

## U.S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991: THE 3D MARINE AIRCRAFT WING IN DESERT SHIELD AND DESERT STORM

LTC LeRoy D Stearns

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This monograph is an account of the activities of the Marines and units of the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing in support of the I Marine Expeditionary Force's efforts to liberate Kuwait. This document is part of a preliminary series of official Marine Corps histories that cover Marine Corps operations in the Gulf War. On 2 September 1990, 3d Marine Aircraft Wing took command of Marine aviation forces ashore from a Marine composite aircraft group, which had hurriedly been moved to the Persian Gulf as part of Operation Desert Shield. The wing would grow to be the largest deployed in Marine Corps history. It would fly more than 10 different types of aircraft from eight airfield sites that required laying more than 4.5 million square feet of ramps, landing, and taxiing areas. In addition, the wing and its support groups would construct six 3,000-man base camps and establish a Marine Air Command and Control System that would operate across four countries in a joint and combined arena. When Operation Desert Storm began, the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing was ready and provided more than 18,000 fixed-wing and helicopter sorties in support of I Marine Expeditionary Force's mission of ejecting Iraqi forces from Kuwait. This monograph is predominantly based on unit command chronologies, more than three dozen interviews with key participants, comments from key participants on the draft monograph, and other source documents available at the Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington, D.C.

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