



# Commanding Officer Special Mission (CO-SM)

## Career Path and Detailing Information

(Updated September 2020)

1. **Background:** The CO-SM (previously called CO Shore) career path has been designed to recognize the considerable talent and experience of officers who are serving, or who have served, as Commanding Officers Ashore; to provide a viable career path that continues to make use of these talents in challenging and rewarding assignments in Post-Commander Command (PCC) tours, and maximizes their opportunity for continued promotion and advancement.

2. **CO-SM Officers:** There are several ways officers enter the CO-SM career path.

- a. **CO Screened Officer:** Some CO screened officers become ineligible for Command of a submarine prior to taking command. Examples include medical disqualification from nuclear field or sea duty and inability to complete the command training pipeline. These officers will have their screening status changed to CO-SM upon recommendation of the Nuclear Officer Community Manager (N133) and the command pipeline instructors (if applicable). These officers will then be eligible to compete for assignment to a CO-SM tour.
- b. **COSS Screened Officer:** Officers that are screened for COSS will be assigned as Readiness Deputies of a Submarine Squadron. During their tour as Deputy, they remain eligible for call-up to Command of a submarine. If not selected for call-up, they can anticipate being offered an opportunity to compete for a CO-SM Command assignment. If slated to a CO-SM Command tour, their screening status will be changed to CO-SM.
- c. **XO Shore/XOSS Officer:** Those XO Shore and XOSS officers that complete an XO or XO-equivalent tour AND are selected for promotion to CDR will be eligible to be screened for CO-SM at the next CO-SM administrative screening board (held in the Fall each year). To be eligible for screening for CO-SM these officers must also have completed their command qualifications. Once screened they are eligible to compete for an assignment to a CO-SM command tour.

3. **Command Tour Assignments:** Below are the CO-SM command assignments that are routinely filled by Submarine officers. These tours are all nominally 24 months in length, except as noted.

- Naval Submarine Support Command (NSSC) Pearl Harbor (Note 1,6)
- NSSC Groton (Note 1, 6)
- NSSC Bangor (Note 1, 6)
- NSSC King's Bay (Note 1, 6)

- NSSC Norfolk (Note 1, 6) (Standing up in FY 21-22)
- Submarine Training Facility Norfolk (Note 6)
- Submarine Training Facility San Diego (Note 6)
- Naval Oceanographic Processing Facility (NOPF) Whidbey Island (Note 2)
- NOPF Dam Neck (Note 2)
- Undersea Rescue Command (Note 3)
- Unmanned Undersea Vehicle Squadron ONE (Note 3, 4)
- Yokosuka Naval Data Center
- Yorktown Torpedo Facility (Note 5)

Note 1: Undergoing name change to Commander, Submarine Readiness Squadron

Note 2: CO-XO Fleet-up, 18 mos as each, rotates with an 18xx officer

Note 3: Command at Sea

Note 4: Being elevated to Maj Cmd, may have subordinate O-5 commands established in next 2-3 years

Note 5: Normally filled by a LDO

Note 6: Requires Nuclear AQDs

4. **Slating Process for Command:** Once per year, typically in the late Fall, the CO Detailer (PERS-42B) will develop a slate of CO-SM command billets that will be filled over the next year. Once the slate is developed he will contact all CO-SM eligible officers who have not yet served a CO-SM Command Tour and have less than 23 Years of Commissioned Service (YCS) to submit their preferences. The 23 YCS limitation is to ensure the officer has sufficient time remaining before statutory retirement to complete the CO-SM tour and at least one follow-on tour. There will usually be more eligible officers than there are available billets, which means that assignment to CO-SM will be competitive amongst the eligible officers.

Once assignment preferences are made the slate will be approved by both Type Commanders, OPNAV N97 and Naval Reactors. In addition to a primary officer, several alternates will be identified. The alternates will be called up if an officer selected as a primary does not go to command, either by refusing assignment, or in the case of COSS-officers, they are called up to command afloat prior to reporting for CO-SM command.

Those officers not selected for assignment to a CO-SM tour will continue to be detailed by the Post-XO/CDR Detailer and will remain eligible for assignment in subsequent years until their 23 YCS point.

5. **Post Command Career Path:** Once slated to command, the CO Detailer becomes your detailer. Following completion of Command you become a PCC and will be assigned to PCC O-5 and O-6 billets in accordance with your preferences, experience and needs of the submarine force. The PCC slating process is discussed in a separate FAQ available on the PERS-42 website. Typical assignments include major staff's at the TYCOM, Fleet and OPNAV level in major fleet concentration areas and Washington, DC. Joint duty assignments at Combatant Command's, Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff are also possibilities. Assignments will typically be for 2 year tours, although 3 year tours may be required for some assignments.

6. **Promotion Opportunities:** The submarine force has averaged 1-2 CO-SM (formally CO Shore) officers being selected for promotion to Captain per year over the last 10 years. With the above changes and other initiatives it is expected that this will eventually grow to 2-3 officers per year.

7. **Major Command (MC) Shore**: CO-SM officers selected for promotion to O-6 will be eligible for screening for MC Shore. Officers will receive 3 looks for MC Shore starting with the first board following their selection for O-6.

Officers screened for MC Shore will be assigned to a Submarine Shore Major Command. These include Base CO, Maintenance Facilities and training facilities. MC Shore screened officers will not be eligible for assignment to MC Afloat assignment (Squadron Command, SSGN Command or Tender Command).