

# Quality Leadership as Maneuver Warfare

## A Method of Instructing and Implementing "Total Quality Leadership" in the Armed Forces

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**Q**uality, as it is understood in the context of the teachings of Dr. W. Edwards Deming (often referred to as "Total Quality Management" [TQM] or "Total/Army Quality Leadership" [T/AQL]), is in trouble in the U.S. Armed Forces today.

### Law or Lip Service?

Not, properly speaking, a doctrine, but rather, an all-encompassing culture of productivity; "Quality Leadership" has been demonstrated to be a superior method of synergistically harnessing the human resources of any organization to better accomplish its missions. It has been endorsed by the Executive Branch of the Federal Government, mandated by Congress, and adopted by the Department of Defense and the various Services. Yet, in spite of the usually forceful, dedicated, competent, and creative efforts undertaken to promulgate it within the armed forces, it is being rejected by many of the middle- and lower-level leaders whom it is principally designed to benefit.

The reasons for this rejection are many and varied. They include the notion that this is but the most recent of a series of leadership "fads," and that it can safely be depended upon to disappear if ignored. Some imagine that they are already "doing" *Quality*. Many are skeptical that *Quality* can really work as advertised. Some fear that it is



U.S. MARINES FROM KILO COMPANY, 3RD BATTALION, 8TH MARINE REGIMENT, 2ND MARINE DIVISION, BEGIN TO FORM A PERIMETER AFTER UNLOADING FROM AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT VEHICLES IN LANDING ZONE HAWK, CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C., ON MAY 10, 1996.

an invitation to anarchy. Others fear risk to their careers and their personal status resulting from such an ambitious "paradigm shift." Many feel that the present system is "good enough," and (in the absence of a crisis) there is no compelling reason to change.

The most prevalent and deep-rooted reason for this rejection is based on the fact that many cannot envision how the principles of *Quality* can be incorporated into, or even made compatible with, their roles as service-members. They see *Quality* as a culture for the office or factory,

completely alien to their needs and duties, particularly on the battlefield. They see *Quality* as being inherently "unsoldierly."

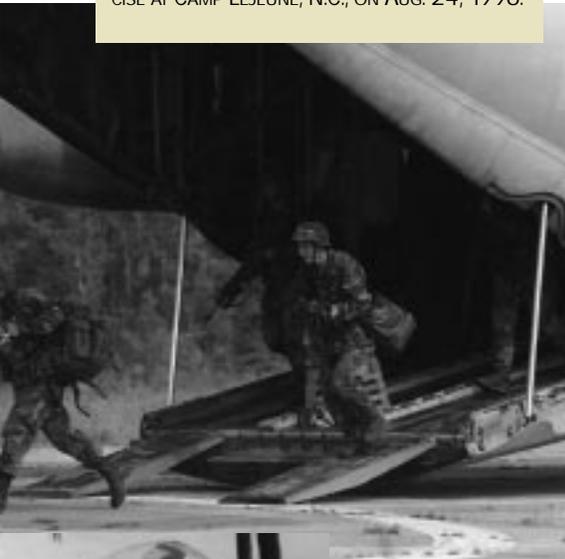
*Quality* instructors, having little or no knowledge of any history of the appli-



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cation of *Quality* on the battlefield, are ill-equipped to address these objections. In the absence of being able to transmit the principles of *Quality* in military terms that servicemembers

MEMBERS OF COMPANY 4 EXIT A U.S. AIR FORCE C-130 HERCULES AT DAVIS AIRFIELD DURING AN AIRFIELD SECURITY, CONVOY OPERATIONS, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FINAL TRAINING EXERCISE AT CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C., ON AUG. 24, 1996.



U.S. MARINE OFFICERS REVIEW THEIR PERIMETER SECURITY AT A SIMULATED U.S. EMBASSY IN THE FICTITIOUS COUNTRY OF PACIFICA DURING A NONCOMBATANT EVACUATION OPERATION EXERCISE ON JUNE 11, 1996, AT KANEHOE BAY, HAWAII.

can understand and appreciate, instructors might as well be teaching in a foreign language. Similarly bereft, upper-level leadership is resorting to simply insisting upon the full implementation of *Quality* in the hope that those who practice it, even under compulsion, will eventually accept and appreciate it. Because compulsory *Quality* is an oxymoron, and since

middle- and lower-level leaders are necessarily experts at appearing to support plans that they, in fact, do not (and because they tend to outlast their superiors), this approach is also doomed.

In short, in the absence of the adoption of an expedient that will effectively and thoroughly persuade servicemembers at every level that *Quality* is not merely compatible with soldiering, but will actually enhance their ability to “soldier,” *Quality* in the armed forces will unavoidably, yet needlessly, fail.

### Talk the Soldier’s Language

The only expedient that can remedy this, that can bridge the gap between hearing and understanding, that can translate the ideas that underlie *Quality* into a language that every servicemember can comprehend and appreciate, is the “doctrine” of “Maneuver Warfare” (a term used, in this context, by the U.S. Marine Corps and, more recently, by the U.S. Navy).

Students of military history have noted and studied that “culture” of military organization, administration, logistics, training, and operations known as “Maneuver Warfare Doctrine.” This doctrine was initially developed and refined by Prussia/Germany between 1808 and 1945; and was subsequently adopted in its entirety by Israel, which has practiced it since its re-emergence as an independent nation in the late 1940s. Other countries have also adopted it, as well as two branches of our armed forces—the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Navy. However, Germany and Israel are the only two countries for which extensive data pertaining to its use in combat are available.

“Maneuver Warfare” has been demonstrated, through sophisticated models of quantitative analysis, to be consistently significantly (20 percent or greater) more combat effective than the “Methodical Warfare Doctrine” developed by France in World War I, and subsequently adopted and refined

by many other countries, notably the United States. (The U.S. Army, until recently, practiced it in the incarnation “AirLand Battle.”)

### Not Merely A Doctrine

Students of both military history and “Quality Leadership,” have been impressed by the striking similarities between *Quality* and *Maneuver*.

- Each can be better understood through study of the other.
- Each is an entire culture (indeed, the same culture), not merely a doctrine.
- Each views leadership as an art more than a science.
- Each is more a way of thinking about problems than a rote formula for solving them.
- Each is based upon an understanding of “Profound Knowledge” (theories of knowledge, systems, psychology, and variation in *Quality*; and maneuver theory, combined arms theory, military psychology, and military history, in *Maneuver*).
- Each is designed to maximize productivity (combat effectiveness) by more fully (synergistically) utilizing the human resources of an organization.
- Each is based upon driving “fear” (narrow self-interest, careerism) out of the decision-making process in favor of a broader appreciation (of organizational “Purpose” in *Quality*, and the “Commander’s Intent” in *Maneuver*).
- Each is based upon using decentralization of the decision-making process to remove systemic barriers to initiative, creativity, and maximum performance, and to thereby unleash the full potential of the individual (“Empowerment” in *Quality*, and “Auftragstaktik,” or “Mission-Oriented Tactics” or “Mission Orders,” in *Maneuver*).
- Each is based upon speed (timely service to the customer in *Quality*, and tempo of operations in *Maneuver*).
- Each is based upon focus of attention on key individuals (serving the customer as opposed to the system

in *Quality*, and neutralizing the enemy as opposed to seizing terrain in *Maneuver*).

- Each is based upon identifying and addressing key problems in order of criticality (using analytical models in *Quality*, and the principle of “Schwerpunkt,” or “Focus of Effort,” in *Maneuver*).
- Each is based upon identifying and accomplishing that which is most readily done first (again using analytical models in *Quality*, and the principle of “Flachen und Lucken,” or “Surfaces and Gaps,” in *Maneuver*).
- Each emphasizes continuous (cyclical) improvement and innovation (using the models of the Shewhart Cycle<sup>1</sup> in *Quality*, and the Boyd Cycle<sup>2</sup> in *Maneuver*).
- Each eschews rigid dogma.
- Each offers (and delivers) otherwise unimaginable increases in productivity/combat effectiveness.
- To most cheaply, quickly, and surely achieve control over any situation involving the dynamics of human interaction (which includes all work and all warfare), each focuses its attention on, and tailors its efforts to, the underlying “causes” of all human behavior: the mind and will, rather than needlessly wasting resources directly engaging the (after) “effects” (the results of a systemic problem in *Quality*, and enemy main/combat force deployments in *Maneuver*).

The parallels are limitless. Each is a direct analog of the other, differing mainly in the environment for which it was designed (civilian in *Quality*, and military in *Maneuver*).

### A Brief History

“Maneuver Warfare Doctrine” was initially created by Prussia following the destruction of its army at the hands of Napoleon in 1806. It was developed by Prussia/Germany and adopted by Israel because both countries realized that they were surrounded by enemies, each of which was stronger than they were. They realized that, due to adverse objective circumstances, if they were to be competitive with their

adversaries (militarily viable) they could not afford battles of attrition. They would have to be faster and smarter (more efficient and more effective) than their enemies. They would have to render their enemies’ materiel superiority irrelevant through the application of superior doctrine. They would have to “fight outnumbered and win.”

Moreover, they realized that while the occurrence of individual military genius is always to be hoped-for, it can never be relied-upon. Accordingly, they sought (as the Romans did before them) to institutionalize excellence through the adoption of a system (culture) that was inherently superior in battle. The most spectacular examples of the success of this approach can be found in the fall of a militarily superior France to German arms in six weeks in 1940,<sup>3</sup> and the collapse of the combined (and vastly superior) Arab forces in the face of Israeli arms after six days of combat in 1967. Empirical data derived from countless battles, campaigns, and wars fought throughout Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, demonstrate conclusively that *Quality Leadership* (as *Maneuver Warfare*) is the most effective means of addressing the challenges of the modern battlefield.

### Not Broken, But Room for Improvement

None of this is meant to imply criticism of the way we do things now. We have expert armed forces that employ a proven and effective doctrine (indeed, AirLand Battle Doctrine was a partial adaptation of the principles of *Maneuver* to the existing Methodical Warfare Doctrine). But *Maneuver*, like *Quality*, is a complete culture; it cannot be effectively adopted piecemeal and without the dislocations that necessarily accompany true paradigm shifts. Our current doctrine is not “broken” but, even “whole,” it may still be improved (better supported by our military culture).

Ours is an effective doctrine, but it is not as fully supported by our current

“Methodical” culture as it could be. A *Quality Leadership* (as *Maneuver Warfare*) culture could provide advantages in training, administration, logistics, and operations that would enable current doctrine to achieve its full potential on the battlefield. In the competitive world of tomorrow’s battlefields, we would not want to be like France in 1940 (objectively superior, yet still defeated).

Countries have two very different military forces: one for peacetime, one for war. These forces differ in size, structure, and most important of all, culture. For all of our talk of “train the way you fight” and “Battle-Focus,” we invariably train using “peacetime” techniques and standards. During mobilization and the early phases of war, we usually waste time and blood struggling to reorient ourselves to the inevitably different demands of war. This expensive process is, at its root, a cultural transformation. Wars often end before this transformation can be completed.

One of the principal objectives and benefits of the *Maneuver Warfare* culture is that it is successfully designed to eliminate the need for this change by already being thoroughly attuned to the real demands of war (just as *Quality* is attuned to the real demands of the marketplace). In the *Maneuver* culture, all considerations that do not pertain to warfighting are ruthlessly suppressed. The successful adoption of *Maneuver* culture therefore eliminates the peacetime culture, and the costs entailed in transitioning that culture to the needs of war. *Maneuver* employs the precepts of *Quality Leadership* to be truly prepared for the “come as you are” war (witness armies of Israeli reservists routinely crushing much larger armies of Arab regulars in days or weeks, after only 24 hours of mobilization).

### Military Services Must Recognize the Need for Training

The discovery of the relationship between *Quality Leadership* and *Maneuver Warfare* has direct and dra-

matic implications for both military *Quality* and leadership-training programs; and through these, for everything else in the armed forces. In order to facilitate the realization of the potential of the existing *Quality* programs within the armed forces, and to maximize the benefit to be derived from the lessons learned by other countries in successfully adapting these principles to their armed forces, the various Armed Services should offer lectures, seminars, and workshops in the relationship between *Quality* Leadership and *Maneuver Warfare*, each as an analog of the other; essentially the same, but designed for different environments (one for business and industry, the other specifically for the military). They should conduct in-depth studies to document this relationship, and to thereby introduce a vocabulary and a method of teaching designed to make the precepts of *Quality* fully comprehensible in a military context.

It can then be demonstrated, through the use of empirical data derived from historical records (and some excellent analytical works that are already available), that *Quality* (in the form of *Maneuver*) is not only "soldierly," but also hugely effective in combat. They can use the results of these studies to create *Quality as Maneuver* curricula, with complete lesson plans, to supplement and complement existing *Quality* curricula, and to offer courses based upon these curricula and plans. This will provide a foundation for subsequent studies, curricula, and courses in the effective implementation of the culture of "Quality Leadership as Maneuver Warfare" in military units,

### A Product Much Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts

*Quality* and *Maneuver* both already exist. This proposal however, relates and combines these two heretofore distinct disciplines in such a way that each may act as a catalyst that makes the other viable in a symbiotic synergy that will result in a product much greater than the sum of its parts. The fate of *Quality* in the armed forces is at

stake, and inasmuch as even a small increase in productivity/combat-effectiveness can easily spell the difference between victory and defeat (*Quality* and *Maneuver* theories both suggest a likely 20-percent or greater increase), and great empires are sometimes lost in single battles, the fate of the armed forces, and the nation, could ultimately hang in the balance.

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### ENDNOTES

1. The Shewhart Cycle, sometimes known as the "Plan, Do, Check, Act" (or "PDCA") cycle; the "Plan, Do, Study, Act" (or "PDSA") cycle; or the "Deming Cycle" (in Japan), is a four-part, cyclic approach to problem solving and continual learning and improvement. It was developed by Deming's mentor, Walter Shewhart, in 1939, and was subsequently introduced by Deming to Japan in 1950.
2. The Boyd Cycle, sometimes known as the OODA loop (for Observe, Orient, Decide, Act), is a four-part cyclic approach to tactical problem solving and continual learning and improvement in combat. It was developed by U.S. Air Force Col. John Boyd to model patterns of fighter combat in Korea, and subsequently expanded to illustrate competitive situations in war at all levels and in all media.
3. This campaign was the third application of the German technique of "Blitzkrieg" or "Lightning War." It entailed the synchronization of artillery and air support assets to support the deep maneuver of concentrated armored and mechanized units spearheading the attack of larger infantry armies. In fact, the Blitzkrieg was the application of 1930s' technology (in the form of tanks, aircraft, and radios) to the German World War I doctrine of "Stormtroop Tactics." Blitzkrieg is therefore a manifestation

of *Maneuver Warfare* on the battlefield. It is dependent upon both technology and *Maneuver* culture to achieve its maximum effect. (By 1945, in the absence of *Maneuver* culture, none of the Allies were able to employ the same techniques with more than 80 percent of the effectiveness enjoyed by the Germans—they were able to mimic its form [technology, synchronization, concentration, etc.], but not its substance [*Quality*]).

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