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INSIDE

National Defence Défense nationale

Canada

An artist's rendition of the new Arctic/Offshore Patrol Ship.

Full production begins on new AOPS

Lieutenant-Commander Tom Sliming, Deputy Project Director of the Arctic/ Offshore Patrol Ship Project, discusses the Royal Canadian Navy's newest class of ships and why they are important to Canada.

1. What is the current status of the AOPS program?

The Arctic/Offshore Patrol Ship (AOPS) Project recently transitioned from the design phase to the construction phase. Steel for Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Harry DeWolf,* the first ship of the class, was first cut on June 9, 2015 when Irving Shipbuilding Inc. began construction of preliminary components. Full production officially began on September 1, 2015. Six ships are expected, with the first delivery scheduled for spring 2018. The last ship should arrive by 2022. The first Arctic patrol should take place by 2019.

2. What type of advanced technology and armament will these ships carry?

The main armament on *Harry DeWolf* is a 25mm automated and remote-controlled gun. With very good accuracy and a high rate of fire, it will meet the requirements for the ship's domestic constabulary mandate. The ship is also fitted with a state-of-the-art bridge from where all of the ship's equipment can be operated. The use of the latest technology and automation means a smaller crew can safely and effectively operate the sophisticated navigation, communications and machinery systems.

While the "high-tech" is impressive, so are some of the ship's features that will enable it to conduct a broad scope of operations. With its ability to carry a variety of boats, vehicles and cargo (including containers), as well as embark a helicopter, the ship will provide the Royal Canadian Navy

Senior Advisor
Commander Kris Phillips
Head, Navy Public Affairs

Senior Editor and Writer
Darlene Blakeley
Navy Public Affairs

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Navy Public Affairs
National Defence Headquarters
11ST, 101 Colonel By Dr., K1A 0K2
or Crowsnest-LaVigie@forces.gc.ca

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Cover page: HMCS *Saskatoon* maneuvers around ice while sailing in the Arctic. Photo: Cpl Donna McDonald

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(RCN) and the Government of Canada with an extremely versatile platform from which a host of important missions can be staged.

3. Are they capable of breaking ice?

The technical definition of the AOPS ice capability is that it can operate in first-year ice up to one metre thick. But what does this really mean? Essentially it means that if the ship encountered solid first-year ice one metre thick, it could pass through it, maintaining forward progress at a speed of three knots. So, the answer is yes, it can break ice. However, the RCN is not calling the ship an ice-breaker because this expression implies that the ship's primary role would be to break ice, and that the ship was designed and built specifically to do that. That is not the case for AOPS. This will be a naval vessel that will conduct missions in support of the RCN's mandate, which will require it to occasionally operate in ice.

4. How many ships have been named, and why were these names chosen?

The AOPS fleet will be known as the Harry DeWolf Class, with the first ship bearing that name. Harry DeWolf was a Canadian naval hero of the Second World War. This theme is applied to all six vessels of the fleet; all of them named after Canadians whose distinguished and heroic actions while serving in a naval environment are a source of honour and pride for Canadians and for the RCN. Four of the five remaining AOPS have been named: *Margaret Brooke*, *Max Bernays*, *William Hall* and *Frédérick Rolette*.

5. What types of roles will these ships have both inside and outside the Arctic?

The primary roles for the Harry DeWolf Class will be sovereignty patrol, maritime domain awareness and providing assistance to other government departments as required. While these are all traditional roles for naval vessels, prior to the arrival of AOPS they have not been practicable for the Arctic. The RCN will now be able to fulfill its primary mandate in all areas of Canada's exclusive economic zone.

In addition to its primary roles, the ship has been specifically designed with an incredible amount of flexibility, which will enable it to support several other critical missions, both within and outside of the RCN's mandate.

Examples include supporting humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations anywhere in continental North America; search and rescue; counter-terrorist operations; responding to requests for Aid to the Civil Power from provincial or territorial governments; contributing to the routine or non-routine federal government effort in supporting northern communities outside traditional roles experienced by the navy; and supporting science and research as permitted by Government of Canada protocols and policies.

An increased Canadian Armed Forces presence in the Arctic is essential to achieving the national obligations of sovereignty and security.

6. Where will the ships be based?

The ships' home ports will be Halifax and Esquimalt, B.C. To provide a refuelling and replenishment depot when the ships are conducting Arctic operations, a naval facility is being built at Nanisivik, Nunavut.

7. Why are these ships important to Canada?

The Government of Canada recognizes that an increased Canadian Armed Forces presence in the Arctic is essential to achieving the national obligations of sovereignty and security. Canada has the longest coastline of any country in the world and is surrounded by three oceans. Though the RCN is able to conduct sovereignty and presence patrols in its Atlantic and Pacific areas of operation, the current fleet of ships is not designed to operate in the Arctic, meaning that even the smallest amounts of sea ice can deny the navy access to a significant maritime region of our country.

The arrival of the AOPS will change that. With the ability to operate from Baffin Bay through the Northwest Passage to the Beaufort Sea, when seasonal ice conditions in the North permit access to commercial interests, tourists, adventurers and illicit activities, the RCN will be there.

For more information about AOPS and the Canadian naval heroes they are named after, visit: www.navy-marine.forces.gc.ca/en/fleet-units/aops-home.page

An artist's rendition of the new Arctic/Offshore Patrol Ship.

The roughy-toughy unwashed submariner

By Darlene Blakeley

Photo: LS Dan Bard

Retired Lieutenant (Navy) Rob Arbour sits in the Submarine Control Trainer in Halifax.

This submariner has seen it all and has the stories to prove it.

From ordinary seaman to chief petty officer first class and commissioned officer in a career that has spanned more than 32 years, retired Lieutenant (Navy) Rob "Bats" Arbour is not only a submariner of the old school, but also a technical expert who still brings his considerable expertise to the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN).

Over the years, Lt(N) Arbour has made his home in both the old Oberon-class submarines, affectionately known as O-boats, and the newer Victoria-class submarines. He joined the RCN in 1982 and was soon taking the first marine engineer mechanical trade course. During this course, sailors were asked if they would like to volunteer for submarine service and the rest, as they say, is history.

"I volunteered because I thought it would be cool," remembers Lt(N) Arbour. "However, as I progressed through the Basic Submarine Course, getting my Dolphins and working my way up through the ranks, I knew being a submarine stoker is what I wanted as a career. As submariners we were given much more responsibility than our peers in the surface fleet. It was long hours of work and lots of sea time. We worked hard and played hard."

Lt(N) Arbour's first operational posting was to Her Majesty's Canadian Submarine (HMCS) *Ojibwa*, one of Canada's first Cold War submarines. For the next 18 years his career in the O-boats flourished and along with *Ojibwa*, he sailed in *Onondaga* and in *Okanagan*, earning his qualifications and promotions along the way. In 1998 the Canadian government purchased four Upholder-class submarines from the United Kingdom. These were renamed Victoria-class submarines, and Lt(N) Arbour served in three of the four: *Corner Brook*, *Windsor* and *Chicoutimi* as Chief Engineer. (*Victoria* is the name of the fourth.)

After shore jobs that saw him gain increasing responsibility and technical expertise, he received his commission as an officer. Retiring from the RCN in 2014, he returned to the East Coast fleet in Halifax as a civilian to fill the position of Submarine Escape, Rescue and Certification Officer.

Stand by to snort

As a long-time marine engineer (stoker) who has served extensively in both classes of submarine, Lt(N) Arbour is uniquely positioned to compare the two, right down to the nuts and bolts. "The differences are huge," he says.

Enormous advancements in technology over several decades led to changes in the way the new boats were staffed and operated. Lt(N) Arbour says the thing he missed the most when moving from the O-boats to the Victoria-class submarines was being the engineering officer of the watch in the O-boats when the weather was rough and the commanding officer wanted the submarine's battery charged before going deep. "The control room and helm had trouble controlling the trim and depth of the submarine and your watch got the pipe 'stand by to snort.' You had to get the engines ready to start, and then start them, while watching the gauges for depth, vacuum and angle, not to mention trying to stand and see the gauges on the engine fronts, with one hand always hovering near the exhaust mast blow valve, watching for one of the parameters to be exceeded. At that time you alone as the engineering officer of the watch had control of the snort and if any parameters were exceeded you blew the mast and stopped the snort. It kept the adrenalin flowing and, if you did stop the snort, within a few seconds the officer of the watch wanted to know why and you had to have made the right choice and back it up."

Apart from the new technology, there were also many changes in life aboard the new submarines, including the fact that women could now serve, says Lt(N) Arbour. "After an excess of 20 years in a male-only submarine service," he says, "it took some time to get my head around it and get used to it. Now, just like in the surface fleet, it's as normal as anything else."

He explains that the mess decks on O-boats were multifunctional areas, bunks, entertainment and meals all in

the same place. “So if a bunch of your messmates were having a discussion after the watch, or watching a movie and it got a little loud, it was hard to sleep. We also had to eat in shifts and there were no chats around the dinner table about how things were going – you got in, got it down your neck, and got out so the next guy could get in. Those coming on watch would come rolling out of their bunks right by the meal table. The sights at times were not that great – a grimy arm or a set of coveralls dragging across the table with food set out,” he laughs.

Eau de Submarine

The new Victoria-class boats have separate bunk areas and mess decks, and better heads (toilets), a vast improvement from the old boats, according to Lt(N) Arbour. “No need to be the roughy-toughy unwashed submariners we used to be,” he says. “While in port, we got shore accommodations. When we all rolled into a hotel lobby back in the day, we brought what is known as ‘Eau de Submarine’ – a mix of diesel, grease and many days of unwashed bodies. The other guests in the lobby seemed to disappear. Spouses of submariners know this smell very well. It permeates anything that has been in the submarine, especially the dirty laundry bag. In my house there was no sorting; it all went in one load. Today, with more water available on board, you can at least shower once every three days.”

Lt(N) Arbour is the first to admit that submariners are a unique lot. “Misfits, I’ve heard more than once!” He does say, however, that modern-day submariners are not quite the same as the older ones were with “their long hair and tattered, greasy work dress. But that is partly what made us a unique submarine brotherhood, or the term we used – ‘Buddies in Boats’ – and we were very good at what we did. Don’t get me wrong, submariners are still part of a strong brother and sisterhood with some very good people. Being a submariner today is challenging for sure, but in my opinion not quite as unique as back in the day.”

Most of them had nicknames that became so common that crewmates often forgot, maybe even never knew, their real names. The story of how Lt(N) Arbour received his nickname “Bats” involved a run ashore in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., during his first trip south in *Ojibwa* as an ordinary seaman stoker. Something about an altercation that involved a convertible vehicle and a baseball bat in the hands of strangers...but some stories are better left to the imagination!

“From that day on, I ceased to have a first and last name,” he laughs. “Everyone just called me Bats. Now, more than 32 years later, still no change. Most people now know my first and last name, but to submariners, non-commissioned members and officers alike, even those now of flag rank, I’m just Bats.”

The impact of the Internet

Lt(N) Arbour has also noted the impact of the Internet on submarines. “With the Internet and social media, something happens and it is all over the news or on the computer,” he says.

He recalls a story years ago in HMCS *Windsor* about cleaning up water with yogurt cups and pots. “This was all over the news. A tank overflows and it goes viral. Back in the day as the O-boats aged, pipes would develop holes and start spraying water into the submarine, and tanks did overflow. This was a fact of life, not big news.”

He fondly recalls an incident when he was paying a visit to the heads, also called “traps.” “The traps were flushed with sea water. It was reduced from the outside sea pressure to something that would spray out of a nozzle to flush. This reducer was in the paneling behind Trap Four. So this day, I slipped into Trap Four for a comfortable seat, when all of a sudden there was this sound behind me and the sound I knew only too well – high-pressure water hitting the paneling! Immediately, the deck is awash in seawater. People are saying: ‘What is going on? What is leaking? Is it a flood? Do we need to surface?’ We just had to go back to port to get it fixed. No problem.”

Important for Canada

Over the years Lt(N) Arbour has seen firsthand the value of submarines to Canada, whether it be the O-boats or the more modern Victoria class. And while it is of the utmost importance to him that submarines be seen as the strategic asset they are – lethal, stealthy and persistent – he says he is a technical person and that the politics of why Canada needs submarines is not that important to him. “I suppose it should be though. If it was decided that they were not important to Canada, I would not have had the career I had, nor would I be able to continue in the job I have now.”

He knows that success in maritime operations requires the ability to have control above, on and below the surface of the sea, and that without submarines, the effectiveness of Canada’s other maritime assets would be diminished.

In the end, however, “Bats” has been thrilled to have the unusual and varied life of a career submariner. He wasn’t one of those sailors in the surface fleet who avoided the submarine jetty in Halifax, just in case someone grabbed them and “volunteered” them for submarine duty.

“We sailed a lot and it was hot and dirty,” he says. “If work had to be done, we stayed until it was done. We were a tight group. We may have been misfits, but we were submariners. DBF (Diesel Boats Forever)!”

Photo: DND

Retired Lieutenant (Navy) Rob Arbour, far right, sails into Halifax Harbour aboard HMCS Corner Brook on his last trip as Chief Engineer. This marked the first time he was able to sail into harbour on the submarine’s fin, as he was usually in the engine room below.

HMCS **Moncton** *sits at anchor in Pond Inlet, Nunavut.*

Maritime Coastal Defence Vessels sail beyond expectations

Photo: Cpl Felicia Ogunniya

By Darlene Blakeley

From icy Arctic waters to the warm Caribbean Sea, the Royal Canadian Navy's 12 Kingston-class Maritime Coastal Defence Vessels (MCDVs) have been expanding their roles and proving their worth time and again.

Launched between 1995 and 1998 as training platforms to replace gate vessels and myriad tenders across the country, they were subsequently linked to a naval mine countermeasure role.

"The initial roles for these Kingston-class vessels were officer training, core at-sea training for the Naval Reserve, and mine countermeasure tasks to include mechanical mine sweeping and route survey using remotely-operated vehicles and side-scan sonars, and support to clearance diving operations," explains Commander Peter Koch, Commander Coastal Division, Maritime Operations Group 5 in Halifax.

The introduction of eight Orca-class patrol craft training vessels between 2004 and 2008 brought less of a demand for the Kingston Class in the maritime surface and sub-surface (MARS) officer training role, and the re-focussing of the Naval Reserve has led to training reservists in more than just the MCDVs.

All of this means that the ships have become less focussed on training and more focussed on operations, sailing beyond expectations in the missions they are assigned.

"The reduction in core training roles of the ships has allowed the operational programs to be expanded with the main growth areas being Arctic operations in the Canadian North and support to law enforcement operations in the Caribbean," says Cdr Koch.

The *Canada First* Defence Strategy clearly underlines the importance for the Canadian Armed Forces to operate in the Canadian Arctic. "Since they are built with an ice rating and can be operated quite efficiently, the MCDVs are ideal ships for tasks in the Arctic," says Cdr Koch. "While not robust ice-going vessels, the ships are nevertheless built to operate safely in 40 centimetres of first-year ice."

Their missions in the Arctic involve the core activities of surveillance and presence operations, but also include being a key enabler for other government departments to achieve their objectives including: conducting fisheries patrols with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans; surveying/charting for the Canadian Hydrographic Service; patrolling wildlife protected areas for Environment Canada; searching for historically significant artefacts with Parks Canada; facilitating research and development for Defence Research and Development Canada; being available for search and rescue; and environmental emergency response.

"For the Arctic, the ships' officers receive an Arctic Operations Course and many have conducted Arctic training in Canadian Coast Guard ships," explains Cdr Koch. "The crews receive cultural and mission briefings to prepare them for their tasks."

In the Caribbean, the MCDVs have supported the counter transnational organized crime (CTOC) task assigned to U.S. Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S). The ships originally participated in an overt and covert intelligence gathering role and now mainly embark U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment teams to conduct intelligence-based interdictions at sea.

"The Kingston-class ships have performed well in the Caribbean CTOC role," says Cdr Koch. "On any given day JIATF-S has a range of assets (air, sea, land and space-based sensors) with which to undertake their effort. Their task is deploying the total force package to best effect. Thus, while the Kingston-class sensor suite is not as robust as some vessels that participate in that mission, their relatively small size allows JIATF-S to monitor areas with shallower depths or among concentrations of legitimate vessel traffic where larger assets are not as advantageously employed."

These relatively new operational roles have led to some significant successes. For the first time since the 1950s, Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) ships sailed from Esquimalt, B.C., to deploy into the Arctic with Her Majesty's Canadian Ships (HMCS) *Nanaimo* and *Saskatoon* deploying to the MacKenzie River Delta to participate in Operation Nanook this summer. (Op Nanook takes place annually in several locations across Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, and is the largest sovereignty operation in Canada's North.)

In the 2014 navigation season, HMCS *Shawinigan* deployed through Kane Basin, Nunavut, to latitude 80 degrees 28 minutes north. This year, HMCS *Moncton* navigated further west into the central Arctic, operating within a few miles of the 100th meridian.

In the Caribbean, the ships have performed well in both the Atlantic and Pacific operating areas with significant drug seizures being facilitated by ships from both the East and West Coast fleets.

In addition to these emergent tasks, the MCDVs continue to see success in deploying in support of general domestic sovereignty support activity, mine countermeasure training missions, and many community relations events such as visits to coastal communities and along the St. Lawrence River.

These missions are not expected to change as the RCN moves towards its future fleet of modernized Halifax-class frigates, Arctic/Offshore Patrol Ships and Joint Support Ships.

"Following the principle of using the right tool for the job means that frigates capable of operating in a full-spectrum threat environment anywhere around the globe may not always be the best unit to employ in CTOC, Arctic and mine countermeasure roles," says Cdr Koch. "These are areas where Kingston-class ships are certainly capable."

Photo: LS Dan Bard

Above: HMCS* Goose Bay*, left, French Ship* L'Hermione *and Nova Scotia's* Bluenose II*, sail into Lunenburg, N.S., in July.

Bottom right: HMCS* Nanaimo *sails off the northern coast of California during transit south to participate in Operation Caribbe in February.

Bottom left: HMCS* Moncton *anchors alongside Canadian Coast Guard Ship* Pierre Radisson *in Nunavut in September.

Photo: Cpl Blaine Sewell

Photo: Cpl Felicia Ogunniya

RCN Korean War veterans remember

Photo: LCdr Al Blondin

Members of HMCS* Huron *Association who were on board the destroyer when it went aground. From left to right: George Guertin (radar), Dave Parent (stoker), Glen Wilberforce (stoker), Ed Grundwell (gunnery), Dan Kendrick (stoker) and Gord Edwards (electrician).

By Lieutenant-Commander Al Blondin

Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Huron's* bow cut through the impenetrable fog and mist of a dark sea off North Korea's eastern coast in 1953. It was the beginning of the middle watch, when most of the crew was asleep, trusting in their blind pilotage team. It was going to be a night to remember.

"*Huron*'s orders for the night of July 13-14 were to patrol the two-mile-wide strait separating the island of Yang-Do from the coast of North Korea," recalls Lieutenant-Commander George Schober, one of *Huron*'s officers at the time. "The patrol, in the form of an endless figure eight, was carried out at 12 knots."

Huron's operational areas in the late spring and early summer of 1953 were in the Yellow Sea and in the Sea of Japan off the east coast of the Korean peninsula. Like other Canadian destroyers deployed to Korea, *Huron* had just been engaged in screening allied aircraft carriers. With a fleet of only nine destroyers, the Royal Canadian Navy's (RCN) involvement in the United Nations (UN) war effort in Korea was significant. The RCN managed to maintain a force of three ships throughout the campaign.

The nature of naval operations off the coast of Korea was varied. In addition to interdiction patrols such as *Huron* was conducting that fateful night, RCN ships carried out shore bombardments and train busting, and blew up floating mines. After a few false starts, RCN ships joined and finally excelled in the U.S. Navy-led exclusive "train buster club", which consisted of shelling the engines of North Korea's cargo trains in order to interrupt their logistic supply chain.

This required excellent marksmanship on the part of ships' gunnery crews and it was a skill for which RCN sailors came to be highly valued. In all, 28 trains were destroyed by UN warships in Korea. Even though Canada's naval contribution paled in comparison to the U.S. Navy, RCN destroyers claimed eight kills. HMCS *Crusade*r alone destroyed four trains, earning the top shot in train busting history.

Once on station, *Huron* proceeded through the fog and mist of the strait. "Yang-Do had been taken by the South Koreans early in the war and held against several attempts by the North to take it back," says LCdr Schober. "The island was valuable, used by the Americans as well as the South Koreans for intelligence-related operations."

Shortly after midnight at the beginning of the middle watch, Leading Seaman Stoker (engineering mechanic) Glen Wilberforce was getting into his hammock after spending the first watch from 8 p.m. to 12 p.m. in the engine room, producing fresh water from the seawater of the strait with the ship's evaporators.

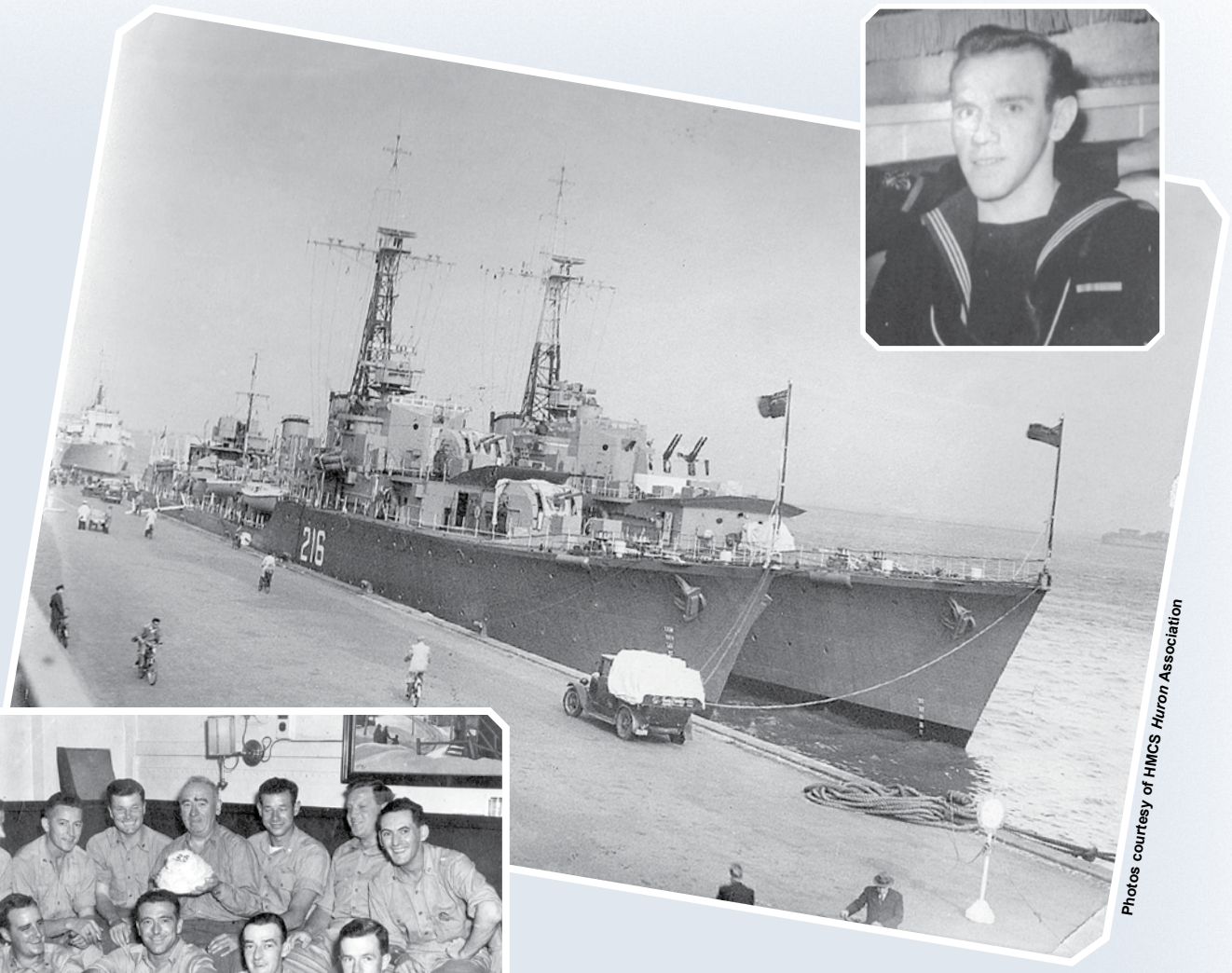
"I had just gotten off watch in the engine room, working on the evaporators," the former stoker recalls. "I was getting into my hammock in the seamen's mess when I felt one hell of a shudder and was thrown out of my hammock and hit one of the tables. The Petty Officer of the Mess was yelling 'Get out! Get out of the mess! We hit a mine!'"

"It was pandemonium," recalls LS Wilberforce. He remembers the Commanding Officer, who had been sleeping in his after cabin, coming out into the passageway, wearing only his underwear and yelling "What the hell happened?"

Still running at 12 knots, *Huron* ran aground. LS Wilberforce's fellow stoker, LS Dan Kendrick, also fell out of his hammock. He then clearly remembers the Engineering Officer, LCdr Howard Minogue, ordering him to go into the forward hold to check the damage. "I remember going down in there and looking," says LS Kendrick. "All I could see were big black rocks and black water and a great big hole."

Yang-Do Island was on the North Korean east coast, nearest the enemy-held mainland. The fog was thick and the Canadians credit it as having saved them from the Koreans. "If they could have seen us," says LS Kendrick, "they could have blown us out of the water."

But allied ships and aircraft formed a semi-circle around *Huron* to protect the Canadians. The Captain then ordered the crew to empty the forward magazines and take all necessary



Photos courtesy of HMCS *Huron* Association

Photo courtesy of LCdr George Schober

Top right: Leading Seaman Dan Kendrick in 1953.

Above: HMCS* Huron *and HMCS* Micmac *alongside in New York in 1950 on their way to Korea.

Left: Sailors gather in HMCS* Huron*'s wardroom in early July 1953, just days before the ship's grounding. Lieutenant (Navy) George Schober, third from the right in the back row, later became* Huron*'s executive officer.

weight off the ship to help take the pressure off the bow. LS Wilberforce and LS Kendrick remember taking advantage of the situation. One of the first things they got rid of was an old out-of-tune piano in the seamen's mess that the sailors loathed.

By clever engine movements back and forth and with the help of a rising tide, the Captain finally got the ship backed off the island under its own power. But *Huron* couldn't make headway because it forced the seawater into the hole in the bow. Once free, the destroyer was towed, going astern the whole way to Sasebo, Japan, by a U.S. Navy fleet tug. Just as they approached the harbour however, the Captain insisted on having the ship turned around. He brought *Huron* alongside bow first under its own power as a matter of pride. She underwent repairs in the SSK Shipyard, recalls LCdr Schober. "It wasn't until October that *Huron* sailed again – with four new officers, including a new Captain."

Dozens of RCN Korean War veterans met in Gananoque, Ont., in mid-September for an annual meeting among old friends who share these special memories. LS Wilberforce, now the 89-year-old HMCS *Huron* Association President, has seen the numbers of attendees dwindling in recent years.

Known by the nickname "Old Guy" since his days as a stoker in *Huron*, he says that he is beginning to feel like his nickname a bit now, but that he and his fellow veterans still identify the Korean War as one of the most significant periods of their lives. Like veterans of other wars, their fondest memories are not of the battles, but the interaction they had with the local population, especially the children, when they went ashore in boats to bring special stores and hope. "The South Koreans loved us," remembers LS Wilberforce. "We didn't understand a word they said, but you could see it in their faces."

This year marks the 60th year since the return of RCN ships from Korea. The RCN will be hosting a vessel from the South Korean Navy at the Port of Montréal in November to commemorate the lasting historical friendship that the war has fostered.

HMCS *Winnipeg*:

Making significant contributions to NATO in Europe

By Sub-Lieutenant Jamie Tobin

Crew members on board Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Winnipeg* have been deployed on Operation Reassurance for about four months and thus far, have had a remarkable journey while making significant contributions to NATO assurance measures in Europe.

"*One with the Strength of Many* is our motto and with this strength we have proven to our NATO colleagues that we are a valuable contributor to allied operations," says Commander Pascal Belhumeur, Commanding Officer of HMCS *Winnipeg.*

Equipped with a CH-124 Sea King helicopter detachment, an embarked intelligence team, 15 Naval Reserve members, and the Royal Canadian Navy's (RCN) first Enhanced Naval Boarding Party (ENBP), HMCS *Winnipeg*'s departure on June 15 marked the first modernized Halifax-class frigate to deploy overseas from Esquimalt, B.C.

The Commanding Officer of HMCS* Winnipeg*, Commander Pascal Belhumeur, right, and the Executive Officer, Lieutenant-Commander Kevin Whiteside, stand on the ship's bridge wing.

The ship began its journey along the western seaboard and transited eastward through the Panama Canal on June 28. On both sides of the link, the ship conducted surveillance in support of Operation Caribbe, Canada's participation in the multinational campaign against illicit trafficking in the Caribbean Sea and the eastern Pacific Ocean.

"As a former navigating officer, sailing through the Panama Canal was a memorable moment in my RCN career and it was a great way to kick off this awesome deployment," says Lieutenant-Commander Kevin Whiteside, *Winnipeg*'s Executive Officer.

During its trans-Atlantic crossing, *Winnipeg* officially chopped in to Operation Reassurance, replacing HMCS *Fredericton*. After sailing through the Strait of Gibraltar, the ship assembled with Standing NATO Maritime Group Two (SNMG2) in Palma de Mallorca, Spain, on July 15.

Throughout the summer months, *Winnipeg* sailed in consort with five vessels from Germany, Spain, Italy and the United States, while operating under the operational command of Commander SNMG2 on board the flagship, Federal German Ship *Hamburg*. The task group conducted Operation Active Endeavour (OAE),

Photos: Cpl Stuart MacNeil

Above: Crew members respond to mock emergencies in HMCS* Winnipeg*'s damage control centre.

***Left: Sailors prepare a tow line aboard HMCS* Winnipeg.**

a NATO mission designed to build maritime situational awareness in order to detect, deter and disrupt terrorism in the Mediterranean Sea.

During OAE, *Winnipeg* hailed more than 135 vessels and employed the ENBP for two maritime situational awareness approaches, the first two times the team was employed in an operational setting.

"I am proud of the contributions that this team made to OAE," says Cdr Belhumeur. "We were Commander SNMG2's go-to ship in the Mediterranean Sea because we consistently demonstrated proficiency and professionalism while carrying out challenging tasks."

The ship disembarked from SNMG2 in late August and travelled west through the Strait of Gibraltar to Porto, Portugal, where it joined the Portuguese-led Standing NATO Maritime Group One (SNMG1) to conduct patrols and exercises in the Atlantic Ocean.

In mid-September the ship took a short pause from operations and travelled up the Thames River into London, England to represent Canada at the Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) exhibition, the world's largest defence industry trade show. At DSEI, *Winnipeg* teamed up with Government of Canada and defence industry partners to showcase the enhanced capabilities of a modernized frigate.

Winnipeg rejoined SNMG1 in the Baltic Sea in late September to participate in the final phase of Operation Northern Coasts. The team then continued on with the task group to participate in Exercise Joint Warrior in early October, where it operated opposite of the Canadian Fleet Atlantic task group consisting of HMCS *Athabaskan*, HMCS *Halifax*, HMCS *Montréal* and HMC Submarine *Windsor*.

"While our engagement with one another was limited, it was great working with our RCN colleagues from Canadian Fleet Atlantic," says LCdr Whiteside. "After being away from Canada for more than four months, it was great to see some familiar faces from home."

Amid all of this excitement, the ship recently surpassed the halfway milestone of its operation. It will remain with SNMG1 and participate in Exercise Trident Juncture and continue conducting patrols throughout Europe.

"We all look forward to the ship's return to Canada in early 2016, but in the meantime, the team on board HMCS *Winnipeg* will continue to proudly represent Canada in allied operations and consistently delivering mission success," says Cdr Belhumeur.

Right: Sub-Lieutenant Matt Baker takes a bearing.

Below: HMCS* Winnipeg*'s Enhanced Naval Boarding Party boards a merchant vessel in the Mediterranean Sea.

Ordinary Seaman Yvette Yong completes at the World Military Games.

Navy's Taekwondo champion humbled by UNWAVERING SUPPORT

By Darlene Blakeley

She's a world renowned Taekwondo competitor, but Ordinary Seaman Yvette Yong is humbled by the unwavering support she receives from her colleagues in the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN).

A naval communicator with HMCS *York*, Toronto's Naval Reserve Division, OS Yong combines that part-time service with her civilian job as a cook at a Toronto restaurant and a heavy schedule of competitions around the world.

This past summer she competed in the Pan American Games in Toronto and placed fifth in her Under 46 kg weight class. "This was one of the most memorable experiences in my life and I am so grateful to have had the opportunity, especially competing in my own country," she says. "Even though I had a heartbreaking loss in the bronze medal match, I couldn't have asked for anything better. In all my years in Taekwondo, I really felt like I was supported that day by every single person, and that was all I needed."

She adds that it was a surprise to see all the white navy uniforms in the crowd from HMCS *York*. "In that moment, I felt especially proud to be part of the Royal Canadian Navy, representing my country on the world stage as an athlete and military member. Words cannot describe how I felt seeing my commanding officer and unit behind me during my fights. It was truly an unforgettable experience, for which I am thankful."

OS Yong first got involved in Taekwondo when her parents tried to enroll her in a Kung Fu school, to follow in her father's footsteps. He was previously a Kung Fu instructor in Malaysia. "Unfortunately, my parents were not able to find a Kung Fu school in the area where we lived, so they enrolled me in Taekwondo instead. I had my first class on the very day I registered and participated in my first competition when I was only 10 years

old. The exhilarating feeling I had when I was in the ring was something I never forgot. My love for Taekwondo was born."

OS Yong's mother was also an athlete; a state track and field athlete in her hometown of Sarikei, Malaysia. "She has always told me that I reminded her of herself when she was young, and loved sports just as I do," OS Yong says.

She also has two sisters, Yvonne and Ysanne. "My older sister Yvonne has always joked and told me that I was the one who took all of her athletic abilities in addition to my own. Although she is not the athletic type, she never fails to support me in all aspects of my athletic career and for that I am thankful. My youngest sister Ysanne has a natural-born ability as a dancer and she is heavily involved with competition in dance. To my surprise, she is also quite athletic in other areas and has joined wrestling in school."

OS Yong trains twice a day with strength and conditioning in the mornings and Taekwondo in the evenings. Balancing training, competing, travelling and her jobs as a naval reservist and a cook is one of the most difficult things she has had to learn over the course of her athletic career. "With great support and understanding from my navy home base and my workplace at Asada (Restaurant), I've had the privilege of being able to pursue what I need to for training and competitions."

She says her motivation comes from her love of Taekwondo, the people who support her and the connections she has made with those in the Taekwondo community. "The friendships I have made with other athletes around the world is priceless, as some of my best friends now were my competitors in the past."

Some of her most memorable successes in Taekwondo were winning Gold, Female MVP and Best Fighting Spirit Award at the 2009 U.S. Open, as well as winning Gold and Female MVP at the 2011 World Military Games. Her most recent successes, apart from the 2015 Pan Am Games, were Bronze at the 2015 Australian Open, Silver at the 2015 Colombia Open and Gold at the 2015 Argentina Open.

In early September she trained in Cuba for a week prior to heading off to compete in an event in Mexico.

OS Yong is conscious of the fact that wherever she competes in the world, she also goes as an ambassador for the RCN. "One of my proudest identities is as a Canadian naval reservist," she says. "I remember on the day of my fight at the Pan Am Games there were people already talking about the RCN members coming out to support me. Before I stepped out of the athlete bus, I could see a few of the sailors outside and I felt so proud. It gave me the opportunity to speak about the military, and the navy in particular, with my friends, coaches and everyday Canadians who wouldn't normally learn about their military."

As she continues her busy schedule in the months ahead, she wants other people to know what it means to have dreams, and what it takes to achieve those dreams. "I always strive to do the best in what I set my mind to, and this is another reason for my motivation. I want to teach others that it is okay to set goals, and that although the road to achieving them may not be an easy one, it can be done with hard work and dedication."

OS Yong is living proof.

Photos courtesy of LCol Nathalie Birgentzlen

Top: Ordinary Seaman Yvette Yong displays her Pan American Games uniform. Bottom: Ordinary Seaman Yvette Yong, right, poses with fellow naval reservists from HMCS York after competing in the Pan American Games.

New commanders take the helm

The Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) welcomed two new formation commanders in the summer. Rear-Admiral Gilles Couturier took over command of Maritime Forces Pacific from RAdm Bill Truelove, and Commodore Marta Mulkins took over command of the Naval Reserve from Cmdre David Craig.

Rear-Admiral Gilles Couturier takes command of Maritime Forces Pacific.

RAdm Couturier

With 32 years of service in the RCN, RAdm Couturier most recently served as Director General International Security Policy within the Assistant Deputy Minister (Policy) group. He has also served as Director General of Plans at Strategic Joint Staff, and as Maritime Component Commander for Operation Podium during the Vancouver 2010 Olympics. He has served in ships on both the East and West Coast fleets and commanded HMCS *Fredericton* from 2005 to 2007, deploying to the coast of Africa on Operation Chabanel which resulted in the seizure of 22.5 tons of hashish bound for the East Coast of Canada.

"I look forward to the honour and privilege of leading Maritime Forces Pacific and Joint Task Force Pacific and to working with a talented and dedicated team to generate and operate a balanced, multi-purpose maritime force in support of Canadian security operations at home and abroad," said RAdm Couturier.

The Commander Maritime Forces Pacific is also Commander of Joint Task Force Pacific. As Commander Maritime Forces Pacific, he is responsible for providing maritime security in the North Pacific region. In his role as Commander Joint Task Force Pacific, he is responsible for all Canadian Armed Forces operations in the province of British Columbia and its western air and maritime approaches, as well as the Victoria Search and Rescue Region comprising the northeastern quadrant of the Pacific Ocean, the Yukon Territory and the province of British Columbia.

Photos: LS Zachariah Stopa

Commodore Marta Mulkins takes command of the Naval Reserve.

Cmdre Mulkins

In her 30 years of service as a naval reservist, Cmdre Mulkins was the first Canadian woman to command a Maritime Coastal Defence Vessel. She also served as the Commanding Officer of HMCS *Kingston* and Naval Reserve Division HMCS *Carleton*. As well, she deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan, for a six-month tour with Operation Argus, the Canadian Forces' Strategic Advisory Team – Afghanistan.

"I am grateful to have this opportunity to take command of the Naval Reserve. I would like to thank Cmdre Craig for his leadership during the last years. His work and dedication will be an inspiration for me as the new leader of the Naval Reserve," said Cmdre Mulkins.

The Reserve component of the RCN is composed of 24 Naval Reserve Divisions across Canada, from St. John's, NL, to Victoria, and is headquartered in Québec City. It provides trained sailors for Canadian Armed Forces operations ashore, at sea or abroad. Naval reservists typically serve part-time on evenings and weekends throughout the year, and can choose to serve full-time.