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NATO MARCOM MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2018

Maritime Security Operations

NATO MARCOM continues its naval activity in the North Atlantic Region with Standing Naval Forces operating in the Baltic Sea, North Sea, Mediterranean, and Black Sea. For Operation Sea Guardian (OSG), NATO's Maritime Security Operation in the Mediterranean to establish Maritime Situational Awareness and counter terrorism, 79 warships from different NATO nations have provided support. For air support to OSG, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Turkey, France, and USA have provided 112 Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) flights over OSG patrol areas during the month of September, in addition to flights provided by NATO Airborne Early Warning Aircraft and helicopters. Furthermore, NATO submarines have provided support under national and NATO operational command. From the 5 - 21 September, FOCOPS 4 (Focused Operations) took place in the waters of the Central and Eastern Mediterranean. The Italian ITS Espero, Greek HS Mastrozis, Croatian HRV Vukovar, and British HMS Echo patrolled the areas assigned for this period under the leadership of Italian Commander Fiorentino, enhancing NATO's Maritime Situational Awareness and control of the maritime domain. A total of 468 merchant vessels were hailed during the period.

Standing Naval Maritime Groups

The high deployment of Russian warships in the Eastern Mediterranean continues, likely to support Russian operations in Syria, as well as for training and exercise purposes.

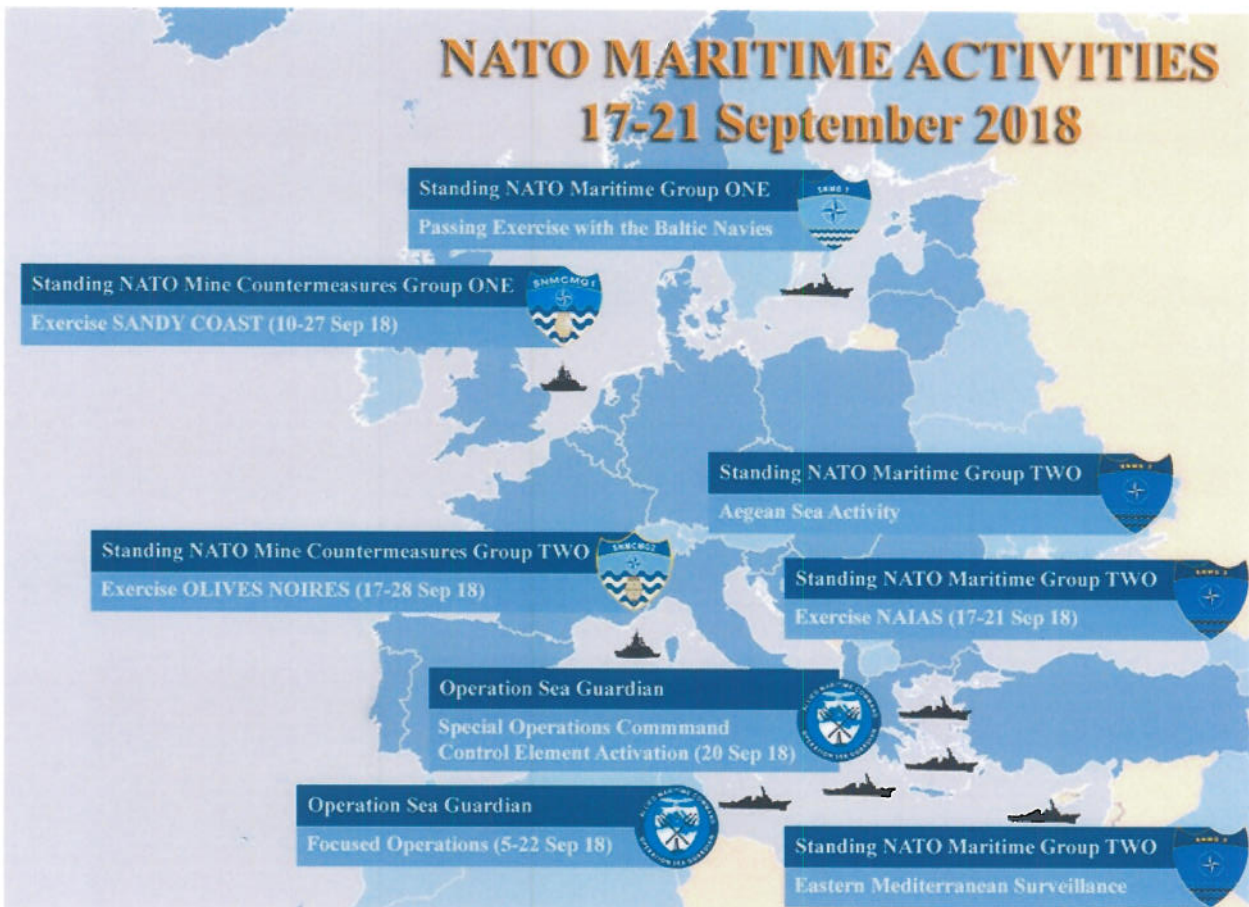
Standing Naval Maritime Group 1 (SNMG-1), formed by the HDMS Esbern Snare (flagship), the HNOMS Helge Ingstad and the Portuguese NRP Corte Real, sailed the Baltic Sea carrying out training activities and Maritime Situational Awareness tasks, including a PASSEX (opportunity training program) with the NATO Baltic States Navies and the Finnish Navy. SNMG-1 visited the ports of Turku, Tallin and Frederikshavn during this period.

Standing Naval Maritime Group 2 (SNMG-2) and its Tactical Unit 2 (TU 02), formed by the Dutch HNLMS De Ruyter (flagship), the Canadian HMCS Ville de Quebec, the Greek HS "Ellis" and the Spanish ESPS Cristobal Colon, continue patrolling the Eastern Mediterranean along with other NATO units under national command. They have participated in the exercise Naias led by the Greek Navy, and also Mavi Balina led by the Turkish Navy. SNMG-2 visited the ports of Souda Bay and Aksaz during this period.

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SNMG-2 TU 01 continues its deployment in the Aegean Sea, supporting the efforts of EU, Greece, and Turkey to control migration. The SNMG-2 TU 01 Commander leads his units from the German frigate FGS Lubeck with support from the Hellenic warships HS Polesmistis, HS Kasos and HS Mikonios, relieved by HS Kallistos, HS Smitzopoulos and HS Armatolos, and the Turkish warship TCG Kumikale, relieved by TCG Karsiyaka. The Albanian warship ALS Lissus also participated in the Aegean activity. In September, SNMG-1 TU 01 patrolled the areas assigned and intercepted 61 small boats coming from Turkey. The movements of these small boats are reported to local authorities for further actions.

Standing Naval Mine Counter Measures Group 1 (SNMCMG-1), led by the Belgian warship BNS Godetia and consisting of the Norwegian HNOMS Maaloey, Lithuanian LNS Kursis, Latvian LVNS Ruis, German FGS Hamburg, and Dutch HNLMS Makkum, completed the MCM exercise Sandy Coast in Belgian waters from 10 - 27 September, while also performing Maritime Situational Awareness tasks in the North Sea. SNMCMG-1 visited Rotterdam and Zeebrugge during this period.



Standing Naval Mine Counter Measures Group 2 (SNMCMG-2), comprised of German FGS Rhein (flagship), Italian ITS Termoli, French FS Orion, Turkish TCG Erdmeli, Greek HS Evropi and Spanish ESPS Turia, completed the MCM exercises Dynamic Move in La Spezia, Italy, and Olives Noires in Toulon, France.

Additional MARCOM Activities

NATO MARCOM conducted an internal Battle Staff training exercise called Dynamic Bonus 18-1, a synthetic operational exercise for MARCOM Staff to be trained on managing a major operation in the context of an Article 5 against the foreign invasion of Norway.

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Members of the MARCOM Staff also participated in the Naval Mine Warfare Exercise, Dynamic Move, in La Spezia, Italy.

Both exercises included Naval Cooperation and Guidance for Shipping (NCAGS) and Allied Worldwide Navigational Information System (AWNIS) measures, two NATO doctrines designed to enhance freedom of navigation and inform and advise military and merchant shipping on risks to safety and security of navigation.

NATO Shipping Centre (NSC) Updates

The NSC attended the INTERTANKO European panel in Bergen, Norway, supporting the shipping industry and providing information about NATO MARCOM activities.

The Allied Maritime Shipping Group (AMSG) held its annual meeting in the Northwood HQ. The AMSG, chaired by the NSC's Branch Head, is an opportunity for national subject matter experts on Naval Cooperation and Guidance for Shipping (NCAGS) and Allied Worldwide Navigation Information System (AWNIS) to work together to understand and respond to the challenges faced by the NATO NCAGS/AWNIS community.

The NSC was present in the EUNAVFOR Atalanta panel in Hamburg in order to maintain awareness of the maritime situation in the Indian Ocean and the continued fight against piracy. The NSC will also be present at the semi-annual Share Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE) meeting in Manama, Bahrain, taking place 20 - 22 November.

The NSC has posted a request for all ships to report incidents of GPS jamming or interference in the Eastern Mediterranean in order to maintain overall awareness of issues affecting safety and security of navigation.

Merchant ships are encouraged to report all suspicious activity in the Mediterranean Sea and broader North Atlantic Region to the NSC.



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NATO Shipping Centre Branch Head