

# MAG-41 Marines Take Part in Corps' Largest Training Exercise

*Stories and photos by Sgt. Chris T. Mann*

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Marines with Marine Aircraft Group 41 returned to Fort Worth, Texas, for duty Aug. 10 after completing a two-week training evolution at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz.

Javelin Thrust 2011 is the Marine Corps' largest training Continental U.S. exercise to date, and members of the MAG were present to support the exercise. The training evolution was also the Corps' largest reservist exercise held in recent history.

Approximately 5,000 Marines and service members took part in Javelin Thrust along with the MAG.

“This exercise shows that a reserve ACE (air combat element) really is possible and what we are capable of doing,” said Lance Cpl. Sean A. Ferguson, a 21-year-old loadmaster with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 234 from Silver Spring, Md.

A large number of reservists with MAG-41 took part in the exercise during the period of time designated as the unit’s annual training for the reserve element.

Aviators attached to Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 112 provided close air support to units on the ground, firing various weapons systems from F/A-18A+ Hornet fighter aircraft while taking part in combined arms exercises from the air. Support Marines also provided key functions to the exercise; keeping aircraft and personnel fully operational.

The exercise spanned across three states, with members of the MAG and 4th Marine Aircraft Wing basing a majority of training operations from Yuma. Other Marine Corps units taking part in Javelin Thrust were located in Hawthorne, Nev., and Bridgeport, Calif.

“This is one of the largest reservist exercises to support the grunts,” said Lance Cpl. Daniel R. Hardesty, a 27-year-old powerline mechanic with VMFA-112 from Wichita Falls, Texas.

MAG-41 Marines provided aviation support to members of the 4th Marine Division and the 4th Marine Logistics Group. Col. Kevin Iiams, the commanding officer of MAG-41, commanded the air combat element during the exercise.

Javelin Thrust combined elements of the infantry, air wing and logistics group to support a Marine Air-Ground Task Force. A MAGTF is a combined task organization with a single command, designed to accomplish a specific mission.

Marines with MAG-41 learned to function as an ACE, supporting a larger function and mission.

“We are responsible for transporting passengers to where they are going, and during the exercise, we supported a mission just like we would if we were deployed,” said Sgt. Esteban Juarez, a 25-year-old loadmaster with VMGR-234 from Ennis, Texas.

MAG-41 Marines left Fort Worth July 17 on several KC-130T aircraft flown by VMGR-234. VMGR-234 also took part in training during Javelin Thrust and helped support the expeditionary capabilities of MAG-41.

A number of MAG-41 Marines haven’t worked with all of their subordinate squadrons together in an exercise such as this one, because of geographical locations that separate the units.

Marine Corps officials say that this exercise could set the tone for future missions of the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing and ultimately MAG-41 in upcoming training and operations.



*Aviators and powerline personnel from Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 112 stand ready to support the Ground Combat Element with F/A-18A+ Hornet close air support missions during Javelin Thrust 2011.*



*Lance Cpl. Bryce K. Enderli, a radio operator with Marine Air Control Squadron 24, communicates with aircraft crewmembers at a landing zone in Yuma and provided support to MAG-41 during Javelin Thrust 2011.*