

ATC Marine leaves his mark on lives of fellow Marines as others left on him

Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point · Friday, December 9, 2016



Sgt. Benjamin Bonilla

Approach controller

Marine Air Control Squadron 2

Sgt. Benjamin Bonilla attentively listens over the radio as his student gives a pilot clearance to land on the runway. He watches the Marines hands through the dim light as they glide over the brightly colored keys on a control panel as he kept a smooth reassuring tone with the pilot preparing to land.

Bonilla is an approach controller assigned to Marine Air Control Squadron 2, Marine Air Control Group 28, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing. He has successfully completed all the training required of him as an approach controller and moved on to completing certifications for the other elements of air traffic control within the Marine Corps.

His passion for teaching other ATC Marines and dedication to his work has driven him to completing all his certifications within his ATC assigned field and other elements outside of his designation.



Sgt. Aaron Mondloch, left, receives guidance from Sgt. Benjamin Bonilla while communicating with an aircraft at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., Nov. 16, 2016. Bonilla has successfully completed all the training required as an approach controller and moved on to completing certifications for the other sections of air traffic control within the Marine Corps. Air traffic controllers are given approximately 12 years to become proficient and certified in all ATC elements, but Bonilla has completed his training in only four years while aboard the air station. Mondloch is an air traffic controller and Bonilla is an approach controller and, both assigned to Marine Air Control Squadron 2, Marine Air Control Group 28, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. N.W. Huertas/ Released)

“Teaching is my favorite part of the job,” said Bonilla. “Even though we are not degreed educators, we are still responsible for critical training for these Marines. You are passing off your knowledge and experience in air traffic control to the next student that’s behind you. I think it’s developed me and my leadership a lot. Not only does it give you great leadership traits to teach others, but it lets you share your own experience and see Marines grow into something more.”

Air traffic controllers are given approximately 12 years to become Marine Administrative Message compliant. ATC Marines must be proficient and certified in all positions of air traffic controlling within the Marine Corps.

Bonilla has completed his training in only four years while aboard the air station.

“Here on Cherry Point, we pride ourselves in being an advanced training facility,” said Bonilla. “We have a lot of Marines strive to get qualified in everything while stationed here even when it’s not required of them. If you are willing to work for it, you can do anything you want in this unit and I am grateful for that opportunity.



Sgt. Benjamin Bonilla observes a monitor in the control tower at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., Nov. 16, 2016. He has successfully completed all the training required as an approach controller and moved on to completing certifications for other sections of air traffic control within the Marine Corps. Air traffic controllers are given approximately 12 years to become proficient and certified in all ATC elements, but Bonilla has completed his training in only four years while aboard the air station. Bonilla is an approach controller assigned to Marine Air Control Squadron 2, Marine Air Control Group 28, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. N.W. Huertas/Released)

According to Bonilla, the Marines at ATC have been the biggest positive impact on his career. The mentors and teachers that came before him instilled in him the importance of never settling for the standard and taking care of his Marines.

“What I have taken from the Marine Corps is the way it’s shaped my character and career through all of my experiences with the people I have met,” said Bonilla.