Coast Guard Creates Special Missions Command to Counter Maritime Threats at Home, Abroad

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WASHINGTON – The Coast Guard is standing up the Special Missions Command to oversee its deployable specialized forces. The command will enhance the operational effectiveness of the Coast Guard in responding to a wide range of national emergencies and events as the demand for deployable specialized forces capabilities increase.

The Coast Guard selected the existing Coast Guard C5I Service Center facility in Kearneysville, West Virginia, as the future site of the Coast Guard's Special Missions Command (SMC). The SMC will be commissioned on or around October 1, 2026, fully integrating the Service's Deployable Special Forces under a single operational commander to provide oversight and advocacy, improve readiness, mission effectiveness, and interoperability to meet Service, Department, and joint military requirements.

"The creation of the Special Missions Command is a vital evolution for our service," said Adm. Kevin Lunday, Commandant of the Coast Guard. "We are forging our most elite operators into a single, razor-sharp instrument of national power. The Special Missions Command is not an administrative change; it is an investment ensuring these elite teams are the best trained, equipped, and organized force possible, ready to protect the Homeland and support the Joint Force."

The Special Missions will include the following units:

- Maritime Security Response Teams serve as the Coast Guard’s first responders to maritime terrorism and other high-risk threats. They are equipped to conduct the nation’s most critical maritime security and defense operations at home or abroad, with both partner law enforcement agencies and joint services.

- Tactical Law Enforcement Teams provide law enforcement expertise across the full spectrum of maritime response situations with specific focus on counter-trafficking and criminal networks attempting to exploit maritime transit zones.

- Maritime Safety and Security Teams are rapidly deployable boat teams that provide port, waterway, and coastal security capability to safeguard the public, protect the marine transportation system, and respond to maritime crime, sabotage, and terrorist activity.

- Port Security Units provide shoreside and waterborne security including point defense of strategic shipping, designated critical infrastructure, and high value assets in joint and combined expeditionary warfare environments.

- Regional Dive Lockers provide dedicated undersea capabilities for a variety of missions. These missions include ensuring the security of ports and waterways, maintaining aids to navigation, and conducting ship maintenance and repair, often in extreme environments like the remote polar regions.

National Strike Force provides highly trained technical

experts and specialized equipment to Coast Guard and other federal agencies to prepare for and respond to the most complex crises and natural disasters, including oil, hazardous substances, and chemical, biological, radiation and nuclear incidents. The force, comprised of three strike teams, an incident management assist team, and the public information assist team supports federal on-scene coordinators and incident commanders, and is poised for immediate response across the nation and globally.

“The geo-political landscape is evolving and the demand for Coast Guard Deployable Specialized Forces is at an all-time high,” said Capt. Robert Berry, Special Missions Command pre-commissioning team lead. “These forces are instrumental to the Coast Guard’s readiness and its role as a global leader in maritime contingency response. The Service has always turned to its specialized forces to respond to national threats and disasters, and establishing this command is the natural next step to enabling our forces to lead the way at the tip of the spear.”

Additional units, capabilities and functions may be incorporated into the Special Missions Command in the future. Currently, the administrative and operational control of specialized forces units is shared between the Coast Guard’s two Area commanders. The Coast Guard is evolving to become a stronger, more capable and responsive fighting force in responding to threats presented by emerging technologies, intensified border security activities, large-scale contingencies and national special security events.