

21st-Century Marine Corps Infrastructure

DISCUSSION

Marine Corps infrastructure consists of 15 major bases and stations in the United States and Japan. In keeping with the Corps' expeditionary nature, these installations are strategically located near air and seaports of embarkation, and are serviced by major truck routes and railheads to allow for the rapid and efficient movement of Marines and materiel.

Recognized as the "fifth element" of the MAGTF because of the close link to the operating forces and their operational readiness, the condition and state of the Corps' infrastructure are of vital importance. With the ability to train as a MAGTF being a fundamental requirement of the Corps, infrastructure development planning is designed to provide the facilities, training areas, and ranges (both air and ground) to accomplish this requirement while minimizing excess and redundant capacities. When faced with increasing external pressures and constrained fiscal and declining manpower resources, challenges and opportunities arise to providing and maintaining a lean and efficient infrastructure that fully meets changing mission demands. Some of the principal installation issues include:

Public Private Venture (PPV) Housing.

The Marine Corps operates and maintains some 25,000 units of Military Family Housing, the majority of which are in need of major renovation or replacement. The Marine Corps is on the fast track to meet the Defense Planning Guidance goal of eliminating inadequate family housing by FY 2007 through a combination of traditional Military Construction (MILCON) and the aggressive pursuit of Public Private Ventures (PPV) projects. Most of the

Marine Corps' PPVs will be a partnership with private companies that will build, renovate, maintain and manage family housing communities.

PPV offers large multi-function community centers, routine service call completion in one to three days, property management offices open on weekends, and property managers on-site to ensure sites are maintained properly. Homes will be energy-efficient and well landscaped, have functional floor plans, high-speed internet connections, and other fine amenities. Rent and reasonable utilities for the privatized units equals the Basic Allowance for Housing and are designed to be a zero out of pocket expense for the Marine. Additionally, the private companies are required to set aside funds for renovation that will ensure these homes remain in good condition over the life of the projects.

Privatization will also result in the elimination of the Marine Corps' deficit of adequate private-sector family housing in the United States by 2009. Ultimately, 95% of the Marine Corps housing inventory will be privatized. This commitment to our Marines and their families will have a far-reaching and positive impact on retention and readiness.

Sustaining the Force - Blount Island Acquisition. We are committed to undertake the wisest possible course to conserve our real property and, when necessary, to acquire any additional property that is mission critical. The Blount Island facility in Jacksonville, Florida, is a national asset that must be acquired to ensure its availability for long-term use. Blount Island's peacetime mission of supporting the Maritime Prepositioning Force is vitally important, while its wartime



capability of supporting large-scale logistics sustainment from the continental United States gives it strategic significance. The facility will play a vital role in the national military strategy as the site for maintenance operations of the MPF for years to come.

The Marine Corps plans to acquire the Blount Island facility in two phases. Phase 1, funded in FY 2000 and FY 2001, is in progress and acquires interests in approximately 311 acres of land for the primary purpose of containing encroachment. Phase 2, planned for FY 2004, involves the Marine Corps' assumption of ownership of the central maintenance operational area, which consists of over 1,000 acres.

Encroachment Control. Encroachment, described as any external or internal force that causes or may cause the loss of, or restrictions to, the use of land, air, frequency, and sea maneuver areas, is a serious threat to the operational readiness of the Corps. Urban, industrial, and residential areas now surround many Marine installations that were originally remotely situated. This growth – along with initiatives from other federal, state, and local agencies – is often accompanied by pressure for access to Marine Corps resources or demands to curtail Marine Corps operations to make them more compatible with surrounding land uses.

The Corps' training lands often provide excellent habitat for threatened or endangered species, serving as islands of biodiversity amid densely populated urban areas. The Marine Corps is proactively engaged with federal, state, and local agencies and governments, as well as non-governmental organizations, to provide win-win solutions to these encroachment pressures, thereby ensuring compatible land

usage and environmental security without degrading mission readiness. Encroachment takes many forms and requires constant vigilance by commanders at all levels to ensure the continued, unimpeded access to the Corps' installations and ranges that are critical to the Corps' remaining a "Force in Readiness."

Environmental Compliance. Our nation has crafted a strong environmental code of conduct structured on a wide range of federal, state, and local laws and regulations, strengthened through increased regulatory agency scrutiny and enforcement. Due to the nature of the Marine Corps mission, environmental regulations present significant challenges, but these policies recognize that national defense and environmental protection can co-exist. Our ultimate goal is to "train as we intend to fight," while achieving compliance with applicable environmental regulations.

As the environmental stewards of our installations, the Marine Corps, through proactive engagement with regulators, has made significant strides in this arena. Today, Marines at all levels contribute toward this goal by simply performing their jobs with an increased awareness of potential environmental impacts. Specific efforts include Joint Land Use Studies, Integrated Natural Resource Management Plans, and aggressive pollution prevention programs.

The hard work does not end with these initiatives. Much like encroachment, the impacts of environmental regulation and compliance on the Corps' ability to fully utilize its installations are varied and require constant vigilance and attention to ensure that operational readiness is not diminished.

Quality of Services. The Marine Corps is dedicated to sustaining equitable quality of life with complementary quality services. Our focus on re-engineering and regionalizing common support services is yielding significant economies and improvements in services.

Driven by reduced resources, we are shaping and redefining the future of military food-service programs. There has been no comparable food service endeavor, in size or complexity, within the Department of Defense. Our requirements are fundamentally new and qualitatively different – we are truly “breaking new ground” in our efforts to improve readiness and our warfighting capability. By consolidating multiple contracted mess halls into two regional contracts and employing commercial industry practices, we are maximizing food service efficiencies and technologies. This regionalized approach essentially buys us a readiness capability that we cannot afford to lose.

We also have regionalized management of our garrison mobile equipment (GME) assets among our western area installations and have begun evaluating the eastern areas for similar treatment. Operating from a central hub with one dispatch office has produced efficiencies in vehicle usage,

minimized deadheading and downtime, and moved Marines back into the operating forces. Installation of an automated fleet management system facilitates the regional approach and standardizes data for reporting and costing purposes.

MARINE CORPS POSITION

The Marine Corps has a long-range vision known as Installations 2020 (I2020) that provides a roadmap to the future. This vision covers the entire range of installation issues, including a basing strategy; implementation of plans to retain access to training areas; proactive response to the continuing threat of encroachment; a best-business approach to base management; and a commitment to Quality of Life for the Marines, Sailors, and their families who live and work on our installations. By fully implementing this vision, the Corps will ensure that its installations fulfill their mission as the fifth element of the MAGTF, thereby contributing to the successful implementation of Marine Corps Strategy 21. I2020 provides a framework for installations to support evolving warfighting concepts and encourages innovation in further developing and operating the Corps’ installations so as to allow a balanced application of resources to best support the combat-ready Marine.