

## Letters . . .

### JOINT COORDINATION

**To the Editor**—The article entitled “The Evolution of Joint Warfare” by Williamson Murray that appeared in the last issue (*JFQ*, Summer 02) might well have discussed an essential ingredient of jointness, command relationships. Rivalries among senior officers with strong personalities often muddied the waters in the past. Many were not as wise as General Winfield Scott, the canny old soldier who led the Army at the start of the Civil War. He was well versed in amphibious operations as a result of his experience during the Mexican War. In planning the expedition to seize seaports along the Carolina coast in October 1861, he instructed that a commander on land would not be subjected to orders from a commander at sea, or vice versa.

Such relations became an issue on Guadalcanal in 1942, when the amphibious force commander attempted to dictate operations ashore. The matter was resolved by senior Navy and Marine Corps commanders in the area. The Navy would remain in charge until the landing force was established under

its commander. After that the landing force commander ran the show. This convention still obtains for Navy-Marine operations.

Murray does well in rehearsing the course of joint warfighting. Perhaps now he might turn his attention to a more complex subject, the evolution of combined and coalition warfare.

—Col Franklin Brooke Nihart, USMC (Ret.)  
McLean, Virginia

### JTF STAFFS

**To the Editor**—The Armed Forces invest a lot of time to train officers who, in turn, then spend years in units to become professionals. Eventually some are assigned to staffs. They might attend staff college before or early in their tours. And as they become proficient as staff officers, they may not remain equally proficient in their combat specialties.

Most staffs function pretty well on a daily basis. But when a crisis arises it may be necessary to partially gut unified and component commands to organize JTF headquarters. This process disrupts the competence of staffs while demanding much from personnel who lack the time to learn and

apply joint operation planning and execution system procedures, develop relations to accomplish their tasks, and cope with routine administrative affairs.

Joint Pub 5-0, *Doctrine for Planning Joint Operations*, states that “principal players need to know what others are doing. All players need to know what is expected of them.” JTF members must develop such an appreciation. That may sound like an endorsement of standing joint force headquarters, but they are not the only option. Instead of taking assets from unified commands for headquarters, it may be better to retain such organizations and, in a crisis, put routine duties on hold and refocus existing staffs. In that way relationships remain intact, which preserves organizational efficiency. JTFs do not always communicate effectively with the staffs of combatant commands.

Finally, when establishing a standing joint force headquarters, its staff should come from unified or component commands with a minimum of two years experience.

—Thomas G. Patterson  
Plan and Policy Directorate  
U.S. European Command

## On the Web

# merln

The Military Education Research Library

Network (MERLN) provides access to military education libraries in the United States and abroad.

**MERLN** offers the combined resources of the largest and most comprehensive collections of military information in the world by providing access to library holdings and electronic resources of participating institutions.

<http://merln.ndu.edu>