Marines Standardize Recruit Depots, Deactivate Historic Battalion

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PARRIS ISLAND, SC – In a milestone emphasizing the Marine Corps' successful standardization in recruit training, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island will deactivate its Fourth Recruit Training Battalion in a ceremony June 15, 2023, and realign personnel between the service's two recruit training locations.

"This is a moment to celebrate the legacy of so many of our Marines who made the transformation through 4th Recruit Training Battalion," said Gen. David H. Berger, the Commandant of the Marine Corps. "It's also a moment to celebrate progress. I'm proud to see our male and female recruits benefit from having access to the quality of all our leaders—at Parris Island and San Diego—through an unchanging, tough, and realistic recruit training curriculum."

Since 1949 and until recently, Parris Island served as the

sole point of entry into the Marine Corps for all enlisted female Marines. Since that time, female Marines have trained under multiple guidons, with 4th Recruit Training Battalion transforming Marines since 1986. Male recruits began training within Fourth Battalion in 2020. Today, successful recruit training standardization makes an all-female training battalion unnecessary, as all recruits have been training in gender-integrated companies since 2022.

“On 1 November 1986, 4th Recruit Training Battalion was established as the Corps’ only unit through which women could earn the title of U. S. Marine,” said Brig. Gen. Walker M. Field, Commanding General of MCRD Parris island and the Eastern Recruiting Region. ”Since then, those Marines have transformed thousands of young women, and since 2021 men, through rigorous basic training and our Corps’ cherished legacy, preparing them to win our nation’s battles. On 15 June 2023, we will bid farewell to 4th Battalion in a deactivation ceremony that concludes her glorious tenure, closing the final chapter of integrating recruit training. We are forever grateful to the Drill Instructors, staff, and legions of Marines who so proudly call 4th Battalion home.”

The personnel move to standardize the recruit training experience includes a portion of the personnel structure previously serving 4th Recruit Training Battalion moving from Parris Island to San Diego. This will create a more similar organization at both depots while MCRD San Diego increases their throughput of integrated training companies to match that of MCRD Parris Island. MCRD San Diego is scheduled to train approximately half of the female Marine population by

fiscal year 2024.

“What matters most is making the very best Marines,” said Sgt. Maj. Troy E. Black, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps. “It won’t be long before there are female Drill Instructors who, as recruits, graduated alongside their male counterparts. They will train recruits and make Marines with that experience.”

The ceremony will be held at Parris Island this summer to formally deactivate the battalion, honor its legacy, and highlight the historic unit’s impact on the transformation of female Marines. More details on the event will follow in a later release.

Berger: Lack of Amphibs Left AFRICOM with No Sea-Based Option for Sudan Evacuation

MEDITERRANEAN SEA (April 30, 2022) The San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS Arlington (LPD 24), center, and the Military Sealift Command Henry J. Kaiser-class fleet replenishment oiler USNS Laramie (T-AO 203), background, sail through the Mediterranean Sea while conducting a replenishment-at-sea, April 30, 2022. Arlington, assigned to the Kearsarge Amphibious Ready Group, is on a scheduled deployment under the command and control of Task Force 61/2 operating in U.S. Sixth Fleet in support of U.S., Allied and partner interests in Europe and Africa. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class John Bellino)
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WASHINGTON – The presence of an amphibious ready group (ARG), with a Marine expeditionary unit (MEU)embarked, gives a regional combatant commander an option to respond to a crisis ashore. When the United States government decided to evacuate its embassy in Sudan on April 23, last week, no ARG-MEU was available in the region.

Similarly, if the United States government had decided that projecting a force ashore in Sudan was needed to protect or

evacuate some 15,000 Americans in Sudan, it would have had few options.

To Marine Corps Commandant General David. H. Berger, testifying April 2 before the House Armed Services Committee, the Sudan crisis is an example of the lack of a crisis response capability that the Navy and Marine Corps amphibious warfare forces, if nearby, could have provided to the combatant commander, in this case, Marine General Michael E. Langley, commander, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM).

To Berger, the crisis illustrated yet again why the nation's need for 31 [large and medium amphibious warfare ships] to provide the crisis response and deterrence capabilities needed by U.S. combatant commanders.

Berger was referring to the statutory requirement in the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act for the Navy to sustain a fleet of a minimum of 31 amphibious warfare ships. Without such a force, there would be occasions when response would be lacking.

"We would have gaps during the year when we would not have an at-sea capability for the combatant commander when something happens," Berger said. "We would not be deterring; we would not be in a position to respond. In places like Türkiye or places like Sudan, I feel like I let down the combatant commander, because General Langley needs options. He didn't have a sea-based option. That's how we reinforce embassies. That's how we evacuate them. That's how we deter.

"It opens up risks for the combatant commander," Berger said. "We have to have 31 [large and medium amphibious warfare ships] at a minimum; nothing less."

Marine Corps announces ACV Transition Training Unit

Photo By Sgt. Alexandra Munoz | U.S. Marine Sgt Jonathan Alvarez, an evaluator with the Amphibious Combat Vehicle Transition Training Unit, watches an ACV at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California, Apr. 11, 2023. The ACV TTU is composed of a cadre of experienced assault amphibian Marines working to create a standardized program to certify Marines to operate and maintain ACVs. As part of a Headquarters Marine Corps initiative, once operational, the ACV TTU will certify ACV crewmembers, vehicle commanders, maintainers, and unit leadership on the safe operation, maintenance, supervision, and employment of the ACV. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Alexandra Munoz

Release from Marine Corps Communications Directorate

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WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES

04.19.2023

Story by Capt. Ryan Bruce

HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS – A Marine Corps-established Transition Training Unit at the Assault Amphibian School is developing a rigorous and standardized program to ensure that Amphibious Combat Vehicle Marines possess the technical knowledge, skills, and proficiency required to safely operate, maintain, supervise, and employ the ACV.

The decision to stand up the TTU came after the Marine Corps identified significant differences between the safe operating procedures of the ACV and its predecessor, the Assault Amphibious Vehicle. Preliminary findings from recent mishap investigations recommend that ACV operators receive more training focused on the internal mechanical systems of the ACV and how the platform differs from the AAV.

“We are clear eyed about the need to get this right,” said Gen. David H. Berger, Commandant of the Marine Corps. “Our Marines deserve no less, and our Nation depends on it. Amphibious operations, to include the use of ship-to-shore connectors, are a foundational aspect of the Marine Corps. Our Marines will be trained safely and to the highest standard to ensure we remain the Nation’s premier expeditionary force in readiness.”

The TTU is staffed by a hand-selected cadre of experienced and proficient ACV operators, maintainers, and trainers, augmented by other subject-matter experts from across the Marine Corps.

The TTU is currently consolidating ACV lessons learned and best practices into an updated, continuous skills validation program. Upon program approval, the TTU will evaluate and re-certify ACV operators and maintainers previously trained on the ACV platform.

“We are developing a program focused on performance-evaluated measurements associated with the safe operation of the ACV both on land and in water,” said Col. Howard Hall, the TTU officer-in-charge who is leading actions on the ground to stand up the unit. “The exceptional intensity and professionalism exhibited by the Marines of the TTU combined with the coordination and support of leaders at all levels across the Marine Corps is a testament to our commitment to facilitating the ACV transition and leveraging its impressive capabilities. This training will lay the foundation for future Assault Amphibian School and assault amphibian battalion proficiency.”

The TTU’s proficiency evaluation and validation standards developed by the TTU will be sustained on an enduring basis through entry-level ACV operator, maintainer, and unit leader training and advanced training for Marines as they progress through their career.

“It is not enough to put a check in a box when it comes to safe operation and maintenance of the ACV,” added Maj. Jim Agostino, the TTU operations officer, and a former 3d AABn company commander. “We are looking to certify Marines in the technical operation of the vehicle from each crew station, to ensure they possess the requisite skills of operating the ACV safely and have a firm foundation to enhance their capability in follow-on training.”

General Officer Announcements

Release from the Department of Defense

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Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III announced that the president has made the following nominations:

Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Leonard F. Anderson IV for appointment to the grade of lieutenant general, with assignment as commander, Marine Forces Reserve; and commander, Marine Forces South, New Orleans, Louisiana. Anderson is currently serving as commanding general, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Roger B. Turner Jr. for appointment to the grade of lieutenant general, with assignment as commanding general, III Marine Expeditionary Force; and commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Japan, Okinawa, Japan. Turner is currently serving as director, Operations Division, Plans, Policies, and Operations, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C.

General Lists Marine Corps

VTOL Development Priorities for Congress

BALTIC SEA (May 18, 2022) U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Ryan Mortensen and Capt. Jeffrey Jaeckel, both AH-1Z pilots assigned to the Aviation Combat Element, 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, take-off during flight operations aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge (LHD3) in the Baltic Sea, May 18, 2022. The Kearsarge Amphibious Ready Group and embarked 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit are participating in the Estonian-led exercise Siil 22 (Hedgehog 22 in English). Siil 22 brings together members of the Estonian Defense Force and Sailors and Marines under Commander Task Force 61/2 to enhance Allied interoperability and preserve security and stability in the Baltic region. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Staff Sgt. Brittney Vella)

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WASHINGTON – The Marine Corps general in charge of aviation requirements detailed for Congress the service's priorities

for vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) platforms during testimony regarding the 2024 defense budget hearings.

“Our VTOL Family of Systems has three lines of effort,” said Lieutenant General Michael S. Cederholm, deputy commandant for aviation, testifying April 19 before the Tactical Air and Land Forces subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee.

“The first one is logistics,” Cederholm said. “We’re looking at a risk-worthy, unmanned logistics connector. We’re in the process of developing and working through our process and Initial Capabilities Requirement Document right now. That’s gone through and is sitting at the MROC [Marine Requirements Oversight Council] for decision.”

Cederholm said the second line of effort “is attack/strike. We have taken a different approach because we’re at different stages of modernization. The Marine Corps is in a unique position – a good one. The relative health of our fleet and the nascent age of our fleet of H-1s [AH-1Z and UH-1Y helicopters] and V-22s. We’re just transitioning to the 53Kilo [CH-53K helicopter]. This gives us an opportunity to – in the future – not wait but very expeditiously and thoroughly explore the intersection point between budget, requirements, and future capabilities. We can look at the attack/strike role and what are the advances in teaming, autonomy; advances in lethality and survivability.”

The general listed the third line of effort, “is to replace our extant platforms like the MV-22 when it ages out with the Next-Gen Assault Support.”

Cederholm said he “is excited [about] where the Marine Corps is. We have a sense of urgency, but we also have time to be thorough in our approach to unmanned in the future.”

U.S. Marine Corps Activates Second F-35C Squadron

Release from 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing

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SAN DIEGO, CA, UNITED STATES

04.15.2023

Story by 2nd Lt. Andrew Baez

3rd Marine Aircraft Wing

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, Calif. – Third Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) reactivated Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 311, an F-35C Lightning II squadron, at Marine Corps

Air Station (MCAS) Miramar, California, April 14, 2023. VMFA-311 is the U.S. Marine Corps' second F-35C squadron. The F-35C is a land and/or carrier-based platform boasting long-range flight and high weapons payload capabilities. Formerly VMA-311, the Tomcats have made their mark on Marine Corps aviation for decades, and now will continue their legacy.

Notable Tomcats veterans include Ted Williams and John Glenn. Ted Williams left a Major League Baseball career for service in World War II and Korea, and later was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. John Glenn was a distinguished fighter pilot in World War II and Korea, who later became an astronaut and public servant.

Third MAW Commanding General Maj. Gen. Bradford J. Gering is also a Tomcat. "Having twice served in VMA-311, the Tomcats hold a special place in my heart," Gering said. "We are extremely excited to add another F-35C squadron to 3rd MAW. The range and operational flexibility that VMFA-311 will bring to I Marine Expeditionary Force is impressive and adds to our warfighting capacity in every domain."

The Marine Corps is undergoing a key transition to the F-35 to maintain its advantage in future conflicts, thereby deactivating VMA-311 on Oct. 15, 2020. The reactivation of VMFA-311 marks the transition for the squadron to the F-35C Lightning II, which brings its unique capabilities to 3rd MAW as a long-range compliment to their existing aviation assets.

"The F-35C brings a long-range fighter/attack platform with the most advanced stealth and sensor capabilities in the Marine Corps," said Lt. Col. Michael P. Fisher, the commanding officer of VMFA-311. "The Harrier was a great weapon that served the Marine Corps well and has been replaced with a more advanced and capable platform. The F-35 was designed for the near-term and future fight."

The reactivation supports the 2022 Marine Corps Aviation Plan, which outlines ongoing modernization efforts across Marine aviation. The plan prioritizes readiness, reinforces the importance of flying from the sea, and refocuses on manpower, support to logistics and modern capabilities.

“We are taking an aggressive approach to build capabilities that will move, sustain, and support the individual Marine while making the force more lethal, effective, and survivable,” said then-Deputy Commandant for Aviation Lt. Gen. Mark R. Wise in the 2022 plan.

The Tomcats, a notable squadron of “firsts” for Marine Corps aviation, originally commissioned in 1942 as Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 311 as a at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, North Carolina, where it first deployed in support of the World War II island hopping campaign.

The squadron led the way for Marine Corps aviation in many groundbreaking events: it was the first Marine squadron to use fighter aircraft for dive bombing missions, flew the first Marine combat mission with jets in 1950 during the Korean War, was the first Marine squadron to employ the AV-8B Harrier in combat during Operation Desert Shield, the first to fly combat missions in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom, and participated in the first combat sortie of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003.

“This reactivation is not about the aircraft, it’s about the people,” said Col. Shannon M. Brown, commander of Marine Aircraft Group 11. “Looking at what this squadron did over the years is impressive considering its 13 Navy Unit Commendations. The Tomcats are all about fighting and winning and now this legacy is entrusted to Lt. Col. Fisher.”

“We will never forget where we came from,” Fisher said in his remarks. “Let’s make history.”

Imagery from the ceremony will be available at: www.dvidshub.net/unit/3MAW.

Leidos to Develop Autonomous Uncrewed Aerial Resupply System for U.S. Marine Corps

Release from Leidos

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RESTON, Va. (April 18, 2023) – Leidos (NYSE:LDOS), a FORTUNE 500 science and technology leader, was recently awarded a new prime contract to develop an uncrewed aircraft system (UAS) that can autonomously resupply forward-deployed ground forces. The firm-fixed-price, multiple-award contract has a period of

performance of 18 months to build a single prototype for the Marine Corps.

“Leidos leads the industry in taking cutting-edge innovations and making them mission-ready today,” said Tim Freeman, Leidos senior vice president and Airborne Solutions operations manager. “The ability to autonomously deliver hundreds of pounds of supplies over long ranges will be a game-changer for the warfighter. We look forward to demonstrating how the Leidos’ SeaOnyx solution will help deliver a logistics advantage to the Marines and other branches of the military.”

Under the contract, Leidos will develop, deliver and demonstrate an autonomous medium unmanned logistics system – air (MULS-A) prototype. The prototype will then be used to perform a logistics distribution mission at the tactical edge of the battlefield. The goal of the project is to demonstrate a prototype UAS that can carry a logistics payload between 300 and 600 pounds to a combat area with a radius of 25 to 100 nautical miles. The work will be performed at locations in Colorado, Ohio, Oregon, California, Nevada and Arizona.

Leidos teamed with Phenix Solutions to design the SeaOnyx prototype. Phenix is a non-traditional, veteran-owned small business defense contractor that develops UAS aircraft for a variety of missions.

Marine Corps to Activate Second F-35C Squadron

Caption: PHILIPPINE SEA (April 19, 2022) An F-35C Lightning II, assigned to the “Black Knights” of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 314, launches from the flight deck of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), April 19, 2022. VMFA-314 will be joined this month by VMFA-311, being re-activated to be the Marine Corps’ second F-35C squadron. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Javier Reyes)
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ARLINGTON, Va. — The U.S. Marine Corps is scheduled to activate its second F-35C Lightning II strike fighter squadron at the end of the week, Headquarters Marine Corps announced in a media announcement.

Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 311 (VMFA-311) will be re-activated from its former Marine Attack Squadron 311 (VMA-311) identity in ceremonies on Friday, April 14, 2023, at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Miramar, California. The squadron will become the second operational Marine Corps squadron to operate the carrier-based F-35C version. VMFA-314, also based at Miramar, was the first, and has completed one deployment

with the F-35C, on board USS Abraham Lincoln.

VMA-311 was an AV-8B Harrier II squadron that was deactivated in October 2020. It was based at MCAS Yuma, Arizona. It had operated the AV-8 since 1988.

VMA-311 was established on December 1, 1942, as Marine Fighter Squadron 311 (VMF-311) and deployed to the Pacific Theater in April 1943, equipped with F4U-1 Corsair fighters. The squadron eventually operated from Okinawa in March 1945 and conducted dive bombing and combat air patrol missions.

The squadron became the Marine Corps' first operational jet squadron in 1948, operating F9F Panther fighters, and during the Korean War flew the Corps' first jet combat mission. After the war, the squadron upgraded to the F9F-8 Cougar. The squadron was re-designated VMA-311 on June 1, 1957, and by 1958 was operating the A4D Skyhawk.

The squadron flew its A-4s in combat in the Vietnam War from April 1965 through January 1973.

After transition to the AV-8B, VMA-311 deployed to Saudi Arabia, and, in Operation Desert Storm, became the first squadron to fly the Harrier II in combat. In November 2001, the squadron also became the first Harrier squadron to fly in combat during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. The squadron also flew combat missions in Iraq beginning in March 2003 during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Lt. Col. Michael P. Fisher will be the first commanding officer of VMFA-311.

USMC Use GA-ASI MQ-9A for Training Exercise

Release from General Atomics

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MQ-9A Used for Live-Fire and Simulated Exercises

SAN DIEGO – 30 March 2023 – General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI) is working with the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) on a series of Service-Level Training Exercises (SLTE) using a company-owned MQ-9A Unmanned Aircraft System to support the Marine Air-Ground Task Force Training Command (MAGTFTC). The SLTE 2-23 is being conducted near Twentynine Palms, Calif. with participation from Joint Forces. The training ensures participants are prepared for the future dynamic environment.

Contracting the use of MQ-9A enabled USMC to begin integrating Group 5 unmanned aircraft into the Marine Air-Ground Task Force for the first time within the various exercises. GA-ASI began flying the MQ-9A on Feb. 3, 2023, with a combination of

GA-ASI and VMU-3 pilots and sensor operators. The aircraft flew out of GA-ASI's facility at the Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz., with flights over training ranges in Southwest-Continental United States (CONUS). The MQ-9A is providing its proven Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) data package – including GA-ASI's Lynx® Multi-mode Radar – to provide the USMC with extraordinary situational awareness and simulated close air support.

"GA-ASI is always ready and willing to support the USMC exercises," said GA-ASI Vice President of DoD Strategic Development, Patrick Shortsleeve. "We know that being able to utilize an actual MQ-9A is critical to the success of these exercises and helps the USMC ramp-up their training program."

The SLTE Program consists of a series of exercises, including the live-fire Integrated Training Exercise (ITX), Marine Littoral Regiment Training Exercise (MLR TE), and Force-on-Force (FoF) MAGTF Warfighting Exercise (MWX). MAGTFTC executes the SLTE Program, which includes simulated and live-fire armed exercises, to enhance the readiness of the Fleet Marine Forces and support the Marine Corps' responsibilities to national security.

GA-ASI was contracted by the USMC in 2022 to deliver eight MQ-9A Extended Range (ER) UAS as part of the ARES Indefinite-Delivery/Indefinite-Quantity (ID/IQ) contract.

USMC Rotational Arctic

Presence Bolsters US and Allied Training

U.S. Marines with Combat Logistics Battalion 2, Combat Logistics Regiment 2, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, set up camouflage netting to conceal vehicles during Exercise Joint Viking near Bardufoss, Norway, March 9, 2023. Marines are deployed to Norway as part of Marine Rotational Forces Europe 23.1 which focuses on regional engagements throughout Europe by conducting various exercises, arctic cold-weather and mountain warfare training, and military-to-military engagements, which enhance overall interoperability of the U.S. Marine Corps with allies and partners. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Christian M. Garcia)

By Dr. Lee Willett

LONDON – The U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) has been increasing its permanent presence in the Arctic in recent years, using rotational deployments. The impact of this rotational presence is being demonstrated again in the multinational exercise

‘Joint Viking,’ which is taking place in March ashore and at sea in and around Norway’s northern fjords.

For ‘Joint Viking’ and the parallel U.K.-led ‘Joint Warrior’ exercise, 20,000 allied aircrew, sailors, soldiers, marines, and supporting personnel are present, including USMC forces. Participating USMC forces are drawn from a pool of more than 1300 marines, from Combat Logistics Battalion 6, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, II Marine Expeditionary Force, that are supporting rotational activities and exercises as the Marine Rotational Force – Europe 2023 (MRF-E 23) deployment.

As ‘Joint Viking’ and other exercises are joint and combined activities, USMC forces are training alongside U.S. Air Force, Army, and Navy personnel, as well as NATO allies and other partners, Lieutenant Colonel Nathan Knowles USMC, Battalion Commander 2nd Combat Engineer Battalion, told Seapower.

“The rotational training has been beneficial for both US Marines and service members from allied and partner countries,” said Knowles. “The Marines are receiving world-class training, which improves overall Marine Corps readiness, and sends Marines back to their units better trained to fight and win in any environment.”

While noting that exercises like ‘Joint Viking’ are long-planned activities that are not conducted in response to any specific threat from any specific adversary, such exercises still enable US, allied, and partner forces to “continue to enhance readiness, capability, and flexibility in response to changing security environments”, said Knowles. In particular, he added, “We are focused on strengthening the development of joint leaders and teams who understand the synergy of air, sea, and land power in a joint, multi-domain environment.”

The MRF-E 23 rotation and associated exercise series will conclude in September, and the USMC units deployed on this rotation will return to base at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.