

# Future Deployable Medical Capabilities and Platforms for Navy Medicine

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its efforts with already-planned initiatives from the rest of the Navy. For example, the LPD-17 is a ship that is already being built and that has been studied as a potential medical platform. The HSV is a ship that is now in experimental stages as a troop carrier. It is just a conceptual step to adding medical capacity.

Working from left to right in the platform matrix, the four sea-based alternatives are the current Mercy-class hospital ship, which is our base case alternative, the LPD-17 variant, an LSD conversion option, and an HSV-32 wave-piercing catamaran. Table 10 describes land-based alternatives—the current 500-bed fleet hospital, the EMF (a smaller, more mobile land-base alternative), and a concept of employing the HSV as a means of transporting the land-based EMF.

## **L-class ships, construction and conversion to dedicated hospital ships**

One potential source for new hospital ship(s) is conversion of older L-class ships (i.e., those that have lived their useful lives as warships) into dedicated hospital ships. This concept offers some advantages. First, the amphibious ships are designed to be personnel carriers, and as such already have built-in comfort facilities, such as berthing, mess, and toiletry, for large numbers of people. In addition, they have large cargo spaces that could be used for medical equipment storage. They already have the speed and mobility to keep up with an amphibious ready group (ARG). Perhaps most important, many of the L-class ships have multiple methods for bringing troops and casualties aboard.

In tables 11 and 12, we list the undisposed L-class ships that could become available for conversion (i.e., become 30 years old) in the next 25 years. Several writers have offered suggestions for which would make the best converted hospital ships. For example, in his widely cited critique of the Mercy-class hospital ships [16], CDR Pete Marghella recommended that we convert the available LSTs to hospital ships. He correctly points out that, compared to the Mercy class, the LSTs are smaller and quicker, enabling them to more easily deploy with the fleet, to dock at many more beaches, and to produce

