

STANDING NATO MARITIME GROUP ONE (SNMG1)



SNMG1 is one of the four immediate reaction maritime forces of NATO. It is a multi-national seagoing force and is on-task continuously. This gives NATO the ability to respond quickly and with flexibility to promote NATO's interests anywhere in the world. The force originally stood up in 1968 as Standing Naval Force Atlantic and previously known as Standing NATO Response Force Maritime Group One, was officially renamed as Standing NATO Maritime Group One in July 2006.



Any NATO nation can contribute to any of the four standing naval forces. SNMG1 consists of between six to ten ships from as many NATO nations.

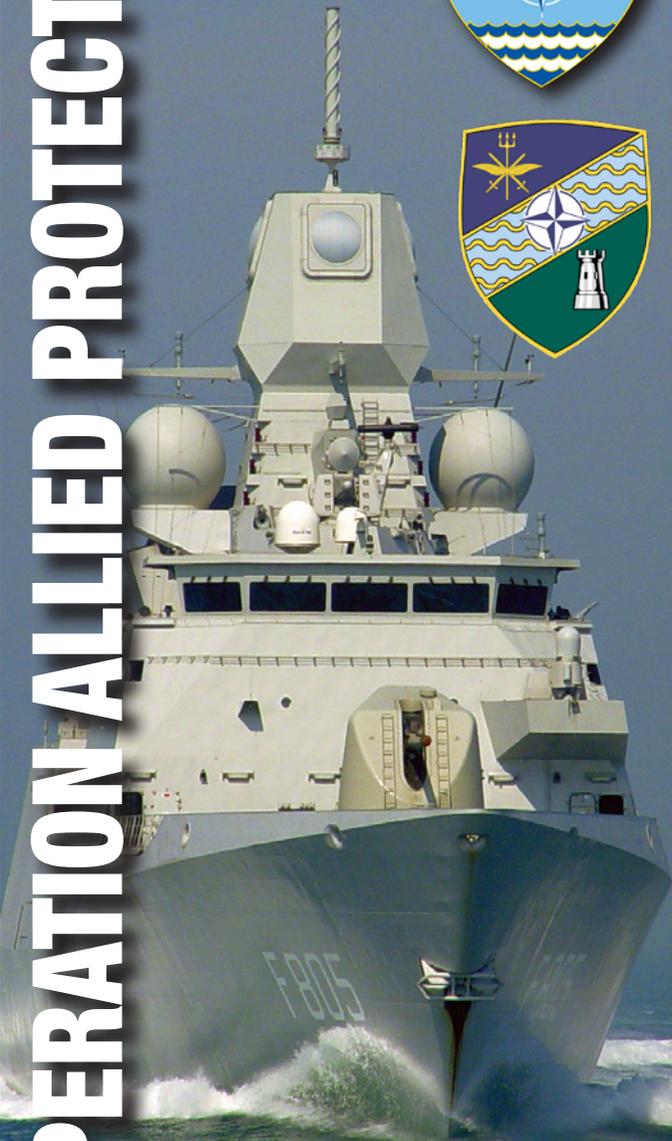
Over the years the force has taken part in many multi-national exercises and operations, both in support of individual allies or as part of a coalition, and has acquired a level of specialist maritime expertise and operational effectiveness unrivalled among world navies. In a changing world, the force has had to adapt to increasingly demanding roles. Initially their role was primarily surveillance and deterrence, maintaining a constant and visible reminder of the solidarity and cohesion of the alliance.



Since the end of the Cold War, international politics have taken on a completely different picture and the versatility of the force has been more than proven in a range of crisis situations both in the traditional NATO area of operations and beyond. The SNMG1 roles include: embargo operations, search and rescue operations, escort duties, monitoring and intelligence gathering, counter terrorism operations and now counter piracy operations. SNMG1 is a key component of the combined NATO Response Force.



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NATO to resume counter piracy operation off Horn of Africa

The North Atlantic Council (NAC) has agreed that NATO will contribute to international community efforts to counter piracy off the Horn of Africa. The aim of the mission is to enhance the safety of commercial maritime routes and international navigation in the area. The Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1) under the command of Rear Admiral Jose Pereira da Cunha (Portuguese Navy) sailed from Souda Bay on 16th March.

As maritime standing elements of the NATO Response Force (NRF), the Standing NATO Maritime Groups are a multinational, integrated maritime force made up of vessels from various allied nations. These vessels are permanently available to NATO to perform various tasks from participating in exercises designed to test readiness and foster interoperability of Allied Armed Forces, to actually intervening in operational missions.



Key areas where NATO can make a difference :

- Conduct surveillance and mount a deterrent naval presence.
- Defend, disrupt and protect against pirate attacks; including boarding operations on suspected pirate or armed robber vessels.
- Establish ad-hoc cooperation and coordination with non-NATO organisations operating in the area of operations.
- Enhance stability within the International Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) in the Gulf of Aden.
- If requested and authorised, provide naval escort to humanitarian aid supply or other vessels.



Piracy and armed robbery off the Horn of Africa are a significant concern to the international community, nations, non-governmental and commercial organisations. A number of these countries and organisations have committed themselves to prevent piracy threatening sea lines of communications and economic interests.

Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope KCB OBE, Commander of MCC Northwood said: *“ This mission reflects NATO’s relevance and adaptability to meet and counter a modern security threat such as piracy. In conjunction with other nations and organisations, we aim to deter, defend against and disrupt pirate activities off the Horn of Africa to maximum extent.”*

