



Silver Strand Training Complex

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The Navy's Mission at the Silver Strand Training Complex

The U.S. Navy's Silver Strand Training Complex (SSTC) is a premier west coast amphibious, special warfare and mine countermeasure training area that accommodates many critical training programs found only at SSTC. SSTC is located on the Silver Strand isthmus within the city of Coronado and north of the city of Imperial Beach.



TRAINING AT SSTC

Many Navy commands are based on Naval Base Coronado and train at SSTC, including the Navy SEALs, Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams, Assault Craft Unit, Beachmaster Unit, Amphibious Construction Battalion and Special Boat units. These units rely on SSTC to conduct a wide range of training activities. Small boat handling, logistics-over-the-shore, special warfare, insertion and extraction of personnel, mine clearance and physical conditioning are among the many types of training that take place at SSTC. For personnel, training is conducted in formal courses with specific learning objectives consisting of both formal classes and in-the-field training. For example, SSTC is home to the Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL or BUD/S School, a qualification training program that all SEAL candidates must complete to become a Navy SEAL. Expeditionary Warfare Training Group, Pacific also runs a critical school on SSTC that annually teaches 70 courses in the principles of expeditionary warfare to more than 10,000 students from all branches of the military and civilian service.

The number of commands and training programs established at SSTC underscores its importance in supporting the military's need for training and operational readiness. Access to Navy command headquarters, equipment, infrastructure and support services make SSTC vital to the efficient execution of Navy training. The ability of local Navy and Marine Corps commands to engage in various types of training on SSTC helps them achieve and maintain operational readiness as mandated by federal law.

SSTC's MISSION

The mission of the Silver Strand Training Complex (SSTC) is to support U.S. Navy and Marine Corps amphibious, special warfare and mine countermeasure training by providing local land, sea and airspace support services; equipment and supplies; and training facilities that will help Naval and Marine Corps forces achieve and maintain the highest level of operational readiness.

SSTC'S UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

The unique value of SSTC lies in its proximity to many Southern California Navy and Marine Corps bases, and the Navy's ability to conduct a wide range of training activities using the Pacific Ocean and the San Diego Bay in combination with beach and inland areas.

Training Environment and Terrain

The temperate, sub-tropical climate of Southern California allows for year-round training. The unique location of SSTC, between the rough ocean and calm bay, allows personnel to start training in a calmer environment and then quickly and easily transition to a more challenging environment on the ocean side as they improve their skill and fitness levels. Also, the open and accessible beach areas and ocean anchorages make the area ideal for amphibious training.

Proximity to the Homeport of Naval Forces

The San Diego region is a Naval homeport. This means there is a high concentration of key Navy organizations, commands and infrastructure. SSTC has the unique ability to draw from neighboring resources, and the Navy can use SSTC to meet the aggressive schedules necessary to graduate numerous groups of trainees throughout the year. This scheduling is necessary to meet the needs of the Navy and ensure personnel are ready for deployment.

Proximity to Other Training Ranges in the Southwest

Southern California contains the most capable and heavily-used concentration of Navy ranges in the eastern Pacific Region. This network anchors a west coast regional training capability which provides complementary training resources for different levels and types of training. Naval forces utilize each of the range areas as appropriate, depending on the training to be accomplished and the training resources of a given range. SSTC is a critical asset within this network of training ranges, particularly in amphibious, special warfare and mine countermeasure training activities.

Proximity to Military Families

Being a homeport also means that San Diego is home to thousands of military families. Since Sailors spend a lot of time away from home during deployment, the Navy is required to minimize the amount of time they are away from home in between deployments. Keeping Sailors close to home while they are training in between deployments is good for morale and troop retention. The availability of SSTC as a local training range is important for meeting this Navy requirement.

EVOLVING REQUIREMENTS

Military readiness requirements are continuously evolving to ensure that service members are prepared for challenges to our nation's security. To support the future training requirements of Navy and Marine Corps commands, additional improvements are needed at SSTC. To analyze the potential environmental effects of ongoing and proposed training activities at SSTC and the southern nearshore area of Naval Air Station North Island, the Navy has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement.



REALISTIC TRAINING

Realistic training enables military personnel to maintain the highest level of readiness and capability. Diverse training enables personnel to be able to react swiftly and decisively to a range of potential situations from hostile environments to challenging nearshore terrains. Training activities at SSTC provide Navy personnel the opportunity to learn and practice skills they need to conduct amphibious, special warfare and mine countermeasure exercises. These training activities provide realistic experience and ensure our service members are ready to respond to our nation's challenges.

