



## **Maritime Security Leader AdvanFort Joins First Class of National Maritime Law Enforcement Academy**

### **in Conjunction with MITAGS-PMI Counter-Piracy Operations Training Program**

On the eve of the National Maritime Law Enforcement Academy's first counter-piracy training program for corporations working in the merchant marine environment, the NMLEA is very pleased to announce that among its first certification candidates are a number of vessel security officers from AdvanFort, already a recognized leader in the world effort against piracy and other attacks against vessels and seafarers.

Noting that the NMLEA is supported by the Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies (MITAGS), the Academy's efforts are a big step forward in meeting growing international demands for standardizing (and professionalizing) counter-piracy security teams not just in the United States, but around the world.

The NMLEA and MITAGS having agreed to work together to design the best program possible to meet the international shipping community's needs, the new counter-piracy operations training program teaches those "best practices" that have been identified to date, with a special emphasis on the effective integration of security forces with vessel captains and crews.

"This program is designed to assist companies like AdvanFort to maintain and highlight their highest-level of professional security officer possible," said Robert M. Wells, director of training for both the National and International Maritime Law Enforcement Academy's.

"The course will certify officers as vessel security officers through MITAGS in order to assist those officers in understanding the corporate ships' security officers and ships' security officer's requirements, and to better assist them in vessel preparation in transit through challenging waters and in the conducting of more realistic and effective required counter piracy drills."

Wells pointed to AdvanFort's leading role in the private maritime security world, noting that the company was just this week officially approved by the Panama Maritime Authority (PMA) to conduct counter-piracy operations aboard the more than 5,700 ships flying the flag of the Republic of Panama, making that country the largest ship registry in the world.

"This training will allow shipping companies to see exactly what officers are being trained in and be comfortable with the fact an outside entity has conducted that training, evaluated the officers and insured they meet the highest standards possible before deployment," Wells added.

"Unfortunately for both crews and ship owners, many companies state they have training programs; however, there is no real transparency as to the effectiveness of that training or exactly what that training entails."

The reason the NMLEA has teamed with MITAGS is to insure industry has the highest comfort level possible for the right training for the mission of counter-piracy operations certification, Wells concluded.

"Safety, working well with Captains and Crews and execution of the appropriate use of force for the situation is key to any successful security operations afloat," he said.

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