



**INVITATION TO THE MEDIA
PATROL-BOAT C-23's TRAGEDY MEMORIAL SERVICE
&
NEW MONUMENT'S UNVEILING CEREMONY**

**Venue: Maritime Squadron Base, Haywharf, Floriana
Date: Monday 7th September, 2009
Time: 08.10 hrs**

The media is invited to a special annual Memorial Service, to commemorate the victims of the C-23 patrol-boat accidental explosion, which will be followed by the unveiling of a new monument on the 25th anniversary of this tragic event.

The event will commence at 08.15 hrs at the AFM's Maritime Squadron Base, Haywharf, Floriana on Monday 7th September, 2009.

Entry to Haywharf Base:

Entry for press-corps members will be via the Sa Maison Gate, Pieta`. For access control and security reasons, members of the Press are required to present their DOI-issued press-cards, and to wear them conspicuously at all times in the performance of their duties whilst on Base. The delegated point-of-contact indicated below will be responsible throughout the conduct of the above-mentioned event and any other further enquiries.

Note to newsroom editors/managers & webmasters:

The commemorative programme for this event will be as follows:

0825 hours: Welcome address and Introduction
by Acting Commanding-Officer, Maritime Squadron
0828 hours: Cenotaph Guard in position
0830 hours: Holy Mass on the quay of the Maritime Squadron
0910 hours: Short address by Police Commissioner
0912 hours: Short address by Commander AFM
0915 hours: Unveiling and blessing of the new monument
0918 hours: Last Post and salute by P61 Fog Horn
0920 hours: One Minute Silence followed by Reveille
0925 hours: Refreshments

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Brief Notes on the AFM's Swift-class patrolcraft:

The two Mark III training boats were transferred to the Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) in 1971 as part of the United State's military assistance program where they have been, and still continue after so many years, to be an important and integral part of that country's active interdiction and prosecution of the contraband and illegal immigration routes crossing the Mediterranean Sea from Africa to Southern Europe. They expected to be decommissioned at the end of year 2009, on the Maritime Squadron receiving four AUSTAL patrol boats, funded by the EU-external borders' fund.

The tough little Swift boats have been well taken care of by the AFM Maritime Squadron's seamen, and proudly and with great success continue the extremely useful tasks and traditions that were established by their US Navy antecedents. Since the early part of 1971, the AFM in the Mediterranean have used these two former US Navy Swift Boats to successfully accomplish the exact same tasks as those which were performed by their US Navy counterparts in South East Asia.

These Maltese Swifts are still on active duty today, performing routine patrols in cooperation with Italian and north African authorities to search for and interdict contraband and illegal aliens moving from the northern coast of Africa through Malta to the coasts of southern Europe.

In addition, they are used extensively for harbour security tasks in the many water ways of this our small tri-island nation, being the critical "first-on-the-scene" vessels during rescue at sea operations near the coastline, dangerous collateral functions such as disposal of un-exploded ordinance and explosives, and even at ceremonial events.

Patrolcraft C-23 (later re-designated Papa 23) suffered extensive explosive damage but arose from the ashes to serve on. Annually, for these last 25 years, the Maritime Squadron seamen remember their fallen shipmates.

