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Pentagon: US Marines Heading to Iraq for Ground Combat

By Jason Ditz
March 20, 2016

In the wake of the death of a US Marine in northwestern Iraq in an ISIS rocket attack on [Saturday](#), the Pentagon has announced they are in the process of deploying an undisclosed number of additional Marines to Iraq to take part in ground combat against ISIS.

While the escalation is being presented as a response to the rocket fire, which officials continue to insist was a “[lucky shot](#),” they are also being more straightforward in their intentions for these troops to take part in combat upon deployment. This comes after months of claiming the troops in combat were merely “trainers.”

The number of troops to be deployed, and the total size of US forces currently in Iraq remains unknown. The US was already confirmed to have more troops in Iraq than their diplomatic deal with the Abadi government permitted, and has only increased the number of troops since.

Pentagon officials are still evasive about the Saturday rocket strikes as well, confirming there were wounded Marines too, but refusing to say how many, beyond “less than five.”

CNN is reporting that the attack was actually against a US firebase which the Pentagon has yet to admit even exists in Iraq yet, and that they had been planning to announce the base’s existence sometime this week, before an ISIS attack apparently ruined the surprise. Pentagon officials had previously indicated that the troops were at an Iraqi military base in the same area.