

# MCICOM

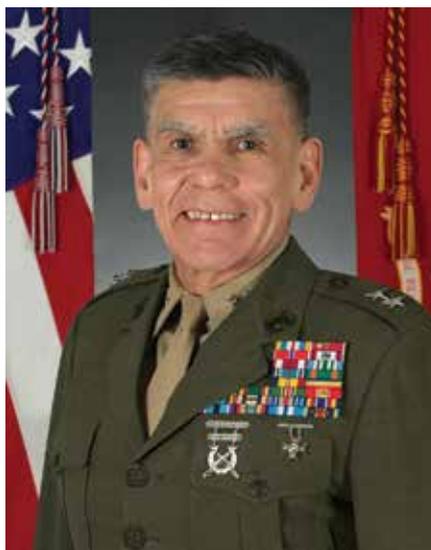
Providing sustainable force projection platforms to the warfighter

by MajGen Juan G. Ayala

**M**arine Corps Installations Command (MCICOM) is one of the newest—and largest—commands in the Marine Corps. Yet many Marines, family members, and civilian Marines are unfamiliar with how this new organization supports Marines' training, operational competence, and the daily lives of all those who work, live, and visit both the bases and surrounding communities. From increasing combat readiness and enabling force projection to providing installation protection and managing encroachment upon our bases, MCICOM's Marines, sailors, and civilian Marines significantly enhance the Marine Corps' warfighting mission. We accomplish this broad spectrum of duties by strengthening the bond with the Operating Forces and closely linking installation support to the operational and training requirements of MEFs, Training and Education Command, and tenant organizations.

Prior to the creation of MCICOM, the Corps' 24 installations were managed by the 2 major Marine Corps force commands whose primary responsibility was to focus on the readiness and operation of the Operating Forces. One of the foundations for the establishment of MCICOM was to relieve the Operating Forces of the burden of managing bases and stations and place primary emphasis on the command to focus installation support on directly supporting the Marine Corps' warfighting mission. The intent of this reorganization is to allow operational commanders at all levels to concentrate their efforts on preparing their forces for the full spectrum of contingencies—from humanitarian assistance to full-scale combat operations. MCICOM continually strives to

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*MajGen Juan G. Ayala. (Official USMC photo.)*

align its capacities against the highest priorities of the operational and training commands.

Before MCICOM's establishment, base support functions had no standardization, which meant support was inconsistent and varied in quality. Oftentimes, Marine units and Marines and their families travelling between or relocating from one coast—or base—to another found that differing requirements, facilities, and base support procedures existed even for similar activities on the bases. Recognizing the need to align and streamline base functions in support of operational units and tenant organizations, the Commandant of the Marine Corps directed in 2011 a broad reorganization of In-

stallations and Logistics at HQMC. This resulted in the formation of a single installations command under the leadership of a single commander to manage all installation functions and equities.

MCICOM has a complex and challenging mission as the single authority over all installation matters, but this new approach to installation management has increased the efficiency and effectiveness of installation functions and operations. It established clear lines of command authority, prioritized limited resources, capitalized on community relationships, standardized installation levels of support, and ensured installation support is directly linked to the requirements and capabilities of the warfighting mission. Perhaps the lack of knowledge and understanding of MCICOM's structure and performance is due to our plan to be transparent to those we serve: When Operating Forces arrive to train, the training facilities are present, available, and modern. When working, living, and community spaces are required, the facilities are clean and modern, the lights are turned on, and the plumbing works.

## Organization and Roles

Installations will play a critical role in providing premier training venues and force projection platforms for the Operating Forces as Marines return to garrison following more than a decade of combat deployments. Marine Corps installations are key national defense assets that offer a unique combination of ocean, coastal, riverine, inland, and airspace training areas. While delivering these critical resources to the warfighter, MCICOM must simultaneously meet its own installation requirements for

sustainability and affordability. MCI-COM's base and station commanders spend a significant amount of time and resources cultivating and forming strong partnerships with local, state, Federal, and host-nation governments, as well as other influential leaders in their surrounding communities. These partnerships ensure the long-term viability of critical training and maneuver areas by leveraging resources, providing mutual support, and joint land use master planning.

Headquartered in the Pentagon, MCICOM achieved full operational capability in October 2012. The command's organization constitutes four subordinate regional commands that span the United States and Pacific Rim. The regions are aligned to support the MEFs and other tenant organizations and they include:

- Marine Corps Installations Pacific at Camp Butler, Okinawa, Japan.
- Marine Corps Installations National Capital Region at MCB Quantico.
- Marine Corps Installations East at Camp Lejeune.
- Marine Corps Installations West at Camp Pendleton.

MCICOM's more than 33,000 personnel oversee 24 active duty bases and installations, 2.3 million acres of land, and 283 ranges, and execute a budget of approximately \$2.7 billion each year. Encompassed within those 24 installations are 11 air stations, air facilities, and expeditionary airfields. These airfields directly support the safe launch and recovery of a fleet of over 1,000 aircraft across more than 80 flying squadrons. MCICOM also provides operational support aircraft for transporting passengers and cargo in support of training exercises, contingencies, and operational commanders.

In fulfillment of its role, MCICOM provides a broad spectrum of services and support across 39 unique installation functions that are framed in 7 functional areas:

- *Marine, family, and community support.* Family team building, Semper Fit and community support, behavioral health, tuition assistance, personal and professional development, unit personal and family readiness, fam-



**Housing for our Marine families is important.** (Photo provided by MCICOM.)

ily care, retail, food and hospitality, commercial recreation, and temporary lodging.

- *Facility support.* Facilities asset management, facilities services, facilities investment, environmental management, housing, utilities operations, energy.
- *Installation protection.* Emergency management, law enforcement, physical security, fire and emergency services.
- *Command and staff support.* Public safety and occupational health, legal support, command support, government and external affairs, religious support, business practices, financial resources, personnel support, public affairs.
- *Information technology.* Voice services, data services, video services, information technology maintenance and repair.
- *Logistics support.* Transportation services, supply services, food services, fuel, procurement services.
- *Training and operations support.* Military training, range management, aviation operations support.

MCICOM has the challenging task of executing this broad range of mission-essential activities amid deep budget cuts; therefore, the command constantly seeks efficiencies in base functions while continuing to focus limited resources on warfighter priorities.

On the surface the command's mission appears to be the provision of services and maintenance; however, MCI-COM's true relevance is far deeper and more important than that. Our bases and stations serve as the deployment platforms that ensure the Marine Corps' readiness. Without installations functioning as well-oiled machines—allowing our Marines to live, train, and deploy—readiness and force projection would suffer.

### Key Priorities

So how does MCICOM successfully support the warfighter and execute its broad mission? It accomplishes the mission within a fiscally constrained environment through increasing efficiency, maintaining effectiveness, and focusing on long-term sustainment.

Focusing on warfighter requirements from the present to 15 or more years into the future, the command has developed a series of programs and processes to ensure sustainability of resources and alleviate the impact of budget constraints in the coming years.

*Land acquisitions and management: Expanding our training areas.* Marines cannot train without access to sea, land, and air space. MCICOM ensures that the land, buildings, and structures to provide commanders the ability to sustain, train, and prepare their units for

contingencies are available for use at the right time and in the right place. As technology and the nature of war evolve, our forces must also evolve. To keep pace, MCICOM's efforts have resulted in numerous land acquisitions and training range expansions around the world. Some of the most important acquisitions have been in Twentynine Palms and the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range in California, and the Townsend Bombing Range in Georgia.

In an era of downsizing, these acquisitions increased Marine Corps training areas by over 450,000 acres, allowing Operating Forces enhanced training opportunities. For example, prior to the Townsend Bombing Range acquisition, the Marine Corps did not have a precision guided munitions range on the east coast. The Townsend Bombing Range will provide aircrews a larger training area that will accommodate new smart-bomb technology and allow aviators to train locally rather than deploying to the west coast. The Twentynine Palms land expansion allows MEB-sized MAGTF units the ability to conduct realistic and sustained combined arms live fire and maneuver utilizing emerging weapons and tactics.

There are numerous other examples, such as the Encroachment Partnering Program, that allow the Marine Corps to partner with nonprofit organizations to protect our ability to train, even on our existing property. Recently, the Beaufort County Open Lands Trust purchased 500 acres of land in Beaufort County, SC, where incompatible development would have endangered Marine Corps operations in the vicinity of MCAS Beaufort. The Department of the Navy subsequently purchased the development rights in the form of an easement that will prevent future conflicting development on that adjacent land.

Land acquisition remains vital to our readiness; however, it can be a long and tedious process requiring years of negotiations or partnering with individual landowners, government and elected officials, and communities. MCICOM's ability to protect the activities currently performed on our existing stations on land we already own is equally impor-

tant. Across our bases and stations, developers, investors, environmentalists, and others continue to seek either access or outright ownership of both our real estate and property immediately adjacent to our bases that have traditionally served as a buffer. MCICOM strikes a fine balance between retaining our ability to train while protecting the environment and developing renewable energy resources, ensuring a positive return on our infrastructure investments. We strive to achieve a foundation where the public sees our presence on our installations and in their communities as essential to national security.

*Community outreach (government and external affairs).* Encroachment has significant and often lasting effects on Department of Defense installations and will become more challenging in the future. Once-isolated bases and stations now experience residential and commercial development right up to their boundaries. As urban growth around our installations increases, public interest—and in some instances, concern—regarding base activities continues to grow. The first to address these concerns are the base and station commanders. These commanders spend a significant amount of time engaging with their respective communities and are the de facto face of the Marine Corps to those who surround or come in contact with the bases. Their presence and constant public engagement are essential to maintaining and expanding training areas vital for operational readiness, as well as being the good neighbors that every community desires.

An example of MCICOM's community outreach efforts is found at installations in the Pacific where strategic key leader engagements are conducted daily, including coordination with the Japanese Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials in Okinawa and at the U.S. Consulate, the Okinawa Prefectural Government, and other key governmental agencies. This interaction facilitates cooperation and resolves many sensitive issues that are inevitable when operating, training, and living abroad.

Commanders walk point, advocating against land and radio frequency

encroachment, addressing noise complaints, resolving law enforcement jurisdiction concerns, and assuring the public, government leaders, and environmental advocates that Marines are some of the best stewards of natural and cultural resources in the world. They educate civic and business leaders about their bases' economic impact on the communities and advocate on behalf of Marines and their families on issues such as education and housing. They are often speakers at school boards, chambers of commerce, civic functions, and other community forums. As the face of the Corps, their access, influence, and status in their communities strengthens alliances, informs influential elected representatives, and tells the Marine Corps story. While the role of being good neighbors cannot be overstated, their most important role is to ensure installation training areas are not encroached upon and that surrounding communities understand and support the Marines and their mission.

*Increasing resource efficiencies.* Declining budgets require commanders to make tough decisions on what functions or capabilities to retain, reduce, or discard without jeopardizing operational readiness. MCICOM commanders face the same challenges. To meet these challenges, MCICOM has implemented a process called common output levels of service (COLS) to bring a corporate management philosophy and discipline to installations by focusing on performance and costs. COLS provide commanders the ability to make informed decisions within a capability portfolio management framework and to deliver essential services while maximizing scarce resources. Supported commanders clearly understand levels of service and support they can expect to receive, thus informing budgeting decisions. Key elements of COLS include:

- Standardized terms to link systems (e.g., readiness, financial, and operations). This enables changes in one system to be incorporated in all.
- Visible costs of services. This enables budget justification and understanding of the impact of shifting funds from one requirement to another.

- Improved planning capabilities to predict resource requirements in changing environments.

The metrics used in COLS will also be used to report mission readiness in the Defense Readiness Reporting System—Marine Corps. When complete, the Defense Readiness Reporting System—Marine Corps will directly align an installation's level of service to the combat readiness of the supported Operating Forces. Simply stated, COLS define installations' services, the resources required to provide those services, and the costs to deliver them, all while maximizing limited funding to the maximum benefit of supported commanders.

*Energy ethos is critical to readiness.* The largest draw on MCICOM's budget is energy costs. In fiscal year 2013, MCICOM paid \$112.6 million in installation electricity and fuel costs. This represents a trend of ever-increasing utilities costs that is simply not sustainable. The Marine Corps' experience on the battlefield has proven that the prudent use of energy enhances combat effectiveness by making forces lighter and faster. Installation energy savings are equally important, but MCICOM has established a two-pronged, cutting-edge approach to energy efficiency versus the outdated methods of arbitrary cost-cutting actions such as simply removing light bulbs, raising/lowering building thermostats regardless of building function, or parking necessary support vehicles. First, MCICOM is aggressively pursuing—and investing scarce resources in—alternative energy sources and methods to reduce energy consumption while striving to achieve energy security.

Since 2009, the Marine Corps has invested over \$500 million to provide more efficient heating, cooling, lighting, and building systems. This includes the incorporation of advanced energy-saving features in the recently constructed multibillion dollar barracks and facilities throughout the Marine Corps. MCICOM has also enhanced energy security by adding renewable generation capability to reduce the load on regional electrical grids; by 2015 nearly 9 percent of installation electricity will come from renewable sources.



**Quality of life is a key aspect of supporting our Marines and sailors.** (Photo provided by MCICOM.)

These long-term investments are already saving millions in utilities costs today and will save up to \$80 million a year when completed. *Why is this relevant to the warfighter?* It is relevant because reducing the cost of utilities means that bases and stations will be able to fund other priorities that directly support the Operating Forces.

Second, in an effort to replace the old, arbitrary energy cost savings methods, MCICOM is creating and fostering an energy ethos among all those it

serves. MCICOM owns the physical infrastructure at their bases and stations; however, it is not the primary user of utilities. For this reason, the command has placed renewed emphasis toward educating and involving supported commands in embracing one of MCICOM's energy lines of operation—fostering an energy ethos—to ensure understanding that the efficient use of vital energy resources has a positive impact on Marine Corps readiness. As a result, installations are becoming increasingly more

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energy efficient, returning scarce dollars to support training, facilities maintenance, and operational readiness.

*Facilities investment and military construction.* MCICOM is committed to maintaining the most cost-effective installations' infrastructure in order to carry out its primary mission of supporting the Operating Forces. As budgets become scarce, base and station commanders must continually update, reshape, and resize their facilities to meet new requirements by consolidating facilities, demolishing obsolete structures, and creatively using excess inventory. Commanders must also maximize the use of existing facilities. MCICOM has invested over \$2.6 billion in facilities sustainment, restoration, and modernization since achieving initial operational capability.

MCICOM is currently focused on the construction of facilities to support Joint Strike Fighter and Osprey aviation relocations to Hawaii and Japan, environmental and safety corrections, and Marine Corps Security Force Regiment consolidation. Additionally, the fiscal year 2015 budget request includes \$52 million to support the relocation of Marines to Guam. Since 2012, we have invested over \$2.7 billion in new construction to support these and other efforts that are considered critical to basing, training, and supporting Marine Corps units in the continental United States and at overseas Marine Corps installations.

This year, MCICOM will demolish buildings (built circa 1920 and 1959) at MCAS Miramar, MCRD San Diego, and MCAF Quantico. Removal of these facilities will return over 100,000 square feet of space for future base development, and eliminate excess facilities that consume valuable resources.

*Installation protection.* Installation protection is essential to maintaining operational readiness and ensuring the safety and security of Marines, their families, and those who work on, visit, and live both on base and in surrounding communities. MCICOM commanders' installation protection efforts focus on ensuring that people, facilities, key infrastructure, and high-value assets are protected from theft, sabotage, or

destruction. Commanders use the Marine Corps' mission assurance process to support risk-informed decision-making for installation protection matters. This process allows MCICOM to link "mission owners" and "asset owners" in risk-management activities.

Emergency managers coordinate activities necessary to prepare and respond to natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other manmade disasters. Every hour of every day, nearly 5,000 MCICOM personnel man the pickets of a defense-in-depth security posture protecting our 24 bases and stations.

Due to resource constraints, MCICOM commanders must take informed and calculated risks at their installations on a daily basis. However, they

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***MCICOM's success as a command is directly tied to the corresponding combat efficiency and readiness of our Operating Forces.***

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continually strive to mitigate these risks through improved technology, enhanced response systems, random measures, and realistic training. Despite the aforementioned risks, MCICOM commanders are committed and prepared to protect their bases and stations.

***Advocacy and the Future***

Chaired by the Commander, MCICOM, the Marine Installations Board (MIB) is the overarching advocacy body that supports installation equities across the Marine Corps. The MIB concept and purpose mirrors aviation's Marine Aviation Board and the combat arms' Ground Board. The MIB is the partner to the Marine Logistics Board; together, these form the Installations and Logistics Board.

The MIB focuses on actionable issues with sufficient depth and rigor to justify resources that will accomplish our installations' anticipated missions.

To accomplish this more effectively, the MIB recently established 10 Installation Advocacy Groups (IAGs), most of which are installations-specific, and are the only such bodies in the Marine Corps. IAGs include facilities, installation protection, logistics services, safety, workforce management, information technology, training support, aviation, government and community engagement, and Marine Corps Community Services. The IAGs seek input from all stakeholders, with a focus toward regional installation commanders and operational commanders.

MCICOM's success as a command is directly tied to the corresponding combat efficiency and readiness of our Operating Forces. Installation commanders will accomplish this by maintaining and strengthening the goodwill and support from their communities and influential civic and elected leaders. Base and station commanders will continue to be laser focused on making their individual installations the ultimate MAGTF training and deployment platforms for their supported operational and training units while enhancing the quality of life of Marines, sailors, and their families. The Commandant's decision to establish MCICOM will continue to pay dividends for the Marine Corps as operational commanders continue to recognize the importance of installations and the support they provide. Installations are represented and included in meetings and decision-making forums at every level of command in the Operating Forces. Conversely, operators are present and contribute at the MIBs. As I always tell my commanders, it is irrelevant how good we think we are, or how well we believe our support is to the operators; the ones who really matter are those whom we support. Your job is to make them recognize that you and your teams' support are indispensable to their success.

