



## ANNEX 3-04 COUNTERSEA OPERATIONS

### AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS

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With increased maritime operations in the vicinity of the shoreline (the littoral), Air Force forces conducting [countersea operations](#) should be prepared to be part of amphibious operations. [Airmen](#) need to understand that amphibious operations are very intensive and complex in planning, [command and control](#) (C2), and execution. Operations in the amphibious objective area (AOA) are particularly risky due to the high density and close proximity of friendly forces attempting to achieve initial lodgment, with their variety of supporting fires. Landing forces will generally be supported by ship artillery, land-based artillery, organic Navy and Marine airpower, and Air Force [airpower](#), all using the same airspace. The risk of fratricide is high in this environment.

#### Airspace Control During Amphibious Operations

During maritime operations such as [amphibious operations](#), the [airspace control authority](#) (ACA) will normally designate the maritime commander as the controlling authority for a specific airspace control area during the conduct of the amphibious operation (see JP 3-52, [Joint Airspace Control](#)). The complexity and size of an amphibious operation directly affects the amount of airspace allocated. The level of airspace control allocated to the amphibious force depends on the airspace control measures approved by the ACA. If only an [area of operations](#) (AO) is established, the amphibious force may request that the ACA establish a [high-density air space control zone](#) (HIDACZ) over this geographic area. A HIDACZ is airspace designated in an [airspace control plan](#) (ACP) or [airspace control order](#) where there is a concentrated employment of numerous and varied weapons and airspace users. Access is normally controlled by the maneuver commander who has the requisite capabilities to command and control the designated area. The items shown below should be considered when establishing a HIDACZ:

- ✦ Airspace control capabilities and limitations of the amphibious force.
- ✦ Minimum risk routes into and out of the HIDACZ (and to the target area).
- ✦ Air traffic advisory requirements. Procedures and systems must also be considered for air traffic control service during instrument meteorological conditions.
- ✦ Procedures that offer expeditious movement of aircraft into and out of the HIDACZ while providing aircraft deconfliction as well as awareness to surface units.
- ✦ Coordination of fire support, as well as air defense weapons control orders or status within and in the vicinity of the HIDACZ.

- ✦ Range and type of naval surface fire support available.
- ✦ Location of enemy forces inside and in close proximity to the HIDACZ.
- ✦ At a minimum, the HIDACZ should cover the amphibious task force sea echelon areas and extend inland to the landing force's (LF's) fire support coordination line. Additionally, the HIDACZ should be large enough to accommodate the flow of fixed-wing aircraft into and out of the amphibious airspace.

## **C2 OF AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS**

To conduct amphibious operations, an amphibious task force is formed as a Navy task organization in charge of the initial afloat operations. The LF is formed as a Marine Corps or Army task organization in charge of the subsequent shore operations. The two commanders are responsible for the planning of the operation. Once initiated, the commander, amphibious task force (CATF) is the supported commander until enough combat power has been built up on land. The CATF then transitions this supported role to the commander, landing force (CLF) ashore who controls operations until complete or a withdrawal occurs. When an AOA or AO is initially established, Air Force forces could be tasked to support the CATF. Later, during the amphibious operation, air forces would transition to support the CLF. **Until the requisite combat power exists ashore, the amphibious operation is quite vulnerable. It is during this transition from afloat to ashore that Air Force forces can create needed effects and play a pivotal role in the success of the amphibious operation.**

### **Afloat C2**

While the preponderance of forces are sea-based, airspace control in the AOA will be performed by the Navy tactical air control center (TACC). The TACC role is to provide air planning, direction, and control over all air efforts within the airspace sector until such time as a land-based control center is established. Within the TACC, the Navy will produce airspace control measures for incorporation into the ACP and [air tasking order](#) special instructions. The TACC is usually collocated with the supporting arms coordination center (SACC). The SACC works closely with the Navy TACC to integrate both helicopter and fixed wing air operations with [naval surface fire support](#) (NSFS), land based artillery, and any other supporting arms. The SACC is the naval equivalent of the Marine Corps fire support coordination center (FSCC). The Marine Corps establishes a tactical air direction center (TADC) on initial build-up ashore to effect air operations through the Navy TACC.

### **Ashore C2**

Once sufficient combat power is massed ashore, C2 of the AOA is passed to CLF. This transition requires extensive planning and coordination in execution. When established ashore, the Marine Corps's TADC becomes the TACC and the afloat Navy TACC becomes a TADC supporting the Marine Corps TACC. Also, the Marine Corps TACC works in conjunction with the Marine Corps FSCC to integrate the different arms (as the SACC performed afloat).

## Close Air Support C2 During Amphibious Operations

Close air support C2 in an amphibious operation is significantly different from traditional Air Force/Army [close air support](#) (CAS) over land. Planning and coordination require familiarity with maritime terminology and C2 arrangements. Additionally, agencies controlling CAS operations will transition from afloat operations to landing force operations.

Both the Navy and the Marine Corps air control systems are capable of independent operations. However, in the conduct of an amphibious operation, elements of both systems are used to different degrees from the beginning of the operation until the C2 of aircraft and missiles are phased ashore.

Under the CATF, the Navy TACC, typically onboard the amphibious flagship will normally be established as the agency responsible for controlling all air operations within the allocated airspace regardless of mission or origin, to include supporting arms. As the amphibious operation proceeds, C2 of aviation operations is phased ashore as Marine air command and control systems agencies are established on the ground. Air C2 functions are traditionally sequenced ashore in five phases:

(1) Phase one is characterized by the arrival of various “supporting arms controllers” ashore; namely the tactical air control party (TACP), forward observers, air support liaison teams, and naval surface fire spot teams.

(2) Phase two, the Marine direct air support center (DASC) is normally the first principal air control agency ashore during amphibious operations. When control is afloat, the Navy TACC supervises DASC operations.

(3) Phase three, the movement of the Marine TADC ashore, although not directly related to CAS, is the principal event.

(4) Phase four, the senior organization of the Marine air control group is established ashore and functions as the Marine TADC under control of the Navy TACC.

(5) Phase five is characterized by the passage of command responsibility ashore. The Marine Corps TADC assumes the role of the tactical air command center and once the Marine Corps tactical air command center receives control of all LF air operations, the Navy TACC becomes a TADC supporting the land-based air control agency.

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