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Navy Hovercraft Gives Sunbathers a Fright During 'Normal' Training Exercise (Video)

By The Moscow Times

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Sunbathers look on as the giant hovercraft parks up on the beach.

In a scene straight from an apocalyptic film, hundreds of sunbathers basking on a beach in the Kaliningrad region were startled by giant waves and a shattering crash as a Russian Navy hovercraft rolled ashore.

Several witnesses captured the Zubr's landing on their cell phones while Russian marine soldiers from the Baltic Fleet jumped onto the beach, put up a barricade, and tried to shoo onlookers away from the ship.

Realizing they were in no danger, the beach-goers in Mechnikovo happily got on with the rest of their Sunday while curious children tried to inspect the vessel.

"Good, it's not a German U-boat," one man joked, Komsomolskaya Pravda reported.

A torrent of comments on social media turned the episode into local and soon national news.

Military authorities were apparently unconcerned. "It's normal," a Baltic Fleet representative said following the incident on Aug. 18, internet portal Kaliningrad.ru reported.

"Mechnikovo is first and foremost the territory of a military firing range," he said, adding that after completing its practice landing, the Zubr simply returned to base.

The Defense Ministry later confirmed the statement.

While the beach may not be authorized for public use, is isn't a regular spot for military training either. The Baltic Fleet usually trains at the testing facility at Khmelyovka, several kilometers north of Mechnikovo.

The Zubr is the largest air-cushioned landing craft in the world. It can operate on land and is equipped with missile launchers and mine laying devices.

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