Teaching tactics as armies integrate. A comparative case study of United States Marine Corps schools and the Norwegian Military Academy

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Master thesis

Abstract
The tactical level is academically not well developed and there is a paucity of literature on the former. Yet it has become more important in the recent years mainly due to shrinking defence budgets and the increasing number of multinational joint operations. This incites nations to integrate more closely and armies find themselves cooperating at ever lower unit levels. Such integration necessitates a similar understanding of tactics to remain effective.

Officers first formally encounter tactics during their training at military academies. This thesis examines how junior officers are educated in tactics at the Norwegian Military Academy and two comparable United States Marine Corps schools. Based on established military theory, indicators for effective tactical education are formulated and applied to the teaching in these schools. The thesis uncovers that the schools' theoretical approach to tactical education is essentially identical, but its practical implementation differs.
The United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, prepares officers for the Army. The Air Force Academy is located at Colorado Springs, Colorado. And the Naval Academy is in Annapolis, Maryland; it prepares officers for the Navy and the Marine Corps. Nominees for these academies must be seventeen to twenty-three years old, unmarried and with no children. Candidates are usually nominated by members of Congress.