



Press release
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Multi-robot underwater surveys successfully conducted from the NATO Research Vessel Alliance in the North Sea

First results being presented at EGUERMIN during “Ostend at Anchor”

From 20 to 29 May 2015 CMRE (Centre for Maritime Research and Experimentation) scientists, along with colleagues from the Royal Netherlands Navy Defence Diving Group, Naval Mine Warfare Centre of Excellence (EGUERMIN) and UK Royal Navy Maritime Autonomous Systems Trials Team (MASTT), experimented using different underwater robots in a joint scientific mine countermeasures (MCM) sea trial.

The NSMEX'15 (North Sea MCM Experiment 2015) sea trial took place over 20-29 May 2015 in the North Sea off the coast of Ostend, Belgium. For the first time, the NATO Research Vessel (NRV) Alliance, a 93-meter 3,180-ton open-ocean ship, operated in the Belgian waters for a successful sea trial developed by CMRE, along with the Royal Netherlands Navy Defence Diving Group, Naval Mine Warfare Centre of Excellence (EGUERMIN) and UK Royal Navy Maritime Autonomous Systems Trials Team (MASTT).

The experiment aimed at exercising state-of-the-art high-resolution underwater acoustic imaging systems and adaptive vehicle behaviours using different Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs) in order to assess the performance of different sonar systems and enhance interoperability and collaboration in the field.

During NSMEX'15 multiple simultaneous underwater robot surveys were successfully conducted in the very challenging North Sea environment characterized by strong currents and complex seafloors. The strong results from this trial will allow NATO and the Nations to gain experience in how these types of systems can be used in joint mine countermeasure missions, and will also permit CMRE to further generalize the performance of its systems in different environments and contexts.

Initial results from this scientific campaign, including data from the MUSCLE AUV (CMRE robot for MCM experimentation) are being presented at EGUERMIN on 1 June 2015. The presentation is conveniently coinciding with the “Ostend at Anchor” event, which is hosting for the first time NRV Alliance. These initiatives will further reinforce the strong ties with Belgium, host Nation of EGUERMIN and the NATO HQ.

About CMRE. The STO-CMRE (Science and Technology Organization – Centre for Maritime Research and Experimentation) is located in La Spezia, Italy. Formerly the NATO Undersea Research Centre (NURC), the Centre focuses on research, innovation and technology in areas such as defence of maritime forces and installations against terrorism and piracy, secure networks, development of the common operational picture, the maritime component of expeditionary operations, mine countermeasures systems, non-lethal protection for ports and harbours, anti-submarine warfare, modelling and simulation, and marine mammal risk mitigation. CMRE operates two ships, NATO Research Vessel *Alliance*, a 93-meter 3,180-ton open-ocean research vessel, and Coastal Research Vessel *Leonardo*, a smaller ship designed for coastal operations. In addition to its laboratories the Centre is equipped with a fleet of autonomous underwater and surface vehicles and a world-class inventory of seagoing sensors.

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