

# U.S. Navy, Estonian Partners Conduct Ice Diving Training to Enhance Baltic Maritime Readiness



Equipment Operator 1st Class Devon Maher, U.S. Navy Seabee Diver assigned to Underwater Construction Team (UCT) One, Construction Dive Detachment Bravo (CDD/B), conduct ice diving operations during a bilateral ice diving exchange with Estonian Rescue Board and Estonian Navy divers at Rummu Quarry Lake, Feb. 10, 2026.

[by 22nd Naval Construction Regiment](#), Feb. 19, 2026

ESTONIA – U.S. Navy Seabee Divers assigned to Underwater Construction Team (UCT) One, Construction Dive Detachment Bravo (CDD/B), are conducting ice diving and underwater demolition training with the Estonian Rescue Board (ERB) and Estonian navy divers during an annual bilateral ice exercise

scheduled from Jan. 31 to Feb. 17, 2026.

The exercise focuses on developing cold weather capabilities that enhance maritime security, improve Alliance readiness, and reinforce Estonia's contributions to the conventional defense of the Baltic Sea region.

"This opportunity builds real-world capability in one of the most demanding dive environments imaginable," said Senior Chief Constructionman Keith Reed, master diver assigned to UCT-1 CDD/B. "Operating under ice requires absolute trust in equipment, procedures, and teammates, especially in conditions where precision, readiness, and discipline directly affect mission success."

The exercise takes place at Rummu Quarry Lake and Miinisadam Naval Base and includes classroom instruction, pier-side safety training, practical ice dives, and a salvage survey of a submerged barge.

Estonia faces a significant volume of explosive remnants of war, particularly in waterways and coastal regions affected by historic conflicts. The training supports humanitarian mine action objectives while improving Allied capacity to detect, assess, and respond to underwater hazards that threaten maritime infrastructure, commercial traffic, and regional security in all weather conditions.

"Ice diving stresses every element of a diver's training from planning, communications, emergency response, and execution," Reed said. "Working alongside Estonian Rescue Board and navy divers allows us to exchange techniques, leverage their local expertise, and carry lessons forward that strengthen cold-weather and Arctic diving operations across the Naval Construction Force."

Beyond technical dive training, the training is designed to improve interoperability, expand operational readiness, and support NATO maritime safety and deterrence efforts

by ensuring regional forces are prepared to operate effectively in austere and contested environments.

“This engagement reflects years of trusted coordination with Estonia and deliberate planning across U.S. and host-nation teams,” said Chief Builder David Madmon, diving action officer assigned to 22nd Naval Construction Regiment (22NCR). “Our role was to align the right capabilities, ensure safety and logistics were in place, and create a training environment that delivers lasting operational value for both nations.”

This training builds on previous U.S.–Estonian humanitarian mine action engagements dating back to 2017 and supports NATO objectives to enhance maritime readiness, resilience, and safety across the Baltic Sea region.

It also reinforces a forward defense posture by strengthening European Allies’ ability to lead regional maritime safety and security efforts, with U.S. forces providing specialized capabilities and operational support.

UCT-1 CDD/B, currently deployed under 22NCR, is a specially trained and equipped unit within Navy Expeditionary Combat Forces that specializes in diving, light salvage, underwater construction, and military engineering operations in austere environments.

22NCR commands naval construction forces for Navy Expeditionary Forces Europe-Africa/Task Force 68 across the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations to defend U.S., Allied, and partner interests.