

MCRP 6-11A

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# A Book on Books

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**U.S. Marine Corps**

PCN 144 000014 00

## USER SUGGESTION FORM

From:

To: Commanding General Marine Corps Combat Development Command,  
2042 Broadway Street, Quantico, Virginia 22134-5067 (C 40OP)

Subj: RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING MCRP 6-11A, *A BOOK ON BOOKS*

1. In accordance with the Foreword to MCRP 6-11A, which invites individuals to submit suggestions concerning this MCRP directly to the above addressee, the following unclassified recommendation is forwarded:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Article/Paragraph No.</u>	<u>Line No.</u>	<u>Figure/Table No.</u>
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Nature of Change:     Add         Delete         Change          
Correct

2. Proposed new verbatim text: (Verbatim, double-spaced; continue on additional pages as necessary.)

3. Justification/source: (Need not be double-spaced.)

Note: Only one recommendation per page.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
Headquarters United States Marine Corps  
Washington, DC 20380-1775

14 April 1997

FOREWORD

1. PURPOSE

Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) 6-11A, *A Book on Books*, has been prepared to provide a guide for the United States Marine Corps Professional Reading Program.

2. SCOPE

**Read to Lead in Today's Corps.** This publication is directed to all Marines, as we are all bound by a common pursuit of professional knowledge. Our profession is warfighting, and, therefore, the emphasis of the professional reading program is on books that will make the individual Marine a better warfighter. This is not homework; this is not drudgery. The selected books have been chosen for their intrinsic excitement as well as their content. Many of the books will be hard to put down. This publication is your roadmap to the professional reading program and serves as a handy reference on how the program works and what the books are about. Let it guide your efforts in developing your own reading program.

3. SUPERSESSION

FMFRP 0-64, *A Book on Books*, dated 21 January 1992.

4. CHANGES

Recommendations for improving this manual are invited from commands as well as directly from individuals. Forward suggestions using the User Suggestion Form format to—

COMMANDINGGENERAL (C 40OP)  
MARINE CORPS COMBAT DEVELOPMENT COMMAND  
2042 BROADWAY STREET  
QUANTICO, VIRGINIA 22134-5067

5. CERTIFICATION

Reviewed and approved this date.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

PAUL K. VAN RIPER  
Lieutenant General, U.S. Marine Corps  
Commanding General  
Marine Corps Combat Development Command

DISTRIBUTION: 144 000014 00

# **A Book on Books**

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# Chapter 1

## Why We Have the Professional Reading Program and How It Can Work for You

Our goal as Marines is to support and defend our nation. Some of the ways we achieve that goal include combat training, the maintenance of weapons and equipment, and physical fitness. These steps alone, however, do not prepare us adequately for combat as we would find ourselves physically ready, but mentally unprepared to fight. Mental readiness is attained partially through training, but primarily it is acquired as a result of professionally oriented education.

The ability to make clear and swift judgments amid chaos is what sets warriors apart. Training in the field and in wargames is important to improving our military judgment, but its development remains anchored primarily to a sound understanding of war. Through education we can equip ourselves to make sound military judgments even in chaotic and uncertain situations; it is here that professional reading plays a vital role.

Professional reading enriches our knowledge and understanding of war and enhances our ability to make timely and sound military judgments. How do we translate written words into sound military decisions? Obviously, the first step is to read. Then, we must relate what we have read to what we actually do in training. The means of accomplishing this are many and varied, but some proven methods are discussed below.

### Reading in Depth About a Single Battle

The professional reading program is designed to enhance every Marine's understanding of the art and science of war. The thorough study of a single battle goes a long way towards attaining that military literacy.

Take the battle of Tarawa, for instance. You might begin with Robert Sherrod's *Tarawa*, and Colonel Joseph H. Alexander's *Utmost Savagery*, and then supplement your reading by looking up "Tarawa" in the indexes of Isely and Crowl's *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, Moskin's *The U.S. Marine Corps Story*, and Spector's *Eagle Against the Sun*. By the time you have studied one battle in this way, you will have learned much about your profession on multiple levels. You will—

- Learn how the Japanese defended the island; how they integrated artillery and armor into their defense and how they made extensive use of bunkers and other field fortifications (including coconut logs at the beach to make it difficult for men and machines to traverse).
- Learn what Marines did to penetrate these defenses; how they employed reconnaissance, task-organized rifle squads, and combined arms in the form of artillery, naval gunfire, and aviation.