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Special Edition: 06

President

The Bahamas Military and Maritime Academy

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INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE SEAFARER

“The enduring call of the sea: Honoring our maritime heritage and charting our future”



Commander Origin Deleveaux, Jr., MSc, B.C.M., JP, Hon. DD
Commanding Officer, Bahamas Military and Maritime Academy (BMMA)

THE ENDURING CALL OF THE SEA: HONORING OUR MARITIME HERITAGE AND CHARTING OUR FUTURE

On this International Day of the Seafarer, we pause to recognize the generations of Bahamians whose lives have been shaped by the sea, and in doing so, we chart a path forward that honors their legacy while securing our maritime future. The Bahamas, with its vast archipelagic geography and deep seafaring tradition, has long depended on those who navigate, protect, and serve upon our waters not only for commerce and connectivity but for the very fabric of national identity and resilience. Today, as we commemorate this global observance established by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), we do so with the understanding that our

nation's destiny has always been inextricably linked to the waters that surround us.



The seafarer is not a distant figure, abstracted in folklore or global shipping statistics. In our context, the seafarer is the Defence Force marine who answers the call to serve in defense of our nation's borders. The seafarer is the inter-island cargo crew, connecting our Family Islands with vital goods. The seafarer is the fisheries officer, the port inspector, the ferry captain, the oceanographer, the maritime lawyer, and the maritime engineer. The seafarer is the fisherman and fisherwoman who, for generations, have sustained communities across our archipelago—from the conch divers of Andros to the bonefishermen of Eleuthera, from the reef fishers of the Abacos to the traditional fishing families of the Family Islands who have passed down maritime knowledge through generations. Each contributes not only to the economic strength of our country but to the health, safety, and cohesion of our communities.

THE ROYAL BAHAMAS DEFENCE FORCE: GUARDIANS OF OUR MARITIME DOMAIN

The Royal Bahamas Defence Force (RBDF) has served as the cornerstone of our maritime tradition, embodying the values of service, discipline, and expertise that define professional seamanship. For over five decades, the RBDF



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has protected our territorial waters, conducted search and rescue operations, and maintained the maritime security essential to our nation's prosperity. From the early patrol boats of the 1970s to today's sophisticated fleet, the RBDF has evolved alongside our nation's growing maritime responsibilities.

The RBDF's distinguished leadership has provided the foundation for institutional excellence and maritime expertise. Former Commodore Dr. Raymond King, who served with distinction for 38 years and led the force through critical periods including Hurricane Dorian, the COVID-19 pandemic, and regional security challenges, exemplified the vision of expanding military training beyond traditional boundaries. His leadership laid important groundwork for what would become the Bahamas Military and Maritime Academy (BMMA), demonstrating that maritime excellence requires both technical competence and academic rigor.

In May 2025, Captain Floyd Moxey was named Commodore-elect of the Royal Bahamas Defence Force, succeeding Commodore Raymond King. Joining him in the leadership team are Deputy Commander Defence Force (DCDF) Captain Carlon Bethell and Captain Natasha Miller—the latter being the first woman to assume this senior command position.



Timeline of the RBDF: 1970s—2025

1970s	Planning for a naval force
1979	RBDF established
1980	Coastal patrols begin
2010s	Focus on counter-narcotics
2025	Modernization efforts

Under the new leadership of Commodore Floyd Moxey, who assumed command in May 2025, the RBDF continues its evolution as a modern, forward-looking force. Commodore Moxey, a distinguished military professional and legal expert with over four decades of experience, brings a unique combination of maritime operational experience and legal expertise to the position. Starting as a marine mechanic from Mangrove Cay, Andros, and rising through the ranks over 40 years of service, he embodies the RBDF's commitment to developing talent from



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within. His comprehensive understanding of both technical operations and legal frameworks positions the Force to address the complex challenges of modern maritime security.

The RBDF's contributions extend far beyond national defense. During Hurricane Dorian in 2019, RBDF vessels and personnel were instrumental in evacuation efforts and humanitarian relief operations. The courage and sacrifice inherent in maritime service was most profoundly demonstrated on May 10, 1980, when four brave marines—Able Seaman Fenrick Sturup, Marine Seaman Austin Smith, David Tucker, and Edward Williams—gave their lives aboard HMBS Flamingo while defending our territorial waters from foreign incursion. This tragic incident, which galvanized national unity and strengthened Bahamian resolve, stands as a testament to the dedication of those who serve upon our waters and the ultimate price that maritime defenders may be called upon to pay in protection of our sovereignty. The Force's marine units have intercepted countless drug trafficking operations, protected our fishing grounds from poachers, and assisted mariners in distress throughout our waters. Under current leadership, the RBDF is strengthening its capabilities with new safe boats, enhanced coastal radar systems, and expanded intelligence partnerships with regional allies, particularly in response to the ongoing crisis in Haiti. These operations demonstrate the multifaceted role that professional seafarers play in maintaining the security and stability that underpin our society.

The establishment of the Bahamas Military and Maritime Academy (BMMA) is a continuation of this legacy. Rooted in the Royal Bahamas Defence Force's longstanding commitment to maritime excellence, BMMA stands today as a public institution designed to elevate the training and academic preparation of Bahamians for roles across the maritime, national security, sustainability, and related sectors. As we reflect on the enduring service of seafarers, we also look to the future one where education is not the privilege of a few but the national inheritance of many. This transformation represents more than institutional evolution; it embodies our recognition that competence is fundamental to national competitiveness in the 21st century.

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN MARITIME GOVERNANCE

Prime Minister Philip Davis has consistently demonstrated visionary leadership in positioning The Bahamas as a regional and global voice on maritime issues. His administration has championed the blue economy as a pathway to sustainable development, recognizing that our ocean resources represent both opportunity and responsibility. During his tenure as CARICOM Chairman in 2023, Prime Minister Davis united Caribbean nations in advocating for stronger international action on climate change impacts affecting small island developing states (SIDS), particularly the threats posed to coastal communities and maritime infrastructure.

The Prime Minister's leadership has been particularly evident in international forums



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where maritime concerns intersect with climate and development challenges.



At COP28 in Dubai, Prime Minister Davis set a commanding tone on the opening day, underscoring the critical need for climate-smart investment, especially for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and highlighting The Bahamas' innovative strategies for sustainable development and resilience. His consistent message that small states must have their voices heard in global governance resonates strongly with the international maritime community's growing recognition of the need for inclusive and equitable ocean governance.

Recent initiatives under the Davis administration have strengthened The Bahamas' position as a leader in sustainable maritime development. The signing of agreements with international partners for airport infrastructure development, the advancement of safety standards, and the promotion of environmentally responsible shipping practices all reflect a comprehensive approach to maritime governance that serves as a model for other small island developing states.

The Academy's School of Maritime and Coastal Studies is designed to be a cornerstone of this effort. It integrates foundational maritime skills with emerging competencies in coastal resilience, port management, marine logistics, and navigation technologies. Through this school of study, BMMA seeks to ensure that our nation is not only keeping pace with global maritime standards but shaping them in ways that reflect the unique needs and opportunities of Small Island Developing States. The curriculum addresses contemporary challenges such as autonomous vessel operations, green shipping technologies, and integrated coastal zone management, ensuring that Bahamian maritime professionals will be prepared for the industry's future, not just its present.

This mission is not hypothetical. It builds on a proven track record. The RBDF's Training Department, from which BMMA evolved, has for decades produced disciplined professionals in vessel operations, maritime safety, and leadership. The transformation of that legacy into a formal stand-alone public academic institution represents a strategic step for national development. It signals our collective intent to treat maritime readiness, blue economy innovation, and ocean governance not as fragmented concerns but as an integrated pathway to sustainable development. This integration reflects our understanding that modern maritime challenges require interdisciplinary solutions, combining traditional seamanship with contemporary knowledge in



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environmental science, technology, and international law.

It also signals something deeper: a commitment to equity. By creating clear, affordable, and high-quality entry points into maritime careers for youth across the archipelago, BMMA acts as a bridge between opportunity and service. The Academy's planned Visiting Scholars Program in its Security and Sustainability Research Institute (SSRI) as well as partnerships with regional and international entities will further ensure that seafaring is not only dignified labor but an engine for scientific advancement, peacebuilding, and climate resilience. These initiatives will bring leading maritime and related experts to our shores while providing opportunities for Bahamian scholars to engage with international research networks, fostering the kind of knowledge exchange that strengthens both local capacity and global understanding.

REGIONAL COOPERATION AND CARIBBEAN SOLIDARITY

The Bahamas does not sail alone in addressing the challenges and opportunities of the maritime domain. Throughout the Caribbean, nations are recognizing the critical importance of maritime cooperation in achieving sustainable development and maintaining regional security. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has increasingly focused on coordinated approaches to maritime challenges, from climate resilience to security cooperation.

Recent initiatives have demonstrated the power of regional maritime collaboration. The

Caribbean Maritime University's (CMU) partnerships with national institutions throughout the region have enhanced training standards and promoted knowledge sharing. The Regional Security System has coordinated joint maritime exercises that have strengthened collective capacity for addressing transnational threats. The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) has developed sophisticated protocols for maritime disaster response that leverage the collective resources of member states.

Prime Minister Davis has been instrumental in advancing these collaborative efforts. His leadership in advocating for the Caribbean's participation in global maritime governance forums has elevated the region's profile and influence. The recent establishment of the Caribbean-Africa partnership, formalized through agreements between CARICOM and the African Union, represents a new model of South-South cooperation that could transform maritime trade and development patterns.

These regional partnerships provide the context within which BMMA's development takes on broader significance. The Academy is being designed not only to serve Bahamian needs but to contribute to regional maritime capacity. Plans for student exchange programs, joint research initiatives, and collaborative training exercises will strengthen the Caribbean's collective maritime capabilities while fostering the kind of regional integration that enhances both security and prosperity.



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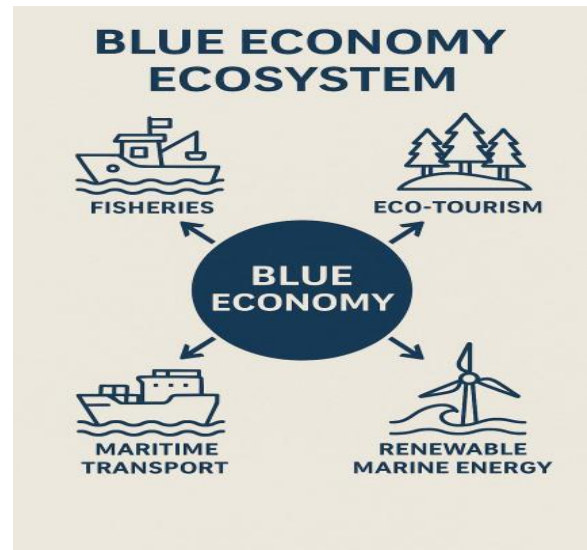
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On this day, we also reflect on the broader geopolitical and ecological realities confronting the maritime sector. Climate change threatens the stability of our oceans and the livelihoods of coastal communities. Illicit trafficking, irregular migration, and geopolitical instability test the strength of regional naval cooperation. The seafarer today must be trained not only in navigation but in systems thinking, crisis response, and the diplomacy of marine space. That is why BMMA's curriculum is being designed with holistic maritime security in mind embedding sustainability, ethics, and technological fluency into its foundation. The modern maritime professional must understand how ocean acidification affects marine ecosystems, how sea level rise impacts port infrastructure, how cyber threats can compromise navigation systems, and how international law governs responses to maritime security challenges.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE BLUE ECONOMY

The concept of the blue economy has gained prominence as nations recognize the potential for ocean-based economic activities to drive sustainable development. For The Bahamas, with our extensive maritime domain and dependence on ocean resources, the blue economy represents both opportunity and imperative. The sustainable management of our marine resources, the development of environmentally responsible maritime industries, and the protection of marine ecosystems are all essential components of our national development strategy.



BMMA's role in advancing the blue economy extends beyond traditional maritime training. The Academy's research initiatives will focus on areas such as sustainable fisheries management, marine renewable energy, and coastal ecosystem restoration. The Security and Sustainability Research Institute will examine how maritime security, and environmental protection can be mutually reinforcing, developing strategies that protect both marine resources and the communities that depend on them.

Current developments in marine technology offer new possibilities for sustainable ocean use. Autonomous underwater vehicles can monitor marine environments with minimal ecological impact. Advanced materials and design techniques can reduce the environmental footprint of shipping and offshore activities. Digital technologies can improve the efficiency of port operations while reducing emissions and



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waste. BMMA's curriculum will ensure that Bahamian maritime professionals are equipped to leverage these technologies in ways that advance both economic and environmental objectives.

The integration of traditional ecological knowledge with modern scientific understanding represents another important dimension of sustainable maritime development. The knowledge held by Bahamian fishermen, boat builders, and coastal communities provides insights that complement formal scientific research. BMMA will create opportunities for this knowledge to inform academic programs while respecting the intellectual property and cultural significance of traditional practices.

We take pride in knowing that the very act of preparing our populous for these roles contributes to our national security, food systems, environmental stewardship, and regional cooperation. As Prime Minister Philip Davis has noted on multiple occasions, including at regional fora, the future of The Bahamas depends not just on education, but on relevance and that is precisely what BMMA strives to deliver. The Academy's emphasis on practical application, real-world problem solving, and community engagement ensures that graduates will be equipped not only with technical skills but with the understanding and commitment necessary to address the complex challenges facing our maritime nation.

INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT

The maritime industry is undergoing rapid technological transformation, and BMMA is positioning itself at the forefront of these developments. The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in navigation systems, the development of autonomous vessels, the application of blockchain technology to supply chain management, and the use of satellite technology for environmental monitoring are all reshaping how maritime operations are conducted.



BMMA's approach to technological innovation emphasizes both adaptation and leadership. Students will learn to operate the latest maritime technologies while also developing the critical thinking skills necessary to evaluate and improve upon existing systems. The Academy's partnerships with technology companies and research institutions will provide access to cutting-edge equipment and expertise while



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creating opportunities for Bahamian innovation in maritime technology.

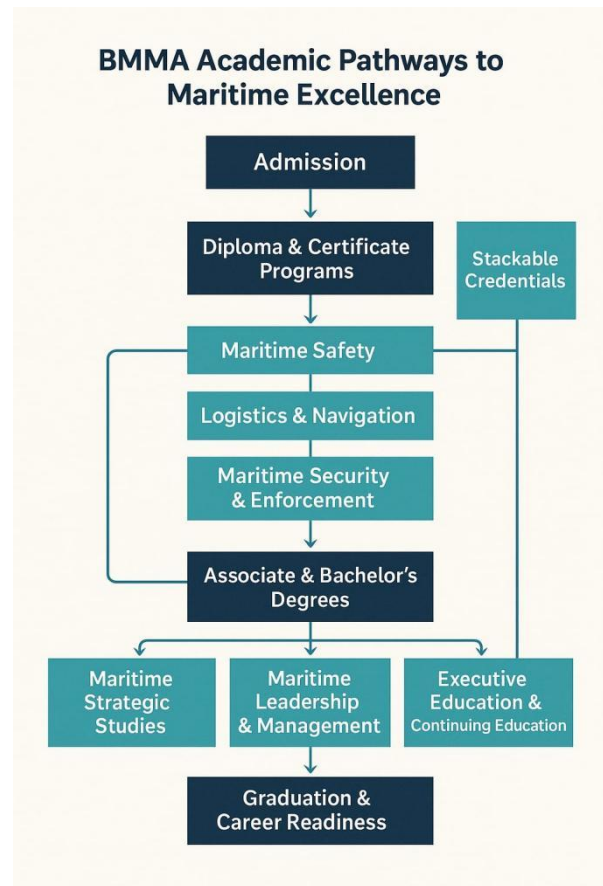
The emphasis on innovation extends to addressing uniquely Caribbean challenges. Small island developing states face particular vulnerabilities in areas such as coastal erosion, hurricane impacts, and supply chain disruptions. BMMA's research and development efforts will focus on solutions that are specifically designed for the Caribbean context while being applicable to other small island developing states worldwide.

Digital literacy and cybersecurity represent critical competencies for modern maritime professionals. As maritime systems become increasingly connected and automated, the ability to protect against cyber threats becomes essential for maintaining safe and secure operations. BMMA's curriculum will ensure that graduates understand both the opportunities and risks associated with digital maritime technologies.

EDUCATION AS A FOUNDATION FOR MARITIME EXCELLENCE

The transformation of the RBDF Training Department into the Bahamas Military and Maritime Academy represents recognition that modern maritime challenges require comprehensive educational approaches. Technical competence must be complemented by critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and global awareness. The ability to navigate complex regulatory environments, to work effectively in multicultural settings, and to adapt to rapidly

changing technologies requires educational experiences that go beyond traditional training models.



BMMA's academic programs integrate theoretical knowledge with practical application, ensuring that students understand not only how to perform maritime tasks but why particular approaches are preferred and how they might be improved. The emphasis on research and innovation encourages students to become producers of knowledge rather than merely consumers, contributing to the advancement of maritime science and practice.



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The Academy's commitment to accessibility and inclusion ensures that maritime careers will be available to talented individuals regardless of their background or circumstances. Scholarship programs, flexible scheduling options, and support services will remove barriers that have historically limited access to maritime education. This commitment reflects our understanding that the strength of our maritime sector depends on drawing talent from the full breadth of Bahamian society.

Partnerships with international maritime institutions will provide opportunities for student exchanges, joint research projects, and collaborative training exercises. These partnerships will expose Bahamian students to global best practices while providing opportunities for them to share their own knowledge and perspectives. The goal is to develop maritime professionals who are globally competent while remaining deeply connected to their communities and committed to national development.

LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

As we honor the International Day of the Seafarer, we recognize that the challenges and opportunities facing the maritime sector require new approaches to education, training, and professional development. The Bahamas Military and Maritime Academy (BMMA) represents our nation's commitment to meeting these challenges while building upon our rich maritime heritage.

The Academy's development reflects our understanding that maritime excellence is not simply about individual competence but about building institutional capacity and creating systems that support continuous improvement and innovation. BMMA will serve as a center of excellence that elevates standards throughout the Bahamian maritime sector while contributing to regional and global maritime development.

The integration of military and civilian maritime education within a single institution reflects our recognition that security and development are mutually reinforcing objectives. The protection of our maritime domain enables economic development, while economic prosperity provides the resources necessary for effective maritime security. BMMA's graduates will understand these connections and be prepared to contribute to both objectives throughout their careers.

Our vision extends beyond The Bahamas to encompass our role as a responsible member of the global maritime community. The challenges facing the world's oceans climate change,





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pollution, overfishing, and security threats require coordinated international responses. BMMA will prepare its graduates to participate in these efforts while ensuring that the particular interests and perspectives of small island developing states are represented and respected.

As we honor seafarers past and present, let us also invest in the seafarers of tomorrow. BMMA will be their home, their launchpad, and their ally in the pursuit of a safe, just, and sustainable maritime future. The Academy represents our commitment to ensuring that The Bahamas will continue to be a maritime nation in the fullest sense not only surrounded by water but competent in its use, protective of its resources, and innovative in developing solutions to the challenges that face all who depend upon the sea.

On this International Day of the Seafarer, we reaffirm our dedication to the values that have always guided those who serve upon the waters: courage in the face of danger, skill in the performance of duty, and commitment to the welfare of others. These values will continue to guide BMMA as we prepare the next generation of Bahamian maritime professionals to carry forward the proud tradition of seafaring while meeting the challenges of an uncertain but promising future.

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