

Special Operations Command/ USMC Interoperability

The Marine Corps is exploring new ways to organize our forces and maximize their usefulness to joint force commanders. The expansion of the Marine Corps' relationship with the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) highlights our commitment to this process, and to transformation. It provides the foundation of Marine Corps assistance to USSOCOM in its role as the supported command in the war on terrorism.

MAGTFs already have a broad spectrum of applicable capabilities, particularly in operations that involve the introduction of helicopter-borne or surface-borne forces from the sea. There are significant national military advantages in having MAGTFs trained in the conduct of maritime special operations while positioned aboard amphibious ships in proximity to a target, unencumbered by base and overflight rights and operating under established command-and-control systems.

INTEGRATION WITH SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

The Marine Corps must ensure our expeditionary forces are easily integrated with and able to support Special

Operations Forces (SOF). To that end, the Commandant and the Commander of the US Special Operations Command reestablished the USSOCOM-Marine Corps Board. The board will be a forum for the exchange of ideas between the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) and deploying Marine Expeditionary Unit staffs, will establish and continue a dialogue between Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOC) and deploying MEU staffs, and will coordinate USSOCOM and USMC warfighting developments. It also will pursue cooperative materiel research and procurement initiatives.





Today the Marine Corps has 105 Marines filling SOF billets around the world. The kind of support they provide is wide-ranging, extending from training, to exchange flying with USSOCOM's Task Force 160, to intelligence analysis and security. The fielding of the V-22 also will bring the Marine Corps and Air Force special operations forces closer together. VMMT-204, based at Marine Corps Air Station New River in North Carolina, the V-22 training squadron, will train both Marine Corps and Air Force pilots and maintainers to fly and work on these aircraft and will enhance joint understanding concerning "special" capabilities.

A significant warfighting development will occur in 2003 when the Marine Corps conducts a test deployment with USSOCOM. The Marine Corps will provide an integrated detachment of reconnaissance, intelligence, and fire support Marines. They will be task-organized, equipped, and trained to conduct special reconnaissance, direct action, coalition support, limited foreign internal defense, and other missions as required, in support of joint and fleet commanders.