

Challenges of Compositing

To Marines, “compositing” is an action in which units not currently under an existing command relationship come together to form a new organization. Compositing differs from “aggregating,” in which units already part of an existing organization come back together after having been separated. Units that are compositing must establish new command relationships and functional relationships and processes (e.g., fires, intelligence, etc.). MAGTFs are formed either through deliberate planning or adaptive planning. A deliberately planned MAGTF is formed to address an expected assignment. In this case, every MAGTF element comes with a baseline of training on its core mission-essential tasks, which then allows the unit to focus on the particulars of its regional- or mission-specific requirements. The ratio of enabling capabilities is balanced against mission requirements and there is a scheduled opportunity for the MAGTF elements to conduct direct coordination, planning, mission rehearsals, and SOP refinement prior to deployment. Additionally, this schedule allows the MAGTF CE an opportunity to work as a coherent element to create unity of effort, focus, and command.

All of this is absent when a MAGTF is composited through adaptive planning to rapidly deploy a credible force to address an unexpected crisis. Adaptively planned MAGTFs typically include a range of available units from around the globe. These could be select elements from forward-deployed MAGTFs, entire forward-deployed MAGTFs (such as MEUs and SPMAGTFs), units from the CONUS-based Global Response Force (GRF), afloat and ashore prepositioned assets, the ready Service forces (i.e., Alert Contingency MAGTF), or any combination of the above.

To improve the effectiveness of composited MAGTFs, we must:

- Ensure MAGTF CEs understand regional differences affecting organizational integration.
- Develop common, consistent practices to enable rapid compositing of forces into a single MAGTF or multiple MAGTFs under a single CE.
- Account for the consistent planning and technological integration needed to ensure composited MAGTFs are fully functional in terms of intelligence, information architectures, cyberspace, communications afloat, and transition from ship-to-shore.
- Consider developing a formal planning and rehearsal mechanism as an adaptable baseline approach to minimize challenges associated with the compositing of MAGTFs.
- Explore the value of defining and documenting a methodology for erasing the seams between a unit’s deployed and garrison capabilities.
- Prioritize our exercise program to drive appropriate Service component and force provider participation in testing potential composition approaches and solutions.