
Marine Corps Operations



U.S. Marine Corps

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
Headquarters United States Marine Corps
Washington, DC 20308-1775

27 September 2001

FOREWORD

Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 1-0 is the first Marine Corps Operations doctrinal publication written for the Marine component and the Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF). It represents how our warfighting philosophy is codified in operational terms. MCDP 1-0 is intentionally written broadly to capture the employment of Marine components and the MAGTF across the range of military operations. The supporting tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) are contained in our warfighting and reference publications.

This doctrinal publication is the transition—the bridge—between the Marine Corps' warfighting philosophy of maneuver warfare to the TTP used by Marines. MCDP 1-0 is written for the Marine component and the MAGTF and is the precursor to future MAGTF-oriented warfighting doctrine. It addresses how the Marine Corps conducts operations to support the national military strategy across the broad range of naval, joint, and multinational operations. MCDP 1-0 explores the contribution to the national defense provided by the unique structure of Marine Corps organizations—the Marine component and the MAGTF. It reflects the notion that "words matter", providing definitions of key operational terms to ensure that Marines speak a common operational language. It describes the role of the Marine component in providing, sustaining, and deploying Marine Corps forces at the operational level of war and how the MAGTF conducts expeditionary operations at the operational and tactical levels.

MCDP 1-0 focuses on how Marine Corps forces conduct operations today and the direction the Marine Corps capstone concept *expeditionary maneuver warfare* and the supporting concepts of *operational maneuver from the sea* and *ship-to-objective maneuver* will take Marine Corps operations in the near future.

MCDP 1-0 concentrates on the operating forces of the Marine Corps—Marine Corps forces as a Service component under joint force command, and the MAGTF. It acknowledges that Marine Corps operations are now and will continue to be joint and likely multinational. It describes how Marine Corps forces support the joint or multinational force commander and what capabilities the Marines bring to a joint or multinational force. It illustrates how the Marine Corps' task-organized combined arms forces, flexibility, and rapid deployment capabilities apply to the widening spectrum of employment of today's military

forces. This publication provides the fundamentals of how MAGTFs conduct tactical operations and concisely addresses the types of operations MAGTFs will conduct to accomplish these missions. Marine Corps commanders and leaders at all levels should read and study this publication. Additionally, joint force commanders and their staffs can use this publication to better understand the capabilities of Marine Corps forces assigned to the joint force.

/s/

J. L. JONES
General, United States Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps

DISTRIBUTION: 142 000014 00

©2001 United States Government as represented by the Secretary of the Navy.
All rights reserved.

Throughout this publication, masculine nouns and pronouns are used for the sake of simplicity. Except where otherwise noted, these nouns and pronouns apply to either gender.

MCDP 1-0, MARINE CORPS OPERATIONS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 The Marine Corps in National Defense

Historical Role	1-3
The Character of Modern Conflict.	1-6
Operational Environment.	1-7
Threat Dimension	1-7
Political Dimension.	1-9
Levels of War	1-9
Range of Military Operations	1-10
The National Security Structure.	1-10
National Command Authorities	1-10
The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff	1-10
The Joint Chiefs of Staff	1-11
Unified Action	1-11
Joint Operations.	1-11
Multinational Operations, Alliances, and Coalitions	1-12
Roles and Functions.	1-13
Title 10, United States Code, <i>Armed Forces</i>	1-13
Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.	1-14
Department of Defense Directive 5100.1, <i>Functions of the Department of Defense and its Major Components</i>	1-15
Marine Corps Manual	1-16
Commandant of the Marine Corps.	1-16
Organization and Structure	1-17
Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps	1-17
Operating Forces	1-18
Supporting Establishment	1-22
Marine Corps Forces Reserve	1-22
Marine Corps Ethos	1-23

Chapter 2 Marine Corps Expeditionary Operations

Marine Corps Core Competencies	2-2
Warfighting Culture and Dynamic Decision-making	2-2
Expeditionary Forward Operations	2-2
Sustainable and Interoperable Littoral Power Projection	2-3
Combined Arms Integration	2-3
Forcible Entry from the Sea	2-3
Expeditionary Operations	2-4
Force Projection	2-5
Amphibious Operations	2-6
Amphibious Operation Command Relationships	2-6
Forcible Entry through an Amphibious Assault	2-8
Sequence	2-9
Maritime Pre-positioning Force	2-11
Sustained Operations Ashore	2-12
Enabling Force	2-12
Decisive Force	2-12
Exploitation Force	2-13
Sustaining Force	2-13
Emerging Concepts and Technologies	2-13
Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare	2-14
Operational Maneuver from the Sea	2-15
Ship-to-Objective Maneuver	2-16
Maritime Pre-positioning Force Future	2-17
Expeditionary Bases and Sites	2-18

Chapter 3 Marine Corps Forces

Marine Corps Component	3-1
Role and Responsibilities to the Commandant	3-3
Role and Responsibilities to a Combatant Commander	3-3
Role and Responsibilities to the Joint Force Commander	3-4
Joint Operations Conducted Through Service Component Commanders	3-5
Joint Operations Conducted Through Functional Component Commanders	3-5
The Marine Corps Component Commander as a Functional Component Commander	3-7

Role and Responsibilities to the MAGTF Commander	3-9
Component Command Relationships and Staff Organization	3-10
The Marine Air-Ground Task Force	3-10
Capabilities	3-11
Elements	3-12
Supporting Establishment	3-15
Types	3-16
Marine Logistics Command	3-20

Chapter 4 Employment of Marine Corps Forces at the Operational Level

Battlespace Organization	4-3
Area of Operations	4-4
Area of Influence	4-6
Area of Interest	4-7
Boundaries, Maneuver Control Measures, and Fire Support Coordinating Measures	4-7
Deployment	4-10
Force Deployment Planning and Execution	4-10
Predeployment Activities	4-14
Movement to and Activities at the Port of Embarkation	4-15
Movement to the Port of Debarkation	4-16
Reception, Staging, Onward Movement, and Integration	4-16
Deployment Forces	4-16
Employment	4-18
Planning Approach	4-19
Arranging Operations	4-20
Combat Power	4-21
Warfighting Functions	4-21
Information Operations	4-22
Redeployment	4-24
Expeditionary Operations in Support of Future Campaigns	4-24

Chapter 5 Logistics in Marine Corps Operations

Levels	5-3
Strategic Logistics	5-4
Operational Logistics	5-4
Tactical Logistics	5-5

Functions	5-5
Supply	5-6
Maintenance	5-6
Transportation	5-7
General Engineering	5-7
Health Services	5-7
Services	5-7
Joint and Multinational Operations	5-8
Strategic Logistics Support	5-10
Strategic Mobility	5-10
United States Transportation Command	5-11
Department of Transportation	5-12
Defense Logistics Agency	5-12
Operational Logistics Support	5-12
Marine Corps Component	5-12
Marine Logistics Command	5-13
Reconstitution	5-14
Command and Control	5-15
Logistics Support to MAGTF Operations	5-16
Marine Expeditionary Force	5-17
Marine Expeditionary Brigade	5-18
Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable)	5-18
Special Purpose MAGTF	5-18
Air Contingency Force	5-19
Maritime Pre-positioning Forces	5-19
Aviation Logistics Support Ship	5-19
Norway Geopre-positioning Program	5-19
War Reserve Materiel Support	5-20
Tactical Level Command and Control	5-20
Supporting Establishment	5-20
Marine Corps Combat Development Command	5-21
Marine Corps Materiel Command	5-21
Marine Corps Bases, Stations, and Reserve Support Centers	5-22
Department of the Navy Agencies	5-22
Future Sustainment Operations	5-23

Chapter 6 Planning and Conducting Expeditionary Operations

Maneuver Warfare	6-2
Operational Design.	6-3
Visualize	6-5
Describe	6-5
Direct	6-6
Planning	6-9
Commander's Battlespace Area Evaluation.	6-10
Analyze and Determine the Battlespace	6-10
Centers of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities	6-11
Commander's Intent	6-12
Commander's Critical Information Requirements	6-13
Commander's Guidance	6-14
Mission	6-15
Decisive Action	6-17
Shaping Actions.	6-18
Battlefield Framework	6-19
Integrated Planning	6-19
Single Battle	6-20
Deep Operations	6-21
Close Operations	6-22
Rear Operations	6-22
Noncontiguous and Contiguous.	6-23
Main and Supporting Efforts	6-24
The Reserve	6-27
Security	6-28
Phasing	6-29
Operation Plans and Orders	6-30
Transitioning Between Planning and Execution	6-31
Execution	6-31
Command and Control.	6-32
Assessment	6-33
Tactical Tenets	6-34
Achieving a Decision.	6-35
Gaining Advantage	6-36
Tempo	6-38
Adapting	6-39
Exploiting Success and Finishing	6-40

Chapter 7 The MAGTF in the Offense

Purpose of Offensive Operations	7-2
Characteristics of Offensive Operations	7-3
Organization of the Battlespace	7-3
Organization of the Force	7-4
Types of Offensive Operations	7-7
Movement to Contact	7-7
Attack	7-10
Exploitation	7-14
Pursuit	7-15
Forms of Maneuver	7-16
Frontal Attack	7-17
Flanking Attack	7-18
Envelopment	7-19
Turning Movement	7-21
Infiltration	7-22
Penetration	7-23
Future Offensive Operations	7-24

Chapter 8 The MAGTF in the Defense

Purpose of Defensive Operations	8-3
Characteristics of MAGTF Defensive Operations	8-4
Preparation	8-7
Security	8-7
Disruption	8-7
Mass and Concentration	8-8
Flexibility	8-8
Maneuver	8-8
Operations in Depth	8-8
Organization of the Battlespace	8-10
Security Area	8-11
Main Battle Area	8-12
Rear Area	8-12
Organization of the Force	8-12
Security Forces	8-12
Main Battle Forces	8-13
Rear Area Forces	8-15

Types of Defensive Operations	8-16
Mobile Defense	8-17
Position Defense	8-20
Future Defensive Operations	8-22

Chapter 9 Other MAGTF Tactical Operations

Retrograde	9-1
Delay	9-2
Withdrawal	9-3
Retirement	9-4
Passage of Lines	9-5
Linkup	9-6
Relief in Place	9-7
Obstacle Crossing	9-7
Breach	9-8
River Crossing	9-9
Breakout from Encirclement	9-9

Chapter 10 Military Operations Other Than War

Principles	10-3
Objective	10-4
Unity of Effort	10-4
Security	10-5
Restraint	10-5
Perseverance	10-6
Legitimacy	10-6
Arms Control	10-7
Combatting Terrorism	10-7
Department of Defense Support to Counterdrug Operations	10-7
Enforcement of Sanctions/Maritime Intercept Operations	10-8
Enforcing Exclusion Zones	10-8
Ensuring Freedom of Navigation and Overflight	10-8
Humanitarian Assistance	10-8
Military Support to Civil Authorities	10-9
Nation Assistance/Support to Counterinsurgency	10-10
Noncombatant Evacuation Operations	10-11
Peace Operations	10-12
Protection of Shipping	10-13
Recovery Operations	10-13
Show of Force Operations	10-14

Strikes and Raids	10-14
Support to Insurgency	10-14
Warfighting Functions	10-14
Command and Control	10-15
Maneuver	10-16
Fires	10-16
Intelligence	10-17
Logistics	10-18
Force Protection	10-19

Chapter 11 MAGTF Reconnaissance and Security Operations

MAGTF Reconnaissance Assets	11-2
Command Element	11-3
Ground Combat Element	11-4
Aviation Combat Element	11-5
Combat Service Support Element	11-6
National and Theater Assets	11-6
Reconnaissance Planning	11-6
Types of Reconnaissance Missions	11-8
Route Reconnaissance	11-8
Area Reconnaissance	11-8
Zone Reconnaissance	11-9
Force-Oriented Reconnaissance	11-9
Reconnaissance Pull and Reconnaissance Push	11-9
Counterreconnaissance	11-11
Security Forces and Missions	11-12
Screen	11-13
Guard	11-14
Cover	11-16
Security Operations in Other Tactical Operations	11-17
Military Operations Other Than War	11-17

Appendices

A Warfighting Functions	A-1
B Principles of War	B-1
C Tactical Tasks	C-1
D Planning and Employment Considerations for Tactical Operations	D-1
E Planning and Employment Considerations for MOOTW	E-1
F Glossary	F-1

Bibliography	Bibliography-1
-------------------------------	-----------------------

Figures

1-1. Marine Corps Organization	1-18
1-2. Marine Corps Forces and Fleet Marine Force Relationship	1-21
2-1. Current Location of Maritime Pre-positioning Ships Squadrons	2-11
2-2. Operational Objectives	2-17
3-1. Chains of Command and Command Relationships	3-2
3-2. Commander's Level of War Orientation	3-4
3-3. Combatant Command Organized by Functional Components	3-6
3-4. Marine Air-Ground Task Forces	3-12
3-5. MAGTF Organization	3-13
4-1. Noncontiguous Areas of Interest	4-8
4-2. Unit Boundaries	4-9
5-1. Strategic Mobility Considerations	5-11
6-1. Operational Design	6-4
6-2. Commander's Vision of Decisive and Shaping Actions and Sustainment	6-7
6-3. Battlefield Framework	6-8
6-4. Single Battle	6-21
6-5. Battlespace Organization	6-24
7-1. Types of Offensive Operations	7-7
7-2. Movement to Contact	7-8
7-3. Pursuit	7-16
7-4. Frontal Attack	7-17
7-5. Flanking Attack	7-18
7-6. Single Envelopment	7-19
7-7. Double Envelopment	7-20
7-8. Turning Movement	7-21
7-9. Infiltration	7-22
7-10. Penetration	7-24
8-1. Organization of the Battlespace	8-11
8-2. Organization of the Force	8-13
8-3. Mobile Defense	8-18
8-4. Position Defense	8-21
9-1. Delay	9-3

CHAPTER 1

The Marine Corps in National Defense

Contents

Historical Role	1-3
The Character of Modern Conflict	1-6
Operational Environment	1-7
Threat Dimension	1-7
Political Dimension	1-9
Levels of War	1-9
Range of Military Operations	1-10
The National Security Structure	1-10
National Command Authorities	1-10
The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff	1-10
The Joint Chiefs of Staff	1-11
Unified Action	1-11
Joint Operations	1-11
Multinational Operations, Alliances, and Coalitions	1-12
Roles and Functions	1-13
Title 10, United States Code, <i>Armed Forces</i>	1-13
Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986	1-14
Department of Defense Directive 5100.1, <i>Functions of the Department of Defense and its Major Components</i>	1-15
Marine Corps Manual	1-16
Commandant of the Marine Corps	1-16
Organization and Structure	1-17
Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps	1-17
Operating Forces	1-18
Supporting Establishment	1-22
Marine Corps Forces Reserve	1-22
Marine Corps Ethos	1-23

“Despite its outstanding record as a combat force in the past war [World War II], the Marine Corps’ far greater contribution to victory was doctrinal [new concepts]: that is, the fact that the basic amphibious doctrines which carried Allied troops over every beachhead of World War II had been largely shaped—often in [the] face of uninterested or doubting military orthodoxy—by U.S. Marines, and mainly between 1922 and 1935.”

—General Alexander A. Vandegrift, USMC

“...American history, recent as well as remote, has fully demonstrated the vital need for the existence of a strong force-in-readiness. Such a force, versatile, fast moving, and hard-hitting,... can prevent the growth of potentially large conflagrations by prompt and vigorous action during their incipient stages. The nation’s shock troops must be the most ready when the nation is least ready... to provide a balanced force-in-readiness for a naval campaign and, at the same time, a ground and air striking force ready to suppress or contain international disturbances short of large scale war....”

-82nd Congress (1952)

Since 1775, the United States Marine Corps has served as an expeditionary force organized and trained to act in the national security interest and carry out the national military strategy. The Marine Corps’ contribution to the national defense has successfully evolved throughout its history by virtue of the ability of Marines to identify and adapt to the nation’s national security needs, often before those needs were commonly recognized. Such innovations as the seizure and defense of advanced Naval bases, amphibious operations, close air support, helicopterborne vertical envelopment tactics, maritime pre-positioning forces (MPFs), and task-organized, combined arms forces consisting of aviation, ground, and logistic elements known as Marine air-ground task forces (MAGTFs) are prime examples of how the Marine Corps has adapted and evolved as an expeditionary force. The Marine Corps continually reviews its roles and missions in the context of an uncertain world, adapting to the changing security needs of the Nation while preserving those core values and professional capabilities that make Marines succeed in war and peace.

The Nation requires an expeditionary force-in-readiness that can respond to a crisis anywhere in the world. The Marine Corps provides self-sustainable, task organized combined arms forces capable of conducting a full spectrum of operations in support of the joint force commander. Missions might include forcible entry operations, peace enforcement, evacuation of American citizens and embassies, humanitarian assistance or operations to reinforce or complement the capabilities of other Services to provide balanced military forces to the joint force commander. The unique capability of the Marine Corps as a sea service and partner with the United States Navy allows the use of the sea as both a maneuver space and a secure base of operations to conduct operations in the littoral areas of the world. The ability to remain at sea for long periods without the requirement of third nation basing rights makes the Marine Corps the force of choice in emerging crises. Marine Corps forces exploit the Total Force concept, employing

combinations of active duty and reserve Marines to ensure that missions are effectively and efficiently executed.

Naval expeditions comprised of Navy and Marine Corps forces have long been the instruments of choice in our Nation's response to global contingencies. From humanitarian assistance, to peacekeeping, to combat, these forces are normally the first on scene and ready to respond. Naval expeditionary forces combine the *complementary but distinct capabilities* of the Navy and Marine Corps. They provide strategic agility and overseas presence without infringing on the sovereignty of other nations and simultaneously enable enhanced force protection. They provide a power projection capability that can be tailored to meet a wide range of crises from a major theater war to military operations other than war (MOOTW). Naval expeditionary forces can be task-organized to provide an array of options to the National Command Authorities and combatant commanders in dealing with a particular situation. Naval expeditionary forces provide the United States the unique capability to conduct and sustain operations from the sea—including continuous forward presence and self-sustainment—in support of our national interests without reliance on pre-positioning ashore, foreign basing or the granting of overflight rights.

HISTORICAL ROLE

Throughout its history, the Marine Corps has lead in developing innovative and successful military concepts. These concepts have helped the Marines and their sister Services to win the Nation's battles and wars. The Marine Corps success in developing into the Nation's premier expeditionary force has its roots in decades of innovative thought, bold experiments, and constant training.

The Marine Corps was established in 1775 to provide landing forces (LFs) for Navy ships. Throughout its first 150 years of existence the Marine Corps provided Marines for ships detachments and temporary battalions and brigades formed from ships detachments and Marine Barracks to provide LFs to the fleet during naval expeditions. These forces conducted expeditionary operations throughout the world such as—

- Seizing New Providence in the Bahamas from the British (1776).
- Raising the United States flag over a foreign city for the first time when Lieutenant O'Bannon and eight Marines, leading a rag-tag force of Arabs and mercenaries, captured the Tripolitan city of Derna (1805).
- Accompanying Commodore Perry as he opened Japan to trade with the world (1854).