Three-Star Command Lands in Norway for Exercise Nordic Response 24



By II MEF Communication Strategy and Operations, Feb. 15. 2024

On February 12th, the vanguard of the U.S. Marine Corps, II Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) command element arrived at Bardufoss Air Station, Norway, to participate in NATO's exercise Nordic Response 24. As the Land Component Command headquarters for the exercise, II MEF's command element will synchronize operations between the U.S. Marine Air-Ground Task Force, Norwegian Army units and a combined Swedish and Finnish Brigade under a NATO Joint Task Force.

We're looking forward to exercising with our Norwegian hosts, NATO allies and partners," remarked II MEF commanding general Lt. Gen. David A. Ottignon. "There's no place like the Nordic countries to sharpen our warfighting skills."

Nordic Response 24 is part of the much larger NATO exercise Steadfast Defender 2024, which is expected to involve approximately 90,000 troops across Europe. According to U.S. Army Gen. Christopher Cavoli, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander and U.S. Europe Command commander, the exercise "will demonstrate our unity, our strength, and our determination to protect each other."

II MEF's strategic deployment more than 6,500 kilometers from its home base in the United States demonstrates the reach and mobility of American forces available to defend NATO's northern flank, if called upon.

"Nothing is easy when you're operating in several feet of snow, at negative 40 degrees Fahrenheit, surrounded by 5,000-foot mountain peaks," Ottignon said. "But being a Marine isn't about doing what's easy. It's about being the best and being prepared for the challenges of the future. This exercise in this environment is designed to do just that by building on the grit, skills, and determination within every Marine so they can operate in any clime and place."

Around 2,500 U.S. Marines will join the exercise alongside NATO allies and Sweden. The goal is to strengthen coordination across air, ground, maritime and other domains into a unified fighting force ready to respond to any threat.

From January to March 2024, the U.S. Marines and their Norwegian counterparts will work hand-in-hand with NATO allies to hone tactics and procedures for winter warfare. Beyond tactical objectives, the exercise signals the steadfast solidarity allies share in defending collective security.

"Norway is special to us. Our countries have been working together for more than a century. II MEF has trained side-by-side, strengthening bonds and operating as one cohesive team in Norway during the last decade of Cold Response exercises," added Ottignon. "The Arctic is a fluid strategic place. It's

important for our allies to know that we're here today and we'll be here when needed to respond swiftly to any threat."

B-roll, imagery, and news stories of II MEF Marines preparing for exercise Nordic Response 24 ca be found hyperlinked.