

Historic Ordnance operation a success.

Over a nine day period between 4 - 12 May 2010 NATO's Mine Countermeasures Group 1 (SNMCMG1) participated in live ordnance disposal operations codenamed Beneficial Cooperation 2010 (BC 2010). Although the weather conditions had a huge influence on our mission, 3 mine hunters and 1 diver support ship supported by the command platform, located and disposed of 6 individual pieces of underwater explosive ordnance (UXOs) remaining from WWII, further reducing the risk from unexploded bombs and mines the North Sea.

SNMCMG1 conducted Beneficial Cooperation 2010 for the second time this year returning to the North Sea in May; the Group's first involvement was in February 2010. The main focus during BC 2010 was on reducing the risk to both merchant seamen and fishermen from live ordnance. Mine counter measure vessels were assigned to specific areas, concentrating on locating and disposing of unexploded ordnance. The operation proved to be extremely demanding for the ships and their crew, with the weather conditions unfavourable for the most part – at times, the waves were over 2 metres high. Additionally, divers were limited by the tidal windows, which in some instances only presented a 2 hour period, 3 times per day, when conditions were within the acceptable and safe limits for diving operations. Despite this units managed to achieve a very successful result by the end of the operation. 1 torpedo and 5 aircraft bombs were destroyed.

During the operation, SNMCMG1 also bid the mine hunter, HNLMS MIDDELBURG, farewell. Having completed her assignment to SNMCMG1 on the last day of the operation; she left to return to her home port. HNLMS MIDDELBURG spent over 3 months in the Group participating in all operations and exercises together with the other assigned MCMV's. COMSNMCMG1, Cdr Krzysztof Rybak, personally thanked the crew of HNLMS MIDDELBURG for their dedication, support and professionalism, wishing all; fair winds and following seas.