

“Letting the  
Warriors  
Focus on  
Warfare”

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to offer a model for the consolidation of the administrative structure spaces throughout the numerous and varied Marine Corps installations located in the United States and to offer a process by which the model should be implemented. By adopting this proposal, the authors believe the Marine Corps can standardize procedures, eliminate duplication of effort, redirect resources, and consolidate functions that may ultimately result in monetary savings as well. However, the Marine Corps must first improve upon the organization's efforts to implement change across the service's administrative structure before these goals will be achieved.

## **Background**

In the late 1990s, Lieutenant General Mutter, Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, responded to a request for additional resources by offering nearly 1,100 administrative billets for redistribution. General Mutter, and others, believed the administrative field could merge functions and realize gains in efficiency brought about by the rapidly growing information technology field. To support this proposal, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Marine Corps Administrative (MARADMIN) message 315/00, directed that administrative personnel and their functions be consolidated at a level at least above the battalion. The intent of this directive was to reconfigure the administrative personnel structure throughout the Marine Corps to realize the "savings" and to ultimately redistribute these resources to meet emerging requirements.

To date, the consolidation of the administrative personnel resides at a variety of levels depending upon the command or installation in question. At some installations the consolidation has been accomplished at the regimental or group level, the division/wing level, or at the installation level. Compounding the problem, the administrative structure still resides on the unit's Table of Organization, thereby skewing the actual personnel structure when compared to the organization as presented on the "official" organizational chart. This disparity causes confusion in the actual versus planned allocation of resources; and it also creates ambiguity in determining the actual savings realized and the actual amount of resources available for redistribution.

This change process must be carefully managed. The current consolidation process is either incomplete or is in a status that differs from organization to organization throughout the Marine Corps. The issues that must be addressed in the change process include:

- a. Clarifying the role and/or responsibilities of unit commanders in implementing the change.
- b. Clarifying the role and/or responsibilities of the unit commanders in the new organization.
- c. Providing clear policy, guidance, and processes subsequent to the consolidation of the personnel administration function.
- d. Commanders at all levels are unclear on who will benefit and what the benefits will be from the structural savings realized from consolidation.

- e. Publishing a standard operating plan that identifies how units will be supported during mobilization/UDP.

### **Analysis – The Proposed Model**

As discussed above, the current model of consolidated personnel administration is flawed and lends itself to further review. The proposed model is to consolidate the administrative functions at the installation level throughout the numerous and varied Marine Corps installations. Attachments 1 and 2 outline the proposed organization charts at the installation level and Installation Personnel Administrative Center (IPAC), respectively. There are three salient issues the consolidated administrative model resolves for the Marine Corps; these are:

**Standard model for administrative structure and ownership.** Currently, the Marine Corps does not have a standard model for administrative structure and ownership. This relationship varies from unit to unit as well as from installation to installation. Attachments 1 and 2 provide the proposed organizational structures at the installation and IPAC, respectively. It should be noted that the current infrastructure at the installation level already supports other consolidated functions such as disbursing, legal, communications, shipping and receiving, postal services, and general supply support. As can be imagined, the current administrative model creates tremendous organizational friction and inefficiency. Further, by retaining the administrative burden at the unit level, the war fighters are, in part, distracted from performing their primary function of training and being prepared for combat. The adoption of the proposed standard model for

administrative structure and ownership brings order to this chaos and consolidates the function at the installation level.

**Standard administrative processes.** Since the mandate to consolidate the administrative function above the battalion level, there have been varying interpretations of the consolidation. With each varying level of those consolidations there has been a differing set of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and different requirements placed on the consolidated admin provider and the unit commander. A Marine stationed at Quantico faces a different administrative support structure and administrative procedures from a Marine stationed at 29 Palms as a Marine stationed at Camp Pendleton.

**Billets reallocated for direct war fighting purposes.** The current model of performing administration at the unit level is estimated to consume approximately 1,215 billets more than that required by consolidating the function at the installation level. Or, viewed from another perspective, the proposed model reduces the required administrative billets by 29%. (Methodology note: This approximation was generated by using the Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command (MAGTFTC) located at 29 Palms, CA as an example. By consolidating the administrative function at the installation level the MAGTFTC was able to perform the same support with approximately 29% fewer personnel. This factor of 29% was then applied to the Marine Corps manpower in the Military Occupational Specialties (MOSs), specifically MOSs 0170, 0193, and 0121, that perform administrative functions at the unit level using the proposed model.) Based on an active duty end strength of almost 172,000, the 1,215 billets represents just under one percent of the total strength of the Marine Corps. Or, in terms of war fighting capability,

the 1,215 billets represents more than a full infantry battalion, an aviation logistics support squadron, or more than three tactical aviation squadrons. This additional manpower can be shifted from administrative support and redirected to real war fighting capability at no additional personnel cost to the Marine Corps. Consider that if the Marine Corps was authorized to add 1,215 billets above its current end strength and assuming that the average pay grade among these billets is an E-4, then the cost savings from adopting this model of consolidated administrative support is about \$53,000,000 per year.

**Analysis - Implementing the Model of the Associated Change**

That the Marine Corps has not been fully effective in realizing substantial gains from the administrative structure consolidation effort has been largely due to the method by which the service has tried to implement change. A vague directive from the Commandant mandating some unspecified level of consolidation, a sketchy outline of some potential for benefits, a loose knit group of commanders wondering how they benefit – each of these steps can be improved upon to dramatically accelerate the successful implementation of the process.

For the Marine Corps to succeed, it must adopt the following transformational strategy for change:

**Create and articulate a clear vision.** The Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) would be advised to create a clear vision of the administrative consolidation architecture with a clearly articulated desired end state, which specifically defines the strategy by which the vision will be achieved. MARADMIN 315/00 directs an

unspecified level of consolidation that is not visionary, does not spell out in detail how the organization will be modeled nor does it mitigate risk required to inspire commanders to endorse the change.

**Communicate the vision.** Once the vision has been formulated, the CMC could use every available method for communicating the vision to his commanders, their subordinates, and the troops under command to ensure “corporate buy-in”. He could literally broadcast his vision through written and spoken word, by tying daily operations to the “big picture” of fitting into the vision, and by linking feedback on performance to how well commanders execute the implementation strategy. His extensive use of various media to “get the message out” may help to inspire his personnel and enlist their aid in moving forward with effective administrative consolidation efforts.

**Establish a sense of urgency.** The Marine Corps leadership must– in communicating this vision – establish a sense of urgency in achieving standardized administrative consolidation. By personally articulating this vision, the leadership would be able to identify the potential concrete benefits and articulate the mounting lost opportunities that stem from continued inaction. This vision would identify a clear and definite time line for implementation with a non-negotiable “drop dead date” for completion of the consolidation.

**Empower others to act.** While the Marine Corps has already formed a guiding coalition by forming a Quality Leadership Board (QLB), but simply communicating the vision through the QLB is not enough. The Marine Corps leadership, through and with the QLB, should be able to remove all obstacles to the successful attainment of the

standardized administrative consolidation. With the clear empowerment to act coming directly from the CMC, the QLB must encourage and reward innovative and/or unconventional ideas, must discourage “self-interest” behavior that would slow or even derail the process, and must convince troops at all levels that this strategy can be accomplished, will be accomplished, and will result in tangible benefits. The change strategy for administrative consolidation must be an “all hands effort” and must allow for maximum participation up and down the chain of command.

**Celebrate short-term victories.** Because the process for change across the Marine Corps is likely to be culturally challenging, it is imperative that short-term victories – defined as within 12 months and as illustrated by concrete evidence that the process is working as expected – must be widely publicized and celebrated as “proof” that the goals can be met. Incremental successes will serve as motivation for commanders to continue efforts in implementing the change strategy for administrative consolidation and will reinforce the supposition of tangible benefits.

In the case of administrative consolidation, progress across installations should be monitored and measured; successes and successful processes should be shared across commands to facilitate similar victories at other installations.

**Recommendation**

1. Establish a Marine Corps-wide standard of consolidated personnel administration at the installation level.
2. Validate the metric for administrators by MOS to population serviced and apply that at the installation level Consolidated Admin (CONAD).

3. Get functional representation from the ground combat element advocate, aviation element advocate, combat service support advocate, and supporting establishment advocate to execute realignment of the administration structure dividend attained through this consolidation to meet unstructured Marine Corps requirements.
4. Standardize administrative processes at the installation level to attain consistency Marine Corps-wide.



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**APPENDIX A**

