

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
FIELD MEDICAL TRAINING BATTALION
Camp Lejeune, NC 28542-0042

FMST 103

USMC Organizational Structure and Chain of Command

TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

(1) Without the aid of references, **identify the mission of the Marine Corps** without omitting key components. (HSS-MCCS-2031)

(2) Without the aid of references, **identify the location of major Marine units** without omitting key components. (HSS-MCCS-2032)

(3) Without the aid of references, **describe Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) organizations**, without omitting key components. (HSS-MCCS-2033)

ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVES

(1) Without the aid of reference and in writing, **identify the significance of the National Security Act of 1947** within 80% accuracy, in accordance with the Marine Corps Common Skills Handbook. (HSS-MCCS-2031a)

(2) Without the aid of reference and in writing, **identify the location of the three Marine Expeditionary Forces** within 80% accuracy, in accordance with Marine Corps Common Skills Handbook. (HSS-MCCS-2032a)

(3) Without the aid of reference, given a description or title, **identify the two parallel Chains of Command within the Marine Corps**, within 80% accuracy, in accordance with MCDP 1-0 Marine Corps Operations. (HSS-MCCS-2033a)

(4) Without the aid of reference, given a description or title, **identify the four broad categories of the Marine Corps**, within 80% accuracy, in accordance with MCDP 1-0 Marine Corps Operations. (HSS-MCCS-2033b)

(5) Without the aid of reference, given a description or title, **identify the four core elements within a Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF)**, within 80% accuracy, in accordance with MCO 3120.8 Policy for the Organization of Fleet Marine Forces for Combat. (HSS-MCCS-2033c)

(6) Without the aid of reference, given a description or title, **identify the different types of Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs)**, within 80% accuracy, in accordance with MCO 3120.8 Policy for the Organization of Fleet Marine Forces for Combat. (HSS-MCCS-2033d)

1. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY ACT OF 1947

Streamlined and unified the nation's military establishment by bringing together the Navy Department and War Department under a new Department of Defense. The National Security Act of 1947, as amended, sets forth the present structure, missions, and functions of the Marine Corps.

a. **The Secretary of the Navy** - is the head of the Department of the Navy. Under the direction, authority, and control of the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Navy is responsible for the policies and control of the Department of the Navy, including its organization, administration, operation, and efficiency. The United States Marine Corps is an integral part of the Department of the Navy and is, at all times, subject to its laws and regulations.

b. **Commandant of the Marine Corps** - The authority of the Commandant of the Marine Corps flows from the reassignment and delegation of authority vested in the Secretary of the Navy. The Commandant of the Marine Corps commands the United States Marine Corps and is the senior officer of the United States Marine Corps. Succession to duties of the Commandant of the Marine Corps during absence, disability, or temporary vacancy in that office is detailed in the U.S. Navy Regulations.

c. **The Mission Of The Marine Corps**

(1) The Marine Corps shall be organized, trained, and equipped to:

(a) Provide Fleet Marine Forces of combined arms, together with supporting air components, for service with the United States Fleet in the seizure or defense of advanced naval bases and for the conduct of such land operations as may be essential to the prosecution of a naval campaign.

(b) Provide detachments and organizations for service on armed vessels of the Navy, and security detachments for the protection of naval property at naval stations and bases.

(c) Develop, in coordination with the Army, Navy, and Air Force, the doctrines, tactics, techniques, and equipment employed by landing forces in amphibious operations. The Marine Corps shall have primary interest in the development of those landing force doctrines, tactics, techniques, and equipment which are of common interest to the Army and the Marine Corps.

(d) Provide, as required, Marine forces for airborne operations, in coordination with the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force and in accordance with doctrine established by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

(e) Develop, in coordination with the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force doctrines, procedures, and equipment of interest to the Marine Corps for airborne operations which are not provided for by the Army.

(f) Be prepared, in accordance with integrated joint mobilization plans, for the expansion of the peacetime components to meet the needs of war.

(g) Perform such other duties as the President may direct.

2. **TWO PARALLEL CHAINS OF COMMAND IN THE MARINE CORPS**

a. **Service Chain of Command** is used for things that are specifically inherent to the Marine Corps. Examples would include anything from purchasing new tanks to establishing rules for the use of tuition assistance. These topics, whether large or small, only affect the Marine Corps. The top portion of the service chain is listed below:

- (1) President
- (2) Secretary of Defense
- (3) Secretary of the Navy
- (4) Commandant of the Marine Corps

b. **Operational Chain of Command** is used to direct forces in conjunction with operational or functional missions. Often times this involves other services outside the Marine Corps. The Operational Chain of Command break down is listed below:

- (1) President
- (2) Secretary of Defense
- (3) Commanders of Combatant Commands

3. **FOUR BROAD CATEGORIES OF THE MARINE CORPS**

a. **Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps** – Headquarters, US Marine Corps (HQMC) consists of the Commandant of the Marine Corps and those staff agencies that advise and assist him in discharging his responsibilities prescribed by law and higher authority. The Commandant is directly responsible to the Secretary of the Navy for the total performance of the Marine Corps. This includes the administration, discipline, internal organization, training requirements, efficiency, and readiness of the service.

b. **Operating Forces** - “The heart of the Marine Corps.” It comprises the forward presence, crisis response, and fighting power that the Corps makes available to US unified combatant commanders. The Marine Corps has permanently established two combatant command-level service components in support of unified commands with significant Marine forces assigned: US Marine Corps Forces Command (MARFORCOM) and US Marine Corps Forces Pacific (MARFORPAC).

(1) ***Marine Corps Forces Command (MARFORCOM)*** - Headquarters at Norfolk, VA. The war fighting arm of MARFORCOM is the II Marine Expeditionary Force (II MEF). Additionally, dual hatted as Commander, Marine Corps Forces, Europe (COMMARFOREUR)

in support of all Marine Forces in US European Command (USEUCOM), and Commander, Marine Corps Forces, South (COMMARFORSOUTH) in support of all Marine Forces in US Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM).

(2) ***Marine Corps Forces Pacific (MARFORPAC)*** - Headquarters at Camp H.M. Smith, HI. The war fighting arm of MARFORPAC is the I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) and the III Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF). MARFORPAC commands all Marine Corps operational and shore based commands in the Pacific theater and all Marine Forces in the Central Command theater (MARCENT).

c. **Marine Corps Reserve (MARFORRES)** – Headquarters at New Orleans, LA. The mission of MARFORRES is to augment and reinforce active Marine forces in time of war, national emergency or contingency operations, provide personnel and operational tempo relief for the active forces in peacetime, and provide service to the community.

d. **Supporting Establishments** - The Marine Corps supporting establishments consist of those personnel, bases, and activities that support the Marine Corps Operating Forces.

(1) Marine Corps Recruiting Command

(2) Marine Corps Combat Development Command

(3) Marine Corps Systems Command

(4) Training Activities and Formal Schools

4. **FOUR CORE ELEMENTS OF MARINE AIR-GROUND TASK FORCE (MAGTF)**

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' organization for missions across the range of military operations. It is designed to fight while having the ability to prevent conflicts and control crisis. MAGTF's are flexible, task-organized forces that are capable of responding rapidly to a broad range of crisis and conflict situations. The MAGTF is primarily organized and equipped to conduct amphibious operations as part of naval expeditionary forces. MAGTF's are also capable of sustained combat operations ashore. Each MAGTF, regardless of size or mission has the same basic structure.

a. **Command Element (CE)**

(1) Role - It is task organized to provide command and control capabilities (including intelligence and communications) necessary for effective planning, direction, and execution of all operations.

b. **Ground Combat Element (GCE)**

(1) **Role** - Its mission is to execute ground operations and such operations as may be directed.

c. **Aviation Combat Element (ACE)**

(1) **Role** - Its mission is task organized to provide a flexible and balanced aviation organization that is capable of providing the full range of aviation operations, without the requirement for pre-positioned support control, and logistical facilities.

d. **Logistics Combat Element (LCE)**

(1) **Role** - It is a composite grouping of functional components that provides Combat Service Support above the organic capability of supported units to all elements of the MEF.

5. **TYPES OF MAGTF**

There are four (4) basic MAGTF organizations (Marine Expeditionary Force, Marine Expeditionary Brigade, Marine Expeditionary Unit and Special Purpose MAGTF).

a. **Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF)**

(1) **Definition of Capabilities** - The largest standing (Exists in peacetime and wartime) MAGTF, approximately 40,000 to 80,000 personnel. The MEF is the principal Marine Corps war fighting organization. It is capable of missions across the range of military operations, through amphibious assault and sustained operations ashore in any environment. Commanded by a Lieutenant General or Major General.

(2) **Three Standing MEFs** - Each MEF is comprised of a Command Element, Marine Division, Marine Aircraft Wing and a Marine Logistics Group.

(3) **LOCATIONS OF MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCES**

I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF)

- (a) 1st Marine Division (1st MARDIV)- Camp Pendleton, CA
- (b) 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (3rd MAW)- Miramar, CA
- (c) 1st Marine Logistics Group (1st MLG)- Camp Pendleton, CA

II Marine Expeditionary Force (II MEF)

- (a) 2nd Marine Division (2nd MARDIV)- Camp Lejeune, NC.

(b) 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (2nd MAW)- Cherry Point, NC.

(c) 2nd Marine Logistics Group (2nd MLG)- Camp Lejeune, NC.

III Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF)

(a) 3rd Marine Division (3rd MARDIV)- Camp Butler, Okinawa, Japan.

(b) 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (1st MAW)- Futenma, Okinawa, Japan.

(c) 3rd Marine Logistics Group (3rd MLG)- Camp Butler, Okinawa, Japan.

b. Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB)

(1) Definition of Capabilities - This is a medium sized, approximately 14,000 to 20,000 personnel, non-standing MAGTF that is task organized to respond to a full range of crisis, from forcible entry to humanitarian assistance. MEB's are not a standing force and formed only in times of need. An example is post 9/11, the 4th MEB and 2nd MEB were formed to respond to combat and peacekeeping contingencies in Afghanistan and Iraq. The MEB is commanded by a Brigadier General.

(2) MEB- is comprised of a Command Element, Marine Regiment, Marine Aircraft Group and Combat Logistics Regiment.

c. Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU)

(1) Definition of Capabilities - The standard forward deployed Marine expeditionary organization. MEU is task organized to be a forward deployed presence and designed to be the "First on the scene" force. MEU is capable of a wide range of small scale contingencies to include non-combatant evacuation, clandestine recovery, maritime interdictions, specialized demolitions, tactical recovery of aircraft and/or personnel, gas/oil platform seizure, humanitarian/civic actions, and other military operations other than war. Approximately 1,500 to 3,000 personnel and commanded by a Colonel.

(2) MEU is comprised of a Command Element, Battalion Landing Team, Composite Marine Air Squadrons (fixed, tilt-rotor, and rotary wing) and Combat Logistics Battalion.

(a) 11th, 13th and 15th Marine Expeditionary Units- Camp Pendleton, CA

(b) 22nd, 24th and 26th Marine Expeditionary Units- Camp Lejeune, NC

(c) 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit- Camp Hansen, Okinawa, Japan

d. **Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF)**

(1) Definition of Capabilities - The SPMAGTF is a non-standing MAGTF temporarily formed to conduct a specific mission. It is normally formed when a standing MAGTF is unavailable or inappropriate. Their designation derives from the mission they are assigned, the location in which they will operate, or the name of the operation in which they will participate.(i.e. SPMAGTF Somalia, Hurricane Katrina etc...)

(2) SPMAGTF is comprised of Command Element and elements of MARDIV, MAW and MLG.

REFERENCES:

Marine Corps Manual

Marine Corps Operations MCDP 1-0

National Security Act of 1947 (revised in 1952)

Organization of Marine Corps Forces MCRP 5-12

Policy for the Organization of Fleet Marine Forces for Combat MCO 3120.8

USMC Organizational Structure and Chain of Command Review

1. How many standing Marine Expeditionary Forces are there? Where are they located?
2. Explain the difference between the Service and Operational chains of command?
3. Explain the four broad categories of the Marine Corps?
4. What are the four core elements of the Marine Air- Ground Task Force (MAGTF)? Explain the roles of each element?
5. What are the four types of MAGTF's? Explain the differences between them?