

**SMALL WARS MANUAL**  
**UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**

**1940**



**CHAPTER XV**  
**WITHDRAWAL**



**RESTRICTED**

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**CHAPTER XV**

**WITHDRAWAL**

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## SECTION I

## INTRODUCTION

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15-1. **General.**—In accordance with national policy, it is to be expected that small wars operations will not be conducted with a view to the permanent acquisition of any foreign territory. A force engaged in small wars operations may expect to be withdrawn from foreign territory as soon as its mission is accomplished. In some instances, changes in national foreign policy may lead to the abrupt termination of small wars operations within a given theater. Since eventual withdrawal is certain, it is a governing factor in troop assignment and field operations.

15-2. **Factors to be considered.**—Voluntary and involuntary withdrawal from contact with a hostile force is a tactical operation, the basic principles of which are applicable to any type of warfare. When a withdrawal from a foreign territory is ordered, the mission will usually be to withdraw, leaving the local government secure in its ability to execute all of its functions satisfactorily. Policies, decisions, plans, and alternate plans should be decided upon well in advance of the time of execution. Local governmental functions should be returned to the control of the local authorities as early in the campaign as conditions warrant, in order that it may not be necessary to turn over all such functions at one time. As soon as an approximate date for withdrawal has been decided, the commander of the United States forces makes recommendations to higher authority relative to the methods to accomplish the withdrawal and requests decisions on all matters pertaining to the operation that he is not empowered to decide himself. Decisions are requested on all matters requiring coordination by a higher authority.

15-3. **Phases of withdrawal.**—For convenience of analysis, withdrawal is divided into two phases; the withdrawal from active military operations and the final withdrawal. The withdrawal from active military operations commences when elements of the United States forces initiate the restoration to the local authorities of any governmental authority or responsibility that has been assumed during

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the course of the campaign. This phase of the operation terminates when the local government is in complete control of the theater of operations. This phase may merge into the final withdrawal phase since the final withdrawal may be proceeding concurrently with the last stages of withdrawal from active military operations. When the United States forces have transferred all governmental authority and responsibility to the local government and no further military operations are contemplated except in case of grave emergency, the final withdrawal phase may be properly considered to have started. This phase ends when all United States forces have been evacuated from the foreign country.

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15-4. **Concentration.**—During the initial military operations of a small war campaign, the commander of the United States forces is usually free to dispose his forces in accordance with the tactical situation, subject to general directives received from higher authority. When the tactical situation permits, troops may be withdrawn from outlying areas and concentrated at points that will enable them to support native forces if such support is required. When order is restored and the proficiency of the native troops or police is such that there is no further need for United States forces in close support, the latter may be concentrated in a locality or localities where they will be available in case of emergency. This concentration may be gradual and extend over a considerable period of time. It may be hastened or retarded by international or local political considerations. Concentration areas are selected only after a careful estimate of the situation. In a withdrawal that is unhampered by combat operations, logistic considerations will usually be a controlling factor in the selection of such areas. The main or final concentration area or areas will normally be at a seaport. When the final concentration area or areas lie inland, a line of communication thereto must be secured.

15-5. **Rights retained.**—As the U. S. forces will be relinquishing all, or at least a part, of their military, territorial, and administration functions, consideration must be given to the matter of rights and powers that are to be retained by the United States forces for reasons of policy or security. The right to use all communication facilities is retained in order that the supply and evacuation of United States forces may be readily carried out until the final withdrawal is completed. Means of communication include the unrestricted use of roads, railroads, waterways, as well as telephone and radio facilities. A definite written agreement with the proper authorities is usually made to cover the retention of rights and privileges pertaining to communication facilities. Military control is retained over areas actually used for military purposes, such as camp sites, airfields, and supply bases. Control is also retained over sufficient adjacent terrain to provide for their defense. The right to operate military planes throughout the theater of operations is also retained. Com-

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plete jurisdiction over all members of the United States forces, even if serving in some capacity with the local government, should be retained. Under no circumstances should members of the United States forces be subject to trial by the courts of the foreign country. The detention of members of the United States forces by native police or military authority should be permitted only in the gravest emergency, and then only for the protection of life and property until the offender can be turned over to United States military or naval authority. In all small-war operations, a definite policy relative to the joint functioning, the extent of duties, and the mutual relations among local police forces, local military forces, and United States forces should be enunciated as early as practicable. Modification of the details of the policies agreed upon are transmitted to all concerned from time to time as the withdrawal progresses.

15-6. **Procedure.**—Normally, the first step in the withdrawal from active military operations will be the concentration of troops at some suitable location or locations in each military territorial subdivision. The final step will probably be the withdrawal of troops from these territorial subdivisions to a final concentration point or points. No area is evacuated until adequate local agencies have assumed the responsibility for the maintenance of law and order. Usually, the initial withdrawal of troops is from the more tranquil or remote areas. If conditions permit, troops are assembled at the most advantageous locations in the territorial subdivisions and are then withdrawn by battalions or regiments. In anticipation of withdrawal, and for other cogent reasons, it is desirable to release the United States forces from all routine constabulary and police duties as early in the campaign as the situation permits. Such procedure does not preclude participation in joint combat operations, since the United States forces continue to act as support for the native military forces. Unforeseen developments in the military situation may necessitate active combat operations by United States forces in order to maintain the morale and prestige of the native military forces that find themselves hard-pressed. Tactical units of the United States forces may be evacuated from the theater of operations prior to the date of final withdrawal. In such cases, due regard should be given to the necessity of retaining certain special units that will be required to function until the last troops are withdrawn. Such special units include air, supply, and communication troops. Administrative plans and the logistics pertaining to the evacuation should be formulated well in advance of the actual troop movement.

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15-7. **General.**—After the withdrawal from active military operations is completed, the United States forces have the status of reserves. Although their active employment is not anticipated, they are held in readiness for active military operations. Their presence is an influential factor in the support of a legally constituted local government. At times, a military commission, legation guard, or other component of the United States forces may remain in the country after the final withdrawal of the major portion of the troops. In such cases, they remain as a result of diplomatic exchanges between the Government of the United States and the country concerned. The final withdrawal is not thereby affected. The plan for the final withdrawal is submitted to higher authority for approval well in advance of the contemplated operation. The final authority empowered to approve, modify, or disapprove all or part of the plan for final withdrawal may be the senior officer present or the Secretary of the State, War, or Navy Department. In some cases, the approval of the Chief Executive of the United States may be required. The necessity for the approval of any or all of these authorities will depend upon the location of the theater of operations, the provisions of the agreement for the withdrawal, or other factors, dependent upon the type of operation. Many important questions requiring action by a higher authority will usually present

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themselves. Those that can be foreseen are ordinarily submitted for decision well in advance of the date of final withdrawal.

15-8. **Plans and orders.**—Initial plans for withdrawal are usually tentative. Due to unforeseen developments in the military situation, they are subject to changes that may be imposed by directives and instructions from higher authority as they become necessary. As a consequence, initial orders for the withdrawal are issued in fragmentary form in order to allow the maximum preparation period. A formal written operation order with appropriate annexes, confirming fragmentary orders and embodying all pertinent instructions for the withdrawal, is issued well in advance of the final troop movement. All agencies and units of the United States forces should be given ample time to provide for every detail pertaining to the withdrawal. The formulation of a comprehensive plan for the final withdrawal is dependent upon securing definite information relative to the date of withdrawal, the ships available for transportation, the schedules of such ships, the naval support available, naval operations affecting the withdrawal, the destination and final organization of the United States forces involved in the withdrawal, and the policies and decisions of higher authority relative to the political and military features of the situation. The necessary orders for the execution of the withdrawal are issued when the military requirements of the situation have been determined and all plans for the final stages of the withdrawal have been perfected in cooperation with the naval forces involved in the evacuation. The administrative details will ordinarily require the issue of voluminous instructions. Only the essential general instructions pertaining to administrative matters are incorporated in the body of the operation order. Other administrative instructions are issued in the form of annexes to the operation order.

15-9. **Executive staff duties.**—Although the duties and responsibilities of the Executive Staff are essentially the same during the withdrawal period as at any other time during a small wars operation, the members of the staff will usually find that their attention is focused on certain definite phases of their duties that assume relatively greater importance during this period. The Chief of Staff may be designated as liaison officer for the purpose of assuring close cooperation with the local agencies of the State Department and other United States naval and military forces involved in the withdrawal. The Executive Staff concerns itself primarily with those decisions and policies announced by the commander of the United States forces

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from time to time during the preparation period. These include the following: the date troops are to be withdrawn from each concentration area; the dates on which major troop units are to be transferred to the continental United States; protective measures to be employed; assembly positions, when designated; routes of movement to be used by each unit; composition and strength of the last unit to clear the country; property and supplies to be returned to the continental United States; the disposition of property and supplies not to be returned to the United States; procedure to be followed during negotiations for final settlement of all claims against the United States as a result of military operations; reserve supplies and ammunition to be held available until the date of departure; date of evacuation of ineffectives, noncombatants, dependents, household effects, and excess baggage; and the ceremonies to be conducted upon the return of forts, barracks, or other property to the custody of the country concerned.

15-10. **First section.**—The first section is charged with the preparation of details relative to the evacuation of the members of the United States forces and their families. Advance information as to tentative assignments to new stations of all personnel is required in order that dependents and personal effects may be properly routed. Since the evacuation of dependents will also require the transportation of the personal effects and household goods, this movement should be executed well in advance of the final troop movement. Arrangement is made for the discontinuance of United States postal service ashore and the transfer of such activities to naval vessels within the theater of operations. Steps are taken to obviate the continued arrival of United States mail for members of the command after the withdrawal has been effected by a notification to all postmasters at forwarding ports in the continental United States of the date on which to discontinue forwarding mail. Plans are agreed upon relative to the relationship of military police with members of the United States forces, and with local military and police forces. Preparations are made for the discontinuance of welfare and post exchange activities. The quantity of welfare and post exchange supplies brought into the country during the preparation for withdrawal is limited to the minimum necessary for current needs. Measures are inaugurated to assure that all financial obligations, individual and organizational, of any kind whatsoever, except those pertaining to the Quartermaster and Paymaster Departments, are liquidated prior to departure. This procedure should be comprehensive, thorough, and timely in order to eliminate the submission of claims by individuals against members

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of the United States forces or against the United States Government after the final withdrawal has been effected. The procurement and retention of releases and signed receipts from firms and individuals having financial dealings with the United States forces or with individual members of the United States forces will eliminate the filing of delayed claims for reimbursement. The first section prepares the administrative annexes with which that section is concerned.

15-11. **Second section.**—The second section continues its normal activities, paying particular attention to the reaction of the populace to the contemplated withdrawal. Steps are taken to uncover the activities of agitators or others who may attempt to interfere with the withdrawal. Appropriate action is taken to see that maps and monographs of the country are up-to-date and as accurate as circumstances will permit. Information thus collected may be of inestimable future value.

15-12. **Third section.**—The third section continues its normal functions. A continuous study of the situation is conducted in order that the section may be prepared to make recommendations for changes in the plan when the circumstances demand. The military situation may change suddenly, and tentative plans must be prepared for the renewal of military operations, should such action become necessary. A thorough study of the ammunition requirements should be made with due regard to the military situation, as well as to the fact that it is desirable to keep such supplies at the minimum necessary for estimated requirements.

15-13. **Fourth section.**—The fourth section is ordinarily confronted with a huge mass of detail prior to and during the withdrawal. The fourth section prepares and distributes administrative instructions and administrative orders to cover the details of the period of withdrawal. Provision is made for the disposition of all supplies, including ammunition, motor transportation, and animals. Steps are taken to dispose of real estate, shelter, and other facilities. In all cases, signed releases are obtained from lessors. Arrangement is made to dispose of all the utilities maintained by the United States forces. In order that the movement of excess supplies may be expedited, a schedule is prepared covering the tonnage to be shipped daily. A continuous study of the situation must be conducted in order that prospective or emergency changes may be met with adequate supply arrangements, and in order to insure the proper disposition of supplies and property. In general, all excess supplies that are to be returned to the continental United States

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are moved to the United States as early as possible. Care must be taken, however, not to reduce the amount of supplies below the estimated requirements. The equipment for all organizations should be reduced to that authorized for expeditionary units in existing tables of organization, in advance of the date of withdrawal. The normal reserve of supplies carried by the force may be used before drawing on the supplies in the base depot or depots. The depots at embarkation points change from receiving and distributing centers to collecting and shipping centers. They should be kept supplied with outbound freight to insure that all available ship space is utilized. Arrangements are made for the transportation of dependents and troops by land and water, including the operation of ports of embarkation. Available government transportation is employed to the fullest possible extent in effecting the withdrawal of both personnel and matériel. Orders are issued relative to highway circulation and the control of traffic. Decision is made as to the priority of the expenditure of funds. The evacuation of hospital patients to the continental United States should be carried out with a view to reducing the number remaining in field hospitals to a minimum as the final day approaches.

**15-14. Special staff duties.**—The disposition of extra equipment and supplies is an important duty of all special staff officers. Definite arrangements are necessary to prevent the loss of supplies as a result of carrying excess stocks. However, a proper amount of supplies must be maintained until the date of withdrawal.

**15-15. Air officer.**—All active planes are maintained in commission as long as practicable, and are flown or shipped to the continental United States. Since adverse flying weather may delay the departure of the planes by air, the date of departure for planes being flown to the continental United States will normally be placed somewhat in advance of the date of departure of the last troop units. Consideration should be given to the fact that supply and maintenance facilities during the period immediately preceding the date of withdrawal will be somewhat limited. Air operations should be reduced to the minimum required by the military situation in order that all planes may be in proper mechanical condition prior to their departure from the country.

**15-16. Engineer officer.**—The engineer officer is in charge of the dismantling of portable construction that is to be returned to the continental United States. The construction of cranes and other weight-lifting machinery may be required to move and load heavy

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material. If existing dock facilities are deficient, preparations are made to reinforce and enlarge such facilities or to construct floating docks if required. The cooperation of naval forces at the port or ports of embarkation will be of considerable assistance.

15-17. **Communications officer.**—The communications officer is responsible for the maintenance of communications until the last headquarters is closed. Plans are made for the disposition of communication equipment. Field radio sets are employed from the time permanent stations are closed until the arrival of naval vessels. Arrangements are made with naval vessels to take over radio communication on a date just prior to the final date of withdrawal. Provision is made for the operation of a message center and messenger service until the headquarters of the United States forces is closed. Telephone service is continued at important stations by means of field sets or permanent installations until the final date of withdrawal.

15-18. **Surgeon.**—Field hospitals are maintained to meet maximum requirements until the naval forces present are able to furnish hospitalization. Patients are evacuated from field hospitals as soon as ships are available. Plans are made for the evacuation of casualties to the embarkation point or points in case of casualties during movement to the latter. Special sanitary measures are adopted, provided it is found necessary to concentrate civilian dependents and additional troops in concentration areas prior to embarkation. Provision is made for the assignment of additional medical personnel to units evacuated on ships that are not equipped as transports.

15-19. **Quartermaster.**—*a.* The quartermaster is charged with the preparation for shipment of equipment and supplies that are to be transported to the continental United States. In all cases, excess supplies are shipped at the earliest practicable date. Household effects and baggage should be shipped prior to the date of final withdrawal. The supplies and equipment are, however, maintained in proper quantity until the date of departure in order to care for current needs. Arrangements are made for the operation of quartermaster utilities, storage, and repair facilities to the capacity required until the naval forces afloat can take over such functions. The transportation of supplies and troops by land and water is a function of the quartermaster. Loading plans are completed in detail in order that the movement of troops and supplies may be carried out without confusion or delay.

*b.* All unserviceable property of every kind should be surveyed and sold in order to avoid congestion and rush in the final days of the

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withdrawal. Unserviceable property should be disposed of, except such items as cooking ranges, mess equipment, and other similar articles that are required for use up to the date of withdrawal. Property that is serviceable, but so worn that it is not worth transportation to the United States, should be surveyed and sold. Careful consideration should be given to all installations of refrigerating equipment and like items with a view to local disposition of heavy items of such nature whose condition does not fully warrant return to the continental United States for future military use. Steel cots, worn mosquito nets, mattresses, sheets, old office furniture, and other articles of this nature should be surveyed and sold.

*c.* Stocks of clothing and subsistence stores, as well as other items of normal supply, should be reduced to a minimum prior to evacuation by making requisition for replacements only when absolutely necessary. Supplies of this nature remaining on hand at the time of withdrawal should be returned to the United States. All weapons, ordnance stores, ammunition, and other classes of stores that are serviceable should be returned to the continental United States.

*d.* Motor transportation and motor transport equipment should be carefully inspected and all that is not considered serviceable for future use should be disposed of by sale. All radio equipment that is serviceable should be returned to the continental United States. Particular care should be taken to see that such equipment is carefully packed under the direct supervision of the communications officer, in order to avoid damage in shipment. Such equipment should be returned complete with all spares and accessories available.

*e.* The withdrawal period will require the appropriation of more funds than would ordinarily be required. Requirements must be foreseen, and arrangements made for the procurement and allotment of the extra funds well in advance of the date of withdrawal.

*f.* All contracts for supplies are canceled, final payment is made, and receipts obtained. Proper releases are obtained from lessors of all property in order to avoid subsequent claims for damage. Buildings belonging to the United States forces located on land belonging to the foreign government and those constructed on leased land should be sold.

