



Gung Ho, Marine! Servant Leadership, Evans Carlson, and the 2nd Marine Raider Battalion

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Abstract

Servant leadership has been seen as being a weak style of leadership by some, unsuitable for such high risk and dangerous professions as the military. This paper shows that the servant leadership style has been used to great effect in at least one historical example. It explores examples of servant leadership through the military career of Evans Carlson, former army officer and founder of the Marine Corps' 2nd Raider Battalion. It also compares Carlson's Gung Ho leadership philosophy with servant leadership and makes the case for the adoption of servant leadership by the military, due to the successful implementation of Gung Ho in the 2nd Raider Battalion. Finally, it examines the impacts that Gung Ho and servant leadership had on the 2nd Raider Battalion and the legacy of the battalion in the modern military.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Servant Leadership, Transactional Leadership

1942 started off as a terrible year for the United States. A surprise attack in December 1941 left the Pacific Fleet crippled and unable to check the Japanese Empire's advances. The US Army in the Philippines retreated in the face of the enemy. Manila was surrendered without a fight and US and Filipino forces fell back to the Bataan Peninsula. A Marine

Corps garrison on Wake Island was surrounded and captured. US morale plummeted in the face of such losses. A victory was needed to rally flagging spirits.

In February 1942, key leaders in the US Navy and Marine Corps, spurred by President Roosevelt, proposed the idea of a hit and run type force, modeled in part on the commandos of Great Britain's armed forces. Two battalions were soon formed, the 1st and 2nd Raider Battalions. Lieutenant Colonel Evans Carlson, an early and vocal proponent of the Raider concept, took command of the 2nd Raider Battalion (Hoffman, 1995).

Carlson took an unorthodox approach to his command. Instead of following strict military discipline and hierarchy, he implemented a more egalitarian approach to leading his Marines. Calling his style "Gung Ho" leadership, derived from a Chinese phrase meaning "work together" that he picked up while an observer attached to communist guerrillas in China's Civil War. Gung Ho leadership displayed the key attributes of what today would be called servant leadership. Servant leadership is defined as "an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader" (Laub, 2004, p. 8). Furthermore, it "promotes the valuing and development of people, the building of community, the practice of authenticity, the providing of leadership for the good of those led and the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual, the total organization and those served by the organization" (Laub, 2004, p. 8). Like the modern theory of servant leadership, Gung Ho meant that leaders were first among equals, receiving no special benefits for their increased responsibilities, beyond additional pay (van Dierendonck, 2011). Servant leaders also display a certain set of characteristics, listed below, that Gung Ho sought to instill in all levels of leadership.

This paper seeks to show that what Evans Carlson's leadership style was similar to servant leadership, that his Raider Battalion and those influenced by demonstrate servant leadership as a viable option for some military operations, and that servant leadership allowed the 2nd Raider Battalion to have far reaching effects on the US population, the Japanese Empire, and on the Marines who served in the battalion. For the purposes of this paper, Lieutenant Colonel Evans Carlson will be the main leader in focus. The people he develops are the Marine Raiders, both under his direct command and influenced by his leadership. The organization will be both the Raider Battalions and the Marine Corps, and those served by the organization will be the United States population.

To further demonstrate that Carlson was a servant leader, his actions will be compared to the characteristics identified by van Dierendonck (2011) to be those of a servant leader. These six characteristics are: 1) empowering and developing people: creating a sense of self confidence and giving followers the ability to make decisions; 2) humility: putting accomplishments in the proper perspective, while also giving credit where it is due; 3) authenticity: acting in accordance with one's true self or following a personal moral code; 4) interpersonal acceptance: the ability to understand the feelings of others and where they are coming from; 5) providing direction: letting subordinates know what is expected of

them; and 6) stewardship: taking responsibility for the larger institution and willing to put its needs above self-interests (van Dierendonck, 2011).

The value of this paper is that it seeks to answer some of the criticism currently leveled against servant leadership. Some have either accused servant leadership of being too weak for the military or listed traits for successful military leaders that seem incompatible with servant leadership (Wong, 2007; Campbell, Hannah, & Matthews, 2010; Laurence, 2011). This paper will show that servant leadership can be used effectively in a military setting. Not only is it an effective style for the military, but instead of stifling risk taking and the initiative, it promoted it.

Carlson's Early Military Career

In order to fully understand Carlson's leadership during his time as commander of 2nd Raider Battalion, it is necessary to examine his military career. Carlson originally joined the Army at the age of 16 by lying to the recruiter and saying he was 22. Branching into the field artillery, Carlson quickly learned about self-discipline and soldiering by observing his company mates and learning from their mistakes. During the course of his three year enlistment, Carlson quickly rose to the rank of Assistant Sergeant Major, traveled to various sites in the Pacific, and took multiple correspondence and local courses to improve his education (Blankfort, 1947). This initial enlistment taught him much about the military, about the importance of authenticity, and gave him his first major chance to learn how to lead others. Though his active duty enlistment was over, he was still subject to mobilization in times of national crisis.

Carlson then worked a variety of jobs and got married after settling down in a small Californian town. However, tensions with Mexico soon brought him back into service as the Army Reserves were called up in 1916. Carlson became an artillery instructor to activated National Guardsmen. While teaching these citizen soldiers, he discovered a few key principles of leadership. He found that he could get his batteries to perform better when they knew why they were doing something instead of just knowing how to do it (Blankfort, 1947). Additionally, he began to realize that even soldiers had an idea of independence that balked at the thought of bending to power (Blankfort, 1947). Carlson was beginning to grasp the idea inherent to servant leadership, that one must lead by example, and not only through power (Hunter, 2004).

In 1917, Carlson was given the opportunity to practice leadership on a grander scale. He was promoted to 1st lieutenant and then captain in quick succession. He led larger groups of men. More importantly, he understood certain ideals of leadership, such as having love for his followers. In a letter to his father, Carlson wrote, "I love my men but must keep them working... I must always see they have sufficient food and shelter whenever it is possible... I never ask a man to do something I won't do myself... An officer that can mix with his men and show them that he does not hold himself above them... always holds their respect and loyalty" (Blankfort, 1947, p. 113).

His unit shipped out to France late in 1918 and saw no action in World War One. They redeployed to the US in 1919 (Blankfort, 1947). The next few years were hard on Carlson. He separated from his wife, bounced from job to job, and lost the zeal he once had for life. In 1922, he decided to return to service. He originally thought about reentering the army, but since they would only make him a second lieutenant, and thus junior to his former colleagues who had not left the service, he enlisted as a private in the Marine Corps (Blankfort, 1947). Due to his previous service as an Army captain, he soon made corporal and was sent to the predecessor of what is now Officer Candidate School. Here, Carlson had to write essays and study a large range of topics. In one essay, he wrote “An Interpretation of Military Ethics.” This essay challenged fellow candidates to reevaluate their ethical code, and stressed the need for ethics in the military, pointing out that ethics are essential to achieving “the welfare of the whole and efficiency of the fighting machine” and stressing that officers were “moral agents” (Blankfort, 1947, p. 125). In writing this essay, Carlson demonstrated how vital ethical behavior was for leadership and how it would improve the overall performance of the organization.

In the next several years, Carlson transferred from post to post, met his second wife, trained, and failed out of flight school. He gained recognition for taking care of his Marines, causing Brigadier General Smedley Butler, one of the legends of the Corps, to comment on the reason for many to join the Marines being “because [the Marines have] a lot of officers like Carlson who take care of their men” (Blankfort, 1947, p. 133). In 1927, Carlson and his unit shipped to China to protect American interests. For much of their time, they did little besides parading and standing by. Carlson received a promotion to first lieutenant and was appointed as a regimental intelligence officer. He worked closely with Naval Intelligence officers to learn about China. The most influential of which was Admiral Bristol, whose ideas of racial equality and demand for the truth would leave a lasting impact on Carlson (Blankfort, 1947). Additionally, while an intelligence officer, Carlson published articles designed to educate his men on the history and current political situation in China. These articles were so popular, his men and fellow officers asked for more when Carlson finished his initial four articles (Blankfort, 1947). His tour ended in 1929 and he headed back to the States.

In 1930, Carlson reported to Nicaragua to help with their national guard. Here, he would work closely with Nicaraguan soldiers, serving as an officer in their Guardia Nacional. Despite another group of soldiers killing a few of their American officers shortly before Carlson’s arrival, Carlson knew he had to establish a trusting relationship with the soldiers he now led. His first words to his group of Nicaraguans was, in Spanish, “I trust you friends. I will see to it that you have food and shelter. It is to the benefit of all of us to bring peace and security to your great country” (Blankfort, 1947, p. 159). Knowing that the Guardias held the power, not Carlson, he sought to lead by example. This paid off with his first taste of combat. Trailing a guerrilla force of 300 men with only 12 of his own, Carlson and his soldiers surprised and routed their enemy. His men performed confidently, demonstrating esprit de corps and élan, shouting “Viva la Guardia Nacional” as they charged forward (Blankfort, 1947, p. 162). This spirit only comes from a well led and

confident group. The fact that Carlson's men demonstrated this was a testament to his leadership.

Carlson returned to the United States in 1933 and was soon on his way to China. During his second tour, he tried something radical and new. He taught language and culture to the Marines under his command. This had a profound effect. Offenses committed by the Marines against the local population plummeted and Carlson learned an important lesson in leadership, one that would greatly impact his command of the Raiders. He discovered that when subordinates "are given information about the situation in which they act and live they derive from it a sense of responsibility" (Blankfort, 1947, p. 169). In 1935, Carlson transferred to Washington for presidential service.

Carlson's Time with the Guerrillas

1937 saw Carlson return to China for his third and final tour there. This assignment would have a profound impact on Carlson's leadership ability and further refine what he already knew about leading soldiers. He was attached as a military observer to the Chinese Eighth Route Army, a communist guerrilla group fighting the Japanese (Carlson, 1940). Here he learned a philosophy that he would pass on to his Raiders, "Gung Ho!" Carlson heard this phrase, a distortion of the Chinese term for "work together", while studying the techniques of the guerrillas. While in their camps and talking with the men, Carlson was reminded of the need to explain the "why" behind a cause to his men. While observing the communists indoctrinate new recruits and the population about the reasons they were fighting the Japanese, Carlson realized the need for followers to understand why they were doing a task, not just how to do a task or that a task had to be done.

When he asked one of the guerrilla leaders about the lack of outward distinction between officers and men, Carlson learned another important lesson. The leader answered, "What are officers? ... They are leaders. And how do we tell if a man is a leader? He is a leader if he has given his men convincing proof of his ability to lead, his correctness and swiftness of decision, his courage, his willingness to share everything with his men. If he proves all this, then he is respected. His men have confidence in him. But men and their leaders are comrades. Off duty, they are on equal social basis. They salute only on duty- and only then when they are addressing each other formally for purposes of transacting business" (Blankfort, 1947, p. 201-202). This stood in sharp contrast to Carlson's Marine Corps, which featured sharp stratifications both on and off duty between the men and their officers. Carlson grasped the importance of this way of thinking immediately, responding, "What you do does more than help win battles or inform people as to their condition. You're teaching yourselves and your people how to live like decent human beings... It's ethical indoctrination!" (Blankfort, 1947, p. 202).

Carlson had found a leadership principle that he was searching for his entire career. He soon saw the results of this philosophy. Working with an element of the Eighth Route Army,, he traveled 58 miles in 32 hours with 600 men, moving over several mountain tops and pursued by Japanese army forces. The men had few chances to rest. During the entire

time, the men continued to push forward, kept a cheery demeanor, and had no stragglers. Carlson attributed this feat of endurance to the ethical indoctrination the men received. He encountered men from the nationalist factions who achieved far less and did not know the reasons they fought. (Blankfort, 1947). In comparing the two factions, Carlson decided that the egalitarian leadership style demonstrated by the Communists was far superior to the autocratic model used by the Nationalists.

In addition to learning about leadership, Carlson also began to fully realize the authenticity of his drive that would help him as a leader. While discussing why he wanted to go to the most dangerous areas in China and why he wanted to see the frontline fighting that so many other foreigners avoided, Carlson told his Chinese counterparts about the rights which Americans enjoyed. “We’ve had a revolution and a civil war for them. In the Chinese people, I have seen this same love of liberty and equality, and I am convinced from what I have seen that they are ready to sacrifice . . . so that their children, at least, will enjoy these rights. . . I, as one American, can see how you resist the invader, and make my report to the world. The risk is one which any of my countrymen would gladly take” (Blankfort, 1947, p. 234). With this, Carlson shows his drive, conviction, and authenticity, which, drives his actions in China and is readily seen by those around him. Additionally, it shows that he views all people and races as equal, a necessary trait for servant leadership, and a fairly radical view in the 1930s.

Carlson’s authenticity was further demonstrated in his attempted resignation from the Marine Corps. After authorizing several reporters to directly quote him on the effectiveness of the Chinese guerrillas, the Japanese government pressured the US government to censure Carlson, since he was a military officer of a neutral nation acting in a strictly observation role. When he received word of this, Carlson decided to resign rather than not do what he saw as the right thing to do. Despite being eligible for promotion and retirement, which came with a government pension, Carlson turned in his letter of resignation. He wished to be free from outside influence to speak the truth as he knew it (Blankfort, 1947). After protests from friends and colleagues, Carlson withdrew his resignation (Blankfort, 1947). However, after the acting secretary of the navy told Carlson that he could only give a lecture on current conditions in China to a charity group if he did not include anything that he learned while on assignment, Carlson resigned, refusing a pension or reserve commission (Blankfort, 1947). He left active duty on April 30, 1939.

Carlson was soon commissioned to write a book on his experiences in China. In his book, Carlson reflects on the leadership philosophy that he witnessed while with the guerrillas. He noted that soldiers will be “faithful to the point of death to a leader who treats him with consideration” (Carlson, 1940, p. 11). He compares the communists, with their ethical indoctrination model and treatment of soldiers as equals, with the nationalists, who used an autocratic leadership style, keeping their soldiers ignorant to important information, and using a very rank based hierarchy. He writes, “The high efficiency of [the nationalist elite units] is not due to any special ideological indoctrination, but to the emphasis that is placed on obedience and to the fact that provision is made for their material well-being. This is the orthodox manner of building an army and its effectiveness up to a

certain point cannot be denied. The men of such an army become automatons without spiritual convictions. When the men of such an army are pitted, in a long and arduous war, against troops that are fighting for an ideal, the spirit of the latter enables them to better endure the strain” (Carlson, 1940, p. 32). Carlson understood that soldiers needed more than just discipline to be effective in combat. To be truly capable of anything, soldiers needed to be developed, to know why they were fighting. He would soon get a chance to enact these ideas with his own unit.

The 2nd Raider Battalion

In mid-1941, Carlson reentered the Marine Corps as a major in the reserves. Soon called up to active duty, he began proposing the creation of commando type units based on guerrilla warfare and the British commando units being used against occupied Europe (Blankfort, 1947). The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the Philippines, and several American territories at the end of 1941. On February 5, 1942, the First Separate Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, which would become the 2nd Raider Battalion, formed, with Carlson in command (Blankfort, 1947). Carlson would have his unit and a chance to implement the leadership he learned in China and over his career.

First came recruitment. The Marine Corps at the time was an all-volunteer force. To become a Raider, Marines would have to volunteer again for the hazardous and secretive new unit. Carlson used this as an opportunity to ensure that he only received men capable of enduring the hardships his battalion would be called on to face. He wanted self-assured fighters—men that had no problems killing with a knife or their bare hands. Carlson and his officers personally interviewed all potential Raiders, looking for these types of men. Carlson took men that others viewed with suspicion, such as American veterans of the Spanish Civil War (Jennings, 2001). Like Carlson’s counterpart in the First Raider Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Mike Edson, Carlson was allowed to go through nearby Marine units and take his pick of officers and men (Walker, 1998). However, the most important quality that Carlson looked for was not physical toughness or a desire for action. Carlson “wouldn’t take a man that didn’t give a damn about anything”. Instead, he wanted men who had “a deep feeling about wanting to fight, even for the wrong reasons” (Smith, 2001, p. 44). Carlson would teach them the right reasons as necessary. With his battalion formed, Carlson proceeded to prepare them for their mission.

The basis of any successful fighting unit is its training (Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2006). Carlson took a somewhat unorthodox approach to training his unit. Shortly after forming the battalion, Carlson gathered the Marines, had the group sing the national anthem, and then explained how he was going to run the unit (Smith, 2001). He explained the concept of Gung Ho that he learned in China, explained his vision of equality between officers and men, and then outlined the basics of his ethical indoctrination concept. This was in stark contrast to many other American units, which were highly stratified by rank. These other units also tended to view their soldiers as cogs in a machine, a means to an end, whereas Carlson viewed them as individuals, full of potential and intelligence.

This talk formed the basis of the Gung Ho sessions that would continue throughout training. Once a week, the battalion would gather together and talk over several topics. Foremost in these discussions was always the performance of the unit in training exercises. Everyone was encouraged to speak up and explain what had happened from their point of view. Criticism, even of higher ranks, was encouraged (Smith, 2001). If the lowest ranking Marines saw a better way of doing an operation, he was not only allowed, but expected to stand up in front of the battalion and explain his way of doing things, and then others were allowed to challenge that Marine with their ideas. This gave his Marines unprecedented interaction with their leadership and allowed them to have a say in what happened with their unit.

Also at these Gung Ho sessions were lectures and guest speakers, including the First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt. The Marines discussed a wide variety of issues, ranging from social issues, such as limiting income after the war, to history and treatment of the South during Reconstruction (Smith, 2001). Carlson's reasoning behind all of this was simple. Encouraging thinking during training, no matter what the topic, would encourage thinking during combat. This would lead to taking the initiative, to taking advantage of any opening that a Marine found in battle (Wukovits, 2009).

In addition to explaining why and how things were going to work in his battalion, Carlson ran tough, realistic training. The basics to this training mirrored many other specialty units of the time. Marksmanship and hand to hand fighting were stressed, just as they were in the commando units that the Raiders were partially based on (Ladd, 1978). Carlson though gave his men no expectations of luxury. Where other units had barracks to live in during training, Carlson acclimated his men to the field conditions they would face in combat by having them live in tents (Smith, 2001).

These harsh conditions came with tough discipline. Unlike the 1st Raider Battalion who got regular passes and leave, Carlson refused passes to his men, and would even discourage men from taking emergency leave to visit sick relatives (Blankfort, 1947). There are few sources that document the disciplinary actions of the battalion, but the inference can be made that Carlson enforced stricter discipline than most other Marine units. He set his battalion away from civilization, to remove the temptations and discipline infractions that come with intermingling with civilians, and held formations in the middle of the night to try and catch anyone who tried to go absent without leave (Hoffman, 1995).

There were several additions to the standard specialty training that made the 2nd Raiders stand out. Carlson pushed his men on forced marches that would sometimes go for 70 miles, gave his men no time off or passes to visit local towns, and had his men build the training areas they would use (Smith, 2001). Officers and men still continued to work side by side, officers receiving no distinction or special treatment because of their rank (Wiles, 2007). Carlson himself set the pace for the marches, causing some of his men, all of whom were much younger than him, to fall out (Wukovits, 2009). He only allowed his men to eat what they could forage on the march. He intended to toughen them up as much as he could,

so that they would be ready for combat. It worked. The officers and Marines of the battalion felt that they were well prepared and could take on anything.

The battalion would soon get the chance to face the enemy. Carlson had to briefly leave the unit to meet with higher headquarters and discuss upcoming operations. While he was gone, his second in command carried out amphibious landing training with the battalion. Despite the absence of the commanding officer, the junior leaders of the battalion had been trained and drilled enough that the exercises went off without incident (Wukovits, 2009). The 2nd Raider Battalion was moved to Hawaii in preparation for more training and to forward stage the battalion for operations in the Pacific.

After months of training and preparing, the Raiders received their first mission. They were to raid Makin Atoll, destroy the flying boat base there, capture prisoners, and score a victory to raise the US home front's morale (Wukovits, 2009). After rehearsing landing on beaches built to look like the atoll for several weeks, Carlson and his Marines headed out on submarines. They landed on the beach in the early hours of 17 August, 1942. From the moment their boats launched off of the submarines, there was confusion. Boats landed at the wrong sites, groups intermixed, and chaos reigned. Japanese forces found the group and firefights soon raged in the jungles. At one point, Carlson attempted to evacuate his Marines from the island and even contemplated surrendering to the Japanese (Wiles, 2007). However, the decentralized nature of the battalion saved the day. Small groups of Raiders continued on to their objectives, wiping out groups of enemy infantry that far outnumbered them (Roosevelt, 1942). Junior leaders took charge and rallied their men, securing a foothold on the atoll, and buying time and space for the battalion to consolidate and finish its mission. Ultimately, the mission killed the entire Japanese garrison, destroyed several major facilities, burned critical war material, and achieved a needed victory (Smith, 2001). The training had paid off. The Raiders had demonstrated that their style of training could work.

The battalion was soon back in combat at Guadalcanal. They landed away from other Marine elements on 6 November, 1942. For the next month, Carlson and his Raiders patrolled through the jungle, disrupting Japanese forces, determining accurate enemy positions, and scouting for a suitable site for an airfield (Smith, 2001). Throughout their month long movement through the jungle, during which time the Raiders suffered from lack of food and from numerous jungle maladies, the battalion encountered numerous Japanese forces. By the end of the patrol, they had killed 500 of the enemy, with a loss of only 16 dead and 18 wounded (Shaw, 1992). They also helped relieve pressure off of the First Marine Division and bought additional time for reinforcements to be brought onto the island.

However, despite the success of the patrol and the earlier Makin Atoll raid, the Gung Ho concept was to be short lived. The Marines raised two more battalions of Raiders, reorganized them into two regiments and appointed Carlson as second in command of the First Raider Regiment. The officer who replaced Carlson restructured the battalion to the standard Marine organization and got rid of all the tenets of Carlson's Gung Ho philosophy

(Forty, 2006). Gung Ho did live on in the 4th Raider Battalion under James Roosevelt, who had been Carlson's second in command through the standing up of the 2nd battalion until shortly after the Guadalcanal campaign (Smith, 2001). In early 1944, the Marines disbanded all Raider units and reformed the men into conventional Marine units (Ladd, 1978). The 2nd Raider Battalion was disbanded entirely, its members scattered throughout the Marine Corps and a select few stayed together to form the regimental weapons company for the new 4th Marine Regiment. The other Raider battalions became conventional Marine battalions in the 4th Marine Regiment (Forty, 2006).

Impact of the Raiders

Carlson retired from the Marine Corps in 1946 as a brigadier general, never having the chance to command a unit after his Raider battalion. Despite only being in a direct leadership role for about a year, he made a huge impact on the Marine Corps and his men. During the short time Raider battalions were part of the Marine Corps, there were 8000 Marines that were assigned to the four battalions. Two of those battalions used the Gung Ho philosophy—the 2nd under the direct leadership of Evans Carson and the 4th under his former second in command, James Roosevelt. (Smith, 2001). One way to measure how individuals take charge and act under fire, a key component of Raider training, is through the awarding of medals. In World War Two, eight percent of the Medals of Honor, 12 percent of the Navy Crosses, the second highest award for valor, and eight percent of the silver stars, the third highest award for valor, awarded to Marines were given to men who had been part of the Raider battalions (Jennings, 2001). By contrast, the Marine Corps had a peak strength of about 500,000 during the war, meaning the Raiders only made up less than two percent of the overall strength (Fuentes, 2011). Additionally, Carlson's battalion was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, the highest award an entire unit can receive, for its actions at Guadalcanal, further demonstrating the effectiveness of their leadership style (Smith, 2001).

Another indicator of the success of a military leadership style, besides how well soldiers perform in battle, is how badly they are affected by battle. Looking at the number of personnel incapacitated by battle fatigue or post-traumatic stress disorder gives a good indication to how well their leadership prepared them for battle (Grossman & Christensen 2008). For Guadalcanal, a campaign noted for its brutality and austere living conditions, for close in jungle fighting, numerous diseases and lack of food, approximately 40% of all casualties, about 2525 men, were psychological casualties that had to be evacuated (Marlowe, 2000). By contrast, the 2nd Raider Battalion, suffered no psychological casualties, despite the fact that during their 30 day patrol they were in repeated combat with the enemy, suffered from frequent food and ammunition shortages, and suffered just as many jungle maladies as the other units fighting at Guadalcanal (Smith, 2001). This is likely because of the group cohesion and esprit de corps of the 2nd Raiders, which was encouraged by the shared hardships amongst all members, and the Gung Ho sessions which encouraged a sense of equality in the battalion. Units that demonstrated high cohesion and felt a bond with their commanders were shown to have a much lower rate of psychological casualties than units that did not during World War Two (Pols & Oak, 2007).

One of Carlson's innovations was his implementation of the fire team at the squad level. This created a smaller unit than was previously seen in the military and allowed his formation not only greater tactical flexibility, but also allowed them greater initiative in their actions. After the disbandment of the Raiders, Carlson's Marines were sent throughout the Marine Corps. They took with them the innovations and ideas that they learned under his command. Among those ideas was the fire team. Carlson received letters from his former subordinates thanking him for the tactic and informing him of their use of the fire team to save lives and exercise greater initiative in their new units (Blankfort, 1947). Prior to Carlson's implementation of fire teams, the squad was the lowest level of organization for Marine riflemen. Leadership consisted of a sergeant and his assistant, a corporal, leading a 9 man organization (Forty, 2006). Carlson divided the nine man squads into three man fire teams, where the most capable junior Marines, regardless of rank, were given leadership positions (Gomrick, 1999). The nine man squads were designed for a more rigid system of control and was a holdover from the battlefields of World War One.

The Corps wide adoption of fire teams, which came about after the Raiders were disbanded and the men of the 2nd Raiders were sent to other units, bringing with them the fire team concept, allowed for greater flexibility. Squads were then divided into three four-man fire teams, each lead by a corporal. Additionally, each fire team gained an automatic weapon, whereas before, automatics were centralized at the platoon level (Forty, 2006). This new system empowered lower leaders to be able to make quicker tactical decisions in combat, by decentralizing control to a lower lever and by allowing more men to become non-commissioned officers. It also helped train junior leaders for greater leadership roles, giving the unit a pool of men who had some experience and could later take on squad leader and higher positions. It also gave new recruits a tight knit group that would train them up and look after them upon their arrival to a unit (Wukovits, 2009).

Another systematic decentralization enacted by Carlson was the breakdown of weapons companies into weapons platoons. Prior to 1942, the majority of the heavy weapons in a Marine battalion, such as mortars and machine guns, were consolidated in a weapons company (Forty, 2006). This meant that the use of these important weapons was decided by the battalion commander. He would determine how to distribute the weapons for a given mission and decide where to concentrate them. This produced tactical rigidity and made it difficult for lower level commanders to exercise initiative. It also meant vulnerability during landing operations, because companies were grouped together on landing craft. Thus, if a weapons company landing craft was sunk on approach to a beach, there was a high likelihood of losing multiple heavy weapons, versus if a rifle company landing craft were sunk. Carlson secured more heavy weapons for his battalion, then divided them across the battalion, creating more robust weapons platoons at the company level and getting rid of a battalion weapons company (Ladd, 1978). This caught on for the Corps at large and by the end of the war, only scarce and heavier weapons, such as 81mm mortars, were consolidated above the rifle company level.

Besides changing battalion organization to gain tactical flexibility and promoting junior level leadership, Carlson's leadership left one more legacy that impacts the entire US military to this day. In the Gung Ho sessions, Raiders were encouraged to point out mistakes or issues and were allowed to make recommendations for improvement, no matter their rank (Wukovits, 2009). This honesty from all ranks, without fear of reprisal, and with the expectation that all men leave their egos behind, was unheard of in the military at the time. However, throughout the years, this idea has morphed into the concept of the after action review, a common technique used by the military after a training exercise (Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1993). In an after action review, all participants in the exercise, including privates, gather around, talk about what was supposed to happen, what did happen, and how to improve. This allows for the lower ranks to give input and have a say in how their organization runs, similar to the Gung Ho sessions held by Carlson in his battalion.

Gung Ho and Servant Leadership

In comparing the practice of Gung Ho leadership to the definition of servant leadership proposed by Laub (2004), several similarities become readily apparent. The work together mentality of Gung Ho meant that everyone was seen as equal. Yes, officers and noncommissioned officers had extra responsibilities, but they did not receive additional benefits beyond pay. They set the example, pushed themselves and others on training exercises, and led the way in combat. Leaders were expected to give up the material benefits they received in other organizations, such as preferential treatment and separate mess facilities. This ties back to the idea of first amongst equals, where servant leaders are expected to persuade others through action instead of compulsion (van Dierendonck, 2011). Comparing Laub's (2004) extended definition to Gung Ho shows even more similarities. Gung Ho, like servant leadership, promoted the development of people through hard training that would help save lives in combat. It created an immense feeling of community, as evident by the high morale shown by the unit throughout its life span and by the bonding of the men during their training. They developed esprit de corps, the intangible military sense that one's unit is better than any that can be found. They also developed authenticity. Carlson set the example, as he was known to firmly believe in the concept of Gung Ho and had conviction that the battalion was improving men who would become better citizens upon their return home. The men took his example and attempted to follow it as best they could (Wukovits, 2009).

Power was readily shared in the 2nd Raider Battalion. This was evidenced by both the Gung Ho sessions and the reorganization of squads into fire teams and the disbandment of weapons companies in favor of platoons. Gung Ho sessions took the power of making changes and expressing grievances and gave it to all ranks in the battalion, ensuring that the lowest level private could have his voice heard by Carlson himself. The reorganization of the unit into smaller, more self-sufficient units, decentralized tactical power and put it in the hands of those who would make contact with the enemy. It gave them the additional benefit of being able to more rapidly react to battlefield conditions. This helped the individual Raiders in that it increased their ability to survive on the battlefield. The

battalion benefited because it suffered less casualties and was able to inflict more casualties on the enemy, thereby increasing its morale. The people of the United States, those ultimately served by the 2nd Raider Battalion, also benefited through reduced casualties and because Carlson and his men were able to achieve much needed victories at a lower cost in lives, which served to revive flagging morale.

Carlson demonstrates all six of the characteristics of a servant leader that van Dierendonck describes (2011). He empowered and developed his subordinates, through his Gung Ho sessions and through his decentralization of combat power. His men had a say as to how missions were conducted and were allowed to give input that could lead to altering the attack plan (Farlow, 1977). His fire teams gave squad leaders more fire power and the flexibility to make quick decisions on the battlefield. His reinforcement of company weapons platoons and removal of a weapons company from the battalion level gave his subordinate commanders the flexibility needed to adapt to battlefield conditions and the ability to make crucial firepower decisions at their level, without needing approval from Carlson. Furthermore, the Raiders developed a self-confident air about them. They felt like they could take on the world. This confidence is one of the key goals of servant leadership (van Dierendonck, 2011).

Carlson was seen as an authentic leader. He truly believed in his mission and what he was trying to do with his battalion. Furthermore, his men believed he was authentic as well. He delivered exactly what he promised and made no attempts to promise anything he could not give his men, which is necessary for authenticity. He promised hardship, then shared in that hardship (Wukovits, 2009). Perhaps the most striking way that Carlson demonstrated authenticity was the fact that he and his fellow officers did not wear rank. They focused instead on building their relationships with their men as opposed to making a big deal over the stratifications of rank. This is one of the best ways to demonstrate authenticity in an organizational perspective (van Dierendonck, 2011).

Interpersonal acceptance is defined as being able to understand how other people think and why they have their perspectives (van Dierendonck, 2011). While Carlson definitely showed this as commander of the 2nd Raider Battalion, his ability for interpersonal acceptance is best demonstrated by his time with the communist guerrillas in China. While working with the guerrillas, Carlson was able to see things from their point of view. At a time when America was divided by racial prejudices and feelings of Anglo superiority towards other ethnicities, Carlson felt that the communist guerrillas were the modern day equivalent of American revolutionary patriots (Blankfort, 1947). By the time he became the commander of his battalion, this ability to see things from another's perspective had become so ingrained in his personality that it is difficult to pick out specific instances.

Providing direction for subordinates comes with being a commander of a unit. However, as demonstrated by the Chinese Nationalist faction, it is very easy to just tell a unit where to go and who to fight, without giving them the reasons for their cause. Through his use of Gung Ho sessions, where he outlined why the war started and what they would

be expected to do, Carlson avoided the issues he saw in China. He made sure that all his men fully understood what was going on and why they were doing it. This helped motivate men on long marches, through intense physical activity, and helped contribute to the lack of psychological casualties on Guadalcanal (Gomrick, 1999).

Seeking to serve the greater good instead of trying to retain control or serving self-interest is the act of stewardship (van Dierendonck, 2011). Carlson demonstrated this in several ways. The most visible is his resignation from the Marine Corps in order to be able to write about China freely, without interference from the government (Blankfort, 1947). He felt he had a responsibility to help the Chinese in their fight against both the Japanese and oppression at home. After being reprimanded for letting reporters attribute quotes to him, Carlson resigned in order to be able to speak freely to American support groups. This allowed him to gather support for a cause he viewed as just. A later example was in how he organized his battalion. By decentralizing key weapons through expanding weapons platoons and by pushing down leadership and decision making to the lowest level through fire teams, Carlson gave up a lot of control that other Marine commanders retained.

Humility is perhaps Carlson's most contested trait as a servant leader. In 1943, Universal Pictures made a movie about the battalion's exploits, changing a few details, but leaving in many facts about the recruitment process and training of the 2nd Raider Battalion (Walter, 1943). Carlson served as a technical advisor for the film. This, combined with the media coverage achieved by the battalion after their long patrol at Guadalcanal, led many in the Marines to call for the disbandment of Carlson's battalion (Smith, 2001). Old detractors also brought up Carlson's earlier controversies that led to his resignation before the war. However, there are two parts to servant leadership's definition of humility. The first is the ability to put personal accomplishments and talents in proper perspective (van Dierendonck, 2011). Part of the Raider's mission was to achieve victory to help home front morale. The US people craved tales of danger and stories of men going behind the lines to hit the Japanese on what was seen as their home turf, the jungle. By highlighting the exploits of his battalion, Carlson achieved that goal. Perhaps he could have framed his battalion's deeds in the context of the Marine Corps as a whole, but it is difficult to say why he did not. The second component of humility is that leaders accept that they can learn from others (van Dierendonck, 2011). Carlson fulfills this part of the definition with ease. Dating back to the time he first enlisted in the army, Carlson was continuously learning from others, attempting to improve his leadership style. His entire time in China further displays this. Finally, his Gung Ho sessions were nothing if not ways for him to learn from his Marines.

Research Limitations

There are some limitations to this paper that further research could help clarify. The first is the statistics of valor medals for former Raiders. The best statistics currently available show all four battalions consolidated for the amount of medals won. Further research would need to contact the Marine Corps' historical division to attempt to break down the statistics further and determine which battalions the former Raiders were a part

of before they won their medals. If it shows that the majority of Raider medals were won by members of the 2nd and 4th battalions, this would strengthen the claim that Gung Ho leadership helps reinforce individual initiative and valor in combat.

Research into disciplinary measures of the 2nd Raider Battalion might be another area for further research. Military units of all types are expected to police their own ranks and punish those that do not follow military rules and orders. This is to ensure strict obedience to orders and to make sure men will do as they are told in combat. Carlson seemed to turn this on its head with his insistence on creating thinking men. At the same time, however, Carlson seems to have enforced strict disciplinary measures with the denial of passes and leave and holding middle of the night formations to check to ensure no one had left camp without permission. This was harsher than what was practiced in the 1st Raider Battalion (Hoffman, 1995). Study into this would be able to look at how servant leadership practicing organizations police themselves.

Another area where further research would be helpful would be to determine the amount of psychological casualties suffered by the 1st Raider Battalion, a battalion run along strict hierarchical lines with distinct rank differences amongst officers and enlisted, on Guadalcanal. If the 1st Raider Battalion suffered many more psychological casualties than the 2nd, then it would appear that the differences in leadership styles affected the psychological well-being of the unit's members. It would also be helpful to research the 4th Raider Battalion and see how that unit fared in combat, since it was run with a similar philosophy to the 2nd Raider Battalion.

It would also be helpful to compare the 2nd Raider Battalion to other elite units, either its sister Raider battalions or similar units in the Marine Corps, such as the Marine Parachute Regiment. This would help determine how much of the 2nd Raider Battalion's successes were due to its unique leadership style and how much was due to the fact that it had highly motivated members that volunteered and saw themselves as elite. If other formations achieved similar levels of success in terms of avoiding psychological casualties and earning valor awards, then success may be attributed more to the highly trained volunteers than to any leadership style. It is recommended that the comparison be limited to other Marine elite units, as this will eliminate many of the differences between the men who volunteered for the units. This is because all men will have been twice volunteers (once for the Marines, then again for the elite unit), the training differences will be minimalized, they will have fought against a similar enemy, since all Marine elite units fought in the Pacific, and they will have the same service standard for awarding medals.

CONCLUSION

Gung Ho seems to be a military name for a concept very similar to, though not synonymous with, servant leadership. As demonstrated in the 2nd Raider Battalion and later by the Marines who had once been a part of the battalion, Gung Ho leaders sought to

share the same burdens as their subordinates and set the example by personal demonstration. This is known as the concept of “first among equals” in servant leadership (van Dierendonck, 2011). Just as Laub (2004) would write about servant leadership building a sense of community, so too would Gung Ho create a feeling of unity in the 2nd Raider Battalion. The Raiders felt they could take on the world, that no force in the world could stop them, and that there was no other unit they would rather be a part of. This shared sense of community continued long after the unit was disbanded (Jennings, 2001).

The idea of empowering and developing others was built into the very structure of the battalion through the fire teams and company weapons platoons. The Gung Ho sessions held by the battalion ensured most of the remaining characteristics of servant leadership. Leaders were expected to be authentic and truly believe in the cause they were fighting for and to act in accordance with those beliefs, as demonstrated by the multiple sessions where they were able to defend their ideas in front of the group. Everyone was expected to listen to everyone else at the sessions. The sessions also provided direction to the Raiders by explaining what they were expected to do, for the unit and the country. The humility of the Gung Ho style is probably best demonstrated in the fact that the battalion was disbanded without protest from the Raiders themselves. This demonstrates that they knew they were part of a bigger picture in the form of the Marine Corps and that they understood what was expected of them as Marines. Finally, stewardship was demonstrated by Gung Ho, not so much in a statement, but by one of the main reasons behind its adoption: to prevent needless casualties and allow small groups to do more than their numbers alone allowed.

The success of Carlson and the Gung Ho/servant leadership model provides some lessons for today’s military. The first is its effects on mental health. The lack of psychological casualties by the battalion on Guadalcanal may be explained by research showing that servant leadership helps prevent psychological issues in subordinates (Rivkin, 2014). However, this is still a relatively new area of research. If further evidence suggests this leadership style to be an effective way to prevent psychological issues, then the military would benefit from adopting servant leadership as a way of preventing post-traumatic stress amongst combat units. Additionally, servant leadership has been shown to increase subordinate morale and happiness at work (Carter, 2014; Chen, 2013; Zhou, 2014). This would help the military, which has been suffering from lowered morale for several years (Seck, 2015). Finally, this case also shows the possibilities of doing more with less in a military sense. Through Carlson’s leadership style and decentralization the 2nd Raider Battalion, he was able to do the work of bigger formations while having less personnel. The military is currently facing large personnel cuts (Simeone, 2014). Being able to do more with less personnel, through the effective use of leadership, would allow the military to cut back, yet still be able to do the job that once required greater numbers.

Hopefully, this paper helps to dispel some of the misconceptions of servant leadership in the military. Herein are shown the similarities of Gung Ho and servant leadership. Also provided, is evidence of the effectiveness of Gung Ho and servant leadership in wartime situations. Because of its effective use in these extremely trying situations, servant leadership should be considered for use in a peace time military or in future conflicts.

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