

Doing What Must Be Done

by Gen A. M. Gray

Marines are heavily committed to Operation DESERT STORM in Southwest Asia, but they must maintain their global capability to respond to crises, maintain presence in areas of interest, and reinforce or replace deployed units. In this article, the Commandant explains how this is being done.

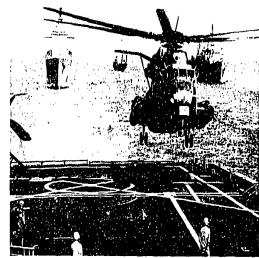
It is not by chance that the Marine Corps is able to expeditiously deploy potent, ready-to-fight Marine air-ground task forces (MAGTFs) to Southwest Asia (SWA) and simultaneously maintain needed capabilities in other regions of the world. The capabilities being demonstrated are the result of our Corps' focus on expeditionary operations. Specifically, they are the result of many years of planning, innovation, and the complete integration of our Active and Reserve forces into the Total Force Concept.

Although a significant amount of our attention is focused on Operation DESERT STORM, we must continue to execute all assigned missions. As a force-in-readiness, we must maintain our global capability to respond to crises and maintain presence in areas of interest. Therefore, in order to enhance our existing capabilities to execute assigned missions, on 15 January 1991, I directed the activation of the V Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) at Camp Pendleton. In addition, II MEF and III MEF command elements have begun taking the actions needed to maintain their expeditionary capabilities.

The organization of these MEFs will be formed from personnel and logistics resources available. They will be augmented by total force ground, aviation, and combat service support units as required and available. Most important, each MEF will be capable of mission planning and the execution of joint and combined operations.

The missions of V MEF will be the same as those assigned to II MEF and III MEF. These missions are:

- To form and train units to reinforce/replace units, crews, and individuals deployed to SWA.
- To organize, train, and equip total force MAGTFs for assignment to the unified and specified commands.
- To plan for the deployment and employment of special operations capable (SOC) naval expeditionary forces for contingency requirements, crisis response missions, counter-narcotic operations, and special mission security operations. This includes campaign plan development, joint/combined planning, exercise participation, wargaming, *et al.*
- To ensure continued amphibious ready group/Marine expeditionary units (SOC) and air contingency



The commitment in SWA has not relieved the Navy-Marine Corps from its global responsibility to maintain forces like these for other crisis response and peacekeeping missions.

force preparedness.

- To ensure maintenance of remain-behind equipment from deployed units.

Under the command of Marine Forces Central Command (MarCent), I MEF, composed of the 1st Marine Division (Rein), 2d Marine Division (Rein), 3d Marine Aircraft Wing (Rein), 1st Force Service Support Group (FSSG), and the 2d FSSG, was initially deployed in support of Operation DESERT SHIELD and is now committed to combat operations in support of Operation DESERT STORM. Additionally, under the command of MarCent is a Marine expeditionary force formed by the compositing of three MAGTFs, the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB), the 5th MEB, and the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (SOC) (MEU(SOC)). This force has been assigned to Navy Central Command (NavCent). All MarCent forces remain focused on executing missions assigned by the Commander in Chief U.S. Central Command.

A IV MEF command element also has been established. The 4th Marine Division, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, and 4th FSSG will continue to provide those combat-ready air, ground, and logistics units and individuals needed to augment and enhance the capability of all expeditionary forces and the supporting establishment. In addition, IV MEF forces will continue to provide a significant portion of the command elements and combat and combat support forces need to continue our Nation's fight against the trafficking of illicit drugs.

In short, the professionalism and expertise of our forces, both Active and Reserve, are the keys to successful execution of the missions that we have been and will continue to be assigned. To date, the performance of our Marines and Sailors has been superb. We expected nothing less.

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