

## Marine Corps Aviation

Marine Corps Aviation provides the MAGTF commander with an Aviation Combat Element (ACE) capable of conducting air operations as part of a naval expeditionary force. The ACE supports the MAGTF commander through the six functions of Marine aviation – assault support, anti-air warfare, offensive air support, electronic warfare, control of aircraft and missiles, and aerial reconnaissance. It can organize at any level from small detachments to entire wings to meet the needs of the MAGTF commander. When combined, ACE assets create scalable, responsive, and highly versatile forces capable of supporting the full range of MAGTF and joint operations.



The unique expeditionary and adaptable nature of Marine aviation allows it to operate effectively across the full spectrum of basing options. The ACE's ability to self-deploy and operate from optimized austere sites, right-sized expeditionary airfields (EAFs), and amphibious platforms and aircraft carriers within the sea base makes it an adaptable, highly responsive, and lethal force.

Fully integrated aviation support is a key enabler that provides the ACE and MAGTF commander with tactical flexibility to support a variety of operational scenarios. The Marine Wing Support Groups (MWSG) and Marine Aviation Logistics Squadrons

(MALs) provide sustainability to the ACE through numerous strategic, operational, and tactically optimized aviation logistics and support programs. The Marine Wing Support Groups and subordinate Marine Wing Support Squadrons (MWSS) provide all essential aviation ground engineering requirements necessary to support any level of MAGTF from forward arming and refueling points (FARPs) to established forward operating bases (FOBs) or EAFs. Examples of service support they offer include messing, crash fire and rescue, and airfield construction.

Marine Aviation Logistics Squadrons (MALs) provide the ACE with intermediate-level maintenance support and provide different sized detachments based on the requirements of the type of aircraft deployed. MALs can support the ACE either from Aviation Logistics Support Ships (T-AVB) or from ashore. These unique and innovative logistic support organizations provide Marine aviation with its expeditionary character and facilitate the ACE's responsive support to the MAGTF in any joint warfighter environment.

Marine Air Control Groups (MACGs) provide the ACE commander with the Marine Air Command and Control System (MACCS) agencies to exercise command and control of aviation assets necessary to support MAGTF, naval, and joint operations. The MACCS consists of various air command-and-control agencies that provide the ACE commander with the ability to plan, supervise, and influence the application of the six functions of Marine Aviation.

The combination of operational and support capabilities make Marine Aviation a key part of naval and joint operations ashore and



at sea. Marine fixed-wing, combat aviation (TacAir) squadrons deployed aboard aircraft carriers in World War II, the Korean War, and during Vietnam. Most recently, Marine Aviation has displayed its flexibility during operations in support of the global war on terrorism, including operations in Afghanistan. In 2001 and 2002, aircraft from the 26th and 15th MEU joined together under Task Force 58 to fly combat missions in Afghanistan. These missions demonstrated Marine Aviation's operational reach and tactical flexibility by launching from a sea base and flying deep overland to support MAGTF and combatant commander objectives. Both fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft have deployed forward in support of Operation Enduring Freedom – Marine F/A-18Cs are deployed with Navy aircraft carriers, two MEU(SOC)s are forward deployed, and Marine AV-8Bs are deployed to Bagram Airbase in Afghanistan.

Marine Aviation has been, and will continue to be, ready to deploy scalable, highly

trained, task-organized, expeditionary ACEs capable of conducting missions across the continuum of conflict in support of MAGTF commanders in either joint or coalition environments. In a world of diminishing host nation support and basing options, the ability to provide the nation with self-contained Marine Air-Ground Task Forces, capable of executing a wide range of missions at a moments notice from a variety of locations, will remain the Marine Corps' hallmark.

