



# AUSTRALIAN ARMY RESEARCH CENTRE - LITTORAL WARFARE READING LIST 2025

JOHN M. NASH

/ AUSTRALIAN ARMY RESEARCH CENTRE



# / AUSTRALIAN ARMY RESEARCH CENTRE - LITTORAL WARFARE READING LIST 2025

## John M. Nash

This reading list follows on from the one published in early 2024 on the topic of 'littoral manoeuvre'. The below list is not intended to supersede the 2024 list, but complement it with different and more recently published works. As is the pitfall of generating reading lists, many of the below were published in the weeks and months after the release of the 2024 list.

Not all of the below works focus exclusively on littoral or amphibious matters. For example, there are papers on drones and drone warfare, which are a concern of all aspects in modern war. Similarly, a collection of essays from the UK on light infantry is illuminating, especially in the Australian context of 1 Brigade's role as a light littoral brigade.

Moreover, the Australian Army Research Centre (AARC) itself has conducted, commissioned, and received several notable works relevant to littoral warfare. Again, this is a wide field and includes discussion on a variety of relevant issues, from concepts and doctrine and historical studies through to robotics and autonomous systems and uncrewed systems. Many of these discussion included reference to lessons learned from the ongoing Russo-Ukraine War.

As with the first littoral reading list, the following resources are all publicly available and free to read and download. These publications come from a number of research centres in the US and UK, including the US Marine Corps University Press, the US Naval War College, and the UK's Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research (CHACR), the British Army's equivalent to the AARC. Like the AARC, these research centres and think tanks publish regularly, on all manner of topics. Many of them publish a regular journal, such as the USMC's *Journal of Advanced Military Studies*, or CHACR's *British Army Review*. No doubt more relevant articles and books will be released in the wake of this current reading list. More than just the works contained here, this list points towards institutions such as the USMC University Press and CHACR as reliable sources of land warfare research and thinking.

## Books

*Chinese Amphibious Warfare: Prospects for a Cross-Strait Invasion*, Andrew S. Erickson  
Conor M. Kennedy Ryan D. Martinson (eds.), Naval War College Press, Newport Rhode  
Island, 2024: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cmsi-studies/8/>

There are a number of books and papers on the prospects of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan, of varying quality. This edited collection from the US Naval War College's China Maritime Studies Institute represents a diverse and well-researched study on the topic. The 19 chapters are written by a number of different experts and cover issues from doctrine through to force structure, capability, and scenarios. It is an excellent look at the complexities of such an operation, for this scenario but also extrapolated into other potential amphibious operations in the region.

*Gull Force. Australian POWs on Ambon and Hainan, 1941–45*, Joan Beaumont,  
NewSouth, 2025

In late 1941, the 23rd Brigade of the 8th Division was split up and its three infantry battalions were spread across the Indonesian Archipelago in an attempt to stop the Japanese advance south. These 'Bird Forces' (Sparrow, Gull, Lark) did not fare well, and in this book renowned historian Joan Beaumont tells the tragic story of Gull Force, sent to Ambon in Indonesia. It is a story of Gull force's mission, defeat, and brutal treatment in the years that followed. It is a cautionary tale on sending a land force forward into the archipelago without naval or air support in the face of an advancing enemy.

*On Contested Shores: The Evolving Role of Amphibious Operations in the History of Warfare, Volume 2*, Timothy Heck, B. A. Friedman, and Walker D. Mills (eds.), Marine Corps University Press Quantico, Virginia, 2024, <https://www.usmcu.edu/Outreach/Marine-Corps-University-Press/Books-by-topic/MCUP-Titles-A-Z/On-Contested-Shores-V2/>

This is an edited volume on amphibious operations throughout history and their enduring relevance, a follow on from the 2020 first volume. The case studies in volume 2 are arranged thematically, and like the first volume cover a wide range of topics and historical periods. Many of the examples will be new or unknown to the reader, which is an excellent way of engaging with the core principles and issues have affected amphibious operations throughout history.

## Journals, Articles, and Research Reports

*The Art and Science of Naval Warfare: Essays in Memory of Wayne P. Hughes Jr., Mie Augier, Sean F. X. Barrett, William F. Mullen III (eds.), US Naval War College Newport Paper No. 48*, 2025: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/usnwc-newport-papers/48/>

US Navy Captain Wayne P. Hughes was a highly influential and inspirational thinker on naval warfare, through both his written works and his teaching and mentoring at the US Navy's Postgraduate School. His book *Fleet Tactics* was revised into a third edition in 2018.<sup>1</sup> This volume collects together essays and musings from a virtual gathering held in the late Captain Hughes' honour in 2021. While it is focused on naval warfare, it does cover important ground for those interested in littoral warfare. Chapters cover the concept of sea denial, 'unsinkable aircraft carriers' and the exploration of land-based maritime forces, and updating Hughes' theoretical construct of salvo size, a critical concept to understand for those looking at the issue of targeting warships at sea.

'Bridging Sky and Sea: Joint Strategies for Medical Evacuation in the Indo-Pacific'; Mahdi Al-Husseini, Samuel J. Diehl, Samuel L. Fricks, *The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters*, 55 (1) 2025, pp. 117-132:

<https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol55/iss1/9/>

A critical but oft overlooked issue for future dispersed operations in the Indo-Pacific is that of medical evacuation. The ability to conduct effective casualty evacuation will be critical to land force operations in the region, and will require the closest of cooperation between the services as well as with allies and partners. This article examines an old planning problem with a contemporary lens.

'Fighting to Supply the Fight—Assessing Approaches for Overcoming Contested Logistics'; Erik Sand, *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 77, No. 2, 2024, pp. 71-82: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol77/iss2/6>

Any discussion of future littoral warfare (or any form of warfare) without recourse to logistics is pointless. Although only a short article, 'Fighting the Supply Fight' is a good starting point for addressing the issue of contested logistics in the Indo-Pacific theatre. It proposes three different approaches to thinking about the issue and provides great fodder for thinking about the problem.

'Might is light', *Ares & Athena – Issue 28*, Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research (CHACR), 7 August 2025, <https://chacr.org.uk/2025/08/07/ares-athena-issue-28-might-is-light/>

---

<sup>1</sup> The First edition was published as *Fleet Tactics: Theory and Practice* (1986); the second edition was *Fleet Tactics and Coastal Combat* (1999); and the third edition was published as *Fleet Tactics and Naval Operations* (2018). See: <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2020/may/guide-reading-fleet-tactics>

This collection of papers explores the topic of light forces. It explores the history of light forces examples of how they have been used in the past, how specific-to-purpose light forces have and can be used and those battlespace circumstances that demand their use, and finally looks at the emphasis placed on light forces by some of the Nordic members of NATO.

## Australian Army Research Centre Publications

Littoral Warfare has been a research priority for the AARC since 2023, in the wake of the direction given in the Defence Strategic Review (DSR). This saw the publication of a littoral-themed Australian Army Journal (AAJ) in 2023, and the publication of the first littoral reading list in 2024. The release of the 2024 National Defence Strategy (NDS) and Integrated Investment Program (IIP) re-affirmed the importance of the Army's adaptation into a littoral-capable force. Littoral research has continued in the AARC through several workshops, commissioned research, and internal works by AARC researchers.

This research has been published primarily in two forms: through the *Australian Army Journal*, and in the *Occasional Papers* series of longer monographs. The AARC publishes three editions of the AAJ every year, with articles on many different topics, including littoral. It also includes book reviews, again covering all manner of topics. This is complemented by the 'Land Power Library' series on the AARC's *Land Power Forum*, where numerous book reviews can be found covering contemporary and historical issues and case studies. Occasional Papers are longer research pieces, with anywhere between 8-12 published a year. All of these publications are available online on the AARC's public website.

Finally, one need not be a passive participant in the discussion on littoral warfare and littoral manoeuvre in the Australian Army. The AARC encourages submissions from those inside and outside of Army, of all ranks and experience levels. Writing should not be seen as the domain only of academics or senior officers, but as a way to engage in the Army profession.

## Journal Articles

'Amphibious Audacity: Littoral Manoeuvre during the Sicily Campaign, July–August 1943', John Nash, *Australian Army Journal*, Vol. 20. No. 1, 2024, pp. 18-42: <https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/library/australian-army-journal-aaaj/volume-20-number-1>

The addition of new watercraft to the Australian Army will substantially enhance its ability to conduct littoral manoeuvre at the tactical and operational levels. There are many lessons to be taken away from the Second World War on the topic of amphibious and littoral operations. The Sicily campaign of July-August 1943 provides several good examples of how the sea can be used as an operational manoeuvre space against an enemy land force.

‘Conceptually Adrift in the Littoral’, Mark O’Neill, *Australian Army Journal*, Vol. 21. No. 2, 2025, pp. 26-55: <https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/library/australian-army-journal-aaj/volume-21-number-2>

Mark O’Neill identifies a range of conceptual gaps in the thinking surrounding the Army and littoral manoeuvre. This article frames in detail the issues a littoral warfare manoeuvre concept will need to address, proposing principles to guide such a concept.

‘Expeditionary Force Mobilisation Planning in an Age of Austerity: Overseas Plan 401 and the Interwar Australian Military Forces (1919–1939)’, Jordan Beavis, *Australian Army Journal*, Vol. 20. No. 3, 2024, pp. 84-121: <https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/library/australian-army-journal-aaj/volume-20-number-3>

History offers many examples of how certain operations have been conducted in the past. In the case of mobilisation for potential conflict, the interwar period and Australia’s plan 401 is illuminating. An expert on this period, Beavis details how mobilisation for major regional conflict has been conceived of in Australia’s past.

‘Follow the Robot: Finding Gaps through Littoral Obstacles’, Matthew Scott, *Australian Army Journal*, Vol. 21. No. 1, 2025, pp. 49-77: <https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/library/australian-army-journal-aaj/volume-21-number-1>

An issue of great concern for littoral and amphibious forces is that of obstacles, both in the land and water environments of the littoral. Scott looks at how technology and uncrewed systems might be used for better obstacle identification and clearance.

‘Land Based Fires in a Littoral Environment: The Case of Ukraine’s Black Sea Campaign’, Charles Miller, *Australian Army Journal*, Vol. 21. No. 2, 2025, pp. 56-82: <https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/library/australian-army-journal-aaj/volume-21-number-2>

The Russo-Ukraine War offers many potential lessons for those studying the conduct of modern warfare. This article explores Ukraine’s use of varying means to conduct a campaign of sea denial against the Russian Navy in the Black Sea.

‘Land Power in the Littoral: An Australian Army Perspective’, John Nash, *Journal of Advanced Military Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 2024 pp. 40-53: <https://www.usmcu.edu/Outreach/Marine-Corps-University-Press/MCU-Journal/JAMS-vol-15-no-2/>

This article represents a starting point for the ongoing discussion on littoral warfare following on from the 2023 *Defence Strategic Review* and 2024 *National Defence Strategy*. Published in the US Marine Corps’ professional journal, it seeks to open more broadly the conversation on transforming the Australian Army into a littoral force and open up the discussion to a wider audience.

‘Optimising the Cavalry for Littoral Manoeuvre’, Mark Sargent, *Australian Army Journal*, Vol. 21. No. 1, 2025, pp. 27-48: <https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/library/australian-army-journal-aaaj/volume-21-number-1>

This article outlines how ‘the Australian Army’s cavalry can modernise and optimise to achieve an asymmetrical advantage in support of a national strategy of denial enabled by a focus on littoral manoeuvre.’ The article looks at several key issues, including the challenges for the cavalry due to the evolving operational context, what an optimised cavalry contribution to littoral manoeuvre might look like, and ends with suggestions for optimising the cavalry for the challenges of the future.

‘Shallow Waters and Deep Strikes: Loitering Munitions and the Australian Army’s Littoral Manoeuvre Concept’, Ash Zimmerlie, *Australian Army Journal*, Vol. 20. No. 1, 2024, pp. 83-109: <https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/library/australian-army-journal-aaaj/volume-20-number-1>

Following on from his 2023 AAJ article, Ash Zimmerlie explores the potential for loitering munitions to support littoral operations. It focuses on the future Army littoral watercraft as platforms for these loitering munitions and how they can enable the Joint force.

## Occasional Papers

*Surf and Turf: Cavalry in the Littoral*, Joshua Higgins, Australian Army Occasional Paper No. 34 (2025): <https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/library/occasional-papers>

One of the key questions in Army is how to translate cavalry operations into the littoral environment. As Commanding Officer of 2nd Cavalry Regiment, Higgins is better placed than anyone to explore the littoral future of Australian cavalry operations.

*Littoral Operations for the Australian Army: Theory and Principles*, John Nash, Australian Army Occasional Paper No. 37 (2026): <https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/library/occasional-papers>

This paper acts as a primer for discussion on littoral warfare. It discusses how ‘littoral’ is a different construct to ‘amphibious’, and what future littoral operations for the Australian Army might look like, in broad strokes.

*Drones in Modern Warfare: Lessons Learnt from the War in Ukraine*, Oleksandra Molloy, Australian Army Occasional Paper No. 29 (2024): <https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/library/occasional-papers/drones-modern-warfare>

'Drone operations have added a new chapter to modern warfare. In Ukraine, uncrewed aerial systems (UAS) have become an important weapon to gain an asymmetric edge over Russian forces. The lessons learnt from the use of UAS in Russia's war against Ukraine are almost innumerable and extend from the individual soldier level to tactical, strategic and government levels. This paper summarises highlights from the first evidence-based research on the lessons learnt from the use of UAS to date in the war in Ukraine, drawing on both Ukrainian and Australian expertise.'

*From the Sea. A Comparative Analysis of Amphibious Operations in the Pacific and European Theatres of the Second World War*, Richard Bushby, Australian Army Occasional Paper No. 23, (2024): <https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/library/occasional-papers/from-the-sea>

'Amphibious operations came of age between mid-1942 and mid-1945 as the armed forces of the western Allied powers conducted over forty major amphibious assaults. Despite this, these amphibious operations required significantly different force structures, equipment, training and command methodologies. As the Australian Army adapts to deliver an expanded focus on combined arms amphibious manoeuvre, the lessons of history offer plenty of markers to help guide this transformation.'

*In Denial, The ADF and Littoral Manoeuvre*, Mark O'Neill, Australian Army Occasional Paper No. 36 (2025): <https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/library/occasional-papers>

In this discussion paper, O'Neill argues there is a conceptual gap in thinking about littoral operations in the Australian Army. He sees a gap between the 'ends' and the 'means' in littoral discussions, and proposes a way to bridge this gap with a new proposal on littoral manoeuvre.

*Small Aircraft, Sizeable Threats: Preparing Army to Counter Small Uncrewed Aerial Systems*, Carl Rhodes, Australian Army Occasional Paper No. 24 (2024): <https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/library/occasional-papers/small-aircraft-sizeable-threats>

'Small uncrewed aerial systems (sUAS) are widely available, militarily effective and challenging to defeat. In this Occasional Paper on counter-sUAS, Dr. Carl Rhodes reviews the recent employment of sUAS and evaluates methods to sense and engage these systems.'

*Translating Ukraine Lessons for the Pacific Theatre*, Mick Ryan, Australian Army Occasional Paper No. 33 (2025): <https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/library/occasional-papers/translating-ukraine-lessons-pacific-theatre>

‘This paper posits that most conceivable military scenarios in the Pacific involving Australia and its allies could benefit from the insights obtained from Ukraine. However, at the same time, these lessons must be contextualised given the distinct political, geographic and strategic characteristics of the Pacific theatre.

The document explores key trends in the Ukraine conflict, highlighting the unprecedented visibility provided by open-source sensors, social media platforms, and media access to battlefield operations. While this visibility has contributed to a broader understanding of the conflict’s trajectory and the employment of innovative technologies, the inherent ‘fog of war’ continues to obscure numerous aspects. It is anticipated that certain elements of this conflict may remain unknown or shrouded in ambiguity for years to come.’



**RESEARCHCENTRE.ARMY.GOV.AU**