

News Release



**Allied Maritime
Command Headquarters
Northwood**



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NATO WARSHIP DESTROYS PIRATE BOAT

As her deployment in the Somali Basin draws to a close, British warship HMS Montrose, operating as part of NATO's counter piracy operation, *Ocean Shield*, left a parting shot with Somali pirates.

During one of her dawn patrols off the Somali coast, HMS Montrose's Lynx helicopter spotted a pirate *whaler* anchored off a pirate known camp and it was quickly identified as the whaler from MV Zouflecar – which has been acting as a pirate 'mother ship' since it was taken by pirates on 3 November 2010.

With permission granted to destroy the pirate whaler, HMS Montrose's helicopter was launched, and as she hovered above, Royal Marine snipers fired and sank it with their M3M 50 calibre machine gun in full view of the pirate camp.

HMS Montrose's Commanding Officer, Commander Jonathan Lett Royal Navy said: "HMS Montrose has been patrolling off the Somali coast for some time and we know how the pirates operate. Our destruction of the whaler close to a known pirate camp has sent a message to the Somali Pirates, that NATO and other coalition forces are willing to take the fight to them in order to prevent them attacking merchant ships".

End text.

Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1)

Background Information:

NATO has contributed to the international counter piracy effort off the Horn of Africa since December 2008. The mission has expanded from escorting UN and World Food Programme Shipping under Operation Allied Provider and protecting merchant traffic in the Gulf of Aden under Operation Allied Protector. In addition to these activities and as part of the latest mission, Operation Ocean Shield, NATO is working with other international bodies to help develop capacity of countries in the region to tackle piracy on their own.

Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 is permanently assigned to NATO. It is a multi-national Naval Group that provides the NATO Alliance with the ability to quickly respond to crisis situations anywhere in the world. A capable, stand-alone task group and one of four standing maritime elements that form a flexible core around which NATO can build a larger force to meet a wide range of missions that will include non-combatant evacuations, consequence management, counter terrorism, crisis response, embargo operations, etc.

NATO Forces currently in Operation Ocean Shield:

HDMS ESBERN SNARE (Flagship) - Denmark
USS KAUFFMAN – United States of America
USS LABOON - United States of America
HMS MONTROSE – United Kingdom
RFA FORT VICTORIA – United Kingdom
ITS BERSAGLIERE – Italy
HNLMS AMSTERDAM - Netherlands

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