

MARITIME NEWS – 25 NOVEMBER 2016

Russia detains ex-naval officer in Crimea as suspected 'Kiev spy'

Russia's FSB security service said Thursday it had detained a retired officer in its Black Sea naval fleet based in Crimea on suspicion of passing on military secrets to Kiev. Leonid Parkhomenko was detained Tuesday in the naval port of Sevastopol on the Russian-annexed peninsula.

FSB said the retired second captain had worked in the Black Sea fleet's headquarters and was still a reservist. Russian television showed FSB-released footage of a handcuffed mustachioed man with greying hair flanked by FSB officers in balaclavas. He is being questioned as part of an FSB probe into treason and could face up to 20 years in jail.

Parkhomenko "carried out assignments from Ukraine's defence ministry's central intelligence directorate" and "collected and handed over information that is a state secret about the activities of the Black Sea fleet," the security service said. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists that "Ukraine's provocative and destructive activity in Ukraine is continuing, including in Crimea." Russian special forces "are doing what they have got to do," he said. Kiev's military spokesman Andriy Lysenko told AFP that Russia's action showed "desperation and lack of professionalism."

The FSB announcement came after Ukraine said on Monday it had captured two of its soldiers at its frontier with Crimea. It said the men were former Ukrainian soldiers who had deserted after the 2014 annexation of Crimea and joined the Russian army. They could face up to 15 years in jail. Moscow in turn accused Kiev of unlawfully abducting the men from Russian soil.

The FSB earlier this month announced the arrest of a group of suspects whom it accused of planning acts of sabotage in Crimea on the orders of the Ukrainian defence ministry. Earlier this year, the FSB also claimed it had foiled "terrorist attacks" in Crimea. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has dismissed the accusations of plotting attacks on Crimea as "fantasies" concocted by Moscow. **Source : Space War**

First U.K. Royal Navy AW101 Merlin MK4 takes flight

The first AW101 Merlin MK4 rotary-wing aircraft delivered to the U.K. Royal Navy by Leonardo-Finmeccanica has taken its maiden flight. Leonardo says the aircraft completed its first successful flight test at the end of October. The milestone comes as the company upgrades 25 Royal Navy Merlin MK3 aircraft as part of the force's Merlin Life Sustainment Program. Deliveries are expected to begin in 2017, and continue until 2020.

"This is a great day and a most significant achievement in the Merlin Life Sustainment Program. The conversion of the Mk3/3a Merlin to Mk4/4a has been a real success story so far against demanding timelines and this first flight is excellent news for our Royal Navy 'Junglie' customers," Royal Navy Captain Kieran O'Brien said in a press release.

The AgustaWestland AW101 Merlin MK4 is equipped with the largest cabin in its class. The aircraft is designed to perform missions in extreme environments such as the Arctic or the Antarctic. For combat, it is armed with anti-ship missiles and torpedoes, 12.7mm and 7.62mm machine guns, air-to-air missiles, and air-to-surface missiles.



Once deliveries are complete, the helicopters will be used to deliver enhanced capability for Royal Navy's Commando Helicopter Force. "We still have a lot of work to do but when the program is complete the Commando Helicopter Force will have a very capable Commando Helicopter aircraft ready to fully operate in its maritime environment," O'Brien added. **Source : Space War**

The more observant readers will no doubt have noted that the chopper in the article is a Chinook! Thus to avoid a rush of comments I have added a photo of the real AW101 Mk4 below!



IMB: Pirate Dies in Attack on Tanker off Nigeria

An unknown number of pirates armed with automatic weapons in a speed boat approached and fired at a tanker while it was some 61 nautical miles off the coast of Bayelsa Coast, Nigeria, according to data provided by IMB Piracy Reporting Centre. Alarm aboard the vessel was raised, while the onboard security team returned fire in the attack, which occurred on November 23.

The pirates managed to board the tanker using a ladder and all crew retreated to the citadel. After two hours, the pirates left the tanker. IMB Piracy Reporting Centre noted that the vessel sustained some damages at the superstructure due to the firing. While one pirate was reported killed, all crew members aboard the tanker are safe, IMB added. Additionally, IMB Piracy Reporting Centre recorded two more pirate attacks on November 23, one off Cap Island, Philippines and the other in Vung Tau anchorage, Vietnam.

Eight persons wearing masks, and armed with automatic weapons, in a speed boat attempted to board a bulk carrier underway using a long pole attached with hook in the Philippines. The persons in the boat opened fire and tried to board the vessel but failed due to the hardening measures taken by the vessel and moved away. In the second incident, a fishing boat slowly approached an anchored bulk carrier in Vietnam. Two robbers armed with knives boarded the vessel and started stealing ship's stores. As the second crew made his routine rounds the robbers confronted and threatened him with the knife. The duty crew retreated into the accommodation and raised the alarm, resulting in the robbers escaping.

The incidents come on the back of reports of a 20-year low in piracy on the world's seas, as 141 incidents were recorded in the first nine months of 2016, representing a 25% drop from the same period in 2015. A total of 111 vessels were boarded, five were hijacked, 10 were fired at, and a further 15 attacks were thwarted.

Although the piracy levels dropped, IMB's global piracy report shows kidnapping and hostage-taking persists off the coasts of West Africa and South East Asia, as 110 seafarers were taken hostage in the first nine months of 2016, and 49 crew were kidnapped for ransom. Nigeria, a growing hotspot for violent piracy and armed robbery, accounted for 26% of all captures, followed by Indonesia, Malaysia, Guinea and Ivory Coast. **Source : World Maritime News**

I will not be recommending the onboard security team – only popped one of the baddies. But then I must assume they may be limited in what weapons they are allowed to carry

China to Build First Overseas Naval Base in Djibouti

China will boost military ties with Djibouti, strategically located in the Horn of Africa, state media quoted a senior Chinese army officer as saying during a visit to a country where China is building its first overseas naval base. In February, China began construction in Djibouti of its first overseas military facility, a logistics base that will resupply naval vessels taking part in peacekeeping and humanitarian missions.

Djibouti, which is about the size of Wales, is strategically located at the southern entrance to the Red Sea on the route to the Suez Canal. The tiny, barren nation sandwiched between Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia also hosts U.S., Japanese and French bases. Fan Changlong, a vice chairman of China's powerful Central Military Commission, said after a meeting with Djibouti President Ismail Omar Guelleh the two countries could strengthen ties in all areas, including militarily, state news agency Xinhua said late on Thursday.



China's Central Military Commission Vice Chairman Fan Changlong smiles at the Chinese Ministry of National Defense in Beijing, China, in this August 28, 2015 file photo. **REUTERS/Ng Han Guan/Pool/Files**

"The two sides have made frequent exchanges of visits, and achieved remarkable results in personnel training, naval escort and supplies, and participation in UN peacekeeping operations," Xinhua paraphrased Fan as saying. Fan said relations between the two militaries had been "developing smoothly in recent years", Xinhua reported. "China is willing to make joint efforts with Djibouti to continue to promote the healthy and stable development of relations between the militaries," Fan said.

There was no direct mention of the Chinese military base, which China describes as a supply facility. Djibouti's location on the northwestern edge of the Indian Ocean has fueled worries in India that it would become another of China's "string of pearls" of military alliances and assets ringing India, including Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. **Source : gCaptain**

This has been announced before but I found the photo intriguing. The fine fellow is an Admiral/General and has 21 ribbons. What is fascinating is that there are only 5 different awards and only the yellow one middle top is unique. There are six blue with two white stripes, five each with green and four yellow stripes and fawn with three red stripes, and four green with broad red stripe. Go figure!

Maritime security operations commanders meet off Somalia



Commodore Luyckx and Captain Minami, on board **HNLMS Tromp**. Photo : **EUNAVFOR**

Operation Atalanta's force commander, Commodore Luyckx, welcomed the Japanese commander, Captain Minami, on board of Dutch flagship, **HNLMS Tromp** off the coast of Somalia on November 21. The Japanese escort task group (CCD4) is part of the Combined Task Force 151 (CTF 151). CTF151 focuses on the disruption of piracy and armed robbery at sea and is one of Operation Atalanta's key counter-piracy partners in the waters of Somalia.

During the meeting both parties discussed the importance of cooperation to ensure Somali-based piracy remains suppressed. In what was their third meeting, the commanders also took the opportunity to say farewell as **HNLMS Tromp**'s deployment with Operation Atalanta will come to an end on December 6. After the meeting both ships continued with their counter-piracy patrols off the coast of Somalia. **Source : Naval Today**

GRSE launches seventh LCU for Indian Navy



Photo: Indian Navy

Indian shipbuilder Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers launched the Indian Navy's seventh MK IV landing craft utility in Kolkata, on November 24. LCU-L57, as the vessel was named during the ceremony, is the seventh vessel in the series of eight landing craft utility ships being designed and built by M/s GRSE for the Indian Navy. The ship can be deployed for multirole activities like beaching operations, humanitarian and disaster relief operations and evacuation from distant islands. GRSE is building the amphibious vessels under a contract signed with the Indian Navy in September 2011 with construction starting a year later in 2012. The first LCU was launched in March, 2014. **Source : Naval Today**

Royal Navy patrol boat 'Example' completes year-long refit



Photo: Royal Navy

After a year in refit **HMS Example** has made her return to the Royal Navy fleet, and taken her place as one of 14 patrol boats that make up the Royal Navy's 1st Patrol Boat Squadron (1PBS). The Archer-class patrol boat has a new

Ship's Company, headed by Lieutenant Thomas Stapley-Bunten RN. **HMS Example** will return to fleet tasking but also support the Northumbrian University Royal Naval Unit based at **HMS Calliope**.

The Northumbrian Universities Royal Naval Unit (NURNU) has welcomed back its units' ship, **HMS Example**, with brand new engines and a gleaming new coat of paint. The ship's return to **HMS Calliope** comes in time for the new academic year where senior students and a new entry of first years were given the opportunity to go on a sea day this month to familiarise themselves with the roles taken on ship as well as experiencing the ships performance with its new engines, achieving a new top speed of 22kts.

The return of **HMS Example** has been beneficial to the URNU students as it allows them to conduct more frequent sea training, putting their skills such as navigation and leadership into practice. The most recent sea day had seen students learn about roles such as that of the officer-of-the-watch, navigator and quartermaster (steering the ship at the helm). **Source : Naval Today**

Actually a fast training boat. At 21m with a crew of 12 and 'fitted for but not with' an Oerlikon 20mm gun, she is not likely to take the pressure off the Type 45s etc but training is important – if the fleet does not continue declining!

US destroyer joins French aircraft carrier on mission against ISIS



USS Mason. Photo: US Navy

U.S. Navy's guided-missile destroyer **USS Mason** (DDG 87) is providing multi-warfare defense to the French **Charles de Gaulle** carrier strike group (CDG CSG) from the Eastern Mediterranean in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. The strike group centered around the French aircraft carrier supports the fight against ISIL with operations from the Mediterranean.

USS Mason deployed from Naval Station Norfolk June 1, 2016. By joining the group in the Med, Mason is taking the place of sister ship **USS Ross** which provided support for the group from Sept. 19, 2016 – Oct. 26, 2016. **USS Ross** has in the meantime returned to Naval Station Rota where it is forward deployed with the U.S. 6th Fleet. **Source : Naval Today**

A hard working vessel, Mason seems to be constantly involved in ops.

READER COMMENT

1. *Regarding the use of Sir in the Navy, I am always amazed when onboard Air France aircraft that they always introduce the captain of the aircraft as Monsieur XXX instead of Captain XXX. Regarding the floating coffin the Hartebeespoort dam - when I was flying a South Africa registered aircraft in the Sudan we were annually inspected by the CAA. When was the last inspection of the boat in question?*

Beats me! That is up to the investigations I guess.

2. *The Israeli submarine 'scandal' is funny: They got the boats – and the previous class, one of which was fully funded by the German government if I recall correctly – from Germany at a massive discount courtesy of the German tax payer, so it is not easy to see where there could have been any corruption. No other country would have provided them with boats on similar terms.*

I too am trying to fathom it out!

TAILPIECE

Seven-Year-Old Container Ship Sent to Scrap



file photo

Rickmers Marine Trust is scrapping the youngest ever container ship sent for demolition. The **India Rickmers** is a seven year old Panamax, 4,250 TEU ship built in China in 2009.

Youngest containership demolition age

Year	Youngest ship sent for demolition
2009	24
2010	23
2011	19
2012	12
2013	14
2014	14
2015	13
2016	7

VesselsValue values the vessel at \$5.87 million, just above scrap. In 2016, the vessel fell 62 percent in value. This year the average change in value in the container ship sector is -26 percent. The main reason for this is that these vessels are becoming defunct now that the Panama Canal has been widened. Panamax container ships built in 2009 have dropped in value by two thirds over the last couple of years.

Rickmers Marine Trust's live fleet of 16 Panamax vessels has an average age of eight years and is valued at \$88.69 million by VesselsValue. Its demolition value is \$87.68 million. Five vessels are on long-term charter to Mitsui OSK, six are trading on the spot market and five are stacked off Batu Pahat, Malaysia (**Erwin Rickmers, Sabine Rickmers, Maja Rickmers, Kaethe C Rickmers, Laranna Rickmers**). **Source : The Maritime Executive**

Not a good investment anymore! The knock-on effect of large canals and larger container capacity.

AGS

Attached is a very interesting article on the Russian Navy – from Russian eyes.