

Calendar

Feb. 8 – Marine Corps Acquisition Command Selection Board convenes.

Feb. 8 – Caracciolo Lecture Series, 2nd Lecture, 10 a.m. at Gray Research Center.

Feb. 14 – Contracts Game Show at 1:30 p.m. in Little Hall.

Feb. 17 – Modeling and Simulation Supporting Acquisition Short Course, 8 a.m. at Gray Research Center.

Feb. 24 – Radio Systems Platform Support Working Group meets at 8:30 a.m. at QNA 65 Barrett Heights Road, Stafford, Conference Room 1 and 2.

Feb. 28 – Command Competency Leadership Board meeting at 9 a.m. in Room 125, Bldg. 2200.

The Point

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The Point is an authorized publication for the employees and U.S. military service personnel attached to the Command. Contents are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, the U.S. Marine Corps, Marine Corps Systems Command or Program Executive Officer Land Systems.

'The Point' submissions

Each month, *The Point* brings Marines, Civilian Marines and families the latest news in Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) and Program Executive Officer Land Systems (PEO LS). Topics include security, safety and features from product groups, off-site program managers, deputy commanders, assistant commanders and Strategic Plan Objective Teams. There are also articles about spouses and families. To submit an article for this newsletter, send it to mcscpao@usmc.mil. Submission deadlines are the third Thursday of the month. *The Point* is distributed the first Tuesday of the month. Photographs are not published. Also, be sure to read *Families On Point* attached separately.

M&S supports Acquisition Short Course

Modeling and Simulation (M&S) is used throughout the acquisition process. While Defense Acquisition University courses, Department of Defense policies and various websites address M&S support to program acquisition, the specifics on how to do this are often lacking.

The M&S Supporting Acquisition Short Course offers practical guidance on how to effectively apply M&S to an acquisition program. It will be held 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Feb. 17 at the Gray Research Center. The following topics will be covered:

- Accreditation Process
- Configuration Management
- Contracting for M&S
- Integrated M&S
- M&S Support Plan
- Risk Management
- Scenario Development
- Systems Engineering Plan
- Test and Evaluation Master Plan
- Verification, Validation and Accreditation

Engineers, scientists and technical managers are recommended to attend the course. These individuals will be eligible for Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act Continuous Learning Credit. To register for the class, contact Tracy West, Georgia Tech Research Institute, tracy.west@gtri.gatech.edu, (703) 630-2400.

Tax center open for business

The Quantico Tax Center is open for walk-in appointments from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Services include preparing state and federal income tax returns free of charge for all active-duty service members and their families, as well as military retirees living in the area. There will be no alteration to the services offered.

Most clients will be served on a walk-in basis. Appointments will only be made for especially complicated tax returns. Anyone with a rank of lieutenant colonel or higher should make an appointment. Anyone else with a complicated return will have to begin with a walk-in.

All clients must bring their W-2 forms, a social security card for themselves and each of their dependents, and all tax-related documents such as 1099 statements on investment dividends or interest earned. Anyone who pays for childcare should also bring receipts for their payments and the address of the childcare facility. For anyone who did not have their tax returns prepared at the center last year, bringing a copy of last year's return will expedite the process.

The Tax Center is at 3095 Roan Street and can be reached at (703) 432-2072 or (703) 432-2073.

Acquisition and technical communities team up

*By Floyd Usry, Colonel (Ret.), USMC
Marine Corps Advocate
SPAWAR Systems Center Atlantic*

Sept. 11, 2011, marked the 10th anniversary of the attack by Al Qaeda terrorists on the United States. Since that event, Marines have been at war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Today, in Central Command, there are 23,000 Marines deployed and fighting as a result of those attacks. As the acquisition agent for the Marine Corps, MCSC equips and sustains those Marines who are entrusted to be "the most ready when the Nation is least ready." Today, those Marines are engaged in a counterinsurgency battle, and "their struggle is our struggle" because their lives depend on the equipment the Command provides to them.

MCSC Executive Director Dr. John Burrow has said that the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Centers (SPAWARSYSCENs) Atlantic and Pacific will grow in importance and urgency for the Marine Corps to remain invincible as America's expeditionary force. And recently, during SPAWAR Day with MCSC, Burrow reiterated that SPAWAR Systems Centers are considered Marine Corps Centers because MCSC intends to leverage the Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) technical strengths of their engineer workforce and facilities for the benefit of the greater Marine Corps.

Over the course of the past turbulent decade, MCSC and SPAWARSYSCEN Atlantic have partnered to equip and sustain Marines in their fight for decision superiority in the counterinsurgency battles of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). MCSC and SPAWARSYSCEN Atlantic are allied to meet the 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps' (CMC) Planning Guidance, specifically the CMC priority to equip the Marine for success in the current conflict in Afghanistan. MCSC recognizes SPAWARSYSCEN Atlantic as the preferred provider to equip the Marine with C4ISR engineered solutions.

Delivering best value to the Corps

Like other engineering centers, SPAWARSYSCEN Atlantic is a Working Capital Fund organization, meaning that it operates similar to a nonprofit business, in effect *not* making a profit as industry would, but providing products to various government sponsors (naval, joint, federal and coalition) based on an agreed-to cost for labor and materials. Although systems centers must think like a business, they don't measure success based on the balance sheet but on the warfighting effects on the battlefield. The successful fielding of C4ISR equipment to Marines in OIF and OEF is directly traceable to the MCSC program managers teaming with SPAWARSYSCEN Atlantic engineers to find the best balance between acquisition and technology to meet urgent time-sensitive requirements. The relationship between Marine and engineer is best exemplified in SPAWARSYSCEN Atlantic's vision: "Make IT Count for the Warfighter and the Nation." This is most evident in the field, from the strategic corporal to the commanding general who are using C4ISR systems to make decisions faster than the enemy.

Together MCSC and SPAWARSYSCEN Atlantic share many intangible values that can't be measured on a balance sheet. They share a common cause to support Marines with the best equipment. This equipment, placed in the hands of Marine leaders, enables the command of forces that create options and decision space for the nation's leaders. In the chaotic nature of war, the strengths are flexibility and adaptability. Value, affordability and competition are the new and accepted benchmarks for acquisition success.

While the intangible values and benefits are hard to measure, Space and Naval Warfare Command's (SPAWAR) contributions to the success of Marine Corps expeditionary operations can be measured in some typical areas:

- SPAWAR provides C4ISR solutions for more than 80 MCSC programs and projects.
- SPAWAR science advisors are embedded with the fleet at two Marine Forces Commands (MARFORS) and two Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEFs) to communicate Marine Corps operational requirements through Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC), Office of Naval Research and the naval labs.

Additionally, SPAWARSSYSCEN Atlantic:

- Understands the science and engineering challenges associated with developing and delivering complex C4ISR solutions to Marines.
- Supports approximately 70 percent of MCSC's C4ISR programs, spanning each element of the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF).
- Employs more than 240 government technical employees on MCSC tasks, which is a significant enabler for each command to become a smart buyer.
- Deploys government technical experts to support forward deployed Marines enabling the best possible combat readiness.
- Employs 1,185 military veterans, approximately 33 percent of its workforce, of which 297, about 8 percent of the total workforce, have a service-connected disability.

C4ISR systems used by the Marines

While more than 74 percent (2,700 employees) of SPAWARSSYSCEN Atlantic's workforce is composed of scientists, engineers and technicians, their wide array of technical skills include (but are not limited to): information assurance, enterprise and systems architecture, C4ISR platform integration, service-oriented architecture, cloud computing, software engineering, mobile tactical command-and-control systems, tactical wireless networks, command center technologies, enterprise cyber IT, etc. The full list of technical skills can be accessed via the Naval System Engineering Resource Center website.

This government workforce provides the technical hands-on work and oversight to put trusted and reliable C4ISR products into the hands of Marines. While there are too many successful C4ISR programs to mention by name, there are critical C4ISR systems built by engineers, managed by program managers and used by Marines in the command, air, ground and logistics elements that have been responsible for the day-to-day successes in Iraq and Afghanistan. Some systems are more recognizable than others, such as the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) program where, to date, SPAWARSSYSCEN Atlantic has integrated a diverse array (as many as 14) C4ISR systems onto 24,000 MRAP/MRAP All-Terrain Vehicles (MATVs) for all four services and Special Operations Command. This one system is generally credited as being the single greatest lifesaver in OIF and OEF against improvised explosive devices. But, SPAWARSSYSCEN Atlantic is also a major partner with the fifth element of the MAGTF bases and stations. It is a key partner in the installation of air traffic control systems at all Marine Corps Air Stations; as well as the key integrator of electronic security systems for 35 Marine Corps installations worldwide.

Navigating the future

During the past 10 years of war, Marines have used critical C4ISR systems developed by SPAWARSSYSCEN Atlantic. Just as the Marine Corps brings the best value to the Nation as an expeditionary middleweight force, so too does SPAWARSSYSCEN Atlantic offer the best value to the Marine Corps, based on its C4ISR technical strengths, understanding of the USMC's operational requirements and perhaps most importantly, the shared responsibility that its systems enable Marines to fight smarter than the enemy.

Interview with Commandant of the Marine Corps General James Amos

October 2011

Fleet Reserve Association Today/ Leadership Interview

As the Marine Corps works to further diversify its ranks, General James Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, spoke with FRA about the importance of diversity.

FRA: Why does it matter that the Marine Corps is diverse?

Commandant of the Marine Corps Amos: The Marine Corps is a product of the American experience and a defender of our 235-year-old experiment in democracy. It is important that the Marine Corps' composition include the many facets of our great society and remain connected to the American people.

History has shown us that inclusive societies are more stable, democratic and equitable — societies in which leadership and responsibility are shared amongst the various groups that comprise it.

The objective of diversity is achieving an organizational composition reflective of contemporary American society and raising the total capability of the Corps by leveraging all the strengths of all our Marines.

FRA: The military as a whole has been a leader in racial and gender integration for decades and the Marine Corps is obviously an equal-opportunity employer. Are there reasons that the Corps' demographics aren't more representative of the U.S. population?

CMC Amos: Across the entire Marine Corps, our demographics are fairly representative. We are focused on a comprehensive approach to ensuring our Corps reflects the composition of the American public.

We are not where we want to be with our officer corps. We are especially emphasizing our recruitment, mentoring and retention of minority officers since this is the area in which we want to improve most. We are also improving our mentorship of all officers so that we increase opportunities for minorities to serve at higher levels of leadership within our Corps.

FRA: What steps are being employed to support this diversity strategy?

CMC Amos: The Marine Corps Leadership and Mentoring Program is being reviewed and updated to ensure a proper level of diversity training, education and supervision. The key focus is communication, proper development and early identification and assistance for all Marines.

Initiatives such as The Marine Corps Leadership Seminar (MCLS) were established to develop a dialogue with university/institutional leadership to attract top talent for Marine Corps officer and enlisted programs. The MCLS is being implemented to engage the nation's diverse communities and to promote increased connectedness. The MCLS will provide a forum to showcase Marine Corps leadership and to attract potential Marine military candidates; ensure event participants gain positive impressions of the Marine Corps; and build relationships among influencers within selected urban communities.

We are reviewing our officer recruiting procedures to ensure we are maximizing our opportunities to recruit and select the very best of American youth to join our Corps.

FRA: You've recently spoken about the contributions of the Montford Point Marines to Marine Corps and American history. As the first African-Americans to serve in the Marine Corps since 1798, they opened the door for racial integration. Why is their legacy important to today's Marines?

CMC Amos: The Marines who served at Montford Point are a part of the rich legacy of our Corps. They answered our nation's call at a time when our society was deeply divided along racial lines. As such, many of their contributions went unrecognized and many times they were not given the recognition they deserved as Marines, as Americans, and as patriots.

It is important to all Marines, past and present, that we honor their selfless service and sacrifice and fully embrace their storied contribution to the history of our Corps. It is our intent to anchor our Montford Point Marines firmly in our Corps' 235-year history, and to anchor it in such a way that every young man or woman joining our Corps today clearly understands the significance of the contribution of these great American patriots.

Safety officers offer cold-weather tips

By Terri Moon Cronk
American Forces Press Service

Despite an unseasonably mild winter for much of the United States, military safety officials offer a reminder that Old Man Winter still has two months to go as they underscore the importance of winter safety for service members and their families.

“The month of February often packs a big winter punch, and it’s not too late to prepare,” advised April Phillips, public affairs director for the U.S. Naval Safety Center in Norfolk, Va.

The Naval Safety Center, U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center at Fort Rucker, Ala., and U.S. Air Force Safety Center at Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M., all kicked off winter safety campaigns in the fall, emphasizing that winter conditions require special precautions -- both on and off duty.

They’re increasingly using social media and blogs among other outreach tools to raise awareness and provide tips on everything from how to drive in hazardous blizzard conditions to how to shovel heavy snow.

For example, in addition to advising commanders to build and manage quality winter safety programs for their units, the Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center also promoted a “Take 5” message that promotes safety awareness to families and Army civilians as well.

It encourages members of the Army community to “Take 5” -- that’s five minutes, five seconds or more or fewer as necessary -- to think situations through to make the right safety decisions, explained Army Brig. Gen. William T. Wolf, the Army center director, in his message to the field.

That brief pause, he said, can make a difference in preventing accidental death and injury.

“Colder months present unique challenges for keeping our soldiers and their family members safe,” Wolf noted. “By working together, we can reduce the risk in all fall and winter activities. Make a plan [and] get the right gear.”

Driving in icy, snowy and dark conditions is among the most dangerous winter activities. Phillips reported, for example, that seven of the nine sailors and Marines killed in off-duty accidents from Dec. 1 to Jan. 19 were involved in motor vehicle and motorcycle accidents.

A Naval Safety Center fact sheet, “Winter, Your Car and You,” urges service members to ensure their personally owned vehicles are in shape for winter by inspecting the battery, ignition, brakes, wiring, hoses and fan belts; changing and adjusting the spark plugs, ensuring tires have adequate tread; and checking the antifreeze level.

Navy safety officials also recommended keeping a winter survival kit in the trunk, with essential supplies including a working flashlight and spare batteries, first-aid kit, ice scraper and snow brush, blankets and nonperishable, high-energy foods such as nuts and granola bars.

Few military bases in the United States have winter safety awareness programs as active as the one at Joint Base Elmendorf-Fort Richardson, Alaska -- a state that’s been buried in record snowfalls this winter.

Commanders there put out regular guidance to ensure their military members and families are prepared to deal with deep snow, ice, frigid cold and long hours of darkness, said media relations officer Chuck Canterbury.

Among guidance they provide is to wear several layers of clothing for warmth, drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration, keep vehicles stocked with emergency items and make sure school children’s clothing has glow-in-the-dark markings when they walk in winter darkness to and from the on-base school, he said.

The message appears to be resonating with the military community as people look out for each other, Canterbury said. So far this winter, no off-duty fatalities have been reported.

“Service members use the buddy system,” he said. “By [observing] your buddy, you can keep him safe from frostbite and other cold weather dangers.”

According to officials at the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center, being able to recognize these dangers is the key to avoid cold-weather injuries. They offer these descriptions of the most common cold-weather injuries:

-- Frostbite. Frostbite is the freezing of skin tissue that can extend through all layers of the skin and freeze muscle and bone. Frozen skin may turn red and then gray-blue with blisters. In the worst cases, the skin dies and turns blue-black, often requiring amputation. Deep frozen skin feels “wooden” to the touch, with zero mobility of the affected body part. Instantaneous frostbite can occur when skin comes into contact with super-cooled liquids including petroleum, oils and lubricants, antifreeze and alcohol, all of which remain liquid at temperatures as low as minus 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

-- Frostnip. Frostnip is the freezing of the top layers of the skin and is considered the first degree of frostbite. Frostnip usually results from short-duration exposure to cold air or contact with a cold object, such as metal. Exposed skin such as the cheeks, ears, fingers and wrists are more likely to develop frostnip.

-- Chilblains. Chilblains is a nonfreezing cold injury that results from repeated, prolonged skin exposure to cold and wet temperatures above freezing. Exposed skin becomes red, tender and hot to the touch and is usually itchy. These symptoms can worsen to an aching, "pins-and-needles" sensation, then numbness. Chilblains can develop in exposed skin in only a few hours. The most commonly affected areas are the ears, nose, fingers and toes.

-- Immersion foot/trench foot. Immersion foot is a nonfreezing injury that results from prolonged exposure to wet conditions between 32 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit, or inactivity with damp socks and boots. Immersing feet in cold water, infrequent socks changing, poor hygiene and allowing sweat to accumulate in boots or gloves will soften the skin, causing tissue loss and often infection.

-- Hypothermia. Hypothermia is a potentially life-threatening condition that involves cooling of the body's core temperature below 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Hypothermia occurs when body heat loss exceeds heat production due to prolonged cold exposure. Although hypothermia usually is associated with cold climates, it can occur at temperatures well above freezing, especially when a person is exposed to wet conditions for an extended period of time.

-- Dehydration. Dehydration, most commonly associated with hot weather, is a lack of water in the body. It's also easy to become dehydrated in cold weather, when many people fail to drink enough liquids and underestimate fluid loss from sweating. Proper hydration is especially important in cold weather because dehydration adversely affects the body's resistance to the cold, increasing the chance of injury.

Meanwhile, Army safety officials share these American Automobile Association tips for safe winter driving:

-- Accelerate and decelerate slowly. Applying the gas slowly is the best method for maintaining traction and avoiding skids. Also, gradually slow down for stoplights. Remember, it takes longer to slow down on icy roads.

-- Drive slowly. Everything, whether it's accelerating, stopping or turning, takes longer on snow-covered roads than on dry pavement. Increase your following distance to eight to 10 seconds to provide more room to stop.

-- Know your brakes. Whether or not you have antilock brakes, the best way to stop is threshold braking. Keep the heel of your foot on the floor and use the ball of your foot to apply firm, steady pressure on the brake pedal.

-- Don't stop if you can avoid it. It's a lot harder to overcome the inertia of a stopped vehicle than one that is still slowly rolling. If you can slow down enough to keep rolling until a traffic light changes, do it.

-- Don't power up hills. Applying extra gas on snow-covered roads just starts your wheels spinning. Try to get a little inertia going before you reach the hill and let it carry you to the top. As you reach the crest of the hill, reduce your speed and proceed downhill as slowly as possible.

-- Don't stop while going uphill. There are few things more difficult than trying to get moving uphill on an icy road.

-- If you really don't have to go out, don't. Even if you can drive well in the snow, not everyone else can. Don't tempt fate: If you don't have somewhere you have to be, watch the snow from indoors.

The Air Force Safety Center also offers guidance during cold-weather recreation, including skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, ice hockey, snowmobiling and ice skating:

-- Wear sunglasses. Sun reflecting off of snow can sunburn the whites of one's eyes. It's painful and unattractive, in addition to being bad for eye health. Be sure to wear sunglasses, even on partly cloudy days, if you're spending time around snow.

-- Wear sunscreen. The sun reflecting off the snow can cause wicked sunburn.

-- Drink water. Winter sports can be dehydrating, but the lack of heat often causes people to forget to drink enough, which can lead to nausea and faintness. Sufficient water can also help to adjust to higher altitudes.

-- Wear recommended safety gear. Research your activity and follow the recommended guidelines for safety gear. Helmets, pads, eye wear, and more are all worth it.

-- Maintain communication. Groups can be easily separated at ski resorts and in the mountains, so be sure to carry cell phones and walkie-talkies to stay in touch. Remember that cell coverage can be spotty to nonexistent in the places skiers, snowboarders, snowshoers and snowmobilers love, so bring a backup form of communication to keep from getting separated from your group.

-- Adjust to the altitude. If you're coming from a lower altitude to a higher one, be careful to listen to your body. Don't overdo it, and be sure to get plenty of water and rest. If you don't have time to gently adjust for a day or two after arriving in high altitude, then take plenty of breaks and listen carefully to your body.

(Donna Miles of American Forces Press Service contributed to this article.)