



# NATO SHIPPING CENTRE NEWSLETTER

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NATO'S SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT WITH THE INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING COMMUNITY

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## Single NATO Maritime HQ enables NSC to take a broader approach

**Mediterranean expertise and network will not be lost as the NATO Shipping Centre assumes roles and responsibilities from MC Naples.**

At the end of March 2013, NATO's Maritime Command Naples will de-activate. According to Norwegian Commander Rune Andersen of the Northwood Maritime Command Transition Team, MC Naples' unique Mediterranean expertise will be preserved and NATO Shipping Centre (NSC) has already taken on the role as the single point of contact for the international shipping community.

Cdr Andersen credits Naples HQ with having a "thorough knowledge of all maritime issues in and around the Mediterranean, and a well developed network in the region". This includes their vast experience with industry through Operation Active Endeavour, NATO's Mediterranean counter-terrorism mission. "That network is something we want to continue, and for the NSC, developing this further is an important task" he says.

The situation is straightforward: Maritime Command HQs will be reduced from two to one. The new MARCOM Northwood will be NATO's new single Maritime HQ, reporting directly to SHAPE, the strategic command centre in Brussels. These changes will take place during the next few months.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of Dec 2012 there was a NATO-wide transition day when the Maritime Command at Northwood assumed its formal authority. For the NSC this means taking over the responsibility for [NCAGS](#) in the Mediterranean Sea. While counter piracy with Operation Ocean Shield remains an important task, Cdr Andersen envisions NSC and the new Maritime Command at Northwood take a more comprehensive view at, "a wider set of Maritime issues and threats to international shipping." Accordingly, the focus will broaden as NSC continue to provide guidance and advice to the international shipping community.



## Focus on the Mediterranean Sea

With the handover of responsibility for NCAGS in the Mediterranean Sea, NATO Shipping Centre handles all shipping related issues. A part of Operation Active Endeavour, our mission is deter, defend, disrupt and protect against terrorism in the region.

To support our task the NSC has directed its focus to the Mediterranean Sea and will in the near future launch a set of new web based products, which will help us clearly communicate our guidance and advice in the region.



## **NATO Warship HDMS IVER HUITFELDT Frees Danish Ship After Pirate Attack**

In the night between 15 and 16 December, the Danish M/V Torm KRISTINA was sailing to Muscat (Oman) in order to perform a quick logistical port visit, when she was approached by 2 suspected pirate skiffs. The crew quickly assembled in the citadel and sent a mayday message out. Meanwhile the mayday message was passed to the

Commander of the NATO counter piracy task force, Rear Admiral Antonio Natale. He tasked one of the NATO warships HDMS Iver Huitfeldt, which was in Muscat for a port visit and therefore only 90 miles away, to proceed to the MV Torm Kristina and assist her.

Vice Admiral Christian Canova, Deputy Commander at Allied Maritime Command said, *“Despite the winter monsoon which generates bad sea states, this incident demonstrates the pirates are still active in the region.”*

By the time the NATO warship arrived on the scene three hours later, the pirates had left the Torm Kristina. It is believed that they saw the warship coming towards them and realised they had no realistic possibility of taking control of the Torm Kristina.

*“When Best Management Practices such as citadels are in effect on merchant vessels, we are able to react quickly and deter pirate actions”,* says the Vice Admiral.

In this incident a boarding party from the Iver Huitfeldt boarded the Torm Kristina, searched the ship to ensure that no pirates were still on board and once this was established they freed the crew from the citadel.

*“Once again, NATO warships have proved their ability to react and to use their speed and capabilities to deter and disrupt piracy and to free innocent merchant sailors. This incident shows that we cannot be complacent”,* concludes Vice Admiral Christian Canov.

Download and read the full press release from the [HQ MARCOM webpage](#)



## **Piracy update: North-eastern Monsoon is almost here, stay alert**

Sea states have been favourable to piracy over recent weeks. They are expected to become more marginal in the coming weeks with the onset of the Northeast monsoon. However, small boats will still be able to operate.

Historically both December and January are months with higher than average attacks on merchant vessels and we therefore urge vessels to stay vigilant. Any areas of concern will be posted to our Pirate Attack Group (PAG) map. The PAG map is available on our web page - <http://www.shipping.nato.int/>



### **Announcing our support for Interim Security Guidelines for Gulf of Guinea**

Piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea region is an established criminal activity and is of increasing concern to the maritime sector. With recent attacks becoming more widespread and violent, industry has now identified an urgent need to issue these Guidelines and NATO Shipping Centre is officially in support of this document which will be published on our web page.

Although piracy in the Gulf of Guinea region in many ways differs from that of Somalia based piracy, large sections of the Best Management Practices already developed by industry to help protect against Somalia based piracy are also valid in the Gulf of Guinea region. Consequently, the interim guidelines aim to bridge the gap between the advice currently found in BMP4 and the prevailing situation in the region. The guidelines have been developed by BIMCO, ISC, INTERCARGO and INTERTANKO.



### **Merry Christmas**

The holidays are approaching and most people will have some deserved time off. We in the NATO Shipping Centre however will not and together with the forces at sea, keep a vigilant eye on both incidents in the High Risk Area and the Mediterranean Sea. Any suspicious activity will be notified via our alert RSS feed and updated on our PAG map. If you see anything suspicious please do not hesitate to get in touch with us, we will be here throughout the

holiday period.

From us in the Shipping Centre - Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

*Stay vigilant, stay safe*

**Cdr sg Stein Olav Hagalid**  
**Branch Head**  
**NATO Shipping Centre**

*The NATO Shipping Centre (NSC) is the link between NATO naval forces and the merchant shipping community. Permanently manned, the NSC is also the primary advisor to merchant shipping regarding potential risks and possible interference with maritime operations. In addition to our current missions, the NSC supports NATO, national and multinational Naval Cooperation and Guidance for Shipping (NCAGS) operations and exercises. The NSC is part of the Allied Maritime Command Headquarters Northwood in the UK.*

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