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**FM 55-501**

**MARINE CREWMAN'S HANDBOOK**

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**HEADQUARTERS,  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**

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# MARINE CREWMAN'S HANDBOOK

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## Preface

The US Army watercraft fleet is made up of all types of vessels, including oceangoing vessels, tugs, landing craft, barges, and amphibians. Although all of these vessels operate on water, their missions are different. The watercraft operator must have the skills and knowledge to perform the tasks required on any of these vessels.

This FM is for the 88K watercraft operator, skill levels 1 through 4. It will provide the subject matter that relates directly to the common technical tasks listed in STP 55-88K14-SM-TG.

The US Army's environmental strategy into the 21st century defines the Army's leadership commitment and philosophy for meeting present and future environmental challenges. It provides a framework to ensure that environmental stewardship ethic governs all Army activities. The Army's environmental vision is to be a national leader in environmental and natural resource stewardship for present and future generations, as an integral part of all Army missions. The Army's environmental vision statement communicates the Army's commitment to the environment.

The proponent of this publication is HQ TRADOC. Send comments and recommendations on DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) directly to Commander, US Army Combined Arms Support Command, ATTN: ATCL-AT, 401 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Suite 227, Fort Lee, Virginia 23801-1511.

Unless this publication states otherwise, masculine nouns and pronouns do not refer exclusively to men.

## Chapter 1

# Introduction to Army Watercraft

Army watercraft are used in the following operations: harbor, coastal, interisland, and LOTS. They are also used for other operations such as ocean towing and security patrols. This chapter addresses these operations and the categories of watercraft.

### WATERCRAFT OPERATIONS

1-1. US Army watercraft play a major role in projecting and sustaining combat forces. From established ports to LOTS operations, Army watercraft provides a flexible means of moving troops and supplies. Through prepositioning and self deployable vessels, the Army's fleet of diverse watercraft are capable of playing a dynamic part in the Army Strategic Mobility Program.

### MISSION

1-2. The mission of Army watercraft is to support the Army's RSOI movement plan. Army watercraft provide the vital link between the offshore arrival of combat power, loaded aboard strategic sealift ships, and placing that power ashore in a ready-to-fight configuration. The Army watercraft fleet must be prepared to do this mission anywhere in the world. This is accomplished by the following means:

- Transport of personnel and cargo between ship and shore and on inland waterways.
- Floating equipment support for terminal operations within a fixed-port or unimproved port facility complex.
- During riverine operations.
- Lighterage for cargo and personnel from ships lying offshore to transfer-segregation areas beyond the beach lines in LOTS operations.

### HARBOR OPERATIONS

1-3. This includes the movement of cargo and personnel within a harbor and the protected waters in the vicinity of the harbor. Tugs, barges, and floating cranes discharge and transfer cargo; small craft provide ferrying service; and picket boats conduct security patrols. Tugs are used for providing berthing service for oceangoing vessels and for fire fighting in the port area.