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# MEB Training Exercise Study: Identifying MEB Training Requirements

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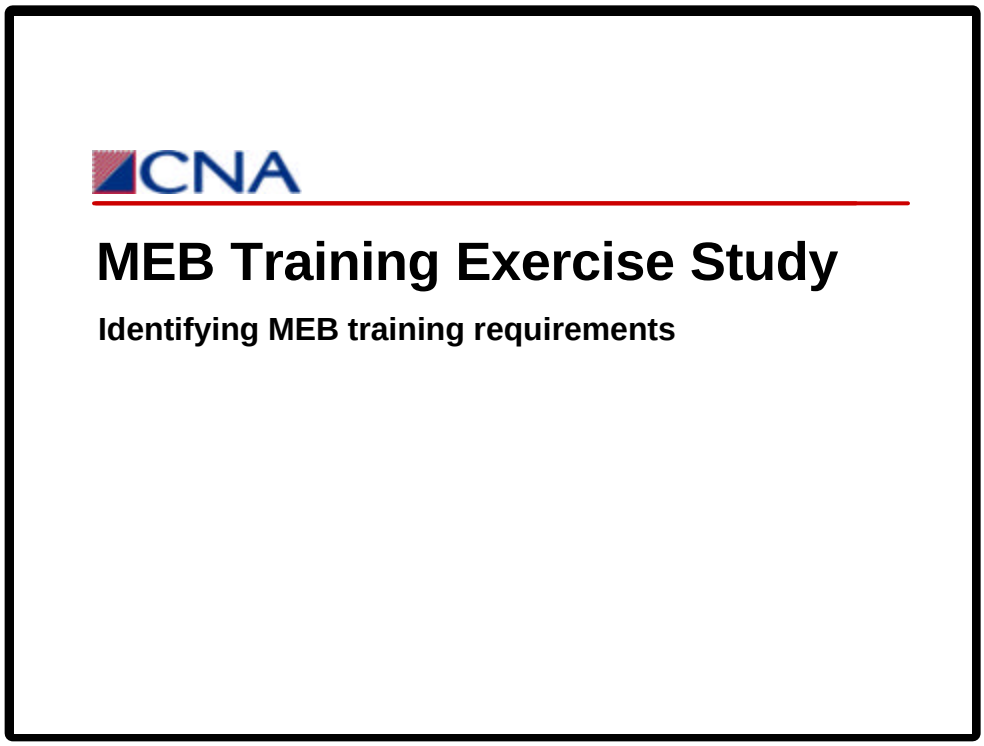



Marine Corps Strategy 21 and Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare established the Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) as the primary United States Marine Corps (USMC) organization dedicated to a joint force for small-scale contingencies [1, 2]. Per the doctrine, MEBs must be capable of performing a variety of missions across the spectrum of conflict. Formal training opportunities exist for Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEFs) and Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs), as outlined in the MEF TEEP and the MEU Pre-Deployment Program (PTP), but MEBs currently lack an equivalent dedicated curriculum.

The Marine Corps Training and Education Command (TECOM) has been tasked with developing initiatives to enhance MEB-level training to support both the current and future MEB. In June 2003, the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) began a study supporting TECOM's efforts.

## Study goals

- Task #1:
  - Identify MEB training requirements
- Task #2:
  - Determine training environment required to support MEB training
- Task #3:
  - Assess specific alternative ranges that support the training environment

The CNA study is organized into three tasks. This annotated briefing documents the results of task 1, and our efforts to identify MEB training requirements. Future products will document the results of tasks 2 and 3, in which we will determine what environment and resources are needed for MEB training, and what ranges meet those training needs.

## Background

- In 1992, Marine Corps deactivated standing MEB HQs and discontinued use of MEB as distinct MAGTF
- In 1999, CMC re-introduced MEB
- Today, MEB staff embedded in MEF staff

But, how do we train the MEB?

The brigade-sized air-ground force first operated in Korea in the early 1950s. MEBs were formally indoctrinated into the Marine Corps along with the MEU and the MEF in 1962 [3]. Throughout most of the latter half of the 20th century, MEBs activated, deployed, and deactivated as needed. Standing MEBs were the exception rather than the rule. The Marine Corps experimented with permanent MEB headquarters (HQs) from 1985 to 1992. When downsizing and budget reductions required force restructuring, the Marine Corps eliminated the standing MEB HQs and discontinued use of the MEB as a distinct Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF). Instead, fighting was discussed in MEF slices, and the lead echelon of the MEF became the MEF Forward (FWD).

Shifting to the MEF(FWD) concept appeared to create confusion within the Joint community. Marine Corps trainers and senior leaders observed that Joint planners and combatant commanders could not determine how the undefined MEF FWD should be used in plans and operations. During an interview in 2001, the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) used that confusion as one justification for re-introducing the MEB as a fighting force [4]. Today, MEBs are embedded within each of the three MEF headquarters. The MEBs have pre-identified commanders and staffs, who are dual-hatted with responsibilities in the MEF and the MEB.

Although the MEBs strive to participate in annual exercises, there is currently no standardized curriculum or formal exercise program for training the mid-sized MAGTF. The purpose of this study is to define the requirements for conducting large-scale MEB training exercises and identify the resources required to establish these exercises on a recurring basis.

## The MEB today

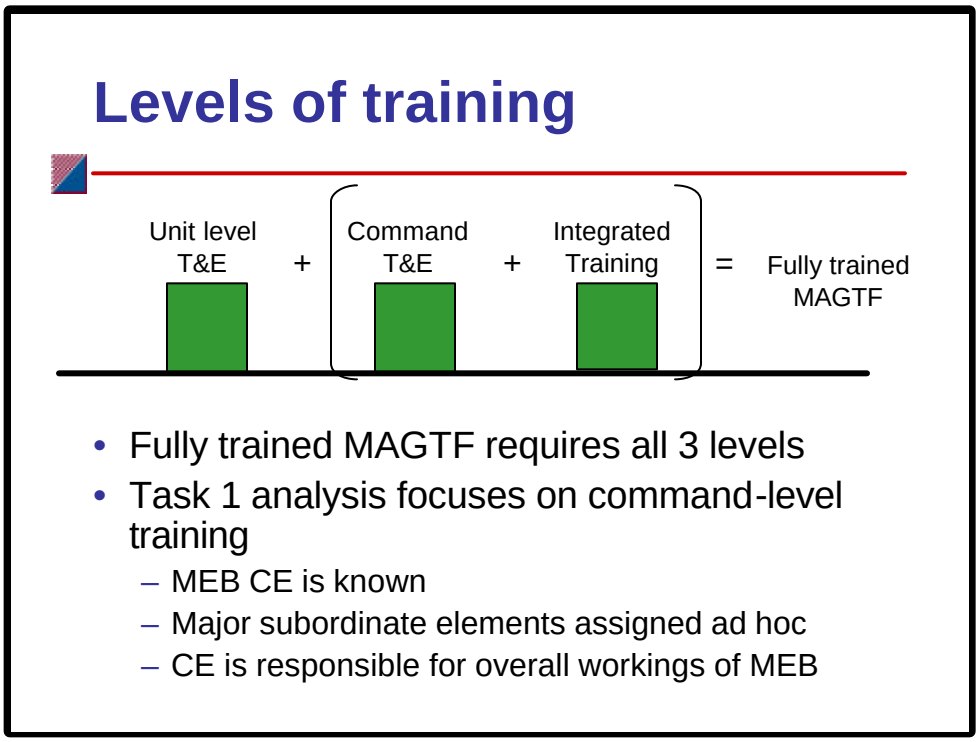
*"The versatility of the MEB is emblematic of the unique scalability of our [MAGTFs]. In size and capability, these brigades are midway between our MEUs and our MEFs."*

-- General James L. Jones [5]

- Key characteristics:
  - 3,000 – 20,000 Marines strong
  - Scalable and task organized
  - Capable of responding to full range of crises, from humanitarian assistance to forcible entry

By formal definition, a MEB is a brigade-sized combined arms combat force built around a reinforced infantry regiment, a composite aircraft group with both fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft, and a combat service support group (CSSG) [5, 6]. The use of force descriptors such as "brigade" and "regiment," are intentional. They make the MEB understandable to Joint planners and combatant commanders, which is something that the MEF(FWD) lacked. However, the structure conferred to the MEB with this definition is not strictly applied. Rather, the Marine Corps bestows significant flexibility on the MEB as a combat capable force. For example, the MEB can be sized anywhere between a MEU and a MEF, or from 3,000 to 20,000 Marines strong. It is designed to be scalable and task organized, so that it can bring the appropriate assets and forces needed to respond to each contingency. Finally, the MEB is described as being able to respond to the full range of crises, from humanitarian assistance to forcible entry, which is a wide scope of missions. The expansiveness of the MEB in terms of size, mission, and organization means the force can be almost anything the Marine Corps needs it to be and can do almost anything the Corps needs it to do.

While flexibility may be highly desired and appreciated by Marine Corps leaders and planners, it makes it difficult to identify specific MEB training requirements. We determined that first the MEB needs a set of baseline training requirements that apply to the force no matter its size, mission, or organization. We begin by defining three general levels of training and by examining the histories of MEB doctrine and real-world employment.




MAGTFs require training at three levels. The supporting units themselves must be trained for their tasks and responsibilities. The MAGTF command element (CE) must receive training for its command and control, planning, and coordination responsibilities. Finally, some level of integrated training is needed. Integrated training opportunities support both the unit and command levels, but they focus on coordination of all the MAGTF functions and capabilities in mission-oriented training environments. Examples of integrated training opportunities are the Combined Arms Exercise (CAX) held at the MAGTF Training Center, and the Special Operations Capable Exercise (SOCEX), which brings together the MEU CE, the Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON) staff, and the Carrier Strike Group (CSG) staff.

As Marine forces are currently organized, the MEB CE is embedded in each of the three MEFs, so the Marines who require the training have been identified to a degree. That is not the case with the major subordinate elements (MSEs). The MSEs will be identified ad hoc depending on mission requirements when a crisis occurs and the MEB stands up. We do not know which specific units need unit-level MEB training. Furthermore, it is unclear how much training MEB units would require that is not already covered in their current MEF unit training plans. While unit-level tasks are largely transferable to any of the MAGTFs, we found the combination of MEB CE responsibilities to differ from MEF CE and MEU CE responsibilities.

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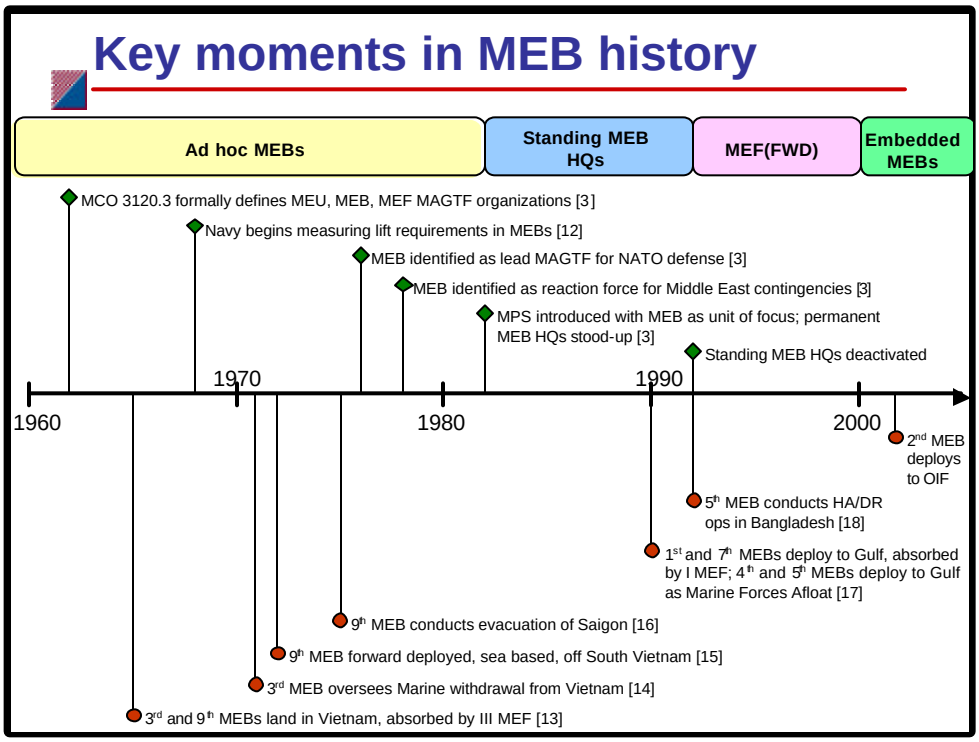
As a result, this study focuses on the training needed by the MEB CE. The training requirements identified may be met by command-level training or integrated training opportunities. At this point in the analysis, we do not differentiate between the two or specify the resources needed to address the training. That analysis will be part of task 2.




While the focus of the study is training the future MEB, we needed to understand the key characteristics of the historic and current MEB, how the MEB force evolved, and how the Marines have used the MEB over time. This information became the data necessary to define the MEB and its capabilities, thereby helping us identify relevant training requirements.

This timeline charts the history of the MEB. The top half plots the MEB's conceptual or doctrinal history, including how the mid-sized MAGTF fit into the overall Marine force structure and how the Corps theorized employing the MEB. The bottom half identifies key real-world MEB operations and some characteristics of those deployments.[1]

We will use these historical deployments throughout the report to support our analysis. Overall, understanding MEB history and conceptual development allows us to compare characteristics of deployments over time, identify trends, compare envisioned capabilities with historical realities, and identify general, or common, training requirements.

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[1] In 1965 the Marine Corps removed the word "expeditionary" from the lexicon and renamed the three MAGTFs "amphibious" units – Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU), Marine Amphibious Brigade (MAB), and Marine Amphibious Force (MAF). In 1988, "expeditionary" returned as the standard Marine Corps descriptor [3]. For the sake of consistency, we use the "expeditionary" terminology throughout this document.

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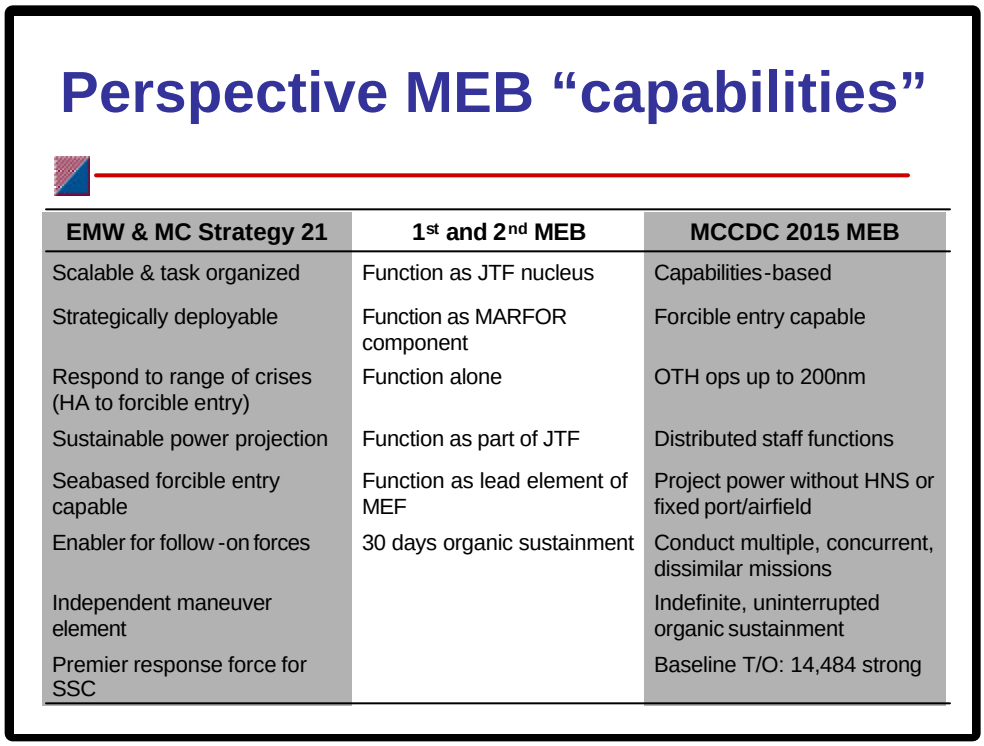
For example, historically, MEBs were unlikely to stand-up for any action other than potential combat. While other missions, such as Operation Sea Angel in 1991, may have arisen during a combat-oriented deployment, history indicates that the manpower and amphibious ship demands of a MEB are so heavy that, for the most part, only the threat of combat has justified forming the force. Unless a MEB had already been established or deployed for the threat of combat, most small-scale contingencies have been addressed with other forward-deployed assets. This historical trend indicates that the envisioned MEB role as the premier force for small-scale contingencies is a new capability for the force.

A review of real-world MEB deployments and conceptual history also shows that the Marine Corps often deployed as MEBs but employed as MEFs. This method of organizing for combat reflected limitations in strategic lift, and was not the Marine Corps' preferred method of operating. When this approach was used, in Vietnam in 1965 and the Persian Gulf in 1990, the MEBs functioned as transitional forces and were absorbed into the MEFs once the full force arrived [13, 17]. While MEBs were usually absorbed into a MEF for ground combat, MEBs that remained seabased were more likely to maintain their stand-alone MAGTF status, like 9th MEB in Vietnam and 4th and 5th MEBs in Desert Storm [15, 17].

Historical analysis also indicates that the expansive description of a MEB as ranging from 3,000 to 20,000 Marines strong is not unjustified. The sizes of real world MEBs varied considerably depending on the mission and security situation. For example, 3rd MEB deployed in 1962 for the Laotian Crisis with only 3,000 Marines, while the MEB that stood up in Vietnam nine years later commanded almost 15,000 [19, 15]. More recently, the 1st and 7th MEBs deployed for Desert Shield at full force, with roughly 15,000 Marines each. The 4th and 5th MEBs that formed the Marine Forces Afloat during that same conflict were roughly half that, numbering 8,400 and 7,700 Marines respectively [17].

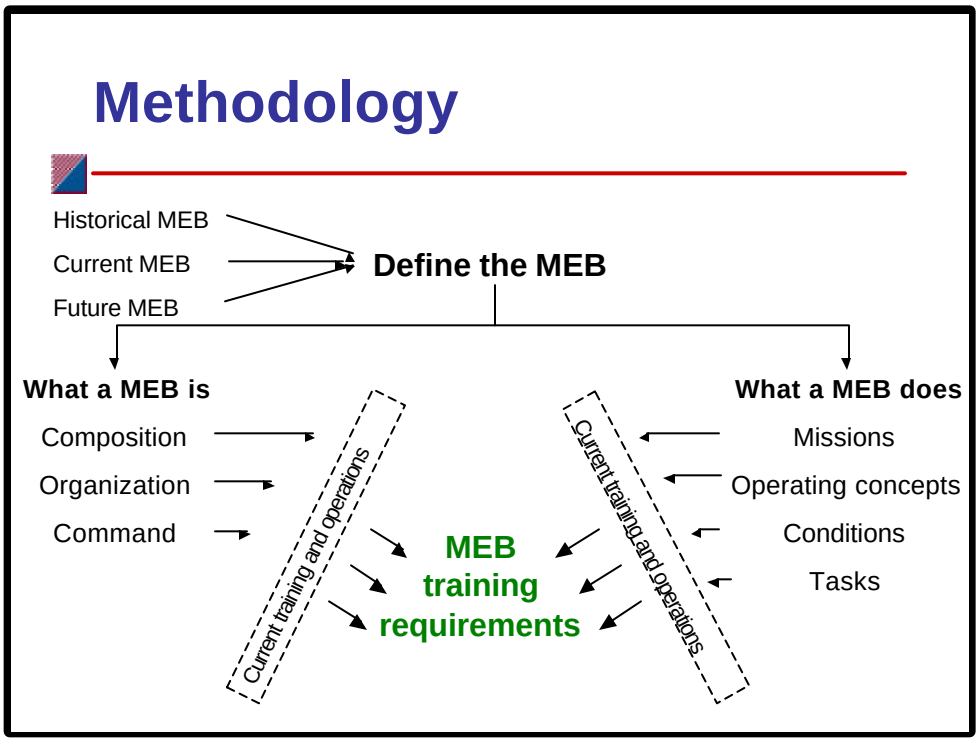
History shows how MEBs were thought of and how they were employed. The current expansive description includes a similar size of force range and includes the wide mission range of small-scale contingency operations (discussed later in the brief). The definitions of the future MEB, shown on the next slide, describe future operating concepts, future missions, and future capabilities not yet in existence. We developed a methodology that takes into consideration the historical, current, and future characteristics and capabilities of the MEB.




In today's national security environment, defense strategy is built around capabilities vice specific threats. This shift in strategic approaches reflects the fact that while we cannot identify who our adversaries may be in the future, we can identify how our adversaries may fight. The capabilities-based approach first introduced in the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) requires identifying the capabilities the U.S. will need to deter and defeat our foes [7]. This approach to national defense strategy requires the services, to describe their forces and platforms in terms of the capabilities they provide. The MEB, re-introduced to the Marine Corps in 1999, is one example of a force described most frequently by its intended capabilities vice its components; in fact, the capabilities-based definition suits the Marine Corps' expansive approach to the MEB.

This table identifies the capabilities and characteristics ascribed to the MEB from three different perspectives: current doctrine, current MEB commanders, and future-oriented thinkers [1, 2, 8-11]. All three lists include both actual and desirable capabilities. As a whole, these lists are a combination of general MEB capabilities and MEB characteristics, but are not an analytical derived.

While a capabilities-based approach to defining a force supports preparations for an ambiguous threat, it adds a layer of complexity to the identification of training requirements. To understand how to train to a particular capability, we must deconstruct capabilities into tasks. This study takes the first step in that deconstruction by pulling apart and simplifying the expansive descriptions of the MEB and its capabilities. Future work on this study could lead to a more complete and realistic list of MEB capabilities.




To understand the 2015 MEB concept, we must first begin with the historical and current MEB structure and warfighting role. We used historical MEB deployments and current operating plans or scenarios, in conjunction with future doctrinal concepts and statements, to help define the MEB.

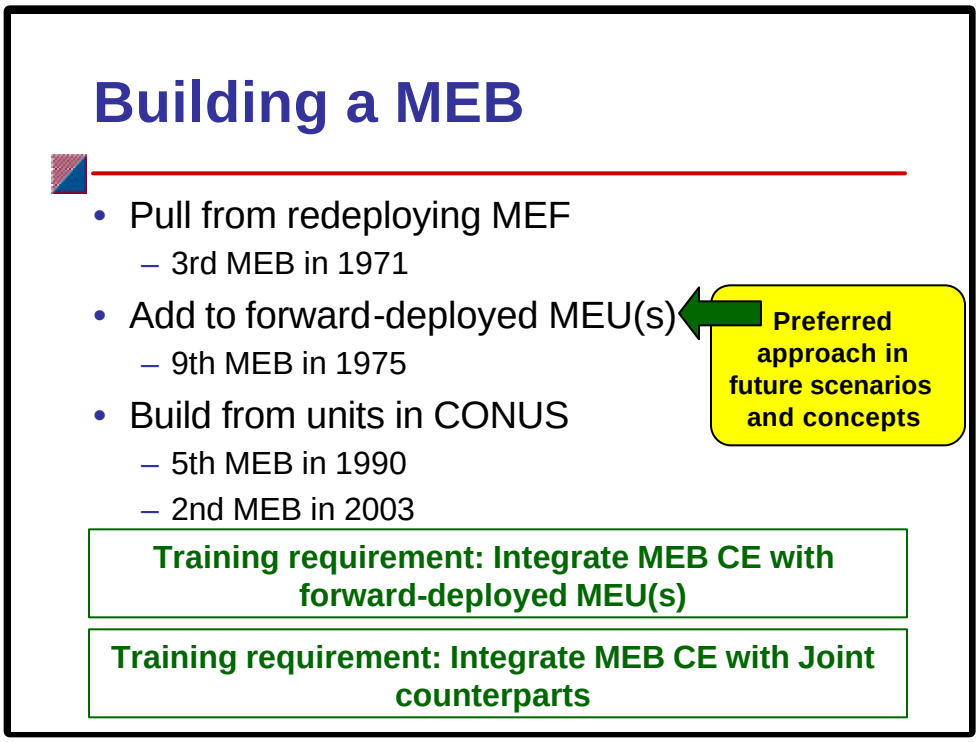
We focused on thinking about the MEB CE and its training requirements in two general ways. First, we defined the MEB based on its character—how it is formed and organized. Second, we defined the MEB by its missions and the way it is likely to operate. Both definitions of the MEB have relevant training requirements.

Once we identified those training requirements, we compared them, in general terms, to the training and operations currently conducted by MEUs and MEFs. In this way, we were able to filter out the requirements that the MEB staff receives via training opportunities gained in their MEF staff roles. Those training needs not already met are the training requirements for a MEB CE.

## Character-based training requirements

- Composition – What units make up the MEB?
- Organization – How are the units organized? For deployment? For employment?
- Command role – What is the role of the MEB CE in a joint operation? What is the MEB CE's level of focus?

We organized the MEB's characteristics, or "what a MEB is," into three categories: composition, organization, and command responsibilities. Composition refers to how the MEB is formed and what units make up the force. Organization considers different ways the MEB can be organized for deployment and employment. An analysis of the MEB command role considers where the MEB fits into a joint operation and what the MEB CE's subsequent level of focus is likely to be.




A review of historical deployments and doctrinal statements relating to future use of the MAGTF suggests that there are three ways to build a MEB: a redeploying MEF could leave various elements in place; additional forces could augment one or more forward-deployed MEUs; or an ad hoc MEB could be formed from units in the continental United States (CONUS). All three approaches have been used to form MEBs in the past.

In 1971, 3rd MEB activated to serve as the senior Marine command in Vietnam after III MEF withdrew. The MEB comprised units and personnel who had previously been part of III MEF [14]. In 1975, 9th MEB activated to conduct the evacuation of Saigon. That force was built on three MEUs—the 31st, 33rd, and 35th—all of which were either in the region, or en route [15]. In 1990, 5th MEB deployed to the Persian Gulf as part of the Marine Forces Afloat (MFA) for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. When Central Command (CENTCOM) identified the requirement for an additional MEB to support an amphibious assault and serve as a reserve force, few active-duty combat forces were left in CONUS to form the MAGTF. Fifth MEB pulled together an assortment of reserve units and embedded 11th MEU to meet the requirement [17]. Even more recently, in 2003, units from 2nd Marine Division (MARDIV), 2nd Marine Air Wing (MAW), and 2nd Force Service Support Group (FSSG) joined with 2nd MEB CE to form 2nd MEB and deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

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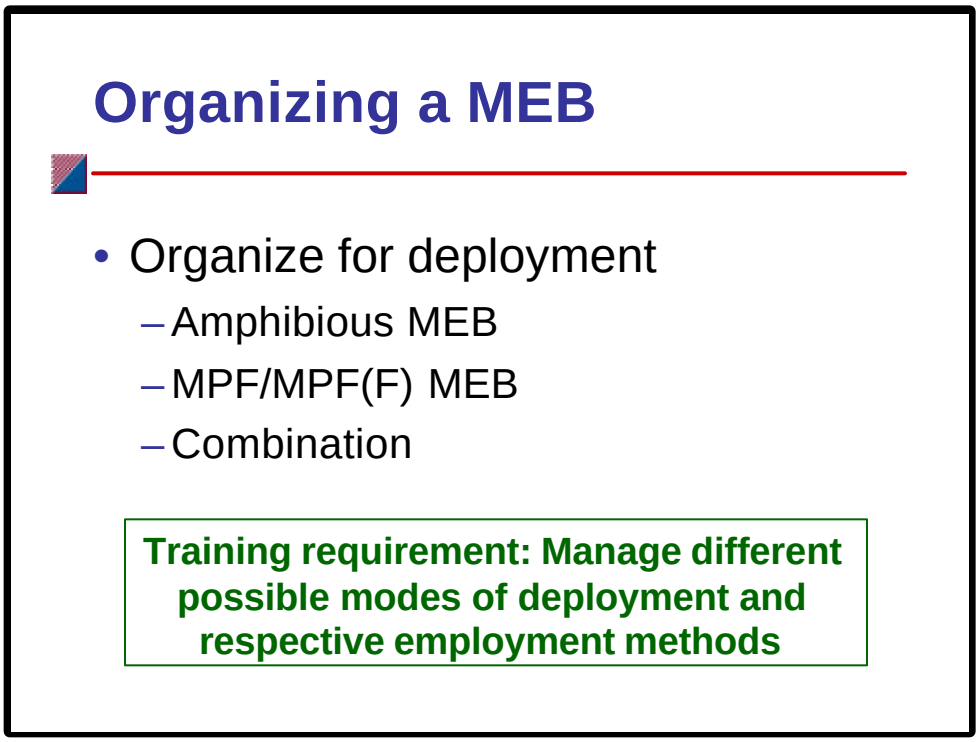
Most small-scale contingency scenarios written for wargaming and analytical studies take the approach of building a MEB using one or more forward-deployed MEUs. The Ship-to-Objective Maneuver (STOM) Concept of Operations (CONOPS), drafted by the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC), also proposes building a MEB by flowing additional forces into the operating area and combining them with two forward-deployed MEUs. The CONOPS goes into greater detail than the scenarios, and specifies flowing-in the combat-ready MEB via the Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future) (MPF(F)) [20]. Augmenting MEUs with additional forces and a MEB CE was preferred because it offers the fastest means of making a combat-ready MEB available to a combatant commander.

Part of command integration is the decision of how to incorporate the MEU into the larger MAGTF. Historically, MEBs have made two choices for MEU integration. MEBs have completely absorbed the MEU, pulling apart the smaller MAGTF and integrating its forces and staff into the appropriate support elements of the MEB, or MEBs have left the MEU as a combined arms maneuver element. MEB deployments offer examples of both approaches to MEU integration. During 9th MEB's 1975 deployment, the MAGTF began the operation with the three MEUs maintaining their MAGTF integrity and command structures. After two weeks under this organizational structure, the MEB reorganized into the traditional triad of subordinate elements—the Ground Combat Element (GCE), Air Combat Element (ACE), and Combat Service Support Element (CSSE). The three former MEU commanding officers (COs) became the COs of each of the subordinate elements [16]. The way that the MEU is integrated into the MEB has implications for command and control, employment, and maneuver. Training for both approaches to this integration would help the MEB staff understand the pros and cons of each as pertains to mission and operational requirements.

The inherent scalability of the MEB and the Marine Corps' history with absorption and compositing suggests that the complexity of forming a MEB around the smaller forward-deployed MEU would be aided by the common MAGTF structure. However, with this approach, the MEB loses the opportunity to build relationships and establish a battle rhythm within the MEB and with its Navy counterparts in the PHIBRON. The MEU CE trains to this during the PTP and during the transits. This integration of command elements in a Joint environment is a MEB CE training requirement.




Just as there are multiple ways to build a MEB, history, scenarios, plans, and conceptual statements describe multiple ways to organize the force once the supporting elements are identified.

Today, the MEB uses two methods of deploying. It can operate directly from amphibious shipping to conduct a forcible entry or an administrative offload. Or, it can link up with MPF ships, conduct an administrative offload, and move forward from a benign port. With both approaches, all the forces and equipment move ashore and the MEB CE maintains centralized command and control of the force. In the future, the Marine Corps plans for the MEB to deploy via amphibious shipping, the MPF(F), or some combination of the two. MCCDC envisions that the amphibious MEB of the future would still send all the forces and equipment ashore, requiring the establishment of a beachhead and rear-area force protection. But the plans call for forces operating from the MPF(F) ships to be organized differently. The fleet's goal is for MPF(F) to enable seabased logistics and the selective offload of personnel and equipment [21]. With these capabilities, the Marine force would be organized into a seabased support element (SBSE) and a seabased maneuver element (SBME). Only the SBME would move ashore during the campaign. Under the seabasing concept as currently designed, the CE would remain afloat; thus, command and control would be dispersed between the afloat HQ and the maneuver elements ashore.

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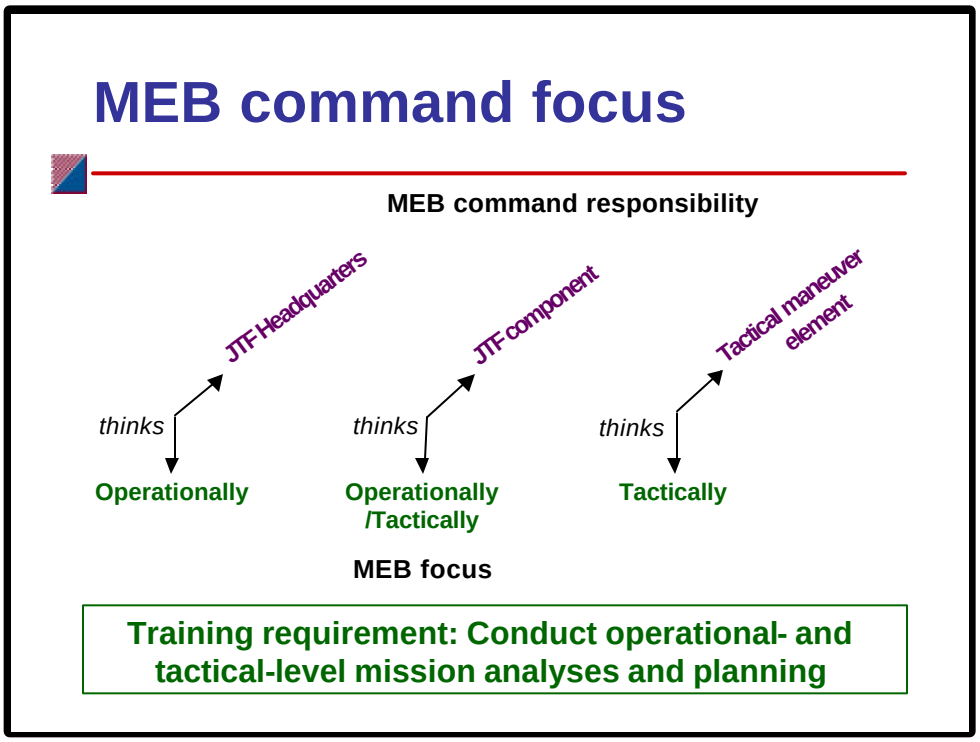
The third future deployment option is for a MEB to deploy aboard a combination of amphibious shipping and MPF(F) ships [20]. An MPF(F) MEB that links up with a forward-deployed Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG)/MEU could be considered one such combination deployment. A scenario requiring a large amphibious assault, or involving a significant amphibious threat, could require additional afloat forces aboard other amphibious ships or another MPF(F) squadron.

The MEB HQ requires training on how to manage its forces for all the different deployment and employment methods.




Per the Marine Corps vision and doctrine, the MEB CE must be capable of filling three command functions. It must be able to operate as the nucleus of a Joint Task Force (JTF) HQ, as the Marine component of a JTF, and as a tactical maneuver command element under the Marine Service Component or a functional component commander.

The role of JTF HQ is possible for a MEB CE given the speed with which the CE is intended to arrive in an operating area and the MEB's identity as the Marine Corps' primary force for small-scale contingencies. If called upon to serve as the JTF HQ, the MEB CE would need to make operational-level decisions about planning the mission, allocating resources, and deconflicting multiple maneuver elements. A MEB serving as the Marine component under a joint command structure would need to make both operational- and tactical-level decisions. A MEB operating as a tactical maneuver element, as is possible in sustained combat situations, would focus on the tactical level of warfare. The three levels of warfare are not mutually exclusive. For example, a commander focusing on the operational level of warfare needs to understand strategic goals and tactical decisions and constraints, even though most of his attention will be on operational decisions and functions.

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The means by which the commander conducts mission analyses and planning is the the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCPP). It is applicable to all levels of command, however, the focus is different at each level. For example, the MEU CE planning process primarily focuses on the tactical level as they rarely function as an operational level headquarters or a Service component. On the other hand, the MEF CE planning primarily focuses on the operational level. The three possible MEB command roles require different training for the MEB CE because they lead to varied responsibilities regarding mission analyses and planning.

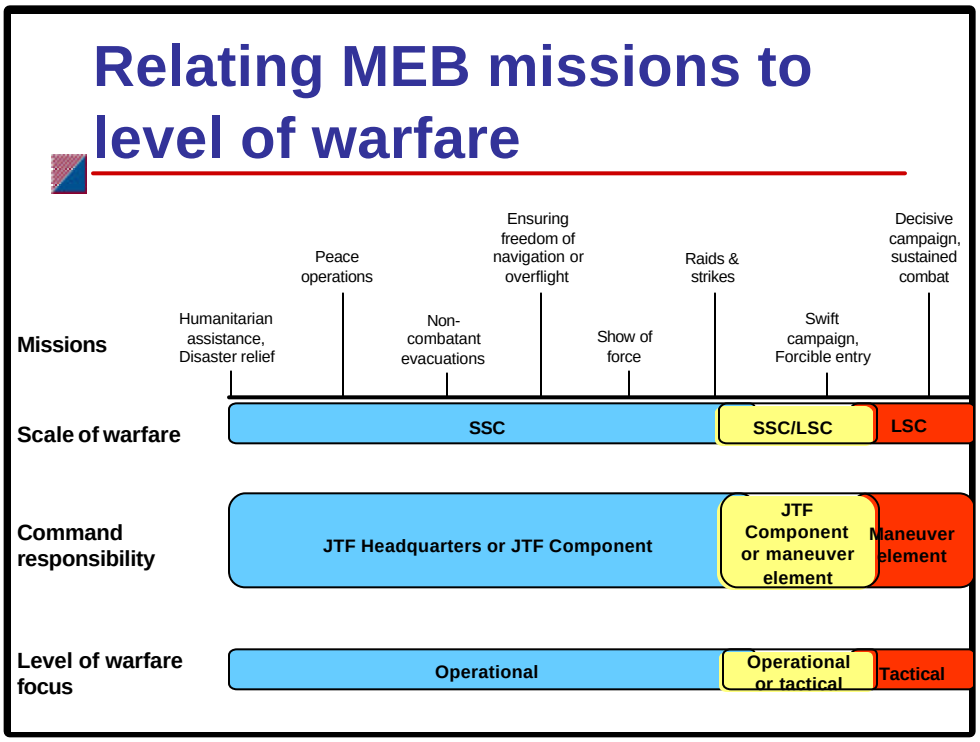
# MEB command role

| Historical deployment | Mission | Scale of warfare | MEB command level |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3rd MEB (1971) | •Combat | LSC | Operational command |
| | •Oversee force withdrawal | SSC | Operational command |
| 9th MEB (1975) | •Evacuate Saigon (NEO) | SSC | Operational command |
| 5th MEB (1990) | •Be prepared for forcible entry in support of larger operation | LSC | Tactical maneuver element |
| | •Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) | SSC | Operational command |
| 2nd MEB (2003) | •Move in trace of main element | LSC | Tactical maneuver element |

**Training requirement: Operate as tactical maneuver element and operational command**

**Training requirement: Transition between operational and tactical levels of focus**

History shows us that a MEB CE has to be prepared to serve as an operational command and a tactical maneuver command element. Two defining characteristics of the MEB are that it is designed to operate in both roles across the spectrum of conflict, and to be flexible about transitioning between operating roles and missions. For example, between 1990 and 1991, 5th MEB operated as a tactical maneuver element during Desert Shield/Desert Storm. The MEB's mission was to be prepared to conduct a forcible entry in support of the larger-scale campaign (LSC) [17]. Later, during that same deployment, 5th MEB served as an operational command during Operation Sea Angel, a humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) mission in Bangladesh [18]. Given the historical data, we identified two training requirements. First, the MEB CE needs to train to operate as both a tactical maneuver element and an operational command. Second, the MEB CE should train to transition between the two roles.




In the previous slides we discussed what a MEB is in terms of composition, organization, and command. We introduced the MEB's potential operational and tactical roles and explained the significance of the different types of focus.

This schematic shows the potential links between MEB missions and the most likely level of warfare on which the MEB CE is going to be focused. The missions cover the entire spectrum of conflict. A MEB can have any one of the missions identified on the slide or a combination of them. While we recognize the potential for mission combinations and escalation of small-scale contingencies into large-scale campaigns, for analytical clarity we considered each mission discretely. Based on doctrine, we identified each discrete mission as a small-scale contingency (SSC) or a large-scale campaign (LSC). Even when considered discretely, the forcible-entry mission could be either, depending on why the assault is taking place. The forcible entry could be *the* mission of a small-scale contingency or *one* mission of a large-scale campaign.

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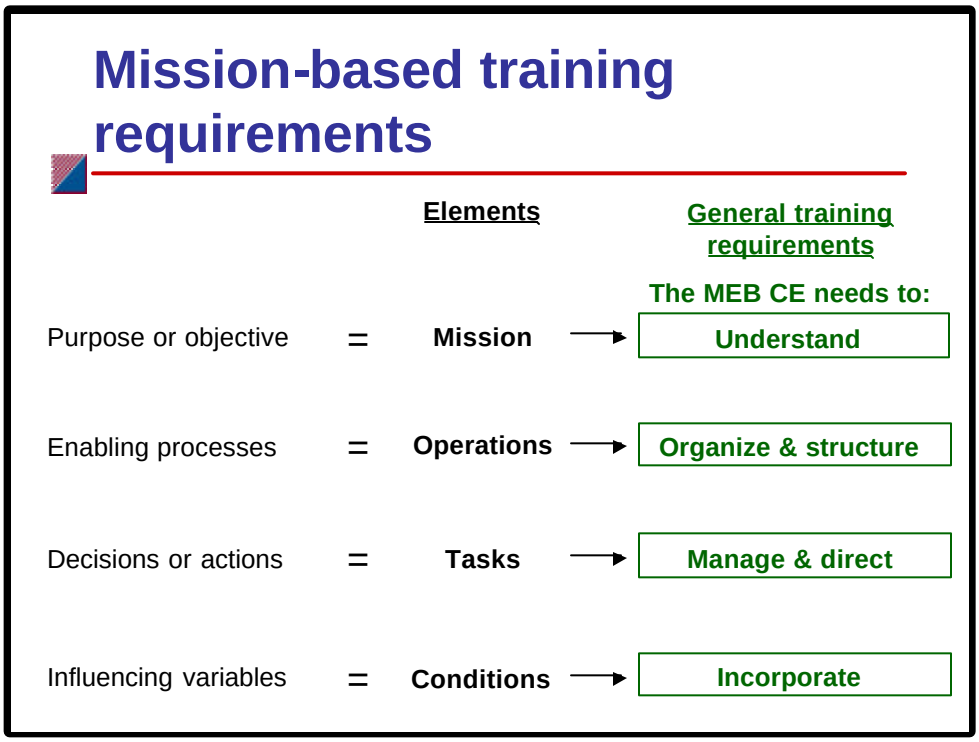
For a small-scale contingency, the MEB will most likely work with the JTF HQ, either as the nucleus of the HQ itself or as the Marine component. As was previously discussed, that role will require the MEB CE to have an operational focus. For the missions that fall closer to the large-scale campaign end of the spectrum, the MEB will most likely serve as a tactical maneuver element under a MEF or Joint command structure. In that scenario, the MEB CE's focus will be tactical. If the MEB is acting as a transition force that enables follow-on forces, the CE will likely begin operations focusing on the operational level of warfare, but will either transition to a tactical focus once the remaining forces fall in or will be re-absorbed into the MEF.

While we considered each mission discretely, the fact remains that all the MEB missions have the potential to escalate or de-escalate in intensity. As the mission changes, so too can the command responsibility and associated level of focus of the MEB commander. This re-emphasizes the MEB CE training requirement to transition between the tactical and operational focus, which we identified previously.

Next we will discuss the missions that a MEB should be prepared to conduct or support, and the associated training requirements.




We broke military actions into four elements: the mission, the operation(s), tasks, and conditions. Our definitions are based on joint doctrine [22]. Regardless of the specific mission, these four elements have general training requirements associated with them. In other words, they lead to common training requirements that are relevant across all missions, command levels, and MAGTFs.

A mission is the purpose or objective behind military action. The MEB needs to understand the mission and how it influences operations. The MEB CE requires training on mission analyses at both the tactical and operational level of command.

Operations are the activities or processes that support the mission. In both its tactical and operational command role, the MEB CE must know how to structure and plan a course of action, make resource allocation decisions, and deconflict the actions of supporting elements.

Tasks are the specific decisions or actions that make up an operation. The MEB CE is responsible for providing oversight of unit actions, or managing and directing the tasks taken as part of the operation.

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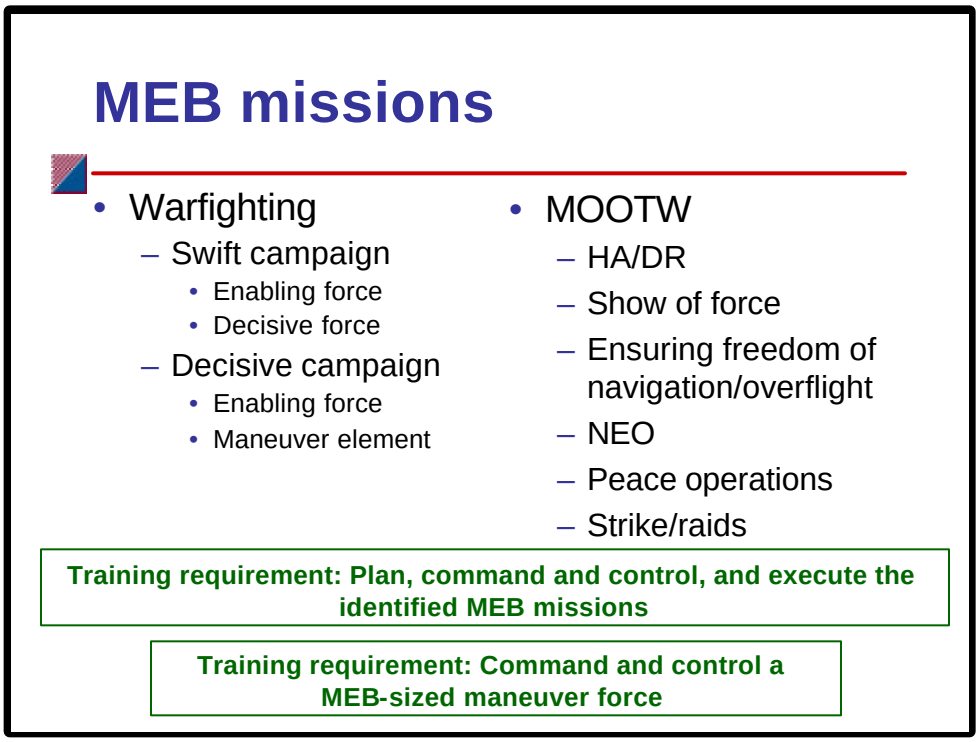
Conditions are the civil, military, or physical contexts in which tasks, operations, and missions are conducted. They are environmental or situational variables that influence operations at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. For example, the weather on a given day will have the greatest effect on tactical decisions, the distance to the objective will affect operational considerations, and an enemy's order of battle will influence decisions at a strategic level. Conditions are relevant for MEB training requirements because of their effect on tactical and operational decisions or actions. Therefore, the MEB CE requires training on incorporating conditions into its tasks and operating plans.

In addition to the general training requirements associated with the mission, operations, tasks, and conditions, there are specific missions and operations for which MEB CEs need to train. We address these in the following slides. We also offer some examples of tasks relevant to the operating concepts, but we did not conduct a thorough mission-to-task analysis. Similarly, we touch upon some of the conditions relevant to these missions or CONOPS, but did not go into detail at this phase of the study.




Marine Corps doctrine identifies the MEB as the primary Marine Corps organization for small-scale contingencies in general [1]. We sought to specify the types of missions MEBs are likely to support in the future, and therefore the missions for which they need to train. To identify MEB missions, we reviewed the Defense Planning Guidance (DPG), the Dynamic Commitment vignettes, scenarios developed by MCCDC for the MPF(F) Analysis of Alternatives (AOA), current Operational Plans (OPLANS) for the different combatant commanders, and scenarios developed for a CNA study on Marine Aviation Requirements [23-31]. We also considered the real-world operations that MEBs have supported over the last 60 years. This slide identifies all the missions supported by MEBs in real-world operations and/or the series of reviewed scenarios. Because of their recurrence in historical, current, and envisioned future operations, we identified these as the most likely missions for the MEB, and the ones which the MEB CE should train to plan for, command and control, and execute.

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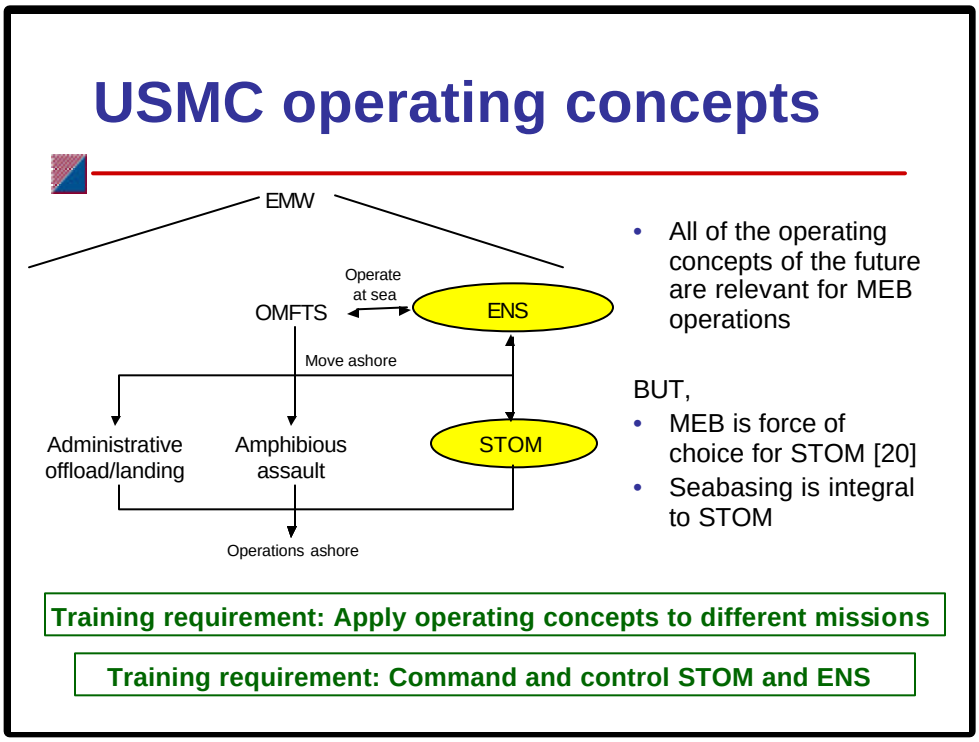
The terminology used to describe the warfighting missions is based on current national security strategy language [7]. A swift campaign is a short-duration combat operation, structured to eliminate an enemy's capabilities and create the conditions necessary for hostilities to end. An example could be a forcible entry or combat along the lines of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). In a swift campaign mission, the MEB could be an enabling force or a decisive force. A decisive campaign is the defeat of an adversary via major combat operations. It is a longer-duration, high-intensity operation where the goal is a decisive victory. Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) is the most recent example of a decisive campaign or sustained combat mission. In a decisive campaign mission, the MEB could act as a transitional or enabling force to establish a Marine (or U.S. combat) presence in the operating area before the full force arrives. The MEB could also be used as another maneuver element, such as an amphibious assault force or a unit to follow in trace of the main force. Because the MEB could be used as a tactical maneuver element, the MEB CE must train to command and control a MEB-sized maneuver force.

The mission types identified as military operations other than war (MOOTW) are from Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 1-0 [32]. These operations are most likely to be described as small-scale contingencies. As discussed previously, a MEB is most likely to function as an operational command for small-scale contingencies. For that role, the MEB CE must train to plan, command and control, and implement the identified MEB missions.

Understanding the likely MEB missions will influence training structure, scenarios, ranges, resources, and environments. These will be addressed and analyzed in task 2.



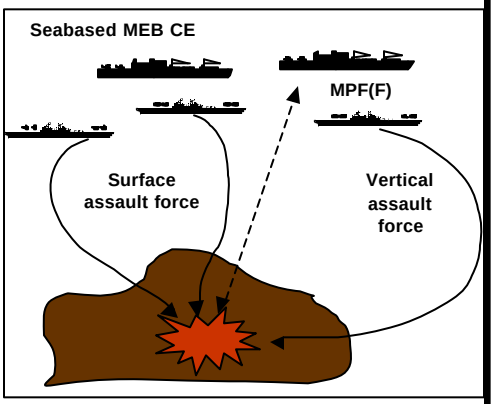

As we discussed previously, operations are the activities or processes that enable or support a mission. Their presence leads to the general training requirement of the need to organize and structure the course of action, make the relevant resource allocation decisions, and deconflict the actions of supporting elements. In other words, the MEB CE will use the mission planning process to determine how to operate at sea, move forces ashore, and operate ashore.

As an organization, the Marine Corps has developed key operating concepts that can be applied to different missions: Operational Maneuver From the Sea (OMFTS), Enhanced Network Seabasing (ENS), STOM, and the traditional concepts of administrative landing and amphibious assault. All of these concepts are relevant to MEB operations. Therefore, the MEB CE has to know how these operating concepts can be used for different missions, and when to use which enabling process.

Additionally, MCCDC sees a unique role for the MEB in STOM and ENS. The MEB CE needs to train to command and control STOM and ENS operations. The following slides discuss in greater detail the MEB CE training requirements associated with these two operating concepts.

# MEB CE in STOM

- All phases of STOM require unit level training
- MEB CE tasks include:
  - Preparing embarkation plan
  - Directing selective offload
  - Managing maneuver elements
  - Coordinating support requests
  - Deconflicting fires




**Training requirement: Conduct command, control, coordination, and communication (C4) from the seabase**

For training purposes, STOM could be divided into five phases or elements of operation. The first phase is seabased support, which would include command and control, fires, intelligence, and logistics. For the most part, these activities occur aboard the MPF(F) or Amphibious Task Force (ATF) platforms. Also included in this phase of the operation are the pre-assault activities such as selective offload and the cross-decking of Marines and equipment. The second phase of the operation is the maneuver from over the horizon to shore by the surface assault force, which includes such tasks as embarkation and tactical maneuver at sea. The third phase of the operation is the surface assault or landing. In STOM, the landing or forcible entry does not stop with the seizure and establishment of a beachhead, but continues with rapid movement to the objective. The surface assault or landing phase of the operation includes combat in the littoral but also the rapid maneuver on the ground to the objective. Phase four of a STOM operation is the vertical assault or landing inland. Phase five is seizing the objective, which requires such tasks as coordination and link-up by the surface and vertical assault forces, as well as continuous logistical support from the seabase.

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All the elements or phases of STOM require significant training. Of the five phases, the last three—the surface assault, vertical assault, and seizing the objective—are not entirely new modes of operating. The distances covered, a condition of the operation, are greater than in most current operations, and the lack of a beachhead is new. However, in general the tasks required by the maneuver elements are very similar to how these units currently operate. For example, a vertical assault in STOM is virtually the same as a vertical assault in today's amphibious landings, except further inland. While the tasks involved in these phases of the operation still require training, that training is not unique to STOM.

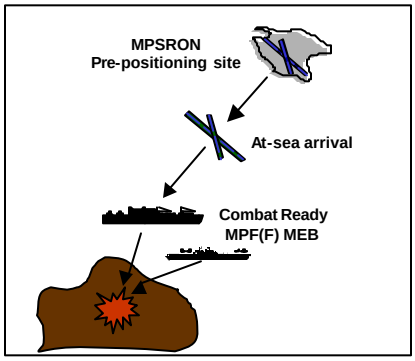
Tactical maneuver to shore is a new way of operating, and it has unique training requirements. During the movement of forces to shore, the MEB CE will need to command, control, coordinate, and communicate with the landing force. But the actual execution of the maneuver is carried out by the units themselves, and requires unit-level training.

Seabasing of the support functions is the key enabler for much of the Marine Corps' vision of future operations. Command and control, intelligence, fires, and logistics are all performed from the seabase, thereby reducing the footprint ashore, limiting the force protection requirements, and enabling faster movement to the objective(s). While most of the general support functions occurring at the seabase are not in themselves new, the at-sea location, the platforms, and the distance from the assault force are new and have unique training requirements. Both unit- and command-level responsibilities require at-sea training time on the MPF(F) and amphibious platforms.

At-sea unit-level training would include such tasks as conducting a selective offload, embarkation, cross-decking equipment, and assembling tailored sustainment packages. MEB CE training must emphasize command and control of the operation from the seabase, including preparing the embarkation plan, directing the selective offload, managing the maneuver elements, coordinating logistics support requests, and deconflicting calls for fire from dispersed forces.

# MEB CE in ENS

- Seabased support functions of STOM are one element of ENS
- MEB CE tasks include:
  - Plan and coordinate at-sea arrival
  - Direct reception, staging, and integration of forces and equipment




**Training requirement: Plan and coordinate at-sea arrival and assembly**

**Training requirement: Operate headquarters afloat**

**Training requirement: Provide at-sea command and control of forces ashore**

In recent years, the Marine Corps expanded the idea of seabased logistics to the broader ENS concept [33-35]. ENS supports STOM and expeditionary maneuver warfare by keeping most support functions afloat. Command and control, intelligence, fires, and logistics are all performed from the seabase, thereby reducing the footprint ashore, limiting the force protection requirements, and enabling faster movement to the objective(s).

ENS also supports the rapid force closure of the MEB to the operating area by enabling phased at-sea arrival and assembly of the combat force. ENS could be considered the operating concept behind MPF(F). In other words, MPF(F) is the platform, and ENS explains how the platform will be used.

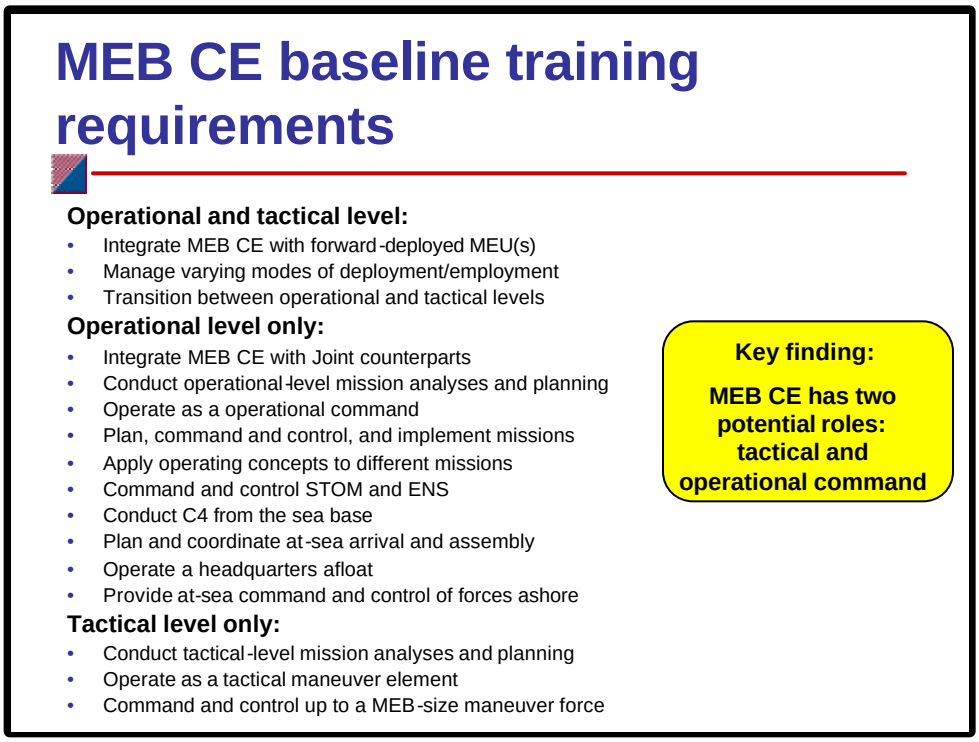
The MEB CE's responsibilities for ENS are twofold. First, the MEB CE must oversee the arrival of the force and its preparations for combat. This includes the tasks of planning and coordinating a phased at-sea arrival and directing the at-sea reception, staging, and integration of the Marines and their equipment. This operational-level maneuver requires close coordination with the Joint Force commander. Second, once in the operating area, the MEB CE must provide tactical command and control from its location afloat. Thus, ENS stresses the training requirement that the MEB CE effectively operate at, and link, operational- and tactical-level command functions.

## Key findings

- Identified need for dedicated MEB CE training
  - Responsibilities as operational and tactical command
  - Missions and operations require transitions between command levels
- Identified baseline set of requirements

The purpose of task 1 was to identify MEB training requirements. This report outlines the baseline set of requirements (summarized on the next slide) for the MEB CE that require training regardless of the MEB's size, mission, or organization.

Not all those requirements are unique to the MEB. However, our analysis shows that the combination of those requirements with the MEB's dual nature as both a tactical and operational command separate the MEB CE's training requirements from those of the MEU and the MEF. This finding is significant because it indicates that neither the MEF training nor the MEU PTP are sufficient to prepare the embedded MEB CE for its command role or mission responsibilities. The MEF CE never trains to operate as a tactical maneuver element, nor to transition between tactical- and operational-level decision-making. The ability to operate at both command levels and to transition between the two is a clear MEB CE requirement based on historical data, analysis of possible MEB missions, and future-oriented operating concepts.




We identified 15 training requirements unique to the MEB CE. We also determined that the MEB CE has two key roles that it must fill at different times: an operational command, and the command element of a tactical maneuver force. This dual capability of the MEB CE, to be either a tactical or operational command, distinguishes it from the other MAGTFs. As both a tactical and an operational command, the MEB CE has unique training requirements.

Most of the tasks identified apply to the MEB's role as an operational-level headquarters. In addition to reflecting the obvious command and control role at this level, the operational-level tasks also reflect the role of the MEB in future operating concepts such as STOM and ENS.

The tactical-level training requirements suggest that a MEB acting as a tactical maneuver element will operate in line with current concepts, but on a larger scale. For example, a MEB will own more assets than a MEU, and thus could have more complex maneuver requirements.

Our analysis also suggests that there are joint training requirements for MEBs and associated PHIBRONs. The use of the seabase, and the MEB CE's continued presence at-sea changes the dynamics of the traditional Navy and Marine Corps supported/supporting relationships. These changes will likely require greater integration and cooperation between the MEB CE and the Commander, Amphibious Task Force (CATF). Training for both commands should include an understanding of the other service's mode of operating, and a joint training opportunity to bridge any gaps.

## Next steps

**Determine training environment required to support MEB training requirements**

- Address how to train the MEB to:
  - Transition between tactical and operational thinking
  - Conduct mission planning
  - Operate from the seabase
  - Maneuver up to a MEB-sized force
- Consider appropriate exercise scenarios
- Identify supporting training resources

For this study we identified three levels of training for a fully trained MAGTF, unit, command, and integrated. Unit level skills are largely transferable to the different MAGTF sizes. This task focused on the command level training and identified training requirements. For the next task we examine the integrated training level to include maneuver of a MEB-sized force and the coordination of the Major Subordinate Commands (MSCs) in the execution of their mission.

The purpose of task 2 of the study is to determine the environment(s) required to support the MEB training requirements identified in phase 1. In our approach to task 2, we will first address how to train the MEB to the identified requirements. We will also consider the appropriate scenarios to train the different tasks at the integrated level and the resources necessary to support that training.

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