

MARINE CORPS



# VISION & STRATEGY 2025





# Marine Corps Vision and Strategy 2025

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## Foreword



Our Nation faces challenges that are global in reach and scope. While today's Marines are performing superbly in every clime and place, our institution must also devote attention to tomorrow's threats and opportunities.

It is our obligation to subsequent generations of Marines, and to our Nation, to always have an eye to the future — to prepare for tomorrow's challenges today. This Vision and Strategy document confirms who we are, what we believe, and what we do. It establishes the foundation for our operational concepts and identifies the critical steps needed to shape our Corps for an increasingly volatile and uncertain future. It is grounded firmly in our legislated role as the Nation's "force in readiness," and it will guide our Service so that we are

properly organized, trained, equipped, and prepared for tomorrow's challenges.

With little warning, our Nation calls its Corps of Marines front and center during its most challenging times. Responding rapidly to crisis and strategic surprise is an integral part of our history as a Corps. In the South Pacific after Pearl Harbor, in Korea after the communist invasion in 1950, in the jungle outposts of Viet Nam, in the deserts of Southwest Asia, and in the mountains of Afghanistan — Marines have distinguished themselves as an expeditionary, multicapable force able to respond and win battles for our Nation.

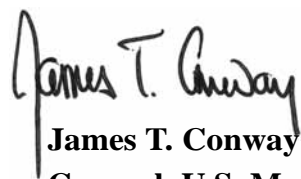
We have been prepared in the past because we understood that a force in readiness must be well-trained, broadly educated, and properly equipped for employment across all forms of warfare. We believe the individual Marine is the most formidable weapon on today's battlefield and will remain so tomorrow. Whatever the future holds, our emphasis on making Marines will not change.

Expeditionary excellence requires Marines who are morally, physically, and mentally tough. Marines must be agile, capable of transitioning seamlessly between fighting, training, advising, and assisting — or performing all of these tasks simultaneously.

Though our Corps has recently proven itself in “sustained operations ashore,” future operational environments will place a premium on agile expeditionary forces, able to act with unprecedented speed and versatility in austere conditions against a wide range of adversaries. We must be a two fisted fighter — able to destroy enemy formations with our scalable air-ground-logistics teams in major contingencies, but equally able to employ our hard earned irregular warfare skills honed over decades of conflict. Our Corps must serve credibly as a persistently engaged and multicable force, able to draw upon contributions from our Total Force, in order to address the full range of contingencies the future will undoubtedly present. In short, we must be prepared to move with speed, “live hard,” and accomplish any mission.

This document details my vision of the future Corps and a plan for creating the Marine Corps of 2025. The future Marine Corps will fulfill its unique role and extend its legacy as the world’s premier expeditionary fighting force. To enhance its operational utility to combatant commanders, the Corps will be preventative in approach, leaner in equipment, versatile in capabilities, innovative in mindset, and increasingly reliant on naval deployment.

Marines are a breed apart — born of epic battles and tempered in the ultimate crucible of combat. We will carry our rich legacy forward and continue to honorably serve our Nation. The Marine Corps is committed to providing the Nation its expeditionary “Force of Choice” for tomorrow’s challenges.



**James T. Conway**

**General, U.S. Marine Corps**

**Commandant of the Marine Corps**



# Purpose

The purpose of the vision and strategy document is to inform all Marines where we intend to take our Corps, to give combatant commanders a concept of how we might best be employed, and to provide our civilian leadership a reference point as to how we see Marine Corps contributions to national defense in the coming years and decades. This document is grounded in the Marine Corps' identity, ethos, values, and competencies. It serves as the principal strategic planning document for our Corps and reflects our legislated roles, functions, and composition. Derived from strategic guidance at the national and departmental levels, it illustrates our utility and value within the joint warfighting community.

The vision section describes a Marine Corps adapting to fulfill our role in the Nation's defense in an inherently unpredictable future. It is founded on our enduring characteristics and capabilities, but also reflects shifts in posture and practice designed to enhance today's Corps for tomorrow's challenges. The strategy section lays out a strategy statement as well as a set of institutional objectives to realize the vision and meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Our Service capstone concept and supporting operating concepts will flow from the vision and strategy, as will the more detailed plans of the deputy commandants and subordinate commanders. The development of these plans will be directed by the Implementation Planning Guidance which will be published in subsequent documents. The relationships between this vision and strategy, higher guidance, and our capabilities development and resource allocation are depicted in the following chart.

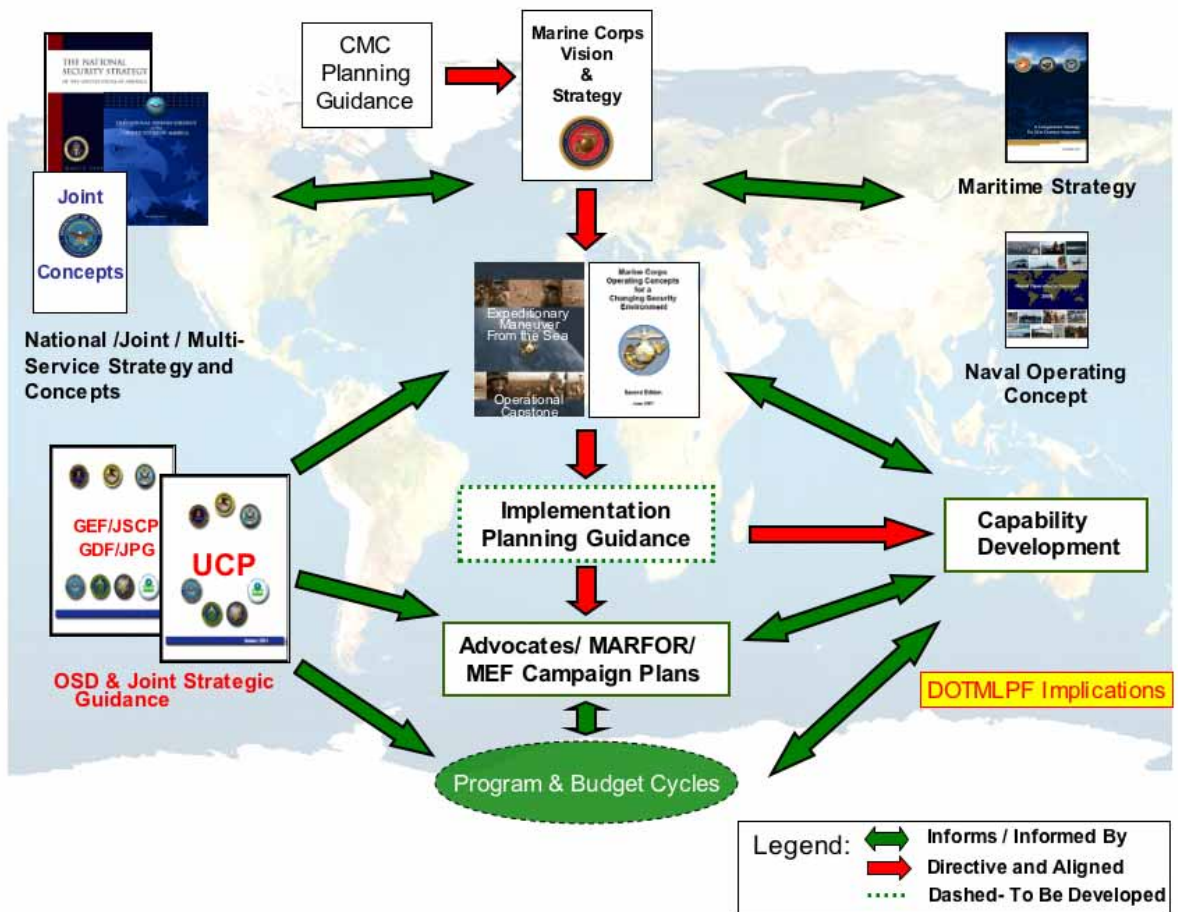


Figure 1. Vision and Strategy: Hierarchy and Connectivity

# Marine Corps Vision and Strategy 2025

## Section I - Vision

### Chapter 1

#### Marine Corps Vision 2025

The Marine Corps of the future will be the Nation's expeditionary force of choice. It will be:

**a. Dedicated to making Marines imbued with the ideal of selfless service to the Nation.** Our success as a Corps depends directly on our ability to recruit, train, and retain the best Marines possible. Young men and women will join our Corps confident in our ability to train and lead them well and employ them in ways that make a difference. Our Battle Colors have been passed to a new generation of Marines who are shouldering them with the same grit and determination as generations past. They are part of a great legacy of Marines that will someday pass our Battle Colors to yet another generation.



**b. Prepared to “live hard” in uncertain, chaotic, and austere environments.** Marine Corps forces must be organized, trained, equipped, and deployed with the expectation of operating in inhospitable conditions against committed and competent foes. We will maintain an expeditionary mindset in our air and ground elements and in all we do — emphasizing speed of execution, agility, and flexibility.

**c. Deployed forward with relevant and timely capabilities.** Marine Corps forces will bring proven capabilities to combatant commanders to accomplish a wide range of tasks. We will —

1. Operate forward with a regional focus, yet be globally capable.
2. Execute persistent forward engagement and security cooperation activities.
3. Respond swiftly, with little warning, to emerging crises.
4. Maximize speed and freedom of action through seabasing, while minimizing footprint ashore.
5. Conduct joint forcible entry operations from the sea.
6. Engage in sustained operations ashore, as required.

**d. Forged to be lean, agile, and adaptable as individuals and as an institution.** We will practice a self-disciplined approach to force design and development. These efforts will strike a balance between being heavy enough to sustain expeditionary warfare and light enough to facilitate rapid deployment. We will apply lessons learned from current operations to maintain an edge against ever-adapting opponents.





**e. Focused on executing sustainable expeditionary operations.** We will ensure that we maintain the ability to sustain ourselves in operations through the use of either a sea base or an initial lodgment ashore. The organic sustainability of our Marine air-ground task forces (MAGTFs) is a unique and critical force enabler in such conditions, particularly early in an operation. We must remain committed to fielding sustainable forces, exploiting joint capabilities, and leveraging the advantages of seabasing.

**f. Trained and equipped to lead joint and multinational operations and enable interagency activities.** Marines take pride in being “first to fight,” and historically have a record of being the first to respond to many emergencies and disasters. As first responders, we have experience integrating many organizations with different levels of capability into an effective team. In the future, Marine Corps forces may be required to remain actively engaged for longer periods alongside our joint, multinational, and interagency partners.



**g. Educated and trained to understand and defeat adversaries in complex conflicts.** We will go to greater lengths to understand our enemies and the range of cultural, societal, and political factors affecting all with whom we interact.

Our training and education programs will provide skills that enable civil-military and combat operations and are particularly important in complex environments.

The ability to conduct both types of

operations, simultaneously, is the essence of the force as a “two-fisted fighter” — capable of offering an open hand to people in need or a precise jab to an adversary in an irregular warfare environment; while at the same time, ready to wield a closed fist in the event of major combat operations.

**h. Committed to taking care of Marines and their families.** While the ideals of service to Corps and Country have not changed, the conditions of service are constantly changing, as are the needs and wants of Marine families. Marines have reasonable expectations regarding housing, schools, and family support, and it is incumbent upon us to support our Marines in these key areas.



## ***Vision Statement***

*The Marine Corps of 2025 will fight and win our Nation’s battles with multicapable MAGTFs, either from the sea or in sustained operations ashore. Our unique role as the Nation’s force in readiness, along with our values, enduring ethos, and core competencies, will ensure we remain highly responsive to the needs of combatant commanders in an uncertain environment and against irregular threats. Our future Corps will be increasingly reliant on naval deployment, preventative in approach, leaner in equipment, versatile in capabilities, and innovative in mindset. In an evolving and complex world, we will excel as the Nation’s expeditionary “force of choice.”*



## Chapter 2

### *Marine Corps Values, Philosophy, Principles, and Competencies*

This chapter describes our values, philosophy, principles, and competencies. These capture *who we are, how we fight, what we believe, and what we do*.

**a. Core Values.** Our values reflect those of the American people and define *who we are*. We are men and women who hold true to our *Core Values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment*. These values serve as our touchstones in times of peril and adversity. They guide the actions of every individual who has earned the title ...“*Marine.*”

**b. Warfighting Philosophy.** We operate in the spirit of, and are guided by, the tenets of maneuver warfare. These tenets describe *how we fight*. We recognize that war is ultimately a violent clash of human wills with an enduring nature characterized by friction, uncertainty, disorder, and complexity. We seek victory by shattering the cohesion and will of the enemy, not just through sheer physical attrition of his means to resist. We combine maneuver with firepower to produce a violent and lethal outcome for the adversary. We seek to concentrate our strength against enemy weakness, exploiting his critical vulnerabilities while minimizing and protecting our own. We believe our decision cycle is faster than the enemy’s, allowing us to exploit the advantages of speed, focus, tempo, shock, and surprise. We believe that the human dimension of war is the most critical element, and that boldness, creativity, intelligence, and the warrior spirit are prime attributes. This philosophy applies across the full range of military operations.



**c. Enduring Principles.** Principles define fundamental beliefs that form the foundation from which Marines derive their ethos and basic operating instincts. The following principles help to further define the cultural identity of Marines in the most basic terms — they express *what we believe*:

**Every Marine a Rifleman.** *Every Marine — regardless of military occupational specialty — is first and foremost a disciplined warrior.*

**Expeditionary Naval Force.** *Marines are “soldiers of the sea,” an integral part of the naval Services — lean, versatile, flexible, and ready. We are organized, trained, and equipped to conduct naval campaigns and operate on and from naval platforms, or to fight in protracted campaigns ashore.*

**Combined Arms Organization.** *In 1952, Congress directed the Marine Corps’ composition as an air-ground combined arms force. This integrated force, known as the MAGTF, has unique and incomparable warfighting capabilities. Our MAGTF contains organic air, ground, and logistics elements under a single command element, making it an effective and integrated combined arms force.*

**Ready and Forward Deployed.** *Congress’ intent that the Marine Corps serve as the “force in readiness” was founded on a recognized national need for a force capable of rapid response to emerging crises. This requirement mandates high standards of readiness across the force. We are routinely forward deployed around the globe and stand prepared to respond quickly in times of crisis.*

**Agile and Adaptable.** *The Marine Corps’ agility is based on its expeditionary mindset and flexible structure, able to operate either from the sea or in sustained operations ashore. We can adapt quickly with unparalleled speed across an extraordinary range of military operations. Our organizational design and training facilitate a seamless transition between these operations, providing the necessary capability to operate effectively.*

**Marines Take Care of Their Own.** *We are stewards of the most important resource entrusted to us — our Nation’s sons and daughters. We make Marines, imbue them with our Core Values, and offer them the opportunity to serve a cause greater than themselves. Marines live up to the motto, Semper Fidelis. We are faithful to those who fall and we care for our wounded Marines and their families.*



**d. Core Competencies.** Core competencies reflect our particular skill sets and thus describe *what we do*. They provide the basis for the level of expertise and effectiveness of Marine Corps forces. They are our fundamental contribution to our Nation's defense. Though enduring, they are not static; as necessary, new competencies must be developed and honed to meet emerging challenges. These challenges are assessed by each Commandant of the Marine Corps. Currently, Marine Corps forces have six core competencies. The first four represent enduring core competencies and reflect legislative direction and are codified in public law. The latter two reflect demonstrated skill sets that have to be raised to a higher level given the Nation's strategy, defense planning priorities, and our understanding of the emerging security environment.

***1. The Corps conducts persistent forward naval engagement and is always prepared to respond as the Nation's force in readiness.***

The Marine Corps is devoted to an expeditionary way of life. We understand that true readiness means much more than being deployable. It requires a force that is deployed with our Navy shipmates and engaged in the littorals, shaping the operational environment, and contributing to the prevention of conflict. This agile force can react rapidly across the range of military operations and must prevail, even thrive, in the uncertainty and chaos of emerging crises.



***2. The Corps employs integrated combined arms across the range of military operations, and can operate as part of a joint or multinational force.***

Our MAGTFs blend the art and science of executing combined arms operations from air, land, and sea. Marine employment and integration of air- and ground-based capabilities reflects our innovative approach to warfighting. History has shown that this approach can be applied with effect in missions that range from security cooperation to major combat operations. Our MAGTFs are task-organized for each mission and can be employed independently, or as part of a joint or multinational force.



***3. The Corps provides forces and specialized detachments for service aboard naval ships, on stations, and for operations ashore.***

The Marine Corps and the Navy share a common heritage. Marines have served aboard Navy ships as marksmen, as embarked MAGTFs, as naval aviators, and as specialized detachments afloat. This heritage is reflected in our doctrine and in how we design our equipment and weapons systems. Our modernization programs for the future are being designed to allow Marine Corps forces to seamlessly deploy, project power, and fight from naval vessels or austere expeditionary bases, or any combination thereof. Our close association with the Navy continues today, along with a growing interaction with the Coast Guard. The new maritime strategy articulates a renewed emphasis on integrated naval capabilities and capacities.

*“There is little that will sober an enemy more surely than the knowledge that somewhere, just over the horizon, lies a force of well-trained, well-equipped Marines in competently manned ships capable of delivering a stunning amphibious blow at a point and time of their own choosing.”*

*Lieutenant General  
Victor Krulak,  
United States Marine Corps*





**4. *The Corps conducts joint forcible entry operations from the sea and develops amphibious landing force capabilities and doctrine.*** When access to critical regions or allies is denied or in jeopardy, forward deployed, rapidly employable Marine Corps forces are trained and ready to execute amphibious operations to overcome enemy defenses. Together, the Navy and Marine Corps provide the Nation with its primary capability to swiftly project and sustain combat power ashore in the face of armed opposition. We

leverage available joint and naval capabilities, project sustainable combat power ashore, and secure entry for follow-on forces. Our sea based MAGTFs provide the Nation with expeditionary forces to conduct initial operations independent of local infrastructure, or in undeveloped, austere areas. This capability enables the accomplishment of amphibious joint forcible entry operations as well as various missions across the range of military operations. These strategic capabilities require focused amphibious resources and doctrine.

**5. *The Corps conducts complex expeditionary operations in the urban littorals and other challenging environments.*** The Marine Corps' historical ability to conduct expeditionary operations, such as irregular warfare, against emerging threats in complex environments is well documented. These operations include counterinsurgency; counterterrorism; train, advise, and assist activities; and stability tasks. The complexity of these missions has increased due to the presence of large numbers of noncombatants, urbanization in the littorals, and the dynamics of the information environment. Marines are specifically trained and broadly educated to understand cultures and populations, to thrive in chaotic environments, and to recognize and respond creatively to demanding situations.



**6. *The Corps leads joint and multinational operations and enables interagency activities.*** The complex nature of existing security challenges demands capabilities that harness the strengths of all the instruments of national power. Marines are well qualified to enable the introduction of follow-on forces and facilitate the integration of military and interagency efforts. This interoperability mandates the establishment of enduring relationships and the orchestration of diverse capabilities, organizations, and cultural awareness across all aspects of an operation.



## Section II - Strategy

### Chapter 3

#### **National Security Planning, Future Security Environment, and Threats and Challenges**

As we prepare for an unpredictable future, we must continue to adapt to the ever-changing character and conduct of warfare, while remaining cognizant of its fundamentally unchanging nature. What Congress described as “fleet marine forces of combined arms, together with supporting air components” — known today as MAGTFs — provides the primary means through which we engage with partners, assist victims, or strike with determination against our foes. Our future remains true to the idea that a Corps of Marines — who are well-trained, equipped, and educated in the art and science of war — can leverage the great advantages of seapower through rapid and decisive action in and around the littorals.

**a. National Strategic Planning Guidance.** The larger purpose and goals underlying our national strategic planning have remained remarkably consistent. Our government, throughout the post Cold War period, has outlined broadly accepted, enduring national interests:

1. Defend the homeland from attack.
2. Prevent the emergence of a hostile regional power.
3. Ensure the stability of the global system.
4. Ensure key allies’ survival and active cooperation.
5. Prevent or respond to major disasters and disturbances.

The United States is a maritime nation. Its enduring national interests clearly necessitate a balanced and integrated foreign policy supported by naval forces that are routinely overseas and prepared to engage and/or respond with speed and decisiveness.

**b. Maritime Strategic Imperatives.** Based upon these enduring interests, the Marine Corps, Navy, and Coast Guard recently identified six strategic imperatives. These imperatives, articulated in *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower*, define the tasks that our maritime Services will contribute to in the future. It directs these Services to —

1. Limit regional conflict with forward deployed, decisive maritime power.
2. Deter major power war.
3. Win our Nation’s wars.
4. Contribute to homeland defense in depth.
5. Foster and sustain cooperative relationships with more international partners.
6. Prevent or contain local disruptions before they impact the global system.

The inherent global reach, presence, and operational flexibility of naval expeditionary forces are critical to meeting these imperatives.

**c. Future Security Environment.** The Marine Corps recently conducted a comprehensive strategic assessment to better understand the security context of 2025. Our assessment was informed by a number of studies such as the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, National Intelligence Council assessments, the United States Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) Joint Operational Environment, and the Marine Corps Intelligence Activity mid- and long-range threat estimates. This assessment serves as a baseline for our strategic planning, tempered by our understanding of history, and the limits of our ability to predict, much less control, the future.

The world of 2025 will be more populated than today's by more than 30 percent and more heavily concentrated within the littorals. More than 60 percent of the Earth's population will live in urban areas in 2025. Urban population growth will be most dramatic in Asia and Africa. The developed world's population will be older, with many native populations declining. As a result, their older native populations will be supported by smaller working forces or larger immigrant populations, straining government resources. Developing world populations, on the other hand, will grow significantly. Most growth will occur in urban areas where good governance, jobs, services, food, potable water, and sanitation will be challenged if not completely lacking. Youth bulges in key countries will produce large numbers of underemployed adolescents with seemingly limited opportunities.

Globalization will continue, increasing the velocity and degree of interaction between societies. This interaction promotes economic prosperity, but also increases vulnerability to disruption. Globalization has helped raise hundreds of millions out of poverty, but more than a billion people still live in extreme poverty. Almost three billion people live on less than \$2 per day. These social inequities have been and will continue to be exploited by extremists or identity-based movements to foment violence.

Globalization induces a greater demand for resources. Global consumption of oil is expected to rise 50 percent by 2035, and most of the increase will be in the developing world, especially China and India. Technological solutions or alternative fuels may not mitigate the challenge in the near term. The scarcity of fresh water and food could be an even greater concern. Today, more than a billion people are without access to an improved water supply. Almost three billion people, many in Africa and Asia, have no form of improved sanitation services. By 2025, more than half the global population will live under water stressed or water scarce conditions.

**d. Threats and Challenges.** Trends point to shifts in the character and forms of future warfare. Many states will improve their conventional capabilities, and states and non-state actors alike will be able to acquire lethal capabilities. A significant trend is the blurring of what was previously thought to be distinct forms of war or conflict — conventional war, irregular challenges, terrorism, and criminality — into what can be described as hybrid challenges.

*“The first feature we can predict with confidence is that there is going to be a blurring, a further blurring, of warfare categories.”*

*Colin S. Gray,  
Another Bloody Century:  
Future Warfare*

This blurring character of conflict is illustrated by combinations of various approaches including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts, and criminal disorder. Hybrid challenges can be created by states, proxy forces, or some armed groups. Hybrid warfare can be conducted by separate entities, or even by the same unit, to achieve effects against more traditional state forces. The purpose of these operations will be to impose excessive political, human, and materiel costs in order to undermine their adversary's resolve and commitment. The ability to employ selected next generation weapons systems or to exploit the information networks of modern societies with computer network attacks can also be anticipated.

Hybrid conflicts are assessed as the *most likely* form of conflict facing the United States. Few states, if any, are capable of matching America's overwhelming conventional military combat power. Because of our conventional superiority, adversaries will seek more indirect forms of conflict. We expect opponents to blend different approaches and integrate various weapons (lethal and nonlethal), tactics, and technologies to deny us access and freedom of action. They will be particularly effective in the information environment, exploiting both modern media and cybertechnology.



Further complicating the task of preparing for the future is the nature of the operational environment, which we judge to be more complex. The most likely operational environment will be more densely populated and urbanized. It will be rife with interdependent power, service, and information systems. Operating in these urban complexes will pose extraordinary challenges. As difficult as the physical aspect of operations in this environment will be, the cultural terrain will be more complicated to navigate. The ability to comprehend and effectively “maneuver” in the cognitive and cultural dimension of the modern battlespace is paramount.

While the threat of state-on-state warfare featuring the destructive capabilities of major powers has declined, it remains a distinct possibility. It must still be regarded as the *most dangerous* threat to the Nation. The expected proliferation of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons among states reinforces this assessment. The potential use of such weapons is ever present and compels us to devote substantial resources to countermeasures.

Non-state actors will also press to acquire weapons of mass destruction and other advanced military technologies. These technologies will be employed to target key operating systems such as those supporting US power projection capabilities. Dramatic increases in global information access, breakthroughs in the biological and material sciences, and our increasing reliance on cybertechnology will enable the diffusion of destructive power to smaller and smaller groups.

The dilemma facing the Marine Corps is that it must maintain the ability to wage successful campaigns against large conventionally-armed states and their militaries, against widely dispersed terrorists, and everything in between — generally at great distance from our shores. It must be prepared to respond to this broad range of operations without extensive warning time and respond consistent with the Nation’s values and commitments. On this uneven playing field, we will be confronted by enemies who adhere to no rules, while many of our actions or inactions may have strategic consequences. Accordingly, the Marine Corps cannot be wedded to a particular method or mode of war. It cannot assume there will be technological silver bullets or doctrinal formulas that ensure military success.

Our Nation’s global interests, the international community’s need for stability, and the range of missions that must be fulfilled demand a discriminating, multicapable force. This force must be highly trained and educated to function in both current and emerging operational environments against evolving foes. The Nation requires very capable forces, covering the greatest range of tasks, at an affordable cost that can minimize the risks inherent in an unforeseeable future. Civilian and military leadership must always acknowledge that weather, terrain, and the enemy still “get a vote” in the conduct of warfare. Truly expeditionary forces must have the ability to engage rapidly and in all conditions against enemies that adapt weapons or tactics to fight us asymmetrically. For the Corps, we must continue to prepare for the challenges that loom on the horizon. We are by law, and will continue to be, the Nation’s force in readiness — “most ready when the Nation is least ready.”



## Chapter 4

### Strategy Statement and Objectives for 2025

The following strategy statement and prioritized objectives reflect the Marine Corps' concept to implement our Service vision.

#### a. **Strategy Statement.**

The Marine Corps' unique contribution to national defense is its *role* as the *Nation's force in readiness*, able to respond rapidly and decisively to crises anywhere in the world. The Corps will continue to fulfill that role – while improving its combat capability to prevail against emerging threats in complex environments.

The Corps will be:

**1. Organized** to execute operations with lethal and lean MAGTFs that are mission tailored and able to operate as part of a naval and joint team.

**2. Optimized** to conduct naval expeditionary operations while retaining the institutional agility, battlefield flexibility, and initiative to meet constantly changing conditions of war.

**3. Modernized** with equipment and logistics that expand expeditionary capability and preserve our ability to operate from the sea.

**4. Postured** to prevent or respond to crises with forward positioned MAGTFs — both afloat and ashore — that are engaged and ready to act decisively in response to combatant commanders' requirements.

These methods will be employed in order to provide the Nation unmatched strategic freedom of maneuver and operational flexibility throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### b. **Objectives.** The Marine Corps will achieve the following objectives:

**1. Focus on the Individual Marine.** The individual Marine will remain our most important warfighting asset. The recruitment, training, professional education, and retention of high-quality, disciplined warriors imbued with our core values is paramount to our mission. We will continue to exploit technology to enhance the performance of the individual warrior. Marines at all levels must be prepared to excel in ambiguous and dangerous conditions, operate from a commander's intent, and with minimal direct supervision.

**2. Improve Training and Education for Fog, Friction, and Uncertainty.** Our realistic training and education system will prepare Marines for complex conditions and to counter the unexpected. It will provide small unit leaders the tactical acumen and knowledge to develop and assess these conditions in order to make sound decisions, and the proficiency to employ supporting intelligence, fires, and information resources. Our noncommissioned and junior officers will be prepared for greater responsibility in an increasingly complex environment while potentially operating in a decentralized manner.



### ***3. Expand Persistent Forward Presence and Engagement.***

The Marine Corps will develop a plan to provide a tailored, persistently engaged, contingency-capable MAGTF in five prioritized regions:

- a) East and Southeast Asia Littorals (US Pacific Command).
- b) Red Sea, Arabian Gulf and Arabian Sea Littorals (US Central Command [USCENTCOM]).
- c) East and West Africa Littorals (USCENTCOM, US Africa Command [USAFRICOM]).
- d) Latin American and the Caribbean Basin (US Southern Command).
- e) Mediterranean Sea/North Africa Littorals (US European Command and USAFRICOM).

Marines will be consistently deployed in the littoral areas of these regions and deliberately engaged per the campaign plans of the respective combatant commanders. First, this includes the routine, rotational deployment of Marine expeditionary units (MEUs) to traditional Pacific, Indian, Arabian, and Mediterranean waters in the role of theater “first responders.” Second, the routine, rotational deployment of special purpose MAGTFs (SPMAGTFs) employed in missions such as training and advising, stability, humanitarian support, and other theater security cooperation activities. Lastly, it requires an advisory group capacity within each Marine expeditionary force (MEF).

We will look for opportunities to increase the number of Marines assigned to government and military assistance organizations, including country teams. At the conclusion of these tours, we will assign them to follow-on duties that apply their experience to regionally-focused operating, advisory, and security forces. We will institutionalize training and advisory duties as legitimate, normal career activities for all Marines, and ensure promotion policies reflect appropriate consideration of these duties.

***4. Posture for Hybrid Threats in Complex Environments.*** Without sacrificing its conventional capabilities, the Corps will prepare to conduct operations against hybrid threats in complex environments; such as urbanized littorals, mountainous terrain, and dense jungles. We must successfully identify, engage, and operate against ever evolving opponents who will exploit irregular approaches with modern lethal capabilities and advanced cyber technology. Robust intelligence capabilities will support all levels of command awareness and decisionmaking.



Advancements in secure communications will extend the commander’s operational reach and enhance force protection. Our approach to problem solving and organization, our maneuver warfare philosophy, and our combined arms skills will continue to serve us well in these chaotic environments.





**5. Reinforce Naval Relationships.** We share with the Navy a remarkable heritage and a common perspective on the fundamental necessity of maintaining the ability to operate freely in the littorals. This underwrites our ability to maintain access to foreign markets, provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, conduct theater security cooperation, and protect our national interests. To maintain this ability, we need the capability to conduct robust forcible entry operations from the sea, maritime interception operations (MIO), and other naval expeditionary force tasks. This operational capability requires the constant maintenance of relationships and skills developed through years of side-by-side service with the fleet. The demands of the past few years have reduced those side-by-side service opportunities. The Corps will place renewed emphasis on such training and deployments in order to reinvigorate that capability.



Our Navy colleagues have embraced a posture of persistent presence and engagement. They routinely operate and “show the flag” in dangerous places, but must keep a constant watch for terrorist attacks. Well-trained Marines can help significantly deter and aggressively defend against those threats. We will work with the Navy to provide embarked SPMAGTFs to Navy commands — when required. Their operational focus will include the following capabilities: providing security ashore, manning boarding parties in support of MIOs, supporting noncombatant evacuation operations, and conducting security cooperation activities and training.

**6. Ensure Amphibious Force Levels Meet Strategic Requirements.** We are resolved to maintain the requisite capacity of modern amphibious lift to support the Nation’s ability to execute forcible entry operations from the sea and other combatant commander missions.

The Nation’s amphibious lift requirement has two primary drivers. The first is the capacity to support joint forcible entry operations. This is a MEF-level requirement, defined as the total shipping needed to lift a MEF command element and the assault echelon of two Marine expeditionary brigade (MEB) equivalents, reinforced by a third MEB equivalent through the use of the maritime prepositioning force (future) (MPF[F]). The ability to overcome challenges to access and to project power ashore is a basis of our combat credibility and conventional deterrent.

The second driver is the combatant commanders’ needs for theater security cooperation, presence, and crisis response forces. Since the end of the Cold War, the frequency of these

missions and other amphibious operations has doubled due to increased requirements for crisis response and flexible, persistent presence options for theater security initiatives.



Given a need to balance a forcible entry capability and increased sea based persistent presence, the minimum force of operationally available amphibious ships must be continuously assessed. This assessment will be

conducted in conjunction with the Navy. We will evaluate the number and composition of ships required to maintain an effective sea-based MEF-level warfighting capability as well as other sea-based forward presence requirements.

**7. Create Joint Seabasing Capabilities.** We will improve our ability to cross wide expanses of ocean and remain persistently offshore at the place and time of our choosing. Joint force commanders depend upon the sea as both maneuver space and as a secure base of operations to overcome antiaccess capabilities. Our approach to both challenges is called *seabasing*. Seabasing provides an initial port and airfield afloat in the area of operations that minimizes the reliance on ports and airfields ashore. Though the sea base must be protected, it is the ideal method for projecting influence and power ashore in either a discrete or overt manner. This can be done in support of security cooperation activities, humanitarian assistance, adversary deterrence, or while executing major combat operations.

Our MPF(F) program, amphibious ships, and other seabasing initiatives expand joint operational capabilities and offer tremendous flexibility to joint force commanders. Seabasing will achieve a robust capability to support joint operations ashore in an era of antiaccess and area denial constraints. The ability to project power from sovereign bases and minimize the footprint of our joint forces ashore provides numerous benefits. The ability to conduct at-sea transfer of resources, for both ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore purposes, is a key enabler for deploying, employing, and sustaining joint forces from the sea.

**8. Lead Joint/Multinational Operations and Enable Interagency Activities.** A clearly changing characteristic in the modern battlespace is the shift from a primarily military focus to one that achieves a greater degree of operational integration of all instruments of national power. Accordingly, we will extend our combined arms approach and add a “combined actions” orientation. We will better integrate



interagency capabilities into our training, education, campaign planning, and operations while also improving our own capabilities to lead joint task forces. We will offer training and educational venues to joint, multinational, and interagency personnel. This will assist our preparation for contingencies and build the relationships needed when the Nation calls on the Corps to lead or enable a joint, multinational, or interagency effort.

**9. Maintain a Ready and Sustainable Reserve.** We will employ a total force approach to meet the Marine Corps’ force generation requirements. We will pursue policies and operational practices to better develop and access the skill, knowledge, and expertise of Marines in the Reserve Component. This approach will provide the most effective warfighting solution for the Marine Corps’ total force manpower requirements. The Marine Corps will optimize the use of its Reserve Component as an operational as well as a strategic force provider.



**10. Build and Deploy Multicapable MAGTFs.** Our MAGTFs will be decisive across the range of military operations with their capacity tailored to combatant commanders' requirements. They will be optimized to operate as an integrated system through the air, land, and maritime domains, and the information environment. In order to reduce strategic and operational risks and provide our Nation's leadership with the capabilities and right capacity to execute the



missions we are assigned, we must be properly sized.

Operational experience confirms Congress'

decision to define the composition of the Corps as a combined arms team with a specified structure.

We will man, train, and sustain three balanced and modernized MEFs in the Active Component.





## Chapter 5

### Force Implications for 2025

To remain the Nation's force in readiness, the Marine Corps must continuously innovate. This requires that we look across the entire institution and identify areas that need improvement and effect positive change. The following implications are drawn from the strategy and reflect the direction our institution is taking in order to fulfill its role within the Nation's security establishment.

**a. Operating Force Structure.** The operational effectiveness of the Corps is founded upon the MAGTF construct—not the separate MAGTF elements. The operational and tactical synergy of the MAGTF is what makes it a flexible, effective, and feared force on the battlefield. Improving this synergy requires concrete steps that cut across the MAGTF; namely, developing capabilities to better operate in complex terrain, in a decentralized manner, and in the information environment.



First, the MAGTF's effectiveness in complex terrain must be qualitatively improved. This requires enhanced small unit training and situational awareness, and the reduction of gaps in ground tactical mobility and assault support. We will pursue means to deliver personnel and logistics in complex terrain with precision. The application of unmanned systems has to be more aggressively explored, as well as integrated intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) across the MAGTF. Lightening the load of the individual Marine while enhancing protection is a Service imperative.

Second, the MAGTF's ability to operate in a decentralized manner will be enhanced through improved training and assignment policies for our junior leaders. The emerging operational environment will place unprecedented demands on our small unit leaders. This reality demands that we take their training to a new level. To this end, our doctrine, organization, training, and manpower models and assignment policies must identify ways of realizing this goal. Key to this is the alignment of progressive predeployment training cycles for all MAGTF elements as early as possible in the training phase in order to build cohesive teams.

Third, we will develop the necessary capability and capacity to effectively operate in the information environment. This is a critical warfighting requirement that must be integrated across the MAGTF in complex and media-intensive operational environments. Those capabilities that are unique to our operational role and warfighting approach must be identified and built. We shall leverage joint and government resources to the maximum extent possible and develop specific organic capabilities as required. We must train and educate Marines at all levels on the challenges and opportunities presented by the Information Age so that it becomes inherent in everything we do. Just as every Marine is a collector of tactical information, every Marine must also understand how their actions contribute to our information activities.

These implications cut across each element of the MAGTF and require specific improvements to provide the required capabilities and necessary capacity demanded by the future security environment.

**1. Command Element (CE).** The organic capabilities of our MEFs provide the MEF or joint force commander the ability to employ expeditionary headquarters in a timely manner. As needed, these headquarters range in size from a MEU, to a MEB, or even a MEF-sized command element. We will continue our initiatives, as evidenced in the Pacific, to establish brigade-sized forces, tailored around our existing aviation, ground, and logistics subordinate commands and augmented by additional capabilities as required. The CEs of these forces will be optimized for amphibious and contingency operations and be properly equipped with modern and secure command and control (C2), intelligence, communications, and networking systems. They will be prepared to lead joint and multinational operations, and to enable interagency activities.



The intelligence systems used by the CEs must give Marines the ability to understand the specific environment, detect and find the threat, and provide useful and timely intelligence to planning and decisionmaking at all levels. Tactics, techniques, and procedures for disseminating high-value, actionable intelligence down to the lowest tactical level in support of operational maneuver and precision engagements must be further refined. Equally important will be further investment in areas such as language proficiency and cultural intelligence to prepare forces for the expanded interaction with local populations.

We must develop the ability to provide persistent surveillance over an extended but densely complex operational environment. To this end, we must pursue development of advanced ISR sensors that are linked to users at all echelons. Marine units need enhanced intelligence sections augmented by multicapable teams and specialized equipment from MAGTF intelligence units. They also need high-bandwidth communications to connect national-level sources to the tactical user.

The Marine Corps will integrate C2 and ISR capabilities down to the squad level. The emerging operational environment requires that we increase the shared situational awareness of small unit leaders to support decentralized decisionmaking. This investment not only enhances the capabilities of these small units, but also increases the quality and quantity of shared situational awareness across echelons. In environments where human intelligence and tactical information reign supreme, we must acquire and convey information rapidly and accurately to facilitate timely decisionmaking. Over the past decade, we have made great strides in enhancing C2 and ISR at the battalion/squadron level and above. We need now to make similar strides from the battalion down to the squad while recognizing that “the last hundred yards” of this challenge is exponentially harder. To this end, we will aggressively pursue integrated microtechnologies, such as a secure communications personal data apparatus that communicates via the spoken word, data, and imagery without adding to an already heavy combat load.

Most importantly, the entire MAGTF’s communications infrastructure must be resilient and protected from cyber attack.

**2. Ground Combat Element (GCE).** We will improve the effectiveness of Marine ground forces. One important enhancement will focus on our small unit leaders – providing them the training and equipment to credibly perform as “strategic” noncommissioned officers (NCOs).

On the increasingly decentralized and lethal battlefield that characterizes current and future conflict, these leaders cannot be developed in a single two- to three-year operational tour. Rather, we must provide further incentives for those who demonstrate the greatest potential in small unit leadership roles to continue to serve in operational billets. We must tailor our training to develop cohesive units, critical reasoning, and ethical decisionmaking in scenarios spanning the full range of military operations. Recognizing the critical importance of capable, mature, and responsible junior leaders is simply not enough. Our personnel assignment, training, and education policies must support the imperative of creating and sustaining these superb small unit leaders.



Recent combat has confirmed the need to improve the essential fires and maneuver capabilities of Marine ground forces, especially within complex urban terrain. Schemes of maneuver in future operations will often necessitate coordinated, precise fires from ground, air, and naval surface fire support platforms. These fires must be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week under all weather conditions and they must be able to rapidly and precisely engage the fleeting opportunities often found in irregular warfare. We must develop complementary nonlethal systems such as those used to control crowds or secure critical facilities where the use of lethal force would be counterproductive. Discrimination in the application of violence will be consistent with the threat, and minimizing collateral damage will be an important consideration.

Ground mobility is a shortfall that must be remedied. As Marines, we are always aware of the size and weight limits that we live with to remain both operationally deployable by sea and tactically effective ashore. Every decision in this area must be carefully reconciled with these two considerations. A third factor is now equally important — we must provide adequate protection for our tactical mobility systems. Our goal is to provide a mix of survivable tactical vehicles that are compatible with expeditionary and amphibious deployment means.

**3. Aviation Combat Element (ACE).** In the increasingly complex and asymmetrical operating environments of the future, our Corps will continue to demonstrate the importance of integrating combat capabilities across the air, land, and maritime domains, and the information environment. Our integrated, combined arms doctrine will prove as relevant in future contingencies as it has throughout our history. Marine aviation will continue to provide six functions to the MAGTF — assault support, anti-air warfare, offensive air support, electronic warfare, control of aircraft and missiles, and aerial reconnaissance. These functions will not change, but they will evolve as technology advances and the battlefield or enemy changes.







Marine aviation is in the midst of a significant modernization effort that will replace every major aircraft type in our inventory with next-generation capabilities. Tilt-rotor and short take off and vertical landing aircraft (STOVL) capabilities bring revolutionary enhancements to the battlefield. The greater range, speed, and agility that tilt-rotor technology brings are driving new concepts of operation to the MAGTF. Enhanced STOVL capabilities will enable flexible distributed shipboard and expeditionary airfield basing, rapid

response to crises, high sortie generation rates, a small footprint, and improved survivability. In every case, our modernization efforts focus on making the future joint force more effective across the range of military operations. Specifically, our STOVL assets will improve the agility and utility of the ACE and its contribution to the joint fight.

We will pursue developments with unmanned aircraft systems (UASs) to widen the force-multiplying capabilities that these enhanced, multispectral systems bring to the fight. Newly emergent concepts for UAS employment will continue to enhance and extend the lethal and nonlethal capability of the MAGTF and joint force commander to new levels, fostering transformational advancements in battlespace command and situational awareness.

Central to enabling the enhanced capabilities of our aviation platforms will be an aviation C2 family of systems that will fuse C2, sensor, weapons data, and information to provide a true common operational picture. This fused information will be distributed throughout the battlespace — from multifunctional C2 centers, to the cockpit, down to our distributed ground maneuver forces at the squad level — allowing for a level of awareness and decisionmaking never before achieved and facilitating MAGTF and joint force integration, coordination, and employment. In the future, the ACE will be secure, network-enabled, and digitally interoperable to ensure it is responsive, persistent, lethal, and adaptive.



The Marine Corps' aviation modernization is designed to improve the warfighting effectiveness, strategic agility, and striking power of the MAGTF and the joint force commander.

**4. Logistics Combat Element (LCE).** The emerging security environment generates hard requirements for lighter and leaner forces, capable of being effectively sustained over a greater distance. The LCE will adapt to complex operating environments, and increase its ability to operate in urban areas and deliver critical support to engaged maneuver units without drawing on combat units for force protection. The logistics community shall establish habitual relationships with GCE units where feasible.

Our efforts to modernize logistics must focus on a markedly improved ability to sense what is needed and respond accordingly. To that end, an integrated and secure logistics operational architecture that identifies the people, processes, and capabilities required to



support deployed MAGTFs is fundamental to logistics modernization. To realize the benefits of this architecture, we will continue to enhance our ability to conduct battlefield sustainment. Innovative efforts, such as unmanned cargo delivery systems, shall be pursued to meet this end.

In addition to modernization, we will pursue other initiatives to increase the readiness of our operating forces. We will adopt a cradle-to-grave approach to equipment readiness, ensuring that logistics support commences with the development of capabilities, evolves throughout systems acquisition and fielding, continues with sustainment in the operating forces and maintenance depots, and remains through the disposal process. It is critical that equipment be designed based on how it will be maintained and sustained. These equipment systems must be lighter, easier to maintain, and consume less power than current systems. As a critical part of the logistics chain, we need our equipment to be able to sense and transmit pertinent systems information, initiating a timely and coordinated maintenance response at the optimal time. The integration of the naval logistics communities must continue in order to move beyond interoperability and seek integrated naval logistics support to deployed forces (both afloat and ashore).

Our expeditionary Marine Corps requires a logistics capability that is leaner, lighter, and less energy-intensive than the past.

**b. Supporting Force Structure.** Our supporting establishment directly supports our deployed Marines as we continue to fight in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. Changing requirements, technological advances in communications and collaborative capabilities, and innovative thinking have evolved the roles of existing organizations and led to creation of new ones to provide new and enhanced capabilities to deployed forces. Our Civilian Marine workforce is crucial to the successful operation of our supporting structure.



**1. Training and Education Command.** The future postulated in this document will require a first-class training and education system. Creating this will require dedicated investments.

From recruit training through senior staff NCO professional military education (PME) and from Officer Candidates School through our Senior Leader Development Program, we must continue to build thinking, decisive, innovative Marines, imbued with initiative and empowered to act within the construct of commander's intent and in the face of potentially confusing, chaotic and unclear situations.

Training and education must accurately reflect the situations, environments, and peoples Marines will face. Future operational environments demand ever more capable junior Marines and experienced, mature leaders. They must be fully prepared to make the right decisions in often ambiguous and demanding situations where failure to act properly may have far-reaching strategic consequences. We shall prepare our Marines realistically for complex conditions — by providing small unit leaders the tactical acumen and knowledge to assess these conditions and the proficiency to employ supporting intelligence, fires, and information resources often associated with higher echelons.



To that end, we will not just ensure “Every Marine is a Rifleman,” we will emphasize combat leadership, knowledge, and proficiency throughout the continuum of training and education for our NCOs and staff NCOs, in addition to their military occupational specialty (MOS). We must ensure both PME and MOS skill development are modernized and designed to reach our entire officer population, regardless of opportunity to attend resident

education, and the core knowledge and abilities are adequately acquired in any venue. Our language and cultural communication skills require considerable enhancement and must become integral to our training and education programs.

In support of increased training requirements, the Marine Corps must sustain, upgrade, and modernize our training ranges and areas. Our bases, stations, and training areas must be viewed as institutional assets. With an eye towards future operational environments, we will enhance live-fire combined arms training capabilities at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, 29 Palms, CA. These facilities must be capable of supporting large-scale scenarios and combined arms exercises that support retaining our unique core capabilities. We must ensure we remain proficient at expeditionary operations, particularly from the sea, and retain our ability to operate throughout the world’s littorals. Our units and leaders must be proficient and comfortable operating in the joint environment and with interagency partners at every level, from small unit leaders through MAGTF staff.



Our training and education must ensure sound, rapid decisionmaking, as well as proficiency at applying the capabilities of the MAGTF. We must be fully integrated in our approach, individual and collective, training and education, individual unit through task organized elements of the MAGTF, and the MAGTF itself, regardless of mission, condition, or environment.



In addition to its orientation on Service specific needs, the training and education system must build innovative capabilities in order to augment our efforts to engage friends and partners throughout the world. Security needs in many countries go far beyond the capabilities envisioned in the operating forces, particularly those needs that are long term institution building in nature. We must devise efficient, effective, regionally and country-oriented capabilities that

target high priority security cooperation objectives of the combatant commands, in conjunction with the Marine Corps forces component supporting plans.

We must continue to promote PME as a career-long activity and it must become increasingly focused on junior Marines. To this end, the Marine Corps University shall expand PME and leadership training through resident and distance education programs to prepare leaders to meet the challenges of future national security environments. We will



actively support the Marine Corps University's continued expansion of its faculty, facilities, and resources, encompassing its mission to educate the entire force, regardless of venue. As the *Marine Corps Officer Professional Military Education 2006 Study* observed, this challenge "cannot be deferred, and must be met, if the Marine Corps is to maintain its heritage of service to the Nation."

**2. Operating Force Bases and Stations.** Marine Corps bases and stations are a critical component of the supporting establishment that constitutes the MAGTF's "fifth element." They are irreplaceable national assets. They are fundamental to combat readiness providing essential training and support the launch, sustainment, and reconstitution of Marine operating forces. They are also integral to the quality of life of Marines, Sailors, and their families.



The ability to train as a MAGTF is a fundamental requirement of readiness and a primary role for installations. Our ability to train together gives us the ability to effectively aggregate into a collective whole when needed in complex expeditionary operations. We will work to assure unimpeded access to our ranges, airspace, and training areas to support this expeditionary readiness. This initiative will focus on individual and unit training and include naval expeditionary considerations. This will be accomplished through encroachment control using federal, state, and local governmental and nongovernmental partnerships to reduce incompatible urban growth near our installations. Also, the Marine Corps will remain responsible stewards of the natural and cultural resources aboard our installations through positive and effective environmental management. Our bases will follow best practices to ensure effectiveness and efficiency. To this end, energy conservation will be a matter of focus to reflect innovative Marine Corps environmental stewardship.

**3. Logistics Command.** Marine Corps Logistics Command (MCLC) will orchestrate logistics solutions, aligning strategically positioned support to reduce customer wait time for supplies and maintenance, while actively engaging with the warfighter to exponentially improve Marine Corps logistics agility.

MCLC shall develop support concepts complementing the full range of tactical operations to support rapid redeployment of equipment and the ability to reconstitute equipment readiness in complex environments. Logistics agility is paramount in supporting and sustaining multiple contingencies simultaneously. Furthermore, the ability to anticipate accelerated equipment rotations and increased demand requires greater flexibility. MCLC will provide agile logistics solutions through employment of multiple distribution channels, integrated supply chains, and mobile maintenance capabilities.



**4. Operational Reachback Support.** A number of organizations in the supporting establishment have assumed significant roles in providing operational reachback support to

deployed forces. Changing requirements, technological advances in communications and collaboration tools, and innovative thinking have evolved the roles of existing organizations like the Marine Corps Intelligence Activity and Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory and led to creation of new organizations such as the Marine Corps Network Operations Security Center and the Marine Corps Information Operations Center. These organizations package expertise and resources that cannot be replicated within the operating forces. The breadth and complexity of challenges facing deployed Marine Corps Forces necessitates further development of these centers, building sophisticated capabilities, robust networks to link them to deployed force, and refinement of tactics and concepts integrating them into deployed force operations.

**c. Marine Corps Special Operations Force Structure.** The US Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command (MARSOC) is the Marine Corps' contribution to US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). In the future, MARSOC will continue to work as our bridge to forge closer interoperability between the Marine Corps, USSOCOM, and the special operations community. We will work closely with USSOCOM and USJFCOM to determine our involvement in advisory and training team requirements. MARSOC's challenge will be to ensure the training and education of its Marines and Sailors to succeed in future special operations even as it returns highly qualified Marines to other tours of duty in the Marine Corps.



**d. Marine Corps Security Force Structure.** In today's security environment, virtually every US Navy ship is a capital ship in terms of capability and cost. Protecting naval ships and facilities is completely consistent with our history and our naval character. We will help protect key operational forces and supporting facilities against terrorism and other irregular warfare tactics, while providing relevant support to the US Navy.





## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

This vision and supporting strategy establish a direction of advance and specific objectives for our institution. This effort is founded on our Congressionally-mandated functions, exploits our legacy and ethos as Marines, and responds to anticipated future challenges. As we prepare for 2025 and beyond, the Marine Corps must pay heed to combat-proven truths that have served the Nation well both in times of peril and in times of peace. It must also continue to refine its capabilities for a challenging future. Our assessment concludes that —

a. Individual Marines are our most potent weapons and where we should continue to place our greatest emphasis. They are empowered by technology, but technology by itself is not a substitute for rigorously trained, highly disciplined, and well led warriors who are shaped by our core values and the Nation's ideals.

b. Being truly expeditionary is based upon an institutional and individual mindset, not simply the ability to deploy overseas. We will focus on traveling fast, being lean, and functioning effectively in austere conditions.

c. Naval forces are a valuable rheostat for the President and Secretary of Defense due to their sovereign status, speed of employment, strategic mobility, and ability to conduct sustained operations for extended periods of time. They give joint force commanders extraordinarily versatile assets that can respond to tomorrow's challenges.

d. To prevent problems and dampen instability, there is no effective substitute for ready and flexible forces, forward deployed, persistently engaged “on station” in crisis-prone regions.

e. MAGTFs — and the amphibious ships that enable them to operate and act with decision and dispatch in the littorals — are prudent and cost effective investments.

f. More than ever, the Nation requires an expeditionary force in readiness.



We see the future imposing significant expectations for a broadening set of missions. Security cooperation efforts, training and advising foreign military forces, deterring aggression, defeating hybrid threats, and preparing for large-scale conventional wars pose a wide range of requirements. This will result in a greater premium for multicable forces that successfully perform various missions in more than one domain.

In a world of dynamic change, some constants remain. The superior performance of the Marine Corps, in every environment, is one of those constants.

Our creative and innovative mindset ensures that we are agile — adept at anticipating and preparing for events in an increasingly dangerous world. This agility is another constant. Whether in the littorals, where we are most comfortable, or in the mountains of a land-locked nation — Marines will adapt and prevail. We are, and will remain, prepared to fight and win when and where our Nation calls.





# Glossary

## Part I

### *Acronyms and Abbreviations*

<b>ACE</b>	aviation combat element
<b>C2</b>	command and control
<b>CE</b>	command element
<b>CMC</b>	Commandant of the Marine Corps
<b>DOTMLPF</b>	doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities
<b>GCE</b>	ground combat element
<b>GDF</b>	Guidance for the Development of the Force
<b>GEF</b>	Guidance for the Employment of the Force
<b>ISR</b>	intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
<b>JPG</b>	Joint Planning Guidance
<b>JSCP</b>	Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan
<b>LCE</b>	logistics combat element
<b>MAGTF</b>	Marine air-ground task force
<b>MARSOC</b>	United States Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command
<b>MCLC</b>	Marine Corps Logistics Command
<b>MEB</b>	Marine expeditionary brigade
<b>MEF</b>	Marine expeditionary force
<b>MEU</b>	Marine expeditionary unit
<b>MIO</b>	maritime interception operations
<b>MOS</b>	military occupational specialty
<b>MPF(F)</b>	maritime prepositioning force (future)

<b>NCO</b>	noncommissioned officer
<b>OSD</b>	Office of the Secretary of Defense
<b>PME</b>	professional military education
<b>SPMAGTF</b>	special purpose Marine air-ground task force
<b>STOVL</b>	short take-off and vertical landing aircraft
<b>UAS</b>	unmanned aircraft system
<b>UCP</b>	Unified Command Plan
<b>USAFRICOM</b>	United States Africa Command
<b>USCENTCOM</b>	United States Central Command
<b>USJFCOM</b>	United States Joint Forces Command
<b>USSOCOM</b>	United States Special Operations Command





# Glossary

## Part II

### *Terms & Definitions*

**amphibious shipping** — Organic Navy ships specifically designed to transport, land, and support landing forces in amphibious assault operations and capable of being loaded or unloaded by naval personnel without external assistance in the amphibious objective area. (JP 1-02)

**antiair warfare** — That action required to destroy or reduce to an acceptable level the enemy air and missile threat. Antiair warfare integrates all offensive and defensive actions against enemy aircraft, surface-to-air weapons, and theater missiles into a singular, indivisible set of operations. It is one of the six functions of Marine aviation. Also called AAW. (MCRP 5-12C)

**assault echelon** — In amphibious operations, the element of a force comprised of tailored units and aircraft assigned to conduct the initial assault on the operational area. (JP1-02)


**assault follow-on echelon** — In amphibious operations, that echelon of the assault troops, vehicles, aircraft, equipment, and supplies that, though not needed to initiate the assault, is required to support and sustain the assault. In order to accomplish its purpose, it is normally required in the objective area no later than five days after commencement of the assault landing. Also called AFOE. (JP 1-02)

**assault support** — The use of aircraft to provide tactical mobility and logistic support for the Marine air-ground task force, the movement of high priority cargo and personnel within the immediate area of operations, in-flight refueling, and the evacuation of personnel and cargo. Assault support is one of the six functions of Marine aviation. (MCRP 5-12C)

**aviation combat element** — The core element of a Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) that is task-organized to conduct aviation operations. The aviation combat element (ACE) provides all or a portion of the six functions of Marine aviation necessary to accomplish the MAGTF's mission. These functions are antiair warfare, offensive air support, assault support, electronic warfare, air reconnaissance, and control of aircraft and missiles. The ACE is usually composed of an aviation unit headquarters and various other aviation units or their detachments. It can vary in size from a small aviation detachment of specifically required aircraft to one or more Marine aircraft wings. In a joint or multinational environment, the ACE may contain other Service or multinational forces assigned or attached to the MAGTF. The ACE itself is not a formal command. Also called ACE. (MCRP 5-12C)

**battlespace** — All aspects of air, surface, subsurface, land, space, and electromagnetic spectrum that encompass the area of influence and area of interest. (MCRP 5-12C)

**civil-military operations** — The activities of a commander that establish, maintain, influence, or exploit relations between military forces, governmental and nongovernmental civilian organizations and authorities, and the civilian populace in a friendly, neutral, or hostile operational area in order to facilitate military operations, to consolidate and achieve operational US objectives. Civil-military operations may include performance by military forces of activities and functions normally the responsibility of the local, regional, or national government. These activities may occur prior to, during, or subsequent to other military actions. They may also occur, if directed, in the absence of other military operations. Civil-military operations may be performed by designated civil affairs, by other military forces, or by a combination of civil affairs and other forces. Also called CMO. (JP 1-02)



**combatant command** — A unified or specified command with a broad continuing mission under a single commander established and so designated by the President, through the Secretary of Defense and with the advice and assistance of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Combatant commands typically have geographic or functional responsibilities. (JP 1-02)

**combatant commander** — A commander of one of the unified or specified combatant commands established by the President. Also called CCDR. (JP 1-02)

**combat power** — The total means of destructive and/or disruptive force which a military unit/formation can apply against the opponent at a given time. (JP 1-02)

**command element** — The core element of a Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) that is the headquarters. The command element (CE) is composed of the commander, general or executive and special staff sections, headquarters section, and requisite communications support, intelligence, and reconnaissance forces, necessary to accomplish the MAGTF's mission. The CE provides command and control, intelligence, and other support essential for effective planning and execution of operations by the other elements of the MAGTF. The CE varies in size and composition; and, in a joint or multinational environment, it may contain other Service or multinational forces assigned or attached to the MAGTF. Also called CE. (MCRP 5-12C)

**control of aircraft and missiles** — The coordinated employment of facilities, equipment, communications, procedures, and personnel that allows the aviation combat element (ACE) commander to plan, direct, and control the efforts of the ACE to support the accomplishment of the Marine air-ground task force mission. Control of aircraft and missiles is one of the six functions of Marine aviation. (MCRP 5-12C)

**conventional forces** — 1. Those forces capable of conducting operations using nonnuclear weapons. 2. Those forces other than designated special operations forces. (JP 1-02)

**counterinsurgency** — Those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency. Also called COIN. (JP 1-02)

**crisis** — An incident or situation involving a threat to a nation, its territories, citizens, military forces, possessions, or vital interests that develops rapidly and creates a condition of such diplomatic, economic, political, or military importance that commitment of military forces and resources is contemplated to achieve national objectives. (JP 1-02)

**electronic warfare** — Military action involving the use of electromagnetic and directed energy to control the electromagnetic spectrum or to attack the enemy. Electronic warfare consists of three divisions: electronic attack, electronic protection, and electronic warfare support. Also called EW. (JP 1-02)

**expeditionary force** — An armed force organized to accomplish a specific objective in a foreign country. (JP 1-02)

**forcible entry** — Seizing and holding of a military lodgment in the face of armed opposition. See also lodgment. (JP 1-02)

**ground combat element** — The core element of a Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) that is task-organized to conduct ground operations. It is usually constructed around an infantry organization but can vary in size from a small ground unit of any type to one or more Marine divisions that can be

independently maneuvered under the direction of the MAGTF commander. It includes appropriate ground combat and combat support forces, and in a joint or multinational environment, it may also contain other Service or multinational forces assigned or attached to the MAGTF. The ground combat element itself is not a formal command. Also called GCE. (MCRP 5-12C)

**instruments of national power** — All of the means available to the government in its pursuit of national objectives. They are expressed as diplomatic, economic, informational and military. (JP 1-02)

**intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance** — An activity that synchronizes and integrates the planning and operation of sensors, assets, and processing, exploitation, and dissemination systems in direct support of current and future operations. This is an integrated intelligence and operations function. Also called ISR. (JP 1-02)

**interagency** — United States Government agencies and departments, including the Department of Defense. See also interagency coordination. (JP 1-02)

**irregular challenges** — Challenges posed by those employing unconventional methods to counter the traditional advantages of stronger opponents. (NDS)

**irregular warfare** — A violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s). Irregular warfare favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capacities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will. Also called IW. (JP 1-02)

**joint** — Connotes activities, operations, organizations, etc., in which elements of two or more Military Departments participate. (JP 1-02)

**joint force** — A general term applied to a force composed of significant elements, assigned or attached, of two or more Military Departments operating under a single joint force commander. See also joint force commander. (JP 1-02)

**littoral** — The littoral comprises two segments of battlespace: 1. Seaward: the area from the open ocean to the shore, which must be controlled to support operations ashore. 2. Landward: the area inland from the shore that can be supported and defended directly from the sea. (JP 1-02)

**logistics combat element** — The core element of a Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) that is task-organized to provide the combat service support necessary to accomplish the MAGTF's mission. The logistics combat element varies in size from a small detachment to one or more Marine logistics groups. It provides supply, maintenance, transportation, general engineering, health services, and a variety of other services to the MAGTF. In a joint or multinational environment, it may also contain other Service or multinational forces assigned or attached to the MAGTF. The logistics combat element itself is not a formal command. Also called LCE. (MCRP 5-12C)

**maneuver** — 1. A movement to place ships, aircraft, or land forces in a position of advantage over the enemy. 2. A tactical exercise carried out at sea, in the air, on the ground, or on a map in imitation of war. 3. The operation of a ship, aircraft, or vehicle, to cause it to perform desired movements. 4. Employment of forces in the operational area through movement in combination with fires to achieve a position of advantage in respect to the enemy in order to accomplish the mission. (JP 1-02)

**maneuver warfare** — A warfighting philosophy that seeks to shatter the enemy's cohesion through a variety of rapid, focused, and unexpected actions that create a turbulent and rapidly deteriorating situation with which the enemy cannot cope. (MCRP 5-12C)

**Marine air-ground task force** — The Marine Corps' principal organization for all missions across the range of military operations, composed of forces task-organized under a single commander capable of responding rapidly to a contingency anywhere in the world. The types of forces in the Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) are functionally grouped into four core elements: a command element, an aviation combat element, a ground combat element, and a logistics combat element. The four core elements are categories of forces, not formal commands. The basic structure of the MAGTF never varies, though the number, size, and type of Marine Corps units comprising each of its four elements will always be mission dependent. The flexibility of the organizational structure allows for one or more subordinate MAGTFs to be assigned. In a joint or multinational environment, other Service or multinational forces may be assigned or attached. Also called MAGTF. (MCRP 5-12C)

**Marine aviation functions** — The six functions (antiair warfare, offensive air support, assault support, electronic warfare, air reconnaissance, and control of aircraft and missiles) performed by Marine aviation in support of the Marine air-ground task force. (MCRP 5-12C)

**Marine expeditionary brigade** — Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) that is constructed around a reinforced infantry regiment, a composite Marine aircraft group, and a combat logistics regiment. The Marine expeditionary brigade (MEB), commanded by a general officer, is task-organized to meet the requirements of a specific situation. It can function as part of a joint task force, as the lead echelon of the Marine expeditionary force (MEF), or alone. It varies in size and composition and is larger than a Marine expeditionary unit but smaller than a MEF. The MEB is capable of conducting missions across the full range of military operations. In a joint or multinational environment, it may also contain other Service or multinational forces assigned or attached to the MAGTF. Also called MEB. (MCRP 5-12C)

**Marine expeditionary force** — The largest Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) and the Marine Corps' principal warfighting organization, particularly for larger crises or contingencies. It is task-organized around a permanent command element and normally contains one or more Marine divisions, Marine aircraft wings, and Marine logistics groups. The Marine expeditionary force is capable of missions across the range of military operations, including amphibious assault and sustained operations ashore in any environment. It can operate from a sea base, a land base, or both. In a joint or multinational environment, it may also contain other Service or multinational forces assigned or attached to the MAGTF. Also called MEF. (MCRP5-12C)

**Marine expeditionary unit** — A Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) that is constructed around an infantry battalion reinforced, a helicopter squadron reinforced, and a task-organized logistics combat element. It normally fulfills Marine Corps' forward sea-based deployment requirements. The Marine expeditionary unit provides an immediate reaction capability for crisis response and is capable of limited combat operations. In a joint or multinational environment, it may contain other Service or multinational forces assigned or attached to the MAGTF. Also called MEU. (MCRP 5-12C)

**maritime interception operations** — Efforts to monitor, query, and board merchant vessels in international waters to enforce sanctions against other nations such as those in support of United Nations Security Council Resolutions and/or prevent the transport of restricted goods. Also called MIO. (JP 1-02)



**maritime prepositioning force** — A task organization of units under one commander formed for the purpose of introducing a Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) and its associated equipment and supplies into a secure area. The maritime prepositioning force is composed of a command element, a maritime prepositioning ships squadron, a MAGTF, and a Navy support element. Also called MPF. (MCRP 5-12C)

**multicapable** — Operationally decisive across the range of military operations with a capacity tailored to combatant commanders' requirements; optimized to operate as an integrated system through the air, land, and maritime domains. (Proposed for inclusion in the next edition of MCRP 5-12C)

**multinational** — Between two or more forces or agencies of two or more nations or coalition partners. (JP 1-02)

**multinational force** — A force composed of military elements of nations who have formed an alliance or coalition for some specific purpose. Also called MNF. (JP1-02)

**noncombatant evacuation operations** — Operations directed by the Department of State or other appropriate authority, in conjunction with the Department of Defense, whereby noncombatants are evacuated from foreign countries when their lives are endangered by war, civil unrest, or natural disaster to safe havens or to the United States. Also called NEOs. (JP 1-02)

**nongovernmental organization** — A private, self-governing, not-for-profit organization dedicated to alleviating human suffering; and/or promoting education, health care, economic development, environmental protection, human rights, and conflict resolution; and/or encouraging the establishment of democratic institutions and civil society. Also called NGO. (JP 1-02)

**offensive air support** — Those air operations conducted against enemy installations, facilities, and personnel to directly assist the attainment of MAGTF objectives by the destruction of enemy resources or the isolation of the enemy's military forces. Offensive air support is one of the six functions of Marine aviation. Also called OAS. (MCRP 5-12C)

**overseas** — All locations, including Alaska and Hawaii, outside the continental United States. (JP 1-02)

**professional military education** — The systematic instruction of professionals in subjects that will enhance their knowledge of the science and art of war. Also called PME. (MCRP 5-12C)

**sea base** — An inherently maneuverable, scalable aggregation of distributed, networked platforms that enables the global power projection of offensive and defensive forces from the sea and includes the ability to assemble, equip, project, support, and sustain those forces without reliance on land bases within the joint operations area. (NTRP 1-02)

**seabasing** — A national capability and overarching transformational operating concept for projecting and sustaining naval power and joint forces, which assures joint access by leveraging the operational maneuver of sovereign, distributed, and networked forces operating globally from the sea. (MCRP 5-12C)

**security cooperation** — All Department of Defense interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific US security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide US forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation. (JP 1-02)

**security cooperation activity** — Military activity that involves other nations and is intended to shape the operational environment in peacetime. Activities include programs and exercises that the US military conducts with other nations to improve mutual understanding and improve interoperability with treaty partners or potential coalition partners. They are designed to support a combatant commander's theater strategy as articulated in the theater security cooperation plan. (JP 1-02)

**supporting establishment** — Those personnel, bases, and activities that support the Marine Corps operating forces. (Excerpt from MCDP 1-0)

**terrorism** — The calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological. (JP 1-02)

**weapons of mass destruction** — Weapons that are capable of a high order of destruction and/or of being used in such a manner as to destroy large numbers of people. Weapons of mass destruction can be high-yield explosives or nuclear, biological, chemical, or radiological weapons, but exclude the means of transporting or propelling the weapon where such means is a separable and divisible part of the weapon. Also called WMD. (JP 1-02)



## Glossary References

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**Marine Corps Vision & Strategy 2025: Crosswalk**

<b>Strategic Imperatives</b>	<b>ENDS (Vision)</b>	<b>WAYS (Strategy Objectives)</b>	<b>MEANS (Principal Force Implications)</b>
Limit regional conflict with forward deployed, decisive maritime power	Dedicated to Making Marines, multicapable and prepared to live hard in uncertain, chaotic, and austere environments	Focus on the Individual Marine	Recruiting/retention program, first-class class training and education systems, expansion of Marine Corps University (MCU), greater realism in training and education, build and sustain more capable small unit leaders, field Improved Equipment (Lighter, more lethal, increased Situational Awareness)
Deter major power war	Adaptable and innovative Marines & MAGTFs, educated and trained to understand and defeat adversaries in complex conflicts	Improve Training and Education for Fog, Friction, and Uncertainty	First class Training, enhancements to MCU/ Education, greater realism in training and education, small unit training for complex terrain, improved ground tactical mobility and assault support, lighten the load of the Individual Marine, train to potentially operate in a decentralized manner, increase ability to effectively operate in the information environment
Win our Nation's wars	Increasingly reliant on naval deployment, preventative in approach, prepared to rapidly engage or respond	Expand Persistent Forward Presence & Engagement	MEU, SPMAGTFs, Organic training and advisory groups (MEF), Global Fleet Stations, continued integration of naval logistics
Contribute to homeland defense in depth	Adaptable Naval Expeditionary Force optimized for littoral/urban environments, deployed forward with relevant and timely capabilities	Lead Joint/ Multinational and Enable Interagency Activities	Tailorable CEs within MEF, Command, Control, Communications, Computer (C4), & ISR investments, Emerald Express, Exchange/Liaison Officers, MCU programs, support to Interagency Consortium for Complex Ops
Foster and sustain cooperative relationships with more international partners	Littoral & Naval in character, focused on sustainable expeditionary operations	Better Posture for Hybrid Threats in Complex Environments	Regional focus, Language skills and cultural communication, Culture, Urban Training, Aviation C4 & ISR, Information Operations capability, Civil Affairs capacity, Company level operations, Strategic NCOs/ junior leaders Center for Irregular Warfare, Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning, continued integration of naval logistics
Prevent or contain local disruptions before they impact the global system	Adaptable and Flexible Marine Corps capable of providing more MAGTFs that are fully capable across the ROMO	Reinforce Naval Relationships Ensure Amphibious Force Levels Meet Strategic Requirements Create Joint Seabasing Capabilities	Embarked MAGTFs to Navy commands, man boarding parties in support of maritime interception operations, support noncombatant evacuation operations, conduct security cooperation activities and training Assault Echelon for 2 MEB equivalents (reinforced by a 3 <sup>rd</sup> MEB through MPF(F)), assets for presence, theater security cooperation, and crisis response Need for MPF(F), High Speed Vessels, Connectors
Source: A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower	Lean, agile, and adaptable MAGTFs More capable across Flange of Military Operations (ROMO)	Maintain a Ready and Sustainable Reserve	Sufficient numbers of properly-structured common/ interchangeable total force modules across the MAGTF.
		Build and Deploy Multicapable MAGTFs	Force Expansion for 3 balanced MEFs, primacy of MAGTFs across ROMO, tailorable CEs within MEF, Intelligence, Large Scale Exercises, All Weather Fires, Tactical Mobility, Assault Support, NSFS. MAGTF to Company-level operations, provide further incentives to small unit leaders



