

# News Release



## Headquarters Allied Maritime Command Northwood



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### **NATO WARSHIPS MEET FOR COUNTER PIRACY MISSION HANDOVER**

Whilst NATO warships continue to patrol in the Gulf of Aden in the counter piracy mission, Operation Ocean Shield, the two flagships from Standing NATO Maritime Groups 1 (SNMG1) and 2 (SNMG2) met in Djibouti for an operational handover. Since the 30<sup>th</sup> of June Commodore Michiel Hijmans (Royal Netherlands Navy) has been in charge of the NATO counter piracy Task Force and today he passed this command to Commodore Christian Rune (Royal Danish Navy).

On completion of the handover, Commodore Hijmans said: "Trying to locate and identify a small pirate skiff amongst large numbers of small craft conducting their legitimate business in one of the world busiest shipping lanes is a real challenge. It is a careful balancing act of concentrating our resources where they are most needed whilst providing protection and reassurance elsewhere and I am very confident that SNMG1, under the command of Commodore Rune, is up to the task. By rotating the groups, NATO demonstrates its commitment towards counter piracy operations."

Upon assuming command of Operation Ocean Shield, Commodore Rune said: "My staff and I will do our utmost to keep up the good work done by Commodore Hijmans and SNMG2. It is an honourable task to contribute to the creation of a safer environment for all in this area. My staff and I are eager to start the work and establish good relationships with our counterparts in the region.

*Ends*

#### **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 (SNMG1)

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

NATO Task Forces currently in Operation Ocean Shield:

HDMS ESBERN SNARE (Flagship) - Denmark  
HNLMS DE ZEVEN PROVINCIEËN – The Netherlands  
USS KAUFFMAN – United States of America

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Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1)