argument in *Voice and Equality* when they pointed to a distinction between Protestant and Catholic religious faiths in their capacities to develop civic skills. Their findings suggested that Protestants tend to engage more than Catholics in the types of activities, within their respective religious institutions, that develop citizenship capabilities including: greater lay participation in the church's liturgy, serving on a committee to hire a new minister, or overseeing the church budget (1995, p. 322). VSB concluded that, "the difference between Protestants and Catholics appears to be related to the characteristics of the two religions and the way their congregations are governed rather than to the characteristics of the congregants" (1995, p.

323). Schlozman similarly argued in our conversation that the organizational structure of the military might stymie the development of civic skills. (Schlozman, February 7, 2013)

There are several responses to this line of argumentation. The first retort would be that participation in the Catholic religion does develop civic skills, even if one agrees that participation in its parishes and services do not do so to the same degree as occurs within Protestant congregations. Likewise and similarly, without engaging in what institutions might play this role more effectively, the purpose of this analysis was to determine whether U.S. Marine Corps basic training could develop civic skills and values. Based on this study's respondents, the answer to that question appears to be in the affirmative.

A second reply to VSB's criticism is that they underestimate the opportunities for associative action within more hierarchical structures, such as the Catholic Church or the USMC. I am not qualified to speak to the practices of that faith tradition. However, this study and my own experiences, reveal several instances of both singular leadership and teamwork within basic training. U.S. Marine Corps basic training is a developmental process that seeks gradually to decrease the recruits' reliance on obeying orders while increasing individual leadership and decision-making. At the beginning of training, recruits are not expected to think for themselves but rather follow the orders given by the drill instructors. By the end of boot camp, however, as demonstrated in the Crucible, recruits are expected to display leadership, teamwork and problem-solving skills. These dispositions were also made visible through participants' discussions of serving as squad leaders in training, as well as in other billets e.g. the Lay Leader. The answer lies in the observable fact that hierarchical organizations nonetheless offer multiple opportunities

for leadership, teamwork and individual decision-making. The Marine Corps' entry training intentionally seeks to develop those capacities within its recruits.

A final answer to this possible objection would be that it seems naïve to assume that hierarchies do not exist generally in the civilian world, and more specifically within the types of organizations that often direct civic missions. Rebecca Nesbit (2011) has argued that learning to operate within a hierarchy, such as the Marine Corps, would actually help develop the necessary organizational skills for effective civic engagement within U.S. society. Key decision processes and organizational skills, such as running and planning meetings, are no less important in hierarchical structures than in more horizontally framed environments. Put differently, there is always room for individual and collective action within institutional structures. Learning how to navigate this reality effectively seems to me vital to civic engagement in contemporary society. Arguably, hierarchical institutions such as the USMC and the Catholic Church are more effective than less tiered organizations at teaching their members this skill, consciously or not.

### **Future Research**

This study suggests several future lines of inquiry. First, although Yonkman and Bridgeland and Nesbit's arguments addressed the entire military, this inquiry was limited to Marine Corps Basic Training. Although this study's findings are consistent with their arguments, its conclusions are limited to this small sample of Marines. This inquiry's results should encourage further scholarly research to determine if basic training in the other branches of the armed forces has similar didactic aims, pedagogies and perceived results. Furthermore, this study focused on enlisted Marines and not Marine Corps officers. It would be worthwhile to study the pedagogical aspirations and methods

employed at the Marine Corps' Officer Candidate School. It appears it would likewise be useful to examine officer candidate training programs for the other branches of the armed services.

Comparative studies could also be undertaken with the armed forces of other nations. The U.S. Marine Corps has two famous international counterparts: the British Royal Marines and South Korea's Republic of Korea (ROK) Marines. It would be fascinating to investigate whether those two sister services have similar didactic aspirations, methods and results as the U.S. Marine Corps basic training vis-à-vis civic dispositions. While those two services most apparently follow from this study, it would certainly be worthwhile to study non-marine military services in other countries with an eye toward how their training programs relate to the development of civic capacities.

This study was limited to one service's basic training. While the literature does support boot camp as the formative training exercise for the military, members of the Armed Services certainly obtain additional learning opportunities during their service. Military service men and women attend occupational training schools after basic training as well as leadership and management development programs as they progress through their careers. It might be illuminating to investigate the role that these additional formative opportunities play in shaping the civic dispositions of military veterans. There is also the lived experience of the military. One of the Marines participating in this study discussed how helping children in Iraq broadened his worldview. Most military members will be deployed during their service and, speaking from first-hand experience, those assignments can prove highly influential learning experiences.

Furthermore, special attention should be paid to the effects of combat on civic dispositions and engagement. Current research suggests that active involvement in conflict can lead to psychological and spiritual trauma that could stunt the civic-mindedness of veterans. Moral injury, as described by Jonathan Shay in his books, *Achilles in Vietnam* and *Odysseus in America*, can devastate those who have experienced combat. According to Shay, “warriors may bear witness to intense human suffering and cruelty that shakes their core beliefs about humanity” (Shay, 1994, p.16). It would be important work to discover how moral injuries and traumas suffered during combat affect veterans’ ability to engage in acts of community and civic service. Along similar lines, there is some evidence to suggest that civic and community involvement can actually help heal the wounds of war. Washington University’s Center for Social Development has conducted a suggestive study concerning how civic service, through The Mission Continues fellowships, affected veterans’ transitions,

By challenging returning disabled veterans, an at-risk group, The Mission Continues Fellowship Program provides a structured transition to employment, education, and continued service. This challenge also offers innovative pathways to improve personal, professional, and social relationships. After completing the fellowship, many of the Fellows report starting a job, enrolling in school, or continuing to serve in their home communities. Study participants perceive that the fellowship provided a direct linkage to lifestyle changes. The post-only study design and the small sample size limit the conclusions regarding long-term impacts (Matthieu, 2011, p. 2).

A similar investigation that considered how participation in Team Rubicon's disaster relief efforts affects the moral injuries of combat veterans could also prove worthwhile.

Finally, this research revealed some interesting connections between faith-based organizations and military veterans. First, according to VSB, religious organizations are one of the adult institutions that impart civic skills and values. This study presented data to suggest that Marine Corps Basic Training could also so serve. Interviewee Rick Moody (RM) spoke specifically to a comparison between his church and the Marine Corps:

EH - Do you think there's some overlap between the values that you learned in church and the Marine Corps?

RM - I would say one teaches you how to care, and the other teaches you how to do it like a man. One comes from the right, one comes from the left, but they both end up in the middle. You still learn to take care of people, you still learn to follow ... I don't go to a traditional church. I go to the one by the Pink Cadillac in [nearby town]. It's not a traditional church, it's very outreach based. They go out and help people, they fix houses, and they take care of ACs. It's showing that people give a shit (Moody, August 6, 2013).

Finally, Yonkman and Bridgeland (2009) suggested that religious organizations could play a significant role in helping veterans transition to their home communities following their military service. The White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships has effectively embraced this recommendation by arguing that faith-based organizations serve as leaders for veterans' reintegration and developing a toolkit to religious institutions to do so. It would be fascinating to study the role that

faith-based organizations are currently playing in the contemporary U.S., and have played throughout U.S. history, in veterans' transitions from the battlefield to their communities.

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## **Appendix A: Interview Protocol for Drill Instructors**

Date -

Pseudonyms –

### **Introduction**

- Introduce yourself
- Discuss the purpose of the study
- Provide informed consent opportunity gestures/expressions of concern. Obtain signature on informed consent form if not already done.
- Provide structure of the interview (audio recording, taking notes, and the character of confidentiality)
- Ask if they have any questions
- Test audio-recording device

### **Interview Questions**

- 1.) Does Marine Corps Basic Training teach individual recruits how to lead diverse groups of people? (Listening to interests of others, identifying common problems, working in a team, dealing with difficult decisions in which there is no clear answer) Why? How?
- 2.) Does Marine Corps Basic Training teach individual recruits how to function as a team? Why? How?
- 3.) Does Marine Corps Basic Training teach individual recruits communication skills (proficiency in English, vocabulary, how to write a letter, how to make a speech or give a presentation)? Why? How?
- 4.) Does Marine Corps Basic Training teach individual recruits how to function as part of an organization? Why? How?
- 5.) Does Marine Corps Basic Training teach individual recruits organizational skills (Knowledge of how to cope in an organizational setting, plan strategies, organizing, attending meetings, planning meetings)? Why? How?
- 6.) Does Marine Corps Basic Training teach individual recruits the values of duty, honor, and loyalty? Why? How?
- 7.) Do you believe that Marine Corps Basic Training teaches individual recruits the skills necessary to serve in their communities once they leave the Marines? Why?
- 8.) How would you describe the educational philosophy of the Marine Corps?

### **Concluding Questions**

- 1.) Is there anything else you would like to add or share about this subject that you believe is important for me to know? Are there any related issues concerning this topic you would like to discuss?

**Concluding Statement**

- Thank them for their participation
- Ask them if they would be willing to look over the finished product to see if it reflects their observations/thoughts
- Ask them if they would like to see a copy of the approved dissertation
- Record any observations, thoughts, feelings and/or reactions to the interview.

## Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Veterans

Date -

Pseudonyms –

### Introduction

- Introduce yourself
- Discuss the purpose of the study
- Provide informed consent
- Provide structure of the interview (audio recording, taking notes, and use of pseudonym)
- Ask if they have any questions
- Test audio-recording device

### Pre-enlistment Questions

- 1.) How old were you when you joined the military?
- 2.) Please describe your motivations for joining the military.
- 3.) Were you involved in community service or political campaigns before enlisting?  
If so, what were your motivations for doing so?
- 4.) What were your opinions of community service and politics before enlisting?

### Reflections of Military Service Questions

- 1.) Please describe your experiences at basic training.
- 2.) How, if at all, did basic training shape your character?
- 3.) Does Marine Corps Basic Training teach individual recruits how to lead diverse groups of people (Listening to interests of others, identifying common problems, working in a team, dealing with difficult decisions in which there is no clear answer)? Why? How?
- 4.) Does Marine Corps Basic Training teach individual recruits how to function as a team? Why? How?
- 5.) Does Marine Corps Basic Training teach individual recruits communication skills (proficiency in English, vocabulary, how to write a letter, how to make a speech or give a presentation)? Why? How?
- 6.) Does Marine Corps Basic Training teach individual recruits how to function as part of an organization? Why? How?
- 7.) Does Marine Corps Basic Training teach individual recruits logistical skills? (Knowledge of how to cope in an organizational setting, plan strategies, organizing, attending meetings, planning meetings) Why? How?
- 8.) Does Marine Corps Basic Training teach individual recruits the values of duty, honor, and loyalty? Why? How?
- 9.) Do you personally believe that Marine Corps Basic Training teaches individual recruits the skills necessary to serve in their communities once they leave the Marines? Why or why not?
- 10.) How would you describe the educational philosophy of the Marine Corps?
- 11.) Please describe your occupational training.

### **Post-service/Post-deployment Questions**

- 1.) Describe the experience of returning home following departure from the service?
- 2.) How do you think your service in the military changed your values?
- 3.) What skills did you take away from your military service?
- 4.) How did your military service affect your daily behaviors?
- 5.) Have you been approached by any veteran service organization since leaving the military?
- 6.) Have you been involved in any community service projects since departing the military?

If yes:

- 7.) Can you describe those experiences?
- 8.) Why did you undertake those activities?
- 9.) Do you think that community service helped you re-adapt to civilian life?

If no:

- 1.) Would you consider community service if you were asked to serve?
- 2.) Is there any particular reason that you have not participated in community service?

### **Concluding Questions**

- 1.) Is there anything else you would like to add or share about this topic that you feel is important for me to know? Are there any related issues concerning this subject that you would like to discuss?

### **Concluding Statement**

- Thank them for their participation
- Ask them if they would be willing to look over the finished product to see if it reflects their opinions
- Ask them if they would like to see a copy of the final results
- Record any observations, thoughts, feelings and/or reactions about the interview

## Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

Dear Participant:

You are invited to participate in a research study that seeks to understand whether and how military training affects the development of values and skills. You can decide not to participate. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision concerning whether you wish to participate. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask. You are eligible to participate in this study because you have served in the Marine Corps.

**Project:** Marine Corps Basic Training and Civic Engagement: Does Marine Corps Basic Training Facilitate Community Involvement?

**Purpose of the Project:** This study will investigate the effects, if any, of Marine Corps Basic Training on the development of civic skills and values.

**Procedures:** You will be asked to participate in an interview with the student investigator regarding your views concerning the influence of military training on the development of skills and values. The conversation will take approximately one hour to one hour and a half of your time and will be audio-recorded and will take place at your home or another location of your choosing. You will be asked a series of questions during this interview.

**Risks and/or Discomforts:** There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research.

**Benefits:** The information gained from this study may help us to understand better the experiences of military veterans and whether/how military training develops skills and values.

**Confidentiality:** The investigator will assign a pseudonym to each interviewee to protect their identity. The audio recording will be assigned your pseudonym during the interview. Once the interview is transcribed, the digital recordings, interview transcripts, and the copies of the documents you provide will be kept for 3 years in a password protected file by the student investigator and only the primary and student investigator will have access to them. The information obtained during this study may be published in academic journals or presented at scholarly meetings but in such cases the data will be shared in aggregated form. You will never be identified personally.

**Compensation:** You will not receive any type of compensation for participating in this study.

**Opportunity to Ask Questions:** You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate or during the study. You may call Eric Hodges at any time, (276) 252-8026 or email [hodgeseb@vt.edu](mailto:hodgeseb@vt.edu), or Max Stephenson at (540) 231-7340 or email [mstephen@vt.edu](mailto:mstephen@vt.edu). If you have questions

about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigator or report any concerns about the study, you may contact the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board, telephone (540) 231-0959.

**Freedom to Withdraw:** You are free to decide not to enroll in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigator or Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

**Consent:** If you wish to participate in this study, you will be interviewed and observed. You are voluntarily making a decision concerning whether to participate in this study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

I hereby give consent to audio record my interview. In my judgment I am voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent and possess the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study.

---

Initials of Participant

---

Date

In my judgment I am voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent and possess the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study.

---

Signature of Student Investigator

---

Date

Eric Hodges, M.A.  
Department of Philosophy  
229 Major Williams Hall (0326)  
Blacksburg, VA 24060  
(276) 252-8026

## Appendix D: Recruitment Letter

### VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY Recruitment letter to be attached to the initial email to potential research participants

**Title of Project:**

Lessons Learned from Marine Corps Basic Training

**Investigator(s):** Eric Hodges, Doctoral Candidate; Max Stephenson Jr., Faculty Advisor

Dear Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_,

I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Public and International Affairs at Virginia Tech. My dissertation research explores lessons learned in Marine Corps Basic Training and how those lessons potentially affect Marine Corps veterans after they depart the service. Because of your previous agreement to be contacted with the aim of research, I am contacting you to inquire whether you would be willing to participate in a personal interview, as a part of this research.

I will study Marine Corps Basic Training from two perspectives. First, I will speak with Marine Corps Drill Instructors for their input on the teaching aims of the Marine Corps, as well as, how they instruct Marine Corps recruits. I will then ask Marine Corps veterans to share their reflections on Marine Corps Basic Training and the lessons learned, if any, during their own individual experiences. The questions for the veterans will also focus on whether and how the lessons learned in basic training affected their post-service lives.

This study will bring together different theories and insights to develop an informed perspective on Marine Corps Basic Training and its potential to teach skills and values. If basic training does develop certain capacities and values, the study will investigate the methods and techniques utilized to teach those lessons. There has been relatively little scholarly research on Marine Corps Basic Training and its potential to develop skills and values. If Marine Corps Basic Training does teach skills that help veterans and their communities, then knowledge of the intentions and methods utilized by the Marine Corps could potentially aid those who wish to facilitate veterans' transition to society. The study could also benefit society by providing a more nuanced understanding of military culture. The military is likely one of the more stereotyped institutions in American society. Listening to the voice of Marine Corps veterans about their experiences could serve to provide a more complex understanding of this one military branch's norms and culture. I will submit the results of this study for review by a faculty committee as part of the requirements for my PhD. degree. I also intend to present the findings at academic conferences and to publish them in relevant journals.

Overall, I hope to interview approximately 10 Marine Corps Drill Instructors and 10 Marine Corps veterans. The interview will require approximately 30 minutes and will be audio or video recorded for transcription. After I have transcribed your interview, I will provide you an opportunity to check it for factual accuracy.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding this study. If you are willing to be interviewed, I will contact you to schedule an interview date, time, and location. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. My information, as well as my faculty advisor's contact information is listed below.

**Principal Investigator/Faculty Advisor:**

Dr. Max O. Stephenson, Jr.  
Virginia Tech Professor  
540-231-7340  
[mstephen@vt.edu](mailto:mstephen@vt.edu)

**Co-Investigator:**

Eric Hodges  
Doctoral Candidate  
(276) 252-8026  
[hodgeseb@vt.edu](mailto:hodgeseb@vt.edu)

**IMPORTANT:**

**If you should have any questions about the protection of human research participants regarding this study, you may contact Dr. David Moore, Chair Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, telephone: (540) 231-4991; email: [moored@vt.edu](mailto:moored@vt.edu); address: Research Compliance Office, 2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000, Blacksburg, VA 24061.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Eric Hodges  
Doctoral Candidate, Virginia Tech  
School of Public and International Affairs ([www.spia.vt.edu](http://www.spia.vt.edu))  
110 Architecture Annex  
Virginia Tech  
Blacksburg, VA 24061  
Email: [hodgeseb@vt.edu](mailto:hodgeseb@vt.edu)  
Phone: (276) 252-8026

## **Appendix E: Annotated List of Tables and Figures**

Table 1: Stages and Factors Relevant for Political Participation in the Civic Voluntarism Model

Table 2: Suggested Classification of Civic Skills Provided by Military Training

Figure 1: Drill Instructors' Demographic Information

Figure 2: Marine Veterans' Demographic Information

Table 3: Research Timeline

Table 4: Table of Interviewee Pseudonyms and Status

Figure 3: Management Skills Pyramid

Table 5: Management Skills Indicators

Table 6: Stages and Factors Relevant for Political Participation in the Civic Voluntarism Model

## Appendix F: U.S. Marine Corps Commandants'<sup>67</sup> Reading List (2014)

### All Hands

A Message to Garcia - Elbert Hubbard

Leading Marines (MCWP 6-11) - United States Marine Corps

The Warrior Ethos - Steven Pressfield; Shawn Coyne (Editor)

Warfighting (MCDP-1) - United States Marine Corps

### Enlisted

*Entry Level Enlisted: Recruit/Poolee*

Battle Cry - Leon Uris

Corps Values - Zell Miller

Making the Corps – Thomas E. Ricks

The Red Badge of Courage – Stephen Crane

*Primary Level Enlisted: Private - Private First Class – Lance Corporal - Corporal*

A Message to Garcia - Elbert Hubbard

Leading Marines (MCWP 6-11) - United States Marine Corps

The Warrior Ethos - Steven Pressfield; Shawn Coyne (Editor)

Warfighting (MCDP-1) - United States Marine Corps

Ender's Game – Orson Scott Card

Gates of Fire: An Epic Novel of the Battle of Thermopylae - Steven Pressfield

Marine! The life of Lt. Gen. Lewis B. (Chesty) Puller, USMC (Ret.) - Burke Davis

My Men Are My Heroes - Brad Kasal

Rifleman Dodd - C. S. Forester

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<sup>67</sup> The Commandant of the Marine Corps provides several professional reading lists, including targeted ones for officers and enlisted Marines, different professions and different ranks.

The Marines of Montford Point: America's First Black Marines - Melton Alonza McLaurin

*Career Level Enlisted: Sergeant - Staff Sergeant*

First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps - Victor H. Krulak

Islands of the Damned: A Marine at War in the Pacific - R. V. Burgin

Outliers: The Story of Success - Malcolm Gladwell

Quartered Safe Out Here - George MacDonald Fraser

Soldiers of God: With Islamic warriors in Afghanistan and Pakistan - Robert D. Kaplan

Storm of Steel - Ernst Junger

The Defence of Duffer's Drift - E. D. Swinton

The Forgotten Soldier - Guy Sajer

The Killer Angels: The Classic Novel of the Civil War - Michael Shaara

U.S. Constitution - United States of America

With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa - E. B. Sledge

*Intermediate Level Enlisted: Gunnery Sergeant - Master Sergeant - First Sergeant*

All Quiet on the Western Front - Erich Maria Remarque

American Spartans: A Combat History from Iwo Jima to Iraq - James Warren

Fields of Fire - James Webb

Flags of Our Fathers - James Bradley

Helmet for My Pillow: From Parris Island to the Pacific : A Young Marine's Stirring

On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society - Dave Grossman

The Age of the Unthinkable: Why the New World Disorder Constantly Surprises Us and What We Can Do About

It - Joshua Cooper Ramo

The Changing Face of War: Lessons of Combat, from the Marne to Iraq - Martin Van Creveld

This Kind of War: The Classic Korean War History - T. R. Fehrenbach

U.S. Constitution - United States of America

We Were Soldiers Once and Young: Ia Drang : The Battle that Changed the War in Vietnam - Harold G. Moore

*Senior Level Enlisted: Master Gunnery Sergeant - Sergeant Major*

Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character - Jonathan Shay

Assignment: Pentagon: How to Excel in a Bureaucracy - Perry M. Smith; Daniel M. Gerstein

Command Culture: Officer Education in the U.S. Army and the German Armed Forces, 1901-1940, & the Consequences for World War II - Jörg Muth

Forgotten Warriors: The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, the Corps Ethos, and the Korean War - Thomas Hammes

Hot, Flat, and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution and How it Can Renew America - Thomas L. Friedman

Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations - Michael Walzer  
Examines the moral issues surrounding military theory, war crimes, and the spoils of war.

No Bended Knee: The Battle for Guadalcanal: The Memoir of Gen. Merrill B. Twining  
USMC (Ret.) - Merrill B.  
Twining

The Face of Battle - John Keegan

The Mask of Command - John Keegan

**Entry Level Officer: Candidate/Midshipman**

Battle Cry - Leon Uris

Corps Values - Zell Miller

I'm Staying with My Boys: The Heroic Life of Sgt. John Basilone, USMC - Jim Proser;  
Jerry Cutter

Making the Corps – Thomas E. Ricks

My Men Are My Heroes - Brad Kasal

The Killer Angels: The Classic Novel of the Civil War - Michael Shaara

*Primary Level Officer: Warrant Officer - 2nd Lieutenant - 1st Lieutenant*

All Quiet on the Western Front - Erich Maria Remarque

Battle Leadership: Some Personal Experiences of a Junior Officer of the German Army with Observations on Battle Tactics and the Psychological Reactions of Troops in Campaign - Adolf von Schell

Gates of Fire: An Epic Novel of the Battle of Thermopylae - Steven Pressfield

Marine! The life of Lt. Gen. Lewis B. (Chesty) Puller, USMC (Ret.) - Burke Davis

Matterhorn: A Novel of the Vietnam War - Karl Marlantes

The Art of War – Sun Tzu

The Defence of Duffer's Drift - E. D. Swinton

The Forgotten Soldier - Guy Sajer

The Last Stand of Fox Company: A True Story of U.S. Marines in Combat - Bob Drury

The Marines of Montford Point: America's First Black Marines - Melton Alonza McLaurin

U.S. Constitution - United States of America

With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa - E. B. Sledge

*Career Level Officer: Chief Warrant Officer 2 - Chief Warrant Officer 3 - Captain*

Attacks - Erwin Rommel

Black Hearts - Jim Frederick

First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps - Victor H. Krulak

Infantry in Battle (FMFRP 12-2) - Infantry School, Fort Benning, Ga.

Into the Tiger's Jaw: America's First Black Marine Aviator - Frank E. Petersen

Islands of the Damned: A Marine at War in the Pacific - R. V. Burgin

On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society - Dave Grossman

Outliers: The Story of Success - Malcolm Gladwell

Quartered Safe Out Here - George MacDonald Fraser

Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions - Gary Klein

The Virtues of War - Steven Pressfield

U.S. Constitution - United States of America

War Made New: Technology, Warfare, and the Course of History, 1500 to Today - Max Boot

*Intermediate Level Officer: Chief Warrant Officer 4 - Chief Warrant Officer 5 - Major - Lieutenant Colonel*

Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era - James M. McPherson

Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking - Malcolm Gladwell

Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War - Robert Coram

Brute: The Life of Victor Krulak, U.S. Marine - Robert Coram

Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western Power - Victor Hanson

Command Culture: Officer Education in the U.S. Army and the German Armed Forces, 1901-1940, & the Consequences for World War II - Jörg Muth

Defeat into Victory: Battling Japan in Burma and India, 1942-1945 - William Slim

Forgotten Warriors: The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, the Corps Ethos, and the Korean War - Thomas Hammes

Hot, Flat, and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution and How it Can Renew America - Thomas L. Friedman

Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations - Michael Walzer

Military Innovation in the Interwar Period - Williamson R. Murray (Editor); Allan R. Millett (Editor)

Ripples of Battle: How Wars of the Past Still Determine How We Fight, How We Live, and How We Think - Victor Davis Hanson

The Age of the Unthinkable: Why the New World Disorder Constantly Surprises Us and What We Can Do About It - Joshua Cooper Ramo

The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle - J. Glenn Gray

This Kind of War: The Classic Korean War History - T. R. Fehrenbach

Senior Level Officer: Colonel - General

Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare - Colin Gray

Assignment: Pentagon: How to Excel in a Bureaucracy - Perry M. Smith; Daniel M. Gerstein

Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies that Led to Vietnam - H. R. McMaster

Diplomacy - Henry Kissinger

How Wars End: Why We Always Fight the Last Battle: A History of American Intervention from World War I to Afghanistan - Gideon Rose

Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle - Stephen Biddle  
consequences for both policy and scholarship.

Modern Strategy - Colin S. Gray

Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime - Eliot A. Cohen

Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln - Doris Kearns Goodwin  
Available online from: Navy General Library Program (NKO/OverDrive accounts  
required) OverDrive WMA  
audiobook

The Federalist Papers - Alexander Hamilton; James Madison; John Jay; Garry Wills  
(Introduction by, Editor)

The Guns of August - Barbara W. Tuchman

The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War - Robert  
B. Strassler (Editor)

The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past - John Lewis Gaddis

The Little Book of Economics: How the Economy Works in the Real World - Greg Ip

The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells As about Coming Conflicts and the  
Battle Against Fate - Robert D. Kaplan