

The Armed Forces of Malta and Military Doctrine

Introduction

Although Malta today does not face any direct military threats to her territorial integrity and interests, she maintains a defence force designated as the 'Armed Forces of Malta'. Its primary function is to safeguard national sovereignty and interests both in peacetime and in crises. Malta does not have a navy, air force or coastguard but her armed forces are equipped with a maritime and air component as an integral part of this joint Force. At full establishment the strength of the Armed Forces of Malta (including the air and sea component) is equivalent to approximately one composite brigade. The Armed Forces also have an Emergency Volunteer Reserve Force.

Command, Control and Administration of the Armed Forces of Malta

1. The Malta Armed Forces Act was passed through Parliament in 1970. It enables the Head of State to raise, maintain and regulate an armed force. This act also empowers the President of Malta as Head of State, to delegate the command and authority vested in him to the democratically elected Government, exercisable by the Minister for Defence and answerable to Parliament. The Prime Minister of Malta retains Defence Matters within his portfolio.
2. A Defence Matters Directorate in the Office of the Prime Minister provides objective, technical and policy advice as well as timely analysis on all aspects of military matters affecting the Government's Defence Policy.
3. Military command of the Armed Forces of Malta is exercised by the Commander, who is of Brigadier rank. He is supported by a Headquarters that is responsible for the command, control and management of the Force. It lays out the policies and gives the necessary direction to run the AFM to achieve the goals set by Government in an efficient and cost effective manner.

Force Structure

4. Set up in 1970, the Armed Forces of Malta are today made up of a Headquarters and five separate units; three land units, an air wing and a maritime squadron.
 - a. 1st Regiment, AFM consists of a Regimental Headquarters, Headquarters Company, A Company, B Company, C (Special Duties) Company, D Air Defence & Support Company and Gozo Company.
 - b. 3rd Regiment, AFM consists of Regimental Headquarters, Headquarters Company, the Electrical & Mechanical engineering Squadron, the Engineer Squadron and the Ammunition & Explosives Company.
 - c. 4th Regiment, AFM consists of Regimental Headquarters, Headquarters Company, the Military Band, Revenue Security Corps, Command, Control, Communications & Information Technology Company, Medical Section, Finance Section, Pay Section, Records Section, Staff Quartermaster, Progress & Control Section, Search & Rescue Training Centre and Catering Company.
 - d. Maritime Squadron, AFM comprises of Squadron Headquarters, Off Shore Patrol, In Shore Patrol, Rapid Deployment Team, Marine Engineering and Integrated Logistics.
 - e. Air Wing, AFM comprises of Wing Headquarters, the Base Party, Flight Operations Division, the Engineering Division, the Integrated Logistics Division and the Rescue Section.

Manpower

5. Malta has never had conscription. The Armed Forces of Malta recruits both male and female volunteers. The personnel strength of the Armed Forces of Malta as at 31 Dec 10 was 1691. A small Emergency Volunteer Reserve Force was established in 1998. The strength as at 31 Dec 10 was 51 individual reservists and 34 volunteer reserves. In addition, there are 108 civilians employed with the Armed Forces of Malta.

MICCD

6. An Italian Technical Military Co-operation Mission (MICCD) is also based in Malta for the purposes of assisting in the training of Maltese military personnel and to increase Malta's search and rescue cover over the central Mediterranean sea. Two Italian Air Force rescue helicopters model type AB 212s are permanently stationed in Malta and operated by combined Italo-Maltese crews for this purpose.

Defence Roles of the Armed Forces

7. The Armed Forces of Malta is tasked to perform two defence roles:

- **Primary Defence Role:** The AFM is responsible for the external security and integrity of the Maltese Islands in peacetime and in crisis.
- **Secondary Defence Role:** The AFM provides military support in specified areas to the Police Force on a regular basis and to other Government Departments when required.

Mission Tasks Arising From Defence Roles

8. The demands, which these defence roles place on the AFM, can be broken down into individual mission tasks as follows:

Primary Defence Role:

Maintain the external security and integrity of the Maltese Islands in peacetime and in crisis

- Maintain territorial integrity (particularly at the Malta International Airport and other sensitive locations)
- Maintain integrity of Maltese waters (physical and electronic surveillance against smuggling, illegal trafficking of immigrants and law-breaking at sea)
- Provide for the limited surveillance of the Maltese Airspace
- Provide search and rescue services in Malta and its Search and Rescue Region
- Provide Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and Improvised Explosive Device Disposal (IEDD) cover
- Contribute towards international peace and stability by participating in European Union Led-Crisis Management Operations.

Secondary Defence Role:

Provide Military Supporting Tasks

- Provide military assistance to Government departments and the civil community
- Provide civil emergency protection support (explosives, marine pollution, floods and other disasters)
- Provide Military Aid to the Police and the Security Services (Internal Security, Anti-Narcotic patrols and vehicles check-points)
- Provide State Ceremonial and Other Public Duties

9. The principal weapons and equipment systems of the Armed Forces of Malta are now as follows:
Land Component

- Anti-Aircraft guns 40 mm (x 49)
- Anti-Aircraft machine guns 14.5 mm (x 50)
- Mortars (x 51 of various calibres)
- Anti-Tank Guns, anti-tank rocket launchers (x 27)
- Sundry small arms and machine guns

Maritime Component

- Offshore Patrol Vessel (x 1)
- Medium Range Patrol Craft (x 2)
- Inshore Patrol Craft (x 7)
- Search and Rescue Launches (x 2)
- Fast Interception Boat (x1)

Air Component

- Helicopters (x 8)
- Fixed Wing Aircraft (x 7)