

**MCRP 5-12D**

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# **Organization of Marine Corps Forces**

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**U.S. Marine Corps**

13 October 1998

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
Headquarters United States Marine Corps  
Washington, D.C. 20380-1775

FOREWORD

1. PURPOSE

Marine Corps reference publication (MCRP) 5-12D, *Organization of Marine Corps Forces*, provides general information on the mission, concept of employment, organization, and equipment of the Marine Corps forces.

2. SCOPE

This publication addresses the mission, organization, equipment, and concept of employment of Marine Corps Forces Atlantic, Marine Corps Forces Pacific, and the Marine Corps Reserve, as well as subordinate organizations thereof, through 1 September 1998. However, due to the frequent changes in organization, the tables of organization will be reviewed and this publication will be updated annually. This publication does not discuss in any detail Marine Corps Security Forces, the Marine Security Guard Battalion, or the Marine Corps supporting establishment. *This publication should be considered only a guide based on current Marine Corps tables of organization and equipment, and not as a replacement for those tables.*

This reference publication is primarily intended for Marine commanders, their staffs, and Marine Corps training and education institutions, although all Marines may find it useful. It may also prove valuable to joint force commanders and their staffs in planning and executing operations involving Marine Corps forces.

3. SUPERSESSION

MCRP 5-12D supersedes Fleet Marine Force reference publication (FMFRP) 1-11, *Fleet Marine Force Organization—1992*, dated 2 March 1992.

#### 4. CERTIFICATION

Reviewed and approved this date.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

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DISTRIBUTION: 144 000050 00

# Organization of Marine Corps Forces

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## Chapter 1

# The Marine Corps

### 1001. Introduction

The Marine Corps, within the Department of the Navy, is organized as a general purpose “force in readiness” to support national needs. Deploying for combat as combined-arms Marine air-ground task forces (MAGTFs), the Marine Corps provides the National Command Authorities (NCA) with a responsive force that can conduct operations across the spectrum of conflict. Recent events continue to highlight the Navy-Marine Corps team’s key national security role. Seabased, combat ready, forward deployed naval forces have been involved in more than 28 major military operations since 1995. Whether responding to natural disasters or to the specter of regional aggression, Navy and Marine forces provide self-contained and self-sustained air, land, and sea strike forces, operating from a protected sea base, that can be tailored to meet any contingency.

### 1002. Organization and Chain of Command

Two parallel chains of command—Service and operational—exist within the Marine Corps. The Service chain begins with the President, through the Secretary of Defense, and continues through the Secretary of the Navy and the Commandant of the Marine Corps. The operational chain runs from the President, through the Secretary of Defense, directly to commanders of combatant commands for missions and forces assigned to their commands. Marine Corps component commanders provide operational forces to commanders of combatant commands and other operational commanders as required.

The Marine Corps is divided into four broad categories: operating forces; the Marine Corps

Reserve; the supporting establishment; and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps.

### 1003. Marine Corps Operating Forces

The Marine Corps’ operating forces consist of:

- w Marine Corps forces (MARFOR)
- w Marine Corps security forces (MCSF) at naval installations
- w Marine security guard detachments at embassies and consulates around the globe.

The “Forces for Unified Commands” memorandum assigns Marine Corps operating forces to each of the combatant commands. A force assigned or attached to a combatant command may be transferred from that command only as directed by the Secretary of Defense and under procedures prescribed by the Secretary of Defense and approved by the President. The Marine Corps has established multiple Marine Corps component headquarters to support the unified commands.

**a.** Marine Corps forces are organized as MAGTFs and are either employed as part of naval expeditionary forces or separately as part of larger joint or combined forces.

The commanders of MARFOR Atlantic and Pacific serve as Marine Corps component commanders to their respective combatant commanders and may also serve as commanding generals of Fleet Marine Forces (FMFs) Atlantic, Pacific, and Europe. As commanding generals, with the status of a naval type commander, they provide forces for service with Commander US Atlantic Fleet, Commander US



Pacific Fleet, and Commander US Naval Forces Europe, respectively. (See figure 1-1.)

The Marine Corps component commander deals directly with the joint force commander (JFC) in matters affecting assigned MARFOR. He commands, trains, equips, and sustains MARFOR. As such, he is responsible for:

- w Making recommendations to the JFC on the proper employment of Marine forces.
- w Accomplishing such operational missions as may be assigned.
- w Selecting and nominating specific Marine units or forces for assignment to other subordinate forces of the combatant command.
- w Conducting joint training, including the training, as directed, of components of other Services in joint operations for which the Service component commander has or may be assigned primary responsibility or for which the Service component facilities and capabilities are suitable.
- w Informing the JFC (and the combatant commander, if affected) of planning for changes in logistic support that would significantly affect operational capability or sustainability sufficiently early in the planning process for the JFC to evaluate the proposals before final decision or implementation. If the combatant commander does not approve the proposal and discrepancies cannot be resolved between the combatant commander and the Service component commander, the combatant commander will forward the issue through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to the Secretary of Defense for resolution. Under crisis action or wartime conditions, and where critical situations make diversion of the normal logistic process necessary, Service component commanders will implement directives issued by the combatant commander.
- w Developing program and budget requests that comply with combatant commander guidance on warfighting requirements and priorities.
- w Informing the combatant commander (and any intermediate JFCs) of program and budget decisions that may affect joint operation planning.
- w Providing supporting operation and exercise plans to support assigned missions.

Although there are five Marine Corps components, there are only two Marine Corps component commands. The Marine Corps has established two combatant command-level Service component commands: Marine Corps Forces, Atlantic, and Marine Corps Forces, Pacific. The II Marine Expeditionary Force is provided by Commander, Marine Corps Forces, Atlantic, to the Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Command, and the I and III Marine Expeditionary Forces are provided by Commander, Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, to the Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command. This assignment reflects the peacetime disposition of Marine Corps forces. Marine expeditionary forces are apportioned to the remaining geographic combatant commands for contingency planning and are provided to the combatant commands when directed by the Secretary of Defense.

The Commander, Marine Corps Forces, Atlantic, is assigned to the Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Command, and the Commander, Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, is assigned to the Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command. In order to provide three-star, general officer representation to the remaining three geographic combatant commands, Commander, Marine Corps Forces, Atlantic (COMMARFORLANT), is designated as the Marine Corps component commander to both Commander in Chief, U.S. European Command (CINCUSEUCOM), and Commander in Chief, U.S. Southern Command (CINCUSOCCOM). The Commander, Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, is designated as the Marine Corps component commander