NATO/US Navy/Amphibious Forces/Amphibious Groups

The US Navy has a very flexible system of providing credible power projection anywhere on the globe by using a combination of its Aircraft Carriers and Amphibious forces. The USMC provides a considerable part of this power projection in the form of its Marine Air/Ground Task Forces ([MAGTF](https://marinecorpsconceptsandprograms.com/organizations/marine-air-ground-task-force/marine-air-ground-task-force-magtf)).

In the 1980’s the USMC transitioned from its more traditional ‘Amphibious’ force to the modern ‘Expeditionary’ force. Thus the development of a more comprehensive combined arms doctrine was needed and this resulted in the evolution of ‘Expeditionary’ elements which were more self sustained and cohesive than the previous ‘Amphibious’ elements. This evolution was linked to the development of pre-positioned equipment in key locations around the globe and a gradual change in organization.

A MAGTF is completely scalable from as small as a few hundred Marines to as large as a 32000-man Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF). Whatever the size however, there are always four elements to a MAGTF:

* **Command Element (CE)** to provide command, control, communications, intelligence and to coordinate joint effects in support of the mission.
* **Ground Combat Element (GCE)** providing the combined arms effects needed for the mission.
* **Aviation Combat Element (ACE)** which is task tailored to provide all air effects necessary for the accomplishment of the mission.
* **Logistics Combat Element (LCE)** organized to provide all logistic functions to both the ground and aviation combat elements.

In 1994 there were three main sizes of MAGTF’s which roughly correspond to Army unit sizes, but are much more powerful and flexible due to the integration of the ACE.

* **Marine Expeditionary Unit** **(MEU):** Based on a Battalion sized GCE with a combined arms complement of approximately 2,200 marines.
  + **CE** issmall but able to coordinate the effects of all combat elements of the MEU
  + **GCE** is based on a Battalion with attached artillery, armor, combat engineer, both armored and light reconnaissance and amphibious vehicles. The GCE represents about half of the MEU’s personnel.
  + **ACE** is based on a composite squadron of transport helicopters, Attack helicopters and Harriers.
  + **LCE** provides all combat service support required to sustain the MEU for approximately 15 days.