Welcome to the Marine Corps

The **Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF)** is the Marine Corps principal organizational construct for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs provide combatant commanders with scalable, versatile expeditionary forces able to assure allies, deter potential adversaries, provide persistent U.S. presence with little or no footprint ashore, and respond to a broad range of contingency, crisis, and conflict situations. They are task organized, combined-arms force packages containing command, ground, aviation, and logistics elements. A single commander leads and coordinates this combined-arms team through all phases of pre-deployment training, deployment, and employment. MAGTF teams live and train together further increasing their cohesion and fighting power.

The MAGTF was formalized by the publishing of Marine Corps Order 3120.3 in December of 1963. Since World War II, in many crises, the United States Marine Corps has deployed projection forces, with the ability to move ashore with sufficient sustainability for prolonged operations. MAGTFs have long provided the United States with a broad spectrum of response options when U.S. and allied interests have been threatened and in non-combat situations which require instant response to crisis. Selective, timely and credible commitment of air-ground units have, on many occasions, helped bring stability to a region and sent signals worldwide that the United States is willing to defend its interests, and is able to do so with a significantly powerful force on extremely short notice.

Tailored to meet combatant commanders' requirements, MAGTFs operate as an integrated force in the air, land, maritime and cyberspace domains. The naval character of MAGTFs enhances their global mobility, lethality, and staying power. Embarked aboard amphibious ships or deployed using other means, multi-mission capable MAGTFs provide U.S. civilian and military leaders with increased strategic and operational flexibility.

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Forward deployed MEUs embarked aboard Amphibious Ready Groups (ARGs) operate continuously in the areas of responsibility of various Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCC). These units provide the President and the GCC with credible deterrence and decision time across the range of military operations. MEUs serve as a forward-deployed, flexible sea-based MAGTF, capable of conducting amphibious operations to respond to crisis, conduct limited contingency operations, introduce follow-on forces, and support designated special operations forces. MEUs are characterized by their sea-based forward presence, expeditionary nature, ability to plan for and respond to crises, combined arms integration, and their interoperability with joint, combined, and special operations forces.

The four core elements describe types of forces needed and not actual military units or commands. They are Command, Aviation, Ground, and Logistics Combat Elements. The four types of MAGTF organizational forces each have specific trained skills and tactics. These are from largest to smallest unit size:

1. MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE (MEF)
2. MARINE EXPEDITIONARY BRIGADE (MEB)
3. MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNIT (MEU)
4. SPECIAL PURPOSE MAGTF (I.E.MARINE RAIDERS)

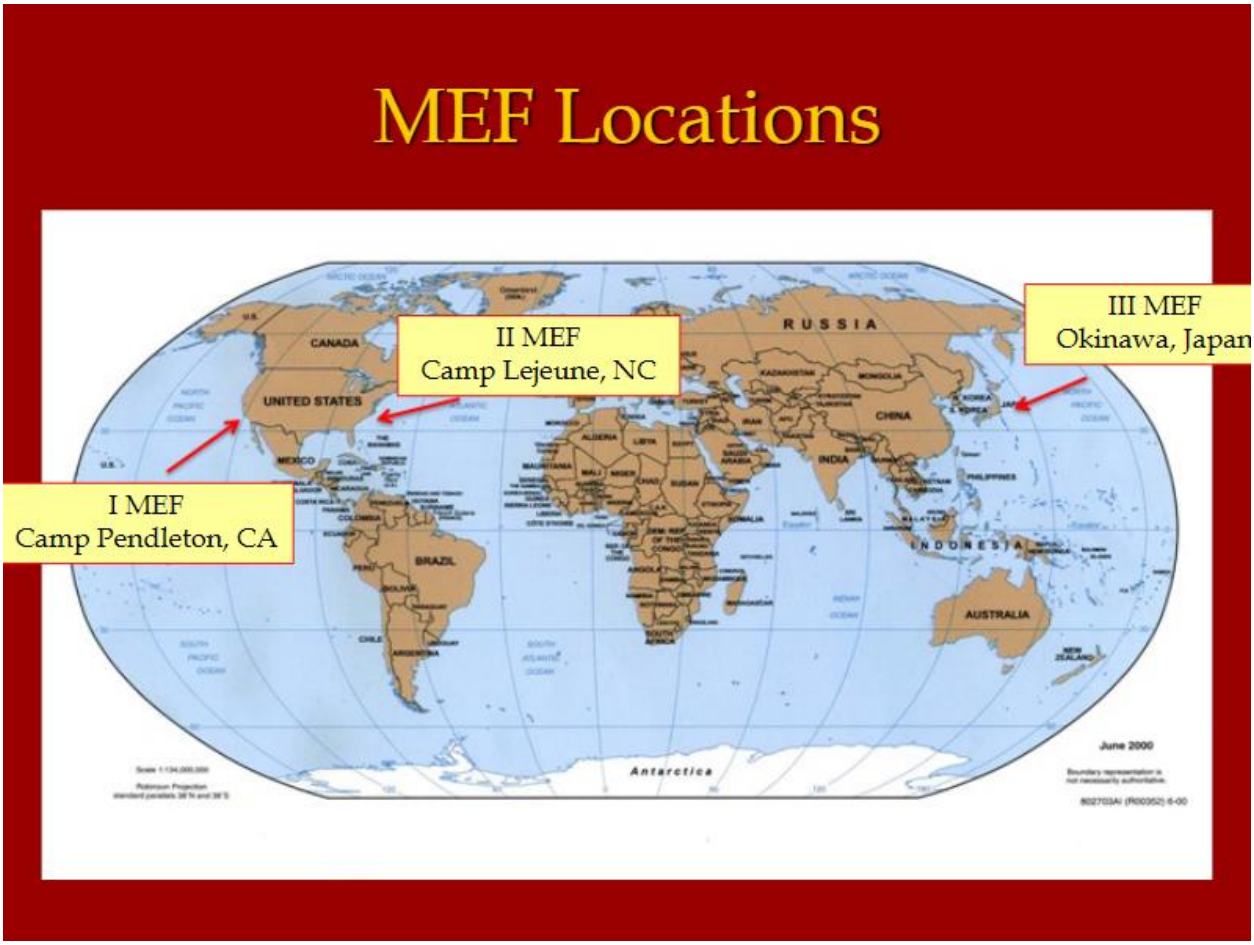
The basic structure of the MAGTF never varies, though the number, size, and type of Marine Corps units comprising each of its four elements will always be mission dependent. The flexibility of the organizational structure allows for one or more subordinate MAGTFs to be assigned.

A Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) is larger than a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) but smaller than a MEF. The MEB is capable of conducting missions across the full range of military operations and varies in size.

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MEF – Marine Expeditionary Force

Also Known As: MAF – Marine Amphibious Force (1970 – 1987)



I MEF – located in Camp Pendelton, California

The I Marine Expeditionary Force is a Marine Air Ground Task Force of the United States Marine Corps primarily composed of the 1st Marine Division, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, and 1st Marine Logistics Group. The Marine Corp's largest warfighting Marine Air-Ground Task Force, I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), stands ready to face the emerging security challenges of today across the full range of military operations. The key to I MEF's success throughout its history has been its ability to seamlessly integrate all aspects of warfighting into an expeditionary combined arms approach. That construct, along with the initiative, determination, and talent of individual Marines, has made I MEF the nation's premier warfighting formation.

II MEF – located in Camp Lejeune, NC; MCAS Cherry Point, NC; MCAS New River, NC; MCAS Beaufort, SC.

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With more than 47,000 Marines and Sailors, II MEF is representative of the largest and most powerful Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF).

II MEF is comprised of four basic components:

(1) II MEF Information Group contains personnel and equipment necessary for the effective planning and execution of operations.

(2) A ground combat element, the 2d Marine Division.

(3) An aviation combat element, the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing.

(4) A combat service support element, the 2nd Marine Logistics Group.

III MEF – located in Okinawa

III MEF, currently headquartered in Okinawa, Japan, maintains a forward presence in support of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the U.S. and Japan, and other regional allies of the U.S. III MEF also conducts combined operations and training throughout the region in support of the National Security Strategy for Theater Security Cooperation.

III MEF subordinate units include the 3rd Marine Division, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit and III Marine Expeditionary Force Information Group.



The Marine Corp's largest warfighting Marine Air-Ground Task Force, I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), stands ready to face the emerging security challenges of today across the full range of military operations. The key to I MEF's success throughout its history has been its ability to seamlessly integrate all aspects of warfighting into an expeditionary combined arms approach. That construct, along with the initiative, determination, and talent of individual Marines, has made I MEF the nation's premier warfighting formation.

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The origins of I MEF can be traced back to 1969 when it was first activated in Okinawa, Japan, under Fleet Marine Forces Pacific. A year later, it was redesignated as I Marine Amphibious Force (I MAF) and relocated to Camp Pendleton, California, where it has maintained its presence for the last 53 years.

During the Vietnam War, I MAF played a crucial role in various operations, including supporting the Republic of Vietnam's government and assisting in counter-insurgency efforts. The force's extensive experience and adaptability in the complex and challenging environment of Vietnam solidified its reputation as a battle-tested and reliable combat force.
I MAF was redesignated back to I MEF in 1988 and quickly cemented its legacy as a premier expeditionary Marine Air-Ground Task Force. It participated in Operation Desert Shield to deter further aggression by Iraq and promote regional stability. Iraq's refusal to withdraw forces from Kuwait triggered Operation Desert Storm, where I MEF's employment of combined air-ground combined operations and combat prowess were vital in the success of the coalition's swift and decisive victory, leading to the liberation of Kuwait and the expulsion of Iraqi forces from the region.
In 1992, I MEF was designated the Headquarters of Joint Task Force Somalia and tasked with restoring stability and providing relief to the famine-stricken nation. I MEF deployed with its Major Subordinate Commands, 1st Marine Division, 3D Marine Aircraft Wing, as well as with elements of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) to Mogadishu in Operation Restore Hope. During their operations, I MEF Marines conducted security operations, humanitarian aid distribution, and collaborated with United Nations peacekeeping forces to protect and aid civilians affected by the conflict and famine.

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In the 2000s, I MEF played a crucial role in both Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, contributing significantly to the success of the United States' military engagements in Afghanistan and Iraq. During Operation Enduring Freedom, I MEF units executed a range of missions, including combat operations, humanitarian assistance, and stabilization efforts proving the flexibility of the MAGTF construct across the full range of military operations. They conducted counterinsurgency operations and partnered with Afghan security forces to disrupt terrorist networks.

Similarly, during Operation Iraqi Freedom, I MEF units conducted major combat operations, leading the effort to seize control of key cities like Baghdad, and subsequently focused on stabilizing and rebuilding Iraq. Their involvement demonstrated exceptional combat capabilities, adaptability, and commitment to fulfilling mission objectives, solidifying I MEF's reputation as masters of expeditionary combined arms warfare.

As the security challenges of the 21st century have evolved, the argument for the MAGTF has only been strengthened based on its flexibility, scalability, and adaptability. Through humanitarian assistance to competition with peer competitors, the combat power, logistical sustainment, and an aviation capability package of the MAGTF remain invaluable to combatant commanders in every region of the globe.



As I MEF has adapted to a shifting character of war, the synergy and fabric of MAGTF remain the basis for achieving success in an all-domain, combined arms approach.

In an ever-changing world, the adaptability, resilience, and warrior spirit of I MEF Marines has proven timeless. The current generation of I MEF

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Marines carries that legacy forward and stands ready to defend America's interests, respond to emergencies, and contribute to global security whenever and wherever called upon.

A Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) comprises a MEF Headquarters Group, Marine Division, Marine Air Wing and Marine Logistics Group. For example, II Marine Expeditionary Force (II MEF) is composed of II MEF Information Group (MIG), 2nd Marine Division, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing and 2nd Marine Logistics Group, all based on the East Coast.
The three Marine Expeditionary Forces are:

- ✓ I Marine Expeditionary Force located at Camp Pendleton, California
- ✓ II Marine Expeditionary Force located at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina
- ✓ III Marine Expeditionary Force located at Camp Courtney, Okinawa, Japan

III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) provides the United States with a forward-deployed force in readiness in the Pacific Theater, as a globally responsive, expeditionary, and fully scalable Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF), capable of generating, deploying, and employing forces for crisis response, forward presence, major combat operations, and campaigns.

III MEF was established as I Marine Amphibious Corps on Oct. 1, 1942. It was renamed III Amphibious Corps, April 15, 1944, and contributed to noteworthy military campaigns, such as the Solomon Islands campaign, the Mariana and Palau Islands campaign, and the Battle of Okinawa, during World War II.

In September 1945, III AC redeployed to Tientsin, China, and supported the occupation of Northern China before being deactivated June 10, 1946.

III AC Amphibious Corps was reactivated on May 6, 1965 in Da Nang, Republic of Vietnam, and redesignated III Marine Amphibious Force on May 7, 1965. III MAF, which consisted of 1st Marine Division, 3rd Marine Division and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, operated in Quang Tri, Thua Thien, Quang Nam, Quang Tin, and Quang Ngai from May 1965 to April 1971 during the Vietnam War.

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III MAF was redesignated as III Marine Expeditionary Force on Feb. 5, 1988 and has since supported military operations throughout the world. In the Middle East, III MEF supported Operation Desert Shield, Operation Desert Storm, Operation Provide Comfort, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. III MEF elements also played a vital role in Operation Sea Angel, in Bangladesh, from May-June 1991; Operation Fiery Vigil, in the Philippines, during June 1991; and Operation Restore Hope and Operation Continue Hope, in Somalia, from December 1992 to March 1994.

Today, III MEF supports a wide range of military operations, including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. III MEF provided HADR assistance during Super Typhoon Megi in the Philippines during 2010; earthquake-relief efforts in Japan during March 2011; Operation Tomodachi, a tsunami-relief effort in Japan during May of the same year; flood-relief efforts in Thailand during October-November 2011; typhoon-relief efforts in the Philippines during December 2012 and November 2013; earthquake-relief efforts in Nepal during 2015 and in Kumamoto, Japan, in 2016.

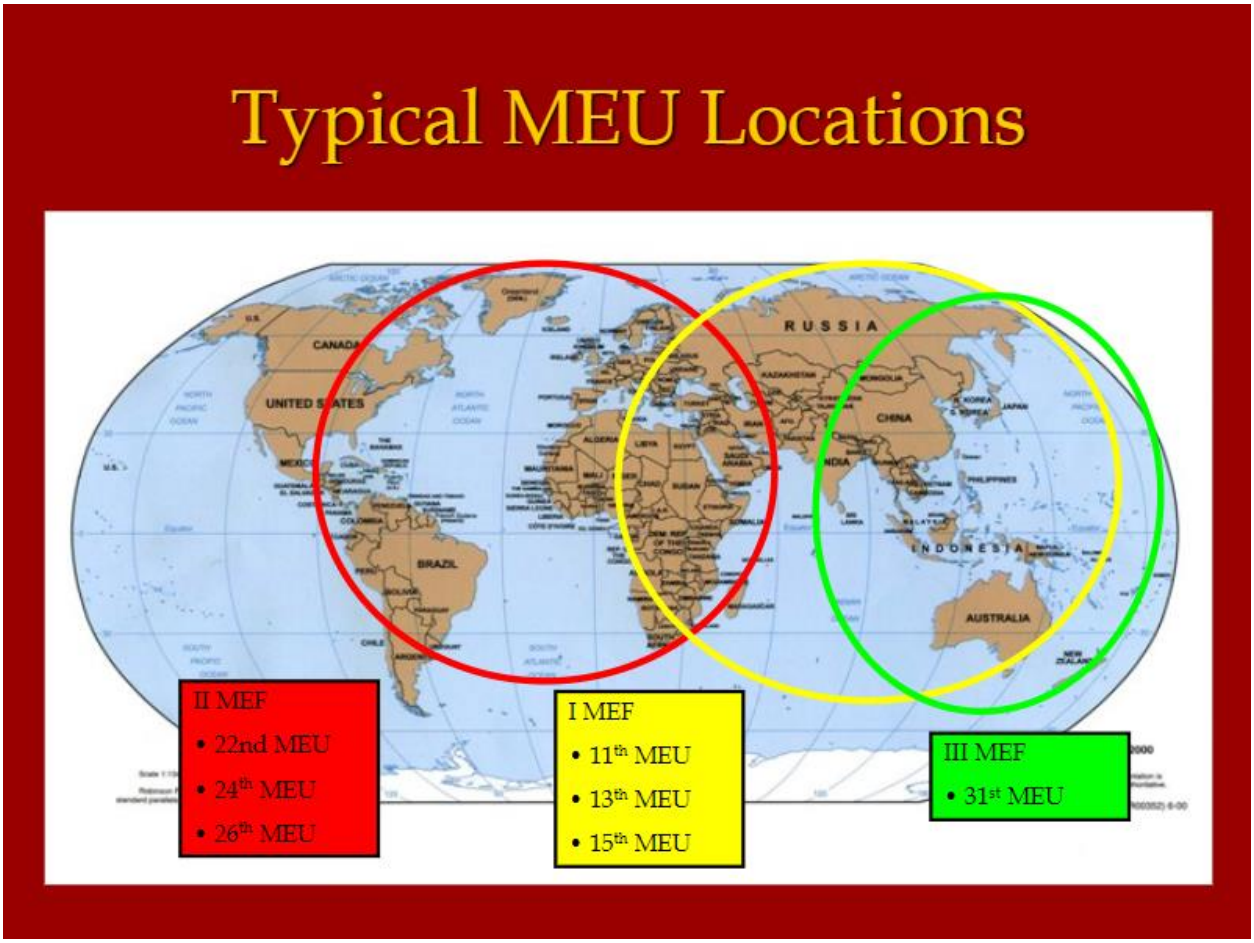
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III MEF subordinate units include the 3rd Marine Division, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit and III Marine Expeditionary Force Information Group.

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MEU - Marine Expeditionary Unit

A **Marine expeditionary unit** (**MEU**, pronounced as one syllable "M'you" IPA: /mjuː/) is the smallest air-ground task force (MAGTF) in the United States Fleet Marine Force. Each MEU is an expeditionary rapid reaction force ready to answer any crisis, whether it be disaster aid or a combat mission.[1] Marine amphibious unit (MAU) was the name used until the late 1980s.



A MEU normally is composed of

- ✓ a reinforced USMC infantry battalion (designated as a Battalion Landing Team) as the ground combat element

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- ✓ a composite medium tiltrotor squadron forming the aviation combat element
- ✓ a combat logistics battalion providing the logistics combat element
- ✓ a company-size command element serving as the MEU headquarters group.

The smallest type of MAGTF is the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), commanded by a United States Marine Corps, Colonel.

There are seven standing MEUs that routinely deploy in accordance with the Global Force Management Implementation Guidance (GFMIG). The CONUS-based MEUs are 11th, 13th and 15th from the West Coast and the 22d, 24th, and 26th MEUs from the East Coast. The 31st MEU is forward assigned and located in Okinawa, Japan.

Troop strength of a MEU is about 2,200 (normal and peacetime) to 4,400 (mobilization and wartime). A MEU is usually commanded by a colonel and is deployed from amphibious assault ships.

Currently, a MEU embarks personnel and equipment on the amphibious warfare ships of an expeditionary strike group (ESG), which also includes escort warships and submarines to protect them from air, surface, and submarine threats. For further protection and strong air support, an ESG is often deployed along with one or more carrier strike groups.

Description

A Marine expeditionary unit is the smallest air-ground task force in the United States Fleet Marine Force. Each MEU is an expeditionary rapid reaction force ready to answer any crisis, whether it be disaster aid or a combat mission. Marine amphibious unit was the name used until the late 1980s.

Size: approximately 2,200 Marines

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U.S. Marines with Battalion Landing Team 1/6, 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) (26MEU(SOC)) conduct a live-fire training exercise aboard dock landing ship USS Carter Hall, Arabian Gulf, Sept. 19, 2023. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Rafael Brambila-Pelayo)

Military.com | By Drew F. Lawrence and Konstantin Toropin

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A Marine Corps expeditionary unit, which abruptly ended pre-scheduled training in Kuwait last week, is en route "to the waters off of Israel," a defense official familiar with planning told Military.com on Monday.

Its movement comes as Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin ordered additional military capabilities to the region. The 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, or MEU, is capable of conducting amphibious operations and crisis response, among other missions, the official said.

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An MEF Unit consists of four elements:

1. **GCE** – **G**round **C**ombat **E**lement

   The ground combat element (GCE) is based on the battalion landing team (BLT), an infantry battalion reinforced with an artillery battery, amphibious assault vehicle platoon, combat engineer platoon, light armored reconnaissance company, reconnaissance platoon, and other units as the mission and circumstances require. The total strength is approximately 1,100 members, including Navy sailors.

   The MSPF - Maritime Special Purpose Force is a subgroup of the MEU, formed for low-profile missions. The MSPF force consists of four elements: an assault platoon (a direct-action platoon augmented from Force Recon), a security platoon (a selected infantry platoon from the battalion landing team), reconnaissance and surveillance assets, and a headquarters section. The total strength is approximately 350 members, including Navy sailors.

   The **ground combat element** (GCE), composed primarily of infantry units (infantry battalions organized into battalion landing teams, regimental combat teams, and Marine divisions). These organizations contain a headquarters unit that provides command and control (management and planning for manpower, intelligence, operations and training, and

logistics functions) as well as scout/sniper, aviation liaison/forward air controller, nuclear/biological/chemical defense, communications, service (supply, motor transport, weapons maintenance, and dining facility), and Navy combat medical and chaplain's corps personnel. The GCE also contains combat support units, including artillery, armor (tank, assault amphibian, and light armored reconnaissance), combat engineer, and reconnaissance units. At the division level, the GCE also contains limited organic combat service support, including a truck company, a military police/law enforcement company, and the division band.

As the largest component of the GCE, Marine infantry is essentially multi-purpose, heavily manned and equipped, light infantry (e.g., a Marine rifle squad having 13 Marines. With three rifle companies that are over 40% larger than an Army infantry unit, plus a weapons company, and an additional 100 members in its Headquarters and Service Company. the Marine infantry battalion contains approximately 970 members as compared to approximately 560 in an Army light infantry battalion.

2. **ACE** – **A**viation **C**ombat **E**lement
   The **aviation combat element** (ACE), which contributes the air power to the MAGTF, includes all aircraft (fixed wing, helicopters, tiltrotor, and UAV) and aviation support units. The units are organized into detachments, squadrons, groups, and wings, except for low altitude air defense units, which are organized into platoons, detachments, batteries, and battalions. These units include pilots, flight officers, enlisted aircrewmen, aviation logistics (aircraft maintenance, aviation electronics, aviation ordnance, and aviation supply) and Navy aviation medical and chaplain's corps personnel, as well as ground-based air defense units, and those units necessary for command and control (management and planning for manpower, intelligence, operations and training, and logistics functions), aviation command and control (tactical air command, air defense control, air support control, and air traffic control), communications, and aviation ground support (e.g., airfield services, bulk fuels/aircraft refueling, crash rescue, engineer construction and utilities support, EOD, motor transport, ground equipment supply and maintenance, local security/law enforcement, and the wing band).

   The majority of aircraft usage within the MAGTF is for close air support or transport for the ground combat element (GCE) or logistics combat element (LCE), however, other specialized missions are available. The six main functions include: assault support, anti-air warfare, offensive air support, electronic warfare, control of aircraft and missiles, and aerial reconnaissance.

   The **aviation combat element** (**ACE**) is a USMC composite squadron (reinforced) composed of a medium tiltrotor squadron augmented with detachments of heavy, light, and attack helicopters, one detachment of amphibious flight-deck-capable jets, and a Marine air control group detachment with tactical air command, air traffic control, direct air support, and anti-aircraft assets, as well as wing headquarters, wing communications, and wing support squadron personnel. Total strength is approximately 600 troops.

3. **LCE** – **L**ogistics **C**ombat **E**lement
   The logistics combat element (LCE), organized into battalions, regiments, and groups, has its own headquarters element for command and control (management and planning for manpower, intelligence, operations and training, and logistics functions) of its subordinate units and contains the majority of the combat service support units for the MAGTF, including:

heavy motor transport, ground supply, heavy engineer support, ground equipment maintenance, and advanced medical and dental units, along with certain specialized groups such as air delivery, EOD, and landing support teams.

The **logistics combat element** (**LCE**) (formerly *combat service support element* or *CSSE*) is based on the MEU combat logistics battalion (CLB) (formerly *MEU service support group* or *MSSG*). It contains all the logistics specialists and equipment necessary for the MEU to support and sustain itself for up to 15 days in an austere expeditionary environment. It includes service support (postal and disbursing), medical, dental, intermediate maintenance, intermediate supply (consumables and secondary reparable), transportation (distribution and landing support), explosive ordnance disposal, utilities production and distribution, bulk fuels, internal communications, and various other technical experts. It consists of approximately 300 members, including Navy sailors.

4. **CE** – **C**ommand **E**lement

   The **Command Element** (CE), a headquarters unit organized into a MAGTF (MEU, MEB, MEF) headquarters (HQ) group, that exercises command and control (management and planning for manpower, intelligence, operations and training, and logistics functions) over the other elements of the MAGTF. The HQ group consists of communications, intelligence, surveillance, and law enforcement (i.e., military police) detachments, companies, and battalions, and reconnaissance (Force Reconnaissance), and liaison (ANGLICO) platoons, detachments, and companies.

   The **command element** (**CE**), which includes the MEU commander and his supporting staff, provides command and control over the other three elements. It includes specialized detachments for air naval gunfire liaison, reconnaissance, surveillance, specialized communications, radio reconnaissance (SIGINT), electronic warfare, Marine Corps Intelligence and counterintelligence, law enforcement, and public affairs missions. The overall strength is about 200 members, including Navy sailors.