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PRESS RELEASE

**FRENCH NAVY SHIP « COMMANDANT L'HERMINIER »
VISITS GHANA
from June 4 to 7, 2012**



French Navy Ship “Commandant L’Herminier” port call is scheduled on Monday June 4, 2012 at Tema Harbour. It will cast off on Thursday June 7, 2012.

The purpose of the visit is to reinforce the existing ties between the French and the Ghanaian naval forces.

Under command of Lieutenant Commander Gwenegon LE BOURHIS since December, 2010, the frigate “Commandant L’Herminier” has a staff of 9 officers, 51 petty officers and 40 boatmen and sailors.

The French Navy Ship’s original tasking is anti-submarine warfare in coastal waters. “Commandant L’Herminier” is now going to take part with the Ghana Navy in common training activities, including a possible exercise at sea.

Within the framework of its visit and as part of its cooperation with the civil society, the military navy’ staff is going to conduct operations of renovation to the benefit of the NGO Orphan Aid at Dodowa.

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PROGRAM

Monday, 4th June 2012, 9am: Cdt L'Herminier arrives at Tema Harbour

Tuesday, 5th of June, 10.30am: CO Cdt L'Herminier calls on Tema Chief and on Metropolitan Chief Executive.

Wednesday, 6th June 2012, 9am-4pm: **Combined trainings at Tema Harbour**

(Participation to a safety exercise onboard, fire fighting exercise, immediate intervention, intervention procedures adapted to foreign vessel, flood fighting exercise onboard with and without assistance ...)

Very important notice: Journalists interested have to let me know by sending an e-mail to gwenola.roblin@diplomatie.gouv.fr or giving a call to 0208869243.

As you will need a special authorization to enter the harbour, you have to provide your name, first name and newspaper's name **before Tuesday, 2pm.**

Wednesday, 6th June 2012, 8am-7pm: **Operation with the civil-society**

Support to the NGO Orphan Aid, at Dodowa (1h30 driving time from Accra): renovation of the buildings, paintings works, floor tiles, sorting of clothes, meeting and sport with the orphans, storytelling on the life on board ...

Very important notice: Journalists interested have to let me know by sending an e-mail to gwenola.roblin@diplomatie.gouv.fr or give a call to 0208869243.

Thursday, 7th June 2012: Commandant L'Herminier departs from Tema.

The French Navy Ship is going to embark personnel of Ghana Navy until Cotonou Harbour.

For the first time ever, a common exercise at sea between the French Navy, the Ghana Navy and the British Navy may take place off the Ghanaian Coast.

This exercise at sea would be aimed to promote broader cooperation between the countries to improve maritime security: counter piracy operations, protection of offshore oilfields, fighting against trafficking and illegal fishing. You will get more information next week, if the exercise is confirmed.



THE FRENCH NAVY SHIP "COMMANDANT L'HERMINIER"

▪ General Data

- Commandant L'Herminier was launched in 1981 and commissioned in 1986
- A69 class - 17 light frigates (most numerous class in French Navy) - 9 are still in ops
- Others have been decommissioned or serve in other navies (Arg, Tur)
- Their name is the one of French sailor heroes of World War II

▪ Characteristics

- Displacement : 1300 t
- Dimensions : 80.5 m (Length Overall) – 5.5 (Max Draft)
- Propulsion : 2 diesel engine 12 000 Hp – variable pitch propellers
- Max Sped : 24 knots – range 4500 miles at 15 knots
- Complement : 8 officers / 47 petty officers / 30 enlisted
- Weapons : 100 mm gun / 2 * 20 mm guns / 4*12.7mm guns

Missions

- Original tasking is Anti-submarine warfare in coastal waters. The main mission remains protection of the French deterrence assets (submarines) in the bay of Biscaye.
- Second tasking is maritime approaches surveillance for Search and rescue operations and law enforcement operations.
- Last tasking is overseas deployment as the present mission: Corymbe 114.

Corymbe Mission

Operational capability in the Gulf of Guinea is characterised by the constant presence of a naval force that is able to detect and prevent a crisis and, if necessary, intervene in the area at short notice. In this way, French Navy vessels contribute to the protection of French nationals – both military personnel and civilians – living or working in this part of Africa. To this end, a French Navy vessel remains in the region at all times, ready, if needed, to help evacuate French nationals and the citizens of other countries, European or otherwise. Since 1990, a warship has "kept watch" in the region between Senegal and Angola as part of the *Corymbe* mission.

The mission also provides an opportunity to organise exercises in cooperation with local naval forces, develop bilateral exchanges with the African nations visited and, where necessary, deliver humanitarian assistance. These activities support other efforts aimed at building up African peacekeeping capabilities. Sources : © French Navy

Interactions with Ghana during the call 4th-7th June

- Meeting with Ghanaian Navy staff to develop cooperation links between our navies.
- Training for some Ghanaians seamen (approx 40) concerning navigation in high sea, fire safety...
- Training at sea with Ghanaian Navy units to be able to operate in common
- Help provided to Orphan Aid Ghana - Lisa Lovatt-Smith association

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BIOGRAPHY OF LIEUTENANT COMMANDER GWENEGAN LE BOURHIS

Lieutenant Commander Gwenegan Le Bourhis, commanding officer of frigate « Commandant L'Herminier ».



After joining the French Naval Academy in 1998 and being certified anti submarine warfare (ASW) officer, LCDR Le Bourhis was appointed on different French Navy units (“Commandant l’Herminier”, hydrographic vessel “Laplace”, destroyers “Montcalm”, “Jean de Vienne” or “Latouche Tréville”

He notably took part in the « Baliste » operation – a non-combatant evacuation ops off the Lebanon coasts in 2006 and in the SAR operation of the sinking of MV “Joola” in 2002.

He took the command of “Commandant L’Herminier” on 10th December 2010.

This fan of rugby is married and father of four children.



www.oafrica.org

OrphanAid Africa (OA) is a non-profit organization developing programs and projects to help vulnerable children and their families in Ghana, West Africa.

The organization was originally founded as a local NGO in Ghana in 2002 and progressively grew internationally with registered branches in the United States where it is a 501 c3 non-profit, as well as France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Switzerland. The common goal of these branches is to rescue vulnerable children in need of care and to trace and reunify children with their families. These children are often separated from their families by poverty, the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the increase of rural-to-urban migration.

OrphanAid Africa depends on the generous donations of individuals and businesses, as well as volunteers and partners, to help us carry out our work.

Mission

OrphanAid Africa's aim is to support orphans and vulnerable children in Ghana through programs in Care Reform, family support, education, and development. Our goal is to ensure that children grow up in safe and permanent family settings with appropriate care and protection. OA is an implementing partner in the Government of Ghana National Plan of Action for Orphans and Vulnerable Children.

The History of OrphanAid Africa

OrphanAid Africa was founded by Lisa Lovatt-Smith in October 2002. Lisa is an established author whose published work includes 13 books on design and photography. She was an editor at Vogue magazine for many years while living in both Spain and France. In 2002 Lisa decided to volunteer with her daughter at children's home in Ghana. There were more than 100 destitute and abandoned children living at the home, some brought to the home by police or social welfare workers because the children's parents had died of endemic sicknesses such as malaria, AIDS, or tuberculosis. Very often, however, the children were abandoned because the parents simply couldn't afford to take care of them. This experience proved to be so life changing for Lisa that she left behind her glamorous lifestyle in Europe and moved to Ghana full-time. Her desire to help orphans was a long-lasting and substantial one, driving her to launch OrphanAid Africa with the aim of helping make sure no child should need to grow up in an institution, unloved and with few prospects for the future.