Strategy and Tactics in Warfighting (WS 2017/18)
(18-01-22)

Synopsis

A Introduction
1. Strategy and tactics, or “stratagēma” and “tactica”: definitions and origins
2. The influence of technology on strategy and tactics
3. A navy’s purpose vs. an army’s purpose: “navies don’t purchase and possess real estate”
4. Strategic visions and tactical constraints
   4.1. Littoral warfare: “A ship’s a fool that fights a fort.” (Nelson)
   4.2. The “355-ship navy” and carrier strike force compositions
5. (Navy-oriented) foreword: “Tactics is the soul of our profession.” (Cebrowski)

B (Mostly Naval) Tactics: “Fire Effectively First!” (Hughes)

   6.1. Fighting sail tactics: ships-of-the-line, columns, shirkers, crossing the T, raking
   6.2. Why (mathematical) models? Game theory and war games
   6.3. (Pre 1775 infantry) Linear combat
   6.4. The Fiske (1905) salvo model: tables, difference equations and tactical implications ...
      6.4.1. ... concentrating fire?
      6.4.2. ... massing?
      6.4.3. ... surprise?
      6.4.3. ... isolating enemy forces?
      6.4.4. ... and a strategic implication: quantity or quality?
   6.5. The Lanchester (1916) (originally aerial combat) square law for continuous fire
      6.5.1. Solving the model
      6.5.2. The Fiske tactical implications
      6.5.3. Anecdotal evidence versus an empirical model?
      6.5.4. Evidence? Fighting sail: ground combat; COIN; aerial combat (“Flying Tigers”; Thach Weave vs 3- or 4-plane formations; RAF doctrine)
   6.6. Lanchester’s law, the prequel: The Chase (1902) square law
7. Tactical formations: column, line or echelon, “Turn” or “Corpen”? Lissa (1866); Parker; Fiske
8. A model of early WWII carrier warfare
   8.1. Introduction to carrier warfare: welcome to the missile age
   8.2. A linear (infantry-style) combat model
   8.3. Screening and surprise: “Fire Effectively First!” yet again
   8.4. Examples of early Pacific carrier battles
      8.4.1 Coral Sea: American tactical defeat ... but strategic victory
      8.4.2. “AF” and Midway
      8.4.3. Eastern Solomons
      8.4.4 Santa Cruz Islands
   8.5. Early WWII carrier tactical problems: massing or dispersal?
9. WWII carrier warfare from 1943 onwards
   9.1. Air support begins to matter: “Combat Air Patrols” and fighter escorts
   9.2. The Battle of the Philippine Sea
   9.3. Resolutions of tactical problems

10. WWII Destroyer tactics
   10.1. US cruiser and destroyer doctrines during the inter-war period
   10.2. Guadalcanal: Cactus and the Tokyo Express
   10.3. “The Battle of the Five Sitting Ducks”: Savo Island (November 8-9, 1942)
   10.4. Lessons learned I: “training, training and TRAINING” (Nimitz)
   10.5. Lessons learned II: “Turn” instead of “corpen”, small TGs instead of one large TF
   10.6. Late night fighting naval battle tactics: the Battle of Vella Gulf (November 6-7, 1943)
   10.7. Battle of Okinawa: destroyer picket stations against kamikazes

11. Staying power and ship size since WWII

12. Naval warfare in the missile age
   12.2. The Battle of the Philippine Sea revisited
   12.3. Ship attributes: typical values
   12.4. Planning with the salvo model: the importance of surprise and numbers
   12.5. How to defend a Ticonderoga/Aegis cruiser
   12.6. Mass for defense
   12.8. Tactics subject to an A2/AD mission: disperse to survive

C  (Not Only Naval) Strategy

13. Strategy and tactics: telling the difference?
   13.1. Some more definitions ...

14. “Missions of the US Navy”
   14.1. Warfighting missions and “tactics”
      14.1.1. Sea control
      14.1.2. Power projection ashore
   14.2. Deterrence and “tactics”
      14.2.1. Presence
      14.2.2. Strategic deterrence

15. Tactical tools
   15.1. Deception
      15.1.1. An A2/AD scenario
      15.1.2. Operation BOLO, North Vietnam (January 2, 1967)
   15.2. Intimidation
   15.3. Strategy, deception, risk levels and costs

16. Examples of poor naval strategies ... or was it tactics?
   16.2. Soviet Foxtrot, Zulu submarines during the Cuban missile crisis (1962)
   16.4. Thatcher navy policy (1981): “The Royal Navy was to become a coast guard.” (Lehman)
   16.5. The UK 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review?

17. Is strategic planning obsolete?
   17.1. Ends, ways, means
   17.2. “Strategic” planning versus annual planning? “Man plans, fate laughs.”
References

Introductory Texts and Seminal Contributions


Wayne P. Hughes (1992), *The Value of Warship Attributes in Missile Combat*, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey CA.


Other Primary Sources


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Ib Hansen, H.P. Gray (1990), Passive Protection and Ship Survivability in Years 2005-2020, David Taylor Research Center, SSPD 90-174-41, Bethesda MD, CONFIDENTIAL.


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Campaign and Battle Analyses, Battle Reports


Recollections


**Professional Non-Fiction Reading List**


Joel I. Holwitt (2009), “*Execute Against Japan*”: The U.S. Decision to Conduct Unrestricted Submarine Warfare*, College Station TX: Texas A&M University Press.


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