



The Navy shows its 'green' power embrace in cooperative exercises

December 8, 2016 Thursday, 1 Edition

Strength in numbers is a time-tested military maxim. It is also a reason the Department of the Navy is partnering with the California Energy Commission to help transition the service away from fossil fuels.

The partnership and the Department of the Navy's commitment to integrate renewable energy technologies in all facets of operations will be showcased this week during the 1st Marine Division's annual Steel Knight exercise at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms. Steel Knight is a live-fire crisis and contingency response exercise that tests and refines the Division's warfighting and command and control capabilities. At least one-third of the division - about 7,000 Marines and Sailors - is deployed to the Middle East and the Pacific at any given time.

During a segment of the exercise, Marines will demonstrate how they're using energy efficient technology, procedures and renewable energy to improve combat capability and extend their operational reach. This includes solar panels that power mobile artillery, fuel efficient tactical vehicles and command-and-control systems that enable commanders to reduce vulnerable replenishment convoys.

The combat integration of these technologies may be unfamiliar to many civilians, but the overall application is not. The Commission's steadfast pursuit of clean energy innovations and applications has helped make renewable and alternative energy a regular part of life in homes and communities, on roads and highways, and for business and industry throughout the state. And with the recent signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Commission and the Department of the Navy, the Energy Commission will help bring renewable and alternative energy projects to the daily operations of the 14 Navy and Marine Corps installations in California, supporting the Department's goals which includes having 50 percent of their installations be net-zero energy by 2020.

In fact, work has already begun. Over the past few years, the Commission has helped facilitate the installation of solar-based microgrid systems at Marine Corps Air Station, Miramar, Camp Pendleton and Twentynine Palms, and is currently demonstrating a waterless, energy saving process at Naval Base Ventura County that cleans and decontaminates battle gear worn by the Seabees. Just last month, the Energy Commission worked with the Department of the Navy on a commercial lease agreement that will bring more than 200 electric vehicles to installations in the state.

For the Department of the Navy, transforming energy use is about increasing mission capability and operational flexibility. For the Energy Commission, it's about reducing energy costs and the impacts of energy use on the environment while ensuring a safe, resilient and reliable energy supply. There is a lot of common ground in those two missions, and by developing partnerships and working together where our goals intersect, we prove once again, that there is strength in numbers.

The Navy shows its 'green' power embrace in cooperative exercises

Dennis V. McGinn is assistant secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations and Environment. Robert Weisenmiller is chair of the California Energy Commission. Readers can respond to them by email via Weisenmiller's executive assistant at Catherine.Cross@energy.ca.gov

Dennis V. McGinn and Robert Weisenmiller