

The Human Resource Development Process and Manpower Modernization

Why and how it affects us all

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The Marine Corps makes Marines and wins the nation's battles. We are the first to fight, the Nation's force-in-readiness, and the persistent inside contact-layer force. We do this with what we have, not always with what we want. We accomplish our mission

of the way we *do* manpower through an effort known as Manpower Modernization. To best understand why and how M&RA is modernizing manpower, it is imperative to first understand what manpower is and the constraints and realities governing all manpower proposals.

or at least thinks they do. How hard can it be to have the 180,000 Marines needed today, tomorrow, and the next day? True, we all know some aspects of manpower—MARADMINs, reenlistment packages, our monitors—but what is manpower, really? The reality is that every Marine is manpower, but most of us have very little understanding of why and how we got here.

Manpower is Marines and planning for Marines. It is planning for those who have yet to step on the yellow footprints, planning for and sustaining those currently in uniform, and taking care of those Marines who came before us. Think of manpower as the lifecycle of a Marine: we were all recruited; we all went through boot camp or The Basic School; we were all assigned and trained in a MOS; we all received orders to some unit after MOS school; we all get evaluated; nearly all of us have been promoted at least once; many of us have exercised the option to be retained; we all separate or retire at some point; and almost every one of us receive some subsequent benefit after we separate. This cycle is continuous and ever evolving to the needs of the Marine Corps. M&RA plans, executes, and owns this cycle, and these *needs of the Marine Corps* are the institutional capabilities and requirements represented as structure.²

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in any clime and place because we are Marines. In short, the Marine Corps has always been and will always be about the individual Marine, and we at Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA) fully understand this.¹

Force Design necessitates we evolve the way we *do* manpower—from how we plan to how we retain and everything in between. Our policies, processes, systems, and technologies must enable and reflect the force we need to fight tonight and sustain the fight tomorrow. Aligned with the Commandant's *Force Design 2030* vision and top priorities, the Deputy Commandant (DC) for M&RA directed his Marines to challenge, analyze, and validate every aspect

“Leaders must have a strong sense of the great responsibility of their office; the resources they will expend in war are human lives.”

—MCDP 1 Warfighting

**Part I. What is Manpower?
*The Lifecycle of a Marine***

Every Marine knows manpower—

Needs of the Marine Corps and the HRDP

Structure drives manpower; therefore, manpower is a byproduct of structure. To put it simply, M&RA develops, sustains, assigns, and retains Marines to the requirements established at Combat Development and Integration (CD&I). Marines are accessed, assigned an MOS, sent to a unit, promoted, and retained based on structure. Marines exist because the Marine Corps has a need for the individual; when those needs change, M&RA adjusts accordingly

fighting organizations such as Marine Littoral Regiments, demands more highly-trained and multi-functional Marines, and requires new capabilities and equipment in support of the naval force. As an end state, *Force Design 2030* creates a smaller, more lethal warfighting force capable of operating inside an adversary's weapons engagement zone.⁵ CD&I captures these requirement changes and decisions in the Authorized Strength Report (ASR) and gives it to M&RA to build and assign Marines to the requirement.⁶ From an

promotion, and modifies retention actions for a cohort produced three years prior. The following summarizes how requirement changes impact the life-cycle of a Marine and why the HRDP needs time to adjust:

- *Accessions.* M&RA (Manpower Plans, Programs, and Budget [MPP]) provides MCRC its annual accession mission. MCRC has an entire FY to recruit and ship new accessions and begins each FY with an objective of 50 percent start pool based on requirements communicated by MPP.⁹ Furthermore, MPP provides MCRC that specific accession mission—and adjusts it—based on future requirements defined by CD&I and end strength requirements funded by Congress. Modifications to the accession mission create friction in MCRC's shipping pool and may impact their ability to make mission.

- *Entry-Level Training.* M&RA (MPP) provides TECOM with the entry-level training school seat requirements necessary to meet MOS structure requirements through a document known as the Training Input Plan (TIP). An increase in structure and change in capability may impact TECOM's ability to meet MOS production requirements and subsequently increase Marines Awaiting Training (MAT). Over 60 percent of the Marine Corps' MOS Schools are taught by sister Services and require a Training Input Plan submission two FYs in advance. In the case of structure increases, TECOM must request additional school seats—which the sister Services are not obliged to provide—while providing additional instructors proportionate to student throughput (consequently realigning those instructor billets to TECOM from the FMF and supporting establishment). Failing to allow time to realign additional school seats and instructors reduces course capacity and manifests itself in MAT, thereby increasing the time to train and impacting combat readiness by delaying the time a Marine is assigned to a Marine Corps unit in his new MOS.

- *Assignments.* M&RA (MM) assigns Marines to the requirements

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(e.g., development of newer capabilities such as cyber, or divested capabilities such as tanks). The single greatest challenge of manpower is the time it takes to make the necessary adjustments within an environment constrained by law, budget, and policy (expanded on at the end of Part I).

Marines are a product of the Human Resource Development Process (HRDP). Imbued with a talent management framework, the HRDP is the process to attract, retain, and develop Marines in order to increase warfighting readiness and maximize individual potential.³ The HRDP enables M&RA to adjust to changes in structure. DC M&RA owns the HRDP in coordination with DC CD&I, Commanding General (CG) Training and Education Command (TECOM), CG Marine Corps Recruiting Command (MCRC), and MOS Sponsors.⁴ HRDP stakeholders work congruously to execute this cycle, with the actions of any one stakeholder impacting the others. *Force Design 2030* is a cogent illustration of this concept in practice.

Force Design 2030 changes the way the Marine Corps doctrinally fights. *Force Design 2030* creates new war-

HRDP perspective, this means potentially recruiting differently (e.g., more low-altitude air defense Marines and less military police); adapting MOS training pipeline by modifying, eliminating, or creating MOS school houses (e.g., infantry, tankers, and UAS). Promotion and retention plans adjust to fill these newly increased or reduced boat space requirements (e.g., aviation mechanics). Marines are assigned to new units (e.g., Marine Littoral Regiments) and units that are no longer necessary are retired (e.g., tank battalions). The HRDP is designed to adapt to strategic changes, and making these adjustments the right way takes time—three years to be exact.⁷

Changes to structure and skill qualifications that take place inside of three years force M&RA to become reactionary and negate deliberate planning.⁸ In accordance with CD&I's *MCO 5311.1E*, M&RA strives to fill published requirements three fiscal years (FY) from the year of execution in order to allow adequate time to recruit, assign MOSs, train, and promote a cohort of Marines to that requirement. An abrupt change disrupts MOS equilibrium by placing friction on an already stressed entry-level training continuum, impacts

based on the number of requisitely qualified and available Marines in a respective MOS. Depending on the scope, an increase in structure and capability change impacts the assignments process if there are not enough qualified Marines to fill the new requirements. Furthermore, approximately sixteen percent of all Marines are in a trainees, transients, patients, and prisoners status at any given time and are not assignable against ASR requirements. In coordination with CD&I, M&RA may need to prioritize the staffing of units, which ultimately impacts overall institutional combat readiness. Moreover, Marines in unhealthy MOSs may not be allowed the opportunity to attend resident PME or fill “8006/8014” MOS billets, which may not only negatively impact their career progression but may also impact Marines in other MOSs by demanding them to fill another MOS’s billet requirements.¹⁰ When the requirements change, monitors have to find the right Marines with the right timing to fill the *needs of the Marine Corps* while accounting for individual preferences and skill sets.

- **Promotion.** M&RA (MPP and MM) develops and executes promotion plans to CD&I’s requirement. Promotion zones or rates are based on many factors: structure requirements, projected retention rates, MOS health, time-in-service and time-in-grade requirements, etc. A change in structure within a three-year window generates significant skill and grade mismatches because the current inventory must satisfy the time-in-grade and time-in-service requirements for promotion. A structure increase may yield a reduction in quality because M&RA must promote Marines to fill the requirement who may not have otherwise been promoted; conversely, a structure decrease yields a highly competitive MOS. This is why promotion zones change or why some Marines promote faster in certain MOSs than others.

- **Retention.** M&RA (MPP and MM) also develops and executes retention plans to CD&I’s requirement. M&RA’s job is to ensure there are

enough Marines to execute the Marine Corps’ missions. Furthermore, because the Marine Corps is an All-Volunteer Force, M&RA must account for human behavior and retention choices of every Marine. Similar to promotion impacts, a structure increase may necessitate retaining lower quality Marines in order to maintain MOS health (a structure decrease has the opposite effect). In addition, structure growth inside of three years impacts the Selective Retention Bonus program and may require additional incentive funding to satisfy new requirements. This is why available boat spaces can change from year to year, why only certain Marines are offered bonuses and incentives, and why authorized redesignations and lateral moves can vary by MOS and rank depending on the FY—or in some cases, the time of year.

The core of the HRDP is timeless and continuous because the lifecycle of a Marine is timeless and continuous. It is complex and dynamic. Marines exist because there is a requirement to exist, and M&RA is already planning (MPP) and executing plans (MM) for those Marines the Marine Corps needs now and well into the future. However, as

stated previously, M&RA must evolve the way we *do* manpower and do so within law, DOD policy, Department of the Navy policy, and budget constraints

Quality, Quantity, and Affordability

Manpower is governed by law, policy, budget, and our warfighting culture. The Marine Corps recruits, develops, and retains the best possible force within existing constraints (see Figure 1).

Title 10 regulates multiple factors such as Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA), Time-in-Service flow points, and service composition and function; the DOD and Department of the Navy stipulate certain manpower policies and guidelines; and Congress determines annual end strength and budget in the National Defense Authorization Act. The Marine Corps is not only an All-Volunteer Force that is subject to American human, social, and economic dynamics, but must also simultaneously compete with the other Services and the economy for those volunteers. Governed and constrained by these factors, all manpower proposals must balance quality, quantity, and affordability of the Force.

Per the *Commandant’s Planning Guidance* and other strategic Service

The 2030 Marine Corps In a <u>unconstrained</u> environment...	The 2030 Marine Corps In a <u>constrained</u> environment...
Every Marine is highly skilled and experienced	Every Marine is tactically and technically proficient IAW requisite rank, training, and experience
Every Marine provides a high ROI to the institution	Every Marine is accessed and retained IAW institutional requirements and demonstrated performance/potential
Every Marine is physically, mentally, psychologically, and emotionally fit regardless of rank or experience	Every Marine’s fitness is requisite to rank, training, and experience IAW warfighting needs of the Marine Corps
Every Marine is a careerist	The Marine Corps is an All Volunteer Force and retention is subject to requirements determined by CD&I and human, social, and economic dynamics
The Marine Corps has an unconstrained budget	Marines are expensive [Annual composite rates: ¹¹ LCpl (\$58K), SSgt (\$108K), 1stLt (\$129K), and Maj (\$193K)]
The Marine Corps can replace a SSgt with the same effectiveness and efficiency as a LCpl	It takes time to make experienced Marines (LCpl vs SSgt)

Figure 1. The unconstrained vs constrained 2030 Marine Corps.

documents, the Marine Corps must change and adapt in order to be organized, trained, and equipped for great power competition and to maintain a strategic advantage over a peer competitor.¹² The *Commandant's Planning Guidance* and *Force Design 2030* opened the institutional aperture on what manpower could, should, and must be. Both senior and junior Marines alike were provided the opportunity and encouraged to systematically (and systemically) challenge our manpower systems and policies for the purpose of taking care of our institution's greatest resource. M&RA welcomed and embraced that challenge and is already evolving to meet the demands of the 2030 Marine Corps through its Manpower Modernization efforts.

"We must be prepared to adapt to changing circumstances and exploit opportunities as they arise, rather than adhering insistently to predetermined plans that outlived their usefulness."

—MCDP 1, Warfighting

Part II. Manpower Modernization Defined

Adaptation and Exploitation

The scope and implementation speed of *Force Design* requires new capabilities and highly-trained Marines in a relatively short amount of time, effectually outpacing the HRDP's ability to generate combat readiness in some critical MOSs. Manpower Modernization is DC M&RA's course of action to meet the challenges and demands of the 2030 Marine Corps. The DC's intent is to "set M&RA on a trajectory that leverages future technologies, our experts, and our service culture that advances the HRDP into a future system that is flexible, re-

sponsive, efficient, and above all, effective in how to man tomorrow's force."¹³

Guided by strategic direction and our warfighting philosophy, Manpower Modernization balances centralized oversight with decentralized execution. The end state is a transparent, collaborative, forward-leaning, data-driven, and commander-focused system that provides individual Marines the opportunity to develop and utilize their abilities to effectively serve in order to provide a combat ready FMF. To meet this 2030 end state, all modernization efforts must be infused with talent management at the core.

Talent Management

Every manpower initiative and effort is founded on talent management principles. *MCO 5250.1* recently codified the institutional definition of talent management as:

the institutionally faithful and transparent manpower processes and policies, from recruitment through separation or retirement, where each Marine is provided the opportunity, mentorship, and guidance to develop and utilize their individual abilities and continue to effectively serve, based upon their demonstrated performance and future potential, in accordance with the needs of the Marine Corps.¹⁴

Though a relatively new phrase, talent management exists at every level of war and has underscored manpower processes and policies for generations of Marines. *MCO 5210.1* details the six guiding principles of talent management listed below, many of which are commonly known by all Marines:

- Every Marine a Rifleman.
- The needs of the Marine Corps are paramount.
- "Best and fully qualified" is the foundation of the promotion model.
- Field Grade Officers are MAGTF experts.
- SNCOs provide advice, technical expertise, and oversee the development, welfare, and morale of the whole Marine.
- Every Marine has equal opportunity to excel, regardless of race, gender, creed, or sexual orientation but ultimate outcome is based upon

individual talent, work ethic, perseverance, performance, potential, and leadership abilities.

When stated simply, talent management is an amalgamation of our eleven leadership principles and fourteen leadership traits. Shaped by this definition and guiding principles, M&RA will use three lines of operation to continue to provide commanders the tools they need to effectively develop and utilize their Marines to maintain a combat-ready force.

Manpower Modernization Lines of Operation (LOO)

LOO #1: Evolve the HRDP. This is the cornerstone of Manpower Modernization. As already described in Part I, the HRDP is the process by which we attract, retain, and develop Marines to the stated requirement. To represent this HRDP *lifecycle*, LOO #1 is divided into seven lines of effort (LOE): planning, accessions, assignments, evaluations, retention, promotions, and separations and retirement. The following lists these LOEs and provides a few examples of initiatives for each:

- *LOE #1: Planning.* Planning involves coordination between HRDP stakeholders to achieve accession, training, staffing, retention, and promotion structure requirements in accordance with budget, end strength, and rank composition constraints published in law and policy. This LOE includes initiatives such as publishing *MCO 5250.1*, *HRDP Order*, developing HRDP plans from draft ASRs, implementing the Command Individual Risk and Resiliency Assessment System (CIRRAS), validating both initial enlistment and reenlistment contract lengths, optimizing our recruit shipping model, and analyzing the timelines for boards and ASR release dates.
- *LOE #2: Accessions.* Accessions is defined as the process by which Marines are recruited, assigned MOSs, and complete all entry-level training requirements. This LOE includes initiatives such as assignment incentive pay offered to critical skill MOSs, implementing the Criteria Cognitive Aptitude Test and Tailored Adaptive Personality Assessment System, explor-

ing other incentives for special skills, analyzing the impact of increasing AFQT and GT scores, and exploring boot camp leave.

- **LOE #3: Assignments.** M&RA uses the assignments process to optimally distribute institutional manpower requirements and career progression opportunities for every Marine.¹⁵ This LOE includes initiatives such as the Talent Management Engagement Platform, duty station incentives as part of reenlistment, incurring a 24 month service obligation for SNCOs, offering female Marines a Return to Active Duty in previously closed MOSs and units, examining FMF staffing policies and ability to conduct in-stride replacements during deployments, assessing the Career Planner structure and training continuum with the addition of the Commander's Retention Model, determining MOS career paths for specialized MOSs, and revising the Assignment, Classification, and Travel Systems Manual where necessary.

- **LOE #4: Evaluations.** Evaluations are the primary means for capturing a Marine's performance to select the best qualified personnel for promotion, augmentation, retention, resident schooling, command, and duty assignments.¹⁶ This LOE includes initiatives such as implementing observed academic evaluations for officers; implementing the Junior Enlisted Performance Evaluation System to replace the legacy proficiency and conduct markings system; and a comprehensive review of the Fitness Report system.

- **LOE #5: Retention.** M&RA develops retention plans to retain the most qualified force to support the structure requirements. This LOE includes initiatives such as implementing Enlisted Career Retention Boards for over-submitted MOSs, aviation bonuses and incentive pays, early reenlistments for high performing Marines, examining monetary and alternative retention incentives; implementing the CG's Retention Program, implementing major subordinate command retention quotas for under-submitted MOSs, and updating the Career Intermission Program and parental leave policies.

- **LOE #6: Promotions.** The promo-

tion system provides a process whereby Marines compete within each grade for promotion to the next grade.¹⁷ This process seeks to ensure a highly qualified force to support the structure requirements. This LOE includes initiatives such as Mature the Force, merit reorder, removing photographs from boardrooms, implementing changes in promotion laws, including standardized MOS briefs in boards, and reviewing the *Marine Corps Promotion Manual*.

- **LOE #7: Separations and Retirement.** This process ensures Marines are able to effectively transition from Marine Corps in accordance with applicable policies, directives, and laws. This LOE includes initiatives such as updating the *Marine Corps Separations Manual*, implementing the Relief for Cause order, and reviewing other Marine Corps Orders.

LOO #2: Manpower Information Systems Modernization. A critical enabler across the entire Manpower Modernization effort, this LOO connects manpower data, systems, and models. Many of our current manpower systems and models operate independently and in isolation from one another—though all of our planning and execution is inter-dependent. This LOO supports the development of all manpower plans (accession, retention, training, etc.) and manpower management models (staffing goal models, assignment models, etc.) by enabling M&RA to rapidly adapt policies and actions to changes in requirements, budget, and human behavior. LOO #2 is organized into the following three lines of effort:

- **LOE #1: Data Management.** This LOE enables access to the total suite of integrated manpower tools by sharing a common, streamlined, interconnected data source stored and secured in the cloud.

- **LOE #2: Modeling.** This LOE connects all models across the HRDP, ensures the models have access to all required data, and reduces manual inputs and propensity for human error.

- **LOE #3: Analytics.** This LOE supports predictive analytics in our manpower modeling and assignment capability through the use of artificial

intelligence and machine learning.

LOO #3: Personnel Administration Modernization (01XX). This LOO specifically examines the Manpower MOS community writ large through: improving automation by incorporating the use of technology in administrative functions; and realigning administrative personnel to the commander. For example, a LOO #2 initiative is to develop a mobile administrative application that allows Marines to check into their new units using their smart phones (i.e., "IPAC on your smart phone"). Additionally, this application would not only allow Marines to access MOL in this manner but also conduct administrative functions such as submitting reenlistment packages and Marine evaluations. With this improvement in automation, the manpower and administrative community is examining how to realign administrative personnel to commanders to ensure all required functions are executed effectively and efficiently.

**"There are two basic military functions: waging war and preparing for war."
—MCDP 1, Warfighting**

Part III. The Importance of Modernizing Manpower

Force Design 2030 is not the first structural reorganization the Marine Corps has undergone, and it will definitely not be the last. Manpower Modernization may be in direct support of *Force Design 2030*, but it is also in preparation for future national security environments and needs. With *Force Design 2030* being implemented in phases and the changes happening at the scope and rate that they are, we have all felt—and will continue to feel—the challenges of the HRDP adapting within the constraints and required timelines.

Our warfighting philosophy demands we outthink, outpace, and outmaneuver our enemy, and M&RA is

committed to ensuring our manpower plans, policies, and enablers are relevant and able to improve our ability to adapt, respond, and predict—essentially enabling us to “fight smart.”¹⁸ After all, the Marine Corps has always been and will always be about the individual Marine, and we at M&RA fully understand this.

From the DC to the Action Officer, M&RA is seeking holistic self-improvement because we recognize the time is now to exploit all opportunities and resources to remain relevant and effective in accomplishing our mission and taking care of Marines. These modernization efforts will take time—some longer than others. They must be pragmatic, effective, to be appropriately resourced to build and sustain a combat ready FMF.

Notes

1. Headquarters Marine Corps, *FMFM 1-0, Leading Marines*, (Washington, DC: January 1995); and Gen David H. Berger, *38th Commandant’s Planning Guidance*, (Washington, DC: July 2019).
2. The terms “requirement,” “capability,” and “structure” are interrelated.
3. *MCO 52’50.1, Human Resource Development Process*, provides a detailed description of the HRDP.
4. Per *MCO 5311.1E, Total Force Structure Process*, MOS sponsors are responsible for force structure requirements, recommending MOS grade structure, reviewing and ensuring accuracy of MOS manuals, etc.
5. Gen David H. Berger, *Force Design 2030*, (Washington, DC: March 2020).
6. Per *MCO 5311.1E*, the ASR is a reflection of how many Marine billets (i.e., T/O) the Marine Corps can afford to buy and is normally published in February and August of each year.
7. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCO 5311.1E, Total Force Structure Process*, (Washington, DC: November 2015).
8. Structure growth places significantly more strain on the HRDP than structure divestment, especially if that growth is in more senior ranks (i.e., on average, it takes ten years to develop a SNCO and field grade officer; it may only take a year or two to separate, retire, or laterally move the same).
9. MCRC recruits enlisted Marines by Program Enlisted For (PEF) code and officers by contract type (ground, air, law, and cyber).
10. An unhealthy MOS is defined as an MOS having less than 85 percent of the Marines needed to fill overall structure requirements.
11. Annual composite rates are average pay rates calculated annually by the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) and used when determining the military personnel appropriations cost for budget/management studies. The rates include: average basic pay plus retired pay accrual, basic allowance for subsistence, basic allowance for housing, incentive and special pay, permanent change of station expenses, and miscellaneous pay (from FY21 DOD Military Personnel Composite Standard and Reimbursement Rates Memorandum dated May 2020).
12. *38th Commandant’s Planning Guidance*; and Gen David H. Berger, *CMC’s Top Priorities*, (Washington, DC: December 2020).
13. DC M&RA Initial Guidance Memorandum (3 Aug 2020).
14. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCO 5250.1, Human Resource Development Process*, (Washington, DC: March 2021).
15. *Ibid.*
16. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCO P1610.7F, Ch2 Performance Evaluation System*, (Washington, DC: June 2009).
17. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCO P1400.32D Ch2*, (Washington, DC: February 2009).
18. Headquarters Marine Corps, *MCDP-1, Warfighting*, (Washington, DC: June 1997).

