

Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment



Concept Development

- **Guidance**

- Navy-Marine Corps Warfighter Talks 10 June 2015.
- The “littoral” title was specifically chosen to frame the content in a manner that is much broader than just amphibious operations.
- Permissive environments are increasingly unlikely.
- The CNO and CMC endorsed the consensus position to explore a more integrated application of Navy and Marine Corps capabilities in operations on and from the sea.
- This included considering new, scalable models of command and control unconstrained by current force constructs and terminology.

- **Execution**

- August 2015 PLANORD
- Dec 15 Center for Naval Analyses game
- Feb 16 Naval Services Game
- Literature Review: 60+ titles
 - ***Fleet Tactics and Coastal Combat***, Captain Wayne Hughes, USN(Ret), Professor Emeritus, Naval Postgraduate School. (V167.H84 2000)
 - ***On Littoral Warfare*** by Dr. Milan Vego, Naval War College
<https://www.usnwc.edu/getattachment/fe330f71-6933-457b-890d-a19726bb508c/On-Littoral-Warfare.aspx>

Purpose of the LOCE Concept

- **Describe “naval operations in the littoral environment in light of emerging threats” in order to provide a unified framework for Navy-Marine Corps innovation.**
 - The “ideas put forth in this concept require further testing and refinement through detailed wargaming, experimentation, and exercises...Of particular importance, practical application of the concept during live exercises will allow naval forces to identify the inevitable seams and capability limitations that must be resolved.”
 - “Following this rigorous testing and refinement process, the ideas determined to have merit will generate changes to...DOTMLPF-P and influence operational planning and execution of integrated Navy and Marine Corps operations on and from the sea.”

Scope

- **Concept derived from an assessment and comparison of friendly and potential adversary capabilities in the 2020-2025 timeframe.**
- **Informed by wargames that spanned a range of naval operations that extends from:**
 - Forward postured formations conducting crisis response in uncertain environments to...
 - Larger formations established to conduct significant contingencies in openly hostile environments.
- **While wargames informing the concept addressed a limited range of naval operations, ideas within the concept itself have applicability to major combat operations.**
- **Content focused on fleet commander/JFMCC to task group level.**

Background

- **The Littoral Battlespace**

- The maritime domain consists of the “oceans, seas, bays, estuaries, islands, coastal areas, and the airspace above these, including the littorals.”
- The littoral is comprised of two segments:
 - *Seaward*: that area from the open ocean to the shore that must be controlled to support operations ashore.
 - *Landward* portion is the area inland from the shore that can be supported and defended directly from the sea.
- Today, the range of modern sensors and weapons extends hundreds of miles both seaward and landward, blurring the distinction between operations at sea and on land and necessitating an operational approach that treats the littorals as a singular, integrated battlespace.

- **The Need for a Paradigm Shift**

- During the immediate post-Cold War era, the United States enjoyed the luxury of presumptive maritime superiority.
- That era is fading.
- The Navy and Marine Corps need to reinvigorate sea control capabilities.

Military Problem

- **“Given advances in adversary sensor and weapon capability and capacity, as well as geographic considerations and global commitments, fleet commanders/JFMCC may be increasingly challenged to assemble the required capabilities, capacities, span of control, or optimal formations to effectively respond to crises, address larger contingencies, and deter aggression in contested littorals.”**

Central Idea

- **The Navy and Marine Corps will refine how we organize, train, and equip forces in order to provide the fleet commanders/JFMCC the ability to operate in all five dimensions of the littorals for the duration required.**
 - seaward (both surface and subsurface);
 - landward (both surface and subterranean);
 - the airspace above;
 - cyberspace; and
 - the electromagnetic spectrum.

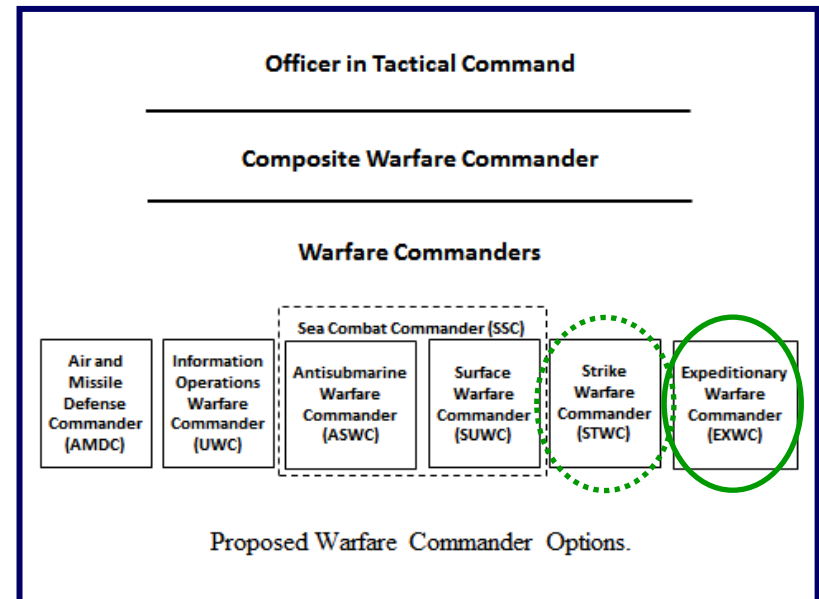
Ensure the fleet commanders/JFMCC have the ability to conduct integrated operations in all dimensions of a seamless maritime domain.

- **Give the fleet commanders/JFMCC a wider range of integrated, Navy-Marine Corps force options and additional sensor and weapons capacity.**
 - Unity of command
 - Networked, sea-based and land-based capabilities
 - Common doctrine and operating principles

Create a modular, scalable, and integrated naval network of sea-based and land-based sensors, shooters, and sustainers that provides the capabilities, capacities, and persistent yet mobile forward presence necessary to effectively respond to crises, address larger contingencies, and deter aggression in contested littorals.

Supporting Ideas: Staff & Doctrinal Integration

- **Operational Level: “Blue/Green” Fleet / JFMCC staffs**
- **Tactical Level: Composite Warfare Commander**
 - Marine participation raised during 2015 Navy-Marine Corps Warfighter Talks.
 - Literature review:
 - Col Bill Rakow, “MAGTF Operations With the Fleet in the Year 2000.” MC Gazette, (Jul 1990)
 - Col Chip Gregson, “Keeping Up With Navy Doctrine.” MC Gazette, (December 1990)
 - Maj Tom Waldhauser, “Composite Warfare/Amphibious Warfare Doctrine Dilemma.” MC Gazette, (Nov 1992)
 - Insights from Expeditionary Warrior 2015 and Naval Services Games 2016 & 2017
 - LOCE proposes experimentation with an **Expeditionary Warfare Commander (EXWC)**
 - MAGTF commander as EXWC
 - In some situations, an officer from Navy Expeditionary Combat Command might be EXWC
 - MAGTF commander might also serve as the Strike Warfare Commander if he has preponderance of aviation



Supporting Idea: Littoral Combat Group (LCG)

- **Command Element**

- Navy Flag Command
- Integrated blue/green staff

- **Littoral sea combat capabilities**

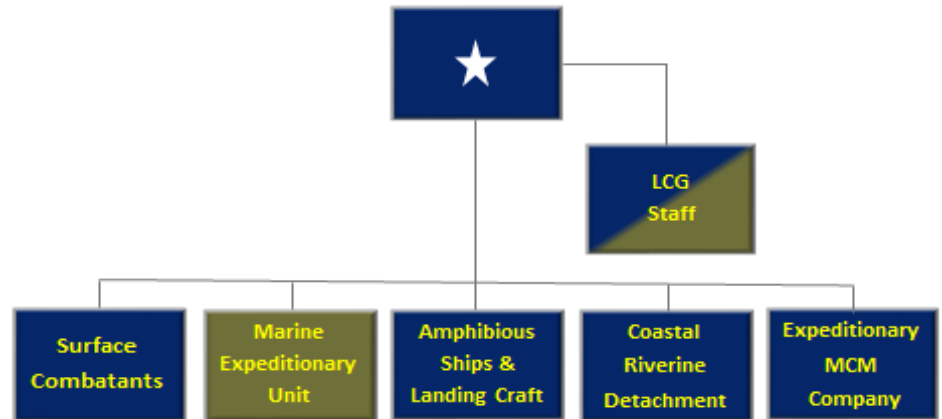
- ASW and SUW
- Some number of surface combatants TBD

- **Expeditionary MCM capabilities**

- **Air and Missile Defense**

- **Littoral Raid Forces**

- Need for long-range surface maneuver capability for raids and amphibious advanced force operations
- Use existing NECC boats as surrogates for experimentation



Notional Example of a Littoral Combat Group.

Supporting Idea: Increase Capacity

- **Distributed Lethality (DL)**
 - SURFOR initiative: “if it floats, if fights”
 - Mitigate adversary sensor and missile capacity
 - Dispersed offensive formations
 - Increase battlespace complexity
- **Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO)**
 - Employ mobile, low-signature capabilities from a series of landward / shallow water locations
 - Expand capacity persistently postured forward to improve resiliency and complicate adversary targeting
 - ISR, coastal defense cruise missiles, anti-air missiles, and forward arming and refueling points to support the fleet’s sea control fight
 - Control key maritime terrain/conduct sea denial operations
 - Temporary fleet logistic nodes (Ex: forward VLS reloads)
- **Screening / Scouting Surface Forces**
 - Explore establishing in key operating areas via EABO or afloat staging bases
 - Reduce the risk of operations in complex archipelagoes and confined and shallow waters
 - Employ in concert with EABO and DL to complicate adversary targeting and change missile ratios

Refining How We Will Fight

- **Force on Force Littoral Exercises**

“The fleet problems offered invaluable learning opportunities for naval officers...Much of their behavior in actual combat was conditioned by experiences gained from nearly two decades of practice.”

—Captain Craig C. Felker, USN, *Testing American Seapower*, 2007

“If the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton, the Japanese bases in the Pacific were captured on the beaches of the Caribbean.”

—Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith, USMC, *Coral and Brass*, 1949

“Littoral War, when wisely prepared and discretely conducted, is a terrible Sort of War. Happy for that People who are Sovereigns enough of the Sea to put it in Execution!”

—Thomas More Molyneux, 1759



Questions?