

# News Release



**Allied Maritime  
Command Headquarters  
Northwood**



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## **NATO Warship Rescues Crew From Armed Pirates**

Over the weekend NATO flagship HNLMS Tromp rescued the crew from a dhow that had previously been hijacked by armed pirates off the coast of Somalia. On Saturday, Netherlands warship HNLMS Tromp spotted the pirated dhow heading for a known pirate camp and as the warship closed to investigate, her boarding team was fired upon. Acting in self defence, the crew from HNLMS Tromp returned fire. Ten pirates tried to escape in a skiff, but were quickly captured, and five were wounded and subsequently received medical care on board the Dutch warship.

When a boarding team from HNLMS Tromp then went to the dhow to assist the innocent crew, they also found 2 fatally wounded pirates on board. No NATO personnel or crew from the dhow were injured during the incident. At the same time, a previously pirated merchant vessel - MV Albedo, lifted anchor and steamed straight for the NATO flagship. After some well-aimed warning shots across her bow, Albedo returned to her anchorage. HNLMS Tromp then escorted the freed dhow and crew to safer waters.

Speaking about NATO's counter piracy operations off Somalia, Commodore Hijmans, the sea commander of the NATO Task Force said "As the weather off the Somali coast continues to improve, we know that Pirate Action Groups, (known as PAGs), will start to leave the beaches to hunt down innocent merchant ships. By conducting this counter piracy operation at sea, but close to shore, NATO has deprived these pirates a 'safe haven' in which to operate. We recognise that dealing with armed pirates is always unpredictable, and of course we have to be very careful to protect innocent hostages. We had to be ready to react quickly and effectively and this is what we have done".

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**Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2)**

## **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.

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)