

(B) Gunnery Exercise (Surface-to-Surface) [GUNEX (S-S)] Boat

Gunnery Exercise (S-S) is a part of quarterly reservist training and operational activities for the Mobile Expeditionary Security Group (MESG) that operates out of Corpus Christi Naval Air Station (NAS). The MESG

trains with M3A2 (0.5-lb NEW) anti-swimmer concussion grenades. The M3A2 grenades are small and contain high explosives in an inert metal or plastic shell. They detonate at about 3 m (9.8 ft) under the water surface within 4 to 5 seconds of being deployed. The detonation depth may be shallower depending upon the speed of the boat at

the time the grenade is deployed. GUNNERY (S-S) training in the GOMEX Study Area may occur during day or evening hours in the UNDET Area E3.

Table 1 below summarizes the level of Surface Warfare training activities planned in the GOMEX Range Complex for the proposed action.

TABLE 1. LEVEL OF SURFACE WARFARE TRAINING ACTIVITIES PLANNED IN THE GOMEX RANGE COMPLEX PER YEAR

Operation	Platform	System/ Ordnance	Number of Events	Training Area	Potential Time of Day
Bombing Exercise (BOMBEX) (Air-to-Surface, At-Sea)	F/A-18	MK-83 [1,000-lb High Explosive (HE) bomb] 415.8 lbs NEW	1 event (4 bombs)	BOMBEX Hotbox	Daytime only
Gunnery Exercise (GUNEX) (Surface-to-Surface) - Boat	Vessels such as combat rubber raiding craft, rigid hull inflatable boats, and patrol craft	M3A2 concussion grenades (8-oz HE grenade) 0.5 lbs NEW	4 events (20 grenades)	UNDET Area E3	Day or night

Vessel Movement

Vessel movements are associated with most training and operational activities in the GOMEX Study Area. Currently, the number of Navy vessels operating in the GOMEX Study Area varies based on training schedules and can range from 0 to about 10 vessels at any given time. Vessel sizes range from small boats (<35 ft, or 10.7 m) for a harbor security boat to 1,092 ft (332.8 m) for a CVN (carrier vessel nuclear) and speeds generally range from 10 to 14 knots, but may be considerably faster, for example an aircraft carrier aking wind while launching and recovering aircraft, and for small boat operations. Operations involving vessel movements occur intermittently and are variable in duration, ranging from a few hours up to 2 weeks. These operations are widely dispersed throughout the GOMEX Study Area, which is an area encompassing 11,714 nm² (40,178 km²). Most vessel movements occur in the offshore OPAREAs, but vessel movements associated with MESG training in the UNDET Area E3 and Commander Naval Installations Command (CNIC) harbor security group training in the Panama City OPAREA occur between shore and 12 nm (22.2 km), including the nearshore zone (<3 nm, or 5.6 km). The Navy logs about 180 total vessel days within the GOMEX Study Area during a typical year. Consequently, the density of Navy vessels within the GOMEX Study Area at any given time is low (i.e., less than 0.0113 ships/nm² (0.0386 km²)).

Proposed Monitoring and Mitigation Measures

The Navy is developing an Integrated Comprehensive Monitoring Program (ICMP) for marine species to assess the effects of training activities on marine species and investigate population trends in marine species distribution and abundance in various range complexes and geographic locations where Navy training occurs. The primary tools available for monitoring include visual observations, acoustic monitoring, photo identification and tagging, and oceanographic and environmental data collection.

A list of proposed mitigation measures and standard operating procedures is described in the application for the proposed training operations. These mitigation measures include personnel training for watchstanders and lookouts in marine mammal monitoring, operating procedures for collision avoidance and a series of measures for specific at-sea training events including surface-to-surface gunnery, etc. A detailed description of the monitoring and mitigation measures is provided in the application.

Information Solicited

Interested persons may submit information, suggestions, and comments concerning the Navy request (see **ADDRESSES**). All information, suggestions, and comments related to the Navy GOMEX Range Complex request and NMFS potential

development and implementation of regulations governing the incidental taking of marine mammals by the Navy training activities will be considered by NMFS in developing, if appropriate, the most effective regulations governing the issuance of letters of authorization.

Dated: April 22, 2009.

James H. Lecky,

*Director, Office of Protected Resources,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION

Sunshine Act Meetings

TIME AND DATE: 11:00 a.m., Friday, May 1, 2009.

PLACE: 1155 21st St., NW., Washington, DC, 9th Floor Commission Conference Room.

STATUS: Closed.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED: Surveillance Matters.

CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION: Sauntia S. Warfield, 202-418-5084.

Sauntia S. Warfield,

Assistant Secretary of the Commission.

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