I Think We’ve Got It!

Making maneuver warfare happen
by Col Michael D. Wyly, USMC(Ret)

Gen William F. Mullen III nailed it! His article in the July 2020 Gazette, “Reinvigorating Maneuver Warfare,” simply and succinctly clarifies for all ranks and specialties the “finishing touches” that will secure our Corps’ place as the world’s most formidable and effective fighting force. And, most importantly, keep our country strong and free. Gen Mullen has laid it out. Now it is up to the rest of us to make it happen. And when I say the rest of “us,” I mean from four-star general down to and including the Marines in the fire teams.

All MOSs are important, but all must focus on the fighting Marine who will close with the enemy. It is what we are about. Gen Mullen distills dimensions of readiness down to three:

1. Training: Coaching, teaching, and mentoring.
2. Assignments: Filling combat leadership positions and keeping them stable.
3. Testing: Ensure competence in all assigned to combat jobs (i.e., jobs confronting the enemy in combat), fire team through MAGTF.

This means that all Marines must make its their top priority every hour of every day to enable, encourage, and force the aforementioned three functions to be competently and energetically implemented, 24/7!

Now it is up to all of us, top generals down to first tour after Boot Camp, together even with civilian administrators if they are to keep their jobs, to place the focus sharply and acutely where Gen Mullen has laid the keel.

During the ten-year period between 1979 to 1989, we debated and developed the concept. Now, 31 years later, precisely and succinctly, Gen Mullen finds the key to make it permanent—and real. Read his article and re-read it. Follow it. If you do not understand, write Gen Mullen a letter. Ask him. He has got it!

All the work that Gen Alfred M. Gray did in the early experiments in maneuver warfare will come to bear in terms of real readiness—and when implemented on the battlefield, victory.