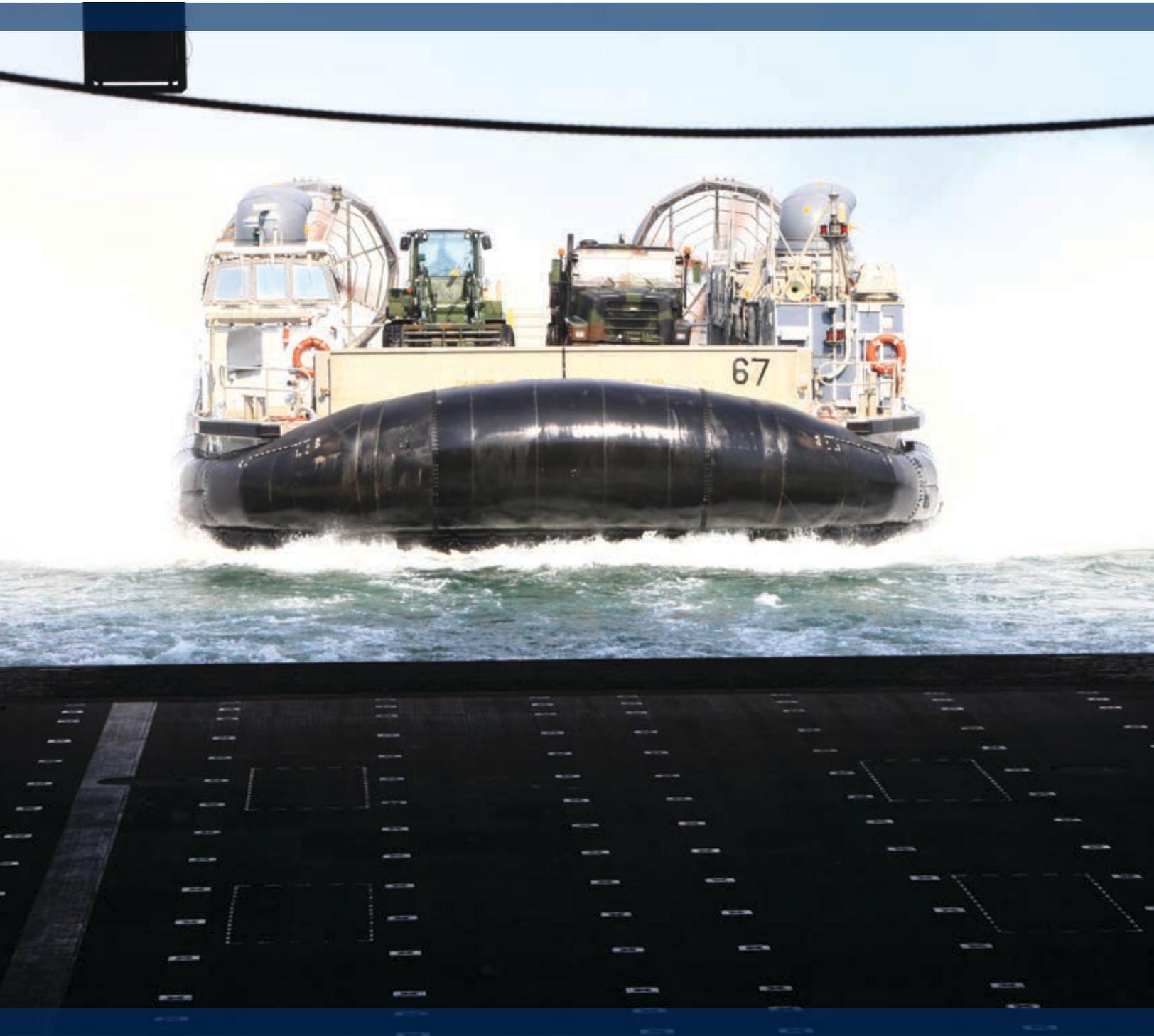


CHAPTER 1



THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS: AMERICA'S EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IN READINESS

The Marine Corps is America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness — a balanced air-ground-logistics team. We are forward deployed and forward engaged, shaping, training, deterring, and responding to all manner of crises and contingencies. We create options and decision space for our Nation's leaders. Alert and ready, we respond to today's crisis with forces available today. Responsive and scalable, we team with other Services, interagency partners, and allies. We enable and participate in joint and combined operations of any magnitude. A "middle-weight" force, we are light enough to get there quickly, but heavy enough to carry the day upon arrival, and capable of operating independent of local infrastructure. We operate throughout the spectrum of threats — irregular, hybrid, conventional — particularly in the gray areas where they overlap. Marines are always ready to respond whenever the Nation calls...wherever the President may direct.

*General James F. Amos, USMC
Commandant of the Marine Corps*

STRATEGIC DEMANDS AND THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The United States is a maritime nation, whose interests are inextricably wound in the networks of global trade and a stable international order. Our nation remains the world's largest economy, critically dependent on the global commons for our livelihood, as more than 90 percent of the world's commerce travels by sea.

Protecting our citizens, allies and interests in this global system is vital for our prosperity and security. While the United States seeks peace and stability, armed intervention is sometimes necessary to preserve them. History reminds us that, no matter how strong our conventional capabilities may be, clever en-



emies find “windows of vulnerability” to exploit. This human dimension creates vast uncertainties and demands a security establishment capable of responding to a wide range of threats.

As we look ahead, we see a world of increasing instability, failing states, and conflict provoked by both conventional enemies and transnational threats. The complexity and scope of conflict continues to evolve and change rapidly. Both friends and potential enemies are increasingly bound through economic interdependence, shifting balances of power, and the effects of the information age. The information age and globalization have brought a diffusion of military power, to a greater number of states and to non-state and criminal actors. Global stressors such as poverty, urbanization, overpopulation, competition over scarce natural resources, and natural disasters increase tension and instability.

While millions have benefitted from globalization, millions of others have suffered social and economic

disruptions. Those who perceive themselves as “left out” of a globalizing world are ripe for exploitation by rogue states, non-state actors, and criminal elements that thrive in the chaotic margins of the global order. Irregular challenges are thus becoming the new “regular” in the future security environment as terrorism, economic warfare, and cyber warfare present new modes of competition.

Much of the world’s population is concentrated along the world’s coastlines. These littoral regions are linked to our national interests and the global economy and are the primary operating area for our Navy-Marine Corps team. Our naval and maritime capabilities are designed to address the range of instabilities and threats found in the critical seam between the water and the land. Naval expeditionary forces provide an important backstop for today’s unpredictable threats. Forward-deployed Marines represent the Nation’s insurance policy against the threats and disruptions in the global security environment.

THE ROLE OF THE MARINE CORPS

Today's Marine Corps is purpose-built for the current and future security environments. The Marine Corps is the right force, at the right time, contributing the right capabilities to the defense of our nation and its interests around the globe. Our potential enemies are observant, adaptive, and cunning. They strike without warning, often in places and at times we least expect. Our Nation needs a force ready to move toward the sound of chaos, responding swiftly to crisis and creating the space and time for strategic decision-making. America needs a forward-deployed force capable of defending its interests, even when access is denied. Our nation has such a force. They are called Marines.



The Marine Corps is a naval service, operating in close partnership with the world's greatest Navy. Together, we share a remarkable heritage that predates the signing of our Constitution. Together, we leverage the access provided by the sea to protect the vast

global commons, while ensuring our ability to project our national power and influence into the littoral regions. Naval forces deter aggression through forward presence, contain crises, respond to natural disasters, and buy strategic decision time for our nation's leaders. Well-trained Navy-Marine teams are located off the coast of anticipated crisis areas every day, poised to swiftly respond.

The flexibility of the Marine Corps and its amphibious capabilities align the service well with the security demands articulated in the 2012 *Strategic Guidance for the 21st Century*. The Marine Corps has the ability to operate without a large footprint ashore, and its ability to scale up in times of crisis make them an essential tool for national decision-makers and joint commanders. Marines smoothly integrate with the other elements of the joint force, enable interagency efforts, and are a natural partner to special operations. Where U.S. citizens, allies or interests are threatened, maritime response capabilities provide a range of rapid intervention options. When conflict escalates, their ability to conduct forcible entry operations in a major contingency serves as a rheostat for the thoughtful and appropriate application of military power.

MARINE CORPS OPERATIONS

During the past year, the Marine Corps has been actively engaged around the world. While continuing to meet operational commitments in Afghanistan, the Marine Corps simultaneously worked with over ninety allies and partners to build effective institutions that contribute to global stability and security. Marines continue to respond to global crises as they emerge, with two-thirds of the Marine Corps operationally committed on a daily basis. Even while providing a significant contribution to Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), our Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs)

and other task-organized Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) supported national security objectives throughout the globe. Marines provided forward presence, deterrence, and theater security cooperation activities, and contributed to building partner capacities in every geographic combatant command.

Afghanistan

The Marine Corps' number-one priority is providing the best trained and equipped Marine units to Afghanistan. Over 7,000 Active and Reserve Marines remain engaged in operations in the Helmand and Nimroz provinces in Regional Command Southwest (RC-SW). Marines, along with nine Coalition partners and 32,000 Afghan National Security Forces in RC-SW, strive to deny the Taliban safe haven, restore stability to the most violent regions of Afghanistan, and give hope to the Afghan people. We have made significant progress in degrading the Taliban's ability to organize and disrupt the efforts of the Afghan government, while building Afghan security institutions and improving the political and social conditions within RC-SW.

As the Afghan government's ability to provide security increases, the confidence of the population will be restored, accelerating the achievement of governance, economic, and social objectives. Marines in Helmand Province have helped open 86 schools, providing a "new normal" of daily classroom participation. Our efforts have contributed to the education of more than 121,000 children, including more than 28,000 female students, representing a 432% increase since 2005. Healthcare is another area of vast improvement. Over the last six years health clinics serving the needs of the Helmand population have increased from six to 57.

Global Crisis Response

Marines remain vigilant around the globe, responding to crises spawned by instability, civil conflict, and humanitarian disaster. The Marine Corps provides six rotational MEUs and numerous special-purpose MAGTFs, each capable of responding when conditions deteriorate. For example, for more than 150 days during 2012, the 24th MEU remained on station, ready to protect American interests and provide decision space to our leaders in the wake of violent protests across the Middle East and North Africa.

Additionally, Marine Embassy Security detachments and Fleet Anti-terrorism Support Teams have protected our diplomatic missions against a range of threats. During 2012, these specialized Marine units deployed to reinforce U.S. diplomatic missions to provide physical security and force protection in Libya, Yemen, and elsewhere. Every day, Marine Security Guards are deployed at 148 embassies and consulates around the world.



Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

In December 2012, Marines and Sailors from the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) responded quickly and effectively to a request from the Government of the Philippines to assist in humanitarian and disaster relief operations in the aftermath of Typhoon

Pablo. U.S. and Philippine armed forces worked shoulder-to-shoulder in order to ensure relief supplies reached those in need.



The flexibility and utility of amphibious forces operating from the sea was demonstrated on our own shores this past year. When Hurricane Sandy struck, more than 300 Marines and Sailors from the 26th MEU provided critical recovery and relief operations in support of Americans in need. Marine aviation conducted disaster relief assessments and provided the necessary airlift for Marines to deploy into the hardest-hit areas. On the ground, Marines successfully coordinated with local leaders and residents for priority relief requirements, providing critical supplies and assisting with clearing debris and helping restore normalcy to people's lives.

Security Cooperation

Last year, Marines participated in more than 200 security cooperation engagements. Additionally, our forward-deployed rotational MEUs participated in joint and coalition exercises around the globe, from Morocco to Indonesia, strengthening our partnership and influence with numerous nations. Marines supported each geographic combatant command, providing crisis response and partnering with a wide range of partners and allies.

Thousands of Marines in Marine Special Operations Command participated in counter-terrorism, foreign internal defense, and other "spec-ops" in places around the globe. In support of U.S. Africa Command, Marines trained counter-terrorism forces in Mali and Mauritania supporting coalition forces combating al-Qaida affiliates across the Maghreb region of North Africa.



In Australia, our newly established presence continued to expand the training and partnership opportunities presented by one of our strongest and oldest allies in the Pacific. Marine Rotational Force Darwin trained on the ranges in Darwin then embarked aboard the USS *Germantown* to participate in a series of combined training and readiness exercises throughout Southeast Asia. Through the annual Landing Force Cooperation and Readiness Afloat Training, these Marines conducted valuable training with our partners in Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Returning to Darwin, these Marines conducted training with the Australians, furthering the development of this important and enduring partnership.

MARINE CORPS MISSIONS

Marines offer an innovative portfolio of highly cost-effective means for crisis response and forward engagement. Our ability to respect territorial sovereignty without a large footprint ashore and scalability in times of crisis makes us an essential tool for national decision makers or joint commanders. By design, Marines smoothly integrate with the joint force, enable the interagency, and are a natural partner to special operations. Where U.S. citizens, allies or interests are threatened, maritime response capabilities provide rapid intervention options tailored to the demands of each crisis. When conflict escalates, our ability to “flex” and scale-up to the forcible-entry demands of a major contingency serves as a “rheostat” for the application of persuasive military power.

The rapid response and early intervention of Marine forces enables access for the rest of the joint force. Operating under austere conditions ashore, Marines can sustain themselves from the sea for long periods, without the need for immediate reinforcement through ports or airfields. The integrated firepower of Marine aviation, operating from amphibious ships or expeditionary basing ashore, allows Marine forces ashore to operate with a light footprint. Marines provide a



wedge for the joint force that buys time and space for the assembling and movement of larger and heavier elements necessary for sustained operations. When the joint force is formed, Marines can smoothly integrate into the larger Joint operation ashore or readily return to sea, where they can serve as an asymmetric maneuver element. This capability creates a “swing force” for subsequent conflict, or for addressing simultaneous crises that arise during major contingencies.

Marines respond to today’s crisis, with today’s forces...TODAY. A force able to swiftly intercede in crisis buys time for civilian and military decision-makers to assess and formulate a more deliberate response. Forward-deployed Marines provide an effective crisis-response capability throughout the range of military operations. Expeditionary forces can defend the territory of allies, seize key terrain, or threaten the global interests of an opponent. The inherent flexibility of these forces enables the United States to swiftly escalate or de-escalate conflict according to the aims of strategy and risk.

Marines provide a stabilizing forward presence that deters conflict. Forward presence builds trust that cannot be created suddenly, when conflict looms. As our Nation’s force in readiness, the Marine Corps bolsters national credibility and deterrence through persistent forward naval engagement. With dispersed expeditionary units afloat near likely crisis areas, and prepositioned equipment stationed forward aboard shipping, the Navy-Marine team is a visible and tangible reminder of our nation’s resolve.

Marines build strong partners. Marines build trust. Investment in building partner capacity is not “charity work,” but rather an investment in collective security throughout the global commons. Sea-based Marines tread lightly on host-nation infrastructure and sovereignty. Sized more closely to the security forces of most other nations, the Marine Corps provides a model of a tightly integrated air-ground-

logistics force, suitable to train effective security institutions across the globe.

Marines assure access ashore. Littoral power projection capabilities enable U.S. joint forces to push open the door of access ashore. This ability to go where the Nation is not “invited” fundamentally underwrites the deterrent value of the joint force, and provides decision-makers options that complement precision strike or nuclear capabilities. Modern amphibious operations seek to achieve precision maneuver that creates and exploits seams in forces that might oppose a landing. Uniquely, Marines can operate without the requirement for nearby land bases and can sustain themselves from the sea without intact and secured ports and airfields.

Marines respond to natural disaster. Crises imposed by unpredictable natural forces create human suffering on a scale that the U.S. cannot ignore. Timely U.S. responses strengthen the credibility of its promises, and increase the effectiveness of its security deterrence. The ability of amphibious forces to provide air, ground, and sea response, without imposing burdens on already stressed infrastructure, makes them a unique contributor to U.S. capability and influence.

Marines are most ready when the nation is least ready. Because our Nation cannot afford to hold the entire joint force at the highest state of readiness, it has chosen to keep the Marines ready. For over half a century, the Marine Corps has complied with the mandate of the 82d Congress to be “the most ready when the Nation is generally least ready.” There is no effective substitute for ready forces that can swiftly respond to crisis. There are no effective substitutes for United States Marines.

RESPONDING TO AUSTERITY WITH VISION

As the Nation continues to recover economically, the Marine Corps is highly cognizant of the necessity for frugality and good stewardship of the nation’s resources. We have continued to adjust our organization, infrastructure and business practices to make the Marine Corps the best possible return for the defense dollar. Austerity may make us leaner but we will emerge stronger as we innovate and remain the most capable Marine Corps the nation can afford. *We may have to do with less, but we will refuse to do things less well.*

Readiness is the currency with which we meet the nation’s security obligations; a hollow force is not an option for the nation’s crisis response force. While readiness comes at a cost, the cost of not being able to intervene or contain crisis can be catastrophic. Investment in a ready Marine Corps buys decision space for leadership decision-making, and it buys time to assemble the components of the larger joint force if conditions require it. Preserving that ready edge for the joint force is fundamental to the capability we provide to the nation’s security.

Maintain our Commitment to fulfillment of the mission in Afghanistan. Our Afghanistan mis-



sion is not complete until the last Marine is home, our wounded warriors have healed, and the families of our fallen have been taken care of. As long as Marines are forward deployed in a combat theater, they will receive our first priority, the center of our thoughts and our last ounce of energy.

Reset and Reconstitute the Force. Our mission is not complete until our equipment is reset and our force is reconstituted. That equipment is central to our ability to respond to future missions. As stewards of the taxpayer, Marines have initiated heroic efforts to recover, refurbish, and repair equipment.

Rebalance to the Pacific. Rebalancing to the Pacific theater is a central element of our national strategy which builds on the decades-long presence of Marines who operate across its land, water and airspace every day. We will not just “be” in the Pacific, we will “be effective” in the Pacific through distributed, multi-mission-capable MAGTFs. We will preserve our global responsiveness, while developing opportunities in this priority theater.

Advance Littoral Concepts. The changing nature of the security threats to the Nation demands continued innovation. Operational Maneuver From The Sea and Ship-to-Objective Maneuver remain our capstone warfighting concepts, and we will continue to focus on



our ability to execute them while furthering the concept of Single Naval Battle to provide a seamless projection of naval power from blue-water to operations ashore. We must have the organizational and process discipline to manage our concepts through their full life cycle, providing focus and guidance for innovation, training, and experimentation.

Invest in our Marines. The superior qualities of the individual Marine provide our warfighting edge. That begins with recruiting and retaining the highest quality talent and applies to our active duty, reserve, and civilian workforces. Marines are expected to shoulder increasingly complex burdens in the emerging security environment we must adopt our educational establishments and training venues to ensure their readiness for the complexity of modern conflict.

Invest in Innovation. In addition to training and education, we will create mechanisms to embrace innovation across the force to move our concepts from theory to practice. We will leverage our human capital through experimentation and innovation at every level and create responsive mechanisms to reduce the “flash-to-bang” process of transforming innovative ideas to force implementation.

Care for our Wounded Warriors. After a decade of war, the continued physical, moral, and mental health of all of our Marines remains paramount. Those who bear the physical and mental wounds of war must remain our first concern. We will continue to extend every effort to heal our wounded, support their families, and help young Marines and Sailors increase their resilience.

Keep Faith with Marines and their Families. The faith of the American people has improved the quality of life for our Marines and families during the last decade and we must protect those gains in an era of increasing fiscal constraints. Our families share in our burdens, our values, and our risks, and their service



must be honored through quality programs and access to much-needed resources.

THE NATION'S EXPEDITIONARY FORCE OF CHOICE

Marines have always responded to change in ways both timely and timeless. While our concepts, training, and equipment have adapted, our fundamental character has not. Marines remain physically strong, mentally agile, and imminently practical warfighters. The cohesion, fidelity, and expeditionary mindset of Marines are a proven recipe for success. Marines will continue to live hard, train hard, and fight hard, providing the Nation with a ready capability to contain the crisis, plug the gap, hold the line, fight and win.

In short, America's Marines are a hedge against the unexpected and dangerous in a security environment that remains fraught with challenges. A compelling security investment, the Marine Corps provides significant return on investment for every security dollar. When the Nation pays the “sticker price” for its Marines, it gets not only the least-expensive force in the U.S. defense arsenal, it also gets one that is highly skilled, forward deployed, and able to operate across the full range of military operations. Expeditionary naval forces provide an effective hedge against both the Nation's most likely and most dangerous security challenges. We do not know where or when we will fight, but we know that we will be ready when the bugle sounds. We do not know whom we will fight, but even the toughest adversaries have not proven our equal. We will remain America's “middleweight” expeditionary force in readiness . . . Semper Fidelis.