

EXERCISE SEAWORTHY

By Cpl C.W. Slute

Between 7 and 11 July 2014, the Combat Diving team from 4 Engineer Support Regiment (4 ESR) located in CFB Gagetown, New Brunswick deployed to CFB Shearwater, Nova Scotia to conduct Exercise SEAWORTHY. 4 ESR is currently serving as Atlantic Canada's Immediate Response Unit (IRU) and the focus of Exercise SEAWORTHY was to test the proficiency of the Combat Divers for an IRU deployment.

Combat Divers are Combat Engineers who perform diving training and operations as a secondary duty. They typically operate in small teams and provide the Army the ability to project common Combat Engineer skill sets, such as mobility and counter mobility support, into the underwater environment. Combat Divers have been called out to support numerous IRU tasks including the Swiss Flight 111 disaster in 1998 as well as a variety of search or recovery operations.



The 4 ESR Combat Diver Team utilizes Light Weight Surface Supplied system and lifting bags in order to recover a sea container from the Ocean floor. Two divers are deployed in the picture and are fed breathing air from the yellow and red lines held by the Diver Tenders on the surface.

Exercise SEAWORTHY allowed the members of 4 ESR's dive team to hone their basic dive skills. The skills practiced during this exercise included basic dive emergency procedures, underwater navigation, underwater search, the use of hydraulic tools and cutting steel with oxygen torches, as well recovery drills. The exercise also gave potential Combat Divers exposure to what may be asked of them when they complete their Combat Diver course.

On the night prior to the last day of the exercise, the team conducted the planning and preparation for a recovery operation. The task involved lifting a large sunken shipping container from the ocean floor to the surface using large air-filled lifting bags. A two stage lift was employed that involved initially lifting

the container a small distance off the sea floor prior to a second lift that brought it to the surface. Once the container was on the surface, it could be towed to shore or lifted with a crane. This method proved highly successful and allowed the Divers to maintain greater control over the container throughout the task.

Ex SEAWORTHY enhanced the diver's individual competence and technical skills as well as their ability to work effectively as part of a deployed dive team. It also enabled 4 ESR to confirm its preparedness to deploy for an IRU task. The 4 ESR Dive Team will continue to serve as a component of the Atlantic Canada IRU until 31 Oct 2014.



Photo by Capt H.J. Morrison