

Wednesday, March 5, 2003

Thousands of 1st Armored Div. troops get orders to join in Gulf buildup

By [Rick Scavetta](#), Stars and Stripes

European edition, Wednesday, March 5, 2003

About 13,000 1st Armored Division soldiers received word Tuesday that they were joining the growing number of U.S. troops based in the Persian Gulf.

The orders were among those issued over the weekend for 60,000 more U.S. soldiers to prepare for hostilities with Iraq.

With more than 200,000 troops already deployed to the Persian Gulf, the Army's only armor division was among the last of the major combat commands to prepare for pending hostilities in the U.S. Army Central Command's area of responsibility.

However, members of the division, headquartered in Wiesbaden, Germany, continued to train while awaiting the call, a unit leader said.

"We're more ready than we've ever been in the past two years — extremely ready," said Col. Michael Tucker, commander of the division's Friedberg-based 1st Brigade.

For the past two months, Tucker's "Ready First" brigade conducted both gunnery and maneuver training at the Army training center at Grafenwöhr. The exercise culminated in a live-fire exercise that combined the brigade's tanks and infantry with artillery and engineers. They trained to standard doctrine for a brigade combat team, with a task force twist — armor and infantry companies combined.

First Brigade's two armor units — the 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment nicknamed "Bandits" and their sister battalion, the "Iron Dukes" of 2nd Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment — provide the brigade's heavy punch.

The 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Regiment in Giessen provides howitzers to soften enemy troops, while the 16th Engineers can clear the way through obstacles.

Infantrymen from the 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment, known as the "Spartans," can be used to deal with built-up area and urban operations.

"We can't accomplish tasks without them," Tucker said. "You can take ground with tanks, but you can't hold it without infantry."

This week, soldiers are cleaning and repairing their equipment from the field while brigade staff continues to train for the deployment, Tucker said. The brigade is awaiting further guidance on when to move out, he said.

The division's 2nd Brigade troops at Baumholder are also confident, said Col. John D.

Johnson, the brigade commander.

“We could not be better prepared right now. We’ve been doing some of the best training I’ve ever seen,” he said.

Johnson attributed the sharpness to increased focus by soldiers to the possibility of war.

“We’d be kidding ourselves if we didn’t say that soldiers have more sense of purpose when they can see their mission,” he said.

He said the brigade faced a major organizational puzzle ahead, with the need to “take all this equipment and 3,500 soldiers plus, pick it all up and put it someplace else,” Johnson said.

But he said his unit has one advantage over others: all the 2nd Brigade pieces can train together regularly thanks to Baumholder’s maneuver and live-fire training areas.

The 4th Brigade’s attack helicopters, under the command of Col. David Lawrence, are based in Hanau, Germany.

Last week, soldiers from the division’s 3rd Brigade, based in Fort Riley, Kan., received deployment orders.

On the ground, the division has 159 M-1A1 Abrams tanks, 172 Bradley fighting vehicles and 36 M-109 Paladins. In the air, it has 18 AH-64 Apache helicopters, 15 OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopters and UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters.

Terry Boyd contributed to this report.

EUCOM forces in Mideast

Roughly 11,000 troops from the U.S. European Command had been deployed or were in the receipt of deployment orders in support of U.S. Central Command on Monday, according to information released then by EUCOM.

The total does not include the 1st Armored Division deployments announced Tuesday.

The number includes about 1,500 Naval Forces Europe personnel who have been deployed from intelligence and Seabee units, as well as liaison officers and other support staff to forward sites in support of CENTCOM.

Also deployed to NAVEUR in support of CENTCOM are six attack submarines and 28 military sealift-command chartered motor vessels.

In addition, 18,000 U.S. Navy personnel are currently deployed in the Mediterranean, including two carrier battle groups and supporting personnel. The two carrier battle groups are the Harry S. Truman and the Theodore Roosevelt.

About 8,000 soldiers from U.S. Army Europe have been deployed. USAREUR units with

elements deployed or in the receipt of deployment orders include:

- 21st Theater Support Command, Kaiserslautern, Germany
- 173rd Airborne Brigade, Vicenza, Italy
- 7th Signal Brigade, Mannheim, Germany
- 18th Engineer Brigade, Heidelberg, Germany
- 7th Army Reserve Command, Schweitzingen, Germany
- V Corps Headquarters, Heidelberg, Germany
- 1st Infantry Division, Würzburg, Germany
- 3rd Corps Support Command, Wiesbaden, Germany
- 11th Attack Helicopter Regiment, Illesheim, Germany
- 12th Aviation Brigade, Giebelstadt, Germany
- 130th Engineer Brigade, Hanau, Germany
- 18th Military Police Brigade, Mannheim, Germany
- 69th Air Defense Artillery, Giebelstadt, Germany
- 205th Military Intelligence Brigade, Wiesbaden, Germany;
- 30th Medical Brigade, Heidelberg, Germany
- 22nd Signal Brigade, Darmstadt, Germany
- V Corps Artillery, Schweitzingen, Germany

About 1,500 airmen and 30 aircraft, including F-16CJ fighter jets and KC-135 tanker aircraft, have been deployed.

U.S. Air Forces in Europe units with elements deployed include:

- 31st Fighter Wing, Aviano Air Base, Italy
- 48th Fighter Wing, RAF Lakenheath, England
- 100th Air Refueling Wing, RAF Mildenhall, England
- 86th Airlift Wing, Ramstein Air Base, Germany
- 52nd Fighter Wing, Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany