

MCICom and Its Importance to Every Marine

New command works to find the right balance of installation service levels in light of budget cuts

by the Staff, MCICom

Marine Corps Installations Command (MCICom) is responsible for:

- Twenty-four active duty installations.
- More than 12,000 buildings on more than 2.3 million acres.
- Approximately 30,000 installation management personnel worldwide.
- Approximately \$4 billion annually in operations, sustainment, and new construction.

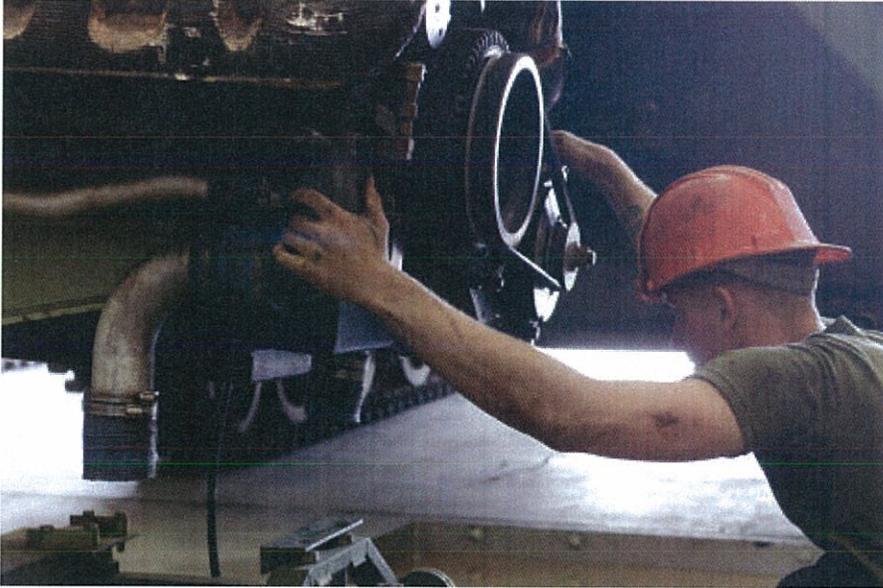
Installations are critical to supporting readiness of Marine Corps Operating Forces as well as providing quality of life for our Marines, sailors, and families. But significant funding challenges begin this fiscal year as budget cuts affect the operations and services on Marine Corps installations. Fortunately, “the new Command in town”—MCICom—reached full operational capability in September and is already tackling the tough task of effectively providing critical services while balancing a shrinking budget. Some difficult decisions will need to be made.

Creating the New Command

In 2005 the Marine Corps instituted a regionalization structure for installations and stood up MCICom East (MCIEast) (southeastern United States, located at Marine Corps Base (MCB) Camp Lejeune) and MCICom West (MCIWest) (southwestern United States, located at MCB Camp Pendleton). These regions provided direct connectivity between Marine Operat-



Operational requirements are linked to installation support functions. (Photo by Kami Swingle.)



Readiness is a top priority. (Photo by Kami Swingle.)

ing Forces and the installations they resided on. Further, management of issues on land between installations within a region, like encroachment control, became far more successful. The Marine Corps now had the ability to educate and inform constituents living between installations resulting in harmonized development that supported both surrounding communities and Marine Corps operational needs, especially three-dimensional training.

However, a central Marine Corps installations command was not established. As a result, varied personnel structures, mission statements and tasks, and command arrangements evolved. These multiple layers and differences created an inability to uniformly prioritize, allocate, and manage all installation resources and made it difficult to implement Corps-wide policy. To resolve these issues, MCICom was formally stood up on 1 October 2011 as the single command authority for Marine Corps installations. It has direct oversight of previously established MCIEast and MCIWest, newly established Marine Corps Installations Pacific (MCIPac), and MCB Quantico. As MajGen Peter J. Talleri, Commander, MCIPac, stated:

We are committed to optimizing regional installation support to our operating forces. We do this by linking

our operational requirements to our installation support functions. We are doing this now, and we worked very hard over the past year to fully develop our capability to oversee, direct, and coordinate our installation support functions.¹

Command Relationships

All three regions are geographically collocated with their respective MEFs. MajGen James A. Kessler, Commander, MCICom, said:

Standing up an entirely new command in one year with such a lean staff was a challenge, maybe even unprecedented, due to the huge scope in terms of geography, people, and money. What will ensure our success will be the relationships between the regional commanders and the Operating Forces they support.²

Oversight of Marine Corps training bases and recruit depots is not included in the formal command structure, but these Training and Education Command (TECom) installations are aligned with their respective MCICom regions for all installations-related issues. MCICom and TECom are closely integrating execution of Corps-wide range support.

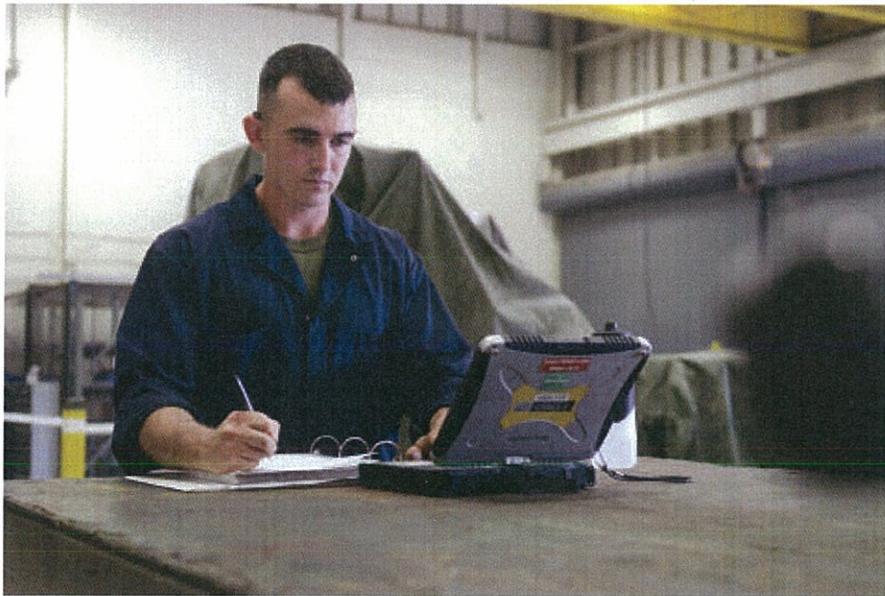
MCICom's commander also serves as both Assistant Deputy Commandant

for Installations and Logistics (I&L) (Facilities) and Commander, Marine Corps National Capital Region Command. MCICom has a very lean headquarters element of 178 personnel and will continue to implement *Title 10* programs and responsibilities long overseen by the I&L Department at Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC). To mitigate risk and minimize staff size, the organization leverages the Command, Control, Communications, and Computers Department at HQMC that remains tasked with oversight of Marine Corps-wide information systems, including those at installations. Also to minimize the MCICom staff structure, a decentralized approach was taken with the administration section (G-1) relying on the more robust abilities of regional installation personnel administration centers and human resource offices.

MCICom Headquarters is organized under the same general staff construct used by the Operating Forces. Installation management will continue to be conducted using the Marine Corps model with 37 separate functions. However, not all 37 are under MCICom management. Therefore, MCICom works to ensure excellent interface with other organizations, including Marine Corps Community Services tasked with implementing quality of life and family readiness programs. "We do not own all the installation functions that are vital to the success of Marines," stated Sgt-Maj John Ploskonka, MCICom. "We must make every effort to understand those programs and assist where we can to ensure program success, support enduring quality of life, and reduce duplication of effort."³ Interfacing occurs with other HQMC offices, including the Plans, Policy, and Operations Department (Physical Security); Aviation Department; I&L Logistics Division (Fuels and Explosive Ordnance Disposal); and the Expeditionary Energy Office.

Setting Priorities and Building Consistency

"Having a strategic plan is critically important to how we address the future," said MajGen Kessler. "No doubt there will be unexpected events that



There is an ability to request higher levels of service if required. (Photo by Kami Swingle.)

we didn't predict, but having a plan in place will put us in a position to respond smartly." Kessler and his team published its initial strategic plan in January and have been executing it in a "very collaborative and transparent manner." The strategic plan and list of 37 installation management functions is available at www.marines.mil/unit/mcicom. The five goals of the plan are:

- Enhance installation support of warfighting readiness.
- Ensure the long-term viability of all installations.
- Provide high-quality, sustainable, and affordable installation support.
- Optimize workforce excellence.
- Promote critical partnerships.

MCICom provides the Commandant with a more effective means to address Service-wide installation management challenges. As the point of entry for all installation matters, MCICom creates uniformity among installation missions, tasks, processes, procedures, structure, service levels, and funding allocation. A single installation higher headquarters drives a consistent application of resources—people, money, and services—resulting in efficiencies and cost reductions across the enterprise. As observed by Col Allen Broughton, MCICom Chief of Staff:

Marines and families moving across Marine Corps installations will experience

consistency in types and levels of service such as using 9-1-1 for emergencies and general appearance including signage which will ease their transitions throughout their many career station changes.⁴

Cuts, COLS, and Clean Audit

The timing of the standup of MCICom coincided with significant Federal government-wide budget cuts. MCICom's immediate focus is, therefore, implementing major cuts targeted at installation management. These cuts—many resulting from a reduction in the Corps' force from 202,000 to 182,100 Marines—will affect the ability to provide all existing installation services at their current levels. Further, budget cuts will necessitate a more Spartan definition of requirements than those developed during the last decade. "We must address cuts with our eyes wide open and recognize the future will be different from the past," stated Maj-Gen Kessler. "If cuts affect an installation then the Operating Forces are affected."⁵ MCICom's goal is to ensure that resources are focused on the most critical needs while balancing tasks and missions with available funding.

To help MCICom determine what base operations support services could be adjusted and to what degree, MCICom is looking to use clearly de-

defined common output level standards (COLS). "MCIWest will continue to prioritize resources, and provide installations with direction and oversight to further refine performance measures, improve effectiveness, and reduce costs,"⁶ says BGen Vincent A. Coglianesse, Commander, MCIWest. Base operations support covers diverse day-to-day functions, including transportation and food services, custodial and refuse collection, fire prevention and protection, supply operations, and utilities. "As these functions impact every Marine and installation patron, decisions to modify current service levels are of universal interest," observed David Clifton, Deputy Commander, MCICom. "Everyone has a supporting role from simply turning off lights to reusing serviceable equipment to consuming less overall."⁷

COLS have not been used in the past, meaning that tenants did not have a clear understanding of what level of service to expect or whether they were getting an appropriate level of service. Therefore, COLS will be developed in coordination with all tenants ensuring they are well understood.

By establishing COLS we will provide every tenant at every installation an understanding of what to expect. If we fall short, they will know it and can challenge us to improve. As budgets begin to tighten and we need to change the service levels we are providing, we can do so in a way that is clearly defined and understood. Therefore, it is important to ensure new initiatives like COLS are thoroughly coordinated with the Operational Forces through-out planning and execution processes.⁸

COLS also provide a means for tenants to request higher levels of service in specific areas if they have a need and associated funding; for example, increased lawn maintenance in support of change of command and retirement ceremonies or extended airfield operations to support training events.

Another emerging MCICom priority is participation in the Marine Corps-wide effort to obtain a clean audit. This initiative requires that the Commandant demonstrate to independent auditors that both leadership and personnel

are being good stewards of taxpayer resources entrusted to them. Since so many Marine Corps resources fall under MCICom, second only to manpower funding, it is a very large and important early focus. According to Mr. Clifton, a single MCICom Headquarters element:

... allows for consistent and uniform execution of a single audit plan across the installations making it easier to demonstrate our mission need for resources and retain public confidence in the Marine Corps.⁹

Continuing Programs That Protect Our Investment and Our Future

Other new initiatives and tough Service-level decisions are in MCICom's future, but the organization will certainly continue executing existing high-priority programs. These include:

- Reducing the Corps' energy footprint at installations by supporting the Marine Corps Energy Strategy and Implementation Plan to both cut en-

ergy consumption and implement renewable energy applications wherever feasible. MajGen Talleri notes that:

Energy conservation is a top priority ... from Hawaii to Okinawa to Korea, we are taking a proactive approach, looking for opportunities to reduce energy consumption, and pushing forward with implementing energy efficiency initiatives and renewable technologies.¹⁰

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- Remaining responsible environmental stewards by protecting health and safety of both base personnel and instal-

lation neighbors. This is executed while ensuring long-term access to critically important training lands and airspace through partnerships with communities, nongovernmental organizations, and state and local governments. Over the last decade these partnerships have acquired restrictive easements on over 30,000 acres in five states.

- Sustaining new facilities and infrastructure investments (over \$6 billion in military construction projects alone from fiscal year 2010–12) including state-of-the-art barracks and other installation assets, such as vehicles, furniture, and recreational facilities and equipment. SgtMaj Ploskonka commented that:

The average cost of a new BEQ [bachelor enlisted quarters] with 150 rooms is \$30 million and it should last 50 years. MCICom is working with installation Operational Force leaders and their Marines to ensure they have a sense of ownership of



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C2 TECOE and MISTC ... the first step in the Battle Staff Training Program

their barracks. Good stewardship of our installations means taking care of what we have today so that assets reach their predicted lifespan. Keeping facilities and equipment in good condition is very important to a Marine's quality of life today and preserves that quality of life for our future Marines.¹¹

A Good Start, but Many Challenges Ahead

Readiness is, without question, the Corps'—and MCICom's—top priority.

Marine Corps installations are irreplaceable strategic assets critical to ensuring the readiness of Marine Operating Forces as well as an enriching quality of life for Marines, sailors, families, and civilian Marines. "The regional commands must ensure a consistent level of service is provided to the Operating Forces," says BGen Coglianese. "It is imperative that we keep faith with our Marines, civilian employees, and family members by enhancing the quality of life across our installations while meeting all operational requirements."¹²

As the Marine Corps continues to modernize every aspect of its warfighting capabilities, installations must keep pace in delivering associated support requirements. MCICom is coupling technology with people to ensure long-term installation health even as financial resources become increasingly scarce. As the single integrator of installation requirements, MCICom is coordinating with Operating Forces and other program managers to ensure that high-priority functions and programs are managed in ways that optimize limited resources for the collective good.



We must be able to deliver required support. (Photo by Kami Swingle.)

Notes

1. MajGen Talleri's comments were made in an e-mail to Headquarters, MCICom, dated 12 June 2012.
2. MajGen Kessler is the first Commander, MCICom. His comments were made during a staff interview conducted on 24 May 2012.
3. SgtMaj Ploskonka is MCICom's first sergeant major. He made this comment in an e-mail to regions and installations dated 2 May 2012. Other comments were made during a staff interview conducted on 24 May and a followup interview conducted on 5 June 2012.
4. Col Broughton's comment was made during a staff interview conducted on 24 May 2012.
5. Kessler.
6. BGen Coglianese's comments were made in an e-mail to Headquarters, MCICom, dated 12 June 2012.
7. Mr. Clifton's comments were made during a staff interview conducted on 24 May and a followup interview conducted on 5 June 2012.
8. Kessler.
9. Clifton.
10. Talleri.
11. Ploskonka.
12. Coglianese.

