
Rear Area Operations



U.S. Marine Corps

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Unless otherwise stated, whenever the masculine gender is used, both men and women are included.

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FOREWORD

Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 3-41.1, *Rear Area Operations*, describes the Marine Corps' approach to rear area operations. It provides general doctrinal guidance for the Marine Corps component and the Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) commander and staff responsible for executing rear area operations. The principles and planning considerations discussed in this publication are applicable to the Marine Corps component and all MAGTFs and their subordinate commands.

MCWP 3-41.1 identifies the functions that occur within the rear area, which are integrated within the warfighting functions, to support the conduct of the single battle. It also discusses the command and control of rear area operations from the joint level to individual bases, planning considerations, and the execution of the rear area operations functions. This publication does not provide detailed tactics, techniques, or procedures for rear area security (see FMFM 2-6, *MAGTF Rear Area Security*, which will become MCRP 3-41.1A when revised).

MCWP 3-41.1 was reviewed and approved this date.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDANT OF THE
MARINE CORPS

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1. The Rear Area

Protect the Force	1-2
Support the Force	1-3
Joint Doctrine	1-5
Applicable Army Doctrine	1-8
Case Study: Guadalcanal 1942	1-10

Chapter 2. Command and Control

The Joint Rear Area	2-3
Organization of Marine Corps Forces.	2-7
Marine Corps Rear Areas	2-11
Base Defense.	2-19

Chapter 3. Planning

Marine Corps Planning Process	3-2
Warfighting Functions	3-5
The Operational Planning Team	3-11

Operation Plan and Operation Order 3-13
Liaisons 3-14

Chapter 4. Execution

Security 4-1
Communications 4-8
Intelligence 4-8
Sustainment 4-9
Area Management 4-10
Movements 4-11
Infrastructure Development 4-15
Host-Nation Support 4-16

**Appendix A. Rear Area Operations
Appendix Format**

Appendix B. Glossary

Appendix C. References

Chapter 1

The Rear Area

“That the rear of an enemy’s army is the point to hit at should be obvious.”¹

—MajGen J.F.C. Fuller

Rear area operations are evolutionary in character. As an operation progresses, the geographic location, command and control structure, and organization of the rear area will change. Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *DOD Dictionary for Military and Associated Terms*, defines the rear area “for any particular command, [as] the area extending forward from its rear boundary to the rear of the area assigned to the next lower level of command. This area is provided primarily for the performance of support functions. Further, it defines a joint rear area as “a specific land area within a joint force commander’s operational area designated to facilitate protection and operation of installations and forces supporting the joint force.”

1. *Co-ordination of the Attack*, ed. Col Joseph I. Greene, *The Infantry Journal Reader* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1943) p. 137.

Rear area operations protect assets in the rear area to support the force. Rear area operations encompass more than just rear area security. While rear area operations provide security for personnel, materiel, and facilities in the rear area, their sole purpose is to provide uninterrupted support to the force as a whole. Rear area operations enhance a force's freedom of action while it is involved in the close and deep fight and extend the force's operational reach. The broad functions of rear area operations, as delineated within both joint and Marine Corps doctrine, include—

- Security.
- Communications.
- Intelligence.
- Sustainment.
- Area management.
- Movements.
- Infrastructure development.
- Host-nation support.

Protect the Force

Force protection is essential to all military operations: from war to military operations other than war (MOOTW). It is conducted at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war. Force protection preserves vital resources—lives, equipment, and materiel—so they can be used to accomplish the mission. It includes every action or measure that preserves combat power so it can be applied at the decisive