

Service Elements

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The fourth and final part of a series

THE RECENTLY COMPLETED REPORT OF THE MARINE Corps Organization and Composition Board recommended major changes in the service organization in the Fleet Marine Force. This article, one of a series, describes those changes and gives some of the background considerations as to why they were recommended.

The concentrations of supply and service installation characteristics of World War II and the Korean War are totally out of the question in modern warfare. The modern doctrine places a premium on speed, shock and surprise. This presupposes that optimum flexibility and a high order of tactical and strategic mobility must be present in the Fleet Marine Force. Service elements are inherently the heaviest, the least mobile, and least flexible of all units. How then, can they be organized to increase their mobility and flexibility and at the same time give them the capability to provide the required support? It is very easy to speak in terms of greater mobility, flexibility—widely separated installations. How to accomplish this is an entirely different matter. In the final analysis the extent of the service support required is a function of the character and size of the force supported, the scope and extent of its operations and the area in and the conditions under which it is operating. The board then had a series of problems to solve. What total service capability should be within the framework of the Fleet Marine Force structure? What should be the organizational arrangement of this capability and finally the specific organization of the individual units?

The Board recognized that the Marine Corps is in a period of transition between conventional operations and those envisioned under the modern doctrine. This means there is a necessity for retaining, for the time being, certain of the battle-tested structure, weapons and equipment of the past. There is at the same time a necessity for selective modification of organization, weapons and other equipment in keeping with the requirements of modern warfare. As a force-in-readiness, the organization and composition of the Fleet Marine Force must at any given time be consistent with and effectively utilize material available during the period under consideration. It must at the same time be such as to allow for the orderly and efficient transition as new equipment becomes available.

The foregoing were factors which influenced the board's thinking with respect to tactical as well as service organizations.

Strange as it may seem, there are not many different ways in which service elements can be organized. In the past they have generally been organized along functional lines, i.e., supply, maintenance service, motor transport, shore party, engineer, medical, etc. At higher levels supply, maintenance and certain service elements have been grouped together in a larger organization. At this level the supply and maintenance functions have usually been further grouped into the technical categories of ordnance, general supply, communication-electronics, engineer and motor transport. Where possible we have separated motor transport and engineer operating functions, from the supply and maintenance function. This

organizational approach is reflected in our current Service Regiment in the division as well as in the Combat Service Group at Force level. The board found no particular quarrel with this functional type organization. However, certain flexibility is lost by resorting to the use of technical categories as a means of organization, particularly at division level. It is difficult to establish a task organization to support a specific tactical plan with our current Division Service Regiment. The same is true with respect to our Combat Service Group.

From a further analysis of our current service organization, it is apparent that several major differences exist. First, too great a burden for logistic support has been placed on and in the division. Second, there are too many echelons in the support chain (battalion, regiment, division, force, depot). Third, our present service support organizations are far too heavy, lack mobility and the necessary flexibility to support widely developed tactical units. Fourth, we do not have an adequate Force-level organization capable of supporting a division/wing task force.

As a desirable goal the Board was interested in cutting down on support overhead in all areas in order to obtain the maximum combat power with a minimum investment in manpower and material. In this connection, certain basic determinations were made. These are:

- 1) To concentrate the principal service support for air units at group and wing level, with certain support common to ground and air at Force level.
- 2) To concentrate the principal service support for ground elements at division and Force level.

3) To develop or adopt a Force-level organization capable of supporting both air and ground elements for all common supply, service and maintenance functions.

4) To eliminate the regimental echelon in the logistic support chain, at the same time making organic to battalion-size units that service support necessary to effect internal distribution and organizational first and second echelon maintenance.

5) To remove from the division those service support capabilities not habitually required in combat. To combine and rearrange service functions within the division, in order to reduce overhead, eliminate weight and bulk and provide a more flexible and mobile organization.

In developing the service support organization within the division, the following were used as guidelines in addition to the general criteria for the division as a whole. These general criteria were outlined earlier in an article on the Marine division.

1) The division should have an organic service support organization to provide minimum requirements for initial assault operations.

2) Additional support to sustain operations for a short period of time.

3) The organization must be to the extent practical as mobile and flexible

as the tactical unit which they are to support.

4) They must contain sufficient organizational flexibility to facilitate optimum combination of various elements in support of a wide variety of tactical missions.

5) The organization must reduce to a minimum its vulnerability to atomic attack.

6) Should reduce administrative and own organic support overhead in all possible areas.

7) Must have a command structure capable of planning, controlling and executing the logistic support mission.

DIVISION SERVICE ELEMENTS

The division service organization was developed from the above guidelines and the other considerations given earlier. The principal changes involved the present Division Service Regt, Shore Party Bn and Engineer Bn. Certain minor changes were made in Medical and Motor Transport.

SERVICE BATTALION

The present Division Service Regt has been redesignated as a Service Bn. It has been reorganized to provide for a more flexible employment in support of tactical operations. The present division shore party function has been incorporated in this battalion.

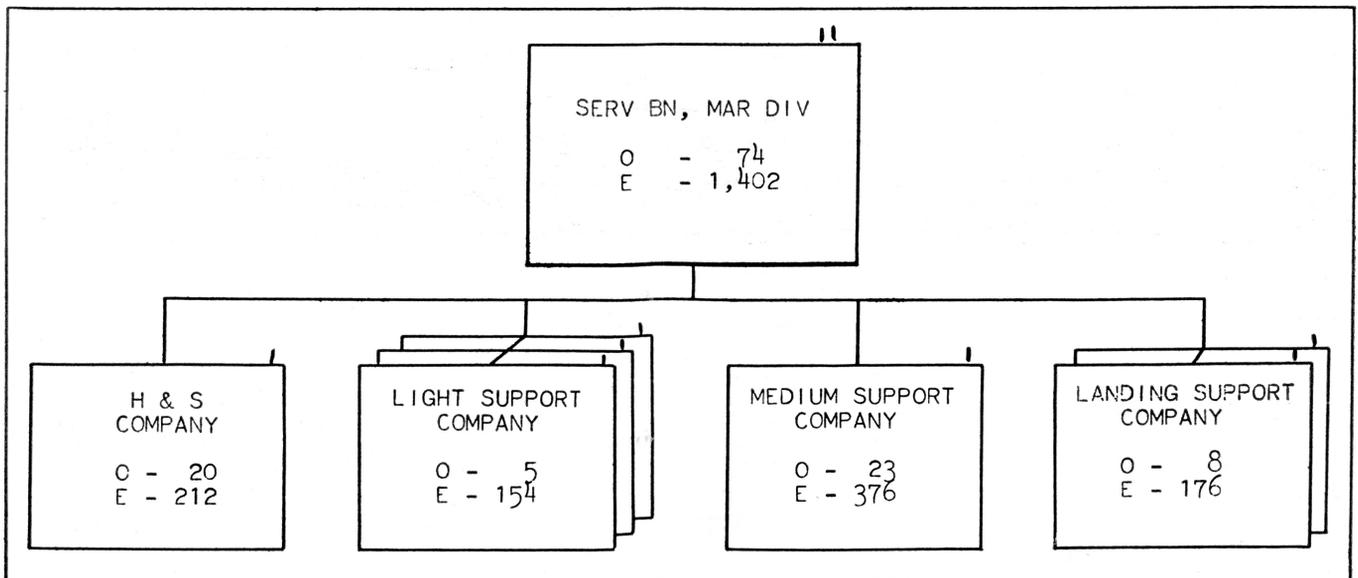
The Service Bn has been organized to provide centralized logistic support to all division units or to provide companies or detachments for support of detached elements of the division.

The battalion consists of H&S Co, 3 Light Support Companies, a Medium Support Company and 2 Landing Support Companies. It is a considerably smaller organization than the present Service Regt and Shore Party Bn which it replaces. Its total strength is approximately 74 officers and 1,402 enlisted men.

The H&S Co provides for command, administrative and organic supply functions for the battalion.

The Light Support Companies are designed to provide light supply and maintenance support to tactical elements of the division. It will normally operate in the forward portion of the beach support area in support of a regimental landing team. It may be either attached to or placed in support of tactical elements. Except for 10 2½-ton cargo trucks in the motor transport section, it is helicopter transportable. Its internal organization is company headquarters, a maintenance platoon and a supply platoon. The amount of supplies it mans will be limited to those required to support current tactical operations on a day to day basis. It does not establish large dumps or maintenance installa-

Service Battalion, Marine Division



tions and should maintain a mobility equal to the tactical element it supports. The company has been structured to provide minimum essential combat type support and requires back-up reinforcement for sustained operations.

The Medium Support Company (22 officers and 364 enlisted men) consists of a company headquarters, 2 maintenance platoons and 2 supply platoons. This company is designed to provide general support to the division as a whole.

It has the capability of operating 2 balanced and widely separated supply and maintenance installations and carries the bulk of the Class II supplies of the division. It will normally operate in the rear portion of the beach support area establishing installations which can receive and distribute supplies and equipment to all elements of the division. It is a heavier unit and provides back-up support to the Light Support Companies. It is capable of limited third echelon maintenance. It does not have a Class I, III, or V capability. The automatic supply distribution of the Force Service Regt establishes these installations in direct support of the division.

The 2 Landing Support Companies (7 officers and 168 enlisted each) consists of a company headquarters and 3 landing support platoons. These companies are designed to operate in the beach support area, preparing, marking and controlling landing areas and assisting in the rapid landing and dis-

ment required for beach operations is organic to the company.

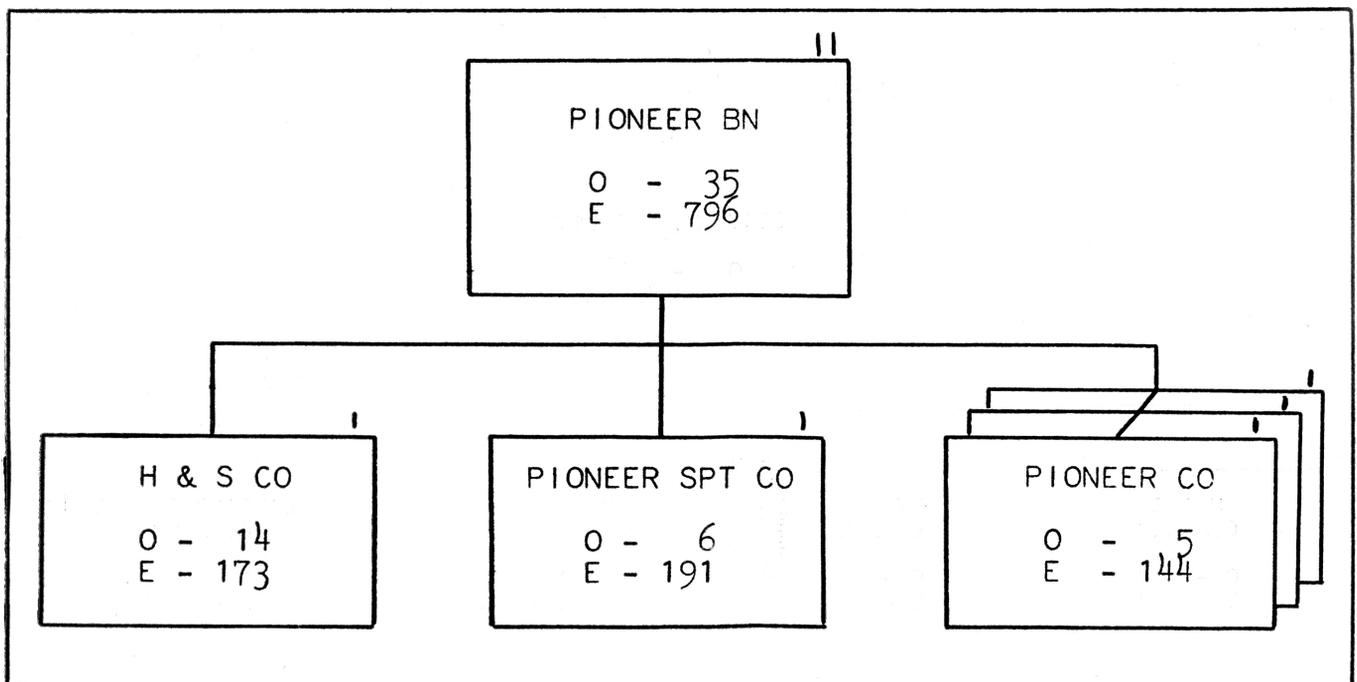
To many, this new Service Bn may look far too small for support of the division. It must be viewed, however, in the light of the division as a whole and what support is to be provided by Force. The new division organization requires

The company has organic the necessary communication personnel and equipment to establish essential internal and external communication necessary in accomplishing its mission.

persed supplies to inland installations. It co-ordinates evacuation of casualties. It will normally operate on the beach or in helicopter landing zones in direct support of assault elements of the division. The platoon is the basic unit for operation of one landing beach or helicopter landing zone. The company has organic the necessary communication personnel and equipment to establish essential internal and external communication necessary in accomplishing its mission. A minimum of heavy equip-

less in the way of service support. It has fewer vehicles to be maintained. The introduction of mortars as close support artillery and the elimination of tanks in the division reduces the ordnance maintenance problems. The reduction in personnel in the division also reduces its logistic requirement. The logistic capability of the Service Bn includes only those services habitually required by the division to initiate and sustain combat for a 15–20 day period. Extended operations ashore will require augmentation

Pioneer Battalion



or support from Force service elements. We will see later that the Force logistic support capability has been increased appreciably.

PIONEER BATTALION

The Engineer Bn was redesignated a Pioneer Bn. This title was considered more appropriate to its assigned functions and provided a better distinction between this unit and our Force Engineer Bn.

The Pioneer Bn is designed to provide both tactical and logistical type support. It is organized into a H&S Co, a Pioneer Support Co and 3 Pioneer Companies. The strength of the battalion is 35 officers and 796 enlisted.

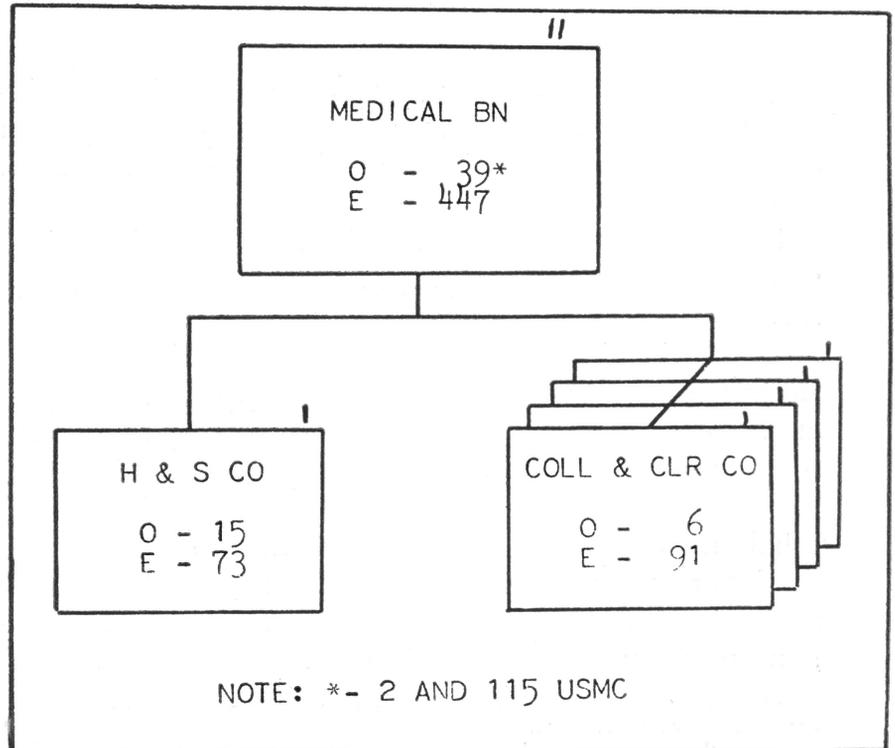
The H&S Co provides command, administrative and organic supply functions for the battalion. In addition it performs field maintenance (limited third echelon for engineer material of the division).

The Pioneer Support Co consists of a company headquarters, a construction platoon, a bridge platoon, an equipment platoon and a motor transport platoon. It is capable of accomplishing those essential support functions in the rear areas of the division. It can also augment the capabilities of the pioneer companies as required.

The Pioneer Co consists of a company headquarters and 3 pioneer platoons. These companies will normally provide light pioneer support for an RLT. They will operate in the forward area.

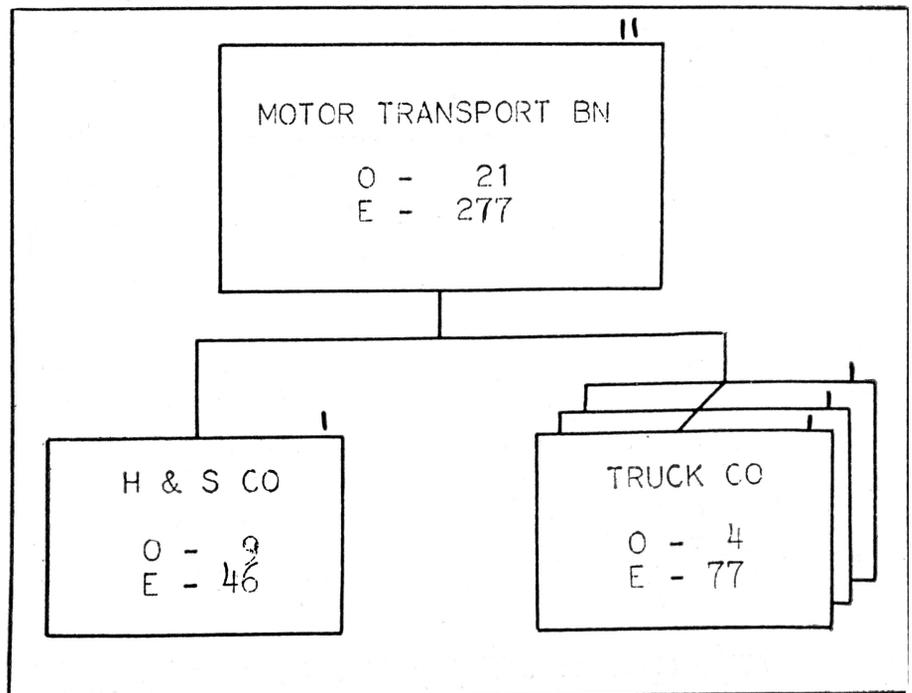
MEDICAL BATTALION

The principal change in the Medical Bn has been the deletion of the 2 Hospital Companies which were formerly organic and the addition of one Collecting and Clearing Company. The medical supply function has been removed and placed in the Service Bn. The hospital companies were deleted from the division in the interest of increasing the mobility of the medical units. The availability of the helicopter for rapid evacuation to higher echelon medical installations and the increasing use of transport aircraft in casualty evacuation were other factors which led to the conclusion that a hospitalization capability



Medical Battalion

Motor Transport Battalion



organic to the division was no longer required.

The battalion now consists of an H&S Co and 4 Collecting and Clearing Cos.

The H&S Co, in addition to providing the command, administrative and organic supply functions for the battalion, has 2 surgical teams for use in reinforcing the Collecting and Clearing Cos as required.

The Collecting and Clearing Cos are organized into a company headquarters, a collecting platoon and a clearing platoon. Its primary mission is to provide for the collection and clearing of casualties of supported units and their evacuation, i.e., helicopter or surface means to rear area or afloat medical installations. One company will normally function in support of each RLT and the fourth company provides medical support for other division elements.

MOTOR TRANSPORT BATTALION

The Motor Transport Bn is organized essentially the same as the "L" Series battalion except that one truck company has been removed. The size of the H&S Co was reduced to reflect the support of one less company. With the increase in helicopter capability, the Board considered that a corresponding reduction in ground transport organic to the division could be effected at this time.

FORCE SERVICE ELEMENTS

The Board recommended no changes in the internal organization of the following units:

- Force Engineer Battalion
- Fixed and Floating Bridge Companies
- Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company
- Topographic Company
- Motor Transport Battalion
- Separate Surgical Companies
- Hospital Companies
- Dental Companies

The major changes in Force service units was for a new organization to replace the present Combat Service Group and the organization of a Mass Evacuation Company. The Board did

make certain recommendations about the number of various units to be organized, but that is beyond the scope of this article.

Other supply elements are echeloned into the objective areas as required.

FORCE SERVICE REGIMENT

This organization has been under study and development at Headquarters Marine Corps prior to convening the Board. From a review and analysis it appeared that it met the general criteria and contained the requisite capabilities for a Force-level service unit. The Board recommended the adoption of this unit.

It is designed to provide supply, maintenance and essential services to a Marine division wing task force as well as a number of Force Troops units. It takes the place of the present Combat Service Group.

It is organized into a H&S Bn, an Automatic Supply Distribution Bn and a Material Supply and Maintenance Bn. It is a large organization and at full strength has 160 officers and 3,700 enlisted.

It is envisioned that the Force Service Regt will be employed as the supply link between depot and fleet logistic agencies and the landing force elements deployed in the objective area. In the execution of this function those elements of the regiment which supply high usage items such as rations, water, ammunition and fuel may be landed early in an operation or even with the assault elements. Other supply elements are echeloned into the objective areas as required. The maintenance elements of the regiment may be deployed in the objective area or at bases outside the objective area. Specifically the Force Service Regt can:

1) Furnish to supported units as required, logistic services to include bak-

ery, graves registration, laundry, salvage, air delivery and freight forwarding.

2) Furnish balanced detachments for simultaneous sustained logistic support in combat up to two separated elements of a task force each of RLT/MAC sixes requiring independent logistic support.

3) Until such responsibility is assumed by higher echelon, co-ordinate for the commander with other services as required in obtaining or furnishing logistic support through cross-servicing and develop cross-servicing procedures for the task force.

4) Requisition, storage and issue to supported units all classes of supply.

5) Maintenance of prescribed stock levels of all classes of supply to include mounting out stocks of fourth echelon spares for all supported units and third echelon spares as required for support of Force Troops.

6) Provision of fourth echelon field maintenance are third echelon back-up for supported units.

7) When adequately augmented by attachment of additional service troops, it assures full responsibility for Force-level logistic support of units in the objective area.

8) Requisition, storage and distribution to supported units of classes I, II, III, IV and V.

9) Receipt, handling, storage and distribution to supported units of class III A and V A. Distribution will extend directly to airfield installations, but does not include base internal storage and distribution functions.

10) Within its capabilities, provision of such assistance as may be required in the receipt, storage handling and movement of classes II A and IV A to supported air units.

11) Provide all echelons of field maintenance of Marine Corps furnished equipment beyond the capabilities of the support air units.

The H&S Bn has the primary mission of providing command, administration, communication, transportation and supporting services for the requirement. It is organized into an H&S Co, a Communication Support Co, a Longshoreman Co and a Shipping and Receiving Co.

The Automatic Supply Distribution Bn provides all functions incident to the supply of classes I, II, II A, V and V A. It is organized into a Hq Co, an Ammunition Co, a Bulk Fuel Co and a Ration Co.

It is envisioned that this battalion will form the nucleus of the assault echelon of the Force Service Regiment. It will assume at an early stage in the operation responsibility for operating class I, III, III A, V and V A installations. It has the capability of operating a minimum of two widely separated installations in support of assault units.

The Material Supply and Maintenance Bn consists of an H&S Co, 5 Maintenance Cos (Electronics, Engineer, MT, Ordnance and General Supply) and a Supply Co. Its primary mission is to perform all functions incident to receipt, storage, issue and field maintenance through fourth echelon of Marine Corps furnished class II and IV for elements of the task force. In operation

of limited duration this organization need not be deployed into the objective area. It can operate at an adjacent or nearby base and be echeloned into the objective area when and if required.

MASS EVACUATION COMPANY

There are many ideas as to what should be done in handling the mass casualty problem. The Board believes that there should be in each Fleet Marine Force an organization capable of providing the minimum essential means to solve this problem. The organization developed was designated a Mass Evacuation Co. It consists of a headquarters platoon, a monitoring and decontamination platoon, a transportation platoon, and a medical platoon. This company will be a Force-level unit. It provides the commander with an organization that can be quickly moved into an area which has been subjected to atomic attack. It has the necessary personnel to control and direct opera-

tions at the site of the atomic blast and a minimum of medical, monitoring and decontamination personnel to perform essential tasks. The transportation platoon provides the necessary personnel for directing, dispatching and controlling the various transportation means that may be assigned for evacuation of injured personnel. It is anticipated that this unit will be the focal point for rescue operations. Additional medical, damage control and rescue teams and other personnel will be used to reinforce this organization as required.



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