



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
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OPNAV INSTRUCTION 3501.316B

From: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: POLICY FOR BASELINE COMPOSITION AND BASIC MISSION  
CAPABILITIES OF MAJOR AFLOAT NAVY AND NAVAL GROUPS

Ref: (a) Joint Publication 1, Doctrine for the Armed Forces of  
the United States  
(b) Title 10, U.S. Code  
(c) MCO 3120.9C  
(d) A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower  
(e) Naval Operations Concept  
(f) OPNAVINST S3061.1E (NOTAL)  
(g) Navy Strategic Plan in Support of Program Objective  
Memorandum 2012

Encl: (1) Definition of Terms

1. Purpose. This instruction provides standard naming conventions and terms used to define baseline composition and basic mission capabilities of major afloat Navy and naval groups. The terms and policy described herein neither imply specific operational or administrative command relationships nor address all capability options that may be required per reference (a). The fleet task organizes to best accomplish the range of military operations (ROMO) in support of combatant commander (CCDR) requirements, while ensuring adequate self-defense and force protection. While this instruction describes units that form baseline force packages, global force providers, CCDRs, and operational commanders may tailor force packages based on unit availability, mission analysis, risk assessment, and their delegated authorities to meet specific mission requirements. This instruction is a complete revision and should be reviewed in its entirety.

2. Cancellation. OPNAVINST 3501.316A.

3. Background

a. Per reference (b), *"The Navy shall be organized, trained, and equipped primarily for prompt and sustained combat*

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*incident to operations at sea. It is responsible for the preparation of naval forces necessary for the effective prosecution of war except as otherwise assigned and, in accordance with integrated joint mobilization plans, for the expansion of the peacetime components of the Navy to meet the needs of war."*

b. References (c) through (g) articulate strategic objectives and key capabilities required to meet CCDR requirements and describe how the Navy and Marine Corps team will typically organize, train, deploy, employ, and sustain a capable and ready force in defense of our Nation as part of the larger Joint force. Central to this is the ability of naval forces to aggregate, disaggregate, and re-aggregate to confront a diverse array of challenges and missions. This unique ability provides the flexibility, in support of national strategic objectives across the ROMO, to secure the United States from direct attack; secure strategic access and retain global freedom of action; strengthen existing and emerging alliances and partnerships; and establish favorable security conditions.

4. Definition of Terms. See enclosure (1).

5. Discussion. Tasks vital to the success of initial crisis response missions throughout the ROMO may be performed in permissive, uncertain, or hostile environments. Based on CCDR requirements, the baseline force compositions may be tailored to provide specific capabilities. Higher authority directives will define any deviation from the baseline standard rotational force compositions. Plans and orders, including initiating directives, promulgate organizational constructs for execution of operations, and will normally assign Navy and naval forces to a maritime component commander (Service or functional component commander). Baseline force compositions (groups) include:

a. Carrier Strike Group (CSG). The CSG provides the CCDR with a responsive, flexible capability for sustained maritime power projection and combat survivability to shape the operational environment, respond to crises, and protect United States and allied interests in any threat environment. CSG capabilities support initial crisis response missions, may function as a sea base, and may be undertaken in hostile environments characterized by multiple threats including, but not limited to: anti-ship missiles, ballistic missiles, sea

mines, torpedoes, fighter/attack aircraft, electromagnetic jammers, cruise missile equipped surface combatants, submarines (nuclear and diesel), and terrorist threats. The CSG shall be organized under the command of a one or two star Navy flag officer. The baseline CSG includes:

- (1) One Navy flag officer with staff.
- (2) One destroyer squadron staff.
- (3) One aircraft carrier (CVN).
- (4) One carrier air wing with staff (CVW).
  - (a) One CVW staff.
  - (b) Four strike/fighter squadrons with approximately 44 strike/fighter aircraft (F/A-18A/C/E/F). Nominally, a minimum of two F/A-18 E/F squadrons are included to provide internal tanker support.
  - (c) One airborne early warning squadron with four E-2C or five E-2D aircraft.
  - (d) One electronic warfare squadron with four EA-6B or five EA-18G suppression of enemy air defense/electronic warfare aircraft.
  - (e) Rotary wing assets. One of the following:
    1. One helicopter sea combat (HSC) squadron with 8 surface warfare (SUW)/naval special warfare/combat search and rescue (CSAR) capable helicopters (MH-60S) and 1 helicopter maritime strike squadron with 11 SUW/anti-submarine warfare (ASW) capable helicopters (MH-60R). This option provides two to four helicopter detachments to CSG surface combatant ships.
    2. One helicopter anti-submarine squadron with six SUW/ASW capable helicopters (SH-60F) and two CSAR capable helicopters (HH-60H).
  - (f) One carrier on board delivery aircraft detachment with two aircraft (C-2A).

(5) Five surface combatant ships.

(a) Nominally, three cruise missile land attack (e.g., Tomahawk Land-Attack Missile (TLAM)) capable surface combatant ships.

(b) Nominally, four air/missile defense capable surface combatant ships (guided missile cruiser (CG)/guided missile destroyer (DDG)).

(c) Nominally, two to three SUW cruise missile (e.g., HARPOON) capable surface combatants (CG, DDG).

(d) Nominally, two tactical towed array systems.

(6) Rotary wing assets. One of the following:

(a) Two to four surface combatant ship helicopter detachments with three to six helicopters (SH-60B).

(b) Two to four helicopter detachments with helicopters sourced from CVN-based squadron (MH-60R).

(c) Nominally, helicopter and maintenance detachments should be assigned for every helicopter capable/hangar-configured surface combatant to ensure readiness for disaggregated operations.

(7) Nominally, one cruise missile land attack/ASW submarine (SSN). To ensure CSG-SSN training interoperability, both east and west coast deployers normally include an SSN as part of CSG work-up, although only Atlantic Fleet SSNs are assigned to deploy with CSGs.

b. Amphibious Ready Group/Marine Expeditionary Unit (ARG/MEU). The ARG/MEU is a scalable and adaptable sea-based force that conducts a variety of missions across the ROMO. The ARG/MEU provides the CCDR with a responsive and flexible capability to shape the operational environment, respond to crises, and protect United States and allied interests. ARG/MEU capabilities support initial crisis response and other missions in permissive and selected uncertain and hostile environments and include, but are not limited to: amphibious demonstrations, amphibious raids, amphibious assaults, amphibious withdrawals,

non-combatant evacuation operations, security operations, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime security operations, enabling operations for follow-on forces, and function as a sea base. Refer to reference (c) for complete list of MEU and Special Operations Capable (MEU (SOC)) capabilities. The ARG and Navy detachments are organized under the command of a Navy O-6, while the MEU is under the command of a Marine Corps O-6.

(1) ARG Composition. The baseline ARG is:

(a) One Navy O-6 with amphibious squadron staff.

(b) A minimum of three amphibious ships. This is a nominal number as it is dependent on the CCDR requirements and missions (i.e., forward deployed naval force) and specific ship platform capacities and capabilities.

1. One amphibious assault ship, multi- or general purpose (LHD/LHA).

2. One amphibious transport dock ship.

3. One amphibious dock landing ship.

(c) One search and rescue/logistics capable helicopter detachment consisting of two MH-60S helicopters (expeditionary HSC).

(d) One assault craft unit (ACU) landing craft air cushion detachment.

(e) One ACU landing craft unit detachment.

(f) One beachmaster unit detachment.

(g) One tactical air control squadron detachment.

(h) One fleet surgical team detachment.

(i) Nominally, one Navy explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) platoon.

(j) One amphibious construction battalion detachment.

(2) MEU Composition. The baseline MEU is:

(a) One Marine Corps O-6 with MEU command element (CE) staff.

(b) One aviation combat element (ACE) with a task organized mix of medium and heavy lift rotary wing and tilt-rotor assault support, rotary wing attack helicopters, vertical/short takeoff and landing strike and aerial refueling/transport fixed-wing aircraft, and associated supporting detachments. For planning purposes, a notional ACE consists of 6 AV-8 aircraft; 10 to 12 MV-22 tilt-rotor aircraft or CH-46 helicopters; 4 CH-53 helicopters; 4 AH-1 helicopters; 3 UH-1 helicopters; and 2 KC-130 Continental United States or forward-based aircraft, tethered for contingency response as required.

(c) One ground combat element (GCE) consisting of a battalion landing team formed of an infantry battalion reinforced with attached light armored reconnaissance company or platoon, tank platoon, amphibious assault vehicle platoon, reconnaissance platoon, combat engineer platoon, and artillery battery.

(d) One logistics combat element (LCE) consisting of a task organized combat logistics battalion (CLB) which normally includes military police, EOD (Marine Corps), transportation, general engineering, maintenance, communications, supply, medical, dental, postal, and disbursing detachments.

(3) Special Operating Forces (SOF). Depending on the mission and task, the ARG/MEU (SOC) may include SOF which may be composed of Navy SOF or Marine SOF. The ARG/MEU will be capable of integrating SOF when directed.

c. Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG). In the event a requirement exists that an ARG/MEU, supported by other forces, be flag officer or general officer-led, the formation shall be referred to as an ESG. It shall include an embarked Navy flag officer or Marine Corps general officer and an associated CE

staff. The ESG CE, consisting of both Navy and Marine Corps personnel, provides a greater range of amphibious and or expeditionary warfare planning capabilities for the execution of a variety of missions in the operational environment, including the ability to conduct and support operations ashore and function as a sea base. ESG capabilities support initial crisis response missions and may be undertaken in permissive and selected uncertain and hostile environments, dependent upon the assigned or attached force structure and composition. The baseline ESG includes:

- (1) One Navy flag officer or Marine Corps general officer with CE staff.
- (2) One ARG/MEU.
- (3) Other forces as assigned, based on mission and CCDR requirements.

d. Surface Action Group (SAG). The SAG provides the CCDR a versatile, tailorable surface combatant-centric force with multi-mission capabilities to support maritime objectives. The SAG can operate in permissive, uncertain, or hostile environments, and independently or in conjunction with allied or coalition maritime forces, provide sea control, deterrence, and immediate contingency response while maintaining the ability to conduct maritime security operations and other tasks such as sea basing. SAG capabilities could include passive surveillance and tracking, passive defense and early warning, strike operations, as well as the SUW capabilities inherent within the specific surface combatant. When so equipped, SAGs include maritime ballistic missile defense, HARPOON, and TLAM capabilities. The SAG is organized under the command of the senior ship commanding officer or other specified officer as assigned. The baseline SAG is a minimum of two surface combatant ships with specific unit assignments based on the assigned mission(s).

6. Naming Conventions. The following standardized naming conventions will be used for administrative and planning purposes (e.g., strategic communications, public affairs, global force management (GFM), training, maintenance, etc.) to more easily identify major afloat Navy and naval groups.

a. CSG. It will assume the name of the CVN. Example: "LINCOLN CSG."

b. ARG/MEU. It will assume the name of the large deck amphibious ship (LHD/LHA) and the numbered MEU. Example: "BATAAN ARG/22 MEU." When the MEU is not embarked, naming convention will be "BATAAN ARG."

c. ESG. It will assume the name of the large deck amphibious ship (LHD/LHA). Example: "BATAAN ESG."

d. SAG. It will normally assume the name of the ship of senior unit commanding officer, or specific officer as assigned or embarked (under Navy led), or as directed if Navy ships are part of a multinational SAG. Example: "LAKE ERIE SAG."

## 7. Action

a. Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Operations, Plans, and Strategy) (N3/N5) shall:

(1) Coordinate the implementation of this guidance.

(2) Serve as the focal point on the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV) staff for Navy, Joint, and interagency policy matters bearing on major afloat Navy and naval group deployments as they pertain to at-sea capabilities.

(3) Conduct a periodic review and update this instruction as applicable.

b. Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command (COMUSFLTFORCOM) shall:

(1) Coordinate with Navy component commanders (NCCs), type commanders (TYCOMs), and numbered fleet commanders to facilitate the training and deployment of major afloat Navy and naval groups as they pertain to at-sea capabilities.

(2) Provide Commander, U.S. Joint Forces Command, with organized, manned, trained, and equipped Navy forces for deployment as directed and per request for forces (RFFs) and GFM requirements.



(3) Deploy Navy forces as directed. Coordinate with Commander, Marine Forces Command for Marine Corps forces as appropriate.

(4) Provide input to the appropriate CCDRs to ensure major afloat Navy and naval groups as they pertain to at-sea capabilities are integrated into the joint mission essential task lists (JMETLs).

(5) Establish standard Navy-wide training and pre-deployment certification procedures and processes.

(6) Establish standard Navy-wide, Navy mission essential task lists for major afloat Navy and naval groups as they pertain to at-sea capabilities.

c. Commander, United States Pacific Fleet shall:

(1) Coordinate with NCCs, TYCOMs, and numbered fleet commanders to facilitate the training and deployment of major afloat Navy and naval groups as they pertain to at-sea capabilities.

(2) Provide organized, manned, trained, and equipped forces for deployment as directed and per RFFs and GFM requirements.

(3) Deploy Navy forces as directed. Coordinate with Commander, Marine Forces Pacific for Marine Corps forces as appropriate.

(4) Provide input to the CCDR to ensure major afloat Navy and naval groups as they pertain to at-sea capabilities are integrated into the JMETLs.

(5) Provide COMUSFLTFORCOM with proposed changes to the appropriate training and pre-deployment certification policies, procedures, and processes as required.

d. TYCOMs shall apprise COMUSFLTFORCOM of current and future Navy/naval capabilities and requirements.


e. NCCs shall:

(1) Apprise COMUSFLTFORCOM of CCDR's current and future Navy/naval capabilities and requirements.

(2) Direct manning, equipping, and training requirements from assigned fleet units, numbered fleet commander, and TYCOM to COMUSFLTFORCOM.

(3) Represent other Navy Echelon II administrative issues to the Chief of Naval Operations.

8. Records Management. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of media and format, shall be managed per Secretary of the Navy Manual 5210.1 of November 2007.



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DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Amphibious Force. An amphibious task force and a landing force together with other forces that are trained, organized, and equipped for amphibious operations. (JP 1-02. Source: JP 3-02)
2. Amphibious Ready Group (ARG). A Navy task organization formed to conduct amphibious operations. (JP 1-02. Source: N/A)
3. Amphibious Shipping. Organic Navy ships specifically designed to transport, land, and support landing forces in amphibious assault operations and capable of being loaded or unloaded by naval personnel without external assistance in the amphibious objective area. (JP 1-02. Source: N/A)
4. Amphibious Squadron. A tactical and administrative organization composed of amphibious assault shipping to transport troops and their equipment for an amphibious assault operation. (JP 1-02. Source: N/A)
5. Amphibious Task Force. A Navy task organization formed to conduct amphibious operations. The amphibious task force, together with the landing force and other forces, constitutes the amphibious force. (JP 1-02. Source: JP 3-02)
6. Carrier Air Wing (CVW). Two or more aircraft squadrons formed under one commander for administrative and tactical control of operations from a carrier. (JP 1-02. Source: N/A)
7. Carrier Strike Group (CSG). A standing naval task group consisting of a carrier, embarked air wing, surface combatants, and submarines as assigned in direct support, operating in mutual support with the task of destroying hostile submarine, surface, and air forces within the group's assigned operational area and striking at targets along hostile shore lines or projecting power inland. (JP 1-02. Source: N/A)
8. Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG). An ARG/MEU, supported by other forces, and led by an embarked Navy flag officer or Marine Corps general officer and an associated CE staff. An ESG provides a greater range of amphibious and or expeditionary warfare planning capabilities for the execution of a variety of

missions in the operational environment, including the ability to conduct and support operations ashore and function as a sea base. (Source: N/A)

9. Hostile Environment. Operational environment in which hostile forces have control as well as the intent and capability to effectively oppose or react to the operations a unit intends to conduct. (JP 1-02. Source: JP 3-0)

10. Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF). The Marine Corps principal organization for all missions across the ROMO, composed of forces task-organized under a single commander capable of responding rapidly to a contingency anywhere in the world. The types of forces in the MAGTF are functionally grouped into four core elements: a CE, an ACE, a GCE, and an LCE. The four core elements are categories of forces, not formal commands. The basic structure of the MAGTF never varies, though the number, size, and type of Marine Corps units comprising each of its four elements will always be mission dependent. The flexibility of the organizational structure allows for one or more subordinate MAGTFs to be assigned. (JP 1-02. Source: N/A)

11. Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). A MAGTF that is constructed around a CE, an infantry battalion reinforced, a helicopter squadron reinforced, and a task-organized CLB. It normally fulfills Marine Corps forward sea-based deployment requirements. The MEU provides an immediate reaction capability for crisis response and is capable of limited combat operations. (Source: N/A)

12. Operational Environment. A composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander. (JP 1-02. Source: JP 3-0)

13. Permissive Environment. Operational environment in which host country military and law enforcement agencies have control as well as the intent and capability to assist operations a unit intends to conduct. (JP 1-02. Source: JP 3-0)

14. Sea basing. The deployment, assembly, command, projection, reconstitution, and re-employment of joint power from the sea without reliance on land bases within the area of operations.

(JP 1-02. Source: JP 3-02)

15. Surface Action Group (SAG). A temporary or standing organization of combatant ships, other than carriers, tailored for a specific tactical mission. (JP 1-02. Source: JP 3-33)

16. Surface Combatant. A ship constructed and armed for combat use with the capability to conduct operations in multiple maritime roles against air, surface and subsurface threats, and land targets. (JP 1-02. Source: N/A)

17. Task Force

a. A temporary grouping of units, under one commander, formed for the purpose of carrying out a specific operation or mission.

b. A semi-permanent organization of units, under one commander, formed for the purpose of carrying out a continuing specific task.

c. A component of a fleet organized by the commander of a task fleet or higher authority for the accomplishment of a specific task or tasks. (JP 1-02. Source: N/A)

18. Uncertain Environment. Operational environment in which host government forces, whether opposed to or receptive to operations a unit intends to conduct, do not have totally effective control of the territory and population in the intended operational area. (JP 1-02. Source: JP 3-0)