

Logistics Training & Education

Modernization and a strategic integration

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Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 wrought some of the most profound changes and challenges that the Marine Corps has seen in well over a decade. Much transpired to force the transformation of the Marine Corps, driving it to realistic assessment and evolution within the arena of training and education (T&E). This began with the return of the Marine Corps to its naval-based heritage as set forth in the *38th Commandant's Planning Guidance (CPG)*, supported by the significance of the establishment of Training and Education Command (TECOM) as a Headquarters 3-Star Command and the reshaping of the Corps through *Force Design 2030*. Warfighting requirements have evolved with a clear direction from the commandant that has, and will continue to, drive DC I&L to evolve Operational Sustainment CONOPS, support CD&I in assessing capability requirements, and align Logistics Training to support TECOM in a single battle approach. Per the *CPG*:

The Marine Corps will be trained and equipped as a naval expeditionary force-in-readiness and prepared to operate inside actively contested maritime spaces in support of fleet operations. In crisis prevention and crisis response, the Fleet Marine Force—acting as an extension of the Fleet—will be first on the scene, first to help, first to contain a brewing crisis, and first to fight if required to do so.

Whether it is the frontline FMF combat service support Marine on a Special Purpose-MAGTF, the forward-deployed Marine assigned in OCONUS, or the civilian Marine supporting reach-

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back operations at any of the supporting establishments (SE), adequate logistics training and education (LOG T&E) is the underpinning of mission accomplishment. This article will provide a brief overview of some of the key background influences affecting LOG T&E modernization as well as highlight a few of the current ongoing initiatives.

The Operating Context

The current *National Defense Strategy (NDS)* defines an increasingly complex security environment that is shaped by rapid technological advancements and the changing character of war, coupled with innovative concepts of operations that our adversaries will likely employ. Former Secretary of Defense Mattis stated, “America’s military has no pre-

ordained right to victory on the battlefield.” He further contends that new commercial technology and speed of innovation will change the face of society and ultimately the “character of war.” However, “modernization is not defined solely by hardware; it requires change in the ways we organize and employ forces.” This is echoed by his successors as essential for warfighting success upholding,

Cultivating a lethal, agile force requires more than just new technologies and posture changes; it depends on the ability of our warfighters and the Department workforce to integrate new capabilities, adapt warfighting approaches, and change business practices to achieve mission success.

Nowhere is this more imperative than in the logistics community.

The CPG outlines specific focus areas that are critical to the continued long-term success of the Marine Corps:

1. Force Design.
2. Warfighting.
3. Education and Training.
4. Core Values.
5. Command and Leadership.

The Commandant first addresses it as a critical component of warfighting investment in stating, “We must change the Training and Education Continuum from an industrial age model, to an information age model. To that end, we need to determine the best way.” He then proceeds to specifically highlight education and training as one of his focus areas. In doing this he asserts, “I have noticed over the past several years that there is an increasing dissonance between what we are doing with regard to training and education, and what we need to be doing based on the evolving operating environment.” He mandates a transition from traditional Industrial Age T&E methods to Information Age T&E methods that “must enforce a more disciplined and



I MEF Marines, Sailors, and civilians receiving naval logistics integration training at the Operational Logistics Seminar. (Photo by LCpl Abigail Paul.)

decisions are required quickly and often with incomplete or overwhelming amounts of data. Our logisticians across the workforce require ongoing T&E opportunities that allow them to instantly collaborate and share information in order to remain current with logistics

1. Enable global logistics awareness: Train and educate through expanding strategic partnerships with Industry, Academia, DOD, and other critical stakeholders.

2. Diversify distribution: Train and educate the logistics workforce to seek out and employ leading edge theory and practices in advanced global distribution.

3. Improve sustainment: Train and educate the logistics workforce to seek out and employ leading edge theory and practices in execution of operational Supply Chain Management (SCM).

4. Optimize installations to support sustained operations: Train and educate the logistics workforce to seek out and employ leading edge theory and practices of operational SCM infrastructure support.

Viewing this through the lens of developing elite warrior logisticians, able to achieve the objectives of *Sustaining the Force* CONOPS as aligned to EABO and other emerging concepts, we must realize the current risks. TECOM points out current methodologies and modes of T&E are inadequate to the task of meeting organizational needs, necessitating the transformation to 21st Century Learning. To maintain competitive advantage, the logistics commu-

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rigorous assessment model in which not every [individual or] unit passes, and for which there are both rewards and punishments for performance.”

As expected, the 38th CPG has driven TECOM’s focus on rapidly developing the strategy to evolve from Industrial Age T&E to an Information Age. The approach is delineated in TECOM’s *Vision & Strategy for 21st Century Learning* and reflected in their *Training and Education Command Campaign Plan, Fiscal Year 2020–2025*. This is an acknowledgement that today’s competition occurs in the cognitive arena in which technologies create a warfighting environment where key

advancements, coupled with enhanced creative and critical thinking skills to develop rapid and effective logistics solutions. The intent is to strengthen all logisticians across all 74 MOSs and 57 civilian OccSeries by ensuring T&E is standardized and propagated from the Marine at the point of execution to the civilian Marine providing SE support services.

For the Marine Corps logistics workforce (Military, civilian, and Contractor), DC I&L’s *Sustaining the Force* outlines the critical lines of effort supporting the DOD and Service-level initiatives (these as interpreted from the T&E perspective):

nity must be willing to fully adopt the 21st Century Learning transformation and effectively leverage Information Age methods such as distance learning, industry and academic continuing education, accreditation, and certifications.

The Path Traveled

In 2014, LtGen William M. Faulkner (DC I&L) and MajGen Thomas M. Murray (CG, TECOM) published the Logistics Training & Education Strategy. This strategy outlined the mission, values, and vision that guided logistics T&E reform effort through the past few years. Despite resourcing challenges, it has continued to pursue its efforts to modernize and integrate logistics training and education, increase training and education opportunities, and expand their current focus. While the LOG T&E OAG established to support T&E efforts though, it lacked comprehensive approach starting with an objective analysis of the gaps. Thus, in 2019, the Logistics Plans, Policy, and Strategic Mobility Division led by MajGen David W. Maxwell and executed by Lt-Col Lindsay K. Murphy conducted an analysis of LOG T&E gaps. The work group, comprised of key stakeholders throughout the FMF and SE, identified nine foundational areas to direct LOG T&E modernization focus:

- Logistics IT.
- T&R Review Process.
- Ineffective or Outdated Career Roadmaps.
- MOJT/Proficiency Development.
- Advanced Individual Logistics Operations T&E.
- Senior-level LogEd Opportunities (individual and collective).
- MSC-level Staff Training.
- External Professional LogEd Access.
- Creative and Critical Thinking/ Problem Solving.

To maximize effective modernization in these areas, efforts must capitalize on the combined capabilities and of I&L, MCLOG, TECOM, and M&RA. Initiatives must seek out opportunity for cooperative and mutually supportive efforts, vice competitive and duplicative programs. To this end, HQMC I&L has revised the LOG T&E program to provide greater support to Service-level

initiatives, specifically, taking actions to enhance integration with TECOM and M&RA partners. Currently I&L, as partner with M&RA, MP, MPC 30 Civilian Workforce Planning & Development Section, is supporting the review of *MCO 12410.25 Civilian Community of Interest Program* that serves as the basis of the I&L and M&RA partnership regarding the civilian logistics workforce. This effort is to ensure the civilian Marines that support the Marine Corps Warfighters are

updated on policy for the Civilian Community of Interest (COI) program. It assigns responsibility for complying with civilian strategic human capital planning requirements in accordance with references of *MCO 12410.25* for the purpose of modernizing the program and facilitating training and education across the civilian workforce.

This critically important in the context of enabling our civilian Marines and SE Commanders to meet the challenges of their responsibilities in execution of *Sustaining the Force* Lines of Effort (LOEs).

Another critical element of meeting and executing the vision for Logistics Training and Education modernization is the Marine Corps Logistics Operations Group (MCLOG). As the caretaker and principal executor of the Lo-

gistics Tactics Training and Education Program, MCLOG spans the learning continuum from individual to collective training and is a principle element of achieving LOG T&E modernization objectives. Primary tasks include training expeditionary logistics instructors (ELIs), training logistics and battle staffs in constructive scenarios, managing logistics publications, and overseeing logistics efforts during the MAGTF Warfighting Exercise in support of MAGTF Training Command. Applying recent lessons learned, MCLOG redesigned its flagship course to certify ELIs. Re-engineered to be a four-week course built around a distributed maritime scenario, MCLOG successfully piloted the new course design this fall to better align with Marine Corps future concepts shaped by the *CPG*. MCLOG plans to run four annual iterations of this new Advanced Expeditionary Logistics Operations Course to continue generating critically thinking and adaptable ELIs. The Expeditionary Logistics Seminar Program supplements other Logistics Tactics Training and Education Program initiatives and provides an additional training venue incorporating the most current and relevant information into the Theater-level Logistics Seminar for pre-deployment units and Operational-level Logistics



MCLOG plans to run four annual iterations of the new Advanced Expeditionary Logistics Operations Course. (Photo provided by author.)

Seminar for MEF/MSC Staff. Through their efforts, MCLOG has identified specific trends that the logistics community must continue to improve: casualty collection and evacuation, understanding command and support relationships, adapting task organization for responsiveness and flexibility, controlling signature management of command and control nodes, and the integration of fires and intelligence to support security behind the main battle area. In achieving these objectives, MCLOG is able implement lessons from the MAGTF Warfighting Exercise into collective and individual training programs, providing near instant feedback to the force.

The Path Ahead

The challenge will not be easy, as TECOM’s campaign plan highlights the organization must overcome degraded capability, cuts in capacity, and lack of professional training opportu-

nity for those responsible for charting and developing the course ahead. While daunting, the task ahead is by no means impossible but can be reasonably summarized into three key concepts.

Validating the Vision. This will require engagement across the logistics workforce force—both civilian and military. To achieve an effective LOG T&E continuum, it all starts with close coordination with TECOM and M&RA lead partners in modernizing the (2014) *Logistics Training and Education Strategy* and *COI Program* and projecting T&E requirements through 2030 to support *CPG* and *Force Design 2030*.

Integration not Competition. For too long, T&E projects and programs have been working from a position of resource competition. With the establishment of TECOM as the Service advocate for training and education, it is important to integrate LOG T&E requirements into larger Service-level

initiatives. It must figure out how to bridge the commonalities of military and civilian T&E requirements. This is necessary to maximize economies of scale, while aligning LOEs and Centers of Gravity.

Casting a Wider Net. Ultimately, the individual Marine and civilian Marine are the most critical “systems” of logistics and combat service support operations supporting, all battlefield functions. Like any other weapon system, it must be maintained and enabled by a comprehensive and integrated Logistics T&E Modernization Plan. As an organization, the Marine Corps must acknowledge its limitations and harness the benefits of commercial industry and academic partnerships to remain on the leading edge of logistics excellence. To be successful, it is time to expand our perspective, break through traditional organizational bias, and truly become innovative and revolutionary thinkers.



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