

Greater Naval Integration through Logistics

Bring Navy, Marine, and Coast Guard logistics together

by LtCol Roy E. Truba, Jr., USMC(Ret), CDR Christopher Kading, USN & LtCol Randy Hodge, USMC(Ret)

*Naval integration is the concerted, proactive effort that includes any action, at any level, to bring the Navy and the Marine Corps together to form a more effective warfighting team.*¹

>LtCol Truba retired from active duty in 1998 and is now the Deputy Head, Logistics Vision and Strategy Section (LPV-1) in the I&L Department (HQMC) leading the naval and MAGTF logistics integration efforts.

>> CDR Kading, Navy Supply Corps, serves on the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, Fleet Readiness and Logistics (OPNAV N4) staff as the Naval Logistics Integration (NLI) lead within the Logistics–Supply Chain Operations Division (OPNAV N41).

>>> LtCol Hodge retired from active duty in 2005 and is now a consultant for naval and MAGTF logistics integration matters to HQMC and the Fleet Marine Forces.

NLI is a naval Service² effort bringing Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard logisticians together to seek and exploit opportunities for integrating capabilities, processes, and technologies that optimize support for naval force operations. NLI is driven by Secretary of the Navy policy³ and Naval Service Chief guidance⁴ and has a long history of success across the logistics spectrum.⁵ Since NLI's inception, stakeholders have challenged the status quo in the areas of science and technology, policy and doctrine, and business practices and processes to enhance the readiness and

combat capability of naval operating forces.

*NLI Guidance for 2020*⁶ addresses specific initiatives and tasks for executing the *NLI 2017–2021 Strategic Plan*⁷ in support of naval Service Chief guid-

ance. *NLI Guidance for 2020* defines three priority efforts: logistics billet integration, integrated logistics training and education, and logistics information technology. This article focuses on greater naval integration through logistics by correlating the NLI 2020 priorities to three lines of effort described in *Sustaining the Force in the 21st Century*:⁸ enabling global logistics awareness, diversifying distribution, and improving sustainment.

Billet Integration

A key NLI objective is to increase

We will build capability with our most natural partner, tying more closely with the Marine Corps—at all levels.

—ADM Michael Gilday, USN

Our logisticians exist to enable and sustain the lethality of the Marine air-ground task force across all warfighting functions and within all warfare domains.

—Gen David H. Berger, USMC

integration of naval logisticians on operational staffs to enhance expeditionary logistics support. In doing so, we must also recognize integrated billets as a core competency for naval logisticians. Success in this area is highlighted by the permanent assignment of distribution management Marines at Naval Supply Systems Command Fleet Logistics Centers (NAVSUP FLC) in Bahrain, Sigonella, and Yokosuka. These Marines are embedded in the NAVSUP FLC staffs serving as cargo expeditors supporting regional sustainment of deployed naval forces. Also, Marine Corps Logistics Command has a supply Marine assigned to the Navy's Priority Materiel Office in Bremerton, WA, providing on-site Marine Corps supply chain expertise within the organization dedicated to sourcing and expediting mission essential materiel to forward deployed units. These are just two examples of billet integration that have reaped huge dividends for deployed naval forces by improving sustainment and diversifying distribution.

Currently, there are Marine Corps aviation and ground logistics officers assigned to NAVSUP Headquarters, and Navy Supply Corps officers assigned to Marine Corps Logistics Command and Marine Corps Systems Command. These assignments provide the insight necessary to ensure unity of effort as support plans and acquisition decisions are made in the best interest of the Naval Service. Both Navy and Marine Corps have supply and logistics personnel working within the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA). These logisticians perform sustainment and distribution functions that directly support naval force operations and possess greater global logistics awareness than their peers serving within Service-specific organizations. The knowledge and skill-sets Marines and Sailors acquire while serving in DLA strengthen the Naval Service's capability to leverage support from DLA—the Nation's combat logistics support agency that is responsible for managing the global supply chain.

In 2020, we must work to increase billet exchanges between appropriate naval force staffs to further enhance mutual understanding and unity of



Marine Corps forces that plan for and use the replenishment capabilities of CLF vessels can reduce their embarkation footprint, and the inventory investment and transportation costs associated with those items available for delivery by CLF ships. (Photo by MCS3 Danielle A. Baker.)

effort. Knowing the specific logistics capabilities each Service brings to the fight and including those capabilities in our logistics support plans for operational concepts can only be accomplished through billet cross-decking. Specific functional areas and staffs that could benefit from further integrating supply/logistics personnel include:

- *Contracting.* Navy and Marine Corps expeditionary contracting officers adhere to the same regulatory requirements; however, each Service maintains a unique capability aligned to contracting authority held by their respective heads of the contracting activity. NLI stakeholders should explore opportunities to integrate expeditionary contracting among MEF and NAVSUP FLC contracting offices to leverage economies of scale and avoid duplication of effort and market competition.
- *Distribution.* Distribution management and supply Marines can further integrate with Navy's distribution pipeline through assignments with the combat logistics force (CLF) and logistics task forces (CTFs) that execute distribution and sustainment for naval forces.
- *Planning.* Billet integration between naval surface forces, Fleet Marine

Forces, numbered fleets, MEFs, CLF/CTFs, Navy Expeditionary Combat Command, and NAVSUP FLC supply and logistics staffs are essential for developing relationships and effective naval operational logistics planning and execution.

- *Sustainment.* Greater billet integration between NAVSUP, MARCORLOGCOM, Military Sealift Command (MSC), and DLA should be explored to improve our collective global logistics awareness and maximize readiness and sustainability through the most effective and efficient use of our global logistics support network.

Training and Education

Another key NLI objective is to broaden cross-training and educational opportunities for naval logisticians by identifying, developing, and modifying expeditionary logistics courses to support current operations and warfighting concepts. The Marine Corps Logistics Operations Group now provides expeditionary logistics seminars: a collective training event designed to educate and train logisticians who are preparing for deployment on the full array of operational logistics capabilities that may be needed to support the range of military operations. This is done through expe-

ditionary logistics seminars for MEUs and other logistics focused deployable organizations within each MEF. The goal of this program is to increase unit knowledge on MAGTF, naval and joint logistics, intergovernmental and inter-agency capabilities, as well as theater specific roles, capabilities, and resources that may be necessary for deployment.

The Expeditionary Warfare Training Groups (EWTGs)—Atlantic and Pacific conduct training and instruction in the doctrine, tactics, and techniques of naval expeditionary warfare with a focus on amphibious operations to support operational commanders. The Navy Center for Service Support at Newport, RI, provides Navy logistics personnel the knowledge and skills to support the Fleet’s warfighting mission. Center for Service Support Newport is the parent command to the Navy Supply Corps School, which provides a career-length training continuum that develops Navy logisticians. Marine Corps Combat Service Support Schools, aboard Camp Johnson in Jacksonville, NC, provides formal resident school training for logistics and supply Marines.

While each of these training and education commands allow other Service participation, only the EWTGs have integrated Navy–Marine Corps staffs, but their training is largely focused on information warfare, expeditionary operations, and expeditionary fires. Marine Corps Logistics Operations Group uses Navy instructors to facilitate their naval logistics seminars, but that instruction is typically *ad hoc*. So then, the naval logistics enterprise must be capable of providing expeditionary support and sustainment from greater distances imposed by a threat that is broader and deeper than in the past,⁹ yet we have no formal training and education program of instruction that adequately prepares naval logisti-

cians to sustain future naval force operations.

Over the next twelve to eighteen months, we must pursue training and education opportunities to support the Chief of Naval Operations’ and the Commandant of the Marine Corps’ planning guidance as we transition to a more fully integrated naval force to meet the demands of the pacing threat and future operating environment. Specific actions that could be driven by NLI governance oversight to improve sustainment, diversify distribution, and enable global logistics awareness include:

- Explore the EWTGs—Atlantic and Pacific as potential venues for integrated naval logistics training and education focused on operational logistics doctrine. *NWP 4-0M/MCTP 13-10K, Naval Logistics*, subordinate doctrine in the Navy 4-series (logistics), Marine Corps 3-40-series (operational logistics), and 13-10-series (seabasing), provide the foundation for necessary periods of instruction.
- Expand, modify, or integrate expeditionary logistics instruction at formal schools to include both Navy and Marine Corps perspectives ensuring naval logisticians are capable of functioning together and in joint operations. Assess the feasibility of mobile training team courses at or near major military installations and expanding use of distance learning courses.
- Ensure logisticians actively participate in official forums such as NLI, the Maritime Working Group, and the Expeditionary Operational Advisory Group.
- Conduct Marine Corps logistics unit staff rides at various Navy commands within NAVSUP, MSC, naval component commands, numbered fleets, and logistics CTFs to gain an appreciation for Navy capabilities and

processes. Include DLA to garner a broader understanding of the global logistics support network. Reciprocate by hosting Navy staff rides at Marine logistics commands.

- Maintain the *NLI Playbook (NAVMC 4000.4A)*, *NAVSUP Support to Expeditionary Forces Guide*, and *Marine Corps Forces—Logistics for Deployed Forces Handbook*. These publications describe logistics capabilities available to commanders, who are responsible for formulating logistics support plans to achieve mission success.

Information Technology

Logistics information technology remains the long pole in the tent for overcoming many naval logistics obstacles. Much has been done under the NLI umbrella to enable interoperability and system cross-servicing, but we are a far cry from logistics systems integration. At a minimum, Marines can access select Navy systems using Global Combat Support System—Marine Corps (GCSS-MC) and other Navy capabilities using Navy systems. In 2016, NLI stakeholders developed the capability for deployed MAGTFs to pass requisitions from GCSS-MC to Navy’s Enterprise Resource Planning and Navy Priority Materiel Office systems of record using pass-through accounts established at MARCORLOGCOM.¹⁰ Although these capabilities eliminated the swivel chair process for requisition processing, problems arose with status and fiscal transactions as well as with system connectivity while underway.

In 2017, MSC established a Navy-funded Marine Corps load list comprised of Marine-specific items available for issue aboard all twelve fleet ordnance and dry cargo ships in the Navy’s CLF.¹¹ The Marine Corps load list is just one of several load lists identified within the Consolidated Afloat Requisitioning Guide Overseas, used by afloat naval forces to order materiel for delivery by CLF ships. Marine Corps forces that plan for and use the replenishment capabilities of CLF vessels can reduce their embarkation footprint, and the inventory investment and transportation costs associated with those items available for delivery by CLF ships.

Marine Corps logistics is not postured to sustain the fight defined by the National Defense Strategy.

—Sustaining the Force in the 21st Century

However, for Marines to access these inventories, they must use local procedures established by each particular logistics CTF. Although offline requisitions are permitted by Marine Corps supply policy in certain circumstances, Marines are reluctant to tap into this capability because of the added workload.

Navy to Marine Corps system interoperability has proven successful in several system tests, whereas rotational naval mobile construction battalions on Okinawa and Guam used Navy's One Touch to interface with GCCS-MC and requisition materiel directly from MEF supply management units. As with Marines using Navy systems, problems arose with status and fiscal transactions making system interoperability a cumbersome process.

Given the renewed emphasis on naval integration from the highest levels of command, the NLI governance is optimistic about exploring opportunities for true logistics systems integration. NLI stakeholders should pursue the following in 2020 to integrate Naval Service logistics systems and technologies to achieve interdependency in the maritime domain, including capabilities for electronically requesting, processing, and tracking materiel over the last tactical mile.

- Map requisition process flows from request to fulfillment within each Service. Process maps can be used to identify gaps and potential systems integration points.
- Develop common naval processes or compatible systems for requisitioning materiel from CLF ships. Ideally, materiel listed in any of the Consolidated Afloat Requisitioning Guide Overseas categories would be accessible using primary Service logistics systems of record.
- Develop the next generation of logistics information technology system(s) to address shortfalls in existing Navy and Marine Corps systems and promote naval logistics, including the command and control of logistics forces. Evaluate integrated system opportunities with the ongoing Naval Operational Business Logistics Enterprise Project.

- Integrate naval request and requisition management systems to enable cross-servicing. If a common logistics system cannot be sourced through the acquisition process, then pursue opportunities for interoperability without status and financial transaction constraints. Leverage the Secretary of the Navy's supply chain modernization forum to promote systems integration.

Integrate naval request and requisition management systems ...

Conclusion

Future operating concepts—*Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment*, *Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations*, and *Distributed Maritime Operations*—require integrated naval logistics organizations, training and education, and information technology. As logisticians, we must exploit every logistics integration opportunity to enable greater global logistics awareness, diversify our distribution processes, and improve warfighter sustainment. NLI is the official and continuing forum to address and prioritize logistics integration opportunities with a focus toward enabling and sustaining the lethality of naval forces across all other warfighting functions, whether conducting seabased or expeditionary operations ashore.

Notes

1. Department of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations/Commandant of the Marine Corps Joint Memorandum, *The Path to Greater Naval Integration*, (Washington, DC: May 2019).
2. The *Naval Service* is comprised of the Active and Reserve Components and the civilian personnel of the United States Navy, the United States Marine Corps, and the United States Coast Guard.

3. Office of the Secretary of the Navy Instruction, *Secretary of the Navy Instruction 4000.37B, Naval Logistics Integration*, (Washington, DC: August 2018).

4. Chief of Naval Operations, *A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority 2.0*, (Washington, DC: December 2018); Gen David H. Berger, *38th Commandant's Planning Guidance*, (Washington, DC: July 2019); and U.S. Coast Guard, *Coast Guard Strategic Plan 2018–2022*, (Washington, DC: 2018).

5. The NLI Terms of Reference was signed in 2003. NLI stakeholders have repeatedly been recognized for their contributions enhancing the supply readiness and combat capability of Fleet Marine Forces through multiple ADM Stan Arthur Awards for Logistics Excellence, VADM Robert Batchelder Awards, and Defense Logistics Awards.

6. *NLI Guidance for 2020* addresses specific initiatives and tasks for executing the NLI 2017–2021 Strategic Plan. It is a collaborative effort of the NLI Executive Board, whose membership includes flag/general officers and senior executive service leadership representing Marine Corps, Navy, Coast Guard, and Department of Defense interests.

7. The *NLI 2017–2021 Strategic Plan* outlines the mission, vision, goals, and objectives of the NLI concept and serves as a road map to cohesively guide logistics integration initiatives.

8. *Sustaining the Force in the 21st Century* provides an aiming point for logistics development, document priorities, and provides direction for supported and supporting actions in the future.

9. Department of the Navy, *Naval Warfighting Publication 4-0M/Marine Corps Tactical Publication 13-10K, Naval Logistics*, (Washington, DC: 2012).

10. Headquarters Marine Corps, *Announcement of Global Combat Support System-Marine Corps Capability to Pass Requisitions to Naval Supply Systems Command*, (Washington, DC: June 2016); and Headquarters Marine Corps, *Announcement of Global Combat Support System-Marine Corps Capability to Pass Requisitions to the Priority Materiel Office*, (Washington, DC: June 2016).

11. Headquarters Marine Corps, *Marine-Specific Inventory aboard Combat Logistics Force Dry Cargo Ships*, (Washington, DC: February 2017).

