



ACQUISITION RESEARCH PROGRAM SPONSORED REPORT SERIES

Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the III Marine Expeditionary Force Contingency Contracting Workforce Structure and Contracting Authority in an Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations Environment

December 2023

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Naval Postgraduate School

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Prepared for the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA 93943

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ABSTRACT

The Marine Corps is in an unprecedented period of reorganization and strategic focus. The Contingency Contracting Force (CCF) provides a critical capability of supporting operating forces and a continuously highly trained force is necessary to execute the Marine Corps mission. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the perceptions of the CCF structure in III Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF) during the year 2023 and determine if the III MEF workforce is properly structured to meet the demands of *Force Design 2030*. This study includes interviews with key CCF Marines who are currently with III MEF. This research provides the perceptions and opinions of key III MEF contracting professionals and provides recommendations to optimize the III MEF workforce.



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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADC, I&L	Assistant Deputy Commandant, for Installation and Logistics
AO	Area of Operation
AOR	Area of Responsibility
CCDR	Combatant Commander
CCF	Contingency Contracting Force
CCO	Contingency Contracting Officer
CLB	Combat Logistics Battalion
CLR	Combat Logistics Regiment
CSS	Combat Service Support
DC, I&L	Deputy Commandant, for Installations and Logistics
DoD	Department of Defense
DON	Department of the Navy
EABO	Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations
ECP	Expeditionary Contracting Platoon
FOO	Field Ordering Officer
GCPC	Government Commercial Purchase Card
HCA	Head of Contracting Agency
HQMC	Headquarters Marine Corps
INDOPACOM	U.S. Indo-Pacific Command
IRB	Institutional Review Board
MAGTF	Marine Air Ground Task Force
MAPP	Marine Corps Acquisition Policy and Procedures
MARFORPAC	Marine Forces Pacific
MCB	Marine Corps Base
MCBH	Marine Corps Base Hawaii
MCIPAC	Marine Corps Installations Pacific
MCO	Marine Corps Order
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Force
MLG	Marine Logistics Groups
MLR	Marine Littoral Regiments



MMOA	Manpower Management Officer Assignments
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
OCS	Operational Contract Support
RCO	Regional Contracting Office
SAT	Simplified Acquisition Threshold
SE	Supporting Establishment
USCENTCOM	United States Central Command
USMC	United States Marine Corps
VMU	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
WEZ	Weapon Engagement Zone



I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with an overview of the Marine Corps Contingency Contracting Force (CCF) and its associated problems, follows with a discussion of the purpose of the report, a presentation of the research question and hypothesis, an explanation of the methodology and scope of the study, and a brief background, and ends with an explanation of the organization of the study.

A. OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONAL CONTRACT SUPPORT

Operational Contract Support (OCS) is a term used to define the entire contracting process, from planning to the purchase of goods and/ or services. This capstone research report serves to describe the nuances of contracting and defines the terms associated with contracting as well as the levels of contracting and the prescribed personnel who should be associated with each level.

B. OVERVIEW OF WORKFORCE STRUCTURE AND CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

There are distinct differences when discussing workforce structure and the flow of authorities that operate military organizations and warrant authority. These types of authority are crucial to understanding and employing Marines and matching their capabilities to the appropriate operations. There is confusion and misunderstanding when organizing contracting forces in Force Design 2030 that do not align with fiscal law and warrant authority.

C. INTRODUCTION OF FORCE DESIGN 2030

Released in March 2020 by General David H. Berger, commandant of the Marine Corps, *Force Design 2030* was an ambitious vision for the future of the Marine Corps. Based on the *2018 National Defense Strategy*, the Marine Corps mission focus was redirected, “from countering violent extremists in the Middle East to great power/peer-level competition, with special emphasis on the Indo-Pacific” (United States Marine Corps [USMC], 2020, p. 2). This change brought the Marine Corps closer to their naval roots and emphasized joint operations.



D. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Marine Corps is in an unprecedented period of reorganization and strategic focus. The CCF provides the critical capability of supporting operating forces and a continuous highly trained force is necessary to execute the Marine Corps mission. Without clear delineation of authority, advocacy at the highest levels, and proper training, the CCF will struggle to provide services in an Expeditionary Advanced Base Operation (EABO) environment.

E. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The authors aim to determine the perception of the III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) CCF workforce regarding the new Force Design 2030 CCF workforce structure and related contingency contracting authority in an EABO environment.

The thesis helps to solve the problem of ineffective employment and manning of the Marine Corps CCF in accordance with *Force Design 2030* by making recommendations that will enable the CCF to better operate in an EABO environment based on the knowledge gained through literature review and interviews with Marine contingency contracting officers in the field. This understanding helps CCF leaders take action to address the problem of improper CCF utilization and manning. The findings also contribute to the discussion about future CCF implementation by explaining the challenges and experiences faced by the CCF in III MEF.

F. RESEARCH QUESTION

The guiding question for this study is, “With changes from *Force Design 2030* does III MEF have the proper CCF and warrant authority structure to provide effective contingency contracting in an EABO environment?” The question is concerned with whether the III MEF CCF, III MEF being the testing ground for EABOs, is structured such that they can effectively support the force in an EABO environment.

G. HYPOTHESIS

The authors intend to explore the current III MEF CCF and examine the structure of the workforce as framed through the lens of *Force Design 2030* and the research into



OCS. To that purpose, they propose the hypothesis: The III MEF CCF is not structured or manned properly to perform effective OCS in an EABO environment.

H. METHODOLOGY

This thesis is based on qualitative research methods utilizing interviews with CCF Marines in the III MEF Area of Responsibility (AOR) put into context with the thematic literature review in which the authors discover the correct and most logical arrangement for an OCS function. The study interview questions were reviewed by the Internal Review Board and found to not include human subjects research.

I. SCOPE

This study is limited to the III MEF AOR and is focused on the perceptions of CCF Marines regarding the structure of the CCF considering Force Design 2030 and operating in an EABO environment. The literature review has a broader scope, providing a review of OCS as a whole and as it pertains to the Marine Corps in general, and an examination of *Force Design 2030* and EABO to inform the authors findings and analysis of data gathered through qualitative research.

J. BACKGROUND

This problem is based on concerned statements from senior CCF Marines in director positions at Marine Logistics Groups (MLGs) and the occupational field sponsor at Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC) (S. Vann, personal communication, April 13, 2023). CCF Marines do not have a clear delineation of manpower authority and warrant authority, nor do they have proper advocacy in high-level decisions being made at HQMC. The Marine Corps is failing to effectively integrate the CCF into the Marine Corps' *Force Design 2030* and EABO concepts. III MEF is the testing ground of the updated force design and serves as a focus area for this research. As the Marine Corps moves into more island-hopping and distributed operations, the CCF community needs to make necessary changes to maintain flexibility in supporting operations.



K. ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

Chapter II provides a thematic literature review detailing OCS, the CCF workforce structure within the Marine Corps in the wake of *Force Design 2030*, and an introduction of the EABO environment because of *Force Design 2030*. The authors examine scholarly work conducted at the Naval Postgraduate School by predecessors and faculty, other works written by knowledgeable Marines in the field of OCS, and doctrinal publications and government documents meant to provide direction to the force regarding OCS and logistics matters. In Chapter III, the authors explain their methodology and describe how they collected data and used that data, coupled with the insights found in the literature review, to inform the findings. Chapter IV presents an analysis of the findings and how the authors frame those findings in context with the literature review. Chapter V presents the recommendations to the force, as well as for future research, and contains the final conclusions.



II. BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to present a thematic literature review on operational contract support (OCS) and contingency contracting, the implementation of *Force Design 2030* and resulting contracting challenges to the Marine Corps' shift in focus to Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO), command structure and warrant authority of the Contingency Contracting Force (CCF) within the USMC, and key issues in Marine Corps contingency contracting.

A. BACKGROUND

As a force in readiness, the Marine Corps must be prepared to respond to a contingency quickly, appropriately, and legally to ensure the Marine Corps obtains the necessary supplies and services when they are unavailable through the organic military supply channels (Department of the Navy [DON], 2018). The OCS definition from *Joint Publication 4-10* includes contracting actions outside of declared contingencies, which is pertinent to the USMC CCF because the Marine Corps must train to become proficient in performing contract actions in the field, and the CCF is employed in exercises and operations across the Indo-Pacific area of operations. *MCRP 3-40B.3* separates the levels of logistics support from the strategic level (Department of Defense [DoD] or national level responsibility) to the operational level (service or joint level responsibility), down to the tactical level (subordinate unit level responsibility) which is where the majority of Marine Corps contingency contracting actions would take place. Tactical level logistics support and utilizing the CCF also aligns with tier one and tier two of the Yoder Three-tier Model for contingency contracting operations (Yoder, 2004). The Yoder Three-tier Model and levels of logistics will be discussed in section B of this chapter.

The RAND report by Baldwin et al. (2008), *Analyzing Contingency Contracting Purchases for Operation Iraqi Freedom (Unrestricted Version)*, and similar reports analyzing contingency contracting and contracting actions within the DoD almost exclusively look at the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Army and are typically discussing contracting actions outside the realm of Marine Corps force design, and especially outside of contingency contracting in an EABO environment. The RAND report deals



with the type of equipment and supplies purchased by Air Force CCOs during Operation Iraqi Freedom (Baldwin et al., 2008). While the RAND report provided recommendations to the U.S. Air Force and the DoD at large, the study was outside the scope of this research.

Other RAND research points out the workforce issues within the DoD contracting workforce and how those issues contribute to poor outcomes (Gates, 2009). Those reports help put into perspective that the Marine CCF is not alone in having issues, although it does not necessarily directly address contingency contracting in an EABO environment. There are further RAND reports that highlight miss-comings of the DoD acquisition teams and examine acquisitions as far back as 1990-2003 (Hanks, 2005). These reports center on a U.S. military focused on extended land campaigns fighting less than near peer adversaries, and not focused on the Marine Corps' force design and contingency contracting in an EABO environment. Although the environment changes from land based to island hopping, the functions of contracting support processes remain similar. Joint operations and collaboration take place to support the Marines in an EABO environment, but the manner in which support is obtained will vary depending on the region.

Kelley et al. (2015) found that key factors in commercial businesses performing contracting actions were talent development and increasing institutional memory through knowledge development. This finding is consistent with the framework that Yoder (2004) speaks to in his Three-tier Model. The levels of contracting, consistent with the levels of logistics referred to in *Joint Publication 4-10*, require knowledge development and well-rounded contracting personnel. The commercial world blazed a path for governmental entities to follow as contracting professionals study their actions.

In a Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) research project, Harrison et al. (2016) examined the USMC CCF and found that in 2016, there was a critical shortage of 3006 personnel at all grades except O-5. Then, as there is now, as shown in Figure 1, there is a request from the O-4 Combat Service Support (CSS) monitor on the Manpower Management Officer Assignments (MMOA) webpage for qualified 3006s to hot-fill eight priority assignments as contracting officers. These hot-fill billets were shown on the



MMOA site as early as August 2023 and were present as of this writing. Harrison et al.'s (2016) writing also aligns with the training imperative described by Yoder (2004) in each level of contracting as it concerns the capability and knowledge held by personnel at each level. Johnson et al. (2005) described the career path of a 3006 and there is a troubling pattern involving a contracting officer becoming proficient in their newfound additional Mission Occupational Specialty (MOS) and then leaving the career field to perform their primary MOS: According to Johnson et al (2005), "In other words, once these officers have the rank and an appropriate matching experience level, they leave the field, resulting in a significant drain to the career fields' knowledge base" (p. 41).

<u>3006 Contracting Officer - Priority Fill Assignments</u>			
<u>MCC</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>BMOS</u>	<u>BGRD</u>
1EM	MARFOR AFRICOM STUTTGART GERMANY	3006	O4
1C0	CE I MEF CAMP PENDLETON CA	3006	O4
1C1	CE III MEF OKINAWA JAPAN	3006	O4
1FU	MCIPAC CAMP BUTLER	3006	O4
091	MCB HAWAII	3006	O4
097	MCIEAST-MCB CAMP LEJEUNE NC	3006	O5
1CF	CLR 37 3RD MLG OKINAWA JP	3006	O5
1Y2	CLR 17 1ST MLG CAMP PENDLETON	3006	O5

Figure 1. 3006 Contracting Officer Hot-Fill Billet List

B. OCS AND CONTINGENCY CONTRACTING

This section provides an overview of the basics of OCS and contingency contracting. The authors will examine the Yoder Three-tier Model, as well as what other researchers have learned about OCS and contingency contracting. To understand the nuances in semantics and level the playing field as the authors move through this research, definitions of key concepts are explained.



1. Operational Contract Support

Joint Publication 4-10 defines OCS as “the process of planning for and obtaining supplies, services, and construction from commercial sources in support of combatant commander (CCDR)–directed operations, as well as CCDR-directed, single-service activities, regardless of designation as a formal contingency operation or not” (JCS, 2019, p. ix).

2. Contingency Contracting

The *Defense Contingency Contracting Handbook* defines contingency contracting as “the process of obtaining supplies, services, and construction via contracting means in support of contingency operations” (DoD, 2017, p. 33).

3. Contingency Contracting Force Mission

According to *Marine Corps Order (MCO) 4200.34* the mission of the Marine CCF is to “support the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF), Supporting Establishment (SE), Special Operations Forces, and Joint and Supported Coalition Forces by planning and obtaining supplies and services from non-organic sources through associated contract support integration, contracting support and contractor management functions” (Department of the Navy [DON], 2016, p. 1-1).

Contingency contracting is included inside the definition of OCS, it does not encompass the same planning process that comes with OCS. Contingency contracting is part of the process that is included in OCS.

The definitions described in this section are consistent with other literature researched in this thesis. This implies that the current body of knowledge in Marine Corps doctrine supports the CCF and that the tools necessary to be effective in an EABO environment are present. The challenge will be structuring the force properly and placing warrant authority at the appropriate positions.

C. YODER’S THREE-TIER MODEL – A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Yoder Three-tier Model offers three models for the employment of contingency contracting officers (Yoder, 2004). The Yoder Three-tier Model is the lens



through which this research will be viewed and understood as it pertains to “what right looks like” and a model for success. Tier one is the most basic construct for utilizing contracting personnel and is called the ordering officer model. The ordering officer model most closely describes the capabilities that the Marine Corps currently possesses, as Yoder concludes tier one is best suited for warranted junior officers and enlisted personnel. Tier one contract actions would be placing orders against existing theater contracts and does not require interactive engagement with the local environment. Tier two encompasses the capabilities of tier one and includes utilizing resources in local economies of the area of operations. Tier two is called the leveraging contracting officer model. Yoder describes the proper tier two contracting officer as more qualified and capable due to their need to engage with and work with local businesses and other government and non-government organizations. Tier three is called the Integrated Planner and Executer Model and is most closely related to the strategic level of logistics, as Yoder (2004) opines the contingency contracting operations may be planned to “meet national strategic and theater objectives” (p. 15). The tier three contingency contracting officer must be well educated and qualified, with higher-level certification and experience. Yoder (2004) recommends tier three contingency contracting officers should be integrated within the J-4 and J-5 organizational structure to leverage integration between all players.

The Yoder Three-tier Model helps to put into perspective the education and experience requirements that the contingency contracting officer (CCO) must have at the different levels of logistics support, and the different phases of an operation. *The Need for a Strategic Approach to Contingency Contracting*, identifies the disparity between contingency contracting and OCS. The authors examined the contingency contracting in the United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) Area of Operation in the early 2000s, and the defining conclusion from the work was that viewing contingency contracting only at the tactical level can misuse scarce resources and inhibit support to strategic goals (D’Angelo et al., 2007). Yoder (2004) agrees with the sentiment of D’Angelo et al. as he says a shortfall of utilizing the contracting officer model, or tier two, is the contracting officer “may or may not be integrated with the broader goals of national and theater objectives”, thus potentially hindering higher level goals (p. 14). The



background in understanding laid out in this section of literature review of contingency contracting, OCS, and the implications this research has on what the right contracting officer for the job is, will inform further investigation and eventually the authors recommendations.

D. FORCE DESIGN 2030

Released in March 2020 by General Berger, commandant of the Marine Corps, *Force Design 2030* was an ambitious vision for the future of the Marine Corps. Based on the *2018 National Defense Strategy*, the Marine Corps mission focus was redirected “from countering violent extremists in the Middle East to great power/peer-level competition, with special emphasis on the Indo-Pacific” (USMC, 2020, p. 2). This change brought the Marine Corps closer to their naval roots and emphasized joint operations.

1. Focus on the Indo-Pacific

From 2001 to the release of the *2018 National Defense Strategy*, the Marine Corps was focused on an inland battle in the Middle East. They retained amphibious capabilities with Amphibious Assault Vehicles and Marine Expeditionary Units, but their primary fight was in the Middle East. General Berger lays out his plan for the Marine Corps by saying,

The Marine Corps must be able to fight at sea, from the sea, and from the land to the sea; operate and persist within range of adversary long-range fires; maneuver across the seaward and landward portions of complex littorals; and sense, shoot, and sustain while combining the physical and information domains to achieve desired outcomes. (USMC, 2020, p. 3)

This ties into his emphasis on the Marine Corps’ naval roots. His vision dictates that the Marine Corps works with the Navy to conduct amphibious operations in the Indo-Pacific region.

2. Lightening the Force

Moving from land based back to sea requires significant changes to the force. In General Berger’s *Force Design 2030*, he made several divestments to force. This



included a total force reduction of 12,000 Marines, divesting one infantry regiment and three infantry battalions (USMC, 2020). It also included divesting 14 cannon artillery batteries and replacing them with rocket artillery (USMC, 2020). Commandant Berger also divested all law enforcement battalions, tank battalions, and bridging companies. These divestments were executed with the intent of lightening the force and allowing the Marine Corps to return to their naval roots. Commandant Berger also doubled the amount of unmanned aerial vehicle (VMU) squadrons. All of these changes were made to enable the force to remain lethal and prepare for expeditionary advanced base operations.

3. Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations

Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations “provide engagement opportunities throughout the competition continuum and are a visible and tangible reminder of our nation’s resolve for friends and foes alike” (Department of the Navy [DON], 2023, p. 1–2). These EABs are reminiscence of island-hopping campaigns of World War II. As described in the *Tentative Manual for EABO*,

EABO are a form of expeditionary warfare that involve the employment of mobile, low-signature, persistent, and relatively easy to maintain and sustain naval expeditionary forces from a series of austere, temporary locations ashore or inshore within a contested or potentially contested maritime area in order to conduct sea denial, support sea control, or enable fleet sustainment. (DON, 2023, p.1-2)

These operations are starkly different from the warfare of the Middle East. There are several characteristics of EABOs: stand-in, mobile, persistent, low signature, integrated, and cost-effective (DON, 2023, p.1-2). This leads to a continued effort by the USMC to practice and perfect joint operations.

4. Joint Integration

General Berger envisions a future force that is different, but still maintain the Marine Corps’ core values and beliefs. He gave three main focuses, based off the *2018 National Defense Strategy*. The first focus is the forces “will be capable of successfully competing and winning in the gray zone” (USMC, 2020, p. 4). He is stating that the USMC will be able to fight in contested waters, well within the enemy’s weapon engagement zone (WEZ). The second focus is that the forces “will be a single, integrated



total force, and not distinct and semi-independent active and reserve components” (USMC, 2020, p. 4). This means that within the Marine Corps, there will be a joint and cohesive planning process. The third focus is the forces “will be, while purpose-built to support joint maritime campaigning, inherently capable of facilitating other joint operations” (USMC, 2020, p. 4). This includes working with not only Navy, but the other branches as well. This is a stark change from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, where joint integration was minimal.

E. MARINE CONTRACTING OFFICERS: IS THE CURRENT FORCE SUFFICIENT TO SUPPORT FORCE DEVELOPMENT

The *Marine Corps Gazette* publishes articles written by Marines for a Marine audience. The article *Marine Contracting Officers: Is the Current Force Sufficient to Support Force Development?* was written by a group of experienced contracting officers and Naval Postgraduate School alumni who seek to influence Marine leaders to expand the CCF in the Marine Corps. The team of writers offer insight into the theoretical changes affecting the CCF in *Force Design 2030* and the *Tentative Manual for Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations* (Young & Pynduss, 2021).

The team argues that compared to the other DoD military branches, the Marine Corps does not have the same amount of personnel, training, or expertise among its contracting professionals to meet a similar mission set. The Marine Littoral Regiments (MLRs) and Combat Logistics Battalion (CLB) are supported by captain 3006 contracting officers and staff sergeant 3044 enlisted Marines. The amount of knowledge and experience to conduct effective contracting support would not exist with the skill sets possessed by those Marines. To be a warranted contracting officer at the simplified acquisition threshold value a Marine must have graduated Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) and possess one year of contracting experience or possess two years contracting experience without NPS (Deputy Commandant, for Installations and Logistics [DC, I&L]; USMC, 2023). The captains graduating NPS would not be able to provide contracting capabilities to their assigned unit MLR/CLB due to needing contracting experience. By the time a captain arrives at a unit, they will conduct on the job training for one year with only one to two years remaining at the unit. Young and Pynduss (2021)



claim the current Marine contracting officers is not sufficient to support force development is substantiated.

Young and Pynduss (2021) concluded that the Marine Corps needs to continue developing their contracting capability and are only solving parts of problems and require more effort into the contracting side. They offer a primary recommendation to strengthen the contracting career path by combining the contracting officer and acquisition officer career fields. To meet the needs of the Marine Corps, a primary MOS would merge the abilities of both communities to create a joint force working together to train, grow, and support the Marine Corps' mission.

F. MARINE CORPS ACQUISITION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The *Marine Corps Acquisition Policy and Procedures (MAPP)* provides contracting policy and procedures to govern contracting officers in the execution of their duties (DC, I&L; USMC, 2023). The significance of this publication is the governing procedures to contracting authority and command authority for contracting personnel at III MEF.

The DC, I&L serves as the Head of Contracting Agency (HCA) for specific HCA requirements outlined in federal regulation, but delegates significant authority to the Assistant Deputy Commandant, Installation & Logistics (Contracts) (ADC I&L [Contracts]). ADC I&L is the delegated authority responsible for the selection, appointment, and termination of contracting officers within the Marine Corps. For chief of contracting office and deputy positions, the ADC I&L reserves the authority to select these individuals as contracting officers. The chief of contracting office and deputy positions are depicted in Figure 2.



Subordinate Offices Under CCO Authority	CCO AUTHORITY				
	< \$1.5M	< \$7.5M	< \$10M	< \$25M	< \$50M
	1 MLG 2 MLG 3 MLG				
		MARFORRES			
Bridgeport		29 Palms			
1 st MCR District 4 th MCR District 6 th MCR District 8 th MCR District 9 th MCR District 12 th MCR District		MCRD PI			
		MCB Hawaii	MCIPAC Camp Butler		
MCAS Iwakuni			MCIWEST Camp Pendleton		
MCAS Barstow			MCIEAST Camp Lejeune		
H&S Bn, MARFORCOM				MCINCR MCB Quantico	
Blount Island Command				LOGCOM	
					MCICOM HQ

Figure 2. Chief of Contracting Office Authority. Source: USMC (2023).

ADC, I&L (Contracts) redelegates to the chief of contracting offices the authority to select, appoint, and terminate contracting officers for all remaining positions requiring warrant authority in the Marine Corps. This includes the proposed small detachment of contracting Marines requiring contract writing authority within the operational forces in *Force Design 2030* and an EABO environment. The *MAPP* describes that for warrant levels Simplified Acquisition Threshold (SAT), \$1.5 million, \$10 million, \$25 million, and unlimited, contracting officers must be within the chief of contracting office’s chain of command (USMC, 2030). For the \$25,000 Government Commercial Purchase Card (GCPC) warrant level, contracting officers may be outside of the chief of contracting office’s chain of command but must be an HQMC I&L GCPC cardholder. Each warrant

level requires different contracting certification, experience, or education outlined in Figure 3.

Warrant Value	Required Contracting Career Field Certification	Required Experience or Education
\$25K (OCONUS GCPC Actions Only)	N/A	Completed GCPC training requirements and CON 237, Simplified Acquisition Procedures
SAT	Contracting Professional	<i>Option One:</i> Completed Naval Post Graduate School (NPS) Acquisition and Management degree (or legacy program such as those previously held at Camp Johnson); 1 year of contracting experience outside of education; and assigned to an MLG <i>Option Two:</i> 2 years contracting experience
\$1.5M	Contracting Professional	3 years contracting experience
\$10M	Contracting Professional	4 years contracting experience
\$25M	Contracting Professional	5 years contracting experience
Unlimited	Contracting Professional	5 years contracting experience

Figure 3. Warrant Information. Source: USMC (2023).

The *MAPP* provides the governing policies and procedures that the CCF must comply with to meet requirements of their positions and mission sets. The unique aspect of contracting authority flow does not align with typical Marine Corps doctrine in command authority. The importance of differentiating contracting authority from command authority prevents legal issues from arising and noncompliance of fiscal laws and regulation (USMC, 2023).

G. AIR FORCE PURCHASING STRUCTURE EVALUATION

Boyle et al. (2020) examined the structure, roles, and authority of purchasing functions within the private sector to compare those trends and practices with the United States Air Force’s purchasing organization. The Air Force handles large scale acquisitions and has more established contracting commands that are vastly different compared to the Marine Corps smaller scale contracting workforce.



The research methodology used to gather information utilizes the same approach for this study, by developing questions and conducting interviews with key players of public, private, and military sectors involved in contracting programs. The interviews and data analyzation resulted in key findings in the research.

The differences in private sector and Air Force contracting sections found that the Air Force was more decentralized with a larger mission set when compared to the private sector having a small mission set, workforce, and the private sector reported directly to their internal high-level executives (Boyle et al., 2020).

Boyle et al. (2020) concluded that the Air Force structure is consistent with the private sector in organization goals and strategy. The Air Force's decentralized approach is an advantage because it allows contracting to be flexible and makes purchasing decisions at different levels. The disadvantage when compared to the private sector is the lack of contract clearance authority. The researchers found that the chief product officer has complete authority over purchasing professionals and determine how and when to make purchases. Additionally, the chief product officer is responsible for aligning the goals with the organization, with the assistance from the direct line established with the chief executive officer.

H. LITERATURE REVIEW SUMMARY

In summary, this literature review provided an introduction to multiple topics that laid the groundwork for the research carried out in this thesis. In this literature review, the authors discussed the basics of contingency contracting, the future design of the Marine Corps forces, and the current state of Marine Corps contracting community. While the current body of knowledge on the Marine Corps contracting workforce addresses traditional contracting approaches for satisfying land-based fighting force, scant research exists on the effectiveness of the III MEF contracting workforce in an EABO environment. Therefore, a qualitative approach to explore perceptions relating to the effectiveness of contracting support to operational forces in III MEF from the perspective of contracting professionals is needed.



III. METHODOLOGY

The research design of this thesis was focused on a qualitative study interviewing CCF Marines from III MEF. The main source of information will come from surveys and formal interviews conducted with members of the CCF workforce. The next step was to conduct an analysis of the questions using the answers provided and the literature review.

A. RESEARCH APPROACH

The focus of the interviews were on real world issues being faced by the contracting personnel and any recent exercises or operations. Additionally, there was a possibility to interview the Marines at HQMC about possible courses of action and their thoughts on the data provided.

B. RESEARCH DESIGN

The authors conducted an analysis of the manpower, capability, and training requirements required to meet the demands of *Force Design 2030*. A comprehensive questionnaire was sent to key players in III MEF contracting field. Some respondents opted for a video conference and others opted to write their responses and return them via email. The expected outcomes of the research approach are characterization of the problem, identification of inefficiencies, and realistic recommendations for improvements.

In adherence to the guidelines set by NPS Human Research Protection Office and Institutional Review Board (IRB), the authors submitted a Human Subject Research Determination Request. The IRB determined that the study did not involve human subject-based research and did not require further approval from the IRB. Once the authors received approval from the IRB to proceed, they identified the group of contracting professionals most apt to give pertinent feedback and began to craft the questionnaire. The primary aim was to engage as many contracting professionals as possible in leadership positions within III MEF for their relevant expertise for this research. The authors sent the questionnaire to eight CCF personnel in III MEF and received four responses. Due to the limited scope of the research, the qualified personnel



eligible to respond to this survey was limited. The authors sought opinions only from the senior personnel within III MEF, as they are representative of the population sought by the authors.

C. QUALITATIVE METHOD

The authors utilized a questionnaire to examine respondents' perceptions of the effectiveness of the new *Force Design 2030* CCF workforce structure and related contingency contracting authority in an EABO environment. Respondent answers are framed through the lens of the literature review as the authors analyzed the data and made recommendations. The following sections provide brief summaries of the sample population and the questionnaire (Figure 4) administered to the respondents.

D. SAMPLE POPULATION

This research involved a survey of four CCF Marines in III MEF currently billeted as contracting officers and working intimately in their field. The Marines surveyed are recent NPS graduates who are serving in their first tour as a 3006 (contingency contracting officer).

After the authors narrowed down the scope of the research and identified the target population, they developed the questionnaire was developed and is shown as Figure 4. The authors aim to examine the respondent's perceptions of the effectiveness of the new *Force Design 2030* CCF workforce structure and related contingency contracting authority in an EABO environment. The questionnaire was sent to eight contracting professionals within Command Element III MEF G-4 Operations, 3rd MLR, 3rd Marine Division, Marine Corps Installations Pacific (MCIPAC) – Marine Corps Base (MCB) Camp Butler Regional Contracting Office (RCO), Combat Logistics Regiment (CLR) 37 3rd MLG, and Marine Forces Pacific (MARFORPAC).



E. QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire	
Question	Purpose
How does the III MEF CCF workforce define effectiveness in an EABO environment?	To provide a baseline for what an effective CCF workforce looks like from the perspective of an internal member of the unit.
How does III MEF plan to conduct OCS in a distributed maritime environment?	To give the authors an understanding of how the unit is planning to conduct OCS in a distributed environment.
What contracting challenges does III MEF face in a joint operations environment?	To give the authors an understanding of what the current challenges III MEF is facing.
What changes could HQMC make to prepare contingency contracting in III MEF for upcoming changes from FD2030?	To provide an understanding of what changes can come from HQMC to empower III MEF's CCF workforce.
What changes can III MEF make internally to prepare contingency contracting for upcoming changes from FD2030?	To give the authors potential solutions that III MEF can make internally.
How are Marines matched to exercises for support? What experience level or factors should be considered for effective Contingency Contracting support?	To provide a baseline for how III MEF handles their workforce.
Are there any issues or concerns you would like to make a statement about that the questions did not address?	To give the interviewee a final chance to address any problem that were not mentioned.

Figure 4. Contingency Contracting Workforce Questionnaire

F. METHODOLOGY SUMMARY

This chapter provided a description of the research approach and describes the qualitative method used to obtain information for this study. Next, Chapter IV presents the analysis of the research.



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IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In this chapter, the authors present definitions of the sample population used to conduct the research, the questions that respondents were asked to answer, trends and analysis from respondent answers, and, finally, a conclusion.

A. INTRODUCTION

The authors utilized a questionnaire with questions to examine respondents' perceptions of the effectiveness of the new *Force Design 2030* CCF workforce structure and related contingency contracting authority in an EABO environment. Respondent answers are summarized in the appendix. Of the four respondents interviewed, two of them were long form interviews, and two of the respondents sent answers via email on Word documents.

This research involved surveying CCF Marines in III MEF currently billeted as contracting officers and working intimately in their field. The Marines surveyed are recent NPS graduates who are serving in their first tour as a 3006s (contingency contracting officer). The four Marines interviewed are currently serving in the MCIPAC AOR.

B. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This section presents each question and provides a summary of respondent answers. Recommendations are made in Chapter V.

- (1) How does the III MEF CCF workforce define effectiveness in an EABO environment?

The most common response to this question revolved around the need for a robust field ordering officer (FOO) program. Training was also a popular response, with empowerment being the third most popular response. Respondents were adamant that training in proper record keeping and financial accounting standards were also necessary. One respondent recommended a ratio of 12 FOOs per contracting officer. They believed



this would enable distributed operations while ensuring oversight with an experienced contracting officer at the helm.

Other responses included proper training conducted at the unit level, and the ability to accurately record financial transactions. It was also recommended that the local currency be used, when possible, to minimize signatures and avoid detection by the enemy.

- (2) How does III MEF plan to conduct OCS in a distributed maritime environment?

The most common response to this question was that the protocols currently being used to support forces in the mission area will not change. There will be a continued reliance on pre-established contracts such as the multiple-award Indefinite Delivery Inadequate Quantity Worldwide Expeditionary Multiple Award Contract (WEXMAC). Another popular response is that a comprehensive FOO program would be essential to giving units the ability to make purchases for sustainment. It was noted that in a contingency environment, the dollar threshold for FOO purchases would not be problematic for these types of needs.

One respondent noted that the Navy is relatively self-sufficient, and that the Army would be a key player for coordinating agency needs in the theatre due to their size and contracting teams. Another respondent noted that OCS positions are held by contracting officers and the same OCS billet could be filled by logistics officers or supply officers. Thereby increasing the contracting officers in the mission area and contracting's ability to sustain force needs.

- (3) What contracting challenges does III MEF face in a joint operations environment?

The most common response to this question was concerned with a lack of experience conducting contract actions in a joint environment. Another concerned response mentioned the Marine Corps' difficulty with deconfliction and coordination within III MEF, I MEF, and MCIPAC when personnel from III MEF and I MEF are operating in the same Area of Operation (AO). One respondent used the term fratricide of logistics to describe the lack of communication within the III MEF AOR. Respondents



voiced concern that an inability to coordinate properly within their own organization would not translate to effective contracting operations in a joint environment.

Other respondents noted that late submissions of requirements and undefined requirements were problematic, the Marine Corps is limited in contracting capability, and there is a lack of vendor trust in USMC contracting. One respondent recommended using an expeditionary acquisition cell (EAC) which consists of the comptroller, the contracting officer, and a card holder who would be collocated making them responsive and agile when called upon.

- (4) What changes could HQMC make to prepare contingency contracting in III MEF for upcoming changes from Force Design 2030?

The most common response to this question dealt with contracting officer billets being charged to subordinate commands under the MEF. Respondents recommended that contracting officers either be placed at the RCO, or Expeditionary Contracting Platoon (ECP) to become a MCIPAC asset, or that they should be placed directly at the MEF. The concern with contracting officer placement is that warrant authority does not flow down to the operational units where they are billeted.

Other responses included removing 3006 contracting officers from the OCS advisor billets and replacing them with 0402 logistics officers while placing the 3006 contracting officer at the ECP or RCO, providing better contracting tools to perform contract actions in an expeditionary environment, providing language translators to the III MEF AOR to improve communication between U.S. forces and local vendors, and finally give the Chief of Contracting Office (CCO) the flexibility to adapt their organization to fit specific AO needs.

- (5) What changes can III MEF make internally to prepare contingency contracting for upcoming changes from Force Design 2030?

The most common response to this question was proper tasking of 3006's and 3044's. The current plan for 3006's and 3044's in 3rd MLR is for the Marines in the ECP to follow the deployment cycle of the 3rd MLR. This overburdens the ECP and does not allow for outside support. The other common answer was for III MEF to train the



Marines in planner billets, i.e. OCS advisors who are with the CE III MEF. The suggested course was the Joint OCS Planners Course (JOPEC).

- (6) How are Marines matched to exercises for support? What experience level or factors should be considered for effective Contingency Contracting support?

The most common response to this question is a combination of level of experience and knowledge of the AO. The CCF Marines are expected to become experts on their respective AOs and execute contracts for exercises.

Other responses included a detailed description of how new contracting officers (KO) are developed. This includes pairing new KOs with experienced personnel who have experience deploying in that operation. Once the KOs show proficiency, they can be assigned to more challenging and demanding operations. After that they may be able to work independently. This is after a year of on the job training at the RCO.

- (7) Are there any issues or concerns you would like to make a statement about that the questions did not address?

There were two top answers for question 7. The first recommendation was to cross train supply officers and logistics officers in contracting. This is because a dedicated primary MOS for unrestricted contracting officers is unrealistic. The next recommendation was to create a career path for enlisted contracting personnel (3044) to become warrant officers.

C. FINDINGS

The responses in these questionnaires show that there was a mismatch between how contracting officers perceive they should be employed and how the Marine Corps employs them. A common trend across many of the responses was OCS positions do not necessarily need to be filled by contracting officers. Responses to questions 2, 4, 5, and 7 note that contracting officers can be better utilized to support operational forces by writing contracts and leading enlisted contracting Marines in writing contracts. Additionally, respondents mentioned that with the personnel shifts in III MEF, there was a reduced number of contracting officers and contracting Marines are a scarce resource.



The respondents concerned with these issues suggest that there was a need for reevaluation and implementation of contracting officer billets and employment.

In the literature review, the authors found that contracting officers are considered a force multiplier in III MEF and have limited positions available in the mission area. There are numerous hot fill billets for O-4 3006 officers in III MEF showing that there is a need for experienced contracting officers in the mission area. The Yoder Three-tier model suggests that tier 2 and 3 contracting officers are more experienced and possess the knowledge and capability to interact with the host nation, local resources, and theatre wide support (Yoder, 2004). The literature suggests that more experienced personnel will be needed to meet the needs of the EABO concept. According to the responses from the questionnaire, the billet allocation for contracting officers and current fulfillment method are not sufficient to meet the future needs of the Marine Corps in an EABO environment.

With the USMC shifting their focus to a dispersed maritime environment, operating in joint environments is going to become standard. The USMC conducts several joint exercises in the Pacific and needs to continue to do so. More importantly, the USMC needs to adjust internally to be able to properly contract in a joint environment. The previously mentioned “fratricide of logistics” that describes a lack of communication within III MEF will increase in an EABO environment. As Young and Pynduss (2021) concluded the Marine Corps needs to continue developing their contracting capability and are only solving parts of problems and require more effort into the contracting side.

Communication between the planners and the contracting personnel was also described as problematic. Late submissions and undefined requirements can hurt the ability for contracting personnel to get supplies to the warfighter at the right time and place. As one of the smaller organizations in the DoD, the USMC’s contracting capability leads to a lack of vendor trust. The vendors know that the other branches will be operating in the same AO and the other branches have more resources and a more experienced contracting workforce. The other organizations are also more focused on planning for contracts at an earlier stage.



Respondent answers dealing with experience and training were found in answers to questions 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7. Question 1 was among the most revealing, as those respondents recommended a robust FOO program to be overseen by an experienced contracting officer. A FOO program would negate the requirement for a robust network of warranted contracting officers but would also increase the burden for a highly trained and experienced contracting officer to oversee the program. According to Yoder (2004), and as discussed in Chapter II, tier one of the Yoder Three-tier Model most closely aligns with utilizing a FOO program to accomplish distributed contract actions in an EABO environment. A major obstacle to a robust FOO program is the requirement for an experienced and highly trained contracting officer to oversee the program. While the Marine Corps does possess second tour 3006 contracting officers who would be suitable for such a task, the typical NPS graduate having just earned the additional MOS of 3006 should not be expected to step into a role of this capacity, even after the one year of on-the-job training. Yoder (2004) describes a tier two type contracting officer as more qualified and capable, aligning more closely with a second tour 3006 and this would be the type contracting officer that would lead such a FOO program.

Question 3 answers revealed a lack of experience for Marine Corps CCF personnel in a joint contracting environment. This is pertinent to training and experience as it concerns a qualified and well-rounded CCF. Question 6 speaks to how Marines are matched to go on exercises based on experience level. This aligns perfectly with the Yoder's (2004) Three-tier Model and ensures CCF personnel are matched to the environment where contracting actions will be performed. The work by D'Angelo et al. (2007) emphasized the need for collaboration and joint integration in contracting actions within a theater of operations because of the potential for misuse of scarce resources and inhibit support to strategic goals. The imperative for successful joint integration in contingency contracting will be amplified in a distributed EABO environment due to the vast and remote nature of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) AOR. Finally, a response from question 7 discussed a recommendation that the authors plan to discuss in Chapter V of this research in the Recommendations section.

In summary, the authors find the questionnaire to be generally successful in gathering objective data from the contracting officers currently serving in III MEF. They



provided significant quantitative information to analyze their perception of contracting officers' employment in III MEF. The quantitative data provides evidence that the author's hypothesis should be accepted.

D. CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a summary of respondents' answers to the authors questionnaire survey and a discussion of those answers to interpret the findings and compare them with the literature review and theoretical framework for this study, the Yoder Three-tier Model (Yoder, 2004). Also, this chapter serves to lay the foundation for Chapter V as the authors make recommendations, draw conclusions from the research, and make suggestions for areas of further research.



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V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND AREA FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This chapter presents the limitations experienced during the conduct of this research, provides recommendations based on the data collected, and suggestions for areas of future research.

This research began with the question “With changes from Force Design 2030, does III MEF have the proper CCF and warrant authority structure to provide effective contingency contracting in an EABO environment?” The research findings support the hypothesis that the III MEF CCF is not structured or manned properly to perform effective OCS in an EABO environment. Although the findings determined that there are different perspectives on what “OCS” truly is, the current structure of the CCF does not have the appropriate personnel to provide contracting support to III MEF units. OCS and contracting support are issues in the region with the changes and will continue to be discussed until restructuring and proofing are conducted.

A. LIMITATIONS

The researchers faced one main limitation while collecting data for this research. The limitation was limited engagement with the respondents due to distance, operational tempo, and command restructuring. Over the course of data collection, the researchers experienced different challenges with respondents that prevented maximum participation. The geographical location and time zone is seventeen-hour difference and Japan is on the other side of the world from NPS. Respondents were heavily engaged with multiple operations combined with a staffing shortfall. Additionally, during data collection, III MEF and MCIPAC were ordered to combine for experimental testing. This order was recalled, delayed, and moved causing uncertainty for staff organization and billet responsibilities. Overall, these challenges did not impede research.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

The first recommendation is to enhance the FOO capability to meet the demands of EABO and Force Design 2030 in III MEF. Most of the contract actions the Marine



Corps are involved in at the tactical level of logistics are described in *JP 4-10* and tie in closely with tier one of the Yoder Three-tier Model (JCS, 2019; Yoder 2004). This would be an environment where FOOs are conducting the majority of purchases for the sustainment of forces. Based on data collected from respondents the dollar threshold would not be problematic for the needs required in an EABO environment. Therefore, III MEF would benefit from a comprehensive FOO capability implemented in a two-step process. The first step is developing detailed internal standard operating procedures to lay the foundation for program implementation. The second step is to educate contracting personnel on the program and develop a strong outreach program to build relationships with using units, interested parties, and leaders to utilize contracting capabilities to meet their requirements.

The second recommendation is to restructure the contracting personnel at III MEF. Due to the geographical location of III MEF, there are inherent challenges that are unique to the command. III MEF contracting personnel are located in Okinawa, Japan, Iwakuni, Japan; Hawaii; and are dispersed between III MEF CE, MLG, MCIPAC, MLR, and MCBH. Consolidating the Okinawa contracting personnel to all fall under the RCO (III MEF OCS advisor and ECP) would assist in staffing shortfalls. Additionally, merging MCIPAC and 3rd MLG into one unit would enable success for contracting personnel. Currently, warrant authority lies with MCIPAC and contracting personnel receive a limited warrant for operational support. Combining the two would allow for the contracting personnel to reside in the same unit as the warrant authority.

Another recommendation is to replace the 3006 contracting officer in the OCS advisor billet with an 0402 logistics officer or 3002 supply officer who has taken the JOPEC course. This will free up manpower resources to be utilized in key billets within the RCO or ECP, providing seasoned guidance and structure to those organizations. The OCS advisor positions are planners who are not involved in the contracting writing process. Keeping qualified and warranted contracting personnel within the RCO enhances the capabilities and meets the demands of the RCO.

Finally, and perhaps most interesting, in answer to question 7, one respondent recommended creating a career path for enlisted personnel (3044s) to become warrant



officers in contingency contracting. This would ensure the Marine Corps CCF has a steady supply of well rounded, well trained, and skilled contracting officers. This recommendation would ensure that the Marine Corps contracting community is acting in accordance with the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter II of this research, the Yoder Three-tier Model (Yoder, 2004). Promoting from within- bringing up enlisted personnel to become warrant officers, and providing incentive for longevity and professional development via increases in pay and responsibility aligns with the industry standards also discussed in Chapter II of this research.

C. AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The researchers recommend that further research be conducted on I MEF and II MEF to determine if both are properly structured to operate in an EABO environment. The researchers were only able to analyze III MEF, due to time constraints and desire to keep the study properly scaled. III MEF is a forward deployed unit that is exercising the latest concepts from *Force Design 2030* and spread out geographically in the INDOPACOM region.

The researchers also recommend further research on the viability of replacing unrestricted officers with warrant officers for the 3006 contracting officer MOS. Using the Yoder Three-tier Model, having an experienced contracting workforce allows for new Marines coming into a unit to be a plug and play asset, eliminating the lag with OJT. Coupled with 3044 and 3006 retention, determining the viability of such a program could be a force multiplier for the contracting workforce.

The researchers also recommend further research on a standardized FOO program across the USMC. The contracting officer appoints the FOO, who is their representative and has a limited scope of appointment, which is delegated from the contacting officer's warrant authority. An analysis of how all MEFs and other supporting establishments conduct FOO programs could lead to clarity and consistency across the USMC. Further research could also compare and contrast how the Army, Navy, and Air Force maintain their respective FOO programs.



D. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the research findings emphasize the need for the USMC CCF to adapt the new operational model outlined in *Force Design 2030*, particularly in an EABO environment. The thesis presents evidence that the current III MEF CCF structure does not effectively align with *Force Design 2030*'s requirement for a more dynamic and distributed maritime operating environment. The analysis of qualitative data obtained from USMC CCF personnel exposes an obvious disconnect between the perceived and actual employment of contracting officers within III MEF, suggesting a misallocation of personnel who may be more effectively employed.

This thesis sheds light on the emerging problems associated with contingency contracting in an EABO environment at the threshold of unprecedented force design within the Marine Corps. The findings and recommendations presented in this study, if implemented, will enhance the Marine Corps contracting efficiency and effectiveness, ensuring that the force is better prepared to meet the demands of contemporary and future combat environments.



APPENDIX: INTERVIEW RESPONSES

RESPONSE 1

How does the III MEF CCF workforce define effectiveness in an EABO environment?

FOOs are going to be important, KOs alone cannot support, so we will need 10 FOOs per KO. Those FOOs managed by a KO located in the headquarters will be most effective. They will cover up to \$25,000 and will also need a pay agent. To break down how much contracting we expect to do, it may not be that much. Many of the purchases will be made via GCPC and under \$25,000. It is more adding to capabilities that already exist.

How does III MEF plan to conduct OCS in a distributed maritime environment?

I don't see OCS changing much from what it is now when we go to a distributed maritime environment. In a distributed maritime environment, we will rely on the army because they are the biggest player. Do we really need KO's doing OCS because an 0402 can do OCS. Doesn't see a change because we already do OCS. III MEF tied into the joint contracting cell, and we receive reports from the Army. OCS advisor will be tied in with OCS integration cell. III MEF holds joint contracting support board or is a part of it every month.

- (1) Follow up question: Regarding disaster response, do you see advanced contracts as a viable option in this type of environment?

Has been talked about for a long time, but in real-world application we do not advanced contracts set up. The ECP is 12 people for the Marines, so if advanced contracts in a distributed environment were to be set up then that would be the army. The army will own Korea, Philippines, and probably Guam. Air force owns Japan for contracting. I will send you the lead service for contracting coordination slides so we can see what the layout looks like. We will tie into other services contracting capabilities.



What contracting challenges does III MEF face in a joint operations environment?

The Marine Corps is limited when it comes to contracting. To purchase professional services in the Philippines, we wouldn't use the Marines, we would go to the Army. It is like pulling teeth to get something other than porta johns from a Marine Corps contracting cell. Most of the purchases are made via Standard Form-44s and are under \$25,000. Having vetted locations where an army veterinarian has assessed water quality is a difficult task as well. Might have a more success if there were other options than relying on Army Veterinarian to assess food and water quality for purchases out in town. The problem may be practicing what we are allowed to do. We talked about it a lot, but we have not applied for it.

- (2) Follow up question: What are your thoughts on consolidating contracting personnel at MCIPAC?

If MCIPAC becomes subordinate to III MEF, then that would be the perfect place for contracting personnel. The Airforce has given a model for this with all contracting personnel in one place. The synergy you can build with this model will far surpass what we have now. Would not stick them at the MEF. Big proponent of putting them at the RCO.

What changes could HQMC make to prepare contingency contracting in III MEF for upcoming changes from FD2030?

Get rid of the OCS advisors (3006 covering that billet) and use an 0402 to cover down on that billet. Things are too complex, and we need to simplify.

What changes can III MEF make internally to prepare contingency contracting for upcoming changes from FD2030?

Experimenting with bringing the OCS advisor down to the ECP. Establish Indefinite Delivery Inadequate Quantity in the mission area. Tracking vendors more efficiently with business intelligence rather than an excel spreadsheet. It would be good to know where vendors are that the Government has done business with in the past while in an EABO environment. Capture all III MEF vendors in the system. Business intelligence is still in development. INDOPACOM does not have an OCS advisor, the



Marine Corps is ahead of our peers in contracting. Why are we using a 3006 to be an OCS advisor who has no contracting experience? We send them to NPS and then send them out to a higher-level OCS billet without having written any contracts or without any field experience. There must be a better solution than part time activation of OCS. Part of the role of OCS advisor is requirements development.

How are Marines matched to exercises for support? What experience level or factors should be considered for effective Contingency Contracting support?

Never been to the ECP, but I've heard they try to match experience with priority exercises. The more senior Marines in the ECP are assigned to important missions. Marines are also rotated so that they can get experience.

Are there any issues or concerns you would like to make a statement about that the questions did not address?

Merging the RCO and ECP. What are the benefits of it, the other services do this.

RESPONSE 2

How does the III MEF CCF workforce define effectiveness in an EABO environment?

In an EABO environment, success hinges on having the right mix of highly skilled personnel. The effectiveness of these operations depends on individuals who understand the FAR inside and out, ensuring that procurement of essential supplies and services comply. Proper financial accounting is also critical, and personnel need to be able to record all transactions accurately and in a timely manner. Ultimately, payment must be correctly rendered, which requires knowledgeable professionals who can navigate complex financial systems with ease. By assembling a team with the right expertise, an EABO operation can ensure smooth, efficient operations in even the toughest environments.

How does III MEF plan to conduct OCS in a distributed maritime environment?

This is already being conducted. Currently, the INDOPACOM contracting forces, comprised of United States Airforce, United States Army, USMC, and United States



Navy contracting forces, are strategically located in different regions across the AOR, enabling them to effectively utilize their current resources. To optimize procurement efforts, the team leverages various procurement methods, including DLA, acquisition and cross service agreements, GCPC, the FOO program, and pre-established contracting vehicles such as WEXMAC. To further enhance their capabilities, the INDOPACOM USMC CCF could consider deploying a team of KOs to austere environments for more rapid responses. This approach has proven successful with I MEF, which deployed its team in Guam and plans to relocate them to a more advantageous forward location. However, due to the limited task organization of the ECP, this tactic may not be feasible for their operations.

What contracting challenges does III MEF face in a joint operations environment?

One of the biggest challenges that III MEF expeditionary contracting faces is the late submission of requirements, as well as the presence of undefined requirements. This has a major impact on the efficiency of the process and can cause significant setbacks. In contrast, the other services typically have well-defined requirements in place by the end of the final planning conference, which allows them to award contracts much earlier and with greater ease. As a result of these challenges, KOs often find themselves under considerable stress when soliciting and awarding contracts, which can result in higher costs for the USMC and inferior products. Moreover, vendors in forward locations tend to have lower levels of trust in the USMC than they do in other services when it comes to providing necessary services.

What changes could HQMC make to prepare contingency contracting in III MEF for upcoming changes from FD2030?

The current practice of taking CCF personnel from ECPs and deploying them to lower echelons is not sustainable for an acquisition's authority approach. Instead, relocating the ECPs to the MEF level would be more advantageous for the CCF. This would allow the ECPs to have direct MEF tasking ability, enabling them to validate MEF requirements and personnel taskers, and get involved earlier in MEF level exercise planning stages. Ultimately, this would provide better support to the MAGTF, and



potentially allow the ECPs to be paired with the acquisition and cross service agreements office or personnel to form a larger overseas-specific acquisitions cell. Broader knowledge of interoperability approaches and logistical support would benefit KOs in supporting MAGTF forces.

There is also a need to add a translator position in the regions where the ECP operates. This would ensure appropriate communication with vendors, ultimately leading to better outcomes. The translator's role would be an invaluable asset in facilitating effective communication between vendors and the ECPs, ultimately strengthening the relationships necessary for acquiring critical goods and services. By adding a translator position, the ECP can address this communication challenge and bolster acquisition activities in their operating regions.

What changes can III MEF make internally to prepare contingency contracting for upcoming changes from FD2030?

None.

How are Marines matched to exercises for support? What experience level or factors should be considered for effective Contingency Contracting support?

The ECP has a customized system for deploying KOs that considers their level of experience and the complexity of the requirements they are expected to handle. Upon arrival, KOs are paired up with experienced personnel who have at least one year of experience working in support of deployed operations. As KOs gain proficiency in their role, they may be assigned to more challenging and demanding operations, or even allowed to work independently. To maximize their knowledge and expertise in contingency contracting, Marines in a contingency contracting support position are encouraged to complete at least one tour at an RCO. They can then be assigned to a contingency contracting team/unit that is led by senior KOs who have extensive experience in deployed contracting. This provides them with a comprehensive understanding of the contracting process, including simplified acquisition procedures contracting requirements, and equips them with valuable skills that are essential in an expeditionary environment.



To further enhance their expertise, senior gunnery sergeant KOs should be placed in an OCS position, preferably in an acquisition and cross service agreement office or major subordinate command G-4. This allows them to gain a deeper understanding of the logistical tools and planning elements that are essential for the success of a Marine Corps unit when deployed. By following this training approach, KOs should be well-equipped to handle the most demanding contracting challenges and are able to provide critical support when it is needed most.

Are there any issues or concerns you would like to make a statement about that the questions did not address?

None.

RESPONSE 3

How does the III MEF CCF workforce define effectiveness in an EABO environment?

There is a heavy reliance on multinational logistics with the USMC. Building up the 21st century foraging program and a robust FOO program is critical. Understanding the USMC is normally the little guy in the AO and resources will not be shifted to them as much. There will not be as many big contracts, and most will fall under the threshold.

How does III MEF plan to conduct OCS in a distributed maritime environment?

Similar to the first question, the USMC needs to establish a robust FOO program. They also need to be integrated at the joint level for distributed operations. Operational requirements need to be identified early on and publicized. Establishing an expeditionary acquisition cell with KO's, comptrollers, and supply Marines would enable success.

What contracting challenges does III MEF face in a joint environment?

Warrant authority needs to be centralized and pushed out to the operational units. Warrant authority is delegated down to the ECP from the RCO. Having KOs at the unit level without warrant authority is not useful to operations.



What changes can HQMC make to prepare contingency contracting forces in III MEF for changes from FD2030?

Tasking KOs appropriately is critical. The MLR is critical to the success of distributed operations, but KO support will be required throughout the AO. Most of the MLR's requirements can be sustained through a robust FOO program.

What changes can III MEF make internally to prepare contingency contracting forces for changes from FD 2030?

Moving the OCS advisor spot away from a 3006 billet. Properly tasking KOs in III MEF is critical given the geographic isolation that KO's face throughout the INDOPACOM region. Moving the OCS advisor billet to a 0402 or a 3002 will free up space for a KO to be properly utilized where warrant authority resides.

How are Marines matched to exercises for support? What experience level or factors should be considered for effective Contingency Contracting support?

None. Cited lack of experience.

Are there any issues or concerns you would like to make a statement about that the questions did not address?

None.

RESPONSE 4

How does the III MEF CCF workforce define effectiveness in an EABO environment?

By training the force in procurement practices, methods, and limitations. Field Ordering Officers at the small unit level with pay agents and cash at their disposal. Using the local currency to minimize their signature (sudden influx of US dollars). KOs are strategically located at the battalion /regiment level to extend that capability.

How does III MEF plan to conduct OCS in a distributed maritime environment?

MEF OCS can respond to this better, but from my viewpoint, it'd be by training all the planners on what OCS is. Recommend you take the JOPEC course soon after



getting to the fleet so you can realize how little OCS is really related to actual contract execution. Putting a contracting officer in an OCS position takes away from their capability to write and award contracts. OCS is to contracting what an operations officer is to an infantryman.

What contracting challenges does III MEF face in a joint operations environment?

The Marine Corps has a hard time understanding that contracting is a joint venture. We cannot do contracting in a vacuum because it creates competition for resources. Ideally, a joint contracting support board is established and the Marine Corps KOs and OCS planners for that AO meet to discuss previous, current and upcoming requirements.

What changes could HQMC make to prepare contingency contracting in III MEF for upcoming changes from FD2030?

Give the KOs the flexibility to adapt their organizations to fit their AO. We are discussing combining the RCO and the ECP. That may work here but will be unnecessary in Pendleton or Lejeune.

What changes can III MEF make internally to prepare contingency contracting for upcoming changes from FD2030?

Train their planners, or at least their G-4 planners, JOPEC.

How are Marines matched to exercises for support? What experience level or factors should be considered for effective Contingency Contracting support?

The more joint experience on contracting the better. Army and Air Force do contingency very differently. Air Force have contingency contracting cells in CONUS ready to deploy. We do not have that, we expect the 3044s and 3006s to become experts on their respective AOs and then pull them from that location and send them somewhere else. Then if that AO needs CCF, the new folks are on tap to support it with little to zero knowledge of that AO.



Are there any issues or concerns you would like to make a statement about that the questions did not address?

Growth of the 3044/3006s community. I think that making every supply officer and some logistics officers 3006s is the right thing to do. Having a primary MOS is wishful thinking and unrealistic given our very small size. Create a path for 3044s to become warrant officers/ limited duty officers as this will improve talent retention and recruiting. Many of our 3044s commissioned after getting their degree or get out and become government employed civilians.



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