

LESSON 1

MARINE CORPS COMPONENCY

“The role of component commanders in a joint force merits special attention. Component commanders are first expected to orchestrate the activity of their own forces, branches, and warfare communities ... In addition, [they must] understand how their own pieces fit into the overall design and best support the joint force commander’s plans and goals.”

—Joint Pub 1, *Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States*

Lesson Introduction

In July 1992 the Commandant of the Marine Corps established two component headquarters, Marine Corps Forces, Pacific (MARFORPAC) and Marine Corps Forces, Atlantic (MARFORLANT), for two basic reasons: Combatant commanders deserved and required a single point of contact for all matters relating to the deployment, employment, and sustainment of Marine forces, and the Marine Corps needed to remove the burden of Service component responsibilities from the Marine expeditionary force (MEF) commanders and their staffs. MARFORs were assigned or designated for each of the then-five geographic combatant commands. Subsequently, the Marine Corps provided a MARFOR to a functional combatant commander, Commander, Strategic Command (STRATCOM). In 1992, the commanders of Fleet Marine Forces Pacific and Atlantic were also designated COMMARFORPAC and COMMARFORLANT, respectively, and assumed the missions and responsibilities of Service component commands. In addition to providing Marine Corps representation to each combatant commander, these components have assumed many of the administrative and logistical requirements previously performed by the MEFs, which has allowed the MEFs to focus on operational and tactical level combat actions.

In the Operational Level of War course (8803A) you learned about how joint forces are organized with Service components, functional components, or a combination of both, Service and functional components. The focus of this lesson is on Marine Corps componency and how this affects the operation of the MAGTF.

Student Requirements by Educational Objective

Requirement 1

Objective 1. Describe Marine Corps componency doctrine and the responsibilities of the component commander. [JPME Area 2(d), 3(c)]

Objective 2. Comprehend the Marine Corps component and the levels of competency. [JPME Area 1(b)(e), 3(e)]

Read:

- MCWP 3-40.8, *Competency*, 5 Jun 1998, pp. 6 to 10, 25 to 37, and 53 to 64 (29 pages)
- MCRP 5-1A, *Doctrinal References for Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare*, 24 Sep 2002, pp. 25 to 31 (7 pages)

The Marine Corps component commander's primary responsibility is as a force provider and sustainer. Additional responsibilities to the combatant commander include:

- Making recommendations on the proper employment of Marine Corps forces.
- Accomplishing such operational missions as may be assigned by the combatant commander. The Marine Corps component commander's assigned forces normally execute operational missions.
- Selecting and nominating specific Marine units or forces for assignment to other subordinate forces of the combatant command.
- Conducting joint training and exercises. A major focus of this training is to train the component staff to meet the standards contained in Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Manual 3500.04, *Universal Joint Task List*, and the Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 3500.38, *Naval Tactical Task List*.
- Informing the combatant commander of any changes in planning for logistic support that will affect the combatant commander's ability to accomplish the mission.
- Developing Marine Corps programming and budgeting requests to support the combatant commander's warfighting requirements and priorities and keeping the combatant commander informed of the status of these programs.
- Providing supporting operation and exercise plans to support assigned missions.
- Maintaining internal discipline and administration.
- Training forces in Service doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures.
- Providing logistics functions normal to the command.
- Overseeing Service intelligence matters.

Bottom Line: The Marine Corps component commander functions at the operational level of war. The Marine Corps component commander is responsible for accomplishing assigned operational missions but primarily provides forces and administrative and logistic support to Marine Corps forces.

The Commander, Marine Corps Forces, Atlantic (COMMARFORLANT), is currently assigned as the Marine Corps component to the Commanders, U.S. Joint Forces Command (JFCOM), U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), U.S. European Command (EUCOM), U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM), and U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM). Over the past several years JFCOM's mission has evolved from its original geographic focus. In the 2002 Unified Command Plan, JFCOM lost its geographic area of responsibility (AOR), making it a purely functional command. Whether the Marine Corps will retain its competency relationship with JFCOM remains to be seen. The Commander, Marine Corps Forces, Pacific

(COMMARFORPAC) is assigned to the Commanders, U.S. Pacific Command, U.S. Central Command, and U.S. Forces Korea/Combined Forces Command.

During peacetime, the designated Marine Corps component commander provides operation and contingency planning support and advice to their respective combatant commanders on Marine Corps-specific matters. When directed, the Marine Corps component commander exercises operational control of forces assigned or attached to the combatant commander. Additionally, COMMARFORPAC possesses the capability of deploying a combatant command-level Marine Corps component headquarters. This capability is required due to the unique nature of the supported combatant commands.

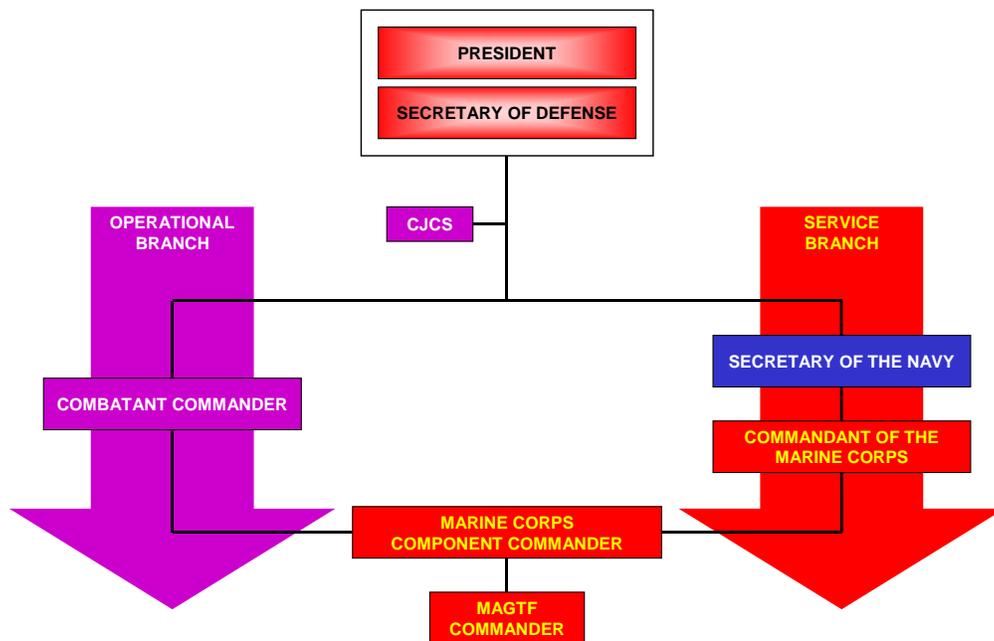
The lack of headquarters elements and personnel dictate the need to multi-task component headquarters and commanders. This means that I MEF must assume the role of the principal MAGTF, supporting both the PACOM and CENTCOM AORs. Clearly, the commander and his staff cannot be in two theaters simultaneously. He relies heavily on his deputies and component planning liaison cells, usually co-located with the supported command, to represent Marine Corps forces' interests and to ensure he is "at the table" when critical issues are discussed (battlespace, mission tasking, sustainment responsibilities, intra-theater lift and flow, etc.).

Training and readiness oversight (TRO) for Selected Marine Corps Reserves (SMCR) is exercised under MARFORLANT through Commander, Marine Corps Forces Reserve (MARFORRES). When the SMCR is mobilized, these forces are assigned COCOM to Commander, JFCOM for follow-on assignment to other theaters as required. During normal day-to-day operations, however, the SMCR falls under the Commander MARFORRES, who works directly for the Commandant of the Marine Corps. Upon activation of the reserve forces under MARFORRES, these forces are then assigned to the Commander, JFCOM or other combatant commanders. In circumstances less than activation or in peacetime, MARFORRES's relationship with JFCOM is through TRO. TRO is the authority that combatant commanders have over assigned RC forces when they are not on active duty and when they are on active duty for training. TRO includes the specific authority of combatant commanders to coordinate and approve participation assigned to reserve component (RC) forces in joint exercises and other joint training when they are on active duty for training or are performing inactive duty training. TRO is influence in the form of the following:

- Guidance on operational requirements and priorities for Service training and readiness programs.
- Comments on Service component program budget.
- Coordination and approval of RC forces in joint exercises.
- Review of readiness reports and readiness inspection results for assigned units.
- Coordination and review of mobilization plans.

American military forces operate under a chain of command with two distinct branches. (See the following figure.) This arrangement reflects our historic tradition of civilian control of the military. The first branch is an *operational chain of command*. The second branch of the chain of command is the *Service chain of command*. The Service chain of command provides for the preparation of Service forces and their administration and support. The Secretary of the Navy is

responsible for the administration and support of Marine forces assigned or attached to each of the combatant commands. Marine Corps component commanders operate within both branches of the chain of command. They respond to the orders of the joint force commander in the operational chain of command, while being equipped, manned, and supported through the Service chain of command.



Requirement 2

Objective 3. Compare and contrast the roles of the component headquarters and the MAGTF. [JPME Area 1(b), 2(d), 3(e)]

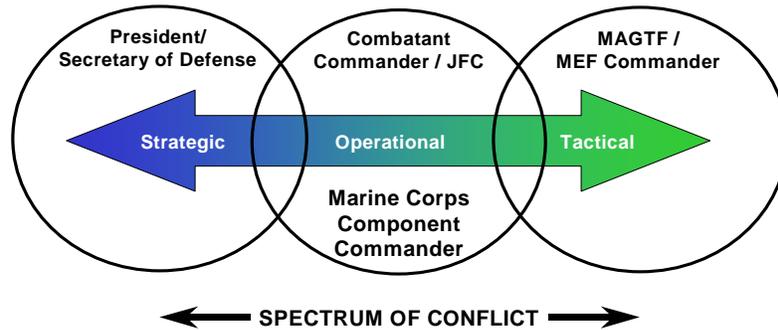
Read:

- MCWP 3-40.8, *Componency*, pp. 37 to 42 (6 pages)

While the Marine Corps conducts operations through the MEF, the major issue is deciding which specific planning/support functions should be performed by the component staff and which should be delegated to the MEF staff. Furthermore, it must be determined how multiple/simultaneous efforts are integrated/deconflicted between the two staffs. The minimum role of the Marine Corps component is to provide operational support to Marine forces. To fulfill the Joint Pub 0-2 mandated responsibilities, the Marine component must be able to act as an operational level headquarters while commanding Marine forces that are executing the full range of operations.

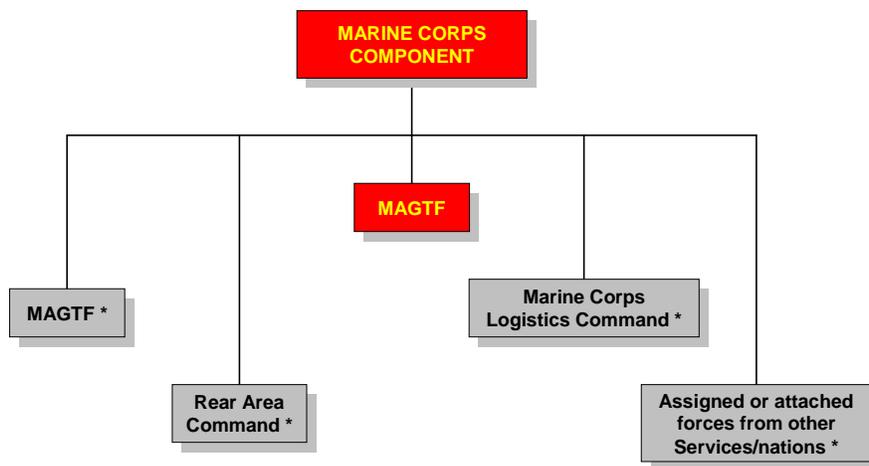
In other words, the challenge for the Marine Corps is this area of overlap between the component headquarters and the MAGTF. This is particularly true in the case of the combatant command-level component and the MEFs. In the case of MAGTF operations at the corps level, the MEF is the principle Marine Corps warfighter while the Marine component commander is the force

provider and sustainer. Defining the division of responsibility between these two headquarters is the area of concern. While the Marine component commander is an operational commander, he keeps one foot in the strategic realm and one foot in the tactical realm (see following chart) and ensures he does not act as the MAGTF commander. If functional competency is assigned to the Service component, then the MAGTF (MEF) will execute that tasking and generally confine itself to the tactical level of war.



The combatant commander expects to organize his force functionally, by Service, or by a combination of the two—whichever best meets his requirements. The Marines may prefer organizing along Service lines (training, doctrine, C² efficiencies) but must be ready and able to operate under a functional organization. However, every planner must recognize that MAGTF combat power is generated through the synergistic application of all elements of the Marine force, across a single-battle construct. Separating the elements of the MAGTF—for whatever reason—has a disproportionate effect on the combat power of the Marine component and the support the component can offer the combatant commander in terms of capability.

The following graphic shows that a Marine component may be comprised of multiple MAGTFs or even an assortment of coalition forces. A Marine rear area command and a Marine Corps logistics command (MLC) may also be assigned. More information about the Marine rear area command and the MLC is found in Lesson 3, Operational Capabilities, of this course and in the MAGTF Operations (8807) course.



* As required or assigned

When establishing command relationships, there are other variables to consider besides doctrine. Such things as personalities of selected staff members, personal relationships amongst commanders, relationships amongst coalition partners, and Service concerns, understanding, and ethos can all affect how well doctrinal command relationships function. Several times, when he was Commander of U.S. Central Command, General Zinni would talk about the various kinds of doctrinal command relationships that staffs would create for a particular operation plan or concept. He would remind everyone that the most important command relationship two commanders could ever have is “HANDCON.” His point was that there was no substitute for a good professional and personal relationship among commanders. This should serve as a lesson to us all—even when working component issues within the Marine Corps, the commanders’ relationship will override doctrinal guidelines if that is what commanders choose to do.

Lesson Summary

The fact that combatant commanders deserve and require a single point of contact for all matters relating to the deployment, employment, and sustainment of Marine forces is a major reason to have a Marine component command. Additionally, the Marine Corps needed to remove the burden of Service component responsibilities from the MEF commanders and their staffs. This is critical since the Marine Corps is organized, trained, and equipped for MAGTF operations through the corps level. Marine Corps component commands command Marine forces and set the conditions for MAGTF operations in whatever regional AOR, joint area of operations, or area of operations where they are assigned contingency missions. It is the force provider and sustainer allowing the MAGTF to execute operational and tactical actions. If the Marine component is assigned functional component, execution is normally accomplished by the MAGTF (MEF).

Student understanding of the MAGTF concept and MARFOR component responsibilities is essential for appreciation of the requirement to fully integrate Marine Corps capabilities and the warfighting functions during operational planning and through mission execution. The instruction provided here will be applied in almost any type of command or staff position with Marine or joint forces. This information also reinforces and further expands previous educational objectives identified in the Operational Level of War Course.

JPME Summary

AREA 1					AREA 2				AREA 3					AREA 4					AREA 5				
A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	
	X			X				X			X		X										