

# News Release



Allied Maritime  
Command Headquarters  
Northwood



## INTERNATIONAL SUBMARINE RESCUE EXERCISE LAUNCHED

### EXERCISE BOLD MONARCH 2011

*30 May 2011, Cartagena, Spain*

From all corners of the globe, submarine rescue specialists, parachuting diving teams, engineers and military doctors have gathered in Spain to prove rescue systems and procedures that have been developed to rescue submariners from the worst case scenarios. Imagine being trapped at the bottom of a deep, bitterly cold ocean in a steel hull with limited air supply...hoping that help is on its way. Fear not ... for the next ten days the world's experts in these operations will be concentrated off the Spanish coast near Murcia in the Mediterranean to improve their response capability.

In the next few days, not just one, but **FOUR** diesel powered submarines will simulate the unthinkable - they will disappear from their last known reported positions and go missing. Fortunately for these submarine crews, this carefully planned event has been choreographed as part of the ambitious NATO - led Bold Monarch exercise, the largest multi-national exercise in this field which will coordinate and demonstrate the operational, diving, medical and engineering expertise involved in saving lives in one of the most challenging environments on the planet...in the ocean depths.

Code named 'Bold Monarch' - the exercise schematic reads like a James Bond movie

script – the opening scene features a bustling Spanish harbour, a warship with a floodable dock, massive support vessels bristling with cantilevered ‘A’ frames supporting mini submersible rescue vehicles cradled within.

The plethora of high tech gadgetry is complimented by international teams of crisp white uniformed Naval officers, M.A.S.H style doctors in combat fatigues and submariners trained to parachute from aircraft to create a floating hospital village. What makes Bold Monarch unique is the truly remarkable level of cooperation and the mutual understanding of the military capability amongst the submarine operating nations taking part.

This weekend saw the multi-national Navy representatives warmly welcomed by the Spanish host nation and NATO exercise controllers, COMSUBNORTH’s Captain David Dittmer USN and Cdr Charlie Neve Royal Navy. At the pre-sail conference the unprecedented level of cooperation became clear as meticulous planning and rehearsal of procedures continued throughout the day to overcome the challenges of operating in many languages. The safe conduct of the exercise is of paramount importance to all participants and a crystal clear understanding of the schedule of events as the rescue scenarios unfold is crucial to the success of the exercise.

At the press conference on Saturday, the media interest generated by the Russian participation was clear. This week will mark the historic first mating of a Russian Navy submarine, the Alrosa with NATO’s Submarine Rescue System (NSRS) evacuating real sailors from the submarine to the surface. The Exercise will also demonstrate the rescue system from the Russian Federation Navy Black Sea Fleet, the Italian Navy, and the United States Rescue Diving and Recompression System (SRDRS) with each of the submarines taking part.

The exercise will also call upon deep specialist medical teams trained in hyperbaric medicine. Rescuing injured crews from the sea bed presents a unique set of challenges especially if the atmosphere has become toxic and pressures are rising - personnel may

have been severely injured by physical impact so bringing these casualties to the surface presents a complex and specific medical challenge. In Bold Monarch, the doctors will work closely with the Parachute Assistance Groups who can descend from military aircraft to the surface with life-rafts, first aid and communications equipment to establish contact with the distressed submarine, extending the survival time until the main recovery assets arrive on the scene. Divers can also support the operations, particularly in shallower areas, inspecting the hull, conducting underwater engineering tasks, delivering urgent supplies and supporting the integrated rescue effort. Self contained atmospheric diving suits allow these divers to work at considerable depth. The Spanish command ship, ESPS Galicia is now operating off the coast of Murcia in the Mediterranean having departed Cartagena on Monday 30 May.

Follow the exciting developments on Exercise Bold Monarch 2011 on the NATO website at this link:

[www.manw.nato.int](http://www.manw.nato.int)

Bold Monarch 2011 Facebook link:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Bold-Monarch-2011/133372500071195>

### **Notes to Editors:**

1. The Allied Press Information Centre( APIC) will be set up on board Spanish Command Ship Galicia at sea off Cartagena between 27 May – 10 June 2011. The media point of contact for the APIC is Lt Cdr Andrew Mills Royal Navy – email address: [Andrew@Nephria.com](mailto:Andrew@Nephria.com). A visitors' reception Area will be set up at San Pedro del Pinatar.
2. Media representatives are invited to attend a media event on board ESPS Galicia on Tuesday 7 June 2011. If you are interested in attending the media event please email Lt Cdr Mills at [Andrew@Nephria.com](mailto:Andrew@Nephria.com)  
Only media representatives who have been allocated a place will be able to attend the media event on Tuesday 7 June 2011.
3. Outline timings for the media event:  
  
0700 Media Arrive at Hotel Thalasia, San Pedro del Pinatar (Visitor Reception Area)  
Receive Safety Brief / Media Accreditation  
  
0715 – 0730 Coach transfer to San Pedro del Pinatar jetty

- 0800 Boat transfer to Command Ship ESPS Galicia
- 0830 Media welcomed on board ESPS Galicia. BOLD MONARCH 11 briefing
- 0900 onwards Media transfer to Support Vessels (4 groups)
- 1000 – 1500 Programme arranged by each Support Vessel
- 1500 onwards Media return to ESPS GALICIA
- 1600 Submarine Parachute Assistance Group (SPAG) insertion demonstration. All media observe SPAG demonstration from ESPS Galicia
- 1630 Media visit life raft village by boat and meet SPAG team
- 1715 Media begin return transit to San Pedro del Pinatar
- 1800 Media arrive at San Pedro del Pinatar and dispersed by coach to Hotel Thalasia and Murcia Airport

All visitors to NATO warships are required to provide photographic ID prior to boarding. Understandably, any person who is not pre-booked to attend and/or arriving without photographic ID **will not** be allowed to participate in the media event. Security checks of bags and any camera equipment will also be carried out. Early bids to attend the media event are recommended.