

## Background lift requirements:

1975	1.33 MEF(AE)
1979	1.15 MEF (AE)
1982	1.0 MEF (AE) + MEB
1990	3.0 MEB (AE)
1991	3.0 MEB AE fiscally constrained to 2.5 MEB AE

## 2001

### Amphibious (3.0 MEB)

- CMC posture statement 2001: “Today's amphibious ship force structure, when the number of active fleet vessels is combined with reserve ships that can be mobilized, has the capacity to lift nearly two and a half Marine Expeditionary Brigade assault echelon equivalents. Several formal studies have concluded that the actual requirement is an amphibious ship force structure capable of lifting **three Marine Expeditionary Brigade assault echelon** equivalents in order to satisfy all forward presence requirements while maintaining the flexibility to deal with the unexpected.”

### MPF(F)

- Additionally, our current fleet of maritime prepositioning ships will require replacement in the 2020 timeframe. The development of advanced maritime prepositioning capabilities will incredibly advance the strength and flexibility of our sea-based expeditionary operations. The marriage of a modern amphibious fleet with maritime prepositioning shipping capable of hosting **at-sea arrival and assembly of forces will eliminate the requirement for access to secure ports and airfields**, and give our nation an unmatched asymmetrical advantage in projecting power.

## 2002

### Amphibious (3.0 MEB)

- CMC 5 Mar: “While it has long been recognized that we require an amphibious ship force structure capable of simultaneously lifting the assault echelons **of three Marine Expeditionary Brigades**, today’s amphibious lift **can support only two thirds of this requirement** in certain aspects of the lift footprint. I strongly recommend that we commit to redress this shortfall as a matter of urgent priority. We are grateful for your support in replacing four classes of older ships with the new LPD-17 *San Antonio* amphibious ship class. Delivery of these 12 ships to the fleet is currently planned to be complete in 2015. However, we remain concerned about further schedule slippage in the LPD-17 program.”

### MPF(F)

- CMC 5 Mar: “The marriage of a modern amphibious fleet with modern Maritime Prepositioning Shipping capable of hosting at-sea arrival and assembly of forces will minimize the requirement for access to secure ports and airfields, and give our Nation an unmatched asymmetrical advantage in projecting power.”

## 2003

### Amphibious (12 ESGs/3.0 MEB)

- DC P&R (Magnus) 2 Apr: “Peacetime rotational requirements are for **twelve ESGs with Amphibious warships**. Our **warfighting requirement** is lift for the **Assault Echelons of three Marine Expeditionary Brigades** with modern amphibious warships. The Navy's shipbuilding programs for LPD-17 and LHD class ships as well as the future LHA(R) ships support these warfighting requirements.”
- CMC 2 Apr: “A **fiscally constrained** programmatic **goal of twelve Amphibious Ready Groups** - one that deliberately accepts increased operational risk by attempting to balance force structure with available resources - **does not change the warfighting requirement to lift the Assault Echelons of three Marine Expeditionary Brigades** via future platforms for amphibious shipping.”

### MPF(F)

- DC P&R (Magnus) 2 Apr: “The Maritime Pre-positioning Force (Future) will be the true enabler of sea-based operations. As it becomes operational, future Maritime Pre-positioning Force capabilities will dramatically increase those of today, providing truly sovereign sea based capabilities. These enhanced capabilities are in four areas: (1) Phased at-sea arrival and assembly of units; (2) Selective offload at-sea of equipment and cargo; (3) Long-term, sea-based sustainment of the landing force; and (4) At-sea reconstitution and redeployment of the force.”
- CMC 2 Apr: “The Maritime Pre-positioning Force (Future) will be the true enabler of primarily sea-based operations. When it becomes operational, the future Maritime Prepositioning Force role will expand beyond that of today, and will provide a true seabasing capability. In this regard, it will serve four functions that the current capability cannot: (1) Phased at-sea arrival and assembly of units; (2) Selective offload of equipment and cargo; (3) Long-term sea-based sustainment of the landing force; and (4) At-sea reconstitution and redeployment of the force. The Naval Services are exploring several new technology areas during the development of Maritime Pre-positioning Force (Future). **Currently** the Maritime Pre-positioning Force (Future) Program is **conducting an analysis of alternatives** to inform an acquisition decision by the Office of the Secretary of Defense.”

## 2004

### Amphibious

- DC PP&O (Huly) 11 Mar: “The operational capability and flexibility of the naval expeditionary fleet will be significantly enhanced with the Fiscal Year 2005 delivery of **USS San Antonio, the first of 12 new landing assault ships** with advanced characteristics for amphibious warships. LHA(R) concept designs are being evaluated within the context of Joint Sea Basing and power projection.”

### MPF(F)

- DC, PP&O (Huly) 11 Mar: “These initiatives will complement, rather than replace, the amphibious lift and forcible entry capacity of the LHA(R), LPD-17, and LHD, and will provide the Nation a deployment and employment capability unmatched in the modern world.”
- CMC 2004: “The Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future) – MPF(F) – will be a key enabler to sea-based operations. It will allow us to better exploit the maneuver space provided by the sea to conduct joint operations at a time and place of our choosing. When the MPF(F) becomes operational, the maritime prepositioning role will expand far beyond its current capability to provide the combat equipment for a fly-in force. MPF(F) will serve four functions that the current MPF cannot: (1) at-sea arrival and assembly of units; (2) direct support of the assault echelon of the Amphibious Task Force; (3) long-term, sea-based sustainment of the landing force; and (4) at-sea reconstitution and redeployment of the force.”

## 2005

### Amphibious (3.0/2.5 MEB, 35 Amphibs with 28 to 30 Operationally Available)

- CRS (O’Rourke) 10 Mar: “Due in part to the emergence of the sea basing concept, **Navy officials cannot state with confidence** whether the Navy in the future will need a total of **36 amphibious ships** or some greater or lesser number. Navy officials have also made few public comments on the issue of whether **the longstanding 2.5-Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB)** lift goal for the amphibious fleet will be **retained, modified, or dropped**. Navy officials have reportedly suggested that savings realized from reducing the number of Expeditionary Strike Groups (ESGs) may be used to procure new MPF(F) ships.”
- CMC 2005: “The Marine Corps warfighting requirement for forcible entry amphibious shipping remains the ability to lift the assault echelon of **three Marine Expeditionary Brigades, fiscally constrained to 2.5.**”
- ACOM/DC, CD&I Apr 2005:
  - “Today’s forcible entry structure is limited to that resident within the **35 amphibious ships** of the Battle Force.”
  - The Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) is the mid-sized Marine Air Ground Task Force that provides the next level of force from the forward deployed MEU and the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), capable of persistent major combat operations. MEBs provide supported Combatant Commanders with a scalable, war fighting capability for a wide variety of military operations. Today, it is capable of deployment and employment via amphibious shipping (normally 15- amphibious ships, including five large-deck amphibious assault ships).”
  - “the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), for highly capable, lethal mobile and sustained operations which today would require **28-30 operational, available amphibious ships**. Today’s 35 Battle Force amphibious warships can surge the required 28-30 operationally available warships and also provide the peacetime rotation load for ESG/MEU(SOC) presence in up to three regions.”
  - “The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) envisioned an **amphibious force structure of 36 warships**: 12-large deck aviation ships (LHA/LHD), 12-LPD-17s, and

12-LSD-41/49 class ships. These ships would enable either 3.0 MEU rotational forward presence, or in **wartime provide a 2.5 MEB (assault echelon)** forcible entry capability (fiscally constrained from a requirement of **3.0 MEB**). **The 12-ship LPD-17 class was needed to provide the lift capacity for the 2.5 MEB constrained requirement.** The current mix and inventory of 35 active Battle Force amphibious ships provides slightly more than a 2.0 MEB lift - forcible entry capability. **Recent decisions have reduced the current LPD-17 program to nine (9) ships**, putting increased risk/pressure on the need for ensuring the right quantities and quality of warships and MPF ships for future challenges.”

MPF(F) (2 MPF(F) squadrons, mix of 14 to 20 ships)

- CRS (O’Rourke) 10 Mar: “Until the Navy and Marine Corps develop a more complete understanding of the details of the sea basing concept, it will be difficult for them to present firm plans for these ships in terms of numbers to be procured, designs, and unit procurement costs. **Navy officials have acknowledged that their plans for MPF(F) ships need to be more clearly defined.**”
- CMC 2005: “The MPF(F) will be a key enabler for sea-based operations. It will allow us to better exploit the sea as maneuver space to conduct joint operations at a time and place of our choosing. MPF (F) will enable four new capabilities: (1) at-sea arrival and assembly (2) direct support of the assault echelon of the amphibious task force; (3) long-term, sea-based sustainment; and (4) at-sea reconstitution and redeployment. “These capabilities will be invaluable in supporting forward engagement, presence, and relationship building operations with allies and potential coalition partners by our forward deployed forces as well as through support to disaster relief and humanitarian operations.
- ACMC/CD&I Apr 2005: “The concept is for **at least two squadrons of MPF(F) ships, a total of 14-20 ships.** Navy and Army Joint High Speed Vessels will enable rapid movement within the sea base and ashore where conditions permit. The mix of Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future) ships is being determined, and will be capable of surface and air transport of Marine combat units, prepositioning critical equipment, and 20 days of supplies for Marine Expeditionary Brigades.”

**2006**

Amphibious (30 Operationally Available, and 5/5/5 mix)

- CMC Posture 2006: “The current Defense Department force-sizing construct requires the capability to respond to two major "swiftly defeat the efforts" events—each of which could require a minimum of 15 capable amphibious ships. One of these crises may further necessitate the use of a **Marine Expeditionary Force requiring 30 operationally available amphibious ships. Ten of these ships should be large-deck amphibious ship** capable of supporting the operations of the air combat element of a Marine Expeditionary Force. Today’s 35 amphibious warships can surge the required 30 operationally available warships and provide the peacetime rotation base for Marine Expeditionary Units in up to three regions.”

- DC, CD&I 2006 29 Mar: The current force-sizing construct requires the capability to respond to two swiftly defeat the efforts (SDTE) – each of which requiring a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) size force. One of these crises may become a Decisively-defeat Campaign, bringing our most powerful force to bear, the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), for highly capable, lethal mobile and sustained operations. This requires 30 operational available amphibious warships (10 of which must be large deck amphibious ships capable of supporting the aviation combat element of the assault echelon)...
- Both Discrete and Volumetric analysis have been conducted to load the “2015 MEB AE” on amphibious ships. **17 ships (five LHD, five LPD-17, five LSD-41, two LSD-49) are required**, however, the Marine Corps **has accepted risk** with a 7% reduction in MEB equipment by self limiting to **15 ships per MEB AE**.
- Limiting the **LPD-17 production line to 9 ships places the Marine Corps at grave/significant risk** by further decrementing the MEB equipment for the assault echelon.
- The current force-sizing construct requires the capability to respond to two (2) swiftly defeat the efforts (SDTE) – each of which requiring a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) size force. One of these crises may become a Decisively-defeat Campaign, bringing our most powerful force to bear, the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), for highly capable, lethal mobile and sustained operations. This requires **30 operational available amphibious warships (10 of which must be large deck amphibious ships** capable of supporting the aviation combat element of the assault echelon).
- DC CD&I 30 Mar: The current Defense Department force-sizing construct requires the capability to respond to two major "swiftly defeat the efforts" events– each of which could require a minimum of 15 capable amphibious ships. One of these crises may further necessitate the use of a Marine Expeditionary Force, thus **requiring a total of 30 operationally available amphibious ships. The Marine Corps aviation combat element requires ten large-deck amphibious ships to support a Marine Expeditionary Force.**
- BARTLETT: General Mattis, are you comfortable that the shipbuilding plan supports the expeditionary warfare requirements for your people. Is it enough amphibis, for instance?  
MATTIS: Mr. Chairman...Marine Corps has a need for 30 operationally available amphibs; that means ready to sail at any time. You notice the numbers are going from 34 to 31 to 30 in the plan. CNO has given his word that he will have those 30 operationally available amphibs. We need 10 operationally available big decks. And we would be gravely concerned at less than 10 LPD-17s...

#### MPF(F) (14 Ships)

- DC, CD&I 29 Mar: “2 MPF(F) MEB squadrons or one MPF(F) squadron plus two legacy Maritime Pre-position Ship (MPS) squadrons.”
  - MPF(F) squadron will consist of **14 ships with two types using proven amphibious hull designs: one LHD, two LHA(R), three T-AKE, three LMSR, three Mobile Landing Platform ships, and two legacy “dense-pack” maritime prepositioning ships.**
  - We are not ready to commit MPF(F) to forcible entry in the assault echelon without further experimentation in the following areas: Civilians (Merchant Marines) manning

MPF(F) and associated legal implications. Survivability, preposition loading, and continued on-load / off-load experiments, etc

- DC, CD&I 30 Mar: “The MPF(F) squadron will be comprised of **two LHA Replacement large-deck amphibious ships, one LHD large-deck amphibious ship, three T-AKE cargo ships, three LMSR cargo ships, three Mobile Landing Platform ships with troops, and two legacy “dense-pack” MPF ships taken from existing squadrons.** The Mobile Landing Platforms, the only new-design ships in the plan, will be based on current technology. This mix of ships will be capable of prepositioning critical equipment and 20 days of supplies for our future MEB.”

## 2007

### Amphibious (2.0 MEB, 30 Operationally Available, 11/11/11 battle fleet)

- CMC posture 2007: “For forcible entry, the Marine Corps’ requirement is a single, simultaneously-employed **two Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) assault capability.** One MEB requires seventeen amphibious warfare ships; however, given the fiscally constrained environment, the Navy and Marine Corps have agreed to assume risk by only using fifteen. Historical amphibious ship availability rates dictate a minimum of **eleven ships of each of the current types of amphibious ship—a minimum of thirty-three total ships**—resulting in a Battle Force that provides thirty *operationally available* amphibious warfare ships. In that Battle Force, ten aviation-capable big deck ships (LHA/LHD/LHA(R)) and ten LPD 17 class ships are required to accommodate the MEB’s aviation combat element.”
- DC, P&R Apr 2007: “Current guidance states that the Marine Corps’ must be able to provide **two Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEBs) of assault capability** simultaneously in a single location. To do this and maintain our other requirements, we believe that we must have at **least thirty operationally available** amphibious warfare ships. Given historical amphibious ship availability rates, we believe that we need a **minimum of thirty-three total ships, eleven of each of the current types of amphibious ship (LHA, LPD, and LSD).**”

### MPF(F)

- CMC posture 2007: “Our proven Maritime Prepositioning Force—capable of supporting the rapid deployment of three Marine Expeditionary Brigades—is an important complement to our amphibious warfare capability. Combined, these capabilities provide the Marine Corps the ability to rapidly react to a crisis in a number of potential theaters and the flexibility to employ forces across the battlespace”
- DC, P&R Apr 2007: “Our proven Maritime Prepositioning Force—capable of supporting the rapid deployment of three Marine Expeditionary Brigades—is an important complement to our amphibious warfare capability. Combined, these capabilities provide the Marine Corps the ability to rapidly react to a crisis in a number of potential theaters and the flexibility to employ forces across the battlespace. The natural progression of this capability set, the Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future) (MPF(F)), is a key enabler of Seabasing and will build on the success of the legacy Maritime Prepositioning Force program. MPF(F) will provide support to a wide range of military operations with capabilities such as at-sea arrival and assembly, selective offload of specific mission sets, and long-term, sea-based sustainment”

2008

Amphibious (2.0 MEB, 11/11/11 battle fleet)

- CMC Posture 2008: “Based on strategic guidance, in the last several years we have accepted risk in our Nation’s forcible entry capacity and **reduced amphibious lift from 3.0 Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) assault echelons to 2.0 MEB assault echelons.**”... “The Marine Corps’ contribution to the Nation’s forcible entry requirement is a single, simultaneously-employed two Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) assault capability — as part of a seabased Marine Expeditionary Force”... “Each MEB assault echelon requires seventeen amphibious warfare ships — resulting in an overall ship requirement for thirty-four amphibious warfare ships. However, given current fiscal constraints, *the Navy and Marine Corps have agreed to assume greater operational risk by limiting the assault echelon of each MEB by using only fifteen ships per MEB* — in other words, a Battle Force that provides thirty operationally available amphibious warfare ships.”... “In that thirty-ship Battle Force, ten aviation-capable big deck ships (LHA / LHD / LHA(R)) and ten LPD 17 class ships are required to accommodate the MEB’s aviation combat element. In order to meet a thirty-ship availability rate —based on a Chief of Naval Operations-approved maintenance factor of 10% — **a minimum of eleven ships of each of the current types of amphibious ships are required** — for a total of thirty-three ships. The Navy has concurred with this requirement for thirty-three amphibious warfare ships, which provide the “backbone” of our maritime capability — giving us the ability to meet the demands of harsh environments across the spectrum of conflict.”
- CMC verbal with SASC Feb 08:

WICKER: Well, how are we going to meet these requirements without the number one and number two requirement? And for you, General Conway, for your number one unfunded priority. How are we going to meet the requirement of 11 strike groups without those?

CONWAY:

Well, sir, first of all, we are short. But let me couch, perhaps, the same conversation just to shade differently. We see that a minimum two brigade across the shore requirement is how we arrive at the numbers of ships that we need. You're certainly correct in that the ESGs are afloat; they serve a very valuable purpose, but nine or 11 ESGs do not make an amphibious assault force. So we have analyzed what our two brigades look like, the amount and the numbers of ships that it would need to carry those brigades. And at this point, we are a little short. Now, as Admiral Roughead mention the, we've had some tremendous discussions with the Navy. **We have come to an agreement on the numbers of ships, 33 to make 30 operational ships** in order to give our nation that very necessary capability. And the Navy has looked at a way to extend some older ships that give us that 30 number for some period on through the FYDP, the five- year defense plan. Our only certain with it, however, is that we have already, through previous agreement, previous CNOs, and previous commandants, agreed on the 30 ships. **That still represents about a 20 percent shortfall that those brigade footprints would require. If we go with the old ships instead of newer ships, that shortfall becomes about 29 percent** [reference to SLEP for older amphibs to maintain the 33 ship battle force]. And

we think there's a risk inherent with that that just concerns us greatly with the ability to provide that kind of capability to the nation. Ergo, it being our number one unfunded priority.

MPF(F) (14 ships, 1.0 MEB reinforcing)

- CMC posture 2008: “Although not a part of the Marine Expeditionary Force Assault Echelon, a **third reinforcing MEB is required** and will be provided via Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future) capabilities.”...” . That squadron is designed to consist of three aviation-capable big-deck ships, three large medium-speed roll-on/roll-off ships, three T-AKE supply ships, three Mobile Landing Platforms, and two dense-packed container ships. All of these will be crewed by civilian mariners and, as stated earlier, are not designed to conduct forcible entry operations. The program is currently in the technology development phase of acquisition, with a Milestone B decision planned in Fiscal Year 2008.”