

DEPLOY

DUNCAN AND ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE

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A Merlin from 814 NAS stops for fuel during Exercise Dynamic Manta

SUBMARINE HUNTERS

March provided an interesting shift in tasking for a Type 45 Destroyer to conducting Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW). However, DUNCAN grabbed this opportunity to lead as she has done before and show that she is still a capable and adaptable Flagship for the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2.

The Exercise was called 'Dynamic Manta' and was designed to improve the NATO anti-submarine warfare and inter-operability. As the largest NATO ASW exercise in 10 years, we operated with 6 live submarines, 8 surface ships, 7 embarked helicopters, 16 maritime patrol aircraft. Every member of the Ship's Company was required to be running on all cylinders as this two week exercise meant we worked in Defence Watches, manning the Ship in an enhanced posture across all areas 24 hours a day. Half the Ship's Company slept soundly or took some down time to eat, sleep or go to the gym, while the other half kept the engines driving, the sensors turning, the crew fed and the exercise running efficiently from the Ops Room, Flight Deck and Bridge.

The exercise was interrupted in the first week by an unknown sub-surface contact, which the Task Group detected on several occasions. This saw the exercise shift in focus from a training exercise with NATO submarines to a real-world search for an unidentified sub-surface contact within the force, which proved to be an even better training opportunity for all the ships, submarines and aircraft involved and a real sense of interest as we collected the evidence to prove or disprove the presence or identity of the contact. Once again, as Flagship, DUNCAN led from the front.

Dynamic Manta was brought to a close in the familiar port of Catania in Sicily before the Ship resumed submarine related tasking. As usual, the Ship's Company enjoyed some down time including climbing or cycling Mount Etna in Sicily, working with the local rugby club and good old Flight Deck Bucketball!

Our next week at sea had us in company with the Spanish Ship VICTORIA and the Canadian Submarine WINDSOR. During this period, DUNCAN proved the coordination of friendly submarines with a small team of embarked submarine specialists, a first for Type 45s and a key milestone for the team who will be used on QUEEN ELIZABETH in the future.

Next DUNCAN enjoyed a visit to Bar, Montenegro for the second time in the last 6 months, re-establishing contacts with the new NATO member, before stopping in Trieste, Italy for the Easter weekend. The opportunity for a few days off and the opportunity to see friends and family or visit Venice, Ljubljana or the surrounding area was enjoyed by many.

LOGS UPDATE

Since deploying, the Stores department has:

- Organised delivery of spares to Turkey, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Romania.
- Handed out stationery, bedding, nuts and bolts, uniform and boots.
- Organised arrival of 3 lorry loads of essential stores all the way from the UK.
- Returned over 100 unserviceable items back to the UK to go into the repair loop.
- Locally sourced essential spares where delivery from the UK was uneconomical.
- Compiled over 15 logistics situation reports to Fleet Commander and NATO MARCOM.

THE CHALLENGES OF ASW

So how did DUNCAN achieve her ASW role – normally given to a Frigate not a Destroyer? It required a totally different mindset. To emphasise this, we only have six designated crew for the ASW role; 2 Petty Officers, 2 Leading Seamen and 2 Able Seamen Under Water Warfare (UWW). Whilst in Defence Watches, only 3 ASW experts are available in the ops room at one time.

The Ship had to reconfigure engine states to produce as little noise as possible and personnel were briefed to limit noise around the Ship. The smallest amount of noise can radiate from the Ship into the water and give away our position, which could aid an enemy submarine to locate the ship and allow it to fire torpedoes before detection. We also had to close up 'Marine Mammal Lookouts' who aid the Bridge Team in identifying whales and dolphins who may be affected by the use of our sonar in exercises. They also keep a look out for periscopes which are very hard to see in a choppy sea state and flares, which may signify an exercise submarine attack or a real life emergency!

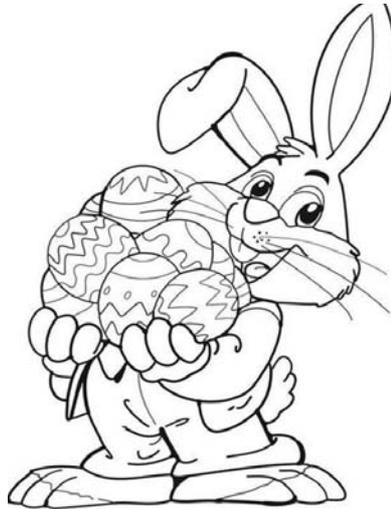
DUNCAN's primary ASW sensor is our hull mounted sonar which transmits a pulse of sound into the water which reflects back on any underwater contact. This is then investigated by the team to determine whether this is a submarine or something else; a wreck, underwater obstruction or even a pod of whales or dolphins. If it has specific characteristics like course and speed, we can then launch our helicopter to investigate, classify and, if necessary, attack before she gets a chance to fire at us.

We were also assisted by air assets from ashore that had dipping sonar or the ability to drop sonar buoys to listen for submarines.

Follow our journey...



COLOUR IN THE EASTER BUNNY!



DUNCAN supports Briganti RFC in Catania, Sicily

Members of HMS DUNCAN RFC discovered that Briganti RFC, Catania had suffered a fire in January and was rebuilding their Club House. The team hatched a plan to support the Club!

25 sailors from all branches on DUNCAN grabbed their overalls and made their way to the club. They were given a brief outline of Briganti RFC's history and why the facilities are important to the local community. The Rugby Club is in an area of Catania where drug use and violence is rife. The Club founders saw children playing rugby and thought that forming a Rugby Club would give the children a safe place to learn the sport. From its humble beginnings the Club has grown and is now a community centre where children can go to complete homework (in the library) as well as learn team work and respect for one another through sport. The club itself has adult and kids teams and the rugby skills taught are impressive; the club is known for its fast and expansive style of play.

The team from DUNCAN helped to build stud walls, shelving, ran electrical cables, built a secure door into the Rugby Club and plumbed in toilet facilities. It was a great example of the bond and brotherhood that rugby teams throughout the world share.

DUNCAN's Rugby Coach, CPO(AWT) Smith, stated "It has been an excellent opportunity for the team to give something back to the rugby community and meet some incredible individuals who are doing much to improve the lives of children and young people".



A MESSAGE FROM THE CAPTAIN

March was certainly an interesting month for my Ship's Company! They have all worked incredibly hard to shift their attention to a style of Warfare that is not normally conducted by a Type 45 and they have exceeded expectations. DUNCAN performed well in every serial during Dynamic Manta and proved to be a reliable and adaptable Flagship during the interrogation of unknown sub-surface contacts. As ever, it has been a pleasure to work with a variety of Nations – this month the Canadians making an appearance!

It has also been a great opportunity for my Ship's Company to enjoy some down time in Trieste at the end of the month. Many of them took a few days off to see the local sights and enjoy a well deserved break – hopefully some of you made it out to see your loved ones.

The next few months will be busy for DUNCAN as we continue as the NATO Flagship, operating in the Mediterranean and returning to the Black Sea for further interaction with our NATO Allies.

All the best to you at home, I thank you for your support and look forward to bringing DUNCAN home to you all in a few months time!



