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Singapore Hosts Regional Submarine Rescue Exercise

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Foreign military observers and participants on board MV Swift Rescue, watching the launch of the submersible rescue vehicle DSAR 6.

The Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) and navies from Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the United States are conducting a Submarine Escape and Rescue (SMER) exercise, codenamed Pacific Reach, from 17 to 25 Aug 2010. This year's exercise, the fifth in the series, is hosted by the RSN for the second time and consists of a shore phase conducted at the Changi Command and Control Centre and a sea phase held in the South China Sea. The exercise also comprises a medical symposium as well as simulated evacuation and treatment of personnel from submarines in distress. Also present at this year's exercise are military observers from 13 countries, namely Canada, China, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, Pakistan, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, the United Kingdom and Vietnam.

Exercise Pacific Reach aims to develop regional SMER capabilities and strengthen interoperability in submarine rescue operations among participating navies. Speaking at the opening of the exercise, RSN's Fleet Commander, Rear- Admiral Joseph Leong, said, "Exercise Pacific Reach serves as a platform to foster cooperation on submarine escape and rescue, as well as to enhance multilateral relations among the submarine operating countries. As more countries acquire or enhance their submarine capabilities in the region, it is also important that we build and maintain a strong network for multilateral submarine rescue collaboration."

This year, the RSN is participating in the exercise with a Landing Ship Tank, RSS Endeavour; a submarine, RSS Chieftain; a submarine rescue support vessel, MV Swift Rescue; and a submersible rescue vehicle, Deep Search and Rescue Six. With hyperbaric facilities such as recompression chambers and a high dependency unit, MV Swift Rescue is able to provide immediate and specialised medical treatment to injured personnel who are evacuated from distressed submarines. Other participating naval assets include an auxiliary support ship, USNS Safeguard, from the US Navy and a Japanese submarine JDS Arashio. In 2000, the RSN hosted the first Exercise Pacific Reach, involving navies from Japan, the Republic of Korea and the United States.



Viewing the recovery of the submersible rescue vehicle DSAR 6.



MV Swift Rescue and DSAR 6.

Archives of Singapore



The RSN's medical personnel, specially trained in the field of hyperbaric medicine, rendering assistance to a "rescued" submariner in the recompression chamber located on board MV Swift Rescue.

Related Resources:

- Fact Sheet: MV Swift Rescue and Deep Search and Rescue Six (MINDEF_20100818003.pdf)

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