



An OUNCE of PREVENTION

MSC and Partners Collaborate to Thwart Pirates

by Laura M. Seal, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. This is the idea behind a new initiative developed by MSC and other key defense, maritime and law enforcement agencies to reduce the vulnerability of US-flagged cargo carriers to piracy attacks.

Working together, representatives from numerous entities within the DOD, Department of Homeland Security and DOT have pooled their anti-piracy ship security best practices and trained representatives to—if requested by a shipping company—visit a specific US-flagged ship in port, conduct a thorough shipboard walk-through, evaluate the ship's vulnerability to piracy and offer recommendations.

MSC's role in the process has been to coordinate the military participation in the process and represent the US-TRANSCOM, which uses the commercial shipping industry as one of many transportation options to move DOD cargo overseas. Now that the teams are in place, MARAD has taken control as the program administrator and the interface of the program to the shipping industry as part of its security and training mission area for the US merchant marine.

The ship visits will be conducted by Anti-Piracy Assistance Teams made up of one representative from MARAD and one from the Naval Criminal Investigative Service. Occasionally, the teams will

include a third member from the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Law Enforcement Training Center.

"These teams bring assets and knowledge that we have in the military to the commercial industry and reinforce the US's ongoing efforts against piracy," said Joe Harriss, of MSC's operations division, who leads the command's participation in the development of the anti-piracy teams. "This initiative demonstrates to US industry that the military and Maritime Administration are doing everything we can to help protect US-flagged ships."

International incidents of piracy reported to the International Maritime Bureau increased from 263 to 293 between 2007

Photos (top to bottom). Photo top: SOMALIA (Feb. 6, 2009) The US Navy fleet ocean tug USNS Catawba (T-ATF 168) provides fuel and fresh water to Motor Vessel Faina following its release by Somali pirates Feb. 5 after holding it for more than four months. The US Navy has remained within visual range of the ship and maintained a 24/7 presence since it was captured. The Belize-flagged cargo ship is owned and operated by "Kaalbye Shipping Ukraine" and is carrying a cargo of Ukrainian T-72 tanks and related equipment. The ship was attacked on Sept. 25 and forced to proceed to anchorage off the Somali Coast. US 5th Fleet conducts maritime security operations to promote stability and regional economic prosperity. (USN photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Michael R. McCormick/Released). Photo bottom: GULF OF ADEN (Feb. 11, 2009) Suspected pirates keep their hands in the air as directed by the guided-missile cruiser USS Vella Gulf (CG 72) as the visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) team prepares to apprehend them. Vella Gulf is the flagship for Combined Task Force 151, a multi-national task force conducting counterpiracy operations to detect and deter piracy in and around the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Gulf, Indian Ocean and Red Sea. It was established to create a maritime lawful order and develop security in the maritime environment. (USN photo by Mass Communications Specialist 2nd Class Jason R. Zalasky/Released)

and 2008. The increase was most dramatic in the Gulf of Aden where piracy attacks increased from 31 in 2007 to 111 in 2008—more than 50 of those in the last four months of the year. An estimated 23,000 ships traverse those waters annually.

The world's navies have responded. The United States, China, India, Russia and the European Union are among those that have sent ships to patrol the waters off of the Somali coast. The recently established multinational force, Combined Task Force 151, is currently operating in the Gulf of Aden with the aim of coordinating all anti-piracy efforts.

Though patrols of these lawless waters are increasingly frequent and more organized, not every bit of ocean can be protected. It would take an estimated 61 ships to control the internationally designated shipping route through the Gulf of Aden, which is only a fraction of the 1.1 million square miles where pirates have attacked.

“The most effective measures we've seen to defeat piracy are defensive in nature,” said Vice Adm. Gortney, Combined Mar-

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itime Force's commander. “The merchant ships have been doing a great job stepping up and utilizing these methods to defeat piracy attempts.”

And this is where the Anti-Piracy Assistance Teams come in. Working from a checklist of about 100 items developed by the Navy Expeditionary Combat Command, MARAD, Navy Criminal Investigative Service and Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (with additional input from industry), these teams are prepared to thoroughly assess a ship and crew's preparedness to detect, deter, disrupt and delay pirate attacks.

Items on the list range from the tangible such as the ship's physical infrastructure to the intangible such as the status of vessel security plans and crew awareness of the latest anti-piracy tactics, techniques and procedures.

A visit from one of these specially trained teams is voluntary, as is the implementation of any recommendations provided. The ship visits are also provided to commercial shipping companies at no cost and may be requested from MARAD, which administers the program. A copy of the assessment checklist is then provided to the ship's master and the company's

Catawba assists pirated Faina

By Gillian Brigham, Sealift Logistics Command Europe Public Affairs

For four months the crew of Military Sealift Command fleet ocean tug USNS Catawba watched over the Ukrainian-owned, Belize-flagged cargo ship MV Faina that was hijacked by Somali pirates in the Indian Ocean Sept. 25.

When Faina was released from the pirates Feb. 5, Catawba's crew immediately began preparations to get Faina underway. Though the tug does not typically provide fuel to other ships, the crew rigged a device that allowed them to transfer fuel to the newly freed ship.

Before getting underway, Catawba's crew filled up all of their ship's five-gallon jugs with water for Faina's mariners. The tug crew donated shoes, shirts, coveralls, socks, underwear, shampoo, soap, Gatorade and food. In a final act of generosity, the civil service mariners aboard Catawba personally gave more than \$2,100 to help Faina's crew get back on their feet.

"We had the opportunity to do something that, in the end, was really, really, significant," said Capt. Charles Rodriguez, Catawba's civil service master. "Captain Nikolsky's letter brought it home to each of us. He let us know how truly significant our seemingly endless routine of standing by to provide assistance had been."

"The letter sent by the captain of MV Faina was the best letter I have received in my entire life," agreed Catawba's supply officer Efren Apostol. "I feel so proud of being a member of MSC."

chief security officer so that they can conduct their own review prior to the team's arrival on board.

When the team boards the ship, it will spend about 90 minutes with the master and shipping company's chief security officer to discuss and review any vulnerabilities identified, as well as any additional concerns noted by the visiting team. Before departing, the team will debrief the master and the chief security officer with its findings. A written report containing an analysis of vulnerabilities and possible solutions will later be presented to the company chief security officer. At this point, the chief security officer will be equipped to conduct the assessment on the rest of the ships in that company's fleet.

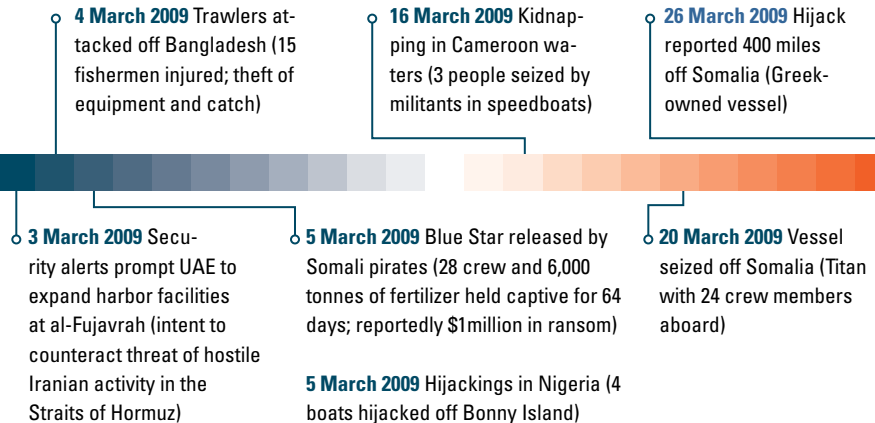
"The main benefit of this program is the information sharing," said Harriss. "Industry has already developed and implemented its own piracy prevention measures, which we are able to enhance through these teams by bringing in expertise from the military, which has a different perspective and therefore perhaps other useful information to share."

Training for the Anti-Piracy Team members was conducted in early February aboard two Ready Reserve Force ships in Newport News, VA. After perfecting their approach in practice sessions aboard the government-owned ships (with input from industry), the newly trained teams conducted an assessment aboard a privately owned and operated US-flagged ship.

PIRACY ON THE HIGH SEAS | March 2009 Timeline

(as the DTJ goes to press)

New tactics include the attack of ships further out to sea; “motherships”, which may appear innocuous-looking civilian vessels, are utilized. Vessels need to be vigilant to unusual vessels, particularly those which do not respond to communication and even those which appear adrift, in distress or with their lights off at night. Near shore, incidents appear at dawn making it difficult for watchmen to spot activity. Harbor area involvement restricts trade and commerce; weakens supply lines.



Information provided by the AKE Intelligence report for the month of March 2009 from GAC Sea Marshall

“We have had formal and informal discussions with international and US shipping industry on the idea of creating these Anti-Piracy Assistance Teams as a means of sharing best practices since late in 2008,” said Kevin Tokarski of MARAD. “Our commercial partners have been both receptive to and supportive of the idea.”

MARAD has already received industry requests to work with the teams and anticipates that ship visits will begin before spring 2009.

“We all recognize that the merchant mariner crews know their vessels and vulnerabilities best,” said Tokarski. “However, with this program we can share the latest anti-piracy techniques being developed by the US military, and that exchange of information will, hopefully, result in safer commercial shipping.”

As the program moves into the execution phase, MSC will continue in an active role, providing assistance in evaluating and updating both the content of the checklists as well as procedures for the teams. **DTJ**