UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
THE BASIC SCHOOL
MARINE CORPS TRAINING COMMAND
CAMP BARRETT, VIRGINIA 22134-5019

AMPHIBIOUS AND EXPEDITIONARY OPERATIONS W4Q0001XQ STUDENT HANDOUT

Amphibious Operations

Introduction

The Marine Corps is an expeditionary intervention force with the ability to move rapidly on short notice to wherever needed to accomplish whatever is required. The Corps possesses a full range of combat capabilities integrated into a single-service, air-ground combined arms team. These qualities make the Marine Corps unique when compared to other United States (US) military services.

For thousands of years, Empires have conducted amphibious operations around the world. Many forms of operations fit into the category of amphibious and expeditionary operations, and the Marine Corps is prepared to conduct a variety of these tasks. These operations have become synonymous with the term Marine, and the student officer needs to understand and be able to operate in these types of missions.

Importance

The Marine Corps has the ability to project combat power ashore for a wide range of contingencies. Depending on the nature of the threat, we can field a *task organized* combined arms team, consisting of ground, air, and combat service support elements under a single commander. Ship, aircraft, or a combination of both may deploy these task forces, called Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs), as an independent force or as part of a joint task force. The information provided here will help you understand amphibious operations, naval campaigning, fleet organization of the MAGTF, as well as understand the junior officer role in the execution of these operations.

Amphibious Operations (Continued)

In This Lesson This lesson covers the following topics:

Learning Objectives

Terminal Learning Objectives

TBS-OFF-2104 Given Marines, an amphibious ship, landing craft, and landing plans, lead a platoon during amphibious operations to accomplish the mission.

Enabling Learning Objectives

TBS-OFF-2104a Given an evaluation, define Marine Corps amphibious concepts without omission.

TBS-OFF-2104e Given an evaluation, define the role of the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) in amphibious operations without omission.

TBS-OFF-2104f Given an evaluation, identify the types of amphibious operations without omission.

TBS-OFF-2104n Given an evaluation, identify platoon level amphibious planning considerations to accomplish the mission and meet commander's intent.

TBS-OFF-2104o Given an evaluation, identify the concept of littoral maneuver without omission.

Background

"Our unique Service culture has allowed the Marine Corps to "think outside the box" and confront conventional military wisdom. Following the Great War, many theorists believed that the Allied experience at Gallipoli had demonstrated the folly of amphibious operations in the face of "modern" weapons. Our experimentation with amphibious techniques during the 1920s and 1930s created key capabilities necessary for success in World War II, allowing the Allies to project military power across vast oceans. Without this pre-war innovation, wresting the continent of Europe from the Axis and seizing bases on the long road to Japan would have been much more difficult and costly. Since then, the Marine Corps has continually sought to exploit opportunities and overcome challenges where domains converge, leading to our development of close air support doctrine, maritime prepositioning, and vertical envelopment.

In order to execute the Marine Corps strategic security role, the institution embraces enduring characteristics—complemented by an ever evolving set of military capabilities that continue to make the Marine Corps especially relevant in the current and future security era. These are the Marine Corps' **naval character, our responsiveness to missions across the range of military missions, and our military professionalism**. The integrated and highly tailorable organizational capabilities inherent in our Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) structure enable our critical trans-domain role. Consisting of command, ground combat, aviation, and logistical elements organized as necessary for each particular situation, the MAGTF supports the adaptability necessary in light of the uncertainty of the operational environment and the full range of military operations we must expect.

Naval Character- Often mischaracterized as land forces, the Marine Corps is actually part of the Naval Service—*soldiers from the sea*. Fundamentally, this is recognition of the vital strategic role the Marine Corps provides in transitioning national combat power and influence across the critical maritime, land, and air domain interface. As such, Marine Corps forces are primarily designed to be employed, supported, and sustained at and from the sea. Mobility and maneuverability constitute the Naval Service's primary operational attributes, stemming directly from the ability of naval forces to move long distances quickly and efficiently, and to maneuver within the maritime environment to achieve advantage in relation to an adversary."

Marine Corps Operating Concepts
Third Edition
June 2010

Chaos in the littorals

The first chapter of MCDP 3, *Expeditionary Operations*, is entitled "Chaos in the Littorals." Although the forward for MCDP 3 was drafted in 1998, recent history, stemming from instability in the middle east, to natural disasters in southeast Asia, to climatic and man-made chaos in Africa, have proven its accuracy and the Marine Corps' foresight in terms of the importance of returning to our amphibious roots. Of course, **amphibious operations**, defined by JP 3-02 as *military operations launched from the sea by an amphibious force (AF),* are relatively ineffective without the ability to project force ashore. A key aspect of that power projection is the ability to operate and win in seam that joins the sea to land—the littorals.

Littorals Defined

Defined in JP 2-01.3, The littoral comprises two segments of operational environment:

1. Seaward: the area from the open ocean to the shore, which must be controlled to support operations ashore.

2. Landward: the area inland from the shore that can be supported and defended directly from the sea.

As can be seen by the definition, there is no exact distance that can be placed upon the definition of the littorals. Instead, an easier way to envision and describe the littorals is in terms of the operational reach and influence of assets, personnel and policy. When considering the ability to influence the littorals, one must consider both friendly and enemy threat capabilities, as well as that of the populace across the domains of the littorals, which expands our understanding of the two segments of the operational environment. The idea of the littorals being defined and analyzed in terms of domains is the first step in understanding the importance and complexity of littoral maneuver.

Littoral Maneuver

With an understanding of the current operating environment, the littoral domains, and the capabilities that enemy's use to oppose access, the importance of littoral maneuver becomes clear. Simply defined, **Littoral Maneuver** is defined as *the ability to transition ready-to-fight combat forces from the sea to the shore in order to achieve a position of advantage over the enemy.* Littoral maneuver treats the sea, air and land as unified littoral maneuver space. The sea is both a protective barrier and a highway of unparalleled mobility that provides greater maneuver flexibility, surprise, and increased security for the amphibious force. And while the sea, covering 75% of the world's surface provides plenty of space with which the U.S. can maneuver it's amphibious forces to a position of advantage over the enemy, modern amphibious warfare in the littorals must leverage capabilities and overlap in each of the domains to achieve success.

The Department of Defense's (DoD) Joint Operational Access Concept (JOAC) attempts to provide a vision and strategy for countering the growing A2AD threats and prevailing in our Nation's ability to maintain access to global commons and ability to project combat power. Its central thesis is Cross-Domain Synergy—the complementary vice merely additive employment of capabilities in different domains such that each enhances the effectiveness and compensates for the vulnerabilities of the others-to establish superiority in some combination of domains that will provide the freedom of action required by the mission.

The challenge of operational access is determined largely by conditions existing prior to the onset of combat operations. Consequently, success in combat often will depend on efforts to shape favorable access conditions in advance, which in turn requires a coordinated interagency approach. The joint force will attempt to shape the operational area in advance of conflict through a variety of security and engagement activities all of which ultimately aim to facilitate access, and when required, littoral maneuver against the enemy.

These activities include but are not limited to:

- Conduct operations to gain access based on the requirements of the broader mission, while also designing subsequent operations to lessen access challenges.
- Prepare the operational area in advance to facilitate access.
- Consider a variety of basing options, to include seabasing.
- Seize the initiative by deploying and operating on multiple, independent lines of operations.
- Exploit advantages in one or more domains to disrupt or destroy enemy antiaccess/area-denial capabilities in others.
- Disrupt enemy reconnaissance and surveillance efforts while protecting friendly efforts.
- Create pockets or corridors of local domain superiority to penetrate the enemy's defenses and maintain them as required to accomplish the mission.
- Maneuver directly against key operational objectives from strategic distance.
- Attack enemy antiaccess/area-denial defenses in depth rather than rolling back those defenses from the perimeter.
- Maximize surprise through deception, stealth, and ambiguity to complicate enemy targeting.
- Protect space and cyber assets while attacking the enemy's cyber and space capabilities.

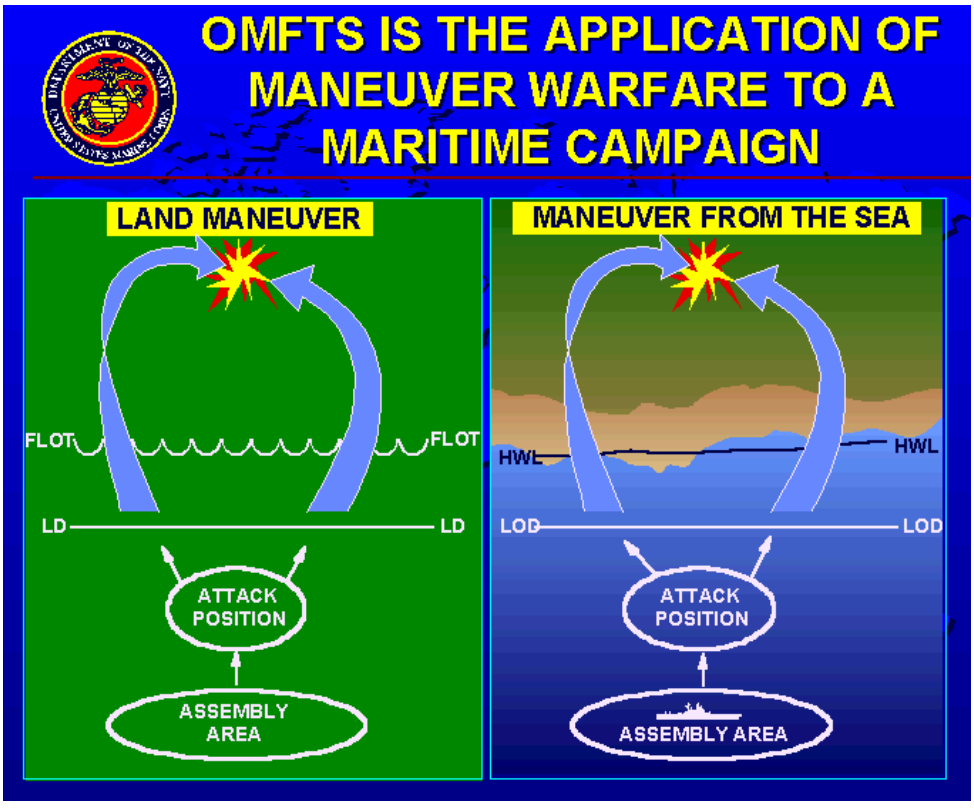
With appropriate conditions set to facilitate littoral maneuver, commanders are afforded the opportunity to make decisions as to just how to use the most appropriate means to facilitate that maneuver.

As was the case in the era between World War I and World War II, the mid 1990s found the Marine Corps looking to solve a unique problem, i.e. the recognized chaos and instability growing in the littoral regions of the world. In the year 1996, the Marine Corps released MCCP 1, *Operational Maneuver from the Sea*, in an effort to provide direction about the way forward for the Marine Corps regarding amphibious operations.

Operational Maneuver from the Sea (OMFTS) (Continued)

Operational Maneuver from the Sea (OMFTS) is *the maneuver of naval forces at the operational level, a bold bid for victory that aims at exploiting a significant enemy weakness in order to deal a decisive blow.*

What distinguishes OMFTS from all other species of operational maneuver is the extensive use of the sea as a means of gaining advantage, an avenue for friendly movement that is simultaneously a barrier to the enemy and a means of avoiding disadvantageous engagements. It is the application of maneuver warfare to a maritime campaign that aims to turn the sea and the littorals into vulnerable flanks.



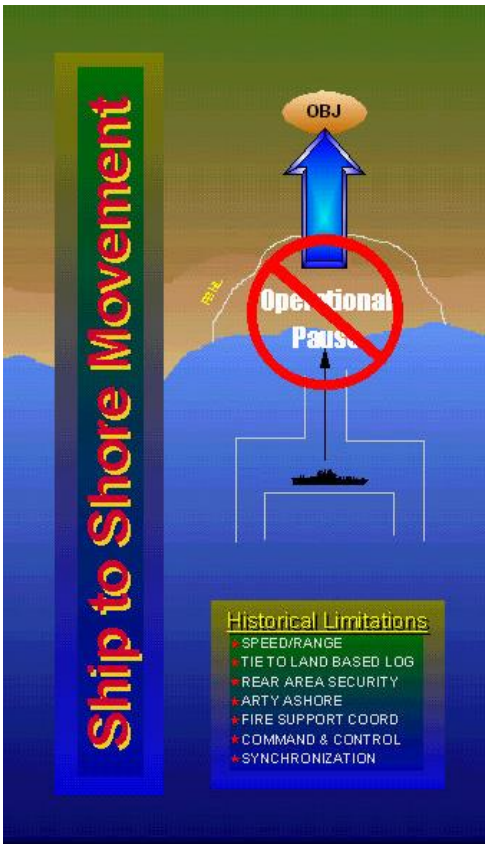
Additionally, in the concept of OMFTS, Naval forces dispense with previous amphibious methods in which operational phases, pauses, and reorganizations imposed delays and inefficiencies upon the momentum of the operation. This aspect of OMFTS may make use

of, but is not limited to, such techniques as sea-based logistics, sea-based fire support. A sea base provides an inherently maneuverable, scalable aggregation of distributed, networked platforms that enables the global power projection of offensive and defensive forces from the sea and includes the ability to assemble, equip, project, support, and sustain those forces without reliance on land bases within the joint operations area. With sea-based support in place, we can leverage OMFTS to use the sea as a medium for tactical and operational movement.

While most individuals typically envision this movement as that of the ship-to-shore movement seen in large scale amphibious assaults of the past, the true nature of OMFTS embraced Ship-to-Objective Maneuver (STOM), which of course is a logical step in our progression of littoral maneuver doctrine and concepts.

Ship-to-Shore Movement

Ship-to-shore movement remains a viable option and in many cases a vitally important part of the amphibious operations. In general, MCWP 3-31.5, expands on concepts outlined in JP 3-02, and focuses specifically on the action phase of the amphibious operations. While it remains a course of action for commanders to choose, and in many cases, an inevitable portion of amphibious operations conducted in coastal regions that require movement of personnel, equipment and supplies from ship to the shoreline, many doubt that we will ever see the large amphibious assaults of WWII, which were characterized almost exclusively as ship-to-shore movement.

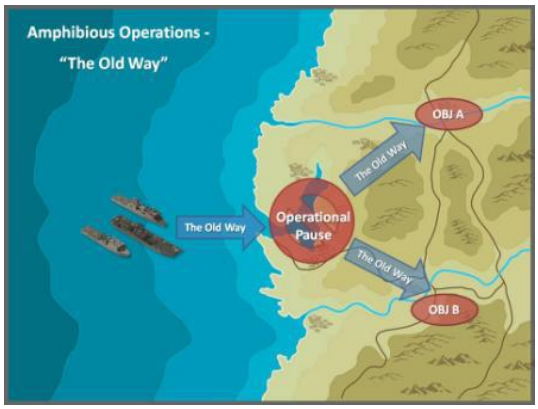


Despite a significant number of limitations, the U.S., specifically the Marine Corps, was able to achieve success in the Pacific campaign of WWII as a result of the exertion of maritime dominance, which in turn facilitated the isolation and preparation of the each island prior to conducting amphibious assaults with overwhelming combat power. In the example of the landing at Inchon during the Korean War, the assault was successful largely due to surprise and boldness.

Technologies available during the early stages of modern amphibious warfare development -- particularly in the areas of mobility, navigation, and command and control -dictated that the Navy provide both the means of landing force movement and its control. The result was frequently a slow buildup ashore as slow-speed water craft executed an intricate ship-to-shore shuttle from ships operating close to the beach. The landing force was required to secure a lodgment until combat power could be built up sufficiently to allow maneuver to the actual objective. Practical considerations in establishing such a beachhead reduced the littoral area vulnerable to attack.

Ship-to-Objective Maneuver (STOM)

In the years and decades following the Cold War, the changes in operating environment and advancement of A2/AD strategies and technologies, the U.S. Naval forces and Marine Corps began to explore the concept of STOM.



Ship-To-Objective Maneuver (STOM) is a tactical concept that can apply to all types of amphibious operations, but generally involves overcoming access challenges. These operations include assaults, raids, demonstrations, withdrawals, and amphibious support to other operations. These five types of amphibious operations support theater security cooperation, building partner capacity, crisis response, small scale contingencies and assaults to enable the joint force. Simply described, amphibious operations executed using STOM overcome access challenges, gain entry and achieve results on land. It should be viewed as the next step in the Marine Corps' development of littoral maneuver and how amphibious forces will be successfully employed in future operations.

Capabilities such as well decks and flight decks, landing vehicles and craft, rotary wing and tilt-rotor craft, billeting, communications, medical, dental, messing, planning, and command and control (C2) all give amphibious forces great utility and flexibility across the ROMO. Freed from the constraints of securing a large beachhead, STOM allows a commander to

maximize advances in technology focus his decision-making and combat power on the enemy while initiating the landing force's maneuver from over the horizon (OTH). A landing force that can maintain the momentum gained by maneuver at sea is able to generate overwhelming tempo and exploit enemy gaps with its power and rapidity of execution. Tactical flexibility, combined with reliable intelligence, allows a landing force to bypass, render irrelevant, or unhinge and collapse the enemy's defensive measures.

STOM is not aimed at seizing a beach, but at thrusting combat units ashore in their fighting formations, to a decisive place, and in sufficient strength to ensure mission accomplishment. Landing forces will engage enemy units only as necessary to achieve the freedom of action to accomplish operational objectives.

It also provides the opportunity to achieve tactical as well as operational surprise, something seldom possible in past amphibious operations. Operations will begin from over the horizon and project power deeper inland than in the past, progressing with speed and flexibility of maneuver that will deny the enemy warning and reaction time. By requiring the enemy to defend a vast area against our seaborne mobility and deep power projection, naval forces will render most of his force irrelevant. The tenants of STOM further describe the advantages afforded to an amphibious force.

MAGTF Core Competencies

MAGTF operations are built on a foundation of six special core competencies. The direct result of more than two centuries of expeditionary experience, these six core competencies define what Marines do and how they operate.

- Expeditionary readiness.
- Combined arms integration.
- Expeditionary operations.
- Sea-based operations.
- Forcible entry from the sea.
- Reserve Integration.

Expeditionary Readiness

Expeditionary readiness defines an institutional mindset that is ready to respond instantaneously to world-wide crises, 365 days a year. To Marines, "ready to respond" means much more than being "ready to go." First it means being ever ready to win our nation's first battles. This requires a force that can transition from peacetime to combat operations at a moment's notice without critical reserve augmentation and with certain success. Second, it demands a force ready to flourish under conditions of uncertainty. Expeditionary readiness is about being ready to adapt to whatever is "out there," improvising and finding unconventional solutions to unconventional problems. As a result, it demands a primary focus on the human dimension rather than the technological dimension of battle. And third, it means being ever ready to defeat the "opponent after next" requiring a relentless commitment to innovation and change.

Combined Arms Integration	As specifically demanded by Congress, the nation's naval crisis response force must be capable of acting on short notice and

MAGTF Core Competencies (Continued)

Combined Arms Integration (Continued)	without immediate support from Army and Air Force warfighting forces. In other words, such a force in readiness requires an organic, combined arms capability. For over half a century, MAGTFs have trained so that a single commander directs their ground combat, air combat, and combat service support capabilities. Other services practice combined arms operations — MAGTF operations embody them.
Expeditionary Operations	Expeditionary operations are much more than military expeditions on foreign soil. Like expeditionary readiness, expeditionary operations require a special mindset — one that is constantly prepared for immediate deployment overseas into austere operating environments. As a result, expeditionary operations consider host nation support a luxury and are designed to bring everything necessary to accomplish the mission — from individual equipment up to and including airfields and hospitals.
Sea-based Operations	Sea-based operations provide for extraordinary strategic reach and give the nation an enduring means to influence and shape the evolving international environment. In addition, sea-based operations provide units with a large measure of inherent force protection. A highly ready, combined arms MAGTF operating from a mobile, protected sea base provides the National Command Authority (NCA) with unimpeded and politically unencumbered access to potential trouble spots around the world
Forcible Entry from the Sea	A key requirement for unilateral action is the ability to project power ashore in a theater without forward bases and in the face of armed opposition. In the past, forcible entry from the sea was defined by amphibious assaults focused on establishing lodgments on the beach and then building up combat power for subsequent operations. It is now defined as an uninterrupted movement of forces from ships located far over the horizon directly against decisive objectives
Reserve Integration	Marine Reserves routinely practice carefully crafted reserve integration plans to augment or reinforce crisis response missions and to add combat power for operations, especially at the high end of the conflict spectrum. For example, during Operation Desert Storm, 53 percent of the selected Marine Corps reserve end strength was activated, surpassing any other service reserve component activations by more than a factor of two. This degree of integration provides the Marine Corps with unprecedented mission depth, operational flexibility, and

sustainability up and down the conflict spectrum.

MAGTF Capabilities

The Marine Corps task organizes for operations consistent with its statutory tasking to "…*provide forces of combined arms, including aviation*…" by forming MAGTFs. The MAGTF is a balanced air-ground combined arms task organization of Marine Corps forces under a single commander structured to accomplish a specific mission. It is the Marine Corps' principal organization for all missions across the range of military operations. It is designed to fight, while having the ability to prevent conflicts and control crises. All MAGTFs are task organized and vary in size and capability according to the assigned mission, threat, and battlespace environment. They are specifically tailored for rapid deployment by air or sea and ideally suited for a forward presence role.

A MAGTF provides the naval, joint, or multinational commander with a readily available force capable of operating as

- The landing force of an amphibious task organization.
- A land force in sustained operations ashore.
- A land force or the landward portion of a naval force conducting military operations other than war such as noncombatant evacuations, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, or the tactical recovery of an aircraft or aircrew.
- A forward-deployed force providing a strong deterrence in a crisis area.
- A force conducting training with allied forces as part of theater engagement plan.

Capabilities

MAGTFs provide joint force commanders with the capability to:

• Move forces into crisis areas without revealing their exact destinations or intentions.
• Provide continuous presence in international waters.
• Provide immediate national response in support of humanitarian and natural disaster relief operations.
• Provide credible combat power in a non-provocative posture, just over the horizon of a potential adversary, for rapid employment as the initial response to a crisis.
• Support diplomatic processes for peaceful crisis resolution before employing immediately responsive combat forces.
• Project measured degrees of combat power ashore, day or night, and under adverse weather conditions, if required.
• Operate independent of established airfields, basing agreements, and overflight rights.
• Sequentially introduce additional forces into a theater of operations
• Conduct operations ashore using organic combat service support brought into the area of operations.
• Enable the introduction of follow-on forces by securing staging areas ashore.

• Operate in rural and urban environments.
• Operate under nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare conditions.
• Withdraw rapidly at the conclusion of operations.
• Participate fully in the joint planning process and successfully integrate MAGTF operations with those of the joint force • Sequentially introduce additional forces into a theater of operations

MAGTF Elements

MAGTF Organization

As a modular organization, the MAGTF can be tailored to each mission through task organization. This building block approach also makes reorganization a matter of routine. In addition to the Marine Corps units, MAGTFs may have attached forces from other service and nations; e.g., naval construction force, multiple launch rocket system batteries, and armor brigades.

A key feature of Marine expeditionary organization is expandability. Crisis response requires the ability to expand the expeditionary force after its introduction in theater without sacrificing the continuity of operational capability. The MAGTF's modular structure lends itself to rapid expansion into a larger force or integration into a joint or multinational force because the MAGTF structure parallels the structure of a multidimensional joint force.

Marine forces integrated into a joint or multinational force are normally employed by the joint force commander as a MAGTF. As a task organized force, the MAGTF's size and composition depend on the committed mission. If a MAGTF is deprived of a part of its combat forces, accomplishment of the mission for which it is tailored is jeopardized.
However, on a day-to-day basis, the MAGTF may be tasked to conduct operations in support of another force
and will identify capabilities; e.g., air sorties, beach and port operations, and civil affairs, excess to its mission requirements to the joint force commander that may be of use to other components of the joint force.

All MAGTFs are comprised of four core elements:

- A command element (CE).
- A ground combat element (GCE).
- An aviation combat element (ACE).
- A logistics combat element (LCE).

The MAGTF's combat forces reside within these four elements. Although MAGTFs will differ because of mission forces assigned, a standard procedure exists for organization, planning, and operations.

MAGTF Elements (Continued)

Command Element (CE)

The CE is the MAGTF headquarters. As with all other MAGTF elements it is task organized to provide the command and control capabilities necessary for effective planning, execution, and assessment of operations across the warfighting functions. The six warfighting functions are:

- Command and control.
- Intelligence.
- Maneuver.
- Fires.
- Logistics.
- Force protection.

When integrated into a joint force, the CE can exercise command and control within the joint force from the sea or ashore and/or act as a core element around which a joint task force headquarters may be formed. It can also provide interagency coordination for military operations other than war and provide a reach back capability for component commanders.

Ground Combat Element (GCE)

The GCE is task organized to conduct ground operations, project combat power, and contribute to battlespace dominance in support of the MAGTF's mission. It is formed around an infantry organization reinforced with artillery, reconnaissance, assault amphibian, tank, and engineer forces. The GCE can vary in size and composition, usually from a battalion to one or more Marine divisions. It is the only element that can seize and occupy terrain.

Air Combat Element (ACE)

The ACE is task organized to conduct air operations, project combat power, and contribute to battlespace dominance in support of the MAGTF's mission by performing some or all of the six functions of Marine aviation. It is formed around an aviation headquarters with air control agencies, aircraft squadrons or groups, and combat service support units. It can vary in size and composition from an aviation detachment of specifically required aircraft to one or more Marine aircraft wings. The ACE may be employed from ships or forward expeditionary land bases and can readily transition between sea bases and land bases without loss of capability. It has the capability of conducting aviation command and control across the battlespace.

Logistics Combat Element (LCE)

The LCE is task organized to provide all functions of tactical logistics necessary to support the continued readiness and sustainability of the MAGTF. The LCE is formed around a combat service support headquarters and may vary in size and composition from a support detachment to one or more Marine

logistics groups. The LCE, operating from sea bases or from expeditionary bases established ashore, enables sustainment of forces, thus extending the MAGTF's capabilities in bases or from expeditionary bases established ashore, enables sustainment of forces, thus extending the MAGTF's capabilities in time and space. It may be the main effort of the MAGTF during humanitarian assistance missions or selected phases of maritime pre-positioning force (MPF) operations.

Types of MAGTFs

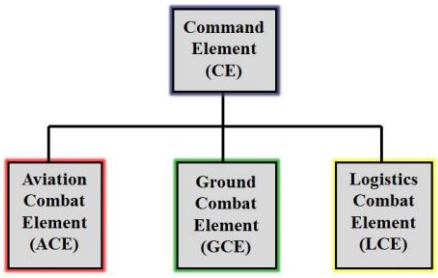
MAGTFs are integrated combined arms forces structured to accomplish specific missions. MAGTFs are generally categorized in four types:

- Marine expeditionary force.
- Marine expeditionary brigade.
- Marine expeditionary unit.
- Special purpose Marine air-ground task force.

Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF)

The MEF is the Marine Corps' principal warfighting organization. It can conduct and sustain expeditionary operations in any geographic environment. MEFs are the sole standing MAGTFs; e.g., they exist in peacetime as well as wartime. Size and composition can vary greatly depending on the requirements of the mission. A lieutenant general normally commands a MEF. It can be comprised of:

- A standing command element.
- A GCE of one or more divisions.
- An ACE of one or more aircraft wings.
- A LCE of one or more Marine logistics groups.



A MEF typically deploys by echelon with 60 days of sustainment. The MEF commander and staff can form the nucleus for a joint task force or functional component headquarters. A MEF nominally consists of a permanent CE as well as a tailored Marine division, Marine aircraft wing, and Marine logistics group. Each MEF deploys a Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) (MEU[SOC]) on a continuous basis to

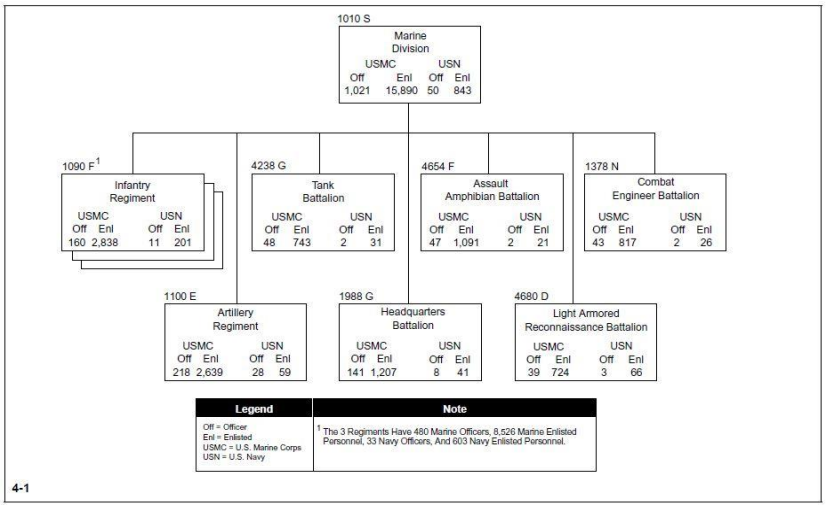
Marine Division (MARDIV)

A Marine Division's mission is to execute amphibious assault operations and such other operations as may be directed. The Marine division must be able to provide the ground amphibious forcible-entry capability to an amphibious task force (ATF) and conduct subsequent land operations in any operational environment.

Types of MAGTFs (Continued)

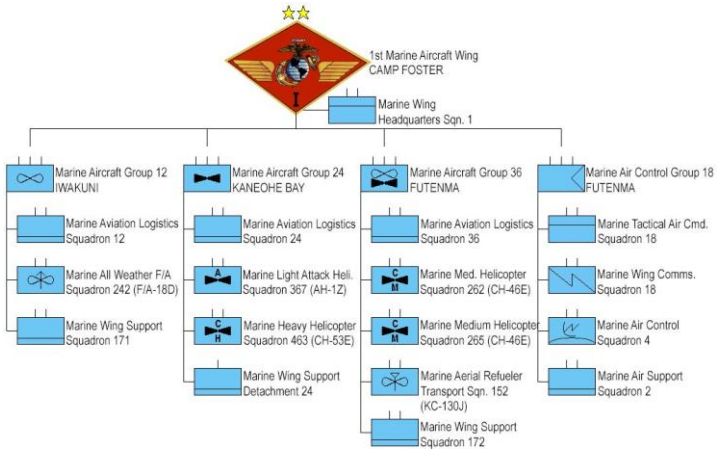
Marine Division (MARDIV) (Continued)

The division commander fights by using combined-arms tactics and tailors the force to the demands of each mission. The Marine division is employed as the GCE of the MEF or may provide task-organized forces for smaller MAGTFs



Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW)

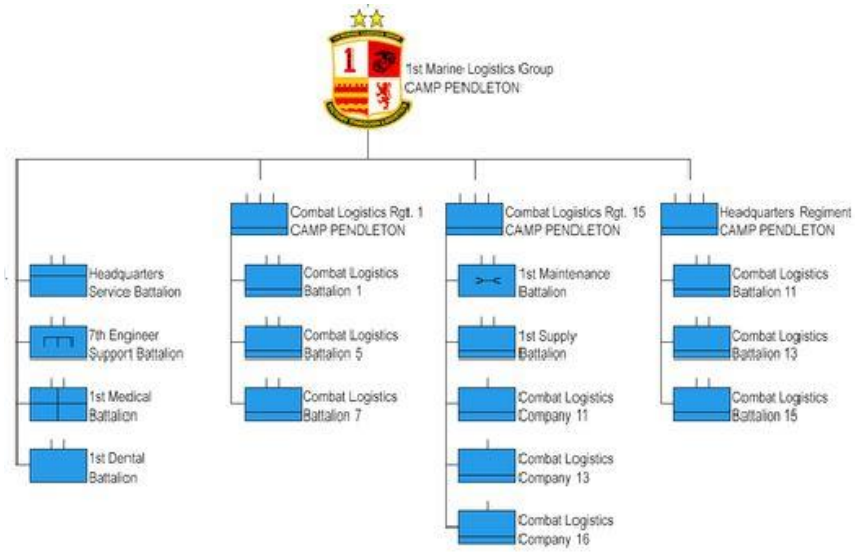
The primary mission of Marine Corps aviation is to participate as the air component of the MAGTF in the seizure and defense of advance naval bases and to conduct such land operations as may be essential for the prosecution of a naval campaign. The notional MAW is task organized to provide a flexible and balanced aviation organization that is capable of providing the full range of aviation operations in a variety of areas without the requirement for prepositioned support, control, and logistical facilities. The MAW is the smallest unit with the inherent capability of performing all six functions of Marine aviation. The wing is composed of the subordinate units depicted below. Aviation organizations smaller than a wing can provide the capabilities to accomplish any or all aviation functions by using task organization.



Types of MAGTFs (Continued)

Marine Logistics Group (MLG)

The MLG provides direct support (DS) to the MEF GCE and sustained tactical logistics to each element in the MEF in the functional areas of logistics beyond the organic capabilities of supported units. It provides LCEs to smaller MAGTFs and trains, rapidly task organizes, deploys, employs, fights, and redeploys in order to provide general support (GS) and direct support (DS) logistics combat support to all elements of the MEF and smaller MAGTFs, which may be geographically separated, in peacetime as well as wartime, in any environment and across the spectrum of conflict in order to preserve and increase the MEFs combat power



Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB)

The Marine expeditionary brigade (MEB) is the “middle- weight” MAGTF. It is a crisis response force capable of forcible entry and enabling the introduction of follow-on forces. It can serve as part of a joint or multinational force and can provide the nucleus of a joint task force headquarters. It is unique in that it is the smallest MAGTF with a fully capable aviation element that performs all six functions of Marine aviation and is self-sustaining for 30 days. A MEB is capable of rapid deployment and employment deploying either by air, in combination with maritime pre-positioning ships, or by amphibious shipping.

As a result, the MEB can conduct the full range of combat operations and may serve as the lead echelon of the MEF. The MEB is not a standing organization but rather imbedded within the MEF. As a result, MEBs are task organized for specific missions from assets with the MEF. The MEB conducts the mission or prepares for the subsequent arrival of the rest of the MEF or other joint or multinational forces. However, the deployment of a MEB does not necessarily mean that all the forces of the MEF will follow.

Types of MAGTFs (Continued)

Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) (Continued)

A MEB notionally consists of the following elements:

- A CE may include additional assets such as command and control, force reconnaissance company, signals intelligence capabilities from the radio battalion, and engineering capabilities from the naval construction regiments. It can also control the forces of other services and nations in missions ranging from combat in an urban area to disaster relief.
- A GCE is composed of an infantry regiment reinforced with artillery, reconnaissance, engineer, light armored reconnaissance units, assault amphibian units, and other attachments as require
- An ACE is composed of a Marine aircraft group comprised of combat assault transport helicopters, utility and attack helicopters, vertical/short takeoff and landing fixed-wing attack aircraft, air refuelers/transport aircraft, and other detachments as required.
- A LCE is task organized around a combat logistics regiment. This element has engineering, supply, transportation, landing support for beach, port, and airfield delivery, medical and maintenance capabilities.

Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) (MEU[SOC])

The MEU(SOC) is the standard forward-deployed Marine expeditionary organization. A forward-deployed MEU(SOC) provides an immediate sea-based response to meet forward presence and power projection requirements.

A colonel commands a MEU(SOC) which deploys with 15 days of supplies. The MEU(SOC) is normally comprised of

- A CE that may include additional assets such as command and control, force reconnaissance company, and signals intelligence capabilities from the radio battalion.
- A GCE comprised of an infantry battalion reinforced with artillery, reconnaissance, engineer, tanks, light armored reconnaissance units, assault amphibian units, and other attachments as required.
- An ACE comprised of a combat assault transport helicopter squadron reinforced with utility and attack helicopters, vertical/short takeoff and landing fixed wing attack aircraft, air refuelers/transport aircraft, and other detachments as required.
- A LCE task organized around a MEU LCE. This element has engineering, supply, transportation, landing support, medical, and maintenance capabilities.

A forward deployed MEU(SOC) operates continuously in the Mediterranean Sea, the western Pacific Ocean, and the Indian

Types of MAGTFs (Continued)

Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) (MEU[SOC]) (Continued)

Ocean or Arabian Gulf region. Embarked aboard a Navy amphibious squadron, the MEU(SOC) provides a combatant commander or other operational commander a quick, sea-based reaction force for a wide variety of missions such as limited forcible entry operations, noncombatant evacuations, raids, or disaster relief. In many cases the MEU embarked on amphibious shipping may be the first US force at the scene of a crisis and can enable the actions of larger follow-on forces. It can provide a visible and credible presence in potential trouble spots and can demonstrate the US' willingness to protect its interests overseas.

While the MEU(SOC) is not a special operations force per se, it can support special operations forces and execute certain maritime special operations missions. These include reconnaissance and surveillance; specialized demolitions; tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel; seizure/recovery of offshore energy facilities; seizure/recovery of selected personnel or material; visit, board, search, and seizure of vessels; and *in extremis* hostage recovery.

Prior to deployment, the MEU(SOC) undergoes an intensive 6-month training program focusing on its conventional and selected maritime special operations missions. Training culminates with a thorough evaluation and certification as "special operations capable." To receive this certification, a MEU must demonstrate competence across the entire spectrum of requirement capabilities, be able to plan and execute any assigned mission within 6 hours of notification, and conduct multiple missions simultaneously. Inherent capabilities of a MEU(SOC) are divided into four broad categories:

The complete list of capabilities subcategories for the MEU(SOC) is found in MCO 3120.9A, Policy for Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) (MEU[SOC]).

Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF)

A special purpose MAGTF is a nonstanding MAGTF temporarily formed to conduct a specific mission for which a MEF or other unit is either inappropriate or unavailable. They are organized, trained, and equipped to conduct such a mission. SPMAGTFs have been deployed for a variety of missions such as humanitarian relief and coalition training.

Designation of an SPMAGTF is based on

- The mission it is assigned ("Special Purpose MAGTF Hurricane Relief").
- The location in which it will operate ("Special Purpose MAGTF Somalia").
- The name of the exercise in which it will participate ("Special Purpose MAGTF Unitas").

A SPMAGTF may be of any size, but normally no larger than a MEU—with narrowly focused capabilities required to accomplish a particular

Types of MAGTFs (Continued)

Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF)

mission. It may be task organized form non-deployed Marine Corps forces or formed on a contingency basis from a deployed MAGTF. Regimental level headquarters often assume the role as a special MAGTF CE and may conduct training in anticipated mission skills prior to establishment. A SPMAGTF may be deployed using commercial shipping or aircraft, strategic airlift, amphibious shipping, or organic Marine aviation.

Air Contingency MAGTF (ACM)

An important type of SPMAGTF is the air contingency MAGTF (ACM). An ACM is an on-call, task organized alert force that is maintained by all three MEFs. Lead echelons of an ACM can deploy within 18 hours of notification. It can be dispatched virtually worldwide to respond to a rapidly developing crisis. The ACM is the MEF's force in readiness. It can deploy independently or in conjunction with amphibious forces, MPFs, or other expeditionary forces.

Because it can deploy so rapidly, readiness is paramount. Equipment and supplies intended for use as part of an ACM are identified and, where appropriate, stored and staged for immediate deployment. Personnel continuous focus is on their tactical readiness. The ACM is airlifted to a secure airfield and carries its own initial sustainment.

The ACM is comprised of the same elements as any MAGTF although normally an ACM is a MEU-size force. Due to the need to reduce to an absolute minimum the size and weight of an air deployed force, only those personnel and equipment needed to perform the function of each MAGTF element are included in the ACM

Locations of Major Combat Organizations

MAGTFs are located throughout the world to speed their responsiveness to contingencies. The table below identifies their locations and the units that comprise their GCA, ACE, and LCE.

MEF	I MEF	II MEF	III MEF
Location	Camp Pendleton, CA	Camp Lejeune, NC	Camp Courtney, Okinawa, Japan
GCE	1st Marine Division HQ, Camp Pendleton, CA	2nd Marine Division HQ, Camp Lejeune, NC	3rd Marine Division HQ Camp Courtney, Okinawa, Japan
ACE	3rd Marine Aircraft Wing HQ, Marine Corps Air Station, Miramar, CA	2nd Marine Aircraft Wing HQ, Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, NC	1st Marine Aircraft Wing HQ, Camp Foster, Okinawa, Japan
LCE	1st Marine Logistics Group, Camp Pendleton, CA	2nd Marine Logistics Group HQ, Camp Lejeune, NC	3rd Marine Logistics Group HQ, Camp Kinser, Okinawa, Japan

MAGTF Summary

The fundamentals involved with understanding the Marine air-ground task force are invaluable to you as an officer, because it helps you to understand the larger picture of how the Marine Corps fights. The concepts that were presented herein are the basics that you need to understand but are not all inclusive. To continue your study of the fundamentals of the MAGTF and its employment, see the references below.

Expeditionary Operations

An expedition is a military operation conducted by an armed force to accomplish a specific objective in a foreign country. The defining characteristic of an **expeditionary operation** is the projection of force into a foreign setting. By definition, an expedition thus involves the deployment of military forces and their requisite support some significant distance from their home bases to the scene of the crisis or conflict. All expeditions involve the projection of power into a foreign setting. However, it is important to recognize that not all power projection constitutes expeditionary operations; power projection is a necessary component but not a sufficient condition by itself to constitute an expeditionary operation. Operations that do not involve actual deployment of forces are not expeditionary operations. Expeditionary forces vary significantly in size and composition. Expeditionary operations may also vary greatly in scope, ranging from full-scale combat to humanitarian missions.

The term “expeditionary” implies a temporary duration with the intention to withdraw from foreign soil after the accomplishment of the specified mission. The term “expeditionary” also implies austere conditions and support. This does not mean that an expeditionary force is necessarily small or lightly equipped, but that it is no larger or heavier than necessary to accomplish the mission. Supplies, equipment, and infrastructure are limited to operational necessities; amenities are strictly minimized.

Expeditionary Operations

Expeditionary bases or airfields, for example, provide less than the full range of support typically associated with permanent stations. Operational considerations such as force protection and intelligence prevail over administrative, quality-of-life, or other considerations. This tendency toward austerity is derived from security considerations, the temporary nature of expeditionary operations, and the imperative to minimize lift and support requirements.

Reasons for Conducting Expeditionary Operations

There are many policy aims or military missions that can be accomplished only by establishing a potent military force on foreign soil. In numerous situations, physical destruction alone cannot achieve policy aims, or massive destruction is inconsistent with political goals. Expeditionary operations will thus be required for a variety of reasons, including:

- Assurance that policy objectives pursued by other means have in fact been secured; for example, to ensure compliance with established diplomatic solutions such as the adherence to cease-fire arrangements or an agreement to hold free elections.
- Seizing or controlling key physical objectives such as airports, ports, resource

Reasons for Conducting Expeditionary Operations (Continued)

areas, or political centers in order to ensure their safe use by all groups, to deny their use to an enemy or disruptive element, or to facilitate future actions such as the introduction of follow-on forces.
- Controlling urban or other restrictive terrain.
- Establishing a close, physical, and highly visible presence in order to demonstrate political resolve, deter aggressive action, or compel desired behavior.
- Establishing and maintaining order in an area beset by chaos and disorder.
- Protecting or rescuing U.S. citizens or other civilians.
- Separation of warring groups from each other or from the population at large, especially when enemy or disruptive elements are embedded in the population.
- Providing physical relief and assistance in the event of disaster.

Characteristics of Expeditionary Operations

- **Expeditionary Mindset.** Expeditionary Marine forces must establish and maintain an expeditionary mindset—an expeditionary culture—devoted to readiness and the mental agility and adaptability to accommodate changing conditions and accomplish rapidly changing missions with the forces and capabilities at hand.
- **Tailored Forces.** Marine forces are task-organized into MAGTFs to conduct expeditionary operations. MAGTFs are designed to accomplish the mission assigned and do not include forces or capabilities not required by the mission. Therefore, those forces needed to do the job—and only those forces—are employed.
- **Forward Deployment.** The presence of forward-deployed MAGTFs close to the crisis or objective area can expedite accomplishing the mission. They allow for a real deterrence, as the threat of employment is imminent and credible. Forward-deployed MAGTFs also can serve as a precursor to larger follow-on forces.
- **Rapid Deployment.** Expeditionary forces must be able to get to the crisis or AO quickly with all their capabilities ready to be employed. MAGTFs can rapidly deploy using airlift, sealift or movement or maneuver from a forward expeditionary site. Marines are always prepared to deploy anywhere in the world.
- **Expeditionary Basing.** Marines are prepared to take advantage of any opportunity to use expeditionary basing or sites to support rapid deployment and employment within the AO. Amphibious shipping, forward expeditionary sites, and intermediate staging bases are all methods the MAGTFs can employ to ensure the rapid buildup and effective employment of combat power.
- **Forcible Entry.** Expeditionary forces must be able to gain access to the AO despite the efforts of the enemy to prevent it. While Marines strive to avoid enemy strengths and take advantage of the enemy's weakness, MAGTFs must be prepared to defeat the enemy to allow follow-on operations. Marines are highly trained in forcible entry techniques such as amphibious assaults and helicopterborne (air assault) operations. Marines also train with allied, multinational, and joint forces such as United Kingdom Royal Marines, Republic

Characteristics of Expeditionary Operations (Continued)

of Korea Marines, and United States Army airborne forces.

- **Sustainment.** Expeditionary operations are often conducted in austere theaters or undeveloped areas of the world. Forces must be able to sustain their operations, providing the essential supplies and services necessary to keep the force manned and equipped to accomplish the mission. MAGTFs are well-suited to operate in these conditions as MAGTFs bring robust logistic and combat service support to the operation. Sea-basing, expeditionary sites, and the use of pre-positioned supplies and equipment assist in sustaining the force.

Amphibious Operations

An **amphibious operation** is a military expeditionary operation launched from the sea by an amphibious force embarked in ships or craft with the primary purpose of introducing a landing force ashore in hostile or potentially hostile area(s) to accomplish an assigned mission. An **amphibious force (AF)** is defined as an **amphibious task force (ATF)** and a **landing force (LF)** together with other forces that are trained, organized, and equipped for amphibious operations. Amphibious operations apply maneuver principles to expeditionary power projection in joint and multinational operations in order exploit the element of surprise and capitalize on enemy weakness. There are four main purposes for conducting amphibious operations. They are:

- Prosecute further combat operations ashore.
- Obtain a site for an advance naval, land or air base.
- Deny use of an area or facilities to the enemy.
- Fix enemy forces and attention, providing opportunities for other combat operations.

Capabilities and Strengths

Strategic mobility and flexibility. The sea allows for maximum strategic, operational and tactical mobility, and flexibility. Once ashore, units can be sustained through sea-based logistics for extended periods of time.

Ability to strike at a point of our choosing. Vast coastlines make it impossible for a defender to be strong everywhere. Amphibious operations allow the attacker to maximize the initiative and strike at the enemy's weakest point.

Projection of power ashore. The only way to truly project power and influence ashore is to introduce ground combat troops.

Forcible entry. If all else fails, the ability to make a forcible entry from the sea is the most important strength of amphibious operations.

Disadvantages

The salient requirement of an amphibious operation is the necessary swift and uninterrupted build-up of sufficient combat power ashore from an initial zero capability to full striking power as the attack progresses toward its objectives. This requirement is the primary difference between an amphibious operation and

Amphibious Operations (Continued)

Disadvantages (Continued)

sustained land warfare. Other disadvantages include:

Initial vulnerability. The landing force is extremely vulnerable during the assault's early hours. Strength ashore must be built up from zero combat power to a balanced force capable of accomplishing the assigned mission. Once ship-to-shore movement is launched, the assault is relatively inflexible until the necessary strength is established ashore.

Natural hazards. The special effects of weather, surf, and hydrography are potent hazards affecting amphibious operation conduct. These hazards can be overcome through: effective planning (landing sites, times, etc.), the use of helicopters and amphibious assault vehicles (AAVs), and good reconnaissance.

Complexity. The technical, operational, and logistical problems inherent with amphibious operations require detailed planning and realistic rehearsals.

Characteristics of Amphibious Operations

Integration of Navy & Landing Forces	The key characteristic of an amphibious operation is close coordination and cooperation between the ATF, LF, and other designated forces.
Rapid Buildup of Combat Power from the Sea to Shore	The salient requirement of an amphibious assault is the necessity for swift, uninterrupted buildup of sufficient combat power ashore from an initial zero capability to full coordinated striking power as the attack progresses toward amphibious force objectives.
Task Organized Forces	Capable of multiple missions across the full range of military operations to enable joint, allied, and coalition operations, amphibious forces are task-organized based on the mission.
Unity of Effort and Operational Coherence	The complexity of amphibious operations and the vulnerability of forces engaged in amphibious operations require an exceptional degree of unity of effort and operational coherence.

Types of Amphibious Operations

Amphibious Assault	The principal type of amphibious operation; involves establishing a force on a hostile or potentially hostile shore.
Amphibious Raid	A limited type of amphibious operation; is a landing from the sea on a hostile or potentially hostile shore involving a swift incursion into, or a temporary occupation of, an objective followed by a planned withdrawal. Raids are conducted to: • Inflict loss or damage

Types of Amphibious Operations (Continued)

Amphibious Raid	• Secure information • Create a diversion • Capture or evacuate individuals and/or materials • Execute deliberate deception operations • Destroy enemy information-gathering systems
Amphibious Demonstration	An amphibious operation conducted to deceive the enemy by a show of force with the expectation of deluding the enemy into a course of action unfavorable to him.
Amphibious Withdrawal	An amphibious operation involving the extraction of forces by sea in naval ships or craft from a hostile or potentially hostile shore.
Other Amphibious Operations	Not all amphibious operations conducted can be categorized by these four types. Forces may be called upon to conduct non-conventional amphibious operations that may closely parallel one of the four types, such as noncombatant evacuation operations and foreign humanitarian assistance.

References

Reference Number or Author	Reference Title
JP 3-02	Amphibious Operations
JP 1-02	DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms
DOD	Joint Operational Access Concept
EF 21	Expeditionary Force 21
MCCDC	Ship-to-Objective Maneuver
MCCP	Operational Maneuver from the Sea
MCDP 1	Warfighting
MCDP 1-0	Marine Corps Operations
MCDP 3	Expeditionary Operations
MCO 3120.8	Policy for the Organization of Fleet Marine Forces for Combat
MCWP 3-31.6	Supporting Arms Coordination in Amphibious Operations
MCRP 5-12D	Organization of the Marine Corps Forces

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Term or Acronym	Definition or Identification
AAV	Amphibious assault vehicle
AOA	Amphibious operation area
ATF	Amphibious Task Force
ACE	Aviation combat element
ACM	Air contingency MAGTF
CA	California
CE	Command element
LCE	Logistics Combat Element
GCE	Ground combat element

HQ	Headquarters
MAGTF	Marine air-ground task force
MEB	Marine expeditionary brigade
MEF	Marine expeditionary force
MEU	Marine expeditionary unit
MEU(SOC)	Marine expeditionary unit (special operations capable)
NC	North Carolina
NCA	National Command Authority
SPMAGTF	Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force
CATF	Commander, Amphibious Task Force
CLF	Commander, Landing Force
LF	Landing Force
MPF	Maritime Prepositioning Force
NEO	Noncombatant evacuation operations
OMFTS	Operational Maneuver from the Sea
OPCON	Operational control
PERMA	Planning, embarkation, rehearsal, movement, and action
STOM	Ship-to-Objective Maneuver
TACON	Tactical control
UNAAF	Unified Action Armed Forces

Notes