



## Left of Bang

### Course Format

Anticipate approximately 5 hours of work per week for 4 weeks consisting of readings and viewings, writing assignments, short quizzes, and group discussions. The group discussion and peer review assignments should involve a constructive exchange of ideas, increasing understanding of the course material in a collaborative forum. Grading on assignments is subjective and wholly focused on providing constructive written feedback. At the conclusion of week 4, learners will have completed a reflection essay and hopefully gained confidence in their writing ability.

### Course Goal

Marine General James Mattis, callsign "Chaos", was the Commander of the First Marine Expeditionary Force, and commanded all Marines in Iraq. He believed in the strategic implementation of technology to counter the enemy's will to impose harm. However, the technology available to the Marines mostly placed them in a defensive posture, his desire was to be on the offense. This desire inspired the creation of the Combat Hunter Program. *Left of Bang* covers the development of the program based on the author's experience from past combat deployments. Being "Right of bang" is synonymous with being reactive and only responding to threats after they has made themselves known (i.e. after the bomb has exploded and shots have been fired causing injury or death). "Left of bang" means taking a proactive approach to possible threats by making a decision based on observation and intuition to prevent the bad from happening. Marines are

trained to remain vigilant of their surroundings in order to protect themselves and the team.

Marines train through various tactical skills assessments during their pre-deployment training, which should eliminate any Marine going forward without knowing how to search and locate the enemy before engagement.

There are two main goals of this course. The first is to develop a continuous mindset and mentality to search your area of responsibility for personnel out of the norm. The second is to possess the knowledge to recognize what causes someone to stand out from the everyday activity of those occupying the area. It is the author's hopes that the information presented in this book provides every Marine the knowledge to achieve both goals.

## **Course Overview**

We will read and discuss the critical points of the book in a four-lesson presentation. In each lesson, the assignments will include selected pages to read. After each reading selection, you will take a short quiz to ensure all are held accountable for the assignment. We then will discuss the key aspects of the assigned readings in an active Socratic style discussion seminar, desirably in an onsite session, but online if required. At the course close, you will write a short essay on an assigned topic from the book. (Note: The book is broken into three parts. This course, however, is divided into four lessons, which divide the readings more equally while keeping the focus of each topical.)

**Lesson 1, [The War Lab]**, [Lesson one focuses on how the Combat Hunter Program instills enhanced observation, combat tracking, and combat profiling while meeting the intent of General James Mattis, that Marines be proactive instead of reactive.]

**Lesson 2, [Everywhere We Go, There Will Be People]**, [In this lesson, the course examines how to get Marines thinking about planning backwards from the decisions, based on the baseline and anomaly which develops the decision structure.]

**Lesson 3, [Detail]**, [This lesson examines the six domains of combat profiling which focus on the important details of human behavior and understanding the geographic area of operations in which the enemy operates.]

**Lesson 4, [Taking Action/Applications]**, [This lesson examines how to get your Marines thinking about the differences between what needs to

happen for a successful outcome, and how to do that in the best available way by talking through the pros and cons of each choice through mental simulations of those options. Furthermore, this lesson surveys a behavioral approach to situational awareness that requires development in either the ability to make behavior-based assessments or the ability to use the correct terminology to explain the situation.

## **Assessments**

Learners will be evaluated through three types of assessment activities:

- 20 points for multiple choice quizzes
- 40 points for discussion contribution
- 40 points for the final assessment reflection paper

After you have completed the course, you are encouraged to complete the end-of-course survey. Future changes in the course are based, in part, on your comments and recommendations.

## **Faculty Bio**

Sergeant Major Steven Collier is from Oak City, North Carolina. He enlisted in the Marine Corps Feb 10, 1989; completed Recruit Training at MCRD Parris Island, South Carolina, and Infantry Training Battalion at Camp Geiger, NC. From 1990 to 1992 SgtMaj Collier served as a Marine Security Guard at Marine Barracks 8th&I, Washington DC.

In 1992, then LCpl Collier transferred to Echo Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> BN, 2<sup>ND</sup> Marines Camp Lejeune, NC; where he was assigned as a SAW Gunner and billet of Squad Leader. While deployed as part of the 22D MEU, LCpl Collier participated in OPERATION PROMISE and OPERATION DENY FLIGHT while in the Adriatic Sea.

Following redeployment from the Adriatic Sea, Cpl Collier was transferred to Marine Combat Training Battalion as a Squad Leader Instructor from 1993 to 1996. He was then transferred to 1<sup>st</sup> BN, 6<sup>TH</sup> Marines Camp Lejeune, NC where he served as Squad Leader, Platoon Guide and Platoon Sergeant. He completed a deployment on Unit Deployment Program (UDP) to Okinawa, Japan. He later deployed on the 24<sup>th</sup> MEU as a member of the Battalion Landing Team (BLT). During the deployment he participated in OPERATION SILVER WAKE (Albania) and OPERATION PACIFIC HAVEN (Guam).

In 1996, SSgt Collier reported to Drill Instructor School, MCRD, PISC and was assigned as a Drill Instructor to 1<sup>st</sup> Recruit Training Battalion. He held the billets as Drill Instructor, Experience Drill Instructor, Senior Drill Instructor, Series GySgt and Drill Master before being assigned as the

Charlie Co, 1stSgt. SSgt Collier was meritoriously promoted to GySgt during his tour. After successfully completing his three-year tour, he was transferred to Navy Chaplain School, Newport RI as the Company Commander of Navy Chaplain students from 2003-2006.

Upon being selected for 1stSgt, he was transferred to Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team Company (1<sup>st</sup> FAST), Norfolk, VA from 2006-2008. After serving two years, he was transferred to 3D BN, 2<sup>ND</sup> Marines Camp Lejeune NC. There he served as the India Company 1stSgt and deployed in support of OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM, with the 26<sup>th</sup> MEU. In 2010, 1stSgt Collier was selected for SgtMaj, upon his redeployment he was transferred to Marine Attack Training Squadron 203, Cherry Point, NC from 2010 to 2011.

In 2011, SgtMaj Collier transferred to 2<sup>nd</sup>, BN 3D Marines, Kaneohe Bay, HI as the Battalion Sergeant Major. He deployed on the Unit Deployment Program to Okinawa Japan and participated in numerous bi-lateral training exercises. Upon redeployment he was transferred to HQtrs Bn, Kaneohe Bay, HI as the Battalion SgtMaj. Four months later he was selected to assume the billet of Marine Aircraft Group 24, SgtMaj from 2013-2016.

After serving 28 years of honorable and faithful service, SgtMaj Collier retired while assigned to MAG-24 on 28 October 2016.