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Reforming the Joint Doctrine Process

ROBERT A. DOUGHTY

The publication of the new manual on joint doctrine, Joint Pub 1, *Joint Warfare of the U.S. Armed Forces*,¹ dated November 1991, signals the opening of a new era in American military history. Though other manuals have been published in "test" form, this is the first fully approved manual that deals with joint warfare from such an authoritative position and is the first in what is sure to be a long line of joint doctrinal documents. As the new era begins, the issue is not whether joint doctrine is important; the issue is determining what institutions and procedures for formulating effective joint doctrine are required and when they will be established. The purpose of this article is to suggest steps to speed the formulation of joint doctrine in the future and ensure its effectiveness.

In many ways the situation today is similar to the situation at the end of the 19th century when the US Army began writing official field manuals.² Until the publishing of official manuals began, the Army depended on individuals to complete methodological treatises about different aspects of military operations. For example, Brigadier General Silas Casey's *Infantry Tactics*³ was adopted in 1863 by the Union Army for use by regular, volunteers, and militia.⁴ It was with the publication of the 1891 *Infantry Drill Regulations*,⁵ however, that a more systematic approach to writing field manuals and formulating doctrine began. Over the next decade the Army's interest in doctrine increased, and in 1905 it followed most other major armies in the Western world by publishing its first *Field Service Regulations*.⁶ This ancestor of the current FM 100-5, *Operations*, signaled the Army's newly found faith in centrally formulated doctrine and played a key role in what has been called "the Army's Renaissance"⁷ before World War I. As the decades of the 20th century passed, the Army's emphasis on doctrine and its institutions

charged with developing doctrine expanded considerably, leading eventually to the establishment of the Training and Doctrine Command in July 1973.

Though the past does not always provide a blueprint for the future, the development of joint doctrine will probably accelerate in the years to come, much as the development of Army doctrine increased in the 20th century. The possibility of a great expansion in the role and importance of joint doctrine may be surprising to some, for during much of the last half century the US armed forces have placed relatively little emphasis on joint doctrine. Instead, they have focused their efforts on developing a system of joint schooling to improve the ability of the services to work together. These efforts began with the establishment of the Army-Navy Staff College on 1 June 1943 and the National War College on 1 July 1946.⁸ Among the missions of the National War College was preparing "selected personnel of the armed forces and the Department of State for the exercise of joint high level policy, command and staff functions, and for the performance of strategic planning duties in their respective departments."⁹ The creation of other schools, such as the Armed Forces Staff College on 13 August 1946, at Norfolk, Virginia,¹⁰ provided new opportunities for education in joint matters. And the establishment of the National Defense University on 16 January 1976 as an umbrella headquarters over the joint schools provided new means for maintaining "excellence in military education."¹¹

Despite significant changes in the joint schooling system in recent decades, it has become apparent that more than education is required to guarantee that the services work together effectively. Command authority and doctrine, not merely education, cause military forces to function together. Education is simply the mechanism for ensuring the ideas are understood and implemented. To this end, the passage of the landmark Goldwater-Nichols legislation in October 1986 enhanced the power of the Chairman at the expense of the corporate Joint Chiefs of Staff and thereby altered many relationships in the joint arena that had existed for more than three decades. The legislation imposed upon the Chairman responsibility for establishing policies for joint doctrine, training, and education and gave him sufficient authority over the services to ensure his policies would be followed.¹²

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One of the earliest changes emerging from the new authority of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs was the establishment of a comprehensive process to discover and address in a systematic way voids in joint doctrine and training. This analysis suggested that something other than JCS Pub 1, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*,¹³ and JCS Pub 2, *Unified Action Armed Forces*,¹⁴ was required to furnish the US armed forces adequate joint doctrine. As a consequence, the Joint Staff and the services began writing more than 75 new joint publications. Among these was Joint Pub 1, *Joint Warfare of the U.S. Armed Forces*, which was intended to articulate an overall philosophy for the other publications.

Joint Pub 1 provides a comprehensive discussion of doctrine, defining the term as follows:

Military doctrine presents fundamental principles that guide the employment of forces. Doctrine is authoritative but not directive. It provides the distilled insights and wisdom gained from our collective experience with warfare. However, doctrine cannot replace clear thinking or alter a commander's obligation to determine the proper course of action under the circumstances prevailing at the time of decision.¹⁵

The absence of information about processes and techniques has caused some critics to deride Joint Pub 1 as being little more than pabulum. Nonetheless, if one reflects on the experience of the Army and improvements in the doctrinal arena since the publication of the landmark 1891 *Infantry Drill Regulations*, the potential for change becomes obvious. That is, by guiding the employment of the US armed forces, joint doctrine will play a large role in Professional Military Education and in the development of new organizations and equipment, and it may soon affect the entire American defense establishment in a fundamental way. In other words, the great value of Joint Pub 1 is not in what it says but in what it signals about developments in the future.

The current system to formulate doctrine within the joint community differs substantially from that used by the Army, particularly since the establishment of the Training and Doctrine Command. In the flurry of activity after 1986 that accompanied the writing of about 75 new joint doctrinal documents, the Joint Staff "subcontracted" the writing of documents among the services, the Joint Staff, and the unified and specified commands. Except for the establishment of the J-7 (Operational Plans and Interoperability), containing a joint doctrine branch, on the Joint Staff and the creation of the Joint Doctrine Center at Norfolk, the requirement to write joint doctrine was superimposed over existing institutions that previously had placed little emphasis on joint doctrine. Though the quality of the joint doctrinal publications is yet to be determined, the variety of authors, the press of deadlines, and the complexities of coordination suggest that revisions in the production process may be necessary.

As steps are taken to improve the formulation of joint doctrine, a more coherent and complete system must be established. Within this system, a major component should be a "Center of Excellence" for joint doctrine. Though such a Center may eventually evolve into something resembling the Army's Training and Doctrine Command, the first step is the marshalling of responsibility and the clarifying of procedures and relationships. Instead of responsibility being shared or fragmented, the Center should have responsibility for evaluating and writing doctrine; researching and writing historical studies on doctrine; conducting simulations to test doctrinal concepts; and conducting exercises to ensure common understanding and application of doctrine. In an ideal world the Center would be located at Norfolk, where it could take advantage of existing institutions in the Joint Doctrine Center and the Armed Forces Staff College and could establish day-to-day links with service doctrinal offices of the Army at Fort Monroe, the Air Force at Langley Air Force Base, the Navy in Norfolk and Virginia Beach, and the Marine Corps at Norfolk and Quantico. Existing service activities in these locations—such as the Army's Training and Doctrine Command at Fort Monroe—would greatly facilitate and simplify the coordination that is essential in the development of joint doctrine.

As the process for formulating doctrine evolves, some documents can continue to be subcontracted to the services, but a significant portion of the joint publications, particularly the capstone ones, must be written within the Joint Staff or the Center of Excellence. This will ensure their adherence to common themes and will minimize the effects of a fragmented system. In the Army's experience, for example, FM 100-5 should not be written by the branches at Fort Benning, Fort Knox, or Fort Sill; the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth and the Training and Doctrine Command at Fort Monroe have demonstrated a better capacity for rising above parochial concerns and writing doctrine that applies to broader segments of the Army.

The Joint Doctrine Center at the Norfolk Naval Air Station may ultimately be the best place for writing joint doctrine, but it clearly does not have that capacity today. Created in April 1987, the Joint Doctrine Center currently focuses on evaluating rather than writing joint doctrine. It analyzes documents that are written by the services and joint commands and ensures that they adhere to common formats and are distributed properly. An important step in improving the formulation of doctrine is enlarging the focus and resources of the Joint Doctrine Center and slowly expanding its mission to evaluating, revising, and writing new doctrine. Such a change will make the Joint Doctrine Center a vital component of the Center of Excellence at Norfolk.

Simulations and exercises should also be important components within the Center of Excellence. The Wargaming and Simulation Center, which was established in May 1982 under the National Defense University,¹⁶

could make significant contributions to the development of doctrine if it were linked more directly to a Center of Excellence at Norfolk. The Army has long recognized the importance of simulations to the doctrinal process, with Arthur Wagner, Eben Swift, and others playing key roles in their expanded use at the end of the 19th century.¹⁷ With the completion of the Army War College's wargaming facility at Carlisle Barracks (the Center for Strategic Leadership), the joint community will have the opportunity to use interactive war games between the Center of Excellence at Norfolk, the Army War College, the Naval War College, and the Air War College to gain important insights and information for those who write joint doctrine—as well as for those who “test” strategic concepts. Additionally, the linking of the Joint Warfare Center in Florida to the Center of Excellence would facilitate the development of useful doctrine. The Joint Warfare Center currently supports exercises conducted by the combatant commands, and its assuming a larger role in the exercising of doctrinal procedures should be nothing more than an expansion of its current activities. Just as exercises within NATO enable extremely diverse units to speak the same operational language and meet common standards, exercises could become an important instrument within the joint community to ensure common understanding and application of doctrine.



An artist's depiction of the Center for Strategic Leadership, a state-of-the-art wargaming facility now under construction at the Army War College. Among its functions, this Center will enable the joint community to use interactive war games to gain important insights applicable to joint doctrine.

As the development of joint doctrine matures, the role of Joint Professional Military Education must be acknowledged and emphasized. In particular, its study must remain embedded in all service colleges without detracting from those colleges' preparing officers for duties in their own service. One of the important insights furnished by the 1987 Dougherty Board on Senior Military Education was that the success of joint operations depends on officers in joint commands having solid expertise in the methods and organizations of their own service. The program that was established to prepare individuals as Joint Specialty Officers (in accord with the Goldwater-Nichols legislation and the Chairman's *Military Education Policy Document*¹⁸) requires officers to receive Phase I of their Professional Military Education from an accredited service school and Phase II from the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk. At the end of Phase I, individuals are expected to know basic information about joint organizations, command relationships, etc., and then in Phase II are expected to apply the understanding they acquired in Phase I. This logical and relatively efficient system enables the services to educate their officers in their basic service-specific skills and responsibilities before they enter Phases I and II of the Joint Specialty Officer program. It also guarantees that all intermediate service schools are deeply involved in the study and teaching of joint issues and that the application phase is clearly under the control of the joint community. There are many useful aspects of the new Phase I and Phase II program, but two of the most valuable outcomes are ensuring that no intermediate service school can ignore the requirement to teach Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) and that no officers are short-changed in the development of expertise in their own service.

Despite the significant improvements that have already been made, steps can be taken to improve the quality of JPME. One of the most important would be the establishment of a joint school similar to the US Army's School for Advanced Military Studies (SAMS).¹⁹ Such a school could be called the Joint Advanced Warfare School (JAWS), could become part of the Armed Forces Staff College at Norfolk, and could furnish many of the benefits to all the services that SAMS provides for the Army. Most especially, faculty and students in the school could develop special expertise in the theory and practice of joint operations, and students could be prepared and slated for positions as war planners in joint commands. The establishment of JAWS would provide the joint community greater expertise than the services in the theory and practice of joint operations. And its focus on warfighting and its level of sophistication would make it a dramatically different course than the one offered at the Armed Forces Staff College before the Goldwater-Nichols legislation.

Officers who attend JAWS should be individuals studying to be Joint Specialty Officers. A portion of those officers who have finished Phase I at

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their service's intermediate school and who are scheduled to attend Phase II—perhaps 25 to 50 a year—could be selected for the more rigorous course of study at JAWS. Because of its small size and purpose, JAWS would not replace Phase I and Phase II instruction for the great majority of Joint Specialty Officers. With a length of about six months, the course at JAWS could include Phase II in a modified format, intensive historical studies, analyses of the operational level of war, and extensive practical exercises. The course could also include an introduction to national policy and strategy as it affects joint operations. As with the Army's SAMS, the faculty could be a combination of individuals permanently assigned to the Armed Forces Staff College and a handful of exceptionally outstanding officers from all services who would serve as fellows at JAWS in lieu of attending the National War College. Assuming that JAWS attains the success of the Army's SAMS, some of those who attend or teach at JAWS could develop joint warfighting skills to their highest levels and could become the premier war planners in joint commands.

Another improvement in the formulation of joint doctrine could come from associating the Joint Doctrine Center more closely with the Armed Forces Staff College. Such an arrangement would make the latest thoughts on doctrinal issues available to student officers and facilitate the development of joint doctrine through a more comprehensive and demanding system than currently exists. One of the key lessons of the Army's experience is that the writing of doctrine cannot be completely separated from the teaching of doctrine; a symbiotic relationship must exist between the two.²⁰ Tightening the links between the Joint Doctrine Center and the Armed Forces Staff College—particularly if JAWS were also established—would give Norfolk unrivaled expertise in joint operations and make it the focal point for understanding and teaching joint doctrine.

Another component of the doctrinal process that is often overlooked pertains to the availability of historical literature on joint operations. Ironically, one of the few areas neglected by the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols legislation was the history community. In comparison to the wealth of material now available about military operations by the services, very little information is

available on the history of joint operations. Worse, little effort is currently being expended to increase the amount of available literature. The historical literature that has been written by historians on the Joint Staff pertains to the functioning of the Joint Staff, not to joint operations or campaigns. Histories about the conduct of campaigns and operation have remained the province of the services. Thus, little is available to provide the "distilled insights and wisdom" that are extolled in Joint Pub 1's definition of doctrine.

If shortcomings in available literature are to be overcome, significant steps must be taken to create a more extensive community of joint historians. The first step is the expansion of the Joint Staff Historical Office. The present office has only five people and should be increased significantly. This enlarged joint history office could complete a series of "purple" histories of joint and combined operations, as well as special studies of important joint historical issues. The next step would be the modest expansion of the history offices in the unified and specified commands. Individuals in these offices should collect and preserve documents, conduct interviews, and write command histories. Steps also could be taken to have historical detachments accompany joint task forces on contingency missions such as Urgent Fury, Sea Angel, or Provide Comfort. These detachments could be tailored according to the JTF's mission, and, though composed of representatives from all the services, could parallel the organization of the Army's Military History Detachments. The detachments should collect documents, conduct interviews, and write reports that would contribute significantly to the completion of joint histories.

As part of the expansion of the joint history community, a center must be created and given responsibility for conducting historical research on joint campaigns and operations. One possible name for such an institute could be the Joint Campaign Studies Institute. As stated in Joint Pub 1, Joint Warfare of the U.S. Armed Forces, "Campaigns of the US armed forces are joint; they serve as the *unifying focus* for our conduct of warfare."²¹ In a similar sense, historical studies of joint campaigns could provide much useful information for the formulation of joint doctrine. If a Joint Campaign Studies Institute were established, it should be part of the Armed Forces Staff College and should be modeled after the Army's Combat Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth. Steps would have to be taken, however, to ensure that it remains focused on the publication of historical literature and does not become completely absorbed by the demands of daily classroom presentations.

In sum, the development of appropriate joint doctrine in the future could become more efficient and effective with the establishment of a system with a Center of Excellence at Norfolk as its head. Without a coherent *system* with precise responsibilities and relationships, the efforts of those who develop joint doctrine will never be as successful as they should be. As the emphasis on joint doctrine increases and a more coherent system emerges, the

Center of Excellence at Norfolk should initially have links to the Joint Doctrine Center, the Armed Forces Staff College (including the Joint Advanced Warfighting School), the Joint Warfighting Center, the Wargaming and Simulation Center, and the Joint Campaign Studies Institute. Over time, the Center of Excellence should evolve from its status as monitor and coordinator of joint doctrinal formulation to having paramount responsibility. Ultimately, the Center should become a Joint Command, probably on the analogy of the National Defense University.

Although much work remains to be done to establish a proper system for formulating excellent joint doctrine, the appearance of Joint Pub 1, *Joint Warfare of the U.S. Armed Forces*, clearly signals an acceleration in its development. As with the publication of the Army's 1891 *Infantry Drill Regulations*, the appearance of Joint Pub 1 does not guarantee the importance of joint doctrine will increase dramatically in the near future. Nonetheless, the first step has been taken, and the direction, number, and pace of the next steps must be determined. The path may be long, but the goal is clear. Those who formulate joint doctrine must work with the best possible chance of success.

NOTES

1. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 1, *Joint Warfare of the U.S. Armed Forces* (Washington: National Defense Univ. Press, 1991).
2. For a history of the field manual, see Virgil Ney, *Evolution of the United States Army Field Manual, Valley Forge to Vietnam* (Fort Belvoir, Va.: Combat Operations Research Group, 1966).
3. Silas Casey, *Infantry Tactics for the Instruction of the Soldier, A Company Line of Skirmishers, Battalion, Brigade or Corps d'Armée* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1862).
4. William A. Ganoe, *The History of the United States Army* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1942), p. 285.
5. US War Department, *Infantry Drill Regulations, United States Army* (Washington: GPO, 1891).
6. US War Department, *Field Service Regulations, United States Army* (Washington: GPO, 1905).
7. Ganoe, p. 448; Maurice Matloff, ed., *American Military History* (Washington: GPO, 1969), pp. 348, 351.
8. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Secretariat, Historical Division, Special Historical Study, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Education System, 1943-1986* (Washington: typescript, 1988), p. 2.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
13. Joint Chiefs of Staff, JCS Pub 1, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington: GPO, 1987).
14. Joint Chiefs of Staff, JCS Pub 2, *Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF)* (Washington: GPO, 1986).
15. Joint Pub 1, p. 5.
16. *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Education System, 1943-1986*, p. 48.
17. Boyd L. Dastrup, *The U.S. Army Command and General Staff College: A Centennial History* (Manhattan, Kans.: Sunflower Univ. Press, 1982), p. 35.
18. Office of the Chairman, The Joint Chiefs of Staff, CM 344-90, *Military Education Policy Document*, 1 May 1990 (Washington: typescript, 1990), *passim*.
19. See Ike Skelton, "JPME: Are We There Yet?" *Military Review*, 72 (May 1992), 2-9.
20. For a more complete discussion of the relationship between education and doctrine, see Robert A. Doughty, "The Command and General Staff College in Transition, 1946-1976," Special Study Project, Department of Strategy, US Army Command and General Staff College, May 1976, pp. 109-23.
21. Joint Pub 1, p. 45.