



## From the Desk *of the* Commanding Officer

# The Bahamas Military and Maritime Academy

Special Edition: 09

September 25th, 2025 | DISTRIBUTION FULL

### WORLD MARITIME DAY

#### “GLOBAL MARITIME IMPERATIVE: A CALL TO ACTION”



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Commanding Officer, Bahamas Military and Maritime Academy  
(BMMA)

Today, as we observe World Maritime Day 2025 under the theme "*Our Ocean, Our Obligation, Our Opportunity*," we stand at a critical juncture in maritime history (International Maritime Organization IMO, 2025).



The International Maritime Organization's selection of this theme reflects a profound truth: the ocean's vital role in the world economy, with more than 80% of global trade transported by sea (United Nations, 2025), demands our collective stewardship and strategic action. The ocean

provides half of the oxygen we breathe, feeds billions of people, regulates the climate, and enables most international commerce through maritime transport (United Nations, 2025).

For The Bahamas, the ocean is not merely a geographic feature but the lifeblood of our nation. Our crystal-clear turquoise waters, renowned globally for their breathtaking beauty, support the daily lives of thousands of Bahamian fishermen and fisherwomen who rise before dawn to harvest the sea's bounty. From the conch divers of Andros to the bone fishing guides of Exuma, our people have forged an unbreakable bond with the sea. Every craft vendor shaping conch shells into art, every straw worker weaving products for cruise ship visitors, every beach vendor, jet ski operator, and glass-bottom boat captain represents a family whose prosperity flows directly from our pristine marine environment.

This year's observance carries special significance as it coincides with the third UN Ocean Conference in June 2025 and follows the historic UN Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) (IMO, 2025). For Small Island Developing States (SIDS) like The Bahamas, these global frameworks represent more than policy documents; they are blueprints for survival and prosperity in an era where climate change serves as what Prime Minister Davis aptly calls a "threat multiplier" (United Nations General Assembly, 2024). The theme emphasizes the critical link between shipping and broader global efforts to protect the ocean, including negotiations



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Special Edition: 09      September 25th, 2025 | DISTRIBUTION FULL

for a new instrument to address plastic pollution and the strengthening of international cooperation for marine conservation (IMO, 2025).



In The Bahamas, maritime commerce touches every aspect of daily life. Our harbors welcome massive cruise ships bringing millions of visitors annually to experience our pristine beaches, while container vessels deliver everything from food staples to building materials that sustain our communities. Small freight boats serve as lifelines for our Family Islands, carrying goods between Nassau and settlements from Cat Island to Crooked Island. Local entrepreneurs export Bahamian-made products, from Androsia batik fabrics to locally crafted hot sauces, while importers bring essential goods that stock our shelves. The interplay between large-scale shipping operations and small island traders creates an economic ecosystem where a delay in one shipment can affect dozens of small businesses and hundreds of families.



As the largest sector operating in ocean space, the shipping industry plays a significant role in both facilitating global commerce and advancing ocean protection (International Council of Marine Industry Associations [ICOMIA], 2025). The ocean faces mounting pressure from pollution and overuse to the accelerating effects of climate change, making protection not just an environmental imperative but a global responsibility that touches every aspect of human life (United Nations, 2025). For The Bahamas, whose exclusive economic zone spans 659,000 square kilometers of ocean, 200 times our land area, these challenges are existential, demanding immediate and sustained action across all sectors of society. Every Bahamian who keeps our beaches clean and pristine, from organized beach cleanup volunteers to hotel workers maintaining our shorelines, contributes to protecting the marine environment that defines our nation.

## **NATIONAL LEADERSHIP: PRIME MINISTER DAVIS'S BLUE ECONOMY VISION**

### **Historic Blue Economy Investment**

On August 19, 2025, Prime Minister Philip Davis demonstrated transformative leadership by signing a \$30 million loan agreement with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to strengthen small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating in the country's blue economy (Jamaica Observer, 2025).

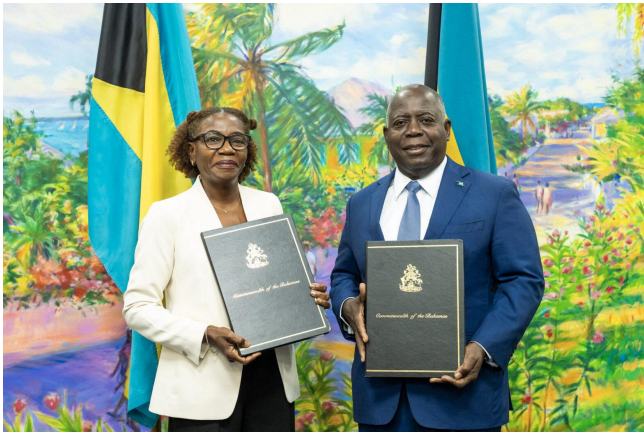
This strategic investment, titled "Local Sustainability and Development in the Blue



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Special Edition: 09      September 25th, 2025 | DISTRIBUTION FULL

Economy of The Bahamas," represents far more than financial support; it embodies our nation's commitment to maritime innovation and resilience.



IDB Country Representative Shirley Gayle emphasized the cultural significance of this investment, noting that "the salt life, as it is called, is in the DNA of the Bahamian people" and that the blue economy currently accounts for approximately 21.5% of the Bahamas' GDP, and up to 50% if indirect impacts are included (Gayle, 2025, as cited in *The Nassau Guardian*, 2025).

This investment directly supports the maritime livelihoods that have sustained Bahamian families for generations. Every entrepreneur hauling traps at dawn and cleaning and preparing conch at Potter's Cay dock, every tour boat operator sharing stories of our waters with visitors, and every straw vendor whose craft depends on cruise ship arrivals will benefit from strengthened blue economy infrastructure. The funding recognizes that our ocean economy encompasses not just large-scale operations but the cumulative impact of thousands of small enterprises: the kayak rental operators, the beach restaurant owners serving

fresh grouper, the dive shop instructors revealing our underwater treasures, and the water taxi captains connecting our communities.

Beyond this immediate investment, The Bahamas has secured substantial backing for blue economy transformation. The IDB approved a US\$140 million loan to boost resilient and inclusive growth to promote business continuity and competitiveness of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) (Inter-American Development Bank, 2025). Additionally, a debt-for-ocean-conservation swap supported by the IDB, The Nature Conservancy, and other partners allowed the government to buy back US\$300 million in external debt, creating sustainable financing for marine conservation (Inter-American Development Bank, 2024). These financial mechanisms represent innovative approaches to addressing both economic development and environmental protection simultaneously.

## **Climate Leadership and Maritime Diplomacy**

At the 79th UN General Assembly in 2024, Prime Minister Davis positioned The Bahamas as a champion of ocean-climate nexus advocacy. His assertion that climate finance must be treated as humanitarian finance essential for safeguarding coastal communities resonates deeply with the IMO's 2025 theme (United Nations General Assembly, 2024). This leadership extends beyond rhetoric, The Bahamas has committed to effective management of our marine protected area system, one of the largest in the Caribbean, while developing a national Mangrove Management Plan to protect vital coastal ecosystems (Office of



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**Commanding Officer**  
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Special Edition: 09      September 25th, 2025 | DISTRIBUTION FULL

---

the Prime Minister, 2025). Prime Minister Davis has consistently emphasized that "capitalizing on the value added from fisheries, shipping, and marine biotechnology will require new strategies and partnerships to expand the production of goods and services beyond traditional exports" (Davis, 2025, as cited in The Tribune, 2025). This vision aligns perfectly with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), demonstrating The Bahamas' commitment to multilateral cooperation for ocean governance (IMO, 2025).

The Davis administration's commitment to regional maritime security exemplifies our understanding that ocean governance transcends national boundaries. The deployment of Royal Bahamas Defence Force (RBDF) personnel to Haiti under the Multinational Security Support Mission demonstrates our capacity to contribute to regional stability while strengthening our own maritime capabilities (Loop News, 2024). As noted in the UN Security Council documentation, Bahamas, Canada, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Kenya and United States expressing their intention to establish a standing group of partners to provide high-level strategic direction for the Haiti mission underscores our nation's elevated role in international maritime security cooperation (United Nations Security Council, 2025).

### **CARIBBEAN REGIONAL SOLIDARITY: STRENGTHENING MARITIME GOVERNANCE**

#### **CARICOM Maritime Security Architecture**

The Caribbean Community's (CARICOM) evolving maritime security framework represents a paradigm shift in regional ocean governance. The Caribbean Maritime Security Strategy (CMSS) constitutes the region's framework for achieving a safe and secure maritime space, promoting cooperation between Caribbean States, institutions, and development partners (CARICOM IMPACS, 2025a). This first-ever comprehensive strategy addresses both traditional and emerging maritime threats while recognizing our shared vulnerabilities and opportunities.

Recent developments underscore the urgency of collective action. The Workshop held from June 16-17, 2025, in Antigua and Barbuda, was a collaborative effort between the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) and the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, focusing on cooperation in suppressing illicit maritime and air trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in the Caribbean area (CARICOM IMPACS, 2025b). Callixtus Joseph, Assistant Director (Ag) of Policy, Strategy and Innovation at CARICOM IMPACS, explained that for all CARICOM countries, monitoring and securing their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) was not only essential but vital to protecting employment and livelihoods, preserving biodiversity, and realizing economic transformation (CARICOM IMPACS, 2025b).



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**Commanding Officer**  
**The Bahamas Military and Maritime Academy**

Special Edition: 09      September 25th, 2025 | DISTRIBUTION FULL

---

The development of a new CARICOM Security Strategy (CSS), which commenced in April 2025, demonstrates the region's commitment to addressing evolving threats. Lt. Col. Michael Jones, Executive Director of CARICOM IMPACS, emphasized that "the current environment demands a recalibrated and adaptive regional strategy, one that strengthens our collective capacity to anticipate, prevent and respond to multidimensional threats" (CARICOM IMPACS, 2025c). The CSS Steering Committee includes representatives from five CARICOM Member States including Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago, as well as key regional institutions such as the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), the Regional Security System (RSS), and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) (CARICOM IMPACS, 2025c).

#### **SEACOP: A Decade of Maritime Excellence**

The European Union-funded Seaport Cooperation Project (SEACOP) exemplifies successful international partnership in maritime security. Now in its sixth phase, SEACOP has trained over 750 officers from coast guards, customs agencies, and police departments across the Caribbean in the last five years (European Commission, 2025a). This initiative's success lies not in imposing external solutions but in building local capacity, a model that aligns perfectly with BMMA's educational philosophy.

Alexander Kellman, SEACOP's Deputy Regional Coordinator for the Caribbean, articulates our regional reality: "The Caribbean is unique by virtue of its geographical location... It sits right

between the source and consumer markets, becoming as such a natural transit zone for criminal networks" (European Commission, 2025a). This geographic reality demands sophisticated responses that combine technological innovation with deep cultural understanding. SEACOP's structure reflects regional realities by training "virtual teams", inter-agency units that remain embedded in their home organizations but mobilize seamlessly when intelligence or operations demand (European Commission, 2025).

The project's impact extends beyond training to operational success. Operation Caribe 2023, executed from May 15-26, 2023, demonstrated the network's effectiveness with seizures including 322.1 kg of cocaine in Colombia, 70 kg of cannabis and 4.95 kg of cocaine in Antigua, leading to multiple arrests of notorious traffickers (European Commission, 2023). Such results validate investment in regional capacity building and underscore the importance of sustained international cooperation.

#### **U.S.-Caribbean Maritime Partnership**

The Caribbean-United States Security Cooperation Framework continues to evolve, addressing new maritime challenges while strengthening traditional cooperation. The framework's emphasis on Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) technology to identify and disrupt illicit networks and more effectively detect illicit maritime activity throughout the region aligns with BMMA's focus on integrating advanced technologies into maritime education and operations (United States Department of State,



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Special Edition: 09      September 25th, 2025 | DISTRIBUTION FULL

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2023). The implementation of the Caribbean Maritime Security Strategy (CMSS) advances sustainable and complementary defense and law enforcement cooperation while improving maritime operational capacity and security across the region (United States Department of State, 2023).

## **RBDF: GUARDIANS OF OUR MARITIME HERITAGE**

### **Our Living Maritime Heritage**

The Royal Bahamas Defence Force (RBDF) protects not just our territorial waters but the way of life that defines us as Bahamians. Every morning across our archipelago, from Bimini to Inagua, thousands of our citizens rise to work with the sea. The fisherpersons of Spanish Wells prepare their vessels for another day harvesting the ocean's bounty, while in George Town, Exuma, bone fishing guides ready their flats boats to share the thrill of our shallow water fishery with visitors from around the world. At Potter's Cay, vendors arrive before sunrise to prepare fresh conch salad, maintaining a culinary tradition that connects us to our ancestors who first dove these waters. Our maritime heritage lives in the weathered hands of sponge fishers from Andros who continue a trade dating back centuries, in the skilled craftswomen of Long Island who transform conch shells into beautiful jewelry, and in the traditional boat builders of Abaco who still construct vessels using techniques passed down through generations. The RBDF's mission encompasses protecting these livelihoods,

ensuring that our people can safely pursue their trade, that our tour operators can confidently take visitors to experience our marine wonders, and that our coastal communities remain secure. When RBDF vessels patrol our waters, they safeguard not just sovereignty, but the very essence of Bahamian culture tied inextricably to the sea.



Commodore Floyd P. Moxey, who assumed command as the 9th Commander of the Royal Bahamas Defence Force in May 2025, has brought over four decades of service to the role and has emphasized modernization and reform to strengthen national security. His agenda prioritizes improving fleet readiness, commissioning new vessels, expanding training programs for specialized personnel, and introducing reforms to enhance accountability and operational effectiveness. Reflecting this vision, he recently directed that the Rangers program and related youth initiatives be brought under the BMMA, a strategic move that rightsized the RBDF's educational portfolio and strengthens



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Special Edition: 09      September 25th, 2025 | DISTRIBUTION FULL

---

oversight and leadership development. His operational focus is equally clear: the RBDF is ramping up border security in anticipation of a potential wave of Haitian migrants—many now using motorized boats instead of traditional sailing sloops (The Tribune, 2025). Addressing these new realities requires innovative tactical approaches, enhanced surveillance, and strengthened regional coordination, all of which underscore the critical alignment between RBDF operational goals and BMMA’s mission to prepare future maritime leaders.

The RBDF's maritime legacy extends beyond contemporary operations. The 1980 Flamingo incident, where four marines, Fenrick Sturup, Austin Smith, David Tucker, and Edward Williams, gave their lives defending our sovereignty, remains a powerful reminder of the ultimate sacrifices made in protecting our maritime domain (Royal Bahamas Defence Force, 2024a; Royal Bahamas Defence Force, 2024b). This legacy of service, from Hurricane Dorian response operations to current multinational deployments, provides the foundation upon which BMMA builds its educational mission. The force's transition from British-style equipment to modern U.S.-manufactured systems, including M4 carbines and digital woodland camouflage uniforms, reflects ongoing modernization efforts that ensure operational readiness (Royal Bahamas Defence Force, 2024a; Royal Bahamas Defence Force, 2024b).

## **BMMA: ARCHITECTING THE FUTURE OF MARITIME EDUCATION**

As the Bahamas Military and Maritime Academy (BMMA) progresses toward full operational status, our institutional architecture reflects a comprehensive understanding of maritime challenges and opportunities. Each proposed school of study addresses critical gaps in national capacity while contributing to regional maritime excellence.

### **School of Maritime and Coastal Studies: *Ocean Stewardship Excellence***

This school will serve as the cornerstone of our maritime education ecosystem, offering programs that directly address the IMO's 2025 theme while honoring the traditional maritime skills that have sustained Bahamian communities for centuries. Students will master both modern navigation technologies, including autonomous vessel operations and AI-enhanced routing systems, and traditional seafaring knowledge passed down through generations of Bahamian mariners (PW Only IAS, 2025). The curriculum will integrate traditional seamanship with cutting-edge maritime technologies, preparing graduates to lead in an era of digital transformation while respecting the wisdom of our fishing communities.

Our maritime strategic studies stackable curriculum will produce graduates capable of balancing economic exploitation with ecological preservation, a critical capability as The Bahamas seeks to expand its blue economy while protecting the marine biodiversity that supports local livelihoods. Students will learn from veteran fishers about sustainable harvesting practices for conch, lobster, and grouper, understanding both scientific management principles and traditional



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**Commanding Officer**  
**The Bahamas Military and Maritime Academy**

Special Edition: 09      September 25th, 2025 | DISTRIBUTION FULL

---

conservation methods. The integration of blue carbon accounting, marine spatial planning, and ecosystem-based management approaches will position our graduates to protect the pristine waters that attract millions of cruise ship visitors annually to experience our world-renowned aqua blue seas.

**School of Engineering and Applied Sciences:**  
***Innovation for Resilience***

Maritime resilience requires engineering solutions that can withstand both environmental extremes and technological disruption. This school will develop professionals capable of designing climate-adaptive port infrastructure, deploying renewable energy systems in maritime environments, and integrating Internet of Things (IoT) sensors for real-time ocean monitoring. The focus on coastal engineering addresses our immediate vulnerabilities to sea-level rise and storm surge, while robotics and autonomous systems training prepare students for the future of ocean exploration and resource extraction. Our graduates will be equipped to implement the IMO's robust regulatory framework ranging from carbon emission reduction to marine waste management (COCATRAM, 2025). The curriculum will emphasize green shipping technologies, including alternative fuels, energy efficiency measures, and emission control systems that align with the IMO's 2050 decarbonization targets. Students will engage in hands-on projects addressing real-world challenges, from coral restoration technologies to resilient coastal infrastructure design.

**School of Military Science and Strategy:**  
***Maritime Security Leadership***

Building on the RBDF's operational excellence, this school will produce strategic thinkers capable of addressing complex maritime security challenges. The curriculum will incorporate lessons from deployments, CARICOM security cooperation, and emerging threats like maritime cyber warfare. Students will study the intersection of traditional naval operations with humanitarian response, recognizing that modern maritime security encompasses everything from counter-piracy to disaster evacuation. The integration of artificial intelligence-supported decision systems and predictive analytics will enable graduates to anticipate and prevent maritime security threats rather than merely responding to them. The school will collaborate with regional partners including CARICOM IMPACS and the Regional Security System (RSS) to ensure curriculum relevance and facilitate knowledge exchange. Special emphasis will be placed on understanding the Caribbean Maritime Security Strategy (CMSS) and its implementation across the region (CARICOM IMPACS, 2025a).

**School of Business and Information**  
**Technology: *Digital Maritime Economy***

The digital transformation of the maritime sector demands professionals who understand both traditional shipping economics and emerging technologies, from the smallest craft vendor accepting digital payments to the largest shipping operations managing complex logistics. This school will prepare students to leverage blockchain for supply chain transparency,



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**Commanding Officer**  
**The Bahamas Military and Maritime Academy**

Special Edition: 09      September 25th, 2025 | DISTRIBUTION FULL

---

implement cybersecurity measures for port operations, and develop sustainable business models for ocean-based enterprises. With the blue economy contributing 21.5% directly to our GDP and up to 50% including indirect impacts (Inter-American Development Bank, 2025), graduates will be equipped to identify and develop new maritime economic opportunities while ensuring environmental sustainability.

Students will study how technology can enhance traditional maritime businesses, from helping sponge harvesters reach global markets through e-commerce to enabling fish vendors to track catches for sustainability certification. The curriculum will address the needs of Family Island entrepreneurs who depend on reliable shipping for their businesses, whether exporting locally made hot pepper sauce or importing supplies for beachfront restaurants. The focus on maritime law, insurance, and finance will create professionals capable of supporting both the cruise ship industry that brings millions to our shores and the small water sports operators who provide unforgettable experiences in our crystal-clear waters. Students will learn to bridge the gap between traditional maritime commerce and digital innovation, ensuring that technological advancement benefits all Bahamians engaged in ocean-based livelihoods.

**School of Health and Human Performance:**  
***Maritime Wellness and Resilience***

Maritime operations demand peak physical and mental performance. This school will address the unique health challenges of maritime professions, from the physiological impacts of extended sea

duty to the psychological resilience required for crisis response. Curricula in maritime occupational health and emergency medical response will produce professionals capable of maintaining force readiness and supporting civilian maritime workers. The integration of telemedicine and remote health monitoring technologies will extend healthcare access to our most isolated maritime communities. Students will study the health impacts of ocean-based activities, from decompression sickness in diving operations to mental health support for seafarers. The school will collaborate with regional health agencies including the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) to address regional maritime health challenges.

**Security and Sustainability Research Institute (SSRI): *Knowledge for Action***

The SSRI will serve as BMMA's intellectual engine, conducting applied research that directly supports national maritime priorities. Research areas will include Climate-Ocean Dynamics, investigating the specific impacts of climate change on Bahamian waters and developing localized adaptation strategies; Blue Economy Innovation, exploring new economic opportunities in aquaculture, marine biotechnology, and ocean renewable energy; Maritime Security Technologies, developing and testing new surveillance, communication, and response systems tailored to our archipelagic geography; and Ocean Governance Models, creating policy frameworks that balance sovereignty, sustainability, and regional cooperation. The Institute will establish



# From the Desk *of the* Commanding Officer The Bahamas Military and Maritime Academy

Special Edition: 09      September 25th, 2025 | DISTRIBUTION FULL

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partnerships with international research institutions, ensuring our work contributes to global ocean science while addressing local priorities. Research outputs will directly inform policy development, supporting evidence-based decision-making for ocean governance. The Institute will host annual conferences bringing together regional and international experts to advance Caribbean maritime knowledge.

## **PARTNERSHIPS FOR MARITIME EXCELLENCE**

BMMA's success depends on strategic partnerships that leverage expertise, resources, and networks across multiple sectors.

### **International Maritime Organization (IMO)**

Direct engagement with the IMO ensures our curricula align with international standards including STCW certification requirements, MARPOL compliance training, and emerging regulations on autonomous vessels and green shipping. Our graduates will be prepared to work anywhere in the global maritime industry while maintaining deep roots in Caribbean maritime traditions. BMMA will seek recognition as an IMO-approved training institution, enabling us to contribute to global maritime education standards.

### **Regional Institutions**

Collaboration with CARICOM IMPACS, the Caribbean Maritime University, and regional defense forces will ensure our programs address shared regional challenges. Joint exercises, faculty exchanges, and research collaborations will strengthen regional maritime capacity while

avoiding duplication of efforts. BMMA will actively participate in regional forums including the Caribbean Maritime Security Strategy implementation meetings and CARICOM Standing Committees on security matters.

### **Industry Partnerships**

Engagement with shipping companies, port operators, and marine technology firms will ensure our graduates meet industry needs. Internship programs, sponsored research, and equipment donations will provide students with practical experience and potential employment pathways. BMMA will establish advisory boards including industry representatives to ensure curriculum relevance and facilitate technology transfer.

## **NAVIGATING TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE MARITIME FUTURE**

The convergence of World Maritime Day 2025 with pivotal developments in our national blue economy strategy, regional security cooperation, and BMMA's institutional development represents a defining moment for The Bahamas. We stand poised to transform from a nation surrounded by the sea to a nation empowered by the sea.

The ocean that separates our islands also unites us with each other, with our Caribbean neighbors, and with the global community. It connects the fisherpersons in Eleuthera to the restaurant owner in Nassau, the craft vendor in Grand Bahama to the cruise ship passenger seeking authentic Bahamian art, the freight boat captain serving the



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**Commanding Officer**  
**The Bahamas Military and Maritime Academy**

Special Edition: 09

September 25th, 2025 | DISTRIBUTION FULL

southern islands to the families depending on his cargo. Through BMMA, we will produce graduates who understand this fundamental truth:

*“that maritime excellence requires not just technical skill but also cultural understanding, environmental consciousness, and unwavering commitment to service.”*

Every Bahamian has a role in protecting our maritime heritage. The child collecting shells on the beach who learns not to disturb living creatures, the hotel worker who ensures pristine shorelines for visitors, the boat captain who refuses to anchor on coral reefs, the fisherpersons who returns undersized catch to the sea, all are guardians of our ocean legacy. Our world-famous swimming pigs of Exuma, our protected sea turtles nesting on our beaches, our thriving coral reefs that paint our waters in shades of turquoise and sapphire, these natural treasures depend on each of us fulfilling our obligation as ocean stewards.

As we navigate the complex waters ahead, from climate change to technological disruption, from security threats to economic opportunities, we do so with confidence born from preparation, partnership, and purpose. The Royal Bahamas Defence Force has protected our waters for decades; BMMA will ensure this capability evolves and expands for generations to come. We will train the next generation of maritime professionals who understand that our pristine waters are not just a tourist attraction but our lifeline, our heritage, and our future.

Prime Minister Davis's vision of The Bahamas as a blue economy leader, coupled with our strategic position at the crossroads of global shipping lanes, creates unprecedented opportunities. But opportunities without preparation remain merely possibilities. Through education, innovation, and collaboration, BMMA will ensure The Bahamas seizes these opportunities while fulfilling our obligations to ocean stewardship. We will honor the legacy of our spongers, fisherpersons, and seafarers while embracing the technologies that will sustain maritime livelihoods for future generations.

Together, we will build a maritime future that honors our heritage, protects our environment, and ensures prosperity for all Bahamians. The sea, once it casts its spell, holds one in its net of wonder forever. For The Bahamas, this is not just poetry; it is our destiny, our duty, and our greatest opportunity. From the smallest craft vendor to the largest shipping company to the modern maritime technologist, we are one people united by one ocean, working toward one future where the beauty and bounty of our seas sustain generations yet unborn.

Sincerely,

Dr. Origin Deleveaux, Jr., DD MSc, JP.,  
Commander  
Commanding Officer, Bahamas Military and  
Maritime Academy (BMMA)



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Special Edition: 09

September 25th, 2025 | DISTRIBUTION FULL

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September 25th, 2025 | DISTRIBUTION FULL

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Special Edition: 09

September 25th, 2025 | DISTRIBUTION FULL

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Haiti to the United Nations addressed to  
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