

U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Operations:

11 September 2001 to 1 November 2003



Front Cover:

Marines deploying for Operation Iraqi Freedom walk the flight line to an aircraft waiting to take them to their destination.

Back Cover:

A helmet belonging to a Marine in 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, lists the locations where the battalion served in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

United States Marine Corps Reserve Operations

11 September 2001 to November 2003



by Major Thomas W. Crecca
U.S. Marine Corps Reserve

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Foreword

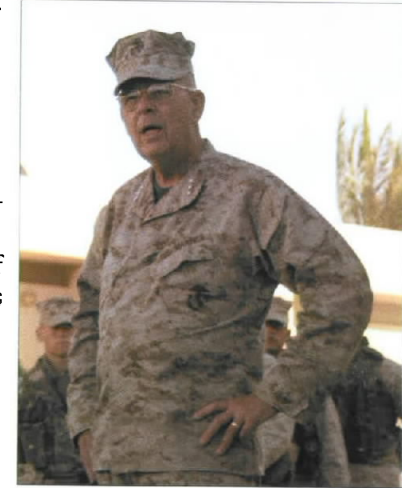
The Gulf War of 1990 through 1991 represented a watershed in modern American defense policy. For the first time since the Korean War we undertook a massive mobilization of the Reserve components of our Armed Forces. This step was taken with a degree of uncertainty and hesitation. Many asked: Will they come? Can they fight? The first of those questions was answered with a resounding yes. In cities and towns, the men and women who had given up weekends and vacations to qualify for service answered the call to arms. The answer to the second question was more nuanced—units that had been properly equipped and trained performed magnificently. Some Services' units, hindered primarily by old policies and lack of resources, showed the results of neglect. Even those units, however, showed great spirit, and thus, great promise.

Throughout the next decade, Reserve component units and individuals served at a previously unprecedented rate both at home and abroad.

On 11 September 2001, a new enemy declared war on America. In one of the boldest moves of his administration, President George W. Bush immediately invoked the statutory authority to mobilize 1 million members of the Reserve and National Guard. The Department of Defense immediately set about to use that authority to call air, ground and naval units into service. This affirmative, confident deployment of Reserve forces was clearly the result of the demonstrated ability of the men and women of the Reserve components and of the lessons learned during and after Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm regarding how to sustain and employ this powerful augmentation force. They were no longer “weekend warriors.” Rather, they truly were—and continue to be—vital elements of the Total Force, giving real meaning to the phrase “one team, one fight.”

This is an account of the contributions of the Marines and sailors of the Marine Corps Reserve in the first two years of the Global War on Terrorism. It is a powerful first chapter to an ongoing story of dedication, heroism and competence. Our Commandant, along with many of those who have led these Marines in combat, repeatedly makes the point that Marines, both active and reserve, are indistinguishable. That is as it should be, but I trust readers will agree with me that telling this unique story does not diminish or reduce the bonds that tie together all who wear the Eagle, Globe and Anchor.

I am tremendously proud of the Marines and sailors portrayed here, and I am very pleased to open a window into their exploits and contributions.



Semper Fidelis,
Dennis M. McCarthy
Lieutenant General
United States Marine Corps Reserve

Preface

Once a Marine, always a Marine, is a mantra binding the men and women who have worn the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor during their lifetimes. Whether a Marine makes it a career or just one enlistment, serving either on active duty or in the reserve, we are proud to claim the title of United States Marines. The Marines are very conscious of their relationship with the public. They always seek to strengthen their ties to the American citizenry and ensure that “the term ‘Marine’ signifies all that is highest in military efficiency and soldierly virtue,” as articulated by the 13th Commandant of the Marine Corps, Major General John A. Lejeune. Whether you are on active duty or drilling in the reserves, the standard noted by General Lejeune remains the same.

The public’s understanding of the Marine Corps Reserve may vary. Many are familiar with the annual Toys for Tots campaign. However, the reserves serve as ambassadors to society by their visibility in the workplace and in community activities. While they train one weekend a month and two full weeks out of each year, they remain ready at a moment’s notice to integrate into an expeditionary force and accomplish the mission at hand.

This publication seeks to show the involvement of the Marine Corps Reserve in the *Global War on Terrorism* as well as its participation in other commitments that required the service of the reserve due to the active duty commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan. The intent here is to convey the “Ready, Willing, and Able” nature of the Marine Corps Reserve in defending the United States both at home and abroad in a most expeditionary fashion.

To illustrate the involvement of the Marine Corps Reserve, I chose to discuss the participation of the units in a general chronological order from the time of the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon to 1 November 2003. With the exception of the individual Marines that served in the rescue efforts at the World Trade Center, this narrative focuses on unit participation. The date of 1 November 2003 is significant because in the late fall of 2003, the

Marine Corps began planning for the next phase of its participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom. This is when another request for forces was dispatched to Marine reserve units in preparation for subsequent deployments in late 2003 and early 2004.

This project was made possible by the guidance provided by Lieutenant General Dennis M. McCarthy, Commanding General, Marine Forces Reserve. General McCarthy underscored the need for the story of the Marine Corps Reserve to be told and illustrated as a key component of the Total Force concept. Under the leadership of Colonel John W. Ripley, USMC (Ret.), and the mentorship of Colonels Jeffrey J. Douglass and Jon T. Hoffman, this project got started and I was asked to make it a reality.

In my research I benefited from several recently produced sources covering the Marine Corps experience in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. The *Operation Enduring Freedom Combat Assessment Team Summary Report* provided data and maps on the accomplishments of Task Force 58 in late 2001 and early 2002. Lieutenant Colonel Michael S. Groen and his staff at the 1st Marine Division produced *Operation Iraqi Freedom: No Better Friend, No Worse Enemy*, and Lieutenant Colonel Michael D. Visconage and Major Carroll N. Harris prepared the *Third Marine Aircraft Wing: Operation Iraqi Freedom*. The maps that I incorporated into my text were based on the maps used in these sources as well as the briefs given by the staffs of I Marine Expeditionary Force and Task Force Tarawa. Additionally, I had the opportunity to review and include the information discussed in the Reserve Combat Assessment Team’s *Marine Corps Reserve Forces in Operation Iraqi Freedom: Lessons Learned*.

I relied extensively on a combination of command chronologies, after action reports, and materials provided by the library, reference, and archive sections at the Marine Corps Historical Center in Washington, D.C. The units throughout Marine Forces Reserve also assisted in providing photographs that were incorporated into the

the historians of the Field Operations Branch, the Oral History Branch, the Chief Historian, and the Administration section of the Marine Corps Historical Center. After writing the narrative, I relied heavily on the expertise of the Editing and Design section to illustrate the text with graphics, pictures, and maps. The cumulative efforts of the individuals, sections, and branches mentioned were essential in making this publication possible.

Finally, I am very grateful for the encouragement and support of my wife, Pamela. She endured extended periods of separation during this time, but always provided invaluable advice, keen

insight, and words of wisdom throughout this endeavor. I also am very grateful for the support of Pamela's family and of my own as they continuously provided encouragement and respites in my drive to reach the finish line.

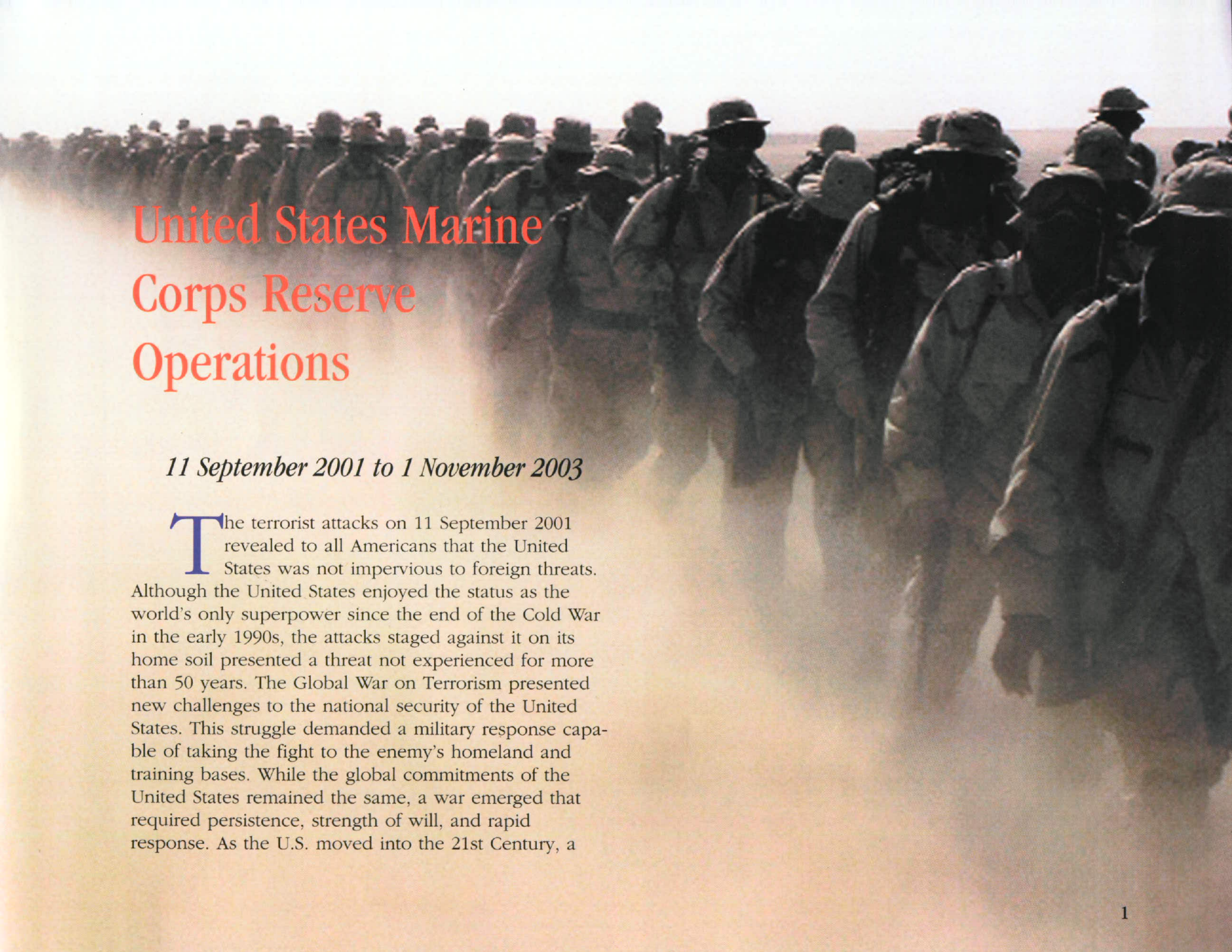
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas W. Crecca". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "C".

Thomas W. Crecca
Major, United States Marine Corps Reserve

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United States Marine Corps Reserve Operations

11 September 2001 to 1 November 2003

The terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 revealed to all Americans that the United States was not impervious to foreign threats. Although the United States enjoyed the status as the world's only superpower since the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, the attacks staged against it on its home soil presented a threat not experienced for more than 50 years. The Global War on Terrorism presented new challenges to the national security of the United States. This struggle demanded a military response capable of taking the fight to the enemy's homeland and training bases. While the global commitments of the United States remained the same, a war emerged that required persistence, strength of will, and rapid response. As the U.S. moved into the 21st Century, a



Cpl Sean P. Tallon

Upon his return, GYSgt John M. Leach, Prior Service Recruiter Region 1, tells a few Marines his experience searching for survivors at the World Trade Center in New York. He joined a 14-man team of naval reserve corpsmen attached to 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, 4th Marine Division, in the effort.

Photo by: Sgt Chanin Nuntavong



Service members, firefighters and other workers drape the American flag over a section of the Pentagon 12 September 2001. As a result of terrorist attacks at the Pentagon the day before, more than 180 people were killed at that site.

LtCol Ward Scott (far right) assisted by 1st Sgt Alexander G. Prophet, present Capt Thomas E. Armas (left) with the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for his lifesaving efforts on 11 September 2001.



solemn reminder of its vulnerability greeted the nation as a new generation experienced a surprise attack reminiscent of the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor in 1941. This generation's "day of infamy" claimed the lives of almost 3,000 citizens and numerous wounded.

Just as the Marines of a previous generation stood bravely at Pearl Harbor and fought in a desperate battle, so did today's Marines as they answered the call in the desperate hours that followed the terrorist attack on 11 September 2001. Some of these Marines wore a different uniform that day. They were going about their private lives working in their civilian professions when the attack came. At the World Trade Center, at the Pentagon, and in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, they were not necessarily prepared to fight back, but they were ready to protect the lives of their fellow citizens and even gave of their own lives to save others.

A number of Marine reservists were at their civilian jobs in New York City when the two commercial airliners flown by terrorists crashed into the World Trade

This photograph was taken from the Staten Island Harbor immediately after the second World Trade Center tower was hit by a second aircraft. After the second impact, most observers began to realize the destruction was intentional.

Photo by: GySgt Matthew Olivolo





Sgt Calixto Anaya, Jr.



GySgt Mathew D. Garvey



SgtMaj Michael S. Curtain

Naval reserve corpsmen attached to the 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, 4th Marine Division, reflect after their return from searching through the ruins of the World Trade Center in New York City. Fourteen corpsmen and one Marine embarked on a journey through heavy traffic and crowds of people to join rescue efforts and help locate survivors. Pictured from left to right: GMG2 Alexander Valdez, HN Rodrick Rivera, HM3 Capodacqua, HM3 John Burnell and HM3 Michael Phillips.

Photo by: Sgt Chanin Nuntavong



An aircraft thundered over the Pentagon, seemingly illustrating America's resolve that terrorism would not destroy its way of life, as Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld reflected on the 11 September attacks. In the months since the attacks, Americans have been attempting to return to a more normal routine in their daily lives that includes, once again, commercial air travel.

Photo by: Sgt M. V. Trindade

Maj David Anderson, (center), Director of Marine Corps Public Affairs, New York, speaks to Lt John Durkin, (left), Emergency Service Unit, in front of a flag signed by rescue workers from the World Trade Center. The flag was on display in front of the CBS Studios on November 2001.

Photo by: LCpl Chad Simon



Photo by: GySgt Matthew Olivolo

A National Ensign flies amongst the devastation of one of the World Trade Center towers. Smoke, ash, and dust choked New Yorkers for days after the WTC towers collapsed.

Center. Captain Thomas M. Armas, a Secret Service agent for the Treasury Department and member of the Marine Corps' Individual Ready Reserve, established a triage site for the wounded and assisted in the evacuation of personnel from the World Trade Center's Twin Towers. While Captain Armas survived the terrorist attacks, Sergeant Major Michael S. Curtain, Gunnery Sergeant Matthew D. Garvey, Sergeant Calixto Anaya, Jr., and Corporal Sean P. Tallon tragically died in the rescue efforts at the World Trade Center.

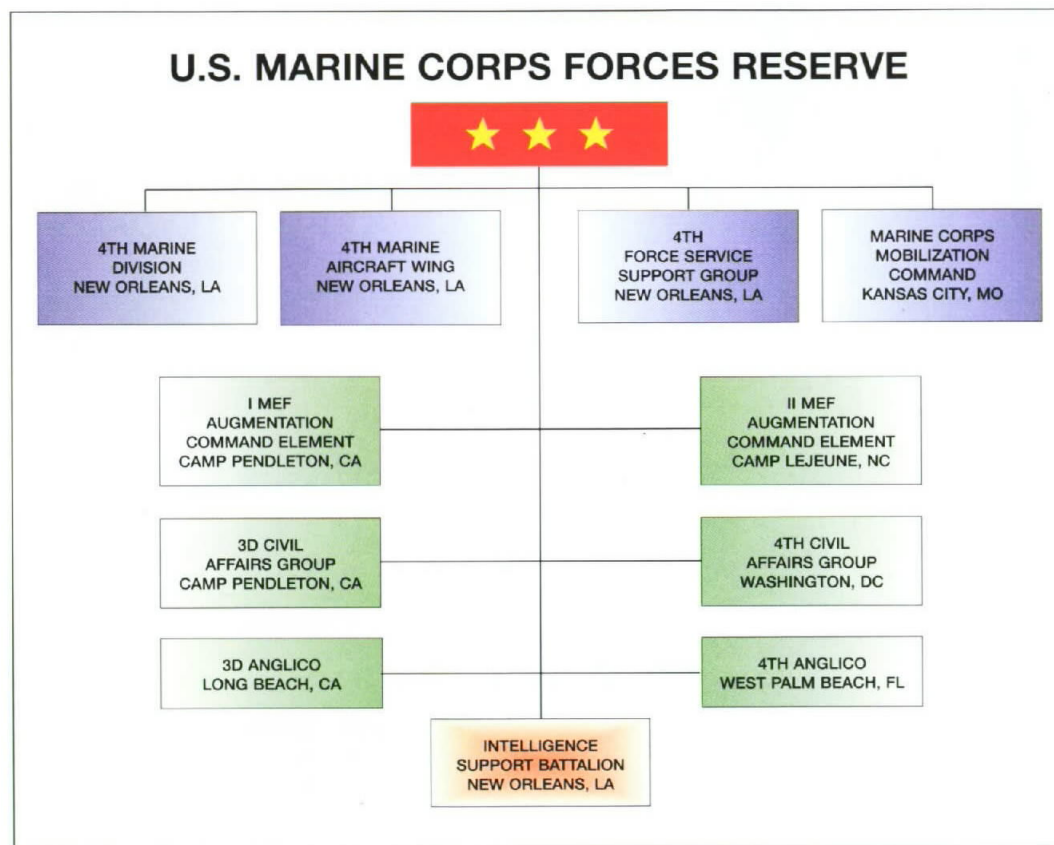
Sergeant Major Curtain served in the Emergency Services Unit of the New York City Police Department and was no stranger to traumatic events. Prior to 11 September 2001, he participated in the rescue efforts in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center and the 1995 bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building. In the latter case, the Emergency Services Unit of the New York City Police Department deployed to Oklahoma City supporting rescue and recovery operations. Serving as

New York City firefighters, Gunnery Sergeant Garvey, Sergeant Anaya, and Corporal Tallon responded to the attacks at the World Trade Center, giving their lives while saving others. As members of the Marine Corps Reserve, Sergeant Major Curtain, Gunnery Sergeant Garvey, and Sergeant Anaya served with the 6th Communication Battalion in Brooklyn, while Corporal Tallon served with Garden City's 2d Battalion, 25th Marines.*

Marine Forces Reserve

Established on 29 August 1916, the Marine Corps Reserve has been extensively involved in protecting America's interests. Since World War I, the Marine Corps Reserve has served a vital role in augmenting active duty forces to meet the massive demands in manpower, equipment, and skilled proficiency for the mission at hand. In the first part of the 20th Century, Marine reserves filled the ranks of an expanding Corps and distinguished themselves in combat in Europe, the Pacific, and Korea. In the latter part of the same century,

* Marine Corps Regiments are referenced simply, as in 25th Marines, rather than 25th Marine Regiment.



the integration of Marine reserves in peacetime operations as well as in combat was more prevalent, particularly in the wake of the Vietnam War and the abolishment of national conscription in 1973. At the close of the 20th Century, a large Marine Corps Reserve contingent provided a vital contribution to I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

On 6 June 1992, Marine Reserve Forces Command, headquartered in New Orleans, Louisiana, was created, becoming the third Force Command in the Marine Corps

along with Marine Forces Atlantic and Marine Forces Pacific. Renamed Marine Forces Reserve on 1 November 1994, it is the largest command in the Marine Corps and includes the 4th Marine Division, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, 4th Force Service Support Group, and Marine Corps Mobilization Command. The mission of Marine Forces Reserve is to provide service to the community; augment and reinforce active duty forces in time of war, national emergency or contingency operations; and provide personnel and operational tempo relief for the active duty forces in peacetime.

Despite reductions in personnel levels across the armed forces in the 1990s, global commitments remained steady and so did the need for a maritime expeditionary force in readiness. In the aftermath of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm and the end of the Cold War, the need for the integration of trained Marine reserve units and individuals into active duty forces continued.

The Marine Corps' expeditionary nature placed it in the forefront of the Global War on Terrorism. Marine expeditionary units came together in the Arabian Sea and moved inland into Afghanistan in the fight that overthrew that country's ruling Taliban regime, which had provided sanctuary to Al Qaeda terrorists. Marine reserves served an integral role in the air, on land, and at sea in Operation Enduring Freedom as they provided aviation support from naval shipping to inland operating bases, as well as guarding terrorist detainees at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. As terrorist activity was detected in the

Horn of Africa, Marine reserves served in aviation support, force protection, and logistics sustainment roles.

High-level command and staff positions were filled by Marine reserves in the leadership and direction of the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (Anti-Terrorism) and the Combined Joint Task Force-Consequence Management in Kuwait. As Marine Corps Reserve units mobilized in the wake of 11 September 2001, numerous individuals were mobilized to fill key staff positions at various command levels with I and II Marine Expeditionary Forces.

As political resolutions began faltering in the relations with Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, the United States prepared for another showdown with Baghdad. This time the mission focused on the removal of the Iraqi regime's leadership. In Operation Iraqi Freedom, Marine reserves served in all elements of the Marine air-ground task force as 50 percent of the Marine Corps Reserve was mobilized for the mission. The Marine Corps Reserve made substantial contributions in the command element, ground combat element, aviation combat element, and combat service support element, illustrating



the warfighting effectiveness of the Total Force concept.

As the Global War on Terrorism continues, the Marine Corps Reserve is working together with active forces in accomplishing this mission and other global commitments that existed prior to 11 September 2001. Since the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Marine Forces Reserve has supported numerous missions, which include homeland defense, stateside support, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and other global commitments. Many individual Marine reservists, as well as reserve units, have been mobilized to meet these obligations. Whether it is providing training for active duty units deploying overseas, fighting as a total force in the Global War on Terrorism, or deploying to meet missions traditionally performed by active duty forces, the Marine Corps Reserve remains "Ready, Willing, and Able."



Pilots from VMFA-321



Homeland Defense

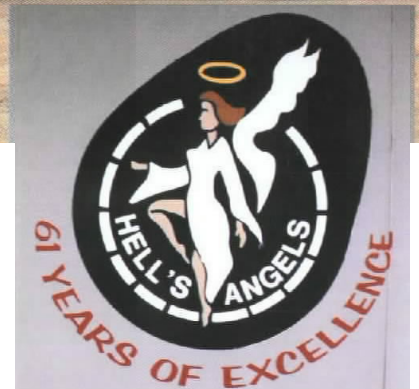
Marine Corps Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officers

Immediately following the attacks on the World Trade Center, Marine Forces Reserve activated the Marine Corps Emergency

Preparedness Liaison Officers to assist the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the New York and Washington, D.C., areas. Marine Forces Reserve provided a group of liaison officers from Team III (Fourth Marine Corps Reserve District) to Marine Forces, Atlantic, in support of the operation later known as Operation Noble Eagle.



F-18 aircraft



Operation Noble Eagle

Operation Noble Eagle was the United States' response to the terrorist actions against the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. Team III provided assistance to civil authorities in the consequence management phase following the attacks. Team III operated in this support role until



Marines from VMFA-321



ordered to stand down on 21 September 2001.

As the nation recovered from the shock of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, as well as the failed attack of United Airlines Flight 93, which crashed in the Pennsylvania countryside near Somerset, the concern about continued attacks using commercial airlines remained. Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 321 (VMFA-321), located at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, had just completed a regular drill weekend on 9 September 2001. In response to the

The logo for 4th MEB (Anti-Terrorism), established after the 11 September terrorist attacks. The fist symbolizes leadership. The arrows, one for each aircraft in the attack, represent military readiness. The phrase Vigila Aeternus states how the Marines and America will remain vigilant until the war on terrorism is won.



attacks, the squadron commander, Lieutenant Colonel Robert A. Ballard, and his executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel William D. Reavis, arrived at the unit headquarters at 1300 and were informed by the squadron staff that all aircraft were fueled and ready to answer the call for assistance. The call came quickly as it was evident that combat air patrols were necessary to protect the Washington, D.C., area from further terrorist threats. Air National Guard units from Andrews Air Force Base dispatched combat air patrols late in the morning of 11 September, but additional aircraft and aircrews were needed to provide relief for the current mission. On the

BGen Douglas O'Dell, commanding general, 4th MEB (AT) addresses an audience gathered during the 4th MEB reactivation ceremony. The 4th MEB was reactivated for the first time in nearly 10 years following the attacks in New York and the Pentagon.



morning of 12 September, Marines from VMFA-321 flew combat air patrols in the Capital area and continued flying sorties until ordered to stand down on the evening of 12 September.

4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (Anti-Terrorism)

As a result of the events on 11 September 2001, the Marine Corps activated 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (Anti-Terrorism) (4th MEB AT), commanded by Brigadier



SSgt Michael D. Fay: Control No. 335-9-22
Motel "6" Bagram 4th MEB Liaison Detachment

General Douglas O'Dell, USMCR. The mission of the 4th MEB (AT) was to deter, detect, defend against, and respond to acts of domestic and international terrorism. The purpose of this organization was to provide theater level commanders (e.g. Commander, United States Central Command) a rapidly deployable force with specialized anti-terrorism training. The 4th MEB (AT) consisted of the Chemical-Biological Incident Response Force, elements from Marine Security Forces Battalion and Marine Security Guard Battalion, and a Marine infantry battalion specially trained in anti-terror tactics. These units were instrumental in re-establishing the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, and maintaining around the clock security for the compound.

Quick Reaction Force

Providing relief for the operational tempo of active duty forces and reinforcing the Marine Corps' role in homeland security; 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, from Garden City, New York, and 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, from Encino, California, were activated for the quick reaction forces rotations on the east and west



Sgt David Ahumada provides security for other Marines and civilians during riot control training in March 2002. The exercise honed the skills of 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, which was activated for homeland defense.



Large plastic shields about 4-feet high protected Marines from 2d Battalion, 23d Marine Regiment, from an angry mob during a riot control exercise held at Camp Margarita in March 2002.

coasts, respectively. The 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, deployed to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and integrated into the 2d Marine Division's training program. The 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, deployed to Camp Pendleton, California, and integrated into the 1st Marine Division's training program. Throughout 2002, both of these infantry battalions participated in their respective division's exercises and operations.

In addition to the quick reaction force mission, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, served in other training missions that included exercises with NATO forces, such as providing support for the ongoing Operation Rapid Guardian, in which the Marines and Sailors from Company G, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, completed an eight-week mission in the Balkans. Company G, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, worked with NATO and non-NATO forces conducting security operations in the towns of Les Kovica and Drenova Glava in Kosovo. The mission included operations that deterred the smuggling of weapons and contraband, while providing medical civil action teams for local villages. This experience was very valuable because many of the Marines in 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, were police officers and firefighters in their civilian jobs. These unique skills would be in high

demand when this unit found itself in Iraq within the next year.

During 2002, 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, participated in numerous exercises that sharpened the unit's combat capability and familiarized them with the standard operating procedures of the active duty units in the 1st Marine Division. The unit was involved in several exercises that honed the battalion staff in command post operations while the subordinate companies participated in field training with specific emphasis on fire support coordination skills.

Stateside Support Provided by Units in Marine Forces Reserve

Since 11 September 2001, many of the Marine reserve units called to active duty have served outside the United States. However, some units provided detachments that were tasked with performing assignments in the United States. These units served an integral role in supporting the Global War on Terrorism with functions ranging from training support for deploying units to logistical resupply and maintenance repair for the sustainment of forces stationed in forward locations.



Photo by: Sgt Arthur DesLauriers
Sgt Michael Stoneburg and Sgt Kevin Rowe of MWSS-472, Detachment B, are awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal by BGen Jack W. Bergman, commanding general of the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing.

Squadrons in the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing met the demands of maintaining and servicing fixed and rotary wing aircraft. Elements of Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 41 (MALS-41) from Fort Worth, Texas, Marine



Aviation Logistics Squadron 42 (MALS-42) from Marietta, Georgia, and Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 49 (MALS-49) from Fort Stewart Air National Guard Base, New York, moved to the Middle East, Okinawa, and stateside bases augmenting the maintenance crews of active duty Marine squadrons. These maintenance crews provided essential repair on the T56 turboprop engine, which strengthened the operational capability of the Lockheed KC-130 Hercules aircraft flown in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation

Photo by: Sgt Richard Kulleck
Sgt David W. Kosolkit inspects the airfield under a VTOL mat held by LCpls Sean M. Bond, Otilia Holguin, and John P. Quitiquit.

Iraqi Freedom by Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadrons 234 (VMGR-234) from Fort Worth, Texas, and 452 (VMGR-452) from Fort Stewart Air National Guard Base, New York. Aviation maintenance detachments were established at forward sites at the Shaik Isa Air Base, Bahrain, and Naval Air Station, Sigonella, Italy. This greatly enhanced the intermediate level maintenance activity, which reduced the resupply and repair time for the KC-130 aircraft.

In January 2003, Marine Wing Support Group 47 (MWSG-47) in Mount Clemons, Michigan and its subordinate commands: Marine Wing Support Squadron 471 (MWSS-471), Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Marine Wing Support Squadron 473 (MWSS-473), San Diego, California, prepared for service at Marine Corps Air Stations on the east and west coasts. The MWSG-47 Headquarters and MWSS-473 deployed to Marine Corps Air Station, Miramar, California, and filled the operational requirements for the units of Marine Wing Support Group 37 (MWSG-37) serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Marine Wing Support Squadron 471 deployed to Marine Corps Air Station, New River, North Carolina, and filled the operational requirements for the units of Marine Wing Support Group 27 (MWSG-27) serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Marine Wing Support Group 47 Headquarters assumed the responsibility for all aviation ground support missions on the west coast. Subsequently, MWSS-473 performed the aviation ground functions at Marine Corps Air Station, Miramar, and Marine Corps Air Station, Camp Pendleton, as well as the outlying airfields in the vicinity. Due to operational demands, MWSS-473 per-



Photo by: LCpl Nathaniel C. LeBlanc
SSgt Jason Magurno, calibration technician, Marine Aircraft Logistics Squadron 49, Marine Aircraft Group 49, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, a native of Mineola, New York, conducts calibration on equipment at Marine Corps Air Station, Futenma 17 June 2002.

formed the missions generally conducted by two active duty Marine wing support squadrons.

On the east coast, MWSS-471 was responsible for running the expeditionary airfield at Bogue, North Carolina, despite having an expeditionary airfield section of only seven Marines. Additionally, MWSS-471 was designated as both the combat service support element and aviation ground support element of the air contingency Marine air-ground task force for II Marine Expeditionary Force from 1 March to 30 September 2003.

While active duty Marine wing support squadrons returned from Operation Iraqi Freedom, MWSS-473 continued providing aviation ground support to the 2003 Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course conducted by Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron 1 at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona.

Even though the reserve F/A-18 squadrons remained stateside during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, Marine Fighter Attack Squadrons 112 (VMFA-112), in Fort Worth, Texas, and 134 (VMFA-134), in San Diego, California, served an important role in providing operational support for active duty and reserve Marine units, as well as the other services of the United States armed forces. These squadrons

provided close air support for the combined arms exercises conducted at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California. They also provided aviation support for the following training: weapons and tactics instructor courses; air force and naval fighter weapons schools; and pre-deployment Marine expeditionary unit exercises.

Additionally, VMFA-112 participated in the testing of new combat technology. The squadron performed functional testing on the target location, designation, and handoff system which allows a pilot to receive an encrypted request in the form of a non-voice burst transmission from a ground forward air controller for close air support on an enemy position.

Since 11 September 2001, the Marines from the Marine Forces Reserve intelligence and counterintelligence sections operated extensively in numerous exercises, joint task force missions, and Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. These Marines provided critical expertise and support to the total force in conducting battlefield interrogations, threat vulnerability assessments, and counterintelligence force protection operations.

The Marine Forces Reserve intelligence organization consists of 10 detachments dispersed throughout the United States. These detachments comprise a sensor control and management platoon, one production and analysis detachment, and eight counterintelligence detachments. From February 2002 to November 2003, the Marine Forces Reserve intelligence section employed all its units and expended 100 percent of its assets in support of stateside and overseas requirements.

The sensor control and management platoon sup-

ported five joint task force counter-drug missions from March to June 2002 and again from October to November 2002. These missions took place in various border regions of the United States, intercepting drug smugglers and illegal immigrants. The sensor control and management platoon, in concert with U.S. law enforcement agencies, deployed a network of sensors that monitored rough, uninhabited terrain, guarding against drug smuggling operations, illegal immigrants, and suspected terrorists attempting to enter the United States.

In addition, the sensor control and management platoon deployed Marines in support of two Joint Chiefs of Staff directed exercises—Dynamic Mix in Spain, and Millennium Challenge at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, in the summer of 2002. The Marines honed their skills by employing and monitoring sensors in both defensive and offensive missions. The Marine Forces Reserve counterintelligence section also provided a detachment of 13 Marines to participate in Dynamic Mix as well as Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Operation Enduring Freedom

With evidence pointing to Al Qaeda as a sponsor, planner, and agent of the attacks on 11 September 2001, immediate plans were prepared for conducting military operations against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Afghanistan served as

the host site for many terrorist training camps with the Taliban government providing sanctuary and support to Al Qaeda and its leader, Osama Bin Laden. The United States and allied forces backed a group of Afghan militias called the Northern Alliance in its ongoing fight against the Taliban. Many suspected terrorists and Taliban fighters were captured and subsequently processed and transported for detainment at Camp X-Ray at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

With the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom in the autumn of 2001, Marine reserves were tasked with supporting overseas and homeland defense missions. They were quickly added to the list of available assets for current operations as well as new contingency missions in the Global War on Terrorism.

Guantanamo Bay, Cuba

In October 2001, Marines from 1st Battalion, 23d Marines, in Houston, Texas, were activated and tasked

A group of Marines from Company B, 1st Battalion, 23d Marines, learn the lay of the land at U.S. Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where they provided security during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Photo by: Sgt Jennifer M. Antoine



Photo by: Sgt Jennifer M. Antoine
Marines load rounds into the M-249 squad automatic weapon during live-fire training at U.S. Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The Marines were part of the second rotation from Company B, 1st Battalion, 23d Marines, which arrived in Cuba to provide installation security, March 2002.

with assuming duties as detainment facility guards at Guantanamo Bay. In November 2001, platoons from Company B, 1st Battalion, 23d Marines, in Bossier City, Louisiana, traveled to Guantanamo Bay. These Marines provided installation security, allowing two active duty Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team (FAST) platoons to assume other missions. Company B, 1st Battalion, 23d Marines, spent six weeks training for their mission, which included special instruction from the Marine Corps Security Force Battalion in basic security guard skills, non-lethal weapons employment, riot control, and close combat. The mission of 1st Battalion, 23d Marines, was to guard both the 17-mile perimeter of the base at Guantanamo and the detainees at Camp X-Ray. In March 2002, another detachment from Company B, 1st Battalion, 23d Marines, composed of Marines from Austin and Houston, relieved the first elements serving at Guantanamo Bay.

Combined Joint Task Force Consequence Management

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the United States, the United States Central Command set up Combined Joint Task Force Consequence Management in October 2001. This organization provided rapid response forces in the event of an enemy attack by nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons. While serving as the Assistant Division Commander for the 1st Marine Division, Marine Brigadier General Christian B. Cowdrey received the assignment as the commander this unit.

After the Kuwaiti government requested assistance from the United States, Brigadier General Cowdrey moved his command to Kuwait in November 2001, joined by specialized German and Czech Republic Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical (NBC) defense units. In April 2002, Brigadier General Cowdrey turned over the leadership of Combined Joint Task Force Consequence Management to Marine Brigadier General Craig T. Boddington, a reserve officer. Through intense training and many exercises, Brigadier General Boddington prepared his force for various contingencies until relinquishing the command to another Marine reserve officer, Brigadier General Cornell A. Wilson in February 2003. This training paid off when Iraq launched SCUD missile attacks on Kuwait in the early stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The rapid response teams immediately deployed and determined that the missile attacks did not contain substances of mass destruction. The Combined Joint Task Force Consequence Management remained very active protect-

ing U.S. and Coalition forces as well as the Kuwaiti public until it stood down in May 2003.

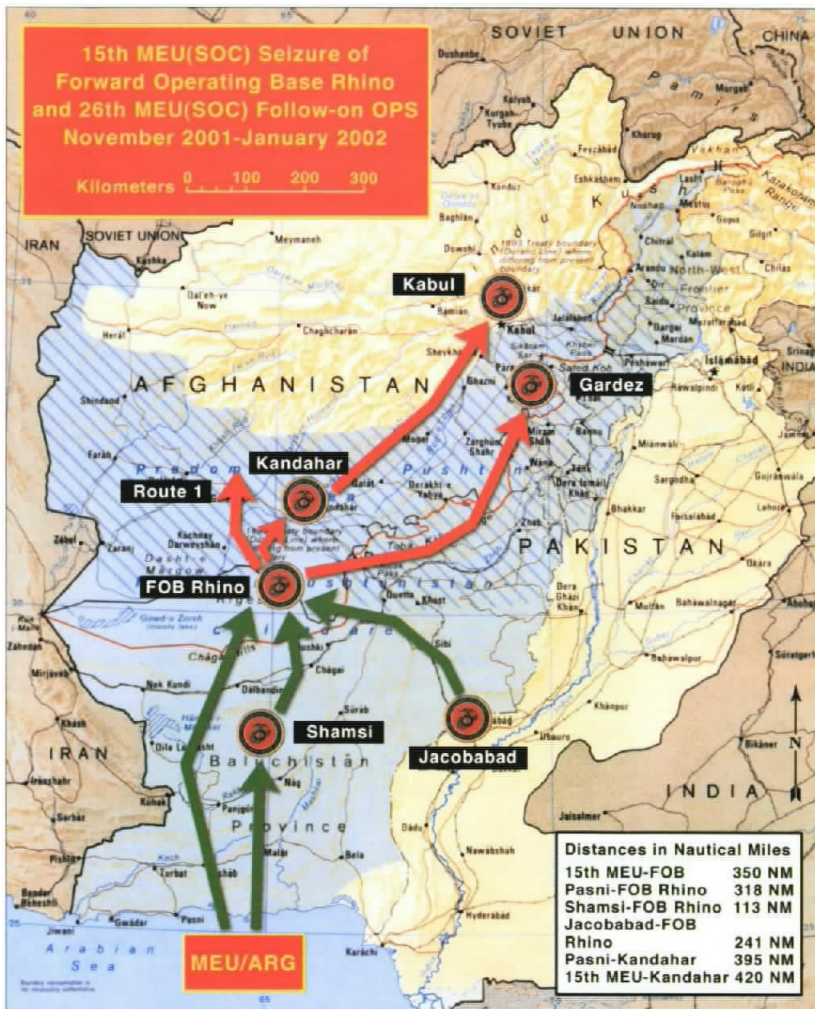
Aviation Support from the Persian Gulf to Afghanistan

Extraordinary demand was placed on the Marine Corps' Lockheed KC-130 "Hercules" and Sikorsky CH-53E "Sea Stallion" squadrons for operations in Southwest Asia. The reserve KC-130 squadrons from VMGR-234 and VMGR-452, as well as the reserve CH-53E squadrons from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 769 (HMH-769) at Edwards Air Force Base, California, and HMH-772 in Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, were activated and supported critical missions in the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan. A need also existed for Marine air command and control systems directing aviation and protecting allied troops from terrorist attacks. This required the services of a Marine air control squadron and the use of both active duty and reserve units in completing this mission. Marine Air Control Squadron 2 (MACS-2) from Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point and Marine Air Control

A Marine CH-53E Super Stallion is refueled in the air by a KC-130 Hercules before making a logistics run in support of Operation Anaconda. Both aircraft are from the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) Aviation Combat Element, supporting Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Photo by: CWO2 William D. Crow





Squadron 24 (MACS-24), a reserve unit from Dam Neck, Virginia, performed this mission.

A critical need existed for additional KC-130 aircraft and CH-53E helicopters in support of ship-to-shore operations from naval ships in the Arabian Sea. To reach the forward operating base at Camp Rhino in Afghanistan, Marines had to travel more than 400 miles inland from ships in the Arabian Sea.

Moving supplies across this distance was a significant challenge, and could only be achieved through the combination of KC-130 Hercules refuelers and CH-53E aircraft. This combination was necessary because inland airstrips were not large enough to support larger U.S. Air Force aircraft in the early stages of operations.





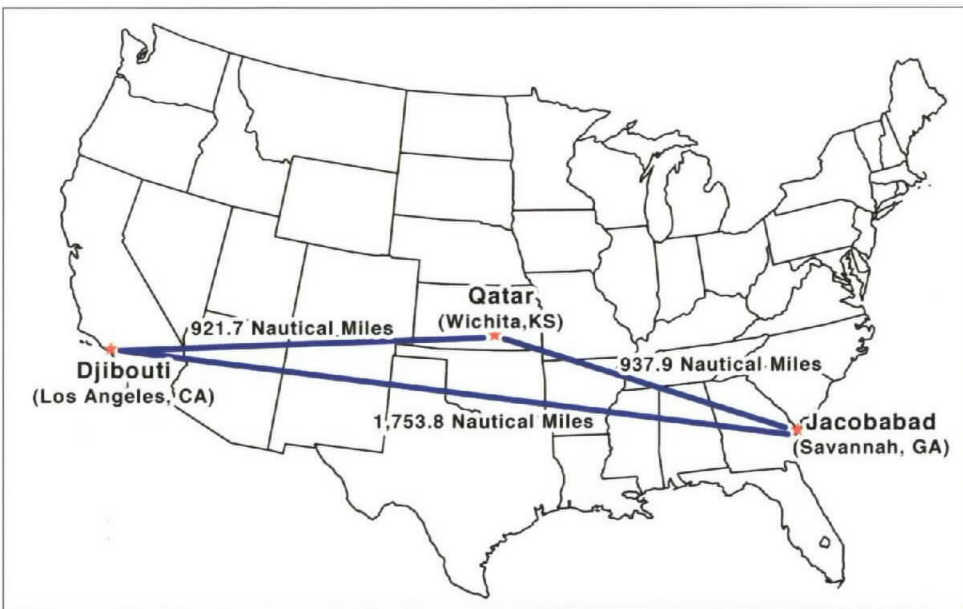
Photo by: Cpl Paula M. Fitzgerald
 A CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter prepares to receive fuel from a KC-130 Hercules aircraft during an aerial refueling exercise. The helicopter belonged to Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 772, a reserve squadron from Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, that served with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



Photo by: Cpl Paula M. Fitzgerald
 Marines from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 772 serving with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, January 2003.

First, sea-based helicopters transported supplies to Pakistan, where cargo was transferred to VMGR-234 and VMGR-352 aircraft for transport to Afghanistan. Detachment A, VMGR-234, led by Lieutenant Colonel

Span of Operations by Marine air and ground units in the early stages of Operation Enduring Freedom compared to distances in the Continental United States.



LtCol Bradley S. James, Detachment Commander, VMGR-234.

Bradley S. James consisted of four aircraft and flew to Pakistan on 25 February 2002, where they joined the Marines and aircraft from VMGR-352. Both VMGR-234 and VMGR-352 supported ground forces in Afghanistan from the 11th and 13th Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs). The primary mission of the KC-130 aircraft was

KC-130s supporting operations in Operation Enduring Freedom.





A KC-130 supports Operation ANACONDA at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, March 2002.

refueling, but it also provided tactical airlift support.

Aircrews in Afghanistan were often targeted by small arms and rocket-propelled grenades at Jacobabad, Pakistan, and Bagram, Afghanistan presenting significant challenges to their mission.

Most flights were conducted at night, increasing the risks to aircraft and personnel alike. Lieutenant Colonel James noted that, "most of the missions were [flown] at night so night vision [capability] was essential for flight

Maintenance team from VMGR-234, Jacobabad, Pakistan, March 2002.



Col Christopher J. Gunther, Commanding Officer, 13th MEU (SOC), talks to the Marines of the Detachment from VMGR-234. Detachment Commander, LtCol Bradley S. James (left), and Maintenance Chief, MSgt Kevin K. Mitchell, listen.

crews who would bring the supplies another 500 miles inland." Missions generally took six to eight hours to complete and Marines usually worked 12-hour shifts.

The reserve KC-130 aircraft were 25 years younger than airplanes with active duty units, and they had night vision goggle capability. The Marines of VMGR-234 spent time working with their active duty counterparts training aircrews on the night vision goggles. Detachment A, VMGR-234, had a group of very experienced pilots due to active duty experience and civilian work in commercial aviation.

While Detachment A, VMGR-234, was engaged in supporting missions in the Persian Gulf and Southwest Asia, the remainder of the squadron supported the intense training requirements of stateside Marine and

Main hanger for KC-130 detachment, Jacobabad, Pakistan, March 2002.





Two CH-53E Super Stallion helicopters receive fuel from a KC-130 Hercules aircraft while each carries two vehicles during operations around Djibouti, January 2003. The helicopters belong to HMH-772, a reserve squadron from Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, attached to the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) in support of the global war on terrorism.

Army units. During the pre-deployment training and subsequent deployment of the Camp Lejeune-based 24th MEU, VMGR-234 provided fixed wing and helicopter aerial refueling and administrative airlift support. At the same time, VMGR-234 served an integral role in providing helicopter aerial refueling support for the Army's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.

In addition to the demand for KC-130 aircraft and crews from the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, heavy lift CH-53E helicopters were needed. Two reserve Marine heavy lift squadrons—HMH-769 and HMH-772—were activated in January 2002 and provided support to active duty forces.

While many active duty squadrons from Camp Pendleton-based Marine Aircraft Group 16 were overseas in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, HMH-769 filled the flight demands required to sustain the tempo of active duty operations. On short notice, HMH-769 augmented the aviation combat element of the 11th MEU with two aircraft and 17 Marines. As the 11th MEU prepared for departure, the Marines and aircraft of HMH-769 joined the composite squadron of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 166 (HMM-166) without participation in the normal six-month pre-deployment training routine. To their credit, the Marines from HMH-769 flew onto the USS *Belleau Wood* (LHA 3) as the ship departed San Diego for the deployment.

As the Global War on Terrorism expanded beyond Afghanistan, suspected terrorist training activity was significant in an area known as the Horn of Africa. During the deployment of the 11th MEU, HMH-769 provided CH-53E helicopter and aircrew support to the multinational Special Operations Force in Djibouti, Africa, for counter-terrorist operations in the Horn of Africa. The squadron participated in flight operations with the United States Air Force's Sikorsky MH-53H PaveLow helicopters supporting Special Forces units. It was necessary for the CH-53Es to stay ashore for this three-month mission. In addition to fighting the Global War on Terrorism, the 11th MEU provided humanitarian relief in East Timor. The Marines and aircraft of HMH-769 transported building materials and troops in support of the humanitarian operations in this region.

Upon activation, the Marines of HMH-772 moved from their training center at the Naval Air Station, Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, to the Marine Corps Air Station,

New River, North Carolina. Due to the substantial demand for additional heavy lift helicopters, HMH-772 reinforced the aviation combat element for the 24th MEU. In contrast to the experience HMH-769 had with the 11th MEU, HMH-772 participated in the six-month pre-deployment training cycle with the 24th MEU.

Upon arrival at the New River Marine Corps Air Station, the squadron immediately integrated with the composite medium lift squadron, HMM-263, and began the pre-deployment training cycle, which requires a Marine expeditionary unit to perform a spectrum of missions before receiving the rating of Special Operations Capable. Training missions include amphibious and heli-borne raids, urban warfare operations, tactical recovery of downed aircraft and personnel, riot control, embassy reinforcement and evacuation, non-combatant evacuations, and humanitarian assistance. During this period, a team comes together comprised of the Navy's amphibious squadron and the Marine expeditionary unit and conducts a series of training exercises. Many of these



exercises are conducted from naval shipping as the team performs ship-to-shore operations by aircraft and amphibious vehicles.

Prior to deployment with the 24th MEU, the CH-53E detachment provided by HMH-772 was reduced from eight helicopters to six. The aircraft and Marines that remained on standby at New River served an integral role in providing operational training support to the II Marine Expeditionary Force. The rear element of HMH-



KC-130 Marine crew member at Bagram airfield during Operation ANA-CONDA, March 2002.

772 strengthened the heavy lift capability of the 2d Marine Aircraft Wing, which provided the aviation support to all II Marine Expeditionary Force operational requirements along the east coast. These included: expeditionary warfare capability demonstrations for congress, flag officers, and foreign dignitaries; logistical and heavy lift support for local training exercises; and participation in joint testing and evaluation missions with the U.S. Air Force at Eglin Air Force Base in Fort Walton Beach, Florida.

The rear element of HMH-772 also provided operational relief to active duty CH-53E squadrons located at the New River air station. This allowed the active duty squadrons time for extensive maintenance on their airframes and the incorporation of much needed technical modifications.

In late August 2002, a detachment of six aircraft and personnel from HMH-772 serving as part of the composite air squadron of the 24th MEU, traveled to the Mediterranean Sea as the designated landing force for the U.S. Navy's Sixth Fleet. The 24th MEU participated in several major exercises including a multinational operation called Dynamic Response 2002. During the operation, HMH-772 detachment flew 177 sorties in mountain-

ous environments under all weather conditions taking part in missions ranging from humanitarian support operations in remote mountain villages to logistical resupply at military border outposts.

As terrorist activities increased in the Horn of Africa, the 24th MEU moved from the Mediterranean Sea through the Suez Canal and Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden in early November 2002. The heavy lift aircraft of the HMH-772 detachment were flown to the Ambouli International Airport at Camp Lemonier, Djibouti, and assigned the mission of supporting counter-terrorist forces.

In the process of taking the fight to the enemy in this part of the world, great demand was placed on Marine air command and control systems for the direction of Marine aviation and protection of allied troops and aircraft from terrorist strikes. The United States Central Command needed additional early warning command and control support and received it from MACS-2. Upon the completion of its deployment to the Middle East, MACS-2 was relieved by MACS-24 in September 2002.

In the summer and fall of 2002, a combined joint task force was established under the leadership of Major General John F. Sattler, USMC. Major General Sattler was the commanding general of the 2d Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, when he was named as the commander of what became known as Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa. The mission of the task



Marines from Company A, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, return from a night patrol, May 2003.

Image Nautilus and Operation Iron Magic in the United Arab Emirates. The amphibious squadron split its force meeting both requirements and straining the distribution of the MEU's heavy lift aircraft capability. The aircraft and Marines of HMH-772 provided a detachment in Djibouti in support of Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa while the remainder of HMH-772 remained with

LtCol Wiliam M. Brandenburg follows Gen Thomas R. Franks, Commanding General, Central Command, during the general's visit with the Command Logistics Element, Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa.



force was to detect, deter, and destroy transnational terrorism in an area defined by the Department of Defense as the air space, land areas, and coastal waters of Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Yemen.

This presented a unique challenge to the 24th MEU, as it required the amphibious force to provide support to both the task force and training exercises Operation



the portion of the amphibious squadron tasked with the training exercises in the United Arab Emirates.

The flight operations conducted in Djibouti required the integration of the HMH-772 detachment with elements of other American services. Joint training was conducted with Army, Air

Force, and Navy special operations teams. This training consisted of the following: rapid live fire exercises; low-light level flying with night vision goggles conducting insertions and extractions; dual point external lifts of high mobility multi-wheeled vehicles (humvees) with multiple aircraft during radio silence; simultaneous aerial refueling in support of long range missions; special insertion and extraction training; airborne sniper platforms; and dissimilar aircraft flights with the Air Force

MH-53M Pave Low helicopters, using them as pathfinders in mountainous terrain. This enabled the CH-53Es to fly in mountainous terrain during all weather conditions.

This train-



Marines from the staff of Command Logistics Element, Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa.



*Photo by: Cpl Andrew W. Miller
MajGen John F. Sattler, (left), Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa Commander, greets MajGen (select) John J. McCarthy, Commanding General, 4th Marine Division, April 2003. CJTF-HOA was established to detect, disrupt and defeat terrorism in the Horn of Africa region.*



Armed and ready, a Marine sentry stands watch for the Command Logistics Element.

ing built a cohesive team and enhanced the development of standard operating procedures for the task force, which were used in future classified operations involving the HMH-772 detachment. Ultimately, this training produced a joint team capable of providing highly effective support in conducting counter-terrorist operations in the Horn of Africa region.

Supporting the Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa, was a command logistics element established and



Photo by: Cpl Matthew J. Appendi
Col Mario LaPaix, commander, Command Logistics Element, Marine Central Command, reviews Djibouti's military police force during a ceremony honoring LaPaix for his efforts to solidify strong relations with Djibouti.

staffed with a large contingent of Marine reserves and led by a reserve officer, Colonel Mario La Paix. The reserve units that comprised the command logistics element were the following: Military Police Detachment, Headquarters, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing from Belle Chase, Louisiana; Detachment A, Headquarters and Service, 4th Force Service Support Group from Marietta, Georgia; Headquarters Detachment, 4th Force Service Support Group from New Orleans, Louisiana; Company A, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, 4th Marine Division from Grand Rapids, Michigan; Weapons Company, 1st Battalion 24th Marines, 4th Marine Division from Perrysburg, Ohio; Anti-Armor Section, Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, 4th Marine Division from Broken Arrow, Oklahoma; and Detachment A, Headquarters and Service Company, 4th Combat Engineer Battalion, 4th Marine Division from Baltimore, Maryland.



LtGen Earl B. Hailston (far left) Commanding General Marine Forces, Pacific and Marine Forces Central Command, visits the Command Logistic Element in Djibouti.

Prior to taking over for MWSG-37 at Marine Corps Air Station, Miramar, California, MWSG-47 Headquarters established an aerial port of embarkation for the Marines and equipment assigned to the command logistics element for the Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa. Marine Wing Support Group 47 provided all necessary



The Marines of the Combined Logistics Command Element work with the local Fire department at Camp Lemonier.

transportation, billeting, food service, and communication needs while coordinating pre-deployment training requirements for the command logistics element. Additionally, MWSG-47 worked in conjunction with Air Force units located at the Air National Guard Base in Selfridge, Michigan, loading two Air Force C-17 aircraft with 17 vehicles and 20 cargo pallets.

The command logistics element assumed responsibility for base operations at Camp Lemonier, Djibouti, on 26 January 2003. The command logistics element renovated the 88-acre former French Foreign Legion camp, constructing additional living spaces, working quarters, and a communication network from January to June



Photo by: Cpl Matthew J. Apprendi
GySgt Ronald N. Brady waves to one of his MPs standing post. Brady is a second generation Marine whose son, Jeffery, served in Kuwait.

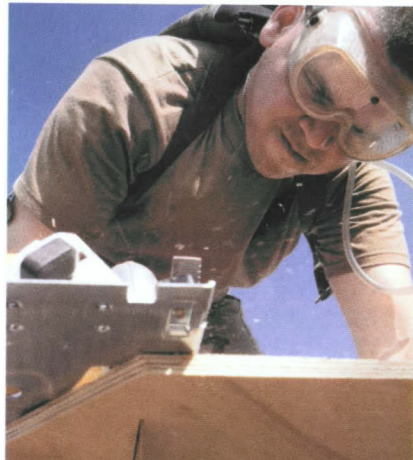
2003. The command logistics element was responsible for ensuring that Camp Lemonier was capable of sustaining the transition ashore of the Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa command from the USS *Mount Whitney* (CLCC/JCC-20). The work of the command logistics element expanded Camp

Lemonier facilities, enabling the site to support nearly 2,000 troops. The element's daily duties included logistical, communication, medical, and civil affairs support for the camp and outlying villages as well as base security.

The command logistics element spearheaded civil affairs projects in several villages throughout Djibouti. These projects included the remodeling of medical clinics and schools and the construction of food storage facilities and irrigation systems. On several occasions, the command logistics element delivered wood and food to village inhabitants while building strong working relationships with the host nation of Djibouti by hiring more than 800 local workers for construction projects and assistance in camp operations. In addition, it established an effective relation-

LCpl Donald Burkholder helps build a new food storage facility in Djibouti at the request of Hachim Ali Said, director of the local school.

Photo by: Cpl Matthew J. Apprendi



ship with the French and Djiboutian military, strengthening security measures for the base. Company A, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, provided security for Camp Lemonier, strengthening the base by building bunkers and upgrading and adding posts, while also serving as the quick reaction force. Company A, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, served as the guard force until replaced in August 2003 by Task Force Rawhide from the 4th MEB (AT). The command logistics element established a strong foundation that enabled the Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa, Headquarters to come ashore and maintain the coalition presence in the mission of finding and destroying terrorist cells in the region.

Operation Iraqi Freedom

The Reserve Contribution

Marine reserves augmented each element of I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) during Operation Iraqi Freedom. The elements of a Marine air-ground task force consist of a command element, ground combat element, aviation combat element, and a combat service support element. Numerous Marine reserves served as individual augmentees on various staff levels throughout I MEF while Marine reserve units con-



An Iraqi artillery position destroyed by the Marines in the march toward Baghdad

tributed essential combat power to the ground, air, and logistics elements during the entire campaign.

As I MEF consolidated its position in Kuwait and prepared for Operation Iraq Freedom, its headquarters staff served as the command element, the 1st Marine Division served as the ground combat element, the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing served as the aviation combat element, and the 1st Force Service Support Group (1st FSSG) served as the combat service support element. Providing additional firepower to the ground combat element, the 2d Marine Expeditionary Brigade (2d MEB), the 15th MEU, the 24th MEU, and the United Kingdom's

1st Armored Division bolstered the capabilities of I MEF. Serving as theater level support for Marine forces in the area of operations, the Marine Logistics Command was established by the 2d Force Service Support Group (2d FSSG) in Kuwait.



U.S. Army LtGen Richard S. Sanchez, Commanding General, V Corps, speaks at a ceremony where I MEF transfers authority for five provinces in Southern Iraq to the Polish-led Multinational Division at Camp Babylon, Iraq, on 3 September 2003.



Prior to the start of combat operations, the 1st Marine Division organized its subordinate commands into three maneuver elements. These elements were identified as Regimental Combat Team 1 (RCT-1), based upon the organization of the 1st Marines; Regimental Combat Team 5 (RCT-5), based upon the organization of the 5th Marines; and Regimental Combat Team 7 (RCT-7), based upon the organization of the 7th Marines. Each regimental combat team was task organized, incorporating tanks, light armor reconnaissance vehicles, amphibious assault vehicles, and combat engineer equipment. Providing indirect fire support for the three regimental combat teams was the 1st Marine Division's artillery regiment, the 11th Marines.

LtGen Dennis M. McCarthy, Commanding General, Marine Forces Reserve, speaks to Marines during Operation Iraq Freedom.



The 2d MEB, named Task Force Tarawa,* organized the 2d Marines into Regimental Combat Team 2 (RCT-2) and the United Kingdom organized its armored division into three maneuver brigades: 7th Armored Brigade, 16th Air Assault Brigade, and 3d Commando Brigade. Marine reserves served a major role in each of the regimental combat teams and provided an important liaison role to the United Kingdom's 1st Armored Division.

Ground Operations in Operation Iraqi Freedom

When combat operations started on 20 March 2003, RCT-5 moved across the border with Iraq and defeated Iraqi forces around the South Rumaylah oilfields. This action prevented the destruction of the oilfields and blocked any westward retreat of Iraqi units in the area. Simultaneously, RCT-7 crossed the border seizing the gas oil separation plant intact at Az Zubayer (also referred to as the "Crown Jewel" by the 1st Marine Division planners) and destroying the Iraqi mechanized force around Basrah. Regimental Combat Team 1 and Task Force Tarawa moved to the west of RCT-5 with RCT-1 attacking toward Jalibah and Task Force Tarawa moving in the vicinity of An Nasiriyah in preparation for a relief in place with the U.S Army's 3d Infantry Division.

As coalition forces moved rapidly toward Baghdad, Marine reserve units served extensively in ground opera-

* Tarawa was a famous World War II battle fought by the Marines of the 2d Marine Division in November 1943. The 2d Marines is one of three infantry regiments in the 2d Marine Division.



tions. The experience of these units is presented in the following order: Headquarters Battalion, 4th Marine Division; 4th Force Reconnaissance Company; Company B and the TOW/Scout Platoon*, 8th Tank Battalion; Company D and the TOW/Scout Platoon, 4th Tank Battalion; 4th Light Armor Reconnaissance Battalion; Company A, 8th Tank Battalion; Companies C and D, 4th Reconnaissance Battalion; 4th Amphibious Assault Battalion; a detachment from 4th Combat Engineer Battalion; 2d Battalion, 23d Marines; 2d Battalion, 25th Marines; 1st Battalion, 24th Marines; 3d Battalion, 23d Marines; Marine Forces Reserve intelligence section; 3d and 4th Air-Naval Gunfire Liaison Company; and 3d and 4th Civil Affairs Groups.



Photo by: Sgt Rob Henderson
Cpl Kurt C. Ozolins, operator, Truck Company, Headquarters Battalion, 4th Marine Division, makes sure the preoperational checks were conducted correctly before sending the truck on a run.

Headquarters Battalion, 4th Marine Division

Headquarters Battalion, New Orleans, Louisiana, was activated on 29 January 2003 in preparation for Operation Iraqi Freedom and arrived in Kuwait within a month. The battalion's Military Police Company, from Twin Cities, Minnesota, Truck Company, from

* The TOW missile system is primarily used as an antitank weapon and is generally mounted on a vehicle. The TOW acronym stands for tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided missile.



Photo by: Sgt Jacques-René Hébert
Reserve LCpl Eric Homquist, Military Police
Company, Headquarters Battalion, 4th Marine
Division, takes a break at Camp Matilda, Kuwait,
to write a letter home to his family.



Photo by: SSgt. Robert Carlson
Marines with the 4th Force Reconnaissance Company at Marine Corps Base Hawaii search their surroundings during training at Marine Corps Training Area Bellows in preparation for deployment to Operation Iraq Freedom.



Ebensburg, Pennsylvania, and Communications Company, from Cincinnati, Ohio, served extensively throughout the 1st Marine Division and I MEF. The Marines of Headquarters Battalion supported RCT-1, RCT-5, RCT-7, 11th Marines, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 2d and 3d Assault Amphibian Vehicle Battalions, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, and squadrons within the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing throughout the entire ground war.

4th Force Reconnaissance Company

The Marines from the 4th Force Reconnaissance Company, with detachments from Reno, Nevada, and Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, were activated in January 2003

and served with the 1st Force Reconnaissance Company. The detachments were organized into the 9th (Reno) and 10th (Kaneohe) Platoons within the 1st Force Reconnaissance Company. The platoons conducted a broad variety of operations ranging from traditional reconnaissance and surveillance to convoy security and raids. The 9th and 10th platoons were extensively involved in operations led by 4th Light Armor Reconnaissance, Headquarters called Task Force



Marines from 1st Force Reconnaissance Company and 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion patrol the banks of the Tigris River during a raid in Rhashid, Iraq, August 2003.

Scorpion in July-August 2003. Many of these missions included raids on suspected terrorist training camps, hideouts for Baath party officials,* and surface-to-air missile sites. Both platoons also conducted counter surveillance, counter ambush, and area denial operations in the vicinity of Forward Operating Base Dogwood. By the beginning of September, both platoons detached from Task Force Scorpion and began the preparations for returning to the United States.

* Baath Party members were supporters of the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq.



SSgt Michael D. Fay, combat artist, illustrates the 4th Force Reconnaissance Company and the layout of Camp Babylon, May 2003.



B Company, 8th Tank Battalion, at a bridge crossing as RCT-5 moves toward Baghdad.



TOW/Scout Platoon, 8th Tank Battalion attached to 2d Tank Battalion supporting RCT-5. These Marines destroyed numerous Iraqi military vehicles and armor in this village south of Baghdad.

Company B and TOW/Scout Platoon, 8th Tank Battalion

Upon activation, Company B, 8th Tank Battalion from Syracuse, New York, and the TOW/Scout Platoon, 8th Tank Battalion from Hialeah, Florida, went to Camp

TOW/Scout Platoon from 8th Tank Battalion supporting RCT-5 in the attack around Baghdad.

RCT-5 moves north through a sandstorm.





Elements of the 2d Tank Battalion move north to secure the southeastern approach to Baghdad.

Lejeune, North Carolina, and served with the 2d Tank Battalion. Company B, 8th Tank Battalion, became an additional tank company while the TOW/Scout Platoon, 8th Tank Battalion, integrated with the TOW/Scout sections of the 2d Tank Battalion. As soon as Company B, 8th Tank Battalion, joined the 2d Tank Battalion, the unit became Company D, 2d Tank Battalion. When 2d Tank



Battalion deployed to Kuwait, it attached to RCT-5 as the 1st Marine Division prepared for combat operations.

When combat operations commenced, RCT-5 crossed the Iraqi border and attacked toward the Rumaylah oilfields. After securing the oilfields, Company D, 2d Tank Battalion, processed numerous enemy prisoners of war. Regimental Combat Team 5 swiftly moved

A Soviet-made Iraqi T-62 tank is destroyed by the lead element of the 2d Tank Battalion just south of Baghdad.





TOW/Scout Platoon, 8th Tank Battalion, and the 2d Tank Battalion in herringbone formation with helicopter support on the road to Baghdad.

along Highway 1 past Ad Diwaniyah and encountered significant enemy resistance near An Numaniyah in early April. Entering An Numaniyah, Company D, 2d Tank Battalion, crossed the Tigris River and came under heavy enemy fire from many dug in emplacements and buildings. Once across the river, the company continued north on Highway 6 and consolidated at the intersection of Highway 6 and Highway 27. The company was oriented to the south to prevent any enemy advance from the Al Kut area.

Fighting intensified as RCT-5 moved toward Al

Aziziyah on 2 and 3 April. Company D, 2d Tank Battalion, engaged numerous bunkers, machine gun emplacements, and armored vehicles, which were pockets of bypassed resistance. The 2d Tank Battalion successfully neutralized an Iraqi ambush site and was relieved in place by RCT-1, allowing the battalion to move north toward Baghdad.

On 4 April, the 2d Tank Battalion came upon an enemy ambush near the town of At Tuwayhah as the TOW/Scout Platoon, which was the lead element of the battalion along Highway 6, encountered heavy fire. In



The 2d Tank Battalion provides support outside one of Saddam's Palace. Company B, 8th Tank Battalion, intergrated into 2d Tank Battalion and re-designated as Company D, 2d Tank Battalion.

Marines from Company B, 8th Tank Battalion, next to roadside sign in Iraq.



this battle, the TOW/Scout Platoon made an integral contribution to the efforts of 2d Tank Battalion by establishing a blocking position and denying the Iraqi Army's Al-Nida Division (a Republican Guard unit) the ability to reinforce Baghdad. In the heavy fighting around At Tuwayhah, the 2d Tank Battalion battled not only the Al-Nida Division, but also irregu-





Marines provide fire support in Operation Iraqi Freedom.



A destroyed Iraqi vehicle after encountering RCT-5.

lar forces wearing black uniforms. The composition of the irregular forces included foreign fighters from Syria, Egypt, Yemen, Lebanon, and the Sudan.

As RCT-5 moved into Baghdad, Company D, 2d Tank Battalion, conducted urban combat operations with 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, and 1st Battalion, 5th Marines. During these missions, the company came under heavy

small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenade attacks from the Iraqis. The unit successfully maneuvered into Baghdad as 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, occupied the Presidential Palace. By the middle of April, Company D, 2d Tank Battalion attached to 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, and moved north to Samarra and Tikrit. However, the

The Marine infantry and armor team clearing positions of Iraqi resistance.



RCT-2 lining up in Camp Shoup at an assembly area prior to movement into Iraq.





towns did not require the presence of these units, so they moved south toward the city of Samawah.

During the drive to Samawah, the units' tanks began showing the effects of the 1,056-mile movement from Kuwait. The maintenance teams and tank recovery crews did an outstanding job of keeping the tanks rolling while dealing with numerous track and suspension problems. The company remained attached to 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, until 29 April, when they rejoined the 2d Tank Battalion and began movement to Kuwait.

Company D and the TOW/Scout Platoon, 4th Tank Battalion

Company D, 4th Tank Battalion, from Riverside, California, and the TOW/Scout Platoon, 4th Tank

Battalion, from Amarillo, Texas, were activated in January 2003 and integrated into 1st Tank Battalion. The battalion's personnel, tanks, vehicles, and equipment were split between the active duty companies in 1st Tank Battalion. As the 1st Marine Division prepared for combat operations, the 1st Tank Battalion provided the armor strength for RCT-7.

When 1st Marine Division began the offensive into Iraq, RCT-7 maneuvered west of Safwan and attacked north toward Basrah with objective of seizing the gas oil separation plant at Az Zubayer. The pumping station at Az Zubayer was critical due to its ability to pump oil into the Persian Gulf and create an environmental danger.

A destroyed Iraqi tank along I MEF's march north.





Marines from Company D, 4th Tank Battalion, serving with 1st Tank Battalion in central Baghdad. An Iraq ministry building is burning in the background.

Capt Edward Oglesby from Company D, 4th Tank Battalion, looks out from the roof of the Palestine Hotel overlooking the circle where Saddam Hussein's statue was removed days earlier.



Marines from Company D, 4th Tank Battalion, after the attack near Al Kut.

With 1st Tank Battalion leading the attack, RCT-7 quickly seized the pumping station at Az Zubayer and the Marines from Company D and the TOW/Scout Platoon, 4th Tank Battalion, contributed to the destruction of four Iraqi tanks, 10 armored personnel carriers, three trucks, and three artillery pieces along the way.

Regimental Combat Team 7 continued pressing the attack to Basrah, encountering resistance from elements of the Iraqi 51st Division. The 1st Tank Battalion moved toward the Basrah International Airport and swiftly defeated enemy defensive positions. On 23 March, the United Kingdom's 1st Armored Division relieved RCT-7 in Basrah and RCT-7 moved west along Highway 1 to Ad Diwaniyah. The Marines from Company D and the TOW/Scout Platoon, 4th Tank Battalion, worked closely



A tank crew member's view as 1st Tank Battalion prepares to cross the Diyala River on the southern outskirts of Baghdad.

with elements of RCT-7 in a vital link-up along Highway 17 between RCT-7, moving east of Ad Diwaniyah, and RCT-1, moving west of Qal'at Sukkar.

As RCT-7 moved back north past Ad Diwaniyah, resistance increased with both Iraqi regular troops and irregulars contesting the movement between An Numaniyah and Al Kut. During this period, the 1st Tank Battalion participated in numerous engagements. After crossing the Tigris River, RCT-7 quickly moved into



Iraqi Free Rocket over Ground (FROG) missiles are seen parked on the road interchange near Babylon as Marines from Company D, 4th Tank Battalion, move toward Ad Diwaniyah.

Baghdad and the 1st Tank Battalion served an essential role in clearing neighborhoods throughout the city, especially near the Palestine Hotel. Once again, the Marines from Company D and the TOW/Scout Platoon were extensively involved in these operations until late April, when elements of 1st Tank Battalion moved south to Karbala. After completing their mission, Company D and the TOW/Scout Platoon returned to California with the 1st Tank Battalion in June 2003.

4th Light Armor Reconnaissance Battalion

In early 2003, the 4th Light Armor Reconnaissance Battalion was mobilized and served extensively throughout the 1st Marine Division in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Prior to crossing the line of departure, Companies A and B were attached to the 1st and 3d Light Armor Reconnaissance Battalions respectively. Company A

served with the 1st Light Armor Reconnaissance Battalion, which was attached to RCT-5 from February to June 2003. Company B served with the 3d Light Armor Reconnaissance Battalion, which was attached to RCT-7 from February to June 2003. Both the 1st and 3d Light Armor Reconnaissance Battalions served vital roles in the combat operations from the South Rumaylah oilfields to Baghdad.

While Companies A and B were involved in supporting their respective regimental combat teams along the route of movement by the 1st Marine Division, the remainder of the 4th Light Armor Reconnaissance, which consisted of Headquarters and Service Company and Companies C and D, conducted security and screening operations in support of Task Force Tarawa in the city of Al Kut in the Wassit Province and along the Iranian border.



Sunset at Camp Babylon, October 2003.

Marines from Company A, 8th Tank Battalion, after capturing an Iraqi indoctrination site on the north side of An Nasiriyah.

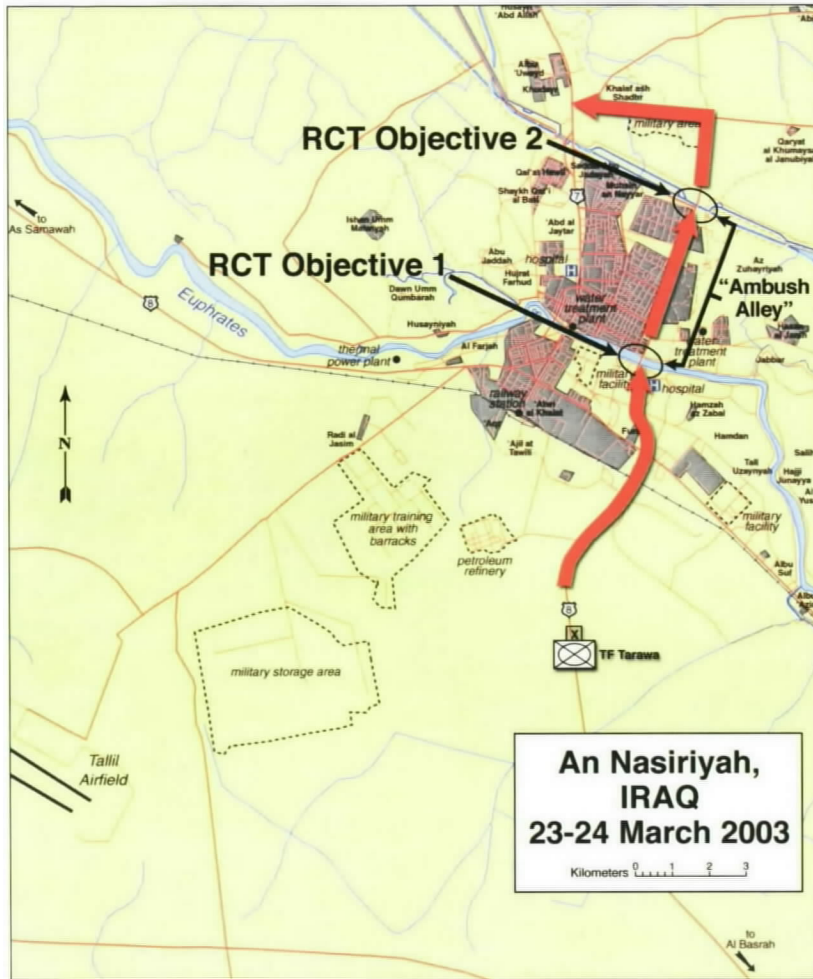
Marines from Task Force Scorpion on patrol in light armored vehicles, August 2003.



Company A, 8th Tank Battalion

Company A, 8th Tank Battalion, from Fort Knox, Kentucky, was activated in January 2003 and moved to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. It was assigned as an additional maneuver company for 1st Battalion, 2d Marines. The 1st Battalion, 2d Marines, was part of RCT-2, which served as the ground combat element of the 2d MEB (also known as Task Force Tarawa). Company A, 8th Tank Battalion, received wheeled and tracked vehicles from 2d Tank Battalion and completed embarkation aboard amphibious shipping on 15 January as the 2d MEB sailed to Kuwait.

Company A made effective use of the transit time, conducting tactics classes, tank maintenance, and preparing for potential missions. The Marines spent considerable time in gunnery classes and studying military opera-



Company A, 8th Tank Battalion, serving with Task Force Tarawa, getting ready to move forward into Iraq.



1stSgt Roger D. Huddleston supervising the resupply of Company A, 8th Tank Battalion.





Marine armor moving south through An Nasiriyah toward Jalibah airfield.

tions in urban terrain. Specific emphasis was placed in analyzing attack plans for the city of An Nasiriyah, with special emphasis on the eastern bridges of the city and the route through the city, which was nicknamed “Ambush Alley” because of its fortified bunkers and narrow streets.

In mid-February, the company arrived in Kuwait and continued to perform maintenance on vehicles and equipment and planning with 1st Battalion, 2d Marines, for combat operations. During this period, the company was split into Team Tank and Team Mechanized.*

On 20 March 2003, RCT-2 moved across the Iraqi

* The combat team designation is based on the composition of the force. Team Tank is a concept whereby a force is composed of tanks and mechanized vehicles such as the amphibious assault vehicle. However, this force will generally have a larger number of tanks than mechanized vehicles. Conversely, Team Mechanized is a force composed primarily of mechanized vehicles with a fewer number of tanks. In summary, a force that has a mix of tanks and mechanized vehicles is given its designation based on which weapon system is in larger numbers within the force.



Three M1A1 tanks from Company A, 8th Tank Battalion, in Al Kut.

border, traveling past the Jalibah airfield into a blocking position on Highway 7 south of An Nasiriyah. On 23 March 2003, Team Tank of 1st Battalion, 2d Marines, received small arms and mortar fire moving north along Highway 7 on the outskirts of An Nasiriyah. After neutralizing the enemy attack, Team Tank came upon two badly damaged vehicles from the U.S. Army’s 507th Maintenance Company. The 507th Maintenance Company had inadvertently driven into An Nasiriyah and was ambushed by the Iraqis prior to the arrival of RCT-2. The Iraqis had killed or taken prisoner several soldiers from the 507th Maintenance Company, including Army Private First Class Jessica Lynch. Team Tank continued north destroying Iraqi troops and tanks along the way while rescuing the remaining wounded of the 507th Maintenance Company.



The 1st Battalion, 2d Marines, was heavily engaged in An Nasiriyah and needed immediate reinforcement. With minimal delay, Team Tank, along with a platoon of infantry, crossed the southern bridge (RCT Objective 1 on Map of An Nasiriyah) over the Euphrates River into An Nasiriyah, where they came upon four tanks mired in

Marine tank crews from Company A, 8th Tank Battalion, take a brief pause during Operation Iraqi Freedom.



mud and sewage. The tanks were receiving indirect fire and their platoon commander was concerned the attacking Iraqis might overwhelm their position. A forward air controller directed helicopter gunships to their location and assisted in fighting off the Iraqis. Team Tank encountered a reverse slope defense of Iraqi T-55 tanks that had attempted to cut off 1st Battalion, 2d Marines. Four enemy tanks were quickly destroyed, but Team Tank still was under heavy Iraqi fire coming from con-



A Marine maintenance crew does its part to keep their equipment combat ready.



While RCT-2 sailed to Kuwait, Marines trained in the well deck of the USS Gunston Hall (LSD 44) focusing on tactics for urban warfare, February 2003.

cealed positions, as well as from paramilitary forces in civilian clothing.

While Team Tank fought off numerous waves of Iraqi attack, it was ordered to assist Company C, 1st Battalion, 2d Marines, north of the Saddam Canal Bridge (RCT Objective 2 on Map of An Nasiriyah). Company C,

Captured Iraqis being escorted by Marines from Task Force Tarawa, March 2003.



1st Battalion, 2d Marines, had moved through the gauntlet known as “Ambush Alley”, but was blocked by enemy forces and pinned down under heavy fire. Team Tank split its force, leaving an element of firepower with Company A, 1st Battalion, 2d Marines, at the southern bridge over the Euphrates River while the other element moved through “Ambush Alley” and drove three miles north to the northern bridge over the Saddam Canal. This element of Team Tank came upon a rifle squad near a destroyed amphibious assault vehicle and engaged many enemy targets with its main guns and machine guns while coordinating air and artillery fire support on Iraqi positions north of the Saddam Canal. Team Tank also assisted in the evacuation of wounded Marines and consolidated its forces into a blocking position north of the Saddam Canal along Highway 7 by the end of the day. Team Tank and Team Mechanized occu-





Marines from 4th Force Reconnaissance Company and 4th Reconnaissance Battalion rapidly integrated into I MEF and served with the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, Task Force Tarawa, and Task Force Scorpion.

pied key tactical positions along Highway 7 around An Nasiriyah from 23 to 29 March, protecting and defending this route for the passage of follow-on forces.

Subsequently, RCT-1 successfully conducted a forward passage of lines with RCT-2, advancing through the city and pushing north along Highway 7 toward Al Kut.

On 2 April, a section of tanks and Marines from Company A, 8th Tank Battalion, served as a security force in the rescue mission for Private First Class Lynch, who was being held prisoner in the Saddam Hospital on the east side of An Nasiriyah. Throughout the month of April, Company A, 8th Tank Battalion, continued to support the operations of RCT-2, assisting in the pacification and restoration missions along Highway 7.

In May 2003, Company A, 8th Tank Battalion,

returned to Kuwait and completed back-loading on amphibious shipping by the middle of the month. The unit returned to Camp Lejeune in late June 2003 and moved back to its home training center in Fort Knox in July 2003.

Companies C and D, 4th Reconnaissance Battalion

In January 2003, the 4th Reconnaissance Battalion's Company C, from San Antonio, Texas, and Company D, from Albuquerque, New Mexico, were mobilized for active duty. Company C was assigned to the 2d Force Reconnaissance Company, which served with Task Force

Tarawa, while Company D was assigned to the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division. Company C conducted route reconnaissance missions for Task Force Tarawa in the movement toward the town of An Nasiriyah. Company C was involved in the heavy fighting around An Nasiriyah and served an integral role in the nighttime evacuation of wounded Marines in “Ambush Alley” and the subsequent mission that rescued Private First Class Lynch. Company C continued conducting route reconnaissance and raid missions for Task Force Tarawa and on 12 April 2003, Company C secured the Al Kut airfield. This enabled Task Force Tarawa to establish its combat operations center at the airfield, also known as Blair Field. Once at Al Kut, Company C continued providing security and reconnaissance patrols for Task Force Tarawa.

Company D deployed with 1st Reconnaissance

Marine assault amphibian vehicles moving in convoy formation.



A Marine assault amphibian vehicle presses forward as the 1st Marine Division moves rapidly toward Baghdad.

Battalion, which supported the 1st Marine Division’s route of maneuver. Company D conducted mobile reconnaissance missions, screening and blocking operations, and humanitarian operations. In the movement toward Baghdad, Company D encountered some fighting around the town of Baqubah and provided security for important energy facilities north of Baghdad.

4th Assault Amphibian Battalion

The 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion, from Tampa, Florida, was mobilized in January 2003 and provided personnel and equipment to the 2d and 3d Assault Amphibian Battalions in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The battalion staff from Headquarters and Service Company, 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion, integrated with the 2d and 3d Assault Amphibian Battalions, which supported the 1st Marine Division. Companies A, from Norfolk, Virginia, and B, from Jacksonville, Florida, provided vital



All Business. This Marine vehicle crewman is ready for the task at hand.

support to RCT-1. Company A provided mechanized support to 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, while Company B provided mechanized support for 1st Battalion, 4th Marines. Although amphibious assault vehicles are designed for ship-to-shore transit and limited inland travel, the efforts of the Marines and equipment of the assault amphibian battalions was truly remarkable as they covered the massive distance from the port facilities in Kuwait to Baghdad, which is well beyond the recommended traveling limit of these vehicles. It is important to note that equipment maintenance was paramount in keeping the Marines mechanized and mobile in the swift maneuver to Baghdad by the 1st Marine Division.

Detachment, 4th Combat Engineer Battalion

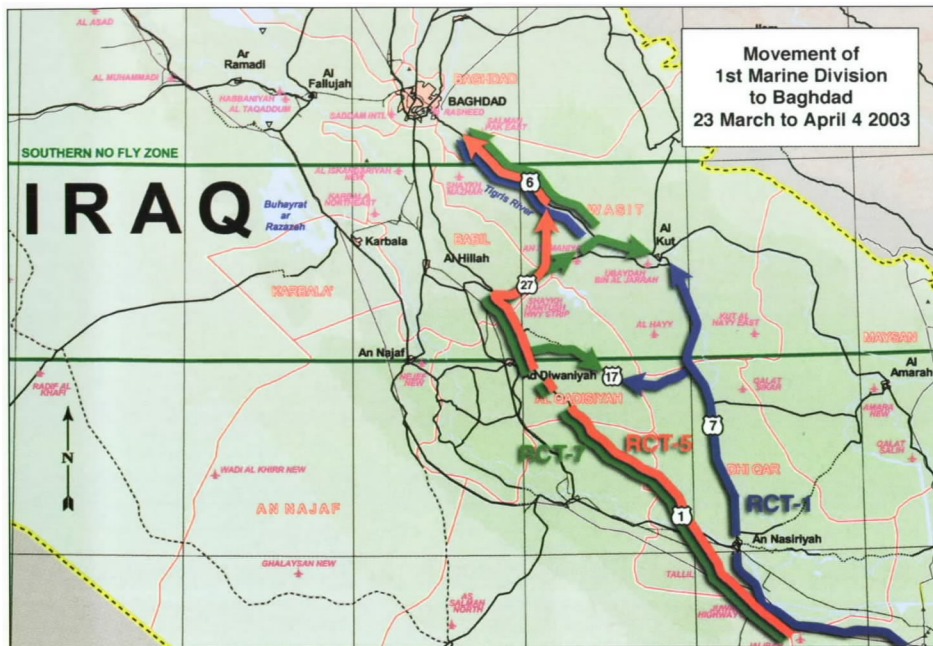
A detachment of Marines from the 4th Combat Engineer Battalion was mobilized for active service in January 2003 and deployed to Kuwait the following

month. This detachment augmented the staff of the I Marine Expeditionary Force Engineer Group, which was under the direction of Rear Admiral Charles Kubic of the First Naval Construction Division. The Marines of the I Marine Expeditionary Force Engineer Group served as advisors to the Naval Construction Division on how I MEF and the Marine air-ground task force operates. The main focus for the I Marine Expeditionary Force Engineer Group was the mission of providing sustainment bridging for I MEF attack routes to Baghdad. The four key bridging obstacles identified by I MEF were the access across the Euphrates River, the Saddam Canal, the Tigris River, and the Diyala River. The Diyala River is located just outside of Baghdad. As I MEF moved rapidly toward Baghdad, the towns of An Nasiriyah, An Numaniyah, and Al Kut quickly fell to Marine forces and the key bridges remained intact. However, Iraqi demolitions caused some delay in crossing the Diyala River, but the engineers quickly overcame this so the 1st Marine Division could enter Baghdad.

As the emphasis shifted from combat operations to rebuilding missions, the Marines of the 4th Combat Engineer Battalion detachment focused on the construction and repair of bridges, hospitals, schools, water purification plants, and port facilities. In June 2003, the 4th Combat Engineer Battalion detachment returned to the United States.

2d Battalion, 23d Marines

The 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, was one of three infantry battalions that formed RCT-1. The other two bat-



Movement of 1st Marine Division to Baghdad 23 March to 4 April 2003. 23-31 March: RCT-1 attacks up Hwy 7 while RCTs 5 and 7 move along Hwy 1.

1-3 April: RCT-1 attacks and fixes the Iraq's Baghdad Republican Guard Division near Al Kut. RCT-5 attacks along Hwy 27 crossing the An Numiniyah Bridge, beginning the advance toward Baghdad. As RCT-5 isolates the Baghdad Republican Guard Division in Al Kut and engages Iraq's Al Nida Republican Guard Division, RCT-7 blocks Hwy 6 to the east and proceeds to neutralize the Baghdad Republican Guard Division.

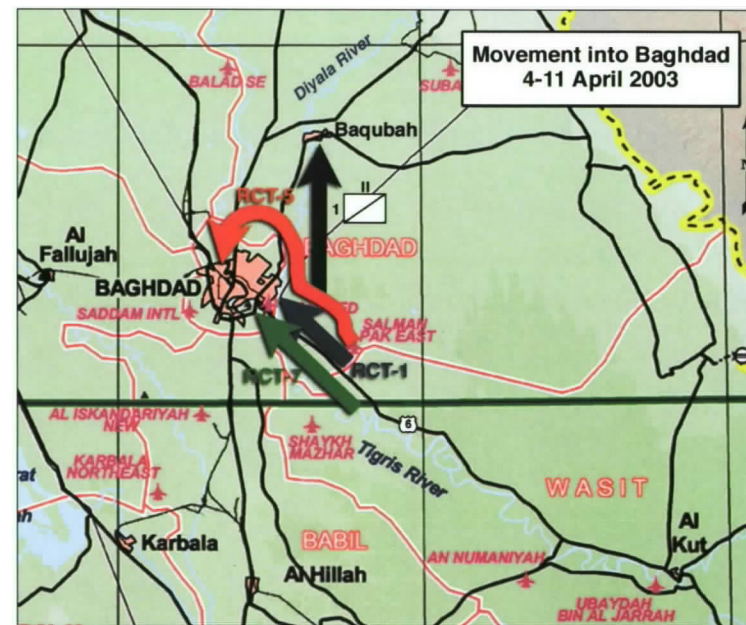
4 April: RCT-1 backtracks south down Hwy 7 and moves east across Hwy 17 on a 200-kilometer night march to link up with the rest of the 1st Marine Division on Hwy 6.



A Marine sniper team with 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, moves into position during a security halt along the route to Baghdad.

talions of RCT-1 were 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, and 1st Battalion, 4th Marines. During the fighting in Iraq, there were several days when 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, served as the lead element for RCT-1 and the 1st Marine Division. Upon entering Baghdad, the battalion was involved in operations that secured the United Nations compound.

As the 1st Marine Division moved into Iraq, the regimental combat teams reached a fork along the main supply route west of Jalibah. At this location, RCT-1 took the northern route of the fork along Highway 7 while RCT-5, followed by RCT-7, took the northwestern route along Highway 1. After the ambush of the U.S. Army's 507th Maintenance Company, Task Force Tarawa was heavily engaged with Iraqi forces around An Nasiriyah. The



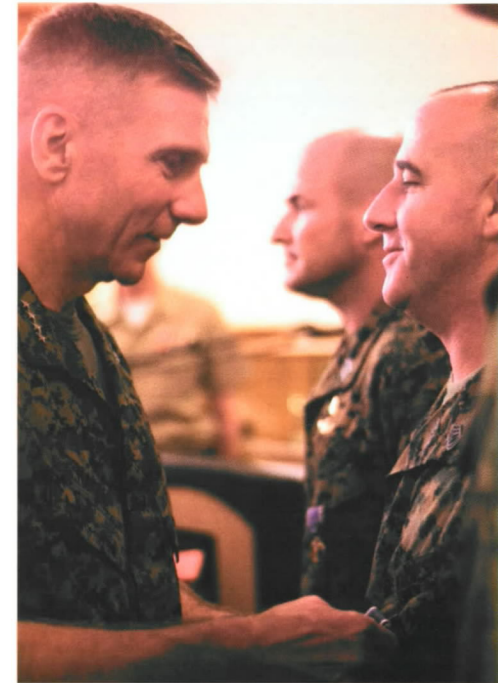
Movement into Baghdad 4-11 April 2003.

4-5 April: RCTs 1, 5, and 7 assault toward Baghdad. RCT-5 seizes the Diyala crossroads and RCT-7 attacks terrorist training facilities in Salman Pak.

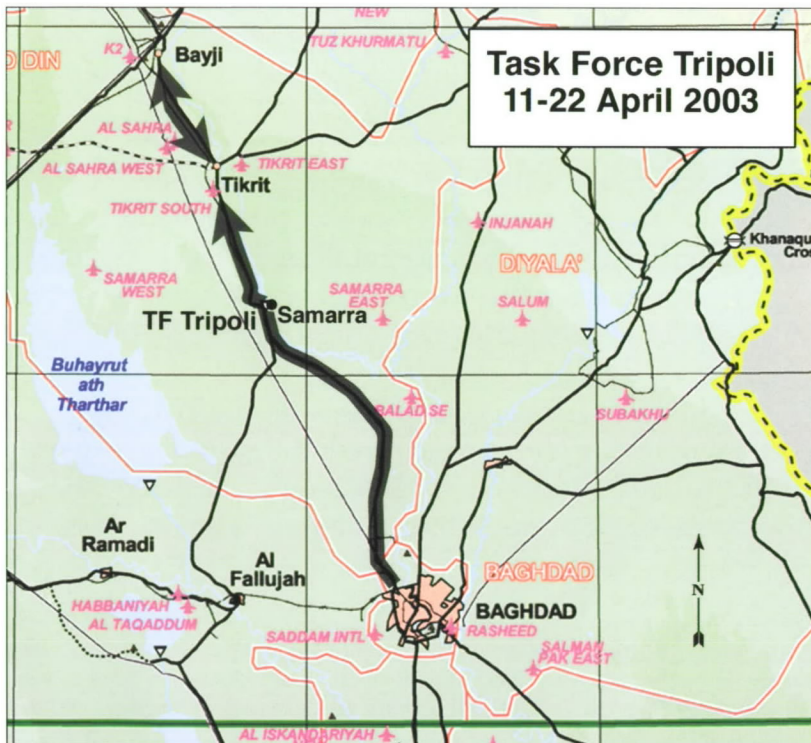
6-11 April: RCTs 1 and 7 attack across the Diyala River and seize objectives in Baghdad. RCT-5 moves north crossing the Diyala River and completing the outer cordon of Baghdad. This isolates the eastern half of Baghdad. 1st Reconnaissance Battalion moves toward Baqubah encountering resistance from Iraqi forces.



fighting around An Nasiriyah delayed RCT-1's passage through this area and the 1st Marine Division's eastern prong attack along Highway 7. As these units moved through An Nasiriyah, Baath Party loyalists put up heavy resistance. After a weeklong battle that liberated the town, the Marines in Task Force Tarawa and RCT-1 moved along Highway 7 toward



Gen Michael W. Hagee, 33d Commandant of the Marine Corps, pins a Purple Heart on GySgt Michael E. Heath at Naval Hospital, Camp Pendleton, 12 May 2003. GySgt Heath was wounded in Iraq while serving with 2d Battalion, 23d Marines.



Sgt Scott C. Montoya with 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, receives the Navy Cross for his actions in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He is credited with braving enemy gunfire and rescuing five Marines and an Iraqi civilian caught in crossfire in Baghdad. The Navy Cross is the nation's second highest award for bravery and heroism in combat.





Capt Michael H. Mittelman, (second from right) Commanding Officer, U.S. Naval Hospital, Okinawa, receives a donation to the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society from Ryanosoke Megumi, (third from right) president of the Gloria Business School in Chatan, in honor of SSgt James W. Cawley and his wife, Miyuki Cawley (far right). SSgt Cawley died in Operation Iraqi Freedom while serving with 2d Battalion, 23d Marines.

the intersection of Highways 7 and 17.

Great concern focused on the Baathist activities in Al Fajr, which is located at the eastern end of Highway 17. Highway 17 served as the main supply route that connected Highway 7 in the east to Highway 1 in the west. Securing Highway 17 was instrumental in the 1st Marine Division's sector because of the gap that existed between RCT-1 along Highway 7 and RCT's 5 and 7 along Highway 1. On 28 March, 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, led a raid on the town of Al Fajr, locating and clearing out Baath Party members operating in the city. In early stages of this mission, Marines met no resistance as Baath Party members kept a low profile. In gathering further information from the townspeople, the Marines learned that approximately 60 Baath Party members ruled the town, using local schools as their headquarters. Subsequently, the Marines inserted scout sniper teams

Due to the threat of chemical and biological weapons, the Marines and Coalition Forces often wore protective equipment.



observing enemy forces carrying weapons through crowds of people. One sniper team came in contact with armed Iraqis and immediately broke contact fighting their way to a link up location for an extraction team. During the extraction a HMMWV hit Staff Sergeant James W. Cawley and Captain Harry S. Porter of the response team, killing Cawley and injuring Porter. The actions of the sniper and response teams provided key information for the battalion raid launched on Baathist locations inside Al Fajr on 29 March.

Companies E, F, and G, along with the battalion's combined anti-armor team, cleared and secured suspected Baath Party residences and headquarters, uncovering large caches of weapons and numerous documents confirming the extent of Baathist activities in the area.*

* In a Marine infantry battalion there is a Headquarters & Service Company, three rifle companies (identified by letters of the alphabet, e.g. Company A, Company B, Company C, etc.), and a Weapons Company. Antiarmor units are found in Weapons Company.

Baath members were even spotted and detained trying to disguise themselves in traditional Arab robes, underneath which they wore Iraqi military uniforms. The Marines of 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, successfully established good relations with the local inhabitants of Al Fajr, which helped in capturing Baath Party members and loyalists. Upon completion of their raid, the Marines conducted humanitarian operations providing medical supplies and assistance to the townspeople. On 30 March, 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, moved west along Highway 17 and successfully linked up with 3d Battalion, 4th Marines, of RCT-7, at a bridge over the Saddam Canal. This link-up allowed the division to move north without having to attack within isolated corridors.

As RCT-1 moved into Baghdad, 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, captured the United Nation's compound and secured the building and surrounding area from looters.

Marines from Company F, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, conduct a raid on a suspected illegal arms market in An Nasiriyah.



LCpl Jason Fogg, a rifleman from Company F, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, looks for unexploded ordnance and weapons caches near An Nasiriyah in April 2003.

Although the building had been damaged, 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, was able to get the electricity, telephone, and water systems working within five days.

2d Battalion, 25th Marines

After actively serving with the 2d Marine Division for a year, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, returned to Garden City, New York in December 2002. However, the battalion staff received notification in January 2003 that the unit would be participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom. This required a quick "turn around" mobilization plan for the entire battalion — a plan that was implemented on 8 March 2003. On 12 March, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, arrived at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, for three weeks



Marines from Company E, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, prepare a meal in a makeshift kitchen at their unit headquarters in An Nasiriyah. Marines used metal bowls and steel rods to construct a grill. Simple cooking tools were fashioned from wire.

of pre-deployment training where the command conducted small unit exercises, nuclear-chemical-biological training, force protection training, small arms firing, culture briefs, rules of engagement briefs, and physical fitness training.

By 29 March, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, moved from Camp Lejeune to Camp Shoup, Kuwait, via commercial and military airlift. On 1 April, the battalion joined the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) and received orders for combat operations in An Nasiriyah, Iraq. In the mid-morning hours of 3 April 2003, Company E, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, was inserted into a captured Iraqi Army base using Boeing CH-46E Sea Knight helicopters. The base, later dubbed Camp

Whitehorse, was located approximately 6 miles south of An Nasiriyah. The remaining elements of 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, moved to the base over the next three days while Company E pushed north into An Nasiriyah and established a company command post at an abandoned building on the south side of the Euphrates River.

On 5 April, Company F provided security on a bridge approximately 15 miles west of An Nasiriyah along a critical supply route for the Marine forces fighting north of An Nasiriyah. Through an established checkpoint at the bridge, Company F apprehended and confiscated numerous former Iraqi Army personnel and weapons. The company held the bridge until relieved by follow-on forces 22 days later.

By 6 April, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, established a base of operations at Camp Whitehorse with its subordi-

A Marine from Company F, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, speaks with local villagers during a raid at a suspected arms market in An Nasiriyah, June 2003.





Sgt Joseph Martino from 3d Platoon, Company F, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, watches the perimeter where his unit searches for unexploded ordnance and weapons caches.

nate companies occupying positions inside An Nasiriyah and the surrounding areas. Eventually, the battalion became the sole military command in An Nasiriyah, making the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Robert C. Murphy, the military governing authority of the city. To maintain security, Lieutenant Colonel Murphy divided An Nasiriyah into sectors. The eastern sector was assigned to Company E, the northern and western sectors were given to Company G, and the southern sector was assigned to Weapons Company. The companies conducted patrols, established checkpoints, and setup security posts on the bridges throughout the city. House searches for weapons and ammunition was given a high priority, resulting in the acquisition of large caches that were subsequently destroyed.

During this time, the battalion established an information-gathering network with local Iraqis that led to the identification and apprehension of numerous Baath Party

officials, Fedayeen members, war criminals, rebel insurgents, weapons dealers, and other security threats. Company F apprehended Hussein Hamoud Hamid, who participated in the execution of American soldiers in the early stages of fighting in An Nasiriyah.

An Nasiriyah sustained significant infrastructure damage during combat operations. However, with the situation stabilizing, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, initiated an aggressive civil affairs and humanitarian aid program. In conjunction with the U.S. Navy Mobile Construction Battalion's (also called Seabees), the Marines repaired government buildings within the city, cleaned and painted schools, drained flooded areas, and distributed food and humanitarian aid. On 23 April, a significant change came to An Nasiriyah with the restoration of electrical power. Under Saddam Hussein's rule, An Nasiriyah had only a few hours of electrical power each day because the dictator sold the power to the Kingdom of Jordan. Once the Navy Seabees and 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, restored electrical power, An Nasiriyah received 23 hours of electricity each day. This had a monumental impact in not only maintaining security, but also in winning the hearts and minds of the local citizens.

1st Battalion, 24th Marines

The Marines from 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, extensively supported Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and training missions such as the Bilateral Exchange with the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps and the Ulchi Focus Lens Exercise in Korea. Companies A, B, and C incorporated Marines from



Cpl Brian Velliquette assists with humanitarian aid at a village outside of An Numaniyah.

Headquarters and Service Company and Weapons Company in the deployment to the Horn of Africa and Southwest Asia. As previously mentioned, Company A, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, mobilized in January 2003 and deployed with the command logistics element serving in the Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa.

Companies B and C were mobilized simultaneously in February 2003. Company B deployed to Kuwait and attached to the 2d Military Police Battalion with the assignment of providing security for the Marine Logistics Command. Initial duties included static and mobile security and force protection for the perimeter of Camp Fox and its adjacent ammunition supply point. Additional missions included protecting the Kuwaiti public trans-



Marines arrive in Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit.

portation center, which served as the staging area for all equipment that was shipped through the Kuwaiti naval base. Subsequently, Marines from Company B, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, provided convoy security from the Marine Logistics Command to Logistics Support Area Viper and Supporting Area Chesty near An Numaniyah, Iraq. During the company's nine-month deployment, it safeguarded Marines and coalition personnel and equipment that were necessary for the success of Operation Iraqi Freedom. After completing their mission, Company B returned to the United States in October 2003.

Company C deployed to Southwest Asia and



Navy Hospitalman 2d Class Lesten L. Hilkeimeier (left) and Capt Thomas F. Kisch (right) with a local Iraqi outside of Al Kut. HM2 Hilkeimeier provided medical assistance for this Iraqi's family.

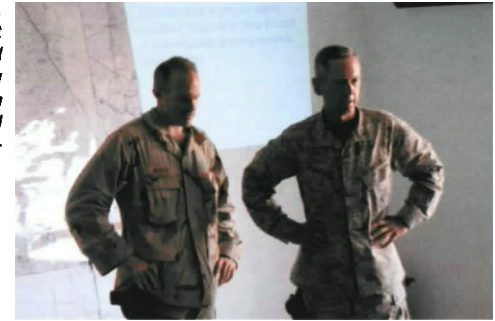
attached to Marine Wing Support Group 37, where it successfully executed security missions in the defense of forward arming and refueling points that supported the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing from March to May 2003. The Company executed combat operations for 60 days in Iraq, pressing as far north as Tikrit. At the conclusion of the war, the Company redeployed to Camp Commando, Kuwait, providing force protection for I MEF Headquarters. Like Company B, Company C returned to the United States in October 2003.

Security and Stability Operations

2d Battalion, 25th Marines

As the focus in Operation Iraqi Freedom transitioned into security and stability operations in May 2003, some units of the 1st Marine Division moved from Baghdad to Kuwait while other units stayed in Iraq. Reserve units such as the 4th Light Armor Reconnaissance Battalion; 2d Battalion, 25th Marines; and 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, served during the security and stability operations phase.

MGen James N. Mattis (right), Commanding General, 1st Marine Division, and LtCol Robert C. Murphy, Commanding Officer, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, discuss security and stability operations during a battalion briefing.



After Companies A and B, 4th Light Armor Reconnaissance Battalion served with RCT-5 and RCT-7 respectively from March to May 2003, both of these units returned to their traditional higher headquarters. At this time, 4th Light Armor Reconnaissance Battalion served as the command element of Task Force Scorpion, which was under the control of the 1st Marine Division and conducted operations in the North Babil Province. Task Force Scorpion, consisting of Headquarters and Service

Iraqi weapons captured in a raid conducted by Task Force Scorpion, August 2003.

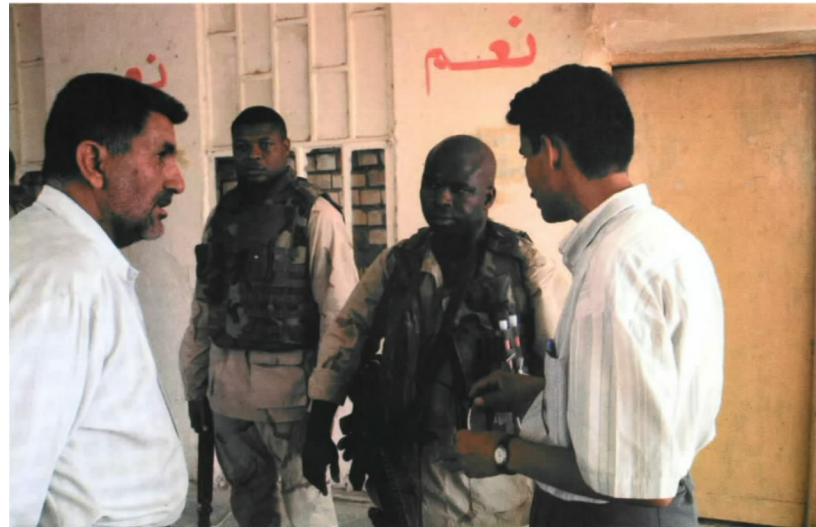




grew from 60 in April to 600 by the end of July.

On 10 May, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, was assigned the security mission for the entire Dhi-Qar Province. Upon assum-

ing this extended mission, Lieutenant Colonel Murphy became the military governing authority for the entire Dhi-Qar Province. Company E moved north to the city of Ash Shatra and maintained security and stability for the northern section of the province. The company's secondary mission was assisting in the civil operations with in this area. Companies F and G, as well as



Sgt Terriance D. James and SSgt Tony C. Harden from Weapons Company, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, listen as a translator discusses the needs of El Gadisiyatan Middle School with the school principal in An Nasiriyah, June 2003.

Headquarters and Service Company and Weapons Company, remained in An Nasiriyah.

During May 2003, the U.S. Army 402d Civil Affairs Brigade joined the command, greatly enhancing the civil affairs capability of 2d Battalion, 25th Marines. This strengthened the battalion's ability to solve problems



Marines in overwatch position during a patrol conducted by Task Force Scorpion.



SSgt Trent Nara from Weapons Company, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, issues an AK-47 rifle to a member of the An Nasiriyah police force, April 2003. Many of the Marines in the 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, served in civilian law enforcement jobs and assisted the city of An Nasiriyah in rebuilding their police force after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime.

concerning water quality and supply; fuel production; sewage and sanitation; electrical power; hospital, school, police, and fire department reconstruction; food and medical distribution; and insecticide spraying. Also during this time, 11 different non-governmental organizations performed services in the Dhi-Qar Province with the battalion providing security for them. Additionally, the security of the electrical facilities and the fuel and propane lines demanded a concerted effort between 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, and the Iraqi police.

In May, Human Exploitation Team 17 joined the 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, assisting in the systematic search of the Dhi-Qar Province for Iraqi war criminals, former Baath Party members, Fedayeen militants, Al-Qaeda terrorists, Iranian insurgents, and local criminals. Numerous raids over a five-month period yielded approximately 20 prisoners. These prisoners were held and interrogated at Camp Whitehorse. In June, the battalion conducted a successful raid, which apprehended Sheik Rasheed, a suspected organizer of an Iranian backed terrorist group.

On 20 July, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, completed a relief in place with Italian forces and began movement to Kuwait. By the end of the month, the battalion returned to United States after extensive service in Homeland Defense and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

3d Battalion, 23d Marines

In March 2003, 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, mobilized and made preparations for deployment to Southwest Asia. From 9 March to 20 April, the battalion trained at the Marine Corps bases at Camp Pendleton and Twentynine Palms, California. The battalion focused its training on patrolling, small arms live fire, combined arms exercises with artillery and close air support, and urban warfare.

Retired Marine and host of the History Channel's "Mail Call" program R. Lee Ermeay with the Marines of 3d Battalion, 23d Marines.



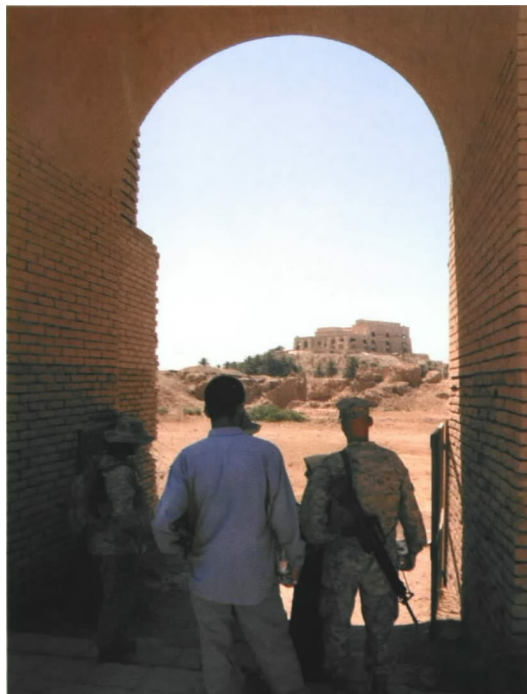


Headquarters for Company I, 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, at the Zulu Castle, a fortress built by Iraq during its war with Iran in the 1980s. Located northeast of Al Kut approximately 1 kilometer from the Iranian border, this site was used to monitor border crossings.

In late April, the battalion deployed to Kuwait and moved into Iraq by the end of the month. By 1 May, the battalion completed its movement to Al-Kut in the Wassit Province and relieved 2d Battalion, 8th Marines. Company L, 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, moved to the city of An Numaniyah and relieved 3d Battalion, 2d Marines.



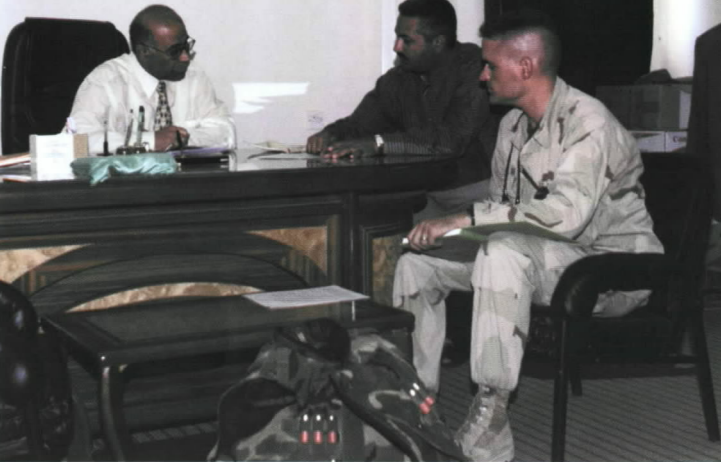
The 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, monitoring the border crossing along the Iraq/Iran border. Iranian troops stand on the berm in the background while Ukrainian troops (left foreground) and Marines work together.



Marines from the 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, and the 4th Civil Affairs Group take a minute to picture what once stood on an area of ruins dating back to 628 B.C.

In conducting security and stability operations throughout the Wassit Province, 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, deployed its companies in the cities of An Numaniyah, Al Aziziyah, Al Zubidiyah, Al Suwayrah, Al Hurar, Al Haay, Al Badrah and Muffuahaq.

From May to August, 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, established vehicle checkpoints, provided public infrastructure protection, conducted patrols and raids on suspected Baath Party loyalist positions and weapons caches, and performed vehicle and house searches. The battalion was also responsible for providing airfield security for the base at Blair Field in Al Kut and dispatched some of its forces eastward for ground and heliborne



Capt Sean R. Dunn, Staff Judge Advocate for 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, talks with Chief Judge Jahour Mahoud at a courthouse in Al Kut. Capt Dunn worked with the Iraqi court system as the country transitioned from the authoritarian rule of Saddam Hussein.

patrols along the Iranian border. In addition, 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, assisted in the reconstruction of the local government and the reorganization and training of the Wassit Province Police Department.

After completing its mission in August, 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, turned over operations to Ukrainian forces and moved to Kuwait. The battalion returned to the United States in September 2003.

Marine Forces Reserve Intelligence Section

A reinforced squad of 14 Marines from the sensor control and management platoon joined the 2d MEB in January 2003 and deployed to Kuwait. This squad consisted of two sensor employment teams and one team of intelligence analysts that worked with the brigade's intelligence section. Both sensor teams moved to the Kuwaiti border with Iraq before the ground assault, employing and monitoring sensors against Iraqi infiltration and probing operations. When the ground war began, one sensor team moved forward with Task Force Tarawa into the city of An Nasiriyah and conducted perimeter securi-



ty operations. When Task Force Tarawa entered Al Kut, the second sensor team moved forward providing convoy security until joining the brigade's forward element. When the two sensor teams rejoined, they were attached to the 4th Light Armor Reconnaissance Battalion and used in the town of Badrah along the border between





Entrance to Camp Babylon.

Iraq and Iran. The teams conducted sensor operations for 10 days before returning to Al Kut. The sensor teams continued supporting the brigade for several weeks in the Al Kut region until May.

The Production and Analysis Company deployed three detachments in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. A detachment of 35 Marines was mobilized in January 2003 and worked with the I Marine Expeditionary Force, augmenting the staff of the 1st Intelligence Battalion. This detachment traveled to Kuwait and was assigned to the Tactical Exploitation Group. The group provided time-sensitive interpretation of imagery received from a variety of sources, including national and theater level collection platforms. The group also identified hundreds of Iraqi order-of-battle targets, provided bomb damage assessments from coalition aircraft, and built databases of high-priority targets.

Another detachment, consisting of four Marines, was assigned to the Photographic Interpretation Group within I Marine Expeditionary Force. This group provided in-depth analysis of combat imagery to units in the 1st Marine Division. Hundreds of feet of film was analyzed and combined with topographic products, providing commanders with detailed mapping of Iraqi armored and mechanized units. Subsequently, Marines from this detachment served in the intelligence operations center working in collections and targeting operations.

The third detachment consisted of 14 Marines, which



worked at the imagery branch of the Marine Corps Intelligence Activity in Suitland, Maryland, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. These Marines assisted in the creation of terrain studies used by combat forces during operations in Iraq. The duties performed by this detachment included the following: analyzing the suitability of roadways for movement routes of coalition forces; participating in studies of potential expeditionary airfield sites; and the development of studies on coastal landing locations.

In preparation for Operation Iraqi Freedom, 15 Marines from the counterintelligence section deployed to Kuwait and conducted human intelligence missions in February 2003. Later, a detachment of six Marines moved to Northern Iraq and served as a human intelligence exploitation team with U.S. Army Special Forces. In addition, 32 Marines served with I MEF in various operations in the Horn of Africa, Bahrain, and Iraq.

3d and 4th ANGLICO

The 3d and 4th Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Companies (ANGLICO) were mobilized and sent to Southwest Asia. These units, along with Marines from 1st ANGLICO, provided supporting arms liaison teams and firepower control teams to the regimental combat teams in the 1st Marine Division as well as to elements within the United Kingdom's 1st Armored Division. During combat operations, these Marines directed fire support for I MEF and made a significant contribution in the destruction of Iraqi armor, artillery, air defense, and infantry.



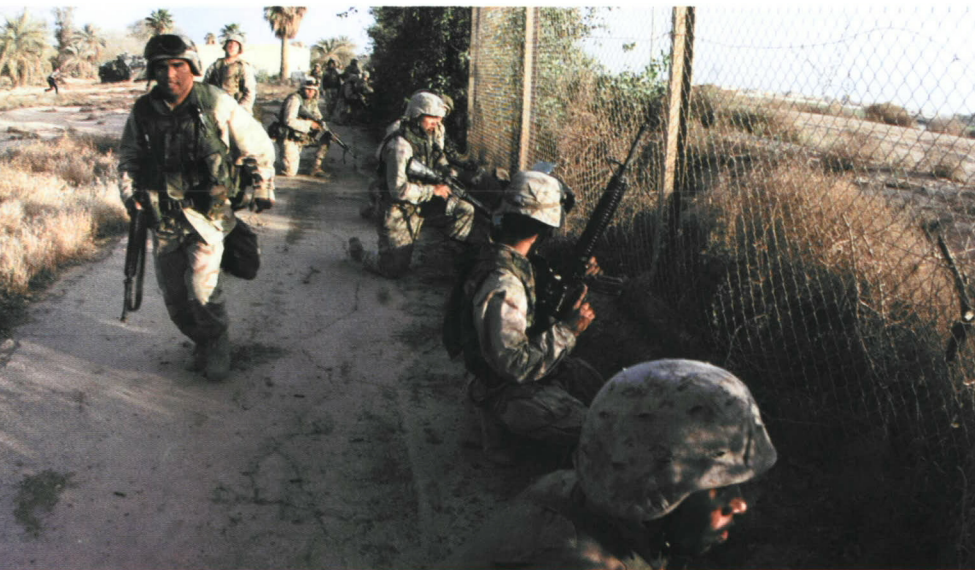
Marines from the 3d and 4th Civil Affairs Group provided a critical link between the Iraqi population and coalition forces in rebuilding the country.





During the security and stability operations, Marines from 3d and 4th ANGLICO guarded contractors working in the Rumaylah oilfields, patrolled the border with Iran, and provided coalition liaison support for I MEF. Serving in the role of coalition liaison support, the ANGLICO Marines provided fire control teams to the Polish,

Marines from the 3d Civil Affairs Group, 3d Battalion, 4th Marines, and 1st Combat Engineer Battalion engage paramilitary forces in a firefight near the Palestine Hotel in downtown Baghdad.



Spanish, and Ukrainian brigades. The fire control teams specifically provided fire support planning and coordination in the use of Marine air support.

3d and 4th Civil Affairs Groups

During security and stability operations in Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 3d and 4th Civil Affairs Groups provided an important bridge between the Iraqi population and Marine units assigned with the civil and military

BGen James L. Williams, the commanding general of I Marine Expeditionary Force Augmentation Command Element, presents the Bronze Star Medal to SSgt Jeremy E. Stafford during a ceremony at the Parker Center, Los Angeles Police Department Headquarters. SSgt Stafford, a weapons instructor with the Los Angeles Police Department Training Division, received the naval service's fourth highest award for heroism for his actions as a Civil Affairs Team Chief in combat operations near Sumar, Iraq, April 2003.





SSgt Dan D. Conners, a civil affairs team chief with the 4th Civil Affairs Group, and Maj Richard Howell, the civil affairs team officer in charge, meet with local government officials in As Samawah to solve problems with the town's water system.

functions in various cities and provinces in southern Iraq. The civil affairs teams supervised the selection of town councils, distributed salaries to local civil servants, supervised the restoration of local infrastructure and utilities, and assisted in the return of regular operations for

GySgt Joel Pearson of the 4th Civil Affairs Group, attached to Task Force Tarawa, hands out newsletters to the people of Al Kut at a newly reopened municipal building. The newsletter provided information about the Marine Corps' efforts to return public services to normal operations.



the local banking system. Additionally, the teams performed a vital function in creating critical links between coalition forces and religious, tribal, and political leaders.

Air Operations in Operation Iraqi Freedom

The reserve contribution to the aviation component of the Marine air-ground logistics team was extensive in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The following units and sections in the 4th Marine

Gen Michael W. Hagee, Commandant of the Marine Corps, answers questions from members of Marine Aircraft Group 42, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, in a hanger near the flight line at Naval Air Station, Belle Chase, Louisiana.





Providing security from the air.

KC-130 Hercules (like the one below) and AV-8B Harriers (like the one to the right) provided critical air and logistics support for Marines and coalition forces in the drive toward Baghdad.



Aircraft Wing (4th MAW) provided support for Operation Iraqi Freedom: Coalition/Joint Force Air Component Commander Liaison Cell, Marine Aircraft Group 42 (MAG-42), Marine Air Control Group 48 (MACG-48), Marine Aerial Refueling Squadrons 234 and 452 (VMGR-234), (VMGR-452), and Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 772 (HMH-772).

Gen William L. Nyland (right), Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, meets with LtCol Thomas F. Dietrich, the commanding officer of VMGR-234, during Operation Iraqi Freedom.





Gen William L. Nyland, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, speaks to the Marines.

Coalition/Joint Force Air Component Commander Liaison Cell

The only dedicated Marine Corps Coalition/Joint Force Air Component Commander Liaison Cell is assigned to the 4th MAW Headquarters and is staffed

A Marine AH-1W Cobra helicopter enroute to its mission in Operation Iraqi Freedom takes on fuel at a forward arming and refueling point.



with reserve Marines. This cell is tasked with providing liaison officers and an air operations center augmentation staff with expertise in Marine aircraft, the Marine air command and control system, coalition/joint operations command and control, and the hardware and software associated with those systems. In January 2003, the Coalition/Joint Force Air Component Commander Liaison Cell was activated and deployed to the Coalition Air Operations Center at the Prince Sultan Air Base in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This cell provided the expertise that ensured proper coordination between the 3d MAW's tactical air command center and the other coun-



CH-53E Super Stallion helicopters served an integral role in providing logistics support for I MEF.

tries represented in the Coalition Air Operations Center. The Coalition/Joint Force Air Component Commander Liaison Cell initially performed duties in support of Operations Southern Watch and Enduring Freedom, but rapidly transitioned into the coordination role for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Additionally, some Marines in the liaison cell filled key joint positions within the



A KC-130 from VMGR-234 dispenses antimissile flares during a flight over Iraq.

Coalition Air Operations Center. The Marines provided crucial input on close air support operations for the entire theater of war.

Marine Aircraft Group 42

A detachment of Marines was activated from MAG-42 based at Naval Air Station, Atlanta, in January 2003. This detachment augmented the staff of the 3d MAW and deployed to Kuwait in February 2003 in preparation for combat operations in Iraq. At the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Marines from MAG-42 were fully integrated into the battle staff of the 3d MAW and its subordinate commands which included Marine Aircraft Groups 11, 13, 16, and 39; Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3; and Marine Wing Support Group 37.





The commanding officer of VMGR-234, LtCol Thomas F. Dietrich, stands in front of his headquarters.

Marine Air Control Group 48

A substantial demand existed for Marine air command and control systems and communication equipment in Kuwait. In preparing for future contingencies, Marine Air Control Group 38 needed the assistance of the 4th MAW's Marine Air Control Group 48, which is based in Highwood, Illinois. Marine Air Control Group 48 began preparations in November and December 2002 for the deployment of its subordinate commands. With a portion of Marine Air Control Squadron 24 already deployed to the Middle East in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, the remainder of the unit was activated and sent an electronic warfare command detachment

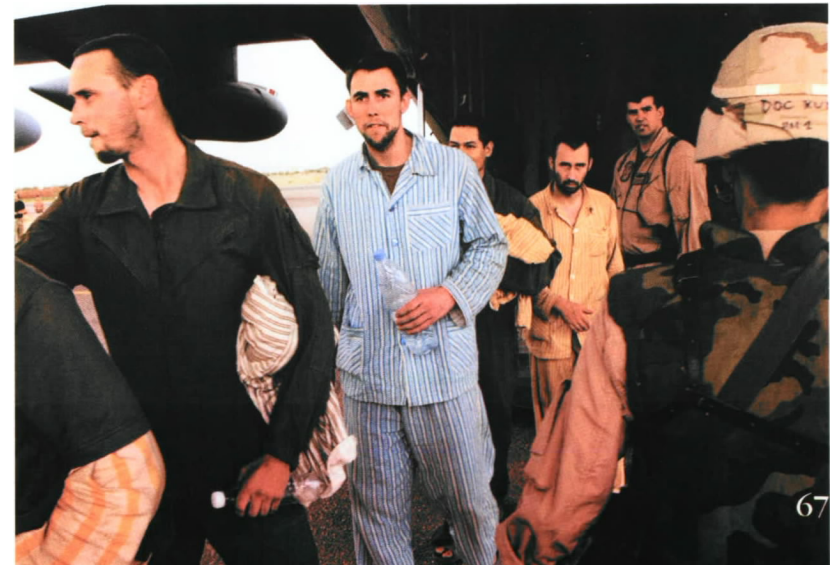


Marines from VMGR-234 in front of a KC-130 at Joe Foss Expeditionary Airfield, named after the legendary Marine aviator who received the Congressional Medal of Honor in World War II.

that provided sector air defense and a tactical air operations center.

In January and February 2003, the following units were activated and sent to Kuwait in support of 3d MAW: Marine Air Support Squadron 6 from Westover Air Force Base, Westover, Massachusetts; and both Marine

Rescued American POWs flown from Iraq by VMGR-452 arrive to a welcome sight in Kuwait.





Pilots Maj Bill Holmes (left) and Maj Charles Miles smile in the cockpit of their KC-130 transport aircraft in Iraq. Along with their aircrew, they arrived in Iraq on a mission to fly seven former POWs to Kuwait.

Tactical Air Command Squadron 48 and Marine Wing Communications Squadron 48 from Highwood, Illinois. The Marines from Marine Air Support Squadron 6 provided staff augmentation to Marine Aviation Support Squadron 3 in functional areas such as the ground direct air support center, the airborne direct air support center

Cpl Christopher Castro (left), Spec Joseph Hudson, Sgt James Riley, CWO Ronald Young, and LCpl Curney Russell ride aboard a KC-130 aircraft flown by Marines from VMGR-452. The Marines took part in house-to-house searches early on 13 April 2003 that led to the rescue of seven American POWs in Sammara, Iraq.



A KC-130 from VMGR-452, Detachment A, forward based in Bahrain supporting the 24th MEU (SOC).

and the air support liaison teams. The Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron 48 detachment worked with Marine Air Control Squadron 38 by providing staff augmentation and systems administrator support for the current and future operations sections of the tactical air command center located at Ahmed Al Jaber Air Base. In early March, more than 200 Marines from Marine Wing Control Squadron 48 arrived in Kuwait and provided vital communication support for the Marine Logistics Command and the U.S. Navy's fleet hospitals. This was a different role for Marine Wing Communication Squadron 48 because the unit was normally tasked with the primary mission of providing communications for the aviation combat element of a Marine expeditionary force.

Throughout March 2003, mission planning, staff coordination, task organization, and unit reorganization took place in preparation for combat operations.

Subsequently, the detachment, composed of Marines from Marine Aviation Support Squadron 6, was split into two sections. One section combined with Marine Aviation Support Squadron 1 and created the air support element for the forces from the United Kingdom. This air support element provided the direct air support center that coordinated and directed aircraft operating in support of the United Kingdom's 1st Armored Division.

The other section provided staff support for both

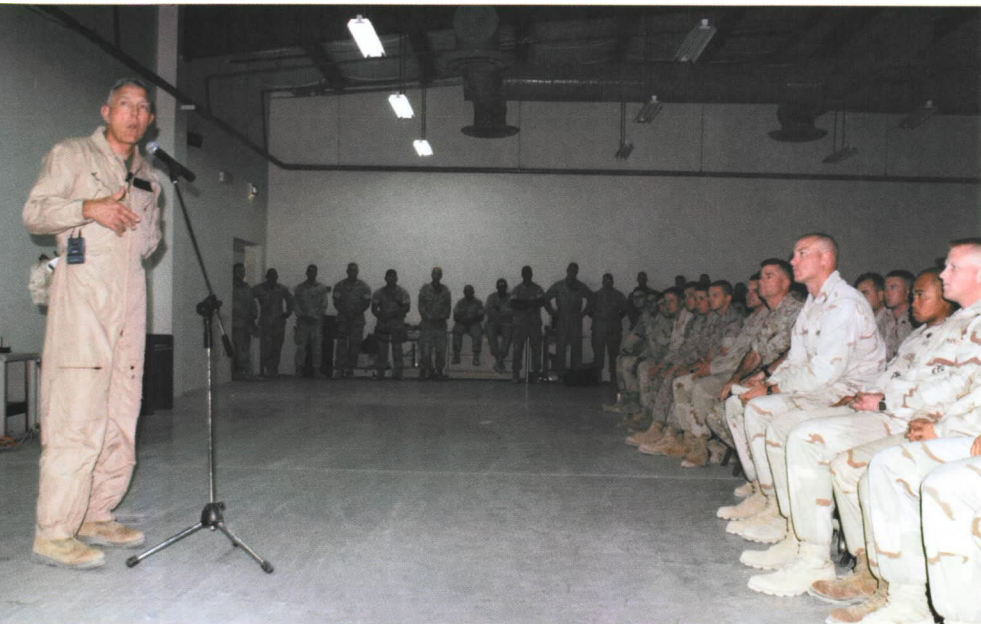
Marines from the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing staff at Ahmed Al Jaber Air Base, Kuwait.



the forward and main elements of the direct air support center of Marine Aviation Support Section 3. Additionally, this section of support provided critical crew augmentation for the air support liaison teams located with the 1st Marine Division's Regimental Combat Teams 1, 5, and 7 and the 11th Marines.

The Marines from Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron 48 filled key positions in the 3d MAW's tactical air command center. These positions included senior watch officer and senior air coordinator, as well as duties in the deep and close battle staff planning cells and the rapid order dispatch positions for fixed and rotary wing aircraft. These Marines also filled the joint issues coordinator position and performed various recorder, plotter, and systems administrator duties.

At the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Marines from Marine Air Control Group 48 were involved extensively in operations throughout the theater. The Marines from Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron 48 served in key command watch positions in the 3d MAW tactical air command center. They were instrumental in managing the Marine Corps' portion of the air war against Iraq. The Marines from Marine Air Support Squadron 6 served an integral role in coordinating and directing air support for the units in the 1st Marine Division and the United Kingdom's 1st Armored Division. They were with the 1st Marine Division's RCT-5 in the capture of the South Rumaylah oilfields and RCT-7 when it captured the Az Zubyr pumping station. They also were with RCT-1 in the fighting around An Nasiriyah. Marines of Marine Air Support Squadron 6, attached to the United Kingdom's 1st Armored Division, supported the attack and seizure of Basrah as well as the Royal Marines' 3d Commando



LtGen James T. Conway, Commanding General, I Marine Expeditionary Force, speaks with Marines during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

raid on the Al Faw Peninsula and the 15th MEU's raid on the port facility at Umm Qasr.

During the early stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Marine Wing Communication Squadron 48 provided critical support, strengthening the communication network in northern Kuwait, which allowed other units to move forward as needed. During the first week of the war, the Marine Logistics Command set up the U.S. Navy fleet hospital at Camp Viper in Jalibah and Marine Wing Communication Squadron 48 provided the communications support. A detachment from Marine Wing Communications Squadron 48 moved north to Camp Viper and built the communications system for the hospital and the camp.

During the first week of April, the U.S. Army's V Corps and the 1st Marine Division closed in on Baghdad and surrounded the city. Major Peter J. Carzoli from Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron 48 went to the V Corps air support operations center and served as a liaison between the I Marine Expeditionary Force and V Corps. In his duties in the air support operations center, Major Carzoli provided key Marine air command and control knowledge to the Air Force and Army planners. He also coordinated cross boundary air fires and air asset management between the V Corps air support operations center and the 1st Marine Division direct air support center. At the same time, Marines from Marine Air Support Squadron 6 entered Baghdad with the regimental combat teams they were supporting. Their efforts coordinating and controlling direct support aircraft helped in the capture of Baghdad.

Once Baghdad was in control of coalition forces, the I Marine Expeditionary Force established Task Force Tripoli and assigned it the mission of securing Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit. The Marines of Marine Air



Support Squadron 6, serving with the 1st Marine Division direct air support center, were attached to Task Force Tripoli's air support element. The air support element received and coordinated close air support requests for Task Force Tripoli in the successful capture of Tikrit.

In early May 2003, Marine Wing Communication Squadron 48 was assigned the mission of providing communication support for the special purpose Marine air-ground task force established for the reconstruction, regeneration, and redeployment of the equipment for the ships of the maritime prepositioning force. While the Marines of Marine Wing Communication Squadron 48 provided communication support for the task force, other elements of the air control group began the retro-

A Marine door gunner monitors the situation on the ground from his aerial position, August 2003.



grade back to their respective home training centers in the United States. As the communication support mission concluded for the special purpose task force, the remainder of the Marines from Marine Air Control Group 48 returned home in November 2003.

VMGR-234, VMGR-452, and HMH-772

As the 4th MAW provided squadrons of KC-130s and CH-53Es in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, the same was true for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Marine aerial refueler squadrons VMGR-234 and VMGR-452 provided aircrews and KC-130 aircraft, and HMH-772 provided aircrews and CH-53E heavy lift helicopters in the air operations against Saddam Hussein's regime.

Both VMGR-234 and VMGR-452 served essential roles supporting the missions of forward air refueling, assault support, and troop and cargo transportation. Frequently, these units were involved in night vision goggle assault landings at forward operating bases. These forward operating bases were often recently captured airfields or unimproved highway landing strips near the frontline of hostilities and within range of enemy small arms fire and anti-aircraft missiles. While providing forward air refueling support for coalition aircraft, VMGR-234 and VMGR-452 also pushed forward critical logistical supplies such as food, water, ammunition, and medical aid as well as evacuating critically wounded casualties and freed American prisoners of war.

In March 2003, after completing their mission in support of Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa, the detachment of Marines and CH-53Es from HMH-772

-serving in Djibouti returned to the ships that embarked the 24th MEU. In early April 2003, the 24th MEU participated in the combat missions of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the Marines and CH-53Es of HMH-772 flew assault and logistical support missions in support of I MEF and coalition elements. These missions included troop inserts and extracts; re-supply of food, water, and ammunition; and emergency medical evacuation of casualties. Flight and maintenance crews worked 12-hour shifts and the sorties often covered enormous distances from naval shipping in the Persian Gulf to Baghdad.

Combat Service Support Operations in Operation Iraqi Freedom

As the Marine ground and air elements maneuvered successfully toward Baghdad, the reserves from the 4th Force Service Support Group made a significant contribution to the combat service support capability of the 1st Force Service Support Group and its ability to sustain I MEF. The units from the 4th Force Service Support Group that

activated and deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom were the Headquarters and Service Battalion, 6th Engineer Support Battalion, 6th Motor Transport Battalion, 6th Communications Battalion, 4th Landing Support Battalion, 4th Medical Battalion, and 4th Dental Battalion. The 4th Supply Battalion and elements of the 4th Maintenance Battalion were also activated but did not deploy overseas to Operation Iraqi Freedom as units. While some individuals from both of these commands deployed to Kuwait and Iraq, most of the Marines deployed to Marine bases at Camp Pendleton, California; Twentynine Palms, California; Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona; Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, California; Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, North Carolina; and Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Headquarters and Service Battalion

Headquarters and Service Battalion was mobilized for Operation Iraqi Freedom and provided two communication detachments, three military police companies, and a mortuary affairs detachment to I MEF. The communication detachments were assigned to various units throughout I MEF. Military Police Companies A, B, and C worked closely with the 1st Transportation Group in the 1st Force Service Support Group and U.S. Army military police units. The mission of the military police companies focused on convoy security, traffic management, and the handling of enemy prisoners of war. The Mortuary Affairs detachment conducted the recovery and processing of friendly and enemy killed in action. This unit employed recovery teams and collection points along the



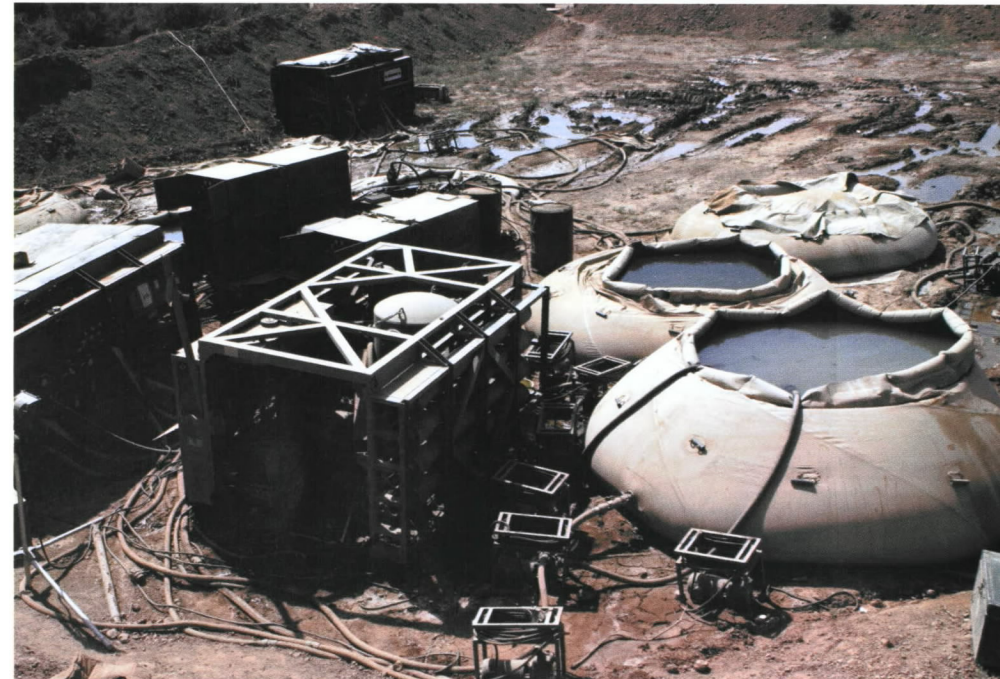
Locations of resupply and replenishment points in Iraq.

I MEF route of movement in accomplishing the mission. Due to a shortage of manpower, approximately 100 Marines from Battery A, 1st Battalion, 14th Marines, an artillery unit from Aurora, Colorado, were activated and deployed for service with the Mortuary Affairs detachment.

6th Engineer Support Battalion

The 6th Engineer Support Battalion from Portland Oregon, was activated in support Operation Iraqi Freedom and consisted of more than 1,500 Marines and sailors. The 6th Engineer Support Battalion, along with the 7th Engineer Support Battalion and 8th Engineer Support Battalion, formed the core of the engineer support capability of the 1st Force Service Support Group. The following units comprised the 6th Engineer Support Battalion: Headquarters and Support Company; Engineer Support Company; three bulk fuel companies; three engi-

The 6th Engineer Support Battalion provided the bulk fuel and liquid support mission for I MEF and coalition forces.





The 6th Engineer Support Battalion dispensed 16.5 million gallons of fuel and produced 4.5 million gallons of water during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

neer companies; and one bridge company.

Upon the battalion's arrival in Kuwait in early February 2003, Bridge Company A was assigned to the 8th Engineer Support Battalion and Engineer Companies A and B were transferred to 7th Engineer Support Battalion. From 9 February to 18 March 2003, 6th Engineer Support Battalion trained at Camp Coyote in

Cpl Geraldo Cortez, a bulk fuel specialist, tops off a light armored vehicle at the 6th Engineer Support Battalion's fuel farm in Iraq.



Kuwait. Training consisted of hose reel deployments and retrogrades as well as the construction of fuel farms. An advance party set up a base camp at the Breach Point West site and established a water point.

At the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Bulk Fuel Companies B and C established a hose reel deployment from Breach Point West in Kuwait to Logistics Support Area Viper in Iraq. This distance covered

almost 60 miles and included 17 booster stations. At Logistics Support Area Viper, Bulk Fuel Company A established a 1.2 million gallon fuel farm. Originally projected to take six days to complete the hose reel and fuel farm, this mission was actually accomplished in 4 days despite major sandstorms. In addition to the establishment of fuel operations at Logistics Support Area Viper, water operations were constructed. Sadly, during this operation, Sergeant Bradley S. Korthaus and Corporal Even T. James drowned while providing security across a local canal for the utilities platoon as it was establishing a water point in the area. Water operations began on 24 March 2003 and required only 12 hours of the projected



Supplying the fight, Marines with the 1st Force Service Support Group kept I MEF resupplied during the rapid advance toward Baghdad.



The logistics element of the Marine Air-Ground-Logistics Team offloads vehicles and equipment from maritime prepositioning shipping in preparation for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

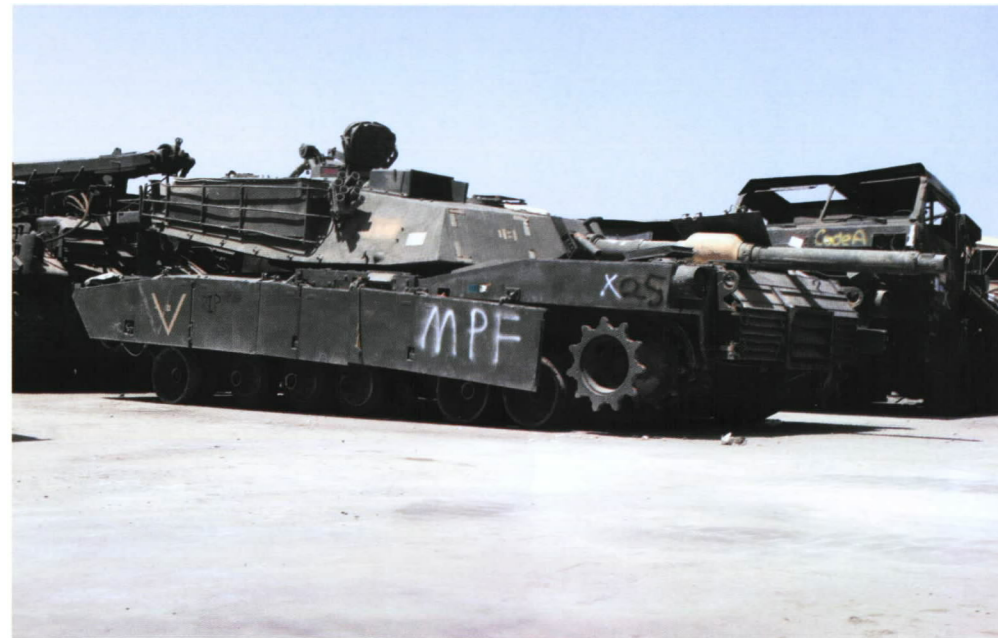
48 hours in the operational plan for completion. Water operations consisted of 14 reverse osmosis water purification units with a one-day production of 120,000 gallons. The Viper water point was a theater-level asset providing water for the 1st Marine Division, 3d Marine Aircraft Wing, 1st Force Service Support Group, Task Force Tarawa, and the U.S. Army.

In keeping up with the movement of Marine forces, numerous resupply and replenishment points were established along the route. Resupply and Replenishment Points Anderson and Chesty were set up between 30 March and 4 April that included the use of reverse osmosis water purification units for water production and the construction of a 1.2 million gallon fuel farm. At this

point in Operation Iraqi Freedom, this extended elements of the 6th Engineer Support Battalion for 150 miles across Iraq.

As I MEF and the U.S. Army's V Corps moved closer to Baghdad, fuel demands increased and the 6th Engineer Support Battalion installed another hose reel system from Logistics Support Area Viper to Logistics Support Area Cedar in support of V Corps operations. This was done in three days and covered 27 miles with eight booster stations. Ultimately, this tactical fuel system became a theater-level asset.

On 12 April, the 6th Engineer Support Battalion established bulk liquid production and storage sites at Resupply and Replenishment Point 26, located southeast





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

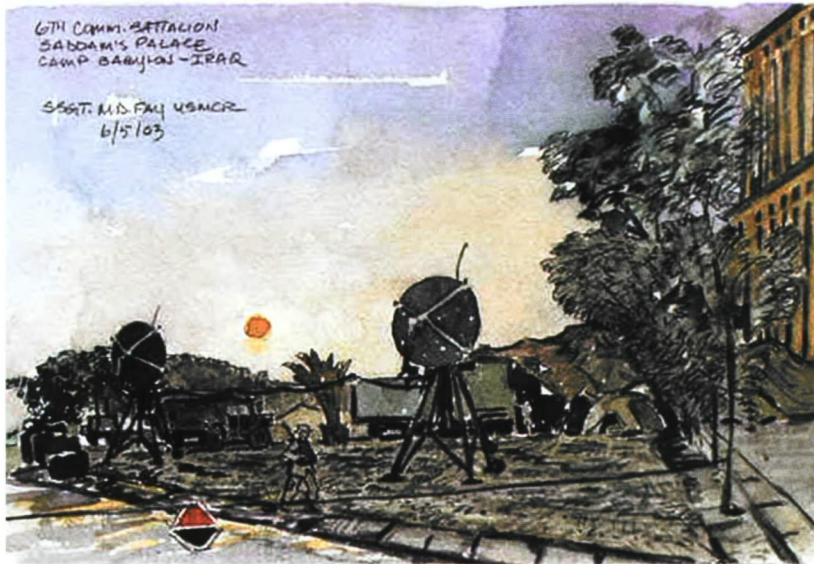
receiving area and supply transfer lot was created for offloading convoys from the Marine Logistics Command in Kuwait. From 21 March to 30 April 2003, detachments from the 6th Motor Transport Battalion served at Supporting Area Edson, Supporting Area Geiger, Resupply and Replenishment Point Chesty, and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

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

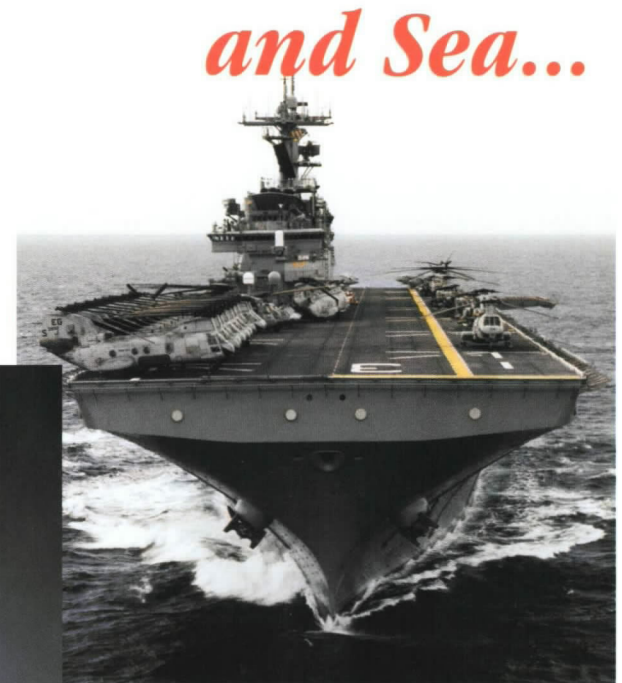
Defending Freedom



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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