

From The Point To The Point



MARINE
EXCELLENCE
CENTER for
CONTROLLING
AIRCRAFT

ATC Facility Officer – Capt Scott M. Schmitz
SNCOIC – GySgt Uriah D. Bufkin
Training Chief – SSgt Robert C. Kelley
Tower Chief – GySgt Christopher N. Hearn
Radar Chief – SSgt Matthew J. Lange
Writer/Editor – Joseph G. Hendrickson

2nd Quarter 2012 Volume 5

The Best ATC Training Facility in the Marine Corps

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On the cover

An F-4U Corsair and an AV-8B Harrier join up on North Carolina's coast in preparation for a Heritage Flight during the 2012 MCAS Cherry Point Air Show.

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Jul 2012

From The Point

New ATC Facility Officer

On 11 May 12, Capt Scott M. Schmitz became the 13th ATC Facility Officer for MCAS Cherry Point in the modern era.



Captain Schmitz enlisted in the Marine Corps and reported to MCRD San Diego on 21 Jan 97. After Boot Camp and Marine Combat Training, he reported to NAS Pensacola, FL for the Aviation Support Equipment Technicians Course and then to a follow-on Support Equipment course at North Island, CA.

In October 2003, he attended OCS under the Enlisted Commissioning Program (ECP) and was commissioned in December of that year. After The Basic School, he attended ATC School in Pensacola and was then assigned to MACS-4 Det B, followed by FAP orders to MCAS Iwakuni, Japan in January 2005 where he served as an ATC Crew Officer. In November 2005, he was assigned to the 31st MEU and served as the Marine ATC Mobile Team (MMT) OIC under HMM-262. He was promoted to the rank of First Lieutenant in December of 2005 and subsequently supported Humanitarian Assistance operations in Leyte, Philippines in March of 2006.

In June of 2006, he returned to Iwakuni and served as the Assistant ATCFO until December of 2007.

In January 2008, he was assigned duties as the Officer Selection Officer in Iowa City, Iowa under the 9th Marine Corps District. In June of 2008 he was promoted to the rank of Captain.

In July of 2010, Captain Schmitz received orders to MACS-2 at MCAS Cherry Point, NC. In September of 2010, he was assigned duties as a Det Commander and tasked with standing up the new ATC Det D. In August of 2011, he led the Detachment as they deployed to Southern Afghanistan in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM combat operations.

From The Schoolhouse

LCpl Julian Navarrete	3 Apr 12
PFC Joshua B. Bohannon	10 Apr 12
LCpl Justin D. McDaniel	30 Apr 12
PFC Joshua D. Warner	8 May 12
PFC James E. Entzi	4 Jun 12

1,000th MOS Issued

On 20 Jun 12, LCpl David A. Harlan, a member of crew 3, qualified as a Radar Final Controller, earning his primary MOS of 7257, Air Traffic Controller. This achievement became the 1,000th MOS that has been issued by MCAS Cherry Point since the commencement of our current ATC Training Program on 11 May 98.

The first MOS issued under this program was a 7252 given to Sgt Timothy O'Donnell, also from Crew 3, on 20 May 98.

LCpl Harlan will be recognized in a special ceremony and will be presented with a certificate marking this historical event.

Training

Training Program Statistics

	<u>Apr-Jun</u>	<u>Total</u>
OJT Hours	3,406.20	159,905
OJF Hours	844.47	18,288
Tower Simulation (Training)	152.48	6,325
Tower Simulation (Support)	409.93	5,827
Radar Simulation (Training)	433.77	8,880
Radar Simulation (Support)	684.70	12,249
Simulated GCAs	1,587	51,014
MOSs Issued	29	1,001
Position Qualifications	57	2,777

Controller of the Quarter

LCpl Amanda D. Rochester was awarded Controller of the Quarter for the 2nd quarter of 2012. In the 11 months she has been here, she has successfully trained 5 Marines, contributing to 3 tower flight data, 1 ground control and 1 radar flight data qualification. In addition to supervising tower training, LCpl Rochester has clearly shown herself as an asset to the tower team by ensuring tower critique readiness. Combine her OJTI prowess with an exceptional training rate on local control, divide it by the time she has been here and it is easy to see why she deserves to be the Controller of the 2nd Quarter.

Qualifications

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>MOS</u>
LCpl M. E. Gonzalez	3 Apr 12	FD	
LCpl T. J. Lund	4 Apr 12	FC	7257R
Cpl M. Dufour	5 Apr 12	FC	
LCpl R. J. Hession	11 Apr 12	FC	7257R
Sgt O. S. Dayse	12 Apr 12	APW	7253/54
Sgt D. Mercado	13 Apr 12	RD	
LCpl A. P. Shade	13 Apr 12	GC	7257T
SSgt M. J. Lange	16 Apr 12	GC	7257T
LCpl B. M. Poklar	20 Apr 12	GC	7257T
LCpl C. Z. Curran	24 Apr 12	FC	7257R
Sgt C. J. Sharpe	25 Apr 12	GC	
LCpl M. E. Gonzalez	25 Apr 12	GC	7257T
Cpl D. Bravo	27 Apr 12	APW	7253/54
LCpl A. D. Orton	27 Apr 12	APW	7253/54
LCpl D. J. Turner	27 Apr 12	RD	
LCpl D. A. Harlan	27 Apr 12	RD	
SSgt E. L. Griffin	28 Apr 12	APE	
SSgt E. L. Griffin	28 Apr 12	APN	
SSgt M. J. Lange	1 May 12	FD	
1stLt D. M. Tadross	1 May 12	FD	
LCpl D. K. Hainsworth	1 May 12	FD	7257T
GySgt L. S. Meyer	7 May 12	FD/GC	

Qualifications

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>MOS</u>
SSgt W. N. Allen	14 May 12	FC	7257R
LCpl M. A. Van	14 May 12	FC	7257R
Cpl D. A. Ulrich	15 May 12	LC	7252
Cpl J. Pongtorn	16 May 12	GC	
LCpl J. Castellon	17 May 12	APW	7253/54
SSgt E. L. Griffin	21 May 12	AR	
PFC D. P. Goodwin	21 May 12	FD	
LCpl A. D. Phillips	21 May 12	FD	
LCpl S. S. Jacobi	22 May 12	APE	
LCpl S. S. Jacobi	22 May 12	APN	
LCpl T. E. Kelch	22 May 12	RD	
LCpl T. E. Kelch	22 May 12	FC	7257R
LCpl S. C. Stiffel	22 May 12	FD	
LCpl D. M. Long	7 Jun 12	GC	7257T
Cpl M. E. Boyd	11 Jun 12	RD/FC	
LCpl B. R. Adams	15 Jun 12	RD	
SSgt J. A. Felix	15 Jun 12	RD	
LCpl C. K. Higgins	15 Jun 12	LC	7252
Cpl T. D. Brooks	19 Jun 12	APW	7253
LCpl D. A. Harlan	20 Jun 12	FC	7257R
PFC J. D. Warner	27 Jun 12	RD	
LCpl D. P. Goodwin	27 Jun 12	GC	7257T
1stLt D. M. Tadross	28 Jun 12	GC	



To The Point

with
Joe Hendrickson

Policy on Air Traffic Control Simulators

On 10 May 2010, a policy letter was issued by APX-25 on the use of ATC simulators. The first sentence read:

"THE PURPOSE OF ATC SIMULATOR SYSTEMS ARE TO INCREASE CONTROLLER PROFICIENCY IN THE ABSENCE OF LIVE TRAFFIC OR ALLOW FOR ADDITIONAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES DUE TO MANNING LIMITATIONS." (sic)

Neither of these would be in my top 5 reasons to use a simulator, in fact based on this statement, if I were to show that there was an adequate amount of live traffic and no manning limitations, I would not even need a simulator. I have found that good simulators are used a lot and bad simulators are used under duress. The policy letter established a minimum requirement of 20% simulation based on historical total training hours. After reading the entire message, I could see the vision of how simulation could become a natural part of the training progression and that the mandate really only applied to revocations. Revocations are such a small part of the program, I can't see why this new policy is tied directly to it.

The ATC Training Program cannot improve if we continue to change its priorities. The top priority of our program is to reduce the amount of time that it takes to complete position, MOS and/or T&R training. Increasing the use of good simulators is definitely one of the tools that can have a huge impact on that goal. The occasional ATC Hazard or revocation is merely a byproduct of the program and, much like industrial waste, they need to be monitored and reduced through process improvement but should never be the main purpose of policy change.

Since this was our first attempt at a simulator policy, I expected it to be arbitrary and ambiguous but also a good starting point. The 20% minimum was all three. Where this number came from is unknown, although it may have been derived from benchmarks already established. 2009 was the first full year that Cherry Point had all three simulators and had documented the simulation hours at 19.99% of OJT. So the 20% may have some basis on demonstrated performance but is still very arbitrary in practice. The chart below shows how we reached 19.99% without an established policy.

	APE	AR	APW	FC	RD	FD	GC	LC	Total
OJT	1,444.55	412.88	1,838.45	1,339.32	1,327.10	1,807.35	1,854.95	1,518.23	11,542.83
Sim	273.53	151.45	830.57	584.63	2.00	131.53	77.63	256.07	2,307.41
%	18.94%	36.38%	45.18%	43.65%	0.15%	7.28%	4.19%	16.87%	19.99%

It wasn't even close to being across the board. The effectiveness of the STARS ATCOACH pushed us from a nominal 7% (1999-2008) to nearly 20% but only through half of our positions. Even the IPART has been mostly replaced by the ATCOACH, accounting for only 1/3 of the RFC training. I had hoped, and still do, that the tower simulator could be tweaked and upgraded to become the preferred method for all three tower positions but it has again gravitated to second place behind the classroom airfield which never needs maintenance and is always on. Simulation on Tower Flight Data/Clearance Delivery has always been around 10% and is normally done in the tower as "Data Stacks" while simulation on Radar Flight Data has proven to be relatively unnecessary.

Mandating simulation as a percentage has its challenges. As we increase our hours of OJT through innovation, motivation and population, we must also increase simulation. If one was simply trying to satisfy the bean counters (me being one of them), one could just reduce OJT or not allow OJT to begin until the simulation tax is paid. Another challenge is that the policy includes all trainees on all positions and all simulators. Controllers gaining subsequent qualifications need very little, if any, simulation and those man-hours can be more useful to initial training.

The amount of simulation an individual needs to meet a chronological goal is not universal. Here are four first term Marines that qualified on Approach West on the same crew in the same amount of calendar days.

Name	Days	OJT	Sim	Total	Sim%
Boyd	99	78.88	68.00	146.88	86.21%
Smith	99	115.17	61.07	176.24	53.03%
Kinningham	99	75.17	56.75	131.92	75.50%
Jacobi	98	43.12	39.50	82.62	91.60%

I guarantee that none of these were pushed to this level of simulation because of the mandate; their training teams understood the effectiveness of the ATCOACH and capitalized on it. We can only speculate on how much OJT would have been required without a simulator or if more simulation could have replaced more OJT. I could easily conclude from these numbers that if I increase simulation to a minimum of 50%, I will decrease qualification time to 99 days but I know that is not the case because I also know that these four Marines are gifted with natural abilities, self motivation, focus and devoted instructors. Another trainee on the same crew during the same time required nearly 100 hours of simulation and 156 days of OJT and is now receiving remedial training.

Back on the revocation issue. There has been an assumption over the past couple of years that the revocation rate is too high, which was followed by a base to base survey. Our records show that in 10 years we received 248 trainees (A School) resulting in 17 revocations for inability to qualify (6.85%), less than 2 per year. We cannot naturally adjust a program that pushes 100 Marines each year through 25,000 hours of training just to ensure that 1.7 Marines don't get cheated out of a chance to get enough simulation. If we determine that an individual needs more simulation, he/she will get it and we will use every tool in our toolbox necessary to succeed.

The focus of higher headquarters in relation to simulators needs to shift from how much are we using them or are being made to use them, to effective feedback on how the make the bad ones better. We spent years complaining about the 15G33 only to be told to stop complaining and just make it work. Now we have much the same problem with the Tower Simulator and IPART. We don't want to give up on them but if all we get back is stop complaining or that it works fine somewhere else, we will just have to find other ways to enhance our training.