ADVANCED BASE PROBLEMS: 1933-1939

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Graduate Certificate in Maritime History

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by
Major Jake J. Hubbard, USMC

June 10, 2020

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14. ABSTRACT Nearly absent in existing historiography, the Marine Corps Schools-Naval War College Advanced Base Problems were one of the pillars of Interwar Period innovation. More than academic drills, they forced the services to perform critical analysis of their ability to practically fight their way across the Pacific by seizing and defending advance bases. The audience was not merely the academic faculties and student bodies at the schools, instead targeting the service chiefs themselves with an intent to directly define the requirements of both services to conduct advanced base operations at a time when no other planning organizations were postured to do so. With senior naval leadership at last in full support, Marine Corps Schools' Advanced Base Problem solutions presented to the Naval War College provided the opportunity to convert the rest of the Navy's officer corps to see the value of using Marines in support of the fleet. The goals of General John A. Lejeune to realign the Marine Corps in support of the naval fleet bore fruit in large part due to the success of the Advanced Base Problems.

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ADVANCED BASE PROBLEMS: 1933-1939

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Abstract

Nearly absent in existing historiography, the Marine Corps Schools-Naval War College Advanced Base Problems were engines of innovation in the interwar years. More than academic drills, they forced the services to perform critical analysis of their ability to fight their way across the Pacific by seizing and defending advance bases. The audience was not merely the academic faculties and student bodies at the schools, but also the service chiefs themselves. They sought to define the requirements of both services to conduct advanced base operations at a time when no other planning organizations were positioned to do so. The designers of the problems had to overcome skeptical naval leaders, but when they did, the problems provided the opportunity to convert the rest of the Navy's officer corps into believers in the value of using Marines in support of the fleet. The goals of General John A. Lejeune to realign the Marine Corps in support of the naval fleet bore fruit in large part due to the success of the Advanced Base Problems.

Subject Items: Advanced Base Problems; Marine Corps; Marine Corps Schools; Naval War College; Interwar Period; South Pacific Theater; Landing Operations; Amphibious Operations; Miller, Colonel Ellis B.; Cutts, Colonel Richard M.

Whether in peace or war, naval forces require the ability to support expeditionary operations ashore. From Presley O'Bannon at Tripoli to Task Force 58 in Afghanistan, amphibious forces have demonstrated the full potential of navies in wartime. Similarly, American amphibious forces have constantly demonstrated their multifaceted capacity to provide humanitarian assistance and evacuation operations after disasters in peacetime. Given the historical importance of amphibious forces, the U.S. Marine Corps has arguably drifted from its central purpose as a fundamental branch of the American sea services. Over the past two decades, the service has largely focused on fighting counterinsurgency missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, retaining a naval expeditionary capability in theory but exercising it infrequently in practice. The Global War on Terror's magnetic pull on the Marine Corps' institutional focus during this period caused the service to get caught up in the demands of long-duration land campaigns that sapped resources and skewed institutional knowledge towards a specialization in the character of that form of war.

This is changing, however. In his 38th Commandant's Planning Guidance, General David Berger stated, "The Marine Corps will be trained and equipped as a naval expeditionary force-in-readiness and prepared to operate inside actively contested maritime spaces in support of fleet operations. In crisis prevention and crisis response, the Fleet Marine Force – acting as an extension of the Fleet – will be first on the scene, first to help, first to contain a brewing crisis,

and first to fight if required to do so."[1] The revival of the old "Fleet Marine Force" label hearkens back to an earlier era, and emphasizes the direction of the intended transition.

A century ago, fresh off of over three decades of counterinsurgency operations in the Banana Wars and a brief but legendary performance with the U.S. Army against the Germans on the fields of France, the Marine Corps was in the middle of a similar effort to redefine the service's mission. The Marine Corps' institutional focus had drifted away from the sea, causing the service to become almost a second land army rather than a uniquely trained and equipped marine force in service of the naval fleet. By 1933, with the last of the Marines fighting in "small wars" returning home, the service realigned itself for the first time into the "Fleet Marine Force."

The Fleet Marine Force evolved from the effort to foster improvements in the broader operational mission of the American sea services. Given the functions of the U.S. Navy in blue water operations, the U.S. Marine Corps recognized the need to develop enhanced doctrine and procedures to coordinate amphibious operations. The expeditionary tasks inherent to seizing and defending naval advanced bases centered upon sustaining the logistical requirements of the fleet, enhancing maritime influence, and ultimately supporting the military policy of the United States on the global stage.

Efforts by the American sea services to develop sound doctrinal foundations for expeditionary operations evolved from necessity. By 1934, the service published the core of its experimental amphibious warfare doctrine, the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations,* and the next year, the Marine Corps executed the first of what became seven significant amphibious training and experimentation events. These "Fleet Landing Exercises" (FLEX) between 1935-

[1] David Berger, *Commandant's Planning Guidance* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office), 1.

1941 molded the budding art and science of amphibious warfare and prepared the service for the demands of the island-hopping campaign of World War II.[2]

This story is well-known. The efforts of the U.S. Marine Corps to innovate and test new concepts during the interwar period profoundly shaped the service. The FLEX series undoubtedly represented the core of hands-on interwar training for the U.S. Marine Corps. However, there is far more to the story of this preparatory period. Indeed, integral to this era were a series of planning exercises developed by the staffs of Marine Corps Schools in Quantico and the Naval War College in Newport.

The schools called these planning exercises "advanced base problems." These problems focused on the use of the Marine Corps to conduct landing operations to seize and defend advanced naval bases, and the impact of these events across the Navy and Marine Corps was substantial. The problems provided a means to exchange ideas between the staffs and student populations of these two schools, educating the future leaders of the Pacific Campaign in the ways of amphibious warfare and shaping the evolution of the FLEX series. Moreover, the timing of these events was such that their impact did not stop at educating student officers. In many ways, the plans developed in these exercises were the first time either service undertook detailed study of many aspects of amphibious operations, the results of which influenced war planning, force design, tactical innovation, and technology development. Lieutenant Colonel Alfred H. Noble, in concluding remarks for Advanced Base Problem V in 1939, spoke of this trailblazing role of the Advanced Base Problems, stating, "I believe there is a marked and growing realization of this fact, and that some of our strategical plans and fleet organization are being

[2] Jeter A. Isely and Dr. Philip A. Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War: Its Theory, and its Practice in the Pacific* (E-Book: Pickle Partners Publishing, 2015), 68-90.

gradually influenced by the problems worked out here and at the Marine Corps Schools."[3] Yet, the Advanced Base Problems have received little scholarly attention from historians, despite the high-level service leadership attention they attracted at the time.

This paper addresses this gap in the historiography by uncovering the details of the Advanced Base Problems of 1933 to 1939 and sets them into proper place in the broader context of Marine Corps amphibious warfare development. An examination of the Advanced Base Problems brings to light the true value of these exercises and the role they played. The Advanced Base Problems were as essential to the interwar transformation of the Marine Corps into the Fleet Marine Force as war planning, wargaming, the Fleet Landing Exercises, and the creation of the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*. Garnering the attention of the service chiefs and their war planning divisions, the Advanced Base Problems provided fertile ground for developing the new doctrine and tactics of landing operations. They also fundamentally shaped the thinking of critical U.S. Navy and Marine Corps officers who led the services through combat in World War II, directly influenced the evolution of joint war planning, aided in spurring the research and development of specialized amphibious warfare technology, and clearly articulated and demonstrated the role of the Fleet Marine Force in support of the U.S. Naval Fleet.

Literature Review

There are innumerable sources that capture the overall history of the Marine Corps' development of amphibious warfare in the interwar period, and several are particularly effective in

[3] Lieutenant Colonel Alfred H. Noble, "Conclusion," *Advanced Base Problem No. 5*, 7, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problem V-VIII (PT.1), Box 7, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division (MHD), Quantico, VA.

highlighting key events such as the Fleet Landing Exercises and the writing of the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* as well as the role those events played in preparing for war. However, none of these sources address the Marine Corps Schools-Naval War College Advanced Base Problems in detail.

The first study of interwar training efforts came shortly after the end of the war. General Holland M. Smith wrote a series of post-war articles published in the *Marine Corps Gazette* that were republished together in 1992 by Headquarters Marine Corps as *The Development of Amphibious Tactics in the U.S. Navy*. In Chapter 2, Smith recounts the origins of amphibious warfare doctrine, and places substantial emphasis on the Fleet Landing Exercises. He identifies the work of Marine Corps Schools to advance amphibious warfare development, but mentions the Naval War College only briefly, and does not address the coordination between the two schools on Advanced Base Problems.[4]

In 1951, the Marine Corps supported an outside study of its amphibious history titled *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War, its Theory, and its Practice in the Pacific*, by Jeter A. Isely and Dr. Phillip A. Crowl. This remains one of the most comprehensive, focused discussions and evaluations of amphibious warfare tactical and technological development in the interwar period. As Isely and Crowl carefully note, "The Marine Corps and the Navy have cooperated in the preparation of this work, making available all sources save those which might jeopardize current security; this means that nearly all sources dated up to the end of World War II were available. The volume was sponsored by the Marine Corps, but is in no way an official history."[5] In their

[4] Holland M. Smith, *The Development of Amphibious Tactics in the U.S. Navy* (E-Book: Pickle Partners Publishing, 2015). Interestingly, Smith appears to have borrowed much of his prose on the FLEXs almost verbatim from Lieutenant Colonel B.W. Gally, "A History of U.S. Fleet Landing Exercises," Atlantic Squadron, U.S. Navy, 1939, Historical Amphibious Files Collection (HAF), COLL/3634, HAF 73, MHD.

[5] Isely and Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, 8-9.

study, Isely and Crowl explicitly, though briefly, highlight the Marine Corps Schools-Naval War College collaboration on Advanced Base Problems, and they provide tantalizing details that suggest there is more to be unearthed. For example, they note that such problems were considered by the two schools annually from 1935 to 1943, and that they had a geographic focus that often lined up with islands that subsequently became Pacific Campaign objectives, such as Truk, Palau, Guam, and Saipan. They also argue that these planning problems quickly became obsolete, but were valuable in enhancing the amphibious warfare knowledge base of Navy and Marine Corps officers, with particular value in applying that knowledge to the aforementioned islands.[6] Unfortunately, the few sentences Isely and Crowl dedicate to the topic betray little else, and represent but a small portion of the introduction to their interwar chapter. They also miss the full story, as the Advanced Base Problems started informally in 1931, and the second iteration gained the title of "Advanced Base Problem No. 1" in 1933. Moreover, the series continued in some form after the war, as well.[7]

In a 1967 *Marine Corps Gazette* article, Lieutenant Colonel Bernard E. Trainor discussed the role of Quantico in the development of amphibious warfare training and doctrine. He dedicated one paragraph to discussing the Advanced Base Problems, and noted that Marine Corps Schools presented the school's solutions to these problems at "other service schools" and that their success led to their continuation after the war in the form of the "Amphibious Warfare Presentation Team."[8] A 2010 Master's Thesis by Major David C. Emmel, titled "Amphibious

[6] Isely and Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, 89-90.
[7] Advanced Base Problem VIII, Stovepipe 1947, MHD.
[8] Bernard E. Trainor, "School for Doctrine," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Vol. 51, no. 11 (1967), 66.

Warfare Doctrine," provides a similar brief discussion and puts the total number of Advanced Base Problems at ten.[9]

Multiple monographs, theses, and articles discuss matters that relate to the Advanced Base Problems without addressing them directly. A key source for the Emmel thesis is Kenneth J. Clifford's 1973 work, *Progress and Purpose*, which provides a concise overview of how the entire Marine Corps evolved over a 70-year period, with particular value coming from sections on the fleet maneuvers of the 1920s and an overview of the evolution of Marine Corps Schools.[10] Williamson R. Murray and Allan R. Millett take a broad approach to military innovation writ-large during the time between world wars.[11] Lieutenant General Victor Krulak's *First to Fight*, required reading for all Marines, dedicated a chapter to interwar innovation and captured the spirit of experimentation fostered during the interwar period.[12] Craig C. Felker's *Testing American Sea Power* provides an excellent concise discussion of the broader story of Marine Corps landing operations mission development during the interwar period.[13] Millett's *Semper Fidelis* does the same.[14] Leo J. Daugherty III's *Pioneers of Amphibious Warfare, 1898-1945*, provides case studies of many of the men who played crucial roles in developing the mission,

[9] David C. Emmel, "The Development of Amphibious Doctrine," (Master's thesis. U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2010).
[10] Kenneth J. Clifford, *Progress and Purpose: A Developmental History of the United States Marine Corps 1900-1970* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, 1973).
[11] Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray, eds., *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
[12] Victor H. Krulak, *First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1984).
[13] Craig C. Felker, *Testing American Sea Power: U.S. Navy Strategic Exercises, 1923-1940* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2007).
[14] Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps* (New York: The Free Press, 1991).

including the leading architect of the Advanced Base Problems, Colonel Ellis B. Miller, USMC.[15]

Among the most useful studies is Albert A. Nofi's *To Train the Fleet for War* is the analytical standard for the Navy's fleet problems. What is missing in the contemporary literature, however, is an equivalent monograph-length work covering amphibious warfare development. Nofi's work, though extensive, does not go into detail on amphibious exercises and training.[16] As a result, primary sources provide the bulk of the available content covering the Advanced Base Problems and their historical context. The Naval Historical Collection (NHC) Archives at the Naval War College and the Marine Corps History Division Archives Branch hold documentation covering the "Advanced Base Problem" exchanges.

Background

The story of the Marine Corps' development of amphibious warfare capability dates to the era of the Spanish-American War, when the United States found itself operating overseas in areas where it lacked established advanced bases capable of refueling the fleet. After the war, recognizing that future fleet needs might necessitate the seizure and defense of advanced bases, naval planners tuned to the Marine Corps to prepare for the task, adding a third task to their existing portfolio of staffing ships with Marine detachments, protecting naval bases, and increasingly, fighting American "small wars." Though initially a tertiary responsibility, in the coming decades the Marine Corps would latch on to advanced base operations as its *raison d'*

[15] Leo J. Daugherty III, *Pioneers of Amphibious Warfare, 1898-1945: Profiles of Fourteen American Strategists* (Jefferson: McFarland and Company, 2009).
[16] Albert A. Nofi, *To Train the Fleet for War: U.S. Navy Fleet Problems, 1923-1940* (Newport: Naval War College Press, 2010).

être and completely change the character and culture of the institution to adapt to the new mission.[17]

Advanced base operations include both the seizure of advanced bases in landing operations, and their subsequent defense. The Marines initially focused on the defense mission, as the sudden acquisition of the Philippines made the American garrison there particularly vulnerable to attack by the European powers. The ominous shadows cast by the rising sun of Imperial Japan further necessitated the importance of expeditionary forces within the U.S. Navy. This mission naturally fell to the Marines to lead in the development of doctrine, specialized equipment, and tactics. Given the imperial maintenance of American territories in the vast expanses of the greater Pacific Ocean areas, the first Marine Corps classes on advanced base operations convened in Newport, Rhode Island in 1901.

From these early studies, Marines developed their first advanced base exercises in the Caribbean. In choosing to conduct exercises on the island of Culebra, Puerto Rico, the sea services were as strategic as they were practical. The barely inhabited island was in the middle of North American waters dotted by French, Dutch, and British advanced bases, and was astride the route to the Panama Canal. The battalion that arrived demonstrated American strategic reach by practicing a defense of the island against an attack from the sea, foreshadowing both the Marine Corps' future mission of amphibious assault and their extensive use of Culebra as their primary amphibious training ground for east coast Marine Corps units. A formal school for advanced base operations opened in New London in 1910. The school moved to Philadelphia in 1911 and

[17] Isely and Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, 48.

Quantico in 1920, where its successors remain today. Though the school was interested in all aspects of advanced base operations, its focus was on defensive missions. [18]

Though the General Board of the Navy had identified the need for an advanced base force, naval officers held little interest in the details of the mission. The Marine Corps quickly grew frustrated with the Navy's attitude toward advanced base operations. In his 1914 Annual Report, the Commandant of the Marine Corps noted, "the impression seems to prevail that advance-base work is purely a Marine Corps matter. This is an error, as there can be no doubt but that advance-base work is essentially a naval matter in which the entire service is deeply interested."[19] This complaint quickly became a theme for Marines attempting to campaign for their new role.

Given the other roles and missions that required integrated employment of naval forces at sea and ashore, the amphibious missions increasingly defined the identity that the Marine Corps. The new Advanced Base Force trained in accordance with prevailing attitudes of the time, which saw value in using Marines only to defend forward naval bases in areas not already held by the enemy. Such a role required little distinction between the Marines and the Army in capabilities and doctrine, and it also presumed that such bases would be operational prior to the commencement of hostilities. The transition to thinking of Marines as an offensive weapon, integral to the Navy's success, happened slowly. As late as 1921, the Navy gave little thought to potential forcible entry scenarios. That year, a revision to the Landing Force Manual reflected a general lack of interest in amphibious warfare from the Navy, with only 42 of 700 pages dedicated to amphibious warfare. Landing operations remained, as described by one historian,

[18] Isely and Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, 49-52.
[19] Commandant of the Marine Corps, quoted in Isely and Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, 50.

"scripted affairs, more parade than military operation."[20] The Advanced Base Problem series became one mechanism to help remedy this situation.

Despite Navy apathy, key events occurring within the Marine Corps set the service on a clear path to assume the leadership role amongst services for all amphibious matters. One of those events occurred on June 30, 1920, when Major General John A. Lejeune became Commandant of the Marine Corps. He soon set about refocusing the service on its value to the fleet by effectively moving its third priority, advanced base operations, to the top. Lejeune installed his former aide, Major Earl A. "Pete" Ellis, as head of the intelligence section within Lejeune's division of planning and training.[21]

Ellis helped the Marine Corps identify its future adversary. In July 1921, he published "Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia," which painted a picture for how a possible campaign against the Japanese might unfold across the central and western Pacific. His vision proved remarkably prescient, predicting the island-hopping operations across the Japanese mandates, the early loss of the Philippines and Guam, and more. Most importantly, it provided operational justification for Lejeune's focus on amphibious warfare in support of the fleet.[22] Two years later, Lejeune redesignated the Advanced Base Force as the new Marine Expeditionary Force, reflecting the offensive character of the Marine Corps' anticipated amphibious mission.[23]

Of course, Ellis was hardly the only planner looking at war with Japan. The Rainbow series of U.S. Navy war plans included War Plan "Orange," designed to defend American Pacific possessions against Japanese aggression. The full history of the Rainbow plans and War Plan

[20] Felker, *Testing American Sea Power*, 90.
[21] Felker, *Testing American Sea Power*, 91.
[22] Isely and Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, 53-55.
[23] Felker, *Testing American Sea Power*, 93.

Orange is beyond the scope of this paper, but suffice to say, it evolved substantially over time as naval planners gained a better grasp of the situation and of Japanese capabilities. Initial versions of the plan held to the idea that it was possible for a naval fleet to launch a "through-ticket" non-stop deployment from the United States to rescue the Philippines from a Japanese invasion. The proponents of the through-ticket plan, called "Thrusters," initially anticipated little use for advanced base operations enroute. However, as the Japanese fortified their mandates in the Central Pacific after World War I, this "through-ticket" concept necessarily evolved. The duration of the execution phase of War Plan Orange in successively evolving plans stretched from weeks to years. As the projected duration of the campaign grew, it became evident that the fleets required increased logistical support that in turn required advanced bases. As a result, the role of an advanced base force became far more prominent, both to seize existing Japanese bases enroute and to establish other forward logistical bases. Though naval planners continued to overlook the details of the amphibious missions required by War Plan Orange, the Marines recognized the need and began to reshape the entire service accordingly. The Marine Corps ultimately used the Advanced Base Problems to fill in many of the planning details skipped over by War Plan Orange.[24]

The Advanced Base Problems are a product of the drastic intellectual reformation of the interwar Marine Corps. At the same time that he created the Marine Expeditionary Force, Lejeune modernized the officer professional military education system, growing the existing School of Application into a structure that remains recognizable today, with separate schools for new lieutenants, captains, and field grade officers.[25] By 1927, Lejeune announced that the Field

[24] Edward S. Miller, *War Plan Orange* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 77-79.
[25] Felker, *Testing American Sea Power*, 93.

Officers' School curriculum would incorporate "an overseas expeditionary course" for the first time.[26] This was an important first step, though it was several more years before major curriculum overhauls diverged from the existing land warfare-centric focus.

The Marine Corps' interwar transformation was not merely intellectual, but it was also rooted in practical application. As Lejeune's Marine Corps redefined its core mission, it needed venues to practice its latest ideas, though finding opportunities was slow going in the 1920s. The opportunities offered by naval leadership were few and of little value in terms of detailed lessons learned. This was hardly surprising when most Naval leaders largely missed the strategic value of the new Marine concept. There were a few important opportunities, however. In January 1924, 1,600 Marines of Lejeune's new Marine Expeditionary Force participated in the Navy's Fleet Problem Three. The experience demonstrated that Marine amphibious assaults could play a valuable role in the Navy's mission of sea control in a future conflict, but few naval officers showed interest, despite the fact that the following year's Fleet Problem Four expanded on the idea.[27] That exercise focused on a Marine amphibious assault at the end of a sea control scenario. Though that focus might have suggested that naval officers had developed an understanding of the value of the new Marine mission, naval leadership showed little interest in the results of Marine actions on their target island, Culebra. Moreover, subsequent exercise designs made clear that the Navy's focus remained on achieving a decisive fleet battle, rather than a methodical island-hopping campaign focused on securing advanced bases. That transition had to wait a few more years.

[26] Donald F. Bittner, "Curriculum Evolution: Marine Corps Command and Staff College, 1920-1988" (Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps: Washington), 16.
[27] Felker, *Testing American Sea Power*, 94.

Despite the lack of cultural shift regarding amphibious assaults in the minds of most naval officers, the Marines pushed on with their campaign to rebuild the Marine Corps around the mission. It took until 1927, however, for the Joint Army-Navy Board to formally assign the Marine Corps its new mission. "The most important function of the Marine Corps (in relation to War Plans) is to seize and hold temporary advanced bases in cooperation with the fleet and defend such bases until relieved by the Army."[28] With that, the Marines finally had a formal task to execute, justifying their evolving force structure and concept of employment. To bring the Marine Corps closer to the fleet in name as well as purpose, on December 7, 1933, the Marine Expeditionary Force was once again renamed the "Fleet Marine Force," (FMF) capturing the fact that this portion of the Marine Corps should work directly for fleet commanders as their assigned landing force. With that relationship clearly defined, the Marine Corps turned towards developing doctrine to support it.[29]

War Plan Orange required American sea services to develop the capacity to fight across the Pacific to support or withdraw American garrison forces in the Philippines and in China. Imperial Japanese protectorates in the central Pacific threatened the ability of American maritime forces to conduct such operations. Advanced bases of the sort envisioned by Ellis were therefore necessary not only to support forward basing for continued Naval operations, but to seize such forward bases from their adversary. By 1934 a new generation of planners, described by some historians as "Cautionaries" to differentiate them from the "Thruster" advocates, supported a more incremental transit through the Central Pacific in response to the growing Japanese threat.

[28] Army-Navy Board, quoted in E.B. Miller, "The Marine Corps in Support of the Fleet," Marine Corps Schools, 1933, 9, in HAF, COLL/3634, Box 2, MHD.
[29] Felker, *Testing American Sea Power*, 101-102.

It was in this critically influential era of transition from the Thrusters' through-ticket to the Cautionaries' plans that the Advanced Base Problem series was born.[30]

The father of the Advanced Base Problems was Colonel Ellis B. Miller. It was Miller who spearheaded the development of amphibious warfare curriculum at Marine Corps Schools during his time as Assistant Commandant (and briefly, acting Commandant) of the school, from 1932 to 1934. [31] A few details of Miller's career are important to highlight. Miller served thirty-six years, from 1900 to 1936, with his last six years involved heavily at each of the service colleges. First, he examined service issues as a student at the Army War College, graduating in June 1930, and then at the Naval War College, where he completed both the Junior and Senior Courses by May 1931.

It was during this time studying naval strategy and tactics that Miller developed his own thinking on the role of the Marine Expeditionary Force. He stayed on at the Naval War College as a lecturer until January 1932, before reporting by that summer to Marine Corps Schools, where he became the Assistant Commandant of the schools under Major General John A. Russell. After two years at Marine Corps Schools, Miller returned to the Naval War College to attend the Student Advanced Course before remaining there on staff until his retirement in 1936.

With an abrasive personality and unrelenting demeanor, Miller had few friends in the service. From 1933 onward, he found himself omitted from the Brigadier General selection boards and was thus retired. Nonetheless, he was perhaps the Marine Corps' most vocal proponent of amphibious operations from 1932 to 1936, writing three substantial articles for the *Marine Corps Gazette* on the matter. He also conceived of and led the development of the new

[30] Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 77-79.
[31] Daugherty, *Pioneers of Amphibious Warfare*, 207.

Marine Corps Schools' curriculum as well as the first doctrinal manual for landing operations that the new curriculum was based on, *The Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*. His connections with the Naval War College were critical for the development of the Advanced Base Problems and sharpened his determination to educate not just Marine Corps officers, but also Naval officers, whom he particularly recognized lacked understanding of the topic. In short, Miller casts a long shadow in this discussion.[32]

Thanks to Miller, amphibious operations became a centerpiece of student education at the Marine Corps Schools. By 1930, the Field Officers School curriculum dedicated over 200 hours, some 20% of the course, to landing operations. The remainder of the course remained focused on army-style land operations. In 1932, Miller argued for a complete overhaul of the curriculum, to focus on "…Marine organizations, Marine equipment, Marine problems, Marine operations, with a Naval, not an Army, background."[33] Miller also demanded new curricula requiring new authoritative references to provide an academic foundation. He identified the need to develop Marine-exclusive studies on Marine Corps organization, Navy-Marine Corps staff systems, Navy-Marine Corps supply systems, unique Marine equipment and armament, naval gunfire support, naval air support, naval logistical support requirements, communications, embarkation procedures, Marine-specific tactics, techniques, and procedures, and more.

Miller also recognized that these matters required data collection, analysis, and distillation into textbooks, studies, and manuals. Most significantly, Miller recognized that doctrine development was now of prime importance. The existing landing operations manuals were inadequate to the task of guiding the new Fleet Marine Force in planning and executing

[32] For an outstanding biographical sketch of Miller and his role in advocating the Marine Corps Mission in the early 1930s, see chapter 9 of Leo J. Daugherty III's *Pioneers of Amphibious Warfare*.
[33] Donald F. Bittner, "Curriculum Evolution," 18-19.

forcible entry operations in contested areas, much less support the redevelopment of curriculum at Quantico. By 1934, the Field Officers School curriculum dedicated 77% of available hours to landing operations-related periods of instruction and exercises.[34] The Advanced Base Problems received significant emphasis with 75 hours of curriculum time—almost 7.5% of the assigned academic hours—earmarked for the effort after the 1934 curriculum revision.[35]

Miller also spearheaded the development of Marine Corps amphibious doctrine, which was necessary to provide the foundation of the new curriculum. The previous fall, at the direction of the commandant, Miller brought the Marine Corps Schools academic year to a halt to facilitate the drafting and publication of what became the Marine Corps' *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*. Based on a handbook recently published by Miller, this publication went beyond all previous landing operations manuals to describe, in detail, the core components of an amphibious assault.[36] Lessons learned from the failed British campaign at Gallipoli and the relatively limited Marine Corps amphibious assault experiences to date informed the content. Importantly, the manual made clear that fleet commanders were to oversee amphibious operations and employ them as part of their naval campaign. The manual also addressed command and control relationships between Navy and Marine leadership during landing operations, as well as the need for naval gunfire and aviation support. It spent considerable time on the unique logistical considerations of landing operations also, from combat loading, to the ship-to-shore movement, to beachmaster duties. The base unit used in the manual was a reinforced Marine Division, speaking both to the fact that the manual was designed to support the FMF, as well as the fact that the scale of future anticipated missions was much larger than

[34] Donald F. Bittner, "Curriculum Evolution," 26 and Felker, *Testing American Sea Power*, 101.
[35] Donald F. Bittner, "Curriculum Evolution," 26.
[36] See Miller's *The Marine Corps in Support of the Fleet*, "The Marine Corps in Support of the Fleet," HAF, COLL/3634, Box 2, MHD.

anything previously executed.[37] Adopted by the Navy in 1938 as FTP-167: *Landing Operations Doctrine*, the core of the manual held up remarkably well with time even after receiving updates with lessons learned in combat in the early years of the war.[38]

The FMF also played a key role in furthering the development of advanced base operations, often tied in with the work at Marine Corps Schools. The relationship between the two was close. A 1936 *Marine Corps Gazette* article spelled out a three-point vision for the role of Marine Corps Schools and its connection with the FMF. The schools must prepare officers for wartime service in the Fleet Marine Force, maintain a close relationship with it, and serve as a research arm for new ideas that can be tested and employed by it.[39] As Marine Corps Schools surged ahead with new curriculum and doctrine, the staff's work spawned ideas that needed to be tested through practical application.

The increasing specialization of the Marine Corps demanded a suitably focused testing environment dedicated to landing operations. Though the Marine Corps executed landing force exercises annually from 1922 to 1925, and again in 1931 and 1932, these were generally small-scale events utilizing less than a battalion of actual Marines. Moreover, because they were often integrated as part of the Navy's annual Fleet Problem series, they were not the focus, and indeed, were often overlooked by naval planners who focused instead on Mahanian-style decisive fleet actions as the culminating point of each exercise. This changed after 1934, when the Marines recognized that limited exercises did not satisfy their requirement to test the new landing operations doctrine and demanded separate fleet-level exercises focused on amphibious warfare.

[37] Isely and Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, 79.
[38] Felker, *Testing American Sea Power*, 103.
[39] Captain Arthur T. Mason, USMC, "The Role of the Marine Corps Schools," *Marine Corps Gazette*, May 1936, 7-9 and 61-64. Quoted in Donald F. Bittner, "Curriculum Evolution," 29-30.

The Fleet Landing Exercises provided the Marine Corps their required experimentation and training venue. The Fleet Marine Force trained at either Culebra or San Clemente with portions of the fleet each winter, prior to the next Fleet Problem exercise. The Marines focused on testing their hypotheses on amphibious warfare doctrine and tactics, tested specialized technologies for amphibious combat, and prepared officers and Marines for the rigors of landing operations.[40] In total, the Marines conducted seven events within the FLEX series from 1935 to 1941, with the last wrapping up just prior to Pearl Harbor. Although they could not have predicted the full strategic importance of the fleet landing experiments at the time in the 1930s, the American sea services certainly demonstrated the crucial role of amphibious doctrine and operational forces in the Second World War.

The Fleet Landing Exercises are the most historically visible and most obviously impactful venue the Marine Corps utilized to develop an understanding of landing operations amongst its officers as well as the naval officers who participated. Yet, they were not the only mechanism for transferring knowledge of amphibious operations. Heretofore largely unexamined for their role in this effort, the Naval War College-Marine Corps Schools Advanced Base Problems played an important supporting role, teaching officers in both services how to plan effectively for amphibious assaults in a time when such knowledge was maturing and not widely understood.

Naval War College-Marine Corps Schools Advanced Base Problems

For as much as Marine Corps Schools was establishing its foundational expertise on the amphibious assault topic in the 1920s, it took the Naval War College a bit longer to come

[40] Isely and Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, 89.

around. Despite recognition among Naval War College planners that the latest versions of War Plan Orange called for the seizure of advanced bases, the staff put little effort into developing curricula on the matter until the staff of Marine Corps Schools requested that the Naval War College present Marine Corps Schools with a naval advanced base problem, to enable the Marines to solve it.

There are many significant gaps in the historiography, which have shaped many popular myths and misinterpretations of the key relationships between the Naval War College and Marine Corps Schools. This fact is abundantly clear in the perspectives recorded in original documentary sources of the past. For example, there are brief references found in personal correspondences which suggest that Marine Corps schools focused upon the problem as early as 1931, which is later amplified Marine Corps Schools historical memorandum produced after the Second World War as American forces anticipated the problems of Asia following the Chinese Civil War in 1949.[41] This problem called for the Marines to seize, hold, and defend the island of Trinidad. Both the Navy and the Marine Corps were so pleased with the results of the effort that they opted to continue it.[42] By autumn 1932, Miller at Marine Corps Schools was exchanging regular correspondence on the matter with the senior Marine at the Naval War College, Colonel Richard Malcolm Cutts.

Cutts served for 35 years in the Marine Corps, and is perhaps best known as the inventor, with his son, future Marine Corps Brigadier General Richard Malcolm Cutts III, of the "Cutts Compensator" used on the Thompson submachine gun. The elder Cutts arrived at Newport in

[41] Research Section, Marine Corps Schools, Memorandum for the Academic Secretary, "A Brief Historical Sketch of the Development of Amphibious Instruction and Doctrine at the Marine Corps Schools During the Years Prior to World War II," 13, HAF, COLL/3634, HAF 741, MHD.
[42] Correspondence from Cutts to Bryant, September 23, 1932, HAF, COLL/3634, HAF 133, MHD.

1931 fresh off a tour as a brigade commander in Haiti, and remained at the school until late 1934, when he became ill and went on leave. Though selected for brigadier general, he never saw the promotion, dying in San Diego on November 24, 1934.[43]

While Cutts worked only for a brief time at the Naval War College, his assistance to Miller helped define the collaboration with Marine Corps Schools on the question of advanced base problems. Historians have yet to fully consider the correspondence of Cutts and Miller, which is located in the unique archival collections in at the Naval War College and Marine Corps University at Quantico, Virginia. The exchanges between the two provide fascinating detail into the initiation of the formal development of the problem set.

In September 1932, for example, Cutts wrote to Miller about his thoughts on the importance of the Advanced Base Problems to the history of the Marine Corps. He argued that prior to the initiation of these problems, no one in the Marine Corps or Navy was working "to lay down the requirements, organization, and equipment of an Advanced Base Force." As a result, Cutts stated that the "Advanced Base Problems will initiate formal planning of the Marines Corps role in seizing and defending advanced bases involved in current plans."[44]

Cutts was frustrated that none of the Naval or Marine service-level operations and war planning staffs even recognized the necessity of doing so. That certainly seemed to be the case on the Marine Corps side, as Miller and his boss, Commandant of Marine Corps Schools Brigadier General James C. Breckenridge, made a personal visit to the Marine Corps War Plans Division in hopes of generating interest in the Advanced Base Problems and in securing

[43] Arlington National Cemetery website, "Richard Malcolm Cutts," no date, accessed May 1, 2020. http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/rmcutts.htm.
[44] Correspondence from Cutts to Miller, September 30, 1932, HAF, COLL/3634, HAF 133, MHD.

assignment of two officers from War Plans to the schools for the duration of the planning process. War Plans had little interest in the affair, turning down Miller's request outright, and upon Breckenridge's appeal, offering to have someone on-call to support from afar if needed.[45]

Despite this kind of institutional resistance to their ideas, Miller and Cutts pressed forward, winning over their respective school staffs with a series of stated goals drafted initially by Cutts and later echoed by the President of the Naval War College in letters to service leadership. According to Admiral Harris Laning, in a letter to Captain Samuel W. Bryant of the Navy War Plans Division, the goals of the Advanced Base Problems were to establish the following:

1. The establishment of the Expeditionary Force as an essential part of the Fleet when undertaking overseas operations.

2. The fact that no organization other than a Marine Corps force under naval command can fulfill the requirements.

3. The fact that our naval overseas operations are doomed to failure unless an advanced base force that can seize and defend the fleet bases is provided.

4. The fact that for overseas war the Marine Base Force is as necessary a part of the Fleet as any fleet unit and must be given as much consideration by the Department as any other fleet unit.

5. Recognition of the fact that this essential Marine Base Force cannot be created by the Marine Corps alone but requires active direction by the Navy Department for its organization, development, training, and maintenance.[46]

With such lofty objectives, the Naval War College clearly held high expectations for the trail-blazing relevance of the Advanced Base Problems. Thanks to Laning's championing of the issue, it was ironically the Navy's War Plans Division that took greater initial interest in the school-to-

[45] Correspondence from Miller to Cutts, September 3, 1932, HAF, COLL/3634, HAF 133, MHD.
[46] Correspondence from Laning to Bryant, September 23, 1932, HAF, COLL/3634, HAF 133, MHD. Emphasis original.

school relationship. In his letter, Laning enclosed a copy of the Navy's initial orders for Advanced Base Problem No. 1, bringing high-level naval attention to the problem series mere days after signing the orders and transmitting them to Marine Corps Schools.[47]

While Laning wrote to Naval War Plans Division, Cutts wrote to General John T. Myers, Assistant to the Commandant, further articulating the key points. He wrote, "So far as known, the Marine Corps has never been furnished with the Naval Requirements the Advance Base Force will have to satisfy under modern conditions, as revealed by the Naval War College Fleet Problems." He further argued that the problems illustrated that the present organization and equipment of the Marine Corps was inadequate to meet requirements. Thus, it was up to the two schools to anticipate future needs and "initiate the procurement, of an Advanced Base Force which will meet the Naval requirements and adequately support the naval strategic and operation plans."[48]

The Marines got the message soon enough, if not from Colonels Miller and Cutts, then from the Commandant himself. In a November 29, 1932 letter to the War Plans Division and Marine Corps Schools, the Major General Commandant, Ben H. Fuller, implemented the vision of Miller and Cutts in an official Marine Corps order. Citing the Naval War College exercises, and the fact that these exercises would identify new requirements, he wrote, "the study of the reorganization and material reconstruction of the Marine Advance Base Force will be undertaken and continued." In a nod to the expected war with Japan, he predicted that this was the beginning of a major undertaking, stating, "A maximum Marine Corps effort will appear in time in all

[47] Correspondence from Laning to Bryant, September 23, 1932, HAF, COLL/3634, HAF 133, MHD.
[48] Correspondence from Cutts to Bryant, September 23, 1932, HAF, COLL/3634, HAF 133, MHD.

probability, as a result of the study of the problems given in the particular theatre of operations in which they are located."[49]

The Marine Corps Schools-Naval War College Advanced Base Problems were more than academic drills. They forced the services to perform critical analysis of their ability to fight their way across the Pacific by seizing and defending advance bases. Their audience was not merely the academic faculties and student bodies at the schools, but also the service chiefs themselves, aiming to define the mission-critical requirements of both services before other planning organizations were postured to do so. With senior naval leadership at last in full support, these briefs provided the opportunity to convince the rest of the Navy's officer corps to see the value of using Marines in support of the fleet. Thanks to the work of Miller and Cutts, Lejeune's goals were starting to bear fruit.

Advanced Base Problem No. 1: February 16, 1933

The ubiquitous Miller and Cutts hashed out the details of Advanced Base Problem No. 1 over a series of letters in September 1932. In an almost flippant hand-wave towards War Plan Orange, Cutts noted that the scenario was part of "the usual advance across the Pacific," a welcome change from the fictional invasion of Trinidad used in the initial 1931 problem. Cutts noted that, unlike the previous iteration, this problem had an official title, "Advanced Base Problem No. 1" and that the school intended to deliver it by mid-month to enable five months of preparation time for the Marines to work it into their schedule. This problem received total scrutiny from the entire breadth of the Naval War College's departments, with staff from the "strategical, tactical,

[49] Correspondence from Fuller to Marine Corps War Plans Division and Marine Corps Schools, November 29, 1932, HAF, COLL/3634, HAF 133, MHD.

research, and executive staff" each reviewing the problem before routing it for Laning's signature.[50]

Miller himself, ever interested in promoting the Marine Corps' landing force mission, personally led the briefing team of Marine Corps Schools staff members. On February 16, 1933, these officers presented Advanced Base Problem No. 1 to the Naval War College's students and staff in conjunction with the "Operations IV" portion of the Joint Operations block of the Naval War College curriculum.[51] In many ways, this presentation set the standard for future Advanced Base Problems in terms of structure and content. The senior Marine on the briefing team presented opening and closing statements, and six (in the case of Advanced Base Problem No. 1) additional officers each presented a portion of the brief. Each Advanced Base Problem brief generally comprised of an intelligence estimate, air and air defense plans, artillery plan, ground force plan, naval support plan, and admin and logistics. These labels varied somewhat between plans over time, but the general concept carried throughout. In accordance with best practices later captured in Naval War College's *Sound Military Decision* manual, planning products included an Estimate of the Situation, an operations order, associated annexes, and appropriate maps, charts, and tables.

Centered on the cover sheet for Miller's introduction of Advanced Base Problem No. 1 is the presentation title, which reads,

Naval War College ADVANCED BASE PROBLEM NO. 1.
MARINE CORPS SCHOOLS LANDING OPERATION PROBLEM NO. 19.

[50] Correspondence from Cutts to Breckenridge, September 22, 1932, HAF, COLL/3634, HAF 133, MHD.
[51] Correspondence from Cutts to Miller, September 11, 1932, HAF, COLL/3634, HAF 133, MHD.

This is the only reference within the Advanced Base Problem files to any such exercises as "Marine Corps Schools Landing Operation Problems" or the first eighteen such exercises which apparently preceded this one. Nonetheless, the implication is that, from the Marine Corps' perspective, these exercises were hardly new. The Marines simply integrated the Naval War College scenario with Senior Field Officers School Course existing planning exercises to generate what became the Advanced Base Problems presented to the Naval War College. The Marine Corps Schools-Naval War College connection established through Advanced Base Problem No. 1 was new, and critically, it enabled integration of the two schools on amphibious warfare scenarios for the first time. The presentation itself was on entirely new material, presented at the Naval War College for the first time, and founded on a scenario that was itself generated by the Naval War College. In 1933, however, the formalization of each of these in Advanced Base Problem No. 1 was an unprecedented occurrence.

Though the framework of the Advanced Base Problem No. 1 presentation set the standard for future iterations, the problem differed substantially from future iterations. Most Advanced Base Problems were offensively oriented, aimed at seizing enemy-held islands. In contrast, Advanced Base Problem No. 1, also referred to as "D Problem" in the documents, did not focus on seizing an advanced base. Rather, "D Problem" was the defense of American-governed Dumanquilas Bay, Mindanao Island, Philippines.[52] This apparent reversion to a defensive problem was not the result of a sudden change-of-heart by the offensively-oriented Marine Corps, but rather, it reflected the status of contemporary War Plan Orange naval planning.

[52] Marine Corps Schools, "Presentation," *Advanced Base Problem No. 1*, cover page, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems and Dumanquilas 1932-1933, Box 1, MHD. Underline in the original.

The Naval War College's specific selection of Dumanquilas Bay for base defense study was not random. In 1928, this bay became a focus of War Plan Orange planners who advocated the Thruster approach. At that time, the goal of the Thruster plan was to deploy the U.S. Fleet rapidly across the Pacific once war with Japan broke out, to arrive at a pre-planned advanced base (Dumanquilas Bay) and prepare for a decisive battle with the Japanese Fleet. Naval planners expected that the Japanese would be unable to seize control of Mindanao, and thus, its southern anchorage, before the U.S. Navy could arrive and therefore its occupation would be straightforward.[53]

Advanced Base Problem No. 1 married up with the Thruster plan but skipped the invasion necessary to secure the bay, as the Thrusters assumed that the bay would be undefended when Blue forces arrived. Instead, the Marines' mission in Advanced Base Problem No. 1 was to establish a defense against potential Japanese attacks from air, land, and sea. Dumanquilas Bay offered several advantages to the fleet that the Marines' defense needed to preserve. The anchorage could receive four hundred ships, with additional space for dry docks and seaplane fairways. It was four hundred miles south of Luzon, offering standoff against Japanese air attack that might be based there after capture. The terrain offered protection against undersea threats and overland attack, and there was plenty of space for a large base with a substantial military force encamped. In short, it offered everything the American fleet needed in an intermediate staging base that could support subsequent operations to counter the Japanese advance.[54]

The Naval War College, acting in scenario as Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet, presented an order to Marine Corps Schools, whose staff played the role of the Marine Expeditionary Force

[53] Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 139-141.
[54] Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 141.

staff.[55] Miller noted in his introductory remarks, however, that in a base defense scenario, the MEF was subordinate to the Base Force Commander. Therefore, the Marines took the liberty of adopting the Naval War College-developed tasks with the perspective of having received them not from the Fleet Commander, but from the Base Force Commander. They consolidated the tasks into a lengthy mission statement, "To render the anchorage secure within five days, to deny access to the Dumanquilas Bay area by enemy land and air forces, and to cover the mine fields and the harbor and sea approaches by gun fire; in order to assist in maintaining the security of the Dumanquilas Bay area as a primary fleet base."[56] The precise modern tactical language familiar to Marines today may have been absent, but the mission, and its broad extent, was clear nonetheless.

Miller's introductory remarks are noteworthy because, after accepting the mission above, he proceeded next to touch on two subjects that, arguably, were beyond the scope of the problem but effectively eviscerated the logic behind the Naval War College's Advanced Base Problem No. 1 scenario. First, he inserted in an advertisement for the offensive capability of the Marine Expeditionary Force. For the purposes of understanding this complex history, Miller's actual planned remarks offer the best means of examining the issues involved. Said Miller:

> How, and for what purpose, shall this M.E.F. be organized? We have been ordered to prepare a plan for the defense of D. That is the first contemplated tactical task of the M.E.F. as determined by the CinC, in his estimate and plan… But is that the entire Mission of the M.E.F.?
>
> Such a force, as organized… is rigid and can do only one thing—defend the major thing it was built for, and the minor defenses included. 7,000 miles from home, if called upon

[55] The MEF label was employed in Advanced Base Problem No. 1 because Advanced Base Problem No. 1's inception pre-dated the creation of the Fleet Marine Force on December 7, 1933.
[56] Marine Corps Schools, "A Statement of the Problem, the Mission, the Decision," *Advanced Base Problem No. 1*, 3, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems and Dumanquilas 1932-1933, Box 1, MHD.

> to do something else, it fails, because it was constructed for one, single purpose and is not sufficiently flexible to carry out any other task.
>
> We believe that no Marine force should initially be constructed for one purpose only. We cannot visualize such a force, as the Advanced Base Force with the fleet. It has no offensive power and would fail in its Fleet Mission. We must build our organization with the type of personnel and material able to perform any task assigned, be it defensive, or offensive.[57]

In effect, Miller seized the opportunity to teach and mentor his naval officer audience on the capabilities of the Marine Corps. Indeed, given his role at Marine Corps Schools and his passion for the mission, he was perhaps the ideal Marine to proselytize these views. These words read as a not-so-subtle challenge to future naval leaders to think creatively about how they might use the MEF in future fights as an action arm of the Fleet, rather than merely a base defense force such as that of the old Advanced Base Force model.

The big difference between U.S. Army soldiers and Marines, Miller thought, centered upon the fact that Marines had developed the specialized capacity to conduct expeditionary naval operations in either peace or war. Unlike soldiers sitting around in distant garrisons, the Marines struck hard and held positions ashore for the temporal purposes of conducting naval operations of finite focus and duration. Miller centered his oceanic vision upon the sea service requirements of the Navy Department. Thus, in this short passage, Miller succeeded not only in chiding the Naval War College staff for requesting a scenario that merely calls for a defensive mission of the Marines, but also made a sales pitch for the landing force capability that the Marine Corps now advertised as its core capability, thereby instilling his audience with an appreciation that this is not the Marine Corps of previous eras. For today's reader, familiar with what the Marine Corps

[57] Marine Corps Schools, "A Statement of the Problem, the Mission, the Decision," *Advanced Base Problem No. 1*, 3-4, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems and Dumanquilas 1932-1933, Box 1, MHD.

has become over the past 90 years, Miller's assertions seem self-evident. They were not so to most officers outside of the Marine Corps in 1933.

Just as the Marine Corps was in a state of transition in 1933, so too was War Plan Orange, as the "through-ticket" model of the Thrusters came under proverbial fire during war games at the Naval War College. Orange seemed consistently able to inflict substantial casualties on Blue forces in transit to the Philippines. In late 1932, Naval planners developed a plan described as the "Quick Movement" plan, aimed at deploying 75% of the fleet and 5,000 Marines forward to Dumanquilas Bay prior to the commencement of hostilities. Should Blue not arrive safely in the Philippines after the commencement of hostilities, perhaps the answer was to deploy early, regardless of the possible political costs.[58]

Miller's presentation suggests that the Naval War College scenario fits within the "Quick Movement" plan. The evidence lies within his review of the deployment schedule for "D Problem," in which he tore to pieces the very fabric of the Thruster's rapid advance, exposing its impractical assumptions about the ability of the fleet to beat the Japanese to southern Mindanao. Noting that the planning cycle for "D Problem" allowed for ten days of preparation and embarkation prior to departure, Miller states that the Naval War College-developed plan further allocated another twenty days of transit between Pearl Harbor and Dumanquilas Bay, where they would link up with the "remnants" of the Asiatic Fleet and begin developing the new fleet base. Just five days later, the fleet expected to "depart for enemy waters." Another twenty-five days later, the U.S. Army would arrive.[59] This timeline fits the 1932 "Quick Movement" to

[58] Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 167-171.

[59] Marine Corps Schools, "A Statement of the Problem, the Mission, the Decision," *Advanced Base Problem No. 1*, 4, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems and Dumanquilas 1932-1933, Box 1, MHD.

Dumanquilas Bay, which dictated the twenty-day movement from Pearl Harbor to Dumanquilas Bay highlighted by Miller.

This scenario timeline and the "Quick Movement" concept of pre-staging forces before the outbreak of hostilities, combine to explain why an amphibious assault of Dumanquilas Bay was unnecessary in this Naval War College scenario, and subsequently why Advanced Base Problem No. 1 was defensive in nature. Yet Miller, though accepting this at face value for the sake of the scenario, took the opportunity to mentor his naval officer audience. In a series of "what if?" questions that reflected the ongoing criticisms of the Thrusters' approach, he presented his concerns regarding possible Marine Corps transport losses and potential seizure and defense of unplanned temporary bases enroute. For these reasons, Miller foresaw scenarios that might delay the MEF's arrival at Dumanquilas Bay by 60 to 90 days. The Thruster plan that Advanced Base Problem No. 1's premise fit into clearly did not hold.[60]

Miller's points exposed the flaws in the through-ticket concept which naval planners addressed by Advanced Base Problem 2. In the immediate presentation, however, he leveraged his concerns to argue for a MEF capable of fulfilling more than the defense of Dumanquilas Bay. He predicted that the fleet commander surely wanted a MEF capable of countering a possible Orange expeditionary force and detaching forces to seize and defend other essential basing locations, while still retaining enough strength to complete the assigned mission. He emphasized that adding to the planned MEF strength was essential to prevent handicapping the MEF commander, "who, when ordered to assume the offensive, replied that he was sorry, but his offensive power was still back in the U.S." He concludes by arguing in favor of additional

[60] Marine Corps Schools, "A Statement of the Problem, the Mission, the Decision," *Advanced Base Problem No. 1*, 4, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems and Dumanquilas 1932-1933, Box 1, MHD.

offensive force to carry out subsequent missions. [61] In so doing, he not-so-subtly returns to the Lejeune vision of an offensively oriented amphibious force.

Miller summarized the intelligence picture for the audience. The Marines expected continuous air and naval harassment from Orange, whom the Marines expected would be operational from Luzon prior to the Blue force arrival in Dumanquilas Bay. They expected an Orange landing force of a reinforced Brigade to oppose their defense. This, coupled with the air and naval forces expected, shaped the Marine defensive planning effort.[62]

Some of the MEF's tasks identified by Miller are largely familiar to today's Marine Corps. The MEF had to conduct reconnaissance of unfamiliar ground, bring ashore and dig in heavy artillery and ammunition, build an airfield for the "MEF air force," prepare defensive positions for the infantry, install communications networks, build infrastructure, and more. Time was of the essence with only five days available and the challenges were daunting without existing maps or topographical data of the island and defended sectors, without docks, and without beach studies.[63]

After reviewing the commander's decision that shaped the planning and the remainder of the presentation that followed, Miller identified the rest of his team and their briefing assignments. Major Parsons discussed the terrain. Captain Campbell next presented the air plan. Major Peck presented the anti-aircraft plan and Major Stephenson presented the artillery plan. After that, Parsons came back to the stage to present the infantry plan. The lone Naval officer on

[61] Marine Corps Schools, "A Statement of the Problem, the Mission, the Decision," *Advanced Base Problem No. 1*, 4, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems and Dumanquilas 1932-1933, Box 1, MHD.
[62] Marine Corps Schools, "A Statement of the Problem, the Mission, the Decision," *Advanced Base Problem No. 1*, 5, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems and Dumanquilas 1932-1933, Box 1, MHD.
[63] Marine Corps Schools, "A Statement of the Problem, the Mission, the Decision," *Advanced Base Problem No. 1*, 5, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems and Dumanquilas 1932-1933, Box 1, MHD.

the team, Lieutenant Commander Richardson, presented the Naval Support Plan and then Miller discussed MEF organization and logistics before concluding the brief.[64] The script used by each officer is part of the archived materials for Advanced Base Problem No. 1. Indeed, the documentary material highlights the value of Advanced Base Problems. Each section of the brief was essentially a narrative of a corresponding portion of an operations order, the compilation of which the Marines delivered to Naval War College in advance of the brief as a read-ahead. The briefers, in the words of Peck, aimed to "present, briefly, the air defense (in his section) of Dumanquilas, the special organization for its accomplishment, and the reasons underlying certain decisions."[65] He underlined those words for emphasis in the presentation, the guiding principles of which shaped each briefer's portion.

Task organized forces were as important to Marine Corps planning in 1933 as they are today. Miller's planning team incorporated flexible task organization in its design of the required Blue forces. The team members calculated that the MEF needed twelve infantry battalions organized into three brigades of four battalions each. The Marines emphasized the flexibility of this task organization, noting that Brigades typically contained only three battalions of infantry, but were able to absorb the fourth battalion in each brigade to simplify the structure. In a further simplification, the battalions were directly subordinate to the brigade. A regimental headquarters was absent. Had the situation warranted eighteen battalions, the Marines would have assigned six per brigade in the same fashion. Additional supporting elements of anti-aircraft, air force, service, supply, administration, and non-organic artillery Marines, comprised the "Force Troops" formation in support of the three brigades. This substantial footprint granted the MEF the

[64] Marine Corps Schools, "A Statement of the Problem, the Mission, the Decision," *Advanced Base Problem No. 1*, 8, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems and Dumanquilas 1932-1933, Box 1, MHD.
[65] Marine Corps Schools, "The Air Defense of Dumanquilas," *Advanced Base Problem No. 1*, 1, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems and Dumanquilas 1932-1933, Box 1, MHD.

flexibility to conduct multiple missions simultaneously, with brigades available to operate independently of the MEF in offensive missions if required, delivering the flexibility promised to the fleet commander.

The total force calculated included 24,531 officers and Marines with 4.17 million cubic feet of cargo weighing 40,712 tons.[66] This massive structure clearly reflected anticipated wartime growth of the service, as it was approximately 50% greater than the typical end strength of the entire Marine Corps in the early 1930s.[67] By comparison, FLEX 1, which kicked off two years after this presentation, only put 1,567 Marines ashore. The major August 1941 Army-Marine Corps landing event in North Carolina, despite service growth and a clear shift in priorities as war approached, mustered only 16,500 men. In 1933, Miller's Marines were looking toward the future Marine Corps, not just in mission and doctrine, but in sheer manpower requirements, as well.

Advanced Base Problem II: May 11, 1935

Despite the desire of the two schools to make the Advanced Base Problems an annual event, events caused a delay before work on the second problem began. At the direction of the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Miller shut down the remainder of the 1933-1934 school year on November 15, 1933 to write the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*. This action not only cancelled the scheduled curriculum, but also the next Advance Base Problem, as the Marines intended to have students do the planning in teams, rather than the staff who did the entirety of the work previously.[68] Miller's letter to Cutts in January 1934 was apologetic, but

[66] Marine Corps Schools, "The Air Defense of Dumanquilas," *Advanced Base Problem No. 1,* 2-4, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems and Dumanquilas 1932-1933, Box 1, MHD.
[67] Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps*, 654.
[68] Marine Corps Schools, "Special Instructional Memorandum: Advanced Base Problem II, Naval War College, 1935," 1, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems II 1934-1935 Truk, Box 2, MHD.

reassuring: "No one regrets this more than I do… The contact made between the M.C.S. and N.W.C. must be maintained. It is too valuable an asset, certainly for the M.C.S., to lose."[69] Miller proposed that Advanced Base Problem No. 1 be re-briefed for 1934, as it was a new school year at the Naval War College anyway, and that it satisfied the requirement.

As a result of the delay, the Marines did not start planning for the official "Advanced Base Problem II" until after January 1935.[70] They split their students up into two groups and provided them with special instructions to go with the Naval War College's scene-setting document. The special instructions discussed the importance of the work, stressing that this was not merely an exercise, but instead the basis of tactical and strategic analysis. Also in these instructions were the student team assignments, providing insight into the reach the Advanced Base Problems had in educating future wartime leaders. In Advanced Base Problem II, future Commandant of the Marine Corps Major Clifton B. Cates was a member of team two.[71] The Marine Corps Schools staff briefing team delivered an approximately three hour presentation of Advanced Base Problem II to the Naval War College on May 11, 1935.[72] The briefing team was now led by Colonel Charles J. Miller, who took over for Ellis B. Miller as Assistant Commandant of Marine Corps Schools. Charles Miller was certainly familiar enough with the effort to step in as lead briefer, having fulfilled the F-3 Operations Officer role for Marine Corps Schools prior to moving up to replace Ellis Miller.[73] The presentation itself included many of the

[69] Correspondence from Miller to Cutts, January 27, 1934, Naval Historical Collection, Records Group 8, *Intelligence and Technological Archives*, Box 62, Folder 6. U.S. Naval War College Archives, Newport, Rhode Island.
[70] Marine Corps Schools, "Special Instructional Memorandum: Advanced Base Problem II, Naval War College, 1935," 1, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems II 1934-1935 Truk, Box 2, MHD.
[71] Marine Corps Schools, "Special Instructional Memorandum: Advanced Base Problem II, Naval War College, 1935," 1, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems II 1934-1935 Truk, Box 2, MHD.
[72] Marine Corps Schools, "School Presentation – Truk – 1936 – Copy for File," *Advanced Base Problem II*, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems II 1934-1935 Truk, Box 2, MHD. Note that this time reference derives from this later file copy of the presentation.
[73] Charles J. Miller, Biographical File, Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

same components as Advanced Base Problem No. 1, but added new products such as landing tables for a planned amphibious assault. Unlike Advanced Base Problem No. 1, this problem involved seizing an enemy-held island.

Ellis Miller desired to make Advanced Base Problem No. 1 an offensive mission, but Laning approved the defensive problem before Miller fully presented his ideas to Cutts. Cutts felt the defensive problem at Dumanquilas Bay was an excellent introduction to the topic for the Navy, as it introduced the audience to the concept of utilizing the Marine Corps as an advanced base force organic to the fleet, and that was progress enough. Miller acknowledged that but hoped that the next problem could focus on Guam.[74] Though his assignment at Marine Corps Schools ended before work on Advanced Base Problem II began, Miller must have been happy with the scenario proffered by the Navy. The new problem called for the Marines to seize Truk.

The delay of Advanced Base Problem II was fortunate because the inspiration for the Truk scenario derived from a recent paradigm shift in War Plan Orange thinking. The Thrusters were thrust out of the war plans picture by the rising Cautionary planners who found the through-ticket concept unworkable. The Thruster-versus-cautionary debate went back over a decade, but the cautionary theory held little sway over planners after discarding the idea after 1922.[75] Thrusters took control of the plan after that, with the through-ticket to Dumanquilas Bay dominating the concept. By 1934, however, planners recognized that the ability of Japanese aviation to threaten the harbor sanctuary intended for Dumanquilas Bay was rapidly increasing. They were hardly alone in that assessment, as an Army report that same year determined that it was impossible to hold the Philippines in the face of any Japanese advance.[76] At the Naval War

[74] Correspondence from Miller to Cutts, September 21, 1932, HAF, COLL/3634, HAF 133, MHD.
[75] Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 119-120.
[76] Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 59.

College, wargames indicated that the transit to the Philippines was also at risk, making the through-ticket aspect of the Thruster plan impracticable.[77] They also noted the increasingly suspicious activity in the Japanese Mandates that indicated possible militarization of the Central Pacific islands through which the Thrusters' through-ticket operation must transit.[78] These factors caused planners to discard the thruster concept and begin looking at other options for an advanced base in the Pacific.

Chief amongst these new cautionary planners was Bryant, who became the Director of the War Plans Division in 1932. This was the very same Bryant, in fact, whom Laning wrote to in September of that year, advertising the new Advanced Base Problem and highlighting its importance to the Navy and Marine Corps. By 1933, Bryant replaced the remaining Thrusters on his staff with Cautionaries and assigned a Marine to prepare amphibious plans. That officer was Miller's 1930 Naval War College classmate and future wartime Commandant of the Marine Corps, Colonel Thomas Holcomb.[79] It was under Holcomb, when commandant, that the Marine Corps rapidly expanded to its wartime strength and began executing the island-hopping campaigns across the Pacific. It was under Holcomb the war planner that this campaign truly began to take form in War Plan Orange. Though other Marine Corps and Naval Officers were of course involved in the process of integrating advanced base operations into war planning, one begins to see just how influential the Advanced Base Problems became by following the idea vector that began with Miller and spread quickly to Cutts, Laning, Bryant, and Holcomb, who saw the ideas bear fruit in wartime execution.

[77] Pete Pellegrino, "History of Naval War Gaming," (Class lecture, Joint Military Operations, Naval War College, Newport, March 16, 2020).
[78] Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 172-173.
[79] Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 182.

Similar to the old 1922 plan, the cautionary plans of 1934-1935 called for two major fleet bases between Pearl Harbor and the Philippines. Given the potential enemy threat to American sea service objectives in the event of a war, naval planners identified Truk as the ideal location for Fleet Base Two. In the 1935 version, labeled the "Royal Road" plan, Marines would seize Wotje to establish Fleet Base One prior to transitioning to an assault on Truk, scheduled to commence on day 85 of the campaign. The Navy valued Truk atoll as a fleet anchorage because its combination of high terrain and spacious lagoon provided substantial protection of an anchored fleet from surface and sub-surface fires and because fortified soldiers could defend the atoll effectively.

Army and Navy planners anticipated that this would be the largest fight in the entire Mandates campaign. In developing joint plans, studies conducted at the military and naval war and staff colleges estimated a requirement of roughly 50,000 soldiers and the entirety of the Navy's available carrier aviation was needed to seize the island. To oppose the landing force, planners anticipated Orange could forward deploy to Truk within one month of the commencement of hostilities as many as 27,663 troops and 400 aircraft. Given the complexity of the lagoon's terrain, within which Orange defenders could set up interlocking fields of fire on as many as twenty outlying islands and islets, planners expected 25% friendly casualties. As events played out in World War II, Truk proved to be an important base for Japan. In the end, the Americans opted to bypass Truk, establishing a major fleet base in the Admiralty Islands, instead.[80]

[80] Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 189-198.

To control Truk was to control the entire island chains of the Marshalls and Carolines, and controlling those islands was of the utmost importance to War Plan Orange. Thus, Truk was the focus of Advanced Base Problem II. Unlike the worst-case scenario accounted for by war planners, Naval War College scenario designers chose to set the stage for a simpler problem. Indicating an expectation that the enemy forces had just started deploying to the island, anticipated enemy numbers were considerably lower. They included one infantry regiment of 3,000 personnel, one light artillery regiment employing artillery up to 75mm, one heavy artillery regiment with sixteen 155mm guns, at least two larger caliber naval guns, anti-aircraft weapons and personnel, and supporting troops. Naval forces observed operating in the vicinity included "limited numbers of light cruisers, destroyers, and submarines; sea planes (including some heavy VP); and some land-based type planes."[81] It is not clear why the Naval War College scenario did not mirror the worst-case scenario anticipated by War Plan Orange, but perhaps it was scaled to represent a force that could be successfully attacked by the FMF without having to call on Army units to support, thus making the planning challenge simpler by keeping it entirely contained within the Marine Corps.

The Fleet Marine Force available for the play of the problem comprised 26,310 Marines and sailors, which included two Marine infantry brigades, one Marine Artillery Brigade, an equally sized element of Base Defense Artillery and associated systems such as searchlights and sound locators, four flying squadrons, five "replacement battalions" and miscellaneous supporting troops.[82] In this planning, the Marines put special emphasis on the components of a successful amphibious assault. They had concerns about the numbers and types of available

[81] Education Department, Naval War College, Advanced Base Problem II, (1935), 1-2, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems II 1934-1935 Truk, Box 2, MHD.
[82] Education Department, Naval War College, Advanced Base Problem II, (1935), 4-5, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems II 1934-1935 Truk, Box 2, MHD.

small boats for combat loading and supply transportation. While they Navy provided enough ocean-going transports, the Marines foresaw "small boats" as a "big problem."[83]

The landing requirement was not merely a matter of simple numbers, as boat design mattered greatly to efficiently launch amphibious forces from ship to shore. The Marine Corps Schools staff in early 1935 came to these conclusions at the same time as FLEX 1 commenced off Culebra, where initial experiments confirmed the need for better boats.[84] The solution did not arrive overnight, as the Marine Corps continued to lack a proper landing craft solution until the first versions of Higgins' famous designs made their first appearance in FLEX VI in 1940.[85]

The Marines expected that getting ashore would prove challenging regardless of the type of boats employed. Due to Truk lagoon's unique topography and hydrography, the Marines put special emphasis identifying water approaches through fringing reefs and islets to possible landing sites. They also put special emphasis on logistics and medical requirements, forming special planning committees to deal exclusively with the topics. The medical planning was particularly noteworthy because previous efforts to consider medical needs lacked depth. Advanced Base Problem II, expecting substantial casualties in a Truk operation, was the first attempt at requiring a detailed study of requirements for hospital ships and transports, ambulance boats, facilities ashore, and medical supplies, for an amphibious operation.[86]

After the presentation, the Naval War College submitted a written series of follow-up questions, which received a written response from the Marine Corps Schools students involved

[83] Marine Corps Schools, "Special Instructional Memorandum: Advanced Base Problem II, Naval War College, 1935," 6, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems II 1934-1935 Truk, Box 2, MHD.
[84] Isely and Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, 90.
[85] Isely and Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, 109.
[86] Marine Corps Schools, "Special Instructional Memorandum: Advanced Base Problem II, Naval War College, 1935," 10, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems II 1934-1935 Truk, Box 2, MHD.

in planning, adding another level of interaction to the evolution. In subsequent years, Marine Corps Schools staff updated the Advanced Base Problem II presentations, archiving copies in 1936 and 1937. The archived speaker notes from those years indicate that the school originally solved the problem and presented the solution to the Naval War College in 1935, though it is not clear who the audience was for those subsequent iterations. Nonetheless, the educational value of the problem and its solution clearly had enduring value.

Advanced Base Problems after 1935

The Advanced Base Problem presentation series continued May 19, 1936 with Advanced Base Problem III. The scenario called for an amphibious assault of Palau against Orange, picking up the capture of Truk after Advanced Base Problem II. Time allotted for the presentation grew to five hours, perhaps reflecting the increasing depth and breadth of planning, and an increased understanding of how to plan such operations compared to previous years.[87] One of the Marine student planners was Captain Harry B. Liversedge, a former Olympic athlete who went on to command the 28th Marines when members of the regiment raised the first American flag over Iwo Jima.[88] The scale of the problem grew, with some 10,000 Orange personnel defending Palau against a larger FMF contingent, which doubled the amount of artillery and supporting troops, and quadrupled the amount of aircraft compared to Advanced Base Problem II.

Advanced Base Problem IV, presented in a 5.5-hour block on May 17, 1936, continued the War Plan Orange march to the Philippines with an attack on Dumanquilas Bay. Through the addition of 10,000 Orange defenders located at the bay and an expeditionary force of 25,000

[87] Naval War College, "Memorandum for All Officers: Schedule for the Presentation, Advanced Base Problem," May 15, 1936, 1, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems III 1935-1936 Palaus, Box 3, MHD.
[88] Marine Corps Schools, "Special Instructional Memorandum: Palau, 1936 Naval War College Problem," March 3, 1936, 1, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems III 1935-1936 Palaus, Box 3, MHD.

assembling at Manila, Advanced Base Problem IV's details were substantially different than the 1933 version that assumed the Marines would arrive at the bay prior to the Japanese. Marine planners again employed three Marine infantry brigades, this time leveraging the new July 1, 1936 Tables of Organization to exercise the latest force structure. Major Merritt A. Edson, who went on to lead the Marine Raiders at Guadalcanal, participated in one of the student planning groups.[89]

The following year, Advanced Base Problem V took a peculiar turn away from War Plan Orange, choosing instead to revisit the idea of an amphibious assault against Red forces holding Trinidad. Like the Dumanquilas Bay scenario the year prior that leveraged the 1933 problem for its location, this Advanced Base Problem V may have borrowed similarly from the 1931 problem. The Trinidad scenario leveraged notional advanced bases in some of the same Puerto Rican islands hosting the ongoing FLEX series, giving it some opportunity to leverage lessons learned within the theater. Perhaps most noteworthy about this problem were the two senior briefers. Introducing and concluding the discussion was, as usual, the Assistant Commandant of Marine Corps Schools. This year, it was Noble, who was later Assistant Commander of 3d Marine Division during the capture of Guam. His lead planner, briefing the Estimate of the Situation and Decision, was Lieutenant Colonel Graves B. Erskine, who led 3d Marine Division at Iwo Jima.[90]

The two men returned to the Naval War College on May 16, 1939 for Advanced Base Problem VI. Their fellow briefers included Lieutenant Colonel Oliver P. Smith, who is best

[89] Marine Corps Schools, "Directive for the preparation of a solution to Advanced Base Problem IV 1937-M.C.S.," February 20, 1937, 1, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems IV 1936-1937 Dumanquilas, Box 5, MHD.
[90] Marine Corps Schools, "Directive for the preparation of a solution to Advanced Base Problem V 1938-M.C.S.," January 19, 1938, 1, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problems V-VIII (Pt. 1), Box 7, MHD.

known for his command time in the Korean War but was able to apply his knowledge of amphibious operations as the Assistant Commander of 1st Marine Division at Peleliu. Noble surely benefitted from this year's scenario personally, as it focused on an amphibious assault of Guam, planned for two years into an ongoing war between Blue and Orange. Though "Orange" was the enemy for the problem, a notable shift occurred when planners used tables of organization and equipment for Imperial Japanese Army units, marking the first time an Advanced Base Problem made overt reference to Japan as the foe.[91]

Advanced Base Problems continued into the post-war period, though archived records are less complete. According to Isely and Crowl, the scenarios for 1940 through 1943 each focused on Saipan. The chosen scenario makes sense, though the accompanying files are not available in the Marine Corps' archives to review. Nonetheless, it is evident that by 1939, in Noble's words, the problems "seem(ed) to be steadily taking on the nature of custom."[92]

Conclusion

The role of the Advanced Base Problems in the development of Marine Corps amphibious capability is more consequential than the existing historiography has acknowledged. There are many more opportunities for research related to the Advanced Base Problems before the gap in historiography resolves. The reintroduction of these problems via this paper only initiates the development of context for the significant role the Advanced Base Problems series played within the Interwar Navy and Marine Corps. The Advanced Base Problems were a cornerstone of the development of the doctrine and tactics used to conduct the island-hopping campaigns of World

[91] Marine Corps Schools, *Advanced Base Problem VI*, cover page, COLL/4204, Advanced Base Problem V-VIII (PT.1) Box 7, MHD.
[92] Marine Corps Schools, "Introduction and Orientation," *Advanced Base Problem VI*, 7, Advanced Base Problem V-VIII (PT.1) Box 7, MHD.

War II. The spirit of General Lejeune's and Miller's passion for spreading the message of amphibious warfare to the Navy was central to the presentations but hardly the extent of the impact. The emphasis on the role of the Marine Corps as a critical component of the naval fleet, to be employed to seize and defend advanced bases as part of a Naval Attack Force, was fundamental to inculcating a mindset across the naval services that understood the value of the Fleet Marine Force's mission, and thus employed it effectively in the World War. But the Naval audience was not the only audience. The efforts of Ellis Miller and his staff to develop the Advanced Base Problems bore exponential returns for the Marines as well, teaching many of the key wartime Marine Corps leaders how to plan for the employment of the new concept of the Fleet Marine Force. Indeed, these problems facilitated another form of a service-level think-tank, where leaders could incorporate ideas in tactics, transportation, weapons development, and more in scenarios based in the possibilities anticipated by War Plan Orange. Largely under-studied by history, the close interaction of the Naval War College and Marine Corps Schools during the interwar period played a vital role in educating officers of both sea services. The Advanced Base Problems deserve closer examination, as their place in the story of Marine Corps amphibious warfare development is far more important that previously considered. Perhaps they even inspire new ideas for today's Marine Corps as it reestablishes the concept of the Fleet Marine Force in service of the fleet.

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