

Jeffrey Thomas

Professor Mark Wegge

Module 4: Joint Capabilities

27 October 2025

DBF 4.4: USCG / USMC Capabilities

Response

QUESTION: *How can the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Marine Corps contribute to the “naval” aspects of an operation? How can a Joint Force Commander best integrate the USCG and USMC into an operation? (minimum of 250 words)*

Primary Post (*by October 27, 2025*)

The Joint Force Commander achieves the naval Operational Objective (OPO) by integrating the United States Marine Corps (USMC) to generate positional advantage from key maritime terrain and the United States Coast Guard (USCG) to secure sea lines of communication (SLOC), enforce control measures, and lower mine and submarine risk, because sea control is temporary and local and depends on sequencing joint effects across air, maritime, ground, cyber, and space.

The OPO drives task and purpose and requires local sea control along specified SLOCs in order to land, sustain, and protect a lodgment ashore. Marine formations create dilemmas from landward positions that hold hostile fleets, sensors, and logistics at risk. Coast Guard forces extend endurance and legality across the competition continuum through maritime interdiction, sanctions enforcement, expeditionary port security, and maritime governance.

Sea control serves as a precondition for follow-on operations and must be created where and when required. “Sea control does not mean command of all the seas, all the time. Rather, it is the capability and capacity to impose localized sea control when and where it is required” (Rowden et al., 2015, p. 2). Navy-Marine integration forms a combined striking problem that complicates targeting and sensing (Rowden et al., 2015, p. 2). Coast Guard Port Security Units (PSUs) and ship riders from Law Enforcement Detachments (LEDETs) and Tactical Law Enforcement Teams (TACLETs) preserve SLOCs and blockade effectiveness, while early mine countermeasures and antisubmarine warfare (ASW) prove essential, “since the end of World War II mines have seriously damaged or sunk almost four times more U.S. Navy ships than all other means of attack combined” (Truver, 2012, p. 32) and success in ASW requires “close teamwork of all ASW forces” with global intelligence support (Burke, 1959, as cited in Vego, 2016, p. 1). In summary, the operational design aligns ends, ways, and means by pairing Marine positional leverage with Coast Guard authorities and presence, then sequencing mine countermeasures and antisubmarine warfare to manage risk and keep the joint force on the campaign clock.

References

- Rowden, T., Gumataotao, P., & Fanta, P. (2015, January). Distributed lethality. *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, 141(1), 18–23.
- Truver, S. C. (2012). Taking mines seriously: Mine warfare in China’s near seas. *Naval War College Review*, 65(2), 30–66.
- Vego, M. (2016, June). Fundamentals of antisubmarine warfare (NWC 1081A). United States Naval War College, Joint Military Operations Department.

Secondary Post #1 (by October 29, 2025)

QUESTION (Jordan): *TODO (minimum of 150 words)*

Jordan, strong frame on purpose and measures. I concur and would tighten the design around the operational objective (OPO), then sequence effects that hold schedule. First, align authorities and timelines. Coast Guard law enforcement under Title 14 paired with Marine employment under Title 10 shortens the gap from detection to disposition, which keeps interdictions and sanctions on the same clock as fires and maneuver. Second, clear hazards before throughput becomes decisive. Mines have imposed disproportionate loss since 1945, as “mines have seriously damaged or sunk almost four times more U.S. Navy ships than all other means of attack combined” (Truver, 2012, p. 32). Third, protect the lodgment against submarines with integrated antisubmarine warfare that depends on “close teamwork of all ASW forces” and global intelligence support (Burke, 1959, as cited in Vego, 2016, p. 1).

In summary, tie the OPO to two pacing metrics, time to operational depth for approach lanes and interdiction yield that removes specific enemy logistics, then sequence mine countermeasures and antisubmarine warfare around Coast Guard authorities and Marine positional leverage to keep the joint force on time.

References

Truver, S. C. (2012). Taking mines seriously: Mine warfare in China’s near seas. *Naval War College Review*, 65(2), 30–66.

Vego, M. (2016, June). Fundamentals of antisubmarine warfare (NWC 1081A). United States Naval War College, Joint Military Operations Department.

Secondary Post # 2 (*by October 29, 2025*)

QUESTION (Warren): *TODO (minimum of 150 words)*

Warren, good catalog. Framing by the Operational Objective (OPO) tightens the logic. If the OPO is a protected lodgment by a date certain, local sea control becomes a condition created on schedule because throughput and defended sorties hinge on it. Sequence matters. Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) effects land cleanly only when mine countermeasures and antisubmarine warfare run early and in parallel, since mines offer a low cost, high effect asymmetric threat and have repeatedly degraded fleet freedom in confined waters, including the northern Arabian Gulf in 1991 (Truver, 2012). Sea control is temporary, so design for episodic creation at decisive places, then hand it off without pause to sustainment and protection tasks that keep the lodgment on time (Vego, 2016). Make presence lawful and persistent. Coast Guard Title 14 authorities, Law Enforcement Detachments (LEDETs) on Navy hulls, and Port Security Units (PSUs) at convoy nodes compress the detection to disposition cycle and harden sea lines of communication (SLOC) while Marines hold chokepoints at risk from landward positions and cue naval shooters (U.S. Naval War College, Joint Military Operations Department, 2023).

References

Truver, S. C. (2012). Taking mines seriously: Mine warfare in China's near seas. *Naval War College Review*, 65(2), 30–66.

U.S. Naval War College, Joint Military Operations Department. (2023, January).

Forces/Capabilities handbook (NWC 3153T). U.S. Naval War College.

Vego, M. (2016, May). Fundamentals of surface warfare (NWC 1164A). U.S. Naval War College, Joint Military Operations Department.

Secondary Post # 3 (*by December 4, 2025*)

QUESTION (Robert): *TODO (minimum of 150 words)*

Robert, strong overview with the right instincts on pairing authorities and maneuver. I would frame around a single Operational Objective (OPO), then plan regressively along the Conflict Continuum. If the OPO is a protected lodgment by a certain date, local sea control becomes a condition created on schedule, then converted into convoy throughput and defended sorties. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) contribution abroad should center on Deployable Specialized Forces (DSF) because most Coast Guard capabilities are aligned to Title 14 at home, while DSF effects translate for Title 10 commanders overseas. Law Enforcement Detachments (LEDETs), Port Security Units (PSUs), Maritime Security Response Teams (MSRTs), and Maritime Safety and Security Teams (MSSTs) project lawful control forward through interdiction, sanctions enforcement, and expeditionary port security that keeps sea lines of communication (SLOCs) and approach lanes usable. The United States Marine Corps (USMC) brings expeditionary combined arms through the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF), Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO), and Stand-In Forces (SIF) that hold fleets, sensors, and logistics at risk from key littorals while protecting connector and tanker cycles. A Joint Force Commander embeds Coast Guard planners with the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander (JFMCC), sequences mine countermeasures (MCM) and antisubmarine warfare (ASW) with convoy and

lodgment tasks and employs DSF to secure cleared approach lanes and convoy nodes through maritime force protection, interdiction, and enforcement, preserving safe convoy movement while mine countermeasures teams maintain clearance.

Professor Feedback

Jeff,

Good job on capabilities. Keep in mind that no one in the J3 or J5 shop is an expert on everything, this includes the JFC. That is why JOINT planning IS the key to success. Seek your other service colleagues' knowledge and advice. This is true during OP/EX execution as well. The last piece of this is the Joint OP/EX After Action Report (AAR) & Lessons Learned (LL). It's a continuous cycle of improvement. This is and should be a recurring theme: joint planning - joint execution - joint AAR/LL – apply LL to joint planning - repeat. Good use of Mod 3 concepts!