Thesis Abstract.
British Maritime Strategy and Amphibious Capability, 1900-1940.
David R. Massam, Corpus Christi College.
Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
Trinity Term 1995.

The thesis deals with the period between the British reorganisation of their defence structure at the turn of the century and the beginning of World War Two. It divides into three parts. The first deals with British theories of maritime strategy and their practical application; the second section examines the practical requirements of these maritime strategies; and the third section comprises a case study, the Norwegian Campaign of 1940, examined and explained in the light of the preceding material.

The thesis contends that the British Services never adopted an amphibious strategy in this period. Despite interest in amphibious strategies following the Russo-Japanese War it proved impossible to apply such strategies to the scenario of a war with Germany. Consequently, on the outbreak of the First World War there were no plans or structures for combined planning, and the result was the politically-initiated Gallipoli Campaign. Although in structural and practical terms the results of Gallipoli were positive, the difficulty with actually applying amphibious strategies persisted in the inter-war years. Throughout the period under consideration there was no amphibious strategy on the British planners' agenda.

The thesis therefore considers the British practical preparations for amphibious operations in this light, and concludes that the British opted for a policy providing the basis for rapid expansion in the unlikely event of an amphibious operation becoming necessary. This was a pragmatic solution flawed by the failure to make provision for training and the possibility of an operation at short notice.

Finally the thesis re-examines the Norwegian Campaign, contending that the difficulties the British encountered there were not the result of an underestimation of the requirements of amphibious operations, but of the failure in the pre-war period to consider the strategic possibility that an amphibious operation could be forced on the British services at short notice.

History Faculty Abstract.
British Maritime Strategy and Amphibious Capability 1900-1940.
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The aim of the thesis is to consider the level of British preparation for amphibious operations in the period between the turn of the century and the first campaigns of the Second World War, and examine the reasoning behind that preparation. To allow this, the theories and plans which called for amphibious operations in this period are first considered, and the British capability is then assessed in accordance with the requirements arising from these.

The chief flaw in existing assessments of British amphibious capability lies in the failure to put the British achievement in context. Comparisons with the amphibious requirements of Overlord, or the capability demonstrated by the United States Marine Corps on its (belated) entry into the war inevitably show British preparations in a poor light. However, Overlord was a response to a wholly unexpected strategic scenario, the collapse of France, whilst a comparison of British and American amphibious capability would only be valid were the two powers equally strong and possessed of identical strategic concerns. The only fair assessment of British amphibious capability is one which judges it in the light of the British strategic position at the time and the requirements arising from this.

At this point it is worth mentioning the other flaws in existing assessments of the British capability. Most are dependent upon the accounts of individuals who were directly involved, or who wrote at the behest of those who were directly involved, in the amphibious development programmes of the Second World War; inevitably in these accounts there is a tendency to play down the achievements which preceded their own. Further problems arise with those works which attempt to compare the British Royal Marines with the United States Marine Corps. This approach leads away from the main thrust of British amphibious development, which lay instead in a

uniquely inter-service approach. Finally, almost all the existing accounts commence after the First World War, yet have little compunction in describing Gallipoli as the fundamental experience from the British point of view. It is a contention of this thesis that the existing view of the impact of Gallipoli on British amphibious thinking is wholly erroneous as a result of the failure to consider what comprised British amphibious thought before that campaign took place.

Existing accounts may be loosely grouped into two main themes. All are agreed that Gallipoli was the critical experience; the division lies between those who consider that that operation wholly discredited amphibious operations as far as the British were concerned, and those who hold that the impact was less drastic, and that the British continued to make progress in this sphere, but that it was largely unofficial, and concentrated on small surprise landings achieved by surprise rather than daylight assaults.

The thesis aims at overcoming the flaws listed above and producing an account of British amphibious development which can be judged according to its own contemporary amphibious requirements. It therefore attempts first to set out the possible strategies which might have called for amphibious operations in this period. Some elements of this question have been covered in the historical debate concerning the so-called Continental Commitment. However, for the purposes of this thesis, that debate has not penetrated sufficiently deeply or widely. It is not sufficient to know that the British eventually decided on a commitment to the Continent in both 1914 and 1940; in order to assess the possibility of the services being called upon to stage an amphibious operation, it is necessary to examine the nature of the alternatives to this strategy and the support which these alternatives enjoyed, as well as to look further afield than the European theatre. The Continental Commitment was never an unquestioned strategy; it did not necessarily rule out complementary amphibious operations; and it did not rule out operations in extra-European theatres, some of which offered great possibilities for the employment of amphibious operations. All

the possible strategic scenarios which could have called for amphibious operations have to be considered before the British capability to stage such ventures can be fairly judged.

The strategic environment having been defined it is then possible to turn to the question of the British capability to meet the amphibious requirements thrown up by these strategic assumptions. This is not simply a case of reassessing existing material by a new standard, as existing descriptions of British capability are also far from complete. The tendency to compare the British with the Americans has led to a failure to recognise that the British, uniquely amongst maritime powers, never sought to create a single service force to conduct amphibious operations, preferring to rely always on the co-operation of the three arms. Consequently much of the British progress in amphibious preparation necessarily consisted of the enhancement of combined planning and command arrangements; the failure to realise the nature of the British approach has meant that whole areas of progress have been missed. This failure has also had a historiographical impact; due to the British "combined operations" approach, the papers relating to the question are scattered evenly between the three services. However, by concentrating on the Royal Marines the existing works depend heavily on Naval papers, with little reference to the Army and none to the Air Force, despite the fact that the latter service, by virtue of its youth, was more methodical in its record-keeping and, usefully, devoted to defining its role in co-operation with the other services. A more comprehensive, as well as contextual, description of British amphibious capability is therefore possible.

The form of the thesis is defined by the approach. It is divided into three main sections: the first dealing with the theories and strategies which called for amphibious operations and the policies laid down for meeting these requirements; the second describing the nature of British preparations; and the third comprising a case study, the Norwegian Campaign of 1940.

It is argued that an explosion of interest in amphibious strategies followed the Russo-Japanese War, the lessons of which for Britain, arguably in a comparable

position to Japan, were quickly proclaimed by military theorists. An attempt was therefore made to create the conditions which would allow Britain to conduct amphibious war with the same success as Japan. However, the impossibility of conducting effective amphibious operations against Germany led to the failure of this initiative, and although the Army remained interested in such operations other than in Europe, the Navy were not disposed to co-operate and no progress was made. This allows a more reasonable assessment of the supposed narrow-minded approach of the General Staff of the period; the supposed division between a continental-minded General Staff and an amphibious-minded Admiralty was not as clear cut as is believed.

As a consequence of the failure to produce an amphibious strategy for employment against Germany, there was no planning or command structure operating at the outset of the First World War; co-ordination between the services took place at the political level, and it was thus with the politicians that the Gallipoli Campaign originated. In contrast to the existing view, however, Gallipoli's results in the sphere of amphibious operations were positive; the relations between the Services improved, and the operation itself was taken as proof of the tactical viability of opposed landings in daylight, an operation whose viability had been much misdoubted before the war began. These positive trends emerge clearly in the course of planning for a landing on the Belgian Coast in 1916-17, demonstrating the inaccuracy of the view that Gallipoli frightened the British off amphibious operations. The assumption that the perceived British failure to develop their amphibious capability in the inter-war years was the result of their bloody experience at Gallipoli is therefore incorrect.

The over-riding factor governing British amphibious preparation in the inter-war period was the same as that which had applied before the First World War; despite the increased interest in amphibious strategies which arose from the reaction to the horrors of the Western Front, there continued to be no likely strategic scenario which called for the use of amphibious operations. Despite a further outbreak of amphibious theory which captured the imagination of many who were embittered by

the experience of the Western Front, the difficulty of applying such ideas persisted. Of possible enemies, only Japan appeared to be vulnerable to an amphibious campaign, and it rapidly became clear that such a campaign was beyond the economic capability of the Empire to support. No amphibious operations therefore figured on the British strategic horizon.

The second section of the thesis assesses British amphibious capability in the light of the strategic environment set out above. Before the First World War, development largely coincided with the brief flash of strategic interest which followed the Russo-Japanese War and subsequently ebbed, although the Army, with its interest in operations outside Europe, persisted in some development. In the inter-war period it would have been reasonable for the British to have abandoned all development in this sphere, seeing, as they did, no possibility for the employment of amphibious technique. One of the established views would suggest that this was more or less the case, whilst the other holds that what interest persisted was largely unofficial, centred around the Staff Colleges. In fact, although the Service Staffs could not conceive of any strategy which called for such operations, they wisely did not rule out the possibility that a requirement for such an operation would arise. The British therefore followed a policy of accumulating a stock of information and prototyping the necessary equipment, in order to possess at the minimum cost the potential for a rapid expansion of their amphibious capability should a requirement for an amphibious venture become apparent. This policy was not adhered to without argument: sections of the Royal Navy, chiefly concerned with Japan, craved a greater degree of preparation; whilst the Royal Air Force, committed to strategic bombing, wished to reduce further the resources devoted to preparing for an operation their strategic assumptions rendered unlikely. The pragmatic policy was constantly favoured by the War Office, and came to be accepted by the Admiralty, hence, due to the compromise nature of British military planning, this middle path was largely followed.

For the most part the pragmatic approach worked well, providing an economical nucleus of expansion to deal with the remote possibility that an

amphibious operation would be required. Case studies of the development of techniques and equipment reveal that the British had only failed to consider fully the problems raised by air power; a difficulty which only a large expenditure could resolve. This conclusion refutes both the suggestion that the British had rejected such operations as impossible after the experience of Gallipoli, or the more moderate suggestion that they had been misdirected towards small surprise landings by that debacle. The nucleus of equipment and knowledge which the British accumulated allowed for indefinite expansion; guidelines for all amphibious operations, from surprise night landings to daylight beach assaults were encapsulated in the British blueprint for expansion; the pragmatism of the approach reflected the absence of ideas as to the strategic requirement for such operations.

There were, however, several flaws inherent in the pragmatic approach. With such a basic caucus of equipment, progressive training and development was difficult, whilst for much of the period in question the time required to convert this potential capability into military reality was underestimated, a consideration which was to undermine the British response to German aggression in Norway. This last was chiefly a flaw in the strategic thinking rather than in the policy evolved to meet its requirements; the inability to meet swiftly a requirement for an amphibious operation reflected the belief that no such requirement would arise quickly. In the closing years of the 1930s, as rearmament monies became available, an attempt was made to increase the stock of material so as to deal with this flaw, but little had been achieved before the outbreak of war. Despite these flaws, it is argued, in the light of their strategic assumptions the British were relatively well prepared.

Having described the main trend of British amphibious preparations, the thesis examines the supposed amphibious role of the Royal Marines and the extent of the British interest in a single-service approach to amphibious operations in these years. The more hawkish sections of the Navy and the Royal Marines did posit that the Marines should perform a function comparable to that of their American counterparts. This pressure arose from two sources: an unwillingness on the part of large sections of

the Navy to accept that an advanced campaign against Japan was beyond the Empire's resources, and a fear that the Marines themselves were threatened by economy measures. These two strands repeatedly coincided in the inter-war years; the suggestion that the Marines could provide an amphibious force for the Navy offered a means by which the opposition of the other services to committing their scanty resources to amphibious operations could be circumvented and provided that force with a role with which to defend itself against would-be economisers. However, the Naval Staff never wholly accepted the view of the naval hawks that the Navy should equip itself to conduct such operations alone, whilst the allocation of an amphibious role to the Marines as a means of defending their existence always had an element of make believe. The idea that the Navy should shoulder the entire burden of amphibious operations was never seriously aired; the basic British approach remained the "combined" policy set out above.

The final section of the thesis provides a case study of the British approach in action, examining the amphibious operations demanded by the Norwegian Campaign. It is here argued that the failure to anticipate that amphibious operations would be required was the chief cause of the poor showing of the British in this theatre; this realisation having been lacking, there had been no attempt to convert the potential capability the British possessed into reality. This error was compounded by the flaw in the pragmatic approach which made no provision for an amphibious operation being forced on the British at short notice. Thus, having failed to predict an amphibious operation, and having no immediate capability to meet such requirements, the British were forced to extemporise. Norway showed up the flaws in British strategic thinking and the pragmatic policy of amphibious preparation they had developed in accordance with their strategic views; however, it did not accurately represent the British potential amphibious capability.

In sum, the thesis shows the British approach to preparation for amphibious operations to have been governed by their expectation of being called upon to conduct such an enterprise. For most of the period in question, British amphibious

development was a form of insurance policy against the possibility of an operation which, for the most part, the services considered unlikely. Although the value of this insurance was reduced by the failure to provide sufficient material for progressive training or to stage a small operation at short notice, the British are more to be lauded for their foresight in preserving such interest during a period of economic shortages than criticised for the shortcomings in their system.

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Corpus Christi College

Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Trinity Term 1995.

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List of Abbreviations Used in the Text.

A.C.N.S.	Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff.
A.D.M.O.	Assistant Director of Military Operations.
A.D.N.I.	Assistant Director of Naval Intelligence.
A.G.R.M.	Adjutant General Royal Marines.
A.L.C.	Assault Landing Craft.
A.N.Z.A.C.	Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.
B.E.F.	British Expeditionary Force.
B.M.B.	Beach Motor Boat, Later M.L.C. 1.
C.A.S.	Chief of the Air Staff.
C.C.S.D.C.O.	Co-ordinating Committee for Staff Duties in Combined Operations.
C.G.S.	Chief of the General Staff.
C.-in-C.	Commander-in-Chief.
C.I.D.	Committee of Imperial Defence.
C.I.G.S.	Chief of the Imperial General Staff.
C.N.S.	Chief of the Naval Staff (and First Sea Lord).
C.O.H.Q.	Combined Operations Headquarters. (World War Two).
C.O.S.	Chiefs of Staff Committee.
C.W.S.	Chief of the Admiralty War Staff.
D.Arm.D.	Director Armaments Division. R.A.F.
D.C.A.S.	Deputy Chief of the Air Staff.
D.C.O.S.	Deputy Chiefs of Staff Committee.
D.C.O.S.(I.T.)	D.C.O.S. Sub-Committee on Inter Service Training.
D.C.I.G.S.	Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff.
D.C.N.S.	Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff.
D.G.D.	Director Gunnery Division. R.N.
D.M.O.	Director of Military Operations.
D.M.O.&I.	Director of Military Operations and Intelligence.
D.M.O.&P.	Director of Military Operations and Plans.
D.N.A.&T.	Director Naval Artillery and Torpedo Division.
D.N.C.	Director of Naval Construction.
D.N.E.	Director of Naval Engineering.
D.N.I.	Director of Naval Intelligence.
D.O.D.	Director Operations Division. R.N.
D.o.P.	Director of Plans Division. R.N.
D.S.D.	Director Staff Duties. W.O.
F.A.A.	Fleet Air Arm.
F.O.	Flag Officer.
F.S.R.	Field Service Regulations.
G.H.Q.	General Headquarters.
G.O.C.	General Officer Commanding.
G.S.O.	General Staff Officer.
H.M.S.	His Majesty's Ship.
H.Q.	Headquarters.

I.D.C.	Imperial Defence College.
I.S.P.S.	Inter Service Planning Staff (Norwegian Campaign).
I.S.T.D.C.	Inter Service Training and Development Centre.
J.P.C.	Joint Planning Sub-Committee of the Chiefs of Staff Committee.
J.S.C.	Joint Staff College.
L.D.D.	Local Defence Division. R.N.
M.C.C.	Military Co-ordination Committee (War Cabinet Sub-Committee 1940)
M.N.B.O.	Mobile Naval Base Organisation.
M.L.C.	Motor Landing Craft.
N.I.D.	Naval Intelligence Division.
N.W.E.F.	North Western Expeditionary Force (Norway).
R.A.F.	Royal Air Force.
R.M.	Royal Marines.
R.N.	Royal Navy.
R.N.C.	Royal Naval College, Greenwich.
R.N.S.C.	Royal Naval Staff College, Greenwich.
R.U.S.I.	Royal United Services Institute.
U.S.N.	United States Navy.
U.S.M.C.	United States Marine Corps.
V.C.N.S.	Vice Chief of the Naval Staff.
W.O.	War Office.

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Introduction.

The aim of this thesis is to describe, for the period 1900-1940, those British strategic theories and plans which called for the use of amphibious operations and to compare these with the actual ability to conduct amphibious operations which the British possessed.

In this task I have followed Corbett, and defined those strategies in which naval and military power act in a complementary manner as "*maritime*", in contrast to those which are purely land-based and thus "*continental*" strategies. Obviously this is a loose definition, and could include such separate but complementary actions as a naval blockade coupled with a war on land. This thesis, however, is concerned with those forms of maritime strategy in which the services co-operate closely. These can be divided into two types; those in which the army of a maritime power is used to support the operations of the fleet, and those in which the fleet assists the operations of the army. The former are simple enough; the army captures naval bases, either for the use of their own fleet, or to deny the use of them to the enemy's ships. In this way, the operations of the fleet, which aim at establishing sea command, are promoted. Operations of the fleet in support of the army are, however, more complex. In principle they are equally simple, the establishment of sea command by the fleet enables the army to travel at will upon the sea, thus enhancing its mobility. However, maritime theory then claims that this symbiotic relationship imbues the army with a power out of all proportion to its numerical strength; a maritime power's small army, by virtue of the enhancement of its mobility resulting from its ability to travel by sea, is capable of dealing blows which will stagger a continental scale army. Maritime strategies thus allow a sea power to act decisively on the continent without the need to maintain a continental scale army.

Amphibious capability simply comprises the practical ability to put such strategies into effect. To possess this capability it is necessary to wield the technical and doctrinal accomplishments required to land an army from the sea and maintain it ashore.

British strategic thought and practical preparation for amphibious operations in the four decades before the Second World War therefore forms the main theme of the thesis. Undeniably poor performances at the outset of World War II, most notably the catastrophic campaign in Norway, arguably suggest that the level of British thought and ability was so low as to be unworthy of consideration. However, it is argued here that any attempt to assess pre-war preparation in the light of the experiences of 1940 - 45 is spurious, for the course which that conflict took was wholly unexpected; one searches in vain for a single pre-war statement to the effect that France might collapse thus greatly increasing the need for amphibious operations.[1] Furthermore, those amphibious operations which took place before the fall of France developed in such a manner as prevented the British from utilising their stock of equipment and knowledge to any effect. The poor showing in 1940 itself implies a need for investigation.

Maritime strategies provided the alternative to the commitment to the continent which was followed in 1914 and 1940. Michael Howard has argued that such ideas depended on wishful thinking,[2] but their contemporary theoretical and public popularity, and the extent to which they were considered and accepted within the military establishment must be understood in order to comprehend British defence preparations. Without an understanding of the degree of acceptance which such strategies enjoyed, it is impossible to assess the quality of the practical preparations to carry out the operations they required.

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[1] Sir John Kennedy. "*The Business of War*". (Hutchison, London, 1957) p. 7.

[2] M. Howard, "*The Continental Commitment*" (Ashfield Press, London, 1989) & "*The British Way in Warfare, a Reappraisal*" (Cape, London, 1974).

At the level of capability, the nature of British co-operation for combined operations is remarkably instructive. In the first place, logically, it reveals the extent to which the ideas of the theorists were practically capable of being put into effect. As a case study of British military preparedness, however, it has a wider applicability. For much of the period under consideration amphibious planning and preparation was the only form of offensive co-operation between the services, and, with the introduction of aircraft, became the only probable offensive operation which would require the involvement of all three arms. The history of preparation for amphibious operations is thus, in microcosm, the history of inter-service co-operation in this period. This is particularly the case at the High (Strategic) Command level, which largely developed its inter-service capability to meet the requirements of amphibious operations. Co-operation between the services in Britain was broadly shaped by amphibious considerations. Further, as amphibious operations concerned all three services, the subject provides a unique overview, for comparative purposes, of how the three arms, together and separately, approached the question of preparing for a responsibility which was not their chief concern. As the period concerned includes a decade infamous for financial retrenchment, this comparison of how the services allotted their limited resources is particularly valuable.

Previous work in this field consists chiefly of brief flashes of lucidity where other themes cut across, it, short introductions to the history of the Second World War, and a few dedicated attempts flawed by a mistaken comparison with the American approach.

Consideration of the nature of British Strategy in this period is extensive, most notably the work of Howard[1] and French,[2] whilst Gooch[3] deals comprehensively with the strategic debates before the First World War, and Bond has examined both army policy

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[1] Ibid.

[2] D. French "*The British Way in Warfare, 1688-2000*", (Unwin Hyman ltd. London, 1990).

[3] J. Gooch, "*The Plans of War, The General Staff and British Military Strategy 1900-1916*" (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1974).

and the work of Liddell Hart in the inter-war period.[1] However, all are constrained to deal with the continental commitment, and hence do not deal extensively with the alternatives or extra-European issues. As it is the object of this thesis to relate the extent of British preparations to the theories and strategies under consideration it is necessary to consider the maritime alternatives to a greater degree than is possible in a work which aims to illustrate the means by which a single strategy emerged.

On the issue of British inter-service command there are excellent general accounts by Johnson[2] and Ehrman,[3] both of which, however, suffer from having been written before the full range of documents became available. A more recent account is Welch's admirable assessment of the Chiefs of Staff,[4] but as this is confined to the inter-war period it does not highlight what this thesis argues were long-term trends, whilst D'Ombrian's account of the early days of the Committee of Imperial Defence covers the origin of a number of these themes but does not follow them through.[5] In general, whilst all of these accounts aim at describing the nature of the British approach to inter-service operations, they do not really consider what form such operations would take; it is a contention of this thesis that for much of the period the command structures were being evolved with amphibious operations in mind, and it is argued that this provides a new insight into their workings.

Existing assessments of British amphibious capacity suffer from a number of failings. The standard naval reference works for this period, Marder[6] and Roskill,[7] draw

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[1] B. Bond. "*British Military Policy Between the Two World Wars*" (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1980).

[2] F. A. Johnson "*Defence by Committee, the British Committee of Imperial Defence 1885-1959*" (OUP, 1960).

[3] J. Ehrman, "*Cabinet Government and War, 1890-1940*". (CUP 1958).

[4] H. Welch. "*The Origins and Development of the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence*", (Unpublished PhD Thesis, London, 1973).

[5] N. D'Ombrian, "*War Machinery and High Policy; Defence Administration in Peace Time Britain 1902-14*". (OUP 1973).

[6] A. J. Marder, "*From the Dardanelles to Oran, Studies of the Royal Navy in War and Peace 1915-40*" (O.U.P. London, 1974). p.52. Marder's account is explicitly based on Fergusson, [below].

[7] S. W. Roskill "*Naval Policy Between the Wars*", (Collins, London, 1968) Vol. I, pp. 539-40. Roskill's account is explicitly based on Maund, [below].

their information from the works of Maund[1] and Fergusson,[2] both of whom were directly involved in amphibious operations in the Second World War and have axes to grind. The conclusion drawn from these works is that amphibious operations were 'discredited'[3] in Britain by the experience of Gallipoli, and that there was little interest until the formation of the Inter Service Training and Development Centre, headed by Maund, in 1938.

More recent assessments, such as Clifford[4] and MacGregor,[5] whilst still relying heavily on Maund's account, are more extensively researched. Both consider interest in amphibious operations prior to the establishment of the I.S.T.D.C. was more widespread than Maund's account would suggest. Clifford considers this to have been largely unofficial, focused around the Staff Colleges,[6] whilst MacGregor, although ready to acknowledge the extent of British interest, considers it misguided, 'distorted' towards a misplaced faith in small surprise landings by the impact of Gallipoli.[7] These two works, from an American viewpoint, place an over-emphasis on locating parallels with the United States Marine Corps, which misconception leads to an inaccurate picture of the British approach and capability.

No single work attempts to cover both the maritime strategies and the preparations which were made to put them into effect. Stokesbury's work on the period

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[1] L. E. H. Maund, "*Assault from the Sea*" (Methuen, London, 1949). Whilst purporting to be a history of amphibious operations, the work is largely autobiographical, christened by one reviewer "sic transit gloria *Maundi*".

[2] B. Fergusson, "*The Watery Maze - The Story of Combined Operations*" (Collins, London, 1951). This work is really a history of Combined Operations Headquarters, based on the internal history in DEFE 2/697, and to all intents and purposes commissioned by Mountbatten; CAB 106/9, Fergusson to Vice Admiral Hughes-Hallett 6/1/59.

[3] Marder, Op. Cit. p. 52.

[4] K. J. Clifford, "On Parallel Courses - An Analysis of British and American Amphibious (Combined) Operations, 1920-40". (London University, MPhil, 1980), published (in America) as "*Amphibious Warfare Development in Britain and America*", (Edgewood, New York, 1983).

[5] D. MacGregor, "Innovation in Naval Warfare in Britain and the United States Between the First and Second World Wars" (Rochester University, New York, PhD. 1989), published (abbreviated) "The Use, Misuse and Non-Use of History, The Royal Navy and the Operational Lessons of the First World War", *Journal of Military History*, Oct. 1992, (Vol. 56. No. 4.)

[6] Clifford, "On Parallel Courses" p. 55.

[7] MacGregor "Innovation in Naval Warfare" p. 104.

before World War I comes closest, but unfortunately confines his investigations of both strategy and capability to the work of the theorists.[1] Attempts to assess the capability therefore tend to give the impression that the benchmark of competence was the ability to conduct the form of operations which were carried out in the Second World War, whereas these were in fact a wholly unprecedented form of continental-scale amphibious ventures, bearing no resemblance to the amphibious scenarios which had been under consideration before that war. Thus there is no assessment of the extent to which maritime strategies were technically viable, or the preparations adequate, as neither has been set in context.

The thesis divides into three parts, the first dealing with the British attitude towards such operations in this period, the second with the problems they faced and solutions they formulated, and the third reconsiders the Norwegian Campaign as a case study of the British approach in application.

This thesis therefore begins with an attempt to describe the nature of the maritime strategies which were under consideration in this period and to demonstrate the degree of acceptance which they enjoyed. It is not intended to summarise the entire strategic debate in these years, but rather to provide a comprehensive assessment of those strategies which called for the employment of amphibious operations. This assessment is split into three periods, the years between the Russo-Japanese War and the outbreak of the Great War, the Great War itself, and the Inter-War Years. This division is necessary to show the aberrant nature of the combined operations which were attempted in the Great War. It also allows a comparison of the pre- and post-war periods, which enables the impact of such operations as Gallipoli to be assessed; for, although the received wisdom suggests that Gallipoli discredited amphibious operations for the British, no-one has really examined the British attitude towards such ventures before that debacle. By these means it is hoped to define the form of amphibious operations which the British had

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[1] Stokesbury, J. L. "British Concepts and Practices of Amphibious Warfare 1867-1916", (Duke University, PhD 1968).

in mind in these years, and thus set their preparations in context. As a rule it emerges that the British at no point were committed to a strategy which called for an amphibious operation, but that certain services at particular times were enthusiastic, and that the possibility of having to employ such an operation was always kept in mind.

Having detailed the strategies which called for amphibious operations in the period under consideration, the thesis then addresses the manner in which the British converted their strategic assumptions into amphibious capability. Previous assessments, such as Clifford's, have suggested that the British owed what level of preparation they enjoyed to the work of dedicated establishments such as the Staff Colleges, which deliberately challenged the lack of interest demonstrated by the Service Staffs. This chapter reassesses that conclusion in the light of the preceding material detailing the strategic assumptions of the British, and new source material to conclude that the Service Staffs actively guided development in amphibious issues in accordance with their strategic conclusions.

The strategies and structures which guided the British development of an amphibious capability having been considered, the thesis then turns to that capability itself.

It is repeatedly stressed throughout this thesis that the British approach to amphibious operations was to treat them as combinations of the services, not, as the Americans did, to create a specialist force belonging to one service, such as the United States Marine Corps, capable of conducting such operations alone. This being the case, the bulk of British preparation was geared towards facilitating the co-operation of the three arms. Inevitably, the most difficult questions were those of command, and a chapter therefore deals with the organisational side of British preparation for amphibious operations; the evolution of the High Command which co-ordinated the efforts of the three services, and the emergence of a system of command for controlling the efforts of the three services in the field. A sister chapter deals with the technical developments

which complimented the progress made in the organisational sphere, explaining that the British approach was the accumulation of a stock of information and a nucleus of equipment which could be expanded to meet the requirements of any scale of amphibious operation which they might be called upon to meet. A final chapter in this section deals with the alternative to the British approach, what might be called the American model, and the unsuccessful attempts of those who were dissatisfied with the extent of British preparation for amphibious operations to allot the Royal Marines a similar responsibility to that of their American namesakes.

The British strategic assumptions and material preparations having been covered, the thesis concludes with an assessment of the first major amphibious operation of the Second World War, the Norwegian Campaign. This seeks to show that the course of this expedition owed more to the manner in which it was initiated than shortcomings in the British understanding of combined operations and that, once allowance has been made for this factor, the campaign provides further proof of the main contention of this thesis.

The final picture which emerges is one of overall pragmatism guiding preparation for such operations, the extent of the British progress in this sphere relating closely to the perceived likelihood that such ventures would be required. In addition, by considering the progress made by the British in the sphere of inter-service co-operation, a question ignored by those seeking parallels with the American experience, the British experience and achievements appear both more extensive and cohesive.

Chapter I. Pre-war Doctrine and Strategy.

British interest in amphibious strategy before the First World War was crystallised by the example of the Russo-Japanese War. That conflict was widely seen as a proxy war for Britain due to the parallels and close contacts between Britain and Japan. The unexpectedly dramatic successes of the Japanese against a far stronger continental enemy inspired British theorists and the military establishment to attempt to isolate the principles of amphibious war and apply them to the British situation. For the purposes of this chapter I have separated the work of the theoreticians from the political and strategic decisions taken in this era. When, as in this case, the theorists held official positions and enjoyed the confidence and patronage of influential figures, to assess whether they were influencing thought or reflecting it would be a thankless task. Thus the aim of the first section of this chapter is to illustrate the widespread nature of amphibious thinking before the First World War and to reveal the lines which such thinking followed. The second section of this chapter will examine the extent to which such ideas were put into practice.

Theory.

Pre-war amphibious theorists considered two main themes; the use of the Army to support the operations of the Fleet, and the use of the Fleet to support the operations of the Army. One sought to use the Army to assist the Navy to attain control of the sea, the other to consider how the Navy could assist the Army to victory on shore once that sea command had been attained. These were not, therefore, mutually exclusive, and could even be sequential in the same war plan; the Army would assist the Navy until the latter was in a position to return the favour. Whilst several of the theorists concerned themselves solely with one or other of these strategies, none claimed an exclusive importance for either stage. Although amongst the services there were those who claimed

the operations of their own service would suffice to achieve victory, either by economic blockade or crushing victories on land, the amphibious theorists all believed both land and sea operations were necessary. Their chief contentions were that land forces were necessary to gain sea command, and that once sea command had been attained, it could be utilised to enhance the effectiveness of land forces.

Of the two strategies, that of military operations in support of the Fleet was the least complex and controversial. Put simply, it considered that the Fleet would require bases from which to conduct its operations, and that an Army would be required to capture and hold them. Conversely, operations could be mounted to deny such bases to the enemy, thus curtailing the manoeuvrability of the opposing fleet, or even to destroy fleets which had taken refuge in such defended positions. On this war of positions, the operations of the fleets would depend.

This strategy had been explicitly stated in the works of Mahan in the 1880s.[1] However, as with much strategic thinking in the early 1900s, particularly in Britain, it was the Russo-Japanese war which provided the clearest modern indication and source of examples. The siege of Port Arthur, and the destruction of the Russian Fleet therein, proved an inspiration to a number of strategic theorists, both naval and military. Mahan's later works, and those of Callwell, Corbett and others, picked up the lessons of that curious war.

Mahan confined his amphibious studies to operations in support of the Fleet. The seizure of bases by 'combined expeditions' would allow the offensive navy to operate in the surrounding waters at an advantage, and deny base facilities to the enemy from whom bases might be taken.[2] Thus a fleet intending to operate in a region would move to attain a base possessing strategic advantages; 'let it be supposed that you have captured such a

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[1] A. T. Mahan, "*The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783*". (6th Edition, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington London)

[2] A. T. Mahan. "*Naval Strategy*" (London, Sampson, Low, Marston and Co. 1911). p. 243.

position, and have driven the enemy's fleet . . . off the theatre of war in your rear and immediate front. This means that your home communications are secure, except from raiding, and that you have established your superiority for the time being'.[1] Thus, for Mahan, naval operations relied on the seizure of bases from which fleets could operate. Motivated by a fear of America suffering a similar defeat to Russia's, which he blamed upon lack of suitable bases, Mahan left his conclusions there. Nevertheless, despite his failure to consider any operations other than those to attain command of the sea, Mahan never argued that the achievement of a victory at sea would be sufficient to end a war. Given that Mahan's work was an explicit call for the reconstruction of the U.S. Navy, it is to his credit that his intellectual probity did not allow him to over-rate the threat of blockade. Mahan admitted that no power now possessed the overwhelming strength necessary to flaunt neutral opinion and carry out an absolute blockade;[2] however, he made no attempt to explain how the attainment of victory at sea might then be turned to account on land.

It was left to the British theorists to consider the means by which sea command, once attained, might be used to assist towards final victory on land, but they also dealt extensively with military operations in support of naval strategy. In contrast with Mahan, Charles Callwell, as a serving Army Officer, explicitly treated the attainment of sea command as a means to an end. Nevertheless, he first devoted half a text to the army's role in assisting the navy 'to show the extent to which naval forces must rely on the co-operation of the military under normal conditions of war.[3] Callwell's appreciation of the operations which might be carried out in support of a fleet were similar to those envisaged by Mahan. Existing bases might be captured to deny them to the enemy or to provide '*points d'appui*' for the fleet to conduct further operations.[4] Wholly new positions

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[1] Ibid. p. 265.
[2] Mahan "*The Influence of Sea Power*" pp. 84-87.
[3] C. Callwell, "*Military Operations and Maritime Preponderance*" (Blackwood, London, 1905) p. 4.
[4] Ibid. p. 94.

might also be captured and fortified by the army to serve as bases for the operations of the fleet.[1] Finally, and most decisively, siege operations could be mounted with the aim of destroying, or forcing into the arms of the Royal Navy, enemy fleets which had taken refuge in coastal fortresses.[2] Upon all or each of these operations, the attainment of sea command might depend.

Similar views were held by other theorists such as Maurice Hankey, later Secretary to the C.I.D., and Brigadier G. Aston. Both were Marines and thus naturally interested in land operations in support of naval strategy. Working, as Callwell had, from the experiences of the Russo-Japanese war, Hankey drew up a list of operations in which the navy would require land support. These included the capture of bases from which to blockade enemy ports and 'to dislodge a hostile fleet from a defended port in which it had taken refuge'. In short, 'to capture any possession required for the use of the fleet'.[3] There was thus general agreement amongst the theorists as to the need for military forces in support of the actions of the Fleet.

Hankey and Aston's work was less theoretically impressive than Callwell's but it did highlight one problem with the strategy which was of increasing significance. Callwell had not set any ceiling to the scale of operations which an Army might be called upon to carry out in support of the Fleet. This was in part due to the fact that his work strove to demonstrate that the Navy was dependent upon the Army; to which end he had concluded that 'the very fact of possessing overwhelming naval forces compels a nation to maintain effective military forces, if naval forces are to have full scope for effective action when hostilities take place'.[4] However, Hankey and Aston, being Marines, had less reason to sing the Army's praises; hence both concluded that the British could only

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[1] Ibid. p. 95.
[2] Ibid. p. 99.
[3] Maurice Hankey "Warfare on the Littoral", Unpublished text, C.C.A.C. HNKY 6/1, (Hankey Papers). Chapter 1.
[4] Callwell, "*Military Operations*". p. 167.

move against a fleet which had taken refuge in an overseas port.[1] They considered that operations on the continent were out of the question due to the sheer size of the continental armies which could be brought to the relief of the fleet the British sought to destroy. With the chief naval threat rapidly becoming the German Fleet based on its home ports, this qualification meant the value of the theorists' work was increasingly doubtful.

Despite this increasingly significant limitation, the employment of the army in support of the operations of the fleet was thus generally accepted by the theorists. It was also agreed that the command of the sea which these combinations were intended to provide would not in itself constitute a decisive achievement. Even Mahan had admitted the diminished efficacy of blockade, and the British theorists were more strongly of the opinion that the blockade would not suffice against most powers. Julian Corbett, naval historian and lecturer at the Naval War Course, illustrated the impotence of sea power alone to affect continental powers by reference to the effects of the battle of Trafalgar; this crushing victory, though it had secured sea command, had not won the war, 'the sea had done all it could do, and for Europe, the end was failure'.[2] Elsewhere he had stated less theatrically that command of the sea was only valuable in so far as it enabled invasion of the enemy's territory and blockade, of which the former was more decisive.[3]

Therefore, the logical step was to devise means by which sea command, once attained, could contribute to the further prosecution of the war. Without pausing to consider that their inability to destroy the German Fleet in its bases might prevent the attainment of sea command, the theorists went on to place their faith in the second form of amphibious strategy; the use of sea command to assist the Army. Callwell summarised

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[1] Hankey, Op Cit. and Brigadier General G. G. Aston, "*Letters on Amphibious Wars*", (John Murray, London, 1911), p 123.

[2] Julian Corbett, "*The Campaign of Trafalgar*", (Longmans, Green and Co. London, 1910). p. 424.

[3] Julian Corbett, "*England in the Mediterranean*". (Longmans, Green & Co. London, 1904). Vol. II, p. 242.

Corbett's conclusion as the realisation 'that if a maritime nation is to do great things in war, its navy and its army must go hand in hand'.[1] The maritime theorists argued that combinations of fleet and army provided peculiar advantages to the country which could employ them. Such combinations, they argued, enhanced the strategic weight of the military forces involved. In support of this thesis, two arguments were advanced. Firstly, that it lay within the abilities of naval power to isolate particular theatres, partially or completely, to such an extent that the enemy would not be able to bring superior land forces to bear against the British Army. The army could therefore operate on artificially created equal terms in such theatres. The second argument based itself on the enhanced mobility of an army embarked aboard ship. Assuming the theatre of operations possessed a reasonable length of coast line, the ability of the army to embark, move rapidly elsewhere and disembark would allow it to ignore fundamental rules of land warfare, and bend others in its favour. Sea command would thus enhance the importance of the small British Army out of all proportion. For the sake of argument, therefore, the theorists may be divided into two schools of thought, theatre and mobility exponents, depending on which line of thought they followed.

Julian Corbett was the chief exponent of the theatre-oriented approach. Developing Clausewitz's thesis of "limited war", Corbett pointed out that such strategies, which sought to achieve victory without the defeat of the enemy's main strength, were rarely possible between Continental Powers. Such wars were usually fought to obtain possession of an area of territory, but in Europe, if the aggressor simply moved to occupy the territorial object of the war, the 'limited' approach, his adversary was likely to respond with a blow at the heart of the aggressor's country and the war would become "unlimited".[2] A power which possessed sea command, however, was capable, under the

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[1] Callwell "*Military Operations*", p179.

[2] Julian Corbett, "*Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*". (Longmans, Green and Co. London, 1911). pp. 44-5.

correct geographical conditions, of isolating both the object of the war and the home country from any unlimited counterstroke by the enemy, and thus forcibly maintaining a state of limited war. Thus Corbett asserted 'limited war is only permanently possible to island powers or between powers which are separated by sea, and then only when the power desiring limited war is able to command the sea to such a degree as to be able to isolate the distant object but also to render impossible the invasion of his home territory'.[1] He considered this ability was 'the secret of England's success against powers so superior to her in military strength'. Corbett believed that such operations, conducted against colonies, might be sufficient to force an enemy on the continent to sue for peace, rather than to sit by impotently whilst Britain, behind the shield of her fleet, stripped away her overseas assets. However, he accepted that colonies 'can never have the political importance of objects which are part of the European system'.[2] In the event of a war of conquest on the Continent, Britain's ability to capture colonies was unlikely to force a power which was successful on the mainland to sue for peace; thus the strategy would only serve in the event of war in which Britain had no continental interests.

In the event of a European war, therefore, Corbett espoused a permutation of his limited war strategy. Under such circumstances, Britain should attempt to 'wrest or secure from the enemy a definite position that to a greater or lesser extent can be isolated by naval action'.[3] This would be 'the application of the limited method to the unlimited form, as ancillary to the operations of our allies, a method which has usually been open to us because our control of the sea has enabled us to select a theatre truly limited'.[4] Corbett's answer to the problem of Britain making her presence felt on the Continent was to espouse the use of the fleet to isolate a region, or carry the army to an isolated region, so the enemy could not bring the full weight of his armies to bear.

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[1] Ibid. p. 48.
[2] Ibid. p. 46.
[3] Ibid. p. 53.
[4] Ibid. p. 57.

However, this thesis was flawed. Corbett considered it a permutation of Clausewitz's description of 'war limited by contingent', but admitted that Clausewitz only allowed for the sending of supportive contingents, rather than the full strength of a nation, when the contributing state felt that the object of the war was not vital to them.[1] The thesis thus made no provision for a Continental war which threatened what Britain saw as vital interests. More critical was the basic geographical difficulty of finding a suitable theatre, sufficiently important that the enemy would be forced to act against the British, and yet capable of being isolated by the action of sea power. Corbett's examples were the Peninsula and the Crimean wars, but the significance of either in a central European war was debatable. Finally, as with operations against colonies, although Britain was defended from an unlimited counterstroke by the aggressor, the same would not be true of any of Britain's allies which possessed contiguous borders with the enemy.

Corbett recognised the possibility of no suitable theatre presenting itself. In that case, a third alternative was the use of an embarked force as a floating threat. Possessing the advantage of sea-conferred mobility, such a force could move faster than the defenders on land; the enemy would therefore be forced to commit far more of his slow-moving land units to cover the same length of coastline which one floating unit could threaten: the force's value 'lay in its power of containing force greater than its own'. In addition, if the enemy's plan of operations had not made allowance for the possibility of British intervention an opportunity might arise to strike a decisive blow with the sea-mobile force.[2] However, Corbett admitted that this method of warfare was generally deemed outdated, observing that 'it is generally held that modern developments in military organisation and transport will enable a great continental power to ignore such threats', and he was unable to put together a convincing argument against this, resorting

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid. p. 60.

to the sophistry which Howard has noted in his arguments.[1] Corbett fell back on asserting that the method had worked in the past, 'all the great Continental masters of war have feared or valued British intervention of this character',[2] and simply stating that 'to ignore a threat is to create an opportunity'.[3]

In his idea of a floating force, Corbett had come around to the second theme of the amphibious theorists; the idea that the mobility conferred by sea command enhanced the operational impact of an army beyond its numerical strength. However, he saw this as operating chiefly as a threat which would disrupt or contain enemy forces. For instance, in his account of the Russo-Japanese War, Corbett considered the Japanese could have displaced the Russians from their defended lines by a seaborne threat to their coastal flank.[4] For Corbett, therefore, the value of a floating force was more apparent than real, and as such, secondary to his preference for a careful choice of theatre.

This view was not shared by those theorists who concerned themselves with co-operative action by the fleet and army. Aston and Callwell were the chief advocates of the advantages which would accrue to an Army which could move freely by sea. Although both men listed amongst the strategic options open to an amphibious power the ability to operate in areas which could be isolated from reinforcement,[5] neither accorded the same degree of weight to them as Corbett. Instead they were interested in operations which could be mounted in any theatre possessed of a coastline and did not agree that the power of a sea-conveyed army was more potential than real.

The operations which these theorists espoused relied upon the mobility with which sea command endowed an army. An army enjoying this advantage could act in a number of unorthodox ways. It could cut itself off from its base and communications,

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[1] Michael Howard "*The British Way in Warfare, A Reappraisal*" (Cape, London, 1974) p 13.
[2] Corbett "*Principles of Maritime Strategy*". p. 60.
[3] Ibid. p. 59.
[4] Julian Corbett, "*Maritime Operations in the Russo-Japanese War 1904-5*" (Admiralty War Staff Intelligence Division 1915). I. 261-2.
[5] Callwell "*Military Operations*" pp. 297 & 308, and Aston, "*Letters on Amphibious Wars*" p 169.

secure in the knowledge that if it could fight through to the coast it could be resupplied or embarked at that point.[1] Similarly, this same power to shift bases could be used to shorten lines of communications and so reduce the number of troops required in the tail of the fighting force. Under the right conditions an amphibious army therefore enjoyed advantages over its land-bound brethren; it could move or reduce its traditionally most vulnerable element, its line of communications, thus avoiding both the threat of an enemy blow at the rear and the requirement to guard long lines of land communications. Again the Peninsula war provided examples. Sir John Moore's bold advance against Napoleon's communications, and subsequent retreat to Corunna demonstrated the ability to treat the entire sea coast as a potential base,[2] whilst Wellington's transfer of his base of operations during his advance allowed him to concentrate his fighting force before crossing the Pyrenees.[3] The same advantages could be turned against the enemy. A force enjoying sea command could act against the communications of a land-bound army wherever they bordered the sea. This would force the opposing army to make greater efforts to defend his line of communications.[4] An amphibious army would have its fighting ability enhanced whilst that of the enemy would be reduced, and this would reduce the imbalance between Britain's armies and those on the Continent.

Further local advantages were claimed for a force which could operate on the enemy's coast, in extension of Mackinder's idea that a power possessed of command of the sea made the enemy's coast his frontier.[5] Thus Callwell suggested that an inlet corresponded to a salient on land, offering an interior position with two possible lines of operations, whilst the attacking force would be protected in rear by the sea.[6] Equally a

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[1] Callwell, Op cit. p. 274. & Aston "*Sea Land and Air Strategy*" (John Murray, London 1914). p 170.
[2] C. E. Callwell "*The Effect of Maritime Command on Land Campaigns Since Waterloo*" (Blackwood, London, 1897). p. 9.
[3] Ibid. p. 13.
[4] Callwell, "*Military Operations*" pp. 309-12
[5] Halford J. Mackinder, "*Britain and the British Seas*", (Heinemann, London, 1902). p 310.
[6] Callwell "*Military Operations*" pp 263-7.

land-bound army could not advance into a narrow peninsula without suffering all the disadvantages of a force entering a salient on land.[1] Obviously, such operations and advantages depended on the configuration of the coast.

A more general advantage was claimed to arise from the ability of a seaborne force to move more swiftly than one ashore. This, it was argued, provided a force with the classic advantages of an interior position; a floating force could strike in more directions than its land-bound equivalents, which would have to divide to meet the threat.[2] Both Callwell and Aston claimed that a seaborne force would have an inherent advantage over land bound armies in any but the most comprehensively railway and road equipped territories.[3] To this general advantage could be added the probability of surprise, which arose from the variety of landing places and the ease with which feints could be carried out. In contrast to Corbett, who had revealed his doubts as to the continued viability of this form of operation, Callwell and Aston remained convinced that, even in those regions with a sophisticated transport network, the force embarked by sea would have the initiative. The defender would have to scatter his forces to defend all the probable landing sites, thus ensuring the superiority of the attacker. Thus Callwell noted 'it is the possession of the initiative which in reality gives to the military commander who is based on the sea . . . his greatest advantage . . . once a fleet of transports has quitted harbour it can move in any direction, and it can appear at any point on the coast of a region where military operations are in progress or are in contemplation'.[4]

However, as Corbett had noted, the benefits enjoyed by the force at sea disappeared when it had committed itself to the shore. Once the force had been landed, the enemy was free to concentrate his strength against it on equal terms, which, for

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[1] Aston "*Sea, Land and Air Strategy*", p 172.
[2] Callwell, Op. Cit. p. 268.
[3] Ibid. p. 249.
[4] Callwell "*Military Operations*" p. 277.

Britain, could only mean a numerical disadvantage compared with a continental power. Aston and Callwell got around this by suggesting that a decisive blow might be struck before the enemy could concentrate against the landed force.[1] Aston, particularly, favoured the idea that a single decisive blow might be struck against the communications of an enemy army.[2] Callwell concurred with this, neither man apparently moved by the risky nature of such an enterprise, but he also sought to allow long-term operations by an army landed from the sea. He got around the problem by postulating two amphibious forces. One would land, whilst the second would remain at sea and thus prevent the enemy concentrating his forces; 'a nation supreme at sea may be able to enter upon warlike operations on a great scale in one region, and also, at the same time, without appreciably diminishing its fighting strength, to contain . . . a portion of the opposing host in districts far removed from the real theatre of war'.[3] In this respect he cited the operations in the Baltic in support of the real campaign in the Crimea.

Such were the amphibious strategies postulated before the outbreak of war, largely prompted by the apparent course of the Russo-Japanese conflict. Actions in support of the operations of the Fleet were largely uncontroversial, though the recognition that besieging continental naval bases was beyond Britain's strength threw their value into question in a war with Germany. Military operations taking advantage of naval supremacy, or Maritime Strategies, were equally questionable. They either supposed the existence of a theatre which could be isolated by naval action, or assumed that an amphibious force would possess an advantage in mobility over forces ashore. However, Corbett himself had recognised the possibility that a theatre suitable to his favoured strategy might not exist, in which case the remaining advantages were mobility and surprise. Corbett, Callwell and Aston had all admitted that good land communications

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[1] Callwell "*The Effect of Maritime Command on Land Campaigns*" p 16.

[2] Aston "Combined Strategy for Fleets and Armies, or, Combined Strategy", *Journal of the Royal United Services Institution*, Vol. LI. (1907) p. 996.

[3] Callwell, Op Cit. p. 17.

would reduce the supposed speed advantages of a sea borne force. The further impact of flotilla weapons and minefields on the speed of seaborne forces had not been considered.

In conclusion it should be noted that the theorists did not consider that their proposed operations would call for opposed landings. Demonstrations to contain the enemy's forces did not require large scale landing operations, whilst if the enemy were present at the landing place the rapid decisive blows envisaged by Callwell and Aston would be impossible. Neither strategy therefore required opposed landings, which was as well as none of the theorists considered them possible. Aston asserted that 'improvement in modern weapons has rendered a landing in the face of serious opposition an almost impossible task'.[1] Callwell concurred; 'under the conditions of the present time, a military force disembarking in defiance of troops drawn up on shore is almost certain to be under fire for a considerable length of time . . . the operation is not one to be ventured on with a light heart, or one to be undertaken without counting the cost and without accepting risk of disaster'.[2]

Practice.

The impact of the Russo-Japanese war upon the British military community was initially as great as amongst the theorists. The example of a island state waging war with a continental enemy was an analogy which those entrusted with the guidance of Britain's military policy were not slow to grasp. A brief flurry of activity followed, as an attempt was made to create a body capable of co-ordinating the two services in a single maritime strategy and formulate such a strategy for a war with Germany. However, it would prove impossible to devise such a strategy, and this failure would lead to the Admiralty withdrawing from the new planning structure, which in turn prevented consideration of

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[1] Aston "*Letters on Amphibious Wars*" pp. 37-8.
[2] Callwell "Military Operations" p. 360.

any other amphibious strategies. Thus despite the vast surge of interest in amphibious operations following the Japanese victory no lasting progress in formulating amphibious strategies resulted.

The lessons of the Russo-Japanese war confirmed the prejudices of those men entrusted with the reform of the British Army after the Boer War. Even before the Far Eastern conflict broke out, the War Office Reconstitution (Esher) Committee aimed at improving co-ordination between the two services in addition to its brief for reforming the War Office. The triumvirate of Lord Esher, Sir John Fisher and Sir George Clarke deliberately went beyond their terms of reference and reported that reform of the War Office would not suffice unless it were accompanied by the enhancement of the then Defence Committee of the Cabinet to co-ordinate the actions of the two services as well as the colonies and other departments of state.[1] To this end the Esher Committee recommended the addition of a secretariat to the Defence Committee,[2] which would enable it to operate as an Imperial General Staff, co-ordinating the actions of the services and other departments. Esher went further in private, confiding to the Prime Minister, Balfour; 'I am sure that in future all questions of defence organisation both for the Navy and the Army will have to be the work of the Defence C'tee. Administration will take all the time of the Admiralty and Army Council'.[3] The report thus pressed for the creation of the Committee of Imperial Defence as an overall arbiter of strategy, whilst Esher even hoped that it would take on the planning functions of the service departments.

Behind the report lay the conviction of the triumvirate that future strategy would be amphibious. This preconception is clear from their recommendations for

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[1] PRO Cabinet papers, Series 17 Vol. 13b, Report of the War Office Reconstitution Committee. The Covering Letter to the Right Honourable A. J. Balfour 11/1/04 explains the Committee's reasons for exceeding their brief, and Part I Section 1 of the Report sets out their recommendations for the Defence Committee.

[2] Ibid. p. 3.

[3] B.L. Add. Mss 49719 (Balfour Papers), Correspondence with 2nd Viscount Esher; Esher to Balfour 15/9/05.

appointments to the War Office General Staff they had established and the subsequent behaviour of their appointees. Fisher pushed for the appointment of Sir John French on the basis of his having expressed a desire that the two services might in time be amalgamated[1] whilst Clarke subsequently pressed the case for Charles Callwell on the grounds of his publications on amphibious warfare.[2] Most revealing was the behaviour of the actual appointee as Chief of the General Staff, Sir Neville Lyttelton. The Esher Committee had stated that this post included responsibility for tailoring the training of the Army to the probable requirements of war;[3] it is therefore significant that Lyttelton's choice of scenario for his first manoeuvres was, in his own words 'influenced by the desire to produce a scheme in which the Services of the Navy might be called into co-operation with those of the land forces'.[4] The Esher Committee were amphibious enthusiasts, and had created the Defence Committee to co-ordinate strategy and packed the General Staff with like-minded or amenable soldiers.

Once the Russo-Japanese War had broken out, the Esher Committee were not alone in their expectations. There was a widespread feeling within the military community that amphibious strategy was logical for a power such as England. Fisher's view that the annual manoeuvres should not be 'inneffectually aping the vast continental armies' but should consist of landings staged by the two services in combination, was merely the clearest expression of a common feeling.[5] Sir Evelyn Wood staged, with Fisher's assistance, a combined exercise within his Second Army Corps early in 1904.[6] Obviously the mood was not general, or there would have been no need for the drastic re-

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[1] Churchill College Archives Centre; FISR Series 8, (Fisher Papers), C.I.D. and Cabinet Prints; File 37, Combined Naval and Military Manoeuvres - Sir John French's Speech 24/11/03. In French's case it appears the Triumvirate may have been mistaken in their hopes; William J. Philpott, "The Strategic Ideas of Sir John French". *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 12 No. 4. (1989).

[2] Add. Mss 49701, (Balfour Papers) Correspondence with Sir George Clarke; Clarke to Balfour 11/7/05.

[3] CAB 17/13 Report of the War Office Reconstitution Committee, Part II Section IV, p 23.

[4] WO 279/8. Report on Army Manoeuvres 1904, p. 13 "Object of the Manoeuvres".

[5] C.C.A.C. FISR 8/37 Fisher to Esher 19/11/03.

[6] WO 33/322. Extract from a Report on a Staff Ride, Embracing a Disembarkation and the Establishment of a Base, as carried out by the Staff of the Second Army Corps April 1904.

arrangement of staff at the War Office which the Esher Committee carried out, but there can be no doubt that in the light of the Russo-Japanese War amphibious strategies possessed widespread support.

It is worth noting at this point that the military agreed with the theorists as to the viability of opposed landings. Fisher's representative at the Second Army Corps' Exercise asserted 'the impracticability of landing troops now-a-days in the face of opposition'.[1] Similarly, Lyttelton noted that 'it is very questionable whether, in these days of improved firearms, a descent on a coastline can be carried out in the face of resolute opposition', and the Clacton Manoeuvres were therefore arranged with a scenario which precluded opposition to the landing.[2] As in Callwell and Aston's works, amphibious operations were seen as taking advantage of seaborne mobility and surprise.[3]

Thus in 1904 the British Military were moving, both by the commitment of those within its ranks and the external pressure exerted by the Esher Committee, towards an emphasis on amphibious approaches to strategy. The process of preparing the services for combined operations continued with the appointment of an inter-service committee under the Quartermaster General, H. C. O. Plumer, to consider the lessons of the Clacton operations and to compile a report which 'may be of advantage whenever next it is necessary for this country to despatch an expedition involving a disembarkation on a hostile shore'.[4] However, at this point the process set in train by the Esher Committee received its first rebuff. The report stated that the 'Conference did not contemplate any such operation as the invasion of the main territory of a Continental Power', the objective of any amphibious operation 'would probably be a colony',[5] with a force of no more than

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[1] WO 33/322 Part II. Opening Lecture by Commander Wilfred Henderson, R.N.

[2] WO 279/8 p. 17.

[3] Stokesbury "British Concepts and Practices of Amphibious Warfare" p. 222, suggests that the Services failed to accept the theorists' conclusions with regard to opposed landings, with tragic results at Gallipoli. It is however clear from the above evidence that this was not the case.

[4] WO 33/344 Report of the Naval & Military Conference on Oversea Expeditions, 20/3/05. p. 5.

[5] Ibid. p 6.

two infantry and one cavalry divisions. These conclusions, which would have ruled out the bold amphibious strategies of the theorists, appear to have been the views of the military members, for the Director of Naval Intelligence, the Admiralty representative, was soon to submit a proposal for investigating operations on the German coast. These qualifications therefore reveal a school within the War Office concerned solely with small scale amphibious operations; the capture of colonies or overseas bases for the Fleet, which ruled out the maritime strategies set out by Corbett, Aston and Callwell. With the amenable Lyttelton as C.G.S., however, this was not immediately apparent.

The bulk of support for such operations at this date came from within the Navy and from the erstwhile members of the Esher Committee. Prompted by the Tangier crisis, the C.-in-C. Channel Fleet, Admiral Sir Arthur Wilson, had suggested that the Navy could best assist the French by landing a force on the German coast.[1] In the aftermath of the crisis the Naval Intelligence Department followed this up with a proposal to enhance the amphibious planning capability of the Committee of Imperial Defence. The Director, Captain Ottley, believed that Britain's strategy in a war with Germany should be a landing in the Baltic.[2] He therefore suggested the creation of a permanent Sub-committee of the C.I.D. responsible for overseas operations, and suggested as a subject for examination 'whether a British Expeditionary Force might not be landed in Schleswig Holstein, or elsewhere, so as to relieve the pressure on France'.[3] Sir George Clarke, now Secretary of the C.I.D., considered and amended Ottley's draft,[4] and Sir John Fisher wrote in its support to the Prime Minister.[5] The authors of the Esher report and the

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[1] Wilson to Ottley, 27/6/05, cited in Marder, "*The Anatomy of Sea Power*", (Frank Cass & Co, London, 1964) pp. 504-5.

[2] National Maritime Museum RIC 9 (Richmond Mss) Ottley to Corbett 3/8/05.

[3] CAB 17/5 Preparation of Plans for Combined Naval and Military Operations in War. 1905.

[4] CAB 17/95 Preparation of Plans for Combined Operations in War. Annotated Copies.

[5] BL Add Mss 49711 (Balfour Papers) Correspondence with Sir John Fisher; "Formation of a Permanent Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence to Consider and Elaborate Schemes For Joint Naval and Military Expeditions", Memo By Fisher, dated 1905.

N.I.D. were united in their support for a body designed to plan combined operations against Germany.

Ottley's proposal was put to the C.I.D. by the Prime Minister in July and met with no opposition.[1] The C.G.S., Lyttelton, unaware of the reservations within his staff which had emerged in the course of the Plumer Conference, readily co-operated with Fisher in drawing up terms of reference for the new body, and their proposals were approved by the C.I.D. the same month.[2] An attempt had therefore been set in train to apply the amphibious lessons of the Russo-Japanese War to the British situation.

However, no sooner had the creation of this Sub-Committee raised the question of combined operations against Germany than the General Staff concluded that it considered such expeditions impossible. Following the decision to establish the Sub-Committee, Lyttelton instructed the Assistant Director of Military Operations to investigate 'the problem of the German Baltic Coast right away to East Prussia, from the point of view of landings, objectives, feints and all the rest of it' for 'this will probably be the first thing considered by the Sub-Committee of the C.I.D. when the holidays are over'.[3] The A.D.M.O., none other than Callwell, therefore wrote to the Assistant Director of Naval Intelligence, Captain Ballard, suggesting operations on the scale of 120,000 men, which would be of "immense assistance" to the French.[4] Callwell and Lyttelton, as befitted the Esher Committee's appointees, thus set in train an examination of the proposed amphibious strategy, but it rapidly emerged that the General Staff as a whole were unenthusiastic.

War Office examination rapidly concluded that the operations under consideration were impossible. With Callwell on leave, the detailed work was carried out by his

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[1] CAB 38/9 Papers of the C.I.D. to 1914. 76th Meeting of the C.I.D., 20/7/05.

[2] CAB 38/9 77th Meeting of the C.I.D., 26/7/05.

[3] WO 106/46 D.M.O.&I., Defence and Operational Plans, Europe. E2; Germany, War with, Feasibility of Invasion of, or raiding German Coasts. Minute of 29/8/05 "C.G.S." to "C".

[4] Ibid. Memorandum by Callwell, cited by Ballard in letters to Grant-Duff 2/9/05 & 9/9/05.

deputies. As early as September 7 Captain Grant-Duff informed Ballard, on the strength of an investigation by Major Fasson,[1] that 'the arrangements on the coast in question are so efficient, and our numbers so small, that it is difficult to see in what way we can interfere to any useful purpose'.[2] Callwell concurred with this view on his return, apologising for misleading Ballard with his initial 'hasty consideration of the subject',[3] and concluding that the combination of Landsturm, strategic railways, and the probability that the Germans would be informed of the British concentration meant that the British force would be better deployed on the French frontier.[4] On the return of the D.M.O., Grierson, expressed himself in accord with Fasson's conclusions.[5] The War Office thus concluded in the Autumn of 1905 that amphibious operations would be ineffectual against Germany, a view they were to hold until war broke out.[6]

This rebuttal of amphibious strategy led the Admiralty to withdraw its co-operation from the C.I.D. Fisher had hoped to subordinate the Army to naval requirements, and when the General Staff proved capable of holding its own, he reacted violently. Unaware of the increasing opposition within the War Office, Fisher informed Balfour on October 10 that 'I am very hot on this Committee, for, as I told Esher, it's the only engine capable of drawing the Army out of its quagmire of one man waiting on another . . . they will be forced to be ready, forced to get on, forced to co-operate and finally forced to be efficient'.[7] In an accompanying memorandum Fisher talked of the possibility of diversions and threats to the enemy's coast in support of a continental ally.

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[1] Ibid. Memorandum by Major Fasson "DF" 7/9/05.

[2] Ibid. Grant-Duff to Ballard, 7/9/05.

[3] Ibid. Callwell to Ballard 3/10/05.

[4] Ibid. Enclosed Memorandum.

[5] Ibid. Memorandum By Fasson 10/11/05, and Minute by Robertson, 15/11/05.

[6] G. W. Monger, "*The End of Isolation, British Foreign Policy 1900-7*" (Nelson and Sons Ltd, London 1963) describes this investigation as 'leisurely' and 'unofficial'; however, with the Admiralty lacking an equivalent to the General Staff, it is difficult to see any way in which these discussions could have been more authoritative. In contrast D. French, "*The British Way in Warfare*" pp. 166-7, considers the General Staff's decision to be based on a realistic assessment of the structural and communications changes in Europe which invalidated the theorists' historical analogies.

[7] BL Add. Mss. 49711, Fisher to Sandars 10/10/05.

Revealingly, he noted that 'every project for offensive hostilities' should be 'subsidiary to the action of the Fleet'.[1] These remarks demonstrate that Fisher's chief concern was that naval requirements should take priority. With the War Office increasingly convinced that only on the French border could they contribute to their ally's cause, Fisher's position rendered a clash inevitable.

In the event a crisis developed without the General Staff having to act. In the winter of 1905-6, with Balfour's Government a dead letter, an unofficial version of the intended Sub-Committee, consisting of Esher, Ottley, Clarke and Sir John French, acted to draw up a contingency plan for assisting the French. These conferences commenced without a General Staff representative, and initially concentrated on combined operations.[2] However, it transpired that such operations would have to wait on the naval situation, and that the country possessed only fifty horseboats for landing troops and equipment.[3] It would therefore be impossible to stage such an operation in time to affect the initial stages of the war.[4] Thus even before the General Staff, in the form of the D.M.O., were invited to the meetings, the members had discovered that a combined operation could not be mounted in the short term. The conference decided to recommend the working out of a plan to send British troops to northern France as they realised no other operation was immediately feasible with the present resources at their disposal; there had been no need for the War Office to express their reservations concerning a combined operation against the German coast.[5] The Conference's conclusion was, as D'Ombrian has noted, simply a short-term solution.[6]

Fisher, however, did not see it that way. Esher had warned Balfour that the First Sea Lord would 'kick against' the idea that the C.I.D. should usurp the planning functions

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[1] Ibid. Enclosed Memorandum "The Elaboration of Combined Naval and Military Preparation for War".
[2] CAB 18/24 Notes of Conferences Held at 2 Whitehall Gdns. Conference of 19/12/05.
[3] Ibid. Conference of 2/1/06.
[4] Ibid. Conferences of 2/1/06 & 12/1/06.
[5] Ibid. Conferences of 12/1/06 & 19/1/06.
[6] N. D'Ombrian "*War Machinery and High Policy*" p.88.

of the Admiralty, and was proved correct.[1] Fisher withdrew Ottley from the Conferences as soon as the decision had gone against predominantly naval operations.[2] As long as the C.I.D. structure was working to subordinate military strategy to that of the Admiralty, the First Sea Lord was ready to co-operate with it. As soon as the reverse threatened to be the case he withdrew Admiralty participation. He was happy for the War Office to be forced to co-operate with his plans, but not vice versa.

The first flush of amphibious enthusiasm had therefore ended in failure. The attempt to take the lessons of Japan's war with Russia and apply them to the British scenario faltered in the face of the General Staff's conviction that operations against the German coastline offered no advantages in the event of a war aimed at defending France from German aggression. With this realisation and the increasing recognition that such a war was the most probable conflict in which Britain would become involved, the General Staff's plan for assisting France on her own frontiers had become paramount. This threatened the Admiralty with subordination to the Army's wishes and led to Fisher withdrawing naval co-operation from the joint planning structures devised to plan the intended amphibious strategies. This was to also close off the possibility of employing amphibious strategies elsewhere. With a General Staff deliberately stocked with amphibious thinkers there was scope for such operations other than against Germany, but the Admiralty's violent reaction prevented any advantage being taken of this opportunity.

Fisher's violent reaction closed the remaining avenues for amphibious strategies. Although the General Staff were convinced that such operations were impossible against Germany, they were more than ready to plan for such operations in other theatres, but the Admiralty's reaction prevented any such plans being drawn up. This trend was most apparent in the Mediterranean theatre.

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[1] BL Add. Mss 49719 Esher to Balfour 15/9/05.

[2] C.C.A.C. ESR 10/38 (Esher Papers) Correspondence with Sir George Clarke; Ottley to Clarke 18/1/06.

That the General Staff were not opposed to amphibious operations per se is apparent from their contingency plans for the defence of Egypt. The question was raised by the Turkish occupation of Tabah, a watering place on the Red Sea, in 1906. The British feared this was a preliminary to an extension of the Turkish rail system into Sinai, which would reduce the effectiveness of that desert as a barrier to attacks upon the Suez Canal. The typical British response to such incursions was to threaten the Turkish islands in the Mediterranean, however, on this occasion, Lyttelton suggested that an Expeditionary Force might be deployed against Haifa or Beirut.[1] In the event the Foreign Secretary preferred to put his faith in the traditional threat to the islands, but the exchange reveals that the C.G.S. was prepared to take the lead in suggesting amphibious strategies, so long as these were not against great powers.[2] Furthermore, when the C.I.D. recommended that plans for the capture of Rhodes and Chios should be drawn up,[3] the General Staff responded immediately,[4] whilst the Admiralty both failed to provide any plans of its own and erroneously informed the War Office that it had destroyed the copies which the latter had sent for Admiralty comment.[5] The Tabah crisis eased in May, but it had shown that the War Office as a whole was keen to conduct amphibious operations in theatres which it deemed suitable; the Admiralty, in contrast, seemed indifferent.

Nor did the General Staff's interest in an amphibious defence for Egypt lapse with the end of the crisis. In the aftermath Callwell suggested to Grierson that the island strategy was all but played out, and that 'operations in Syria are worthy of consideration'. Callwell envisaged the cutting of the Turkish rail communications where they neared the

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[1] WO 106/42 D.M.O.&I. Defence and Operational Plans, Mediterranean. C3, Defence of Egypt. C3-13B. Note by the C.G.S. 5/5/06.

[2] WO 106/42 C3-13C. Sir Edward Grey to C.G.S. 8/5/06.

[3] CAB 38/11/27 "The Egyptian Frontier Question", Note Prepared by the Direction of the Prime Minister 9/5/06.

[4] WO 106/42 C3-17A "Khios, Plan of Attack and Chart" 9/5/06.

[5] WO 106/42 C3-16A. Memorandum by Grant Duff.

coast at Haifa; a classic example of the form of operation which he and Aston described repeatedly in their publications. In the course of his exposition he noted that Gallipoli, whilst too obvious a target for an actual operation, was, by the same coin, a valuable object for a feint.[1] But whereas Callwell had been ahead of his colleagues in considering operations on the German coast, where Turkey was concerned he was seen as unduly cautious. Grierson considered that Haifa was the correct place to strike in Syria, but 'I consider that any movement in that direction should be subsidiary to, and designed more or less to draw enemy attention from, our main object of attack, which should be the Gallipoli Peninsula, to open the way for the fleet to Constantinople'.[2] Grierson's view was typical of the War Office stance; Grant-Duff, sometime critic of amphibious operations against Germany, argued that neither the island strategy nor the Syrian operations proposed by Callwell would suffice; 'the only remaining alternative is a joint naval and military attack on the Dardanelles defences, with the object of clearing the way for the fleet to Constantinople'. Such an operation, Grant Duff felt, was 'suitable to our fighting forces, it would be a short operation and would be immediately decisive'.[3] The same officers who had rejected amphibious operations against Germany were demonstrating a marked tendency to press for such expeditions elsewhere.

The General Staff were thus taking the initiative in amphibious planning, and maintained this by proceeding to take the proposal to the C.I.D. Provided with an opportunity by Sir John French's report on the defences of Egypt,[4] the General Staff's views drove the discussion. French had disparaged operations against the Peninsula, and Esher pointed out that Fisher had rejected an attempt on the straits,[5] but the politicians

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[1] WO 106/42 C3-14B Callwell to Grierson 15/5/06.

[2] Ibid. Grierson to Callwell, Minute on above.

[3] WO 106/42 C3-21A. "Military Policy in a War with Turkey" Memo by Capt. Grant-Duff 11/7/06.

[4] CAB 4/2 C.I.D. Memoranda. C.I.D. 84-B. "A Turko-German Invasion of Egypt", Note by Sir John French 16/7/06.

[5] CAB 4/2 C.I.D. 87-B. "A Turko-German Invasion of Egypt" Memorandum by Lord Esher, referring to Fisher's comments at the 87th C.I.D., CAB 38/11.

favoured the more dramatic scheme. Lord Cromer commented on French's paper that the question boiled down to whether the straits could be forced,[1] whilst the meeting concentrated almost exclusively on Gallipoli. Grierson's project for 'capturing the Northern Forts by attacking them in rear, by troops landed on the North Coast of the Peninsula', captured the imagination of the C.I.D. The service departments were instructed to report on the question, and, as only an afterthought, were commissioned to carry out an investigation of the Syrian project.[2] Fisher was not even present, whilst Ottley and Esher confined themselves to disparaging operations by the Fleet alone; the General Staff was making the running in amphibious planning.

Within the War Office the proposed Gallipoli operation was the favourite, which demonstrates that the General Staff were not opposed to amphibious operations per se. Although the C.I.D. had recommended that both schemes were to be investigated, the M.O.2., Robertson, observed to Grierson that 'I understood from you before you went away that there was nothing for us to do, as you had yourself explained the whole case to the C.I.D.'.[3] In response to Callwell's suggestion that both schemes should be sent 'semi-officially to the D.N.I. for remarks', Robertson requested and received an assurance from Grierson that the area was his responsibility.[4] With the exception of Callwell, who feared that a landing at Gallipoli was certain to be opposed,[5] the Department of Military Operations appears to have been wholly in favour of an amphibious operation against the Peninsula. The General Staff's opposition to combined operations was therefore not general; given their readiness to consider an expedition against a country with a smaller army, poorer defences, and fewer railways than Germany, it is clear that their opposition to a landing on the European coast was based on these factors.

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[1] CAB 4/2 C.I.D. 86-B. "Remarks by Lord Cromer on Sir John French's Memorandum" 23/7/06.
[2] CAB 38/12 92nd Meeting of the C.I.D. 26/7/06.
[3] WO 106/42 C3-21B Robertson to Grierson 5/9/06.
[4] Ibid. Callwell to Robertson 21/08/06, Robertson to Grierson 5/9/06, Grierson to Robertson 11/9/06.
[5] WO 106/42 C3-14B Callwell to Grierson 15/5/06.

Nevertheless, the General Staff eventually recommended the Syrian strategy. The departure of Grierson and his replacement by Spencer Ewart provided Callwell with the opportunity to reverse the earlier decision, converting the new D.M.O. to his way of thinking. At the 93rd C.I.D. meeting Ewart expressed doubts that the scheme could succeed unless it were to take the form of a coup de main, for 'surprise appeared to be absolutely necessary as without it we could not hope to land in the face of the opposition that we should encounter'.[1] This statement prepared the way for the famous memorandum, compiled by Callwell,[2] in which the C.I.D. were informed that the General Staff rejected the idea of an expedition against Gallipoli. A landing in the face of opposition was deemed impossible unless the Navy could provide comprehensive covering fire from its ships, on such a scale that the force could land and form up 'unmolested', an impossible request. Gallipoli was such an obvious target that surprise was unattainable; the Turk's 'solicitude regarding the safety of his front door is not likely to be diminished by noises elsewhere'.[3] Surprise being unattainable, an opposed landing was inevitable, to land in the face of opposition was deemed suicidal, and therefore the entire operation was impossible. After the initial wave of enthusiasm for the Gallipoli plan, the General Staff had settled down to support Callwell's Syrian plan and his more thoughtful amphibious outlook.

The Admiralty only made a confused and weak response to this, revealing that the General Staff were making the running. Ottley made a half-hearted attempt to challenge the conclusions of the General Staff paper, claiming a high degree of efficiency for naval gunnery in support of land operations based on the operations of the Japanese at Kinchow. Even he was forced to admit, however, that the operation involved 'great risks'

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[1] CAB 38/12 93rd Meeting of the C.I.D. 13/11/06.

[2] Maj. Gen. Sir C. E. Callwell "*Experiences of a Dug-Out 1914-18*", (London, Constable & Co. 1928). p. 88.

[3] CAB 38/12 C.I.D. 92-B 19/12/06.

and that the Government would have to be prepared to accept heavy losses.[1] Even in going this far Ottley was out on a limb; for Fisher had already stated that he 'hoped no attack on the Dardanelles would ever be undertaken in any form',[2] and made no attempt to support the N.I.D.'s arguments when the two memoranda were discussed at the C.I.D.[3] The Admiralty thus failed to present a coherent line to the C.I.D. and the attitude of the First Sea Lord was distinctly hostile; The General Staff were proving the more interested and rational department as far as amphibious planning was concerned.

Famously the C.I.D. accepted that the operation was impossible,[4] and ordered the decision kept secret,[5] opening the way for Callwell's Haifa scheme. The fall of the Gallipoli plan marked a partial triumph within the General Staff of Callwell's philosophy of combined operations; against second rate powers, the Staff were prepared to exploit amphibious mobility to hamper the enemy and strike a decisive blow. Thus, in re-submitting the Haifa proposal to the C.I.D., the War Office argued that the mere threat of operations against Gallipoli would serve to contain forces there, similarly the enemy would be forced to scatter his troops between all the possible landing places in Syria. This would allow the landing of the entire British Expeditionary Force to take place at Haifa with little threat of opposition, from whence it would cut the communications of any Turkish force operating against Egypt.[6] This 'immense advantage' was acknowledged to arise from 'possession of command of the sea'; the General Staff were putting the principles identified by Callwell in his published writings into practice.

The Haifa plan reveals that the War Office recognised the advantages of an amphibious strategy where circumstances suited; which implies that their opposition to

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[1] Ibid. "Remarks by the Director of Naval Intelligence on the Attached Memorandum".
[2] CAB 38/12 93rd Meeting of the C.I.D. 13/11/06.
[3] CAB 38/13 96th Meeting of the C.I.D. 28/2/07.
[4] Ibid.
[5] WO 106/42 C3-21B. Note by Grant-Duff; 19/3/07 'These questions were duly discussed and certain conclusions arrived at. All papers except those remaining were destroyed by me under orders from the D.M.O.'.
[6] WO 106/42 C3-26 "Operations in Syria should Turkey attack Egypt". 1907.

such operations against Germany was based on valid arguments. The degree of support which the scheme commanded within the War Office is apparent from its ready acceptance by Lord Morley's 1909 Sub-Committee concerned with the defence of Egypt. This body, which counted Sir William Nicholson, Ewart and French, C.G.S., D.M.O. and C.-in-C. Aldershot respectively, amongst its members, recommended the Haifa project as the best form of defence for Egypt.[1] With their Secretary of State also present on the Committee, the military members constituted a majority, revealing that by 1909 this amphibious strategy was accepted throughout the General Staff.

The Haifa plan also reveals the Admiralty's attitude towards combined planning at this date. It was accepted by the C.I.D. without comment, but subsequently Fisher simply refused to co-operate.[2] The General Staff were reduced to appealing to the C.I.D. to overcome the resistance of the Admiralty to co-operating in the planning of an amphibious operation. In December 1909 the War Office was forced to request via the C.I.D. that the General Staff could be provided with 'Naval opinion as to the suitability of suggested landing places' for operations in the Near East.[3] In support of this they also cited the decision of the 92nd C.I.D. to the effect that the Admiralty and War Office should work out the plans for operations against Haifa.[4] A third appeal led the C.I.D. to refer the question of responsibility for the defence of the Suez Canal to the Standing Sub-Committee, but the result was not what the General Staff had hoped for.[5] The Sub-Committee, as heavily dominated by naval members as Morley's had been by the military, concluded that the Navy should bear no responsibility for the direct defence of

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[1] CAB 4/3 Report of a Sub-Committee of the C.I.D. on the Military Requirements of the Empire as Affected by Egypt and the Soudan, 11/3/09.

[2] CAB 38/15 102nd Meeting of the C.I.D. 29/6/09.

[3] WO 106/45 D.M.O.&I. Defence and Operational Plans, Miscellaneous. E1-5 "Questions Requiring Joint Naval and Military Consideration" D.M.O. to Secretary of the C.I.D. 13/12/09.

[4] Ibid. "Decisions of the C.I.D. Which Demand Combined Naval and Military Action.

[5] CAB 38/16/7. Memorandum by the General Staff 22/3/10.

the canal.[1] Esher failed to appreciate the implications for the Haifa plan, for he presented the report to the C.I.D. together with a report on the probable landing places required for the Syrian plan.[2] However, Fisher had intended the decision to absolve the Admiralty from all responsibility for the Haifa plan, as became apparent two years later.

As at the time of the Whitehall Conferences, Fisher's opposition to joint planning continued to be based on a determination to avoid compromising the freedom of operation of the Fleet in any manner whatsoever. Thus the absolution of the Navy from responsibility for the defence of Egypt was argued for in order 'that the complete freedom of action and maximum of mobility should be preserved to the fleet'.[3] The Admiralty policy of concentrating its forces in the North Sea was the purest expression of the Admiralty's single-mindedness and finally condemned the Haifa plan. This trend prompted the Secretary of the C.I.D., Maurice Hankey, to circulate a memorandum summarising the responsibilities allotted to the two services in the Mediterranean. He pointed out that although the Navy had been absolved of responsibility for the defence of Egypt, the C.I.D. were still committed to the Haifa plan, which involved the transportation of a force by sea. Therefore 'in order to enable the War Office to fulfil their responsibilities, command of the sea is a necessity'; in short, the Navy still had some responsibility as far as the defence of Egypt was concerned.[4] At the C.I.D., this discrepancy was confirmed; Esher observed that all plans for the defence of Egypt were based 'entirely on our maintenance of sea command', to which Fisher, now as an Admiral of the Fleet, retorted that 'a further sub-committee had entirely repudiated Admiralty responsibility'.[5] It was now clear that Fisher had deliberately set out to overturn the

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[1] CAB 38/6/7 Inquiry by the Permanent Standing Sub-Committee of the C.I.D. into the Responsibility of the Army and Navy respectively for the Defence of the Suez Canal, 2/6/10.
[2] CAB 38/16 107th Meeting of the C.I.D. 17/7/10.
[3] CAB 38/6/7 Inquiry by the Permanent Standing Sub-Committee of the C.I.D. 2/6/10.
[4] CAB 38/20/11 "Egypt, Considerations on Which the Existing Arrangements for Defence are Made". Memorandum by the Secretary 6/5/12.
[5] CAB 38/21 117th Meeting of the C.I.D. 4/7/12.

conclusions of the Morley Committee; in the interests of independence of action, the Admiralty had intentionally undermined an amphibious strategy.

The General Staff, faced with such opposition, fell back on land bound strategies for the defence of Egypt. Even before the Admiralty admitted its intention of withdrawing its ships from the Mediterranean, the War Office, thwarted by the Navy's refusal to co-operate in planning, had drawn up alternative plans based on the occupation of watering places in Sinai.[1] Although they had initially rejected such a style of defence as ineffective,[2] the resistance of the Admiralty left them with no choice.

In view of the Haifa plan, therefore, it is unfair and inaccurate of Liddell-Hart and others to condemn the pre-war General Staff as blinded by continental doctrine. Their favoured strategy in the Middle East clearly demonstrates that this was not the case and that the reasons for their commitment of forces to the land war in Europe must be sought elsewhere. The General Staff, as we have seen, became convinced that amphibious operations against a continental power had been invalidated by the size and mobility which continental armies possessed due to conscription and the construction of strategic railways. They remained convinced of this to the outbreak of war. Meanwhile, the Admiralty, as has also been shown, had as its chief priority the freedom of operation of the fleet; the Senior Service therefore made little attempt to persuade the General Staff that amphibious operations were possible. These trends dominated the strategic discussions of the period 1909-11 which defined the nature of the British commitment to their French allies in the First World War.

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[1] WO 106/42 C3-35C. Memorandum by the D.M.O. 12/3/12.

[2] CAB 38/17 109th Meeting of the C.I.D. 24/3/11, Nicholson commented negatively on Ian Hamilton's suggestion of just such a defensive scheme.

The relative positions of the General Staff and Admiralty were reiterated at the 1909 C.I.D. investigation into the Military Needs of Empire. The General Staff pointed out that the size of the German reserve forces and the quality of the German coastal railways meant that 'any force which we could succeed in landing would very soon be opposed by superior force and sooner or later driven back to the sea and captured'.[1] The General Staff also assumed that 'no operations of this nature could be undertaken until naval successes had paved the way for them',[2] and hence could not be mounted in time to affect the clash on the frontiers. Such a statement having been made, it was for the Admiralty to state otherwise. However, Fisher explicitly stated that the Admiralty plans required no troops.[3] Furthermore, the Admiralty circulated a memorandum suggesting that if operations were to take place in the Baltic, they might with advantage be left to the French, or until successful naval operations had diminished the German power of resistance.[4] Fleet operations were the Admiralty's chief concern, and it was left to Lord Esher to suggest that Britain's contribution to a continental war should be chiefly naval, including raids, a proposal which met with little support.[5] The Admiralty had thus made no attempt to persuade the General Staff that there was an alternative to committing forces to a land war, preferring to keep their own counsel. Consequently the Sub-Committee concluded that they should work out their proposal for sending four divisions to assist the French in detail.

Not until 1911, by which time Fisher had retired, did a naval representative to the C.I.D. make any attempt to challenge the General Staff plan with one of their own. The General Staff by this time firmly recommended operations on the French flank, and

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[1] CAB 16/5 Proceedings of a Sub-Committee of the C.I.D. to Consider the Military Needs of Empire, Dec. 1908-March 1909. Appendix IV C.I.D. E-3. Memorandum by the General Staff, 27/11/08, para. 6.
[2] Ibid. Para. 7.
[3] CAB 16/5. Minutes of the First Meeting of the Sub-Committee of the C.I.D. Appointed to Consider the Military Needs of the Empire, 3/12/08.
[4] CAB 16/5 Appendix X, C.I.D. E-8. Naval Considerations Regarding Military Action in Denmark. 4/2/09.
[5] CAB 16/5 Appendix VII, C.I.D. E-5. The Assistance to be given by Great Britain to France if She is attacked by Germany, discussed at the 3rd Meeting 23/3/09.

hoped to deploy all Britain's regular forces to this end.[1] The Admiralty chiefly opposed this on the grounds that public alarm at the country being denuded of troops would lead to the Fleet being tied to the defence of the coast. Only after this repetition of the Admiralty creed on the independence of the Fleet did the First Sea Lord, Sir Arthur Wilson, describe a series of possible amphibious actions. His proposals were a repetition of those he had put forward as C.-in-C. Channel Fleet during the Tangier crisis: the seizure of islands to support a close blockade, and a possible siege of Wilhelmshaven. These were easily refuted by the C.I.G.S., Sir William Nicholson, who pointed out that Britain had nowhere near the number of forces which the Japanese had needed to take Port Arthur. Wilson also suggested that the threat of a floating force would compel the Germans to retain a significant force on their coast, an expression of the containment ideas of the theorists. However, Nicholson responded with the General Staff's usual contention that the excellent railway system of the Germans would allow them to move faster than the troopships of an amphibious force, particularly as the latter would be hampered by the threat of mines and torpedoes. Nicholson succinctly dismissed Wilson's proposals as 'madness'.[2] It was clear to those present that the Admiralty proposals were not thought out, and, as Wilson's career was studded with references to such a forward strategy, it appears that the proposals were his own, rather than the general Admiralty view.[3] Nicholson dismissed them with the unanswerable Army view; 'the truth was, that this class of operation possibly had some value a century ago, when land communications were indifferent, but now, when they were excellent, they were doomed to failure'.[4] Wilson's poor showing led to his replacement and no further attempt was made to challenge the commitment of the Army to the direct support of the French.

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[1] CAB 2/2 C.I.D. Minutes; 114th Meeting of the C.I.D. 23/8/11.

[2] Ibid.

[3] CAB 19/33 Proceedings of the Dardanelles Commission p. 65. Churchill noted Wilson was so associated with this strategy that the Admiral kept his return to the Admiralty in 1914 secret.

[4] CAB 2/2 114th Meeting of the C.I.D. 23/8/11.

The General Staff's position on amphibious operations therefore remained constant from their first serious investigation until the outbreak of war. They were convinced that such expeditions could not hope to succeed where the enemy possessed a larger army and the ability to rapidly move forces to oppose the landing. Where one or other of these conditions did not apply, as in the case of Turkey, they were ready to apply the old advantages of amphibious mobility. The Admiralty, in contrast, despite their occasional interest in amphibious operations, was chiefly guided by their desire to retain freedom of action for the fleet. As a result they made no serious attempt to convince the General Staff or the C.I.D. that such expeditions were still viable, and in the case of Syria, quashed such a plan rather than accept the claims on the fleet which it would involve.

The lack of interest in combined planning demonstrated by the Admiralty at the C.I.D. reflected the low priority afforded to planning such operations within the Admiralty itself. Only two such plans were considered in the years before World War I, and both were operations in support of the Fleet rather than maritime strategies of the sort described by Corbett, Callwell and Aston. In 1907 a set of War Plans were drawn up under Fisher's instructions, in which the chief element was the capture of the German island of Borkum, whilst in 1913 Churchill ordered an examination into the possibility of capturing a flotilla base on the eastern side of the North Sea. Both projects were more closely connected with the Naval War Course than with the Admiralty; the N.I.D. were not consulted in 1907,[1] whilst their successors, the Admiralty Staff, were only asked to vet the results of the 1913 investigation.[2] Neither project was ever circulated outside the Admiralty.

The first of these plans, the so-called Admiralty War Plans, were compiled at Fisher's request in the autumn of that year. They were compiled by a Committee under

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[1] ADM 1/8997 Captain G. Ballard. War Plans Historical Statement 3/5/09.

[2] ADM 137/452 Seizure of an Advanced Base. Remarks by D.O.D. Capt. G. Ballard 10/8/13.

Captain G. Ballard, ex-Assistant Director of the N.I.D., from a memorandum which he had compiled in that department several years earlier. To this were added a general assessment of the European situation compiled by Captain Slade, commanding the Naval War Course,[1] and a general preamble concerning naval war by the historian Julian Corbett.[2] That the compilation of the plans coincided with Admiral Lord Charles Beresford's criticisms of the unpreparedness of Fisher's Admiralty regime was no coincidence.[3] The speed with which they were compiled, Fisher's request to Corbett to produce an introduction to 'add materially to their educational value',[4] and their circulation to Beresford all suggest the plans were a response to that Admiral's criticisms, rather than a practical scheme of operations.[5] Furthermore, they emerged, as Paul Kemp has noted, at the very end of the pre-Dreadnought era, and were thus obsolete before they were finished.[6] Within two years Ballard was emphasising that element of the plans which dealt with commerce warfare at the expense of the amphibious proposals.[7] The 1907 War Plans were thus a mere device, Fisher using the War Staff College to deflect criticism of his regime.

Similarly, the plans drawn up under Churchill's auspices in 1913 are no representation of the trend of Admiralty thought at that date. Churchill's appointee, Admiral Lewis Bayly, worked independently of the Naval Staff and had recently relinquished command of the Naval War College; consequently the work again owed more to the College than to the Admiralty.[8] It is clear that the scheme originated with

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[1] ADM 116/1036b War With Germany, Memorandum by Capt. E. Slade, 1/09/06.
[2] N.M.M. Corbett Mss Box 12. Draft of Memo. 'Introduction to War Plans' written by Corbett.
[3] Sir Sydney Fremantle "*My Naval Career, 1880-1928*" (Hutchison, London, 1949), p. 151.
[4] N.M.M. Corbett Mss. Box 12. Fisher to Corbett 9/03/07.
[5] ADM 116/1037 War Plans, 1907. Contains Beresford's Comments on the 1907 Plans. 8/5/07.
[6] Lt Cdr. Paul K. Kemp (Ed). "*The Papers of Admiral Sir John Fisher*", London, (Navy Records Society 1960-64). Vol. II. p. 317.
[7] ADM 1/8997, Ballard's Statement 3/5/09.
[8] ADM 203/100 Officers Attending, Lectures & Essays, Naval War College 1906-24. p. 53 Staff List.

Churchill,[1] and that the Staff felt that at most it might serve as a means of luring the German fleet to sea if they proved reluctant to fight.[2] The detailed plans which Bayly devised for the capture of Borkum were useless; divorced from the Staff, his work bore no relation to the planned dispositions of the fleet.[3] Significantly the chief criticism of the plans came from Ballard, now Director of the Operations Division of the new staff, who described the proposals as an unjustifiable gamble. The plans were therefore pigeonholed, and it was not until the outbreak of war that they assumed any importance.

Those amphibious plans which originated with the Admiralty in the pre-war period were therefore of little importance. Both were simple operations in support of the Fleet rather than maritime strategies. Neither was ever submitted to the C.I.D., or even considered in detail by the planning staff. The single amphibious proposal submitted by the Admiralty to the C.I.D. before the outbreak of war was Wilson's ad hoc presentation at the 114th C.I.D., which was so patently amateur as to result in his retirement. In comparison with the General Staff's proposals for the employment of a maritime strategy in Syria they make poor reading.

Inspired by the Russo-Japanese War, Britain had seen an explosion of interest in the co-operation of the services and the amphibious operations which these entailed. However, the theorists and the military establishment alike all proved incapable of applying such strategies to a war between continental powers, increasingly the most likely conflict. The speed and size of modern armies invalidated the age-old advantages of surprise and containment highlighted by the theorists, whilst in a continental conflict operations to capture colonies were certain to be irrelevant. The General Staff quickly came to this realisation and ruled out operations on the Continent, whilst the Admiralty's

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[1] ADM 137/452 Admiralty to Rear Admiral Lewis Bayly 31/1/13.
[2] ADM 137/452 Chief of Staff to First Sea Lord & First Lord, 17/3/13.
[3] ADM 137/452 "Remarks Submitted" by Capt. G. Ballard, 10/8/13.

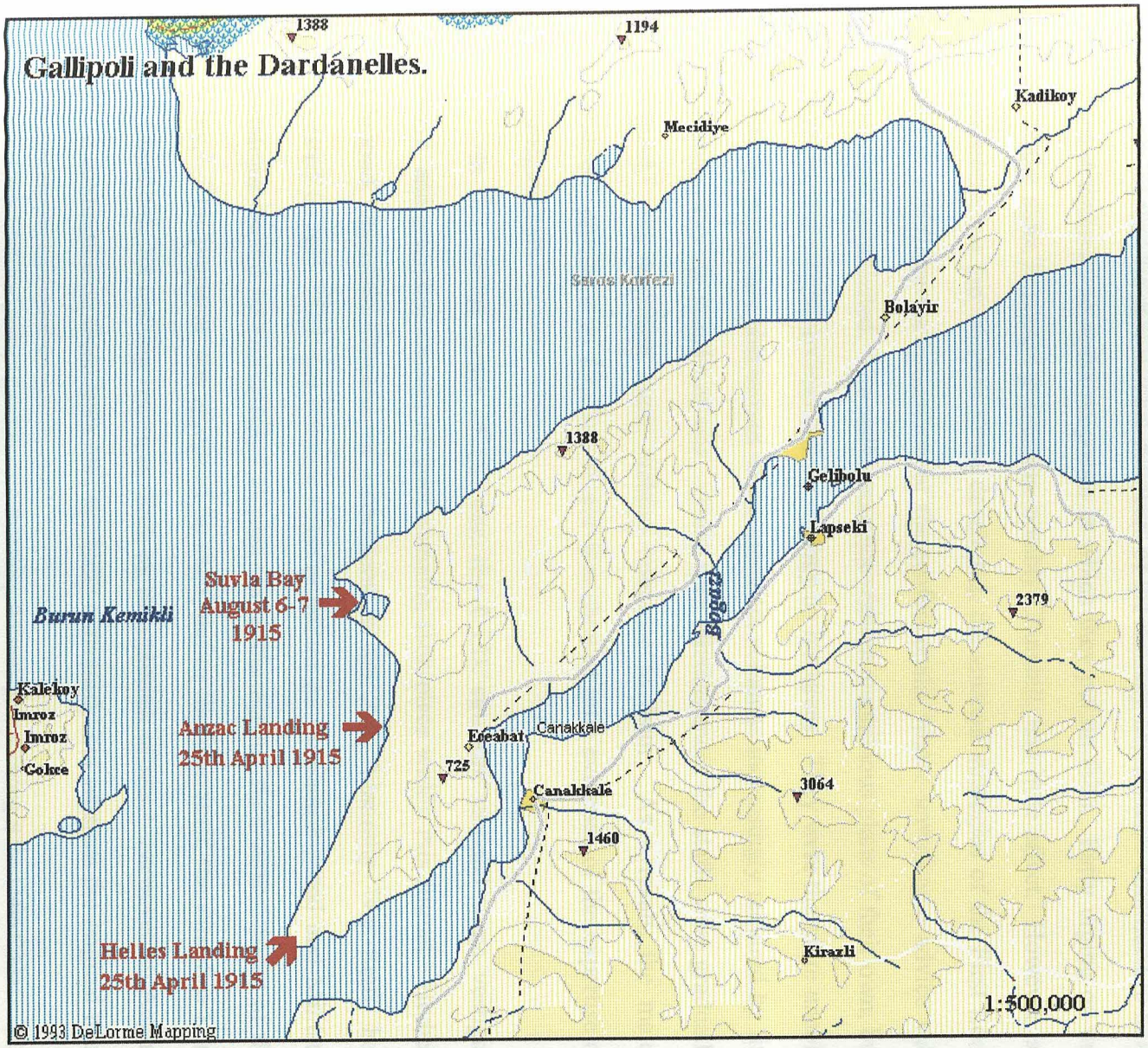
violent response to this rebuff, coupled with their desire to retain complete independence for the Fleet, prevented investigation into amphibious operations elsewhere. Thus, despite the creation of the Committee of Imperial Defence to co-ordinate the actions of the services, no plans, and no real progress in co-operation had been made by the outbreak of war.

Chapter II. First World War Strategy and Doctrine.

The amphibious history of the First World War can be divided into two phases; an aberrant period in which operations which had been rejected before the war were revived and the strategy which had governed the commitment of the British Army to the Continent was called into question, followed by a period in which there was a reversion to that strategy and a consequent limitation of the possibilities for amphibious operations. Ironically the first phase was to suggest that tactically, opposed landings were more viable than had hitherto been thought, but the reversion to pre-war strategic thinking in the later phase reduced the possibility of this discovery being put into effect.

The First Phase and Gallipoli.

The first year of the First World War saw an aberration in the British approach to amphibious operations. Before the war the Army had successfully demonstrated within the C.I.D. that amphibious strategies had little to offer in a war with Germany. However, the outbreak of war saw the C.I.D. and the General Staff fail to maintain their position. The General Staff lost vital members, and with them, weight in counsel; the C.I.D. was replaced by Cabinet war committees, and the pre-war framework within which the politicians and military members had co-operated was lost. The result was the exaltation of the politicians at the expense of the military. The collapse of the staffs' authority ushered in an aberrant phase in British amphibious strategy; with the staffs increasingly sidelined a number of the operations they had rejected before the war were revived and even approved by their ministerial superiors. Ironically this phase culminated in the Gallipoli Campaign, an amphibious operation in direct contravention of all pre-war amphibious thinking, initiated as a purely naval venture, whose unexpected escalation into an amphibious campaign absorbed all available resources and eventually discredited


Gallipoli and the Dardanelles.
1388
1194
Kadikoy
Mecidiye
Bolayir
1388
Gelibolu
Lapseki
Suvla Bay
August 6-7
1915
Burun Kemikli
Anzac Landing
25th April 1915
Kaleköy
Imroz
Imroz
Golce
Eceabat
Canakkale
725
Canakkale
3064
1460
Kirazli
Helles Landing
25th April 1915
2379
1:500,000
© 1993 DeLorme Mapping

the ministerial conduct of the war, thus preventing the implementation of any of the ministers' amphibious proposals and causing the staff to return to prominence.

This state of affairs was not immediately apparent. For several months after the outbreak of war the professional members of the military departments continued to hold sufficient authority to reject proposals in which they put no faith. Early urging on the part of the more impatient politicians, notably Churchill, had little effect. However, as the stalemate on the Western Front developed, the amateur strategies of the First Lord began to overcome the opposition of the professionals, whose unwelcome advice was increasingly unsolicited. The staffs were not without amphibious plans of their own, but recognised the limitations imposed on strategy by resources. They were therefore unable to provide immediate alternatives to the quick-fix solutions increasingly required by the politicians after six months of war. Under such circumstances the staffs were gradually sidelined,[1] and decisions made without reference to them. As a result, the major amphibious operation of the First World War showed little evidence of the expertise of the professionals.

In the earliest stages of the war, the C.I.D. structure retained some vestigial powers, and a limited amount of joint planning took place within this format. Herbert Richmond, Assistant Director of Operations in the new Admiralty War Staff, had suggested in July 1914 that Ottley's Sub-Committee on Combined Naval and Military Operations should be reconstituted to plan operations against the overseas bases of the enemy.[2] This proposal was approved by the Chief of the War Staff, the First Sea Lord and Churchill, but nothing had been done by the outbreak of war.[3] However, in August 1914 a committee on these lines was hurriedly convened,[4] but whereas the original body

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[1] A Naval War Staff had been created in 1912 following Wilson's poor showing at the 114th C.I.D.

[2] N.M.M. RIC Richmond Papers 1/9 Diary, Memo of 20/6/14.

[3] ADM 1/8386/213 Plans for Combined Offensive Action on the Outbreak of War, Proposed Reconstitution of the Sub-Committee of the C.I.D.

[4] CAB 38/28/45 C.I.D. 113-C. Joint Naval and Military Sub-Committee for the Consideration of Combined Operations in Foreign Territory. 5/8/14.

had been intended to consider major combined strategies, its successor was only charged with suggesting operations against the German colonies, and these only when they could be carried out with colonial forces. The Committee confined itself to co-ordinating the actions of the Dominions and India against the German cable and wireless stations on Pacific islands and to initiating two minor combined operations: against Duala in the Cameroons and Tanga in German East Africa.[1] Significantly the War Office considered the schemes insufficiently important to merit their involvement.[2] These operations having been set in train, the Committee dissolved in October. This body amounted to the last gasp of the C.I.D. system, and the only occasion on which the military experts were allowed to co-operate without political interference.

As the Western Front ceased to monopolise the attention of the politicians, the initiative in proposing combined operations passed from the services to their civilian masters.

The chief proponent of combined strategies in the early months of the war was Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty. Temperamentally unsuited to the watching and waiting posture which the Admiralty had adopted, Churchill was the first of the politicians to press for combined operations as a means of striking at Germany. In the early months of the war, he threw out repeated suggestions of actions for action's sake, none of which offered any real strategic returns. As uninformed criticism of the perceived inaction of the expensive fleet mounted, Churchill's desire to act increased.[3] At first his plans were easily disposed of by the expert staff of the Admiralty and War Office and as long as Churchill's plans met with little support from other Cabinet members, the

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[1] CAB 38/28/45 C.I.D. 113-C Proceedings of a Joint Naval and Military Sub-Committee for the Consideration of Combined Operations in Foreign Territory.

[2] CAB 38/28/41 C.I.D. 111-C. Expedition Against German East Africa, Memo by Sir E.G. Barrow; 'Under the abnormal conditions of the present crisis the War Office do not wish to be troubled with this expedition'.

[3] N.M.M. RIC 1/9 Diary 22/10/14. Richmond, dining with Churchill, commented that the 'attitude of waiting' made Churchill 'despondent' and he suggested a pointless operation in the Elbe.

staffs could hold their own. However, as the situation on the Western Front stabilised, ministerial support for alternative strategies promising an end to the deadlock grew, and the staffs' position weakened. Churchill's plans, vested with strategic significance by the stalemate in the West, were less easily disposed of than before.

Churchill repeatedly proposed amphibious operations from the outbreak of war. However, the variety of the plans reveal that he was driven more by the desire for action than any strategic insight, whilst his failure to persuade his colleagues to act on them indicates that for the first four months of the conflict, the General and Naval War Staffs were able to maintain the positions they had adopted before the war. Churchill began by reviving Bayly's plans for capturing Borkum,[1] and repeatedly urged them in the face of Staff opposition. The War Office Directorate of Military Operations headed by Callwell, demolished Bayly's 'Eighteenth Century' examples and concluded 'it is probably out of the question at present to carry out such an operation'.[2] The First Sea Lord reminded Churchill that 'of course, the holding of such a base depends on our being superior at sea'.[3] An officer on the Naval Staff urged that the operation was strategically pointless; 'most naval officers consider the advantages to be gained by the seizure of this port as a naval base are not worth the cost of the ships and the men which must surely take place in the operation', and that 'it is considered that a decisive action between the fleets, resulting in our favour, is necessary before [a] direct attack on German Territory is feasible'.[4] Nevertheless, Richmond noted that Churchill was 'hammering' at the idea in September,[5] and in December he put it to the War Council, where, however, Balfour supported the

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[1] ADM 137/452 Churchill to Asquith 1/8/14.

[2] ADM 137/452 'Report on the Proposal to Occupy Certain Places as Temporary Naval Bases for Offensive Action Against Germany'. August 1914.

[3] Ibid. Minute by "B"[attenburg] 1/8/14.

[4] Ibid. "Question of Occupying a Base in Neutral Territory". August 1914. [This unsigned Memo appears to be the work of Admiral Sir Henry Jackson]

[5] N.M.M. RIC 1/9 Diary 13/9/14.

War Staff and the proposal was rejected.[1] Simultaneously Churchill supported Sir Arthur Wilson's equally pointless proposal to capture Heligoland, putting the plan to Admiral Jellicoe and his officers in the Grand Fleet,[2] and continuing to support the project even after they had rejected it.[3] That Churchill, who owed his position to Wilson's poor showing at the 114th C.I.D., should have supported a revival of the Admiral's vague proposals is clear proof that he was driven more by the desire to act than any strategic insight. Finally, operations against Gallipoli also came in for the First Lord's attention in this period. The possibility of Greek support led Churchill to suggest a landing on the Peninsula. The War Office reconsidered the question and adhered to their pre-war opinion,[4] Callwell informing the Admiralty representatives at a Joint Staff meeting that he 'did not regard it as a feasible military operation and that he believed that this was the War Office view'.[5] Churchill reconvened the meeting but Callwell adhered to his line and in the event the withdrawal of the Greek offer ended the debate.[6] The first four months of the war thus reveal Churchill urging amphibious projects with little regard to their strategic value, only to have them rejected by the Staffs in accordance with their pre-war conclusions.

Churchill's early proposals thus met effective resistance from the service staffs. However, as the war began to seem overlong, and the staffs failed to provide alternative strategies to the slaughter in France, Churchill's colleagues began to share his impatience, and the staffs' ability to resist his schemes diminished.

During this period the professional staffs did produce schemes of their own, which were more in accord with their pre-war attitudes, but were unable to put them into

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[1] ADM 137/452 'Seizing an Overseas Base' Memorandum by Balfour, 3/12/14 & Remarks on Sylt and Borkum, Memorandum by Admiral Oliver, 15/12/14.
[2] ADM 116/1350 Minutes of a Meeting Aboard the Iron Duke 17/9/14.
[3] ADM 137/452 Wilson continued to work at the details of the scheme into October.
[4] WO 106/1463 Paper "A".
[5] Ibid. Minute by Col. Talbot.
[6] Ibid.

effect within a time-scale which the ministers were ready to accept. Into this bracket fell a scheme of Fisher's for operations in the Baltic, and a General Staff proposal to cut the Turkish communications on the Syrian Coast which also commanded Admiralty support. Neither of these schemes was capable of being put into effect at once, but by revealing that the professionals did consider amphibious operations possible, they conferred a spurious authority on the superficially similar schemes proposed by ministers for instant enaction. Eventually both the Baltic and Syrian schemes failed, having unintentionally advanced the cause of other, more precipitate schemes.

Fisher's Baltic scheme remains something of an enigma. He alluded to it at the Dardanelles Commission,[1] and claimed it for a war winning strategy once hostilities were over, but there is little evidence relating to it from his time in office.[2] Sumida has pointed out that Fisher used the scheme to win authorisation for the construction of his final generation of battlecruisers, and concludes that he did not seriously support the scheme at all.[3] Whatever the reason, there is no doubt that Fisher suggested amphibious operations in the Baltic, used Corbett as a propagandist;[4] circulated his arguments to Churchill and others;[5] and initiated the construction of a large number of specialist vessels including monitors and the first landing craft, or X-Lighters.[6] Whatever Fisher's reasoning, the plan's significance lies in the fact that Fisher did propose it and intended the politicians to believe it was possible. Crucially, however, in accordance with his pre-war emphasis on the paramountcy of Fleet operations, he stated the operation could not be carried out at once: Fisher variously described the project as dependent upon the construction of the specialist vessels or on a battle which 'might place Germany in a position of naval

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[1] CAB 19/33 Lord Fisher of Kilverstone's Evidence, p. 191.

[2] Lord Fisher of Kilverstone "*Lord Fisher on the Navy*", (Hodder and Stoughton, London 1919). p. 8.

[3] J. T. Sumida, "In Defence of Naval Supremacy" (Unwin Hyman, Boston, 1989), p. 292.

[4] C.C.A.C. FISR 1/17/874, Official Correspondence; Corbett to Fisher 19/12/14.

[5] C.C.A.C. CHAR 13/28 Fisher to Churchill 22/12/14; 'I hope you will include Frederick the Great's phial of poison in your paper! I have returned the Baltic paper for that purpose'.

[6] FISR 5/23/4325, Papers on Naval Subjects; Vessels Ordered to be Built Since Lord Fisher Became First Sea Lord, 1915.

inferiority to Russia and expose the Baltic coast to invasion'.[1] The first of these scenarios involved a delay of a year, the latter an indefinite waiting period; whether strategy or ruse, the Baltic plan did not promise the swift solutions which the politicians increasingly desired. What Fisher's scheme would do was provide Churchill with an opening, suggesting professional support for amphibious strategies, and allowing him to justify his own island strategy as a necessary preliminary to any Baltic operations.

The second professional project, the General Staff scheme for operations against the Turkish communications in Syria, commanded general support: but the difficulty of providing the requisite troops prevented it being put into effect. This scheme was a revival of the General Staff plan formulated in 1907, with Alexandretta substituted for Haifa, and it appears no coincidence that its revival coincided with the recall of Callwell. The idea had general appeal. Churchill suggested it as an alternative to Gallipoli, and Lord Kitchener, Secretary of State for War, agreed that an amphibious attack on the Turkish communications was an attractive future strategy.[2] Richmond had already suggested similar operations within the Admiralty, with which Jackson and others concurred.[3] At the War Office Callwell worked out a detailed scheme in December.[4] The staff also conferred on the question, Richmond discussing it with Callwell several times.[5] The project thus commanded the support of the staffs and both Churchill and Kitchener supported it; the Alexandretta plan was perhaps the best thought-out of all the amphibious proposals put forward during the first year of the war, reflecting the pre-war conclusions of the General Staff, and through them, the influence of the mobility theorists.

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[1] CAB 19/33 Fisher's Evidence, and FISR 5/23/4336 "Memorandum by the First Sea Lord on the Position of the British Fleet and its Policy of Steady Pressure'. 25/1/15.

[2] CAB 42/2/4 Cabinet Papers 1915-16. Minutes of The War Council, 25/11/14.

[3] N.M.M. RIC 1/11 Diary 1/11/14 & Submission to D.O.D. of same date. Also CAB 19/33 Sir Henry Jackson's Evidence, p. 133.

[4] Callwell "*Experiences of a Dug Out*". pp. 62-3.

[5] N.M.M. RIC 1/12 Diary 16th Jan.

However, as with the Baltic project, the Syrian scheme would take time to prepare, in this case because prior to the arrival of the New Armies Kitchener was not prepared to release troops which might be required in France; consequently the operation could not be put into effect at once and was overtaken by other, more expedient, schemes. Kitchener's admission that he was unable to provide any troops to assist the Russians against the Turks on January 2 1915 set in train the Dardanelles campaign,[1] and thus, although the War Council ordered joint investigation of the Alexandretta plan on the 8 January, the project was doomed to be overtaken by Gallipoli.[2] By suggesting a demonstration at Gallipoli, Kitchener initiated a campaign which set the favoured plans of his own department at nought; Callwell noted that the escalation of the Gallipoli project 'put an end to any thoughts about Alexandretta'.[3] This was not apparent at once, for the Dardanelles project was not initiated as an amphibious enterprise, and thus Kitchener continued to correspond with the intended commander of the Alexandretta project, Licutenant-General Birdwood, well into February.[4]

It was early in 1915 that the waning influence of the Staffs and the increasing impatience of the Ministers began to overturn the pre-war conclusions regarding amphibious strategy. Projects which had been condemned on the advice of the Staffs began to be accepted by the War Council; proposals such as the capture of Borkum, which the General Staff had rejected as an anachronism and the Naval Staff as strategically pointless, came to be approved by the Ministers. The aberration in amphibious development had commenced.

By January the stage had been set. The reception of the winter memoranda of Hankey and Lloyd George made it clear that the politicians were no longer ready to wait

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[1] CHAR 13/46 Kitchener to Churchill 2/1/15.
[2] CAB 42/1/12 War Council Minutes 8/1/15.
[3] Callwell, "*Experiences of a Dug Out*", p 63.
[4] PRO 30/57 (Kitchener Papers) Birdwood to Kitchener, 14/12/15.

for the services to produce a solution to the strategic deadlock.[1] Churchill followed these up with the revival of his Borkum plan at the Admiralty, now sufficiently sure of himself to set dates and dictate the outlines of a plan of attack.[2] Simultaneously he resubmitted the proposal to the Prime Minister and the War Council, investing it with a spurious strategic significance by suggesting that the project was a necessary preliminary to Fisher's Baltic strategy.[3] The scheme, rejected only a month earlier, was now 'approved in principle, subject to the feasibility of the plan when worked out in detail'.[4] Professional opinion counted for little. Within the Admiralty Richmond, supported by Oliver, the Chief of the War Staff, was feverishly opposed to Churchill's proposal.[5] Jellicoe, commanding the Grand Fleet, insisted that the island could not be held.[6] At the War Office Callwell knew nothing of the plan's revival. Despite this opposition, preparations for the operation continued until the Dardanelles absorbed all available resources.[7] The acceptance of the Borkum plan makes it clear that by early 1915 professional opinion counted for little, and that the politicians responsible for the war effort were so determined to act that even the most spurious strategic justifications convinced them.

Thus by the middle of January 1915 a situation had developed in which an amphibious strategy could be commenced without the approval of the staffs, and it was out of this situation that the Gallipoli Campaign arose.

Gallipoli was doubly aberrant in that it was started as a solely naval operation as well as against the advice of the Staffs. In response to a request by the Grand Duke Nicholas in January 1915 for some allied action which would reduce the pressure on his

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[1] Hankey's "Boxing Day Memorandum" and CAB 42/1/8 "Suggestions on the Military Position" David Lloyd George.
[2] ADM 137/452 Memorandum by Churchill circulated to Fisher, Wilson and Oliver, 3/1/15.
[3] CHAR 26/1 Churchill to Asquith, 29/12/14 & CHAR 13/27 Memorandum, 31/12/14.
[4] CAB 42/1/11 Minutes of War Council 7/1/15.
[5] N.M.M. RIC 1/12 "Danzig"; Memorandum by Richmond on Borkum, 19/1/15.
[6] CHAR 13/46 Jellicoe to Churchill 15/1/15.
[7] CHAR 13/48 Churchill to Jellicoe 9/3/15.

armies in the Caucasus, Lord Kitchener suggested a naval demonstration, informing the First Lord that the Army could do nothing at present.[1] Churchill exploited this request to initiate a major naval operation. He used Fisher's suggestion of an attempt to force the Straits as part of a grand Balkan coalition,[2] as an excuse to request of Admiral Carden, commanding in the area, an assessment of whether the Straits might be forced by the Fleet alone.[3] On receiving the Admiral's tentative admission that the Straits might be forced, Churchill then suggested, disingenuously, that this met with the support of the Sea Lords and Admiralty Staff, and extracted a detailed plan from Carden which he then presented to the War Council.[4] The War Council then approved this solely naval operation when it concluded, famously and foolishly, that 'the Admiralty should prepare for a naval expedition in February to bombard and take the Gallipoli Peninsula'.[5] The first operations were therefore conducted by ships alone and against the consensus of opinion in the Admiralty.

The attack only gradually assumed an amphibious form as marine landing parties were found necessary to complete the destruction of the forts. Unease in England led to the commitment of troops to the theatre, but the function they were intended to fulfil was not made clear.[6] Abstract ideas of the prestige involved persuaded Kitchener and the War Council that the attempt could not be broken off and hence the idea that the Army would assist in the event of naval failure became established.[7] What form that assistance would take was not explicitly stated in London until the respective commanders met in the aftermath of the naval failure of March 18 and concluded that the Army would have to

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[1] CHAR 13/46 Kitchener to Churchill 2/1/15.
[2] CHAR 13/47 Fisher to Churchill 3/1/15.
[3] CHAR 13/65 Admiralty to Carden 3/1/15.
[4] CHAR 13/65 Carden to Admiralty 5/1/15, Admiralty to Carden 6/1/15, Carden to Admiralty 11/1/15.
[5] CAB 42/1/16 Minutes of the War Council, 13/1/15.
[6] CAB 42/1/35 Conclusions of an Informal Meeting of the War Council 16/2/15; Troops 'to be available in case of necessity to support the naval attack on the Dardanelles'.
[7] CAB 42/1/42 Minutes of the War Council Meeting 24/2/15.

take the Peninsular before the Fleet could pass through.[1] Only after a month of desultory naval fighting had the venture become an amphibious operation. Although Gallipoli became an amphibious operation, and great strategic potential was claimed for it after the war, its origins owed little to amphibious strategic thought.

In addition to its origins as a purely naval effort, the campaign was almost entirely conceived and controlled by Ministers: the input of the professional staffs was minimal. In effect, as the Dardanelles Commission was to record, the conduct of the war was in the hands of the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for War, and the First Lord of the Admiralty.[2] The role of the professional staff depended largely on the extent to which the heads of the service departments were willing to accept their advice. At the War Office, this meant not at all; after rejecting the Greek scheme the General Staff were not consulted again until the Gallipoli operation was under way.[3] In the Admiralty, where Churchill lacked Kitchener's military reputation, more devious means were required in order to allow him to circumvent the opposition of his advisers, but he successfully got his way.[4] Due to the collapse of the C.I.D. system, neither the General Staff nor the Admiralty representatives felt themselves entitled to speak out at the War Council, where they could have revealed their reservations to Ministers other than Asquith, Churchill and Kitchener.[5]

In fact the opinion of the Staffs was hostile. The impression conveyed by such works as Marder, which concentrate on the naval side of the operations, is that the naval staff would have preferred a combined operation from the outset.[6] Whilst it is undoubtedly correct that the Naval War Staff would have preferred an amphibious

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[1] CHAR 13/65 de Robeck to Admiralty 23/3/15.

[2] CAB 19/1 Dardanelles Commission First Report, p. 6.

[3] Callwell, "*Experiences of a Dug-Out*". p. 88.

[4] Robert Rhodes James, "*Gallipoli*", (Batsford, London, 1965). p 29, notes that Churchill played off the Admiral on the spot against those in the Admiralty; 'it requires considerable credulity to believe that this was entirely fortuitous'.

[5] CAB 19/1 First Report, p10.

[6] A. J. Marder, "*Dreadnought to Scapa Flow*", (OUP, London, 1965). Vol. II. pp. 211-12.

operation to an attempt to force the straits with ships alone, it is unclear to what extent the staff would have supported the operation at all had they not been led to believe it would be diplomatically decisive. Fisher called for a Balkan confederation to provide the necessary troops.[1] Jackson's memoranda likewise called for the deployment of troops and misdoubted the ability of the fleet to get through alone.[2] Richmond repeatedly stressed the uselessness of the operation unless there were troops to back it up.[3] The consensus within the Naval War Staff was, therefore, that if the operation were to be attempted at all, it should be a combined scheme. However, it would not be fair to say that the Staff favoured a move against Gallipoli. Only Fisher produced an unsolicited paper in support of such an expedition; for the rest, it can only be said that when the War Council ordered an attempt, they felt an amphibious approach held the best chance of success.

Whilst the Admiralty were prepared, when faced with an attempt to force the straits with ships alone, to consider a combined operation, the General Staff were opposed to the operation on any terms. Twice in the last ten years they had considered and rejected an expedition against Gallipoli. There is no reason to doubt Callwell's assertion that if the Staff had been properly consulted, then their advice would again have been wholly against the enterprise.[4] No developments had invalidated the central theme of Callwell's 1906 memorandum; Gallipoli remained so obvious a target that any landing there would be opposed, and the losses incurred would, according to pre-war doctrine, be prohibitively heavy. There was no 'new fact' affecting opposed landings equivalent to the erroneous lessons drawn from the bombardment of the Belgian forts. Only three months had passed since the War Office had re-examined the question in relation to the Greek proposals, and had stuck to their original opinion. Under the more structured auspices of

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[1] CHAR 13/47 Fisher to Churchill 3/1/15.
[2] CAB 19/30 Dardanelles Commission, Statements and Papers, Memoranda by Sir Henry Jackson, 5/1/15 & 15/1/15 pp. 172-7.
[3] N.M.M. RIC 1/12 Richmond Diary 26/3/15.
[4] CAB 19/33 Proceedings of the Dardanelles Commission, Callwell's Evidence, p. 217.

the C.I.D., the same arguments had led to the wholesale abandonment of the scheme; when Gallipoli was taken on in 1915 it was because the General Staff had been ignored.

In considering British amphibious strategies Gallipoli's significance is therefore restricted. The professionals can only really be faulted for their pre-war failure to anticipate problems with the command structure; as combined operations are particularly dependent upon the nature of the command system more thought should have been given to this issue. As there had been no peacetime planning, problems had simply not emerged and even the General Staff had happily taken for granted the functions of the 'Naval and Military Authorities' without clarifying their functions.[1] The outbreak of war exposed this deficiency. All subsequent failures, indeed the staging of the operation itself, sprang from this initial flaw. The catastrophic collapse of the co-ordinating system rendered useless the not-inconsiderable corpus of information and experience which the service departments, particularly the General Staff, had accumulated over the last ten years.

Ironically, Gallipoli is no more indicative of amphibious thinking amongst the Ministers who initiated it than amongst the professionals who opposed it. Although, as Hankey has recorded, Churchill's scheme was met with great enthusiasm,[2] that scheme was for the forcing of the Straits by ships alone and, it was generally held, could be broken off at once. The Council's enthusiasm was for an alternative to the Western Front which seemed to entail little in the way of a risk. Immediately the operation showed signs of escalation there were serious reservations, chiefly expressed by Lloyd George, about the use of the Army to rectify the situation,[3] and questions of prestige rather than strategy governed the decision to back up the naval operations with military force.

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[1] WO 33/644 Manual of Combined Naval and Military Operations 1913, p.13.

[2] Lord Hankey "*The Supreme Command*", (Allen and Unwin, London, 1961). pp. 265-6.

[3] CAB 42/1/42 Minutes of the War Council 24/2/15.

Gallipoli, initiated as a purely naval attempt, does not signify any amphibious predilection on the part of the War Council.

Little more can be claimed for the two crucial figures. Kitchener also expressed doubts when it began to look likely that the scheme would require troops.[1] Only the question of prestige consequent on the failure of the Navy led him to consider combined operations in the area. Thus we are left with Churchill. Although Esher remained convinced that he was the sole member of the Committee who had studied combined strategy, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that he was simply impatient. Hankey's enlistment of Corbett to press the case for a full combined operation from the outset elicited no response from Churchill; his approach was not shaped by the theorists.[2] His simultaneous preparations for attacking Borkum reveal his impatience, his readiness to press for operations without any strategic justification, and his belief that Gallipoli would be a short, purely naval operation.

Neither the military nor the political members of the High Command favoured the initiation of Gallipoli as a combined operation. In strategic terms the most important amphibious operation of the war owed nothing to pre-war amphibious thought. The Alexandretta operation had been the sole example of a strategy which conformed to pre-war ideas, but the collapse of the command system had led to Gallipoli overtaking and eventually killing it.

After operations at Gallipoli were set in train, the opportunities for the Supreme Command to involve themselves in amphibious strategy disappeared. The details of the campaign, even the decision to shift the emphasis to an amphibious attack, were made by the Commanders on the spot, their conclusions accepted, albeit reluctantly, by the Ministers in London. Henceforth the ministers were confined to supplying the Commander-in-Chief with troops and, eventually, acting on his successor's

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[1] CAB 42/1/42 Minutes of the War Council 24/2/15.

[2] CAB 42/1/32 Dardanelles, Mr Julian Corbett's Letter to Colonel Hankey 4/2/15.

recommendation to abandon the enterprise. Only with the realisation that the Dardanelles operation had failed irredeemably did amphibious operations return to the sphere of ministerial discussion, but once again no evidence of strategic thinking was apparent. Whilst the evacuation of Gallipoli was under discussion, a landing at Alexandretta was briefly considered. However, this operation was solely designed to limit the damage to British prestige arising from the evacuation of the Peninsula,[1] and, if the officer responsible for suggesting the plan is to be believed, the entire proposal was simply a device to ease the decision to evacuate Gallipoli, and was always intended to be quietly dropped once that difficult conclusion had been reached.[2]

The Second Phase and Belgium;

Where the revived Alexandretta plan is significant is in the manner in which it was investigated, which contrasted sharply with the initiation of the Gallipoli campaign. It proved sufficient for the First Sea Lord to state that the operation could not be staged at the same time as Gallipoli and Salonika for the War Committee to reject the idea.[3] The decision was taken without waiting for either the Admiralty or War Office to justify their position, the simple fact of their opposition was sufficient to curtail the scheme. The form which that justification took, when it did arrive, was, however, equally significant: the General Staff and the Admiralty War Staff collaborating on a joint memorandum.[4] It

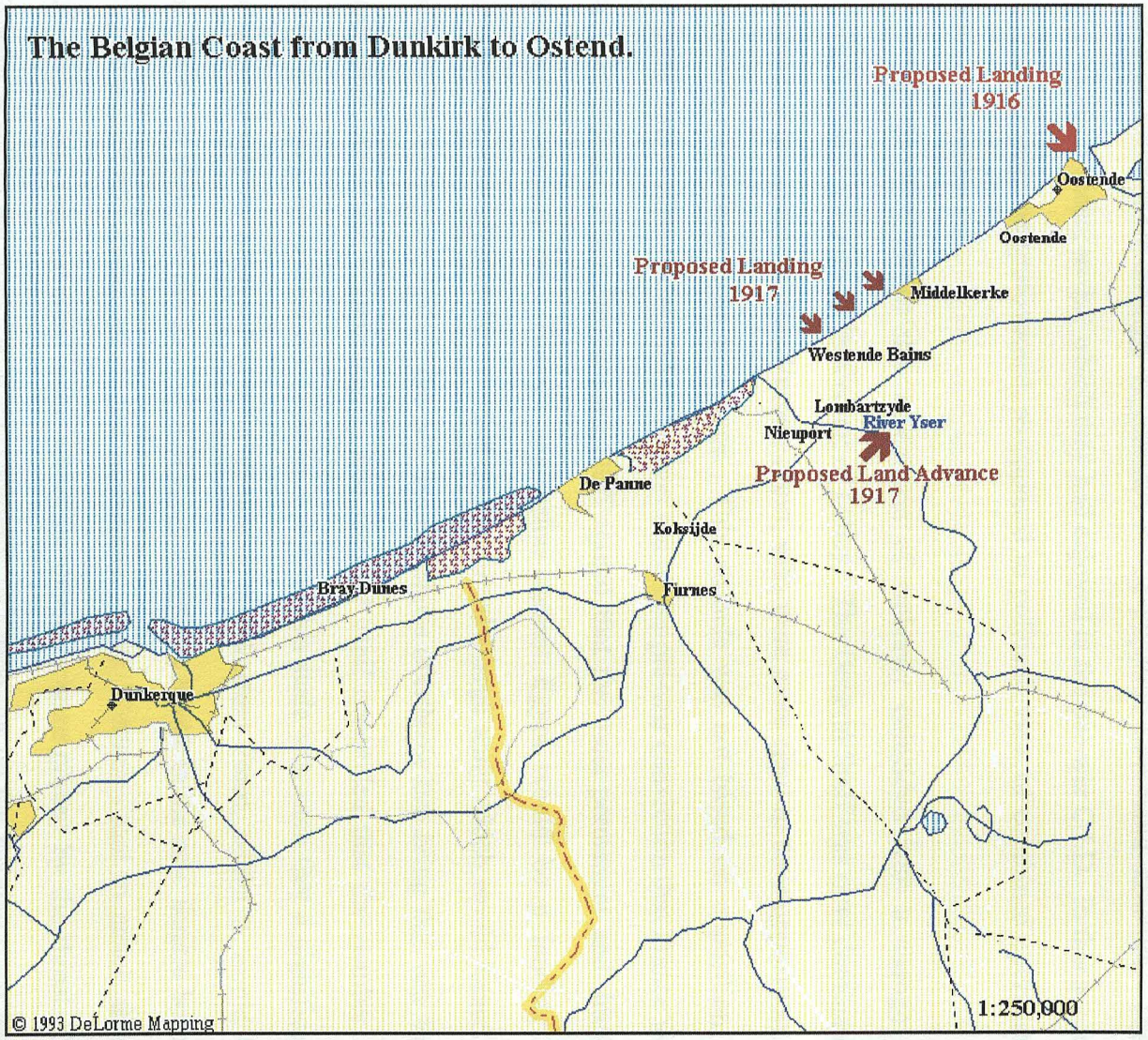
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[1] CAB 42/5/12 Minutes of the War Committee, 15/11/15. Mr Asquith; 'Appreciated that Lord Kitchener's motive was to deliver a blow at Alexandretta before the abandonment of Gallipoli took place, which would discount our evacuation of the latter'.

[2] L.H.M.C.A. LH 11 (Liddell Hart Papers), Memoranda, Piece 1933/29; talk with Guy Dawnay 18/12/33 & I.W.M. 69/21/1 (Dawnay Papers) Book II; Dawnay to Mrs Dawnay 30/6/16.

[3] CAB 42/5/8 Minutes of the War Committee 12/11/15 decision taken to inform Kitchener that the plan 'would be an insuperably difficult operation for the Navy' & CAB 42/5/12 Minutes of the War Committee 15/11/15, decision taken to 'provisionally refuse to consider the scheme'.

[4] CAB 42/6/4 Minutes of War Committee, 6/12/15. Appendix "The Present and Prospective Situation in Syria and Mesopotamia, A Paper Prepared by the General Staff in Consultation with the Admiralty War Staff'.


The Belgian Coast from Dunkirk to Ostend.
Proposed Landing 1916
Oostende
Oostende
Proposed Landing 1917
Middelkerke
Westende Bains
Lombartzyde
River Yser
Nieuport
Proposed Land Advance 1917
De Panne
Koksijde
Bray Dunes
Furnes
Dunkerque
© 1993 DeLorme Mapping
1:250,000

is clear that the balance between the professional staff and the ministers had altered drastically in the period between the initiation and the close of the Gallipoli campaign. The two Staffs were now co-operating to a greater degree and voiced their opinions direct to the War Committee. At least as far as combined operations were concerned, the Staffs were now much more strongly represented in the Supreme Command structure. Their status was now closer to that which they had enjoyed in the pre-war C.I.D. In this second phase of the war the professional, as opposed to political, view of combined operations could come to the fore.

At the War Office this restoration of authority coincided with a change in personnel and a consequent hardening of policy. The General Staff was now dominated by soldiers returned from the Western Front, who were more rigid in their opposition to operations other than those in France. This attitude was not based on opposition to amphibious operations or maritime strategy but on the pre-war conviction that France was the vital theatre. Thus the General Staff agreed that the most permanent and drastic method of crushing any Turkish aggression against Egypt would be a landing at Alexandretta, but rejected the proposal as it required a large army which would 'cease to be available for action against the one enemy whose overthrow can bring this war to a successful conclusion - Germany'.[1] The General Staff concluded that the number of troops necessary for a decisive effect in a war of this scale was such that a significant force could not be obtained without denuding the Western Front, whilst it would be impossible to transport the force and develop a decisive attack in the new theatre before the Germans took advantage of the weakening of the Western Front to attack there. Effectively, the General Staff were admitting that they were pinned by the threat of a German attack in the west. However, amphibious operations on the Belgian coast were described as a future option, demonstrating that the General Staff's fears were based

[1] Ibid.

solely on their determination that forces should not be diverted away from the main theatre, and not on any doubt as to the tactical viability of landing operations.[1]

The restoration of General Staff influence thus restricted the field for maritime strategy. The military professionals were not prepared to consider operations anywhere other than in the main theatre and against the main enemy. These conditions struck at the heart of maritime strategy; the threat over their ally invalidated the advantages which the British Army was supposed to accrue from its ability to move faster by sea than enemy forces could move by land, and its freedom to range freely without fear of a decisive blow at the heartland. This was, however, no more than a logical development of the General Staff's pre-war conclusions. Since 1905 the General Staff had considered it impossible, in view of the size of the British Army and the probable speed of the German attack, to mount an amphibious operation which would have any effect on the main battle on the French frontier. The establishment of a permanent front line had crystallised that situation. Although the British Army was now sufficiently large to stage a significant operation, it was, even more than before, fixed by the threat of a German attack; the troops could not be carried to a new theatre, deployed and develop their attack in time to prevent the Germans taking advantage of their absence from the Western Front to deliver a crushing blow.

The General Staff view meant that broad-ranging amphibious operations were out of the question. Henceforth combined operations would be confined to the European theatre, where the short distances involved might allow an operation to be staged before the Germans noticed the weakening of the front line, and where a successful landing would immediately force the Germans to denude their own front to deal with it. In effect, as the General Staff noted, such an operation would not be a new line of operations, but a

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[1] CAB 42/6/14 Minutes of the War Committee, 28/12/15. Appendices; "An Examination by the General Staff into the Factors Affecting the Choice of a Plan of Campaign, Together with a Recommendation as to the Best Plan to Accept" & "A Note for the War Committee by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff".

continuation of the existing one.[1] Henceforth amphibious planning was confined to the coasts of Belgium, with a brief reconsideration of the possibilities offered by the German coast.

The ascendancy of the professionals in the Admiralty further restricted the field for combined operations, for the Naval War Staff remained determined not to risk the Fleet, and now their advice carried authority. The new First Lord, Arthur Balfour, ran his department as he had run the C.I.D. before the war, allowing the Staff to make their position clear. He raised the question of future naval strategy in the War Committee, thus providing an opportunity for the First Sea Lord, the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet and Sir Arthur Wilson to state the Admiralty position before all the company.[2] Jellicoe informed the Committee that he considered such projects as the Baltic and Borkum schemes implied Grand Fleet operations in the southern North Sea, and this he was not prepared to recommend. For the first time a Naval representative had admitted explicitly that the Royal Navy did not dare venture into the coastal waters where the Germans would have the advantage, and thus that no amphibious operations in that area were possible until the High Seas Fleet had ventured out and been destroyed. Admirals Wilson and Jackson supported the Commander-in-Chief, stating that to produce a workable scheme for the Borkum project had proven impossible. Faced with such a clear expression of the service experts' view, the Committee accepted that the only offensive operations open to the Navy were conjunct enterprises against the Belgian coast, which would require joint consideration.[3] The Admiralty Staff had recovered their weight in counsel and used it to reaffirm their pre-war opposition to amphibious operations which endangered the Fleet.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] CAB 42/9/1, Minutes of the War Committee, 17/2/16.

[3] Ibid.

For fear of a German counter-blow, the General Staff were not prepared to consider operations anywhere other than in close proximity to the Western Front. The Admiralty was not prepared to risk its ships in operations in the Baltic or North Sea. As the staffs had regained their influence, henceforth combined operations would have to take place within the limits imposed by these considerations.

Further, the two staffs were also agreed that an attack on the German coast was out of the question. The General Staff could not understand why a feint of attack could not be made by the Navy, but neither the Chief of the Imperial General Staff or the First Sea Lord could see any way towards mounting an actual operation. The C.I.G.S. could see no way of providing the troops for what would essentially be a new front; Sir William Robertson vetoed military operations against the German Coast in May 1916 on the grounds that 'it is conceivable that, under certain conditions we might by adopting a strictly defensive attitude in other theatres, collect the troops required to attempt such an attack, but at present I cannot, on military grounds, recommend such a hazardous enterprise'.[1] Robertson therefore suggested that a feint could be staged by the Navy: 'it is difficult to understand why, in view of the great superiority of our fleet, the threat of offensive operations against the German coast . . . should be regarded as impossible'. The Admiralty responded that the short, shoal and fortified nature of the German coast rendered it impossible to carry out a landing there, and the same considerations applied to a demonstration. Operations in Belgium were serving to confine German forces, and there alone could the Admiralty conceive of further opportunities.[2]

Thus by early May 1915 the amphibious opportunities open to the British had contracted to operations against the Belgian coast. The chief reason for this reduced range of options was the General Staff's opposition to diverting effort from the main

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[1] CAB 42/13 Minutes of the War Committee, 13/5/16. Appendix; "Military Assistance for Russia", Memorandum by the C.I.G.S. 1/5/16.

[2] CAB 42/13 Memoranda by the First Sea Lord, Untitled, 3/5/16; Chief of the Naval Staff, Untitled and Undated; and Admiral of the Fleet A. K. Wilson, Untitled, 2/5/16.

enemy. Amphibious operations, therefore, had not been discredited by the experience of Gallipoli; the operation had created a deep distrust of detachments in the General Staff, but had not convinced them that landing operations were impossible. Repeated preparations for a landing on the Belgian coast in 1916-17 underline this point.

From the last days of the Gallipoli Campaign until the winter of 1917 a series of amphibious outflanking manoeuvres on the Belgian coast were considered by the British high command. Born of the Admiralty's desire to close the U-boat ports and the Army's intention to capture Ostend as a port to supply its advance, these plans reveal that landing operations were not abandoned as a result of Gallipoli. The nature of the General Staff's grand strategy meant that the Belgian coast was the only possible theatre for such operations, accordingly the services planned to mount one there.

The idea was first mooted in November 1915, before the evacuation from Gallipoli had taken place. Naval pressure for an operation to deprive the enemy of submarine bases at Ostend and Zeebrugge led to the formulation of a combined staff appreciation which envisaged a land attack up the coast coupled with a landing at Middelkerke Bains.[1] This proposal, approved by Balfour and Asquith, the latter temporarily acting both as Prime Minister and Secretary of State for War, was rejected by the Commander in Chief, Sir John French, on the grounds that the coastal advance would be dependent upon the necessarily unreliable artillery support of the Royal Navy.[2] The question of the landing was not a factor in the abandonment of the proposal, from which it is clear that no great antipathy to landing operations had emerged from the experience of Gallipoli, a point which was to be confirmed by repeated incarnations of the plan.

For, once problems with co-ordinating an advance on land were resolved, the landing operation returned to the agenda. French was replaced in December 1915, and

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[1] WO 158/21 Secretary of State and Chief of Imperial General Staff Correspondence with C.-in-C. Project for Combined Naval and Military Operations on the Belgian Coast With a View to Preventing the Enemy Using Ostend as a Naval Base. 12/11/15.

[2] WO 158/21 C-in-C to C.I.G.S. 20/11/15.

his successor, Sir Douglas Haig, commenced planning an offensive in the western part of the line. Haig began co-ordinating his actions with those of Vice-Admiral Bacon, commanding the Dover Patrol, within a month of his appointment.[1] He planned to make the land attack further from the coast, which removed the dependence on naval artillery support which French had considered the basis flaw in the plan. Haig informed Joffre, the French C.-in-C., that he intended to operate in conjunction with the Fleet,[2] and early in January instructed a meeting of his and Bacon's staff that 'a scheme for attack on the Ostend front from the sea be worked out in detail'.[3] Within a month of the evacuation of Gallipoli the British were preparing for another amphibious operation.

Haig did have reservations about staging a landing attack on a heavily fortified coast, and hoped to reduce the scale of opposition by preliminary operations on land, but as the plan entailed a landing on the sea front at Ostend, he was accepting an opposed landing would occur. Haig intended that the landing would be timed to coincide with a reduction of the scale of defence resulting from his intended advance on land,[4] but his chief concern was that the enemy's reserves should be drawn off before the operation went ahead, and it was for that reason he insisted that the landing would be contingent upon the advance on land.[5] Haig was not balking at the example of Gallipoli; Lt.-General Sir Aylmer Hunter-Weston, who had commanded at the Helles landing, was appointed to co-operate with Bacon in compiling the plan.[6] The tactical difficulties of a landing under fire were not the cause of his reservations concerning the operation.

The 1916 plan was fated not to come about. The operation became increasingly contingent upon the advance of the main force as investigation proceeded. Despite a typically bravura declaration to the effect that he would be happy to stage the attack if so

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[1] WO 256/7 Haig Diaries, Dec. 1915-Jan. 1916. 26/12/15.
[2] Ibid. 29/12/15.
[3] Ibid. 7/1/16.
[4] Ibid.
[5] WO 256/8 Haig Diaries, February 1916, 26/2/16.
[6] Ibid. 16/2/16.

ordered, Hunter-Weston clearly balked at the dangers of landing in a built up area in the face of machine gun fire.[1] Bacon concurred, and Haig laid down that the landing should not take place until the enemy had been considerably shaken and the land army advanced to within co-operating distance.[2] As the British were forced by the pressure at Verdun to maintain their offensive in the Somme rather than return to the Ypres Salient, Haig's first choice for an offensive, this pre-requisite was never attained, and the attack could not take place in 1916. The discovery of a heavy battery of German guns which could range on the harbour also undermined the original plan for landing directly at Ostend.[3] In the event the sole result of these plans was a number of troop and boat movements in the Summer and Autumn of 1916 designed to distract the Germans from the Somme.[4] However, G.H.Q. remained interested in the plan, and continued to consider it on hold in case the Germans broke, at which point the port would be seized from the sea.[5] Haig remained in communication with Admiral Bacon and began to consider the possibility of using tanks in a landing operation on the coast south of Ostend.[6] The situation elsewhere on the front and the particular difficulties of landing in a fortified town prevented the 1916 plan being put into effect, but interest in amphibious operations on the Belgian coast continued.

Interest in the scheme persisted throughout the war, indicating a continued faith in such operations. The increasing fears of the Admiralty with regard to the submarine menace led to the issue being raised again before the year was out. A further conference was called at the War Office where Haig informed the Staffs that only the fact that

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[1] WO 256/10. Haig Diaries, "Note on a Projected Landing at Ostend", Lt. Gen. Sir A. Hunter-Weston, 24/2/16.
[2] PRO ADM 137/2103 Dover Patrol Papers, "Scheme for the Operation" 29/4/16.
[3] ADM 137/2103 Précis of a Conference Between the Commander in Chief and the Vice Admiral, Dover Patrol, on 12/6/16.
[4] ADM 137/2103 Orders for the Second Army 10/9/16. WO 256/11 Haig Diary July 1916 17/7/16, WO 256/13 Haig Diary September 1916, 9/9/16 & 17/9/16.
[5] WO 158/36 GHQ Coastal Operations File. Kiggell to Plumer 13/9/16.
[6] WO 256/13 Haig Diary, 18/9/16.

'Verdun had made it necessary for us fight shoulder to shoulder with the French' had prevented him from acting already.[1] As Robertson noted, those present, who included representatives of the two Service Staffs and the Commands in France and at Dover, were 'all clearly agreed in principle'. A year after Gallipoli there were still no signs that amphibious operations had been discredited amongst the senior elements of the British services.

Interestingly, the French were apparently even less disenchanted by their experience at Gallipoli, for Joffre responded to Robertson's communication with a suggestion for a self-sustaining five-division landing on the Belgian coast. It is of course possible that the fact that the British would have provided the troops for such a landing was a factor in the French equanimity.[2] However, the British were not prepared to be so bold and the General Staff adhered to their strategic decision not to open a wholly new line of operations. Joffre's plan was rejected as too ambitious by a further conference of the Departmental and Commanders' Staffs, where it was decided to adhere to the original conception of a landing of 2 divisions dependent upon the success of an advance from the Ypres Salient and threatening Ostend from the south.[3]

The detailed plans reflected the determination of the General Staff and G.H.Q. not to open a new line of operations. The first prerequisite remained a major advance by the Fifth Army from the Ypres Salient, designed to reach as far as the Staden-Roulers Ridge.[4] Once this was achieved, and only then, the plan called for an advance along the sea coast across the River Lys, which would connect up with a division landed from the sea. These coastal operations, to be carried out by the XV Army Corps of Rawlinson's Fourth Army,

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[1] WO 158/22 Secretary of State and C.I.G.S. Correspondence with the C.-in-C.; Précis of a Meeting held in the C.I.G.S.'s Room 23/11/16.

[2] WO 158/15 Joffre-Haig Correspondence; Joffre to Haig 8/12/16.

[3] WO 158/22 Minutes of A Meeting Held in the C.I.G.S.'s Room to Discuss the Scheme Proposed by the French for the Capture of the Belgian Coast 25/12/16.

[4] WO 95/434, Fourth Army War Diary Sept. 1917 - Feb. 1918; Special Appendix Z, Sub Appendix 4 Note by Haig 'For Personal Information of Sir Henry Rawlinson'

were wholly dependent upon the success of the Fifth Army in the main theatre. Specialist equipment for landing the troops and tanks was constructed, and the earmarked troops moved into a quarantined camp for dedicated training in July.[1] Everything was ready by the middle of August.[2]

Eventually, the operation was again condemned by the failure to advance on land. On the first day of the year Robertson had suggested that the replacement of Joffre with Nivelle in the French Command could imperil Haig's plan for an offensive in the west,[3] and Haig had replied that he was satisfied that the new French C.-in-C.'s offensive would be over before his Ypres offensive was scheduled to begin.[4] In the event Robertson's fears proved nearer the mark; the Nivelle Offensive failed to provide the rapid success its commander expected and was pushed beyond its original time-scale without result. The effect was to postpone the commencement of Haig's northern onslaught, with the result that even before the preparations were completed the landing operations were postponed.[5] Eventually the scheme was again abandoned as the Fifth Army failed to make progress in the Autumn mud around Passchendaele, and the coastal sector reverted to French control.[6]

The dependence of the coastal operation on the advance on land meant that it was never put into effect. This dependence was due to the fact that Haig never envisaged an operation of the sort described by Callwell and Aston, which might have a decisive effect in its own right. Haig only saw the landing as taking advantage of his advance on land, rather than facilitating it, and consequently was not prepared to reduce his land forces to the level necessary to allow the amphibious force to operate independently. Haig may

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[1] Ibid. Note on the Northern Operations to be Entrusted to the Fourth Army, With Special Reference to the Landing Operations to be Carried out by the First Division.
[2] Ibid.
[3] WO 158/22 Robertson to Haig, 1/1/17.
[4] Ibid. Haig to Robertson 6/1/17.
[5] WO 158/239 4th Army Operations May-Nov. 1917; 4th Army Instructions 26/7/17 & 29/7/17.
[6] Ibid. General Davidson to Admiral Bacon, 5/11/17.

also have feared that a more ambitious amphibious operation, had it failed to connect up with his main force, would have left him holding two separate fronts with the Germans occupying the interior position and able to concentrate against either at will. The Field Marshal was not, therefore, prepared to attempt an amphibious flanking manoeuvre which would displace the German front line, his vision was limited to a small attack which would seize a useful port from an already retreating enemy. Thus the plan had been always been based on the assumption that the landing force would rapidly connect up with the main advance; for instance, there were no arrangements for supplying the force from the sea for any length of time.[1] Haig was insistent that the main thrust should either have put the Fifth Army in a position to co-operate, or brought about a general German retreat and the diminution of the Coastal Garrisons before the landing took place.[2] Haig always put more faith in the operations on land, even to the point of considering whether the forces committed to the amphibious stroke should be moved to the main front.[3] The C.-in-C. was prepared to face an opposed landing, he was not prepared to land a small force until he was sure it would not be cut off.

Haig's subordinates and naval counterparts however, untroubled by the responsibility which the Commander-in-Chief bore, did conceive the operation in more decisive terms. Bacon and Rawlinson, backed by Du Cane, the Commander of XV Corps, were sufficiently convinced of the potential benefits to be wrung from the operation that they were prepared to press for it to be mounted despite the failure of the Fifth Army to advance. Both Bacon and Du Cane suggested to Rawlinson that the landing should go ahead regardless, as it would facilitate the advance of the main force up the coast. They were thus suggesting an operation of the sort advocated by Callwell and Aston; Du Cane particularly hoped that the operation could be used to disrupt the German

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[1] WO 95/434, Appendix Z, Sub Appendix 8 'Supplies, Transport and Reinforcements'.
[2] WO 256/20 Haig Diary July 1917; 21/7/17, talk with Rawlinson.
[3] WO 256/21 Haig Diary August 1917; 23/8/17.

line and allow a successful attack on land, rather than being dependent on it.[1] Haig rejected a verbal approach by Rawlinson,[2] who nevertheless penned a second submission to the Commander in Chief. Like his subordinate, Rawlinson considered that the landing operation could be used to weaken the opposition in front of the Fifth Army, and argued that the chances for the landing were 'distinctly favourable . . . the troops are very confident of success and the means at our disposal adequate to deal with any opposition that may be encountered'. In the event, however, Rawlinson was not prepared to challenge the views of Haig for a second time, and never submitted his paper.[3] Despite this it is clear that the officers to whom the operation was entrusted held out high hopes that such an operation would have a dramatic effect on the Germans; a modest version of the strategies expounded by the mobility theorists before the war. Haig himself was sufficiently aware of the temptation which this offered to expressly state that 'he would not countenance a landing operation being utilised to facilitate the passage of the River Yser' by XV Corps.[4]

The history of the Belgian coastal plans throughout 1916-17 makes it clear that there was no determined backlash against amphibious operations in the immediate aftermath of the Gallipoli campaign. Schemes involving the landing of between one and three divisions of infantry, later supplemented with artillery and tanks, were repeatedly approved by the Admiralty and General Staffs; by the naval and military Commanders from whose commands the forces would be drawn; and by the commanders entrusted with the operation. There appear to have been few doubts concerning the tactical viability of an amphibious operation. The chief reservations were those of Haig, who

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[1] WO 95/434 Special Appendix Z Sub Appendix 8 Memorandum by Bacon 22/7/17 & WO 256/17 Haig Diary, 13/8/17, Conversation between Rawlinson and Haig.

[2] Ibid.

[3] WO 95/434 Special Appendix Z, Sub Appendix 9 'Review of the Situation by the Army Commander' 22/8/17 & note thereon by A.A. Montgomery B.G.G.S. 'This letter was NOT forwarded officially to G.H.Q.'.

[4] WO 158/239 Army Record of a Meeting Held at Advanced G.H.Q. 22/8/17.

considered that the operation offered less than the same forces could achieve if used in a more conventional manner, which combined with his unwillingness to open a new front to keep the Belgian plans dependent upon an advance on land which in the event never took place.

Amphibious strategy in the Great War was thus confused by the collapse of the command structure in the early stages. Whilst this was the case, amphibious operations were suggested, and put into effect, with little consideration of their strategic value, either as individual operations or in relation to the war as a whole. Once the service staffs had regained their authority, the general strategy of the war was that which had governed the outlook of the General Staff since 1905; the sustenance of France was their chief concern and no new theatre should be opened which would undermine that capability. Amphibious operations in the latter part of the Great War were, therefore, hampered by the limits imposed on strategy by the permanent threat of a German breakthrough in the west rather than by any doubts as to their tactical viability. The General Staff became convinced that no new line of operations could be opened on a decisive scale before the Germans took advantage of the necessary weakening in the allied line that this would entail, which in itself was only an extension of the view which had led them to commit their forces to France in the first place. Under such circumstances the only amphibious scenario was a local outflanking manoeuvre on the Belgian coast, along the lines favoured by the Russians both then and later. Such operations were planned, but never put into effect due to factors unrelated to their tactical viability. Even in the aftermath of Gallipoli, therefore, the reasons for the lack of British amphibious operations were more strategic than tactical. At the tactical level there was no major backlash against amphibious operations in the course of the war. In fact, given that the pre-war staffs had largely considered opposed landings an impossibility, it is reasonable to say that the

British high command ended the war more sanguine about the tactical possibilities of combined operations than they had entered it.

Chapter III. Inter-War Doctrine and Strategy.

After the First World War the theory and practice of amphibious strategy diverged. The theories became more popular than ever, largely as a reaction to the perceived failures of the Western Front. Despite this, however, the British never agreed on a single strategy in the inter-war years which called for the employment of amphibious operations. The political climate, the condition of the services and the probable enemies in this period all provided little scope for the employment of amphibious strategies. Only one scenario which would have necessitated the use of amphibious operations was ever considered in detail: the Royal Navy's plan for a war with Japan. However, this scheme merely considered the use of the army to provide bases for the fleet, rather than the more ambitious forms of maritime strategy, and in the event the project was never accepted by the other two services. Thus, whilst the theorists' work was at the height of its public popularity, its strategic applications were non-existent.

Theory.

For the most part the amphibious theorists contributed little that was new in the inter-war years. Most of the pre-war school chose to see their work confirmed by the course of the war and confined themselves to criticising the system of command, which they blamed both for the commitment to the Continent and the failure of the one great amphibious venture that had been attempted. Others of the new generation of military theorists thrown up by the war were equally uncritical, finding in maritime strategy an attractive alternative to the Western Front. Few considered the impact of the new weapons and dimensions of conflict arising from the Great War on their favoured strategy. Alone amongst the theorists J. F. C. Fuller was both free of emotional attachment to the amphibious alternative and sufficiently farsighted to perceive the

impact of aviation and mechanisation, but, as with his land-warfare predictions, he was too farsighted to be of immediate use. For the most part the theorists were reduced to the level of popularisers, and perhaps the one new idea which they drew from the experience of the Great War was that opposed landings were more feasible than they had hitherto believed.

Aston, rushing into print at the end of the war, immediately claimed that he had shown a remarkable degree of prescience in calling for a combined staff as early as 1907.[1] Aston considered the failure at Gallipoli to be entirely due to the pre-war failure to establish some system of co-ordinated command. He asserted that 'the successful effect produced by all amphibious operations depends, in the first instance, upon two principle factors - the system of controlling the combined action of the two services and the judgement shown in the selection of the objective at which the blow is to be struck'.[2] Gallipoli had been a mistake on both counts. Constantinople was not a suitable objective for an amphibious operation, such as the communications of an army. Aston therefore concluded that the chief lessons of the campaign were 'the importance of a good controlling authority to decide the nature of the operation and to issue clear instructions to all the departments concerned', and 'the need of a combined and well trained naval and military staff to draw up plans in detail, in concert with each other, the controlling authority not to decide upon the practicability of the operation until the details had been mastered'.[3] Thus all the failures he noted, which included the lack of a viable object, the absence of secrecy and the neglect of tactical loading, Aston blamed on the failings of the command structure; as a result there was no need to reassess the validity of his strategic

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[1] Major General Sir George Aston, "*War Lessons, Old and New*", (John Murray, London, 1919). The Appendix reprints the 1907 Lecture in full.

[2] Ibid. p. 65.

[3] Ibid. p. 78.

thought, and he declared that the perfect strategy of the war would have included a giant combined operation aimed at the German Fleet.[1]

Despite the flaws in the initiation of the operation, Aston took Gallipoli as proof that amphibious operations were not as tactically difficult as had been thought before the war. Aston informed his readers that 'the generally accepted view when war broke out in 1914 was that the improvements in range and rapidity of fire of modern weapons had rendered such landings quite impossible'.[2] Gallipoli, he argued, 'teaches us never to apply the word "impossible" to any warlike operation'.[3] The former Staff College instructor did consider that there was a requirement for motor driven light-draught craft to assist in such landings, but his overall conclusion from the Dardanelles disaster was that opposed landings were viable.

Aston made no attempt to deal with the new weapons which the war had thrown up. He held that it was 'too early days' to comment on the Great War, although he did allow that, 'it may be said that the use of submarines and aircraft in the future will revolutionise the conduct of such operations'.[4] Six years later J. F. C. Fuller was to comment to Liddell Hart on Aston's abilities, noting witheringly; 'Can't you give old Aston a dose of weed killer? it is a national disgrace that the Times cannot produce a better correspondent'.[5] It is hard to escape the conclusion that the one-time Staff College Instructor was already a spent force at the end of the war.

Aston was not alone in seeing his pre-war doctrines confirmed in the experiences of W.W.I. Corbett, granted the influential position of official historian of the war at sea, was equally fulsome in his claims for maritime strategies. Fisher's one time publicist commenced his work from the assumption that Gallipoli was an example of the maritime

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[1] Ibid. p. 56.
[2] Ibid. pp. 76-77.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid. p. 39.
[5] L.H.C.M.A. Liddell Hart 1/302/97 Fuller to Liddell Hart, 25/8/26.

strategy which he had preached before the war; operations in a theatre which Britain could isolate from the main strength of the enemy. In contrast, the commitment of all Britain's forces to the Continent was a mistake, based on false doctrines. Thus the Dardanelles Campaign was described as a reassertion of 'the old influences, which had never allowed us to concentrate in the main European theatre of a great war'.[1] This was in keeping with Corbett's pre-war views, although not perhaps with history,[2] given that the campaign had in fact commenced as a purely naval operation. Nevertheless, Corbett claimed that the operation, 'followed the traditional lines of the system of warfare upon which - whether or not ideally the best - the British Empire had been built up', whilst the obsession with France sprang merely from what 'current military doctrine taught soldiers to regard as the only decisive theatre'. Corbett argued that a departure from tradition had arisen because the ideal of concentrating superior force at the decisive point had been extended, by a 'doubtful corollary', to suggest that all strength should be concentrated in the decisive theatre, regardless of the possibility of actually attaining a decisive superiority there. This misconception had subsumed the British recognition that if requisite superiority could not be achieved in the main theatre, an alternative theatre where British forces could be wielded in greater numbers than their enemy was the obvious site for operations.[3] For Corbett Gallipoli represented the resurgence of the traditional method, whilst the war had been 'the most bigoted "soldiers'" war we have ever fought'.[4]

Like Aston, Corbett did not consider that the experiences of war had invalidated his arguments; he also blamed the failure at Gallipoli on the absence of an executive. Mistakes in the planning process and co-ordination of the services' actions he put down to

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[1] Julian S. Corbett, "*History of the Great War, Naval Operations, Vol. II*". Longmans, Green and Co. London, 1920. p. 65.

[2] See, for instance, Michael Howard "*The British Way in Warfare*" pp 14-15.

[3] Corbett, "*History of the Great War; Naval Operations*" Vol. III. p. 42.

[4] N.M.M. Corbett Papers, Box 13, Corbett to Fisher, 12/6/18.

'our imperfect machinery for bringing together the naval and military staffs for intimate study of such problems'.[1] Under these conditions, Corbett concluded, 'such failures in council were inevitable'. Other problems arose from the difficulty of operating in conjunction with allies; the advantages arising from mobility were thwarted by the difficulties of relations between the British and the French. Corbett concluded that the sudden changes of objective open to the amphibious force, 'are by no means easy to arrange with an allied force - even when strategical considerations alone are involved; and when, as in this instance, there is a tangle of political interests that has to be previously unravelled by negotiation, the difficulties tend to become insuperable'.[2] Like his fellow pre-war exponent, therefore, Corbett considered the failures of the executive to be the paramount reason for failure; consequently he made no attempt to examine afresh the validity of his favoured strategy.

Having thus explained the failure of the operation on the poor operation of the command structure, Corbett considered that Gallipoli confirmed his pre-war theories. Command of the sea had allowed the allies 'the power of freely combining naval and military force against the point where the system of the Central Powers was weakest, while standing securely on the defensive in the main theatre where its strength was greatest'.[3] Gallipoli should have been a perfect example of his pre-war suggestion of fighting the enemy with an artificially attained local superiority. Poor execution had marred an otherwise excellent conception. Similarly Gallipoli provided Corbett with proof of the validity of his containment theories; the threat of Russian action had once again shown 'the impossibility of ignoring the menace of troops brought down to the sea with transports gathering to them'.[4] For Corbett the war was confirmation of his pre-war theories, and he developed them no further.

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[1] Corbett, "*Naval Operations*" Vol. II. p. 175.
[2] Ibid. p 195.
[3] Ibid. p 290.
[4] Ibid. p 295.

Although Corbett did note that circumstances had changed to such a degree that operations of this sort were more difficult, he did not comment on the extent to which such increased difficulties might require a reworking of his thesis. Corbett admitted that 'railway transport had greatly accelerated the enemy's power of taking effective counter-measures' but made no attempt to consider whether this had wholly invalidated the principles behind maritime strategy.[1] Similarly, he noted the threat which submarines offered to command of the sea, but only considered their impact on the Gallipoli Campaign from the point of view of the demands which they made on shipping elsewhere.[2] Although he commented elsewhere that the submarine would prove a deterrent to German invasion of Britain, he failed to assess the implications of this for his favoured strategy.[3] Corbett therefore admitted that there had been developments which affected amphibious operations, but continued to see what he had isolated as the classic British strategy as an immutable truth.

Thus Corbett remained committed to his maritime strategy. He painted the Dardanelles as an inspired operation of war marred only in the planning and the execution. He asserted that 'there are probably few now who do not see in that narrow area . . . the decisive point of the war'.[4] The campaign was 'proof that the British genius for that most difficult and least appreciated form of operation, and the instinct for seeking in it the solution of the most baffling strategical problems, has in no way diminished in vigour and resource'. Like Aston, he saw the landing operations as a positive lesson, the landing at Helles 'outshone all precedent', whilst of Suvla he commented that 'nothing equal to it, in conception difficulty and magnitude had ever been attempted before'.[5]

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[1] Ibid. p 291.
[2] Ibid. p 383.
[3] Ibid. p 399.
[4] Corbett "*Naval Operations*", Vol. III. p. 40.
[5] Ibid. p. 84.

The third of the chief pre-war amphibious theorists, Callwell, was no slower into print. In both his memoirs and an account of the Dardanelles Campaign he was critical of the planning process which had led up to it, which, in view of his experience, offered further support for the argument that this was the chief cause of failure.[1]

Callwell also adhered to his pre-war views. He reiterated the argument put forward in the 1906 Memorandum: Gallipoli had been so obvious an objective that it was certain to be defended.[2] It was therefore, an exception to the strategic advantages of amphibious warfare, but it proved the rule; Callwell reiterated that the threat of operations against Gallipoli would have kept the Turks on edge, and that the amphibious blow should have fallen on Alexandretta.[3] Like Aston and Corbett, there was no suggestion in his work that the strategic advantages of amphibious warfare might have been militated against by the development of new weapons and systems of transportation.

Callwell also ended the war more confident about opposed landings than he had entered it. As the most thoughtful critic of opposed landings before the war it would be surprising to find him as positive about the conduct of the disembarkation as Aston and Corbett, but even so, his findings were remarkably upbeat. Whilst he commented that the difficulties had been foreseen before the war, and that Gallipoli proved that 'landing in defiance of determined opposition' was 'a class of undertaking . . . to be avoided at almost any cost', Callwell considered that the Y beach operations had confirmed his pre-war ideas on outflanking the defences of the proposed landing beaches.[4] But even if such flank landings were impossible Callwell held that; 'British infantry had proved to the world how, even under the unfavourable conditions that obtain today, it is not impossible

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[1] e.g. Callwell "*Experiences of a Dug-Out*" p. 93. & "*The Dardanelles, Campaigns and Their Lessons*" Constable and Co., London 1919. p. 11.
[2] Callwell "*Dardanelles*" p 43.
[3] Ibid. p 10.
[4] Ibid. p 65.

for troops of the very best class to effect a landing in broad daylight in the face of relentless and skilfully conducted opposition'.[1]

Added to the voice of the theorists was that of the twice-First Sea Lord, Fisher. In post-war writings for the Times he suggested that the war should have been waged in the Baltic, with the initial British Expeditionary Force being committed to Antwerp, where it should have had the fleet at its back to sustain and supply it. His graphic picture of armoured "hippopotami", amphibious landing vehicles, crawling ashore in Pomerania, though lacking in practical details, was an attractive idea which added to the various expositions of alternative strategies.[2] Fisher made no attempt to justify his assertions, but his was another voice claiming that the war might have been won more efficiently had the naval and military arms been used in combination. Common to almost all the works published in the immediate aftermath of the war was the idea that the British could have made more of their amphibious power.

The initial reaction to the war was thus a spate of publications which advanced as arguments the continued viability of amphibious operations and the need for a controlling executive, which in most cases also suggested that a maritime strategy would have been a more suitable and successful means of waging the war. Were this view confined to the pre-war maritime theorists it would hardly be surprising, but this view of the war achieved a wider acceptance. Amongst the most noteworthy converts was Major General Sir Frederick Maurice, erstwhile Director of Military Operations under Robertson, and, at the time of writing, Professor of Military Studies at the University of London.

Maurice's intention was to produce a gloss of Field Service Regulations which would he applicable to all arms. His motivation lay in his interpretation of the First World War; 'I venture to suggest that the chief criticism which our descendants will have to make of our conduct of the Great War will be that we did not make the best use of our

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[1] Ibid. p 73.

[2] Fisher "*Lord Fisher On the Navy*" - "*An Oil Maniac*" reprinted from the Times 9/9/19.

amphibious power, and in fact we turned ourselves voluntarily into a land power, and began to think of our amphibious power afterwards'. Maurice held that the cause of this failure was the lack of a doctrine of war suited to Britain's circumstances; like Corbett and also Liddell Hart, who was beginning to argue along similar lines, he argued that the commitment to the Continent had been the result of 'the influence of continental military thought, which was very little if at all concerned with sea power'.[1]

Maurice fell into the mobility rather than the theatre school of maritime strategists, holding that the backing of the Navy provided the army with certain strategic advantages when operating in an area flanking the coast. Maurice agreed with Corbett only in so far as the former had stated the inability of sea battles to settle matters between great land powers.[2] Thus, as Corbett had concluded, decisions had to be sought upon the land. For Maurice, however, this meant in the main theatre. Corbett's carefully argued suggestions for fighting limited wars in theatres which the Navy could isolate he disregarded, suggesting that, excluding police actions, 'it is imprudent for a Great Power to regard any other kind of war as capable of definite limitation, since its developments and repercussions in the interests of other nations cannot be foreseen'.[3] Thus he only supported Gallipoli as a theatre in which the sea and land forces could co-operate, not as a theatre for limited war.[4] Similarly, he considered that the development of the submarine and long range gun meant Britain could no longer rely on the channel to isolate her from continental enemies while she fought small wars elsewhere; 'Britain's vitals had thus in process of time extended from our shores on to the continent of Europe, and to defend them we had to expend our utmost efforts'.[5] Maurice thus deemed it necessary to fight against the main enemy with all the strength that Britain could put forward; where he

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[1] Major General F. Maurice, "*British Strategy, a Study of the Applications of the Principles of War*", (Constable and Co. London, 1929). p. 55.
[2] Ibid. p. 41.
[3] Ibid. p. 42.
[4] Ibid. p. 81.
[5] Ibid. p. 42

differed from the Continental school was in his belief that this strength could be enhanced with the assistance of the Navy.

Maurice therefore argued that if the new F.S.R was correct in asserting that the three arms were to work in co-operation with each other for the overthrow of the enemy 'it follows that the Army can be most effectively employed, and our military power as a whole be most effectively exercised, when our army is within comparatively easy reach of the coast'.[1] This principle, when broken down into constituent parts, amounted to a recognition of the various supposed advantages which sea power conferred on the army. These amounted to mobility, surprise and initiative in the terms used in the new F.S.R.; the ability to attack anywhere conferring surprise and forcing the enemy to await and conform to one's own operations, and the ability to move one's base and line of communications to any point on the sea coast and hence thwart the conventional attempts of the enemy to strike at these vulnerable points.[2] Despite the association with the new principles enshrined in F.S.R., there was nothing new in Maurice's strategy; he had arrived at the same conclusions as Callwell, albeit by a different route.

In all other respects he also conformed to the general line. He considered that Callwell had been proven correct in his assessment of the dangers of an opposed landing, but concluded that they were possible given that 'a reasonable degree of surprise is assured and when there is time for careful preparation', a conclusion based in part on his research into Rawlinson's plans for the Belgian operations.[3] Maurice also accepted the basic assumption that the command structure had been at fault in W.W.I., suggesting that the British were tied to French plans as a result of their inability to produce a plan encompassing all the elements of Britain's strength. Writing as he was after the creation of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, Maurice was able to suggest that the new body would

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[1] Ibid. p 86.
[2] Ibid. pp. 93-94 & 150.
[3] Ibid. p 134 & Maurice "*The Life of Lord Rawlinson of Trent*", (Cassell & Co. London 1928).

prevent a recurrence of such a failure.[1] Finally, Maurice also failed to look clearly at the implications of new weapons for his strategy. Though he noted the possible effect of air attack on lines of communications and bases, he did not consider it significant and merely suggested that Britain's own air force would be a counter, without examining the problems of operating it in overseas theatres or landing operations.[2]

There was thus little that was new in what Maurice was saying, but its reception is significant. His book was fronted by an introduction from the Chief of the General Staff, Field Marshal Sir George Milne, who noted that the work 'emphasises the special characteristics of the British Empire and shows that in the application of strategical principles these characteristics confer upon us peculiar advantages and disadvantages'.[3] More striking was the controversy which his book provoked. Reviewers concentrated on his statement that future generations would criticise the failure to make more amphibious use of the war, and divided roughly equally between Aston at the Times who erroneously condemned him for following the same line as Liddell Hart and advocating 'dumping our troops down in minor theatres from boats' to Liddell Hart himself in the Telegraph who stressed Maurice's conversion from his earlier Western ideals. Critical reviews tended to stress the degree to which the British had been committed to the French and the impossibility of a small land power dictating strategy to France. Positive reviews, however, referred without exception to the 'traditional' nature of British strategy, and the failure to carry it out in the war. Milne's introduction and the sheer number of reviews reveal the extent to which the issue was "live" in 1929, whilst it is also clear that the idea of a traditional British strategy was widespread.[4]

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[1] Maurice "*British Strategy*" pp 78-9.

[2] Ibid. pp. 58-9.

[3] Ibid. Introduction.

[4] Maurice Papers, L.H.M.C.A., Maurice 3/7/4 - Contains the reviews from a number of papers and periodicals, including the Times, Telegraph, Manchester Guardian and the Spectator.

The issue was thus becoming of emotive rather than academic interest. Only one reviewer commented on the validity of the operations proposed in the present day. Repeating the point which Sir William Nicholson had made before the war, the military correspondent of the Spectator observed that; 'It seems doubtful whether our command of the sea was as potentially valuable, and "our power greatest where land and sea meet", as General Maurice seems to think'. The reviewer observed of Maurice that 'if he does not overestimate our facilities for transporting troops by water, he underestimates the carrying power of railways', and suggested that the war had shown the latter form of transport to be considerably faster than Maurice allowed for.[1] However, the reviewer of the Spectator was in a minority of one; his colleagues confined themselves to assertions and statements as the political possibility or otherwise of fighting other than in France. Ten years after the war, the question of Britain's involvement on the Continent was a contentious issue, generating more emotional than scientific thought.

Rational theoretical consideration of maritime strategy was thus being overtaken by an emotional reaction to the First World War, a trend apparent in the works of Captain Basil Liddell Hart. Liddell Hart's claims to being an amphibious thinker rest upon the strategies of the Indirect Approach and the British Way in Warfare, both of which he set forth in books of the same name. In fact, although both these works include an amphibious alternative for the conduct of the Great War, neither followed from the strategies set out therein. Liddell Hart does not ever appear to have considered the implications of his strategies for amphibious operations, and his adherence to a maritime approach appears to have been the result of the same emotive factors which drove many of the reviewers of Maurice's works.

Liddell Hart's early works, the most challenging and innovative of his corpus, in which he set forth the ideas on tank warfare on which his reputation has rested, were

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[1] Ibid. The Spectator.

written in an era when it did not appear as though Britain would be involved in another war. The result, as Brian Bond has noted, is that they are almost abstract in their application of strategical principles; they are not applicable to a particular country, but bear more resemblance to the "Redland" and "Blueland" of tactical exercises.[1] His early works, which stressed the impact of air power and tanks on warfare, were entirely composed in this abstract philosophical vein.[2] There was, therefore, no incentive to consider combined operations, for, as Callwell, Corbett and Maurice had all stressed, such operations were peculiar to Britain's position and strengths. For as long as Liddell Hart was only concerned with the abstract, he was not likely to concern himself with the unique case of Britain. It is striking, however, that once he did turn to Britain's position, the clarity and impartiality of his earlier works vanished.

Liddell Hart's increasingly specific interest in the role of Britain's armed forces coincided with his increasing disillusion with the conduct of the First World War. Thus, although his interest in maritime matters was increasing, the reason for this was such as to lend his work a more polemical slant than had hitherto been the case. He proceeded to work through several theories of war which he held to have particular benefits and attractions for Britain, but it is notable that through all of these theories, several of which were contradictory, he arrived at the same conclusions as to how the war should have been fought.

This first manifested itself in his work dealing with the "Indirect Approach" in strategy. This loosely defined theory rested on the basic premise that to attack an enemy where he was expecting it was both to face the mass of his strength and to conform to his expectations, which reduced the chance of panicking his forces. Liddell Hart's alternative was to attack where the enemy did not expect it, and hence avoid his fighting strength and

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[1] Brian Bond, "*Liddell Hart, A Study of His Military Thought*" (Cassell, London, 1977). p.6.

[2] B. H. Liddell Hart, "*Paris, Or The Future of War*", (Kegan Paul, London, 1925) & "*The Remaking of Modern Armies*". (John Murray, London, 1927).

increase the chances of throwing his forces into disarray.[1] However, Liddell Hart only considered this in the light of mechanised forces slipping around the enemy flank to strike at industrial resources, communications and bases.[2] Although purporting to deal with all means of war, at no point does he describe an amphibian strategy of the indirect approach. It is only in the chapter in which Liddell Hart "applies" his theory to the conduct of the First World War that amphibious questions are raised, suggesting the use of the B.E.F. against the German communications in Belgium,[3] the Dardanelles as 'an indirect approach to the central powers as a whole' and the naval blockade.[4] So loose was his ideal of the indirect approach that it could be applied to any operation which did not confront the enemy's forces head on, consequently all the above fell into it. However, the only theory which Liddell Hart had detailed was that of employing tanks on deep penetration operations on land. These same three operations, Belgium, Gallipoli and the Blockade, were to feature recurrently in his works, regardless of the nature of his argument; it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that his attraction to them was more emotional than analytical.

Thus the same three operations were tagged onto the end of the lecture which he gave for R.U.S.I. in 1931. The title of the lecture "Economic Pressure or Continental Victories", accurately reflects Liddell Hart's argument that the war could have been best won by the blockade and economic support for Britain's allies, rather than the involvement of a large army on the Continent.[5] However, coupled to this was an amphibious element; one of the arms of this strategy was the use of 'seaborne expeditions against the enemy's vulnerable extremities'. Once again the attraction appears to have been more emotional than intellectual, for, as Mearsheimer has observed, this reliance on

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[1] B. H. Liddell Hart. *"The Decisive Wars of History"* (Bell & Sons, London, 1929). pp. 4-5.
[2] Ibid. p 145.
[3] Ibid. p 163.
[4] Ibid. pp. 199 & 208.
[5] B. H. Liddell Hart, "Economic Pressure or Continental Victories". *"Journal of the Royal United Services Institute"*, 1931.

the navy contradicted earlier strictures of Liddell Hart on the limitations which sea power would labour under in the face of air power.[1] Again Liddell Hart made no attempt to elaborate what might be achieved by the amphibious "arm" of his strategy. The only amphibious detail provided in the lecture was, once again, the suggested use of the B.E.F. on the coast of Belgium and the operations at the Dardanelles, in identical terms to those previously used to support the idea of the indirect approach. So little time did Liddell Hart devote to the amphibious side of the strategy that Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond and Captain Edward Altham, both amphibious enthusiasts, missed his emphasis entirely, and remarked on it.[2]

Liddell Hart's commitment to blockade and amphibious operations was short lived. Mearsheimer has noted that the idea was of short provenance, in fact it had ceased to be the central theme of Liddell Hart's "British Way in Warfare" by the time the book of that name was written. Although he continued to argue for the blockade, his work now concentrated on the means by which economic objectives in the enemy homeland might be attacked. These included aircraft and the use of the indirect mechanised force movements which he had set out in the mid 1920s; for a tract supposedly dedicated to the blockade it is interesting to find the Captain asserting that 'in the future we need to think of the army and the airforce as the two main components of military power'.[3] As means of attacking the enemy's home resources without coming up against the shield of the enemy's army, Liddell Hart placed his faith in the Army and R.A.F.; 'now air forces can jump off this shield and mechanised forces can slip round it. As for the Navy, only 'if the sea spaces are wide' would 'navies play their traditional part'.[4] Liddell Hart had

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[1] John Mearsheimer, "*Liddell Hart and the Weight of History*" (Cornell, 1977). p 93. Bond, "*Liddell Hart*" p. 71 and Huw Strachan "The Real War; Liddell Hart, Cruttwell and Falls", in Bond "*The First World War and British Military History*" (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991) pp 48-9, concur that Liddell Hart's argument was little more than an emotional assertion.

[2] *Journal of the R.U.S.I.* 1931 pp 503-4.

[3] B. H. Liddell Hart "*The British Way in Warfare*", (Faber and Faber, London 1932). p 136.

[4] Ibid. p. 138.

synthesised his early works to arrive at a doctrine of striking at the enemy's home resources with the new weapons; blockade had been the weapon of economic warfare in the past, but aircraft and mechanised forces would be the instrument of the future. Thus was he able to reconcile his earlier recognition of the diminished freedom of the navy with his desire to press for a cheap economic form of warfare. It will come as no surprise, however, to learn that Liddell Hart again attached his ideas on the Great War to his publication, in this case verbatim with the account he had given in the R.U.S.I. lecture.

The same ideas thus materialised three times, on each occasion supposedly backed by the strategic theory put forward in the text to which they were connected, although each theory was strikingly different from the one before. It is hard not to come to the conclusion, therefore, that Liddell Hart's attraction to a series of amphibious operations in the First World War was purely emotional, a result of the revulsion arising from the wastage of the Western Front. Thus, although he repeatedly stressed the alternative line which the British could have followed, he never considered the strategic principles behind them in any detail. His main contribution to amphibious thought therefore appears to have been simply to popularise the idea that there were amphibious alternatives to a Western Front style of warfare; he made no attempt to suggest what these might be in the future. In this respect it is significant that he never considered how the new technology which he had espoused on land could be applied to amphibious strategy. Although he welcomed a demonstration of Martel's tankette landing on a beach and the creation of the Carden Loyd Amphibious Tank, he saw their potential in solely tactical terms.[1] He suggested that either would have been of assistance at Gallipoli, but he appeared more interested in the amphibious tank as a means of crossing rivers. Unlike

[1] On the Tankette landing trial see Liddell Hart "*Remaking of Modern Armies*" p 75-76, & on the Amphibious Tank see The Daily Telegraph 29/10/31 p. 12. "*Marvellous New War Machine*".

Fuller, he never attempted to recast amphibious strategy in the light of technological advances.

J. F. C. Fuller was in fact alone in attempting to produce a maritime strategy for the future. His attitude towards such side-shows as the Gallipoli operation meant he had no emotional commitment to the peripheral strategies which Liddell Hart was peddling.[1] He arrived at his conclusions by a more rational route. In the 1920s Fuller believed that the future of land warfare would be wholly tank armies, roaming the country in a manner similar to fleets at sea. Fuller had devised an amphibious tank in 1917 for crossing the Rhine, and developed the idea in the aftermath of the war in conjunction with Vickers.[2] By combining these two ideas Fuller conceived of an amphibious tank force able to initiate cross country havoc at any point on the enemy coast. His ideas were thus an evolution of the "mobility" rather than the "theatre" school of amphibious theorists.

He first outlined the idea at R.U.S.I. in 1920. Pointing out that the problem with the plan to use tanks in Rawlinson's Belgian Coast landing was the fact that they could not swim, he highlighted a role for an amphibious tank force in a Great War situation;

> 'We see a stretch of weary sand - it is the Baltic Coast. We see curious ships racing through the Skagarak. They are now standing out a mile or more from the coast, for the water is shallow. There is a rumbling sound, and from their prows squat objects splash into the water - they are moving rapidly towards the shore line; from the water they crawl onto the sands, they are tanks, and Warnemunde, 150 miles from Berlin, is ours. We materialise and find some commotion going on amongst the enemy's armies on the Western Front'.[3]

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[1] L.H.C.M.A. LH 1/302 Correspondence with J. F. C. Fuller, Piece 74, Fuller to Liddell Hart 6/8/25. 'The Dardanelles punch was a blow in the air. The reach was too long to prove effective . . . we looked for a flank and the only one we could find was too far away'.

[2] L.H.C.M.A. LH 1/302/212. Fuller to Liddell Hart 25/10/31 Gives a history of his early involvement with the amphibious tank, whilst Foss, C. F. "*The Vickers Tanks*" (Patrick Stephens, 1988) p 26 describes the 1918 trials.

[3] Brevet Col. J. F. C. Fuller; "The Development of Sea Warfare on Land and its Influence on Future Naval Operations". *Journal of the R.U.S.I.* Vol. LXV.

The influence of Fisher's Baltic plan is clear, but in the assumption that the force would disrupt the German front line was the same idea as had lain behind Fuller's famous Plan 1919. Fuller saw the amphibious tank in the same role as he foresaw for the land tank, but with enhanced abilities to side-step the enemy.

Fuller continued to hone the strategic role of his amphibious tanks throughout the 1920s. With his increasing belief that armies of the western front type were less likely in future, the strategic side-step which he had set out to R.U.S.I. became less important. Instead, he considered that amphibious tanks, with an unrivalled capacity to both disembark and re-embark under fire, would be the ultimate raiding weapon. A force of such tanks, given a reasonable degree of endurance, would spread havoc through the enemy's country until confronted by superior strength, at which point they would run for the coast and re-embark. Several such units would suffice to scatter the defender's forces over the country, and, even if the defence was mechanised, would prevent them concentrating to defend against any real invasion which might follow.[1] Thinking even further ahead, he considered the idea of submarine tank carriers, thus carrying the indirect approach to a new level by allowing the invading force to circumvent not only the enemy's army, but his fleet as well.[2]

Fuller's later ideas were more capable of immediate application than his visionary strategies. By the 1930s the first flush of enthusiasm for tanks was over, and it was apparent that they would not continue to develop at the same rate as had marked their evolution in the Great War. In addition the British Army was settling down to a semi-mechanised rather than wholly mechanised form; it was therefore obvious that for the foreseeable future, the tank-only forces on which Fuller had based his strategic thinking were not going to materialise. Furthermore, in his last service writings Fuller was

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[1] J. F. C. Fuller "*On Future Warfare*" (Sifton Praed, London 1928) "*Tanks in Future Warfare*" [reprinted from The Nineteenth Century and After, July 1921] pp. 142-3.

[2] Ibid., "*The Development of Scientific Warfare*" [Originally a Letter to the RAF Staff College June 1923] pp 193-4.

attempting to provide a mechanised gloss on the existing Field Service Regulations, and hence was more closely tied to current practice than in his earlier predictions. As a result his work was chiefly on the tactical level, but he retained his support for the amphibious tank as a means of carrying out landing operations. Fuller, alone amongst the theorists, attempted to deal with the problem of a landing in the face of aerial opposition. He concluded that aerial reconnaissance would reduce the time available before enemy forces gathered to repel an attack; speed was therefore of the essence. Further, the landing would probably be made under enemy air attack. To both these problems he considered amphibious tanks were the obvious answer.[1] Fuller also considered the likelihood that future armies would be so mechanised that landing their equipment on an open beach would be impossible. He concluded that a port would be required, and as these were certain to be defended, opposed landings would come to be the norm. Fuller's solution was an advance force of amphibious tanks which would seize the port for the main army to land.[2] In addition to his solo redrafting of maritime strategy, Fuller also stood alone amongst the theorists in positing solutions to the tactical difficulties of the operations which he espoused.

Thus in the 1930's Fuller was chiefly concerned with the tactical elements of such operations rather than with strategy. In his "Lectures" he simply assumed that the existence of the Manual of Combined Operations was proof such landings were intended, although he remarked scathingly that 'to publish textbooks and instructions without solving the ship to shore problem may well be compared to issuing rules and regulations as regards fires and fail to establish a fire brigade.[3] However, he did develop a raiding strategy, for which purpose he considered the amphibious tank admirably suited, rounded down from the original grand chevauchees of his 1920s works. Fuller hoped that the

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[1] J.F.C. Fuller "*Lectures on F.S.R. II*", (Sifton Praed, London, 1931). pp. 27-8 & 32.
[2] Ibid. pp. 31-33.
[3] Ibid. p 33.

threat of such operations against the enemy's coastal aircraft and submarine bases would be sufficient to force the retention of tanks in those areas to protect against amphibious tank raiders. This would reduce the number of tanks which the enemy would be able to put into the field at the decisive spot, and was thus a further modern adaptation of the veteran maritime theories of containment.[1]

Fuller was the only inter-war theorist to consider the implications of modern technology for amphibious strategy and operations. Whilst his work in the 1920s assumed a greater dominance and rapid rate of development for the tank than proved to be the case, his later suggestions were well within the bounds of possibility and comprised the sole attempt amongst the theorists to meet the new conditions of amphibious operations.

The bulk of post-war consideration of amphibious strategy concentrated on re-fighting the First World War, often on emotional rather than rational grounds. Amphibious strategies were thus popularised without reference to their practicality in the new conditions ushered in by the war. The chief lesson which they drew was the need for a controlling authority to co-ordinate combined strategies; none considered that World War I had called into question such strategies and few examined the extent to which the developments thrown up by that war had affected their validity. Alone amongst the theorists Fuller considered the impact of air power and tanks, but his strategical conclusions were extremely theoretical. Commitment to amphibious strategies was now more emotional than real, with the theorists providing little guidance to the services.

Practice.

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[1] J. F. C. Fuller, "*Lectures on F.S.R. III (Operations Between Mechanised Forces)*" (Sifton Praed, London 1932). p 36.

Despite the wave of maritime strategy theories which emerged in the aftermath of the Great War, the British High Command's interest in such strategies remained at a low level throughout the inter-war period. The Service Chiefs, in whose hands the details of strategy remained after the armistice, never agreed on a strategic scenario which would either allow or require amphibious operations. Confined by low expenditure and hostile public opinion, planning in the 1920s was abandoned as speculative, whilst by the 1930s the realities of Britain's position and probable antagonists were such that offensive operations, into which bracket amphibious ventures naturally fell, appeared extremely unlikely in the first years of any conflict. There were dissenters, notably the Admiralty, which sought to prepare for an amphibious-assisted naval advance against Japan, but the scheme made no headway in the 1920s and by the 1930s was accepted to be impossible. Between 1920 and 1940, therefore, the British never possessed an accepted strategy which relied on amphibious operations.

Political involvement in the details of strategy was low throughout the 1920s. Chiefly for economic reasons the Government had decreed, as early as 1919, that there would be no major war for ten years.[1] Bond has noted that this earliest manifestation of the notorious "Ten Year Rule" may well have been intended purely as a guide for the estimates of 1920,[2] but it rapidly assumed the status of gospel, subsequently acquiring a rolling status which meant that as late as 1932 it was official policy that military expenditure should be based on the assumption that no major war could break out within ten years. A further clause in the "Rule" noted that this assumption of an absence of major war meant that there was no need to maintain an Expeditionary Force for operations on the Continent, and that the main function of the military forces was the defence and garrisoning of the Empire. With all the Governments of the 1920s adhering to the principle that war was always at least ten years away, planning was largely left to

[1] CAB 23/15 War Cabinet 616A 15/8/19; Conclusion 1.
[2] Brian Bond "*British Military Policy Between the Two World Wars*" p. 25.

the professionals. This situation persisted until the Chiefs of Staff initiated the abolition of the rule in 1932, but by that date the professionals had largely come to the conclusion that amphibious operations were a highly unlikely undertaking, and nothing in the new diplomatic agenda challenged that view.

Although within these bounds the services were largely free to plan without political intervention, the limitations imposed by the politicians were not conducive to amphibious strategies. With the Army deprived of an Expeditionary Force, the application of the maritime strategies which sought to influence continental operations was unlikely. Thus, although the inter-war period saw the services working together far more closely than before the war, as the creation of the R.A.F. forced the development of the Chiefs of Staff system, the limitations imposed by the Government's policy meant that little advantage was taken of this development.

The 1920s; The Admiralty Looks East.

The Royal Navy alone in these years showed an interest in preparing strategies which required amphibious operations. Despite the Ten Year Rule the Navy was kept at a strength equal to the greatest naval power, and was thus able to envisage waging a major war with their present resources. However, the strategies they formulated did not include operations of the continental-periphery type. As might be expected, the Admiralty was chiefly concerned with the remaining naval powers and conceived its strategies in terms of waging a naval war against them. The amphibious plans under consideration therefore fell into the bracket of operations in support of the actions of the Fleet. Of the more ambitious intentions of the theorists to use sea power to influence land operations, there was no sign, whilst even the limited schemes of the Admiralty were to falter in the face of opposition from the other services.

With Germany defeated, the Admiralty turned its concern to the remaining sea powers, America, France and Japan. The Washington Conference signalled the end of immediate naval competition with America, leaving only Japan and France as even potential threats. As far as the Naval Staff were concerned, Japan took priority, and in the early 1920s, the Admiralty issued a draft eastern war plan. The Naval Staff considered that the first stage in a war would consist of the despatch of the British Fleet to Singapore. Thus far, they could proceed without the co-operation of the other arms. However, they concluded that 'to bring a war with Japan to a satisfactory conclusion, it is necessary that the British Main Fleet should operate from Hong Kong or even possibly from a base to the North of Hong Kong'.[1] As it was considered possible that Hong Kong would have fallen in the meantime, both of these options would require amphibious operations. Furthermore, as a means of forcing the Japanese fleet to fight, the Naval Staff considered that it might be possible for 'land forces to capture Japanese possessions', thus implying further amphibious operations.[2] It was obvious that this strategy would require the co-operation of the Army, and Sir Herbert Richmond, C.-in-C. East Indies, pointed this out; 'in my opinion it is impossible for any one of the fighting departments to make out a war plan by itself'.[3] The justice of this was admitted by Egerton, Director of Plans, but, as he well knew, there was good reason for the Admiralty plan making no reference to the other services in this first post-war amphibious strategy.

The Naval Staff had in fact attempted to initiate a joint investigation of the strategy to be followed in the event of war with Japan, but without success. Egerton's predecessor, Dudley Pound, had pressed for the creation of a Joint Planning Committee to deal with all plans which required combined action by the three services,[4] which for the

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[1] ADM 116/3125 War Memorandum Eastern 1924. Draft Memorandum.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., Comments of Vice Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, C-in-C. East Indies 13/4/25.

[4] ADM 1/8644/169 Naval Military and Air Force Joint College, Ministry of Defence. Minute by D. Pound, Director Plans Division, 12/5/23.

Navy meant war with Japan or France.[1] Significantly, the Air Ministry and War Office declared they had no plans of their own to discuss.[2] The Naval Staff proved to be alone in considering that joint offensive planning was necessary.

The Naval proposal was rejected by the Chief of the General Staff, Earl Cavan, in terms which revealed the effect of the Ten Year Rule on the General Staff. It was important to remember, he stressed, that 'our Imperial and Dominion Governments maintain forces whose strength and organisation are based on purely defensive requirements . . . not for many months after the outbreak of a great war should we be capable of offensive action against a hostile first class power . . . in the period which must elapse between the outbreak of war and our expansion, many things would occur to stultify any plans made in the dark beforehand'. This being the case, Cavan saw little scope for joint planning. In the event of war with Japan, all that was required were the arrangements to pass the Fleet to Singapore; 'anything like a military operation against the Japanese main islands is at present inconceivable, certainly unplannable'.[3] Incapable of fighting an offensive war, Cavan saw no reason to try to plan one.

As far as operations against France were concerned, Cavan considered them unnecessary. Convinced that the blockade would suffice to force France to terms, he made no attempt to consider the possibilities which maritime strategy might offer should such a war develop: 'there can be no question of our landing troops in France in the face of the French Army - the idea is ludicrous, equally ludicrous is the idea of our landing troops in Morocco. Attacks on other French colonies, even if feasible, would not affect the result of the war one way or the other'.[4] This was the only occasion on which

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[1] ADM 1/8646/205 Joint Planning Committee, Proposal for Regular Collaboration Between the Three Services; Minute by Director of Plans 8/12/23.

[2] Ibid. Admiralty to War Office and Air Ministry 29/11/23, Air Ministry to Admiralty 6/12/23 & War Office to Admiralty 5/12/23.

[3] CAB 53/1 Minutes of the 6th Meeting of the C.O.S., 8/1/24. Note by the C.I.G.S. 'Consideration of Strategical Problems' 17/1/24.

[4] Ibid.

amphibious operations against a continental power's home territory were considered in the inter-war period. Discussion thus never progressed far enough to include discussion of how amphibious operations might be utilised in such a scenario. By the time the question of large military operations was raised again, Germany rather than France was once again the threat and all the difficulties that had prevented amphibious operations against her in the First World War again applied. The French scenario of the 1920s was the one occasion on which a possibility to apply the maritime strategist's theories arose, but in a startling inversion of the pre-war situation the C.I.G.S. considered the Navy could complete the task alone.

It is difficult to criticise the General Staff for their limited outlook in the 1920s. In contrast to the Navy's relative readiness for war the Army formed no more than a caucus of expansion. At this date, the Army, stripped of its Expeditionary Force under the Ten Year Rule, lacked the forces to consider any major offensive operations. The new Territorial force was not required to serve abroad. The force available to Cavan after garrison duties amounted to two divisions of Infantry and one of Cavalry.[1] Planning of the sort envisaged by the Naval Staff would have been wholly speculative under such circumstances.

The Army had in fact developed a rational approach to preparing for amphibious operations in the light of the state of their forces. Incapable of setting aside sufficient of their slim budget to prepare for such enterprises, the General Staff were convinced that any landing operation would have to be preceded by a period of preparation during which time detailed planning could be carried out. This pragmatic General Staff view is evident in their attitude to equipment at this date. The Staff supported the development of prototype landing craft which could be tested, and would provide the blueprint for rapid expansion in war once it was clear for what they would be required. This view was stated

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[1] WO 32/5943 Strength of the Military Forces in Relation to Military Commitments, Note by the C.I.G.S. 20/3/23.

explicitly; 'It is not proposed that landing craft should be constructed or maintained until the need for them can be clearly foreseen. This may not be until after the declaration of war. What is required now is that the type (or types) of craft should be settled, and if necessary tried out, so that plans will be in existence to enable construction to be started at once'.[1] This view governed the Army's approach to preparing for combined operations throughout the inter-war period; in the 1935 edition of Field Service Regulations it was noted that 'owing to the time required for the preparations and for the collection or manufacture of the necessary material, a landing operation on a large scale cannot usually be launched until some time after the outbreak of war'.[2]

In the mid-1920s, however, this pragmatism was taken to extremes. The General Staff view which Cavan voiced at the Chiefs of Staff Committee arrested all joint planning for three years.[3] Until 1927 not only was there no plan in existence which called for the employment of amphibious operations, there was no inter-staff discussion of amphibious strategy whatsoever.

The 1930s; Retreat in the Face of Air Power.

Despite the creation of the Joint Planning Committee in 1927, following the replacement of Cavan with the more flexible Sir George Milne, the situation did not improve. The combination of Government vacillation over the fortification of Singapore; a growing realisation of Japanese strength and an unresolved inter-service debate concerning the impact of air power on naval operations prevented the war plans against Japan progressing. As war with Japan was the sole strategic scenario under consideration

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[1] N.M.M. Ships Cover 453 M.L.C. 1. General Staff Memorandum 1924, cited in Col. A. S. Redman to Secretary Landing Craft Committee, 16/12/24.

[2] Field Service Regulations Vol. III, Operations, Higher Formations, 1935, p. 13. [LH 15 General Evidence, File 8 Military Manuals and Pamphlets, Piece 92].

[3] CAB 53/1 Minutes of the 27th Meeting of the C.O.S., 11/3/26. Beatty's summary.

which called for the employment of amphibious operations, this situation meant that no amphibious project would remain on the planners' agenda.

The Naval Staff's object in urging the creation of a Joint Planning Committee had been the integration of military and air elements into its Eastern War Plan. This would include the garrisoning of the ports which the Fleet would require, but the J.P.C. was chiefly designed to plan the amphibious operations which the Naval Staff imagined would follow the arrival of the Main Fleet. That the J.P.C. was devised with amphibious operations in mind is apparent from the fact that its first task comprised planning for landings on Bogue and Dane's Islands in the approaches to Canton, as a means of overawing the Nationalist Government there.[1] The terms of reference which the Chiefs allotted to the new Committee therefore included, in addition to the garrisoning of Hong Kong, Singapore and the ports en route to the East, the development of 'a combined plan of action after the relief of Hong Kong'.[2] For the first time since the war, a major strategy involving amphibious operations had been placed on the agenda of all the service staffs.

However, much had changed since the Admiralty first considered operations in the Far East. The capabilities and claims of air power had advanced dramatically, and would eventually rule out the Naval Staff's favoured strategy.

Few of the theorists having considered the impact of air power on their ideas, it was left to the Services to assess the extent to which amphibious operations were still viable in the age of aircraft. As might be expected the R.A.F. set the pace in advancing the claims of air power to affect such operations, but the Army also swiftly accepted that air superiority over the landing area was a necessity. The implications for amphibious strategies of this admission were drastic, for the R.A.F. eventually came to take the line that attaining air superiority in the face of a first class power's home air force was almost

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[1] CAB 55/4 JP 3 Question of Operations Against the Dane Island and Bogue Forts & JP 5 Report of the Joint Planning Sub-Committee, 26/4/27.

[2] CAB 53/2 Minutes of the 44th Meeting of the C.O.S. 14/3/27.

impossible, particularly if the enemy were so far from Britain's own aerial bases as to necessitate dependence on the capture of advanced bases and the use of carriers. In effect this ruled out the possibility of landing operations on any area which was within range of the main air force of a first class power. Operations on the European mainland were already being neglected as a result of the weakness of the Army; as the area covered by the Japanese metropolitan air force extended, operations in the Far East, the sole remaining theatre where an amphibious strategy was under consideration, came to be seen as equally unlikely.

The need for command of the air in landing operations was recognised immediately the war was over. The Commandant of the Army Staff College, framing a chapter for Field Service Regulations dealing with landings, extrapolated from the experiences of the Western Front to suggest that 'command of the air' in the battle area was a vital necessity.[1] Thus even before any consideration had been given to the special requirements of a landing operation, it was already accepted by the Army that air superiority in all battle areas was vital. Considering the question in 1922, the R.A.F. added that a landing operation was particularly vulnerable to air attack; 'under normal circumstances an enemy cannot land without first obtaining superiority in the air. The handicap imposed on him by lack of information of the defenders' action and the difficulty of securing observation for the fire of naval guns covering the landing is serious, whilst the losses to his transports from bomb attack might be prohibitive'.[2] The need for air superiority in a landing operation was thus accepted by two of the three services by 1922.

Initially the difficulties of attaining such superiority did not appear insurmountable. Consequently the Air Staff also considered the extent to which the

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[1] ADM 116/2086 Combined Operations, Revision of Manual; Draft Chapter XIII of Field Service Regulations, 27/5/20.

[2] AIR 5/204 Collaboration with Admiralty in Manual of Combined Operations; "Some Considerations of Combined Operations in so far as they affect the Royal Air Force", Air Staff, August 1922.

attackers' air operations could assist a landing operation in addition to protect it from the aircraft of the defender, suggesting that bombing operations against the enemy's lines of communications 'must add greatly to the troubles of the defender, who, in the absence of definite information as to the landing points chosen by the attacker relies on his central position and power of rapidly reinforcing any threatened point'.[1] This was the first expression of the technique which was to prove so decisive in Normandy over twenty years later. However, in the meantime the difficulties of obtaining the necessary air superiority to put such ideas into effect prevented the idea being developed further.

The difficulty of obtaining air superiority over an enemy air force on its own coast soon came to be seen as insuperable. In part this was due to the fact that the R.A.F. could not argue for their ability to prevent an enemy establishing air superiority over Britain without conceding that in the reverse situation they could not establish sufficient air superiority to allow a British landing. As the R.A.F. based much of its claim to be an independent arm on its supposed ability to defend Britain from invasion, inevitably the difficulties facing a seaborne invasion in the face of an enemy's main air strength were afforded great weight. Thus in 1923, commenting on a Staff College Exercise describing an attack on Singapore, the Air Staff concluded that the Colleges underestimated 'the menace that can be imposed by the Singapore Air Force on any Japanese landing within their radius of action',[2] and informed the War Office 'that the air staff view is that long range reconnaissance aircraft backed by bombers could deal effectively with a force of aircraft carriers approaching Singapore with a view to the attack of the air forces stationed there'.[3] The Air Staff were thus claiming that imperial outposts, let alone the home country, could defend themselves against seaborne air attack; the implications for British amphibious offensives were obvious. In 1923 the Air Staff made this explicit;

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[1] Ibid.

[2] AIR 2/246/22781 Report by the RAF Staff College on Combined Exercise Camberley 1923. Remarks by Squadron Leader E. L. Tomkinson, Directorate of Operations and Intelligence.

[3] Ibid. Air Council to War Office 4/9/23.

> 'To attempt a landing in the face of opposition without at least local air superiority is not a feasible operation of war. Against a first class air power, the achievement of that air superiority is beset with innumerable and almost insurmountable difficulties, and it is for this reason that the Air Staff have always urged the extreme impracticability of an invasion of this country'.[1]

Thus by 1923 the Air Staff had concluded, partly because of their domestic concerns, that amphibious operations against a first class air power's home territory were impossible.

The Air Staff did not consider that amphibious operations were impossible per se. The services were agreed that local air superiority was all that was essential for a landing to be carried out, but the Air Staff could not conceive of a means whereby they might attain this local air superiority within range of the main air force of their enemy. The 1925 Manual, largely compiled before the Air Staff had considered the issue, merely asserted that air supremacy 'may be a necessary preliminary' to a landing operation,[2] but by 1931 the Services were agreed that 'air superiority at the time and place of the landing' was necessary.[3] In the face of a first class air power, however, the Air Staff remained convinced that no mere attempt to provide local cover could suffice, it would be necessary as a preliminary to defeat the enemy's air force. Thus the Deputy Chief of the Air Staff commented in 1938 'if we are considering such an operation against a first class air power, I frankly do not believe that it is a practical proposition against an unbroken air force'.[4] In view of the superiority attained over the Luftwaffe as a whole by the time of Overlord, this can be seen as percipient, although in the 1930s the Air Staff thought in terms of breaking, rather than overwhelming an enemy air force as proved to be necessary.[5]

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[1] AIR 8/71 Air Staff Memoranda; No. 10. Issued, 20/7/23.

[2] AIR 10/1206 Manual of Combined Operations 1925, p. 14.

[3] DEFE 2/708 Manual of Combined Operations 1931, p. 4.

[4] CAB 54/4 D.C.O.S. 64; D.C.A.S., Peirse, to Deputy Secretary of the C.I.D., Ismay, 8/2/38.

[5] On the attainment of air superiority before D-Day see R. J. Overy, *"The Air War 1939-45"*, (Europa, London, 1980) pp 73-4.

By the time the services commenced joint planning for operations in the Far East, the Air Staff had already come to the conclusion that the Japanese air force would be strong enough to threaten the ability of the British to operate forward of Singapore. As the range of aircraft and the number and extent of Japanese airbases increased, the Air Staff accepted that they could not challenge Japanese strength.

Consequently when the J.P.C. considered the question of the defence or recapture of Hong Kong in 1927, the Air Staff representative pointed out that the port could not be used, let alone recaptured, unless the British were able to build up air forces sufficient to hold off those of the Japanese. At this juncture the Air Staff did not state that operations around and in advance of Hong Kong were impossible, but their solutions, the cutting of the supply lines of the Japanese air bases, and the seizure and construction of advanced air bases by the British, revealed the increasing complexity of any plan of operations in the area.[1] As the Air Staff's respect for the Japanese air force grew, these difficulties came to be considered as insurmountable.

Apparently unaware of the Air Staff's view, the Naval Staff continued to develop their plans for a forward strategy for war with Japan. The reissued Eastern War Memorandum went into greater detail than its predecessor concerning the proposed 'Phase III' of operations: a British advance into Japanese waters, heavily dependent upon amphibious operations. The Naval Staff considered several possible strategies as a means of putting direct pressure on Japan including a landing in rear of the Japanese forces in China or the seizure of a base which would allow the Navy to cut those forces' lines of communication and Japan's trade with the mainland were all considered. Although these schemes were considered unlikely, this was not because of any difficulty envisaged in the landing operations, but due to the difficulty of cutting such short lines of communication. The Naval Staff even went so far as to consider landings on the Japanese main islands.

[1] CAB 55/4 JP 26. Defence of Hong Kong. 'Appreciation of Air Situation Prepared by the Air Ministry Representative on the Sub-Committee, 31/10/27.

The favoured strategy, however, comprised 'a progressive campaign from Hong Kong to the northward'. This would commence with operations against the Japanese bases in Formosa and the Pescadores, and if the loss of those bases did not force the Japanese to face a fleet action, would continue, further bases being captured to allow the fleet to operate further north.[1] Fleet and Station Commanders concurred with this proposal.[2] The Naval Staff and senior naval officers thus continued to believe in a war plan which depended heavily on amphibious operations to allow the fleet to develop its strength against the Japanese.

However, the Naval Staff were out of step with the views of the other services and the political realities of the day. R.A.F. opposition continued to harden against such operations, whilst an immediate problem was the repeated postponement of the fortification of Singapore. The Joint Planning Committee had continued to consider the question of the relief of Hong Kong,[3] but by 1933 was forced to admit that with Singapore's defences in their unfinished state the question of operations even as far forward as Hong Kong had become difficult to plan for, whilst plans for any operations in advance of that position 'would be of so hypothetical a nature that their value would be extremely doubtful'.[4] Singapore's weakened defences apart, the J.P.C. also recorded that, in their opinion, forward operations would entail 'considerable difficulties'. Thus, on the grounds that planning would be useless, and the operations very difficult, the J.P.C. recommended that they should no longer be charged with the responsibility for planning an advanced campaign against Japan. Henceforth, the Sub-Committee suggested, they should confine themselves to the question of the defence of Singapore and the relief or recapture of Hong Kong.[5] This recommendation was accepted by the Chiefs of Staff.[6]

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[1] ADM 116/3118 Admiralty War Memorandum Eastern, 1931-2.
[2] Ibid. C.-in-C. China Station to Admiralty 19/1/32.
[3] CAB 55/5 JP 42 Defence of Hong Kong, Report, 31/5/30.
[4] CAB 55/6 JP 82. Situation in the Far East, Plans for Singapore and Hong Kong. 7/4/33.
[5] Ibid.
[6] CAB 55/6 JP 84. Terms of Reference from the C.O.S. Committee 11/4/33.

The Navy's forward strategy was thus abandoned, leaving the possible recapture of Hong Kong as the sole amphibious operation on the planners' agenda.

Operations to recapture Hong Kong did not remain on the planners agenda for much longer. The arrival of Group Captain Arthur Harris as the R.A.F. representative on the J.P.C. led to an uncompromising statement of the Air Force's view of the implications of air power for naval operations within range of Japan's land-based aircraft. Applying this to Hong Kong, the J.P.C. concluded that if the Japanese had established air bases in the area, the port would be unusable, even if it remained in British hands. Interception of the Japanese supplies and carrier attacks on their airbases were considered insufficient to overturn this situation. The J.P.C. were unable to produce any useful plan, and were only able to suggest a coastal raid on the Japanese mainland in the hope of luring off the Japanese forces. Even if Hong Kong had held out, therefore, there appeared little hope of using the port. The implications if the base had fallen were yet more severe. A recapture attempt would require as preliminaries the establishment of advanced air bases and a long build up of forces. The R.A.F.'s doubts about the possibility of defeating an enemy air force on its own ground were thus in full flower by this date, and condemned the last remnant of the Far Eastern Strategy; the J.P.C. concluded 'we feel that no good purpose would be served at present by attempting to work out in detail plans which must be based on a multitude of hypothetical contingencies and assumptions'.[1] The J.P.C. thus recommended in 1934 that planning cease on the last amphibious strategy with which it had been entrusted.

Neither the Chiefs of Staff or the Naval Staff saw fit to challenge the findings of the J.P.C. The First Sea Lord, Admiral Chatfield, accepted that the Admiralty's projected third phase of operations, the forward strategy, was 'very difficult, and even, perhaps, impracticable'. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Montgomery-

[1] CAB 55/6 JP 92. Hong Kong, Plans for Defence, Relief or Recapture. 30/7/34.

Massingberd, confirmed 'an attempt to recapture Hong Kong would be difficult, if not entirely impossible'.[1] The Navy had finally accepted the impossibility of the operations which it had set out in its War Memoranda. Thus Chatfield told his C.-in-C. East Indies, Admiral Dreyer, that the most that could be done was the relief of Hong Kong; there was no Expeditionary Force to allow for offensive operations.[2] Similarly, the First Lord, Sir Bolton Eyres-Monsell, categorically stated to the Committee of Imperial Defence, that 'we had never considered taking offensive action against the Japanese, our strategy was defensive, based upon Singapore'.[3] This was far from accurate as regards the Naval Staff's earlier hopes, but adequately represented the position reached by 1935.

It is worth stressing at this point that the reason for the abandonment of the Navy's forward strategy did not lie in a negative assessment of the possibilities of combined operations, but in the growing realisation of the planners of the limitations of British strength in the area.[4] The J.P.C. never argued that the recapture of Hong Kong was impossible because it would entail a combined operation, but because the number of aircraft and men required to carry out such an operation were not available, and, that if it were possible to build up to a level of strength capable of challenging the Japanese, this would take so long as to leave plenty of time for planning the operations they would be employed upon. The Chiefs of Staff realised that any operations in advance of Hong Kong would be beyond the strength that Britain could put into the field; Chatfield informed both his colleagues and Dreyer that the prosecution of the war further than the relief of Hong Kong would depend upon the assistance of the United States.[5] The

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[1] CAB 53/5 Minutes of the 132nd Meeting of the C.O.S., 24/7/34.

[2] N.M.M. CHT 4/4 Chatfield Papers, Chatfield to Dreyer, 7/8/34.

[3] CAB 2/6 Minutes of the 269th Meeting of the C.I.D., 16/4/35.

[4] Paul Haggie "*Britannia at Bay. The Defence of the British Empire Against Japan 1931-41*". (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1981) p 12. has shown how this affected the Navy; the other services were equally incapable of wielding sufficient strength in the Far East and recognised it earlier; thus the amphibious element of the plans was abandoned before the Main Fleet to Singapore concept itself was questioned.

[5] CAB 53/5 Minutes of the 132nd Meeting of the C.O.S., 24/7/34.

forward strategy was abandoned because it was beyond Britain's resources, not because the high command considered combined operations per se as impossible.

This view held good until the outbreak of war; the last strategy which called for amphibious operations had been abandoned five years before the outbreak of hostilities. The arrival of Captain Tom Phillips as Naval representative on the J.P.C. provided a counter-weight to Harris' forceful advocacy of the advantages of the aircraft over the battleship, but he was unable to tip the balance sufficiently far the other way to allow for the reinstatement of amphibious operations in the Eastern Theatre. As late as 1937 the most that the J.P.C. were willing to consider was the operation of the Main Fleet from Hong Kong, 'pending war experience of air attack', and even this Harris refused to accept, recommending instead that the base be demilitarised.[1] The final version of the Admiralty War Memorandum issued before the war explicitly accepted that 'there can be no question of hasty operations for the recapture of Hong Kong'.[2] The only strategy which called for amphibious operations had been abandoned completely by 1935, and from that date until the outbreak of war the British high command could envisage no theatre or conditions which would call for landing operations.

Neither the increasing threat of war nor the initial hostilities altered this situation. In February 1938 the Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice Marshal Peirse, commented that he did not consider such operations were sufficiently likely to justify expenditure which might reduce the resources available for more probable operations.[3] Nine months later the D.C.I.G.S., Sir Ronald Adam, stated that at most amphibious operations of the scale of the Tanga Expedition were likely in the next war, and that nothing more should be provided for.[4] Finally, once war had broken out, the military member of the recently formed Inter-Service Training and Development Centre was informed by the Assistant

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[1] CAB 53/31 C.O.S. 579 (JP) Far Eastern Appreciation 7/5/37 & Harris's qualifications 7/5/37.
[2] ADM 116/4393 Admiralty War Memorandum, Eastern, 1937.
[3] CAB 54/4 D.C.O.S. 64. D.C.A.S. to Secretary of the C.I.D., 8/2/38.
[4] CAB 54/2 Minutes of the 30th Meeting of the D.C.O.S., 15/11/38.

Chiefs of Staff that 'we do not see any likelihood of combined operations in this war, except perhaps a landing at Petsamo'.[1] The British High Command had not, therefore, developed any war plan which would definitely call for amphibious operations before they were actually committed to one in Norway.

The absence of an actual war plan for much of the 1930s, should, however, not be taken as signifying a complete lack of interest on the part of the departments concerned. Two of the three services in this period considered that there was a fair possibility that some such operation would be required, although it could not be predicted, and was unlikely to be on a large scale. This had been the General Staff view throughout the inter-war years. It has already been shown that the War Office, whilst opposing speculative planning, had, on this basis, continued to make funds available for the development of prototype landing craft throughout the 1920s. Similarly, Adam's remark, cited above, reveals that whilst the General Staff had no clear projects in mind, as late as 1938 they still considered that there was a minimum state of preparedness at which the British should aim.

With the realisation that their forward strategy was impossible, the Naval Staff had come round to a similar point of view. Thus the Director of Staff Duties, in October 1937, summarised the Admiralty view; 'whilst it is probable that any one war plan cannot make allowance for a Combined Operation involving an opposed landing, it is considered that an opposed landing may be an operation in any war'.[2] The D.C.N.S. agreed; the aim was to be 'nearly ready, (as far as we can be economically) to launch a combined operation if one is required'.[3] Thus the two older services were united in their commitment to the minimum level of preparation necessary should a combined operation be unexpectedly forced upon them. The Naval Staff were, however, in advance of their

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[1] CAB 106/9 Correspondence Relating to "*The Watery Maze*", Macleod [Military Member of the I.S.T.D.C. 1939] to Bernard Fergusson [author] 12/4/59.
[2] N.M.M. Ships Covers 569. "New X-Lighter". Memorandum by C.V. Jackson, D.T.S.D. 26/10/37.
[3] Ibid. Minute by W. M. James, D.C.N.S. 9/11/37.

War Office counterparts in the degree of provision which they regarded as essential. Both the D.C.N.S. and the A.C.N.S. were in favour of the designation of a special force for combined operations,[1] (which may also have been attractive as their chosen force was the Navy's own Royal Marines), a proposal which the General Staff rejected as unjustifiable in view of other more urgent requirements.[2]

The Air Ministry alone appears to have considered such operations sufficiently unlikely as to resent the amount of time and money which the Army and Royal Navy were prepared to invest. Their representatives, such as Peirse, repeatedly stressed the amount of time which the services already committed to training for such improbable operations.[3] To this end the Air Staff attempted to persuade their fellow services that combined training should include other forms of operation than purely amphibious.[4] Even so the Air Staff opposition was not absolute; though they considered such operations unlikely in the extreme, they did not go so far as to suggest an end to preparation for them, only to oppose the more ambitious proposals for increased expenditure.

This more or less general consensus that such operations were at present unplannable but that there was a minimum degree of preparation which should be aimed at was explicitly stated six months before the outbreak of war. The Deputy Chiefs of Staff informed the newly created I.S.T.D.C. that there was 'general agreement that an opposed landing on a hostile shore on a big scale was not a feasible operation in the early stages of war. The minimum requirement therefore was sufficient up to date equipment to enable progressive training to be carried out in peace having regard to the above

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[1] CAB 54/4 D.C.O.S. 61; W. M. James, D.C.N.S., to Deputy Secretary C.I.D. 13/1/38 & ADM 230/62 Royal Marine Striking Force, L. E. Holland, A.C.N.S., to W.S. Chalmers, Director R.N.S.C. 9/4/38.
[2] CAB 54/4 D.C.O.S. 62. R. F. Adam, D.C.I.G.S., to W. M. James, D.C.N.S., 7/2/38.
[3] CAB 54/4 D.C.O.S. 64. D.C.A.S. to Secretary of the C.I.D., 8/2/38, & CAB 42/2 Minutes of the 30th Meeting of the D.C.O.S. 15/11/38.
[4] CAB 54/12 Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the D.C.O.S. (IT) Committee, Appendix. C.A.S. to C.N.S. & C.I.G.S. 19/3/38.

assumption. It was possible that later on in the course of a war, when enemy resistance had started to weaken, the risks attending a landing against opposition would be justified'. That being the case, the necessary equipment could then be produced.[1]

Although the amphibious theorists continued to claim that their ideas were practical in the light of the Great War, at no time between the end of that conflict and the renewal of hostilities in 1939 did the British formulate a grand strategy which included amphibious operations. Bar the Admiralty desire to formulate a strategy against France the question of continental-periphery operations was never raised, and although the Naval Staff remained committed to a naval strategy dependent upon amphibious supporting operations for war with Japan until 1933, the other services never accepted the validity of this scheme. Faith in the blockade as a weapon against Continental powers, the reduction of the Army to a level at which planning seemed ludicrous and the inability of the British to contest Japanese air supremacy in the Far East combined to rule out the application of amphibious strategies in the most likely theatres of war. The services were not ignorant of the theories, as Milne's introduction to Maurice's work has shown, and as Ironside's conception of the Norwegian Campaign will show, but between 1918 and 1939 the services as whole could never envisage a particular combined operation. In considering the British progress in amphibious technique and equipment in the inter-war years, therefore, this must be borne in mind.

[1] CAB 54/2 Minutes of the 31st Meeting of the D.C.O.S., 7/12/38.

Chapter IV. Training and Preparation.

In view of the fact that the British High Command and Services as a whole were never committed to an amphibious strategy, and for much of the period under review could see little chance of employing such operations at all, it is worthwhile to consider why consideration of such questions arose. The British possessed a Manual of Combined Operations before World War I and entered World War II with a number of prototype landing craft, a clear tactical and administrative doctrine and a number of technical and logistical concepts, such as the Headquarters Ship, which merely required to be put into effect. And yet in 1940 the Assistant Chiefs of Staff were still unable to foresee a landing other than in Finland. In view of their strategic preconceptions, therefore, the British were curiously well-prepared. Why was this the case? Kenneth Clifford has suggested that the inter-war activity of the Staff Colleges was responsible for keeping alive interest in amphibious operations.[1] This argument has merit, so far as staff questions are concerned. However, this approach ignores the fact that there were material and tactical as well as doctrinal developments in these years and that without the support of the departmental Staffs, the Staff Colleges could have achieved nothing. The British progress in this field was, in fact, largely commensurate with the degree of interest shown by the Service Staffs, who remained interested in such operations despite their inability to agree on a strategy which required them. During those years that the Staffs' interest waned, no real progress was made. A further factor in the development of amphibious capability, particularly in the later 1930s, was the increasing belief of the Staffs that all future operations of the services would be in some way combined. As amphibious expeditions fell into the more general bracket of combined operations, developments in the general co-operation of the services naturally improved the British amphibious capability.

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[1] Kenneth J. Clifford, "*On Parallel Courses*".

Pre-War.

Before the First World War developments of amphibious doctrine and materiel were entirely Staff inspired, driven by the War Office interest in combined strategy arising from the work of the Esher Committee. Thus the Clacton Landing of 1904, from which all British amphibious doctrine of the pre-war era sprang,[1] was arranged by the Chief of the General Staff in accordance with the Esher Committee's intention that this officer should tailor the Army's training to meet its probable functions. As long as the Staff were considering an amphibious strategy, they made the running in developing the necessary skills and equipment. Thus not only was Clacton deliberately designed as an instructive set of manoeuvres, but those lessons specific to combined operations were extracted and published as a separate report by a committee of Admiralty and War Office representatives.[2] However, with the reduced interest in such operations which followed the rejection of schemes for operations against the German coast, this level of interest was not maintained, and further combined manoeuvres did not take place before the outbreak of war.

Nevertheless the question continued to be studied up until the outbreak of war, chiefly at the Staff College Camberley and the Naval War Course. These two bodies had been influenced by the apparent trend of British strategy in this period; 1904 saw both the Staff College and the War Course following the lead provided by the Esher Committee and the General Staff. Thus Sir Henry Rawlinson, Commandant at Camberley, requested the services of Colonel Aston R.M. as a lecturer; 'to bring the two branches of H.M. Forces into closer touch'.[3] Similarly, Edmund Slade, Captain of the War Course,

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[1] WO 279/8 Report on Army Manoeuvres 1904.

[2] WO. 33/344 Report of the Naval & Military Conference on Oversea Expeditions, 20/3/05.

[3] L.H.M.C.A. Aston papers Series 6, Correspondence, File 2; Staff College, Letters on Aston's Appointment. Rawlinson to Aston 24/5/04.

recommended an exchange of officers, which led to an annual Joint Staff Ride.[1] Thus officers from each service attended the other's staff course, and the two courses combined for a week per year to study an amphibious problem. This progress was not, however, independent of the Admiralty and War Office, both of which considered such a role suitable for the instructional establishments. Thus Slade's proposals were placed via the D.N.I.[2] and Aston's appointment approved by Fisher, soon to go to the Admiralty, and by Admiral Wilson.[3] Support was also extended to the Staff Rides; in 1907 the Admiralty provided H.M.S. Terpsichore and a Marine Landing Force, and the War Office loaned the Royal Fusiliers, with the result that the 'Ride' resembled a small Exercise.[4] The early Staff College and War Course investigations into amphibious warfare were thus fully supported by the service departments.

The Staff College and War Course investigations remained dependent upon support from Whitehall. Both Slade and Henry Wilson, Rawlinson's successor, suggested that their 1907 exercise showed the need for further investigation and the issue of a Manual based on their findings and those of the Plumer Conference,[5] but the subsequent action of the two instructional establishments reveals that their interest reflected that of their parent departments. Whilst the Army possessed the Haifa plan, the Navy had no amphibious projects save the propagandist 1907 War Plans; consequently 1908 saw a reversion to a Staff Ride without troops, whilst in 1909 and 1910 the naval officers merely visited the Staff College, the Staff Ride being confined to the soldiers.[6] The withdrawal of the Naval Officers and facilities from the Staff Ride contrasts with the continuation of such exercises by the Camberley Staff, and corresponds to the greater

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[1] N.M.M. Corbett Papers, Box 13, Slade to Corbett, 20/5/06.

[2] ADM 1/7859 Attendance of Military and Royal Marine Officers at War Courses, and of Naval Officers at the Staff College; Slade to Prince Louis of Battenberg, 11/11/04.

[3] Aston 6/2, Fisher to Aston 25/5/04 & Wilson to Aston 28/5/04.

[4] I.W.M., DS Misc. 80, Henry Wilson Diaries, 16-17 May 1907.

[5] WO 279/13 Naval and Military Staff Tour April-May 1907, covering letters by Captain Slade & Brig-Gen. Wilson.

[6] I.W.M. DS. Misc. 80 Henry Wilson Diaries. Entries for 21-22/5/08, 19/5/09, 6/4/10.

interest being shown in amphibious operations by the General Staff in comparison with the Admiralty at this date.

In contrast to the failure to increase the scale of investigation, the proposal to draft a Manual was approved, but once again the War Office's interest was greater. This may in part have been related to the arrival of Henry Wilson as Director of Military Operations there in 1910, but, as the General Staff were at this date committed to an amphibious strategy in the event of war with Turkey, that department had an incentive to produce an amphibious manual which was lacking at the Admiralty. The War Office issued the first Manual of Combined Operations in 1911,[1] and a further edition in 1913.[2] This text was essentially a staff manual, dividing responsibilities between the services and co-ordinating the arrangements for command and planning. Although the Admiralty were involved in the drafting,[3] it appears that the Manual was not disseminated amongst naval officers, for Rear Admiral Lewis Bayly was in ignorance of it when drawing up his Borkum plans in 1913,[4] and Rear Admiral Roger Keyes described it as an 'Army book' in his evidence before the Dardanelles Commission.[5] The progress made at Camberley resulted from the interest in such operations in the War Office, the diminishing interest at Portsmouth from the insouciance of the Admiralty; the teaching establishments were following rather than leading their departments.

Before the First World War, therefore, the driving force in preparation for amphibious operations came from the War Office. Initially this took a direct form, consisting of the arrangement of amphibious manoeuvres and the dissemination of reports thereon. With the realisation that such operations would not comprise the main employment of the Army, this degree of interest was not sustained. However, a

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[1] WO 33/569 Manual of Combined Naval and Military Operations, 1911.

[2] WO 33/644 Manual of Combined Naval and Military Operations, 1913.

[3] S. Fremantle "*My Naval Career*" includes a confused account of his involvement with the Manual, which misdates the Clacton operation. p.157.

[4] ADM 137/452. Seizure of an Advanced Base. Report 30/6/13.

[5] CAB 19/33 Proceedings of the Dardanelles Commission; Keyes Evidence, p. 1453.

reasonable level of involvement was maintained, which included the provision of support to the Staff College in its investigations, and the compilation of a Manual encapsulating the staff lessons learnt at the Staff College and the more practical material resulting from the earlier manoeuvres. The General Staff appear to have readily accepted and encouraged their Staff College in its interest in combined operations, considering such involvement as one of its proper functions. In contrast the Admiralty, with no amphibious strategy akin to that of the General Staff, showed only a brief interest in the War Course's involvement in such matters and did not support that body as Slade requested. Amphibious progress depended upon the support and involvement of the military departments; the Staff College and War Course reflected the concerns of their respective departments.

The Inter-War Years.

The inter-war period can be divided into three distinct phases of amphibious development: the immediate post-war enthusiasm, which, sustained by the Navy's interest in the Far Eastern Strategy, persisted until nearly 1930; the early 1930s, when little progress was made due to the shortage of funds; and the re-armament period, during which time progress recommenced, not because any higher priority was afforded to amphibious operations, but because more funds were available and inter-service co-operation in all forms of war was increasingly required.

The dominant role of the Staffs persisted throughout the inter-war period. The Staff Colleges' involvement in the Staff side of combined operations became more formalised, to the extent that the Service Departments automatically looked to them for advice in that sphere. However, it would be too much to suggest, as Clifford does, that the Staff Colleges were the sole or even the chief repository of amphibious learning in this era, fighting uninterested departments. Progress in the materiel and tactical side of

amphibious operations was retained in the hands of the Departmental Staffs, who co-ordinated these several strands of amphibious endeavour with the work of the Colleges. There was thus a continued Staff interest, which was commensurate with the Admiralty's early post-war commitment to a strategy requiring amphibious operations and the general commitment of Naval and General Staffs, throughout the inter-war period, to a minimum level of amphibious preparation. Without these interests, the Staff Colleges' initiatives would have been confined to the classroom, and would not have been matched by tactical and technical progress.

The Period of Post-war and Naval Enthusiasm; the 1920s.

The Staff Colleges' resumed their combined activity in 1919, commencing with an initiative by the Army College at Camberley. Major General Hastings Anderson arranged a repetition of one of the pre-war schemes for the first course to pass through the College, and deliberately set about obtaining the services of Hamilton's staff team, Aspinall, Dawnay and Mitchell, as lecturers during the exercise.[1] The result was to show that the entire question of amphibious operations required rethinking, as both Anderson and Captain Ernle Drax, Director of the Naval Staff College, reported to their respective Staffs. On this occasion, as the course had included many who had been involved at Gallipoli, lessons could be drawn from both 'the tactical and the Staff duties side of the Exercise'.[2]

These proposals matched the preconceptions of both the Service Staffs. A number of investigations into amphibious operations had already been set in train before Anderson's report was received. Even before the armistice the Admiralty had proposed the creation of a tri-service Committee to investigate the German coastal defences in

[1] I.W.M. Dawnay Papers, Book 1; Anderson to Dawnay, 15/9/19 & 17/9/19

[2] ADM 116/2086 Anderson to D.S.D. War Office, 7/1/20. Report on Combined Naval and Military Exercise 1919.

Belgium, including those aimed at preventing a British landing.[1] Similarly, early in 1919 a Committee was created to investigate the defences at the Dardanelles and Gallipoli for the same reason.[2] Both these initiatives met with the support of the other two services, reports being submitted in 1919.[3] It is clear, therefore, that on the part of the Staffs as well as the Staff Colleges, there was a determination to glean the lessons of the war so far as amphibious operations were concerned. Indeed Anderson believed that the Manual of Combined Operations was already under revision when he made his report.[4] There was a general desire to learn and preserve the lessons of the war, with which the proposals of the Staff Colleges were in tune.

These various lines of investigation coalesced in 1920 to bring about the revision of the Manual. The War Office commissioned Anderson to convert his report into a new draft chapter for Field Service Regulations, which they intended to submit to the approval of an inter-service Committee.[5] However, the Naval Staff, working from the material gathered in Gallipoli and Belgium, challenged this approach as too narrow; Anderson's draft was rejected on the grounds that it dealt exclusively with opposed landings and, due to its intended inclusion in F.S.R., was too Army-oriented in its outlook.[6] The Committee originally appointed to consider Anderson's draft was therefore instructed to produce a more general chapter dealing with combined operations to be included in the

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[1] ADM 1/8557/126. Report of Belgian Coast Defence Committee. Minutes by Frederick Dreyer, D.N.A. &T. 18/10/18 and 18/11/18.

[2] ADM 1/8548/5 Appointment of Dardanelles Committee. Minute by Dreyer D.N.A. &T. 5/1/19.

[3] ADM 239/27 Report of the Committee Appointed to Consider the German Defences on the Belgian Coast, 1919, & AIR 1/2323 Report of the Committee Appointed to Investigate the Attacks Delivered on and the Enemy Defences of the Dardanelles Straits.

[4] ADM 116/2086 Anderson's Report p. 4.

[5] ADM 116/2086 War Office to Admiralty 11/3/20.

[6] ADM 116/2086 Memorandum by Acting Commander Edward Altham, 23/2/20.

Field Regulations,[1] and a new Committee was appointed to redraft the Manual of Combined Operations for the three services.[2]

Thus by the beginning of 1921 there were two inter-service staff committees drafting complementary papers on Combined Operations. The first, under Major-General Guy Dawnay, ex-Gallipoli, was charged with the production of a draft chapter setting out the general arrangements for combined action by the services. The other, under Captain Edward Altham, veteran of the Archangel Expedition and recently head of the Belgian Coast inquiry, was responsible for the production of a full Manual of Combined Operations, dealing with all tri-service combinations in more detail than Dawnay's Committee. Both Altham and Dawnay were provided with the findings of the 1919 Exercise and Anderson's draft chapter. The broad interest in combined operations evident at the end of the war had thus been focused into these two committees. When the War Office decided merely to use Dawnay's Chapter as guidance for the main Manual, all the post-war interest was being co-ordinated to a single end.[3] The veterans of the wartime campaigns, the compilers of the post-war reports (often one and the same) and the Staff Colleges' distilled wisdom gleaned from the veterans present at the 1919 Combined Staff Exercise had all been channelled into one course by the Staffs. For the remainder of the 1920's the Altham Committee and its successor, the Co-ordinating Committee for Staff Duties in Combined Operations, would be responsible for the production of the Manual of Combined Operations, the chief repository of the amphibious know-how of the British.

Both Altham's Committee and its successor were inter-departmental Staff Committees. In this manner the three service Staffs co-ordinated the efforts of several

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[1] ADM 116/2086 Minutes of the First Meeting of the Interdepartmental Committee on Combined Operations & War Office to Admiralty 25/6/20 Enclosing correspondence with the Committee President, Major-General G. P. Dawnay.

[2] Ibid. Minutes by Dreyer, D.G.D. 2/10/20 , Astley Rushton, Deputy D.T.S.D. 8/10/20 & Admiralty Letters to War Office and Air Ministry 13/1/21.

[3] WO 237/14 Abstract of the Recommendations of the Principal Commissions, Committees and Conferences Relating to Army Affairs, 1921-3; 1010 Combined Operations, Interdepartmental Committee.

inter-service and individual service investigations. Permanent inter-service committees, such as the Chemical Warfare Committee and the Joint Wireless Board were utilised, dealing with those aspects of combined operations which fell within their areas of expertise. More specialist bodies, such as the Landing of Tanks Committee, and later a Landing Craft Committee, were also set up specifically to deal with issues exclusive to combined operations. Further, relevant lessons learnt by the Navy's Mobile Naval Base Organisation were incorporated into the Manual. Finally, from 1924 onwards, and with increasing sophistication and co-ordination from 1927 until the end of the decade, the Royal Navy carried out annual amphibious operations to investigate tactical and communications issues. All these efforts were on a small scale, the financial restrictions of the period ruling out more ambitious efforts, but they are a clear indication of the interest of the War Office and the Admiralty in preparing for such operations.

Inevitably the Staff Colleges were the chief resource available to the Inter Staff Committee when compiling the Manual. Limited funds meant full scale exercises would be rare, hence the Staff Colleges' annual theoretical exercises provided a cheap alternative. Equally, as financial limitations restricted material developments, issues which could be worked out theoretically came to dominate the Manual and by their very nature such issues were the concern of the Staff Colleges. Finally, the all-service approach of the British to amphibious operations placed staff work at a premium. For all these reasons a major role for the Staff Colleges in preparation for amphibious operations was inevitable. On the Staff College side, amphibious exercises were attractive as they were acknowledged to be the most difficult form of inter-service combination to train for, and thus by tradition the most suitable for training purposes, whilst their sheer complexity guaranteed employment for all the officers on the staff course.[1] Thus the Staff Colleges came to be the test bed for the Manual of Combined Operations. For example, Altham's

[1] CAB 54/1 Minutes of the 17th Meeting of the D.C.O.S., 27/4/37.

draft manual was tested at the Staff College Exercise of 1921,[1] the Colleges' comments were considered by the Altham Committee and the three Service Staffs, and where it was considered appropriate, the Manual amended. This process was repeated annually until the final version of the Manual was issued in 1925.[2] The Air Staff's procedure in these years reveals the relationship between the Staff and the Staff Colleges. The Air Staff considered their College's report[3] and compiled a set of Notes[4] and a Memorandum[5] on the subject for the College's guidance in future, subsequently rebuking the institution for failing to adhere to the line laid down by Adastral House.[6] The Air Ministry was perhaps more jealous of its prerogatives than its elder sisters, but the fact that all three services were represented on the inter-service staff committee by the Directors of their Staff Divisions suggests that none of them were content to leave questions of amphibious operations in the hands of the Staff Colleges. The role of the Colleges was important, but should not be overestimated.[7]

Thus in the early 1920s all three services were agreed on the need for investigation into combined operations, and were co-operating via the medium of inter-service committees and Staff College Exercises.

However, the Navy, convinced at this date that such operations would be required for its forward strategy in the East, gradually pulled ahead of the other arms. Admiralty and Fleet shared a belief that amphibious operations would be necessary in a war with Japan. Even before the Manual was issued in its final form, the Admiralty requested

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[1] ADM 116/2086 Maj.-Gen. Lindon-Bell to Captain W. Ellerton D.T.S.D. 27/7/21.
[2] ADM 116/2086 Maj.-Gen. Romer, D.S.D. [W.O.] to Capt. V. Haggard, D.T.S.D. Admiralty. 2/1/22.
[3] AIR 2/1059 Revised Manual of Combined Naval, Military and Air Operations 1923; 68B, Air Staff Annotated Copy.
[4] AIR 9/7 Air Staff Notes; No. 3, Combined Operations.
[5] AIR 8/71 Air Staff Memoranda. No. 10 Methods of Supporting the Landing of a Military Force on Enemy Territory, 1923, placed on the Agenda for the 5th Meeting of the C.C.S.D.C.O. AIR 2/1061 28A.
[6] AIR 2/246/22781 Report by the RAF Staff College on Combined Exercise Camberley 1923. Remarks by Sqdn. Ldr. E. Tomkinson, Directorate of Operations and Intelligence.
[7] AIR 2/1061 Co-Ordinating Committee for Staff Duties in Combined Operations, Minutes of First Meeting, 22/6/23.

criticism and advice from its Admirals on Stations and with Fleets. This revealed a widespread belief within the Navy that amphibious operations would be required; admirals on several stations had already taken the initiative in staging exercises and improving liaison. Thus Sir Herbert Richmond, C.-in-C. East Indies, initiated combined exercises with the Indian Army Staff College at Quetta in 1925,[1] scheduled a repeat of the exercise for the following year,[2] and pressed hard for funding to send a naval officer full-time to the Staff College at Quetta.[3] These proposals met with the approval of the Admiralty: the findings of Richmond's Exercises were circulated to the Staff Colleges, and the Naval Staff attempted, without success, to attain the necessary funding to send naval officers to Quetta.[4] Richmond was a known amphibious enthusiast, but his interest in landing operations was shared by his fellow commanders. Admiral Madden, C.-in-C. Atlantic Fleet, invited Major General Ironside, newly appointed Commandant at Camberley, to attend the Fleet's Spring Cruise in 1922, and requested of the Admiralty that 'I shall be glad to know whether any subjects connected with joint operations are being investigated by the Admiralty and War Office which can be discussed with advantage while General Ironside is with me'.[5] The Admiralty furnished Madden with the draft Manual and requested his opinions on the joint planning and joint staff aspects of combined operations.[6] Richmond and Madden's behaviour indicates that interest in such operations was common amongst Fleet Commanders.

The next step was taken with the issue of the Manual, which provided the Admiralty with an opportunity to focus and co-ordinate the interest in amphibious

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[1] ADM 203/84 Combined Exercise December 1924, Salsette Island, Bombay.
[2] ADM 203/74 Report on Combined Exercise Kasid Beach 1925.
[3] ADM 1/8714/169 Staff College Quetta, Exchange of Officers Between - and Staff College Greenwich. Sir Herbert Richmond, C.-in-C. East Indies to Admiralty, 26/1/25.
[4] Ibid. Minutes by Dreyer, A.C.N.S., 12/3/25 & Sir Michael Culme Seymour, Second Sea Lord, 16/3/25.
[5] ADM 116/2086 Correspondence between Admiral Madden C.-in-C. Atlantic Fleet and the Admiralty concerning the fact that Maj.-General Ironside will be joining him for the Manocuvres. Madden to Admiralty, 5/1/22.
[6] Ibid. Admiralty to Madden 31/12/20.

operations. In 1925 the Manual was distributed generally to the Services. Clifford asserts that prior to 1938 the Manual's issue was restricted to the Staff Colleges.[1] However it is clear from R.A.F. distribution lists and subsequent Admiralty Fleet Orders that the Manual was generally available: the R.A.F. distributed over 400 copies of the 1925 edition between the Staff Divisions; Area, Group and Wing Headquarters; R.A.F. Stations and Squadrons; and the various Air Force educational establishments,[2] and subsequently requested a further 230 copies to form a reserve in case of war. When a revision was contemplated in 1927, a print run of 4,000 was considered necessary to meet the requirements of the three services.[3] An agreed set of tactical and administrative ideas was now available to the three services.

With the Manual to provide common ground, a framework for investigation into combined operations was available, and the Admiralty took advantage of the opportunity. Admiral Dreyer suggested that 'as the 1925 Manual of Combined Operations has now been issued, I consider the time is ripe for steps to be taken to ensure that every convenient opportunity is taken of carrying out combined exercises and giving the officers of the three services the opportunity of attending manoeuvres and other exercises carried out by the other two services'.[4] This recommendation was approved by the First Sea Lord, Lord Beatty, and the Admiralty therefore set about arranging for increased co-operation between the three services.[5] The other Service Ministries were informed of the Admiralty's intentions, and the Commanders-in-Chief on the various stations instructed to consider how such co-operation could be improved, and to pass their conclusions to the Admiralty.[6]

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[1] Clifford, "Parallel Courses" p 70.
[2] AIR 2/1059 Manual of Combined Operations 1923-8; 75A, Distribution List.
[3] AIR 2/1060 Revised Manual of Combined Naval, Military and Air Force Operations, 1923. 10A. Report.
[4] ADM 116/2517 Co-operation Between the Three Services; Minute by Dreyer, 6/1/26.
[5] Ibid. Minute by Beatty 5/2/26.
[6] Ibid. Admiralty to Air Ministry and War Office 9/2/26, & Admiralty to all C.-in-C.'s 9/2/26.

The Admiralty was thus forcefully pressing for practice in amphibious operations. The Naval Staff stressed that 'liaison should be increased, and that every opportunity of studying and practising such exercises should be taken on all stations and in all commands'. To this end a memorandum was circulated to the Commanders-in-Chief, suggesting a number of possibilities. These included exchanges of officers, the invitation of Air Force and Military officers to naval exercises and the encouragement of the other services to reciprocate. The Admiralty concluded its instructions with the injunction that 'every opportunity should be taken to carry out actual landing operations in conjunction with the Army, or Army and R.A.F'., and stressed that the Naval Staff attached great importance to the issue; 'the defence of the Empire cannot be secured by any one particular service. Only by the closest collaboration and co-operation of all services can that object be attained'.[1] With an amphibious strategy for the East taking shape, the Naval Staff were urging the necessary preparations.

The responses from the other service departments give a clear indication of the relative interest of the three services in combined operations by 1926. The Admiralty, possessed of a strategy which depended upon amphibious operations, had taken the initiative and exhorted its Commanders to do all that was possible to train for such expeditions within the limitations under which they had to operate. The War Office, with its constant but lower priority for amphibious issues, responded that the General Staff would include instructions to practice small combined operations in its annual training memorandum.[2] The Air Ministry, increasingly concerned with its strategic role, merely noted that aside from the few coastal squadrons 'it is feared the opportunities for co-operation with the Fleet will be limited'.[3] Thus in the 1920s, the Admiralty, the sole service with a clear idea of employing amphibious operations in its expected military

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[1] Ibid. Memorandum Regarding Liaison Between the Three Services.
[2] ADM 116/2517 War Office to Admiralty 15/10/26.
[3] Ibid. Air Ministry to Admiralty 2/5/27.

strategy, was forging ahead of the other two services in its support for dedicated amphibious training.

The Navy's Commanders continued to concur in the view that such operations would be necessary, the Naval Staff proposals meeting with a uniformly positive response from the Commanders-in-Chief. All the C.-in-C.'s recommended future exercises, lectures and exchanges of officers, whilst in some respects the Commands were in advance of the Admiralty. Richmond's successor in the East Indies noted rather smugly that such exercises were already an annual feature there; Fremantle, commanding at Portsmouth, took the Admiralty to task for not informing him of the Marines' development of a Mobile Naval Base; and H.M.S. Excellent noted that they were in close touch with the Army's Tank and Artillery Schools.[1] The expectation of an amphibious campaign meant that interest in amphibious operations was widespread within the Navy.

The co-ordination of this interest was undertaken by the Admiralty Staff's Tactical Division. The Naval Staff had developed a system to control the various exercises and equipment trials conducted by the Fleets, collating their findings and disseminating the lessons to the Service as a whole; investigation into amphibious questions was co-ordinated within this framework.[2] Thus from 1928 a Summary of Tactical Progress was issued annually, encapsulating the lessons of the previous year. The Staff Division informed the Fleet 'during the year 1927 a greater number of Combined Operations were carried out than hitherto. In the majority of Fleets or Stations the army co-operated, both in carrying out actual landing operations and in working out staff exercises of this nature'.[3] In order to prevent repetition and duplication, in future, the reports of such exercises would be circulated annually. All officers involved in the organisation of such

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[1] Ibid. Comments of Commanders-in-Chief, & Précis of Liaison Reports & Suggestions Appended to Report of C.-in-C. Portsmouth.

[2] Chatfield, E. "*The Navy and Defence*" (William Heinemann Ltd, London, 1942). p. 192.

[3] ADM 186/143 Selected Reports of Exercises, Operations and Torpedo Practices in H.M .Fleet. 1927. Annual Summary of Tactical Progress; IX Combined Operations.

schemes were referred to the Manual 'for it embodies the experience of combined operations in war and peace and includes the agreed policy in many questions affecting more than one service'. As a corollary, amendments and criticisms of the Manual arising from such exercises would be 'particularly welcome' and would be included when, as was intended, the Manual was periodically revised.[1] Along with these injunctions the Staff circulated a number of lessons which had emerged from the exercises of the previous year, and a list of points which they desired should be investigated in future trials.

The Naval Staff had thus systematised the approach to amphibious investigation. Developments in doctrine arising from such exercises were disseminated generally, and questions and ideas were referred to the fleet for practical test. For example in 1928 the Staff Duties Division recommended the adoption of a standard zero hour between the Services and suggested anti-aircraft measures for the boats approaching the beaches; the use of gangplanks; a means of guiding the boats to their landing place; and the degree to which the approaching force was visible from the beach were all worthy of investigation in the following year.[2] The reports for the subsequent year revealed that these problems had been examined; at a landing in the Moray Firth gangplanks were tested, and an attempt made to guide the landing force by means of lights shone through the barrel of the flagship's guns.[3] These lessons, and those of four other landings, were circulated in 1929.[4] Admiralty interest had led to a system for field-testing amphibious issues being developed.

Despite all this, to some extent the exercises repeatedly staged in the inter-war years were less effective as practical tests than as an expression of intent. Financial restrictions limited the progress which could be made by such methods. When the

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[1] Ibid.
[2] Ibid.
[3] ADM 203/89 Combined Naval and Military Landing Operation, Moray Firth 11-12 June 1928.
[4] ADM 186/144 Exercises, Operations and Torpedo Practices in HM Fleet, and Annual Summary of Tactical Progress During 1928. Section IX Combined Operations.

Manual came to be revised for the third time in the late 1930's the Committee responsible was to note that although this subject had received 'continuous study' over the last eighteen years, 'progress had been slow'. This they attributed to the lack of opportunity for experiment and practical testing.[1] This problem had in fact been recognised from the outset, but financial limitations had prevented anything more ambitious being attempted. As early as 1929 the Naval Staff acknowledged that the need for 'financial economy' limited the material available and the size of the exercises which could be mounted; a large scale exercise was not likely, and therefore commanders should attempt to provide experience for naval officers and the Army, and 'to explore the limitations of existing material with a view to its improvement'.[2] The Naval Staff's efforts were necessarily curtailed by the limitations imposed by the financial restrictions of the period. Nevertheless they were attempting to build up a stock of information and experience which could be turned to good account when the financial situation eased.

Although the Admiralty took the lead amongst the three Staffs in the 1920s, the War Office's pragmatic interest ensured that amphibious questions continued to be treated as a common concern, although R.A.F. interest was diminishing as their conviction that such operations would be impossible in the face of an unbroken air force grew. Preparation for amphibious operations continued to be an inter-service concern, as the revision of the manual in the late 1920s reveals. Revision was initiated by the Staff Colleges' observation that the creation of the Chiefs of Staff Committee invalidated much of the procedure in the 1925 edition.[3] This observation led to the re-convening of the C.C.S.D.C.O. and a deluge of amendments from interested parties.[4] The Air Ministry, in line with its increasing scepticism, confined itself to repeating the Staff Colleges' point

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[1] CAB 54/3 D.C.O.S. 44 Training and Development Centre for Opposed Landing Operations, Memorandum by the Secretary of the Drafting Committee, 29/4/37.
[2] ADM 186/144 Annual Summary of Tactical Progress, Section IX. August 1929.
[3] AIR 2/1059 125A. Appendix A to Report on Combined Exercise, 1926.
[4] AIR 2/1059 137A. Admiralty to Air Ministry 17/2/27.

concerning the Chiefs of Staff.[1] The older services, however, demonstrated greater interest. The War Office weighed in with an abortive attempt to persuade the other arms to accept a Commander-in-Chief, preferably a soldier, as a necessity for such operations,[2] whilst the Admiralty contributed the points arising from their annual exercises.[3] Further amendments originated in the work of the Landing Craft Committee and the inter-service Chemical Warfare Committee.[4] Sufficient progress had in fact been made to necessitate a complete revision of the Manual, which was undertaken by the Staffs and completed in 1931.[5]

Disillusionment Amongst the Staffs; Amphibious Development Arrested.

Throughout the 1920s there was a systematic inter-service investigation into amphibious warfare. The Admiralty had taken the lead, but the War Office remained interested, and the R.A.F. was content to play along. However, by the beginning of the 1930s this staff enthusiasm was beginning to wear thin. The Admiralty's repeated attempts to persuade the other services to consider combined strategy in the East were beginning to backfire; as the Air Force questioned the viability of such operations the drive behind the Admiralty's investigations flagged. Furthermore, the limitations which finance imposed on practical tests were beginning to dishearten the General and Naval Staffs, and a gradual realisation emerged that further progress in the tactical and material sphere was impossible without more adequate provision of equipment. The exercises did not stop, but Staff enthusiasm flagged.

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[1] AIR 2/1059 125A & 125 B Memo by Plans Division 7/7/26.
[2] AIR 2/1059 Sub-File, Revision of CD 33. Paper 2A, Draft of Section 7A Command of Combined Operations; this paper described as War Office in origin in 4A. Minutes of 3rd Meeting, 22/6/28.
[3] AIR 2/1059 153A Admiralty to Air Council 22/2/28 List of Proposed Amendments.
[4] AIR 2/1059 Sub-File Revision of CD 33. 5A Minutes of 4th Meeting of C.C.S.D.C.O., 29/6/28. Admiralty raises question of chemical warfare and calls for removal of reference to amphibious tank due to the development of M.L.C.1.
[5] DEFE 2/708 Manual of Combined Operations 1931.

This sense that a limit had been reached, and that any further progress would be slow in coming emerged in the second revision of the Manual. In the course of this revision the C.C.S.D.C.O. rejected a suggestion that the Manual should be issued in a form which would allow easy amendment in future, as it was felt that 'few amendments to the principles contained in the body of the book should be necessary in the immediate future'.[1] A Staff College suggestion for the creation of a permanent inter-service committee to investigate and test new equipment was also quashed; it was felt that such a body would have little to do and the C.C.S.D.C.O. could handle what little work there was; the dependence of the Staff Colleges on the support of their Departmental Staffs is clear. So strong was the impression that the work was as complete as resources would allow that the Committee actually recommended that there should be no further amendment of the Manual for the next three years; those few points which might arise could wait for inclusion.[2] The phase of post-war interest had come to an end, and rearmament would be under-way before this lethargy was dispelled.

The inter-staff co-operative system which had developed to meet the requirements of the post-war period had reached the limits of its effectiveness. Lacking the funds to develop its work further, it simply petered out after the second post-war revision of the Manual. Although in theory the C.C.S.D.C.O. continued to exist until 1941, when it was belatedly noted that it had never been abolished, it did not meet again.[3] In the short term a similar suspension of activity took place within the Committees whose interests the C.C.S.D.C.O. had co-ordinated. After developing two prototype landing craft, the Landing Craft Committee went into a state of suspended animation for five years, denied

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[1] AIR 2/1060 Minutes of the 6th Meeting of the C.C.S.D.C.O. 7/8/29.
[2] Ibid.
[3] AIR 2/1061 111A War Office to Air Ministry 16/8/41 & Minute 102 Air Commodore C. L. Courtney Director of Training, 18/4/34.

the opportunity to proceed further by the shortage of resources.[1] Staff interest in preparing for such operations therefore reached its lowest ebb between 1929 and 1933.

However, despite the Staffs' disillusionment, investigation into combined operations continued even in these years. Although the Staffs, unwillingly on the Navy's part, had recognised the improbability of such operations and therefore the pointlessness of spending their meagre funds providing sufficient equipment to allow further progress, there remained a general interest in such operations within the Services as a whole. Many outside the Staff remained convinced that amphibious operations were likely; consequently there continued to be Staff College exercises and combined training on the various commands. This grass-roots interest in combined operations was most prevalent within the Navy, but there was willing support from the military commands, and the proceedings of the Royal United Service Institution reveal the widespread nature of this belief. The Naval and General Staffs did not challenge this belief, and remained encouraging although unwilling to commit resources. This circumstance preserved, and to a limited extent enhanced, amphibious doctrine throughout the lean years, and ensured that the question of amphibious operations was raised as soon as rearmament monies became available.

The general interest within the Royal Navy in the early 1920s, already alluded to, continued into the 1930s. The expectation of an amphibious campaign against Japan was widespread. The first session of the Imperial Defence College, under the guidance of Richmond, considered operations in the East and the probable need to capture Santu inlet in advance of Hong Kong.[2] Dreyer was another who displayed a persistent interest in such operations. Following his work at the Admiralty in advancing inter-service co-operation, Dreyer instilled his next command, the Battle Cruiser Squadron, with his

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[1] N.M.M. Ships Covers 569 New X-Lighter. 1. Landing Craft Committee, Report of Meeting held on 11/11/36, Appendix A, D.N.C.'s Remarks; notes that the landing craft committee had not met for five years.

[2] CAB 53/13 First Report of the Imperial Defence College 27/12/27.

interest in combined operations. The Squadron mounted such exercises annually,[1] and Dreyer circulated the findings of his exercises to the Staff Colleges as well as to the Admiralty.[2] Like Richmond, Dreyer's interest appears to have sprung from his reading of the situation in the Far East; on being posted there in the early 1930s, he wrote to the First Sea Lord of his expectation that an Expeditionary Force would be used in that theatre.[3] It is clear that the general expectation within the Navy that such operations would be required survived the increasing lack of interest at the staff level.

This belief meant combined exercises continued to be carried out by the Naval Commands, usually with the co-operation of the local military forces. An invasion of the Isle of Wight was staged in 1930, with the Isle masquerading as a port off China. Motor Landing Craft were used for the first time in an exercise on this occasion by dint of borrowing from the Marines' Mobile Base Organisation at Portsmouth.[4] 1934 saw the landing of the 5th Division on the coast of Yorkshire, and an exhibition of the use of motor landing craft, tanks and smoke-screens in a landing, organised by Admiral of the Fleet Lord Cork and Orrery, another amphibious enthusiast.[5] These repeated exercises reveal that the Fleet was even less willing to accept that amphibious operations would not be necessary than the Naval Staff, who were themselves barely convinced.

The Royal Naval Staff College proved a determined champion of amphibious thinking throughout these lean years. The College remained fiercely imbued with the idea of advance base operations; a philosophy directly related to the forward strategy against Japan. A forward base for use against Italy also came under consideration at the Staff College during the Abyssinian crisis. Thus in 1936 the Director argued that 'a

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[1] ADM 203/89 Combined Naval and Military Landing Operation, Moray Firth, 11-12 June 1928; ADM 186/146 Exercises and Operations 1929 No. 8. Exercise BW 11/6/29; and ADM 186/148 Exercises and Operations 1930, No. 12 Combined Operations, Exercise KO4 2-3/7/30.

[2] ADM 203/89 Covering Letter by Rear Admiral F. Dreyer to Director R.N.S.C.

[3] N.M.M. CHT 4/4 Chatfield to Dreyer 7/8/34 includes Chatfield's attempt to disabuse Dreyer of this belief.

[4] ADM 186/149 Exercises & Operations 1930, Combined Operation, Portsmouth Command, Sept. 1930.

[5] ADM 186/156 Exercises and Operations 1934, Combined Operation Yorkshire Coast, 10-13/9/34.

future war may urgently require the seizure of an advanced base in enemy territory - or even the recapture of one of our own bases - without which our Main Fleet or Air Forces will be unable to operate effectively'.[1] His successor was even more explicit; 'strategical discussions and exercises at the War and Staff Colleges continue to emphasise the need for advanced bases capable of accommodating the Fleet in the event of war in overseas theatres. Both in the Far East and the Mediterranean, the occupation of bases, other than our permanent ones, appears to be necessary before offensive operations can be undertaken by our Fleet or Air Forces'.[2] The Naval Staff College thus continued to be a forthright exponent of preparation for combined operations, despite the discouraging line being taken by the Chiefs of Staff and Joint Planners.

Although the Navy was the service most imbued with this belief that amphibious operations would be necessary, such expectations were by no means exclusive to the Senior Service. The Army also contained many who supported training in landing operations. Its Staff College, though less outspoken than its naval counterpart, was forceful in its support for preparation for combined operations, and a number of commands, notably Southern, were regular participants in combined exercises. Without this support the Navy could have achieved little. Of all the inter-war exercises, only one, a Marine landing at Dragomesti in 1927, saw no participation by the Army. On occasion the Army's enthusiasts were critical of the facilities which the Navy placed at their disposal, particularly whenever Southern Command was involved. Geographically this Headquarters was perhaps best suited to co-operate with local naval commands, and it demonstrated a consistent interest in such operations.[3] For instance in 1936 Southern Command was the driving force behind a landing at Studland, and stressed in their report

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[1] CAB 54/3 D.C.O.S. 44 Training and Development Centre for Combined Operations, Enclosure "The Naval Side of Combined Operations and the Necessity for its Development in Peace" Memorandum by the Director of the R.N.S.C., 22/2/36.

[2] ADM 203/62 Need for a Royal Marine Striking Force, 1937. Report by Director, W.S. Chalmers, 14/7/37.

[3] *Journal of the R.U.S.I.* 1929 Vol. LXXIV; Details a landing by the 47th Division in that year pp. 854-5.

that the provision of naval and air forces had been paltry in comparison with the military forces involved.[1] The Army did not lack amphibious enthusiasts.

Nor were the Army's enthusiasts any less professional than the Navy's. At Yorkshire in 1934 and again at Studland in 1936, the military commanders recommended annual amphibious exercises. The commander at Studland, a forceful individual who had used his own men to load the ships in the face of obstructive stevedores and awkward Board of Trade restrictions, went further, and forwarded to the War Office a massive report detailing numerous failures in the planning and training of the exercise which required revision of the manual. He also called for the construction of new landing craft and a greater degree of commitment from the Navy and Air Force as far as such exercises were concerned.[2] Unlike the Navy, the Army did not possess a strategic assumption which required combined operations; however, there was a widely held belief within the land service that combined operations of some sort might be required and should therefore be prepared for.

This popular view was well represented at the Royal United Services' Institute. In 1926, prompted by the creation of the Imperial Defence College, and the arrival of Captain Altham as Secretary, the Institute's Journal introduced a section of 'General Service Notes', which dealt with questions concerning all three services.[3] The first of these described a combined Staff Ride at Slapton in that year, recommended specialised landing craft, and initiated a persistent interest in amphibious operations.[4] Henceforth the Journal provided comprehensive coverage of amphibious exercises carried out by British forces,[5] detailed the operations of foreign services, and invited discussion on such

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[1] AIR 2/1924 Combined Operations Exercise, Southern Command, 25-9/8/36. 25C, 3rd Division Report.
[2] Ibid. Report on the Combined Operations Exercise 1936 by the Commander 8th Infantry Brigade, Brigadier Holmes, 18/9/36.
[3] *Journal of the R.U.S.I.* 1926 Vol. LXXI. Editorial Note p. 462.
[4] Ibid. General Service Notes. p. 607-8.
[5] *Journal of the R.U.S.I.* 1928 Vol. LXXIII details Dreyer's Moray Firth Exercise pp. 617-8, & 1929 Vol. LXXIV describing the 47th Division's landing in 1929 pp. 854-5.

questions as the future role of the Royal Marines and the implications of air-power for combined operations.[1] With Altham as Secretary there were few subjects which could not be considered from an amphibious angle; Frederick Pile, lecturing on the tank, was questioned on the amphibious version by the indefatigable Captain, and the same volume contained the specifications of a Carden-Lloyd prototype.[2]

Guided by Altham, who had been instrumental in the first post-war revision of the Manual, R.U.S.I. became a bastion of amphibious thought. Liddell Hart's thesis of the British Way in Warfare was first expounded there in 1931, and criticised by both Altham and Richmond for its failure to place sufficient stress on amphibious operations.[3] Frequently covered subjects included the need for combined staffs and a coherent strategy utilising the three services in combination.[4] The degree of contiguity between the Institute and the Naval College was made apparent when the late President of the College lectured the Institute on sea power and British strategy, and assumed that his audience accepted as 'self evident' the 'enormous strategic advantages conferred on land forces by this ability to transport them and land them at will'.[5] The Royal United Service Institution thus became a mouthpiece for the amphibian school of thought, maintaining interest in the years when the Staffs lacked both the strategy and the resources to concentrate on amphibious issues.

It seems that, free of the restrictions of strategic realities and financial priorities which trammelled the Staffs, the Colleges, Commands and Service Institutes were less inhibited in their strategic thought. They were thus free to believe in the likelihood of

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[1] *Journal of the R.U.S.I.* 1927 Vol. LXXII. "Royal Marines Prize Essay", p 58. & "The Effect of Air Power Upon Naval Strategy", Commander A. F. E. Palliser pp. 346 -.

[2] *Journal of the R.U.S.I.* 1931 Vol. LXXVI. Discussion following Pile's Lecture p. 394 & "*An Amphibious Tank*" p 182.

[3] Ibid. "*Economic Pressure or Continental Victories*". Captain B. H. Liddell Hart.

[4] e.g. *Journal of the R.U.S.I.* 1934 Vol. LXXIX contains "British Strategy" by Lt. Cdr. G. B. H. Fawkes & "The Need for a Special Combined Staff" by Maj. A. N. Williams, R.M.

[5] *Journal of the R.U.S.I.* 1935, Vol. LXXX. Vice Admiral Sir Barry Domvile, "The Influence of Sea Power On British Strategy". p. 470.

amphibious operations, either against the Japanese or in the manner argued for by Maurice and Liddell Hart. Thus they continued to believe that amphibious operations would be likely long after the Service Staffs had accorded them a low priority.

Rearmament and a General Trend Towards Inter-Service Co-operation.

Conventionally this phase ended with the Chiefs of Staff accepting the point of view of the RN College that more investigation into amphibious operations was required and thus establishing, in accordance with that body's proposals, an inter-service committee on amphibious operations and a training and development centre. By this view the RN College is portrayed as the successful champion of amphibious preparation against an uninspired staff. Leaving aside the point, already established, that two of the services already possessed a pragmatic "minimum level of preparation" philosophy towards what they reasonably considered to be unlikely operations, there are several other reasons why this perception of the role of the Staff Colleges and the formation of the Inter Service Training and Development Centre are erroneous. In the first place, the improving financial position of the services in the rearmament era had already seen an improvement in the provision of material for training before the Staff College's initiative. In the second place, the Royal Naval College's aims were far more ambitious than the inter service committee and training centre which eventually emerged. Thirdly, the committee and centre were not established with the sole brief of preparing for amphibious operations; in keeping with the general trend at the time they were designed to enhance all forms of inter-service co-operation, and although as a result of RN predominance they did concentrate on amphibious operations, they were unable to force the Staffs to depart from their pragmatic approach to preparations for amphibious ventures.

The first indication that matters had improved arose from Cork and Orrery's report on his landing operations in Yorkshire in 1934. Lord Cork pointed out that there were simply too few landing craft to allow realistic training, and recommended the

construction of nine improved M.L.C. Cork also suggested an end to the old system of sharing financial responsibility for landing craft between the services, recommending that the issue was of such importance to the Navy that they should accept all the responsibility.[1] Although the issue had to be taken to the Committee of Imperial Defence in order to over-rule the Admiralty's Finance Department,[2] both the First Sea Lord[3] and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff[4] declared themselves in favour of greater exertions in this area. The question of combined operations was thus back on the staff agenda from 1934, and receiving widespread support.

It was at this auspicious point that the Staff Colleges repeated their post-war initiative. Although their proposals were to have striking effect, it is worth noting that as far as the Naval Staff were concerned, they were, once again, preaching to the converted, albeit with the General Staff more warily sympathetic than before. In contrast during the early 1930s, when financial restrictions had bound the Staff, the Staff Colleges had not made any progress.

In 1936 the question of the revision of the Manual and the creation of a committee to co-ordinate training was again raised by the Staff Colleges. This proposal took the form of three memoranda, produced after joint discussion by the Commandant at Camberley, the Director of the R.N. Staff College, and the Commandant of the Imperial Defence College. These three papers set in train a process which led to the revision of the Manual into the form it held on the outbreak of war; the creation of the Deputy Chiefs of Staff Committee on Inter-Service Training, (D.C.O.S. (I.T.)), to co-ordinate training; and the formation of the Inter-Service Training and Development Centre, (I.S.T.D.C.), to develop amphibious material and technology. However, although the result was the

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[1] ADM 116/3395, Exercise, Combined Operations, Yorkshire Coast; Report, Part III, Remarks and Recommendations.

[2] See Chapter IV Page 229.

[3] CAB 53/6 Minutes of the 173rd Meeting of the C.O.S. 4/5/36.

[4] CAB 4/24 C.I.D. 1234-B Provision and Maintenance of Motor Landing Craft, memo by the C.I.G.S., 23/3/36.

enhancement of the British inter-service capability in amphibious operations, this was not the object at which the Staffs had aimed, nor was it the outcome which the Royal Naval Staff College, the most strident of the three colleges, had sought to produce.

Dealing first with the Royal Naval Staff College, the Memorandum compiled by the Director, Captain B. C. Watson, is widely held to be the most important step in British amphibious development in the inter-war years. This assertion rests on two main points, first, that it was the chief initiative which resulted in the creation of the D.C.O.S. (I.T.) and the I.S.T.D.C., and second, that these two bodies were then responsible for an unprecedented improvement in the British provision for amphibious operations. This line is taken by both Maund and Fergusson,[1] and followed by Clifford in his thesis.[2] However, it is an erroneous assertion. Watson's memorandum was not in the mainstream of British amphibious thinking, but belonged more to the extreme naval school, which hoped to create a single-service amphibious force based around the Royal Marines, in emulation of the United States Marine Corps. The main thrust of his proposal was thus the enhancement of the Royal Marines; the improvement of inter-service co-operation and the creation of a Training Centre were secondary to this aim. In the event only those elements of Watson's proposal which could be integrated into the conventional British inter-service approach to amphibious operations were adopted, and of those, almost all had been suggested before; the increased funding available, rather than any skill on the part of Watson, was responsible for them being adopted now.

The Watson memorandum, as with those of Armitage, Commandant at Camberley, and Haining, Commandant of the I.D.C., is supposed to have emerged from the Staff Colleges' annual inter-service exercises, and a meeting between the Commandants which took place in 1935.[3] However, although the three memoranda

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[1] L. E. H. Maund "*Assault from the Sea*" p.6. & Bernard Fergusson "*The Watery Maze*" p. 37.
[2] Clifford "*Parallel Courses*" p. 96.
[3] CAB 53/27 C.O.S. 427 Report by the Commandant on the 9th Course at the I.D.C. '6. Co-operation with the Staff Colleges'. January 1936.

shared some points, such as the revision of the Manual, Watson's was more the result of thought within the R.N. Staff College than of co-operative discussion with his fellow commandants. His thesis, that 'a future war may urgently require the seizure of an advanced base in enemy territory, or even the recapture of one of our own bases', sprang direct from the Naval College's vision of a war in the Far East, untempered by the R.A.F. opposition which the Admiralty Staff had faced in the Chiefs of Staff Committee.[1] The Navy, Watson claimed, possessed a greater interest in such operations than the other services, and bore the greatest responsibility due to its paramount involvement in the landing, which he considered the critical stage of the operation. Thus Watson was not arguing for an increased participation on the part of all three services, but for the Navy to take more of the responsibility onto itself. Such a proposal is unlikely to have arisen from the combined consultation of the commandants of the various Staff Colleges; it reflects the outlook of the Naval Staff College alone.

Watson recommended that the Navy should accept that amphibious operations were 'our special interest and responsibility', and made a number of proposals. He suggested the creation of a 'Permanent Committee on Combined Operations' and a 'Training and Development Centre'. The former would consist of representatives of all three services, which would orchestrate exercises, supervise his proposed training centre, develop material and keep the Manual up to date. Thus far his proposals did not clash with the conventional approach of the British to combined operations. However, his proposed Training and Development Centre was intended, not simply to carry out practical tests, but to draw up plans for combined operations in war and possess its own military force, which in war could be used for small operations on its own or to serve as

[1] CAB 54/3 D.C.O.S. 44 Training and Development Centre for Opposed Landings, Enclosure; 'Memorandum by the Director of the R.N.S.C. on The Naval Side of Combined Operations and the Necessity for its Development in Peace'. 22/2/36 Henceforth "Watson Memorandum".

the covering force in larger landings. As to the constitution of this military force, Watson noted 'a force of Royal Marines would be the ideal'.[1]

In effect, therefore, although his permanent committee appeared to continue the tradition of inter-service co-operation which the British had always applied to combined operations, the Training and Development Centre, as envisaged by Watson, was a step in the opposite direction. The centre would create a specialist Navy-controlled amphibious force, capable of operating independently of the other services. This was a remarkably clever dual approach. In the first place, the creation of such a force would allow the Navy to undertake small operations, such as the seizure of island bases, without recourse to the other services. In addition, the fact that it could be used as the spearhead for a larger landing meant that the Army's opposition to making large provision for combined operations could be ignored; it mattered little if the Army as whole was not trained to stage a landing, for, if the Marines were capable of seizing a landing area on their own, then the Army could be landed behind them and not come into action until it was in its natural element. The opposition of the other services to extensive peacetime preparation for combined operations would thus have been neatly side-stepped; the Navy would be capable of staging small operations alone, and, should the necessity for a large campaign commencing with a landing arise, the Navy would be ready to put the army ashore without having to wait for it to train for the operation. The Watson Memorandum was thus a bid for amphibious independence for the Navy on the part of the Staff College, yet the Training Centre which allegedly emerged as a result of it was an inter-service body without a trace of the specialist military force suggested by the Director.

In the first place, Watson's ideas were inaccurately represented to the Chiefs of Staff, which set the Chiefs of Staff thinking along a different lines to Watson. The idea of a permanent inter-service committee had first been broached in 1929, when the

[1] Ibid., p. 8.

C.C.S.D.C.O. had concluded that it was not necessary.[1] However, the Commandant at Camberley, Major General Armitage, wrongly assumed from the Commandants' conference that Watson's intention was to revive this proposal. Armitage therefore reported to the Chiefs of Staff that Watson had suggested an inter-service committee and that he considered this merited consideration.[2] Armitage's report was submitted before Watson's, and thus, although the scheme had originated with the latter, it was the Armitage's erroneous impression of Watson's proposal which reached the Chiefs of Staff first. The proposal was therefore sponsored by the Chief of the General Staff, Deverell, whose recommendations were more in keeping with the traditional approach to combined operations than Watson's. Deverell recommended the creation of two committees, one to co-ordinate training and the other to co-ordinate materiel, the latter to absorb the old landing craft committee.[3] The proposal was tied in with a War Office suggestion to revise the Manual, which in itself is further proof of the conventional nature of the General Staff's view of the inter-service committees.

Thus the Chiefs of Staff had already acted upon the Armitage proposals before the Watson Memorandum came to be considered. The Chiefs decided to associate the question of the creation of an inter-staff committee and a training centre with the revision of the Manual.[4] The R.N. Staff College proposal was only mentioned in passing, Chatfield suggesting that it should be referred to the drafting committee for consideration.[5] As a result the new bodies would be created in the light of the revision of the Manual, which, as the book was based on the principles of combined action, was not likely to result in a call for a single-service amphibious force.

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[1] AIR 2/1060 Minutes of the 6th Meeting of the Co-Ordinating Committee for Staff Duties in Combined Operations, 7/8/29.
[2] CAB 53/28 C.O.S.469; Combined Operations; Enclosure, Armitage's report, 31/12/35.
[3] Ibid. Memorandum by the C.I.G.S., 27/5/36.
[4] CAB 53/6 Minutes of the 178th Meeting of the C.O.S., 16/6/36.
[5] Ibid.

Once the Manual had been revised, it was again the General Staff who took the lead in developing the proposals made by the Staff College Commandants. The military member of the Deputy Chiefs of Staff recalled that the question of inter-service bodies had been referred to them along with the Manual, and suggested that the completion of the Manual was a suitable time to consider that question.[1] On completing the manual, therefore, the Drafting Committee reported to the Deputy Chiefs of Staff their views on Watson's proposals. Their recommendations proved markedly different to his. Superficially their proposal for an inter-service committee and a training centre echoed Watson's, but the former no longer possessed any planning role, and the drafting committee explicitly stated that they did not agree with the proposal to create a special force; they preferred 'to aim at developing material which can be used by any force called upon to do so, and at training personnel on a sufficient scale to disseminate knowledge of opposed landing operations throughout the services'.[2] Unsurprisingly, the drafting committee had chosen to tender proposals in accord with the co-operative spirit of the Manual.

The pre-emption of Watson's memorandum had thus prevented his main aim from being considered at all. The Deputy Chiefs concurred with the drafting committee, recommending the creation of an inter-service committee, and suggesting that the question of the need for a Training Centre should be the first question this committee should consider.[3] The proposal for a specialist force had sunk without trace, a point which the C.I.G.S. noted with approval in approving the Deputy Chiefs recommendation.[4] The new inter service committee, or D.C.O.S. (IT) was therefore instructed to consider whether an inter-service Training Centre should be set up, but not,

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[1] CAB 54/1 Minutes of the 16th Meeting of the D.C.O.S., 2/2/37.
[2] CAB 54/3 D.C.O.S. 44; Training and Development Centre for Opposed Landing Operations. Memorandum by the Secretary of the Drafting Committee, 29/4/37.
[3] CAB 54/1 Minutes of the 18th Meeting of the D.C.O.S., 29/7/37.
[4] CAB 53/8 Minutes of the 221st Meeting of the C.O.S., 4/11/37.

as Watson had intended, whether a Training Centre built around a Royal Marine amphibious force should be created. The more conventional combined approach to amphibious operations, advocated by the War Office, had won out over the Royal Naval College's single-service approach.

In part this outcome can also be laid at the door of the Admiralty Staff, who do not appear to have grasped the full implications of the Director's report. Thus Vice-Admiral James, the D.C.N.S., failed to support the proposal for a specialist force at the Deputy Chiefs, for he mistakenly believed that the Director was calling for 'the collection of units of all three services in one place in time of peace and continuous training of these units together'.[1] It was not until the following year that James realised the implications of Watson's memorandum and put forward a proposal for the creation of a specialist amphibious force in line with the original recommendation,[2] only to have the proposal rejected outright by the D.C.I.G.S. and D.C.A.S.[3] The newly created D.C.O.S. (I.T.), which by that time was examining the question of the Training Centre, was informed of the generally negative attitude of the Deputy Chiefs to any such specialist force, thus confirming the brief they had received from the Chiefs of Staff.[4]

Thus the combination of various threads of combined operations investigation had resulted in the creation of the D.C.O.S. (IT) and the I.S.T.D.C. The Watson Memorandum, whilst certainly a spur to their creation, was by no means the only such, and was more effective in mobilising the interest of the Staffs in the question than in actually guiding their decisions; only those elements of his programme which fitted in with the traditional approach to amphibious operations were adopted.

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[1] CAB 54/1 18th D.C.O.S., 29/7/37.
[2] CAB 54/4 D.C.O.S. 61; 'The Establishment of a Special Striking Force for Amphibious Operations', D.C.N.S. to Secretary D.C.O.S., 13/1/38.
[3] CAB 54/4 D.C.O.S. 62; D.C.I.G.S. to D.C.N.S. 7/2/38 & D.C.O.S. 64 D.C.A.S. to Secretary D.C.O.S., 8/2/38.
[4] CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 4; The Establishment of a Special Striking Force for Amphibious Operations, Note by the Secretary, 16/2/38.

A second point worth noting with regard to the D.C.O.S. (I.T.) and I.S.T.D.C. is that they were not created solely with amphibious operations in mind. The reception which the General Staff gave to the proposals, and the toleration which the Air Staff showed to them, were largely due to the assumption on their part that the new bodies would concern themselves with all forms of combined operation, and not simply amphibious assaults on enemy beaches.

The creation of the I.S.T.D.C. and D.C.O.S. (I.T.) have been portrayed as the greatest step in British preparations for amphibious operations between the wars. This conclusion, based on their supposed achievements, is itself erroneous, as the amount of material they inherited from the earlier inter-war investigations has been underestimated. However, dealing solely with their amphibious achievements also fails to reveal the intended functions of the two bodies. It is too commonly assumed that "amphibious" and "combined" are interchangeable terms, indeed, Clifford uses them as such in the title of his thesis.[1] In fact, amphibious operations are a type of combined operation, one possible combination which the services might undertake, but by no means the only such. The I.S.T.D.C. and its parent committee were designed to deal with all forms of possible combination, not merely with amphibious operations. That they concentrated on landing operations was not due to the intentions of its creators, but to the fact that both the I.S.T.D.C. and the D.C.O.S. (I.T.) were dominated by the Royal Navy, which, as has been shown, retained much the strongest interest in amphibious operations.

The idea that amphibious operations should only be considered as part of the greater question of inter-service combinations in general was present from the beginning of the revision of the Manual. Major General Armitage, Commandant at Camberley, reported that the Manual gave no guidance as to the forms of combined operation which the forces might be called upon to carry out, and noted that 'although the definition of a

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[1] Clifford "*On Parallel Courses, An Analysis of British and American Amphibious (Combined) Operations*".

combined operation given . . . is very broad and covers a large variety of operations, the greater part of the book is devoted to one particular type of combined operation, i.e. an opposed landing'.[1] When this question was referred to the Deputy Chiefs of Staff, the D.M.O.&I., Major General Dill, stressed this point; 'it is difficult to conceive of any type of major operation which would not be combined in the sense that it would involve more than one service'. Dill agreed with Armitage that whereas the Manual mentioned several forms of combination, it only dealt satisfactorily with one, and therefore recommended that the revised version should consist of a section comprising the general principles of combinations, with separate chapters dealing with the specifics of individual types of combined operation, of which amphibious expeditions would be only one, albeit the largest.[2] This approach was accepted by the Deputy Chiefs, and the drafting committee instructed to bear the general nature of the manual in mind.[3] The Manual was therefore to be drafted as a general guide to combined action by the services, with the importance of amphibious operations reduced from being the sole such operation detailed to merely the most comprehensively covered of various possible combinations.

This new broad approach to combinations was not long restricted to the Manual. The R.A.F., which remained convinced that amphibious operations were highly improbable, followed up with a proposal that the Staff Colleges should also reduce their emphasis on amphibious operations in favour of other possible combinations. The Deputy Chief of the Air Staff recommended that the Colleges should end the annual amphibious exercise which they had organised since 1919 as 'a form of combined operation in which Imperial Forces are unlikely to be called upon to take part' and instead should consider hypothetical schemes which would embrace 'the main features of a large

[1] CAB 53/28 C.O.S. 469; Enclosure to Memo by the C.I.G.S., report by Commandant Staff College, 31/12/35.
[2] CAB 54/3 D.C.O.S. 12; Revision of the Manual of Combined Operations, Note by the D.M.O.&I. 9/7/36.
[3] CAB 54/1 D.C.O.S. 6th Meeting, 16/8/36.

number of the practical problems involved in combined operations of the various types'.[1] The War Office were substantially in agreement, although they did not consider amphibious operations should be abandoned entirely. The new D.M.O.&I., Haining, considered that amphibious exercises should continue for they could not be ruled out as a possibility and were valuable training schemes by virtue of their very difficulty, but he noted that the new Manual 'will give more guidance than the old as to the possible types of combined operations'.[2] A subsequent meeting of the Deputy Chiefs of Staff confirmed this trend; the new Manual, with its new emphasis on combinations other than opposed landings, was forwarded to the Staff Colleges for their guidance in setting combined schemes.[3] The move towards a more general approach to combinations was widespread.

The proposal by the Committee responsible for the redrafting of the Manual of Combined Operations that a Permanent Inter-Service Committee and a Training Centre should be set up was thus made into an atmosphere more favourable to combined operations in general than to opposed landings in particular. In the first place this was not clear, as the drafting committee simply proposed a Training Centre for opposed landings,[4] despite their declared intention of killing the 'erroneous impression' that 'the term combined operations is synonymous with an opposed landing' in the manual itself.[5] It appears that the drafting committee merely referred the recommendations of the Watson memorandum back to the Deputy Chiefs of Staff without considering that a centre devoted solely to developing the tactics and material for opposed landings was out of step with the general trend. The Deputy Chiefs were also slow to notice. Although Peirse for the R.A.F. maintained the view that opposed landings were an unlikely form of

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[1] CAB 54/4 D.C.O.S. 41; D.C.A.S. to Secretary of D.C.O.S. 6/4/37.
[2] CAB 54/4 D.C.O.S. 43; Note by the D.M.O.&I. 21/4/37.
[3] CAB 54/1 D.C.O.S. 17th Meeting, 27/4/37. Item 1.
[4] CAB 54/3 D.C.O.S. 44; Training and Development Centre for Opposed Landing Operations, Memorandum by the Secretary of the Drafting Committee, 29/4/37.
[5] CAB 54/3 D.C.O.S. 45 Manual of Combined Operations, Memorandum by the Secretary of the Drafting Committee.

operation, and Haining agreed that the Training Centre would have difficulty finding sufficient to do, the D.C.O.S. recommended such a body to the Chiefs of Staff.[1] As with their Deputies, the Chiefs of Staff initially accepted the recommendation unquestioningly.[2] However, this was an oversight; the R.A.F. soon realised that it had made a mistake and informed the newly created D.C.O.S. (I.T.), the inter-service committee created to co-ordinate training, that the Air Staff did not consider the said centre should confine its enquiries to opposed landings. The C.A.S., Newall, stated that he did not think the centre should be concerned solely with opposed landings, and that he and Peirse believed this was the intention of the Deputy Chiefs as well. The R.A.F. had woken up to the dichotomy between their intentions for the revised Manual and the intended training centre, and acted to bring the two into line; Newall explicitly stated that the Training Centre should 'include in its purview all the possible types of combined operations'.[3] The role of the inter-service committee and the training centre were therefore matched to the new Manual; the role of amphibious operations, particularly opposed landings, was reduced, and the emphasis increasingly placed on other combinations.

Nevertheless, despite the intentions of the Chief of Staff, the D.C.O.S.(I.T.) and the I.S.T.D.C. still proved to be largely concerned with the development of technology and tactics for opposed landing operations. The Interim Report of the Commandant of the I.S.T.D.C. dealt solely with the state of preparations for mounting such operations, and his recommendations for improving that situation.[4] This brought forth a plaintive remark from the R.A.F. representative on the inter-service committee that 'the report dealt solely with opposed landings and . . . that the Air Ministry hoped it would deal with other

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[1] CAB 54/1 Minutes of the 18th Meeting of the D.C.O.S., 29/7/37 & CAB 54/3 D.C.O.S. 50; Report of the Deputy Chiefs of Staff Committee, 14/10/37.
[2] CAB 53/8 221st Meeting of the C.O.S., 4/11/37.
[3] CAB 54/12 Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the D.C.O.S. (IT) Committee, 21/3/38.
[4] CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 11; Interim Report by the Training and Development Centre, Aug. 1938.

matters'.[1] When the report reached the Deputy Chiefs, Peirse made the same complaint, stressing that the Air Ministry considered opposed landings highly unlikely, and urging the consideration of other issues such as the use of airborne troops. The Commandant of the Training Centre was therefore instructed to this effect at the next meeting of the Deputy Chiefs, but in contrast to the progress made in the production of landing craft and tactical doctrine for opposed landings, pre-war investigation into airborne troops consisted of a single memorandum by the I.S.T.D.C.,[2] and a D.C.O.S. (I.T.) injunction to the effect that the Commandant should attend French trials of paratroops.[3] The inter-service committee and its associated training committee had, therefore, been created with a far broader brief than they actually adopted.

The creation of the I.S.T.D.C. was, therefore, a modest triumph for the Royal Naval College insofar as it turned out to be a bastion of amphibious thought in defiance of the intentions of the R.A.F. and Army. This triumph was, however, rather hollow, for although the I.S.T.D.C. was dominated by amphibious thinking, it was unable to persuade the Deputy Chiefs of Staff to alter their outlook.

The I.S.T.D.C. wasted no time before proposing the formulation of outline strategies to guide it in its preparations. The Commandant, Captain Maund, an amphibian since his involvement in Richmond's exercises in the 1920s, listed probable amphibious operations as he saw them in the Interim Report of the Centre. The list reveals the extent to which Maund was in sympathy with the views of the Staff College and more general amphibious feeling within the Navy. Maund considered that the political situation might bring about a requirement for operations in the Dodecanese, North Africa, the 'Danish Islands covering the Belts', Malaya, and Japanese islands including Formosa.[4] The acceptance of any one of these proposals would have provided

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[1] CAB 54/12 Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the D.C.O.S. (IT) Committee, 24/8/38.
[2] CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 17; Memorandum by the Commandant I.S.T.D.C., circulated 15/2/39.
[3] CAB 54/12 6th Meeting of the D.C.O.S. (IT); Item 2.
[4] CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 11; Interim Report, August 1938.

the I.S.T.D.C. with a raison d'être for immediate, or at any rate accelerated, preparation for amphibious operations in place of the pragmatic minimum-preparation philosophy of the General Staff. They were, however, rejected outright by the Deputy Chiefs of Staff, and the Commandant informed in no uncertain terms of the degree of preparation which the Deputy Chiefs were prepared to accept. The D.C.I.G.S., Adam, set out the War Office view; 'all that was required now was enough equipment so that a reasonable degree of up to date training could be carried out'.[1] The Commandant was to take as the basis of the Centre's work the assumption that 'an opposed landing on a hostile shore on a big scale was not a feasible operation in the early stages of a war'.[2] Thus the first attempt to follow up the successful establishment of the Training Centre with a definition of probable amphibious strategies had come to naught.

A second attempt resulted in a similar rebuff for the Commandant from the Staffs, although revealing a sympathy on the part of the Naval Staff. The first annual report by the Commandant included a revival of Watson's proposal that the I.S.T.D.C. should be responsible for drawing up appreciations of possible combined operations.[3] This amounted to a less direct approach to the question of persuading the Deputy Chiefs that there were specific amphibious strategies which could be planned for. The results were predictable; both the Air and General Staffs rejected the proposal out of hand.[4] The Naval Staff, whilst jealous of the Staff monopoly of planning, were willing to allow the I.S.T.D.C. to compile appreciations,[5] but in the face of Air and General Staff opposition the recommendation fell.[6]

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[1] CAB 54/2 Minutes of the 30th Meeting of the D.C.O.S. 15/11/38.
[2] CAB 54/2 Minutes of the 31st Meeting of the D.C.O.S., 7/12/38.
[3] CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 14; Annual Report of the I.S.T.D.C. 5/12/38.
[4] CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 19; I.S.T.D.C. Annual Report, Comments by the General Staff 8/3/39, & D.C.O.S. (IT)29; Comments by the Air Staff 29/4/39.
[5] CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 27; I.S.T.D.C. Annual Report, Comments by the Admiralty..
[6] CAB 54/5 D.C.O.S. 89; I.S.T.D.C. Annual Report, Report by the Sub-Committee on Inter-Service Training. The D.C.O.S. (IT) report makes no mention of the compilation of appreciations.

The I.S.T.D.C. was also unable to persuade the Staffs to alter their stance that all that was required was the minimum provision for training and expansion in time of war. As with the question of outlining possible operations, the Naval Staff were sympathetic but not prepared to fight their fellow staffs over the question. This refusal to move to a greater degree of readiness than that desired by the General Staff is most clearly illustrated by the I.S.T.D.C.'s repeated attempts to win approval for the construction of a Landing Craft Carrier, which they regarded as a vital element in any opposed landing. This proposal was first outlined in the Interim Report,[1] and received strong support from the D.C.O.S. (I.T.), chaired by the Assistant Chief of Naval Staff, Rear Admiral Holland.[2] However, the General Staff refused to countenance this departure from the minimum level of preparation which they considered necessary. The Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Adam, stated that whereas landing craft could be used for supplying an army operating on the coast, referring specifically to the North African coast, he considered a landing craft carrier to be a 'luxury' in peacetime.[3] A second proposal for the construction of a Landing Craft Carrier featured in the Annual Report for 1938.[4] On this occasion the D.C.O.S. (I.T.) was only prepared to recommend that the Motor Transport Ships currently under construction should be adapted for beach landings if this could be done without delay to their completion.[5] In the event this proposal was overtaken by a hastily commissioned report on the current state of readiness to mount a combined operation, to which the I.S.T.D.C. appended a further request for a Landing Craft Carrier.[6] Despite the increasing likelihood of war the Deputy Chiefs refused to go further than to recommend investigation of the D.C.O.S. (IT)'s modest proposal for adapting the Motor Transport

[1] CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 11.
[2] CAB 54/12 D.C.O.S. (IT) 4th Meeting, 24/8/38 & CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 13; Report by D.C.O.S. (IT) on Interim Report of I.S.T.D.C. 30/8/38.
[3] CAB 54/2 Minutes of the 30th Meeting of the D.C.O.S. 15/11/38 & the 31st Meeting, 7/12/38.
[4] CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 14.
[5] CAB 54/12 Minutes of the 7th Meeting of the D.C.O.S. (IT) 11/5/39.
[6] CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 28; Landing Attacks, Present Situation as Regards Material and Personnel, Report by the I.S.T.D.C. 5/4/39.

Ships.[1] Thus right up to the outbreak of war the I.S.T.D.C. was unable to persuade the Staffs to alter their viewpoint and increase the state of readiness for combined operations.

The sole success of the I.S.T.D.C. in the short space available to it before the war was an acceleration in the provision of landing craft.[2] However, this did not mark a change of stance on the part of the Staff as the I.S.T.D.C.'s proposal was pitched to tie in with the line taken by the Deputy Chiefs; by pointing out that the time delay before even a Brigade could be landed would be greater than six months, the Training Centre won permission to increase the peacetime stock of landing craft to the number necessary to cut this time by half. Hence this small success was not a departure from the line which the Deputy Chiefs had held throughout; they remained committed to the minimum provision which would allow training and expansion, but the I.S.T.D.C. had managed to convince them that this minimum provision was higher than previously thought. Thus the increased provision did not herald any change of outlook, and with war only a month away, it was a poor achievement.

This small victory apart, the I.S.T.D.C. and D.C.O.S. (I.T.)'s work chiefly consisted of a more systematic continuation of the work of the ad hoc inter-service committees which had preceded them. The main effort in the two years before the war went into amendment of the Manual and the provision of a simplified version for junior officers; the compilation of a bombardment code to replace that designed in the 1920s and a similar updating of the procedure relating to maps. As throughout the inter-war years, the bulk of the work was related to doctrine and staff questions, not to the more virgin issues of strategy and material.

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[1] CAB 54/2 Minutes of the 40th Meeting of the D.C.O.S., 10/7/39.

[2] Recommended in CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 28 and accepted by the Deputy Chiefs at their 40th Meeting, CAB 54/2.

Both before the First World War, and throughout the inter-war period, the degree of progress in amphibious questions reflected the interest shown in such issues by the service Staffs. Thus before the First World War, the General Staff, possessed of an amphibious strategy for the defence of Egypt, provided the driving force for progress in combined operations. In the inter-war period, Naval Staff interest in such operations. as part of their favoured strategy, provided impetus, but with the services more closely integrated, amphibious developments were largely governed by the generally accepted pragmatic approach formulated by the General Staff. The final years before the war, though marked by the creation of the I.S.T.D.C. and an increased provision of landing craft, saw no departure from the principles which had governed the preparation for such operations since the 1920s; reflecting rather the increasing interest of the staffs in combinations in general and the greater availability of funds. Although enthusiasts such as the Staff Colleges did provide ideas, only those which fitted the parameters of the Staffs' strategic outlook were accepted. The degree of preparation with which Britain entered the Second World War was wholly the result of the priorities allotted by the Staffs, and if credit is due for the fact that Britain, lacking an amphibious strategy of the sort guiding American progress, was relatively well prepared, then the credit should go to the Staffs.

Chapter V. Command and Control of Amphibious Operations.

The nature of the British approach to amphibious operations placed a permanent emphasis on the co-operation of the three services. Unlike the Americans and the Japanese, the British did not attempt to resolve the problems of operations which overlapped the normal boundaries of service responsibility by creating a specialist force; they were, therefore, forced to rely upon co-ordinating the efforts of the existing services. This co-operative approach applied both at the level of the high command, where the plans of the services had to be co-ordinated, and in the field, where conjoint commanders were appointed to control the operations. The problems of exercising field command of combined operations required the co-ordination of the fighting services: the problems of high command added a political element to these difficulties.

To meet these requirements a distinct trend towards the integration of the Services occurred between 1900 and 1940. At both levels of command systems were developed specifically for amphibious operations which only gradually became general to the British military structure as it was realised that all operations in the future would be in some way combined. It is argued here that the Chiefs of Staff Committee was largely created as a body for co-ordinating the Services in amphibious enterprises and only subsequently assumed a general responsibility for controlling wars as a whole; similarly lower-level service preparations for amphibious operations were increasingly submerged in a more general effort to co-ordinate the three arms. Ironically, whereas in the case of the higher command this general trend towards co-operation was to enhance the British system for the control of amphibious operations, in the specific case of field command, the move towards providing guidelines for all combined operations prevented a final decision on the form that command of an amphibious operation should take. In general, though, the arrangements for both the higher command and the field command of amphibious operations improved markedly throughout the period.

High (Strategic) Command.

Traditionally co-operation between the services was provided for by the commanders of the service contingents actually engaged on an operation. However, in age of forward-planning General Staffs, with increasing departmental control over planning and operations being exercised from London, it became necessary to devise a system for co-ordinating the service departments. Furthermore, as the departments came to exercise a more interventionist role, the degree of influence of their civilian heads became an issue, for their scope for intervention in hitherto military matters increased. The first attempt to create a structure which would define politico-military relations and facilitate inter-service planning was the Committee of Imperial Defence, created to implement the Esher Committee's favoured strategies, but which failed as a result of inter-service rivalries. The First World War was therefore entered upon without any such system, and the result was the politically-driven Gallipoli Campaign. In the aftermath of this disaster, however, the degree of political intervention reduced, and the Service Chiefs initiated a practice of conferring on combined issues before Government consideration. With the end of the war an attempt was made by Churchill to overturn this co-operative practice, substituting instead a single integrated Ministry of Defence and Joint Staff over the three services. However, Churchill's proposals were rejected in favour of a development of what was coming to be known as the Chiefs of Staff Committee, which gradually developed into the Government's official military advisers on all military matters thus addressing both the questions of inter-service co-operation and politico-military relations. In the last years before the Second World War the Chiefs of Staff system assumed a more general responsibility for the conduct of wars, their original co-operative joint planning role being subsumed in a more integrated approach to combined operations.

Early Attempts at Enhancing Co-operation and the Experience of War.

The first attempt to create a permanent structure to deal with these difficulties was the Report of the Esher Committee. By creating the C.I.D. as a forum in which ministers and military could meet face to face,[1] and supporting the D.N.I., Captain Ottley, in his proposal to create a Sub-Committee in which combined plans could be prepared,[2] the Triumvirate sought to resolve the problems raised by the strategies which they favoured.[3] Combined plans could be worked out by the Staffs and conjointly presented to ministers in the C.I.D. However, the inability of the Navy to accept the Army's commitment to France shattered this scheme when Fisher withdrew Ottley from the informal version of the Sub-Committee meeting in the winter of 1905-6.[4] Henceforth no inter-service consideration of plans took place. The 1906 Memorandum dealing with operations against the Dardanelles consisted of two separate appraisals by the service departments.[5] Similarly the 1909 investigation into the Military Needs of Empire,[6] and the infamous 114th meeting of the C.I.D. saw contradictory schemes presented by the services for the politicians to decide between.[7] Although the C.I.D. itself survived as a forum in which politicians and military professionals could meet face to face, there was no other body which provided for inter-service conferral, and thus the only official contact between the two services took place in the political sphere. This lack of any body to co-ordinate the planning efforts of the services was reflected in the pre-war combined operations manuals, which referred vaguely to the 'naval and military authorities'.

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[1] CAB 17/3 Report of the War Office Reconstitution Committee, Section I. 11/1/04.
[2] CAB 17/95, the original draft of Ottley's Memo, includes Sir George Clarke's amendments.
[3] See Chapter 1 Page 28.
[4] 'Sir John Fisher begs me to say . . . that he does not think it would be advisable for us to participate in any more discussions on this question at present'. C.C.A.C. ESR 10/38 Ottley to Sir George Clarke, 18/01/06.
[5] CAB 38/12 C.I.D. 92-B. "Memorandum by the General Staff upon the Possibility of a Joint Naval and Military Attack Upon the Dardanelles and Remarks by the Director of Naval Intelligence Upon the Attached Memorandum".
[6] CAB 16/5 Proceedings of a Sub-Committee to Consider the Military Needs of Empire 1908-9.
[7] CAB 2/2 Minutes of the 114th Meeting of the C.I.D. 23/8/11.

The arrangements for co-ordinating the efforts of the services deteriorated further on the outbreak of war. Richmond's attempt to revive Ottley's Sub Committee merely produced a short-lived body to co-ordinate mere colonial operations,[1] and its parent, the C.I.D. itself, lapsed as intended on the outbreak of war. The situation was thus worse than ever so far as the planning of combined enterprises was concerned. There was still no forum for inter-service planning, whilst the only organised channel by which the servicemen could present their views to a ministerial audience wider than their immediate departmental chief had ceased to exist. Henceforth the only channel for inter-service communication was via the political heads of the two service departments, who were therefore free to impose their own perceptions over the work of the military professionals, and only convey those elements of their advisers' views which concurred with their own. Almost from the outset, therefore, the conduct of the war lay in the hands of a triumvirate of the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for War and First Lord of the Admiralty; Asquith, Kitchener and Churchill.[2] Although a War Council with a wider membership, including the professional heads of the services, was established by the end of the year, in reality the conduct of the war remained in the hands of these three men. The War Council, in contrast to the C.I.D., was executive; it substituted for the Cabinet, whereas its predecessor had merely advised it.[3] As a result the servicemen considered that they were in the position of advisers rather than full members, and refrained from challenging the views put forward by their ministerial chiefs.[4] Despite the semblance of military expertise, therefore, the War Council was in reality an extension of the ad hoc meetings of the departmental heads and the Prime Minister which had been taking place since the war began. Joint action between the services continued to be co-ordinated by the

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[1] See Chapter II Page 51.
[2] CAB 19/1 Dardanelles Commission Report First Report, p 6.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid. p. 7.

services' political heads, detailed staff examination and co-operation was therefore impossible, and the Dardanelles Campaign was the result.

For the most part this situation was unintentional. The true situation was not realised by all those involved in guiding the British war effort, whilst the Dardanelles Commission found it difficult to believe the manner in which the campaign had been set in process. Thus Lord Grey informed the Commission that he considered strategy the concern of the service departments, combined operations being worked out between them, with the War Council acting as an adjudicator in the event of deadlock.[1] The members of the Commission repeatedly sought to extract some proof that the campaign had been conjointly considered by the Service Departments, incredulous that the operation could have been commenced without any direct conferral between the professionals of the two services.[2] One member, more outspoken than the others, chose to record his disbelief in a separate report, and concluded; 'I strongly recommend that operations of a similar character should be thoroughly considered by a joint naval and military staff before they are undertaken'.[3]

A distinct improvement in the manner of arranging combined strategy followed the disaster at Gallipoli. Between the realisation that the Dardanelles Campaign had failed and the end of the war, there were no operations which called for co-operation at a strategic level between the Army and the Navy. Michael Howard has stated that 'after the collapse of the Dardanelles Campaign each fought a virtually separate war', without 'occasion for either friction or intimate co-operation'.[4] However, although no schemes were put into effect, a number were planned, and the planning process in these operations reveals the extent to which the command structure had changed in the course of the war.

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[1] CAB 19/33 Proceedings of the Dardanelles Commission, Lord Grey of Fallodon's Evidence, p. 47.

[2] This particularly concerned Field Marshal Sir William Nicholson, see for instance his cross-examination of Churchill, CAB 19/33 p. 105; of Vice Admiral Sir Henry Oliver, CAB 19/33 p. 130; & of Admiral Sir Henry Jackson, CAB 19/33 p. 145.

[3] CAB 19/1 Dardanelles Commission First Report, Memorandum by Mr Roch, 22/12/16, p 60.

[4] Michael Howard "*The Central Organisation of Defence*", R.U.S.I., 1970. p 6.

A clear improvement in the approach to planning combined operations is evident in the preparations for a landing on the Belgian Coast in 1916 and 1917.

The history of proposals for operations on the Belgian Coast provides a case study of the improvement in inter-service co-operation at the highest level of command during the course of the war. The first proposal was made by Sir John French in January 1915, but his project for an advance along the coast in co-operation with the Navy was rejected by the War Council in favour of Churchill's more ambitious schemes. At this date the staffs were not conferring and the decision was taken under the same conditions which had led to the Dardanelles Campaign.[1] However, when the second proposal for operations on the Belgian Coast was aired by Admiral Bacon at the end of the same year,[2] the situation had altered dramatically. Bacon's proposal was referred to the C.I.G.S. by the Admiralty Staff, and in turn referred to the C.-in-C. in the field,[3] before the Prime Minister, standing in for the Secretary of State for War, was informed of the wishes of the two service departments.[4] The third airing of the scheme was yet more professional. The First Sea Lord and the Chief of the Admiralty War Staff proposed the project as a means of striking a blow against the German submarine campaign (a hope now regarded as erroneous but nevertheless a clear departure from Churchill's spurious justifications for amphibious ventures). The professional heads of the services and the prospective commanders met and discussed the project, and only then was the Prime Minister's approval for the proposal sought. Conjoint staff consideration and the submission of an agreed proposal for political approval had replaced the previous situation in which the various service views were co-ordinated in, and by, the ministerial body, assuming that

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[1] CAB 42/1/16 Minutes of the War Council Meeting of 13/1/15.

[2] J. E. Edmonds, "*Official History of the War, Military Operations France and Belgium 1917*", (MacMillan, London, 1948) Vol. II. p. 2.

[3] WO 158/21. No. 21. "Project for Combined Naval and Military Operations on the Belgian Coast", Memorandum by the C.I.G.S., 12/11/15.

[4] Ibid. Murray to the Secretary of State for War, 15/11/15.

the departmental heads saw fit to convey them at all. It remained to be seen whether this improvement would survive the return to peacetime conditions.

The Co-operative Era, 1920-35.

In the aftermath of the war two distinct approaches to the question of planning inter-service operations were posited. The first comprised a clean break with the traditional co-operative approach, substituting instead a single staff over the three services and a Ministry of Defence over that. The second was a direct development of the system which had emerged during the war. The former "integrated" approach commanded the support of such ministerial heavyweights as Churchill, who also wished to restore the lost ministerial involvement in detailed planning, whilst the latter "co-operative" approach was championed chiefly by the Naval Staff, who were, unsurprisingly, opposed to the restoration of ministerial involvement and further, only desired that level of co-ordination between the services which was necessary to prepare for the Far Eastern Strategy which they favoured throughout the 1920s. For the first half of the 1920s these opposing views clashed over the symbolic issue of the establishment of a Joint Staff College, a debate which continued until 1927, by which date the naval view had conclusively triumphed.

Churchill, as Secretary of State for War and Air, revealed his views to the Commons during the post-war debates on service economies. He concluded that 'the final system to which we will be drawn by logic, by economic and by war efficiency', was 'a combined general War Staff for the three services'.[1] He subsequently described the 'the formation of this Joint Staff and this Joint Staff College with special training to enable the officers who will serve on that Joint Staff to be created without delay' as the first step towards the eventual goal of a single Ministry of Defence to administer the three

[1] Hansard, 15/12/19, Vol. 123. Column 55.

services.[1] In accordance with these views, Churchill recommended the creation of an inter-service committee of Ministers and Service Chiefs and the creation of a Joint Staff College when the CID reconvened in June 1920.[2] The Ministerial Committee would have reversed the gains of the war years, whilst the proposed Joint Staff would have comprised an end to the old system of inter-service co-operation on individual operations, replacing it with a permanently integrated high command for the three services.

The Naval Staff, fresh from the experiences of the war and determined not to surrender their responsibility for planning to a joint staff, opposed both proposals. Inter-service co-operation at the strategic level was, they argued, best arranged by the professional heads of the three services meeting in the absence of their ministerial superiors. Whilst so far as a joint staff was concerned, co-operation between the services was the exception rather than the rule, and inter-staff activity should therefore be confined to individual cases, where it could be carried out 'on the spot by close co-operation of the two staffs.[3] This last was special pleading on the part of the Admiralty, which was soon to propose its own Whitehall inter-staff committee for planning specific operations, but the Naval Staff were clearly opposed to the reintroduction of ministers into the combined planning process and to any suggestion of a permanent joint staff over and above the Naval Staff itself.

The debate concentrated on the Joint Staff and the Joint Staff College which Churchill saw as the first step towards it. His proposed ministerial committee received no support at all at the CID and sank into obscurity; it appears that none of his political colleagues were prepared to support such a proposal from a man with Churchill's reputation as a military meddler.[4] With the demise of the Ministerial Committee,

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[1] Hansard, 22/3/20, Vol. 127 Col. 183.

[2] CAB 2/3 Minutes of the 133rd Meeting of the C.I.D. 29/6/20.

[3] CAB 5/3 C.I.D. 118-C Imperial Naval Defence.

[4] CAB 2/3 Minutes of the 159th Meeting of the C.I.D. 12/7/22 [23rd Meeting of the Standing Defence Sub-Committee].

however, the role for which a joint staff college would prepare its graduates was less clear, and the Naval Staff were able to alter the basis of the debate. The First Sea Lord suggested that a Joint Staff College would serve to improve understanding between the three services, thus subtly misdirecting Churchill's proposal away from an integrated joint staff towards a mere enhancement of the officer exchanges which had taken place between the Staff Colleges before the war.[1]

This limited view of the Joint Staff College was shared by the two committees set up to investigate the question. The first, under Churchill, lapsed with the fall of the Coalition, being replaced by a new commission under Evelyn Wood. However, none of the military members of either body saw the Staff College as leading to a single staff. Thus of the first committee, Major General Anderson stressed that 'it should be in no way the duty of a Joint Staff College to instruct in the details of the staff systems and duties of the three services, a general knowledge, sufficient to ensure intelligent co-operation only is required'.[2] His naval and air force counterparts, Vice-Admiral Richmond and Air Vice Marshal Game,[3] concurred; what was required was an Imperial Defence College which taught a broad appreciation of Britain's military position, not a Joint Staff College capable of creating a single inter-service staff.[4] The same view was held by their successors. Richmond alone survived to serve in the second incarnation of the committee, but his new colleagues concurred in their predecessors' views. General Romer suggested that the aim was to produce officers who could 'think in three dimensions', and Air Vice Marshal Salmond urged 'the necessity in combined operations of having staff officers who understand the points of view of the three services.[5] The final report reflected these co-

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[1] Ibid.

[2] CAB 16/45 Combined Staff College. Memorandum by Major General Sir Hastings Anderson, Sept. 1922.

[3] Ibid. Memoranda by Rear Admiral H. W. Richmond and Air Vice Marshal P. W. Game, both Sept. 1922.

[4] CAB 16/45 SS (J.S.C.) 6 Minutes of Preliminary Meeting in the Unavoidable Absence of the Chairman, 22/9/22.

[5] CAB 16/45 SS (J.S.C.) Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the Sub-Committee on the Institution of a Joint Staff College for Officers in the Three Services, 20/3/22.

operative rather than integrative views; the College was being directed away from Churchill's Joint Staff concept.

However, one possible avenue for improving the combined planning structure remained. Richmond suggested that the Imperial Defence College should act as a think tank for the services, considering strategic questions and pronouncing on them.[1] His proposal was accepted by both incarnations of the Committee and embodied in the final report, which recommended that the I.D.C. consider strategic problems 'in their broadest aspect . . . with a view to subsequent action being taken on the conclusions arrived at'.[2] Thus although Churchill's integrated staff appeared doomed, the Wood Committee reported in favour of an inter-service think tank for combined enterprises.

Even in going so far, however, Richmond was exceeding his brief. The Directors of the Admiralty's Staff Divisions had already laid down unequivocally that 'any proposal to form a Ministry of Defence or extend the machinery of the C.I.D. along the lines of a Ministry of Defence, and proposals for training a staff for these institutions should be strongly opposed'.[3] Richmond had been briefed in person by the First Sea Lord,[4] and informed that 'the formation of a Combined Staff acting as a kind of super staff over the Admiralty and other Staffs is highly undesirable . . . the higher strategic problems of war and the preparation necessary in time of peace should be dealt with by the combined staffs consisting of the Chiefs of Staff. Decisions arrived at by this body can be carried out in the respective spheres by the separate staffs, co-operating with the other staffs as and when necessary'.[5] Richmond's proposal was only in keeping with the letter and not the spirit of these instructions.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] ADM 1/8644/169 Report of the Sub-Committee on the Institution of a Joint Staff College for Officers in the Three Services. 29/3/23.

[3] ADM 1/8644/169 Minute by Rear Admiral V. H. S. Haggard, Director Training and Staff Duties Division, 7/11/22.

[4] ADM 1/8644/169, Minute by Captain Bellairs, Naval Assistant to the First Lord, 1/2/23.

[5] Ibid. Secretary of the Admiralty to Rear Admiral H. W. Richmond, 19/2/23.

In the short term Richmond's proposal was irrelevant. Earl Cavan, the C.I.G.S., who had already scorned advance planning, rejected the entire idea of an Imperial Defence College on the basis of Churchill's hopes for it. Cavan ridiculed the idea of 'producing supermen by teaching' and voiced fears of the removal of the 'Chiefs of Staff from the personnel of the Committee of Imperial Defence to make room for Graduates of the Joint Staff College'.[1] With Churchill gone from office and the Chiefs of Staff agreed that the College threatened the independence of their staffs, the Joint Staff College proposal was tacitly dropped for three years.[2]

To follow Churchill's proposals to the bitter end, before turning to the co-operative approach which triumphed over them, it is necessary to jump forward three years. On his return to power as Chancellor, Churchill enquired as to the status of his proposed college,[3] but the Chiefs of Staff, reinforced by three years operation in the meantime, responded with a curt gloss on the Wood Committee's report. Stressing that a single staff was an unworkable concept, they recommended a reduction in the number of graduates at the College, that the graduates be utilised within the existing co-operative structure and that the think tank role should be controlled by the Chiefs of Staff themselves.[4] Churchill attempted to challenge this but was too late, the CID registering its belief that 'the Committee of Chiefs of Staff . . . already performs many of the functions of a Joint Staff'.[5] The College was thus emasculated, and its investigatory role entirely at the mercy of the Chiefs of Staff.[6] The result was predictable; the Chiefs starved the College of the information necessary to make its investigations relevant,

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[1] CAB 53/12 C.O.S. 8 Institution of a Joint Staff College for Officers of the Three Services, Note by the C.I.G.S., 25/1/24.

[2] CAB 53/12 C.O.S. 34 Institution of a Joint Staff College for Officers of the Three Services, Note by the Secretary, 5/3/26.

[3] Hankey noted that the question had been raised by the Chancellor, CAB 53/1 Minutes of the 27th Meeting of the C.O.S., 11/3/26.

[4] CAB 4/14 C.I.D. 689-B; The Imperial Defence College, Report by the Chiefs of Staff, 27/5/26.

[5] CAB 2/4 Minutes of the 214th Meeting of the C.I.D. 10/6/26.

[6] This concurs generally with B. Hunt "*Sailor - Scholar, Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, 1871-1946*". (Wilfred Laurier University Press, Ontario, 1982). pp. 156 - 7.

rejecting the Commandant's requests for C.I.D. papers,[1] and were thus able to dismiss its findings as 'really only exercises to make the students concentrate their thoughts'.[2] The last integrated proposals were thus laid to rest, leaving the way open for the Naval Staff's favoured approach of enhancing the co-operative inter-relations of the services.

Churchill's attempt to create a permanently integrated staff having failed, the problem of co-ordinating the efforts of the three services in combined enterprises remained. The Chiefs of Staff Committee, which had evolved from the wartime co-operation evident at the time of the Belgian Coast plans, although it provided intercommunication between the Service Staffs, had thus far only operated as a liaison committee, lacking any detailed planning capability. Joint planning was however becoming more imperative, at least so far as the Navy were concerned, as their Far Eastern Strategy took shape. It was therefore necessary, in the opinion of the Naval Staff, to provide for this planning whilst at the same time avoiding any trend which might lead to the single superior staff which Churchill had envisaged. Their answer was to enhance the Chiefs of Staff Committee by the addition of a planning committee which would act to co-ordinate the efforts of the separate planning departments of the three services. This body would therefore enable the combined enterprises integral to the Navy's strategy to be prepared for without imperilling the independence of the individual service staffs.

It is clear that the Naval Staff sought to facilitate the planning of the amphibious operations which they expected to arise in a war with Japan, whilst at the same time undermining Churchill's schemes. In direct response to Churchill's first proposal they suggested as an alternative that each Chief of Staff 'should be assisted by a division or section of his own staff for the preparation of war plans and the study of imperial defence problems'.[3] Similarly, following the report of the Wood Committee, the Director of Plans

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[1] CAB 53/1 Minutes of the 43rd C.O.S. 25/1/27.
[2] CAB 53/2 Minutes of the 65th C.O.S., 23/2/28.
[3] CAB 5-3 C.I.D. 118-C. Imperial Naval Defence.

at the Admiralty, Dudley Pound, produced a refined version of this recommendation, urging a Sub-Committee to the Chiefs of Staff consisting of the heads of the three services' planning departments. The timing makes it clear that these proposals were intended to undermine the case for Churchill's Joint Staff, as well as being, as Pound noted 'necessary work which now goes by default'.[1] The Naval Staff's proposals were thus geared to provide the planning their schemes required whilst fending off Churchill's threat to the Navy's independence.

Initially, however, the Navy's plans made no more headway than Churchill's. Cavan's belief that such operations were too remote to be realistically planned for meant that the proposal lapsed in 1923.[2] No real progress had therefore been made in the planning of combined operations by the time the first edition post war edition of the Manual was issued; consequently that text merely urged the services to co-operate in drawing up their separate appreciations for the Government, and made no mention of the Chiefs of Staff Committee whatsoever.[3]

Unsurprisingly, the Navy's proposals for a Joint Planning Committee were revived in 1927, simultaneously with Churchill's return to power and his revival of the Joint Staff proposals. With Cavan's retirement the War Office was more amenable, and the Chiefs of Staff Committee therefore accepted Beatty's suggestion that plans for war against Japan would require inter-service co-operation.[4] A Joint Planning Committee was therefore established early in 1927.[5] The Navy was deliberately moulding the Chiefs of Staff structure to allow for the planning of the amphibious operations which were integral to its plan of campaign in the Far East and yet at the same time resist any suggestion that all operations should henceforth be controlled by a single omni-service

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[1] ADM 1/8644169 Minute by Pound, D.o.P. 12/5/23.
[2] CAB 53/1 Minutes of the 6th Meeting of the C.O.S., 8/1/24.
[3] AIR 10/1206 Manual of Combined Operations 1925 pp. 16-17.
[4] CAB 53/2 Minutes of the 44th Meeting of the C.O.S., 14/3/27.
[5] CAB 55/4 Joint Planning Committee of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, Secretary's Note, 31/3/27.

authority. It was no coincidence that the first proposals which the Joint Planning Committee drafted concerned a punitive amphibious operation in the approaches to Canton; a co-operative system for planning combined operations had been instituted.[1]

Simultaneously with this development the position of the Chiefs of Staff in relation to the Government was finally stated explicitly. Taking advantage of Maurice Hankey's definition of the various forms of government in war,[2] the Chiefs defined their own position in relation to the government;

> 'It should be a cardinal principle that the Organ of Supreme Control should take no decision in regard to the initiation or conduct of operations without consulting the Chiefs of Staff. If, for reasons of policy, a decision contrary to their advice is taken, the fact ought to be recorded . . . silence on the part of the Chiefs of Staff should not, we submit, be taken as acquiescence in the decisions taken'.[3]

With the acceptance of this formula by the C.I.D. the Chiefs of Staff structure's preparations for planning combined operations were largely complete.[4] A body for joint planning had been created, and the service professionals' views were guaranteed a voice in counsel. A repetition of the events which had led to the Gallipoli fiasco had been insured against, and at the same time the independence of the services had been preserved.

The Move Towards Integration, 1935-39.

It is clear that by the close of the 1920s the relations between the senior service advisers, and their relations with the Government had crystallised. However, the Chiefs of Staff now began to move away from their original role as an instrument for planning individual combined strategies and operations and develop into an executive authority for

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[1] CAB 55/4 JP 3 Question of Operations Against the Bogue and Dane's Island Forts. 18/4/27.
[2] CAB 4/17 C.I.D. 882-B. The Supreme Control in War, Memorandum by the Secretary, 24/5/28.
[3] CAB 4/17 C.I.D. 883-B. Supreme Control in War, Memorandum by the C.O.S. 23/5/28.
[4] CAB 2/5 239th Meeting of the C.I.D., 13/12/28; It was made the responsibility of the Secretary of the Cabinet to present these two papers to the Prime Minister during the precautionary period.

controlling the armed forces in time of war. The Abyssinian Crisis brought this issue to a head.

Abyssinia forced a realisation that all future wars would be combined to some extent. Forced to act in concert, the Chiefs of Staff issued general instructions through their Chairman directly to the Commander of the service most concerned, the Navy, and instructed the C.-in-C.s of the other two services to co-operate.[1] By such expedients co-operation between the services was ensured and once the Abyssinian Crisis died down, the Chiefs attempted to create a peacetime formula to provide the same results as the expedient they had adopted in the emergency.

The War Office was the Department most convinced that all future operations would be some form of combination. The General Staff therefore suggested a two tier system; individual Service Departments would be responsible for administrative issues, but the Chiefs of Staff should be responsible for the issue of general instructions and outline plans to all the Commanders-in-Chief in a theatre. Thus the War Office was suggesting that the general guidance of all operations of war should be the remit of the Chiefs of Staff. A move away from the perception of the Chiefs of Staff as co-ordinators of specific operations towards a more comprehensive role as supervisors of the entire war effort was therefore under way.

The reform of the C.O.S. came to be tied in with the ongoing reform of the Manual of Combined Operations. The C.I.G.S. suggested that the C.O.S. should issue orders over the signature of the Minister for Co-ordination of Defence, their recently acquired occasional civilian Chairman.[2] But this solution was considered to be unworkable on the grounds that as the Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence was not head of an executive department he could not issue orders. Hankey was therefore

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[1] CAB 54/3 D.C.O.S. 37; 'The Higher Control of Operations in War', 21/12/36, includes a description of the development of the C.O.S.-CinC communications in the Abyssinian Crisis.
[2] CAB 53/28 C.O.S. 495. Deverell to Hankey, 9/7/36.

instructed to produce a solution.[1] By chance the Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice Marshal Courtney, was standing in for his superior and noted that the Deputy Chiefs of Staff were currently revising the Manual of Combined Operations, which dealt with the relations of Commanders-in-Chief in the field. Consequently the final pre-war revision of the Manual and the restructuring of the higher command took place in combination.[2]

The growing belief that all future operations would be combined had also been behind the decision to revise the Manual. The combination of Hankey's inquiry into the Higher Command with the Deputy Chiefs' revision of the Manual guaranteed that the expectation that all future operations would be combined was carried into the recommendations for the reform of the Chiefs of Staff. Major General Haining, the Commandant of the I.D.C., had reported in 1936 that the Manual was once again out of date due to the further development of the Chiefs of Staff structure.[3] However, Haining's view of how the Chiefs of Staff Committee worked went further than the Committee itself had hitherto recognised. Haining considered that the Committee of Imperial Defence (by which he meant the entire structure, including the Chiefs of Staff), rather than the specific departments was responsible for the formulation and maintenance of plans in accordance with the political situation.[4] Thus Haining was suggesting that the Chiefs were not simply a body for the co-ordination of specific operations, but should exercise a general initiatory and planning role. To this end, Haining stressed (although he allowed for Ministerial initiatives) that the Chiefs of Staff should be the main source of proposals for operations, and further, that the Joint Planning Committee should be used in the formulation of their proposals into plans. As Haining saw it, any proposal for a combined operation should first be considered by the Chiefs in relation to the war as a

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[1] CAB 53/6 186th Meeting of the C.O.S., 16/10/36.

[2] CAB 53/6 187th Meeting of the C.O.S., 20/10/36; Hankey suggests that he should work out a solution with the D.C.O.S. who are revising the Manual of Combined Operations.

[3] CAB 53/27 C.O.S. 427; Report by the Commandant on the 9th Course at the Imperial Defence College, 1935. January 1936.

[4] CAB 54/1 6th Meeting of the D.C.O.S., 16/7/36. Appendix C to Enclosure to C.O.S. 427.

whole; their findings would be put to the ministerial body; if the ministerial body approved it, the Chiefs and the Joint Planning Committee would draw up a more detailed plan, which, on being approved by the ministerial body, would form the basis of the service departments' preparations.[1] Haining's report had formed the background to the War Office's proposal, and was also the basis upon which the Deputy Chiefs were basing their revision of the Manual;[2] consequently it guided the D.C.O.S. in their collaboration with Hankey on the formulation of a system for the higher control of operations in war.

Thus, when Hankey and the Deputy Chiefs set about systematising the position of the Chiefs of Staff they followed the line laid down by Haining. In their view policy was the function of Government; plans were the concern of the Chiefs of Staff assisted by the Joint Planning Committee; and detailed instructions were the concern of the service departments, including their individual staffs.[3] This arrangement satisfactorily covered all the constitutional proprieties and accepted the War Office assumption that the Chiefs would operate in a supervisory role over the entire war as all operations would be in some way combined. The Chiefs of Staff system, which had largely been evolved for amphibious operations was thus being altered to include all operations of war, although as these included amphibious ventures this did not reduce its capacity to conduct such operations.

The Admiralty weakly opposed the idea of a Chiefs of Staff structure which would oversee the entire war effort. Throughout the inter-war years the Naval Staff had repeatedly opposed the creation of a combined command structure with a general authority; Beatty had stated in 1920 that the bulk of operations would continue to be single service concerns, and whilst pressing for the creation of the Joint Planning Committee the Naval Staff had stressed that this inter-service body was designed to plan

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[1] Ibid.

[2] CAB 53/5 Minutes of the 162nd Meeting of the C.O.S., 24/1/36; The C.I.G.S., Sir A.A. Montgomery-Massingberd notes that Haining's report 'would be valuable in the revision of the Manual'.

[3] CAB 54/3 D.C.O.S. 37; Appendix, 21/12/36.

specific combined campaigns or operations. It had never been the intention of the Admiralty that the Chiefs of Staff Committee should superintend all naval strategy, only that it should tie in the efforts of the other services when the Navy required it, and this view persisted into the 1930s. Thus, when faced with Hankey and the Deputy Chiefs' proposals, Chatfield retorted that 'too much stress was placed on the assumption that the majority of operations in war in the future would be combined operations', whereas he held that Abyssinia had been 'an altogether exceptional case'.[1] In this uncharacteristically narrow outburst, Chatfield was thus reiterating the established Admiralty view; a joint planning body was required for working out specific operations but not for all aspects of a war. This attitude also led the First Sea Lord to argue for a Ministerial Body to be set up in peacetime which could approve plans in advance; a proposal in keeping with his Service's picture of the C.O.S. as a body designed to plan a few specific combinations, rather than a staff structure capable of co-ordinating all strategy on a day to day basis.[2] Nevertheless, Chatfield did not press his opposition to the point of rejecting the Deputy Chief's proposals. Both the Deputy Chief's proposals and Chatfield's amendments were accepted by the C.I.D., marking the last steps in the evolution of the higher command before the war.[3]

So far as amphibious operations specifically were concerned, therefore, the same trends which lay behind the creation of the I.S.T.D.C. were also evident in the arrangements made for command.[4] In the late 1930s a general preparation for integrated warfare replaced the emphasis on perfecting a system for initiating single operations. Specific combinations, such as amphibious operations, were absorbed in preparations for general co-operation in war. It was no longer necessary to make specific arrangements for the planning of such operations, as all operations would be considered from an inter-

[1] CAB 53/6 191st Meeting of the C.O.S., 11/1/37.
[2] Ibid.
[3] CAB 2/6 Minutes of the 288th C.I.D., 11/2/37.
[4] See Chapter IV Page 139.

service perspective. As an illustration of this point, although the 1938 Manual of Combined Operations detailed the combined procedure for planning either an entire war,[1] or a specific operation, the latter was essentially a small scale version of the former.[2]

Thus by the outbreak of the Second World War the British possessed a high command system capable of planning and ordering amphibious operations. The evolution of this system had been curious. The first attempt to create an inter-service body capable of planning specific combinations had been made before the First World War. It had failed, leaving only a tenuous improvement in the relations between politicians and military professionals which had collapsed under pressure of war. However, the war itself had forced the emergence of a system by which the professional heads of the Services could deal with each other directly to co-ordinate the actions of their forces to the common good, and present such schemes as integrated proposals to their political masters. In the aftermath of the war an attempt had been made to take the logical step and fully integrate the high command of the three services in a single staff to administer the entire effort of the three services in war. This proposal proved unworkable. The Admiralty was unwilling to accept that all operations in future would be some form of combination and preferred a development of the system which had emerged in the war; a means by which specific combinations could be planned if required. Chief amongst the possible operations which the Admiralty had in mind for this co-ordinating body were amphibious enterprises, and thus for nearly fifteen years the Chiefs of Staff structure was modelled on the requirements for integrating the services in a specific amphibious operation. Eventually, however, Abyssinia proved that all future operations would require the integration of the services to some degree, and the Chiefs of Staff moved towards a more comprehensive responsibility, including all operations. With

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[1] DEFE 2/709 Manual of Combined Operations 1938. p 13.
[2] Ibid. pp. 15-16.

this development, it no longer became necessary for amphibious operations, or any other form of combined operation, to be treated as unique, as the high command arrangements necessary for such operations were now operating on a permanent basis.

Field Command.

At the beginning of the Century the British believed they possessed a proven traditional system of field command for amphibious enterprises. This perceived system, which arose logically out of the inter-service co-operative approach the British adopted to amphibious operations, consisted of the appointment of co-equal naval and military commanders, each responsible for those parts of the operation which fell under the remit of his particular service, but with neither in a superior position. Although such divided control had failed in the past, most dramatically at Walcheren in 1807, it had also produced such masterpieces of co-operation as the Quebec campaign, where the co-operation of Saunders and Wolfe achieved a mythic status. Under the influence of such successes, and the belief that the problems of divided command were less than those inherent in giving an officer command over a service which was not his own, the British entered the century committed to the conjunct principle. Nevertheless, over the course of the next forty years they were to move away from this idea, and would eventually come to the point of recommending a single Commander-in-Chief for amphibious operations; at the very last, however, this recommendation would be lost as the emphasis was moving away from amphibious operations towards an attempt to provide guidelines for all possible combinations.

Corbett, although he clearly understood that such a co-equal command system had its flaws, nevertheless considered it as the right and only approach to the problem of combinations of the services. He criticised excessive deference to the other service, which he considered Hawke had shown at Rochefort as strongly as disagreement; 'it is the

essence of conjunct operations that councils should be conjunct',[1] but when such co-operation was fully forthcoming, as at Quebec, Corbett could conceive of no better alternative.[2] Such was Corbett's commitment to this system that he was blind to the possibilities of alternatives, and even ready to condemn them, as he himself admitted, without full evidence. Corbett noted of his history of the Russo-Japanese War that his information was 'defective',[3] but he had no compunction about criticising the Japanese attempt to avoid the problems of inter-service combination by the creation of a military transport staff. Corbett gleefully asserted that the problems this brought about forced 'recourse to be had to something more like our own system' at Chemulpho,[4] whilst at Yentoa Bay 'the Navy took charge' of the actual landing operations.[5] To Corbett's uncritical eye the British system of co-operation, where each service controlled those portions of the operation which fell within its normal functions, had emerged almost naturally to triumph over the imperfect arrangements of the Japanese.

Corbett's faith in co-operation in the field was near absolute. Although Corbett believed there was a need for a Higher Joint Staff at the level of the supreme command,[6] he considered the system of co-operation of commanders in the field to be so perfect that it could even compensate for flaws in the command arrangements at home.[7] In consequence Corbett restricted his comments on field command to proposing a rough priority to govern the decision-making process when it came to making a landing. He suggested that the final decision on whether a landing should go ahead should rest with the commander of that service which faced the greater obstacles; the other service would inform them of their requirements and capabilities, and within the scope of these, the first

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[1] Julian S. Corbett "*England in the Seven Years War, A Study in Combined Strategy*" (Longmans, London, 1907), Vol. I. p. 218.
[2] Ibid. p. 282.
[3] Corbett "*Maritime Operations in the Russo-Japanese War 1904-5*" Vol. I. p. 217.
[4] Ibid. p. 113.
[5] Ibid. p. 218.
[6] Julian S. Corbett. "*Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*" p. 274.
[7] Ibid. p. 275.

would decide where and whether to go ahead.[1] By such means Corbett hoped to reduce the possibility of friction occurring between the commanders, but he remained committed at heart to the basic principle of conjunct command;

> 'Since the elder Pitt's time it has never been our practice to place combined expeditions under a naval or military Commander-in-Chief and allow him to decide between naval and military exigencies. The danger of possible friction between two Commanders-in-Chief came to be regarded as small compared with the danger of a single one making mistakes through unfamiliarity with the limitations of the service to which he does not belong'.[2]

In fact, in even considering the question Corbett was unusual; for most of the thinkers and military of the period such an arrangement simply went without saying.

Corbett's counterpart at Camberley, Aston, largely took co-equal command for granted. In 1911 he wrote in support of the officer exchanges between the colleges on the grounds that 'if nothing else they will learn each other's language and form friendships, and it is easier to work with a friend than with a stranger'.[3] The basic principle of co-operation and conjunct command in the field was generally accepted, with no notable pressure for an alternative approach evident in the years before the first world war.

This attitude carried over without alteration to the military publications of the era. The report of the Plumer Conference, the Manual of Combined Operations and Field Service Regulations all started from the assumption that the command of an amphibious operation in the field would be conjunct, each service's commander being responsible for the functions allotted to his service. Thus these publications were chiefly devoted to demarking the relative responsibilities of the two services, and barely touched on the question of command per se. The Plumer Conference simply stated that when the object of the expedition had been settled then the 'naval officer appointed to command the

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[1] Ibid. p. 274.
[2] Ibid. p. 275.
[3] G. G. Aston "*Letters on Amphibious Wars*" p. 145.

escort, his principal transport officer and the military officer appointed to command the military force' should be brought together to commence planning, and provided a table of instructions to assist the 'joint naval and military commanders'.[1] The first edition of the Manual, though more detailed, started from the same assumption of naval and military co-operation. The Navy, and hence its commander, were responsible for the provision of sea transport and its protection whilst at sea, the maintenance of the communications of the force, and the landing and embarking of troops.[2] Like Corbett, the compilers of the Manual considered that the main point at which responsibilities would intersect was that at which the decision on whether to land was taken. In consequence a similar rubric to that which Corbett laid out in his book of the same year was set down in the Manual; the naval commander should set out where he was willing to make the landing, and the military commander could then choose between these options.[3] The 1913 revision of the Manual made no alteration to this basic principle.

By the outbreak of war, therefore, in the military publications at least, the relative responsibilities of the two services and their conjoint commanders had been roughly demarked. The edition of Field Service Regulations with which the Army entered the war clearly set out the concerns of the two services. The passage of the force across the sea was the responsibility of the Navy, with whom lay the decision as to whether a sufficient degree of sea command had been attained to allow the operation to take place.[4] Similarly the transport of the force was the concern of the Navy, which would provide, despatch and control the transport of the force and subsequent shipments of supplies, and would also be responsible for the embarkation and disembarkation of the force from the quay to the beach, where the high water mark was taken as the point at which the Navy's

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[1] WO 33/344 Report of the Naval and Military Conference on Overseas Expeditions. 1905.

[2] WO 33/569 Manual of Combined Naval and Military Operations, 1911. pp. 7-8.

[3] Ibid. p. 23.

[4] Field Service Regulations 1912 Reprint; Part i. "Operations", Chapter 3 "Movements by Land and Sea", Section 41 (iii) "General Principles".

responsibility ceased.[1] The Manual of Combined Operations went into greater detail, arranging for the provision of a Naval Transport Officer on each troop transport and a Naval Beach Master assisted by a Military Landing Officer on each beach to conduct the landing.[2] To these arrangements the Field Service Regulations added the pious hope that 'it is to be understood that each service is working for a common object, and will render the other all the assistance that lies in its power'.[3]

The general idea up until the outbreak of war therefore remained that the two services would retain their independence in such operations, carrying them out as partners, the Army responsible for the operations on shore, the Navy for those at sea, a clear dividing line for the two laid down, and the one point of contact, the decision as to the landing, specifically catered for. In peace this appeared a perfectly sensible system, but the test of war, particularly Gallipoli, was to reveal that both F.S.R. and the Manual failed to consider a scenario of the Gallipoli type, where the operation would be arrested barely over the beaches, and hence the combined command and logistic arrangements would have to apply indefinitely. This unexpected set of circumstances was to produce a sharp expression of dissatisfaction on the part of the Army during and after the campaign.

Amphibious Field Command in the First World War.

The course of operations at Gallipoli revealed failings in the accepted approach, and went some way towards dispelling the happy notion of co-operation in which Corbett and the Staff Colleges had put their faith. Although a misplaced sense of loyalty prevented the Commanders concerned in the Gallipoli Campaign from taking advantage of the Commission of Inquiry to criticise each other, the statements of their subordinates reveal that all had not gone smoothly. Gallipoli demonstrated that the system as devised

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[1] Ibid. Section 42. "Division of Duties Between Navy and Army.
[2] WO 33/644 Manual of Combined Naval and Military Operations 1913 pp. 36-7.
[3] F.S.R. I, Section 42.

was not suited to operations on a large scale, placing as it did too great an emphasis on the personal relations of the Commanders in Chief.

The division of command and responsibility at Gallipoli was made according to the guidelines in the Field Regulations and the Manual.[1] The Commanders were jointly responsible and the dividing line between the spheres of Naval and Military responsibility was laid down as the High Water Mark. If the protestations of the Commanders were to be believed, this system had worked perfectly. General Sir Ian Hamilton recorded his belief 'that there has never been an expedition of this sort in which the services have co-operated so well together'.[2] Lt-Gen. Sir Alexander Godley for the Anzacs and Rear Admiral Roger Keyes for the Navy also expounded on the goodwill and co-operation of the two services.[3] However, these assertions can be readily discarded as expressions of loyalty towards men with whom they had worked for months, for it is clear from the testimony of their subordinates, and the Commanders' own correspondence during the campaign, that the relations of the forces were by no means easy or efficient.

Outside the confines of the Dardanelles Commission the same men who extolled the co-operation in the campaign were frankly critical of the arrangements for command and co-ordination. Hamilton informed Kitchener that 'I have struggled with your High Water Mark for months', when it was suggested that a further naval officer should be appointed to control the evacuation of wounded from that demarcation line.[4] Keyes was also far more critical in private than he had been before the Commission. To his wife he admitted that there had been 'scores of cases' where the Army's behaviour had been 'intolerable' since the landing. He put these down to excessive departmentalisation within the Army's General Staff, which prevented Hamilton and Braithwaite from acting on the

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[1] CAB 19/33 Proceedings of the Dardanelles Commission; Rear Admiral Roger Keyes Evidence, p. 1453.
[2] Ibid. General Sir Ian Hamilton's Evidence, p.447.
[3] Ibid. Lt-Gen. Sir Alexander Godley's Evidence. p. 801. & Keyes, Op. Cit.
[4] CAB 19/31, Dardanelles Commission Statements and Papers Submitted Before Giving Evidence, War Office Telegrams Vol. II. Hamilton to War Office, 3/7/15.

complaints of Keyes and de Robeck.[1] In many cases the problem lay in the differing command and staff systems of the two services; the R.N.'s centralised command could not be instantly co-ordinated with the Army's more diverse system. The naval officers were not used to working with a semi-autonomous supply system such as was operated by the Army, and Hamilton's tendency to neglect his Quartermaster's branch (he left it in Alexandria during the planning of the landing) cannot have assisted matters. Admiral Wemyss, attempting to control the base at Mudros, found himself arbitrating between the General Staff, Quartermaster's Staff and Royal Engineers' shipping requirements.[2] Simply instructing the commanders to co-operate was insufficient when such large forces and long-term supply requirements as occurred at Gallipoli were concerned.

Subordinate officers revealed these problems to the Dardanelles Commission itself. The Army's transport staff were unanimously critical of the Royal Navy, heartily reciprocating the criticisms of Keyes and Wemyss. Lt-Gen. Sir Edward Altham, Inspector General of Communications from July, set the tone by suggesting that the Admiralty should be deprived of the control of the line of communications, which should instead rest with the military, as per the Japanese system.[3] The Chief Engineer at Gallipoli favoured the transportation being removed from the hands of the Navy and vested in the Mercantile Marine,[4] a recommendation which met with the approval of the War Office Director of Movements, and Field Marshal Sir William Nicholson on the Commission itself.[5] Stripped of the protestations of loyalty, it is clear that the pre-war system for controlling combined operations was perceived to have failed.

Structural differences between the services were not the only cause of disarray. The Deputy Chiefs of Staff noted twenty years later that at Gallipoli 'the Commanders

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[1] BL Keyes 2/13 (Keyes Papers), Letters to Lady Keyes, 22/7/15.
[2] C.C.A.C. DRBK 4/32 (De Robeck Papers), Correspondence with Admiral Wemyss, Wemyss to De Robeck 14/7/15.
[3] CAB 19/33 Lt-Gen. Altham's Evidence, p. 469.
[4] CAB 19/33 Brig-Gen. Joly de Lotbiniere's Evidence. p 630.
[5] CAB 19/33 Major Gen. the Hon R. Stuart-Wortley's Evidence. p 604.

concerned adhered rigidly to their own particular spheres of activity and were particularly careful not to intrude in any way on the business of the other commander concerned'. The Deputy Chiefs concluded that 'this attitude . . . militated against the success of the operation, and the degree of co-ordination obtained was not what it should have been'.[1] It is difficult to fault this judgement. In the planning stages the Navy was happy to merely wait on the Army, whilst the Army made little or no attempt to improve its liaison with the Navy. Thus de Robeck remained at Gallipoli whilst Hamilton departed for Alexandria, and merely observed that 'until the Army have stated their demands it is impossible to give detailed proposals of the naval co-operation'.[2] In the meantime Hamilton's Staff, with the addition of one Naval Captain, were attempting to reload the transports and draw up a plan of campaign.[3] Not until the 10th April was the naval force informed of Hamilton's plan, with less than a fortnight remaining before the landing was scheduled to take place, and Hamilton's logistical staff still remained in Alexandria.[4] Even when the hurried nature of the operation is taken into account, the degree of co-operation between the two services in the planning stages was lamentable.

In part this failure can be laid at the door of the doctrine, with its emphasis on the personal relations of the Commanders-in-Chief. The naval officer attached to Hamilton's staff was merely an 'advisor', he did not have the power actually to issue orders or make decisions in his own right.[5] Hamilton particularly adhered to the idea that all relations should take place between he and his opposite number; he opposed proposals which would 'widen the scope of the dual control which is at present only applicable to my great friend the Admiral and myself'.[6] If all co-operation was to take place between the C.-in-

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[1] CAB 54/1 Minutes of the 15th Meeting of the D.C.O.S., 7/1/37.
[2] C.C.A.C. DRBK 4/3 Operations in Spring 1915; Memorandum 49L.
[3] ADM 137/2166 Orders and Correspondence of the V.A. Commanding Eastern Mediterranean Squadron Feb.-Aug. 1915. Admiral Wemyss to V.A. De Robeck 4/4/15.
[4] BL. Keyes 2/10; Letters to Lady Keyes, 10/4/15.
[5] I.W.M. 69/21/1; Dawnay Papers; Dardanelles. Book 2 Letters to Mrs Dawnay, 24/7/15.
[6] CAB 19/31, Dardanelles Commission Statements and Papers Submitted Before Giving Evidence, War Office Telegrams Vol. II. Hamilton to War Office, 3/7/15.

C.s then it was essential that they did co-operate: unfortunately this was not the case. The two Commanders and their Staffs should have been together continuously; instead, de Robeck remained with his fleet off the entrance to the Dardanelles whilst the detailed planning was carried out in Alexandria. As the Navy were not issued with the Manual of Combined Operations, (in contrast to the Army the officers did not have personal copies and orders were not framed by reference to it), it is possible to suggest that de Robeck's failure to comprehend the need for extensive co-ordination sprang from the lack of a Manual.[1] Relying solely on tradition he did not grasp the need for co-operation and the profferal of free and open advice to the officers of the other service. The system placed too great an emphasis on the co-operation of the Commanders-in-Chief and this problem was compounded by de Robeck's errors.

The failure of the two arms to integrate was as evident in the conduct of the operations as in the planning. Keyes, never one to stand on ceremony or refuse to accept responsibility, bemoaned de Robeck's refusal to interfere in what the Admiral saw as purely military issues. The Naval C.-in-C., Keyes noted, was 'very diffident in putting his views to the General in anything to do with land operations'. Most disastrously, this prevented the Navy strongly pressing the case for the development of the successful landing at Y-beach in place of the thwarted attempt at V-Beach; de Robeck, Keyes reported, 'said he didn't like to interfere'.[2] The failure to co-ordinate the staffs can be placed at the door of traditional and doctrinal emphasis on the relations of the Commanders but it was compounded by the failure of the Commanders, particularly de Robeck, to co-operate closely and fully with each other, preferring, as the Deputy Chiefs noted, to restrict their activities to their own spheres and not to offer advice outside it.

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[1] Hamilton had a personal copy, L.H.M.C.A. Hamilton Papers Series 15, Dardanelles Campaign GHQ Papers, Piece 1, Manual of Combined Naval and Military Operations, & the Army Orders directly referred to the Manual e.g. L.H.M.C.A. Hamilton 15/4, G.H.Q. M.E.F. Force Orders; 'Instructions for Military Beach Personnel' 19/4/15.

[2] BL. Keyes; 2/13 Letters to Lady Keyes, 2/7/15.

Thus co-operation was restricted to the exchange of orders, conferences of Commanders, and the attachment of a naval adviser to the General Staff.[1] A Committee was appointed to draw up instructions for co-ordinating naval bombardment with the military's requirements, but this laudable attempt to rectify a pre-war omission was an exception rather than the rule.[2]

Under such circumstances confusion and failure to achieve the full potential of a combination of sea and land forces was inevitable. The most striking example remains the failure to exploit the initial success at Y-beach, but other failures were equally critical. The brutal division of responsibility at the water-line was fatal at Suvla, where the relative responsibility for provision and landing of water and water carrying utensils was so confused as to leave the water stranded just off-shore for much of the operation, thus contributing to the failure of the New Army troops to attain their objectives. In the same operation the centralisation of co-operation at the Commander-in-Chief level further compounded the problems of the landing, the Commander of the Corps conducting the landing was presented with a complete plan drawn up by the G.H.Q. and Naval Staff without his knowledge, whilst junior officers were kept uninformed for so long that the Commander of the 10th Division was unable to issue all his Battalions with orders before sailing for the landing beaches.[3]

Gallipoli thus demonstrated that the co-ordination of a large scale amphibious operation was beyond the capabilities of single commanders and their staffs. The problems with the lines of communication revealed that modern armies' size and diversity required far more integration with their transport arm, be it naval or military, than could

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[1] de Robeck and Hamilton had full copies of each others' orders as instructed by the Manual. C.C.A.C. DRBK 4/24 Military Printed Orders; BL. Keyes 5/5 Military Force Orders; L.H.M.C.A. Hamilton 15/4 GHQ M.E.F. Force Orders.

[2] L.H.M.C.A. Hamilton 15/17 Dardanelles Telegrams, Hamilton to Kitchener, 13/4/15; details the arrangements for gunnery; CAB 19/33 Col H. E. Street's Evidence, p. 614 describes the work of the Committee.

[3] CAB 19/31 Statement by Lt-Gen. the Hon. Sir F. Stopford.

be satisfactorily co-ordinated through a single channel of co-operation. De Robeck's failure to accompany Hamilton and co-operate closely in the planning of the landings revealed the need for the commander in any such operation to be free of other obligations. Finally Gallipoli revealed an unexpected failure in the co-operative command system; clashes of temperament were expected, but such diffidence as Hamilton and de Robeck showed in their relations was equally damaging. The lack of a supreme authority was telling.

Almost none of these mistakes were made in the planning of the operations intended for the Belgian Coast; however, this did not reflect a general improvement in the conduct of combined operations. The context of the Belgian operations, intended as a subsidiary part of the operations on land and taking place within the theatre of operations already under the control of Field Marshal Haig, was responsible for the improvement in the system of command. Haig had not the time to conduct the operations himself, and treated them as he would any normal land operation; handing over their detailed planning and enaction to a subordinate while he retained a watching brief. Further, as the troops concerned were to come from Haig's forces, and were intended to co-operate with his operations on land, he was in the de facto position of Supreme Commander. The operation would only take place with Haig's approval; hence he could make such demands as he chose of the Navy, which was in the position of supplicant. That the plans for the Belgian coast saw a degree of preparation and professionalism absent from Gallipoli was due to the circumstances prevalent in that theatre; it was not that the lessons of Gallipoli had been learnt.

This professionalism was evident from the outset. When the proposal to land in Ostend harbour was first mooted by Admiral Bacon, Commander of the Dover Patrol,[1] Haig's response was to appoint his most experienced amphibious commander and staff to

[1] WO 256/7 Haig Diary, 26/12/15.

co-operate with the Admiral in drawing up appreciations and preliminary plans.[1] General Hunter Weston and Colonel Aspinall, late of the XXIXth Division at Helles and Hamilton's staff respectively, were appointed Commander and G.S.O.1 of the operation, and worked out the details with Bacon and his Flag Captain, Bowring.[2] This done, they presented appreciations to Haig, on the basis of which he made his decision on the operation.[3] Interestingly, this procedure reflects that set out in the 1913 edition of the Manual for the relations of the Commanders and the 'Naval and Military Authorities' which were to control their actions; where the civil power had failed at Gallipoli, Haig, due to the authority he possessed through his control of the troops, succeeded in acting as the co-ordinating authority in the Belgian theatre. In this case the requirements of the Somme and the discovery that the Germans possessed a battery capable of ranging on the intended landing places in the harbour at Ostend caused the operation to be abandoned for the year.[4]

A similar process took place the following year. With the revival of the scheme as a result of Admiralty pressure,[5] Haig appointed one of his Staff Colonels to liaise with the Admiral and his Staff.[6] Haig had initially nominated Sir Hubert Gough to command this operation in addition to the main offensive,[7] but when the liaison officer reported that he was unhappy with the arrangements being made by Bacon to conduct the landing,[8] Haig responded by appointing Sir Henry Rawlinson to control the military side of the

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[1] WO 256/8 Haig Diary, 16/2/16.

[2] BL. Add. Ms. 48365 Hunter Weston Papers, Diary 19/2/16 - 17/3/16, & 8th Army Corps War Diary, Summary of Personal Movements 17/8/15 to 18/3/16.

[3] WO 256/10 Haig Diary; Précis of a Conference of the Commander in Chief and the Vice Admiral Dover, 19/6/16 & 'Note on the Projected Landing at Ostend' by Lt-Gen. Sir Aylmer Hunter Weston. 24/2/16.

[4] Ibid. Conference 19/6/16.

[5] WO 158/22 C.I.G.S.-CinC Correspondence, Précis of a Meeting Held in the C.I.G.S.' Room 23/11/16.

[6] WO 158/39 Formation of a Special Sub-Section Under Colonel MacMullen.

[7] WO 256/17 Haig Diary, 30/4/17.

[8] WO 158/20 General Staff Notes; "Landing by British on Belgian Coast, Memo by Col. MacMullen, 11/5/17.

operation.[1] Rawlinson was given command of the landing operation and a complementary movement along the coast, both of which were comparatively small operations in comparison with the main Passchendaele Offensive with which they were intended to tie in. Haig appears to have realised the difficulties inherent in the operation required the full attention of its Commander. Bacon and Rawlinson were left to work out the details together, whilst Haig and G.H.Q. exercised a supervisory role. Thus the Commander-in-Chief attended the equipment trials and laid down the conditions on which he was willing to allow the operation to go ahead.[2] The operation remained firmly under the strategic control of G.H.Q., who rejected any idea that it should go ahead without a preceding success in the main offensive.[3] Within these confines, Rawlinson and Bacon drew up the detailed plans.

At the field level there was less to go wrong than had been the case at Gallipoli. The Belgian landing consisted solely of assault troops, with only sufficient supplies to enable them to hold their own until they connected up with the main advance, and received their supplies that way.[4] There was, therefore, little in the way of material to off load, and none of the problems arising from lines of communication and supply which had arisen at Gallipoli. Difficulties of integration were further removed by Bacon's willing abnegation of all responsibility for the actual loading and landing of the troops and tanks allotted to the operation. He noted to Rawlinson that the responsibility for getting the Army ashore rested with the Navy, but that as all that was being landed were the assault forces, it could best be left to the Army.[5] Rawlinson agreed, and all logistical

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[1] Ibid. Haig's marginal notes on MacMullen's memo.

[2] WO 256/20 Haig Diary, 16/7/17 & 21/7/17.

[3] Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson "*Command on the Western Front; The Military Career of Sir Henry Rawlinson*" (Blackwell, Oxford, 1992) p. 272. suggest Rawlinson challenged Haig on this point, however, it is clear that the Memorandum which Rawlinson compiled was never sent; WO 95/434 Special Appendix Z; "Review of the Situation by the Army Commander", 22/8/17, "This letter was NOT forwarded officially to GHQ'., Note by A.A. Montgomery, B.G.G.S., 4th Army.

[4] WO 158/239 Fourth Army, Northern Operations May to November; 59. Plan of 4th Army for Northern Operations.

[5] WO 95/434 Special Appendix Z, Sub Appendix III, Bacon to Rawlinson 10/6/17.

arrangements were therefore left to the military, the Navy operating solely as a shuttle service. Belgium thus offered less scope for disagreement than had existed at Gallipoli.

The Belgian operations were planned before the lessons of Gallipoli could possibly have filtered through from the Commission, and the appointment of Hunter-Weston in 1916 suggests that the criticism of the conduct of the Dardanelles Campaign had yet to gather pace. However, the Belgian operation is important, for it reveals the extent to which the Army were growing used to the idea that amphibious operations could no longer be conducted in person by the Commander in Chief. The sheer complexity and size of the forces involved invalidated that approach. At Gallipoli Hamilton had devolved responsibility for military planning onto his subordinates but kept the liaison with the Admiral in his own hands. Haig was the first, probably simply through pressure of work elsewhere, to devolve both planning and liaison responsibility for an amphibious operation to his subordinate officers. As for more detailed integration at the lower level, the simplicity of the Belgian operation meant that there were few lessons which could be drawn, but the precedent of military control of the embarkation and disembarkation areas was not wasted on the Army.

Field Command in the Inter-War Period.

In the immediate aftermath of the war, despite the creation of the R.A.F. as a third service, there was no move to overturn the principle of conjunct command which governed the control of combined operations. Initially commentators concentrated on the problems of integrating staffs rather than question the basic precepts of the command system. However, with repeated investigations staged by the Staff Colleges, the Camberley Staff came to the conclusion that the division of command equally between all three commanders was an unfortunate arrangement. This view was accepted by the War Office which gradually came to press for the adoption of a single commander, preferably

a soldier, for such operations. Outright Naval hostility hampered the adoption of such a scheme, whilst the R.A.F. were initially opposed, only to become more amenable as the new service came to consider itself more secure. The increasing tendency to view amphibious operations as merely one of a number of inter-service combinations also hampered the development of the command system. As combined operations came to include more combinations than simply opposed landings, there was less chance that a single system of command would be acceptable to all three services. As a result the British opted for providing a number of optional systems of command, rather than recommending one in particular. Thus by the opening of hostilities, although the British had recognised the possibility that a single commander would be required to conduct combined operations under certain circumstances, and although they recognised opposed landings were likely to comprise such circumstances, they had made no firm recommendation, with the result that the first amphibious operations of W.W.II. were mounted according to the traditional system. Only with the proofs offered by wartime experience was a decision in favour of a single commander finally taken.

The first proposals for reform met with blind partiality for the traditional system. Anderson's report on the 1919 Staff College Exercise, though it did not tilt at the conjunct command system, suggested the possibility of a combined staff,[1] and he repeated this recommendation in his draft chapter for Field Service Regulations.[2] However, Guy Dawnay, chairing the inter-service committee considering Anderson's recommendations, stated that 'he was unable to visualise a Combined Staff owing to the difficulty of functioning in such a staff',[3] apparently a reference to the supposed difficulty of placing

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[1] ADM 116/2086 Combined Operations Revision of Manual 1920-22. Report on Combined Naval and Military Exercise 1919, 7/1/20. p 6.

[2] ADM 116/2086; Draft Chapter XIII Combined Naval, Military and Air Operations, Plans. p. 1A.

[3] ADM 116/2086; Minutes of the First Three Meetings of the Interdepartmental Committee on Combined Operations, Minutes of the 1st Meeting, 22/6/20.

officers of one service under a commander from another. The committee followed his line, accepting that 'a true combined staff was not a practical possibility'.[1] Thus the draft chapter produced by the Dawnay Committee, which was to form the basis for the first post-war Manual, explicitly rejected any improvement in the system controlling the relations of the services in the field, asserting 'the state organisation of our fighting services does not contemplate the appointment of a single commander-in-chief in the case of combined operations'.[2] The first proposal to alter the arrangements for command was thus rejected out of hand in favour of a continuation of the existing system.

Nevertheless, even within the Dawnay Committee there was a recognition that the existing system was not satisfactory, and a measure of reform within the bounds of the traditional approach was posited. Dawnay's draft suggested that 'the interests of the service on which the chief burden rests at any moment should always be considered as paramount'.[3] This amounted to an extension of Corbett's approach to the problem of which service should have the final say in the decision to land the force. The Dawnay Committee extended this approach to the entire operation; in making decisions the service whose role was most critical at that point should have priority. This modification within the traditional outlines of the command system passed into the Manual, where the emphasis was placed on similarity of outlook and co-operation between the three services, but it was stressed that 'the interests of the service whose share in the enterprise is most vital to its success at the moment should always be given precedence'.[4] Within the limitations imposed by tradition the inter-service committees responsible for revision did attempt to amend the Manual to meet some of the worst failures of the war.

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[1] Ibid. Minutes of the 2nd Meeting, 8/7/20.
[2] ADM 116/2086; Field Service Regulations Volume II, Chapter XIII, Combined Operations, Provisional. p 1.
[3] Ibid. p. 2.
[4] AIR 10/1206 Manual of Combined Naval, Military and Air Operations, 1925. p. 15.

The inevitable problems with the "Predominant Partner" approach soon led the Army to propose a more radical alternative. Admiral Madden and General Ironside, commenting on the first draft, pointed out the system 'seems to contemplate a succession of supreme commanders, first an Air Officer, then possibly a Naval Officer and lastly a Soldier, such a system is likely to lead to failure'.[1] More critically, the "Predominant Partner" arrangement did not solve the problem of a disagreement between the services; instead of disagreeing over the course of action to follow, commanders' disagreements would focus on which of their commands' activities was most vital to the course of the operation. This problem came out at the Staff College tests, and led to the military suggesting a permanent arrangement of priorities between the services. General Anderson, after two inter-college tests of the draft manual, asserted that 'it would seem to be very desirable to indicate clearly in the Manual that in an opposed landing the services of the Navy and the Royal Air Force must in general be auxiliary to the Army operation'.[2] These points did not prevent the principle being enshrined in the Manual, but the Camberley Staff had come to the conclusion that there was no alternative to a single Supreme Commander, preferably an Army Officer.

The revision of the Manual in 1928 provided the Army Staff College with an opportunity to air these views with the support of the General Staff. It is clear that Camberley stood alone amongst Staff Colleges on this issue, for a list of points the Colleges jointly recommended for revision contained no reference to the system of field command.[3] The military representatives on the Committee for Staff Duties in Combined Operations were alone in putting forward their staff college's recommendations for the revision of the command structure; urging that 'as concentration of purpose and efficient

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[1] ADM 116/2086 Madden to Admiralty, 10/4/22.

[2] ADM 203/61 Manual of Joint Operations; Comments on the Manual of Combined Operations 1921, Maj.-Gen. W. H. Anderson, 17/2/22, Addendum.

[3] AIR 2/1059 Manual of Combined Naval, Military and Air Operations 1923-8. 146A Proposed Amendments to the Manual. March 1927.

direction of effort can only be secured by unity of command, the command of a combined operation will normally be exercised by a Commander-in-Chief'.[1] The Army had directly challenged the traditional approach to the command of combined operations.

However, as the Army stood alone this initiative came to nothing. The Committee for Staff Duties in Combined Operations rejected it outright; which suggests that the Naval and Air Force representatives were united in their opposition. The proposal for a Commander-in-Chief was vetoed, and all the associated proposals, 'automatically negatived' as a result.[2] The Committee reported that in relation to combined operations command the 'principle' of 'independent command of the Forces of each service by its own commander and of close co-operation between them . . . should stand'.[3] The sub-committee drafting the Manual were instructed to draw up the new Manual were instructed accordingly, and thus the 1931 Edition did not differ from its predecessor insofar as the question of command was concerned.[4]

The issue was not reopened until the 1935 revision of the Manual. By this time the R.A.F. were more amenable to an alteration in the arrangements for command, and thus the issue was more broadly debated. The reason for this change in the attitude of the R.A.F. is not entirely clear, but appears to have resulted from a reduction in the defensiveness of the new arm. Other trends in the R.A.F.'s attitude towards combined operations bear out this theory; whereas in the early 1920s the R.A.F. representatives jealously guarded the R.A.F.'s claims to equality even to the point of insisting on having their own beach officers,[5] by the 1930s this tendency had rather diminished and such purely political demands were no longer in evidence. With their fear of losing their independence reduced, the R.A.F. were readier to consider the possibility of a single

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[1] AIR 2/1059 Sub-File; Revision of CD 33; Minutes of Conferences, 2A, Redraft of Section 3.
[2] Ibid., 4A. Minutes of 3rd Meeting 22/6/28.
[3] AIR 2/1060 Revised Manual of Combined Naval, Military and Air Operations 1923, 10A. Report and Covering Letter by Major L. G. Goodeve, 31/10/28.
[4] DEFE 2/708 Manual of Combined Operations 1931. p. 5.
[5] AIR 2/1059 21A Minute by Director of Equipment to D.T.S.D. 16/4/23.

Commander-in-Chief. Thus by 1934 the Staff College at Andover reported in favour of a Supreme C.-in-C., and although the following year they recommended the predominant partner approach, they were obviously open to persuasion.[1]

Camberley's insistence on the need to reconsider the 'question of command'[2] led to the issue being considered as part of the general revision, the War Office referring their concerns on to the Committee redrafting the Manual.[3] However, the problem was now more difficult to resolve, due to the intention of redrafting the Manual to cover combined operations in general, rather than concentrating on opposed landings to the extent which it had in the past. To produce a single recommended form of command for the various operations which the Manual was intended to cover was obviously more difficult than to resolve the question of command in amphibious operations alone.

In the first place, however, the Drafting Committee revealed that the services continued to be divided on the issue. The Military and Air Force members agreed that whereas the existing system 'prevents undue risks being forced on a commander of an individual service by one who is not fitted by his training to appreciate these risks', on the other hand 'there is always the danger that Commanders will be unable to agree on plans', and 'that execution will lack firm direction and decision'.[4] The "predominant partner" approach they ruled unworkable, as 'the elements of disagreement at once arise'. The Army and R.A.F. representatives therefore recommended a number of possible solutions, all of which included the allocation of final decision to a single officer. The Naval Officer on the other hand, echoing Chatfield's opposition at the level of the High Command, considered that the greatest danger lay in that risk which his colleagues accepted was best avoided by conjoint command. The naval representative held that no

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[1] CAB 54/3 D.C.O.S. 22 Revision of the Manual of Combined Operations, Note by the Secretary of the Drafting Committee, 23/11/36.

[2] CAB 53/28 C.O.S. 469 Combined Operations, Appendix; Maj.-Gen. CC Armitage to Under Secretary of State War Office, 31/12/35, enclosing report.

[3] Ibid.

[4] CAB 54/3 D.C.O.S. 22. 23/11/36.

amount of joint training could enable the supreme commander to make decisions for a service not his own, and that the senior officer of a service imperilled by an erroneous decision by the supreme commander 'might take the extreme step, at whatever risk to himself, of refusing to obey orders rather than commit his service to a course of action which he considers unjustifiable'. He therefore reported that 'the existing system of joint responsibility is the one most likely to achieve success in all operations involving two or three of the services in roles on the same plane of importance'.[1] The services thus continued to disagree on this issue, and the matter had to be referred to the D.C.O.S.

Due to the Manual's brief to cover all combined operations, the Army and Air Force members of the Drafting Committee had recommended a number of options which could be adopted, depending on the type of operation envisaged. These broke down roughly into two groups, depending on whether it was intended to appoint a C.-in-C. over the immediate Commanders of the three services or to give one of those commanders power over his colleagues. If the first option were taken, then it was further possible to distinguish between a C.-in-C. with a full staff and general planning authority and a C.-in-C. merely responsible for laying down general policy and settling questions of policy. If, on the other hand, it were decided to allot one of the immediate commanders the power of decision over his fellows, this could be simply a power of final decision or the other service's commanders could be put directly under his orders. As their brief now concerned all combined operations and not just amphibious expeditions, the Army and Air Force members of the Drafting Committee had concluded that the C.O.S. should advise the Cabinet as to which of these options was most suitable in each individual case. With specific reference to opposed landings, however, they did suggest that a full Supreme C.-in-C. would slow up the planning process and be difficult to accommodate

[1] Ibid. Views of the Naval Member of the Committee.

with his staff in a single ship, and that a liaison C.-in-C. would be the most suitable under such circumstances.[1]

The Deputy Chiefs followed the line suggested by the military and air force members of the drafting committee. The D.C.N.S. did not maintain the naval opposition to departing from the conventional approach, and thus the only problems arose from the desire to produce a manual covering all possible combinations. All the Deputy Chiefs were agreed that the situation would vary with the type of operation, and the D.C.A.S. even went so far as to consider that certain operations would even lend themselves to the traditional co-operative approach.[2] A Supreme Commander in Chief with a full staff was considered too unwieldy and 'agreed unanimously to be undesirable under all circumstances', as was the allocation of the power of final decision to one of the immediate commanders. The Deputy Chiefs thus came down in favour of providing three options: the traditional approach; the allocation of full command to one immediate commander; or a liaison C.-in-C., depending on the circumstances and the type of operation envisaged. More decisively, the Deputy Chiefs also expressed the opinion that an opposed landing was 'the operation in which the need for a Supreme Commander appears most likely to become apparent'.[3] Thus by 1936 the possibility of departing from the traditional approach had been recognised, and the particular need for doing so when faced with the great difficulties of an opposed landing had been stated.

Ironically the Manual did not record the Deputy Chiefs' suggestion that a Supreme Commander was most likely to be required in an opposed landing.[4] Thus, although the Deputy Chiefs had supported a single commander for amphibious operations, the fact that the 1938 Manual was a more determined attempt than hitherto to produce a general

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[1] CAB 54/3 D.C.O.S. 22. 23/11/36.
[2] CAB 54/3 D.C.O.S. 36, Minute by Haining, D.M.O.&I., 15/12/36 & D.C.O.S. 39 Minute by Peirse, D.C.A.S., 2/1/37.
[3] CAB 54/1 Minutes of the 15th Meeting of the D.C.O.S., 7/1/37.
[4] DEFE 2/709 Manual of Combined Operations, 1938. pp. 20-23.

handbook for combined operations meant that this point was lost. Consequently, as late as 1943 the British Chief of Staff for the Overlord operations could still describe the standard British approach as a Committee system.[1]

It is important to stress that this prolonged dithering over the command arrangements for combined operations did not hamper peacetime training. As was repeatedly noted in the debates over the question, the problems of command which would arise in peacetime exercises were not the same as those as would occur in war. In peacetime exercises, with little at stake, serious disagreements between commanders were unlikely to manifest themselves. However, it was unfortunate that the Deputy Chiefs' recommendation in favour of an end to the co-operative approach was lost, for once war broke out, the traditional approach would be adhered to as no clear policy of departing from it had been laid down.

Conclusion.

It is clear that the British gave extensive thought to questions of command and control of amphibious operations. However, in the spheres of both higher and field command this was hidden by the increasing tendency to treat amphibious enterprises as merely part of a greater whole; combined operations. In the case of the higher command the role which preparation for amphibious operations played in the development of the Chiefs of Staff structure, and the implications of that development for such enterprises has been overlooked; amphibious concerns had shaped the Chiefs of Staff Committee in its earliest days, and even when the Committee moved away from this role, its continuing improvements in arrangements for command further enhanced the system's ability to control amphibious operations. However, in the case of field command, although initial opposition to a departure from the traditional co-operative approach eventually

[1] Lt.-Gen. Sir F. Morgan, "*Overture to Overlord*", (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1950) p. 191.

disappeared, the desire to provide a general guideline to cover all combined operations meant that this trend was hidden and the chance to make a firm decision in favour of a single commander was lost. The British therefore entered the war with a system, based around the Chiefs of Staff, theoretically capable of dealing with the higher command requirements of amphibious operations. They had not, however, clearly broken with the traditional co-operative approach to command in the field.

Chapter VI. Technique and Materiel.

The conventional view of the British approach to the practicalities of combined operations suggests that the experience of Gallipoli inspired an excess of caution. The most extreme view, expounded by Marder, suggests that Gallipoli 'discredited amphibious warfare' as far as the British were concerned,[1] whilst even more moderate consideration concludes that the British approach was distorted towards small operations reliant upon surprise as a result of their experience at the Dardanelles.[2] The first of these opinions can be disregarded, for, as has been shown elsewhere in this thesis, British progress in amphibious operations was limited more by the unlikelihood of such operations being required than by any belief they were impossible. The suggestion that the British favoured a technique based on avoiding opposition is, however, borne out by the memoirs of the first Commandant of the I.S.T.D.C., and this argument therefore merits consideration.[3] Did Gallipoli instil in the British services such respect for the power of beach defences that they concentrated exclusively upon the attainment of surprise and failed to consider alternative means of surmounting such defences? Were they, as a result, ill-prepared for the amphibious operations which were to be forced upon them in the Second World War?[4]

The true situation was more complex. British reservations concerning landings in the face of opposition preceded the experience of Gallipoli, which in certain spheres was actually seen as a qualified tactical success.[5] For most of the inter-war period the British approach was to accumulate in the Manual ideas and experience relating to amphibious operations and to create a nucleus of prototype craft. This skeleton preparation could then be called upon in the event of an operation being necessary, the requisite information

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[1] A. J. Marder "*From the Dardanelles to Oran*" p. 52.
[2] MacGregor, '*The Use, Misuse and Non-Use of History*' p. 607.
[3] L. E. H. Maund, "*Assault from the Sea*". p. 9.
[4] MacGregor, '*The Use, Misuse and Non-Use of History*". p. 608.
[5] See, for instance, Corbett's views, Chapter III Page 83.

being culled from the Manual and the craft required being constructed from the prototypes. From this basis the British could therefore prepare for any amphibious operation, from a surprise landing to a full scale beach assault. The British were not, therefore, committed to achieving landings by surprise. The apparent emphasis on surprise in the inter-war period chiefly resulted from a flaw in this nucleus approach: as there was not enough equipment to realistically train for set-piece assaults exercises tended to concentrate on the less equipment-dependent surprise operations. The nucleus approach is the main theme of this chapter, which includes case studies such as the British approach to the problems of gas and aircraft to show how effective this approach was, and to illustrate the manner in which the Manual became the repository of all British amphibious know-how. Similarly an examination of the development of prototype landing craft and headquarters ships illustrates the means by which the British sought to provide a basis for rapid material expansion for any scale of amphibious operation. In closing, the chapter examines the work of the I.S.T.D.C. in the last year before the war, demonstrating that this organisation's emphasis on surprise landings was a departure from the mainstream British approach and as such never accepted by the military establishment.

The Mainstream of British Amphibious Development.

Even before the First World War, the British services, particularly the Army, had profound reservations concerning the possibility of staging an amphibious landing in the face of modern weaponry. The theorists were agreed that modern artillery and rapid firing weapons had rendered an opposed landing far more difficult than hitherto. Callwell stated that a landing in the face of opposition was an operation which 'modern tactical conditions have rendered so difficult as to make it virtually impracticable'.[1] Aston

[1] C. Callwell, "*Military Operations*" p. 283.

agreed; 'the improvement in modern weapons has rendered a landing in the face of serious opposition almost an impossible task'.[1] Naval theorists were less alarmist, but admitted that the situation was unclear; Corbett allowed that, 'the extent to which, under modern conditions, ships at sea can usefully perform the delicate operation of supporting an infantry attack with gun fire . . . remains to be proved'.[2] The favoured solution to the problem was the achievement of a landing by means of surprise. Thus for Aston secrecy was the element 'upon which the success of amphibious operations entirely depends',[3] whilst Callwell stressed that the advantages of an amphibious force 'are thrown away unless the objective remains a secret'.[4] A surprise descent was therefore seen as a *sine qua non* by the military theorists long before the experience of Gallipoli.

Pre-war exercises and staff publications also agreed that improvements in weaponry had thrown the practicability of opposed landings into question. The naval adviser to the 2nd Army Staff Ride in 1904 informed his audience that shrapnel would 'play sad havoc' with tows of boats approaching the shore, and that this demonstrated 'the impracticability of landing troops nowadays in the face of opposition'.[5] The Army Manoeuvres of the same year, embracing a disembarkation at Clacton, were framed on the assumption that 'it is very questionable whether, in these days of improved firearms, a descent on a coastline can be carried out in the teeth of a resolute opposition', and the scenario was therefore arranged to allow of a surprise landing.[6] The military publications arising from these exercises were more open-minded. Nevertheless the inter-service Plumer Conference, which codified the findings of the Clacton operation, observed that the threat of determined opposition would necessitate a careful reconsideration of the

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[1] G. G. Aston, "*Letters on Amphibious Wars*" pp. 37-38.
[2] J. Corbett. "*Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*" pp 264-5.
[3] Aston, "*Letters on Amphibious Wars*", p 32.
[4] Callwell, "*Military Operations*", p. 283.
[5] WO 33/322 Extract from a Report on a Staff Ride as carried out by the Staff of the Second Army Corps, April 1904. Part II Opening Lecture by Commander Wilfred Henderson, RN, p. 10.
[6] WO 279/8 Report on Army Manoeuvres 1904. p. 17.

plan, although noting that 'the success of Wolfe at Quebec in 1759 and of Abercrombie at Aboukir in 1801, should make us chary of setting limits to what daring may accomplish'.[1] It is clear therefore that even before the war there were strong expressions of doubt as to the possibility of landing in the face of the enemy, chiefly based on the expected efficacy of his artillery.

In response to these fears, the Army developed a technique for opposed landings intended to minimise the expected threat from defenders. The Plumer Conference initiated this process and set out the basic principles which would govern the British approach to landing operations in the Great War. The operation was seen as falling naturally into two phases: the landing of a covering force, which would capture the beach and defend it from counter-attack, and the landing of the main force under this protection. In order to reduce the difficulty of the initial landing, the covering force could be landed by night.[2] The Manual issued in 1911 suggested the landing in a single wave of a covering force consisting of infantry, machine gunners and cyclists to seize and hold the landing area, opposition being countered by means of night landings and feint attacks elsewhere to draw the enemy away.[3] By 1913 the night landing had become gospel, the reissued Manual insisting of the covering force that 'if opposition is expected, part, at any rate, should be landed by night'.[4] Thus by the outbreak of war the threat from artillery had produced a tactical technique built around a night landing.

Less progress was made in the development of technology which might counter the perceived threat from shore-based artillery. What development there was came chiefly from the naval side; the Army-dominated Manual concerning itself chiefly with tactical innovations. This division between Naval faith in materiel and Army reliance upon tactical solutions proved a recurrent theme, particularly during the First World War.

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[1] WO 33/344 Report of the Naval and Military Conference on Overseas Expeditions. 20/3/05.
[2] Ibid.
[3] WO 33/569 Manual of Combined Naval and Military Operations 1911. p. 25.
[4] WO 33/644 Manual of Combined Naval and Military Operations 1913. p. 29.

The differing degrees of faith which the two services were prepared to put in material solutions first emerged during the investigation into operations against the Dardanelles in 1906. The General Staff report, written by Callwell,[1] rejected the operation on the grounds that it was impossible for the naval guns to provide the landing troops with the necessary protection, (although, perhaps to promote his own Syrian strategy, Callwell did stipulate a near-impossible level of covering fire).[2] The Director of Naval Intelligence's response was to suggest that the General Staff 'somewhat underrates the value of the assistance which might be rendered by a co-operating fleet by means of heavy covering fire at the point of disembarkation' and propose that with feints, diversions and practice the operation might be possible.[3] This disagreement was the first indication of the divergent views of the services as to the potential for technical solutions to the problems of opposed landings.

Before World War I the Army never seriously investigated technical solutions to the problems which improved weaponry had raised up. The Plumer Conference declared itself happy with the unpowered horseboats which were used to land men and material at Clacton, and confined itself to recommending that fifty such craft should be maintained in peacetime.[4] The first edition of the Manual made no mention of the use of specialist craft or the employment of the guns of the fleet in support of the landing. The 1913 edition, though it instructed the prospective commanders to consider the gunnery support which the fleet could provide, placed its faith in the landing of the covering force by night and chiefly considered naval gunnery as a means of supporting the force once it was ashore.[5] No real attempt was made to integrate the gunnery of the fleet into the landing

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[1] C. E. Callwell "*Experiences of a Dug-Out*" p. 88.
[2] See Chapter 1 Page 39.
[3] CAB 38/12 C.I.D. 92-B. Memorandum by the General Staff Upon the Possibility of a Joint Naval and Military Attack Upon the Dardanelles. 19/12/06.
[4] WO 33/344 p. 11.
[5] WO 33/644 p. 14. Procedure for Seizing the Beach and Covering Positions.

process, despite the suggestion that the commanders consider the capability of the warships to 'cover and support the landing'.

The Navy was apparently more open to technical solutions. During the Churchill-commissioned investigations into the seizure of German islands, various mechanical solutions to the problems of landing were posited. Rear-Admiral Bayly, commissioned by Churchill to investigate the capture of Borkum in 1913, suggested a number of technical innovations which were later to become commonplaces. Bayly suggested that the landing should be carried out under cover of smoke screens, supported by naval artillery right up until the last moment, and conducted from powered horseboats with a landing ramp at the front.[1] Bayly's converted horseboats are recognisable precursors of the later landing craft.[2] Such was the faith which Bayly placed in these technical solutions that he was prepared to sacrifice all advantage of surprise; his plan called for a three day attack on the island, clearing its mine defences and bombarding its defenders, before the actual landing was attempted.[3] The Operations Division of the Admiralty was less sanguine, considering that the smoke screen was 'likely to be equally disconcerting to both sides', and questioning the robustness of Bayly's proto-landing craft, but considered that the proposals should be the subject of experiment.[4] Admiralty preparation for combined operations was limited in comparison with the Army, but Naval thinkers showed a greater readiness to utilise technical solutions than characterised the Army's approach.

Thus on the outbreak of war, long before Gallipoli, the British were demonstrably wary of the risks inherent in an opposed landing. The Navy had made some sporadic investigations into the possibility of countering the threat of shore artillery by technical means, but the main response had been tactical. The Manual of Combined Operations,

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[1] ADM 137/452 Seizure of an Advanced Base; Report by Rear Admiral Lewis Bayly, 30/6/13.
[2] ADM 137/552 Contains diagrams of Bayly's proposed craft.
[3] ADM 137/452; Report by Rear Admiral Bayly; "B"; Borkum, Germany". pp. 8-12.
[4] ADM 137/452 Comments of D.O.D., Capt. G. Ballard, 10/7/13.

which comprised the most broadly disseminated body of knowledge on the subject, favoured the employment of surprise and the cover of darkness for staging such operations, whilst any possibility of opposition would require careful consideration. The pre-war theorists were largely convinced that such an operation was impossible per se; the British treated amphibious operations with a great deal of cautious respect before their experiences at Helles.

Developments on the outbreak of war reflected the relative interest of the two services in amphibious strategy. With Churchill, Fisher and Wilson at the Admiralty considering the possibility of operations in northern waters, a number of suggestions for improving amphibious technique were put into effect. The bulk of these were Fisher's own. Wilson confined his technical innovations to a system of ship-to-shore spotting designed to enable the bombardment of the Heligoland fortresses.[1] Churchill, though he was ready to support Fisher's proposals for specialist vessels, was not convinced that they were necessary, and considered that his plans for capturing German islands could go ahead without these craft if they could not be ready in time.[2] Fisher alone appears to have considered that the operations under consideration required the production of specialist vessels. As has been described elsewhere, his strategic outlook remains somewhat mysterious,[3] and there may have been other reasons for the creation of the light battlecruisers than their ostensible function of operations in the Baltic.[4] However, Fisher did make realistic preparations for a landing operation, and to this end he ordered the production of armoured diesel barges, the "X-Lighters", capable of carrying five hundred

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[1] ADM 137/452 Sir Arthur Wilson's papers on Bombardment of Heligoland, 26/10/14; System of Range-Finding and Marking.

[2] ADM 137/452 First Lord to First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir A. K. Wilson and Admiral Oliver, 3/1/15.

[3] See Chapter 2, Page 55.

[4] Sumida "*In Defence of Naval Supremacy*" p. 292.

men and landing them via a brow in the front of the vessel.[1] Some two-hundred of these vessels were constructed, although the operations for which they were designed were abandoned as Gallipoli began to consume all resources.[2] Fisher subsequently bemoaned the impossibility of properly preparing for such an expedition in the face of political pressure for action, which suggests that the mercurial First Sea Lord possessed a clear impression of at least the material commitment such an operation involved, although he clearly lacked the resolve to impress this realisation on Churchill.[3] His X-Lighters, however, were later to give good service at Gallipoli.

The Dardanelles operations, having been conceived as an entirely naval enterprise and initiated largely in opposition to the opinions of the military services, saw no tactical or technical innovation during the discussions in Britain. It was left to the Commanders on the spot to improvise what techniques and material they could to facilitate a landing. Such extemporisation was necessary, for the drawn-out process which had preceded the attack had sacrificed all chance of achieving the operation by surprise; although feints could be and would be used to delay the arrival of reserves, all the main beaches were held. Consequently an opposed landing was inevitable, and for the first time the services had seriously to consider its implications.

In the first instance there was amongst Hamilton's Staff and Commanders a consensus that due to the loss of complete surprise the operation would be difficult if not impossible. All agreed with the Manual that surprise was normally the vital element in such operations. Surprise having been compromised, however, they were forced to consider alternatives, and concluded that the only possible substitute was the extensive use of the guns of the fleet in support of the landing. Hamilton's subordinates were

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[1] C.C.A.C. CHAR 13/56 Fisher to Churchill 29/1/15 contains the first reference to these, which Fisher added to the programme approved by Lloyd George at the War Council Meeting of the Morning of 28/1/15, CAB 42/1.

[2] N.M.M. Admiralty Director of Naval Construction Reports, 1918-21; X-Lighters.

[3] C.C.A.C. FISR 5/30 4296 "Postscript". 1917.

agreed that with the Turks forewarned, 'the fire of the fleet is the only factor that brings within the bounds of possibility a landing in the face of the enemy'.[1] Most, however, remained convinced that an opposed landing was an impossibility.[2] Hamilton admitted himself that he was 'most anxious about the first landing under fire',[3] and aware that all his subordinates considered it impossible.[4] However, he considered he was under orders to try, and the choice of landing places was therefore governed by the belief that naval gunnery was the only possible substitute for surprise. Thus Generals Hunter-Weston and Paris both favoured Helles as the point at which most scope could be given to the guns of the fleet,[5] and Hamilton's Staff agreed; 'the most favourable landing place will be that at which the most assistance can be obtained from the guns of the fleet, this will be at the S.W. extremity of the Peninsula'.[6] Orthodox tactics called for a surprise landing, but with surprise out of the question, and with Hamilton under 'a preremptory instruction that he was to take the Peninsula',[7] the Army was forced to resort to a landing in the face of opposition supported by naval gunfire.

Ironically, whilst the Army had been forced to accept the view that naval gunnery might allow a landing in the face of opposition, the Navy's experiences at Gallipoli had already led it to the opposite view. Whereas in 1906 the War Office had rejected the Admiralty's suggestion of a landing on the Peninsula under the fire of the fleet, the position was now reversed.[8] De Robeck informed Hamilton that the ships' guns were not

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[1] Add. Ms. 48364 (Hunter-Weston Papers), Private War Diary Vol. X, March-Dec. 1915, Appreciation 27/315. A similar view is expressed in General Paris's Appreciation 19/3/15, L.H.C.M.A., Hamilton Papers 17/7 (31) Dardanelles Expedition, Various Documents.

[2] Add. Ms. 48364 Vol. X; "Note with regard to the opinion of Major General Aylmer Hunter Weston as to the best utilisation of our forces in the Eastern Mediterranean, March 1915.

[3] L.H.M.C.A. Hamilton 15/17 Telegrams; Hamilton to Kitchener 10/4/15.

[4] Sir Ian Hamilton, "*Gallipoli Diary*", (Edward Arnold, London, 1920), p 94.

[5] B.L. Add. Ms. 48364 Hunter-Weston Diary, March-Dec. 1915, Appreciation 27/3/15. General Paris' Appreciation 19/3/15, L.H.M.C.A., Hamilton Papers 17/7 (31).

[6] L.H.M.C.A. Hamilton Papers 17/5 (2), Staff Appreciation [by C. Aspinall and G. Dawnay] 23/3/15.

[7] CAB 19/1 Dardanelles Commission First Report p. 37.

[8] CAB 38/12 C.I.D. 92-B. Memorandum by the General Staff Upon the Possibility of a Joint Naval and Military Attack Upon the Dardanelles. 19/12/06.

effective against the wire and trenches, but failed to insist upon the point. In the course of the commission Field Marshal Nicholson confronted Hamilton with the General Staff paper of 1906 and repeatedly stressed that the Navy had admitted their guns could not dominate the Turkish defences.[1] As part of the general shortcomings in communication between the Navy and the Army the extent to which the latter were relying on the gunfire of the fleet does not appear to have been fully realised, for de Robeck instructed his Captains that 'the shelling of the enemy's trenches is . . . as a rule . . . a waste of ammunition', and that their heavy guns should be used 'sparingly'.[2] Due to this misunderstanding Hamilton was placing his faith in naval gunnery just as the Naval Squadron was becoming aware of its limitations.

Faced with an amphibious operation which could not be carried out according to the pre-war surprise-based tactical doctrine, the military were forced to extemporise technique and equipment for a landing in the face of opposition. Ideas which had been neglected by the Army whilst it continued to place its faith in avoiding opposition by surprise were now of necessity incorporated into the plan. Although pre-war Manuals had mentioned the possibility of naval fire support, no procedure for controlling it had ever been worked out, and an artillery code had to be swiftly improvised.[3] Informed of the existence of Fisher's X-Lighters,[4] Hamilton unsuccessfully appealed to Kitchener to request their despatch to Gallipoli.[5] Other devices, such as the use of the collier "River Clyde" to run troops ashore, were also adopted. Innovations which had been unnecessary so long as it was considered that amphibious operations should be accomplished by stealth were therefore rapidly extemporised to meet the situation.

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[1] CAB 19/33 Proceedings of the Dardanelles Commission Gen. Sir Ian Hamilton's Evidence p. 427 & Brig-Gen. G. N. Johnston's Evidence, p. 1397.

[2] BL Keyes Papers, 5/9 Memorandum 49L, Orders for Combined Operations, 12/4/15.

[3] CAB 19/33, Colonel H. E. Street's Evidence p. 614.

[4] Hamilton "*Gallipoli Diary*" p. 44.

[5] CAB 19/31, Dardanelles Commission Statements and Papers; War Office Telegrams; Hamilton to Kitchener, 23/3/15.

Despite the departure from the norm forced by the circumstances of the Gallipoli Campaign, however, wherever possible the Army adhered to the principles laid down in the Manual. The Navy made little attempt to interfere, preferring to tailor their arrangements to the Army's requirements.[1] Despite the departure from their standard tactics forced by the loss of surprise, the Army continued to follow the Manual in all other respects, with some unfortunate results. The tactical arrangements of the pre-war Manual were largely adhered to, a covering force being designated for each of the two main landings, with the object of seizing a position inland which would allow the main force to land with impunity. However, no allowance was made for the fact that this force would be making an assault in daylight rather than an unopposed landing at night, and hence the covering positions allotted, Achi Baba and the Sari Bair ridge, were too far inland for the shattered troops to reach.[2] Post-war manuals were to stress that the first forces to land should not be expected to do more than seize the beach.[3] Similarly, the pre-war manual made little provision for the evacuation of wounded, for heavy casualties were obviously not expected in a surprise night landing. Aspinall-Oglander, Hamilton's G.S.O.2. and later historian of the campaign, was to complain bitterly that the pre-war manual contained 'only the meagre instructions "that sanitary and medical officers should be landed amongst the troops of the main body"'.[4] For Aspinall to blame such shortcomings on the Manual was unfair; having adapted other elements of the pre-war doctrine to meet the situation, it was incumbent upon Hamilton's Staff to ensure that the remainder of the Manual was applicable to the new situation. Due to its presumption of a surprise landing, the Manual's arrangements required drastic recasting to meet the wholly

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[1] C.C.A.C. CHAR 13/65 de Robeck to Churchill 4/4/15. See also Chapter V Page 184.

[2] L.H.M.C.A. Hamilton Papers 15/4, Instructions for Covering Force, 19/4/15 & Instructions for G.O.C. A.&N.Z. Army Corps, 13/4/15.

[3] AIR 10/1206 Manual of Combined Operations 1925 p 109.

[4] Brig-Gen. C.F. Aspinall-Oglander, "*History of the Great War, Military Operations, Gallipoli*" (Heinemann, London, 1929) Vol. II. p. 146.

different conditions of Gallipoli; short on time and material, Hamilton's Staff failed to fully comprehend this.

It was thus with a muddled combination of pre-war doctrine based on surprise and a hurriedly extemporised system for conducting opposed landings that the first landings on Gallipoli were attempted. Subsequent operations showed clearly that Helles was an aberration forced by circumstances. For the second set of landings, undertaken in August, the Army reverted to reliance on surprise. Suvla Bay had been disregarded in the first landings, due to the belief that the fleet and the army could not co-operate closely there, and the conviction that the force available in April was insufficient to operate in such an open area. With the arrival of the XI Corps, however, the requisite troops were available and the weakly-held bay was chosen for their operations.[1] Despite the arrival of fourteen of Fisher's X-Lighters the planners adhered to the reliance on surprise which characterised the pre-war Manual.[2] The covering force was landed at night,[3] with the main force landing at dawn under its protection. Surprise was complete, those officers who had witnessed Helles considering that no comparison could be made. Apart from the grounding of a number of lighters, the landing operations went off smoothly.[4] Subsequent failures to exploit the success of the landing led to the operation's failure, but Suvla was a model assault in terms of the pre-war doctrine.

The "lessons" of Gallipoli were therefore more confused than the conventional view would allow. Helles had in fact revealed the possibility of a landing in the face of opposition, an operation which even some of Hamilton's planning staff had considered 'impossible'.[5] An opposed landing had been at best an unproven possibility before the war, Helles revealed that both the requirement and the capability existed. Suvla, on the

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[1] CAB 19/33 Sir Ian Hamilton's Evidence, pp. 413-4.
[2] BL Keyes 2/14; Keyes to Lady Keyes, 16/8/15.
[3] CAB 19/1 Dardanelles Commission Final Report, Appendix. Sir Ian Hamilton's Despatch 11/12/15. p 131.
[4] CAB 19/33 Maj.-Gen. W. G. B. Western's Evidence, p. 762.
[5] I.W.M. Dawnay Papers, Book 2. Letters to Mrs Dawnay, 3/5/15 & 11/5/15.

other hand, appeared to confirm the pre-war emphasis on surprise and secrecy. Furthermore, it appears that in the short-term all the experiences of landing operations at Gallipoli were considered positive, for several of the staff and commanders were to be re-utilised in the plans hatched for a landing in Belgium the following year.[1]

The operations on the Belgian coast would entail an even greater departure from the strictures of the pre-war Manual than had Gallipoli. The coast was fortified to a greater extent, with extensive artillery defences, and, due to the proximity of the front, the enemy reserves were in great strength.[2] A landing was therefore certain to be opposed. On the other hand, the nearness of the allied front line offered the possibility that the landed troops could quickly connect up with the main army, and would therefore not require reinforcement or supply by sea. The operation could take the form of a single assault from the sea designed to connect up with an advance on shore; which tied in with Haig's intention to use the landing as a means of obtaining a port to further his advance.

The first plan, drawn up in 1916, sought to avoid entirely the problems of a landing on the fortified coast. By means of a rapid and smoke-screen disguised approach it was hoped to rush a force of trawlers and monitors into Ostend Harbour itself and thus 'get behind' the German defences.[3] This scheme was adopted on the grounds that the coast itself 'was very much fortified and wired and . . . the only possible point of offence would be a very bold attack on the harbour of Ostend itself'.[4] On investigation, however, this project was considered to be impossible. The Naval Commander, Vice-Admiral Bacon, discovered the existence of a German artillery battery which could range on the

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[1] BL Add. Ms. 48364 (Hunter-Weston); Eighth Army Corps War Diary March to July 1916; Summary of Personal Movements 17/7/15 to 18/3/16.

[2] ADM 239/27 Belgian Coast Defences Committee Report 1920; provides an exhaustive description of the fortifications of the coast.

[3] WO 256/10 Haig Diary May-June 1916; Note on Projected Landing at Ostend, by Lt. Gen. Sir Aylmer Hunter-Weston, 24/2/16.

[4] BL Add. Ms. 48364 (Hunter-Weston); Eighth Army Corps War Diary March to July 1916; Summary of Personal Movements 17/7/15 to 18/3/16.

harbour itself, thus rendering his idea of getting in 'behind the guns' impossible.[1] Lt-General Hunter-Weston, appointed to apply his Gallipoli expertise to the plan, added various military considerations against making the attempt. The difficulty of fighting out through the town and the probable defences of the quays all weighed heavily in his mind. Further, Gallipoli had taught Hunter-Weston the necessity for a number of landings which could support each other in the event of one being held up, and although he had not taken advantage of such possibilities during the Helles landing,[2] he considered that a single landing in the harbour would provide only a precarious foothold.[3] To avoid the difficulties of assaulting the fortified coast was therefore impossible, and it was decided to prepare on the basis of a landing on the beach.[4]

With the revival of the project towards the end of the year, preparations for making an assault across the beaches began in earnest. Haig had suggested as early as September that Bacon should investigate the possibility of using flat-bottomed boats in the first wave as a means of 'landing a line of tanks on the beach with the object of breaking through and capturing the enemy's defences'.[5] As no possibility of evading the German defences appeared possible, Haig was applying the lessons of the Western Front to the problem of assaulting a fortified beach. The operation therefore took on the appearance of a set-piece assault. Between the approval of the scheme in December 1916 and the summer of 1917 extensive preparations were made.[6] Thorough surveying of the coast and tides provided the data necessary to produce pontoon craft capable of placing the tanks and troops on the shore.[7] The tanks were specially equipped with slatted tracks

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[1] WO 256/10 Haig Diary, Précis of a Conference of the Commander in Chief and the Vice Admiral Dover, 19/6/16, Note by Admiral Bacon.
[2] For this see Rhodes James, "*Gallipoli*" p. 123.
[3] WO 256/10 Note on Projected Landing at Ostend, by Lt-Gen. Sir Aylmer Hunter-Weston, 24/2/16.
[4] ADM 137/2103 Dover Patrol Papers; Précis of a Conference between the Commander in Chief and the Vice Admiral Dover, 12/6/16. An account which emphasises the shift in tactics is in WO 256/10.
[5] WO 256/13 Haig Diary, 18/9/16.
[6] Adm. R. H. Bacon, "*The Concise Story of the Dover Patrol*", (Hutchison, London, 1932) pp. 188-193.
[7] ADM 137/2104 Belgian Coast Operational Plans of the Dover Patrol, C/116/00.

and portable ramps to enable them to climb the sea wall. An apparatus, which worked by trailing a measured wire behind the assaulting craft, was developed to enable the correct landing places to be located in the covering smoke screen. Whilst the Navy developed the technology for the assault, the Army moved a Division into a 'quarantined' camp and constructed replicas of the wall and coast for training purposes.[1] Typically, there was a disagreement between the Naval and Military Staffs over the extent of the faith that could be placed in technical solutions,[2] but the final scheme inspired sufficient confidence in the Commanders appointed to carry it out that all opposed Haig's decision to abandon the operation due to the failure of the land forces to advance within co-operating distance.[3]

The plans proposed for operations on the coast of Belgium in the later years of the war are a clear indication that Gallipoli's impact on British amphibious technique was by no means as clear cut as the conventional view would suggest. The plan for 1916 involved an extremely hazardous assault on a port, whilst the following year a carefully considered set-piece assault on a fortified coast was fully planned and prepared for, only being abandoned as a result of the failure to advance on land. There is no evidence that the British were shy of landings under fire, or that they were committed to a strategy dependent upon surprise.

In part the assumption made by MacGregor and others that the British were obsessed with surprise arises from a misconception; every plan mentioned above considered that the attack should fall without warning, but a valid distinction can be drawn between striving for surprise as a means of reducing the effectiveness of the opposition expected, and relying on surprise to ensure the absence of opposition. Too

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[1] WO 95/434 Fourth Army War Diary, Sept. 1917-Feb. 1918; Special Appendix Z, Note on the Northern Operations Entrusted to the Fourth Army 31/10/17.

[2] WO 158/20 General Staff Notes Jan. 1917-Oct. 1918, 'Landing by British on Belgian Coast', Memo by Colonel MacMullen and marginal notes on same by Field Marshal Haig.

[3] WO 95/434 Special Appendix Z, Sub Appendix 8, Bacon to Admiralty 22/7/17; Sub Appendix IX, Review of the Situation by the Army Commander [Not Sent] 22/8/17; & WO 95/433, Fourth Army War Diary, August 1917, Appendix IV, G.O.C. XV Corps to Fourth Army, respectively contain Bacon, Rawlinson and General Du Cane's arguments for going ahead regardless of the progress at Passchendaele.

often, the British insistence on the former is confused with the latter. It is clear, however, that in the aftermath of Gallipoli there was no hasty reaction against the staging of landings under fire.

The post-war consideration of amphibious technique showed no tendency to depart from this readiness to consider landing in the face of opposition. The report drafted by Major General Anderson, Commandant of the Staff College, Camberley, drawing on the experiences of the 1919 Combined Exercise and its uniquely experienced participants, set the agenda for amphibious technique for the next eighteen years. As with the pre-war manuals, great emphasis was placed on the attainment of tactical surprise. Increasingly, however, the possibility of landing in the face of opposition was coming to be considered, and the means by which this might be effected explored.

Anderson's first attempt was somewhat disjointed, largely due to the fact that he styled his report as amendments to the 1913 Manual. On the one hand he urged the landing of the covering force at night as 'it must be borne in mind that surprise is the first essential to success. No action in the nature of covering fire or preliminary bombardment can be permitted which will in any way lessen the chances of effecting a surprise in the initial landing'.[1] However, he also considered the chances of surprise vastly lessened by the introduction of aerial reconnaissance,[2] and urged the advantages of an advanced base from which tanks could be despatched in landing craft to precede the first wave of troops.[3] Similar innovations were urged by his Naval counterpart, Admiral Drax, which suggests that such ideas were common currency at the Exercise.[4] Drax also agreed that the size of a modern expedition and aerial reconnaissance would militate against secrecy and require alternative methods.[5] Both men felt that whilst a landing by surprise

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[1] ADM 116/2086 Report on Combined Naval and Military Exercise, 1919 Annexe Vii.
[2] Ibid. Report, p. 2.
[3] Ibid. Annexe III; Notes Regarding the Use of an Advanced Base in Combined Operations.
[4] ADM 116/2086 Director RN College to D.T.S.D. Admiralty 8/12/19, General Conclusions "m" & "n".
[5] Ibid. Conclusion "c". MacGregor "*The Use, Misuse and Non-Use of History*" p. 607 suggests that Drax considered 'perfect secrecy' as the key to success, however, Drax actually stated that 'secrecy and celerity

remained desirable, it was not necessarily achievable, and that alternative methods were required.

By the time Anderson came to revise his report as a chapter for inclusion in Field Service Regulations he had clarified his thinking. The power of modern weapons was such, he stated, that 'it must be accepted as a principle that a landing in the face of the enemy should never be attempted unless, either by surprise *or other means*, there is a reasonable prospect of the covering force being able to land without encountering organised resistance'.[1] To this end it was for the military to decide 'whether a surprise landing by night, or a landing by day with supporting fire should be attempted'.[2] Anderson divided landing operations into three types; those in which complete surprise could be achieved and the force landed deliberately in daylight; those in which partial or local surprise was possible, and a covering force slipped ashore at night; and those in which 'opposition is allowed for and expected, the factor of surprise being relied on merely to lessen the opposition'. This last, he noted, was both the most usual case and 'the most difficult operation of war'.[3] Anderson thus set out the basic assumptions which were to guide British preparations for amphibious operations between the wars; landing operations should not take place against organised opposition, depending on the circumstances, either surprise or technological solutions should be employed to disrupt the enemy's defences. This marked a more positive attitude towards opposed landings than had been prevalent before W.W.I.; thus Gallipoli does not appear to have 'distorted' the British attitude towards such operations; if anything the experiences of the war had

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are admittedly vital to success but . . . convoys move slowly and aerial reconnaissance may well locate them at twelve hours steaming from the shore . . . two or three hours may suffice to bring up mobile forces adequate to wreck the hopes of the expedition . . . a successful landing will require . . . the adaptation to our needs of every resource that science can devise . . . and perfect secrecy'.

[1] ADM 116/2086 Field Service Regulations, Chapter XIII Draft, p. 1A. [My Italics]

[2] Ibid. p. 3A.

[3] Ibid. p. 5A.

rendered the British more sanguine as to the possibilities of amphibious operations than hitherto.

Having defined the parameters of amphibious planning, Anderson turned to the details of the operations. Like Haig, Anderson drew his lessons from the entire war, rather than simply the experiences of Gallipoli. He therefore suggested that the answers to an assault on a beach were to be found in set-piece assaults on land; 'the same methods must be employed to overcome machine guns whether emplaced on a foreshore or organised in a battle position'.[1] Thus he provided outlines of possible techniques based on operations on land. In a landing relying on surprise he compared the action of the covering force to that of the advanced guards in a land movement.[2] Similarly, Anderson considered that in the event of opposition being expected, the tactics prevailing on land should be adapted to the assault; just as infantry had followed tanks on the Western Front, 'it may be necessary to land tanks at the head of the vanguard and before any attempt is made to put the infantry ashore'.[3] Post-war amphibious thinking owed as much to the Western Front as to Gallipoli.

Anderson did not believe that the surprise landing of infantry by night was the only answer; he rather considered that such an approach would serve for some situations whilst greater opposition would have to be met by more extensive preparation. However, it was far easier to draw up the arrangements for the former operation, for none of the material required for the latter form was in existence. Thus Anderson provided a detailed outline of the arrangements for an surprise landing, whilst his comments on a landing by force were restricted to suggesting the addition of tanks and naval gunnery support. The same problem of non-extant equipment led to the inter-war exercises tending to focus on

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[1] Ibid. Report, p. 2.
[2] ADM 116/2086 Draft Chapter XIII, p. 6A.
[3] Ibid.

landings achieved by surprise, giving the erroneous impression that this technique comprised the sole British approach to the problem.

Where Gallipoli's impact was unmistakable was in the modifications made to the arrangements for the assaulting force. Anderson amended the pre-war doctrine with the experiences of Helles in mind, recommending that the first wave of the covering force should be responsible solely for the capture of the beach,[1] and should be rested before being used again.[2] Similarly he suggested the creation of a 'floating reserve' which could be used to exploit those landings in the first wave which succeeded; the lesson of Hamilton's inability to develop the successful landing at Y-Beach in place of the arrested offensive at V-Beach had obviously struck home.[3] Thus in the event of an attempt to land a force by surprise, he favoured a night landing; the first wave landing unheralded to seize the beach; a floating reserve waiting in the offing to support those points at which the landing was successful; and the remainder of the covering force following up to secure the area for the landing of the main body. In the event of a set-piece assault a similar process would follow the disruption of the enemy defences by tanks and naval artillery.

Anderson's approach was followed in almost all inter-war publications on the subject. Each provided a general outline for a landing, coupled with suggestions for the technical solutions which would be necessary if the landing were certain to be opposed in strength. Thus the 1925 edition of the Manual called for a night landing with the 'first flight' of troops fulfilling the role of Anderson's vanguard and securing the beach for the remainder of the covering force.[4] If opposition were expected, however, 'tanks should be landed in front of the infantry'.[5] However, in contrast to Anderson, the 1925 Manual did

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[1] Ibid.
[2] Ibid. p. 7A.
[3] Ibid. p. 8A
[4] AIR 10/1206 Manual of Combined Operations, 1925. p. 109.
[5] Ibid. p. 108.

not really consider the possibility of a landing in daylight and appears to have considered that the tanks, if used, should precede the covering force in at night.

By 1932 the confusions of the post-war Manual had been worked out, and a return made to Anderson's original division between surprise-dependent landings and landings conducted by force. Whilst allowing for the possibility of placing the first flight ashore unopposed under cover of night and reiterating the advantages of a night landing, against this the Manual stressed the difficulties of utilising naval guns, aircraft and armoured fighting vehicles in the dark.[1] As the Manual also considered the employment of naval gunnery and the use of tanks supported by covering fire, counter battery fire and smoke-screens as substitutes for surprise,[2] it is clear that for certain scenarios a set-piece daylight assault found as much favour with the compilers of the Manual as did a surprise night landing for others.

The 1938 Edition went further and provided explicit guidelines as to the circumstances which would dictate whether a surprise landing or set-piece assault should be attempted. Adhering to the basic precept of an assault force consisting of a first flight, follow up troops and a floating reserve to exploit success,[3] the Manual adapted the manner of use according to circumstances. Landing operations were divided into two scenarios; those in which the enemy would be unable to defend all possible landing places in an theatre of operations and those where the choice of landing places would be sufficiently restricted that the enemy could defend them all.[4] In the first case the Manual recommended landing the covering force by night, whereupon it would establish itself ashore before the defenders could react. Thus the ideal conditions for this approach included 'the absence of defences at the landing places'.[5] However, if the second scenario

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[1] DEFE 2/708 Manual of Combined Operations 1932, p. 65.
[2] Ibid. p. 67 & p. 70.
[3] DEFE 2/709, Manual of Combined Operations 1938. p. 134.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid. p. 135.

applied and the landing places were certain to be defended, then the Manual suggested an 'exactly executed and accurately co-ordinated attack', assisted by naval and aerial bombardment and smoke screens,[1] utilising tanks in the first wave.[2] 'Such a landing', the compilers of the Manual concluded, 'must be made by day'.[3] Essentially the doctrine can be summarised as avoiding opposed landings by night landings if possible, but where they were inevitable, a set-piece daylight assault was the favoured solution. In the light of this, it is difficult to agree with MacGregor that Gallipoli had convinced the British that 'assaulting a well-defended beach was hopeless'.[4]

Thus from the end of the First World War until a mere year before the commencement of the Second, the official British doctrine repeatedly considered the question of operations in the face of opposition and suggested the basic elements necessary for success. The deliberately undogmatic nature of the doctrinal material reflected the British conviction that all such operations would be unique and each might have to be approached differently. The Manual of Combined Operations was thus the embodiment of the British approach; the accumulation of the information necessary to allow the Commanders to produce a unique plan based on the particular circumstances of the operation they had been appointed to carry out. It was a reference work for commanders of amphibious operations, rather than a specific modus operandi such as the Americans were evolving for the obvious requirements of the Pacific.

Technique and Material Development in the Mainstream; Case Studies.

Having ascertained that the British approach consisted of an undogmatic accumulation of experience, information and prototypes, it is intended to demonstrate the

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[1] Ibid. p. 134.
[2] Ibid. p. 142.
[3] Ibid. p. 134.
[4] MacGregor "*The Use, Misuse and Non-Use of History*", p. 608.

manner in which this approach worked, and assess its merits and failures. To this end three case studies have been examined: the British responses to the introduction of air power and chemical weapons, and the development of specialist landing craft. As these were the main areas of development in the inter-war years, this survey will also provide an overview of the state of British preparation in this period.

A clear illustration of the British approach is provided by the manner in which they dealt with the problems raised by the introduction of chemical warfare. The British consideration of the impact of gas on landing operations also reveals how particular fields of investigation could be hampered by factors peculiar to them, further illustrating the fallacy of blaming the lack of progress solely on the experience of Gallipoli. Investigations relating to chemical weapons for instance, were restricted by the reaction against them in the post-war period.

The first suggestions that the use of gas in landing operations should be investigated made little headway against the post-war consensus against such weapons. Although the question of gas was raised in 1923,[1] and taken up by the Committee for Staff Duties in Combined Operations,[2] the first post-war Manual only considered the use of smoke.[3] Investigation continued to be hampered even after the probable implications of chemical warfare for landing operations had been brutally spelt out. Captain R. Fitzmaurice RN, a veteran of Gallipoli, joined the inter-service Chemical Warfare Committee in 1928 and circulated a memorandum which pointed out that the contamination of the beach with a persistent weapon such as Mustard Gas could be disastrous for a landing force. Fitzmaurice suggested that if the foreshore could be contaminated with Mustard Gas, and the attackers held up on it; 'it requires little

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[1] AIR 2/246/22781 Report by R.A.F. Staff College on Combined Exercise at Camberley 1923. Report by Commandant Staff College Camberley, Maj.-Gen. Ironside, 16/5/23.

[2] AIR 2/1061 1A, Appendix B. List of Outstanding Questions on Combined Operations. No. 5. Use of Gas and Smoke Clouds.

[3] AIR 10/1206 Manual of Combined Operations 1925. p170. 'Training in the Use of Smoke'.

imagination to picture the unenviable position of our personnel under such conditions'.[1] As elsewhere in the post-war investigation into amphibious operations, the Western Front rather than Gallipoli provided the model; the Germans had used Mustard Gas contamination as a defensive technique in 1918.[2] Fitzmaurice suggested that as the weapon would be used on the defender's own soil it would not be illegal, and urged investigation,[3] but the Air Staff concluded that 'the illegality of an instrument or method of war is not cured by its use being confined to defensive operations in one's own territory'.[4] Fitzmaurice's report was not acted upon.

Consequently investigation was held up until the 1930's, when faith in international law began to wane. Naval pressure led to the C.C.S.D.C.O. meeting with the Chemical Warfare Committee,[5] and resulted in the inclusion in the Manual of a preamble setting out the Government's position with regard to gas.[6] The Services were growing increasingly sceptical; the Portsmouth Command amphibious exercise in 1930 saw the use of 'a small amount of lachrymatory gas' by the defenders.[7] Abyssinia confirmed this trend. John Dill, then D.M.O.& I., recommended that the Manual should deal with gas, as 'the mildness of the reaction of the Great Powers to the use of gas by Italy is a significant feature, it seems certain that we must be prepared for the use of gas from the outset of a war'.[8] This view was common amongst the senior military establishment; Henry Pownall, serving on the C.I.D. Secretariat, noted that permission

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[1] AIR 2/1242 Use of Gas Against Landing Operations. 6A. The Use of Persistent Gas as a Deterrent or Preventative to Landing Operations. 7/3/28.

[2] Ludwig F. Haber. "*The Poisonous Cloud, Chemical Warfare in the First World War*". (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1986). p. 217.

[3] AIR 2/1242 Use of Gas Against Landing Operations. 6A.

[4] Ibid. 7A; S.4. to Deputy Chief of the Air Staff (C. Newall), 21/3/28.

[5] AIR 2/1059 Revision of Manual of Combined Operations 1923, Revision of CD 33; 5A. Minutes of meeting 29/6/28 & AIR 2/1069 Revised Manual of Combined Naval, Military and Air Force Operations 1923; 13A Minutes of C.C.S.D.C.O. 2/11/28.

[6] DEFE 2/708 Manual of Combined Operations 1931, p. 3. For the British position see Edward M. Spiers, "*Chemical Warfare*", (Macmillan, London, 1986), p 47.

[7] ADM 186/149 No. 7. Combined Operation Portsmouth Command, 1930.

[8] CAB 54/3 D.C.O.S. 12 Revision of the Manual of Combined Operations, Note by the D.M.O.& I. 9/7/36.

had been given to stockpile gas as 'it is quite obvious that gas will be used, despite all protocols'[1]. The Deputy Chiefs agreed, and instructed the drafting committee that they should pay special attention to the question of the use of gas in and against landing operations.[2] By the third revision of the Manual the faith of the military in the Geneva Protocol was shattered, and they made preparations accordingly.

The War Office therefore requested the Chemical Warfare Establishment to investigate the question.[3] The Porton Staff investigated the effectiveness and persistency of Mustard Gas as a beach contaminant and concluded that 'occupation will involve casualties, unless elaborate anti-gas measures are taken'. Porton noted the obvious implications for landing operations; 'the taking of necessary precautions would have a very serious harassing effect on the resultant operations'. Furthermore, decontamination was seen as extremely difficult and labour intensive. The report concluded 'to sum up the position, it is considered that large scale contamination of beaches will cause considerable harassing and delaying effect on an invading force'.[4]

By the time the Porton report was available, the final edition of the Manual had already gone to press. Nevertheless, it contained a comprehensive assessment of the probable impact of the use of gas on a landing force. The Manual's compilers correctly assumed that 'the persistency of mustard gas on sand is high and considered that such a use of gas 'will not hamper the first flight initially, but will mean high casualties later'.[5] Protection for the troops would be necessary if the use of gas in this manner appeared likely. On the other hand, freed from the constraints of International Law, the Manual also suggested that naval or aerial bombardment with mustard gas might provide a means

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[1] Brian Bond. "*Chief of Staff, the Diaries of Lieutenant General Sir Henry Pownall*". Entry for 9th July 1936.

[2] CAB 54/1 D.C.O.S. 6th Meeting, 16/7/36.

[3] AIR 2/1242 7A. E. E. Haddon to D.Arm.D. 31/3/39.

[4] AIR 2/1242 7B. Contamination of Beaches, Service Aspects of Trials at Tipner in Spring and Summer of 1938. Addendum to Porton Report no. 2067. Photographs of the trials are in Carter, G. "*Porton Down, 75 Years of Chemical and Biological Research*", (H.M.S.O. London, 1992) p. 37.

[5] DEFE 2/709 Manual of Combined Operations 1938. p 155.

of delaying the arrival of defending reinforcements at the landing place.[1] The offensive possibilities of gas were further brought out in an Air Ministry-proposed amendment to the Manual which was suggested too late to be included in the Manual before the war.[2]

The case of chemical weapons thus exemplifies the British approach to amphibious preparations in the inter-war period. Despite the political reaction to the use of such weapons, an example of an extraneous factor disrupting service investigation, their defensive and offensive potential were assessed and the conclusions drawn enshrined in the Manual for the guidance of future commanders.

A complementary approach was applied to the preparation of material for combined operations. As the Manual comprised a repository of amphibious techniques from which prospective commanders could select those which their particular operation required, so the British prepared prototype landing craft which could be rapidly produced once an operation was ordered.

In the first few years after the war, British attention focused on the possibility of constructing an amphibious tank for landing operations. The X-Lighter seemed a satisfactory answer to the problem of landing troops,[3] and thus initial investigations concentrated on the problem of meeting the requirement for landing tanks which the Staff Colleges had identified.[4] Haig's answer to this problem had been the use of landing craft,[5] which took form as Bacon's pontoons, but the idea of self-landing tanks rapidly gained ground. J. F. C. Fuller, as a Staff Officer with the Tank Corps, had suggested an amphibious tank in 1917 as a means of crossing the Rhine, whilst in 1918 he had tested a floating tank on the Welsh Harp Reservoir.[6] Possibly in response to Fuller's experiments

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[1] Ibid. p 146.
[2] CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S.(IT) 10. Manual of Combined Operations, Enclosure II. Amendments to the Galley Proof Suggested . . . by the Staffs of Admiralty, the War Office and Air Ministry'.
[3] ADM 116/2086 Report on Combined Naval and Military Exercise, 1919, Chapter VII.
[4] Ibid. & ADM 116/2086 Director RN College to D.T.S.D. Admiralty 8/12/19.
[5] WO 256/13 Haig Diary, 18/9/16.
[6] L.H.M.C.A., LH 1/302/212, Liddell Hart Papers, J. F. C. Fuller to Liddell Hart, 25/10/31.

the Germans had built defences against floating tanks on the Belgian Coast,[1] which ironically provided the Admiralty with the idea during the post-war investigations of the German defences.[2] At the same time the idea was being given greater currency by Fuller's R.U.S.I. lectures[3] and Fisher's memoirs.[4] In the light of the rapid material progress of the First World War ambitious technological solutions dominated the Services' investigations into amphibious material.

Repeated consideration by the Staff Colleges confirmed the initial interest in the possibility of landing tanks on hostile coasts, and in 1922 the question was investigated by an inter-service committee under the Director of Naval Construction, Sir Eustace Tennyson D'Eyncourt.[5] The committee based their investigation upon War Office provided accounts of the amphibious operations in the last war, and instructions to consider 'all forms of combined operation, small wars and major operations', which last included the relief of Hong Kong.[6] Naval input consisted of the Royal Naval War College's report on the 1921 Camberley Exercise, which stated that as military opinion considered 'no opposed landing on a beach is possible without tanks . . . from the point of view of the Navy there is the greatest possible advantage in the tanks of the covering force being able to approach the shore under their own power'.[7] As the committee's terms of reference instructed them to consider what could be done with existing equipment as well as make recommendations for the future, D'Eyncourt and his colleagues, who

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[1] ADM 239/27 Report of the Committee Appointed to Consider the German Defences on The Belgian Coast, 1919. Appendix B "German Order Concerning Water Tank Defences" 5/9/18.

[2] ADM 116/2086, Memo by Acting Commander E. Altham, 23/2/20; Altham headed the investigation into the defences of the Belgian coast.

[3] Journal of the Royal United Services Institution, Vol. LXV. No 458. May 1920. "*The Development of Sea Warfare on Land and its Influence on Future Naval Operations*".

[4] Fisher "*On the Navy*" - "Oil Maniac"; 'amphibian monsters were definitely fixed in my thoughts'.

[5] N.M.M. DEY 57, D'Eyncourt Papers; Committee on the Sea Transportation and Landing of Tanks. 1922. Terms of Reference.

[6] Ibid. "Memorandum Shewing the Types of War Which Should be Considered by the Landing of Tanks Committee" & "Historical Memorandum on Landing Operations in Hostile Territory During the War of 1914-18".

[7] Ibid. Minutes of the 2nd Meeting, 24/2/22.

included Fuller, developed two distinct solutions. As an interim measure they recommended the construction of a cheap tank landing raft to carry the Vickers Light Tank. As a long term solution they favoured the popular idea of an amphibious tank.[1] This was the position when the first post-war edition of the Manual was printed, and, in keeping with the role of the Manual as a repository of all information to do with amphibious operations, the Committee's recommendations were summarised as an appendix.[2]

However, this first flush of enthusiasm for expensive technical solutions was replaced with a more modest programme as the economic crisis bit into the resources of the services. The first sign of this was the cancellation of the construction of the D'Eyncourt Committee's prototype raft as the Army dithered over committing its funds to a particular tank,[3] but the longer-term result was the emergence of a clear policy on material preparation. All questions to do with amphibious operations were now being gathered into the hands of the Committee for Staff Duties in Combined Operations, which proposed an inter-service 'Landing Craft Committee' to consider 'the design and numbers of landing craft of all descriptions required for combined operations on a hostile coast' and the best means of landing tanks in the first flight.[4] The terms within which the Landing Craft Committee were to operate were laid down by the War Office, with whom the financial responsibility for providing landing craft lay,[5] thus providing a policy for equipment preparation for landing operations. The General Staff stressed that 'it is not proposed that landing craft should be constructed or maintained until the need for them

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[1] N.M.M. DEY/57 Interim Report of the Committee on Sea Transportation & the Landing of Tanks. August 1922.

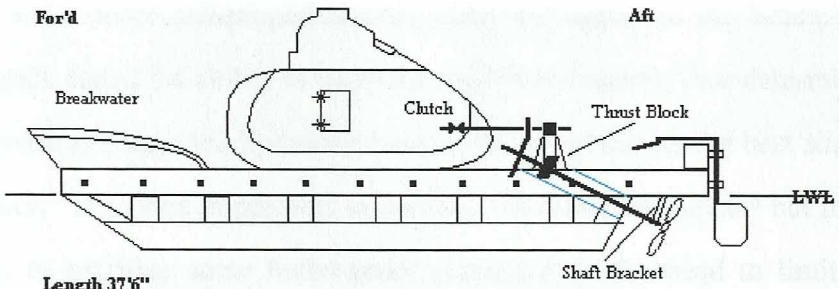
[2] AIR 10/1206 Manual of Combined Operations 1925, Appendix X.

[3] AIR 2/1061, Co-ordinating Committee for Staff Duties in Combined Operations, Lt Col Day (Secretary) to Air Commodore T. C. R. Higgins. Enclosure; Notes on Landing Craft, 10/7/23

[4] ADM 203/73. Memoranda on Landing Craft; "Memorandum Concerning the Investigation of the Types of Craft Required for Landing a Covering Force in an Opposed Landing, Including the Transportation and Landing of Tanks". June 1926.

[5] CAB 53/27 C.O.S. 450 "Allocation of the Cost of the Provision and Maintenance of Motor Landing Craft", 23/3/36, includes an account of the financial arrangements of the 1920s.

Plan W2 **Arrgt. of Raft for Transporting a Military Tank of 8½Tons**



Length 37'6"
Breadth 12'0"
Draught (Loaded) 2'6"
Weight of Raft 15½ tons
Total Weight of Raft and Tank 24 Tons

To be built of Douglas Fir.

(Tiller to be connected to the interiot of the tank via cables, breakwater to to be bolted and sheer off).

can be clearly foreseen', and that therefore 'what is required is that the type (or types) of craft should be settled, and if necessary tried out, so that plans will be in existence to enable construction to be started at once'.[1] A policy of preparing the prototypes and plans necessary to enable rapid expansion in case of need had therefore been established, and would govern the British approach to amphibious equipment until war broke out.

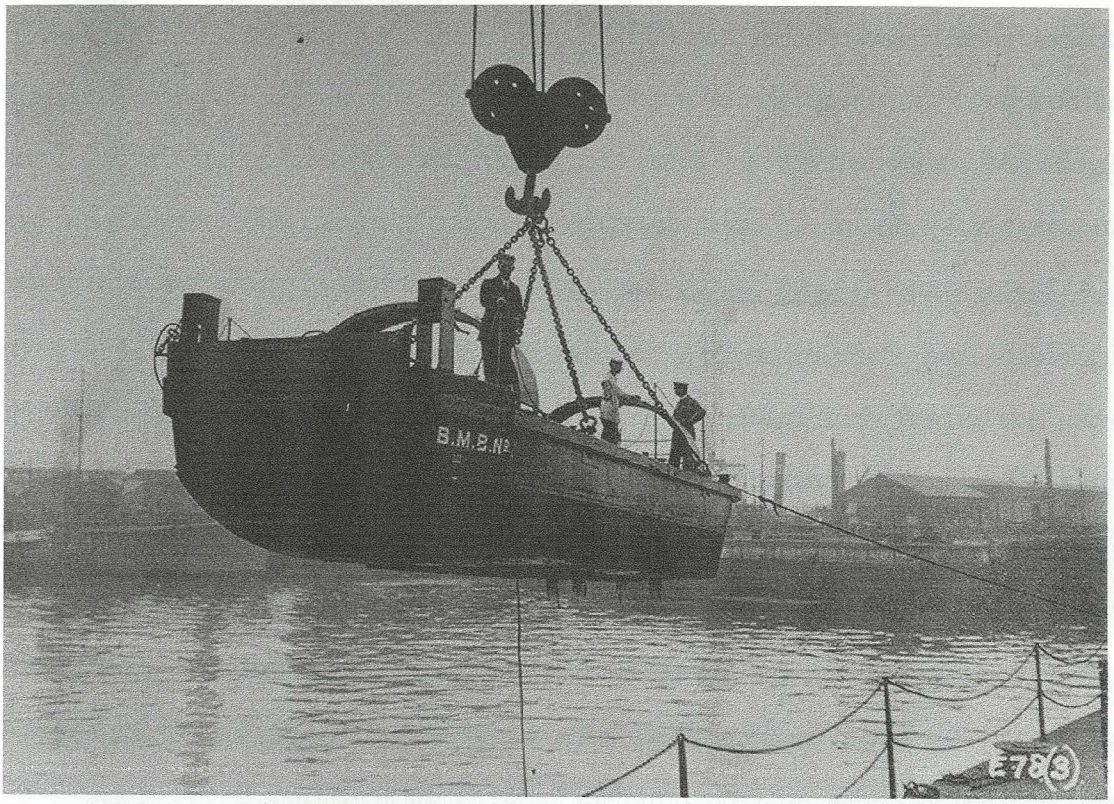
The Landing Craft Committee therefore set about producing two craft, a motorised version of the traditional horseboat for the tactical phase and an X-lighter derivative to land stores and equipment.[2]

The first craft designed by the Landing Craft Committee was therefore a powered horseboat, designed for the landing of troops. The War Office provided the tactical brief; requesting bullet-proof self-propelled craft with easy egress to the beach.[3] To this the Board of Trade added the ability to carry the craft in transports, thus determining its size,[4] and the Admiralty suggested hydraulic (water jet) propulsion as the best suited for use in shallow water.[5] It proved impossible to combine all these desiderata,[6] but the War Office was willing to sacrifice some bullet-proof protection to the need to limit the size and weight,[7] and within these specifications a powered lighter, Motor Landing Craft (M.L.C.) No. 1, was built and satisfactorily tested at Portsmouth in 1926.[8]

Attention then turned to the question of landing equipment, but the sheer variety of roles the heavy landing craft was expected to fulfil caused problems. The possibility of constructing amphibious tanks had finally been rejected by the Landing Craft

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[1] N.M.M. Ships Covers 453 M.L.C. 1; Col. A. S. Redman to Secretary Landing Craft Comm. 16/12/24.
[2] Ibid. F. Bryant, Chief Constructor, to Landing Craft Committee, 6/7/24.
[3] ADM 203/73. Memoranda on Landing Craft; "Memorandum Concerning the Investigation of the Types of Craft . . .". June 1924; 4. War Office and Air Ministry Requirements.
[4] Ibid.; 3. Board of Trade Limitations.
[5] N.M.M. Ships Covers 453. Inter-Departmental Committee on Landing Craft, Interim Report, 25/1/25.
[6] ADM 203/73 47B. Committee on Landing Craft, Memo by F. Bryant, November 1924.
[7] N.M.M. Ships Covers 453 Redman to Landing Craft Committee 16/12/24.
[8] Ibid. W.O. to Admiralty, Report on Preliminary Trials of Self-Propelled Landing Craft, 1/9/26.


B.M.B.N2
E78(3)


E80(12)

Committee as too difficult and costly,[1] and hence it was determined that the second craft designed by the Committee should combine the roles of tank landing craft and workhorse for the heavy equipment of the main force.[2] A further set of requirements was added by the involvement of the marines' Mobile Naval Base Organisation. Based at Portsmouth, the M.N.B.O. had witnessed the trials of the first craft and grasped its potential.[3] As the M.N.B.O. were prepared to pay for the craft the two design briefs were combined to produce a single landing craft, designated M.L.C. 10.[4] Initial trials showed that perhaps too much had been attempted. In order to obtain a craft capable of carrying the varying loads of her different sponsors, within the size and weight limitations imposed by the requirement that she could be carried on transports, the craft was short and bulbous. Consequently she steered badly, grounded rather far out and had a tendency to pivot on her hull when beached.[5] However, the worst of these problems were met by the addition of leeboards and an increase in the length of the ramp, with the result that the craft proved capable of landing the Army's standard lorry, field gun and Vickers Tank.[6] By 1931 the M.L.C. was the established means of landing tanks and all references to the amphibious tank were dropped from the Manual.[7] Two further craft of this design were constructed for trials, and in 1933 the War Office declared that 'M.L.C. 10 met all known military requirements' and recommended that 'the design might be sealed for the future manufacture of landing craft'.[8] Thus by 1930 two technically adequate landing craft had been produced which had been specifically designed to allow rapid construction in the

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[1] ADM 203/73 "Memorandum Concerning the Investigation of the Types of Craft . . ."; 9. Notes on the Development of Amphibious and One Man Tanks.

[2] Ibid. 6. Proposed Designs of Landing Craft.

[3] N.M.M. Ships Covers 453, Col J. V. C. Finlaison, R.M., Commandant Eastney to C.-in-C. Portsmouth, 30/7/36.

[4] N.M.M. Ships Covers 461; M.L.C. 10. Motor Landing Lighter MLL No. 1. 31/1/27.

[5] Ibid. Admiral Keyes, C.-in-C. Portsmouth, to Admiralty, 14/11/29, enclosing reports.

[6] Ibid. Reports by Mr Shepheard, 27/5/30 & 3/10/30 on Portsmouth Trials.

[7] DEFE 2/708 Manual of Combined Operations 1931, p. 57.

[8] N.M.M. Ships Covers 569 New X-Lighter and General Discussion of Landing Craft Design, War Office Letter of 12/6/33 cited in Meeting of Landing Craft Committee, 11/11/36 Appendix A.

nation's boatyards in the event of emergency; the War Office were satisfied that their criteria had been met.[1]

This approach, though apparently logical, was, however, flawed. The policy of the War Office and the Landing Craft Committee failed to provide for training. The system of building a mere one or two craft as prototypes was sufficient to produce an adequate technical basis, but did not allow for realistic use of such craft in exercises. The development of tactical lessons in how to use such craft was therefore retarded.[2] The Admiralty appear to have been more aware of this shortcoming than the War Office, which incidentally confirms the argument that the Navy considered amphibious operations more likely than the Army. The Naval Staff argued as early as 1927 for the M.L.C. 10 to be made standard equipment for battleships as a means of building up a reserve and facilitating training, but the proposal made no headway.[3] Consequently there were insufficient landing craft to be used realistically in exercises. At Portsmouth in 1930 M.L.C. 1 and M.L.C. 10 were used to land horses in the first wave, as a 'peacetime measure of convenience'.[4] Similarly, at the large operation off the Yorkshire Coast in 1934 M.L.C. 10 alone was used in a demonstration to show the possible uses of landing craft and smoke in a daylight landing.[5] The Admiral in charge, the amphibious enthusiast Lord Cork and Orrery, concluded 'little progress with landing operations can be made until a reasonable supply of landing craft are available for experiment and training on a comparatively large scale'.[6] Thus, although the British possessed an adequate landing

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[1] Ibid. Meeting of Landing Craft Committee, 11/11/36.

[2] Robin Higham "*Armed Forces in Peacetime; Britain 1918-40, a Case Study*". (Foulis & Co. Ltd. London, 1962). pp. 98-9, has noted similar failings with regard to the British Army's development of tanks, where over-long testing of a few prototypes prevented tactical development.

[3] N.M.M. Ships Covers 461 M.L.C. 10, Minutes by Egerton, D.o.P. 31/5/27, Laurence D.T.S.D. 1/6/27, and Austin for D.O.D. 2/6/27.

[4] ADM 186/49 Exercises and Operations 1930, No. 7.

[5] ADM 186/56 Exercises and Operations 1934 Vol. II.

[6] ADM 116/3395 Combined Operations Exercise September 1934; C.-in-C. Home Fleet to Admiralty, 30/11/34, enclosing report, Part III, Recommendations.

craft, little progress had been made in the development of tactical and logistical arrangements by 1934.

By 1934 the Naval Staff were sufficiently convinced of the need for training and experimentation to press for the construction of a further six landing craft, and prepared to accept the cost if the less interested War Office should refuse to depart from their established policy. The proposal originated with Lord Cork, who suggested that the Admiralty should take over responsibility.[1] The C.-in-C.'s recommendations met with a sympathetic response from the Naval Staff,[2] but it proved necessary to resort to the C.I.D. to extract the necessary funds from the finance department. The War Office supported the need for the vessels, but not to the extent that they were prepared to make sacrifices elsewhere; consequently the C.I.G.S., Sir Cyril Deverell, suggested that the Navy, as the service responsible for the landing, should be responsible for the dedicated craft required.[3] The Naval Staff, though nothing loath, were unable to over-rule their own Finance Division; the C.N.S. therefore suggested to Deverell that he raise the matter at the C.I.D.[4] This advice was followed and the First Lord gratefully accepted the responsibility for the craft.[5] However, by the time these financial manoeuvrings had been resolved it was the summer of 1936; two years had been wasted. As a result contracts for six improved M.L.C. 10-type craft were not placed until 1937,[6] and the vessels were only available for trial in 1939.[7] Consequently, although the Admiralty had been convinced of the requirement five years earlier, it was not until 1939 that sufficient craft existed for realistic training and experimentation.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid. Minute by Training and Staff Duties Division, 7/1/35.

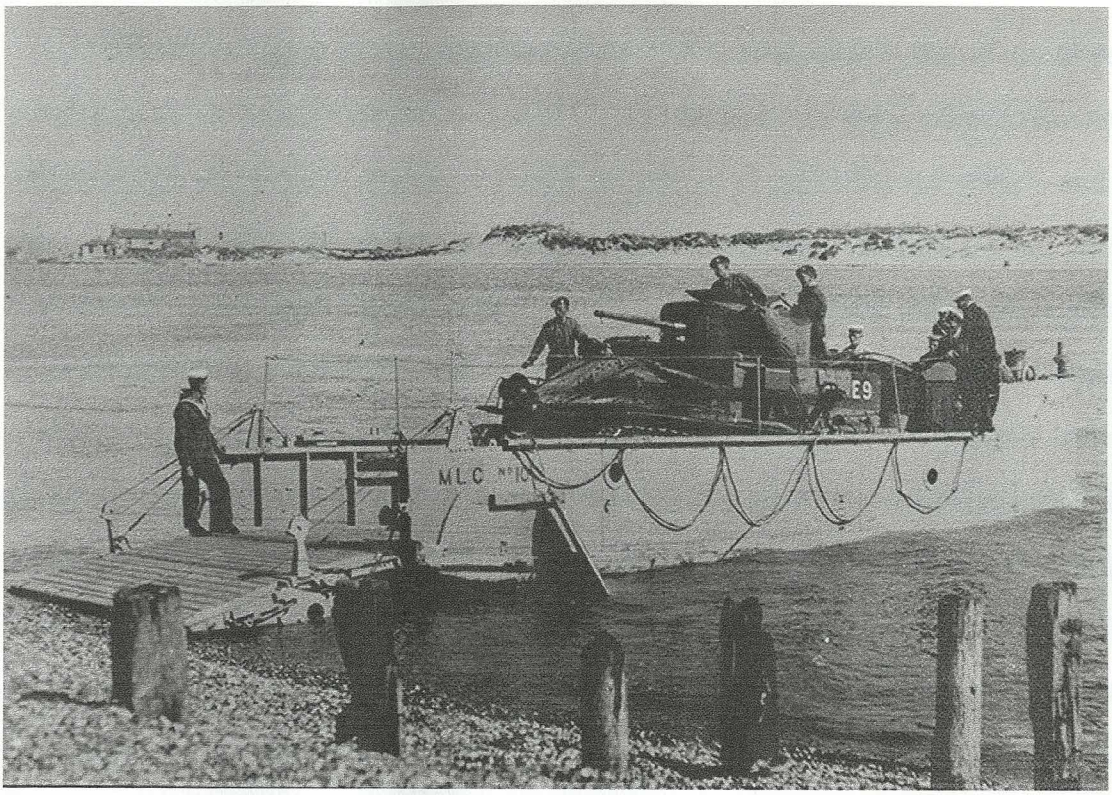
[3] CAB 53/27 C.O.S. 450 Allocation of Cost of the Provision and Maintenance of Motor Landing Craft, Memorandum by the C.I.G.S. 23/3/36.

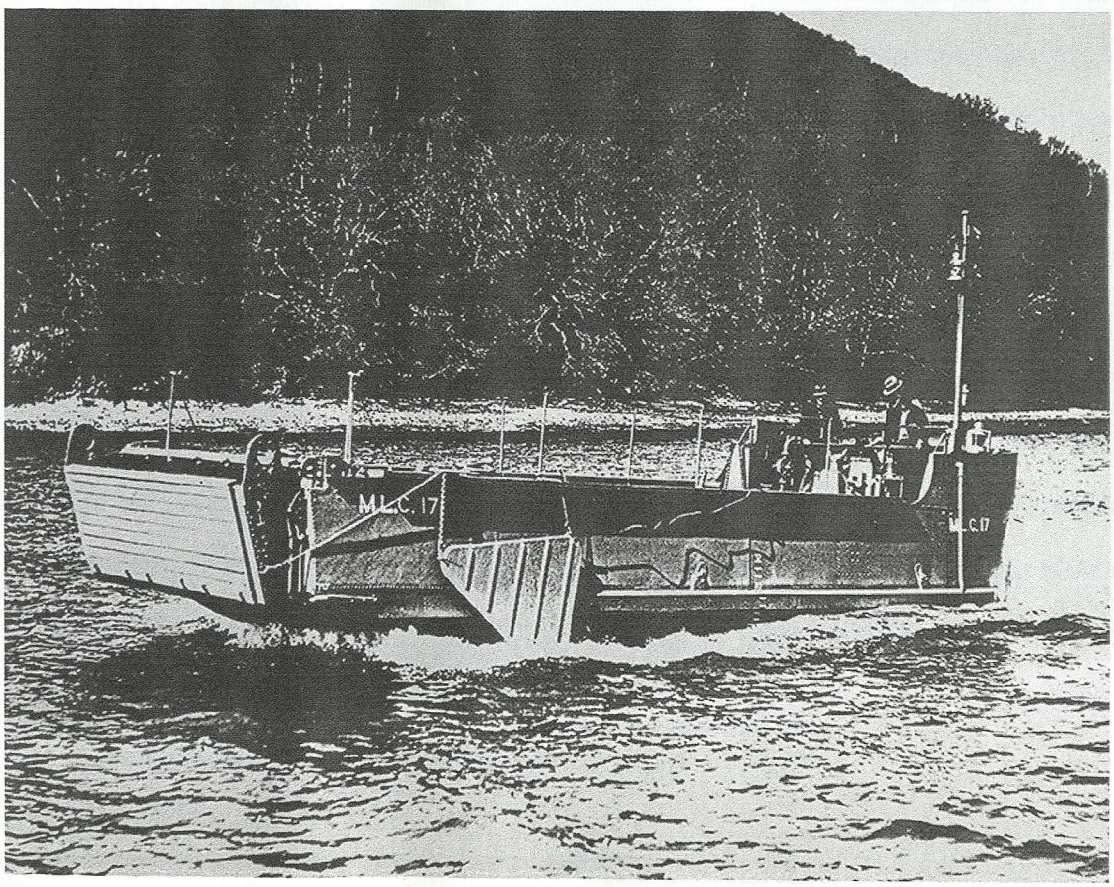
[4] CAB 53/6 173rd Meeting of the C.O.S., 4/5/36.

[5] CAB 2/6 Minutes of the 279th Meeting of the C.I.D. 25/6/36.

[6] N.M.M. Ships Covers 461A M.L.C. 14-19. D.N.C. to D.N.E. 14/9/37.

[7] Ibid. Landing Trials for new M.L.C.s, 27/3/39.


E9


M.L.C. 17

It has been suggested that the low provision of landing craft in the inter-war years was due to the responsibility for the craft being divided between the services.[1] However, responsibility was actually divided between the cost of constructing the vessels and the cost and responsibility for maintaining them.[2] Prior to 1936 the sole responsibility for the provision of assault craft lay with the War Office, which accepted this state of affairs. Few craft were built because the War Office's conviction that amphibious operations were unlikely led them to give landing craft a low priority, and, with budgets already drastically cut, the General Staff considered the construction of single prototypes all that could be justified. By 1934 the Naval Staff allotted amphibious operations a higher priority than the War Office and were therefore prepared to accept the responsibility. But, despite the War Office's willingness to hand over responsibility, progress was delayed until the Admiralty Finance Department, grown over-strong in the years of financial shortages, could be over-ruled by appeal to the C.I.D. Divided financial responsibility was not to blame for the failure to build landing craft; tight financial control of the services led to the War Office decision to concentrate on more likely priorities and prevented the Admiralty taking on the responsibility until too late.

Landing craft were not the only technical innovation prototyped in the inter-war years; in keeping with the general policy of preparing plans for rapid implementation should the need arise, other concepts were considered and their details enshrined in the Manual for future reference. Chief amongst these proposals was the concept of the Headquarters Ship. The basic idea envisaged a dedicated command vessel housing all three service commanders and their communication requirements thus avoiding the division of command and consequent paralysis which had occurred at Gallipoli. Mountbatten claimed to have conceived the headquarters ship during his time at Malta,

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[1] Maund "*Assault from the Sea*", p. 4 contains a witty but inaccurate account.
[2] CAB 2/4 194th Meeting of the C.I.D. 6/2/25.

but the idea was common currency by that date.[1] The idea originated in the Staff College Exercises, and was passed to the Admiralty for investigation into the time necessary for conversion of a merchant ship to fulfil the role.[2] Despite the Staff Duties Division's insistence that a H.Q. Ship was chiefly required for planning on the voyage out (which they estimated at six weeks, thus incidentally confirming that large sections of the Admiralty thought of amphibious operations in terms of the Far East),[3] a H.Q. Ship to control the landing was comprehensively examined in practical and theoretical exercises. The idea was sufficiently established by 1938 to be taken for granted in the Manual, which shaped all its signals arrangements on the assumption of the existence of a H.Q. Ship and included an appendix on the requirements thereof.[4] Thus, as with the prototype M.L.C.s, the H.Q. Ship concept was ready to be put into effect should an amphibious operation be required; the combination of the Service's financial straits and the perceived improbability of an amphibious operation would not justify more.

The one major technical problem which the British did not satisfactorily address in the inter-war years was that of provision of air cover for landing operations where the R.A.F. could not operate from its own bases. In this case the differing priorities of the R.A.F. and the Royal Navy hampered any agreement on the method which should be adopted were such an operation required, whilst the awkward division of the services blurred the question of responsibility. As with landing craft and headquarters ships, it was intended that the details should be agreed ready to be put into effect should the need arise. However, the extent to which air cover was required, and the means by which it should be provided were one area where no agreement had been reached by the outbreak of war.

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[1] Philip Ziegler; "*Mountbatten, The Authorised Biography*" (Collins, London, 1985). p. 201.
[2] ADM 116/3674 Requirement for a Headquarters Ship for Combined Operations. Report on Exercise in Combined Operations by Officers of Naval, Military & Air Force Staff Colleges, 12/1/32.
[3] Ibid. Director Training & Staff Duties Division to Director R.N. Staff College, 9/11/34.
[4] DEFE 2/709 Manual of Combined Operations 1938, Appendix XI, p. 263.

The R.A.F. view, once a clear doctrine had been formulated, was that amphibious operations were unlikely. Their belief that a landing in the face of an unbroken air force was an impossibility, dealt with elsewhere in this thesis, was unlikely to lead the R.A.F. to the commit much time to considering the requirements of such enterprises; had the enemy air force been defeated, strategic bombing would, according to theory, suffice to bring the enemy to his knees. In the unlikely event that such an operation should be required, however, the Air Staff consistently held that air cover should be provided from the Navy's carriers until it proved possible to establish aircraft ashore. Fighter cover from carriers was first described as 'essential to success' in a landing operation by the Air Staff in 1923.[1] Seven years later the Air Ministry was still of the view that 'it is considered that the employment of landplanes, transported to the theatre of operations by aircraft carriers and flown off to aerodromes as soon as possible, is the method likely to prove most generally successful in a combined operation'.[2]

The Admiralty, however, did not agree. The Navy, as a result of its Far Eastern concerns, considered such operations far more likely than did the R.A.F. Further, the Naval Staff held air power in less respect than did the Air Staff. Most critically, however, the Naval Staff were not prepared to risk their few carriers in this manner. In response to the Air Staff's statement that carriers were essential, the Admiralty representatives stressed that 'if sea opposition was expected the Navy could not guarantee carriers for the Army.[3] Throughout the inter-war period the Navy refused to unequivocally commit their carriers to the support of a landing, thus leaving the possibility that they would withdraw them at a critical moment to meet Fleet requirements. There is no explicit statement as to what these requirements might be, but in view of the Admiralty's concern with the Far

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[1] AIR 8/71 Air Staff Memo 10 20/7/23, confirmed by the Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, Air Commodore Steele, AIR 2/1061 Minute 31, Steele to Air Commodore T. C. R. Higgins, D.T.S.D., 6/12/23.

[2] AIR 9/1 Combined Operations. Section 10, 4b. Air Ministry to Commandant Staff College, Extract, 1930.

[3] AIR 2/1061, Draft minutes of the 4th Meeting of the C.C.S.D.C.O., 11/10/23.

East, it is reasonable to suppose that the Naval Staff were thinking in terms of using the fleet and its carriers to cover the amphibious advance into Japanese waters which their war memoranda envisaged. The Admiralty were markedly reluctant to allow their few carriers to be committed to support of landing operations, and, with less respect for aircraft, showed a tendency to place their faith in the ability of fast, anti-aircraft equipped expeditions to land with a reduced scale of aircover.[1]

In the face of these differing views, alternative solutions were also suggested. The R.A.F. Staff College, by virtue of conducting an annual fortnight of combined exercises with the other Service Colleges, considered such operations more likely than did the Air Staff. Such interaction may also have led the College to compromise more readily than the Air Staff. For these reasons the R.A.F. Staff College, aware of the shortage of carriers, repeatedly suggested that the R.A.F. design its aircraft with the capacity to be operated from floats to support such operations,[2] but were informed that the Air Staff remained committed to relying on carriers.[3]

The compilers of the Manual of Combined Operations, faced with this divergence between the services, attempted to resolve it by compromise. In 1923 the C.C.S.D.C.O. proved unable to produce a solution,[4] and the 1925 edition of the Manual reflected this indecision, stating that aerial superiority 'may well be a necessary preliminary' to a landing operation.[5] The revision of the Manual undertaken in 1927 was entrusted to a

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[1] The D.C.N.S., Admiral James, insisted on the inclusion of an amendment in the 1938 edition of the Manual stressing that the Navy's new A.A. Cruisers were a 'new factor' in the defence of a landing operation., CAB 54/1, 16th Meeting of the D.C.O.S., 2/2/37. Similarly the I.S.T.D.C. under Captain Maund placed its faith in fast assaults and an effective A.A. Defence; CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 13 Enclosure A, Landing Operations, Policy and Method of Execution, Part 4.

[2] The views of the Staff College are summarised in AIR 9/1 Section 10 Employment of Seaplanes and Seaplane Carriers in Combined Operations; pieces 1A - 3A are extracts from the reports on the Combined Exercises carried out by the Staff Colleges 1927-9 all urging the use of floatplanes.

[3] AIR 9/1 Section 10, 4b. Air Ministry to Commandant Staff College, Extract, 1930.

[4] AIR 2/1061 32A Draft Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the C.C.S.D.C.O., General Romer, Chairman noted that the problems raised by the Navy's refusal to commit its carriers 'might affect the question of the despatch of the Expeditionary Force'.

[5] AIR 10/1206 Manual of Combined Naval, Military and Air Operations, 1925, p. 14.

small drafting committee, and hence avoided the contradictions of the 1925 edition. The 1931 edition of the Manual was therefore able to provide a coherent outline for the provision of aerial support for landing operations, but at some cost in the degree to which it represented the views of the services concerned. The 1931 edition therefore stipulated that the R.A.F. would decide as to the number of aircraft required for an operation, whilst the Navy would decide how many carriers it could provide. If the number of carriers available was sufficient to operate all the aircraft the R.A.F. required then the operation could go ahead on this basis,[1] if not, it would be for the commanders to consider whether an advanced airbase could be brought into operation before the main landing took place or if the enterprise would have to be abandoned.[2] The same general outline was adopted for the 1938 Manual.[3] Although this was a rational solution, it was achieved by ignoring the R.N.'s refusal to commit any carriers unequivocally to the support of such an operation, whilst the idea of using an advanced aerodrome had obvious drawbacks, such as the loss of surprise and the possibility that the operations to establish an advanced base would themselves escalate into a full scale combined operation.

A further problem with the provision of aircover, related to the differing priority which the services allotted to amphibious operations, arose from the nature of the British Air Forces in the inter-war period. Between 1917 and 1937 all British military aviation was officially part of the Royal Air Force; divided into three sections, the main air force, and two 'wings' to act in support of the Fleet and the Army.[4] Although the Army Co-operation Squadrons and the Fleet Air Arm came under the operational control of the Arm they served, they were part of the Royal Air Force, and could be enhanced from, or (with the approval of the commanders of the other services) drawn on by the main force.

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[1] DEFE 2/708 Manual of Combined Naval, Military and Air Operations, 1931, Chapter 8, 'Bases'.
[2] Ibid. p. 64.
[3] DEFE 2/ 709 Manual of Combined Operations, 1938, p. 85.
[4] CAB 23/3 233rd Meeting of the War Cabinet, Appendix II (Command 467) "Permanent Organisation of the Air Force". [Smuts Report]

The implications of this situation for the aerial element of combined operations were severe. The attainment of aerial superiority in war was the responsibility of the main section of the R.A.F., and thus by extension, the achievement of aerial superiority over a landing beach was also their concern. For the bulk of the inter-war period, therefore, it was assumed that in the event of a landing operation the R.A.F. would provide the necessary aircraft to attain aerial superiority over the beaches, operating initially from the Navy's carriers or an advanced base, and subsequently from airstrips established ashore. Even when it became apparent that the specialisation of types would prevent the R.A.F. operating its aircraft from carriers this assumption continued to guide preparations for amphibious operations. The R.A.F. appears to have feared to provide the Navy with any justification for their campaign to take over the Fleet Air Arm, whilst the Navy was almost exclusively concerned with aerial operations in support of Fleet actions and content to leave the responsibility for covering an opposed landing to the R.A.F. Thus prior to the return of the Fleet Air Arm to Admiralty control in 1937 both services accepted uncritically the view that the R.A.F. would provide the aircraft to cover a landing operation, despite the fact that it possessed no aircraft capable of operating from carriers, and no attempt was made to equip the Fleet Air Arm with fighters capable of fulfilling the role.

It was assumed from the very beginning of the inter-war period that the RAF was responsible for the attainment of aerial superiority over a landing zone, even if the aircraft were operating from carriers. The reports on the 1919 Combined Exercise at Camberley assumed that the R.A.F. would be responsible for this element of the operation, and suggested the provision of floating or forward aerodromes to support them.[1] As the R.A.F. moved towards the idea of using carriers to support the aircraft, they continued to consider that the aircraft operating from them would be their own. In lectures at the Staff

[1] ADM 116/2086 Maj.-Gen. Anderson to Secretary to War Office, enclosing report on Combined Naval and Military Exercise, 1919, Annexe 1.

College Exercises in 1922 Wing Commander Samson assumed that the R.A.F. would operate its aircraft from the Navy's carriers; the theoretical integrity of the Fleet Air Arm and R.A.F. providing for such interchangeability.[1] The Director of Staff Duties at the Air Ministry summed up the means by which a landing operation would be covered; 'Cabinet will have to decide when the naval situation is sufficiently secure to detail all available carriers to go with the landing and convert all available w/e to bombers with fighters to attain an air superiority till landing ground is secure for land w/e to land, assemble and operate'.[2] The Fleet Air Arm would thus be supplemented for the course of the landing by bombers and fighters from the main body of the R.A.F.

This assumption continued to be held throughout the 1930s. The Manual of Combined Operations stated that the decision as to the number of aircraft required was reserved to the R.A.F., which implies that the Air Force would also be expected to provide the aircraft to meet the requirements it set out. Although the last pre-war edition of the manual was issued after the return of the Fleet Air Arm to naval control, it still considered that 'overcoming air opposition is mainly the responsibility of the Air Force',[3] although the Fleet Air Arm was now explicitly expected to share responsibility for attaining aerial superiority. Only on the very verge of war was there any recognition that the operation of aircraft from carriers could only mean the Fleet Air Arm. The I.S.T.D.C.'s memorandum on landing operations finally stated in October 1938 that 'except where aerodromes are available aircraft will normally be found by the Fleet Air Arm' for the support of landing operations.[4] However, the I.S.T.D.C. was able only able to suggest the Fleet Air Arm was capable of fulfilling this role because, in keeping with

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[1] N.M.M. RIC 11/4 Lectures Given at the RN War College, Summary of Wing Commander Samson's Lecture given in Captain E. W. Denison's Lecture "Combined Operations II" Given November 1922. pp. 85-6.

[2] AIR 2/1061 19b Air Commodore T. C. R. Higgins to Sholto Douglas, Note attached to Agenda for the 4th Meeting [of the C.C.S.D.C.O.] September 1923.

[3] DEFE 2/109 Manual of Combined Operations 1938. p. 109.

[4] CAB 54/3 D.C.O.S. (IT) 13 Enclosure A, p 30.

its naval orientation, the training centre preferred to place its faith in anti aircraft fire; 'as the number of fighters which can be carried with the expedition will be limited, the anchorage must rely in the main upon its own A.A. fire'.[1] Even assuming that the air defence would be chiefly Anti Aircraft, the I.S.T.D.C. had to admit that providing aerial support to a landing was not the normal task of the F.A.A. and 'special preliminary training will be necessary'.[2] Thus even though the I.S.T.D.C. had recognised that the Fleet Air Arm would be responsible, they confined themselves to pointing this out and stating that special preparations would be necessary before the F.A.A. could fulfil this role. In the event, the memorandum was not circulated, so this realisation was confined to the new training centre.[3]

Thus the question of air defence of a combined operation had not really been settled by the outbreak of war. Unlike most other technical details, the issue had been postponed rather than resolved. The problems of the shortage of carriers and the provision of suitable fighters for them had not been squarely faced up to. Confronted with the problems of providing aerial support, British amphibious thought took refuge in the frequently reiterated view that any amphibious operation would be preceded by a long period of planning and preparation; the question of provision of aircover could therefore be decided on the merits of the individual case.

Air power excepted, therefore, for the most part the British possessed a tactical and technical readiness which accorded with their strategic outlook. Amphibious operations were unlikely, whilst the Army was so reduced that any offensive operation which might be decided upon would have to be preceded by a long period of preparation. Consequently the provision of a pool of information and a number of prototype landing craft was all that was justifiable. For the most part this was a justifiable approach, though

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[1] Ibid. p. 137.
[2] Ibid. p 134.
[3] See this Chapter Page 242.

it allowed for little in the way of training and made no allowance for the possibility that an operation would be forced on the British at short notice, a circumstance which would occur in the Norwegian Campaign.

The I.S.T.D.C. and the Abortive Move Towards a Single Doctrine.

In the last year before the war, there was a limited departure from the general pragmatic approach enshrined in the Manual and the preparation of prototype equipment. Interest did begin to concentrate more exclusively on night landings achieved by surprise, a development which coincided with the formation of the Inter-Service Training and Development Centre. The chief reason remained the lack of any strategy which would require a landing by force; the I.S.T.D.C. on its formation was informed by the Deputy Chiefs of Staff that they 'were not basing their plans on a combined operation in the face of strong opposition'.[1] A second reason lay in the preconceptions of the first Commandant of the I.S.T.D.C., Captain Maund. A veteran of inter-war exercises as far back as those organised by Richmond during his Command of the China Fleet, Maund had also witnessed the landings staged by the Japanese at Shanghai where they had utilised specialised landing craft carriers and assault vessels.[2] The result was to sharply colour the initial approach of the I.S.T.D.C. to amphibious operations (as well as Maund's memoirs) and give the erroneous impression that there was a single British amphibious technique solidly based upon the principle of surprise. The combination of Maund's faith in a surprise approach with the Deputy Chiefs' belief that no large scale operation was on the horizon led to the I.S.T.D.C. concentrating its efforts on small operations achieved by surprise. If this is contrasted with the more open-minded approach of the 1938 Manual set out above, it seems the work of the I.S.T.D.C. was in some respects a set-back, due to its exclusive concentration on the technique of landings by surprise which in the event proved unsuited to the conditions of World War II.[3] The I.S.T.D.C.'s approach, however,

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[1] CAB 54/2 30th Meeting of the D.C.O.S. 15/11/38.

[2] Maund "*Assault from the Sea*", p. 2.

[3] Clifford, who follows Maund closely, considers the creation of the I.S.T.D.C to be the major step in British pre-war amphibious preparation. "*On Parallel Courses*" pp. 97-99.

marked such a departure from the accepted British approach that it was not accepted by the Chiefs of Staff.

Maund came to the I.S.T.D.C. with a clear idea of how amphibious operations should be carried out, and the belief that all previous experimentation was invalidated by the lack of a clear tactical doctrine.[1] His experiences in the Far East had convinced him that the answer to the problem of an opposed landing was the use of fast landing craft carriers and specialised landing craft to provide complete surprise. The ships' speed would enable them to reach a large expanse of the enemy's coast under cover of darkness, thus defeating the efforts of aerial reconnaissance. Their silent landing craft could then be despatched to the shore whilst the convoy remained out of sight of land, ensuring that the assaulting force would reach the shore undetected. Maund thus put complete faith in achieving 'tactical surprise', the attacking troops would be in amongst the defenders before they realised it. Tanks and artillery support should not be used if, as was likely, they would imperil the chances of getting the force ashore unseen.[2] This approach sprang from the Commandant's head fully formed: even before the I.S.T.D.C. officially opened Maund called for the construction of dedicated Landing Craft Carriers and Landing Craft;[3] whilst its first annual report included a draft memorandum setting out the full procedure for conducting such an operation;[4] and a proposed outline for the combined operations exercise scheduled for 1939 based around the new doctrine.[5] Maund claimed in his memoirs that this doctrine was approved by the Chiefs of Staff and 'was broadly the policy employed for the landings in North Africa and Sicily'.[6] This suggestion is taken

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[1] Maund, "*Assault from the Sea*", p. 4.

[2] CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 14; Annual Report of the I.S.T.D.C. 1938. 5/12/38, Appendix A "Landing Operations, Policy and Execution, A Memorandum by the I.S.T.D.C. pp. 2-10.

[3] CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 11; Interim Report by the Training and Development Centre, August 1938, The Centre opened officially on 15/9/38, CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 9.

[4] CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 14; Annual Report of the I.S.T.D.C. 1938. 5/12/38.

[5] Ibid. Enclosure D. Landing Exercise - 1939.

[6] Maund "*Assault from the Sea*", p. 9.

up by MacGregor, who argues that the I.S.T.D.C.'s approach was the typical British technique for amphibious operations, arising out of the experience of Gallipoli.[1]

Even in the era of the I.S.T.D.C., however, it is still too much to claim that the surprise approach typified British thinking. For one thing the I.S.T.D.C.'s departure from the trend of development prior to its establishment was by no means complete. The stance eventually adopted by the Centre was less uncompromising than Maund's first statements or his later account. Whereas he had stated in his preliminary assessment that 'unless tactical surprise can be achieved a landing in the face of opposition is not likely to succeed',[2] this narrow view was not adhered to. The Centre's later reports noted that the "tactical surprise" approach was in fact only suited to operations 'on a coast outside a heavily defended area', whereas where a fortified shore was concerned the I.S.T.D.C. concluded that 'no guiding principle can be laid down'. After the initial bold assertion that tactical surprise was the answer to all combined operations, the Centre thus retreated somewhat, and concluded that in the event of an attack on a heavily defended coast, the form which the operation would take would be dependent upon the particular situation.[3] In effect, therefore, the I.S.T.D.C. returned to a line similar to that expressed in the Manual; although the Centre considered surprise landings could cope with a greater degree of opposition than the Manuals allowed for, both agreed that in the event of extensive defences a specifically tailored approach would be necessary. However, whereas the Manuals had set out some of the methods which might be applied in such circumstances, the I.S.T.D.C. made no progress in this area.

Further, Maund's assertion that the Centre's approach was approved by the Chiefs of Staff is not correct. From the outset the Deputy Chiefs expressed doubts concerning the reliance placed on surprise. The Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, Peirse, considered that

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[1] MacGregor, "*The Use, Misuse and Non-Use of History*", p. 608.
[2] CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 11; Interim Report, August 1938.
[3] CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 14; Annual Report Appendix A. p. 1.

'it was most unlikely surprise could be achieved against a first class enemy'.[1] The Deputy Chiefs were insufficiently convinced of the technique or the possibility of such operations to provide the equipment essential to its conduct; the Centre's repeated proposals to construct landing craft carriers were rejected right up to the outbreak of war.[2] Finally, the memorandum setting out the Centre's preferred approach to combined operations was extensively criticised by the service departments. The General Staff were particularly scathing; commenting that the Centre's approach 'deals with a particular situation and is inclined to be rigid'; pointing out the difficulties inherent in outflanking beach defences at night; and attacking the assumption, inherent in the Centre's technique, that the landing force would consist solely of infantry.[3] The General Staff explicitly rejected the I.S.T.D.C.'s attempt to produce a doctrine applicable to most situations, and merely considered it as an elaboration of one of the approaches already described in the Manual. Due to War Office opposition the I.S.T.D.C.'s memorandum on landing operations was not promulgated to the services as the Centre had intended, and the 1938 Manual continued to be the official guide to officers involved in such operations.[4]

Equally, the I.S.T.D.C.'s approach to the provision of equipment was not allowed to depart from the established approach. Although the Centre designed its craft to meet the requirements of their doctrine of tactical surprise, the Deputy Chiefs of Staff did not approve certain elements vital to the Centre's approach, thus confirming that the I.S.T.D.C.'s policy on landings was not accepted.

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[1] CAB 54/2 30th Meeting of the D.C.O.S., 15/11/38.

[2] CAB 54/2 31st Meeting of the D.C.O.S., 7/12/38, Conclusion (ii). When the proposal was repeated in CAB 54/7 D.C.O.S. 111 30/6/39, the Deputy Chiefs did not bother to discuss it, CAB 54/2 40th Meeting of the D.C.O.S., 10/7/39.

[3] CAB 54/13 I.S.T.D.C. Annual Report 1938; Comments by the General Staff, War Office, circulated 8/3/39.

[4] CAB 54/12 D.C.O.S. (IT) 7th Meeting, accepted the War Office's recommendation that the memo should be redrafted as a small pamphlet on landing operations 'for the use of officers other than commanders and their staffs'.

The I.S.T.D.C.'s sole success was the construction of a larger pool of landing craft. The Centre's Interim and First Annual reports concentrated on the proposal for a Landing Craft Carrier,[1] which recommendation, as has been noted, was rejected by the Deputy Chiefs right up until the outbreak of war. Initial progress was restricted to the construction of a single prototype silent assault landing craft, and the provision of a modest research budget from the three services estimates.[2] It was not until April 1939 that the I.S.T.D.C. successfully challenged the view, long paramount in guiding amphibious expenditure, that there would be time to prepare for such operations once war broke out.[3] The I.S.T.D.C. pointed out that in fact it would take six months to prepare the equipment necessary to land even a brigade, and that little training would be possible in the meantime. Consequently the delay between ordering an operation and its enactment, even on the modest scale of a brigade, would be enormous. The D.C.O.S. (IT) Committee added the point that building times would probably be greater in war due to other demands on shipyards,[4] and the Deputy Chiefs were sufficiently convinced to order the construction of thirty two landing craft.[5]

This material success was not, however, tantamount to approval of the I.S.T.D.C.'s tactical doctrine. The requirements set out in the May 1939 report were based on the Centre's scenario of an infantry brigade landed by surprise.[6] As has already been pointed out, the General Staff had criticised the Centre's rigid adherence to a surprise infantry attack and had opposed the replacement of the more flexible approach inherent in the Manual. The Deputy Chiefs, whilst ready to approve the construction of

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[1] CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 11 & D.C.O.S. (IT) 13.

[2] "Improved" arrangements for financing the Centre were proposed by the Secretary to the D.C.O.S., Ismay, CAB 54/4 D.C.O.S. 72, and they and the construction of a prototype craft were approved at the 31st Meeting of the D.C.O.S. 7/12/38, CAB 54/2.

[3] CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 28 Landing Attacks, Present Situation as Regards Material and Personnel. 5/4/39.

[4] CAB 54/7 D.C.O.S. 111 "Situation as Regards Material and Personnel for Landing Attacks" 30/6/39.

[5] CAB 54/2 40th Meeting of the D.C.O.S., 10/7/39.

[6] CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 28. 5/4/39.

craft, did not consider this tantamount to approval for the doctrine propounded by the Centre. The D.C.O.S. again rejected the idea of constructing specialist landing craft carriers. In addition, they threw out a proposal to equip the R.A.F. with fighters on floats; another I.S.T.D.C. device to assist in the attainment of surprise.[1] The Centre's tactical doctrine was not accepted.

The British approach to the conduct of amphibious operations up until the outbreak of war, was, therefore, far more complex than has been allowed for. The supposed reaction to the horrors of Gallipoli does not appear to have been a dominant factor at all, fear of staging landings in the face of opposition was greater before the First World War than after. To suggest that the British Services concentrated on the attainment of surprise for fear of a repetition is thus incorrect. Further, it is incorrect to suggest that the British concentrated on any particular approach to amphibious operations; for until the institution of the I.S.T.D.C. they never sought to produce a single modus operandi for such expeditions, and that organisation's attempt to do so failed. Lacking a clear idea of the operations which might be required, due to the absence of any war plans which required landing operations, the Services produced doctrinal and technical answers to the various problems which might arise in the whole range of such operations, failing only with regard to the problems raised by air power. The British were willing to countenance operations ranging from small landings achieved by surprise to set-piece assaults on fortified coasts; that they were better prepared for the former than the latter merely reflects the impact of financial limitations on the material necessary to train for the latter.

[1] CAB 54/2 40th Meeting of the D.C.O.S., 10/7/39.

Chapter VII. The Royal Marines and Amphibious Warfare.

As has been observed, existing studies of British preparations for amphibious operations have concentrated on the Royal Marines, largely due to the over-emphasis on their equivalence to the United States Marine Corps.[1] This thesis has stressed the "combined" nature of the British approach to amphibious operations, and thus the fallaciousness of any attempt to deal with the British experience by reference, wholly, or even predominantly, to the experience of the Royal Marines. However, that having been said, the involvement of the Royal Marines in amphibious operations is worthy of note. Throughout the period there was support for developing the Royal Marines into a force capable of mounting amphibious operations without the assistance of the other arms, in direct emulation of the U.S.M.C. Why the British chose to persist with their co-operative approach, and the degree of support which the single service alternative enjoyed are significant questions in understanding the British approach in these years.

Pressure for the Royal Marines to be allotted a self-sufficient responsibility for amphibious operations came exclusively from within the Corps and the Navy. This pressure appears to have arisen from two beliefs; first, that the allocation of such a role would be a defence for the force in times of financial retrenchment, and second, the view common within the Navy, that amphibious operations against Japan would be required and that the War Office was not doing enough to prepare. The Marines appeared to offer a means by which the Navy could develop its plans for operations against Japan without the need for War Office co-operation. For almost the entire period, however, these debates were internal to the Navy, and hence did not affect developments in the

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[1] These include Clifford's thesis "*On Parallel Courses*" & his derived book "*Amphibious Warfare Development*", whilst a more specific (and less positive) analysis of the Royal Marines is provided by Donald Bittner "*Britannia's Sheathed Sword, The Royal Marines and Amphibious Warfare in the Interwar Years, A Passive Response*". (Journal of Military History, 55, July 1991). MacGregor's "*Innovation in Naval Warfare*", and derived article "*The Use, Misuse and Non-Use of History*", uses largely the same sources as Clifford but also criticises him for being too generous to the British. Both Bittner and Clifford are U.S.M.C. (retd.).

traditional co-operative approach to amphibious operations. Only in the late 1930s was the idea broached to the other two services, who rejected it outright on the grounds that such operations were insufficiently likely to require the designation of a specialist force and because the Army saw the suggestion as threatening its traditional responsibilities. As the Naval Staff appears to have been more interested in preserving the Corps than enhancing its role, it did not contest the issue, and the opposition of the other services was sufficient to quash the idea.

At the beginning of the Century the Marines were used in a limited role as ships' landing parties, but all attempts to increase their responsibility for amphibious operations failed. Originating as a shipboard force of soldiers to maintain discipline, provide sharpshooters and landing parties, the last function had become the most important during the period of imperial expansion, in which the Marines had come to be seen as an imperial police force.[1] It was therefore logical that the Marines should be considered when the question of larger scale amphibious operations came in for consideration. However, the pressure of finance had led to the Marines fulfilling a dual role, in addition to providing the Navy with a small military force, they also manned turrets on the warships which carried them. Over time the size of the Corps had come to be governed by the number of marines who were required for shipboard gunnery duties. There was thus no standing force of Marines, any large marine unit would have to be created by amalgamating the Marine complements of a number of warships. This situation had numerous disadvantages; broken up into small packages aboard ships the Marines could rarely train together in any numbers, and, as the fleet's fighting power was partially dependent upon them, they could not be spared for amphibious operations when there was a risk of a fleet encounter. In short, the Marines were admirably suited to the small

[1] ADM 1/8664/134 Functions and Training of the Royal Marines, Committee on the Corps of Royal Marines, Report, 6/8/24. Section 2; Historical Survey.

landing operations required of an imperial police force, but could not be spared for amphibious operations in time of war; any attempt to use the force for such a purpose would have to begin by either reducing the Fleet's dependence on the Marines for gunnery, or increasing the size of the Corps so as to allow a reserve to be built up which could be used for landing operations without drawing on the ships' complements.

Before the First World War two attempts were made to expand the Corps to provide such a permanent amphibious force, neither of which were put into effect. In 1905 the Flag Captain at Portsmouth proposed to provide seven Royal Marine Battalions as a permanent operational force,[1] but his conviction that the War Office would be happy to pay for the force was not shared by the Admiralty, and the proposal was dropped.[2] Between 1912 and 1913 an Admiralty Committee considered the capacity of the marines to seize overseas bases for the Fleet, to act as the covering force for an army landing, and to act as a raiding force.[3] The Committee concluded in favour of a permanent force of four marine infantry battalions,[4] but no practical arrangements were made.[5] The Army does not appear to have been informed that the Marines had been thus designated, no mention of the use of Marines as a covering force is made in either of the pre-war Manuals. Thus the most that can be said of the Marines before the Great War is that the Admiralty had unilaterally allotted them a responsibility for amphibious operations, but had made no effort to prepare them to fulfil this role.

Behind the Admiralty's action lay that department's ill-defined ideas as to the probability of amphibious operations in a forthcoming war, and their impatience with the War Office's lack of interest. The 1907 War Plans envisaged the use of 3,000 marines on

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[1] ADM 116/996 Engineers and RM. Officers Entry Scheme, "Further Employment of the Royal Marines, Scheme Submitted by Flag Captain R. F. Phillimore. 8/9/06.

[2] Ibid. Minutes by A.G.R.M. 26/9/06; D.A.G. 1/10/06; & Second Sea Lord, Sir Charles Drury, 17/10/06.

[3] ADM 1/8664/134 Case X313/1913 Notes.

[4] Royal Marines Museum Eastney, ARCH 2/2/2 Royal Naval Division. "The Royal Naval Division 1914-18, Miscellaneous Notes", R.M. Historian, 1967.

[5] RM. ARCH 7/1/2 Reorganisation of R.M. Forces; [Papers relating to the Madden Committee of 1924]. Unsigned, undated, Note 'With Reference to Colonel Godfrey's Evidence . . .'

the outbreak of war to capture the island of Borkum as a flotilla base. At the time the use of Marines had been recommended on the grounds of secrecy,[1] but when Admiral Bayly reconsidered the plan in 1913 it was clear that the Army would be neither able nor inclined to provide an amphibious assault force, and the Operations Division criticised Bayly for failing to realise this.[2] The Admiralty were aware that the Army would not be available for amphibious operations on the outbreak of war and thus operations of the Borkum type would have to be carried out from their own resources, which meant the Marines. Subsequent investigation of the Borkum question was in fact carried out by Colonel Aston R.M., attached to the Admiralty for "Special Service".[3] A loose association between the Marines and the limited fleet-support amphibious operations under consideration by the Admiralty thus appears to have emerged, produced by War Office indifference, and forming the background to the Committee's consideration of the Marines' amphibious role. Nevertheless, despite this association, actual preparations were almost completely lacking.

The First World War saw little in the way of amphibious operations by the Marines. The recommendations of the pre-war Committee were put into effect by the First Sea Lord in August 1914, when Battenberg ordered the creation of a Royal Marine "Flying Column".[4] The force was comprised of reserves, certain of the staffs from the three Marine 'Divisions' and recruits, and after two weeks training was despatched to Ostend as a feint against the German flank.[5] In the words of Aston, hurriedly appointed commander, there was 'no staff, no organisation, not even a servant to look after my kit',[6] whilst the bulk of the equipment landed was designed for the defence of Scapa Flow, a

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[1] P. Kemp. "*Papers of Admirals Sir John Fisher*". p. 419.
[2] ADM 137/452 Seizure of an Advanced Base. Comments by G. Ballard, D.O.D. 10/7/13.
[3] Ibid. "Borkum", Colonel Aston's Supplement, 19/11/13.
[4] RM. ARCH 7/1/2. "Note"; "With Reference to Colonel Godfrey's Evidence . . .".
[5] Ibid.
[6] RM. ARCH 11/12/38 (1/8) Aston Papers, Diary August-Sept. 1914. 26/8/14.

role the Corps had also been investigated for before the war.[1] The operation was an excellent example of the traditional employment of maritime power, along the lines posited by Aston and Corbett before the war. However Aston's account clearly indicates that whatever the pre-war intentions, the force was wholly extemporised when hostilities commenced. After Ostend the force was absorbed in Churchill's larger Royal Naval Division, with the result that the Marines were diluted with sailor reserves and volunteers. Both at Ostend and at Antwerp with the R.N.D. the Marines were landed conventionally in friendly harbours, not in true amphibious operations. Only at Gallipoli were the Marines and Royal Naval Division used in a true amphibious role, the former in the sporadic landings following the initial naval bombardments and the latter at Y-Beach in the landings of August 25th.[2] However, the initial landings at Gallipoli were little different to the typical functions of the Corps before the war, whilst in the main landing no attempt was made to use the Royal Naval Division as an amphibious spearhead,[3] the bulk of it in fact being used in a feint towards Bulair.[4] For the remainder of the war the Royal Naval Division's service was indistinguishable from the Regular Army, and the unit was disbanded at the end of hostilities. Thus despite the Admiralty's pre-war inclinations, there had been little use of the Marines for amphibious enterprises.

The idea of associating the Royal Marines with amphibious operations was revived in the 1920s by the Admiralty's growing interest in waging campaigns far from their existing bases. In the first place this led to the creation within the Marine Corps of the Mobile Naval Base Organisation, designed to defend temporary bases set up to allow the Fleet to operate in areas where there was no permanent base; such as in forward operations against Japan. The M.N.B.O. itself was concerned solely with the provision of

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[1] Ibid. 28/8/14.
[2] RM. ARCH 7/1/2. "Note".
[3] ADM 1/8664/134 Memorandum by Captain Collard Director Gunnery Division, 8/1/24.
[4] CAB 19/1 Dardanelles Commission Final Report; Appendix, Despatch of Sir Ian Hamilton 20/5/15. p. 100.

base defences, and never possessed the capability to establish itself in the face of opposition, however, an increasing desire to complement the M.N.B.O. with an amphibious force that could capture the sites necessary for bases emerged in the 1920s and came to be seen as the logical role for the Royal Marines. With this allocation of an amphibious role were associated other amphibious tasks, such as providing the amphibious spearhead for the Regular Army. This was a more structured attempt to put into effect the more general ideas of a "flying column" which had been evident before the war. Nevertheless, although the M.N.B.O. was put into effect, the allocation of the associated amphibious role and amphibious responsibility in general to the Marines was little more effective than the pre-war effort.

The belief that most future naval wars would call for the establishment of temporary bases was evident as early as 1920, actually preceding the official adoption of the Far East war strategy in the Admiralty War Memorandum.[1] The Local Defence Division of the Admiralty urged that a system for providing such bases was 'a necessity for the employment of the Fleet in the future',[2] and the relevance of the scheme for a war with Japan was immediately noted by the A.C.N.S.[3] The initial proposal included no provision for establishing the M.N.B.O. in the face of opposition, and Plans Division chose potential sites deliberately to avoid the need to use an 'expeditionary force' to prepare the ground.[4] However, the restrictions arising from this limited idea led to consideration of the possibility of associating the M.N.B.O. with some force which could establish itself in the face of opposition and this tied in with a long overdue investigation into the role of the Royal Marines to associate the two ideas in the minds of the Naval Staff.

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[1] See Chapter III Page 100.
[2] ADM 116/2335. Mobile Naval Base Organisation, 1920-28. Minute by Director, L.D.D., 30/6/20.
[3] Ibid. Minute by A.C.N.S., Capt. E. Chatfield, 29/7/20.
[4] Ibid. Minute by Plans Division, 30/8/20.

At the same time that the M.N.B.O. was being established, the threat of post-war economies was making the Royal Marines appear increasingly vulnerable. With their disciplinary and close fighting roles eroded by the emergence of a professional navy and long range naval gunnery, their position had been vulnerable even before the war. Furthermore the war had shown that the Marine contingent of a ship or even a fleet was vastly inferior to the forces available to any modern land power, and thus even their landing role was in danger.[1] The Marines were too small a force to be able to act alone in any military operations other than Imperial policing, and yet they were more expensive than regular sailors, who could have replaced all their shipboard functions. Consequently they were an obvious target for economies.[2] Determined to preserve this 'valuable force' the Admiralty therefore set about defining the functions of the Royal Marines, creating a committee to consider the question.[3] As preservation was the keynote here, it should come as no surprise that the role allotted to the Royal Marines was in some respects more apparent than real.

The combination of Admiralty determination to preserve the Marines with the development of a strategy requiring the capture of oversea bases rendered it somewhat inevitable that the Corps should be entrusted with the responsibility for capturing such bases. The Admiralty Committee under Admiral Sir Charles Madden included the Director of Plans, Captain Dudley Pound, and took evidence from various Marine Officers. In addition, the Committee considered the recent definition of the U.S.M.C.'s role produced by Major General John Lejune; also concerned with a war with Japan, the United States Marines were experimenting with the idea of an advance base role. The combination of the Plans Division's preconceptions with the Marines' desire for a role and the American influence led to the Committee reporting in favour of allotting the Marines

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[1] ADM 1/8664/134 Memorandum by Director Gunnery Division, 8/1/24.
[2] Ibid. Minutes by Haggard, D.T.S.D., 10/7/23 & J. D. James, Deputy Adjutant General, 14/8/23.
[3] Ibid. Minute by Haggard, D.T.S.D., 5/9/23.

the responsibility for seizing bases for the fleet, with conducting raiding operations and acting as the Army's amphibious spearhead as associated tasks.[1] In order to render the Corps capable of these functions, they recommended creating a force independent of the complements carried on board ships which necessitated an increase of 1,900 men;[2] acknowledging the economic situation, the Committee modestly conceded that 550 men would be sufficient to make a start.[3] A dissenting paper by the Director of Gunnery Division, which pointed out that the functions of a shore-based marine force could equally well be carried out by a specially designated Army Brigade was ignored, implying that the Committee was more concerned with allotting the Marines a role than fulfilling amphibious requirements.[4] That the Admiralty and Royal Marine Committee should have come to such a conclusion was hardly surprising.

However, although the Madden Committee concluded in favour of allocating a general amphibious role to the Marines, the Naval Staff were less convinced of the need for the force to be multi-purpose. It rapidly became clear that the Staff allotted greater importance to the idea of the Marines as a base-seizing force than to their pretensions to act as the Army's amphibious spearhead, and further, that the Admiralty was not prepared to make sacrifices elsewhere in order to provide the necessary funding. The initial response to the report within the Staff, although positive, confined its support to the use of the Marines to seize bases for the Fleet. Interestingly, this response was marked amongst those Admirals, such as Dreyer and Keyes, who had demonstrated the greatest interest in amphibious operations; they were aware that the normal form such operations took was inter-service combined efforts, and they seem to have seen the Marines as responsible for only small operations. Thus Dreyer minuted he was in favour of the Marines providing a force for seizing temporary bases or raiding under the command of

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[1] ADM 1/8664/134 Committee on the Corps of Royal Marines, Report. 6/8/24. Section. III.
[2] Ibid. Section IV.
[3] Ibid. Section V.
[4] ADM 1/8664/134 Memorandum by Director Gunnery Division, 8/1/24.

the Naval C.-in-C., but that he considered that all ideas of the Marines as an inter-connecting force between the Navy and the Army should be expunged from the report.[1] Keyes concurred; the Marines were 'to provide independent forces to join the Fleet on mobilisation, to carry out operations for the seizure and defence of temporary bases and raids on the enemy coastline and bases, under the direction of the Naval Commander in Chief'.[2] Neither Admiral considered that the Marines should be trained to act as the spearhead for the Army in larger operations. Three years later, when an amendment to the "Instructions for Royal Marines" was under consideration, Dudley Pound himself rejected the Adjutant General's suggestion that the Marines should act as an amphibious spearhead, leaving the force with only the responsibility for seizing advanced bases.[3] The Naval Staff were clearly more interested in the strategic mobility of the fleet, for which the advance bases were required, than in the general amphibious role of the Royal Marines.

This reduced role was further diminished by the Admiralty's refusal to provide the necessary funds to allow the Marines sufficient troops to carry out the training necessary to fulfil the new role. The Naval Staff were initially enthusiastic and urged consideration of the Madden Committee's report despite the economic situation. However, with the realisation of the costs involved in increasing the size of the Corps to the point where it could fulfil the role envisaged for it by the Committee, the Staff initially fell back to a reduced scale of provision, and finally, despite pressure from the Adjutant General,[4] postponed the question indefinitely.[5] No further attempt was made in the 1920s to increase the numbers of Marines sufficiently to allow them to train or maintain a specialist force for amphibious operations. Their overall numbers remained linked to the

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[1] Ibid. Memo by Rear Admiral F. Dreyer, A.C.N.S., 3/12/24.
[2] Ibid. Memo by Vice Admiral R. Keyes, D.C.N.S., 8/12/24.
[3] ADM 1/8721/272 Royal Marines, Reduction and Abolition of Certain Posts for Economy Reasons, Minute by Rear Admiral Dudley Pound A.C.N.S., 10/11/27 & Enclosure "A".
[4] ADM 1/8644/134 Minute by A. R. H. Hutchison, A.G.R.M. 20/10/26.
[5] ADM 1/8644/134 Minute by H. G. B. [Vice Admiral Sir Hubert Brand, Second Sea Lord] 1/11/26.

size of the complements they provided for the Fleet. Thus although in 1927 the Naval Staff agreed to the Marine Instructions including a clause to the effect that the Royal Marines were, in addition to their shipboard role 'to provide independent forces to join the fleet on mobilisation, to carry out operations for the seizure and defence of temporary bases and raids on the enemy coastline' this addition was a mere formality; no such force existed, nor were the Admiralty attempting to create one.

Thus the Marines' amphibious capability was more apparent than real throughout the 1920s, a fact which emerges clearly from the exercises of that period. A single "Royal Marine Striking Force" exercise was carried out in those years; under Keyes' command the Mediterranean Fleet conducted a trial of the advanced base principle at Dragomesti in 1928. In this exercise a marine force was landed to seize the site for the temporary base but the "Striking Force" was only cobbled together by denuding the entire fleet of its Marines, a peacetime convenience impossible in war .[1] The previous year the Admiralty had been forced to remind its commanders to use the marines as the landing forces in combined exercises, as there was a marked tendency to use them as the defenders against Army landing forces.[2] Trials with the M.N.B.O. continued, but at a purely experimental level, and in 1929 the Admiralty informed the other services that the Mobile Naval Base should not be considered as part of the preparations for an amphibious operation.[3] When the M.N.B.O. Manual was finally issued in 1934 it stated explicitly that the organisation had no offensive capability and if opposition were expected, a landing operation would have to precede its deployment.[4]

The Marines therefore entered the 1930s with a theoretical responsibility for amphibious operations in support of the Fleet; the role, however, had been allotted

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[1] ADM 186/144 Annual Summary of Tactical Progress in 1928. Section IX. "Combined Operations".
[2] ADM 186/143 Annual Summary of Tactical Progress, 1927, Section IX "Combined Operations"; Royal Marines.
[3] AIR 2/1060 Revised Manual of Combined Naval, Military and Air Force Operations, 1923; 17A 6th Meeting of the Co-ordinating Committee for Staff Duties in Combined Operations, 7/8/29.
[4] ADM 239/129 Manual of the Mobile Naval Base Defence Organisation 1934; Chap. I, Limitations.

unilaterally by the Admiralty and was not backed up by any training or material preparation. As far as larger amphibious operations were concerned, no attempt whatsoever had been made to integrate the Marines into the larger combined operations investigations focused around the Manual; the suggestion that they should provide an amphibious spearhead had not been taken up.

This situation persisted into the early 1930s. The size of the Corps remained too low to allow for training in landing operations of any size; landing exercises continued to consist of the forces scraped together out the complements manning the guns of the Fleet. It was not even possible to repeat the type of exercise that had taken place at Dragomesti with any kind of frequency; the C.-in-C. Home Fleet recorded in 1932 that his Royal Marines only landed 'on comparatively rare occasions' and that the Fleet Royal Marine Officer, whose task it was to command the force created by collecting together the Marines from the various warships 'has practically no opportunity of keeping in touch with the majority of the Royal Marine Detachments in the Home Fleet.[1] By 1934 the A.G.R.M. considered that only 'a minor operation . . . might fall to the lot of a Royal Marine Unit', and that his men were not even trained to carry out such operations as these successfully. The need to counter automatic weapons had increased the need for tactical training, but the Marines were not so prepared. The small strength of the Corps meant each man spent a mere five months ashore to two years afloat, and this time was largely taken up with leave and retraining for their shipboard gunnery role. The Adjutant General concluded that a further five hundred marines were required merely to allow the Corps to train its men sufficiently well to carry out small operations.[2] The proposal was approved by the Board, albeit spread over five years,[3] but this measure was necessary merely to allow the Corps to adequately train the shipboard complements for their small

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[1] ADM 1/8767/99 Appointment of a Fleet Royal Marine Officer, Sir John Kelly to Admiralty, 3/7/32.
[2] ADM 1/8775/128 Royal Marines, Margin for Military Training. Memo by A.G.R.M., 23/8/34.
[3] Ibid. Board Minute 3285.

landing operations; there was no mention of the independent striking force which had formed the centrepiece of the Madden Committee's proposals. Thus by the mid 1930s the Royal Marines were no better equipped to perform an amphibious role than they had been at the end of the First World War.

A final attempt to have the Royal Marines designated as Britain's amphibious force was made in the rearmament period. The Royal Naval College emerged as champions of the Far Eastern Plan and the equipping of the Marines to fulfil the strategy's amphibious requirements, and maintained this position until almost the outbreak of war. The Naval Staff sympathised with their strategic conclusions but were less dogmatic as to the need for the Marines to provide the amphibious force; but more decisive in the rejection of such proposals was the belief of the other services that the combined approach to such operations was more than sufficient, particularly as they did not share the Navy's strategic preconceptions.

The third inter-war revision of the Manual was the cue for the first attempt by the R.N. Staff College to have the Royal Marines clearly designated and equipped as the country's amphibious experts. As has been noted, when the staff colleges recommended an inter-service training centre, the Director of the Navy's Staff College, Captain Watson, proposed that a specialist amphibious force should be associated with the new establishment, and suggested 'a force of Royal Marines would be the ideal'.[1] The Director alluded to the Madden report and concluded that the time had now arrived to put that paper's recommendations into effect. However, the question was referred to the inter-service committee drafting the new manual, which rejected the idea of a specialist amphibious force in favour of 'developing material which can be used by any force'.[2] The proposal had apparently been rejected by the military member of the Committee, who

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[1] CAB 54/3 D.C.O.S. 44, Enclosure, "The Naval Side of Combined Operations and the Necessity for its Development in Peace". B.C. Watson 22/2/36.

[2] CAB 54/3 D.C.O.S. 44, Training and Development Centre for Opposed Landing Operations, Memorandum by the Secretary of the Drafting Committee, 29/4/37.

was reported as minuting the proposal 'it appears the Navy now require their own army'.[1] The Deputy Chiefs of Staff diplomatically made no mention of the proposal in their report to the Chiefs of Staff,[2] which body commended their circumspection and recorded its own opposition to such a move.[3] Clearly the General Staff were averse to the creation of a single service amphibious force, and thus the proposal was rejected with little debate.

The Royal Naval Staff College, however, mounted a more determined attempt to have the Marines designated and equipped as Britain's amphibious force even before Watson's proposal had been finally rejected. Early in 1937 Watson's successor, W. S. Chalmers, formed a syndicate of Marine Officers attending the Staff Course and ordered them to prepare a proposal for presentation to the Admiralty.[4] After much discussion as to the best means of making a case for such a force, Chalmers repeated his predecessor's submission to the Admiralty. An amphibious force was required for 'in the Far East and the Mediterranean, the occupation of bases, other than our permanent ones, appears to be necessary before offensive operations can be undertaken by our Fleet or Air Forces'. This force, Chalmers argued, should be able to act before extensive defences could be established, therefore a permanent force was required and the Royal Marines were the obvious choice.[5] It is obvious from this submission that the Staff College was not aware that joint forward planning in the Far East had been abandoned, indeed the syndicate believed that advance base operations were still included in the Joint Planning Committee's schemes.[6] On the basis of this erroneous belief that the amphibious strategy for the Far East still applied, the Royal Naval Staff College restated its claims for the Royal Marines to be elevated into a specialist amphibious force.

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[1] ADM 203/62 Need for a Royal Marine Striking Force, 1937, Lt-Col. Newman to the Director of the R.N.S.C., W.S. Chalmers, 20/5/37.

[2] CAB 54/3 D.C.O.S. 50; Co-ordination of Military Training, 14/10/37.

[3] CAB 53/8 Minutes of the 221st Meeting of the C.O.S., 4/11/37.

[4] ADM 203/62 Need for a Royal Marine Striking Force, 1937; Proposed Functions of the Royal Marines, Memo by Director R.N.S.C., 30/3/37.

[5] Ibid. S.C. 169, 14/7/37.

[6] Ibid. Lt-Col. Newman to Director, 20/5/37.

The Staff College's strategic expectations were to some extent general within the Navy. Chalmers was able to enlist the support of Admirals Drax and Lord Cork, as well as the President of the R.N.C., Admiral Bailey.[1] All were agreed on the need for a force to be capable of conducting amphibious operations from the outset of war, and of the requirement for capturing bases for the Fleet; clearly within the Navy as a whole there was a strong belief that the Far Eastern strategy would be put into effect.

This second proposal to allot responsibility for amphibious operations to the Marines failed as completely as had the first. In the first place the Admiralty was less fervent in its support for the Marines to replace inter-service co-operation than was the Staff College. The D.C.N.S., Vice Admiral James, conveyed the essence of the Staff College's proposal to his colleagues and supported the suggestion that better preparation for amphibious operations was required. However, James was less dogmatic than the Staff College, and noted that the alternative to a specialist force was an improvement in the combined training carried out by the three services already.[2] Clifford suggests that by considering the alternative James destroyed his own proposal,[3] but the D.C.N.S. was more concerned with ensuring some amphibious capability than with the question of cornering this task for the Marines, who were no longer under threat. Of greater importance in crushing the proposal, however, was the fact that the Navy's strategic priorities were not shared by the other two services. The D.C.I.G.S., Adam, retorted that the British Army already practised Brigade level operations every year and that 'with our many commitments we could not afford to set units aside for training in amphibious operations only'.[4] The R.A.F. representative repeated that force's contention that

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[1] Ibid. Admiral of the Fleet Lord Cork and Orrery to Director, 2/6/37, Admiral the Hon. Sir Reginald Plunkett Ernle-Erle-Drax to Director, 14/6/37 & Vice Admiral S. R. Bailey to the Admiralty, 22/7/37.

[2] CAB 54/4 D.C.O.S. 61 The Establishment of a Special Striking Force for Amphibious Operations. Letter by the D.C.N.S., 13/1/38.

[3] K. J. Clifford, "*Amphibious Warfare Development*" p. 67; Clifford is not aware that this proposal also emanated from the R.N.S.C.

[4] CAB 54/4 D.C.O.S. 62; The Establishment of a Special Striking Force for Amphibious Operations" D.C.I.G.S. to D.C.N.S. 7/2/38.

amphibious operations were unlikely in the face of an unbroken air force, and argued that consequently there was no justification for training and equipping a special force to carry them out.[1] The question was dropped from the D.C.O.S. agenda,[2] and when the new Committee to oversee inter-service training was established, it was informed from the outset that the Deputy Chiefs had considered and rejected the possibility of creating any specialist force.[3] The Admiralty considered the question might be re-opened when the I.S.T.D.C. was up and running, but the issue was not raised before the outbreak of war.[4]

It is clear, therefore, that at no point before the outbreak of the Second World War was it accepted that the Royal Marines should be Britain's amphibious force. Within the Corps itself, at the Staff College, and on occasion within the Admiralty, there was pressure for the force to be designated and equipped for amphibious operations in support of the Fleet, with the more forceful exponents also calling for the Marines to have a more general amphibious responsibility, including spearheading the landing of the Regular Army. On two occasions the Admiralty accepted the more modest of these proposals, but the failure of the Staff to take any practical measures to equip the Marines to fulfil this role made the decisions worthless. A particularly cynical assessment might conclude that the Naval Staff were largely content to provide the Corps with a theoretical role which protected them from the inroads of the Treasury. Even this qualified Admiralty support was invalidated by the Naval Staff's reluctance to put the idea to the other services. Not until the 1930s were the other arms officially informed that certain sections of the Navy favoured the allocation of responsibility for amphibious operations to the Marines, and on both occasions that the Naval Staff raised the subject in the Chiefs of Staff structure they

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[1] CAB 54/4 D.C.O.S. 64; D.C.A.S., Peirse, to Deputy Secretary of the C.I.D., Ismay, copy. 8/2/38.
[2] CAB 54/4 D.C.O.S. 63; James to Ismay, copy. 7/2/38.
[3] CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 4; The Establishment of a Special Striking Force for Amphibious Operations, 16/2/38.
[4] ADM 203/62 Need for A Royal Marine Striking Force, Rear Admiral L. Holland, A.C.N.S., to Captain WS Chalmers, Director R.N.S.C., 9/4/38.

did so merely by forwarding the recommendations of the Staff College, and to some extent dissociated themselves from the proposal. The Marines' actual amphibious capacity remained at the level of imperial policemen but more importantly, it was never accepted by the three services that the Marines should replace the combined approach to amphibious operations.

Chapter VIII. Norway; The Test of War.

This Chapter aims at examining the disastrous Norwegian Campaign in the light of the points raised in the thesis. If the British were as pragmatically prepared as has been argued, why did they fail so ignominiously in Norway? The answer lay in the manner in which the Norwegian Campaign had been conceived. The political object and scope of the project changed repeatedly, which in itself did not facilitate planning and preparation, but more fundamentally, at no point in the planning process was it ever considered that operations in Norway would be amphibious in form. It was only when the Germans forestalled the British in Scandinavia that an amphibious venture became necessary. Thus the British, who had always assumed that any amphibious operation would be preceded by a long build up, were faced with a landing operation at short notice, and the bulk of the campaign's failures stemmed from this single miscalculation. This chapter demonstrates the lack of any amphibious preparation for the campaign, despite the widespread belief that Scandinavia offered advantages for a maritime power. Further, it attempts to show that the British were fully aware that they were unprepared to stage such an operation, but they went ahead as they considered that the circumstances justified the attempt. Thus the apparent lessons of the campaign, notably those relating to the need for dedicated landing craft and air superiority, were points known before the campaign, cited at the time, and only ignored due to the peculiar conditions of the campaign.

A Brief Account of the Campaign.

In September 1939 Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, proposed that the British should seek means of interfering with the German supplies of iron ore from the Gallivare fields in the north of Sweden. A temporary interruption could be achieved

by placing mines in Norwegian territorial waters, through which the ore was transported during the ice season in the Baltic, and hence forcing the ore-carrying vessels into open waters where they could be intercepted by the Royal Navy. However, to completely halt supplies compelled occupation of the orefields themselves, for in summer the ore was transported via the Baltic. For the remainder of the winter the British examined means of actually occupying the Gallivare fields, chiefly under the guise of assisting the Finns in their fight with the Russians. Plans were drawn up and forces prepared on this basis. In the event the unwillingness of the Scandinavian Countries to be dragged into the war prevented the British acting until the Finns had accepted an armistice, and hence the excuse was lost. The British returned to the idea of mining the Norwegian waters, hoping that the German reaction would provide them with the excuse they needed to move into Scandinavia and completely cut off the ore supplies. The mines were accordingly laid on 8 April, and a military force held in readiness to occupy the Northern Norwegian ports as bases for operations in Scandinavia. However, the Germans had become worried by the British interest in Norway and were already taking steps to occupy all the ports of that country. Thus instead of reacting slowly, which would have allowed the British to arrive in Scandinavia before them, the Germans landed at Narvik, Trondheim, Bergen and Oslo on 9 April. In place of the hoped-for welcome to the Norwegian ports, the British were suddenly faced with a combined operation.

Initially the British concentrated on expelling the Germans from Narvik, northernmost of the Norwegian ports occupied and terminus for the iron ore route from Gallivare. The force originally intended to occupy the ports was despatched to the area with instructions to prepared for the recapture of Narvik. However, initial reports made it appear that the capture of Narvik would be easy, consequently British interest, and some of the forces originally despatched to the ore port, shifted to Trondheim. At the centre of the Norwegian rail network, and a far larger port, Trondheim appeared to be capable of acting as a base for major British operations in Scandinavia, which would both protect the

orefields and tie up large numbers of German forces. Thus, whilst the first forces despatched landed at Harstad on 15 April and prepared for an attack on Narvik, the main thrust of the British effort focused on Trondheim.

Forces were landed the same day at the unoccupied ports of Andalsnes and Namsos to make flank advances on Trondheim, whilst an amphibious assault on the town itself was prepared. However, increasing doubts about the risks involved in such an operation, mounted at short notice, with little equipment and under enemy air superiority, combined with the initial promise of the flank landings to cause the British to concentrate their efforts on capturing Trondheim via their flanking manoeuvres. The amphibious assault was therefore abandoned in favour of operations conducted through ports which had been occupied without fighting. No sooner had the decision been made, however, than German air attacks on Namsos, Andalsnes and the forces operating from them forced the British into retreat. The question of a direct assault on the town was revived, but abandoned on the grounds that Trondheim could not be held in the face of the German air effort and consequently the forces in central Norway were evacuated by 2 May.

At Narvik an attempt at compelling the surrender of the Germans by naval bombardment failed and the British concentrated on surrounding the port by land operations. The Major General in charge proved so antagonistic to the idea of a direct assault on the town that he was first placed under the command of the Naval C.-in-C. and then sent home. Not until May 7 was a small amphibious operation was carried out at Bjerkvik to the north of Narvik to provide a site for artillery to cover the final assault, and a similar small landing in the environs of the town to complete its capture only took place on 27 May. Furthermore, neither of these operation was conducted by the British army, but by French Foreign Legion Troops in co-operation with the Royal Navy. Narvik was subsequently abandoned as the German advance in France caused the recall of all allied forces.

The entire campaign was thus an unimpressive return for the time devoted to combined operations by the British services since the beginning of the century, whilst the reluctance of the British Army to undertake an opposed landing at Narvik has been cited as yet another example of the extent to which Gallipoli had convinced the British of the impossibility of such operations.[1]

However, the hurried nature of the campaign was almost entirely responsible for its disastrous outcome. The expedition to Norway in no way conformed to the strategic scenarios for combined operations which the British had considered before the war, and hence they were unprepared. Although ideals of maritime strategy had shaped their interest in the theatre, prior to the German landings they had not considered amphibious operations would be required, and hence had not set in train many of the planning or material preparations which they knew landing operations would require.

The British Performance in Norway, A Re-assessment.

Amphibious Strategy and the Operations in Norway.

British involvement in Scandinavia reveals that the ideals of maritime strategy had considerable influence. Interest in Scandinavia arose out of the iron ore question; however, in addition to this idea there was a general belief that Scandinavia was a theatre which offered particular advantages to a maritime nation such as the British, and that operations there should be encouraged in preference to a repeat of the stale deadlock on the Western Front. Politicians and planners shared the idea that the services could be used in combination on the Norwegian seaboard in a manner which did not apply in France. To a great extent, therefore, the operations in Norway were an attempt to put into effect the principle, first expressed in Corbett's writings, that in a Continental war Britain

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[1] J. L. Moulton, "*The Norwegian Campaign of 1940, A Study of Warfare in Three Dimensions*" (Eyre and Spottiswood, London, 1966) pp. 225-6.

should look for opportunities to act on the periphery. Coupled with the desire to interrupt the iron ore was the idea that Scandinavia was suited to the British way in warfare.

The belief that a campaign in Norway would favour the British emerged repeatedly during the campaign. In their plans for intervention under the guise of assisting the Finns, in their initial response to the German invasion, and in the desperate measures they looked to in the closing stages of the conflict, the British repeatedly placed their faith in the supposed advantages open to a maritime power in such a theatre.

The chief exponent of such a strategy was the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Ironside.[1] The Chiefs of Staff first referred the question of operations to cut off German ore supplies to their Joint Planners in November 1939, but the J.P.C. merely pointed out that the Germans would seize the mines in response.[2] The Chiefs' next suggestion, that the British could move into Norway to forestall the Germans,[3] was similarly dismissed by the Joint Planners.[4] It is clear, therefore, that the project that arose subsequently originated with Chiefs themselves rather than the J.P.C.; for, despite the views of the Joint Planners, the Chiefs went on to report that if the British could establish themselves to cover the ore fields, the Germans would be forced to use a disproportionate degree of force to displace them.[5] Ironside explained his thinking to the War Cabinet; 'Germany was inexperienced in combined operations. An invasion of Southern Scandinavia would be an enormous commitment for her'.[6] Subsequently the C.I.G.S. described the operation as 'a golden opportunity . . . to cause the enemy to disperse his forces',[7] and criticised the War Cabinet for arrogating to itself the responsibility for combined planning and yet producing no 'plan to use the Navy, Army and Air Force

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[1] Brian Bond in John Keegan (Ed). "*Churchill's Generals*" (Grove Weidenfield, New York, 1991). "*Ironside*", pp. 24-5.
[2] CAB 80/6 C.O.S. (39) 160 (JP), December 1939, & C.O.S. (39) 165 (JP), 16/12/39.
[3] CAB 79/2 C.O.S. 109th Meeting, 18/12/39.
[4] CAB 80/6 C.O.S. (39) 166 (JP) 18/12/39.
[5] CAB 80/6 C.O.S. (39) 168. 20/12/39.
[6] CAB 65/4 War Cabinet Conclusions, Confidential Annexes, W.M. (39) 122 Minute 1. 22/12/39.
[7] CAB 79/2 C.O.S. (39) 116th Meeting, 28/12/39.

together'.[1] It is evident that Ironside was the originator of the idea of a Norwegian strategy as a means of forcing the Germans to fight in a theatre more favourable to Britain.

Ironside was not alone; the argument was accepted with relief by the politicians, his fellow Chiefs of Staff and his French counterparts. Thus Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, agreed with Ironside that 'there would be a distinct advantage in conducting operations in Scandinavia . . . such operations would give us the opportunity for exploiting the amphibious strength of this country'.[2] General Gamelin, the French Commander in Chief, concurred that Scandinavia would be a welcome diversion of German strength away from the French front.[3] The First Sea Lord, Admiral Pound, supported the strategy on the grounds that the German supply routes would be vulnerable to Royal Naval action; a reiteration of the idea that the Navy could isolate certain areas thus enabling the small British Army to fight more powerful enemies on equal terms; Corbett's "limited war" scenario.[4] By the close of the year, the idea was in full flower. In a paper issued on Christmas Day, and evocative of Hankey's famous Boxing Day Memorandum, Churchill remarked that 'the supreme strategy is to carry the war into a theatre where we can bring superior forces to bear'.[5] It remained for Leo Amery to draw a direct comparison between Norway and the Peninsular War.[6] The idea that the supposed amphibious expertise of the British would enable them to draw the Germans into a war at a disadvantage was widespread by early in 1940.

The strategic advantages of a campaign in Norway were now seen to possess equal weight with the expected economic effects. On a reassessment the Joint Planners reported that a force of six British divisions deployed to cover the orefields could tie up

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[1] R. Macleod "*The Ironside Diaries 1937-40*", (Constable, London, 1962), Entry for 28/12/39, p. 190.
[2] CAB 65/4 W.M. (139) 122, Minute 1 22/12/39.
[3] CAB 65/11 War Cabinet (40) 10 12/1/40.
[4] CAB 79/3 C.O.S. (40) 14th Meeting 24/1/40.
[5] ADM 199/1929 First Lord's Records, Section I; A Note on the War in 1940, 25/12/39.
[6] Ibid. Some Notes on the Situation, Rt. Hon. L. S. Amery, 30/12/39.

twenty German divisions, and thus military operations in the theatre would be justifiable in their own right, the threat to the ore serving to force the Germans to fight where the British wished.[1] The Joint Planners also accepted the idea that the Germans were less experienced than the British in combined operations, which would give the British the advantage and the initiative in the theatre. At the same time, they advised that no premature action should be taken against the mines which might reduce the possibility of opening up prolonged operations in Scandinavia.[2] The Inter-Service Planning Staff, set up specifically to plan the operations, also concurred with the prevalent assumptions concerning the advantages which would accrue to the British in that theatre, agreeing that the Germans were inexperienced in combined operations.[3] Thus by early 1940 the plans for operations in Norway and Sweden were governed as much by the expectation of opening hostilities in a theatre suited to the British as by the hoped for damage to the German economy.

This hope was crushed by the inability of the British to persuade the Scandinavian countries to allow the Allies to bring them into the war but revived when the Germans established themselves in all the major ports on the Norwegian seaboard.

In the face of this apparent strategic reverse, the initial response of the British was near glee that the Germans had fallen into the trap of opening a theatre in which a maritime power had the advantage. Thus Churchill informed the War Cabinet that 'our hands were now free and we could apply our overwhelming sea power on the Norwegian Coast. The German forces which had been landed were commitments for them, but potential prizes for us . . . we would liquidate them in a month or two'.[4] The 'strategic situation', the First Lord was sure 'would develop to our advantage'.[5] This perception lay

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[1] CAB 80/6 C.O.S. (39) 180 (JP) 31/12/39.
[2] CAB 80/6 C.O.S. (39) 181 (JP) 31/12/39.
[3] CAB 79/85 C.O.S. (40) 30th Meeting, 15/2/40.
[4] CAB 65/12 Minutes of the War Cabinet (40) 86, 9/4/40.
[5] CAB 65/12 Minutes of the War Cabinet (40) 87, 10/4/40.

behind the decision to divert the focus of the British response from Narvik to Trondheim, whence it was believed that the Germans could be both held up and forced to commit a disproportionate number of troops. Thus ten days after the German invasion, and only a day before the troops in the central area began to pull out under the German air onslaught, the Joint Planners still believed that the Germans could be forced to maintain large forces in the theatre.[1] The initial stages of the campaign were therefore conducted under the impression that the British held the aces in this kind of warfare.

Even with the expulsion from Trondheim this perception was slow to fade, particularly amongst the politicians, who continued to believe that Norway was particularly suited to British military operations. Maurice Hankey, Minister without Portfolio in Chamberlain's War Cabinet, hearkened back to the ideas which he had first expressed before the First World War in his unpublished work on amphibious operations. With the British falling back on Narvik, Hankey still considered that the German advance northward could be hamstrung by forces landed from the sea. Norway could be turned into a 'running sore' equivalent to the Peninsula War.[2] Both Churchill and Chamberlain agreed, and it remained for the Vice Chiefs to point out that no sizeable force could be maintained on the coast without air defences which the British could not provide.[3] In the face of all the evidence to the contrary, the idea that Norway was a theatre with particular advantages for the British persisted almost to the end of the Campaign.

It is clear, therefore, that the British interest in Norway was largely driven by a belief in maritime strategy. Such ideas were as persuasive in 1939 as they had in 1914. However, the British were not prepared for amphibious operations in the theatre.

The Lack of Preparation.

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[1] C.O.S. (40) 298 (JP) (S) 21/4/40.
[2] CAB 83/3 Minutes of the 36th Meeting of the M.C.C., 29/4/40.
[3] CAB 80/105 C.O.S. (40) 312 (S) 30/4/40.

Although the plans for an expedition to Norway were shaped by a belief in maritime strategy, the British never considered, until too late, that such operations might involve opposed landings. At no point in the complex preliminaries to the conflict did the British believe that the Germans might pre-empt them,[1] whilst they twice considered and rejected, on both occasions for diplomatic reasons,[2] the possibility of landing in the face of Norwegian opposition. Consequently they never prepared for an opposed landing; both the force apparently intended to help the Finns, and those waiting on the German response to the mining operations were expected to disembark in friendly Norwegian ports long before any German troops appeared.[3] When the Germans did manage to establish themselves in all Norway's major ports, the British were, therefore, faced with an amphibious operation they had not expected.

This circumstance exposed the chief flaw in pre-war amphibious preparations. The Manual and the provision of equipment had all been based on the presumption that any amphibious operation would be preceded by a long build-up. This was erroneous in the case of Norway; in a scenario where the enemy was not strongly established but would become more so with time, a swift response was desirable, for it would face a reduced scale of opposition. Such a circumstance had not been envisaged before the war, whilst operations in Norway had been under consideration for five months, it was not expected that they should involve opposed landings: consequently, the British were not prepared to mount an operation at short notice. Summoned to the Joint Planning Committee following the German coup, the Commandant of the I.S.T.D.C. stated 'with some force' that the British 'were in no position to undertake a combined operation

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[1] Only at Stavanger and ports south did the British consider that the Germans could arrive before them, these points were not vital to the British plan and thus if the Germans had arrived 'there would be no question of an opposed landing'. CAB 80/7 C.O.S. (40) 184, 5/1/40.

[2] A suggestion that the British should fight their way through to Gallivare was rejected by the Prime Minister in January CAB 65/11 War Cabinet (40) 16, 17/1/40, whilst a proposal to use 'minimum force' to get ashore was rejected by the Foreign Secretary in March, CAB 65/12 War Cabinet (40) 67, 12/3/40.

[3] CAB 79/85 C.O.S. (40) 60. 29/3/40.

involving an opposed landing, the equipment for such an operation did not exist'.[1] Consequently Norway was an extemporised affair; the first test of the equipment and doctrine would take place under inauspicious circumstances resulting from the flaws in British strategic thinking.

The Combined Operations Planning Structure in Norway.

In one respect, however, the British were prepared for the Norwegian campaign; due to the increasing trend to treat all operations as combined,[2] certain elements of the structure for conducting combined operations were already in place. The Chiefs of Staff system, which, as has been shown, had largely been developed with amphibious expeditions in mind, had smoothly expanded its operations on the outbreak of war from advising the C.I.D. to guiding the War Cabinet and acting as the executive control of the Commanders in the field. The Chiefs, as had been intended, provided co-ordinated advice to the politicians, and it is notable that Hankey deliberately adhered to the pre-war agreement that the Chiefs should personally state their views at the War Cabinet.[3] There was therefore little chance of a repetition of the situation which had allowed the Gallipoli operation to take place. Although the individual Chiefs were still open to blandishments, amongst which can be placed Churchill's late night visits to press operations against Trondheim on Ironside,[4] when the Chiefs agreed on a line of action, they constituted a formidable opposition. Thus, when the C.O.S. decided that the direct attack on Trondheim should be abandoned, there was little the politicians could do; Churchill later wrote critically that 'no more decisive stopper on a positive plan can be imagined, nor

[1] CAB 84/2 JP (40) 26th Meeting, 10/4/40.
[2] See Chapter IV Page 139.
[3] CAB 65/12 War Cabinet (40) 95 17/4/40.
[4] Macleod "*Ironside Diaries*", pp. 256-7.

have I seen a Government or Minister who would have overridden it'.[1] The Chiefs were perhaps not wholly in the habit of co-operating,[2] but, as intended, they provided an integrated planning and control invaluable for combined operations.

In addition to the Chiefs of Staff, there existed a joint staff established exclusively to plan the operations in Norway. Although the preparations the British had made before the German invasion had been geared towards a peaceful landing, the planning process had been framed along the lines for combined operations which had been set out in the Manual before the war. When a full scale amphibious operation was forced on the British by the German pre-emptive invasion, these elements were capable of being adapted for the new operation. Consequently, despite the rushed nature of the operation, there was at least a semblance of the planning structure which the Manual considered essential for such operations. The contrast between the careful preparations which took place before the German initiative and the extemporisations which followed it further confirms that, as was also the case with the provision of equipment, the failures of the Norwegian campaign were largely due to the speed with which the expedition had to be put together in order to commence operations before the Germans consolidated their gains. They suggest how the British would have conducted the operations had they had the initiative.

The Inter Service Planning Staff was created in February by the Chiefs of Staff to plan the occupation of the Gallivare Ore Fields. It was composed of members of the three service planning departments, a representative of the Ministry of Shipping, and a French liaison.[3] This body was to provide the outline planning for the operations, the commanders being brought in when the detailed planning stage had been reached. At the same time an Inter-Service Signal Board was established, and later an Inter-Service

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[1] W.S. Churchill, "*The Second World War, Vol. I; The Gathering Storm*", (Cassell & Co., London, 1948) p. 494.

[2] Ibid. & J. L. Moulton, "*The Norwegian Campaign*", who suggests that the initial naval response to the German actions took place without consulting the other Services. p. 101.

[3] CAB 79/85 C.O.S. (40) 25th Meeting, 8/2/40.

Security Board was added to spread the cover story that the force was intended for the Far East.[1] All these preparations were in accordance with the strictures of the Manual regarding the secrecy, communications and planning of combined operations; the only departure being the delay in appointing the actual commanders, apparently due to the diplomatic delicacy of the operations under investigation. Consequently, the I.S.P.S. were available when the combined operation they had been planning became an amphibious expedition as a result of the German invasion. The bulk of the responsibility immediately passed to the Commanders on the spot, but the I.S.P.S. provided a co-ordinated planning organisation in London.

Once the German invasion had taken place the I.S.P.S. assisted in planning the British response. Thus, although the I.S.P.S. had made all its preparations on the basis that the British would land in a friendly country,[2] it was able to serve for a more demanding form of combined operation. Even as Major General Mackesy was hurried to northern Norway, the joint staff anticipated his requirements and initiated the despatch of Motor Landing Craft to his support.[3] In the Narvik operations, where the Commanders were appointed and despatched immediately, the role of the I.S.P.S. was confined to anticipating material requirements; in the slower gestating Trondheim operations the joint staff performed a more comprehensive planning role. The I.S.P.S. considered operations against Trondheim on April 12 and concluded that a direct attack 'implies combined operations against opposition which we are not organised to undertake'.[4] The I.S.P.S. was the first element in the British command structure to consider and reject a direct attack on Trondheim as an inter-service undertaking, and their conclusion gradually prevailed. Subsequently, the I.S.P.S. were also used to provide joint service investigation

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[1] CAB 79/85 C.O.S. (40) 30th Meeting, 15/2/40. Annexe, Notes for War Cabinet Meeting 16/2/40.
[2] WO 106/1905 Sickle Force Reports; "Report of operation on the Norwegian Coast, Administrative Notes Compiled by Order of General Mackesy". Minute by Lt-Col. R.N. Gale, War Office, 17/5/40.
[3] WO 106/1972 I.S.P.S. Minutes 2-27th April 1940. Minutes of 28th Meeting, 11/4/40.
[4] Ibid. Minutes of 29th Meeting, 12/4/40.

into the proposals for deploying the "Independent Forces" by sea along the coast road north of Trondheim in the closing stages of the campaign in the south.[1] In each of these cases the joint staff were used as a preliminary inter-service think tank, handing over their responsibility to the commanders as they were appointed, or, in Mackesy's case, entered the battle area. Once there were no further plans to open further spheres of operations the I.S.P.S. ceased to operate as a planning body and instead served as a means of co-ordinating the services' support of the Narvik operations until the close of the campaign.[2]

The British planning arrangements for an expedition to Norway which preceded the German invasion thus conformed with the pre-war strictures of the Manual. It is seems likely, therefore, that had the British not been rushed by the belief that a rapid response would minimise German resistance, a far better planning and command structure would have been created to control their amphibious operations in the campaign. The performance of the I.S.P.S. when called upon to perform this role at short notice, and with the Commanders for the most part already despatched to their fields of operations, merely hints at the capacity of the system the British would have employed had they had the time.

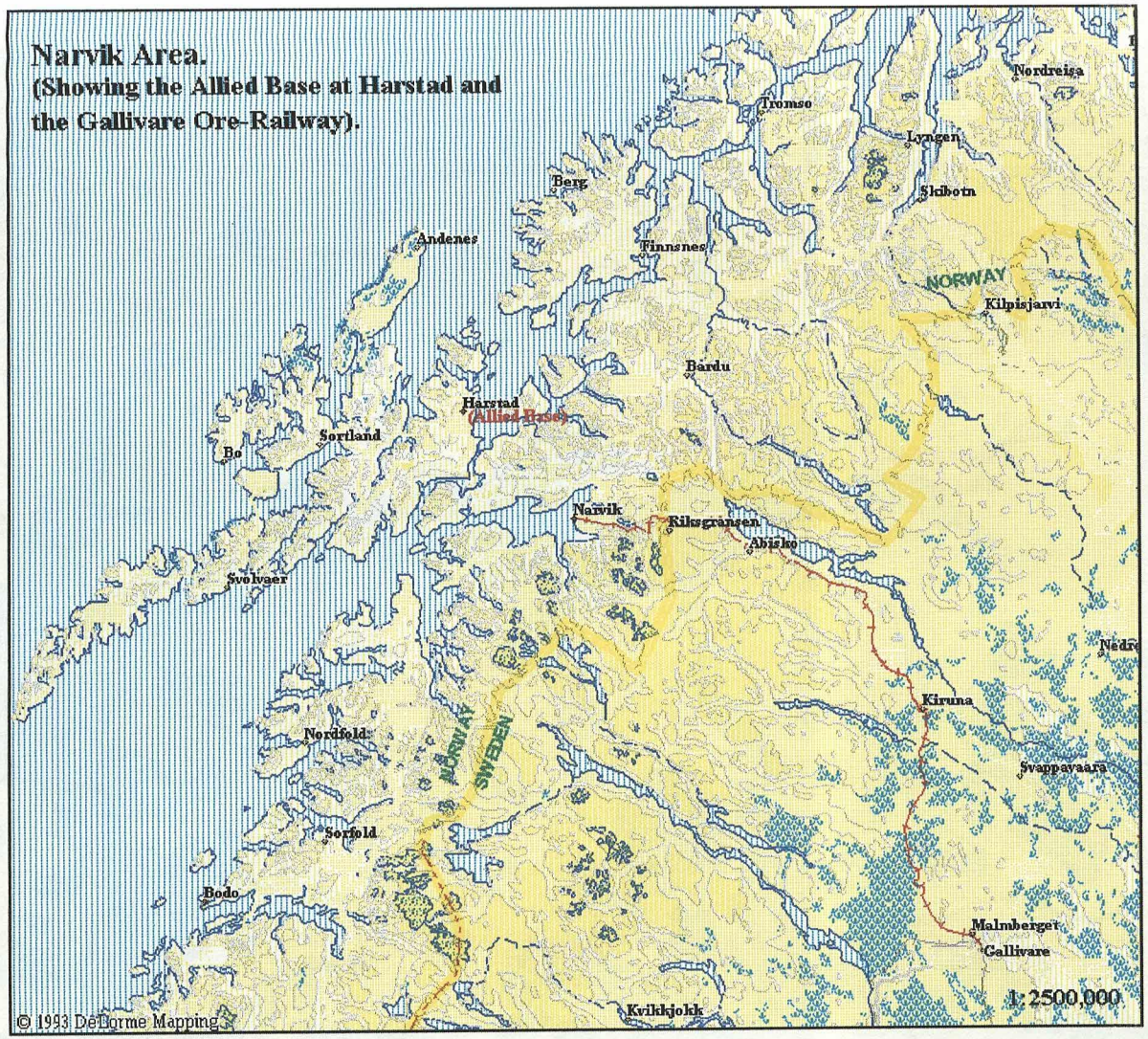
Opposed Landing Operations, Narvik.

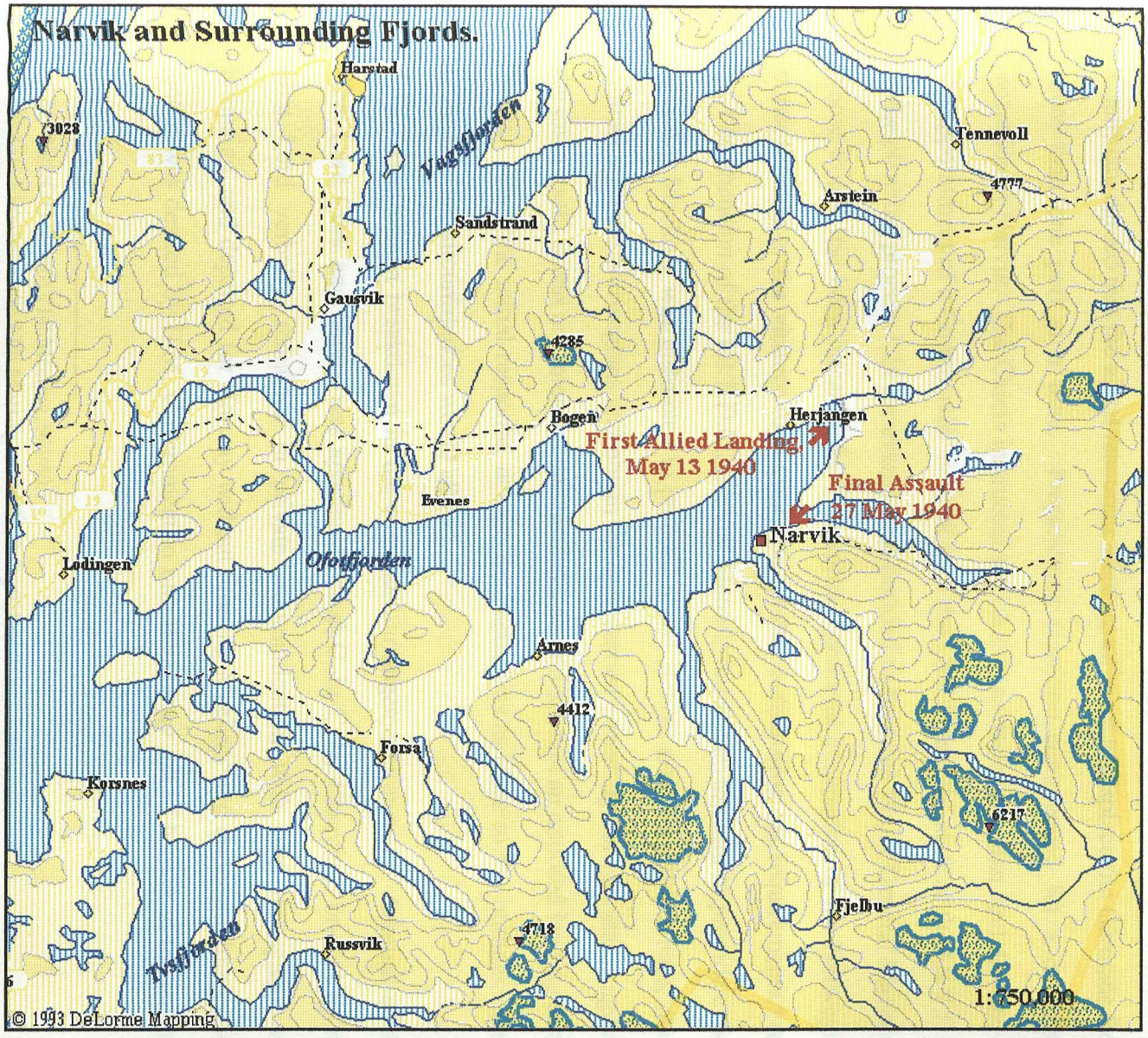
A limited number of the requirements of an amphibious operation were thus in place, despite the fact that the British had not anticipated the need to conduct opposed landings. However, for the most part, the hurried nature of the campaign undermined any possibility of conducting the operations by the book.

Following the German coup, despite being wrong footed, the initial British response was thoughtful and careful. Once it became clear that the Germans were at

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[1] WO 106/1875 Instructions to Maj.-Gen. P. J. Mackesy. R. Dewing, D.M.O.&P. to G.S.(P) 29/4/40.
[2] WO 106/1958 Daily Inter-Service Meetings, Norway, 4/5/40-16/6/40. Minutes of the 39th Meeting of the I.S.P.S., 3/5/40.


Narvik Area.
(Showing the Allied Base at Harstad and
the Gallivare Ore-Railway).
Nordreisa
Tromso
Lyngen
Skibotn
Berg
Andenes
Finnsnes
NORWAY
Kilpisjarvi
Bardu
Harstad
(Allied Base)
Sortland
Bo
Narvik
Riksgransen
Abisko
Svolvaer
Kiruna
Nordfold
NORWAY
SWEDEN
Svappavaara
Sorfold
Bodo
Malmberget
Gallivare
Kvikkjokk
1:2500,000
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Narvik and Surrounding Fjords.
Harstad
3028
Vågsfjorden
Tennevoll
4777
Arstein
Sandstrand
Gausvik
4285
Bogen
Herjangen
First Allied Landing,
May 13 1940
Final Assault
27 May 1940
Evenes
Narvik
Ofotfjorden
Lødingen
Arnes
4412
Forsa
Korsnes
6217
Fjelbu
4718
Russvik
Tysfjorden
1:750,000
© 1993 DeLorme Mapping

Narvik, the Chiefs' attention was concentrated on that port; operations in the south would await the results of reconnaissance and operations in the northern area.[1] The Military Co-ordination Committee were informed that the operation at Narvik 'depended on the most careful preparation and that it would be doomed to failure if rushed',[2] and Churchill, as Chairman, agreed that the allied resources were insufficient to displace the Germans from more than one port at a time. Preparations therefore commenced for a combined operation at Narvik. The Chiefs instructed the I.S.P.S. to draw up a plan, and decided on the appointment of a Commander to work with the I.S.P.S. and the staff of the I.S.T.D.C. in the planning process.[3] In the event it was decided to despatch Major General Mackesy, whose troops had been intended for the expected peaceful occupation of the Norwegian ports, directly to the vicinity of Narvik, the I.S.P.S. anticipating his requirements,[4] and the Commandant of the I.S.T.D.C., Captain Maund, accompanying him to provide expert advice.[5] Mackesy was instructed to proceed to the Narvik area, establish a base, make contact with the Norwegians and obtain the information necessary for operations against the town itself; it was not intended that his force should attempt an opposed landing at the outset.[6] Thus the initial response, despite the haste, was as close to the outlines of the Manual as the circumstances would allow.

However, a breakdown in the command arrangements ensued. Admiral of the Fleet Lord Cork and Orrery was appointed Naval C.-in-C. by Churchill, briefed by the First Lord verbally, remained in private communication with him throughout the campaign, and departed for Norway without meeting Mackesy and under the impression that 'it was desired by H.M. Government to turn the enemy out of Narvik at the earliest

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[1] CAB 79/3 C.O.S. (40) 71st Meeting, 9/4/40.
[2] CAB 83/3 Minutes of the 17th Meeting of the M.C.C., 9/4/40.
[3] CAB 79/3 C.O.S. (40) 72nd Meeting, 10/4/40.
[4] WO 106/1972 I.S.P.S. Minutes 2-27th April 1940. Minutes of 28th Meeting, 11/4/40.
[5] WO 168/83/1 General Staff, Avon (Late Rupertforce) March-April 1940. 11/4/40.
[6] WO 106/1875 Instructions to Major General P. J. Mackesy, 10/4/40.

possible moment'.[1] Cork later concluded that 'the orders given to the General by the War Office and the Cabinet differed fundamentally from my conception of what was required'.[2] No consideration had been given to whether a single commander was more suitable now that the operations involved an opposed landing, the two commanders were despatched separately with different instructions and a different chain of command; all the strictures of the Manual on this vital issue had been abandoned as a result of haste and Churchill's intervention.[3]

To this was added a rapid downsizing in the operation. Following the crushing defeat of the German naval forces in the Second Battle of Narvik, Admiral Whitworth, commanding, signalled that he considered German forces in the town sufficiently overawed that a landing might be made at the quay.[4] Cork concurred,[5] Mackesy did not, and the Commanders were instantly at loggerheads.[6] Furthermore, the idea that Narvik was as good as taken took hold in London. Although due to the haste with which they had been despatched Mackesy's troops were without any transport or supporting arms, the second brigade of his force was diverted to the southern operations,[7] whilst Churchill informed the War Cabinet that the remaining force might be able to land in Narvik itself and turned his attention to Trondheim.[8] So confident were the high command that the C.I.G.S. pencilled in Mackesy's Brigade of Guards for the subsequent operations against

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[1] ADM 199/485 Operations in Narvik Area, Norway. Report by Admiral of the Fleet Lord Cork and Orrery, Commander of Naval Forces in the Narvik Area. p.1.

[2] Ibid. Appendix C.

[3] M. Harvey "*Scandinavian Misadventure; The Campaign in Norway 1940*" (Spellmount, Tunbridge Wells, 1990), p 253. suggests that Narvik reveals the requirements of combined command were not understood, given that Major-General Hotblack's instructions for "Hammer" included a direct reference to the strictures on command included in the Manual, (T. K. Derry "*The Campaign in Norway*", (U.K. Military Series, London, 1952), Appendices, pp 251-2) Churchillian haste rather than flawed doctrine seems responsible.

[4] ADM 199/485. Lord Cork's Report, p 2.

[5] WO 168/83/1 Appendix 16; Lord Cork to Admiralty, C.-in-C. Home Fleet, HMS Aurora & Southampton 10.27 14/4/40.

[6] Ibid. Appendix 17; General Mackesy to Flag Officer, Aurora, 17.30, 14/4/40.

[7] CAB 83/3 Minutes of the 22nd Meeting of the M.C.C. 13/4/40.

[8] CAB 65/12 War Cabinet (40) 92nd Meeting, 14/4/40.

Trondheim.[1] From a careful build-up to an opposed landing, Narvik had come to be seen by all save the military commander as a quick coup d'état.

Deliberate amphibious operations were therefore abandoned in favour of an attempt at a direct landing in the town under the sole command of Lord Cork. Mackesy had lost the confidence of Churchill who enquired of Cork personally whether the situation was being 'mishandled'.[2] In London the assumption that the naval guns would enable a walkover was firmly entrenched; Churchill signalling to Cork that the question was not one of assault as the enemy's machine guns could be destroyed by the Fleet,[3] whilst Mackesy's lack of faith in the operation[4] led the Chiefs to place him under Cork's command.[5] This change in the command arrangements was not made in accordance with the Manual; for whereas that publication had considered the possibility of a single officer co-ordinating three junior service commanders,[6] Cork both commanded the naval contingent and had 'full direction' of the operation as a whole.[7] Haste and political pressure, particularly from Churchill, had resulted in the abandonment of an ordered amphibious operation in favour of an attempted coup de main under the complete control of the Naval C.-in-C. The attempt took place on 24 April, but the snowstorms prevented any assessment of the bombardment's effect and no attempt at landing was made.[8]

The agenda then reverted to more conventional operations, but the command system was wholly disrupted. The poor relations between the commanders prevented any real co-operation. Whereas Mackesy had earlier reported on the possibility of an opposed

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[1] CAB 83/3 Minutes of the 26th Meeting of the M.C.C., 16/4/40.
[2] ADM 199/1929 Section IV. First Lord to FO Narvik, Personal 17/4/40.
[3] ADM 199/1929 Section IV. First Lord to Lord Cork, 19/4/40.
[4] WO 168/83/1 Appendix 35, Aurora, Mackesy, to War Office, 19/4/40 & Appendix 43, Rupertforce to Troopers, London, 21/4/40.
[5] ADM 199/1929 Appendix IV; Admiralty to FO Narvik, 20/4/40.
[6] See Chapter V Page 196.
[7] ADM 199/1929 First Lord to FO Narvik, Personal and Private, 21/4/40.
[8] WO 168/83/1 Appendix 60 Notes for War Diary of Events on 24th April 1940.

landing near the town;[1] once subordinated to Lord Cork, Mackesy opposed all suggestions of amphibious operations preferring to encircle the German force from the land.[2] Mackesy was prepared to accept a landing in the Herjangsfjord, but hoped that a final assault on the Narvik Peninsula would not be necessary.[3] The relations between the two commanders had collapsed entirely; Cork resorted to veiled references to his authority,[4] whilst Mackesy wrote direct to the D.C.I.G.S., Dill, to suggest the replacement of them both.[5] Under such circumstances staging an operation was impossible, and after a further initiative by Cork had been thwarted by the concerted opposition of Mackesy's officers, the Admiral determined to place his faith in the French troops arriving in the area.[6] The landings which took place subsequently, at Bjerkvik in Herjangsfjord and on the Narvik Peninsula, were undertaken by troops of the Foreign Legion in co-operation with the Royal Navy. The haste with which the two commanders had been despatched, and Churchill's appointment and personal interventions via Lord Cork lay at the root of the failure to stage a British combined operation at Narvik.

The course of the operations at Narvik is therefore complicated by the disarray in the command arrangements. However, it is still possible to determine certain trends from the British response.

Within the limits of the command crisis and the weather conditions, the British response was largely by the book. Mackesy's first assessment considered 'shore artillery, shore observation and suitable landing craft' were all essentials.[7] The only departure from the pre-war doctrine here lay in the suggestion that shore artillery was necessary to cover the landing. Mackesy considered the nature of the ground ruled out the use of flat

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[1] WO 168/83/1 Appendix 43. Rupertforce to Troopers London, 21/4/40.
[2] WO 168/83/2 No. 35 Paper handed to C.O.S. 24/4/40 [Mackesy's proposals].
[3] Ibid. No. 42. Draft for FO Narvik, 25/4/40.
[4] WO 168/83/1 Appendix 68, Lord Cork to General Mackesy, 27/4/40.
[5] Ibid. Appendix 69. Rupertforce to Troopers, Most Secret and Personal for General Dill. 27/4/40.
[6] ADM 199/485, Lord Cork's Report, Appendix C, Entry for 8/5/40.
[7] WO 106/1806 Rupert Appreciations. Rupertforce to War Office, 21/4/40.

trajectory naval guns, but it is reasonable to suppose the fact that operations across the narrow fjords allowed for covering fire from shore artillery was a consideration; that army officers preferred to rely on their own supporting weapons when possible is not surprising. Further points were raised when Cork attempted to order a landing on the Narvik peninsula early in May. Colonel Trappes-Lomax, commanding the Guards Battalions pencilled in for the assault declared that he and his officers were agreed that the operation was impossible due to the limited size of the beaches, continuous daylight, the lack of sufficient landing craft and the enemy's aerial superiority.[1] To this Mackesy added that he considered an 'opposed landing in the face of unopposed enemy aircraft as being absolutely unjustified'. All this was in accordance with the strictures of the pre-war Manual, which stressed the need for aerial superiority, suitable landing craft, and landings on broad frontages to allow for local setbacks. The Army's reservations were entirely in accord with pre-war thinking.

The only criticism which can be levelled at the British in northern Norway is that which Cork made in his final report; that the British Army applied the lessons of a large operation to the peculiar requirements of Narvik.[2] This debate is not rewarding due to the fact that Cork, in direct communication with the First Lord, had reason to attach greater importance to haste than did the military officers. Further, it is worth noting that the reservations of the military officers were shared, and to some extent based upon, the reservations of the junior naval officers. Trappes-Lomax noted that his naval counterpart, Captain Hamilton, R.N., agreed with his views. It also appears that Captain Maund, ex-commandant of the I.S.T.D.C. and Lord Cork's Chief of Staff, was also opposed to the operation.[3] The emphasis on a surprise approach in darkness and the reference to specific numbers of the new assault landing craft suggest that Maund was putting into practice the

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[1] WO 168/83/2 Nos. 65 & 66 Mackesy to Cork 5/5/40 and Enclosure.

[2] ADM 199/485 Lord Cork's Report, Appendix B, Entry for 27/5/40.

[3] Both T. K. Derry "*The Campaign in Norway*" p. 196 and Maurice Harvey "*Scandinavian Misadventure*" p. 261, conclude that Maund was opposed.

theories which had guided the I.S.T.D.C. in drafting its pre-war memorandum on landing operations. The R.A.F.'s internal history of the campaign notes cryptically that 'the best informed officers on the Naval Staff' shared the Army view.[1] Lacking Cork's sense of urgency, and affronted by his appointment as supremo, it is unsurprising that the British Army officers were reluctant to depart from the rulebook.

Opposed Landing Operations, Trondheim.

The operations in northern Norway were thus hampered by the lack of preparation and the awkward command arrangements resulting from haste and Churchill's intervention. In the central area the only truly amphibious operation considered was the direct assault on Trondheim, operation "Hammer", proposed in the light of the apparent collapse of German resistance at Narvik. Small scale landings of marines at unoccupied ports were already under way in the central area, and to these were added the idea of a direct assault on Trondheim itself. The idea was batted about for five days and then abandoned in favour of developing the landings at the smaller ports into flank attacks on Trondheim. It has been suggested that the Navy were, as a result of the Home Fleet's experiences at the hands of the Luftwaffe, excessively wary of the air threat, and to this was added to the 'amphibious multiplier' of the fears of a repeat of Gallipoli.[2] Consequently the Navy chose to press the unrealistic alternative of developing the landings at the small ports.[3] By this argument the abandonment of "Hammer" would thus appear a precipitate collapse of faith in the British capability to mount amphibious operations in the face of air power combined with a reiteration of the fears engendered by Gallipoli. In reality the situation in the central area was identical to that around Narvik; there was no time to prepare the plans or material which pre-war doctrine had identified

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[1] AIR 36/39 A Review of the Campaign in Norway. p. 76.

[2] J. L. Moulton, "*The Norwegian Campaign*" p. 160.

[3] Corelli Barnett, "*Engage the Enemy More Closely; The Royal Navy in the Second World War*" (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1991). pp. 127-8.


The Central Theatre.
Trondheim, Namsos and Andalsnes.
Unopposed Allied Landing
April 14
Operation Hammer
Abandoned 19 April 1940
Unopposed Allied Landing,
April 18
Vikna
Namsos
Osen
Malm
Steinkjer
Afjord
NORWAY
SWEDEN
Verdalsora
Stiklestad
Levanger
Austrat
Asen
Stjordalshalsen
Meraker
Trondheim
Hell
Heimdal
Orkanger
Koppera
Duved
Jarpen
Storlien
Handol
Aure
Lokken
Valadalen
Kristiansund
Rindal
Storen
Tydal
Surnadalsora
Bud
Eide
Tingvoll
Berkak
Ljungdalen
Molde
Sunndalsora
Oppdal
Roros
Andalsnes
Mardalsfossen
Funasdalen
Os
Tolga
Tannas
Hede
Stranda
Kongsvon
Tynset
Lesjaskog
Folldal
Hellesylt
Dombas
Dovre
1:5000,000
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as essential; inability to counter the enemy air threat was only one of the problems resulting from this unreadiness. Hopes that a landing could be carried out were raised by Whitworth's experiences at Narvik, but despite Churchill's fervent support for the operation the Chiefs rapidly recognised that the pre-war conclusions still applied.

The operation was first placed on the agenda on April 13, immediately Narvik appeared to be a foregone conclusion.[1] The question was referred to Admiral Forbes, commanding the Home Fleet, and to the Joint Planning Staff. Both reported that they considered the long approach up the fjord would expose the troop carrying vessels to extensive air attack. The Joint Planners already favoured concentrating on the flank attacks,[2] whilst the C.-in-C. concluded that the operation was not feasible.[3] Nevertheless the Chiefs of Staff and the Military Co-ordination Committee continued to prepare for a direct assault. Churchill was the driving force behind this plan; by his own account he was thwarted by the Chiefs' final decision against the operation;[4] it is clear from the phrasing of the signals to Forbes that they were drafted by the First Lord;[5] and such was his enthusiasm that Hankey, presumably with Gallipoli in mind, felt it necessary to ascertain whether the Chiefs of Staff actually agreed with the plan.[6] The Chiefs appear to have been temporarily amenable and proceeded with the appointment of commanders and the outline plan.[7] Aircraft carriers, available for this duty since there was little threat of German naval intervention, were expected to provide temporary superiority over the German aircraft based in Norway,[8] whilst a Regular Brigade from France, bolstered by Canadians and with a Territorial Brigade in reserve, would make the landing from

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[1] CAB 83/3 Minutes of the 22nd Meeting of the Military Co-ordination Committee, 13/4/40.
[2] CAB 79/85, C.O.S. (40) 80th Meeting, 15/4/40.
[3] WO 106/1859 Battle Summary No. 17 The Conjunct Expeditions to Norway, 1940 p. 31; Forbes to Admiralty 14/4/40.
[4] W.S. Churchill "*The Gathering Storm*" p. 494.
[5] WO 106/1859 p.31. Admiralty to Forbes 15/4/40, includes what Kersaudy describes as the classic "Churchillism", "pray consider" Francois Kersaudy "*Norway 1940*" (Collins, London, 1980) p. 134.
[6] CAB 65/12 Minute of the War Cabinet (40) 95th Meeting, 17/4/40.
[7] CAB 80/105 C.O.S. (40) 289 (S); Operations for the Capture of Trondheim, Aide Memoire.
[8] CAB 65/12 Minute of the War Cabinet (40) 95th Meeting, 17/4/40.

warships and a handful of landing craft.[1] In London, the apparent ease of operations at Narvik, and the evident political and strategic importance of Trondheim temporarily allowed Churchill to carry the Chiefs of Staff with him.

However, in the theatre of operations, there was less readiness to abandon the accepted doctrine on combined operations. Forbes, whose Home Fleet would have to carry out the operation, adhered to the pre-war outlook. He signalled that the chief problem was air attack, both during the approach and the landing, and noted 'I know, from personal experience, what an opposed landing is like, even without air opposition'. Forbes' signals demonstrate that he clearly appreciated the requirements of an amphibious operation; he stressed that he lacked the necessary charts and information, and requested that a senior planner brief him at Scapa. On the material side he stressed the need for 'numerous' landing craft, and pointed out that the aircraft carriers could not provide air superiority against the numbers of German home-based aircraft who would be able to reach the scene as the assault force sailed up the fjord.[2] Forbes had hit on all the major flaws in the proposal; the British lacked the information necessary to plan such an operation, there had been no combined planning and none of the essential material aids for a landing were available. In addition to all these, the normal problems of landing in the face of enemy air superiority, an operation considered foolhardy since 1923,[3] were compounded by the narrow waters of the fjord.

Forbes' criticisms were thus all securely based in the pre-war doctrine relating to such operations, and it is unsurprising that with the ebbing of fortunes at Narvik and the apparent success of the flank landings at Namsos and Andalsnes the Chiefs of Staff should have taken his arguments for their own. Following an initiative by the First Sea Lord, Dudley Pound,[4] the Chiefs reported that 'an opposed landing has at all times proved

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[1] WO 106/1859 p 32. Admiralty to CinC Home Fleet, 17/4/40.
[2] WO 106/1859 p. 32. C.-in-C. Home Fleet to Admiralty, 15/4/40.
[3] See Chapter IV. Page 106.
[4] CAB 79/85 C.O.S. (40) 87th Meeting, 19/4/40.

to be one of the most difficult and hazardous operations of war, for which the most detailed and careful preparation is necessary'. Amongst the reasons they gave for abandoning the attempt were the air threat, the lack of detailed information and the fact that 'insufficient time has been available for that detailed and meticulous preparation which is so necessary in operations of this character'.[1] The operation was consequently abandoned in favour of the less risky strategy of building up British forces via the bridgeheads already obtained in the area, and although when that strategy failed "Hammer" was momentarily revived, the Joint Planners concluded that the town could not be held even if captured,[2] thus rendering the argument as to whether a landing was possible largely irrelevant.

Operation Hammer would have been in breach of all the conclusions concerning amphibious operations which the British had drawn up in forty years of examination. The air threat was the most serious factor, but this was not a new revelation; the impact of air power on landing operations had been appreciated long before the war. Similarly, such considerations as the provision of landing craft, detailed reconnaissance and careful planning had largely been accepted since before the First World War. It is to Forbes' credit that he did not allow the enthusiasm and hurry engendered by the initial experiences at Narvik and the politically inspired sense of urgency to persuade him to attempt an operation at odds with all that the British knew about combined operations. To a lesser extent the Chiefs of Staff are also to be lauded for abandoning the project despite massive political pressure immediately a less risky alternative appeared possible.

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[1] CAB 83/5 M.C.C. Memoranda, Feb.-May 1940; M.C. (40) 81 "Operation Hammer, Aide Memoire Prepared by the Chiefs of Staff, 19/4/40.

[2] CAB 80/105 C.O.S. Memorandum (40) 303 (JP) (S) 26/4/40.

Response to an Unexpected Challenge.

The operations in Norway are overall a poor guide to the British understanding of amphibious operations. Whilst they clearly reveal that the British were ill-prepared in material terms to carry out landings in the face of opposition, it is erroneous to suggest that they reveal the British to have been ignorant of this shortcoming. Political pressure and the apparent collapse of resistance at Narvik tempted the British high command to consider operations which they knew were really outside their capability, and in the event none of these operations was carried out. The British knew their unpreparedness for amphibious operations from the outset; the enthusiasms of Churchill and the course of the campaign occasionally threatened to overcome their self-knowledge, but never did. As proof that the British were already aware of the requirements of amphibious operations it is necessary to look no further than their immediate reaction to the opening of the campaign; what little equipment they had was despatched immediately, and efforts were made to extemporise solutions to other problems which had been recognised before the war but where no material progress had been made. The importance of landing craft and aerial support are generally regarded as the chief lessons of the campaign, but it is clear that these points were fully appreciated before the operations began.

The entire stock of landing craft were rushed to the scene. Other than when direct landings in the ports were under consideration, the urgent need for landing craft was recognised both in London and by the commanders on the spot. At Narvik three Motor Landing Craft arrived in the theatre of operations on the 25th April,[1] followed on the 29th by the remaining four M.L.C.s and the four A.L.C.s which had been delivered from the I.S.T.D.C.'s pre-war order.[2] Mackesy had noted the requirement for such craft as early as 21 April, but even in this had been anticipated by the I.S.P.S. which had ordered the first

[1] ADM 199/485, Lord Cork's report. Appendix B, entry for 25/4/40.
[2] Ibid. entries for 23/4/40 & 29/4/40.

such craft despatched before he had left Scapa.[1] Forbes stressed that large numbers of landing craft were essential for any landing in or near Trondheim,[2] and all those craft which had not yet been sent to Narvik were allotted to "Hammer" in the Chiefs of Staff outline plan.[3] Lord Cork also recognised the need for such craft once he accepted a beach landing was necessary, requesting further (unavailable) craft on 6 May,[4] and incurring Churchill's wrath by delaying his final assault until he could spare the landing craft from helping in the construction of aerodromes.[5] In both the landings at Bjerkvik and on the Narvik peninsula the first wave of troops was carried in A.L.C.s whilst tanks were landed from the M.L.C.s. At Narvik the tanks bogged down on the soft beach,[6] but at Bjerkvik they proved successful in countering the machine guns which had been seen as the greatest threat to an opposed landing ever since Gallipoli.[7] Although the landings in northern Norway were carried out by French troops and tanks, (in which respect it is worth noting that the British forces in Norway had no tanks to land and their presence at Bjerkvik is generally seen as decisive),[8] they were conducted with the landing equipment, and in the manner, which the British had been evolving since the First World War.

As far as air support was concerned, no preliminary measures had been taken due to the expectation of arriving in a friendly Norway; the R.A.F. had assumed that they would be able to use the Norwegian air bases.[9] There had therefore been no attempt to prepare an air contingent or airfields in accordance with the Manual. Only once the

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[1] WO 106/1972 I.S.P.S. Minutes 2-27th April 1940. Minutes of 28th Meeting, 11/4/40.
[2] WO 106/1859 p. 32. C.-in-C. Home Fleet to Admiralty, 15/4/40.
[3] Ibid. Admiralty to CinC Home Fleet, 19/4/40; The 4 remaining M.L.C. and the 4 completed A.L.C. were all pencilled in for use at Trondheim, being diverted to Narvik when that operation was abandoned.
[4] ADM 199/486 Miscellaneous Telegrams Concerning Narvik, FO Narvik to Admiralty 6/5/40.
[5] ADM 199/1929 Section IV. FO Narvik to Admiralty, Cork to Prime Minister, Personal, 21/5/40.
[6] ADM 199/482 Norway, Combined Operations. Report of Lt Commander S. H. Balfour, Naval Liaison Officer with French Troops.
[7] WO 106/1921 Rupert, Attacks on Narvik. Gen. Bethouart to Gen. Auchinleck, 14/5/40, report on Bjerkvik.
[8] Bernard Ash "*Norway 1940*", (Cassell, London, 1964). P. 244; 'The first tank landing in the history of war . . . and there is no doubt that their influence was considerable if not decisive'.
[9] Air 36/39 p. 44.

ground forces were already established did R.A.F. reconnaissance officers begin to search for possible aerodromes to cover the bases.[1] In their reports on the operations the commanders in the southern area were scathing of this departure from what they correctly stated to be established principles. Major General Carton de Wiart, commander at Namsos, noted that 'it has always been considered a definite principle that during the early stages of a combined operation air superiority is desirable'.[2] Similarly, General Paget, commander at Andalsnes, reiterated that 'all the lessons of peacetime exercises' showed that the first aim of any landing force was the establishment of air bases, with the Navy providing carrier support in the meantime. As carrier support was evidently insufficient and there were no potential airbases ashore, Paget declared the entire operation had 'a doubtful gamble' from the outset.[3] The risks inherent in attempting a landing without initial aerial support were largely understood and had only been ignored due to the apparent need for haste. As the forces at Namsos reported the crippling effect of enemy bombing the V.C.I.G.S. informed the War Cabinet that 'it had always been recognised that a landing operation in the face of superior air forces was extremely hazardous'.[4] The aerial requirements of a combined operation were well understood before the Norwegian campaign, as with most other failures the extemporised nature of the campaign was responsible.

Once in the campaign, however, the British immediately set about countering the threat posed by the German airforces to their amphibious operations. All the possible means of providing air support which had been suggested before the war were investigated and, where they proved possible, applied.

Both aerial and naval bombardment of enemy airfields had been posited as solutions before the war, and both methods were attempted in Norway. The cruiser

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[1] Ibid. p. 45.
[2] WO 106/1905 Sickle Force Reports. 5. Report by Major General Carton de Wiart, 10/5/40.
[3] WO 106/1904 General Paget's report of Operation Sickleforce. Part II.
[4] Cab 65/12 Conclusions of the 101st War Cabinet, 23/4/40.

Suffolk's bombardment of Sola airfield, frequently cited as an example of naval disregard for the air threat, has been correctly defended by Till as a justifiable attempt at reducing the scale of air attack to which the British were exposed.[1] In fact the attempt was in line with pre-war thinking; similar operations had been suggested as a means of countering Japanese air superiority in the Far East.[2] As for aerial bombardment, the R.A.F. commenced bombing operations immediately the campaign opened, and by April 24 Stavanger airfield alone had been attacked 18 times.[3] This was also in accordance with pre-war consideration of the question; as early as 1925 the R.A.F. had asserted that its main targets in a combined operation would be enemy air bases.[4] Post-mortem reports on the campaign made it clear that attacks on aerodromes failed to reduce the German air strength, the attempt, however, was in full accord with pre-war thinking.

A second theoretical solution to the problem of providing aerial support to amphibious operations was the use of fighters on floats. Investigations were commenced immediately the campaign commenced. Aware of the Navy's reluctance to risk its few precious carriers the Staff Colleges and the I.S.T.D.C. had always favoured this solution.[5] The possibility of deploying fighters on floats was doubly attractive due to the difficulties of developing shore aerodromes in the winter conditions under which the campaign was fought. The Air Ministry began 'urgent consideration' of the possibility of fitting floats to its fighters for operations in the central area,[6] as did the Fleet Air Arm slightly later in the Narvik area.[7] The shortness of the campaign in central Norway prevented any attempt to deploy float-plane fighters there, whilst the F.A.A.'s Roc fighters proved unsuitable for

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[1] G. Till "*Air power and the Royal Navy 1914-45*", (Jane's, London, 1979) p. 20.
[2] e.g. CAB 55/4 J.P.C. papers; JP 26; Defence of Hong Kong, Appreciation of the Air Situation prepared by the Air Ministry Representative on the Sub-Committee 31/10/27, & CAB 55/5 JP 92; Hong Kong, Plans for Defence, Relief or Recapture, 30/7/34.
[3] AIR 36/39 p. 61.
[4] AIR 10/1206 Manual of Combined Operations 1925, p. 92.
[5] CAB 54/13 D.C.O.S. (IT) 13 Enclosure A; Memorandum on Landing Operations, p. 37.
[6] CAB 65/12 Conclusions of 99th War Cabinet, 21/4/40.
[7] ADM 199/486 Part A; Admiralty to FO Narvik, 1/5/40.

conversion to floats.[1] Thus despite the pre-war support for the development of such fighters, they were not used in Norway; however, once again it appeared that the pre-war thinking had been confirmed, and in the immediate aftermath of the Norwegian campaign such fighters were seen as part of the answer to the problem of close support in landing operations.[2]

The use of float planes and attacks on airfields were, however, secondary means of establishing air superiority over the landing zone. The accepted solution to the problem of defending a beachhead, as Paget had noted, lay in the temporary provision of fighter cover from carriers, followed by the rapid production of landing grounds ashore from which land-based fighters could operate.

Carriers provided the bulk of air support in Norway. The haste with which the operations were set in train meant that aircover was not provided when the first landings were made, but subsequently carriers were moved to support both the northern and central operations. However, the failure to anticipate the campaign meant that no preparations had been made to establish airforces ashore as quickly as possible. The carriers were therefore faced with an impossible task which had never been expected of them; the provision of long-term air support. Even had the carriers been equipped with better fighter aircraft it is unlikely that they could have maintained adequate aerial support for the length of time that the circumstances in Norway required of them. Two carriers with fighter aircraft were despatched to cover the central area following the first heavy bombing of the base at Namsos.[3] After three days of operations in the theatre the Vice Admiral Aircraft Carriers had to report that losses and the impossibility of defending the carriers as well as the shore positions meant that he was unable to maintain

[1] WO 106/1801 Rupert, RAF Co-operation. Admiralty to FO Narvik, 7/5/40.
[2] ADM 116/4457 Float Plane Fighter. Minute by the Naval Air Division, 28/6/40.
[3] CAB 65/11 Conclusions of the 99th War Cabinet, 21/4/40.

his position.[1] Till has described this as an 'honourable defeat', which, considering that it had never been suggested the carriers could provide prolonged aerial support to a landing, is modest praise.[2] In the northern area, further from the German bases, aerial support could be more satisfactorily supplied from carriers, but even there the General Auchinleck considered 'the enemy had complete mastery in the air' until air bases ashore were available,[3] and Lord Cork preferred to delay the final capture of Narvik until he had constructed airstrips.[4]

According to the pre-war manuals the sites for airstrips should have been identified beforehand,[5] whilst the materials necessary for constructing landing grounds and the aircraft to operate from them should have been ready to be put ashore 'as soon as the expedition had made sufficient progress to permit of the establishment of aerodromes'.[6] None of these preparations were ready: the result of the expectation that the Norwegian aerodromes would be available for use. This miscalculation was compounded by the depth of snow which added to the problems of creating airfields. In the central area a belated attempt was made to establish an airfield on lake Leskajog. Lack of air defences and a hastily extemporised outfit resulted in its rapid destruction by bombing, the C.-in-C. concluding that a greater degree of preliminary preparation was necessary if such airstrips were to be erected and operated in the face of enemy air attack.[7] In the northern area, however, the prolonged nature of the operations provided time for the establishment of airbases. As early as 2 May the Admiralty informed Lord Cork that 'the arrival of R.A.F. fighter aircraft is of paramount importance', stressing the

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[1] ADM 199/489 Narvik Operations. V.A. Aircraft Carriers to C.-in-C. Home Fleet, Repeated Admiralty, 26/4/40.

[2] G. Till "*Air power and the Royal Navy*" p. 22.

[3] DEFE 2/675 Report on Operations in Northern Norway, Lieut.-General C. J. E. Auchinleck. Section 7.

[4] ADM 199/486 FO Narvik to Admiralty for Chiefs of Staff, 20/5/40.

[5] DEFE 2/708 Manual of Combined Operations 1931 p 12. Selection of Suitable Landing Places, Air Force Considerations.

[6] Ibid. p. 108.

[7] WO 106/1828 Despatch on Operations in Central Norway, 1940. By Lt. Gen. H. R. S. Massy, C.-in-C. N.W.E.F.

need to prepare and defend the airfields as soon as possible, and committing two of their precious carriers to the task of transporting the aircraft to Norway.[1] However, the lack of the necessary preparations and the ground conditions meant that the airstrips were not ready to receive modern fighters until May 26, the capture of Narvik taking place the following day.[2] As elsewhere in the campaign, the shortcomings in the provision of air support were largely due to the overall failure to predict the nature of the campaign; once the amphibious nature of the operations became clear, a belated attempt was made to provide the air support which had always been recognised as essential.

Conclusion.

It is clear, therefore, that the British services were largely aware of the requirements of combined operations before the Norwegian Campaign took place. Such reports as Auchinleck's and Massy's, which state the need for large numbers of landing craft and the critical nature of aerial support in amphibious operations, whilst correct, give the erroneous impression that these points were not known before the campaign commenced.[3] In fact, as Carton de Wiart and Paget's reports show,[4] these issues were fairly clearly appreciated before the war, but the strategic miscalculation which meant there had been no preparation for opposed operations in Norway meant that no attempt had been made to fulfil these requirements. Similarly, the vital nature of preparatory planning and integrated command were, as Maund was prepared to admit, already clearly set out in the Manuals.[5] Haste and pressure from the politicians, who were ignorant of

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[1] ADM 199/486 Section A; Admiralty to FO Narvik, 2/5/40.
[2] ADM 199/485 Lord Cork's Report Chapter VI.
[3] WO 106/1828 Despatch on Operations in Central Norway, 1940. By Lt. Gen. H. R. S. Massy, C.-in-C. N.W.E.F. Part IV, & DEFE 2/675 Report on Operations in Northern Norway, Lieut.-General C. J. E. Auchinleck, Chapter V.
[4] WO 106/1905 Sickle Force Reports. 5. Report by Major General Carton de Wiart, 10/5/40, & WO 106/1904 General Paget's report of Operation Sickleforce. Part II.
[5] L. E. H. Maund, "*Assault from the Sea*", pp. 58-9

these prerequisites, led to their being ignored in the case of Norway. That the peculiar circumstances of Norway forced a departure from the at that time unproven inter-war theories is not surprising; particularly as there was cause to believe that a rapid response might meet minimal opposition. Norway was thus a special case and the campaign's lessons should be seen as providing confirmation of British amphibious doctrine; the chief flaws it exposed were in the British supreme command's strategic assumptions.

Conclusion.

Two schools of thought exist with relation to Britain's amphibious experience before the Second World War. There first consists of those such as Marder, who argue that these ventures were wholly discredited by the experience of Gallipoli. The members of the second school do not take such a strong line but urge one or more of a number of similar themes; that the British official staffs were uninterested in such operations; that the British approach was distorted; that little was achieved. This second school are divided as to the degree of progress made by the British, but agreed that this progress was largely in spite of the attitude of the Departmental Staffs. The picture that emerges, therefore, is of a wholly or partially neglected technique of warfare, in which what level of interest there was was sustained by the Staff Colleges, Royal Marines and enthusiastic individuals. This state of affairs emerged directly from Gallipoli, which enterprise, being casually set upon by the British, so shocked them as to blind them to the possibilities of such operations in the future. Even the work of Clifford, which makes the most of the British progress in this era, still paints a picture of largely unofficial progress.

These views are both erroneous, and arise from a number of errors. In the first place, to attempt to assess the British amphibious capability without first addressing the question of the extent to which the British expected to utilise such operations is to consider the question in a vacuum, or, worse, to judge the British by the amphibious requirements of a later era. Secondly, the much vaunted impact of Gallipoli is impossible to assess unless the situation before that operation is considered; it is facile to argue that the British attitudes stemmed from Gallipoli without examining their preceding experiences. Thirdly, the supposed "distortion" arising from Gallipoli, is a misconception arising from an over-concentration on the work of the I.S.T.D.C. and the memoirs of its first Commandant and a failure to appreciate that the British exercises in the inter-war years concentrated on small surprise ventures for economic rather than doctrinal reasons.

A fourth set of errors sprang from a misconception concerning the relations of the Service Staffs and their Staff Colleges; the latter were not capable of taking a line independent of the policy of the former, when the Colleges' views failed to correspond to those of their Staffs they were rebuked or ignored, and it must therefore be concluded that where the Staff Colleges contributed to the advancement of amphibious capability it was because their superior staffs desired that they should. Finally, there is the failure to appreciate the peculiar nature of the British combined approach to amphibious operations, which has led researchers to regard the work of the Marines as representative of British progress and also to neglect progress made in the co-ordination of the services to such ends. These mistaken approaches are compounded by the failure to make use of Royal Air Force sources and an over-reliance on the official or semi-official histories of Combined Operations Headquarters.

This thesis has attempted to approach the subject free of any of the above preconceptions, to consider the neglected period before the Gallipoli venture, and to utilise the hitherto unregarded resources in the Air Force records. On this basis it comes to the following conclusions.

Before the First World War an entire school of strategy dependent upon amphibious operations emerged, supposedly offering a means by which Britain's traditional military infrastructure of a small army and a large navy could, without alteration, be employed to decisive effect in Continental Wars. This alluring spectacle led to a burst of interest in amphibious operations, a command structure was created, exercises were staged and the formulation of a doctrine was set in train. However, the difficulties of applying such a strategy in the event of war with Germany, and the flaws in the theory highlighted by the General Staff meant that this initiative failed. Interest in extra-European amphibious operations continued, but inevitably at a lower level of intensity and, after the first rush of interest in the higher reaches of the British defence

structure, little further was achieved. A doctrine of landing operations, heavily dependent on surprise, had however been worked out.

The First World War saw an aberration. The collapse of the planning structures led to the initiation of the Gallipoli Campaign. Not ignorance of the difficulties of such operations, but the sidelining of the service professionals and the initiation of the campaign as a purely naval venture led to the amphibious operation being undertaken. Thus the amphibious experiences of Gallipoli were not a shock to the military, if anything the results were more promising than they had expected; despite its strategic failure, Gallipoli demonstrated that landing operations were tactically possible. On the other hand, the operation failed to confirm the great claims of the maritime strategists. The subsequent plans for operations on the Belgian Coast demonstrate that whilst the British might have been wary of the claims made for amphibious intervention, they were by no means shy of opposed landings and had already reached the conclusion that specialist equipment was the best means of carrying them out.

The inter-war period saw no departure from this position. As before the First World War there seemed little prospect of putting amphibious operations into effect. For all the popularity of the theorists' work in the inter-war period, only J. F. C. Fuller's visionary ideas were new; the remainder were mere repetitions of pre-war ideas rendered more attractive by the widespread revulsion for the events of the Western Front. The theorists therefore had little new to offer. For the planners, therefore, the problems remained as before, the geographical difficulties of applying amphibious strategies and the flaws in maritime strategy. Operations against Germany were never considered. Operations against France were briefly considered, and rejected as impossible and unnecessary. Japan alone of Britain's potential enemies appeared to offer a scenario for amphibious ventures, as the Navy posited an advance towards her home islands by a series of amphibious hops along the China Coast. However, in the 1920s the Army refused to consider planning so far ahead, and by the 1930s the R.A.F. had concluded that

it could not face the Japanese Air Force in those waters. This last amphibious strategy, which at any rate bore little resemblance to the grand maritime strategists of the theorists, was thus never accepted by the three services; no strategy calling for amphibious operations was ever planned for in the inter-war period.

Added to this depressing scenario was the belief that even should a requirement for an amphibious operation arise, it would not do so in the early stages of a war. With the Army reduced to a skeleton strength, it would be many months before offensive operations were open to it, therefore it seemed unlikely that any amphibious operation would be staged without a long build-up. Similarly the R.A.F.'s contention that a full scale air war would have to precede any landing operations suggested a long preparatory period would be available before any amphibious venture would be put into effect.

There were thus no plans which called for amphibious operations and no expectation that such operations would be called for in the early stages of a war. The incentive for amphibious development was thus wholly lacking. With these beliefs, for which there was a good deal of supporting evidence, had the British possessed no amphibious capability whatsoever in 1940 it would not have been surprising.

Nevertheless the British Staffs did make preparations for amphibious operations. Before the Great War these were restricted to the brief flurry of activity which followed the Russo-Japanese War, but in the inter-war period a clearly defined policy of preparation emerged. This policy consisted of the preparation of prototype material and the accumulation of expertise so as to provide a caucus of knowledge and equipment which could be drawn upon in the event of one of these unlikely operations ever being required. This policy was essentially that of the War Office, to which the other services largely agreed, although the Navy was inclined to show more interest, and the R.A.F. less, in accordance with their strategic preconceptions. Despite the occasional initiative by one or other of the services, this pragmatic staff approach governed the British preparation for amphibious operations until the outbreak of war. Such late developments

as took place under the I.S.T.D.C. merely reflected the realisation that the minimum level of preparation required was slightly higher than had hitherto been recognised, the simple availability of more funds, and the increasing emphasis on combined operations in general, which enhanced readiness for amphibious operations as they fell into this bracket. Staff pragmatism governed British amphibious preparation.

Turning to the Staff Colleges, these bodies provided useful test-beds for amphibious doctrine and fertile sources of ideas, but they were never autonomous champions of amphibious preparation. Their strategic assumptions, particularly in the case of the R.N.S.C., were historical and naive, whilst their proposals were often, as in the case of Camberley's support for float plane fighters, impossibly ambitious and consequently ignored by the Staffs. The Colleges were a useful source of ideas, but they never set the pace for amphibious development.

The British achievements under this pragmatic policy were manifold. The bulk were administrative: the co-ordination of the three services necessitated by the British approach. These achievements have been neglected by those who approach the question with the American experience in mind. In the tactical sphere the Manual was compiled as a repository of all the British experience and ideas on the topic, which could be used to provide the outline for any operation, from a night raid to a full scale beach assault. In the material sphere prototype landing craft were constructed and extensively tested, concepts such as the headquarters ship were blueprinted, and the use of tanks, gas and air support in landings were all experimented with. In view of the British expectation of a long build up to an amphibious assault, should one ever be required at all, such an approach was considered to be sufficient.

However, the British approach was inadequate in several respects. In the first place, it failed to provide sufficient equipment for progressive or extensive training. Secondly, the assumption that a long build up would be necessary became progressively less true as the Army began to rebuild itself in the last years before the Second World

War. Thirdly, the British assumption that as long as they could foresee no possibility of employing such an operation a minimum level of preparation was all that was required made no allowance for the possibility that an operation would be forced on them. The British approach made no provision for a scenario such as Norway, where they had not expected to conduct amphibious operations but were forced to attempt them at short notice by the actions of the enemy.

In general, therefore, it may be concluded that the British approach was pragmatic; in view of their strategic outlook and other priorities the time devoted to amphibious operations was by no means negligible. The chief flaws in their preparations were an excessive economy in the provision of equipment for training and development, and an over-deterministic attitude to strategy, which led them too readily to assume that they would have time to expand their amphibious capability before they were called upon to use it.

In closing, it is perhaps worth noting that the British approach provided a basis capable of almost infinite expansion. By relying on the co-ordination of the three services for amphibious operations, in theory the British were capable, given time, of staging a landing operation employing the entire available strength of the three services. Consequently, although no-one had foreseen the need to invade the Continent in strength, the Manual was remarkably well adapted to providing the basis of that operation. The extent to which C.O.H.Q. really made use of this inheritance, and the question of whether the Americans adopted its strictures when forced to stage combined amphibious operations form a counterpoint to the ill-considered comparisons of the United States Marine Corps and the Royal Marines, and are questions worthy of consideration.

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