



NEWS RELEASE

**Allied Maritime
Command Headquarters
Northwood**



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Future Commander SNMG2 visits Training Centre in Souda Bay

During a short port visit by HNLMS De Zeven Provinciën in Souda Bay, Commodore Michiel Hijmans RNLN, the designate Commander of NATO's Standing Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2), visited the NATO Maritime Interdiction Operations Training Centre (NMIOTC). He was met by the Commanding Officer Commodore Athanasios Makris HN and was given a tour of the Training Centre.

At the end of the visit Commodore Hijmans said: "In preparation of the upcoming task as SNMG2 Commander in Operation Ocean Shield and Operation Active Endeavour, this visit was a great opportunity to meet with the Commanding Officer of NMIOTC and make future plans for the training of SNMG2 units".

The NMIOTC conducts combined training for NATO, Partnership for Peace and Mediterranean Dialogue forces to execute surface, sub-surface, aerial surveillance and special operations activities in support of Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO).

A Maritime Interdiction Operation encompasses seaborne enforcement measures to intercept the movement of certain types of designated items in or out of a nation or specific area. MIO are normally restricted to the interception and, if necessary, boarding of vessels to verify, redirect or impound their cargoes in support of the enforcement of economical or military sanctions.

From the 30th of June HNLMS De Zeven Provinciën is the flag ship of Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2). An international staff on board will lead the NATO Naval Force.

Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2)

Notes to editors

1. 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 to 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 offering countries in the region, upon their request, to help develop their own capacity to combat piracy. This complements the existing international efforts as coordinated with the Contact Group on Piracy off the coast of Somalia (CGPCS).
2. NATO earlier this year announced its commitment to counter piracy by extending Operation Ocean Shield to December 2012.
3. The NATO Task Force currently consists of 5 ships from Standing NATO Maritime Group 2. These are:
 - HMS CHATHAM (Flagship) – UK
 - USS COLE – US
 - TCG GELIBOLU – Turkey

Media Inquiries only to:

Public Affairs Officer

+44 (0)1923 956763

+44 (0) 7747 008508

<mailto:pio@manw.nato.int>