

Software boosts marines civilian operations at fleet exercise

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New software that takes advantage of mobile devices to streamline civilian assistance operations has received encouraging feedback from Marines who tested it this month during one of the largest annual multinational military exercises.

Funded by the [Office of Naval Research](#) (ONR) and Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC), the Marine Corps Civil [Information Management System](#) (MARCIMS) helped Marines manage, track and analyze [construction projects](#), health engagements and civil affairs in Thailand Feb. 11-21 during the 32nd Cobra Gold exercise, organized by U.S. Pacific Command in conjunction with the Royal Thai military and several other participating nations.

The development of MARCIMS aligns with the Marine Corps Science & Technology Strategic Plan, which calls for enhanced command-and-control systems for "better decision-making, collaboration and shared understanding" across the range of military operations.

"The [Marine Corps](#) has always been called on to do more than fight, and this technology brings to their fingertips the kind of information they need to manage resources and understand the sociocultural environment for a variety of civilian-military operations," said Martin Kruger, MARCIMS program officer from ONR's Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare and Combating Terrorism Department.

MARCIMS combines technologies developed by ONR to create a

seamless system for collecting and analyzing information and tracking projects, such as the construction of a school or a community health engagement. The system combines the use of smartphones and tablets with a semantic "wiki" site that can be updated instantaneously as information is gathered in the field.

Personnel in the field during an exercise such as Cobra Gold normally would record information in individual notebooks and computer files, making it difficult to analyze data, keep track of projects and follow trends.

MARCIMS enables users to share, organize, visualize and analyze this data within the context of demographics and geography. The tool has given Marines, particularly the III Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF), an unprecedented level of situational awareness as they work with representatives from several other countries during Cobra Gold.

Marines have used the system for everything from daily briefings to calling in more lumber for construction projects. In addition, it has provided a clearing house of civil information in the areas the III MEF has been dispersed throughout [Thailand](#).

"I found the MARCIMS device and associated wiki page to be an excellent command-and-control tool," said Maj. Jared C. Voneida, deputy commander of the Combined Joint Civil Military Operations Task Force, a military unit responsible for carrying out civil-military operations and the primary user of MARCIMS at Cobra Gold. "A substantial amount of man-hours were saved daily by not having to spend time manually inputting raw data from the field into a database."

ONR and MCSC will continue to evaluate feedback from the exercise and further refine MARCIMS for future tests and acquisition.

Provided by Office of Naval Research

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