

OPERATION CHROMITE—INSIGHTS FOR JOINT EXPEDITIONARY OPERATIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

By LTC Gabriel Choy

ABSTRACT

Among modern joint expeditionary operations, Operation CHROMITE stands out for its audacity and success despite significant odds. In analysing how success was achieved, the author examined the role of both personality and non-personality reasons. He argues that operational success in Operation CHROMITE was built on more than just the back of its commander. While General MacArthur’s operational vision and leadership were instrumental in leading to the birth of Operation CHROMITE, it was the tactical proficiency of the Joint Force in executing operational functions that made accomplishing MacArthur’s plans possible. In the author’s opinion, it is only by distilling the personality from the non-personality related reasons of success behind Operation CHROMITE that the correct operational lessons can be best learnt. By applying these to any future joint expeditionary operations that any force may find itself embarking on in the 21st Century, they may then be better positioned to reap operational success.

Keywords: Operation CHROMITE; personality factors; Joint Expeditionary Operations; operational leadership; amphibious

INTRODUCTION

In the modern history of joint expeditionary operations, the amphibious invasion of the Republic of Korea (ROK) / South Korea during the Korean War, under Operation CHROMITE, stands out as one boldly conceived, swiftly planned and thereafter impeccably executed.¹ It reversed the hitherto gains of the North Korean People’s Army (NKPA), relieved the pressure on United Nations (UN) coalition forces at the Pusan Perimeter, and provided the momentum of the subsequent counterattack across the 38th Parallel and towards the Yalu River.

The author examines the operational insights from Operation CHROMITE, focussing in particular on the factors of success. He argues that while ostensibly, much of Operation CHROMITE’s success was personality-driven—General Douglas MacArthur’s operational leadership in particular was essential, it was the non-personality related reasons manifesting in how the Joint Force was applied to execute MacArthur’s operational vision that made it a reality. It is only by distilling the personality from the non-personality related reasons of success behind Operation CHROMITE that the correct operational lessons can be best learnt. By applying these to any future joint expeditionary operations that any

force may find itself embarking on in the 21st Century, they may then be better positioned to reap operational success.

APPROACH

In the first part of the essay, the author provides a brief background on Operation CHROMITE. In the second part of the essay, the author continues to explain the importance of learning from Operation CHROMITE, especially in the era of great power competition against a rising China, and the prevalent threat of a rogue North Korea. The third part examines a prevalent argument that personality reasons were the key drivers of Operation CHROMITE’s success, in particular MacArthur’s operational leadership and vision. In the fourth part, the author offers a rebuttal to the third, by examining non-personality reasons in exercising the operational functions through the Joint Force—namely intelligence, information, manoeuvre and fires—and show how these were essential in providing MacArthur with the platform for success, without which the latter could not happen. The fifth part projects these lessons on to the 21st century and suggests how countries may prepare their forces to succeed in future joint expeditionary operations, if necessary, on the East Asian mainland.

BACKGROUND OF OPERATION CHROMITE

On 25th June, 1950, upon orders from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) / North Korean leadership, the NKPA crossed the 38th Parallel and invaded the South, thereby starting the Korean War. United States (US) forces in South Korea, weakened by drastic cutbacks in defence spending after World War Two (WWII), could not muster a sufficient response to stop and push back the NKPA onslaught.² By early August 1950, the NKPA had advanced and pushed the US Eighth Army and ROK troops into the Pusan Perimeter, a shrinking area at the south-eastern tip of South Korea, thereby threatening to evict coalition forces out of the Korean Peninsula. In response to this, MacArthur, the US Commander-in-Chief, Far East and Commander-in-Chief, United Nations Command (UNC), conceived of Operation CHROMITE, a joint expeditionary operation consisting of: (1) a surprise amphibious assault at Inchon, a major port 177

km behind enemy lines of South Korea's west coast; (2) the subsequent advance of ground forces from Inchon to capture the nearby key air base of Kimpo; and (3) the attack and capture of Seoul, the capital of South Korea. The successful conclusion of the operation was envisaged to relieve the pressure on the coalition forces at the Pusan Perimeter, and enable the latter to push back the NKPA. By subjecting the NKPA to an encirclement attack, the intended outcome was the complete destruction of the NKPA and the liberation of South Korea.³ As intended, the amphibious assault caught North Korea by surprise. The subsequent march onto Seoul was accompanied by the counterattack of coalition forces from Pusan. The operation had swiftly changed the tide of the war with coalition forces assuming the offensive after months of being on the defensive since the Korean War broke out. Even though Operation CHROMITE subsequently led to coalition forces advancing onto the Yalu River and triggering the intervention of the Chinese, leading to unintended



General of the Army Douglas MacArthur (centre) grasps General J. Lawton Collins (the Army Chief of Staff, left) and Admiral Forrest Sherman (the Chief of Naval Operations, right) upon their arrival in Tokyo, Japan.

strategic implications, the operation itself was a success with all operational objectives achieved. It is the operational nature of Operation CHROMITE—not its strategic outcomes—that the author examines.

The desired end state for the US and coalition forces was to signal that Communist aggression would not be rewarded and that the tide of Communist expansion would be checked on the Korean Peninsula.

IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING FROM OPERATION CHROMITE

In his 2019 Posture Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Commander US Indo-Pacific Command Admiral Philip S. Davidson, in outlining his ‘five key challenges [to US]... vital national interest in ensuring a Free and Open Indo-Pacific’, classifies North

Korea as ‘the most immediate challenge’ and China as ‘the greatest long-term strategic threat.’⁴ These coupled with the fact that two of the US’ closest and most important allies, Japan and South Korea, lie in close proximity, make it clear that the East Asian mainland is a region of great importance to US security interests. The immutable characteristics of theatre geometry mandate that any conventional operations in the area will have to be conducted using a combination of air, land and sea assets. This in turn means that any operation would definitely be of a joint and expeditionary nature. It is therefore natural that Operation CHROMITE—a successful joint expeditionary operation conducted with modern combined arms in a conventional war on the East Asian mainland, despite being conducted more than half a century ago, would have important operational lessons for a joint force today.

THE PERSONALITY REASONS: OPERATIONAL VISION AND LEADERSHIP OF THE COMMANDER

In analysing the success of Operation CHROMITE, the role MacArthur played as the operational



Four tank landing ships unload men and equipment on Red Beach one day after the amphibious landings on Incheon.

commander inevitably comes to the fore. MacArthur's operational vision and leadership were critical factors. MacArthur: (1) set clear operational objectives that were well-nested within the higher-level objectives; (2) conceived an operational idea that successfully attacked the enemy's centre of gravity; and (3) had the personality and reputation to push through his ideas despite scepticism from his superiors and subordinates.

By planning in accordance with the sound practice of operational art, MacArthur's operational idea was well-conceived and therefore set up for subsequent success in theatre.

Operation CHROMITE had well-nested objectives across the different levels of war. The desired end state for the US and coalition forces was to signal that Communist aggression would not be rewarded and that the tide of Communist expansion would be checked on the Korean Peninsula. The theatre-strategic objective of Operation CHROMITE was the liberation of South Korea from North Korean control. The operational objectives of Operation CHROMITE were the cutting of supply lines to the NKPA, and the subsequent destruction of the latter. Operation CHROMITE was successful because the attainment of operational objectives, as formulated by MacArthur himself when he decided on the operation, would lead to the successful attainment of the larger theatre-strategic objective and in turn the desired end state. Once the NKPA was destroyed, there would be no remaining North Korean forces to occupy South Korea, which would lead to the latter's liberation. Once South Korea was liberated, North Korea would then have failed to achieve its aims of conquest through aggression. This clear setting of operational objectives, and the sound choice to choose objectives that nested properly within higher-level objectives, contributed to the subsequent success of MacArthur's operational idea behind Operation CHROMITE.

From the beginning of the Korean War, MacArthur had personally conceived of an amphibious assault in the rear of the NKPA supply lines. His

operational idea was to use the inherent advantages of the joint force (its amphibious capability) to hit the lengthening North Korean supply lines where it was vulnerable and encircle the NKPA. This would enable the coalition forces to destroy the NKPA and liberate South Korea.⁵ MacArthur's operational idea successfully attacked the enemy's operational centre of gravity. The North Korean centre of gravity was the NKPA. This was because of the NKPA's critical capability, namely its ability to invade the South, seize decisive points and destroy coalition forces on the ground. North Korea's desired end state was to unify the entire Korean peninsula under North Korean rule. This led to the theatre-strategic objective of conquering South Korea by force and in turn an operational objective of destroying or evicting South Korea and coalition forces out from South Korea. Clearly then, the NKPA was central to achieving the various objectives, thereby making the NKPA the operational centre of gravity. The critical requirements of the NKPA were its supply lines on land to sustain itself at the front. Given the critical weaknesses of the North Korean air and naval forces, the associated critical vulnerabilities of the NKPA were its susceptibility to: (1) air attack; and (2) envelopment by amphibious forces landing from the sea. Therefore, Operation CHROMITE succeeded because it attacked the NKPA indirectly by targeting its critical requirements and exploiting its critical vulnerabilities, and thereafter attacking the NKPA directly and destroying it on land. By planning in accordance with the sound practice of operational art, MacArthur's operational idea was well-conceived and therefore set up for subsequent success in-theater.

MacArthur's operational idea was nonetheless insufficient to make Operation CHROMITE a reality on its own. Indeed, the operation was met with scepticism by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), and MacArthur's own subordinate generals and admirals.⁶ The tactical difficulties of Inchon had convinced the naysayers that Operation CHROMITE would be an enormous risk, and that there were other landing areas which posed less dangers of failure.⁷ Operation CHROMITE might not have materialised if MacArthur's superiors refused to support him, or if his subordinates failed to put their all into executing his plan. However, MacArthur prevailed by sheer force of will, and managed to convince his superiors to go along with his operational idea and

supply him with the necessary forces he needed for the campaign.⁸ Similarly, his insistence on Inchon over all other possible landing sites also focused his subordinates on the task, and after the decision was taken, they subsequently went about their duties with a single-minded determination to make Operation CHROMITE a success.⁹ Much of MacArthur's ability to push his ideas across stemmed from the immense reputation he enjoyed—in both the military and on the domestic front back home. His reputation was built on the back of his successes in WWII, and the Allied occupation of Japan. By 1950, MacArthur had become virtually immune to criticism, with the JCS keen to give him the free rein he needed—within acceptable political boundaries—to determine and achieve his own operational objectives. Even President Harry S. Truman himself was reluctant to challenge MacArthur to avoid the political fallout and loss of public support from doing so.¹⁰ MacArthur's dominant personality and unique background, therefore, ensured that there were no obstacles to stop Operation CHROMITE from being tested against the enemy on the battlefield.

Personality reasons had therefore driven the success of Operation CHROMITE. Led by an able operational commander, who set clear operational objectives that were well-nested across the different levels of war, conceived of an operational idea that successfully attacked the enemy's operational centre of gravity, and who had the personality and reputation to enforce his will despite the naysayers, Operation CHROMITE therefore possessed important ingredients for success. In order for it to actually succeed however, the Joint Force had to execute MacArthur's plan in-theatre which, due to the inherent tactical difficulties of the plan, was not in itself a forgone conclusion.

THE NON-PERSONALITY REASONS: EXERCISING OPERATION FUNCTIONS THROUGH THE JOINT FORCE

While MacArthur played a critical role in the success of Operation CHROMITE, it was not true that personality reasons were the only ones at play. Even though MacArthur had the operational vision to conceive of a sound operational idea and the operational leadership to push for its execution in-theatre, the plan would still not have succeeded unless the Joint Force was well trained to execute it. As it was, three non-personality reasons pertaining to how the

Joint Force was applied with aplomb—on both the operational and high-tactical level—were instrumental in the success of Operation CHROMITE. These corresponded to the operational functions of: (1) information; (2) intelligence; and (3) manoeuvre and fires. It was the proficiency of the Joint Force in executing these operational functions that contributed to the success of Operation CHROMITE.

In order for MacArthur to successfully execute Operation CHROMITE, the different services in the Joint Force needed to be highly tactically proficient to overcome the significant challenges posed at Inchon.

The first reason was because information operations, in particular military deception, were executed well. Operation CHROMITE caught the North Korean leadership by surprise. There were two reasons why surprise—a principle of war—was achieved. The first stemmed from the choice of landing at Inchon. This had severe tactical difficulties, thereby convincing the North Korean leadership that the coalition forces would not attempt to mount an operation there. Indeed, Inchon was noted by Lieutenant General Edward Almond, Commander of X Corps as 'the worse possible place where we could bring in an amphibious assault.'¹¹ Against the recommendations of US doctrine, Inchon had strong currents, mineable waters, no landing beaches, few docks and piers, extreme tidal ranges, presence of mudflats and harsh weather during the intended duration of Operation CHROMITE.¹² All of these combined to make amphibious operations at Inchon an extremely hazardous undertaking with a high chance of failure. Rear Admiral James Doyle, Commander of the Amphibious Force expressed his reservation to MacArthur, 'The best I can say is that Inchon is not impossible.'¹³ Yet, it was the tactical difficulties of landing at Inchon which gave it the element of surprise, precisely the very trait that MacArthur was going for. MacArthur himself suggested that 'The very arguments you have made as to the

impracticabilities involved will tend to ensure for me the element of surprise.¹⁴ The second reason why surprise was achieved was because of peripheral operations taken to deceive the NKPA. An elaborate deception operation was taken to fool the latter that the landing would occur at Kunsan, 170 km south of Inchon.¹⁵ In comparison to Inchon, Kunsan had more suitable conditions for an amphibious landing and was actually one of the landing spots preferred by the JCS.¹⁶ The deception operations included diversionary strikes by aircraft and warships in the lead-up to the Inchon landing, and the deployment of disinformation techniques to spread rumours and false news.¹⁷ As a result of both the tactical difficulties of landing at Inchon and deception operations to fool the enemy, the North Koreans were caught completely by surprise. The North Korean leader Kim Il-sung himself said, 'A US counterattack is not possible... a landing to our rear ports would be difficult.'¹⁸ As it was, after the Inchon landing, only about 16,000 NKPA troops were available to counter the nearly 70,000-strong US forces, which led to weak resistance as the latter marched on Seoul.¹⁹

Information operations had successfully delivered an element of surprise.

The second reason was because intelligence-gathering operations were executed well in preparation for Operation CHROMITE. Given the tactical difficulties, the coalition forces needed accurate intelligence of Inchon and its water approaches. In particular, intelligence was needed on the local tides, the waterways leading to the port and enemy defences at Inchon. To obtain these, a reconnaissance team under Lieutenant Eugene Clark, was sent ashore at Yonghung Do, an island only 22.5 km from Inchon. Clark and his team obtained useful intelligence—they found out that Japanese-prepared tide tables were accurate, that the mud flats fronting Inchon would support no weight, that the harbour's sea walls were higher than estimated, that Wolmi Do (an island off Inchon) was heavily fortified with artillery, and that the North Koreans had not systemically mined the approaches to Inchon.²⁰ These pieces of intelligence were incorporated by the planners of Operation CHROMITE and enabled the



Wolmido under bombardment on 13th September, 1950, two days before the landings, seen from the US Navy destroyer USS Lyman K. Swenson.

invading forces to significantly mitigate the tactical risks of the plan. As it was, by utilising the intelligence gathered, the invading forces landed successfully on Inchon.

The third reason why Operation CHROMITE succeeded was because the Joint Force had the tactical proficiency to conduct its manoeuvre and fires well. The entire operational idea of Operation CHROMITE—an amphibious landing in the rear of the enemy supply lines—was an operation in manoeuvre and fires. In order for MacArthur to execute his operational idea however, he needed his Joint Force to be highly competent, especially given the tactical difficulties of operating at Inchon.²¹ He needed the US Navy to be able to overcome the hazardous waterways, land Marines, and conduct naval gunfire support. He needed the US Marine Corps to scale the sea walls at Inchon, seize territory and destroy the enemy forces. He needed the US Air Force to launch air sorties for bombings on defensive fortifications and installations on the Korean coast, for both deception purposes (such as attacks by the Far East Air Forces at Kunsan) and landing preparatory purposes (such as dropping napalm on Wolmi-do to clear the way for troop landings). He needed the US Army to continue the fight against the enemy forces on land as the coalition forces marched on to capture Kimpo airfield, and subsequently seize Seoul. In order for MacArthur to successfully execute Operation CHROMITE, the different services in the Joint Force needed to be highly tactically proficient to overcome the significant challenges posed at Inchon. As it was, luckily for MacArthur, he had forces which lived up to the demands of his operational idea.²²

Non-personality reasons, therefore, manifesting in the successful ways the Joint Force could be applied, made operationalising MacArthur's operational vision a reality. It was due to the tactical proficiency of the Joint Force in successfully executing the operational functions of intelligence, information, manoeuvre and fires, at Inchon that paved the way for the amphibious landings and subsequent march on Seoul.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Among modern joint expeditionary operations, Operation CHROMITE stands out for its audacity and success despite significant odds. In analysing how success was achieved, the author has distilled the role of both personality and non-personality reasons. He argues that operational success in Operation CHROMITE was built on more than just the back of its commander. While MacArthur's operational vision and leadership was instrumental in leading to the birth of Operation CHROMITE, it was the tactical proficiency of the Joint Force in executing operational functions that made accomplishing MacArthur's plans possible.

In any future conflict in the Asia Pacific region, a country should be ready to conduct joint expeditionary operations across the large expanse of the Pacific. As Operation CHROMITE has shown, tactical proficiency in: (1) intelligence; (2) information; and (3) manoeuvre and fires was important in giving MacArthur options to deliver decisive operational outcomes on the Korean Peninsula. It is therefore critical that a country continues to be equally, if not more intensively trained for these operations during peacetime, so as to ensure its readiness to be deployed in war.

Nonetheless, MacArthur's example also illustrates important learning points for the operational commanders of today. The need to set clear operational objectives in line with higher-level strategic objectives and desired end state, the need to attack the enemy centre of gravity in one's own operational idea, and lastly the temperament, determination and force of will to push through one's own ideas despite the scepticism from top and above—Clausewitz's *coup d'oeil*—are all critical ingredients the operational commander must possess to mount a successful joint operation. While the first two might be more easily taught and trained in schools, significant creativity may be required to set conditions for the last and allow commanders of similar quality to develop.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brodie, Bernard. *War and Politics*. New York: Macmillan, 1973.
- Clark, Eugene F. *The Secrets of Inchon: The Untold Story of the Most Daring Covert Mission of the Korean War*. New York: Putnam, 2002.
- Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.
- Foster, Simon. *Hit the Beach! Amphibious Warfare from the Plains of Abraham to San Carlos Water*. London: Arms & Armour Press, 1995.
- Heinl, Jr., Robert D. "Inchon, 1950" in *Assault from the Sea: Essays on the History of Amphibious Warfare*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1983.
- Heinl, Jr., Robert D. *Victory at High Tide: The Inchon-Seoul Campaign*. New York: J.B. Lippincot Company, 1968.
- Krulak, Victor H. *First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1999.
- Langley, Michael. *Inchon Landing: MacArthur's Last Triumph*. New York: Times, 1979.
- Li, Xiaobing. *China's Battle for Korea: The 151 Spring Offensive*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014.
- MacArthur, Douglas. *Reminiscences*. New York: Ishi Press, 1964.
- Marola, Edward. *The US Navy in the Korean War*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2007.
- Montross, Lynn and Canzona, Nicholas A. *U.S. Marine Operations in Korea 1950-53 - Volume II: The Inchon-Seoul Operation*. Washington D.C.: Historical Branch G-3 HQ USMC, 1955.
- Osgood, Robert. *Limited War: The Challenge to American Strategy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957.
- Schnabel, James F. *Policy and Direction: The First Year*. Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 1992.
- Sheldon, Walt. *Hell or High Water: MacArthur's Landing at Inchon*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968.
- Sloan, Bill. *The Darkest Summer – Pusan and Inchon 1950: The Battles that Saved South Korea – and the Marines – From Extinction*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009.
- Stueck, William. *Rethinking the Korean War: A New Diplomatic and Strategic History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.
- Utz, Curtis A. *Assault from the Sea: The Amphibious Landing at Inchon*. Washington: Naval Historical Center Department of the Navy, 1994.
- Varhola, Michael J. *Fire and Ice: The Korean War, 1950-1953*. Mason City, Iowa: Da Capo Press, 2000.
- Zwolensky, Todd S. *Logistics over the Shore: A Review of Operation CHROMITE, Operation BLUEBAT and its Relevance to Today*. Kansas: Army Command and General Staff College Fort Leavenworth, 2007.

ENDNOTES

1. Code named Operation CHROMITE, the Battle of Incheon was an amphibious invasion and a battle of the Korean War that resulted in a decisive and strategic victory of the United Nations Command led by General Douglas MacArthur over the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) in September 1950. The operation involved some 75,000 troops and 261 naval vessels and led to the recapture of the South Korean capital of Seoul.
2. Curtis A. Utz, *Assault from the Sea: The Amphibious Landing at Inchon*, Washington: Naval Historical Center Department of the Navy, 1994, 1.
3. Robert D. Heinl Jr., "Inchon, 1950" in *Assault from the Sea: Essays on the History of Amphibious Warfare*, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1983, 339.
4. Philip S. Davidson, "Statement of Admiral Philip S. Davidson, U.S. Navy Commander, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command before the Senate Armed Services Committee on U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Posture", 2019.

5. Robert D. Heinl Jr., "Inchon, 1950" in *Assault from the Sea: Essays on the History of Amphibious Warfare*, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1983, 346.
6. Robert D. Heinl Jr., "Inchon, 1950" in *Assault from the Sea: Essays on the History of Amphibious Warfare*, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1983, 346.
7. Ibid, 346.
8. Ibid, 347.
9. Robert D. Heinl Jr., *Victory at High Tide: The Inchon-Seoul Campaign*, New York: J.B. Lippincot Company, 1968, 45.
10. Michael Langely, *Inchon Landing: MacArthur's Last Triumph*, New York: Times, 1979, 32.
11. Simon Foster, *Hit the Beach! Amphibious Warfare from the Plains of Abraham to San Carlos Water*, London: Arms & Armour Press, 1995, 94.
12. Ibid, 94.
13. Ibid, 97.
14. Michael Langely, *Inchon Landing: MacArthur's Last Triumph*, New York: Times, 1979, 47.
15. Curtis A. Utz, *Assault from the Sea: The Amphibious Landing at Inchon*. Washington: Naval Historical Center Department of the Navy, 1994, 21.
16. Robert D. Heinl Jr., "Inchon, 1950" in *Assault from the Sea: Essays on the History of Amphibious Warfare*, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1983, 346.
17. Curtis A. Utz. *Assault from the Sea: The Amphibious Landing at Inchon*. Washington: Naval Historical Center Department of the Navy, 1994, 21.
18. Bill Sloan. *The Darkest Summer – Pusan and Inchon 1950: The Battles that Saved South Korea – and the Marines – From Extinction*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009, 252.
19. Ibid, 253.
20. Curtis A. Utz. *Assault from the Sea: The Amphibious Landing at Inchon*. Washington: Naval Historical Center Department of the Navy, 1994, 20.
21. Simon Foster. *Hit the Beach! Amphibious Warfare from the Plains of Abraham to San Carlos Water*. London: Arms & Armour Press, 1995, 93.
22. Ibid, 93.



LTC Gabriel Choy was enlisted into the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) in January 2007 and commissioned as a Naval Officer in the same year. LTC Choy was awarded the SAF Overseas Scholarship. He graduated from the London School of Economics and Political Science with a Bachelor of Science in Philosophy and Economics (First Class Honours) and a Master of Science in Management and Economics in 2011. LTC Choy also attended the United States Naval War College, where he attained a Master of Arts in Defence and Strategic Studies (Highest Distinction) in 2020.

LTC Choy served his formative years in the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) onboard the Formidable-class Frigates. Ashore, he was a Staff Officer and a Branch Head in the Naval Plans Department, where he made significant contributions to the future of the Navy. He was also concurrent Military Private Secretary to the Minister for Defence.

LTC Choy assumed command of the Littoral Mission Vessel *RSS Independence* from 2018 to 2019, and of the Frigate *RSS Formidable* from 2020 to 2022. Under his leadership, *RSS Independence* undertook numerous critical maritime security operations, and was awarded the Best Operational Excellence Award in 2019. During his command, *RSS Formidable* participated in many foreign exercises, and maintained the highest state of operational readiness as the RSN's first-of-class capital platform.

LTC Choy was appointed as Head Naval Training in January 2023 and is happily married to Holiday with a daughter, Eva.