

HNLMS JOHAN DE WITT and took part in the EU Counter Piracy mission ATALANTA. Since 2018 he has been working within NLMARSOF and since 2021 at the Netherlands Special Operations Command.

Vice Admiral R.P. (René) Tas (Aardenburg, 3 March 1964) joined the Royal Netherlands Navy in 1982. As a warfare officer on HNLMS Witte de With he participated in operation SHARP GUARD in the Adriatic Sea. He commanded HNLMS VAN SPEIJK with participation in UNIFIL Maritime. In 2010 he took command of the Air Defence and Command Frigate HNLMS Tromp operating off the coast of Lybia, in NATO's Counter-Piracy Operation OCEAN SHIELD and a tour in the Caribbean. From 2018 to 2021, as Rear Admiral, he was posted at the Headquarters of the NATO Supreme Allied Commander of Transformation in the United States. Having been promoted to Vice Admiral in 2021 he took command of the Royal Netherlands Navy and currently performs also duties as Admiral BENELUX.

Commander E.H. (Eelke) Toering MA BEng (Bernisse, 30 December 1980), joined the Royal Netherlands Navy in 1999. Apart from several submarine patrols, he was deployed three times during Counter-Piracy operations near Somalia, once as the navigation officer of one of HNLM Submarines and twice as a senior staff member of both NATO Operation OCEAN SHIELD, on board HNLMS ROTTERDAM, and EU Operation ATALANTA, on board NRP ALVARES CABRAL and HNLMS JOHAN DE WITT. Based on his experiences as a submariner, he contributed greatly to the situational understanding of human actors and environmental factors near Somalia and was involved in several intelligence-driven operations to disrupt so-called Pirate Action Groups.

Lieutenant General RNLMC (Ret'd) R. (Rob) Verkerk ON4 (with swords) EL2 KB2 (The Hague, 17 April 1960) joined the Royal Netherlands Navy in 1979. During his career, he commanded 2nd Battalion RNLMC, the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps and the Royal Netherlands Navy. As Director of Operations from 2007-2012, he supervised the RNLN contribution to the Counter-Piracy Operations in the Indian Ocean (OCEAN SHIELD/ATALANTA) and the RNLMC contribution to the International Coalition in Afghanistan (ISAF). LTGEN Rob Verkerk left the RNLN in 2017.

Sergeant J.J.M. (Jessica) Wesemann-Verhofstad (Lieshout, 20 July 1974) joined the Royal Netherlands Navy in 1997. She held positions as steward and as cook on board HNLMS KAREL DOORMAN and the Commandant Maritime Middelen Den Helder (CMMHLDR) until 2001. From then on she fulfilled a wide variety of roles within Logistics, as Chief Steward Ratings, Petty Officer and cook on board HNLMS DE RUYTER (2009-2013) including NATO Operation OCEAN SHIELD. Since 2018 she has been a Military Instructor Regional Education Centre 'Veiligheid en Vakmanschap Maritiem', providing practical courses for naval ratings to prepare them for a career within the Royal Netherlands Navy.

Royal Netherlands Army

Lieutenant Colonel M. (Maarten) Gortworst (Drachten, 14 June 1980), joined the Royal Netherlands Army in 1999 and started his career in command of a reconnaissance platoon. He held various operational positions interspersed with placements as a Staff Officer attached to the Army Command (C-LAS). Having completed the Advanced Command & Staff College (HDV) an appointment to the Defence Staff followed, after which he became Head of the Training Expertise Centre. Gortworst completed four tours abroad. In 2013 he acted as Commander of the Maritime Intelligence Surveillance Target Acquisition Reconnaissance (ISTAR) module on board the Landing Platform Dock HNLMS JOHAN DE WITT, during Operation ATALANTA.

Royal Netherlands Air Force

Lieutenant Colonel D.C. (David) van de Bunte MSc MA BSM (Nunspeet, 16 May 1970) joined the Royal Netherlands Air Force in 1996 and left active duty as a reserve platoon commander of a Ground Defence Squadron. He then started a professional career as an aviation consultant in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. After 9/11 he re-entered active military duty and worked as an aviation advisor for the Ministry of Transportation, Coalition Provisional Authority, in Iraq in 2003-2004. In 2005-2007 he advised the Afghan Ministry of Transport on how to rebuild civil aviation in Afghanistan. In 2009 he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal of the United States of America for his service in Iraq. In 2011 he was deployed as a special advisor on board of HNLMS TROMP as part of the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 during Counter-Piracy operation along the coast of Somalia. After this he continued to work with the Special Operations Community and in the Netherlands Special Operations Command.

Sergeant Major T.C. (Tarinda) Frijters - van der Gouwe (Borsele, 23 May 1988), joined the Royal Netherlands Air Force in 2009 as a General Military Nurse. In 2012 her training followed to become a 'Flight Nurse' followed. In that position she participated in the EUNAVFOR mission ATALANTA in 2013 with the Cougar AS 532U2 helicopter and in 2015 again with the NH-90 helicopter on board the Landing Platform Dock HNLMS JOHAN DE WITT. In 2018 she switched to the Group Air Force Reserve. Currently she is Flight Nurse, Flight 8, Group Air Force Reserve.

BK Bronzen Kruis

BSM Bronze Star Medal (USA).

CB Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath (UK).

EL2 Légion d'Honneur (FR) - Officier

KB2 Commandeur Kroonorde / Order of the Crown (BE).

LM Legion of Merit (USA) 2. Commander - 3. Officer - 4. Legionnaire.

MSM NATO Meritorious Service Medal

ON Orde van Oranje-Nassau 4. Officer - 5. Ridder

ONM L'Ordre National de Mérite (FR) - Chevalier

Rm1 Ereteken voor verdienstelijke daden voor de Nederlandse Scheepvaart (De Ruyter-medaille) 1. Goud

VK Vliegerkruis

‘Countering Piracy’

A limited edition print (200) published by Stichting Maritiem Erfgoed (©2023)

The original oil painting by Fred Boom depicts an anti-piracy action during Operations ‘OCEAN SHIELD’ and ‘ATALANTA’. Operation ‘OCEAN SHIELD’ was NATO’s counter-piracy mission in the Indian Ocean, Gulf of Aden and Arabian Sea, between 2008 and 2016. The aim was to deter and disrupt attacks on merchant vessels by Somali pirates. The Task Force also helped to increase the general level of security in the region through different military operations, also with Non-NATO partners and interaction with local Somali leaders.

Operation ‘ATALANTA’, formally European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) - Somalia, is a current counter-piracy military operation off the coast of Somalia. It is the first naval operation conducted by the European Union (EU) and was launched on 8 December 2008 within the framework of the European Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) and International Law. One of the most important tasks was the protection of vessels of the UN World Food Program.

Working side-by-side with the Royal Navy and other units of NATO Allies and EU member States, the Royal Netherlands Navy contributed to both missions with Frigates, Ocean-going Patrol Vessels, Landing Platform Docks, Submarines, Tankers (AORs), shipborne Maritime helicopters, Landing Craft, Vessel Protection Detachments and Maritime Special Operations Forces. HNLMS Tromp (F803), depicted here, was one of the participating frigates.

Details of the limited edition (200):

The signatories are:

Royal Navy

- Commander A. (Adam) Ballard
- Rear Admiral (Ret'd) R.K. (Bob) Tarrant CB MA

Royal Netherlands Navy

- Sergeant Major RNLMC (Ret'd) S.O. (Sander) Aarts
- Lieutenant (Ret'd) P.J. (Peter) Groen
- Sergeant Major RNLMC J.H. (Johan) van der Hek
- Lieutenant (Eng) A. (Anne) Hoogeveen
- Commodore (Ret'd) M. (Michiel) Hijmans
- Lieutenant (Ret'd) M.M. (Mohamed Mouse) Kadir
- Captain A. (André) van der Kamp
- Commander (Ret'd) R.F.M. (Richard) Keulen
- Commodore (Ret'd) P.W. (Peter) Lenselink
- Commodore (Ret'd) H. (Hans) Lodder
- Lieutenant (Ret'd) Y. (Yvonne) Niersman
- Captain G.H. (Gerrit) Nijenhuis
- Major General R.G. RNLMC (Richard) Oppelaar
- Lieutenant Colonel RNLMC (Ret'd) R. (Ronald) Poetiray
- Lieutenant Commander (Ret'd) B.L. (Bastiaan) Ruizeveld de Winter
- Captain J.W.A. (Jan Willem) Scheuer
- Lieutenant General RNLMC F.V. (Frank) van Sprang
- Commander N.W.P. (Niels) van Swelm
- Vice Admiral R.P. (René) Tas
- Commander E. (Eelke) Toering
- Lieutenant General RNLMC (Ret'd) R. (Rob) Verkerk
- Sergeant J.J.M. (Jessica) Wesemann-Verhofstad

Royal Netherlands Army

- Lieutenant Colonel M. (Maarten) Gortworst

Royal Netherlands Air Force

- Lieutenant Colonel D.C.(David) van de Bunte
- Sergeant Major T.C. (Tarinda) Frijters - van der Gouwe

Royal Navy

Commander A. (Adam) Ballard, joined the Royal Navy in 1999. After Britannia Royal Naval College his junior officer appointments included HM Ships MARLBOROUGH, PENZANCE, GLASGOW, LEEDS CASTLE, IRON DUKE, SUTHERLAND and BULWARK. He then moved to the role of Staff Warfare Officer (Navigation) of Flag Officer Sea Training. Next was the Specialist Navigators course, followed by 15 months on the staff of Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 serving under British, Dutch and Turkish commanders. The Group spent most of the period conducting counter piracy operations off Somalia resulting in multiple hostages and ships released. Adam then attended the Principal Warfare Officers course before returning to the Gulf in HMS KENT. Selected as the Executive Officer of HMS ST ALBANS, he once again returned to the Middle East where the Ship conducted Theatre Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Operations and Force Protection of a US Carrier conducting strike operations against ISIL. A further year of home waters Fleet Ready Escort Tasking and North Atlantic ASW operations concluded a thoroughly rewarding assignment prior to moving to Portsmouth Flotilla as Staff Executive Officer. Adam then joined HMS PROTECTOR as the Commander in July 2019 before returning to the UK to attend the Advanced Command and Staff Course at the Defence Academy in September 2021.

Rear Admiral (Ret'd) Bob Tarrant CB MA, has held both submarine and surface ship command in the Royal Navy. He gained operational experience serving in the Falklands conflict in 1982, numerous submarine patrols, two seasons in the Antarctic and periods of defence diplomacy off west Africa. After senior positions developing naval strategy for the First Sea Lord at the Ministry of Defence, he went on to command the multi-national CTF 150, responsible for maritime security operations from the Red Sea to the Gulf of Oman. In 2013 he was appointed Commander, UK Maritime Forces and the EU Op Commander for Operation ATALANTA, conducting successful counter piracy operations off the Horn of Africa. During the same period he also served as the UK's designated representative for NATO High Readiness Force (Maritime). From 2015-17 he was Commander Operations, responsible for the readiness and operations of the UK Fleet.

Royal Netherlands Navy

Sergeant Major RNLMC (Ret'd) S.O. (Sander) Aarts ON5 (Lisse, 2 March 1979), joined the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps in 1996. During most of his 21 years' career he served operationally with the Special Forces of the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps; MARSOE. Aarts was deployed in Ethiopia (UNMEE,2004), Iraq (SFIR2, 2007), Afghanistan (ISAF, 2011), OCEAN SHIELD (2012,2013) and Operation ATALANTA as a Team Leader. After he left the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps in 2017 he moved on to become an entrepreneur. With his undertaking 'Unbreakable Academy' he wants to build bridges between the military world and civil society by transferring his experiences and knowledge from the Special Forces.

Lieutenant (Ret'd) P. (Peter) Groen (Dordrecht, 25 November 1963) joined the Royal Netherlands Navy as Rating Operational Services in 1981. From 1 August 2012 until 1 November 2014 he was Staff Warrant Officer within the operational squadron of the Royal Netherlands Navy, the Netherlands Maritime Force (NLMARFOR). In that role he was responsible for the communication and (network) connectivity between the assigned units and the responsible headquarters. From 6 August 2013 until 6 December 2013, Lieutenant Groen was deployed as Information Management Staff Officer within the OPERATIONAL EU Staff ATALANTA, Fleet Headquarter Commander Task Force 465, and was involved in counter piracy operations in the Indian Ocean. Additionally he held the position of Security Officer within the Staff of NLMARFOR for 2 years.

Sergeant Major RNLMC J.H. (Johan) van der Hek BK (Groot-Ammers, 28 November 1975), joined the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps in 1995. Most of his career he served with the Netherlands Maritime Special Operations Forces (MARSOE). Van der Hek was deployed in several anti-piracy operations. (OPERATION OCEAN SHIELD and OPERATION ATALANTA). In 2010 he was involved in liberating the pirate-hijacked ship MS 'Taipan', in which the 15-man crew was freed unharmed and 10 pirates were captured. For this action he was awarded the 'Bronzen Kruis'.

Lieutenant A. (Anne) Hoogeveen (Franeker, 24 June 1964) joined the Royal Netherlands Navy in 1982 as rating. Since December 1983 he served on board various Submarines, starting his career on board HNLMS TIJGERHAAI. From 18 August 2008 until 17 December 2012 he served in HNLMS DOLFIJN. The boat patrolled the Somali-basin from February to May 2012 to carry out search and reconnaissance missions off the coast of Somalia. During this period, about 20 ships had been hijacked and more than 700 persons on board had been taken hostage. His current role is within the Directorate Materiel Royal Netherlands Navy. Lieutenant Hoogeveen was involved in three anti-piracy operations in 2009, 2010 and 2012.

Commodore (Ret'd) M. B. (Michiel) Hijmans LM3 MSM ONM (Amsterdam, 22 April 1958) joined the Royal Netherlands Navy in 1978. During his career he commanded HNLMS KAREL DOORMAN, HNLMS DE ZEVEN PROVINCIE and HNLMS TROMP. He served as Defence Attaché in the USA, thereafter Director International Military Cooperation of the NL Defence Staff. He commanded the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2) from June 2010 - June 2011 and in that capacity also 2 times NATO's Counter-Piracy operation OCEAN SHIELD. During this operation, many hostages were liberated, more than 200 pirates arrested and large quantities of pirates' equipment destroyed. He ended his career at NATO and the EU in Brussels. Michiel Hijmans is currently Senior Associate Fellow at the Clingendael Academy in The Hague.

Captain A. (André) van der Kamp (Oldemarkt, 26 June 1967) joined the Royal Netherlands Navy in 1985. During his career he fulfilled various operational posts including commanding several minehunters and the Ocean-going Patrol Vessel HNLMS ZEELAND. With this OPV he participated in the Humanitarian Assistance operation on St. Maarten in the aftermath of hurricane IRMA (2017). He also served as a Staff Officer in National, NATO and EU Joint and Maritime Battle Staffs. As such he participated in both NATO (OCEAN SHIELD, 2011) and EU (ATALANTA, 2013) Counter-Piracy missions. Apart from these Counter-Piracy missions he participated in several International and NATO peace keeping missions in the Adriatic (1993), Persian Gulf (1999), Arabian Sea (2003), Libya (2011) and Lithuania (2022).

Commander (Ret'd) R.F.M. (Richard) Keulen (Kerkrade, 1 April 1966) joined the Royal Netherlands Navy in 1984 and was commissioned Officer in 1987. He completed his operational career with commands of M-frigate HNLMS VAN AMSTEL and LC-frigate HNLMS DE RUYTER; with the latter he served as flagship captain in operation Ocean Shield (2011-2012), whilst hosting CTF508 staff lead by CDRE Michiel Hijmans. The deployment coincided with the most widely spread operations of pirate mother ships and numbers of crew members taken hostage. On 29 October 2011, HNLMS DE RUYTER successfully freed MV New York Star crew from pirates, who fled the rampaged ship. Apart from Ocean Shield, Keulen served as an exchange officer in the US NAVY and participated in several international and NATO peace keeping missions. Commander Keulen also served in different navy and interservice shore assignments and followed the Higher Defence Staff Course. After almost 30 years he retired from the Navy in 2013 and joined Dutch national naval shipbuilder Damen, firstly as Director Naval Sales Support. In 2023 he took on the job of Director Corporate Strategy and Innovation.

Commodore (Ret'd) P. W. (Peter) Lenselink LM2 (Vught, 26 May 1958) joined the Royal Netherlands Navy in 1976. During his career he commanded HNLMS PHILIPS VAN ALMONDE, the FRIGATE SQUADRON and SEA TRAINING COMMAND. From 2007-2010 he went on to become 'Commandant der Zeemacht in het Caribisch Gebied (CZMCARIB)', Director Coastguard for the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba and Commander Task Group (CTG) 4.4. For his efforts in the Caribbean, he has been awarded Commander of the Legion of Merit by the United States. During his deployment as Commander Netherlands Maritime Force (2010-2014) he became, in 2013, Commander Task Force 465 of the "European Naval Force Somalia – OPERATION ATALANTA": The Counter-Piracy mission of

the European Union in the Gulf of Aden and the Horn of Africa. Commodore Lenselink left the Royal Netherlands Navy in 2014 after more than 38 years of service.

Commodore (Ret'd) Hans Lodder Rm1 LM3 (Schiedam, 7 July 1960) fulfilled various operational commands during his naval career, commanding HNLMS DELFZIJL, HNLMS VAN AMSTEL and HNLMS TROMP as well as a tour as 'Commandant der Zeemacht in het Caribisch Gebied' (CZMCARIB) and Commander Task Group 4.4. When in HNLMS TROMP, he was involved in the liberation of the pirate-hijacked ship MS TAIPAN and carried out, in which the 15-man crew was liberated unharmed and ten pirates were captured. For the liberation of MS TAIPAN he was awarded the "Admiral de Ruyter Medal", a decoration by Royal Decree. For his role as CTG 4.4 he was awarded the Officer of the Legion of Merit by the United States.

Lieutenant (Ret'd) Yvonne Niersman VK (Leidschendam, 27 May 1980), joined the Royal Netherlands Navy and started her flying training in 2002. During her career she started as an SAR-pilot on the Westland LYNX helicopter. In the period 2009-2011 she was flying on the frontline with 860 Squadron and as such was deployed several times during both NATO (OCEAN SHIELD, 2011) and EU (ATALANTA, 2013) Counter-Piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden and the Horn of Africa. When stationed on board HNLMS Tromp she flew the LYNX helicopter and fulfilled a pivotal role in the liberation of MS TAIPAN's crew from pirates. For this action she was awarded the 'Vliegerkruis', the Dutch equivalent of the British Distinguished Flying Cross. She is the second female pilot, in the history of the Dutch Military Aviation. to receive this medal after Ida Veldhuyzen van Zanten had received hers in 1948.

In 2011, she was detained in Libya for 11 days after a failed rescue operation. From 2012-2018 she flew for the NL Coast Guard on the Dornier 228 from Schiphol. In 2018, Lieutenant Niersman left the Royal Netherlands Navy in order to continue her distinguished flying career as an Air Ambulance Pilot, operating from Amsterdam.

Captain G.H. (Gerrit) Nijenhuis (Hoogeveen, 23 June 1963) joined the Royal Netherlands Navy in 1982. As a navigator and tactical coordinator on the P3 Orion and Lynx he participated in various operational EU/UN missions in former Yugoslavia (Maritime Monitor, Sharp Guard and Grapple). Following command of 7 NL Search and Rescue Squadron, he commanded the Fast Combat Support Ship HNLMS Amsterdam in 2010 during the Counter-Piracy missions Atalanta (EU) and Ocean Shield (NATO), during which HNLMS Amsterdam and her crew not only executed many replenishment action with coalition warships but also executed 44 successful operations against the Somali pirates. Following functions at the Netherlands Support Command and Naval Staff, he is currently the Netherlands Defence and Naval Attaché to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Major-General R.G. RNLMC (Richard) Oppelaar LLM ON5 (with swords) (Jos, Nigeria, 27 February 1962). On 24 August 1981, General Oppelaar joined the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps as a Reserve Officer. He was subsequently deployed in Northern Iraq (1991), Cambodia (1993), Bosnia (1997), Southern Iraq (2003-2004) and Northern Afghanistan (2005). For his deployment as a battalion commander in both Iraq and Afghanistan, he was awarded a Knighthood in the Order of Orange-Nassau. From March 2012 to March 2016, Oppelaar was Director Operations of the Naval Forces Command responsible for planning, preparing and executing counter-piracy operations along the east coast of Africa. From April 2015 – November 2019, Oppelaar was Director Operations within the Ministry of Defence. During this period, the Dutch contribution to Counter-Piracy operations came to an end.

Lieutenant Colonel RNLMC (Ret'd) R. (Ronald) Poetiray (Aruba, 17 December 1960) joined the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps in 1981. During his career he commanded several marine units such as the former "Bijzondere Bijstandseenheid Mariniers" and the Amphibious Combat Support Battalion, and conducted many missions all over the world. His first mission was in 1988 in the Persian Gulf and his last mission was in 2016-2017 in MINUSMA, Mali. During the EU Operation ATALANTA in 2013 he commanded the embarked (special operations) forces to conduct Counter-Piracy operations. After almost 42 years of service he left the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps in January 2023. For his achievements he was awarded the "Ereteken van Verdienste" in silver.

Lieutenant Commander (Ret'd) B.L. (Bastiaan) Ruizeveld de Winter (Rotterdam, 19 September 1978) joined the Royal Netherlands Navy in 1996. In 2011 he was appointed Commanding Officer of the submarine HNLMS DOLFIJN (S808). 'DOLFIJN' patrolled the Somali basin from February - May 2012 to carry out search and reconnaissance missions off the coast of Somalia. During this period, about 20 ships were hijacked and more than 700 passengers were taken hostage. By operating without being noticed in the vicinity of the hijacked ships, the routines of the pirates could be observed and established. In the course of these patrols and in close cooperation with Special Forces from the Danish frigate HDMS ABSALON (F341), dozens of pirates were arrested. Lieutenant Commander Ruizeveld de Winter was honorably discharged in 2017 and has since pursued a career outside the Royal Netherlands Navy.

Captain J.W.A. (Jan-Willem) Scheuer (Den Helder, 12 December 1964) joined the Royal Netherlands Navy in 1983. He graduated in 1989 as a logistics officer and fulfilled several jobs as Deputy and Head of Logistics on HNLMS JACOB VAN HEEMSKERCK and HNLMS TYDEMAN. In 2010 he became Head of Logistics in HNLMS TROMP. In this capacity he took part in NATO Counter-Piracy Operation Ocean Shield in 2011 and served as Staff Officer Logistics of Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2).

Lieutenant General RNLMC F.V. (Frank) van Sprang (Tilburg, 28 September 1962), joined the Royal Netherlands Navy in 1982. During his career, he commanded No. 7 Troop Special Boat Service RNLMC, 1st Battalion RNLMC, the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps and was second in command of the Royal Netherlands Navy. As Director of Operations, from March 2016 to September 2017, he supervised the RNLN contribution to the Counter-Piracy Operations on the main maritime routes in the Indian Ocean. Since November 2019 LTGEN Frank van Sprang has held the position of Inspector General of the Armed Forces.

Commander N.W.P. (Niels) van Swelm BSc (Nijmegen, 17 November 1975). Joined the Royal Netherlands Navy as a Navigation Communications Officer in the Naval Air Service. He changed to Logistics Officer in 2002. He was stationed on HNLMS TROMP, DE RUYTER and EVERTSEN during their final phase of construction and trials as Deputy and Head of Logistics. He was deployed twice in Afghanistan in 2006 and 2009 (CIMIC Officer in Uruzgan Province). During this last deployment he was awarded the Combat Insignia. After returning from Afghanistan in 2010 he was assigned to the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2) Staff. In this capacity he took part in the NATO Counter-Piracy mission OCEAN SHIELD and the Article 5 mission ACTIVE ENDEVOUR. In 2015 he joined