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A Study of Professionalism during the Falklands/Malvinas War: The Case of the Argentine Marines (*) ()**

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This paper assesses how organizational culture affects the fighting performance of units in the battlefield. By focusing on the behavior of a group of Argentine troops during the Falklands War in 1982. Between May 21 and June 14, Argentine and British troops engaged in a fierce land battle for the possession of a group of islands in the South Atlantic known as the Falkland/Malvinas. In a campaign that a participant characterized as “no picnic,” British Marines, paratroopers, and Guards troops defeated the Argentine garrison comprised mainly of conscripted soldiers. However, Argentine Marine units especially distinguished themselves for their fighting ability. According to the author the main reason for this performance rests on their organizational culture.

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“Argentines fought well and bravely in many parts of the islands. Not all. But many. And it is those Argentine groups that are more interesting than those who did run away” (Nora Kinzer Stewart)¹

“Vaux wrote how smartly marching Argentine Marines, holding their regimental colors high, caught his eyes as they bravely marched along the muddy streets of Port Stanley. When he learnt that these were their valiant foes from Tumbledown Mountain, Vaux, his company commander, and sergeant major all had the idea of snagging those Argentine regimental flag to decorate their Marine Commando mess in England. To the Royal Marine’s chagrin, the Argentine Marines poured gasoline on their flags and burned them to ashes before the eyes of their enemies. With the typical British grudging admiration for a brave enemy, Vaux acknowledges that his brother Argentine Marines’ act of defiance was exactly the same as the British Royal Marines would have done were they prisoners of war.”²

“The Marine Corps ‘spirit’ which I cannot explain (one feels it in his body only and acts accordingly) is the reason why our’s is the greatest fighting organization in the world” (Second Lieutenant Richard C. Kennard, USMC, 1944)

*“Within the 5th Marine battalion exists a **special spirit** that provides the troops with a unique and inflexible will that pushes and obliges them to give their best performance”³*

Between May 21 and June 14, 1982, Argentine and British troops engaged in a fierce land battle for the possession of a group of islands in the South Atlantic known as the Falkland/Malvinas. In a campaign that a participant characterized as “no picnic,” British Marines, paratroopers, and Guards troops defeated the Argentine garrison comprised mainly of conscripted soldiers.⁴ Among the Argentine troops, Marine units especially distinguished themselves for their fighting ability. By focusing on the behavior of these troops, this paper assesses how organizational culture affects the fighting performance of units in the battlefield.

In general, observers have depicted the Falklands/Malvinas conflict as a one-sided show. Despite these general assertions about the poor performance of the Argentine land forces, several analysts present a more balanced judgment. According to these accounts, professionalism was a distinctive characteristic of some Argentine units, particularly the Marines.

What made the soldiers fight the way they did? The traditional and simple answer has been “cohesion”. However, this paper provides the insights for another response. In order to understand combat performance, observers have to look more deeply at how the military organizations instill the uniform values that allow their members to share the same spirit that distinguishes one group of soldiers from another. Consequently, in order to understand the performance of any military organization it is necessary to pay attention to the basic factors that help to generate cohesion. These are the visible structural features of the organization, as well as more subtle ones such as cultural features.

An analysis of the battle waged by the Marines during the conflict exposes the institutional approach adopted by the Argentine Navy, in order to confront the problems of organizing and leading men in combat.⁵ In particular, the short duration of the conflict underscores how important was their state of readiness and ability to sustain the first combat was. The performance of the Marine battalion was the product not only of good training, but also of the different organizational factors, structural and cultural, employed by the Argentine Navy. These factors, in turn, improved cohesion.

In order to explicate the cultural attributes of the Argentine Marines, we used interviews of Navy officers on active duty or in retirement as well as printed official and semiofficial articles, documents, and testimonies. Moreover, the Falklands/Malvinas campaign offers an opportunity for comparative historical research. In this case, during the same period of time, against the same enemy, within a confined theater of operations, and with the same type of conscripted soldiers, different Argentine military units showed different behavioral patterns.⁶ Only military service organizations were different.

Early sections of the paper assess the Argentine fighting performance during the campaign and that of the Marines in particular. Later sections take up the concept of

organizational culture and its relations to fighting performance. On this basis it is possible to examine the two levels of organizational factors, the structural and the cultural. The paper concludes with a comment on the effect of organizational factors by comparing the Argentine Marines and the Argentine Army. The findings should shed some fresh light on the importance of organizational culture per se in different military institutions.

Assessing the Argentine fighting performance

In general, scholars have depicted the Falklands/Malvinas War as a one-sided show. For instance, Cohen states that the British success in the 1982 war was predetermined because the Argentine troops were poorly led and trained.⁷ Others have attributed the Argentine defeat to the lack of military cohesion. In this case, the key to British success was their advantage in training, stamina, and leadership, which produced a highly cohesive force.⁸ In this same line of analysis, some observers point to the poor motivation of the Argentine conscripts.⁹ As a final example, a privileged British participant in the action considers it is fair to describe the Argentine Army as “military pygmies.”¹⁰

Despite these general assertions about the poor performance of the Argentine land forces, several accounts present a more balanced judgment. For example, Nora Stewart, an American scholar who studied the combat cohesiveness of the two armies during the conflict, maintains that “the Argentines fought well and bravely in many parts of the islands. Not all. But many.”¹¹ Stewart includes the Marines among the positive cases. Consequently, these are the cases that deserve more analysis.

The Argentine Marines defended Mount Tumbledown against the attacks of the Scots Guards during the night of June 13-14. The site of the battle was part of the inner defensive ring around Port Stanley, the capital of the Malvinas, and it has been described as part of “those areas

of the battlefield where British troops fought *professional and well-trained* Argentine groups . . . English units like [the] Welsh and Scots Guards paid a high price [for capturing this position]”.¹² The fact that Mount Tumbledown “fell only after fierce fighting” underscores “the spottiness in the quality of Argentine troop performance.”¹³

The Argentine Marine forces in the Falklands/Malvinas Theater

After the Argentine occupation of the islands, the original plan for their defense did not contemplate further use of Marine forces.¹⁴ When the political situation forced the High Command to reinforce the garrison on the islands, however, the Marines were among troops chosen to do so. The total Marine contingent sent to the Malvinas comprised 1,590 troops. Another 3,587 Marines garrisoned the Island of Tierra del Fuego.¹⁵ These last troops constituted the 1st Marine Brigade, which represented the strategic operational reserve for the South Atlantic Theater of Operations.¹⁶

The backbone of the Marine contingent was the 5th Marine Battalion (BIM 5). The Navy High Command decided to send it because it was the best prepared to fight on the kind of terrain on the islands and because it was well equipped and highly trained (specially on air cooperation and night fighting), so that its personnel was best suited for this kind of operation.¹⁷ Since 1952 the 5th Marine Battalion had been stationed near the town of Río Grande, on the Island of Tierra del Fuego, approximately 750 km away from the Malvinas. This was also the Marine training school unit that specialized in cold areas, low mountain and “monte austral” combat.¹⁸

On April 8th, the 5th Marine Battalion received orders to go to the Malvinas. Through April 12th, Marine personnel and equipment were airlifted to Port Stanley. Once the unit was totally in place, the operational theater command ordered its members to prepare defensive positions around the capital. More precisely, the 5th Marine Battalion was assigned

responsibilities for defending Mount Tumbledown, Mount William, and Sapper Hill.¹⁹ To accomplish this task, the battalion had a total force of 703 men. All its conscripts were from the class of 1962 or older, and no recently incorporated conscripts (class of 1963) were sent to the islands.²⁰ The battalion was far from complete, since only the rifle companies, the headquarters unit, and a few logistical units entered the islands.²¹ Other Marine units soon reinforced the battalion, however, including a group of heavy machine-guns with 29 men, the First Platoon of Marine Amphibious Engineers (20 men), and B Battery of the Marine Field Artillery Battalion (85 men).²²

The battalion was not the only Marine contingent rushed to the islands. Other units sent to garrison Port Stanley, Camber Peninsula, and Pebble Island included a Marine Antiaircraft Battalion (308 men), the remaining part of the Amphibious Engineers Company, a detachment of Amphibious Commandos (10 men), the Third Platoon D Company of 2nd Marine Battalion (39 men), Second and Third Platoons of H Company of 3rd Marine Battalion (65 men), two groups of anti-tank missiles Bantam (24 men), three groups of forward air controllers (12 men), a Security platoon (23 men and 18 dogs) and a Marine Command detachment (9 men).²³ All these units also saw action in the defense of the islands with positive results.²⁴

During their deployment to the islands, the Marines were well fed, and they had good clothing and improved communications equipment. During the period between their arrival and the fighting, the Marines kept busy preparing their positions, digging bunkers, cleaning their equipment, reconnoitering the terrain, and coordinating and organizing fire support.²⁵ The battalion was also well provided with entrenching tools.²⁶ These preparations soon became key elements in the strong defense that the Marines put up against the attacking British troops.

The battle for Mount Tumbledown: assessment and acknowledgment

The final combat around Port Stanley took place between June 11 and 14 on the Mounts surrounding the town.²⁷ The 2nd Scots Guards attacked Mount Tumbledown late in the night of the 13th. As the Scots Guards began the attack against the main heights of Tumbledown, they encountered fierce machine-gun fire. A British war correspondent described the action in the following terms:

Within a few minutes, Argentine snipers using night sights had killed three Guardsmen and wounded two more. The usual British formula of replying with 66 and 84 mm rocket fire seemed to have little impact on the enemy positions among the rocks. The Scots Guards could hear some of the Argentineans shouting and even singing as they fought. These were the best troops General Menéndez [Argentine military governor of the Islands] put into the field, the 5th Marines...As night wore on and the fierce firefight continued, they showed no sign of crumbling, and their main positions held firm.²⁸

The action described by Hasting and Jenkins lasted for eleven hours:

The Guards reached the last of the enemy positions on Tumbledown only after a further struggle inch by inch up the rocks, using phosphorous grenades and automatic weapons to force the enemy from his bunkers (...) The battalion had (...) captured one of the most strongly defended Argentine positions of the war.²⁹

After a long night of fighting, the remaining Marines and some scattered Army units still in possession of the battalion's command post on Sapper Hill prepared to counterattack.³⁰ But at about 12:30 pm on June 14th, the Argentine High Command ordered them to cease fighting on the islands. Argentine casualties only marginally outweighed the British. At the end of the battle, the 5th Marines had suffered a total of 61 casualties: 16 dead and 45 wounded.³¹ The Scots Guards reported nine of their number killed and 41 wounded.³²

On Mount Tumbledown, as the *Sunday Times* team explained to its readers, "the Scots Guards were to face the toughest action of all. There a well trained Argentinean marine battalion was heavily dug into a series of intricate bunkers; cut in the rock . . . The firepower of the marines was intense and impressive."³³ Likewise, the American military analyst Harry G.

Summers noted that: “as [the British] approached the main heights of Mount Tumbledown, the Scots Guards ran into heavy opposition. Instead of the hasty field fortifications that the British had faced earlier in the war, they came up against a strongly entrenched company of the Argentine 5th Marines . . . A British artillery officer described these positions as ‘exceptionally well-prepared’”³⁴

After their surrender, the Argentine 5th Marines “continued to behaved cohesively, unified, and showed a belligerent manner...they stayed together as a team”³⁵ According to Lieutenant-Colonel N. Vaux, the commanding officer of the 42nd Marine Commandos, the Argentine Marines marched smartly, holding their regimental colors high as they marched along the streets of Port Stanley.³⁶ The British historian Martin Middlebrook also has words of praise:

The Argentine Marines considered themselves to be better troops than the army units and they probably were. Their ‘rank and file’ were still conscripts, but the marine system of taking in new conscripts steadily throughout the year resulted in the unit having a much higher level of training when dispatched to the Falklands, and there were none of the younger 1963 Class recruits present. Other advantages enjoyed by the unit were its better cold-weather clothing...and it was also supported by its own Marine Artillery Battery.³⁷

From the Argentine side, assessments produced outside the Navy were similarly positive. A publication of the Army explicitly assessed the reasons for the superior performance of the 5th Marine Battalion:

[They] possessed a well-balanced set of weapons, and excellent communication equipment. But much more important, because of the Navy’s particular draft system, they had enough trained soldiers adapted from peacetime to the terrain and the extreme weather conditions . . . At the same time, the Navy’s excellent logistic support system . . . could sustain the outstanding fighting performance.³⁸

The official account of the Argentine Commission of Inquiry for the Malvinas War, known as Rattenbach Report, underscored the contrast in institutional approaches that the Argentine services demonstrated so clearly in the Falklands/Malvinas:

Teamwork spirit and higher levels of training, *professionalism* and adequate equipment. These aptitudes were shown in the land fighting during the defense of Puerto Argentino [Port Stanley]. In this action, the unit [5th Marines] established an outstanding performance.³⁹

Finally, a recent book written by the former commanding officer of Army's 3rd Artillery Group, which was part of the forces defending Port Stanley, comments that "the British say that at Tumbledown they confronted an elite Marine Battalion. I witnessed their *professionalism*."⁴⁰

Friends and adversaries alike acknowledged the superior performance of the Argentine Marine units, particularly the 5th Battalion.⁴¹ According to the different commentators what accounted for the distinctive performance was a balanced set of weapons and equipment, superior logistics, and skill in the preparation of defensive positions. The Argentines Marines also displayed a high degree of cohesion. Finally, analysts praised the Navy's system of taking and training conscripts and their resultant professionalism.

Organizational factors and fighting performance

The concept of "fighting performance" used in this paper follows that of Millet and Murray's "tactical effectiveness" which refers "to specific techniques used by combat units to fight engagements in order to secure operational objectives."⁴²

Generally, to explain the fighting performance of military units scholars tend to focus on a social psychological level of analysis, namely, cohesion. At moments, survival and victory depend on the intense cooperation of all ranks during combat. Combat cohesion has been defined as "a special bonding which implies that men are willing to die for the preservation of the group, or the code of honor of the group, or the valor and honor of the country."⁴³ Accordingly, analysts conclude that the bonding between officers and men and among soldiers at all levels determines whether or not a unit fights or runs away.⁴⁴ A high degree of cohesion is important because it assures that "a military unit will attempt to perform its assigned or charged mission, irrespective

of the situation.”⁴⁵

Besides cohesion, there are authors who move up to a societal level of analysis and explain fighting performance as the outcome of the relations between the society and the armed forces, citing in particular national character, religious beliefs, and/or ideology.⁴⁶

In between these two levels there is another level of analysis, the organizational. This includes a set of variables related to the core characteristics of the organization in which the soldiers fight. These organizational factors are also important at the moment of explaining fighting performance. Organization is defined as “an entity with a define purpose, made up of persons or members and a systematic structure.”⁴⁷ The term structure describes the formal framework or the communication and authority system of the organization.⁴⁸ Military historians, however, do not always agree on the component parts and structure of an organization. For instance, Peter Mansoor considers that organizational factors are only one of the three factors vital to combat effectiveness.⁴⁹ This group of factors determines how the weapons are organized and employed. They include doctrine, command and control, adaptability, and interservice cooperation.⁵⁰ These last three, the style of command and control, adaptability, and interservice cooperation, can stand as attributes of the organizational culture. In contrast, Robert Rush posits a different set of categories and contents.⁵¹ According to Rush, the organizational structure includes not only “the formal organization of the combat elements and the administrative, logistical, and other support elements that minister to the soldier’s primary needs” but also “the intangibles of unit history and tradition.”⁵² Consequently, Rush’s view also includes part of what we will consider organizational culture within the overall organizational structure. Both Mansoor and Rush do agree that an organization has, at least, a human component, a formal structure that combines different elements and an organizational culture.

This research also affirms that besides the human component, which is the flesh, an

organization has a tangible organizational structure. This structure constitutes the skeleton, which includes the formal organization and other tangible or visible elements such as weapons and material, number of members, and geographical deployment of its component units during peacetime. There is, however, another dimension of the organization, the intangible elements of the organizational culture. This dimension defines the personality of the organization; it shapes the internal working of the organization; and it includes the basic assumptions, the set of norms, values, beliefs, and formal knowledge of its members. These traits in turn influence the ways in which soldiers behave collectively.

This paper assumes that in order to understand combat performance researchers have to pay more attention to these structural and cultural aspects of the organization that help to mold cohesion. Consequently, the focus of this research moves from the “human dimension” to the “organizational dimension” of warfare.⁵³

Organizational factors I: Organizational structure

The appraisals of the Argentine Marines in combat previously cited show that their positive performance resulted from a balanced set of weapons and equipment, superior logistics, and skill in the preparation of defensive positions. The Argentines Marines also displayed a high degree of cohesion. Finally, analysts also praised the Navy’s system of taking and training conscripts. These are all easily observable attributes of the organizational structure. This research adds another set of structural attributes to this list.

One such characteristic of the Argentine Marines is, as one of its members put it, the “obsession for training and readiness that means we want to be prepared all the time.”⁵⁴ It is the *geographic location* of the main Marine base, Baterías, which helps to account for these characteristics. In effect, the geographic location of Baterías, which guards the entrance to the naval base of Puerto Belgrano near the city of Bahía Blanca, explains in part this “drive” for

training. Its isolated location without civilian distractions provides the perfect Spartan incentives to train more rigorously than any other unit placed near a city.⁵⁵

The garrison of Baterías also *concentrates* in one place the core of the Marine force, namely, the Marine Brigade and the Amphibious Support Force. The former “plans, regulates and supervises the instruction, training and every operative activity of the formal component units of this battle unit.”⁵⁶ During the Malvinas campaign the Marine Brigade included the Headquarters Battalion, the 1st and 2nd Marine Battalions, 1st Marine Artillery Battalion, the Support battalion, and the Amphibious Engineers Company. The mission of the Amphibious Support Force was “to provide the personnel, means and weapons systems, the support and/or reinforcements to the operating units when required as ordered by the Marine Headquarters.”⁵⁷ This outfit comprised the Amphibious Vehicles Battalion 1, Communications Battalion 1, the Antiaircraft Battalion, and the Amphibious Commandos Group.

Size is another structural factor that enhances military cohesion (*espíritu de cuerpo*). Writing about the U.S. Marine Corps, Cameron judges its small size as an advantage, noting that “as the smallest and most homogeneous of the services, the Marine Corps imposed its indoctrination on members more easily than the others.”⁵⁸ Similarly, in the Argentine case, the Marines comprise a small force existing within the context of a larger organization, the Navy. They find it easier get to know each other and learn to work together.⁵⁹ In 1982, the total of Marine troops numbered 9,500 including officers, NCOs, and conscripts. The total number of men in the Navy was 36,000, including 18,000 conscripts.⁶⁰

In this case, structural factors such as isolated geographical location, concentration of units, and small size could be viewed as acting in a way similar to what specialists on

constitutional studies name “enabling constraints.” Under the circumstances, these constraints did not weaken the organization; instead they helped to improve it.⁶¹

Another advantage that the Navy has over the other services derives from having its *own means of logistic support means*.⁶² A veteran Marine officer has underscored that “the secret of the successful logistic capacity of the Navy land units in Malvinas was that the logistics were ours. We did not depend on anybody else.”⁶³

Finally, according to some analysts, another important institutional feature distinguishing the Argentine Marines from its sister services, and critical to its organizational performance, was *the system of inducting conscripts*. As an integral part of the Navy, Marines arranged to draft new recruits bimonthly in five successive rotations, a procedure which guaranteed enough veteran conscripts during the full year.⁶⁴ The conscripts served a fixed time of 14 months. This system was adopted in the 1970s and “was one of the reasons the force was always ready to fight.”⁶⁵ Conversely, as Stewart observed of the Army:

Conscripts are inducted in March; the training cycle closes in October; a portion of the class is released in November, others in December and January, and the final group after the induction of the new class in March. Therefore, some conscripts serve as few as eight months and others their full twelve-month commitment. Thus the lowest number of men in the Army is between January and March (summer).⁶⁶

Under such circumstances, it was difficult in 1982 for the Army to be prepared to fight all year round.

Structural factors such as geographical location, concentration of units, size, own logistic support system and the draft system were distinctive attributes of the Argentine Navy and the Marine forces, each contributing to effective training and integration. The presence of these factors was important to accomplishing the mission expected from the soldiers in combat. The next section will discuss the core cultural elements of the organization.

Organizational factors II: organizational culture, military culture and fighting performance

In his historical review of the military organizations, Jeremy Black describes a pattern: while weapons and tactics are easily reproduced if they are successful, it is much more difficult to replicate “efficient military performance.” According to Black, efficiency during combat seems to be closely connected to the quality of the officers and NCOs.⁶⁷ Thus, how is it possible to create high quality officers and NCOs? A quick response to this question is to look at how the military organizations recruit and prepare their personnel to do their job. During this process organizations instill the essential values that allow their members to share the same spirit that distinguish one group of soldiers from another.⁶⁸ Consequently, in order to understand the performance of any organization, it is necessary to pay attention not only to the visible formal structural features of the organization, but also to more subtle features. These are the cultural elements characteristic of each organization. They are “socially constructed, unseen,” and are the “unobservable force behind organizational activities.”⁶⁹

A common definition states that organizational culture is “the set of basic assumptions, values, norms, beliefs, and formal knowledge that shape collective understandings.”⁷⁰ Organizational culture is stable, it acts as the social or normative glue that holds an organization together, and it expresses the values or social ideals and beliefs that organization members come to share. It also enables the organization to cope with the external challenges. According to Scheina, these ideas are considered valid because they have worked well enough.⁷¹ Most important, culture provides generally accepted ways of accomplishing tasks; it provides “tool kits” or a “repertoire” of organizational behavior. It is important to note, however, that culture does not define goals.⁷² The relevance of the organizational culture resides in the fact that “the organization continues to operate according to guidelines set by its culture and integrates exogenous changes into its established way of doing things.”⁷³

According to Kier, in military organizations, culture is transmitted to members through the training process or “indoctrination”. Military organizations as “total” organizations inculcate a common culture or spirit. That is an *esprit de corps*.⁷⁴ For example, when analyzing the case of the U.S. Marine Corps, one historian observed that their “men shared an institutionally defined relationship based on the subordination of the Marine *spirit*.”⁷⁵

While structural features are easily observable behaviors or procedures, cultural features are harder to apprehend.⁷⁶ The analysis of the data suggests the following key elements of the organizational culture of the Navy and, in particular, of the Marines.⁷⁷ While both the Navy and the Marines share some of these elements, others belong specifically to the latter.

Integration

The *educational system* of the Navy is critical in stressing integration.⁷⁸ From the beginning of the training of the young midshipman (cadete), he absorbs the idea of integration. During the first two years at the Naval Academy, instruction and training are given without separating the cadets and Marines into navy and midshipmen. In the last two years of the academy, the Marines are trained as infantry. They graduate as ensigns (guardiamarinas) in charge of an infantry platoon. After two years of serving in rifle companies, they begin their specialization training in artillery, communications, engineering, or infantry in appropriate school units. It is important to note that, unlike the Army where the lines dividing the branches are strictly established, Marines consider these specializations as mere professional orientations or as technical skills. In the Army the separation of service branches was strictly established and the cadets were trained from the beginning in separated classrooms and have separated dorms.⁷⁹

The members of the Marine unit become accustomed to working as a cohesive whole in long campaigns. According to Captain Olmedo “the exercise of the whole brigade begins every

October...It is a system operating as a whole. In this way, the Brigade is used to operate altogether in long campaigns.”⁸⁰

This activity generates integration, a situation where “everyone knows a little bit of everything and they train jointly.”⁸¹ Consequently, during the Malvinas campaign the Marines were very effective in the use of coordinated support fire.⁸² Integration was also achieved not only within the Marine force but also with other components of the Navy, namely, naval support and especially aviation.⁸³ Overall, the Argentine Navy stresses the importance of unity of action and “the concept of interoperability,” that is, the capability to operate in every geographical zone in conjunction with the other component forces.⁸⁴ In contrast to the Navy, the Army has as a core unit, the brigade, which stressed the concept of “great battle unit.” Its main problem, however, according to the interviewees, was its geographical dispersion, which made it very difficult to train jointly.

Lastly, the naval profession teaches its members how important is to work harmoniously as a well-oiled team. The personnel know that they will be confined within the small space of a ship for a long time. Under such circumstances, the crew members stay in close contact with one other and each individual is assigned an important task for the sake of the group as a whole. Moreover, the axiom that “if the ship is sunk, in the rafts all the crew members will be equal” is always present in their minds.⁸⁵

Importance of Leadership

In his study about the U.S. First Marine Division’s preparation for combat, Cameron observes that “Marines almost universally credited their accomplishments foremost to outstanding small-unit leadership.”⁸⁶ Argentine Marines are no exception to this observation. Based on his combat experience in the Malvinas, Commander Alberto Baffico identifies as the

key to the Marines' success the quality of leadership of Marine officers and NCOs. According to Baffico, leadership is exerted both by presence and by example.⁸⁷ The Argentine Navy emphasizes the leadership of personnel in practical as well as theoretical terms. Contrary to what some have said about some Argentine officers abandoning their men in the front line,⁸⁸ Baffico affirms that Marines “were not alone in the positions. There was a continuous presence of the commanding officers (leaders).” Furthermore, “in the Navy it is vital not to be an institutional leader, but a natural one.”⁸⁹ Rear Admiral (Ret.) Carlos Büsser, commanding officer of the Argentine landing forces in the Malvinas, credited Marines' superior performance to what he described as the fact that:

Officers and NCOs were always near their troops. [Moreover,] they were in very close contact to the different situations presented by modern combat; therefore, they were able to solve them in a swift and safe way.⁹⁰

In sum, to lead is “to know how to give orders in such a way that they are carried out.”⁹¹

Related to the role of leadership, some of the interviewees mentioned that Navy officers are always taught to care for the well being of their subordinates. Their “concern about the personnel is real, not formal or merely declared.”⁹² Also, for the Marines, “the man and his personal weapon are the most important weapon system.”⁹³

Discipline

As in any military institution, the Argentine Navy and Marines also emphasize the value of discipline. In this regard, two Marine officers, Vice Admiral (Ret.) Julio Bardi and Captain Enrique Olmedo, concluded that the Argentine Marines are an especially highly disciplined force. They stressed that within the force, discipline is both formal and fundamental. Marines tend to emphasize formal discipline because they are more rigid and they “manifest the fundamental discipline by abiding the formal principles.”⁹⁴ Within the Navy, Marines are best known for their care in personal presentation and in military forms.⁹⁵ As an example, a Marine officer stationed

in Puerto Belgrano observed that Navy's formal discipline was not as good as that of the Marines. Thus, "Marines needed their formal discipline as a complement of their combat training."⁹⁶

The importance of Initiative

According to the interviewees, the Marines respect independent decision criteria. That is, they stress resourcefulness, self-reliance, and the capacity to take independent action. In this case, "the ability to act by self initiative is more remarkable in the Marine force."⁹⁷ The present author's most memorable experience as a draftee in the Marine boot camp in 1978 was that the NCOs always repeated during the drill: "the private always thinks and acts." In contrast, his friends drafted into the Army were drilled with the recurring phrase: "the private does not think; he just obeys."

The importance of Planning

According to Captain Olmedo, Marine officers are educated in such a way that they develop a characteristic planning capacity. For this reason, they are usually assigned to lead planning roles.⁹⁸ During the Malvinas War, the Marine High Command worked in the planning of the invasion of the islands. Later, it planned and executed the mobilization and support operations for the Marine troops on the islands and on the continent. Finally, it was ordered to prepare numerous schematic plans. These were very general plans with the purpose of solving a very wide range of contingencies.⁹⁹ The demand for planning for every imaginable situation was so great that the personnel came to use the unofficial acronym "PAPs", meaning "purposeless plans."¹⁰⁰

The value of Tenacity

Tenacity is another value underscored by the interviewed officers. According to Captain (Ret.) Jorge Errecaborde, “tenacity is praised by the Marines.” Moreover, Marines are different not because they “are smarter but [they] are more tenacious.” Marines are taught that they must do what they say they are going to do.¹⁰¹ In this case, states Captain Olmedo, “the idea of achieving a mission is such that it has to be very hard to find out a justification for not accomplishing the mission.”¹⁰² In the Marines, training aims to teach recruits how “to overcome obstacles by creating the means to do it.”¹⁰³ Another characteristic maxim for the men was: “to overcome scarcities with ingenuity and sacrifice.”¹⁰⁴

Foresight: The Logistic culture

One the often-cited advantage that the Argentine Marines exploited in the Malvinas was their “excellent logistical support.” According to Rear Admiral (Ret.) Büsser, the Navy provisioned the Marines stationed in the islands with enough supplies of food, gasoline, medicines, spare parts and clothing to last for 180 days. Naval commanders also sent sufficient ammunition to sustain continuous fighting for 30 days.¹⁰⁵

The reasons for such foresight come from an important imperative in the Navy. The very concept of “ship” means that, in order to operate successfully, a unit has to be self-sufficient.¹⁰⁶ Because of this requirement, the Navy developed a characteristically profound “idea of foresight.”¹⁰⁷

Capacity to learn

Regarding preparation, the Navy as an institution also demonstrated a capacity to learn from past experiences. In effect, naval officers took advantage of the preparations for war against

Chile in 1978. That experience allowed the Navy to adjust its equipment and to obtain the necessary supplies to sustain a campaign in areas of rigorous weather like the Malvinas.¹⁰⁸ Argentina and Chile had a long dispute for three small islands at the eastern entrance of the Beagle Channel, at the south of Tierra del Fuego. When in 1977 an arbitration court awarded the disputed islands to Chile, Argentina declared the ruling null. Bilateral negotiations followed but broke down in the late 1978. Both countries mobilized and concentrated their armed forces in their respective southern areas.¹⁰⁹ Blackout exercises were conducted in many cities of both countries. According to Scheina:

On the Argentine side alone an army of about a quarter million men was stationed along the frontier ready to defend the few mountain passes across the Andes. This was probably the largest concentration of troops on the South American continent since the Chaco War.¹¹⁰

Both fleets concentrated on the southern waters ready to initiate the hostilities. The whole Marine force along with other Army units was placed in charge of the defense of the island of Tierra del Fuego. The Argentine 4th Marine Battalion was scheduled to land on the disputed islands. On December 22nd Pope John Paul II intervened in the dispute and announced his intention to mediate. Consequently, all military operations ceased and the condition of war readiness was canceled.¹¹¹ From this experience the Argentine Navy “learned its need for greater logistics capability.”¹¹² Later, in 1982, the logistical changes made after the mobilization of 1978 worked well.

Conclusion

After the Malvinas War, different analysts centered their explanations of the Marines' distinguished performance on cohesion, balance of weapons and equipment, superior logistic support, and skill in the preparation of defensive positions. Observers also praised their professionalism. In searching for a more comprehensive explanation, this paper also looks at

other visible structural characteristics of the Marine organization, such as geographical location, integration, the educational system, small size, the possession of its own logistical support, and the nature of draft. Most importantly, the paper also considers a dimension rarely discussed—a more subtle and unobservable one that helps to shape the spirit of the organization, its culture. In the case of the Argentine Marine Corps, leadership, discipline, initiative, planning, tenacity, foresight, and the capacity to learn have worked well, and they may be considered valid elements of Marine culture. The members of the Argentine Navy shared these basic values and beliefs, and they proved to be critical for their performance during the campaign.

A preliminary comparative analysis of the land fighting in the Falklands/Malvinas also exposed the institutional differences between the Army and the Navy in solving the problem of organizing and leading men in combat. In contrast to the Navy, the Army experienced some of the difficulties that could be attributed to an organization of larger size, with a wide geographical dispersion, a sharp distinction among branches (*armas*), and an annual system of conscription. These characteristics handicapped the Army's capacity for joint training and hindered its cohesion. Army officer veterans of the campaign summarized the problem in the following terms,

Army troops lacked combat experience in classic warfare, and convenient integration and practice on joint work. These qualities were needed in the planning and execution of the operations.¹¹³

These shortcomings were exacerbated by the lack of a campaign contingency plan in case of a full-scale confrontation with the British. Under the circumstances, the Argentine High Command rushed the troops in without much planning and preparation.¹¹⁴ Particularly, Army troops performed poorly when they were sent to the islands without their heavy equipment and support equipment. Most of them lacked sufficient field kitchens, winter clothing, guns, ammunition, communication equipment, or even spare batteries properly to support the troops.¹¹⁵ As some claimed the consequences were that in some units, the soldiers suffered from a “critical

lack of leadership” from their officers on the battlefield.¹¹⁶ Notably, the most effective Argentine Army efforts during the campaign came from the fractions or small units. As other research suggests, when they fought well it was, mainly, because to the individual efforts of junior officers and NCOs rather than the Army’s organizational backup.

The short duration of the conflict also underscores the central importance of readiness and the ability to sustain the first combat. All the difficulties seem to point to serious organizational problems spawned by an inadequate organizational culture. In the case of the Marine battalion, however, its performance was the product not only of good training, but also of the different organizational approach to the means of waging war that the Argentine Navy employed.

It could be said that the cultural features here identified are common to all the military services. Nonetheless, the Argentine Marines exhibited them conspicuously when tested under real battlefield conditions. Strikingly, during the World War II in the Pacific, a young U. S. Marine reached the same conclusion. Even when the troops deployed into the Pacific were “all American boys of the same breeding in general,” between the Army and the Marine Corps there was, as he said, “a difference in training and spirit.”¹¹⁷

This research also shows that, as the men joined the force, Marines were very successful in inculcating a “Marine pride” that seems to be a nearly universal feature of Marine forces.¹¹⁸ According to one Argentine Marine officer, “the Marines are the best troop that existed in the history of our country -to these days, ever.”¹¹⁹ These words echoed those written years before by an American Marine: “the Marine Corps `spirit' which I cannot explain (one feels it in his body and acts accordingly) is the reason why ours is the greatest fighting organization in the world.”¹²⁰

Finally, an official publication of the Argentine Navy published few years before the 1982 war characterized the 5th Marine Battalion as a particularly cohesive unit. The reasons it gave for this condition were isolation, geographical insularity, and the prevalent adverse conditions in the

area. But most importantly, it pointed to the presence of a special spirit that provided the troops with a “unique and inflexible will” that pushed them to the extremes.¹²¹ This paper is an attempt to find an explanation for that spirit.

¹ Nora Kinzer Stewart, *Mates & Muchachos. Unit Cohesion in the Falklands/Malvinas War*. McLean, Va: Brassey's (US), 1991. pp. 127-128.

² *Ibid.* pp. 104-105.

³ Armada Argentina, *Infantería de Marina. Tres Siglos de Historia y Cien años de vida orgánica 1879- 19 de noviembre- 1979* (Buenos Aires: Armada Argentina, 1979), pp. 133-134. Emphasis added.

⁴ Julian Thompson, *No Picnic. 3 Commando Brigade in the South Atlantic: 1982* (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1986).

⁵ The Argentine Marines are part of the Navy, and they hold Navy ranks.

⁶ Argentine citizens conscripted were assigned to the different services by the state lottery system.

⁷ Elliot A. Cohen, *Citizens and Soldiers. The Dilemmas of Military Service* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 172.

⁸ Jeffrey Record, "On the Lessons of Military History," *Military Review* LXV (8) August 1985, 33; Lawrence Freedman, *Britain and the Falklands War* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988) 73.

⁹ William Fowler, *Battle for the Falklands I. Land Forces* (London: Osprey Military, 1993) 27-28.

¹⁰ According to Major General Julian Thompson, commanding officer of the No 3 Commando Brigade during the campaign, Argentines "were about on par with the Italian Army at its best in the Second World War." And he continued, "this was not, of course, the fault of the soldiers, nor anything to do with their being Argentine as opposed to British. It was because they were not properly trained and motivated. The blame for those deficiencies must be laid on the senior officers, all the way to the top of their Army." (Nicholas van der Bijl, *Nine Battles to Stanley*, South Yorkshire: Leo Cooper, 1999, Foreword, p. xii).

¹¹ Nora Kinzer Stewart, *Mates & Muchachos. Unit Cohesion in the Falklands/Malvinas War* (McLean, VI: Brassey's, 1991) 127-28.

¹² Stewart, "A Case Study..." 33. Emphasis added.

¹³ Harry D. Train, "An Analysis of the Falkland/Malvinas Islands Campaign," *Naval War College Review* XLI (1) 321, winter 1988, 49. Not only was there hard fighting at Mount Tumbledown, but after the bloody encounter in Mount Longdon, Colour-Sergeant Faulkner said that "some of the Argies wounded had been injured by phosphorous grenades....One or two had bayonet wounds –very unusual in a modern battle-some were even physically mauled, literally from hand-to-hand fighting with rifle butts or anything that had come to hand. *The Argies had fought very well*" (Martin Middlebrook, *Task Force. The Falklands War, 1982*. London: Penguin Books, 1987, 352, emphasis added). Goose Green was also a bloody encounter for the British 2 Para (John Frost, *2 Para Falklands. The Battalion at War*, London: Sphere Books, 1987). See also Julian Thompson, *No Picnic*, p. 168.

¹⁴ See for example, Martin Middlebrook, *The Fight for the 'Malvinas.' The Argentine Forces in the Falklands War* (London: Penguin Books, 1990) 47-48; F. R. Aguiar et al., *Operaciones Terrestres en las Islas Malvinas* (Buenos Aires: Círculo Militar, 1985) 33-34, 60-61, 103; and Carlos Augusto Landaburu, *La Guerra de las Malvinas* (Buenos Aires: Círculo Militar, 1988) 133.

¹⁵ There was also a small Marine detachment (70 men) in the South Georgias Islands. Besides the islands and Tierra del Fuego, Argentine Marine forces were distributed in different Marine bases along the continental coast (*Desembarco* N° 160 March 1997, 41-42). According to the official report, the number of Army soldiers in the islands was 10,001 (*Informe oficial del Ejército Argentino*, t. 2, Anexo 21).

¹⁶ Pablo Arguindeguy and Horacio Rodríguez, *Las Fuerzas Navales Argentinas. Historia de la Flota de Mar* (Argentina: Instituto Browniano, 1995), 319.

¹⁷ *Separata de Desembarco* N° 16 (1996), 14-15. Rear Admiral (IM) (Ret.) Carlos Büsser also mentions geographical proximity as a reason for the decision (Emilio Villarino, *Batallón 5. El Batallón de Infantería de Marina N° 5 en la Guerra de Malvinas*, Buenos Aires: Aller Atucha, 1992, 9). According to Vice Admiral (IM) (Ret.) Julio Juan Bardi, the fact that the BIM 5 was prepared and ready was the product of the strategic view of the Navy, which had established this unit in the area as a maritime area (Personal interview, Buenos Aires, 08-10-1999).

¹⁸ The members of the 5th Marines had undergone night combat training, and because of their training in Tierra del Fuego, its members had adapted to the rigorous climatic conditions that they also encountered in the Falkland/Malvinas. Villarino, *Batallón 5*, 64. See also Interview to Captain Robacio in *ibid.*, 21-22, 24, 30; Carlos H. Robacio and Jorge Hernández, *Desde el frente. Batallón de Infantería de Marina N°5*. Buenos Aires, Solaris, 1996, 71-73, 107, 117, 138, 168 and 230.

¹⁹ Villarino, *Batallón 5*, 58; Robacio y Hernández, *Desde el Frente*, 250, 258. On April 11th, the first echelon of the Argentine Tenth Mechanized Infantry Brigade arrived in the islands. Later, the Military Junta also sent the Third Infantry Brigade, and on April 28th the command in the islands was finally established. There would be a General High Command under which the land forces were organized in two groups, the Army Group Litoral (under the

command of the Third Brigade) and the Army Group Puerto Argentino (under the command of the Tenth Brigade). The 5th Marine Battalion served under the latter.

²⁰ These soldiers stayed in Rio Grande on garrison duty.

²¹ In the continent remained the artillery battery, logistical personnel from the support group, reconnaissance platoon, and the military police platoon. Only two of the battalion's rifle companies were complete, and its third company was a reinforced platoon (Robacio and Hernández, *Desde el Frente*, 43).

²² Robacio and Hernández, *Desde el Frente*, 67; *Desembarco*, Separata N° 16 (1996), 61-66, 77-81, 82-85. Originally, the machine-gun troop belonged to a Marine Machine-gun Company hastily assembled in the naval base of Puerto Belgrano. This company, some 136 strong, had a total of 27 guns and was divided into three platoons. When the company arrived in the islands, its platoons were dispersed, and the Marine Battalion used only one (Villarino, *Batallón 5*, 93; Robacio and Hernández, *Desde el Frente*, 380).

²³ The numbers of troops are approximate, since there are some minor variations according to the sources.

²⁴ *Desembarco*, Separatas N° 10 (n.d.), 14 (1995), 15 (1995), 20 (1997).

²⁵ Villarino, *Batallón 5*, 64-65; Robacio y Hernández, *Desde el Frente*, 72, 118, 189.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 123; *ibid.*, 19; *Desembarco*, Separata N° 16 (1996), 20. These were the famous "iron bars" used by the Marines to dig into the rocky Falklands' soil.

²⁷ The night of the 11 and 12 the British attacked Mounts Longdon, Two Sisters, and Harriet, The night of June 13 and 14 they attacked Mounts Tumbledown, Williams and Wireless Ridge.

²⁸ Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins, *The Battle for the Falklands* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1983) 301-303.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 303.

³⁰ According to Middlebrook, "the Argentines lost Tumbledown, ... only after a stout and prolonged resistance which upset the British timetable." (*The Fight for the Malvinas*, 262)

³¹ Robacio and Hernández, *Desde el Frente*, 346.

³² Paul Eddy et al., *The Falklands War*, 253; Middlebrook, *Task Force*, 366; Hastings and Jenkins, 303.

³³ *Ibid.* 251.

³⁴ Harry G. Summers Jr., "Yomping to Port Stanley," *Military Review* LXIV (3) March 1984, 14.

³⁵ Stewart, *Mates & Muchachos*, 104-105.

³⁶ N. Vaux, *March to the South Atlantic: 42 Commando Royal Marines in the Falklands War* (London: Buchan and Enright, 1986) 206-07 cited in *ibid.* 105. See also Villarino, *Batallón 5*, 201. For a while, the British allowed the Marines to keep their individual weapons.

³⁷ Middlebrook, *The Fight for the Malvinas*, 254-255. See also Middlebrook, *Task Force*, p. 357.

³⁸ Eugenio Dalton and Martín Balza, "La batalla de Puerto Argentino" in *Operaciones Terrestres en las Islas Malvinas* (Buenos Aires: Círculo Militar), 236.

³⁹ Comisión Rattenbach, *Informe Rattenbach. El drama de Malvinas* (Buenos Aires: Espartaco, 1988) 203. Emphasis added.

⁴⁰ General Martín Balza, *Malvinas. Gesta e incompetencia*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Atlántida, 2003, p. 175. Emphasis added.

⁴¹ For a performance assessment of the other Marine units see Horacio A. Mayorga, *No vencidos. Relato de las operaciones navales en el conflicto del Atlántico Sur* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1998), 458-462, 463-471, 495, 501-502, y las *Desembarco*, Separatas N° 10 (n.d.), 14 (1995), 15 (1995), 16 (1996), 20 (1997).

⁴² Allan Millet and Williamson Murray (eds.), *Military Effectiveness Volume I*, Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989, p. 19. According to these authors, "tactical activity involves the movement of forces on the battlefield against the enemy, the provision of destructive fire upon enemy forces or targets, and the arrangement of logistical support directly applicable to engagements." Peter R. Mansoor asserts that the definition of combat effectiveness "as a term used to describe the abilities and fighting quality of a unit" is not very helpful and he restates the definition as "the ability of a military organization to achieve its assigned missions with the least expenditure of resources (both material and human) in the shortest amount of time." However, the later implies only a positive use for the concept: only successful units are effective in combat. The former definition instead, portrait combat effectiveness as range from low to high. (*The GI Offensive in Europe. The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions, 1941-1945*; Lawrence, KA: University Press of Kansas, 1999, pp. 2-3.)

⁴³ Nora Kinzer Stewart, "A Case Study in Cohesion. South Atlantic Conflict 1982," *Military Review* LXIX (4) April 1989, 32 and 38.

⁴⁴ Nora Kinzer Stewart, *Mates & Muchachos...*, p. 102.

⁴⁵ Cited in John G. Fowler, Jr.: "Combat Cohesion in Vietnam," *Military Review*, December 1979, p. 26.

⁴⁶ Martin van Creveld: *Fighting Power. German and U. S. Army performance, 1939-1945* (Westport, CT: Greenwood

Press, 1982, p. 4). See also Omer Bartov: *Hitler's Army. Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) and Stephen Fritz: *Frontsoldaten. The German Soldier in the World War II* (Lexington, Ky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1995). Finally, recent literature focused on the performance of the American Army during the Second World War explains its superior fighting performance as the ultimate result of the democratic character and ingenuity of the American society. See for example, Colin F. Baxter: "Did the Nazis Fight Better Than Democrats? Historical writing on the Combat Performance of the Allied Soldier in Normandy" (*Parameters*, Autumn 1995); Stephen Ambrose: *Citizen Soldiers. The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany June 7, 1944- May 7, 1945* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1997); Michael D. Doubler: *Closing with the Enemy. How GIs Fought the War in Europe, 1944-1945* (Lawrence, Ka: University Press of Kansas, 1994); Keith E. Bonn: *When Odds Were Even. The Vosges Mountains Campaign, October 1944-January 1945* (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1994).

⁴⁷ Stephen Robbins and Mary Coulter: *Administración. 5ta Edición* (México: Prentice Hall Hispanoamericana, 1996) p. 6

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 335.

⁴⁹ The other two sets of factors are human and technical. (Mansoor: *The GI Offensive in Europe*, p. 3).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ According to Rush an organization has at least four components parts: primary group, organizational structure, organizational cohesion, and cohort. (*Hell in Hurtgen Forest. The Ordeal and Triumph of an American Infantry Regiment*. Lawrence, Ka: University Press of Kansas, 2001, pp. 8-9).

⁵² Ibid., p. 9.

⁵³ In general, this paper follows the following definition: "organizational analysis...is primarily about figuring out why militaries ... prepare for, and conduct, war the way that they do" (Theo Farrell, "Figuring Out Fighting Organizations: The New Organizational Analysis In Strategic Studies", *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 19, No 1, March 1996, p. 123).

⁵⁴ Interview with Errecaborde (07-21-1999).

⁵⁵ Ibid and interview with a high ranking officer wishes to remain anonymous (07-17-1999). Geographic isolation also helps to explain the traditional predisposition of the 5th Marine Battalion to training and professional development (Errecaborde, *Anecdotario*, 179).

⁵⁶ Armada Argentina: *Infantería de Marina. Tres siglos de Historia y Cien años de vida orgánica. 1879-19 de noviembre- 1979*, Buenos Aires, 1979, p. 122.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 134.

⁵⁸ Cameron, *American Samurai*, 271.

⁵⁹ Interview with Errecaborde (07-21-1999). See also Errecaborde, "Reflexiones," 32 (5); interviews with Bardi (08-10-1999) and Baffico (08-20-1999).

⁶⁰ Errecaborde, "Reflexiones," 41-42. At the same time, the Army had a total of 125,000 men. (*Military Balance, 1982-1983*, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, IISS, London, 1983, 99).

⁶¹ For complete explanations of the idea see Jon Elster and Rune Slagstad: *Constitucionalismo y Democracia*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, pp. 247-249. The author would like to thank Andrés Rosler for this idea.

⁶² Interview with Errecaborde (07-21-1999). See also Errecaborde, "Reflexiones," 37-38 (6. Logística).

⁶³ Interview with Baffico (08-20-1999).

⁶⁴ Robacio and Hernández, *Desde el Frente*, 14; Villarino, *Batallón 5*, 21.

⁶⁵ Interview with Bardi (08-10-1999).

⁶⁶ Stewart, *Mates & Muchachos*, 45.

⁶⁷ Jeremy Black, "Military Organization and Military Change in Historical Perspective," *Journal of Military History* 62 (4) October 1998, 884.

⁶⁸ According to Kier, "military organizations with long-term membership and powerful assimilation mechanisms, develop strong cultures." (Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War. French and British Military Doctrine Between the Wars*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997, 28)

⁶⁹ Steven J. Ott, *The Organizational Culture Perspective* (Pacific Grove, Ca.: Brooks/Cole, 1989), 50.

⁷⁰ Kier, *Imagining War*, p. 28. A textbook definition of organizational culture states that it is a system of shared meanings. Consequently, organizations have cultures, which set the behavioral patterns of their members. (Robbins and Coulter: *Administración. 5ta Edición*, p. 79)

⁷¹ According to Schein, organizational culture is, among other things, the pattern of basic assumptions that "have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems." (Edgard H. Schein, "Coming to a New Awareness of Organizational Culture," *Sloan Management Review* 25, No2 1984, 3). In the case of the Argentine Marines, the

officers who were interviewed frequently mentioned the influence of American doctrines on amphibious warfare.

⁷² Kier, *Imagining War*, p. 31.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 28-29.

⁷⁵ Craig M. Cameron, *American Samurai. Myth, Imagination, and The Conduct of Battle in the First Marine Division, 1941-1951* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 196. Emphasis added. In his study, Cameron assumes that military organizations are able to shape their physical and social environments. The First Marine Division's tactics were "the product of myths and images of Self, Other and function of technology" (Theo Farrell, "Figuring Out Fighting Organisations...", p. 130)

⁷⁶ This paper assumes that organizational culture is significant in guiding behavior. The common culture within the organization is the unifying theme that provides meaning, direction, and mobilization for its members. For more detailed information on this concept, see Ott, *The Organizational Culture Perspective*, 50.

⁷⁷ We do not suppose that these are the only cultural elements. Ott's book presents an extensive general list of elements of organizational culture (*The Organizational Culture Perspective*, 53 e).

⁷⁸ According to Rear Admiral Robacio, "every Marine has been molded to the total devotion to service the Naval Institution" (Robacio and Hernández, *Desde el frente...*, 95).

⁷⁹ Author's personal experience as professor in the Army Academy during the years 1987-1989. The Army cadets had separated classrooms according to the branches of the force (infantry, cavalry, artillery, communications, engineers and logistical units), and they had their separate quarters (cuadras). After graduation, they went to the units of their specialization and later to their own weapons schools. The branches remain deeply separate and create a very competitive spirit among their members that could be described as "tribal." This difference also affected the promotion process. At times of deeply political involvement of the military in various periods of the country's history, the branches often espoused different political views.

⁸⁰ Interview 07-20-1999.

⁸¹ Interview with Errecaborde (07-21-1999).

⁸² To accomplish such a degree of proficiency "there is a need to be highly trained" (ibid. See also Jorge Errecaborde, "Reflexiones a 15 años de la gesta," *Desembarco XLI* N° 160, 1997, 36). For instance, the fire of the Marine artillery battery was so accurate that immediately after the surrender the British troops were insistently asking and searching for the "artillery radars." However, this level of accuracy was achieved without the help of any advanced technology (Errecaborde, *Anecdotario...*, 115; for an operational account of the Marine artillery unit see *Desembarco*, Separatas N° 16 (1996), 58-66 y N° 17 (1996), 162-64; Villarino, *Batallón 5*, 124-5).

⁸³ Errecaborde, *Anecdotario*, 84-85; Mayorga, *No Vencidos*, 463-471.

⁸⁴ Personal interviews with Olmedo (07-20-1999); Vice Admiral (IM) (Ret.) Julio Juan Bardi (Buenos Aires, 08-10-1999); and Commander (IM) Alberto Baffico (Buenos Aires, 08-20-1999). Commander Baffico stated that "in the Navy we worked continually with the other forces, there was team integration, specially with the naval aviation."

⁸⁵ Personal interview to high ranking officer who asked to remain anonymous. (Buenos Aires, 17-07-1999).

⁸⁶ Cameron, *The American Samurai*, 222-223.

⁸⁷ Interview with Baffico (08-20-1999). Vice Admiral (Ret.) Bardi said to the interviewer "in the Navy, leadership is not only an ethical issue but also exemplary behavior" (08-10-1999). Captain Olmedo, also underscored the concern of the Navy on the issue of leadership (07-20-1999).

⁸⁸ Hastings & Jenkins, *The Battle for the Falklands*, 296.

⁸⁹ Interview with Baffico (08-20-1999).

⁹⁰ Büsser in Villarino, *Batallón 5*, 16.

⁹¹ Interview with Errecaborde (07-21-1999).

⁹² Interview with Olmedo (07-20-1999).

⁹³ Interview with Errecaborde (07-21-1999).

⁹⁴ Interviews with Bardi (08-10-1999) and Olmedo (07-20-1999). This can be sum up as "short hair and flat belly" (Errecaborde, *Anecdotario*, 168)

⁹⁵ Ibid., 168.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 126.

⁹⁷ Olmedo (07-20-1999). Some anecdotes about the resourcefulness of Marines during their training are recounted in Errecaborde's *Anecdotario*, 29-30, 38-39 and 40-41.

⁹⁸ Interview with Olmedo (07-20-1999).

⁹⁹ For instance, Rear Admiral (Ret.) Carlos Büsser, explains that some of the plans were "what to do in case the British surrender," "if we are defeated, how are we going to assume it?" "What to do if the British attack the Argentine shoreline," "what to do if we have to retreat" and others. He also mentioned that one of the PAP that was

in advance state of planning at the end of the war was Operation Eagle (AGUILA). It was an attack on the British rear positions in San Carlos, Goose Green and Fitz Roy (*Desembarco, Separata* N° 14 (1995), 11).

¹⁰⁰ Errecaborde, *Anecdótico*, 187-188. In his comments to the paper, an Argentine naval officer, Captain (Ret.) Guillermo Montenegro, underscored that Marines are acknowledged as “fanatical” in terms of their penchant for general planning (Fourteenth Naval History Symposium, Annapolis, 09-14-1999).

¹⁰¹ Interview with Errecaborde (07-21-1999).

¹⁰² Interview with Olmedo (07-20-1999).

¹⁰³ Interview with Bardi (08-10-1999).

¹⁰⁴ Errecaborde, *Anecdótico*, 41.

¹⁰⁵ Büsser in Villarino, *Batallón 5*, 15.

¹⁰⁶ Interviews with Olmedo (07-20-1999) and Bardi (08-10-1999).

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Bardi (08-10-1999).

¹⁰⁸ Interviews with Olmedo (07-20-1999) and Baffico (08-20-1999), and a published interview with ViceAdmiral Máximo E. Rivero Kelly, *Boletín del Centro Naval* N° 752/753, Buenos Aires, 1987, 100.

¹⁰⁹ The operation was known as “Campaign for the Defense and Affirmation of the Sovereignty.” It was, as some describe it, “the most important military mobilization and preparation for war in the naval history of our country” (Arguindeguy and Rodríguez, *La Flota de Mar*, 283).

¹¹⁰ Scheina, *América Latina*, 185

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 184-187; Errecaborde, *Anecdótico*, 99-100, 130-131, 141; Alejandro L. Corbacho, *Predicting the Probability of War During Brinkmanship Crises: The Beagle and the Malvinas Conflicts*, MA Thesis, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1993, pp. 6-20.

¹¹² Scheina, *Latin America*, 187.

¹¹³ Dalton, Eugenio and Martín Balza, “La batalla de Puerto Argentino,” in F.R. Aguiar et al., *Operaciones Terrestres en Malvinas*, 243.

¹¹⁴ See Alejandro L. Corbacho: “Improvisation on the March: Argentine Command Structure and its Impact on Land Operations during the Falklands/Malvinas War (1982).” Paper delivered at the Society for Military History 2000 meeting, Quantico, Virginia, April 28-30 April 2000.

¹¹⁵ Jorge Errecaborde, “MLV...De eso no me hables...” *Boletín del Centro Naval* N° 752/753, 1987, 93. Piaggi, Italo A., *Ganso Verde (Goose Green)[sic]* (Buenos Aires, Planeta, 1986), 16, 30-31, 35-36, 55-56 y 72. Robacio y Hernández, *Desde el Frente*, 71, 107, 167.

¹¹⁶ Hastings & Jenkins, *The Battle for the Falklands*, 295-296; Robacio and Hernández, *Desde el Frente*, 107, 167, 236, 238, 290, 317 and 318.

¹¹⁷ Second Lieutenant Richard C. Kennard, letter to parents, cited in Cameron, *American Samurai*, 156.

¹¹⁸ This statement is probably originated in the need to differentiate the Marine Corps from superimposing functions with the Army.

¹¹⁹ Commander Jorge Sáenz in Errecaborde, *Anecdótico*, 132.

¹²⁰ Second Lieutenant Richard C. Kennard, letter to parents, cited in Cameron, *American Samurai*, 156.

¹²¹ Armada Argentina, *Infantería de Marina*, 1979, 133-134.