

# Crowsnest

Vol. 1, No. 1 Summer 2007

Chief of the Maritime Staff

CANADIAN  
**NAVY**

## Welcome to the first issue of *Crowsnest*!

For nearly 20 years *Crowsnest* was the navy's national newspaper, reaching all those with an interest in the life of their navy. We've revived the name for a new publication with an unchanged goal of providing a bird's eye view of the navy, from all points of the horizon. *Crowsnest* will complement our other print and web-based products, and reach a broader audience.

It is aimed at all who would like a better understanding of our navy, as well as an appreciation for our sailors and air personnel and the great work they do for the country around the world. *Crowsnest* will provide a forum for news, feature articles and updates on topics from across the navy – at sea and ashore. Much of what we do is accomplished far from the view of anyone but other mariners, and whether it is at home, in local waters, or further abroad, we'll be using *Crowsnest* to tell some of our stories.

We look forward to your comments and suggestions. Welcome aboard!



*Drew Robertson*

Vice-Admiral Drew Robertson  
Chief of the Maritime Staff



Vice-Admiral Drew Robertson aboard  
HMCS Halifax during her recent Great Lakes tour.

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## From the Editor

# Why Crowsnest?

by Darlene Blakeley

**W**e took a page from history when we decided to call the Chief of the Maritime Staff's new publication *Crowsnest*.

The original *Crowsnest* began publishing in November 1948 and continued as the national newspaper of the Royal Canadian Navy until June of 1965

when it was folded into the tri-service publication *Sentinel*.

### Crows helped navigators plot course to land

*The crow was an essential part of the early sailors' navigation equipment. These land-lubbing fowl were carried on board to help the navigator determine where the closest land lay when the weather prevented sighting the shore visually. In cases of poor visibility, a crow was released and the navigator plotted a course that corresponded with the bird's because it invariably headed toward land.*

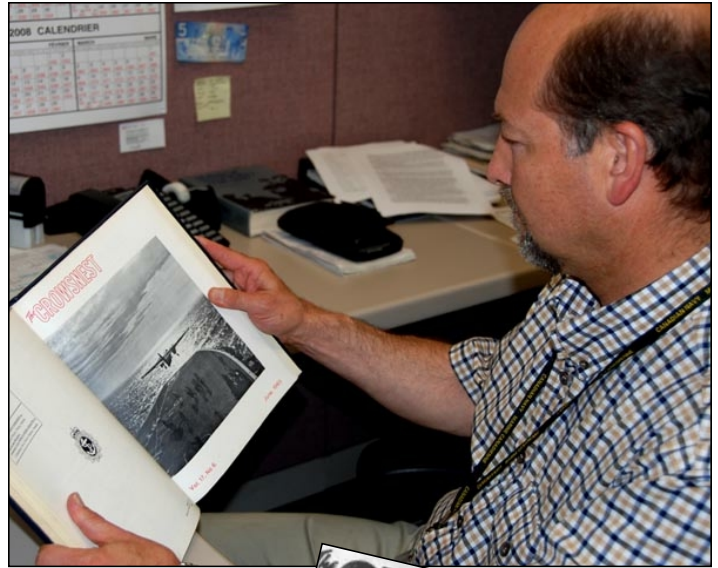
*The crowsnest was situated high in the main mast where the look-out stood his watch. Often he shared this lofty perch with a crow or two since the crows' cages were kept there: hence the "crowsnest".*

When *Crowsnest* first came out, Vice-Admiral Harold Grant was Chief of the Naval Staff and Canada was restructuring its navy after the Second World War. When its last issue hit the stands, the navy was about to start the construction of four helicopter-carrying destroyers and two additional operational support ships, as well as the mid-life refit of HMCS *Bonaventure* and the procurement of a submarine to replace HMCS *Grilse*.

Over the nearly 20 years of its publication, it

served the navy with a variety of news stories, features and regular columns aimed at keeping its internal audiences well-informed.

"*Crowsnest* was a really top-notch production – informative, all-inclusive and well-written," says Rich Gimblett, Navy Command Historian. "I have used it



Above: Naval historian Rich Gimblett looks at a copy of *Crowsnest* from 1965.



Right: The cover of the first issue of the original *Crowsnest*, published in November 1948.

many times as a primary reference source."

It is our hope that this new version of *Crowsnest* will also provide an interesting mix of articles and images that will help people to better understand the navy and its place in today's ever-changing security environment. While it is intended to reach a larger audience than the original publication, its main goals are still the same – to inform and recognize.

To that end, we value your feedback. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome and can be sent to the editor at [blakeley.d@forces.gc.ca](mailto:blakeley.d@forces.gc.ca). We look forward to hearing from you!



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*Crowsnest* is published quarterly on the authority of the Chief of the Maritime Staff, Vice-Admiral Drew Robertson. Comments are welcome and can be sent to: Maritime Staff Public Affairs  
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## HMCS *Halifax* tours Great Lakes region to raise awareness

**B**eginning in mid-April, the frigate HMCS *Halifax* left her home port and set out on a six-week tour of the Great Lakes region, visiting nine cities from Quebec City to Thunder Bay. The tour was designed to raise awareness of the maritime dimensions of Canada, enabling Canadians to connect with the navy and the Canadian Forces, and also to attract people who are thinking about potential employment or careers.

More than 10 million Canadians live along the St. Lawrence River and Great Lakes, far away from our oceans, with few connections to the navy. Giving them the opportunity to see a Canadian Navy warship, up close and personal, was a unique experience – and they came by the thousands! By the time this year's tour was over, more than 40,000 people had visited HMCS *Halifax*.

Activities were aimed at showcasing the ship and the navy through a variety of events including port visits, open houses, static displays, media opportunities and receptions onboard for community leaders. As well, the ship allocated time to the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group and the Canadian Forces Liaison Council (CFLC) to bring groups of people aboard for special guided tours, including business leaders who are "recruiting influencers" in their communities.

"Recruiting influencers are people who have a role in guiding and shaping the career path of young people, including everything from students, high school guidance counsellors, community college teachers or staff, university professors, employment counsellors and job finding agencies, to specialized groups like medical students and engineering students," explains Commander Scott Bishop, commanding officer of *Halifax*. "The business leaders come to us at the invitation of CFLC, who are on a campaign right now to garner support from the private sector to give reservists job security while they serve on active duty on operations. This is a good way for business leaders to get a

first-hand taste of the CF and understand what their employees are doing in the Reserves."

While on the tour, the ship also participated in a variety of charitable works in the cities it visited, participating in fun runs, walk-a-thons, charity suppers, *Habitat for Humanity*, children's wish foundations, and many others. "This is another good way of connecting with the local community and getting the message across that being in the military is all about public service," explains Cdr Bishop.

The Naval Reserve Divisions located in the Great Lakes region were critical to the success of the deployment, according to Cdr Bishop. As the local experts who are plugged into the community, they take a leading role in the planning and coordination of each port visit.

The tour is also enjoyed by the crew, although it means a lot of work. "You can imagine that they have

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**Right: The colour party from HMCS *Halifax* on the field before a Toronto Blue Jays game.**

**Below: HMCS *Halifax* in Toronto**







# Weapons of stealth

**T**he new Victoria-class submarines operated by the Canadian Navy are leaving the introductory milestones behind and embarking on “normal operations” according to Capt (Navy) Bill Woodburn, Director Maritime Policy, Operations and Readiness.

“There is no doubt the introduction of the submarines into the fleet has been challenging and has required the full support of all aspects of the navy,” Capt (N) Woodburn says. “But we are now conducting operations as a matter of routine and can focus on the future – getting all four submarines fully operational and full contributors to the security and defence of the nation.”

Three of Canada’s four Victoria-class submarines – HMCS *Corner Brook*, HMCS *Windsor* and HMCS *Victoria* – have finished comprehensive Canadian modernization work packages and are currently in

various stages of their operational life cycles. HMCS *Chicoutimi* has yet to complete modernization but has entered dry dock in Halifax to progress this activity. *Windsor* has just finished a successful running period and recently started an extended docking work period (EDWP) in Halifax; *Victoria*, as the first of class to undergo an EDWP, is progressing well towards the completion of this important milestone; and *Corner Brook* remains at sea conducting an ambitious program of training and operations both abroad and at home.

Each submarine is scheduled to complete an EDWP approximately once every six to seven years. This is a significant engineering and maintenance work period that prepares the vessel for ongoing operations.

“We need to have the material state of the boat in absolutely prime condition. Submarines are exposed

## Canadian submarines:

- Provide a broad range of options to the Canadian government across the full spectrum of operations in domestic, continental and international contexts.
- Are flexible and can perform a wide range of unique military missions.

- Make potent adversaries – no other platform in the CF inventory combines their stealth, persistence and lethality.
- Due to their endurance and relatively small crew size, submarines are economical to operate compared to other maritime forces.
- Are an important element of the strategic Canada-United States relationship.

to a challenging environment simply by operating at depth under water, not to mention working in a combat environment,” says Capt (N) Woodburn.

A new program under way called Submarine Maintenance/OpCycle Alignment and Rationalization (SubMOAR) takes a comprehensive look at the submarine maintenance package and consolidates where it can. According to Capt (N) Woodburn, SubMOAR will nearly double the operational availability of the submarines, allowing them to be at sea for longer periods of time. “Our goal is to have two or three boats conducting operations simultaneously for the remainder of the class life,” he says.

Last fall, a significant milestone was achieved when *Windsor* and *Corner Brook* successfully conducted an intensive anti-submarine exercise against each other.

Embedded in everything that is done on the submarines is the issue of safety – ensuring the boat is mechanically sound and that her crew is properly trained to face any challenges.

“Once a submarine dives, our biggest ally and our worst enemy is the sea – it is always trying to get in,” explains Capt (N) Woodburn. “This results in a heightened awareness. It’s challenging, but it’s also exhilarating. The crew is very close-knit and you notice the professionalism and heightened sense of awareness as soon as you get onboard.”

Capt (N) Woodburn puts it humorously: “In a submarine, you want people in the people tank and water in the water tank. But you never want water in the people tank!”

Having commanded HMCS *Onondaga*, one of the navy’s previous Oberon-class submarines in the early ‘90s and more recently *Victoria* from 1999-2001, Capt (N) Woodburn is in the unique position of being able to compare both classes of submarines. “It’s like night and day,” he says. “There is a quantum leap in capability – the Victoria-class is an exceptionally effective, modern diesel-electric submarine that is amongst the quietest in the world and particularly well suited against today’s asymmetric threats.”

There is no doubt that

submarines are one of the greatest strategic military assets that Canada possesses, according to Capt (N) Woodburn. “Putting a submarine into the equation changes the situation entirely with their unrivalled stealth, covert endurance and potential lethality,” he says. “One sub at sea means it can be anywhere at any-time. No other asset in the Canadian Forces can equal the sheer deterrent effect of our submarines.”

The Victoria-class is now contributing on a regular basis to the sovereignty and security of the nation, and much will be accomplished yet as Canadian submariners press ahead with new challenges and new operations.

“Progress is strong, morale is high and the Victoria’s continue to impress in both performance and potential,” stresses Capt (N) Woodburn. “Indeed, the milestones of a newly introduced class of submarines are giving way to a bright and busy future.”

## Victoria-Class Facts

**Crew** – 48

**Displacement** – 2,400 tonnes (submerged)

**Length** – 70.3 metres

**Diameter** – 7.6 metres

**Draught** – 6.5 metres

**Speed** – 20+ knots (submerged), 12 knots (surfaced)

**Weapons** – six forward torpedo tubes capable of launching Mk 48 torpedoes (18 total)

**Range** – 10,000 nautical miles

**Patrol endurance** – approximately 56 days





# Navy trying to attract people for technical trades

**(Editor's Note:** The mission of Director Maritime Training and Education (DMTE) is to provide sufficient, properly qualified personnel to conduct naval operations through recruiting attraction, training, professional development and education. One of its biggest challenges right now is the "recruiting attraction" element of that mission – how it supports the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group (CFRG) in encouraging people to join the navy. The following article focuses on DMTE's challenges in helping to ensure that the navy meets its recruiting goals through a variety of innovative programs designed to raise awareness and educate.)

**T**he recruiting of high quality people, particularly those interested in technical occupations, is one of the navy's most significant human resources challenges. Although the smallest of the three services at approximately 8,300 regular force personnel and 3,650 primary reservists, the navy still has recruiting goals which need to be met to ensure ongoing operational success. Last year, the overall naval technical occupations recruiting target was 393 regular force personnel, and yet the navy was only able to enrol 181 new recruits.

"While the numbers may not seem that large, it has a cumulative effect over the years and if it continues,

it is a trend that will have significant consequences," says Captain (Navy) Brendan Ryan, Director Maritime Training and Education.

The numbers are particularly low in naval technical trades where fierce competition in the marketplace has made it difficult to recruit people for these jobs over the past few years. Coupled with that is the navy's lower profile amongst Canadians, particularly those in central Canada (including Quebec and Ontario), where the bulk of the population lives.

"People in central Canada have a lack of awareness about the navy. It's hard to get a frigate to Winnipeg so that people can see what a naval warship looks like," says Capt (N) Ryan.

The navy is responding to this "maritime blindness" by aggressively pursuing the best and brightest recruits possible, with a particular emphasis on central Canada. While the core responsibility for recruiting belongs to CFRG, the navy supports recruiting attraction efforts in a variety of ways including the provision of naval personnel for job fairs, coordinating naval band participation at sports events, and organizing recruiting blitzes at technical high schools and community colleges. It also provides a naval display bus and a separate naval display trailer which tour the country, providing walk-through exhibits for potential recruits.



The Great Lakes tour is a classic example of reaching into the centre of the country for recruiting and education purposes.



Recruiting in technical trades such as Naval Electronics Technicians (Radar) (Leading Seaman Jeffrey Norman, above left) and Maritime Engineering Mechanics (Ordinary Seaman Louis Comeau-Martel, above right) is one of the navy's greatest human resources challenges.

A classic example of reaching into the centre of the country for recruiting and education purposes is the Great Lakes tour recently conducted by HMCS *Halifax*, which saw the frigate visit nine ports from Quebec City to Thunder Bay over a six-week period (see article on page 3). DMTE worked with CFRG and the ship, as well as the army and the air force, to maximize exposure of the Canadian Forces to both the Canadian public and potential recruits.

"The Great Lakes deployment is a terrific way to show central Canada its navy," says Commander Keith Keyes, Senior Staff Officer Training Support and Official Languages. "That being said, it is an incredibly labour-intensive job, and the amount of coordination with CFRG and the other services is huge. Our job at DMTE is to make sure that things run like silk for the ship's commanding officer."

In trying to attract new recruits, the navy needs to highlight both its traditional and cutting-edge nature, according to Cdr Keyes. "This is an educational process," he says. "Our strategy is built around long-term education. We have to get recruits at a young age and show them that we can provide teamwork, camaraderie, exciting work and brilliant educational opportunities."

To assist with that, as well as to address the technical trade shortfall, the navy has recently expanded upon its Naval Technical Training Program at the Maritime Institute (MI) of Memorial University in Newfoundland. Since the early '90s the navy has partnered with MI to provide a complete diploma pro-

gram for members entering the naval technical trades. The increasing need for technicians has also led the navy to seek out other technical programs offered at civilian colleges across the country through the Subsidized Education Program, to expand the academic avenues that potential applicants may access.

DMTE recognizes that two key factors play significant roles in meeting its recruiting attraction targets: optimizing the traditional recruiting areas while re-focusing efforts on central Canada, and ensuring that recruiting attraction efforts have a long-term educational component.

"We really suffer for lack of awareness," says Capt (N) Ryan. "In recruiting attraction, we have to get out there and show the face of the navy. We have to show that our people are knowledgeable, well-educated and highly trained. We have to show that while the navy is proud of its traditions, it is also on the cutting edge of today's technology. In essence, we have to help showcase the navy, proving that it's a viable and exciting career."

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## HMCS *Halifax* tours Great Lakes region to raise awareness

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been asked many of the same questions by more than 40,000 visitors,” says Cdr Bishop. “They have been phenomenal though, and as the captain of the ship, this is the most frequent feedback from the people I speak to who have visited the ship. They consistently remark that the crew is extremely



**Above:** A citizenship ceremony was held onboard HMCS *Halifax* in Toronto to welcome new Canadians.

**Below:** Recruits from nearby St-Jean, Que., visited HMCS *Halifax* during her port visit to Montreal.

professional, courteous and considerate. The visitors have all told me how proud they are of our sailors and our military after visiting the ship.”

The sailors themselves have a lot of fun to go along with their hard work and volunteerism. They have seen nine ports in just a few weeks, and have been well hosted by many of the communities visited. Many of the ship’s company have family and relatives along the route, so the trip has also given them a chance to show off their workplace and career.

Cdr Bishop notes that during this trip, he saw a change in public attitude from past years. “In the past, the most common comment from the Canadian visitors was that ‘they didn’t know we even had a navy’. During this deployment, we never heard that comment. Instead, we were asked about when the ship was in combat, or what was the most dangerous thing we’d ever done? This represents a sea-change in public opinion and awareness of the military and the navy. These Great Lakes deployments are a fantastic way to leverage this awareness and interest into practical knowledge of what the navy and Canadian Forces are all about.”

