

# Joint, Combined Exercise Shows Marine Littoral Regiment Idea is on "Right Track"



U.S. Marines with 3d Marine Littoral Regiment, 3d Marine Division present arms during the redesignation ceremony of 3d Marines to 3d MLR aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, March 3, 2022. The 3d MLR will serve as a key enabler for joint, allied, and partnered forces, will integrate with naval forces, and will enable multi-domain maneuver and fires within contested spaces. The transition of 3d Marines to 3d MLR is in accordance with Force Design 2030 and one of the first major steps to facilitating a shift as the Marine Corps divests in legacy capabilities and builds a force that is optimized for operations envisioned within the Commandant's Planning Guidance. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Patrick King)

ARLINGTON, Va. – Now that the first Marine Littoral Regiment has been created, U.S. Marine Corps leaders say they're experimenting to determine how best to equip the pioneering unit as the forward-based eyes and ears of the fleet inside a

contested maritime environment.

The 3rd Marine Regiment was [redesignated the 3rd Marine Littoral Regiment](#) (MLR) in a March 3, 2022 ceremony at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, where the new regiment will continue to be headquartered. The first of three planned littoral regiments for the Indo-Pacific region, the 3rd MLR is a key part of the Marines' ambitious force redesign to contend with near-peer militaries like China and Russia.

"We have not only built the organization, now we are equipping it, experimenting and doing the testing and evaluation with those concepts we've come up with," Marine Corps Col. Lance Lewis told the National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA) [Expeditionary Warfare Conference](#) Feb. 22. "We're definitely on the right track when it comes with MLRs," added Lewis, the Assistant Vice Chief of Naval Research at the Office of Naval Research (ONR), "That is how we are going to enable the Stand-In Force."

The Marines' evolving Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations concept envisions littoral operations by specialized mobile, low signature units within larger distributed maritime operations areas. Plans call for the MLRs to be organized, trained and equipped to support sea control and sea denial operations as part of a larger naval expeditionary force integrated with the joint force and allied and partnered forces.

Currently the MLRs are divided into three elements: a littoral combat team made up of a one infantry battalion equipped with a ship-killing missile battery, an anti-aircraft battalion, and a combat logistics battalion. All three elements were dispersed over three separate islands in their debut inclusion [in RIMPAC 22](#)

, the huge joint multinational maritime exercise in Hawaii. The MLR provided multi-domain awareness to the Combined Task Force, the Combined Force Maritime Component Command, and the

Combined Force Air Component Command.

As the “eyes and ears of the fleet,” Lewis said, “You need not only to restructure, but how do you maneuver those forces around the battlefield so it’s not a standard set of battalions but a different task organization, and then how do you now equip those forces.”