

Chapter 3

Current Operations

Today the Marine Corps is engaged world wide, answering the Nation's call, with well-trained, task-organized forces. Participating in myriad operations, from humanitarian relief and peace operations to forward presence and crisis response, forward deployed Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs), Maritime Prepositioning Forces (MPFs), and sea-based MEUs can operate without access to land bases, providing a high degree of flexibility as to when, where, and what force should be employed.

Because of this expeditionary character, Marine forces stand ready to deploy quickly, effectively, and with sufficient agility and ability to deal with wide-ranging and multiple situations. This tremendous political and military capability is not offered by other United States military services. These current capabilities are honed by an extensive program of exercises at the unit, force, Joint and "Combined" levels that keep our warriors in top combat shape and ready for any tasking.

Current Operations

While 2000 did not see dramatic operations on the scale of 1999's Kosovo campaign, rotational naval forces were constantly "on station, on call" worldwide throughout the year, supporting ongoing Joint operations and theater engagement efforts. The attack on the USS Cole highlighted the importance, as well as the cost, of maintaining a strong American presence in key, but unstable, regions.

Again this year, five MEUs, manned by more than 11,000 Marines, embarked on Amphibious Ready Groups (ARGs), deployed during the year. Similarly, 30,500 Marines were deployed or based forward in support of other operations.

Marines from the 15th and 22nd MEUs, embarked on the USS Bon Homme Richard and Wasp ARGs respectively, participated in training and exercises with friends and allies throughout Southwest Asia. Elements from Navy and Marine aircraft wings conducted strike and support operations as part of Operations Northern Watch and Southern Watch over Iraq.

Forward-deployed naval forces, based in Japan, continued to provide visible overseas engagement and projected U.S. influence in East Asia. Seventh Fleet Marines and Sailors exercised and operated with the forces of several nations in Southeast Asia. USS Peleliu, with elements of the 11th MEU, provided heavy-lift logistics support to the International Force in East Timor (INTERFET). The Navy and Marine Corps team executed some 30 varied missions in support of INTERFET and humanitarian assistance efforts. Operating forces from Marine Forces, Pacific (MARFORPAC) supported the U.S. Liaison staff to the United Nations Transition Assistance program in East Timor, transporting thousands of tons of humanitarian supplies and building materials.

In other activities, Marines deployed in ARGs assigned to the Sixth Fleet provided presence ashore in Kosovo and served as the Joint Task Force Commander's ready reserve. Marine Fleet Anti-Terrorist Support (FAST) teams deployed to Cuba, Yemen, and Bahrain on short notice to provide enhanced force protection to forward deployed forces during periods of heightened threats.

The Marine Corps Reserve, including Reserve aviation units, contributed significant support to counter drug operations, both from bases in the United States and overseas. Marine Reserves also supported many other efforts, including Operations Northern Watch and Southern Watch, civil affairs and other activities in Bosnia and Kosovo, and the annual large-scale Exercise Bright Star in Egypt.



Exercises

The Marine Corps also reestablished three Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEB) in 2000. Two of these MEBs participated in major Joint exercises last year.

Marine Corps participation in realistic, worldwide exercises-whether internal specific, Joint, and/or Combined-provides a significant contribution to meeting capability requirements for sustaining a relevant force in readiness.

Internal Marine Corps exercises-such as Combined Arms Exercises (CAX) in Twenty-nine Palms, California; Mountain Warfare Training Center (MWTC) courses in Bridgeport, California; Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) courses in Yuma, Arizona; and, MEU (Special Operations Capable) workups-develop individual and unit proficiency/competency and test operational skills in order to provide those capabilities required to execute the full range of Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Operations.

Through Joint and Combined exercises-such as Ulchi Focus Lens in The Republic of Korea; Red Reef in Saudi Arabia; Cobra Gold in Thailand; Cooperative Osprey in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina; and UNITAS in various South American countries and West African States-the Marine Corps improves its ability to rapidly project forces globally and enhances interoperability.

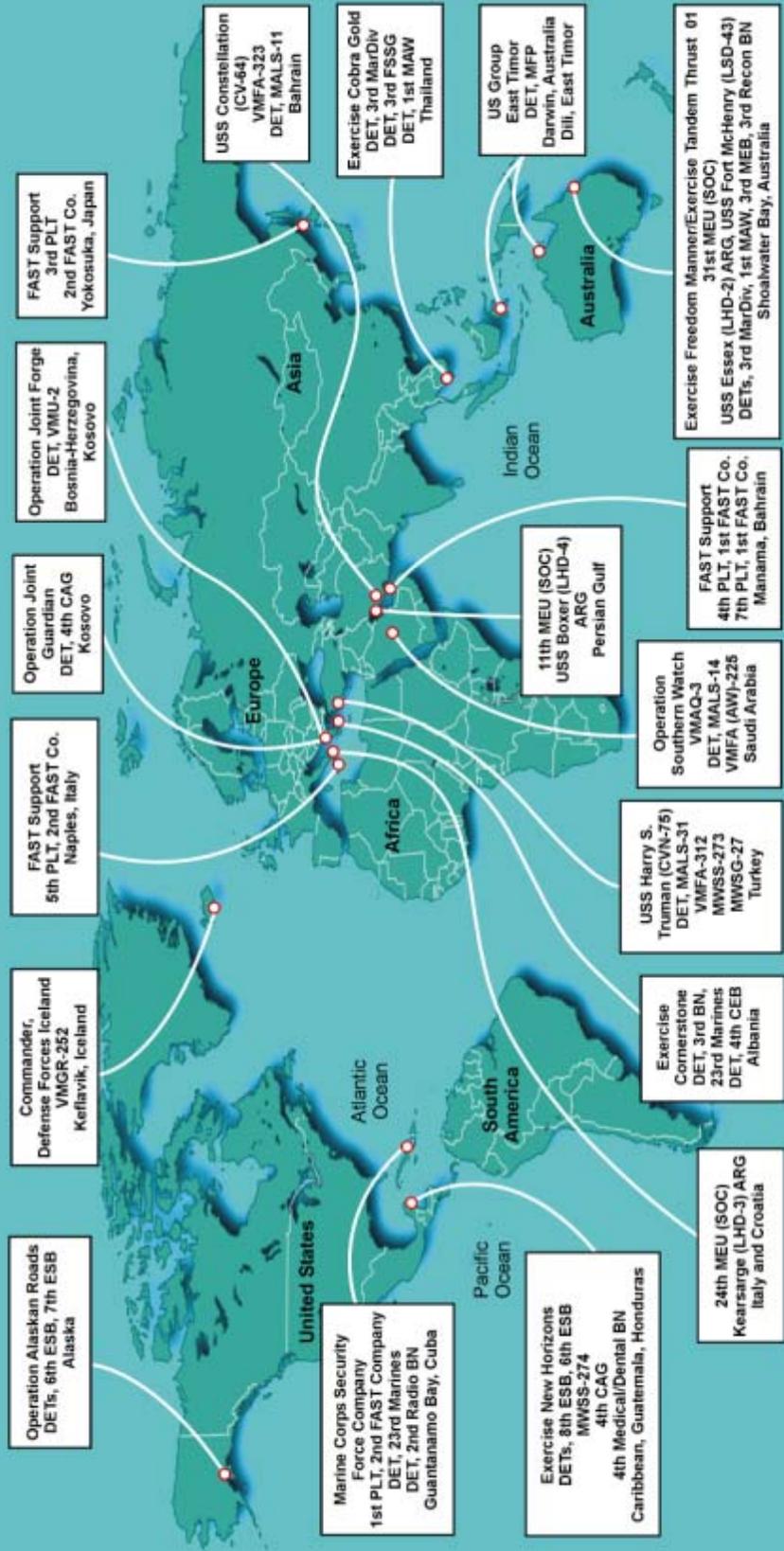
During 2000, Marines participated in over two hundred internal, Joint, and Combined exercises. These exercises were categorized as live fire, field training, command post, and/or computer assisted. Marine participation levels ranged from selected detachments (from small cadres of skilled specialists to trained battle staffs) to a MEB in excess of two thousand troops. These exercises provided invaluable training in diverse locations around the world and ensured that we remained operationally ready and forward deployed.

Counter-drug Operations

The Marine Corps continued to contribute to the Nation's counter-drug effort during 2000, and participated in 50 counter-drug (CD) missions in support of Joint Task Force Six (JTF-6), Joint Interagency Task Force East (JIATF-E), and Joint Interagency Task Force West (JIATF-W). These missions were conducted along the U.S. southwest border, on federal lands, and within several domestic hot spots that have been designated as High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTAs). Individual Marines and units are assigned to these CD missions in order to provide support to domestic Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (DLEA) in their investigation of drug trafficking and apprehension of suspected traffickers throughout the United States. Seventy-five percent of the missions were executed by Marines of Marine Forces Reserve (MARFORRES).



Deployed Marine Forces - June 2001



CY00 USMC Operations Matrix

<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Mission</i>
Oct 92 — Present	Southeast Asia	POW / MIA Accounting
Jul 96 — Present	Southwest Asia	Force Protection
Jan 98 — Present	South America	Counter-drug Support
Jun 98 — Present	Aviano, IT, Ramstein, GM, Bosnia/Kosovo	Peacekeeping
Sep 99 — Present	East Timor	Peacekeeping
Aug — Oct 00	Western United States	Wildland Fire Support
Apr 00	Puerto Rico	Clearing Operations
Jul — Oct / Dec 00	Incirlik, Turkey	NORTHERN WATCH
Oct — Dec 00	Yemen	DELIBERATE RESPONSE
Oct — Dec 00	Saudi Arabia	SOUTHERN WATCH

<i>Force</i>	<i>Description of Action</i>
Dets from 1 st MAW and 3 rd FSSG	FULL ACCOUNTING — Support of national efforts to account for POWs/MIAs from the Vietnam War
Dets from I MEF	DESERT FOCUS — Conducting CI force protection operations in support of CJTF-SWA
Det MACG-28	LASER STRIKE — Counter-drug radar and communication support
Dets; VMU-2, 4 th CAG, 2ND LSB	JOINT FORGE — Peace enforcement/keeping operation
Elements of III MEF	Provide planning support and humanitarian assistance in support of international/United Nations peacekeeping force to East Timor
Elements of 1 st and 2 nd MARDIV	Wildfire suppression in western United States
Elements of 2 nd MARDIV	Providing support to F.B.I. operations to clear trespassers from Vieques Range in Puerto Rico
Dets from 3 rd and 4 th MAW	NORTHERN WATCH — VMGR detachments providing aerial refueling support for CSAR helicopter
13 th MEU(SOC) / FAST Platoons	Providing assistance to CJTF DELIBERATE RESPONSE in support of the USS Cole bombing incident
Dets from 3 rd MAW and VMAQ-1	Providing aircraft support to Operation SOUTHERN WATCH