



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
2 NAVY ANNEX
WASHINGTON, DC 20380-1775

MCO 1500.53A
C 467
30 Aug 02

MARINE CORPS ORDER 1500.53A

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps
To: Distribution List

Subj: MARINE AIR-GROUND TASK FORCE STAFF TRAINING PROGRAM (MSTP)

Ref: (a) Commandant's Guidance dtd 1 July 1999
(b) Marine Corps Reference Publication 3-0A, Unit Training Management Guide
(c) Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1-0, Marine Corps Operations

1. Situation

a. Marine forces offer the joint force commander rapidly deploying and self-sustaining capabilities that can be employed in a wide range of contingencies. Marine forces are organized and employed as a Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF). The power of the MAGTF is derived from its unique integration of the command element, ground combat element, aviation combat element, combat service support element, and bases and stations that "produces a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts." In many cases, the MAGTF commander will also fulfill Marine component commander responsibilities.

b. With this in mind, senior Marine commanders and their staffs must be prepared for the variety and complexity of warfighting tasks that may be assigned in support of a joint force commander's campaign. MAGTFs must be able to quickly integrate with, and fight under, the joint force. The MSTP is designed to provide professional training and education, along with a rigorous staff exercise program, in order to maximize the proficiency and effectiveness of the principal leadership of the MAGTF.

2. Mission. The MSTP will provide training in MAGTF warfighting skills, within the context of a Joint and Combined environment, in order to improve the warfighting skills of senior commanders and their staffs and to provide feedback into the Expeditionary Force Development System (EFDS).

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: Approved for public release;
distribution is unlimited

MCO 1500.53A
30 Aug 02

3. Execution

a. Commander's Intent

Purpose: It is my intent that this program provide realistic, challenging training for MAGTF commanders and their staffs in accordance with the *Commandant's Guidance* issued in reference (a).

Method: We must "train the way we intend to fight." This concept is not new, but the reality is that we too often do not "train smart." Exercise design is critical. Training scenarios must pit MAGTFs against skilled and determined adversaries who are capable of sophisticated tactical actions. Evaluation of tactical execution in training exercises will compare plans with actual outcomes, with analysis enhanced by the informed judgment of experienced monitors. Our training must provide a learning environment in which we recognize MAGTFs striving for excellence will make tactical errors from time to time. If we treat these errors as learning opportunities, the lessons will not be forgotten. Without question, a key part of any exercise is the After Action Review (AAR). AARs will be a positive means of providing meaningful feedback aimed at helping our MAGTFs and their commanders improve the proficiency and effectiveness of their commands.

Endstate: MAGTF commanders and their staffs possess the requisite warfighting skills to optimize operational success.

b. Concept of Operations. The MSTP will be conducted in accordance with the following guidance:

(1) Main Effort: Support to the Operating Forces. Training in support of the operating forces will be provided in the form of a comprehensive five-part package normally delivered to the MAGTF commander and staff at least once every 24 months. Training for major subordinate commands (MSC) will occur in conjunction with MAGTF training, and will be tailored to address the unique capabilities and requirements of each element. The five-part package consists of:

(a) Command, Control, Communication, and Computers Mobile Training Team (C4 MTT). The C4 MTT will provide an executive level session for commanders and battlestaffs, functional training for watch standers, and technical training for operators and information managers.

(b) Warfighting Seminar. Content of the seminar will be derived from two sources: those topics fundamental to MAGTF operations in accordance with MCDP 1-0, and other topics identified by the MAGTF commanders to meet their specific training requirements.

(c) Planning Practical Application. Instruction in the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCP) will be followed by practical application on command and staff actions in planning, including the production of a written operations order.

(d) Command Post Exercise (CPX). The commander and his staff will execute their order in a command post exercise. Based on the MAGTF commander's desires, the CPX may be linked to an existing operations plan, an emerging contingency, a pre-existing scheduled exercise, or conducted as a "stand alone" exercise.

(e) After Action Review (AAR). The CPX will be closely followed by a rigorous after action review that will emphasize lessons learned and collective education by primarily comparing what was planned to what was executed. The AAR will also serve as a forum for the operating forces and the representatives of the Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC) to identify and capture warfighting requirements. Information gathered in this manner will be merged into the Expeditionary Force Development System (EFDS).

(2) Supporting Efforts

(a) The General Officer Warfighting Program (GOWP) will provide a forum for warfighting discussion and professional development for newly selected brigadier generals.

(b) Support to Marine Corps University (MCU) will augment the MCU curriculum and enhance preparation for student assignment to the operating forces.

(c) Support to emergent training requirements in the operating forces, supporting establishment, and Marine Forces Reserve (MARFORRES) will be provided on an as needed basis.

(3) Tactical Reserve. The MSTP staff will constitute a resource of highly skilled MAGTF staff officers, prepared to deploy and augment operating forces involved in actual contingencies, to include external/joint billet requirements.

MCO 1500.53A
30 Aug 02

c. Tasks

(1) Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command

(a) Designate Commanding General, Training and Education Command to serve as Executive Agent for the conduct and administration of the MSTP.

(b) Conduct phased training for MAGTF commanders, MSC commanders, and their staffs in order to improve their warfighting skills.

(c) Support joint exercises, operations, and contingencies in order to enhance MAGTF capabilities in a joint/combined environment.

(d) Provide the exercise venue to assess MAGTF warfighting capabilities in order to provide feedback into the EFDS.

(e) Conduct the GOWP in order to provide a forum for warfighting discussion and professional development.

(f) Provide support to MCU in order to enhance preparation for student assignment to the operating forces.

(g) Conduct an annual conference in order to produce a MSTP Training, Exercise and Employment Plan (TEEP).

(h) Provide representation to MSTP AARs in order to capture input to the EFDS.

(i) Submit to the Commandant recommendations for the selection of retired USMC general officers, who collectively represent experienced leadership of all elements of the MAGTF, in order to serve as the MSTP Senior Mentors.

(j) Provide tailored MSTP training as requested by Commanders Marine Force Pacific, Atlantic and Reserve.

(k) Report systemic trends quarterly to CMC and inform Commanders Marine Force Pacific, Atlantic and Reserve.

(l) Report emerging trends to CMC as required and inform Commanders Marine Force Pacific, Atlantic and Reserve.

(2) Commanding General, Marine Corps Material Command.
Provide for Modeling and Simulation (M&S) in support of the MSTP.

(3) Commander Marine Forces Pacific, Commander Marine Forces Atlantic, and Commander Marine Forces Reserve

(a) In coordination with CG, MCCDC schedule participation by assigned forces in the MSTP.

(b) Request and prioritize emergent training requirements from CG, MCCDC as required.

(c) Request MSTP staff augmentation in support of actual contingencies as required.

(d) Participate in MSTP training as required to observe and/or augment those elements of the MAGTF's higher service/functional component headquarters involved in planning and execution of the exercise.

d. Coordinating Instructions

(1) Program Implementation Goals

(a) Each Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) will undergo the MSTP training cycle at least once every 24 months.

(b) Each Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) will undertake the MSTP training cycle at least once every 24 months. Recognizing that the commanders and staffs of the MEBs normally hold senior billets in the MEF and so are exposed to MEF MSTP training, MEF and MEB commanders have wide latitude in selecting the forum and scope for conducting this training. For example, MEB MSTP training can be conducted as a separate stand-alone exercise, or MEB commanders can capitalize on the first three events in a MEF MSTP cycle and then execute the CPX portion as a MEB "battle staff only" event or in conjunction with an existing MEB-level TEEP exercise.

(c) Support to MCU will be in accordance with the annual academic calendar.

(2) The MSTP can conduct four large MEF/MEB level exercises per year if detailed schedule coordination is completed at the MSTP annual TEEP conference.

MCO 1500.53A
30 Aug 02

(3) The MSTP will stand prepared to conduct battlestaff training at home station or in conjunction with the conduct of a Combined Arms Exercise (CAX) at Twentynine Palms or training at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center for those MEBs not undertaking the standard five-part package.

(4) Scheduling. MARFOR and MAGTF commanders, along with the President, MCU, will identify their requirements via an annual MSTP TEEP conference hosted by the CG, TECOM, MCCDC.

(5) Additional Requirements. Requirements that arise outside scheduled events will be submitted directly to CG, MCCDC.

(6) Terminology. To maximize the effectiveness of the program the following terms must be understood and employed:

(a) Training Goals. Reference (b) defines a training goal as "a broad statement of desired individual or collective proficiency with respect to a capability required for mission readiness / accomplishment." Training goals provide the framework for the development of academic instruction, exercise and scenario design, planning and practical application exercise, and the command post exercise. Training goals may be derived from two sources: those topics identified by the MSTP as fundamental to MAGTF operations in accordance with reference (c), and those topics identified by the MAGTF commanders to meet their specific training requirements.

(b) Exercise Objectives. Exercise objectives are used to articulate how the CPX will support the commander's overall training goals. They drive exercise design.

(c) Exercise Design. Exercise Design refers to a wide variety of activities that must be synchronized to create a realistic and challenging training experience. These activities include scenario development, opposing forces planning and execution, intelligence control activities, M&S support, C4 technical architecture and support, replication of higher and adjacent HQ, exercise control, and exercise support. Exercise design is used to create an environment for the training audience to plan and execute operations.

(d) After Action Review (AAR). In accordance with reference (a) "a method of providing feedback to units by involving participants in the training diagnostic process in order to increase and reinforce learning." The AAR leader,

guides participants in identifying deficiencies and lessons learned. MSTP AARs will provide, to the maximum extent possible, empirical data to the training audience that compares what was planned and what was executed. MSTP will present sufficient analysis to facilitate learning and discussion by the training audience. The AAR participants will include: the MAGTF commander, his battlestaff, MSC commanders and their battlestuffs, and additional staff officers as designated. The AAR will be conducted within 72 hours of the end of the CPX.

(e) Exercise Advisor. A MSTP senior mentor will serve as exercise advisor. He provides guidance to ensure exercise design and execution achieve the designated objectives. He coordinates the collation and analysis of exercise results and the production of the AAR.

5. Administrative and Logistics

a. Administrative Instructions. Planning and coordination between the MSTP and the training audience will be affected via an Initial Planning Conference, Mid-term Planning Conference, and Final Planning Conference. Agreements between the principals shall be incorporated into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) co-signed by representatives of CG, MCCDC and the supported command.

b. Logistics

(1) Support. The MSTP will be largely self-sufficient and will require minimal logistic support from the training audience. Details of support provided by the training audience to the MSTP will be specified in the MOU.

(2) Fiscal. The costs associated with the MSTP deployment and employment will be programmed and executed by CG, MCCDC.

6. Command and Signal

a. Signal

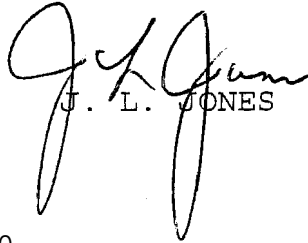
(1) This order is effective on receipt.

(2) Submit reports IAW taskings in paragraph 3.c.

MCO 1500.53A
30 Aug 02

b. Command. This order is applicable to the Marine Corps Reserve.

c. Cancellation. MCO 1500.53



J. L. JONES

DISTRIBUTION: PCN 10201532300

Copy to: 7000144/8145001 (1)