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Front cover photo credit: Cpl Ricardo Hurtado, USMC
Marines with Company F, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines (2/7), prepare to escort civilian personnel aboard MV-22B Ospreys during a tactical non-combatant evacuation training mission at the Mountain Warfare Training Center in Bridgeport, CA, 13 August 2014. The evacuation drill was conducted by 2/7 as part of Large Scale Exercise 2014.
During August-September 2014, MCCLL Program Analysts (PA) from Headquarters (HQ), 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), 1st Marine Division (MarDiv), 1st Marine Logistics Group (MLG) and 3d Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) conducted a lessons learned collection at Marine Corps Base (MCB) Camp Pendleton, CA; Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Miramar, CA; and Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) Twentynine Palms, CA; in order to document the lessons and observations related to the organization, training, equipping, and operations of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) command element (CE), its major subordinate elements (MSE) and other assigned units in planning and conducting Large Scale Exercise 2014 (LSE-14) from 8-14 August 2014.

LSE-14 was a service sponsored, MAGTF Staff Training Program (MSTP) assessed, MAGTF exercise focused at the MEB-level, that incorporated a multi-tiered, total force training audience including the MEB CE, ground combat element (GCE), aviation combat element (ACE) and logistics combat element (LCE). The purpose of the exercise was to demonstrate the MAGTF’s ability to conduct combined arms with joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational (JIIM) mission partners, and featured combined arms live fire in an integrated live, virtual and constructive (LVC) training environment. Complexity was added to the exercise design by having participating units distributed across several southwest exercise sites, but centered on Twentynine Palms, CA.

First MEB and the 5 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group (CMBG) combat operations centers (COCs) were fully manned during the daily ‘game window’ of 0700 to 2100, during which exercise control injected scenario events and assessed performance. Ongoing constructive actions occurring within the exercise game window continued to event completion regardless of the time of day. Conversely, command and control (C2) systems and the exercise simulation ran 24 hour operations throughout LSE. Additionally, exercise forces had the option to operate outside the 14 hour game window to meet unit training goals.
The G-3 for Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) remarked that “Large Scale Exercise 2014 was a phenomenal step forward in the process of putting together a live, virtual, constructive exercise with a training audience at the brigade-level... our ability to put together a group as diverse as MSTP, MCTOG, MCLOG, TTECG, and MAWTS-1 was great.”

Key Points

Prior to the commencement of LSE-14, 1st MEB’s major subordinate elements (MSE) participated in multiple training evolutions to prepare the staffs to execute functional requirements. Key events included: three command post exercises (CPX); planning exercise; 1st MEB operational planning team (OPT) exercise; rehearsal of concept (ROC) drill to confirm plans; two MEB internal information flow exercises and several communications exercises (COMMEX) to validate communications plans and refine equipment configuration.

The four main exercise events were:

- Operational Planning Exercise (PLANEX)—a venue for the 1st MEB and 5 CMBG to conduct exercise specific integrated operational planning based on the exercise scenario;
- Battle Staff Training (BST)—LSE-14 related training packages for 1st MEB and its major subordinate elements;
- Final Exercise (FINEX)—a seven-day field training exercise designed to provide a comprehensive training environment for the entire exercise force;
- Facilitated After Action Review (FAAR)—immediate formal feedback to 1st MEB (primary training audience) to enhance and reinforce the impact of the training.

Areas for improvement in future exercises include the integration of MAGTF Logistics Support Systems (MLS2), Transportation Capacity Planning Tool (TCPT), and other elements of Global Combat Support System-Marine Corps (GCSS-MC) into exercise play.

To function as a MEB ACE, a Marine aircraft group (MAG) headquarters requires augmentation from the Marine air control group (MACG), the Marine aviation logistics squadron (MALS) and other Marine aircraft wing (MAW) support units that provide capabilities required for aviation command and control (C2).

The content of interviews, questionnaires, and source documents made recommendations to associated doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF) pillars. The report contains detailed discussions of the following recommendations:

- MAG headquarters serving as a MEB ACE.
- Manning documents for each of the MEB’s MSEs.
- Computer, communication and network connectivity.
- Communication with coalition partners.
- Simulator systems authority and permissions.
Other Observations and Lessons

Regarding an embedded MEB staff versus a standalone MEB staff, the Commanding General (CG), 1st MEB stated; “I arrived here at the MEB wondering how an embedded MEB staff would work. There are some on one side that say an embedded MEB is good because you’re in a perfect position as the deputy CG of the MEF to never be in conflict with yourself; you can make sure that the MEB is resourced the way you want it. That sounds good, however I don’t think in practicality it works out real well. You need a cell or a mini-staff whose first priority is the MEB not the MEF. The challenge is which master are they going to serve and you tend to serve the MEF first, not the MEB... but you need something that can accommodate most of the staff functions and can keep the MEB moving forward. So ideally, an element from each staff section needs to be in there.”

One recommendation to improve MEB-level LSEs in the future was to identify a dedicated MEB staff 12-18 months prior to exercise start. The director of TTECG said that the MEB staff had multiple other priorities throughout the planning process prior to the exercise.

A summary of MSTP input into MAGTFTC's Final Exercise Report reads:

“Throughout the course of LSE-14, 1st MEB and its staff, to include the MSEs, were forward-leaning, aggressive in their preparation, and totally focused on their roles, while at the same time dealing with the systematic problems associated with the integration and planning as a MAGTF. Steady growth and development were noted across all staff activities, processes, and warfighting functional areas. The methodical CPXs were properly resourced with personnel and effort to improve not only the setup of the command post and improving connectivity of the staff, but also understanding the weak areas in the tactical plan and allowing sufficient time to adjust it; the latter was accomplished by running a war game in MAGTF Tactical Warfare Simulation (MTWS), against a thinking OPFOR.”

MSTP comments included the recommendation that a MAG headquarters serving as a MEB ACE requires battle staff training along with its MACG, MALS, and other augmentation, in order to perform ACE C2 functions. Additionally, manning documents for each of the MEB’s MSEs should be reviewed and refined for large scale exercises, to ensure that required augmentation is identified.

A more in-depth discussion and analysis of the aforementioned and other topics can be found in the detailed MCCLL report.
The 1st Battalion, 2d Marines (1/2) deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) 14.2 from April through October 2014. Prior to deployment the battalion successfully completed Integrated Training Exercise (ITX) 14-2 and a pre-deployment site survey (PDSS). The relief-in-place (RIP) and transfer of authority (TOA) with 1st Battalion, 9th Marines (reinforced) occurred in May 2014.

The battalion provided security at the Regional Corps Battle School while controlling the Camp Leatherneck main entry point (MEP), and conducted security operations from Camp Leatherneck in the battalion’s eastern area of operations (AO). One company was based out of Patrol Base (PB) Boldak and was responsible for security operations in the battalion’s southern AO. Another company was tasked with conducting company operations in the battalion security areas (BSAs).

During the first 100 days of the deployment, the battalion conducted operations in their battlespace and completed a successful RIP with the 23rd Georgian Light Infantry Battalion (GLIB) and a private security company for full control of the Camp Leatherneck perimeter.

Specific topics addressed in the AAR include:

- “Patrol tracker.” Platoons should maintain a patrol tracker for all patrols and support provided. Include all relevant details that could be used for future operations.
- Command and control of aviation assets while conducting a tactical withdrawal. The tactical withdrawal mission demanded collaboration between the battalion tactical air control party (TACP), the air support element (ASE), the Marine air traffic control mobile team (MMT), and the air support liaison team (ASLT). The combined efforts of these agencies supported the integration of close air support (CAS), assault support, and command and control aircraft operating as part of a single cohesive evolution.
- Unity of command. Several different military and civilian agencies, often with competing interests and tasks, worked at the MEP. It was critical for each mission assigned, for there to be one chain of command ultimately responsible for everything underlying the mission. The AAR recommends ensuring clear guidance, specific assigned tasks, and support relationships, regardless of a subordinate unit’s parent unit.
- Company level intelligence cell (CLIC) task organization. Each rifle company had one intelligence section CLIC chief. Due to the large number of tasks and products, and high operations tempo, additional manpower is recommended. The AAR states that during stability operations, CLIC task organization should include additional cross-trained 03XX Marines to assist the CLIC chief.

In the final 100 days of the battalion’s deployment, 1/2 completed a RIP with 1st Marines Headquarters for overall responsibility of the Bastion Leatherneck complex, base defense, and control of the combined joint operations center, a multi national base defense operations center. The battalion retrograded equipment and personnel from the last USMC patrol base, PB Boldak, while continuing to secure the base from external, internal, and perimeter threats. Finally, the battalion conducted a successful RIP/TOA with the 215 Corps of the Afghanistan National Army for control of Camp Leatherneck and Bastion Airfield on 27 October 2014, signaling the end of USMC infantry combat operations in Helmand Province.
Marines and Sailors from 3d Marine Expeditionary Brigade (3d MEB), along with Combined Task Force 76 (CTF-76), as well as Philippine Sailors and Marines participated in Amphibious Landing Exercise 2015 (PHIBLEX 15) in the Republic of the Philippines during October 2014. PHIBLEX is an annual, bilateral training exercise conducted by the Armed Forces of the Philippines, U.S. Marines and Navy to strengthen interoperability across a range of capabilities to include disaster relief and contingency operations. Service members from both countries met for three weeks to conduct a command post exercise; multiple field training exercises, to include small arms and artillery live fire training, amphibious operations, ship-to-shore movement, combined arms training; and civil-military operations, including various humanitarian and civic assistance projects. This AAR covers the combined aspects of the exercise from the 3d MEB perspective.

PHIBLEX 15 was designed to improve interoperability, increase readiness and enhance the ability to respond to natural disasters or other regional contingencies. This year’s exercise built upon the longstanding, vibrant professional and personal relationships between Philippine and U.S. Marines and Sailors. Bilateral Philippine and U.S. military training opportunities such as PHIBLEX 15 sustain a strong foundation of interoperability and strengthen working relationships across the range of military operations, from disaster relief, to complex expeditionary operations.

During the exercise, Philippine and U.S. Marines conducted an amphibious mechanized assault. A section of U.S. Marine amphibious assault vehicles departed from the USS Germantown (LSD-42) to establish a beachhead. Once ashore, Philippine Marines disembarked the AAVs and maneuvered toward a simulated objective. Infantry forces from 3d Battalion, 5th Marines (3/5), 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (31st MEU), 3d MEB conducted the assault. The exercise included AV-8B Harrier jets from Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 542 providing simulated close air support. U.S. and Philippine Marines had 12 hours to plan and complete the assault. The Marines and partner nations utilized the Rapid Response Planning Process (R2P2) to prepare for the amphibious operation.

This is the 31st iteration of PHIBLEX, with the goal of building relationships and a stronger bond between
American and Philippine militaries. Specific areas addressed in the AAR include continued integration between CTF-76 and 3d MEB to ensure a mature, habitual supported/supporting naval integration relationship at the MEB/expeditionary strike group (ESG) level, improving the ability to integrate and gain joint operational access in an anti access/area denial (A2/AD) environment, better use of the sea as maneuver space, and set the conditions for combined forcible entry (or other amphibious operations) in support of U.S. Pacific Command operational requirements.

The AAR addresses the Philippine Marine Corps (PMC) amphibious capability development, with the Marine Corps supporting development through education at Expeditionary Warfare School (EWS), and the development of a formal, structured program of instruction at the battalion and brigade level. Recommendations include continuance of the Philippines Marine Enhancement Program (PMEP) that supports the PMC Commandant’s vision, and an increase in subject matter expert exchanges (SMEE) that support PMC capability planning guidance objectives.

The USNS Sacagawea (T-AKE-2) was the primary sustainment platform for PHIBLEX 15. Throughout the exercise, the T-AKE provided 80% of all rations for exercise forces; class II to support emerging requirements; fuel for rotary wing aircraft during sustainment missions; and emerging maintenance requirements for packaged petroleum, oil, and lubricants (POL). The AAR provides recommendations for integrating the T-AKE in future amphibious exercises and deployed operations. The USNS Sacagawea met all expectations and remains a valuable and reliable sustainment platform. However, the AAR suggests that minor modifications would significantly improve the support capability of the ship.

The PHIBLEX provided the battalion commander, 3/5, the opportunity to command and control a special purpose Marine air ground task force (SPMAGTF). PHIBLEX 15 also provided a unique opportunity for the battalion staff to operate as a major subordinate command level staff. Staff officers were hands-on across each training site, which enhanced effective real-time problem solving. The AAR recommends that the battalion continue seeking future staff training opportunities.
This after action report documents the Marine Corps Georgia Training Team (GTT) Rotation (ROTO) 14, in support of Marine Forces Europe and Africa’s (MFE/A) Georgia Deployment Program (GDP). The GTT’s six month deployment ended in October 2014. GTT 14’s mission was to advise and assist Georgia’s Krtsanisi National Training Center (KNTC) staff to prepare the Georgian 51st Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) for combat operations, and continue building Georgian military capacity to train and evaluate Georgian military forces. The Georgia Deployment Program recently reached a turning point; this recent Marine Corps rotation, GTT-14, trained a Georgian battalion to serve alongside a U.S. Army battalion rather than a Marine Corps unit. The Georgian battalion deployed as the Marine Corps combat mission was drawing to a close.

GTT 14 was primarily sourced from Marine Corps Forces Reserve (MFR), with the preponderance of the Marines coming from 4th Marine Division. The team also included active duty augments from the Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group (MCSCG) and II MEF. Finally, during the in-country unit training phase of the deployment, the Georgia Liaison Team (GLT), sourced from 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), was attached to the GTT and embedded within the 51st LIB prior to deploying to Afghanistan. The GTT/GLT was based at the Georgian Army facility, commonly referred to as the “Krtsanisi training area” (KTA).

The primary focus of the Georgia Deployment Program (GDP) is to train Georgian infantry battalions to deploy in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). The GTT accomplishes the task of training the infantry battalions by partnering directly with the KNTC staff and aiding their implementation of a training plan. The training plan was fast-paced, with little preparatory time. Georgian instructors received “train the trainer” practical application, while exercises were conducted, with emphasis on preparations for combat operations.

The GTT staff was engaged in staff actions that supported the GTT as well as actions that supported the training of the 51st LIB. Activities included synchronization and coordination for: meetings, letters of instruction, confirmation briefs, orders, planning conferences, and contingency planning. Joint U.S. and Georgian staff interaction continued on a regular basis to maintain the training schedule. KNTC continues to improve in their capacity to train and provide qualified units to deploy in support of NATO Missions. A natural step in their progression is an ability to conduct their own battalion level mission rehearsal exercise (MRE) in Georgia. This capacity has slowly been building through a deliberate approach, with the conduct of the battalion level field exercise (FEX) in Georgia and the mission rehearsal exercises (MRX) in Germany.

ROTO 13 was originally scheduled to be the “last” GDP International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) rotation. The force generation requirement for ROTO 14, and subsequent sourcing timelines, were compressed as compared to other rotations. ROTO 14 had 60 days from receipt of mission to mobilization. This could not have been accomplished without the support of many organizations, to include: GDP program management section at MFE/A, 4th Marine Division, Office of Defense Cooperation (Georgia), U.S. Embassy (Tbilisi) Defense Attaché Office, previous GDP-ISAF rotations, 23d Marines and notably, Inspector-Instructor staff, 2d Bn, 24th Marines. The end result of the efforts of all involved was a Georgian infantry battalion that was fully trained for their Afghanistan deployment.

Photo credit: Spc Brian Chaney
Georgian soldiers from the 51st Light Infantry Battalion provide security during a mission rehearsal exercise, 7 August 2014. Georgian soldiers train alongside U.S. Marine Corps mentors before deploying.
From September through December 2014, Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 467 (HMLA-467) executed a retrograde from combat operations in Afghanistan that included movement of squadron tactical aircraft, personnel, and equipment via strategic airlift (STRATLIFT) to Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Cherry Point and MCAS New River, NC. Additional aircraft and personnel were flown into MCAS New River via C-17 Globemaster III transport aircraft as part of the retrograde. The Commanding General (CG), 2d Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) requested a deviation from established procedures to utilize MCAS New River as the aerial point of embarkation (APOE).

The retrograde of squadron aircraft was successfully executed without significant problems, delays or incidents. However, the undertaking highlighted numerous tradeoffs and risks involved in utilizing MCAS New River, as opposed to Cherry Point, that are addressed in the AAR from the perspectives of the key stakeholders. Marine Wing Support Squadron 272 (MWSS-272), Marine Aircraft Group 26 (MAG-26), at MCAS New River was tasked to provide personnel, transportation and material handling equipment in support of the offload. MWSS-272 reported that this tasking was a routine exercise of their organic capabilities and that no significant lessons learned were yielded.

The use of MCAS New River as an APOE in this retrograde saved HMLA-467 and MAG-29 significant time and man-hours, and facilitated restoration of the squadron to its full operational readiness and capabilities more rapidly than if the entire retrograde had been conducted at MCAS Cherry Point. However, this savings should be viewed through the lens of the operational and institutional risks involved, as identified in the AAR, from the strategic mobility community within II MEF.

The New River offload allowed the squadron and MAG to maintain an effective and expeditious span of control over re-deployment activities. Conversely, executing retrograde operations from an alternate APOE (MCAS New River) without resident equipment, facilities and trained crews involves a level of risk that is difficult to predict and problematic to mitigate when load configuration changes, or an incident occurs. The AAR points out that STRATLIFT offload is acceptable and feasible at the MCAS New River destination for HMLA squadrons and favorable consideration should be given to such operations in the future.
The Most Popular Downloads
FROM THE MCCL WEBSITE

Many of the documents highlighted in MCCLL monthly newsletters and weekly new data rollups are downloaded every month from the MCCLL NIPR and SIPR websites. These include MCCLL reports, Marine Corps unit AARs, recent doctrinal publications, briefings on a wide range of topics, and many other source documents that articulate valuable lessons learned. In an effort to inform readers concerning the products that other Marines, civilian Marines, and contractors have found of interest, we include in each monthly newsletter a list of documents that have been accessed and downloaded from the MCCLL website and central data repository most often during the previous month.

Additionally, during the month of January 2015, 165 new members registered on the MCCLL website.

L2 EXTERNAL LINKS

The below link can be used to access additional resources:

EXTERNAL LINKS

This web page includes both public website and common access card (CAC) enabled links to lessons learned and other organizations within the Department of Defense and other U.S. government agencies.

Top Ten Downloads from the MCCLL Website, December 2014 to January 2015

2. MCCLL Monthly Newsletters (December 2014)
3. HQMC PP&O Current Operations Brief (11 December 2014)
4. I Marine Expeditionary Force: SPMAGTF-CENT First 100 Days AAR
5. MARFORPAC: Exercise Rim of the Pacific 2014 (RIMPAC 14) CFLCC AAR
6. VMM-162: SPMAGTF-CR AAR
7. CNA: Future MEU ACE Study Brief
8. 3d Marine Division: Ulchi Freedom Guardian (UFG) 2014 AAR
9. SPMAGTF-CR AF 14.2: First 100 Days AAR
10. 1st ANGLICO: Exercise Black Alligator 2014 AAR

Photo credit: Cpl John Martinez
The Commanding Officer, Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 2d Marines, provides guidance and explains his expectations and command philosophy to Marines aboard Camp Leatherneck in Helmand province, Afghanistan.
Seabasing: Annual Report For Program Objective Memorandum 2017
PUBLISHED BY DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR COMBAT DEVELOPMENT & INTEGRATION, (SEABASING INTEGRATION DIVISION)
23 DECEMBER 2014 (EXCERPT)

Message from the Deputy Commandant for Combat Development & Integration

Seabasing, a national capability integrated with joint and coalition forces and inter-agency partners, enables naval forces to fully exploit the sea’s maneuver space and generate global force power projection. Seabasing capabilities provide a naval expeditionary framework within which operational commanders can capitalize on seabasing’s inherent flexibility in executing a wide array of options to extend seapower ashore across the range of military operations. Seabasing provides the means to generate Marine Corps forward presence and facilitates rapid response to emerging crises without the need to establish bases ashore. An effective Navy and Marine Corps Seabasing capabilities development process delivers the right force in the right place at the right time.

The Seabasing Annual Report for Program Objective Memorandum 2017 (POM FY17) provides an update to the key warfighting capabilities and programs required for the Navy-Marine Corps team to maintain our unmatched amphibious and expeditionary expertise. In the past year we published our capstone concept, Expeditionary Force 21. It provides the vision and direction the Marine Corps will pursue over the next ten years. It provides guidance for how the Marine Corps, as an integral part of the larger naval and joint force, will be postured, organized, trained and equipped.

In the past twelve months the Navy has joined two new amphibious warfare ships to the battle force inventory. As well, the integration of the Mobile Landing Platform (MLP) into the Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF) has begun, and construction of the Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) replacement via the Ship-to-Shore Connector (SSC) program is to begin this year. This is tremendous progress across multiple fronts, and we will continue to work with our Navy counterparts to further advance our naval expeditionary warfighting capabilities.

K.J. Glueck, Jr.

Seabasing is defined as the deployment, assembly, command, projection, sustainment, reconstitution and reemployment of joint power from the sea without reliance on land bases within the operational area. Seabasing incorporates the traditional naval missions of sea control, assuring access, and power projection with an increased emphasis on maneuver from the sea.

The Seabasing Annual Report for POM FY17 is published to provide Navy and Marine Corps capability developers, program managers, operational planners, and warfighters an update of key programs managed and monitored by Seabasing Integration Division, Combat Development and Integration, Headquarters, United States Marine Corps (SID, CD&I). The Annual Report also provides recommendations for materiel solutions that will enhance the ability of an afloat Marine air ground task force (MAGTF) to effectively operate in the seabase and to extend naval power ashore through the conduct of naval expeditionary operations.

There will be challenges and opportunities in congested and diverse areas where the sea and land

Photo credit: MC2 Corey Truax
(POM FY17 report cover photo) An AV-8B Harrier conducts a vertical landing aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Essex (LHD 2).
merge - the littorals. The ability to operate simultaneously and seamlessly on the seas, ashore, in the air, in space, and in cyberspace while operating across the range of military operations (ROMO) is a keystone of the Navy/Marine Corps team. Naval expeditionary forces (MAGTFs and Navy ships), enable us to move seamlessly through these domains, providing “the ability to respond to crisis” and “assure littoral access.” Given this emphasis, our focus ranges from security cooperation to amphibious forcible entry with a special emphasis on crisis response. Fulfilling this role requires a forward posture with the right mix of capabilities to deploy, employ and sustain our forces in austere environments.

Expeditionary Force 21 is designed to focus the Marine Corps on meeting the nation’s crisis response needs by having readily deployable, employable, and sustainable power projection forces tailored to meet the geographic combatant commander’s (GCC) operational needs, ranging from steady-state activities to forcible entry.

The United States is a maritime nation, and we view ships as a critical component of our deployment and employment strategy. The combatant commander demand for amphibious warfare ships far exceeds available inventory. Our inventory demand is based on the requirement to support the assault echelons of two Marine expeditionary brigades (MEB) and our obligation to provide Marine expeditionary units (MEU) and special purpose Marine air ground task forces (SPMAGTF) for enduring forward presence and capable crisis response.

MEBs can deploy by amphibious warfare ships, and those ships also provide an operational platform from which the MEBs can be employed. They are capable of going into harm’s way and serve as a cornerstone of America’s ability to project expeditionary forces and respond to a wide range of crises. The Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps have determined the force structure and number of amphibious warfare ships to support the deployment and employment of two MEBs simultaneously. Understanding this requirement in light of fiscal constraints faced by the nation, the Department of the Navy has agreed to sustain a minimum level of amphibious warfare ships. The reduced threshold level ship force accepts risk in the arrival of combat support and combat service support elements of the MEB but has been adjudged to be adequate in meeting the needs of the naval force within today’s fiscal limitations.

A second method of deployment is our maritime prepositioning force (MPF) which combines the speed of strategic airlift with the high embarkation capacity and endurance of strategic sealift. We have two maritime prepositioning ship squadrons (MPSRONs), each designed to facilitate the deployment of one MEB. Essential combat equipment and supplies are loaded on each MPSRON to initiate and sustain MEB operations for up to 30 days. With

Photo credit: Sgt Sarah Fiocco
Amphibious assault vehicles with 3d Assault Amphibian Battalion, 1st Marine Division, line the deck of the USNS Montford Point (MLP-1) as a landing craft air cushion offloads more AAVs during seabasing capability testing 9 July 2014.

Photo credit: Sgt Sarah Fiocco
A landing craft air cushion with Assault Craft Unit 5, carries two amphibious assault vehicles to the USNS Montford Point MLP during seabasing capability testing off the coast of California, 9 July 2014.
the introduction of the seabasing enabling module (LMSR, MLP, T-AKE) each MPRSON will have enhanced capability to close, assemble, employ, sustain, and reconstitute (CAESR) forces from the seabase.

A critical enabler for any seabased force is connectors. They transport personnel, equipment and supplies in the amphibious area of operations and enable maneuver. The Marine Corps has modernized our aerial connectors with the MV-22 and the CH-53K. Operational reach afforded by these two aerial connectors has revolutionized our ability to operate from the sea. The Navy is in the process of modernizing the surface connector fleet by replacing the Landing Craft Utility (LCU) and the Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC).

Seabasing expands access, reduces or eliminates the need to build up logistics assets ashore, reduces the operational demand for strategic sealift and airlift capabilities, and permits forward positioning of joint forces for immediate employment. All of these seabasing characteristics support national global strategic objectives and provide needed operational flexibility in an uncertain world. Through seabasing we can establish expeditionary bases at sea in support of GCC requirements.

Seven principles are essential to seabasing operations.

1. Use the sea as maneuver space.
2. Leverage forward presence and joint interdependence.
3. Protect joint/coalition force operations.
4. Provide scalable, responsive, joint power projection.
5. Sustain joint force operations from the sea.
6. Expand access options and reduce dependence on land bases.
7. Create uncertainty for adversaries.

The seabase supports the five overlapping CAESR lines of operation. These lines of operation define the directional orientation of the force in time and space in relation to the enemy. They connect the force with its base of operations and its objectives.

Traditionally, Marines conducted seabased operations only from amphibious warfare ships. MPS and maritime prepositioning equipment and supplies (MPE/S) were employed once they were assembled with fly-in echelon forces at major port and airfield complexes ashore. Our maritime preposition forces are increasingly capable of conducting seabased operations across the ROMO. We continue to work with our joint and Navy partners to address the interoperability challenges associated with seabased operations and to take ever-greater advantage of the opportunities inherent in seabasing.
Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy

BY KENNETH KATZMAN, CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE, 2 DECEMBER 2014

(SUMMARY EXCERPT)

Afghan security forces have lead security responsibility throughout the country, and the United States and its partner countries are in the process of transitioning to a smaller post-2014 mission consisting mostly of training the Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF). The number of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, which peaked at about 100,000 in June 2011, has been reduced to just over 20,000. President Obama announced in May 2014 that the United States plans to keep 9,800 U.S. forces in Afghanistan during 2015 mostly as advisers and trainers, with that number shrinking to 4,900 in Kabul and at Bagram Airfield during 2016. U.S. forces will be joined by about 3,000 partner forces from various NATO and other countries. The post-2016 U.S. force is to be several hundred military personnel under U.S. Embassy authority. Still, doubts about the ability of the ANSF to operate without substantial international backing have led to recent U.S. alterations of the post-2014 U.S. rules of engagement and debate over the post-2016 force.

The post-2014 force was contingent on Afghanistan's signing a Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) with the United States. A dispute over alleged fraud in the June runoff presidential election resulted in a U.S.-brokered solution under which Ashraf Ghani became President and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah was appointed to a new position of Chief Executive Officer of the government. Ghani and Abdullah took office on September 29, and the U.S.-Afghan BSA was signed on September 30. A similar document was also signed between Afghanistan and NATO.

Even though the election dispute was resolved, at least for now, experts remain concerned that Afghan stability is at risk from weak and corrupt Afghan governance. Ghani and Abdullah's disagreements over new cabinet selections have delayed the appointment of a new cabinet. U.S. and partner country anti-corruption efforts in Afghanistan have yielded few concrete results, although since taking office, Ghani has signaled he will prioritize anti-corruption issues.

An unexpected potential benefit to stability could come from a negotiated settlement between the Afghan government and the Taliban and other insurgent groups. Negotiations have been sporadic, but May 2014 produced an exchange of prisoners that included the return of Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl. Afghanistan's minorities and women's groups fear that a settlement might produce compromises with the Taliban that erode human rights. Ghani's trips to Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and China since taking office have been intended, at least in part, to invigorate negotiations on a political settlement with the Taliban. Persuading Afghanistan's neighbors, particularly Pakistan, to support the reconciliation process has shown some modest success, although Afghan insurgent groups continue to operate from Pakistani territory.

As part of a longer term economic strategy for Afghanistan, U.S. officials seek greater Afghan integration into regional trade and investment patterns as part of a “New Silk Road,” and say that Afghanistan might be able to exploit vast mineral resources. Still, Afghanistan will remain dependent on foreign aid for many years. Through the end of FY2013, the United States provided nearly $93 billion in assistance to Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban, of which more than $56 billion has been to equip and train Afghan forces. The appropriated U.S. aid for FY2014 was over $6.1 billion, including $4.7 billion to train and equip the ANSF, and the FY2015 request is about $5.7 billion. These figures do not include funds for U.S. military operations in Afghanistan. Administration officials have pledged to Afghanistan that economic aid requests for Afghanistan are likely to continue roughly at recent levels (about $1.5 billion per year) through at least FY2017. [CRS Report: Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance, by Kenneth Katzman.]

Photo credit: PO2 Frankie Colbry

Afghanistan National Army (ANA) students graduated from the training mullah’s course in April 2014. These soldiers, taught by the United Arab Emirates in the way of modern Islam, will be religious and cultural affairs officers for the ANA.
In January 2013, the Commandant’s Professional Reading List (CPRL) was revised by a panel established by then Commandant of the Marine Corps General James F. Amos to ensure that the list remains relevant and provides Marines with a variety of resources. As discussed in previous newsletters, the new list is divided into three sections: (1) the Commandant’s Choice list of books that are required reading for all Marines, (2) a Rank Level list of books that are required reading for each rank level, and (3) a Categories list of books that are recommended for expanding Marines’ understanding in specific areas. Each Marine is required to read a minimum of three books from the “Commandant’s Choice” or “Rank Level” lists each year.

The Commandant strongly encourages Marines to discuss and debate the issues raised by the books to broaden their perspectives and benefit from the experiences of others. Completion of the CPRL reading requirement is noted in individual Marine’s fitness reports and taken into account when assigning proficiency/conduct remarks. How a Marine demonstrates completion of the annual requirement is at the discretion of the command. The Commandant also invites Marines to submit nominations for a CPRL “Book of the Month” per instructions on the CPRL website http://guides.grc.usmcu.edu/usmcreadinglist.

This month, MCCLL features three books from the Commandant’s reading list:

- “Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption” by Laura Hillenbrand; Commandant’s “Category” list for Wounded Warrior;
- “The Guns of August” by Barbara W. Tuchman; Commandant’s “Category” list for Senior Level Officer: Colonel - General; and,
- “The Starfish and the Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations” by Ori Brafman and Rod A. Beckstrom; Commandant’s “Category” list for Leadership.

Brief reviews of each of these books are provided in the following sections.

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**Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption**

**BY LAURA HILLENBRAND**

(RANDOM HOUSE PUBLISHING GROUP, 16 NOVEMBER 2010)

Access this book [at no cost](http://guides.grc.usmcu.edu/usmcreadinglist) from the Navy General Library Program and begin reading it on your e-reader, smart phone or tablet computer:

1. Register at: [Navy Knowledge Online](http://guides.grc.usmcu.edu/usmcreadinglist) with your Common Access Card (CAC).
2. Establish an account with the [Navy General Library Program](http://guides.grc.usmcu.edu/usmcreadinglist).
3. Check out [Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption](http://guides.grc.usmcu.edu/usmcreadinglist), which is available in the following formats: Kindle Book, OverDrive Read, and EPUB eBook.

Laura Hillenbrand is the author of the #1 New York Times bestseller “Seabiscuit: An American Legend,” which was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award, won the Book Sense Book of the Year Award and the William Hill Sports Book of the Year award, landed on more than fifteen best-of-the-year lists, and inspired the film Seabiscuit, which was nominated for seven Academy Awards, including Best Picture. Hillenbrand’s New Yorker article, “A Sudden Illness,” won the 2004 National Magazine Award, and she is a two-time winner of the Eclipse Award, the highest journalistic honor in thoroughbred racing. She and actor Gary Sinise are the co-founders of Operation International Children, a charity that provides school supplies to children through American troops.

**DESCRIPTION:**

In boyhood, Louis Zamperini was an incorrigible delinquent. As a teenager, he channeled his defiance into running, discovering a prodigious talent that had carried him to the Berlin Olympics. But when World War II began, the athlete became an airman, embarking on a journey that
led to a doomed flight on a May afternoon in 1943. When his Army Air Forces bomber crashed into the Pacific Ocean, against all odds, Zamperini survived, adrift on a foundering life raft. Ahead of Zamperini lay thousands of miles of open ocean, leaping sharks, thirst and starvation, enemy aircraft, and, beyond, a trial even greater. Driven to the limits of endurance, Zamperini would answer desperation with ingenuity; suffering with hope, resolve, and humor; brutality with rebellion. His fate, whether triumph or tragedy, would be suspended on the fraying wire of his will. [Note: Louis Zamperini died in 2014 at the age of 97.]

Appearing in paperback for the first time—with twenty arresting new photos and an extensive Q&A with the author—Unbroken is an unforgettable testament to the resilience of the human mind, body, and spirit, brought vividly to life by Seabiscuit author Laura Hillenbrand.

**REVIEW:**

*From Publishers Weekly, Reviewed by Sarah F. Gold*

Starred Review. From the 1936 Olympics to WWII Japan's most brutal POW camps, Hillenbrand's heart-wrenching new book is thousands of miles and a world away from the racing circuit of her bestselling Seabiscuit. But it's just as much a page-turner, and its hero, Louie Zamperini, is just as loveable: a disciplined champion racer who ran in the Berlin Olympics, he's a wit, a prankster, and a reformed juvenile delinquent who put his thieving skills to good use in the POW camps, In other words, Louie is a total charmer, a lover of life—whose will to live is cruelly tested when he becomes an Army Air Corps bombardier in 1941. The young Italian-American from Torrance, Calif., was expected to be the first to run a four-minute mile. After an astonishing but losing race at the 1936 Olympics, Louie was hoping for gold in the 1940 games. But war ended those dreams forever. In May 1943 his B-24 crashed into the Pacific. After a record-breaking 47 days adrift on a shark-encircled life raft with his pal and pilot, Russell Allen “Phil” Phillips, they were captured by the Japanese. In the “theater of cruelty” that was the Japanese POW camp network, Louie landed in the cruelest theaters of all: Omori and Naoetsu, under the control of Corporal Mutsuhiro Watanabe, a pathologically brutal sadist (called the Bird by camp inmates) who never killed his victims outright—his pleasure came from their slow, unending torment. After one beating, as Watanabe left Louie’s cell, Louie saw on his face a “soft languor... It was an expression of sexual rapture.” And Louie, with his defiant and unbreakable spirit, was Watanabe’s victim of choice. By war’s end, Louie was near death. When Naoetsu was liberated in mid-August 1945, a depleted Louie’s only thought was “I’m free! I’m free! I’m free!” But as Hillenbrand shows, Louie was not yet free. Even as, returning stateside, he impulsively married the beautiful Cynthia Applewhite and tried to build a life, Louie remained in the Bird’s clutches, haunted in his dreams, drinking to forget, and obsessed with vengeance. In one of several sections where Hillenbrand steps back for a larger view, she writes movingly of the thousands of postwar Pacific PTSD sufferers. With no help for their as yet unrecognized illness, Hillenbrand says, “there was no one right way to peace; each man had to find his own path...” The book’s final section is the story of how, with Cynthia’s help, Louie found his path. It is impossible to condense the rich, granular detail of Hillenbrand’s narrative of the atrocities committed (one man was exhibited naked in a Tokyo zoo for the Japanese to “gawk at his filthy, sore-encrusted body”) against American POWs in Japan, and the courage of Louie and his fellow POWs, who made attempts on Watanabe’s life, committed sabotage, and risked their own lives to save others. Hillenbrand’s triumph is that in telling Louie’s story, she tells the stories of thousands whose suffering has been mostly forgotten. She restores to our collective memory this tale of heroism, cruelty, life, death, joy, suffering, remorselessness, and redemption.

This text (review) refers to the Hardcover edition. ■

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**The Guns of August**

*BY BARBARA W. TUCHMAN*  
(RANDOM HOUSE PUBLISHING GROUP, 26 AUGUST 2009)

Access this book at no cost from the Navy General Library Program and begin reading it on your e-reader, smart phone or tablet computer:

1. Register at: [Navy Knowledge Online](#) with your Common Access Card (CAC).
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3. Check out [The Guns of August](#), which is available in the following formats:

   - Kindle Book, OverDrive Read, EPUB eBook.
Barbara W. Tuchman (1912–1989) achieved prominence as a historian with *The Zimmermann Telegram* and international fame with *The Guns of August*—a huge bestseller and winner of the Pulitzer Prize. Her other works include *Bible and Sword,* “The Proud Tower,” “Stilwell and the American Experience in China” (for which Tuchman was awarded a second Pulitzer Prize), “Notes from China,” “A Distant Mirror,” “Practicing History,” “The March of Folly,” and “The First Salute.”

**DESCRIPTION:**

In this landmark, Pulitzer Prize winning account, renowned historian Barbara W. Tuchman re-creates the first month of World War I: thirty days in the summer of 1914 that determined the course of the conflict, the century, and ultimately our present world. Beginning with the funeral of Edward VII, Tuchman traces each step that led to the inevitable clash. And inevitable it was, with all sides plotting their war for a generation. Dizzingly comprehensive and spectacularly portrayed with her famous talent for evoking the characters of the war’s key players, Tuchman’s magnum opus is a classic for the ages.

**REVIEW:**

From Amazon, Editorial Review - Doug Grad, Editor

To many people, W.W.I seems like ancient history. To me, it is the most fascinating of wars. It is when the modern world began, or, in Barbara Tuchman’s opinion, when the 19th Century ended. My late Great Uncle Jimmy, a Brit, joined the Army at the age of 16 by lying that he was 18 after being encouraged to do so by a recruiter. Where did they send him? To Ireland, to train horses for the cavalry! This was the same war that saw the debut of the airplane, submarine, tank, poison gas, machine gun, flamethrower, and hand grenade!

In this Pulitzer Prize-winning history, Tuchman writes about the turning point of the year 1914 the month leading up to the war and the first month of the war. This was the last gasp of the Gilded Age, of Kings and Kaisers and Czars, of pointed or plumed hats, colored uniforms, and all the pomp and romance that went along with war. How quickly it all changed, and how horrible it became. Tuchman is masterful at portraying this abrupt change from 19th to 20th Century. And how she manages to make the story utterly suspenseful, when we already know the outcome, is the mark of a great writer, and a classic volume of history.

“A brilliant piece of military history which proves up to the hilt the force of Winston Churchill’s statement that the first month of World War I was ‘a drama never surpassed.’” —Newsweek

“More dramatic than fiction . . . a magnificent narrative—beautifully organized, elegantly phrased, skillfully paced and sustained.” —Chicago Tribune

“A fine demonstration that with sufficient art rather specialized history can be raised to the level of literature.” —The New York Times

“(The Guns of August) has a vitality that transcends its narrative virtues, which are considerable, and its feel for characterizations, which is excellent.” —The Wall Street Journal

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**The Starfish and The Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations**

BY ORI BRAFMAN AND ROD A. BECKSTROM
(PENGUIN GROUP US, 14 NOVEMBER 2008)

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New York Times bestselling Ori Brafman is the coauthor of “The Starfish and the Spider,” “Sway,” and “Click.” A renowned organizational expert, he regularly consults with Fortune 500 corporations and for the past three years has been working with General Martin Dempsey, the Chairman
of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to introduce chaos theory into the Army. A graduate of Stanford Business School, he lives in San Francisco.

Ori has repeatedly pushed the envelope of thinking about leadership, decision-making, and human interaction via the three books he has co-authored: “The Starfish & The Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations” (2006); “Sway: The Irresistible Pull of Irrational Behavior” (2008); and “Click: The Magic of Instant Connections” (2010). His newest book, “The Chaos Imperative” is about the need for organized chaos in organizations, and about his extensive work at the very top levels of the US military.

Rod A. Beckstrom is a former CEO, who founded CATS Software, Inc., which he took public. Since his “retirement,” Rod has served on various private and nonprofit boards. He holds a BA and MBA from Stanford and was a Fulbright Scholar.

DESCRIPTION:

If you cut off a spider’s head, it dies; if you cut off a starfish’s leg it grows a new one, and that leg can grow into an entirely new starfish. Traditional top-down organizations are like spiders, but now starfish organizations are changing the face of business and the world.

What is the hidden power behind the success of Wikipedia, Craigslist, and Skype? What do eBay and General Electric have in common with the abolitionist and women’s rights movements? What fundamental choice put General Motors and Toyota on vastly different paths?

Ori Brafman and Rod Beckstrom have discovered some unexpected answers, gripping stories, and a tapestry of unlikely connections. “The Starfish and the Spider” explores what happens when starfish take on spiders and reveals how established companies and institutions, from IBM to Intuit to the U.S. government, are also learning how to incorporate starfish principles to achieve success.

REVIEWS:
From Publishers Weekly

Brafman and Beckstrom, a pair of Stanford M.B.A.s who have applied their business know-how to promoting peace and economic development through decentralized networking, offer a breezy and entertaining look at how decentralization is changing many organizations. The title metaphor conveys the core concept: though a starfish and a spider have similar shapes, their internal structure is dramatically different—a decapitated spider inevitably dies, while a starfish can regenerate itself from a single amputated leg. In the same way, decentralized organizations, like the Apache Indian tribe and Alcoholics Anonymous, are made up of many smaller units capable of operating, growing and multiplying independently of each other, making it very difficult for a rival force to control or defeat them. Despite familiar examples—eBay, Napster and the Toyota assembly line, for example—there are fresh insights, such as the authors’ three techniques for combating a decentralized competitor (drive change in your competitors’ ideology, force them to become centralized or decentralize yourself). The authors also analyze one of today’s most worrisome “starfish” organizations—al-Qaeda—though that group undermines the authors’ point that the power of leaderless groups helps to demonstrate the essential goodness and trustworthiness of human beings.

“The Starfish and the Spider’ lifts the lid on a massive revolution in the making, a revolution certain to reshape every organization on the planet from bridge clubs to global governments. Brafman and Beckstrom elegantly describe what is afoot and offer a wealth of insights that will be invaluable to anyone starting something new—or rescuing something old—amidst this vast shift.” —Paul Saffo, Director, Institute for the Future.

MCCLL PRODUCTS “IN THE PIPELINE”

The results of recently completed, ongoing, and planned collection efforts will be documented in MCCLL reports within the next few months. “Stay tuned” for these MCCLL products:

▪ Special Purpose MAGTF Crisis Response (SPMAGTF-CR)
▪ F-35B Squadron Stand-up, VMFA-121
▪ Marine Rotational Force-Darwin (MRF-D) 2014, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines (1/5)
▪ Exercise Valiant Shield 2014
Contact Information for MCCLL Program Analysts

Contact information for Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) representatives at major Marine Corps and joint commands and organizations is provided below. In many cases, both commercial telephone numbers and Defense Switched Network (DSN) numbers are provided.

Individuals from commands and organizations that do not have a MCCLL representative may contact the MCCLL Operations Officer at (703) 432-1950.

Questions or comments (or requests to be added to the MCCLL newsletter distribution list) can be directed to: Mr. Terence Larkin, Editor; (703) 432-1283 │ DSN: 312-378-1283.

The Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) newsletter provides "initial impressions" summaries that identify key observations and potential lessons from collection efforts. These observations highlight potential shortfalls, risks or issues experienced by units that may suggest a need for change. The observations are not service level decisions. In addition, some information in this newsletter has been compiled from publicly available sources and is not official USMC policy. Although the information has been gathered from reliable sources, the currency and completeness of the information is subject to change and cannot be guaranteed.