



# Integrating Naval Surface Fire Support Into an Improved Joint Close Air Support Architecture

*Amy E. Lindahl*

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During recent campaigns in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq, increased emphasis has been placed on Close Air Support (CAS) for forces conducting unconventional operations with small, specialized units as well as conventional operations at the brigade or division level. Because of the proximity to friendly troops, the need for successful integration of forces during CAS missions is critical. The effectiveness of the joint forces conducting Joint Close Air Support (JCAS) can be measured by the success or failure of the Command and Control (C2) process. Situations often occur in which forward air controllers (FACs) from one service integrate into the structure of another service, yet still report to their own leadership. Many non-interoperable communications systems are used, further adding to the confusion. This thesis analyzes the effectiveness of current Joint Close Air Support doctrine in providing the guidelines necessary for the warfighter at all echelons to plan, prepare and execute integrated close air support missions seamlessly when operating in a joint environment. Themes which hamper the ability to efficiently employ command and control (C2) to provide close air support to the Ground Combat Commander are examined. Finally, Naval Surface Fire Support is studied to determine its place in the JCAS architecture and where, within that architecture, it should be implemented. The analysis of case studies involving situations in which JCAS was not used effectively revealed that, though there has been significant progress made in revising Joint CAS doctrine, weaknesses still exist. Joint doctrine must keep pace with emerging technology but for that doctrine to remain relevant, warfighters at all levels must know it, use it and provide feedback when it doesn't work so future iterations can mature and flex with the force.

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