



# ***OVERWATCH***

*"The advancement and diffusion of knowledge is the only guardian of true liberty."  
-James Madison*



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Photo by LCpl Audrey Rampton

**IN THIS ISSUE: FEATURE ARTICLE – FIVE REASONS THE MARINES CORPS  
IS THE FUTURE OF U.S. GROUND COMBAT**



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# Inside This Issue

## Features:

- 3 A Message from the Director
- 4 Five Reasons the Marine Corps is the Future of U.S. Ground Combat
- 6 Marine Corps Revamps its Geospatial Intel Database
- 7 Move Over Nerds, Grunts are Learning Signals Intelligence
- 8 Intelligence Photographs in the News



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## *A Message from the Director*



This edition of *Overwatch* is the last for FY 2018. The current state of Marine Corps Intelligence continues to rise to the occasion to meet current threats. With the selection of LtGen Lori Reynolds as the Deputy Commandant for Information (DCI), the Corps has invested heavily in preparation for a new battle space. As stated in a past newsletter, I continue to be impressed with the caliber of individuals currently in our intelligence enterprise.

As a slight divergence from our normal intelligence feature article, this issue will look at the future of U.S. Ground Combat with an article submitted by Loren Thompson dealing with information warriors. Using our National Strategy, we look at information warfare as it relates to the ground combat mission as we prepare the battle space.

Ms. Alison Simon of Defense Systems wrote our second article almost a year ago but we felt it relevant to include in this month's newsletter. The focus of this article discusses how the Marine Corps is upgrading aging systems and databases for geospatial Intelligence.

In the third article, Shawn Snow points out how Infantry Marines (grunts) are learning more about signals intelligence to explore the electromagnetic spectrum of their warfighting capability.

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## **Featured Article**

# **Five Reasons the Marine Corps is the Future of U.S. Ground Combat**

By Loren Thompson  
Forbes.com  
June 21, 2018

The Marine Corps is gearing up to conduct combat exercises with its information warriors. Doesn't sound like the leathernecks of yore, does it? As America's military transitions from the global war on terror to great-power competition with near-peers like Russia and China, the Marines are rethinking what they need to deter or defeat in the future. One area where they need to bolster skills is protection of battlefield networks, because Russia and China are able to conduct cyber-attacks and electronic warfare.

So the Marines are putting more emphasis on information operations in their preparations for combat, because if your communications are jammed or your intelligence data is corrupted in wartime, fighting effectively could be hard. The latest Marine Operating Concept (the Corps' plan for fighting and winning future wars) is heavily focused on securing and exploiting the electromagnetic spectrum.

Once you get beyond that innovation, though, what you find is a service returning to its roots: maneuver warfare, amphibious operations, "every Marine a rifleman." And with good reason. The operational environment of the future looks better suited to the agile, expeditionary strengths of the Marine Corps than it does to the ponderous, industrial-age traditions of the Army. The Marines have made rising China the pacing threat for their plans, while the Army is focused mainly on Russia in Europe. The White House cares more about China.

Marines going ashore in heavy seas as an amphibious assault vessel looms in the background. The Marines have invested wisely in new warfighting technology, but the Navy isn't buying "amphibs" fast enough to keep up with future military requirements.

Because the Marine Corps and Navy are so much better prepared for combat in the Western Pacific than the Army and Air Force are -- at least, once you get away from the Korean Peninsula -- there is a case to be made that the Marines will dominate U.S. ground combat operations in the future. They certainly look poised to be called on more frequently than the Army for missions like crisis response and regional deterrence.

In fact, if Washington scales back its military presence in Korea and U.S. relations with European NATO nations stay on their present vector, the Army might have trouble finding things to do in the years ahead. Not so the Marine Corps, which will be forward deployed near every potential flashpoint in the global littorals where 80% of the world's population and the vast preponderance of its commerce are found. Here are five reasons why the Marine Corps is likely to be the face of U.S. ground combat operations in the future.

**An identity that matches what national strategy requires today.** The Marine Corps is a naval expeditionary force focused on maneuver warfare and amphibious operations. What that means in practical terms is that the Marines are postured for fast foreign deployment, and they are based at sea rather than depending on land bases. They defeat enemies by throwing them off balance, using the sea as a maneuver space to surprise and deceive. Because their bases are mobile and positioned near trouble spots, they will almost always be the first foreign troops that respond. The Marine Corps is thus uniquely prepared for a world of unpredictable threats and fluid relations.

**Training that focuses on basic warfighting skills and adaptability.** Expeditionary warfare requires self-sufficiency, so Marines are trained to operate in austere conditions with minimal assistance from other services. Their combat units combine ground, air, logistical and command elements in an integrated structure focused on the support of infantry. Whatever their combat specialties may be, all Marines receive basic infantry training so that they can operate flexibly in fast-moving campaigns. Marine warfighting doctrine delegates responsibility to the lowest levels within combat units, and encourages initiative among

junior personnel. U.S. Marines thus tend to be more resilient than the warfighters of other nations.

**Technology that surpasses enemy gear and fits the moment.** Although the Marine Corps claims only 7% of the defense budget and receives a fraction of what the Army does for equipment, it has invested wisely. Its MV-22 Osprey is the world's only operational tilt-rotor, combining the vertical agility of a helicopter with the speed and range of a fixed-wing plane. Its F-35B fighter is the world's only stealthy tactical aircraft capable of landing on a dime, without a runway. Its Amphibious Combat Vehicle (awarded to BAE Systems this week) will be the most capable ship-to-shore fighting vehicle ever built. So Marines have options for assaulting and defeating hostile forces that other services lack.

**A warrior culture that emphasizes bravery and self-sacrifice.** Anyone who volunteers for military service knows they might have to die for their nation. However, awareness of that fact seems closer to the surface in Marine Corps culture than in the other services. Marines are taught to be tough, exhibiting physical and moral courage in the most harrowing circumstances. Although Marine formations are scalable and tailorable to tactical challenges, combat training focuses on small units that, as the Corps puts it, are led by warfighters "biased to action." The end result is highly disciplined killers who can respond to any contingency across the spectrum of conflict.

**A leadership that is politically adept but principled.** Marines tend to operate more effectively in political jobs than warfighters hailing from other military services. It is no coincidence that the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff both come from the smallest of the four military services under the Department of Defense. The Marine Corps seems to have done a better job than the Army of training its general officers for sensitive joint assignments, and as a result Marine thinking permeates the senior leadership of the national defense establishment. This presumably influences how warfighting options are assessed when conflicts arise.

To summarize, the competencies, training, technology, culture and influence of the Marine

Corps make it more likely to be the preferred choice in future ground combat campaigns than the Army. If prolonged occupation of other countries is required then the superior numbers of the Army's active and reserve components might make it a crucial contributor to any campaign. But at the moment domestic political sensibilities seem to be trending away from long-term occupations, just as they are trending away from support for European defense. Nation building is not a franchise for the future, nor is the protection of allies who seem unwilling to help themselves.

However, there is one facet of Marine Corps preparedness that needs to be addressed if the service is to achieve its full potential in support of future military operations. A military organization that relies on warships for its bases needs an adequate number of warships. At the moment, the Marine Corps is several ships short of the 38 amphibious vessels it would need to lift two full expeditionary brigades, and that's before items like wartime attrition are taken into account. The Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments has calculated the Marines actually need 40 "amphibs" -- 11 large-deck, 29 small-deck -- to meet future operating requirements, and that is probably the right number.

Those ships are purchased and operated by the Navy, which has to balance the demands of amphibious warfare against the competing needs of surface warfare, undersea warfare, and naval aviation communities (not to mention the Navy's contribution to the nuclear triad). President Trump has provided a fiscal framework for eventually getting to 38 amphibious warships, but at the rate they are being built, that will take a long, long time. Considering how indispensable the Marine Corps is likely to be in the future operating environment, it seems there is a convincing case to be made for accelerating the pace at which warships suitable for amphibious warfare are purchased and put to sea.

## Marine Corps Revamps its Geospatial Intel Database

By Alison Simon  
Defense Systems  
October 30, 2017

The US Marine Corp is reworking its infrastructure, geospatial databases and information systems while working to reduce overhead costs as part of an Infrastructure Reset Strategy.

The Infrastructure Reset Strategy is looking to upgrade aging Marine technology systems and databases to increase efficiency while decreasing spending, thus improving the quality of life for service men and women and their families.

The contract to upgrade the geospatial databases, facility planning, and services data management went to Logistics Management Institute (LMI), a consulting group headquartered in Tysons, VA that specializes in government management and technology, according to their website. This contract win is the largest LMI has ever won.

Geospatial technologies are used by the Marine Corp to ascertain intelligence about a specific geographic area—from terrain intelligence to usable transportation infrastructure, such as usable roads or waterways, in a specific location. The intelligence is gathered by specially trained marines and used for further analysis.

Maintaining the geospatial intelligence gained by specially trained Marines is of the utmost importance to the Corp, and LMI has been contracted to update the outdated systems to help them bring their database system up to date; this also allows savings on facilities costs.

The importance of having good data infrastructure systems was emphasized by General Robert B. Neller in a brief outlining the Marines' plan to improve their infrastructure, "Data driven infrastructure investment decisions will link facility readiness as measured by condition, configuration, and capacity to mission impact."

Geospatial technology is incredibly relevant as it impacts decision making and mission planning in both Marine

Corps specific and joint operations, according to the Marines handbook on Geospatial Information and Intelligence.

With all geospatial data feeding into geospatial intelligence as a whole, it is important that their databases and data storage systems are up to date and maintained.

"This is a huge win for LMI. . . to execute the work of optimizing the Marine Corps' infrastructure inventory," said Jim Kessler, vice president of LMI's Material Management division in a press briefing on their site. According to the same briefing, LMI will be focusing not only on the geospatial intelligence data system, but also facility planning and data management support.

The Infrastructure Reset Strategy will impact Marine Corps installations internationally, impacting Camp Lejeune, NC; Camp Pendleton, CA; Quantico, VA; Arlington, VA; Cherry Point, NC, Beaufort, SC; Twenty-nine Palms, CA; Yuma, AZ, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, HI, Miramar, CA, and two camps in Japan; Camp Butler and Iwakuni as well as several other places. The contract is to be completed in four year-long installments with the first year of work ending on October 18, 2018 but will continue on through to October 22, 2022. The biggest contract ever won by LMI, the total contract is worth over \$46 million.



## Move Over Nerds, Grunts are Learning Signals Intelligence

By Shawn Snow  
The Marine Corps Times  
June 5, 2018

With the new National Defense Strategy, the Corps is amid a structural and equipment overhaul of its forces in preparation for a fight with more sophisticated adversaries, that means grunts are taking on new tasks, like exploiting the electromagnetic spectrum.

It's not a job they are accustomed to, but as the Corps faces down rising enemies like Russia and China, whose forces are equipped with sophisticated sensors and electronic attack capability, Marine grunts will need to know how to exploit the electromagnetic spectrum.

In March, the Corps kicked off an experimental urban exercise known as Urban ANTX held aboard Camp Pendleton, California where Marines with 3rd Battalion, 4th Regiment, were given "a lot of EMS [electromagnetic spectrum] and electronic attack capability," Lt. Gen. Robert S. Walsh, the commanding general of Marine Corps Combat Development Command, told audience members at defense discussion held at Center for Strategic and International Studies on Monday.

The grunts were able to absorb the capability well, Walsh said, even "maneuvering in the electromagnetic spectrum."

"This is normally something that even back in the Cold War when we had a lot of electronic attack capability, it would have been to a specific unit that conducted that mission for them," Walsh said.

The three radio battalions in the Corps support Marines with electronic warfare and signals

intelligence and the unit hosts a series of job fields like linguists, signals intelligence and some cyber folks.

Indeed, the Corps already has a unit that provides tactical electronic warfare in support of infantry operations and that unit is a radio battalion.

The radio battalions are not disappearing but grunts are taking on some basic electronic warfare capabilities like packing sensors or carrying jammers that will aid them in navigating through the complex information terrain that lies ahead in a future conflict.

Even small militias and terrorist groups have learned how to arm commercial drones or exploit the information environment to further their causes.

Grunts will need tools to be able to locate these drones and disable them. Or be able to protect themselves from electronic attacks from enemy forces.

According to Walsh, grunts with 3/4 seemed to naturally be taken to the new role and technology.

"They used it incredibly different than I could have imagined," Walsh said.

# *Intelligence Photographs in the News*



UNDISCLOSED LOCATION, SOUTHWEST ASIA – U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Justin Johnson, an intelligence analyst with 3rd Battalion 7th Marine Regiment attached to Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force, Crisis Response-Central Command (SPMAGTF-CR-CC), recovers an Instant Eye quadcopter system out of the night sky July 27, 2018. SPMAGTF-CR-CC Marines regularly support Task Force Spartan, whose mission is to advise and assist Iraqi forces in the Ramadi area. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Gabino Perez)

A Marine in the Infantry Officer Course yells at another marine to keep suppressing fire during a live fire training exercise at Range 410A aboard the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif., June 9, 2018. The Purpose of IOC is to train and educate newly selected infantry and ground intelligence officers in leadership, infantry skills, character required to serve as infantry platoon commanders in the operating forces. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. William Chockey)



U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Giovanni Milan, center, a motor transport operator with 9th Communication Battalion, I Marine Expeditionary Force Information Group flips a tire during the tire flipping challenge at the I MIG field meet at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., June 8, 2018. The field meet consisted of various competitive events constructed to build team work, motivation and esprit de corps between all units under I MIG. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Allison Bak)



# Intelligence Oversight Division

**MISSION:** To ensure the effective implementation of Marine Corps-wide Oversight of Intelligence, Counterintelligence, Sensitive activities (to include USMC support to law enforcement agencies, special operations, and security matters), and special Access Programs. To establish policy and ensure their legality, propriety and regulatory compliance with appropriate Department of Defense/ Department of the Navy guidance.

Examples of sensitive activities include:

- Military support to Civil Authorities
- Lethal support/training to non-USMC agencies
- CONUS off-base training
- Covered, clandestine, undercover activities
- Intelligence collection of information on U.S. persons

**SECNAVINST 5430.57G** states:

"...personnel bearing USMC IG credentials marked 'Intelligence Oversight/Unlimited Special Access' are certified for access to information and spaces dealing with intelligence and sensitive activities, compartmented and special access programs, and other restricted access programs in which DON participates. When performing oversight of such programs pursuant to Executive Order, they shall be presumed to have a 'need to know' for access to information and spaces concerning them."

## **WHAT IS INTELLIGENCE OVERSIGHT?**

Intelligence Oversight ensures that intelligence personnel shall not collect, retain, or disseminate information about U.S. persons unless done in accordance with specific guidelines, proper authorization, and within only specific categories ([See References](#)).

## **DEFINITIONS**

- INTELLIGENCE OVERSIGHT (IO):** Ensures that intelligence personnel shall not collect, retain, or disseminate information about U.S. persons unless done in accordance with specific guidelines, proper authorization, and within only specific categories. References: E.O. 12333, **DoDM 5240.01**, **DoD Reg 5240.1-R**, **DoDD 5148.13 SECNAVINST 3820.3E**, **MCO 3800.2B**
- SENSITIVE ACTIVITY OVERSIGHT:** Any activity requiring special protection from disclosure which could embarrass compromise or threaten the DON. Any activity which, if not properly executed or administered, could raise issues of unlawful conduct, government ethics, or unusual danger to DON personnel or property. These activities may include support to civilian law enforcement. Reference: **SECNAVINST 5000.34F**
- SPECIAL ACTIVITIES OVERSIGHT:** As defined by Executive Order 12333, activities conducted in support of national foreign policy objectives abroad which are planned and executed so that the role of the United States Government is not apparent or acknowledged publicly, and functions in support of such activities, but which are not intended to influence United States political processes, public opinion, policies or media, and do not include diplomatic activities or the collection and production of intelligence or related support activities. Reference: **SECNAVINST 5000.34F**
- SPECIAL ACCESS PROGRAM (SAP):** Any Program imposing need-to-know or access controls beyond those normally required for Confidential, Secret or Top Secret information. Such a program includes but is not limited to a special clearance, more stringent adjudication or investigation requirements; special designation of officials authorized to determine need-to-know; or special lists of persons determined to have a need-to-know. A special access program may be a sensitive activity.
- QUESTIONABLE ACTIVITIES:** Any conduct that may constitute a violation of applicable law, treaty, regulation or policy.