

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Marine-Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) is the Marine Corps' principle organization for the conduct of all missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs are balanced, combined arms forces with organic ground, aviation, and sustainment elements. MAGTFs have no standard structure, rather the MAGTF provides a single commander a combined arms force that can be tailored to the situation. MAGTFs are flexible, task-organized forces that can respond to a contingency anywhere in the world and are able to conduct a variety of missions.

MAGTFs must be *light* enough to be expeditionary yet *heavy* enough to defeat potential adversaries possessing large armored formations. The expeditionary nature of the Marine Corps limits the number of armor assets available to the MAGTF, while many of our potential enemies continue to expand and upgrade their armored forces. This dilemma requires that the MAGTF commander adopt a style of warfighting which allows him to win without armor parity. The MAGTF defeats enemy armor through the use of combined arms and the execution of maneuver warfare as prescribed in MCDP 1, *Warfighting*.

1001. The MAGTF vs. Enemy Armored Formations

A MAGTF may confront two types of armor threat. The first is the small group of tanks operating in support of enemy infantry. The second type is the large armored force which may be the enemy's primary means of influencing the battle. The destruction of either threat is the subject of this manual.

Destroying small groups of tanks is an action that occurs primarily at the small unit level of war. The destruction of enemy armored formations is primarily a tactical action carried out by the integration of all lethal and non-lethal weapon systems available to the MAGTF commander. The defeat of large armored formations *is not* the result of a series of successful, random actions at the platoon and squad level, in which small units utilize supporting arms on an as required basis. Success against large armored formations requires detailed planning, coordination, and the effective use of combined arms from the MAGTF commander down to his subordinate commanders and staffs.

When developing a countermechanized plan for countering a modern opposing force, if intelligence is incomplete, the assumption should normally be made that the MAGTF is potentially facing a sizable enemy armor force. This approach avoids the pitfall of analyzing threat as if it were only operating in an infantry-intensive environment. This precaution should not only be reflected in the Countermechanized Plan in Appendix 20. Rather, it must be integrated and reflected throughout the entire operations order. Adjustments to the countermechanized plan are made according to mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available, and time available (METT-T). The MAGTF should assume an antiarmor posture as a rule, not an exception.

1002. Scope

This manual sets forth the basic concepts of antiarmor operations for the MAGTF commander, subordinate commanders, and his staff. This manual provides general guidance (doctrine and tactics) and specific guidance (techniques and procedures) to commanders and their staffs. The most general guidance is called doctrine, while the most specific guidance is called procedures. Tactics and techniques fall between doctrine and procedures, with tactics being more general than techniques. (See fig. 1-1.)

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3 There are no clear divisions between these different levels of guidance. The interdependence of these levels is
4 equally difficult to quantify. For example, a change in tactics may or may not require a change in procedures. The
5 guidance in this manual includes doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures.
6

7 **a. Doctrine.** MCWP 3-15.5 (CD) provides the doctrinal foundation for employment of antiarmor operations
8 by the by the MAGTF commander. MCWP 3-15.5 (CD) also provides an overview of Threat doctrine for antiarmor
9 operations. Doctrine is the fundamental principles by which the military forces, or elements thereof, guide their
10 actions in support of national objectives. It is authoritative but requires judgment in application. (Joint Pub 1-02)
11 Doctrine is a collection of words which describe how military organizations function and how military operations
12 are conducted. Each principle has (1) a word or phrase for a name and (2) a definition which explains or describes
13 the principle. The definition may include a list of functions or a list of parts. Doctrine is important because words are
14 the tools for thinking, teaching, and giving directions. An example is the primacy of the combined arms concept
15 over individual arms in achieving success.
16

17 **c. Tactics.** This manual describes the tactical actions that a commander must take to destroy enemy armored
18 formations. Tactics is 1: employment of units in combat and the ordered arrangement and maneuver of units in
19 relation to each other and/or to the enemy in order to use their full potentialities (Joint Pub 1-02). .
20

21 **c. Techniques.** Techniques are methods of accomplishing a goal or mission. An example is engaging enemy
22 armored formations at the maximum effective range of friendly antiarmor weapon systems.
23

24 **d. Procedures.** Procedures are a series of standardized steps, a particular way of doing something. An example is
25 the formulation of an anti armor weapon range card.
26

27 **1003. Marine Corps' Warfighting Concept in Antiarmor Operations**

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29 The MAGTF defines the Marine Corps' posture toward combat. When the MAGTF is fighting against armored
30 formations, the fact that the MAGTF is an air-ground team can be used to present the enemy with a dilemma. To
31 effectively strike our ground forces, the enemy may mass his armor. However, massing his armor may present a
32 lucrative target to our ground attack aircraft and indirect fire weapon systems. To avoid being attacked by Marine
33 air, enemy armored commanders will seek to operate in forests, built-up areas, and other close terrain. However,
34 this type of terrain is ideal for dismounted ground forces can most effectively attack armored vehicles.
35

36 **a. The MAGTF's Transitional Capability.** The MAGTF commander views his force's traditional combined arms
37 capability as a combat multiplier, allowing the MAGTF to simultaneously confront the enemy with a variety of
38 fighting modes:
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40 · Light armored reconnaissance (LAR).

41
42 · Mechanized (AAV).

43
44 · Dismounted (foot).

45
46 · Motorized (truck).
47

1 · Helicopterborne (helicopter).

2
3 **b. Terminology.** The following definitions are provided to assist the reader in developing a basic understanding of
4 antiarmor doctrine and operations.

5
6 (1) **Combined Arms.** The full integration of combat arms in such a way that to counteract one, the enemy must
7 become more vulnerable to another (MCRP 5-2A). We accomplish combined arms through tactics and techniques at
8 the lower levels and through task organization at the higher levels. Combined arms integrates the effects of various
9 arms- infantry, armor, artillery, and aviation- to achieve the greatest possible effect against the enemy. The strengths
10 of arms complement and reinforce each other. At the same time, the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of each arm are
11 protected or offset by the capabilities of the other. In doing so we take advantage of the complementary
12 characteristics of different types of units and enhance our mobility and firepower. Fundamental considerations
13 include:

14
15 a. Lowest Level. The commander should implement combined arms at the lowest echelon capable of
16 controlling and coordinating the different forces and weapons systems.

17
18 b. Task Organization. Task organization is the process of allocating available forces to subordinate
19 commanders for the accomplishment of tasks. Task organization is developed through the Marine Corps Planning
20 Process described in MCWP 5-1, *Marine Corps Planning Process*. By using the planning process, the commander
21 and his staff wargame and analyze courses of action, taking into account key operational factors--mission, enemy,
22 terrain and weather, troops and support available-time available (METT-T); the commander's intent and concept of
23 operations; the maintenance of operational flexibility and tempo; and weighting the main effort--to determine the
24 best allocation of combat power to accomplish the mission.

25
26 c. Optimal Force Mix. The commander task organizes forces and employs weapons to maximize mutual
27 support and minimize inherent limitations among different units and their weapon systems. Characteristics to
28 examine when task-organizing a force include, but are not limited to: training, experience, equipment, sustainability,
29 operating environment, enemy threat, and mobility.

30
31 d. Unity of Command. All forces operate under one responsible commander who possesses requisite
32 authority to direct forces in the pursuit of a common unified purpose. The commander must have the means and
33 authority to control the employment of the combined arms force. Command and support relationships must give the
34 commander maximum flexibility to accomplish his mission.

35
36 e. Unity of Effort. Commanders develop in their staffs and subordinates the desire to cooperate, not only
37 among themselves, but with other elements of the MAGTF. Unity of effort extends down the entire chain of
38 command so that all echelons are working to attain the same goal. Teamwork is essential to ensure unity of effort
39 necessary to achieve the synergistic effect of combined arms.

40
41 (1) **Mechanized Force.** A Marine mechanized force is a task-organized, ground combat force of combined arms
42 built around an infantry or tank unit, reinforced with substantial assault amphibian assets. The Marine Corps is one
43 of the few armed forces in the world that conducts mechanized operations without permanently formed mechanized
44 infantry units. A Marine mechanized force is normally supported by air, artillery, light armor, antitank, engineer,
45 reconnaissance, motor transport, and other combat support and combat service support units. Maneuver units of a
46 Marine mechanized force are primarily tracked but may also include wheeled vehicles.

1 (2) **Mechanized Operation.** A mechanized operation is a tactical operation designed to maximize the ground
2 mobility, protection, shock action, and firepower of combat vehicles to concentrate combat power rapidly against
3 the enemy. Combat power is generated by the massed employment of tanks and enhancing the mobility of other
4 forces through the use of AAVs and other ground mobility means. (MCRP 5-2A)

5
6 (3) **Mechanized Infantry.** This term refers to a task-organized force of Marine infantry mounted in tracked
7 vehicles (AAVs). In general, this term is a reference to any infantry (friendly or enemy) that are riding in APCs or
8 IFVs. Note, that in most of the world's land armies the APC or IFV is organic to infantry units.

9
10 (4) **Light Armored Reconnaissance (LAR).** This term refers to the LAR battalion. The infantry personnel which
11 are organic to the LAR battalion are called scout infantry. Scout infantry are not employed in the same manner as
12 infantry or mechanized infantry. Scout infantry are trained and organized for employment in support of light
13 armored vehicles.

14
15 (5) **Cross-attachment.** The exchange of subordinate units between units for the purposes of task organizing a force
16 for a specific mission on a temporary basis. Example: A tank battalion detaches a tank company that is subsequently
17 attached to an infantry battalion mechanized in AAVs, and the infantry battalion mechanized in AAVs detaches a
18 company to the tank battalion to create two battalion task forces with complementary capabilities.

19
20 (6) **Mechanized Task Force.** A mechanized task force is created by task organizing mechanized infantry and or
21 tanks under the command of a single battalion or regimental commander. The mechanized task force, like the
22 MAGTF, has no standard structure. Normally, the mechanized task force is supported by air, artillery, light armor,
23 antitank, engineer, reconnaissance, motor transport and other combat support and combat service support units.
24 Mechanized task forces are described by their mix of tank and mechanized infantry. (Note: Graphics for task force
25 and company teams to be included during editing)

26
27 a. **Tank Heavy Task Force.** A tank-heavy force has more subordinate tank than infantry units. The
28 headquarters of a tank heavy task force is usually that of a tank battalion. Tank-heavy forces provide more firepower
29 and armor protection than mechanized infantry.

30
31 b. **Mechanized Heavy Task Force.** A mech-heavy force has more subordinate infantry units mounted in
32 tracked vehicles than subordinate tank units. The headquarters of a mech-heavy task force is usually that of an
33 infantry battalion or regiment.

34
35 c. **Balanced Task Force.** A balanced task force is organized with an equal number of subordinate tank and
36 infantry units. The headquarters for a balanced task force can be either that of a tank battalion or infantry
37 battalion/regiment. A balanced task force provides a balance between armor and infantry capabilities while retaining
38 similar mobility.

39
40 d. **Tank/Infantry Pure Task Force.** A pure unit has either tank or infantry units, but not both.

41
42 (7) **Company Team.** A team organized by the cross attachment of one or more tank platoons and/or mounted or
43 dismounted infantry platoons. Based on METT-T, an infantry or tank battalion commander receiving tank or
44 mechanized infantry companies may tailor the increase the effectiveness of his units by forming company teams.
45 This is done by cross-attaching tank platoons and mechanized infantry platoons.

46
47 a. **Tank/Mechanized Infantry Heavy Teams.** Teams are cross-attached in the same manner and for the
48 same reasons as task forces.

49
50 b. Types of Mechanized Company Teams

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1 Note: Graphics to be included later.

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- 3 1. Tank Heavy Teams
- 4 2. Mechanized- Heavy Teams
- 5 3. Balanced Teams
- 6 4. Mechanized Pure Companies
- 7 5. Tank Pure Companies
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10 1004. Engagement Area Model

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12 In addition to the preceding model depicting different levels of guidance, the reader should also be cognizant of
13 another conceptual model that addresses the technical aspects of antiarmor operations within the framework of the
14 engagement area (EA). An **engagement area** is an area along an enemy avenue of approach where the commander
15 intends to contain and destroy an enemy force with massed fires of all available weapons. The size and shape of the
16 engagement area is determined by the relatively unobstructed intervisibility from the weapons systems in their firing
17 positions and the maximum range of those weapons (MCRP 5-2A). Within the EA, sectors of fire are usually
18 assigned to subordinates to prevent fratricide. Mutual support among firing positions exists to achieve interlocking
19 fire for area coverage and recognizable limits for the control of fires. Key elements of this model are: weapon
20 engagement and positioning, and unit positioning within the EA. As the definition implies “all available weapons”
21 refers to the integration of both lethal and non-lethal fires that all MAGTF elements can employ.

22
23 The engagement area model is rooted in higher order doctrine under the concept of ambush mentality.(MCDP 1-3)
24 Like ambushes, commanders employ engagement areas to:

25
26 (1) *Surprise the enemy* by delivering fires from multiple directions. The psychological impact of this
27 surprise may paralyze the enemy’s thoughts and actions, leaving the enemy incapable of reacting effectively.

28
29 (2) *Draw the enemy unknowingly into a trap* by deceiving them into taking an inviting course of action.
30 When the attacker takes this course of action, he will face overwhelming massed fires.

31
32 (3) *Create the illusion of invisibility* by preventing the enemy from detecting us until it is too late to react.
33 Invisibility can be achieved by stealth or by luring the enemy’s attention elsewhere to allow our forces time and
34 space to maneuver without detection.

35
36 (4) *Shock the enemy* by massing fires which may induce paralysis and prevent a proper counter-action by
37 the enemy. Often the enemy will panic, making his problem worse as he reacts rather than acts.

38
39 (5) *Focus on the enemy* by using terrain to effect the ambush. The primary purpose is to destroy the
40 enemy, not hold a piece of terrain.

41
42 The EA model, like the concept of the ambush mentality, is the frame of reference for the discussion of MAGTF
43 antiarmor operations. (See fig. 1-2.) This concept will be further defined in the forthcoming chapters. See chapter 3,
44 Section 3202.