

STATEMENT BY

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Chairman Snyder, Ranking Member Wittman, distinguished sub-committee members. Good afternoon. Thank you for permitting me to discuss Professional Military Education (PME) within the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps is very proud of the programs, students, and staff and faculty associated with PME. Graduates of our institutions are more prepared than ever to assume positions of increased responsibility. The critical components of PME are students, faculty, and curricula and I am pleased to report that all three of these components are extremely strong within your Marine Corps. We have identified deficiencies in facilities and infrastructure and are working diligently to improve these two areas. This testimony will address students, faculty, and curricula in the context of the questions raised in your letter of invitation.

### **Policy and Authority**

The policy framework and authority for Marine Corps Professional Military Education (PME) are contained in Marine Corps Order 1553.4B. This order forms the basis of the Marine Corps' PME system and states that PME is a career long study of the foundations of the military profession, designed to equip Marines with the analytical skills necessary to exercise sound military judgment in contemporary operations. The Marine Corps PME program is a progressive learning system designed to educate Marines by-grade throughout their careers. Participation in this program is an institutional expectation. The program consists of resident instruction, distance education, professional self-study, and The Marine Corps Professional Reading Program.

MCO 1553.4B designates the President of Marine Corps University (MCU) as the PME advocate for the Marine Corps and charges him to “develop, implement, and monitor policies and programs in order to maintain the relevance of the PME continuum, keep the force educated, and ensure the goals are accomplished.” We have been very fortunate to have great leaders, including the

current Commandant of the Marine Corps, to fulfill this mission and strengthen the number and quality of PME programs.

The lines of authority for PME within the Marine Corps are clear and concise. The President of MCU is also dual-hatted as the Commander of Education Command. Education Command and Training Command form Training and Education Command (TECOM), located at Quantico, VA. TECOM falls directly under the Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration, also at Quantico. Since the Deputy Commandant works directly for the Commandant of the Marine Corps, this provides a concise, well-structured line of authority.

### **Purpose and Mission of Resident USMC PME**

USMC PME develops the professional competence of its Marine, other service, international, and civilian students through a comprehensive series of progressive programs. Graduates are prepared to perform with increased effectiveness in service, joint and multinational environments at the tactical, operational and strategic levels of war, as well as in crises ranging from humanitarian assistance to combat. This education is accomplished through appropriate curricula using lectures, seminars, symposia, practical exercises, case studies and independent study led by a competent academic and professional faculty augmented by distinguished visiting scholars and senior government officials.

The vision of world-class resident PME programs can be traced to several leaders of USMC education. Brigadier General Breckinridge, the 1934 Commandant of Marine Corps Schools (the precursor to Marine Corps University), articulated his goals for his PME students, "I do not want such a person to be hammered down by narrowness and dogmas: to have their mind cramped by compulsory details. It is my constant ambition to see the Marine

officers filled with ambition, initiative, and originality; and they can get these attributes only by liberality of thought – broad thought – thought that differs from precedent and the compulsory imprint of others.” This thoughtful passage provides the foundation for our current philosophy for PME.

General Al Gray’s philosophy on education mirrored that of Brigadier General Breckinridge and in 1988 testimony before the House Armed Services Committee posited that PME should “...teach military judgment rather than knowledge. Knowledge is of course important for developing judgment, but should be taught in the context of teaching military judgment, not as material to be memorized.” In addition to providing his philosophy on the purpose of PME, General Gray very specifically addresses what should be taught in a PME institution. He indicates, “...the material should grow more complex...” as the Marine student progresses through the various PME schoolhouses. Additionally, he states “History should be used to teach officers military judgment, not to make academic historians or simply teach facts.” He also states, “The focus of effort should be teaching through doing, through case studies, historical and present-day, real and hypothetical; presented in war games, map exercises, sand table exercises, free-play, force-on-force “three day wars” and the like.”

The vision of these two giants of education forms the basis of USMC PME. The Marine Corps fully supports these views and has embraced the educational goal of developing innovative, critical military thinkers skilled in both the art and science of war. Learning outcomes and programs have been developed and vetted that provide progressive educational framework where the material grows more complex as the student progresses through the courses of instruction offered at the PME schoolhouses of Expeditionary Warfare School (EWS), Command and Staff College (CSC), and the Marine Corps War College (MCWAR) at Marine Corps University.

General Gray's desire to use the study of history as the conduit through which students develop the capacity to be creative, innovative military thinkers inspired Command and Staff College to include that concept within its mission statement: "Informed by the study of history and culture, CSC educates and trains its joint, multinational, and interagency professionals in order to produce skilled warfighting leaders able to overcome diverse 21<sup>st</sup> century security challenges." All of the MCU's colleges and schools use the study of history as the backdrop for evaluating military operations from tactical, operational, and strategic perspectives; developing innovative warfighting tactics and strategies; analyzing the influence of the Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic (DIME) components on operational success; and integrating the joint and interagency components of successful military operations, among others. For instance, MCWAR uses the historical study of WWI and II, the Cold War, Malaya, the Vietnam War, North Korea, Iraq, and China to investigate the development of strategy using various models which include the alignment of ends, ways and means to achieve military/political victory. Likewise, Command and Staff College's Culture and Interagency Operations block of instruction studies Imperial Warfare in Africa, the Philippine Insurrection, the Huk Rebellion, WWI and II, Afghanistan and other historical eras and battles to develop students who are able to analyze foreign cultures and the instruments of U.S. national power in terms of their role in combating insurgency and terrorism within today's contemporary security challenges. Expeditionary Warfare School, like the other schoolhouses, uses the study of history as the mechanism for developing student analytical skills. Through its Battle Studies component of the curriculum, EWS presents historical case studies of the Chosin Reservoir, Guadalcanal, Normandy and Operation OVERLORD, Fallujah, Gallipoli, Inchon, the Falklands, and Okinawa. Throughout the University, student emphasis is on the development of critical analysis skills using the historical case study approach, informed by theory and doctrine.

General Gray's call to utilize "...case studies, historical and present-day, real and hypothetical; presented in war games, map exercises, ...force-on-force "three day wars" and the like" is also fully embraced. Each PME schoolhouse utilizes the delivery methods General Gray espouses. For example, in addition to the War College's case study approach to the study of history, following 14 days of planning, MCWAR participates in a capstone 6-day multi-war college Joint Land Aerospace Sea Simulation (JLASS) exercise at Maxwell AFB in which sister service war colleges conduct a simulated exercise with emphasizes interagency cooperation. In the JLASS exercise, MCWAR plays the role of both Northern Command and Southern Command Headquarters. The other PME colleges also use hands-on exercises as a teaching construct. Within its Warfighting From The Sea block of instruction, Command and Staff College includes Barbary Dagger, Pacific Challenge, COIN Exercise, Catastrophic & Disruptive Exercise and the capstone Nine Innings wargaming exercises. Expeditionary Warfare School also extensively utilizes case study and practical application exercises such as its Command and Control 17-hour Hopewell Gap Recon Exercise, MAGTF BARBARY DREADNOUGHT 36-hour exercise, Current Operations 24-hour exercise, and NATIVE FURY Maritime Pre-Positioning Force 8.5-hour exercise, among many others.

USMC PME provides a unique opportunity for selected students to immerse themselves in a study of their profession. Today's environment is constantly changing, thus requiring leaders to be able to rapidly adapt and solve complex problems at lower and lower levels. USMC PME provides some solutions to problems, but more importantly, it focuses on "how to think." Critical thinking is more important than ever in the development of our leaders. This is best accomplished through reading, reflecting, writing, discussions with others, case studies, and practical exercises. The seminar format and Socratic Method of instruction at our PME institutions reinforces the value of critical thinking and creative problem solving.

## Achieving the Objectives

USMC PME programs are producing graduates who are extremely well prepared to meet the challenges of complex Service, joint, and multinational requirements. As requirements change, so do the curricula of the educational institutions. A series of internal and external assessments ensure that the curricula are meeting the needs of the operating forces and providing students with the education they need, and demand.

MCO 1553.4B has established a set of objectives and measurements to assess the effectiveness of the PME experience. The objectives are: develop officers educated and skilled in the employment of combat forces and the conduct of war; develop officers with the knowledge and critical thinking skills to analyze situations, in an environment of ambiguity and uncertainty, then make sound decisions in progressively more demanding positions; develop officers whose professional backgrounds and military education will improve the operational excellence of both single-service and joint military forces throughout the spectrum of war; and develop strategic thinkers and operational level warfighters that excel in the application of MAGTF combat power throughout the spectrum of conflict. Each academic year graduates and reporting seniors are asked how well the USMC PME system is meeting the above stated objectives. Below are the results from the most recent survey:

- Graduates are educated and skilled in the employment of combat forces and the conduct of war  
Graduates – 96%                      Reporting Seniors – 100%
- Graduates have improved their critical thinking and analysis while attending USMC PME  
Graduates – 97%                      Reporting Seniors – 90%

- Graduates increased their ability to make complex decisions in demanding positions  
 Graduates – 96%                      Reporting Seniors – 100%
- USMC PME prepared graduates for operational excellence of both single-service and joint military forces throughout the spectrum of war  
 Graduates – 94%                      Reporting Seniors – 100%
- USMC PME develops strategic thinkers and operational level warfighters that excel in the application of MAGTF combat power throughout the spectrum of conflict  
 Graduates – 94%                      Reporting Seniors – 100%
- USMC PME experience prepared graduates for assignments of greater responsibility  
 Graduates – 94%
- Would recommend USMC PME attendance to their peers or subordinates  
 Graduates – 97%                      Reporting Seniors – 100%
- USMC PME improved student leadership skills  
 Graduates – 87%

These data illustrate that USMC PME is producing strategic thinkers, well-versed in critical thinking and complex problem solving.

### **Overall Officer and Civilian Development**

Within the Marine Corps, it is expected that all officers will complete their PME requirements, either through resident or non-resident means. Philosophically, the Corps believes completion of PME makes a Marine more

competitive for promotion because completion of each block of PME provides the Marine with the requisite warfighting skills, mental dexterity, and analytical ability to perform at the assigned level of leadership responsibility. Ideally, officers who demonstrate the ability to “make sound decisions in progressively more demanding positions” are promoted to the top leadership positions in the Corps. The Commandant of the Marine Corps emphasizes the importance of PME in his *Vision & Strategy 2025* when he states, “We must promote PME as a career-long activity...”

Resident officer PME opportunities in the Marine Corps consist of attendance at one of the three Marine Corps formal in-resident schoolhouses, attendance at an equivalent sister service or joint schoolhouse, or attendance at an approved Foreign Service schoolhouse. All three venues provide Marine Corps students the opportunity to develop their analytical abilities while honing their warfighting expertise. The interaction among foreign, sister service, agency, and Marine students within the same classroom (present in all three venues), fosters the development of strategic thinking across the broad spectrum of war, one of the goals of the PME program. Within the resident Marine Corps PME courses, the mix of host/non-host students is a mandated 60/40 ratio for the Senior Level PME schoolhouses, as articulated in the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 1800.01C. The 60/40 ration indicates no greater than 60% of the student body may be Marine or Navy students and no less than 40% of the students may be non-Marine/Navy students. This mandated mixture of students enables the Marine Corps to produce graduates who not only possess Marine Corps-specific warfighting skills, but also an expanded appreciation of the capabilities our sister service, agency, and allied cohorts bring to the fight.

The Marine Corps resident PME curricula are developed in a stair-step approach. The initial Career-Level resident (and non-resident) PME course for captains is the Expeditionary Warfare School, whose curriculum focuses on the

tactical level of war, with special emphasis on the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) operations. The following Intermediate Level PME course is Command and Staff College for majors with an emphasis on the operational level of war. The following Senior Level PME course is the Marine Corps War College for lieutenant colonels focusing on the strategic level of war. The stair-step approach to PME curricula content fosters the development of warfighting abilities and mental alacrity appropriate for students of a PME system designed to prepare graduates for the assumption of “progressively more demanding positions” within the operating forces.

Although this testimony specifically focuses on resident PME, it is important to note our progress in delivering quality PME through our distance education program, as it is the vehicle through which the majority of Marine officers receive PME. The Marine Corps commits significant resources to deliver quality distance education through the most modern means available. Our content is derived from and parallel to the resident curricula, and we have used current technology to put all students into collaborative seminars, whether in person or virtually. We have taken novel approaches which include a hybrid resident-non resident program that provides for half the student population to be international officers. The program has two resident phases of about six weeks, with 26 weeks of collaborative on-line seminar. The effectiveness of the program can be seen in the doubling of students in three years of experimentation, and expansion with Army and Air Force officers, as well as government civilians. Notably, this is the second year that Canada has committed eight active duty majors to participation in the program. I believe the effectiveness of our distance education program can be measured in that 28 of our non-resident students have been selected to participate in School of Advanced Warfighting (SAW) over the last five years. This accounts for almost a third of the total Marine officers selected for that very competitive program.

Resident professional Military Education provides limited opportunity for civilian leader development. DoD and interagency civilians attend our more senior programs, but throughput is inadequate to develop the entire civilian workforce. Therefore, Marine Corps University, in cooperation with Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA), will soon establish a series of progressive programs for civilians, very similar to those of the officer corps. These programs are particularly important as more and more civilians assume leadership positions within our Corps.

### **Selection Process for Student, Faculty, and Military Personnel on Senior Staff**

The Marine Corps fully recognizes that quality personnel are the key to rigorous, effective PME programs. All personnel actions are carefully screened to ensure the most qualified students attend resident education, the most qualified faculty develop and deliver the programs, and the most qualified leaders are selected to head our PME Programs.

All USMC students attending resident PME are selected by a board convened by M&RA. The board uses a non-biased process to select those officers who have demonstrated the highest levels of leadership and academic performance thus far in their career and possess the greatest potential for future service as senior leaders in our Corps. Appropriate numbers are also selected from each Military Occupational Specialty to ensure a representative combination of disciplines for classroom seminars. Other services use a similar process to select students to attend Marine Corps PME programs. Civilian and interagency students are selected based of established criteria similar to those of military students. These processes continue to select excellent students for all programs. Increasingly, students arrive at our programs with extensive operational experience. Students with OIF/OEF experience in our AY08-09 classes were as follows:

MCWAR – 11 out of 19 students (58%)  
SAW – 23 out of 24 students (96%)  
CSC – 158 out of 192 students (82%)  
EWS – 191 out of 237 students (81%)

These data are particularly significant in that the student totals include civilian and international students. At one time there was one line of thought that this high level of operational experience might cause students to be resistant to new ideas. That has not been the case. Today's students are very receptive to change, anxious to share their experiences, and to learn from the experiences of others.

Only the best military and civilian personnel are selected as faculty at our PME institutions. Desired credentials for our military faculty are as follows:

- MCWAR: O6, Top-level School complete, master's degree, Joint Qualified Officer, recent operational experience
- SAW: O6/O5, Top-level school complete, master's degree, recent operational experience
- CSC: O5, Top-level school desired, master's degree, recent operational experience, O5 command desired
- EWS: O5/O4, recent operational experience, company-level command, Intermediate Level School desired

Similar to the student demographics, the military faculty have extensive operational experience. The number of military faculty with OIF/OEF experience compared to the total number is as follows for each college/school:

MCWAR – 3 out of 4 faculty (75%)  
SAW – 2 out of 2 faculty (100%)  
CSC – 15 out of 19 faculty (79%)

EWS – 24 out of 25 faculty (96%)

This is particularly important in that our faculty must be able to relate to the experiences of their students. It is also important as a mechanism to ensure that our curricula are relevant and meet the needs of the operating force.

Marine Corps University, in cooperation with M&RA, has been very successful in identifying military faculty who have the requisite education, experience, and expertise to educate our future leaders. We are fortunate that MCU, TECOM, and M&RA are all located aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico, thus making face-to-face coordination a reality. In fact, MCU and M&RA discuss the assignment of all faculty for our PME programs. Each file is carefully reviewed to ensure potential faculty possesses the requisite skills, abilities, and attitude to educate our future leaders. Our military faculty represents the best the Marine Corps has to offer. Typically Quantico is not their terminal assignment. Because our requirements are stringent, faculty are continually selected for promotion, command, and follow-on assignment to demanding positions. Recently, CSC experienced an 88% turnover in its military faculty at the end of the academic year. However, we will accept the high turnover of military personnel, and associated faculty development, in order to provide the very best instruction to our students.

We demand high standards for our civilian faculty as well. Civilian faculty are selected via a board comprised of MCU faculty and leadership. Recommendations of the board are forwarded to the President of MCU who is the ultimate hiring authority under the provisions of Title 10, USC. Required credentials for civilian faculty include a terminal degree from a regionally accredited institution, education/teaching experience, evidence of scholarly research and publications, and familiarity with current national security issues. Desired credentials include an understanding of PME and familiarity with military policies and procedures. All current faculty possess these credentials. However,

Title 10 authority is limited to 10-month PME programs. This hiring authority is needed for PME programs that are less than 10 months in duration, but are offered several times throughout the year. This additional hiring authority will greatly enhance the quality of the faculty for critical programs.

Similar procedures are used to select senior civilian and military personnel to lead our USMC PME programs. Similar to military faculty, all school directors are selected based on their experience and expertise. Selection of the school directors is a nominative process with several general officers choosing from a list of highly competitive, accomplished Marine colonels. Directors of MCWAR, CSC, and EWS are required to have commanded in the grade of colonel, be a JQO, possess a master's degree, be a TLS graduate, and have recent operational experience. Stability of directors is generally good and they do not consider Quantico as their final assignment. Many receive additional tours based on promotion or assignment to other highly demanding positions –. In fact, the record of MCU school directors being promoted to brigadier general is superb. The last four directors of EWS have been selected for promotion to brigadier general. Three years ago the director of CSC was selected for promotion. Our schools are being led by the best of the Corps. Similarly, deans, or academic heads, are selected based on their record of scholarly accomplishment, educational credentials, and familiarity with national security issues. The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Deans of all degree producing schools have a terminal degree, record of excellence in education, and experience in national security issues.

The senior leadership of the Marine Corps carefully considers the selection of the President of MCU. From 1989 until 2004, the President of the University was an active duty brigadier general. Many future leaders in the Marine Corps including Gen James Conway, current Commandant of the Marine Corps, and Gen Peter Pace, recent Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, held this pivotal position. In 2004, MajGen (Ret) Donald Gardner was selected to lead

MCU and USMC PME. Gen Gardner's extensive experience in education, leadership, and history provided stability for five years during a period of transition for many programs. In 2009, MajGen Neller was selected to head MCU. In all cases, the selection was vetted with the highest level within the Marine Corps.

### **Role of PME in Future Assignments of Marine Officers**

As stated earlier, our resident PME students have already proven themselves to be among the top performers within their peer group and were selected to attend our service schools because of their demonstrated potential for greater service. Upon completion of the courses, our PME graduates are assigned to the most highly competitive billets in our operating forces, higher headquarters staffs and joint positions. Our officer assignment policies are governed by MCO P1300.8R and look to balance the needs of the Marine Corps, the particular circumstances of that officer's career path, and the individual desires of the officer. For example, if Major Jones served as a battalion executive officer prior to attending Command and Staff College, he/she would most likely be assigned to a joint billet. That officer would most certainly have the PMOS experiences at the rank of major and would be ready for a complex, demanding tour with the Joint Staff or COCOM HQ. If Major Jones had been assigned to one of our Recruit Training Depots prior to resident PME, he/she would most likely be assigned as a battalion/regiment staff officer upon completion of the course. Our officer assignments personnel strive to place our PME graduates into critical, demanding billets within our Corps and at external/joint commands. 10 U.S.C. 38 prescribes policies for Joint Duty Assignment List (JDAL) assignments and MCO P1300.8R recognizes the laws and guidelines governing joint duty assignments. If an officer is not PME complete, he/she is not competitive for a joint assignment and we would not nominate that officer to the gaining joint commander.

## **Decision Process for Significant Change**

Significant decisions within the Marine Corps are vetted through a variety of forums. Concepts and processes are usually discussed during General Officer Symposium involving all general officers and SESs, or during Executive Off-Sites involving only the Generals and Lieutenant Generals of the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps Requirements Oversight Council (MROC) is the forum where detailed discussion is held to resolve manning, budgetary, and command and control issues. The Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps chairs the MROC with membership from the offices of all deputy commandants. The relatively small size of the Marine Corps makes coordination somewhat easier than in many larger organizations. The decision to create Marine Corps University was the vision of General Al Gray, 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps. In July 1988, General Gray testified before the HASC and said, “Quantico will be the intellectual think tank of your Marine Corps.” A year later General Gray signed ALMAR 128/89 establishing Marine Corps University. He understood the importance of professional military education and clearly saw the need for an overarching structure to assist the individual schools in developing and delivering current, relevant curricula.

The Marine Corps also understands the need to be able to make significant changes in curricula in response to changing operational issues, feedback from the operating forces, and policy guidance. As an example, several years ago we recognized the need to integrate culture and language into the curricula of our schools. Because of the processes in place, streamline command structure, and small size of our organization, we were able to implement meaningful change to our programs in a very short timeframe. MCU has established processes to systematically review curricular content and student achievement of approved learning outcomes. Marine Corps University utilizes three main mechanisms for curricular review. The first is the Curriculum Review Board (CRB). The Curriculum Review Board is the University oversight

mechanism to direct long-range, strategic planning, coordination, and integration of the PME Continuum within the curricula of MCU. Course content and assessment data related to the accomplishment of established student learning outcomes are reviewed to ensure a progressive, systematic building-block approach is utilized throughout resident and distance education course development. The CRB reviews curricula, evaluates the incorporation of the PME Continuum within the programs of instruction, identifies linkages/gaps among the various MCU programs of instruction, and evaluates the academic rigor of the programs. The J-7 indicated MCU's CRB process will be marketed to the other PME institutions as a "best practice" to be emulated. Besides the CRB, the University conducts Course Content Review Boards (CCRB). In these internal academic reviews, faculty members who develop and teach the instructional programs analyze data from periodic student and faculty course surveys as well as results of CRB-approved assessment measures related to approved student learning outcomes. Faculty members also analyze feedback from surveys from graduates and their supervisors regarding the perceived relevance of the instruction presented in the course or sub-course. Finally, the Director, Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning (Dir, IRAP), works closely with each school/college/academy to assist them in developing assessment measures in addition to designing surveys for course evaluation as well as surveys of graduates and reporting seniors of graduates.

### **JDAL Credit for Non-Host Military Faculty**

As described earlier, we seek to identify the most qualified military and civilian faculty for all USMC PME Programs. This is true for USMC officers, as well as officers from other services. One aspect that attracts the most promising officers is the ability to receive joint credit while serving at a sister-service educational institution. Awarding of joint credit at JPME I institutions is certainly warranted due to the amount of joint material in the curriculum and the responsibilities of joint faculty. Sister service faculty are totally immersed in the

culture, operations, and capabilities of the host service. There is no better way to understand material than to teach it to others and that is exactly what sister service faculty do at our institutions. This is an exceptional joint experience tour for these officers. By rescinded the listing of JPME I faculty as part of the JDAL, the FY07 NDAA made recruitment of high-quality military faculty much more difficult and created a significant obstacle in attracting the best faculty to educate our leaders. Today an officer must balance requirements for joint duty, command tours, staff tours, and various service related assignments. Officers are hard pressed to include all requirements and must take advantage of every opportunity to receive credit where it is appropriate. Assignment to a position on the JDAL is considered to be a "standard" path to earning joint qualifications. While officers still have the capability to self-nominate based on their experiences, this hardly seems appropriate if we are serious about quality joint education. In short, not giving JDAL credit to non-host military faculty at the JPME I schools will certainly not help the recruitment, nor retention, of the "top shelf" military faculty.

## **Summary**

In summary, your Marine Corps Professional Military Education system is extremely strong. On a daily basis we prepare our young men and women for the complexities of today's world. As I stated in my opening paragraph, the critical components of education are students, faculty, and curricula and I am pleased to report that all are superb. We have a long range plan to improve our facilities and infrastructure and we look forward to continuing to provide a world-class education for our leaders.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the chance to speak with you today. I welcome the Sub-Committee's questions.