Smith Nominated as Next Commandant of the Marine Corps

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ARLINGTON, Va. — President Joe Biden has nominated Marine Corps General Eric M. Smith as the next commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, Defense Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III said in a May 31 release.

Smith currently is serving as the 36th assistant commandant of the Marine Corps. If confirmed by the Senate, Smith would be come the 38th commandant.

Smith, a combat veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, has served in senior positions that developed the doctrine of the Marine Corps and has been instrumental in implementing Commandant General David H. Berger’s Force Design 2030 concept, a plan to re-design the Corps to meet the challenges

of great power competition and higher-end warfare.

Below is an excerpt from Smith's official biography posted on the Marine Corps' website:

"Born in Kansas City, Missouri, and raised in Plano, Texas, General Smith graduated from Texas A&M University and was commissioned in 1987. He has commanded at every level, including Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment during Operation Assured Response in Monrovia, Liberia; 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment during Operation Iraqi Freedom; and 8th Marine Regiment/ Regimental Combat Team 8 during Operation Enduring Freedom. He also served in Caracas, Venezuela as part of the U.S. Military Group.

As a General Officer, he commanded U.S. Marine Corps Forces Southern Command, 1st Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, and Marine Corps Combat Development Command.

General Smith's staff assignments as a General Officer include serving as the Director of Capability Development Directorate, Combat Development and Integration; Senior Military Assistant to both the Deputy Secretary of Defense and Secretary of Defense; and Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration."

U.S. Marine Corps deactivates 1st Battalion, 12th Marines

Photo By Sgt. Israel Chincio | U.S. Marines with 1st Battalion, 12th Marines, 3d Marine Division, participate in the unit's deactivation ceremony on Marine Corps Base Hawaii, May 26, 2023. The deactivation is in accordance with Force Design 2030's modernization efforts. The battalion has played a valuable role in setting conditions for the 3d Marine Littoral Regiment, and future MLRs, to provide combat ready and lethal forces in the Indo-Pacific. 3d MLR and 12th Marines, which is scheduled to transition to an MLR in 2025, will provide ready and capable stand-in forces to the first island chain, bolstering the United States Indo-Pacific Command's ability to support deterrence efforts and respond to potential crises with allies and partners. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Israel Chincio) see less | View Image Page

Release from 3rd Marine Division

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MARINE CORPS BASE HAWAII, HI, UNITED STATES

05.26.2023

Story by 1st Lt. Anne Pentaleri

[3rd Marine Division](#)

MARINE CORPS BASE HAWAII – 1st Battalion, 12th Marines cased its colors during the unit's deactivation ceremony at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, May 26, 2023.

1st Battalion, 12th Marines activated on Sept. 1, 1942, as 4th Battalion, 12th Marines at Camp Elliot, California, as an artillery regiment in support of 3d Marine Division. After participating in a number of World War II campaigns, to include battles at Bougainville, Guam, and Iwo Jima, 1/12 underwent a brief period of deactivation before reactivating in support of the Far East Command's maintenance of amphibious readiness capabilities during the Korean War.

The Marines of 1/12 saw the Vietnam War unfold from April 1965 to September 1969 while operating from their positions at Phu Bai, Da Nang, Cam Lo, Khe Sanh, and Camp Carroll. As U.S. forces kicked off the major raid known as Operation Thor on June 1, 1968, 1/12 enabled the regaining of control of the Demilitarized Zone through the provision of fire support and conduct of artillery raids.

In June 1971, at the conclusion of the Vietnam War, the Marines of 1/12 reported to Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, where they have since been permanently stationed. In September 1994, after the battalion's successful participation in operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, 1/12 was reassigned to the 3d Marine Division as a part of III Marine Expeditionary Force. From August 2004 to November 2011, 1/12 participated in the Global War on Terror, deploying in support of operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. One such deployment to Al Anbar Province, Iraq, was under the command of now Maj. Gen. Stephen Liszewski, who served as 1/12's battalion commander from 2006 to 2008, and is now the commanding general of Marine Corps Installations Pacific.

In recent years, 1/12 has been at the forefront of institutional change, leading the practical application of expeditionary advanced basing operations, experimentation with foraging concepts, and the employment of next-generation weapons systems. Most notably, operating in support of Large Scale Exercise 21, the battalion successfully employed the soon-to-be fielded Navy Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System to fire the Naval Strike Missile aboard Pacific Missile Range Facility Barking Sands on Kauai, Hawaii, on Aug. 5, 2021. The missiles traveled over 100 nautical miles before reaching their target – a simulated adversary ship played by the ex-USS Ingraham, a retired Oliver Hazard Perry-class guided missile frigate. Similar operational mission profiles will allow Marine artillery to deny key maritime terrain and facilitate joint force maneuver.

“1st Battalion, 12th Marines spent the last two years at the forefront of force design and joint force integration,” said Lt. Col. Joseph Gill, commanding officer, 1st Battalion, 12th Marines. “We have made tremendous progress in the development of tactics, techniques, and procedures and set conditions for the fielding of the Navy Marine Corps Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System. The battalion’s efforts have increased the lethality of the 3d Marine Division and influenced the way we’ll fight for the foreseeable future.”

On May 26, 2023, the U.S. Marine Corps deactivated 1/12. The change took place in accordance with Force Design 2030’s modernization efforts. The battalion has played a valuable role in setting conditions for the 3d Marine Littoral Regiment, and future MLRs, to provide combat ready and lethal forces in the Indo-Pacific. 3d MLR and 12th Marines, which is scheduled to transition to an MLR in 2025, will provide ready and capable stand-in forces to the first island chain, bolstering the United States Indo-Pacific Command’s ability to support deterrence efforts and respond to potential crises with allies and partners.

“Deactivating a battalion of this nature and ensuring the deliberate transfer of personnel, facilities, and equipment is a tremendous undertaking,” said Maj. Ryan Capdepon, the executive officer of 1st Battalion, 12th Marines. “In true 1/12 fashion, our Marines and Sailors displayed professionalism, flexibility, and dedication in tackling the associated tasks. Concurrently, we continued to support numerous operational requirements and remain postured for potential contingency scenarios. I am proud of our team and the job they have done. Each one of them will be an asset to their next command.”

Marine Corps Receives First of Two C-40A Transport Aircraft

The Marine Corps' first C-40A aircraft, assigned to Marine Transport Squadron (VMR) 1, Marine Air Group 41, 4th Marine Air Wing, Marine Forces Reserve, lands at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth Texas, May 19, 2023. VMR 1 will use these aircraft to support the Marine Corps and joint services with assault support in the form of air logistics, providing time-, place- or mission-sensitive, long-range, multipurpose air transport and critical logistical support of key personnel and cargo between and within combatant commands and theaters of war. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Ashley Corbo)

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ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Marine Corps has taken delivery of its first Boeing C-40A Clipper transport aircraft, the first of two that will be operated by the Marine Forces Reserve.

The C-40A arrived at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth Texas on May 19, the Marine Forces Reserve said in a release. It will be operated by Marine Transport Squadron One (VMR-1), a unit of Marine Aircraft Group 41, 4th Marine Air Wing.

“VMR-1 will use these aircraft to support the Marine Corps and joint services with assault support in the form of air logistics, providing time-, place- or mission-sensitive, long-range, multipurpose air transport and critical logistical support of key personnel and cargo between and within combatant commands and theaters of war,” the release said.

VMR-1 flew two C-9B Skytrain II aircraft from Joint Base Andrews-NAF Washington, Maryland, until 2017, when the squadron moved to NAS-JRB Fort Worth to provide crews to share C-40A Clipper transports with Navy Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 59. According to the 2022 Marine Corps Aviation Plan, VMR-1 will move to Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, by fiscal 2024 to replace the two C-20G Gulfstream IV transports there that support the Indo-Pacific Command.

The two Marine C-40As were not new-build aircraft but were converted from two used Boeing 737 airliners. The Navy Air Reserve operates 17 C-40As – the first of which was delivered in 2001 – in six fleet logistics support squadrons for Navy-unique fleet-essential airlift missions.

L3HARRIS RECEIVES US MARINE CORPS ORDERS FOR MULTI-CHANNEL RADIOS

The L3Harris Falcon IV® family of manpack and handheld radios provide true resilience against peer threats using L3Harris' broad portfolio of secure waveforms and mission-enabling technologies.
Release from L3Harris

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ROCHESTER, N.Y., May 17, 2023 – L3Harris Technologies (NYSE:LHX) announced orders totaling $160 million from the Marine Corps for multi-channel handheld and vehicular radio systems, bringing total program orders to $336 million.

The two new orders from the Marine Corps are under a 10-year, competitively awarded $750 million indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contract for L3Harris Falcon IV® manpack and handheld radios. The technology in these radios enables greater interoperability among U.S. and allied forces.

"The resilient communications our battle-proven radios and secure waveforms offer allow Marines to talk to each other with confidence and exchange information at faster rates," said Chris Aebli, President, Tactical Communications, L3Harris. "These radios are the most advanced systems industry can put into the hands of our warfighters, delivering enhanced capabilities to address evolving threats."

By integrating voice and data communications, network routing and gateway functions, L3Harris' software-defined multi-channel AN/PRC-163 handheld radios provide real-time battlespace situational awareness to help warfighters make informed decisions.

All U.S. military services, including Special Operations Command, and a growing number of key allies have broadly adopted the Falcon IV family of radios' software-defined architecture. It provides flexibility for continuous upgrades with seamless integration of emerging technologies to meet future needs.

The latest Marine Corps commitments follow two Falcon IV orders from the U.S. Army last year totaling $235 million.

U.S. Marines Resupply Ballistic Missile Submarine in Philippine Sea

PHILIPPINE SEA (May 9, 2023) A CH-53 helicopter from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron (HMH) 462, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force, flies over the Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine USS Maine (SSBN 741) after completing a vertical replenishment in the Philippine Sea, May 9, 2023. Vertical replenishments enable naval vessels to quickly receive critical resources without disrupting maritime security operations while underway. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Emily Weiss)
Release from III Marine Expeditionary Force

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17 May 2023

From Capt. Joshua Hays

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP COURTNEY, Japan – U.S. Marines from 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force, provided a vertical replenishment (VERTREP) operation for a U.S. Navy ballistic missile submarine in the Philippine Sea, last week.

Two U.S. Marine Corps CH-53E Super Stallions from Marine Heavy

Helicopter Squadron (HMH) 462, 1st MAW, carried mission-essential equipment to the Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine USS Maine (SSBN 741) during its regularly scheduled patrol. Vertical replenishments enable naval vessels to quickly receive critical resources without disrupting maritime security operations while underway.

“1st MAW’s persistent and forward presence makes it the backbone of the Stand-in-Force’s expeditionary capability,” said U.S. Marine Corps Col. Christopher Murray, commanding officer of Marine Aircraft Group – 36, 1st MAW, in Okinawa, Japan. “The intricacies of seamlessly sustaining the force through naval integration and aviation-delivered logistics is a testament to our adaptability, readiness, and ability to project power within the Indo-Pacific.”

The mission underscores the important role of the U.S. Marine Corps as part of a Stand-in-Force. The Marine Corps employs the SiF concept to persist within the Weapons Engagement Zone, employing maneuver and logistics webs. This strategy enhances sea control and sea denial operations, integrates multi-domain operations, and ultimately strengthens regional security.

“The U.S. Navy’s ballistic missile submarine force has demonstrated yet again that we have the proven capability to work seamlessly alongside III Marine Expeditionary Force to execute our mission, allowing us to remain on station,” said Maine’s Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Travis L. Wood. “Rotary-wing vertical replenishment such as this allow us to quickly resupply so that we can constantly maintain pressure against any adversary who would wish to do harm to the homeland.”

The Pacific Submarine Force maximizes our strengths – knowledge, stealth, agility, firepower, and endurance – and works as part of Joint and Combined Forces to maintain the international rules-based order and promote a free and open Indo-Pacific Region. Submarine-based strategic deterrence is

the most survivable leg of the nuclear triad, and the endurance of our submarines means that the Submarine Force maintains a continual presence across the globe, each and every day.

III Marine Expeditionary Force is postured to support naval expeditionary operations within the first island chain as part of a SiF. Close, lethal integration between the U.S. Marine Corps and the Navy enhances regional security and stability alongside our Allies and partners.

VSR700 tested at sea in full operational configuration

[Release from Airbus]

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Marignane, 15 May 2023 – Airbus Helicopters and the French Armament General Directorate (DGA) tested the unmanned aerial system (UAS) VSR700 for the first time in an operational configuration from a ship at sea. At the beginning of May, the VSR700 performed 80 fully autonomous take-offs and landings from a civil vessel equipped with a helicopter deck, cruising off the coast of Brittany in the west of France.

“This flight test campaign was an important step for the VSR700 programme as it allowed us to validate the excellent performance of the drone in operational conditions, which were representative of its future missions,” said Nicolas Delmas, Head of VSR700 programme at Airbus Helicopters. “The VSR700 prototype opened its flight envelope in winds above 40 knots, accumulated eight hours of testing in 14 flights, and made successful landings in several different sea states,” he added.

In 2022, the autonomous take-off and landing capabilities of the VSR700 were tested from the same vessel using an optionally piloted vehicle (OPV) based on a modified Guimbal Cabri G2 equipped with the autonomous take-off and landing (ATOL) system developed for the VSR700. This time the test campaign took place with the SDAM demonstrator and fully validated the capabilities of the system as part of the SDAM (Système de Drone Aérien pour la Marine) study that was awarded to Airbus Helicopters and Naval Group in 2017.

Autonomous take-off and landing capabilities are a key asset of the VSR700 and are made possible with the use of the Airbus DeckFinder system. This enables autonomous launch and recovery of unmanned air vehicles (UAVs) with an accuracy of 10-20cm during challenging operations in harsh environmental conditions, independently of GNSS/GPS and regardless of degraded visual conditions.

This new test campaign follows two series of trials that were conducted with the DGA in late 2022 and early 2023 from the Levant Island test center located in the south of France. During these trials, the SDAM prototype demonstrated its ability to operate in a maritime environment. The handling qualities of the aircraft were tested as well as the capabilities of the sensors (a maritime surveillance radar, an electro optical sensor, and an AIS receiver) alongside the mission system developed by Naval Group.

The next development steps will see the second VSR700 prototype perform its maiden flight ahead of flight testing onboard a French Navy FREMM during the second semester of this year.

U.S. Marine Corps activates first-ever Marine Innovation Unit, hosts defense innovation roundtable event

Release from the Marine Corps Communications Directorate

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NEWBURGH, NY, UNITED STATES

05.05.2023

Story by 1st Lt. Kevin Stapleton, Marine Forces Reserve (MARFORRES)

NEWBURGH, N.Y. – In accordance with the 38th Commandant's Planning Guidance and Force Design 2030, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Reserve formally activated the Marine Innovation Unit (MIU) during an activation ceremony at Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh, New York, on Friday, May 5, 2023.

The activation symbolizes the Marine Corps' renewed focus on innovation and experimentation in support of the Total Force as it continues to modernize the service in preparation for the future fight.

"We are extremely grateful for the advocacy provided by Gen. David Berger, Sgt. Maj. Troy Black, Lt. Gen. David Bellon, Sgt. Maj. Carlos Ruiz, and other leaders around the service,"

said Col. Matthew C. Swindle, commanding officer of MIU. “MIU exists to act as a strategic connector between industry and the entire Marine Corps. Our Marines are eager to provide that critical capability and enable success for our customers throughout the Total Force.”

The unit activation ceremony, hosted at the unit’s command post in Newburgh, was widely attended by key stakeholders from around the U.S. Department of Defense and federal government.

Notable ceremony attendees included guests of honor Rep. Pat Ryan (D-NY-18); the Honorable Carlos Del Toro, 78th Secretary of the Navy; and Lt. Gen. David G. Bellon, commander of U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Reserve and U.S. Marine Corps Forces, South.

Just before the ceremony, the unit hosted the Department of the Navy’s first-ever Defense Innovation Roundtable.

The roundtable discussion hosted approximately 250 guests with representatives from industry, finance, academia, state and federal government, and the Department of Defense to help accelerate the transition of key capabilities from the private sector to the national security sector.

The roundtable actioned the unit’s unique connection to the civilian talent marketplace – specifically leveraging reserve Marines’ civilian backgrounds and experiences to tackle some of the challenges facing today’s Marine Corps.

The unit is already doing just that – in the weeks and months leading up to the activation ceremony and roundtable, MIU Marines hit the ground running, conducting several annual training educational periods to establish a unit-wide common operational picture before proceeding to engage with clients around the Marine Corps.

MIU is perhaps the only place in the Marine Corps where one might find lance corporals and lieutenant colonels working together on the same team to problem solve while on "engagements" – or the unit's moniker for projects and supporting activities that align with Force Design 2030; Talent Management 2030; or the Marine Forces Reserve Campaign Plan 2030.

Sourcing talent for these engagements does not come in the form of an operations or fragmentary order. Instead, the Marines self-select work based on their civilian education and expertise once the unit's leadership appropriately scopes an engagement.

MIU Marines are made up of chief executives; acquisitions and contracting experts; professional educators and investment professionals; cyber and coding gurus; researchers and data scientists; and self-funded entrepreneurs and innovators – just to name a few of the numerous career fields that define the service members in the unit.

This is the type of civilian experience and background needed by the Fleet Marine Force to solve some of Force Design 2030's chief objectives and related initiatives, which are supported by the unit's lines of operation that target areas like contested logistics; data management & integration; and even command, control, computers, communications, cyber-defense & intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and targeting (C5ISR-T).

Whether in the form of experimentation for Force Design 2030; modeling the way ahead for talent management, training, and education; or developing enterprise-wide solutions in contested logistics as the service prepares to deploy onto the distributed battlefields of tomorrow, the Marines of MIU are working quickly to partner with key Active Component clients and discover, manufacture, and implement actionable results –

at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels – around the Corps.

MIU is here to help Marines innovate and win – today and in the years ahead. And the unit is actively recruiting its newest cohort of reservists before achieving full operational capability (FOC) later this year.

"Regardless of their uniquely qualifying civilian experience and background, our Marines first wear the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor on their uniforms just like all Marines," said Sgt. Maj. Robert K. Lusk, sergeant major of MIU. "And alongside our colleagues in the Fleet, our Marines continue to prioritize mission accomplishment by, with, and through our partners throughout the force."

Interested Marines may apply to join the unit by visiting https://miu.applytojob.com. Prospective candidates may submit applications through May 21, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. PDT, with selection results released on or about June 30, 2023.

To learn more about MIU, please visit https://www.marforres.marines.mil/MIU/.

Marines receive first MQ-9 Reaper under latest procurement contract

[Release from Naval Air Systems Command]

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NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md.—The Marine Corps recently received the first of eight MQ-9 Reapers, which was delivered under a joint contract with the U.S. Air Force.

The Navy's Multi-Mission Tactical Unmanned Air System program team (PMA-266) at Pax River leveraged the U.S. Air Force's Agile Reaper Enterprise Solution (ARES), an Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) type contract, to procure U.S. Air Force MQ-9 Reaper aircraft, associated spares, and support equipment for the Marine Corps.

The Air Force has enabled the Marine Corps to move fast standing up the Medium Altitude Long Endurance portion of the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Uncrewed Expeditionary (MUX) family of systems, a key component of Marine Corps Force

Design 2030

“The U.S. Air Force has been a great partner and a major enabler in the Marine Corps’ pursuit to acquire group 5 UAS,” said Lt. Col Leigh Irwin, Marine Corps MQ-9 program director for PMA-266. “Group 5 UAS will give the Marines the ability to conduct ISR [intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance] and network extensions in support of the MAGTF in support of stand-in forces and the Joint Force.”

Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron (VMU)-1 in Yuma will utilize this aircraft for operational missions overseas, she said.

The MQ-9 Reaper is filling an immediate need for a long-range, long-endurance, land-based Group 5 UAS to conduct ISR and data relay in the Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility.

Currently, the Marine Corps has two operational MQ-9A aircraft to support a wide range of operations such as coastal and border surveillance, weapons tracking, embargo enforcement, humanitarian assistance /disaster relief, peacekeeping and counter-narcotic operations.

Marine Units Ordered to the Southern Border

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Arlington, Va. — U.S. Marines from two units have been selected to augment the Department of Homeland Security in assisting with operations along the U.S. southwest border, according to the U.S. Northern Command.

The Marines will “provide support with duties including data entry, warehousing, support, and additional detection and monitoring support efforts,” a May 6 Northern Command release said. “This military support increases the availability of Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) law enforcement personnel to conduct law enforcement-specific duties.

The Marines will come from two regiments from the 2nd Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina:

- 2nd Marine Regiment
- Combat Logistics Battalion 2

The Army’s 93rd Military Police Battalion based at Fort Bliss, Texas, and some Air Force personnel from unidentified units also are being assigned the same duties. All assigned forces are to be in place by May 10.

“Military personnel will not be permitted to support migrant processing and escort duties or other activities that involve direct participation in civilian law enforcement activities, be responsible for property seized from migrants, or require direct contact with migrants,” the release said.

26th Marine Expeditionary Unit deploys an element to CENTCOM

Photo By Cpl. Matthew Romonoyske-Bean | U.S. Marines with the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), track a simulated adversary vessel using the Light Marine Air Defense Integrated System (L-MADIS), and a Counter Unmanned Aerial Surveillance Utility Task Vehicle, during a defense of the amphibious task force (DATF) drill aboard the Wasp-Class Amphibious Assault Ship USS Bataan (LHD 5) Jan. 28, 2023. During PMINT, the 26th MEU embarked the L-MADIS, which is the only counter unmanned aircraft system on the east coast organic to the Marine Corps, which can be employed expeditiously on ship and on land in order to protect high value assets and personnel. The DATF drill positioned Marines and Sailors to augment and reinforce the ship's security posture while crossing a simulated strait. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Matthew Romonoyske-Bean) see less | View Image Page
Release from the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit

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CAMP LEJEUNE, NC, UNITED STATES

04.29.2023

Story by Capt. Angelica White

26th Marine Expeditionary Unit

A small task-organized element of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), II Marine Expeditionary Force (II MEF) is deploying on short notice to United States Central Command (CENTCOM) area of operations under the direction of the Combatant Commander, May 1, 2023.

The 26th MEU is entering the final stage of its pre-deployment training program in preparation for a deployment to the tri-COCOM region, including EUCOM, AFRICOM and CENTCOM. As a crisis response force, the 26th MEU is prepared to aggregate forces at a moment's notice to support operations across the globe.

The 26th MEU serves as one of the Nation's premier crisis response forces capable of conducting amphibious operations, crisis response, and limited contingency operations, to include enabling the introduction of follow-on forces and designated special operations, in support of theater requirements of the Geographic Combatant Commander. Coupled with the BAT ARG, the 26th MEU serves as a premier stand-in force with a full complement of all-domain capabilities to operate persistently within the littorals or weapons engagement zones of an adversary.