

Training Command 101

Ten things you might not know about Training Command

by the CG and Staff TRNGCMD

Feedback from a myriad of interactions with junior and senior Marines and anecdotal evidence supports the conclusion that many Marines have little understanding of the critical role that Training Command plays in generating and sustaining institutional and operational readiness for the Marine Corps. This article will highlight some of the essential functions performed by Training Command while also providing a baseline understanding of key elements of the command.

1. Training Command is not “TECOM.” Although Training Command is commonly confused with Training and Education Command (TECOM), and numerically speaking represents a huge portion of the Marines assigned to TECOM, Training Command is just one of five general officer commands assigned to TECOM. As a matter of fact, if you ask a Training Command staff member, they will likely tell you that at least once a week they receive a call or email that is meant for TECOM—the two-Star (soon to be three-Star) higher headquarters. This confusion is understandable: for one thing, the names are similar. Training Command is also less than twenty-years-old (formed in 2000) and was not its own separate headquarters until it split (mostly) from TECOM in 2009. Complicating matters, TECOM and Training Command still share some matrixed staff functions, although there have been considerable efforts in the past year to separate most of those. For easy reference, TECOM’s basic hierarchy with Training Command shown in Figure 1.

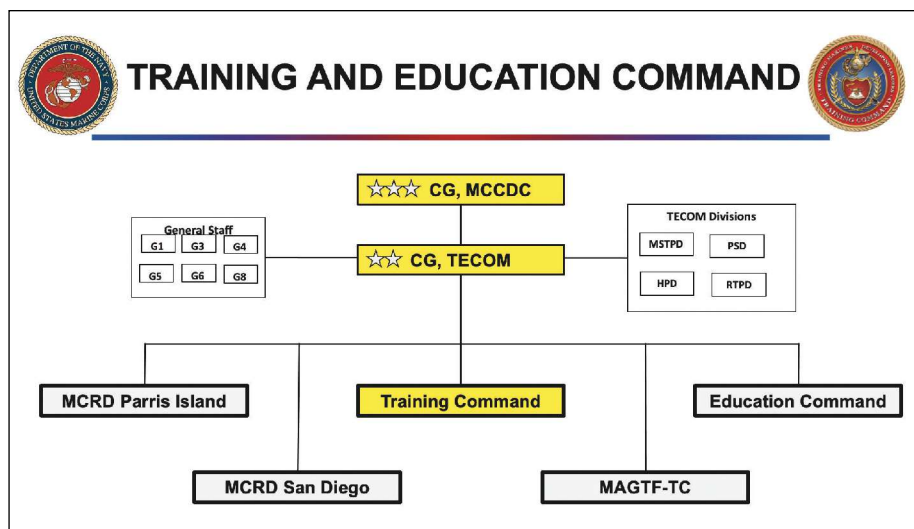


Figure 1. Training Command is one of five general officer commands under TECOM. (Image provided by the author.)

2. Training Command has a huge span of control. Training Command consists of 87 Formal Learning Centers (FLCs) that are regionally aligned under seventeen unique Colonel-level commands (fifteen commanded by Marine Colonels and two commanded by Navy Captains) spread across the continental United States (plus de-

Training Command is also less than twenty-years-old ...

tachments in Hawaii and Okinawa). At any given time, there can be more than 28,000 Marines and Sailors under the command and control of Training Command, including instructors, staff, and students. These personnel are en-

gaged in training associated with 242 different MOSs. All of that structure falls under CG, Training Command, a brigadier general with a small but capable staff located aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. (See Figure 2 and 3, next page.)

3. Training Command plays a key role in the Street to Fleet Process. As outlined in *MCO 5300.19, Marine Corps Enlisted Production Process* (Washington, DC: January 2018),

The entry-level production process for enlisted Marines begins at manpower planning and ends with qualified Marines reporting to their first unit. This is often referred to as the “street-to-fleet” process.

(See Figure 4, page 18.) Working with other stakeholders in the Human Resource Development Process—including Marine Corps Recruiting Command and Manpower and Reserve

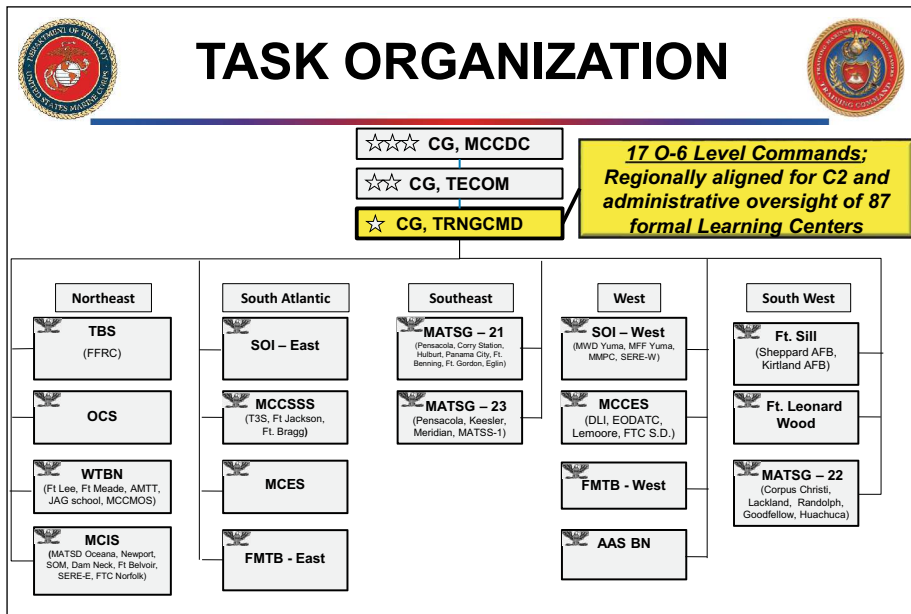


Figure 2. Training Command comprises 87 FLCs regionally aligned under 17 Colonel/Captain commands. (Image provided by the author.)

Affairs—Training Command seeks to align graduation dates from recruit training, Marine combat training/infantry training, and other required primary MOS schools to streamline the training pipeline to the greatest extent possible by reducing any Marines awaiting training time and delivering well-trained Marines to their first duty station as quickly as possible. While this process might appear simple on the surface, factors that include individual Marine program enlisted for codes, Marine Corps Recruiting Command trimester recruiting proportions, formal learning center throughput capacities, and a myriad of other considerations often result in delays and inefficiencies in the process that require staff attention. Nevertheless, with considerable attention and focus, Training Command delivers to the Fleet Marine Force (FMF) and supporting establishment over 36,000 basically trained Marines—officer and enlisted—each year. History has shown that this number of accessions remains relatively constant regardless of end-strength fluctuations, meaning that the Training Command role in the production of basically trained Marines will not decrease as the size of the Service is reduced under the Commandant’s plans for the 2030 Objective Force.

4. Training Command focuses heavily on transformation enhancement. Training Command’s role in the entry-level pipeline is more than teaching necessary MOS-related skills. There is also a critical role to *enhance* the transformation that has occurred as civilians are transformed into Marines on the

Recruit Depots and at Officer Candidates School. In 2018, CG Training Command signed the first Transformation Enhancement Plan order that requires each formal school to incorporate our Marine Corps ethos into every facet of training. The original order was updated in November 2019 to align the five themes of the Transformation Enhancement Plan with Marine leader development outlined in *MCO 1500.61, Marine Leader Development* (Washington, DC: July 2017). Those five themes include: instill the basic tenets of maneuver warfare, strengthen our core values and culture, develop future leaders, strengthen the resiliency of your unit, and improve fitness and wellness. The collective experience has shown that MOS-skill lessons are much more effective when Marines and Sailors understand how those skills align to our core values as well as the Marine Corps’ warfighting functions.

5. Training Command does not just do entry-level training. Training Command is responsible for more than 700 Programs of Instruction, over half of those are focused on career progression and advanced skills training devel-



Figure 3. Training Command FLCs are located aboard 40 Marine Corps and sister Service installations. (Image provided by the author.)

oped at the request of the occupational field (occfld) sponsors and FMF. For Training Command, 29 MOS fields build expertise up to the rank of master gunnery sergeant, equating to over 340 advanced and career enhancing courses. Most Marines are aware of Training Command's role in the entry-level pipeline (Marine Combat Training/ Infantry Training Battalion and MOS Schools), but some may not realize those formal schools support in-depth skills progression training for NCOs, SNCOs, and officers. Figure 5 shows an example of the programs of instruction progression for 03XX/0369—one of the Corps' larger occfields. Training Command will always be known for making Marines into riflemen at Marine combat training and for primary MOS skills, but the command also performs a key function in advanced individual training delivered at FLCs like Marine Combat Dive School, Infantry Unit Leaders Course, Military Free Fall Parachute course, and Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape.

6. Training Command succeeds on the efforts of quality instructors and support personnel. As stated in the recently published *MCDP 7, Learning* (Washington, DC: 2020), "Teaching and leading cannot be uncoupled—Marines who cannot teach will struggle as leaders." This lesson is universal, but it has a direct tie to Training Command. In the simplest terms, quality leaders are made better through instructor duty at any one of our FLCs. The TECOM and Training Command emphasis on the importance of formal school instructors must also be reinforced by Service actions to recognize the critical role that these Marines play in sustaining institutional and unit readiness while also laying the foundation for the future success of every Marine. A key starting point for this recognition is inclusion of the importance of instructor duty in the precept language that guides promotion selection board members in their selection of Marines deserving of promotion. Those Marines who take up the challenge of instructor duty and achieve success have demonstrated their value to the institution and should be

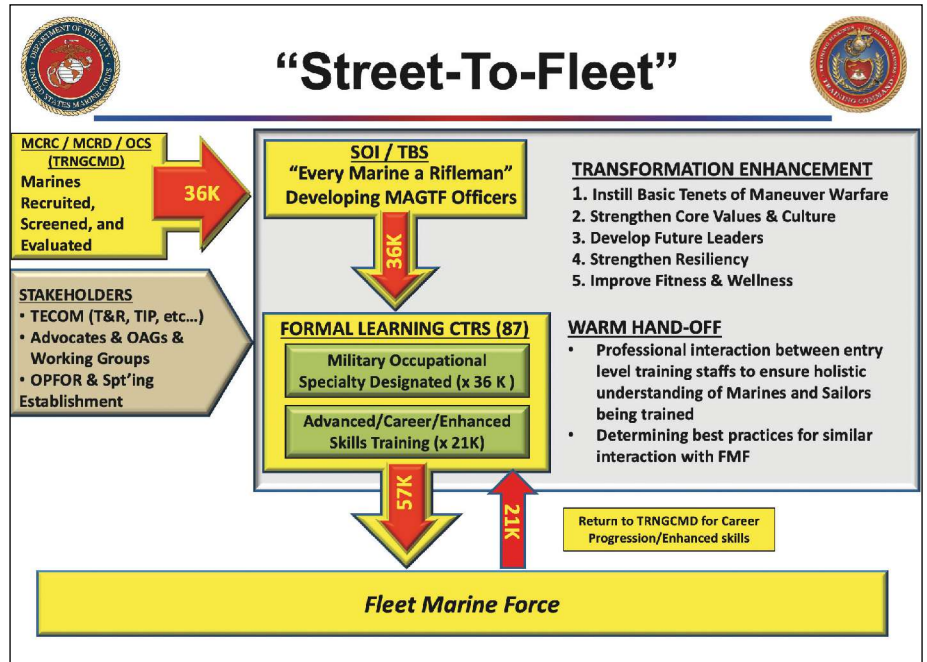


Figure 4. More than 57,000 Marines each year receive basic and advanced MOS training delivered by Training Command. (Image provided by the author.)

moved to higher levels of responsibility for the good of the Corps. Currently, there is no systematic method or system to capture the proficiency that a Marine acquires and develops during a successful tour as a formal school instructor. TECOM and Training Command efforts to develop and institutionalize

a master instructor program will provide an effective solution, allowing a Marine to achieve qualifications that can be acknowledged and recognized as he/she transitions from Training Command to Education Command and vice versa. A Service program to establish a “Career Instructor,” similar

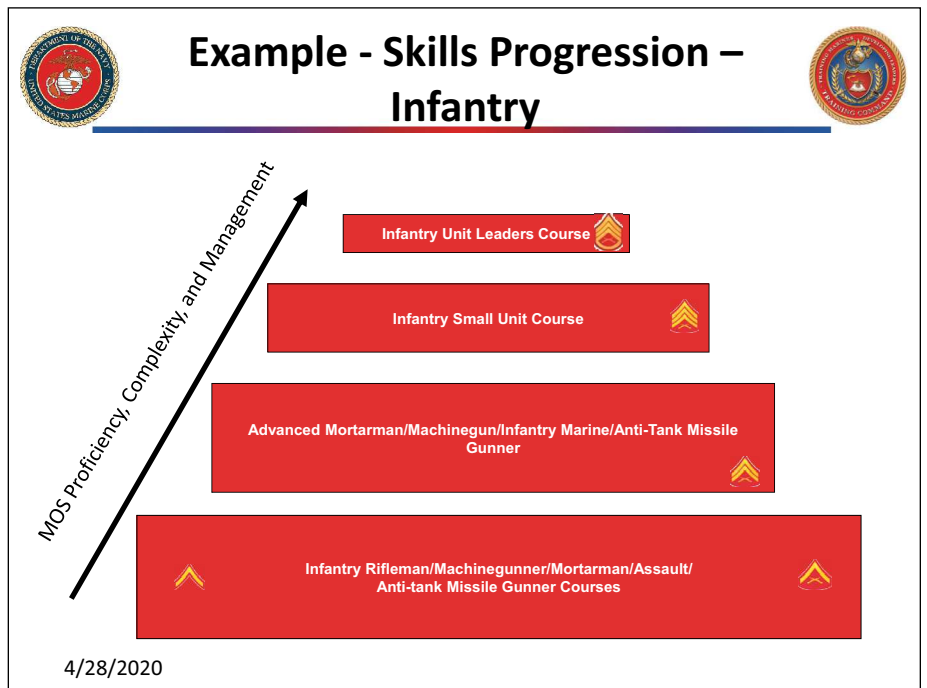


Figure 5. Training Command provides training and education in 29 MOS fields to build expertise up to the master gunnery sergeant level. (Image provided by the author.)

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to a Career Recruiter, should be examined as a means of developing enlisted Marines through their careers as NCOs and SNCOs. The main point is that, when units send quality personnel to serve as MOS school instructors, those Marines/Sailors will return to the FMF/Supporting Establishment as more well-rounded leaders in the teach/coach/mentor model.

7. Training Command is modernizing but more resources are required to do it right. Spurred on by the *38th Commandant's Planning Guidance* (CPG) (Washington, DC: July 2019) and guidance from CG, TECOM, the entire Training Command enterprise has redoubled efforts to modernize the learning environment. Understanding the essential role that instructors play in facilitating a modernized learning environment and to enable the development of existing instructor capabilities as learning leaders and facilitators, Training Command has maximized use of TECOM's Innovative Instructor Workshop (IIW) that "put participants ... in control of their own learning on how to think, decide, act, and develop ways to facilitate similar learning for others" (see *MCG*, Jun19 article). Due to fiscal constraints, however, the student capacity of IIW cannot meet the need to train the Training Command population of more than 2,500 instructors. The Training Command solution to this challenge is to embed the principles and techniques currently taught at IIW into the Instructor Development Course provided by Train the Trainer School to all assigned Training Command instructors. To ensure appropriate prioritization of this effort, Training Command has adjusted its internal organization so that Train the Trainer School will report directly to CG, Training Command beginning in the summer of 2020.

While enhancement of instructor capacities and capabilities is essential, it is not sufficient to complete the transformation to an information age model for delivery of training that is directed in the CPG. In the 21st Century Learning model, instructors and students must be supported by technology enablers.

These include wireless Internet access in and out of the classroom, digitized learning material available on-line, and student devices (e.g., tablets, laptops, smartphones) to access that material. These tools enable the persistent learning environment for students to take ownership of their own learning but are mostly absent from the Training Command FLCs at this time (see Figure 6). As an example, a study in 2017 determined that 94 percent of all school districts across the country had met the federal target for internet connectivity in the classroom (See Benjamin Herold, "Analysis: 94 Percent of School Districts

ments have already demonstrated the tangible benefits of implementing 21st Century Learning. Experiments with self-paced learning at Marine Corps Communication Electronics School and Marine Corps Combat Service Support Schools have validated the hypothesis that mastery of course materials in multiple ocfields can be achieved at a pace comfortable to the individual Marine without sacrificing proficiency or MOS competence. On the contrary, evidence in the form of test scores, overall grade point average, and practical application outcomes supports the conclusion that Marines are better trained and can

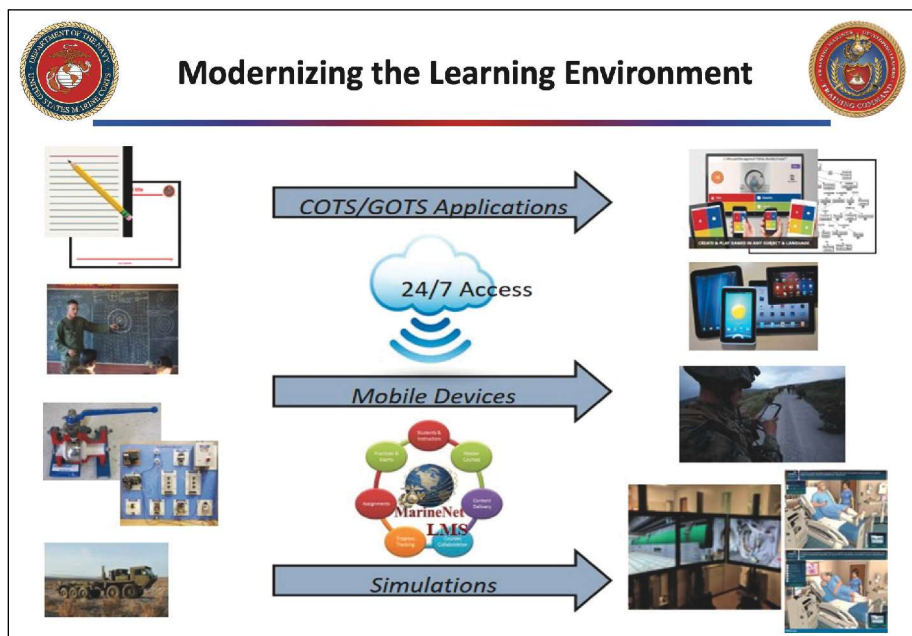


Figure 6. Training Command is pursuing technology enablers to support instructors and create an Information Age model of learning. (Image provided by the author.)

Nationwide Meet Federal High-Speed Internet Access Targets," *Government Technology*, [September 2017], available at <https://www.govtech.com>. In contrast, in the current fiscal year, only a handful of Training Command schools are able to provide students internet access. To resolve these current technology challenges, Training Command has submitted a series of POM-22 initiatives to receive the necessary fiscal resources that support Information Age learning in the 21st century.

Despite the absence of widespread technological enablers, several Training Command major subordinate ele-

reach the FMF faster. During an early experiment at Marine Corps Intelligence Schools, instructors noted that incorporating commercially available online training modules into existing course content enabled the students in the Basic Geographic Intelligence Specialist for MOS 0261 Marines to engage in classroom discussions at the advanced level—well above what would be expected for entry-level Marines.

8. Over one-third of our entry-level Marines are trained on sister-Service installations. Training Command also serves as the lead Marine Corps orga-

nization for leveraging sister Service primary MOS training through inter-Service requirement agreements (on 35 sister Service installations). These support arrangements represent a significant resource savings for the Marine Corps and approximately 36 percent of our entry-level Marine population receives their primary MOS from a formal learning center located aboard a sister Service installation. A large portion of this is concentrated with the Navy and aviation MOS training. In this field, Training Command maintains very close ties with the Chief of Naval Air Training for officer aviator training, and Naval Education and Training Command for enlisted aviation training. Tying Training Command to other Service installations provides instructors, classrooms, barracks, equipment, and

to inform and influence Training Command's efforts toward 21st Century Learning. In addition, Marines who serve as instructors or support staff at FLCs located aboard sister Service installations receive an early introduction into the experience of "joint-ness" and gain an appreciation of the capabilities, capacities, and culture that each Service brings to the evolving battlefield.

9. Training Command creates new training programs (and sometimes new FLCs) every year in response to FMF/Service requirements. As the Marine Corps evolves to match the demands of the current and future operating environment, Training Command constantly works with the FMF, TECOM, and occfield sponsors to align basic and advanced MOS training to

in various 17XX operational planning teams to develop training solutions for the various MOSs associated with 17XX. At the conclusion of planning, these operational planning teams led to an updated inter-Service Training Review Organization agreement with the U.S. Navy for increased throughput at the Joint Cyberspace Analysis Course in Corry Station, FL, and to a new Inter-Service Training Review Organization agreement with the U.S. Army for consolidation in various courses at the Army Cyber Center of Excellence in Fort Gordon, GA.

10. Training Command belongs to you. As the example of the 17XX occfield above demonstrates, Training Command exists to serve the needs of the Marine Corps for individual MOS training. Consistent, focused input and feedback to the process of training Marines is both welcome and required to ensure that the needs of the FMF and the Marine Corps, as a whole, are met. This feedback comes in a variety of forms. Most recently, the top-down direction from the CPG and associated force design efforts have sharpened Training Command's concentration on the training needs to support the objective force of 2030. Ongoing opportunities for feedback by occfield sponsors, FMF and other unit representatives, and HQMC agencies exist in the form of training and readiness conferences hosted by TECOM and course content review boards hosted by individual FLCs—both directly and immediately impact the MOS training provided by Training Command. Finally, the investment that is represented by sending quality Marines to serve in Training Command is one that pays off for the occfield and the Service as these Marines return to the FMF as better teachers, leaders, coaches and mentors.

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other support not available on Marine Corps installations. For example, at the U.S. Army's Fort Gordon near Augusta, GA, Marine students receive satellite communications training in order to link Marine Corps systems to a live, but training version, satellite that is not easily available elsewhere.

In addition to the cost savings, the Marine Corps and Training Command also benefits in intangible ways by leveraging sister Service schools. From the learning perspective, Training Command gains valuable lessons in the implementation of Information Age learning models by observing and participating in these initiatives by the other Services. This is certainly the case with the Navy's implementation of Ready Relevant Learning and the introduction of Student-Center Active Learning-Upside down Pedagogy (SCALE-UP) at several Air Force learning centers, both of which have served

requirements. More often than not, this process involves adjustments to the content of existing programs of instruction. In some cases, however, the Service leadership determines that a new capability is required and the training pipeline for that capability must be created. A recent example of the need for a new capability and associated training pipeline was the creation of the cyber occfield (MOS 17XX) that was initially identified in planning for *Force 2025*. Following concurrence by the Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel and Facilities working group and CMC approval, the 17XX occupational field was created on 1 October 2018. Prior to the inception of this occfield, the Training Command G-3 and TECOM staff—in collaboration with the Deputy Commandant for Information, Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration, and other stakeholders—participated

