

# FORUM & FEATURES



## Amphibious Warfare School



CAPTAIN ERNEST W. COOLER III

The art of amphibious warfare is uniquely suited to the United States Marine Corps. Or perhaps it is the Marines who are uniquely suited to the art of amphibious warfare.

The Corps began studying this form of carrying the battle to the enemy before World War I, and the ensuing years brought the problem of executing amphibious landings into sharper focus. At the time, the future of the Marine Corps seemed to include the employment of this infant art in the protection of U.S. interests in the Pacific. By 1934 it had become apparent that Marine officers needed formal training in amphibious warfare, and the Marine Corps Amphibious Warfare School (AWS) was established.

The School should be of special interest to Army officers, because each year several of them are selected to attend along with officers from other services and other nations.

The Amphibious Warfare School (the equivalent of the Army's branch officer advanced courses) is conducted once each year by the Marine Corps Development and Education Command at Quantico, Virginia. It begins in late August and lasts for 39 weeks. Each class consists of about 190 officers, including about 14

foreign military officers, an occasional U.S. Navy officer, and several U.S. Army officers of various branches.

Just what is it that these Marines do for 39 weeks in AWS that would interest an Army officer? For one thing, an Army officer who graduates from the course receives credit for attending an advanced course. For another, the instruction he receives and his association with the Marines make it a valuable experience.

Unlike an Army officer advanced course, the AWS places more emphasis on staff-oriented tasks than on the maneuver and administration of a company. The principal objective of the course is to train officers to operate as members of a staff in the various elements that make up a Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF). The instruction focuses on developing the students' background knowledge of the various types of Marine Corps units, their organizations, and their missions.

After the basic building blocks of amphibious operations and of the MAGTF have been established, the last four months of the school are devoted primarily to the tactical employment of these elements in the form of Marine Amphibious Units

(MAUs), Marine Amphibious Brigades (MABs), and Marine Amphibious Forces (MAFs). During this time, the students occupy different staff positions and work on various kinds of operations.

Although precise staff planning is demanded, equally important is a firm understanding of the enemy threat that exists on the potential battlefields of the world. To foster an appreciation for the Threat's present capabilities, the School's faculty members take advantage of the resources of the intelligence community in the Washington, D.C., area for the School's guest lecturer program. These guests present the basic Threat capabilities and also keep the students informed of the latest innovations in Soviet technology, tactics, and doctrine.

### ELECTIVES

Another interesting and valuable diversion from the classroom routine is provided by the electives program. For at least six hours per week, the students have an opportunity to broaden their horizons in several fields by taking up to three elective courses. The topics range from third

world terrorism to the Civil War, from mechanical forces on the modern battlefield to Infantry MOS improvement. Still other courses offer graduate credit in management from George Washington University.

These electives allow the students to conduct extensive study in areas that either improve the skills they already have or to open entirely new fields of interest. During one of the elective periods, all students must take a course in effective writing, with the emphasis on grammar and composition in military writing.

The physical fitness portion of the course consists of two hours set aside daily for lunch and what is called the Physical Excellence Program. These two hours, usually from noon until 1400, are normally spent in the gym or out running three to ten miles. Those who choose not to run or work out are subjected only to the disapproving glances of their peers.

As with most things, however, a day of reckoning comes in the Marine's routine of physical training (or lack of it, as the case may be), for once in the fall and once in the spring the Physical Fitness Test (PFT) is administered. While the scores are nor-

mally as expected from good Marines, the few who have spent an hour or two too many in the lunch line instead of in the gym must embark upon a "conscientiously applied program of physiological metamorphosis" and retake the test later. The PFT itself consists of bent-leg situps, pullups, and a three-mile run.

Throughout the course, the best lessons for Army officers come not from studying the mechanics of backloading and crossloading amphibious shipping or even Napoleon's maxims of war. Rather, they come from the daily association with the officers of the Marine Corps, of our other sister services, and of our allies.

The benefits of having Marines and Army officers get a close look at each other are obvious. And the benefits of having some Army officers who understand the inner workings of MAUs, MABs, and MAFs cannot be disputed. But the real treasure found in this school is the appreciation the Marines have for their traditions. This is a quality that until recently was all but lost in the Army, but which now seems to be enjoying a renaissance.

Any Army officer who wants to at-

tend the AWS should have a good background in TOW assignments and a solid understanding of how the Army intends to win the next war.

The Army's Military Personnel Center selects the officers to attend the course. An Infantry officer who is interested, therefore, should request the AWS in lieu of IOAC on his preference statement, because his chances are a lot better if Infantry Branch knows that's what he wants.

Further information on the school can be obtained from the various assignment officers at MILPERCEN or from the Director, Amphibious Warfare School, MCDEC, Quantico, Virginia 22134.

CAPTAIN ERNEST W. COOLER III, a 1973 ROTC graduate of Clemson University, is now serving as an Assistant Professor of Military Science there. He has completed the Airborne and Ranger Schools and the Marine Corps Amphibious Warfare School. He has served as a platoon leader in rifle, support, and TOW platoons with the 3d Armored Division and as a company commander in the 1st Infantry Training Brigade at Fort Benning.

# ANGLICO

MAJOR WILLIAM R. JONES



feature

ANGLICO. Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company. A special kind of United States Marine Corps unit that does not support its own kind. Rather, it exists to support U.S. Army or Allied units when those units operate with or near a Marine air-ground task force — usually in amphibious operations — or when they are to be sup-

ported by U.S. Navy or Marine Corps air elements or by naval gunfire.

An ANGLICO is made up of supporting arms specialists. It has its own vehicles, radios, and cryptographic gear and can support the committed elements of an Army division. Its members are organized into teams that can co-locate with each Army

command level from a company on up. Thus, a brigade platoon contains enough Marine Corps and Navy personnel to support the committed elements of one Army brigade. If necessary, a team can be shifted from one platoon to another.

When a full ANGLICO deploys to support an Army division, the