

# A Brief History of



# Marine Corps Education







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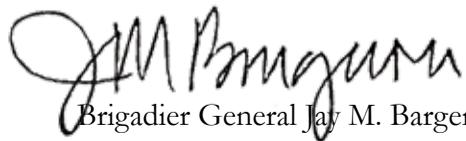


## FOREWORD

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### Formal Education of Marines

In July 1910, our 10th Commandant, Major General George F. Elliot, opened the Advanced Base School in New London, Connecticut. Elliot's vision was to create an institution for educating officers and enlisted Marines on both the theoretical and practical aspects of seizing and defending naval bases on foreign shores. Moving to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a year later before finally settling in Newport, Rhode Island, as part of the Naval War College's curriculum, the instruction provided at the Advanced Base School produced the Marine Corps' earliest scholars and pioneers of amphibious warfare doctrine. Names such as Dion Williams, Eli K. Cole, John H. Russell, and Robert H. Dunlap are just a few of its graduates who set in motion the development of our amphibious doctrine and postured the Marine Corps for its role in the Second World War. In the years preceding the war, the Advanced Base School's successor, Marine Corps Schools, teamed up with the Fleet Marine Forces to fully test what were then only ideas. Not only did this collaborative effort validate the school's concepts, it implanted education as part of our warfighting ethos and how we fight. Since 1989, the Marine Corps University has carried on the tradition of educating and preparing Marines and continues to contribute to the combat readiness of the nation by teaching our Marines to outthink as well as outfight our adversaries.



Brigadier General Jay M. Barger  
Commanding General, President  
Marine Corps University

# PHASE I:

MARINE CORPS SCHOOLS CREATED



1910

1920

MAJOR GENERAL  
JOHN A. LEJEUNE

The first major step for the Marine Corps to formalize the education of Marines came with the appointment of Major General John A. Lejeune as Major General Commandant on 1 July 1920. Lejeune's education at U.S. Army schools and service with the Army taught him the value of education on actual operations. A month after taking the helm, Lejeune created Marine Corps Schools on 1 August 1920. While the courses included much of

what had been learned during World War I, new developments were taught by lectures, conferences, practical exercises, and demonstrations. Lejeune's vision was not limited to officers, he was also concerned with the continuing education of enlisted Marines, and he created vocational schools to advance their skills in the Corps but, more importantly, for use after their military service was complete.

MAJGEN COMMANDANT GEORGE F. ELLIOTT SUBMITS  
A COPY OF THE PROPOSED COURSE OF INSTRUCTION FOR  
ADVANCED BASE SCHOOL AT NEW LONDON, CT

FIRST CLASS OF OFFICERS AND ENLISTED BEGIN  
AT ADVANCED BASE SCHOOL

MARINE CORPS SCHOOLS CREATED BY  
MAJGEN COMMANDANT JOHN A. LEJEUNE

FIRST COMPANY OFFICERS COURSE COMMENCED  
AT THE MARINE CORPS SCHOOLS

1921

1930

1940

1950

1960

1970

1980

“The military education of its officers is essential to the efficiency of a military organization.”  
~ MajGen John A. Lejeune

# PHASE II:

EDUCATION INTO ACTION:  
AMPHIBIOUS EXERCISES OF THE 1920s AND 1930s



1920

1924

1925

Lejeune understood the Corps could not sustain itself as a second land army. While the lessons of the Great War and service with the Army were still studied, it was amphibious warfare that began taking over. Practical application of amphibious doctrine was necessary and was put into action in the 1920s and 30s, engaging students and faculty of Marine Corps Schools in amphibious exercises. One such event was in March 1925, when the normal operation of Marine Corps Schools was suspended. The students and instructors became

members of the “Blue” Marine Corps Expeditionary Force (attacking) in Amphibious Exercise #3 off the Hawaiian Islands. Upon returning to Quantico in June, a thorough review and critique of the exercise was held; the most significant critique being the need to develop a boat suitable for landing the first waves ashore on a defended coast. This was a reoccurring recommendation from all the exercises held during this time. By 1930, Marine Corps Schools had become the center of development of techniques in landing operations.



**COL DION WILLIAMS CONDUCTED WINTER MANEUVERS WITH THE NAVY THAT INCLUDED A SIMULATED ATTACK ON THE PANAMA CANAL**

**ARMY-NAVY EXERCISES HELD OFF THE TERRITORY OF HAWAII WITH MORE THAN 1,500 MARINES PARTICIPATING**

1930      1940      1950      1960      1970      1980      1990

“If the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eaton, the Japanese bases in the Pacific were captured on the beaches of the Caribbean, where the problems involved were worked out in the Marine maneuvers.”  
~ Gen Holland M. Smith

# PHASE III:

PLANNING FOR FUTURE WAR:  
AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE, 1920s–1940s



MAJOR  
EARL H. ELLIS

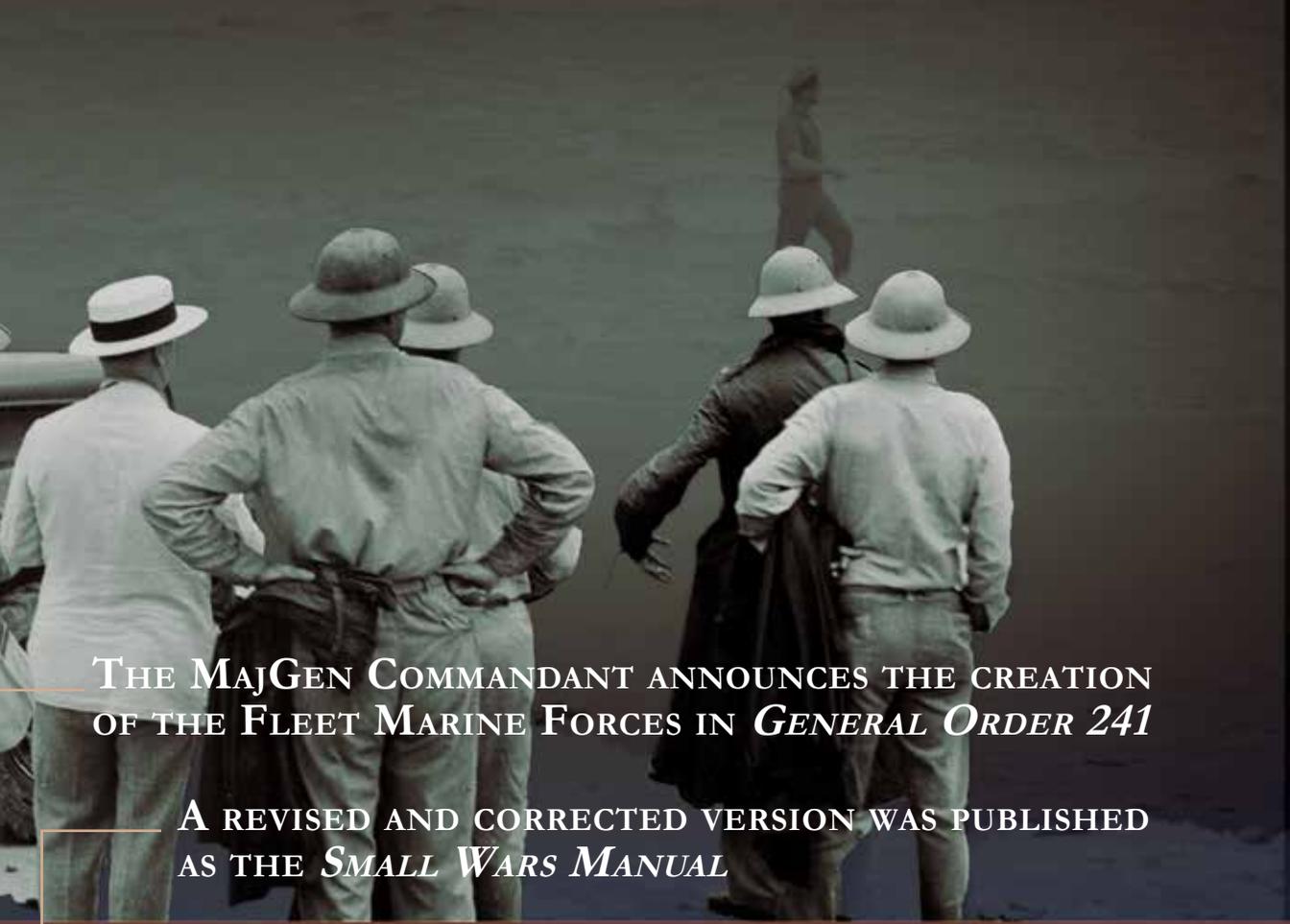
1925

1930

1933

In the two decades after World War I, lessons in Army doctrine were slowly decreased as amphibious warfare increased. At Marine Corps Schools, instruction focused on landing operations was increased to 49 hours in 1926, as compared to just 5 hours the year prior. As amphibious warfare in the curriculum increased, the Army – intensive courses were phased out, and by 1933, the Commandant reported the changes in the curriculum at Marine Corps Schools to the secretary of the Navy, stating that the shift away from Army-centric courses

was complete with the emphasis on Marine Corps units and equipment and the development of comprehensive courses on landing operations. During this period, officers of Marine Corps Schools came together with officers from Headquarters Marine Corps to research and write the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* based on the need for a doctrine to guide the training of the newly created Fleet Marine Forces (FMF). The manual was distributed to students at Marine Corps Schools during the 1934–35 academic year.



## THE MAJGEN COMMANDANT ANNOUNCES THE CREATION OF THE FLEET MARINE FORCES IN *GENERAL ORDER 241*

A REVISED AND CORRECTED VERSION WAS PUBLISHED AS THE *SMALL WARS MANUAL*

1934

1940

1950

1960

1970

1980

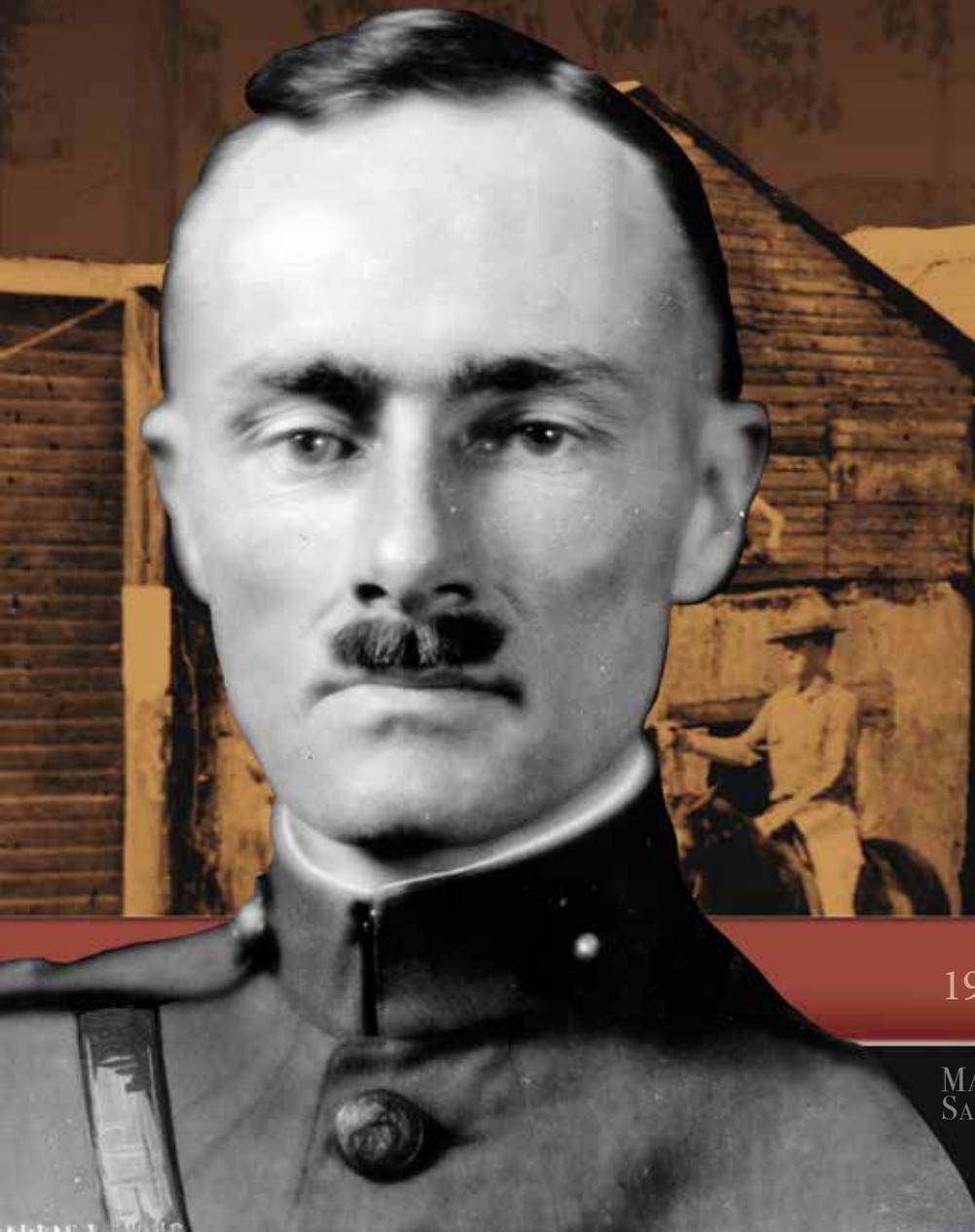
1990

“The work on the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*, which began in 1931 and ended in 1934, not only produced a sound body of operating principles but also indoctrinated many of the officers who passed through the MCS in the 1930s.”

~ Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis*

# PHASE IV:

CAPTURING PAST PRACTICES:  
SMALL WARS, 1920s–1940s



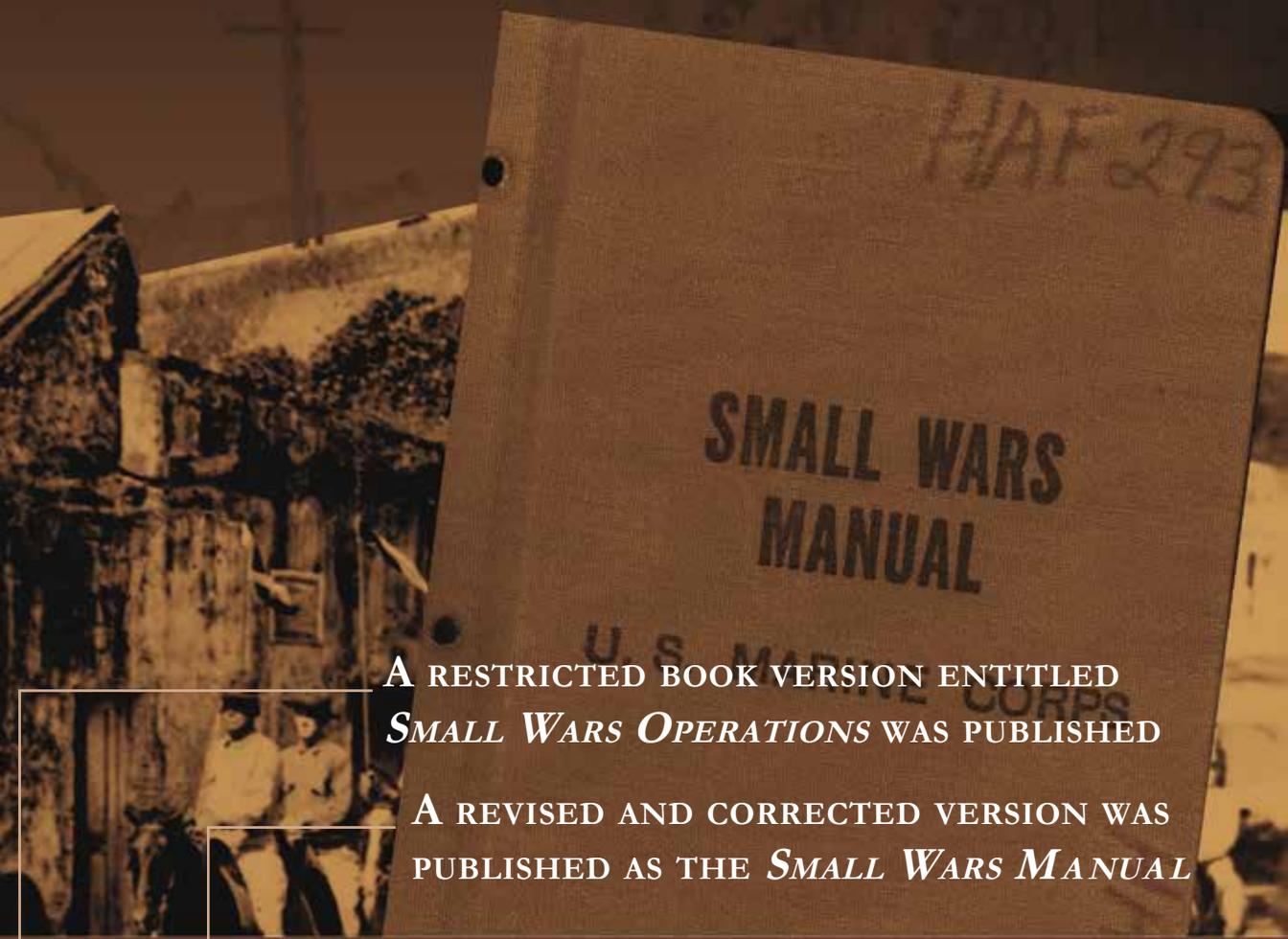
1920

1930

MAJOR  
SAMUEL M. HARRINGTON

While the focus on amphibious warfare continued, it was not the only doctrine consuming the Marine Corps. Years of small wars operations in Nicaragua, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic kept the operating forces busy. In 1921, while a student at Marine Corps Schools, Major Samuel M. Harrington began a comprehensive study of small wars and produced two definitive treatises

that were published in the *Marine Corps Gazette*. Understanding the value of his work, Marine Corps Schools incorporated Harrington's work into the school's curriculum. In 1935, a restricted book version entitled *Small Wars Operations* was published, and in 1940, a revised and corrected version was published as the *Small Wars Manual*.



A RESTRICTED BOOK VERSION ENTITLED  
*SMALL WARS OPERATIONS* WAS PUBLISHED

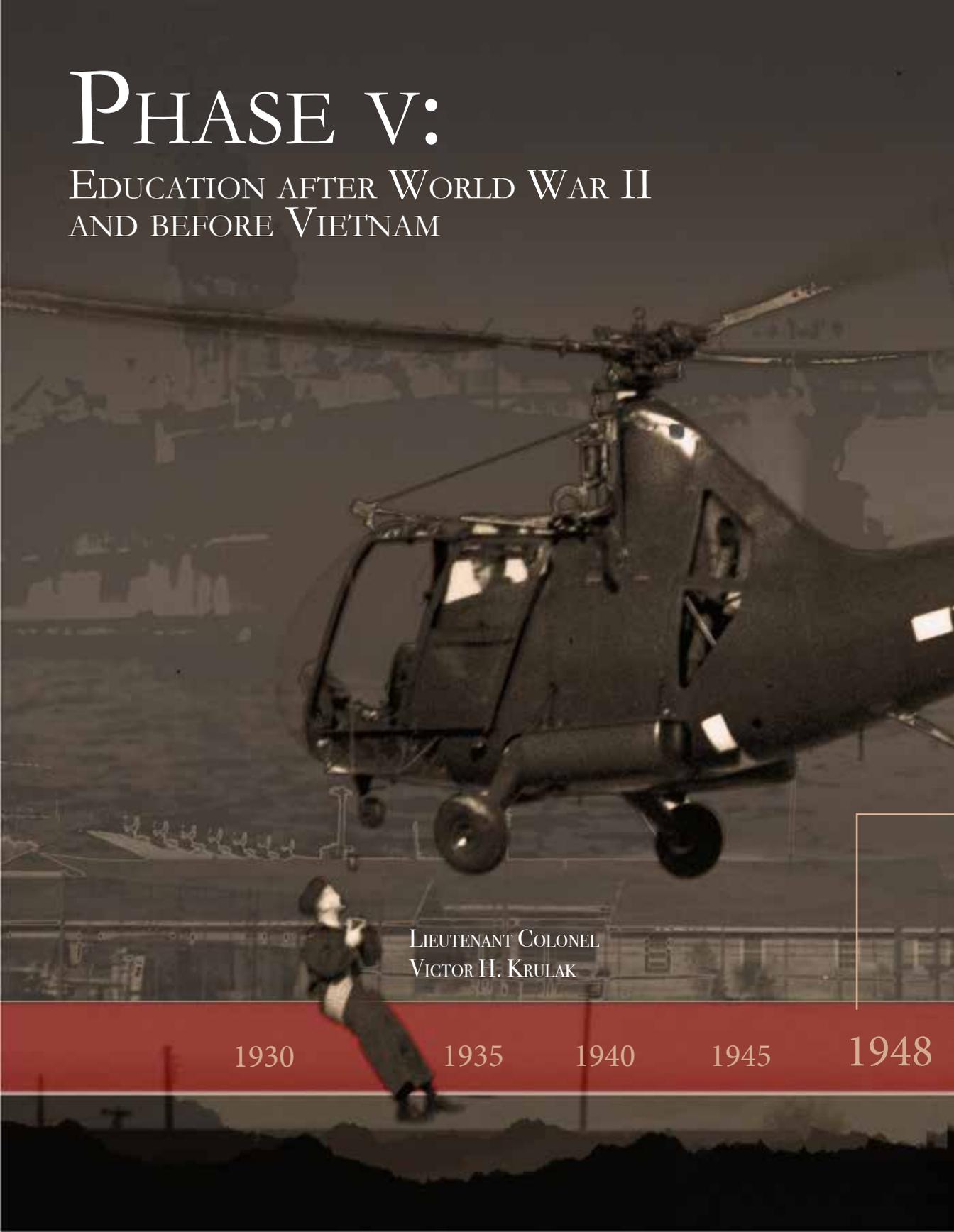
A REVISED AND CORRECTED VERSION WAS  
PUBLISHED AS THE *SMALL WARS MANUAL*

1935      1940      1950      1960      1970      1980      1990

“From writings in the ‘Marine Corps Gazette’ to the syllabi of the officers’ courses at Marine Corps Schools at Quantico, Marine officers wove their experiences into a doctrinal guide to the problem and tactics of counter guerrilla warfare and population control.” ~ Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis*

# PHASE V:

EDUCATION AFTER WORLD WAR II  
AND BEFORE VIETNAM



LIEUTENANT COLONEL  
VICTOR H. KRULAK

1930

1935

1940

1945

1948

With World War II over and Marine Corps Schools returning to normal operation, new doctrine and technology took center stage to be studied for application with amphibious warfare. Colonels Victor H. Krulak and Edward C. Dyer and other members of Marine Corps Schools researched and prepared a tentative doctrine on the employment of helicopters in 1948. In November 1948, the publication was published by the schools as *Amphibious Operations—Employment of Helicopters (Tentative)*, also known as Phib-31. In practical application of the new publication, Marine Helicopter Squadron 1 (HMX-1) performed the first ship-to-shore movement of troops from the deck of an aircraft carrier in an exercise in

May 1948. Further, the overall structure and organization of the Marine Corps needed revising to deal with the technological and doctrinal changes. In 1956, the Fleet Marine Forces Organization and Composition Board (a.k.a. the Hogaboom Board) was convened at Quantico and staffed by members of Marine Corps Schools to conduct a thorough and comprehensive study of the FMF and make recommendations for the optimal organization, composition, and equipping of the FMF to perform its mission. The board's recommendations, as outlined in numerous articles in *Marine Corps Gazette*, were the basis for the "M" Series of Tables of Organization and Equipment approved in 1957.

## PUBLICATION OF *AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS—EMPLOYMENT OF HELICOPTERS (TENTATIVE)*

HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS RELEASES THE RESULTS OF THE HOGABOOM BOARD VIA A SERIES OF *MARINE CORPS GAZETTE* ARTICLES

1957

1960

1970

1980

1990

2000

2010

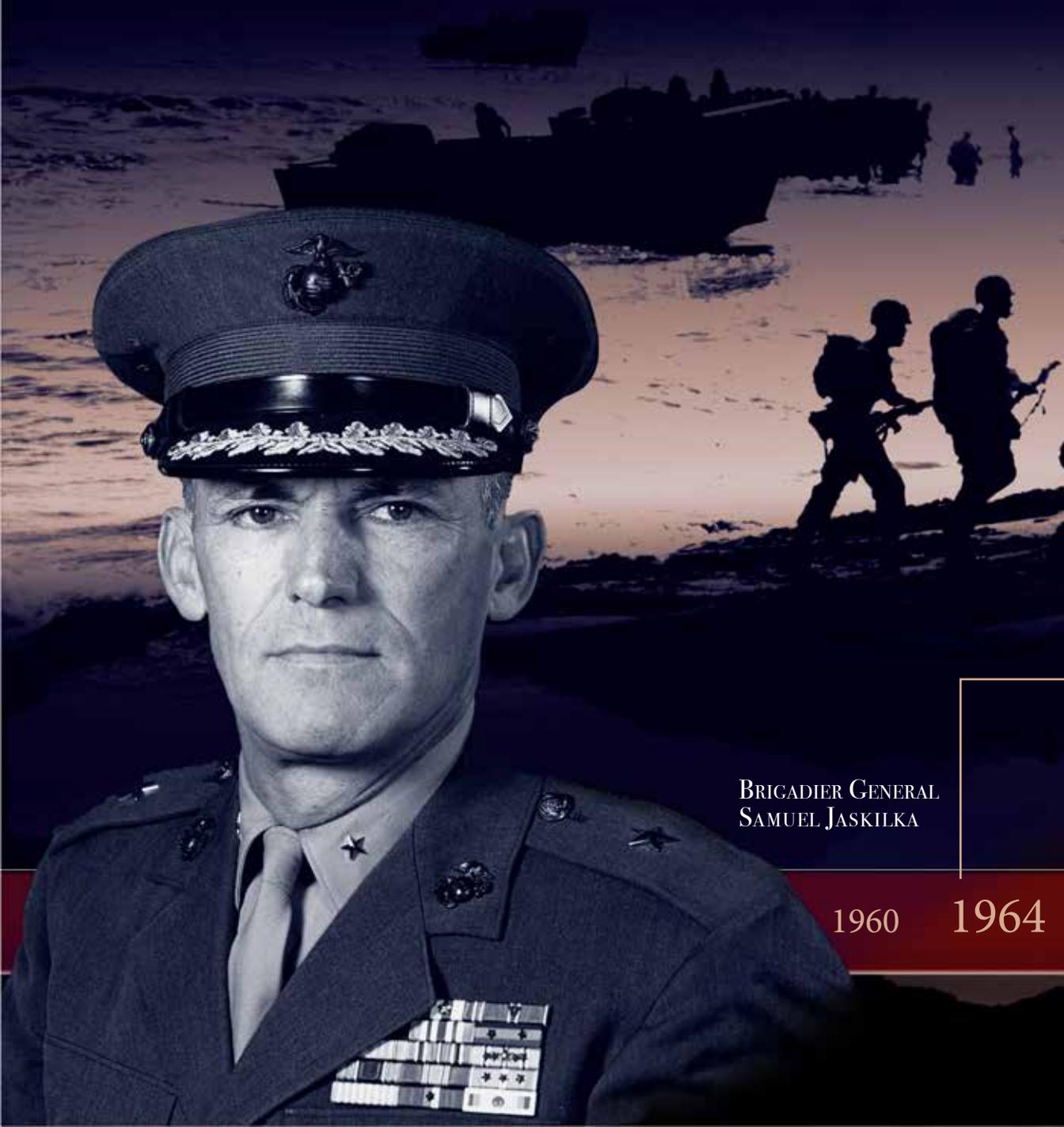
"Within the framework of amphibious operations, World War II experience had raised a new element hitherto not addressed in such statements – aviation."

~LtCol Donald F. Bittner,

*Curriculum Evolution: Marine Corps Command and Staff College, 1920–1988*

# PHASE VI:

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SKILLS, 1960s–1970s



BRIGADIER GENERAL  
SAMUEL JASKILKA

1960

1964

To keep pace with the increase in participation in Southeast Asia, Marine Corps Schools began looking for a new location for the illustrative operation in 1961. Operation Cormorant was presented to most Marines and many other groups as Amphibious Warfare Study XVI from 1961 to 1963. It was set in a future time frame of April 1965. As with all such studies, Cormorant was concerned with the planning factors of an amphibious operation more than the tactical execution. Nevertheless, the use of actual world geography prevented the problem from lapsing into the sterility of make-believe and was another

example of Marine Corps Schools studies coming to life.

While the Vietnam War dominated education at Marine Corps Schools through the 1960s. In 1972, the curriculum of Command and Staff returned to an emphasis on amphibious warfare under its director, Brigadier General Samuel Jaskilka, who said, "We have de-emphasized instruction based on our Vietnam experience. In effect, we have taken our heads out of the jungle. We are resharpening our skills in the amphibious business and again firing up the great Navy-Marine team."



## SENIOR SCHOOL RENAMED COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE AND JUNIOR SCHOOL RENAMED AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE SCHOOL

### THE 9TH EXPEDITIONARY BRIGADE LANDS AT DA NANG, SOUTH VIETNAM

1965

1970

1980

1990

2000

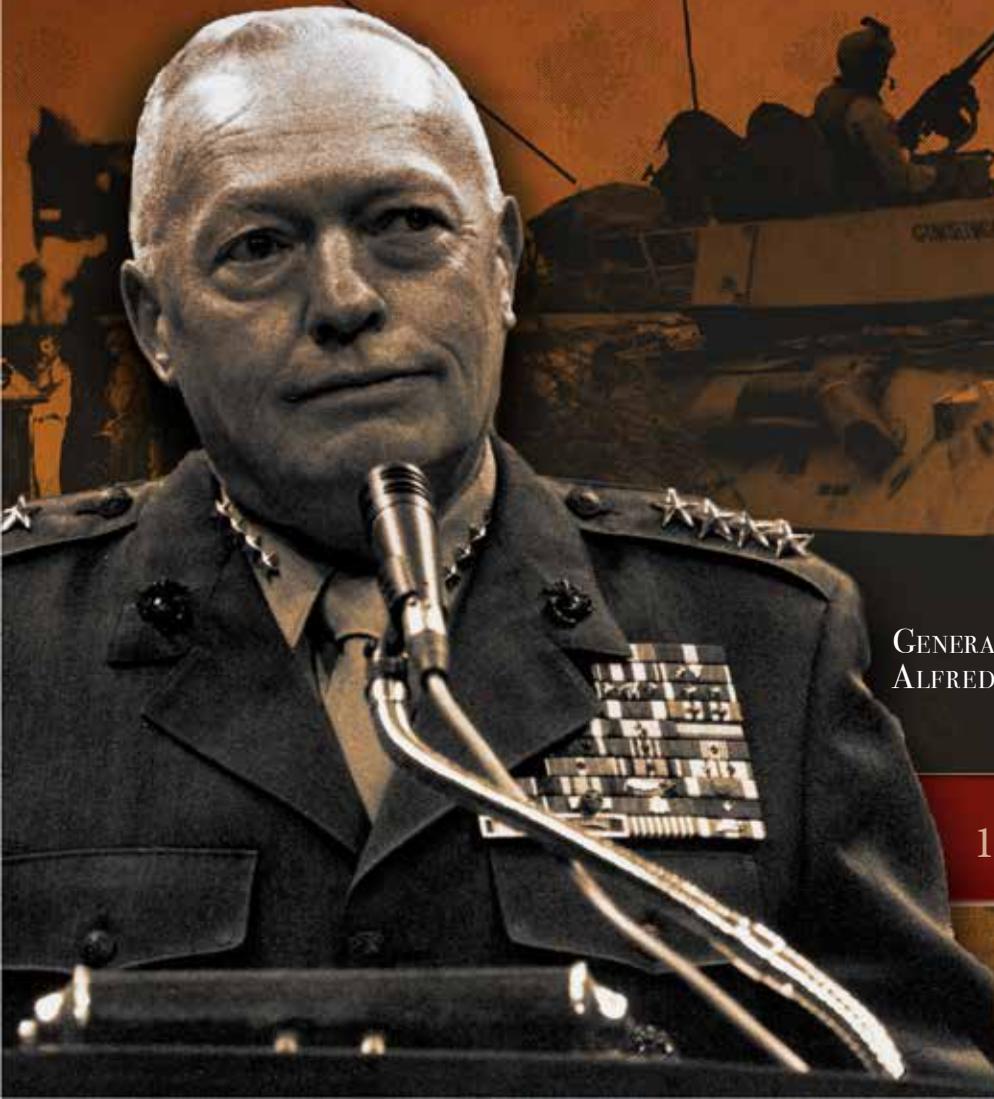
2010

"The Marine Corps believes that education supports training and positively influences readiness."

~Gen Louis H Wilson Jr.

# PHASE VII:

CONSOLIDATING EDUCATION:  
MARINE CORPS UNIVERSITY, 1989–2001



GENERAL  
ALFRED M. GRAY JR.

1980

1989

The late 1980s brought many changes to Quantico. On 1 December 1987, the Commandant General Alfred M. Gray Jr. redesignated Marine Corps Development and Education Command to Marine Corps Combat Development Command and in so doing returned elements of training and education to Quantico from Headquarters Marine Corps. In April 1989, the Commandant strengthened enlisted education with the creation of the Noncommissioned Officers Professional Military Education Program—a prerequisite to giving NCOs a greater role and authority in the Corps. Two years later, on 1 August 1989, Gray activated Marine Corps University (MCU), bringing together under one command the Command

and Staff College, Amphibious Warfare School, 17 staff noncommissioned officers schools and the Staff Noncommissioned Officer Academy.

During the 1990s, students benefitted from curricula based on active learning, and seminar-based discussions; resident lectures focused on senior leadership experience and expertise. During these years, the Commandant directed the small think-tanks, “Gang of 10,” and “Gang of 8” to provide critical thinkers for focused projects such as the *Quadrennial Defense Review*, Force Structure Planning Group, and the Commandant’s Assessment Team (Afghanistan), once again using the gathered skills and experience of students and faculty.

## MARINE CORPS UNIVERSITY FORMED

MCU RESPONDED TO RECENT WORLD EVENTS BY EDUCATING AND FIELDING CULTURAL AWARENESS AND BATTLE STAFF TRAINING TEAMS IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION DESERT SHIELD

COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE FOUNDATION RENAMED AS MARINE CORPS UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION TO MORE ACCURATELY RECOGNIZE ITS SUPPORT OF MCU AS A WHOLE

COLLEGE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION CREATED

1990

1996

1997

2000

2010

2019

“Our Nation expects its Marine Corps not only to be combat ready, but also to plan continuously for the future and determine what its warfighting capabilities should be for tomorrow.” ~Gen Alfred M. Gray Jr.

# PHASE VIII:

CONTEMPORARY OPERATIONS AND ENLISTED  
PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION, 2001–19



1980

1990

2000

LIEUTENANT GENERAL  
PAUL K. VAN RIPER

Marine Corps University began evaluating itself as it closed the first decade of existence. Curriculum mapping pointed to inconsistencies in how the university was educating NCOs/staff NCOs in the SNCO academies, leading the university to develop roadmaps for each military occupation specialty (MOS) to include training, education, professional development, and options for off-duty education. Part of this process was to link the Enlisted Professional Military Education (EPME) of MCU with the Marine Corps Institute, which partnered resident and distance capabilities, as well as a complete review of the entire EPME curriculum. By 2002, the students within the EPME program, through the SNCO academies,

experienced an interconnected education system emphasizing leadership, warfighting, military studies, and emerging operational concepts.

To bring more real-world experiences and skills to the students, speakers were invited to address the various schools at Marine Corps University. On 3 September 2009, retired Chief of Naval Operations Vernon E. Clark spoke to the students of the Expeditionary Warfare School in the “Ethical Leadership” workshop. Through endowments funded by the Marine Corps University Foundation, experienced leaders such as retired Lieutenant General Paul K. Van Riper, continue to educate Marines at MCU.



## JOHN W. WARNER CENTER FOR ADVANCED MILITARY STUDIES OPENED.

2010

2014

2016

2017

2018

2019

“The need for leadership goes beyond today’s conflicts and lies at the heart of current debates of the future of our national security organizations and strategy.” ~MajGen Robert B. Neller

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HISTORY DIVISION

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