

# A History of 4th Marine Division, 2000-2012



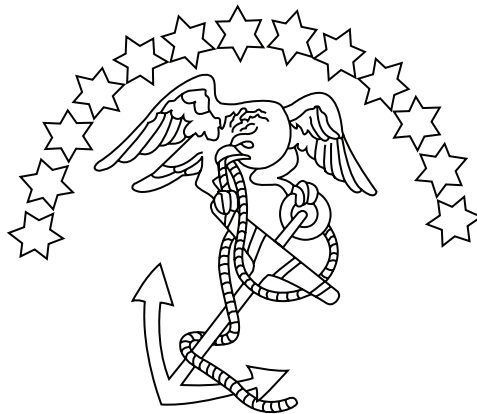
Occasional Paper

Photo Courtesy of Sgt Brian Kelly, USMCR

*Lance Corporal Brian Kelly, a Radio Operator from Headquarters and Support Company, 3rd Battalion, 24th Marines, keeps a lookout for snipers from the second floor of a temporary patrol base (a civilian's home) in downtown Fallujah, Iraq, 7 January 2007. 3/24 Marines were attached to 1st Battalion, 24th Marines during 1/24's 2006-2007 deployment to Fallujah.*

# A History of 4th Marine Division, 2000-2012

*Reserve Marines and the Global War on Terrorism*



by  
Colonel Rod Andrew Jr.  
U.S. Marine Corps Reserve

Occasional Paper

History Division  
United States Marine Corps  
Quantico, VA  
2013





# Table of Contents

4th Marine Division, 2000-02	1
Mobilizing for Operation Iraqi Freedom, 2003	6
4th Marine Division in the Fight for Iraq, 2003	7
4th Marine Division in 2004—Back to Iraq	17
Restructuring the Division	26
The Fight for Anbar Province, 2005-06	30
Hurricane Relief	38
2006: Turning the Corner in Iraq	39
A Battle-Hardened and Reorganized Division	42
The Fight for Iraq Continues, 2007-08	46
“Turning Out the Lights” in Iraq; Fighting for Afghanistan, 2009-10	51
Looking Forward—and Back	56
Appendix 1:	
4th Marine Division, 2000	58
4th Marine Division, 2010	62
Appendix 2:	
Commanding Generals, 4th Marine Division, 1997-Present	66
Appendix 3:	
4th Marine Division Deaths, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom	67
Notes	68
About the Author and Acknowledgments	74



By the last year of the twentieth century, 4th Marine Division (4th MarDiv) was still in the early stages of a gradual transformation that had begun before 1990. The 11 September 2001 attacks, however, and the demands of the “long war” against terrorism would hasten that transformation so that it would be complete by 2005 or 2006. Before 1990, many military and political leaders and most of the public still considered 4th MarDiv and other elements of the Reserve Component to be a “strategic reserve” to be utilized in case of a major international conflict or national emergency on the scale of World War II.

Several events, particularly the Persian Gulf conflict of 1990-91, had begun to change that perception of the Reserve Component’s function. The nation had mobilized a large share of the Reserves and National Guard for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and the mobilization of the Marine Corps Reserve, including significant elements of 4th MarDiv, had been particularly successful. The Persian Gulf War was a transitional event. On one hand, the Marine Corps mobilized the Reserves for an exceptionally large conventional conflict that was generally unexpected before 1990 and not part of a regular deployment cycle. On the other hand, the entire Division (as well as 4th Marine Aircraft Wing and 4th Force Service Support Group) did not fight together as a whole, nor did entire regiments, as in the case of World War II.\* Nor did any of the Division’s regiments or Division Headquarters serve as a basis for an all-Reserve Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) as some scenarios envisioned. Instead, battalions and companies integrated with and reinforced active duty regiments and battalions, amplifying the combat power of I and II Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), as well as taking on routine “peacetime” missions allowing other active duty units to join the fight against Saddam Hussein’s army. This potential use of 4th MarDiv elements had been foreseen since the 1970s, but had not been put into practice on a large scale until 1990.<sup>1</sup> With few exceptions, the integration of active and reserve units was highly successful, and more leaders throughout the Marine Corps began to see that the Reserves had a utility beyond being “pulled off the shelf” and deployed only in the case of another

world war. Instead, the levels of training, proficiency, and motivation of 4th MarDiv units, as well other Reserve Marines, were such that they could be quickly integrated into active duty units for smaller conflicts and also take on peacetime missions that relieved the operational tempo for the active force.

By the 1990s, many leaders in the nation’s military establishment were beginning to refer to the nation’s reserve component as an “operational” rather than a “strategic” reserve. Few were able to fully or precisely define what the term “operational reserve” meant, at least in regard to theory or doctrine, but the practical implications of the phrase were becoming more and more apparent. Throughout the 1990s, the nation relied on elements of the National Guard and Reserve, including those of 4th MarDiv, to relieve the operational tempo for active duty units. This development resulted not only from the new recognition of the Reserves’ capabilities and utility, but also from necessity. Many political leaders, including President William J. Clinton, declared that the United States should now be able to reap a “peace dividend” due to the end of the Cold War, allowing the nation to reduce defense spending and shrink the active force. This reduction of the active force in the 1990s, however, was not matched by a decrease in global commitments. The deployment pace for active units, if anything, increased, and unforeseen crises in Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, and elsewhere forced military leaders to call on the Re-



Photo by SSgt Marlene S. Barry, USAF

Company C, 8th Tank Battalion, from Tallahassee, Florida, forms in front of the Capitol before the 1997 Presidential Inaugural Parade, 20 January 1997, Washington, DC.

\* A possible exception to this statement is 24th Marines, which mobilized as a regiment for Operation Desert Storm but detached one of its battalions to Okinawa as part of the unit deployment program. The rest of the regiment assumed the rear area security mission for I MEF in Saudi Arabia (*History of the 4th Marine Division, 1943-2000*, 94).

serves more than at any time since 1945 to take on “real world,” rather than training, missions, and relieve the operational tempo for active duty units.

In some ways, the structure of the Division in 2000 still reflected the pre-1991 perception of its role and of the nation’s primary threat—a conventional struggle against a rival superpower. The Division had three full infantry regiments (23d, 24th and 25th Marines) and a preponderance of tanks and artillery. With two full tank battalions (4th and 8th Tanks), it had more armor capability than any of the three active duty divisions. The artillery regiment, 14th Marines, had five battalions, more than any of the active duty divisions, comprising roughly 50 percent of the artillery tubes in the entire Marine Corps; the 14th Marines regimental headquarters constantly trained to ensure that it could take on the role of a force artillery headquarters, controlling and massing the fires of multiple artillery battalions and regiments.

In less than a decade, this situation had changed significantly, and the Division as a whole was fully engaged in fighting the “Long War” against international terrorism. Infantry battalions as well as companies, batteries, and platoons of all branches and occupational specialties were integrated into the Marine Corps’ regular deployment requirements. Every year from 2003 to 2012, Marines and Sailors from the 4th MarDiv—Reservists and their I-I counterparts—served on six continents and fought and bled in Iraq and, by 2009, in Afghanistan. The Division was busier than ever before—training, equipping, mobilizing, deploying, and fighting—in a long-term conflict. In the midst of this frenetic activity, it was simultaneously reorganizing its structure to compensate for shortfalls in the active force and better fit the nation’s needs in a war that required capabilities not only in conventional warfighting but also in counterinsurgency. As a whole, the Division’s flexibility and adaptability in the first decade of the twenty-first century was surpassed only by the determination, commitment, and courage of its individual Marines and Sailors. During 2003-10, the Division was more relevant, more battle-hardened, and more essential to the nation’s defense than at any time since 1945.

All the while, the Reserve Marines of 4th MarDiv remained “citizen soldiers.” Their presence in, and frequent absences from, their communities and civilian workplaces heightened the public’s connection to the Global War on Terrorism and awareness of the sacrifices being made by men and women throughout



Photo by Cpl Matthew Shaw, USMC  
*SSgt Williams, 4th Force Reconnaissance Company, waits aboard USS Bonhomme Richard, (LHD-6) prior to conducting helo casting operations off the coast of California during Operation Kernel Blitz 2001, 31 March 2001. Operation Kernel Blitz was a MEB-level exercise showcasing Marine Corps/Navy capabilities in performing amphibious assault.*

the nation’s military establishment. Poignant farewell ceremonies for departing local units, heartbreaking funerals and memorial ceremonies, and joyous homecoming parades occurred again and again in small and large communities across the nation, strengthening the public’s emotional connection to the war effort and its pride in its Marine Corps.

## Fourth Marine Division, 2000-02

In 2000, as in recent years, 4th MarDiv units supported several operations outside the continental United States (OCONUS) that involved “theater engagement” or training with allies. Though these types of activities were still part of the active component’s mission, the Marine Corps had relied more and more on the Reserves to help fulfill it. Still, reserve units and individual Marines usually were not committed to these operations for more than two or three weeks, making them suitable for reserve “Annual Training.”

First and 2d Battalions, 24th Marines, sent Marines to participate in Operation Dutch Bilat between 13 and 26 March and 7 and 21 May 2000. This exercise took place in Aruba and consisted largely of small-unit training with Dutch Marines. The headquarters staff of 24th Marines played a key role in Operation Ulchi Focus Lens in Korea from 29 July to 11 August. Other participants in this exercise included a liaison section from 14th Marines that formed a force artillery command operations center (COC) and augmented the MEF staff. Elements of 4th Reconnaissance Battalion



(4th Recon) participated in Operation Carat from 13 to 26 August in Malaysia and 7 to 23 September in Singapore, focusing on amphibious operations and jungle warfare training. Several units took part in exercises with European countries that were part of the Partnership for Peace program, sponsored by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization or NATO nations for the benefit of non-NATO countries in Europe. These exercises included Operation Cornerstone (6 May to 25 June) in Macedonia supported by three platoons from 4th Combat Engineer Battalion (4th Combat Engineers); and Operation Cooperative Key in Romania supported by Marines from Company B, 4th Recon. Company D, 4th Combat Engineers and 3d Recon Company were able to train at the Jungle Warfare Training Center (JWTC) on Okinawa. Finally, 3d Force Reconnaissance Company deployed a site survey team to Peru in late September to evaluate a jungle training area for the purpose of future Marine Corps training and enhancing relationships with the Peruvian government and military. The first training event in the area was planned for April-May 2001.<sup>2</sup>

Much of the Division's training in 2000 included the traditional company, battalion, and MEU- or MEB-based events that had been so useful in the past and would continue through the next decade. For example, Combined Arms Exercise (CAX) 7 and 8 took place at Twentynine Palms, California, between 3 and 17 June and from 25 June to 8 July. The 23d Marines headquarters served as the command element for Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF-23), and ground combat elements included those from 2d Battalion, 23d Marines (2/23); 3d Battalion, 23d Marines (3/23); 4th and 8th Tanks; Truck and Military Police (MP) Companies of Headquarters Battalion; 1st battalion, 14th Marines (1/14), 4th Recon; 4th Amphibian Assault (AA) Battalion; and 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance (LAR) Battalion.

The training and operational activities of some 4th MarDiv units in 2000 foreshadowed roles that they would take after 2001. Operation Gunslinger, for example, took place at Fort Knox, Kentucky, and it could be seen as a preparation for homeland defense missions. The principal objectives were "to explore and define potential roles of the Marine Corps Reserves within the civil support mission and educate commanders and their staffs about the nuances of civil support." Brigadier General Douglas V. O'Dell Jr., assistant division commander of 4th MarDiv, was the exercise director. Participants included elements of Head-

quarters Battalion, 2/25, 8th Tanks, Company A, 4th LAR; Company B, 4th AA Battalion; 4th Marine Air Wing (4th MAW); the Kentucky State Police and Fire Department; the Department of Health and Human Services; and the Kentucky National Guard.<sup>3</sup>

Another foreshadowing event was a meeting between the Division G-3, Lieutenant Colonel Edwin Rivera and key personnel of Security Force Battalion, Little Creek, Virginia. The discussion involved the assignment of Reserve Marines to a 48-Marine guard rotation of six months' duration at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The Division was slated to support this operational tempo relief mission every two years, and a team was slated to be mobilized in February 2001.\* On 6 November 2001, two platoons from Company B, 1/23 departed for Guantanamo Bay to serve a tour as the guard force.

Some documents from 2000 indicate that the senior leadership of 4th MarDiv was contemplating the Division's present and future role. Interestingly, much of this study was prescient, predicting what some of the Division's tasks might be after 2001. Colonel John L. Ledoux, commanding officer of 23d Marines, conducted a mission analysis in the latter half of 2000 in which he first stated the specific tasks assigned by the Division commander, including:\*\*

- reinforce/augment the regular component;
- provide operational and personnel tempo relief;
- conduct joint and combined operations;
- focus on the Central Command (CentCom) area of operations, which included large portions of Africa, Iran, Afghanistan, and part of India;
- conduct mechanized operations, as directed by the Division;
- conduct desert operations, as directed by the Division;
- provide homeland defense to assist civil authorities in natural or manmade disasters;
- honor Marines, living and dead;

---

\* Maj Christopher Dixon and SSgt James DeSantis were mobilized in 2000 to head up the Guantanamo Bay guard force (4th Marine Division Command Chronology, G-3 section, 6).

\*\* The Division commander who provided this guidance was conceivably MGen Arnold L. Punaro, who relinquished command to MGen Jack A. Davis on 14 August 2000, just one month after Col Ledoux took command of 23d Marines. More likely it was MGen Davis.

- assist the recruiting effort and improve retention; and
- connect with the civilian community.

As it turned out, these ten tasks virtually defined what the Division's role would be throughout the first decade of the twenty-first century. Perhaps the only major elements it omitted from what the Division's future service would entail were counterinsurgency warfare and flexibility in Marines serving outside their original MOS's and units outside their traditional function. Colonel Ledoux's mission analysis of the sixth task, providing "homeland defense to assist civil authorities in national or emergency disasters," was especially prescient. The colonel considered this mission to be the "most likely" one. "This mission," he wrote, "ranges from major earthquakes in San Francisco, hurricanes in the Gulf, fires out west, riots in LA to a Weapons of Mass Destruction attack on a major city. This also is the mission most neglected—I currently assess this as a crucial vulnerability. Understanding how the reserves are mobilized for homeland defense, how to best integrate our capabilities into the civil structure and how to train for employment in likely scenarios are all tasks we must address in the future."<sup>4</sup>

In the first part of 2001, the deployment and training cycles were much like that of the year before. Twenty-third Marines, for instance, mobilized a detachment for Exercise Cooperative Determination, a Partnership for Peace exercise in Azerbaijan lasting 18 days. First Battalion, 24th Marines supported Operation Bilat with the Dutch Marines. Units throughout the Division, in fact, continued to support OCONUS operations and participate in company, battalion, and

MEU-size Annual Training exercises. Fourteenth Marines, just as in 2000, continued to prepare for its traditional function—deploying and fighting "as Force Artillery for a Marine Air Ground Task Force, while continuing to maintain battalions capable of augmenting or reinforcing active component artillery regiments."<sup>5</sup>

On 11 September 2001, terrorists belonging to the Al Qaeda organization launched massive terrorist attacks against the United States, killing nearly 3,000 people. Waves of shock, sadness, and outrage swept over the nation, followed shortly by a fierce determination to defend against future attacks and punish those responsible. President George W. Bush announced the beginning of a "war on terror" and, in his 2002 State of the Union address, identified three regimes constituting an "axis of evil" seeking to threaten the world by sponsoring terrorism and developing weapons of mass destruction. No one doubted that 4th MarDiv would play a very important role in the near future, but exactly what that role would be was unclear.

On the surface, much of the Division's training in 2002 continued as before. There were OCONUS operations, such as Cobra Gold/Freedom Banner (Thailand), Battle Griffin (Norway), Rescuer Medceur (Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia), Cooperative Key (France), Cooperative Adventure Exchange (Ukraine), and Ulchi Focus Lens (Korea). At Guantanamo Bay, two platoons of Company B, 1/23, continued to serve as a guard force until relieved in May by another platoon from Company B and two platoons from Company C. These Reserve Marines remained on active duty until December, when they were relieved by 4th MEB. Other units participated in CAX 7 and 8 and smaller CONUS-based training exercises as in years before, but throughout the Division local units gave greater attention to the possibility of imminent mobilizations.<sup>6</sup>

Reflecting the uncertainty in how the Division was to be utilized in the near future was the experience of the 25th Marines regimental headquarters, 2/25, and 2/23, all of whom were mobilized in early 2002. The 25th Marines regimental headquarters, located in Worcester, Massachusetts, mobilized in January 2002. These Marines deployed to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and participated in numerous command post exercises (CPX's) at Camp Lejeune and Fort Bragg, North Carolina. They demobilized in December 2002. Second Battalion, 25th Marines mobilized on 14 January 2002 and reported to Camp Lejeune six days later. In April, it was designated the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) for



Photo by SSgt Jeremy T. Lock, USAF

*Marines of Company D, 4th LAR Battalion (Quantico, VA) patrol the roads of Shoalwater Training Area, Queensland, Australia on 21 May, 2001 during Exercise Tandem Thrust, a combined U.S.-Australian military exercise.*



U.S. Marine Corps History Division



the East Coast. Over the next 12 months, various elements of the battalion trained at Camp Lejeune, at Fort Irwin, at Bridgeport, California, in Operation Rapid Guardian in Kosovo, in Portugal with Portuguese Marines, and in a wargame exercise known as Millennium Challenge 2002. Meanwhile, 2/23 mobilized on 4 February and reported to Camp Pendleton, California, 5 days later. Elements of the battalion trained at Fort Irwin, California, in Millennium Challenge 2002, at Bridgeport, California, and at George Air Force Base.<sup>7</sup>

The service of both these Reserve infantry battalions was unusual. Almost as soon as 2/25 was demobilized, it mobilized once again. Within a month of demobilizing in December 2002, 2/25 began receiving warning orders to prepare for a second mobilization. This required quick “turnaround” planning and the filling of critical billets vacated at the end of the last deployment. By 12 March, the battalion was back at Camp Lejeune and, within weeks, would find itself part of the 2003 invasion of Iraq in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Second Battalion, 23d Marines began the demobilization process in December, but did not complete it before its mobilization was extended for another year. Those Marines who had already been demobilized were called back to active duty. By February, the battalion was in Kuwait preparing to take part in the invasion of Iraq. In the case of both battalions, the active duty officers with whom they had worked throughout 2002 at Camp Lejeune and Camp Pendleton had developed so much confidence and familiarity with their reserve counterparts that they specifically requested that those units be directed to rejoin them.<sup>8</sup>

## Mobilizing for Operation Iraqi Freedom, 2003

In the winter and spring of 2003, 4th MarDiv began mobilizing a large share of its force to fight in Iraq as part of OIF, the Division’s largest combat mobilization since Operation Desert Shield/Storm. When Coalition forces crossed the line of departure into Iraqi territory on 20 March 2003, they were accompanied by two full battalions from 4th MarDiv and the equivalent of 10 more companies of infantry, tanks, reconnaissance, combat engineers, MPs, and communications Marines from the Division. Additionally, well before Baghdad had fallen, the Division had sent the bulk of four more combat arms battalions and a truck company into the fight.<sup>9</sup> By the time OIF ended over seven years later, the magnitude of the Division’s contribution to the Global



From Reynolds, *Basrah, Baghdad and Beyond*  
U.S. Marine Corps History Division, 2007.

War on Terrorism dwarfed that of 1990-91 and arguably matched that of World War II, as most units in the Division served in a combat zone not once but two, three, or more times. In the process, the Division completed a transformation in its role in national defense.

The identification of the first units that would mobilize for OIF began in the autumn of 2002. The decisions on which units would deploy were based largely on Status of Resources and Training System (SORTS) reports that assessed units’ readiness to deploy based on their manpower and equipment assets. A second factor, as mentioned earlier, was the preference of active duty commands for those reserve units they had already worked with in recent months. Major General John J. McCarthy, commanding general of 4th MarDiv, spent much of his time that fall visiting units that he knew would be activated to better determine and address their short-term needs. He also visited many other units throughout the Division to assess their needs as well.

Across the board, the most serious problem McCarthy found was the shortage of company-grade officers, an issue that will be discussed later. In a few



units, a shortage of staff noncommissioned officers (SNCOs) compounded the problem. Some infantry companies had only one officer. One assault amphibian (amtrack) company had no officers and no staff NCOs. The deployment of inspector-instructors and their staff and their integration into deploying reserve units became the norm, but only partially alleviated the problem. In terms of equipment, there were few if any serious issues. Throughout the Global War on Terrorism, 4th MarDiv units generally received new and updated equipment in a timely manner, usually shortly after active duty units. These included new ordnance such as the M16A4 rifle and new howitzer systems, uniforms, body armor, and individual load-bearing equipment. What was most plentiful of all, McCarthy found, was motivation, enthusiasm, and willingness to deploy. Everywhere he went, Marines from the rank of private first class (PFC) to field-grade officer asked when they would have the chance to join the fight. McCarthy believes that the “attitude and enthusiasm of Reserve Marines” almost always overcame any other serious concerns. In the case of the amtrack unit with no officers or staff NCOs, for example, the leadership vacuum contributed to a staggering (and unusual) UA rate of approximately 40 Marines missing per unit drill. Once the company was mobilized, however, all but three or four of the UA’s reported for duty.<sup>10</sup>

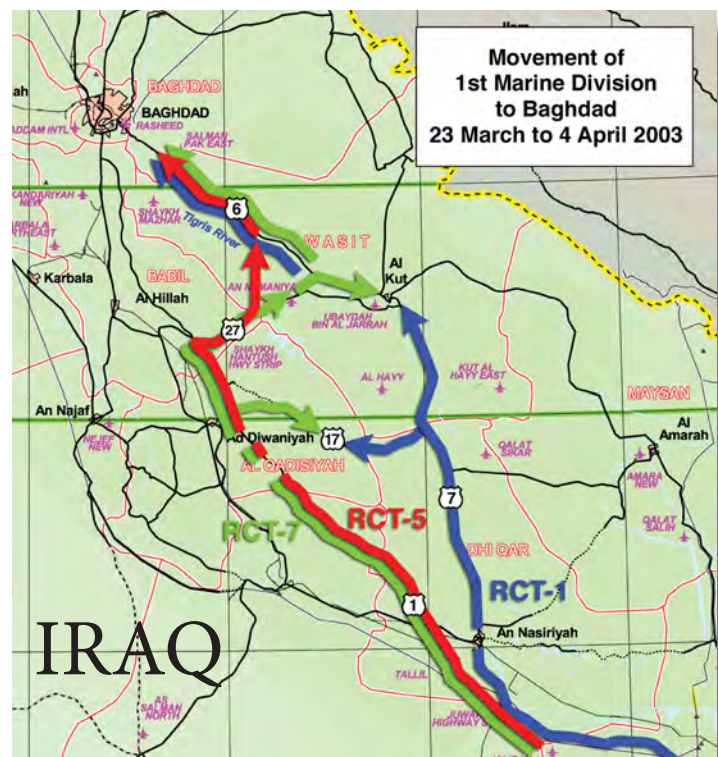
## Fourth Marine Division in the Fight for Iraq, 2003

Each of the Division’s elements that served in OIF-1 became part of I MEF, and most of them were in 1st MarDiv, the principal ground combat element of I MEF. A few served instead with 1st MAW or 1st FSSG. First Marine Division’s main elements were Regimental Combat Team 1 (RCT-1), RCT-5, RCT-7, 11th Marines, and 2d MEB, also known as Task Force Tarawa. What follows is a general overview of 1st MarDiv’s invasion of Iraq in the spring of 2003, followed by an abbreviated operational history of the 4th MarDiv units that participated in the campaign, later known as OIF-1.

RCT-1 began the campaign on the left flank of 1st MarDiv as it crossed into Iraq on 20 March. Its first major objective was Jalibah. Subsequently, it passed through the city of An Nasiriyah, though its passage was delayed until Task Force Tarawa could neutralize unexpectedly heavy resistance there. As RCT-1 passed

through An Nasiriyah on 25 March, the rest of 1st MarDiv bypassed the city to the west, and RCT-1 continued northward along Highway 7 in the direction of Al Kut. Meanwhile, the objectives of RCT-5 and RCT-7 were the oil fields of Ar Rumaylah and the gas and oil separation plant at Az Zubayr, respectively. These two regimental combat teams then advanced up Highway 1 to the west of An Nasiriyah and into the cities of Ad Diwaniyah and An Numaniyah. After RCT-1 captured Al Kut and RCT-5 and RCT-7 crossed to the eastern side of the Tigris River, the entire Division marched northwest toward Baghdad, eventually entering it from the southeast, east, and north. While most of the Division spent several weeks in April in Baghdad, several mechanized and armored units were detached to form “Task Force Tripoli.” This column continued northward another 100 miles to capture Tikrit, the hometown of Saddam Hussein and one of his most secure bases of political support. By mid- to late-May, most of 1st MarDiv was retrograding to Kuwait. However, some units, including elements originally from 4th MarDiv, remained to conduct stability and support operations throughout various areas of Iraq.<sup>11</sup>

After having its mobilization extended, 2/23 became part of RCT-1, making up one of the RCT’s



From Reynolds, *Basrah, Baghdad and Beyond*  
U.S. Marine Corps History Division, 2007.

four maneuver battalions. It crossed the border into Iraq with the rest of RCT-1 on 21 March. As 2/23 passed through An Nasiriyah between the Euphrates River and the Saddam Canal, Company G received and returned small-arms fire from enemy “tactical vehicles” paralleling the route and from dismounted enemy fighters. Later in the day, Companies E and F were engaged heavily with elements of the Iraqi 80th Brigade around the town of Al Gharraf. An active duty artillery unit, Battery A, 1/11, was near the point of being overwhelmed by superior forces when Company F counterattacked with a mobile assault culminating in an attack on a fortified building and defeated the enemy. The battery staff later personally thanked the Marines of Company F for their efforts.<sup>12</sup>

The next day, the battalion continued to move north through the towns of Ash Shatrah and an-Nasr, with Company E and elements of Weapons Company seizing and holding a key bridge at the latter town and capturing a large weapons cache. Between 27 and 30 March, the battalion conducted operations around the town of al-Fajr, including a raid on Baath Party headquarters that yielded another large weapons cache. In the following days, 2/23 operated around the Qalat Sukkar oil field, al-Kut, and an-Numaniyah as RCT-1 and the entire 1st MarDiv continued to push toward Baghdad. The bulk of the battalion fought in and around Baghdad from 4 to 22 April, capturing an Iraqi Air Force headquarters and the United Nations headquarters. At times, the enemy resistance was fierce. While battling enemy forces in Baghdad, Sergeant Scott C. Montoya of the battalion’s Scout-Sniper Platoon risked his life repeatedly to rescue Iraqi civilians and wounded Marines under fire, earning the Navy Cross. Company G, meanwhile, was attached to 1st LAR Battalion on 12 March as part of “Task Force Tripoli” and participated in the capture of Tikrit. The company attacked and cleared Hussein’s presidential palace complex in Tikrit on 14 March, and then helped conduct civil security and humanitarian operations. The battalion was reunited on 22 April and redeployed to Camp Pendleton, California, on 29 May. Second Battalion, 23d Marines demobilized in June after more than 16 months of active duty service. One of its Marines, Staff Sergeant James Cawley, lost his life in Iraq. In addition to Sergeant Montoya’s Navy Cross, Marines from 2/23 were awarded at least 4 Purple Hearts, 2 Navy-Marine Corps Commendation Medals with “V”

device denoting valor (“Combat V”), and 10 Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medals with Combat V.<sup>13</sup>

The other battalion from 4th MarDiv that contributed heavily to RCT-1’s combat power was 4th AA Battalion, though elements of the battalion served elsewhere. The entire battalion mobilized on 27 January and arrived in Kuwait in mid-February. Company A supported 3/1, while Company B supported 1/4 as RCT-1 fought its way through an-Nasiriyah, al-Kut, and into Baghdad. Marines from Headquarters and Services (H&S) Company were split up and assigned to various units. The battalion staff was integrated with that of 2d and 3d AA Battalions, while the rest of H&S Company’s Marines served either in combat or in maintenance and support roles. Companies C and D, along with some Marines from H&S Company, performed various missions during the march to Baghdad. They conducted security and screening operations to support Task Force Tarawa around al-Kut and also along the Iranian border. By the end of July, the entire battalion had returned to its home stations and demobilized. Three Marines from H&S Company were awarded Purple Hearts, one posthumously, while several more were decorated for valor.\* One Marine from Company A also received a Purple Heart.<sup>14</sup>

The majority of 8th Tank Battalion mobilized for OIF-1 and played a significant role in the campaign. The mobilization and initial deployment of Company A of Fort Knox, Kentucky, was a story in itself. The company mobilized on 10 January 2003, along with a detachment from H&S Company, 8th Tanks. Within a matter of 16 hours, Company A was enroute to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. When it departed the East Coast on amphibious shipping on 15 January, less than five days after its mobilization, it became the first Marine Corps tank company, active or reserve, to deploy for OIF-1. The compressed timetable created problems, however. As the company “fell in” on gear assigned to it at Camp Lejeune, it had no time to properly inventory it or conduct limited technical inspections (LTIs). Moreover, as the company embarked on amphibious shipping after its arrival at Camp Lejeune, it was split into three detachments. With communications among the company staff thus hampered, it was some time before it became clear that 10 of the 14 tanks the company had received were deadlined until resourceful

\* The deceased Marine, LCpl Andrew Aviles, was killed on 7 April 2003 by hostile fire.

## Navy Cross Citation for Sergeant Scott C. Montoya

The President of the United States  
Takes Pleasure in Presenting  
The NAVY CROSS  
To  
SERGEANT  
SCOTT C. MONTOKA  
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

For Services as Set Forth in the Following Citation:

For extraordinary heroism while serving as a Scout Sniper, Scout Sniper Platoon, 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force in Support of Operation Iraqi Freedom on 8 April 2003. During the battle for Baghdad, Sergeant Montoya's sniper team arrived within Company F's position as they came under heavy small arms fire from a determined enemy force. He immediately encouraged Marines to deploy and return fire. Noticing a disabled civilian vehicle on the road in the line of fire and with complete disregard for his own life, he rushed forward amidst a hail of gunfire and dragged a wounded Iraqi civilian to safety. Returning to the front, he spotted a wounded Marine struggling to get off the same fire swept street, he risked his life to lead the Marine to safety. Returning to the front, he spotted a wounded Marine lying in the street. Ignoring the hailstorm of bullets, Sergeant Montoya rushed into the street for a third time to carry the injured Marine to safety. Sergeant Montoya returned a fourth time to evacuate an unconscious Marine. Returning to the front again, he dashed into the contested street and assisted a Marine to safety who had been dazed by an explosion. Sergeant Montoya ensured medical attention was administered and verified that evacuations were ongoing. By his outstanding display of decisive leadership, unlimited courage in the face of heavy enemy fire, and utmost devotion to duty, Sergeant Montoya reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

and hard-working maintenance personnel could repair them.<sup>15</sup>

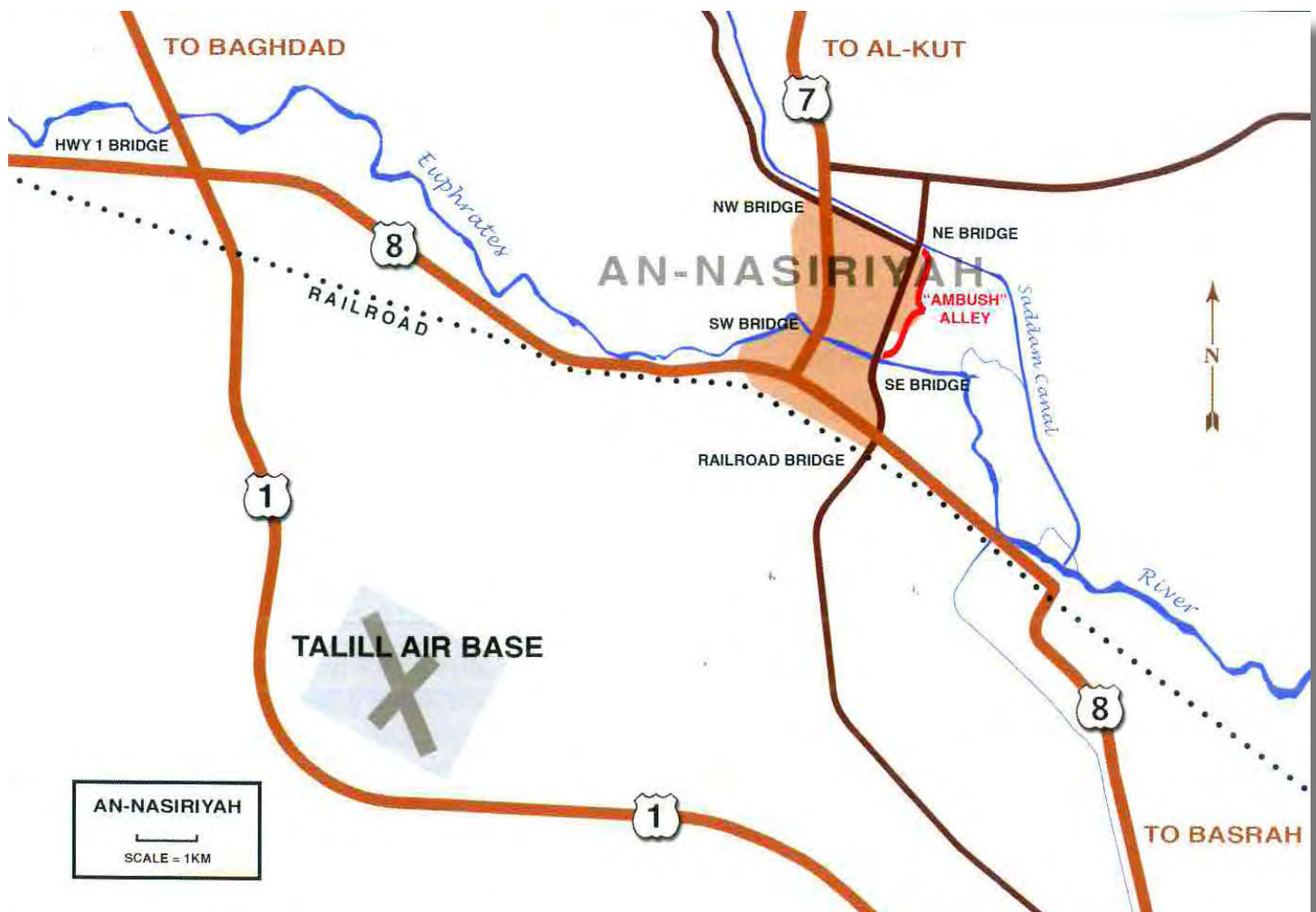
Company A was attached to 2d MEB (or Task Force Tarawa),\* which in turn was built around the nucleus of RCT-2. While aboard ship, the company maximized the available training time and prepared for Task Force Tarawa's first important mission—securing bridges in the vicinity of An-Nasiriyah to facilitate the advance of 1st MarDiv, while preserving the Division's combat power. The company arrived in Kuwait with the rest of 2d MEB in mid-February. Before its final approach into An Nasiriyah on 23 March, the company was split so that its elements helped constitute “Team Tank” and “Team Mech” of Task Force Tarawa. Besides a few humvees belonging to the Combined Anti-Armor Team of 1/2, Team Tank was the lead element as Task Force Tarawa approached the city. Just a few kilometers south of the city, Major William P. Peeples, commander of Company A, met a smoking humvee travelling toward him. One of the passengers was Captain Troy K. King, commander of the U.S. Army's 507th Maintenance Company. The Army maintenance company had taken a wrong turn and entered An Nasiriyah before any other Coalition forces. Unfortunately, the unit had been ambushed at several locations. The visibly distressed Captain King informed Peeples that his unit had suffered significant casualties and that much of his company was pinned down to the north and in need of medical assistance and rescue. It later developed that one of the soldiers captured by enemy forces was PFC Jessica Lynch, whose fate attracted international media attention.

Major Peeples had difficulty contacting higher headquarters by radio and decided on his own initiative to lead a column to rescue the stricken soldiers. The tankers and other Marines with them were able to rescue 10 soldiers and bring them back to Marine lines. From that point on, Company A, 8th Tank Battalion, played a significant role in the 11-day fight for An Nasiriyah. The tanks helped secure the city's eastern bridges over the Euphrates River and the Saddam Canal. They provided critical combat power as they helped mounted infantry units traverse “Ambush Alley”—the stretch of highway between the two

---

\* As it turned out, the use of the term “Task Force Tarawa” was not simply a matter of applying a distinctive nickname for 2d MEB. It also reflected reality. At various points in the campaign, the organization was stripped of its air support and combat service support elements, so that it became simply a ground maneuver element rather than a MAGTF or MEB.





Map by Vincent Martinez

*Movement of Task Force Tarawa*

From Rod Andrew Jr.'s, *An-Nasiriyah* (U.S. Marine Corps History Division, 2009)

bridges—and led at least one other foray into the city to rescue stranded Marines.<sup>16</sup>

On 2 April 2003, 3d Platoon of Company A participated in the operation to rescue PFC Lynch. During the next few weeks, the company continued to serve with 2d MEB as the latter marched north up Highway 1 to support the advance on Baghdad. Later the MEB and Company A moved to the vicinity of al-Amarah, just a few kilometers from the Iranian border, then returned northwest to accept the capitulation of enemy forces at al-Kut. Between 2 and 5 May, Company A retrograded to Kuwait, having traveled over 700 miles, engaging in fierce combat with enemy armor and infantry, and suffering one minor casualty. The company returned to Fort Knox on 1 July and demobilized on 2 August.<sup>17</sup>

The other elements of 8th Tank Battalion that mobilized for OIF-1 were Company B of Syracuse, New York, and the TOW and Scout Platoons of Hialeah, Florida. Company B mobilized on 14 January and was

joined by TOW and Scout Platoons, 8th Tanks when it reported to Camp Lejeune on 21 January. Company B became part of 2d Tank Battalion, and was temporarily renamed Company D, 2d Tank Battalion, RCT-5. The TOW and Scout platoons integrated with the TOW and Scout sections of 2d Tanks. A week after crossing the border into Iraq and capturing the Ar Rumaylah oil fields, Company D and the TOW and Scout Platoons were engaged in heavy combat with the enemy around Ad Diwaniyah, some 170 miles northeast of the oil fields. By 3 April, they were in a fierce fight north of Al Numaniyah, where one Marine from Scout Platoon was wounded. On 4 April, five Marines from TOW Platoon were wounded in fighting at At Tuwayhah, south of Saddam City. Over the next several days, the Reserve Marines attached to 2d Tank Battalion participated in heavy fighting in Baghdad. As the occupation and pacification of Baghdad continued, Company D and the TOW and Scout Platoon Marines were attached to Task Force Tripoli for the attack on Tikrit.





Photo from 2d MEB Command Chronology, Disk 5, Gray Research Center, Marine Corps University, Quantico, VA.

*A tank from Company A, 8th Tank Battalion, patrols a street in an-Nasiriyah in late March-early April 2003. Company A played a key role in securing the city and key bridges in it for the use of Coalition forces.*

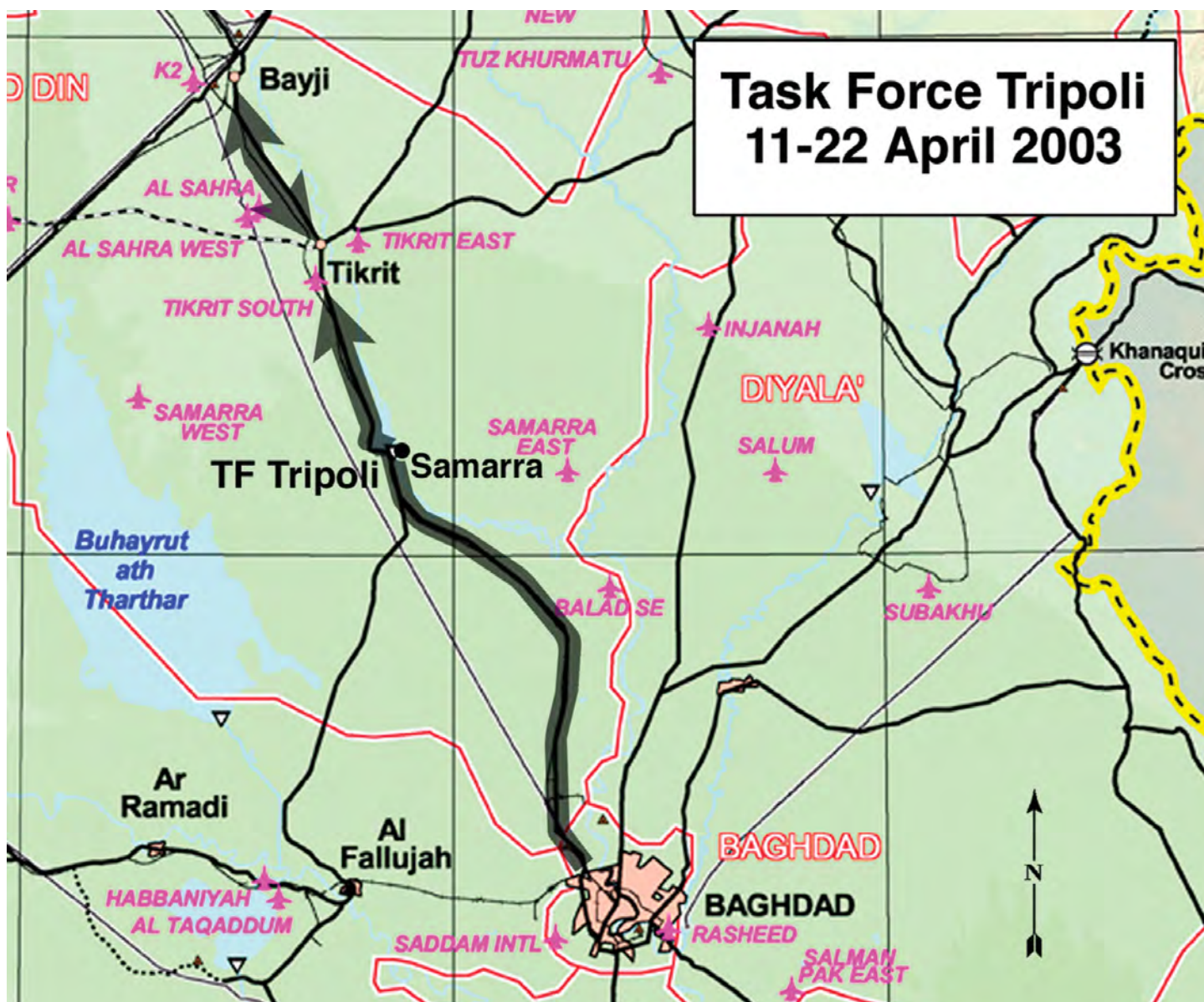
This made Company D the northernmost Coalition armor unit in the campaign. Upon reaching Hussein's hometown, Company D set the Marine Corps record of a 500-mile armor attack from Kuwait to Tikrit. On 25 April, Company D and the TOW and Scout Marines rejoined 2d Tank Battalion. By 25 May, they were back in Camp Matilda, Kuwait; they returned to Camp Lejeune on 3 June and demobilized later that month. The two units together had lost one Marine killed, Lance Corporal Eric J. Orlowski, and at least seven were wounded.<sup>18</sup>

Fourth Marine Division, of course, had two tank battalions at the time rather than one, and 4th Tank Battalion played a direct role in OIF-1 as well. Company D, 4th Tanks, based in Riverside, California, mobilized on 14 January. When word came of the company's mobilization in January, the company staff immediately began close coordination with 1st Tank Battalion, to which the company would be attached. It was decided to spread Company D's Marines throughout the existing line companies (A, B, and C) of 1st Tanks. Meanwhile, 4th Tank's TOW Platoon in Amarillo, Texas, mobilized one antitank TOW section that was also attached to 1st Tanks, reinforcing the latter unit's TOW Platoon. First Tank Battalion, along with

its Reserve augmentees, was part of RCT-7.

The tankers and antitank Marines from 4th Tanks arrived in Kuwait at the end of February and participated in the opening stages of the ground war. They were assigned to destroy Iraqi armor units located in and around the vital gas-oil separation plant and pumping station at Az Zubayr. As part of 1st Tanks, the Reserve Marines helped destroy 4 enemy tanks, 10 armored personnel carriers, 3 trucks, and 3 artillery pieces. When the United Kingdom's 1st Armoured Division relieved RCT-7 in the Basrah-Az Zubayr region, they supported RCT-7's attack north up Highway 1. Particularly after the seizure of Ad Diwaniyah, resistance from Iraqi regular troops and irregular forces increased, and 1st Tanks fought in numerous engagements. The unit ultimately entered Baghdad and played an essential role in clearing neighborhoods throughout the capital city, particularly near the Palestine Hotel. Upon returning to Kuwait, the Marines from 4th Tank Battalion detached from 1st Tank Battalion, returned to CONUS, and demobilized in June after five months of active duty, fortunately with no loss of life.<sup>19</sup>

All of 4th LAR Battalion mobilized for OIF-1 and fought in Iraq. Companies A and B mobilized on 3 February and deployed to Kuwait between 16 and 22



From Reynolds, *Basrah, Baghdad and Beyond* (U.S. Marine Corps History Division, 2007)

February. Company A spent most of its time attached to 1st LAR Battalion, RCT-5, though at times it operated in direct support of 1st MarDiv. Company A participated in RCT-5's march on Baghdad. Company B was attached to 3d LAR Battalion, RCT-7, and also played an important combat role from the Ar Rumaylah oil fields to Baghdad. The remainder of 4th LAR Battalion—Companies C, D, and H&S Company—mobilized on 8 March. The battalion departed CONUS for Kuwait on 2 April and entered Iraq on 9 May, where it was attached to Task Force Tarawa. The three companies conducted security and screening operations in al-Kut and along the Iranian border in support of Task Force Tarawa.

In early May, Company C detached from its parent command and returned to CONUS—not to demobi-

lize but to redeploy to Okinawa, Japan, as part of the Unit Deployment Program, thus further relieving the operational tempo for active units. Companies A and B, meanwhile, rejoined 4th LAR Battalion. Between April and September, the battalion continued to conduct combat and stability and security operations in Iraq to include patrolling, peacekeeping, and screening operations in al-Kut and near the Iranian border and service with Task Force Scorpion in the northern Babil Province. Most of the battalion returned to the United States in September and demobilized either in that month or in October. Company C, however, did not return from Okinawa and demobilize until December.<sup>20</sup>

Fourth Force Reconnaissance Company, with one detachment in Kaneohe, Hawaii, and another in



Reno, Nevada, mobilized two platoons for OIF-1. Both platoons were mobilized in January. The Reno detachment became 9th Platoon, 1st Recon, while the Hawaiian Marines became 10th Platoon, also attached to 1st Recon. These two platoons conducted a wide variety of missions, including raids on terrorist training camps and known terrorist assassins and leaders, Baath Party headquarters, convoy security, and reconnaissance and surveillance. During July and August, they supported operations by Task Force Scorpion, especially in the areas around Sadr al-Yusufiyah and al-Haswah. They detained or wounded numerous enemy combatants and destroyed a concealed SA-2 surface-to-air missile site. Both detachments returned to their home training centers (HTCs) in September. Two Marines from 4th Force Recon were awarded Purple Hearts for their service in Iraq in 2003, though fortunately none were killed.<sup>21</sup>

Fourth Recon Battalion mobilized two companies for OIF-1: Company C of San Antonio, Texas, and Company D of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Company C mobilized on 10 January and was in Camp Lejeune by 13 January. There Company C attached to 2d Force Reconnaissance Company, Task Force Tarawa, and arrived in Kuwait in mid-February. After crossing the border into Iraq, the company participated in Task Force Tarawa's securing of the bridges in and west of An Nasiriyah. Company C Marines conducted multiple patrols in and around the city as well as the area around Suq Ash Shuyukh, a city southeast of An-Nasiriyah. They played an integral role in the nighttime evacuation of 30 wounded Marines in Ambush Alley. Company C, as part of 2d Force Reconnaissance Company, also briefed and supported other special operations forces during the rescue of PFC Lynch. It later participated in actions around Ash Shumali, al-Amarah, and al-Kut. Company C embarked on the USS *Bataan* in mid-May for its return home and demobilized in June.<sup>22</sup>

Company D, 4th Recon Battalion mobilized on 3 February. It was attached to 1st Recon Battalion, which supported 1st MarDiv's advance on Baghdad. The Marines of Company D performed mobile reconnaissance missions along with screening and blocking and humanitarian operations. They saw significant fighting near the town of Baqubah and later provided security for vital energy facilities near Baghdad. On 10 June, they returned home to a joyful welcome in Albuquerque.<sup>23</sup>

Headquarters Battalion, 4th MarDiv contributed

three companies to OIF-1. The Military Police (MP) Company from Twin Cities, Minnesota, mobilized on 25 January and arrived in Kuwait on 13 February. Initially it was under the operational control of 2d AA Battalion, but at various times in its deployment it would come under control of RCT-5, 3d AA Battalion, and Headquarters Battalion, 1st MarDiv. MP Company, 4th MarDiv helped facilitate and direct the movement of 1st MarDiv units to their attack positions prior to crossing the line of departure, and also manned the breach sites to be used at the Iraqi border by RCT-5. As the invasion progressed, the company conducted route reconnaissance and selected and patrolled main supply routes throughout the Division's march to Baghdad. Once in Baghdad, MP Marines secured a bridge over the Diyala River on the eastern side of the city and patrolled one of its suburbs, Alwan al-Hamid.

As I MEF conducted retrograde operations, MP Company, 4th MarDiv spent the period from 10 May to 28 June inspecting and clearing baggage and cargo for customs inspections prior to their return to the United States. The company's Marines completed customs inspections for 2,180 containers and the baggage of 10,666 personnel, as well as vehicle inspections. From 30 June to 22 September, the company provided the camp commandant and camp guard for Camp Matilda in Kuwait. MP Company closed Camp Matilda on 22 September and returned to Minneapolis four days later, one of the last units to return home. Shortly after being demobilized, the company received an "alert message" announcing the intent to mobilize the company again. By the end of the year, the company's Marines received orders to report for mobilization on 5 January 2004 for further service in Iraq.<sup>24</sup>

Communications Company, Headquarters Battalion, 4th MarDiv, based in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Indianapolis, Indiana, mobilized on 29 January. It was initially attached to 1st Communications Company, 1st MarDiv, and arrived in Kuwait around 21 February. The Reserve communications Marines were subsequently sent out in small detachments to support regimental, battalion, and squadron-size units throughout I MEF. They returned home on 15 June and demobilized on 11 July.<sup>25</sup>

The third company from Headquarters Battalion to mobilize for OIF-1 was Truck Company from Erie, Pennsylvania. Truck Company's Marines departed Erie for Camp Lejeune on 17 March; upon arrival in Kuwait, they were attached to 2d Transportation Battalion, 2d FSSG and served throughout I MEF. The unit's

first Marines began returning home on 6 June, but the entire company was not home in Pennsylvania until 13 September. Three of its Marines earned the Combat Action Ribbon in Iraq.<sup>26</sup>

Besides Communications Company and Truck Company, there were several other 4th MarDiv units that served in I MEF, but not in 1st MarDiv. Fourth Combat Engineer Battalion mobilized 29 Marines, mostly from H&S Company, for OIF-1 on 12 January. (Three additional Marines from Engineer Support Company mobilized to support JTF Djibouti.) The Iraq-bound detachment arrived in Kuwait in February and augmented the staff of the I MEF Engineer Group, or MEG, under the command of Rear Admiral Charles R. Kubic of the First Naval Construction Division, which in turn was part of 1st FSSG. They advised the Naval Construction Division on how Marine air-ground task forces, such as I MEF operate. The MEG succeeded in its mission of ensuring there was adequate bridging for I MEF's use at critical points over the Euphrates River, the Saddam Canal, the Tigris River, and the Diyala River. I MEF forces were able to seize bridges over the first three waterways intact. Iraqi demolitions, however, caused some delay in crossing the Diyala River. Engineers quickly overcame this problem so that 1st MarDiv could enter Baghdad. In the latter part of their deployment, the deployed Marines of 4th Combat Engineer Battalion assisted in the construction and repair of bridges, schools, hospitals, water purification plants, and port facilities. They returned home in June.<sup>27</sup>

Another unit that served in 1st FSSG rather than 1st MarDiv was Battery A, 1st Battalion, 14th Marines from Aurora, Colorado. The battery mobilized in March and was given the mission of a mortuary affairs company. Battery A reported to Camp Pendleton, California, on 18 March and received further training from then until 13 April. On 14 April, the main body arrived in Kuwait and was divided into 15-man squads. While in Iraq, these squads performed their mortuary affairs mission and also conducted security patrols. Battery A's Marines returned home in three contingents. The first two groups arrived via different ships in July. A third smaller contingent continued to serve with I MEF and returned home in mid-October.<sup>28</sup>

Company B, 1/24, in Saginaw, Michigan, mobilized on 26 February along with Marines from 1/24's H&S and Weapons Companies. These Marines deployed to Kuwait on 17 March and were attached to 2d MP Battalion, Marine Logistics Command (MLC).

Their first mission was providing security for Logistics Support Area (LSA) Fox, the largest Marine Corps ammunition depot in the world at that time. Later they also provided convoy security for MLC convoys to LSA Viper and other points in Iraq. Company B continued performing these duties until its return to Saginaw on 25 October.

Company C, 1/24 mobilized at its HTC in Lansing, Michigan, on 27 February and arrived in Kuwait on 18 March, where it joined Marine Wing Support Group 37 (MWSG-37). Throughout the march on Baghdad, Company C provided security for forward arming and refueling points (FARPs) and forward operating bases (FOBs) for MWSG-37. More often than not, the individual platoons deployed in support different FARPs concurrently, so that by the end of April, the company at provided security at 12 different FARPs/FOBs. Once FARPs were established, the platoons conducted mobile patrols and established blocking positions and perimeter defenses, receiving hostile fire on multiple occasions. After the conclusion of major combat operations in early May, the company secured the FARP at Ad Diwaniyah and the airfield at Al Kut. In early June, it relieved Company G, 2/6 aboard Camp Commando and began executing mounted patrols, vehicular and personnel searches, and a perimeter defense around Camp Commando. In October, Company C redeployed to Lansing.<sup>29</sup>

Besides the Reserve units that crossed the line of departure with 1st MarDiv on 20 March, there were several other 4th MarDiv units that played a combat role with 1st MarDiv as follow-on forces. These included the bulk of 4th LAR Battalion, MP Company, and elements of Communication Company, whose service has already been described, but also the infantry battalions 2/25 and 3/23. These units not only eventually participated in combat operations in Iraq but also contributed to the stability and support (SASO) operations that became the focus in the latter stages of the campaign.

As related earlier, 2/25 was remobilized in March 2003 shortly after its one-year mobilization in 2002. It arrived in Kuwait on 30 March and was attached to 15th MEU, which by that point was part of Task Force Tarawa near an-Nasiriyah. As the rest of Task Force Tarawa continued north on 3 April, after its fighting in an-Nasiriyah, the city was left in the hands of 2/25. The local police, sanitation, and fire departments in the city were either destroyed or badly looted. While restoring order, helping to rebuild, and providing humanitarian





Photo by Sgt Nicholas S. Hizer, USMC

*SSgt Douglas George, Weapons Company, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, gives a local schoolgirl in an-Nasiriyah a toy during Operation Iraqi Freedom, 9 June 2003.*

assistance in the city, the Marines occasionally received and returned hostile fire as well. Shortly after taking control of the city, 2/25 succeeded in ensuring that the city enjoyed the benefits of electric power 23 hours a day, far more than it had had under Hussein's rule. This success contributed immensely to security and to winning the hearts and minds of the local citizens.

Between early April and July, 2/25 became the primary combat arms Coalition unit bringing stability to the city of an-Nasiriyah and eventually the entire Dhi Qar province. With 2/25 being the only law enforcement entity in the city, its commander, Lieutenant Colonel Robert C. Murphy, directed the establishment of a new police department. Many of the Marines in the battalion worked in law enforcement in their civilian occupations, including two officers on the battalion staff, one of whom was an agent for the Federal Bureau of Investigation and another who was a New York City police officer. These officers along with other Marines of the battalion recruited, trained, and built a new police force. On 10 May, Lieutenant Colonel Murphy became the military governing authority for the entire Dhi Qar Province and 2/25 assumed the security mission for the province.

As 2/25's successes in restoring order and stability mounted, the battalion was given more reinforcements and assets to expand its mission. During the month of May, the U.S. Army's 402 Civil Affairs Brigade attached to 2/25, greatly enhancing the battalion's ability to provide civil affairs assistance to the city. The battalion was also augmented by Human Exploitation Team (HET) 17. This facilitated a number of raid operations in search of Iraqi war criminals, former Ba'ath Party members, Fedayeen militants, al-Qaeda terrorists, Iranian insurgents and local criminals, yielding approximately 20 prisoners. Soon 11 nongovernmental organizations were working to provide and restore services in Dhi Qar Province, with 2/25 providing security for all of them. On 20 July, 2/25's Marines turned over control of the area to Italian forces, having left Dhi Qar province far safer and secure than they had found it. By the end of the month, the battalion had returned to the United States and the majority of its Marines demobilized on 23 August.<sup>30</sup>

Third Battalion, 23d Marines was largely involved in SASO operations during its time in Iraq. The battalion mobilized on 5 March and spent approximately six weeks at Twentynine Palms, California, training and preparing for deployment. It arrived in Kuwait over a five-day period between 24 and 28 April. By 2 May, 3/23 was conducting SASO operations in Wasit Prov-



Photo by Sgt Nicholas S. Hizer, USMC

*Maj James Schutta, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines and the Chief of Police, Colonel Hassen, promote one of the outstanding officers in an-Nasiriyah during Operation Iraqi Freedom, 20 May 2003.*



Photo by Cpl Anthony J. Adamson, USMC

*A Marine from Company L, 3d Battalion, 23d Marines (Montgomery, Alabama) provides security and assistance for a local bank during a pension payday to retirees and widows in al-Kut, Iraq, 7 June 2003.*

ince, including the cities of al-Kut, Az Zubaydiyah, As Suwayrah, al-Haay, Badrah, al-Azizyah, and an-Numaniyah. The Marines of 3/23 conducted mounted and dismounted patrols, vehicle checkpoints, searches, public infrastructure protection, security for Blair Airfield in al-Kut, heliborne patrols along the Iranian border, and raids to capture suspected terrorist leaders. They apprehended dozens of terrorist leaders, insurgents, and criminals. One raid 30 miles south of Baghdad resulted in the seizure of over 2,000 Katyusha rockets and several hundred land mines; another raid led to the discovery and destruction of 8,000 pounds of explosives and munitions in As Suwayrah. The Marines also supervised mayoral and city council elections in an-Numaniyah, led reconstruction projects, and assisted in the reactivation of the Wasit Province Police. Though 3/23 suffered no fatalities, the work was dangerous, with patrols often receiving hostile fire. Near the end of August, 3/23 turned over its duties to Ukrainian forces and retrograded back to Kuwait. Each company returned to its HTC on 27 September and demobilized shortly afterward.<sup>31</sup>

In reviewing 4th MarDiv's contributions to the Global War on Terrorism in 2003, this narrative has so

far focused exclusively on those units that deployed to Iraq. As important as those deployments were, they do not capture the entirety of the Division's contribution. Several units deployed to other overseas locations, relieving pressure on the active force. Two examples will suffice to illustrate the point. As explained earlier, 1/24 deployed Companies B and C to Iraq in 2003, as well as elements of H&S and Weapons Companies. Meanwhile, Company A and most of the remainder of H&S and Weapons Companies deployed for seven months to Djibouti in the Horn of Africa in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Additionally, a few personnel supported Operation Ulchi Focus Lens in South Korea from 26 July to 1 September.

While 1/25 did not deploy any units to Iraq, it mobilized and spent a full year on active duty relieving operational commitments of the active force. The battalion mobilized on 15 January, trained at Camp Lejeune, and supplied one company on a rotating basis to 2d MarDivi as the Quick Reaction Force. In June, the battalion deployed to Okinawa as part of the Unit Deployment Program. A large detachment from Company C served in Bahrain from August to November as security details for Maritime Prepositioning Shipping



(MPS). First Battalion, 25th Marines did not return to its HTC in New England until 18-19 December and demobilized on 15 January 2004. Thus, 1/25 served on active duty longer than most of the units that were deployed to Iraq and significantly contributed to the war effort by relieving active duty units of deployment rotation requirements.<sup>31</sup>

Even units that did not deploy often contributed manpower to those units that did. Moreover, it is safe to say that every unit in the Division intensified its training and gave renewed attention to its embarkation and mobilization procedures as it prepared for the day when it may have to deploy as well. Future events in Iraq would soon justify that increased anticipation and vigilance.

## Fourth Marine Division in 2004—Back to Iraq

By 1 December 2003, nearly every Marine Corps unit involved in OIF had returned home. The lone exception was Company C, 4th LAR Battalion, Salt Lake City, Utah. It returned to Utah on 18 December, making it the last Marine Corps unit, active or reserve, to return to its home station after serving in Iraq.<sup>33</sup> By the end of the year, there were less than 250 Marines remaining in Iraq.<sup>34</sup>

Even as 4th MarDiv Marines were reunited with their loved ones, however, it was becoming clear that the battle for the future for Iraq was not over. By November, planners were already identifying units

that would be assigned to I MEF for the second phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom, soon known as OIF-2. The first battalion from 4th MarDiv to be mobilized for OIF-2 and to arrive in Iraq in 2004 would be 3d Battalion, 24th Marines, while MP Company, Headquarters Battalion, mobilized on 5 January—its second mobilization.\* Later in the year, other units from the Division would follow, including the infantry units 1/23 and 2/24. The Division's artillery regiment, 14th Marines, provided its counter-battery radar platoon; two provisional truck platoons provided by headquarters battery, 2/14; Battery P, 5/14; all of 4/14, and eventually the bulk of 5/14. As will be explained later, most of these artillery units, with the exception of the counter-battery radar platoon and Battery M, 4/14, did not serve in their traditional artillery role but adapted themselves to other missions, such as route security and motor transport, military police, and provisional infantry. By the end of March 2004, some 5,800 Marine Reservists were on active duty, a large portion of them from 4th MarDiv, and over 80 percent of those Marines were in Iraq. Many were individual augmentees detached from their parent reserve units to serve with active-duty units or were Marines activated from the Individual Ready Reserve. By 31 July, 10,929 Marine Reservists were on active duty.<sup>35</sup>

Third Battalion, 24th Marines, would be one of seven battalions—six active duty and one reserve—making up the core of the ground combat element of I MEF in early 2004. Led by Lieutenant General James T. Conway, I MEF's assignment was to take over operational control and responsibility for Iraq's al-Anbar Province from the U.S. Army's 82d Airborne Division in March. Anbar would soon become the deadliest province in Iraq for the American military—between 2003 and 2007, fighting in Anbar resulted in roughly a third of all American deaths in Iraq. Several factors made Anbar particularly dangerous and difficult to control. It is Iraq's largest province, encompassing a vast area approximately the size of California, from the western outskirts of Baghdad to the borders of Syria and Jordan in the far west of the country. Most of it is sparsely populated desert. The need to patrol this vast area created opportunities for insurgents to attack American vehicles with improvised explosive devices (IEDs). However, there was a long band of territory extending several miles on either side of the Euphrates

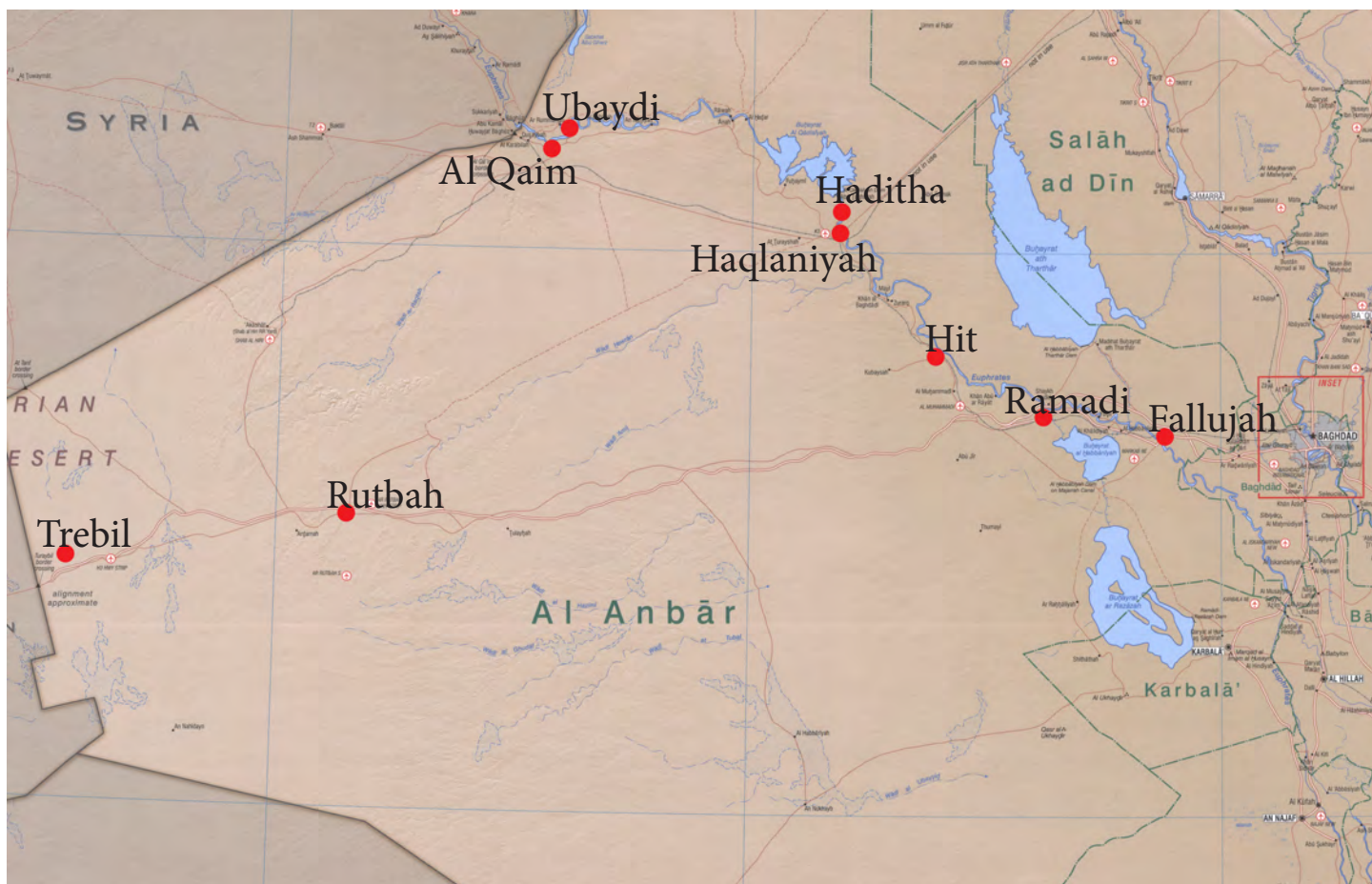


Photo by GySgt Hugh Tyhsen, USMCR

*LCpl Esteban Teran from Headquarters and Support Company, 3d Battalion, 24th Marines, clears a building that had been destroyed by an airstrike in the vicinity of al-Habbiniyah, Iraq, during Operation Vigilant Reslove (First Battle of Fallujah) 18 April 2004. Violence throughout the greater Fallujah area spiked during the operation, and 3/24 responded with increased patrolling and clearing missions.*

---

\* MP Company, 4th Marine Division operated the detention facility in Ramadi during this tour in Iraq (Estes, 28)



Map by Central Intelligence Agency

*Al-Anbar Province, Iraq with select cities indicated.*

River that was lush and densely populated, including several major cities and towns, such as Fallujah, Ramadi, Habbaniyah, Hit, and Haditha. These builtup areas ensured that much of the Marines' service in Iraq would consist of urban combat. For centuries, smugglers had used the river valley as an infiltration route, and now it served the same purpose for foreign fighters bringing in supplies, ammunition, and reinforcements from the Syrian border into the heart of Iraq. Moreover, due to tribal loyalties and Iraqi history, residents of Anbar Province were among the Iraqis most likely to oppose the presence of Coalition forces. As a predominantly Sunni region in Shi'ia-majority Iraq, the province had served as a critical base of support for the residents' fellow Sunni, Saddam Hussein, and was most likely to resent his overthrow and the establishment of a Shi'ia-led regime.<sup>36</sup>

Third Battalion, 24th Marines consisted of companies based out of Missouri, Tennessee, and Indiana. The battalion learned in December 2003, that it would be mobilized the following month, and the Marines reported on 5 January 2004. They spent six weeks at

their Intermediate Location (ILOC) in Camp Pendleton, California, receiving immunizations, updated uniforms and equipment, and additional training, including a crash course in SASO operations. This training attempted to simulate an environment in which Marines had to be prepared to operate against deadly insurgents and suicide bombers, while almost simultaneously interacting with peaceful civilians. Small-unit leaders down to the fire-team level had to be prepared to make difficult decisions that could not only affect the safety of their fellow Marines but also have consequences at the strategic level and reverberations in the court of popular opinion in Iraq and around the world.

The SASO training was fortunate, for that was exactly the mission assigned to the battalion once it arrived in Anbar Province. The four companies were assigned to provide security at four separate sites. Company I would provide security for Camp Fallujah, the headquarters for I MEF and 1st MarDiv located 10 kilometers east of Fallujah. The Company I Marines dramatically improved the physical defenses of Camp Fallujah, took charge of perimeter security, controlled



the base's three entry control points (ECPs), and provided a quick reaction force (QRF) to respond to attacks or imminent threats.<sup>37</sup>

Company K was assigned to assist Army personnel guarding the Abu Ghraib prison facility, made infamous only two months before by the brutal behavior of previous Army guards. After discussions between Company K's officers and their Army counterparts, the latter quickly realized the advantages of turning over all force protection and security tasks to a Marine rifle company. Company K Marines took charge of the base's external guard towers, ECPs, QRF, and a mortar team made ready to respond quickly to enemy indirect fire attacks. They hardened the base's defenses with sandbags, miles of concertina wire, and cleared and charted fields of fire. Abu Ghraib had become a popular target for insurgent attacks, and the Marines defended the facility against several enemy mortar, rocket, and small arms attacks. They engaged enemy fighters in several firefights both at Abu Ghraib and during convoy operations. On 24 March, elements of

2d Platoon engaged insurgents that had ambushed an Army convoy near Taji and killed four enemy fighters.<sup>38</sup>

Weapons Company as well as the headquarters element and H & S Company helped defend the 1st FSSG support base at Camp Taqaddum, Iraq. Company L performed security duties at the large air base at al-Asad, home of the 3d MAW. Its Marines frequently patrolled nearby neighborhoods, providing a "security blanket" to the base as its only infantry unit. The company also provided security for dozens of convoys between al-Asad other bases. For three weeks, the company relieved an active-duty unit in the Haditha-Hit area, allowing it to fight with its parent battalion in Fallujah. During that time, the company found several enemy weapons caches, two of them the largest that had been yet located in Anbar Province. It saw combat in Hit, Haditha, and the town of Baghdadi, and had one Marine wounded by an IED.<sup>39</sup>

As a future inspector-instructor for the battalion explained, 3/24's mission was not a "sexy" mission, but



Photo by LCpl Richard A. Hilario, USMC

*Sgt Jeremiah R. Cable, Company A, 1st Battalion, 23d Marines, sights his 5.56mm M16A4 rifle on a target as fellow sniper Sgt Adam V. Scheele watches, Ar Rutbah, Anbar Province, 30 December 2004.*

it was absolutely critical.<sup>40</sup> By providing convoy security and force protection at numerous locations, the battalion contributed significantly to the fight in Anbar. And though they usually did not find themselves in firefights on a daily basis, the duties of its Marines were dangerous enough, unfortunately, to result in several casualties. Company I's Corporal Brad P. McCormick of Overton, Tennessee, for example, was killed outside Fallujah on 19 August. The 23-year-old McCormick and several other Marines were returning from a mission in which they had confiscated enemy weapons when their vehicle struck an IED, killing McCormick and gravely wounding several others. At least 11 of 3/24 Marines were wounded during the deployment. Before the year was over, the battalion's S-1 administration section had processed 250 Combat Action Ribbons, 6 Navy Commendation Medals with Combat V, and 2 Navy Achievement Medals with Combat V.<sup>41</sup>

Third Battalion, 24th Marines, as the only 4th MarDiv unit in contact with the enemy in the first half of 2004, performed its security mission well. Before the battalion's tour in Iraq was half over, other 4th MarDiv units were already mobilizing and preparing to deploy. Several of them would be given more challenging, and ultimately more lethal, assignments.

First Battalion, 23d Marines, called the "Lonestar Battalion" because several of its companies were based in Texas, officially relieved 2/7, in "Area of Operations (AO) Denver," Anbar Province, on 18 September. The Lonestar Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colo-

nel Gregory B. Stevens, was responsible for patrolling a vast area stretching from Ramadi to just south of Haditha. Initially, the unit's primary mission was to protect and keep open a main supply route (MSR) that traversed the unit's area of operations. The previous Marine unit in the area had focused on that task as well and had minimal contact with Iraqi citizens in the Euphrates River Valley. Its leaders had become suspicious that there were numerous IED's along the secondary roads connecting the villages along the river and that there was significant insurgent activity; however, they simply did not have enough Marines to do more than keep the MSR open. By the time 1/23 arrived, though, it was clear that this section of the river valley was rife with insurgents and had become a thoroughfare for the infiltration of enemy foreign fighters and supplies into central Iraq.

About the time Lieutenant Colonel Stevens learned that his mission would be more difficult than originally thought, he was ordered to detach one of his companies to 3d LAR Battalion, patrolling the major roads in the extreme western portion of the country near Camp Korean Village and al Rutbah. Stevens detached Company A for this mission, while assigning Company C to a former base of the Iraqi Army near the city of Hit, where it would attempt to monitor the city as well as train a company of the Iraqi National Guard. Company B was split between Ammunition Supply Point Dulab and a traffic control point south of Hit known as the "Bronze Uranium Split." Other elements of Company B were to conduct route security patrols.<sup>42</sup>

As 1/23 settled into its area of operations, its leaders became progressively more alarmed about the



Photo by GySgt Hugh Tyhsen, USMCR

*LCpl Brian Donelly from 3d Battalion, 24th Marines, checks out a suspicious wire during a counter-IED patrol on Highway 10 (MSR Michigan) during Operation Vigilant Resolve (First Battle of Fallujah) in the vicinity of al-Fallujah, Iraq, 8 April 2004. Marines from 3/24 helped keep the major roads around Fallujah clear so supplies could reach the combat outposts and maneuver elements.*



Photo by LCpl Richard A. Hilario, USMC

*Marines from 1st Battalion, 23d Marines during a security halt on a patrol just outside Ar Rutbah, Anbar Province.*





Photo by GySgt Kevin W. Williams, USMC

*Capt Mike E. Ogden, Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 23d Marines, meets with Iraqi children outside a girls' primary school in Abu Tiban, Iraq, 5 January 2005.*

situation in Hit. Coalition forces previously assigned to the area had made informal agreements with Hit's City Council generally to stay out of the city as long as the council could provide security. The arrangement seemed to make sense at the time as the area seemed quiet; a lack of good intelligence led to the false impression that insurgent activity there was minimal. If that were ever actually the case in Hit, it certainly was not true by October 2004. As I MEF prepared for a large battle to retake control of Fallujah and insurgents made preparations to defend it, enemy activity in Hit increased dramatically. The local police were inept at best and, at times, actually aiding or abetting insurgent activity. The city council also made no effort to thwart the insurgents. The dangerous situation in Hit became obvious at all levels of command in early October when insurgents near Hit brazenly attacked a convoy transporting Major General Richard F. Natonski, commander of 1st MarDiv, just after a meeting with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld at al-Asad.

On 11 October, Major Michael B. Miller, commander of Company B, sent his 1st Platoon under Captain R. Shane McGinty into Hit's affluent suburb of Turbah, with plans for other elements to sweep the city after 1st Platoon occupied Turbah's police station and established a blocking position. The entry of 1st Platoon into Turbah in the predawn hours resulted in a fierce fight that became known as the "Battle for Hit." The Marines would later learn that there were at least 200-400 insurgents in Hit when 1st Platoon entered the city. Captain McGinty's platoon, after securing the police station, came under fire from small arms, machine guns, RPG's, and mortars from the east, west,

and south. The platoon fired back and called in close air support from HMLA-169, whose AH-1 Cobras and UH-1 Huey gunships quickly provided effective strafing runs, halting an enemy counterattack from the south. A scout-sniper team led by Sergeant Herbert B. Hancock and attached to Company B killed several insurgents with long-range shots and forced others deep into the cover of buildings from which they could no longer accurately fire on Marines. Meanwhile, Major Miller led 2d Platoon into Turbah to reinforce 1st Platoon. F-18s flying nearby dropped a 500-pound bomb approximately 200-220 meters from Miller's position, which was followed by more strafing runs from the helicopters. Immediately afterward, enemy resistance slackened, though the Marines were still receiving some small-arms and mortar fire. In the afternoon, Company B's 3d Platoon arrived as well, along with RCT-7's Quick Reaction Force.

Fighting in Hit continued for two more days, but the Marines clearly were in control. On 12 October, roughly a dozen sniper teams moved into Hit to disrupt the enemy. These teams were mostly from various reconnaissance and special forces units, but also included Sergeant Hancock's team. The sergeant himself had two confirmed kills that day, one from a range of 960 yards and another from 900. On the third day of the battle, RCT-7 commander Colonel Craig A. Tucker decided to clear Hit by sweeping it with elements of 1/8 and 3d LAR battalion. By that time, the fighting was over and no shots were fired by either side. The battle had resulted in a large number of enemy casualties and two minor wounds to the Marines of Company B. Insurgents had fled the city, but the Battle for



Photo by GySgt Kevin W. Williams, USMC

*A Marine assigned to 1st Battalion, 23d Marines finds a covered position after entering a rock factory during a security patrol in the city of Haqlaniyah, Anbar Province, Iraq, 18 January 2005.*





Photo by GySgt Kevin W. Williams, USMC

*A Marine assigned to 1st Battalion, 23d Marines provides over-watch from the rooftop of a school during a security patrol in the city of Haditha, Anbar Province, Iraq, 19 January 2005.*

Hit made it clear that insurgent activity in the western Euphrates River Valley was far more serious than the Coalition's leaders had yet understood.<sup>43</sup>

In November, Company B, 1/23 participated in Operation al-Fajr, also known as the second Battle of Fallujah, in which I MEF forces finally eliminated insurgent control of that key city. The company was attached to 3d LAR with the mission to help secure a peninsula in the Euphrates River directly west of the city itself. The peninsula jutted out into the river and its seizure by Coalition forces on 7 November prevented any ingress or egress from the city by insurgents. During the battle, Sergeant Hancock and his observer, Corporal Geoffrey Flowers, eliminated an enemy mortar team with two long-range shots and a 60mm mortar fire mission that they requested. Sergeant Hancock killed the two enemy fighters with shots at a range of 1,050 yards, at that time the longest sniper kills recorded in OIF. Months later, Sergeant Hancock would receive the Navy Marine Corps Commendation Medal with Combat V; and Lieutenant General Dennis M. McCarthy, commander, Marine Forces Reserve, would cite Hancock's accomplishment in a statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee as an example of the outstanding service being rendered by Marine Reservists in the Global War on Terrorism.<sup>44</sup>

The Lonestar Battalion participated in several more operations in Iraq after the battles for Hit and Fallujah, including Operation River Blitz in February 2005, which included the cities of Ramadi, Hit, and Haditha. The Marines returned to their HTC's in Texas and Louisiana in the spring, conscious that they had

done much good but that the insurgency in Anbar Province was still alive and well. After their return, the battalion awarded one of its Marines a Bronze Star with Combat V, 12 Navy-Marine Corps Commendation Medals with Combat V, 29 Navy Achievement Medals with Combat V, 127 Combat Action Ribbons, and 52 Purple Hearts.<sup>45</sup>

The third and last Reserve infantry battalion to arrive in Iraq during 2004 was 2d Battalion, 24th Marines, based out of Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin. In contrast to the vast area of operations assigned to 1/23 that consisted of broad expanses of desert and a large segment of the western Euphrates River Valley, 2/24's portion of "AO Raleigh" was smaller, more urban, and more densely populated. It consisted of the so-called "Triangle of Death" just a few miles south of Baghdad, an area in which deadly battles between Iraqi Sunnis and Shi'ia were frequent. Assuming responsibility for its area of occupation (AO) in October, the battalion's primary mission was to improve security in the region to facilitate fair and peaceful national elections scheduled for 30 January 2005. To accomplish this, the battalion's commander, Lieutenant Colonel Mark A. Smith, believed his men needed to defeat insurgents in the area, prevent Iraqi-on-Iraqi violence, and build inroads into the communities that would improve the lives of the local residents, even if those citizens did not initially welcome their presence.<sup>46</sup>

The battalion had a large number of Marines who were law enforcement professionals in civilian life. Smith himself was an Indiana state trooper and felt that the "community policing" activities he planned "came naturally" for 2/24.<sup>47</sup> To accomplish this community policing effectively, 2/24 executed distributive



Photo by GySgt Kevin W. Williams, USMC

*Marines assigned to 1st Battalion, 23d Marines on a security patrol outside the city of Haditha, Anbar Province, Iraq, 27 January 2005.*



Photo by GySgt Kevin W. Williams, USMC

*Marines of Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 23d Marines take cover behind a wall before moving in to secure a radio station in the city of Haqlaniyah, Anbar Province, Iraq, 28 January 2005. The radio station would be used as a polling site for an upcoming election.*

operations. While the Army battalion that preceded 2/24 had based all its forces at FOB Mahmudiyah, Lieutenant Colonel Smith created two additional FOBs in the cities of Yusufiyah and Lutafiyah and had his reinforced infantry companies conduct independent operations, patrolling the areas around them at all hours of the day and night. Local residents unaccustomed to such constant Coalition presence gave 2/24 the nickname “The Mad Ghosts.”

The insurgents operating in the Triangle of Death generally appeared to be better armed and better trained than most of those in other areas of Iraq. Many of them were foreigners, who had received formal training elsewhere before coming to join the “jihad” against the Americans in Iraq, and knew how to use fire-and-maneuver tactics and suppressive fires effectively. Their capabilities became obvious when a company-size enemy force attacked Company F at FOB Yusufiyah on 12 November. In a six-hour battle, the insurgents used suppressive fire and supporting arms as they maneuvered against Company F and tried to overwhelm the FOB. The Marines inflicted heavy casualties on their attackers with their organic weapons and eventually with mortars and close air support. The enemy demonstrated remarkable determination, but the final casualty count was 1 Marine killed to roughly 70 insurgents. Still, the attack convinced higher headquarters that enemy fighters in the area were capable of mounting large-scale attacks.<sup>48</sup>

Besides its usual small-unit activities, 2/24 participated in several larger operations, including Red Mayhem I, II, and III in conjunction with Army units. In

December and January, the battalion joined with three battalions from the U.S. Army’s 2d Brigade Combat Team in Operation River Walk, a cordon-and-search operation in the area of Cargoul.

One of the great markers of 2/24’s success in its AO was the elections on 30 January. The battalion established eight polling sites, but did not announce their locations until 48 hours before the polls opened in order to frustrate enemy attempts to disrupt the election. They established barriers, traffic control measures, and voting procedures, and Iraqi soldiers were posted at the inner cordons of the polling sites. Each site experienced some type of insurgent activity designed to close down the site, but they all remained open. More than 16,000 Iraqi citizens, over 71 percent of those registered, turned out to vote and waited in line until they could cast their ballots.

Second Battalion also succeeded in improving transportation in the area. One platoon of Company G spent most of its tour living in the field and providing security for a dangerous 35-kilometer segment of the major highway that connected central Iraq with Kuwait, a route that Coalition forces referred to as “MSR Tampa.” By the time the battalion left, security had improved to the extent that the Coalition was able to open MSR Tampa to civilian traffic.

During their tour, 2/24’s Marines killed an estimated 400 insurgents and detained more than 1,200. With their civilian background in law enforcement, they were able to prepare a large number of detainee packages, resulting in the long-term incarceration of 970 suspects in Abu Ghraib. Perhaps most importantly, the level of insurgent activity in AO Raleigh dropped dramatically. During a six-month period, the frequency of insurgent attacks dropped from 12 to 18 hostile acts per day to roughly 1 per week.<sup>49</sup> These successes did not come without a cost. In November, for example, Company G lost four Marines killed and five badly wounded by IED attacks.<sup>50</sup>

While the infantry regiments of 4th MarDiv made undeniable contributions to OIF-2, so too did the artillerymen of 14th Marines. One remarkable aspect of the artillery units’ service is that so few of them served in the traditional artillery role for which they were primarily trained. For years, 14th Marines had prepared primarily to serve as a force artillery providing reinforcing and general support reinforcing fires to a corps- or MEF-size organization and to provide battalions of artillery in a general support role to infantry regiments or divisions. They were fully prepared to



provide direct support fires as well. It was abundantly clear from the experience of OIF-1 and from the present threat in Iraq, however, that 14th Marines was far less needed for its ability to provide massed artillery fires than it was for its ability to serve as provisional infantry, convoy security, and military police.

In several ways, the artillerymen were uniquely positioned to make this transition. MP operations involve the ability to move and communicate, which of course is fundamental to artillery units' basic missions. Also, artillery batteries are responsible for providing their own convoy security and train regularly on dealing with blocked and unblocked ambushes and utilizing crew-served weapons mounted on their vehicles during convoy operations. Thus, they had little trouble adjusting to that role as well. Artillery units also regularly train on providing their own local security, to include laying out fields of fire, firing crew-served weapons, and conducting dismounted patrols, thus providing them a baseline level of preparation for the

skills they would need in Iraq. Finally, like the infantry regiments of 4th MarDiv, 14th Marines had a large number of men whose civilian occupations were in law enforcement.<sup>51</sup>

A few 14th Marines did serve in their traditional artillery role. The regimental counter-battery radar platoon provided detachments to various units at Fallujah, al-Asad, Ar Ramadi, and al-Qa'im, which tracked incoming indirect fires. Battery M, 4/14 spent much of its tour providing artillery support for the "take-down" of Fallujah—the dramatic battle that occurred in November-December 2004 known as Operation al-Fajr. The Chattanooga, Tennessee-based Marines fired thousands of rounds during Operation al-Fajr, by some accounts the most rounds fired by any Marine artillery battery in combat since the Vietnam War. Battery M, along with Battery C, 1/12 and the Army's Battery A, 3d Battalion, 82d Field Artillery, was one of only three batteries providing artillery support for Operation al-Fajr.<sup>52</sup>



Photo by LCpl Samantha L. Jones, USMC

*Gun 4, Battery M, 4th Battalion, 14th Marines (Chattanooga, Tennessee) fires on a target in Fallujah, Iraq, from Camp Fallujah, 11 November 2004. The battery was supporting Operation al-Fajr. Left to right are battery GySgt Justin Grafton, cannoneer PFC Matthew Camp, section chief Sgt Mike Dasher, cannoneer LCpl Josh Rosenberger, cannoneer Cpl Will McGee, ammunition team chief Cpl Jonathan Layman, and cannoneer LCpl Jonathan Fox.*



More common was the experience of Battery M's sister batteries from 4/14. Battery K served as a provisional infantry company at Camp Fallujah in support of I MEF, repeatedly defending Camp Fallujah from enemy attacks. Battery L served as a provisional MP company for 1st FSSG at Camp al Taqqadum, while Headquarters Battery personnel augmented the three firing batteries. In addition to its MP role, Battery L's Marines escorted numerous convoys throughout the dangerous Anbar Province. Most of the battalion's staff officers served in staff billets and as camp commanders throughout the MEF. Another increment of 14th Marines units began arriving in March 2005 as 4/14 prepared for its return home. Battery E, 2/14 split into two truck platoons and performed dangerous convoy operations in the Euphrates River Valley from Hit to the Syrian border. One of the provisional truck platoons was attached to 3/2, while another served with the reserve unit 3/25, which would become one of the most bloodied American combat units to serve in the Iraq war. By the end of the year, Battery E had awarded four Purple Hearts to its members. Meanwhile, Battery D, 2/14, became a provisional MP company attached to 2d MP Battalion at Camp Fallujah. One of its platoons provided force protection for Camp Fallujah, and another helped run the detention center at Camp Ramadi. A third platoon conducted security patrols and convoy missions from Camp Taqaddum, traveling over 10,000 miles throughout Iraq and locating 15 "daisy chain" IED's along the sides of Iraqi roadways. At the end of its tour, Battery D Marines were awarded one Bronze Star and two Purple Hearts, though none lost their lives. Battery P, 5/14, served as a provisional MP company with 3d MAW. Finally, detachments from Headquarters Battery, 14th Marines, and Headquarters Battery, 2/14 provided truck platoons to 2/2 and 3/6.<sup>53</sup>

Most members of 14th Marines who served in Iraq, then, did so in small detachments attached to other units. Because of the dispersed nature of their service, it is often difficult to track how many of them became casualties and how many were specially recognized for valor, as this information sometimes did not appear in their own units' command chronologies, and the after-action reports of the units they were with temporarily often did not identify the units from which they originally came. The same would become true of combat engineers, reconnaissance Marines, tankers, and Marines from AAV units temporarily attached to other units. Some were killed and wounded while serving as MPs or in truck platoons attached to other units.

One Marine, whose name did unfortunately appear in his parent unit's command chronology as a fatality, was Lance Corporal Louis W. Qualls of Temple, Texas, a member of Headquarters Battery, 2/14, temporarily attached to an infantry unit as a truck driver and killed in late November in Fallujah.<sup>54</sup>

Other 14th Marines members were singled out for outstanding performance in combat, though their exploits were mentioned neither in their own units' command chronologies nor in those of the units to which they were attached. Two examples are given here. Staff Sergeant Glen David Bragg formerly had been a Howitzer section chief and platoon sergeant in Battery M, 4/14. When the battery deployed to Iraq, he became the fire support coordination chief for 2/24. He was acting as a forward observer for Company F, 2/24, when the company was attacked on 12 November at FOB Yusufiyah, resulting in the battle described earlier. Bragg's infantry brethren recognized his contributions in calling in and clearing fires during the battle as critical to the company's victory that day. He was also recognized for having the presence of mind in the heat of battle to end a fire mission when he saw a woman and children fleeing into a building that was about to be fired upon, undoubtedly saving civilian lives. Later in 2005, Bragg was awarded the Navy Marine Corps Commendation Medal with Combat V for the sum of his contributions during his tour with 2/24.<sup>55</sup>

Similarly, Gunnery Sergeant Robert C. Bayne Jr., also of Battery M, found himself leading a fire support (FiST) team attached to Weapons Company, 3/1 during Operation al-Fajr rather than in his accustomed role as the battery gunnery sergeant. During Operation Blackbear, a feint toward southern Fallujah in October, Bayne was part of a Combined Anti-Armor Team (CAAT) with several vehicles maneuvering several hundred meters east of the city. One of the vehicles struck a mine, and immediately the CAAT Team began receiving heavy mortar, machine gun, and RPG fire. With mines buried or partially buried all around him and with enemy fire pouring in, Gunnery Sergeant Bayne checked on the condition of the disabled vehicle, steadied the Marines inside, supervised the connection of a tow chain, and guided all the vehicles out of the minefield as he walked on foot. During the following weeks, Bayne exhibited outstanding leadership on the streets of Fallujah as he called in accurate and timely artillery and mortar fires for 3/1. Like Staff Sergeant Bragg, he was later awarded the Navy Marine Corps Commendation Medal with Combat V.<sup>56</sup>

Other 4th MarDiv units served in Iraq in 2004 as well and, like the artillerymen, were often mobilized at the company level and split into platoons serving with different units once they arrived. Others were mobilized as platoons. Truck Company of Headquarters Battalion had elements serving with Headquarters Battalion, 1st MarDiv, as well as RCT-1 and RCT-7 of 1st MarDiv. Company B, 4th Recon Battalion mobilized 35 Reserve Marines and 4 I-I staff members for service with 2d Recon Battalion, RCT-7. Company C, 4th Combat Engineers arrived in Iraq in September, and its platoons split up among various units serving in the Anbar and Babil Provinces. One of its Marines, Corporal Bradley T. Arms, a student at the University of Georgia, was killed in a firefight in Anbar Province on 9 November.<sup>57</sup> Third Force Recon Company in Mobile, Alabama, mobilized its 2d Platoon, which augmented 1st Force Recon Company for OIF-2 in 2004. The platoon conducted or contributed to over 50 “Limited Scale Raids” and detained over 20 “High Value Targets.” It was also heavily involved with urban reconnaissance and IED interdiction operations.<sup>58</sup>

By January 2005, 10 battalions from 4th MarDiv had deployed to Iraq since the beginning of the 2003 campaign, and a new wave of approximately 7 more was due to arrive within months. At the company or battery level, approximately 64 units had mobilized for OIF or OEF since the September 11 attacks, not including numerous individual platoons, detachments, and individual augmentees. Some of these units did not go to Iraq but supported OEF by serving in such places as the Horn of Africa or supporting U.S. Cent-

Com in Tampa, Florida. Others provided operational relief to active duty forces by serving at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Camp Lejeune, or Camp Pendleton.<sup>59</sup> In January 2005, Lieutenant General Dennis M. McCarthy, Commanding General, Marine Forces Reserve (MFR), reported to the Senate Armed Services Committee that some 3,900 reservists from across MFR had been mobilized more than once.<sup>60</sup> By the end of the decade, virtually every Reserve Marine would know someone who had mobilized twice, if not three or four times, since late 2001. Similarly, many civilians knew at least one reservist or National Guard member who had served in multiple deployments.

## Restructuring the Division

A summary of the number of 4th MarDiv units that mobilized for the Global War on Terrorism, however, does not fully capture the frenetic pace of work throughout the Division. Even the mobilization of just one company or battery affected the rest of its battalion in numerous ways. The battalion staff, inspector-instructor staff, and family readiness officer had to provide myriad forms of administrative, logistical, and training support to a company before it mobilized and also before and after its return home until it demobilized. It became commonplace for battalions to have one or two companies that were mobilized or deployed, another one that was preparing for an imminent mobilization, and another one that had just returned home and needed all the administrative support that went into demobilization. The support staff that remained behind worked hard to keep up. Moreover, when one company or battery mobilized and deployed, more often than not detachments, platoons, or individual Marines were taken from its sister units to ensure that its table of organization (T/O) strength was 100 percent, putting additional stress on those units. The same process occurred in the infantry regiments as personnel from nonmobilized battalions sent personnel to augment deploying ones. This shifting of bodies was common in active duty units as well, but it meant that the stress from the operational pace remained significant even for reserve and active duty Marines in the Division who were not currently deployed. Finally, some units that were not officially “mobilized” were directed to provide such a large number of individual augmentees, such as entire platoons, for other units currently serving in Iraq that their own peacetime operations were greatly affected.



Photo by Cpl Neill A. Sevelius, USMC

*Sgt John A. McNeill of 4th Combat Engineer Battalion inflates a soccer ball at Haditha, Iraq, 18 March 2005, before giving it to Iraqi children.*

It is important to recognize, too, that Iraq was far from being the only theater in which the Division's Marines served. With active duty forces committed heavily to Iraq and Afghanistan, 4th MarDiv continued to provide much-needed support to smaller operations that supported OEF and other joint exercises with the nation's allies. A few examples will suffice. Eighth Tank Battalion provided Marines from C, D, and H&S Companies to form the 1st Provisional Security Company for Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTTF-HOA). They arrived at Camp Lemonier, Djibouti, in July 2004. Later that year, Marines from H&S and B Companies and TOW Platoon mobilized to form the 2d Provisional Security Company for the same mission. These missions were important to overall national security and part of the Division's responsibility to provide an operational reserve, but they also created operational stress for several battalions. Fourth LAR Battalion, supposedly "reconstituting" and rebuilding since its 2003 deployment to Iraq, nonetheless sent detachments of Marines to support five operations in 2004: Operation Rescuer Medcuer in the Republic of Georgia; Operation African Lion in Morocco; Operation Battle Griffin in Norway; OIF with personnel augmenting Iraqi Military Assistance Teams; and OEF by providing staff members for CJTF-HOA.<sup>61</sup>

To many Marines and their families responsible for planning these deployments and for serving on them, the day-to-day changes in the "word" on what was going to be required of them next undoubtedly created an element of uncertainty and unpredictability. In reality, though, once the initial push of forces into Iraq for OIF-1 was complete, a general pattern quickly emerged. In the initial deployment to OIF in early 2003, the transition for 4th Div Marines and Sailors from civilian to active-duty warrior had been sudden, as was the adjustment for their families. The average period from the date of notification that a unit or detachment was to be mobilized until the time it was awaiting strategic lift to be transported overseas was between 8 and 13 days. One study concluded that "including the wait for strategic lift, the average time from the issuance of a deployment order until a Marine Reserve unit's arrival in theater was 34 days, about half the average for all reserve and National Guard units mobilized."<sup>62</sup> This rapid deployment was a marvelous achievement and necessary at the time, but judged to be unsustainable over a long period for purposes of retention and unit cohesion.

Senior officers and civilian officials, including



Photo by Cpl M. D. Kibel, USMC

*Cpl Geddie of Headquarters Platoon, Company C, 4th LAR Battalion, fires turret ringmounted M240 7.62mm machine gun from his light armored vehicle (LAV-25) at Range 407, Camp Pendleton, California, 19 March 2003.*

Secretary Rumsfeld, recognized the need for a more predictable deployment pattern. In the Marine Corps, this involved planning and study at Plans, Policies, and Operations (PP&O) under the leadership of Lieutenant General Jan C. Huly and Major General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr. (director of PP&O's Operations Division) with input from the Marine Corps' four division commanders. These senior officers constructed a "force generation model" that allowed senior commanders to determine what reserve forces and capabilities would be required 24 to 36 months in the future, assuming that the Global War on Terrorism would continue. This in turn would allow 4th MarDiv units to be alerted to upcoming deployments nearly a year in advance, facilitating their training and preparation.<sup>63</sup> After 2003, when a Marine Reserve unit was mobilized, it generally had a period of 48 days until it actually deployed overseas. During this 48-day period, it would spend a few days at its HTC and then move to an intermediate location (ILOC), such as Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, or Camp Pendleton or Twentynine Palms, California, for several more weeks of preparation. These would include immunizations, issue of any required or supplemental gear it did not yet have, and cultural and rudimentary language training. Units expected to serve in their traditional function as infantry or reconnaissance, for example, would train in their MOS tasks to maximize mastery of those skills and unit cohesion (though most units had also trained intensively during drill weekends and their two-week annual training period in the months immediately preceding their mobilization.) Often they received additional training



in SASO operations and civil affairs. Units that were anticipated to serve outside their traditional function, such as artillerymen or tankers in the roles of military police or provisional infantry, would receive specialized training in the skills they would need once deployed. Near the end of that 48-day period, the unit would have a “block leave” period of several days, after which it would muster and be transported to Iraq, Afghanistan, or wherever it was to serve. Each unit then spent 7 months deployed overseas, returned home, and was demobilized a month or two later, for a total mobilization period of 12 months.<sup>64</sup>

This pattern was established in accordance with Total Force Marine Corps planning guidance as optimal for providing well-trained, cohesive units ready for combat and for sustaining a manageable deployment pace that would preserve reserve units for the long-term nature of the Global War on Terrorism. One of the high ranking officers who had advocated 12-month deployments for reserve units was Major General Arnold L. Punaro, former commanding general, 4th MarDiv, from 1997 to 2000 and director of reserve affairs, Headquarters Marine Corps from 2001 to 2003. General Punaro argued that responsible leadership demanded that units that were told that they would be mobilized for 12 months should not be demobilized early. “Early” demobilizations might save money, but created hardship, financial and otherwise, for reserve Marines who had already made arrangements with their employers and colleges. Instead, units that returned to CONUS sooner than anticipated should be kept on active duty training and performing other useful functions until the 12 months were completed; meanwhile, individual Marines in those units who needed to demobilize early for personal or civilian employment reasons could request to do so.<sup>65</sup>

In the higher ranks of the military establishment, it was considered optimal for reserve units to have five years of “dwell” time between each deployment; in other words, a unit could expect to be mobilized once approximately every six years.<sup>66</sup> This planning objective received codification in a memorandum by Secretary Rumsfeld signed on 9 July 2003.<sup>67</sup> In the first seven or eight years after the September 11 attacks, 4th MarDiv generally could not achieve this amount of dwell time for its units between deployments. However, the attempts to do so ultimately have allowed the battalions and companies to sustain themselves for “The Long War.”

What had become clear to military planners and

what was gradually becoming clear to the public was that the mobilization of reserve units was no longer a response to a short-term emergency. Rather, the Reserve and National Guard, more than ever, had become the “operational reserve” that many had spoken of since the 1990s. This coincided with the realization that the struggles in Iraq and Afghanistan were not short-term conflicts but part of “The Long War” against terrorism. The nation’s reserve forces were recognized as cost-efficient, effective, and essential components of national defense, and it was understood that Reserve and National Guard units would be integrated into regular deployment cycles over the long term. Patriotic young Americans who enlisted in the Guard and Reserve after 2001 were under no illusion that they might never have to deploy. The old model of reservists serving only one weekend a month and two weeks every summer was obsolete, as was any lingering assumption that they should be less trained or serve with outdated equipment.

By the middle of the decade of the 2000s, senior



Photo Courtesy of GySgt Hugh Tychsen, USMC

SSgt Hugh Tychsen of 3d Battalion, 24th Marines, posts security in front of the entrance to a government of Iraq building, Ministry of Interior, in the Syrian border town of Waleed, 10 November 2009. The Marines of 3/24 interdicted the movement of insurgents into al-Anbar Province from Syria and Jordan, and provided security for the embedded advisor teams working with the local police, border police, and the Iraqi Army.

leaders in the Marine Corps had determined that several structural changes to the Division could make it more useful in the Global War of Terrorism and capable of supplying needs and capability shortfalls that the active component could not meet. Some of the upcoming changes were initially discussed (though not immediately acted upon) in a Reserve Structural Review conducted between August 2001 and January 2002, while others came from a Force Structure Review Group report in 2005 and feedback from the active duty forces on their needs during the early years of the Global War on Terrorism.<sup>68</sup>

Overall, it was decided to pare down the Division's overabundance of artillery and tanks and increase its capabilities in security, military police, civil affairs, reconnaissance, and light armored reconnaissance. With five battalions of artillery, 14th Marines could pack a massive punch if it were ever mobilized as a force artillery, but that seemed highly unlikely given the nature of the current threat and of others in the immediate future. The norm for the active duty artillery regiments was three battalions. Accordingly 1st Battalion, 14th Marines, with individual batteries in dispersed locations of Alameda, California; Aurora, Colorado; Joliet, Illinois; and Waterloo, Iowa, would be officially deactivated in 2007. Thus when the Marines of Battery A, 1/14 returned from their 2005 deployment to Iraq, they knew their unit would no longer exist in its current form shortly after its return. Fourth Battalion, 14th Marines, conversely, was geographically compact, with two batteries in Bessemer, Alabama, one in Huntsville, Alabama, and one in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Because of these locations, it was relatively easy for the batteries of 4/14 to train together at Fort McClellan, Alabama, with a minimum of travel time for each battery. However, the need for artillery to deploy as cohesive battalions had not existed since the beginning of OIF-1, and the two Bessemer sites had long had difficulty recruiting to T/O levels. Thus, the battalion was split up. Battery M became part of 3/14 shortly after its 2005 return to Chattanooga, while Battery K would transfer to 2/14 after its return to Huntsville. Headquarters Battery and Battery L in Bessemer would help form the nucleus of the new 4th Antiterrorism (AT) Battalion.

The Division also had an overabundance of tanks. With two full battalions, it had more armored combat power than any of the three active duty divisions. The active duty forces cited their need for the support of a full reserve battalion of tanks in addition to two

extra companies. (In fact, since OIF-1, 1st Tanks and 2d Tanks had not been able to deploy a tank battalion with a full complement of four companies, and had always relied on a reserve tank company to make up the difference.)<sup>69</sup> By deactivating 8th Tank Battalion and moving some of its combat power to 4th Tank Battalion, the Division went from fielding eight tank companies to six. In 2005, Company A of 8th Tanks, Fort Knox, Kentucky, became Company E, 4th Tanks; and Company C became Company F, 8th Tanks. In the following year, the latter unit would be redesignated once again as Company E of the newly formed AT Battalion. Two other companies from 8th Tanks converted into much-needed LAR companies. Company B of Syracuse, New York, became Company E, 4th LAR Battalion; Company D of Eastover, South Carolina, became Company F, resulting in a robust 4th LAR Battalion of six line companies. Other 8th Tanks elements, such as TOW/Scouts Platoon in Hialeah, Florida, would also become part of the 4th AT Battalion.<sup>70</sup>

The formation of the 4th AT Battalion was another innovation designed to enhance the Division's capabilities in civil affairs, military police, engineers, and SASO operations. The idea for a specially designated "Antiterrorism Battalion" originated in the immediate aftermath of the events of 11 September 2001. In the days after the terrorist attacks, Marine Corps Commandant General James Jones mandated the creation of an "Antiterrorism Brigade." At the time, there was great concern about the possibility of further terrorist attacks on the United States and the need for military units to defend federal facilities. On 29 October 2001, the 4th MEB (AT) was officially activated (or reactivated since a 4th MEB had formerly existed), headquartered at Camp Lejeune, and placed under the command of General O'Dell. Several members of the MEB staff were reservists, and there were several personal links between the MEB staff and 4th MarDiv. Both General O'Dell, for example, as well as G-3 Operations Officer, Colonel James M. Lariviere, would later command the Division. Fourth MEB had an AT battalion assigned to it on a rotational basis from 2d MarDiv, the first being 3/8. Meanwhile, a permanent AT battalion was set up near the end of 2003 to relieve 2d MarDiv of this rotational commitment. That battalion was the recently reactivated 1/9. Fourth MEB was soon deactivated and the headquarters of 4th MEB became the headquarters of Marine Corps Special Operations Command (MARSOC). While these changes were taking place, however, Lieutenant General Dennis

M. McCarthy, Commander, Marine Forces Reserve, expressed an interest in 4th MarDiv developing its own antiterrorism battalion. The stated mission of the newly conceived 4th AT Battalion, 4th MarDiv, was to “provide designated supported commanders with specially trained and sustainable forces that are capable of detecting terrorism, conducting activities to deter terrorism, defending designated facilities/personnel against terrorism in order to combat the threat of terrorism worldwide.”<sup>71</sup> By the end of 2006, the 4th AT Battalion consisted of a variety of companies, detachments, and platoons located at nine sites across the nation.<sup>72</sup>

## The Fight for Anbar Province, 2005-06

The war in Iraq continued into 2005 and 2006, and indeed those years represented the most intense and deadly phase of the Al Qaeda-led insurgency, at least for the Marines of 4th MarDiv.\* In 2004, planners were already preparing for the replacement of I MEF by II MEF in early 2005, and once again the Marine Corps Reserve was due to play an important role. This subsequent phase of the war in Iraq was tentatively known as OIF-3. Later, planners with the Joint Chiefs of Staff dubbed it OIF 04-06. The replacement of I MEF units by II MEF units occurred in a phased manner throughout the first quarter of 2005 rather than all at once in order to avoid a loss of momentum and continuity. The newly organized II MEF contained the rough equivalent of seven battalions from 4th MarDiv in spring 2005, compensating for the departure of the five battalions and three platoons from the Division that were about to return home. In the latter half of 2005, still more 4th MarDiv reservists would arrive to replace those that had arrived in February and March. The narrative that follows will summarize the activities of those units that arrived in the early part of 2005, with particular emphasis on 3d Battalion, 25th Marines, which saw especially fierce and bloody fighting. It will then trace the experiences of the units arriving in the second half of 2005, early 2006, and so on.<sup>73</sup>

Perhaps no Coalition unit that fought in Iraq had

a more challenging tour than 3/25. Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Lionel B. Urquhart, the battalion's companies were headquartered in Brook Park, Columbus, and Akron, Ohio; Buffalo, New York; and Moundsville, West Virginia. By the end of its tour in Iraq, the heroism and losses of this battalion would profoundly touch these communities and serve as another reminder to the public of the high price that freedom demanded. The battalion was mobilized in early January and, in what had become a standard pattern for reserve units, traveled by air to its ILOC for seven weeks of further training—in this case at Twentynine Palms, California. Here, elements of 4th Combat Engineers and 4th AA Battalion attached to 3/25 and would serve with it in Iraq. (Later, the battalion would also be joined by elements of 1st Tank Battalion in Iraq.) On 19 February, an advance party consisting of the principal battalion staff members and the company commanders departed for Iraq and would be joined by the main body on 1 March. Scheduled to relieve 1/23 on 15 March in the Hit-Haditha corridor, 3/25 would be the “main effort” for RCT-2. Company I detached to the 2d MAW to guard Al Asad Air Base. Company K took over Camp Hit and two other stationary posts in the vicinity. Company L was stationed at Camp Haditha Dam, while Weapons Company split into nine Mobile Assault Platoons (MAPs) and was divided between Camp Hit and Camp Haditha Dam.<sup>74</sup>

One primary mission of 3/25 was to keep main MSRs along the Euphrates clear of IEDs. These roads, along with the river and open desert had allowed smugglers easy access into the towns along the Euphrates for centuries, and now served as corridors for the infiltration of foreign insurgents coming by way of Syria. These insurgents planted IEDs, attacked Coalition forces, and carried out vicious campaigns of murder and intimidation against local Iraqis. Colonel Stephen W. Davis, commander of RCT-2, also wanted 3/25, 3/2, and his other maneuver units to establish a constant presence (as much as possible) in towns and villages that had been secured, rather than conduct patrols from secure bases and then simply return to those bases. This tactic, which had been impossible for preceding units because of a lack of manpower, would demonstrate to the insurgents that they could not count on finding sanctuary in the area, and to Iraqi citizens that Coalition forces could provide security on a round-the-clock basis.<sup>75</sup>

The battalion's first combat operation in Iraq was Operation River Bridge, conducted from 12 to 25

---

\* Fourth MarDiv suffered 5 deaths in 2003 (4 in Iraq) and 13 in 2004. In 2005, the number spiked up to 55, and 26 Marines from the Division were killed in 2006. These numbers do not include U.S. Navy personnel. See Appendix. Source: Casualty Section, Headquarters Marine Corps.



# Navy Cross Citation for Lance Corporal Todd Corbin

The President of the United States  
Takes Pleasure in Presenting  
The NAVY CROSS  
To  
LANCE CORPORAL  
TODD CORBIN  
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

For Services as Set Forth in the Following Citation:

For extraordinary heroism as Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement Driver, Weapons Company, 3d Battalion, 25th Marines, Regimental Combat Team 2, 2d Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM in Hadithah, Iraq. On 7 May 2005, enemy forces ambushed Lance Corporal Corbin's platoon using a suicide vehicle borne improvised explosive device, rocket-propelled grenades, and machine guns. Instantly, three of the four vehicles were severely damaged and eleven of sixteen Marines suffered casualties. Lance Corporal Corbin immediately repositioned his truck directly between the enemy and many of the wounded. He radioed the situation to the battalion and leapt into the enemy fire, directing Marines to engage and marking targets. He ran to his fallen patrol leader, threw him onto his shoulder and carried him to safety while firing at the enemy with his off-hand. He re-crossed the kill zone, made his way to his fallen corpsman, bound his wounds and began carrying him. As he began to move, the enemy engaged at close range and Lance Corporal Corbin threw himself on a wounded Marine and shielded him as friendly machine gun fire suppressed the enemy. Organizing Marines to suppress and repel the ambush, he then, on five occasions, ran through enemy fire, recovered dead or wounded personnel, and returned them to his truck. When the casualties were loaded onto his heavily damaged vehicle, he activated its emergency systems and drove it out of the kill zone and through the city to a battalion aid station five miles away. Due to his heroism, no Marine lost his life after the initial attack. By his outstanding display of decisive leadership, courage in the face of heavy enemy fire, and utmost devotion to duty, Lance Corporal Corbin reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

March, largely to cover the relief in place and transfer of authority that was occurring and making it transparent to the enemy. Supported by a small number of Iraqi forces and tanks and AAV's, Companies K and L engaged insurgents in Hit and Haditha, respectively. Company L killed at least four insurgents on 18 March by calling in aircraft to deliver two GBU-38 bombs. During the operation, Corporal Bryan J. Richardson of Summersville, West Virginia, a radio operator in Company K, was killed when the humvee in which he was travelling struck a mine near Hit; the explosion wounded four other Marines who later returned to full duty.<sup>76</sup>

In April and until 4 May, 3/25 participated in a number of operations collectively known throughout RCT-2 as Operation Outer Banks, designed to clear villages of insurgents, locate weapons caches, and interdict insurgent activity. The battalion cleared and occupied the towns of Barwanah, Baghdadi, Abu Hyatt, Muhammadi, Haqlaniyah, and Bani Dahir—communities that had not seen any significant Coalition presence in several months. There were casualties—Company K, for example, evacuated 12 Marines for wounds, while others suffered concussions or other minor injuries without being evacuated. One of the evacuated Marines, Corporal Joseph S. Tremblay of New Windsor, New York, later died of his wounds. Operation Outer Banks succeeded in killing dozens of insurgents, capturing scores, and forcing hundreds more to flee the area. The Marines located



Photo by Cpl Eric C. Ely, USMC

*U.S. Navy HM2 Jenkins of Company L, 3d Battalion, 25th Marines treats a young boy with an old unhealed burn wound. The boy was discovered while Marines were conducting a cordon-and-knock operation in the area and entered the family's home during Operation Matador in Anbar Province, Iraq.*

# Silver Star Citation for Lance Corporal Mark A. Camp

The President of the United States  
Takes Pleasure in Presenting  
The SILVER STAR  
To  
LANCE CORPORAL  
MARK A. CAMP  
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

For Services as Set Forth in the Following Citation:

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Lance Corporal Mark A. Camp, United States Marine Corps (Reserve), for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy while serving as Automatic Rifleman, First Platoon, Company L, Third Battalion, Twenty-Fifth Marines, Regimental Combat Team 2, Second Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM from 8 to 11 May 2005. During an assault in New Ubaydi, Iraq, an enemy ambush seriously wounded four members of Lance Corporal Camp's squad and trapped two of them in a courtyard. Leaving his covered position, he engaged the enemy at point-blank range with his M-249 machine gun, thereby allowing one injured Marine to be pulled to cover. Lance Corporal Camp then joined a Marine in a frontal assault of the ambush site, forcing two insurgents from the rear of the house and into friendly fire, and permitting the recovery of the injured Marine. As the assault to clear the house continued, armor-piercing rounds were fired from a hidden bunker beneath the floorboards, mortally wounding another Marine. Lance Corporal Camp refused to leave the building without the fallen Marine, and twice braved intense machine gun fire while attempting to recover the fallen Marine's remains. On 11 May, an improvised explosive device destroyed Lance Corporal Camp's amphibious assault vehicle, killing or wounding all 17 Marines trapped inside the vehicle, only to be thrown out of the vehicle from a secondary explosion. Receiving additional shrapnel wounds, yet undeterred, Lance Corporal Camp returned to the burning vehicle and pulled a Marine to safety. By his bold leadership, wise judgment, and complete dedication to duty, Lance Corporal Camp reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

numerous enemy weapons caches and demonstrated to the insurgents and the local residents that they were determined to provide a continuous presence in the area.<sup>77</sup>

On 7 May, one of the Mobile Assault Platoon sections (MAP-7) from Weapons Company, consisting of 16 Marines and 1 Navy corpsman, was ambushed near Haditha Hospital. The patrol was accompanied by two tanks. While carrying out orders to clear a portion of Haditha from which Marines had recently received enemy fire, the column approached a vehicle and other obstacles blocking the road and immediately recognized the signs of a blocked ambush. While MAP-7 was dismounting several Marines to provide security and turning the column around, a van suddenly approached. It turned out to be a suicide vehicle-born IED, or SVBIED, which exploded between two vehicles and killed three Marines. Violating the laws of war, the insurgents combined the SVBIED attack with mortars, RPGs, machine guns, and small arms fired from Haditha Hospital. The Marines fought back fiercely. Lance Corporal Todd Corbin, for example, heroically ran into the kill zone over five times to carry out wounded comrades, while also marking targets and firing at the enemy. He would later receive the Navy Cross for his valor. In all, MAP-7 lost three Marines and their Navy corpsman killed, and seven Marines wounded. Within minutes, reinforcements from Weapons Company arrived on the scene and cordoned and searched the hospital, killing one insurgent and wounding another in the process.<sup>78</sup>

On the day the Haditha Hospital ambush occurred, Company L was making final preparations for its role in Operation Matador, in which the company was temporarily attached to 3/2, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Timothy S. Mundy. Operation Matador focused on the Ramana area, a series of villages that began at the Syrian border and ran along the northern shore of the Euphrates River for a distance of about 20 kilometers. There had been little Coalition interference with insurgent activities in this area for over six months, owing to the existence of a single substantial bridge in the area and the fact that most Iraqis lived on the southern side of the river. The two lead companies in the operation would be Company K, 3/2 and Company L, 3/25, supported by tanks, AAV's, LAR, and air assets. Before the two companies could cross the Euphrates on 8 May, they began receiving heavy fire from the village of New Ubaydi, a modern settlement that consisted of several hundred homes





Photo by Cpl Eric C. Ely, USMC

*Marines of Company L, 3d Battalion, 25th Marines run toward a house during a patrol in the city of Hit, Anbar Province, Iraq, 28 June 2005. The patrol was part of Operation Sword, designed to pursue and neutralize terrorists and foreign fighters in the city.*

crowded into an area less than one square mile. Deviating from his original plan, Lieutenant Colonel Mundy decided to deal with this threat by sending both companies into the town. The result was an intense, door-to-door urban fight against a well-trained and significant force of foreign fighters. Assisted by air attacks, the Marines advanced house by house, often killing their foes at ranges of 10 or 20 meters. Marine snipers on rooftops also exacted a heavy toll on the enemy. Company L continued to fight and advance throughout the day and had taken no significant casualties until 1st Squad, 1st Platoon, reached what was designated the “last house” of the day. It turned out that insurgents had punched holes in the floor and used armor-piercing rounds to kill the Marines by firing up at them from below the floor. Corporal Dustin A. Derga was killed when his fire team entered the house; two other Marines and a corpsman were wounded. Despite these casualties, the 1st Platoon platoon sergeant, Staff Sergeant Anthony L. Goodwin, then entered the house, along with Lance Corporal Mark A. Camp. While they were working their way through the house and driving some insurgents out of it and into the fire of other Marines, one enemy fighter sprayed bullets through the floor, killing Staff Sergeant Goodwin. Before the Marines finally secured the house, Lance Corporal Camp’s aggressiveness and exposure to enemy fire on several occasions had allowed several of his fellow Marines who were wounded to be evacuated safely.<sup>79</sup>

The fight for New Ubaydi hardened the Marines of Company L. Lieutenant Colonel Mundy was impressed

at how the Reserve Marines took heartbreaking casualties, but continued to fight effectively the next day. The commander of RCT-2, Colonel Davis, was already impressed with 3/25 as a whole. Before the month of May was over, he remarked to an interviewer, “This Battalion has done exceedingly well. It is a very, very good Battalion.”<sup>80</sup>

The tragic losses for Company L were not over, however, and the same squad and same platoon seemed to bear the brunt of them. First Squad, 1st Platoon had lost one of its fire team leaders, Corporal Derga, and their highly respected platoon sergeant, Staff Sergeant Goodwin on 8 May, and three days later tragedy struck again. The remainder of 1st Squad was travelling in an amtrack when it struck an IED. The explosion killed or wounded every remaining member of the squad and also killed Staff Sergeant Kendall H. Ivy. Ivy was an experienced infantryman working at the regimental headquarters, and he had enthusiastically volunteered to replace the fallen Goodwin when the need arose. Roughly 24 hours after taking over, he was killed. First Platoon, Company L, was now so decimated that Colonel Davis removed it from the fight until 1st Squad could be reconstituted.<sup>81</sup>

From May to September, 3/25 continued to deliver hard blows against the insurgents in the Haditha-Hit region, while the unit suffered its own losses as well. In Operation New Market, from 25 to 30 May, Companies L and K along with Company K of 3/2, worked to clear the portion of Haditha where MAP-7 had been ambushed on 7 May. On 30 May, Company K was temporarily attached to 3/2 for Operation River Sweep. Along with snipers and two MAPs, the com-



Photo by Cpl Eric C. Ely, USMC

*Marines of Company L, 3d Battalion, 25th Marines prepare to enter a house while patrolling the city of Hit, Anbar Province, Iraq, 28 June 2005, during Operation Sword.*





Photo by Cpl Eric C. Ely, USMC

*A Marine assigned to Company L, 3d Battalion, 25th Marines uses a ladder to access a building rooftop while patrolling in the city of Hit, 28 June 2005, during Operation Sword.*

pany cleared 40 kilometers along the eastern side of the Euphrates while other forces swept up the western side. Two platoons from Company I joined the operation later to help exploit its early success locating and destroying enemy munitions caches. This operation concluded on 8 June.

Later, Company L, 3/25 reunited with Company K, 3/2 for Operation Spear in the area of Karabilah in the al-Qa'im region near the Syrian border. This operation resulted in the death of 20-30 insurgents and the discovery of an enemy regional command and control headquarters, a torture house (with four Iraqi citizens found chained to the walls, beaten but alive), a large facility for manufacturing IEDs, and other insurgent infrastructure.

A particularly successful operation for 3/25 was Operation Sword, launched on 28 June. Company

I had just been relieved of its duties guarding the Al-Asad Air Base and been allowed to rejoin its parent unit. Companies I and K and much of Weapons Company conducted the operation with support from an LAR company, a U.S. Army mechanized infantry company, and an Iraqi Army company. Insurgents in Hit had oriented their defenses to the north in the direction of the Marine base at Camp Hit and emplaced numerous IEDs on the road connecting Hit with Camp Hit. Lieutenant Colonel Urquhart, however, approached at night, utilizing a more circuitous southern route, catching the enemy unprepared. The battalion-size Coalition force was able to sweep into Hit against no resistance. Days later, the insurgents were no doubt dismayed to see that the Marines were not leaving Hit but establishing "firm bases" in the heart of the city. Later in the summer, SVBEID and mortar attacks in Hit would wound 15 Marines and take the lives of 2 more, as well as a Navy corpsman, but 3/25 signaled that the Marines were in Hit to stay. It would never again be a safe haven for the insurgents.

In Operation Saber, begun on 28 July, Company L conducted a cordon-and-knock operation in Cykla, a village that, it later turned out, had been occupied by a dozen well-armed and well-trained insurgents. The fight in Cykla took the lives of Corporal Andre Williams of Galloway, Ohio, and Lance Corporal Christopher Lyons of Mansfield, Ohio. It resulted in the death of nine insurgents, the capture of two, and the seizure of a large cache of weapons and ammunition.

The difficulties of 3/25's deployment became headlines around the world during the first week of August, as the battalion lost 21 Marines killed over a period of 3 days. On 1 August, a team of six snipers from Weapons Company were ambushed and killed. The next day, a Weapons Company Marine, Sergeant James R. Graham III of Coweta, Oklahoma, was killed by a suicide bomber driving a Ford Bronco into a checkpoint near Camp Hit.

Finally, 14 Marines from Company L lost their lives on 3 August, bringing more pain to that unfortunate but resilient rifle company. After the ambush of the snipers, 3/25 Marines had secured the bodies of their comrades as well as the ambush site, and RCT-2 launched Operation Quick Strike on the morning of 3 August as a reaction to the loss. The mission of 3/25, 3/2, and the attachments with them was to clear Haditha and Haqlaniyah on the western side of the Euphrates; Company L, 3/25 was to clear Barwanah on the eastern side. Later that day, an amtrack carry-

ing 15 Marines and an interpreter were struck by a command-detonated IED as Company L approached Barwanah. The explosion split the 25-ton vehicle in half and flipped it into the air, killing 14 of the Marines and the interpreter. Company L evacuated the sole survivor and continued on with the mission of clearing the area to find the insurgents that had ambushed the snipers and the networks that had supported them. Operation Quick Strike resulted in the destruction of 9 car bombs and 23 IEDs, the killing of 15 insurgents and the capture of 63. Once again, then, the Marines of Company L refused to let the loss of their friends prevent them from accomplishing the mission, but it was another painful blow.<sup>82</sup>

Third Battalion, 25th Marines, came to al-Anbar Province at a time when the insurgency was at its height, and at a time in which American commanders had decided to be as aggressive as possible in establishing an enduring presence in the enemy-infested western Euphrates River Valley, the very area in which this

battalion was to operate throughout its tour in Iraq. The Reserve Marines of 3/25 undoubtedly helped send the message that Coalition forces were determined to stay and fight until peace was secured, and they did bring progress. For the final 75 days of their tour in Iraq, for example, there was relative peace in the American-patrolled city of Hit, an insurgent stronghold at the time of 3/25's arrival.<sup>83</sup>

The fate of 3/25 arrested the attention of the American public and the national media. In 7 months in Iraq, the battalion lost 49 Marines killed in action, including other Marines that had been temporarily attached to it, and many more were wounded. The tragic casualty rate, particularly the loss of 21 reservists in 3 days in August from 1 unit, was shocking to the public. In the region around Columbus, Ohio, the home of Company L, the war hit home in a particularly poignant way. The battalion was the focus of numerous articles and at least two television documentaries, including A&E Television Network's "Combat Diary: The



Photo by Cpl Eric C. Ely, USMC

*Marine of Company L, 3d Battalion, 25th Marines kick in the main gate to a house during a patrol in the city of Hit, 28 June 2005, during Operation Sword.*



Marines of Lima Company.” Through it all, the Marines of 3/25 never lost their nerve, and undoubtedly laid the foundation for the Coalition’s eventual success in bringing stability to al Anbar Province.

Third Battalion, 25th Marines, of course, was not the only 4th MarDiv unit to serve in Iraq during 2005. Many of the Division’s combat engineers, tankers, and amtrackers, in fact, were attached to RCT-2 and fought alongside 3/25 throughout their tour. The bulk of 4th AA Battalion mobilized in December 2004 and early January 2005. Company A, based out of Norfolk, Virginia, served in Anbar Province as part of RCT-2. Before its return to the United States on 8 October 2005, it took part in at least 11 major operations. On 16 August, the company’s I-I staff buried one of the company’s own with full military honors—Sergeant Bradley T. Harper, a police officer in Virginia Beach. Sergeant Harper had been in the amtrack transporting members of Company L, 3/25, into Barwanah on 3 August. Killed in the same explosion was Lance Corporal Kevin G. Waruinge of H&S Company and Corporal David S. Stewart of 3d Platoon, Company A. That platoon, separately based out of Gulfport, Mississippi, received 12 Purple Hearts as a result of its service in Iraq. By June, more than half of Company B was mobilized, either for service in OIF or in the Horn of Africa. The bulk of H&S Company mobilized as well.

Newspapers in the United States printed the story of Lance Corporal Lance T. Graham’s “death letter” to his family. Graham intended for the letter to be read only in the event that he was killed. The letter was full of expressions of loyalty to his family and his Corps. He asked his family not to be “mad at the Marine Corps. It was my choice to join and come here.” He asked them also not to harbor hatred for all Iraqis. “I don’t care what the media says,” he wrote. “We are making a difference here....Know that I did not die in vain or for some worthless cause. We are fighting for those who can’t fight for themselves, and I think that is the right thing to do.” Reporters covering the story were obviously moved by the letter, calling it a “sincere, living testament of his loyalty to his family, his nation, and his branch of service.”

(Chicago Tribune, Aug. 31, 2005 [[http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2006-08-31/features/0608310189\\_1\\_marine-s-death-two-marines-read](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2006-08-31/features/0608310189_1_marine-s-death-two-marines-read), accessed 27 July 2011])

Fifty-four of its Marines augmented Company A; eight joined Company B; and the remainder of the company mobilized as a provisional rifle company for deployment to the Horn of Africa.<sup>84</sup>

The bulk of 4th Combat Engineers was mobilized during 2005. Company C returned from its deployment in March, having lost four Marines killed in Iraq. By the time it returned, all five of the other companies had mobilized either entirely or large proportions of their Marines. H&S Company mobilized in January and became 5th Civil Affairs Group (CAG), conducting civil affairs missions throughout Anbar Province. Company A’s 1st Platoon mobilized in support of OIF; 2d Platoon mobilized for JTF-Horn of Africa. Company B served throughout Anbar Province and participated in many of RCT-2’s major operations, including Operations River Blitz, River Bridge, Matador, New Market, and River Sweep. The company provided close combat engineer support, including “urban breaching, cache seeps, mine Clearance Detachments for convoys and Mobile Assault Platoons, support for Condon and Knocks and Cordon and Searches, route reconnaissance and clearing [and] construction and survivability projects.” The combat engineers also served as provisional infantry on several occasions, including patrolling around Ammunition Supply Point (ASF) Wolf. Company D mobilized 3d Platoon for OIF, 2d Platoon for JTF-Horn of Africa, and six other smaller detachments for various units in OIF and for disaster relief operations after Hurricane Katrina. By the end of the year, 4th Combat Engineers was bloodied and decorated. Five of its Marines had been killed over the course of the year and an additional 16 received Purple Hearts for their wounds; a total of 29 were decorated for valor in combat.<sup>85</sup>

Fourth Force Recon Company was activated in June 2005 and deployed to Iraq in August, having previously served in Iraq in 2003. One element of the company reinforced 2d Force Recon Company, 2d MarDiv. The remainder, consisting mainly of headquarters personnel, augmented 5/14, the reserve artillery battalion that had converted into 5/14 MP Battalion and was serving near Camp Fallujah. During 2005, four Marines of 4th Force Recon were awarded Purple Hearts.<sup>86</sup>

The bulk of 4th Recon Battalion also mobilized for the Iraq war in 2005. It seems that because so many detachments and individual Marines from the battalion were already mobilized and serving at various locations, it was deemed infeasible to mobilize entire,

self-contained companies. Indeed, it is nearly impossible to track where all the Marines of 4th Recon ended up serving during OIF 04-06. One salient fact is that Marines from H&S Company and Companies B, C, D, and E formed one company, which became known as Company E, 3d Recon Battalion once it arrived in Iraq. (Other Marines from Company D constituted a separate platoon that was not always located with Company E.) It is also clear that Marines from the battalion ended up serving as attachments to, or members of, 1st Force Recon Battalion, 2d Recon Battalion, the aforementioned 3d Recon Battalion, and 3/25. In fact, at least 11 Marines from Company B were integrated into Company L, 3/25, as combat replacements. Some of 3/25's casualties in Anbar Province were originally from 4th Recon. One of the Weapons Company, 3/25 snipers killed on 1 August, Lance Corporal Roger Dale Castleberry of Austin, Texas, was originally a member of H&S Company, 4th Recon. Sergeant Aaron N. Cepeda and Lance Corporal Lance T. Graham, also of Texas and originally members of 4th Recon, were killed by the SVBIED attack on MAP-7, 3/25, outside of Haditha Hospital on 7 May. Lance Corporal Grant Fraser of Anchorage, Alaska, was one of the 14 Marines killed by the catastrophic IED attack on Company L, 3/25 outside Barwanah on 3 August; while Lance Corporal Jeremiah Kinchen of Salcha, Alaska, was with 3d Recon Battalion when he was killed on 4 April. Both Fraser and Kinchen were originally members of Company E, 4th Recon, out of Anchorage. Though no company guidons from 4th Recon flew over any single unit in OIF 04-06, the battalion's contributions were undeniable.<sup>87</sup>

Over half of 4th Tank Battalion mobilized for OIF in 2005, mostly serving as provisional MPs. Companies A and B, augmented by Marines from H&S Company and the battalion's TOW Platoon, were attached to 2d MP Battalion, 2d FSSG, II MEF. By March, they were deployed to Camp Fallujah and were collectively designated as "Force Protection Company F." They returned in October after a very successful tour and with no casualties. Company C, from Boise, Idaho, was split into three increments. The first increment of 43 Marines became Company C, 2d MP Battalion, and worked out of Ramadi, with a great deal of their mission being convoy security. Six of these 43 Marines were wounded in action. A second element of Company C was attached to Company B, 2d Tank Battalion at Camp Fallujah. These Marines performed a variety of tasks, including route security, IED interdiction, IED



Photo by Sgt Izzel Sanchez, USMC

*A Marine of 2d Platoon, Battery H, Task Force Military Police, 1st Battalion, 14th Marines (TFMP 1/14) provides security while escorting Iraqi prisoners released from a detention facility of the Iraqi Highway Police Station in Ramadi, Iraq, 20 August 2006. The prisoners would be released in Fallujah and Ramadi.*

sweeps, cache sweeps, and snap vehicle check points. Finally, 20 other Marines from Company C became 1st Platoon, Company A, 1st Tank Battalion, except for two who were attached to other platoons within Company A. They provided armor support to 3/25 in Anbar Province. This platoon was awarded five Purple Heart medals as a result of its 2005 deployment. One of them was awarded posthumously to Lance Corporal Dustin V. Birch of Saint Anthony, Idaho, killed in an IED explosion on 9 June near Haditha.<sup>88</sup>

Fourteenth Marines provided the equivalent of two battalions to OIF 04-06. The service of Batteries D, E, and Headquarters Battery, 2/14 has already been described. Additionally, Headquarters Battery of 14th Marines provided a truck platoon that was attached to RCT-8 and served in Iraq from July 2005 to February 2006. Finally, 5/14 sent its Headquarters Battery and three firing batteries—N, O, and P—to the fight. The entire battalion was reorganized, retrained, and temporarily redesignated "5/14 Military Police Battalion." The battalion's 650 Marines were augmented by approximately 200 active duty Marines, largely trained MPs. The battalion relieved 2d MP Battalion at Camp Fallujah on 29 September and returned home in early April 2006. During its tour in Iraq, 5/14 MP Battalion conducted over 300 convoy security escort missions, processed hundreds of detainees, maintained perimeter security for Camp Fallujah, provided a detachment for al-Asad, and operated the military working dog



detachment for Anbar Province. The battalion suffered one nonbattle death, one KIA, and at least three Marines wounded in action during its tour. A tragic event occurred on 5 January 2006, as the military dog working team skillfully worked to defuse a situation in Ramadi. A large, angry crowd of thousands of Iraqi citizens looking for jobs with the Ramadi police force created disorder at the facility where screening was taking place. Sergeant Adam L. Cann and his military police dog were bravely identifying and locating the suicide bomber when the device exploded, killing Sergeant Cann and badly wounding Staff Sergeant R. R. Sadler. Overall, 5/14's success showed that it was feasible to build and deploy an effective MP battalion principally from the staff and Marines of a Reserve artillery battalion.<sup>89</sup>

At least two other platoon-size elements from 4th MarDiv served in OIF 04-06, though existing command chronologies tell little about their deployments. Headquarters Company, 24th Marines provided an antitank (TOW) platoon that was with RCT-8 from March to October 2005. Eighth Tank Battalion, which was in the process of deactivating and transferring its units to 4th LAR Battalion and 4th Tank Battalion, nevertheless managed to send its Scout Platoon to Iraq. It too served with RCT-8 from March to October 2005. This was the second Iraq deployment for Scout Platoon, 8th Tanks.<sup>90</sup>

## Hurricane Relief

While large elements of 4th MarDiv engaged in combat operations overseas, other Marines played a criti-

cal role in domestic disaster relief. Hurricane Katrina made landfall near New Orleans, Louisiana, early on the morning of 29 August 2005, creating arguably the worst natural disaster in the nation's history. Marines of 4th MarDiv played a critical role in search and rescue, search and recovery, and humanitarian relief. Less than a month later, on 23 September, Hurricane Rita came ashore close to the border of Louisiana and Texas, creating another serious humanitarian situation. Despite the devastating tragedy of these two events, they demonstrated that 4th MarDiv could be an extremely useful asset in the event of domestic disasters.\*

On Friday, 26 August 2005, the headquarters of 4th MarDiv evacuated its buildings in New Orleans as part of a prearranged disaster response plan. The next day, Lieutenant General Jack Bergman, Commander, Marine Forces Reserve, telephoned the Division's commanding general, Major General O'Dell. Bergman ordered O'Dell to mobilize 4th MarDiv's capabilities in response to any catastrophic events that may occur on the Gulf Coast in the coming days. By the following day, O'Dell had spoken with a number of subordinate commanders throughout the Division and had formed the core of what would become Marine Forces Katrina, a critical component of Joint Task Force Katrina. The headquarters element of 24th Marines, commanded by Colonel Keith Seiwel, would become the command element of Marine Forces Katrina. Meanwhile, AAV's from 4th AA Battalion would play a prominent role in search-and-rescue and search-and-recovery operations in the flooded Gulf Coast region, and vehicles from 14th Marines were critical in the transportation of disaster-relief military personnel, including those of the U.S. Army 82d Airborne Division. Some of the 4th MarDiv units that contributed personnel to the hurricane relief efforts included H&S Company, Company A, and Company B, 4th AA Battalion; Battery M, Battery H, and Headquarters Battery of 14th Marines; Company D, 4th Combat Engineers; 3/24; and Headquarters, 24th Marines. Marines from 4th MarDiv would play a leading role in Hurricane Rita relief efforts as well, showing their ability to assist their fellow citizens at home as well as fight their enemies on foreign battlefields.

## Turning the Corner in Iraq—2006

The Coalition's strategy in Iraq for 2005 had been based on two fundamental goals: building security

\* The Marines of 4th MarDiv who participated in hurricane relief efforts in 2005 received the Humanitarian Service Medal.



Photo by LCpl Zachary Frank, USMC

*Marines of 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion aboard an AAV7A1 assault amphibian vehicle (AAV) travel through the heavily flooded areas of New Orleans looking for survivors of Hurricane Katrina, 10 September 2005. The Marines were assigned to Special Purpose MAGTF St. Bernard to conduct search-and-rescue missions throughout the New Orleans area.*

and stability and self-government for Iraq as a whole. Progress in achieving the first goal had been slight due to the painfully slow development of Iraqi military and police forces and, in some areas such as Anbar Province, the inadequate numbers of American troops for the tasks at hand. In terms of self-government, the Coalition placed great emphasis on ensuring free and peaceful elections in the second half of the year—the constitutional referendum on 15 October and national elections on 1 December. The success of those elections was a source of hope, but no one in the U.S. military had illusions that 2006 would not be another deadly year for American troops. The insurgency was as active and dangerous as ever. However, virtually no one foresaw the dramatic improvement in the situation in Anbar Province that would begin around August or September 2006, a development known as the “Anbar Awakening.” Sunni leaders in the province, disgusted with the cruelties and tyranny of al Qaeda, would begin challenging the terrorist organization and cooperating extensively with Coalition forces. This was largely an indigenous development, but it would not have been possible without the continued presence, the valor, and determination of U.S. Marines and soldiers. Units and members of 4th MarDiv would continue to help supply resourceful and brave citizen-warriors for that mission.<sup>91</sup>

In 4th MarDiv’s 2006 Command Chronology, the command historian wrote, “For the Marines of 4th MarDiv, it became business as usual when they were called on to mobilize.”<sup>92</sup> I MEF replaced II MEF as the umbrella organization for most Coalition forces in Anbar Province in spring 2006, just as II MEF had replaced the former in 2005. During 2006, the Division deployed an additional four battalions to Iraq for service with I MEF, as well as a reconnaissance company, two combat engineer companies, and two platoons from 3d Force Recon. Other units throughout the Division supported countless other overseas operations with foreign allies, including OEF in Djibouti, and operations in Aruba, Australia, Chad, Israel, Japan, Korea, Morocco, the Netherlands, Niger, and Singapore.<sup>93</sup>

First Battalion, 25th Marines deployed to Iraq in March 2006. Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Christopher A. Landro, it was designated Task Force (TF) 1/25 and attached to RCT-5 to operate in and around Fallujah. The battalion’s primary mission was to help develop the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police. The battalion participated in at least nine major operations, all of them combined operations integrating the

2d Brigade, 1st Iraqi Division, the Fallujah Police, and other Coalition forces assigned to RCT-5 or I MEF.

During the first five months of their deployment, Lieutenant Colonel Landro’s Marines had, relatively speaking, few difficulties in Fallujah. That quickly changed after the decision by the new Iraqi Prime Minister to initiate a prisoner release program. As a Shi’ia, Prime Minister Al Maliki hoped to ease sectarian tensions by releasing a number of Sunni prisoners captured during the war. Marines of 1/25 universally testified that their job suddenly became more dangerous and difficult once the prisoner releases began, and the insurgents they faced were far more skilled and experienced. Most of the battalion’s casualties occurred after the releases began.<sup>94</sup>

Nevertheless, the Marines and their Coalition partners had many successes, many of them occurring



Photo by Sgt Chad Simon, USMC

Sgt Ted A. Stohler, Headquarters and Service Company, 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, and Masizo, a military search dog, search a store in Fallujah, Iraq, 2 October 2006. The search was part of Operation Souk, a cordon-and-search operation.



in the latter, more dangerous phase of their deployment. They captured and killed numerous insurgents in and around Fallujah, some of whom had been holding Fallujah residents citizens captive in order to blackmail their families. TF 1/25 captured and destroyed large amounts of enemy ordnance to include IEDs, cordoned and searched over a thousand houses, and became the sole Coalition unit responsible for controlling the city of Fallujah. The unit manned six ECPs, inspecting every vehicle and individual entering or leaving the city. The battalion also provided a Military Training Team (MiTT) that received special training and deployed to Ramadi as trainers and combat advisors of an Iraqi battalion. MiTT 1/25, as this team was known, was augmented by nine U.S. Army soldiers, and was able to ensure that 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division was independently verified as ready for combat by autumn and prepared to assume operational control over its own battlespace. While MiTT 1/25 was advising this Iraqi battalion, the latter conducted over 40 company-level raids, over 700 squad- and platoon-level patrols, received enemy fire over 50 times, and netted over 60 detainees. Unfortunately, these impressive accomplishments came at a cost, as two MiTT team members were killed and five wounded, while the Iraqi troops they trained and advised suffered casualties as well. The MiTT team earned six Bronze Stars for valor. As the battalion's command historian noted, MiTT 1/25 contributed greatly to "the President's imperative for improved security in Iraq and the overall reduction of American forces in theater." The Marines of 1/25 were also proud of the accomplishments of the rest of the battalion in



Photo by Sgt Chad Simon, USMC

*LCpl Mohammed H. Salameh, Headquarters and Service Company, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, speaks with local citizens of Fallujah, Iraq, during Operation Souk, 2 October 2006.*

Fallujah; the official unit history noted the battalion's "pride" in the "ever growing capabilities of Iraq Security Forces," and the growing security and prosperity in the city.<sup>95</sup> The battalion as a whole lost 10 Marines and Sailors killed during its deployment and, including concussions, had at least 105 wounded. One of the slain was Captain Brian S. Letendre, the inspector-instructor for Company C, who had fought in an-Nasiriyah as a platoon commander in 2003. Another was Captain John J. McKenna IV, commander of 3d Platoon, Company B. Captain McKenna was killed by a sniper as he exposed himself to enemy fire while trying to rescue one of his Marines who had been shot while on a patrol in the streets of Fallujah. Captain McKenna would be awarded the Silver Star posthumously.<sup>96</sup>

As 5/14 MP Battalion was preparing to leave Iraq in spring 2006, its sister artillery unit, 1/14, was arriving. The bulk of the latter unit, now designated "Task Force MP," mobilized on 1 December 2005, trained in its new military police mission at its ILOCs at Twentynine Palms and Camp Pendleton, California, and then deployed to Iraq. Like 4/14 in 2004-05, this Iraq deployment would be the unit's last, as 1/14 was scheduled to be deactivated. Battery A would be redesignated Battery Q, 5/14 after its return. (This battery had deployed to Iraq in 2003 as a Mortuary Affairs Company.) Battery B split into two increments. Part of the battery was joined to Battery A, with 64 Marines detaching to become part of the large "I MHG Force Protection Company" responsible for force protection at Camp Fallujah during March and April. During the



Photo by Sgt Chad Simon, USMC

*Marines from Headquarters and Service Company, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, conduct a patrol as part of Operation Souk, a cordon-and-search operation in Fallujah, Iraq, 2 October 2006.*



Photo by LCpl Joseph A. Lambach, USMC

*Marines pay respects to Cpl Jacob H. Neal, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, at his memorial at Forward Operating Base Gold, Fallujah, Iraq, 31 January 2007. Cpl Neal, of Company A, had been killed on 19 January.*



Photo by Cpl John M. Odette, USMC

*Marines from 2d Platoon, 4th Recon Battalion provide security while 4th Recon Marines speak with locals from Al um Waz, Iraq about current issues, including the recently established Iraqi government and insurgent activity, 5 April 2007.*

period 8 May-2 September, these Marines were reunited with 1/14 and provided security for the air base at Al Asad. Battery B deactivated on 30 November and ceased to exist the following year. Battery C of Waterloo, Iowa, had been part of II MEF from September 2005 to March 2006, and split into platoons that were assigned to different detention centers throughout Anbar Province. Its officers had assumed various staff positions in the command element of 5/14. Battery C returned to its HTC in Waterloo on 12 April 2006. By December, the unit deactivated and ceased to exist, its Marines having been given full latitude as to which reserve units they would transfer. In 2006, 1/14's Marines would be awarded 10 Purple Hearts and 2 Navy-Marine Corps Commendation Medals with "Combat V."<sup>97</sup>

Third Battalion, 14th Marines, was the third battalion from that regiment to serve in Iraq in 2006. The entire battalion mobilized in May 2006, except for its newly acquired Battery M, which had been part of 4/14 and had returned from Iraq just over a year previously. However, 32 Marines from Battery M also mobilized to deploy with the rest of 3/14. Like 5/14 and 1/14, 3/14 served as a military police unit, "Task Force MP 3/14." Battery G, like its sister batteries, received additional ILOC training before deploying to Iraq and arrived in Iraq approximately two months later. By the end of the year, the battery was operating regional detention centers in al-Asad, al-Qa'im, Ramadi, and Fallujah. Battery H was augmented by 1/14 Marines during its

deployment and provided convoy security in support of I MEF throughout western Iraq. Its Marines drove almost 500,000 miles while conducting 283 missions. Battery I's command chronology states that it had been training as a provisional military police company since June 2005, the role that it also would perform in Iraq. It was augmented by 60 Marines from across the United States.<sup>98</sup>

First Battalion, 24th Marines, was the fourth unit to mobilize at the battalion level for Iraq in 2006. It mobilized in June, while its sister battalion, 3/24, provided 286 Marines to augment 1/24 for its deployment.<sup>99</sup> In fact, 13 of the 16 company HTCs across 24th Marines provided augments for 1/24.<sup>100</sup> First Battalion, 24th Marines replaced 1/25 as the U.S. unit primarily responsible for security in the city of Fallujah. It inherited a different situation than that confronted by its predecessor. During 1/25's tour, much of the city had been rebuilt from the devastating battle of November-December 2004, and thousands of the city's residents had returned to their homes. Obviously this was a positive development testifying to 1/25's successes, but it meant it was easier for insurgents to "hide in plain sight." Also, a solid relationship had developed between 1/25 and local Iraqi forces, and 1/24 hoped to build on that. In fact, 1/24 learned much about its AO and received much valuable advice from the outgoing 1/25.<sup>101</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel Harold R. Van Opdorp, 1/24's



commanding officer, believed his unit's achievements in Fallujah were largely due to its successes in intelligence activities. These, in turn, were attributable to the unique skills often found in reserve units. Van Op-dorp's S-2 intelligence officer, for example, was Chief Warrant Officer James Roussell, who had spent most of his 29 years as a Chicago policeman in counter-gang operations. Trained to equate detailed knowledge of individual criminals and their whereabouts as a precursor to victory, Roussell worked to see that every Marine in the battalion saw himself as an intelligence gatherer. Another officer in the battalion, Major Daniel P. Whisnant, was a former intelligence officer during 2/24's tour, and had been a counter-intelligence Marine in the enlisted ranks and later an intelligence officer specializing in collecting human intelligence. He was now the company commander for Company A. Having an experienced intelligence officer as a rifle company commander would be unheard of in an active duty unit, but was uniquely appropriate and useful in counterinsurgency operations in Fallujah. It was also another indicator of the battalion's emphasis on intelligence as critical to counterinsurgency operations. The battalion witnessed a 60-percent reduction in violent acts during its tour in Fallujah and established an excellent relationship with the Fallujah police. Almost certainly the dramatic improvement in stability in Fallujah was a factor in making the Anbar Awakening possible in the latter half of 2006 and 2007.<sup>102</sup>

Fourth Combat Engineer Battalion contributed much of its strength to OIF in 2006. Company C deployed to Iraq in September, with augments from the other companies. This was the company's second deployment to Iraq since 2004. Many of those Marines volunteering to go overseas with Company C were on their second or third tours. Company A deployed to Iraq in November. The remainder of Companies B and D traveled to Morocco to take part in Operation African Lion. Six Marines originally from Company D, however, were wounded in Iraq.<sup>103</sup>

Numerous other units from 4th MarDiv mobilized for months-long overseas deployments in support of either OIF or OEF. Second Battalion, 25th Marines mobilized the equivalent of four platoons to serve with 1/25 during its deployment in Fallujah.<sup>104</sup> Elements of 4th Force Recon Company served with RCT-7. The TOW and Scout Platoon of H&S Company, 4th Tank Battalion deployed to Iraq on 30 September and supported RCT-5. This unit had sustained four casualties by the end of 2006. Company A, 4th LAR



Photo by LCpl Nicholas J. Riddle, USMC

*SSgt Brian Lambert, 4th Force Recon Company, Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, descends during High Altitude Low Opening (HALO) training at Schofield Barracks, Oahu, Hawaii, 16 March 2004.*

Battalion was activated on 7 January and took over its duties in March as 4th Provisional Security Company, Camp Lemonier, Djibouti, in support of OEF. Its sister unit, Company B, mobilized on 31 May. In another remarkable role transformation common among 4th MarDiv units throughout the Global War on Terrorism, Company B trained at Camp Lejeune as a "Small Craft Company" for riverine operations. In fact, it turned out that there were some similarities between the riverine craft employed and the Marine Corps LAV. When Company B arrived in Iraq later in the summer it became Dam Support Unit 3, responsible for protecting Haditha Dam on the Euphrates River, 10 miles of Haditha. This critical infrastructure held back 2.2 trillion gallons of water that would have flooded Baghdad and other cities downstream if terrorists had been able to destroy it. Headquarters Battery, 14th Marines, deployed a provisional truck platoon and counterbattery radar detachment to Iraq. Second Battalion, 14th Marines also contributed a provisional truck platoon. Finally, 3d Force Recon Company deployed two platoons to Iraq, while H&S Company, 4th AT Battalion mobilized 18 Marines for deployment there as well.<sup>105</sup>

## A Battle-Hardened and Reorganized Division

After four years of deployments to Iraq, 4th MarDiv was a seasoned, battle-hardened force, and this combat experience extended across every MOS and every type of unit. Every unit that existed in 2003 had deployed to Iraq at least once, and some more than once. Between 2005 and 2007 alone, every battalion and nearly every

company had been deployed or was currently preparing for a scheduled deployment. Additionally, countless Marines had deployed to Iraq with their unit only to volunteer for a second tour with a sister company or battalion, while his or her own unit was rebuilding and reconstituting. Commanders from the company level all the way to the senior leaders in the nation's military establishment worried about the effect that the demands of the "Long War" would have on attrition in the reserve component. At times and in some units, the concerns were justified. Many in the Division were former active duty Marines who had then joined reserve units, either before or after the 11 September 2001 attacks and the beginning of the Global War on Terrorism. After subsequently serving on one or more deployments as Reservists, they were satisfied that they had done their part. The stress of mobilizations and deployments on their families and their civilian careers became too much for them to continue. The fact that Division units often had to "borrow" detachments or individual volunteers from other units before deploying shows that manpower levels were always a concern. As a whole, however, the Division was able to meet its recruiting and retention goals and remained a viable and effective force. It seemed that for every Marine who decided that his or her civilian career and family's

needs could not sustain further service in 4th MarDiv, there was another who, for deeply personal reasons, felt the need to reenlist or volunteer for another deployment.

By everyone's admission, however, there was an acute shortage of company grade officers. In 2005, the billet "fill ratio" for company grade officers was approximately 25 percent.<sup>106</sup> This lack of junior officers was not new to the post-9/11 era; it had traditionally been a problem throughout the Marine Corps Reserve for decades. Due to Marine Corps manpower policies, virtually no junior officers joined the Selected Marine Corps Reserve without having first served their initial active duty obligation of three, four, or six years. Hence, most officers came to Marine Corps Reserve units as majors, captains, or very senior first lieutenants. Platoons were typically led by captains, companies and batteries by majors, and many platoons had no officer at all.

During the 1990s, the Division had proposed several solutions to the problem. One involved increased commissioning of warrant officers from the NCO ranks into combat arms MOSs. Another involved commissioning enlisted reservists who completed their college degrees, but these ideas had not been favorably received outside the Division and produced only



Photo by LCpl Nicholas J. Riddle, USMC

*Marines from 4th Force Recon Company, Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, parachute from a USMC CH-53 Sea Stallion helicopter during training at Schofield Barracks in Oahu, Hawaii, 16 March 2004.*



a trickle of new officers. Major General John J. McCarthy Jr., commanding general from August 2002 to September 2004, was appalled by the shortage of officers, which was nearly universal and, in his mind, “absolutely crippling” in some units. As he visited units around the country to help them identify their needs prior to deployment, he noted infantry and tank companies that had only one officer, and an AA company that had none. (In some companies, the shortage of officers was compounded by a shortage of staff NCOs.) Thus, it became the norm for deploying units of 4th MarDiv to take their I-I officers with them when they went overseas, a practice that had generally not been followed during the Persian Gulf War of 1990-91. Also, officers from the active component were temporarily reassigned to mobilized reserve units to help alleviate the problem.<sup>107</sup>

General O’Dell, commanding general of the Division from September 2004 to April 2007, worked vigorously to remedy the shortage of company-grade officers. Though his early efforts were unsuccessful, senior officers in the active component had become more aware of the problem when they saw reserve companies and battalions deploy to combat zones in Iraq without a full complement of officers.\* O’Dell gained another sympathetic ear in a conversation with the Commandant, General Conway, in spring 2007, just as he was about to turn command of the Division over to Major General James L. Williams.<sup>108</sup> In that year or shortly afterward, a new program emerged by which the Division could recruit junior officers. Under OCCR (Officer Candidate Course Reserve), officer selection officers recruited college graduates willing to attend Officer Candidate School based on the understanding that they would be assigned an MOS appropriate for a reserve unit near their home that they would later join. These officer candidates would be selected and screened in the usual way and receive the same training at OCS, The Basic School, and their MOS school as active duty officers. Then they would join their local reserve unit. The program was later expanded so that the Marine Corps would fund an additional year of active duty for officers who deployed overseas with a unit immediately after completing their MOS school and just before reporting to their reserve units, giving those officers more valuable active-duty experience. By 2011, this program had begun to alleviate the shortage of lieutenants in many units, providing about 125-130 lieutenants to the Division per year, far more than in years past. Due to limited capacities at

The Basic School and many MOS schools, however, it has not been a total solution, and as of this writing some units still have a serious shortage of company grade officers.<sup>109</sup>

In addition to finding ways to keep its officer and enlisted ranks full, the Division’s combat readiness had benefitted from several policies and innovations. The aforementioned policy of units conducting six weeks of training at an ILOC proved adequate and useful, especially for units about to serve in functions outside of their original one. What further enhanced this preparation was the force generation model and commanders being informed months in advance of an upcoming mobilization, as well as what role the unit would be expected to play, such as provisional infantry, military police, etc. Units that were about to mobilize could focus their training on drill weekends and annual training periods on that provisional role. The headquarters of the unit to be supported in Iraq often sent Mission Essential Task Lists (METLs) and training standards that assisted the units greatly with their preparation, and often units were able to send liaison teams or advance parties to the supported unit and send information back to their parent units on the mission and tasks they would be expected to perform upon their arrival in theater. Moreover, now that the Division was more and more composed of combat veterans, pre-deployment training benefitted from Marines currently serving in the mobilized unit or in sister companies or battalions that had already deployed to Iraq. Many units stressed in their unit histories how valuable that



Photo by GySgt Donald E. Preston, USMC

*Cpl Christian Perez, Company G, 2d Battalion, 23d Marines, assists Georgian army Cpl Cecil Kharaishvili in loading rounds in the M240G machine gun during Exercise Sea Breeze in Ukraine, 11 July 2007. The exercise’s focus was on strengthening partnerships and fostering maritime safety and security capabilities to conduct peacekeeping operations in the Black Sea region.*

mentoring and training was in their preparation.

Another major change occurring in the Division was the transformation of 14th Marines. First and 4th Battalions were deactivating, batteries were being moved to other battalions or converted to AT companies, and all the regiment's units were training and serving as provisional infantry and military policemen. In the midst of these changes, the regiment was also converting to new weapons systems. Third and 5th Battalions were converting from the M198 155mm Howitzer to the M777 Lightweight 155mm Howitzer. This change occurred on an incremental basis, battery by battery, and was proceeding in earnest by 2007. The newer weapon system had the same firepower and range as the M198 but was lighter, more maneuverable, and easier to tow and transport.

This adoption of the M777 was a major change involving much logistical work and some retraining of cannoneers, but not as drastic as 2/14's transition to the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS). The HIMARS system was very different from traditional towed artillery and involved major changes to 2/14's T/O and table of equipment (T/E). The addition of a rocket capability to 14th Marines made sense in several ways. The regiment had long had the

mission of serving as force artillery in a reinforcing or general support, reinforcing role. In predeployment or contingency scenarios, force fires was traditionally augmented by rocket batteries from the U.S. Army since the Marine Corps had none. Before 2000, when the idea of the Marine Corps adopting HIMARS had been discussed, General Punaro, then commander of 4th MarDiv, had argued that the reserve component should get them first. Fourteenth Marines could work through any "kinks" in the manning and deployment of the system to help make the transition smoother for any active component artillery battalion that might assume the HIMARS role later. Several factors influenced the decision to make 2/14 the rocket artillery battalion. The battalion's HTC's were all relatively close to the regimental headquarters of 14th Marines, as well as to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, the Army's and Marine Corps' center for artillery training and doctrine. Also, Fort Sill and Fort Bliss, Texas, had artillery ranges suitable for the training of HIMARS units.<sup>110</sup> The training of Battery F, 2/14 on the HIMARS system began in 2004, and the conversion was complete by 2006, with the battery actually deploying to combat as a HIMARS battery in 2007. The conversion of Batteries D and K would follow a year or two later. With the conversion of 2/14 to HIMARS, 14th Marines would have one of the only two rocket artillery battalions in the Marine Corps, Active or Reserve.

Another major structural change occurring within 4th MarDiv was the formation of the 4th Antiterrorism (AT) Battalion. In 2005 and 2006, 4th MarDiv began building 4th AT Battalion by converting existing 4th MarDiv units into AT companies. The new battalion consisted of six line companies, an H&S company, and an Engineer Support Company at nine different sites. H&S Company, Support Company, and Company E were formed mostly from the former Headquarters Battery and Battery L of the now-deactivated 4/14 and was still located in Bessemer, Alabama. Second and 3d Platoons of Company E had their HTC in Tallahassee, Florida, formerly the home of the now-deactivated Company C, 8th Tank Battalion. Companies A and B joined the battalion on 15 September and 15 November 2005, respectively, and were located in Rochester, New York, and Amarillo, Texas. Company C, in Jackson, Mississippi, had originally been Battery E, 2/14, and officially joined the battalion on 15 May 2005. Company D was composed largely of former members of Companies B and E, 4th Recon Battalion, in Billings, Montana, and Anchorage (Elmendorf Air Force Base),



Photo by LCpl Monica C. Erickson, USMC

*LCpl Jason Altmann, Company F, 2d Battalion, 24th Marines, hangs dog tags on the pistol grip for Cpl Richard Nelson at a memorial service on 19 August 2008, Twentynine Palms, California. Cpl Nelson was killed in action in Iraq on 14 April 2008.*



Alaska, and had two platoons at the Billings and one in Anchorage. Company F, based in Lafayette, Louisiana, joined the battalion on 1 October 2006. There was also a Scout/Sniper Platoon in Reno, Nevada, that had formerly been part of 4th Force Recon Company. Finally, Machine Gun Platoon of Support Company provided the battalion's heavy weapons capability and was located in Chicopee, Massachusetts.<sup>111</sup>

After Lieutenant Colonel James M. Rose took command of the new 4th AT Battalion in late 2005, he and his staff participated in discussions with personnel from 4th MEB on their mission and examined their tables of organization and equipment. It soon became apparent that 4th AT Battalion would not have the equipment or specialized training to fulfill the role envisioned for it. Rose, however, examined what assets he did have and presented a list of the battalion's capabilities to General O'Dell. Over the subsequent five years, Marines from 4th AT Battalion would play an important role in hurricane relief efforts in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and would also deploy as provisional infantry to Djibouti, Africa, in support of OIF.<sup>112</sup>

## The Fight for Iraq Continues, 2007-08

By the beginning of 2007, the situation in Anbar Province, where most U.S. Marines were deployed in Iraq, had improved dramatically. In several other areas of Iraq, including Baghdad, it had not, and the overall situation was still grave. In January, President Bush announced a "surge" of additional manpower to be committed to Iraq. Fourth Marine Division provided less troops to Iraq during the 2007 deployment cycles than it had in previous years. Whereas four of 4th MarDiv's battalions and several separate companies and platoons had arrived in Iraq in the first half of 2006, by early 2007, the Division had one infantry battalion (3/23) serving in Iraq and an additional four companies and three platoons. Later in the year, another infantry battalion (2/24) would arrive, as well as two batteries and a few other detachments of platoon size or smaller. While the commitment to Iraq was less robust than in previous years, the pace of work and deployments throughout the Division abated only slightly, if at all. Besides OIF, the Division deployed units for the support of at least 13 overseas training operations with friendly nations, not to mention short deployments within CONUS for unit annual training events.<sup>113</sup>



Photo by Cpl Shane S. Keller, USMC

*LCpl Dustin L. Meadows of 4th Combat Engineer Battalion wades through water to the west bank of the Euphrates River after searching an island for weapons caches in Hit, Iraq, 9 March 2007.*

An abbreviated unit-by-unit description of activities conveys a sense of how busy the Division was. Twenty-third Marines apparently provided no command chronology to Division headquarters in 2007, but the main event for the regiment that year was the mobilization of 3/23 for OIF in May that year. Twenty-fourth Marines received 1/24 back home from its Fallujah deployment. The success that 1/24 and its predecessor in Fallujah, 1/25, had there was obvious. However, the roughly 40 Purple Hearts that 1/24 awarded its Marines in 2007 testified that those gains came at a cost. The Headquarters element of 24th Marines spent much of the year supporting and deploying for Exercise Partnership of the Americas. Second Battalion, 24th Marines, was also busy. Along with the Regimental Headquarters, Company F sent a detachment to serve with Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force 24 (SPMAGTF-24) for Exercise Partnership of the Americas, where they worked with Marines from the Republic of Chile as well as Peruvian forces. Company G sent one platoon to the Nether-



Photo Courtesy of U.S. Marine Corps

*PFC Rick Foard of Company D, 4th LAR Battalion (Quantico, VA) observes a target through the sights of an M-240 machine gun at the Shoalwater Training Area, Australia, during Operation Talisman Saber, 20 June 2007.*

lands Antilles to train with Dutch Marines in Operation Dutch Bilat 2007. On 10 September, all of 2/24 mobilized for OIF and traveled to Twentynine Palms for ILOC training. It arrived in Iraq in early 2008 and was back in CONUS by August, having suffered several casualties due to IEDs. Third Battalion, 24th Marines, received back its roughly 280 Marines that had deployed with 2/24 and served in Fallujah and continued to train for its next deployment, whenever that might be.

In 25th Marines, 1st Battalion continued to rebuild and recruit since its recent return from Iraq. In June, 2d Battalion, H&S, F, and Weapons Companies participated in Operation Shared Accord in Senegal. This was considered their annual training. In July and August, Company G participated in Operation Khan Quest in Mongolia, working with military units from Mongolia, South Korea, Tonga, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh on counterinsurgency tactics and methods. Third Battalion supported Operation Talisman Saber

in Australia.

Headquarters Battery, 14th Marines welcomed back its provisional truck platoon and counterbattery radar detachment in the first quarter of 2007. It also deployed the regimental staff as the Force Artillery Headquarters in support of III MEF for Operation Ulchi Focus Lens (UFL) 2007 in the western Pacific. In 2d Battalion, Headquarters Battery activated Marines to form another provisional truck platoon. Battery D continued its transition to the HIMARS rocket system. Battery F mobilized and deployed to Iraq in July. It became the first Marine Corps unit to fire the HIMARS in combat. In one of its first fire missions, it destroyed an enemy weapons cache that was heavily booby-trapped. In another mission, it responded to a request from a special forces unit to destroy a building. With 10 rockets, Battery F demolished the building, killing 25 enemy fighters and facilitating the capture of an additional 47.<sup>114</sup> Battery K participated in Operation Jaded Thunder, sponsored by Joint Special Operations Command.

Batteries G, H, I, and Headquarters Battery of 3/14 returned from Iraq in the second quarter of 2007, and spent the remainder of the year rebuilding and reorienting toward their primary mission as artillery rather than military police. Battery M completed its training on the new M777 Lightweight Howitzer, and began preparing for a January 2008 mobilization. In 5/14, Batteries N and O were also certified on the new M777. Battery P mobilized as a provisional MP company.

Fourth AT Battalion had 39 Marines of its Company C return from deployment to the Horn of Africa in May. Approximately half of Company E was also



Photo by Cpl Tyler W. Hill, USMC

*Marines of 2d Platoon, Weapons Company, 3d Battalion, 23d Marines along with Provisional Security Forces patrol the Euphrates River near Haditha, Iraq, 23 March 2008.*





Photo by Sgt Jason W. Fudge, USMC

*An M1A1 Abrams tank belonging to Company A, 4th Tank Battalion patrolling in the Jazeerah Desert, Iraq, 4 July 2008.*

deployed to the Horn of Africa between January and April. In 4th Tank Battalion, Company B's annual training was Exercise Talisman Saber in Australia, and the company was augmented by a detachment from H&S Company. Company D mobilized in June, deployed to its ILOC at Twentynine Palms, and then deployed to Iraq in October.

Fourth LAR Battalion, 4th Combat Engineer Battalion, and 4th Force Recon apparently did not submit command chronologies for 2007. Division records indicate, however, that C Company, 4th LAR, provided a provisional MP platoon for OIF; Company A, 4th Combat Engineers, mobilized a platoon, and 4th Force Recon was preparing for another mobilization to occur at the beginning of 2008.<sup>115</sup>

The 2007 Command Chronology for 4th AA Battalion stated that "2007 was the first year since the [2003] invasion of Iraq that no Marines from 4th AABN were deployed," enabling the battalion to "focus on regenerating its personnel strength and readiness."<sup>116</sup> The statement was a revealing comment on the deployment pace and its effects on units throughout the Division since 2003. However, it was also somewhat misleading, because one of the battalion's companies actually mobilized for OIF on 3 December. Company A mobilized in preparation to serve as a provisional infantry company. The difference between the T/O of an AAV company and an infantry company, however, required the unit to be given augments from three other reserve unit sites and to integrate them. Also, 4th AA Battalion provided the equivalent of a

company for Operation Talisman Saber in Australia.<sup>117</sup>

In 2008, the Division's support of OIF continued, perhaps a higher level in terms of units deployed than in 2007. The Division's Command Chronology repeated what had become a standard phrase: it was "business as usual" when the Marines of 4th MarDiv were called on to mobilize. Headquarters Battalion's MP Company participated in Operation African Lion in June, then began its predeployment training, and finally mobilized for OIF in December. Third Battalion, 23d Marines returned from its deployment in April, having spent eight months in Anbar Province, mostly in and around the city of Haditha. Some of the battalion's Marines had been injured by roadside bombs, but none seriously. In another sign that the situation in Iraq had improved dramatically, 3/23 turned over the primary responsibility for security in the city of Haditha to Iraqi security forces in February, while keeping reaction forces nearby in case they needed assistance. Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham walked the streets of Haditha with Marines on 18 March and marveled at the vastly improved situation.<sup>118</sup>

Second Battalion, 25th Marines mobilized for OIF in May 2008 and departed for Iraq in September. Upon arrival, it split into two elements. Company F and elements of H&S and Weapons Companies acted as a security force aboard Al Asad Air Base. Companies E, G, and remaining elements of H&S Company and Weapons Company conducted security patrols in the vicinity of Rutbah and Akashat. The battalion returned in April 2009 and demobilized throughout May and

June. First Battalion, 25th Marines mobilized over 180 Marines to augment 2/25 during its deployment.<sup>119</sup> Third Battalion played an important foreign policy role when deployed to the Republic of Georgia shortly after the limited invasion of that country by Russia in August 2008. In September, staff from H&S Company and 121 Marines from Company L participated in Operation Immediate Response, flying to Georgia for a three-and-a-half week annual training period in which they helped train the nascent Georgian army.<sup>120</sup>

The artillery battalions were busy as well. Headquarters Battery, 14th Marines, had a truck platoon mobilized in 2008 and a total of three counterbattery radar detachments in support of OIF. Second Battalion was officially designated a HIMARS battalion in June. Rocket Battery F returned from Iraq in April, and Rocket Battery D activated on 15 October for service in Afghanistan. Much of 3/14 finally got to train as artillerymen in 2008. When Batteries G, H, and I, recently returned from Iraq, held a live-fire exercise early in the year, it was the first time the batteries had fired artillery rounds in over three-and-a-half years. It was also the last time they fired the M198 Howitzer. At their annual training period later in the year, they were certified on the M777. Battery M had already completed that transition and was now back in Iraq, having mobilized in January as a provisional infantry company. After its return, Battery M reported that it had conducted 344 mounted patrols, 127 dismounted patrols, 83 combined patrols, registered 171 vehicles, located 15 IEDs, and located and disposed of over 650 pieces of explosive ordnance. The battery recorded no casualties.<sup>121</sup>

Fifth Battalion conducted its first live-fire exercise as an artillery unit in over five years. Battery P returned from Iraq in April and demobilized 89 Marines, having filled a requirement for a company-size convoy security element for 1/10's Provisional MP Task Force. The battalion as a whole worked to complete its transition to the M777 Howitzer.<sup>122</sup>

Every company in 4th AT Battalion was mobilized completely or, in part, during 2008, perhaps indicating the utility of that unit. Company A mobilized in December and departed for its ILOC at Twentynine Palms. Company B mobilized with 165 Marines for Operation Noble Shirley in Israel; Company C returned in April from supporting Task Force MP 1/10 in Iraq. Company D, augmented by attachments from three other drill sites in the battalion, mobilized in May and supported Task Force MP 1/12 in Iraq.



Photo by Cpl Tyler W. Hill, USMC

*Marines of 2d Platoon, Company D, 4th Tank Battalion, fire an M1A1 Abrams tank's 120mm smoothbore cannon during a firing exercise on Combat Outpost Rawah in Anbar Province, Iraq, 28 February 2008.*

Company E sent a 25-man detachment as a personal security detail for the commanding officer, 24th Marines, during Operation Partnership for the Americas. Company F mobilized one platoon in May to serve with Company D's deployment.<sup>123</sup>

Little is recorded about the two Force Recon companies in the Division, but both units contributed to OIF in 2008. Third Force Recon deployed its 2d Platoon at some time in the year. Fourth Force Recon mobilized over 75 Marines in April, who were subsequently attached to 3d Recon Battalion, and then deployed to Iraq. This detachment returned in November, earning one Bronze Star and one Purple Heart during its deployment.<sup>124</sup>

All three companies in 4th AA Battalion were mobilized, in whole or in part, in 2008. H&S Battalion placed 20 Marines on Active Duty Operational Support (ADOS) orders in September to assist with hurricane recovery operations in Galveston, Texas. Other Marines in the company readied themselves for deployment as part of Company B later in the year. Company A began the year already mobilized; on 4 January, it relocated to its ILOC at Camp Pendleton. The unit then learned that it would not deploy as a traditional AAV unit as originally intended, but would instead serve as motorized infantry. This news required a complete redesign of the training already underway at Camp Pendleton. The company deployed to Iraq in 8 April and conducted a formal relief in place with Company C, 3d AA Battalion on 7 May. Much of its work involved helping to train units of the Iraqi Army, Iraqi





Photo by Cpl Michael L. Haas, USMC

*A Marine humvee belonging to Company F, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines is driven through a wadi during a security patrol south of al-Asad Air Base, Iraq, 7 March 2009. The Marines were conducting security patrols to deter insurgent activity and protect base personnel.*

Police, and Iraqi security forces. Company A was back in the United States in November and demobilized on 5 December. On that very day its sister unit, Company B, mobilized.<sup>125</sup>

Fourth Combat Engineer Battalion was extremely busy in 2008. The 56 Marines of 1st Platoon, Company A, began the year in Iraq attached to 3/23. They returned to their HTC in Charleston, West Virginia, in April, about a month after 1st Platoon, Company B, departed for Iraq. In May, a platoon from Company D mobilized and deployed to Iraq and then in July attached to 1/2. A platoon from Company C mobilized in December. Meanwhile, 4th Combat Engineer Marines supported numerous peacetime operations. A number of them participated in Operation Partnership of the Americas in Peru; others deployed to Honduras as part of Exercise Beyond the Horizon Central Americas, an operation directed by CJCS and sponsored by Southern Command (SOUTHCOM). Finally, heavy

equipment operators from Engineer Support Company assisted with reconstruction projects for the city of Pisco, Peru, that had recently been devastated by a deadly earthquake.<sup>126</sup>

Company D, 4th Tanks was in Anbar Province from January to April 2008 and officially demobilized on 15 June. It was relieved in place by its sister company, Company A. Company A's mission was to support Task Force Mech, RCT-5, with the mission "to deny the enemy freedom of movement across the desert terrain of central and northern Iraq." During its tour in Iraq, Company A discovered 33 weapons caches, one of them the largest found since the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003. Company A was later relieved by an active duty tank company and returned home near the end of the year to be demobilized on 5 January 2009. Meanwhile, Company B mobilized on 1 December.<sup>127</sup>

Fourth LAR Battalion mobilized two companies in 2008. Company D mobilized in January and served



Photo by Cpl Joshua Murray, USMC

*Cpl Nick Boucher (second from left) and Cpl Clifton Maston (third from left) and other Marines of Weapons Company and Headquarters and Support Company, 3d Battalion, 24th Marines congratulate Iraqi Army soldiers of the 7th Iraqi Army Division on a job well done during a riot-control training exercise at Camp Mejid, Iraq, 10 November 2009. The Iraqi soldiers learned to use a variety of nonlethal weapons and riot-control tactics.*

as part of 2d LAR Battalion. From March to October, the company patrolled a vast area around Rutbah, Iraq, to prevent oil and drug smuggling and worked closely with local police and the city council of Akashat. Company D detained a number of trucks transporting stolen oil and captured one “high value” insurgent leader. However, in one of many signs of the improving situation in Anbar Province, Company D had no exchanges of hostile fire during its tour. Company F also mobilized in 2008, though little has been recorded about its deployment. The unit would return to its home in Eastover, South Carolina, in April 2009 and demobilize in May.<sup>128</sup>

## “Turning Out the Lights” in Iraq; Fighting for Afghanistan, 2009-10

By 2009, stability had improved markedly in Iraq and Coalition casualties had dropped precipitously. In February of that year, President Barack H. Obama announced that all U.S. combat troops would be withdrawn by August 2010. This did not mean that 4th MarDiv would no longer have a role in bringing peace and stability to Iraq; more than ever, however, Iraqi forces were taking over responsibility for the country’s security. This time also marked the beginning of a shift in focus for the U.S. military from Iraq to Afghanistan. The trend would not be in full swing until 2010; however, in 2009, 4th MarDiv would deploy its first



Photo by GySgt Hugh Tychsen, USMCR

*Marines from Company K, 3d Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, patrol the streets of Waleed, Iraq, a small town on the Syrian border, on 5 November 2009. The Marines were disrupting insurgents from using Waleed as a rest stop between Syria to the west, and Ramadi and Fallujah to the east.*

battalion-size element to Afghanistan. The rest of the Division would remain busy with other operations outside the United States, retraining on MOS skills that had been unused for years, reorganizing at the battalion level and, for some units, addressing critical manpower shortages.

Some 4th MarDiv units that arrived in Iraq in the early part of 2009 served a standard, complete seven-month tour there or longer, but this was not true of others, especially those that arrived later in the year. Second Battalion, 23d Marines had been mobilized in December 2008 and began arriving in Iraq in March 2009. Its companies served in the northern area of the Ramadi district of al-Anbar Province. Partnering with Iraqi forces, they conducted cache sweeps, vehicle checkpoints, IED interdiction patrols, and cordon and knocks. They engaged sheikhs and tribal elders, gathering information and initiating civil affairs projects, and turned over responsibility for several military posts to Iraqi forces and assisted with training Iraqi troops. The battalion’s summary of its activities reported that it helped conduct “a responsible retrograde within MNF-W (Multi-National Forces-West). The three primary destinations for equipment turn-in were Baghdad, al-Taqqaddum, and al-Asad.” By August, the entire battalion was back in the United States and completing other training and administrative requirements until it demobilized in December. Generally, the deployment was less dangerous than others at the height of the Iraq war, but two Marines from Weapons Company, 2/23 earned Purple Hearts.<sup>129</sup>



One unit that arrived early in the year and stayed for seven months was Company B, 4th AA Battalion. Company B attached to 1/8 and was responsible for internal security at al-Asad Air Base from January to September 2009. Over 70 Marines from MP Company, Headquarters Battalion, and 90 Marines from Company A, AT Battalion, mobilized on 1 December 2008 for OIF 09.1. Company A served with Task Force MP 3/3; the company was temporarily redesignated Company A, 3/3. This company was split between Camp al-Taqaddum and the Task Force MP 3/3 headquarters at al-Asad, where it served at the Regional Detention Facility and on the Military Working Dog staff. The company, as a whole, performed five-and-a-half months of convoy security, detainee releases, resupply of Jordanian field hospitals, and “security escorts for countless loads of material traversing in support of base closures and overall retrograde in Iraq.” During its final month in Iraq, elements of the company took on the mission of a heliborne quick reaction force. These Marines returned to the United States in October 2009.<sup>130</sup>

Because of the gradual drawdown of forces in Iraq, many of the 4th MarDiv units mobilized in 2009 for OIF did not spend the entire seven months in Iraq. They were sent home early and continued to train at their HTC or other CONUS locations until their twelve-month mobilization period was over. Company B, 4th Tank Battalion, served in Iraq from late April to early September 2009 as a provisional mobile security detachment with RCT-8. One platoon worked in the vicinity of Camp Korean Village and Rutbah in the



Photo by Sgt Christopher R. Rye, USMC

*Marines with Gun 1, Battery N, 5th Battalion, 14th Marines reload a M777A2 Lightweight Howitzer during a calibration shoot at Fire Base Pico, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 2 November 2009.*

extreme western portion of Iraq, while the rest of the company was at al-Asad. Second Platoon, A Company, 4th Combat Engineer Battalion, arrived in Iraq in May, attached to 3/9, and returned in October.<sup>131</sup>

The 2009 deployment of 3/24 illustrated the shift in emphasis from Iraq to Afghanistan. This battalion activated on 1 May 2009 and deployed to Anbar Province in October as Task Force MP. Attached to it as additional elements of Task Force MP were a communications detachment from Headquarters Battalion, a truck platoon from Headquarters Company, 25th Marines, and Scout Platoon from H&S Company, 4th Tanks. These Marines performed convoy security and route reconnaissance and manned combat outposts on Iraq’s western border at such places as Waleed and Trebil. Along with other reserve and active units, Task Force MP was directed to redeploy early from Iraq, having spent four months there instead of the usual seven. In the early part of 2010, it took on the responsibility of withdrawing and accounting for the gear of the last Marine Corps combat units to leave Iraq. As 3/24’s command chronology reported in 2010, “we successfully retrograded . . . all of TFMP, 1st Bn, 9th Marines, and RCT 8’s gear and equipment to Marine Corps Logistics Command as the responsibility fell on us as the last Combat Unit to leave Iraq.” The bulk of the battalion returned home in February and March



Photo by Sgt Christopher R. Rye, USMC

*Marines with Gun 1, Battery N, 5th Battalion, 14th Marines reload a M777A2 Lightweight Howitzer during a calibration shoot at Fire Base Pico, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 2 November 2009.*



Photo by PFC Ariel Solomon, USMC

*An LAV belonging to Company F, 4th LAR Battalion, kicks up a cloud of dust as it speeds toward the firing range during Company F's final exercise at African Lion 2011, 24 May 2011. African Lion 2011 involved more than 2,000 U.S. service members and approximately 900 members of the Royal Moroccan Armed Forces.*

2010, but did not demobilize until 2 June. However, 125 members of Task Force MP did not return directly to the United States but instead redeployed as MiTTs in Afghanistan. This made them, as the Division Command Chronology commented, part of “a rare and distinguished group of Marines serving combat tours in both Iraq and Afghanistan within a single one-year mobilization period.”<sup>133</sup>

The Division's first units to arrive in Afghanistan were from 14th Marines, now performing their primary artillery mission for the first time since late 2004. Rocket Battery D, 2/14, from El Paso, Texas, arrived on 21 January 2009. Rocket Battery D's deployment included many remarkable “firsts.” After accomplishing numerous logistical, operational, and planning tasks, the battery fired the Marine Corps' first HIMARS rocket in Afghanistan on 15 February. First Platoon assisted in the construction and force security at Camp Bastion and Camp Leatherneck, as well as establishing its own firing point, while 2d Platoon did the same for FOB Delaram. As a reserve unit, the civilian job skills of many of the battery's Marines were extremely useful in the construction of the base at Delaram. Even more importantly, the battery took the lead role in establishing procedures for the employment of HIMARS

in Afghanistan. As the unit's history explained, “since there was nothing in place in Afghanistan, everything regarding HIMARS had to be developed and distributed.” The battery's liaison section coordinated the establishment of procedures with three major agencies responsible for clearing civilian and military airspace. Battery personnel developed and distributed “HIMARS Smart Cards” and forward observer reference cards to adjacent units to educate and assist them in the capabilities, ranges, and unique aspects of requesting HIMARS missions. They also led the effort to refine Coalition rocket fires procedures and provide information for cross-boundary support with 3d Battalion, 27th Field Artillery (a U.S. Army HIMARS unit) and British Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) elements.

On 31 May, III MEF assumed authority over the battlespace formerly controlled by Special Purpose MAGTF-Afghanistan (SPMAGTF-A), but this also involved an increase in the size of the MEB's area of operation. This required Rocket Battery D to form a third platoon from the existing two and establish a third firing point farther south at FOB Dwyer. This was the first time that any HIMARS unit had split into three platoons in combat. During its seven months in Afghanistan, the battery fired 52 rockets in support of troops in contact, time sensitive targets, and pre-planned targets, including one mission that destroyed eight buildings used by the enemy for command and control purposes in the Now Zad region. Another mission was fired in support of a counter-narcotics



Courtesy of GySgt Hugh Tychsen, USMCR

*LCpl Piotr Wolynski of Company L, 3d Battalion, 24th Marines, Task Force Military Police, II MEF (FWD), loads his M-240 atop a MRAP (mine resistant ambush protected) vehicle prior to a patrol of Highway 10 (MSR Michigan) in the vicinity of al-Asad, Iraq, 25 October 2009.*



mission being driven by British special forces, with 1st Platoon firing 12 rounds at a range of over 80 kilometers. Thus, the battery's deployment was an example of Marine reservists not only providing combat power to the active force but also leading in the development of procedures and doctrine for a new weapons system. Just before Rocket Battery D departed Afghanistan in mid-August, it was relieved in place by Rocket Battery R, 5/11, an active duty HIMARS unit.<sup>134</sup>

The second 4th MarDiv unit to arrive in Afghanistan was Battery N, 5/14. Mobilized on 3 January 2009, the battery arrived in Afghanistan the first week of May and was attached to 3/11, an active duty artillery battalion supporting RCT-3. This was the first time since 2003 that Marine artillery had deployed as a battalion in its traditional role. Another unique aspect of the deployment was that initially 3/11 in Afghanistan included one active duty battery (Battery I) and two reserve batteries (Batteries D and N). And while Batteries I and N fielded the M777 155mm Howitzer that was capable of providing fires at a range of up to 30 kilometers, Rocket Battery D's HIMARS could support the "deep fight" with long-range fires, thus combining two sets of range capabilities within the same battalion. Battery N, 5/14, returned to its home station in Pico Rivera, California, in December.<sup>135</sup>

Company B, 4th Recon Battalion, mobilized a platoon of 36 Marines in June, originally slated for service

in Iraq. This was a milestone for the company that had formed in Smyrna, Georgia, in 2005 with a nucleus of one officer and three enlisted Marines. The platoon attached to a platoon-size element from 3rd Force Recon Company, also mobilized in June, and the two platoons then became known as "Detachment Echo." While Detachment Echo was still conducting its predeployment training, its mission changed from Iraq to Afghanistan, as did its training emphasis. Just before deploying to Afghanistan in September, the detachment was divided once again, with one platoon attached to 4th LAR Battalion and another to 3d Recon Battalion. All of these Marines returned to the United States in June 2010.<sup>136</sup>

In the latter part of 2009, 4th LAR Battalion mobilized three line companies and H&S Company, or roughly 645 Marines, for OEF service in Afghanistan. They arrived in Afghanistan in late October and early November. First Platoon, Company B, and 3d Platoon, Company D of 4th Combat Engineers, mobilized in December.<sup>137</sup>

The Division's decreased commitment to Iraq was offset not only by the Afghanistan requirement but also by continued support to theater security operations and retraining on MOS skills. Fourth Marine Division units and personnel participated in at least 15 operations outside CONUS in 2009: African Lion, Natural Fire, and Shared Accord in Africa; Combined Endeavor, Noble Shirley, Freedom Guardian, JWTC, and Ulchi Focus Lens in East Asia; Talisman Saber in Australia; and UNITAS Gold, Partnership of the Americas, Southern Exchange, Panamax, Beyond the Horizon, and Key Resolve in South and Central America. Units involved included elements of Headquarters Battalion; 24th Marines; 4th AT Battalion; 4th LAR (before the July mobilization for OEF); 4th Combat Engineers; and 3/23.<sup>138</sup> Numerous units across the Division reported spending time in 2009 retraining on MOS skills and traditional roles they had been forced to neglect, in some cases for years, as they had trained and deployed for provisional roles outside of their traditional function. Fourteenth Marines reported that it was able to return to training in its traditional role as a force artillery. All but three of the regiment's batteries were able to train together at Fort Hood, Texas—the first time that the regiment had controlled more than two battalions in the field since 2003. In short, despite the busyness of the Division as a whole in 2009, several battalions and regiments felt that the year allowed them the opportunity to regroup and retrain.<sup>139</sup>

The Division's presence in Afghanistan increased



Photo by MSgt Michael Q. Retana, USMC

*LCpl Christopher M. Colgan, 1st Platoon, Company G, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, takes up a firing position at Camp Ethan, Jericho, Vermont, 12 December 2009. His unit was training in preparation for Exercise Cold Response 2010, a NATO-sponsored multinational exercise held in Norway in 2011.*

in 2010. The four deployed companies of 4th LAR Battalion had arrived in early November 2009 and taken over the responsibilities of 2d LAR Battalion in Helmand Province. H&S Company was augmented by Marines from Company A and renamed Company G, after which those two companies performed base security missions aboard Camp Leatherneck and Camp Dwyer. The rest of the battalion conducted counterinsurgency operations in the Rig District of southern Helmand Province. In mid-January, the H&S and Company A elements were able to rejoin the rest of the battalion, allowing 4th LAR Battalion to extend its presence in the AO to the west. The battalion operated over a vast area well over 100 kilometers wide, including Taghaz and the Khan Neshin “Castle.” The LAR Marines captured numerous suspected Taliban along with weapons, jihadist literature, and thousands of pounds of heroin and opium intended to support Taliban operations. They engaged in several firefights. Along with the platoon from 3d Force Recon that was attached to them, 4th LAR Battalion elements conducted a heliborne operation that cleared the Taghaz Bazaar and the area surrounding it. By mid-May 2010, the battalion had improved conditions for local Afghans, expanded the area of Coalition control, and created conditions for its successor unit, 1st LAR Battalion, to build on its success. The battalion redeployed to Camp Pendleton, California, that month and officially deactivated on 4 September 2010. Six Marines and one Navy corpsman from 4th LAR Battalion lost their lives on this deployment. Lance Corporal Carlos A. Aragon

and Lance Corporal Nigel K. Olsen were killed on 1 March and 4 March, respectively. Both were graduates of Mountain View High School in Orem, Utah. Three 4th LAR members were killed by a suicide bomber, and an IED claimed the lives of Lance Corporal Rick J. Centanni and the battalion sergeant major, Sergeant Major Robert J. Cottle, on 24 March.<sup>140</sup>

Other 4th MarDiv units that mobilized in December 2009 for OEF were from 4th Combat Engineers, as noted previously. First Platoon, Company B, attached to 3/7 in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, serving there for the bulk of 2010. The platoon demobilized by the end of the year. Other elements of 4th Combat Engineers mobilized in 2010. A headquarters element from Company C mobilized in the spring and was in direct support of RCT-7, then RCT-1, in Afghanistan. In June, 2d Platoon, Company C, mobilized and was augmented by a platoon each from Companies B and D. This company-size element deployed to Afghanistan in November 2010 and was attached to 1st Combat Engineers. Headquarters Battery, 14th Marines, continued to support the active force with counterbattery radar detachments in 2010, welcoming home two such detachments from Iraq and then deploying another to Afghanistan.<sup>141</sup> By the end of the year, 4th Combat Engineer Battalion had awarded 7 Purple Hearts, 14 Navy Achievement Medals with Combat V, and 1 Navy Commendation Medal with Combat V to its Marines, testifying to how dangerous these deployments had been.

Third Battalion, 25th Marines, mobilized in May and arrived in Afghanistan in August. Upon arrival, it was divided into three elements in three locations; all three were assigned security force missions under three different active component commanders. As was the case in its casualty heavy 2005 deployment, 3/25 suffered from a shortage of officers. Moreover, the security missions given to the battalion had previously been assigned to several units filling seven different “manning documents.” Not until after the unit had mobilized on 1 May did the unit have a clear idea of exactly what personnel would be required and which missions it would be expected to perform. As the Division Command Chronology reported, however, “through the exceptional dedication, perseverance, and prior planning by the leadership of both 25th Marines and 3d Battalion, 25th Marines, personnel sourcing challenges were overcome, and 3d Battalion, 25th Marines, completed a noteworthy and successful OEF-Afghanistan combat deployment.”<sup>142</sup>



Photo by LCpl John C. Lamb, USMC

*LCpl Heath Bowker, Company F, 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, provides security for his squad as the unit conducts patrols and immediate action drills at Camp Ethan Allen, Vermont, 12 December 2009. The Marines were preparing for Exercise Cold Response 2010, a NATO-sponsored exercise held in Norway in 2011.*



As OEF-Afghanistan continued, still more 4th MarDiv units mobilized in late 2010 in preparation for deployments in 2011. These included 1/23 (the Lonestar Battalion); Rocket Battery K, 2/14; and detachments from MP Company and Headquarters Company, Headquarters Battalion.<sup>143</sup> Later in 2011, Rocket Battery F, 2/14, replaced Rocket Battery K.<sup>144</sup> Also, 4th Recon Battalion deployed Marines to Afghanistan who were attached to 3d Recon Battalion. One of them, Staff Sergeant Alexander V. Haralovich, earned the Silver Star for his heroism in leading an effective counter-attack against Taliban insurgents who had ambushed his patrol on 4 October 2011.<sup>145</sup>

In January, 2012, Company E, 4th Tank Battalion, mobilized and deployed to Afghanistan while attached to 1st Combat Engineer Battalion as a route clearance company. While clearing routes and helping to neutralize the threat of IED's, the company also trained and worked alongside Route Clearance Company, 1st Brigade, 215th Corps, Afghan National Army, until the Afghan company was a fully functional and independently operating unit. During Company E's deployment, it found at least 11 IED's and "exploited" (destroyed or disarmed) 10 others, greatly facilitating the operations of 3/8. Company E also sustained 5 IED attacks, and tragically one of these killed Lance Corporal Alec R. Terwiske of 1st Platoon on 3 September. Eighteen days later, 1st Platoon found itself in a fire-fight and killed eight Taliban insurgents while suffering no casualties. The company returned to its home station of Fort Knox, Kentucky, in November 2012 and demobilized in December.<sup>146</sup>

Meanwhile, the commitment to other theater security operations outside of CONUS was ongoing. One notable example was 2/25's deployment in 2010 for Operation Cold Response. This operation, formerly known as Operation Battle Griffin, was a multinational (15 nations) operation planned and sponsored by the Norwegian military. It focused on maritime and amphibious operations and the interoperability of multinational forces. Unlike the other operations conducted by units from 4th MarDiv that year on five other continents, Operation Cold Response took place entirely above the Arctic Circle.<sup>147</sup> As the first decade of the twenty-first century came to a close, Marines from 4th MarDiv were once again found serving in "every clime and place."

As the new decade began, the Division continued in its role of providing operational support to the active duty component. In 2011, the battalion staff



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech Sgt Sean M. Worrell

*A M1A1 Abrams tank crew with 4th Tank Battalion fires at targets downrange at Camp Draa, near Tan-Tan, Morocco, 22 May 2011, as part of African Lion 2011.*

of 4th Tank Battalion formed the command element of the Black Sea Rotational Force (BSRF), which was augmented by Marines throughout Marine Forces Reserve. The BSRF is an annual deployment to the Black Sea, Balkans, and Caucasus regions of Eastern Europe. It is designed to enhance military capabilities, provide regional stability, and build partnerships with nations in that region. The BSRF led by 4th Tanks in 2011 was headquartered in Constanta, Romania from early April to mid-September. Working with the military forces of 12 different countries at various times, the Reserve Marines conducted multinational exercises, an NCO academy, martial arts training, and counterinsurgency training that included combat marksmanship, fundamentals of counter-IED tactics, military operations in urban terrain (MOUT) and non-lethal weapons employment. After serving overseas for five months, the Reserve Marines returned to Camp Pendleton, California and demobilized on 31 October. Once again 4th Mar Div Marines efficiently performed what is often an active duty mission.<sup>148</sup>

## Looking Forward—and Back

As 4th MarDiv looked forward to its next decade of service to the nation, there was a continued determination to serve as a "force in readiness" in the fight to defend America's freedoms. As the Division's commander, Brigadier General James M. Lariviere, wrote in his "Division Campaign Plan" in 2010, the Division remained at war "against violent extremists who are on a 100 year campaign to destroy our way of life."<sup>149</sup> General Lariviere's campaign plan anticipated that the Division's commitments and deployment require-

ments would remain high. Fourth Marine Division would be expected to continue its contributions to overseas contingency operations, such as Afghanistan; to theater security cooperation missions worldwide; and to military training exercises with friendly nations. Meanwhile, due to a prolonged economic downturn, available resources would likely decrease and budgets would shrink. Partly due to these anticipated budget cuts, the commanding general warned that 4th MarDiv would need to become “lighter” and “rediscover our expeditionary heritage.”<sup>150</sup> In making this assessment, Lariviere was not only looking to the future but back to the Division’s experiences over the last seven years:

Because of our prolonged combat presence ashore in Iraq, we have become heavy, a characteristic not in keeping with our expeditionary heritage. Commanders at all levels have to re-instill our expeditionary ethos and character. As you develop your training plans, decide wisely and spend frugally . . . . Seek out training opportunities that assist us in reinforcing our expeditionary and amphibious character . . . . Plan and employ all equipment and capabilities organic to your unit to sustain yourself. Be creative in planning to be lighter and more lethal.<sup>151</sup>

The Division campaign plan also noted the newly established role of the Division as an “Operational Reserve while also providing strategic depth.” The Division would need to continue its pattern of mobilizing units on a “scheduled, predictably rotational basis designed to sustain Active Component operational tempo.” Yet it would also need to provide strategic depth by providing units, personnel, and capabilities from those elements not scheduled to mobilize.<sup>152</sup>

What went unsaid and unquestioned in General Lariviere’s marching orders to the Division was the confidence that 4th MarDiv would continue to do everything that the nation asked; that its Marines and Sailors, reserve and active duty, would perform honorably and well. Reading between the lines, one can find the unspoken assumption that subordinate commanders and SNCO’s and NCO’s would continue to lead from the front; Marines and Sailors of all ranks would continue to volunteer and to sacrifice as they proudly served the nation and sustained their heritage as Marines.

That confidence in the Marines and Sailors of the Division could not have come from knowledge of

future requirements and future budget cuts, but rather from what 4th MarDiv had already done over the last decade. The Division had proven itself to be a tough, resilient, and capable force. It had shown great flexibility in restructuring itself to meet the needs of the larger Marine Corps, even while in the midst of fighting a war.\* It had also shown remarkable agility—units deployed within days or even hours of being mobilized in 2003; after 2003, they adjusted predeployment training in midcycle when the anticipated mission changed; and served capably outside their traditional MOS functions, sometimes with little notice. In serving as an operational reserve, the Division had provided critical operational tempo relief to the active component. It had provided strategic depth by augmenting the active force in capabilities that were in great demand in Iraq and Afghanistan—tanks, MPs, combat engineers, reconnaissance, light armored reconnaissance, and AAVs. Again and again active duty commanders noted that their units could not have achieved what they did without reserve augmentation; repeatedly they observed that, within a few weeks at most, it was impossible to tell the difference in skills and efficiency between active duty units and those of 4th MarDiv.

Most impressive of all had been the patriotism and dedication of the citizen-Marines and citizen-Sailors. Between 2003 and 2012, 125 Marines from 4th MarDiv, as well as a number of U.S. Navy corpsmen, gave their lives in the fight against terrorism and rogue regimes. Scores of others suffered grievous, life-changing wounds. Through it all, their comrades continued to serve with valor and to put their civilian careers, college plans, and families on hold as they did whatever their nation called on them to do. Through their devotion to each other and loyalty to their country, they undoubtedly upheld the legacy of those who had gone before them and the motto of their Corps, “Semper Fidelis.”



## Appendix 1

### 4th MARINE DIVISION, 2000

#### Headquarters Battalion [HQ]

Headquarters and Services Company [H&S Co] (New Orleans, LA)

Communications Company (Indianapolis, IN)

Military Police Company [MP] (Twin Cities, MN)

Truck Company (-) (Erie, PA)

Truck Company, 1st and 2d Platoons (Ebensburg, PA)

#### Anti-Tank Training Company (Broken Arrow, OK)

#### 14th Marines

Headquarters Battery (Fort Worth, TX)

##### 1st Battalion

Headquarters Battery (Alameda, CA)

Battery A (Aurora, CO)

Battery B (Joliet, IL)

Battery C (Waterloo, IA)

##### 2d Battalion

Headquarters Battery (Grand Prairie, TX)

Battery D (El Paso, TX)

Battery E (Jackson, MS)

#### Battery F (Oklahoma City, OK)

##### 3d Battalion

Headquarters Battery (Philadelphia, PA)

Battery G (West Trenton, NJ)

Battery H (Richmond, VA)

Battery I (Reading, PA)

##### 4th Battalion

Headquarters Battery (Bessemer, AL)

Battery K (Huntsville, AL)

Battery L (Bessemer, AL)

Battery M (Chattanooga, TN)

##### 5th Battalion

Headquarters Battery (Seal Beach, CA)

Battery N (El Paso, TX; moved to Pico Rivera, CA, in 2001)

Battery O (Seal Beach, CA)

Battery P (Spokane, WA)

## 23d Marines

Headquarters Company (-) (San Bruno, CA)

TOW Platoon (Broussard, LA)

### 1st Battalion

Headquarters and Services Company (Houston, TX)

Company A (Houston, TX)

Company B (Bossier City, LA)

Company C (-) (Corpus Christi, TX)

Detachment (Harlingen, TX)

Weapons Company (Austin, TX)

### 2d Battalion

Headquarters and Services Company (Encino, CA)

Company E (San Bruno, CA)

Company F (Las Vegas, NV)

Company G (Los Alamitos, CA)

Weapons Company (Port Hueneme, CA)

### 3d Battalion

Headquarters and Services Company (New Orleans, LA)

Company I (North Little Rock, AR)

Company K (Memphis, TN)

Company L (Montgomery, AL)

Weapons Company (Baton Rouge, LA)

## 24th Marines

Headquarters Company (Kansas City, MO)

Anti-Tank Platoon (Kansas City, MO)

### 1st Battalion

Headquarters and Services Company (Detroit, MI)

Company A (Grand Rapids, MI)

Company B (Saginaw, MI)

Company C (Lansing, MI)

Weapons Company (Perrysburg, OH)

### 2d Battalion

Headquarters and Services Company (Chicago, IL)

Company E (Des Moines, IA)

Company F (Milwaukee, WI)

Company G (Madison, WI)

Weapons Company (Waukegan, IL)

### 3d Battalion

Headquarters and Services Company (Bridgeton, MO)

Company I (Nashville, TN)

Company K (Terre Haute, IN)

Company L (Johnson City, TN)

Weapons Company (Springfield, MO)



## 25th Marines

Headquarters Company (Worcester, MA)

### 1st Battalion

Headquarters Company (Fort Devens, MA)

Company A (Topsham, ME)

Company B (Londonderry, NH)

Company C (Plainville, CT)

Weapons Company (Fort Devens, MA)

### 2d Battalion

Headquarters and Services Company (Garden City, NY)

Company E (Harrisburg, PA)

Company F (Albany, NY)

Company G (Dover, NJ)

Weapons Company (Garden City, NY)

### 3d Battalion

Headquarters and Services Company (Brook Park, OH)

Company I (Buffalo, NY)

Company K (Moundsville, WV)

Company L (Columbus, OH)

Weapons Company (Akron, OH)

## 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion

Headquarters and Services Company (Tampa, FL)

Company A (-) (Norfolk, VA)

Company A, 3d Platoon (Gulfport, MS)

Company B (-) (Jacksonville, FL)

Company B, 3d Platoon (Galveston, TX)

## 4th Combat Engineer Battalion

Headquarters and Services Company (Baltimore, MD)

Company A (Charleston, WV)

Company B (Roanoke, VA)

Company C (Lynchburg, VA)

Company D (Knoxville, TN)

## 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion [4th LAR]

Headquarters and Services Company (Camp Pendleton, CA)

Light Armored Vehicle-Air Defense Platoon [LAV-Air Defense Platoon],  
(Camp Pendleton, CA)

Company A (Camp Pendleton, CA)

Company B (Frederick, MD)

Company C (Riverton, UT)

4th Reconnaissance Battalion [4th Recon]

Headquarters and Services Company (San Antonio, TX)

Company A (San Antonio, TX)

Company B (Billings, MT)

Company C (San Antonio, TX)

Company D (Albuquerque, NM)

Company E (Elmendorf Air Force Base, AK)

4th Tank Battalion [4th Tanks]

Headquarters and Services Company (San Diego, CA)

TOW/Scout Platoon (Amarillo, TX)

Company A (San Diego, CA)

Company B (Yakima, WA)

Company C (Boise, ID)

Company D (Riverside, CA)

3d Force Reconnaissance Company [3d Force Recon] (Mobile, AL)

4th Force Reconnaissance Company [4th Force Recon] (-) (Kaneohe Bay, HI)

Detachment (Reno, NV)

8th Tank Battalion [8th Tanks]

Headquarters and Services Company (Rochester, NY)

Company A (Fort Knox, KY)

Company B (Syracuse, NY)

Company C (Tallahassee, FL)

Company D (Eastover, SC)



## 4th MARINE DIVISION, 2010

### Headquarters Battalion [HQ]

Headquarters and Service Company [H&S Co] (New Orleans, LA)

Anti-Tank Training Company (Broken Arrow, OK)

Communications Company (-) (Cincinnati, OH)

Communications Company Detachment (Indianapolis, IN)

Military Police Company [MP] (-) (Minneapolis, MN)

MP Company Detachment (Wahpeton, ND)

Truck Company (-) (Erie, PA)

Truck Company, 2d & 3rd Platoons (Ebensburg, PA)

### 14th Marines

Headquarters Battery [HQ Btry] (Fort Worth, TX)

#### 2d Battalion

HQ Battery (Grand Prairie, TX)

Rocket Battery D (El Paso, TX)

Rocket Battery F (Oklahoma City, OK)

Rocket Battery K (Huntsville, AL)

#### 3d Battalion

HQ Battery (Philadelphia, PA)

Battery G (West Trenton, NJ)

Battery H (Richmond, VA)

Battery I (Reading, PA)

Battery M (Chattanooga, TN)

#### 5th Battalion

HQ Battery (Seal Beach, CA)

Battery N (Pico Rivera, CA)

Battery O (Seal Beach, CA)

Battery P (Spokane, WA)

Battery Q (Aurora, CA)

### 23d Marines

Headquarters Company (San Bruno, CA)

#### 1st Battalion

Headquarters and Services Company [H&S Co] (Houston, TX)

Company A (Houston, TX)

Company B (Bossier City, LA)

Company C (Corpus Christi, TX)

Weapons Company (Austin, TX)

#### 2d Battalion

Headquarters and Services Company [H&S Co] (Pasadena, CA)

Company E (San Bruno, CA)

Company F (-) (Salt Lake City, UT)

Company F, Weapons Platoon (Las Vegas, NV)

Company G (Los Alamitos, CA)

Weapons Company (Port Hueneme, CA)

### 3d Battalion

Headquarters and Services Company [H&S Co] (Belle Chasse, LA)  
Company I (Little Rock, AR)  
Company K (Memphis, TN)  
Company L (Montgomery, AL)  
Weapons Company (Baton Rouge, LA)

### 24th Marines

Headquarters Company (Kansas City, MO)

#### 1st Battalion

Headquarters and Services Company [H&S Co],  
(Selfridge Air N.G. Base, MI)  
Company A (Grand Rapids, MI)  
Company B (Saginaw, MI)  
Company C (Lansing, MI)  
Weapons Company (Perrysburg, OH)

#### 2d Battalion

Headquarters and Services Company [H&S Co] (Chicago, IL)  
Company E (Des Moines, IA)  
Company F (Milwaukee, WI)  
Company G (Madison, WI)  
Weapons Company (Waukegan, IL)

#### 3d Battalion

Headquarters and Services Company [H&S Co] (Bridgeton, MO)  
Company I (Smyrna, TN)  
Company K (Terre Haute, IN)  
Company L (Johnson City, TN)  
Weapons Company (Springfield, MO)

### 25th Marines

Headquarters Company (Fort Devens, MA)

#### 1st Battalion

Headquarters Company (Fort Devens, MA)

Company A (Topsham, ME)  
Company B (Londonderry, NH)  
Company C (Plainville, CT)  
Weapons Company (Fort Devens, MA)

#### 2d Battalion

Headquarters and Services Company [H&S Co] (Garden City, NY)  
Company E (Harrisburg, PA)  
Company F (Glenville, NY)  
Company G (Picatinny Arsenal, NJ)  
Weapons Company (Garden City, NY)

#### 3d Battalion

Headquarters and Services Company [H&S Co] (Brook Park, OH)  
Company I (Buffalo, NY)  
Company K (Moundsville, WV)  
Company L (Columbus, OH)  
Weapons Company (Akron, OH)



Anti-Terrorism Battalion [AT]  
     Headquarters and Services Company [H&S Co] (Bessemer, AL)  
     Support Company (-) (Bessemer, AL)  
         Machine Gun Platoon (Chicopee, MA)  
         Scout/Sniper Platoon (Reno, NV)  
 Company A (Rochester, NY)  
     Company B (-) (Amarillo, TX)  
         3d Platoon (Reno, NV)  
     Company C (Jackson, MS)  
     Company D (-) (Elmendorf AFB, AK)  
         2d and 3d Platoons (Billings, MT)  
     Company E (-) (Bessemer, AL)  
         2d and 3d Platoons (Tallahassee, FL)  
     Company F (-) (Lafayette, LA)  
         2d and 3d Platoons (Kaneohe Bay, HI)

4th Assault Amphibian Battalion  
     Headquarters and Services Company [H&S Co] (Tampa, FL)  
     Company A (-) (Norfolk, VA)  
         Company A, 3d Platoon (Gulfport, MS)  
     Company B (-) (Jacksonville, FL)  
         Company B, 3d Platoon (Galveston, TX)

4th Combat Engineer Battalion  
     Headquarters and Services Company [H&S Co] (Baltimore, MD)  
     Engineer Support Company (Baltimore, MD)  
     Company A (Charleston, WV)  
     Company B (Roanoke, VA)  
     Company C (Lynchburg, VA)  
     Company D (Knoxville, TN)

4th Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion [LAR]  
     Headquarters and Services Company [H&S Co] (Camp Pendleton, CA)  
     Company A (Camp Pendleton, CA)  
     Company B (Frederick, MD)  
     Company C (Riverton, UT)  
     Company D (Quantico, VA)  
     Company E (Syracuse, NY)  
     Company F (Eastover, SC)

4th Reconnaissance Battalion [4th Recon]  
     Headquarters and Services Company [H&S Co] (San Antonio, TX)  
     Company B (Smyrna, GA)  
     Company C (San Antonio, TX)  
     Company D (Albuquerque, NM)  
     Company E (Joliet, IL)

4th Tank Battalion [4th Tanks]

Headquarters and Services Company [H&S Co] (San Diego, CA)

Company A (Camp Pendleton, CA)

Company B (Yakima, WA)

Company C (Boise, ID)

Company D (Twentynine Palms, CA)

Company E (Fort Knox, KY)

Company F (Camp Lejeune, NC)

TOW and Scouts Platoons (Hialeah, FL)

3d Force Reconnaissance Company [3d Force Recon] (Mobile, AL)

4th Force Reconnaissance Company [4th Force Recon] (-) (Alameda, CA)

4th Force Reconnaissance Company Detachment (Kaneohe Bay, HI)



## Appendix 2

### Commanding Generals, 4th Marine Division, 1997-Present

Major General Arnold L. Punaro	August 1997-August 2000
Major General Jack A. Davis	August 2000-August 2002
Major General John J. McCarthy	August 2002-September 2004
Major General Douglas V. O'Dell Jr.	September 2004-April 2007
Major General James L. Williams	April 2007-April 2010
Major General James M. Lariviere	April 2010-September 2012
Brigadier General James S. Hartsell	September 2012-Present

### Appendix 3



#### 4th Marine Division Deaths, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom

<u>Year</u>	<u>Deaths</u>
2003	5
2004	16
2005	55
2006	26
2007	9
2008	2
2009	0
2010	7
2011	4
2012	1

#### Notes

1. Figures include hostile fire, nonhostile causes, accidents, and self-inflicted.
2. All deaths from 2010 to 2012 were attributed to Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan.
3. Figures do not include U.S. Navy personnel or personnel from other services attached to Marine units.

Source: Casualty Section, Headquarters Marine Corps.



## Notes

1. 4th Marine Division Historical Detachment, *History of the 4th Marine Division, 1943-2000* (2nd edition, 2000) 64, 73-74.
2. See 2000 command chronologies for 4th Marine Division, 4th Combat Engineer Battalion, 4th Reconnaissance Battalion.
3. 4th Marine Division ComdC, 2000, G-3 Section, 5.
4. "Mission Analysis," in "23d Marines Campaign Plan," 23d Marines ComdC, 2000.
5. Quote from 14th Marines ComdC, 2001; see also command chronologies from 23d and 24th Marines.
6. 4th Marine Division ComdC, 2002, "Narrative Summary," 5-7.
7. *Ibid.*, 7-8.
8. See command chronologies of 2/25, 2/23; also MGen John J. McCarthy, Jr (Ret.) intvw by Col Rod Andrew Jr., 2 August 2011 (hereafter McCarthy intvw.)
9. A useful "quick reference" list of Marine Corps units participating in OIF in 2003 appears in Colonel Nicholas E. Reynolds, *U.S. Marines in Iraq, 2003: Basrah, Baghdad and Beyond* (Washington: History Division, U.S. Marine Corps, 2007), Appendix C. However, the list often does not denote reserve units of company size or smaller that were integrated into larger active duty units. It also incorrectly lists Company C, 4th Combat Engineer Battalion as part of RCT-5. That company did not mobilize for OIF in 2003 (See 4th Combat Engineer Battalion ComdC, 2003).
10. McCarthy intvw.
11. For more on 1st Marine Division's 2003 campaign in Iraq, see Reynolds. An excellent map showing the route of each RCT and major engagements appears in Bing West and MajGen Ray L. Smith, *The March Up: Taking Baghdad with the 1st Marine Division* (New York: Bantam, 2003).
12. Major Thomas W. Crecca, *United States Marine Corps Reserve Operations: 11 September 2001 to November 2003* (New Orleans: U.S. Marine Forces Reserve, 2005), 26, 46; 2d Battalion, 23d Marines ComdC, 2003.
13. 2d Battalion, 23d Marines ComdC, 2003; Citation, Navy Cross, Sergeant Scott C. Montoya.
14. 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion ComdC, 2003; Crecca, 37-38.
15. Company A, 8th Tank Battalion ComdC, 2003; McCarthy intvw.
16. Company A, 8th Tank Battalion ComdC, 2003; Col Rod Andrew Jr., *U.S. Marines in Battle: An Nasiriyah, 23 March-2 April 2003* (History Division, U.S. Marine Corps, 2009), 4-23 *passim*.
17. Company A, 8th Tank Battalion ComdC, 2003.
18. 8th Tank Battalion ComdC, including individual reports from Company B and TOW and Scout Platoons, 2003.
19. Company D, 4th Tank Battalion ComdC, 2003; TOW/Scout Platoons, 4th Tank Battalion ComdC, 2003; Crecca, 36-37.
20. 4th LAR Battalion ComdC, 2003.
21. 4th Force Recon Company ComdC, 2003.
22. 4th Recon Battalion ComdC, 2003.
23. *Ibid.*, Crecca, 44.
24. MP Company, Headquarters Battalion, 4th Marine Division ComdC, 2003.
25. Communications Company, Headquarters Battalion, 4th Marine Division ComdC, 2003.
26. Truck Company, Headquarters Battalion, 4th Marine Division ComdC, 2003; Crecca, 28.

27. 4th Combat Engineer Battalion ComdC, 2003; Crecca, 45.
28. 1st Battalion, 14th Marines ComdC, 2003.
29. 1st Battalion, 24th Marines ComdC, 2003.
30. 2nd Battalion, 25th Marines ComdC, 2003.
31. 3rd Battalion, 23rd Marines ComdC, 2003.
32. 1st Battalion, 25th Marines ComdC, 2003.
33. Company C, 4th LAR Battalion ComdC; LtCol Kenneth W. Estes, U.S. Marines in Iraq, 2004-2005: Into the Fray (Washington: History Division, U.S. Marine Corps, 2011), 9. Estes cites 9 December as Company C's return date, though the unit's command chronology gives the date 18 December.
34. Colonel David T. Watters, Marine Forces Reserve Operational History: Global War on Terror (2004-2007), n.p., n.d., 7.
35. Estes, 22, 52.
36. Watters, 10.
37. 3rd Battalion, 24th Marines ComdC, Jan-June 2004.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid; see especially Company L section.
40. Ibid., 14.
41. Overton County News (Livingston, TN), 25Aug04, <http://www.overtoncountynews.com/archives2004/news08-25-2004.html>; 3rd Battalion, 24th Marines ComdC, Jan-Dec 2004.
42. Watters, 20-21.
43. The bulk of this narrative on the Battle for Hit is drawn from Watters, 23-26.
44. Dick Camp, Operation Phantom Fury: The Assault and Capture of Fallujah, Iraq (Minneapolis, MN: Zenith Press), 159-61; Watters, 26; Citation and Summary of Action, Navy Commendation Medal, Sergeant Herbert B. Hancock, [https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/iaps/awards/viewAward.action?case\\_id=820342&is\\_legacy=true&form=1650X](https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/iaps/awards/viewAward.action?case_id=820342&is_legacy=true&form=1650X); "Statement of Lieutenant General Dennis M. McCarthy, United States Marine Corps Reserve, Commander, Marine Forces Reserve, Before the Senate Armed Services Committee Personnel Subcommittee on Reserve Matters on 13 April 2005," hereafter "McCarthy Statement, 2005."
45. 1st Battalion, 23rd Marines ComdC, 2005.
46. Watters, 16.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid., 18.
49. Ibid., 19.
50. 2d Battalion, 24th Marines ComdC, 2004, Company G section.
51. Watters, 55.
52. Battery M, 4/14 ComdC, 2004.
53. See 2004 command chronologies for 14th Marines and 2/14.
54. 2d Battalion, 14th Marines ComdC, 2004.
55. Summary of Action and Citation, Navy Commendation Medal, SSgt Glen David Bragg, [https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/iaps/awards/viewAward.action?case\\_id=832537&is\\_legacy=true&form=1650X#](https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/iaps/awards/viewAward.action?case_id=832537&is_legacy=true&form=1650X#).
56. Summary of Action and Citation, Navy Commendation Medal, GySgt Robert C. Bayne, Jr., [https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/iaps/awards/viewAward.action?case\\_id=813109&is\\_legacy=true&form=1650X#](https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/iaps/awards/viewAward.action?case_id=813109&is_legacy=true&form=1650X#).
57. 4th Combat Engineer Battalion ComdC, 2004.
58. 3d Force Reconnaissance Company ComdC, 2004.
59. 4thMarDiv ComdC, 2002; 14th Marines ComdC, 2003.

60. McCarthy Statement, 2005.
61. 8th Tank Battalion ComdC, 2004; 4th LAR Battalion ComdC, 2004.
62. Col. Frank R. Gunter, "Marine Reserve Gets the Job Done," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 130:6 (June 2004).
63. MGen Douglas V. O'Dell, interview by Col Rod Andrew Jr., 1 August 2011 (hereafter O'Dell intvw).
64. McCarthy Statement, 2005.
65. McCarthy intvw.
66. "An Interview with Thomas H. Hall," Joint Force Quarterly 43 (4th Quarter, 2006), 10. [Hon. Mr. Hall was the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs and is a retired U.S. Navy Rear Admiral.]
67. John D. Winkler, "Developing an Operational Reserve: A Policy and Historical Context and the Way Forward," Joint Force Quarterly 59 (4th Quarter 2010), 16.
68. McCarthy intvw.
69. Ibid.
70. See Command Chronologies of 2/14, 3/14, 4/14, 8th Tanks, 4th Tanks, 4th LAR, 4th AT Battalion for 2004 and 2005.
71. Mission Statement, AT-Battalion, 4th Marine Division.
72. MGen Douglas V. O'Dell, interview by Col Rod Andrew Jr., 26Sept11; 4th AT Battalion, ComdC, 2006; BGen James M. Lariviere, intvw by Col Rod Andrew Jr., 12 July 2011 (hereafter Lariviere intvw).
73. Troop lists for the units of II MEF can be found in Estes, Appendix B; and II MEF Presidential Unit Citation, Award Recommendation.
74. 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines, ComdC, 2005.
75. Watters, 28-29.
76. 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines, ComdC, 2005; see especially Company K section, Sequence of Events, 25 March.
77. Ibid., Watters, 29.
78. 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines ComdC, 2005, Watters, 30.
79. 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines ComdC, 2005; Watters, 30-32.
80. Col Stephen W. Davis, intvw with LtCol David A. Benhoff, 20 May 2005, Oral History Collection, History Division, Marine Corps University, Quantico, Va (hereafter, HD, MCU); Watters, 32.
81. Watters, 32; LtCol Christopher Starling, intvw by LtCol David A. Benhoff, 21 May 2005, HD, MCU.
82. 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines ComdC, 2005; Watters, 34-39; Estes, 110-11.
83. Watters, 39.
84. 4th AAB ComdC, 2005; 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines ComdC, 1-31 Aug 2005, p.7.
85. 4th Combat Engineer Bn ComdC, 2005.
86. 4th Force Reconnaissance Company ComdC, 2005. This source refers to 5/14 as "5/14 Antiterrorism Battalion," but that is incorrect.
87. 4th Reconnaissance Battalion ComdC, 2005; 3/25 ComdC, Jan-Jun 2005, pp.9-10; and 1-31 August 2005, p.7.
88. 4th Tank Battalion ComdC, 2005; 3/25 ComdC, Jan-June 2005, p.10.
89. 5th Battalion, 14th Marines ComdC, 2005 and 2006 (see attached statements in case of Sergeant Adam L. Cann in 2006 ComdC); Troop List, II MEF, OIF 04-06; Watters, 56.
90. Troop List, II MEF, OIF 04-06.



91. MGen Douglas V. O'Dell, interview by Col Rod Andrew Jr., 26Sept11; relevant unit after-action reports, 2005.
92. Estes, 105, 115, 123-25, 141, 147-49.
93. 4thMarDiv ComdC, 2006, G-3 section.
94. Ibid.
95. Watters, 42-46.
96. 1st Battalion, 25th Marines ComdC, 2006, Enclosure 1, pp.3-4.
97. Watters, 46.
98. 1st Battalion, 14th Marines, ComdC 2006.
99. 3d Battalion, 14th Marines, ComdC 2006.
100. 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, ComdC 2006.
101. 24th Marines ComdC, 2006, Section II, p.5.
102. Watters, 48-49.
103. Ibid., 48-54.
104. 4th Combat Engineer Bn ComdC, 2006.
105. 2/25 ComdC, 2006.
106. See relevant unit command chronologies, 2006; MGen O'Dell mentions the similarities in riverine craft and LAV's in O'Dell intvw.
107. Lariviere intvw.
108. Lariviere intvw; McCarthy intvw.
109. O'Dell intvw.
110. Lariviere intvw.
111. O'Dell intvw; Col John M. Caldwell, intvw by Col Rod Andrew Jr., 6 July 2011 (hereafter Caldwell intvw).
112. See 4th AT Battalion ComdC, 2006 and command chronologies of originating units from 2004, 2005, and 2006.
113. Col James M. Rose, intvw by Col. Rod Andrew Jr., 20 July 2011.
114. 4th Marine Division ComdC, 2007, G-3 Section.
115. Defence Talk, 18 Dec 2007 (<http://www.defence-talk.com/first-marine-himars-provides-new-battle-field-capabilities-14622/>) accessed 29 July 2011.
116. 4th Marine Division ComdC, G-3 and G-1 Sections.
117. 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion ComdC, 2007, Section 2.
118. Ibid., and see embedded chronologies submitted by Company A and 3d Platoon, Company A.
119. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iraq/2008/03/iraq-080318-mnfi03.htm>; [http://www.usf-iraq.com/?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=17347&Itemid=128](http://www.usf-iraq.com/?option=com_content&task=view&id=17347&Itemid=128).
120. 2d Battalion, 23d Marines ComdC, 2008 and 2009, 1st Battalion, 23d Marines, 2008.
121. 3d Battalion, 25th Marines ComdC, 2008.
122. 3d Battalion, 14th Marines ComdC, 2008.
123. 5th Battalion, 14th Marines ComdC, 2008.
124. 4th AT Battalion ComdC, 2008.
125. 3d Force Reconnaissance Company ComdC, 2008; 4th Force Reconnaissance Company ComdC, 2008. The mobilization of these units is omitted in the 4th Marine Division command chronology. The units themselves refer to them but do not provide much detail on the deployments.
126. 4th AA Battalion ComdC, 2008.
127. 4th Combat Engineer Bn ComdC, 2008.

128. 4th Tank Battalion ComdC, 2008.
129. 4th LAR Battalion ComdC, 2008, 2009.
130. 2d Battalion, 23d Marines ComdC, 2009.
131. Headquarters Battalion, 4th Marine Division ComdC, 2009; 4th Combat Engineer Battalion ComdC, 2009; 4th AA Battalion ComdC, 2009; 4th AT Battalion ComdC, 2009; see also Company A's separate report.
132. 4th Tank Battalion ComdC, 2009; 4th Combat Engineer Battalion ComdC, 2009.
133. 3d Battalion, 24th Marines ComdC, 2010.
134. 4th Marine Division ComdC, 2010, G-3 section.
135. 2d Battalion, 14th Marines ComdC, 2009.
136. 5th Battalion, 14th Marines ComdC, 2009; "Artillery Marines Ready to Bring Steel Rain," jdnews, 15 June 2009 (<http://lejeunedeployed.freedomblogging.com/2009/06/15/artillery-marines-ready-to-bring-steel-rain/>), accessed 3 August 2011.
137. Company B, 4th Force Reconnaissance Battalion ComdC, 2009, 2010; 3d Force Reconnaissance Company ComdC, 2009, 2010.
138. 4th Marine Division ComdC, G-3 Section, 2009; 4th LAR Battalion ComdC, 2010, 4th Combat Engineer Battalion ComdC, 2009.
139. See 4th Marine Division ComdC, 2009, and command chronologies of relevant units.
140. See, for example, 14th Marines ComdC, 2009.
141. 4th LAR Battalion ComdC, 2010; "Scholarship Named for Two Local Marines Will Honor Their Memory," Utah Daily Herald, 16 April 2010 ([http://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/central/ore/article\\_b416fc56-dd20-597c-b552-13636241b435.html](http://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/central/ore/article_b416fc56-dd20-597c-b552-13636241b435.html)), accessed 3 Aug 2011.
142. 4th Combat Engineer Battalion ComdC, 2009, 2010. The platoon numbers in the battalion command chronologies do not always match up with those in the 4th Marine Division ComdC; this manuscript uses those given in the 4th Combat Engineer Battalion reports. See also Headquarters Battery, 14th Marines ComdC, 2010.
143. Ibid., pp. 6-7.
144. Cpl. Walter D. Marino II, "2/14 Marines Rest from Firing Rockets," Aug. 12, 2011 (<http://www.2ndmardiv.marines.mil/News/NewsArticleDisplay/tabid/2643/Article/41951>), accessed 29 July 13.
145. Jon Rabirow, "Time to Get Out of This Situation," Stars and Stripes, June 10, 2013 (<http://www.stripes.com/time-to-get-out-of-this-situation-1.224747>); Sgt. Ray Lewis, "Indiana Marine's Rocket Assault Earns Silver Star," Sept. 20, 2012 (<http://www.marforres.marines.mil>); accessed 29 July 13; Silver Star Citation, Staff Sergeant Alexander V. Haralovich.
146. Company E, 4th Tank Battalion ComdC, 2012.
147. 2nd Battalion, 25th Marines ComdC, 2010.
148. 4th Tank Battalion ComdC, 2011; Cpl. Tatum Vayavananda, "U.S., Romanian Marines Complete Counterinsurgency Training," 12 May 2011 (<http://community.marines.mil/unit/marforeur/Pages/MarinesatBTA.aspx>) accessed 19 July 2013.
149. 4th Marine Division, "Standing Operation Order 001-10 (Division Campaign Plan)," 16 Dec 2010, 1.
150. Ibid., 7.
151. Ibid.
152. Quoted phrases from *ibid.*, 2.

*The Logotype reproduced on the back cover has as its major element the oldest military insignia in continuous use in the United States. It first appeared, as shown here, on Marine Corps buttons adopted in 1804. With the stars changed to five points, the device has continued on Marine Corps buttons to the present day.*

Back Cover Photo by 1stSgt Lance Nutt, USMCR  
*A view of the Tigris River from a CH-53, 2010.*



## *About the Author and Acknowledgments*

*Colonel Rod Andrew Jr. is Officer-in-Charge of the Field History Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, Virginia. He was commissioned in 1987 and served in 4th Marine Division as an artillery officer from 1991-2001. In civilian life, he is a professor of history at Clemson University, South Carolina.*

*Author acknowledgments: The genesis of this publication lay in the desire to capture, as Major General James M. Lariviere put it, “the major muscle movements” of 4th Marine Division in the last decade and to ensure that the collective memory of what the Division did and accomplished during this remarkable period was not lost. This book was originally envisioned to accompany a newly written overview of the Division’s history before 2000, including its formation in 1943 and its later development as the ground combat component of the Marine Corps Reserve. That overview of 1943-2000 was not written, though earlier works on that period are still useful.*

*The “project manager” tasked with identifying an author and serving as a liaison between him and the 4th Marine Division staff was Lieutenant Colonel Adam N. McKeown, whose dedication to the project and assistance to the author have been invaluable. The author would also like to thank Major General Lariviere, Major General (Ret.) John J. McCarthy, and Major General (Ret.) Douglas V. O’Dell Jr. for providing interviews and reading and commenting on earlier drafts. Brigadier General James S. Hartsell’s interest and command support provided the final impetus to get the work “over the finish line” and into print. Colonels James M. Rose and John M. Caldwell as well as First Sergeant Robert C. Bayne Jr. (Ret.) provided helpful information in telephone interviews. For the assistance provided by Marine Corps History Division in helping with the editorial process and in getting this work printed, special thanks is due to the Director of History Division, Dr. Charles P. Neimeyer, and History Division’s Senior Editor, Ms. Angela J. Anderson. Staff Sergeant Brian A. Knowles, a member of the Field History Branch, History Division, and Mrs. Brianna Knowles did the layout and design.*

