

How Should the Marine Corps
Raise the Competence
of its
Infantry Squad Leaders?

MCWL Squad Leader Project
Capt B.B. McBreen

Thesis

- The Marine Corps does a marginal job of manning, training, and equipping Infantry Squad Leaders
- Infantry Squad Leaders are key leaders on the battlefield
- Fielding well-trained Marine Infantry Squad Leaders needs institutional focus
 - Manning Policies: The Main Effort
 - Training

“Our Main Effort is Excellence in Warfighting.”

“Aggressive and informed leadership demands education, training and mentoring.”

“We will continue to develop leaders who, given mission-type orders and commander’s intent, can think on their feet, act independently, and succeed.”

- CMC Guidance

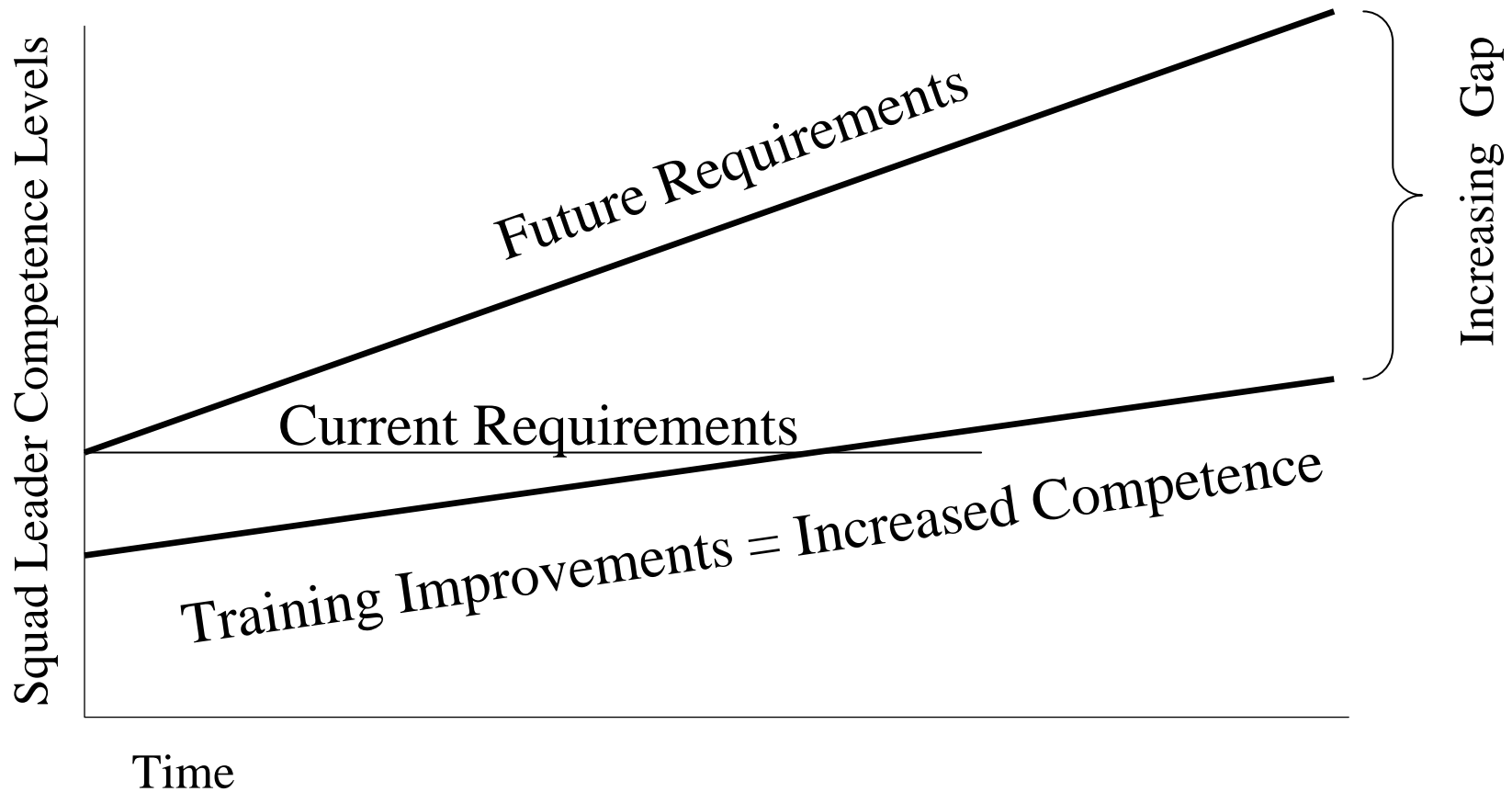
Facts on Infantry Squads

- 648 Active Duty Squads, 243 Reserve
- ~25% Led by Sergeant SL
 - 75% of USMC squads do NOT have T/O leader?
- Corporal SL: ~2 years TIS, 3-6 mo in billet
 - One deployment, limited experience
 - Limited training, marginal maturity
- Our infantry Marines deserve tough, experienced, and skilled leadership at the squad level.

Infantry Squad Leaders Course

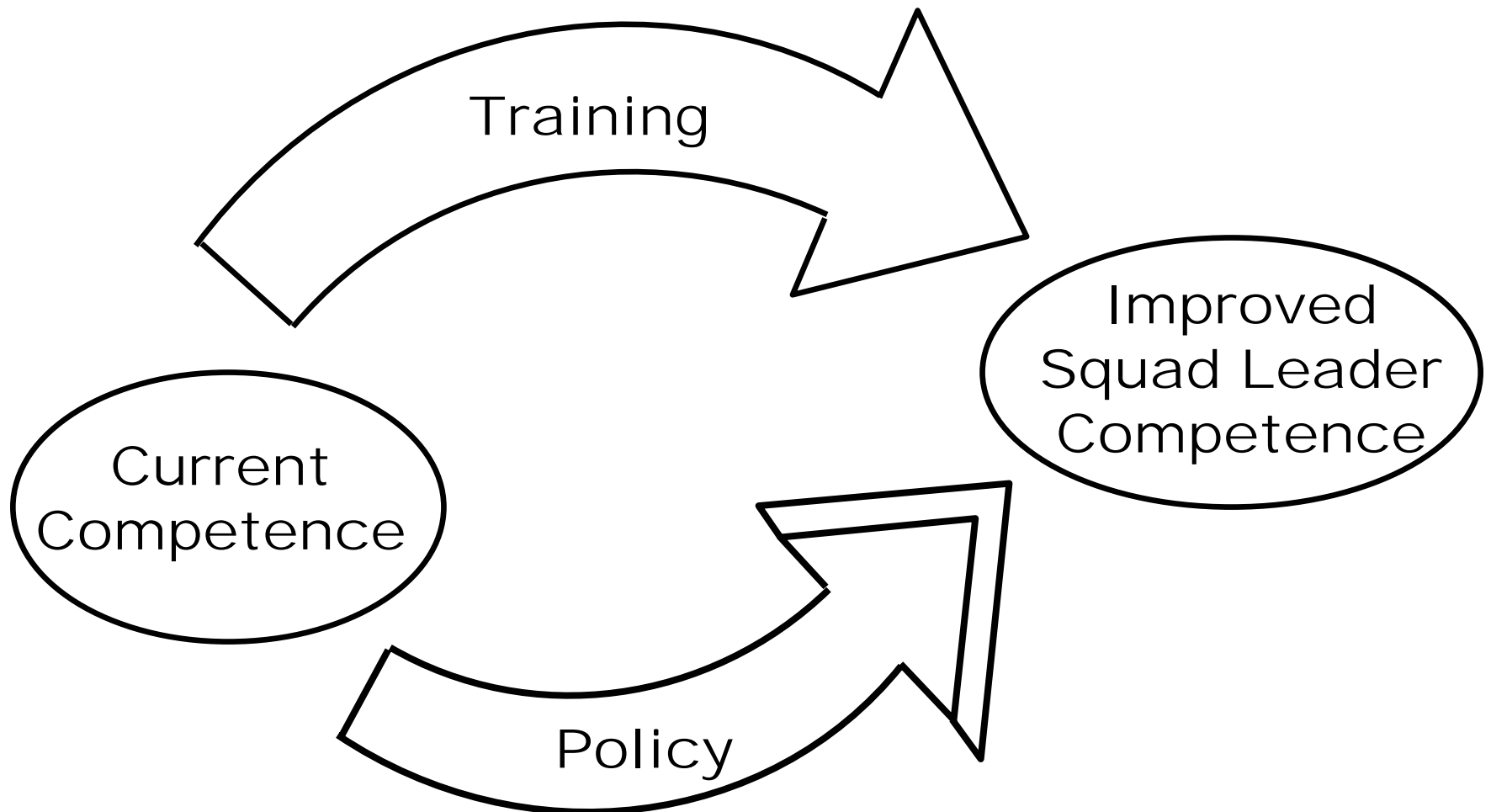
- Capacity SOI(E) and SOI(W): ~450 year
- No PME credit. Not required. Not tracked.
- ISLC has no influence on who enrolls
 - Published rank pre-requisite (Cpl) often ignored
- Large numbers of SLs NOT ISLC graduates
 - 3/3: 10 of 27 = 37% graduates / 63% NOT
 - 2/4: 16 of 27 = 59% graduates / 41% NOT

What is Future Competence?



Requirements are increasing faster than training improvements.

How Do We Give a Well-Trained Sergeant to Each Rifle Squad?



Training Axis

- **Unit Training** – Primacy of Company Leaders
 - Company Commanders train unit Leaders
 - Train Captains on UTM at EWS “How to Train”
 - SNCOs train unit Leaders
 - Fence Unit Training Time
- **School Training**
 - Increase ISLC throughput
 - Increase ISLC curriculum [Handout: [MCWL Course](#)]
- **Individual Training:** Improve SL MCIs

Policy Axis – The Main Effort

- **Training Policies**
 - Define Billet Requirements
 - Define ISLC Prerequisites
- **Personnel Policies**
 - New 0368 MOS
 - Promotion requirements
 - Adjust infantry career path

Long-Term Success Requires Policy Changes

Training Policies

- Re-write MOS Manual. Define Billets.
 - What are the skills we expect from Rifleman, Fire Team Leaders, and Squad Leaders?
 - [Handout: [Proposed SL Billet Description](#)]
- Require ISLC Prerequisites
 - What are the MCI courses required of Corporals? To apply to ISLC?
 - Conduct entry evaluations

Personnel Policies

- MOS: Establish 0368 as Squad Leader
 - ISLC grants 0368 MOS
 - ISLC grants PME credit
 - Billet Description = ISLC = promotion
- Promotion:
 - Require ISLC for promotion to SSgt
 - 0368 is prerequisite for 0369 SSgt
 - Today there are *no requirements* for 0369

Sustainment

- Require 18-24 month service after ISLC graduation
- Reverse Assignment Policy to Security Forces
 - All new 03s to FMF
 - Draw Security Forces from experienced Marines
- Examine Infantry Career Path imbalance
 - Balance special-duty tours with infantry skills
- Squad Leader improvements link to Crucible, cohesion, and related transformation programs
- Squad Leader improvements link to doctrinal changes & battlefield challenges of next century

Sergeant Stryker

- How Should the Marine Corps Raise the Competence of its Infantry Squad Leaders?
- Institutional Focus. Rigorous expectations

“We must remember that one man is as good as another, and he who is best has been trained in the severest school.”

– Thucydides

References

- “Squad Leaders Up!” MCG, August 1999
- MCWL Squad Leaders Course 1998
- Proposed SL Billet Description
- MCWL Policy Recommendations
- NCO Training in the British Army