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Admiral Harvey's Amphibious Operations Reading List

David P. Dilegge

What's a good-old fashioned amphibious exercise without a reading list? *Small Wars Journal* received an e-mail the other day that had a message attached from Admiral John C. Harvey, Commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command. The message, "Amphibious and Expeditionary Operations Reading Program"; was addressed to all Commanders, Commanding Officers, Officers-in-Charge and Command Master Chiefs; and concerned preparation for Bold Alligator 12 (the largest amphibious exercise to be conducted by the Fleet in ten years). Galrahn at Information Dissemination has posted the message in its entirety [here](#).

The message emphasized Admiral Harvey's concern that our Sea Services' collective knowledge of amphibious expeditionary operations has eroded over time. As such, the bulk of the message provided Admiral Harvey's personal reading program intended to stimulate the intellectual juices in preparation for BA 12. Good on Admiral Harvey!

The reading list is a personal program, voluntary in nature, but he truly believes it can form the basis of a stronger amphibious expeditionary operations professional reading program. The list contains four "core" books with additional reading focused on specific areas of amphibious operations to include doctrine and tactics.

Full disclosure: Despite my Marine Corps background I have not read all the books on this list and can remember little concerning those I did so many years ago. I've relied on "mini-reviews" and "product descriptions" for the short blurb after each listed book.

I also enjoin you to *add to this list*, let *Small Wars Journal* know what additions are required to build this into a world-class amphibious operations professional reading list.

Now on with Admiral Harvey's list...

Core List: Current doctrine and amphibious operations in a modern environment:

Joint Publication 3-02 (JP 3-02) Amphibious Operations (10 August 2009). The current doctrine for amphibious operations; provides the frame of reference for reading subsequent books on amphibious operations.

Three books on the 1982 Falklands conflict between the United Kingdom and Argentina:

This conflict “featured an amphibious operation carried out by a modern maritime force under a significant threat from conventional air-delivered ordnance without air superiority in the area of operations. While technology has advanced since 1982, many of the warfighting issues we face today are similar in nature to what U.K. forces faced while projecting forces ashore are the end of a long and complex logistical pipeline in a hostile environment.”

One Hundred Days: The Memoirs of the Falklands Battle Group Commander by Sandy Woodward. The personal reflections of Admiral Sandy Woodward, during the hours up to the surrender at Port Stanley, of the repulse of the Argentinean navy and defeat of their air forces, of the sinking of the "Belgrano" and of the landing at Carlos Water, 8000 miles from home.

Amphibious Assault Falklands: The Battle of San Carlos Water by Michael Clapp and Ewen Southby-Taylor. A candid description of the problems met in a Navy racing to war and finding it necessary to recreate a largely abandoned operational technique in a somewhat ad hoc fashion. During the time it took to 'go south' some sense of order was imposed and a not very well defined command structure evolved, this was not done without generating a certain amount of friction.

No Picnic: 3 Commando Brigade in the Falklands by Julian Thompson. Major General Julian Thompson first wrote *No Picnic* when the momentous events of April - June 1982 were fresh in his mind. As Commander of 3 Commando Brigade, he was at the heart of the planning and conduct of the War. Under his direct command had been the Royal Marine Commandos and the two battalions of the Parachute Regiment who conducted the lion's share of the fighting.

Secondary Selections: These books are listed with the intent of broadening the reader's understanding of specific amphibious operations areas:

The U.S. Marines and Amphibious Warfare: Its Theory and its Practice in the Pacific by Jeter A. Isely and Philip A. Crowl. Amphibious operations approaches and techniques not captured in current doctrine, but worth reviewing closely and considering, in updated form, the applicability today (general description by Admiral Harvey concerning all books in this section)

Gators of Neptune: Naval Amphibious Planning for the Normandy Invasion by Christopher D. Yung. A historical account of the Royal and U.S. Navies' involvement in one of the greatest amphibious assaults of modern history. It is a story of cooperation and, at times, discord, between the two navies as they planned the naval portion of the Allied invasion of Normandy. The book has sufficient technical detail to satisfy the modern-day practitioner of amphibious operations.

MacArthur's Amphibious Navy: Seventh Amphibious Force Operations, 1943-1945 by Daniel E. Barbey. Amphibious operations approaches and techniques not captured in current doctrine, but worth reviewing closely and considering, in updated form, the applicability today (general description by Admiral Harvey concerning all books in this section)

U.S. World War II Amphibious Tactics: Mediterranean and European Theaters by Gordon Rottman. This book explains, in accessible terms, the many problems associated with amphibious warfare and how they were overcome in the Mediterranean and European Theaters. It is illustrated with photographs, maps, diagrams and color plates that support the explanations and bring the whole complex process to life.

U.S. World War II Amphibious Tactics: Army and Marine Corps, Pacific Theater by Gordon Rottman. This study offers a clear, succinct explanation of every phase of WW II amphibious operations in the Pacific Theater as they evolved during the war years, illustrated with detailed color plates and photographs.

Secondary Selections (continued): These books provide different perspectives on amphibious operations, using broad sets of studies to derive their conclusions:

Amphibious Operations: The Projection of Sea Power Ashore by Michael Evans. A comprehensive analysis of power projection ashore. This book describes all aspects of amphibious operations from planning to execution, including such elements as ship design, command and control and fire support for the landing force.

At the Water's Edge: Defending Against the Modern Amphibious Assault by Theodore L. Gatchel. Conventional military wisdom holds that the amphibious assault against a defended beach is the most difficult of all military operations--yet modern amphibious landings have been almost universally successful. This apparent contradiction is fully explored in this first look at 20th-century amphibious warfare from the perspective of the defender.

Eagles and Alligators: An Examination of the Command Relationships that Have Existed Between Aircraft Carrier and Amphibious Forces During Amphibious Operations by Theodore L. Gatchel. (Not available online. Naval War College Strategic Research Department Research Memorandum 1-97)

Secondary Selections (continued): These books provide broad histories of amphibious operations doctrine development:

Development of U.S. Joint and Amphibious Doctrine, 1898-1945 (Center for Naval Analyses, Sep 1994) by Barry P. Messina. This research memorandum focuses on the origins and evolution of U.S. doctrine for joint, combined, and amphibious warfare. First, it discusses how doctrine developed from the initial U.S. experience at modern coalition warfare in World War I, and then through the development of techniques and doctrine for operations between the wars. Second, it examines how current doctrine arose out of World War II. Finally, it discusses some of the implications for today's naval forces.

Assault from the Sea: Essays on the History of Amphibious Warfare by Merrill L. Bartlett. Used as a textbook at the United States Naval Academy. Covers the Age of Sail (from 490 B.C.) to the Falklands in 1982. A solid history reference. It contains over 50 different eras in 437 pages.

Sea Soldiers in the Cold War: Amphibious Operations, 1945-1991 by Joseph H. Alexander. An operational history of amphibious warfare in the Cold War, as executed by the two superpowers and their allies and surrogates, emphasizing the activities of the US Navy and Marine Corps. Examines amphibious doctrine, organization, specialized ships and landing craft, and force deployments.

Dave Dilege is Editor-in-Chief of Small Wars Journal and a Director on the Small Wars Foundation's Board of Directors.

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