



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
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CMC-CSG
26 Sep 18

WHITE LETTER 2-18

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps
To: All Commanding Generals
All Commanding Officers
All Officers-in-Charge
All Senior Enlisted Leaders

Subj: FORCE-ON-FORCE TRAINING

1. Since the 1980's, our Service-level training has focused on combined arms live-fire maneuver training. This will not change. However, our Service-level training for the MAGTF must move beyond "scripted" live-fire maneuvers and incorporate more Force-on-Force (FOF) training in a free-play environment to better replicate realistic operational tempo in a peer-to-peer fight. The January 2016 message to the Force - "Advance to Contact" - directed the enhancement of our FOF training and increased use of simulation to improve our readiness. MCDP 1 states, "Exercises should approximate the conditions of war as much as possible; that is, they should introduce friction in the form of uncertainty, stress, disorder, and opposing wills." Only through opposed, free-play exercises can we practice maneuver warfare where a peer adversary will contest us at range, in depth, and across all domains.

2. Concurrently, at the institutional level, we must test our concepts and develop new tactics, techniques, and procedures. At the unit level, we must focus on core competencies, discipline, and continuing actions in order to develop the mindset and skills necessary to prevail in the coming fight. We must ruthlessly test ourselves, conduct honest after-action reviews, make refinements, and test ourselves again. Though we cannot replicate the full expanse of these adversary capabilities, yet, we can replicate free-play against a free-thinking peer during Integrated Training Exercises.

3. It is the responsibility of all commanders and unit leaders to adhere to this direction. To meet the challenges of a peer-to-peer fight we must incorporate independent actions and opposing will in our training at all levels and elements of the MAGTF. Just as iron sharpens iron, an aggressive FOF training regime will test the limits of our capabilities, refine our actions, and prepare us for the fight to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert B. Neller".
Robert B. Neller