MCWP 3-25.5

Direct Air Support Center Handbook

U.S. Marine Corps

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
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FOREWORD

The Marine air command and control system (MACCS) provides the Marine aviation combat element (ACE) commander with the means to exercise control of those organic and nonorganic aviation assets necessary to support Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) operations. Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 3-25, *Control of Aircraft and Missiles*, addresses basic planning considerations for MACCS operations, employment, and interoperability among MACCS and joint service agencies.

MCWP 3-25.5, *Direct Air Support Center Handbook*, complements and expands on the information in the MCWP 3-25 by focusing on the details of direct air support center (DASC) operations and the role the DASC plays in integrated MAGTF operations. Written for MAGTF, naval expeditionary force, and joint force commanders and staffs, MCWP 3-25.5 highlights DASC organization, equipment, planning considerations, operational fundamentals, and employment options.

By investigating these areas, MCWP 3-25.5 provides the requisite information needed by commanders and staffs to understand and evaluate the operational principles and capabilities of various DASC employment options.

This publication is a revision of MCWP 3-25.5 dated 16 September 1996.

Reviewed and approved this date.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDANT
OF THE MARINE CORPS

/s/
EDWARD HANLON, JR.
Lieutenant General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding General
Marine Corps Combat Development Command

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Direct Air Support Center Handbook

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Chapter 1
Fundamentals

The direct air support center (DASC) is the principal Marine air command and control system (MACCS) air control agency responsible for the direction of air operations directly supporting ground forces. It functions in a decentralized mode of operation, but is directly supervised by the Marine tactical air command center (Marine TACC) or the Navy tactical air control center (Navy TACC). During amphibious or expeditionary operations, the DASC is normally the first MACCS agency ashore and usually lands in the same category (i.e., scheduled or on-call wave) as the ground combat element's (GCE's) senior fire support coordination center. The DASC's parent unit is the Marine air support squadron (MASS) of the Marine air control group (MACG).

Role

The DASC processes immediate air support requests; coordinates aircraft employment with other supporting arms; manages terminal control assets supporting GCE and combat service support element forces; and controls assigned aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and itinerant aircraft transiting through DASC controlled airspace. The DASC controls and directs air support activities that affect the GCE commander's focus on close operations and those air missions requiring integration with the ground combat forces (close air support [CAS], assault support, and designated air reconnaissance). The DASC does not normally control aircraft conducting deep air support (DAS) missions as detailed coordination of DAS missions are not required