

## San Diego Unit Takes Part in NATO Exercise By JO1 Kristina Brockman

Deep Submergence Unit (DSU), the U.S. Navy's only submarine rescue team, is taking part in the NATO Exercise Sorbet Royal, an international submarine rescue evolution based out of Taranto, Italy. The team is one of many units taking part in the scenario that will display the interoperability of multinational forces in a mock disabled submarine exercise. DSU is comprised of both Navy divers and submariners, the ideal combination for their mission of rescuing crew on a disabled submarine, which will hopefully never see real-life application.

"Being a submariner," says MM1(SS) Sam Pilgrim, "it gives me great pride and joy participating in this organization because whether our rescue is foreign or domestic, we know we are rescuing personnel in our community... our brothers and sisters in arms."

DSU's participation began at their facility on Naval Air Station North Island in San Diego. The unit is located at the air station, next to the runway, so they can easily and quickly deploy when needed. DSU has participated in previous Sorbet Royal exercises, most recently in 2002, and its Sailors kicked off the evolution two weeks ago by loading up the cargo aircraft carrying their gear and flying to the island of Sicily. From there, the team moved all of their gear, some 154,000 pounds, onto USS Grasp (ARS 51), a Norfolk-based auxiliary rescue and salvage ship. The process was similar to what would happen in the event of a real submarine incident.

"All of our gear is sitting in a warehouse, ready to be loaded in an aircraft in four hours," says certified master diver MMC(SW/DV) Tom Perkins, "so we start by getting it all palletized and pushed into an airplane and we fly to the nearest job site. Meanwhile our headquarters staff is finding us a vessel of opportunity... the closest vessel that will fit our equipment and put us quickly over the submarine site."

Besides DSU, the exercise rescue will include personnel from two other units: Grasp and Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit Two (MDSU Two). Grasp is taking part in the exercise as part of their scheduled six month deployment. Divers stationed on the ship will integrate with the DSU Sailors and other Grasp personnel will be involved other aspects of support. MDSU Two, out of Norfolk, Va., is an expeditionary mobile unit that deploys to conduct combat salvage, emergent and force protection diving, battle damage repair and harbor clearance. The combined efforts of all three units will be added to those of other nations to "flex the muscles" of the international capabilities available.