



Airmen move beds from an eight-man tent to a 12-man tent to make way for a troop buildup at a forward-deployed location supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Matthew Hannen) | [High-res version of this photo](#)

Servicemembers heading toward gulf

*by Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service*

01/08/03 - **WASHINGTON (AFPN)** -- Thousands of American servicemembers are deploying to the U.S. Central Command area of operations.

The largest deployment is that of the Army's 16,500-man 3rd Infantry Division to Kuwait.

The division's 2nd Brigade is already in Kuwait. The 3rd Brigade, based at Fort Benning, Ga., flies out this week for Southwest Asia. The 1st Brigade, based at Fort Stewart, Ga., the aviation assets and other support elements will follow later this month.

The Army troops will draw pre-positioned equipment in the region and be ready for any eventuality,

Defense Department officials said. Certain division assets must be shipped to the region, however. Helicopters and certain other pieces of equipment will be shipped from Georgia and South Carolina, officials said.

Some 3,500 sailors and Marines of the Tarawa Amphibious Ready Group left San Diego on Jan. 6. The 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit will join almost 1,000 members of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force already in the region. The amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa and the dock landing ships USS Mount Vernon and USS Rushmore form the core of the ready group.

The Air Force is also deploying personnel and aircraft to the region.

Airmen from the 1st Fighter Wing at Langley Air Force Base, Va., will deploy with F-15 Eagles.

Moody Air Force Base, S.C., is deploying HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopters and C-130 Hercules aircraft to the region.

The 4th Fighter Wing of Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C., will deploy with F-15E Strike Eagles.

Airmen from Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., will deploy with the 15th Reconnaissance Squadron (RQ-1 Predator unmanned aerial vehicles), the 58th Rescue Squadron and the 66th Rescue Squadron.

The 28th Bomb Wing at Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., will deploy about half its B-1B Lancer bombers.

E-8C Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System aircraft from Robins Air Force Base, Ga., will deploy to the region, as will F-16 Fighting Falcons from the 52nd Fighter Wing at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany.

Special operations aircraft, such as AC-130 gunships, MC-130 Combat Talons and MH-53 Pave Low helicopters, will deploy from Hurlburt Field, Fla.

In addition, KC-10 Extender and KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft from around the world will support the effort, Air Force officials said.

More deployment announcements are expected, said DOD officials. (Courtesy of American Forces Press Service)
