

# G-6 Delivers

Modern comms for reserve readiness

by CWO2 Brandon L. McCreight

**M**arine Forces Reserve (MARFORRES) G-6 stands at the forefront of technological readiness, serving as the backbone of communications and IT operations across the Marine Reserve Force. Despite lacking a formal MEF structure and a Marine Corps Installations Command presence at Reserve sites, the G-6 rises to meet an expansive and complex mission set. Acting as both an enabler and advocate, the G-6 is critical to the sustained operational effectiveness of the Marine Corps' Reserve component. It ensures secure communication, resilient IT infrastructure, cybersecurity compliance, and cutting-edge innovation—all while supporting over 167 dispersed installations.

To carry out these vital functions, the G-6 is structured into six core divisions: Operations, Cybersecurity, Plans, Communications Security (COMSEC), Reserve Base Support, and Fiscal. Each division addresses specific areas of need yet works in concert to deliver seamless support to major subordinate commands and field units. In fiscal year 2024 (FY24), these divisions executed key initiatives to bolster resilience, enhance capability, and modernize infrastructure.

## Tactical Support and Technological Innovation

In FY24, the G-6 Operations division provided strategic guidance and hands-on support for tactical communications across MARFORRES. The division coordinated more than 80 exercise support requests for events such as INTEGRATED TRAINING Exercise 4-24, UNITAS 24, and various Theater Security Cooperation missions. These included tactical satellite communications, single-channel radio, and data

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services. A major milestone was fielding 2,500 AN/PRC-163 handheld radios in partnership with G-4, directly contributing to tactical modernization. Additionally, the G-6 Operations expanded the Marine Corps Tactical Systems Support Activity Warfighting Support Detachment, facilitating 30 site visits and providing realtime support across a range of exercises.

The division also emphasized skill development, hosting courses such as the Communications Planner Course and Advanced SATCOM Opera-

tor Course. In anticipation of future needs, G-6 tested commercial off-the-shelf technologies, including Starshield terminals for global low-earth orbit connectivity and wireless access points for classified and unclassified network access. As part of the transition from the Reserve Cyber Unified Network to the Marine Corps Enterprise Network (MCEN) Tactical Edge, the division supported exercises that adopted this new architecture, ensuring alignment with Marine Corps *Force Design 2030* and MCEN unification efforts.



**Marines with Marine Corps Forces Cyberspace Command pose for photos in the cyber operations center at Lasswell Hall aboard Fort Meade, MD. Marine Corps Forces Cyberspace Command conduct offensive and defensive cyber operations in support of United States Cyber Command and operate, secure, and defend the Marine Corps Enterprise Network. (This image is a photo illustration.)**

### Safeguarding the Digital Battlespace

The Cybersecurity division is central to protecting the integrity of MARFORRES' digital assets and ensuring compliance with evolving enterprise policies. In FY24, the team managed 16 systems and five application-specific authorizations to operate, along with 21 Assessment and Authorization packages. A critical undertaking involved migrating legacy systems to Microsoft Azure in line with the Marine Corps' enterprise policy. The Cybersecurity

Information Systems Agency Joint Provider Edge services, with eight more upgraded to Defense Information Systems Agency supported Commercial Ethernet Gateways, enhancing resilience and performance.

The division also supported the shift to Software-Defined Wide Area Networks, with seven locations already converted and 128 more planned. Telephony modernization efforts included the installation of Defense Red Switch Network capabilities and VoIP services

support for the CWF program, IT modernization at Home Training Center Lynchburg, VA, Marine Forces Command's Continuity of Operations site, and Wi-Fi expansion across the home training center reinforced its forward-leaning posture in communications readiness.

### Ensuring Secure Communications across the Force

The Communications Security division provided critical oversight and training to ensure the secure handling of classified materials and encryption devices. In FY24, COMSEC conducted 13 Central Office of Records audits, four technical inspections, 45 physical security surveys, and 25 site visits across reserve installations. A key highlight was the annual COMSEC Training Conference in Kansas City, MO, where managers received hands-on training, updates on policy, and system modernization information. Continued emphasis was placed on updating information application systems, account creation, and device replacement processes.

Through these proactive measures, COMSEC continues to protect the integrity of MARFORRES communications and classified systems, maintaining compliance and enhancing secure information exchange.

## *These efforts continue to foster a culture of cybersecurity awareness, ensuring mission assurance across the reserve force.*

Workforce (CWF) management team ensured the 136 reserve CWF members remained compliant, exceeding a 95 percent compliance rate for required elevated privileges. Incident response was also a priority. The team handled 104 cybersecurity events, including spillages and unauthorized activities, and provided remediation, training, and prevention measures. The Cybersecurity division also conducted a successful inspection visit to the Marine Innovation Unit, receiving high marks with only two discrepancies in its cybersecurity management program. These efforts continue to foster a culture of cybersecurity awareness, ensuring mission assurance across the reserve force.

### Strategic Integration and Infrastructure Modernization

The G-6 Plans division leads long-term strategy, policy alignment, and infrastructure modernization efforts. This year, the division managed more than 150 tasks through the Enterprise Task Management Software Solution, ensuring MARFORRES was represented at all levels of enterprise IT decision making. A key initiative was transitioning more than 130 network circuits to the Enterprise Infrastructure Services contract to reduce costs and improve efficiency. Additionally, 23 circuits were migrated to Defense

at MARFORRES Headquarters and Navy Reserve sites. Collaboration with external agencies such as the Marine Corps Systems Command, Program Executive Office Digital, and Marine Corps Cyber Operations Group ensured integration with the MCEN Tactical Entry Points and *always-on* connectivity during deployments. Plans also spearheaded cost reductions in telephony through renegotiated service contracts with AT&T. The division's



**PFC Erwin C. Mariano, a data systems administrator at Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, conducts a Service Life Extension Program upgrade on a computer. (Photo by Sgt Anika M. Lewis.)**



**Cpl Joshua Mackaman, a cyberspace warfare operator with Defensive Cyberspace Operations, Force Headquarters Group, Marine Forces Reserve, helps a civilian with a computer network analysis hacking game called “Packet Inspector” at DEF CON 31, Las Vegas, NV. DEF CON helps identify opportunities to join and participate in think tanks, research organizations and as interagency and industry sectors pertinent to DCO IDM and Marine Forces Reserve. The DCO-IDM and MARFORRES offer rare and valuable skills and experience found in a growing number of reserve Marines who work in cyber roles among hundreds of civilian employers. (Photo by Cpl Jonathan L. Gonzalez.)**

### **Full-Spectrum End-User and Infrastructure Services**

The Reserve Base Support division was officially aligned under G-6 in FY24, consolidating previously decentralized support functions. The team, composed of uniformed Marines, government civilians, and contractors, supported IT infrastructure, customer service, audiovisual capabilities, and mobile device management.

Significant accomplishments included IT support for the establishment of the Marine Innovation Unit, support for Marine Forces South’s move from Florida to New Orleans, and executive-level transitions for more than a dozen senior officers. Reserve Base Support also supported VIP conferences, network upgrades, and emergency continuity site readiness. The Mobility Team oversaw the successful migration of 855 NIPR smartphones to Microsoft Intune and managed 658 work orders. The Infrastructure Team installed a \$110,000 cellular repeater system at Marine Corps Support Facility New Orleans and refreshed hundreds of Windows 11-ready laptops and multifunc-

tion printers. The team managed an \$8.1 million budget and re-competed a \$4 million facilities support contract,

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working closely with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the MARFORRES Regional Contracting Office to ensure efficient service delivery. Quarterly site visits and rapid-response support ensured resilience and readiness across MARFORRES installations.

### **Enabling Innovation through Smart Budgeting**

The Fiscal Division ensured effective resource management, executing a \$13.5 million budget that supported every division within G-6. This included oversight of contracts, government purchase card transactions, and travel expenditures. The division processed 97

Information Technology Procurement Request Approval System submissions to ensure enterprise-wide compliance with Marine Corps acquisition policy. Its role as command coordinator ensured seamless fiscal support for IT initiatives and sustainment projects.

### **A Force Multiplier for the Marine Corps Reserve**

Marine Forces Reserve G-6 plays a critical role in enabling secure, modern, and reliable communications across the entire reserve force. Without the traditional support of a MEF or Marine Corps Installations Command structure, G-6 fills that gap by delivering enterprise-level IT solutions, tactical communications support, cybersecurity oversight, and infrastructure modernization to more than 167 dispersed reserve sites. In FY24, G-6 led efforts to field advanced communications equipment, expand network capabilities, enhance cybersecurity compliance, and support emerging technologies—all while coordinating strategic plans aligned with *Force Design* and Marine Corps Enterprise Network initiatives. G-6 also delivered hands-on support for training exercises, modernized legacy

systems, and ensured critical connectivity at both garrison and tactical levels. Through its specialized divisions, G-6 ensures that reserve units are not only connected and secure but fully prepared for mission success. As MARFORRES continues to evolve, G-6 remains a central force behind the Marine Corps Reserve’s operational readiness and digital transformation.

