The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Missile Explosion Spoils Navy Day in Crimean Port of Sevastopol

By Anna Dolgov

July 27, 2015



A Russian warship fires during celebrations for Navy Day in the Black Sea port of Sevastopol, Crimea, July 26, 2015.

A missile exploded immediately after its launch during a parade celebrating Navy Day near the Crimean port of Sevastopol on Sunday, according to videos posted online. The mishap marred an event that the Russian military had intended as a show of strength, undermining an admiral's assurances that the Black Sea Fleet was enjoying renewed might following a period of post-Soviet decay.

The explosion sent fragments of the missile flying and left plumes of smoke billowing around the "Ladny," the ship that had attempted the launch in the waters off Sevastopol — the Crimean port city that is home to the Black Sea Fleet.

The fragments fell into the water without reaching the shore or other craft, according to videos posted online by people who viewed the event. No injuries were reported, but a man in

one of the videos could be overheard exclaiming that the explosion was a bad “screw-up,” and predicting that heads were likely to roll.

Making the incident particularly embarrassing for the Navy, the Black Sea Fleet had praised the planned launch as a show of its strength, saying that the firing of a missile would be included in Sevastopol's Navy Day festivities for the first time in more than 10 years.

“As part of a demonstration of the fleet's combat capabilities, after a long break, missile fire will be conducted from a complex of anti-submarine weapons against an imitation target by the guard ship 'Ladny,'” the Defense Ministry's Southern Military District said in a statement last week.

Video footage of the explosion emerged shortly after the Black Sea Fleet commander, Admiral Alexander Vitko, addressed the festive gathering, saying that the era when the fleet was unable to replace its aging warships and weapons has ended, RIA Novosti reported.

“This page has not been expunged from history, but it has been turned over,” Vitko was quoted as saying.

“For the first time in a long time we have inducted more than 10 new combat ships and support vessels into the fleet in the course of one calendar year,” Vitko said, Russian news agency RIA Novosti reported.

The naval show involved 20 warships and 10 support vessels, more than 30 aircraft, and 21 artillery units and other weapon systems of coastal troops, the Defense Ministry said in a statement.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/07/27/missile-explosion-spoils-navy-day-in-crimean-port-of-sevastopol-a48540