

MS DAILY BRIEF - 9 September 2022

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Dredger Lieutenant Dimitrie Nicolescu hit a mine he was supposed to neutralise. A ship left Constanta

The Romanian Naval Forces sent the maritime dredger "Locotenent Dimitrie Nicolescu" on Thursday to neutralize a war mine drifting in the territorial waters of the Black Sea, the explosive mechanism having been detected around noon, about 40 kilometers away from the port of Constanta. The Romanian Naval Forces announced a short while ago that the explosion produced a small water hole, there are no casualties, the crew is out of danger and the ship's buoyancy is not affected. At the same time, a ship has left the Port of Constanta for the location of the dredger.

The Naval Forces also explained how the dredger "Locotenent Dimitrie Nicolescu" was hit by the mine.

The full press release is available here:

The maritime dredger "Locotenent Dimitrie Nicolescu" (DM-29) arrived on Thursday, 8 September, at around 17.45, in the bay where the sea mine reported by the GSP ship "Falcon" was drifting.

In accordance with the operational procedures for such interventions, a team of EOD divers was embarked on board the vessel, with a specialised boat to search and collect information about the object posing a danger to navigation, with the aim of neutralising it.

Hydrometeorological conditions in the maritime district where the war mine was located worsened after the arrival of the sea dredger in the district due to the increase in wind speed (10-12 m/s), the sea being of degree 4 (wave height 1.5-2 m). This situation did not allow to leave the EOD craft in the water and execute the mission.

Although safety precautions were taken after dark, due to the adverse weather conditions, the military vessel was struck by the sea mine, which was carried adrift by the storm. The explosion produced a small water hole, located at the limit of the ship's waterline, in the stern area (aft part of the ship).

There were no casualties or injuries as a result of the explosion, the ship's crew of 75 were not at risk, the ship's buoyancy was not affected and there was no major damage on board.

Immediately after the mine explosion, the ship's crew acted to plug the water hole and limit the effects of seawater entering the aft compartment. By order of the Chief of Naval Staff, the diving ship "Grozavul" left the port of Constanta to assist and tow the damaged dredger to the port of Constanta.

It should be recalled that the sea dredger "Locotenent Dimitrie Nicolescu" (DM-29) left the port of Constanta on Thursday, 8 September, at around 13.15, to carry out an intervention mission on a war mine, which was drifting at a distance of approximately 25 nautical miles (46 km), in a NE direction from the entrance to the port of Constanta.

After the outbreak of armed aggression by the Russian Federation in Ukraine, this is the third war mine to arrive in the area of responsibility of the Romanian Naval Forces. Since the start of the war, 28 sea mines have been destroyed in the western Black Sea so far, including three by Turkey, two by Romania, one by Bulgaria and 22 by Ukraine.

Original news:

According to Digi 24, during the intervention the ship hit the mine which exploded and caused major damage. The military vessel hit the mine it was supposed to neutralise and the engines were damaged.

There were 75 military personnel on board, but no casualties were reported. The vessel is unable to move and is awaiting help to be towed away as the sea is stormy. Initial reports also suggest that the vessel is taking on water at the stern and the crew is trying to evacuate it.

The war mine was discovered at around 11:45 by the GSP "Falcon", which was carrying out specific activities at a distance of about 25 nautical miles (46 km), in a northeasterly direction from the entrance to the port of Constanta. Subsequently, the maritime dredger "Locotenent Dimitrie Nicolescu" (DM-29) left the port of Constanta on Thursday, 8 September, at around 13:15, to carry out the intervention mission, a press release from the Romanian Naval Forces said.

Source: https://www.defenseromania.ro/dragorul-locotenent-dimitrie-nicolescu-a-lovit-o-mina-pe-care-trebuia-sa-o-neutralizeze-nava-ia-apa-la-bord-sunt-75-de-marinari_618083.html

Turkey to build ship for Azerbaijani fleet

Turkish company "STM Savunma Teknolojileri Mühendislik ve Ticaret A.Ş." will build an STM-MPAC warship for the Azerbaijani navy. The report states that the company

has developed a design for the STM-MPAC multi-purpose warship for the Azerbaijani Navy and has already proposed it for consideration by Baku. The cost of building the ship is estimated at \$100 million. If the project is approved in Baku, the ship will be handed over to the Azerbaijani Navy within three years. Earlier, it was reported that Azerbaijan's Ministry of Defence Industry and the Turkish company ASELSAN presented a modern high-precision GFAB-250 LG aerial bomb at a defence exhibition in Baku.

Source: <https://www.blackseanews.net/read/194048>

Another railway operator has started carrying Ukrainian cargo to the port of Constanta

At the Vadul-Siret border crossing point (Romania), another carrier - the Romanian company Cargo Trans Vagon - has started accepting Ukrainian cargo. According to Ukrzaliznytsia, this carrier has already accepted 1.54 thousand tons of cargo from Ukraine. The company works mainly with transport to the sea port of Constanta, writes the publication Porta Ukrainy with reference to Rail.insider. In addition, 4 Romanian carriers operate at the crossing. Cargo Trans Vagon is a private rail freight operator operating since 2004 and is part of the TTS (Transport Trade Services) group of companies. The transport services offered cover almost the entire Romanian railway network and are provided by its own fleet of locomotives. The goods transported include cereal crops, oil, fertilisers, timber, scrap iron, steel profiles and sugar.

Source: <https://www.blackseanews.net/read/194044>

Britain's flagship heads to US ahead of European operations

Britain's flagship leaves Portsmouth for the United States today - and ahead of a busy autumn of operations and exercises in European waters.

In the coming months, HMS Queen Elizabeth will be at the centre of a powerful task force of thousands of sailors, up to ten ships, F-35B Lightning jets, helicopter squadrons and Royal Marines Commandos operating across Europe this autumn. But the aircraft carrier will first deploy to the US east coast to undertake parts of the HMS Prince of Wales deployment - while her sister ship undergoes repairs. HMS Queen Elizabeth's Commanding Officer, Captain Ian Feasey, said, "After a period of maintenance, it is fantastic to have the fleet's flagship back on operational work with allies and partners." The Royal Navy Task Group will be working closely with allies and partners across Europe - from the Baltic Sea south to the Balkans and the Black Sea region - over the coming months. The operations are part of NATO's galvanised efforts in the face of Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine to protect security, stability and prosperity across Europe. HMS Queen Elizabeth will focus primarily on operations in the Baltic Sea and will work closely with forces in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. Together, these nations form the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force, which is designed to respond to crises whenever and wherever they occur. Ahead of the operational phase of the deployment, HMS Queen Elizabeth will be in New York to host the Atlantic Future Forum - a conference that brings together the brightest minds and most influential thinkers in defence and beyond to strengthen UK-US ties. The frigate HMS Richmond will accompany the aircraft carrier across the Atlantic. AB Warfare specialist Callum Rotherforth from HMS Richmond is on his first deployment. He said, "I've never been to the US, so I'm looking forward to going to New York. I want a picture above the Empire State Building. It's so cool to be part of a group sailing across the Atlantic." As a radar operator, I look forward to working with our shipmates on HMS Queen Elizabeth." AB Sophie Profitt of HMS Queen Elizabeth is also on her first

deployment. She added: "I feel nervous but very excited and grateful for the opportunity. "I'm looking forward to finding out what it's like on board at sea." Meanwhile, the Royal Navy's Littoral Response Group is completing its final preparations before deploying to the Mediterranean to operate with NATO allies and partners in a region that is vital to European security. The amphibious task group is made up of more than a thousand sailors and Royal Marines and will be led by HMS Albion.

Source: <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2022/09/britains-flagship-heads-for-the-usa-ahead-of-european-operations/>

Babcock wins contracts for MIECZNIK frigate programme in Poland

Babcock, the international defence company, has won two more contracts related to Poland's MIECZNIK (Swordfish) frigate programme.

The class design contract and the knowledge and skills transfer framework agreement (TOKAT), respectively, support the further development of the programme and the improvement of shipbuilding capacity in Poland to deliver MIECZNIK according to schedule. The two contracts underpin the strong economic and commercial relationship between the UK and Poland. Babcock was selected earlier this year as the platform design supplier and technology partner for the new frigate programme in Poland. Babcock is supporting the PGZ-MIECZNIK consortium for three Arrowhead 140 frigates to be built in Polish shipyards by a local workforce, making significant use of Polish suppliers and Babcock's global supply chain. The MIECZNIK program is an important addition to Babcock's established support for international defense customers around the globe and its continued international growth ambitions. Babcock's Arrowhead 140 design wins Polish MIECZNIK frigate program The class design contract is key to supporting the maturity of the MIECZNIK frigate and the provision of a design documentation package to Polska Grupa Zbrojeniowa (PGZ S.A) for submission to the classification authority. This critical and timely process in the contract will drive the next stage of the engineering process and support the cut steel programme of Ship 1 in 2023. Under the TOKAT framework contract, Babcock will share its technology, engineering expertise and industry know-how with PGZ S.A., PGZ SW and Remontowa Ship Building, with the aim of transforming its shipyards and delivering the MIECZNIK programme for the Polish Navy. The cooperation will include human resource development and staff training, support in infrastructure modernisation planning and implementation of tools and technologies. Babcock announced its contracts for the MIECZNIK frigate programme during MSPO, the 30th international defence industry event held in Kielce, Poland. Babcock CEO David Lockwood said, "I am delighted with the progress being made on the Polish MIECZNIK program. Our work in Poland is based on the common interests of NATO countries. Babcock will deliver first-class frigates that will contribute significantly to Poland's sovereign defence capability. We look forward to building on our close working relationship with the PGZ-MIECZNIK Consortium." Earlier this year, Babcock supported the opening of a new PGZ S.A. project management office in Gdynia, Poland, which will manage the in-country delivery of the country's MIECZNIK frigate program. The MIECZNIK frigate program in Poland is the second export contract for Arrowhead 140, following the first order of a design license agreement with PT PAL in Indonesia for two frigates. Babcock was announced as preferred bidder for the UK Tip 31 frigate programme in 2019, with the contract confirmed in November that year.

Source: <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2022/09/babcock-wins-contracts-for-polands-miecznik-frigate-programme/>

The experimental Ghost Fleet Overlord team has been joined by a new unmanned USV Mariner

The U.S. Navy and contractors continue to implement the Ghost Fleet Overlord pilot program, which aims to create and test new technologies in unmanned ships and surface vessels. To conduct the necessary research, experimental vessels with a special set of equipment and capabilities are being built. At the end of August, a third such vessel, the USV Mariner, was launched. In the near future it will go to sea and take part in tests.

Third in a series

Development of the Ghost Fleet Overlord programme began in the second half of the 10th year at the initiative of the US Navy's Unmanned Systems Command. By the end of the decade, companies participating in the program received orders to build experimental unmanned ships for testing. The first construction results came in last year. The customer received two ships, USV Ranger and USV Nomad, designed and built by Leidos and Gulf Craft. Under a similar design, the USV Mariner has been built since the late 1910s, but work on it has only recently been completed. The solemn christening and launching ceremony took place on 23 August this year in Annapolis, Maryland, home of the US Naval Academy. As reported, in the near future the ship will complete the installation of the remaining systems and perform the necessary berthing tests. The timing of such work is not specified. Then Mariner will go to sea trials, where it will need to confirm key features as well as demonstrate the operation of key systems. In the next phase, the new ship will join the other two. The unmanned flotilla will participate in various tests and experiments. It is planned to develop the independent and group work of such flagships in solving a wide range of tasks, from simple steering to the use of weapons. The first experiments of this kind took place last year, and now the Navy has new opportunities associated with an increased number of experimental ships.

Next year, the GFO team will include another unmanned ship, the USV Vanguard. It was fitted out last year and is being built to a different design from L3Harris and Austal USA. Having received such a ship, the Navy will be able to compare different designs and solutions and choose the most successful. In addition, the interaction of ships with different control systems will be developed.

On a ready-made basis

Due to the experimental nature of the GFO project, outstanding technical performance is not required from test vessels. At the same time, they should be built as soon as possible and at no extra cost. To this end, Leidos and Gulf Craft have completed their project on a ready-made platform. The basis for the "Ranger", "Nomad" and "Mariner" was one of the series support vessels built at the Gulf Craft plant. This boat is approx. 60 m with a displaced bow thruster and a large cargo deck. The power system is based on diesel engines of adequate power. It provides both propulsion and power generation for new controls and payload. Jobs have been saved in the wheelhouse, but the presence of a crew on board is not mandatory. Sailors are replaced by an automatic control system developed by Leidos. It includes various radio engineering and optical means of situational awareness, navigation systems, computer equipment, etc. The control system can operate completely independently, according to a programmed schedule, or it can execute commands from an operator located at a remote control point. Functions such as automatic steering of the vessel, application of the target task, etc. Group operation of several vessels is also possible. In this case, control systems must exchange data and solve tasks together. The Leidos and Gulf Craft is capable of carrying a variety of payloads. When solving transport problems, several standard containers are placed on deck. In reconnaissance or combat configuration, the ship can receive appropriate tools and weapons, including in container form. In early September 2021, the USV Ranger

demonstrated one of the methods of combat use. As part of the testing, a container with a unified missile launcher was placed on its deck. An SM-6 anti-aircraft missile was placed on the installation. In automatic mode, the "Ranger" went to a given area and then, on command from the operator, launched. This test showed the fundamental possibility of turning GFO ships into guided missile weapon carriers. At the same time, the use of a unified launcher allows a wide range of munitions to be used in service with US Navy surface ships. A vision for the future The Ghost Fleet Overlord program envisions building and testing more unmanned ships. One such craft will participate in various events and demonstrate its capabilities. In addition, during testing they plan to identify and correct deficiencies in the two proposed projects. At the same time, the GFO programme is exclusively research in nature. Four ships will retain their experimental status and will not be transferred to the battle fleet. However, based on the results of the GFO, it is planned to create new projects for unmanned vessels, ships and boats for various purposes. These pennants will enter service and strengthen the existing Navy. The results of the GFO programme have not yet been determined, but the US Navy is already making bold plans. So, in the distant future, unmanned ships will be able to go into large-scale production and become a major component of the surface fleet. Depending on the situation, they could complement full-fledged warships or replace them. At the end of July, the US Navy released a new sail plan for the Chief of Naval Operations for 2022. According to the document, the fleet now has about 300 warships and support vessels. In light of existing and expected challenges and threats, the Navy needs to increase its surface forces. By 2045, the fleet should already have 523 flags. It is noted that only 373 surface units will be manned. The remaining 150 units will be unmanned. This means that automated ships will account for almost a third of the total surface forces. It is expected that this way of developing the IUD will offer both quantitative and qualitative advantages. Building 150 unmanned ships is a challenge, even if it takes more than 20 years. Advanced technologies and solutions are needed to achieve such plans. They are now being developed as part of the GFO programme and a number of other projects. Consequently, the implementation of the command's bold plans depends on the success of the new USV Mariner and other experimental flagships.

New step

The Pentagon is showing great interest in unmanned and unmanned technologies, including in the maritime domain. Various such samples are being developed and tested. In the distant future, such experiments should lead to the formation of a fairly large unmanned fleet. The next step in this direction was the launch of the new experimental vessel USV Mariner. In the near future, it will be tested and participate in experiments, independently and together with other Ghost Fleet Overlord ships. What the results of these activities will be is not yet clear. But it is clear that the US Navy will do its utmost to complete them successfully and create the necessary new technologies.

Source: <https://topwar.ru/201445-jeksperimentalnyj-otrjad-ghost-fleet-overlord-popolnilsja-novym-bezjekipazhnym-sudnom-usv-mariner.html>

Russia's demand for new ship construction by 2035 has risen to 1,500 units

Russia's demand for the construction of new ships by 2035 has increased to 1,500 units, IAA correspondent PortNews quotes Victor Yevtukhov, State Secretary - Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation, at the session of the Eastern Economic Forum "The future of industries: what to buy and what to produce? Shipbuilding". According to him, the previous plan for the construction of ships and civil equipment was based on demand by 2035 estimated at just over 1,000 units. "However, the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Agriculture have stated that an additional 440 units are

needed... In addition, the demand for new buildings to provide cargo transport on the Northern Sea Route, as well as for passenger transport, has increased from 32 units with additional. 71 ships. Thus, by 2035 about 1,500 ships are to be built at Russian shipyards," Victor Yevtukhov said.

Source: <https://en.portnews.ru/news/335234/>

Empty container problem intensifies - Sea-Intelligence

Sea-Intelligence has reviewed the analysis of the possible normalisation of supply chains and the potential ramifications on empty container flows. The data underpinning this model comes from Flexport Ocean Timeliness Indicator (OTI) data, which measures the time it takes from when goods are ready at the exporter until the importer takes delivery. Pre-pandemic, the average shipping time was 45 days, peaking at a shipping time of 112 days in February 2022, which has since been reduced to 88 days, as measured on 26 August 2022. As transport times have been extended, containers have become stuck in the longer supply chain, causing initial increases in freight rates in the second half of 2020 as not enough empty containers could be moved back to Asia in time. With a massive shortage of empty containers, carriers had to order new containers to be manufactured in Asia, and these were then introduced into extended supply chains. As transport times get shorter and shorter, these extra containers will be taken out of the supply chain again and start to accumulate, mainly in Europe and the US. We have been predicting this development since February 2022, and this week we looked at whether our prediction was on track. The blue line in Figure 1 shows Sea-Intelligence's current projection of the excess empty containers that will be released in North America from the Transpacific trade alone, and the orange line shows Sea-Intelligence's projection from February 2022. If shipping times are back to "normal" by early next year, to release 4.3 million TEUs of excess containers in North America that cannot be shipped out in planned network operations. This will potentially overwhelm empty container depots in the US, a problem that is already starting to materialise.

Source: <https://en.portnews.ru/news/335250/>

Grain exports to Iran via the port of Makhachkala in 2022 increased by 60% to 142 thousand tonnes

Handling of all types of dry goods increased by 90% In January-August 2022, grain exports to Iran through the commercial port of Makhachkala increased by 60% year-on-year to 142 thousand tonnes. Handling of all types of dry goods, including cement, grain, clinker, building tile, flour and salt increased by 90% year-on-year to 285 thousand tonnes. Since the beginning of 2022, Makhachkala Commercial Seaport has handled over 108 thousand tonnes of Iranian cement, twice as much as in the same period of 2021. Makhachkala Commercial Seaport is Russia's only ice-free deep-water port in the Caspian Sea, capable of accommodating vessels up to 150 meters in length and up to 4.5 meters in draft. The port's infrastructure includes a dry cargo port with a transshipment facility capable of handling 3 million tonnes of cargo per year, general cargo, dry bulk and container berths with an annual capacity of 1.2 million tonnes, a Ro-Ro terminal with an annual capacity of 1.3 million tonnes and a grain terminal with an annual capacity of 0.5 million tonnes. It connects the southern Russian transport system with the states of Middle Asia, Iran, the Transcaucasian region, etc.

Source: <https://en.portnews.ru/news/335248/>

Cargo volume at Russian seaports in 2022 remains constant year on year - Vladimir Putin

Cargo transport along some routes may increase by about 60% by 2030 Total cargo throughput at Russian seaports decreased only slightly in the seven months of this year: it remained at the same level as in the previous year, i.e. about 482 million tons of cargo. Last year it was 483 million, Russian President Vladimir Putin told the plenary session of the Eastern Economic Forum on 7 September. According to the president, in recent years Russia has implemented big plans to develop transport infrastructure, railways and roads, seaports and pipelines. These timely decisions have made it possible for businesses to quickly rebuild logistics in today's conditions. "Ports in the Far East are experiencing a real logistics boom. The volume of cargo transshipment and container handling is such that specialists are working 24/7 to manage the workload," he stressed, adding that Russia will further strengthen its transport capacities, expand the road and rail network, build new access routes to sea terminals. and expand their capacity. "Our focus is on building infrastructure to the east and developing the international north-south corridor and ports in the Azov-Black Sea basin which we will continue to work on. These will open up more opportunities for Russian companies to enter the markets of Iran, India, the Middle East and Africa and, of course, for reciprocal deliveries from these countries. The total volume of freight and cargo transport along these routes and arteries could increase by about 60% by 2030. We are absolutely realistic about our forecasts," Vladimir Putin said. "In order to achieve these figures, the Government has drawn up specific 'roadmaps' that will allow us to do this work consistently, to strengthen and coordinate our efforts in terms of deadlines and the ability to overcome bottlenecks and modernise border crossings and related infrastructure," he added.

Source: <https://en.portnews.ru/news/335246/>

The first LNG tanker from the Arctic LNG 1 project sailed to the US - Vladimir Putin

Russia's president has referred to Russia's gas and oil price cap as nonsense The first LNG tanker carrying LNG from the Arctic LNG 1 project has sailed to the United States, Russian President Vladimir Putin told the plenary session of the Eastern Economic Forum, according to the Kremlin. "The Americans are very pragmatic people. They waged a war against one of our Arctic LNG projects, but the first tanker carrying LNG from this field and from this enterprise sailed to the United States, because it was a profitable business," the president said adding later that he was talking about the Arctic LNG 1 project. According to Vladimir Putin, Russia can meet the growing demand of all those who want to work with us. He pointed out that pipeline gas is orders of magnitude more competitive than liquefied natural gas brought in from overseas. When commenting on the G7's decision to impose a price cap on Russian gas and oil, Vladimir Putin referred to it as foolish: "yet another non-market decision with no prospects. All administrative restrictions in global trade only lead to disproportion and higher prices," he said, adding that the European market has recently lost its premium status, while global energy demand is huge, so there are no problems with selling energy. "We will also engage in gas liquefaction and LNG sales around the world," Vladimir Putin said.

Source: <https://en.portnews.ru/news/335197/>

Bunkering in the port of Vladivostok in 2022 fell 28% from last year

The number of bunkering operations increased to 2,321 In January-August 2022, bunker fuel sales in the port of Vladivostok and its offshore terminals totaled about 390.4 thousand tons, down 28% from January-August 2021, according to company statistics.

Approximately 2/3 of this volume was sold at offshore terminals (eastern, western and inland terminals), with the remainder sold in port. During the reporting period, heavy fuel oil accounted for the bulk of sales. Shipments of lubricants totalled 150 tonnes. The number of operations increased to 2,321. In 2021, fuel sales in the port of Vladivostok and its offshore terminals totaled about 739,500 tons, down 24% from last year.

Source: <https://en.portnews.ru/news/335182/>

NATO and allied naval forces monitor three Russian ships in the North Sea

The three Russian vessels are the Vice Admiral Kulakov, the Marshal Ustinov and the tanker Vyazma.

NATO and allied naval forces have been monitoring the movement of Russian Navy warships in the North Sea and Celtic Sea region. The Russian ships transiting the region were a Udaloy-class destroyer, the Vice Admiral Kulakov and a Slava-class cruiser Marshal Ustinov, together with the support ship Vyazma. Prior to their most recent transit of the English Channel on their homeward voyage, the three ships were deployed in the eastern Mediterranean region. That's after the Russian task force backed the invasion of Ukraine in February. According to the Royal Navy (RN), its three Type 23 warships, including HMS Lancaster, HMS Westminster and HMS Richmond, were working alongside NATO forces to track Russian warships. However, NATO's Maritime Allied Command (MARCOM) said the watch forces had not observed any "aggressive behaviour" from the Russian ships. The forces remained vigilant and ready to adapt to any changing tactical situations. The latest mission was coordinated by Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1), which is currently under the command of the Royal Netherlands Navy, and the Maritime Operations Centres of the allied navies. SNMG1 is NATO's very high readiness task group, consisting of warships from Germany, the Netherlands, the UK, Portugal and Norway. This operation was undertaken by NATO ships as part of the larger Allied military presence to maintain maritime situational awareness in the Atlantic and North Sea regions. Commander NATO Surface Forces and Rear Admiral of the German Navy, Stefan Pauly, said, "Routine monitoring of areas and activities of interest to the maritime security of allied nations is an important part of NATO's responsibilities. "It creates general maritime awareness and contributes to the safety of navigation for the international maritime community."

Source: <https://www.naval-technology.com/news/nato-allied-forces-russian-ships/>