

# News Release



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## Northwood open for Business as NATO Maritime Hub

From 1 December Northwood Headquarters in Middlesex, nr London, officially becomes host to NATO's new Maritime Command.

Vice Admiral Christian Canova French Navy, recently appointed Deputy Commander NATO Maritime Command says: "that this not only represents an extraordinary privilege for the UK which will now host the sole maritime command for NATO, but it fuses together all maritime expertise into one centre of excellence.....We will be NATO's primary advocate and advisor for the whole Maritime domain."

The change is a result of a larger programme decided at NATO's 2010 Lisbon Summit aimed at making NATO's command structure more efficient and effective. Admiral Canova added that "from today we are open for business and while some elements of integration are still underway for a few more months, we are now in a position to provide command, capability design, advice; as well as take the lead for directing a whole range of NATO maritime assets including aircraft, ships and submarines. Indeed, nominally this could be as many as 750 ships and 800 000 men and women."

The overall changes will also help make NATO's Command structure more affordable. Throughout the whole of NATO positions are being trimmed from 12,000 HQ personnel to around 9,000 and reducing the number of NATO HQs from ten to six, in the largest re-structuring since the end of the Cold War. The new Maritime Command will report directly to Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Mons, Belgium.

By the end of March 2013, NATO's Maritime Command Naples will de-activate but MC Naples' unique Mediterranean expertise will be preserved. Admiral Canova credits Naples HQ with having a "thorough knowledge of all maritime issues in and around the Mediterranean, and a well developed network in the

region". This includes their vast experience with Operation Active Endeavour, NATO's Mediterranean counter-terrorism mission. "That network is something we want to continue," he says.

These changes will take place during the next few months however, today the 1 Dec 2012 marks NATO-wide transition day when the Maritime Command at Northwood will assume its formal authority. A four-month transition period will follow, culminating in the de-activation of MC Naples on 28 March 2013. Northwood's recent focus has been Operation Ocean Shield, NATO's mission to counter Somali piracy in the Indian Ocean. While that remains important, Admiral Canova envisions the new Maritime Command at Northwood as aiming for a more comprehensive view, looking at, " a wider set of Maritime issues and threats." Accordingly, the focus will have to be broadened from the current attention on Operation Ocean Shield.

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