

New Anti-Piracy PowerBoat Combo-Course for Scotland following Prime Ministers Decision to Allow Armed-Guards on British Vessels

A new Anti-Piracy combo training course for HM Armed Forces service-leavers comes to Scotland, to help former service personnel move into the private sector.

United Kingdom of Great Britain & N. Ireland, Oct 30, 2011 -- It has been announced that following UK Prime Minister David Camerons' announcement that British-Flagged merchant vessels are to be allowed to carry armed-guards to protect against the increasing threat of piracy attacks, a Scottish maritime training centre has created a new integrated combination training course aimed at former and serving members of the Armed Forces, to assist in finding employment in the private maritime protection sector.

1st ScotSail Training, based at Largs Yacht Haven on Scotlands West coast, is to offer the new 3-day intensive training course from November 2011. The course will include UK and Internationally-Recognised training and certification covering fast powerboating, rescue, navigation and handling skills, small-craft radar targetting and the Marine-Band VHF Radio (SRC) Licence.

The announcement comes just as the UK Government plans to introduce new plans to relax existing legislation banning the use of firearms at sea, on British-Flagged vessels in high-risk areas like the Gulf of Aden, a region notorious for the high level of piracy attacks and hostage-takings.

In October 2009 British couple Paul and Rachel Chandler were kidnapped whilst sailing their boat around Somalia by pirates.

Mr Cameron said he wanted to legalise armed guards after talks in Australia with Commonwealth leaders from the region over the escalating problem faced in waters off their shores.

Peter Cook, director of the Security Association for the Maritime Industry (Sami), said: "We welcome this carefully considered change of policy and we will continue with our accreditation programme to ensure that maritime security guards are of the highest standards."

Under the plans the home secretary will be given the power to license armed guards for ships.

Mr Cook said most armed guards would be using high velocity rifles, which were used to "deter pirates" from attempting to board a ship.

Use of armed guards would be restricted to voyages through particular waters in affected areas He confirmed that no vessel with armed guards had been taken over by pirates, and said in several cases guards had fired shots at pirates.

Mr Cook said many armed guards were former Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel, and he added: "With the current redundancies it has provided them with an ideal place to go because their levels of professionalism are very high and they are doing something very worthwhile with their skills."

The new ScotSail Anti-Piracy Servicel Leavers (AP/SL) Combo-Course will be available to book from Tuesday 1st November 2011, and information will be published in 'PathFinder' the British Armed Forces magazine. Further details including dates and pricing can be found online at www.ScotSail-Training.co.uk/APSL

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