

## **USMC EOD Condensed History : Version Jan 2024**

Marine Corps Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) has historically been an incredibly adaptive and innovative capability, transforming to constantly meet the needs of the Service and the Nation. From the onset of World War II, Marine Corps Bomb Disposal units supported amphibious operations throughout the Pacific campaigns. Bomb Disposal Officers and Technicians supported combat operations by removing the threat associated with dud explosive ordnance and enemy ammunition storage areas. Given the tactical situation and the expanding number of Bomb Disposal Technicians, on 6 June 1944, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General A. A. Vandergift, directed the Commanding General, Fifth Amphibious Corps to form new organizations to be known as Bomb Disposal Companies. The organizational construct called for one Bomb Disposal Company to be assigned to each Corps and would contain the same number of platoons as the Corps has Divisions. The Company assumed all bomb disposal missions previously distributed across the tactical units, except those in anti-aircraft battalions and defense battalions, which retained their organic Bomb Disposal personnel. As World War II came to a close, the Bomb Disposal Companies were reduced in size and capacity commensurate with overall Marine Corps reductions.

During the Korean War, when fierce fighting in the frozen Chosin Reservoir required Bomb Disposal Marines to adapt to an entirely new set of harsh conditions, they continued to neutralize and destroy explosive ordnance in support of operations. Later, during combat operations in the jungles of Vietnam, "Bomb Disposal" units, now referred to as "Explosive Ordnance Disposal", continued to support Marine Corps forces against an entirely new array of explosive threats across a complex and rapidly changing battlefield.

In support of Operations Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, Marine Corps EOD forces supported major combat operations throughout the areas of responsibility. In the post 9/11 environment, as the improvised explosive device (IED) became the weapon of choice used against coalition forces, Marine Corps EOD personnel were consistently called into action to conduct procedures within the danger area of the explosive device, as others would take cover. During these extended conflicts, explosive threats elevated EOD activities to being essential in pursuit of national security, directly enabling strategic, operational and tactical military objectives. Unique to Marine Corps EOD is the ability for all EOD units across the total force to conduct exploitation of explosive ordnance, and improvised explosive devices, through inerting and disassembly operations. This advanced skill set has directly enabled intelligence activities and programs to support attribution and targeting efforts.

In 2009, Headquarters Marine Corps reorganized EOD to better support the operating forces, Supporting Establishment and Marine Corps Special Operations Command. This effort better postured EOD to support tactical, operational, and strategic roles and responsibilities in the post 9 /11 environment.

As part of Force Design 2030 efforts, the Marine Corps continued to reorganize EOD, creating a combination of both centralized and distributed formations, within the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF), in order to best support Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations and the Naval Expeditionary Force. During this Force Design era, the Marine Corps created an underwater EOD capability to detect, identify, render safe, recover, exploit, and dispose of underwater explosive hazards in the very shallow water, surf zones and throughout the littorals.

Marine Corps EOD continues to develop and deliver responsive, scalable capabilities that are task organized to support conventional, special operations, and crisis response actions in every clime and place.