

Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory (MCWL)

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, 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, two phases of the FYEP have been completed. The first, Hunter Warrior, examined small unit enhancements for the dispersed, extended battlespace. Urban Warrior, the second phase, examined operations in cities and urban environments and was completed in March 1999.

Capable Warrior, the last phase of the FYEP, builds on lessons learned in the two earlier projects. Its purpose is to develop or find technologies and TTPs that can enable Operational Maneuver from the Sea (OMFTS). Four major experimental areas will be explored in this effort. These areas are over-the-horizon (OTH) communications, command and control; sea-based fires; sea-based logistics and mine countermeasures (MCM).

Capable Warrior will also include Marine Corps participation in one of the largest joint experiments to date. MCWL, and its experimental unit, the Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force (Experimental), will participate in the Millennium Challenge Advanced Warfighting Experiment with the U.S. Army in September 2000. In addition, at least two of the events will involve communications connectivity experiments between Navy and Marine Corps staffs and limited connectivity experiments with U.S. Army units.

These efforts will expand MCWL's already extensive joint efforts such as the Military Operations in Urban Terrain Advanced Concept Technology Demonstration (MOUW ACTD). Co-sponsored by MCWL and the U.S. Army's Dismounted Battlespace Battle Lab at Fort Benning, Georgia, the ACTD explores technological and tactical solutions for 32 identified urban warfighting requirements. To date, 10 separate service experiments and two joint experiments have been held. A culminating demonstration will take place in September 2000 at the Joint Readiness Training Center in Fort Polk, Louisiana as part of the Millennium Challenge AWE.

MCWL has also initiated a small-unit level Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUW) experiment, Project Metropolis, that focuses on tactics, techniques and procedures. Project Metropolis evolved from the urban combat events held during Urban Warrior and will feature experiments in several locations during 2000. The goal of the project is to develop a MOUW program of instruction for transition to the Combat Development System at Quantico.

Capable Warrior will conclude with an advanced warfighting experiment in the spring of 2001. Coalition Warrior will follow and is currently scheduled for 2001-2003. It will focus on the interoperability of joint and combined forces.

Joint Warrior will begin at the conclusion of Coalition Warrior. MCWL will lead the Marine Corps planning for the initial Major Joint Integrating Experiment, sponsored by Joint Forces Command, in 2004. Following this event, experimentation is scheduled to continue with Cyber Warrior from 2004-2006 and Ultimate Warrior from 2006-2008.

Marine Corps Position

The Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, through concept based experimentation, serves as the focal point for the refinement of future warfighting capabilities. The MCWL develops tactics, techniques, and procedures; evaluates advanced technologies that create or enhance future warfighting capabilities; and integrates them into the Marine Corps Combat Development System.