Difficult domestic circumstances punctuated by fiscal austerity, an increasingly complex international security environment, and the near certain employment of U.S. military force in response to crisis will combine to make the future operating environment challenging. In order to maintain effective options for crisis response, joint capabilities must be combined to close the gap between small, light, and rapidly deployable forces and a decisive follow-on echelon. Despite the difficulties arising in the next 15-20 years, the U.S. Army in particular must prepare itself to not only maintain rapidly deployable crisis response forces, but also ensure its capability to deploy the required critical mass of combat power in a timely manner. In conjunction with the rest of the joint force, the Army must exercise its existing force projection capacity while integrating both service and joint force projection capabilities in training.
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FUTURE WAR PAPER

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CLOSING THE GAP:

THE ROLE OF AN EXPEDITIONARY ARMY

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF OPERATIONAL STUDIES

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INTRODUCTION

As the United States moves past a period of over a decade of limited conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan the Department of Defense and the U.S. Army in particular look to the future. The characteristics of this period will be similar to inter-war periods that the United States has experienced in the past. The operating environment of the next 15-20 years will carry with it challenges, some of which are predictable. A constrained fiscal environment, an international security environment that remains as complex as it has ever been, and the likelihood of American commitments to crisis response will drive the United States to prioritize resources. To offer effective crisis response options to decision makers, how can joint capabilities best be combined to close the gap between small, light, and rapidly deployable forces and the follow on echelon that provides the combat power required to achieve national objectives across a broad range of contingencies? The U.S. Army in particular must posture itself to provide that critical mass of effective ground forces to a joint crisis response force despite the challenges of fiscal austerity, an increasingly contested operational environment, and potentially increasing commitments. This will require the Army to exercise existing force projection capacity while integrating both service and joint force projection capabilities in training.

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

The security environment of the next 15-20 years will place increasingly rigorous demands on the Armed Forces of the United States. This environment, for all of its complexity, should be no more or less mystifying than at any other time in history. The same resource allocation dilemmas exist now that existed at any other time. The variables that will influence the Army's posture and shape can be described in terms of three parts. First, the United States is facing very real fiscal constraints, the effects of which will likely continue to limit resources for
the next two decades. Second, global economic and social interconnectivity has increased, expanding the list of scenarios in which a country will act in order to influence its interests. Finally, the rapid development of competitor capabilities causes concern for allies while aggressive moves made by countries pursuing their interests continue to cause friction.¹

First, domestic realities in the United States may limit military capacity in the near term. Fiscally, there may be significant reductions over the next five years under sequestration that will have effects over the course of the next two decades. To some degree, every service will likely be required to cut costs by sacrificing either force structure or future development. The Army specifically may continue to face force reductions that will cut deeper into its total end strength. These limitations on resources will mean that opportunities for building technological solutions to tactical and operational problems may be limited in the next two decades. Services will likely become more interdependent and the integration of joint capabilities will become even more important than they have been in the past decade of conflict.

Second, the nature of American commitments abroad is not likely to change drastically in the next twenty years. The conduits that move information globally have widened, and technological advancement has made bids for real and functional power by non-state actors an existential concern for some unstable countries.² Even today the United States maintains a long list of potential overseas contingency operations influenced by a host of policy issues including the pivot to the Pacific, a continued effort to combat terrorism, and enduring interests such as ensuring global freedom of navigation. Historical examples of similar contingency operations in other regions include the invasion of Grenada in 1983, Panama in 1989, Task Force Hawk in the Balkans in 1999, Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM in 2001 and 2003 respectively, and Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE 2010. If operations conducted by or in
support of allied partners is included, the list becomes longer, including operations like the
British intervention in Sierra Leone in 2001 (OP PALISER) and the French intervention in Mali
in 2012.\textsuperscript{3,4} Contingency operations, whether they take the form of combat operations or
Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR), will continue to test the Army’s capacity to
rapidly deploy and conduct operations relatively often.

A final influence on the security environment in the near future is the continued advances
in technology that will allow near peer competitors to contest operational environments. The
progress of science and technology and a narrowing capability gap between the United States
and near-peer competitors have the potential to affect the country’s ability to conduct
contingency operations on any scale, much less as an economy of force. Information technology
and the expanding cyber arena provide not only early warning but also a conduit through which
an adversary can launch attacks that take advantage of a perceived asymmetry. Anti-Access and
Area Denial (A2AD) threats, to include systems like the Chinese DF-21D, effectively narrow the
gap between operational force projection and tactical action.\textsuperscript{5,6,7}

The effects of these three aspects of the future security environment generate the
requirement for the joint force and the U.S. Army in particular to be able to project a critical
mass of combat power within potentially narrow temporal and geographic windows of access,
and to do it without massive future investments in technological solutions. The aggregate of this
so-called critical mass of combat power should be estimated at 3-5 divisions, spread across the
two services that provide the majority of ground forces, the U.S. Army and the U.S. Marine
Corps. The U.S. Army’s share of the load will likely remain the equivalent of 2-4 divisions.\textsuperscript{8}
For example, Operation DESERT SHIELD required the initial deployment of five divisions totaling 15 brigades and five separate headquarters and sustainment commands. To this number was later be added the remainder of the force that would comprise the ground component of Operation DESERT STORM. Ten years later, as planners refined the original OPLAN 1003-98 in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, they decided to begin the invasion with three divisions while follow-on forces brought the total number of deployed divisions to over five. In order to effectively plan for a full range of military operations requires the ability to project much more weight than is currently retained in light, rapidly deployable forces, be they Marine or Army. While exceptions to this rule are easily brought to mind, France’s Operation SERVAL as one example, it is a fallacy to assume that every contingency will offer the same conditions that make such a small scale intervention successful. Regardless of the scale of the commitment, the critical ability is the capacity to deploy an adequate force while compressing the time between the arrival of early entry forces and the follow on echelon behind it.

**EXERCISE EXISTING CAPABILITIES**

While power projection from the United States is challenging due to the distances that geography imposes, it is an unavoidable planning reality; the U.S. military has fought almost exclusively in expeditionary campaigns since the closing of the Western frontier. The Marine Corps and Navy partially solve the problem distance poses through forward basing. This allows the Marine Corps to maintain a responsive, though limited, medium weight force spread between sea-going platforms and bases ashore. Between CONUS and OCONUS bases, the Army maintains a light, a medium, and a heavy force. The United States projects this combat power in two ways: over the water and through the air. Light forces, which make up the bulk of the Army’s rapid deployment forces, provide immediate options for response, but they are limited
and bound by physics. The seven Stryker brigade combat teams (SBCT) comprise the U.S. Army’s medium-weight force while the majority of the Army’s heavy force is located in its Armored Brigade Combat Teams (ABCT). These forces are for the most part limited to sealift. In a contested environment, access is guaranteed only in narrow geographic or temporal windows and the gap between early entry forces and a heavier follow-on force must be closed. As part of the joint force, the Army has the ability to close this gap, though it has to be universally understood and then trained in focused deployment exercises to be realized.

FROM THE AIR

The ability to project combat power by air from the United States is a relatively recent addition to capabilities, but is an important one. This ability is comprised of two capabilities. The first is airborne forces, made up of 6 airborne brigades, four of which currently reside in the 82nd Airborne Division. The other two brigades are the 4th ABN BCT, 25th Infantry Division, and the 173rd ABN BCT. These formations are designed to be rapidly deployable; the Global Reaction Force (GRF), a force of approximately 5,000 Soldiers that is built around the Division Ready Brigade (DRB), an airborne infantry brigade combat team of the 82nd Airborne Division. This brigade is charged with the ability to deploy within 18 hours of alert to conduct a parachute assault anywhere in the world. Historically, this formation has been called on to conduct operations in Grenada during Operation URGENT FURY (1983), Panama in Operation JUST CAUSE (1989), rapid deployment to Saudi Arabia in 1991 for DESERT SHIELD, and Haiti as a part of Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY (1994). The GRF provides a very agile and responsive capability to a Joint Forces Commander, but it comes with limitations. It is reliant on the U.S. Air Force for strategic air lift. By definition, the air-delivered force is light and fast with
very little in the way of sustainment. A contested environment presents a number of significant risks to the air bridge supporting this airborne force.

Air mobility supported by the United States Air Force is the second aspect of the Army’s ability to project force through the air. It differs from a true airborne capability in that it is not used for assault, although it can support the expansion of an airhead following one. The difficulty with air mobility is efficiency; though it is by far the largest military transport provider in the world, the United States Air Force’s capacity is still limited and thus the force that is introduced by air transport must balance combat power, transportability, sustainability. The footprints and associated tonnage requirements for U.S. Army units are relatively easy to predict. For example, an Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) will require 94 C-17 sorties to move into theater. An Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) would require as many as 477 such sorties. In terms of rapid deployment, the seemingly ideal solution to these problems is a medium weight force, but even a pure Stryker Brigade Combat Team has its limitations in this regard. A RAND study conducted in 2005 illustrates the stark differences between the Army’s ideal deployment capability for a Stryker Brigade Combat Team and the Air Force’s ability to execute it. The study concludes that the SBCT deploying from Fort Lewis, Washington to Skopje, Macedonia would require 270 C-17 equivalent loads and close on an APOD within 7 days, significantly slower than its target time of 96 hours. An examination of available airframes, flight hour generation, and operational ready rates will reveal a significant time requirement to move any substantial force through the air alone.
FROM THE SEA

The second option for deploying forces is over the water. Historically, the flow of Army combat power into a theater has overwhelmingly been by sea. Many are looking at solutions that increase the speed of sea lift without examining the existing capacity to move over the water. The challenge inherent to sea lift is time, and there are three functions of the movement that influence it: loading, movement, and unloading. All three functions are affected by distance and available platforms. The RAND study *Speed and Power*, cited above, determined that in the Pacific, Army Prepositioned Stock (APS-3) shipping times to potential points of disembarkation averaged 3-5 days. History shows this estimate to be somewhat optimistic. During the initial deployment of forces in support of Operation DESERT SHIELD, nine of twelve maritime and afloat prepositioned ships arrived in Saudi Arabia within 17 days after their departure from the Indian Ocean. Barring an expensive technical solution that offers a class of roll on/roll off vessel that is both larger and faster than those currently in service, these transit times themselves will remain relatively constant.

Next, the available lift resident in the U.S. Navy’s Maritime Sealift Command (MSC) is extensive. The MSC maintains in the Ready Reserve Force eight Fast Sealift Ships (FSS) as well as the 20 Roll On/Roll Off ships and seven Large Medium Speed Roll On/Roll Off (LMSR) ships. The RRF ships are maintained in an inactive status and require approximately five days to get underway. This does not include those ships detailed to either the Army’s Prepositioned Stocks Afloat (APS-3) or the Maritime Prepositioned Stock Squadrons (MPSRON) that support the Marines. The APS-3 flotilla carries the embarked stocks to equip a motorized brigade, one sustainment brigade, as well as ensure a theater sustainment command’s ability to open and maintain a sea port of debarkation (SPOD). To this set of very large ships is added an Army
flotilla of 35 *Runnymede* class landing craft (LCU-2000) and the eight *General Frank S. Besson* class Logistics Support Vessels (LSV) that serve as connectors for in-stream offload and intra-theater support. Theater Support Vessels such as the TSV-1X *Spearhead* can cut the travel time to these destinations, but still do not solve the problem of offload, which for APS shipping requires a secure port or extended periods of time to conduct an in-stream offload; in the contested environment of the future neither can be guaranteed.

Between air and sea lift, the question remains, how much can be moved and how fast? By focusing on the hard-fought ability to de-aggregate and aggregate units that has been gained over the last decade of conflict, the U.S. Army can capitalize on the available air and sea-lift to rapidly close the gap between early entry forces and its follow on echelon. The *Speed and Power* and *Stryker Brigade Combat Team* studies included an extensive analysis of data that resulted in a set of planning factors for the deployment of Army formation by air based on such variables as airframes available, distance to be travelled, and the type of formation. For example, starting from notification, an airborne brigade of the GRF as well as a division or Corps (JTF) TAC can physically deploy within 96 hours. This formation can be paired with the lead elements of an SBCT. The air-landed components of the follow on echelon can conceivably bring an additional I BCT and the remainder of the SBCT into theater no later than D+7, depending on C-17 and C-5 sortie availability. From a joint perspective, this timeline could, within reason, coincide with the closure of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) and its equipment on MPS shipping. Assuming a rapid rail load that is complete in less than one week, the first FSS and LMSRs complete loading in ports of embarkation at D+8 depart sea ports of embarkation at D+9. While distances to the contingency area will vary, two FSS or LMSRs will deliver one brigade combat team over 7,600nm. The minimum commitment from the U.S. Army
to the critical mass of combat power, two divisions, can theoretically close on a theater at D+23. The continued offload of shipping will grow that force to a 4-5 division set by D+31 assuming a port capable of offloading two Roll on/Roll off ships simultaneously and a secure APOD capable of receiving the units’ personnel.

The Army’s obligation in the coming decades is the fostering of the habitual relationships with the Maritime Sealift Command that make these movements possible while maintaining the internal proficiency to take advantage of it. To this end, the value of exercises specifically designed to exercise the functions of embarkation, travel and debarkation cannot be overstated. The REFORGER (Return FORces to GERmany) exercises, held during the Cold War, were a series of events that simulated the reception, staging, and onward integration of combat formations disembarking at European ports. While the specific requirement for REFORGER is no longer evident, there remains a need for a similar exercise. One needs to look no further than the disparity between offload times during REFORGER and those experienced during the offload in Saudi Arabia during DESERT SHIELD. During REFORGER, it was not uncommon to see vehicle offload times in excess of 20 per hour, whereas during DESERT SHIELD, this number dropped to 15-16 per hour. Without focused deployment exercises, the knowledge and ability to rapidly execute these functions, be they by sea or through the air, deteriorates over time.

TRAIN AS PART OF THE JOINT FORCE (THE JTF)

The reality is that future interventions will be completely joint endeavors, and that capability that must be trained. Service components must become accustomed to working with and around one another at lower levels under ad hoc task organizations. The implications for the
integration of joint capabilities found in the evolving relationship between services are often overlooked. Doctrinal solutions to this problem have been lethargic at best. Despite the development of *Air Sea Battle* by the Air Force and the Navy, and the publishing of *Joint Operational Access Concept 2012* by the Army and Marine Corps, there remain gaps in the joint force's collective ability to rapidly gain access to hostile environments.\(^{26,27}\)

At considerable expense, the Army and Marine Corps maintain rapidly deployable forces capable of executing operations in support of these types of contingency operations. Despite some popular arguments to the contrary, these capabilities that allow for successful joint forcible entry, are in fact complimentary, rather than redundant.\(^{28}\) Between Marine amphibious and Army airborne forces, there are a number of options for rapidly introducing combat power into a crisis, but barring a very large deployment of forces, these unique capabilities are rarely combined.\(^{29,30}\) This can be practiced, but in order to do so it must be made a priority. Improvement generally coming hand in hand with increased experience, Army and Marine interoperability has been a work in progress. In 1991, at the outset of Operation DESERT SHIELD, the United States showed an inability to do this very well. Marines who linked up with elements of the 82\(^{nd}\) Airborne Division in Saudi Arabia left the experience behind with an unfavorable perspective on Marine-Army interoperability. This experience can be contrasted with that of the Tiger brigade, placed under operational control of 2MARDIV prior to DESERT STORM.\(^{31}\) More recent examples have appeared to lay a more favorable foundation for the integration of Army and Marine formations at lower levels. During Operation AL FAJR in 2004, 1MARDIV attacked to defeat insurgent elements in Fallujah. The task organization for 1MARDIV included two Army combined arms battalions, each integrated fully into the division's RCTs.\(^{32}\) Rarely does the joint force train this capability prior to the deployment of
forces. The exercises that are conducted are either limited in scope or are focused on only two services. TALISMAN SABER, a combined operational access exercise held in Australia, often combines the capabilities of an Army airborne battalion and a Marine Expeditionary Unit, but rarely goes beyond that level of involvement. Another telling example of this is the Joint Operational Access Exercise (JOAX), predominantly executed by only two services, the Air Force and the Army.

The training events that would, with some modification, allow for the regular integration of joint capabilities are already in place. Within the next two decades, U.S. Army Mission Rehearsal Exercises at the National Training Center, Joint Readiness Training Center, and Combined Maneuver Training Center should include several aspects that challenge both service and joint deployment capabilities. The first of these is multiple and varied methods of entry. This means that for U.S. Army BCTs, the units should arrive via a combination of U.S. Air Force strategic air lift, reserve air lift command platforms. The second aspect is a joint character. If all contingencies are likely to be joint operations, it makes sense to train to this reality by incorporating Navy, Air Force, and Marine formations to these exercises in a more deliberately planned manner than is currently done. While there is some interaction in this respect currently, it is often ad hoc and almost always limited. Finally, the MRX should include a mix of units that comprise the brigade combat team. This idea points the Army toward flexible force packages available for overseas contingency operations. At the NTC or any other similar training center, this would mean the combining of Army formations below the BCT level with Marine counterparts, the result of which is a truly joint MRX. These changes, while they will take time to fully realize, will better prepare Army formations for flexible employment while at the same time fostering interoperability across the joint force.
CONCLUSIONS

Ultimately, the Army’s goal over the course of the next 15-20 years should remain focused on the contribution of responsive and flexible land power to the joint force that provides decision makers with suitable options for the application of force. In simple terms this means that the Army will need to move faster while being better integrated into the joint team. Challenges to movement toward joint inter-dependence will come primarily in the form of service parochialism in a time of fiscal austerity. The impact of current and increasing fiscal limitations will be felt across the Department of Defense for the next decade at least. Even so, the characteristics of the security environment, both international and domestic, pose challenges to the entire joint force. Army Doctrinal Publication (ADP) 1, The Army restates the problem by defining operational adaptability as “land power that can adjust rapidly to prevent conflict, be scalable and tailorable in order to shape an operational environment, and win the Nation's wars.” The same challenges create opportunities; time and resource investments in the exploitation of existing service capabilities, the development of operational maneuver capacity through more extensive joint training, and the adjustment of joint task force headquarters will benefit the joint force on the battlefield tomorrow.

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1 Joint Operating Environment 2010, United States Joint Forces Command Joint Futures Group (J59), February 18, 2010, 38.


Mark P. Fitzgerald, “Delivering Air Sea Battle,” *Joint Forces Quarterly* 67, http://www.ndu.edu/press/air-sea-battle.html. To some extent, the Navy and Air Force have taken a step toward countering the problem that A2AD capabilities pose with the introduction of Air-Sea Battle. Proponents of Air-Sea Battle see mere access to the global commons and a theater as decisive. The risk in focusing solely on Air Sea Battle is that while securing theater access provides an exploitable gap, it is not necessarily decisive in its own right. Meanwhile,

Elbridge Colby, “The War Over Future War: Repelling a Ground Assault on AirSea Battle,” *War on the Rocks*, November 27, 2013. http://warontherocks.com/2013/11/the-war-over-future-war-repelling-a-ground-assault-on-airsea-battle/. Advocates of “strategic land power” tend to disagree with the premise that investments in high technology solutions to access problems are the panacea for the successful prosecution of most operations in the future.

This estimate is informed by history and has implications for future force structure. Given the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) model, to maintain a ready and responsive force of this size requires a minimum of 9-10 divisions.


Brigadier General Charles Flynn and Major Joshua Richardson, “Joint Operational Access and the Global Response Force,” *Military Review*, July-August 2013. 39-42. The GRF in its current form includes, in addition to the airborne BCT, a heavy (M1/M2) company team, a Stryker infantry company, a combat aviation battalion task force, additional artillery assets (both 155mm and MLRS), and a US Air Force section for air control and port opening, as well as supporting EOD, MP, and MI assets to augment the Brigade’s capabilities.

Defense Science Board Task Board, *Future Need for VTOL/STOL Aircraft*, (Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, 2007). p. 55-56. One future possibility that fuses operational reach and maneuver is the advancement of air assault formations. The 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) has immense operational maneuver capacity once it is in theater. This ability was showcased in during Operation DESERT STORM in 1991 when the 101st Division, maneuvering on the left flank of the infamous “left hook.” A 2007 study by the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics determined that the best possible solution to the Army’s heavy lift requirement was to be found in the integration of rotary and fixed wing characteristics in a single platform. The report remained conflicted on the most economical and timely solution, ultimately erring on the side of a smaller aircraft. While a larger tilt-rotor aircraft is still being contemplated, the Army is currently entertaining concepts for the Future Vertical Lift program.


Bower, Halliday, and Peltz, p. 28.
A future possibility that will expand the Army's capability to compress the gap between rapidly deployable light forces and heavier follow-on formations can be found in the Boeing Pelican or a similar concept. The Pelican is a concept aircraft currently being researched by Boeing's Phantom Works. While it consists of little more than concept at this stage, it is a technological solution worth keeping alive; the aircraft has a planned cargo capacity of 1,400 tons and a range of 6,500nm due to the efficiencies it gains by traveling in ground effect. An ULTRA WIG, or an Ultra Large Transport Aircraft Wing in Ground-effect, offers a compromise between faster sea lift and hard choices in the use of limited strategic air lift.

Bower, Halliday, and Peltz, 48.

**Footnotes:**

16 William Cole, *Boeing Frontiers Online*, Volume 1, Issue 5, September 2002. [http://www.boeing.com/news/frontiers/archive/2002/september/i_pw.html](http://www.boeing.com/news/frontiers/archive/2002/september/i_pw.html). A future possibility that will expand the Army's capability to compress the gap between rapidly deployable light forces and heavier follow-on formations can be found in the Boeing Pelican or a similar concept. The Pelican is a concept aircraft currently being researched by Boeing's Phantom Works. While it consists of little more than concept at this stage, it is a technological solution worth keeping alive; the aircraft has a planned cargo capacity of 1,400 tons and a range of 6,500nm due to the efficiencies it gains by traveling in ground effect. An ULTRA WIG, or an Ultra Large Transport Aircraft Wing in Ground-effect, offers a compromise between faster sea lift and hard choices in the use of limited strategic air lift.

17 Bower, Halliday, and Peltz, 48.


19 John Gordon IV and Peter A. Wilson, *The Case for ARMY XXI “Medium Weight” Aero-Motorized Divisions: A Pathway to the Army of 2020*, Strategic Studies Institute, 1998. p. 14. This publication, though somewhat dated, mentions the value of what now make up the eight-ship squadron of LMSRs currently in service with the MSC. The technological advance the authors are specifically referring to is a very large hydroplane capable of traveling at speeds above 40 knots across the ocean.


23 Bower, Halliday, and Peltz.

24 Seth Jones, David Orletsky, Bruce Pirnie, and Alan Vick.

25 Seth Jones, David Orletsky, Bruce Pirnie, and Alan Vick, p. 31-32.


28 *Joint Publication 3-18 Joint Forcible Entry*, November 2012, 1-1. *Joint Publication 3-18* describes airborne, air assault and amphibious landing as the three means of joint forcible entry. The Army is uniquely capable of conducting large scale airborne operations. The Marine Corps is the most immediately ready to conduct amphibious operations including amphibious assault, although limitations on amphibious shipping limits the capability in much the same way that the U.S. Army is limited by air lift in terms of airborne operations. The overlap in capability is found in air assault operations, the one method of entry in which that both services control their own lift. Arguably, to complete this list a fourth should be added: the rapid buildup of combat power followed by a forcible entry across a land border.

AmphibiousShips.pdf. Marine capabilities include the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) that is habitually paired with a Navy Amphibious Ready Group (ARG). Due to the nature of it continual forward deployment, the ARG/MEU combination has the capability to rapidly deliver a sustainable combined arms battalion task force with organic air support. The forward deployed MAGTF construct allows the Marine Corps to task organize a force relatively quickly and deploy it quickly. Like Army rapid deployment capabilities, though, this too is not without its drawbacks. The Marine Corps is limited by the investment of the Navy on amphibious shipping much like Army airborne forces are limited by Air Force commitment to air mobility.

30 Sydney J. Freedburg Jr., “Navy’s Newest, LHA-6, A Dead End For Amphibious Ships?” Breaking Defense, October 3, 2012. http://breakingdefense.com/2012/10/navys-newest-lha-6-a-dead-end-for-amphibious-ships/. Not only do the Navy and Marine Corps remain in a constant state of debate over the size and type of amphibious shipping, but they also demonstrate significant differences of opinion when it comes to amphibious assault; the USS America, LHD-6, was built with no well-deck and thus limits the options available to its ARG/MEU to air assault forces only.


34 ADP-1 The Army, Headquarters, Department of the Army, September 2012. p.4-3.
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