

NAVY NEWS WEEK 24-2

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Arab coalition destroys Houthi boats threatening oil tanker in Red Sea

UAE forces destroyed the two boats that were targeting a commercial oil tanker.

DUBAI: The Arab coalition destroyed two Houthi boats threatening an oil tanker in the Red Sea on Wednesday, UAE state-news agency WAM reported. UAE coalition forces destroyed the two boats that were targeting a commercial oil tanker, while two other Houthi boats escaped the report added. No specific details were given on the tanker, or if it had been damaged. Last month, a Saudi oil tanker was hit off Yemen's main port city of Hodeidah, suffering limited damage, in what coalition forces said was an attack by the Houthis, without identifying the type of weapon used in the assault. The Houthis said they had targeted a coalition warship.

Source: Arab news

As Pirates Ride Roughshod over Nigerian Waters

May 25, 2018 3:58 am



A ship in Nigerian waters

Eromosele Abiodun highlights the recent attacks on ships berthing at the Lagos Ports Complex and calls on government agencies responsible for tackling the ugly menace to sit up

At the quarterly stakeholders meeting organised by the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) in Lagos last week, an official of one of the terminal operators raised the alarm that they

have witnessed seven attacks in the last one month. The official, who pleaded with the government to tackle the menace head-on, said the company had to employ the service of private security to guard its ships. The situation is even worst in the Niger Delta axis. Last month, a terminal operator had complained to official of the NPA at a similar forum that his company was going out of business following increased attacks on vessels calling at his terminal. The official gave a gripping example of how one of its ships was attacked, and the captain and the crew locked themselves in the engine room. According to him, after the attackers had left the scene, the ship drifted and collided with an oil tanker vessel, causing irreparable damage to the ship. Also last week, the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Mr. Abubakar Malami, called on stakeholders in the maritime sector to develop a strategy to deal with the challenges within the permissible scope of security agencies to improve on maritime security. The minister made the call in a presentation tagged, "**Armed Guards Aboard Merchant Vessels in Nigeria -Legal or Illegal,**" at the 3th Edition of Lagos International Maritime Week in Lagos. Malami who was represented by the Special Assistant to the President on Financial Crimes, Mr. Abiodun Aikomo said maritime security has become an important requirement for merchants' vessels over the last decade due to the increasing threats from pirates across the world. He stressed that the issue of maritime security in the Nigerian territorial waters should be taken seriously. According to him, "Human beings have the responsible for self-preservation of their life and limbs and by extension, private properties and investments. As to the legality and illegality of armed guards on merchant vessels in Nigeria, the debate should no longer be focused on whether armed guards should be employed. *"Rather, how they can effectively, legally and safely be engaged with emphasis on accreditation and accountability. In this regard, the United Kingdom and Norway have provided regulations on the use of private guards on-board."* He added: *"The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) has also announced its change of stance on armed guards. Even though Nigerian-flagged vessels cannot make use of armed private guards as the law stands today. The reality is that there must be a dynamic strategy of dealing with security challenges facing merchant vessels in Nigerian waters."* He said that it could be necessary to amend the relevant laws in long term, adding that there was need for stakeholders to develop a strategy within the scope of power of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) in collaboration with other sister agencies.

IMB Report

Recently, the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) released a report naming Nigeria as one of the hotspots for sea piracy. The IMB in the report said: *"Of the 27 seafarers kidnapped worldwide for ransom between January and March 2017, 63 per cent were in the Gulf of Guinea. Nigeria is the main kidnap hotspot with 17 crew taken in three separate incidents, up from 14 in the same period in 2016. "All three vessels – a general cargo ship, a tanker and a bulk carrier were attacked while*

underway 30-60 nautical miles off the Bayelsa coast. Three more ships were fired upon at up to 110 nautical miles from land, and many other attacks are believed to go unreported.” Specifically, Director of IMB, Pottengal Mukundan, said: “The Gulf of Guinea is a major area of concern, consistently dangerous for seafarers, and signs of kidnappings increasing. IMB has worked closely with the response agencies in the region including the Nigerian Navy, which has provided valuable support, but more needs to be done to crack down on the area’s armed gangs. We urge vessels to report all incidents so that the true level of piracy activity can be assessed.” IMB said guns were used in 18 of the incidents and vessels were underway in 17 of the 20 reported attacks. IMB further stated that 39 of the 49 crew members kidnapped globally occurred off Nigerian waters in seven separate incidents. Other crew kidnappings in 2017 have been reported 60 nautical miles off the coast of Nigeria. “In total, 92 vessels were boarded, 13 were fired upon, there were 11 attempted attacks and five vessels were hijacked in the first nine months of 2017,” it stated. The flagship global report noted that, while piracy rates were down compared to the same period in 2016, there is continuing concern over attacks in the Gulf of Guinea and in South East Asia.

Who’s Responsibility?

Since the report was released, a number of attacks have been recorded showing that government agencies responsible for the monitoring and foiling of attacks are clearly failing in their responsibility. Put simply, Section 22 (P) of the NIMASA Act provides opportunity for the agency to provide maritime security. The obvious question then will be why the agency is not doing what is necessary to put an end to piracy in Nigerian waters. For those who don’t know, the NIMASA only last year awarded a surveillance contract worth billions of naira, a move that was intended to check rising cases of piracy and other vices in Nigerian waters. This has not happened and no one seems to care. Late last year, the United States of America, through its Maritime Administration, warned ships to be wary when approaching Nigerian waters. “Two incidents have been reported in the Gulf of Guinea in the past six days. The first reportedly occurred south of Port Harcourt, Nigeria at 0600 GMT on October 21, 2017. The second reportedly occurred in the vicinity of 03-35.50N 006-49.20E at 1905 GMT on October 25, 2017; both incidents have been confirmed,” it said in a report. “The nature of the first incident was piracy and kidnapping; the nature of the second incident was piracy,” it noted. Quoting the latest quarterly report from the IMB, the US Maritime Administration stated that “the latest quarterly report from the International Maritime Bureau notes that a total of 20 reports of attacks against all vessel types were received from Nigeria, 16 of which occurred off the coast of Brass, Bonny and Bayelsa. In general, all waters in and off Nigeria remain risky, despite intervention in some cases by the Nigerian Navy. We advise vessels to be vigilant,” it concluded. The US advisory report to ship masters and owners further warned that ship transiting Nigerian waters to be cautious and seek further information, even as it stated that the alert subsists until November 2, 2017.

NPA Takes Action

Worried about the attacks on vessels berthed at the Lagos Ports Complex (LPC), the management of the Nigerian Ports Authority announced that it has outlined strategies to counter such attacks. The Managing Director of the NPA, Ms. Hadiza Bala-Usman who disclosed this at a quarterly stakeholders meeting in Lagos, admitted that there are challenges in the operations of the ports stressing however, that they are being looked into. Usman who was represented by the Executive Director, Marine and Operations, Mr. Sekonte Davis said by the time some of the strategies are put in place, the NPA would be able to point fingers at stakeholders perceived to be responsible for such attacks. This is just as stakeholders accused foreign shipping companies operating in Nigeria of contravening federal government directive on holding bays for their empty containers. They accused the foreign shipping lines of deliberately not having holding bays for their empty containers in order to defraud the nation’s economy. Davis disclosed that more patrol boats will be purchased to enhance port waterfront patrols. The NPA boss however advised the management of ENL terminal, one of the operators that have been attacked seven times in the last one month, to look into their internal system adding that there could be sabotage from within. According to him, “ENL should look within and see if there is sabotage because the mode of these attacks suggests that there is an insider that gives out information to these criminals. ENL should also increase its operational vehicle patrols as this could help to detect and forestall attacks at the berths. Presently we are not pointing fingers, we are discussing together, we are looking at the operations, and we are suspecting that there could be sabotage inside some of these terminals.” Usman explained that NPA has also commenced discussions with the port Police Command with a view to strengthening waterfront security at the ports.

Work in Progress

Responding to queries about the security situation in Nigerian waters over the weekend, the Director General of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Dr. Dakuku Peterside stated that security in the Nigerian Maritime domain is a work in progress that requires the commitment of all stakeholders to ensure optimum safety of all investments in the sector. Peterside stated that the agency is taking the lead on the issue of maritime safety in the entire West and Central African sub-region noting that safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea has a direct impact on the Nigerian economy. The NIMASA boss noted that there are a lot of factors that contribute to the cost of products coming into the country through the seas, which makes it very important to tackle insecurity in the waterways. According to him, “We must ensure the security of the Gulf of Guinea because Nigeria is not isolated from whatever happens in the region which may lead to negative economic impact, or increase in the cost of insurance or war premium insurance and ultimately lead to high cost of goods and services which will be borne by the consumer of the goods and services.” While noting that 65 per cent of cargo heading to the region ends up in Nigeria, Peterside who is also the current chairman of the Association of African

Maritime Administrations (AAMA), said that securing the nation's territorial waters is a work in progress that requires the commitment of all stakeholders and neighbouring countries, noting that the management of NIMASA has recognised this fact and is implementing international regulatory instruments in collaboration with various countries in the region to checkmate criminal activities. In his words, *"No maritime crime occurs within a jurisdiction alone. Very often the trend is that maritime crime starts from one jurisdiction and ends in another. The only way we can tackle maritime crime is all of us working together and there have been several regional initiatives in that respect to tackle maritime crime. Apart from the ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategy, you have the Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy, you have the Gulf of Guinea Commission dealing with the same thing there are several sub-regional and regional initiatives to tackle maritime insecurity so I see a lot of potentials in regional collaboration and integration."* He said that on the home front the Agencies of the government especially in the Transport sector has seen collaboration as the way to go and that this has occasioned the renewal of the MoU between NIMASA and the Nigerian Navy as well as partnership with other sister parastatals. Peterside also noted that the Agency's goal in the implementation of the International Ships and Ports Facility Security (ISPS) Code is 100% implementation level stating that the Agency is still not resting on its laurels after achieving over 90% implementation level within a short period of being appointed the Designated Authority of the implementation of the code.

Safeguarding Vessels

Meanwhile, Nigeria will spend \$186m to combat piracy in a bid to safeguard its waters and vessels moving in and out of the country. Transport minister, Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi revealed this in a speech at Nor-Shipping's inaugural Africa Podium in Oslo, Norway recently. The Fund is meant to acquire three new ready-for-war ships, three aircrafts, 12 vessels and 20 amphibious vehicles to combat the menace of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. Amaechi allayed potential investors' fears of growing security concerns in Nigeria's seaway amid the rise in attacks by pirates. He revealed that over the next six months, the Nigerian government would give additional training to its navy, while providing technical and further support to patrol vessels in the region. *"Rest assured, in six months you will no longer be harassed in our waters,"* he told delegates. Amaechi said Piracy is not the only issue currently impacting the progress of the maritime sector in Nigeria. While admitting that eradicating this growing issue was the main priority, Amaechi was keen to point out that Nigeria was also making significant strides in its bid to improve its creaking transport infrastructure. *"All you hear about is efforts to stamp out corruption, but we are working extremely hard to develop transport infrastructure,"* he added. Whether this be roads or railways, the development of ports, the dredging of inland waterways and coastal regions, he said there was huge investment and resources earmarked for projects now and in the future.

Source: <https://www.thisdaylive.com>

EU NAVFOR Holds Anti-Piracy Forum in Kenya

24 May 2018 08.58am



Image from the EU NAVFOR anti-piracy joint exercise with Atalanta Warship ITS Carabiniere and French Warship FS Floreal. Image courtesy of EU NAVFOR.

EU NAVFOR recently brought together EU and regional partners to focus on counter piracy and maritime security in efforts to build a more secure maritime environment.

A forum was held by the organization on their

flagship vessel, the **ITS Carlo Margottini**, after it made an operational stop in the port of Mombasa, Kenya after a period of counter-piracy patrolling along the coast of Somalia. During the forum, EU NAVFOR Force Commander, Rear Admiral Simone Malvagna, commented: *"More security and awareness of the maritime situation throughout the region is essential to overcome the barriers of illegality and being able to use the precious resources of the Blue Economy. "In November this year we will see an International Conference on the Blue Economy here in Kenya."* The results of two of the organization's operations, Operation Atalanta and the EU Critical Maritime Route Indian Ocean Project (EU CRIMARIO), were presented at the forum to an audience of government officials — including EU Deputy Ambassador Mr. Bruno Pozzi of the EU Delegation in Kenya, the Italian Deputy Ambassador Dr. Angela Loi, and members of Defence and Foreign Relations Committee of the Kenyan Parliament. EU CRIMARIO aims to strengthen maritime safety and security in the Indian Ocean region by supporting coastal countries through a web-based information sharing tool, the Indian Ocean Regional Information Sharing and Incident Management (OIRISIM) network — enabling collaboration between regional partners to increase maritime situational awareness. During the visit to the port of Mombasa the ITS Carlo Margottini carried out a range of humanitarian initiatives to support the civilian population, donating food and medicine to local health and welfare infrastructure. The

Margottini also provided aid to the 'Mahali Pa Usalama' Rescue Centre, an infant rehabilitation centre for victims of sexual violence. At the end of the visit the Margottini set sail to continue her focus on freedom of navigation to international merchant vessels and the deterrence of piracy in the Indian Ocean region. Piracy has been increasingly in the maritime industry's focus in recent years, as reports of piracy incidents continue to rise. [According to the annual State of Piracy report released by One Earth Future \(OEF\)'s Oceans Beyond Piracy, the number of piracy incidents off the coast of East Africa double in 2017 compared to 2016.](#) The report stated that there were 54 cases of reported piracy in the East Africa region, with 306 seafarers being experiencing a boarding or failed attack from pirates. In West Africa the total number incidents hit 97 in 2017, with 317 seafarers exposed to kidnapping incidents, and 880 seafarers experience a boarding or failed attack.

Source: <https://www.porttechnology.org>

Navy Commissions Littoral Combat Ship *Manchester*

PORTSMOUTH, N.H. — The littoral combat ship (LCS) **USS *Manchester*** was commissioned as the Navy's newest surface combatant vessel during a ceremony May 26. The vessel is the Navy's second ship to be named for the city of Manchester, New Hampshire. *"The faces of the Sailors that ran to man this ship are the faces that I've seen day after day for the last 22 months as we worked to bring this ship to life,"* Navy Cmdr. Emily Basset, Manchester's commanding officer and a Seattle native, said during the commissioning ceremony. Basset added, *"They took the city of Manchester's Latin motto, 'Labor Vincit' — work conquers — and they have personified the spirit of our namesake city. Each Sailor is highly trained and must do the duties that three or four would do on another ship. These Sailors are reasons to make us all proud."* The ship's sponsor, Sen. Jeanne Shaheen representing New Hampshire, gave the traditional order to, *"Man this ship and bring her to life,"* signaling the sailors to embark and officially begin the vessel's service as a Navy ship. For the ship's crew, the day was the culmination of months' worth of work to get the **Manchester** prepared for commissioning. Having the commissioning in the ship's namesake state was a special opportunity for some of Manchester's Sailors. *"It's really amazing to be on a ship named for [a city in] my home state,"* said Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Laryssa Noyes, an information systems technician from Derry, New Hampshire. *"It's really quite an honor that I'm here for this. It's awesome because my family got to be here and see what I do on a daily basis."* After the ceremony, the ship will transit to join Littoral Combat Ship Squadron 1 and eight other littoral combat ships currently homeported at Naval Base San Diego. **Manchester** is the 12th LCS and the seventh of the Independence variant.



The crew of the littoral combat ship USS Manchester man the rails during the ship's commissioning ceremony in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, May 26. Manchester is the 12th littoral combat ship to enter the fleet and the seventh of the Independence variant.

(U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Jacob I. Allison)

Navy eyes unmanned underwater vehicle (UUV) weapons payloads to stop or disable 160-foot ships at sea

May 24, 2018

By [John Keller](#) Editor



NEWPORT, R.I. — U.S. Navy [unmanned underwater vehicle \(UUV\)](#) experts are surveying industry for enabling technologies for future UUVs to stop or disable large ocean-going vessels as long as 160 feet. Experts are interested in lethal or non-lethal UUV [weapons payloads](#), as well as ways to speed UUVs accurately to their targets. Officials of the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Newport (NUWC DIVNPT) in Newport, R.I., issued a request for information this week (N66604-18-R-2397) for explosive or non-explosive technologies that could enable a UUV to stop or disable boats and ships shorter than 50 meters long (164 feet). For reference, a 50-meter vessel is roughly as long as a medium-sized luxury yacht, or a U.S. Coast Guard Sentinel-class fast-response cutter. This RFI is to gather information on best

practices, technology solutions, and cost estimates for UUV modular lethal or non-lethal weapons payloads and enhancements. The Navy's request for information is to help experts understand market availability, technical characteristics, cost, and functionality of information technology (IT) tools, applications, or products for enabling UUVs to stop or disable 50-meter vessels, and to provide the Navy with an asymmetrical warfare advantage during UUV operations in complex, shallow-water, and cluttered littoral environments. The idea is to detect, understand, and react to threats in this environment that pose significant risk to the warfighter and other military assets. Officials of the Naval Surface Warfare Center Indian Head EOD Technology Division (NSWCIEODTD) in Indian Head, Md., also will use information provided from industry. The project has two objectives: to investigate UUV effector payloads for UUVs can stop or disable maritime vessels of less than 50 meters in length; and investigate technologies to give UUVs the speed and navigational precision to deliver effector payloads to stop or disable ocean vessels. The first objective is to investigate UUV effector payloads that can be integrated into, deployed from or attached to a UUV to help it stop or disable maritime vessels shorter than 50 meters. The means of disablement may be kinetic or non-kinetic and the effect may be lethal or non-lethal. The effector payload must be able to be transported and deployed from an UUV or be part of the UUV itself. Navy researchers want the maximum effect from the smallest possible UUV. The second objective is to investigate commercial or developmental UUV capability enhancements that will result in increased UUV speed and positional and placement accuracy to deliver the effector payload. Industry white papers may address one or both objectives. **Source:** <https://www.militaryaerospace.com>

'You're being reported': Royal Navy chases away Spanish military's patrol boat from Gibraltar

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HMS Sabre on patrol © Pablo Blazquez Dominguez/Getty Images

A British Royal Navy vessel chased away a Spanish military ship from its territorial waters off Gibraltar. With Brexit on the horizon tensions are mounting over 'the

Rock's' sovereignty. The incident happened at the weekend after a Spanish Navy Serviola-class patrol boat first entered British waters around the headland on Saturday, May 19. The incursion was spotted and reported on Twitter by Gibraltar-based naval researcher Michael Sanchez. In response, the Royal Navy dispatched **HMS Sabre**, a fast patrol boat assigned to the service's Gibraltar Squadron, and a Royal Navy RHIB, a small inflatable vessel, which chased away the Spanish ship, named as '**Vigia**.' A statement from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) later said that the vessel has been expelled without incident. *"The Royal Navy challenges all incursions into British Gibraltar Territorial Waters, and did so on this occasion. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office backs this up by making formal diplomatic protests to the Spanish government,"* an FCO spokesperson said. The FCO added that it would be backing up the action by *"making formal diplomatic protests to the Spanish government."* During audio of the incident, obtained by British tabloid The Sun, the Royal Navy crew can be heard issuing sovereignty warnings to the Serviola, switching to Spanish to say the vessel was *"sailing imprudently and endangering traffic"*. In English the crew member says: *"You are violating international regulations and are in British Territorial waters. Your actions are being reported to higher authorities."* The incursion is one of several by Spanish naval vessels reported in recent months. A British Overseas Territory since 1704, the territory's 30,000 citizens voted overwhelmingly to stay in the European Union during the 2016 referendum, with the result coming in at 95.9% to remain. Since the vote, as with Northern Ireland, questions have arisen as to what will happen with the territory's border once the UK exits the bloc in March 2019. The Spanish government had called for joint sovereignty over Gibraltar after the UK decided to leave the EU. Speaking on Spanish radio, Spain's Foreign Minister Alfonso Dastis said: *"It's a complete change of outlook that opens up new possibilities on Gibraltar not seen for a very long time. I hope the formula of co-sovereignty – to be clear, the Spanish flag on the Rock – is much closer than before."* However, Gibraltarians may beg to differ, with Gibraltar's Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia telling members of the US Congress last week that he will not cede an inch of its sovereignty as the Rock prepares to leave the EU. *"It remains to be seen whether Spain can find the political goodwill to move forward with solutions that do not impact on sovereignty. We welcome such solutions but we will not give an inch on sovereignty, jurisdiction and control. It is clearly not just about sovereignty but about the attributes of sovereignty as well,"* he said.

Source: <https://www.rt.com>

There is no doubt that the Spanish will continue infringing, especially now that the issue is in troubled waters due to the Brexit vote. Another long term problem not foreseen by short term visions of politicians (as for Northern Ireland)

Maritime Self-Defense Force submarine fires torpedo decoy by mistake

May 25, 2018

A submarine operated by Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force mistakenly launched a torpedo decoy off the Kii Peninsula in western Japan early Thursday. According to the Maritime Staff Office, no damage has been confirmed so far. The MSDF is searching for the decoy, while investigating the cause. The decoy was mistakenly launched during a drill by the Sekiryu submarine based at the MSDF's Kure base in Hiroshima Prefecture. The cylindrical device with a diameter of some 15 centimeters is about 1.6 meters long and weighs some 26 kilograms. The decoy is used to issue an acoustic signature that causes incoming torpedoes to misidentify the device as the submarine.

Source: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp>



An early morning arrival on the Clyde recently on a grey, still day was the **USS Farragut DDG 99**. She had been on exercise off Norway but originally came into European waters as part of the **USS Harry S Truman (CVN 75)** strike group.

Photo : Tommy Bryceland. SCOTLAND ©

Suspicious object on Navy ship at BAE Systems prompts bomb squad response

By : Jermaine Ong

A suspicious item discovered on a Navy ship Tuesday night prompted a major response from first responders, including a bomb squad, but the object turned out to be harmless. A worker told 10News the suspicious item was found at a dry dock area at the BAE Systems complex in the 2200 block of Belt Street. The object was apparently inside of the **USS Howard**, which was at the facility for repair. Authorities did not immediately disclose what the object was, but the discovery led to a massive response from the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department's bomb squad, Harbor Police, Homeland Security officials and a hazardous materials team. After a thorough inspection, the item was determined to be harmless and an all-clear was given for the ship and surrounding area. Authorities told 10News there have been some reported non-credible bomb scares at the same location in the last several weeks, but details on the previous threats were not provided. **Source: 10news**



The German Brandenburg class frigate **F 217 Bayern** has been one of the Nato SNMG2 ships operating in the Black Sea in the Romanian exercise Sea Shield. Ships from Britain and Turkey also took part.

photo : Raymond Wergan, Newton Ferrers.

Navy nabs 20 Vietnamese poachers off Palawan

By JOSEPH TRISTAN ROXAS, GMA News

The Philippine Navy has arrested at least 20 Vietnamese poachers off the waters of Mangsee Island in Palawan after 54 sharks and stingrays were found in their fishing vessels. A statement from Captain Cheryl Tindog, spokesperson of the Armed Forces of the Philippines' Western Command, said Navy vessel **PC 375** was conducting a maritime patrol off Mangsee Island on May 19 when it found two foreign fishing vessels. *"Philippine Navy vessel PC 375 was conducting maritime patrol in the waters off mangsee island on May 19, 2018 when it apprehended two foreign fishing vessels with 10 Vietnamese crew each who were poaching in the area. Found in their custody were 54 sharks and stingrays,"* Tindog said. Tindog said one vessel was registered as SBF34 SK Fishing Enterprises SBN BHD, while the other was named SBF18 Sakon Fishing Industries SBN BHD. Tindog said the poachers were later escorted to Puerto Prinsesa where they had a

medical check-up and were transferred to the custody of proper authorities. He added the Vietnamese nationals were turned over to the Palawan provincial prosecutor on Tuesday for inquest proceedings. — source: MDM, GMA News

Defence Minister welcomes first of new carrier-ready helicopter fleet

Defence Minister Guto Bebb has today announced the delivery of the first of a fleet of new helicopters designed for Royal Marine aircraft carrier operations.

Published 24 May 2018

From: [Ministry of Defence](#), [Defence Equipment and Support](#), and [Guto Bebb MP](#)



Defence Minister Guto Bebb has today announced the delivery of the first of a fleet of new helicopters designed for Royal Marine aircraft carrier operations. Crown copyright.

The helicopter, known as the Commando Merlin Mk4, has been upgraded to a faster and more powerful aircraft than its predecessor. It now sports a maritime grey coat, has a

folding main rotor and tail, upgraded flight controls and a tactical computer. The modifications are designed to ensure it can now operate from sea, and it will take off from ships including the UK's new 65,000-tonne aircraft carrier, **HMS Queen Elizabeth**. A total of 25 Commando Merlin aircraft will be delivered to the air wing of the Royal Marines - the Commando Helicopter Force (CHF) — who will use them to deliver troops and supplies from sea to land. Defence Minister Guto Bebb said: *This new version of the Merlin will provide an essential bridge between sea and land for our Marines operating from ships, including our brand-new aircraft carriers. This fleet will deliver troops and supplies to the centre of the action, be that a conflict zone or the site of a humanitarian disaster, as well as providing search and rescue cover. Flown from the Yeovil factory to now be homed here, this is another way defence is supporting the South West, where we spent over £5bn last year – more than any other region in the UK.* The Commando Merlin Mk4 aircraft, an upgrade from the Merlin Mk3 standard, are being delivered through a £388 million contract between the MOD's Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) and Leonardo Helicopters, supporting 175 skilled jobs at Leonardo in Yeovil, and a further 500 across the UK supply chain. Last year the MOD's highest spend per person in the UK was in the South West, where £920 was spent for each member of the population – totalling around £5,079,000,000. Defence spending in the region also supported one in every 60 jobs there – the highest proportion of jobs support by MOD expenditure in the UK, totalling 33,500 jobs.

DE&S Director Helicopters Air Vice-Marshal Graham Russell said: *DE&S is proud to have delivered the first Merlin Mk4 to the Royal Navy. Today underscores that DE&S and their industrial partners are delivering. And delivering more with less, thanks to our effective change programme and fantastic staff. We look forward to all 25 aircraft being fully operational by 2023. DE&S will also ensure the Commando Merlin are supported with a full training and support solution, so they are always available to be deployed across the globe.*

Commando Merlin Mk4
Delivering Royal Marines from sea to shore

25 aircraft to be delivered in total

First entering service in summer 2018

£388m MOD contract with Leonardo Helicopters

User: **Commando Helicopter Force**

Based: **RNAS Yeovilton, South Somerset**

Labels: Folding main rotor, Folding tail rotor, Upgraded flight controls, Tactical computer

Defence Minister Guto Bebb has today announced the delivery of the first of a fleet of new helicopters designed for Royal Marine aircraft carrier operations. Crown copyright.

The delivery will allow air crews to familiarise themselves with the Commando Merlin before they enter service, expected in the summer. They have been acquired to replace the veteran Sea Kings. When not deployed on operations the helicopters will be based at RNAS Yeovilton, the home of

CHF since the unit was formed in 1997. CHF, known as the 'Junglies', have served in a commando support role in theatres of operations including Bosnia, Sierra Leone, Iraq and Afghanistan. It's the ability to fold the tail section – which has been completely rebuilt for the Mk4 - and the rotor heads which assist flying from Royal Navy carriers in particular. Colonel Lenny Brown RM, the Officer Commanding Commando Helicopter Force said: *Commando Helicopter Force provides aerial*

support to the Royal Marines, be they at sea, in an assault ship or in the sand and dust of Afghanistan. My air crews will soon begin training to fly the Commando Merlin from the Queen Elizabeth Class carriers, marking the start of a new era of Commando support operations. The news was trailed by Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson earlier today, at the [RUSI Sea Power Conference in London](#). Whilst there, he also announced that [all Type 23 frigates will be fitted with the Sea Ceptor air defence system](#) – starting with **HMS Argyll** as she is deployed to the Asia-Pacific to visit ports across the region.

Source: <https://www.gov.uk>

Isn't wonderful how politicians can create big stories out of small one, while forgetting that the number of ships able to carry them and Marines is shrinking.

Russia Will Not Disclose the Characteristics of the Nuclear Submarine-Drones "Poseidon"

[May 23, 2018](#)

Russia will not publicize the characteristics of the nuclear submarine-drones "**Poseidon**", which was reported by the Russian president in a message to the Federal Assembly, the head of the United Shipbuilding Corporation Alexei Rakhmanov told Interfax. *"In his message, the president only hinted at some features of such devices. And this is one of the cases when a wide publicity of the characteristics of the submarine is not supposed in principle,"* Rakhmanov said. In April, he said that the submarine-robot with a nuclear power plant is no longer a prototype. *"I can not say more than the president*



said, but it's not fantasies, not prototypes, and these are not cartoons. That's all I can say for today. These are real samples," Rakhmanov said. On March 1, the Russian head of state announced the creation of unmanned underwater vehicles in the Russian Federation capable of moving at a very deep depth and at an intercontinental range at a rate that is a multiple of the speed of submarines, the most advanced torpedoes and all types, even the fastest, surface ships. *"Unmanned underwater vehicles can be equipped with both conventional and nuclear munitions. This will allow them to hit a wide range of targets, including carrier groups, coastal fortifications and*

infrastructure," Putin said in his message.

Source: <http://www.maritimeherald.com>



U.S. Coast Guard WPC 1114 USCG **Heriberto Hernandez** departing from the USCG base in San Juan Puerto Rico

Photo : Wouter van der Veen ©

USCG Heriberto Hernandez is the 14th Sentinel-class cutter delivered to the United States Coast Guard. Like five of her sister ships, her initial assignment based her in San Juan, Puerto Rico The Coast Guard decided to design all its new cutters, even its smallest, to be able to accommodate mixed sex crews. The Sentinels, and the smaller Marine Protectors, have berthing areas of various sizes, to make this possible. A Sentinel's complement is 22, and they are armed with a 25 mm Bushmaster autocannon, that can operated remotely, and four crew-served fifty caliber Browning machine guns. The cutters are equipped with a sophisticated modern sensor suite, that can share data with other vessels. The Sentinel class is equipped with a stern launching ramp, that can deploy and retrieve the vessel's 7-meter high-speed jet-boat, even when the vessels are underway. Only a single crewmember is required to remain on deck to deploy or retrieve the jet-boat. **USCG**

Heriberto Hernandez was commissioned in her home port, San Juan, Puerto Rico, on October 16, 2015

Source: [Maasmond Maritime](#)

Pentagon Reportedly Admits UFO Encounter With US Navy

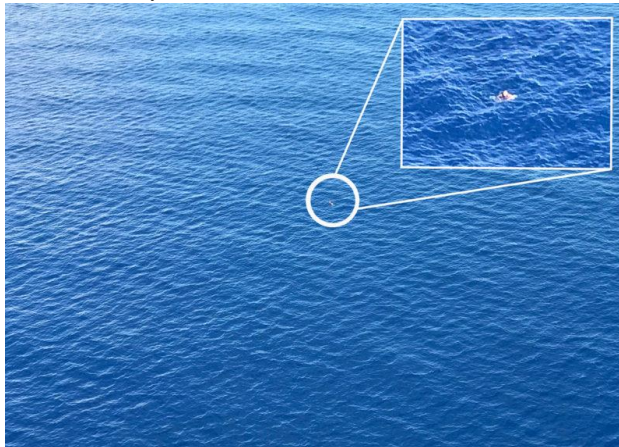
16:10 24.05.2018(updated 16:11 24.05.2018)

The US military has reportedly confirmed an encounter between its naval aircraft and a UFO, which occurred nearly 14 years ago. A 13-page report commissioned by the Pentagon reveals the details of a cat-and-mouse game between a UFO and a US strike carrier group in the Pacific, according to media reports. The [paper](#), which was obtained by KLAS-TV, describes an incident that occurred in November 2004 when aircraft carrier **USS Nimitz** and its escort vessels encountered an unidentified flying craft off the coast of California. Several months ago video footage allegedly recorded by one of the fighter jets presented during the Nimitz incident was uploaded on YouTube, showing what appears to be a UFO being chased by the aircraft. See the video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6rWOTrke0HY> The unidentified craft, designated in the report as "*Tic Tac*," was described as a 46-foot-long "solid white" object, "smooth with no edges." The report allegedly claimed that the unidentified craft resembled no known plane in the world and was capable of "advanced aerodynamic performance," with "advanced propulsion" and the "ability to cloak or become invisible," not to mention the ability to render "US radar based engagement capabilities ineffective." The UFO reportedly managed to evade the fighter jets, which attempted to intercept it, and was able to "operate unchallenged in close vicinity" to the carrier group.

Source: <https://sputniknews.com>

Man Rescued After Falling Overboard from Containership Off Port Everglades, Florida

June 7, 2018 by [Mike Schuler](#)



A 25-year-old man treads water 5 miles east of Port Everglades Wednesday, June 6, 2018. U.S. Coast Guard illustration courtesy of Air Station Miami

This guy is lucky to be alive...

The U.S. Coast Guard rescued a 25-year-old Filipino man from the water about 5 miles east of Port Everglades, Florida on Wednesday after the man apparently fell overboard from a containership. Rescued was Lorejei Moscoso, a crew member on board the Liberian-flagged containership, **Vega Sagittarius**. Moscoso was reported missing by fellow crew members after the ship moored in

Port Everglades at approximately 6:40 a.m. He was reported as last seen at approximately 5:30 a.m. Watchstanders at Coast Guard Sector Miami issued an urgent marine information broadcast, directed the launch of a Coast Guard Station Fort Lauderdale 45-foot Response Boat—Medium boatcrew and a Coast Guard Air Station Miami MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew to search. The helicopter crew located the missing crewmember and directed the boatcrew to his location. The boatcrew transferred the man to awaiting emergency medical services. It was not immediately clear if Moscoso had a flotation device with him in the water. Hereis another photo of the rescue:



U.S. Coast Guard Photo

Source: <http://gcaptain.com>

Kings Point Superintendent James Helis Accepts New Role at MARAD Headquarters

May 24, 2018 by [gCaptain](#)

The United States Maritime Administration on Thursday announced that Rear Admiral James Helis, Superintendent of the United States Merchant Marine Academy since 2012, has accepted a position at MARAD headquarters in Washington, D.C., where he will serve as Special Assistant to the Administrator. "During his six-year assignment as Superintendent, Helis

led the response to many complex issues including, financial and management issues which had threatened USMMA's accreditation," MARAD said in a statement. "Under his leadership, the Academy launched several major construction projects as part of its Capital Improvement Plan. Today, the Academy remains fully accredited and the student body's educational experience has been enhanced by much needed improvements to the facilities where Midshipmen learn, live, eat, and study."



Photo: U.S. Merchant Marine Academy

The Administration said Admiral Helis will continue lead USMMA while it conducts a

search for a new Superintendent. "During this transition period, it is our priority to find an exceptional person to lead the Academy into the future, while still maintaining a strong and effective organization," MARAD said. "We thank Admiral Helis for his service, and for his willingness to serve through the transition. A Change of Command ceremony is planned for later this summer," the statement concluded.

Source: <http://gcaptain.com>