



TRAINING AT THE COMBAT CENTER

Preparing warfighters for mission success

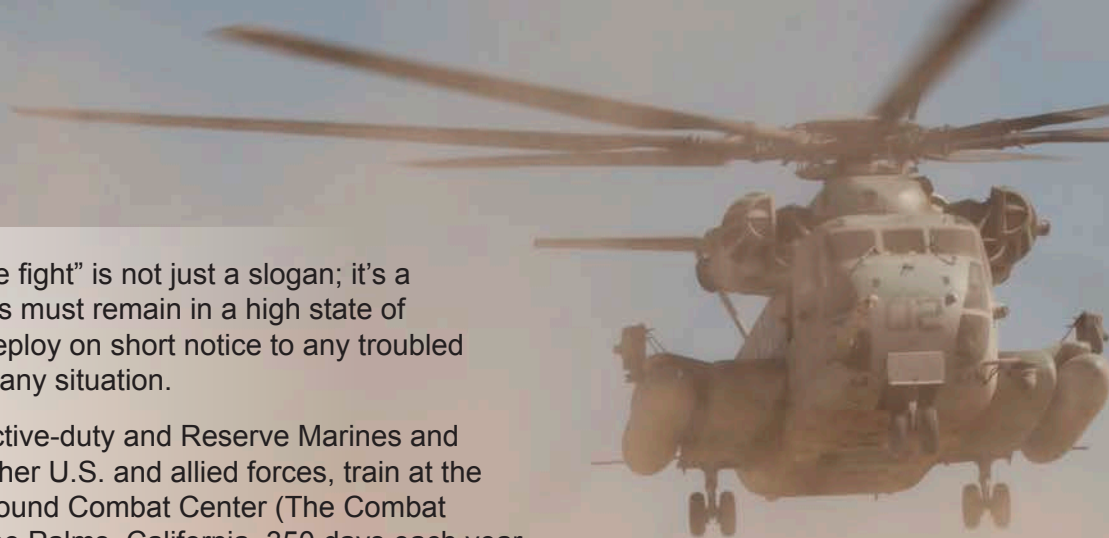


“We must train as we fight” is not just a slogan; it’s a requirement. Marines must remain in a high state of readiness, able to deploy on short notice to any troubled location, to stabilize any situation.

More than 50,000 active-duty and Reserve Marines and sailors, as well as other U.S. and allied forces, train at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (The Combat Center) in Twentynine Palms, California, 350 days each year.

The only way to ensure that mission success is consistent is to conduct realistic training that prepares Marines for real-world challenges they may face in an ever-changing landscape of opponents, battlegrounds, objectives, technologies and cultures.

The Combat Center is the Marine Corps’ choice location to prepare the Marines of today for the full range of crises they may face, from forcible entry to humanitarian assistance. The dynamic training conducted aboard the base is unavailable anywhere else in the world. The Combat Center provides units the very foundation for victory no matter where they are called upon to fight.



ONE BASE, TWO MISSIONS

Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command Mission: **Manage the Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Program and conduct service level Marine Air Ground Task Force combined arms training to enhance the combat readiness of the operating forces and support the Marine Corps’ responsibilities to national security.**

Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Mission: **Provide a standard of excellence in managing facilities, services and support to the operating forces and families, in order to ensure readiness of the tenant and resident commands aboard the Combat Center.**

HOW THE MARINE CORPS FIGHTS

The Marine Corps fights as a Marine Air Ground Task Force, or MAGTF. Each MAGTF is composed of four elements:

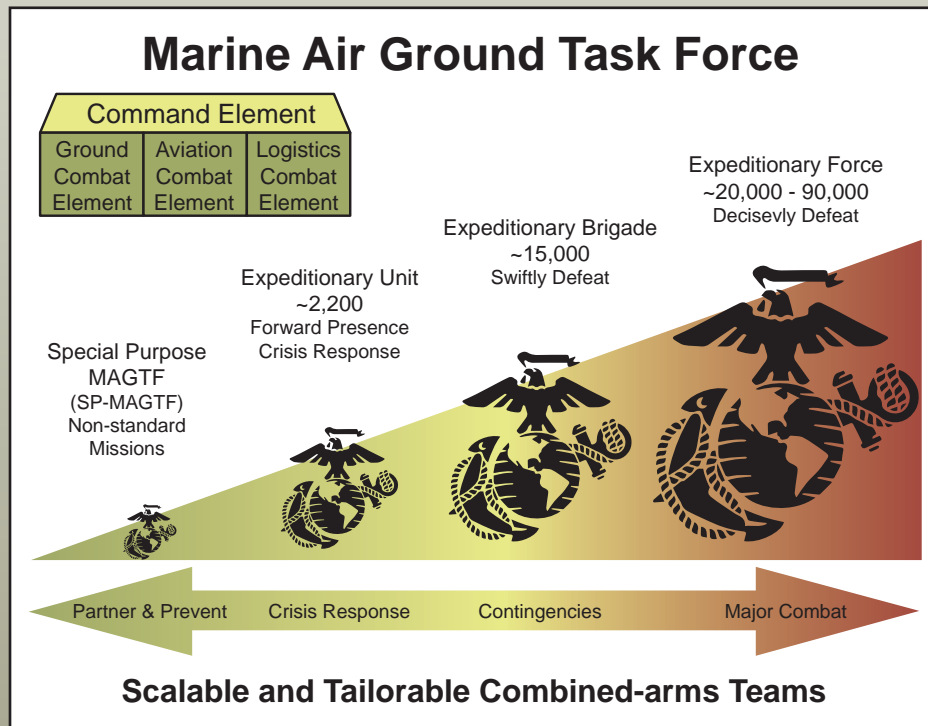
Ground Combat Element — infantry, artillery, reconnaissance, armor, light armor, assault amphibian and engineers

Aviation Combat Element — fixed- and rotary-winged platforms providing assault support, anti-air warfare, offensive air support, electronic warfare, control of aircraft and missiles and aerial reconnaissance

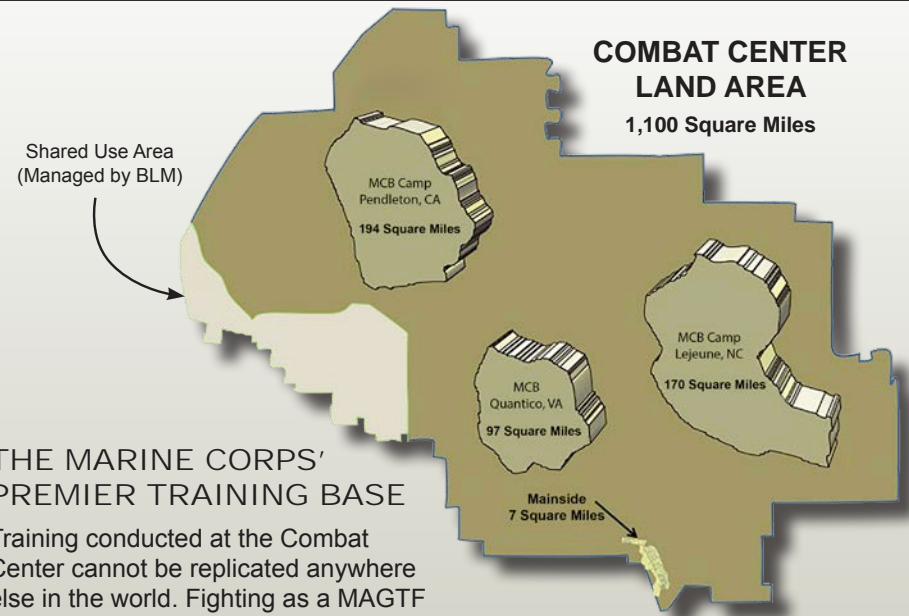
Logistics Combat Element — full range of combat logistics functions to support and sustain the MAGTF

Command Element — the headquarters function providing operations, intelligence, logistics, communications and administrative support

Although the Marine Corps fights as a MAGTF, Marine Corps units are not organized or permanently attached to any MAGTF. The elements comprising a MAGTF are built from Marine units stationed across the U.S. and at Iwakuni or Okinawa, Japan. When called upon, a MAGTF is organized to meet a specific mission and to rapidly deploy by air and/or sea to respond to a broad range of combat, crisis and conflict situations.



COMBAT CENTER OVERVIEW



THE MARINE CORPS' PREMIER TRAINING BASE

Training conducted at the Combat Center cannot be replicated anywhere else in the world. Fighting as a MAGTF is complex and unique to the Marine Corps. To gain proficiency, Marine Corps units must train together as one, and train as they would fight.

After being identified as the best location to support modernized air, ground and logistical training at the Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) level, the Combat Center was expanded in 2014 with new training ranges and a Shared Use Area in Johnson Valley.

The Combat Center is the largest Marine Corps base in the world. With the additional training lands, it encompasses roughly 1,100 square miles. This far surpasses the size of other large Marine Corps bases in Quantico, Virginia; Camp Lejeune, North Carolina; or Camp Pendleton, California. Only at the Combat Center can a MEB-sized force (roughly 15,000 Marines and sailors) simultaneously maneuver for 48 to 72 hours in a combined-arms, live-fire exercise scenario. Before this expansion, no Marine Corps base in the nation could provide the space sufficient for this critical training.

TENANT COMMANDS

The Combat Center is home station to:

- 7th Marine Regiment (infantry)
- 1st Tank Battalion
- 4th Tank Battalion
- 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines (artillery)
- 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion
- 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion
- Combat Logistics Battalion 7
- Marine Wing Support Squadron 374
- Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital
- 23rd Dental Company

These commands conduct training and support the MAGTF, are worldwide deployable, and provide resources and capabilities to the units visiting the Combat Center.

TRAINING: INDIVIDUAL TO LARGE SCALE EXERCISES

Individual Marines and units need training before participating in live-fire, combined-arms MAGTF exercises. Aside from its large maneuver corridors, the Combat Center operates a number of ranges that enable smaller units and individual Marines to refine skills and gain invaluable opportunities to “train as we fight.” These ranges allow Marines to employ weapons systems, conduct both non-live-fire and live-fire training, and practice tactics, techniques and procedures that are the building blocks for follow-on training.

Marine Corps infantry units are built on a four-person fire team construct. Fire teams comprise a squad, squads a platoon and platoons a company. To build on the requisite skills and teamwork needed for complex combined-arms operations, these units begin with the marksmanship and training ranges. Here, the Marines are exposed to known and unknown distance ranges for both the rifle and pistol. These ranges are geared toward the individual Marine gaining confidence and proficiency in these weapons systems.

Units then begin training on a series of ranges designed for fire teams and squad tactics. These ranges enable units to conduct table gunnery; familiarize themselves with live-fire training for defensive operations; fire mortars, hand grenades and light/heavy anti-armor weapons; execute squad-sized troop formations to engage stationary and moving infantry targets at unknown distances; and employ mines, line charges and other demolitions.

Next, units progress to ranges designed to train an infantry platoon and company in the tactics and techniques required to conduct hasty attacks and live-fire maneuver. These ranges allow the infantry company to use supporting arms including machine guns, 81mm mortars, Amphibious Assault Vehicles, Light Armored Vehicles and engineers, while facing three enemy platoon strong points, minefields, machine gun bunkers and wire bunkers containing anti-tank/anti-personnel mines.

Once units are proficient through the company level on live-fire employment of their organic weapons systems, they progress to ranges that focus on urban warfare. Complete with two- and three-story buildings, schools, cafés, market places, wrecked cars, walled compounds and tunnels, these training areas continue to build on the company’s proficiency in maneuver warfare.



Finally, units graduate to Range 220, a large-scale battalion and larger complex urban environment capable of accommodating combined-arms exercises for infantry, fighting vehicles, rotary wing aircraft and the logistics needed to support the training. The range features seven districts, each presenting distinct character, elements and challenges intended to fulfill urban combat training objectives. Districts are complete with multi-story structures and open spaces such as market places, plazas, playing fields, courtyards and traffic circles. Each district includes infrastructure like roads and tunnels, bridges and helicopter landing zones.

To ensure proficiency in the employment of other Marine Corps weapons systems, additional ranges are geared toward aviation indirect live-fire, explosive ordnance disposal training, tanks and maneuver vehicles and sniper training. Other ranges are dedicated to the training of armored vehicle gunnery crew qualifications for mounted or dismounted infantry, and to air- and artillery-sensitive fuzed munitions.

Combat Center training ranges continue to develop capability in response to lessons learned from real-world operations. An example is Range 800, the Counter-IED (Improved Explosive Device) training facility designed to improve the warfighting skills of individual Marines through a company-sized unit. This range prepares Marines to fight in the IED/Counter-IED environment.

When a need to conduct counter-tunneling operations was identified, the Combat Center began building a tunnel complex and creating the requisite training program to continue to prepare Marines for challenges they could face when deployed.



INTEGRATED TRAINING EXERCISE

As America's opponents, battlegrounds, objectives and cultural challenges change, so must training. From the Cold War-era Desert Palm Tree exercise of the 1950s, to the Combined Arms Exercise of the 1980s and 1990s, to the counter-insurgency Mojave Viper and Enhanced Mojave Viper exercises that focused on Iraq and Afghanistan, the Marine Corps has continually shaped and adjusted training at the Combat Center to meet operational demands.

After the final Enhanced Mojave Viper in 2012, the Combat Center implemented the Integrated Training Exercise, or ITX. This exercise returned to the traditional warfighting skills Marines need to successfully fulfill combat missions worldwide.

ITX is a 29-day exercise focusing on the tactical application of combined-arms, live-fire maneuver warfare during global contingency operations. Five ITXs are held each year, consisting of two maneuver battalions, artillery, engineers, rotary and fixed wing squadrons and logistical support led by a Regimental Command Element. It also includes training events relevant to any MAGTF expeditionary operation. Ideally, every battalion and squadron will have the opportunity to participate in an ITX once every two years.

The Tactical Training Exercise Control Group develops, coordinates, resources, executes and evaluates units that participate in ITX. This organization ensures that the training is relevant and that the educational concepts, policies, plans and programs are aligned to challenge Marines in current and future operational environments.

Beyond the dual battalion construct of an ITX, only at the Combat Center (with its expanded training lands) can a MEB train the way it would be expected to operate in a deployed environment. With the Johnson Valley Shared Use Area, the Combat Center can now meet the mandate of MEB training with the maneuver and weapons system employment requirements. The Combat Center can now simultaneously move three battalions and all support personnel, equipment and vehicles through dynamic combined-arms, live-fire training. Further, the expanded training area allows the Ground Combat Element of a MEB to exercise command and control of actual instead of simulated troops. The Combat Center is truly the best venue to prepare the Marines of today for the real-world challenges they are likely to confront when deployed in harm's way.



EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

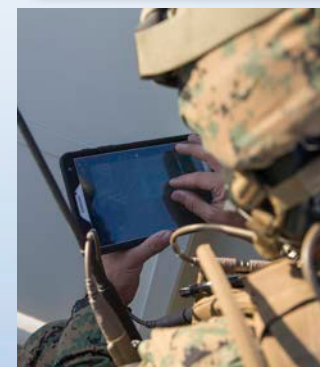
As part of its role to educate and train Marines, the Combat Center includes two organizations that provide standardization; manage doctrine, training standards and tactics; and oversee institution training programs. For the Ground Combat Element the command is Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group, and for the Logistics Combat Element these responsibilities fall on the Marine Corps Logistics Operations Group. Aside from setting doctrine and training standards, these organizations provide advanced individual training for operations officers and chiefs, intelligence officers and chiefs, and logistics officers and chiefs. Additionally, they aid in unit readiness planning at both the battalion and regimental levels and conduct Battle Staff Training either aboard the Combat Center or at the unit's home station.

There are two formal schools located on board the Combat Center. The Marine Corps Communication-Electronics School is the largest Military Occupational Specialty school in the Marine Corps, training Marines to operate critical communications networks and assets. In 2012, the Marine Corps Low Altitude Air Defense basic gunner and officer courses moved from the Army base at Fort Bliss, Texas, to Twentynine Palms. In addition to the training opportunities aboard the Combat Center, this move eliminated the inter-service support agreement between the Army and Marine Corps, and ultimately saved money.

Apart from tenant schoolhouses, the Combat Center hosts numerous schools that leverage the unique training areas and ranges to train students as future warfighters.

During the final days of the Infantry Officers Course in Quantico, Virginia, the students travel to the Combat Center to participate in their culminating event. This roughly three-week exercise challenges students to conduct a live-fire, mechanized assault on urban terrain, capping a three-month course that prepares future infantry officers to train and lead Marines in combat. Once again, the terrain and training capabilities aboard the Combat Center are leveraged to provide the best training to these future leaders before they are assigned to their first infantry unit.

To support maneuver elements, the Marine Corps must have skilled Forward Air Controllers and Joint Terminal Attack Controllers. On the West Coast, the school tasked with training and qualifying Marines in this requirement is located in San Diego. After the academic portion of the course is complete, the students travel to the Combat Center to control air and artillery assets, and to gain their certification. Once certified, these controllers are embedded in maneuver units and deployed worldwide to conduct close air support.



COALITION PARTNERS

Not only is the Combat Center an ideal place for Marine Corps units to train, it also provides a premier venue for America's Coalition Partners. The ranges, simulators and ability to work alongside Marines builds partner nation capacity and interoperability. Both our Coalition Partners and the Marine Corps mutually benefit from this bilateral training and are better prepared to deploy together.

TESTING AND EVALUATION

The Combat Center provides an ideal location for testing of new equipment used by the Department of Defense.

Often, the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation will leverage the terrain, targets and Marines that reside aboard the Combat Center in the testing process. These tests are pivotal in making decisions about equipment acquisition or modifications, and ensuring that deployed equipment meets the needs of the operators prior to fielding to the fleet.



BILATERAL TRAINING AT THE COMBAT CENTER

Bilateral exercises conducted aboard the base include:

- Black Alligator (Britain/Netherlands)
- Black Horse (Britain)
- Iron Fist (Japan)
- Large Scale Exercise (Multiple nations)
- Striking Atlas/Striking Viking (Canada)
- Valiant Mark (Singapore)
- UET (United Arab Emirates)



