

MCJROTC Unit Organization

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to make you aware of the organizational elements of a MCJROTC Unit. As a MCJROTC cadet, you should be familiar with the MCJROTC chain of command and organization and the principles inherent in that organization.

Introduction

When a group of people get together to perform a specific task, there must be some form of organization. Otherwise, time and effort are wasted and the mission may not be accomplished. This is true for both civilian and military **endeavors**. In the military and more specifically, the United States Marine Corps (USMC), missions take on greater importance, because they often deal with the defense of the nation. Just as the Marine Corps has organization and structure, so too does the MCJROTC. Therefore during this lesson, you will learn about the MCJROTC **chain of command** and organization.

Most organizations follow the same general pattern. Decisions are made and actions are taken by an executive, or commander. This individual is entrusted with the authority and the responsibility to give orders and to enforce those orders, so that the task is accomplished. If subordinates have more than one commander to report to, organization can break down. If this happens, the chances of the successful completion of the task are lessened. This is why responsibility for a unit is given to a single individual. Within

the MCJROTC unit organization, that individual is the Cadet Battalion Commander.

The main idea behind organization is the effective use of the individual. Wasting labor hours and efforts of subordinates is **detrimental** to the accomplishment of the task. Thus, capable people would be assigned to jobs in accordance with their talents and capabilities. The jobs should provide individuals with training that will allow them to advance to the next highest rank. This encourages them to successfully complete the tasks, which results in positive reinforcement in the form of advancement. The same holds true for members of the MCJROTC Cadet Corps.

Grade and Rank

Each person in a military organization holds a certain rank or grade. Individuals begin as recruits or trainees. As they obtain experience and training, they move up the chain of command to take on responsibilities as leaders. Leaders come in two categories. There are commissioned officers and noncommissioned officers.

Commissioned officers, second lieutenant and up, receive their “commissions” from the President. These commissions authorize them to perform their functions and duties in the military. The commissioned grades are: second lieutenant, first lieutenant, captain, major, lieutenant colonel, colonel, brigadier general, major general, lieutenant general, and general. Second lieutenants, first lieutenants, and captains are known as “company grade” officers. Majors, lieutenant colonels, and colonels are called “field grade officers.” All grades of general are referred to as “general officers.”

Noncommissioned officers (NCOs) are enlisted personnel who have advanced above the first three entry-level positions and placed in positions of authority by the commander of a unit. USMC noncommissioned officer grades are: corporal, sergeant, staff sergeant, gunnery sergeant, master sergeant or first sergeant, and master gunnery sergeant or sergeant major. These NCO/SNCO are placed in command of other enlisted personnel. The senior noncommissioned officer of the Marine Corps holds the title, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps and is the adviser to the Commandant on all enlisted matters.

Selected individuals may be warranted to perform tasks that require a high degree of training and specialization. These warrant officers rank between the top enlisted grade and the lowest commissioned officer.

In the MCJROTC, cadet rank will parallel the rank of the actual Marine Corps. As a result, cadets will earn cadet rank ranging from enlisted, to officer with the highest rank achievable being lieutenant colonel.

Principles of Organization

There are several principles that must be taken into consideration when establishing an effective command and control system. You must consider the **unity of command**, the **span of control**, and the chain of command.

Unity of Command

Unity of command means that there is only one officer who is responsible for the actions of the unit in question. This is the person who answers for the success or failure of the unit. It follows that it is this person's duty to see that any and all assigned missions are accomplished.

Span of Control

Span of control concerns the number of subordinates who can be controlled or supervised by an individual commander. The number of subordinates a commander can control varies with the type of unit and the variety of functions to be performed. The span of control is greater for units composed of identical elements than for units where the parts are varied and specialized. Other factors that can affect the span of control include freedom of movement, communications, and the number of subordinate assistants available. The range for span of control is between three and eight persons.

Chain of Command

The chain of command varies with the component of command involved. All orders and instructions from higher echelons to lower echelons should be issued through the chain of command. A person or unit can only have one immediate commander. It is from this commander that all orders and instructions are received. By using the chain of command, an individual commander may limit the number of personnel who are directly supervised.

It is the duty of the leader, or commander, to see that the task is completed. This requires the commander to see that the unit has the means necessary to complete the task. To see that this is done, the following three additional factors must be taken into consideration: simplicity, economy, and flexibility.

Simplicity. This factor is necessary for a number of reasons. Simplicity will allow a reduction of high skill levels in training. It will also help minimize problems in supply and maintenance. Employment and deployment of the unit will be **facilitated**. One must be careful,

though, because if this is taken too far, the unit will be unable to perform its functions.

Economy. This involves the equipment of the unit. The equipment that you have on hand should relate to the normal performance of the unit. Any equipment not used on a day-to-day basis should be pooled at the highest possible level. Extra equipment should be requested only on an “as required” basis.

Flexibility. A unit is designed for a specific task. This does not mean that the unit should restrict itself to those tasks. In Korea, in 1950, many transport units and engineering units were forced into combat and infantry type duties as a result of the encirclement by the Red Chinese. These units were able to accept the challenge and be successful. They displayed their flexibility and resourcefulness.

MCJROTC Organization

Military command is exercised through a series of leaders. When a commander wants a specific task accomplished, a subordinate is given an order and that order is passed down the chain of command. This saves the commander much time and trouble. For instance, the commander will give the order to the lieutenants who are the platoon leaders. They will then give it to the sergeants who are the squad leaders. The squad leaders will give the order to their squad members. In this way, the information flows from commanders to subordinates. The series of leaders along which the command follows is called the chain of command. The chain of command extends from the President of the United States (Commander in Chief) to the last private in the last rank.

Your school has a similar chain of command. The county or city superintendent

supervises the principal. The principal supervises the teachers, who supervise you, the student. As a cadet in MCJROTC, you are directly in the chain of command of the USMC. The chain of command from the President to you is illustrated in *Figure 1* on the next page. This illustration shows how you fit into the Marine Corps JROTC chain of command.

Figure 2 on the next page shows the organizational structure of a typical MCJROTC unit. On the level of MCJROTC, you will most often be organized at either battalion or company level, according to the desires of your Senior Marine Instructor (SMI). A battalion consists of two or more companies. A company consists of three or four platoons. Normally, a platoon consists of three or four squads. A squad is made up of a sergeant and eight to twelve squad members.

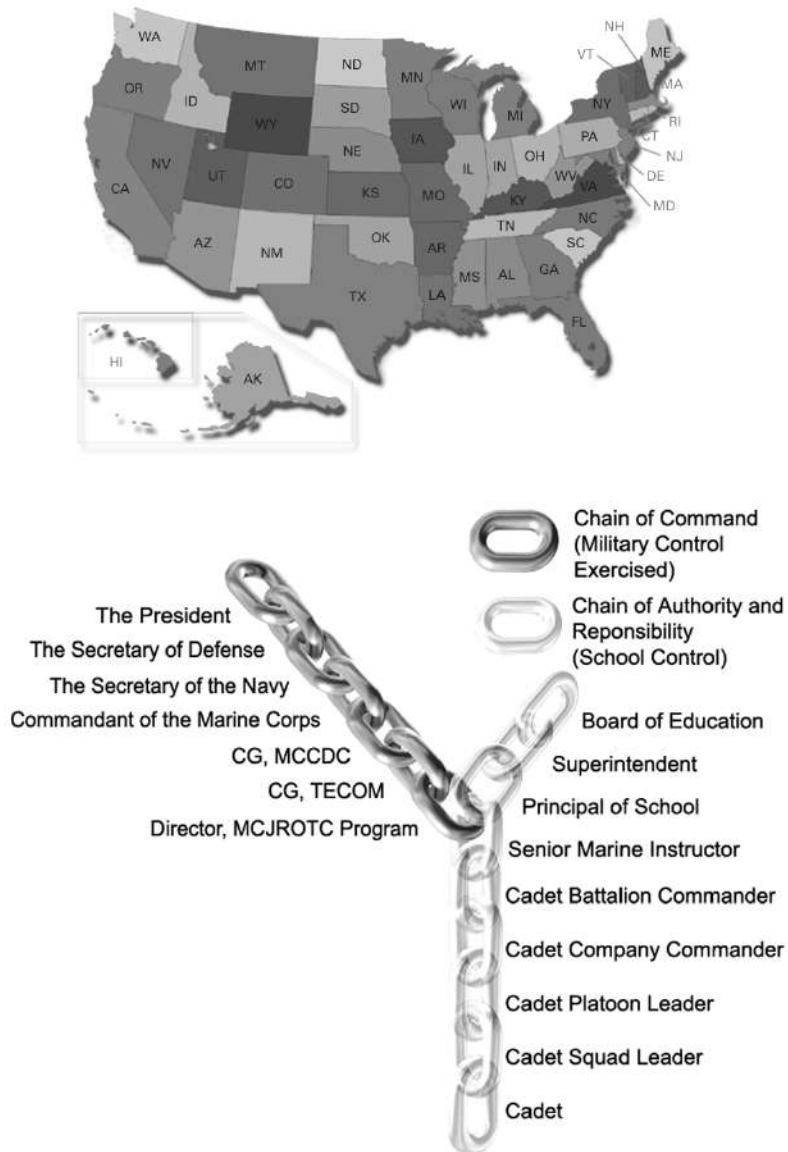
As a member of a MCJROTC unit, you will earn and carry rank. Your insignias will display your rank and should give you a sense of identity. If you wear your uniform properly and develop the proper attitude about your unit and your duty, it will help you in your development as an individual.

Conclusion

The MCJROTC, like the USMC, has both officers and NCOs as leaders. MCJROTC follows the USMC concepts of unity of command, span of control, and chain of command. Simplicity, economy, and flexibility are important features. MCJROTC units are not only in the USMC chain of command, but also in the school system’s chain of command. ❖

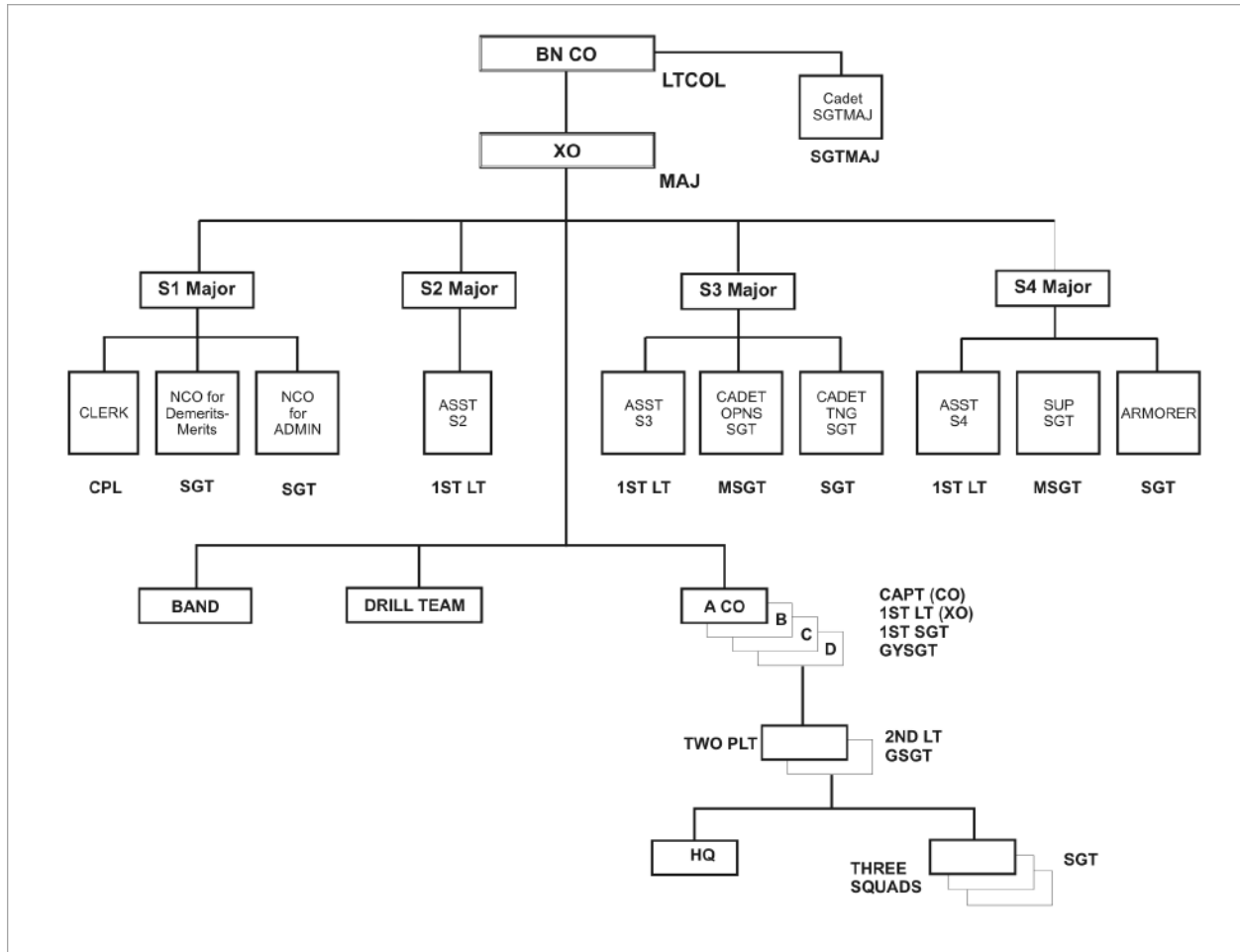
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Category 5 – General Military Subjects
Skill 1 – Administration

Figure 1: MCJROTC Chain of Command



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Figure 2: Organizational Structure



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