Special Missions Training Center graduates first class from new N.C. location



CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. – The Coast Guard celebrated the graduation of the first pre-deployment training class at Special Missions Training Center here on March 1.

Class 19-01's 104 students mark the first group to graduate from the Camp Lejeune location since the course was relocated from Portsmouth, Va., last May.

The SMTC crew made preparations for the inaugural Camp Lejeune-based course, which convened Sept 10, to be the first to graduate from the new location. But Hurricane Florence forced the staff and 90 students to evacuate to Charlotte.

The SMTC staff utilized makeshift classrooms at a hotel for classroom training and capitalized on relationships with Naval Operations Support Center, also in Charlotte, for medical screening and initial weapons classroom training. The students received weapons qualifications, water survival training master and responder qualifications, tactical combat casualty care instructor training, maritime tactical-egress and firearms instructor school qualifications.



After moving several times, the hurricane passed, but no one could return home or to SMTC due to the devastation at the Marine Corps base.

"SMTC trains over 300 members deploying to Patrol Forces Southwest Asia each year," said Capt. Adrian West, commander of the Special Missions Training Center. "Our highly trained and competent instructor staff does a great job each course

preparing our Coast Guard men and women for deployment to the U.S. Central Command area.”

Vice Adm. Scott A. Buschman, Coast Guard Atlantic Area commander, was the keynote speaker at the March 1 graduation while Capt. J. Paul Gregg, PATFORSWA commodore, watched as his first class of students graduated.