



The 6th Communication Battalion augmented I MEF's communication and information technology network during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

of Baghdad. At this location, the water purification units produced 55,000 gallons of water, and the construction of a 300,000-gallon fuel farm supported all military units in the area. Additionally, showers and hygiene areas were set up at the site in support of the coalition forces in Baghdad.

On 19 April, the 6th Engineer Support Battalion set up sites for water production, storage, and fuel at Al Kut airfield, which was later named Supporting Area Geiger. The bulk fuel site consisted of a 300,000-gallon fuel farm while the reverse osmosis water purification units provided water to Task Force Tarawa. Additionally, the battalion established Resupply and Replenishment Point Edson in the vicinity of Ad Diwaniyah, which included a

150,000-gallon fuel farm and eight water purification units.

As coalition forces started the transitioned to security and stability operations, the 6th Engineer Support Battalion returned to Kuwait on 29 April 2003. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, the battalion built 90 miles of the bulk fuel hose reel system and pumped 8 million gallons of fuel. The unit also dispensed 16.5 million gallons of fuel and produced 4.5 million gallons of water.

Bridge Company A, 6th Engineer Support Battalion

On 20 March 2003, Bridge Company A advanced with Task Force Tarawa through the breach site in southern Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The company moved 85 vehicles of bridging assets and heavy equipment 60 miles from Kuwait to Logistics Support Area Viper, Iraq. Providing I MEF much needed bridge support, the unit built a 22-bay, double story,

LCpl Martin Fulgencio, a hygiene equipment operator with Utilities Platoon, 6th Engineer Support Battalion, pours water into a 3,000 gallon bag from the canal behind him.





Water is pumped into 3,000-gallon bags from a fresh water source along the Euphrates River, April 2003. The water is then pumped into nine reverse osmosis water purification units to be purified, tested, and stored in 50,000-gallon bags and distributed for consumption. This picture is taken near LSA Viper, which served as the headquarters of the 1st Force Service Support Group Forward Element.

medium girder bridge in the vicinity of the Euphrates River while weathering major sandstorms on 25 March.

On 4 April, Bridge Company A provided RCT-5 an alternate crossing site at the Tigris River outside of Al Kut by employing a 20-bay improved floating bridge.

This supported the 1st Marine Division's rapid movement north toward Baghdad. On 18 April 2003, the company participated in convoy operations between Resupply and Replenishment Point Chesty and Resupply and Replenishment Point 26.

On 22 April, Bridge Company A moved operations and assisted in general engineering missions at the Al Kut Airfield. The unit conducted road sweeps for unexploded ordnance, assisted explosive ordnance disposal in the destruction of unexploded ordnance, improved facilities at the Al Kut Airfield, conducted convoy operations, and improved a British grave site in the center of Al Kut.

6th Motor Transport Battalion

The 6th Motor Transport Battalion from Red Bank, New Jersey, was activated from seven reserve sites within four days and processed for deployment within 12 days. Upon arrival at Camp Pendleton, California, the battalion was organized into four companies and integrated into the 1st Transportation Support Group, 1st Force Service Support Group. The new organization was structured into the following units: Headquarters and Service Company, Light Company, Heavy Company, and General Support (Bulk Liquid) Company.

Once in theater, some elements of 6th Motor Transport Battalion were tasked out to the 6th, 7th, and 8th Engineer Support Battalions in direct support of the I Marine Expeditionary Force Engineer Group. The rest of the battalion provided support to the landing force shore party and surge drivers moving equipment from the Maritime Pre-positioning offload location in Kuwait to



PFC Kenneth Camling performs a chlorine test prior to dispensing water at LSA Viper, April 2003.

the arrival assembly operations group. To meet an ever-increasing operational tempo, arrangements were made for contracting host nation support vehicles. The 6th Motor Transport Battalion implemented a host nation support licensing program and a tracking system that accounted for the civilian vehicle fleet.

After crossing the line of departure into battle, the 6th Motor Transport Battalion provided logistical support throughout the theater. The battalion staff established a forward combat service support operations center at Logistical Support Area Viper for the 1st Transportation Support Group. In further missions, the 6th Motor Transport Battalion set up forward support operations at Supporting Area Anderson. At this location, a convoy

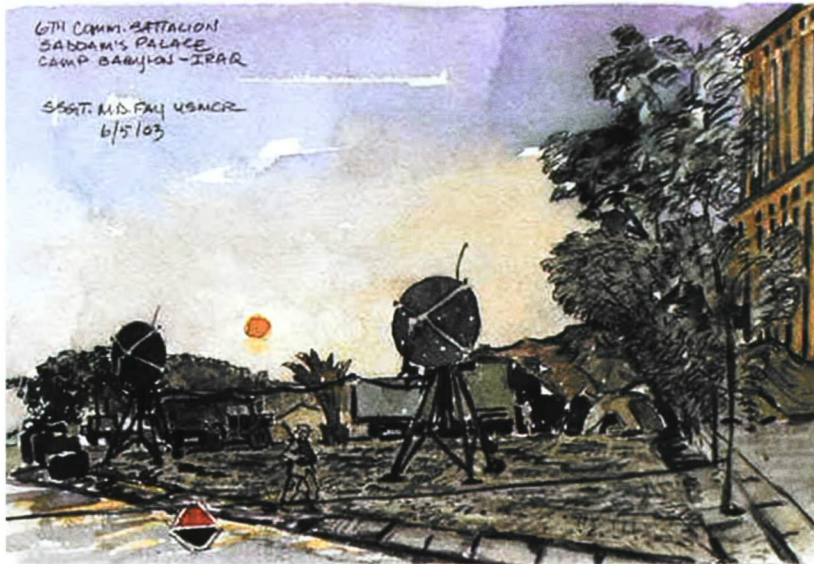
receiving area and supply transfer lot was created for offloading convoys from the Marine Logistics Command in Kuwait. From 21 March to 30 April 2003, detachments from the 6th Motor Transport Battalion served at Supporting Area Edson, Supporting Area Geiger, Resupply and Replenishment Point Chesty, and Logistics Support Area Viper moving supplies to and from the front lines.

In summary, the 6th Motor Transport Battalion traveled more than 1.3 million miles, hauling more than 5,000 short tons of ammunition, 7 million gallons of fuel and water, and 13,000 troops, without any significant injuries or incidents.

6th Communications Battalion

In January 2003, the 6th Communications Battalion was activated for operations in Southwest Asia. On 8 February, the battalion departed the Reserve Training Center, Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn, New York, for Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, where the unit conducted additional classes in battle skills and communications training. After completing medical requirements, the battalion departed for Kuwait from the Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point, North Carolina.

After arriving in Kuwait, the unit moved to Camp Commando and established a temporary command post next to the I MEF communication and control center. This temporary facility provided the staff with vital data and tactical telephone services. Once digital and voice services were set up in the northern camp, a battalion technical operations center was established.



SSgt Michael D. Fay, illustrates the operations of the 6th Communication Battalion at Camp Babylon.

A close working relationship was established with the 9th Communications Battalion from I MEF. Both battalions worked together through an intensive counterpart training program for all communication and service related occupational specialties. The training covered the following functional areas: operational relief of communication control watches, voice switching operations, ground mobilization force teams, and single channel radio operations. The Marines of the 6th Communications Battalion augmented the 9th Communications Battalion staff and integrated into the I MEF communication and control center and the watch rotations for the battalion technical operations center. This strengthened situational awareness and developed specific communication control skills.

Ground mobilization force teams deployed in support of 3d MAF at Al Jaber Air Base and the 1st Force Service Support Group forward command post in the vicinity of Camp Coyote, Kuwait. The ground mobilization force teams with the forward element of the 1st Force Service Support Group command post made subsequent displacements to the Jalibah forward operating base and then to Ad Diwaniyah during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Additional Marines were assigned to the Health Service Battalions in the 1st Force Service Support Group serving as radio operators and providing generator and air conditioning support. The battalion also provided tactical satellite operators to 3d ANGLICO, as part of the latter's liaison mission with the United Kingdom's 1st Armored Division.

With the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the battalion executed numerous missions, some of which lasted until the unit's departure from theater in August. The battalion augmented the command and control systems of I MEF by employing a conceptual communication platform known as the preliminary first in command and control system, which provided the commanding general video teleconferencing capability and the use of secret and unclassified data services at his forward command post.

The preliminary first in command and control system concept was developed at the Marine Corps Tactical Systems Support Activity and was specifically requested by the communications officer for I MEF as part of the command and control system for the commanding general's command post. The 6th Communications Battalion received the mission of rapidly getting this system operational using only technical publications and organic tech-

nical support. Since this was a concept system constructed from various off-the-shelf commercial products, there was very little guidance available in the way of doctrinal publications or technical manuals. Despite the difficulties, the unit was successful in standing up the system used by I MEF, which became the central communications component for the commanding general.

As combat operations began, the 6th Communications Battalion provided personnel, equipment, and professional expertise throughout I MEF's operational area. They provided radio systems and personnel, which allowed communication between the logistics movement command center and the 1st Force Service Support Group. They also contributed personnel and equipment that provided I MEF both voice and data services with coalition forces. This included a satellite link with the United Kingdom's 1st Armored Division that established a secondary path for data and voice circuits. Finally, 6th Communications Battalion developed a communications plan supporting the renovation and reactivation of the South Rumaylah oilfield infrastructure by government contracting firms. This assisted the I Marine Expeditionary Force Engineer Group in conducting civil affairs operations in this area.

4th Landing Support Battalion

The 4th Landing Support Battalion from Fort Lewis, Washington, was mobilized in January 2003 and its subordinate commands performed a spectrum of tasks from controlling the air and ship movements at airfields and ports in the United States to providing logistical support

to I MEF in Kuwait and Iraq. The Headquarters and Service Company of the 4th Landing Support Battalion formed the foundation for Combat Service Support Battalion 13, which moved to Kuwait in support of 3d MAF. Combat Service Support Battalion 13 established its headquarters at Al Jaber, Kuwait, and directed the operations of Combat Service Support Companies 133, 134, and 135. The 4th Landing Support Battalion also had Marines directing airfield and port operations on both the East and West Coasts. These Marines were responsible for the movement of personnel and equipment to and from Kuwait.

4th Medical Battalion

The 4th Medical Battalion from San Diego, California, activated 563 personnel in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The unit was attached to the Health Service Battalion of the 1st Force Service Support Group. By mid-April 2003, the 4th Medical Battalion was on station at Camp Okinawa, which was a sub-camp inside Camp Coyote, Kuwait. While in Kuwait, the 4th Medical Battalion assumed control of the surgical company hospital and treated more than 1,500 patients during a three week period. On 11 June 2003, all but 87 sailors returned to Camp Pendleton, California. The remaining personnel supported the forward resuscitative surgical systems in the following locations: An Hillah, Al Kut, As Samawah, and Tillal. The battalion staff also set up shock trauma platoons in Al Kut, Karbala, Hillah, Najaf, and Ad Diwaniyah. Additionally, a forward resuscitative surgical systems team and shock trauma platoon was established

at Camp Iwo Jima, Kuwait, in support of retrograding personnel. The last element of the 4th Medical Battalion in Iraq and Kuwait returned to Camp Pendleton in mid-October 2003. Personnel that did not deploy to Southwest Asia supported the Alaskan Roads exercise and augmented the 1st Medical Battalion, 1st Force Service Support Group (Rear) at Camp Pendleton.

Analysis of Operation Iraqi Freedom

As the war on terrorism focused on Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq, the Marine Corps Reserve made an essential contribution to the war fighting effort. This was clearly articulated in the study conducted by the Reserve Combat Assessment Team entitled: "Marine Corps Reserve Forces In Operation Iraqi Freedom."

The assessment team noted that, "the Marine Corps' reserve forces were one of the great success stories of the war. They showed that they were skilled warfighters who could perform as advertised—muster, train, deploy, and fight—and do it, not as second stringers who would suffice in an emergency, but as highly motivated, highly competent Marines." As I MEF launched combat operations, Marine reserve units were deployed with the ground, aviation, and combat service support elements. Additionally, many reserves served as individual aug-

Marines from 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, field-tested the MK 47, 40mm Advanced Lightweight Grenade Machine Gun at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.



mentees and filled important roles in staff sections throughout I MEF. The Marine Corps Reserve underscored its significance as an expeditionary organization and served a vital role in the total force concept. As the Reserve Combat Assessment Team expressed in its study, the Marine Corps Reserve "not only performed homeland security missions, but also augmented and reinforced the active duty component "in their expeditionary role as the nation's 911 force."

When comparing the role and impact of the Marine Corps Reserve prior to Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm (1990 to 1991) to the eve of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the reserves occupied a more substantial role in the augmentation of the active forces prior to the commencement of combat operations. Before Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Marine Corps policy outlined that there would be no requirement for reserve force support during the first 60 days of conflict. In preparation for Operation Iraqi Freedom, the reserves were activated and employed extensively prior to combat operations.

The experience of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm and subsequent mobilizations convinced planners that reserve augmentation was essential to the Marine Corps warfighting capability in meeting the assigned mis-

sion. This important step forward reinforced the critical nature of the reserves in the Marine Corps total force concept. Subsequently, a key change from Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm to Operation Iraqi Freedom was that Marine planners accepted from the initial planning stages that reserve units would be involved.

Marine Corps Reserves and the Total Force

Due to the numerous global commitments of the active duty Marine Corps prior to 11 September 2001, a significant need existed for reserve augmentation. As the

Reserves Activated for Operation Iraqi Freedom

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|----------------------|-----|
| Army National Guard | 24% |
| Army Reserve | 33% |
| Air National Guard | 20% |
| Air Force Reserve | 21% |
| Navy Reserve | 13% |
| Marine Corps Reserve | 48% |

Source: HQMC RA; EFCAT-R calculations. Data as of May 2003.

Global War on Terrorism unfolded, the need for reserve augmentation was even greater. The study conducted by the Reserve Combat Assessment Team revealed that during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, the Marine Corps activated 63 percent of its reserve component. Subsequently, for Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Marine Corps activated 48 percent of its reserve force.



Sgt Jeffery Rand (right) from the 3d Civil Affairs Group and Army Sgt Nick Cione (left) from the 304th Civil Affairs Battalion avoiding enemy fire in Karbala, July 2003.

Some other noteworthy achievements illustrated in the study by the Reserve Combat Assessment Team

were that unit mobilizations were rapid and smooth, generally taking five total days after reporting for activation. Marine reserve units deployed rapidly and arrived when required. Finally, 99 percent of the personnel in the reserve units reported for duty and 98 percent of them were medically fit. Less than .5 percent of them requested some sort of waiver for exemption.

Active Duty Commanders Assessment

The overall contribution and performance of the Marine Corps Reserve has been an essential part of the Marine Corps' ability to maintain its role as the nation's premier force in readiness. In the process of mobilizing and deploying individuals and units, there have been some definite growing pains where difficulties and challenges revealed areas needing great improvement. However, the overall performance of the reserves is best articulated in the comments of several general officers in the study conducted by the Reserve Combat Assessment Team. The Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Michael W. Hagee, said that, "our Marine reservists are Marines first and there was absolutely no difference in performance—on the ground, in the air, in logistics." Lieutenant General James T. Conway, the commanding

general of I Marine Expeditionary Force, noted, “We could not have done what we did without the reserves.” Finally, Brigadier General Richard F. Natonski, the commander of Task Force Tarawa, stated, “I can’t say enough for the reserves ... they were every bit as good as the active forces and proved it time and time again, in combat and Phase IV [security and stability] operations. Our reserve was envied as much by the army as our Marine air-ground task force capability.”

Skills Provided from Civilian Experience

A unique factor that was very consistent with the activated reserves was how their civilian professions greatly enhanced their military contribution. An example of this is the employment of 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, and 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, in the rebuilding of Iraqi police forces in their respective areas of Al Kut and An

Marines from 1st Marine Corps Recruiting District, Public Affairs Office New York, and 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, stand with New York City rescue workers in front of a flag that flew over the World Trade Center.



After reactivating the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (Anti-Terrorism), Gen James L. Jones (far left), 32d Commandant of the Marine Corps, stands with the current commander, BGen Douglas O'Dell, Jr., (fourth from the right) and former commanding generals of the 4th MEB, which include former Commandants Gen Alfred M. Gray (far right) and Gen Carl E. Mundy (second from the right).

Nasiriyah. Both units had a significant number of Marines with extensive professional backgrounds in law enforcement. Their civilian skills were invaluable in meeting the mission requirements. Additionally, two Marine reserve aerial refueler transport squadrons (VMGR's 234 and 452) provided almost 90 percent of the aircrews for assault support missions in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Many of the pilots in these squadrons flew for commercial airlines in their civilian line of work. The Reserve Combat Assessment Team noted in its study, “The reserve squadron crews had more current qualifications and had, on average, 800 more flight hours than the active duty crews.” Finally, many of the medical personnel in the 4th Medical Battalion had extensive experience in the civilian health care industry. This civilian experience was diverse and varied throughout many disciplines of health care and proved relevant in the application of wartime medicine.

Individual Augmentees

The Marine Corps was able to identify, mobilize, and deploy large numbers of individual augmentees for staff positions at various command levels throughout the

operating forces. Commanders typically spoke highly of reserves that were activated from Individual Mobilization Augmentee detachments and the Marine Expeditionary Force Augmentation Command Elements. Marine reserves composed 60 percent of the personnel in the I MEF Combat Operations Center and 40 percent of the Combined Joint Task Force-Consequence Management command in Kuwait.

The reserves in the Headquarters element of the 4th MAW provided a detachment to the 3d MAW and served as liaison to the Coalition Air Operation Center within the United States Central Command. The reserves of the 4th Force Service Support Group detachments successfully integrated into the 1st Force Service Support Group staff and the Marine Logistics Command established in Kuwait by the commander and staff of the 2d Force Service Support Group.

Other Global Commitments

1st Battalion, 25th Marines, and Company C, 4th Light Armor Reconnaissance

The 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, was tasked with the unit deployment mission in support of the III Marine Expeditionary Force from June to December 2003. The battalion was activated in



Marines from the 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion light up the night skies at the Shoalwater Bay Training Area in Queensland, Australia, during a night-fire exercise, October 2003.

January 2003 and quickly set up headquarters, work-spaces, and barracks at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. In February 2003, the battalion focused on nuclear, biological, and chemical training; martial arts skills; swim qualifications; vehicle licensing; and infantry training at the fire team, squad, and platoon level. The infantry training placed emphasis on military operations in urban terrain

Marines with Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, conduct fire support training with Philippine Marines in the exercise Talon Vision. Pictured here are Marines firing 81mm mortars.





Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen Michael W. Hagee presents Petty Officer 2d Class Edward Kern, USN corpsman, 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, with a Navy Achievement Medal during an awards ceremony atop Mount Sunbachi on Iwo Jima, the site of a legendary World War II campaign in 1945.

and riot control. The unit prepared for the role as the deploying infantry battalion of the air contingency Marine air-ground task force for the II Marine Expeditionary Force as well as the quick reaction force

Cpl Kevin A. Boswell, Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Defense Chief, Headquarters and Service Company, 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, instructs Marines of Company A on how to properly remove the mission oriented protective posture gear, or MOPP gear, after being exposed to a chemical or biological agent.



L Cpl Cody Roberts from Company C, 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, talks with a Royal Thai Marine Commando during a break from a live fire exercise, June 2003.

Sgt David Rohde, a platoon guide with 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, aligns his sights prior to training in Australia.



for the East Coast.

In April 2003, the battalion assumed the roles of air contingency battalion and quick reaction force and also participated in Exercise Sharp Wedge with the U.S. Navy mobile construction battalions. The battalion also provided support for the two-week evaluation of the tactical unmanned guided vehicle, known as "Gladiator." The battalion received training from the Special Operations Training Group in the use of non-lethal weapons and participated



Marines from 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, render honors to the flag during the Ted Williams memorial service at Boston's Fenway Park, 22 July 2002. Williams, a former Marine pilot and Hall of Fame baseball player, died 5 July 2002.

in military operations in urban terrain exercises. On 30 April, the unit received the tasking as the deploying battalion for the unit deployment rotation in Okinawa in June.

In May 2003, the battalion went through a Marine Corps combat readiness evaluation held by 6th Marines, and in June, deployed to Okinawa completing a turnover with 2d Battalion, 7th Marines. Company C, 4th Light Armor Reconnaissance Battalion, which just returned from Operation Iraqi Freedom, joined the battalion in Okinawa.

During the deployment to Okinawa, 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, and Company C, 4th Light Armor Reconnaissance Battalion, participated in the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines and the fol-

lowing exercises: Ulchi Focus Lens in Korea, Talon Vision in the Philippines, Southern Frontier in Australia, and Khaan-Quest in Mongolia. In December 2003, 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, turned over the unit deployment mission to 3d Battalion, 4th Marines, and returned to the United States.

Conclusion

As the attacks of 11 September 2001 linger in the American memory, the nation's expeditionary force in readiness serves in the vanguard of the fight against terrorism. The Marine Corps



responded in various ways from the citizen-Marines like Captain Armas, Sergeant Major Curtain, Gunnery Sergeant Garvey, Sergeant Anaya, and Corporal Tallon to the Marine Corps Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officers that assisted the Federal Emergency Management Agency in crisis management and disaster control activities in New York

and Washington, D.C. The Marines of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 321 quickly assembled their aircrews and aircraft and provided vital combat air patrols in the defense of the nation's capital as the United States anticipated more commercial airline attacks, which fortunately never materialized.

When President George W. Bush made the decision to take the fight to Al Qaeda and terrorist sponsoring regimes such as the Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein's Iraq, the Marine Corps met the challenge. The combat readiness of active duty and reserve forces proved essential in meeting the demands placed on the Marine Corps. As Marine expeditionary units moved into

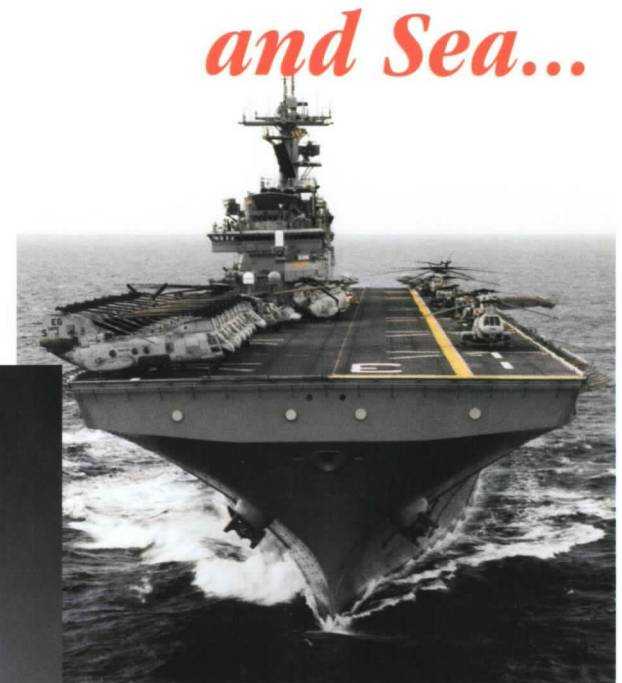
Defending Freedom



In The Air...



On land...



and Sea...

the Arabian Sea and launched forces inland to Afghanistan, reserve squadrons of KC-130 aircraft strengthened the aviation refueling and assault support requirement necessary to accomplish the mission. With the capture and transport of terrorist detainees, reserve infantry units rapidly augmented the guard force duties at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

As Marine expeditionary units deployed with a greater demand on heavy lift capability, reserve CH-53E helicopter squadrons filled the need and provided vital support to air operations in Southwest Asia and the Horn of Africa. As terrorist activity developed in the Horn of Africa, reserve logistics and infantry units established the command logistics element, which supported the combined joint task force command created specifically for the detection and destruction of international terrorism in the region.

In preparation for the war against Iraq, the Marine Corps recognized the vital role served by the reserves in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and made plans that incorporated reserve units and individual augmentees well in advance of the start of combat operations. Marine reserves served extensively in each of the elements of the Marine air-ground task force during

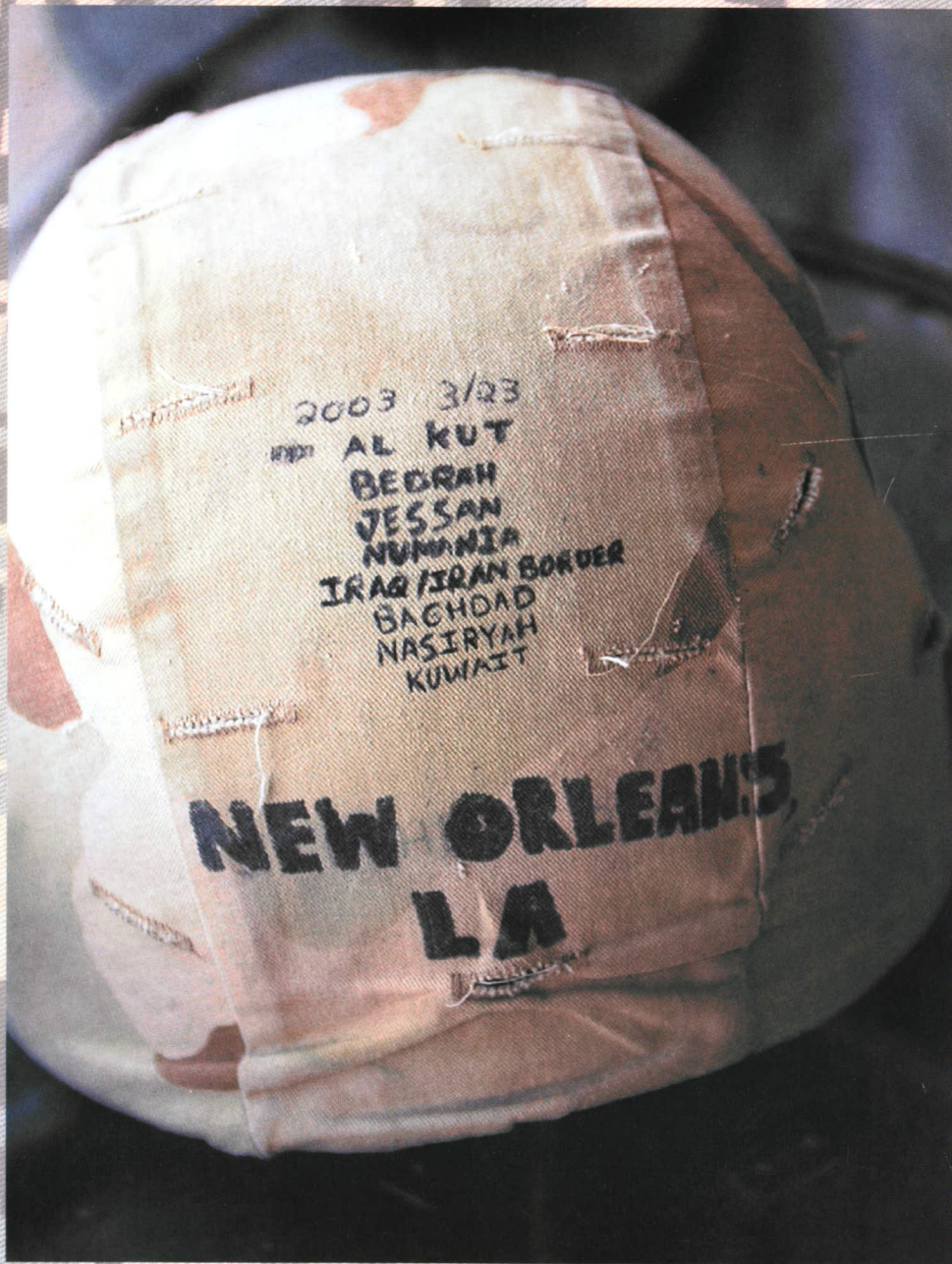
Operation Iraqi Freedom. Reserve infantry, aviation, logistics, and civil affairs units served widely throughout I MEF and the theater of operations.

Meanwhile, as much of America's attention focuses on the Global War on Terrorism, the nation still maintains its global commitments that existed before 11 September 2001. The Marine Corps filled the demand for a ground force combat element in the unit deployment rotation to the III Marine Expeditionary Force by sending a reserve infantry battalion and light armor reconnaissance company from June to December 2003.

Reminiscent of the legendary World War I recruiting posters of "First in the Fight," and "The Spirit of 1917," today's Marine Corps Reserve continues its long-standing tradition of meeting the nation's call to arms in its service alongside the active duty component, forming a potent warfighting machine. From the Battle of Belleau Wood to current operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, Marine reserves have distinguished themselves as an integral part of the Marine Corps' total force. As the Marine Corps Reserve moves into its ninth decade, its serving citizens along with their active duty counterparts continue the tradition of meeting the nation's clarion call of "Tell That To The Marines."



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AL KUT

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