

News Release



**Allied Maritime
Command Headquarters
Northwood**



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First Bulgarian Officer to Receive NATO Counter Piracy Africa medal

London: At an operational medal parade on board the NATO flagship HNLMS De Ruyter, Lieutenant Commander Georgi Savov of the Bulgarian Armed forces became the first Bulgarian officer to receive the NATO Non Article Five Africa Medal for his participation in NATO's counter piracy mission, Operation Ocean Shield.

"I am particularly proud to present to you this medal for your great contribution to the staff of Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2) and to the success of the operation," said Commodore Michiel Hijmans during the short ceremony.

Lt Cdr Savov has been part of the SNMG2 staff since November 2010 as the Staff Planning Officer. In June he will return to his own ship where he is stationed as the Executive Officer.

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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 2 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 has announced its continuing commitment to counter-piracy by extending Operation Ocean Shield to December 2012.

Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2)

NATO Forces currently in Operation Ocean Shield:

HNLMS TROMP (Flagship) - Netherlands
HDMS ESBERN SNARE - Denmark
USS BAINBRIDGE - United States of America
USS HALYBURTON – Unites States of America
TCG GIRESUN – Turkey

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Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2)