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**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
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**TOPGUN FOR THE IRREGULAR WAR FIGHTER:  
A PROVEN SOLUTION TO A NEW PROBLEM**

**By**

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**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

**10 MAY 2010**

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## **Abstract**

### *TOPGUN for the Irregular War Fighter: A Proven Solution to a New Problem*

The emergence of Irregular Warfare (IW) as the joint forces' primary focus has, for the first time, sparked a large-scale education and training effort for the first time outside of the Special Forces community. The rapid growth of IW centers of excellence and academic engagement has resulted in a collection of organizations and efforts that is not well coordinated or controlled. This paper explores the stovepiped structure of the current IW effort, and the resultant deficiencies in educating and training the joint forces. An innovative application of the training model first implemented by the U.S. Navy Fighter Weapons School (TOPGUN) represents a promising mechanism for sustaining IW fundamentals as a core capability, while also achieving a more balanced overall capability.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The United States' Irregular Warfare (IW) education and training apparatus is not optimized to disseminate the collective knowledge, doctrine, and best practices across the joint forces in the near or long term. The key to providing the future operational commander with a force capable of succeeding in both conventional and irregular warfare is not a technical solution, nor does it result solely from updating doctrine and training. It will be possible only if a change to the military culture occurs throughout the joint forces.

The social scientist Edgar Schein defines culture as, "A pattern of shared basic assumptions that [a] group learned as it solved its problems...that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members."<sup>1</sup> The military's culture is similarly shaped through its traditions, experiences, and solutions to problems. In essence, military culture is perpetuated by the way the services educate and train personnel at all levels. Dr. Schein also asserts that changing an organization's structure is a highly effective mechanism in changing its culture.<sup>2</sup>

An analogous cultural transformation took place in the U.S. Navy and Air Force during the Vietnam War. The organizational change that facilitated it in this case was the 1969 advent of the United States Navy Fighter Weapons School, also known as TOPGUN. The thesis of this paper is that applying TOPGUN's organizational model to IW education and training could provide a positive and lasting cultural transformation, which could improve the combat effectiveness of the future joint force across the warfare spectrum.

## **BACKGROUND**

President Harry S. Truman said, "If you want a new idea, read an old book." Irregular warfare is ready for a new idea, and it can be found in a report written in 1968 by

the late Captain Frank Ault, USN. “The Report of the Air to Air Missile Capability Review,” known widely as the, “Ault Report,” resulted from then Chief of Naval Operations, ADM Thomas Moorer’s direction to find out why the Navy was experiencing dismal aerial combat performance over Vietnam. The fifty-one-page report identified a wide range of technical and cultural problems within Naval Aviation, and made salient recommendations to correct these deficiencies. The Ault Report highlighted the loss of a critical air combat training function. “Since decommissioning of the Fleet Air Gunnery Unit in 1960, there has been a gradual loss of expertise and continuity in the field of fighter weaponry. This trend must be reversed by providing a means of consolidating, coordinating, and promulgating the doctrine, lore, tactics, and procedures for fighter employment.”<sup>3</sup> It went on to recommend that the, “CNO and COMNAVAIRPAC establish, *as early as possible*, an Advanced Fighter Weapons School...at NAS Miramar for both the F-8 and the F-4.”<sup>4</sup> It was from this recommendation that the United States Navy Fighter Weapons School was born. Graduate aircrew began to populate fleet squadrons in 1969. Their impact was dramatic: the Navy’s kill ratio rose from 2:1 to 13:1 over the next four years.<sup>5</sup>

Navy Fighter Weapons School graduates made an immediate impact over Vietnam but, perhaps more importantly, in every year since, new graduates continue to populate operational and training units where they pass on the lessons they learn in the arduous course. They are developed as subject matter experts (SMEs), who serve as the primary training facilitator and information conduit from TOPGUN to their units. More recently, utilization of the TOPGUN model has expanded to include the Navy’s patrol, helicopter, and electronic warfare communities. The USAF now operates a similar weapons school for each of its

manned and unmanned aircraft, and key warfare communities such as Space, Mission Support, and Intelligence.<sup>6</sup>

When doctrinal updates occur, the information is rapidly pushed through the network of graduates, who in turn update their respective units. New ideas also flow from the squadrons back to the school where they can be evaluated and potentially incorporated. This network provides efficient and effective reach-back to the keepers of the doctrine, and is the foundation of the organizational change that occurred in Naval Aviation. While combat success offered credibility and prestige to the school; the true impact of TOPGUN has been the lasting transformation of aviation's culture through its adherence to historically based fundamental principles, its methods for training combat aircrew, and the information conduit provided by its network of graduates. TOPGUN's first commanding officer, CAPT J. Monroe Smith, USN (Ret.), described the impact of the new organization this way. "It was a cultural thing; a complete ground-shift in the way we thought, briefed, and trained..."<sup>7</sup>

This type of organization and network is missing from the IW structure. Joint forces would benefit immensely from an organization that, in Captain Ault's words, "Provides a means of consolidating, coordinating, and promulgating the doctrine, lore, tactics, and procedures..." for irregular warfare.<sup>8</sup>

## **TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS**

In order to describe and assess the current IW education and training landscape, it is important to clarify the terminology utilized in this paper. The *IW structure* comprises all of the individual elements to include centers of excellence, academic institutions, and training facilities focused on IW. The organizational interactions, relationships, and partnerships also shape the overall structure. These interconnects are the formal and informal lines of

communication between structural elements and will be referred to as *infrastructure*. The overall structure yields a cumulative IW *effort*. Tangible material, training evolutions, or educational events are referred to as *products*.

Additionally, this paper utilizes the DoDD 3000.07 definition for IW, which includes five categories: Counterinsurgency (COIN), Counterterrorism (CT), Foreign Internal Defense (FID), Stability operations (SO), and Unconventional Warfare (UW). Much of the discussion in this paper focuses on the COIN subset due to its current relevance.

### **THE IRREGULAR WARFARE DIRECTIVE AND VISION**

The primary driver of the IW effort is the Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 3000.07, *Irregular Warfare*. Released in December 2008, the directive assigns primary responsibility for “leading the collaborative development of joint-IW relevant doctrine” to the Commander, U.S. Joint Forces Command (CDRUSJFCOM).<sup>9</sup> Three primary responsibilities are included in this directive. First, CDRUSJFCOM is responsible to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) for developing IW doctrine. Second, CDRUSJFCOM has been tasked with exploring new mechanisms to balance IW and conventional capabilities. Finally, CDRUSJFCOM has been charged with standardizing the education and training of the joint forces.<sup>10</sup> In short, USJFCOM has been designated the lead in the IW doctrine, education, and training effort.

In March 2009, GEN James Mattis, USMC, CDRUSJFCOM, published his *Irregular Warfare Vision*. This document affirms USJFCOM’s commitment to DoDD 3000.07, and focuses the tasking on two primary agents, the Joint Warfighting Center (J7/JWFC) and the Joint Irregular Warfare Center (JIWC). The JWFC is tasked with coordinating the U.S. military’s overall joint training efforts, while the JIWC specifically deals with the IW subset

for conventional forces, also known as general purpose forces (GPF).<sup>11</sup> Together, the two organizations are responsible for enabling “collaboration with services and joint academic institutions to institutionalize IW education into the military’s Professional Military Education (PME) curriculum and driv[ing] it down to the lowest levels.”<sup>12</sup> Of note, this mandate also approximates TOPGUN’s training and education role in Naval Aviation. While USJFCOM is focused primarily on conventional forces, a significant effort is underway to establish access and communications with IW expertise resident in the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). General Mattis has directed the JIWC to “partner with USSOCOM, [let there be] no light between you; locked at the hip.”<sup>13</sup> While USFJCOM has been designated the lead agency, it is far from alone in the IW effort.

### **THE STOVEPIPED STRUCTURE**

The current IW structure can best be described as stovepiped.<sup>14</sup> There are currently twenty-four independent institutions that enjoy “center of excellence” status.<sup>15</sup> Primary among these are five active duty and seven Reserve/Guard Combat Training Centers (CTCs), including the National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, CA. In addition, there are six service-specific centers, such as the U.S. Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Center, and the USAF Coalition and Irregular Warfare Center of Excellence. Centers of excellence have also been established in theater to provide the latest updates to arriving units at Camp Taji, Iraq, and Camp Julien, Afghanistan.

Additionally, there are twenty-seven government and civilian academic institutions engaged in the IW effort. In total, fifty-one different organizations comprise the IW structure.<sup>16</sup> All of these institutions contribute products to the IW effort, but coordinating and optimizing this effort is a monumental task. A complete list of the institutions

comprising the IW structure is provided in Appendix 1, which brings the scale and decentralized nature of the IW structure into relief.

Among the many centers of excellence, the U.S. Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Center at Fort Leavenworth was one of the first centers to emerge in response to the need to improve U.S. counterinsurgency education and training in 2006.<sup>17</sup> Known as “The COIN Center,” its mission is to “foster integration of COIN efforts among service components preparing to deploy or already conducting COIN operations...to achieve mastery of all aspects of COIN operations,” and to “consult on the quality of COIN doctrine and training curricula.”<sup>18</sup> While the COIN Center’s mission fulfills an important requirement, it also highlights overlapping efforts and products that have developed as the structure has rapidly expanded. For example, the COIN Center and the Battle Command Training Program (BCTP), conduct similar functions at Fort Leavenworth, but are only loosely coordinated with each other, and to a lesser degree with USJFCOM’s JIWC<sup>19</sup>; the organization tasked with joint IW doctrine, education and training in DoDD 3000.07.<sup>20</sup> This is not to say that the products generated by these organizations are not valuable, nor that there should be only one institution focused on specific IW tasks; rather it highlights the necessity for improved unity of effort. Additionally, the rapid emergence of the IW structure has outstripped the implementation of any significant command and control system, which hinders USJFCOM’s ability to meet the tasking set forth in DoDD 3000.07.<sup>21</sup>

Major Niel Smith, an armor officer and instructor at the COIN Center from 2007-2009, described the problem this way in his February 2010 *Proceedings* article. “Despite sporadic and halting efforts to incorporate [COIN] as a core competency, such instruction remains uneven in both quantity and quality throughout the Army, to the detriment of

operational performance.”<sup>22</sup> This statement represents the ongoing disconnect between doctrine, the many centers of excellence, and the education and training products delivered to the forces engaged in IW.

### **IRREGULAR WARFARE EDUCATION**

Irregular warfare education is available from multiple sources and at various levels. Despite ample information being available, it is not uniform in content or reach due to the stovepiped structure. In July 2009, the CJCS released the 1800.01D Instruction, “Officer Professional Military Education Policy,” which mandates “joint professional military education (JPME) and PME must deliver a keen understanding of joint and Service doctrine and concepts in both a traditional and irregular warfare context.”<sup>23</sup> In keeping with this mandate, IW focus has been on the rise in all military institutions, from the U.S. Military Academy to the war colleges, to PME courses such as the Marine Corps’ Basic School and Expeditionary Warfare School.<sup>24</sup> The Marine Corps also provides a good example of increased IW-related PME by now including some IW education in all formal enlisted schools.<sup>25</sup> Additional IW education is facilitated through many of the centers of excellence, yet further examination will show that the overall effort is still falling short.

### **IRREGULAR WARFARE EDUCATION SHORTFALLS**

Successful implementation of the tasking in DoDD 3000.07 and General Mattis’s IW Vision is inhibited due to the stovepiped IW structure. Institutions within the IW structure are free to devise their courses of instruction independently. While this freedom over curriculum is not being questioned, it can be argued that curriculums in these wide-ranging institutions might benefit from a more standardized foundation of IW principles, doctrine and best practices. The IW structure does not possess a single entity where doctrine, fundamental

principles, best practices, and future outlook are integrated, or a deliberate vehicle to collate and disseminate this information to all of the academic elements within the IW structure. Before exploring a possible solution to the education shortfalls, it is worth examining the training side of the IW structure.

### **IRREGULAR WARFARE TRAINING**

Irregular Warfare training is typically provided to deploying forces at two levels. The JIWC through the JWFC (USJFCOM J7) coordinates training that specifically targets the staff level. The JWFC supports Combatant Commander staff training, and joint task force commander mission rehearsals for International Security Assistance Force Afghanistan, U.S. Forces Iraq, and Joint Task Force Horn of Africa.<sup>26</sup> At the brigade and battalion staff level, IW training is delivered by the Battle Command Training Program (BCTP), which integrates an instructor element into the staffs prior to commencing CTC training.<sup>27</sup> In addition, brigade and battalion staffs also make a short pre-deployment site survey to their intended theater of operations to conduct a detailed turnover with the unit they are designated to relieve. This enables the brigade or battalion staff to tailor training to their expected operating area during the six months leading up to deployment.<sup>28</sup>

At the unit level, ground forces receive dedicated IW training at one of the CTCs. Once units arrive in theater, they receive the latest updates from centers of excellence such as the COIN Center at Camp Julien, Afghanistan.<sup>29</sup> In addition to the ground forces, IW training has been introduced at the Air Force Warfare Center and Naval Strike and Air Warfare Center.<sup>30</sup> Naval surface forces have also begun to integrate IW into training events, such as the March 2009 Second Fleet Irregular Warfare Exercise conducted in the

Jacksonville Operating Areas.<sup>31</sup> Despite significant inroads, IW training is still deficient in many regards.

### **TRAINING DEFICIENCIES**

When looking at the typical IW training that U.S. forces experience, the combat training centers come into focus. The CTCs are the primary instrument for in imparting IW training and mission rehearsal to U.S. ground forces, however four significant shortcomings exist with the current training paradigm. First, integrated training at the CTCs is sequenced into the last phase of training prior to deployment. This is often too late in the cycle to enable units to truly internalize the IW doctrine and lessons learned. GEN Stanley McCrystal, USA, has demanded that forces under his command in Afghanistan “master COIN in both theory and practical implementation. Only with this understanding can you be an asset to the force and not a liability.”<sup>32</sup> In order to achieve this, IW training should be interwoven at every opportunity during the entire training and deployment cycle. If IW is to become a part of the professional culture, it must be drilled at continuous intervals, rather than delivered in one or two large doses prior to deployment. It is likely that this comprehensive focus is being accomplished in some units, but there is not a sufficient delivery mechanism to achieve this with suitable standardization and reach across the joint forces.

The next section will highlight the disjointed message that is received from instructors at the CTCs. In December 2006, the Army published Field Manual 3-24 (FM-3-24) *Counterinsurgency*. Spearheaded by Generals Patraeus and Mattis, it was the first manual that the Army or Marine Corps had published on the subject in over twenty years, and is credited with the emergence of significant unity of effort in the counterinsurgency in

Iraq.<sup>33</sup> This doctrine paved the way for JP 3-24 *Counterinsurgency Operations*, the first joint doctrine of its kind. Both of these publications represent significant movement in the direction of a military force fluent in IW doctrine. Unfortunately, this message is not being delivered universally to units in training or in theater. As of February 2010, the COIN fundamentals taught to deploying units at the NTC differed from those contained in FM-3-24 or JP 3-24.<sup>34</sup> This is described by former COIN Center instructor Major Niel Smith, “If the Army’s best training center, staffed by its best Soldiers, is bewildered two years after the doctrine was published and more than a year after the Iraq surge, the how badly confused must the rest of the Army be?”<sup>35</sup> He highlights erratic performance in theater, resulting from an inconsistent message being received at different levels and in various units. “This leads to confusion and distrust among the local population, as a new unit arrives every 8 to 12 months with its own theory of operation.”<sup>36</sup> This inconsistent comprehension and internalization of doctrine can be summarized as a lack of standardization, and points back to the stovepiped structure. Despite some success in theater since the implementation of IW doctrine, it has not yet become standardized within the military’s professional culture.

A third criticism of CTC training is that the lessons taught are often too heavily reliant on individual experience.<sup>37</sup> At an interview at the U.S. Naval War College, a Marine Corps Battalion Operations Officer described much of the CTC training his unit received at Twentynine Palms in 2008 as “too experienced based.”<sup>38</sup> Instructors would too often say, “Always do it this way, because that’s how I did it when I was over there.”<sup>39</sup> Training weighed too heavily on individual experiences does not necessarily equate to best practices. In General McCrystal’s words, “If a tactic works this week, it may not the next.”<sup>40</sup>

The fourth problem inherent in the heavy reliance on CTCs cuts at an overarching problem inherent in today's training paradigm – achieving a balanced force. The mandate to create a force balanced in irregular and conventional capabilities is found in both DoDD 3000.07 and General Mattis's IW Vision in which he states, "USJFCOM is charged with achieving a balanced force where IW is a core competency."<sup>41</sup>

The combat training centers have traditionally been the source for the conventional, live-fire, combined arms exercises that are the foundation of ground forces' conventional capabilities. This conventional training has given way almost exclusively to IW training. The Commandant of the Marine Corps illustrated this point in a January 2010 speech. "In 2003 the Corps did ten of those a year. Now it does none. Instead, the desert training base at Twentynine Palms, California, is used mostly to prepare Marines for Afghanistan."<sup>42</sup> General Conway went on to describe the impact of sustained IW. "The Corps lacks a cadre of officers with maritime expertise...A growing number of rank-and-file Marines have never stepped foot on a ship."<sup>43</sup>

The Marines are not unique in their concern about unbalanced training. Brigadier General Donald Campbell, USA, the commanding officer of the Army Armor Center at Fort Knox wrote, "We must concede that [core] competencies are slowly declining as we concentrate solely on counterinsurgency operations."<sup>44</sup> The general's statements highlight the current imbalance between conventional and irregular warfare training and readiness. Infusing IW education and training across the entire joint force is currently requiring the bulk of training that deploying forces receive, and points to a troubling vulnerability in the future.

American history shows that the U.S. armed forces have yet to retain a balance in competencies from one conflict to the next. U.S. Naval War College Professor and retired

Special Forces Colonel John D. Waghelstein makes the case that the Army's inability to prepare a balanced force has existed since the 1755 Indian Wars. Professor Waghelstein points out that despite IW being present in the majority of American conflicts, the Army has not stayed focused on IW post war. Its culture has always stayed true to conventional warfare.<sup>45</sup>

This cuts to the heart of the debate going on within the services regarding how best to train for current and future conflicts. The military's culture remains divided between those favoring conventional versus those favoring irregular capabilities.<sup>46</sup> Organizations store what they have learned in their culture and documentation.<sup>47</sup> If the military culture does not retain a focus on IW, history suggests that the lessons learned will again be lost. If this hypothetical subjugation of IW occurs, which of the fifty-one elements of the IW structure will survive the realignment? Will the remaining organizations truly encapsulate the doctrine, fundamental principles, and hard-won lessons learned? The way to assure sound answers to these questions are found in an old book written by Captain Ault, which spawned an enduring institutional cultural change in the Navy and Air Force, despite vast changes in technology, diverse air combat environments, and expanding missions.

### **PROPOSAL: A CULTURAL CHANGE FROM A NEW SCHOOL**

A more effective model exists to enable USJFCOM to achieve its commander's IW Vision and the tasking set forth in DoDD 3000.07. Using the TOPGUN model as its basis, USJFCOM could create a new organization called the Joint Irregular War Fighter School (JIWFS) as part of the JIWC. (See Appendix 2 for discussion of possible locations for the JIWFS.) The JIWFS and its associated network of graduates represent the organizational

change that will drive a transformation in the joint forces' culture. The JIWFS could establish lasting and balanced IW competency through three primary means.

First, it should be established as the information management center, or fusion cell of the IW structure.<sup>48</sup> As such, it would also be the designated keeper of joint IW doctrine. In order to incorporate and disseminate the best doctrinal ideas and IW products from the overall effort, the school should be structured around key partnerships with other centers of excellence in accordance with DoDD 3000.07. For example, a partnership with the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare center would enable Special Forces' expertise to be efficiently accessed and incorporated into joint doctrine and best practices.

Second, in accordance with its role as the IW fusion center, the JIWFS should be established as the central hub for a network of graduates, whose primary purpose is to teach and distribute clear and consistent IW information throughout the joint forces. This purpose equates to the concept of information management in joint terminology.<sup>49</sup> As the Army and Marine Corps *Counterinsurgency* field manual states, “[A] network organization inherently deletes or bypasses stovepipes that slow or inhibit decision making and coordination.”<sup>50</sup>

Third, the JIWFS should develop a demanding course of study that will act as a mechanism for “consolidating, coordinating, and promulgating the doctrine, lore, tactics, techniques and procedures...” for irregular warfare.<sup>51</sup> In addition, the course should focus on teaching students to be teachers of IW. Similar to the way TOPGUN produces Strike Fighter Tactics Instructors (SFTIs), the JIWFS should create Joint Irregular War Fighting Instructors (JIWFIs) with emphasis on the word “instructor.” Upon graduation, they return to their units with the ability to effectively teach the subject matter, and integrate IW doctrine and practices into training. As it did for the Navy and Air Force, this would also provide the joint

forces with an infrastructure that gains strength and drives cultural change as the network of graduates expands.

### ***WHO TEACHES WHAT TO WHOM AT THE JIWFS?***

The JIWFS's initial staff of instructors should be the anvil, upon which the school's reputation and the quality of its graduates are forged. The first JIWFS staff should represent the spectrum of the joint forces, but be grounded in experience from both conventional and special forces operators. Similar to the way the Navy and Air Force weapons schools select staff instructors, JIWFS instructors should be selected from top-performing officers and non-commissioned officers rotating from operational tours. These E-5 to E-7s and O-3s to junior O-4s, should be highly experienced, motivated, and respected in their communities.

The initial cadre of instructors would be responsible for generating the course curriculum. Generally, the syllabus should provide graduates with a firm grasp of fundamental IW doctrine, principles, and practices supported by historical examples. One of TOPGUN's lasting contributions has been the organization's ability to remain grounded in past lessons learned, while also focusing on the current fight and potential future threats. A similar past-present-future outlook would serve the JIWFS equally well.

The key to the curriculum would be providing students with a solid understanding of what the entire joint force brings to the IW arena. Students should be selected from all warfare specialties, interagency, and multinational units. Student selection should mirror that of the instructors in terms of caliber, motivation, and career potential. Furthermore, key billets throughout the IW structure and combat units should be coded to require a JIWFI. For example, making this course a prerequisite for a portion of CTC instructors would alleviate examples of doctrinal inconsistencies previously highlighted, and lend further credibility to

those in teaching positions. This would significantly enhance the infrastructure and standardization amongst the many centers of excellence.

### **COUNTERARGUMENT**

One could argue that the nature of IW training differs significantly enough in scale and method from aviation training that the TOPGUN model loses its applicability. First, the relatively small scale of the target training audience in aviation is incompatible with the much larger scale of the joint forces engaging in IW. For example, TOPGUN conducts four ten-week classes, which yield approximately one hundred aircrew and airborne intercept controllers (AICs) graduates per year. The joint forces would require many more JIWFIs to populate the requisite billets.

In rebuttal, the proposed JIWFI course would require less than half the time in weeks and a fraction of the per-student cost, enabling it to operate on a much larger scale. In TOPGUN's case, the model is not limited by the number of students; rather it represents a balance between the high operating costs, and graduate production requirements. The return on the investment comes when these graduates are nested in training units and fleet squadrons. The proposed JIWFIS would operate on a much larger scale, but the benefit would be the same for the joint forces; embedded unit-level expertise, networked to the central IW hub.

Furthermore, while ground forces currently receive IW training prior to deploying, this training is provided to the exclusion of conventional training, and is limited to certain warfare communities. In contrast, the TOPGUN model enables information and training to reach to a much larger audience than can actually attend the school. Embedding IW SMEs

directly into units increases training efficiency, information management, and IW expertise throughout the joint forces.

Second, TOPGUN, and similar aviation training programs are focused on disseminated technical knowledge, physical skill sets, and cognitive skills relating to weapon systems, tactics, and situational awareness. This is where the training methodology becomes less compatible with the more nebulous and complex nature of IW. On this point, the TOPGUN model is not a perfect analogy, but the utility is still highly transferable.

The TOPGUN model is proven in its ability to distribute standardized doctrine, fundamentals and best practices. The previous education and training deficiencies discussions highlight the joint forces' requirement to do the same. TOPGUN's model is ideally suited to this task regardless of the nature of the education and training. The model provides a lead center connected to the rest of the IW structure and combat units through a network of embedded SMEs. As it has done for military aviation, this would enable a professionalization of the standards, a conduit to communicate them, and the framework to sustain IW in the joint forces' professional culture. In the midst of an IW conflict, this model provide the fastest means for passing newly discovered practices vertically back to the JIWFS, and horizontally to other JIWFI's facing similar challenges in theater. Furthermore, when not engaged in IW operations, the model would ensure that IW doctrine, dialog, and training opportunities are injected into conventional education and training, while providing units with an information conduit and a standard bearer. This would be especially beneficial to the future force if CTC training shifts back to conventional disciplines.

A final counter argument is that there is not sufficient time in career paths or deployment cycles to send top performers to teach at this school, or attend as students.

TOPGUN had to overcome this same mindset in its early years. Some senior officers in the Navy did not hold the school in high regard, and not all squadron commanders wanted to support it with aircrew, maintainers, and aircraft. Over time, the results validated the program to the extent that the naysayers were quieted. A young JIWFS will likely have to deal with similar issues, but these could be stifled by strong support from the Joint Chiefs of Staff down. In addition, while the manpower draw is not inconsequential, it is precisely the manpower that will affect the cultural change. Field Manual 3-24 states that [IW] success requires, “Establish[ing] rapid avenues to ensure dissemination of lessons learned.”<sup>52</sup> The JIWFS network of graduates would provide this avenue. In order to sustain IW competency for the joint forces, the time and money must be spent to properly man the JIWFS.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

“Armies that successfully defeat an insurgency do so because they are able to overcome their institutional proclivities to wage conventional war and learn how to practice [IW] despite themselves.”<sup>53</sup> The stovepiped IW structure inhibits USJFCOM from providing a force balanced in warfare capabilities. The JIWFS idea is an innovative application of a proven model. Instead of molding units en masse as they flow through training evolutions, the proposed school adds an embedded mechanism directly into all units comprising the joint forces and interconnects them through a network. The creation of a JIWFS will extend USJFCOM’s reach and relevance, while facilitating information management and unity of command and effort. The proposed school and its associated network are directly in line with DoDD 3000.07 tasking and General Mattis’s Irregular Warfare Vision to develop doctrine, educate, and train a balanced joint force.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Joint Irregular War Fighter School should be created based upon the Navy Fighter Weapons School model. In order for the JIWFS to succeed, buy-in must be strong and unwavering at the Joint Chiefs and Combatant Command levels. It is recommended that these flag officers instill their support down the operational and administrative chains to include each service's respective personnel management commands, thus enabling the JIWFS to draw the proper funding, authority, instructors and students. In 1969, TOPGUN was commissioned as an echelon II command, which meant that the school's commanding officer reported directly to the Vice Chief of Naval Operations.<sup>54</sup> This provided key backing by Naval leadership in during TOPGUN's early years. The JIWFS should be commissioned with a similarly direct of chain of command to CDRUSJFCOM, to provide it with the support and efficiency needed to reach its potential.

Formally establish the JIWC as the lead within the overall IW structure. This recommendation is aimed at breaking down the stovepiped structure and facilitating improved coordination and cooperation for both JIWC and its nested JIWFS. USJFCOM should strive to streamline the IW structure through logical mergers, and formalized chains of command. This would provide USJFCOM with a mechanism to create unity of command in the IW structure, and accomplish the goal set by General Mattis in his IW Vision, to, "Craft a way forward and prioritize specific efforts necessary to achieve the objectives in DoDD 3000.07."<sup>55</sup> These recommendations combine to create an organizational change that will sustain IW culture and capability for the joint forces far into the future.

**APPENDIX 1**  
***The Stovepipes - Irregular Warfare Centers of Excellence 2010***

Combatant Commands

1. USJFCOM, Joint Irregular Warfare Center (JIWC)
2. USSOCOM Irregular Warfare Office

United States Army

3. U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School
4. US Army Asymmetric Warfare Group
5. US Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute
6. US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency (COIN) Center

US Army Combat Training Centers

7. National Training Center, Fort Irwin, CA
8. Camp Taji, Iraq
9. Camp Julien, Afghanistan
10. Joint Warfighting Center, Suffolk, VA
11. Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, LA
12. Joint Maneuver Readiness Center, Hohenfels, Germany

FORSCOM/1<sup>st</sup> Army (Reserve and Army National Guard) CTCs

13. Fort Carson, CO
14. Fort Meade, MD
15. Fort Dix, NJ
16. Fort McCoy, WI
17. Camp Atterbury, IN
18. Fort Riley, KS
19. Camp Shelby, MS

United States Marine Corps

20. USMC Center for Irregular Warfare
21. US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency (COIN) Center

United States Marine Corps Combat Training Centers

22. U.S. Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, CA

United States Navy

23. The Navy Irregular Warfare Office

24. The U.S. Navy John F. Kennedy Center for Irregular Warfare. (A subordinate command to the Office of Naval Intelligence in Washington, DC)

#### United States Air Force

25. The USAF Coalition and Irregular Warfare Center of Excellence  
(A subordinate command to the USAF Warfare Center Commander)

### ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

#### Military/DoD

1. The Center on Irregular Warfare and Armed Groups at the Naval War College
2. The Center for Complex Operations at the National Defense University
3. The Combating Terrorism Center at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point
4. Naval Postgraduate School, Center on Terrorism and IW USSOCOM, Joint Special Operations University
5. The Marine Corps University
6. Air Force Special Operations School
7. National Defense University, College of International Security Affairs
8. The Counter-Terrorism Fellowship Program

#### Interagency

9. Department of State Foreign Service Institute
10. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Law Enforcement Training Center
11. The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism
12. The United States Institute of Peace
13. The Center for Interdisciplinary Policy, Education, and Research on Terrorism
14. The National Center on the Psychology of Terrorism

#### Civilian

15. International Center for the Study of Terrorism, Pennsylvania State University
16. The Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence, The University of St Andrews, Scotland, UK
17. Center on American and Global Security, Indiana University
18. The RAND Corporation
19. The McCormick Foundation

#### Additional Academic Institutions engaged in IW Study<sup>56</sup>

- |                              |                          |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 20. Harvard University       | 25. Princeton University |
| 21. Johns Hopkins University | 26. Stanford University  |
| 22. Kansas State University  | 27. Kings College        |
| 23. University of Kansas     |                          |
| 24. University of Alabama    |                          |

**APPENDIX 2:**  
***POTENTIAL ORGANIZATION AND LOCATION FOR THE JIWFS***

The creation of the JIWFS could provide an opportunity for USJFCOM to strengthen the IW structure by combining or partnering centers of excellence. The proposed JIWFS's mission is in alignment with the mission of the JIWC. As such, the JIWFS should be organized as part of the JIWC with a streamlined chain of command to CDRUSJFCOM. While a logical component of the JIWC, co-location in Norfolk, Virginia may not be optimal.

An interesting possibility exists in partnering the new JIWFS with the existing Army and Marine Corps COIN Center. The COIN Center represents significant expertise, but arguably does not have the mechanisms to mass-deliver a product across the joint forces. Its current mission is also aligned with USJFCOM's DoDD 3000.07 tasking; suggesting that melding both organizations could increase the efficiency and reach of each.

Fort Leavenworth might also be the appropriate location for the proposed JIWFS, as it would enable the JIWFS to better integrate the efforts of three major contributors to the IW effort: The COIN Center, the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL), and the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.

Another factor to consider is USJFCOM's interest in creating a joint IW academic center in coordination with USSOCOM and the National Defense University.<sup>57</sup> The proposed center could be established as a department within the JIWFS, which would enable the staff to integrate the efforts of the academic community and facilitate expeditious incorporation and delivery of products to the joint forces. Regardless of how the JIWFS is organized, the opportunity to improve the overall IW structure should be a primary consideration in establishing the school.

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