

News Release



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POLISH NAVY TAKES COMMAND OF SNMCMG1

On Thursday, 17 January 2013, the Polish Navy assumed command of Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 1. ORP 'Kontradmirał Xawery Czernicki' became the flagship of the Group and Cdr Piotr Sikora (Polish Navy) was appointed Commander SNMCMG1.

The official Change of Command Ceremony took place in Gdynia naval base, alongside the flagship ORP 'Kontradmirał Xawery Czernicki' with the participation of the crews of two other Mine Countermeasures vessels - FGS 'Weilheim' and ORP "Czajka". The Deputy Chief of Staff 'Operations' of the Allied Maritime Command, Rear-Admiral Jacques De Solms, Commander of Belgian Naval Component Rear-Admiral Michel Hofman and Polish Navy Commander-In-Chief Vice-Admiral Tomasz Mathea all attended the ceremony.

This is the second time in three years that NATO has entrusted the role of Commander of Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 1 to the Polish officer. The staff of the Group is composed of ten officers – one from Italy and nine from Poland.

In the first half of the year the SNMCMG1 will consist of the following ships:

- ORP 'Kontradmirał Xawery Czernicki' (Flagship - Poland);
- ORP 'Czajka' (Poland);
- BNS 'Belis' (Belgium);
- FGS 'Weilheim' (Germany);
- HNOMS 'Hinnoy' (Norway);
- HNLMS 'Urk' (The Netherlands).

SNMCMG1 (Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 1) provides a continuous Maritime Mine Countermeasures capability for operations in peacetime and periods of conflict. The force demonstrates the support of the contributing nations to the NATO alliance. SNMCM Groups are key assets in the NATO Response Force (NRF) and are able to fulfill a wide range of roles from humanitarian tasks to high intensity operations. They are able to deploy at short notice and are often the first assets to go into an operational theatre both enabling and making a significant contribution to subsequent naval operations. SNMCMG1 makes the sea a safer place for everyone. Among others, the Group will conduct Historical Ordnance Disposal operations to minimize the threat from old WWII mines for all those who use the sea for their benefit – fishermen, cargo ships, ferries and the like.

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