



# Submarine Service

## **Submarine Service**

The submarine service has a staff of 340 and operates 4 submarines and an auxiliary vessel. As far back as the 1960's, the decision was made to opt for diesel-electric submarines rather than for nuclear-powered boats. The former category are extremely well suited to their tasks, owing to their minimal noise level. In addition, the construction and running cost of diesel-electric boats are considerably lower.

Den Helder acts as home base for the submarine service, although the submarines also frequently operate from British ports.

The main tasks of the submarines consist of surveillance, indication and warning and support operations to national and/or international taskforces. Further tasks are proficiency training in antisubmarine warfare for frigates, helicopters and aircraft. The inherent characteristics make the submarine an ideal platform to operate unseen in hostile waters, where surface ships and aircraft can't operate due to enemy activities.

## **The Twin role of the auxiliary ship**

HNLMS Mercuur as the support ship for the Netherlands Submarine force, has proofed its worth. As the torpedo recovery vessel she enables the Dutch submarines to conduct open ocean torpedo firings through which firings are not limited to the restricted area's of torpedo firing ranges. The crew of the ship retrieves the launched torpedos from the water and prepares them for a next firing. The ship also acts as a target for torpedos launched by submarines. During these launches it is comforting to know that they aim below and not at the ship itself.

Further tasks for HNLMS Mercuur are fishery patrol and acting as trails platform.