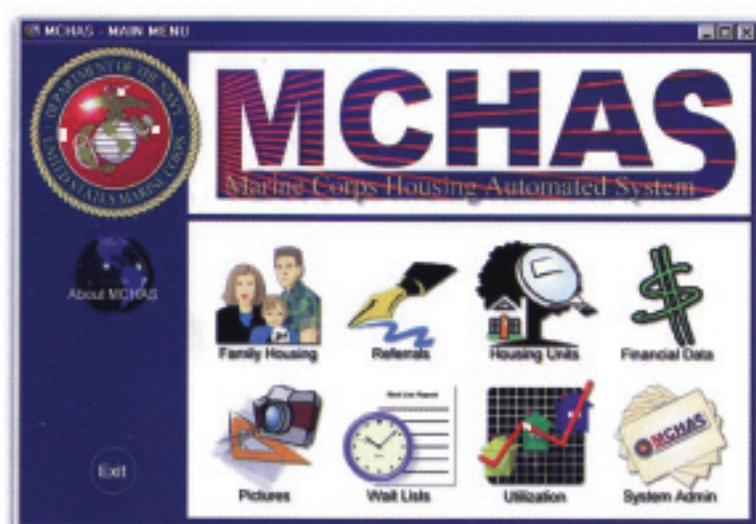


# Marine Corps Housing Automated System (MCHAS)

The Marine Corps brings a fully automated, standardized housing management system online.

In June 1999, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps Housing faced a major challenge with its existing and degrading family housing automated system. Time was running out because existing support systems were not Y2K compliant. Through a series of meetings, data collection requests, and several anxious phone calls to and from the various housing offices, it became obvious that the existing automated housing systems had diverged into 13 separate, incompatible software systems. Training was handled on a lessons learned basis and provided from one housing staff member to another staff member. At six months and counting, it became very apparent that an automation crisis was at hand and an immediate solution was necessary. With luck on its side, HQ USMC found the computer systems expertise and experience with the Facilities System Division at the Naval Facilities Engineering Service Center (NFESC) located at Port Hueneme, California. Within a few short weeks, it was decided that the Facilities System Division (ESC 64) would be the Program Managers for the Marine Corps' effort to develop and implement a new family housing system.

Needless to say, this would not be an easy task. The Marine Corps' existing family housing system was over 10 years old and was not Y2K compliant. Although the system would be ren-



dered unusable and obsolete by the end of the calendar year, it was like a comfortable, old pair of shoes that one hesitates to discard. The other challenge that needed to be corrected was that over the years each individual family housing office had customized its operating system to meet requirements that were specific, or unique, to that base. Because of that, the systems were no longer compatible with each other. This caused a problem for Headquarters USMC housing when the need came to compile reports submitted by the various housing offices. So, with these issues in mind, the ESC 64 project management team was chartered with the following short-fused major milestones:

- Develop a new and fully automated and standardized family housing system that was Y2K compliant.
- Host a users' workshop to gather the information needed to develop a user-friendly and customer-focused family housing automated system.
- Implement the new system at 13 sites by Dec. 31, 1999.

At five months and counting, ESC 64 quickly assembled a team and started moving forward at a breakneck pace. Fortunately, ESC 64 had three things working in its favor. First, the Marine Corps was committed to replacing its existing and degrading automated system. Second, there was a Navy housing system called "MANIS" that was in its early stages of development, which ESC 64

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would use as a foundation for development of the Marine Corps system. Third, ESC 64 found a software developer who worked with the Marine Corps family housing offices and was familiar with the Marine Corps housing regulations and guidelines. With the software development under way, the ESC 64 team began a tandem effort to survey existing hardware and software that was available at each site. The new Marine Corps family housing system was going to be developed in Oracle Forms and would use the Oracle database. It was important, however, to ensure that available hardware could support the new system and that ESC 64 had the proper number of Oracle licenses in place at each site.

As minutes ticked away, November had arrived and it was time to start the software implementations. ESC 64's implementation strategy was to organize three teams. Team one focused on implementation efforts on the West Coast (MCB Camp Pendleton, MCLB Barstow, MCAGCC 29 Palms, MCAS Yuma, and MCSA Kansas City). Team two focused on implementations on the East coast (MCB Quantico, MCAS Cherry Point, MCB Lejeune, MCAS Beaufort, MCRD Parris Island, and MCLB Albany), and team three focused on implementation efforts in MCB Hawaii and MCAS Iwakuni, Japan. When the clock struck midnight on Dec. 31, 1999, all outstanding Y2K concerns were fixed! Degrading old systems and Father Time had departed and the Marine Corps Housing Automated System (MCHAS) was created.

As any automated system in its initial stages of development, MCHAS encountered the usual glitches involved with software development and implementation situations. MCHAS development teams proceeded to release a myriad of patches and various upgrades. Fortunately, Marine Corps housing staff users of MCHAS were very enthusiastic and supportive about the new MCHAS system and were will-

ing to endure the growing pains associated with it. As a necessity, ESC 64 organized several talented Support Work and Training (SWAT) teams that would arrive on-site and immediately tackle and resolve a wide range of problems. Working side-by-side, ESC 64 and Marine Corps housing staff team members marched forward to expand the capabilities of MCHAS.

Marine Corps housing staff, better known as the principal users of MCHAS, are instrumental in achieving success! One key step was to host three MCHAS Users' Workshops that were held at NFESC training facilities at Port Hueneme, California. At these workshops, MCHAS users and MCHAS software developers interacted and quickly created the functionality needs and customer service baseline MCHAS offers to its users and customers. These workshops gave the MCHAS users a positive feeling knowing that they were contributing to the development of a family housing system that satisfies customer service needs and eases daily workload requirements. As a matter of fact, the housing users came up with the MCHAS name during the first user's workshop.

Over the past 18 months, MCHAS has developed into a very robust system for the Marine Corps. MCHAS offers, but is not limited to, the following functional features:

- Waitlist Management
- Housing Assignments and Terminations
- Housing Referral Tracking
- Dependent/Pet/Firearms Tracking
- Incident Reporting
- Financial Data and Billing
- Occupancy and Utilization Reporting (Includes PPV Housing Reporting)
- Housing Inspection Scheduling
- Administration

Additionally, a toll-free MCHAS hotline was developed and provides technical support, to include a MCHAS Web site available for general information and for downloading MCHAS upgrades (<http://mchas.nfesc.navy.mil>).

## SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2001

Plans for 2001 include implementing a centralized MCHAS database server at NFESC and making the MCHAS application Web based. Future plans also include two MCHAS Users' Training sessions and one MCHAS System Administrator Training session annually. These first training sessions will be held at Port Hueneme, California. Future training plans include extending MCHAS training on a regional basis. For instance, Marine Corps bases on the West coast, Hawaii, and Japan would receive MCHAS training at Port Hueneme. East coast bases would receive training at a Marine Corps Base, i.e., MCB Quantico, Virginia or MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina.

During the week of January 21-26, 2001, a MCHAS showcase was unveiled at the PHMA PDS XIII in Louisville, Kentucky. To the Marine Corps' delight, MCHAS received an overwhelming amount of positive feedback, not just from USMC Family Housing attendees to PHMA's PDS, but from other PDS attendees as well. Many compliments about MCHAS were received from Army, Navy, and Coast Guard attendees and many inquired about possible implementation of MCHAS at their bases. Headquarters, Marine Corps Housing views MCHAS as a success story. The Marine Corps' primary objective is to continue to develop and improve MCHAS for its users and as an efficient automated system and source of information for military customers. This objective is being met thanks to the continued teamwork between the Marine Corps, NFESC, and private industry.

For more information about MCHAS, please call-toll free 877/809-7213 or go to <http://mchas.nfesc.navy.mil> for further information. ■