

Range of Military Operations

Conflict can take a variety of forms ranging from general war, such as a global conflict between major powers, all the way down to MOOTW where violence is limited and combat forces may not be needed. This range may be characterized by two major categories:

A major theater war is the employment of large joint and multinational forces in combat operations to defeat an enemy nation, coalition or alliance. Operation Desert Storm is an example of a major theater war.

A smaller-scale contingency normally encompasses a wide range of naval, joint or multinational operations in small wars and MOOTW. Peace enforcement operations in the Balkans and humanitarian assistance operations are examples of smaller-scale contingencies.

THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRUCTURE

The Marine Corps' involvement in national security has its foundation in law. The National Security Act of 1947 unified the defense establishment, assigned roles, missions, and functions among major Department of Defense agencies, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Military Services, and combatant commands.

National Command Authorities

The National Command Authorities include the President and the Secretary of Defense or their duly deputized alternates or successors. They exercise authority over the Armed Forces through combatant commanders and the Secretaries of the Military Departments and the chiefs of the Services for those forces not assigned to the combatant commanders. The National Command Authorities translate policy into national strategic military objectives.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

In accordance with Title 10, United States Code, Sections 151 and 153, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff assists the President and the Secretary of Defense in providing strategic direction of the Armed Forces. His responsibilities include—

- Presiding over the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
- Acting as the spokesman for the combatant commanders.
- Preparing military strategy, assessments, and strategic plans.
- Providing for the preparation and review of joint operation plans.
- Providing military guidance to the Services in preparation of their detailed plans.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Joint Chiefs of Staff consists of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Vice Chairman, and the four Service chiefs. Joint Chiefs of Staff members advise the National Command Authorities upon their request or when a member recognizes a matter of national security that merits being addressed. When the Chairman advises the President, National Security Council or the Secretary of Defense, any member may submit advice or an opinion in disagreement with that of the Chairman in addition to the advice provided by the Chairman. Duties of the members take precedence over all their other duties as Service chiefs.

UNIFIED ACTION

Unified action is a generic term that refers to a broad scope of activities (including the synchronization of activities with governmental and nongovernmental agencies) taking place within unified commands, sub-unified commands, or joint task forces under the overall direction of the commanders of those commands. The national military strategy calls for the Marine Corps to act as part of fully interoperable and integrated joint forces. The joint force commander synchronizes the employment of Marine Corps forces with that of the other Services to fully exploit the capabilities of the joint force and to effectively and efficiently accomplish the mission.

Joint Operations

Joint operations are operations that include forces of two or more Military Departments under a single commander. Joint force commanders use joint forces within their AOs to participate in engagement activities and to conduct military operations in support of the geographic combatant commanders' contingency and war plans. Combatant commanders and their staffs are responsible for preparing plans for engagement with other nations and their forces throughout the theater. They also must prepare and maintain contingency and war plans for their theater of operations.

Engagement is the use of military forces to contribute to regional stability, reduction of potential conflicts, and the deterrence of aggression. Engagement activities are pro-active, conducted at home and abroad, that take advantage of opportunities to shape the international security environment. They include overseas presence, forward deployment, foreign internal development, and alliance and coalition training and exercises.

Contingency plans are plans for major contingencies that can reasonably be expected to occur within the theater of operations. Contingency planning can be deliberate or can be conducted under time constraints in crisis action planning. Contingency plans differ from operation plans as they are in an abbreviated format and require significant time or considerable expansion or alteration to convert them to operation plans or orders. War plans are completed operation plans for major contingencies such as major theater wars.

One of the techniques the combatant commanders and their staffs employ in contingency and war planning is flexible deterrent options. These are tailored military forces and operations designed to effectively and efficiently accomplish an anticipated mission or meet an unexpected contingency. Joint planners use flexible deterrent options within a planning framework intended to facilitate early decision and rapid response by laying out a range of forces and capabilities to be employed by the combatant commanders to accomplish particular missions. Flexible deterrent options are carefully tailored to send the right signal to the threat and the United States and world public. These options should include the minimum military force necessary to accomplish the objectives and the coordinated use of economic, diplomatic, and political actions appropriate to the particular situation. For more on Marine Corps participation in joint operations see chapter 3.

Multinational Operations, Alliances, and Coalitions

Although the United States may act unilaterally when the situation requires, it pursues its national interests through alliances and coalitions when possible. Alliances and coalitions can provide larger and more capable forces, share the costs of the operation, and enhance the legitimacy of the operation in world and United States public opinion. Multinational operations are usually conducted within the structure of an alliance or coalition. Alliances normally have established agreements for long term objectives, developed contingency plans, and standardized some equipment and procedures to ease interoperability. Coalitions are normally established for shorter periods or for specific multinational operations. They normally do not have established procedures or standardized equipment.

However organized, multinational operations normally involve complex cultural issues, interoperability challenges, conflicting national command and control procedures, intelligence sharing, and other support problems. Even long established alliances experience some degree of these obstacles. Unity of command is difficult to achieve in multinational operations. To compensate for this, commanders concentrate on obtaining unity of effort between the participating national forces. Consensus building is the key element in building

unity of effort in multinational operations. Multinational operations command and control is usually based on parallel or lead nation command and control structures. Parallel command requires coordinated political and senior military leadership to make decisions and transmit their decisions through existing chains of command to their deployed forces. This is the simplest to establish but limits tempo. Lead nation command and control requires that one nation (usually the one providing the preponderance of forces or capabilities) provides the multinational force commander and uses that nation's command and control system. Other nations' forces are then assigned as subordinate forces. Normally, this structure requires some integration of national staffs.

Multinational commanders must be prepared to accommodate differences in operational and tactical capabilities by nations within the combined force. The commander's intentions, clear guidance, and plans must be articulated to avoid confusion that might occur due to differences in doctrine and terminology. Detailed planning, wargaming, exchange of standing operating procedures and liaison officers, and rehearsals help to overcome procedural difficulties between nations. Finally, the commander should ensure that the missions assigned to nations within the multinational force reflect the specific capabilities and limitations of each national contingent. Mission success should not be jeopardized because of unrealistic expectations of the capabilities or political will of member forces.

ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

Roles are the broad and enduring purposes for which the Services and USSOCOM were established by Congress by law. Missions are the tasks assigned by the President or Secretary of Defense to the combatant commanders. Functions are specific responsibilities assigned by the President and Secretary of Defense to enable the Services to fulfill their legally established roles. Various laws, directives, and manuals establish the roles and functions of the Marine Corps and describe the general composition and responsibilities of the Marine Corps. The key sources are Title 10, United States Code, *Armed Forces*; Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986; Department of Defense Directive 5100.1, *Functions of the Department of Defense and Its Major Components*; and the Marine Corps Manual.

Title 10, United States Code, *Armed Forces*

Chapter 507, Section 5063 details the Marine Corps' composition and functions. The Marine Corps—

- Shall be organized to include not less than three combat divisions and three aircraft wings, and other organic land combat forces, aviation, and services.

- Shall be organized, trained, and equipped to provide Fleet Marine Forces of combined arms, together with supporting aviation forces, for service with the fleet in the seizure and defense of advanced naval bases and for the conduct of such land operations as may be essential to the prosecution of a naval campaign.
- Shall provide detachments and organizations for service on armed vessels of the Navy, shall provide security detachments for the protection of naval property at naval stations and bases, and shall perform such other duties as the President may direct. These additional duties may not detract from or interfere with the operations for which the Marine Corps is primarily organized.
- Shall develop, in coordination with the Army and Air Force, those phases of amphibious operations that pertain to the tactics, techniques, and equipment used by landing forces.
- Is responsible, in accordance with integrated joint mobilization plans, for the expansion of the peacetime components of the Marine Corps to meet the needs of war.

Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986

Salient features of the act are the—

- Service chiefs (Chief of Staff of the Army, Chief of Naval Operations, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and Commandant of the Marine Corps) are responsible for organizing, training, and equipping Service forces, while combatant commanders are responsible for the planning and execution of joint operations.
- Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the *principal* military advisor to the President, National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. While he outranks all other officers of the Armed Forces, he does not exercise military command over the combatant commanders, Joint Chiefs of Staff, or any of the Armed Forces.
- Joint Staff is under the exclusive direction of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It is organized along conventional staff lines to support the Chairman and the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in performing their duties. The Joint Staff does not function as an overall Armed Forces General Staff and has no executive authority.
- Operational chain of command is clearly established from the President through the Secretary of Defense to the combatant commanders.

Department of Defense Directive 5100.1, *Functions of the Department of Defense and its Major Components*

This directive defines the primary functions of the Marine Corps. Among these primary functions are to—

- Organize, train, equip, and provide Marine Corps forces to conduct prompt and sustained combat operations at sea, including sea-based and land-based aviation. These forces will seek out and destroy enemy naval forces, suppress enemy sea commerce, gain and maintain general naval supremacy, control vital sea areas, protect vital sea lines of communications, establish and maintain local superiority in an area of naval operations, seize and defend advanced naval bases, and conduct land, air, and space operations essential to a naval campaign.
- Provide Marine Corps forces of combined arms for service with the Navy to seize and defend advanced naval bases and to conduct land operations necessary for a naval campaign. In addition, the Marine Corps shall provide detachments and organizations for service on armed vessels of the Navy and provide security detachments for naval stations and bases.
- Organize, equip, and provide Marine Corps forces to conduct joint amphibious operations. The Marine Corps is responsible for the amphibious training of all forces assigned to joint amphibious operations.
- Organize, train, equip, and provide forces for reconnaissance, antisubmarine warfare, protection of shipping, aerial refueling, and minelaying operations.
- Organize, train, equip, and provide forces for air and missile defense and space control operations.
- Provide equipment, forces, procedures, and doctrine to conduct and support electronic warfare.
- Organize, train, equip, and provide forces to conduct and support special operations.
- Organize, train, equip, and provide forces to conduct and support psychological operations.

Functions to be accomplished together with other Services include develop—

- The doctrine, procedures, and equipment of naval forces for amphibious operations and the doctrine and procedures for joint amphibious operations.
- The doctrine, tactics, techniques, and equipment employed by landing forces in amphibious operations. The Marine Corps has primary responsibility for the development of landing force doctrine, tactics, techniques, and equipment that are of common interest to the Army and the Marine Corps.

- Doctrine, procedures, and equipment of interest to the Marine Corps for airborne operations not provided for by the Army.
- Doctrine, procedures, and equipment employed by Marine Corps forces in the conduct of space operations.

In addition to the above functions, the Marine Corps will perform such other duties as the President or the Secretary of Defense may direct. However, these additional duties must not detract from or interfere with the operations which the Marine Corps is primarily organized. These functions do not contemplate the creation of a second land army. Finally, the directive describes collateral functions of the Marine Corps to train its forces to—

- Interdict enemy land and air forces and communications through operations at sea.
- Conduct close air and naval support for land operations.
- Furnish aerial photography for cartographic purposes.
- Participate in the overall air effort, when directed.
- Establish military government, as directed, pending transfer of this responsibility to other authority.

Marine Corps Manual

The Marine Corps Manual adds three more functions. The Marine Corps shall—

- Maintain a Marine Corps Forces Reserve for the purpose of providing trained units and qualified individuals to be available for active duty in the Marine Corps in time of war or national emergency and at such other times as the national security may require.
- Provide Marine Corps officer and enlisted personnel in support of the Department of State security program overseas.
- Organize Marine Corps aviation, as a collateral function, to participate as an integral component of naval aviation in the execution of such other Navy functions as the fleet commanders may direct.

COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

The Commandant has two vital functions—as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and as Marine Corps Service Chief. His duties as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff take precedence over all other duties.

As a Joint Chiefs of Staff member, the Commandant may submit his advice or opinion to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff when it is in disagreement

CHAPTER 3

Marine Corps Forces

Contents	
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

"I have just returned from visiting the Marines at the front, and there is not a finer fighting organization in the world."

—General Douglas MacArthur, USA

The Marine Corps organizes its operational forces as Marine Corps components and as MAGTFs to provide task-organized, self-sustaining, multipurpose forces to the joint force or naval expeditionary force. These uniquely organized Marine Corps forces can respond to a wide range of operational and tactical missions and tasks, providing the National Command Authorities with an unmatched combination of deployment and employment options.

MARINE CORPS COMPONENT

The Marine Corps will normally conduct operations as part of a joint force. While the overwhelming majority of operations that Marine Corps forces will be involved with will be joint, there may be instances where Marine Corps forces may conduct single-Service operations. A combatant commander can establish command structure and conduct operations using a single-Service

force. See JP 0-2 and JP 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, for more information. Joint forces are constituted with subordinate organizations known as components. Per JP 0-2, the Service forces that comprise the joint force operate as components. Normally a joint force is organized with a combination of Service and functional components. Regardless of how a joint force commander organizes his forces, if Marine Corps forces are assigned, there is a Marine Corps component. There are two levels of Marine Corps components: a Marine Corps component under a unified command and a Marine Corps component under a subordinate unified command or a joint task force. The Marine Corps component commander deals directly with the joint force commander in matters affecting Marine Corps forces. See figure 3-1.

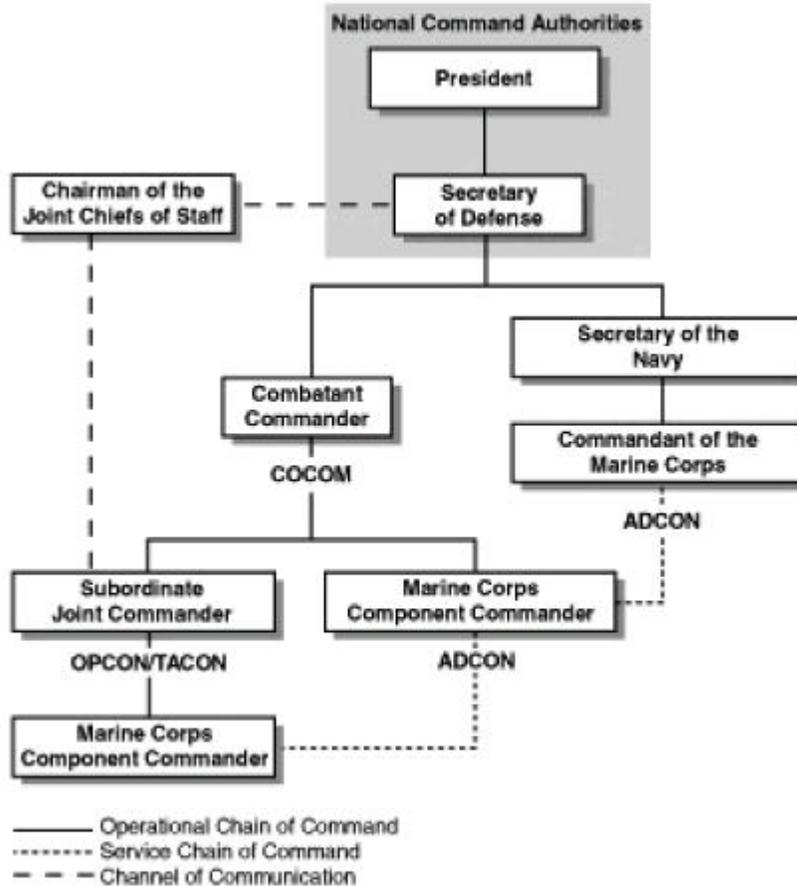


Figure 3-1. Chains of Command and Command Relationships.

The Marine Corps component commander commands, trains, equips, and sustains Marine Corps forces. He sets the conditions for their success in the battlespace. He translates the joint force commander's intent into Marine Corps forces' actions.

Role and Responsibilities to the Commandant

The Marine Corps component commander is responsible for and accountable to the Commandant for the internal discipline, training, and administration of his forces. His responsibilities specifically include—

- Internal discipline and administration.
- Training in Marine Corps doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures.
- Logistic functions normal to the command, except as otherwise directed by higher authority.
- Service intelligence matters and oversight of intelligence activities according to current laws, policies, and directives.

While the Marine Corps component commander responds to the joint force commander in the operational chain of command, his component is equipped, manned, and supported by the Commandant through the Service chain of command. The Commandant's relationship with the Marine Corps component commander is through the Service chain—not the operational chain. Unless otherwise directed by the combatant commander, the Marine Corps component commander will communicate through the combatant command on those matters that the combatant commander exercises COCOM or directive authority. On Service-specific matters—personnel, administration, and unit training—the Marine Corps component commander will normally communicate directly with the Commandant, informing the combatant commander as the combatant commander directs.

A combatant command-level Marine Corps component is generally required for a major theater war. A subordinate joint command-level Marine Corps component is normally appropriate for a smaller-scale contingency and MOOTW. MOOTW may occur simultaneously with a major theater war or a smaller-scale contingency.

Role and Responsibilities to a Combatant Commander

There are five combatant command-level Marine Corps components—Marine Corps Forces, Atlantic (MARFORLANT), Marine Corps Forces, Pacific (MARFORPAC), Marine Corps Forces, Europe (MARFOREUR),

MARFORSOUTH, and Marine Corps Forces, United States Central Command (MARFORCENT). Only MARFORLANT and MARFORPAC have assigned forces. COMMARFORLANT is the combatant command-level Marine Corps component commander for the USCINCFJCOM and is assigned as the combatant command-level Marine Corps component commander to both USCINCEUR, and USCINCSO. COMMARFORPAC is the combatant command-level Marine Corps component commander for USCINCPAC, and is designated as the combatant command-level Marine Corps component commander to the USCINCCENT. COMMARFORPAC is also designated as COMUSMARFOR-K to the Commander United States Forces Korea, a subordinate unified commander. See Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 1-0.1, *Componency*, for more information.

Role and Responsibilities to the Joint Force Commander

The joint force commander conducts campaigns through a series of related operations. He conducts his campaigns by assigning component commanders missions that accomplish strategic and operational objectives. The orientation of the Marine Corps component commander is *normally* at the operational level of war, while the MAGTF commander is *normally* at the tactical level. See figure 3-2. Naturally, there is some overlap. The Marine Corps component commander is normally responsible to set the conditions for Marine Corps tactical operations. These operations include military actions executed by the MAGTF, other assigned or attached Marine Corps forces, and assigned or attached forces from other Services and nations.

A joint force commander organizes his forces to accomplish the assigned mission based on the factors of mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available, and time available (METT-T), and the concept of operations.

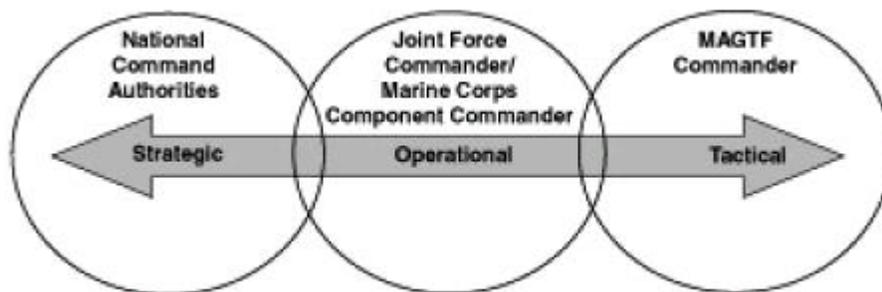


Figure 3-2. Commander's Level of War Orientation.

The organization should provide for unity of effort, centralized planning, and decentralized execution. The joint force commander establishes subordinate commands, assigns responsibilities, and establishes appropriate command and support relationships. He should allow Service tactical and operational assets to function generally as they were designed, trained, and equipped. The intent is to meet the needs of the joint force while maintaining the tactical and operational integrity of the Service organizations. He can organize and conduct operations through Service component commanders, functional component commanders or a combination of the two.

Joint Operations Conducted Through Service Component Commanders

A joint force commander may conduct operations through the Service component commanders. Conducting operations through Service components has certain advantages, including clear and uncomplicated command lines. This relationship is appropriate when stability, continuity, economy, ease of long-range planning, and scope of operations dictate preserving the organizational integrity of Service forces. These conditions apply when most of the required functions in a particular dimension are unique to a single-Service force or when Service force capabilities or responsibilities do not significantly overlap. In addition, Service component commands provide administrative and logistic support for their forces in a joint operation.

When the joint force commander conducts joint operations through Service component commanders, the Marine Corps component commander and the other Service component commanders have command—OPCON and ADCON—of their assigned Service forces. The joint force commander may also establish a support relationship between Service components to facilitate operations. Support is a command authority. A superior commander establishes a support relationship between subordinate commanders when one should aid, protect, complement or sustain the other. The four categories of support are general, mutual, direct, and close. See MCDP 1-0.1, *Componency*.

Joint Operations Conducted Through Functional Component Commanders

A joint force commander may conduct operations through functional components or employ them primarily to coordinate selected functions. Regardless of how the joint force commander organizes his assigned or attached forces, a Marine Corps component is included to provide administrative and logistic support for the assigned or attached Marine Corps forces. See figure 3-3 on page 3-6. Functional components may be established across the range of military operations to

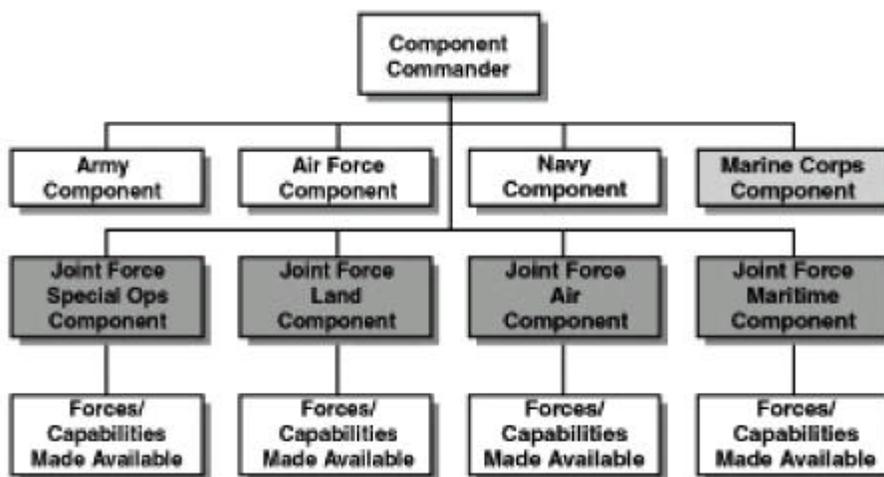


Figure 3-3. Combatant Command Organized by Functional Components.

perform operational missions that may be of short or extended duration. Functional components can be appropriate when forces from two or more Military Departments must operate in the same dimension or medium or there is a need to accomplish a distinct aspect of the assigned mission. *Functional components are components of a joint force and do not constitute a “joint force” with the authorities and responsibilities of a joint force.*

When the joint force commander centralizes direction and control of certain functions or types of joint operations under functional component commanders he must establish the command relationships. The joint force commander must designate the military capability that will be made available for tasking by the functional component commander and the appropriate command relationship(s) the functional component commander will exercise. For example, a joint force special operations component commander normally has OPCON of assigned forces and a joint force air component commander is normally delegated TACON of air defense, long-range interdiction, or long-range reconnaissance sorties or other military capability made available. The policy for the command and control of Marine Corps aviation, specifically covered by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff “Policy for Command and Control of USMC Tactical Air in Sustained Operations Ashore,” is found in JP 0-2.

The Marine Corps component commander retains command—OPCON and ADCON—of those Marine Corps forces and capabilities not designated by the joint force commander for tasking by functional component commanders. The

Marine Corps component commander advises functional component commanders on the most effective use of Marine Corps forces or capabilities made available. Marine Corps forces or capabilities made available by the joint force commander respond to the functional component commander for operational matters based on the existing command relationship. All Marine Corps forces receive administrative and logistic support from the Marine Corps component commander. The joint force commander may also establish a support relationship between components to facilitate operations. See MCDP 1-0.1 for more information on the designation and responsibilities of functional component commanders.

Designation of a functional component commander must not affect the command relationships between Service component commanders and the joint force commander. The joint force commander must specifically assign the responsibilities and authority of the functional component commander. He defines the responsibilities and authority based on the concept of operations and may alter these responsibilities and authority during the course of an operation. Functional component commander responsibilities are found in JP 0-2 and JP 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*.

The Marine Corps Component Commander as a Functional Component Commander

Forward-deployed naval forces, including Marine Corps forces, are usually the first conventional forces to arrive in an austere theater or AO during expeditionary operations. The Marine Corps component commander's inherent capability to command and control Marine Corps forces—and attached or assigned forces of other Services or nations—allows him to command and control a functional component. The Marine Corps component commander can serve as a functional component commander in most smaller-scale contingencies and MOOTW. If the Marine Corps component commander is assigned functional component commander responsibilities, execution is normally accomplished by the assigned MAGTF.

As the commander of the force most capable of rapid worldwide deployment, the Marine Corps component commander may serve as a functional component commander in the initial phase of a major theater war. As the theater matures and additional United States forces flow into the theater, the Marine Corps component commander's capability to command and control these joint forces diminishes. When the functional component commanders establish their headquarters and supporting infrastructure, they begin to assume command and control of their assigned forces and capabilities. The transition of functional component duties from the Marine Corps component commander continues until

the gaining functional component commander demonstrates full operational capability. The joint force commander can designate the Marine Corps component commander as follows.

Joint Force Maritime Component Commander

This commander is responsible for planning, coordinating, and executing joint maritime operations. Joint maritime operations are performed with maritime capabilities or forces made available by components to support the joint force commander's operation or campaign objectives or to support other components of the joint force. The maritime environment includes oceans, littorals, riverine areas, and amphibious objective areas, and the coordinated airspace above them as defined by the joint force commander. The joint force commander will designate the component commander best suited to accomplish the mission as the joint force maritime component commander. When maritime operations are focused on littoral operations—and Marine Corps forces have the preponderance of the mission or capabilities to accomplish the mission—the Marine Corps component commander may be designated the joint force maritime component commander.

Joint Force Land Component Commander

This commander is responsible for planning, coordinating, and executing joint land operations. Joint land operations are performed with land capabilities or forces made available by components to support the joint force commander's operation or campaign objectives or to support other components of the joint force. Marine Corps component commanders normally have the preponderance of land forces and the necessary command and control capability to direct their activities during expeditionary operations in a smaller-scale contingency. In the early stages of a major theater war, the Marine Corps component commander may serve as the joint force land component commander, but as forces continue to build up in theater, the joint force commander will normally designate the Army Service component commander as the joint force land component commander.

Joint Force Air Component Commander

This commander is responsible for planning, coordinating, and executing joint air operations. Joint air operation are performed with air capabilities or forces made available by components to support the joint force commander's operation or campaign objectives or to support other components of the joint force. The expeditionary nature of Marine aviation and its associated command and control capability allow the Marine Corps component commander to function as the joint force air component commander in a smaller-scale contingency. In the early stages of a major theater war, the Marine Corps component commander may serve as the joint force air component commander, but as forces continue to

buildup in theater, the joint force commander will normally designate another component commander as the joint force air component commander.

Most often, the joint force commander conducts operations through a combination of Service and functional component commands with operational responsibilities. Joint forces organized with Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps components will have special operations forces (if assigned) organized as a functional component. The joint force commander defines the authority and responsibilities of the Service and functional component commanders. However, the Service responsibilities, i.e., administrative and logistic, of the components must be given due consideration by the joint force commander.

In addition to functional component responsibilities, a joint force commander can assign the Marine Corps component commander other joint responsibilities. The joint force commander can designate the Marine Corps component commander as the area air defense commander, airspace control authority, joint rear area coordinator or to establish the joint search and rescue center.

Role and Responsibilities to the MAGTF Commander

The Marine Corps component commander is responsible for the employment of his forces and to support other component commanders as directed by the joint force commander. The Marine Corps component commander sets conditions for the successful employment of the MAGTF by ensuring that appropriate missions, forces, resources, battlespace, and command relationships are assigned or made available to the MAGTF. While principally a force provider and sustainer, the Marine Corps component commander may be assigned some operational responsibilities. He focuses on the formulation and execution of the joint force commander's plans, policies, and requirements. He coordinates strategic and operational actions with other component commanders to achieve unity of effort for the joint force. He accomplishes any assigned mission by executing Marine Corps component operations through the MAGTF and other assigned forces.

During employment, the command relationship between the Marine Corps component commander and the MAGTF commander can vary with each phase of an operation. The MAGTF commander may have command relationships with two types of components: functional and Service. When the MAGTF is OPCON or TACON to a functional component commander, the functional component commander provides the tasks and purpose for the MAGTF, which in turn drive the development of the MAGTF's course of action and subsequent planning efforts. If the joint force is organized on a Service component basis, the Marine Corps component commander provides the tasks and purpose for the MAGTF.

As the Service component commander, the Marine Corps component commander represents MAGTF interests at various joint force boards. He will participate on joint force boards along with any functional component commander the MAGTF may be supporting. Consequently, the MAGTF must keep the Marine Corps component commander informed of operational matters to ensure relevant and contextual representation at the various joint boards.

Component Command Relationships and Staff Organization

This difference in orientation is the result of the joint force commander's organization of forces and each subordinate commander's place in the operational chain of command and the assigned mission. This placement, in turn, determines the people and agencies with whom the Marine Corps component and MAGTF commanders must interact.

The Marine Corps component commander—who translates strategic objectives into operational objectives—must interact up the chain of command with the joint force commander, laterally with other component commanders, and down to his MAGTF commander. The MAGTF commander—who translates operational objectives into tactical actions—must interact up the chain of command with the Marine Corps component commander, laterally with adjacent tactical commanders, and down to his subordinate commanders. The Marine Corps component commander assigns the MAGTF commander missions that may accomplish objectives at both the operational and tactical levels of war when the joint force is organized on a Service component basis.

The difference in orientation of the Marine Corps component commander and the MAGTF commander also has an important influence on the Marine Corps component-MAGTF command relationship and the staff organization adopted by the Marine Corps component commander. The Marine Corps component-MAGTF command relationship and staff organization that the Marine Corps component commander selects depends on the mission, size, scope, and duration of the operation and the size of the assigned force. Three possible command relationships and staff organizations are: one commander with one staff, one commander with two staffs, and two commanders and two staffs. See MCDP 1-0.1.

THE MARINE AIR-GROUND TASK FORCE

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