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Received through the CRS Web

Iraq: Summary of U.S. Forces

Updated April 30, 2004

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Summary

This report provides a summary estimate of military forces that have reportedly been deployed to and subsequently withdrawn from the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR), popularly called the Persian Gulf region, to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. For background information on the AOR, see [<http://www.centcom.mil/aboutus/aor.htm>]. Geographically, the USCENTCOM AOR stretches from the Horn of Africa to Central Asia. The information about military units that have been deployed and withdrawn is based on both official government public statements and estimates identified in selected news accounts. The statistics have been assembled from both Department of Defense (DOD) sources and open-source press reports. However, due to concerns about operational security DOD is not routinely reporting the composition, size, nor destination of units and military forces being deployed to the Persian Gulf. Consequently, not all has been officially confirmed. For further reading, see CRS Report RL31701, *Iraq: Potential U.S. Military Operations*. This report will be updated as the situation continues to develop.

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U.S. Forces

Military Units — Deployed/En Route/On Deployment Alert

Since December 2002 when the Department of Defense (DOD) began announcing the first deployments of military units to the Persian Gulf region, U.S. forces reportedly deployed include the following:

Army — one armored division, one mechanized infantry division, one light infantry division, one airborne division, one air assault division, and one armored cavalry regiment

Navy — one carrier strike group, one expeditionary strike group

Marine Corps — two expeditionary forces, one expeditionary unit, and one division

Air Force — elements of eight fighter, fighter/bomber, specialized, and support wings

Coast Guard — four Coast Guard cutters and elements of Port Security Units

As of April 30, 2004, according to DOD officials, approximately 135,000 U.S. forces are in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).¹ National Guard Bureau (NGB) officials say there are over 42,000 Army National Guard (AG) and approximately 800 Air National Guard (ANG) troops currently deployed.² NGB officials also say that due to the current Operation Iraqi Freedom troop rotations, the AG OIF 1 force level is currently 19,403, and the OIF 2 level will be 22,812. U.S. Air Force officials indicate that about 4,700 Air National Guard and reservists are currently deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.³ Also, approximately 26,500 non-U.S. coalition forces from 33 countries are in Iraq contributing to stabilization operations.⁴

¹ Department of Defense, American Forces Information Service news article, Apr. 15, 2004.

² Department of Defense, National Guard Bureau, Apr. 27, 2004.

³ “No Plans to Extend Guard, Reserve,” *Air Force Print News*, Sept. 12, 2003.

⁴ See Non-U.S. Forces in Iraq at [http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq_orbat_coalition.htm].

A report prepared by the staff of the U.S. Central Command, Combined Forces Air Component Commander, indicates that as of April 30, 2003, there were 466,985 total personnel deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom.⁵ This includes USAF, 54,955; USAF Reserve, 2,084; USAF National Guard, 7,207; USMC, 74,405; USMC Reserve, 9,501; USN, 61,296 (681 are members of the U.S. Coast Guard); USN Reserve, 2,056; and USA, 233,342; USA Reserve, 10,683; and USA National Guard, 8,866.

Operation Iraqi Freedom Force Rotations

At a news briefing on November 6, 2003, DOD officials announced a force rotation plan that will introduce new active and reserve units into Iraq. The force rotation plan is designated Operation Iraqi Freedom 2 (OIF 2). According to slides presented at the news briefing, units from Operation Iraqi Freedom 1 (OIF 1 or units currently deployed to Iraq) will transition out, and units activated for OIF 2 will deploy to Iraq commencing in January 2004 (see **Table 1**). As a result of increased combat activity by insurgent forces at several locations in Iraq, DOD announced on April 15, 2004, that the deployment orders for 20,000 troops preparing to rotate out of Iraq and Kuwait would be extended for 90 days. The original DOD OIF 2 rotation planned to reduce the U.S. force level in Iraq to 115,000 troops. The 90-day extension will temporarily maintain the U.S. OIF force level at 135,000 in the region.

Table 1. Operation Iraqi Freedom Ground Troop Rotations

OIF 1	OIF 2	Transition Period
Coalition Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7)	Coalition Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7)	January-April 2004
82 nd Airborne Division	1 st Marine Division	January-May 2004
1 st Armored Division	1 st Cavalry Division	January-May 2004
4 th Infantry Division	1 st Infantry Division	January-May 2004
101 st Airborne (Air Assault Division)	No replacement unit	January-May 2004
53 rd Infantry Brigade (Separate) Florida Army National Guard	81 st Enhanced Separate Brigade Washington/California Army National Guard	January-April 2004
76 th Infantry Brigade (Separate) Indiana Army National Guard	81 st Enhanced Separate Brigade Washington/California Army National Guard	January-April 2004

⁵ "Operation Iraqi Freedom — By the Numbers," U.S. Central Air Forces, Assessment and Analysis Division, Apr. 30, 2003, p. 3.

OIF 1	OIF 2	Transition Period
377 th Theater Support Command	377 th Theater Support Command	February-May 2004

Source: DOD Defense News Briefing, "Briefing on the Force Rotation Plan," November 6, 2003, Briefing Slide 3, "Ground Troop Rotation Plan Operation Iraqi Freedom." This document is available online from DOD *DefenseLINK* at [<http://www.dod.mil/news/Nov2003/g031106-D-6570C.html>].

On January 14, 2004, the USS *Boxer*⁶ (LHD 4) deployed from San Diego, California, and on January 19, 2004, the USS *Bataan*⁷ (LHD 5) deployed from Norfolk, Virginia. The mission of both ships will be to provide amphibious lift and logistical support for the OIF 2 force rotation. Both ships completed their OIF 2 troop rotation support missions. The USS *Boxer* on April 29, 2004, returned to its homeport in San Diego, CA; and the USS *Bataan* on March 31, 2004, returned to its Norfolk, VA, homeport.

Army

Mechanized infantry divisions have 17,000 personnel consisting of three maneuver brigades (a brigade is 5,000 soldiers) that comprise five tank battalions (a battalion is 1,000 soldiers) and five mechanized infantry battalions.⁸

Armored divisions consist of 17,000 personnel and are similar in organization and equipment to a mechanized division, however, the three maneuver brigades have six tank battalions and four mechanized infantry battalions.⁹ These numbers are approximate. Army divisions generally deploy with additional support units not included in division counts.

Armored cavalry regiments are comparable in size to a brigade (approximately 4,000 personnel) and are composed of three armored cavalry squadrons (a squadron is 1,000 soldiers) and one air cavalry troop (a troop is 190 soldiers).¹⁰ A corps is a deployable command of approximately 20,000 to 45,000 soldiers.¹¹

⁶ "USS *Boxer* to Deploy in Support of Global War on Terrorism," *Navy Newsstand*, Jan. 8, 2004.

⁷ "USS *Bataan* to Deploy in Support of OIF Force Rotation," *Navy Newsstand*, Jan. 13, 2004.

⁸ This information comes from archived CRS Report 91-167, *Persian Gulf War: Summary of U.S. and Non-U.S. Forces* (no longer available; for more information contact Steven R. Bowman at 7-7613).

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Department of the Army, *Organization of the United States Army*, Pamphlet 10-1, June 14, 1994, J4-J10.

Table 2. Major Army Units Deployed or Alerted

Military Unit	Number of Personnel	Home Military Base
1 st Infantry Division (Mechanized)	14,000	Wuerzburg, Germany
25 th Infantry Division (Light) (Selected Units)	17,000	Schofield Barracks, HI
10 th Mountain Division (Light)	1,000	Fort Drum, NY
1 st Armored Division	18,000	Banau/Baumholder, Germany, and Fort Riley, KS
2 nd Armored Cavalry Regiment	3,700	Fort Polk, LA
82 nd Airborne Division	5,000	Fort Bragg, NC
1 st Cavalry Division	16,700	Fort Hood, TX

Navy

The Carrier Strike Group (CVSG) does not have an official definition or standard composition. Battle groups are formed and disestablished by the Navy on an as needed basis, and one may be different from another. However, they all are comprised of similar types of ships and aircraft. The U.S. Navy announced on April 9, 2003, that the USS *Abraham Lincoln* strike group was relieved of duty by the USS *Nimitz*, and would be returning to homeport. DOD officials said during a Pentagon briefing on April 14, 2003, that the USS *Constellation* and USS *Kitty Hawk* strike groups were being withdrawn from the Iraqi theater of operations to return to their homeports. On May 9, the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* strike group was ordered to return to homeport, and on May 15, 2003, the Navy reported that the USS *Harry S Truman* strike group had withdrawn and would return from deployment.

On September 5, 2003, DOD officials said that the USS *Nimitz* carrier strike group was departing the Persian Gulf to replace the USS *Carl Vinson* in the Pacific ocean. On November 3, 2003, the USS *Enterprise* strike group deployed from the port of Jebel Ali, United Arab Emirates, for the North Arabian Sea. The USS *Enterprise* strike group will return to its homeport of Norfolk, Virginia, on February 29, 2004, and will be replaced by the USS *George Washington* strike group on February 16, 2004.

Support Ship. The USNS *Comfort* hospital ship is a 1,000-bed medical treatment facility capable of providing emergency on-site care for U.S. combatant forces deployed in war and peacetime operations. The ship is also equipped to deliver medical care for troops injured in biological and chemical attacks. On May 9, 2003, the *Comfort* was ordered to return to its homeport in Baltimore, MD.

USS George Washington Carrier Strike Group. Carrier Air Wing 7 consists of 70-80 aircraft including the F-14A Tomcat, F/A -18 C/D Hornet, E-2CHawkeye, EA-6B Prowler, S-3B Viking, C-2A Greyhound, SH-60F Seahawk, and HH60 Seahawk.

Table 3. USS George Washington Carrier Strike Group

Name	Type of Ship	Homeport
USS <i>George Washington</i>	Nuclear-powered aircraft carrier	Norfolk, VA
USS <i>Vella Gulf</i>	Guided missile cruiser	Norfolk, VA
USS <i>Bulkeley</i>	Guided missile destroyer	Norfolk, VA
HMCS <i>Toronto</i>	Halifax class patrol frigate	Halifax, Nova Scotia
USNS <i>Supply</i>	Combat logistics ship	Earle, NJ

Marine Corps

A complete Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) consists of approximately 45,000 personnel. A Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) has 15,000 troops, and the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) is composed of nearly 2,000 marines.¹²

Table 4. Marine Corps Personnel Deployed or Alerted

Military Unit	Number of Personnel	Home Military Base
I st Marine Expeditionary Force (selected units)	14,000	Camp Pendleton, CA
II Marine Expeditionary Force (selected units)	5,000	Camp Lejeune, NC
I st Marine Division (selected units)	22,900	Camp Pendleton, CA
13 th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable)	2,200	Camp Pendleton, CA

Operationally, these Marine Corps units are organized into Amphibious Task Forces that consist of three Amphibious Ready Groups (ARGs) or battle groups. Each ARG is led by an amphibious assault helicopter carrier with approximately 2,000 marines on board.¹³ On June 13, 2003, the Marine Corps reported that the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade had withdrawn from Iraq and would return to Camp Lejeune on June 22, 2003. The 15th MEU on April 29, 2003, and the 26th MEU on July 10, 2003, were both withdrawn from Iraq and redeployed.

Amphibious Task Force East. Six to eight aircraft and 33 helicopters, including AV-8 Harrier, CH-53 Sea Stallions, CH-46 Sea Knights, AH-1 Sea Cobras, Mechanized Landing (LCM), Landing Craft Utility (LCU), and Landing Craft, Air Cushion (LCAC) landing craft. On June 6, 2003, the Navy reported that the sailors,

¹² CRS Report 91-167, *Persian Gulf War* (archived; no longer available).

¹³ "Sending in the Marines," *Washington Post*, Jan. 29, 2003, p. A13.

marines, and ships attached to Amphibious Task Force East would return to Norfolk, VA, on June 25-26, 2003.

Amphibious Task Force West. Six to eight aircraft and 33 helicopters, including AV-8 Harrier, CH-53 Sea Stallions, CH-46 Sea Knights, AH-1 Sea Cobras, Mechanized Landing (LCM), Landing Craft Utility (LCU), and Landing Craft, Air Cushion (LCAC) landing craft. On July 30, 2003, the Navy reported that the sailors, marines, and ships attached to Amphibious Task Force West returned to San Diego on July 26, 2003.

On July 25, 2003, the Navy ordered the Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group to redeploy from Iraq. On July 25, 2003, President George W. Bush ordered the USS *Iwo Jima* to take a position for possible action off the coast of Liberia.

Expeditionary Strike Groups (ESG). Expeditionary Strike Group One, led by the USS *Peleliu* Amphibious Assault Ship, is the first ESG to deploy overseas. The ESG arrived in the CENTCOM area of responsibility in September 2003 with the assigned mission of “providing a post-war presence in the region, aid in peacekeeping, security, and to promote an environment conducive to rebuilding a new Iraqi government.”¹⁴ ESG One will return to the United States during the first week of March 2004. Expeditionary Strike Group Two is led by the USS *Wasp* Amphibious Assault Ship — the first ESG to deploy from the East Coast. ESG Two departed from Norfolk, VA, on February 17, 2004, to replace ESG One.¹⁵

Table 5. Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) Two

Name	Type of Ship	Homeport
USS <i>Wasp</i>	Amphibious assault ship	Norfolk, VA
USS <i>Leyte Gulf</i>	Guided missile cruiser	Norfolk, VA
USS <i>Yorktown</i>	Guided missile cruiser	Pascagoula, MS
USS <i>Shreveport</i>	Amphibious transport ship	Norfolk, VA
USS <i>Whidbey Island</i>	Dock landing ship	Little Creek, VA
USS <i>McFaul</i>	Guided missile destroyer	Norfolk, VA
USS <i>Connecticut</i>	Fast-attack submarine	Groton, CT

Air Force

The units listed below are those DOD has publically acknowledged have been deployed; additional units and aircraft may have been deployed but not acknowledged.

¹⁴ “ESG 1 Heads North in Support of Operation Iraqi Freedom,” *Navy Newsstand*, Oct. 21, 2003.

¹⁵ “Wasp Strike Group and 22 MEU to Deploy,” *Navy Newsstand*, Feb. 10, 2004.

Table 6. Air Force Units

Military Unit	Home Military Base
447 th Air Expeditionary Group	Baghdad IAP, Iraq
506 th Air Expeditionary Group	Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq
40 th Air Expeditionary Wing (selected elements)	Diego Garcia BIOT, Jacobabad, Pakistan
320 th Air Expeditionary Wing	Seeb IAP, Oman
321 st Air Expeditionary Wing	Masirah AB, Oman
332 nd Air Expeditionary Wing	Ahmed Al Jaber, Kuwait
401 st Air Expeditionary Wing	Souda Bay, Crete
167 th Airlift Wing (selected elements)	Shepherd Field, WV

Coast Guard

According to the Coast Guard, during peak OIF operations there were 1,250 active duty personnel and nearly 500 reservists, two large cutters, a buoy tender, eight patrol boats (CGCs), four port security units, and law enforcement detachments deployed to the Persian Gulf region.¹⁶ On May 23, 2003, the Coast Guard announced the CGCs *Dallas*, *Pea Island*, *Knight Island*, *Bainbridge Island* and *Grand Isle* would be returning to their homeports. On June 10, 2003, the Navy reported that Naval Coastal Warfare Group 1 had completed their port security and harbor defense mission and would return to San Diego, CA. Port Security Unit 313 returned to Tacoma, WA, on August 27, 2003.

Table 7. Coast Guard Personnel

Units	Home Base
Port Security Unit 307	St. Petersburg, FL
Port Security Unit 308	Gulfport, MS
Port Security Unit 309	Port Clinton, OH
Harbor Defense Command Unit 206 (Coast Guard elements)	Jacksonville, FL
Harbor Defense Command Unit 111 (Coast Guard Elements)	Alameda, CA
Mobile Inshore Undersea Warfare Unit 206	Norfolk, VA

¹⁶ U.S. Coast Guard, Factcard, *Operation Iraqi Freedom*, Sept. 2003.

Table 8. Coast Guard Cutters

Name	Type of Ship	Homeport
<i>CGC Wrangell</i>	Island Class Cutter	South Portland, ME
<i>CGC Adak</i>	Island Class Cutter	Sandy Hook, NJ
<i>CGC Aquidneck</i>	Island Class Cutter	Atlantic Beach, NC
<i>CGC Baranof</i>	Island Class Cutter	Miami, FL