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National Guard Patrols Grand Isle Waters

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 13, 2008 – GRAND ISLE, La. – In an effort to prevent looting of area residents' property and local businesses, Louisiana National Guardsmen began patrolling the waters along the north shore of Grand Isle, La.

The 2225th Multi-Role Bridge Company of the 205th Engineer Battalion arrived with MK-2 Bridge Erection Boats originally designed to build bridges in strong currents. Fortunately, these special boats also perform well in the security and patrol missions the unit was performing.

Coordinating with local law enforcement, the National Guard Special Reaction Team and the 1083rd Transportation Company, the 2225th say they are more than prepared for the mission.

"We have SRT members of the Louisiana National Guard on board our vessels that patrol day and night. We use night-vision goggles to monitor during the night patrols and help deter any looting," said 1st. Sgt. Kevin Giroir of the bridge company.

There about 15 SRT members on site that have detention and arrest powers. "We're the state's military SWAT team," said Spc. Coleman Barnett of the SRT.

The 2225th and the SRT are responsible for seven miles of coastline. They patrol the area with six vessels and are required to approach and identify anyone coming into the area.

"There are a lot of expensive homes here. People come to Grand Isle for their own enjoyment; it's a fishing community and an oil field port," said Sgt. 1st Class Brian LeBoeuf of the 2225th. "People have their homes here and like anyone else, they don't want to lose them. We're providing a helping hand to keep trespassers out so they can start their lives again when the storm is over."