

COMMANDING GENERAL'S OPERATING CONCEPT AND GUIDANCE TO THE 3D MARINE DIVISION



March 2012

“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 today’s force...TODAY.”

General James F. Amos
35th Commandant of the Marine Corps
Commandant’s Planning Guidance 2010



Third Marine Division Operating Concept

The Marine Corps is entering a time of transition after the longest period of sustained combat operations in our Nation's history. Our Commandant has provided clear guidance to his Marines as we collectively rebalance our Corps to meet future challenges. By virtue of our location and lineage, the 3d Marine Division is well postured to meet these challenges.

This document identifies and articulates my vision of an overarching operating concept for the 3d Marine Division. This *Operating Concept and Guidance* represents my thoughts on our operating environment, to include the challenges and opportunities that exist in this region. Additionally, this document lays out my *critical priorities for the close and deep fight*, as well as priorities that I consider to be *continuing actions*. Finally, no plan survives first contact with the enemy. This *Operating Concept and Guidance* is intended to be flexible and will mature as the operating environment evolves.



There is a deliberate strategic shift in focus towards the Asian-Pacific Region. We will continue to support ongoing combat operations in Afghanistan as we adapt to the emerging requirements in the Pacific Command (PACOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR). As the Ground Combat Element (GCE) of the Third Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF), we must understand the critical role we play as a forward deployed infantry division. We provide unique capabilities that can be employed as part of a task-organized and balanced Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) to meet the broad range of security challenges that exist in the PACOM AOR.

We are the most geographically distributed division in the Marine Corps. Third Marine Division is forward deployed across the PACOM AOR from Hawaii to Okinawa and, most recently, Australia. This environment clearly presents force closure and coordination challenges, but it also allows us to routinely exercise both air and sea movement of our forces for training, security cooperation events, and real-world operations. Regardless of the existing and emerging challenges, we must be prepared to exercise effective command and control while conducting operations across the Range of Military Operations (ROMO) in austere, expeditionary environments. We must train to deploy, employ, and redeploy on short notice. To achieve this goal, 3d Marine Division must remain agile in response time, method of deployment, and force capability.



Third Marine Division Operating Requirements

Major Combat Operations. We must sustain and improve upon our ability to conduct tactical-level combat operations in any location in the PACOM AOR. The ability to command and control both organic and non-organic forces while operating as part of a joint/combined force is central to this concept. Third Marine Division must also remain poised to support potential combat operations on the Korean Peninsula.

Theater Security Cooperation (TSC). Third Marine Division will execute directed TSC engagement activities throughout the PACOM AOR to enhance interoperability and to increase our expeditionary warfighting capabilities. We will support III MEF directed exercises and operations that seek to develop the military capacity, professionalism, and interoperability of our partners and allies. Our participation in partner nation capacity building is critical to mitigating the threat posed by transnational forces, dissuading potential adversaries, and ensuring peace and stability throughout the region.



Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HA/DR). The natural state of this theater necessitates that we be prepared at all times to respond quickly to complex human suffering scenarios associated with all manner of natural disasters. Earthquakes, tsunamis, and typhoons are just a few of many violent acts of nature that can cause mass suffering and hardship across the PACOM AOR. Third Marine Division will remain ready to respond to disasters throughout the Pacific when directed.

Other Missions as Directed. Third Marine Division stands ready to conduct other missions as directed.



The Operational Environment

The PACOM AOR encompasses half of the earth's surface. From the Korean peninsula to the Indian subcontinent, this vast theater presents a unique problem set of challenges to our Marines and Sailors as we train to operate in every clime and place. Third Marine Division will play a tactical role in supporting our Nation's strategic interests as well as the common interests of Allies and partners of the United States. We operate in a maritime theater spanning much of the Pacific and Indian Oceans and the majority of the Asian landmass. The shipping lanes within these oceans are the most highly traveled sea routes in the world. Freedom of navigation will remain a key security concern due to its importance to both global commerce and regional security. The dramatic range of climate and geography presents the 3d Marine Division with the potential of operating from the sea and across extremes of climate and terrain when ashore. Our unique expeditionary mindset and amphibious capability will continue to make us the force of choice in this AOR. We will actively pursue opportunities to embark Marines on naval shipping to preserve and enhance this critical skill set.



The PACOM AOR contains 36 nations and roughly 50% of the world's population. These nations range from totalitarian states to the largest democracy in the world. Three of the world's largest economies, ten of the world's smallest economies, and several of the largest militaries in the world exist in the Pacific and Indian Ocean region – each vying for both economic and military relevance. Nations within the PACOM AOR are growing and expanding both economically and demographically. The pace of urban and economic expansion in this region is unlike any other region in the world. This will be the most dynamic and complex operating environment for at least the first half of the 21st century.

I envision several issues in the PACOM AOR that could potentially serve as a catalyst for conflict:

- Competition for regional influence with an increasingly powerful and assertive China – especially within the Economic Exclusion Zone of the South China Sea
- Increasing population and urbanization may result in social unrest as competition for economic opportunity increases
- Increased competition for raw materials and resources among nation states
- North Korean adventurism or political/social unrest that could lead to instability on the Korean Peninsula
- A growing (real or perceived) economic inequality among nations or societies
- Transnational terrorist networks and violent extremists that pose a risk to the security of the United States, our allies, and partners

As a result, there exists the potential for tensions to quickly manifest into conflict or crisis, not only between nation states, but also between differing religions, ideologies, cultures, and ethnicities. In some cases, these complex issues will bleed across traditional and internationally accepted borders.



Third Marine Division Challenges



Tyranny of Distance. By the sheer size of the PACOM AOR and the natural obstacles present, operations undertaken by 3d Marine Division face an immediate and significant task of moving personnel, equipment, and sustainment throughout a dispersed maritime theater.

Diverse Mission Set. Third Marine Division is required to be ready to conduct operations across the range of military operations. This includes missions that require us to rapidly deploy and defeat potential adversaries in Major Combat Operations (MCO). In 2010, this division was able to rapidly deploy a forward command and control capability to support HA/DR efforts in support of Operation TOMODACHI. The PACOM AOR will

continue to be an area filled with friction and uncertainty as a result of its unpredictable and sometimes violent physical environment, and by the constant change in dynamics of its complex human terrain.

Posturing. Third Marine Division forces are currently located thousands of miles apart but must still retain the ability to rapidly aggregate as a coherent force. In the near future, the division may face further dispersion with fewer resources with which to train and operate. We must work collaboratively with our higher headquarters to positively shape the GCE posture in the Pacific so that we will be able to accomplish any mission assigned while maintaining the trust of our host nations, partners, and allies.

Fiscal Austerity. One of the most significant challenges facing our Corps is the fiscal austerity resulting from the recent global economic crisis. We have an entire generation of officers and staff noncommissioned officers that have experienced unprecedented access to funding in support of combat operations. We have entered a period of fiscal austerity that our Corps has not experienced since the post-Vietnam era. We will have to make the most of every taxpayer penny we receive as we reconstitute the division following 11



years of protracted combat operations. We will need to closely scrutinize our budget, rigorously enforce fiscal discipline, and continuously educate our Marines on how to maintain a high level of combat readiness during a period of declining resources.



Commanders will have to prioritize mission essential requirements and efficiently execute their respective budgets within the fiscal constraints that will exist during this indefinite period of reduced funding. Disciplined stewardship of available resources is a commander's responsibility. This message must be communicated to every subordinate commander.



Opportunities

We have several unique opportunities that can be leveraged to improve our operational capabilities.

Maritime Nature of our Area of Operations.

The Marine Corps has operated with great success in the Pacific region during the 20th century. Our operational expertise, familiarity with the region, and institutional reputation among the nations in the region provides us with some distinct advantages. Additionally, our inherent relationship with the Navy and the ability to operate seamlessly from ship-to-shore represents a critical engagement construct in this AO.



Multinational Partners. Building on decades of goodwill and professional relationships earned in this theater, we are ready to expand partnerships throughout the AO in support of III MEF and PACOM initiatives. We will support theater strategy by executing well-planned tactical actions and unparalleled military professionalism during directed exercises and engagement activities.



Experienced Forces. Since 2001, our Marines and Sailors have operated magnificently in support of Overseas Contingency Operations. We have supported combat operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Philippines by manning, training, and equipping task-organized forces to support global service requirements. These efforts occurred while the division was providing forces to execute numerous directed annual exercises within the PACOM AOR and providing globally sourced individual augmentation requirements. These experiences have resulted in a mature, experienced, and agile force that readily adapts to any mission assigned.

Third Marine Division possesses the most professional and highly trained commanders, staffs, and units in our history.

I want to leverage this leadership and combat experience to expand our warfighting and tactical expertise in order to meet the diverse mission sets resident in the PACOM AOR. Most importantly, I envision this leadership as the key enabler towards developing the next generation of responsible and professional Marine Corps leaders.



PACOM Strategic Guidance

The PACOM Commander has issued specific guidance for all forces operating in the Pacific theater. Although we operate at the tactical level, we need to understand that our actions directly support PACOM Theater Strategy. What we do on the ground, from the platoon to division level, impacts PACOM's ability to achieve theater-strategic objectives. Our actions need to support PACOM goals that include: *promoting military professionalism, building capacity, enhancing interoperability, and increasing trust so that we can strengthen and advance existing alliances and partnerships.* At the theater-strategic level, PACOM advocates *sustaining U.S. and China military-to-military relationships to increase cooperation while reducing the chances for strategic miscalculation.* Further, PACOM also seeks to *develop the U.S. – India strategic partnership through military-to-military interaction and interoperability.* We must continue to support 2015 OPCON transition efforts while also being *prepared to respond to contingencies on the Korean Peninsula* and *fight tonight* should aggression or instability require U.S. support or intervention. Finally, *countering transnational threats by working with allies and partners to disrupt and/or defeat violent extremist organizations* will continue to be a priority.



Marine Forces Pacific Guidance



Marine Forces Pacific (MFP) serves as the Marine Forces (MARFOR) service component to PACOM. Within this role, MFP commands and directs assigned forces, accomplishes assigned operational missions, advises USPACOM on the capabilities and employment of USMC forces, provides & sustains combat ready capabilities as required, establishes and maintains basing and infrastructure, and postures the force IOT shape the region, deter aggression, respond to crises, and defeat adversaries.

Specific areas of focus that pertain to the division include:

- The development and employment of the Marine Rotational Force (MRF) in Australia
- Developing a flexible strategic lift plan that allows the component to use assigned forces to rapidly respond to emerging crises.

III MEF Guidance

In addition to previous guidance that outlined his *Tip of the Marine Corps Spear*, the Commanding General of III MEF published four key priorities for 2012. These priorities include **the ability to rapidly deploy to the Korean Peninsula, “fight tonight,” preparing to respond to crisis in theater, reconstituting III MEF, and increasing the focus on Force Preservation.** All of these priorities are represented and supported in this document.



My Guidance to the Division

This *Operating Concept and Guidance* is nested with the goals and objectives of our higher headquarters. It is designed to be a broad-based document that will assist our Marines and Sailors to *advance together* to achieve objectives that will benefit this division for years to come. The cornerstone of our collective strength is built around the premise that we properly train, equip, and lead our most lethal weapon – the individual Marine.

I want to reiterate some of the guidance that I have previously published as your Commanding General. We cannot get to my desired endstate unless *we all work together as part of a cohesive team built on mutual trust, dignity, and respect*. Our ability to address the challenges that lie ahead relies heavily on the quality of the individuals that we have at every echelon of leadership – from fire team leaders to commanders and senior enlisted leaders.



Third Marine Division has been supporting overseas contingency operations for over a decade in addition to maintaining a robust exercise schedule. The operational tempo of units under this division has been exceptionally fast paced. We have paid a high price, as have other units in the Marine Corps, during this period of prolonged global conflict. Most of you have experienced the personal sorrow and pain that comes with the loss of a fellow Marine or Sailor in combat – whether you were at home training to deploy or while fighting overseas. Our fallen have been laid to rest with dignity and respect.

The same is true for our day to day treatment of our Marines and Sailors. Every Marine and Sailor in this division *will be treated with dignity and respect*. There is *zero tolerance* in this division for any type of maltreatment of Marines and Sailors. **The irresponsible acts of a few ultimately detract from our honor as well as our ability to accomplish our mission to train for and be ready to fight our nation's battles.**

Part of our fight abroad has been about the rights of our fellow man to live a dignified life under the protection of the rule of law. Why would we allow anyone in our own organization to abuse a fellow Marine or Sailor after fighting so hard for others in foreign lands? *Hazing, sexual assault, and bullying, have no place in the 3d Marine Division or anywhere else in our Marine Corps. These acts are committed by those who lack dignity and respect for their fellow Marines and Sailors, and frankly, lack the moral fortitude of true warriors.*

In order for us to be effective as a team, we must ensure that every Marine and Sailor understands their value to our organization. Our Marines and Sailors are more effective and are more responsive in executing orders when they have a solid understanding of their important role in accomplishing the mission. Every Marine and Sailor will have a basic understanding of their commander's intent two levels above and fully understand that everyone, regardless of position or rank, is accountable for their actions. At the end of the day, the future of the 3d Marine Division relies on a healthy and resilient force that can react quickly and decisively despite the presence of *uncertainty, friction, and the fog of war*.



Critical Priorities

There are six priorities which I view as critical to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of division operations. These priorities are intended to provide overarching guidance for the division staff and my commanders at all echelons of leadership. These priorities are further divided into near-term (The Close Fight) and enduring (The Deep Fight).

Operational Requirements. Our #1 priority is to support operational requirements for Afghanistan with properly trained and equipped combat forces.

Reconstitution. The reconstitution and reset of the 3d Marine Division, with an emphasis on infrastructure and equipment required to support the full resumption of the Unit Deployment Program (UDP), is of paramount importance to increasing our readiness to respond to crisis.

Command and Control. We must be able to rapidly deploy and execute effective command and control while operating in austere tactical environments. We must be able to harness reach back capability to our garrison location from anywhere in the Pacific Theater.

Combat Readiness. We will be ready to conduct operations across the ROMO unilaterally or in support of our allies through joint and combined exercises.

Posture and Infrastructure. We must continue to provide accurate and operationally relevant information to our higher headquarters in an effort to shape decisions that will impact the future GCE lay down in the Pacific. We must also effectively collaborate with other elements of the MAGTF on future force locations to ensure that we are mutually supporting and properly task organized to meet mission requirements. Additionally, we must accurately forecast future infrastructure requirements and inform appropriate decision makers in time to influence future year budget decision making.



Force Preservation. In order to meet our sacred commitment as America's Force-in-Readiness, we must take care of our most important and precious asset, our people. We will lean heavily into improving and maintaining the moral, mental, and physical fitness and resilience of our Marines and Sailors. Success on this front will, without a doubt, lead to a more operationally ready expeditionary force. We will execute a proactive and engaged force preservation program that informs, educates, connects, and empowers leadership at all levels to identify at-risk Marines and Sailors and quickly bring appropriate resources to bear, both on and off the battlefield. Regardless of rank, we are all in this fight together.



The Close Fight

The close fight involves those areas in which the Division Staff and Commanders must immediately invest time, assets, and effort to accomplish. These requirements may change as we take down the five meter targets and others pop-up on the event horizon.

Global Sourcing. Third Marine Division continues to support Service requirements in the current fight (Afghanistan). We will continue to provide trained forces to meet the needs of combatant commanders. Through all aspects of manning, training, and equipping, this is the most important near-term task facing 3d Marine Division.

Division Reset and Reconstitution. Sustained combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past decade have placed an unprecedented demand on our ground equipment. As the Marine Corps begins its drawdown from OEF, we must be ready to place the right equipment, in the proper condition, into the hands of our warfighters. We must do all of this in a time of growing fiscal austerity.

The Marine Corps does not anticipate a post OEF *operational pause* that will provide us with the luxury of focusing exclusively on reset and reconstitution. Equipment reset will occur in stride with ongoing current operations. Therefore, close staff coordination with III MEF is essential to improving access to funding and equipment required for unit readiness. A critical requirement supporting this reset effort demands that commanders place a priority on Global Combat Support System - Marine Corps (GCSS-MC) proficiency in order to exploit its full potential in supporting our priorities. Resetting the division for the future remains our top logistics priority.



UDP Resumption. The full resumption of infantry battalion UDP under the command and control of 4th Marine Regiment represents the most significant aspect of the division's reconstitution efforts. We must aggressively identify shortfalls, critical gaps, and requirements to ensure we are prepared to receive the first infantry battalion in a manner that seamlessly integrates them into our training and operations. Using lessons learned in stride, we must remain proactive in refining and resourcing requirements in support of remaining UDP units. We will be fully prepared to receive, billet, equip, sustain, and incorporate into our Training and Exercise Employment Plan (TEEP), the various units participating in UDP.



Operationalize Force Preservation. Force Preservation is a critical component of the division's combat readiness and will remain so as many of our Marines and Sailors transition from combat operations in Afghanistan. We will continue to improve our Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) training programs to maintain unit strength, resilience, and readiness throughout the division. Our NCOs are the first line of defense in the prevention, early identification, and intervention of stress related problems experienced by our young Marines and Sailors. However, we must also recognize that destructive stressors come in many forms which can negatively impact Marines and Sailors of any rank, position, or experience. Force Preservation Councils (FPC) at the battalion and regiment level, when combined with active mentoring and engaged leadership by officer and enlisted leaders at EVERY level, will be our standard. Finally, our family readiness programs enhance force preservation efforts – family readiness must continue to receive command attention during this period of transition.

Training. Training will focus on supporting the Mission Essential Tasks (METs) required to conduct high tempo, combined arms operations in a MCO scenario. These types of high-intensity combat operations are the most taxing on staffs and units. Demonstrated competence against these METs equips us exceptionally well to succeed in any mission. We need to reinvigorate training management techniques and educate unit leadership on how to plan and conduct training based on unit training readiness assessments that are linked to higher headquarters METs. I see the following training venues as important enablers towards maintaining readiness.

Hawaii Based Training. Our units stationed on Hawaii must continue to have access to training areas on Oahu and on the Island of Hawaii. The proximity of the Pōhakuloa Training Area (PTA) provides valuable training to our Hawaii based units but should not be the default option to support pre-deployment training certification. My intent is that our Hawaii based units continue to conduct training at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in preparation for overseas deployments.

Okinawa Based Training. Training on Okinawa is unique. The operating environment presents tactical opportunities and challenges; both through the training restrictions and the extreme terrain and weather conditions. Third Marine Division must develop a training architecture that facilitates METs based training on the island. Streamlined procedures to request support, coherent, and current range control procedures, combined with critical enablers are key elements of this architecture. The Jungle Warfare Training Center (JWTC) and Ground Air Integrated Training (GAIT) should be incorporated into every deploying unit's training plan.



Off-Island Training. Training off-island and in remote locations with a myriad of partner nations will occur frequently. UDP units will have little knowledge of the requirements and expectations to conduct this training. We must enhance cultural awareness and facilitate an understanding of the training opportunities that exist in our AOR to these units. Annual exercises, as well as the Combined Arms Training Center (CATC) located at Camp Fuji, offer unique opportunities for live-fire, combined arms training off-island. To the greatest extent possible, every deploying unit should get the opportunity to conduct training outside of Okinawa.



The Deep Fight

The deep fight involves tasks that will require recurring attention and staff action to shape future actions that may continue for several years into the future.

Defense Posture Review Initiative (DPRI). The current political, economic, military, and informational realities prescribe that at a future date, some 3d Marine Division units will relocate from their current home stations. We will be prepared to execute two tasks in support of DPRI:

- Provide accurate and timely information to decision makers in order to “shape the destiny” as the full intent of the Pacific lay-down becomes known
- When directed, 3d Marine Division units will transition from current locations to designated locations

Infrastructure. Future construction, renovation, and rebuilding of infrastructure are outside the direct control of the division. However, we have an inherent responsibility to shape the future in these areas by identifying “out-year” requirements.

It is important that we monitor the condition of our existing infrastructure against future operational requirements and that we actively advocate for future military construction and renovation requirements. This includes infrastructure for our units based on Hawaii and also encompasses shared training infrastructure issues that may be of interest to the division.

Continuing Actions

Continuing actions involve key areas that the division must remain engaged in, prepared for, and attentive to on a recurring basis to improve operations and readiness.

Theater Sourcing. The 3d Marine Division will continue to provide forces in support of exercises and contingency operations throughout the PACOM AOR. We will staff, train, equip and sustain these units to ensure we provide expeditionary forces in readiness and individual Marines prepared to excel in any environment.

Command and Control. The 3d Marine Division faces significant command and control challenges. First, we must maintain a tiered, operationally responsive, and mobile command and control capability that is rapidly deployable. We must be capable of operating across the communications spectrum in a joint/combined environment. Most importantly, we must develop a standardized command and control system that enables us to operate as the GCE for a MAGTF. This architecture must enable our Major Subordinate Elements (MSEs) to “plug and play” into higher headquarters utilizing existing (program of record) tactical communication systems.



Operations. Third Marine Division will remain prepared to conduct MCO in the Korean Theater of Operations (KTO) and in support of other allies in the region. We will conduct TSC operations in support of the combatant commander's theater campaign plan and leverage these activities to meet our own training objectives. TSC activities offer unique opportunities for bilateral, military-to-military interaction while advancing our cultural depth and knowledge of the PACOM AOR. Finally, we must remain ready to conduct contingency operations at the lower spectrum of conflict. Over the last decade, this division has participated in multiple HA/DR operations and we will remain ready to execute future tasks as directed.

Readiness. The 3d Marine Division will remain ready in manning, training, and equipping to respond to any crisis regardless of current or future geographic location. This can only be successful if leadership embraces an expeditionary mindset and creates an environment of purposeful readiness and tempered urgency. Preserving combat power begins with accountability. This is the foundation of an effective expeditionary sustainment mindset.

Third Marine Division leaders at every level have a responsibility to account for and properly maintain their equipment, infrastructure, and personnel at the highest possible state of preparedness. This is a distinct challenge as much of our equipment, buildings, and support structure is old, worn, and in some ways, deficient.

We will take proactive steps to protect, preserve, and improve the state of our equipment. That is not to imply that we will not train hard with it, quite the contrary. However, we will place a high priority on the material readiness of our equipment.

Summary

Our division will continue to operate in an increasingly challenging and dynamic strategic landscape. This document lays out my overarching operating concept. I want to encourage an active dialogue at every level to ensure that we are looking ahead and anticipating, rather than reacting to, future events. To that end, I want my division staff and commanders to stay actively attuned to emerging requirements so that we can adapt when required. It will require a coordinated effort by all hands to achieve our objectives and to make the 3d Marine Division the premier expeditionary ground combat force in the Pacific.



F. M. PADILLA

Brigadier General, USMC

Commanding General, 3d Marine Division





“THE SUN NEVER SETS ON THE 3D MARINE DIVISION”



3D MARINE DIVISION