

President Kennedy quickly came to appreciate how important the Marine Corps, as the nation's force in readiness, was to his new *"flexible response"* policy. In the spring of 1962, the president had already ordered 3,000 combat-ready Marines ashore in Thailand to protect that country's territorial integrity. During the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962, President Kennedy also directed Marine forces in the Caribbean to reinforce Guantanamo Bay and to rehearse amphibious landings designed to topple Fidel Castro from power.²⁵ The Cuban Missile Crisis was eventually defused, through tough diplomacy backed by the use of a naval blockade in concert with other conventional military forces. Particularly in Cuba, a *"flexible response"* with conventional forces demonstrated its value in helping to avert a nuclear confrontation between the Superpowers.

For the *"flexible response"* doctrine to be effective, strong conventional forces had to be both capable and adaptive to constantly changing requirements. As always, economic costs proved to be a major consideration as Washington policy-makers sought the greatest *"bang for the buck."* President Kennedy, a naval reservist himself during World War II, saw as a central goal of the *"flexible response"* doctrine a large and well prepared Ready Reserve to augment the regular forces at a moment's notice. Early in his administration, in October 1961, Kennedy demonstrated his faith in the reservists and National Guardsmen by calling 150,000 of them to active duty in a show of strength intended to dissuade the Soviets from carrying out their threats against West Berlin.²⁶

Only a few months before the crisis in West Berlin, on July 25, 1961, Kennedy addressed the nation and called for a series of improvements in the readiness of conventional forces, including an *"increase in the size of the Marine Corps,"* and *"improved readiness of our reserves."*²⁷ He saw the Ready Reserve as vitally necessary to create a force *"large enough to make clear our determination and ability to defend our rights at all costs--and to meet all levels of aggressor pressure with whatever levels of force are required."*²⁸ It was not realistic, politically or economically, for the United States to attempt to match the Soviet Union in the numbers of ground troops they had on active duty. Through a large and effective reserve program, however, Kennedy hoped to offset the Soviet's numerical advantage. For this policy to be effective, the Ready Reserve had to be truly ready and have capabilities comparable to their active duty counterparts.

Army Reserve and National Guard units began to reorganize in 1961 under the *"One Army"* concept. The goal was to create a Reserve and National Guard that was *"so organized, trained and equipped as to permit their rapid integration in the active Army,"* The implicit goal of this program was to eliminate units that did not have missions under contingency war plans and to significantly increase the levels of manning, equipping, training, and overall combat readiness of priority reserve forces.²⁹

The Marine Corps Reserve reorganization would follow much the same path, deactivating some units and reorganizing others. As much as possible, reserve units in the Marine Corps also had to be trained and equipped to the same level as regular Marine Corps units. Additionally, reserve units needed to be organized like the active duty units to facilitate their immediate activation and integration with the regular forces when they were needed.

Reactivation of the 4th Marine Division: Concept

The Kennedy administration's new emphasis on conventional forces and reserve forces directly impacted the Marine Corps in several important ways. For example the president ordered increases in the authorized strength, from 178,000 to 190,000, of the active duty Marine Corps while placing additional require-

ments on the Marine Corps Reserve. In early 1962, Kennedy's Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, called on the Marine Corps to be ready to provide four division-air wing teams, one of them formed from the Ready Reserve, for the next five years.³⁰ This was not a new concept to the Marine Corps but instead, simply formalized a more general readiness and reorganization program that planners had been working on for some time.

During the summer of 1961, as a result of a study conducted by Colonel R. M. Wood, the Marine Corps launched an extensive public relations campaign to reemphasize its Reserve as "ready" for mobilization in the nation's defense.³¹ This simple message was carried on billboards, on matchbooks, and on A-frame signs on city sidewalks. The goal was to inform all Marine reservists and the American public, that the Marine Corps Reserve could be called up at any time and that reservists were expected to be ready in every way. That same year, the Organized Marine Corps Reserve (Ground) began its reorganization to provide the basic elements for the potential mobilization of a fourth Marine division.³² This was a marked departure from the way reserve Marines had been employed in the past.

Colonel Wood also headed a committee that was examining the Marine Corps' reserve structure with an eye toward a major reorganization to improve mobilization readiness and capabilities. His report recommended the Marine Corps Reserve be restructured to support the basic elements of a Reserve Division/Wing team. Colonel Wood's recommendations were intended to make the Reserve more comparable to the active duty Fleet Marine Force units and capable of mobilization in thirty days.³³

Before the reorganization of the Organized Marine Corps Reserve which established the 4th Marine Division/Wing team, individual Marine reservists were trained to fill specific vacancies within existing regular Marine Corps units or to be available to form new units if they were needed.³⁴ In the Korean War call up, for example, an individual reservist reporting for active duty at Camp Pendleton in the summer of 1950 might find himself assigned to the 1st Marine Division embarking for the coming Inchon landing, or assigned to fill a billet at the Marine Barracks at Mare Island Naval Shipyard, or assigned to remain at Camp Pendleton to support further mobilization. In these situations, his training and experience could, at best, only generally meet the requirements of his new assignment. Calling up reservists on an individual replacement basis and assigning them as fillers to existing units also created serious problems by disrupting unit cohesion*.

After World War II, Army historical teams led by Colonel S. L. A. Marshall studied hundreds of small-unit actions and the role unit cohesion played.³⁵ Marshall concluded what military commanders have intuitively known throughout history, that *"one of the simplest truths of war"* was that, *"the thing which enables an infantry soldier to keep going with his weapon is the near presence or the presumed presence of a comrade."*³⁶ Other scholars, including Morris Janowitz, Edward A. Shils, Samuel A. Stouffer, Richard Gabriel, and Trevor N. Dupuy, came to much the same conclusion, in their studies of the American military services and those of other countries as well.³⁷ Fighting men simply perform best in combat situations when they know and care about other members of what they feel is *"their"* unit.

Psychologists have even reported that the fighting man's greatest fear in battle is not death or injury, but letting his friends and his unit down in the face of the enemy.³⁸ Randomly plugging individual Marine reservists into existing active duty units, as had happened during the Korean War, was not the most effective way to maintain unit cohesion and combat effectiveness. It was unfair to both the units and the individual Marines. Colonel Wood's report offered a solution to many of these problems by creating combat organizations within the Reserve that would be called to active duty as units.

*Cohesion of a military unit has been defined as "the bonding together of members of a unit or organization in such a way as to sustain their will and commitment to each other, their unit, and the mission." (Cohesion in the US Military, p. ix)

Creation of the 4th Marine Division: Implementation

The formal reorganization of the Marine Corps Reserve and the initial formation of the 4th Marine Division began on July 1, 1962 when the Director of the Marine Corps Reserve, General W.T. Fairbourn adopted Colonel Wood's recommendations. Under the direction of June 8, 1962 Marine Corps Order (MCO) 5400R.2, the newly reestablished 4th Marine Division was to be manned by ten percent regulars and ninety per cent reservists. The reorganization effected all reserve units, not just those assigned to the new division. Ten Reserve rifle companies were deactivated and another fifty-three were transferred into the new Reserve division.

The broad concept was for these rifle companies, and other units in the new division, to work and train together while in a reserve status and to be assigned together as a unit during mobilization. To facilitate this, the reservists would train together on a quarterly basis and they would be equipped with enough weapons and equipment to train together at their drill centers. It was intended that the reserve units would receive their full allocation from one of the Marine Corps Supply Depots (Barstow, California or Albany, Georgia) in the event they were mobilized. This general reorganization of the Marine Corps Reserve had a number of advantages over the old system.

Reserve units in the 4th Division were defined as either regimental or non-regimental, with most being in the former category. Command relationships and responsibility for administration for the units, defined in MCO 5400.36B, were complex, divided between the division itself, Headquarters, Marine Corps, and the Marine Corps districts where the Reserve units were activated. Contact between the units and the District Directors, the senior officer in command of a Marine Corps district, was channeled through the existing Inspector-Instructor staffs.

It was believed that Mobilization of a Marine Corps Reserve unit as a standing organization, with its unit cohesion, familiarity with personnel and command structure, was desirable. This type of system was believed to be far better than assigning individual reservists to existing active duty units or creating entirely new units in time of desperate need. The training the reserve units received before being mobilized was more effective and relevant as it directly prepared the individual Marines for the jobs they would be expected to do on active duty. It also trained the units to work as teams. Unit cohesion was enhanced along with professional proficiency. Individual reservists also benefited since they were no longer simply generic "fillers" with no idea of where they might end up or what they might be doing when they were ordered to on to active duty. They would train with and get to know other Marines in their unit and come to understand what their officer and non-commissioned leadership expected of them. Marines assigned to the new reserve division could also count themselves as members of the illustrious 4th Marine Division and have the unit pride that comes from being part of a combat unit with such an enviable record of combat achievements during World War II.

It was appropriate that it was the 4th Division that became the new home for so many Marine reservists. The division had first been created during the middle of World War II and it was the first Marine division to be deactivated after the war was over. The majority of the Marines who served in the wartime 4th Marine Division, were not career Marines, but real "*citizen-soldiers of the sea.*" A wartime reservist himself, Brigadier General Lewis C. Hudson noted that "*without the Reserves, we simply would not have had the 2d battalion, 25th Marines,*" and that "*thirty-six of the 38 officers of this battalion were Reserves and upon them fell the burdens of combat duty.*"³⁹ He noted too that, "*as the war progressed, increasingly large numbers of the combat NCO's were Reserve,*" and that "*it was largely a war of Reserves during the latter period of World War II.*"⁴⁰ These wartime

reservists served their country and the Marine Corps in the time of need and then, like their division, demobilized and returned to their civilian lives once the war was over.

As advanced as the general idea was, the concept of a reserve division would take several years before it would become a reality. A 1963 report to the Secretary of the Navy admitted that, *"simply promulgating a reorganization order redesignating many units we did not overnight attain the readiness required to raise the Marine Corps to a 4-Marine Division/Wing Team force structure effectively responsive to mobilization requirements."*⁴¹ Under the reorganization of the Marine Corps Reserve, fifty-four drill-pay units would become part of the 4th Marine Division. Another ninety-five went to the Force Troops, fifty-six remained in their independent status to serve as a source of trained reservists for the Fleet Marine Force, and thirteen were to be deactivated. As it had been during the Second World War, the reactivated 4th Marine Division was again made up of the 23d, 24th, and 25th Marines, serving as its infantry regiments. The 14th Marines again provided artillery support. All of the companies within each battalion had drill sites located close enough to one another to allow training together, normally at least once each quarter and during their summer field training. For example, the companies of 3d Battalion, 23d Marines were all located in the San Francisco Bay area and companies of the 2nd Battalion, 25th Marines were all located near New York City. The individual battalions, however, were located throughout the continental United States.⁴² Artillery units were assigned to areas of the country that allowed them to practice firing their weapons.

Under the reorganization, most 4th Marine Division units had the same Tables-of-Organization and Tables-of-Equipment as their regular counterparts. Generally, however, they were not authorized to have full Table-of-Organization (T/O) strength and only had enough equipment and weapons on hand for training purposes. Battalion commanding officers remained responsible for training only, with individual company commanders retaining responsibility for all administration, supply, and other duties. Headquarters Marine Corps was responsible for publishing an annual field training cycle since, at the time the Division was reestablished, there were no provisions for a division headquarters.⁴³ The ultimate goal was for the Marine Corps to be able to mobilize 4th Division/Wing units within five to thirty days. To facilitate rapid mobilization, the Marine Corps had eighty specially trained teams located throughout the United States.

Brigadier General R. R. Van Stockum, who became Director of the Marine Corps Reserve on June 12, 1962, welcomed the reorganization of the Reserve and the reactivation of the 4th Division. He noted, the changes gave the *"Reserve for the first time a longer range training goal at which to aim,"* and that it offered a view on where the Reserve would be *"five to eight years from now."*⁴⁴ A major part of this was the integration of the new reserve division to train more like their regular counterparts. Ideally, each unit with the 4th Division was scheduled to conduct battalion level training at least four times a year, exclusive of their normal summer training.⁴⁵

Training and the New 4th Division

The first major test of the new 4th Division/Wing Team came with the three-day Operation Trident, held at Camp Lejeune in 1962. Some 3,000 reservists from nineteen separate units and from eighteen different states participated in the exercise. On the West Coast, a similar training exercise, Operation Tiger, with approximately 10,000 Marine reservists, trained at six installations including Twenty-nine Palms. For the first time, too, Marine reservists participated in annual field training that was conducted in Puerto Rico. Six ground units, with more than 1,000 Marine reservists, participated.⁴⁶ In the summer of 1963, two more large-scale reserve exercises were conducted, Operation Unity at Camp Lejeune and Operation Scorpion in

the desert of Southern California. Again these exercises were planned, staged, and staffed by reservists. In all, 34,075 reservists participated in these exercises.

The reorganization of the reserve and the reactivation of the 4th Marine Division provided a vital back-up to active duty Marine Corps forces who were increasingly being committed to combat in Vietnam in the mid-1960s. In a January 3, 1963 talk to his staff, the Commandant, General David M. Shoup, likened his 4th Marine Division to the division reserve of a corps commander. He continued; "*it is something to be committed at the vital moment.*"⁴⁷ As the nation's strategic reserve, the 4th Marine Division and the rest of the Reserve provided the promise of a ready and capable force to meet unexpected emergencies. This was particularly important as Marine Corps and other active duty military units were committed to Southeast Asia in the coming months.

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On April 13, 1963, members of Company B (Rein), 4th Tank Battalion, Force Troops, Mattydale, NY completed a 50 mile hike in 13 hours and 15 minutes. From left to right; Major Edward Kaish, First Lieutenant Paul Liddell, Sergeant Dick Driggs, Cpl Thomas Marzinski, LCpl Harold Thompson.



PFC's T Reed, Jr. (right) and T. Quinn, reservists from G Company, 2/23, prepare to reload a M-60 machinegun during a field problem.



During Company B, 8th Tank Battalion's annual training in August 68, M-103 heavy main battle tanks fire at tank gunnery tables in 29 Palms, California. Tanks were on loan from Delta Company, 1st Tank Battalion.



On the move a lone M-103 heavy main battle tank takes aim and fires on tank firing ranges in 29 Palms, California.



Reverend Father Kenneth A. Mitchell, commissioned in the Chaplain Corps sits atop tank to observe the 96th Rifle Co. during annual 2-week field exercises at Camp Pendleton. Before his commission he traveled to twice to California at his own expense to take part in company's exercises.



Color Guard team of 12th Infantry Battalion, USMCR, Treasure Island, San Francisco, marches into cemetery for Memorial Day ceremonies on May 30th, 1947.



First wave of Marines from Company I, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines, hit Onslow Beach at Camp Lejeune, NC during RESMEBLEX-69.



Men of the 4th Marine Division scurry across sand dunes on Red Beach at Camp Pendleton, CA during Operation "Golden Slipper".

Chapter 3

Vietnam War Era

The Vietnam War

On the morning of March 8, 1965, elements of the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB), under the command of Brigadier General Frederick J. Karch, USMC, waded ashore across RED Beach 2 to the north-west of Da Nang, in the Quang Nam province of South Vietnam.¹ Unlike their counterparts in World War II and Inchon, these Marines faced no hostile fire and were instead greeted by the mayor of Da Nang, by schoolgirls who presented them with leis of flowers, and by four American soldiers bearing a sign: *"Welcome Gallant Marines."* Once ashore, 9th MEB Marines quickly moved inland over roads that had been secured by South Vietnamese troops to Da Nang Airbase, to the southwest of the city. These ground combat Marines had been requested by U. S. Army General William C. Westmoreland, the commander of the U. S. Military Assistance Command in Vietnam (MACV), on February 22, 1965. They were assigned to protect Da Nang's vulnerable airbase from approximately six thousand Vietcong guerrillas believed to be in the vicinity.² This first step of America's entry into the ground war in Vietnam was modest in both size and mission.

The Marines of the 9th MEB had a limited mission to establish a secure American enclave and provide *"local, close-in security"* for the vital airfield, freeing up South Vietnamese troops to conduct offensive operations against the Vietcong. Westmoreland was specifically concerned that the Vietcong might retaliate against the base at Da Nang in response to Operation Rolling Thunder, the American bombing offensive against North Vietnam.³ The American general viewed the Marines as a stop-gap to *"secure a vital airfield and the air units using it"* and not necessarily as the start of a larger overall American escalation of the war.⁴ Whatever the original intent, however, these first Marine Corps ground units were only the first in what would become the longest and one of the most costly of all the wars in the nation's history.**

The United States had long been actively involved in the undeclared war in Southeast Asia, supporting the anti-Communist government of South Vietnam with military advisors, air support, and economic and military assistance. Before 1965, a few Marines had been assigned there as military advisors, as members of two Hawk missile anti-aircraft batteries, and with HMM-162 and -163 helicopter squadrons, all supporting the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) in its operations against the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese Army. The commitment of 9th MEB, however, signaled a new phase in the war in which the United States, and its Marine Corps, became progressively more committed to offensive ground combat against the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese army.

By the end of 1965, the number of Marines deployed in South Vietnam grew to approximately 38,000. Direct American participation in the ground war would ultimately last six years, from 1965 to 1971, and cost the Marine Corps more than 100,000 dead and wounded. Some 794,000 Americans served as Marines during the Vietnam War with as many as 85,755 assigned there at one time.⁵ The conflict so dominated the Marine Corps during that period that it prompted General Chapman, commandant from January 1968 to December 1971, to state, *"there were just three kinds of Marines; there were those in Vietnam, those who had just come back from Vietnam, and those who were getting ready to go to Vietnam."*⁶ This highly unconventional and unpopular war placed tremendous strains on the very fabric of the Marine Corps and its Reserve both during the war and for years afterwards.

**When the 4th Marine Division landed on Roi-Namur in World War II, Major Frederick J. Karch was the operations officer for the 14th Marines.*

*** Marine casualties in Vietnam totaled 101,574 killed and wounded, a figure approximately 4,000 greater than World War II. A total of 12,983 Marines died in the Vietnam War, compared to 19,733 deaths in World War II.*

Marines in Vietnam faced hostile terrain and climate, a committed and skilled enemy, an unreliable ally, and an unfamiliar mission. For decades, the Marine Corps had perfected the art of amphibious warfare and organized itself as the world's premiere amphibious assault force only to be assigned to a protracted defensive mission in a war of attrition. At the same time, the Marine Corps was also expected to meet its strategic commitments elsewhere in the world. As active duty Marine Corps units were assigned in increasing numbers to combat operational commitments in Vietnam, the role of the Marine Corps Reserve and the 4th Marine Division became that much more critical. The Marine Corps Reserve, however, would play a far different role during the Vietnam War than it had played during World Wars I and II, or in Korea.

Mobilization of the 4th Marine Division

In all of the American wars of the 20th century, the Reserve has played a major role in support of the active duty forces. The Marine Corps Reserve was created during the First World War on August 29, 1916. It was intended to augment the active duty force for the coming combat in Europe. In the autumn of 1940, more than a year before the United States entered World War II, the Organized Reserve of the Marine Corps was mobilized in response to Hitler's aggression in Europe and bellicose Japanese moves in Asia and in the Pacific. During World War II, the Reserve comprised well over sixty percent of the Marine Corps with 30,074 officers and 307,340 enlisted Marines.⁷ The Reserve was also called up within weeks of President Harry Truman's commitment of American forces in the Korean War in 1950. The Marine Corps Reserve was, however, not mobilized for the war in Indochina.

Within the Marine Corps' leadership, during the initial build-up of American forces in Vietnam in 1965, there was some expectation, and even desire, to mobilize the newly organized 4th Marine Division/Wing Team for combat in Vietnam. In hearings before the House Armed Services Committee on 18 August, 1965, General Wallace M. Greene, Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps, stated that he saw no reason to have the 4th Division/Wing Team sitting unemployed on the West Coast while active duty Marine Corps units were assigned to combat in Vietnam. He expressed confidence that, if they were mobilized, they would respond quickly and well.⁸

Mobilization of the 4th Marine Division/Wing Team in 1965, at the same time a major build-up of the active divisions and wings was underway, would have resulted in grave problems of competing demands for equipment and personnel.

The recently formed 4th Division/Wing Team had only modest levels of equipment on hand that had been authorized under the Reserve Table of Equipment. This system provided the Reserve units with only enough equipment for limited training purposes. The equipment they did have was often obsolete, old, and worn out. Before the 4th Division/Wing Team could have been effective in combat, they would have needed virtually a complete issue of all new weapons and equipment. This would have placed severe strain on the Marine Corps' already overtaxed supply system.

Personnel shortages would have proved to be an equally challenging problem. The 4th Division/Wing Team would have required significant numbers of augmentees to flesh out its ranks. There would have been a serious problem too in maintaining the Reserve's authorized manpower strength after a mobilization. By law, any Marine reservist brought on to active duty, for any length of time, would have fulfilled his obligated service. General Greene's successor as commandant, General Leonard F. Chapman, likened the Reserve to *"a huge [piece] of artillery that has only one round,"* which *"you can fire once, and then it will be 20 years, proba-*

bly, before you can fire it again.”⁹ Even partial mobilization of the Reserve for the prolonged Vietnam War would have created serious manpower shortages.

During the Vietnam War, there were legitimate concerns within the Marine Corps that, if units from the 4th Division/Wing Team had been called up piecemeal, the combat integrity of the team would have been undermined to the point where it would not be able to meet strategic responsibilities elsewhere. Some other method had to be found to reach the increased Marine Corps strength of 223,000 that was authorized in August 1965. Expansion demands became even more acute as Marine Corps involvement in Indochina escalated. On July 1, 1967, the authorized strength of the active duty Marine Corps was again increased, this time to 278,184.¹⁰ Before the war started winding down in 1969, the total strength of the active duty Marine Corps grew to a post World War II high of 309,771.¹¹

The question of whether or not to mobilize the Reserves and how to otherwise increase the size of active duty forces in Vietnam was eventually decided by the president. After visiting South Vietnam in the summer of 1965, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara recommended to President Lyndon B. Johnson the mobilization of 235,000 Reserve and National Guard members for a period of one year. This, Secretary McNamara reasoned, would give the regular forces time to expand to meet the requirement of the fighting in Vietnam. McNamara’s recommendations to the president included a call for 75,000 Marine reservists.¹² General Earle G. Wheeler, U. S. A, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, also counseled the president that a mobilization of the reserves would be necessary to bring the war in Vietnam to a favorable conclusion. Army planners especially favored mobilization since their active duty force structure counted heavily on Reserve and National Guard units to provide much of their combat service support in the event of a major war.

On July 21, President Johnson and his civilian and military national security advisors discussed the future role of the United States in Vietnam and whether or not to mobilize the reserves. In addition to practical military considerations, the president was also concerned with the costs of a general mobilization of the reserves, both in terms of money and domestic and international reaction. Johnson appreciated that a mobilization would *“require a great deal of money and a huge sacrifice for the American people”* and wanted to review McNamara’s *“proposal with the greatest care.”*¹³

In a July 28 news conference, President Johnson finally announced his decision to increase the number of American troops in Vietnam to 125,000, that there would not be a call up of the reserves, and that any unmet manpower requirements would be realized through an increased draft.¹⁴ It was believed that the president was unwilling to order a general mobilization for fighting in Indochina for a number of national security and political reasons.

The Vietnam War may have been the most conspicuous and immediate national security threat to the United States, but there were also any number of other potential trouble spots around the world where serious armed conflict might have erupted at any moment. During this unsettled and confrontational period of the Cold War, conflict could have flamed in West Berlin, Cuba, Cyprus, the Caribbean, the Middle East, Korea, or a dozen other places without warning. The president and other American policy makers had to consider that the Vietnam conflict could have been a strategic feint on the part of the Communist bloc to prompt the United States to commit its conventional forces there to allow aggression elsewhere.

The month after the 9th MEB landed across the beaches of Da Nang, for example, President Johnson also ordered the 6th Marine Expeditionary Unit (6th MEU) and major portions of the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (4th MEB) ashore in the Dominican Republic to prevent *“another Cuba.”* Had the coun-

try's reserves been committed to Vietnam, along with major portions of the regular forces, little would have been available to meet this or any other crises. This need to maintain the Reserve and National Guard as the nation's strategic reserve was well understood, even in 1965, as the Johnson administration knew that the Vietnam War would require a long-term commitment. President Johnson was also very reluctant to call up the reserves for fear of signaling to the American people and foreign governments an unwelcome escalation in the war.¹⁵ Domestically, Johnson attempted to maintain the appearance of a limited conflict in Vietnam to bolster public support for his foreign policies and to protect his administration's ambitious domestic "*Great Society*" programs. Ironically, as the war and domestic opposition to it grew, National Guard units, which were not federalized, were needed to maintain order in many American cities and on college campuses. Internationally, the American president wanted to avoid provoking the Soviet Union or China while reassuring America's allies, especially those in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), that they had not been forsaken.

The Marine Corps Adapts to the War and the Draft

With President Johnson's decision not to mobilize the reserves and instead rely on increased conscription, the Marine Corps once again had to accept draftees into its ranks. During fiscal year 1966, the Marine Corps assimilated 19,573 draftees.¹⁶ Marine Corps training was also streamlined to speed new enlisted Marines and junior officers to the operational Fleet Marine Force (FMF). Recruit training was reduced from twelve to eight weeks and The Basic School for officers was cut from twenty-six to twenty-one weeks.¹⁷ To insure a steady infusion of voluntary recruits, Headquarters Marine Corps also shifted from the usual three and four year enlistment's to two year enlistments. This allowed individual volunteers to serve their obligated military duty with only one tour in Vietnam.

Although each of these measures helped, Marine Corps manpower shortages were so severe that by 1966 "*Project 100,000*" was initiated to enlist individuals who had previously been considered unfit for service because of educational deficiencies or physical defects.¹⁸ This highly controversial program required the Marine Corps to enlist 24 percent of its total accession from Mental Group IV.* Because of their limited mental abilities, 90 percent of these recruits were limited to only 12 of the 34 Marine occupational fields.¹⁹

To absorb these ever increasing numbers of incoming Marines and to create new combat units for rotation to Vietnam, in December 1965 Secretary McNamara approved the reactivation of the 5th Marine Division. Like the 4th Division, the 5th had been created during World War II only to be demobilized at the end of the war. The decision to reactivate the 5th was officially announced by the Department of Defense on March 1, 1966.²⁰ Starting from scratch, it would be a full year before the 5th Division was fully operational and combat ready. Even then, it did not deploy to Vietnam as a division, but instead provided two regiments, the 26th and 27th Marines, to join the Marine divisions already there. While the active duty Marine Corps grew to meet the demands of increasing requirements in Vietnam, the Reserve, especially the 4th Marine Division continued its work toward becoming a truly combat ready force.

4th Division Supports Marines in Vietnam

While not mobilized, Marine Corps reservists in the United States did play a number of important roles in providing support to active duty Marines deployed to Vietnam.

*The Mental Group Classification System is based on standardized written examinations designed to determine if an individual is allowed to enter the service and his aptitude to perform certain tasks. Mental Group IV is the second lowest group and is equivalent to an IQ of approximately 70 to 91.

In an effort to “*win the hearts and minds*” of the South Vietnamese people in the III Marine Amphibious Force (MAF) area of operation, U. S. Marines in Vietnam initiated an ambitious civic action program. The object of this effort was to provide money, tools, food, clothing, medical care, housing, schools, and other basic items to needy South Vietnamese. The direct purchase of these supplies was prohibited by Marine Corps policy and shipping space to South Vietnam was always at a premium. As a solution, members of the 4th Division and other Marine Corps Reserve units worked through the Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere (CARE) in raising money to purchase the needed materials. Marine reservists did not directly collect donations but instead made people aware of the need and encouraged donations through CARE. The money collected was then sent to the III MAF area in Vietnam for the purchase of the needed supplies there. This method avoided the bottleneck in shipping, brought money into the South Vietnamese economy, and best of all, provided invaluable assistance to the Vietnamese people.²¹

The Marine Corps program, which tied into the Navy’s successful Operation Handclasp, was officially launched on September 13, 1965 by the Commandant of the Marine Corps with positive and immediate results. Within five months, nearly a hundred and twenty thousand dollars had been collected.²² The money went to work supporting programs like the Medical Civic Action Program (MEDCAP); it provided medical aid to local hamlets and the School Building Program.²³ Money from this program also paid for school supplies, orphanages, religious institutions, and, in a quintessential American gesture, Little League equipment. Aside from the general altruistic motivation, the project was designed to encourage the Vietnamese people to believe in the good will of the United States and that she had their best interests at heart.

The 4th Marine Division Works Toward Readiness

On the eve of the Marine Corps’ major commitment of ground forces in Vietnam, the Marine Corps Reserve was experiencing serious personnel shortages while undergoing major organizational and operational changes associated with the recent formation of the 4th Marine Division and the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing.

As of June 30, 1964, the total Reserve strength, not on active duty, was only 136,001, and well over half of these were in an inactive status. The Department of Defense considered this number, “*inadequate for the desired rate of mobilization expansion.*”²⁴ If the 4th Marine Division/Wing Team had been ordered to mobilize during this period, it would have been necessary to call up significant numbers of the normally inactive Class III reservists to fill many of its billets. The problem was exacerbated by the growing commitment of active duty units to Vietnam which made the likelihood of a Reserve mobilization much more probable.

An effort was made to bring the Reserve up to strength and continue its reorganization into the newly created 4th Division/Wing Team. An exhaustive effort sought to match personnel and equipment in an effort to mirror the Regular establishment.²⁵

Serious personnel shortages within the Marine Corps Reserve were aggressively addressed during the mid-1960s. In 1965 the authorized strength of the Organized Reserve was increased by 2,500.²⁶ Reorganization during this period was geared to create three major sections within the Organized Reserve. Most units were assigned as part of the newly reactivated 4th Division/Wing Team. Other Reserve units were intended to support a Marine Corps force structure. The remaining Reserve units were designed to train individuals to augment existing units of the regular establishment and mobilized reserve units. Before Vietnam developed into a major Marine Corps commitment, 4th Marine Division units enjoyed manning

levels of 80 percent. The war would have a significant impact, both good and bad, on efforts to revitalize the Reserve and bring the 4th Division up to a true combat-ready status.

To help Marine Corps planners understand and measure the personnel, training, and logistics of the Organized Reserve, the Readiness Reporting system was established. This reporting system was instead to become a cohesive readiness reporting system designed to augment the active duty's FMF Operational Effectiveness Reports.²⁷

While units of the 4th Division or the rest of the Marine Corps Reserve were not mobilized during the Vietnam War, individual reservists were asked to volunteer to for extended active duty. Within the regular Marine Corps there were severe shortages of junior officers, non-commissioned officers, and enlisted men with "hard" technical skills. Qualified reserve officers were offered Standard Written Agreements (SWAG) for a one year period, with an opportunity for extensions. Enlisted Marine reservists too were actively sought for regular units. With the active duty Marine Corps and its Reserve competing for the same individuals, it became necessary for the Reserve to become more aggressive in its recruiting efforts. One method employed was assigning Reserve Liaison and Training officers to major Marine Corps installations. The goal of this program was to counsel every Marine leaving active duty about the benefits of continuing their Marine Corps affiliation by joining the Reserve.

President Johnson's early decision in the war not to mobilize the reserves, coupled with the increasing levels of conscription as the war escalated, actually eased recruiting efforts for the Marine Corps Reserve. During the height of the war in 1968, nearly 300,000 American men were drafted into the service. To avoid involuntary service, highly qualified young men could join the Reserves or National Guard and fulfill their military obligation without having to go to Vietnam. During this period the quality of enlisted Reserve recruits was significantly higher than their active duty counterparts. Between July 1, 1967 and June 30, 1969, 80 percent of the enlisted reservist recruits scored in highest Mental Groups I and II, while only 32 percent of active duty recruits scored as high. Reserve recruits were also very well educated compared to their active duty counterparts. Only seven percent of the Reserve recruits lacked a high school diploma and ten percent of them had graduated from college.²⁸ Many others either had professional or graduate degrees or were currently working toward advanced degrees. It was not unheard of during this period to find a junior enlisted Marine reservist with a law degree or a Ph.D.

The war in Indochina benefited the Marine Corps Reserve in all existing personnel shortages but exacerbated the issue of equipment shortages. While the number and quality of people wishing join the Reserve remained high, chronic equipment shortages remained a serious problem. The Marine Corps Reserve had long had shortfalls both in the quality and quantity of its authorized equipment. Reservists had to make-do with whatever old, worn, and outdated equipment was no longer used by active duty Marine Corps units. This proved to be a serious problem for mobilization and training. Obsolete or broken equipment had little value in battle and reservists could not be considered properly trained if they had not trained with the weapons and equipment they would ultimately use in combat. The obvious, but expensive solution was to provide the Reserve with the same equipment as their active duty counterparts and in quantities adequate for operational use.

Starting in the mid-1960s, the 4th Marine Division units were gradually reequipped with modern M14 rifles, M60 machine-guns, M109 155mm self-propelled howitzers, M50 106mm self-propelled rifles (ONTOS), M110 8-inch self-propelled howitzers, and LVTP5-A1 tracked landing vehicles. Efforts were also started to address the limited quantities of equipment that the Reserve units were authorized.

Up until the mid-1960s, the Organized Marine Corps Reserve received equipment in accordance with the Reserve Table of Equipment. Under this policy, each Reserve unit had only enough equipment to conduct their regular training. They were also constrained by the amount of space and maintenance facilities that were available at drill sites. There was not an expectation that the equipment Reserve units had on hand would be adequate in the event the unit was mobilized. Instead, the general plan was for mobilized units to receive all new equipment and supplies at the time of mobilization through the Marine Corps Supply System. There were, however, all manner of problems associated with this concept.

There was little uniformity between units. A unit's Inspector-Instructor (I&I) and its commanding officer had widely differing ideas of what were adequate levels of equipment for training. Not all drill sites had the ability to store and maintain equipment. While some units supported significant amounts of equipment, others had almost none. In any event, the Marine Corps Supply System lacked the ability to support a large mobilization of the 4th Division/Wing Team with War Reserve Material while simultaneously equipping the expanding active duty divisions, which were to see ground combat commitment in Vietnam.

By 1968, the Reserve equipment problems began receiving official attention. Moving away from the old Reserve Table of Equipment, Organized Reserve Units were authorized, for the first time, to receive and train with as much up-to-date equipment as they could store and maintain at their drill sites. Flexibility was the key to the new policy, with Organized Reserve units responsible for storing and maintaining all equipment that they could reasonably handle. They were accountable for everything on hand, and determining what they needed under the new table of equipment (T/E) to accomplish their training requirements. Division headquarters was ultimately responsible for the allocation of their equipment.²⁹

Unit Training

Recruiting, reorganization, and the issuance of new equipment were vitally important to the 4th Marine Division during the mid-1960s, however, the keystone to military effectiveness of any combat unit remained realistic combat training. The goal of the new Reserve training program was *"to produce the strongest, most effective Reserve force possible at an economical cost."*³⁰

Understanding this, Brigadier General Joseph L. Stewart, the Director of the Reserve, pushed for increased unit training with an emphasis on air-ground skills and counter-guerrilla warfare. The 23d Marines, for example, participated in Operation Scarecrow in early February, 1965 against an aggressor *"guerrilla force"* in defensive positions west of the Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Crow's Landing, California. During the two day exercise, these reserve units from Stockton and San Bruno practiced their combat skills.

In April, nearly 1,000 Marine Reservists of the 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, from Toledo, Ohio, and the southern Michigan area, participated in a similar exercise, Operation Lancer, at Fort Custer near Battle Creek, Michigan. Companies B and D of the 4th Tank Battalion similarly conducted unit exercises at Camp Drum, New York. The 3d Battalion, 14th Marines from Pennsylvania, traveled to Fort Sill, Oklahoma for their annual training.

While ground combat units of the 4th Marine Division practiced their skills, so did the division's combat support units. The 10th Engineer Company of Portland, Maine traveled to Camp Garcia on Vieques to assist in base development programs. Other Reserve engineer units were involved in construction projects at 29 Palms and San Clemente Island.³¹

Ambitious training programs for units of the 4th Marine Division were not limited to weekends and summer training periods. In Operation Tampa during January 8-9, 1966, Company A, 4th Amphibious Tractor Battalion in Tampa Bay, conducted a joint amphibious landing exercise with other Marine Corps Reserve, Air National Guard, and the Coast Guard Auxilliary.³³ In RESMEBLEX-68, over five thousand Marine reservists took part in the largest Reserve exercise ever held on the East Coast at Camp Lejeune in August.³²

During the second half of the 1960s, a symbiotic relationship increasingly developed between the newly formed Reserve division and active duty units. With the pressing requirements of normal operational commitments coupled with the increasing demands of the Vietnam War, active duty Marines were frequently hard pressed to provide the needed Marines to conduct training, umpire exercises, build construction projects, or meet other pressing manpower requirements. Reserve units, in turn, had the personnel but often lacked training areas, equipment, and weapons for their training. As a result, reserve units of the 4th Marine Division frequently trained right along side their active duty counterparts, enhancing training for both.

Creation of the Nucleus Headquarters

The Marine Corps Reserve officially turned fifty in 1966 and the U. S. Postal Service marked the occasion with an anniversary stamp. In February 7th of that same year, the commandant issued an Initiating Directive officially activating the nucleus headquarters of the 4th Marine Division. The new headquarters was initially staffed with one or two officers and a few enlisted Marines.³³ At first, the 4th Marine Division's new nucleus headquarters concentrated on creating plans to improve the rapid mobilization and deployment of the Division when called upon to do so.

At the outset the new headquarters staff had almost nothing to work with. It possessed only a handful of officers, mostly reservists who had been recalled to active duty and a few motivated but inexperienced enlisted Marines. Its facility included one telephone, a barbershop, and a volleyball court.³⁴ The new headquarters was initially stationed in Area 25 aboard sprawling Camp Pendleton, California. When the 5th Marine Division was formed, the 4th's headquarters moved to the "Little Red Schoolhouse" (painted white) in the 17 area.³⁵ The base commander, Major General Robert F. Cushman, Jr., was assigned command of the new headquarters with Colonel H. L. Oppenheimer as his Deputy Commander, and Colonel R. D. Peterson as his Chief of Staff.³⁶ Colonel Oppenheimer had been called out of retirement for the new assignment while several of his staff officers were reservists on active duty.³⁷

The new division staff had a "primary mission to establish an effective core staff capable of directing, controlling and integrating the mobilization planning and logistics functions preceding the activation of the 4th Marine Division."³⁸ In addition to the new nucleus headquarters, a Headquarters Company Cadre was also established to support mobilization. Enlisted Marines to man the new Reserve organizations came from the Files Section of the Reserve Liaison Training Unit, Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton and additional personnel from Headquarters, Marine Corps.³⁹

General Cushman was an ideal officer to command the new 4th Division nucleus headquarters. During his long career in the Marine Corps, he had held several billets directly involved in mobilization planning and implementation. In 1940 and 1941, he had been assigned as the Operations Officer in the reserve training center at Quantico where he trained reservists mobilizing for World War II.⁴⁰ From 1962 through 1964, he had also been the Operations Officer (G-3) at Headquarters Marine Corps and was responsible for mobilization plans for the Marine Corps.⁴¹ As the commander of both Camp Pendleton and the 4th Marine

Division, General Cushman was in an ideal position to provide developed training areas and other base facilities for the reservists. General Cushman and his new headquarters were specifically charged with making necessary preparations for mobilization of the 4th Division and its combat support forces.⁴²

As personnel arrived for their new assignments, the new 4th Division headquarters' staff filled-out to include twenty-eight Marine officers, sixty-two enlisted Marines, two Navy officers, and one enlisted sailor.⁴³

The Southern California base was a fitting site for the new nucleus headquarters. The 4th Division had originally been established at Camp Pendleton during the Second World War and returned there after the Japanese surrender to demobilize. In a symbolic connection between the World War II and the modern 4th Marine Division, in the summer of 1966, four hundred members of the 4th Marine Division Association traveled down to Camp Pendleton from their reunion in Los Angeles. During their visit, retired General Clifton B. Cates, commander of the division in World War II, presented the 4th Marine Division's World War II battle colors to Major General Cushman.⁴⁴

While the nucleus division headquarters formulated mobilization plans, it initiated liaison with other Marine Corps commands, developed training programs, drafted standard-operating-procedures, division orders, and coordinated summer training. The day-to-day administration of 4th Division and other Reserve units was left under the control of the seven Marine Corps District Directors, 165 Inspector-Instructor staffs, and 222 individual Marine Corps Reserve units. In addition to their high profile annual training exercises, 4th Marine Division and other Reserve units continued their normal training out of 129 joint reserve centers, 47 Marine Corps Reserve Training Centers, 70 Naval Air Stations, one National Guard Base, and one Marine Corps Base.⁴⁵

Operation Golden Slipper

In 1967, the 4th Marine Division Headquarters participated in a large-scale joint Navy/Marine Corps-Active Duty/Reserve amphibious training exercise called Operation Golden Slipper. With more than 3,000 Marine reservists, 2,500 active duty Marines, and 3,500 sailors participating, it was the largest Regular-Reserve Amphibious exercise ever held aboard Camp Pendleton.⁴⁶ The exercise was conducted during the period from July 30 to August 4. It included the Navy's Amphibious Command Group One and both active duty and reserve Marine Corps units in a Marine Expeditionary Brigade size problem which featured helicopter and surface assault landings.⁴⁷

Units of the 4th Marine Division, 5th Marine Division, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, and the 4th Marine Division Headquarters Nucleus all participated as combat elements of the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (4th MEB). Individual Marine Class III Reservists also filled billets on the various MEB staffs. Aggressors were provided by one active duty rifle company from the 27th Marines and the Reserve 6th Rifle Company from Little Rock, Arkansas.⁴⁸ The Navy supported the exercise with Task Force 176.0, that included the amphibious command ship *Estes*, the amphibious assault ship *Iwo Jima*, attack transports *Cavalier* and *Cabildo*, destroyers *Maddox* and *Shelton*, and the tank landing ships *Wexford County*, *Jerome County*, and *Summit County*.⁴⁹

Golden Slipper was a particularly challenging exercise for the units of the 4th Division. While real-world planning allowed the Reserve division thirty days to mobilize and sixty days to deploy, the Camp Pendleton exercise allowed them only seven working days before landing ashore. For many of the participating

reservists, it was their first time afloat or aboard helicopters. Despite being in the same division, most of the reservists had never worked with each other, thus making coordination more difficult. The exercise was the first realistic test of the 4th Division's ability to mobilize and "fight" alongside active duty counterparts and was a real test of the planning and leadership ability of the new nucleus headquarters staff.

The exercises began in earnest when assault elements of the 4th MEB embarked on their ships in San Diego and at Del Mar boat basin at Camp Pendleton. On August 1, the amphibious assault force conducted a rehearsal, landing at Silver Strand, Coronado, California before assaulting the beaches of Camp Pendleton the following day. One reinforced company made a diversionary landing on GREEN Beach while Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 1/28, from the active duty 5th Marine Division, landed on RED Beach amid aggressor machine-gun fire and explosions simulating naval shelling and enemy fire.

Reservists of BLT 1/23 traveled by helicopter from the deck of the *Iwo Jima* to Landing Zone Kathy, deep in "enemy" territory. Once ashore, the active duty and reserve Marines conducted aggressive patrolling and seized critical terrain features. The next day, BLT 1/23 conducted a helicopter-borne search and seizure mission against an "enemy" occupied village. Regimental Landing Team 23 (RLT 23) seized control of the mythical KILINDIA province. By the following day, the exercise climaxed as the landing force occupied all of their objectives.⁵⁰ The ambitious regular/reserve amphibious training exercise was observed by many prominent military and civilian dignitaries and received significant press coverage, including stories by the *Los Angeles Times*, *Leatherneck*, and *The Reserve Marine*.⁵¹

Golden Slipper was only the first of what would become a series of major training exercises that the 4th Division would engage in during the 1960s. From July 15 thru July 17, 1968, division units participated in another amphibious exercise called Bell Banger aboard Camp Pendleton. Some units of the Division also conducted their summer training at Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Base and Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Continuing Challenges

Operation Golden Slipper achieved its training objective but the exercise pointed out that a number of challenges remained to be met before the 4th Marine Division would become a truly effective force in readiness.

Among the most serious problems facing mobilization planners were logistic shortcomings and the need for increased regimental and division level training. The 4th Division's nucleus headquarters was stationed at Camp Pendleton, while all of the reserve units that formed the division itself were scattered across the United States. During a time of general recall, these Marines would have to be transported to Camp Pendleton, quartered, fed, adequately equipped and trained for assignment.

However, at the time the 4th Division nucleus headquarters was reactivated, the logistical task would have been difficult to perform because Camp Pendleton was also supporting a massive increase in formal schools necessary to train Marines and units on their way to Vietnam. Furthermore, the 5th Marine Division, with General Cushman in command, was also forming aboard the same California base. Finally, a general mobilization of the 4th Division during this time would have brought regimental and division staff members together, although few of them had any experience working together during normal Reserve training periods.

Bell Banger

By 1969, American involvement in ground combat in the Vietnam War began to decline. Richard Nixon had been elected president the previous year, partially on the promise of ending the war through a negotiated settlement. His Secretary of Defense, Melvin Laird, traveled to Vietnam shortly after the inauguration to personally observe the situation there. As a result of his visit, Secretary Laird offered an optimistic report and consoled the President that the United States could “Vietnamize” the war. American troops would “train, equip, and inspire the South Vietnamese” so that they could take an increasingly greater share of the responsibility for the war, allowing American troops to return home.⁵² Under this “Nixon Doctrine,” American troop strength in Vietnam moved steadily downward. On June 8, 1969, in a speech on Midway Island, Nixon announced that 25,000 American troops would be pulled out of Vietnam by the end of August.

Marines were included in the general reduction of American forces in Vietnam. Beginning in July 1968, the Marine Corps instituted the Expanded Early Release Program which allowed individual Marine Vietnam veterans discharges from active duty up to 20 months early.⁵³ Beginning in June 1969, the first group of 26,800 Marines, including the entire 3d Marine Division and several fixed-wing and helicopter squadrons were redeployed out of Vietnam.⁵⁴ As the Marine Corps commitment to ground combat in Indochina was transferred to South Vietnamese forces, the size of the active duty Marine Corps dropped as well. The 5th Marine Division was deactivated for the second time. From a wartime peak of 309,771 on active duty at the end of fiscal year 1969, the Marine Corps active duty strength dropped to 259,737 in 1970, to 212,369 in 1971, and to 198,238 in 1972.⁵⁵ By January 1, 1972, only 500 Marines were still in-country.⁵⁶ On August 11, 1972, the last U. S. combat troops left Vietnam.⁵⁷ As the demands of the war eased and active duty Marine Corps units returned to the United States, the Reserve and the 4th Division enjoyed mixed blessings. The de-escalation brought fewer wartime demands but along with it, an atmosphere of austerity and active duty force reductions. Once again, the Marine Corps was called upon to justify its existence and unique mission during a post-war period. The Marine Corps also faced a number of internal and external problems that had to be aggressively addressed.

Dealing with the Legacy of the Vietnam War

With the end of the Vietnam conflict, the size of the American military was dramatically cut. The total active duty strength fell from 3.4 million in 1968 to only 2.1 million in 1975. By 1974 there were 46 percent fewer aviation squadrons, 47 percent fewer ships, and 16 percent fewer divisions than there had been a decade earlier.⁵⁸

The Marine Corps faced a number of serious problems at the end of the Vietnam War. During the war, military pay was increased dramatically to make service more attractive. After the war, paying active duty Marines at the greater pay rates remained a huge expense. Between 1964 and 1975, personnel costs rose 106 percent.⁵⁹ Active duty “reductions in force” turned out to be of limited benefit to the Reserve. Some quality officers and enlisted Marines separating from active duty chose to retain their affiliation with the Marine Corps through the Reserve, but overall, recruiting and retention became much more difficult when the draft was abolished.

During the war, the Marine Corps had been forced to rely on conscription to fill its ranks. Illegal drug use, disciplinary problems, criminal behavior, and racial friction grew into major problems within many

Marine Corps commands. These sorts of social problems, to one degree or another, also affected the Reserve. Disenchanted by the war in Vietnam, several colleges and universities disestablished their Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) units. A Reserve center in Oregon was destroyed by arson. Marine reservists in California refused to cut their hair to regulation length and their court-martial was overturned by a sympathetic federal judge.⁶⁰ The end of the Indochina conflict produced problems for the Marine Reserve far greater than the familiar personnel and equipment shortages of old.

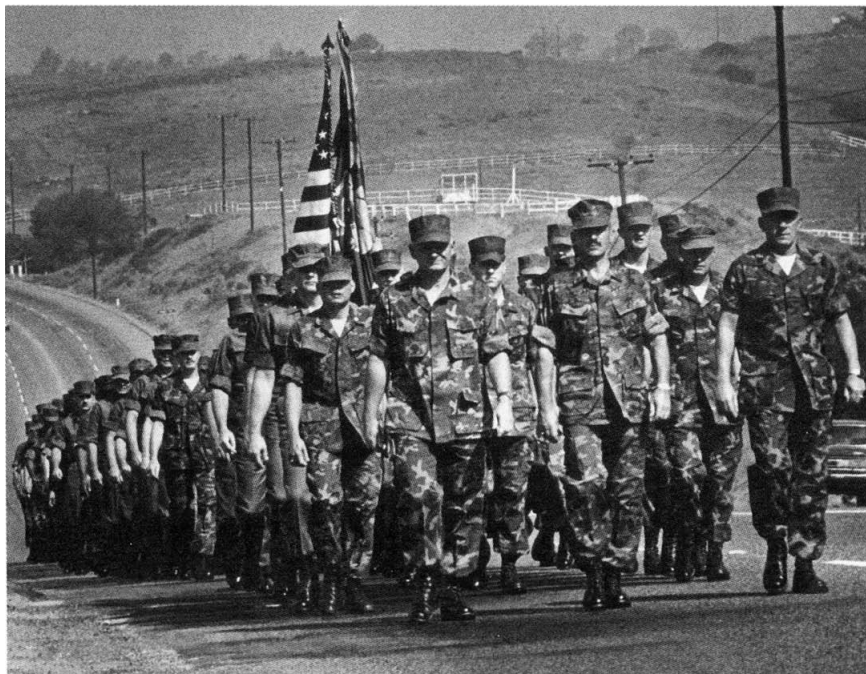
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1972 pictorial command survey. Overall view of the Naval Support Activity, New Orleans with the Mississippi River in the background. Future home of the Eighth Marine Corps District is under construction at center of photograph.



Led by MajGen. E.J. Miller the 4th Marine Division Colors march from Camp Pendleton, California to NSA New Orleans, LA April, 1977.



"Disbudak, Turkey-I" Major John T. Dyer, USMCR (RET), USMC Art Collection

"Display Determination", first NATO amphibious exercise held in Turkey since 1973. 4th Marine Amphibious Brigade operation, with 6000 Marines from Camp Lejeune, NC and Norfolk, VA and Marine reservists.



Operation "Palm Tree-III". A camouflaged M48A3 tank of B Co., 4th Tank Bn participated in desert warfare training with over 2,400 Marine reservists of the 4th Marine Division.



*"Over the Edge" Col. H. Avery Chenoweth, USMC (RET), USMC Art Collection.
Instructor from 4th Recon Battalion, Hawaii with MWTC Staff Instructor trainees from 3/23 New Orleans, LA.*

Chapter 4

Post Vietnam War Period: 1973-1976

Post Vietnam War

With the conclusion of the American commitment to the ground war in Vietnam in 1971, the Marine Corps, its Reserve, and the 4th Division, entered a period of transition, facing a number of serious problems and an uncertain future. As happens after any war, it was a time for introspection. People both inside and outside the Marine Corps assessed its battlefield performance and reconsidered its future role and mission in the nation's defense. This was especially true after the Vietnam War, since, despite years of tremendous efforts and great sacrifices of blood and resources, the United States ultimately failed to achieve its primary political and military objective in Southeast Asia. The Marine Corps, along with all of the armed services, had to both assimilate the lessons of the war and adapt itself to new peacetime realities.

The lengthy and unpopular war in Vietnam left the Marine Corps with a number of unwelcome legacies. The failure of a military solution in Vietnam made many Americans openly question the value of the military for achieving national goals. Isolationism, that had been such a predominant feature of American domestic politics before World War II, was embraced by a growing number of Americans weary of costly and futile overseas military commitments. A 1976 Brookings Institution study warned, *"there is growing public disenchantment with military ventures overseas, particularly those involving the use of ground troops."*¹ As is so often the case in a democracy, public opinion ultimately manifested itself in public policy.

Even before the end of the war in Vietnam, the general concept of employing military forces changed significantly. Official policy of the new Nixon administration was outlined in 1969 as the Nixon Doctrine and the Strategy of Realistic Deterrence.² In a policy reminiscent of Eisenhower's *"New Look,"* the Nixon Doctrine maintained the United States' continuing role in guarding the security of the Free World while down-playing the role of American ground troops. This new doctrine, coupled with massive post-war force reductions, made it highly improbable that the United States would be willing to commit ground forces to anything less serious than a full-scale Soviet invasion of a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ally in Western Europe.

The executive branch was not alone in restricting the future role of the U. S. military. In 1973, Congress passed the War Powers Act which attempted to limit the president's ability to commit ground troops to combat situations. In the immediate post-Vietnam War era, there was little apparent likelihood that Washington policy-makers would commit American ground military forces to the sort of expeditionary, small-scale, and limited interventions that had been the stock in trade of the Marine Corps throughout much of the 20th century. This assessment of future national security requirements and policy left the Marine Corps, an expeditionary force in readiness, in a precarious position.

Addressing the Marine Corps' Future

Questions about the Marine Corps' future in the post-war era came from several different quarters. In light of the rapidly changing international situation and shifts in American foreign policy, the Brookings Institute conducted a study to discover if the Marine Corps was *"appropriately geared to meet the most likely*

threats to U. S. national interests."³ Of particular interest to this study, was the question of how the lightly armed Marine Corps could deal with the "*sophisticated, heavily armored forces*" of the Soviet Union and its allies. Many Marine Corps leaders of the period openly wondered if they could find a role for the Marine Corps within NATO contingency plans.⁴ By 1975, however, the Marine Corps was able to secure a limited NATO mission of defending Europe's northern flank, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland. Training exercises for this new mission were called Bold Guard and Northern Wedding.

The Brookings study also addressed what the future role of Marine Air would be and how the Marine Corps could address its critical recruiting problems in the post-draft period.⁵ Central in the latter question was the future importance of the Reserve and the 4th Marine Division in providing the Marine Corps with the additional personnel and operational units to compensate for reductions of active duty forces while continuing to meet its future requirements. Reflecting the general sentiment of the era, the Senate Armed Services Committee ordered the Marine Corps to re-evaluate its mission and to clear out substandard personnel who were left over from the Vietnam War. To do this, the new Commandant, General Louis H. Wilson, convened a board, chaired by Major General Fred E. Haynes, to comprehensively study the Marine Corps' problems and to suggest possible solutions.⁶

The report issued by General Haynes's board acknowledged that the Marine Corps had, "*a manpower quality problem as generally identified,*" by the Senate Armed Services Committee.⁷ Specific personnel problems included unacceptably high rates of unauthorized absences and desertions, recruits who had not graduated high school, drug and alcohol abuse, racial conflict, and crime. In far too many cases, these problems ultimately led to young first-term Marines who failed to complete their enlistments. By 1975, the Marine Corps had the worst rates of imprisonment, unauthorized absence, and courts-martial in the armed forces.⁸

The report went on to say that the problems of the past had been identified and were in the process of being corrected and recommended that quality, rather than end strength, should be the promised goal of the Marine Corps. Discharging the "*dead wood*" was not the only reason the active duty side of the Marine Corps was shrinking. While post-World War II acts of Congress protected the existence of the Marine Corps and mandated it to maintain three active duty divisions and wings, the reality of austere post-war budgets forced Marine Corps planners to make some difficult choices. The Haynes Report noted, that while "*it has long been the opinion of this headquarters that a Corps of 212,000 Marines is necessary to maintain three [active duty] division/wing teams,*" the reality of fiscal limitations dictated a 196,300 manning level.⁹

The post vietnam era forced the Marine Corps to clean out its "*dead wood,*" and deal with low manning levels, while still meeting operational commitments abroad. In order to adapt and revise, the Marine Corps would have to increasingly rely on the Reserve and, especially, the units in the 4th Marine Division.

Understrength

Perhaps the most serious problem facing the Marine Corps in the immediate post-war years was getting and keeping the necessary numbers and quality of people for both active duty and reserve units. At the height of the Vietnam War, the Marine Corps had expanded to nearly 310,000 active duty Marines, its highest level in its history except during World War II. Actions taken during the war to meet critical manpower demands, however, did little to enhance the Marine Corps' image as an elite and selective military institution. As had happened during World War II, the Marine Corps was forced to accept tens-of-thousands of reluctant draftees into their ranks. President Johnson's social-engineering "*Project 100,000*" forced the Marine

Corps to accept enlisted men who, in a more selective environment, would not have been qualified to enter the Marine Corps because of low standardized test scores or physical limitations. The Marine Corps' seasoned staff non-commissioned officer corps was also seriously depleted during the Vietnam War era as many of these Marines were promoted to the warrant and commissioned officer ranks. Low retention rates during and in the years immediately after the war also meant that the Corps lost its skilled and experienced Marines, both officer and enlisted, in alarming numbers. Even as the war wound down, with lower manpower requirements and no combat rotations, recruiting and retention of good people remained very difficult for the Marine Corps.*

The All Volunteer Force (AVF)

One of the most divisive and controversial issues during the Vietnam War was the draft. Since President Johnson did not order a general mobilization of the Reserves, the service branches relied on wide-scale conscription to fill their ranks.** As American involvement in the war diminished and eventually ended, popular and political support for the draft waned. Shortly after taking office, President Nixon appointed former Secretary of Defense Thomas S. Gates chairman of a presidential commission with instructions to *"develop a comprehensive plan for eliminating conscription and moving toward an all volunteer armed force."*¹⁰ When the commission announced its findings in February 1970, it concluded that the draft could be eliminated without prohibitive costs or jeopardizing national security.

The new concept of an All Volunteer Force (AVF) would rely on making military life more attractive, through higher pay and better living standards, to encourage voluntary recruitment and retention. While the AVF solved some difficulties, it also created a number of new and serious manpower challenges for the Marine Corps.

Without the ability to rely on the draft for many of its new recruits, the Marine Corps and other services were authorized to provide substantial pay, education and other monetary incentives to build an all-volunteer force. This policy doubled the average military pay between 1968 and 1973.¹¹ Between 1964 and 1973, average pay for officers increased 81 percent while enlisted pay increased 125 percent.¹² This was welcome news for the individual service members and helped greatly with recruiting and retention, but it also made funding other aspects of the military budget that much more difficult. The Department of the Defense paid \$22 billion dollars more in 1974 for 400,000 fewer personnel than it had paid in 1964.¹³ In fiscal year 1974, personnel costs accounted for more than half, 56 percent, of the entire Department of the Defense budget.¹⁴

More money also had to go into recruiting and advertising to compensate for the loss of draftees. Along with the other services, the Marine Corps also had to spend large amounts of its limited budget to improve the quality of life of its members to improve retention. Ironically, the American public expected a sizable *"peace dividend"* as the Vietnam War wound down. So despite the rising cost of pay and caring for Marines the defense budget shrank. From 1968 to 1974, overall military spending declined by 37 percent.¹⁵ All this occurred at a time when military planners had to cope with high inflation, dramatically higher prices for petroleum products, and the need to acquire more sophisticated and expensive weapon systems.

Marine Corps leaders had to discover ways to maintain the Corps' size and combat effectiveness with fewer active duty Marines and less money. The way to do this was to rely more heavily on the Reserve and to make 4th Marine Division genuinely comparable to its active duty counterparts.

**Post-war manpower levels were set at 196,300 active duty men and women and an organized Reserve of 35,000.*

***The post-World War II period was the only time in American history that a draft was used to maintain the military. Even in war, the draft had only been resorted to during the Civil War, the World Wars, and the Korean War.*

The Marine Corps Reserve Adapts to the AVF

Before the Reserve and the 4th Division could help make up for the Marine Corps' active duty manpower shortages and budget problems, it had to deal with its own serious personnel problems. The draft ended in 1973, dramatically reducing the number of people willing to enlist.

Without an incentive to avoid the draft and service in Vietnam, far fewer young men were willing to join the Reserve. In addition, many Marine reservists left as soon as their military obligation was fulfilled. For the majority of Marine reservists during the Vietnam War era, the draft had been their most powerful incentive to enlist. A 1970 survey of 968 Marine reservists in the Sixth Marine Corps District revealed that 90 per cent of them reported that they joined the Marine Corps Reserve solely to avoid the draft.¹⁶ The long lines of highly qualified young men who wanted to become Marine reservists during the Vietnam War disappeared abruptly with the end of the draft.

Reserve recruitment was all the more difficult since the generous new incentive packages being offered for active duty personnel to make the AVF attractive simply were not carried over to reservists in any meaningful way. These recruiting problems were only made worse by a 1973 increase in the authorized strength of reserve components.

In addressing the manpower problems with the AVF in the Reserve, the Department of Defense made an effort during the mid-1970s to initiate several programs to make reserve enlistment more attractive and to improve retention. Reserve drill pay was increased, payment of allowance for quarters for reservists with dependents was authorized during active duty periods, and direct procurement of non-commissioned and petty officers from skilled civilians was authorized.

In 1973, the Marine Corps initiated two experimental programs that allowed individuals to enlist for a total of six years obligated service in the Reserve but allowed them to transfer to a Class III Ready Reserve status after three or four years.¹⁷ Despite these changes, end strength numbers fell dramatically during the early 1970s. As early as 1973, Secretary of the Navy Chafee stated before the Senate Armed Services Committee, *"I am especially concerned about our ability to enlist and retain the quantity and quality of people we need in the Naval and Marine Corps Reserve"*; The Secretary cited the need for upgraded recruiting and a new incentive package *"to attractable people to the reserve forces."*¹⁸ The most troublesome area remained the inability to find qualified individuals with *"hard skills"* to fill particular billets.

In 1975, when the Marine Corps was authorized to have 36,703 paid drilling reservists, it had only 32,391, with severe (MOS) shortages in the combat arms. Shortages were especially critical in the lower enlisted ranks.¹⁹ Inactive Reserve shortfalls were equally pronounced. Between 1974 and 1978, the number of Marines in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) fell from 89,700 to 39,600.²⁰ Department of Defense manpower problems were such a serious concern that Congress created the Defense Manpower Commission in 1974 to investigate the problem and suggest possible solutions. Reserve recruiting problems were so severe that the Department of Defense's Project Volunteer Committee gave serious consideration to proposing a *"Reserve draft."*²¹ Retention and recruiting remained problematic in the Reserve as it lacked many of the effective monetary incentives, such as advanced training and educational benefits, available in the active duty Marine Corps. Manpower problems, however, were not the only ones that faced the Reserve and the 4th Marine Division in the immediate post-Vietnam Era.

Reserve Post-War Readiness

During the prolonged Indochina conflict, while all attention was focused on supporting the immediate needs of active duty Marines engaged in combat in Vietnam, Reserve issues such as readiness, modernization of weapons and equipment, amphibious shipping, facilities construction and maintenance all suffered from unavoidable neglect.

While fighting continued in Vietnam, only limited progress was made to bring the 4th Marine Division up to a truly combat-ready status. The Marine Corps Reserve also had to deal with the troubling legacy that, even at the height of the fighting in Southeast Asia, it had never been mobilized. The reserves' absence from the battlefield raised doubts in the minds of many about the reserves' readiness and value to the national defense. Although President Johnson may have had a number of sound political reasons for not mobilizing the reserves, many people concluded that the reserves were not called up because they were not ready to fight.

In the 1970s, several critics concluded that the nation's reserve forces were in serious trouble. Professor John B. Keeley of the University of Virginia noted, "*the condition of our reserve forces, in their totality, can only be judged as disastrous.*"²² Martin Binkin, of the Brookings Institute, agreed, stating that the nation's reserve forces were "*short of people, short of equipment, untrained and unready.*"²³ While these problems were most evident in the Army Reserve and National Guard, the Marine Reserve also had its share of post-war problems, or at least a perception that had to be addressed. The austere post-war period, however, proved to be a difficult time to play catch-up.

Reserve Reform and Recommitment: The Total Force

At the same time the reserves were attempting to deal with the problems and challenges that faced all the American military services at the end of the Vietnam War, the Executive Branch initiated a comprehensive reorganization which fundamentally changed the relationship between active duty and reserve components. Under the Nixon Doctrine, the United States would no longer automatically intervene to counter Soviet expansionism in proxy wars of national liberation in the Third World. Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird embarked on a program of scaling down American conventional forces. From a capacity to fight two-and-one-half major global conflicts, American forces had to fall back to a more realistic assumption of one-and-one-half conflicts. Military units no longer needed on active duty were either deactivated or transferred to the reserves. The new policy was designed to bring the reserve forces into the mainstream of national security planning as never before. The reserves were intended to materially augment the shrinking active duty force.

In 1970, the Secretary Laird formally announced a renewed emphasis on integrating the shrinking active duty forces with revitalized reserve components of all of the military services under an overall "*Total Force*" policy. This policy not only addressed the realities of the day, it also appealed to America's long tradition of maintaining a small regular military that could be augmented by trained and equipped "*citizen-soldiers*" in time of need. Secretary Laird was counting on "*members of the National Guard and Reserve, instead of draftees,*" to be the "*initial and primary source for augmentation of the active forces in any future emergency requiring a rapid and substantial expansion of the active forces.*"²⁴

The “Total Force” idea was to reorganize the reserves, while providing them with new missions and higher priorities in military operational planning. Secretary Laird envisioned the Total Force as *“the most advantageous mix [of active duty and reserve units] to support national strategy and meet the threat.”* The total force concept would be *“applied in all aspects of planning, programming, manning, equipping and employing the Guard and Reserve.”*

The ultimate goal of the Total Force program was to prepare the reserves *“to be the initial and primary source for augmentation of the active forces in any future emergency requiring a rapid and substantial expansion of the active forces.”*²⁵ Each service developed mobilization planning to meet predetermined maximum total force requirements with its active duty and reserve forces. Reflecting the new emphasis on the reserves under the Total Force policy, and at a time when overall Department of Defense spending was being cut, annual appropriations for the reserves increased from \$2.6 billion in 1970 to \$4.4 billion by 1974.²⁶

For the Army, the Total Force program meant dramatic changes in the role of its Reserve and National Guard. To compensate for the loss of active duty soldiers, five Army divisions had one of their active brigades, about 5,000 each, replaced by reserve “round-out” brigades. In theory, the Army would be able to field more combat divisions with a given number of active duty soldiers. The reserve round-out brigades, in turn, would benefit from better training and higher priority in resource allocation.²⁷ By 1989, the Army had six round-out divisions and three others that relied on one or more reserve round-out battalions.²⁸ Units in the Army Reserve and National Guard that were not part of the round-out program also received increased attention. They were assured their levels of readiness and training were adequate so as to mobilize and reinforce the regular Army in time of war or national emergency. Under the Total Force concept, the Army’s reliance on its Reserve and National Guard units was so great, that by 1983, they comprised approximately one-half of the Army’s combat units and about 70 percent of its combat service support units.²⁹

For the Marine Corps, the new Total Force concept changed little but did prompt the Marine Corps’ leadership to recommit itself to insuring that the 4th Division was brought up to the same standards and capabilities as the active duty divisions. In addition to increased readiness, the Total Force Concept held the promise of maintaining a large conventional force at a substantially reduced cost. A series of formal studies were initiated within the Marine Corps, within the Department of Defense, and with private consulting groups to determine how best to apply this program.

An obvious solution to the manpower shortage and budget cuts was to place a greater reliance on the far more cost-effective Ready Reserve. Defense policy makers counted on placing a *“greater reliance on our National Guard and Reserve”* in order to *“preclude any need to return to a massive draft.”*³⁰ The goal was to have a truly combat-ready National Guard and Reserve that could be realistically incorporated into strategic planning and quickly augment active units.

As an indicator of the renewed commitment to the National Guard and Reserve, the Nixon administration called for a \$600 million budget increase for them in fiscal year 1973.³¹ Under the concept of a Total Force, all the services, along with their reserve components, would be integrated into strategic planning at all levels. Reserve forces were particularly important in this time of force reductions and budgets cuts. Elliot L. Richardson, Laird’s successor as Secretary of Defense, noted in his annual report to Congress, *“a well equipped, manned and trained National Guard and Reserve, deployable on short notice, is potentially the most economical part of our Defense establishment.”* He went on to say that, *“it is also an essential part of the total force concept, and I intend to seek ways to improve and strengthen the quality and readiness of the National Guard and Reserve.”*³² Without a functioning selective service, the Ready Reserve, including the 4th Marine Division, represented the only way to rapidly mobilize additional forces at the outbreak of hostilities.

In 1973, the full integration of the active duty forces with the National Guard and Reserve Force was formalized under the concept of the Total Force. This policy was initiated by Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger and was intended to bring the reserve community to the same standard as active duty force in force structuring, mobilization planning, and operational evaluation.³³ Reserve forces in all of the services received more recognition and funding. The reserves also received a windfall of modern equipment made available from the shrinking active duty forces. This equipment included fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters. Units in the 4th Marine Division received M-16 rifles, M48A3 tanks, LVTP-7 amphibious tractors, and M561 Gama Goats.³⁴

Major General M.P. Ryan, Director of the Marine Corps Reserve, worried that mobilization remained a difficult problem. While Marine Corps doctrine called for the 4th Division/Wing Team to be activated within thirty days, this was likely overly optimistic. A Brookings Institution study in 1976 concluded that deployment of the wing would require two months and the division between two and five months.³⁵

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Chapter 5

Transformation Into The Total Force, 1976-1990

While the United States was not committed to combat operations immediately following the end of the Vietnam conflict, it did face volatile and significant political and military threats throughout Africa, Asia, Central America and Europe. Even overlooking the fall of South East Asia to communist forces, the Cold War in Europe and its spread to Third World countries multiplied the number of possible contingencies to which Marine expeditionary forces might be required to respond. With these multiple global threats, a draw-down of active duty forces and a shrinking defense budget, the role of the Marine Corps Reserve would take on greater prominence. In the post-World War II era, the 4th Marine Division had been viewed primarily as a source of pre-trained combat replacements. Now, units of the 4th Marine Division would begin training to fight as part of a task-organized Total Force, integrating Reserve units with Active units for contingency planning.¹

The Reorganization of the 4th Marine Division

By 1975, the 4th Marine Division had grown to an approximate strength of 23,000. It was the largest and most complex Division in the Marine Corps. It was larger than any of the other Marine Divisions. The 4th had a fourth artillery battalion, two Air Naval Ground Liaison Companies (ANGLICO), two tank battalions, two engineer battalions and more Force troops than any Active duty division. The units of the 4th Marine Division were spread across the United States. Local reserve centers could be found in 156 cities and in 45 of the 50 states. Individual units of the Division numbered in excess of 200.²

While remaining ready for any contingency, combat skills training began a subtle shift away from the small unit tactics used in Indochina to preparing for the more armor-intensive threat found in Europe and in the desert environs of Africa and the Middle East. At the same time, hard-learned lessons from combat in World War II and Korea, along with the mobilization problems of 1950, would be incorporated into planning for the new Total Force.³

By 1977, planning doctrine for the Total Force dictated that the 4th Marine Division units were better deployed and trained at a size no larger than the brigade level as opposed to deploying the entire Division or the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing. With this new focus on unit employment in the Total Force, the Division's force structure was revised to facilitate this transformation. Reserve units were activated, deactivated and reassigned. This structural re-alignment enabled the Marine Corps to rapidly establish air-ground units, Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTF), and to provide a Reserve Marine Amphibious Brigade (MAB).

One of the major re-alignments was the simplification of the Reserve command structure. The original command relationships at the 1966 re-activation of the Division were complex. In 1962, the Organized Marine Corps Reserve (OMCR) was structured to mirror that of a Marine Expeditionary Force, composed of the 4th Marine Division, the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, and requisite combat and combat service support units necessary to support a Division/Wing team in sustained combat. Until the re-organization of the mid 1970's, the 4th Marine Division was structured to facilitate mobilization and deployment on short notice as part of the Division/Wing team.

Under the original command relationships, responsibility and direction over the operation of the Division was divided three ways between Division Headquarters; Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps; and the twelve regional Marine Corps Districts. Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps issued training plans spanning three to four year cycles, while local reserve commanding officers were tasked to develop their own training programs to reflect their mission.⁴ The Directors of the twelve regional Marine Corps Districts, normally active duty Colonels, were responsible for all Marine Corps functions in their region which were not tasked to major operational commands. This included supervision of the local reserve units and the Inspector-Instructor staffs in addition to other primary responsibilities such as recruiting, officer procurement and ceremonies.

The original command structure of the 4th Marine Division tasked the Director, Marine Corps Reserve with developing plans and programs to prepare reserve units for mobilization while the district directors were tasked with supervising reserve units and individual Reservists in their respective geographical areas. Inspector-Instructor staffs (I&I) were, in turn, assigned to assist reserve commanding officers at the local reserve center in the operation, training, administration and logistical support of their units.

This operational chain of command posed some obvious command challenges. District directors had several important primary duties in addition to supervising local reserve units. Focus on their vital recruiting mission impacted the ability of a district director to monitor the training and administration of local reserve units. Also, because the districts were organized to be regional in scope, the district director had little ability to oversee the quality of training in a subordinate unit if it were located outside his district. For example, a district director could find himself responsible for overseeing the conduct of a reserve infantry battalion in the First Marine District but was unable to oversee the training of a subordinate infantry company or platoon from that battalion if it were located in the Sixth Marine District.⁵

Inspector-Instructors often found themselves responsible to a district director yet also answerable to the Division's commanding general. The appointment of commanding officers of reserve units was also a source of frustration. District directors recommended commanders to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. The Commanding General of the 4th Marine Division, to whom the commanding officer of the reserve unit would ultimately answer, merely forwarded the recommendations to Headquarters Marine Corps.⁶

On July 15, 1970, Brigadier General Leo J. Dulacki assumed command of the 4th Marine Division. He was the first commanding general whose singular duty was to actually command the Division. Two days later, Dulacki was promoted to Major General. His appointment was viewed by many as a significant step in the re-organization that had been ongoing since the activation of the Division. From this point forward, the emphasis in command alignment would be to bring all training and appointing authority under the Commanding General of the 4th Marine Division.⁷ Brigadier General P. X. Kelley, the Commanding General, 4th Marine Division from 1974-1975, recommended to Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps that the Division's commanding general make the Division's command assignments instead of simply forwarding on the recommendations of district directors. This recommendation was also supported by Major General Ryan, Director of the Marine Corps Reserve. The Commandant approved this recommendation. Thus, in 1975, the 4th Marine Division became responsible for its own training and command appointments. This refinement of command relationships continued under Major General Edward J. Miller who succeeded Brigadier General Kelley as the Division's new commanding general.

In July, 1975, Major General Miller recommended to the Commandant that it was "*essential*" for the Commanding General to assume operational and administrative control of all 4th Marine Division units and their assigned Inspector-Instructor staffs. This and other organizational recommendations were accepted and

phased in during the early part of 1976. On 2 March 1977, the Commandant of the Marine Corps directed that the final transfer of the command of the Organized Marine Corps Reserve ground assets from district to 4th Marine Division control would be accomplished by 1 October 1977. This shift in power phased out the district directors' responsibility for reserve training and permitted the district directors to focus on the other responsibilities of their command.⁸

On April 20, 1977, the headquarters of the 4th Marine Division, under the command of Major General Miller, was relocated from Camp Pendleton to New Orleans, Louisiana. This move allowed the Division's headquarters to be more centrally located in the continental United States, as 65% of the Division's units were located East of the Mississippi River. The movement of Division headquarters to New Orleans was also seen as a way of solidifying the partnership between the Division and the other half of the Marine Reserve's Air-Ground Team, the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing which was already headquartered there.

The 4th Marine Division Colors were marched 1,820 miles from Camp Pendleton to New Orleans. The Division's Colors arrived on 3 August 1977. The entire advance was accomplished on foot with the Colors being transferred to local reserve units along the way. Representative of that effort was Sgt. Twila Toule of the 4th Tank Battalion who marched the Colors five miles across desert sand. At the same time that the Division Colors began their trek, the battle standard of the new 4th Marine Amphibious Force was marched from the birthplace of the Marine Corps, Tun Tavern, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The battle standard arrived at the same time in New Orleans, and was welcomed by that city's first all military parade since World War II. General Louis Wilson, Commandant of the Marine Corps, described the dual march as *"symbolic of our determination as a nation to be organized, trained, equipped and ready to defend against the full range of unspecified and highly visible threats that confront us in today's world of advanced sophisticated technology."*⁹

Several other symbolic changes reflected the growing prominence of the Division as a unit in transformation. Just prior to the Division's relocation to New Orleans, the title *"New Breed"* and a new logo were bestowed on the 4th Marine Division. In April, 1977, ***The Reserve Marine*** was absorbed by the ***Continental Marine*** which is still published today. Over the years, the ***Continental Marine*** has been selected several times as the best appropriated fund newspaper in the Marine Corps.¹⁰

People and Problems

Immediately following the end of the Vietnam conflict, the 4th Marine Division reflected many of the problems of the American society from which it drew its members. It further suffered, to some extent, from the same malaise that afflicted the active duty forces, including a breakdown in respect for military authority, racial polarization, and widespread substance abuse. During this difficult time, the 4th Marine Division not only survived these challenges but also was able to assume its global mission as a member of the Total Force. By effectively dealing with its problems following the Vietnam conflict, the 4th Marine Division not only survived intact but actually thrived.

Many of the company grade officers joining the Division in the early 1970's got a shock as they joined the Division's reserve units. A joining officer, many of whom saw combat action in Vietnam, could be expected to encounter unkempt Reservists wearing short hair wigs to cover non-regulation long hair during drill week-ends.¹¹ However, many of the Reservists were far better educated than the new officers. Many of these Reservists had no genuine desire to extend their initial enlistment, having joined the Reserves to avoid the draft. Many Reservists questioned the need to train as ordered or even to make drills or annual training duty. Race relations were tense. Drug and alcohol abuse was also common.

In addition to these significant command challenges, many commanding officers found it difficult to motivate the Reservists who did perform drill. In many areas, especially urban centers, unemployment and societal problems provided leadership challenges unknown to a regular unit. Some commanders discovered that the meals provided during a drill week-end and the drill pay were the only earned food or income a Marine had all month.

The dramatic interest in human relations and programs developed by the Commandant to combat this threat to the combat readiness of the Marine Corps was also introduced to 4th Marine Division units. Command attention was drawn to identifying and addressing the causes of racial friction and not just treating the symptoms. Officers and staff non-commissioned officers were directed to immediately begin a meaningful dialogue with their Marines about race relations and perceptions. Numerous studies, commissions and recommendations followed.¹²

In July, 1972 the Marine Corps Human Relations Institute was established at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, California. The purpose of this Institute was to train instructors to conduct seminars about race relations and human diversity. Instructors traveled throughout the Marine Corps conducting Human Relations Training and evaluating existing programs. Every Marine, whether in boot camp or at the general officer level, received a mandated course of instruction. Besides opening a constructive dialogue, this training focused a commander's attention on race relations in his unit. While it cannot be said that these efforts resulted in overturning years of perceived or actual injustice and bias, the new focus served well to remind leaders that good leadership begins with fairness and impartiality in decisions affecting enlistment, assignment, discipline and promotions.¹³

Widespread drug and alcohol problems were initially met with education and rehabilitation. Marines and sailors were isolated, detoxified, and received inpatient treatment where necessary. Many Marines, who could have been punished for illegal drug use, were afforded exemption, a diversion process that allowed for rehabilitative treatment and, in some cases, a return to duty.

General Louis H. Wilson became Commandant of the Marine Corps in July, 1975. His arrival marked the beginning of the "*Great Personnel Campaign*."¹⁴ This effort was aimed at reducing the serious social ills afflicting the Corps by insisting on improved recruit quality standards. The percentage of high school graduates was raised and recruitment of Marines from the lowest mental group was ended. Expedient administrative discharges rather than courts-martial for malcontents were ordered. For 4th Marine Division reservists, this meant mandatory processing for immediate administrative separation for those who maintained an unsatisfactory drill attendance. Finally, Marines were admonished to adhere to traditionally high standards of behavior and commitment. Those who did not were purged from the rolls. General Wilson, in his 1978 State of the Corps report, stressed that the goal of recruiting quality high school graduates applied equally to both Reserve and Active duty recruiting missions.¹⁵

These efforts dramatically reduced a myriad of command problems which affected the 4th Marine Division's morale and combat effectiveness during the 1970s. By 1981, the most serious residual personnel problem was the still wide-spread use of illegal drugs throughout the Marine Corps. In 1981, The Commandant, General Robert Barrow announced "*a war on drugs*."¹⁶ More aggressive detection methods, such as unscheduled and random drug tests of all ranks, including officers, commenced. While rehabilitation and therapy was still offered, efforts at retaining identified abusers in a duty status diminished. This anti-drug campaign produced immediate results because it identified substance abusers. Along with the introduction of random drug testing through urinalysis, a concurrent assault on the alcohol abuser within the Corps began. Historians have noted that the early focus on identifying and treating the drug abuser enabled the

Marine Corps to also quickly identify alcohol abuse as a significant problem. This two pronged assault allowed Marine Corps commanders to look at the root causes behind incidents such as serious automobile accidents and domestic violence.¹⁷

By 1985, the Active and Reserve components of the Marine Corps reached a plateau of excellence in recruiting and retaining quality officers and enlisted. The wealth of experience and expertise in the 4th Marine Division was impressive. Combat experience remained high among the career Reservists. To assist with readiness and mobilization, the Marine Corps developed programs and data bases such as Reserve Qualification Summaries to capitalize on the skills and expertise gained by Reservists in the private sector. In addition to the drilling Reservists assigned to the Selected Marine Corps Reserve (SMCR) units, Marine Corps Mobilization Stations (MCMS), and Mobilization Training Units (MTU), other detachments which specialized in specific or technical mobilization support were staffed by Individual Mobilization Augmentees (IMA). While not under 4th Marine Division control, these units often assisted local reserve units, or were attached as special staff in large scale division exercises.

Another essential component of reserve readiness was the Full Time Support (FTS) program recently redesignated as the Active Reserve (AR program). This program brought Reservists on extended periods of active duty, some for a few years. These Reservists often filled administrative and logistic billets at various headquarters within the Division. The intent of this program is to make more personnel available to perform the day to day requirements of a reserve unit, thus allowing the drilling Reservists to concentrate on training and readiness. Prior to 1980, the majority of FTS Marines came from those Marines being released from active duty. By Fiscal Year 1984, however, there were over 800 FTS Marines recruited and joined from the Reserve ranks.¹⁸

Women Marines in the 4th Marine Division

Prior to 1958, most women Reservists were located in Women Reserve Platoons. These tended to be disbursing and administration units. The platoons were normally attached to a ground unit and commanded by the reserve unit's male commanding officer. These Women Reserve Platoons were deactivated in 1958 due to fiscal limitations, and a desire to increase male enlisted strength. The deactivation allowed for 227 women Reservists to remain in a drill pay status. This tiny number represented one-half of one percent of the authorized strength of the Organized Marine Corps Reserve. At first these billets were highly sought. However, by 1967, the number of women in a drill status dwindled to only two officers and 74 enlisted.¹⁹

By 1974, several administrative changes occurred that did much to remove the perceived separate status of women in the Marine Corps. For example, prior to 1974, a special Commandant's anniversary message was promulgated for the founding of the Women Marines on February 13, 1943. After 1974, however, only one message commemorating the November 10th Marine Corps Birthday was released signifying unity. The separatism fostered by the official use of the title "*Woman*" before the use of the word Reserves, as in Woman Reservist (WR), or Women Marine (WM) was discouraged.²⁰

Between 1958 and 1967 there was no specific Reserve program for women Marines. In 1971, a women Marine "*Special Enlistment Program*" was established in the Marine Corps Reserve with an initial quota of 88 billets. The women selected to fill these billets were to be recruited by the ground and aviation units of the Organized Marine Corps Reserve. From that time, the assignment of women in the Reserves paralleled the assignments of those in the Active components.²¹

In 1967, Public Law 90-130 removed any percentage caps on the number of women Marines who could join the Marine Corps and its reserve forces. Previous federal law had limited the number of women Marines to a maximum of two percent of the enlisted Marine strength. By May 1976, 30 officer and 400 enlisted billets belonged to women in the Fourth Marine Division/Wing Team.¹⁷ In 1973, Women Marines began filling billets in the Division headquarters. 1973 was also the year that Major Jeanne Boatwright Humphrey became the first female commanding officer of an Organized Marine Corps Reserve unit, Truck Company, 4th Service Battalion, 4th Marine Division located in Erie, Pennsylvania. This change of command was significant. Prior to Major Humphrey's command of this almost exclusively male Marine unit, female Marine officers had been relegated to commanding predominantly all female units.²²

In June, 1980, the Commandant refined Marine Corps policy concerning the assignment of women Marines to ground and combat support units. The policy change provided that women Marines could now be recruited and assigned to any 4th Marine Division unit that had a billet requirement and an MOS open by federal law for women, in which the female reservist could be effectively employed and trained. In November 1993, Congress rescinded the statutory restrictions of Title 10, and thus *"opened exciting new career opportunities for female personnel."* For the Marine Corps Reserve this meant that all occupational fields, except those involving assignment to direct combat billets, were open.²³

Deployment and the MORDT

The 4th Marine Division of World War II took five months to move by sea to its first combat objective. Deployment as part of the Total Force would be measured in days. Modern warfare emphasized rapid mobilization and speed of deployment as never before. The key indicator for successful mobilization was the reserve unit's ability to assemble, mount out and deploy when the recall came. In order to test mobilization readiness, a Mobilization Operational Readiness Deployment Test (MORDT) was developed. The MORDT was first used in 1976 to inspect 4th Marine Division units in emergency recall procedures, administration, logistics and embarkation readiness. MORDTs were tailored for Reserve readiness and commenced unexpectedly. Because of their unpredictability, they required that units constantly maintain a high level of deployment readiness. A MORDT did not assess a unit's combat readiness. Other inspections like the Marine Corps Combat Readiness Evaluation System (MCCRES) tested for combat efficiency.²⁴ The second phase of a MORDT assessed the ability of the unit to *"mount out"*. This movement might take the form of a motor march to an in-state training site, a flight to a distant military base, or even the joining of several reserve units for a weekend exercise.

1977 was a representative year in which there were twelve unit MORDTs conducted. One of the more publicized MORDT's was Operation *"Iron Hand"* which took place during March 9-13, 1977. Reservists from all the armed forces were test mobilized, including three thousand Marine reservists who came from 12 states and the District of Columbia. Units were transported to Camp Shelby, Mississippi, by the Air Force's Military Airlift Command, and 4th Marine Aircraft Wing aircraft. The operations plan for the exercise was formulated by the reservists of the 8th Staff Group from Houston, Texas. The success of this operation was attested to by the Commandant, General Louis Wilson, who said in a message to all participants that *"this operation was a significant demonstration of our ability to rapidly and professionally assemble and deploy Marine Air/Ground task force elements ...observers from the highest levels of our government were able to witness first hand the successful execution of what is meant by Total Force and interservice cooperation."*²⁵

On January 5, 1979, six hundred 4th Division Marines began a MORDT at their drill centers after only 72 hours notice. They then flew by Military Airlift Command to Camp Lejeune, trained with their active duty counterparts and returned to their reserve centers by the end of the drill week-end on January 7, 1979. Among the units participating were Long Lines Company, 6th Communications Battalion, from Brooklyn, New York, Bravo Company, 4th Combat Engineer Company, from Roanoke Virginia, and Alpha Company, 4th Combat Engineer Battalion, from Charleston, West Virginia.²⁶

The validity of the MORDT in ensuring mobilization readiness was described by Brigadier General Frederick R. Lopez, Commanding General, 4th Marine Division, in a November 1996 oral history interview: *"The units that were mobilized, [for the Persian Gulf Conflict], did well. Because we do MORDT's every two years formally, something we practice regularly, we did not have a problem getting people to the [Station of Initial Assignment] and then "in country."*²⁷

Lengthy sea movement to an area of conflict was now a thing of the past. The dictates of modern warfare required air delivery by the Military Airlift Command with the unit being equipped and supplied in theater with pre-positioned supplies. Small units were challenged to develop training schedules that would accomplish this type of training at local reserve centers. For example, Bravo Company, 8th Tank Battalion in Syracuse, New York utilized Canadian training facilities for its small arms live fire exercises and would then be flown to Fort Knox, Kentucky where it would acquire its tanks. Similarly in 1980, Detachment 4, Truck Company, 6th Motor Battalion from New Haven Connecticut spent a weekend drill learning to load vehicles on a C141 Starlifter, at Westover Air Force Base, while working closely with reservists from the Military Airlift Command who were stationed at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware.²⁸

Equipment

Significant change in equipping the Marine Reserve became necessary for it to become a true partner in the Total Force. The message became clear for both Regular and Reserve Marines; train with the same equipment as you would fight. The Marine Corps has a mobilization potential second to none among the armed services. Trained units and pre-trained individuals can be quickly assimilated from the Reserve into a total war effort. Provisions have been made to augment or reinforce Active commands with a great range of capabilities, from individual combat or combat service support units to a complete Reserve Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF). In a maximum effort, the Reserve can provide almost one-third of the manpower, a broad range of combat assets, 100% of civil affairs, 67% of force reconnaissance units, 40 % of the tanks and 33% of the artillery.

Over the years there has been a changing character in the relationship of the Active/Reserve force. Once viewed as a source of pre-trained individuals, the SMCR (4th Marine Division) trains today as a highly effective combat organization. Units are tied to active commands for contingency planning. In concert with the Active forces, Reserve units will receive major new ground equipment and weapons systems being introduced into the Marine Corps inventory.²⁹

Prior to the early 1980's, equipment priorities dictated that the other Marine divisions receive new weaponry first and that the Reserves would be equipped with newer weaponry later. For example, the Reserve was not fully equipped with M-16 service rifles until the early 1970's. M-60 tanks did not reach the tank battalions until 1979. An obvious draw-back to this situation was that mobilized reserves, who had trained on older equipment, would need to spend considerable time at the Station of Initial Assignment (SIA)

drawing new equipment and training on it before deployment. Such a delay might seriously impact the Division's Total Force effectiveness.

During the 1980's the Division began receiving state of the art equipment on the same time line as the Regular forces. In some instances, the Division received equipment ahead of active forces, as with the issuance the Beretta 9mm service pistol. Total Force missions, and the resultant equipment modernization, allowed the Reserve to receive major new ground equipment as it was being introduced into the Marine Corps inventory.

Among changes in the arsenal of the Division was the replacement of the 105mm Howitzer batteries with the new 155mm Battery and the introduction of the Light Armored Vehicles(LAV). New infantry weapons included the squad automatic weapon (SAW), the shoulder launched multipurpose assault weapon (SMAW), a lightweight mortar, new helmets and body armor.³⁰

Training and Readiness

Following the Vietnam conflict, several studies questioned what the mission of the Marine Corps would be. However, old enemies from the Cold War continued to pose a significant threat to national security. The Soviet military threat was evidenced by the deployment of its growing "*blue water*" navy around the world including the Pacific and North Atlantic and its massive military involvement in Afghanistan. The Marine Corps, as an expeditionary force, would play a vital part in the defense of Europe and other parts of the world which required a rapid response.

In his 1981 Fiscal Year Posture Statement, the then Commandant, General Robert Barrow, stated "*without question, with the threat to NATO, Europe remains our conventional forces' most demanding challenge.*"³¹ Regular employment of the 4th Marine Division in a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) mission began taking shape. The Marine Corps and its Reserve was assigned responsibilities including the defense of the North Atlantic against possible Warsaw Pact incursions over the Arctic. 4th Marine Division training began to focus for these missions.

In February, 1978, Operation Drumbeat II was conducted at Fort Drum, in northern New York. This operation was designed to test how effectively a joint service force of Marine Reservists, along with New York Air and Army National Guardsmen could mount an air supported mechanized thrust into Northern Europe if assigned such a mission by NATO.

Tactical control of the operation rested with the staff of 1st Battalion, 25th Marines from Boston, Massachusetts, who were commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Francis P. Reidy. The New York Army National Guard provided armored personnel carriers. Units from Bravo Company, 8th Tank Battalion from Syracuse, New York were extensively employed as the armor element of the exercise. Captain Richard Van Horne, commander of a tank platoon, found this training to be beneficial as it permitted armor and infantry commanders to work together. "*It is important that the tank and infantry commanders are co-located in order to coordinate our movements and get the job done.*"³²

Realistic training for this mission had to include cold weather training, mountain warfare skills, joint operations, and brigade-level operations. In defense of the North Atlantic, Norway's countryside, with its numerous mountains, fjords, and bitter cold became a familiar training area for Marines. Bridgeport, California, the home of the Marine Mountain Warfare Training Center (MWTC), also hosted much reserve

training. Annual Training Duty (ATD) for some units from the 4th Marine Division emphasized mountain training in the summer and cold weather skills in the winter. Situated in the California High Sierra mountains, a unit would often march out to the training site in snow and return in 90 degree weather. Rappelling, rock climbing, and river crossing skills were taught. Cold weather survival and ski training were also highlighted. The training taught an infantry company that an outnumbered unit could still gain the advantage against a superior mechanized infantry or heavy armor force which had difficulty negotiating mountainous rock and tall timber. This training helped those Marines assigned missions in NATO operations in Norway and within the Arctic circle.³³

Training in Alaska, Norway, Denmark, and Canada during the 1970s through the 1990s included such operations as *"Jack Frost," "Northern Wedding," "Bold Guard,"* and *"Alloy Express."* *"Operation Jack Frost"* in 1979 at Fort Wainwright, Alaska, was typical of what was to be expected in Norway. One hundred and fifty one Marines, from four rifle companies within 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines, were transported by Military Airlift Command (MAC) to Alaska. There, they received cold weather training, and then participated in a week long joint service operation with more than 17,000 soldiers, sailors and airmen.³⁴

From March 11-23, 1979, Marines from across New York and New England participated in Exercise *"Cold Winter,"* a NATO operation held in northern Norway. More than 160 Leathernecks from Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 25th Marines from Albany, New York spent two weeks becoming accustomed to temperatures that often dropped below zero and barely rose to 30 degrees in the afternoon. Other 1st Battalion, 25th Marine units included Bravo Company, from Hartford, Connecticut; Charlie Company from Chicopee, Massachusetts; Delta Company, from Topsham, Maine and Headquarters and Service Company from Worcester, Massachusetts as well as a smaller contingent from Headquarters Battery, 3rd Battalion, 14th Marines in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Part of the two week training was spent in a field skills test with active duty Marines from the 2nd Marine Division, Canadian and Norwegian soldiers, and Marines from the British and Dutch Marine Corps. American presence in the operation was explained by Marine Reserve Major David Corson. *"Our presence assures the Norwegians that we stand behind them and our commitments to NATO."*³⁵

From September 1-15, 1979, Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marines, participated in Operation *"Bar Frost."* This exercise attested to the emphasis on a NATO role for the 4th Marine Division in Northern Europe. Captain Ned Ellsworth, Executive Officer of Fox Company, put the training in perspective: *"I had heard of NATO, as long as I could remember, but it was just a collection of letters... now I know it as a real thing, a deterrent force."*³⁶

From its reactivation in 1962, throughout the Vietnam conflict and, with the exception of *"Golden Slipper 1967,"* 4th Marine Division training usually centered around battalion-sized exercises. However, it became apparent that by embracing new NATO missions, units larger than battalions, such as brigades, would have to be employed. Like individual Marines, staffs required constant training, especially training requiring the integration of supporting arms and maneuver warfare. In order to do this, a large training area which would permit maneuver and live fire exercises was needed.

General Wilson, while Commanding General, Fleet Marine Forces Pacific, 1973-1975, first thought of the possibilities that Marine Corps Base, 29 Palms California offered. Wilson said *"when I was selected to be the Commandant, I then determined that I was going to take the 29 Palms Base and enlarge its mission to include all the tactical units of the Marine Corps."* True to his word, upon becoming Commandant, he redesignated the huge desert base as the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC), Twentynine Palms.³⁷

The 932 square miles of high desert at Twentynine Palms provided a harsh and realistic training environment ideal for live fire and maneuver warfare. Marines also learned how to survive under extreme field conditions where temperatures approached 120 degrees. It was in this environment that all the weapons in the Marine inventory could be employed including rifles, howitzers, tanks, and aircraft. Senior officers at the base's Tactical Exercise Control Center (TECC) were able to control and exercise participating units and staffs which would make up a deployed brigade. During the late 1970's General Wilson left no doubt that these exercises were not only extremely significant, but were to be conducted before the eyes of the entire Marine Corps, and many throughout the Department of Defense. Twentynine Palms was to be a permanent *"Combined arms college for the whole Marine Corps."*³⁸ Within two years, General Wilson could comment that *"both Regular and Reserve units participate in these exercises which take advantage of live firing and the full spectrum of combined arms in an open, unrestricted environment. That side by side training of Regular and Reserve Marines supports the total force concept and provides a realistic means of preparation for all contingencies."*³⁹

"Palm Tree III" in August, 1976 saw 4th Marine Division assets employed in a live fire exercise at a Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) level. The Commandant, General Wilson, favored these new mobility exercises, in order to make the Reserve *"a member of our Marine Team."* By 1981, the 4th Marine Division training cycle included regularly scheduled Combined Arms Exercises (CAX) which rotated Active and Reserve units through the Combat Center each year. The 1981 training cycle was unique in that it involved two consecutive 4th Marine Division Combined Armed Exercises. Staff Sergeant Charles Owe, a photojournalist, described the initial exercise as *"the irresistible force that is the Marine Corps Reserve clashing head on with the immovable force that is the Mojave Desert."*⁴⁰

The first unit to train that Summer in 1981 was the 41st Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU), commanded by Colonel John Studt, the Commanding Officer of the 25th Marines. The infantry element came from 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, while the artillery support was supplied by the four batteries of the 14th Marines. At the conclusion of the first two weeks, the 42nd MAU arrived, commanded by Colonel Luigi Ragosta. The infantry element were the Marines from 2nd Battalion, 25th Marines. The operation culminated in a *"3-day war,"* including live fire and the use of combined arms.⁴¹ Beginning in 1985, six active duty and two reserve battalion sized Combined Arms Exercises were conducted each year at the Combat Center.

The Marine Corps fundamental mission has always centered around amphibious warfare. In so doing, Marine forces have historically been task organized depending on the requirements of the particular mission. The 4th Division of the 1980's was able to contribute to that historic mission. Since the end of the Vietnam conflict, the Division successfully purged its rolls of malcontents and substance abusers. It participated in realistic training at Twentynine Palms, Bridgeport and Norway. It was outfitted with state of the art weapons and equipment. Most importantly, the Division was manned by reservists skilled and motivated to take on the challenges of Total Force commitments. In 1984 alone, 25,000 4th Marine Division members trained in exercises around the world from Puerto Rico to Korea.

The 2nd Marine Amphibious Brigade

In December, 1982, the Division redesignated, relocated, or deactivated a total of 68 division units. Of considerable importance was the revitalization and reorganization of the 2nd Marine Amphibious Brigade (MAB). The brigade headquarters was to be permanently co-located with the Division in New Orleans. In a test of its ability to task organize and support a brigade, the MAB was directed to conduct a MAB *"command post exercise (CPX)"* in 1983 and then a full MAB exercise in 1984.⁴²

August 1984 saw the largest Marine Reserve exercise and amphibious landing since the Korean War. Units from the 4th Marine Division, some 7,000 strong, made up the 2d Marine Amphibious Brigade which was commanded by Brigadier General Constantine Sengalis. Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, North Carolina, and the Naval Operating Base Norfolk, Virginia hosted reservists from 125 units and hailing from 32 states and the District of Columbia.⁴³ This exercise marked the first time a full strength amphibious brigade was completely assembled from reserve units. The brigade's ground element was drawn from the 24th Marines from Kansas City, Missouri who were commanded by Colonel James R. Ruffini. This regiment of 3,300 Marines was supported by 28 amphibious assault vehicles, 16 tanks and 22 artillery pieces. The 24th Marines' 1st Battalion was landed by amphibious tractor. The 2d Battalion was helicoptered in and the 3rd Battalion was the brigade reserve. Preparation for this exercise evolved over the twelve preceding months. Participating units used their drill weekends to prepare and rehearse. This included all administrative procedures needed for mobilization and the embarkation of equipment to be moved to the East Coast. The scenario mirrored a possible Marine response to a threat in Northern Europe and a simulated brigade movement in Norway's Jutland peninsula. Besides conducting an amphibious landing, the brigade secured a beachhead for the landing of follow-on friendly forces. Marines also conducted river crossings, helicopter air assaults, and extractions while battalion, regiment and brigade staffs tested command and control and fire support coordination in the fast moving, fluid environment of maneuver warfare.⁴⁴

The training exercise, "*Phalanx Sound 2*" offered a unique historic reunion. The infantry of the 24th Marine Regiment was supported by the artillery of the 14th Marine Regiment, a relationship reminiscent of the bonds forged during the Pacific battles of Roi-Namur, Saipan, and Iwo Jima. The participating 6th Engineer Battalion also fought in the Pacific on Okinawa as did the participating 4th Assault Amphibian Vehicle Battalion which had served as the 4th Amtrac Battalion in 1943 at Roi-Namur.⁴⁵

During the mid-1980's, the 4th Division continued participation in training with active duty counterparts, as first begun in the early 1970's. Reserve infantry battalions participated in NATO exercises "*Alloy Express*," "*Northern Wedding*," "*Bold Guard*" and "*Teamwork 84*." The year 1984 saw the augmentation by the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marines, headquartered in Encino, California, to the 6th Marine Amphibious Brigade.⁴⁶

Exercise "*Solar Flare*," in the Summer of 1987, saw another realistic test of the Total Force concept. This training evolution grew out of the 1984 "*Phalanx Sound II*" brigade landing which saw a 4th Marine Division brigade employed for the first time since World War II. Planning for "*Solar Flare*" began in 1986 with a directive by then Commandant, General P.X. Kelley. General Kelley directed the Commanding General of II Marine Amphibious Force (MAF) to conduct a force level exercise that integrated active duty and reserve Marines and equipment. The training plan called for the active duty 4th Marine Amphibious Brigade and the reserve Second Marine Amphibious Brigade, drawn from the 4th Marine Division, to face off against each other in a series of unstructured engagements typical of maneuver warfare.⁴⁷

During July, 1987, the 2nd Marine Amphibious Brigade under the command of Brigadier General Omrod, deployed a force of 7,500 Marines from 118 units around the country. Facing the brigade were units of 2d Marine Division that constituted the 4th Marine Amphibious Brigade. A Reserve infantry battalion, 3rd Battalion, 23rd Marines, was attached to Regimental Landing Team 2 (RLT). The Reserve battalion, commanded by LtCol. W.R. Wittington, was composed of rifle companies from Houston and Austin Texas, and Shreveport and Lafayette, Louisiana. Likewise, an active duty infantry battalion, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines was assigned to the reserve Regimental Landing Team 23.

The battalion from 23rd Marines was able to train with the active force on a daily basis and was selected to be the lead element in a highly successful counterattack on the final day of the exercise.⁴⁸ At the conclusion of Solar Flare, it was evident to observers that 4th Marine Division forces, when given comparable equipment and training, were capable of fully integrating into active units. Major General Comfort, the Commanding General of II MAF which was the senior headquarters for the 2d MAB, believed that the 2d Marine Amphibious Brigade's performance validated the contingency plans for II MAF in Europe and the Caribbean.⁴⁹

The decade of the 1980's proved to be a watershed for the 4th Marine Division. Prudent decisions on future policy, made in the early 1960's, were now producing results. The division had been reconstituted as a credible fighting force. The 4th Marine Division saw its units deployed with the Marine Corps to combat training exercises as part of task organized brigades and amphibious units as opposed to utilization as a combat replacement pool. In 1988, General A.M. Gray, Commandant of the Marine Corps, in an address to Congress on the status of combat readiness stated: *"While we are fully prepared for the most challenging conflict, your Marine Corps must also stand ready for the most likely conflict, that in the Third World. We are not only your most deployable force, but the most employable across a broad spectrum of conflict."*⁵⁰

The **Perestroika** movement in 1987 signaled the lessening of Cold War tension, the approaching collapse of the Soviet nation and the demise of the Warsaw Pact. With a perceived lessening of global threats and tension, many again questioned the modern roles and missions of the Marine Corps. While the Soviet threat had indeed subsided, many knew that the current threat came from small groups of terrorists and guerrilla movements which operated in urban and jungle environs alike, including Beirut, Lebanon, Central and South America, and Africa. This new type of warfare became known as Low Intensity Conflict (LIC). Low Intensity Conflict, however, proved to be a form of conflict well known to Marines whose predecessors fought in Haiti, the Dominican Republic and the Philippines. It was a return to warfare that had been the Marine Corps' strength for years. This was an area in which the Marine Corps had traditionally excelled.

To those who confused the missions of the Marines and Army, the Marine Corps saw its mission clearly. Brigadier General Edwin Simmons, the Director of the Marine Corps History and Museums Division, summed up the distinction between the Army and Marine Corps roles as follows *"the Army and the Marine Corps seem to be converging ... the nation does not need, nor can it afford two land armies. For that matter, it neither needs, nor can it afford, two Marine Corps."*⁵¹

By 1990, the 4th Marine Division had come far from the assessment of the Reserves as conjured up in a 1976 Congressional report which reported that the Reserves suffered from *"benign neglect...handicapped by serious shortages...it is not unexpected that some Reservists have a difficult time in maintaining a high level of dedication."*⁵² The 4th Marine Division of 1990 had modern equipment, more than a decade of meaningful training, including battalion, brigade and force level experience, and an infusion of quality recruits. As 1990 began, Marine commanders were aware of the readiness of the 4th Marine Division, yet few could foresee that, within 9 months, units of the Division would be activated for combat for the first time since 1945.

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Cpl T. Carson, 8th Tank Battalion, aims an M-16A1 rifle equipped with the multiple integrated laser engagement system (MILES) during field exercises at Ft. Pickett, VA.



Marines from Battery H, 3/14, loads a round into an M-101 105mm howitzer during training exercises at Ft McCoy, WI.



Two M-60 main battle tanks of the 8th Tank Battalion move along a dirt road during field exercises at Ft. Pickett, VA.