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Iraq: Summary of U.S. Forces

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Summary

This report provides a summary estimate of military forces reported to have been deployed to and subsequently withdrawn from the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR), popularly called the Persian Gulf region, to support Operation Iraqi Freedom.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 The information about military units that have been deployed and withdrawn is based on both official government public statements and estimates identified in selected news accounts.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, or destination of units and military forces being deployed to the Persian Gulf. Consequently, not all the data herein have been officially confirmed. For further information, see CRS Report RL31701, *Iraq: 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 reported to be currently deployed include the following:

Army — two mechanized infantry divisions, one airborne corps, one airborne division, six infantry brigades, two armored brigades, two armored cavalry regiments, one brigade combat team, and one field artillery brigade

Navy — one carrier strike group, one expeditionary strike group

Marine Corps — two expeditionary forces, one expeditionary unit

Air Force — elements of 11 fighter, fighter/bomber, specialized, and support wings

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

As of May 5, 2005, according to DOD officials, approximately 137,157 U.S. forces are in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). There are currently 94,595 active duty, 29,640 National Guard, and 12,922 Reserve forces deployed in Iraq.¹ Also, approximately 23,900 non-U.S. coalition forces from 25 countries are in Iraq contributing to stabilization operations.²

**Table 1. Operation Iraqi Freedom
Active Duty Force Levels**

Branch of Service	Troop Numbers
Army	65,044
Navy	2,299
Air Force	7,149
Marine Corps	20,103
Total	94,595

¹ Office of the Secretary of Defense, Legislative Affairs, May 5, 2005.

² Non-U.S. Forces in Iraq at [http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq_orbat_coalition.htm].

Table 2. Operation Iraqi Freedom Reserve Component Force Levels

Branch of Service	Troop Numbers
Army National Guard	29,140
Air National Guard	500
Army Reserve	9,773
Navy Reserve	430
Air Force Reserve	343
Marine Corps Reserve	2,376
Total	42,562

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.³ 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

Commencing on December 14, 2004, and continuing on January 4 and January 18, 2005, DOD announced the Operation Iraqi Freedom 4 (OIF 4) troop rotational units. At a hearing held by the House Committee on Armed Services on July 7, 2004, DOD officials announced the troops rotation plan for Operation Iraqi Freedom 3 (OIF 3). OIF 3 commenced in July 2004 with the stated goal of flowing new active and reserve forces into the Iraqi theater of operations for up to 12-month rotations, and eventually reducing U.S. force levels in Iraq from 140,000 to approximately 130,000. According to slides presented at the hearing, units from Operation Iraqi Freedom 2 (OIF 2 or units currently stationed in Iraq) will transition out, and units activated for OIF 3 will deploy to Iraq commencing in July 2004 (see **Table 3**). Also, on May 17, 2004, DOD announced that approximately 3,600 members of the 2nd Brigade of the 2nd Infantry Division will deploy from the Republic of Korea to Iraq in mid-summer 2004.⁴

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

⁴ Department of Defense, American Forces Information Service news article, May 17, 2004.

Table 3. Operation Iraqi Freedom Ground Troop Rotations

OIF 2	OIF 3	Transition Period
Stryker Brigade	Stryker Brigade	November 2004
1 st Infantry Division	42 nd Infantry Division (NY)	December 2004-February 2005
I Marine Expeditionary Force	Marine Expeditionary Force	March 2005
1 st Cavalry Division	3 rd Infantry Division	November 2004-March 2005
1 st Armored Division	2 nd Brigade, 10 th Mountain Division	July 2004
2 nd Light Cavalry Regiment	11 th Marine Expeditionary Unit 24 th Marine Expeditionary Unit 155 th Armored Brigade (MS)	July 2004 July 2004 February 2005
81 st Brigade	29 th Brigade (National Guard, HI) 3 rd Armored Cavalry Regiment	March 2005 March 2005

Source: U. S. Congress, House Committee on Armed Services, *Hearing on Troop Rotations For Operation Iraqi Freedom 3 and Operation Enduring Freedom 6 and the Army's Mobilization of the Individual Ready Reserve*, July 7, 2004, Prepared Statement of Lieutenant General Norton A. Schwartz, Briefing Slide, "Ground Troop Rotation Plan Operation Iraqi Freedom." This document is available online from the House Armed Services Committee at [<http://armedservices.house.gov/openingstatementsandpressreleases/108thcongress/04-07-07schwartz.pdf>].

Table 4. Operation Iraqi Freedom 4 Rotational Units

Military Unit	Home Military Base	Transition Period
XVIII Airborne Corps	Fort Bragg, NC	February 2005
V Corps	Heidelberg, Germany	early 2006
42 nd Infantry Division (Mechanized), New York National Guard	Troy, NY	February 2005
11 th Armored Cavalry Regiment	Fort Irwin, CA	February 2005
2 nd Marine Expeditionary Force	Camp Lejeune, NC	February 2005
3 rd Marine Air Wing	Miramar Naval Air Station, CA	February 2005
3 rd Infantry Division (Mechanized)	Fort Stewart, GA	February 2005
48 th Infantry Brigade (Separate), Georgia Army National Guard	Macon, GA	mid-2005
29 th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Hawaii National Guard	Kalaeloa, HI	February 2005

Military Unit	Home Military Base	Transition Period
172 nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team	Fort Wainwright, AK	mid-2005
1 st Brigade, 10 th Mountain Division	Fort Drum, NY	mid-2005
101 st Airborne Division, Air Assault (division Headquarters and 4 Brigades)	Fort Campbell, KY	mid-2005
1 st Brigade, 1 st Infantry Division	Fort Riley, KS	mid-2005
4 th Infantry Division (division Headquarters and 4 Brigades)	Fort Hood, TX	mid-2005
2 nd Brigade Combat Team, 28 th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania Army National Guard	Washington, PA	mid-2005
1 st and 2 nd Brigades, U.S. Army 1 st Armored Division	Wiesbaden, Germany	mid-2005

Source: DOD News Releases, Dec. 14, 2004, and Jan. 4, Jan. 18, Feb. 11, Feb. 15, 2005.

On January 14, 2004, the USS *Boxer*⁵ (LHD 4) deployed from San Diego, CA, and on January 19, 2004, the USS *Bataan*⁶ (LHD 5) deployed from Norfolk, VA. The mission of both ships was 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.⁷

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.⁸ These numbers are approximate. Army divisions generally deploy with additional support units not included in division counts.

⁵ "USS *Boxer* to Deploy in Support of Global War on Terrorism," *Navy Newsstand*, Jan. 8, 2004.

⁶ "USS *Bataan* to Deploy in Support of OIF Force Rotation," *Navy Newsstand*, Jan. 13, 2004.

⁷ 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).

⁸ *Ibid.*

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).⁹ A corps is a deployable command of approximately 20,000 to 45,000 soldiers.¹⁰

Table 5. Major Army Units Deployed or Alerted

Military Unit	Number of Personnel	Home Military Base
1 st Brigade, 25 th Infantry Division	4,000	Fort Lewis, WA
2 nd Brigade, 25 th Infantry Division	4,000	Schofield Barracks, HI
2 nd Brigade, 10 th Mountain Division	2,000	Fort Drum, NY
2 nd Armored Cavalry Regiment	3,700	Fort Polk, LA
11 th Armored Cavalry Regiment	1,500	Fort Irwin, CA
XVIII Airborne Corps (Selected Units)	8,000	Fort Bragg, NC
82 nd Airborne Division	5,000	Fort Bragg, NC
17 th Field Artillery Brigade	2,000	Fort Sill, OK
3 rd Infantry Division (Mechanized), 2 nd Unit of Action Brigade	4,400	Fort Stewart, GA
42 nd Infantry Division (Mechanized)	23,000	Troy, NY
2 nd Brigade, 2 nd Infantry Division	3,614	Camp Red Cloud, South Korea
29 th Infantry Brigade (Separate), Hawaii National Guard	3,600	Kalaeloa, Oahu, HI
81 st Armor Brigade (Separate), Washington National Guard	4,500	Seattle, WA
56 th Brigade Combat Team, 36 th Infantry Division, Texas Army National Guard	2,944	Fort Worth, TX
155 th Armored Brigade (Separate), Mississippi Army National Guard	4,015	Tupelo, MS
30 th Infantry Brigade (eHSB) Mechanized North Carolina Army National Guard	4,500	Clinton, NC

Navy

The Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 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 Ibid.

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

9, 2003, that the USS *Abraham Lincoln* CSG 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* CSGs were being withdrawn from the Iraqi theater of operations to return to their homeports. On May 9, 2003, the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* CSG was ordered to return to homeport, and on May 15, 2003, the Navy reported that the USS *Harry S. Truman* CSG had withdrawn and would return from deployment.

On September 5, 2003, DOD officials said the USS *Nimitz* CSG was departing the Persian Gulf to replace the USS *Carl Vinson* in the Pacific Ocean. On November 3, 2003, the USS *Enterprise* CSG deployed from the port of Jebel Ali, United Arab Emirates, for the North Arabian Sea. The USS *Enterprise* CSG was scheduled to return to its homeport of Norfolk, VA, on February 29, 2004, and was replaced by the USS *George Washington* CSG on February 16, 2004. The USS *George Washington* CSG returned to its Norfolk, VA homeport on July 26, 2004, and was replaced by the USS *John F. Kennedy* CSG. The USS *John F. Kennedy* CSG was relieved of duty station by the USS *Harry S. Truman* CSG on November 20, 2004. The USS *Carl Vinson* CSG replaced the USS *Harry S. Truman* CSG on March 19, 2005. The USS *Carl Vinson* CSG will continue military and maritime operations in support of OIF.

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 *Carl Vinson* Carrier Strike Group. Carrier Air Wing 9 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 6. USS *Carl Vinson* Carrier Strike Group

Name	Type of Ship	Homeport
USS <i>Carl Vinson</i>	Nuclear-powered aircraft carrier	Bremerton, WA
USS <i>Antietam</i>	Guided missile cruiser	San Diego, CA
USS <i>O’Kane</i>	Guided missile destroyer	Pearl Harbor, HI
USS <i>Mustin</i>	Guided missile destroyer	San Diego, Ca
USS <i>Olympia</i>	Nuclear-powered attack submarine	Pearl Harbor, HI
USS <i>Camden</i>	Fast combat support ship	Bremerton, WA

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.¹¹

Table 7. Marine Corps Personnel Deployed or Alerted

Military Unit	Number of Personnel	Home Military Base
II Marine Expeditionary Force (Selected Elements)	20,000	Camp Lejeune, NC
I Marine Expeditionary Force	25,000	Camp Pendleton, CA
26 th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operation Capable)	2,100	Camp Lejeune, NC

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.¹² 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. The 26th MEU returned to Iraq on May 2, 2005.

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, 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.

¹¹ CRS Report 91-167, *Persian Gulf War* (out of print; available from author: 7-8983).

¹² "Sending in the Marines," *Washington Post*, Jan. 29, 2003, p. A13.

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 USCENTCOM 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.”¹³ ESG One was scheduled to 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.¹⁴

Expeditionary Strike Group Three (ESG 3), also known as the Belleau Wood ESG 3, entered the U.S. Navy’s 5th Fleet on July 2, 2004, and will assume the duties of maritime security operations in the Northern Arabian Gulf (NAG). The NAG security operations include security of the Al Basrah and Khawr Al Amaya Iraqi oil terminals.¹⁵ Expeditionary Strike Group Two was redeployed to its homeport on August 21, 2004. ESG Three changed flag staff and ships at sea, from the USS *Belleau Wood* to the USS *Essex*. The Essex Expeditionary Strike Group was officially activated on September 10, 2004, and will be responsible for “Maritime Security Operations (MSO) in the Northern Arabian Gulf, to include protection of Al Basrah Oil Terminal (ABOT) and Khawr Oil Terminal (KAAOT) off the coast of Iraq.”¹⁶ The USS *Bonhomme Richard* ESG arrived in the Persian Gulf on January 26, 2005, to relieve the Essex ESG.¹⁷ The USS *Kearsarge* ESG arrived on station in the Persian Gulf on May 2, 2005, to replace the USS *Bonhomme Richard* ESG. The USS *Kearsarge* will be conducting maritime security operations.¹⁸

Table 8. *Kearsarge* Expeditionary Strike Group

Name	Type of Ship	Homeport
USS <i>Kearsarge</i>	Amphibious assault ship	Norfolk, VA
USS <i>Ponce</i>	Amphibious transport dock	Norfolk, VA
USS <i>Ashland</i>	Dock landing ship	Norfolk, VA

¹³ “ESG 1 Heads North in Support of Operation Iraqi Freedom,” *Navy Newsstand*, Oct. 21, 2003.

¹⁴ “Wasp Strike Group and 22 MEU to Deploy,” *Navy Newsstand*, Feb. 10, 2004.

¹⁵ “ESG 3 Assumes Maritime Security Mission,” *Navy Newsstand*, Jul. 7, 2004.

¹⁶ “ESG 3 Proves Flexibility, Mobility with First Staff Cross Deck at Sea,” *Navy Newsstand*, Sept. 15, 2004.

¹⁷ “Bonhomme Richard Arrives On Station in Persian Gulf,” *Navy Newsstand*, Jan. 26, 2005.

¹⁸ “Kearsarge on Station in Persian Gulf,” *Navy Newsstand*, May 3, 2005.

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.

Table 9. Air Force Units

Military Unit	Military Base
447 th Air Expeditionary Group	Baghdad IAP/Camp Sather, Iraq
506 th Air Expeditionary Group	Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq
40 th Air Expeditionary Wing (selected elements)	Diego Garcia , BIOT
320 th Air Expeditionary Wing	Seeb IAP, Oman
321 st Air Expeditionary Wing	Masirah AB, Oman
332 nd Air Expeditionary Wing	Balad Air Base, Iraq
380 th Air Expeditionary Wing	Al Dhafra Air Base, United Arab Emirates
386 th Air Expeditionary Wing	Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait
405 th Air Expeditionary Wing	Thumrait Air Base, Oman
407 th Air Expeditionary Group	Tallil Air Base, Iraq

Coast Guard

According to the Coast Guard (CG), 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.¹⁹ 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. On June 2, 2004, at the request of DOD officials, the CG ordered the deployment of two additional 110-foot Patrol Boats and two Law Enforcement Detachments. These additional units will bring the total number of CG personnel currently supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom to 400.²⁰

¹⁹ U.S. Coast Guard, Factcard, *Operation Iraqi Freedom*, Sept. 2003.

²⁰ U.S. Coast Guard, Press Release, *Coast Guard Deploys Additional Units To Support Operation Iraqi Freedom*, Jun. 2, 2004.

Table 10. Coast Guard Personnel

Units	Home Base
Port Security Unit 307	St. Petersburg, FL
Tactical Law Enforcement Team South	St. Petersburg, FL

Table 11. 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
<i>CGC Monomoy</i>	Island Class Cutter	Woods Hole, MA
<i>CGC Maui</i>	Island Class Cutter	San Juan, PR