Navy EOD Releases Strategic Guidance for Next 10 Years



The U.S. Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal 2020-2030 Strategic Plan marks the first update to the Navy EOD mission since 1997. It is born out of the Force's need to adapt towards a changing national security environment characterized by great power competition and rogue nations following nearly two decades of combating terrorism and non-state actors. U.S. Navy / Lt. John Mike

CORONADO, Calif. – Navy EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) released its force-shaping blueprint for the next 10 years as its leadership looks to mold the military's maritime EOD force into one that best supports the U.S., its allies and partner nations to compete and win in an era of great power competition, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group One Public Affairs said in a release.

The force's first major strategic mission update since 1997, the plan was developed to meet the challenges of a changing national security environment and position Navy EOD to best serve its clear, secure, build and protect role within the Navy Expeditionary Combat Force (NECF), said Rear Adm. Joseph DiGuardo, commander of Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC).

"The NECF clears the explosive, security, and physical hazards emplaced by our adversaries; secures battlespace for the naval force; builds the critical infrastructure, domain awareness, and logistic capacity to rearm, resupply, and refuel the fleet; protects the critical assets the Navy and the nation need to achieve victory and reinforce blue-water lethality," said DiGuardo, who oversees the NECF, which is comprised of Navy EOD, the Maritime Expeditionary Security Force, the Naval Construction Force, and diving and salvage units.

“As part of the NECF, our EOD forces play a pivotal role clearing the explosive hazards in any environment to protect the fleet and Joint Force – from the simplest impediment to the most complex weapon of mass destruction – and build an understanding of our adversary capabilities by exploiting those hazards. Navy EOD is the key to our nation being undeterred by explosive threats,” said DiGuardo.

“The strategic plan ensures Navy EOD supports the NECF by eliminating explosive threats so the fleet, Navy and nation can fight and win whenever, wherever and however it chooses,” said Capt. Oscar Rojas, commodore of the Coronado, California-based EOD Group (EODGRU) 1.

Rojas said this will be accomplished through the strategic plans’ five core objectives: develop the Navy EOD force to win against near-peer competitors and empowered non-state actors; expand Navy EOD’s advantage against competitors’ undersea threats; capitalize on Navy EOD’s ability to counter WMDs; grow Navy EOD’s expertise in its ability to counter, neutralize and understand next-generation weapons systems; and enhance the EOD capabilities of allies and partner nations.

“Our strategic plan was designed to guide us in creating a force that can deter adversaries and win in a complex security environment,” said Capt. Rick Hayes, commodore of EODGRU-2, which operates out of Virginia Beach, Virginia. “That is why we dedicated an objective to specifically focus on developing and caring for our Sailors. Our people are our most important asset—they are our weapons system.”

The plan lays out how Navy EOD will grow its ability to recruit and retain the best talent, develop strong leaders of character, and use its force resiliency program, STRIKE, to improve the physical and mental care Navy EOD personnel receive throughout their careers.

“Navy EOD’s unique mission requires us to be fit in mind, body

and spirit. We want our current and future operators to have access to the best facilities with the most qualified staff, so they are ready to deploy when called upon," said Hayes, adding STRIKE's holistic approach includes giving EOD operators access to athletic trainers, physical therapists and mental health professionals.

The force's 1,800 operators can also expect an increased emphasis on building their knowledge and capabilities in areas critical to succeeding in a GPC environment, according to the plan.

This includes Navy EOD enhancing its expeditionary undersea capabilities by working in cyberspace. The force will pursue using unmanned maritime systems (UMS) to access adversary communication networks to disrupt, delay or destroy weapons systems.

EOD operators will see initiatives expanding exploitation training – the understanding of a weapons systems' assembly, capabilities and weaknesses – throughout their careers along with educational opportunities to develop their expertise to counter WMDs (CWMD). They will also work with leaders in industry, research and development, and academia to stay at forefront of unmanned systems, explosives detection, and forensic science.

Additionally, the plan calls for Expeditionary Mine Countermeasures (ExMCM) companies to be a testbed for these new systems and software.

"The operators using emerging UMS technology are the closest to the challenges. Our strategic plan will empower them to provide us feedback from the tactical level during the capability development process to help accelerate solutions to the ever-evolving threats," said Rojas.

ExMCM companies provide military commanders a flexible, scalable and rapidly-deployable capability that ships and

aircraft do not offer. They are capable of operating in theater from a variety of craft within days of tasking.

“ExMCM will be instrumental in bolstering the capabilities of our allies and partner nations as we look to better interoperate with them and define shared responsibilities during GPC in the maritime environment,” said Rojas.

The 10-year plan has ExMCM companies working with allies and partner nations to expand initiatives, such as subject matter expert exchanges and multinational exercises designed to deter peer and near-peer adversaries.

All the objectives put forward in the 2030 plan are essential to delivering a lethal, resilient and sustainable Navy EOD force that can be called upon during contingency and crisis operations, said Hayes.

“Realizing this vision will be impossible without the support of everyone in the Navy EOD community. By leveraging their creativity, discipline and leadership, we will develop a force for 2030 that continues to protect the security and future of the American people,” said Hayes.