

# Crowsnest

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Chief of the Maritime Staff

CANADIAN  
**NAVY**



Photo: Cpl Robert LeBlanc

## Leading the way

HMCS *Charlottetown*, now deployed for a six-month tour of operations in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea as part of Canada's maritime contribution to the continuing U.S.-led campaign against terrorism, exercises en route with Carrier Strike Group 10 including U.S. Ships *Harry S. Truman*, *Hue City*, *Oscar Austin*, *San Jacinto* and *Carney*. For complete details on the story, see page 9.

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# From the House of Commons to the high seas

It's a long way from the House of Commons to the bridge of a Canadian Navy frigate in heavy seas off the coast of Halifax or Victoria.

But that's just where 10 Members of Parliament found themselves this year as participants in the navy portion of the Canadian Forces Parliamentary Program (CFPP).

The aim of this non-partisan program is to provide parliamentarians with a better understanding of Canadian defence and security matters in order to permit them to participate more fully and knowledgeably in related parliamentary discussions and debates. They are fully integrated into the navy, army or air force, participating in training exercises, learning how equipment works, and taking part in operational activities.

The program is important to the navy because it gives parliamentarians a chance to participate in activities such as operations and navigation briefings; demonstrations of combat capabilities; man overboard and damage control/fire fighting exercises; and tours of the ship's compartments and equipment. It also gives them the chance to interact with the ship's company over

several days, gaining a unique insight into the daily routine of naval life at sea.

The program also highlights one of the fundamental responsibilities of parliamentarians: sending their armed forces to war.

"There can be no higher purpose of government than to protect the safety of its citizens and the integrity of the state, and there is no more solemn decision than to order the sons and daughters of the nation into harm's way," says Captain (Navy) Serge Bertrand, Chief of Staff with the Maritime Staff in Ottawa. "The Parliamentary Program allows our MPs not just to see how the men and women of the Canadian Forces go about the work the nation asks of them, but also gives them the opportunity to live it with them."

MPs routinely sail with a naval vessel for three to four days while the ships are conducting normal operations such as sea trials, fisheries patrols or maritime security patrols. Their experiences have been eye-opening.

Dawn Black, Member of Parliament for New Westminster-Coquitlam and the NDP defence critic, spent a few days aboard HMCS *Calgary* during sea trials this past summer. She says she wanted to participate in the program to gain a greater understanding of the work that the navy performs, and also to speak to sailors about their experiences serving with the navy.

"My experience at sea was fascinating. I learned so much and had a real opportunity to experience life with the Canadian Navy," Ms. Black says. "I returned with a profound respect for the difficult work that the men and women of the navy do on behalf of all Canadians. I was impressed by the professionalism and dedication of all



*Serge Ménard, MP for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, and Louise Thibault, MP for Rimouski-Témiscouata, aboard HMCS Ville de Québec.*



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Cheryl Gallant, centre, MP for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, helps haul on a line aboard HMCS Vancouver.

those onboard.”

Peter Stoffer, Member of Parliament for Sackville-Eastern Shore, was so impressed by his time aboard HMC Ships *Preserver* and *Iroquois* that he stood up in the House of Commons to encourage other members to participate in the program. “I stand here as a proud individual of this House of Commons who took a wonderful opportunity. I encourage all my colleagues to do the same. Bravo Zulu to all the men and women of HMCS *Preserver* and the *Iroquois*,” he said.

Todd Russell, Member of Parliament for Labrador, also found his experience with the CFPP rewarding. He

spent four days aboard HMCS *Algonquin* on a maritime security patrol this summer, and says that although he has always respected and held all Canadian Forces in high esteem, “the days spent on *Algonquin* have left lasting impressions that have deepened those feelings.”

“I saw first-hand the pride and proficiency of our men and women, and sensed the personal sacrifice that all make, whether in a combat role or not,” Mr. Russell says. “I can assure you that the days I spent on HMCS *Algonquin* will have a significant impact on my policy discussions with my colleagues in the House of Commons. In so many respects, when one experiences the navy and our Canadian Forces generally, one experiences Canada. The pride of our new Canadians serving aboard the *Algonquin* was one striking example.”

The manager of the CF Parliamentary Program, Louise Des Roches, says that the response to the program continues to be encouraging. “We have several Members of Parliament who have participated in the program for three years in a row! This speaks for itself.”

**“I saw first-hand the pride and proficiency of our men and women, and sensed the personal sacrifice that all make, whether in a combat role or not.”**



Dawn Black, MP for New Westminster-Coquitlam, gets instruction in how to properly handle a 9mm pistol from Leading Seaman Mark Purvis, aboard HMCS Calgary.



# HMCS *Toronto:* around Africa in 12,500 nautical miles



Photo: MCpl Kevin Paul

*Off the coast of Somalia*



During a five-month deployment with Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1), HMCS *Toronto* conducted operations in the Mediterranean and participated in an historic 12,500 nautical mile circumnavigation of Africa. SNMG1 is an integral part of the NATO Response Force (NRF), a highly ready and technologically advanced force made up of land, air, sea and Special Forces components that can be deployed quickly to respond to a range of emergencies.

The ship's captain, Commander Steve Virgin, and his crew of over 230 officers and sailors, departed Halifax in July and are expected to return home just before Christmas.

As part of SNMG1, HMCS *Toronto* conducted two principle missions. The first involved a first-time event for SNMG1: the circumnavigation of Africa. The task group, composed of ships from six different nations and under the control of a U.S. Navy task group commander embarked in USS *Normandy*, sailed around South Africa, conducting exercises with the South African Navy and paying a visit to Cape Town. Following this, *Toronto* carried out operations in the Mediterranean as part of NATO's operation to help deter, defend, disrupt and protect against maritime terrorist activities.

During the tour, *Toronto* crew members were also involved in charity work ashore, rescue efforts after the eruption of a volcano on the island of Jazirat At-Ta'ir, and Remembrance Day ceremonies in Gallipoli, Turkey.

"HMCS *Toronto* is part of Canada's ongoing commitment to support NATO objectives and solidarity," says Cdr Virgin. "Our security at home starts overseas and international maritime security is important business 24/7."



Able Seaman David Demitroff sends signals during a Replenishment at Sea (RAS) in the Red Sea with the German Tanker FGS Spessart.

Photo: MCpl Kevin Paul



Cdr Steve Virgin, right, shakes hands with the Yemeni soldier rescued from the water after the eruption of a volcano.

Right: Corporal Martin Page shares a quiet moment with a child from the ABBA House orphanage near Cape Town. Crew members assisted in the construction and painting of a building there as part of their out-reach program.



Photo: MCpl Darcy Lefebvre



Remembrance Day ceremonies were held by the ship's company in Gallipoli, Turkey.

Photo: MCpl Kevin Paul

Photo: MCpl Darcy Lefebvre

HMCS Fredericton near Iqaluit, Nunavut

Photo: MCpl Blake Rodgers



## DRDC Arctic sensor project benefits navy

**T**he Arctic is getting a lot of attention these days. With the melting of the polar ice cap, increased areas of open water make it easier for traffic to use the shorter route between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and also make exploration and eco-tourism more accessible.

In August, a Russian submersible planted a flag at the North Pole in a show of sovereignty, and the Canadian government responded by announcing several new Arctic-related projects including a new deepwater port, Arctic/offshore patrol vessels for the navy, a new Arctic training centre for the Canadian Forces and the expansion of the Canadian Rangers.

The mission of Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) is to ensure that the CF are prepared for future operations, including those in the Arctic, and this past April approved a \$15 million project to understand how to create a continuous picture of what's happening there, from sea-bottom to upper atmosphere.

The four-year project, called Northern Watch Technology Demonstration, will identify and characterize combinations of sensors and systems for the surveillance of the Canadian Arctic.

"Our mandate is to figure out the most cost-effective ways of doing this given vessel traffic, environmental conditions and sensor performance," says Klaus Kollenberg, project director.

Currently, Canada carries out much of its surveillance in the maritime domain from space using surveillance aircraft and satellite-based radar, but the results are sporadic since these platforms are constantly moving and cannot dwell on one spot. Northern Watch is looking at improving this through a combination of radar satellite and a suite of sensors, both surface and underwater, positioned at navigation chokepoints in various locations in the Arctic.

"Each sensor will have its own range and capabilities to identify, track or detect different types of vessels travelling through the passageways," explains Mr. Kollenberg.

Since the responsibility for maritime domain awareness rests with the Canadian Navy, an increased surveillance capability in the Arctic will be valuable, he says. Currently, joint operations centres on the east and west coasts provide essential information, but new sensors will significantly increase information from northern waters.

"The navy is really going to benefit from the work that we do here in a number of ways," says Mr. Kollenberg. "They'll be able to get a better picture of what's happening in the Arctic...but they will also be able to look at what we produce and apply it to other regions in Canada where they have maritime domain awareness responsibility as well."

Photo: MCpl Blake Rodgers





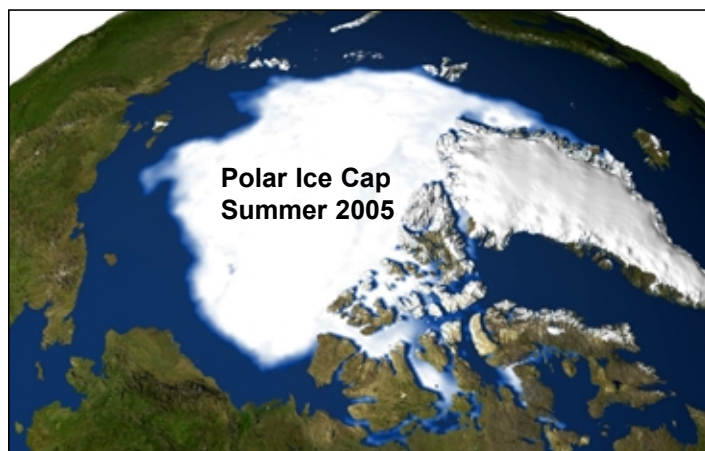
The preferred site for three annual chokepoint trials is at Gascoyne Inlet and Cape Liddon on Barrow Strait, and DRDC expects to send scientists to this site next summer. The trials and study results will determine whether a permanent network of monitoring stations for the Arctic is technologically and economically feasible.

"It's a matter of bringing together materiel, people and trials plans to ensure that when we get there, we can do our trials in the limited amount of time we have," explains Mr. Kollenberg. Typically the time of greatest traffic in the area is from about mid-August to mid-September, given the harsh climate and ice conditions.

Some of the "bugs and wrinkles" for these trials will be worked out beforehand at the Naval Electronics Systems Test Range (NESTRA) just outside of Halifax at Osborne Head. The Canadian Forces Auxiliary Vessel *Quest*, often used by DRDC Atlantic for research trials, will be used to calibrate sensors for a baseline measurement.

In October, Northern Watch organized a conference at Dalhousie University's Centre for Foreign Policy Studies in Halifax, which saw about 150 defence experts, scientists and scholars meet to discuss surveillance in the Arctic region. As a result, knowledge was exchanged and the surveillance programs of other government departments such as the Canadian Ice Service, Transport Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard were discussed.

During the conference Brigadier-General Chris Whitecross, commander of Joint Task Force (North), underlined the importance of this to the military by saying: "Anything you can do to help me with surveillance, I'd be ecstatic."



The Canadian Forces face many challenges as they try to patrol an area that makes up to 40 per cent of Canada's land mass and 75 per cent of its coastal territory. DRDC assists in that challenge by helping to ensure the military is "ready and prepared for future operating environments," says Mr. Kollenberg.

In the end, while the Northern Watch project will not come up with an operational system, it will provide "hard science and data" to decision-makers who will decide whether to put in an Arctic surveillance system or not, according to Mr. Kollenberg.

"There's more traffic (in the Arctic) and we need to know as a country what that traffic is and where it's going so we can be prepared for any eventualities," he says. "The drive for having to do this leads you to exploring your options on what we can do as a country in terms of surveillance."

*HMCS Corner Brook in Arctic waters*



# Navy achieves critical effects in deployments around the world

Over the past few months Canadian naval operations and deployments have spanned the globe from Canada's North to the Baltic Sea, South Africa, the Caribbean and the western coast of South America.

The effects of these voyages have been far-reaching, and it's those effects that build support for the navy, according to Vice-Admiral Drew Robertson, Chief of the Maritime Staff.

"I'm very proud of the effects our ships, submarines and aircraft have achieved for Canada in far distant waters over the past few months," he says, "and I look forward to continuing to produce these effects in other waters in the coming year."

These deployments are "vital to maintaining maritime security in challenging conditions and are also essential to building relations with like-minded countries", the admiral explains.

Since May, the navy has been involved in such diverse operations as support to the Prime Minister attending meetings with government leaders from the Caribbean Community; contributing to NATO exercises such as NOBLE MARINER in the Baltic Sea and as part of Standing NATO Maritime Group 1's circumnavigation of Africa; working with western hemisphere navies off the Panama Canal; and enforcing Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic.

"We have had some real success in showing Canadians what we do off our own coasts, around the



*HMC Ships Vancouver and Algonquin in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii*

continent, and internationally," VAdm Robertson says.

Using HMCS *Toronto*'s current deployment with SNMG1 as an example, he says that the presence of NATO ships off the coast of Somalia, where piracy is enabled by lawlessness ashore and feeds that lawlessness in turn, is sure to have a positive effect on maritime security and the merchant ships that rely on that security to deliver food aid ashore.

"The same benefit of enhanced maritime security will be delivered by our next deployment to the Coalition effort in the Gulf," VAdm Robertson says. "Indeed, beyond enhanced security, ships that Canada deploys also project our interests and power in a region with many security challenges. Our deployed ships achieve a wide range of effects, including engaging friendly coastal states; deterring adventurism by those whose interests run counter to Canada's; interdicting the unlawful use of the seas while ensuring free access for trade so vital to regional prosperity; and building and maintaining knowledge about the region essential to

success should tensions rise further."

For sailors, this means its full speed ahead in the coming year.

"Whether it be Southply, RIMPAC, NATO exercises or domestic operations, we will be delivering maritime security while projecting Canadian interests and power off almost every continent," says VAdm Robertson. "It's the efforts of our sailors, and the effects they achieve, that I'll be speaking about to Canadians in the months ahead – and Canadians are invariably impressed and supportive once they hear of our successes at home and abroad."



*HMCS Toronto  
near Cape Town,  
South Africa*



# HMCS *Charlottetown* deploys in war against terror

**H**MCS *Charlottetown* has deployed for six months on Operation ALTAIR, Canada's maritime contribution to the continuing U.S.-led campaign against terrorism known as Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.

The ship left Halifax on November 1 under the command of Commander Patrick St-Denis and with a crew of about 250 officers and sailors, including a CH-124 Sea King helicopter detachment. HMCS *Charlottetown* will conduct surveillance patrols and maritime interdiction operations to control sea-based activity in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea.

The ship will also be assigned to monitor shipping, escort commercial vessels, and help detect, deter and protect against terrorist activity. Throughout the deployment, the ship will conduct port visits designed to reinforce established regional relations and demonstrate

Canada's ongoing commitment to international security. HMCS *Charlottetown* is the fourth Canadian ship to



Crew members of HMCS *Charlottetown* wave goodbye to family and friends before departing Halifax.

Photo: Cpl Jeff Neron



Lt (N) Mark O'Donohue says goodbye to his daughter Fiona.

Photo: Cpl Rod Doucet

deploy on Operation ALTAIR. The first ship was HMCS *Toronto*, which deployed with the USS *George Washington* Carrier Strike Group from January to July 2004. In April 2005, HMCS *Winnipeg* deployed for six months with the 5th Fleet of the United States Navy. And the third ship, HMCS *Ottawa*, deployed from September 2006 to March 2007.

"This mission, like other missions before it, will aid in the defence of Canada and in the prevention of future attacks on Canada and her allies by helping to eliminate the threat of terrorism," says Cdr St-Denis. "I feel that Op ALTAIR will ensure Canada's Navy remains relevant, responsive, and effective in the new security environment."



Photo: Cpl Jeff Neron



Photo: Cpl Jeff Neron

Above left: Master Warrant Officer Donald Macintyre supervises the departure of a Sea King CH-124 from the deck of HMCS *Charlottetown*. Above right: The ship nears Gibraltar en route to the Persian Gulf.

## Successful counter-drug operation nets prestigious award

Operation CHABANEL, an RCMP counter-drug operation supported by the navy in the spring of 2006 off the coast of Africa, has received a prestigious award from the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). Commander Gilles Couturier, commanding officer of HMCS *Fredericton* at the time, was on hand in New Orleans, Louisiana, October 16 to receive the award, along with RCMP Staff Sergeant André Potvin and his team.

*Fredericton* was deployed for 44 days from April 10 to May 23, 2006 in support of Op CHABANEL, which resulted in the seizure of 22.5 tons of hashish (989 bags weighing between 20 and 50 kilos each), the biggest seizure of its kind in Canadian history. These drugs, en route for Montreal and the eastern Canadian market, had a street value of approximately \$225 million.

"This operation wouldn't have been attempted by the RCMP without the assurance provided by *Fredericton's* ability to operate unseen, as well as her ability to apply overwhelming force at a moment's notice, had that been needed by the RCMP to back up them up," said Vice-Admiral Drew Robertson, Chief of the Maritime Staff, when explaining the operation to members of the Standing Committee on National Defence last fall. "Although these actions occurred at a great distance from our shores, the actions that were taken contributed to the security of Canadians directly, while also interdicting a drug-smuggling chain that likely began in the poppy fields of Afghanistan."

For the crew of HMCS *Fredericton*, the IACP award provides recognition of a job well done. "This award reinforces the sense of pride the ship's company felt when the operation was over," says Cdr Couturier, who commanded the ship for 18 months and now works at NDHQ. "After all the secrecy surrounding the mission, having to hide some aspects of the task from our loved ones, and realizing the importance of taking away 22.5 tons of hash from the streets of eastern Canada, we were all proud of what we



Above: Crew members of *Fredericton* transport bags of illicit drugs from the boat deck to the after cleansing station where the product was secured until the ship's return to Halifax. Right: Cdr Gilles Couturier, centre, RCMP Sgt Joe Toméo, left, and Staff Sgt André Potvin proudly display the IACP award.



accomplished."

*Fredericton* had left Halifax on a routine fisheries patrol, but the mission changed significantly and the ship's company responded admirably, according to Cdr Couturier. "From the senior leadership to the most junior sailor, including 35 sailors who had never sailed before, they demonstrated the professionalism expected of all sailors."

Cdr Couturier also points out that being recognized for this operation is a clear indication of the team spirit that was quickly built between RCMP officers embarked and members of the ship's company. "We formed a team and were ready for any eventuality," he says. "To be recognized at this level only confirms what we already knew: the mission was a success. It is a credit to the professionalism of all of the sailors and RCMP officers involved."

Operations like CHABANEL are an integral part of what the navy has been doing over the years to curtail the importation of illicit drugs to Canada. "This operation is a prime example of how the Canadian Navy affects the lives of Canadians at home," Cdr Couturier explains.





*HMCS Protecteur provides fuel to the destroyer USS Russell off the coast of California during a task group exercise.*

Photo: Cpl Pier-Adam Turcotte

## Maritime warfare skills practised in task group exercises

**T**ask group exercises (TGEX) are part of a continuing series of fleet training exercises, the aim of which is to develop unit-level and multi-unit proficiency in all areas of maritime warfare. Hosted in both east and west coast waters, Canadian Navy ships are typically joined by a few U.S. Navy ships. Mock scenarios are staged to make the annual training exercise more realistic.

As the nature of threats to Canadian and regional security change, the navy must remain vigilant and ready to respond to a wide variety of complex challenges. The TGEX provides an opportunity for the navy to reinforce combat effectiveness, develop additional skills in littoral warfare and become more effective, relevant and responsive at the task group level.

In November, five ships from the west coast fleet, including HMC Ships *Algonquin*, *Protecteur*, *Calgary*, *Ottawa* and *Vancouver*, exercised off the coast of Southern California with United States and Chilean naval vessels. On the east coast, HMC Ships *Iroquois*, *St. John's*, *Halifax*, *Ville de Québec* and *Preserver* sailed south and exercised along the eastern seaboard with four ships of the United States Navy.



Photo: Cpl Pier-Adam Turcotte

*Left: A naval boarding party from HMCS Algonquin practises boarding techniques on a practice vessel at the Southern California Offshore Range. Below: HMC Ships Iroquois, Halifax and Preserver during a task group exercise near Norfolk, Va.*



Photo: MCpl Eduardo Mora Phineda

## Freeze frame



Photo: WO Jerry Kean

*HMCS Iroquois leads a sail past of eight Canadian warships from the Bedford Basin to the mouth of Halifax Harbour en route to a task group exercise off the east coast in November. The sail past included one destroyer, three frigates and four maritime coastal defence vessels. Two Sea King helicopters from 423 Squadron in Shearwater, N.S., assigned to HMC Ships Iroquois and St. John's, also took part in the event.*

## Feedback

Dear Editor:

Thank you for a very informative read. Your publication has played an important role in helping me with my decision to sign up with our navy.

**Michael Chapman**

Dear Editor:

Congratulations on resurrecting not only a much respected and informative publication, but also some wonderful memories of my early life growing up in a navy family in Halifax.

My dad, Chief Petty Officer Louis A. Cassivi, (C1-

ERA), joined the RCN in 1936 as a stoker, 2nd Class and served for the next 25 years in various ships including HMCS *Columbia* and *Prescott* during the invasion of France.

Before the *Crowsnest* was a year old, he was featured in the September 1949 issue as "the Man of the Month". Consequently, the monthly edition of the *Crowsnest* became a regular part of our family. As the years and the decades rolled on, that prized edition, for whatever reason, was lost.

It was not until 2003 that the CO of HMCS Hunter, Commander Bruce Lodge, unearthed from his own collection of RCN memorabilia that treasured link to my youth and my father's life, and delivered it personally to my doorstep.

I am grateful to him, and to you, for reviving a good thing.

**David S. Cassivi**

*Naval Officers' Association of Canada, Windsor*

Feedback is always welcome and can be sent to [blakeley.d@forces.gc.ca](mailto:blakeley.d@forces.gc.ca)