

**FM 3-92** (FM 100-15)

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**Corps Operations**

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**November 2010**

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**Headquarters, Department of the Army**

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## Foreword

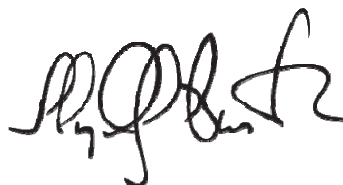
The corps design was forged by Napoleon in the early 1800s and became the operational construct for decisive maneuver and exploitation through World Wars I and II, Korea, Panama, Operation Desert Storm, and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Today, the corps remains the operational headquarters for decisive land combat and includes enhanced capabilities for full spectrum operations. The corps defines the fight, ensures coherency, conducts operational maneuver, and serves as the bridge to translate strategic guidance into tactical tasks. The corps serves in an essential role as a joint or multinational headquarters for many contingencies. It conducts contingency planning to shape the operational environment, execute decisive operations, integrate interagency and nongovernmental agency efforts, and assess operations. The staff translates the corps commander's visualization into plans and orders. Commanders consider the elements of operational design as they frame the problem and describe their visualization.

Field Manual 3-92 effectively describes the guiding principles and framework for decisive corps operations. It reflects the hard-earned gains and lessons learned during the conduct of corps operations in Iraq since 2003. The lessons learned continue to reinforce the absolute necessity of the corps as an operational headquarters. The corps operates in the temporal, physical, and functional realms between the tactical echelons and the strategic theater. It provides the unique capability to orchestrate large, complex operations and synchronize joint, multinational, and interagency actions in a coherent campaign for decisive full spectrum operations. It is through these efforts that tactical actions are linked to accomplish strategic campaign objectives.

Recent combat experience validates the enduring truth: the critical component in warfare at all echelons remains the leadership and professionalism of the Soldiers and supporting civilians that comprise the team. Inspired leadership, at the operational level provides the shared vision, purpose, and direction that guides this powerful capability.

As you study and reference this manual, bear in mind that the themes and concepts reflect the hard-earned experiences and sacrifices of units and Soldiers in combat in a tremendously complex operational environment against formidable and adaptable enemies. Apply these principles with relentless professionalism and even greater adaptability. We must prepare to fight our nation's wars, and the corps design provides the critical headquarters to orchestrate and conduct decisive, coherent, and aggressive joint and coalition operations to achieve operational objectives and strategic goals.



LTG LLOYD J. AUSTIN III  
Commanding General  
XVIII Airborne Corps, and Multi-National Corps – Iraq

# Corps Operations

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# Preface

## PURPOSE

This manual provides direction for the corps headquarters: what it looks like, how it is organized, how its staff operates, how it is commanded and controlled, and how it operates in full spectrum operations. This publication replaces the previous edition of the Army's corps operations manual and describes the organization and operations of the corps. It reflects current doctrine on the elements of full spectrum operations: offense, defense, and stability or civil support. This manual addresses these elements without regard to priority. This manual—

- Incorporates the Army's operational concept, full spectrum operations.
- Describes the stand alone corps headquarters.
- Links brigade combat team and division doctrine with theater army doctrine. It describes the principles underlying the Army modular corps.
- Shows a corps headquarters designed for four primary employment roles—in priority—an Army intermediate tactical headquarters, an ARFOR, a joint force land component command headquarters, and a joint task force headquarters.
- Recognizes that the corps headquarters normally requires augmentation with elements from theater-level organizations for selected missions.
- Discusses when serving as a joint task force or joint force land component command, the corps may require a separate subordinate headquarters to serve as the ARFOR or may need augmentation to serve as both the joint headquarters and the ARFOR.
- Introduces a staff organization that reflects the warfighting functions discussed in Field Manual (FM) 3-0.
- Describes the three designated command and control facilities: main command post, tactical command post, and mobile command group.
- Describes the ability of the corps headquarters to readily accept joint augmentation from a standing joint force headquarters core element or other joint manning and equipping source.

## SCOPE

This publication is organized into five chapters and five appendixes:

- Chapter 1 introduces the modular corps headquarters concept.
- Chapter 2 discusses how the corps headquarters is organized.
- Chapter 3 describes corps command and control.
- Chapter 4 describes how the corps headquarters conducts full spectrum operations.
- Chapter 5 details how a corps headquarters transitions to the headquarters of a joint task force or joint force land component command.
- Appendix A explains sustainment in support of the corps headquarters.
- Appendix B discusses how the corps plans, prepares, executes, and assesses joint fires.
- Appendix C describes how the Army Network Enterprise Technology Command/9th Signal Command and other organizations support LandWarNet operations for the corps headquarters.
- Appendix D describes how the corps headquarters conducts airspace command and control.
- Appendix E describes Air Force planning considerations for corps operations.

## APPLICABILITY

FM 3-92 applies to commanders and trainers at the corps echelon. It forms the foundation for corps operations curriculum within the Army school system.

FM 3-92 applies to the Active Army, the Army National Guard/Army/National Guard of the United States, and United States Army Reserve unless otherwise stated.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

Most terms used in FM 3-92 that have joint or Army definitions are identified in the text. For terms defined in the text, the term is italicized before its definition, and the number of the proponent manual follows the definition. The glossary lists acronyms and abbreviations used in the text. Users must be familiar with Joint Publication (JP) 1-02 and FM 1-02, listed on page References-1.

This manual uses the phrase *corps forces* to indicate all organizations that have a command or support relationship to the corps assigned by a higher headquarters.

Headquarters, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, is the proponent for this publication. The preparing agency is the Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center. Send written comments and recommendations on a DA Form 2028 (*Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms*) to Commander, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth, ATTN: ATZL-MCK-D (FM 3-92), 300 McPherson, Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2337; by e-mail to [leav-cadd-web-cadd@conus.army.mil](mailto:leav-cadd-web-cadd@conus.army.mil); or submit an electronic DA Form 2028.



# Introduction

The United States Army has published doctrine on corps operations since the beginning of the twentieth century. Its experience with large unit operations began during the Civil War. Leaders on both sides realized that they could not command and control regiments, brigades, and divisions without an intermediate headquarters between the Army-level planning and supporting field operations and the lower echelon forces actually engaged in battle. Corps operations have been included in eleven Army field service regulations (and later field manuals) both for larger-unit operations spanning from 1905 to 1996. All reflected contemporary conditions and provided guidance to existing corps operations.

This manual describes the corps headquarters: a continental United States-based headquarters, with no assigned troops other than those in its headquarters battalion, which is deployable worldwide. The Army's two capstone publications, Field Manual (FM) 1 and FM 3-0, along with keystone publications FM 3-07 and FM 3-24, anticipate that future United States military operations will be joint campaigns requiring unity of effort by a team of military, civilian, joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational organizations. The corps headquarters focuses on serving as an intermediate or senior tactical land echelon with the ability to command and control divisions, brigade combat teams, and associated functional and multifunctional support brigades. It remains capable of transitioning to a joint task force or joint force land component command headquarters.

The redesigned corps headquarters represents one of the biggest changes in Army organizations since World War II. Army of Excellence doctrine established the corps headquarters at the top of an organizational structure that contained thousands of Soldiers and numerous subordinate organizations. While they still exist in the Army forces structure, those subordinate forces are no longer assigned to the corps. The corps headquarters battalion contains the communications, life support, and command post elements to accomplish required tasks.

FM 3-92 reflects an Army corps headquarters designed to—in priority—command and control Army forces, command and control land components, and command and control joint forces for contingencies. Its primary mission is to command and control land forces in full spectrum operations. This manual discusses how the corps headquarters stays prepared to engage at any point across the spectrum of conflict as well as to command and control forces engaged in conditions of limited intervention, irregular warfare, and major combat operations.

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## Chapter 1

# The Corps

The Army's transformation to a brigade-based force has produced a modular, modified corps headquarters. This chapter introduces that organization and shows the corps headquarters in an operational environment. It explains the priorities of the redesigned corps headquarters able to exercise command and control over land forces or function as a joint task force.

### THE JOINT ENVIRONMENT

1-1. The Army corps fights in a joint environment, whether subordinate to an Army or other Service headquarters. The corps is organized, trained, and employed to support the objectives of the joint force commander. The corps provides those command and control and warfighting capabilities that contribute to achieve unity of effort.

### THE CORPS HEADQUARTERS

1-2. For the Army, the operational concept is full spectrum operations: Army forces combine offensive, defensive, and stability or civil support operations simultaneously as part of an interdependent joint force to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative, accepting prudent risk to create opportunities to achieve decisive results. They employ synchronized action—lethal and nonlethal—proportional to the mission and informed by a thorough understanding of all variables of the operational environment. Mission command that conveys the commander's intent and an appreciation of all aspects of the situation guides the adaptive use of Army forces. Full spectrum operations require continuous, simultaneous combinations of offensive, defensive, and stability or civil support tasks. (See Field Manual (FM) 3-0 for doctrine on the Army's operational concept.)

1-3. Full spectrum operations necessitate an expeditionary, scalable corps headquarters able to exercise command and control of land forces for operations (first priority) and be designated a joint task force headquarters (second priority). Each role grows increasingly complex and requires increasing amounts of augmentation. The theater army headquarters tailors the corps headquarters to meet mission requirements. The corps headquarters can exercise command and control over any combination of divisions, brigade combat teams, or support brigades provided from the Army pool of forces or other Service equivalents. It operates at either the tactical or the operational level of war, as required.

1-4. The corps headquarters has no organic troops other than its headquarters battalion. It routinely assumes attachment, operational control (OPCON), or tactical control (TACON) of numerous organizations. Until United States Army Forces Command has attached or given OPCON to units, the corps headquarters lacks training and readiness authority over division headquarters, brigade combat teams, and supporting brigades within the United States under the Army force generation process.

### COMMAND AND CONTROL OF LAND FORCES

1-5. Exercising command and control of land forces for operations is the corps headquarters' first priority. If corps headquarters is not the senior Army headquarters within the area of operations, then it is an intermediate tactical headquarters. If it is the senior Army headquarters within a joint operations area (JOA), then it is the ARFOR for that joint task force (JTF) or multinational force. If the corps exercises command and control over all Marine Corps forces within the JOA, then it is a joint force land component command. If the corps also exercises command and control over multinational forces, then it is a coalition joint force land component command.

1-6. The corps headquarters exercises command and control of land forces for operations with little or no augmentation. When the mission dictates, the corps headquarters identifies and fills needs for specialized skills not organic to the corps headquarters. This is particularly true in prolonged stability operations. Requirements for augmentation increase with the complexity of the mission. When the corps acts as a joint force land component command, augmentation is provided according to the appropriate joint manning document.

### **Intermediate Tactical Headquarters**

1-7. The corps headquarters acts as an intermediate tactical headquarters when conducting command and control of forces assigned, attached, or OPCON to it to conduct operations under a joint force land component command with OPCON of multiple divisions (including multinational or Marine Corps formations) or other large tactical formations. This situation occurs when another corps or a field army (such as Eighth Army) is designated a joint force land component command. Intermediate tactical headquarters use Army rather than joint tactics and procedures.

### **ARFOR**

1-8. The senior tactical headquarters is the senior Army headquarters controlling multiple subordinate tactical formations. If a joint force land component command is established, it is the senior tactical headquarters for that JTF headquarters. Identifying the senior tactical headquarters is significant because it receives an air support operations squadron from the Air Force. This squadron may be assigned to an intermediate tactical headquarters in multi-corps operations or when the geography separates units. Senior tactical headquarters function at the tactical and the operational levels of war simultaneously. They use Army rather than joint tactics and procedures.

1-9. When the corps headquarters is the senior tactical headquarters in a JOA, it is also the ARFOR for that JTF. The ARFOR includes both the senior Army headquarters controlling multiple subordinate tactical formations and the actual forces placed under a joint or multinational headquarters. The ARFOR is the Service component headquarters for a JTF or a joint and multinational force. The ARFOR commander answers to the Secretary of the Army through the Army Service component command for most administrative control or title 10 authorities and responsibilities (see FM 3-0, appendix B). As the senior Army headquarters, the corps provides administrative control for all Army units within the JTF, including those not under OPCON of the corps. The ARFOR may share some or all of its administrative control responsibilities with other Army headquarters based on the situation.

### **Joint Force Land Component Command**

1-10. A corps headquarters designated by the JTF commander as a joint force land component command exercises command and control over all land force units in the JOA. Army units subordinate to it are normally OPCON, and Marine Corps forces assigned to it are normally under TACON. Multinational forces assigned to the joint force land component command form a combined joint force land component command if the nations are part of an alliance. If the multinational forces are an ad hoc grouping of nations, then it is a coalition joint forces land component command. The corps headquarters can transition to any joint force land component command with minimal joint augmentation. For sustained operations as a combined or coalition joint force land component command, the corps requires augmentation according to an appropriate joint manning document. Combined or coalition joint force land component commands are the senior tactical headquarters within a JTF headquarters. Typically, joint force land component commands function at both the tactical and the operational levels of war simultaneously. Combined and coalition joint force land component commands use joint rather than Army tactics and procedures.

### **JOINT TASK FORCE**

1-11. The second priority of the corps headquarters is to transition to a JTF headquarters. Minimum joint manning, defined as 20 other Service officers, is required for the headquarters to initiate operations as a JTF headquarters. This includes initiating campaign planning and deploying the corps' early entry command post and advance elements to establish initial command and control capabilities in the JOA. (See

chapter 2 for a discussion of command posts.) The headquarters can also initiate shaping operations and coordinate with host-nation and multinational partners in the JOA. A corps headquarters acting as a JTF headquarters requires a separate ARFOR headquarters or significant augmentation because of the differing roles and responsibilities. JTFs focus on the operational level of war and use joint rather than Army tactics and procedures.

1-12. The Secretary of Defense or any joint force commander can establish a JTF. The size and scope of the force depends on the mission. A JTF can be established on a geographic or functional basis. Normally, the commander of the JTF exercises OPCON over forces and other resources the combatant commander allocates or apportions to the JTF. OPCON is the usual command relationship when the force conducts an operation with a limited objective that does not require centralized control of logistics. A JTF has Service components. It may also have subordinate JTFs or functional components. In a JTF organization, a corps can be a Service component, the headquarters of a subordinate JTF, or a functional organization. (See Joint Publication (JP) 1 for information on joint force organizations and interagency and intergovernmental coordination.)

### AVAILABLE FORCES

1-13. Depending on the situation, the corps receives capabilities from theater army assets, depicted in figure 1-1, to support the operations. The theater army is a regionally focused command and control headquarters. The remaining chapters of this manual discuss the organization, command and control procedures, and operational activities of the corps headquarters.

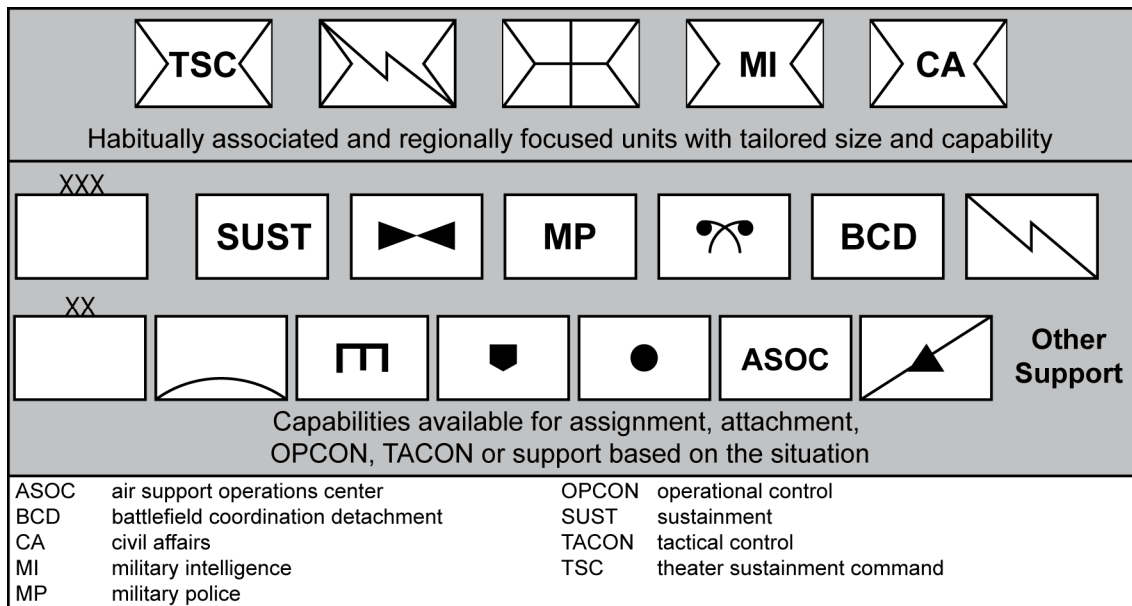


Figure 1-1. Forces available to support a corps

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## Chapter 2

# Corps Headquarters

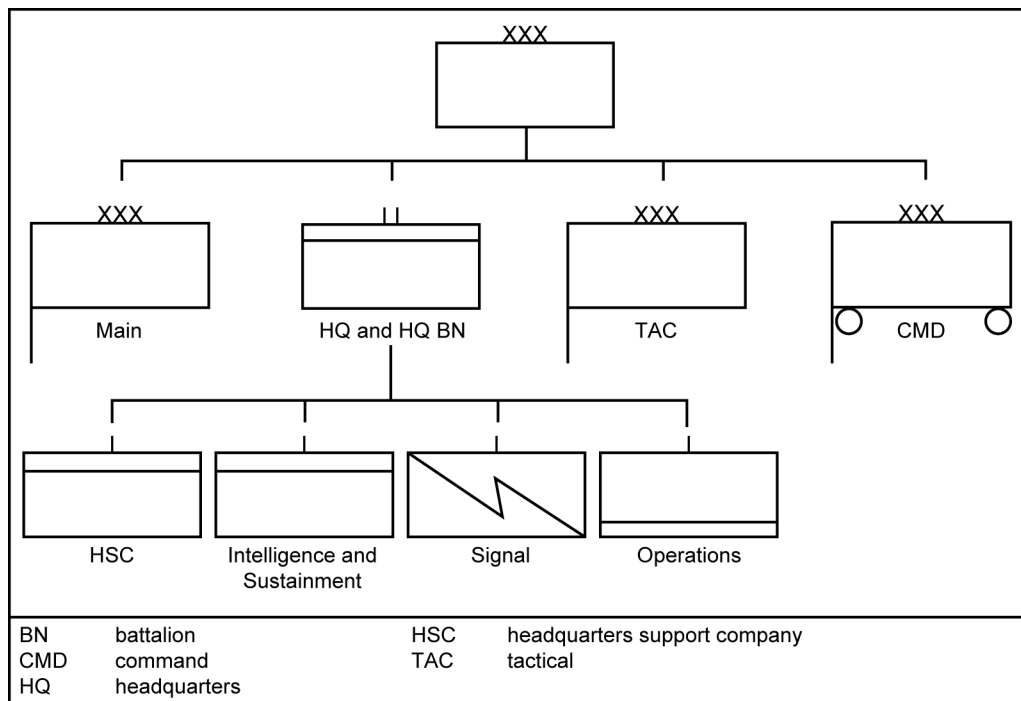
Transformation has impacted the corps headquarters. This chapter describes the corps headquarters, its organization, the corps main and tactical command posts, and their facilities. It elaborates on how the Air Force supports the corps and describes the corps headquarters and headquarters battalion.

### SECTION I – CORPS HEADQUARTERS ORGANIZATION

- 2-1. The corps headquarters is designed around several basic characteristics:
- When deployed, the headquarters is organized around one main command post (CP) and one tactical CP.
  - The commanding general (CG) has a mobile command group so the CG can exercise command and control away from the CP. The mobile command group conducts some offensive and stability operations. The corps also fields an early-entry CP. This command and control element of the corps headquarters can control operations until remaining portions of the headquarters deploy. It conducts some operations—especially reception, staging, and onward movement and defensive operations. Normally, it locates near the tactical CP, and additional personnel from the main CP may augment it. Often, a deputy commander, assistant commander, chief of staff, or operations officer leads the early-entry CP. The corps headquarters battalion provides life support and network support to the headquarters. The corps tasks its subordinate units to provide security assets for each command and control facility. Alternatively multinational, host-nation, or contracted assets provide security. Regardless of its source, the corps headquarters security elements come under control of the corps headquarters battalion commander.
  - The corps does not possess a set of corps troops other than those in its headquarters battalion. It receives attached forces. The corps exercises operational or tactical control over any mix of brigades, division headquarters, other Service, or multinational headquarters appropriate for its mission.
- 2-2. Figure 2-1 (page 2-2) depicts the corps headquarters organization consisting of a main CP, tactical CP, mobile command group, and its organic headquarters battalion with assigned companies. The corps main CP has three integrating and six functional cells, while the tactical CP forms a single integrating cell with functional components.

## COMMAND GROUP

2-3. *Command* is the authority that a commander in the armed forces lawfully exercises over subordinates by virtue of rank or assignment. Command includes the authority and responsibility for effectively using available resources and for planning the employment of, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling military forces for the accomplishment of assigned missions. It also includes responsibility for health, welfare, morale, and discipline of assigned personnel (Joint Publication (JP) 1). The design of the corps identifies four general officer positions: the CG, deputy CG, chief of staff, and assistant chief of staff for operations. Paragraphs 2-4 through 2-10 discuss the duties of the two general officers with command responsibility, the CG and deputy CG. The duties of the chief of staff and assistant chief of staff for operations are addressed in the discussion of the staff.



**Figure 2-1. Corps headquarters and headquarters organization**

## COMMANDING GENERAL

2-4. A lieutenant general commands the corps. This CG has responsibility for the corps headquarters and all units and organizations that have a command or support relationship to the corps assigned by a higher headquarters (corps forces). The commander also oversees the control functions performed by the staff. Corps commanders normally position themselves where they can best exercise command and control over their corps.

## DEPUTY COMMANDING GENERAL

2-5. The deputy CG, a major general, serves as the CG's primary assistant and second in command of the corps. The deputy CG has specific duties described in the corps standing operating procedures or directed by the commander. The deputy CG does not have a staff but may control certain staff elements based on responsibilities the CG assigns. The deputy CG can request staff assistance at any time.

2-6. The deputy CG interacts with the chief of staff and staff principal advisors based on duties the CG assigns. The deputy CG maintains situational understanding so to assume command at any time. Because of this requirement, the deputy CG normally remains at the main CP to be physically or virtually colocated with the CG. The deputy CG has three general responsibilities:

- Temporarily assume the CG's duties.
- Serve as the CG's successor.
- Assume certain delegated authorities.

## Temporarily Assume the Commanding General's Duties

2-7. The deputy CG temporarily assumes command and makes decisions based on the mission and the commander's intent when needed. The deputy CG assumes the CG's duties temporarily on a routine basis during continuous operations for reasons of rest and health. A corps CG frequently leaves the main CP to meet with military and civilian superiors, government officials, and multinational partners. These meetings can take place outside the corps area of operations (AO), making it difficult for the CG to maintain a



situational understanding of the current operation; therefore, the deputy CG steps in and assumes command during these events.

### **Serve as the Commanding General's Successor**

2-8. The corps CG may be relieved, killed, wounded, or incapacitated in some way. In these situations, the deputy CG assumes command as specified in the standing operating procedures or the current order.

### **Assume Certain Delegated Authorities**

2-9. The corps CG delegates authority to the deputy CG for specific tasks or areas. Such tasks can include the following:

- Provide control of reception, staging, onward movement, and integration activities.
- Coordinate directly with a host-nation partner.
- Provide command of multinational forces under corps control.
- Provide overall direction of sustainment activities.
- Conduct a specific shaping operation, such as a vertical envelopment or an amphibious operation.
- Conduct a decisive operation separated in time and space from the bulk of the corps assets.
- Serve as the chairman of any joint targeting or coordination boards established by the headquarters if corps serves as a base for a joint task force (JTF) or JTF headquarters.
- Supervise troops provided by the theater army that are not subordinated to a division.

2-10. Under certain conditions, the corps CG appoints a deputy commander from another Service or nation to demonstrate solidarity or to gain expertise in an area required for the operation. Such circumstances include when the corps serves as the base for a JTF, joint force land component command, or a multinational force. For example, a Marine Corps general officer may serve as the deputy CG for a corps engaging in amphibious operations.

## **THE STAFF**

2-11. Staffs assist commanders in planning, coordinating, and supervising operations. A *staff section* is a grouping of staff members by area of expertise under a coordinating, special, or personal staff officer (Field Manual (FM) 5-0). Not all staff sections reside in one of the functional or integrating CP cells (discussed in paragraphs 2-24 through 2-32). These staff sections maintain their distinct organizations. They operate in different CP cells as required and coordinate their activities in meetings to include working groups and boards established by the unit's battle rhythm. *Battle rhythm* refers to a deliberate daily cycle of command, staff, and unit activities intended to synchronize current and future operations (JP 3-33). The staff consists of the chief of staff, personal staff, special staff, coordinating staff, staff augmentation, and command liaison, functional liaison, and others. See chapter 3 for a discussion of battle rhythm at corps level.

### **Chief of Staff**

2-12. The corps CG delegates supervision of the staff to the chief of staff. The chief of staff directs, supervises, and trains the staff and is one of the CG's principal advisors. An effective working relationship helps the chief of staff and the CG transmit and share information and insights.

2-13. All staff principal advisors report to the chief of staff. The chief of staff is the command's principal integrator. This duty includes overseeing the command and control functional cell and its components of civil affairs operations, psychological operations, information engagement, and network operations. The chief of staff normally remains at the main CP. (FM 6-0 lists the chief of staff's responsibilities.)

### **Personal Staff**

2-14. The personal staff sections advise the commander, provide input to orders and plans, and interface and coordinate with entities external to the corps headquarters. They perform special assignments as

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