

U.S. Marine Corps activates first-ever Marine Innovation Unit, hosts defense innovation roundtable event



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Story by [1st Lt. Kevin Stapleton, Marine Forces Reserve \(MARFORRES\)](#)

NEWBURGH, N.Y. – In accordance with the 38th Commandant’s Planning Guidance and Force Design 2030, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Reserve formally activated the Marine Innovation Unit (MIU) during an activation ceremony at Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh, New York, on Friday, May 5, 2023.

The activation symbolizes the Marine Corps’ renewed focus on innovation and experimentation in support of the Total Force as it continues to modernize the service in preparation for the future fight.

“We are extremely grateful for the advocacy provided by Gen. David Berger, Sgt. Maj. Troy Black, Lt. Gen. David Bellon, Sgt. Maj. Carlos Ruiz, and other leaders around the service,” said Col. Matthew C. Swindle, commanding officer of MIU. “MIU exists to act as a strategic connector between industry and the entire Marine Corps. Our Marines are eager to provide that critical capability and enable success for our customers

throughout the Total Force.”

The unit activation ceremony, hosted at the unit’s command post in Newburgh, was widely attended by key stakeholders from around the U.S. Department of Defense and federal government.

Notable ceremony attendees included guests of honor Rep. Pat Ryan (D-NY-18); the Honorable Carlos Del Toro, 78th Secretary of the Navy; and Lt. Gen. David G. Bellon, commander of U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Reserve and U.S. Marine Corps Forces, South.

Just before the ceremony, the unit hosted the Department of the Navy’s first-ever Defense Innovation Roundtable.

The roundtable discussion hosted approximately 250 guests with representatives from industry, finance, academia, state and federal government, and the Department of Defense to help accelerate the transition of key capabilities from the private sector to the national security sector.

The roundtable actioned the unit’s unique connection to the civilian talent marketplace – specifically leveraging reserve Marines’ civilian backgrounds and experiences to tackle some of the challenges facing today’s Marine Corps.

The unit is already doing just that – in the weeks and months leading up to the activation ceremony and roundtable, MIU Marines hit the ground running, conducting several annual training educational periods to establish a unit-wide common operational picture before proceeding to engage with clients around the Marine Corps.

MIU is perhaps the only place in the Marine Corps where one might find lance corporals and lieutenant colonels working together on the same team to problem solve while on “engagements” – or the unit’s moniker for projects and

supporting activities that align with Force Design 2030; Talent Management 2030; or the Marine Forces Reserve Campaign Plan 2030.

Sourcing talent for these engagements does not come in the form of an operations or fragmentary order. Instead, the Marines self-select work based on their civilian education and expertise once the unit's leadership appropriately scopes an engagement.

MIU Marines are made up of chief executives; acquisitions and contracting experts; professional educators and investment professionals; cyber and coding gurus; researchers and data scientists; and self-funded entrepreneurs and innovators – just to name a few of the numerous career fields that define the service members in the unit.

This is the type of civilian experience and background needed by the Fleet Marine Force to solve some of Force Design 2030's chief objectives and related initiatives, which are supported by the unit's lines of operation that target areas like contested logistics; data management & integration; and even command, control, computers, communications, cyber-defense & intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and targeting (C5ISR-T).

Whether in the form of experimentation for Force Design 2030; modeling the way ahead for talent management, training, and education; or developing enterprise-wide solutions in contested logistics as the service prepares to deploy onto the distributed battlefields of tomorrow, the Marines of MIU are working quickly to partner with key Active Component clients and discover, manufacture, and implement actionable results – at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels – around the Corps.

MIU is here to help Marines innovate and win – today and in

the years ahead. And the unit is actively recruiting its newest cohort of reservists before achieving full operational capability (FOC) later this year.

“Regardless of their uniquely qualifying civilian experience and background, our Marines first wear the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor on their uniforms just like all Marines,” said Sgt. Maj. Robert K. Lusk, sergeant major of MIU. “And alongside our colleagues in the Fleet, our Marines continue to prioritize mission accomplishment by, with, and through our partners throughout the force.”

Interested Marines may apply to join the unit by visiting <https://miu.applytojob.com>. Prospective candidates may submit applications through May 21, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. PDT, with selection results released on or about June 30, 2023.

To learn more about MIU, please visit <https://www.marforres.marines.mil/MIU/>.