



# UK SMERAS

**SubMarine**

**Escape**

**Rescue**

**Abandonment**

**Survival**

**Commander Jeff Fillmore (UK SMERAS)**

**Brief is Unclassified**



# Agenda

## **Governance & Policy**

## **UK response to a DISSUB event**

**It is all about “time” – the building blocks of “time to first rescue”**

## **UK Rescue System (NSRS)**

- **Operations**
- **Assurance**
  
- **Final thoughts / observations**



# Introductions

- **Commander Jeff Fillmore**
  - Job title – Commander SMERAS since 2021
- **2020-21**      **Advanced Command and Staff Course (academic studies)**
- **2018-21**      **Maritime Operations Centre – submarine programming**
- **2015-18**      **2\* Maritime battlestaff as submarine element coordinator**
- **2013-15**      **Maritime Operations Centre – Officer in Charge of SUBOPAETH (CTF311)**
- **2010-13**      **HMS TRENCHANT – global deployment (330 days away from UK)**
- **2010**          **Submarine Command Course (Perisher)**
- **2000-10**      **Served on SSN/SSBNs (warfare Officer)**
  - **HMS SUPERB**
  - **HMS VENGEANCE / VIGILANT**



# Commander SMERAS

## Equipment / Procurement / Policy / Money

- **In-service equipment support**
  - Survival suits
  - Personal locator beacons
  - Life rafts
  - Alertment beacons
- **Future Capability Requirements**
  - SMERAS on new classes of submarines
  - Replacement rescue systems
- **Advisor on all SMERAS matters**

## Operations

- **Command rescue mission at sea**
- **Coordinator Rescue Forces**

Commander SMERAS is the single point of contact for all SMERAS matters across defence



# UK SMERAS - history

## Pre-2018

- **SMERAS – Navy problem**
- **SMERAS – Submarine problem**

## Now

- **SMERAS is a UK government problem**
- **SMERAS is UK defence problem**

2019 - Strategic Guidance from Chief of Defence staff - issued a formal directive / instruction to Defence

2021 - Tactical Guidance Joint Commander's Orders to supporting forces



# Governance & Policy

- **Government Policy Statement**

Royal Navy submarines operate within a rigorous safety envelope, yet environmental and operational challenges prevent the complete elimination of the risk. **Submarines ARE safe**

History shows that incidents resulting in a disabled submarine (DISSUB) on the surface or the sea bed do occur. In the worst case they can lead to the loss of life and even the submarine in its entirety. **Accidents do happen**

To mitigate this small risk but immutable risk, a proportionate contingent response is to be maintained to deliver a Submarine Escape, Rescue, Abandonment and Survival capability. **Do everything we can to save life**

# MOD – strategic direction

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE

**DCDS(MSO) OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVE (CAT 2)  
TO THE FLEET COMMANDER FOR THE DELIVERY OF THE UK  
SUBMARINE RESCUE CAPABILITY – OPERATION LONGSTONE**

Note by the Secretary

This DCDS(MSO) Planning Directive gives military strategic direction to the Fleet Commander as the Joint Commander responsible for the delivery of the UK's Submarine Escape, Rescue, Abandonment and Survival (SMERAS) capability.

## Key Points

Command and Control

Mission

Execution

Tasking

Responsibilities

Strategic Communications

Intelligence / Security

Finance

Logistics

Task Organisation / force elements at readiness

# Joint Commander – tactical Orders

28 Apr 21

See Distribution

NAVY OPERATIONS ORDER 03/21 – OPERATION LONGSTONE

Timings: LOCAL

TASKORG: See Annex A

## References:

- A. DCDS (MSO) Operational Directive – Operation LONGSTONE dated 7 Jun 19.
- B. ATP 57 – The Submarine Search and Rescue Manual Version 3 dated 24 Oct 17.
- C. NATO Submarine Rescue System Concept of Operations Version 4.0 dated Nov 18.
- D. BR241(1) – SMERAS – UK Policy, Governance and Training.
- E. Fleet Incident Response Cell Operations Manual Issue 6 dated 19 Dec 19.
- F. BR241(5) – SMERAS Stores.
- G. JSP 751 – Joint Casualty and Compassionate Policy and Procedures.
- H. CTF 311 SOP 1.19 – Submarine Search and Rescue dated Aug 17.
- I. BR241(6) Submarine Escape and Rescue Books Command Guide and Senior Survivor's Guide.
- J. BR9465 – Fleet Naval Nuclear Authorisation and Radiological Control Manual Version 1 dated Aug 20.
- K. BR19 – Surface ASW Records and Recording Procedures Version 2 dated Apr 19.

## Preliminaries

1. **Timing.** Action: Immediate. Info: Routine
2. **Definitions.**

- a. **Submarine Operating Authority (SUBOPAETH).** The Commander with Operational Control of a submarine.

## Key Points

- **Aligned to NATO doctrine (ATP57)**
- **Jt Cdrs intent – support to UK foreign SMs**
- **Concept of Operations**
- **Mission**
  - **Force generate**
  - **Deploy**
  - **Operate**
  - **Sustain**
  - **Recover**
- **Communications (internal and external)**
- **Media**
- **Finance**
- **Legal**
- **Casualty reporting**

NATO STANDARD

ATP-57

THE SUBMARINE SEARCH AND  
RESCUE MANUAL

Edition XX Version XX

XXXXXX 2022



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ALLIED/MULTINATIONAL TACTICAL PUBLICATION

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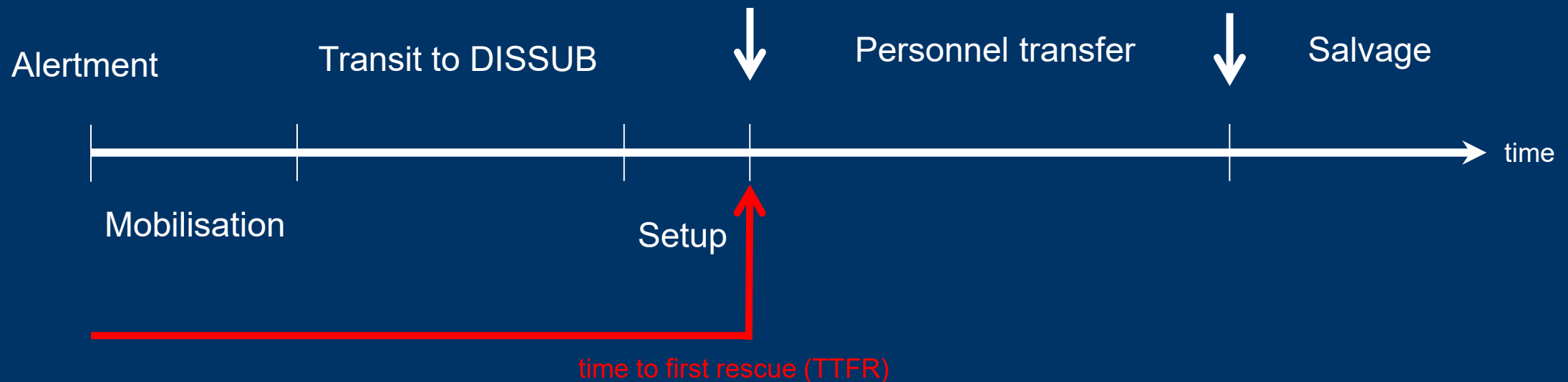
# Constructing a Rescue Plan

- **Standing Rescue plan**

- **Activate Rescue System(s)**
  - NATO Submarine Rescue System (NSRS)
- **International assistance**
  - Swedish URF rescue system
  - US Submarine Rescue Vehicle
  - Australian LR5

- **Rescue timeline**

Hatch Open – commence transfer



# NSRS – a collection of rescue capabilities

Intervention



- DISSUB site preparation
- POD posting
- Localisation

Rescue vehicle



- Max depth 600m
- 30 tonnes
- 3 man crew
- Rescue 15 per sortie

Transfer under Pressure



- 2 x decompression chambers
- Up to 72 personnel

# Concept of Operation

Operate global “blue water Navy”

- Submarine Operations 2022
  - Atlantic / Norwegian Sea / Mediterranean / Gulf / Indian Ocean / Pacific / South China Seas
- UK SMERAS needs to be a global capability



# NSRS time to first rescue

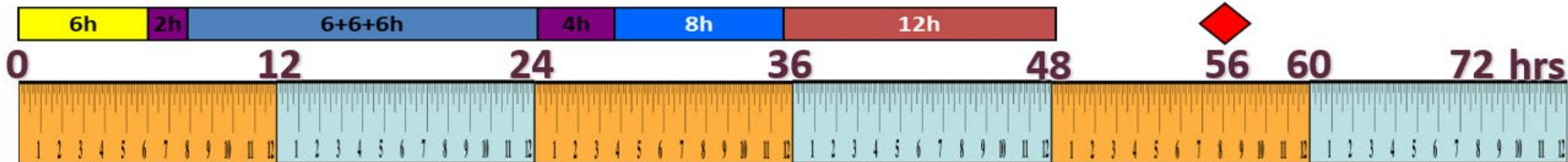
## INTERVENTION



Interv'n  
MOSHIP



First  
ELSS POD  
Transfer  
To DISSUB



Rescue  
MOSHIP



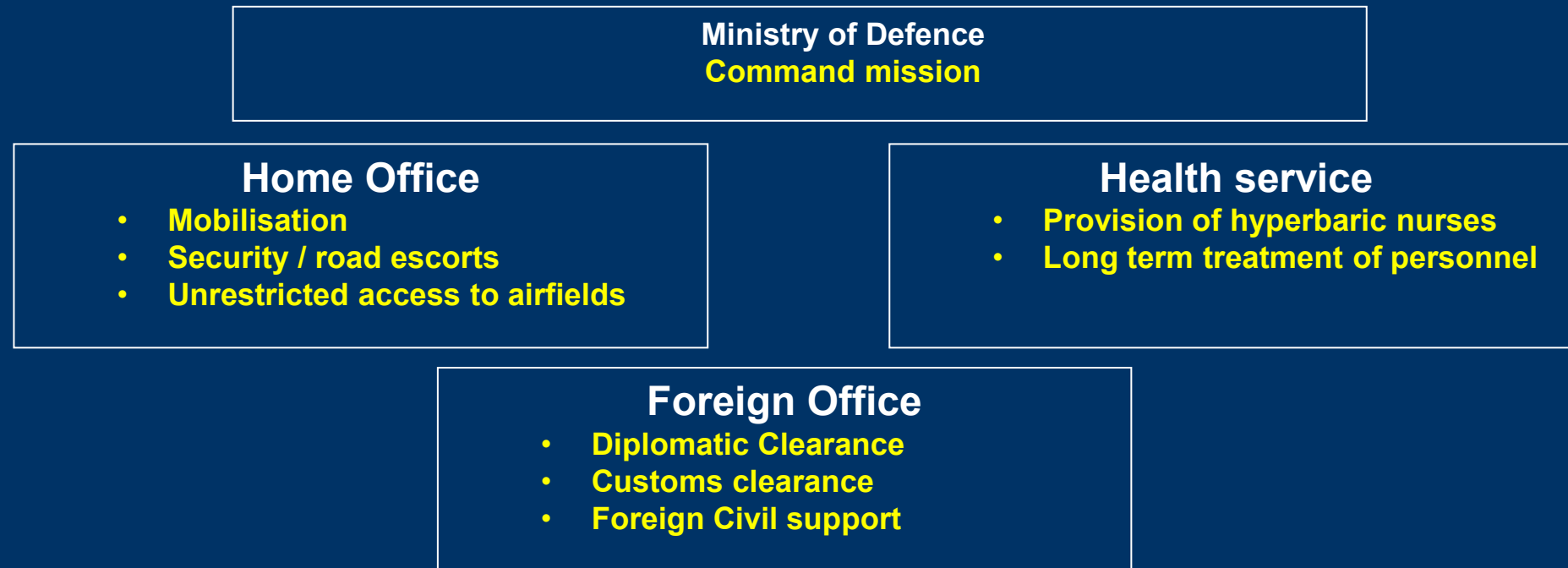
First  
Rescuee Transfer  
from DISSUB



## RESCUE

# SMERAS Operation

- Requires cross Government engagement / cooperation
- Scenario UK SSN DISSUB in Mediterranean



← DELAYS TO DEPARTMENT RESPONSE WILL CHALLENGE TIME TO FIRST RESCUE →



# Assurance

- UK SMERAS is externally audited / assessed by industry experts
- Robust training plan for rescue assets
- Dynamic Minotaur March 2023
  - SMERAS Command and Control exercise
  - First SMERAS training under a Longstone umbrella
  -



# Final thoughts / observations

- For the UK submarine Escape and Rescue is more than just owning a rescue system.
  - Its all about time...
  - NSRS is only part of the solution
  - Requires cross government cooperation
  - International assistance is extremely likely
  - Directive / Operational orders – need to be exercised
  - You cannot keep it secret – Sky news may get there first