



**PART 3** | INITIATIVES

## EXPEDITIONARY STRIKE GROUP EXPERIMENTATION

The Marine Corps is engaged with the Navy in a series of experiments that are exploring the Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) and Expeditionary Strike Force (ESF) concepts. As noted, the ESG concept will combine the capabilities of surface action groups, submarines, and maritime patrol aircraft with those of Amphibious Ready Groups and Marine Expeditionary Units (Special Operations Capable) [MEU (SOC)s] to provide greater combat capabilities to theater combatant commanders. Expanding on the ESG, the ESF integrates the Carrier Strike Group (CSG), the ESG, and the Seabasing functions provided by the Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future) (MPF(F)) to provide an even more potent capability.

ESG-1, built around the amphibious assault ship *Peleliu* (LHA 5) and the 13<sup>th</sup> MEU(SOC), deployed from the West coast in August 2003. The foundation of ESG-2, the first expeditionary strike group scheduled to deploy from the East coast in 2004, is USS *Wasp* (LHD 1) and the 22<sup>d</sup> MEU (SOC).

While the basic organization of these two ESGs is the same, each evaluated different command structures. The *Peleliu* ESG was commanded by a Navy admiral, and experimented with a centralized chain of command under which all Marine and Navy forces assigned to the ESG were under his operational control. Conversely, the *Wasp* ESG/MEU will use the flexible “supported-supporting” traditional command relationship under which amphibious ready groups and MEUs have deployed for years. A Marine brigadier general will command the forces of ESG-3, which will deploy later in 2004.

This experimentation will allow the Naval Services to analyze the impact of the ESG model during the work up, deployment, and employment phases. It will provide critical information to support the future implementation of the concept and highlight any changes that are required in Service doctrine, organization, training, material, leadership education, personnel, and facilities.

