



## HEADQUARTERS, ALLIED MARITIME COMMAND

Atlantic Building, Northwood Headquarters, Sandy Lane  
Northwood, Middlesex, HA6 3HP  
United Kingdom



<b>Our Ref:</b>		<b>Tel:</b>	+44 (0)1923 956577
		<b>NCN:</b>	57+ 56577
<b>Date:</b>	12 March 2019	<b>Email:</b>	f.gallego-aranda@mc.nato.int

IAW distribution

### MONTHLY NEWSLETTER NATO MARCOM MARCH 2019.

During the eventful month of February, NATO's Standing Naval Forces (SNFs) were reinforced to face new challenges in the NATO Area of Responsibility (AOR), NATO Anti-Submarine Warfare platforms participated in DYNAMIC MANTA 19, and Operation Sea Guardian (OSG) executed the first Focus Operation of 2019 (FOCOPS 19-1). Additionally, several key engagement activities took place with NATO partners from the Pacific Ocean to the Black Sea.

#### Maritime Security Operations

In the last month, 76 warships from NATO Nations took part in OSG, providing support in different roles to this critical Maritime Security Operation in the Mediterranean. Additionally, 72 sorties of NATO Airborne Early Warning (AEW) and Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) were flown in direct support of the operation. The AEW flights were provided by NATO's own assets while the MPA flights were provided by Greece, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, France, and USA. Submarines under NATO and national operational command also operated in support of OSG, providing inputs from the important sub-surface dimension. From 7-24 February, FOCOPS 19-1 took place in the Eastern Mediterranean led by the Hellenic Navy Captain Spyridon Lagaras onboard the frigate HS Limnos, and supported by submarines and air assets.

OSG remains a crucial operation to enhance NATO Maritime Situational Awareness (MSA) in the Mediterranean, increasing the Alliance' understanding of the Maritime Pattern of Life (MPoL) as the basis for detecting anomalies, and supporting the fight against crime at sea as a means to counter terrorism. A total of 465 MV were hailed and queried in February.

#### Standing Naval Maritime Groups

Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG-1) led by USS Gravelly (DDG 107) and supported by the Polish frigate ORP General Kazimierz Pulaski and the German auxiliary ship FGS Spessart carried out Exercise DYNAMIC GUARD 19-1 with the Norwegian Navy and visited Bergen and Trondheim. Since 18 February, the group has been patrolling the North and Baltics Sea to enhance MSA and support training activities with NATO member nations.

Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG-2) Tactical Unit 1 (TU 01) continued their deployment and operations in the Aegean Sea to support the efforts of the EU, Greece, and Turkey to control migration. SNMG-2 TU 01 is commanded from German frigate FGS Bonn and also consists of the Albanian patrol vessel ALS Butrinti, the Turkish warship TCG Kusadasi that relieved TCG Karsiyaka, and the Greek patrol vessels HS Starakis, HS Polemistis, and HS

## NATO UNCLASSIFIED

Armatolos that relieved HS Kasos, HS Troupakis, and HS Kalypso on 27 February. Five sightings of immigrant boats occurred in February and, consequently, their movements were reported to local authorities for further action.

SNMG-2 Tactical Unit 2 (TU 02), led by the Dutch frigate HNLMS Evertsen, with the Canadian frigate HMCS Toronto, the Spanish frigate ESPS Santa Maria, and the Turkish frigate TCG Gelibolu, patrolled the Eastern and Central Mediterranean and entered Antalya, Turkey and Piraeus, Greece before gathering in Catania, Italy for Exercise DYNAMIC MANTA on 22 February. There, the Italian frigate ITS Alpino and the auxiliary French warship FS VAR joined the group for the exercise. DYNAMIC MANTA is now ongoing in the Central Mediterranean.

Standing NATO Mine Counter Measures Group 1 (SNMCMG-1) continues under Danish command from Mine Countermeasure Vessel (MCMV) HDMS Thetis, along with the Belgian minehunter BMS Bellis and the German minehunters FGS Homburg and FGS Diilingen. The group entered Zeebrugge, Belgium to carry out DYNAMIC MOVE 19-1 for the first two weeks of February. The group then proceeded through the channel towards Chebourg, France for two intensive weeks of counter mine training and operations, including HOD (historical ordinance disposal) in French waters.

SNMCMG-2, led by German FGS Werra (flagship), arrived in Istanbul on 15 February to join the mine counter measures vessel TCG AKCAKOCA and sail together to carry out operational training in the Black Sea with the Bulgarian BGS Tsibar and the Romanian ROS Lupu Dinescu. The four vessels visited Varna, Bulgaria on 22-24 February and currently remain on task in the Black Sea.

### MARCOM exercises

MARCOM is executing the Live Exercise DYNAMIC MANTA 19 in February/March under the control of NATO Submarine Command (COMSUBNATO) to train NATO nations for anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare. Participants in the exercise include SNMG-2 TU 02 and various NATO nations, for a total of nine surface warships, six MPA's, and submarines from Greece, Italy, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

Submarine		DYNAMIC MANTA 2019 ADVANCED ASW EXERCISE		Ship	
Nation	Submarine	Nation	Ship		
	HMS AMBUSH		HNLMS EVERTSEN (SNMG2 FLAG SHIP)		
	HS PAPANIKOLIS		HMCS TORONTO		
	ITS SCIRE'		FS VAR		
	ESPS TRAMONTANA		FS AUVERGNE		
	TCG GUR		HS ELLI		
			ITS ALPINO		
			ESPS SANTA MARIA		
			ESPS BLAS DE LEZO		
			TCG GELIBOLU		

  

Maritime Patrol Aircraft		Maritime Patrol Helicopter	
Nation	Maritime Patrol Aircraft	Nation	Maritime Patrol Helicopter
	CP-140		EH-101&SH-90
	P-3C		EH-101
	ATL-2		
	P-3M		
	P-235		
	P-8		

DYNAMIC MANTA is one of MARCOM's most challenging exercises and an excellent opportunity for NATO nations to practice and evaluate their anti-submarine and anti-surface skillsets in a complex environment.



DYNAMIC GUARD is a tactical exercise led and managed by NATO MARCOM and the Norwegian Navy, designed to provide force integration training for SNMG-1. The exercise consists mainly of serialized Electronic Warfare (EW) and Anti-ship Missile Defence (ASMD) training events. It took place in the Norwegian Sea from 2-15 February.

### **MARCOM Engagements**

COM MARCOM Vice Admiral Clive Johnston visited Tbilisi, Georgia on 27-28 February for talks with key maritime leadership and discussions about maritime security in the Black Sea. Georgia is part of the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) program and a participant nation in OSG.

MARCOM Staff held another meeting in Batumi, Georgia with the Georgian Coast Guard on 26 February to coordinate technical aspects of the shared activities.

On 27 February, MARCOM Staff visited Rabat and met Moroccan authorities to make the current ways of cooperation more fluid and effective. Morocco is a NATO partner inside the Mediterranean Dialogue program.

### **NATO Shipping Centre (NSC) Activities**

A delegation from the NSC traveled to Odessa, Ukraine on 19 February to meet with Ukrainian naval authorities to discuss Freedom of Navigation in the Sea of Azov and Kerch Strait. Ukraine is a key member of the PfP program in the Black Sea.

The Director of the NATO Shipping Centre participated as an observer during the Pacific and Indian Ocean Shipping Working Group (PACIOSWG) in Sydney, Australia from 4-8 February, which doubled as the planning conference for Exercise BELL BUOY 2019. The PACIOSWG highlights the interesting fact that NATO Partner- and Allied Nations in the Pacific and Indian Ocean area base their interactions with merchant shipping and the wider commercial maritime community on established NATO Doctrine, especially Naval Cooperation and Guidance for Shipping (NCAGS). Accordingly, members of the PACIOSWG are welcome to participate as observers during the annual NATO Shipping Working Group (NSWG) in which NCAGS Doctrine is maintained and updated. The next NSWG is slated for Bruges, Belgium from 6-10 May. Stakeholders from the Shipping Industry are also welcome to attend the NSWG.

Finally, one NSC representative attended the INTERTANKO European panel in London on 23 February, continuing the joint push from MARCOM and the Shipping Industry to enhance Maritime Security and protect Freedom of Navigation.

The NSC continues monitoring the situation in the Kerch Strait and Sea of Azov and the impact the activities are having on shipping in the area.

The NSC, in cooperation with US MARAD, continues encouraging all ships to report incidents of GPS jamming or interference in areas of the Eastern Mediterranean. This reporting enables MARCOM to maintain overall awareness of cyber issues that may affect safety of navigation.

As always, merchant ships are encouraged to report any suspicious activity in the Mediterranean Sea and broader North Atlantic Region to the NSC.

*Ben Lofstad*

Commander, NOR N  
Director, NATO Shipping Centre