

Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory

Discussion

The Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory (MCWL) was established in October 1995 at the direction of the Commandant of the Marine Corps. It is responsible for developing tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) and evaluating technologies that may create or refine advanced warfighting capabilities. These technologies and TTPs are field tested in concept-based experiments held in conjunction with operating forces on both coasts. Technologies and TTPs that demonstrate potential are passed on to the Combat Development Process.



In early 1996, MCWL formulated an initial Five Year Experimentation Plan (FYEP). To date, all phases of the FYEP have been completed. The first phase, Hunter Warrior, examined small unit enhancements for the dispersed, extended battlespace. The second phase, including Urban Warrior in March 1999, examined operations in cities and urban environments.

Capable Warrior, the last phase of the FYEP, built on lessons learned in the earlier projects. The purpose was to develop or find technologies and TTPs that could support Operational Maneuver From the Sea (OMFTS). Four major experimental areas were explored in this effort. These areas included over-the-horizon (OTH) communications, command and control; seabased logistics and mine countermeasures (MCM).

As part of Capable Warrior, MCWL participated in one of the largest Joint experiments ever, Millennium Challenge '00. MCWL's portion was Millennium Dragon, conducted in Southern Mississippi, during September. Millennium Dragon continued the refinement of tactics, techniques, procedures, and supporting technologies required to meet the challenges of OMFTS and STOM. Joint efforts included over-the-horizon communication links with the Navy and simulated the use of mine countermeasures to safely bring an amphibious landing force ashore.

MCWL also initiated a small-unit level Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) series of experiments, Project Metropolis, focused on TTPs in the urban environment. Project Metropolis evolved from the urban combat events completed during Urban Warrior and additional experiments

conducted in southern California. Project Metropolis met its goal of developing a MOUT Program of Instruction for transition to the Combat Development System at Quantico. MCWL will continue to focus on improving the TTPs throughout 2001.

During 2000, MCWL formed the Center of Emerging Threats and Opportunities to identify emerging non-traditional threats, explore concepts, and determine the capabilities and solutions to meet these future challenges. Initial efforts will focus on MEUs, Civil Affairs/PSYOP Training Packages, Negotiation Skills, Interagency Training, and non-governmental organization liaison and contingency support.

Capable Warrior will conclude with an advanced warfighting experiment as part of the Navy's Kernel Blitz experiment. Capable Warrior AWE will culminate 24 months of experimentation with the OMFTS/STOM concepts for expeditionary operations in the littorals.

The next series of experiments will begin in the summer of 2001, leading towards Millennium Warrior '03. MCWL will focus on five core competencies: Reconnaissance, Surveillance, and Target Acquisition (RSTA); MOUT; Information Technology and Command and Control (IT&C2); Asymmetric Threats; and Wargaming.

Marine Corps Position

The Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory conducts concept-based experimentation for the identification, development, and integration of operational concepts in concert with the tactics, techniques, procedures, and technologies used to improve naval expeditionary capabilities across the spectrum of conflict.

