

Command Report

Establishment of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command

by Gen A.M. Gray
29th Commandant of the Marine Corps

"The Marine Corps has been successful because it has possessed the foresight and vision necessary to anticipate the future needs of the Nation with respect to our mission. For this purpose we seek to expand the role of the Marine Corps Development and Education Command at Quantico, Virginia. It will become even more active in the development and integration of concepts, doctrine, and systems requirements necessary for the conduct of tomorrow's operations."

—From testimony before Senate Armed Services Committee, 24 June 1987

Our Nation expects its Marine Corps not only to be combat ready today, but also to plan continuously for the future and determine what its warfighting capabilities should be for tomorrow. This second role has traditionally fallen to Marines at Quantico who, in concert with the Fleet Marine Forces, have been at the forefront in developing fundamental concepts like our amphibious and helicopter vertical envelopment doctrines. Quantico has been the Crossroads of the Corps—the place where our officers receive initial training and subsequent professional education, where many of our troops receive skill training, and where ideas are translated into organizational concepts, doctrine, tactics, and equipment.

For the past 10 to 12 years, expanding our training and planning capabilities has been at the core of many innovative proposals by such prominent Marines as Gen Louis J. Wilson, Gen Robert H. Barrow, and Gen Paul X. Kelley, all former Commandants; LtGen John H. Miller, a former commanding general of the Marine Corps Development and Education Command (MCDEC); LtGen Bernard E. Trainor, while assigned as the director of the Quantico Education Center; and both BGen Americo A. Sardo and MGen James Day during their tours as director of training at Headquarters Marine Corps. Their ideas for expansion and adjustment rightly involved Quantico, and it is time that we move out smartly to implement some change as a step in meeting our needs for the decade

ahead and on into the 21st century.

Over the past few months, the commanding general of MCDEC, LtGen Frank E. Petersen, Jr., has conducted in-depth analysis of the missions, functions, and organizations at MCDEC. Early in November, I approved a proposed plan and directed its execution on the 212th birthday of our Corps. As of that date, MCDEC became the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC), a name more accurately reflecting its new roles. MCCDC has been designed to increase our effi-

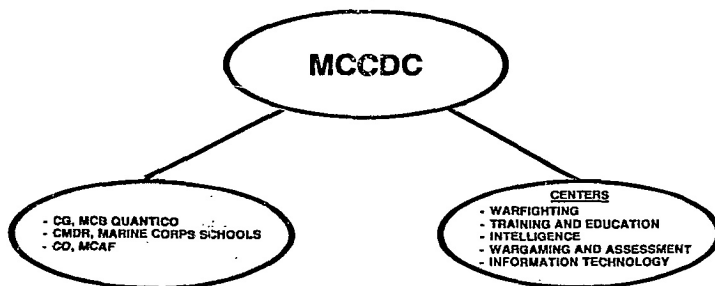
ciency in training, education, planning, materiel requirements identification, and concept and doctrinal development. Each of these elements is essential to ensuring that our responsiveness to crisis is the best we can make it.

At the heart of our reorganization plan is the establishment of five discrete but functionally related centers under the Combat Development Command. These activities are:

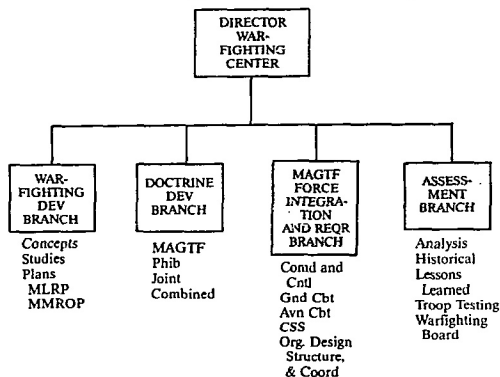
- MAGTF Warfighting Center
- Training and Education Center
- Intelligence Center
- Wargaming and Assessment Center
- Information Technology Center.

Because we must have continuous, top quality conceptual thinking, thinking that produces new ideas and expands old ideas, and thinking that is focused on tactical examination and doctrinal improvement, one of the pivotal organizations we are creating is the Warfighting Center. This center is designed to satisfy our need to develop operating concepts and doctrine, to improve our analysis of force structure and materiel requirements, and to enhance our doctrinal coordination with other Services and with our Allies. It will also generate meaningful, practi-

MARINE CORPS COMBAT DEVELOPMENT COMMAND QUANTICO, VIRGINIA



MAGTF Warfighting Center Organization



cal mid- and long-range plans that conform with evolving missions and employment concepts.

In short, the Warfighting Center will be our brainpower in the areas of operational concepts, studies, doctrine, and plans, and it will also provide what we call the "proponency" function. In this capacity, the center will identify needs across the spectrum of 19 wartime mission areas in our Corps. The center will assess structure, hardware, and personnel requirements, and, in concert with agencies at Headquarters Marine Corps, serve as advocate in prioritizing acquisition objectives. These functions are imposing, but we must discharge them with vision and precision, and we will assign people to these tasks with the right backgrounds and proven ability to think and act.

The changing nature of the modern battlefield demands that we intensify our training and education efforts. Our training must be dedicated to the purpose of preparing our commanders, staffs, troop leaders, and troops to make the right decisions and to execute those decisions in the uncertainties of combat. We seek to improve the *thought processes* at all levels. After careful consideration, we are convinced that we can magnify our training and educational benefits if we collocate these functions. Our plan is to establish a center at Quantico to develop and implement the right training and education policies and programs for all Regular and Reserve Marines, units, and schools. By combining the functions of training and education under one organization and under one commander, the Marine Corps will benefit through increased

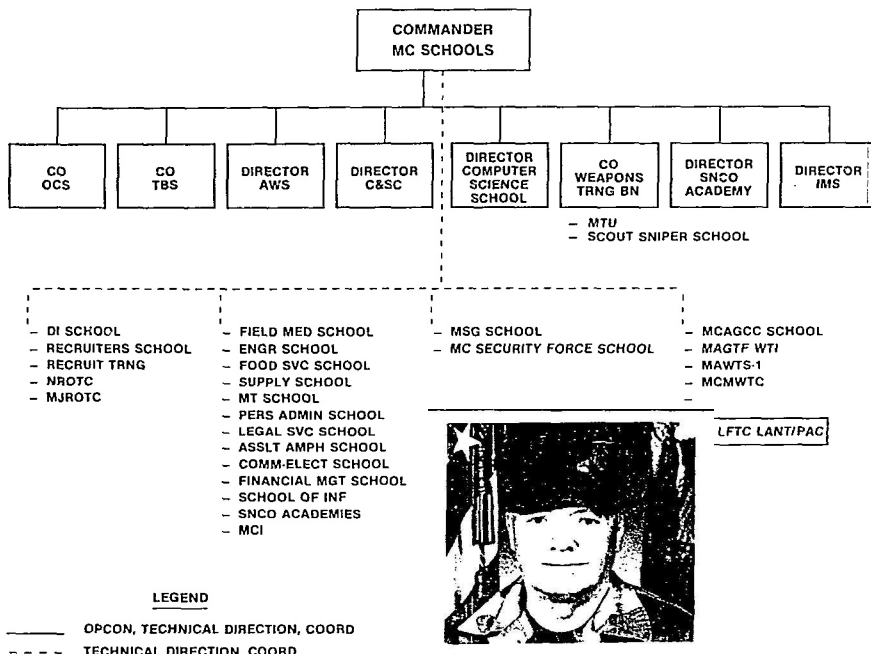
standardization and by economies realized from the sharing of instructors and educational materials. To join these functions, the Department of Training from Headquarters Marine Corps will migrate to Quantico and merge with the Education Center, forming the new Training and Education Center, MCCDC.

A Marine Corps Schools Command will also be activated at Quantico to exercise command functions over schools at Quantico and provide technical direction over schools throughout the

Marine Corps. One of the chief responsibilities of this command will be to promote standardization of curriculum, instructional materials, and instructional techniques. We must ensure that our Marines receive not only the right information, presented in the best format by quality instructors, but that the information presented is standard on both coasts and in the Pacific. This command will also help us ensure that we have the proper focus on combat oriented training and cross-training and that we have well-qualified Marines in our combat support and combat service support units.

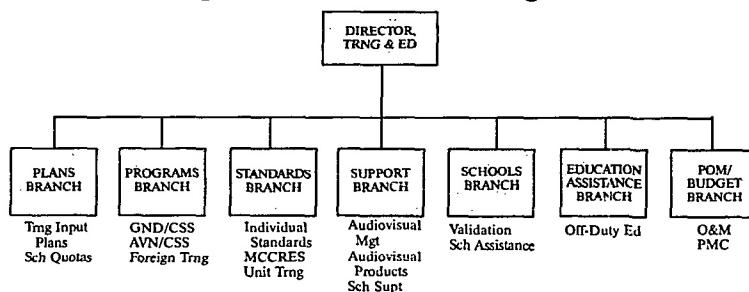
As an adjunct to our new Warfighting Center and to our Training and Education Center, an Intelligence Center is also being established at MCCDC. The primary functions of this center are to conduct current threat analysis, promote intelligence awareness, and provide intelligence support to MCCDC and to other tenant activities. Solid, reliable threat analysis lends itself to on-target materiel requirement profiles, appropriate training and education, sound concepts on which to base our doctrine, and optimal short- and long-term operational planning. For these

Marine Corps Schools Organization



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Training and Education Center Organization



reasons, the location of a capable, resourceful intelligence agency at Quantico is vital to the effectiveness of MCCDC. This center must and will work hand-in-glove with other centers providing the needed information on which to base concepts, plans, and doctrine.

Without the means to assess our concepts and doctrine and the means to train our present and future commanders and staffs, our new efforts at Quantico will be much less effective than is required in today's world. To avoid these shortfalls, a Wargaming and Assessment Center is being created. It is essential that the Marine Corps have state-of-the-art wargaming capability that allows us to assess the effectiveness of doctrine and hardware in countering the threat spectrum. Such a center will help produce quick-thinking, operationally responsible commanders and staff officers; and through modeling and simulation, it will provide the Marine Corps the advantage and opportunity of exercising new operational ideas to counter known and anticipated threats. The Wargaming and Assessment Center will be a vital link in the production of sound doctrine for our Marines in the coming

years, and it will provide valuable service to the Fleet Marine Forces and to our professional schools.

The fifth center being established at MCCDC is the Information Technology Center. This agency will provide needed information systems, networking internally with the other Quantico centers, the operational forces, the supporting establishment, and Headquarters Marine Corps. We are all aware of the pressing need for rapid transfer of information. To fail in this area is an admission of inefficiency at best and a loss of control at worst. We must institute measures through our Information Technology Center to ensure any shortcoming in this area is avoided.

The reorganization plan also calls for the reestablishment of the Marine Corps Base, Quantico. This organization will consolidate essential functions of administration, facilities, logistics, legal, civilian personnel management, and base training under a separate commander reporting to the commanding general of MCCDC. Essentially, this command will conserve the energies of the centers and allow them to focus on the needs of the Ma-

rine Corps, while the base commander provides appropriate support to the centers and to the personnel, both civilian and military, assigned to MCCDC. Our analysis confirms that this separation of responsibilities serves the best interests of the Quantico organizations.

Each of the five centers will be headed by a director who will also serve as an assistant chief of staff for the commanding general of MCCDC. By establishing the centers under Quantico's new command, we are confident the Marine Corps will be better informed, better trained, and doctrinally more solid; our materiel requirement profiles will better reflect operational needs; our plans will be practical and achievable; and our professional education will keep pace with current doctrine and employment concepts. The aggregate impact of these initiatives will produce a more combat ready Marine Corps.

As I mentioned earlier, the standup of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command was effected on 10 November of this year. We still have much to do in the execution phase, ranging from facilities preparation to the assignment of personnel. But by our timetable, this work will be completed by midsummer 1988. The centers can be accommodated in existing facilities and at no additional cost in personnel. We will have a new and better way of doing business and approach the next decade even better prepared for warfighting. The departures made from previous organizations and missions are appropriate and timely and will revitalize Quantico in its traditional, but expanded, role in our Corps. We are confident that these initiatives will ensure that the Marine Corps continues to be the best air, ground, and logistics combat team in the world.

USMC

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- A.M. Gray



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