Customer Story

# Marine Corps Community Services Sped Up Mission Readiness

With Akamai, Operation StormBreaker collapsed time to deploy from years to days, saving millions of dollars and modernizing mission delivery

Cut ATO timelines from 18 months to 30 days

Saved $10M+ by accelerating app delivery

Enabled global access and stronger security

## Accelerating mission relevance at the speed of need

The U.S. Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) supports more than 25 lines of business, 80+ programs, and $1.2 billion in annual revenue. Supporting Marines and their families worldwide, its mission spans everything from retail exchanges and food services to recreation, lodging, and fitness. At the heart of it all is fast, reliable, and secure digital services. Akamai is a key component of the Operation StormBreaker landing zone platform designed to replace outdated acquisition and authorization to operate (ATO) methods with a secure, agile, and cost-effective DevOps model.

## Breaking the bottleneck of legacy processes and IT

As Chief Digital Services Officer for MCCS, Dave Raley is tasked with driving the digital modernization of a vast and complex organization. His first order of business was building modern websites and applications to support dozens of businesses and programs. But outdated waterfall acquisition and legacy compliance practices made it nearly impossible to deliver new capabilities at mission speed.

Typical delivery timelines stretched to four years: six months to define requirements, a year to acquire a solution, another year to implement it, and up to 18 months to obtain an ATO.

“We needed to provide warfighters with the decisive advantage they require — delivering solutions at the speed of relevance for the mission,” said Raley. “We couldn’t continue treating IT as a time and budget vacuum.”

Legacy ATO processes were a major barrier. Paper-based and point-in-time, these compliance models consumed resources and delayed delivery. Requirements changed long before systems were authorized, and millions of dollars were spent building capabilities that were outdated before they launched.

According to Raley, mission owners and cyber teams wasted time proving compliance instead of building it in from the start. “Compliance should be serving the mission, not the other way around,” he said.

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**Location**
Quantico, Virginia
usmc-mccs.org

**Industry**
Public Sector

**Solutions**
Security
Content Delivery

**Product**
App & API Protector

Akamai Security

His analysis of the cost of delay showed an average loss of $100,000 per system, per month, due to slow authorizations. The mission impact was clear — and unacceptable.

## Building the foundation: A secure landing zone

To break through these barriers, Raley partnered with **Raven Solutions** to build a centralized landing zone incorporating solutions from dozens of vendors. This secure, scalable, and standardized environment would be hosted on AWS GovCloud, designed to meet DoW security requirements. Serving as the backbone for Operation StormBreaker, this landing zone provides commercial cloud services, shared infrastructure, and active cyber defense. It hosts both legacy virtual machines and modern **containerized** workloads.

The landing zone also incorporates Akamai's globally distributed network and **App & API Protector** solution to protect public-facing MCCS assets from internet-based threats. "Anybody visiting public sites is hitting a cached version on the Akamai network, so traffic isn't hitting MCCS' origin servers," said Ryan Pratt, CEO of Raven Solutions. "That helps from both a cost and security standpoint."

Akamai's capabilities help Raven and Operation StormBreaker reduce overhead and accelerate delivery. Pratt added, "It would be impossible for us to otherwise establish a global footprint for this landing zone. Plus, Akamai already satisfies many of the security controls we need."

Just as important, Akamai ensures global users enjoy secure, high-performing experiences that match commercial expectations. MCCS operates across Japan, Guam, Hawaii, and the continental U.S., but its authorized patrons live worldwide. "It's really important to provide access and security at the speed our users expect," said Raley. "Akamai enables us to do that."

## Agile authorizations at mission speed

The landing zone makes two groundbreaking capabilities possible:

- **Agile ATO:** For traditional workloads, Operation StormBreaker can now deliver an ATO in just 30 days — a 17x improvement over the traditional timeline. All infrastructure, controls, and cybersecurity operations are provided as a service to mission owners, removing the burden of building from scratch.
- **Software factory and continuous ATO:** For container workloads, Operation StormBreaker provides a CI/CD pipeline with full DevSecOps integration. As a certified Navy RAISE (Rapid Assess and Incorporate Software Engineering) platform, this enables container workloads to be released into production with same-day authorization and continuous monitoring, eliminating the need for additional paperwork.

"Akamai's Professional Services team plays a critical role in enabling such rapid ATOs. They work in lockstep with both our team and Operation StormBreaker, responding quickly to requests for new hostname integrations. Their support simplifies our work and is essential to achieving fast go-lives," explained Pratt.

"ATOs aren't a constraint for us anymore," continued Raley. "We are typically delivering an ATO or a continuous authorization for a container workload three to six months before the mission owner is even ready to deploy."



**With Akamai baked into the Operation StormBreaker landing zone, we and other DoW departments can easily use the cloud and focus on differentiating apps, which is the mission.**

**Dave Raley**
**Chief Digital Services Officer, MCCS**

## Real-world results: MVP in nine months

Using the Operation StormBreaker software factory and platform services, MCCS recently developed and deployed an employee scheduling system in just nine months for $200,000. That was a huge win, especially compared to a failed $1.5 million, multiyear effort a decade earlier. For employees without a Common Access Card or Marine Corps email, MCCS isolated the application and used Akamai to protect personally identifiable information (PII).

"We eliminated the extra authorization time and collapsed implementation timelines," said Raley. "The product owner defines requirements every two weeks and can tailor the app on the fly. That should be the norm."

## Scaling across the DoW

Now that the majority of MCCS applications run in the landing zone, Raley is focused on expanding Operation StormBreaker across the DoW. "We've assembled the entire platform. Developers or mission owners just need to bring their application or requirements," he said. "This is a very different and powerful approach."

Raley encourages other DoW components to take advantage. "We cannot outpace our adversaries if we constrain ourselves to outdated processes. The old methods are incredibly costly and slow. As a proven model for delivering secure, mission-ready applications at unprecedented speed, Operation StormBreaker is how we break free from that," he concluded.

> **Though Raven Solutions is agnostic, we always choose Akamai for sensitive government projects because it provides the same capabilities as SIPRNet/NIPRNet.**
>
> **Ryan Pratt**
> **CEO, Raven Solutions**

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**About Marine Corps Community Services**
MCCS provides commanders with an integrated organization for the development and delivery of family, fitness and recreation, exchange and business services, and other quality-of-life programs and services for Marines and their families. Learn more at usmc-mccs.org.

**About Operation StormBreaker**
Operation StormBreaker is a mission-focused software initiative accelerating the delivery of secure, adaptive, and resilient digital capabilities to warfighters. Built for speed, security, and agility, it integrates cloud native services, automated software pipelines, and real-time responsiveness to maintain a strategic edge across multi-domain operations. Learn more at operationstormbreaker.usmc-mccs.org. For more information or to schedule a discussion about Operation StormBreaker, contact operationstormbreaker@usmc-mccs.org.

**About Raven Solutions**
Raven Solutions provides full-service solutions to migrate existing systems into government-approved, commercial cloud environments and accelerate cloud adoption. Learn more at raven-solutions.com. For more information or to schedule a discussion with Raven Solutions, contact productteam@raven-solutions.com.

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