

NATO ASW Exercise Under Way off Sicily



Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 ships and submarines sail in formation in the Ionian Sea off the coast of Sicily Feb. 21 during Exercise Dynamic Manta 22. *NATO ALLIED MARITIME COMMAND MEDITERRANEAN SEA* – While the NATO maritime forces have had to navigate around the rocks and shoals of the global pandemic, it has not stopped them from exercising and raising their game in looking for adversary submarines in the Mediterranean.

The annual Dynamic Manta antisubmarine warfare exercises are conducted in the central Mediterranean, usually around Sicily, and takes advantage of the maritime patrol air bases at Sigonella and Catania in Italy. This year is no exception.

Ships, submarines, aircraft and personnel from nine allied nations will take part in the antisubmarine warfare and anti-surface warfare training exercises from Feb. 21 to March 4.

Submarines from France, Greece, and Italy have been joined by surface combatants from Canada, France, Greece, Italy, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the U.S. for the exercise. Maritime patrol aircraft from Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, U.K. and the U.S. are supporting the simulated, multi-threat environment during the exercise.

The task group is joining up in Catania harbor. The nearby Italian naval helicopter base in Catania and U.S. Naval Air Station at Sigonella are supporting Dynamic Manta 22 operations. Logistical support is being provided from the Italian naval base at Augusta Bay.

Dynamic Manta is one of the two major antisubmarine warfare exercises led every year by NATO Maritime Command. Dynamic Manta involves NATO Standing Maritime Group Two in the Mediterranean. The other, Dynamic Mongoose, takes place in the North Atlantic in the summer, involving NATO Standing Maritime Group One.

“NATO’s maritime power lies in the ability of the standing forces to rapidly join with high readiness, high-capacity national forces to deliver effects when and where needed,” said U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Stephen Mack, commander, Submarines NATO, who is commanding Dynamic Manta 22. “Exercises like this, along with regular training between allied navy units and our multinational standing naval forces, is a force multiplier that provides a collectively trained and interoperable force, ready to work together as the maritime portion of the VJTF [Very High Joint Readiness Task Force].”

Mack added, “This exercise is a visible demonstration of the alliance’s ability to cooperate and effectively integrate. Alliance unit, solidarity, and cohesion are the core of NATO.”