

DENTAL SUPPORT  
TO THE  
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

U.S. Naval Dental School  
National Naval Medical Center  
Bethesda, Maryland

1 January 1965

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Office of the Staff Dental Officer  
Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps  
Washington, D.C.

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Many reinforcing specialty groups of naval personnel are required to support Marine Corps units since these specialties are not available in the Marine Corps structure. These personnel include members of the: Slide #1

Line  
  Unrestricted  
  Aviation  
  Legal  
Medical Corps  
Dental Corps  
Medical Service Corps  
Nurse Corps  
Supply Corps  
Chaplain Corps

The U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey also provides support to the Marine Corps, and the Army and the Air Force provide the services of veterinarians. Our discussion will include dental support only.

This dental support is required in three areas: Headquarters, Marine Corps; the Marine Corps Supporting Establishment; and the Marine Corps Operating Forces.

Headquarters, Marine Corps: The Staff Dental Officer, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, is a special staff officer to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. His duties comprise:

1. Administrative functions to help guide the dental support to the Marine Corps.
2. Provision of advice to the Commandant on policies and doctrines relating to dentistry.
3. Inspections - he is a specialist member of the Inspector General, Marine Corps, team that visits all of the major Marine commands throughout the world.

4. ADDU to the Dental Division, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, as special assistant to the Chief, Dental Division, for dental matters pertaining to the Marine Corps.

Marine Corps Supporting Establishment: The Marine Corps Supporting Establishment provides recruiting, training, administrative, and logistic support to the Marine Corps Operating Forces.

1. Marine Corps Bases: The training bases are at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and Camp Pendleton, California.

NOTE: In contrast to other dental facilities providing support to Marine Corps supporting establishments, the U.S. Naval Dental Clinic, Camp Pendleton, California, is managed by the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.

2. Marine Corps Air Stations and Facilities: Examples are the air facility at New River, North Carolina, and the air stations at Cherry Point, North Carolina, and El Toro, California.
3. Marine Corps Recruit Depots: The recruit depot at Parris Island, South Carolina, is for recruits from east of the Mississippi River; and the recruit depot at San Diego, California, is for recruits from west of the Mississippi.
4. Marine Corps Supply Centers: The supply center at Barstow, California, serves the west coast and the Pacific; and the one at Albany, Georgia, serves the east coast and the Atlantic.
5. Marine Corps Schools: The schools at Quantico, Virginia, include the Senior Amphibious Warfare School and the junior course.
6. Marine Corps Reserve and Recruiting Establishments.

Marine Corps Operating Forces: The Marine Corps Operating Forces are the backbone of the fighting forces of the Marine Corps.

1. Detachments Afloat: Several thousand serving on ships, with flag commands, and in staff positions.
2. Security Forces - naval installations, State Department posts, and special billets.
3. Fleet Marine Forces
  - Ground - 1st, 2nd, 3rd Division, Force Troops, Pacific and Atlantic
  - Air - 1st, 2nd, 3rd Marine Air Wings

We have two Fleet Marine Forces--one to support the Pacific Fleet and the other to support the Atlantic Fleet. These forces include both ground and air units. The dental support to the Marine Corps Operating Forces is from force dental companies and their detachments.

#### HISTORY

The history of dental support to the Marine Corps is relatively short but quite interesting.

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On August 4, 1913, the first naval dental officer was ordered to duty with the Marine Corps. He was Acting Assistant Dental Surgeon Lucian C. Williams, who reported to Parris Island, South Carolina.

#### World War I

In World War I several dental officers assigned to duty with the Marine Corps distinguished themselves by aiding the wounded during combat.

Lt. (jg.) Alexander G. Lyle, DC, USN, while serving with the 5th Regiment, U.S. Marines, on April 23, 1918, was awarded the Medal of Honor for extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty. He was also awarded the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action against the enemy.



The first naval officer to meet death in land fighting overseas was Lt. (jg.) Weeden E. Osborne, DC, USN, who was killed June 6, 1918, while on duty with the 6th Regiment, U.S. Marines. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for extraordinary heroism in actual conflict with the enemy and under fire. Lieutenant Osborne was also awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and two Silver Star Medals for risking his life to aid the wounded. As most of you know, the first vessel in the U.S. Navy to be named in honor of a dental officer was the torpedo boat destroyer OSBORNE.

On June 12, 1918, Lt. Comdr. Cornelius H. Mack, DC, USN, was awarded the Navy Cross for extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty while with the 6th Regiment, U.S. Marines. In addition, he was cited six times for the Silver Star and awarded the Croix de Guerre.

In October 1918, Lt. (jg.) Harold Arthur Badger, DC, USN, who also served with the 6th Regiment, was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action against the enemy. He also received a letter of commendation from the Secretary of the Navy and the Croix de Guerre from the French Government.

#### Dependents' Care

Dental care for dependents is a fairly new problem for our Corps. This, however, is not true for dental officers serving with the Marine Corps. As far back as 1923 dependents were receiving dental care at Quantico and Parris Island.

#### World War II and Korea

The excellent and often heroic support to the Marine Corps during World War II is also a landmark in the history of our Corps. We will always remember those that died, were wounded, and fought with the Marines while accomplishing their mission.

Again, during the Korean conflict our Corps was called upon to support the Marine Corps in their usual combat environment and did so with distinction.

### Reorganization

On July 13, 1955, Capt. L. M. Smylie, DC, USN, reported to Headquarters, Marine Corps, as the Staff Dental Officer. Previously, this assignment had been additional duty for Capt. J. C. Allen and Capt. F. C. Snyder, DC, USN.

Recognizing the need for a reorganization of the dental support to the Marine Corps, these officers and others began the momentous task of developing the dental company concept to provide support for the Marine Corps Operating Forces. As you know, they succeeded and thus established another milestone in naval dentistry.

In July 1955 a Table of Organization was signed by the Commandant of the Marine Corps authorizing the force dental company (ground). Soon after this the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Force Dental Companies were formed.

In June 1956 the Division of Aviation, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, also agreed to the dental company concept. In January 1957 the 11th, 12th, and 13th Dental Companies were activated.

### MISSION

The mission of naval dental personnel serving with the Marines is not only to support combat effectiveness by maintaining the dental health of Marine personnel, but to amplify and extend the services of the medical personnel when needed--especially in combat. Also, they must strive to improve the organizational structure and equipment, and to motivate a dedicated nucleus of dental personnel to support the Marine Corps.

To accomplish this mission logistic support is needed. The dental company is capable of technical maintenance of dental equipment, first echelon maintenance of other organic equipment, and performance of organic supply and fiscal functions. Other logistic services must be provided by supported units.

Dental companies, as Fleet Marine Force units, must maintain the capability for rapid deployment. However, during those periods when they are not deployed, they are more or less permanently located "in garrison" in specific geographic areas. In garrison, a dental company is a tenant of the supporting establishment at which it is located, and it depends upon that installation for complete dental supply and service support.

The company may be assigned spaces separate from those used by the supporting dental facility; but if existing physical circumstances will not permit such an arrangement, the two units are sometimes integrated. If integrated, their operational relationship must not disturb the organizational identity of either; yet their cooperation should be such that it promotes maximum dental care.

#### CONCEPT

A force dental company is organized to provide dental support to a Marine division, aircraft wing, or force troops. The company is designed to attain maximum utilization of professional dental manpower while providing the most effective and timely dental support to combat or other Fleet Marine Force operations. The force dental company, as a unit, normally will not take an active part in an initial landing or in the early phases of a Fleet Marine Force combat operation. However, detachments may be assigned temporarily to medical units that land early, to afford first aid talent for maxillofacial and dental injuries.



Maximum dental service effort is concentrated where needed as soon as possible after a beachhead has been established, or when reserve, supporting, replacement, or other Marine Corps units are free from combat operations. The force dental company's organization and equipment are designed to permit a considerable degree of flexibility and mobility--to allow it to subdivide, or splinter, into small satellite units. Thus, to meet situational requirements, mobile teams can be sent to separated or independent Marine units to provide required dental support under all conditions.

This concept has many advantages. The major ones are as follows:

1. It establishes a definite unit with a specific mission of providing dental support to a division, aircraft wing, or force troops command, including any attached commands.
2. It consolidates dental personnel under an officer of the Dental Corps with professional knowledge and experience, to ensure maximum efficiency and flexibility in organization and logistic control.
3. It provides centralized control of all dental services required by various units, whether within the same area or dispersed.
4. It promotes simplicity and flexibility in personnel administration concerning allowances, complements, and distribution by higher authority, and, when required, a timely rotation and replacement of dental personnel within a force by the force commander.
5. It allows maximum utilization of dental manpower in their specialties and at the same time provides rotation under a clinic-type system. This minimizes personnel requirements yet ensures maximum treatment.
6. It provides means for proper planning for mobilization and demobilization of facilities, equipment, and supplies.

## ORGANIZATION

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The dental company, FMF T/O number M-4552, consists of 26 officers and 45 enlisted personnel and is designed to support a Marine division, a Marine aircraft wing, or a force troops command.

The organization of a dental company includes three separate platoons, namely: a headquarters and service platoon (administrative and clinical); a clinic platoon (operative, oral surgery, and periodontics); and a prosthetic platoon (prosthodontics of all types).

### Headquarters and Service Platoon

The headquarters and service platoon has four dental officers, one medical Service Corps officer, and seven dental technicians. This platoon includes the commanding officer, the executive officer, the administrative assistant, and four dental technicians; and also the mobile dental clinic section, which has two dental officers and three dental technicians.

The dental company is capable of dental administration only. Other administrative support must be provided by supporting units.

The company is a Fleet Marine Force unit staffed entirely by naval personnel. Although designated as a "company," its functions and administration can be compared with those of a naval dental clinic. The commanding officer, who is ordered as such by the Chief of Naval Personnel, is an officer of the Dental Corps. The organization also provides for an executive officer and an administrative officer (or administrative assistant).

The commanding officer of a force dental company is charged with absolute responsibility for the operation, the security, and the combat readiness of his command. The authority of the commanding officer is commensurate

with his responsibility. His primary specific duty is to ensure the provision of maximum dental care of the highest professional quality to the command. The executive officer is an officer of the Dental Corps and is next in seniority. He is responsible to the commanding officer for effectuating the latter's policies and for keeping him informed of all matters pertaining to his command. The executive officer, under the commanding officer, takes precedence over all other officers of the company.

In carrying out the administrative functions of the company the commanding officer and the executive officer are assisted by an officer of the Medical Service Corps or a chief dental service warrant officer. This officer is usually referred to as the administrative assistant. His primary function is to keep abreast of the laws and policies applicable to his assigned area of responsibility and to advise the command regarding them.

#### Clinic Platoon

The clinic platoon has 17 dental officers and 22 dental technicians. This platoon is delegated to accomplish the bulk of dental support.

#### Prosthetic Platoon

The prosthetic platoon has 4 dental officers and 16 dental technicians and gives the company a complete prosthodontic capability.

### EQUIPMENT

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#### Technical Equipment

Technical field equipment and supplies consist of items needed by the company to carry out its mission of dental care in the field. These materials are supplied in basic outfits and in supply blocks.

The basic outfit for a dental officer (dental equipment set, operating field) is an assembly of dental equipment and supplies functionally packed in sets, kits, and outfits for convenience in handling. The outfit is designed to be light in weight and very compact. A supply block consists of a relatively small quantity of dental supplies maintained in a continuous state of readiness to resupply the basic outfit. Together, the basic outfit and the supply block provide the dental officer with a 60-day capability. It is expected that under combat conditions regular supply channels will be established within this period and the company will then receive its supplies from the designated supply support facility. Should the supply channels not be established within this length of time, a minimum quantity of supplies can be ordered by dispatch.

The number of basic outfits plus supply blocks allocated to a dental company is based on the number of dental officers called for by the Table of Organization. In addition to the basic outfits, the company as a whole has other basic technical equipment, such as a field dental X-ray equipment set.

It is well to remember that certain items in the basic outfits and the supply blocks are subject to deterioration. Periodic checks and replenishment procedures should be established for these items. In this regard the commanding officer of the dental company and the dental officer of the supporting establishment should develop a working arrangement concerning these items. It is recommended that these deteriorative items be removed from the field units and placed within the working stock. This requires that the inventory of the supporting establishment be held at a point of always maintaining a sufficient amount of these materials in the storeroom, separately marked, for immediate supply to the dental company in case of deployment.

It seems that in many instances the present technical equipment of the dental company has been improved to the maximum capability permitted by its design. If optimum dental support is to be provided in the future, new equipment must be developed and adopted to replace present items before they become obsolete. This requires teamwork at all levels--but primarily the using personnel will make the final determination concerning the adequacy of new equipment and the discrepancies that become apparent in the old. Therefore, those in the field must be actively encouraged to submit new ideas and to suggest ways of eliminating existing problems.

In this connection, let's take a fresh look at what is being done by others to meet this continuing problem of obsolescence in equipment. For instance, the Japanese have designed and developed an amazing all-inclusive, but compact, dental unit made of aluminum and stainless steel that could have great possibilities.

#### Operational Equipment

When the dental company goes into combat, it must have certain nontechnical items of equipment to function properly. This equipment, furnished by the Marine Corps, is listed in the Table of Equipment (T/E) and includes such items as generators, tents, trucks, trailers, and water cans.

The Table of Equipment items are requisitioned from the Marine Corps unit designated to furnish logistic support to the company. The storage and maintenance of these items is the responsibility of the dental company in most instances. However, the vehicles necessary for movement of the company are usually held by the motor transport unit designated to provide this support.

Operational equipment is continually being evaluated by the Marine Corps Research and Development Program. It is the obligation of dental personnel to assist in

this program, whenever possible, by furnishing information concerning improvements necessary in items of equipment required for the proper functioning of field dental units. They must also develop more detailed contingency plans, for future operations, that will clearly project the requirements for equipment furnished by the Marine Corps. To accomplish this, a close liaison must be established between the dental unit and the Marine Corps unit providing support. Dental needs must be made known well in advance if the equipment is to be available upon embarkation.

## PERSONNEL

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### Officer Personnel

At the present time officer personnel comprising a force dental company includes the following specialties:

Oral surgery	2 officers
Prosthodontics	4 officers
Periodontics	1 officer
Administration	1 officer (Medical Service Corps)
Operative	18 officers

This is a total of 26 officers. Is this a realistic number? The Marine Corps has changed since these figures were determined--the concept of the combined division wing team, and also of added reinforcing elements to the ground units, may necessitate a reconsideration as to the number of personnel and the specialties required.

Distribution of dental officers to activities of the Marine Corps Supporting Establishment and the Fleet Marine Forces are carried out by the Chief of Naval Personnel upon the recommendations of the Dental Division, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery. The tours of duty are similar to those of the Navy. The tour lengths are promulgated by the Bureau of Naval Personnel Manual and Bureau of Naval Personnel directives.



## Enlisted Personnel

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There are 45 enlisted assistants in a force dental company. These include the following specialties:

Administrative technician	2
General technician	30
Repair technician	1
Prosthetic technician	12

Again, the number of personnel and the specialties required should be reevaluated so that they are in harmony with actual needs, not only in garrison but in deployment.

Distribution of enlisted personnel is carried out by the Enlisted Personnel Distribution Office, Continental United States (EPDOCONUS), the Enlisted Personnel Distribution Office Atlantic Fleet (EPDOLANT), and the Enlisted Personnel Distribution Office Pacific Fleet (EPDOPAC). Procedures and policies concerning enlisted distribution are given in the Enlisted Transfer Manual, the Bureau of Naval Personnel Manual, and pertinent directives.

### LOCATION

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The location of force dental companies is as follows:

#### Pacific

1st Dental Company, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, California  
3rd Dental Company, 3rd Marine Division, Okinawa  
Detachment No. 1, 3rd Dental Company, 1st Marine Brigade, Hawaii  
5th Dental Company, Force Troops, Twenty-Nine Palms, California  
11th Dental Company, 1st Marine Air Wing, Japan  
13th Dental Company, 3rd Marine Air Wing, El Toro, California

## Atlantic

2nd Dental Company, 2nd Marine Division, Camp  
Lejeune, North Carolina  
4th Dental Company, Force Troops, Camp Lejeune,  
North Carolina  
12th Dental Company, 2nd Marine Air Wing, Cherry  
Point, North Carolina

This map does not show operational detachments that are supporting deployed Marine Corps units in various parts of the world.

Amphibious type operations are almost certain to play an important role in any future limited wars. Providing dental support to widely scattered Marine Corps units, in the present cold war situation or in a major conflict, presents a real challenge to the Naval Dental Corps. For instance, a detachment of dental officers and technicians is supporting Marine elements in South Vietnam. It must also furnish similar detachments to the Marine battalion landing team with our fleet in the Mediterranean theater and on the other side of the globe, in the Pacific area. Our show of strength during the Cuban problem called for rapid deployment of elements from two dental companies, and two other companies were completely committed in the event of a landing. From this we can see that maintaining and improving the readiness posture of dental units supporting the Marine Corps is a major undertaking.

### TRAINING

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#### Dental Officer Training

Training for dental officers assigned to duty with the Marine Corps includes:

Command and Staff College, Quantico, Virginia -  
41 weeks  
Junior Course, Quantico, Virginia

Field Medical Service School - 2 weeks  
Dental company field training exercises - at least  
one a year  
Correspondence courses from:  
    Bureau of Medicine and Surgery  
    Bureau of Naval Personnel  
Officer leadership program  
Casualty care training  
Deployments

Personnel of a dental company must be trained in field procedures to ensure that they are prepared for field duty as individuals or as members of a dental detachment. All training points to this end. From time to time the training received in garrison is put into actual practice by means of field exercises. These exercises may be carried out in conjunction with the Marine Corps unit to which the dental company is attached or by the company on its own. They are designed to improve the efficiency of the individual units through the employment of tactics and techniques normally used under combat conditions. Exercises such as these bring out the difficulties and inefficiencies encountered by individuals and units in the execution of their phase of the operation.

Also, the dental company conducts a company level field exercise annually. This training is designed to ensure unit readiness to deploy and support Fleet Marine Forces in the field and to evaluate total mount-out material to determine the practicability of such material under field conditions.

This exercise is normally held in close proximity to the garrison area of the company; however, all field and organization procedures are planned and put into effect. During this period tentage is erected and all field equipment is placed in operation. Patients are scheduled and dental treatment is accomplished. In reality this exercise simulates all those conditions that the dental company would encounter in an actual combat situation. This method of training gives each

man of the unit, from the commanding officer down to the last dental technician, a complete idea of what his functions will be in case of combat.

### Dental Technician Training

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Training for dental technicians assigned to duty with the Marine Corps includes:

- Field Medical Service School - 4 weeks
- Bureau of Medicine and Surgery Inservice Training Program
- Correspondence courses from:
  - Bureau of Medicine and Surgery
  - Bureau of Naval Personnel
- Dental company field training exercises
- Casualty care training
- Deployments

Dental personnel assigned to duty with the Fleet Marine Forces require certain additional training other than that prescribed for dental personnel with naval facilities. They must acquire detailed knowledge of the Marine Corps itself, its organization and procedures, and must become skilled in setting up, operating, and maintaining field equipment.

At the present time there are two field medical service schools in operation. One is located at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and the other at Camp Pendleton, California. The curriculum established for these schools requires staffing with both naval and Marine Corps personnel.

The course of instruction includes classroom study and field demonstrations. The classroom curriculum includes mass casualty handling, ABC warfare training, and Marine Corps organization. The field demonstrations include instruction on erecting tents in the training area, field sanitation, how to handle firearms, and participation in day and night field problems.

## SUMMARY

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In summary, besides carrying out the obvious mission of providing dental support to the Marine Corps, the Dental Corps should strive to improve this support by organizing dental manpower for best utilization, by conducting research to improve field equipment and supplies, and finally by motivating a dedicated group of dental personnel to continue their professional efforts with the Marine Corps.

Also, it is common knowledge that those who serve with the Marines enjoy a well-earned feeling of prestige and of belonging to a great organization. In his welcoming remarks to the conferees attending a dental conference at Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, the present Commandant, Gen. Wallace M. Greene, Jr., welcomed them as fellow Marines. This high regard has been earned by the dental personnel who have entered the Marines' way of life.

Gen. David M. Shoup, the former Commandant of the Marine Corps, stated in a letter: "Since its founding on 22 August 1912, the Navy Dental Corps has established a fine record of devotion to duty and high professional competence. We Marines hold all of you in high esteem."