

MARS TAKES FLIGHT
The United States Marine Corps Adapting Aviation in Small Wars 1919-1933

MARS PREND SON ENVOL
Le Corps des Marines des États-Unis adapte l'aviation dans les petites guerres 1919-
1933

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Dedication

For my wife, Wendy, who told me I would be terrible in finance.

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Abstract

From 1915-1934, the United States sent the United States Marine Corps into military interventions to secure American interests in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua; these interventions are now known as the Banana Wars. In February and March 1919, the US Marine Corps introduced land-based aviation into the campaigns in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, where aviation was adapted to become a fundamental yet subordinate arm for fighting small wars. While other military services around the globe created independent roles for their aviation arms, conscious decisions were made inside the Marine Corps to shape organic aviation into a platform used to support ground operations. The history of how the Marines developed the specific functions of aviation when fighting in small wars has, however, received little scholarly attention. Prominent histories only examine the Corps' approach to fighting small wars and these rely heavily on modern counterinsurgency language in their analysis. However, the Marines developed and subsequently utilized airpower during the Banana Wars, in the context of small wars theories of the time, to become a fundamental yet subordinate arm of their small wars operations. This dissertation will demonstrate that Marines adapted aviation to suit an established operational construct for the conduct of small wars campaigns that focused on infantry operations to destroy the enemy, a construct based on the Marines' existing small wars framework, their small wars combat experience, and their service culture. An examination of the Second Nicaraguan Campaign (1927-1933) illustrates the culmination of the development, execution, and active role aviation played during the Marines' small wars operations in the Banana Wars.

Résumé

De 1915 à 1934, les États-Unis ont envoyé le Corps des Marines des États-Unis dans des interventions militaires pour protéger les intérêts américains en Haïti, en République dominicaine et au Nicaragua ; ces interventions sont désormais connues sous le nom de Banana Wars. En février et mars 1919, le Corps des Marines des États-Unis a introduit l'aviation terrestre dans les campagnes en Haïti et en République dominicaine, où l'aviation a été adaptée pour devenir une arme fondamentale mais subordonnée dans la lutte contre les petites guerres. Alors que d'autres services militaires du monde entier créaient des rôles indépendants pour leurs armes aériennes, des décisions conscientes ont été prises au sein du Corps des Marines pour transformer l'aviation organique en une plate-forme utilisée pour soutenir les opérations au sol. L'histoire de la façon dont les Marines ont développé les fonctions spécifiques de l'aviation lors de combats dans de petites guerres a cependant reçu peu d'attention de la part des chercheurs. Les histoires marquantes examinent uniquement l'approche du Corps dans la conduite de petites guerres et

celles-ci s'appuient largement sur le langage moderne de la contre-insurrection dans leur analyse. Cependant, les Marines ont développé puis utilisé la puissance aérienne pendant les guerres de la banane, dans le contexte des théories des petites guerres de l'époque, pour devenir une arme fondamentale mais subordonnée de leurs opérations de petites guerres. Cette thèse démontrera que les Marines ont adapté l'aviation pour l'adapter à une construction opérationnelle établie pour la conduite de campagnes de petites guerres axées sur des opérations d'infanterie visant à détruire l'ennemi, une construction basée sur le cadre de petites guerres existant des Marines, leur expérience de combat dans les petites guerres et leur culture de service. Un examen de la deuxième campagne du Nicaragua (1927-1933) illustre le point culminant du développement, de l'exécution et du rôle actif que l'aviation a joué pendant les petites opérations de guerre des Marines dans les guerres de la banane.

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Chapter One
Introduction

On July 16, 1927, during the Second Nicaraguan Campaign (1927-1933), a group of thirty-seven US Marines found themselves surrounded by four hundred bandits in the village of Ocotal, Nicaragua.¹ After being under siege for over twelve hours, with supplies running low and the nearest relief force three days march away, the situation looked grim for the Marine defenders. As the attack progressed into its thirteenth hour, out of the sky came relief: five US Marine biplanes. Using fragmentation bombs and machine guns, the Marine aviators roared into the attack and drove off the numerically superior force and, in the process, saved the beleaguered garrison.² Marine historians see the attack by the Marine aviators at Ocotal as the birthplace of the US Marine's close relationship between the infantry and aircraft.³ However, the dive-bombing attacks employed, the communication between the infantry on the ground and the aircraft, and the supporting role played by the Marine aviators were tactics first introduced before the Second Nicaraguan Campaign in the small wars in Hispaniola in the previous decade. This dissertation will analyze how the United States Marine Corps (USMC) utilized and developed airpower during its small wars campaigns from 1919 to 1934.

From 1915 until 1934, the United States used the US Marines in military interventions to secure American interests in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua; these interventions are now known as the Banana Wars.⁴ Although the military operations conducted by the Marines were categorized using a variety of terms, such as suppressions of rebellion, irregular war, or bush warfare, they were better known as 'small wars.' Although "somewhat difficult to define," the term was generally accepted to encompass "all campaigns other than those where both the

¹ Major General Commandant Report on Operations to the SecNav, September 4, 1928, Record Group 127, Records Relating to Activities in Managua, Nicaragua, 1927-1933, Folder D-42, US National Archives, Washington, DC. Estimates ran as high as five hundred bandits.

² Gilbert Hatfield, "Attack on Ocotal, July 16, 1927," Nicaraguan Campaign Box 1, Folder 11, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, and Log of Engagements VO-7M, July 16, 1927, Nicaraguan Folder Box 2, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 3-4.

³ Alan Millet, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 263, Wray R. Johnson's *Biplanes at War: US Marine Corps Aviation in the Small Wars Era, 1915-1934* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky, 2019), 213, and Edward Johnson, *Marine Corps Aviation: The Early Years, 1912-1940* (Washington, DC: Headquarters United States Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, 1977), 56.

⁴ The term Banana Wars was used by the US Marines who fought in these campaigns and is now synonymous with the Caribbean and Central American interventions by the Marines from 1915-1933. Lester D. Langley popularized the term in his work, notably *The Banana Wars: United States Intervention in the Caribbean, 1898-1934* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 2002), 1. This third edition was initially titled *The Banana Wars: An Inner History of American Empire, 1900-1934*, first published in 1983.

opposing sides consist of regular troops.”⁵ The USMC eventually created a new definition for these small wars with the publication of the *Small Wars Manual* in 1940, well after the Banana Wars had concluded: “Operations undertaken under executive authority, wherein military force is combined with diplomatic pressure in the internal or external affairs of another state whose government is unstable, inadequate, or unsatisfactory for the preservation of life and of such interests as are determined by the foreign policy of our Nation.”⁶ The importance of aviation in the small wars of the early twentieth century required a complete chapter in this 1940 *Small Wars Manual*. This chapter described the tactics of incorporating airpower into small wars operations and, in doing so, highlighted aviation’s significance in small wars. During the Banana Wars, within the context of then prominent small wars theory, the Marines utilized and developed airpower to become a fundamental, yet subordinate to infantry, part of their small wars operations. Despite the significant role of aviation, the history of how the Marines developed the specific functions of aviation when fighting in small wars has received little scholarly attention.

Within the US Marine Corps, the anecdotal conclusion to military success during this era is that aviation worked well in the Banana Wars because, quite simply, ‘we are Marines.’ Even at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, Virginia, the explanation of the use of airpower development during this period is scant. Directly underneath a display of a US Marine DH-4B biplane communicating with ground troops is a video montage of early and modern aircraft stating the Marine Air to Ground Task Force (MAGTF) was born in the jungles of Hispaniola and Central America. How exactly this birth happened is left to the visitors’ imagination.⁷ Chapter Two will examine those limited sources that do deal with the history of aviation in the Banana Wars. There needs to be more analytical thought and a codified understanding of the causal factors in how the Marines developed aviation during their small wars campaigns.⁸ This dissertation seeks to answer the following question: What causal factors led the Marines to adapt aviation into a fundamental but subordinate arm of small wars operations during the Banana Wars? In doing so, dissertation will demonstrate that Marines adapted aviation to suit an established operational construct for the conduct of small wars campaigns that focused on infantry operations to destroy the enemy, a construct based on the Marines’ existing small wars framework, their small wars combat experience, and

⁵ Charles Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* (Nebraska: Bison Books, 1906), 21. The Marines took much of their doctrinal cueing from Callwell, discussed in detail in Chapter Four of this dissertation.

⁶ *Small Wars Manual* (Washington DC: Department of the Navy, 1940), 1.

⁷ This display is in between the World War I and World War II main exhibits.

⁸ For a detailed study of the formulation and drafting of the *Small Wars Manual*, see Keith Bickel, *Mars Learning: The Marine Corps Development of Small Wars Doctrine, 1915-1944* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2001). Bickel’s work will be examined in the Literature Review chapter of this dissertation.

their service culture. But to start, we must first examine how the US Marines envisioned small wars, from strategy to tactics, during the Banana Wars.

An examination of the Marines' concept of fighting small wars in the Banana Wars begins with the Philippine Insurrection (1898-1902). The Philippine Insurrection is relevant to understanding how the Marines conceptualized small wars in the 1920s and 30s because senior US Marine leaders during the Banana Wars had their first combat experiences in the Philippines. Further, during the Philippine Insurrection a legal framework for fighting bandits was established by the US Army and the Marines. The US Marines took their small war experiences from the Philippine Insurrection into the military interventions of Haiti and the Dominican Republic and refined their small wars' operational construct. This research will demonstrate that when aviation arrived in the Banana Wars 1919 Marines adapted aviation to suit an established operational construct of conducting a small wars campaign focused on infantry operations intended to destroy the enemy. The Second Nicaraguan Campaign provides an illustrative case study to examine the culmination of the development, execution, and active role aviation played during the Marines' small wars operations in the Banana Wars.

"Mars Takes Flight" will pursue three lines of inquiry to fill the analytical vacuum concerning the USMC's development of aviation doctrine for small wars and these will constitute the focus and flow of this dissertation. The first line of inquiry examines the development of the USMC small wars doctrine and its influence on the Banana Wars. An overarching concept for conducting small wars was first seen during the Philippine Insurrection and progressed into the later campaigns in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The second line of inquiry will analyze the development of aviation inside the USMC and the integration of aviation into USMC small wars concepts, doctrine, and operations. Since the Marines' first intentional use of aviation occurred during World War I, it was only after "the Great War" that the Corps began applying airpower in their small wars campaigns. A third line of inquiry argues that aviation became a central aspect of small wars doctrine and operations in which the Marines made conscious decisions about developing and employing airpower. All three lines of inquiry include United States' political goals, military objectives, resources availability, and service culture, as well as the analysis of the experiences of other militaries, particularly the Royal Air Force and the US Army Air Corps. While these factors were at play, the US Marines were simultaneously fighting small wars of their own, which also influenced the decisions made by the Marines when adapting airpower in their small wars activities.

Historiography

Chapter Two will provide a comprehensive survey of the existing literature regarding US Marine aviation development during the Banana Wars; however, it is appropriate to survey the historiographical trends here before exploring each line of inquiry. A review of these trends begins with airpower concepts known at the time of the Banana Wars. Two primary airpower theorists influenced US airpower

development between the world wars. During these years, Italian airpower theorist Giulio Douhet and American US General William ‘Billy’ Mitchell explored the strategic aspects of airpower and were known to the Marines of the time.⁹ The popular theory of the interwar period, espoused by Douhet and Mitchell, was to use aviation as an independent, war-winning weapon. In contrast, the US Marines saw aviation as a new weapon to directly support the infantry. How the US Marines approached the application of airpower during the interwar period differed from the predominant airpower theories of the time.

After World War I, aviation in the form of bombers was generally envisioned as a means of obliterating a nation’s production capacity and breaking the will of a population far away from the front lines. The research and historiography into airpower theory and aircraft development during the interwar period is centered on the developments that led to the use of strategic airpower during World War II.¹⁰ There is, however, a scarcity of historical analysis and research on US airpower development and application in small wars during the interwar period. Specific research on USMC airpower development follows the historiographical trend in examining how the interwar period shaped the Marines’ use of aviation while fighting in the Pacific from 1941-1945.¹¹ The exception came from inside the US Marine Corps when Marine flyers Major Ross Rowell and Captain Denny Campbell wrote and lectured about their experiences in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign in the late 1920s and early 1930s.¹² Aside from the *Small Wars Manual* and Wray Johnson’s 2019 *Biplanes at War*, these early works

⁹ Giulio Douhet, *The Command of the Air*, Translated by Dino Ferrari, Edited by Joseph Harahan and Richard Kohen (1921, Reprint, Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2009) and William Mitchell, *Winged Defense: The Development and Possibilities of Modern Air Power* (1925, Reprint, Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2009).

¹⁰ John Shy, “Jomini” in *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 181-182. Shy’s chapter rightly emphasizes the desire of interwar thinkers to avoid a static front, as seen during WWI. A complete analysis in *Makers of Modern Strategy* is David MacIssac’s chapter “Voices from the Central Blue: The Air Power Theorists.” A recent counterpoint and a much deeper analysis of the weaknesses of the interwar airpower thinkers is in Peter Faber’s “Paradigm Lost: Airpower Theory and its Inherent Struggles,” in *Airpower Reborn: The Strategic Concepts of John Warden and John Boyd*, ed. John Andreas Olsen (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2015).

¹¹ Edward Johnson, *Marine Corps Aviation: The Early Years, 1912-1940* (Washington, DC: Headquarters United States Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, 1977).

¹² Major Ross E. Rowell, “Aircraft in Bush Warfare,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 14, no. 3 (September 1929): 180-203 and Captain H. Denny Campbell, “Aviation in Guerrilla Warfare; Part I,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 15, no. 4 (March 1931); 37-75.

remained the definitive writings for the Marine Corps from the period on adapting aviation into a small wars campaign.¹³

Given the paucity of specific literature on aviation in small wars, several general works related to the execution of small wars campaigns undertaken by the United States that discuss the Banana Wars were examined. Recent research into the Banana Wars' indicates that the United States' cultural influences and the military service culture inside the Marine Corps shaped how the Marines developed their small wars doctrine but this research uses a modern counterinsurgency lens.¹⁴ More broad histories into the United States military interventions provides some analysis of the Banana Wars, but again often utilize modern military operational frameworks. Importantly, it should be noted that those published after September 11, 2001, (hereafter labeled 9/11) are seen through the perspective of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq from 2001 to 2021.¹⁵ While such a historiographical lens might be useful when comparing tactical approaches across a wide range of history, a modern counterinsurgency framework is inappropriate for drawing conclusions about how the Marines fighting in the Banana Wars made decisions within the context of their own time.

Other historiographical approaches in analyzing Marines in the Banana Wars are seen in the official histories of the Marines covering the period. Official military histories tend to write favorably about a campaign and emphasize any successes. The official histories used in this dissertation generally follow this trend but are useful in analyzing tactics and how political changes inside the Marine Corps affected decision making.¹⁶ More wide-ranging histories of the US Marine Corps exist with some analysis of small wars operations undertaken by the US Marines. Each of these histories of the Corps reflects the time they were written and will be

¹³ Wray R. Johnson's *Biplanes at War: US Marine Corps Aviation in the Small Wars Era, 1915-1934* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky, 2019).

¹⁴ John Collins, *America's Small Wars: Lessons for the Future* (Sterling, VA: Potomac Books, 1991). Also, Austin Long, *The Soul of Armies: Counterinsurgency Doctrine and Military Culture in the US and UK* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016). A comparison throughout the book examines the historical influence of colonial policing and its impact on shaping the culture of the British military.

¹⁵ Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace* (New York: Basic Books, 2002) and Leo Daugherty, *Counterinsurgency and the United States Marine Corps: Volume 1, The First Era 1899-1945* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company Publishers, 2015), and Andrew Birtle's, *US Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941* (Washington DC: Center of Military History United States Army, 2009). While Boot's work was published in 2002, his original and revised edition (2014) emphasizes the population centric operational approach favored by modern US counterinsurgency doctrine.

¹⁶ Stephen M. Fuller and Graham A. Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic, 1916-1924* (Washington DC: HQ USMC, 1974) and Bernard C. Nalty, *The United States Marines in Nicaragua* (Washington DC: HQ USMC, 1968).

analyzed in Chapter Two.¹⁷ Although specific histories of the Banana Wars are contained within more extensive histories of the Marine Corps, aviation's role in the Banana Wars is often only mentioned in passing.¹⁸

Contrary to official histories, historical research into the Banana Wars written outside of military circles primarily highlights the adverse effects of the Marine's military interventions. Whether examining a specific campaign or the Banana Wars as a whole, the historiographical approach is anti-imperialist, with the conclusion that the military interventions in Latin America were motivated solely by economic greed and American imperialism.¹⁹ The military tactics analyzed in these works focus on ground operations, with little analysis of how aviation was used to support these operations. The value of works exploring the adverse effects of military intervention is that they highlight the second-order effects of the Marines' military operations that focused on fighting their enemy.

The historiography, explored in Chapter Two, demonstrates a gap in research and analysis about how the Marines adapted aviation to their small wars campaigns. Generally, the interwar period of aviation history focuses on strategic airpower thinkers or how the belligerents in World War II developed their air forces before the war began. Research into the Banana Wars is written from a ground operations perspective or analyzed the negative implications of US foreign policy through military interventions. Further, Marine service histories provide little analysis of how aviation adapted to small wars. This dissertation intends to address the requirement for research into how Marine aviation evolved during this period by examining the causal factors that led the Marines to adopt aviation as a fundamental capability of small wars doctrine and operations. This dissertation answers the 'why' and the 'how' Marines developed aviation in the context of small wars practices of the time. By analyzing the causal factors of the Marines' small war experiences, service culture, and early aviation use, this dissertation will investigate

¹⁷ Alan Millet, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), and Robert J. Heinel, *Soldiers of the Sea: The United States Marine Corps, 1775-1962* (Baltimore, MD: The Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1991).

¹⁸ Millet, *Semper Fidelis*, Ch 7.

¹⁹ Bruce J. Calder, *The Impact of Intervention: The Dominican Republic during the US Occupation of 1916-1924* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2006), Ivan Musicant, *The Banana Wars: A History of United States Military Intervention in Latin America from the Spanish-American War to the Invasion of Panama* (New York: MacMillian Publishing Company, 1990), Neil MacAulay, *The Sandino Affair* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1985), Lester Langley, *The Banana Men* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1995), Ellen Tillman, *Dollar Diplomacy by Force: Nation Building and Resistance in the Dominican Republic* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), Alan McPherson, *The Invaded: How Latin Americans and Their Allies Fought and Ended US Occupations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

and explain why the Marines adapted aviation into a fundamental yet subordinate arm for fighting small wars.

Methodology

To understand how the Marines thought and made decisions, this dissertation takes the approach outlined by Ged Martin in his work, *Past Futures: The Impossible Necessity of History*. As Martin stated, “What matters is where they thought they were heading, not where we know where they would eventually arrive.”²⁰ Examining and understanding the events and circumstances as seen by the contemporary Marine is the appropriate lens for analyzing how the Marines developed airpower during the period covered by the dissertation. The Marines of the interwar period were not thinking about counterinsurgency (COIN) campaigns but instead about locating and destroying any armed opposition during their overseas interventions. The difference between modern terminology and doctrine versus how the Marines viewed their mission at the time is an essential distinction that this study takes when analyzing the Marines’ use of airpower in small wars.

For this dissertation, I intend to explore the causal mechanisms that led to the Marines’ adaptation of airpower as a fundamental but subordinate function in small war doctrine and operations. Process tracing will examine the causal factors that led the Marines to adapt airpower to their small wars operational construct. Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen define process tracing as a social science that traces causal mechanisms to an outcome.²¹ Beach and Pedersen offer three process tracing methodologies: theory building, theory testing, and explaining-outcome process tracing.²² Theory testing and theory building seek to test a hypothesis or discover links regarding causal factors and a known outcome. The outcome of either theory type of process tracing is to develop a workable theory that can be applied to other cases.²³

Explaining-outcome process tracing will be employed to answer the research question, as this approach is best suited for analyzing causal factors when examining the historical case of the Banana Wars.²⁴ While creating a theory for how the US Marines might adapt new technology or weaponry into their doctrine might help explore future concepts, this dissertation is focused on analyzing a specific

²⁰ Ged Martin, *Past Futures: The Impossible Necessity of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 117. The ‘they’ for this dissertation are the Marines fighting the Banana Wars.

²¹ Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen, *Process Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines* (Ann Arbor, MI: the University of Michigan Press, 2013), 1-3, and David Collier, “Understanding Process Tracing.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44, no. 4 (2011): 823–30.

²² Beach and Pederson, 4.

²³ *Ibid.*, 4-5 and James Mahoney in, “Process Tracing and Historical Explanation” *Security Studies*, no. 2 (April 2015), 206.

²⁴ Beach and Pederson, 6.

period, the Banana Wars, and examining the factors in play during that time to determine what influenced the decisions to adapt aviation in small wars. Explaining-outcome process tracing seeks to examine the factors that led to a particular outcome.²⁵ From examining the *Small Wars Manual*, we know the eventual outcome for aviation inside small wars doctrine: “Marine aviation will concentrate almost entirely on the close support of ground troops.”²⁶ We also know by examining the result of the Second Nicaraguan Campaign that aviation operations were subordinated to the operations conducted by the infantry. However, the causal factors that led to this outcome are unknown. While working retrospectively from the outcome and examining the Banana Wars, three potential causal factors become evident: the Marines had executed small wars in the previous two decades and had developed their own small wars operational construct; the Marines were given a specific mission during each intervention and had a distinct service culture that influenced their operations; and additionally, during World War I, the Marines had employed aviation, gaining an experience base in the use of airpower.

The research for this dissertation begins with the primary sources for the Philippine Insurrection in pursuing the first line of inquiry: the development of the Marines’ small wars operational construct. The Marines had conducted numerous interventions since their creation in 1775, but the Philippine Insurrection stands out as a starting point for causal factors to answer the first research question for two reasons. First, while the US Army oversaw the total military effort and conducted offensive operations, they also shouldered the responsibility of occupation and administrative duties across the archipelago. The US Marines, albeit guarding key ports, were used as a striking force from the sea that set the pattern for offensive operations focused on destroying an enemy. Secondly, the Philippine Insurrection is where many future senior leaders in the Banana Wars began their careers.²⁷ These Marines’ tactical missions as junior officers in the Philippines would be mirrored in their operational choices in Hispaniola (Haiti and the Dominican Republic) and Central America as senior commanders. Examining aircraft integration into the Banana Wars using primary source material shows the Marines specifically tailored airpower to suit their operational infantry needs rather than change infantry operations to best fit with aviation. The second line of inquiry, the development of aviation inside the Marine Corps, illustrates the causal factors leading to the Marines’ choices about how best to employ aviation. The Second Nicaraguan Campaign shows the eventual outcome of adapting airpower into a small wars campaign, highlights aviation’s subordinate role, and follows the third line of

²⁵ Beach and Pederson, 3 and 51.

²⁶ *Small Wars Manual*, Ch. 9, p. 1. A caveat is that there is no air opposition from enemy forces.

²⁷ Marines Logan Feland, Littleton Waller, Smedley Butler, and Wendell Neville played prominent roles in the Banana Wars and served in the Philippine Insurrection. Henry Stimpson also played a part in the negotiations in the Philippines and would be the lead negotiator in Nicaragua in 1927.

inquiry. The material examined throughout the study will come principally from primary sources, complemented by some secondary sources, will be analyzed using a qualitative approach, and will be used to draw conclusions based on the thoughts of the Marines at the time.

The Way Ahead

Chapter Two is a literature review of the primary and secondary sources used for this dissertation. Analyzing primary and secondary sources shows that historians have not sufficiently scrutinized the development of Marine aviation during the Banana Wars. Chapter Three pursues the first line of inquiry by examining the actions the Marines took during the Philippine Insurrection and the development of the US Marine service culture before the Banana Wars. Chapter Four begins with the initial stages of the Banana Wars in Haiti and the Dominican Republic before the introduction of aviation and concludes with a review of the theory of the small wars during the period. Examining the small wars theory extant when the Marines were fighting each conflict provides a more complete understanding of how the foundational theories about fighting small wars existed within the Corps during the decades in question. This examination will better illustrate what changes occurred or what approaches remained the same during the remainder of the Banana Wars after the Marines introduced aviation into their campaigns. Chapter Five will demonstrate the development of airpower inside the US Marine Corps, beginning with its first usage in the Corps in 1912 through the end of World War I. Chapter Five will also investigate how the Marines integrated aviation into their developed approach to small wars in their campaigns in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. These campaigns were underway when airplanes arrived in 1919, but aviation was integrated quickly into offensive operations. Chapter Six will examine the Second Nicaraguan Campaign and how airpower was adapted into a mature operational construct from the outset of an intervention. Finally, Chapter Seven will demonstrate that the causal factors of combat experience, service culture, and a mature small wars framework shaped airpower development in the Banana Wars for the US Marine Corps.

To ensure that the scope and scale of the dissertation are narrowly focused, conscious choices have been made to analyze only those causal factors that had the most significant impact on the adaptation of airpower into small wars operations. This dissertation is focused on aviation development during the Banana Wars, culminating in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign from 1927-1933. Although the Marines conducted interventions in six other countries between departing the Philippines in 1902 and entering Haiti in 1915, these will only be touched upon briefly. Beyond adding to the trend of small wars' operational activity for the Marines, these other interventions will not be analyzed in-depth.²⁸ Similarly,

²⁸ China (1899-1901), Cuba (1906), Panama (1904), Honduras (1906), Nicaragua (1912-1925), and Vera Cruz (1914).

although other European nations conducted small wars during the same period, notably the Spanish and French in the Rif Mountains in Morocco and the British in Mesopotamia and Afghanistan, making a comparison to each nation is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, it is worth noting that the Marines were aware of French aviation efforts and British ‘air control’ employed during the 1920s.²⁹ Ultimately, this dissertation analyzes Marines called upon to execute small wars and adapt new tools, like aviation, to fit their needs. It will show that their actions were influenced by organizational culture and what they experienced. In doing so, this dissertation will define those causal factors that shaped the Marines’ decision to adapt airpower by distilling primary and secondary sources related to small wars.

²⁹ “MH-5: Books Recommended for reading on Military History,” 1933, The Basic School Collection, collection 3706, Box 3, Folder 6, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA. Specifically, Section VI, “Bibliography on Small Wars.”

Chapter Two
Literature Review

This chapter has two purposes. First, this chapter contains a literature review of the primary and secondary sources used in addressing the research question. Second, this chapter identifies the areas yet to receive scholarly attention in the secondary material that was available to analyze the causal factors behind the Marines adapting aviation in the Banana Wars. An examination into the causal factors behind Marines' aviation adaptation during the Banana Wars is made difficult due to scant research on the subject. As of the writing of this dissertation, there is only one publication on the topic of the US Marine's development of aviation during the Banana Wars, Wray Johnson's 2019 *Biplanes at War: US Marine Corps Aviation in the Small Wars, 1915-1934*.³⁰ In addition to the limited amount of history written on the subject, the use of presentism in secondary sources is prevalent, as well as the over use (or misuse) of modern values and frameworks as the lens for analysis.³¹ For example, Johnson in *Biplanes at War*, is writing a historical narrative often using a contemporary counterinsurgency lens. This dissertation differs by using an approach that limits itself to what the Marines knew at the time of their actions and decisions rather than a retrospective analysis using modern military frameworks. The primary and secondary sources used during my research provide ample material to analyze the causal factors that led the US Marines to consider aviation a fundamental yet subordinate arm in fighting small wars.

The material described in this chapter is organized thematically to the maximum extent possible and consists of two parts: Part 1 will analyze and review the primary sources before shifting in Part 2 to a literature review of the secondary sources.

Part 1: Primary Sources

The following paragraphs describe where research occurred and then moves thematically to official records, small wars doctrine, aviation theory and practice, and what was taught inside the Marine Corps. While primary sources can generally be found for campaigns in the archive locations described in the next paragraph, most primary source material dealing with the topic in those archives is scattered across the various small wars campaign collections or found in personal paper collections. Of note, there are no specific unit histories for the squadrons that

³⁰ Wray Johnson, *Biplanes at War: US Marine Corps Aviation in the Small Wars, 1915-1934* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University of Kentucky Press, 2019).

³¹ Alexandra Walsham, "Past and ... Presentism," *Past & Present* 234, no. 1 (February 2017): 213. Walsham leads a series of articles arguing the pros and cons of presentism in historical writing. David Hackett Fisher, in his *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), numbers presentism as one of his fallacies. However, arguing for presentism is David M. McMahon, ed., *History and Human Flourishing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020). Specifically, in the chapter written by David Armitage, "In Defense of Presentism," Armitage argues that presentism is useful in giving a purpose to the history discipline (48).

operated in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, making quantitative data challenging to acquire.

Primary sources, such as pilots' logbooks, ground patrol reports, and mission reports from operational units in the field during the Banana Wars, can be found in two locations: the Marine Corps Research Center in Quantico, Virginia, and the United States National Archives in Washington, DC. Record Group 127, at the US National Archives, contains USMC records, including extensive official communications within the Banana Wars theaters ranging from field orders, training plans, intelligence reports, and after-action reports to logistics summaries, maps, photographs, and correspondence. In general, it should be noted that official reports were written by the Marines involved in the execution of the small wars campaign, and as primary source documents, these official reports offer a wealth of insight into tactical detail and overall operational assessments; however, they tend to gloss over crucial errors and mistakes.

The National Archives also holds the Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF) of many of the key leaders involved in the prosecution of the Banana Wars, including those of Littleton Waller, Alfred Cunningham, Roy Geiger, Ross Rowell, Mike Edson, Smedley Butler, Louis Puller, Earl 'Pete' Ellis, and John Lejeune. The OMPFs allow for reconstructing accurate timelines of specifically where and when these individuals served. In addition, each OMPF often has personal letters and official correspondence not found in other archives or collections, giving the researcher insight into the thinking and impressions of the Marines involved in the campaigns.

Many critical leaders who served during the Banana Wars also left official personal papers in the History Division of the US Marine Corps Research Center. The Center also holds campaign collections for each small war examined in this dissertation, consisting of official reporting and personal correspondence. The most comprehensive is the collection housing the Second Nicaraguan Campaign, which also has the most wide-ranging set of aviation records for the Banana Wars. For example, the "Log of Engagements of VO-7M [the squadron flying missions in Nicaragua]" report chronicles every reconnaissance flight, including all air attacks, from the beginning of the Second Nicaraguan Campaign in May 1927 until September 1928, the period of greatest air activity.³² This record shows the dates, times, flight routes, and after-action observations, making it an invaluable resource when analyzing how and why aviation was used during the Banana Wars. Missing from this report, however, are the corresponding logistics flights. Indeed, while logistical flight data is found in quarterly and yearly reporting in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign collection, the same level of detail given to combat flights does not exist.

³² "Log of Engagements VO-7M," Nicaraguan Folder 2, Box 2, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

In addition to the various campaigns, collections include oral records in the form of transcribed interviews, but these oral accounts are treated with care in this dissertation. By way of example, Ross Rowell and Lawson Sanderson, two influential Marine aviators during the Banana Wars, were general officers during the Second World War. The reminiscences of their time fighting small wars at the outset of their careers are often seen through a lens of fighting a total war; their thoughts were retrospective, authored years, often 30 to 40 years, after their time in the Banana Wars.³³ The same can be said for those Marines who participated in the First World War.

Primary Sources: Marines in the Philippines

This section describes the primary sources relating to the Philippine Insurrection and details each source used. Compared to the later small wars campaigns in Hispaniola and Nicaragua where there is considerable material there are few documents available that deal with the Philippines campaigns. Although the primary sources listed are few, they highlight how the US Marines favored offensive action, setting the trend for future small wars campaigns. Primary source material relating to the prosecution of small wars in the Philippine Insurrection (1898-1903) tends to fall into either official orders and correspondence or personal papers and diaries. Most orders specific to the US Marine Corps are contained in the yearly reports from the Commandant of the US Marines to the US Secretary of the Navy. These orders are published around a general narrative describing the year's events.³⁴ Although titled 'Reports Major General Commandant,' they were written by the Commandant's staff and represent a synthesis of various command and staff inputs. Official reports and orders relating to the Samar Campaign waged by the Marines (October 1901-January 1902) are found in Littleton Waller's papers and congressional reporting done by the then Secretary of War, Elijah Root.³⁵ Official

³³ Ross Rowell and Roy Geiger's personal paper collections are at the USMC Archives in Quantico, VA. Geiger and Rowell were interviewed after WWII and gave separate oral accounts of their exploits during the Banana Wars, but due to the time that had passed, these retrospectives may have been clouded by the scale and scope of what the interviewees achieved fighting in the Pacific in WWII.

³⁴ "Reports Major General Commandant" years 1898, 1899, 1901, 1902, Philippine Insurrection Box, various folders, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA

³⁵ Littleton Waller, "Report to the Commandant," May 24, 1902, Littleton Waller Personal Papers, Box 2, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA and Charles Francis Adams, *Secretary Root's Records: Marked Severities in Philippine Warfare, An Analysis of the Law and Facts bearing on the Action and Utterances of President Roosevelt and Secretary Root* (Boston: Geo H. Ellis Printers, 1902). All orders, court-martial records, and telegrams with directions to/from Washington DC to commanders in the Philippines are found in this latter work.

reports and orders help establish an accurate timeframe for when and where units are as well as their assigned missions.

US Navy Lieutenant Commander A.P. Niblack wrote a detailed timeline for Navy and Marine engagements in *The US Naval Institute Naval Proceedings* in 1902. Niblack's purpose was to establish the importance of US Naval and Marine participation.³⁶ The rapid speed of ship movements and narrowly focused tactical operations conducted by the Marines help illustrate the offensive nature of Marine missions during the Philippine Insurrection. Niblack's chronology also provides a timeline to cross-reference personal letters and diaries kept by some of the Marines who fought at the time.

Also located within the US Marine archives are personal papers from Marines who served during the Philippine Insurrection. The most detailed and comprehensive is a series of letters from US Marine Private Harold Kinman written from 1898-1902. Kinman was involved in all Philippine Marine operations from July 1899 until being deployed to the China Relief Expedition (Boxer Rebellion) in July 1900. Kinman returned to the Philippines in 1901, took part in the punitive expedition on Samar in late 1902, and was an eyewitness at Littleton Waller's court martial for murder in May 1902.³⁷ His lengthy descriptions of operations, including dates, times, and personal observations, are valuable in adding evidence to the offensive and enemy-focused operations conducted by the Marines at the time. In addition to Kinman's writings are the diaries of Marine Privates Louis Mothersbaugh and Joseph Hawkins. While Mothersbaugh's journal focused nearly exclusively on ship movements around the Philippines interspersed with succinct engagement descriptions, Hawkins' record was replete with detailed personal observations.³⁸ Both diaries add to the body of evidence analyzed that confirm the offensive nature of Marine military operations in the Philippines.

Three other personal papers collections also detail Marine operations during the Philippine Insurrection. The first includes US Marine Captain N.L. Draper's reports during two separate offensive operations. Both were launched from Cavite (Manila Bay) to the west coast of Luzon to engage enemy forces.³⁹ What is clear from Draper's accounts is that the Marines were used to disembarking quickly from

³⁶ A.P. Niblack, "Operations of the Navy and Marine Corps in the Philippine Archipelago, 1898-1902," *Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute*, 30, no. 4 (December 1904): 745-753.

³⁷ Harold Kinman, letters, Philippine Insurrection Collection, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

³⁸ Lewis Mothersbaugh, Diary 1899-1902, Philippine Insurrection Collection, USMC Archives, Quantico VA, and Joseph Hawkins, Diary 1901-1902, Philippine Insurrection Collection, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

³⁹ NL. Draper (Capt USMC), "Report to 1st Regiment Commander, Col Rob L. Mead from Capt Draper, E Company Commander", DTG April 9, 1900", Philippine Records Box, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA (Handwritten)

the sea and then redeploying back to a fixed naval station after combat operations. Essentially, the US Marines were used as a raid force rather than a force for occupation. This method of employment contrasted with US Army operations, which were intended to seize and hold territory.⁴⁰ The second collection is the papers of John Twiggs Meyers. Meyers detailed the initial naval and Marine operations against Manila and Cavite in 1899 in several reports and letters.⁴¹ Finally, Littleton Waller's papers provide insight into his punitive campaign in Samar. The most detailed and comprehensive among these is Waller's report directly to the Marine Corps Commandant written during his voyage back to the United States in 1902. Including with his report a handwritten map and copies of his orders, Waller emphasized his October-December 1901 offensive campaigns and only briefly mentioned his court-martial and the events leading to it.⁴² Draper, Meyers, and Waller would later serve as senior leaders during the Banana Wars, and the analysis of their papers helps to identify the operational tendency towards offensive military operations in small wars.

Doctrine During the Interwar Period

Any examination of US Marine small war theory and practice begins with British Army Colonel Charles Callwell's classic *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, first published in 1896.⁴³ This book was unique because it captured the British experience in small wars, compared to which the United States military had no equivalent. Most Marines were likely aware of Callwell's writings, as is evident from the professional journal articles written at the time.⁴⁴ Most significant is the analysis done by the Marines during the Banana Wars after reading Callwell's book and their decisions to deviate from his writing. These decisions were derived from

⁴⁰ "Telegrams Received," April 1899-April 1901, Philippines Records Box, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA. These telegrams are from US Army leaders across Luzon detailing their efforts to pacify the local population and accounts of their meetings with tribal and local leaders.

⁴¹ John Twiggs Meyers, "Letters and orders 1899", Personal Papers collection, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴² Littleton W.T. Waller, Personal Papers, Report to Major General Commandant, Collection 1784, Box 5, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴³ Charles Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* (Nebraska: Bison Books, 1906). The book had three editions, with the final being published in 1906.

⁴⁴ All four foundational Marine small wars articles quote directly from Callwell; Major E.H. Ellis, "Bush Brigades," *Marine Corps Gazette* 6, no. 1 (March 1921): 1-15, Major Samuel M. Harrington, "The Strategy and Tactics of Small Wars," *Marine Corps Gazette*, 6, no. 4 (December 1921): 474-491, Major Samuel M. Harrington, "The Strategy and Tactics of Small Wars, Part II" *Marine Corps Gazette* 7, no. 1 (March 1922): 84-93, and Captain G.A. Johnson, "Junior Marines in Minor Irregular Warfare," *Marine Corps Gazette* 6, no. 2 (June 1921): 152-163, and Major Harold Utley, "An Introduction to the Tactics and Technique of Small Wars," *Marine Corps Gazette* 16, no. 2 (May 1931): 50-53.

the Marines' actions and missions, later captured in *Marine Corps Gazette* articles written during the Banana Wars; these are thoroughly explored in Chapter Four.⁴⁵ Although the Marines' motivations and small wars approach differed from Callwell's experience serving in imperial policing, the Marines quoted several passages from Callwell in *Small Wars Operations* and included two specific examples when *Small Wars Operations* became the *Small Wars Manual* in 1940.⁴⁶ In essence the Marines followed Callwell's tactical advice, but did not ascribe to the political objective of Imperial policing.

Second only to Callwell's influence on developing small wars doctrine in the Marine Corps is W.C.G. Heneker's *Bush Warfare*, published in 1907.⁴⁷ Similarly to Callwell's classic book, Heneker was studied and used as an example by the Marines during their development of the *Small Wars Manual*. In the earlier publication, *Small Wars Operations*, Heneker is quoted verbatim with sections of his book used as historical examples for future leaders to study and emulate.⁴⁸

Despite different approaches to the US Marine's small wars operational system, Callwell and Heneker influenced how they formulated their ideas on fighting small wars, culminating in the 1940 publication of the *Small Wars Manual*, and as mentioned in the preceding paragraph was a follow-on to the earlier 1935 publication *Small Wars Operations*. Although written after the Banana Wars, *Small Wars Operations* and the *Small Wars Manual* provide the historical deduction that aviation was a fundamental but subordinate arm for fighting small wars. Examining the both provides this dissertation with an insight into the culmination of the Marines' small wars campaigns.

Internal to Service Viewpoints

The widest dissemination of tactics, techniques, and doctrine during the Banana Wars was accomplished through the *Marine Corps Gazette*, *The Leatherneck*, and, to a lesser extent, *The US Naval Institute Naval Proceedings*.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Ellis and Harrington are analyzed in depth in Chapter Four.

⁴⁶ *Small Wars Manual* (1940; reprint, Washington DC: Department of the Navy, 1987), 149-150 quoting Callwell's observations about the effect of rugged terrain on re-supply and 359-360 reprinting an example of river crossings. It should be noted that this is the only work quoted directly in the *Small Wars Manual*.

⁴⁷ W.C.G. Heneker, *Bush Warfare* (London: Hugh Rees, Ltd., 1907).

⁴⁸ *Small Wars Operations* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Schools, 1935), Chapter 12, 24-27.

⁴⁹ The *Marine Corps Gazette* was created in 1915 and published quarterly. It was intended for officer discussion on professional matters such as training, combat, and direction of the Marine Corps. *The Leatherneck* was started in 1917 as an unofficial newspaper for all Marines but became an official publication of the Corps in 1921. *Proceedings* began in 1874 as an officer's organization for the "advancement of professional and scientific knowledge of the Navy." It soon became a quarterly publication for the same purpose. *The Papers and Proceedings of the US Naval Institute, Volume One* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1874), 11.

These professional journals contained many reports, or synopses of reports, taken directly from official correspondence. During the Second Nicaraguan Campaign (1927-1933), the initial campaign reports, titled "Combat Reports," were published in the *Marine Corps Gazette* to help educate the Corps and pass along institutional knowledge gained from recent small wars experience.⁵⁰ However, after September 1929, no further operational reporting was published or disseminated across the entire Corps in either the *Gazette* or *Leatherneck*. As the US Marine Corps began to focus its professional development on amphibious warfare, small wars instruction in the formalized Marine Schools systems was also gradually reduced.⁵¹

Along with official reporting came numerous articles written by Marines who had recently participated in small wars. The *Gazette*, *Leatherneck*, and *Proceedings* articles were written by individual officers expressing their opinions slightly more openly and honestly than official reports. Still, the majority focused on tactical level detail. Although written with more candor than official reports articles in professional journals bolstered the combat prowess of the Marines. An example of some of the self-serving propaganda highlighting the Marine Corps service culture sometimes encountered in writing during the era was an article by US Marine Major Fran Evan. In 1917, Evan claimed that the Marines were "a veteran body of seasoned officers and men to whom the seizing of coastal towns, the razing of supposedly impregnable native strongholds, and the secrets of bush fighting and street fighting in tropical countries became an open book."⁵² A less enthusiastic view of small wars, during the same period and campaign, came from Colonel George Thorpe, writing two years later in 1919, who lamented the lack of both political and military direction who highlighted a common frustration with small wars;

It would be a fine thing if troops in the tropics, and especially in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, were told exactly what their mission is. In the first place, it would help if our government could

⁵⁰ *The Marine Corps Gazette*, "Combat Reports," 13, no. 4 (December 1928): 241, and *The Marine Corps Gazette*, "Combat Reports," 14, no. 1 (March 1929), and *The Marine Corps Gazette*, "Combat Reports," 14, no. 2 (June 1929): 81-94, and *The Marine Corps Gazette*, "Combat Reports," 14, no. 3 (September 1929): 170-179.

⁵¹ LtCol Donald F. Bittner, *Curriculum Evolution: Marine Corps Command and Staff College, 1920-1988* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, HQ USMC, 1988), 16 and 22. The Marine Schools consisted of The Basic School (lieutenant level), Command and Staff (senior captain and majors), and the Senior Course (Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels). Col E.B. Miller, the Executive Officer of the Marine Schools, was directed by future Marine commandant Brigadier General Russel, to overhaul the school system in 1930 to begin focusing efforts on developing doctrine and tactics for fighting an amphibious war in the Pacific.

⁵² Major Fran E. Evans, "The Marines Have Landed," *Marine Corps Gazette* 2, no. 3 (September 1917): 213.

announce its policy in reference to these countries - if it could say definitely what its program was intended to be so that its representatives out among the people of these countries could tell them exactly what our government conceives its mission to be there. Uncertainty is always unsatisfactory.⁵³

Some articles, like Colonel Thorpe's, highlighted the broad strategic thinking across the Corps when formulating a small wars campaign approach. Lieutenant Colonel Harold Utley, writing more than a decade later in 1933, made the careful observation that "we [USMC] must never in our zeal for the perfection of plans for a Small War overlook the fact that behind and over us is the force known as 'The Public Opinion of the United States.'"⁵⁴ Both Thorpe and Utley illustrated that some Marine officers at the time were aware of the political dimension of small wars and had a savvy sense of how public perception also influenced military operations. In this current study, the writings of Marines who fought and captured their thoughts on paper during the Banana Wars are used to analyze the overarching approach to small wars within the Corps and how it applied to the application and development of air power.

The two most influential writers within the Corps whose writing helped to shape a small wars approach during the Second Nicaraguan Campaign were US Marine Majors E.H. 'Pete' Ellis and Samuel Harrington. Both Ellis and Harrington served in Hispaniola and both published lengthy articles detailing their views on small wars operations in the *Marine Corps Gazette* shortly after their combat tours. Ellis was motivated to write as the result of a backlash of public opinion resulting from Congressional inquiries into the conduct of the Marines in Haiti in 1921.⁵⁵ Ellis recognized that small wars are often conducted in isolation and depend upon the support of the population back in the US and that a negative opinion could negatively impact military operations: "The chief danger to a peaceful occupation is the effect of hostile propaganda initiated and spread by the agitator class."⁵⁶ At the heart of Ellis' article is the sentiment about needing persistent offensive action and ensuring remote bases consistently pressure the enemy force.⁵⁷ Ellis put his theories into practice when he was the G-2 (Intelligence Officer) in the Dominican Republic.

⁵³ Colonel George C. Thorpe, "Dominican Service," *Marine Corps Gazette* 4, no. 4 (December 1919): 325.

⁵⁴ LtCol Harold H. Utley, "Tactics and Techniques of Small Wars: Part II. Intelligence," *Marine Corps Gazette* 19, no. 3 (August 1933): 47.

⁵⁵ Major E.H. Ellis, "Bush Brigades," *Marine Corps Gazette* 6, no. 1 (March 1921): 1.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

His operational analysis, written in Hispaniola in 1919, provided most of the material for his article, where he expanded his views on offensive action.⁵⁸

Harrington, who published his first article eight months after Ellis, established a two-part framework that included strategic military intervention as a driver to operational constructs.⁵⁹ At the heart of Harrington's small wars approach was the need for offensive action against the enemy force: "The objective will be the hostile forces. This will remain true when the hostile forces become unorganized [disorganized]. But the *means of reaching this objective* will differ from those used in regular warfare (italics in original)."⁶⁰ Harrington was straightforward in describing a logical process, from the strategic to the tactical level, to articulate how Marines should operate in future small wars. Both Harrington and Ellis effectively captured the small wars approach used by the Marines during the Banana Wars, and it is that same approach that this dissertation will examine in analyzing the use of air power in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign.

Inside the US Marine Corps, the personal papers of Alfred Cunningham, Ross Rowell, and Roy Geiger are all located at the US Marine Corps Research Center in Quantico, Virginia. In addition to their OMPFs, the personal papers of each US Marine aviator provide a deeper insight into their decision-making and collaboration that contributed to airpower becoming a viable arm within the Marine Corps. These men also wrote for publication in military professional journals, such as the *Marine Corps Gazette* and *Leatherneck* beginning in 1916 with Cunningham's first article in the *Marine Corps Gazette* through to 1929 with Rowell's article in the same publication about his experiences in Nicaragua. As neither Cunningham, Rowell, nor Geiger published any memoirs, their personal papers allow for an analysis of their thoughts at the time of their decisions.

Airpower Primary Sources

Interwar airpower theory stemmed from tactics and operations during World War I (WWI). The primary post-war airpower proponents were focused on strategic bombing and utilizing airpower as a stand-alone service with a potentially war-winning capability. Italian Giulio Douhet, in his lauded publication *The Command of the Air*, is often seen as having a tremendous impact on the development of airpower during the interwar years. The US Army Air Corps was aware of Douhet's writings and theories but did not actively teach his doctrine at their Air Corps Tactical School, attended by several prominent Marine aviators of the period

⁵⁸ Earl H. Ellis, "Operations Order, Summer 1920," National Archives, Record Group 127, Records Relating to the Occupation of the Dominican Republic, Folder D-40, National Archives, Washington, DC.

⁵⁹ Major Samuel M. Harrington, "The Strategy and Tactics of Small Wars," *Marine Corps Gazette* 6, no. 4 (December 1921): 474-491 and Major Samuel M. Harrington, "The Strategy and Tactics of Small Wars, Part II" *Marine Corps Gazette*, 7, no. 1 (March 1922): 84-93.

⁶⁰ Harrington, 476.

covered by this dissertation.⁶¹ A more prominent publication in American military interwar thought was US Army Air Corps Brigadier General William “Billy” Mitchell’s *Winged Defense*, which argued for creating a separate air service and the potential for air power in a future war.⁶² Although the Marines, especially those attending the US Army Air Corps Tactical School, may have heard of Douhet and might have read Mitchell’s work, neither of these early airpower theorists appear to have influenced how the Marine Corps adapted aviation to small wars.

Across the globe, the Royal Air Force (RAF) developed parallel theories for using airpower during their small wars in the Middle East and Afghanistan. The RAF’s development of airpower is relevant to this study as their airpower theory for small wars shifted during the interwar period. The RAF’s doctrine, officially codified in the 1922 *CD 22: Operations Manual, Royal Air Force*, provided the first RAF thoughts on using airpower in small wars. The RAF adopted much of the British Army’s doctrine into their own during the first decade of the interwar period.⁶³ Chapter IX, “Aircraft in Warfare Against an Uncivilized Enemy,” made a case for aircraft utilization in Imperial Policing. Although *CD 22* advocated the primacy of airpower during small wars, the need for cooperation with ground forces ran throughout, and it illustrates how the RAF evolved their airpower concepts during their small wars.⁶⁴ Updates to RAF manuals throughout the period show the shift in thinking within the RAF towards a more refined use of airpower in small wars. Although there is no direct quote or linkage from RAF doctrine to how the Marines developed airpower in any primary document examined for this dissertation, the Marines were aware of the RAF’s application of air power in Iraq, India, and Afghanistan.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Robert T. Finney, *A History of the Air Corps Tactical School: 1920-1940* (Reprint, 1955, Maxwell AFB: Air University, USAF Air Warfare School, 1998), 57. Finney, writing in 1955, was able to interview past instructors, and few, if any, had read Douhet. A few examples of Marines attending are Ross Rowell, the senior aviator for the first year of the Second Nicaraguan Campaign, Thomas Turner, future head of Marine Aviation, and Christian Schilt, Medal of Honor winner for his exploits during the Second Nicaraguan Campaign.

⁶² William Mitchell, *Winged Defense: The Development and Possibilities of Modern Air Power* (Reprint, 1925 Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2009) specifically Chapter 5, “How Should We Organize our National Air Power? Make it a Main Force or Still and Appendage?” and Chapter 8, “The Making of Air Force Personnel.”

⁶³ *CD 22: Operations Manual, Royal Air Force* (London: Air Ministry, 1922). The first six chapters were current Army regulations and two from the Royal Navy. Only three dealt explicitly with the RAF: Aerial Operations and Aerial Fighting, Cooperation of Aircraft with the Army, and Aircraft in Warfare Against an Uncivilized Enemy.

⁶⁴ *CD 22: Operations Manual, Royal Air Force* (London: Air Ministry, 1922), 87 and 107 and Chapter IX, “Cooperation of Aircraft with the Army.”

⁶⁵ H. Denny Campbell, “Aviation in Guerrilla Warfare: Part III.” *Marine Corps Gazette* 16, no. 3 (November 1931): 37-40. This article quotes an early RAF communique and shows a

Political and Military Leadership

The most important political leader during the Second Nicaraguan Campaign was Henry L. Stimson. Stimson, whose career entailed two terms as the US Secretary of War (1911-1913 and 1940-1945) and the US Secretary of State (1929-1933), set the political objectives for the US in Nicaragua during his four-week mission to Nicaragua in 1927. Stimson's writings about his varied career, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, provide primary source material on the decision-making during the critical timeframe examined in this dissertation. Stimson's mission represented only a small portion of his extensive public career, and Stimson wrote to ensure that the historical record was accurate from his point of view.⁶⁶ Fortunately, Stimson's thinking and work were captured in *Henry L. Stimson's American Policy in Nicaragua: The Lasting Legacy*, edited by Paul H. Boeker. Boeker makes available Stimson's publication, *American Policy in Nicaragua*, and another primary source, the State Department's report on its dealings with Nicaragua: *The United States and Nicaragua: A Survey of the Relations from 1909-1932*. Stimson's writings, published immediately after his political mission in 1927, offer a contemporary recounting of the events seen through the eyes of the prime political architect of American policy objectives in Nicaragua. His plan to create an internal police force, modeled on the Haitian and Dominican Republic experiences of the Marines, became a directed mission for the Marines' small wars campaign during the Second Nicaraguan Campaign.⁶⁷ Although Stimson had a naïve understanding of the political climate inside Nicaragua at the time, his political direction provides significant value for this dissertation.⁶⁸

The autobiography of US Marine Major General John Lejeune, *The Reminiscences of a Marine*, offers insight into what a senior Marine and Commandant thought of Marine aviation in the Banana Wars. General Lejeune's writings provide this dissertation with a primary source but one of limited value. Nearly half of the book focuses on his service in World War I, and only 20 pages are devoted to his time as Commandant, with few details about the Banana Wars.⁶⁹

knowledge of RAF operations. Similarly, Ross Rowell's lecture at the Army War College on July 29, 1929, entitled "Air Operations in Minor Warfare."

⁶⁶ Henry L. Stimson, *American Policy in Nicaragua*, reprinted in Paul H. Boeker, ed, *Henry L. Stimson's American Policy in Nicaragua; The Lasting Legacy* (Marcus Weiner: New York, 1991), 25.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, xi.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 23. Stimson asserts that "both parties were friendly to the United States." The support given to Augusto Sandino would indicate otherwise.

⁶⁹ John A. Lejeune, *The Reminiscences of a Marine* (Philadelphia: Dorrance and Co. Publishers, 1930). World War I covers pages 110-208 and his time as the Commandant of the Marine Corps on 209-220. On 214, General Lejeune specifically includes Marine aviation in future force structures.

Most relevant for this dissertation is that Major General Lejeune shaped the service culture of the Corps and gave it its mission focus during a period of post-World War I resource reductions. In a 1922 *Marine Corps Gazette* article, he stated that the mission of the Corps was to “protect American lives, rights, and interests” and “restore order and to maintain tranquility in disturbed countries.”⁷⁰ As explored in Chapter Three, Lejeune’s direction for the Corps ensured small war fighting remained a part of the service’s mission.

The primary sources examined allow this dissertation to explore several points of analysis. First, the primary sources provide first-hand accounts of the events analyzed in my research through letters, reports, and articles. Official reports and publications gather valuable metrics across campaigns but also illustrate what was valued most by the service at the time. Choosing to emphasize combat action in official reporting shows that the US Marines’ service culture put a premium on emphasizing the narrative of offensive action. The primary sources also let us analyze how the US Marines responded to and adapted to outside political pressures and public perception. Finally, the primary sources allow for the analysis of trends in thought. The near universal reporting on combat action and offensive pressure on the enemy provides a body of evidence that illustrates the primacy of action, the centrality of ground operations, and an adaptation of aviation into a supporting arm in small wars. Unfortunately, discussion of other choices available to the US Marines, as they adapted aviation into their small wars, are missing from the primary sources. We can infer from letters and professional articles what other courses of action the Marines may have taken when developing aviation, but the primary sources lack any debate weighing different options and only provide us with the eventual outcomes chosen.

Part II: Secondary Sources

History of the Corps

This section looks at secondary sources, grouped thematically, beginning with USMC histories and continuing through biographies. This review will highlight the paucity of existing literature on the causal factors for developing US Marine airpower in small wars. In secondary sources, the history of US Marine aviation is often described in terms of new developments in tactics and technology. Importantly, it is missing explanations of why Marine aviation developed the way it did. Additionally, secondary sources relating to small wars or the Banana Wars, especially those written after 2001, are replete with modern terminology and counterinsurgency frameworks. The US Marines fighting the Banana Wars did not conceive of themselves as fighting against insurgents bent on achieving legitimate

⁷⁰ Major General John A. Lejeune, “Preparation,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 8, no. 1 (March 1922): 55.

political objectives. Rather, the Marines in Hispaniola and Nicaragua were fighting to secure American interests, and the military way of achieving that objective was to pursue a strategy of offensive military action to destroy the enemy.

Comprehensive histories of the US Marine Corps are important to this dissertation because they illustrate how aviation development in small wars is nested in the more extensive developmental history of the Marine Corps. Marine aviation is but a small segment of the broader service history of the Marine Corps. As such, the early use of airpower by the Marines receives scant attention in most official and unofficial accounts of the Corps. Three broad histories of the Corps are described here in order of their value to this dissertation. Alan Millett's *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps* is regarded as one of the Corps' best histories.⁷¹ Although the development of aviation during the Banana Wars consists of just one paragraph, Millet's history provides excellent insight into the Corps during the period covered in this dissertation.⁷² Millett examines myriad factors that shaped the Corps, including operations, new technology, manpower developments within the Corps, and the influence of world politics. His lengthy chapter on the Banana Wars describes the significant operations undertaken, including brief mentions of aviation use and the grueling reality of conducting small wars.⁷³ Millett also makes an in-depth analysis of the impact of the Banana Wars experience on the Marines' doctrine, service culture, and operational capabilities.⁷⁴

Another comprehensive history of the Corps is Robert Heintz's *Soldiers of the Sea: The United States Marine Corps, 1775-1962*. Heintz, more so than Millett, describes more of aviation's tactical and technical aspects when it entered operations during the Banana Wars. His discussion of the first instance of aviation employment directly supporting Marine ground operations is relevant to this dissertation.⁷⁵ Heintz dispels the common misconception that direct support of ground troops through air-delivered fires first occurred in 1927. He explains that the first use of aviation delivered fires in direct support of infantry first occurred years earlier, in August 1919, when Captain E.A. Ostermann coordinated a single DH-4 to strafe a bandit

⁷¹ The US Marines commissioned Millett to write the definitive history of the Corps in 1980, the original publication of his work. Millett wrote an update rather than have another author write a new history after Desert Storm. *Semper Fidelis* has also appeared several times on the Commandant's Reading List, the directed professional reading for all US Marines.

⁷² Alan Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 252.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, Chapter 7.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 262-263.

⁷⁵ Robert D. Heintz, *Soldiers of the Sea: The United States Marine Corps, 1775-1962* (Baltimore, Maryland: The Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1991), 242.

encampment in Haiti.⁷⁶ Heinel's work however lacks a detailed study of the impacts of certain decisions or answers to the fundamental question of "why" events occurred versus describing them in detail. Overall, Heinel's work is exhaustively researched and offers readers an important historical narrative.

A narrow and tactically focused history of the Marines is found in George Clark's *Battle History of the United States Marine Corps, 1775-1945*. Clark's book provides to a quick operational overview of early Marine battles but does not provide an in-depth analysis of small wars campaigns. Clark examines tactical engagements by setting up his chapters in a pseudo-military mission brief format, laying out the period, situation, forces involved, and geographic location.⁷⁷ Clark then succinctly describes combat engagements and neatly summarizes the results using a tactical lens. His descriptions focus on isolated tactical combat engagements and often ignore the more significant operational level of war and related small war developments. After describing the combat in the Dominican Republic in 1916, he writes of the remainder of the small wars campaign from 1916-1924: "Nothing of any real consequence occurred during the period, but on occasion, it was deadly for a few Marines and their opponents. After eight years of occupation, the US withdrew its forces."⁷⁸ In these two sentences, Clark ignores the introduction of aviation, the military government established by the Marines, the civil works projects undertaken, and the training of the local guard force during these small wars campaigns. All these lines of effort would become hallmarks of the small wars approach used by the Corps during the Banana Wars.

Specific unit and operational histories written during the Banana Wars are found at the Marine History Division in Quantico. The Marines produced no comprehensive official history or study of the Banana Wars, and the attention to ground operations is a consistent theme throughout the history of the Banana Wars, illustrating aviation's supporting role. One focused official account by Stephen Fuller and Cosmas Graham, titled *Marines in the Dominican Republic 1916-1924*,

⁷⁶ Ibid. and E.A. Ostermann, "Letter to Col R.D. Heinel," August 7, 1959, Heinel Personal Papers collection, Box 38, Folder 1959, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA. This perspective comes from a personal account of Ostermann given during an interview with Heinel. In 1959, Heinel served in the US Naval Mission to Haiti, and Ostermann and his wife traveled to that country. After the interview, Ostermann stated in a letter that he would prepare a memorandum of the engagement, but this document does not exist in either Osterman's or Heinel's papers. Heinel left extensive records and personal papers illuminating some of his research at the Marine Archives in Quantico, VA.

⁷⁷ US military members, particularly in the US Army and USMC, will be intimately familiar with Clark's adoption of the '5 Paragraph Order' to frame his chapters; Situation, Mission, Execution, Admin and Logistics, and Command and Signal. This, in turn, inherently limits his analysis to the proscribed format.

⁷⁸ George B. Clark, *The Battle History of the United States Marine Corps, 1775-1945* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Co, 2010), 113.

offers a detailed narrative of the campaign in the Dominican Republic. Although this work focuses on ground operations, there is some discussion on aviation integration. While there is a missed opportunity for *Marines in the Dominican Republic 1916-1924* to compare the Haitian small wars operations happening simultaneously on the same island, Fuller and Graham do examine the choices of Marine leaders in their approach to small wars in the Dominican Republic, which in turn affected the use of airpower.⁷⁹ Fuller and Graham concentrate entirely on drawing the military lessons from the campaign but acknowledge some social impacts on Dominican and later Nicaraguan societies.⁸⁰

Another focused historical publication is Bernard Nalty's *The United States Marines in Nicaragua*. Nalty begins his chronicle in 1855, giving a full background of US intervention leading to the 1927-1933 small wars campaign.⁸¹ He describes the strategic decisions made by State Department leaders, such as Henry Stimson, and how political decisions shaped combat operations.⁸² Nalty's summary of the results is balanced, noting that while US political objectives were met, a longer-lasting strategic failure persisted due to the animosity among the Nicaraguans created by US military intervention.⁸³ While Nalty acknowledges the political ramifications of occupation and the lack of a lasting peace once the Marines departed, his analysis is that the occupation benefited the local population and was a military success for the Marines.⁸⁴

Edward Johnson, writing in *Marine Corps Aviation: The Early Years, 1912-1940*, chronicles the efforts of the Marine Corps in gaining and establishing training facilities, as well as the early challenges of creating a permanent role for aviation within the Marine Corps.⁸⁵ Johnson's purpose in writing is to demonstrate how the changes in USMC aviation development led to its inclusion in the Fleet Marine Force (FMF) concept before the outbreak of World War Two. Johnson draws on first-hand accounts, oral histories, and primary source material to examine the evolution of USMC aviation. However, he fails to mention the development of the

⁷⁹ Stephen M. Fuller and Graham A. Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic 1916-1924* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division HQ US Marines, 1974), 42 and 53. Fuller and Graham describe the use of aviation to deliver mail and conduct aerial mapping to increase the lines of communication for the Marine ground forces.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 68–69.

⁸¹ Bernard C. Nalty, *The United States Marines in Nicaragua* (Washington DC: Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1968), 2-13.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 13–14.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Edward Johnson, *Marine Corps Aviation: The Early Years, 1912-1940* (Washington, DC: Headquarters United States Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, 1977), 27. Most early attempts to “sell” aviation as a valuable part of the Marine Corps were by the Marine's first aviator, Alfred Cunningham.

USMC's most lasting doctrine during the period, the *Small Wars Manual*. From the perspective of this study, Johnson's book is a good source for examining the types of aircraft and equipment used during the USMC's small wars in the 1920s and 1930s. In addition, Johnson also provides insight into the internal struggles within the service during the development of aviation. Accepting aviation as a critical component of the FMF set the course of USMC aviation towards finally achieving a formal structural organization that included doctrine, resources, and specified missions.⁸⁶ Johnson concludes that the close coordination developed by the Marines between aviation and a ground force commander was solidified during the Banana Wars, but this is the only benefit he derives from over a decade of aviation experience in small wars. Indeed, the culmination of combat experience gained in the Banana Wars is summed up in one sentence.⁸⁷ While well-researched, Johnson accepts the success of aviation and ground operations working together at face value rather than exploring the 'why' behind decisions made during the Banana Wars.

An important work for explaining the 'why' military decisions were made is the 1934 Marine-sponsored publication by Marine Captain Harry A. Ellsworth, *One Hundred Eighty Landings of the United States Marine Corps: 1800-1934*. His book describes the shifting political climate across several presidential administrations during various USMC interventions, capturing the political dimension that drove the Marine's military objectives. As one example, the 1906 intervention in Cuba was justified because "officials of the United States felt that there was a poor outlook for a change for the better, and that intervention was necessary to bring about order, protection to foreigners and the establishment of a stable regime to administer properly the affairs of the government."⁸⁸ This intervention took place under US President Theodore Roosevelt's 'Roosevelt Corollary' that, beyond the stipulations in the Monroe Doctrine, allowed the US to intervene. However, in 1933, another domestic upheaval occurred in Cuba, causing concern for US national interests. By this time, US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 'good neighbor' policy was in effect, reversing the trend of the previous 30-plus years. Marines were dispatched on ships to observe the civil unrest from afloat but did not go ashore.⁸⁹ Ellsworth's work is notable, being both a secondary and quasi-primary source. Ellsworth served in Haiti in the 1920s, and his bias towards military intervention comes through his writing.

Another publication that analyses the causal factor of service culture is the 2018 *The Marines, Counterinsurgency and Strategic Culture: Lessons Learned and*

⁸⁶ Ibid., 65. Squadron size, missions, designations, and resources were formally laid out in the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*. It should be noted that no formal structure for aviation in small wars was ever officially adopted by the Marines.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 58.

⁸⁸ Harry A. Ellsworth, *One Hundred Eighty Landings of the United States Marine Corps: 1800-1934* (Quantico, VA; USMC Historical Section, 1934), 62.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 64.

Lost in America's Wars, by Jeannie L. Johnson. Johnson asserts that the small wars approach taken by the Marines stems from the national culture from which the troops are drawn, this in turn shaping the military service culture. Johnson examines small wars while viewing the Marines' actions through both national and military service cultural lenses, but her primary lens is that of counterinsurgencies.⁹⁰ Johnson asserts that military practices are constrained by the national norms of the United States, and "this is an unconscious, natural process" expected of all US troops.⁹¹ For Johnson, US norms and behavior patterns are rooted in life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, these then formulating the American norms of hard work, individualism, and a sense of fair play, and ultimately shaping the US Marine Corps service culture.⁹²

Interestingly, Johnson analyzes why the Banana Wars are viewed with a certain amount of selective memory within the Corps. The history the Marines choose to remember concerning Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua is one of an effective military government run by the Marines in addition to the legendary exploits of a few Marines, including Smedley Butler, Herman Hannekan, Lewis B. 'Chesty' Puller, and 'Red' Mike Edson.⁹³ Although Johnson brings forth some exciting analysis, the book has no primary source documentation beyond a handful of *Marine Corps Gazette* articles.

Also examining the impact of service culture is Austin Long's *The Soul of Armies: Counterinsurgency Doctrine and Military Culture in the US and UK*, which looks beyond the culture of the Corps to present a comparison between the approaches used by the British Army, the US Army, and the US Marine Corps.⁹⁴ Long aims to explain how the three services fared in the counterinsurgency

⁹⁰ Jeannie L. Johnson, *The Marines, Counterinsurgency and Strategic Culture: Lessons Learned and Lost in America's Wars* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2018). This book relies primarily on secondary works with only a smattering of *Gazette* articles to buttress the research.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 16 and 37.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 38

⁹³ These Marines have achieved mythological status in the annals of the Corps. Butler was a two-time recipient of the Medal of Honor and had vast small wars experience. Hannekan, disguised as a rebel, killed Charlemagne Peralte, the then-leader of the Haitian rebellion. He was awarded the Medal of Honor and two Navy Crosses for other combat actions in Haiti and Nicaragua. Chesty Puller, the winner of Five Navy Crosses, known as 'El Tigre' by the Sandino forces in Nicaragua, was known for his battlefield prowess and leadership from the Banana Wars to Korea. "Red Mike" Edson, who commanded the original Raider Battalion in WWII, led a famous patrol up the Coco River in Nicaragua that had 12 engagements against Sandino and gained the support of the Mosquito Indians.

⁹⁴ Austin Long, *The Soul of Armies: Counterinsurgency Doctrine and Military Culture in the US and UK* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2016). A comparison throughout the book examines the historical influence of colonial policing and its impact on shaping the culture of the British military.

campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan in the 2000s. The value of Long's work for this dissertation lies in establishing a cultural pattern for the British Army, US Army, and US Marine Corps stretching back to the beginning of the 20th century. He suggests that part of this cultural service history stems from the missions assigned to each service, but Long also uses a modern counterinsurgency framework lens to examine the Banana Wars.

Long succinctly summarizes the institutional tension resident within the Corps regarding service missions and identity at the turn of the 20th century—two distinct sub-cultures developed within the US Marine Corps that continued through the interwar period. One advocated for an amphibious expeditionary role for the Corps, specifically fighting alongside the US Navy in the Pacific. At the same time, the other sub-culture was intent on focusing the Corps' efforts on small wars.⁹⁵ Combining the work found in *Marines, Counterinsurgency, and Strategic Culture* and *The Soul of Armies*, it is possible to see how both national culture and the unique service culture of the Marine Corps shaped the small wars approach used by the Marines and, ultimately, how airpower developed to support the campaigns in the Banana Wars.

A more focused work on how service culture shaped the US Marine Corps is Heather Venable's *How the Few Became the Proud: Crafting Marine Corps Mystique 1874-1918*. Venable examines a formative period of the Marine Corps as the service transitioned from small-sized elements aboard sailing ships to operating as field force divisions in modern industrial war. Venable's work analyzes how Marines promoted their fighting prowess over other services and how recruiting toward such an image created a certain mystique about the Corps.⁹⁶ Venable argues that the Marines portrayed an aggressive fighting image to distinguish themselves from the Navy and the Army. This constructed identity made Marines more offensively minded in their operations during small war campaigns.⁹⁷ Venable touches briefly on the early interventions in Haiti and the Dominican Republic but does a deep analysis of the Samar expedition in 1902, led by Littleton Waller, and shows how the aggressive spirit inside the US Marine Corps spurred Waller into action.⁹⁸ Venable's analysis – that a self-stylized image, and one to upheld in the field, helped shape offensive tactics for the Marines – is valuable to this dissertation and the examination of small wars development inside the Corps.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 67. This is not a uniquely Marine Corps tension between what type of conflict to train for. The modern US Joint Force focus swings from total war (peer competition) to crisis response/counterinsurgency.

⁹⁶ Heather Venable, *How the Few Became the Proud: Crafting Marine Corps Mystique 1874-1918* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2019), chapter 3 begins to describe early recruiting efforts, but her description of the Samar expedition in chapter 2 exemplifies the identity construction perpetuated by Marines.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 8.

⁹⁸ Ibid., end of chapter 2.

Into the Wild Blue Yonder

Several relevant histories of airpower were analyzed for this dissertation. Broad histories of airpower typically follow an arc beginning in World War I, expound upon technological and airpower doctrine advances in the interwar period, move on to discuss the ascendancy of airpower in World War II, and finally end with the advances of touted war-winning airpower technology of today. While nearly all omit the development of airpower usage during small wars, these broad histories are important for this dissertation to illustrate the niche development of airpower in small wars pursued by the US Marines immediately following WWI. One classic text, *Paths of Heaven: The Evolution of Airpower Theory*, edited by US Air Force Colonel Phillip Meilinger, analyzes airpower doctrine across various services and countries. Of interest for this dissertation is the chapter “Trenchard, Slessor, and Royal Air Force Doctrine before World War II.” In this chapter, also written by Meilinger, Trenchard’s offensive spirit and passionate advocacy of the RAF come across very clearly.⁹⁹ Meilinger also gives Trenchard full credit for succeeding during the bureaucratic in-fighting that kept the RAF alive during the defense spending cuts in the post-war era and for carving out the small wars role the RAF played in Imperial policing during the same period.¹⁰⁰ However, Meilinger, following in a similar bias used by the other contributing authors, is writing to show the primacy of strategic airpower and is less concerned with small wars. He writes that the small wars experience of the RAF was “neither grand nor glorious,” and appears to believe that writing about small wars and strategic airpower is the same.¹⁰¹ The value of *Paths of Heaven* for this dissertation is the analysis by the authors of the thinking of the significant airpower proponents of the time. Although the Marines used airpower purely tactically, *Paths of Heaven* highlights the differences between the Marines’ usage of airpower from other services.

Discussions about aviation in small wars can be found embedded in more significant works on the development of military aviation. A typical example is Richard P. Hallion’s *Strike from the Sky, The History of Battlefield Air Attack 1911-1945*. Most historical airpower books are more concerned about the development of massed air forces, typically culminating in World War II. Hallion uses thirty pages to describe four small wars during the interwar period: the Russo-Polish War, the Rif War, the Third Afghan War, and the Second Nicaraguan Campaign.¹⁰² Despite a reasonable focus on small wars, regrettably, air operations in Hispaniola and the RAF’s operations during the interwar period are missing from his discussion. The book is well researched, but it illustrates the focus of most studies of airpower

⁹⁹ Phillip Meilinger, “Trenchard, Slessor, and Royal Air Force Doctrine before WWII,” in *The Paths of Heaven: The Evolution of Airpower Theory*, ed. Phillip Meilinger (Maxwell Air Force Base: Air University Press, 1997), 41-42.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 49-50.

¹⁰² Richard P. Hallion, *Strike from the Sky, The History of Battlefield Air Attack 1911-1945*, (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 45

history, which is the significant combat operations such as the Combined Bomber Offensive of World War II. Small wars, with no pun intended, are considered small and not worth time and study.

Turning to how the RAF developed and used airpower during the interwar period is David Omissi's *Air Power and Colonial Control, The Royal Air Force 1919-1939*. Omissi details RAF development and employment of airpower for Imperial Policing. Omissi is writing for a British audience, and reflecting on a period of British history. His use of terms, such as "police bombing," illustrates the attitudes of RAF leaders of the time.¹⁰³ A unique concept put forward by Omissi is that the RAF thought of its air policing role as a training ground for European-based pilots, allowing them to gain experience.¹⁰⁴ Omissi questions the efficacy of knowledge gained in air control missions and demonstrates that the skills and tactics used by the RAF on the outskirts of the Empire were vastly different from the strategic airpower focus back in the UK.¹⁰⁵ Of relevance for the current dissertation, Omissi's work examines indigenous reactions to the use of air power.¹⁰⁶ Omissi describes the countermeasures indigenous peoples used when attacked by the RAF, but he is largely silent on how the RAF adapted.

A similar work to Omissi's is Sebastian Ritchie's *The RAF, Small Wars and Insurgencies in the Middle East: 1919-1939*. Ritchie's work, written in 2011 when the UK was conducting post 9/11 operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, was born out of renewed interest in how airpower could be applied in a counterinsurgency.¹⁰⁷ Although Ritchie is writing a history, his lens is distinctly modern, using counterinsurgency frameworks to examine the effectiveness of the RAF during its Imperial Policing. The strength of Ritchie's work is that it illustrates the differences between the British campaigns in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine during the interwar period. His analysis shows how the RAF adapted aviation to suit their needs depended on local politics, specific military objectives, and terrain.¹⁰⁸ Ritchie's work is helpful to this dissertation in arguing that the most successful uses of air power in the British small wars of the interwar period were those conducted in close coordination with the ground scheme of maneuver.¹⁰⁹

The use of airpower in the small wars conducted by the RAF is further explored in *Pilots and Rebels: The Use of Aircraft in Unconventional Warfare 1918-1988*, in which Philip Towle writes about the operations, strengths, and limitations

¹⁰³ David Omissi, *Air Power and Colonial Control, The Royal Air Force 1919-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 209.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 145.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 210–211.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 107–122.

¹⁰⁷ Sebastian Ritchie, *The RAF, Small Wars and Insurgencies in the Middle East: 1919-1939* (Shrivenham, UK: Air Historical Centre, 2011), 1-2.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 5 and 79-81.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 79.

of the RAF in small wars.¹¹⁰ Towle illustrates throughout his work that airpower can accomplish a variety of missions on the battlefield but also that airpower is limited in achieving a lasting political objective.¹¹¹ Towle's book is an essential piece in the historiography of aviation use in small wars, discussing, in particular, the evolving use of aircraft by the RAF during the same period as the Banana Wars.

A broader work concerning the use of airpower across various small wars is Joel Hayward's *Airpower, Insurgency, and the "War on Terror."* Hayward notes in his introduction that airpower theorists have considerable consternation about how airpower fits into small wars. Many classic airpower missions, such as long-range interdiction and strategic bombing, might not apply in a counterinsurgency.¹¹² However, "a lack of viable independent 'strategic' roles in most counterinsurgency contexts does not mean that airpower is of minimal importance or influence against insurgents. Traditional 'tactical' airpower still plays a key role."¹¹³ Hayward uses the subsequent chapters, written by different contributing authors, to examine if there are common challenges in using airpower in counterinsurgencies. Hayward correctly asserts that for airpower to be successful in small wars, it needs to cooperate closely with the ground force.¹¹⁴ In his chapter "Airpower and Counterinsurgency: Back to the Basics," James Corum echoes Hayward's belief, stating: "While there is no airpower solution to counterinsurgency, there is certainly a large role for air power. Airpower can bring firepower, transport, reconnaissance, and constant presence to the fight; these are all things the counterinsurgency force needs."¹¹⁵

One chapter in *Airpower, Insurgency, and the "War on Terror"* gives a particularly damning analysis of Marine use of aviation in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign, focusing on preventing civilian casualties. Rick Grossman's "'Looks Suspicious': The US Marines Air Campaign against the Sandino Insurgents of Nicaragua 1927-1933" asserts that the USMC caused considerable civilian casualties, leading to the loss of popular support for the Nicaraguan government, thereby rendering the Marines' intervention a failure.¹¹⁶ It is worth examining

¹¹⁰ Philip Towle, *Pilots, and Rebels: The Use of Aircraft in Unconventional Warfare, 1918-1988* (London: Brassey, 1989), 2.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 3. His final chapter on pages 210–212 shows his complete analysis, followed by how a rebellious force can counter airpower in a small war.

¹¹² Joel Hayward, ed. *Airpower, Insurgency, and the "War on Terror"* (Cranwell, U.K.: Royal Air Force Center for Air Power Studies, 2009), 14.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹¹⁵ James Corum, "Airpower and Counterinsurgency" in *Airpower, Insurgency, and the "War on Terror"* ed. Joel Hayward (Cranwell, U.K.: Royal Air Force Center for Air Power Studies, 2009), 222.

¹¹⁶ Grossman, "Looks Suspicious," in *Airpower, Insurgency, and the "War on Terror,"* ed. Joel Hayward (Cranwell, U.K.: Royal Air Force Center for Air Power Studies, 2009), 81-96.

Grossman's chapter to illustrate how applying modern concepts and methodology can lead to differing conclusions about airpower's effectiveness in the Banana Wars. Grossman weighs the variable of Marine airpower too heavily in his chapter, ignoring other variables with greater weight that would have caused the shift in popular support.¹¹⁷ Grossman's use of the term 'COIN' is also misplaced, suggesting a bias towards presentism in all of the chapters in Hayward's collection. In contrast, the writings of the time captured in the *Marine Corps Gazette*, including reports from the field, are much more accurate about how the Marines operated during the conflict.¹¹⁸ The Marines of the interwar period did not think or operate using modern counterinsurgency doctrine. This dissertation will show that during the Banana Wars, the US Marines focused their efforts on offensive military operations, not, as Grossman criticizes, winning over a local population through modern COIN outreach initiatives.

Another compendium, *A History of Air Warfare*, edited by John Olsen, details the development of combat airpower from 1913-2010. The final chapter in that volume, "Airpower Small Wars 1913 to the Present," by James Corum, asserts that little has changed regarding the use of airpower in counterinsurgency and small war operations. Military forces might win a small war with or without airpower, but

His chapter contrasts Wray Johnson's article, "Airpower and Restraint in Small Wars," in the fall 2001 issue of *Aerospace Journal*. Johnson's premise is that the Marines were quite deliberate in their use of offensive attacks in order to avoid antagonizing the local population. Wray Johnson, "Airpower and Restraint in Small Wars: Marine Corps Aviation in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign, 1927-1933," *Aerospace Power Journal*, no. 3 (Fall 2001).

¹¹⁷ Mahoney and Goertz, "A Tale of Two Cultures," *Political Analysis*, 14 (2006): 241-242. The perils of weighing a variable too much or too little are discussed here. Singer also warns against personal bias affecting the data types selected for analysis: J. David Singer, "From *A Study of War* to Peace Research: Some Criteria and Strategies," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 14, no. 4 (December 1970): 532. Grossman also does not consider the prevalent theories of airpower employment studied at the time (Douhet, Mitchell, and Trenchard), nor does he use the international law in place for airpower, namely the proposed Hague Rules of Air Warfare of 1923. The Hague Rules for Air Warfare were designed to extend the then-existing Hague Convention of 1907. Specifically, Article IX, "Convention Concerning Bombardment by Naval Forces in Time of War." Although not formally adopted, the Rules for Air Warfare do show a consensus in the international committee to curtail the indiscriminate use of force, in this case, from aircraft. A complete list of the Rules can be found at Yale Law School's The Avalon Project, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hague09.asp. The Marines' engagement rules for combat used in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign will be examined later in Chapter Five and Six.

¹¹⁸ Major Ross E. Rowell, "Aircraft in Bush Warfare," *Marine Corps Gazette* 14, no. 3 (September 1929): 180-203. In this article, Rowell, now the Regimental Air Officer, describes the operations, tactics, procedures, and various missions conducted by the Marine aviation element.

the military effort is for naught without a sound political strategy.¹¹⁹ Writing in 2010, Corum is undoubtedly referring to the lack of a coherent strategy in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. However, as shall be shown, the US Marines who fought the Banana Wars were acutely aware of how military objectives are used to serve a political end.

A much more nuanced approach in the historiography of airpower in small wars is presented by James Corum and Wray Johnson in their work *Airpower in Small Wars: Fighting Insurgents and Terrorists*, which is one of the few books to examine airpower in small wars through a historical lens using multinational case studies. *Airpower in Small Wars* is a superb book for studying airpower in small wars. Although the Banana Wars graces less than one-half of one chapter, the research used by Corum and Johnson is immense, providing researchers with a springboard for further study. Other works, such as Phillip Towel's *Pilots and Rebels*, only examine airpower in small wars from one country's perspective.¹²⁰ Corum and Johnson use various sources in each case study, including primary sources from countries such as Spain, France, and El Salvador. Using a multinational lens combined with primary sources Corum and Johnson highlight common themes that transcend nationalities; they argue that "the supporting role of airpower (e.g., reconnaissance, transport, and so on) is usually the most important and effective mission in a guerrilla war."¹²¹ *Airpower in Small Wars* highlights several limitations when using airpower in small wars. An air operation may gain a tactical victory, but creating too much damage and killing civilians can lead to a strategic failure.¹²² Corum and Johnson also emphasize that small wars are invariably long, even when airpower is used advantageously, as the US Marines fighting the Banana Wars discovered.¹²³

The sole history of US Marine development of airpower during the Banana Wars exists in Wray Johnson's recently published *Biplanes at War: US Marine Corps Aviation in the Small Wars, 1915-1934*, which provides an excellent narrative of airpower in the Banana Wars. This a superbly researched tome offering a

¹¹⁹ James Corum, "Airpower Small Wars 1913 to the Present", in *A History of Air Warfare*, ed. John Olsen, (Dulles, Virginia: Potomac Books, 2010), 348-349.

¹²⁰ The RAF is the only service studied throughout Towel's book, without mentioning other nations' efforts incorporating airpower into small wars practice.

¹²¹ James S. Corum and Wray R. Johnson, *Airpower in Small Wars: Fighting Insurgents and Terrorists* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 427. An example of mission shifts from the Second Nicaraguan Campaign was when VO-6M deployed to Nicaragua in 1928 as an observation squadron. Over the following year, this changed, and VO-6M soon became equipped for solely logistical and transportation missions.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 428.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 435-436.

gripping narrative buttressed by facts and primary sources.¹²⁴ However, Johnson overlays modern terminology and draws upon modern counterinsurgency theory to describe the missions assigned to the Marines during the Banana Wars.¹²⁵ As an example, he judges that the Marine involvement in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign depicts a “strategically necessary example of well-intentioned and restrained counterinsurgency.”¹²⁶ He mentions Mao but does not mention Harrington or Ellis’ writings on how to conduct a small wars campaign.¹²⁷ A significant difference between Johnson’s book and this dissertation is that the present study will focus on what the Marines knew then, not what future small wars and counterinsurgency theorists would think later.

Between them *Biplanes at War*, *Airpower in Small Wars* and *Airpower, Insurgency, and the “War on Terror”* illustrate how airpower is used to enhance ground operations, and even with airpower’s offensive capabilities that airpower is best suited to a supporting role in small wars. Corum, Johnson, Hayward, and Towle all acknowledge the potential negative aspects of airpower in small wars when a country’s enemies begin using strategic messaging to counter the kinetic effects of airpower. The writings on airpower in small wars benefit this dissertation by illustrating the common trends across multiple small wars, such as the Banana Wars. The causal factors of service culture and experience reveal the difference in how the US Marines adapted airpower for their small wars.

A COIN by any Other Name

The last two decades of counterinsurgency operations by the United States and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces have led to a surge in small wars research focused on insurgency and counterinsurgency strategies. Leo Daugherty’s 2015 *Counterinsurgency and the United States Marine Corps: Volume 1, The First Era 1899-1945* provides insight into the decision-making of Marines in shaping their force, doctrine, and operations during the Banana Wars using a counterinsurgency lens to view past campaigns. His analysis of the Marines’ decision to create a specific aviation branch dedicated to supporting Marines is particularly relevant to this dissertation. Daugherty ascribes the creation of this aviation branch to service culture, resource competition, and a necessity related to the assigned missions of securing American interests overseas.¹²⁸ Daugherty also explores the significant personalities who shaped Marine aviation in the aftermath of

¹²⁴ Wray Johnson, *Biplanes at War: US Marine Corps Aviation in the Small Wars, 1915-1934* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University of Kentucky Press, 2019).

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2-21.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 193.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹²⁸ Leo Daugherty, *Counterinsurgency and the United States Marine Corps: Volume 1, The First Era 1899-1945* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company Publishers, 2015), 139-144.

World War I, including Major General George Barnett (the Commandant who shaped Marine missions after the Armistice), Alfred Cunningham (considered the father of Marine aviation), Thomas Turner (who was the senior Marine aviator after Cunningham) and Ross Rowell (who led the first squadron in the second Nicaraguan campaign and advocated strongly for aviation in small wars).¹²⁹ Daughtery dedicates a chapter to the development of aviation in small wars, but in the main, it is limited to an analysis of *Marine Corps Gazette* articles written by Alfred Cunningham and Ross Rowell.¹³⁰

Stephen Evans' book, *U.S. Marines and Irregular Warfare, 1898-2007: Anthology and Selected Bibliography*, offers a collection of articles organized thematically, allowing for a close analysis of particular touchstones regarding Marines and small wars.¹³¹ This anthology, edited by Evans, was written during the surge in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2007 and published in 2009. Consequently, many articles compare how the Marines fought in the past with more contemporary operational concepts; these articles explain how certain aspects of small wars have changed or remained constant. An entire chapter on airpower in the Banana Wars argues that aviation was used with restraint and deliberate precision, providing a counterargument to Grossman's views described earlier.¹³² The remainder of the Banana Wars chapters focus on small wars ground operations and the supporting role of aviation. Evans' collection of articles offers the dissertation a good cross-section of well-researched articles arranged by campaign, including USMC operations in the Philippines at the turn of the 20th century. These articles help in the analysis of the casual factors that drove the adaptation of airpower by the Marines.

A general work of US involvement in small wars is Max Boot's *The Savage Wars of Peace*, which examines several small wars fought by the United States. Boot asserts that throughout US history, small wars have been the dominant form of warfare conducted by the US military, but as with many other contemporary researchers, Boot describes the events that happened using the modern counterinsurgency lexicon.¹³³ The Banana Wars are analyzed in a stand-alone chapter that briefly describes the introduction of Marine aviation into small wars operations and the development of the *Small Wars Manual*.¹³⁴ Boot adds to the study

¹²⁹ Ibid., 140-141 for Barnett, 141-142 for Cunningham, 148 for Turner, and 148-149 for Rowell.

¹³⁰ Alfred Cunningham is discussed at length in Chapter Five, and Ross Rowell in Chapter Six of this dissertation.

¹³¹ Stephen Evans, ed., *U.S. Marines and Irregular Warfare, 1898-2007: Anthology and Selected Bibliography* (Quantico, Va.: US Marine Corps University, 2009).

¹³² The chapter in question is a reprint by Wray R. Johnson, "Airpower and Restraint in Small Wars: Marine Corps Aviation in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign, 1927-33" *Aerospace Power Journal* 15, no. 3 (Fall 2001): 32-41.

¹³³ Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), Ch 7.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 238-239.

of airpower during the Banana Wars, and small wars in general, by emphasizing that aviation played a supporting role and making the same conclusion as Corum and Johnson that no matter how well applied, aviation cannot make up for operational or strategic mistakes. Similarly, Alan Axelrod's *America's Wars* lists US small wars primarily based upon secondary sources and neglects to mention the campaigns of Haiti or the Dominican Republic.¹³⁵ Benjamin Beede's *The War of 1898 and US Interventions 1878-1934: An Encyclopedia* is an excellent reference guide with suggested readings after brief summations of each conflict.¹³⁶ Beede goes so far as to include air operations in Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, but unfortunately, he neglects air operations for Haiti. John Collin's *America's Small Wars: Lessons for the Future* presents different case studies of small wars campaigns but emphasizes the US government's political motives through detailed descriptions of Congressional actions during each small war, thereby diluting the overall usefulness of his work for this dissertation.¹³⁷ The importance of Boot's, Axelrod's, Beede's, and Collins' books to this dissertation are their utility in illustrating the evolving approach to small wars throughout US history, providing context to the period of the Banana Wars, and highlighting the need for further study on the use of airpower in small wars.

The flip side of the COIN

Secondary source studies, especially those written within US military circles, portray favorably the outcome of military interventions during the Banana Wars. Conversely, Neil Macaulay's *The Sandino Affair* provides a counterargument to the successful use of aviation during small wars during the second Nicaraguan campaign. As mentioned in the introduction, Augusto Sandino was the rebel leader in Nicaragua and the focus of many of the Marine's offensive operations during the Second Nicaraguan Campaign (1927-1933). Macaulay describes his motivations and uses many of Sandino's speeches and propaganda to highlight Sandino's strategic communications battle to win over the population of Nicaragua to his cause. An equal treatment supporting the efforts of local resistance in the Dominican Republic is in Ellen Tillman's *Dollar Diplomacy by Force: Nation Building and Resistance in the Dominican Republic*, who, like Macaulay, asserts the indigenous fighters successfully defeated US military intervention.¹³⁸ Necessary for the scope of this dissertation, Macaulay argues aviation was "aerial terrorism" and

¹³⁵ Alan Axelrod's, *America's Wars* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002).

¹³⁶ Benjamin Beede, *The War of 1898 and US Interventions 1878-1934: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 6-8.

¹³⁷ John Collins, *America's Small Wars: Lessons for the Future* (Sterling, VA: Potomac Books, 1991).

¹³⁸ Ellen Tillman, *Dollar Diplomacy by Force: Nation Building and Resistance in the Dominican Republic* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

used indiscriminately.¹³⁹ He also acknowledges that the Second Nicaraguan Campaign provided valuable experience to the US Marines in integrating aviation into their later amphibious operations, but ultimately, how a population views military force is crucial to whether aviation is effective in small wars.

Other publications asserting the US's military interventions were harmful include Ivan Musicant's *The Banana Wars*, which focuses on the US political decision-making process and provides a history of US, Caribbean, and Central American relations. His book is written from the perspective of an imperial United States that exploited the Caribbean for economic purposes.¹⁴⁰ A similar work is Carrie Gibson's *Empire's Crossroads*, an overarching Caribbean history up to the modern era. Gibson does an excellent job describing the economic forces which resulted in outside intervention. The work's most relevant aspect is the indigenous people's perspective and the aftermath of US intervention after 1933.¹⁴¹ Finally, Alan McPherson's *The Invaded* describes how the rebels, *cacos*, and Sandinistas fought against the US along while also explaining those groups' motivations.¹⁴² McPherson highlights alleged abuses of power, corruption, and terror tactics used by the Marines, including how aviation terrified locals into submission. More important is his conclusion that the US ultimately lost the Banana Wars, showing a different perspective not often examined by US scholars. These three works provide an analysis outside of the purely military perspectives given in many aviation histories. However, the anti-imperial lens taken by each of these authors highlights a bias in their analysis.

Keith Bickel's *Mars Learning: The Marine Corps Development of Small Wars Doctrine, 1915-1944* (2001) is a more nuanced examination of the Banana Wars. Although the book aims to examine the origins of the *Small Wars Manual*, Bickel was writing before the 'War on Terror' and avoided using modern counterinsurgency terminology.¹⁴³ Bickel is pro-Marine in his analysis, but his work is relevant to study because the aviation chapter was a late addition during the writing of the *Small Wars Manual*, and he describes why airpower became a topic worthy of inclusion. Bickel describes in detail who provided input into the manual's creation and the arguments behind different points of view before its publication. Bickel's book also describes how USMC professional development schools taught the material in the *Small Wars Manual*, showing that the Marines were keenly aware

¹³⁹ Neil Macaulay, *The Sandino Affair* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967), 116.

¹⁴⁰ Ivan Musicant, *The Banana Wars* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1990).

¹⁴¹ Carrie Gibson, *Empire's Crossroads* (New York: Atlantic Press Monthly, 2014), 254.

¹⁴² Alan McPherson, *The Invaded: How the Latin Americans and their Allies Fought and Ended US Occupation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 4-10, for US political justifications contrasted against local political objectives for each country in the Banana Wars.

¹⁴³ Keith Bickel, *Mars Learning: The Marine Corps Development of Small Wars Doctrine, 1915-1944* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2001), 1.

of the value of professional military education. Additionally, Bickel does an excellent job showing that the Marines solidified their small wars doctrine and practiced what they taught with continual refinement.¹⁴⁴

Personalities matter

The history of how aviation became a fundamental yet subordinate arm for small wars in the US Marines was also driven by individuals and their decisions. Unfortunately, relatively few key leaders' biographies exist, but a number are used in this dissertation. David Bettez, in his *Kentucky Marine: Major General Logan Feland and the Making of the Modern Marine Corps* (2014), writes about USMC Major General Logan Feland, the senior military commander during the Second Nicaraguan Campaign and a keen supporter of Marine aviation. Feland began his Marine career in the Philippines and actively participated in offensive operations from late 1899 through March 1901. Feland took away an experience of high-tempo offensive operations but tempered with civic action.¹⁴⁵ As a commander, Feland helped formulate the concepts around aviation use in small wars when he commanded forces in the Dominican Republic and later Nicaragua. Based on his experiences in the Dominican Republic, Feland established rules of engagement for the Marines to use when conducting armed reconnaissance flying operations in Nicaragua.¹⁴⁶

Roy Geiger was another influential individual in the early days of Marine aviation and its initial introduction into the Banana Wars. *General Roy S. Geiger, USMC: Marine Aviator, Joint Force Commander*, by US Marine Brigadier General (then Major) James Wellons, sheds light on this dominating personality in Marine aviation during the Banana Wars. Wellons' biography makes extensive use of General Geiger's personal papers. Although the purpose of this work is to establish Geiger as a model for current joint warfare based on his WWII experience, Wellons highlights the importance of Geiger's expertise in developing Marine aviation before, during, and after WWI. Of particular importance is Geiger's close relationship with Alfred Cunningham, considered to be the "father of Marine aviation."¹⁴⁷ Of relevance for this dissertation are Geiger's experiences flying during the Banana Wars and his hand in developing Marine aviators during the period. Geiger served two tours in Haiti, 1920 and 1925, and commanded the air squadrons in Quantico.¹⁴⁸ Many of the pilots trained under Geiger and Cunningham

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 188-192.

¹⁴⁵ David J. Bettez, *Kentucky Marine: Major General Logan Feland and the Making of the Modern Marine Corps* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2014), chapter 2. Feland served under Littleton Waller for a time during his training in the US before deploying to the Philippines before Waller was ordered to the Boxer Rebellion.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 197-198.

¹⁴⁷ James B. Wellons, *General Roy S. Geiger, USMC: Marine Aviator, Joint Force Commander* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2009), 13, 17, and 23.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 29-31 and 40-42.

would go on to serve in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign. Wellons does an excellent job synthesizing the Marines' internal politics and describing how the Corps' dominant personalities, including Geiger, shaped the small wars approach during the Banana Wars.

Conclusion

Taking into consideration the totality of the primary and secondary sources examined, there are several benefits and shortfalls related to this dissertation. With the benefit of hindsight, we know from the analysis of the sources the outcomes of the Banana Wars, both in the immediate timeframe when the Marines departed and the longer-term impacts of military intervention. We can also examine the historiographical lens focused on each secondary source, drawing together areas where existing research is plentiful and where there are seams in the historical analysis of aviation development in the Banana Wars.

The sources examined in this literature review demonstrate that historical inquiry into US Marine aviation in small wars is sparse and that there is a need for more research into airpower development and employment during the Banana Wars. The analysis done in this chapter shows a wide variety of research and historiographical approaches when examining the Banana Wars. A large body of work is dedicated to researching the second and third-order effects of US military intervention during the Banana Wars and the longer-lasting social and economic impacts of these interventions. Other strong areas within existing research are in strategic airpower development during the interwar period and analysis of the US's small wars of the past utilizing modern counterinsurgency concepts and doctrine. However, this creates presentism in the final analysis. While there are arguments for using modern lenses in historical analysis, using modern frameworks and terminology obscures any examination of how US Marines thought, acted, and made decisions based on the norms and experiences of their time.¹⁴⁹

Given these realities, the research and analysis in this dissertation will add new material and insights concerning airpower development for the US Marine Corps in the Banana Wars. Historians have focused little attention on either airpower development by the Marines during the Banana Wars or what doctrinal frameworks the Marines used during their small wars. Examining how the Marines conceptualized and thought about small wars during their own time provides the appropriate historiographical lens to begin analyzing how and why the Marines adapted aviation into a fundamental yet subordinate arm for fighting small wars. This dissertation's primary and secondary sources will provide insight into the causal factors of service culture, small wars experience, and early aviation usage inside the Marine Corps. By examining all available primary and secondary

¹⁴⁹ David Armitage, "In Defense of Presentism," in David M. McMahon, ed., *History and Human Flourishing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020). Also, Sabine Cherenfant, ed., *Presentism: Reexamining Historical Figures Through Today's Lens* (New York: Greenhaven Publishing, 2019).

sources, an analysis of the causal factors for how the US Marines adapted aviation into a fundamental yet subordinate arm in fighting small wars can proceed.

Chapter Three
The Philippine Insurrection and Service Culture

This chapter will focus on the first line of inquiry: the development of a small wars framework inside the US Marine Corps that would then be used during their small wars campaigns between 1915 and 1933. In order to analyze how the Marines adapted aviation into a fundamental yet subordinate arm in small wars, an examination of how the Marines developed their small wars concepts before the arrival of aviation into the service is required. Critically, examining small wars development must be conducted in the context of the time these conflicts occurred, and not artificially transposing modern counterinsurgency terms and lenses onto the history of the US Marines in small wars. This chapter will provide the historical background for how the US Marines developed their small wars framework and examine the service culture of the time that drove the Marines' decision-making in their follow-on campaigns in Hispaniola and Central America. This chapter begins twenty years before the Marines used aircraft in their small wars with the examination of a foundational small wars campaign, the Philippine Insurrection (1898-1902). The Philippine Insurrection demonstrated a pattern of military operations focused on destruction of the enemy and was where many senior leaders of the Banana Wars gained their first experience in fighting small wars. After the Philippine Insurrection the Marine Corps solidified its service culture centered around combat prowess that later impacted how they conducted their military operations during the Banana Wars. Armed with this background, this dissertation will begin to fill the academic void in analyzing how the Marine Corps thought about and fought small wars and, ultimately, how they adapted aviation into their small wars campaigns.

Learning from Experience: The Philippines 1898-1902

At the end of Book One of *On War*, Carl Von Clausewitz lists various factors that make up the hardships and friction of war. In his dialectic manner, he queries the reader, then rhetorically answers: "Is there any lubricant that will reduce this abrasion? Only one, and a commander and his army will not always have it readily available: combat experience."¹⁵⁰ Whatever their faults, the Marines had an abundance of small wars combat experience leading up to the Banana Wars.¹⁵¹ The Spanish-American War which resulted in the Philippine Insurrection between 1898-1902, was how the US Marines came to be involved in a four-year contest in the Philippines where they learned about small wars.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Clausewitz, *On War*, 122.

¹⁵¹ See Captain Harry A. Ellsworth, *One Hundred Eighty Landings of the United States Marine Corps: 1800-1934* (Quantico, VA; USMC Historical Section, 1934).

¹⁵² For a deeper analysis of the US military planning and strategic decision making see Philip Zelikow, "Why did America Cross the Pacific: Reconstructing the US Decision to take the Philippines, 1898-1899," *Texas National Security Review* 1, no. 1 Issue 1 (December 2017): 44, <https://doi.org/10.15781/T2N29PQ17>, accessed January 21, 2020. For overall histories see John Morgan Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags: The United States Army in the Philippines*,

The involvement of the Marines in the Philippines had its origins in the United States' long-held interest in removing Spanish control of Cuba. A succession of Cuban revolutions in the 19th century, all vocally supported by the American public, only highlighted the desire of the United States for Cuba to gain its independence.¹⁵³ A new internal revolution in Cuba in 1895 created the need for the American military to consider war plans should war come between the United States and Spain. Planning for ground operations stayed focused on Cuba, but the US Navy concentrated on how to protect United States interests in the Pacific through the use of its Asiatic Squadron. Spain controlled several Pacific colonies, including the impressive Manila port in the Philippine archipelago. From the US Navy's perspective, attacking and defeating the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay would allow the United States to bargain from a position of strength during peace negotiations after a war with Spain.¹⁵⁴ When the USS MAINE exploded in Havana harbor on February 15, 1898, the Navy accelerated their plans and preparations for war.¹⁵⁵

The United States' declaration of war against Spain on April 21, 1898, forced the US Navy to act in the Pacific.¹⁵⁶ At the time of the declaration of war, the Asiatic Fleet, led by Commodore George Dewey, was anchored in the British port of Hong Kong. Dewey had been preparing for war with the Spanish Fleet since receiving instructions on February 25, 1898, to "conduct offensive operations in the Philippine Islands" in the event of war.¹⁵⁷ Arriving in Manila Bay under darkness on

1898-1902 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press INC., 1973), Brian McAllister Linn, *The Philippine War 189-1902* (Lawrence Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2002), and Andrew Birtle, *U.S. Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941* (Washington DC: Center of Military History United States Army, 2009).

¹⁵³ Allan R. Millett, Peter Maslowski, and William B. Feis, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607 to 2012*, 3rd Edition (New York: Free Press, 2012), 219 and 252-253.

¹⁵⁴ Zelikow, 42.

¹⁵⁵ For analysis of the Marine's action in the Cuban theater, see John Shulimson, "The Influence of the Spanish-American War on the U.S. Marine Corps," E.J. Marolda (eds) *Theodore Roosevelt, the U.S. Navy, and the Spanish-American War. The Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute Series on Diplomatic and Economic History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001). For an analysis of the various investigations into what caused the MAINE to explode see Dana Wegner, "New Interpretations of the USS MAINE was Lost," in the same book. Wegner details the initial inquiry, the 1911 investigation, and the 1974 investigation led by US Navy Admiral Rickover.

¹⁵⁶ United States Senate, "Declaration of War with Spain, 1898", <https://www.senate.gov/about/images/HR10086SpanishAmericanWar.htm>, accessed December 23, 2019. The US Congress backdated this declaration to the 21st of April when a final ultimatum was sent to Spain.

¹⁵⁷ George Dewey, *The Autobiography of George Dewey* (New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1913), 178. Dewey quotes then Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt's cable directing the Asiatic Fleet to be ready for combat operations. Also, Craig L. Symonds,

May 1st, 1898, Dewey quickly decimated the Spanish fleet.¹⁵⁸ The US Navy had done its job, but twenty thousand Spanish troops still held the ground in the Philippines, including the capital city of Manila.¹⁵⁹ Dewey, recognizing he needed to control the land and the sea, requested troops to wrest control of the capital of the Philippines from the Spanish.¹⁶⁰

To gain control of Manila, US Army Major General Wesley Merritt deployed fifteen thousand troops from the United States to the Philippines in early July 1898. Simultaneously, the leading Filipino revolutionary, Emilio Aguinaldo, returned from exile to Luzon to lead his compatriots to independence. The orders from President McKinley to Major General Merritt seemed simple enough;

Go to the Philippines, cooperate with the Navy, defeat the Spanish armed forces there, establish order and the sovereignty of the United States. Advise the Filipinos that the United States aims to protect, not to fight them; follow existing laws as far as possible; take over public property, the collection of taxes and customs; open the ports to commerce.¹⁶¹

Merritt and his soldiers occupied Manila by the end of August, but Filipino revolutionaries led by Aguinaldo held the rest of the country, not wanting to exchange the Spanish rulers for American overseers. In complementary operations, seeing an opportunity to seize more territory in the Pacific, on June 21, 1898, Marines from the USS CHARLESTON were sent ashore on Guam to take the island from the Spanish. This was followed by a combined force seizure of Samoa by the British and US Marines.¹⁶²

Decision at Sea: Five Naval Battles the Shaped American History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 156-157. Contrary to popular belief it was President McKinley who ordered Dewey into action, not the Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt. J. Davis Long, Mayo, *America of Yesterday: As Reflected in the Journal of John Davis Long*, ed. Shaw Mayo (Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1923), 186, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015027751380&view=1up&seq=9>, accessed July 20, 2020. Also see Millett, Maslowski and Feis, 26.

¹⁵⁸ Dewey, Chapter 15, "The Battle of Manila Bay." For a fuller account of the tactics and deeper analysis of the Naval Engagement see Craig L. Symonds, *Decision at Sea: Five Naval Battles the Shaped American History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 169-182.

¹⁵⁹ Millet, Maslowski, and Feis, 254.

¹⁶⁰ Dewey, 239-240. See also Millett, Malowski, and Feis, 261, and also Zelikow, 44.

¹⁶¹ William Thaddeus Sexton, *Soldiers in the Sun: An Adventure in Imperialism* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: The Military Service Publishing Company, 1939), 19.

¹⁶² John Twiggs Meyers, Personal letter, August 27, 1898, John Twiggs Myers Personal Papers Collection, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA. Meyers, a Marine officer serving aboard the CHARLESTON, described the relatively easy taking of Guam. See also

Dewey and Merritt advocated keeping the Philippines as a protectorate under US control, a sentiment shared by many in the United States. Manila Bay provided a key port for re-coaling and a significant foothold for trade in the Pacific.¹⁶³ Additionally, taking control of the Philippines would prevent other European powers from gaining more power in the Pacific.¹⁶⁴ President McKinley predicted the allure of new territory would fade “when the difficulties, expense, loss of life which it entailed became manifest.”¹⁶⁵ McKinley was correct in his prediction.

After Dewey and Merritt completed their military mission, they assumed Aguinaldo and his supporters would disperse peaceably once peace negotiations had been concluded between the United States and Spain. As negotiations with the Spanish dragged on through the winter of 1898-1899, Aguinaldo grew impatient. Aguinaldo, initially thankful for the help of the United States in ejecting the Spanish, declared independence. No country recognized this declaration, and McKinley still held to his political goal of using the Philippines as a bargaining chip during peace negotiations with the Spanish.¹⁶⁶ In February 1899, Aguinaldo and his forces began attacking US troops.¹⁶⁷ A naval victory for the US over the Spanish Fleet in Manila Bay quickly transformed into a military occupation. The United States shifted its political aims from defeating the Spanish, focused on those forces in Cuba, to a moral crusade to instill American values in the Philippine people. Reform aims soon followed, these intended to spur social and economic growth.¹⁶⁸ In his book *Strategy: A History*, Lawrence Freedman warns about the pitfalls of making significant strategy changes without proper analysis.¹⁶⁹ For the United States, the shift in political end state from the military defeat of the Spanish to the occupation and pacification necessitated a large land army ill-prepared to fight a rebellion on the far side of the world.

Jack Murphy, *History of the US Marines* (Worth Dighton, Massachusetts: World Publishing Group, 2003), 51. The seizure of Guam and Samoa was an early indicator that the policy of the United States was to have territory in the Pacific to support US Naval refueling stations.

¹⁶³ Dewey, 283-284.

¹⁶⁴ Meyers, Personal letter, August 8, 1898, John Twigg Myers Personal Papers Collection, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA. Also, Dewey, 290, and Zelikow, 60.

¹⁶⁵ Quoted in Zelikow, 55.

¹⁶⁶ Zelikow, 46 and John Offner, *An Unwanted War: The Diplomacy of the United States & Spain Over Cuba, 1895-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992) and Long, *America of Yesterday*, 184.

¹⁶⁷ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, 274.

¹⁶⁸ Andrew D. Sens, *A Summary of the U.S. Role in Insurgency Situations in the Philippine Islands, 1899-1955* (Washington D.C.: Special Operations Research Office, The American University), 5-7.

¹⁶⁹ Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 15.

A revolution in the Philippine Islands posed some new challenges for the US Army in that this was the first time the Army had deployed outside the continental US. From 1865-1898 the Army had been focused on fighting Indian wars on the frontier of the United States, which provided a conceptual framework for fighting small groups of armed bandits.¹⁷⁰ Over the four-year Philippine Insurrection, the Army adapted these tactics and these proved to be militarily successful in this new conflict. Brian Linn, in *The Philippines War*, asserts a crucial factor in the military success of the US Army was that they were unencumbered by rigid doctrine, allowing the officers to adapt practices and innovate depending on the situation and geography—however, internal analysis after the Insurrection offered a different viewpoint.¹⁷¹ US Army General William Harding Carter, writing in 1914, extolling the virtues of the teachings of Leavenworth as the burgeoning professional school for the US Army, said this about the officer corps' schooling for small wars: “that in Cuba, Porto Rico [Puerto Rico] and the Philippines not an instance had been observed where any graduate of the Infantry and Cavalry School had been found wanting in the knowledge of all the details of practical service. Certainly, no body of officers ever took the field with better technical knowledge of minor warfare than the regulars who were so widely dispersed in Cuba and the Philippine Islands.”¹⁷² If Carter's assertion was true, the fact remains that the US Army had no formal doctrine for small wars and relied on experience more than formal education for their concepts for fighting in the Philippines.

The US Army commanders, in particular Arthur MacArthur, who eventually assumed command of all US forces in late 1900, reached back to the closest experience the US had had to an armed insurrection, which was the US Civil War.¹⁷³ During operations deep into Confederate-held territory, US Federal troops in the Civil War faced irregulars aimed at disrupting Union movements, and used General Order 100 to govern their military operations and conduct. Faced with Filipino irregulars, General Order 100 appeared to senior Army commanders to be best suited to their small wars operations in the Philippines.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ William Thaddeus Sexton, *Soldiers in the Sun: An Adventure in Imperialism* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: The Military Service Publishing Company, 1939), 3. Brian M. Linn, *The Philippines War, 1899-1902* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2000), 168-170.

¹⁷¹ Linn, *The Philippines War, 1899-1902*, 168.

¹⁷² Major General William Harding Carter, “The Greater Leavenworth,” *The Journal of the US Cavalry Association* 25, no. 104, (October 1914): 175.

¹⁷³ David J. Silbey, *A War of Frontier and Empire* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 157. Arthur MacArthur, recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor for his exploits during the Battle of Chickamauga when he led the assault up Missionary Ridge, who would eventually command all forces in the Philippines. Arthur MacArthur's son, Douglas MacArthur, would fight his own battles in the Philippines in WWII.

¹⁷⁴ Silbey, 156.

Frances Lieber, a lawyer whose sons fought for both the Union and the Confederates, wrote General Order 100.¹⁷⁵ Lieber's motivation was to govern troop behavior in occupied Confederate territories to prevent a protracted guerilla war.¹⁷⁶ Under the commission of then Secretary of War Edwin Stanton and Major General Halleck, Lieber wrote the "Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field." President Abraham Lincoln codified this instruction for all Union Armies when, on 23 April 1863, he signed Lieber's document as General Order 100. The 157 articles therein covered various topics, from military necessity to parole to assassinations, and established the legal framework for military operations now recognized under the name Rules of Engagement. Most relevant to the conduct of soldiers and Marines in the Philippine Islands were articles 82-84:

Art. 82. Men, or squads of men, who commit hostilities, whether by fighting, or inroads for destruction or plunder, or by raids of any kind, without commission, without being part and portion of the organized hostile army, and without sharing continuously in the war, but who do so with intermitting returns to their homes and avocations, or with the occasional assumption of the semblance of peaceful pursuits, divesting themselves of the character or appearance of soldiers - such men, or squads of men, are not public enemies, and, therefore if captured, are not entitled to the privileges of prisoners of war, but shall be treated summarily as highway robbers or pirates.

Art. 83. Scouts, or single soldiers, if disguised in the dress of the country or in the uniform of the army hostile to their own, employed in obtaining information, if found within or lurking about the lines of the captor, are treated as spies, and suffer death.

Art. 84. Armed prowlers, by whatever names they may be called, or persons of the enemy's territory, who steal within the lines of the hostile army to rob, kill, or of destroying bridges, roads, or canals, or of denying or destroying the mail, or of cutting the telegraph wires, are not entitled to the privileges of the prisoner of war.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ D. H. Dilbeck, "'The Genesis of This Little Tablet with My Name': Francis Lieber and the Wartime Origins of General Orders No. 100," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 5, no. 2 (June 2015): 238, and John S. Reed, "External Discipline during Counterinsurgency: A Philippine War Case-Study, 1900-1901," *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 27-29.

¹⁷⁶ Reed, 27.

¹⁷⁷ Francis Lieber, *Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field*, Originally Issued as General Orders No. 100, (Washington; Adjutant General's Office, 1863), accessed January 18, 2020, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/lieber.asp#art1.

Lieber predicated his comments on the conduct of both the occupier and the belligerents. According to Lieber, the belligerents must be uniformed when attacking occupying troops, and the occupiers were justified in destroying private property should the civilian population be seen to assist rebels who opposed US Federal troops. General Order 100 set the rules of engagement to allow for the destruction of civilian property. Guerillas, furthermore, were not enemies of the state but rather treated as “highway robbers or pirates.”¹⁷⁸ In essence, those fighting against Army soldiers and Marines in the Philippines were bandits no better than armed criminals, not insurgents with political grievances.

The distinction between regular combatants and how the Marines viewed their enemies is essential for understanding their operational concept which stemmed from General Order 100, and subsequent actions during the Banana Wars. Classifying guerillas and insurgents as little more than armed criminals focused the Marines on destroying or removing the enemy. A criminal did not have legitimate grievances or protection under the rules of war and, according to the regulations of General Order 100, were not “entitled to privileges of the prisoner of war.”¹⁷⁹ This framework to treat guerillas more harshly would be carried forward into the Banana Wars.

From February to November 1899, Aguinaldo tried to meet the US forces with conventional force. After severe losses, he then shifted to a guerilla strategy.¹⁸⁰ US Army Major General Elwell Otis, who succeeded Merritt in August 1898, oversaw Army operations during the conventional fighting and subsequent shift in Aguinaldo’s strategy.¹⁸¹ Initially concentrating his forces around significant cities, Otis began sending his troops into the interior and to islands where significant rebel concentrations were located.

In May 1900, MacArthur, now promoted to Brigadier General, continued the new offensive strategy when he succeeded Otis. MacArthur initially instituted a policy of amnesty for those who willingly surrendered their arms and urged American forces to use restraint when he issued the following orders:

The purpose of the United States in these islands is beneficent. It is, therefore, one of the essential duties of American Soldiers to assist in establishing friendly relations with the natives by kind and considerate treatment in all matters arising from personal contact. To exasperate individuals or to burn or loot unprotected or

Amongst the concerns from Lieber was how to treat guerilla forces, driven by fear inspired by marauding Confederate bands led by Mosley or Quintrill.

¹⁷⁸ Reed, 29.

¹⁷⁹ Lieber, Section III, Article 52.

¹⁸⁰ Birtle, 110.

¹⁸¹ Dewey, 283. Merritt departed Manila in 1898 having been ordered to attend the Paris Peace Conference.

abandoned houses or property is not only criminal in itself but tends to impede the United States' policy and defeat the very purpose the Army is here to accomplish.

When in hostile contact with the enemy, an adversary, with arms in his hands, must be killed, but a wounded or surrendered opponent, who is incapable of doing any injury, is entitled to the most cordial courtesy and kindness. Any departure from the well-established amenities of the battlefield or the laws of war must and will be punished, according to the nature of the case, to the extent of the law.¹⁸²

General MacArthur seemed to set a foundation of tolerance and amnesty during offensive action, and his orders show an operational approach focused on ensuring popular support. However, ambushes, skirmishes, and booby traps confronted the Army, and the offer of general amnesty failed.¹⁸³

As a result of renewed attacks on US forces, General McArthur increased offensive pressure to destroy the '*insurrectos*.' The operational plan shifted to reducing static garrisons of US soldiers in secure areas, such as Manila. Instead, all troops proceeded into the country's interior to remote outposts, creating maximum offensive pressure on revolutionary forces. Removing revolutionary leadership and resources became the military objective. This new placement of soldiers throughout the Philippines allowed for local commanders to learn the specifics of a particular location's people, geography, and conditions.¹⁸⁴ This way, commanders and troops learned the intimate details of a specific sector and adopted appropriate measures for their assigned area of operations.

In addition to the aggressive pursuit of Filipino rebels, the US Army began training a local constabulary. This was a new development in the doctrine of the US Army. During the Indian Wars, soldiers merely moved Indian inhabitants.¹⁸⁵ In the Philippines, the Army created a locally grown quasi-military force wholly trained by the US Army. With various dialects, religions, and cultures spread throughout the archipelago, the Army was required to employ local operatives to help navigate the complex social

¹⁸² General Arthur McArthur's orders are reprinted in Charles Francis Adams, *Secretary Root's Records: Marked Severities in Philippine Warfare, An Analysis of the Law and Facts bearing on the Action and Utterances of President Roosevelt and Secretary Root* (Boston: Geo H. Ellis Printers, 1902), 3.

¹⁸³ Sexton, 247-251, and Brian M. Linn, *The US Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina, 1989), 107 and Sibley, 156.

¹⁸⁴ Linn, *US Army and COIN*, 124.

¹⁸⁵ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, 274.

environment during the Philippine Insurrection.¹⁸⁶ By the late summer and fall of 1899, organized Filipino military groups, such as the Macabebe Scouts, became operational across the island chain.¹⁸⁷ Trained and armed by US soldiers, these groups became invaluable in maintaining peace and security after primary offensive operations ceased. Soon, every US Army commander throughout the Philippines created and employed the services of a trained Filipino military force.¹⁸⁸

The War Department endorsed MacArthur's more aggressive plans, including sending Marines around the archipelago to attack rebel forces and fortifications. Even before MacArthur's renewed offensive, the US Navy and Marines had commenced assaults from the sea, securing coastal towns and waterways. US Navy Lieutenant Joseph Taussig wrote in his diary about several assaults that the Marines led in the winter of 1899 to 1900.¹⁸⁹ On December 5, 1899, a force of Marines supported by US Navy gunboats seized the town of Vigan on the northwest coast of Luzon. This raid aimed to clear the village of rebels so the US Army could occupy it and use it as a base of operations.¹⁹⁰ After two days of minor offensive actions, the Marines secured Vigan, returned to the ships, and proceeded to the northeast of Luzon for a similar operation. On December 10, 1899, into the town of Aparri, the Marines went ashore and, after landing, accepted the surrender of nearly one thousand insurgents.¹⁹¹ Lieutenant Taussig stayed on station in the Philippines until April 1900, and even participated in a raid himself before the ship he was assigned to departed for Hong Kong. His diary provides valuable insight into the actions of the US Navy and Marines during the Philippine Insurrection, and is one piece of evidence demonstrating the pattern of offensive operations conducted by the Marines.

¹⁸⁶ Linn, *US Army and COIN*, 127.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 127 and Sens, 17 and 23. The term 'scout' is a bit misleading. These Filipino forces were light infantry employed in conventional and guerilla methods. The Macabebes held a long-standing animosity towards the Tagalongs, those Filipinos on Luzon, who made up a large portion of Aguinaldo's forces. The Macabebes were only too happy to continue their tribal fighting with assistance from the US.

¹⁸⁸ For a very detailed of the formation of Filipino Scout formations see Allan D. Marple, "The Philippine Scouts: A Case Study in the Use of Indigenous Soldiers, Northern Luzon, the Philippine Islands, 1899," Masters Thesis, US Army War College, 1983. This tactic presaged today's COIN operations.

¹⁸⁹ Taussig went on to have a career in the US Navy eventually retiring as a Vice Admiral after World War II.

¹⁹⁰ Joseph K. Taussig, *Three Splendid Little Wars: The Diary of Joseph K. Taussig*, ed. Evelyn M. Cherpak (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2009), 105.

¹⁹¹ Taussig, 106. Also, A.P. Niblack, "Operations of the Navy and Marine Corps in the Philippine Archipelago, 1898-1902," *Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute* 30, no. 4 (December, 1904): 748.

Another piece of evidence comes from US Navy Lieutenant Commander A.J. Niblack who wrote an article for the *Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute* in 1904 to capture the efforts of the Navy and Marines during the Philippine Insurrection. His aim was to reverse the record of these services being “overshadowed by those of the army,” and he described the combined actions of the Navy and Marines during the entire conflict.¹⁹² According to Niblack, the Marines executed sixteen separate amphibious raids from May 1899 until February 1902.¹⁹³ A prime example of the types of offensive operations performed by the Marines occurred on April 6, 1900. US Marine Captain Draper, E Company Commander, received information from the US Army regional commander that ‘Alba, a local rebel leader, was encamped in Silanguin Cove. Draper consulted “local natives on whom I largely depend for information” that the force was “six miles up the coast as the crow flies.”¹⁹⁴ He set sail the following morning at 3 a.m. aboard the USS LEYTE with “two officers, the medical officer, and 64 men.”¹⁹⁵ Under darkness, Draper disembarked his men and surprised the village in Silanguin but, finding no enemy, re-embarked and proceeded up the coast on the LEYTE. Sending a small force ashore to scout the beach, they came under fire from the enemy atop cliffs looking down on the beach. Draper forced the enemy to withdraw by using shipboard fire from the LEYTE and rifle fire from the remaining Marines aboard the LEYTE.

This episode captures several operational experiences the Marines gained during this small war. First was the rapid movement of troops using whatever means were possible. In one day, Draper moved his men by ship from Cavite to Silanguin, a 70 mile journey by sea, and then to a beach opposite Capones Island, a further 15 miles north. Second, the Marines made use of native intelligence to plan for follow-up military action. The location of enemy emplacements came from natives working with Draper, not from Army intelligence. Third, Draper defeated the enemy using an aggressive, offensive operational tempo. Less than 24 hours passed from receiving information to action, this including seaborne movement.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹² A.P. Niblack, “Operations of the Navy and Marine Corps in the Philippine Archipelago, 1898-1902,” *Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute*, 30, no. 4 (December, 1904): 745-753. Niblack served in the Philippine theater from 1898-1900 and eventually retired as a Vice Admiral.

¹⁹³ Niblack, 747-753. The number counted, sixteen, does not include the six separate entries Niblack gives to Waller’s expedition into Samar.

¹⁹⁴ N.L. Draper (Capt USMC), “Report to 1st Regiment Commander, Col Rob L. Mead from Capt Draper, E Company Commander”, DTG April 9, 1900”, Philippine Records Box, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA. (Handwritten) 1-7, and Niblack, 752. Niblack reports Draper and his men “drove the enemy from the area.”

¹⁹⁵ Draper, 2.

¹⁹⁶ Serving under Draper was a new 2ndLt Logan Feland. Draper rated Feland high in his after-action report. “Report of Capt Draper,” *Annual Report of the Navy; 1900* (Washington,

Niblack's accounts, Taussig's diary, and Draper's combat reports show that the Marines were typically involved in quick striking offensive action. Moving from ship to shore, the Marines would quickly engage the enemy, often supported by Naval gunfire, and then move on to the next engagement.

From the fall of 1900 to the spring of 1901, the US Army and Marines kept relentless pressure on all Filipino resistance, eventually resulting in the destruction or dispersal of almost all rebel forces. Aguinaldo, captured in 1901, called for all Filipinos to accept the rule of the Americans.¹⁹⁷ After his capture, one of the last large groups offering active resistance remained on the island of Samar.¹⁹⁸ Moro rebels attacked an Army garrison on September 28, 1901, in the village of Balangiga, Samar, resulting in a massacre in which thirty-two soldiers were killed and twenty-two wounded, with only four escaping unscathed.¹⁹⁹ In response, Marine Major Littleton T. Waller was tasked to assemble a force of Marines for a retaliatory patrol.²⁰⁰ His marching orders from the senior Army officer in that sector of the Philippines, US Army Brigadier General Jacob Smith, stated, "I want no prisoners. I wish you to burn and kill; the more you burn and kill, the better it will please me."²⁰¹ US Marine Private Harold Kinman, sailing with the Marines under Waller's command to Samar, was ready to exact revenge; "Four companies of Marines leave here tomorrow for the island of Samar to avenge the terrible massacre of the 9th Infantry, which took place less than two weeks ago. We are heavily armed and looking to avenge our comrades who fought alongside us in China."²⁰²

D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900), 1143-1146. Feland would go on to serve in both Hispaniola and will be the senior Marine in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign.

¹⁹⁷ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis, 279.

¹⁹⁸ The island of Samar is located to the northeast of Leyte Gulf.

¹⁹⁹ Report of Capt Edwin V. Bookmiller, US Army, "Casualties at Balangiga, Samar Island," in, *Annual Reports of the War Department: Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1902* (Washington DC: Washington Printing Office, 1902), 628-629.

²⁰⁰ John H. Clifford, *History of the Pioneer Marine Battalion at Guam, 1899 and Campaigns in Samar, 1901* (Pike, NH: 1914), 25. Clifford's work is his first-hand account of the seizure of Guam in 1898 and his participation in the Samar marches. It brings a first-hand account from a Marine who was there, as a private and is replete with his own personal feelings about the events he took part in. Also, Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Random House, 1989), 191.

²⁰¹ These are the recorded words from General Smith's court-martial found in Charles Francis Adams, *Secretary Root's Records: Marked Severities in Philippine Warfare, An Analysis of the Law and Facts bearing on the Action and Utterances of President Roosevelt and Secretary Root* (Boston: Geo H. Ellis Printers, 1902), 33. Private Clifford records the sentiment of the junior Marines in his record, "We all believe Gen Smith was justified in his actions."

²⁰² Harold Kinman, Letter dated October 18, 1901, Personal Papers, Collection 2571, Box 7, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico VA. Kinman felt a certain

Waller's retaliatory expedition is worth recounting to illustrate the focus on combat operations and how even a reprisal mission was celebrated within the service. After landing on Samar on October 24, 1901, followed by a brutal march into the jungle, including the scaling of 200-foot cliffs to reach the Moro stronghold, Waller and his Marines caught the Moros by surprise and conducted a successful attack.²⁰³ After this operation, Brigadier General Smith ordered Waller to find the best ground for a telegraph line across the island of Samar. During the ensuing march across Samar from mid-December 1901 through early January 1902, the sudden appearance of the Marines in previous areas of sanctuary prompted many *insurrectos* to surrender. On December 15, 1901, 26 'bolo men' capitulated. A similar event occurred on December 17, 1901, with five *insurrectos*, including "a captain of the insurgents presented themselves at the post, and they were all given the oath of allegiance to the United States."²⁰⁴ By pushing into the interior Waller was able to deny sanctuary and resources to the enemy, a tactic he would later use in Haiti in 1915.

Despite these moderate successes, Waller and his force ran into trouble. After experiencing everything from supply problems, sickness, their boats sinking in a river, and even a bearer mutiny, Waller split his force into two separate groups to try to extricate themselves from the jungle; the healthiest to press ahead to gather a relief force to rescue those unable to travel and the second with the sick and lame to follow behind with the guides and majority of the bearers.²⁰⁵

Suffering from fever, Waller led the first group into a village and collapsed. However, he soon learned that ten of his Marines in the second group had perished from starvation, but their bearers had survived. Waller immediately had the bearers, 11 Filipinos in all, hastily court-martialed and executed on the spot.²⁰⁶ Waller was subsequently court-martialed but ultimately acquitted partly because of Brigadier General Smith's order to kill every male under age ten, which Waller had countermanded.²⁰⁷ Although acting under direct orders from Brigadier General

kinship to the soldiers of the 9th who had fought with the Marines during the Boxer Rebellion, of which Kinman also took part.

²⁰³ "Reports, Major General Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps, 1902", Philippine Records Box, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA., 25. Harold Kinman from a hospital in Leyte described his harrowing journey across Samar and his near-death experience in a January 27, 1902, letter; Personal Papers, Collection 2571, Box 7, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA. He also was one of the principal witnesses for Waller during Waller's March 1902 court martial. See also Clifford, 29-33.

²⁰⁴ "Reports, Major General Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps, 1902," 25. The 'post' in question was located at Baseyn, Samar.

²⁰⁵ Clifford, 37-39.

²⁰⁶ Adams, *Secretary Root's Records*, 28-29.

²⁰⁷ Stuart Creighton Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation: The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1982), 219-220. Bickle takes a much harsher view of Waller's conduct toward Samar (Bickle, 30).

Smith to make Samar a “howling wilderness,” Waller apparently understood the likelihood of a domestic backlash in the United States.²⁰⁸ Despite negative public opinion following the events on Samar, Wallers’ actions were seen as appropriate and applauded inside the US Navy and Marine Corps, illustrating the service culture norms of the time.

In his annual report to the Secretary of the Navy and Congress, the US Marine Commandant emphasized how the natives attempted to kill the Marines to whom they were attached. That “Major Waller was subsequently tried by general court-martial and was acquitted” was the only mention of the situation in the Commandant’s report to the Secretary of the Navy and Congress.²⁰⁹ The Commandant’s report reveals that the focus of military operations was on finding and destroying enemy military forces, and despite Waller’s public court martial praise for Waller’s conduct poured in. For example, the senior ranking US naval officer in the Pacific, the Commander in Chief of the Asiatic Squadron, Rear Admiral Frederick Rodgers, wrote, “I desire to state here that the Marine battalion commanded by Major Waller, which was sent to the southern end of Samar, then considered the worst place in the Philippines, and where a whole company of the Ninth Infantry had just been massacred, was actively and continuously engaged against *insurrectos* for over three months and performed its duty in a most efficient manner.”²¹⁰ The Secretary of War’s opinion was that Waller’s actions were, “justified by the history and conditions with the warfare with the cruel and treacherous savages who inhabited the island and their entire disregard for the laws of war; were wholly within the limitations of General Order No. 100 of 1863, and were sustained by precedents of the highest authority.”²¹¹ The historical evidence from the Samar campaign, subsequent trials, and negative publicity showed that the Marines were wholly focused on offensive military operations regardless of negative press reporting. In no official correspondence or private letter seen during this research is there any mention or analysis of trying to redress societal shortcomings inside another country. Although the Marines in the Banana Wars will later recognize that having a local population supporting military efforts was better, positive local support was secondary to directly engaging the enemy.

As the public spotlight of Waller’s court martial faded and combat operations ended in the Philippines, the Marines continued their small wars operations on behalf of the United States. The Philippine Insurrection imprinted the

²⁰⁸ “President Retires Gen Jacob H. Smith,” *New York Times*, July 17, 1902, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1902/07/17/101959147.pdf>, accessed August 29, 2021. President Roosevelt forcibly retired Smith after court-martial

²⁰⁹ “Reports, Major General Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps, 1902,” 25.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 27.

²¹¹ Secretary Root, War Department, Washington July 12, 1902, quoted in “President Retires Gen Jacob H. Smith,” *New York Times*, July 17, 1902, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1902/07/17/101959147.pdf>, accessed August 29, 2021.

beginnings of a small wars' framework on the Marines. The Marines in the Banana Wars utilized many of the same techniques and tactics first introduced in the Philippines. In the next chapter, aggressive action against the enemy and the use of forward camps and outposts to maintain constant patrolling will be analyzed more thoroughly. The initial capture of Manila and subsequent stagnation, until Aguinaldo's forces prompted the insurrection, was viewed as a failure of the offense. Once MacArthur began consistent offensive operations, US Army soldiers and Marines suppressed the rebellion. Moving out into the countryside to remote bases helped maintain a high operational tempo. Amongst the measures, and important to the Marines, was the role of the Navy in cutting off all seaward logistical supplies to the rebels. By 1900, the Marines occupied fourteen naval stations across the Philippine Islands, showing the necessity of controlling both the sea lanes and preventing resource bases from being used by the enemy.²¹² Shortly after the Philippine Insurrection, the US Marine Corps, capitalizing on its combat experience, began crafting and publicly advertising Marines' service culture. This service culture would influence the Marines' tactics and decisions when later adapting airpower in their small wars.

Marine Culture

As the Marines began their four-year small war in the Philippines in 1898, the US Marine Corps' involvement in the Spanish-American War in Cuba thrust the Marines into the public sphere as essential to the United States' victory in the Caribbean.²¹³ Capitalizing on this newfound recognition, after the conflict the Marine Corps deliberately crafted an image of elite warriors fighting around the globe; they consciously cemented their service culture centered on being soldiers from the sea.²¹⁴ One causal factor under examination in this dissertation is that the service culture of the US Marine Corps shaped how the Marines planned for and ultimately conducted their fighting in small wars, which influenced how they

²¹² Linn, 208.

²¹³ Trevor K. Plante, "New Glory to its already Gallant Record," *Prologue Magazine* 30, no. 1 (Spring 1998), accessed July 1, 2023, <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1998/spring/spanish-american-war-marines#:~:text=Although%20the%20majority%20of%20marines,marines'%20role%20in%20the%20war.>

²¹⁴ See Heather Venable, *How the Few Became the Proud: Crafting the Marine Corps Mystique, 1874-1918* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2019), 4-7. Also, Mark Ryland Folse, "Globe and Anchor Men: US Marines, Manhood, and American Culture, 1914-1924," PhD diss., University of Alabama, 2018, and Heather Pace Marshall, "'It Means Something These Days to be a Marine': Image, Identity, and Mission in the Marine Corps, 1861-1918", PhD diss., Duke University, 2010.

adapted aviation into their operations.²¹⁵ For the purposes of this dissertation, the definition of service culture is “a set of shared beliefs about the organization [service] and its mission.”²¹⁶ Additionally, an organization’s culture determines which lessons it will learn and which lessons it will unconsciously ignore or forget, and for an organization that, after the Philippine Insurrection, actively pursued an image of offensive military action, service culture shaped how the Marines fought.²¹⁷ While more broad strategic culture frameworks exist, such as those explored by Carl Builder in *Masks of War* and Peter Mansoor and Williamson Murray in *The Culture of Military Organizations*, they are beyond the scope of this dissertation.²¹⁸ The remainder of this chapter will examine how the Marines viewed themselves and their missions established the bedrock of their identity, norms, and beliefs and, ultimately, how aviation was adapted in the Banana Wars.

The service culture of the US Marines was rooted in American values of the time, such as hard work, individualism, a sense of fair play, and equal opportunity.²¹⁹ Even when fighting small wars, the conduct of the military reflected the societal norms and values of the United States. The US population expected its military to conduct itself according to those aspirational American values.²²⁰ According to Dr. Jeannie Johnson, author of *The Marines, Counterinsurgency and Strategic Culture: Lessons Learned and Lost in America’s Wars*, national norms underpinned the conduct of the US Marines fighting the small wars of the United

²¹⁵ Peter R. Mansoor and William Murray, eds, *The Culture of Military Organizations* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 1-2 and 14. Also, Chiara Ruffa, “Military cultures and force employment in peace operations,” *Security Studies* 26, no. 3 (2017):391-392. Ruffa gives an example of how two units in Afghanistan in 2015, one Italian and one French, given the same mission, executed their military operations very differently.

²¹⁶ Long, *The Soul of Armies*, 15.

²¹⁷ Johnson, *Strategic Culture*, 40-41, and Edward C. Stewart and Milton J. Bennet, *American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Boston, MA: Intercultural Press, 1991), 11.

²¹⁸ Carl H. Builder, *The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989). Builder creates a framework for analysis using five different aspects of service culture: alters of worship, concerns with self-measurement, toys versus the arts, degrees of intraservice distinction, and insecurities about service legitimacy. Also, Mansoor and Murray, *The Culture of Military Organizations*, 1. The subsequent chapters, from contributing authors, explore various components of culture to included rituals, myths, symbols, beliefs, and norms.

²¹⁹ Anne-Marie Slaughter, *The Idea that is America: Keeping Faith with our Ideals in a Dangerous World* (New York: Basic Books, 2007). Written as a touchstone of how American ideals have transcended American history regardless of time or circumstance. Also, Johnson, *Strategic Culture*, 38. Dr. Johnson is a professor in the Political Science Department at Utah State University.

²²⁰ Sam C. Sarkesian, *American’s Forgotten Wars; The Counterrevolutionary Past and Lessons for the Future* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 14-15.

States: “this [was] an unconscious, natural process” and was expected of all US troops.²²¹ However, the culture of the United States did not lend itself to the prosecution of small wars. One reason included that Americans wanted unambiguous military victory when sending troops overseas and tended to view enemy insurrections as military problems, forgetting that military action was rooted in political purpose.²²²

Despite the example of the Philippine Insurrection, the expectation was that other US military intervention overseas would be of short duration.²²³ Although events played out differently in the Banana Wars, neither the US government nor the Marines envisioned a significant standing military commitment.²²⁴ Still, American society assumed goodwill and generosity would overcome cultural barriers, and a country receiving American bounty would quickly adapt to American interests.²²⁵ Just as crucial as goodwill was the belief that American democracy and capitalism were systems that would benefit all countries.²²⁶ Samuel Inman, who wrote extensively during the interwar period extolling the virtues of the Monroe Doctrine, wrote, “Because we North Americans are so sure of our generous desire to help all who are in need and so sure of our superiority to all the rest of America, many of us suppose that all Hispanic American governments must be highly appreciative of the help which the Monroe Doctrine makes us honor bound to give.”²²⁷

The assumption that American goodwill and democracy would be embraced during military interventions proved incorrect. The Philippines Insurrection and the turn of the twentieth-century actions in the Caribbean and Central America saw repeated military interventions by the United States, which became grinding affairs.²²⁸ The body politic expected quick military commitments and solutions, but

²²¹ Johnson, *Strategic Culture*, 37.

²²² Jeffery Record, “The American Way of War: Cultural Barriers to Successful Counterinsurgencies,” *Political Analysis; The Cato Institute*, No. 577 (September 2006): 4.

²²³ Johnson, *Strategic Culture*, 40-41, and Stewart and Bennet, *American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, 11. The American tendency is to ignore large aspects of its own history.

²²⁴ Capt Harry A. Ellsworth, *One Hundred Eighty Landings of the United States Marine Corps: 1800-1934* (Quantico, VA; USMC Historical Section, 1934) and Ivan Musicant, *The Banana Wars* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1990), 164.

²²⁵ Hall and Hall, “Understanding Cultural Differences”. For American Imperialism, see Alan McPherson, *The Invaded: How the Latin Americans and their Allies Fought and Ended US Occupation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), Ivan Musicant, *The Banana Wars* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1990), and Carrie Gibson, *Empire’s Crossroads* (New York: Atlantic Press Monthly, 2014).

²²⁶ Birtle, 101.

²²⁷ Samuel G. Inman, “The Monroe Doctrine and Hispanic America,” Reprinted from the *Hispanic American Historical Review* 4, no. 4 (November 1921): 636.

²²⁸ Ibid. Also, Ellsworth, *One Hundred Eighty Landings of the United States Marine Corps: 1800-1934* and Musicant, *The Banana Wars*, 164. Military operations originally envisioned

the reality was that military campaigns lasted for years. One factor contributing to the idea that military intervention in the Banana Wars would be conducted through short-duration campaigns was the American viewpoint at the beginning of the 20th Century that the enemy combatants were inferior to Western democracies and that these nations needed Western intervention to prevent themselves from falling into chaos.²²⁹

There was sincerity in trying to improve the occupied lands, but that improvement was embedded in a Social Darwinist attitude of superiority over those local populations that the Marines assumed did not know any better.²³⁰ Nowhere was the attitude of benevolent imperialism more acutely articulated than Rudyard Kipling's poem, "The White Man's Burden," which many Americans felt was the natural extension of Manifest Destiny.²³¹ The evidence in the research conducted during this dissertation shows that the US Marines were more interested in achieving the military mission of establishing security by defeating any armed opposition rather than establishing long-lasting institutionalized solutions, mainly for the benefit of populations they felt were inferior. Waller's actions and subsequent court-martial highlight the norms surrounding cultural inequality of the time. Internally, the Marines applauded Waller's efforts and continued to promote him up the ranks. In 1920, the Marines named the Officers' barracks at Quantico "Waller Hall" specifically in his honor as he was "[one of] the Corps' heroes because of his exploits on the island of Samar in the Philippines in 1901."²³²

as short and sharp resulted in lengthy stays in all three countries: Haiti, Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua. Also, Johnson, *Strategic Culture*, 39.

²²⁹ Three diaries from Marines who fought in the Philippines are replete with derogatory language for the Philippine rebels. Harold Kinman, Personal Papers, Collection 2571, Box 7, and Joseph Hawkins, Diary, Collection 2492, Box 7, and Louis Mothersbaugh, Diary, Collection 1925, Box 7, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

²³⁰ Mary A. Redna, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 15. For an evolution of Social Darwinism from peak popularity to falling out of fashion see Robert Bannister, *Social Darwinism: Science and Myth in Anglo-American Social Thought* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1979), especially chapter 12.

²³¹ Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden," *McClure's Magazine* 12 (February 1899). Senator Albert Beveridge, in a 1900 speech before the Senate, put more of a fine point on it by claiming it was "our part in the mission of our race, trustee, under God," to maintain the Philippines and other overseas territories. US Congress, *Congressional Record*, 56 Congress, 1st Session, 704-712. A counterpoint to Kipling's poem was from fellow Englishman Henry Du Pre Labpuchere in his lampooning "The Brown Man's Burden," published in his magazine *Truth*, in 1899. <http://www.swans.com/library/art8/xxx074.html>, accessed December 5, 2023.

²³² Robin L. Austin, Charles, A. Braley, Charles A. Fleming, *Quantico: Crossroads of the Marine Corps* (Washington DC: History and Museum Division Headquarters, US Marine Corps, 1978), 29. Also Austin, Braley, and Fleming, 25.

The popular American perspective at the time of the Banana Wars was that US military force was superior physically and mentally to any native enemy. Marine Major Samuel Harrington, writing in 1921, emphasized this attitude when he stated: “Now *the tactics of the enemy and his morale are affected by his psychology* which varies with different peoples. (italics in the original).”²³³ The unambiguous assertion was that Western forces were superior in morale and morals to those they faced in small wars due to the natives’ lack of Western education and ideals. A history of the Marines, published in 1939, highlights this sentiment of superiority when commenting about the Banana Wars, claiming the Marines “were engaged in more or less backward countries.”²³⁴ This statement, written six years after the close of the Banana Wars, demonstrates how the idea that the US Marines were more advanced than their adversaries was deeply ingrained. As such, Marines would tend to do a job themselves rather than hire, train, and equip a local population who were deemed inferior to do the work.²³⁵

The tactics employed by the US Marines differed from those of British Army officer and adventurer T.E. Lawrence. In 1917, Lawrence wrote *27 Articles* to capture his observations during his fighting in Syria.²³⁶ In *27 Articles*, he asserts that a hands-on approach may prove counter-productive: “Do not try to do too much with your own hands. Better the Arabs do it tolerably than you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are to help them, not to win it for them. Actually, also, under the very odd conditions of Arabia, your practical work will not be as good as, perhaps, you think it is.”²³⁷ Whether or not Lawrence’s advice would have worked in the Banana Wars is unknown. Conducting a time-consuming analysis of deep-seated historical issues in another country was the antithesis of the American preference to act, which held for the Marines.²³⁸ When indigenous institutions failed to meet American expectations, the Marines often stepped in to fix and control the problems,

²³³ Major Samuel M. Harrington, “The Strategy and Tactics of Small Wars, Part I” *Marine Corps Gazette* 6, no. 4 (December 1921): 481. Italics in the original.

²³⁴ Clyde H. Metcalf, *A History of the United States Marine Corps* (New York: G.P. Putnam and Sons, 1939), vii.

²³⁵ A much deeper examination of the Marines’ attitude about race and their own image is found in the unpublished dissertation Mark Ryland Folse, “Globe and Anchor Men: US Marines, Manhood, and American Culture, 1914-1924,” PhD diss., University of Alabama, 2018. Chapter 4 focuses on Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Also, Bikel, 83.

²³⁶ Originally a handwritten note sent to the Arab Bureau, the section that handled intelligence gathering for the British during the First World War. For a detailed study on the Bureau read Bruce Westrate, *The Arab Bureau: British Policy in the Middle East, 1916–1920* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992). The famous ‘Lawrence of Arabia,’ who led an insurgent force of Arabas against the Turks in WWI. A deeper understanding of Lawrence’s experiences can be obtained from his own *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.

²³⁷ T. E. Lawrence, *27 Articles* (2017; repr., New York: Simon and Schuster, 1917), 39.

²³⁸ Colin Gray, “Out of the Wilderness: Prime Time for Strategic Culture,” *Comparative Strategy* 26, no. 1, (2007): 18.

preferring misguided action to inaction.²³⁹ Central and South America were deemed too uncivilized for democracy and had to be taught or forced into it.²⁴⁰

As will be discussed in more detail during the examination of the Banana Wars in the following chapter, when the Marines entered Haiti in 1915, they immediately took control of the ports and customs functions and even administered justice in outlying villages.²⁴¹ A similar pattern was repeated in the Dominican Republic in 1916. Jeannie Johnson observes, “Unsurprisingly, economic, material, and political transformations made during these eras of hands-on military administration often met with quick reversal once US troops are withdrawn.”²⁴² The research and analysis in this survey shows the Marines ‘can-do’ approach based on US culture led them to a very intrusive and controlling form of small wars application focused on destroying the enemy rather than establishing the roots for long-lasting social reform.

Returning to the internal culture of the Marines, the turn of the 20th century saw the US Marine Corps at a crossroads in seeking an independent identity and specific mission. For the first 125 years of the Corps’ existence, the Marines served aboard ships in various functions, deploying in small numbers as required around the globe.²⁴³ Operationally, the Marines deployed in small units away from large command structures, establishing an identity based on small-unit leadership and independent military execution but linked firmly to serving aboard US Navy ships. Doctrinally, the Marines up until the early 20th century either borrowed totally or used large portions of US Army doctrine. As late as 1885, the USMC had no formal doctrinal publication and only then did it finally publish a service-specific doctrine,

²³⁹ Stewart and Bennet, *American Cultural Patterns: A Cross Cultural Perspective*, 62. They also list three American assumptions for effective action; individuals are responsible for their actions, clarity is always sought after, and any time spent thinking should lead to action. In their book, especially the chapter on action orientation, “Form of Activity”, there is a comparison to Japanese culture which is more methodical and ‘slow’ compared to American standards.

²⁴⁰ Johnson, *Strategic Culture*, 41.

²⁴¹ “Memorandum for the Secretary of the Navy Concerning Strength and Duties of Marines in Haiti and Santo Domingo, 1920,” RG 127, Folder D-40, National Archives Building, Washington, D.C. Also, Stephen M. Fuller and Graham A. Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic: 1916-1924* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, 1974), 52-56.

²⁴² Johnson, *Strategic Culture*, 43.

²⁴³ A history written prior to the Philippine Insurrection was Richard S. Collum, *History of the United States Marine Corps* (Philadelphia: L.R. Hamersley & Co., 1890) and has exacting detail about their early history. For other early histories of the Marines, see Alan Millet, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps* (New York: The Free Press, 1991) and Robert J. Heinel, *Soldiers of the Sea: The United States Marine Corps, 1775-1962* (Baltimore, Maryland: The Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1991).

the *Marine Corps Manual*.²⁴⁴ The manual was copied from US Army and Navy doctrines and was the first attempt to create a service-specific Marine doctrine. Along with the first steps to carve out specific doctrine came the desire to find a Corps-specific mission at the beginning of the 20th century.²⁴⁵ The search for a particular assigned task aboard ships put the Marines at cross-purposes with the US Navy, where the Marines wanted to remain shipboard police and train as gunnery crew on modern ships.²⁴⁶ The US Navy, however, needed an amphibious force to seize naval bases for power projection, a task the Marines eventually took their focus for military operations.²⁴⁷ The reality was the Marines were used for establishing security in areas of unrest where US interests were at risk. Once the Marines went ashore in the Philippines in 1898, they were continuously employed in various small wars until 1934.

Military interventions were a regular activity for the Marines even before the Banana Wars. Sending in Marines from US Navy ships to quell unrest and to secure US interests around the globe was something of a given for the Marines. Marine Captain Harry Ellsworth, writing in 1934 about each intervention conducted by the Marines, in *One Hundred Eighty Landings of the United States Marine Corps: 1800-1934*, stated:

It is this type of routine active foreign duty of the Marine Corps in which this manual is primarily interested. Small wars represent the normal and frequent operations of the Marine Corps. During about 85 of the last 100 years, the Marine Corps has been engaged in small wars in different parts of the world. The Marine Corps has landed troops 180 times in 37 countries from 1800 to 1934. Every year during the past 36 years since the Spanish-American War, the Marine Corps has been engaged in active operations in the field. In 1929, the Marine Corps had two-thirds of its personnel employed on expeditionary or other foreign or sea duty outside the United States continental limits.²⁴⁸

The turn of the twentieth century saw an increased frequency of sending Marines into foreign countries for armed intervention. Some leaders inside the Marine Corps began to see themselves as small wars fighters, even if others wanted to focus on

²⁴⁴ H. K. Gilman, *Marines' Manual: Prepared for the Use of the Enlisted Men of the U.S. Marine Corps* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1885), see also Heinel, *Soldiers of the Sea*, 108.

²⁴⁵ Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 109-111.

²⁴⁶ Jack Shulimson, *The Marine Corps Search for a Mission, 1880-1898* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas, 1993), 10-29, and Johnson, *Strategic Culture*, 60-64, and Millett, 110.

²⁴⁷ Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 112.

²⁴⁸ Ellsworth, 2.

large-scale amphibious operations for the Navy.²⁴⁹ Whatever the focus of the US Marine Corps would become, their experience presented a military force that could deploy quite literally to “every clime and place” and be successful in small wars.²⁵⁰

The most relevant event in shaping the image of the Marine Corps occurred between the Philippine Insurrection and the beginning of the Banana Wars. Buoyed by the positive publicity gained in the Spanish-American War and with a desire to carve out a image distinct from that of the US Army and Navy, the Marines began their first forays into mass marketing in 1907.²⁵¹ Tasked by the then US Marine Commandant George Elliot, Marine Captain William C. Harllee was told to create a deliberate publicity campaign for the Marines to capitalize on their positive public image and further educate the American people on why the Marines provided value to the American military.²⁵² Harllee was so successful in his efforts that the Marine Corps established a Marine Corps Publicity Bureau in New York City in November 1911.²⁵³ To promote synergy across all recruiting stations nationwide, the Publicity Bureau created the *Recruiter's Bulletin*, which circulated among all recruiting stations and over a thousand local and regional newspapers.²⁵⁴ The *Recruiters' Bulletin* contained humorous stories and information for recruiters and was a propaganda tool used exceptionally well by the Marines. Inside its pages was the consistent theme of an elite fighting organization, deployed globally and doing the work of the US Army and Navy.

²⁴⁹ Major General John A. Lejeune, “The United States Marine Corps,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 8, no. 4 (December 1923): 249-250. Austin Long also argues there were two subcultures within the Marine Corps; those who wanted to focus only on small wars and those who wanted to carve out a future mission of amphibious operations.

²⁵⁰ From the second stanza of the Marines Hymn.

²⁵¹ Stephen Crane wrote his *Wounds in the Rain* based on his experiences as an imbedded reporter with the 1st Marine Brigade in Cuba. Also, Bernard C. Nalty, *The United States Marines in the War with Spain* (Washington, DC: Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1959), 9.

²⁵² John Harllee, *The Marine from Manatee: A Tradition of Rifle Marksmanship* (Washington, DC: National

Rifle Association of America, 1984), 118. This book, written by Harllee's son, contains many stories bordering on tall tales, but Captain Harllee was successful.

²⁵³ For a detailed study of the development and history of the Publicity Bureau see Jack Shulimson, *The Marine Corps' Search for an Mission, 1880- 1898* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993) and Colin M. Colbourn, “Espirt de Marine Corps: The Making of the Modern Marine Corps Through Public Relations, 1898-1945” (PhD dissertation, University of Southern Mississippi, 2018), and Heather Pace Marshall, “It Means Something to be a Marine These Days: Image, Identity, and Mission in the Marine Corps, 1861-1918,” (PhD Dissertation, Duke University, 2010).

²⁵⁴ “Press Bureau Checks Up,” *Recruiters' Bulletin*, August 1916, 10. By circulating this *Recruiter's Bulletin* amongst newspapers the Marines could get their stories printed for free across the country.

The US Marine's service culture that developed during this period was best summed up by a recruiting poster in June 1917 entitled "First to Fight."²⁵⁵ In it, Marines are coming ashore in boats, rifles up and at the ready and clearly on the attack. It showed able-bodied, aggressive men pushing onto an enemy shore. Where that shore happened to be was immaterial; the Marines were ready, willing, and able to be first to fight. As the national face of the Marine Corps, the Publicity Bureau imprinted in average Americans' minds that Marines were a breed apart, elite fighters, and always involved in combat operations around the globe. The Publicity Bureau maintained its marketing campaign throughout the Banana Wars, where the Bureau published first-hand accounts of fighting bandits in Hispaniola, Nicaragua, or wherever the Corps sent its Marines. This offensive culture, centered on the individual rifleman, was a defining characteristic of the Marines' service culture.

With the image of a Marine infantryman coming ashore firmly implanted in the minds of the American public and celebrated internally inside the Marine Corps, Major General John A. Lejeune, upon assuming the role of Commandant of the Marine Corps in 1922, formerly articulated his mission for the Corps; "keep the Marine Corps a great fighting machine" and "protect American lives, rights and interests" and "restore order and to maintain peace and tranquility in disturbed countries."²⁵⁶ Lejeune's vision portrayed the Corps as the force of choice for fighting small wars and the land force needed by the US Navy to secure advanced naval bases. Lejeune's articulation regarding securing American interests and restoring order formed the bedrock of why Marines would be called upon to deploy during peacetime.

Lejeune's vision was codified in 1927 when a joint Army-Navy board formerly defined the role of the Marines. The US Army would provide land forces for fighting in major conventional wars. In contrast, the Marines during peacetime were given the mission of delivering military force "for emergency service in time of peace for protection of the interests of the United States in foreign countries."²⁵⁷ The US Army would only move overseas during peacetime for occupation "in exceptional cases."²⁵⁸ The Marines had gained recognition as a small wars force based on experiences in the Philippines and Hispaniola. However, this division of responsibility between large and small wars meant the Marines would now lead in the development of doctrine and execution of small wars. As the official roles became solidified, at the heart of the US Marine Corps was its steadfast focus on being "a great fighting machine."²⁵⁹ Having a combat mission in times between

²⁵⁵ "First to Fight," *The Marines Magazine* (June 1917): 1.

²⁵⁶ Major General John A. Lejeune, "Preparation," *Marine Corps Gazette* 7, no. 1 (March 1922): 55 and Major General John A. Lejeune, "The United States Marine Corps," *Marine Corps Gazette* 8, no. 4 (December 1923): 249.

²⁵⁷ Joint Board, *Joint Action of the Army and the Navy* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1927), 2-3.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁵⁹ Lejeune, "Preparation," 55.

major conventional wars meant the Marines needed to be ever ready to deploy and fight for the interests of the United States.

The US Marines lauded their success as the force sent overseas to secure American interests. The Marine's self-assessment of their performance even while still engaged in the Banana Wars was varied but overall positive. For example, Major Fran Evans, writing in the *Marine Corps Gazette* in 1917, described the Marines rotating out of the Dominican Republic as "a veteran body of seasoned officers and men to whom the seizing of coastal towns, the razing of supposedly impregnable native strongholds, and the secrets of bush fighting and street fighting in tropical countries became an open book."²⁶⁰ Evans was extolling the fighting prowess of the Marines, placing particular emphasis on how the Marines had overcome every physical obstacle in their offensive military operations. Similarly, Ellsworth's historical account of Marines' exploits during the Banana Wars described the Dominican Republic intervention in terms of "the military government [run by the Marines in Santo Domingo that] created order out of chaos, and placed the government on a sound basis in all respects."²⁶¹ Ellsworth summed up the Haitian campaign stating:

During these slightly over nineteen years, the Marines' achievements in Haiti constitute one of the bright pages of American history. They were a people torn with revolution and misery, but now peaceful conditions reign, personal liberty and prosperity prevail to such an extent as never known before in that country.²⁶²

At the time of the Banana Wars, Marine service culture was influenced by American values, underpinned by the prevalent Social Darwinist attitudes present at the time, and reinforced by their vast combat experience in the first two decades of the twentieth century. From their small wars experiences and subsequent experience in WWI, the Marines considered themselves soldiers of the sea who could be sent anywhere across the globe and prevail in combat. Moreover, this was also the public-facing image promoted relentlessly by the Publicity Bureau. As the Banana Wars progressed and with the accumulation of more small wars combat experience, the service culture calcified into one that was aggressive in the offensive regardless of the situation or who the enemy was. It also created a service culture that would overcome environmental, technological, and physical obstacles in upholding the image of an elite infantryman now embedded in the culture of the US Marines. As aviation was introduced into the Marine Corps and its small wars, the offensive

²⁶⁰ Major Fran E. Evans, "The Marines have landed," *Marine Corps Gazette* 2, no. 3 (September 1917): 213.

²⁶¹ Ellsworth, 70.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 90.

service culture and desire to uphold the ideals of being a Marine became a causal factor in how aviation was adapted to small wars.

The other causal factor examined in this chapter was the small wars experience gained in the Philippine Insurrection. The available evidence strongly suggests that their experience in the Philippines was a causal factor in the development of small wars doctrine by the Marines. From General Order 100, the Marines drew legal support for military actions and attitudes toward their enemy. The Marine's viewpoint was that they were fighting armed bandits and that removing the enemy combatants would lead to peace and stability. The Samar affair taught the Marines that American public opinion could quickly sour on them. While the episode highlighted the need to balance small war tactics with political implications, it also reinforced that offensive and even harsh action would be looked upon favorably inside military circles.²⁶³ Given the prevalent norm that American ideals and US Marines were superior to those whom the Marines fought, it is not surprising that the Marines focused on offensive infantry action rather than tempering their operations to gain popular support.

Examining the operational conduct of the campaign showed the Marines had little interest in solving social and governmental wrongs but instead focused on offensive military operations and, when necessary, operations of reprisal.²⁶⁴ Maintaining offensive military action, securing lines of communication, utilizing local intelligence, and actively pursuing the enemy were all tactics, techniques, and procedures the Marines brought into the Banana Wars. Most relevant as the Marines moved forward into the Banana Wars was the fact that many junior officers, who later would lead in the Banana Wars, gained their first experiences in the Philippine Insurrection; Smedley Butler would be a battalion commander in Haiti in 1915; Logan Feland would command all US Marine forces in the Dominican Republic in 1922 and the Second Nicaraguan Campaign in 1927-1928; and Littleton Waller would command all US Marine forces in Haiti in 1915-1916.

Even with small wars experience gained in the Philippines, formal doctrine and training manuals were still needed. The next chapter will explore how the Marines used their experience and British publications, such as Callwell's *Small*

²⁶³ Long, *The Soul of Armies*, 67.

²⁶⁴ John H. Clifford, *History of the Pioneer Marine Battalion at Guam, 1899 and Campaigns in Samar, 1901* (Pike, NH: 1914), 33. Clifford at no time apologizes for harsh reprisal actions against the Moros on Samar and never mentions governmental reforms. Kinman, Waller, and Drapers papers all reveal the same. Internally, the Marines applauded Waller's actions and continued to promote him up the ranks. In 1920, the Marines named the Officer's barracks at Quantico "Waller Hall" in his honor. Waller was one of "the Corps' heroes because of his exploits on the island of Samar in the Philippines in 1901." Robin L. Austin, Charles A. Braley, Charles A. Fleming, *Quantico: Crossroads of the Marine Corps* (Washington DC: History and Museum Division Headquarters, US Marine Corps, 1978), 29. Also Austin, Braley, and Fleming, 25.

Wars: Their Principles and Practice and Heneker's *Bush Warfare*, to formalize their approach to small wars.²⁶⁵ Not until 1916, with the creation of the *Marine Corps Gazette*, did the Marines begin to circulate knowledge inside the service formally. Once the Marines began publishing their thoughts on small wars, their operational approach became clear: offensive ground operations aimed at destroying the enemy forces. This approach was influenced by the causal factors of service culture and the experiences of the Philippine Insurrection and was carried forward into their initial campaigns in Hispaniola.

²⁶⁵ W.C.G. Heneker, *Bush Warfare* (London: Hugh Rees, Ltd., 1907). An additional book was LtCol A.F. Montanaro, *Hints for a Bush Campaign* (Strand, London: Sands &CO, 1901).

Chapter Four
The Banana Wars and a Small Wars Framework

Moving from the causal factors of service culture and the experience gained in the Philippine Insurrection, this chapter will now examine the second line of inquiry: the US Marine Corps' entry into the Banana Wars and the beginnings of a specific doctrine for fighting small wars. The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, it will provide the historical record of the Marines from the beginning of the Banana Wars. Analyzing how the Marines fought their campaign in Hispaniola before the arrival of aircraft will provide context for when and how the Marines began utilizing aircraft in their small wars operations. The second purpose of this chapter is to examine the first writings of Marines on conducting small wars. Understanding how the Marines conceptualized small wars during the Banana Wars is crucial in analyzing how the Marines adapted aviation into a fundamental yet subordinate arm in fighting small wars.

In addition, as described in the literature review, very little codified doctrine for small wars existed during the Banana Wars. Theorists studied today, such as Mao, David Galula, and David Kilcullen, came after the Banana Wars, so attempting to use their views and theories is inappropriate, as Marines did not have these later ideas to shape their thoughts on small wars. This chapter will focus on what the US Marines knew at the time of the Banana Wars instead of using counterinsurgency frameworks, a different approach than the historiography on the topic of the Banana Wars examined in Chapters One and Two.²⁶⁶

Knowing what the Marines thought about small wars within the context of their service culture and experience of the time is the appropriate lens for analyzing the factors that led the Marines to adapt aviation into a fundamental yet subordinate arm for fighting small wars. This chapter will analyze the evolution of Marines' thinking of small wars and show that it did not change with the advent of aviation; rather, the Marines adapted aviation to fit their small wars framework. The Marines' small wars framework was rooted in the Marines' experience in conducting military interventions in support of US policy and US national interests.

The Banana Wars Strategic Context: America First

The Marine's involvement in the Banana Wars evolved from long-standing US interests in the Caribbean and Latin America. US President James Monroe's seventh annual message to Congress in December 1823 was a seminal foreign policy

²⁶⁶ Works mentioned in Chapter Two encompassing the literature review using a modern counterinsurgency lens when exploring this period are, in order of publication: Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Austin Long, *The Soul of Armies: Counterinsurgency Doctrine and Military Culture in the US and UK* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2016); Jeannie L. Johnson, *The Marines, Counterinsurgency and Strategic Culture: Lessons Learned and Lost in America's Wars* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2018) and Wray Johnson, *Biplanes at War: US Marine Corps Aviation in the Small Wars, 1915-1934* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University of Kentucky Press, 2019).

pronouncement from the fledgling US republic. Focusing on recent turmoil between Spain and Portugal, Monroe wanted to prevent any new government on the Iberian Peninsula from re-asserting control over newly independent South American nations. Monroe wrote, “A principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved that the American continents by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers.” This statement would become better known as the Monroe Doctrine.²⁶⁷ Monroe stated that the United States now had a national interest in keeping the Western Hemisphere free of future European colonization. Although historical research puts the Spanish American war as the starting point for the advent of American Imperialism, the Monroe Doctrine set the foundation for justification for military intervention in the Banana Wars.²⁶⁸

The fundamental tenets of the Monroe Doctrine were that the US would not tolerate new European colonies in the Western Hemisphere and that the US would not interfere with existing settlements.²⁶⁹ President Monroe set out to limit European influence in the New World, promote democratic ideals in the Caribbean and South America, and increase US trade in the Western Hemisphere.²⁷⁰ As the 19th century progressed, successive US presidents used the doctrine to develop the international stance that brooked no interference from Europe in the Western Hemisphere and to increase economic ties with South America and the Caribbean, including an abortive attempt by President Ulysses S. Grant to annex the Dominican Republic in January 1870.²⁷¹ Gradually, the principle of no interference morphed into the right of

²⁶⁷ James Monroe, “Annual Message to Congress, December 2, 1823,” National Archives Milestone Documents, accessed March 28, 2020,

<https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=23&page=transcript>.

²⁶⁸ For more on American Imperialism see Ivan Musicant, *The Banana Wars: A History of United States Military Intervention in Latin America from the Spanish-American War to the Invasion of Panama* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1990), Lester Langley, *The Banana Men* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1995), Carrie Gibson, *Empire’s Crossroads* (New York: Atlantic Press Monthly, 2014), and Alan McPherson, *The Invaded: How the Latin Americans and their Allies Fought and Ended US Occupation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). All were discussed in Chapter Two.

²⁶⁹ US Department of State, “Milestones: 1801-1829,” Office of the Historian, accessed February 11, 2016, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1801-1829/monroe>.

²⁷⁰ Interestingly, Monroe was more concerned about keeping out a resurgent Catholic Spain rather than establishing an extended-lasting foreign policy. Carrie Gibson, *Empire’s Crossroads* (New York: Atlantic Press Monthly, 2014), 195-196. Also, Jay Sexton, “This is not the Monroe Doctrine You’re Looking For,” *War on the Rocks*, November 27, 2013, <https://warontherocks.com/2013/11/this-is-not-the-monroe-doctrine-youre-looking-for/>.

²⁷¹ Gibson, 210 and Ron Chernow, *Grant* (New York: Penguin Press, 2017), 665-666. Sadly, there is no lyrically inspiring hip-hop play derived from this work.

intervention when there were threats to the national interests of the United States and the maintenance of exclusive economic relationships.²⁷²

As the Philippine Insurrection raged on after the Spanish-American War, Cuba, the principal theater of combat actions during the war, avoided outright occupation by the United States thanks to Spain's quick capitulation. Looking to avoid another entanglement in a rebellion similar to the Philippine Insurrection, the new US Secretary of State, Elihu Root, devised a way to ensure non-involvement while at the same time securing America's interests.²⁷³ The Platt Amendment to the Monroe Doctrine, named after then-Senator Orville Platt and passed on March 2, 1901, allowed Cuba to assert its independence, but only under certain conditions imposed by the United States: Cuba could not engage in foreign diplomacy, European countries could not give monetary investments directly to the Cuban government, and Cuba ceded Guantanamo Bay to the United States in perpetuity.²⁷⁴ For Secretary Root, this amendment straddled the fine line between domestic anti-imperialist sentiments in the United States while simultaneously preventing Cuba from courting European influence.²⁷⁵ If Cuba did slide back into unrest that threatened American interests, Article 3 of the Platt Amendment allowed the United States the right to intervene directly, stating: "That the government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty."²⁷⁶ Soon after the Platt amendment was signed, European intervention in Venezuela provoked a more assertive policy from the United States.

The Venezuelan Crisis of 1902-1903 saw the realization of the US fear of European influence in the Western Hemisphere when a fleet of British, German, and Italian warships blockaded Venezuela to realize repayments of defaults on Venezuelan loans.²⁷⁷ Eventually, the European blockading force sank most of the Venezuelan navy and bombarded a Venezuelan fort before the arbitration of the crisis at The Hague.²⁷⁸ However real or imagined, the United States constantly

²⁷² Jay Sexton, *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in the Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Hill and Wand, 2012), 8.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 218.

²⁷⁴ Platt Amendment, National Archives Milestone Documents, accessed March 30, 2020, <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=55&page=transcript>. Senator Platt also firmly supported the annexation of Hawaii and the occupation of the Philippines.

²⁷⁵ Sexton, *The Monroe Doctrine*, 219.

²⁷⁶ Platt Amendment, May 22, 1903.

²⁷⁷ For more on the Venezuelan Crisis of 1902, see Kori Schake, *Safe Passage: The Transition from British to American Hegemony* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 167-182.

²⁷⁸ Ivan Musicant, *The Banana Wars* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1990), 242, and Gibson, *Empire's Crossroads*, 226.

worried about Europe reestablishing political, economic, and military influence in the Caribbean and South America.²⁷⁹ To prevent future European military involvement in the Western Hemisphere, President Theodore Roosevelt issued an update to the Monroe Doctrine in December 1904, declaring the US had the right to interfere, militarily if necessary, in the affairs of any country in the Western Hemisphere if that country did not honor their financial obligations.²⁸⁰ However, the justifications for military intervention provided by the Platt Amendment and the Roosevelt Corollary were not uniquely American.

Intervention into Latin American affairs to enforce financial obligations was a common reason for the use of military force by European nations.²⁸¹ The “Roosevelt Corollary” now justified US involvement in Latin American affairs aimed explicitly at curtailing European military involvement on the western side of the Atlantic.²⁸² In addition, four years later, President Taft stated in his “Dollar Diplomacy” policy that he intended to create mutual economic benefits for the US and Latin America. The Roosevelt Corollary and Dollar Diplomacy gave the United States its *jus ad bellum*, from a US perspective, for sending US troops to Haiti, Nicaragua, Mexico, Cuba, and Santa Domingo from 1910-1916, reinforcing a pattern of small wars operations that culminated in the Banana Wars.²⁸³

The Banana Wars

The diplomatic framework created by successive US Presidential administrations and frequent military interventions in South and Central America came to a culminating point in 1915 with a period of political instability in Hispaniola combined with the island’s importance to the national interests of the

²⁷⁹ The feeling of being threatened is examined in the seminal article by Arnold Wolfers, “National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol,” *Political Science Quarterly* 67, no. 4 (December 1952): 485. The duality of actual physical security and the feeling that one is secure is also explored in Lawrence Freedman’s ‘The Concept of Security,’ in Mary Hawkesworth and Maurice Kogan (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Government and Politics*, vol. 2 (London: Routledge, 1992), 731.

²⁸⁰ “Milestones: 1899-1913,” US Department of State, Office of the Historian, accessed February 11, 2016 <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/roosevelt-and-monroe-doctrine>, and Gibson, *Empire’s Crossroads*, 227.

²⁸¹ Martha Fennimore, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs About the Use of Force* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2003), 25 and 27.

²⁸² Theodore Roosevelt, “Annual Message to Congress, December 6, 1904,” National Archives Milestone Documents, accessed February 12, 2016, <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=56&page=transcript>. Roosevelt amplified his intentions for future intervention by stating that the US would “in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, exercise an international police power.”

²⁸³ *Ibid.* Also, Ellsworth, 62–64, 66–69, 115–118, 124–128. Military interventions conducted by the Marines before the Banana Wars: Cuba (1903, 1912, 1917); Dominican Republic (1903, 1904); Mexico (1913, 1914); Nicaragua (1910, 1912, 1922).

United States. Hispaniola is an island resting in the heart of the Caribbean, consisting of Haiti in the western half and the Dominican Republic in the east.²⁸⁴ The island was strategically important for the United States at the beginning of the 20th century because of US economic investment in both countries and its access to the Panama Canal. Although the Panama Canal sits hundreds of miles to the West, Hispaniola straddles the sea lanes flowing into and out of that critical international maritime passage. The two approaches towards the Panama Canal are the Windward Passage to the West of Hispaniola and the Mona Passage to the east. If any government other than the United States gained control of Haiti or the Dominican Republic, then another power could threaten the maritime trade of the east coast of the US to and from the Pacific. Alfred Thayer Mahan, the US's preeminent maritime strategist at the turn of the 20th century, wrote that it is "a practical recognition that the Caribbean Sea and the Panama Canal form together a great central position."²⁸⁵ The islands that controlled the approaches to the Panama Canal remained key maritime terrain and were of vital national interest to the United States. Unfortunately for the US, both countries in Hispaniola were centers for revolution and European influence, setting the stage for military intervention to secure US interests.

Haiti had long suffered a turbulent and violent history; between 1857 and 1914, the Marines landed 19 times in Haiti to protect US residents and their property against civil unrest.²⁸⁶ The murders of six of seven presidents of Haiti between 1910 and 1915 added to the country's instability.²⁸⁷ In addition, like many other Latin American and Caribbean nations, Haiti defaulted on numerous loans. Successive revolutions in Haiti created financial conditions such that in early 1914, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France sent warships to observe the latest rebellion. In January 1914, ironically most likely cooperating, all three countries landed forces to protect their respective legations.²⁸⁸ A US force consisting of Marines landed on January 29, 1914, and remained there until February 9, when all European forces departed. Although the European contingents had withdrawn their military troops by this time, having Europeans land military force in the Caribbean sent shockwaves through Washington, DC.²⁸⁹ After this incident, the United States took a more

²⁸⁴ The Dominican Republic was periodically known by the name Santo Domingo, but the term Dominican Republic is used throughout the dissertation for ease of use unless a primary source is quoted.

²⁸⁵ Alfred Thayer Mahan, "The Panama Canal and the Distribution of the Fleet," *The North American Review* 200, no. 706 (Sep. 1914): 413. Also, Inman, "The Monroe Doctrine," 647. Mahan also wrote the seminal *The Influence of Seapower on History: 1660-1783*.

²⁸⁶ Ellsworth, 87. Also, Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 159.

²⁸⁷ Gibson, *Empire's Crossroads*, 251, and Musicant, *Banana Wars*, 166-167.

²⁸⁸ Ellsworth, 88.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 88.

aggressive role in handling its interests in the Caribbean to prevent any European power from conducting further military interventions.

Several months passed before, on December 17, 1914, the gunboat USS MACHIAS sent fifty Marines ashore at Port-au-Prince to secure Haiti's meager financial stability after yet another defaulted loan by the Haitians to the United States. The Marines marched into town with three mule carts and appropriated the gold reserve from the National Bank of Haiti.²⁹⁰ The Marines placed the gold into the holds of the MACHIAS, and the ship sailed to New York to ensure the gold's safekeeping. The US feared the gold would fall into the hands of the *cacaos*, the armed mercenary force in Haiti.²⁹¹ Whether one viewed the unauthorized transfer of Haiti's wealth as an act of prudence or outright theft depended on whether one was Haitian or an American businessman, but the result was the same. The US had invaded another sovereign nation, albeit one in constant turmoil and insolvency, to exercise the rights set down by Monroe and Theodore Roosevelt. Removing Haiti's gold did little to halt the political unrest and violence inside the nation.

In the summer of 1915, Haiti was in the throes of another violent overthrow. The recently elected Haitian President Guillaume Sam's tenure as president only lasted a few weeks, at which point a mob found and killed him, chopped up his body with machetes, paraded his head about on a spike, and dragged his torso through the streets.²⁹² In addition to the violent collapse of President Sam's government, a parallel national security issue arose. In 1915, the then-neutral US was concerned that the Imperial German Navy would establish a permanent military navy base in the Caribbean, placing a European belligerent off the American coast, one that could directly affect American shipping coming out of the Panama Canal. On advice from a recently returned diplomatic mission to Haiti, US President Woodrow Wilson ordered the Marines to exact a peace treaty out of a yet-to-be-formed stable government, and he placed Haiti in the protective custody of the US.²⁹³ Against the backdrop of continued unrest and the threat of European intervention, the Marines again landed in Port-au-Prince to protect US citizens and property. By August, a force of over 2000 Marines in Haiti had been formed into the 4th Brigade under the command of Colonel Littleton Waller, who, as discussed earlier in Chapter Three,

²⁹⁰ Musciant, *Banana Wars*, 159.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 160, and Gibson, *Empire's Crossroads*, 251. The gold was eventually returned to Haiti with added interest, Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, 159. The term 'cacaos' was a local Haitian term originating in 1804 during the Haitian Revolution. It was derived from a local bird's sound and was used to illustrate how armed men could hide in the jungle like a bird. For the Marines, the term 'cacaos' was synonymous with the bandit. Intelligence Section, *Monograph of Haiti* (Headquarters, US Marine Corps, Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1932), 336 and 342.

²⁹² Mary A. Renda, *Military Occupation and the Culture of US Imperialism* (Raleigh, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 80–81.

²⁹³ Musciant, *Banana Wars*, 164.

was a commander with extensive combat experience in the Philippine Insurrection.²⁹⁴

The Marines who landed in Haiti initially prioritized taking control of as many ports as possible. By doing so, the Marines could control supply for their forces and direct trade in and out of Haiti. More importantly, from a strategic lens, this intervention prevented Haitian ports from falling into a European power's hands. Within two weeks of landing in Haiti, small detachments of Marines dispersed to the outlying towns along the coast to seize port facilities and customs houses to reestablish trade. First Lieutenant Frederic Wise led one such detachment. Like many Marines of that era, Lieutenant Wise had extensive experience in operations around the globe. Commissioned in 1899, Wise was a seasoned combat leader who had seen action in the Philippines, Guam, and Peking during the Boxer Rebellion, twice landed in Cuba, and participated in the military intervention in Vera Cruz, Mexico.²⁹⁵ Wise and a contingent of Marines traveled west along the coast from Port au Prince to the town of Jeremie, where they immediately disarmed the local constabulary and began running the customs functions.²⁹⁶ The activities of Wise's detachment were illustrative of what the 4th Brigade was doing across Haiti. Rapidly coming ashore and securing critical port facilities would become a hallmark of the US Marine's small wars framework.

Once the US Marines secured port facilities and customs houses, the next priority for the US government was to oversee a new national election to form a stable government, preferably under the leadership of someone favorable to the policies of the United States. Under the watchful eyes of the Marines, voting occurred in August 1915.²⁹⁷ One prominent candidate, Dr. Rasalvo Bobo, announced he would not support US intervention, and therefore, not surprisingly, the US-favored candidate, Philippe Sudre Darvin, won in a landslide.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁴ "Prompt embarkation of the regiment for duty at Port au Prince, Haiti," August 4, 1915, Record Group 127, Official Military Records Littleton Waller, National Archives Washington DC. This was the same Waller of Samar infamy. A court-martial acquittal for murder did not prejudice his promotion.

²⁹⁵ Frederic Wise, *A Marine Tells it to You* (Kingsport, TN: Kingsport Press, 1929). The first 130 pages are about Wise's extensive combat experience before his service in Haiti. His memories of the Marines marching on Peking in 1900 are incredibly vivid for their detail about the harsh environmental conditions and the effects of six days of non-stop movement and fighting on the human body and mind. Marines of this era were given the moniker 'The Old Breed' by the young Marines of WWII.

²⁹⁶ Wise, *A Marine*, 131.

²⁹⁷ Mary A. Renda, *Military Occupation and the Culture of US Imperialism* (Raleigh, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 30-32 and 80-81.

²⁹⁸ Richard Millet with G. Dale Gaddy, "Administering the Protectorates: The US Occupation of Haiti and the Dominican Republic," in *US Marines and Irregular Warfare, 1898-2007: Anthology and Selected Bibliography*, ed. Stephen S. Evans (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2008), 104.

Even after the Marines had taken control of customs functions and overseen an election, the US government did not make the overall US national policy for Haiti clear to military commanders. A question amongst the senior commanders was, would the US Marines depart or occupy Haiti now that the Haitians had formed a new government? The US Chief of Naval Operations, writing to then Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin Delano Roosevelt, complained: “The State Department has not yet informed us their exact policy in Haiti.”²⁹⁹

Despite little political guidance, port revenue continued flowing under the control of the Marines. However, a significant *cacao* uprising occurred as a direct result of the US oversight of the election.³⁰⁰ Initially, the Marines sought to disarm as much of the population as possible and maintained a tight discipline on armed action.³⁰¹ *Cacao* rebels began interfering with internal trade and the regular market routine established inside Haiti. Once a week, farmers from around the country proceeded to the nearest large city to sell their produce and goods, but the *cacaos* stopped the flow of goods, halting the flow of resources, food, and internal commerce. The disruption to the entire internal economy prevented general food access, so the US Marines prepared to take further action. Colonel Waller later stated: “They [*cacaos*] were stopping all food going to Cape Haitian; they cut off the water supply of Gonaives and were levying taxes on all the market people and the business of the country without any authority and treating them brutally.”³⁰² Although no official policy existed to provide for domestic security against the *cacaos*, Colonel Waller began taking action to ensure goods and services continued flowing in the country’s interior.

Initially, similar to the amnesty provided by US Army Brigadier General Arthur MacArthur in the Philippine Insurrection, Waller offered a period of amnesty and money for rifles in order to disarm the *cacaos*. However, this measure met with little success. With no reduction in attacks and food distribution still halted, Waller

²⁹⁹ Quoted in Richard Millett and G. Dale Gady, “Administering the Protectorates,” 383.

³⁰⁰ Millett and Gady, 105.

³⁰¹ “Report of Operations at Gonaives and Vicinity, September 20 to September 25, Inclusive,” Record Group 127, Official Military Personnel File, Smedley Butler, National Archives, Washington DC. In these documents by Colonel Waller to his subordinate commanders were explicit instructions not to fire unless fired upon.

³⁰² United States Senate, Selected Committee on Haiti and Santo Domingo, *Inquiry into Occupation and Administration of Haiti and Santo Domingo: Hearings before a Select Committee on Haiti and Santo Domingo, United States Senate, Sixty-seventh Congress, First, and Second sessions, Pursuant to S. Res. 112 Authorizing a Special Committee to Inquire into the Occupation and Administration of the Territories of the Republic of Haiti and the Dominican Republic* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1922), 609. Hereafter, *Inquiry into Occupation*. This hearing also encapsulates many orders issued to the Marines and provides incredible insight into the Marines’ small wars approach, the leadership decisions, and the political climate of the time.

ordered his Marines to take offensive combat action.³⁰³ Waller laid out his plan for seeking the *cacaos* in a formula similar to the tactics used on the Philippine Islands. He sent his forces out in small units that operated from remote patrol bases in the interior. Later, Waller said: “I wanted to get them [Marines] into the mountains, and then establish these different bases in the mountains, and operate from the different bases daily, with rapid moving columns, small columns. I seldom sent out more than 40 men in a column, but as they moved in different directions, it kept the other people [*cacaos*] guessing our actual intent and was very successful.”³⁰⁴ The offensive operational scheme outlined by Waller gave the Marines several advantages. By constantly patrolling, they increased their awareness and intelligence in the interior. Constant patrolling by the Marines maintained pressure on the *cacaos*, forcing the enemy to stay on the move, and the tactics employed by Waller allowed the Marines to achieve some element of surprise. Rather than remain confined to garrisons in the major cities, the Marines moved about the country’s interior, achieving some unpredictability in where they patrolled. Maintaining a constant presence in the country’s interior to gain intelligence and maintain pressure on the enemy would become a focus of Marine aviation operations.

On October 30, 1915, Waller issued the following orders: “Our troops will occupy positions in readiness to clear the above district of outlaws, the movement being started Monday morning, November 1, 1915; natives with arms in their possession are bandits and are to be treated as such. Particular attention will be paid to the capture or destruction of the chiefs.”³⁰⁵ The Marines were clear in their fundamental military objectives: destroy the enemy. Any armed native encountered was the enemy, specifically an “outlaw” or a “bandit,” the same terms used in General Order 100 that Waller had operated under during the Philippine Insurrection. Rather than chase single bandits, the Marines focused their patrolling on finding and destroying *cacao* forts and hideouts to deny the *cacao* forces any sanctuary and to remove any supplies the *cacao* might have accumulated. These tactics were the same used by the Marines in the Philippines during their expedition to Samar and were consistent with the Marine’s service culture.

To maintain a high operational tempo in the country’s interior, the Marines erected outposts during these initial patrols to allow a more extended reach and establish a logistics chain into the country’s interior. Based on his experience Waller divided Haiti into three separate districts, Northern, Central, and Southern, to deal with the issues of command and control over such a large area, a technique used by the US Army during the Philippine Insurrection. Due to shortfalls in the

³⁰³ Lester D. Langley, *The Banana Wars: US Intervention in the Caribbean, 1898-1934* (Lexington, KS; University of Kansas Press, 1985), 137.

³⁰⁴ Littelton Waller, “Field Order No. 9”, October 20, 1915, quoted in *Inquiry into Occupation*, 614.

³⁰⁵ *Inquiry into Occupation*, 616-619.

availability of troops, the Marines focused on one area, pacified it by force, and then shifted to the next.³⁰⁶ This same marshaling of resources, focused on districts of concentrated enemy activity, was repeated when aviation arrived in Hispaniola.

Waller's tactic of denying the *cacao*'s sanctuary succeeded, and the Marines returned to their previous duties of garrisoning significant cities and port towns by January 1916.³⁰⁷ In assessing the Marine's actions, the senior US military officer in the Caribbean, Rear Admiral William B. Caperton, considered Waller had "effectively crushed all armed resistance to the American occupation and the Haitian government, and maintained peace and order in all parts of the country."³⁰⁸ The tactics of moving into the country's interior and facing the *cacaos* head-on resulted in military success during this period.

Waller next turned his attention towards creating a native security force modeled after the victorious Filipino forces created in the Philippines at the turn of the century. By December 1915, under the leadership of Major Smedley Butler, this new Gendarmerie force soon began shouldering some of the burden of providing security and ostensibly could take over policing duties and the maintenance of the rule of law once the Marines departed Haiti.³⁰⁹ So critical was the formation of the Gendarmerie that Admiral Caperton wrote to the Secretary of the Navy asking to keep Waller in place until the native force was more capable of providing security for the country.³¹⁰ The Marines took great pride in the growth and accomplishments of the Gendarmerie throughout the 18-year occupation. Responding to a series of essays critical of American intervention in 1927, the editors of the *Marine Corps Gazette* took offense to critics not giving the Gendarmerie their due: "What is most to be noted perhaps in this chapter [of the history of the Marine campaign in Haiti] is the lack of credit given to the Gendarmerie for the excellent work they have undoubtedly performed."³¹¹ Although often led by Marine officers and non-commissioned officers, the Gendarmerie provided additional manpower to the

³⁰⁶ Long, 74, and Bickel, 81.

³⁰⁷ Bickel, 83. Notably, Bickel criticizes Waller for bringing his Marine forces back into garrisons, given Waller's vast experience fighting in small global wars. At the time of this suddenly armed rebellion, Waller also faced two personal issues that may have affected his judgment. The first was a stoppage to his pay. He fought an unsuccessful bureaucratic campaign against it with letters and telegrams over the period. The second was his campaign seeking a nomination for Brigadier General. At the time, colonels could lobby on their behalf for promotion to senior ranks, including having influential congressional leaders and businessmen write letters of recommendation directly to the commandant.

³⁰⁸ "CDR Cruiser Squadron to CNO, January 3, 1916," Record Group 127, Records Relating to the Occupation of the Dominican Republic, Folder D-40, National Archives, Washington, DC.

³⁰⁹ Long, 74.

³¹⁰ "Caperton to SecNAV, December 28, 1915," Record Group 127, Littleton Waller Official Military Personnel File, National Archives, Washington DC.

³¹¹ "Book Review," *Marine Corps Gazette* 21, no. 4 (December 1927): 259.

Marines, allowing them to provide security across a wider area. Training a native force to conduct policing and security missions also became a principle in the Marine's small wars framework.

With the training of a local security force underway, the Marines began to focus on improving Haiti's physical infrastructure. Using native labor, the Marines started a building program to enhance or develop roads, phone lines, water supply, and sanitation systems throughout the country. Unfortunately, the Marines turned to the old Haitian *corvee* system to acquire the required workforce for construction tasks. *Corvee* involved impressed labor and was a practice abolished before the Marines arrived in 1915. The Haitians deeply resented the reinstatement of a type of modern slavery, and in October 1918, the brigade commander, now Colonel Alexander Williams, ordered the practice discontinued. Unfortunately, Major Clarke Wells continued the tradition of *corvee* without permission for another three months before being found out by Colonel Williams.³¹² Although Colonel Williams fired Major Clarke and ordered a subsequent court-martial for alleged abuses, a second *cacao* uprising was underway in part due to the *corvee*, with the *cacaos* now led by the charismatic Charlemagne Peralte.

With a new *cacao* uprising under Peralte, the Marines redoubled their patrolling efforts, eventually luring Peralte into a trap and killing him in October 1919.³¹³ After Peralte's death, Benoit Batrville assumed the role of self-proclaimed leader of the *cacaos*. On January 15, 1920, Batrville had mustered 300 *cacaos* and, with banners waving and conch-shell horns blowing, descended upon Port-au-Prince.³¹⁴ What Batrville possessed in theatrics and sheer audacity, he lacked in operational planning, and machine guns emplaced by the Marines and Haitian gendarmes mowed down the *cacaos*. Aggressively pursuing the fleeing bandits and employing relentless patrolling, by May 1920 the Marines had killed Batrville and crushed most of the *cacao* strength.³¹⁵ In the words of the brigade commander in 1920, Colonel John Russell: "This removes the leading bandit chief and assures complete pacification."³¹⁶ After finally putting down this final *cacao* uprising, the Marines settled in to train the gendarme and govern the people of Haiti.

Congressional hearings in 1921 investigating allegations of abuse by the Marines in Haiti and the Dominican Republic led to more overt US governmental oversight in Haiti. However, by 1920 the *cacao* uprising was finished, resulting in a

³¹² *Inquiry into the Occupation*, 490.

³¹³ "Confidential Order," October 15, 1919, reprinted in *Inquiry into Occupation*, 429-430. Also, Benis M. Frank, *Oral History Transcript, Brigadier General Herman H. Hanneken* (History and Museums Division Headquarters, US Marine Corps, Washington DC, 1982), 30-31.

³¹⁴ Ellsworth, 90 and "Report of Activities," August 15, 1920, Col John C. Russel to MGen George Barnett, reprinted in *Inquiry into Occupation*, 1730-1731.

³¹⁵ "Report of Brigade Commander," May 20, 1920, reprinted in *Inquiry into Occupation*, 1719-1720.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

reduction in direct action by the Marines. John Russell, now promoted to Brigadier General, was appointed the High Commissioner of Haiti and oversaw the next and most prolonged phase of the Marine occupation of Haiti, finally leaving his position in 1930. Although small ambushes occurred sporadically over the next decade, the Marine's combat role was essentially over. Pulling back to Port-au-Prince, the Marines provided security for the country's capital, rarely venturing out as they had during the major *cacao* uprisings. On the eastern side of Hispaniola, the small wars operations conducted against the *cacaos* were mirrored in the military intervention in the Dominican Republic, operations which expanded the scope and scale of the Banana Wars. The tactics used by the Marines, coming ashore and securing ports, moving rapidly against any armed opposition, maintaining offensive pressure against armed resistance, and training a local security force all became part of the Marine's small wars framework that ultimately shaped how the Marines adapted aviation into their small wars campaigns.

The Other Side of the Island: Dominican Republic

Haiti's eastern neighbor, the Dominican Republic, fared slightly better in terms of internal political stability but, from a United States perspective, fell into the same pattern of insecurity as Haiti. In March 1903, fearing for the safety of the US legation in Santo Domingo due to an uprising in the country, US consul to the Dominican Republic, Campbell L. Maxwell, requested a detachment of Marines. This application for additional security went to the nearest naval commander, Commander William H. Turner, who granted the request to send 25 Marines ashore.³¹⁷ This force of Marines stayed ashore, providing security for the US legation from April 1 to April 25, 1903, when they withdrew back to sea.³¹⁸ The following year, the Dominican Republic tried to assert its sovereignty by declaring its waters free and neutral, which the US protested. The Dominicans tried blockading and even firing on US ships. Simultaneously, 'insurrectionists' fought amongst one another, beginning a series of internal revolutions and prompting the US Marines to land two more times for brief periods in 1904.³¹⁹ After years of insolvency, the Dominican Republic was placed in receivership by Theodore Roosevelt in 1904, thus preventing European powers from exacting armed reprisal for defaulted loans and wanting to avoid any European military intervention, as happened in Venezuela in 1902-1903.³²⁰

After the military interventions in 1904, the Dominican Republic remained sufficiently stable for the next decade that no US military forces were called upon to protect US property and lives. However, in 1916, after a succession of six

³¹⁷ Ellsworth, 66.

³¹⁸ Ibid. Also, Frank Evans, "The Marines Have Landed," *Marine Corps Gazette* 2, no. 3 (September 1917): 214.

³¹⁹ Ellsworth, 69.

³²⁰ Heinel, *Soldiers of the Sea*, 180.

Dominican presidents in five years, an internal uprising put American lives in Santo Domingo at risk. At the behest of the US consul in the Dominican Republic and with the US State Department's consent, two Marine companies were detached from Haiti to stop the civil unrest in the capital city.³²¹ The Marine forces landed in Santo Domingo on May 5, 1916, to secure American property. After failed attempts to negotiate peace, the US government declared a military occupation and sent more Marines, pulled from Haiti and the United States, into the Dominican Republic.³²²

An example of initial operations undertaken by the Marines in the Dominican Republic is shown in the actions taken by US Marine Captain Wise, mentioned earlier in this chapter and now promoted to captain in 1916. Wise was in command of a company of Marines in Haiti and was shipped from Haiti to the Dominican Republic to seize Monte Cristi, a medium-sized trading town on the north coast of the Dominican Republic. The reception waiting for the Marines differed significantly from Wise's earlier experience in Haiti. After coming ashore and setting up security in an abandoned fort, an armed force of about one hundred marched on the Marine-held town and began attacking. Wise, a veteran of previous small wars campaigns, had anticipated such an attack and had had his machine guns emplaced and waiting. The attack melted away after an initial barrage of machine gun fire killed thirty-nine Dominicans.³²³ Wise and his Marines then secured their positions in the port town and awaited follow-on forces from the United States, these led by Colonel Joseph Pendleton. Pendleton had graduated from the US Naval Academy in June 1884 and served mainly in sea-going duty or shore assignments. He had not served in the Philippines but had seen action in Nicaragua in 1912 and was a close friend of Littleton Waller.³²⁴

Colonel Pendleton adopted a small wars framework consistent with the activities of the Marine forces in Haiti in 1915 when he was dispatched as a newly appointed brigade commander in June 1916 to the Dominican Republic. Pendleton implemented a period of amnesty to disarm the population but simultaneously took the offensive by sending two primary flying columns fanning into the interior to quell armed resistance.³²⁵ The most organized threat of opposition came from former Dominican Secretary of War, General Desidero Arias, who aimed to overthrow the Dominican government. When the Marines came ashore, Arias fled Santiago into

³²¹ Ellsworth, 69.

³²² *Ibid.*, 70. Also, Fuller and Cosmas, 28.

³²³ Wise, *A Marine*, 148–149.

³²⁴ Joseph Pendleton's personal papers collection contains several letters between Pendleton and Waller. At the same time, both operated in the respective areas in Hispaniola—specifically Pendleton Personal Papers, Box 3, Folder 1, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

³²⁵ Long, 74.

the interior with his forces.³²⁶ Pendleton took his force ashore at Monte Cristo on June 21, 1916, and marched the length of the Dominican Republic to Santo Domingo via Santiago, deliberately attempting to engage the rebel forces.³²⁷ Pendleton's force successfully fought through five separate engagements during their march and arrived on the outskirts of Santiago on July 5, 1916.³²⁸ Before Pendleton moved into the city, Arias agreed to lay down his arms and submit to American control, ending one element of armed resistance to the US military intervention.³²⁹

After preventing violence in Santiago and the capital of Santo Domingo and securing the major ports in the country, repeating the same tactics used in Haiti, the Marines began clearing the land of other enemy forces and training a constabulary force.³³⁰ Subsequent patrolling resulted in the capture, in August 1916, of a notorious rebel leader, Juan Calcano, who had led most armed rebels in the southeastern part of the Dominican Republic.³³¹ Political unrest continued even with the significant rebel leaders dead or in custody and agreements for disarming the population.³³² The Marines declared martial law in the Dominican Republic on November 29, 1916, as the result of a surge in violence in the eastern part of the country.³³³

Even though the two foremost enemy leaders had been captured, from 1916 until the Marines departed in 1924, unorganized armed groups roving the countryside precipitated continued fighting in the Dominican Republic. Before establishing a stable government, the Marines' primary mission was to patrol and engage these bandit groups. As in Haiti, the bandits in the Dominican Republic

³²⁶ "Report of Operations Ashore at the American Legation, Santo Domingo City, May 5-11, 1916" Historical Division, Quantico Virginia and Maj Edwin N. McClellan, "Operations Ashore in the Dominican Republic," *US Naval Institute Proceedings* 47, no. 2 (February 1921): 238.

³²⁷ "Record of Pendleton, Joseph H., Section 4", Record Group 127, Official Military Personnel Files, National Archives, Washington DC, and Joseph Pendleton, "Comprehensive Report of Provisional Detachment, US Expeditionary Forces Operating Ashore in Santo Domingo," July 20, 1916, Pendleton Personal Papers Collection, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

³²⁸ Major Edwin N McClellan, "Operations Ashore in the Dominican Republic," *Proceedings* 47, no. 2 (February 1921), 216.

³²⁹ "Comprehensive Report," 6. The arrival into Santo Domingo by Pendleton's force was enough to scare off any direct threat to the Marines.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, 181.

³³¹ Fuller and Cosmas, 22.

³³² Fuller and Cosmas, 22, and Millet, "Administering the Protectorates," 104. The *curios* were the armed bandits in the Dominican Republic. Leo J. Daugherty, *Counterinsurgency and the United States Marine Corps: Volume 1, The First Era 1899-1945* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company Publishers, 2015), 105.

³³³ Fuller, 25.

were often led by charismatic leaders, usually disaffected politicians using violence to sow discontent against the central government. According to Marine intelligence estimates, most of the armed opposition were typically armed highwaymen and peasants forced to fight, and this assessment shaped the Marines' tactics.³³⁴ An examination later in this chapter shows General Order 100 was still used as the foundational set of rules, along with its provisions for treating bandits differently from prisoners of war and making the destruction of bandit property lawful according to the United States military.

Repeating the same practices used in Haiti, the Marines divided the country into Northern and Southern districts and created a separate Eastern district in early 1919 for more effective command and control of operations in the geographic region with the most armed unrest.³³⁵ Breaking territory into administrative districts shaped how the Marines allocated resources for their operations based on the district's needs, and when introduced, aviation resources would be allotted under the same system. Under various commanders, until the final withdrawal in 1924, the Marines kept up constant pressure and engaged the rebels located in the Eastern District, who never totally ended armed resistance.³³⁶ Typical patrols were met with an ambush, followed by a Marine counterattack that led to the retreat of rebel forces. At the same time as the Marines created the new Eastern District in 1919, aviation was introduced in the Dominican Republic's small war operations and this will be discussed in detail later.

The small wars in Haiti and the Dominican Republic saw the establishment of a pattern of the Marines in action. The character of the Banana Wars, until aviation's introduction in 1919, consisted of the Marines relying on offensive action centered on destroying the enemy. The guiding principles in the Marines' concept of small wars involved securing ports and resource centers followed by aggressive combat, the latter consisting of patrols with the express purpose of engaging the enemy and denying the enemy resources. Applying those experiences from previous small wars in Hispaniola allowed the Marines to refine their approach, and the *Marine Corps Gazette*, first published in 1916, created a place for Marines to capture their thoughts formally. The remainder of this chapter will analyze the written records on the Marine's doctrinal development for fighting small wars. These first articles put into print the small wars concepts the US Marines had executed in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

³³⁴ "Field Operations, etc." February 27, 1919, Record Group 127, Records Relating to the Occupation of the Dominican Republic, Folder D-40, National Archives, Washington DC. This report contains the Marine's assessment. Leo J. Daugherty, *Counterinsurgency and the United States Marine Corps: Volume 1, The First Era 1899-1945* (McFarland and Company Publishers: Jefferson, North Carolina, 2015), 105.

³³⁵ Benis M. Frank, *A Brief History of the 3rd Marines* (Washington DC: HQMC, 1961), 3-5.

³³⁶ "Field Operations, etc.," March 6, 1919, Brigade Commander, Record Group 127, Records Relating to the Occupation of the Dominican Republic, Folder D-40, National Archives, Washington DC.

A Small War by any other name

The two most important documents for analyzing the small wars approach established by the Marines during the Banana Wars were *Marine Corps Gazette* articles published in 1921 by Major E.H. ‘Pete’ Ellis and Major Samuel Harrington. Both Marines described an operational approach for military operations in small wars later employed in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign. Before analyzing the small wars framework of these two Marines, it is essential to understand how the Marines involved in the Banana Wars viewed and defined small wars. From the Spanish-American War until the final publication of the *Small Wars Manual* in 1940, the Marines had an evolving concept about what did or did not constitute a small war. The most widely read and influential author in the discourse of small wars inside the Marine Corps before and during the Banana Wars was British Army Colonel Charles C. Callwell.³³⁷ Ellis and Harrington quoted directly from Callwell without footnotes or references, giving the impression that Callwell’s words were widely known by Marine officers. It is relevant that the first article to appear in the *Marine Corps Gazette* on the topic of small wars in 1917 was written by British Army Captain E.M. Hobday. Entitled “Notes on Jungle Warfare,” it was replete with examples and quotes drawn directly from Callwell, implicitly acknowledging Callwell as the authoritative source on small war doctrine.³³⁸ Hobday’s article also confirmed that the US Marines looked to the British experiences of fighting small wars when formulating their doctrine because so few resources were available inside US military circles.

Colonel Charles C. Callwell, a British Army officer, wrote *Small Wars, Their Principles, and Practice* in 1899, with a final version printed in 1906.³³⁹ Callwell had broad experience fighting for the British across their Empire, including the First Boer War in 1880-1881, campaigning in Afghanistan in 1880, and the 1897 Greco-Turkish War.³⁴⁰ To his credit, Callwell acknowledged that the term small

³³⁷ Even as the Marine’s concepts for small wars developed during the Banana Wars and subsequently, during the writing of the *Small Wars Manual*, it is noteworthy that Callwell was the only source cited in the entirety of the *Small Wars Manual*. *Small Wars Manual*, 146, 349, and 359. The pages listed are direct references by name to Callwell, and no other small wars author or doctrine is specifically named.

³³⁸ E. M. Hobday, “Notes on Jungle Warfare” *Marine Corps Gazette* 2, no. 4 (December 1917): 332 and 336.

³³⁹ C.E. Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principals and Practice, 3rd Edition* (reprint, 2016: London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1906). This 3rd Edition is the volume most likely read by the Marines in the Banana Wars.

³⁴⁰ C.E. Callwell “Lessons to be Learned from the Campaigns in Which British Forces Have Been Employed Since the Year 1865”. *Royal United Services Institution Journal* 31, (1887): 357–412. Callwell references his experiences as a basis for observation and his small wars conclusions.

wars was challenging to explain precisely. All military operations short of state-on-state war fell into the category of small wars, or what Colonel Callwell called fighting against “irregular troops.”³⁴¹ The term “regular troops” implied European or Western-styled armies, and Colonel Callwell defined small wars:

Expeditions against savages and semi-civilized races by disciplined soldiers it comprises campaigns undertaken to suppress rebellions and guerilla warfare in all parts of the world where organized armies were struggling against opponents who will not meet them in the open field, and it thus obviously covers operations varying in their scope and their conditions.³⁴²

Callwell’s description of the enemy as “savages and semi-civilized” was a common sentiment during the time period of the Banana Wars. The US Marines viewed themselves as superior to their enemies in their small war campaigns, reflecting the spirit of the times.³⁴³ The use of the term savage or other derogatory terms was to classify the types of enemies the British might face in small wars, as opposed to the regular troops in war who were assumed to be European, and these sentiments were in keeping with the prevailing attitudes of Social Darwinism of the period, discussed earlier in Chapter Three. Callwell’s definition also highlighted enduring themes associated with small wars against a “savage and semi-civilized” enemy operating far differently than a Western-trained army and could be encountered anywhere the world and in any form. There was an underlying frustration that the small war about to be embarked upon would be unlike any regular fighting because the enemy “will not meet them in the open field,” again showing a distinction between the type of enemy encountered in small wars versus a regular soldier who presumably would stand and fight. The discipline mentioned by Callwell meant the British regimental military training and conditioning system, also typical of other European-styled armies. Although the Marines adopted a different definition of small wars after the Banana Wars, Callwell’s description and definitions were still used by the US Army Air Corps in their lectures on small wars as late as 1929-1930.³⁴⁴

The US Marines and the US Army looked to the British for writings on small wars because the US military offered little in codifying principles to conceptualize, much less explain how to execute small wars, as discussed earlier in Chapter Three. In 1907, then updated in 1916, the Navy codified how to employ troops from ship to shore in *The Landing Force and Small Arms Instructions*. This

³⁴¹ Callwell, *Small Wars*, 11.

³⁴² *Ibid.*

³⁴³ This dissertation described this sentiment earlier in Chapter Three with the prevailing racial and social superiority attitudes.

³⁴⁴ Lecture, “Air Force in Minor Wars,” 1929–30, Army Air Corps Tactical School, May 1930, 1.

naval doctrinal publication included a verbatim copy of the Army's writing on "minor warfare."³⁴⁵ At a mere page and a half, the guidance for minor warfare in *The Landing Force and Small Arms Instructions* certainly did not capture the many hard-fought lessons from the Philippine Insurrection. Minor warfare fell under "irregular operations," described as "actions against unorganized or partially organized forces, acting in independent or semi-independent bodies. Such bodies have little or only crude training and are under nominal and loose leadership and control."³⁴⁶ The *Landing Force Manual*, renamed as such in 1920, was updated in 1920 and again in 1927, but the minor warfare section stayed the same, with only one modification in the 1927 version.³⁴⁷ The paucity of doctrine on the predominant form of warfighting for the US Marine Corps from 1898 until the conclusion of the Banana Wars is relevant to understanding how a few *Marine Corps Gazette* articles set the foundation for small wars instruction inside the Marine Corps.

The first foundational document for the Marine's execution of small wars was written by US Marine Major Earl 'Pete' Ellis.³⁴⁸ The analysis of Ellis's writings, including his operational assessment when fighting in Hispaniola, filled the doctrinal void in developing the Marine's small wars framework. Ellis wrote his article in response to US congressional hearings of 1921. These proceedings were investigating allegations of misuse and abuse of combat power during the Haiti and Dominican Republic campaigns, and the hearings influenced how he defended the military action taken by the Marines.³⁴⁹ Ellis believed the US public should not be shocked when sending a military force to fight an armed conflict.³⁵⁰ From Ellis' perspective, the reasons for military intervention were to protect US property, to

³⁴⁵ James Alfred Moss, *Infantry Drill Regulations: United States Army, 1911 Simplified, with Annotations, Illustrations, and Index. Updated, 1918* (Menasha, WI: Banta Publishing Company, 1918).

³⁴⁶ Bureau of Navigation, Navy Department, *The Landing-Force and Small-Arm Instructions, United States Navy, 1916* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute, 1916), 253. The Navy's writers give the US Army full credit and explicitly state where they copied certain aspects of the *Landing Force Manual* from Army publications.

³⁴⁷ Bureau of Navigation. Navy Department, *The Landing-Force Manual, United States Navy, 1920* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1920), 379 and Bureau of Navigation. Navy Department, *The Landing-Force Manual, United States Navy, 1927* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1927), 355.

³⁴⁸ For more on Ellis, see Dirk Anthony Ballendorf and Merrill L. Bartlett, *Pete Ellis: and Amphibious Warfare Prophet, 1880-1923* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2010) and B.A. Friedman, ed., *21st Century Ellis: Operational Art and Strategic Prophecy for the Modern Era* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2015). Ellis' later writings on amphibious operations would provide the foundation for *The Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*, the seminal doctrinal publication for the Marine's combat operations in World War II.

³⁴⁹ See the introduction to the *Inquiry into Occupation*.

³⁵⁰ Major E.H. Ellis, "Bush Brigades," *Marine Corps Gazette* 6, no. 1 (March 1921): 1.

ensure a stable native government existed to preclude European intervention, and to address any violation of the Monroe Doctrine. However, according to Ellis, these political motives were often lost on the average American citizen.³⁵¹ While Ellis referred to Callwell in his article, it is also relevant that the political reasons articulated by Ellis for military intervention were uniquely American. Ellis' writing had a nuanced thought process and recognized the importance of public opinion: "the chief danger to a peaceful occupation is the effect of hostile propaganda initiated and spread by the agitator class."³⁵² From the public court-martial trial against Waller in the Philippines in 1902 to the 1921 congressional hearings into the Marine's operations in Hispaniola, the Marines were very aware of public perception. To the ill feelings expressed by Congress about the actions of the Marines, Ellis said: "That is most unfortunate, but the Marines are only doing their job as ordered by the people of the United States."³⁵³ As offered by Ellis, "insofar as the Marines are concerned, they believe that in every case where the United States has taken charge of a small state, it has been actuated by purely altruistic motives."³⁵⁴ The US Marines did not initiate the Banana Wars but fulfilled a military mission as ordered by the US government, which, in the minds of the Marines doing the fighting was for a legitimate purpose. At its core, the political objectives assigned to Marines guided their actions and, eventually, how they utilized aviation in small wars.

Ellis asserted that Marines were well aware of the political objectives set forth by the United States and understood why they were fighting. Ellis had been the Brigade G-2, or intelligence officer, for the Marine Brigade in the Dominican Republic in 1920.³⁵⁵ From his position, he would have received reports from those Marines actively engaged in the field and would have fully understood the military situation during this small war. Ellis chafed at the idea of overt civilian control once a military operation had begun and believed that once given their political direction, Marine forces should proceed with the military operations that best suited the needs of the theater of operations. The ideal method was for the Marines to act based on orders issued by military commanders, not from dictates from Washington, DC. Ellis wrote that the Marines were best suited to execute their assigned military mission as they saw fit: "They do get along quite well provided they are not interfered with by outside forces [Washington, DC]."³⁵⁶ Ellis' preferred method of

³⁵¹ Ibid., 2.

³⁵² Ibid., 15.

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 1.

³⁵⁵ "Change of Station," April 27, 1920, Record Group 127, Ellis Official Military Personnel Files, National Archives, Washington DC. The role of the intelligence officer was not a primary Military Operations Specialty (MOS) for the Marines at this time as it is today. Typically, G-2s were selected based on their previous operational experience and analytical minds rather than because of formal training or career path.

³⁵⁶ Ellis, "Bush Brigades," 3.

conducting small wars, without outside political interference, was derived from his experience.

After he articulated the political motivations and his desire to avoid outside interference in military operations, Ellis proposed the following small wars operational framework:

We thus have the strategy:

- a. Land simultaneously and take over the crucial seaports to secure the doors of the country.
- b. Establish a line of fortified posts in the interior to cover production areas, steady the wavering and faint-hearted population, and serve as bases for supply and rest for the operation of mobile troops.
- c. Drive with flying columns into the isolated districts and mop up.³⁵⁷

The three phases of small wars described above had been seen in the Marines' actions when they entered Haiti in 1915 and the Dominican Republic in 1916, and were based on the experiences of the Marines fighting small wars. However, they differed slightly from Ellis' original thoughts on conducting a small war that he had prepared while fighting in the Dominican Republic. During his tenure as the Brigade G-2, Ellis wrote an operational assessment for the Marines in the summer of 1920, along with a framework for future fighting.³⁵⁸ In his operational assessment, Ellis was adamant that offensive military action must occur immediately to "justify our presence here for the protection of foreign and peaceful Dominican lives and property. The slowness of action will be considered as weakness, leniency, and timidity."³⁵⁹ His operational assessment written during operations in 1920 was much more aggressive than his later 1921 article. For example, the second and third steps of his *Marine Corps Gazette* article are verbatim from his operational assessment. However, the first step he advocated for in 1920 was to "immediately suppress uprisings in cities (troop centers and areas of lives and property) [brackets in original text]."³⁶⁰ Writing in 1920 from the Dominican Republic, Ellis was abundantly clear about the focus of small wars when he wrote, "We must rapidly seek out and destroy all enemies" and "our action must be

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ B.A. Friedman uses a distinctly counterinsurgency lens when analyzing "Bush Brigades" and does not mention Ellis' operational order from his time as the G-2. Friedman, *21st Century Ellis*, 12–16.

³⁵⁹ Earl H. Ellis, "Operations Assessment, Summer 1920," National Archives, Record Group 127, Records Relating to the Occupation of the Dominican Republic, Folder D-40, National Archives, Washington, DC.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

immediate and, once begun, must be carried out uninterruptedly [underline in original text] to a conclusion. This, to over-awe the population, regain the waverers and faint-hearted, and, in fact, shorten the war.”³⁶¹ As an officer serving in the Banana Wars, Ellis wanted to destroy the enemy. However, he also examined the operational considerations of resupply and communication for US Marines forces fighting the enemy.

Ellis recognized the essential operational requirement to seize the ports and make the necessary immediate repairs to reestablish, if necessary, functioning seaports. In his experience as a Marine, Ellis knew that all resupply of resources to support an operation came from the sea. Ellis remarked that in any amphibious landing initiated to take control of a seaport and its population, “there is a good chance that the particular mission will not be accomplished peaceably.”³⁶² Ellis did not imply that population control must be for altruistic ends. Instead, control of the people prevented the enemy from gaining support and resources: “if a force controls the fertile areas and markets (plus inter-communications) [brackets in original] of a country, it practically controls all, for within those areas are contained the mass of the foreign and native population and their property.”³⁶³

Ellis also emphasized that once the Marine forces secured the ports, the need for immediate pursuit of the enemy through vigorous offensive action was essential: “Immediately upon the occupation of the seaports, the next important step is the projection of mobile columns into the interior to pursue and destroy any irregular forces that may be in existence, and establish fortified posts; advanced bases for further operations.”³⁶⁴ Similarly, in his article, Ellis emphasized offensive action; “Slowness of action will be considered weakness and leniency as timidity, and the practice of either will only result in the prolongation of hostilities and consequent suffering to all concerned.”³⁶⁵ Even a year after he wrote his operational assessment, the focus on destroying the enemy remained the primary objective for small wars fighting. As will be described in Chapter Six of this study the imperative to aggressively pursue the enemy pervaded aviation operations.

Ellis called the final phase of small war operations, the mopping up, the “most arduous.” However, he took professional pride in the challenge of fighting guerillas: “the most interesting of all phases, the idea being to beat the native guerilla at his own game on his own ground.”³⁶⁶ Ellis recognized the enemy’s natural advantage in fighting on their home territory. Further, the native enemy knew the language, customs, routes, weather, and the best ways to secure

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Ellis, “Bush Brigades,” 4.

³⁶³ Ibid., 6.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 4.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 4. Callwell also emphasized offensive action: Callwell, 128.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 8.

information and resources amongst the local population.³⁶⁷ Conducting a campaign against a dispersed hostile force differed from devising strategies for two conventional armies engaged in direct combat.

Ellis drew attention to the “special circumstances which attend a war that is not a war.”³⁶⁸ The challenges of small wars required different approaches than conventional wars. Ellis quickly pointed out, “It is worthy to note that a few years ago, it was custom to bombard towns with ships’ guns when mopping up [securing seaports].”³⁶⁹ The standard method of engagement was to attack the objective with all military tools available, such as the utilization of artillery in towns, but “under certain conditions, it might not be strictly humane” and “the destructive power of modern weapons may preclude their use.”³⁷⁰ There was a recognition that the methods used in small wars needed to be different from conventional fighting since the destruction caused by modern firepower might prove inhumane and detrimental to small wars campaigns. Determining the required level of force was challenging, especially classifying opposing enemies in small wars, and deciding whether they were bandits or legitimate enemy combatants was difficult.

Ellis wrote in his article, “The ‘Rules of Land Warfare’ for regular forces engaged in hostilities with irregular or guerilla forces have never been written.”³⁷¹ When Ellis commented on “Rules of Land Warfare,” he referred to the 1914 publication, *Rules of Land Warfare*, later republished in 1917 at the US declaration of war against Germany.³⁷² The *Rules of Land Warfare* was an attempt to codify the recent developments in international relations and the regulation of the use of force.³⁷³ It is relevant that the publication, written for the express use by US forces, used General Order 100, discussed in the previous chapter, as its bedrock; “wherever practical the original text has been used herein because it is believed that familiarity with this text [General Order 100] and its interpretation by our officers should not be

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 8. A point emphasized by Callwell as well, who dedicated all of chapter 4 of his book to the subject, 30-43.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 9.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 6.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 6. Callwell, *Small Wars*, 422. Later, the *Small Wars Manual* carried through this realization that modern weaponry (rifles, machine guns, and grenades) would change the dynamics of small wars.

³⁷¹ Ellis, 10.

³⁷² War Department, Office of the Chief of Staff, *Rules of Land Warfare* (April 25, 1914); War Department, Office of the Chief of Staff, *Rules of Land Warfare* (April 25, 1914, with Changes Nos. 1 and 2, corrected to April 15, 1917)

³⁷³ The most impactful was the Hague Convention in 1907. Chapter 2 of Martha Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs about the Use of Force* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003) is a detailed look at the state’s use of military force for intervention. Beyond international norms, the convention also attempted to codify behavior on the battlefield through various articles.

interfered with if possible to avoid doing so.”³⁷⁴ This section of Ellis’ article highlighted two critical factors when examining the Marines’ small wars doctrinal development. First, there had been no modification to General Order 100 since its inception in 1863, nor had it been changed in the years after the Philippine Insurrection. Second, it showed that General Order 100 was institutionalized into the officer corps of the US military and was still suitable because it needed no further explanation in the *Rules of Land Warfare*.

While the *Rules of Land Warfare* were US-specific, Ellis made some observations about what other nations had done in the conduct of small wars. Some of the tactics used by other countries included indiscriminate killing and the destruction of property, harsh punishments for those who aided the enemy, scorched earth policies to remove resources from the enemy, and the removal and dispersal of women and children from territory occupied by the enemy. Ellis quickly pointed out, “The great disadvantage is that their application is likely to exasperate the people as a whole and tend to forfeit their friendship permanently.”³⁷⁵ Ellis was representative of the service culture of the US Marines during the Banana Wars when he illustrated how other countries executed small wars and explained why such tactics were contrary to the norms of the Marine Corps.

Ellis acknowledged that harsh tactics could harm the small wars campaign. Rough treatment of the native population was both militarily unwise and counter to the culture of the US: “that the friendship of the people of any occupied nation should be forfeited by the adoption of any unnecessarily harsh measures is avowedly contrary to the policy of the United States.”³⁷⁶ It is relevant that Ellis used American values and culture as a shaping function for conducting small wars, showing that values, and by extension, service culture, were a causal factor in how the US Marines shaped their small wars doctrine. The service culture of the Marines flowed from the cultural norms of the United States, and Ellis offered, “When Uncle Sam occupies the territory of a small nation, he wants to enforce his will, but he does not want any trouble – that is, any stir that may cause undue comments among his own people.”³⁷⁷ Ellis recommended that the preferred method was to engage the enemy and not the local population whenever possible. Whatever the case, “each situation should be treated as a separate problem and the most humane solution, always keeping in mind the safety of our troops, should be applied.”³⁷⁸ When aviation was brought into service in the Banana Wars, especially during the Second Nicaraguan Campaign, there existed tension in tactics between aggressively attacking an enemy and avoiding harm to civilians.

³⁷⁴ War Department of the United States, *The Rules of Land Warfare* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1914), 7.

³⁷⁵ Ellis, 10. Although not explicitly stated, Ellis is most likely referring to British efforts to police her Empire, including the use of concentration camps in the Second Boer War.

³⁷⁶ Ellis, 11.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

While there was the recognition of being mindful of humane treatment, Ellis was acutely aware that any harsh treatment of a local population would likely result in negative media attention focused on Marine's actions. After all, the impetus behind Ellis writing his article was in response to the negative public opinion generated by US congressional hearings into alleged abuse by the US Marines in Hispaniola. Regardless of Ellis' motivations for writing his article, he established a framework for conducting small wars for the US Marines that set the reference point for future small wars thinking inside the Marine Corps. Even though his original concepts were expanded upon later, his vision shaped how aviation would be adapted to support small wars operations.

Immediately following the publication of Ellis' article in the *Marine Corps Gazette*, Major Samuel Harrington published two articles in the *Marine Corps Gazette* in December 1921 and March 1922, articulating his ideas on small wars. Harrington was a career Marine and based his writings on his combat experiences in the Dominican Republic and his previous deployments during the military interventions in Vera Cruz in 1914 and Haiti in 1915.³⁷⁹ Harrington began his first article by explaining the rationale behind small wars' political objectives, lifted straight from Callwell's work: conquest, suppression of a revolution, or avenging an insult, which was very different from Ellis' unique focus on American-specific political reasons.³⁸⁰ Suppressing rebellions in the Western Hemisphere was viewed as pivotal to maintaining the vital national interest of the United States by protecting US citizens and property overseas.³⁸¹ The point Harrington was making by beginning with the national political motives behind military interventions was to start framing why small wars occurred according to the political ideas of the US Marines; when there was a threat to the overseas national interests of the United States, military force was used. The size and scope of small wars might vary, but in Harrington's analysis, "it is not improbable that Marines will continue to perform

³⁷⁹ Samuel Harrington was a 1906 Yale graduate who served in various posts throughout his career after joining the Corps in 1909. Before the interventions in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, he had billets in the Philippines, Cuba, and China. Yale Archives, Samuel Milby Harrington, <https://archives.yale.edu>, accessed July 3, 2020. He served under Colonel Pendleton during the march from Monte Cristo to Santo Domingo. His writings would form the basis of the *Small Wars Manual*.

³⁸⁰ Major Samuel M. Harrington, "The Strategy and Tactics of Small Wars, Part I" *Marine Corps Gazette* 6, no. 4 (December 1921): 474 and Callwell. Callwell's exact words are "campaigns of conquest or annexation, campaigns for the suppression of insurrections or lawlessness of for the settlement of conquered or annexed territory, and campaigns undertaken to wipe out an insult, to avenge a wrong, or to overthrow a dangerous enemy." Callwell, *Small Wars*, 14.

³⁸¹ Major General John A. Lejeune, "The United States Marine Corps," *Marine Corps Gazette* 8, no. 4 (December 1923): 249.

duty of this nature [fighting small wars].³⁸² How exactly the Marines fought was the focus of Harrington's two articles.³⁸³

A central tenet in Harrington's small wars approach was the requirement to seize territory. However, the issue was not gaining and maintaining control of territory for the sake of territory. Instead, Harrington wrote, "Critical urban and agricultural terrain occupation comes in distinct and delineated phases of small war operations."³⁸⁴ The emphasis on gaining and controlling physical territory emphasized the infantry's primary role in the Marine's small wars framework. Here, Harrington built upon Ellis' writing when he quoted Ellis' description of how a landing force comes ashore to seize property, stressing the need to occupy ground to fight an enemy effectively.³⁸⁵ Only by physically occupying ground could a military force successfully exert control. Supporting arms assisted, but in the end, the infantry remained the focal point for small wars. Harrington was clear that the focus of small wars operations was on ground operations centered on the infantry, and he highlighted again the importance of physically holding terrain. The focus on territorial control was a foundational principle in how Harrington viewed a small wars campaign. This principle meant that when the Marine Corps introduced aviation, it became a supporting asset to the infantry rather than the focus of operations.

In addition to emphasizing the importance of holding ground, Harrington recognized that the Marines needed to maintain positive relations with the local population. He further postulated that any opposition to invading Marines would generally be limited, provided "the rights and privileges of the neutral inhabitants are not wantonly violated by the invading forces."³⁸⁶ Harrington, like Ellis, also recognized the impact of their interactions with the population and the human dimension of small wars. The behavior of the Marines was seen as a critical factor in ensuring the native people did not become sympathetic to the opposition, and with this goal in mind, Harrington used the instructions from Colonel Pendleton, the senior officer in the Dominican Republic in 1916, as a model for the conduct of Marines in the Dominican Republic.³⁸⁷ Harrington placed particular emphasis on how Pendleton established a framework for his mission, which Harrington believed set the correct tone for future small wars operations: "to restore and preserve peace and order, and to protect life and property, and to support the constituted

³⁸² Harrington, "Small Wars, Part I," 474.

³⁸³ It is worth noting that Harrington is heavily influenced by British Col. C.E. Callwell, going so far as to quote whole passages from Callwell's book and use Callwell's guiding principles as the philosophical bedrock of the Marines' approach to small wars.

³⁸⁴ Harrington, 474.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 486-488.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 475.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 478. Major General Joseph Pendleton, a career Marine, served in the Dominican Republic from early 1916 through 1918, eventually becoming the military governor.

government.”³⁸⁸ Here, much as Ellis commented, Harrington added to the representation of service culture based on the United States norms. While Harrington earlier echoed Callwell’s definition of small wars by emphasizing how Pendleton conducted his operations, Harrington posited that small wars undertaken by the Marines were fought for the political objectives of restoring order, supporting legitimate governments, and preserving life and property. The native reaction to the Marines occupying another country is one aspect where Ellis and Harrington differed. Ellis, in contrast to Harrington, assumed that the enemy would have the support of the indigenous population in that “the enemy will have moral support from most of his own people, material support from many, and will operate in their midst.”³⁸⁹

Although maintaining positive relations with the local population in a foreign country was seen as necessary, the principal object of a small war was the physical defeat of the enemy’s military force. Harrington pointed out that there was no difference between the primacy of offensive action, whether a single leader organized armed opposition or the opposition had disintegrated into a collection of highwaymen and bandits: “The objective will be the hostile forces. This [objective] will still remain true when the hostile forces become unorganized. But the *means of reaching this objective* will differ from those used in regular warfare. [Italics in original publication].”³⁹⁰ Similar to Ellis’ ideas that small wars differed from conventional conflicts, Harrington was clear about the focus of military operations: destroy the enemy. Harrington also recognized that the military defeat of enemy forces did not mean the end of fighting: “When such organized forces are defeated and scattered, its members may still be unconquered and may continue opposition through petty depredations degenerating in unorganized guerilla or bandit warfare.”³⁹¹ What distinguished small wars from conventional fighting was the method of execution, which became the focus of the Marines’ small wars approach.³⁹²

³⁸⁸ “Record of Pendleton, Joseph H., Section 4”, Record Group 127, Pendleton Official Military Personnel Files, National Archives, Washington DC, and Joseph Pendleton, “Comprehensive Report of Provisional Detachment, US Expeditionary Forces Operating Ashore in Santo Domingo,” July 20, 1916, Pendleton Personal Papers Collection, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA. Also quoted in Harrington, “The Strategy and Tactics of Small Wars,” 479.

³⁸⁹ Ellis, “Bush Brigades,” 3 and Callwell, *Small Wars*, 71-72. Ellis appeared to be more pragmatic in his assessments than Harrington.

³⁹⁰ Harrington, “The Strategy and Tactics of Small Wars,” 475, italics for emphasis in the original publication.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*

³⁹² As Harrington shifts his writing to exploring small war tactics, it is essential to note that when Harrington or Ellis referred to tactics, they meant “the art of disposing and maneuvering troops on the field of battle.” Harrington, 480. Harrington’s definition of tactics is straight from Henri Jomini, or what was being taught by Jomini from the US Army. In the

Returning to the importance of terrain, Harrington, like Ellis, saw immense value in quickly gaining control over major towns, ports, and cities. Harrington wrote, “It is a further general fact in small wars that the seizure of enemy cities has a great moral effect and tends to disintegrate his forces and discourage opposition.”³⁹³ Using the Dominican Republic as an example, Harrington stated, “Cities occupied have been garrisoned and used as bases from which expeditions against bandits have continuously gone forth into the mountains.”³⁹⁴ Seizing population centers allowed the Marines to control resources and allowed for an initial secure base of operations. Again, Harrington added to the ideas found in Ellis’ article, even going so far as to quote an entire section written by Ellis devoted to seizing seaports and cities.³⁹⁵ The Marines experienced this approach firsthand when operating in the Philippines. As discussed in Chapter Three, the Marines had been used to seizing coastal towns and then handing these over to US Army forces to deprive Filipino rebels of using these resource centers. Unlike military operations conducted by the Marines in the Philippines, the Banana Wars were undertaken solely by the US Marines, who needed to continue occupying terrain while pursuing the enemy.

As a small war continued, “the strategy developed into a division of forces into small units pursuing an enemy action in the movement and petty reprisal.”³⁹⁶ Here, Harrington anticipated fighting disparate rebel forces spread across the entire area of operations, which was his experience in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Harrington’s experience and personal bias emerged in the latter portion of the quote when he called the enemy’s actions “petty.” Harrington was expressing the frustration of not engaging the enemy directly in force on force action, a sentiment expressed by Callwell. To rapidly engage the enemy in a small war, Harrington provided the several operational ideas that built upon the original framework established by Ellis:

Marine Schools in Quantico, US Army doctrine was taken directly from the Army’s professional schools and taught to Marines. Jomini calls these Grand Tactics “the art of posting troops upon the battlefield.” Baron Antoine Henri de Jomini, *The Art of War: Restored Edition*, translated by Capt G.H. Mendell and Lt. W.P. Craighill (reprint 2009, Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippincott, 1862), 46-47, accessed September 18, 2020, <https://legacybookspress.com/books/Jomini.pdf>. Troops were maneuvered around a field of battle to engage the enemy directly and decisively; “this accounts for a principle of small wars that we must take the offensive.” Harrington, 480. For more on the French influence on the American way of war until World War II, see Michael A. Bonura, *Under the Shadow of Napoleon: French Influence on the American Way of Warfare from Independence to the Eve of World War II* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

³⁹³ Harrington, 476.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 478.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 486–488.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 476.

1. Seizure of ports or border towns commanding routes of trade and entrance.
2. Seizure of the interior cities commanding the resources of the territory and the establishment therein (or at other suitable points) of bases of supply.
3. Division of the theater of operations into military districts.
4. Operations based on a captured city or fortified base of supplies against the remaining opposition.
5. Seizure of livestock and supplies.
6. Seizure of all arms.³⁹⁷

Harrington underpinned his small wars perspectives with “three principles of tactics that appear essential to success: Offensive, Surprise, and Security.”³⁹⁸ From Harrington’s framework, the Marines had an approach to operations focused on destroying hostile forces while removing human or material resources from the enemy. Harrington’s operational strategy mirrored Ellis’ steps and expanded upon Ellis’ thoughts for conducting small wars, but Harrington’s articles significantly impacted small wars thinking inside the Marine Corps. Since Harrington was an instructor at the Marine Schools in Quantico when he wrote his articles, the Marine Corps professional schools used Harrington’s articles throughout the 1920s as the foundational texts on small wars.³⁹⁹ Additionally, in the 1927 revision of the *Landing Force Manual*, Harrington’s six steps were repeated verbatim, the only update to the Minor Warfare section in over a decade, showing the influence of his writing inside the Marine Corps.⁴⁰⁰

Another relevant article written as Ellis and Harrington were publishing their thoughts on small wars came from a junior officer’s perspective. US Marine Captain G.A. Johnson, heavily influenced by his own small wars experience and the writings of British authors, wrote an article for the *Marine Corps Gazette* in June 1921 to assist junior officers in their first assignments in small wars.⁴⁰¹ Johnson’s article showed that even as Ellis and Harrington put their thoughts down on paper, the actions being taken by the Marines were consistent with the small wars approach advocated by Ellis and expanded upon by Harrington: move ashore, disperse into the countryside, and seek out the enemy. Johnson also echoed both Ellis and Harrington when he quoted directly from British advice to maintain the offensive: “Strive

³⁹⁷ Harrington, 477.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 485.

³⁹⁹ Kenneth J. Clifford, *Progress and Purpose: A Developmental History of Marine Corps Schools* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1973), 37.

⁴⁰⁰ *Landing Force Manual: 1927*, 355.

⁴⁰¹ Captain G.A. Johnson, “Junior Marines in Minor Irregular Warfare,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 6, no. 2 (June 1921): 152. Johnson pointed the reader to the end of his article for further reading, comprising six British publications on small wars, including Callwell.

continually for contact, and when obtained, don't give the enemy leisure to reload their guns, but keep them on the move and press home the attack with the bayonet if they are fifty to one."⁴⁰² Although Johnson's article is almost wholly devoted to tactical level details, his words showed that an offensive-minded thinking existed amongst the Marines fighting small wars campaigns in Hispaniola.

Johnson's definition of small wars exhibited the same level of Western superiority and Social Darwinism prevalent at the time and shown by Callwell and Harrington: "Irregular warfare consists in the main of campaigns against nature, surprise, treachery, inferior weapons, tactics, and people."⁴⁰³ The Marine's advantages over any irregular enemy were superior weaponry, professional military training, and the "individuality, the courage, discipline and steadfast determination of the white man."⁴⁰⁴ Johnson here showed the Westerners' assumption of superiority over their armed enemies and was consistent with the attitudes and service culture of the period. Although Johnson's attitudes about the enemy were in keeping with the views of the time, his tactical viewpoint highlighted two challenges for the Marines fighting small wars that became the focus of aviation operations in small wars.

Captain Johnson was enthusiastic in his methods of driving into the interior of a country and confronting the enemy. However, he lamented the lack of means both for communicating effectively with higher headquarters and nearby patrols and for gathering timely intelligence. Johnson observed that "communication has proved a stumbling block on many occasions in small wars of the past."⁴⁰⁵ The technology available to Johnson for communicating with other patrols, based on his experiences, ranged from pyrotechnics, prearranged signals across open land, and recognizing the sounds of friendly forces. Similarly, because his experience was based solely on ground operations, Johnson offered that "information [intelligence] will be insufficient; adequate reconnaissance will rarely be practicable."⁴⁰⁶ Based on the small wars experience of the Marine Corps, Johnson repeated the same small wars framework as Ellis and later expanded by Harrington. Johnson also highlighted the shortfalls in communication and intelligence that would provide an opportunity for the introduction of aviation into the Banana Wars and the Marines' small wars framework.

The Banana Wars Small Wars Framework

The small wars approach used by the Marines was a way to focus their planning, resources, and execution, and now shaped how aviation was integrated to support small wars campaigns. The political objectives given to the Marines told

⁴⁰² LtCol A.F. Montanaro, *Hints for a Bush Campaign* (London: Sands & CO, 1901), quoted in Johnson, 163.

⁴⁰³ Johnson, "Junior Marines," 152.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁴⁰⁵ Johnson, 160.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

them what was to be accomplished; the Marine's service culture shaped their tactics in small wars; and the experiences of past campaigns began to coalesce in an approach for the Marines to apply in future small wars. Based on their Philippine and later Hispaniola experiences, the Marines focused their efforts on locating and destroying the enemy. Based on US policy, experience, and service culture, the enemies encountered in small wars were considered marauders and thieves at worst and well-organized bandits at best. Either way, they were lawless hostile forces to be engaged and destroyed. General Order 100 set the legal foundation allowing Marines to hunt down their enemy with impunity. Since the enemy in small wars were bandits and not regular forces, destroying their property was entirely legal from a US military perspective. There was almost no recognition that the enemy might be trying to achieve a political objective counter to the interests of the United States. Captain Johnson wrote, "Small wars, or phases thereof, are fought for persons or continued by persons and not for causes. When the [enemy] leaders are removed, the 'war' is over."⁴⁰⁷ The Marines' method was to find and fight enemy combatants. Any social reforms were a distant second to this Marine small wars focus.

In summary, Ellis and Harrington had created an operational perspective founded on destroying enemy opposition, which directly influenced how aviation would be utilized. As demonstrated in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, the operational sequencing was to come ashore, seize ports, maintain a high operational tempo against the enemy, and reestablish government functions. Ellis' article influenced Harrington's later writings, and Harrington built upon and expanded Ellis' original thinking. Although examined briefly, Captain Johnson's article showed that the ideas put forward by both Ellis and Harrington were already being put into practice in Hispaniola, demonstrating that the Marines relied on their experience when fighting and conceptualizing doctrine for small wars. These concepts were further shaped by the political objectives given to the US Marines and the service culture of the Marines.

Using the collective experiences of the US Marine Corps in Hispaniola and by then synthesizing the ideas of Ellis and Harrington, the Marines conceptualized small wars campaigns during the Banana Wars in six distinct phases. An analysis of these phases will follow in the remainder of this paragraph along with where aviation, further explored in Chapters Five and Six, was integrated. First, the Marines seized ports to control sea lanes and regulated trade to benefit the ruling government and to provide a secure means of resupplying the Marines engaged ashore. Aviation played no role in this opening phase. Next, the Marines seized critical cities and towns to prevent the enemy from accessing valuable resources and to isolate any opposition from the population. As seen in Chapter Six's Second Nicaraguan Campaign analysis, aviation played a vital intelligence-gathering role in this phase. Once the major population centers were secured, the Marines divided the territory into military districts. This phase dictated where aviation was placed to

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., 161.

best support infantry operations. After military districts were established, within these districts the Marines established outposts from where they conducted offensive operations. Based on the location of the outposts, this phase determined the location of aviation's communication and logistics support base. During offensive operations to find and engage the enemy, the Marines simultaneously aimed to find and destroy enemy supplies. This find and destroy emphasis prioritized what aviation was searching for during reconnaissance. Finally, the infantry trained local security forces, where aviation only played a supporting role in logistics and reconnaissance.⁴⁰⁸

As the US Marines conducted military operations in the Caribbean, a revolutionary tool had arrived in Hispaniola in 1919, one that the Marines adapted to their specific needs and small wars approach: the airplane. Putting aside the Banana Wars for a moment, the focus of the next chapter will shift to the Marines' entry into the world of aviation, their experiences fighting in the air in World War I, and how, after the Great War, the Marines immediately began sending aircraft to their small wars in Hispaniola, inserting aviation into the small wars framework as described in this chapter. How they implemented aviation capabilities will be carried forward into the discussion of the Second Nicaraguan Campaign, where the US Marines adapted aviation into a fundamental yet subordinate tool for small wars. As analyzed in the following chapters, the addition of aircraft enabled the Marines to develop different tactics but did not fundamentally change how they conceptualized fighting small wars.

⁴⁰⁸ Neither Ellis nor Harrington wrote about training local security forces. Both officers served in Hispaniola while such efforts were underway and were seen as a significant part of their operations. Despite its glaring omission in the writing of both Marines, training local forces in Haiti and the Dominican Republic was a substantial part of the small wars approach adopted by the Marines. After successfully training the Macabebe Scouts in the Philippine Insurrection, the Marines knew the value of a locally derived military force. As discussed earlier in the chapter, the Marines who helped train the Haitian Gendarmerie took great pride in these efforts. The use of local forces in the Dominican Republic helped bring the bandits in the Eastern District to a negotiation.

Chapter Five
Mars Takes Flight

The previous chapters detailed the development of a small wars framework used by the US Marines in the Banana Wars and addressed the lack of research into how the Marines evolved their small wars doctrine. This chapter will continue adding to the historical record by analyzing the Marines' decisions concerning airpower that took place before the introduction of aviation into the small wars in Haiti and the Dominican Republic in February 1919. The chapter begins with a brief discussion of the emergence of Marine aviation and will be followed by an analysis of the US Marines' efforts to integrate aviation in World War I. The chapter continues with an analysis of the Marines' adaptation of aviation to their ongoing small wars campaigns in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, illustrating that the Marines did not fundamentally alter their small wars framework with the addition of aviation. While aviation use in the Banana Wars was of prime importance, aviation development within the Marine Corps in the United States was complex, with many advancements. Analyzing Marine aviation activities and developments in the US will show that aviation employment in Hispaniola was tailored to the Marines' small wars framework. This chapter will examine the deliberate decisions made to introduce specific airpower tactics to an already established small wars campaign.

Fledgling to Flight: from Early Days to WWI

Military aviation development in the United States can trace its origins to balloon usage during the US Civil War, but the adoption of airpower began in earnest after the Wright Brothers flew on December 17, 1903.⁴⁰⁹ The evolution of airpower inside the US military was slow due to the lack of immediate threats to the United States that stifled innovation, career Army and Navy officers who saw little utility in this new technology and was filled with bickering between rival aircraft manufacturers.⁴¹⁰ Because aviation growth within US military circles was so ponderous until the US entered the First World War, aviation initiatives inside the Marine Corps resulted from the efforts of a small cadre of officers. As such, these individuals had an outsized influence on aviation's direction before, during, and after World War I. The most influential was a US Marine officer, Alfred Cunningham, whose decisions would shape how Marines adapted aviation into their small wars operational approach. Examining why he made his decisions fills in a missing part of the historiography concerning the Marines' use of airpower in small wars.

Marine aviation began, like many military innovations, with enthusiasm and failure. First Lieutenant Alfred Cunningham, an infantry officer by training, was an

⁴⁰⁹ Richard Hallion, *Taking Flight: Inventing the Aerial Age, from Antiquity Through the First World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 66-70.

⁴¹⁰ Douglas V. Smith, ed., *One Hundred Years of US Navy Airpower* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2010), 7-8.

early aviation enthusiast and built his first airplane while stationed in Philadelphia in 1911. On his first attempt to take flight, he failed to get airborne.⁴¹¹ Undeterred, Cunningham continued studying aviation and was eventually the first Marine officially selected for aviation duty.⁴¹² Cunningham recalled later that with just under three hours of flight instruction, where he had only attempted to land twice, he soloed on April 12, 1912, ushering in the aviation era for the US Marines Corps.⁴¹³ Cunningham's dedication and vision that aviation have a permanent place inside the Marine Corps would be crucial in integrating aviation into Banana Wars concepts and operations.

After a year of training with the first cadre of Navy pilots in Annapolis, Cunningham traveled to Guantanamo Bay for exercises with the US fleet. Flying Curtiss Model N seaplanes, the new naval aviators provided long-range reconnaissance for fleet maneuvers. The US Navy saw aviation's role as one of long-range reconnaissance that would allow the surface fleet to locate and then maneuver to engage an opposing surface fleet. The addition of Marine aviators offered the same sort of long range reconnaissance needed but, in this instance for Marine amphibious landings. While in Guantanamo, in addition to their basic flying maneuvers, the naval aviators were tasked with conducting aviation indoctrination sorties for over 150 Marine and Navy officers. One of those taking their first flight was then Lieutenant Colonel John A. Lejeune, a future USMC commandant who later advocated for Marine aviation.⁴¹⁴ At this time, the Marine aviation community welcomed another designated naval aviator, USMC First Lieutenant Bernard Smith, who, like Cunningham, played a role in establishing aviation inside the Marine Corps.⁴¹⁵ With the addition of new equipment, the Marine Corps formed the first Marine Aeronautic Company in Quantico in June 1914, comprised of aerial balloons

⁴¹¹ Aviation Log, July 15, 1911, through June 5, 1913, Alfred Cunningham Personal Papers Collection, Box 2, Folder 7, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴¹² Orders to Flying Duty, Record Group 127, Alfred Cunningham Official Military Personnel File National Archives, Washington, DC.

⁴¹³ Aviation Log, July 15, 1911, -June 5, 1913, Alfred Cunningham Personal Papers Collection, Box 2, Folder 7, USMC Archives, Quantico, Virginia. May 12th is celebrated as the birth of Marine Corps aviation. The Wright B-1, as the name suggests, was a Wright brothers-produced seaplane aircraft explicitly designed for the US Navy, termed a 'pusher' because the engine and propeller sat behind the pilot, pushing the plane forward as the pilot sat on a board "projecting into the atmosphere." Most riding lawnmowers have 30 horsepower engines for a frame of reference. Letter from Cunningham to LtCol Miller in response to *Marine Corps Gazette* article, January 22, 1931, Alfred Cunningham Person Papers, Box 2, Folder 4, Marine Corps Archives, Quantico, VA.

⁴¹⁴ Edwin N. McClellan, "Marine Corps Aviation," *Marine Corps Gazette* 16, no. 1 (May 1931), 13 and 43.

⁴¹⁵ Bernard Smith Biographical file, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

mainly used for artillery spotting. Initially equipped with kite balloons (those tethered to the ground) and Caquot balloons (free-floating), they eventually received R-6 and N-9 seaplanes.⁴¹⁶ The procurement of balloons and seaplanes showed that at the earliest stages of airpower development inside the Marine Corps, the decisions about Marine aviation followed alongside the US Navy's focused vision of supporting a surface fleet and developing platforms and tactics for reconnaissance in naval missions.

At the same time as the Marines slowly procured seaplanes and balloons in the United States, aviation quickly became a revolutionary weapon of war across the Atlantic in World War I, where aircraft conducted reconnaissance and long-range strikes into enemy territory. Of relevance to the US military, the coming of WWI accelerated the development and acquisition of aircraft. The primary aircraft eventually used by the Marines in the Banana Wars, developed for the First World War, was the de Havilland Model 4, or DH-4.⁴¹⁷ The DH-4 was originally a British-built aircraft selected by US armament manufacturers for production in the US due to a relatively straightforward construction process.⁴¹⁸

The US Navy continued to develop its aviation force, and by extension, the aviation of the Marine Corps, for any future participation in the First World War

⁴¹⁶ Robin L. Austin, Charles, A. Braley, Charles A. Fleming, *Quantico: Crossroads of the Marine Corps* (Washington DC: History and Museum Division Headquarters, US Marine Corps, 1978), 35 and John M. Elliot, *Marine Corps Aircraft, 1913-2000* (Washington DC: USMC History and Museums Division, 2002), 6.

⁴¹⁷ Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, De Havilland DH-4, https://airandspace.si.edu/collection-objects/de-havilland-dh-4/nasm_A19190051000, accessed June 23, 2020. However, the US version consisted of a metal frame with a canvas covering, creating a sturdier aircraft than the original De Havilland aircraft.

⁴¹⁸ The American-built DH-4 had minor modifications over the original, including the metal frame, but the most significant change occurred in the fuselage. A large fuel tank separated the pilot and observer initially, but this configuration caused two problems. First, it physically separated the crew members making communication, accomplished by shouting, very difficult, and the fuel tank would often crush pilots in the event of crashes or forced landings. The American-built DH-4s reversed this configuration bringing the pilot closer to the observer and moving the fuel tank in front of the pilot. The other American air power contribution to the war effort was the 400 horsepower Liberty V-12 engine giving the DH-4 a top speed of 124 miles per hour. Renamed the 'Liberty Plane,' the DH-4Bs became the workhorse for the American military and saw service in the US armed forces until 1932. Francis K. Mason, *The British Bomber since 1914* (London: Putnam Aeronautical Books, 1994), 66-69. Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, De Havilland DH-4, https://airandspace.si.edu/collection-objects/de-havilland-dh-4/nasm_A19190051000, accessed June 23, 2020, and Peter M. Bowers, *Boeing Aircraft Since 1916*. (London: Putnam, 1989), 69-70.

based on seaplane technology.⁴¹⁹ Until June 1916, “all Navy and Marine flying was exclusively water flying,” in keeping with the original concepts devised by the Navy.⁴²⁰ Seaplanes seemed a natural extension for the US Navy, to be stored aboard a Navy vessel and then craned down to the water for flight operations. Their purpose was to become the eyes of the fleet for reconnaissance and provide observation reports for battleships in naval surface combat. However, Cunningham saw the utility of developing a land-based capability for the Marines and, at his insistence, was ordered to the US Army flying school to complete land-based aviation training in April 1916.⁴²¹ If the US Marine Corps became involved in fighting on the Western Front, then Cunningham wanted to ensure those Marines had Marine aviation supporting them.⁴²² As the probability of the US becoming more overtly involved in the war increased, the Marine Corps decided to pursue both land- and sea-based aviation.⁴²³

To organize a land-based aviation force, Cunningham was ordered on February 26, 1917, to form the First Aviation Company at the Philadelphia Navy Yard; the unit was later renamed the Marine Aeronautic Company after the United States declared war on Germany on April 4, 1917.⁴²⁴ At this point in Marine Corps aviation history, another dominant figure, Roy S. Geiger, began his career. Like Cunningham, Geiger was originally an infantry officer but transferred to aviation in March 1915, earning his naval aviator designation on August 29, 1916.⁴²⁵ Ordered to report to Cunningham in October 1917, Geiger proposed that all Marine pilots train as balloon pilots. Fortunately, Bernard Smith, by this time working at the Marine Aviation Headquarters in Washington DC, had traveled to France to learn how to

⁴¹⁹ Alfred Cunningham, “Value of Aviation to the Marine Corps,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 5, no. 3 (September 1920): 224.

⁴²⁰ Letter from Cunningham to LtCol Miller in response to *Marine Corps Gazette* article, January 22, 1931, Alfred Cunningham Person Papers, Box 2, Folder 4, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 5.

⁴²¹ Orders, Request Being Sent to Army Aviation School, April 28, 1916, Alfred Cunningham Person Papers, Box 1, Folder 12, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴²² Cunningham asserted his desire to have a strong Marine air arm should the US be drawn into World War I in a 1916 article, Alfred Cunningham, “Aviation in the Navy,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 1, no. 4 (December 1916): 333-342.

⁴²³ Orders, February 26, 1917, Alfred Cunningham Person Papers, Box 2, Folder 3, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴²⁴ The report, “Data Regarding my Service with American Expeditionary Force,” July 13, 1920, Record Group 127, Alfred Cunningham Official Military Personnel File, National Archives, Washington DC.

⁴²⁵ Orders as Naval Aviator, June 9, 1917, Roy Geiger Personal Papers, Box 1, Folder 7, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA. This designation letter came nearly a year after his official designation but was used to codify when he finished training.

train an aviation force best suited for fighting a modern war and informed Geiger that “having all officers trained as balloon pilots does not coincide with what is happening abroad.”⁴²⁶ Smith, like Cunningham, saw the utility in having land-based aircraft flown by Marines, and, fortunately, both officers, as discussed below, had convinced the US Marine Commandant of the merits of their idea.

An advocate for Marine aviation and keen to provide more Marines in any fashion to the war effort, the US Marine Commandant, Major General George Barnett, ordered Cunningham to France to conduct a battlefield tour to see what roles Marine aviation could fulfill. Setting sail for France and the front lines in November 1917, Cunningham returned in January 1918 even more convinced of the utility of Marine land-based aviation.⁴²⁷ While on his trip in France, Cunningham initially offered US Marine aviation assistance to the US Army, which turned down repeated offers for the Marines to provide additional aircraft and men for fighting. However, he remained undeterred about being “turned down cold” by the Army and on his return trip from France to the US by way of England he devised a mission for the Marines to help them gain land-based aircraft.⁴²⁸

On his journey across the Channel heading to England from France, Cunningham was informed that the bombing of German submarine pens in Ostend and Zeebrugge had stopped due to the menace of air defenses and the lack of aviation assets to put in a concentrated bombing effort against the submarine pens.⁴²⁹ After gaining a verbal agreement from the Royal Flying Corps that the Marine Corps could pursue this mission, Cunningham briefed the Secretary of the Navy and the US Marine Commandant, who approved of Cunningham’s plan to establish the Day Bombing Group.⁴³⁰ Due to Cunningham’s persistence, by February 1918, the Marine Corps had settled on creating a land-based flying force comprised of four squadrons, each with sixteen aircraft.⁴³¹ The original task of creating a seaplane

⁴²⁶ Letter to Geiger from Bernard Smith, November 14, 1917, Geiger Personal Papers, Box 1, Folder 7, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴²⁷ Cunningham’s trip is recorded in a diary he kept, later published as a single work: Graham A. Cosmas, ed., *Marine Flyer in France: The Diary of Captain Alfred A. Cunningham: November 1917-January 1918* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division HQ USMC, 1974). Cunningham flew with both French and British squadrons during his trip and made no attempt to observe sea-plane operations.

⁴²⁸ Letter from Cunningham to LtCol Miller in response to *Marine Corps Gazette* article, January 22, 1931, Alfred Cunningham Person Papers, Box 2, Folder 4, 6, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴²⁹ “Orders to temporary foreign shore service,” October 30, 1917, Record Group 127, Alfred Cunningham Official Military Personnel File, National Archives, Washington DC., and Cunningham, “Value of Aviation to the Marine Corps,” 224, and Cunningham, *Marine Flyer in France*, 39.

⁴³⁰ “Data Regarding..” Also, *United States Naval Aviation, 1910-1970* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1970), 32.

⁴³¹ Letter to Geiger February 26, 1918, Cunningham Papers, Box 1, Folder 12.

force changed for Cunningham in March 1918 when he was officially designated as the First Marine Aviation Force Commanding Officer.⁴³² Cunningham's vision of creating a land-based aviation force was a reality. The decision was a significant turning point for the later addition of airpower in the Banana Wars as this wartime decision led to land-based aircraft being available to the Marines after the war. Without Cunningham's determination, the US Marines might have been relegated to seaplane convoy escort only with no land-based aviation training and, more importantly, no land-based aircraft once the fighting on the Western Front ended.⁴³³

The First Marine Aeronautics Company, the original sea-plane force assembled by the Marines, departed for the Azores in February 1918. While protecting convoys was an important mission and critical for supplying the Western front, the Marines chafed at the idea of not supporting their fellow Marines heading to France to fight. Major General Barnett officially expanded the future wartime roles of Marine aviation from seaplane-based maritime missions into land-based roles in June 1918 to include all land-based aircraft-associated missions: reconnaissance, bombing, artillery spotting, and pursuit.⁴³⁴ For training purposes, Cunningham was allocated the JN-6H, nicknamed Jenny, and while configured for the land attack mission, it was essentially a two-seat trainer powered by a 150-horsepower Wright-Hispano engine.⁴³⁵

⁴³² "Data Regarding.." and Orders to Command First Aviation Force March 11, 1918, Cunningham Papers, Box 1 Folder 12, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴³³ The original 1st Marine Aeronautics Company did provide convoy escort. 1st Marine Aeronautics Company, Azores, War Diary, February-May 1918, 1st Marine Aviation Force Collection, Box 1, Folder 4, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA. Although they were outfitted and trained with two (eventually 10) RN-6 floatplanes, they would finally have six other Curtiss HS-2L flying boats. The HS-2Ls were a much-needed improvement over the older RN-6 in speed, reliability, and range. Despite a limited range of 80 miles from the Azores, the HS-2Ls provided coverage for convoys between the US and the Western front. Christian Schilt, who would earn the Medal of Honor in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign, enlisted as an aviation Marine in July 1917. He was assigned to the HS-2Ls sent to the Azores for their deployment. He recalled later that in his nine months of flying anti-submarine patrols, "we saw a few [German submarines] out there; in fact, we dropped a few bombs, but as far as I know, we didn't damage anything. We had 125 and 200-pound bombs, which wasn't very much. You'd have to get a direct hit and then be lucky to sink one. But we kept them submerged, I think." Christian Schilt Oral History Transcript, History and Museums Division, HQ USMC, 1974, 16.

⁴³⁴ "Organizing Squadrons," Orders from MajGen Barnett to Commanding Officer, First Marine Aviation Force, June 13, 1918, Record Group 127, Alfred Cunningham Official Military Personnel File, National Archives, Washington DC.

⁴³⁵ John M. Elliot, *Marine Corps Aircraft 1913-2000* (Washington DC: History and Museums Division HQ, US Marine Corps, 2002), 20. The Jenny had evolved into several variants, including a pursuit trainer and an observation trainer. The JN-6H model used by the

As the US Marine Corps prepared for war in Europe, Cunningham and Geiger split the responsibilities of forming a new aviation force to ensure they could assemble it as quickly as possible. Cunningham spent most of his time in Washington, ensuring the interests of Marine aviation were met within the US War Department. Geiger took charge of the newly formed Miami Airfield to create the First Marine Aviation Force and its training. Their correspondence shows tremendous activity in accepting new trainees, eventually building an airfield just outside of Miami, and dealing with the bureaucratic infighting that came with creating the American Expeditionary Force for deployment to France.⁴³⁶ At one point, the US Navy tried to usurp the land-based aviation mission from the Marines when the Navy realized their seaplanes would have no place to establish a base on the coast of France.⁴³⁷ Parts, personnel, and aircraft for the Marines came from both Army and Navy sources, wherever Cunningham and Geiger could get equipment. So eager was Cunningham to procure equipment that he was not above diverting resources bound for the US Army or Navy. As materiel began to flow in, including supplies marked for other bases and services, Cunningham directed Geiger to ignore such markings and to “see that the supply officer does not fail to turn it over to you. Each package should [then] be marked by a diamond with ‘Marines’ in the center.”⁴³⁸ After the failed attempt by the US Navy to take the location allocated to Marine land-based aircraft in France, Cunningham knew the faster he could get mobilized and deployed, the better; only then would land-based aviation for Marines fighting on the Western Front be secured.⁴³⁹

Cunningham was ordered to organize four land-based squadrons as quickly as possible, a daunting task since, at the time, the Marine Corps had only five qualified pilots, thirty enlisted personnel, and six JN aircraft.⁴⁴⁰ To quickly increase

Marines was a bomber training variant. With an all-wood construction and a maximum speed of 80mph, the JH-6H would later be the only aircraft available to the Marines after WWI and was often underpowered in the frequent intense weather conditions of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. K. F. Bubur, “Foreign Aviation Field an Ideal Marine Post,” *Leatherneck* 7, no. 52 (1924), 4. The much more capable DH-4B would eventually replace the Jenny.

⁴³⁶ Cunningham’s papers, Box 1 Folders 12-13, have 22 letters from Cunningham to Geiger, and Geiger’s personal papers in Box 1 have many of his replies and correspondence back to other staff officers. Cunningham and Geiger’s papers are in the Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴³⁷ Letter from Cunningham to Geiger, April 30, 1918, Cunningham Papers Box 1 Folder 12, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴³⁸ Letter to Geiger February 26, 1918, Cunningham Papers Box 1, Folder 13, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴³⁹ Cunningham, “Value of Aviation to the Marine Corps,” 225.

⁴⁴⁰ Ford Rodgers, Major General (USMC ret.) Oral History Transcript, April 1966. Oral History Collection, Historical Division, HQ, US Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, Washington, DC, 35, and Letter to Mrs. Talbot, April 28, 1918, Ralph Talbot

the number of skilled naval aviators, Cunningham arranged for an inter-service transfer of naval officers from the US Navy to the Marine Corps. Ralph Talbot was one of the US Navy aviators who accepted Cunningham's offer to switch from the Navy to the Marines; he and others traveled to Miami and waited on the paperwork to become second lieutenants in the Marine Corps. His observations after arriving at Miami Airfield are relevant and illustrate the service cultural differences between the Navy and the Marine Corps:

For now, I feel that it [transferring] means real business at last. The trouble with the Navy was that there was too much playing around and too much of the student type of flying, and not enough of the real business-like preparation for fighting. Now, in the Marine Corps, they are running things on a different basis. They mean service from the word go. No more studying in books or fooling around in classrooms. One thing I like about the Marine Corps is that one is not working in the dark. Captain Cunningham called us all in a few days ago and told us just what we had to do.⁴⁴¹

From Talbot's observations, it is clear that the attitude of the Marines training for war carried an action-oriented motivation behind it. As a service, the US Marines had fought in various small wars nearly every year since the Philippine Insurrection and knew how to prepare to fight. Even though aviation was a new tool for combat, the service culture of 'First to fight' pervaded the new aviation arm. Although quickly assembled and without dedicated training in the aircraft to be used over the front lines, the First Marine Aviation Force departed for France in June 1918. Cunningham was proud that he had prepared a fully trained force "in the short time of six months, and I left for France with 149 trained pilots and 842 mechanics."⁴⁴² His sheer determination to create a land-based aviation force was counter to the direction being pursued by the US Navy and was at odds with the US Army. Still, Cunningham persisted until he had achieved his objective: land-based aircraft flown by Marine aviators. This achievement would profoundly impact the future of adapting aviation in the Banana Wars.

Cunningham's First Marine Aviation Force, later renamed the Day Wing, Northern Bombing Group, got off to an inauspicious start when arriving in France;

Personal Papers, Folder Correspondence, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA., and Cunningham, "Value of Aviation to the Marine Corps," 223.

⁴⁴¹ Letter to Mrs. Talbot, April 28, 1918, Ralph Talbot Personal Papers. Talbot won the Medal of Honor but was killed in a test flight on October 25, 1918, in France. In his last letter to his mother, dated October 20, 1918, Talbot briefly describes his action earning him the Medal of Honor.

⁴⁴² Letter from Cunningham to LtCol Miller in response to *Marine Corps Gazette* article, January 22, 1931, Alfred Cunningham Person Papers, Box 2, Folder 4, 7.

they found no hangars, billets, or functioning airplanes.⁴⁴³ Unfortunately, no effort was made to deliver US built DH-4s to the Marines, and the Marine pilots made do by flying with British squadrons until they could secure their aircraft. The newly arrived Marines circulated through RAF squadrons, with the majority serving with No. 217 or 218 Squadrons, who were short of pilots.⁴⁴⁴ As none of the Marines had done any bombing before and were expected to operate DH-4 bombers as soon as those aircraft could be delivered, they learned about and adopted the RAF method of level bombing. A formation of aircraft, typically six to eight, would climb to 15,000-16,000 feet, fly towards a target, and bomb off the flight leader's signal to release their weapons. The flight lead had a "bomb site that was a piece of Plexiglas with two cross wires between the squadron leader's feet. He had notches on the vertical wire and the crossed wire, and he lined up on the target, and when he decided to drop bombs, he'd nod his head. His rear seat gunner would shoot a Very pistol [flare gun], and we'd all drop on the Very pistol."⁴⁴⁵ As described in the next chapter, it is striking that the Marine pilots, many of whom also went on to fly in Hispaniola less than a year after being taught by the RAF, ultimately rejected the tactic of level bombing upon arriving in the Banana Wars.

While the Marines were gaining experience with the RAF, Cunningham, to get his aircraft, bargained with the British to "give them 3 Liberty engines in exchange for one DH-9 plane equipped with a Liberty motor."⁴⁴⁶ Fortunately, Cunningham had a surplus of Liberty engines; in contrast, the British had an abundance of DH-9A airframes with no engines. The British delivered one fully assembled DH-9 to the Marines for every three engines supplied.⁴⁴⁷ Slowly, Cunningham acquired enough aircraft by August 1918 to outfit one of his four squadrons but could never fully equip the entire First Marine Aviation Force. Instead, he paired his growing squadron's strength with the British.⁴⁴⁸ Over a short period between August 10, 1918, and the Armistice, the Marines flew in 43 British and French raids and 14 Marine-only raids in all, dropping over 52,000 pounds of

⁴⁴³ Seventy two new aircraft, on paper, were allotted for his Marine squadrons. Cunningham later claimed credit for this in his 1931 letter to LtCol Miller, but in actuality, it was the work of Capt Brian Smith at HQMC. Captain Smith's letter to Cunningham, May 1918, Alfred Cunningham Personal Papers, Box 1, Folder 12, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴⁴⁴ Cunningham Letter to Gen Long, October 5, 1918, Cunningham Personal Papers Box 2 Folder 1, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴⁴⁵ Rodgers oral history transcript, 42.

⁴⁴⁶ Letter from Cunningham to LtCol Miller in response to *Marine Corps Gazette* article, January 22, 1931, Alfred Cunningham Personal Papers, Box 2, Folder 4, 7-8.

⁴⁴⁷ Cunningham blamed the US Navy for putting him in this predicament, "in spite of the inability of Navy to deliver all our planes, spares, tools, etc." his bomber group was successful in combat operations. Also, in "Data Regarding..."

⁴⁴⁸ Cunningham's letter to Gen Long, October 5, 1918, Cunningham's Personal Papers, Box 2 Folder 1, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

bombs and shooting down 12 enemy aircraft.⁴⁴⁹ The one accomplishment missing from the war record of Marine aviation during the Great War was that they never directly supported US Marine infantry. This lack of direct support within the service meant many infantry officers inside the Marine Corps had a poor impression of Marine aviation, a sentiment Cunningham and Geiger would fight against when aircraft were introduced into the Banana Wars.

As the war ended in Europe, Cunningham made a monumental decision for the future of Marine aviation and the use of aircraft in the Banana Wars. Writing to the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, Brigadier General Charles Long, in late October 1918, Cunningham stated, “I certainly hope that we have gotten a proper field and equipment [in the US]. The war situation over here looks as if our work might be over most any time, and I am hoping that we secure the field and equipment before the reaction sets in, after peace is declared.”⁴⁵⁰ Writing two days before the armistice and after finally getting up to “strength to operate on a respectable scale,” Cunningham argued in favor of sending the First Marine Aviation Force home as quickly as possible because “I think we could accomplish much more at home, getting our aviation service established under the new conditions of peace.”⁴⁵¹ Cunningham knew that unless the Marines immediately used the wartime buildup of materiel and training to their advantage to create a permanent land-based aviation force, the post-war reductions would see them lose all of their equipment and pilots. Much to the chagrin of the Marine pilots and crew, who wanted to stay in France to enjoy leave, at Cunningham’s insistence the First Marine Aviation Force sailed home in December 1918 to set up a permanent structure for land-based Marine aviation.⁴⁵² This decision was crucial in putting Marine aviation into the small wars campaigns in Hispaniola because remaining as an occupation force would have meant Marine aviation was committed in Europe and not available to participate in the Banana Wars.

⁴⁴⁹ “Data Regarding...” and “Record of Cunningham, Alfred A.” Official Military Personnel File, and Mersky, 11.

⁴⁵⁰ Cunningham’s letter to Gen Long, October 22, 1918, Cunningham’s Personal Papers, Box 2 Folder 1, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴⁵¹ Cunningham’s letter to Gen Long, November 9, 1918, Cunningham’s Personal Papers, Box 2 Folder 1, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴⁵² After the war ended, Cunningham had to arrest six more officers for drunken behavior and unauthorized flying along the now peaceful front, including Roy Geiger. Although Cunningham held Geiger accountable for his drunken behavior, he never held it against him. Later, when other First Marine Aviation Force officers were being considered for medals, Cunningham ensured Geiger was recommended and eventually awarded a Navy Cross for his bravery and leadership while fighting in France. Cunningham’s letter to Gen Long, November 9, 1918, and Cunningham’s letter to Gen Long, November 23, 1918, Cunningham Personal Papers, Box 2 Folder 1, and Letter to Geiger October 20, 1920, Geiger Papers Box 1, Folder 15, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

When the First Marine Aviation Force returned from France, they received new orders, at the insistence of Cunningham, to disperse to the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Guam, and Quantico. In the Dominican Republic, the 2nd Brigade's forces, occupying that nation since 1916, were augmented with the 15th Regiment and the arrival of their first aircraft.⁴⁵³ This first squadron, Squadron D, arrived in Santo Domingo on February 27, 1919, with a complement of six JN-6H (Jenny) biplanes.⁴⁵⁴ One month later, Squadron E arrived in Haiti with six Jennies and seven HS-2 seaplanes.⁴⁵⁵ Although the JN-6Hs were more limited than the DH-4s the Marines had just used in France, aviation was of immediate value to the ground commanders in both theaters. The ground commanders did not realize that Alfred Cunningham was the only reason any aircraft had come to Hispaniola. His drive and vision in securing land-based aviation and then having the foresight to take advantage of equipment on hand before mass demobilization together put aviation on its path towards fighting in small wars. How the Marines fighting in Hispaniola adapted aviation in Haiti and the Dominican Republic followed similar paths will now be examined, beginning with an analysis of the use of aviation in Haiti and subsequently analyzing aviation's use in the Dominican Republic.

Aviation enters the Banana Wars: Haiti

Marine aviation was an exotic tool when it first appeared over the Banana Wars. Never before had the US Marine Corps utilized aviation in their small wars campaigns, and the Marines who fought in Hispaniola had never worked with land-based aircraft before. As the following discussion will demonstrate, Marine aviation usage began in an ad hoc fashion but soon became an integrated part of small wars operations. As the Marine ground forces were involved in a new *cacao* uprising in the spring of 1919 (discussed earlier), the Marine aviators arriving in Haiti now supported the military mission of subduing the *cacaos*. Benoit Batraville, the prominent *cacao* leader in 1919, was now at large with a large group of *cacaos* near Mirebalais. Squadron E disembarked at Port au Prince on March 25, 1919, and after establishing an airfield north of the city, began flight operations on April 3, 1919.⁴⁵⁶

No secondary airfields existed at the beginning of flight operations, meaning aircraft could not receive requests for air support in the field but only at the primary airfield. Thus, as the Marine headquarters in Port au Prince received intelligence,

⁴⁵³ Fuller, 33.

⁴⁵⁴ Santo Domingo Squadron, Cunningham Personal Papers, Box 2 Folder 5, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴⁵⁵ Haiti Squadron, Cunningham personal papers, Box 2 Folder 5, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA. Also, Robert Sherrod, "Marine Corps Aviation: The Early Days," *Marine Corps Gazette* 36, no. 6 (December 1952), 55.

⁴⁵⁶ Haiti Squadron, Cunningham Personal Papers, Box 2, Folder 5, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

they relayed it via telephone to the squadron at their airfield.⁴⁵⁷ To improve communication, “landing fields had to be built at the various towns, and then the towns connected with the Squadron by air routes possessing the most advantageous position relative to wind and forced landing [emergency] fields en route.”⁴⁵⁸ In keeping with the small wars framework of distributing combat forces into the interior and creating remote patrol bases to engage enemy forces quickly, the aviation element also developed a hub and spoke system of emergency landing fields and outlying bases away from headquarters and in the interior of Haiti. The squadron was soon hard at work developing its alternate airfield system. By the end of 1920, over ten new airstrips had been created, with five more being added in 1921.⁴⁵⁹ Moving physically closer to where the infantry was posted was in keeping with the service culture of providing support to the infantry.

By dispatching aviation into the interior to be closer to the Marine infantry patrols, Marine aviators ensured air support was available and more responsive to the remote patrols executing their missions in the island’s interior despite the relatively slow airspeeds of the Jenny. Moving aircraft into the interior also solved a practical problem encountered by the Marine pilots. Given the mountainous topography and with the weather prone to afternoon thunderstorms in the central areas of Hispaniola, the Marine aviators were deployed to a range of locations and thus able to provide support without being cut off due to poor flying weather. Secondary airfields were indispensable from a pure safety perspective as “most of the air routes lead over mountain ranges with their accompanying winds, clouds, rainstorms, and absence of a possible forced landing place, long stretches of jungle country where even small towns are far apart.”⁴⁶⁰ Canvas-covered wooden biplanes with relatively low power were susceptible to the weather and winds.

Despite being limited by the slow Jenny, the infantry Marines in Hispaniola immediately began taking advantage of using aircraft to reconnoiter an area quickly. One of the early pilots, First Lieutenant Morrison Barr, said, “Their [aviation] work

⁴⁵⁷ Newcomb Smith, “Watching Bandits from the Air,” *Recruiter’s Bulletin* (October 1919), 17–18.

Smith noted that extreme geography limited the number of land planes and secondary field opportunities.

⁴⁵⁸ “Report of First Air Squadron, Marine Aviation Force ca 1920,” Personal Papers Kratos History of Marine Aviation, Collection 5316, Box 1, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴⁵⁹ “Report of First Air Squadron, Marine Aviation Force ca 1920.” The airfields were Port au Prince, Mirebalais, Thomonde, Hinche, Maissade, Pignon, St. Michel, Gonaives, Port de Paix Cape Haitian, with Belvedere, Los Cahobas, Cera la Spource, and Hux Caye’s under development.

⁴⁶⁰ “Report of First Air Squadron, Marine Aviation Force ca 1920.”

is entirely in cooperation with the troops.”⁴⁶¹ Marine aviators began taking ground commanders on flights in their assigned areas to “observe the contours of the land, the large trails, the most favorable places for bandit camps and the best means of reaching them.”⁴⁶² A more refined concept of employment was described as “[aviation] brought the Marines ‘eyes’ to Haiti to observe the movement and hiding places of the bandits and to report by radio and wireless telephone their location to troops operating on the ground and to transport military passengers, freight, and mail to all principal towns in Haiti.”⁴⁶³ These statements, made only months after arriving in theater, showed that aviation was adapted to suit the needs of the infantry immediately upon arrival. These statements also highlight that aviation directly supported the infantry in keeping with the small wars approach focused on infantry operations. Additionally, the Marine aviators’ efforts to fly rudimentary aircraft over inhospitable terrain through poor weather with no navigational aids demonstrated the service culture committed to supporting the infantry.

As an example of direct infantry support, in August 1919, US Marine Captain Edward Ostermann, a veteran of the 1916 *cacao* campaigns, asked for two planes to come to his area of operations and received two Jennies under his direct control. Captain Ostermann had learned that Batrville was gathering his men to conduct a *bamboche*, a Haitian custom consisting of a large party with a prodigious amount of drinking.⁴⁶⁴ At dawn the next day, the two aircraft under Ostermann’s command flew off toward the party and, finding the *cacaos* still gathered, began strafing attacks against the unsuspecting insurgents. When the *cacaos* ran to escape the onslaught of aerial fires, they faced machine gun ambushes set up by Ostermann’s men, who were waiting in the adjacent jungle. Ostermann noted in his after-action report, “We had no more trouble from Benoit Batrville in my area.”⁴⁶⁵ This episode is notable for two reasons. First, it showed that Marine aircraft willingly worked in concert with the infantry rather than attempting to create their own independent tactics. Roy Geiger’s assessment of an independent air service for the Marine Corps, that it would fail to meet the needs of the service, is discussed later in this chapter. Second, the strafing attacks conducted by the Marine pilots were so successful that it led to the Marine aviators modifying traditional airpower

⁴⁶¹ Morrison Barr, “Tells How Marine Fliers Hunt Down Bandits,” *Recruiter’s Bulletin*, (June 1919), 5–6.

⁴⁶² Barr, “Tells How Marine Fliers Hunt Down Bandits,” 5–6.

⁴⁶³ Smith “Watching Bandits from the Air,” 17–18.

⁴⁶⁴ Heinel, *Soldiers of the Sea*, 242. Described in detail, the account is from an interview conducted by Heinel with Ostermann. No interview record survives, but Ostermann’s letter to Heinel remarks that he wishes to discuss an episode that “may have significance on the history of Marine aviation.” Letter Ostermann to Heinel, October 11, 1960, Heinel personal papers.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

tactics to improve accuracy with bombing. These new bombing procedures and their link to Marine offensive culture are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The integrated air and ground attack devised by Ostermann led to a new tactic that the Marine aviators would use for the rest of the Banana Wars, which subsequently played an important role in combat support in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign. Until 1919, the preferred method for delivering bombs, used during World War I, was from level flight. One Marine pilot assigned to Haiti, First Lieutenant Lawson Sanderson, figured, “If we could point the ship [airplane] in the direction of the target, the bomb would have to keep traveling in the same direction.”⁴⁶⁶ Dive bombing, as opposed to horizontal bombing, was adopted immediately by the Marines. The idea of improved accuracy was crucial to providing effective support to Marines on the ground. Marine aviator and Medal of Honor winner Christian Schilt later remarked: “We sort of worked the thing together, and it proved so successful that it was the type of bombing they [pilots in Hispaniola] used. We used it as our tactics whenever we had bombing [missions].”⁴⁶⁷ Initially, there were no bomb racks fitted underneath the Jennies as these were training aircraft. Sanderson’s solution was to place several bombs in a sack underneath the airplanes with a wire lanyard running to the front cockpit where the pilot sat. At the appropriate moment in the dive, the pilot would pull on the lanyard, which opened the sack and released the bombs.⁴⁶⁸ Sanderson noted, “It was like shaking a cat out of the bag, but it was more accurate than horizontal bombing.”⁴⁶⁹ First Lieutenant Morrison Barr described the makeshift bombs as “constructed of gas pipe [steel piping] and loaded with black powder.”⁴⁷⁰ Barr explained the initial shock aircraft had on the bandits, saying, “Only by actual observation can they [locals and bandits] be convinced that men actually travel in these machines.” Often, aviation in a direct attack role broke up bandit formations: “The aviators fly over and drop a few bombs in their midst. As they [bandits] come out of the jungles, they are seized by the ever-ready Marine on foot.”⁴⁷¹

Tactics, including dive bombing, were created out of necessity. In later years, Lawson Sanderson claimed credit for being the “father of dive-bombing,” but the reality is somewhat more challenging to ascertain from existing records.

⁴⁶⁶ Lawson H. M. Sanderson, Major General (USMC ret.) Oral History Transcript, July 1969. Oral History Collection, Historical Division, HQ, US Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, Washington, DC, 14 and Joseph H. Alexander, “Marine Aviation Comes of Age” *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History* 17, no. 4 (2005), 74.

⁴⁶⁷ Christian Schilt, General (USMC ret.) Oral History Transcript, November, 1969. Oral History Collection, Historical Division, HQ, US Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, Washington, DC, 53.

⁴⁶⁸ Sanderson oral history transcript, 8 and Heinel, 242.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁰ Barr, “Tells How Marine Fliers Hunt Down Bandits,” 5–6.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Wherever and with whomever the tactic originated, Marine aviators quickly adopted the practice because they were there for one reason: “to help the guys [infantry] on the ground.”⁴⁷² Although Marines cannot claim credit for inventing dive-bombing, Marine aviators embraced the concept of providing accurate bombing in direct support of ground forces. Even with a new tactic to deliver bombs accurately to support the infantry, the preponderance of sorties flown was in logistical support of the entire military effort in Hispaniola. No matter what mission they flew pilots never lost sight of the fact that “our main mission was the support of ground forces out there,” this statement highlighting the impact of service culture on how aviation was adapted into the Banana Wars.⁴⁷³

The desire to support ground troops is the most relevant causal factor for how aviation adapted to become a fundamental yet subordinate arm for fighting small wars. Until February 1919, “ground forces were unaware of the capabilities and limitations of supporting air units and with the wartime training planes then assigned capabilities were extremely limited.”⁴⁷⁴ Despite the Jenny and DH-4s limitations, “it soon became the normal procedure to supply patrols with food, clothing, ammunition, and all necessities by airplane drops; similarly, interior stations were supplied with everything required by air transport trips.”⁴⁷⁵ By 1920 aviation was taking root in the overall operations of the Marine forces. While in command of Squadron E in Haiti beginning in July 1920, Roy Geiger worked with Pete Ellis, who was “able to work the planes in with the Brigade work to good advantage,” which demonstrated that the ground commanders involved in combat operations were beginning to make aviation a routine part of their operations in Hispaniola.⁴⁷⁶ Although Ellis was “strong for aviation,” there remained a reluctance from the senior Marines to fully incorporate aviation into their battle plans. Geiger made the relevant observation that “what we need is to get the older officers of the Marine Corps acquainted with the work we can do so that we will become a necessary part of their operations. I think every officer serving on this island will return to the States as a strong friend of aviation. The planes have become an essential part of operations here.”⁴⁷⁷

Realizing the need to continue convincing others who were not in favor of aviation, the Marine aviators conducted any mission asked of them. As one Marine pilot recalled later, “We’d run the mail. And then we’d pick up sick people and

⁴⁷² Schilt oral history transcript, 7.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁴⁷⁴ LtCol H.C. Major, “Marine Aviation” found in Cunningham Box 2 folder 4, published in the magazine *Aeronautics* July 10, 1940, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁶ Letter to Evans, August 10, 1920, Geiger Personal Papers, Box 1, Folder 13, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

move them back and forth. And then we did go into a great deal of practice in gunnery and bombing. That was the first time it became the support of the ground troops, the help of the organization. See, we did everything . . . , anything they wanted. And we did it for them. Consequently, we became useful and friends of the ground troops.”⁴⁷⁸ Proving how beneficial aviation was in supporting operations on the ground was far better than talking about how aviation could be helpful. The missions flown by the Marines in combat conditions proved their worth.

Brigadier General Smedley Butler, the second most senior Marine to the Commandant, Major General Lejeune, was an older Marine officer who had successfully fought in small wars without aviation support and needed convincing initially.⁴⁷⁹ Geiger observed that during a visit to Haiti, “General Butler did not seem to be a very strong friend of aviation when he arrived here. I think he changed his mind after he saw what was being done, or, at least, he spoke that way to me.”⁴⁸⁰ Geiger was correct in his assessment about Butler, who now favored integrating aviation. Immediately after Butler left Haiti, he traveled to the Parris Island Marine base in South Carolina. Soon after, a friend of Geiger’s stationed there wrote to him, “I heard General Butler talking to another officer...you had the grandest flying field that he has seen and the finest system, you can get to any place in Haiti in a very short notice.”⁴⁸¹ That “finest system” referred to how an aircraft could be dispatched to support Marines in the field. By conducting missions that directly benefited the ground forces, the Marine aviators began to convince senior officers of the value of aviation. The service culture and a small wars framework centered on offensive infantry missions pervaded the Marine aviation community.

An illustration of how deeply rooted the service culture of supporting the infantry was inside the Marine Corps came in December 1919. The Office of Naval Operations conducted an informal poll among US Navy and US Marine Corps squadron commanders on whether a separate air service should provide aviation to the Navy and the Army. The impetus behind asking naval aviators came from remarks made at that time by Brigadier General Billy Mitchell: “I think the flying personnel of Naval Aviation are really in favor of it [a separate Air Force for the United States]. They hesitate to express their opinions because they are all junior officers.”⁴⁸² Roy Geiger, commanding the Marine squadron in Haiti at this time, was part of the informal survey that asked naval aviators their opinion on whether naval

⁴⁷⁸ Rodgers oral history transcript, 58.

⁴⁷⁹ A two-time Medal of Honor winner, Butler fought in the Philippine Insurrection, the Boxer Rebellion, Vera Cruz, Haiti, and France during WWI.

⁴⁸⁰ Letter to Cunningham, October 10, 1920, Geiger Personal Papers, Box 1, Folder 14, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴⁸¹ Letter to Roy Geiger from William Flynn, September 30, 1920, Geiger Personal Papers, Box 1, Folder 14, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴⁸² Quoted in US Navy CAPT Craven to Capt Geiger, December 19, 1919, Geiger Personal Papers Box 1 Folder 15, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

aviation, including the Marine aviation, should form its own separate and distinct air service. Geiger was unhesitating in his answer: naval aviation should remain firmly under the control of the Navy and Marine Corps. He stated, "It [aviation] is able to inflict heavy damage or to offer invaluable assistance, but it cannot alone capture and hold ground or control the sea. Therefore, it is not an independent arm; but is one of the components of any Army or of a Fleet."⁴⁸³ He went on to write that an independent air service would lose the ability to determine how to operate with another branch because "unless they [ground and aviation] have mutual confidence and a thorough understanding of the habits, capabilities, and problems of each other, success cannot be expected."⁴⁸⁴ He finished his assessment with, "To conclude: Theoretically, I think a Separate Air Service is unsound; practically, I think it would be a failure and a source of friction and discord throughout both the Army and the Navy."⁴⁸⁵ The Marines were firmly committed to supporting ground forces, reflecting their experience and service culture.

As Marine aviation became more integrated with supporting infantry combat operations, a standard practice developed in which attacks on bandits in Hispaniola were pre-coordinated with some flexibility provided to the ground forces directly engaged and to the pilots' judgment. As authorities in Haiti and the Dominican Republic had instituted the removal of small arms from the population, the general thought was, "Anybody down there that had a rifle, they were bandits."⁴⁸⁶ A visual confirmation that an individual or group was carrying weapons was reinforced with intelligence reports so that "you usually had a pretty good intelligence as to where the bandits were."⁴⁸⁷ The Brigade or district headquarters would pass known bandit locations and activity to the pilots before they launched. Once over a general area of bandit activity, friendly forces were located who "had signals down on the ground, and they were advised to lay down the signals and tell us where the bandits were, and at that point indicate an area where they were, and how far away, and the number. And by that, we went into action."⁴⁸⁸

In one instance, in August 1920, a combined air and ground attack occurred after a ground patrol discovered a large camp of 50-75 bandits. The ground patrol passed this discovery via telephone to the Brigade headquarters which was co-located with the aviation headquarters in Port au Prince. The infantry patrol observed the bandits throughout the night until the aircraft arrived at sunrise and "directed their fire apparently with good effect and produced the desired morale

⁴⁸³ Capt Geiger to CAPT Craven, January 20, 1920, Geiger Personal Papers, Box 1, Folder 15, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Schilt oral history transcript, 49.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., 49.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., 50.

effect as well.”⁴⁸⁹ The two aircraft dispatched were given directions for the enemy’s whereabouts using rudimentary ground signals and were “directed to the proper locality by him [ground patrol leader].” Although unable to put direct fire onto the bandits “on account of the dense vegetation,” the aircraft used their machine guns to flush the enemy towards a waiting ground ambush.⁴⁹⁰ Later, the district commander wrote in his after-action report that this operation demonstrated that “airplanes are a success in such affairs.”⁴⁹¹ In Haiti, these new types of tactics between aircraft and the infantry in addition to logistics, intelligence, and communications support allowed the infantry to operate more effectively within their small wars framework. However, combat operations quickly wound down in Haiti, and the Marines turned to occupation and training the gendarmerie.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, in May 1920, Batrville was killed by the Marines, and most of the *cacao* strength had been crushed, both the results of aggressively pursuing the fleeing bandits with relentless air patrolling.⁴⁹² After finally putting down the last *cacao* uprising, the Marines settled in to train the *gendarmerie* for the security of the people of Haiti over the next decade. The US Congressional hearings in 1921, investigating allegations of abuse, determined that Haiti needed continued oversight and appointed US Marine Brigadier General John Russell as the senior representative for the United States.⁴⁹³ The Marines pulled back into Port au Prince while the aviation element maintained regular logistics support and reconnaissance around the island.⁴⁹⁴ By 1930, with four more years of occupation ahead, there was no thought of bandits or danger in the interior of Haiti but of negotiating the removal of all US forces and control from Haiti, which finally

⁴⁸⁹ J.J. Meade, “Operations at the section of Moice, Trois Palmistes, Map designation 1422-11,” August 5, 1920, Geiger Personal Papers, Box 1, Folder 16, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴⁹⁰ 1stLt K.B. Collins, “Report of Operations,” August, 5 1920, Geiger Personal Papers, Box 1, Folder 16, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁴⁹¹ J.J. Meade, “Operations at the section of Moice, Trois Palmistes, Map designation 1422-11,” 2. Interestingly, this brief encounter is described in both ground and air operations reports. Unfortunately, having both air and ground accounts proved to be rare, as discovered during the research of this dissertation.

⁴⁹² Gendarmerie D’Haiti, Department of the North, Headquarters, Eastern Division, Ouanaminthe, Haiti, Official Diary, Harold Utley Papers, Box 2, Folder 2, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA. This diary chronicles a nearly day-by-day accounting of efforts across all districts in Haiti to capture or kill cacao bands and leaders.

⁴⁹³ Richard Millet and G. Dale Gaddy, “Administering the Protectorates: The US Occupation of Haiti and the Dominican Republic,” in *US Marines and Irregular Warfare*, ed. Stephen S. Evans (Quantico VA: Marine Corps University, 2008), 106.

⁴⁹⁴ Thomas G. Ennis, Major General (USMC ret.) Oral History Transcript, March, 1971, Oral History Collection, Historical Division, HQ, US Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, Washington, DC. This reconnaissance supported public works projects by conducting surveys from the air.

occurred in 1934. Although Marine aviation continued to play a logistical role in Haiti for the last fourteen years of occupation, the techniques and tactics developed from 1919 to 1920 set the foundation for aviation use in small wars.

The Dominican Republic

On the eastern side of Hispaniola, when the first land-based aircraft arrived in the Dominican Republic in February 1919, the Marine aviators confronted similar technical challenges, weather extremes, and terrain obstacles. Consequently, they used many of the same tactics devised on the island's western side. Another challenge in the Dominican Republic, similar to Haiti, was the lack of communication between patrols, aircraft, and the Brigade headquarters. When the aviators arrived to begin operating in the Banana Wars, another technological marvel was also introduced for the infantry: the radio. Before 1919, Marine patrols had to communicate back to their headquarters using runners and carrier pigeons to deliver messages.⁴⁹⁵ But beginning that year, each Marine infantry company received a field radio that could be carried on mules during patrols.⁴⁹⁶ The addition of wireless communications made it possible for patrols to communicate their locations and any intelligence they received back to their command posts in real time. Unfortunately, radios were bulky and heavy and only worked at short ranges. Neither the Jennies nor the DH-4s were equipped with radios sets due to their size and weight. Recognition that "nowhere is the necessity of an efficient system of aerial communication of more importance than in guerilla warfare" became evident.⁴⁹⁷

Utilizing a method of communicating between aircraft and ground troops employed in World War I, Marine aviators began dropping messages from their aircraft down to the patrols, relaying pre-planned messages from headquarters or describing what the aviators saw.⁴⁹⁸ The Marines also developed a system of air panel signals consisting of large strips of brightly colored fabric used by the infantry patrols. When arrayed in specific patterns, these strips conveyed rudimentary messages for the overhead aircraft to decipher but allowed for a basic means of two-way communication between ground and air.⁴⁹⁹ Dropping messages out of a bi-plane and arranging messages on the ground seems rudimentary compared to today's

⁴⁹⁵ Daugherty, *Counterinsurgency*, 103.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁴⁹⁷ Campbell, "Aviation Part III," 33.

⁴⁹⁸ The specific techniques are captured in the *Tentative Manual for the Employment of Air Service* written by the US Army First Air Service Chief of Staff, Lieutenant Colonel William C. Sherman, immediately following the war. Lieutenant Colonel William C. Sherman, *Tentative Manual for the Employment of Air Service* reprinted in Maurer Maurer, *The US Air Service in World War I: Volume II* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1978), 313-410.

⁴⁹⁹ Rodgers oral history transcript, 63.

near-instantaneous communications. Still, developing a means to communicate effectively was a crucial adaptation the Marines made when fighting their small wars.

A rare instance of effective communication occurred on July 22, 1919, when a report of a bandit skirmish was passed via telephone to the Air Squadrons' Headquarters.⁵⁰⁰ A Marine patrol had become engaged with approximately 30 bandits and notified the Marine aviation headquarters that they were under attack. A single Jenny flew to the scene of action and found the bandits. After flying low to identify the group and being shot at by the bandits, the aircraft fired machine guns from both the pilot and observer seats. Although successful, the aerial attack highlighted the difficulty of employing aviation fires in dense jungle environments. After the first attack run, the pilot "returned to a higher altitude in the hopes of locating another group; we failed in this."⁵⁰¹ By the time the Jenny had maneuvered for a second pass, the bandits had scattered, leaving six bodies behind.⁵⁰² At the time of the attacks, the validity of whether the bandits were dead, injured, or feigning injury is unknown, but the result was that Marine aviation had dispersed a large group of bandits.⁵⁰³ The report from this combat engagement demonstrated that effective communication could be used to bring aviation to the direct need of an infantry patrol. The incident also illustrated the service culture focused on fighting that emphasized combat reporting.

Aircraft units in the Dominican Republic and Haiti emphasized their combat capability in their reporting. However, the real boon to infantry patrols came from using aviation for reconnaissance, mapping, medical evacuation of wounded, and supply delivery. In 1922, Captain Francis Evans developed a specially modified DH-4B to evacuate wounded Marines.⁵⁰⁴ The air ambulance was outfitted with a turtleback that could accommodate one sitting and one prone patient. This innovation reduced the time to evacuate wounded to minutes and hours rather than a several-day trip through the jungle on a donkey.⁵⁰⁵ Beyond this helpful but niche capability, the types of support and weight of effort given by Marine aviation outside of combat operations showed that the real value in aviation in small wars was intelligence and logistics.

⁵⁰⁰ Fuller, 52.

⁵⁰¹ 2ndLt Manson C. Carpenter, "Contact with Bandits," July 28, 1919, Personal Papers Kratos History of Marine Aviation, Collection 5316, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁵⁰² Ibid.

⁵⁰³ Ibid. In true aviator post-engagement reporting, the crew reported killing six enemies. Reports from the local population later verified this report.

⁵⁰⁴ LtCol H.C. Major, "Marine Aviation" found in Cunningham Box 2 folder 4, published in the magazine *Aeronautics* July 10, 1940. Also, Sherrod, *History*, 22.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

Although in their combat reports, Marines emphasized the value of the work conducted by Marine aviation, Geiger's assessment of his squadron's activities from October 1919 to July 1920 shows where the actual utility of aviation lay. Out of 1271 sorties flown, only 15 were documented as "raids" compared to 343 as "transporting mail," with "reconnaissance flights" coming in just behind at 342 sorties.⁵⁰⁶ Geiger emphasized that "these reconnaissance flights were made over mountainous country inhabited by bandits with the object of locating bands of outlaws and keeping in contact with ground patrols." Geiger also emphasized that all raids "were made in conjunction with infantry."⁵⁰⁷ There are two relevant points regarding the reconnaissance flights that should be highlighted from Geiger's report: first, aircraft located the bandits and then passed that information to the infantry, which emphasized the key role of intelligence gathering by aviation. In a similar fashion, patrolling aircraft could help locate and track Marine patrols. Once the Marine patrol was found, their location was passed to the district headquarters, and now the district and Brigade headquarters knew exactly where their patrols were. Thus, other forces or resources around the patrol's area of operations could be directed much more effectively. Second, Geiger emphasized that aircraft were in support of and partnered with the infantry, showing that even in post flight reporting, upholding the service culture of being a supporting arm was important to Marine aviators.

Another way aviation supported infantry operations in small wars was through air transportation of logistics. Even rudimentary air transport using Jennies and DH-4s in the early years provided an economy of both time and resources to the small wars campaigns. The speed at which aircraft could move about the country was invaluable, particularly in impassable terrain or where there were no roads. The most common form of mechanized travel in Hispaniola was surplus World War I Liberty Trucks. Even when trucks were employed, they "burn over four times as much gas and oil as a Ford [later transport aircraft] and triple the time to make the same trip."⁵⁰⁸ A report from 1924 mentions the hazards associated with overland travel, such as washed-out roads, incomplete roads, and foul weather.⁵⁰⁹ In contrast, a DH-4B could "in little over an hour complete the trip that takes a day by boat or more by land to complete, and that is only under the most favorable conditions. Thus, time and money are saved, and a direct service is maintained."⁵¹⁰ Unhindered by the rudimentary road and rail network found in Hispaniola, the Marine aviators needed little more than a thousand feet of an open field or a long stretch of a dry, smooth riverbed to land on. Easy access to secondary airfields throughout the

⁵⁰⁶ Report of Operations Squadron 'E,' Marine Aviation Force, from October 1, 1919, to July 1, 1920, 1-3, Geiger Papers, Box 1, Folder 14.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁸ "Report of First Air Squadron, Marine Aviation Force ca 1920," 2.

⁵⁰⁹ Burbur, "Foreign Aviation," 4

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

country meant aircraft could pass information quickly from one sector to the next, bring in intelligence reports from headquarters, and even move Marine ground forces around the theater as needed, whether as replacements in response to minor medical emergencies.⁵¹¹ Marine pilots delivered mail to distant villages and brought information on future public works projects.⁵¹² Facilitating ease of movement ensured aviation became “practically indispensable to a Marine force operating in the field, no matter where it is.”⁵¹³ Marine aircraft reduced the time and manpower needed to move supplies, provided communications from outposts to the headquarters of each country, and began providing a much-needed intelligence-gathering function.

Patrol leaders were confronted with a limited view of their routes and areas due to the dense foliage of Hispaniola. Flying a patrol leader or company commander above their respective area of responsibility allowed them to scout terrain nearly instantaneously, a task that would take days of normal patrolling. Aircraft also provided newly arrived Marine company commanders with a unique perspective by flying them over their new areas of operation so that they could familiarize themselves with the terrain.⁵¹⁴ In an era of traditional map and compass land navigation, the birds-eye view afforded to Marine ground officers enhanced situational awareness of the lay of the land, which could then be transcribed into more accurate maps, increasing the intelligence awareness in the small wars theaters. Using aerial photography, the Marines assisted the national government in creating the first-ever comprehensive road construction project in the Dominican Republic.⁵¹⁵ An examination of photos done during the research for this study taken by Marine aircraft during the time shows the emphasis on roadways, bridges, and waterways, all critical information that would take an exponentially greater length of time to acquire if that intelligence had to be gained by foot patrols.⁵¹⁶ By 1924, the director

⁵¹¹ Captain W.E McCaughtry, “Santo Domingo Aerial Pilot,” June 1920, Personal Papers Kratos History of Marine Aviation, Collection 5316, Box 1, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁵¹² Fuller, 42. Also, Turner, “Aviation Notes,” 296. Marine aircraft also supported increasing medical readiness and improved the population’s overall health by flying life-saving vaccines around the respective countries.

⁵¹³ “Report of First Air Squadron, Marine Aviation Force ca 1920,” 2.

⁵¹⁴ Ennis oral history transcript, 10, and Rodgers oral history transcript, 62.

⁵¹⁵ Keith Bickel, *Mars Learning: The Marine Corps Development of Small Wars Doctrine, 1915-1944* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2001), 60.

⁵¹⁶ “Marine Corps History Division Photo Galleries,” United States Marine Corps History Division, accessed February 24, 2021, <https://www.mcu.usmc.mil/historydivision/SitePages/Photo%20Galleries.aspx>. An example of these photos can be viewed under the Dominican Republic folder, specifically, the photos labeled “Santo Domingo 46-48. Further examples of aerial photography from the Banana Wars are found in the Haiti folder (photos “Barracks and Bases” 006-023, “Bridges, Roads,

of mapping for the Brigade had completed twelve comprehensive contour maps of the country, including road networks, village locations, demographic information, and economic conditions of various backgrounds.⁵¹⁷ The US Secretary of the Navy's report to the President in 1920 mentioned air operations in Haiti and the Dominican Republic but highlighted two aspects: mapping and combat operations. The Secretary noted that mapping operations of the entire coastline of both countries were well underway, a first for Hispaniola. However, he underscored that "operations have been undertaken against bandits in conjunction and cooperation with forces on the land."⁵¹⁸ This statement is relevant to the current study as it underscores that the combat actions, while very few, were highlighted as aviation's success in Hispaniola. Based on the primary source documents used for research in this survey the more important contributions made by aviation to the Marines' small wars was in reconnaissance, communications, and logistics support.

There were, however, severe shortfalls with aviation's support to Marine ground forces in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The lack of reliable communications and some tactics used by the Marine patrols hampered aviation's ability to provide adequate direct combat support. Marine ground forces often patrolled at night and utilized inclement weather to mask their approach toward enemy strongholds.⁵¹⁹ Most patrols would disperse into the countryside for days or, in some cases, weeks at a time.⁵²⁰ Such long-range patrols made direct support from aircraft even more challenging given that direct communication was needed between airplanes and the Marines on patrol. Aircraft in Hispaniola never flew at night, and once a patrol was under the jungle canopy, locating it from the air was challenging.⁵²¹

In addition to the challenges of locating a patrol in the jungle, the lack of navigational equipment in the aircraft further compounded the difficulties in supporting the infantry. Navigation over the rugged terrain in Hispaniola consisted entirely of following ground landmarks. To overcome navigational difficulties, the first commander of Squadron D in the Dominican Republic, Captain William McCaughtry, put together a booklet of "aerial sailing directions" for his squadron and for future aviators assigned to Santo Domingo. In addition to prominent landmarks to assist aviators in navigation, the handout described thirteen separate

and Canals" 026-029, "City Views and Aerials" 001-033, and the Nicaragua folder "Aerials" 001-081.

⁵¹⁷ Fuller, 59.

⁵¹⁸ *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy for the Fiscal Year 1920* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1920), 46.

⁵¹⁹ Gendarmerie D'Haiti, Uteley Personal Papers, Box 2 Folder 2. Also, Bickel, *Mars Learning*, 124.

⁵²⁰ Fuller, 34.

⁵²¹ Turner, "Aviation Notes," 294. The first concerted effort to develop night flying procedures took place in Quantico in the late summer of 1921, discussed later in this chapter.

landing fields and thirteen additional emergency landing areas created in the first year of operations in the Dominican Republic. An example of the descriptions for navigation read as follows: “Five miles beyond La Vega is a small white church on an isolated hill. Flying on over this to the northwest, Santiago is soon picked up lying in the middle of the broad valley.”⁵²² Although seemingly rudimentary compared to modern aerial navigation systems, it remained an invaluable tool to navigate quickly and easily “over a mountainous jungle country where there has never been any flying done before.”⁵²³ The secondary airfields allowed the Marine aviators to project their air patrols into the country’s interior to support the infantry better. The aviator’s efforts, including their acceptance of the dangers of flying support for the infantry, were immediately recognized by their ground counterparts: “Marine air backed up ground operations, and this was no easy chore for it was a very mountainous country.”⁵²⁴

In addition to the hazards of rudimentary aircraft, bad weather, and low technology navigation, some of the population were openly hostile to the Marine aircraft flying overhead: “Low flying reconnaissance had its drawbacks for pilots frequently found bullet holes in their planes on their return. They resorted to taking stove lids from the buzzycots [camp stoves] for seats.”⁵²⁵ Overcoming the extreme hazards of flying at the time was an effort that went beyond trying to prove that aviation was valuable. The Marine aviators were driven by their sense of service culture to provide the best support possible to the infantry.

Turning now to a senior officer who was a proponent of aviation, Brigadier General Logan Feland was the new commander of Marine forces in the Dominican Republic. Feland, a career Marine recently returning from service on the Western Front, took command of the Second Provincial Brigade in the Dominican Republic in December 1919.⁵²⁶ He understood the value of aviation, having seen its usefulness in action on the Western Front, and realized that aviation could benefit the Marine Corps.⁵²⁷ Feland’s time in command over the next year was notable in terms of his integration of airpower for several reasons. Upon arriving in the

⁵²² McCaughtry, “Santo Domingo, Aerial Pilot,” 2.

⁵²³ “Report of First Air Squadron, Marine Aviation Force ca 1920,” 1.

⁵²⁴ Lester A. Dessez, Brigadier General (USMC ret) Oral History Transcript, June, 1970, Oral History Collection, Historical Division, HQ, US Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, Washington, DC, 26. Dessez was a career infantryman and was the aide de camp to General Catlin, the Brigade commander in Haiti when aviation was introduced.

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

⁵²⁶ Feland was a veteran of several small wars, including the Philippines in 1899, Vera Cruz in 1914, and fighting at Belleau Wood and the Meuse Argonne in France. A complete biography of Feland is David J. Bettz, *Kentucky Marine: Major General Logan Feland and the Making of the Modern Marine Corps* (University of Kentucky: The University of Kentucky Press, 2014).

⁵²⁷ Cunningham, *Diary*, 30.

Dominican Republic, he grappled with the problem of a down-sizing Corps that had seen a reduction in quality non-commissioned officers since 1917, and Feland advocated for additional Marines to deal with the still untamed Eastern District.⁵²⁸ To make up for the lack of experience in the Dominican Republic, Feland issued a standing order encompassing many aspects he felt needed improvement in executing operations in the small wars campaign. These included tactical measures from the manual of arms to codifying the running of the Guardia and a more effective court-martial system.⁵²⁹ Feland continued to increase pressure on the Eastern District with his newly issued orders and by standardizing the tactics, including formalized training between ground forces and aviation.⁵³⁰

To achieve the best cooperation between the ground and the air, Feland also established training schools in Santo Domingo for ground forces and aviators to learn how to collaborate in a training environment and then apply the training in combat. The course consisted of seven weeks of instruction in patrolling, bush warfare, and small war-specific training.⁵³¹ By July 1921, the Marine Brigade in the Dominican Republic, later mirrored by the school in Haiti, had developed training systems and example problems incorporating aircraft in their tactical solutions.⁵³² All new arrivals participated in the training, leading to a synchronized training regimen. Marines attending the training in either country found tremendous value in a focused program dedicated to the tactics of small wars fighting. One infantry officer stationed in Haiti remarked, “The brigade training center was outside Port au Prince. They had a very fine training center out there. It is what corresponds now to our infantry training outfits. It was all small unit tactics. We had a combat range where we used live ammunition. It lasted about two months, and I had a hot-shot platoon when I got back to Cap Haitian.”⁵³³ By 1923, the Marines had three schools

⁵²⁸ Military governor of Santo Domingo to CNO, “Increase in Forces in Santo Domingo, “February 14, 1920, Record Group 127, Records Relating to the Occupation of the Dominican Republic, folder D-46, National Archives, Washington DC..

⁵²⁹ Brigade General Order Number 1 1920, Record Group 127, Records Relating to the Occupation of the Dominican Republic, Folder D-43, National Archives, Washington DC.

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

⁵³¹ Report of Operations 2d Brigade July 31, 1920, and Combat Problem to be used by the 115th company, June 23, 1921, and Report of Operations, 2d Brigade, April 20, 1921, and Report of Operations, 2d Brigade, July 31, 1921, Record Group 127, Records Relating to the Occupation of the Dominican Republic, Folder D-43, National Archives, Washington DC. In February 1922, a formal small wars training center was also established in Haiti, and the Brigade began cycling its troops through it. *Annual Report of the Major General Commandant of the United States Marines Corps to the Secretary of the Navy for the Fiscal Year 1922* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1922), 22 and 24.

⁵³² “Training Problem, 1921” Record Group 127, Records Relating to the Occupation of the Dominican Republic, Folder D-43, National Archives, Washington, DC.

⁵³³ Vernon McGee, General (USMC ret.) Oral History Transcript, January 1973, Oral History Collection, Historical Division, HQ, US Marine Corps, History and Museums Division,

focused on small wars: one in Haiti at Pont Beudet and two in the Dominican Republic in Santo Domingo and in Santiago. The establishment of small wars schools in Hispaniola marked the end of the ad hoc way the infantry and aviation solved the challenges of small wars fighting and was a sign that aviation was now fully embedded into small wars operations.

The Marines had expanded their formal education system since the end of WWI, and having a standard curriculum dedicated to the practice of small wars was a new development for the US military and an accomplishment worthy of inclusion in the Commandant's annual report in 1922.⁵³⁴ During his tenure as the Second Provisional Brigade commander, Feland took this integrated training approach with him when he departed the Dominican Republic in December 1920 and became the Director of Training for the Marine Corps.⁵³⁵ Feland continued to be an advocate for aviation in the 1920s and took a keen interest in further integrating it into the Marine Corps. He went so far as enrolling in an aviation observer course in Quantico in 1926.⁵³⁶ His emphasis on integrated offensive operations and interest in aviation is relevant to this dissertation because Feland went on to command all Marines in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign in 1927.

Taking over from Feland, the new Marine commander in the Dominican Republic, Brigadier General Harry Lee, who looked favorably on aviation, began arming locals friendly to the US and using them to augment the strength of Marine patrols.⁵³⁷ These more recent ground formations of armed locals, coordinated with other patrols across the Eastern District, resulted in increased rebel losses of men and materiel. Colonel W.C. Harlee, the commander of the 15th Regiment in 1921, enacted a policy of rounding up every male in the eastern area of the Dominican Republic, which was the area with the most unrest.⁵³⁸ Using a combination of radio communications, aircraft reconnaissance, and a well-established intelligence network, the Marines were able to round up 400 known bandits in just three months in 1921.⁵³⁹ The local males were made to line up, and intelligence officers and informants would pick out the bandits. Although effective, the "cordon system" was increasingly unpopular with the local population and was discontinued. However, the cordons, along with several amnesty periods and increased patrols by the Marines and Guardia Nacional, supported by aircraft, delivering timely intelligence,

Washington, DC, 36-37. McGee was an infantry officer in Haiti in 1923-24 before going to flight training, where he would fly in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign.

⁵³⁴ *Report of the Major General Commandant 1922*, 7.

⁵³⁵ Bettz, *Kentucky Marine*, 134-135.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, 147. Feland was subsequently disenrolled for being too senior and for a heart condition.

⁵³⁷ Brigadier General Harry Lee to District Commander, Eastern District, "Operations against Bandits," July 1, 1922, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁵³⁸ Heinel, *Soldiers from the Sea*, 250.

⁵³⁹ *Ibid.* Also, Smedley D. Butler, "Marine Aviation Notes," *Leatherneck* 5, no. 1 (1921), 2.

and effectively ended armed resistance in the Dominican Republic. By May 1922, rebels in the Eastern district agreed to an armistice.⁵⁴⁰

From the USMC Commandant's perspective, by 1922, operations in the Dominican Republic were reduced and no longer required a robust Marine presence.⁵⁴¹ Having transferred much of the internal security to the trained Guardia, the Marines began consolidating their forces in Santo Domingo. The United States turned over governmental control to the Dominicans on October 21, 1922, but a US military governor remained in place to approve funding for expenditures above and beyond the Dominican budget. On September 17, 1924, all US forces withdrew from the Dominican Republic. As the Marines departed the Dominican Republic and then Haiti a decade later, the Marines had created a working set of tactics incorporating aviation into small wars operations, but a set of tactics that were subordinate to infantry operations shaped by the Marines' small wars framework and service culture. The efforts of Marine aviation in Hispaniola, now an embedded part of the Marine's small wars operational procedures, were used as an example of how valuable aviation could be to the Marine Corps by those in the United States trying to secure a permanent place for aviation inside the Marine Corps.

Report Card: Aviation in Small Wars an 'A' for Effort

Cunningham, who served as the commander of Squadron D from December 1920-1921, lauded aviation's performance in the Banana Wars, even with the aircraft's physical limitations, in his 1920 *Marine Corps Gazette* article "The Value of Aviation to the Marine Corps." In this article, Cunningham set out to show how useful aviation could be to the Marine Corps. He reported that commanders in both theaters requested more aircraft because even the limited number of planes had significantly reduced the amount of active patrolling required.⁵⁴² Colonel Colon Harlee, the 15th Regiment commander in the Dominican Republic from 1921-1922, stated that aviation "enabled all companies to move out promptly and simultaneously for concerted action."⁵⁴³ Additionally, machine guns and bombs employed from aircraft provided the opportunity to scatter groups of bandits, but the

⁵⁴⁰ Heinel, 251, and Fuller, *Marines in the Dominican Republic*, 45. General Lee, the military governor of the Dominican Republic, pronounced the country pacified in his May 31, 1922 report.

⁵⁴¹ *Report Major General Commandant 1922*, 22-23.

⁵⁴² In Cunningham's article "The Value of Aviation."

⁵⁴³ Brigadier General Harry Lee, "Special Report of Activities of the 2nd Brigade, U.S. Marines, Dominican Republic, for the Year ending June 30, 1922," August 24, 1922, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

actual value of aviation lay in its communications and logistical roles according to Cunningham and reporting from the field.⁵⁴⁴

In his article, Cunningham emphasized the value of reconnaissance and aerial photography that helped locate and follow bandit groups; photos could be “distributed to the various organizations forty-five minutes after the plane which took them landed” and provided a revolutionary military tool for the Marines in conducting small wars operations.⁵⁴⁵ The rugged terrain in Haiti and the Dominican Republic made aviation invaluable in exponentially extending the range and speed of patrols. Aviation saved time by quickly surveying an area and providing the intelligence necessary to direct Marine ground forces to where they could be most effective. In particular, Cunningham noted the ability of aircraft to disperse bandits before they could band together, but Cunningham saw the enemy through a lens of superiority.⁵⁴⁶ Aviation provided a practical advantage in firepower, reconnaissance, and logistics, multiplied by the fact that the enemy “are nearly always superstitious and easily stampeded or cowed by methods of warfare with which they are unfamiliar.”⁵⁴⁷ By maintaining aerial patrols and harassing bandits using machine guns and bomb attacks in direct support of infantry operations, Marine aviation became a natural extension of the offensive approach at the heart of the service culture and advocated by all Marine commanders going back to the Philippines in 1898. Turning to the Marines’ aviation efforts in the United States during time period which saw the introduction of aircraft into Hispaniola, an analysis of stateside activity demonstrates that although Marine aviators experimented with other tactics, the tactical choices made by those fighting in small wars remained dominant.

Post WWI Marine Aviation development

Before looking at aviation in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign, it is necessary to examine some of the efforts by Marine aviation inside the United States after WWI, as Marine aviators worked to create a permanent role for aviation within the Corps. After the war, Cunningham fought externally and internally to make a permanent aviation force within and under the control of the Marine Corps. Reflecting similar reductions in other services, Marine Aviation manning dropped from 282 officers and 2,180 mechanics to a much smaller contingent of 50 officers and 300 mechanics. Cunningham, now the Director of Marine Aviation, had carved out a role for Marine aviation by immediately sending squadrons to the Dominican

⁵⁴⁴ “Special Report on the Activities of the 1st Air Squadron, Marine Aviation Force, Santo Domingo,” Geographical files, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA., and Cunningham, “Value of Aviation,” 227.

⁵⁴⁵ Cunningham, “Value of Aviation,” 229.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 231.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 230.

Republic, Haiti, Guam, and North Island, California, in February 1919.⁵⁴⁸ The decision to send squadrons to distant locations was partly driven by the fact that Marines had no permanent airfield at the war's end because Miami Field, where all pre-war training had taken place, was due to be closed six months after the Armistice. The Marines returned to the US in December 1918 and packed their equipment within three months to set sail for Hispaniola, taking the less capable JN-6Hs training aircraft from the Miami airfield.⁵⁴⁹

Although driven by a lack of permanent airfields in the US, Cunningham's decision to send Marine aircraft to locations where Marine infantry was engaged in small wars was relevant in terms of cementing aviation into the service. Looking back after the Banana Wars, many Marine aviators agreed that moving Marine aviation to Hispaniola "gave us [Marine aviation] a reason to exist. We would have disintegrated completely because we were not loved by any means by the line [infantry] or anything else—thought we were superfluous and no good."⁵⁵⁰ Because Marine aviation had not supported Marine infantry on the Western Front, it is not surprising that at the beginning of 1919 many Marine infantry officers thought little of Marine aviation. By sending aircraft to the small wars campaigns on Hispaniola, Cunningham knew those aircraft would be of immediate use to the fighting on the ground.

Within the USMC in the United States, Cunningham faced skeptics, especially those Marines who had fought in France during World War I but had never received aviation support from the Marine Northern Bombing Group. Cunningham synthesized his ideas about the role of aviation inside the Marine Corps in a 1920 *Marine Corps Gazette* article by stating, "It is fully realized that the only excuse for aviation in any service is its usefulness in assisting the troops on the ground to successfully carry out their operations."⁵⁵¹ The Marine Corps service culture pervaded this statement and Cunningham's words formed a foundational statement about Marine aviation. The most senior aviator in the Marine Corps at the time was proclaiming that aviation was a supporting arm to the infantry, and this set the tone for how Marine aviators viewed their role inside the service. Cunningham believed in the worth of aviation in a theoretical sense and saw that the lack of proper aircraft did not preclude the thinking necessary to conceptualize aviation for

⁵⁴⁸ Letter to LtCol Miller, January 22, 1931, Cunningham Person Papers, Box 2, Folder 4, 9. Also, Squadron Lineage Haiti, Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua are found in Cunningham Personal Papers Box 2 Folder 5.

⁵⁴⁹ Cunningham's letter to Gen Long, November 23, 1918, Cunningham's Personal Papers, Box 2 Folder 1, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA. The US Navy aviation commands in France refused to bring home their aircraft, brand new DH-4's, and equipment from fighting on the Western Front.

⁵⁵⁰ Rodgers oral interview, 49-50. The same sentiment is made in the oral records for Schilt, Sanderson, Miller, and Mulcahy.

⁵⁵¹ Cunningham, "Value of Aviation to the Marine Corps," 222.

its future use. Marine aviators remained dedicated to supporting the infantry, no matter what mission they flew. Using hypothetical examples, Cunningham foresaw the advantages gained by faster aircraft that could go further and with radios installed would have the ability for instant and long-range communication.⁵⁵² He saw that the support already provided in 1919 and 1920 to the infantry in Haiti and the Dominican Republic was “seriously but unavoidably handicapped by a lack of suitable planes and not enough personnel to properly carry on the work.” Still, the lack of proper equipment did not dampen his enthusiasm for supporting the infantry.⁵⁵³

Cunningham’s efforts and persistence paid off when, in October 1920, Major General John Lejeune, by now the Commandant of the US Marine Corps, formally reorganized Marine aviation into permanent squadrons, confusingly with new designations, based on where Cunningham had initially placed Marine squadrons after returning from World War I; Squadron 1 in the Dominican Republic, Squadrons 2 and 3 in Quantico (one of these squadrons had originally been in North Island), Squadron 4 in Haiti, and one patrol squadron in Guam.⁵⁵⁴ Although by 1920, the US Marines had created an airfield in Quantico, the permanent aviation force structure was centered on where the Marines were fighting and needed aviation the most – in combat operations.

By 1921, aviation was well established in the Corps. Cunningham relinquished his duties as the senior aviation officer to Major Tom Turner and subsequently took command of the First Air Squadron in the Dominican Republic.⁵⁵⁵ As Cunningham stepped down from his position as the director of Marine aviation, he continued to advocate for Marine aviation and to influence its development. His singular contributions were relevant to the development of Marine aviation from its first days until aircraft began combat operations in the Banana Wars. The significant impact of his drive to create a land-based aviation capability in WWI and his subsequent prophetic vision to quickly return to the US to retain resources, manpower, and structure before the demobilization cannot be overstated.

As the Marine Corps continued its small wars campaigns in Hispaniola, Marine aviators in the US participated in different exercises, including in July 1921 in US Army Air Service Brigadier General William “Billy” Mitchell’s aerial bombing demonstrations of a captured German battleship and several older US Navy ships. Under Mitchell’s direction, a series of attacks were conducted by aircraft to show how naval cruisers, destroyers, submarines, and even battleships could be

⁵⁵² Ibid. Cunningham, in the article, makes a case for the value of a future expedition.

⁵⁵³ Ibid., 226.

⁵⁵⁴ Change of Station, Orders to Major Alfred A. Cunningham from Major General Commandant, Signed John A Lejeune by dir, December 18, 1920, Record Group 127, Cunningham Official Military Personal File.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid.

destroyed by airpower alone.⁵⁵⁶ The Marine effort, led by then Major Roy Geiger, was highlighted in the senior Navy aviator's report to the Chief of Naval Operations.⁵⁵⁷ Later that same summer, Major Geiger, now commanding the Air Station in Quantico, conducted the first night operations for Marine aviation. Heavily scripted and with the maximum safety considerations set in place, the event was a success over two nights of flying but was not a tactic pursued by those squadrons assigned to the Caribbean or Central America.⁵⁵⁸ The result of all these activities meant that the Marines stayed prominent in major aviation exercises and continued to develop their tactics to meet their service needs. The needs of the Marine Corps, driven by its service culture, shaped the aviation decisions made by Marine senior leaders. While Marine aviation might have participated in strategic bombing exercises like Mitchell's, the Marines foremost focus was on supporting the infantry.

In one instance, General Smedley Butler conducted a series of large-scale ground maneuvers in Gettysburg and other US Civil War battlefields to display Marine capabilities. Butler sent Marine forces from Quantico to nearby battlefields to re-create the older battles while demonstrating what a modern Marine force could do. One of the highlights was the Gettysburg Maneuvers in the summer of 1922, which entailed a march of 4,000 Marines, trucks, heavy artillery, and tanks. Overhead were observation balloons, six VE-7s (bi-plane trainer), three Martin bombers (two engine bi-plane bomber), and six DH-4s.⁵⁵⁹ Aviation supported large infantry maneuvers and practiced coordination between air and ground forces. The Gettysburg Maneuvers received pride of place in the 1922 US Marine Commandant's Annual Report to the Secretary of the Navy: "especially worthy of note, nearly 500 hours actual flying time in the air was registered, and about 38,500 miles were flown. Airplanes carried passengers and freight with a speed and a

⁵⁵⁶ William Mitchell, *Winged Defense: The Development and Possibilities of Modern Air Power--Economic and Military*. (3rd printing, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1926), 71-73 described the specific attack on the *Ostfriesland*. The chapter "Aircraft Dominate Seacraft" details the numerous air-to-sea attacks conducted by Mitchell and his team to demonstrate the ability of aircraft to attack and sink capital ships.

⁵⁵⁷ The Marines distinguished themselves during the lauded sinking of the *Ostfriesland*, a captured German warship, during aerial bombing excises in July 1921. Letter from US Navy Captain A.W. Johnson to Major Roy Geiger, July 23, 1921, Geiger Personal Papers Box 1 Folder 14, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA. Also, Thomas Turner, "Aviation Notes," *Marine Corps Gazette* 5, no. 3 (September 1921): 293.

⁵⁵⁸ Turner, "Aviation Notes," 294. Geiger had the airfield covered in lamps and headlights from airfield vehicles. The aircraft used procedural control, circling the field at various altitudes, and vacating their assigned altitudes at a proscribed time. During the Banana Wars, almost all flights were conducted in daylight. Flying at night in Quantico with no prominent terrain was one thing. Flying in the dark with unseen mountain ranges in Hispaniola and Nicaragua was quite another.

⁵⁵⁹ Austin, Braley, and Fleming, 47.

dispatch impossible by any other method.”⁵⁶⁰ Although the Gettysburg Maneuvers were part military exercise and part Marine publicity, the participating Marine aviators demonstrated that aviation played a valuable supporting role to infantry even with a large formation of troops. Moving troops around by air, keeping communications open along the length of the march, and providing reconnaissance were all critical features in Marine aviation training in the United States and Hispaniola. Marine aviation cleverly took advantage of these maneuvers to highlight their capabilities to those within the Corps who remained skeptical.

Due to the demands for better coordination, particularly communication, between aircraft and ground troops in the Caribbean, the Marine base in Quantico began conducting an extensive aerial observation training course. As tactics, techniques, and procedures were developed in the field operations in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, they were incorporated into the curriculum at Quantico and given further study and refinement. The results from the training schools were then relayed directly to units actively engaged in small wars.⁵⁶¹ For example, Quantico dedicated two courses at the School of Aerial Observation in 1926 to finding the best means to communicate with and support ground troops, specifically for small wars. As discussed in the next chapter, which focuses on the Second Nicaraguan Campaign, these schools perfected air panel communications for ground-to-air communications as well as a technique for aircraft to pick up messages from infantry patrols. Although the US Marine Corps did not have the scale of other air services, the Marines attempted to develop the best techniques and tactics for employing aircraft to support their ground forces.

A Fundamental but Supporting Arm

By the time all Marine forces departed the Dominican Republic in 1924 and Haiti in 1934, Marine aviation had demonstrated it could successfully support Marines on the ground. Marine aviation underwent several transformations from when Cunningham soloed in May 1912 until the beginning of the Second Nicaraguan Campaign in 1927. Beginning as a seaplane force used only for scouting for surface fleets, through Cunningham’s insistence and leadership Marine aviation became a bomber force in World War I. Quickly returning to the US after the war, Cunningham took advantage of surplus equipment in the US and sent aircraft to existing small wars operations just three months after the armistice was signed. Trained to fight on the Western Front, the Marine aviators quickly adapted their tactics to support the infantry in the jungles of Hispaniola. Marine aircraft had participated in attacks on enemy forces that directly supported the military objectives of subduing the rebels and *cacaos*. However, the limited number of aircraft available in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, the lack of reliable

⁵⁶⁰ *Report Major General Commandant 1922*, 7.

⁵⁶¹ Austin, Braley, and Fleming, 52.

communications, and the types of aircraft available meant that Marine aviation had a non-decisive role in combat operations but had earned its place as a tool to assist the Marines in small wars.⁵⁶²

Marine aviation proved to be a valuable supporting arm for fighting small wars and received significant support from the Commandant. There is a relevant section in the 1922 Commandant's Annual Report about aviation and fighting in the Banana Wars. What may have been sent to the Marines in Hispaniola in haste in February 1919 was, by 1922, fully integrated into the overall structure of forces needed to fight small wars. The Annual Report noted that the two squadrons stationed in Hispaniola conducted "routine courier and passenger carrying service, [and] patrol work in connection with the operations of troops against bandits has been performed" that also included a consistent air-mail route supporting Marines in the interior.⁵⁶³ Significantly, the Commandant was clear that no matter where aviation was established around the globe, all pilots conducted "wherever possible, training in working out tactical problems with troops on the ground."⁵⁶⁴ This statement is relevant because it shows that the most senior leadership level of the Marine Corps recognized that aviation both supported ground forces and reflected the Marines' service culture.

Despite the obstacles facing Marine aviation in Hispaniola, including detractors from inside the service, from February 1919 onwards, aviation became an integral tool used in small wars, and from the first aerial attack coordinated by Ostermann, Marine aviation continually improved its tactics. In order to better support ground forces, communication methods were refined and then incorporated into training schools back in the United States. The first dive bombing tactics combined experimentation and a desire to be the greatest assistance to the ground forces. Not designed to ferry passengers, the DH-4s in Hispaniola became a reliable means of quickly moving Marines and materiel around the theaters of operations. Taking the lead from Alfred Cunningham and the service culture centered on ground forces, Marine aviation tactics were adapted to support the infantry, not supplant ground operations.

These tactics were shaped around the existing small wars framework established by the Marines' previous small wars experiences. The service culture dictated that aviation supported infantry operations, which was a causal factor in how aviation developed for use in small wars. As Marine aviator Ford Rodgers recalled, "We were there, and they [infantry] used us, and they used us to their advantage, and consequently, we became a useful and integral part of the Marine Corps."⁵⁶⁵ Marine aviation had proven its worth through its deeds, not theoretical possibilities, and took every opportunity to demonstrate the multifaceted capabilities of aviation. Although offensive action dominated reporting, support services of

⁵⁶² Johnson, *Marine Corps Aviation*, 53.

⁵⁶³ *Report Major General Commandant 1922*, 22–23.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵⁶⁵ Rodgers oral history transcript, 58.

communication, mail delivery, transportation, aerial reconnaissance, mapping, and aero-medical evacuation made aviation particularly valuable in executing small wars. Marine aviation continued to be “useful and integral” as a new Marine force deployed to the Second Nicaraguan Campaign in 1927, which will be the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Six
The Second Nicaraguan Campaign 1928-1933

The previous chapter analyzed the development of Marine aviation, the decisions made to adapt aviation into a subordinate arm during the small wars campaigns in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and how service culture and an existing small wars framework shaped the use of Marine aviation. The examination showed that the aviation tactics, techniques, and procedures developed in Hispaniola quickly became standard operating procedures, with aviation concepts and practices included in the small wars schools' curricula in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.⁵⁶⁶ The lessons learned in Hispaniola for adapting aviation for a small wars campaign pervaded Marine training in the United States and became standard tactics before the Marines departed for the Second Nicaraguan Campaign in 1927, which is the focus of this chapter.⁵⁶⁷

Unlike the use of aviation in Hispaniola, which was introduced after the small wars campaigns had begun, the Second Nicaraguan Campaign had aviation resources available from the start of the conflict. This chapter will analyze how aviation was subordinate to infantry operations from the outset of the campaign, demonstrating that the addition of aircraft enabled the Marines to develop different small wars tactics but did not fundamentally change how they conceptualized fighting small wars. Changes and improvements to aviation tactics occurred, but Marine aviation remained a supporting arm to the infantry. This chapter will first examine the evolving political objectives that Washington's political leadership wanted to achieve in Nicaragua. This is followed by an analysis of the deployment of Marine forces and the use of aviation in Nicaragua from its arrival in early 1927 through the Nicaraguan national election in November 1928. The focus of the chapter then shifts to the general use of aviation for the remainder of the campaign, which ultimately concluded in January 1933. Major events will be examined chronologically to the maximum extent practical as aviation usage, the crafting of political objectives, and the evolving military campaign occurred simultaneously.

⁵⁶⁶ Brigade General Order Number 1 1920, Record Group 127, Records Relating to the Occupation of the Dominican Republic, Folder D-43, and Report of Operations 2d Brigade July 31, 1920, and Combat Problem to be used by the 115th company, June 23, 1921, and Report of Operations, 2d Brigade, April 20, 1921, and Report of Operations, 2d Brigade, July 31, 1921, Record Group 127, Records Relating to the Occupation of the Dominican Republic, Folder D-43, National Archives, Washington DC.

⁵⁶⁷ Dion Williams, "The Fall Exercises of 1924: Marine Corps Expeditionary Force," *Marine Corps Gazette* 10, no. 1 (June 1925): 30-62. This article describes the reconnaissance and communication methods developed in Hispaniola used in conjunction with large-scale ground exercises conducted in 1924. Also, Edwin H. Brainard, "Marine Aviation, A Lecture," *Marine Corps Gazette* 11, no. 3 (September 1926): 192-198. Major Brainard, the new Director of Marine Aviation, gave this lecture at the Marine schools describing how aviation was used in the Marine Corps, describing certain techniques that originated in the Banana Wars.

Into Central America

The US Marine Corps' involvement in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign stemmed from long-standing US national commercial interests and national security in Central America. At the turn of the twentieth century, the United Fruit Company and other US businesses owned a majority interest in the railroads, plantations, and ports in Nicaragua, notably on the East Coast at Bluefields and the West Coast at Corinto, with other investments in the capital of Managua.⁵⁶⁸ Along with sustaining the protection of its economic investments and the safety of American citizens in the region, the US was also concerned in the early 1920s that Mexico would spread its brand of communism into Central America. These factors and the pervasive political unrest in Nicaragua resulted in the Marines maintaining a permanent presence in the capital of Managua to protect American lives and property from 1912 to 1925.⁵⁶⁹ From the perspective of the USMC, the motives for military intervention and occupation in Nicaragua were that the Marines “were forced to land and reestablish law and order” and “protect American and foreign lives and property.”⁵⁷⁰ During this period, later dubbed the First Nicaraguan Campaign, the Marines kept their presence localized to Managua with sporadic small unit clashes with local bandits.

After thirteen years, in 1925, the US removed the Marines from Managua as Nicaragua had developed a constabulary force with military powers to ensure free and fair elections.⁵⁷¹ However, after the Marines departed, the conservatives, led by General Emiliano Chamorro, ousted the elected liberal government and assumed power. While Chamorro was consolidating his power, the liberals fought back, setting the conditions for a civil war. The overthrown vice president of Nicaragua, Dr. Juan Sacasa, a member of the liberal party, landed troops loyal to the liberal party from cargo ships at Bluefields in May 1926, starting open fighting between liberal and conservative factions.⁵⁷² Since this new civil war put the lives of

⁵⁶⁸ Richard J. Macak, “Lessons from Yesterday’s Operations Short of War: Nicaragua and the “Small Wars Manual,” in *US Marines and Irregular Warfare, 1898-2007: Anthology and Selected Bibliography*, ed. Stephen S. Evans (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2008), 80, and Benjamin R. Beede, *The Small Wars of the United States 1899-2009: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 199–200. Although this book is a bibliography, it provides the best-consolidated chronology for each small war before listing sources by category.

⁵⁶⁹ Harry A. Ellsworth, *One Hundred Eighty Landings of the United States Marine Corps: 1800-1934* (Quantico, VA; USMC Historical Section, 1934), 125–127. Also, Macak, “Lessons,” 80. For a deep analysis of the Civil Wars inside of Nicaragua, see Neil MacAulay, *The Sandino Affair* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1985).

⁵⁷⁰ Major R.O. Sanderson, “Conduct of the Dominican and Second Nicaraguan Campaigns,” Lecture circa 1929, Nicaragua Box 2, Folder 17, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁵⁷¹ Beede, 200.

⁵⁷² Ellsworth, *One Hundred Eighty Landings*, 126. Also, MacAulay, *The Sandino Affair*, 25.

American citizens and their property at risk, the Marines' return was inevitable. Nine separate landings by the US Marines occurred between May 1926 and January 1927 to ensure American property was safe from the fighting between the factions; after each occasion, the Marines withdrew from Nicaragua.⁵⁷³ The ninth landing is significant because it marked the entry by the Marines and constant occupation of Nicaragua until January 1933.

On January 11, 1927, US Marines disembarked on the east coast of Nicaragua at Bluefields to secure American commercial assets and ensure river traffic from the interior remained unimpeded.⁵⁷⁴ Leaving in place a contingent of Marines at Bluefields, the senior Marine, Lieutenant Colonel J.J. Mead, took the rest of his battalion through the Panama Canal, proceeded to Corinto on Nicaragua's west coast, and continued by rail to Managua to provide security in the capital. The 5th Marine Regiment, stationed in Quantico, Virginia, embarked for Nicaragua in February 1927 followed three months later in May by one aviation squadron, US Marine Observation Squadron Four (VO-4M), that had trained with the regiment.⁵⁷⁵ On February 16, 1927, US Marine Observation Squadron One (VO-1M), commanded by Major Ross 'Rusty' Rowell, was ordered to deploy to Managua, Nicaragua, as part of the overall military build-up, and arrived in Nicaragua with six DH-4B's debarking in Corinto, and made their way to Managua via train on February 25, 1927.⁵⁷⁶ The two squadrons would eventually combine into VO-7M.

As the squadron commander, Rowell had considerable influence in ensuring direct support to Marine ground forces and he significantly influenced aviation utilization during the Second Nicaraguan Campaign. His drive to support Marines on the ground from the air is second only in impact to the efforts of Alfred Cunningham. Commissioned in 1906, Rowell served in several small war campaigns, including Cuba in 1906 and Haiti in 1921. While in Haiti, Rowell began flying as an observer in the DH-4s assigned to the brigade and finally earned his

⁵⁷³ Ellsworth, *One Hundred Eighty Landings*, 125–127.

⁵⁷⁴ LtCol J.J. Mead Letter to Major General Commandant, January 21, 1927, Nicaraguan Campaign Box 1 Folder 4, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 1-3 and 6.

⁵⁷⁵ Robin L. Austin and Charles, A. Braley, Charles A. Fleming, *Quantico: Crossroads of the Marine Corps* (Washington DC: History and Museum Division Headquarters, US Marine Corps, 1978), 52-53. This squadron finally arrived in May 1927.

⁵⁷⁶ Ross E. Rowell, "Experiences with the Air Service in Small Wars," Lecture, January 12, 1929, Ross Rowell Collection, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA., 3. Also, Brief History of the Aircraft Squadrons, 2D Brigade, Marines, Nicaragua March 1, 1927, to December 10, 1932, Nicaraguan Campaign Box 1 Folder 2, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 2. At this time, the designation of squadrons based on their type of platform and mission began being used. VO-1M is an abbreviation of 'V' for fixed wing, 'M' for Marine, and 'O' for observation. This type of designation is still used in the Navy and Marine Corps. For example, VMFA means Fixed Wing Marine Fighter Attack; for the Navy, it would be VFA.

naval aviator wings in 1923 at thirty-nine.⁵⁷⁷ After receiving his wings, Rowell studied air tactics at the US Army Air Corps Advanced Flying School in late 1923, where he claimed he was first introduced to dive-bombing.⁵⁷⁸ Rowell had the revelation that he “immediately visualized the naval use where accuracy against small moving targets is paramount, and also it seemed to me that it would be an excellent form of tactics in guerilla warfare.”⁵⁷⁹ After departing the Air Tactics School, Rowell assumed command of VO-4M in San Diego in 1924 and used his experience to teach his pilots these air-to-ground tactics.⁵⁸⁰

Having served in the Marine Corps for over twenty years, Rowell embodied the service culture where the focus of operations was the infantry. Rowell’s background in small wars campaigns also led his squadron to follow the same small wars framework advocated by Ellis and Harrington, analyzed in Chapter Four. The first step of seizing ports and key cities had already been accomplished, and Rowell’s squadron began conducting missions into the country’s interior. The Marines established a main aerodrome operating base in Managua immediately upon landing on the west coast of Nicaragua.⁵⁸¹ After creating their main airfield, Rowell’s squadron began flying reconnaissance missions to develop intelligence about the disposition of rebel forces in the region of Nueva Segovia, where bandit activity was known to be the highest. Rowell’s squadron was later joined by VO-4M, which arrived on May 22, 1927, with six Vought O2U-1 aircraft, called the Corsair; Rowell, as the senior aviator, retained control of all aviation operations.⁵⁸²

⁵⁷⁷ “LtGen Ross E. Rowell: A Marine of Many Talents,” *Fortitudine* 7, no. 2 (Fall 1978): 12.

⁵⁷⁸ Interview with MajGen Ross E. Rowell on the Origin and Early Use of Dive-Bombing Tactics, October 24, 1946, Nicaraguan Aviation Folder 1, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 2. This assertion seems improbable as Rowell would have seen firsthand dive bombing employed at the small wars school in Haiti and while he was an observer aircrew.

⁵⁷⁹ Interview with MajGen Ross E. Rowell, 1-2.

⁵⁸⁰ Bruce Robertson, ed., *United States Navy and Marine Corps Fighters 1918-1962* (Fallbrook, California: Aero Publishers, 1962), 36, and Johnson, *Marine Aviation*, 53, and Interview with MajGen Ross E. Rowell, 3. The pilots of VO-4M perfected their technique in military training. They even demonstrated their accuracy to the public during airshows around the country, as did their east-coast counterparts in Quantico. Rowell later claimed that during a dive-bombing exposition by the Marines, a direct impression was made on Ernst Udet, a visiting German official to the US. Udet would later be appointed the Inspector of Fighters and Bombers for the Luftwaffe in 1936, where he would pioneer the operational ideas for the Stuka dive bomber.

⁵⁸¹ Rowell, “Experiences with the Air Service in Small Wars,” 3. Also, Alexander F. Barnes and Sara E. Cothren, “The Marine Corps’ Development of Aerial Delivery in Nicaragua between 1912 and 1933,” *Army Sustainment* 45, no.1 (January-February 2014): 74.

⁵⁸² Aviation Data estimated date late 1928, Record Group 127, Folder Aircraft Squadrons 2D BDE, Records Relating to Activities in Managua, Nicaragua, 1927-1933, National Archives, Washington, DC. The Corsair designated the OSU had variants -1, -2, -3, and -4 which were

The aviation element, consisting of DH-4Bs and later the more capable Vought O2U Corsair, was initially tasked to maintain a vital communications link between the remote garrisons and the capital.⁵⁸³ Additionally, through reconnaissance flights, the squadrons provided the primary source of timely intelligence to the growing Marine contingents arriving in the country.

As the size of the Marine forces grew, in March 1927 Brigadier General Logan Feland, who had commanded Marine Forces in the Dominican Republic and was a proponent of aviation, was placed in command of all Marines in Nicaragua. Feland, in his first report back to Marine Headquarters in Washington DC, was unclear of the intended political direction but was preparing his Marines to engage bandit forces if necessary.⁵⁸⁴ Feland described several missions his forces might be called upon to undertake, but the US government established no clear direction even as more Marines arrived in early March 1927.⁵⁸⁵ As Feland waited for the US government to finalize its political objectives, he continued to send his arriving troops into the countryside and had his aviation assets continue their reconnaissance and intelligence gathering.⁵⁸⁶ Feland followed the US Marine Corps small wars approach, establishing remote bases, while at the same time ensuring linkages in communication using his aircraft. Work began on a series of secondary airfields to provide greater flexibility in aviation support, communications, and logistics. As Feland maneuvered his infantry and aviation assets around the country, the political objectives began to take shape.

Henry Stimson, a WWI veteran and future Secretary of War during WWII, was sent in April 1928 by US President Calvin Coolidge to mediate peace talks between the liberals and conservatives, obtaining promises from both sides to lay

all basically the same aircraft with minor modifications. One substantial modification was that the Corsair, all variants, had air-cooled motors versus the water-cooled motors of the DH-4, making the Corsair's motor more reliable in the hot, humid weather of Nicaragua. DH4 Project, The United States World War One Centennial Commission, <https://www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/dh4-technical-specifications.html>, accessed February 19, 2023. For improvements made regarding types of motors, see Notes on Military Operations of US Naval forces in Nicaragua-July 1927 to October 1928, October 30, 1928, Ridgeway Papers Collection 273, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁵⁸³ "Products," Vought Heritage website, accessed March 1, 2016, accessed March 1, 2016, <http://www.vought.org/products/html/o2u.html>; the Corsair had a 450hp engine and was one of the first successful radial-cooled engines. The Corsair was much sturdier than the Jenny or DH-4, as it had an all-metal fuselage and purpose-built bomb racks for dive-bombing.

⁵⁸⁴ Feland Letter to Major General Commandant, March 21, 1927, Nicaraguan Campaign Box 1 Folder 4, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 1.

⁵⁸⁵ Feland Letter to Major General Commandant, March 21, 1927, Nicaraguan Campaign Box 1 Folder 4, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 2-3.

⁵⁸⁶ Feland Letter to Major General Commandant, March 21, 1927, 3.

down their weapons.⁵⁸⁷ As recorded by Stimson, the primary political objectives were to enforce the Roosevelt corollary to the Monroe Doctrine and protect the vital sea line of communication just north of Nicaragua which led into the Panama Canal.⁵⁸⁸ Stimson arrived in Nicaragua on April 17 and, over the next two months, negotiated an agreement for the Marines to remain in place until a November 1928 national election.⁵⁸⁹ He also proposed that Adolfo Diaz, a conservative, serve as interim president until the election. The leading liberal general, Jose Moncada, agreed to these terms, establishing an uneasy cessation of hostilities.⁵⁹⁰

Stimson communicated to General Moncada that President Coolidge, to ensure the Nicaraguans had a free, fair, and impartial election, had authorized the following: American officials would help supervise the election; US Marines would be allowed to train a “non-partisan national constabulary” to provide security for the election; and, the US would “leave in Nicaragua until after the election a sufficient force of Marines to support the work of the constabulary and ensure peace and freedom at the election.”⁵⁹¹ Thus, the Marines’ mission was to establish conditions to enable an election in 1928. As a result of this mission, the task assigned to Brigadier General Feland was “to maintain law and order in Nicaragua.”⁵⁹²

As had occurred at the beginning of the Philippine Insurrection and during the opening stages of the small wars campaigns in Hispaniola, a period of amnesty was offered in June 1927, along with a call for all Nicaraguans to surrender their firearms to allow for a peaceful election and to reduce the likelihood of renewed violence across the countryside. Both the liberals and the conservatives consented to the peace, except for one man, former liberal army commander Augusto C. Sandino. Sandino was a driven, charismatic military leader who proved as clever as he was elusive. Feland assessed that Sandino would accept the amnesty offer and turn in his

⁵⁸⁷ Henry Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War* (Harper Brothers: New York, 1948), 112-113. Macak, “Lessons,” 81. Also, MacAulay, *The Sandino Affair*, 27-28.

⁵⁸⁸ Stimson and Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, 112.

⁵⁸⁹ Henry Stimson, *American Policy in Nicaragua* (Charles Scribner’s Sons: New York, 1927), 18.

⁵⁹⁰ Feland Letter to Major General Commandant, May 24, 1927, Nicaraguan Campaign Box 1 Folder 7, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 3. Also, Stimson and Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, 114. Also, Neil MacAulay, *The Sandino Affair*, 28.

⁵⁹¹ Henry Stimson to General Moncada, May 11, 1927, Nicaraguan Campaign Box 1 Folder 1, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 2. The idea of Marines training a local constabulary force was first proposed during the first Nicaraguan Campaign, in August 1923; Marston letter to Major General Commandant, August 2, 1923, Nicaraguan Campaign Box 1 Folder 3, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 2-3.

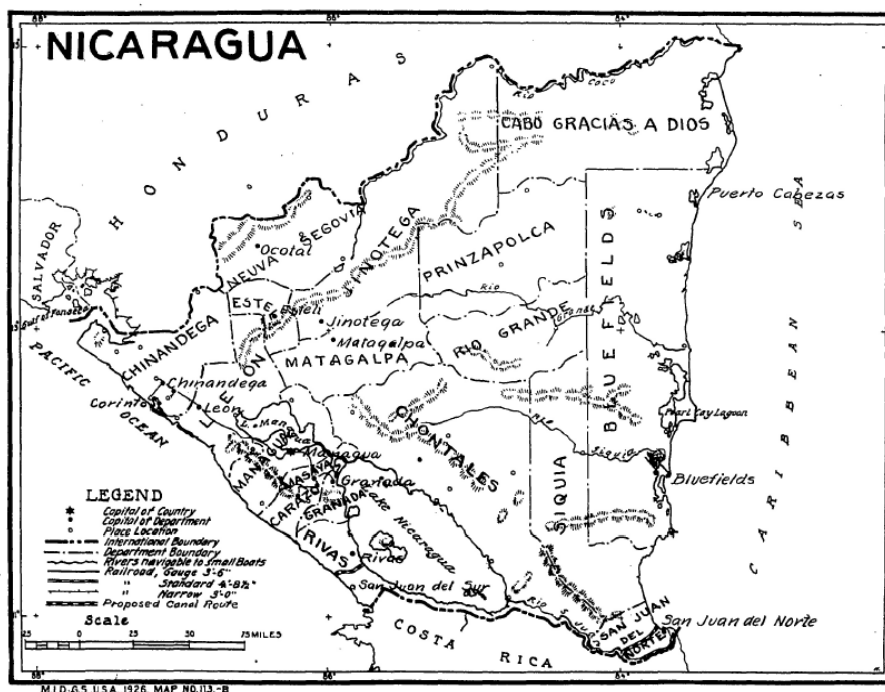
⁵⁹² Notes on Military Operations of US Naval Forces in Nicaragua-July 1927 to October 1928, October 30, 1928, 3.

weapons and that disarming his forces by force would not be necessary.⁵⁹³ Unfortunately, Feland was wrong, and Sandino rejected this offer because, although Sandino had fought on the side of the liberals, he believed that the liberal and the conservative leaders were misleading the country. In a formal letter addressed to the “The Chief of the American Marine Detachment,” Sandino stated that with Americans now overseeing the elections, “neither myself nor my soldiers will accept any money for the surrender of our arms.”⁵⁹⁴ Taking roughly five hundred men into Nueva Segovia, in the northwestern region of Nicaragua, Sandino vowed to continue fighting (see Map 1 for orientation).⁵⁹⁵ Nueva Segovia’s topography is characterized by rough terrain with dense vegetation; a prominent mountain range stretches generally from northeast to southwest across the territory.

⁵⁹³ Feland Letter to Major General Commandant, May 24, 1927, Nicaraguan Campaign Box 1 Folder 7, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 3.

⁵⁹⁴ To the Chief of the American Marine Detachment, May 24, 1927, Record Group 127, Folder Nicaragua-Military Situation, National Archives, Washington, DC. Sandino wrote to many Marine commanders directly, including passing notes to and from Capt Hatfield in the battle for Ocotol on July 15, 1927.

⁵⁹⁵ Rowell, “Experiences with the Air Service in Small Wars,” 6. Also, Andrew Bacevich, *Diplomat in Khaki: Major General Frank Ross McCoy and American Foreign Policy, 1898-1949* (Lawrence Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1989), 121.



Map 1. Illustration of Nicaragua in November 1930 Article ⁵⁹⁶
 “The Nicaraguan Situation” issue of *Marine Corps Gazette*

Initial Moves and Countermoves

While the political negotiations continued, the Marines pushed into the interior of Nicaragua and dispersed throughout the country, establishing forty-five garrisons by the end of March 1927 in order to ensure secure lines of communication.⁵⁹⁷ As they occupied territory, the Marines created sectors throughout the country following the small wars framework used in Hispaniola. Feland divided Nicaragua into northern, southern, and eastern districts. The northern district, where the principal enemy activity emanated, was divided into “sub-districts and all villages capable of supporting hostile bands were occupied.”⁵⁹⁸ Arriving

⁵⁹⁶ Dion Williams, “The Nicaraguan Situation,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 15, no. 3 (November 1930): 18.

⁵⁹⁷ Feland Letter to Major General Commandant, March 21, 1927, Nicaraguan Campaign Box 1 Folder 6, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 3. Also, Heinel, *Soldiers from the Sea*, 265.

⁵⁹⁸ Major R.O. Sanderson, “Conduct of the Dominican and Second Nicaraguan Campaigns,” Lecture, Nicaragua, Box 2, Folder 17, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA., 7.

from the sea, the Marines had already occupied key seaports and secured railroads and significant road intersections on Nicaragua's east and west coasts by the close of February 1927. Once dispersed to major lines of communication hubs, the Marines initially provided patrolling and support to local police forces.⁵⁹⁹ In particular, the railroad between Managua and Corinto was secured solely by Marine forces.⁶⁰⁰ Securing major ports and all significant road and rail networks upon landing in a foreign country was in keeping with the Marine's previous small wars experience in Hispaniola.

The activities of the Marines during the first year in Nicaragua were synthesized in a lecture at the Marine Schools in Quantico and is an important document for the research in this dissertation.⁶⁰¹ The unidentified lecturer referred to the Nicaraguan small wars campaign as being "carried out by modern practices in the conduct of bush warfare," namely dispersing forces to known enemy locations and executing aggressive patrolling, which was in keeping with the Marines' small wars framework.⁶⁰² As discussed earlier in Chapter Four, the Marines followed a long-established operational construct built from the influence of thinkers such as Caldwell, Ellis, and Harrington, their own experiences from the Philippines, and their campaigns in Hispaniola. The aim was to bring the enemy into a conventional fight where the Marines' training and often superior weapons could be brought to bear. In addition to the normal securing of remote patrol bases for active offensive patrolling, the "very important feature of our operations is the establishment of landing fields everywhere throughout the disaffected districts."⁶⁰³ Aviation was already an integral part of small wars operations, and the experience in Hispaniola had shown the Marines the need for secondary landing fields in the interior to facilitate logistics, communications, and effective reconnaissance in support of infantry operations.

It is important to note that at this stage of the campaign, the Marines were dispersing their forces in anticipation of offensive operations, but they remained

⁵⁹⁹ "First engagement of 2nd Nicaraguan Campaign," Author Unknown, lecture, Nicaragua, Box 2, Folder 12, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA., 1-2.

⁶⁰⁰ "Small Wars Operations in Nicaragua, 1927-1928," Author unknown, June 1929, Nicaragua, Box 2, Folder 11, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA., 132.

⁶⁰¹ "Small Wars Operations in Nicaragua, 1927-1928." Unfortunately the identity of the lecturer is unknown. The document is superb in its analysis of tactics and the operational situation in Nicaragua from arrival of the Marines until roughly January 1928. The author had clearly served in the infantry, giving myriad of examples of "we did" this or that, and more importantly what was learned. The date listed in the citation, June 1929, is an extrapolation of a graph illustrating troop strength in theater. Whether this hand written graph was added later is unknown.

⁶⁰² "Small Wars Operations in Nicaragua, 1927-1928," 137.

⁶⁰³ Ibid.

strictly on the defensive. Brigadier General Feland used Naval Regulation 723 to guide naval and Marine forces in their conduct when engaged in what was deemed a friendly country, and he directed his forces “to a strictly defensive attitude in case of attack. It [Naval Regulation 723] permits the return of fire only when the force is fired upon and then only when the return of fire is necessary for safety’s sake.”⁶⁰⁴ From the Marine’s perspective, military forces were deployed into Nicaragua to fulfill the obligations of and carry out specific stipulations in the Stimson Agreement. The foremost political objective was for the United States to oversee a Nicaraguan presidential election in November 1928.⁶⁰⁵ The US Marines were there to ensure safety and security in the country, this allowing for a peaceful election.

Additionally, to provide security for the local population, the Marines began to train an indigenous security force, the *Guardia Nacional*, an activity which was also part of the Stimson Agreement and mirrored the efforts of the Marines in Haiti with regard to training the *Gendarmerie* discussed in Chapter Four. Marines and some US Navy sailors were appointed officers in the *Guardia Nacional*, immediately solving a problem of corruption inside the Nicaraguan military and security forces. Appointed by the Nicaraguan Commandant of the *Guardia*, a US Marine officer, “the Commandant [Nicaraguan *Guardia*] is thus able to rid the *Guardia* promptly of undesirable officers and to reward those who show themselves to be efficient and of high character.”⁶⁰⁶ Previously, officers inside the *Guardia Nacional* were selected based on favoritism, but under the senior US Marine, officers were chosen for their ability.⁶⁰⁷

Feland’s first report back to the Commandant of the US Marine Corps on March 21, 1927 stated that although the distribution of his forces was to merely show a presence that if called upon to “support the present government by use of force,” he recommended he “strike a blow” before the rainy season began in May.⁶⁰⁸ By April, he had deployed and provisioned Marine detachments across the country

⁶⁰⁴ Interview with General Feland, April 13, 1928, Record Group 127, Folder Nicaragua-Military Situation, Records Relating to Activities in Managua, Nicaragua, 1927-1933, National Archives, Washington, DC, 1. Here Feland is paraphrasing Naval Regulation 723, most likely from the 1920 version of *United States Naval Regulations* which granted the use of force in self-defense and the use of force to protect US citizens and property overseas in all cases: “The right of self-preservation, however, is a right which belongs to States as well as to individuals, and in the case of States it includes the protection of the State, its honor, and its possessions, and the lives and property of its citizens against arbitrary violence, actual or impending, whereby the State or its citizens may suffer irreparable injury.” *United States Naval Regulations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1920), 221.

⁶⁰⁵ Major General Commandant Report on Operations to the SecNav, September 4, 1928, Record Group 127, Folder D-42, National Archives, Washington, DC.

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶⁰⁷ Stimson, *American Policy in Nicaragua*, 17-18.

⁶⁰⁸ Feland Letter to Major General Commandant, March 21, 1927, Nicaraguan Campaign Box 1 Folder 6, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 2 and 4.

but maintained a restrained posture with his forces.⁶⁰⁹ As Sandino began arming more troops in Nueva Segovia, Feland sent Marines to Ocotal, the largest town in the region. However, since Sandino had made no attacks, Feland was confident that he could begin reducing forces by the end of August 1927 and planned to “force him [Sandino] out of the country by successively occupying the towns he claims.”⁶¹⁰ Sandino, in turn, increased his rhetoric, stating he was the ruler of Nueva Segovia and would kill any Marines he saw.⁶¹¹ Feland tasked his aviation element to focus all their reconnaissance efforts on ascertaining how many men and weapons Sandino had at his disposal.⁶¹² By sending more Marines to Ocotal, Feland hoped to push Sandino into Honduras. Still, if Sandino remained, “I shall use the Aviation in that event and everything else we can bring against him. I still doubt if he will make a stand. If he does, the matter will be soon over.”⁶¹³

The initial ground engagement occurred during the early hours of May 16, 1927, when liberal opposition mistakenly thought the Marines had departed from the area of La Paz and seized an opportunity to “destroy the fifty Conservative troops policing the town.”⁶¹⁴ During the night, opposition forces moved into the town, meeting no resistance from the local police all of whom fled. The first the Marines knew of enemy forces moving came from celebratory fire by the enemy in “returning the town to Liberal [Sandino] control.”⁶¹⁵ After the Marines brought machine guns to bear, the resistance faltered, and the opposition “disappeared in all directions and no attempt was made to follow them further than the outskirts of the town.”⁶¹⁶ The initial confrontation between the opposition and the Marines was over, but the tension between the Marines and Sandino’s forces continued to increase.

Interaction between liberal opposition and the Marines continued. On May 24, 1927, Marine aviators observed “an armed force estimated at two hundred”

⁶⁰⁹ Feland Letters to Major General Commandant, April 6, 1927, and April 22, 1927, Nicaraguan Campaign Box 1 Folder 5, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 2.

⁶¹⁰ Feland Letter to Major General Commandant, June 12, 1927, and June 28, 1927, Nicaraguan Campaign Box 1 Folder 8, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 2 and 4.

⁶¹¹ Augusto Sandino letter to Capt Hatfield, July 12, 1927, Hatfield Personal Papers Collection 2971, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 9.

⁶¹² Summary of Air Operations Against Bandits in Nuevo Segovia, June, July, and August 1927, Record Group 127, Folder Aircraft Squadrons 2D BDE, Records Relating to Activities in Managua, Nicaragua, 1927-1933, National Archives, Washington, DC, 1.

⁶¹³ Feland Letter to Major General Commandant, July 8, 1927.

⁶¹⁴ Division of Operations and Training, HQ USMC, “Combat Reports of Operations in Nicaragua,” *Marine Gazette* 13, no. 4 (December 1928): 241-247, and “First engagement of 2nd Nicaraguan Campaign,” 3-4.

⁶¹⁵ “First engagement of 2nd Nicaraguan Campaign,” 5-6.

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

during a routine aerial photo reconnaissance patrol.⁶¹⁷ As the planes moved in for a closer examination, the bandits fired at them with rifles and machine guns. This marked “the first aerial contact with the armed force under Sandino.”⁶¹⁸ The small arms fire necessitated a change in tactics for the Marine aviators as they had to increase their patrolling altitude from 500 to 1500 feet above the ground, which offered better protection from small arms but reduced the aviators’ ability to see details on the ground.⁶¹⁹

Over the next several weeks, as infantry patrols moved about the interior to occupy towns and villages, Marine aviation maintained constant contact with ground forces. By way of example, a ground patrol, operating from July 2 through July 8, 1927, conducted a ground reconnaissance along a route covering the northern portion of Nueva Segovia. Rowell’s squadron provided “daily two plane air patrols [that] covered the area and noted the movement, strength, and distribution on the bandit forces. Each day, the regular reports were made, and upon the completion of flight operations, a summary of the air intelligence obtained was turned in, and copies furnished to all troop commanders concerned.”⁶²⁰ Information was passed to the outlying garrisons either via telephone, radio, or airdrop by returning aircraft. Marine aviation also provided “oblique photographs of all points of military interest in the area” which were developed and distributed to the Marines in the field.⁶²¹ The constant communication enabled by aviation between the ground forces and headquarters allowed information sharing across all command echelons, from the brigade headquarters to the individual patrol leaders.

During the aerial patrolling to support the Marine ground forces on the march, “the planes were fired upon daily from nearly every bandit camp visited and were struck five times by bullets.”⁶²² As the Marine aviators continued their patrols and deliberately flew over enemy camps, the fliers returned fire on only one occasion after taking fire from six bandit camps in one patrol. However, this “was done as a warning rather than to inflict losses.”⁶²³ Even though returning fire

⁶¹⁷ Summary of Air Operations Against Bandits in Nuevo Segovia, June, July, and August 1927, 1.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid., 2.

⁶¹⁹ Lecture on Small Wars Operations in Nicaragua, February 1929, Nicaraguan Campaign Box 2, Folder 22, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 18-19 and Ross Rowell, “Aircraft in Bush Warfare,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 14, no. 3 (September 1929): 187-188.

⁶²⁰ Interview with MajGen Ross E. Rowell, 1-2.

⁶²¹ Summary of Air Operations Against Bandits in Nuevo Segovia, June, July, and August 1927, 2.

⁶²² Interview with MajGen Ross E. Rowell, 1-2. Also, Summary of Air Operations Against Bandits in Nuevo Segovia, June, July, and August 1927, 1.

⁶²³ Interview with General Feland, April 13, 1928, 4. Also, Summary of Air Operations Against Bandits in Nuevo Segovia, June, July, and August 1927, 2. Also, Rowell, “Experiences with the Air Service in Small Wars,” 3.

exceeded the intent of Brigadier General Feland's standing orders, the incident was deemed, in Feland's own words, as "justifiable, and the return of fire was necessary to stop further shots directed against the plane."⁶²⁴

The amount of small-arms fire directed at the Marine's aircraft prompted a change in their tactics. Through experimentation, the Marines discovered that small arms fire scored hits upon their aircraft when flying at low altitudes. During the first year of aviation engagements in Nicaragua, the Marines recorded that: "one hit per airplane per each engagement has been registered. Thus, in 84 contacts, 82 hits have been made."⁶²⁵ Through trial and error, the Marines discovered that "rifle fire has been found effective up to 2500 feet. No hits have been registered at 4000 feet."⁶²⁶ If weather and threat conditions permitted, aircraft flew their patrols at "1,500 feet [above ground level], but pilot and observer must be very alert not to fly directly over a large group at this altitude." If large concentrations of the enemy were discovered, "airplanes are sometimes forced to fly at 4000 feet."⁶²⁷ Higher altitudes hampered the reconnaissance capabilities of the aircraft as the only means of finding enemy or friendly locations was through visual identification.

Brigadier General Feland realized that any heavy-handed use of force, especially where such use could result in civilian deaths, would cause popular support for the Nicaraguan government to wane. To prevent civilian casualties, he therefore forbade offensive action by aircraft. Over time, the Marine aviators developed several ways to separate the enemy from the rest of the population as they similarly understood the need to distinguish the enemy from civilian non-combatants. An enemy could be positively identified through "hostile fire, visible firearms, number of persons present compared to the normal population, proportion of women to men, number of horses and pack animals present, actions of individuals in the presence of the planes, occasional earthworks for defense or prepared ambushes."⁶²⁸ Trying to delineate the difference between Sandino's forces and the local population highlighted the Marine's acknowledgment of the requirement to reduce the impact of war on the civilian population in order to prevent the population from giving their support to the bandits. However, a major offensive by

⁶²⁴ Interview with General Feland, April 13, 1928,, 2 and Brief History of the Aircraft Squadrons, 2D Brigade, Marines, Nicaragua March 1, 1927, to December 10, 1932, 2.

⁶²⁵ Rowell, "Aviation in Bush Warfare," 187-188.

⁶²⁶ "Small Wars Operations in Nicaragua, 1927-1928," 146. Apparently, the Marines compared this to French operations in Morocco and the RAF in Waziristan and found that both countries had similar findings. Unfortunately, no record exists of how such information was shared from Europe to the Marines, and it is most likely through magazine articles published in professional journals. In Captain Campbell's later *Gazette* article "Aviation in Guerrilla Warfare," he quotes communique and after-action reports that were published in *RUSI*.

⁶²⁷ "Small Wars Operations in Nicaragua, 1927-1928," 145.

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*, 146.

Sandino soon necessitated offensive aerial strikes as his forces began attacking the Marines in Nueva Segovia.

The Fighting Begins

Nueva Segovia was the central operating area for Sandino and his followers. In the first part of July 1927, a party of thirty-seven Marines and forty-two Guardia Nacional under the command of US Marine Captain Gilbert Hatfield had occupied the town of Ocotal in Nueva Segovia, intending to capture Sandino. However, Sandino made the first move in the early hours of July 16, 1927, with an estimated 300 to 400 men attacking the garrison at Ocotal.⁶²⁹ After pinning down Hatfield's troops and surrounding the town, Sandino settled in to starve out the American invaders.⁶³⁰ Fortunately for Hatfield, two aircraft were on a routine morning patrol to check on outlying garrisons and noticed the Marines were under attack. The patrol flight leader noted, "On approaching Ocotal, on our regular patrol, the peculiar appearance of the town immediately indicated that something was wrong. Upon circling, we saw panels displayed reading 'Sandino attacking. Need help.'"⁶³¹ One aircraft strafed Sandino's troops while another immediately headed for Managua to get that help.⁶³²

Once Major Rowell learned of the siege at Ocotal, he informed Brigadier General Feland and gained approval to conduct offensive air operations to relieve the beleaguered garrison. This was a critical turning point as Feland's decision shifted the Marines from a defensive posture to offensive action.⁶³³ Rowell's formation of five aircraft arrived overhead and immediately began bombing and strafing Sandino's troops. Captain Hatfield noted in his after-action report that the effect was immediate: "The air attack was the deciding factor in our favor, for

⁶²⁹ Major General Commandant Report on Operations to the SecNav, September 4, 1928, Record Group 127, Records Relating to Activities in Managua, Nicaragua, 1927-1933, Folder D-42, US National Archives, Washington, DC.

⁶³⁰ When Sandino gave Capt Hatfield the option to surrender, the reply was, "The Marines do not know how to surrender." Hatfield informed Sandino's messenger that they would fight to the last man. Hatfield Report on Attack on Ocotal July 20, 1927, Record Group 127, Box 38, Records Relating to Activities in Managua, Nicaragua, 1927-1933, National Archives, Washington DC. For battle narratives, see Boot, *Savage Wars*, 238 and Russell Crandall, *America's Dirty Wars: Irregular Warfare from 1776 to the War on Terror* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 142.

⁶³¹ Col Thomas Turner, "Flying with the Marines in Nicaragua," March 27, 1931, Lee M. Conant Personal Papers, Collection 1358, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 3.

⁶³² Additionally, Hatfield had set out his air panels to say, "Being Attacked by Sandino." Gilbert Hatfield, "Attack on Ocotal, July 16, 1927," Nicaraguan Campaign Box 1, Folder 11, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁶³³ Bettez, *Kentucky Marine*, 170.

almost immediately the firing slackened, and troops began to withdraw.”⁶³⁴ Sandino’s forces began to scatter and disperse as Rowell and his squadron conducted repeated bombing and strafing attack runs, leading to a victory for the Marines on the ground because of the intervention of the Marine aviators.⁶³⁵ Major Floyd, commanding the relief force for Ocotal that arrived three days after the attack, then proceeded to conduct offensive patrolling and, after three weeks, was able to drive Sandino’s troops from the area and “reestablished considerable confidence as evidenced by the return to their houses of most of the inhabitants [local farmers].”⁶³⁶ After the battle around Ocotal, Feland updated the guidelines for using force now that Sandino had openly attacked both Marines and the Guardia Nacional. Now, the Marines, both aircraft and infantry, could “attack organized bands coming into the region and also permitted an attack on any organized band so situated as to be a menace to land forces.”⁶³⁷

The attack on Ocotal triggered a shift to offensive operations for the Marines, and they moved out of their defensive posture into active patrolling, seeking to engage Sandino’s bandits. Rowell’s squadron was now allowed to engage bandit forces even if not directly supporting a US Marine infantry attack, another significant change in how Marine aircraft operated. These were not stand-alone search-and-destroy missions but were conducted within the scope of their reconnaissance and communications work with ground forces. By way of example, on July 18, 1927, a two-plane patrol discovered and attacked a bandit supply mule train after being fired upon while on a routine reconnaissance mission. Using fragmentation bombs and machine guns, the two aircraft broke apart the bandit column. However, one plane was struck in the fuel tank and reached the Marine secondary field at Ocotal “just before running out of gasoline.”⁶³⁸ This incident is

⁶³⁴ Hatfield, “Attack on Ocotal, July 16, 1927.”

⁶³⁵ Summary of Air Operations Against Bandits in Nuevo Segovia, June, July, and August 1927, 4. Rowell, “Experiences with the Air Service in Small Wars,” 3. Also, Macaulay, *The Sandino Affair*, 33. The greatest threat came from the weather, not from Sandino’s forces. Rowell made a note in his report and in subsequent writings that the journey to and from Ocotal from Managua was extremely hazardous; “Numerous local storms were encountered en route to Ocotal, and returning, the formation was driven into Honduras and finally obliged to penetrate a severe tropical storm which was navigated with the greatest difficulty.” Summary of Air Operations Against Bandits in Nuevo Segovia, June, July, and August 1927, 4.

⁶³⁶ Hatfield, “Attack on Ocotal, July 16, 1927.” Also, Summary of Air Operations Against Bandits in Nuevo Segovia, June, July, and August 1927, 6. Major General Commandant Report on Operations to the SecNav, September 4, 1928, Record Group 127, Folder D-42, National Archives, Washington, DC, 2.

⁶³⁷ Interview with General Feland, April 13, 1928, 3.

⁶³⁸ Summary of Air Operations Against Bandits in Nuevo Segovia, June, July, and August 1927, 7. Also, Log of Engagements VO-7M, September 13, 1928, Nicaraguan Folder Box 2, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 4-5.

relevant in that throughout the summer of 1927, the Marines waited until being fired upon before commencing their attacks on the enemy groups in keeping with Feland's original orders, demonstrating restraint shown by the Marine aviators to ensure they attacked only Sandino's forces. In a report submitted at the end of the summer of 1927, Rowell highlighted that "every engagement, the enemy has opened fire first, and the squadron has always and only fought in the defense of the lives of our people."⁶³⁹

As Rowell's aircraft conducted reconnaissance across the country, many aerial attacks executed by US Marine aviators were independent of infantry patrols, a tactic different from the previous campaigns in Hispaniola. While the reconnaissance flights provided intelligence to the ground forces and the Brigade headquarters, using aircraft to attack Sandino's forces wherever and whenever the aviators discovered the enemy placed additional pressure on Sandino and was a new way for the Marines to incorporate aviation into their small wars framework. Even though Marine aviation was still in direct support of the infantry, Marine aviators frequently used the new tactic of striking the enemy independently of infantry patrols. From the opening of hostilities in July 1927 through June 1928, Marine aviators conducted eighty-four aerial attacks with only ten of these being in direct support of infantry patrols.⁶⁴⁰ Independent aerial attacks against targets of opportunity put increased pressure on Sandino's movements in Nueva Segovia, but aviation remained a supporting arm.

An example of aircraft supporting the movements of infantry patrols occurred on July 27, 1927, when two aircraft were providing overhead reconnaissance for a Marine ground patrol as it moved from Santa Clara to Jicaro. One of the Marine aviators "discovered about fifty bandits in an ambush awaiting the approach of our ground troops," and the bandits were subsequently attacked by the aircraft, which drove them away.⁶⁴¹ Using aircraft attacks to force bandits away from ground patrols often allowed those ground patrols to destroy supplies left behind by the fleeing bandits. In one instance, after an aerial attack on a group of bandits, "in early April [1928], a large number of supplies, equipment, and booty, which the outlaws had gathered together in the extreme eastern part of Nueva Segovia, was located and destroyed by a column of Marines commanded by Major Gray."⁶⁴² Relentless ground patrolling and continual air reconnaissance kept Sandino on the move and forced him to relocate to other areas and continually stay on the move.

⁶³⁹ Summary of Air Operations Against Bandits in Nuevo Segovia, June, July, and August 1927, 7.

⁶⁴⁰ Log of Engagements VO-7M, September 13, 1928, 1-52.

⁶⁴¹ Summary of Air Operations Against Bandits in Nuevo Segovia, June, July, and August 1927, 6. Also, Log of Engagements VO-7M, 5-6.

⁶⁴² Major General Commandant Report on Operations to the SecNav, September 4, 1928, 5.

While offensive patrolling by the Marines and *Guardia* increased, Sandino was not finished launching attacks on Marines in Nueva Segovia while also mounting harassing ambushes against the Marines before fading into the jungle. Sandino attempted one more assault on a town occupied by Marines when, on September 18, 1927, the garrison at Telpaneca came under a concentrated attack “by about 200 outlaws”. Still, it was “beaten off with a great loss [to Sandino], the combined Marine and *Guardia* garrison receiving but three casualties.”⁶⁴³ After this failed attempt by the bandits, it became clear to the Marines that Sandino had a base of operations where he found sanctuary. Throughout the fall and winter months of 1927/8, ground patrols dispersed across Nueva Segovia to find Sandino’s hideout; these were supported directly by aviation, which played a critical role in providing communications, logistics re-supply, and, when necessary, air support for patrols under attack. With this increase in operational tempo, the US recognized that a larger force of Marines was required to secure the country before the November 1928 election, and the 11th Marine Regiment departed for Nicaragua in January 1928 with an additional one thousand Marines. An increased footprint meant more infantry patrols for the aviation element to support.

One consequence of the increased military operations was the negative perception of the US efforts in Nicaragua. For example, the fight at Ocotal was a military victory for the Marines, but some US newspapers reported the battle as nothing less than aerial terrorism.⁶⁴⁴ Some US senators and congressmen questioned US military involvement, and several newspapers compared Sandino’s objectives to those of the colonists who fought against the British during the Revolutionary War.⁶⁴⁵ The only interview Sandino gave to a US journalist was with Christian Beal; writing for *The Nation*, Beal portrayed Sandino as a freedom fighter bravely resisting imperialism.⁶⁴⁶ Conversely, the largest-selling aviation magazine at the time, *Popular Aviation*, portrayed the exploits of the US forces as heroic and daring, marveling at the Marines’ “record unsurpassed in courage and heroism under

⁶⁴³ Ibid., 2. Also Brief History of the Aircraft Squadrons, 2D Brigade, Marines, Nicaragua March 1, 1927, to December 10, 1932, 2.

⁶⁴⁴ MacAulay, *The Sandino Affair*, 116. MacAulay makes the accusation that the use of aviation was in fact terrorism against the local population. Also, Michael J. Schroeder, “Social Memory and Tactical Doctrine: The Air War in Nicaragua During the Sandino Rebellion, 1927-1933,” *The International History Review* 29, no. 3 (September 2007): 511–515. The battles of Ocotal and El Chipote were reported in Latin American, European, and some US newspapers as acts of atrocity. Also, Russell Crandall, *America’s Dirty Wars: Irregular Warfare from 1776 to the War on Terror* (Cambridge University Press: New York, 2014), 145.

⁶⁴⁵ Crandall, *America’s Dirty Wars*, 146.

⁶⁴⁶ Christian Beal, “With Sandino in Nicaragua Part IV: With Sandino Himself,” *The Nation* 126, no. 3271 (March 14, 1928): 288. This article was in a series of nine articles by Beal that added to Sandino’s mystique.

fire.”⁶⁴⁷ The forces fighting against the Marines were deemed “bandits,” “outlaws,” or “jungle gangsters,”⁶⁴⁸ reflecting the sentiment of Americans towards native populations in the Banana Wars. The Marines’ mission was to stop the “Reign of terror,” prevent the opposition from “spreading terror and death,” and bring the outlaws to heel. They “go on reconnaissance patrols, the standard aim of which is to locate and destroy well-hidden and well-fortified outlaw camps.”⁶⁴⁹ The fight at Ocotal was also the centerpiece of the 1929 film *Flight*, directed by Frank Capra. Of dubious artistic quality, the Ocotal depiction does have sequences showing OC-2 aircraft flown by Marines dive-bombing and strafing, as well as the use of air panels for signaling. The film was dedicated to the US Marine Corps as a show of support for the fight in Nicaragua,⁶⁵⁰ and was a commercial success in the United States, indicating that the American public showed an enthusiasm for the aviation exploits of the Marines.⁶⁵¹

Increasing Offensive Pressure

As the Marines and Guardia kept up their patrolling, an aviation incident occurred in the fall of 1927, which signaled a turning point in the small wars campaign. On October 8, 1927, the engine failure of a DH-4 crewed by Lieutenant Earl Thomas and Sergeant Frank Dowell forced them to crash land near Quilali in Nueva Segovia. Sandino later claimed credit for downing the aircraft, but “among the 31 cases investigated [of other mishaps] were those of the loss of Lieutenant Thomas and his plane and the crashing of the plane due to the striking a buzzard.”⁶⁵² After being observed by their wingman to “leave the plane unhurt,” the two Marines were later captured and killed by Sandino’s forces.⁶⁵³ A patrol led by Second Lieutenant O’Shea was sent to recover the downed aviators and was ambushed near the wreckage. A pair of aircraft covered the patrol during their march to the wrecked plane and were overhead when the patrol was ambushed. At that point, O’Shea coordinated an aerial attack to escape: “The ground patrol laid out air panels

⁶⁴⁷ Bart Milton, “How Uncle Sam Hunts Bandits,” *Popular Aviation*, (October 1932), 228.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid., 227

⁶⁵⁰ The OC-2, very similar in design to the O2U series, was used after 1929 in Nicaragua, but only two were stationed there. For the movie *Flight*, the Ocotal action began at the 1-hour 17-minute mark and was supported by the Marine Corps. *Flight*, Frank Capra, 1929, Columbia Pictures.

⁶⁵¹ Joseph McBride, *Frank Capra: The Catastrophe of Success* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 205-207,

⁶⁵² Interview with General Feland, April 13, 1928, 8. Also, Brief History of the Aircraft Squadrons, 4 and 8.

⁶⁵³ Major General Commandant Report on Operations to the SecNav, September 4, 1928, 2-3. Also, Brief History of the Aircraft Squadrons, 4.

indicating the direction and range of the enemy and requested an air attack. The planes bombed and strafed the area, relieved the situation.”⁶⁵⁴

This episode is relevant for two reasons. First, it caused Feland to modify how he executed his campaign against Sandino. Rather than deny Sandino geography through occupation, “from this time on, our efforts took the form of offensive operations in seeking out and destroying bandits and their bases. Previous to O’Shea’s patrol, our operations had been purely along defensive lines to deny vital areas to the bandits.”⁶⁵⁵ Second, this episode showed how past experiences allowed aviation to support ground forces most effectively. The system for using air panels had been developed and practiced in the small wars training schools in Haiti and the Dominican Republic and was used by units training in the United States. As a result of the casual factor of past small wars experience applied to a new campaign, the Marine aviators could conduct closely coordinated attacks successfully in a jungle environment, with no prior coordination with the infantry. (See Picture 1 for an example of air panels.) The use of air panels allowed for efficient communications between the infantry and overhead aircraft, who could quickly respond with aerial attacks, pass intelligence, or provide logistical support if required.



Picture 1: Example of air panel communications from the 1929 Frank Capra film *Flight*. This scene is a fictionalized portrayal of the attack at Ocotal.⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁵⁴ Brief History of the Aircraft Squadrons, 5.

⁶⁵⁵ Division of Operations and Training, “Combat Operations in Nicaragua,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 14, no. 2 (June 1929): 81.

⁶⁵⁶ *Flight*, Frank Capra, 1929, Columbia Pictures.

In November 1927, aerial reconnaissance discovered Sandino's main base of operations, a fortified outpost atop a 5,000-foot mountain called El Chipote.⁶⁵⁷ The concept of operations for an attack against El Chipote called for a combined ground assault supported by aerial firepower and reconnaissance. Sandino knew a large-scale operation was underway through his extensive local intelligence network and ambushed the first Marines attempting to surround El Chipote.⁶⁵⁸ As one infantry patrol worked their way up the western side of the mountain on December 30, 1927, Sandino sprung an ambush where "a severe engagement took place in which four Marines were killed, and the commanding officer and several others were wounded. The Marines managed to drive off the opposing force, and occupied Quilali [a nearby village]."⁶⁵⁹ Surrounded by bandits, there was no way for the Marines and Guardia Nacional troops to break out with their diminished forces while also evacuating their wounded. Sandino pressed home his advantage by surrounding Quilali, located on a hill that was, in turn, surrounded by mountains. With the situation looking grim, the beleaguered Marine commander passed a message to the aircraft overhead, "If humanly possible, I request a Corsair land here to evacuate the wounded."⁶⁶⁰

With no runway available and no nearby fields in the mountainous region around Quilali, Marine aircraft dropped shovels and axes to the Marines in the village to clear buildings away from the main street to create a makeshift runway. First Lieutenant Kilcourse, a Marine officer present at Quilali, described the conditions in his diary:

Planes over at 0920 - dropped tools and medical supplies - busy building landing field. Planes bombed and strafed with machine guns along the route of Hunts [a relief patrol] march. Hunt with Richal's [another relief patrol] column arrived at 1545. I had no further trouble. They shot at everything suspicious looking en route. Sure were welcome

⁶⁵⁷ Log of Engagements VO-7M, 20.

⁶⁵⁸ Summary of Operations, 2nd Brigade, January 1, 1928, Record Group 127, Records Relating to Activities in Managua, Nicaragua, 1927-1933, Folder 43A, National Archives Washington, DC., and Bettez, *Kentucky Marine*, 187.

⁶⁵⁹ Major General Commandant Report on Operations to the SecNav, September 4, 1928, 3. Also Brief History of the Aircraft Squadrons, 5.

⁶⁶⁰ Ross E. Rowell, "Annual Report of Aircraft Squadrons, Second Brigade, U.S. Marine Corps, July 1, 1927, to June 20, 1928," *Marine Corps Gazette* 12, no. 2 (June 1928): 253.

with the rations – beef and coffee – nothing else for three days was getting monotonous.⁶⁶¹

After removing houses and felling trees, the Marines cleared just enough space for an airplane to land along Quilali's one dirt street.⁶⁶² Stripping down an aircraft of all excess weight, including his parachute, First Lieutenant Christian Schilt began three days, January 6th through 8th, 1928, of bringing in supplies and evacuating eighteen wounded, the most relevant fact being "our reports show that if the wounded had not been evacuated as they were, at least three out of five would have died from their wounds and undoubtedly the column [ground patrol] would have had great difficulty in getting out without severe losses."⁶⁶³ Schilt was later awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions and demonstrated the service culture of supporting the infantry in any way possible.⁶⁶⁴ While Marine aviation had flown sick Marines in biplanes during the small wars campaigns in Hispaniola, Schilt's exploits demonstrated a determination to devise new tactics and apply them immediately to best support the infantry. With continued air support, the Marines extricated themselves from Quilali, but after sustaining so many casualties, a plan was devised to attack El Chipote first by air, followed by a ground attack.⁶⁶⁵

Additional US Marine forces, previously requested by Feland, arrived in the theater on January 15th and 20th, 1928. As the new Marines were arriving in Nicaragua, Marine aviation attacked El Chipote on January 14, 1928, coordinating with Marine and Guardia Nacional infantry moving up the mountain.⁶⁶⁶ Rowell led his aircraft on a deliberate bombing attack on El Chipote using fragmentation, high

⁶⁶¹ "Personal Diary of Lt. J. Kilcourse on Special Expedition against El Chipote," The Sandino Rebellion 1927-1934, accessed February 28, 2016,

<http://www.sandinorebellion.com/pdocs/1928a/PC280105-Kilcourse.html>.

⁶⁶² Ibid.

⁶⁶³ Christian Schilt, General (USMC ret.), Oral History Transcript, November, 1969, Oral History Collection, Historical Division, HQ, US Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, Washington, DC., 56. Also see Alexander F. Barnes and Sara E. Cothren, "The Marine Corps' Development of Aerial Delivery in Nicaragua between 1912 and 1933," *Army Sustainment*, (2014) 74. Major Brainard, Testimony to the House and Senate Naval Appropriation Bill Hearings, 1929, Kratos collection, Box 2 Folder HASC, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 9.

⁶⁶⁴ "Medal of Honor," Marine Corps University, accessed February 9, 2016, <http://www.mcu.usmc.mil/historydivision/PublishingImages/Biography%20Images/MHC/Sc hilt%2c%20C.F.pdf>, and "1stLt Christian Schilt Flight Log Showing the Flights for Which He Received the Medal of Honor," Library of the Marine Corps Research Portal, accessed

February 9, 2016, http://lgdata.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/docs/2215/442983/Schilt_Log.pdf.

⁶⁶⁵ Bettez, *Kentucky Marine*, 187.

⁶⁶⁶ Major General Commandant Report on Operations to the SecNav, September 4, 1928, 4.

explosive bombs, white phosphorus grenades, and strafing.⁶⁶⁷ With aviation providing communications and air support, the Marine ground forces entered El Chipote on January 26, 1928, but did not capture Sandino himself at that point.⁶⁶⁸ The Commandant of the US Marine Corps, Major General Commandant John A. Lejeune, visiting Nicaragua at the time, witnessed the ground assault on El Chipote from the observation seat of an OSU-1 and praised aviation for its direct support to the Marines.⁶⁶⁹ Although many of the bandits and Sandino had escaped El Chipote, Sandino no longer had a secure base of operations and was forced to move further into the interior. The aerial attack on El Chipote represented the first application of a new set of tactics for the Marine aviators. Although trained in dive bombing and strafing, they had never deliberately attacked a fortified position. The attack on El Chipote demonstrated how the Marine aviators adapted and changed their tactics to best support the infantry.

As Sandino fled eastwards, the Marines launched a patrol down the Coco River to keep constant operational pressure on his forces. Moving eastward along the Coco River out of Nueva Segovia, Sandino's followers began "looting and wanton destruction of property."⁶⁷⁰ Recognizing that Sandino was on the run, the Marines sent a separate patrol, supported by aviation, down the Coco River to cut him off. Marine Captain Guyer led a thirty-three-day patrol pursuing Sandino. Captain Guyer's patrol could only push as far as they did as a result of aviation's logistic support for the ground operation. In his after-action report, Guyer wrote, "The Coco River Patrol, being walled in at all times by deep cliffs, heavily jungled, forced the planes to do an inordinate amount of low, dangerous, mettle-testing flying. The patrol subsisted by rations dropped from planes flying between closely set trees on the river bottom."⁶⁷¹ Now enabled by aircraft to push farther into the interior without needing a base of supplies, another Marine infantry patrol proceeded from the mouth of the Coco River, moving westward to catch Sandino. This is a relevant event in the Marines' small wars campaigns because this marked the first combat patrol supplied entirely by air and again illustrates new tactics developed by Marine aviation. Delivering supplies to secondary airfields occurred in Hispaniola and Nicaragua, but being the sole element responsible for supplying a patrol on the march was a new tactic for Marine aviation.

⁶⁶⁷ B-2 Intelligence Report, January 17, 1928, RG 127, Folder 43A, Records Relating to Activities in Managua, Nicaragua, 1927-1933, National Archives, Washington, DC.

⁶⁶⁸ Daugherty, *Counterinsurgency and the United States Marine Corps*, 249.

⁶⁶⁹ John A. Lejeune, "The Nicaraguan Situation," *The Leatherneck* 10, no. 52 (February 1928): 7 and John A. Lejeune, *The Reminiscences of a Marine* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Dorrance and Co. Publishers, 1930), 483.

⁶⁷⁰ Interview with General Feland, April 13, 1928, 4.

⁶⁷¹ P.C. Guyer in Maj Brainard, Testimony to the House and Senate Naval Appropriation Bill Hearings, 1930, Kratos collection, Box 2 Folder HASC, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 11.

US Marine Captain Holmes, based at Nueva Segovia, later described the coordinated effort to catch Sandino in the open; “We found ourselves taking part in a concerted drive of many detachments from the Regiment upon this area [Nueva Segovia]. This offensive forced Sandino out of his bailiwick and started him prematurely on a long run down the Coco River to loot the mines of La Luz and El Angel. Of course, Capt Edson ran him back.”⁶⁷² US Marine Captain “Red” Mike Edson, had conceived a plan to push from east to west moving up the Coco River, the operation provided another opportunity for aviation to contribute to keeping Sandino off balance.⁶⁷³ Direct support by aviation made the patrol possible as Marine aviators provided reconnaissance, airdropped supplies, and maintained a critical communications link during Edson’s patrol. During the spring and early summer of 1928 Edson’s forces penetrated 350 miles into the interior of Nicaragua, captured Sandino’s new headquarters, and scattered his forces there.⁶⁷⁴ Edson’s Marines turned Sandino’s Coco River base into a fortified camp and used it for further action against Sandino.⁶⁷⁵

Again, Sandino escaped, but the efforts of Edson’s Marines and the direct support of aviation kept Sandino on the move and forced him further away from any areas of sanctuary.⁶⁷⁶ In addition to driving off the forces of Sandino, aviation enabled the Marine patrols to extend the duration of their forays into the jungles of Nicaragua. The only option for resupply over the harsh terrain was often via airdrop, a new tactic utilized by Marine aviation.⁶⁷⁷ The extended patrols enabled by

⁶⁷² Maurice Holmes, “With the Horse Marines in Nicaragua,” *The Cavalry Journal* 34, no. 159 (April 1930): 224. Also, Edson’s letter to Utley, November 28, 1928, Harold Utley Personal Papers Collection Box 1, Folder 42, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 2. In this letter, Edson describes his coordination with Holmes as they tried to cover as much territory between their respective patrolling.

⁶⁷³ Harold Utley Memorandum to Brigade Headquarters, December 28, 1928, Harold Utley Personal Papers Collection Box 2, Folder 15, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 1-6. In this memorandum, Utley, the Eastern Commander, gives a synopsis of the year’s activities, describing how riverine patrols were used in his area to push Sandino out. Jon T. Hoffman, *Once a Legend* (Novato, California: Presidio Press, 1994), 52.

⁶⁷⁴ David Brooks, “US Marines and Miskito Indians: The Rio Coco Patrol of 1928” in *US Marines and Irregular Warfare, 1898-2007: Anthology and Selected Bibliography*, ed. Stephen S. Evans (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2008), 71. From Bluefields, on the east coast of Nicaragua, to Sandino’s new headquarters was 200 miles to the coast but the winding river added considerable distance to the total distance traveled.

⁶⁷⁵ Harold Utley Memorandum to Brigade Headquarters, December 28, 1928, Harold Utley Personal Papers Collection Box 2, Folder 15, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 1-6. Also see Hoffman, *Legend*, 83.

⁶⁷⁶ Hoffman, *Legend*, 73.

⁶⁷⁷ The Vought OSU-2s and the Fokker/Ford tri-motors assisted Edson’s river patrols. The Vought’s typically dropped packages no more than 30 pounds while the Fokker/Ford would drop packages up to 40 pounds. These weights were based on trial and error and consisted of

Marine aviation resulted in more interaction with the population, allowing the Marines and *Guardia* to further isolate Sandino from Nicaragua's people. Most notable in their support of the Marines were the Miskito Indians, native to the northeast coast of Nicaragua. Edson and the Marines stationed near Miskito settlements made it a point to respect native customs, not interfere in their daily lives, and pay for any assistance required. This starkly contrasted with Sandino's approach; he pressed Miskitos into service and dealt harsh reprisals against any group who supported the national government.⁶⁷⁸ Even after the Marines left the area in 1930, the tribe continued to provide intelligence on Sandino's forces.⁶⁷⁹

After being pushed away from the Coco River, Sandino dispersed his troops and only massed his forces when he had a numerical advantage. Utilizing dispersion and the natural overgrowth of the jungle, Sandino mitigated some of the effects of aerial reconnaissance.⁶⁸⁰ The rough terrain and heavily forested areas helped bandits avoid detection, and "as operations of airplanes became more frequent, the enemy learned to take cover from aerial observation and in later stages [post-1928 election] was rarely discovered from the air."⁶⁸¹ As Guardia patrols increased in frequency by 1931, Colonel Thomas Turner, the Senior Marine aviator at the time, noted, "In the early days of our flying, before the bandits realized the attacking power of our planes, they were in the habit of exposing themselves and openly firing on our ships. Now they take cover upon the first approach of a plane patrol and no longer fire upon a ship in the air unless discovered and attacked."⁶⁸² Turner also observed that in addition to hiding themselves, the bandits realized that the planes only flew in the daytime; As a result, bandit "marching is done chiefly at night with operations confined to remote regions."⁶⁸³ Sandino held another advantage; he could move into Honduras for rest and recovery, whereas the Marines could not conduct operations in another country. Sandino resorted to small ambushes but never held sway over any territory. Even as the need for direct aerial attacks reduced in frequency, Marine aviation remained the critical enabler for ground operations, and an examination of the impact of reconnaissance, communication, and logistics will follow.

nearly of type of item needed by the patrols; food, ammunition, clothing. It is staggering to think that over 11,000 pounds of supplies were dropped to Edson's patrols given the small weights dropped each time. Charles R. Sanderson, "The Supply Service in Western Nicaragua: April 1927 to August 1928," *Marine Corps Gazette* 17, no. 1 (May 1932): 42.

⁶⁷⁸ Edwin North McClellan, "The Saga of the Coco," *Marine Corps Gazette* 15, no. 3 (November 1930): 71 and Brooks, "US Marines," 72.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, and Hoffman, *Legend*, 62.

⁶⁸⁰ Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 252.

⁶⁸¹ Notes on Military Operations of US Naval Forces in Nicaragua-July 1927 to October 1928, October 30, 1928, Ridgeway Papers Collection 273, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 14.

⁶⁸² Turner, "Flying with the Marines in Nicaragua," 4.

⁶⁸³ *Ibid.*, 4.

Aviation in Direct Support

Air reconnaissance became a critical and much commended role for Marine aviation: “there is no substitute for air reconnaissance, as the great distances flown and the speed of the planes place it in a class of its own. There are certain types of information obtainable only on the ground, but air information has become a military necessity and has proven it in the operation of the brigade.”⁶⁸⁴ While crude by modern standards, the rudimentary communication between ground and aircraft served the needs of the Marines. The most prevalent type of communication between aircraft and ground patrols was through airdropped messages from aircraft down to the patrols, with the patrols using air panels (strips of colored cloth arrayed to convey messages, see Picture 1) to communicate up to the aircraft. Primary sources show that the air panel system was used in both the US Army and US Marine Corps. Responding to queries from the Air Tactics School, who were eager to learn about the tactics and techniques developed by the Marines, Rowell stated that “for liaison missions, the observers use the *standard infantry panel code* [emphasis added], augmented to suit local conditions” demonstrating standardization of this form of communication across the US Marine Corps and the US Army.⁶⁸⁵ Rowell’s statement also highlighted that the Marines in Nicaragua developed their own signals suited to their small wars campaigns, transforming a standard means of signaling into an effective theater-specific means of communication.

An action detailed in *Popular Aviation* recounts how a section of aircraft providing overwatch for a patrol was brought to bear on the enemy using these communication techniques. The Marine aircrew dropped a message asking, “Where are the bandits?” The ground patrol responded with “a huge arrow, pointing northwest,” associated with a distance.⁶⁸⁶ The Marine planes then proceeded to drop bombs on that location to break up the massing bandits. One aircraft began searching for more bandits while the other stayed overhead the patrol and directed the ground forces onto newly seen bandit locations. The communications were accomplished by the aircraft continuously dropping weighted messages down to the ground forces to guide them onto the remaining bandits.⁶⁸⁷ Communicating with

⁶⁸⁴ Major Brainard, Testimony to the House and Senate Naval Appropriation Bill Hearings, 1930, Kratos collection, Box 2 Folder HASC, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 12.

⁶⁸⁵ Ross Rowell, “Replies to Queries by Chief of Air Service, US Army,” February 21, 1928, Nicaraguan Folder 2, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 2.

⁶⁸⁶ Milton, “How Uncle Sam Hunts Bandits,” 264. This most likely occurred on July 2, 1932. Aircraft Squadrons, 2nd Brigade, Aviation Reports, Record Group 127, Records Relating to Activities in Managua, Nicaragua, 1927-1933, Box 43A, National Archives, Washington, DC.

⁶⁸⁷ Milton, 264.

aircraft also allowed the area or brigade commanders a better operational orientation concerning their forces dispersed across Nicaragua.

Marine Captain Maurice Holmes described how aviation reconnaissance, communications, and logistics supported his patrols' movements and communications with the Second Brigade Headquarters, providing near real-time intelligence during his patrols in Nueva Segovia from January to August 1928. Writing in *The Cavalry Journal* in 1930, Holmes emphasized that "as liaison elements, their value cannot be exaggerated" and "those planes represented the vital link in the general scheme" of the overall mission "to make that part of Nicaragua untenable for the bandits."⁶⁸⁸ During his initial patrol, Holmes was due to link up with another ground patrol, but both groups diverged away from one another. Knowing the ground scheme of maneuver, the aircraft overhead noticed the two patrols were headed away from one another and "gave both new courses for a meeting."⁶⁸⁹ Without the intervention of the aircraft overhead, neither patrol would have linked up with the other.

During each day of the ground patrol, one or two aircraft patrols contacted Holmes' group so that he was updated on the latest orders from the Second Brigade and kept abreast of new intelligence. So impressed was he that on one occasion, he stated, "These performed, it seemed to me, almost every mission which could be given an air service."⁶⁹⁰ Holmes also commented on the restraint shown by the aircrew, writing, "They refrained from attacking Sandino there [the village of San Rafael del Norte] because of probable injury to the non-combatant population of the town, a consideration for the bandits' fellow citizens which we have yet to hear of the bandits showing." Combat attacks from the air aside, keeping up communications between the ground forces and describing what was happening outside the infantry's limited viewpoint was crucial to increasing the infantry patrols' situational awareness. Communications also increased the feeling that aviation was there to support Marines in any way possible.

One of the many significant results of aircraft supporting ground forces was the positive impact on morale. Receiving the latest intelligence or orders from headquarters meant that ground patrols could move to areas where they would have the greatest effect. Air dropped supplies, including "food, ammunition, water, medicine, and all manner of supplies," allowed a patrol to stay provisioned

⁶⁸⁸ Holmes, "With the Horse Marines," 224. Holmes stayed actively patrolling for eight months, a feat that US Army Captain Matthew Ridgeway commented upon in his report after observing the Marines in Nicaragua. Notes on Military Operations of US Naval Forces in Nicaragua-July 1927 to October 1928, October 30, 1928, Ridgeway Papers Collection 273, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁶⁸⁹ Holmes, "With the Horse Marines," 217.

⁶⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 221.

throughout lengthy marches through the jungle.⁶⁹¹ One US Army observer commented on the buoyant effect aircraft had on the morale of troops:

From the standpoint of the men on the ground, the liaison maintained by the air force has a tremendous effect on the morale of the entire command. When an outfit is marching along the trail, hot and tired, the first plane sighted, or the first drop or pick-up message raises morale 100%. The planes have endeavored to drop sacks of cigarettes after every contact, which helps a great deal. A drop from a plane, news, or message as to where camp will be made for the night will cause a patrol marching along glum, any old way, to brighten up. Thereafter, they will march along cheerfully, through the worst kind of going to their campsite...the patrols want the planes. They want to see them and get in touch with them.⁶⁹²

However, as described in Chapter Five, not all Marine infantry were convinced of aviation's usefulness in small war operations and were frustrated by aviation's limitations. The Second Brigade Headquarters, in November 1928, published a bulletin soliciting input from the infantry officers across Nicaragua with a series of questions regarding ways to improve transportation, communications, and combat effectiveness across the campaign.⁶⁹³ Although the responses universally applauded aviation's transportation and communication functions in small wars, some officers did not feel that using aircraft in a combat role in small wars was worth the effort. One company commander replied that aircraft were "generally limited to liaison and reconnaissance. Extreme difficulties have been encountered in locating patrols in the heavy country."⁶⁹⁴ A platoon commander was less diplomatic when he wrote, "I am not in favor of combat with planes. There are many factors which may enter into the situation, terrain, the proximity of the enemy and their relative position to our troop, which may or may not advise the use of planes and the

⁶⁹¹ Report of Observations by Major R.L. Christian, Infantry, USA, Notes on Military Operations of US Naval forces in Nicaragua-July 1927 to October 1928, October 30, 1928, Ridgeway Papers Collection 273, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁶⁹² Ibid.

⁶⁹³ Brigade Memorandum Number 28, November 29, 1928, Record Group 127, Folder 2D BDE, Records Relating to Activities in Managua, Nicaragua, 1927-1933, National Archives, Washington, DC.

⁶⁹⁴ Captain Karl I. Buse, Problem, Expeditionary, comments on, April 17, 1928, Record Group 127, Folder 2D BDE, Records Relating to Activities in Managua, Nicaragua, 1927-1933, National Archives, Washington, DC, 6.

employment of their weapons against the enemy.”⁶⁹⁵ Communicating with radios still proved problematic since “the radio has not been generally carried by planes on account of its weight. Communication with ground troops has been almost entirely by Very Pistol (flare gun), pick-up and drop messages and panels.”⁶⁹⁶ Despite challenges with communicating effectively, the ability of aviation to conduct logistics resupply was a critical enabler for the entire campaign. The most significant turning point in the logistics role came with the arrival of three Fokker Tri-motor transport aircraft, the first transport aircraft assigned to the United States Marine Corps.⁶⁹⁷

Tactics are for Amateurs; Logistics are for Professionals

As had been the case in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, combat operations dominated the reporting by Rowell’s squadron and subsequent aviation commanders throughout the Second Nicaraguan Campaign; however, logistical and intelligence support was the most beneficial aspect of Marine aviation in this new small war. Indeed, a subsequent report covering the period through the summer and fall of 1927 showed the aviation element provided critical communications and logistics to Ocotal and delivered “ammunition, pyrotechnics, hand and rifle grenades, medicine, radio sets, an electric charging plant [generator], a machine gun, a trench mortar, exchange stores, and other articles, amounting in all to more than two tons in weight.”⁶⁹⁸ It is a tremendous achievement that DH-4 biplanes, used by the squadron during these months, carried such a wide variety of supplies in three months and demonstrated the lengths Marine aviators went to to support the remote outposts. Before the arrival of the Fokker Tri-motor, the Marines made do with their observation aircraft by removing the observer from the rear seat and filling that position with supplies or replacement Marines. In one instance, during a mass movement of Marines from the remote garrison in Apali (approximately 25 miles east of Ocotal), “we packed in two men, with their equipment, rifles, and sea bags,

⁶⁹⁵ Second Lieutenant A. E. O’Neil, Brigade Memo, No. 28; 310-JBH-t, March 30, 1928, Record Group 127, Folder 2D BDE, Records Relating to Activities in Managua, Nicaragua, 1927-1933, National Archives, Washington, DC, 6.

⁶⁹⁶ Buse, 6.

⁶⁹⁷ Heinel, 277, and Johnson, *Marine Aviation*, 57. The Fokker’s were later replaced with Ford Tri-motors, made from an all-metal construction. This considerably reduced the maintenance of transport aircraft in Nicaragua since the Fokker had wood and canvas wings. The British in the Malayan Emergency and the French in the Indochina War would also discover the problems of operating wooden aircraft in a hot, humid jungle environment, such as the De Havilland Mosquito.

⁶⁹⁸ Summary of Air Operations Against Bandits in Nuevo Segovia, June, July, and August 1927, 8.

complete with parachutes.”⁶⁹⁹ Such an arrangement, while successful, was less than ideal. The airplane’s stability became an issue as “the planes were so tail heavy longitudinal stabilator would not compensate and it was physical labor to hold the nose in level flight for the hours trip to Managua.”⁷⁰⁰ As innovative as the Marine aviators were in trying to provide a logistics service to support the infantry, their biplanes were not designed to be supply aircraft.

Senior leaders in the Marine Corps recognized that a better means of air transportation was needed to move troops and material around the theater.⁷⁰¹ It was with relief that the 5th Regiment commander, Colonel Gulick, reported that “today [December 3, 1927] we expect to see the arrival of Major Brainard with the transport plane. This plane will greatly reduce our supply problem and be especially useful in sending replacements forward into the theatre of operations.”⁷⁰² The first dedicated transport aircraft operated by the US Marines, the Fokker Tri-Motor, designated the TA-1, arrived in the theater on December 7, 1927, followed by two additional TA-1s on December 14, 1927, and a Ford Tri-motor, designated TA-2, on February 7, 1928.⁷⁰³ The Fokker Tri-Motor was a three-engine, high-wing, and purpose-built transportation aircraft carrying up to 8 passengers or any mix of cargo combined; it had a 750nm (approximately 1400 kilometers) radius and a relatively high cruising speed of 210 knots (approximately 380 kph). It was an ideal aircraft for use in Nicaragua and represented a new mission for Marine aviation: dedicated logistics and transportation. Previously, Marine aviators made do with two seat biplanes, but the tri-motors provided a fundamentally new way of providing logistical support to the infantry.

An analysis conducted by the Marine Corps after the first year and a half of campaigning claimed that: “Aviation is the savior of our supply system because no large force could be maintained at the front without the ‘flying ox-carts’ that have been supplying our forces for more than a year with the greatest efficiency and success.”⁷⁰⁴ Without aviation resupply of replacement Marines and delivery of regular supplies, “supply would have been so difficult that only by a wholesale

⁶⁹⁹ “Small Wars Operations in Nicaragua, 1927-1928,” 142, and John M. Elliot, *Marine Corps Aircraft, 1913-2000* (Washington DC: History and Museums Division, USMC, 2002), 24-25, and “Brief History of the Aircraft Squadrons,” 3, 4.

⁷⁰⁰ “Brief History of the Aircraft Squadrons,” 3, 4.

⁷⁰¹ E. H. Brainard, “Marine Corps Aviation: Lecture,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 13, no. 1 (March 1928): 34.

⁷⁰² Gulick to Commandant, December 3, 1927, Nicaraguan Campaign Box 1 Folder 11, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 3.

⁷⁰³ Aviation Data, estimated date late 1928, Record Group 127, Folder Aircraft Squadrons 2D BDE, Records Relating to Activities in Managua, Nicaragua, 1927-1933, National Archives, Washington, DC.

⁷⁰⁴ “Small Wars Operations in Nicaragua, 1927-1928,” 129-130.

construction of military roads could a large force be maintained in the field.”⁷⁰⁵ Before the introduction of aircraft, the Marines were limited to moving supplies by mule train in Hispaniola and still utilized this method in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign. A typical mule train consisted of thirty mules carrying two hundred pounds each, or six thousand pounds of supplies. Depending on the season and terrain, the average distance covered by a mule train was 15 miles per day.⁷⁰⁶ To increase the speed of delivery, the Marines began experimenting with aerial delivery of supplies.⁷⁰⁷ Parachute drops were deemed impractical due to the thick jungle canopy, so the Marines became experts at dropping small supply bundles wrapped in burlap sacks, stuffed with grass, much like the Philippine Air Force did thirty years later during the Huk Rebellion.⁷⁰⁸

The addition of the Fokker transport aircraft saw a significant increase in materiel and personnel movement inside Nicaragua. Compared with the two tons, or four thousand pounds, of logistical lift provided using DH-4s over six months, the transport aircraft’s introduction exponentially increased the air squadrons’ lift capacity. An example of how much time and effort was saved by utilizing air transport was seen on July 7, 1928. The Fokker aircraft “transported forty-two men with full packs and 2,500 pounds of equipment from Ocotal to Puerto Cabezas in 1 hour and 55 minutes. Two days would have been required to hike the distance.”⁷⁰⁹ Days were saved in addition to the nearly fifteen mules it would have taken had the men moved by foot, plus the added Marines and Guardia needed to provide security along the route. From June 1928 to June 1929, aerial transportation moved over one million pounds of supplies across the theater. This volume increased to two and half million pounds from July 1929 to June 1930, delivered directly to secondary airfields with an additional one hundred fifty thousand pounds of air-delivered supplies to patrols made possible because five transport aircraft were available by

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid.,142.

⁷⁰⁶ Survey Results on Supply, 2D Brigade, November 1929, Nicaraguan Campaign Box 1, Folder 15, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 31-32. Twenty-four officers sent their responses to this survey conducted by the Brigade Headquarters. The amount carried was consistent at 200 pounds per mule across all respondents, but the distance traveled varied depending on the location.

⁷⁰⁷ Barnes, “Development of Aerial Delivery,” 73.

⁷⁰⁸ LtCol Charles R. Sanderson, “The Supply Service in Nicaragua,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 17, no. 1 (May 1932): 43. Also Barnes, 73–74, and A. H. Peterson, G.C. Reinhart, and E. E. Conger, eds., *Symposium on the Role of Airpower in the Counterinsurgency and Unconventional Warfare: The Philippine Huk Campaign*, RM-3652-PR (Santa Monica, California: Rand Corporation, July 1963), 47. The Philippine Air Force would wrap supplies into a large ball surrounded by woven rattan (palm leaves) and stuffed with straw.

⁷⁰⁹ Notes on Military Operations of US Naval Forces in Nicaragua-July 1927 to October 1928, October 30, 1928, 4.

this time.⁷¹⁰ With the reduction in troops, the airlift numbers dropped from July 1931 until the eventual departure of these aircraft in January 1933, with one million pounds of supplies moved about the theater in the final eighteen months of the campaign.⁷¹¹

While learning through their experience, USMC aviators kept abreast of aviation developments in other small wars, particularly those involving the RAF. Although the Marine Corps did not ascribe to the RAF concept of air control, this did not mean that the Marines stopped paying attention to other military campaigns around the globe.⁷¹² Regarding transportation, the Marines noted the successful use of large transport aircraft. In a *Marine Corps Gazette* article, US Marine Captain Denny Campbell commented favorably on the RAF's use of the Vickers-Victoria transport to evacuate diplomatic legations in Kabul from December 1928 to February 1929.⁷¹³ The French use of Goliath transports in Morocco garnered similar positive observations from the Marine aviators, who noted the utility and excellent service of transport aircraft for military operations.⁷¹⁴ The RAF and French employment of transports were also used as examples during small wars instruction in the Marine Schools in Quantico.⁷¹⁵

The impact of aerial transportation was so significant that another turning point was reached in 1930 when the Commandant of the US Marine Corps put aviation logistical support ahead of combat in his report to the US Secretary of the Navy, this signaling the operational importance of air transport. Coming first the report stated that: "planes have been used in the transportation of troops and supplies to the outlying stations, and the evacuation of the sick from isolated areas." There

⁷¹⁰ Fokker Transport Report 1928-1933, Record Group 127, Folder D-42, Records Relating to Activities in Managua, Nicaragua, 1927-1933, National Archives, Washington, DC.

⁷¹¹ Nicaragua Aircraft Squadrons, 2D Brigade, Cunningham Personal Papers, Box 2 Folder 5, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 3.

⁷¹² The most famous account of air control was the RAF's participation in Somaliland removing 'Mad Mullah' from power. Viscount Milner in Douglas Jardine, *The Mad Mullah of Somaliland* (London: Herbert Jenkins, Ltd., 1923), vii. .

⁷¹³ Capt Denny Campbell, "Aviation in Guerrilla Warfare: Part II," *Marine Corps Gazette* 15, no. 5 (May 1931): 42. Also, "Small Wars Operations in Nicaragua, 1927-1928," 144. A comprehensive report of this evacuation can be found in the official report, Sir W.G.H. Salmond, *Report on the Air Operations in Afghanistan between December 12, 1928, and February 25, 1929* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1929).

⁷¹⁴ The French efforts were notable to warrant their own lecture, referenced in other Marine lectures, which Capt Campbell references in his "Aviation in Guerrilla Warfare: Part II," 41-42. Unfortunately, no record of this original lecture was found in either the National Archives or the Archives of the US Marine Corps. Campbell's information most likely came from US Army Lieutenant Colonel Nelson E. Margetts "Extracts from the Diary of an American Observer in Morocco," *The Field Artillery Journal* 16, no. 2 (March-April 1926): 124.

⁷¹⁵ "Small Wars Operations in Nicaragua, 1927-1928," 143-144.

was only a brief mention that “planes have been engaged in connection with operations against bandit elements.”⁷¹⁶ New aviation tactics enabling communication and transportation to a degree never experienced by the Marines helped them to set the security conditions for their primary mission, the Nicaraguan election of 1928.

Election of 1928

Approaching November 1928, the Marines and Guardia began to set the security conditions for a successful national election. The constant pressure from ground and aerial patrols had forced Sandino away from his base of operations and, more importantly, kept him from consolidating his power. Brigadier General Feland felt that despite the failure to capture or kill Sandino, “the methods adopted to combat the activities of outlaws have proved effective.”⁷¹⁷ By continued offensive patrolling both on the ground and from the air and by isolating the bandits from their source of supplies, Feland felt confident in making his recommendation to the US State Department to proceed with the election. Rather than rest on his laurels, Feland kept up the offensive military pressure to ensure no bandit activity impeded the 1928 election: “I have taken special measures to keep alive an enthusiastic aggressiveness to ensure that the outlaws do not come back.” Central to this dispatch was his desire to maintain the same level of military force in his area of responsibility in order to preclude any resurgence of bandit activity while his forces concentrated on “the pursuit and destruction of bandit groups.”⁷¹⁸ Bandit attacks slowly decreased in frequency from July through October 1928. Feland surmised that “it is possible that he [Sandino] has left the country.” Still, Feland intended to keep exerting military pressure through continued patrols supported by the aviation’s ability to provide communications, reconnaissance, and aerial resupply.⁷¹⁹

From October through November 1928, the Marines and a US Army delegation, commanded by US Army Major General Frank McCoy, oversaw peaceful elections in Nicaragua.⁷²⁰ Feland’s Marines and the Guardia Nacional increased their patrols across the country to ensure a smooth election free from

⁷¹⁶ Aircraft Squadrons, Second Brigade, Nicaragua, October 1931.

⁷¹⁷ Logan Feland, *Assessment*, Date unknown before the 1928 election, Nicaragua Box, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA,

⁷¹⁸ Notes on Military Operations of US Naval Forces in Nicaragua-July 1927 to October 1928, 3.

⁷¹⁹ Logan Feland, *Assessment*, 2. For the number of attacks recorded, see Unknown author, “Lecture: Small Wars Operations in Nicaragua 1927-1929,” Nicaraguan Campaign Box 1, Folder 22, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 8. Based on the information presented in this lecture, it was most likely presented in mid-1929.

⁷²⁰ Bacevich, *Diplomat in Khaki*, 122-123. McCoy was appointed in late July 1927 and spent his time shuttling between Managua and Washington. He and Feland clashed over the overall small wars campaign.

interference from Sandino. Feland also issued a Brigade Memo focusing efforts on the original mission of “to facilitate, and in every way assist, in making possible a fair, supervised election in Nicaragua on November 4, 1928.”⁷²¹ Marine transports flew election officials to outlying districts, provided a communications link to the capital, and brought the ballots back to Managua for tallying while other aircraft flew overwatch above the over four hundred polling stations.⁷²² In a decisive electoral victory, General Moncada, the leading liberal candidate, was elected as the new president of Nicaragua.⁷²³ One of McCoy’s staff, US Army Captain Matthew Ridgeway, observed that “the results are especially noteworthy because of the fact that the Marines have no control over the inhabitants and that no martial law or provost courts have been instituted, and everyone having full knowledge of the fine service that they have rendered, under the most difficult conditions, must needs to feel the same intense pride in the Corps that is felt by me.”⁷²⁴ Notably, wrote Ridgeway, “the part played by the Air Service in operations here has been of the greatest value in the final result obtained. The flying the pilots have done daily [before and during the election] has probably been more dangerous than any peacetime flying our service pilots have yet been called upon to do.”⁷²⁵ In the center of Nueva Segovia, one Marine Guardia commander commented that during the period of the election, “The morale effect on my men knowing that no fight with the bandits can last longer than 24 hours without being brought to a successful conclusion by your planes, has done much to keep up their spirit during their difficult and dangerous duty here in this advanced position.”⁷²⁶ Although a Liberal candidate had won the election, Moncada knew the security in Nicaragua was far

⁷²¹ Notes on Military Operations of US Naval Forces in Nicaragua-July 1927 to October 1928, October 30, 1928, 3.

⁷²² History of Squadron, VJ-6M Commanding Officer, July 21, 1931, Kratos Aviation Collection, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 2. Also, Wray R. Johnson, “Airpower and Restraint in Small Wars: Marine Corps Aviation in the Second Nicaragua Campaign, 1927-1933” *Aerospace Power Journal* 15, no. 3 (Fall 2001): 38.

⁷²³ Lejeune Cummins, *Quijote on a Burro: Sandino and the Marines. A Study in the Formulation of Foreign Policy* (Mexico City: La Impresora Azteca, 1958), 33-34. Out of 150,000 registered voters, Moncado won by over 20,000 votes.

⁷²⁴ Major General Commandant Report on Operations to the SecNav, September 4, 1928, 8. Matthew Ridgeway will go on to a distinguished career in the US Army leading the 82nd Airborne Division in Normandy in June 1944, halting the retreat of 8th Army in the winter of 1950 in the Korean War, taking command from General Eisenhower of NATO in 1952, and finally becoming US Army Chief of Staff in 1953. For more on Ridgeway see George C. Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgeway: Soldier, Statesman, Scholar, Citizen* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2002).

⁷²⁵ Notes on Military Operations of US Naval Forces in Nicaragua-July 1927 to October 1928, October 30, 1928, Ridgeway Papers Collection 273, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 7.

⁷²⁶ Turner, “Flying with the Marines in Nicaragua,” 5.

from stable and formally asked the United States to allow the Marines to stay in place and continue to lead and train the Guardia for at least another two years.⁷²⁷ Despite mounting pressure from an ever more capable *Guardia* and a liberal president that Sandino had once served under, he refused to accept the election outcome.

Despite Sandino's losses in Nueva Segovia and his loss of face after a peaceful election put a liberal candidate in power, he became a popular figure in Latin America as a man who stood up to the Yankee invaders and was still fighting. In April 1928, a series of nine articles by Christian Beal of *The Nation* added to Sandino's mystique. On the other hand, the Marines assessed that the people of Nicaragua "look upon him [Sandino] as a bandit."⁷²⁸ Although Sandino's presence inspired continued attacks and remained an embarrassment to both the Marines and Guardia, it is relevant to note that the area Sandino operated in only represented a small portion of the country. Despite Sandino's notoriety, that area, Nueva Segovia, was the most northerly province, known for its dense jungle, mountainous terrain, and relatively small population compared to other regions of Nicaragua.⁷²⁹ Further, the people in Nueva Segovia suffered abuse and mistreatment by Sandino and his followers; this was especially so in the case of indigenous Indian tribes in the northeast, tribes who, because of their grievances with Sandino, assisted the Marines.⁷³⁰ With the success of a national election and continued patrolling by the

⁷²⁷ *Annual Report of the Navy Department for the Fiscal Year 1929* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1930), 90-91.

⁷²⁸ General Lane in testimony to the US Senate February 18, 1928, *The United States Navy in Nicaragua: Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate, Seventieth Congress* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1928), 27. General Lane had been part of a senatorial fact-finding mission from December 1927 through January 1928 trip to Nicaragua.

⁷²⁹ *Censo General de la Republica de Nicaragua de 1920*, <http://www.sandinorebellion.com/EastCoast/ATL-1927/Census-1920-1.jpg>, accessed May 20, 2020. This 1920 census was the first ever completed in Nicaragua. Despite the poor road conditions and rudimentary communications at the time, the census takers gathered sufficient information to offer a detailed snapshot of the country's population, demographics, and racial makeup. From this, one can see that Nuevo Segovia had a population of 42,658 in 1920, only 6% of the overall population. It is doubtful that an influx of population to support Sandino's cause moved into the region eight years before Sandino began his opposition.

⁷³⁰ David Brooks, "US Marines and Miskito Indians: The Rio Coco Patrol of 1928" in *US Marines and Irregular Warfare, 1898-2007: Anthology and Selected Bibliography*, ed. Stephen S. Evans (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2008), 72. Also, Samuel B. Griffith, Brigadier General (USMC ret.) Oral History Transcript, November, 1976, Oral History Collection, Historical Division, HQ, US Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, Washington, DC. Brigadier General Griffith details his experience of 14 months living with the Guardia National, and he assessed that Sandino was never popular with the

Marines and Guardia Nacional, Sandino re-evaluated his position and sought supplies and arms from outside the country to continue making armed attacks against the US Marine occupiers.

After 1928 and through 1933

Several changes occurred after the successful election of 1928 and these highlight aviation's critical role in small war operations during the Second Nicaraguan Campaign. Sandino's support and logistical base dwindled to the point that he left for Mexico in May 1929, where he stayed until May 1930, trying to assemble men and materials.⁷³¹ As a result of the successful election and Sandino's abandonment of the area, Marine ground forces were drawn down from a high of nearly 5,000 Marines at the time of the 1928 election to just under 800 by the end of 1929.⁷³² Meanwhile, the *Guardia* grew from its original strength of 400 in the summer of 1927 to nearly 2,000 by 1930. While Marine ground forces drew down and the *Guardia Nacional* took a more prominent role in executing their patrols and defenses, the aviation element grew in numbers by adding seaplane-modified O2Us and additional transport aircraft.⁷³³ Aviation was seen as such a critical factor that there was no thought of reducing the vital communication, intelligence gathering, and logistics capabilities that made the early combat operations successful.⁷³⁴ The reduction of US Marines was a political decision directed by the US Department of State, but even the State Department recognized that aviation was a crucial factor that kept the Marines and *Guardia* supplied and informed.⁷³⁵

Recognizing that it was the Marines who led the *Guardia Nacional* and dominated all leadership positions even with a reduced force, the first US Marine 'Jefe' of the *Guardia*, Colonel Beadle, realized that to achieve security, there needed to be a "real organization that must be Nicaraguan which has the Nicaraguan confidence and National interest and pride, for if this is not so when the Marines and Navy personnel are withdrawn, there will be a complete breaking down."⁷³⁶ The

local population. Smith attributed this to Sandino's troops stealing food and supplies from the locals.

⁷³¹ Captain Evan F. Carlson, "The Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua," *Marine Corps Gazette* 21, no. 3 (August 1937): 10. Also see Boot, *Savage Wars*, 243-244.

⁷³² Williams, "The Nicaraguan Situation," 20-21.

⁷³³ The sea-plane modified O2Us were used predominately on the east coast near Bluefields due to the lack of outlying airfields, but ample rivers to land these aircraft.

⁷³⁴ Williams, "The Nicaraguan Situation," 21.

⁷³⁵ US Department of State, "The United States and Nicaragua: A Survey of the Relations from 1909-1932," *Latin American Series No. 6* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1932), 106.

⁷³⁶ Beadle to Commandant, December 7, 1927, Nicaraguan Campaign Box 1 Folder 11, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 4. Beadle was hand selected by General Lejeune to head the *Guardia* and had been in place since July 1927.

intent of the US State Department in late 1928 was to maintain a long-term presence of Marines in Nicaragua, but the political situation was changing within the United States in 1930-1931. A year and a half into the Great Depression, the Herbert Hoover administration felt “Dollar Diplomacy” was no longer viable for securing US national interests in the Western Hemisphere. In a dramatic shift in policy, US Secretary of State Henry Stimson, in early 1931, notified US nationals living in Nicaragua that the United States would no longer be responsible for protecting their property or themselves in that country.⁷³⁷ After 1931, most Marine ground forces slowly withdrew to the capital of Managua, except the aviation mechanics scattered across secondary airfields who gave mechanical support to the aircraft involved in aerial logistics, reconnaissance, and communications.

Although contact between bandits and the *Guardia* patrols still occurred, aviation had few opportunities to engage offensively. A report of aviation operations in September 1930, two years after the 1928 Nicaraguan election, noted that “Contacts between *Guardia* and bandits still continue with frequency, but the enemy persists in their old tactics of concealing themselves from airplanes with such skill that no aerial brushes have taken place in the last six weeks. It would appear that the high rate of casualties amongst bandits, due to *Guardia* and aircraft activities, during the past six months would soon cause the outlaws to see the light.”⁷³⁸ During 1930 alone, there were only five aerial attacks from the O2U Corsairs and newly arrived OC-1s (two person bi-plane made by Curtis nicknamed the ‘Falcon’), and from June 1931 until the aircraft departed in January 1933, only ten attacks against enemy forces were carried out by Marine aircraft.⁷³⁹

The preponderance of flying from January 1929 until the Marines departed in early January 1933 was “for the most part the work consisting of covering patrols, maintaining liaison with them, dropping and otherwise delivering supplies, mail, money, and other cargo; as well as ferrying replacement personnel and reinforcements.”⁷⁴⁰ One notable humanitarian mission occurred during the March 31, 1931, earthquake centered on the capital of Managua, which left 2,000 dead and 45,000 homeless. The Marine Ford Tri-Motors flew in medical supplies, evacuated

⁷³⁷ Stimson and Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, 179. Also see Heinel, 287.

⁷³⁸ Weekly Operations Report, September 24, 1930, Record Group 127, Box 43A, Records Relating to Activities in Managua, Nicaragua, 1927-1933, National Archives, Washington DC. The OC-2 ‘Helldiver,’ a modified US Army A-12 Falcon, then confusingly redesignated a third time as the O2C-1, arrived in Nicaragua in late 1929 and would eventually become the principle two seat aircraft for the Corps until the late 1930s.

⁷³⁹ Turner, “Flying with the Marines in Nicaragua,” 5, and Thomas Turner, “1931-1932, An Incredible Year,” unpublished report, Nicaraguan Aviation Folder 2, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 1-2.

⁷⁴⁰ Handwritten observations from Marine pilot, date and author unknown, Nicaraguan aviation Folder 1, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 1.

the wounded, and brought relief supplies.⁷⁴¹ Even though the aviation element focused on logistics and communication during this period in the year before the November 1932 election, contacts between the Guardia and bandits increased in frequency, but the only surge in offensive operations occurred during the summer and fall of 1932 to ensure a safe second national election. US Marine Captain Lewis B. ‘Chesty’ Puller’s force of Company M maintained continuous patrolling in the summer before and during the 1932 election in central and northern Nicaragua until the Marines departed the country.⁷⁴² The 1932 election, mirroring that of 1928, was a success as the *Guardia*, the limited Marine ground forces, and aviation surged during the election period in November 1932. Another liberal candidate, Juan Suaza, was elected in an ironic twist of fate. His involvement in the disputed election in 1926 had started the internal fighting between conservatives and liberals, prompting the Marine intervention.⁷⁴³ As soon as the election ended, the Marines prepared to depart. With their January 1933 departure from Nicaragua, the US Marine Corps closed its chapter on the Second Nicaraguan Campaign, but this last campaign in the Banana Wars demonstrated what support aviation could provide in support of US Marine small wars.

Learning from experience

The Second Nicaraguan Campaign solidified how crucial airpower was to the conduct of small wars. Aviation maintained a subordinate role within the US Marine Corps, but the missions the Marine aviators conducted cemented aviation as an integrated part of small wars operations. In a lecture to the Marine Corps Schools in Quantico in 1935, Marine aviator Major Sanderson stated, “Aviation played a significant part in the operations in Nicaragua. Ground troops would have encountered tremendously increased difficulties, supply would have been more difficult, liaison between ground patrols would have been impossible in many cases, and serious losses would have occurred.”⁷⁴⁴ Retired Marine Major General Ford

⁷⁴¹ Barnes, “Development of Aerial Delivery,” 75.

⁷⁴² Capt Evan F. Carlson, “The Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 21, no. 3 (August 1937): 17, and General Lewis Puller and Colonel William Lee Oral History interview, January, 1961. Oral History Collection, Historical Division, HQ, US Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, Washington, DC., 5. The Guardia had 43 separate combat actions from September 1 through November 7, 1932. During this time, Puller would receive his second of five Navy Crosses. Also see, *Contacts of the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua* (Managua, Nicaragua: Headquarters Guardia Nacional, 1933), 97–106.

⁷⁴³ Ellsworth, *One Hundred Eighty Landings*, 125.

⁷⁴⁴ Major Sanderson, lecture, “Conduct of the Dominican and Second Nicaraguan Campaigns,” Nicaragua, Box 2, Folder 17, USMC Archives, Quantico Va., 7-8. Based on his career progression and the content of the lecture, this was most likely written and given during his 1935-1936 tour at Quantico. For a synopsis of Sanderson’s career see Major General Lawson H. M. Sanderson, Oral History Transcript, July 1969. Oral History

Rodgers recalled that despite its shaky start in 1919, the small wars campaign in Nicaragua was a seminal episode in establishing aviation in the Marine Corps: “Santo Domingo and Haiti saved it [aviation], and then came Nicaragua, and that was the peak. Then Marine Aviation was on its feet for good, due entirely to those two expeditionary force outfits [Haiti and the Dominican Republic] and Nicaragua.”⁷⁴⁵

Several key developments in aviation use occurred during the Second Nicaraguan Campaign. Before deploying to Nicaragua in 1927, the 5th Regiment had trained alongside a squadron in air-to-ground communications and the employment of aircraft for bombing enemy targets, leading to dedicated tactics in dive-bombing, directly supporting infantry operations. Infantry units and aviation squadrons training together began in Hispaniola in 1921, discussed in Chapter Four, and the integration between ground forces and supporting aircraft was evident in the tactics used as soon as the Marines established their permanent presence in Nicaragua in 1927.

Another development was the improved aviation capability that came with the arrival of Fokker and Ford Tri-motor transportation aircraft. These purpose built cargo aircraft were revolutionary in how the Marines operated, enabling patrols to operate farther from their bases and allowing remote bases to be resupplied entirely by air. Supplying patrols by air was a new tactic made possible by the ability of larger transports to quickly move large quantities of material throughout Nicaragua on a scale of magnitude far larger than using older DH-4s. As described earlier in this chapter, the US State Department advocated maintaining a large aviation force in Nicaragua even when Marine ground forces were reduced after the 1928 Nicaraguan election. Without suitable roads and rail networks, the only way to keep the *Guardia Nacional* adequately supplied in the country’s interior was by air.

The communications and reconnaissance provided by Marine aviation allowed the synchronization of ground force movement towards common objectives in near real-time, provided a higher level of situational awareness for the commanders than in previous small wars, and delivered ground patrols with up-to-date intelligence. Experimentation with air panels and message drop and pick-ups created an efficient system for communication between ground forces, aircraft, and the higher headquarters in Managua. The communications and reconnaissance air patrols also increased the offensive tempo of operations by ensuring aircraft were overhead in the areas of greatest enemy activity. While aircraft presence provided support to the US Marines on the ground, it had the second order effect of causing the enemy to change their tactics. Unable to move with impunity, Sandino’s forces

Collection, Historical Division, HQ, US Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, Washington, DC., 1-2.

⁷⁴⁵ Ford Rodgers, Major General (USMC ret.), Oral History Transcript, April 1966, Oral History Collection, Historical Division, HQ, US Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, Washington, DC., 57-58.

were reduced to move “only when and where he [enemy] is free from aerial observation; he does not entrench or occupy villages; confines his operations to remote regions offering the best cover from aerial observation; and never fires on a plane unless discovered and attacked.”⁷⁴⁶

Even with the advantages provided by aviation, the use of aircraft did not change the operational framework practiced by the Marines in their small wars campaigns. Rather, aviation enabled other aspects of small wars to operate more effectively. As a critical enabler, aviation provided intelligence, fire support, and logistics to support ground operations. Small wars campaigns still focused on infantry tactics, with the primary objective being the destruction of the enemy. The development of new tactics for communication, aerial drops of supplies, refined attack techniques, and the use of aviation to maintain offensive pressure on the enemy during the Second Nicaraguan Campaign demonstrated that the Marines fighting in the Banana Wars adapted aviation into a fundamental yet subordinate arm for fighting small wars.

⁷⁴⁶ “Small Wars Operations in Nicaragua, 1927-1928,” 146-147.

Chapter Seven
Conclusion

This dissertation began with a brief account of the July 16, 1927, Sandino-led attack on Ocotal, Nicaragua. As detailed in the previous chapter, Sandino's forces surrounded thirty-seven Marines in Ocotal. However, they were saved when five Marine aircraft drove off a numerically superior force using pre-established communication methods and dive-bombing tactics. Inspired by this use of aviation in small wars, this dissertation aimed to analyze the causal factors in how the US Marines had adapted aviation into a fundamental yet subordinate arm for fighting small wars and, at the same time, to respond to a historiographic need for research into the development of Marine aviation in small wars. Although the events of the attack on Ocotal appear simple, the use of aviation in this battle pulled together complex strands that have been analyzed in this dissertation, namely a pre-existing small wars framework used by the Marines based on their small wars experience and the Marine's unique service culture focused on infantry operations.

To avoid the "fallacy of metaphysical questions" described by David Hackett Fisher in his work *Historians Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought*, this dissertation pursued, specifically, what were the causal factors in how the US Marines adapted aviation during the Banana Wars.⁷⁴⁷ Fisher details other fallacies with the aim of identifying common question framing missteps in historical analysis. By asking 'what were the causal factors' this survey avoids the fallacy of a metaphysical question of 'why did the US Marines adapt aviation for small wars?' As described by Fischer, 'why' questions are "slippery and difficult to define" and "lacks direction and clarity."⁷⁴⁸ By framing the research question on 'what were the causal factors,' this survey was able to use a deliberate methodology for research and analysis. In Chapter One the methodology chosen to analyze the causal factors was explaining outcome process tracing. During the period under investigation (1919-1933), other air services developed air power concepts and practices to serve their specific needs and organizational ends. Similarly, the US Marine Corps adapted aviation for their service, but in a profoundly different way compared to these others. The result of going this 'different way' was that during the Banana Wars, the US Marines adapted aviation into a fundamentally important yet subordinate arm in their small wars campaigns because of their combat experience, an existing small wars framework, and Marine service culture. This concluding chapter will examine these causal factors and demonstrate that aviation was a fundamental element in the future small wars doctrine of the Marine Corps.

Combat Experience

One causal factor in why the US Marine Corps adapted aviation to support infantry operations was their previous small wars experience. The dissertation began with analyzing the Marines' small wars experiences, starting with the Philippine Insurrection. As shown in Chapter Three, US Marine Corps forces in

⁷⁴⁷ David Hackett Fisher, *Historians Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper Collins, 1970), 14-15.

⁷⁴⁸ Fischer, 14.

theater were used in offensive operations, and in one infamous reprisal operation. During these operations future key leaders, including Littleton Waller, Smedley Butler, Frederic Wise, and others, had their first opportunity to participate in small wars. Those leaders brought their small wars experience with them as they conducted military intervention in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The legal framework buttressed this experience with the re-issue of General Order 100 concerning the treatment of the enemy in small wars. As stipulated in General Order 100, which formed the bedrock of the rules of war for the United States military beginning in 1915, any enemy in a small wars was seen as lawless bandits and not subject to the rights stipulated in the rules of war, such as those afforded to prisoners of war. Because bandits were little more than criminals, their property was seen, from a US military perspective, as a legal target for destruction. Underpinning the legal framework established by General Order 100 were the sentiments of racial superiority over the natives where the Marines deployed. Moving into Hispaniola in 1915, the Marines brought with them offensive military experiences alongside a sentiment that the enemy must be subdued by force, this including the destruction of their resources.

The opening stages of the Banana Wars in Haiti and the Dominican Republic saw a continuation of the offensive mindset centered on infantry operations. This small wars combat experience gained by the Marines was manifested in Haiti and the Dominican Republic with the creation of small wars training schools (1921-1922), where the curriculum taught that the infantry incorporated aviation as a tool. As described in Chapter Five, the small wars schools in Hispaniola taught infantry tactics, with aviation serving in direct support of ground operations. All the Marines' small wars experience leading up to the introduction of aviation was centered on the infantry; although aviation enabled new tactics, its addition to the Banana Wars did not fundamentally change how small wars were fought by the Marine Corps. The small wars experience of the Marine Corps in Hispaniola, centered on infantry operations, was a causal factor in how aviation was adapted to small wars.

The most comprehensive writing on aviation combat experiences came from US Marine Captain H. Denny Campbell, the operations officer for VO-7M in Nicaragua in 1927, who in 1931 wrote three in-depth articles about aviation use in small wars.⁷⁴⁹ His wide-ranging articles covered topics from aviation employment in small wars to assessing other nations' aircraft use in small wars. By his own

⁷⁴⁹ Captain H. Denny Campbell, "Aviation in Guerrilla Warfare; Part I," *Marine Gazette* 15, no. 4 (March 1931): 37-75, "Aviation in Guerrilla Warfare: Part II," *Marine Corps Gazette* 15, no. 5 (May 1931): 35-42 and "Aviation in Guerrilla Warfare: Part III," *Marine Corps Gazette* 16, no. 3 (November 1931): 33-40. In his three articles, Campbell also quoted from RUSI and the *Journal of Royal Artillery*, leading to the conclusion that these were publications read by other Marine officers or at least known as credible sources for military professional development.

experience, Captain Campbell described small wars as “a large nation coming to the assistance of a weaker one in subduing internal disorders.”⁷⁵⁰ Mirroring social norms of the time, Campbell’s writing also reflected Social Darwinism when he described the positive outcomes of US intervention as a “means to enlighten less fortunate peoples, to improve their conditions of living, their education, their development in the commercial world and for the general advancement of the nation at large.”⁷⁵¹ His views on the conduct of small wars both reflected those of the early writings of Ellis and Harrington and were in keeping with the focus on enemy destruction favored by the Marines.

Campbell acknowledged that changing the enemies’ will is the objective of war, but his approach was still the annihilation of the enemy force; “the strategical object of war is the destruction of the enemy’s fighting strength.”⁷⁵² For airpower, “The object of aviation in guerilla warfare is the attack of the armed forces of the enemy and their leaders and rendering of the utmost assistance to the ground forces through the service of information and its firepower.”⁷⁵³ Specifically, Campbell advocated for directly removing the opposition’s leadership as doing so would lead to the opposition’s collapse: “attack the brains of the army. These are the chieftains and their staff. As the brain controls the body, so the brain controls the army. Get the Chieftains, and the army will cease to function.”⁷⁵⁴ It is important to note that Campbell’s method for changing the will of the enemy is through their destruction. The purpose of a small war, according to Campbell, was “the subduing of hostile factions” in order to “enlighten less fortunate peoples, to improve their conditions of living, their education, [and] their development in the commercial world.”⁷⁵⁵ Nowhere in his analysis of changing an enemies’ will does Campbell articulate the need to address any grievances from a local population. Taken from Campbell’s viewpoint military intervention and the use of force is justified to serve the interests of the United States.

Campbell framed his justification for the use of force through the lens of known international law and norms of the time. In particular, he quoted passages from the Hague Convention of 1907 and focused on those aspects which delineated

⁷⁵⁰ Captain H. Denny Campbell, “Aviation in Guerrilla Warfare; Part I,” *Marine Gazette* 15, Issue 4 (March 1931); 37.

⁷⁵¹ Campbell, “Aviation Part I,” 39.

⁷⁵² *Ibid.*, 39 and 75. It is unknown if Campbell was exposed to the writings of Clausewitz, but *On War* was listed in the recommended readings for officers attending officer professional military education in Quantico at the time. See “MH-5: Books Recommended for reading on Military History,” 1933, The Basic School Collection, collection 3706, Box 3, Folder 6, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA. Specifically, Section VI, “Bibliography on Small Wars.”

⁷⁵³ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁷⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

an armed belligerent from a guerrilla fighter.⁷⁵⁶ From Campbell's perspective, guerillas were unorganized bandits "which do not conform to the laws and customs of war."⁷⁵⁷ This distinction aids in the interpretation of his advocacy for the use of force against specific targets. As guerillas were bandits, they were not afforded the same protection as uniformed soldiers who performed conventional fighting. The theme argued by Campbell was a direct link to General Order 100, itself a source document for the Hague Conventions, showing a consistency in the US Marines' views on the legal framework for using force in small wars. Beyond a legal framework there was little doctrine for the Marines to utilize for fighting small wars.

This dissertation's research showed that no formal doctrine or operational publication existed within the Marine Corps for fighting small wars during the Banana Wars. However, this research has found that in as described in the writings of Ellis and Harrington there was a small wars construct utilized by the Marine Corps when fighting small wars, and that this construct was demonstrated by the military operational activity conducted by the Marines during the Second Nicaraguan Campaign. This small wars' construct delineated a framework, based on the Marines' combat experience, which advocated the Marines come ashore, seize ports, and then set up outposts in the interior of a country to deny resources to the enemy through securing key population centers or the outright destruction of enemy property. Underpinning all activity in small wars was the maintenance of offensive pressure on the enemy through aggressive patrolling. When introduced into Hispaniola in 1919, aviation was adapted to fit this small wars' framework. The Marine's small wars framework was predicated on infantry operations, which meant aviation adapted to this focus and was directly influenced by the Marine Corps service culture. As shown in the research and analysis of the campaigns in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and the Second Nicaraguan Campaign, Marine aviation focused its flight operations on reconnaissance, intelligence gathering, logistics, and combat support of the infantry.

Service Culture

The Marine Corps service culture, as publicized by the Publicity Bureau, was formed around the idea of elite soldiers who came from the sea. Intensely proud of their combat experiences, the Marines did study other militaries' use of aviation. It is instructive to show differences of US Marine service culture to the service cultures of the RAF and US Army Air Service to illustrate the impact of service culture on how Marines adapted aviation in the proceeding paragraphs. The Marines were aware of the impacts the RAF made on imperial policing across the

⁷⁵⁶ The Yale School Avalon Project has online copies of The Hague 1907 convention easily accessed at [Avalon Project - The Laws of War \(yale.edu\)](http://avalonproject.org/). In his arguments about bandits vs conventional forces, Campbell refers to Hague IV: Laws and Customs of War on Land.

⁷⁵⁷ Campbell, "Aviation Part I," 37-38.

world in Somaliland, Iraq, and India.⁷⁵⁸ Campbell, who fought in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign as a pilot, used the RAF imperial policing campaigns to show how European countries used aviation differently in small wars.⁷⁵⁹ Although the Marines did not necessarily ascribe to a separate air arm within the Corps, there were other air services that operated independently from ground operations.⁷⁶⁰ It is relevant that aviators in the Marine Corps noted the efficiency and low cost of using aviation in small wars rather than employing large numbers of ground troops. However, the Marines never seriously considered conducting separate small wars aviation campaigns, or as the RAF called it, ‘air control,’ independent of infantry operations.⁷⁶¹ Campbell laid bare the stark realization of the ultimate limitation with airpower because airpower “cannot seize and hold ground.”⁷⁶² Marine airpower proponents, such as Cunningham, Geiger, and Rowell, never in their writings tried to displace the role of the infantry with airpower. However, they did argue that airpower could enhance and increase land operations’ effectiveness, whether in small or big wars. Campbell offered the counter-argument that “while the air force is ill-adapted to occupying terrain, it can make this same terrain untenable and thereby deny it to the enemy.”⁷⁶³ The RAF and the US Marines found common ground in utilizing C.E. Callwell’s *Small Wars: Their Principals and Practice* as a foundational text for formulating concepts about small wars.

Callwell’s writings were known and read by RAF officers who took his views on using force to quell a rebellion as the definitive word on method. As tribesmen who lived off the land often led the opposition in small wars, aircraft were seen as a natural extension of economic reprisal against rebels.⁷⁶⁴ For the RAF, bombing livestock, crops, and food transportation was an excellent use of airpower to bring a rebellious section of the Empire to heel.⁷⁶⁵ In this way, the RAF mirrored

⁷⁵⁸ Ross Rowell, “Aviation in Bush Warfare,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 14, no. 3 (September 1929): 180.

⁷⁵⁹ Campbell, “Aviation Part I,” 37–40.

⁷⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁷⁶¹ Campbell, “Aviation in Guerrilla Warfare; Part III,” 38. The RAF publicly stated that they conducted their operations independently of ground troops, but the opposite was, in fact, true. For example, the RAF in Somaliland was supported by a prodigious amount of ground forces: The 6th King’s African Rifles, roughly 850 strong; the 101st Indian Grenadiers, 450 rifles; and the Somaliland Camel Corps, providing a final 360 soldiers. Major H. Rayne, *Sun, Sand, and Somals: Leaves from the Note-Book of a District Commander in British Somaliland* (London; HF & G. Holborn, 1921), 201-203

⁷⁶² Campbell, “Aviation Part II,” 35.

⁷⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶⁴ Callwell, 41. Targeting supplies, livestock, crops, and villages was specifically advocated by Callwell.

⁷⁶⁵ Lecture given by Air Commodore H.R. Brooke-Popham, reprinted in “The AIR Force,” *Royal United Service Institution* 65, (February 1, 1920): 60. Brooke-Popham was

the Marines in relentless pursuit of their enemies, albeit using different methods. Although the Marines also followed a tactic of removing resources from bandits, as advocated by Ellis and Harrington, the Marines never considered using aircraft to destroy resources in the same way as the RAF. The RAF and US Marines used the same principles advocated by Callwell but applied different tactics to achieve their ends. The Marines' service culture of infantry-focused operations differed significantly from the RAF, which was trying to showcase itself as a less costly independent service compared to the Royal Navy and the British Army. The social norms and political objectives of the United States also differed from the United Kingdom. The US Marines sent to the Banana Wars believed their objective was to secure US economic interests as opposed to maintaining an Empire. Sharing the social norms of the Marine Corps was the US Army as it shaped its aviation doctrine but used a much different approach than the tactical focus of the Marines in the Banana Wars.

As part of the US Army, the United States Army Air Service (USAAS) was formally established as a separate arm inside the US Army in the National Defense Act of 1920.⁷⁶⁶ Even with its establishment, US Army aviation pioneers sought to exploit the potential of airpower by creating a war-winning and fully independent separate service. However, US Army ground commanders wanted to retain control over their aircraft, while air proponents wished to be free from interference or overall control.⁷⁶⁷ In addition to the tension within the US Army with who retained operational control of airpower were the growing pains as the USAAS created its own identity. Two plans were submitted to Congress in 1925 for the formation of either an Air Corps, to create a linkage between the Army and the air service similar to the Navy and the Marine Corps, with the other plan creating an independent air force.⁷⁶⁸ As the internal debate continued, aviation officers inside the US Army continued to advocate for strategic bombing. Even with a focus on strategic bombing and independent operations, the USAAS did experiment with a more coordinated air-to-ground integrated concept in the interwar period with the creation of the 3rd Attack Group.

The 3rd Attack Group was established in 1921, but the role of this group was an anomaly in the fledgling air service's pursuit of strategic air power

Trenchard's staff officer when he commanded the RAF on the Western Front and pervaded an offensive mindset in all RAF operations, 70.

⁷⁶⁶ *The Statutes at Large of the United States of America from May 1919 to March 1921, Concurrent Resolutions of the Two Houses of Congress and Recent Treaties, Conventions, and Executive Proclamations Amendment to the Constitution: Part I* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1921), 768.

⁷⁶⁷ Maurer Maurer, *Aviation in the US Army: 1919-1939* (Washington DC: Office of Air Force History, 1987), 74.

⁷⁶⁸ Maurer, 73-74.

development.⁷⁶⁹ Outfitted with DH-4s, the 3rd Attack Group was the only entity within the USAAS focused on providing air support through bombing and strafing to attacking ground units, and this focus was guided more by the types of aircraft available than any doctrinal commitment.⁷⁷⁰ Although the 3rd Attack Group managed to keep some thinking about close air support alive within the USAAC, the difference in warfighting approaches between services could be seen in their respective missions and cultures. The Marines were a small service with a small wars focus, with a larger mission of providing amphibious troops for naval campaigns. The USAAS, as a service, remained focused on creating an independent air force for winning wars. Even at the Air Service Tactical School, the USAAS's school for ground attack tactical aviation in direct support of ground forces, Marine aviators who attended the course were taught that Douhet and Mitchell's vision of strategic bombing was the logical evolution of airpower.⁷⁷¹

Strategic bombing dominated doctrinal development inside the USAAC, and only the briefest mention of small wars aviation experience was taught at the USAAC Air Corps Tactical School in 1930. The only reason the Marines' expertise received any attention was that a US Army instructor knew two Marine pilots involved in the Banana Wars.⁷⁷² The tactical use of aviation by and for the Marines was based on their small wars combat experiences, whereas the USAAC chose to develop their concepts on what theoretically could be. Becoming an independent strategic bombing force was never a consideration for Marine aviation. It was a significant separation of airpower philosophy between the two services and this distinction was a direct result of the service culture of the Marine Corps. Roy Geiger's response to whether or not the Marines should have a separate air service, detailed in Chapter Five, sums up the focus and service culture of the Marine Corps: "To conclude: Theoretically, I think a Separate Air Service is unsound."⁷⁷³

⁷⁶⁹ *Annual Report Chief of the Air Service 1924* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office), 86-87.

⁷⁷⁰ Richard R. Muller, "Close Air Support" in *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period*, ed. by Williamson Murray and Alan R. Millet (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 175.

⁷⁷¹ Vernon McGee, Lawson Sanderson, and Christian Schilt all recorded that Douhet was taught as the pinnacle of thought in their respective courses when they attended the Air Service Tactical School.

⁷⁷² Rusty Rowell and Christian Schilt were the two Marines invited back to speak. Christian Schilt, General (USMC ret.), Oral History Transcript, November 1969. Oral History Collection, Historical Division, HQ, US Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, Washington, DC., 8. Also, Ross E. Rowell, "Experiences with the Air Service in Small Wars," Lecture, January 12, 1929, Ross Rowell Collection, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA., 3.

⁷⁷³ Capt Geiger to CAPT Craven, January 20, 1920, Geiger Personal Papers, Box 1, Folder 15, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

Service Culture into Doctrine

Nowhere is the Marines' service culture of supporting ground operations more apparent than in the seminal small wars document published by the US Marines after the Banana Wars the *Small Wars Manual*, first published in 1938. The precursor to the *Small Wars Manual* was *Small Wars Operations*, published in 1935, primarily influenced by Harrington and US Marine Major Harold Utley, a veteran of Hispaniola and the Second Nicaraguan Campaign.⁷⁷⁴ The idea of codifying the experience of the Banana Wars into a written publication had begun in earnest over a decade earlier. Even before the fighting ceased in Nicaragua, the *Marine Corps Gazette* solicited officers in December 1928 to submit articles relating to "bush warfare."⁷⁷⁵ The editors of the *Marine Corps Gazette* felt that too many lessons, reports, techniques, and tactics had been lost during the opening phases of combat in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. After sustained offensive combat operations, with the relative peace of the Nicaraguan election in 1928, the editors wanted to take advantage of every opportunity to disseminate the lessons from the Second Nicaraguan Campaign. In an effort to make the knowledge about "bush warfare" available "for future reference and study," the *Marine Corps Gazette* pledged to publish combat reports from the Second Nicaraguan Campaign and solicited input for articles relating to various aspects of "operations of its expeditionary forces in tropical countries."⁷⁷⁶ True to their word, the editors published contact reports (reprinted combat reports), and articles focused on specific disciplines fighting small wars. While the last combat reports were published in the September 1929 issue, specific discipline articles continued to appear, including the three lengthy articles on the use of aviation by US Marine aviator Captain H. Denny Campbell in 1931 and 1932.

As the *Marine Corps Gazette* tried to capture and disseminate lessons from the Banana Wars, Utley, while he was assigned to the Marine Corps Schools in 1930, synthesized his ideas about small wars in the hopes of reviving the flagging study of small wars.⁷⁷⁷ Writing as an instructor, he formalized his lecture notes on

⁷⁷⁴ Utley, when the commander of the Eastern Area in Nicaragua, 1928-1929, wrote extensively in his reports and to Capt Mike Edson about the best way to conduct small wars. Utley had also served as a leader in the Gendarme in Haiti from 1918-1919. For correspondence in Nicaragua, see Utley Papers Box 1, Folders 40-42; for his combat reports in Haiti, see Utley Personal Papers Box 2, Folder 2, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA. Writing as an instructor, he formalized his lecture notes on small wars, eventually serializing his thoughts in the *Marine Corps Gazette* in 1931.

⁷⁷⁵ Division of Operations and Training, Headquarters US Marine Corps, "Combat Reports of Operations in Nicaragua," *Marine Corps Gazette* 13, no. 4 (Dec 1928), 241.

⁷⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁷ Utley, when commander of the Eastern Area in Nicaragua, 1928-1929, wrote extensively in his reports and to Capt Mike Edson about the best way to conduct small wars. Utley had also served as a leader in the Gendarme in Haiti from 1918-1919. For correspondence in

small wars, eventually serializing his thoughts in the *Marine Corps Gazette* in 1931. Utley's work was admired by succeeding commandants of the training schools, and he was ultimately put in charge of writing a manual for fighting small wars; eventually titled *Small Wars Operations*, it was the precursor to the *Small Wars Manual*.⁷⁷⁸ Harrington's original writings, found in the Archives of the US Marine Corps, formed the bedrock of *Small Wars Operations* and maintained the consistent kernel at the heart of small wars campaigns: "if there is an organized hostile force opposing the intervention, the primary objective in small wars, as in a major war, is its early destruction."⁷⁷⁹ *Small Wars Operations* echoed the writings of Ellis and Harrington, who both advocated the destruction of enemy forces, and it is relevant that Utley quoted both in his writings.⁷⁸⁰ By building upon the ideas of Ellis and Harrington, Utley's writings underscored the core idea about the centrality of effort in small wars, finding and destroying the enemy that spanned the entirety of the Banana Wars.

While *Small Wars Operations* recognized that the ultimate political end was to achieve peace, the need for offensive action against enemy forces was the paramount message throughout the text. The aviation chapter stated: "Throughout a small war campaign, the supporting air unit's most essential task is the direct aid given to the infantry in battle."⁷⁸¹ From the first arrival of aircraft in Hispaniola in February 1919 to the close of the Banana Wars in 1934, the focus of aviation as a supporting function was never in doubt. As described in *Small Wars Operations*, "There are many and varied uses for aviation in small wars. It is primarily a part of a team and will usually produce its best results when employed in support of other arms. It must be placed at the disposal of the arm which carries the decision, the infantry."⁷⁸² This statement was later refined in the *Small Wars Manual*: "[aircraft] support the ground forces in whatever manner is expedient, regardless of their normal function in major warfare."⁷⁸³ While the causal factor of past small war experiences led aviation to play an offensive role in supporting the infantry, the other functions of aviation, based on their experiences in Hispaniola, played the

Nicaragua, see Utley Papers Box 1, Folders 40-42; for his combat reports in Haiti, see Utley Personal Papers Box 2 Folder 2, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

⁷⁷⁸ Bickel, 214-215.

⁷⁷⁹ *Small Wars Manual*, Ch 2, 2.

⁷⁸⁰ Specifically, Major Samuel M. Harrington, "The Strategy and Tactics of Small Wars," *Marine Corps Gazette* 6, no. 4 (December 1921): 475 and Earl H. Ellis, "Operations Assessment, Summer 1919," Record Group 127, Records Relating to the Occupation of the Dominican Republic, Folder D-40, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁷⁸¹ *Small Wars Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 1935), Ch 15, 17.

For stability being the ultimate political outcome, see Ch 1, 1.

⁷⁸² *Small Wars Operations*, Ch 15, 1.

⁷⁸³ *Small Wars Manual*, Ch 15, 1.

most crucial role in small wars. Its use as an enabler of ground operations was Marine aviation's most significant value.

As the Marines came to appreciate through their experiences in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign, the importance of reconnaissance support was made clear in the *Small Wars Manual*: "It should be borne in mind, however, that combat is secondary to reconnaissance, and attacks which are not coordinated with the ground force action should generally be avoided."⁷⁸⁴ Aviation, which brought new capabilities to the Marines in their small wars operations, remained a supporting arm. Service culture, focused on supporting infantry operations, was a causal factor in how the Marines adapted aviation to their small wars campaigns.

Beyond the Banana Wars

While Marines such as Utley worked on the *Small Wars Manual*, the Marine Corps shifted its focus from small wars to amphibious operations. As described in Chapter Three, tension existed inside the Corps regarding the priority warfighting specialty: small wars or amphibious operations. With the removal of all Marines from the Banana Wars, after the publication of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor" policy, the Marines poured their energy, resources, and training into large-scale naval combat in the Pacific. One of the principal founders of the Marine's small wars operational construct, Pete Ellis, was the intellectual driving force behind the other seminal doctrinal publication developed by the US Marines in the interwar period, *The Tentative Manual on Landing Operations*.

When Ellis departed Hispaniola in December 1920, he was ordered to conduct a survey of the South Pacific, an area Ellis predicted would become the future battleground for the United States.⁷⁸⁵ Upon his return to the US, Ellis wrote *Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia*, his forward-thinking work concerning his forecast about a war between the Empire of Japan and the United States.⁷⁸⁶ Major General Lejeune, by this time the Commandant of the US Marine Corps, republished Ellis' work as Operational Plan 712 and promptly sent Ellis on a site survey of the South Pacific. Ellis' untimely death on the island of Korrer in early 1923 meant he did not live to see his work's profound impact on US naval doctrine for the Second World War.⁷⁸⁷ As the small wars in the Caribbean and Central America drew to a

⁷⁸⁴ Ibid., 392. Brief descriptions of fighting, scout/observation, and transportation aircraft followed.

⁷⁸⁵ Brett Friedman, *21st Century Ellis: Operational Art and Strategic Prophecy for the Modern Era* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2015), 44-48. Friedman analyzes Ellis' writings along four themes, including amphibious operations, and traces how Ellis' earlier writings at the Naval War College influenced his later thoughts.

⁷⁸⁶ E.H. Ellis, *Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Marine Corps, 1921; Washington, DC: Headquarters US Marine Corps, 1992).

⁷⁸⁷ Ellis, Medical History August 12, 1922 through October 01, 1922, Official Military Personnel File. Ellis' alcoholism is well documented in his OMPF, including these final

close, US Marine Commandant Major General Ben Fuller ordered all Marine Schools closed in 1933 to turn Operational Plan 712 into a more codified doctrine.⁷⁸⁸ The *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*, published in 1934, resulted from a year of work using Ellis' original work as its framework.⁷⁸⁹ Included in the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* were some tactics created in the first instance from the cooperation between ground forces and aviation during the Banana Wars.⁷⁹⁰ It is important to note that like the Marines' concept for fighting small wars within the pages of the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* aviation was again given a supporting role.⁷⁹¹ Knowing that the only way to maintain the aviation support needed in an amphibious battle was through the aircraft carrier, the Marines sent two detachments to US Navy aircraft carriers in 1931 to begin gaining experience with the carrier Navy.⁷⁹² H. Denny Campbell, after writing his aviation articles for the *Marine Corps Gazette* discussed earlier in this chapter, helped craft the aviation sections, to include Marine aircraft deploying from aircraft carriers, into the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*.⁷⁹³

In parallel to writing new amphibious doctrine was the reorganization of the entire United States Marines Corps. The Fleet Marine Force, a permanent structure of command and control, manning, and equipment, was formally created in 1933.⁷⁹⁴ Within the Fleet Marine Force, aviation was given a permanent place but it remained in support of ground forces. As articulated in 1936 by the US Marine Corps

stays at Yokahama Naval Hospital, Japan, where, against medical orders left the hospital on October 01, 1922, to continue his travels. Hampered by his various neurosis and severe alcoholism, Ellis only managed to visit certain parts of Micronesia before dying on the island of Korrer, most likely from alcohol poisoning.

⁷⁸⁸ Heinl, *Soldiers of the Sea*, 299–301 and Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 329–31.

⁷⁸⁹ *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Marine Corps, 1934).

⁷⁹⁰ *Tentative Manual*, Chapter 3, communication methods listed in sections 2-426 and 2-427, air panels and airdrops/pick-ups.

⁷⁹¹ *Tentative Manual*, Chapter 3, 2-400.

⁷⁹² Elizabeth L. Tierney, *A Brief History of Marine Corps Aviation* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Marine Corps, 1962), 5. The US Navy began experimenting with carrier operations in the 1920s and early 1930s with the converted destroyers USS LANGLEY and SARATOGA. The lessons learned, and tactics developed, helped shape the first US purpose-built carrier, the USS RANGER, commissioned in 1934. For a good synopsis of the early development of US Navy carrier development, see Philip D. Mayer, "Incubate Innovation: Aviation Lessons from the Interwar Period," *US Naval Institute Proceedings* 33, no. 6 (December 2019).

⁷⁹³ Johnson, *Marine Corps Aviation*, 65.

⁷⁹⁴ Claude A. Swanson, General Order no. 241, December 7, 1933,

<https://www.usmcu.edu/Research/Marine-Corps-History-Division/Frequently-Requested-Topics/Historical-Documents-Orders-and-Speeches/The-Fleet-Marine-Force/>, accessed November 26, 2023. Swanson was the US Secretary of the Navy.

Commandant Major General John Russell the Fleet Marine Force “corresponds to an infantry division, containing infantry, artillery, aircraft, the special weapons, and the maintenance units necessary to make it tactically independent.”⁷⁹⁵ The emphasis on the nucleus of the Fleet Marine Force as an infantry division showed the operational focus remained on the infantry, but aviation was a requirement in future military operations.

Final Thoughts

The Marine’s departure from Hispaniola and Nicaragua marked the closing of the Banana Wars in the Caribbean. The types of operations executed by the Marines were offensive in practice, focused on aggressively attacking any enemy force. Although “Mars Takes Flight” adds to the history of the development of aviation during the Banana Wars, further research is needed into small wars and the use of aviation in small wars. As well, a detailed study into the operations of the US Marines in the Philippine Insurrection has yet to be written. A compendium of articles was compiled by the History and Museums Division of the US Marine Corps in 1998 on the 100th anniversary of the Spanish-American War, but the focus of this work is almost entirely dedicated to operations in Cuba.⁷⁹⁶ Another area worthy of research is that of aviation training given to native populations during the Banana Wars. Given the importance of aviation to the Second Nicaraguan Campaign, enabling the Nicaraguans to operate their own aerial logistics seemed to be a logical step in establishing a functioning security force. The US Marines trained local ground forces to police their own countries and such training was a key tenant of their small wars framework. Aviation was a key enabler in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign, but why the Marines did not help the Nicaraguans train their own flyers and mechanics remains a mystery. Not until 1934 did Nicaragua establish its air force.⁷⁹⁷ Finally, further research is needed into the history of Marines and small wars. Specifically, it would be useful to understand why and how the concept of small wars that initially focused on the destruction of an enemy changed into the more nuanced views espoused in the *Small Wars Manual* where the needs of a native population begin to take a more prominent place in small wars considerations.

⁷⁹⁵ John Russell, “The Fleet Marine Force,” *Naval Institute Proceedings* 62, no. 10 (October 1936), <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/1936/october/fleet-marine-force#:~:text=241%2C%20dated%20December%207%2C%201933,personnel%20situation%20of%20the%20corps>, accessed November 26, 2023.

⁷⁹⁶ Wanda J. Renfrow and Jack Shulimson, eds., *Marines in the Spanish-American War, 1895-1899: Anthology and Bibliography* (Headquarters and Museum Division, US Marine Corps: Washington, DC 1998).

⁷⁹⁷ Dan Hagedorn, “Nicaraguan Air Force: 1934-1953,” The Latin American Historical Aviation Society, accessed December 8, 2023, <https://www.laahs.com/nicaraguan-air-force/>. Hagedorn also wrote *Central American and Caribbean Air Forces* (Tonbridge, UK: Air Britain, 1993).

This dissertation covered one aspect of the history of the Banana Wars, utilizing the perspective of the Marines of the time. This perspective was explicitly chosen to help fill the historiographical void in aviation development in small wars by examining how the Marines thought at the time rather than using modern military frameworks and presentism. The Banana Wars provided a unique opportunity for the US Marines to develop their aviation tactics by providing space and time for the Marines to experiment in an intellectually safe environment. It was, obviously, deadly for those fighting, but in the larger sense, the Marines could try new concepts and experiment without overbearing oversight or supervision. There are few opportunities for a military service to do what the Marines did during the Banana Wars, and the US Marines of the time capitalized on the experience. As analyzed in this dissertation, aircraft enabled the Marines to develop different tactics that capitalized on the advantages offered by the use of aviation but did not fundamentally change how they conceptualized fighting small wars. Marine aviation was adapted into a fundamental yet subordinate arm for fighting small wars during the Banana Wars and this philosophy was then set down in the codification of small wars tactics in the *Small Wars Manual*. The foundational concept that aviation should be used in support, not in place of, Marine ground operations is a cornerstone of all US Marine tactics and operational developments today.

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Appendix
Common Aircraft Pictures

Aircraft



JN-4B Jenny

The versatile trainer for World War I and later combat aircraft for the Marines in 1919 in Hispaniola.

US Marine Corps Archives, Flickr, Goodyear W. Kirkman Collection,

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usmcarchives/29081465598/in/album-72157670367675108/>,

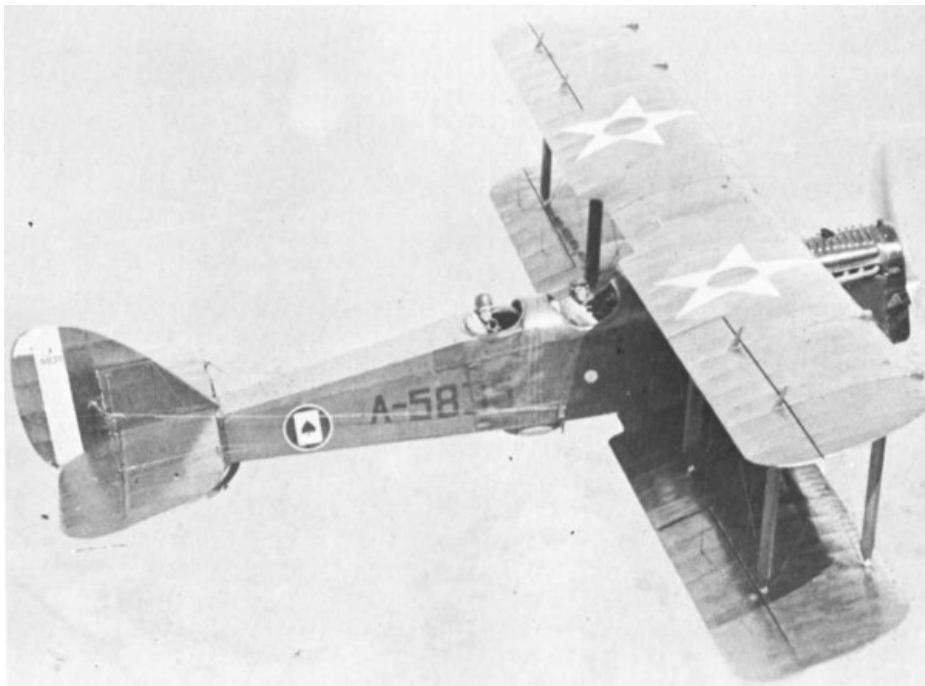
accessed December 31, 2023.



DH-4A

The basic airframe that became the workhorse for Marine aviators. The front cockpit location under the wings between the wing-struts is a distinguishing feature of the A model.

US Marine Corps Archives,
Flickr, Goodyear W. Kirkman
Collection,
<https://www.Flickr.com/photos/usmcarchives/42054494475/in/album-72157670367675108/>,
accessed January 02, 2024.



DH-4B

DH-4B flown by Alfred Cunningham in the Dominican Republic in 1922. Note the pilot cockpit placement further aft of the wing struts, a notable feature of the B variant.

Edward Johnson, *Marine Corps Aviation: The Early Years, 1912-1940* (Washington, DC: Headquarters United States Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, 1977), 38.



O2B-1

The new designation for a modified DH-4B.

Edward Johnson, *Marine Corps Aviation: The Early Years, 1912-1940*

(Washington, DC:

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Museums Division, 1977), 45.



OSU-1 Corsair

Note the radial engine compared to the earlier in-line engines of the DH-4s. Radials were air cooled, lighter, and gave better performance. Additionally, the more aerodynamic cylindrical was an advancement over the boxier looking DH-4s.

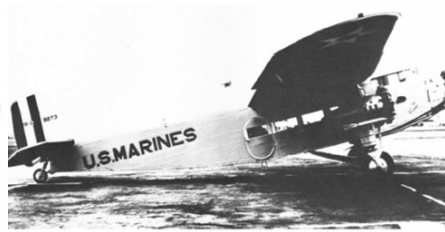
Edward Johnson, *Marine Corps Aviation: The Early Years, 1912-1940* (Washington, DC: Headquarters United States Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, 1977), 41.



OC-1 Falcon

Aircraft designations of this time are difficult to research as they changed periodically. The OC-1 was previously the F8C-1 nicknamed the Helldiver.

San Diego Air and Space Museum, Flickr, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/sdasmarchives/4561490405/in/photostream/>, accessed January 4, 2024.



Top: Fokker Tri Motors

Left: Fokker Tri Motor

Right: Ford Tri Motor

Note rear wheel on the Ford (right) compared to the tail dragger configuration of the Fokker (left) for easy identification.

Edward Johnson, *Marine Corps Aviation: The Early Years, 1912-1940* (Washington, DC: Headquarters United States Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, 1977), 50 and 59.