

SHOULD THE MARINE CORPS HAVE ITS OWN WAR COLLEGE?

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THE field of activity of the marine officer is peculiar to himself; he is neither an army soldier nor a sailor but to a large extent combines their knowledge and abilities in his own person and has tasks to perform for which no one else is fitted.

His education as a marine has always been obtained mostly by practical methods; what the older and experienced ones have learned in service is passed on to the new ones by actual demonstration; in unaccustomed circumstances and unfamiliar conditions he experiments for himself because of the lack of a doctrine and of thoroughly trained knowledge of the best practice.

Now that the Marine Corps has been so largely increased and its duties and stations so widely dispersed, a marine officer has a man's sized job, but the opportunities for acquiring a knowledge of these duties and of how to meet the responsibilities that may be unexpectedly thrust upon him are inadequate.

The Army and the Navy each has its War College, why not the Marine Corps?

Our sphere of action and the tasks given us are sufficiently different from those of either the Army or the Navy to require an education and a training that cannot be obtained in either or both of the War Colleges.

A graduate of these may learn how to be a Major General commanding an Army division or be well-instructed in the knowledge of strategy necessary to a Fleet Commander, but where can he learn anything about being a Brigadier-General or a Colonel commanding an advance base or an expeditionary force which may have to administer the affairs of a Caribbean republic?

Of course when the thing has to be done, he does it, as has been the custom of marines ever since there have been marines, but the ways and means may not be the best.

There is, in the Marine Corps, a vast amount of un-correlated information and experience on the subjects of expeditionary service and advance base work, but this is not available to those who have not actually been engaged extensively in those affairs.

The personnel for the faculty of such a college is at hand amongst the field officers who have served in Haiti, Nicaragua, Culebra, and Mexico.

The methods of the other War Colleges could be followed to a large extent, except that the course at the Marine College should be laid out on practical lines, aiming at a well-defined system of doing the things that belong to us exclusively.

These subjects include a thorough study of possible naval bases and the military geography of countries where we might be employed; transports; government in occupied countries; the taking of towns; landing of troops and military operations on shore with especial reference to co-operation with a naval brigade, etc.

The tendency of thought in the country is towards "preparedness"; a determination to defend our policies and possessions. Many of these possessions are overseas; islands that must be fortified to be of use as naval bases, and needing troops for their defence.

What more appropriate than that marines should be the defenders?

The more we study these larger problems, the better we shall be fitted to take them up, when the time comes, the serious responsibilities that may be imposed upon us.

