

O P E R A T I O N
A P O L L O



THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE CANADIAN NAVY IN THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM

RICHARD GIMBLETT



Richard Gimblett resigned his commission after 27 years service with the Canadian Navy to pursue a career as an independent historian and defence policy analyst. While in the Navy, he served in ships of various classes on both coasts, including as Combat Officer of HMCS *Protecteur* for operations in the Persian Gulf during the war of 1991. He subsequently co-authored (with Major Jean Morin) the official account of Canadian participation in the Gulf War, published under the title *Operation FRICTION: The Canadian Forces in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991*. His last appointment was to the Directorate of Maritime Strategy, to assist in the writing of *Leadmark: The Navy's Strategy for 2020*. He currently is contracted with the Directorate of History & Heritage (NDHQ/DHH) in writing *Volume 1 (1867-1939) of the Official History of the Royal Canadian Navy*. He has contributed naval analyses for the Conference of Defence Associations and the Council for Canadian Security in the 21st Century (CCS21). He is a Research Fellow with the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies (CFPS) at Dalhousie University, and is Vice-President of the Canadian Nautical Research Society.

(Photo, Eveline Goodall)

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OPERATION APOLLO



RICHARD GIMBLETT

DEDICATED TO THE MEN AND WOMEN
OF CANADA'S NAVY
AND TO THEIR FAMILIES

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FOREWORD



This work, although not the 'official' history of Canada's naval contribution to the post-September 11, 2001 campaign against terrorism, is an authorized account of it. It is aimed at providing Canadians an accurate overview of their Navy's contribution to this major conflict, through the eyes of an informed but independent author.

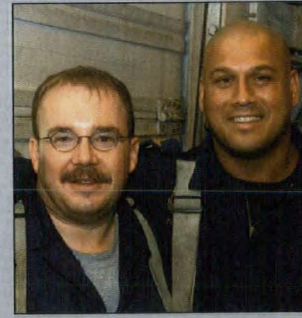
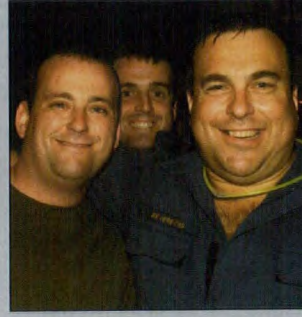
In due course, the official record will be produced by the Directorate of History and Heritage, utilizing not only Canadian sources but also those of our allies and partners, balanced against the broader geopolitical situation. In the meantime, I consider it very important that Canadians have this opportunity to better understand the contemporary relevance and credibility of their Navy.

I view this volume as comparable to the void filled by Joseph Schull's *Far Distant Ships* following the Second World War. Of all of Canada's armed forces, Canadians know and see the Navy the least. In part, this is because navies do most of their work far from the media. That said, navies are highly flexible instruments of national power, performing a range of functions from diplomatic to military engagement, while not needing to have a 'footprint' on others' sovereign territory. The mere presence of warships offshore sends a very powerful signal.

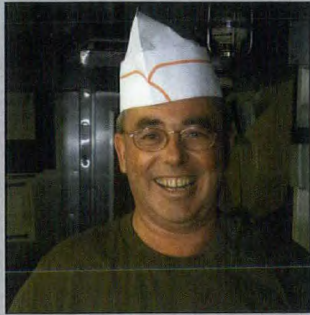
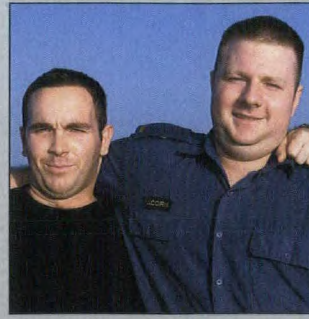
I am very proud of what the men and women of Canada's Navy have accomplished, particularly when it is understood that virtually every major warship and over 95 per cent of our deployable sailors participated in this conflict. Some of those sailors went more than once, and for extended periods at sea which have not been seen since the days of sail.

This volume is dedicated to the men and women of Canada's Navy, and to their families, without whom this accomplishment would not have been possible.

Vice-Admiral Ron Buck
Chief of the Maritime Staff



Our Friends & Family



Your Navy

Acronyms and Abbreviations

24/7	24 hours a day and 7 days a week, to signify around-the-clock activity	COI	contact of interest
AIMP	Aurora Incremental Modernization Program	COMPLAN	communications plan (list of radio circuits and frequencies)
AOR	(1) area of responsibility; (2) auxiliary, oiler, replenishment ship (navy colloquial: 'tanker')	COWAN	Coalition Wide Area Network
ARG	Amphibious Ready Group	CPF	Canadian Patrol Frigate (Halifax class)
ASW	anti-submarine warfare	CTG	Commander [of] Task Group
BAM	[Strait of] Bab al Mandeb	CTF	Commander [of] Task Force
C2	command and control	DCDS	Deputy Chief of Defence Staff
C4I	command, control, communications, computer and intelligence	det	detachment
CAG	Central Arabian [Persian] Gulf	DDG	guided missile destroyer (navy colloquial: 'shooter')
CAMP	Contingency Air Maintenance Program	DDH	helicopter-carrying destroyer
CANUS	Canadian-US	DMPOR	Director of Maritime Plans Operations and Readiness
CAP	Combat Air Patrol	FFH	helicopter-carrying frigate
CDS	Chief of the Defence Staff	FMF	Fleet Maintenance Facility
CENTCOM	Central Command	FNS	French Navy Ship
CF	Canadian Forces	GOO	Gulf of Oman
CFB	Canadian Forces Base	HELAIRDET	helicopter air detachment
CFSA	Canadian Forces Support Agency	HMCS	Her Majesty's Canadian Ship
chop	change of operational command	HOA	Horn of Africa
CJTFSWA	Canadian (or Coalition, or Commander) Joint Task Force, S.W. Asia	JMSDF	Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force
CMS	Chief of the Maritime Staff	JTF2	Joint Task Force 2
		LIO	[Taliban / Al-Qaeda] Leadership Interdiction Force
		LRP	long range patrol [aircraft] – (see MPA)

Author's Acknowledgements

Although only one name might appear on the cover, very few books can claim to be the product of a single author. The scope of the subject covered in this one, plus the ambitious format adopted, has put me in the debt of many persons.

Harry Harsch and Ian Parker helped establish the initial concept for the volume and then propelled it along at important intervals. They enlisted the critical approval of Admiral Ron Buck, knowing my own critical demand for academic freedom. All of us had sufficient confidence the Navy's Apollo story so deserved to be told that any such risks would be minimal.

Other members of the Navy and the Maritime Staff to whom I owe very special thanks are: Elizabeth Kerr, Gord Peskett, Mike Considine, Charles Hutton Brown and Paul Doucette. Michael Whitby and Ian Yeates offered valuable commentary on drafts of the manuscript.

It has been a rare treat working with my publisher, John McQuarrie, and his editor Diane Gonto. The hospitality extended to me by the companies of Her Majesty's Canadian Ships *Fredericton* and *Iroquois* in May of 2003 will never be forgotten.

Those who helped in ways too many to detail are themselves too many to list fully. This attempt to do so is made knowing that some inevitably will be overlooked: Tim Addison, Rob Bailey, Morgan Bailey, Steve Bell, Jack Backstrom, Fred Bigelow, Mary-Ellen Clark, Gilles Couturier, Colin Darlington, Peter Ellis, Ralph Fisher, Dave Fortin, George Forward, Diane Grover, Melanie Graham,

MPA	maritime patrol aircraft (see LRP)	RAS	replenishment at sea (see also UNREP)
MARLANT	Maritime Forces Atlantic	RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
MARPAC	Maritime Forces Pacific	RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
MIO	Maritime Interdiction Operation (some times Multinational Interception Operations)	RHIB	Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat
MOU	memorandum of understanding	RIMPAC	Pacific Rim naval exercise
MSM	Meritorious Service Medal	RMP	recognized maritime picture
M/V	motor vessel	RN	Royal Navy
NAG	Northern Arabian [Persian] Gulf	RNLN	Royal Netherlands Navy
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization	ROE	rules of engagement
NAVCENT	naval component of Central Command	SAG	(1) Southern Arabian Gulf; (2) Surface Action Group
NBP	naval boarding party	SITREP	situation report
NCS	Naval Control of Shipping	SLOC	sea lines of communication
NDHQ	National Defence Headquarters	SNFL	(see STANAVFORLANT)
NEO	non-combatant evacuation operation	SOH	Strait of Hormuz
NORAD	North American Aerospace Defence Command	STANAVFORLANT	Standing Naval Force Atlantic (NATO) (also SNFL)
O & M	Operations and Maintenance	TACON	tactical control
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom	TAL	theatre airlift
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom	T/AQ	Taliban / Al-Qaeda
OPCON	operational control	TG	task group
optempo	operational tempo	UNREP	underway replenishment (see RAS)
perstempo	personnel tempo	USN	United States Navy
RAMP	rest and maintenance period	USNIP	United States Naval Institute <i>Proceedings</i>
RAN	Royal Australian Navy	VOI	vessel of interest
		WEU	Western European Union
		WMD	weapons of mass destruction

Al Harrigan, Paul Hendry, Barbara Hotte, Mike Jellinek, George Kearney, Wayne Krause, Ross Lambert, Jamie MacKay, Paul Maddison, Al Markewicz, Dave Mason, Jonathan Myers, John Orr, Tom Park, Denis Paradis, Bob Robinson, Roger Sheperd, Todd Smart, Ruthanne Urquhart, Mark Watson and Kelly Williams.

Visual imagery is an important element of this book. I cannot repeat too often what an honour it is to use the paintings of John Horton; in this regard, the Directorate of History and Heritage must be credited for re-establishing the Canadian Forces Artists Program that supported his work. It was a pleasure also to engage once again the mapmaking skills of Bill Constable, and for the first time (but hopefully not the last) the chart production efforts of Bob Corrall.

Every effort has been made to identify the Canadian Forces photographers and other individuals who so capably chronicled the operations, but several were of particular assistance: Lori Brown, Vic Johnson, Shawn Kent, Jonathan Kowenberg, J.G. Lizotte, Sandy McClearn, John Price, Rick Ruthven, Mike Selig, Dave Shirlaw, and Tom Tulloch.

Finally, I thank the following persons and institutions for permission to reproduce copyrighted material or to have made such resources available: Andrew Marlatt (satirewire.com), Aaron Gairdner (Conservative Party of Canada), US Dept of Defense, Royal Navy, Royal Australian Navy, Shearwater Aviation Museum, Canadian Press, Ottawa Citizen and the British Broadcasting Corporataion.



I. THE NAVY – "READY, AYE, READY"

On the morning of September 11th, 2001, the Halifax-based destroyer, Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Iroquois*, was conducting trials offshore when news arrived of the terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and possibly other targets. Navy Captain Cal Mofford immediately had his ship establish connectivity with the North American Aerospace Defence Command, joining the NORAD radio and computer datalink communications network for operations against the as yet unidentified enemy. As the air space over the United States and Canada was rapidly shut down, all domestic commercial aircraft were ordered to land, and transoceanic flights diverted to Canadian airports such as Halifax and Gander.



Images such as this one, taken just moments after the second aircraft crashed into the World Trade Center, will remain etched in the memories of the millions of people who watched in horror as events of that day played out on their TV screens.

(Canadian Press Photo 2902418)

*A sailor from Iroquois bids farewell.
(CFB Halifax Formation Imaging Services
photo by Corporal Paz Quillé
HS20010716-08)*





This photo, taken during a routine watch shortly before the September 11th, 2001 attacks, shows Navy Captain Michael Jellinek (right) at his station in the NORAD Command Center. (Official NORAD photo)



Pair of CF-18 Hornets. (John McQuarrie)

(inset above) Iroquois firing SM-2 missile. (Canadian Forces Photo)

Iroquois took up a picket station to monitor the East Coast airways, looking for air traffic not conforming to expected patterns. The idea of warships working with NORAD was relatively novel, but as an area air defence guided-missile destroyer *Iroquois* is fitted with Standard anti-aircraft missiles effective out to a hundred-mile radius and long range air search radars that could

vector in Combat Air Patrol (CAP) fighters well beyond that. Although nothing suspicious did occur in her area of responsibility, several flights were intercepted elsewhere and forced to land by Canadian Air Force CF-18 Hornet fighters. This was serious business, and Canada's Navy was among the very first to engage in it.

Interestingly, it was another Canadian sailor – sitting in NORAD headquarters in Cheyenne Mountain – who issued the orders to bring all of North America’s air defences into action.



For his performance in organizing NORAD reaction to the attacks, Navy Captain Mike Jellinek was awarded the United States' Meritorious Service Medal. In accepting the award, Captain Jellinek noted the important part played by others: "An award focuses on an individual, but in the Command Center that morning, it was the command team that did it. We all worked together, supported each other and dealt with an extraordinary situation pretty well. ... Just like the CO of a ship, if your ship does well, you get a pat on the back. If your ship runs aground, you get court-martialed."

(Official NORAD photo)

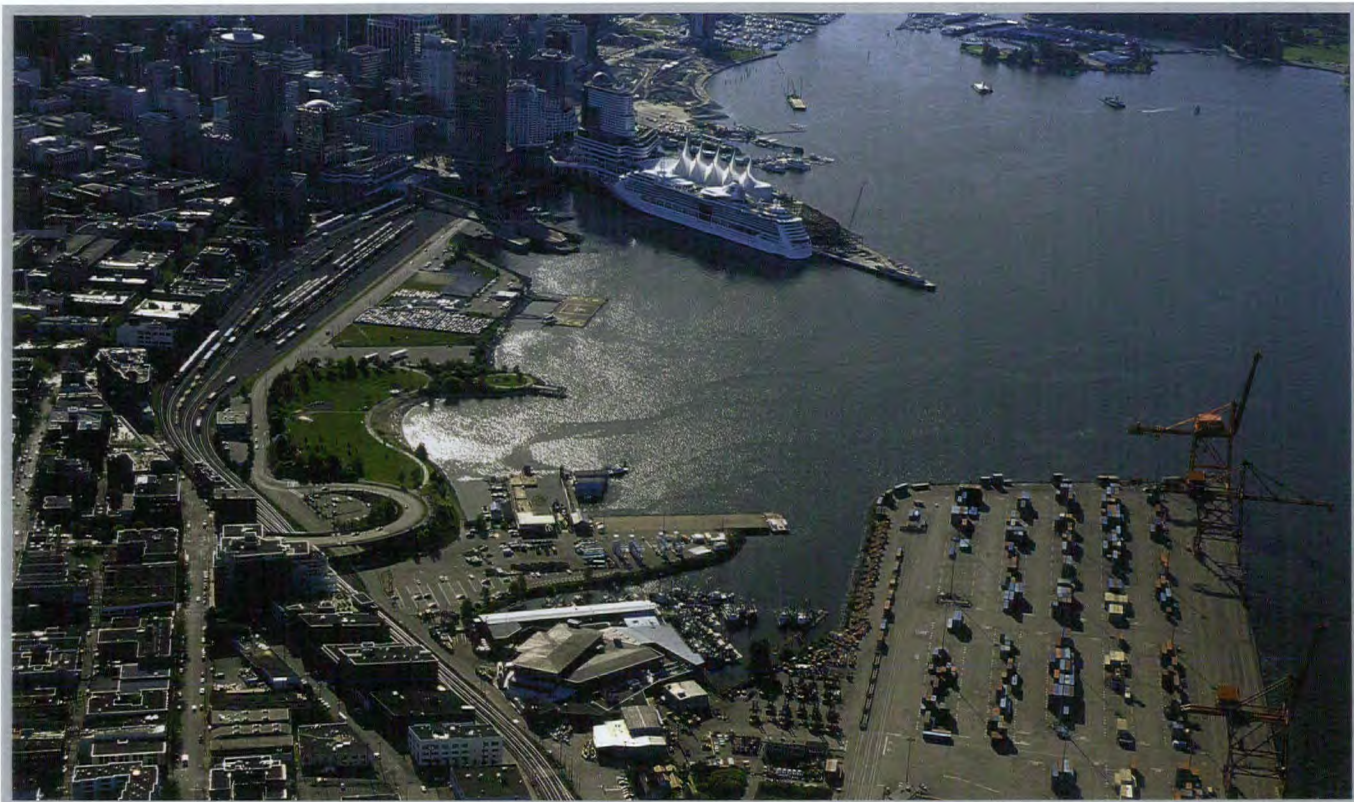
From its inception NORAD was recognized as a combined Canadian-US (CANUS) responsibility, but being established for the air defence of North America, it was assigned to the two nations' air forces. Late in the 1990s, when the US military shifted its manning of NORAD to a joint posture (that is, involving all three services, in this case the navy and army as well as the air force), the Canadian Deputy Commander of NORAD, then Lieutenant-General George MacDonald, supported the initiative by establishing ten Canadian naval and ten army billets. Navy Captain Mike Jellinek was the first Canadian naval Command Director, and he was on his regular morning watch when the report came in of a hijacking in progress. The Northeast Air Defence sector had already scrambled its fighters, and Jellinek's role was to obtain approval from the NORAD commander to intercept if necessary. The NORAD Battle Staff was closed up for a scheduled exercise, so permission was obtained even before the first jet hit the World Trade Center. Despite very fast scramble times, however, NORAD was not set up to counter a threat originating within North America, and no fighters were near enough to affect the intercept. Improvising quickly, Jellinek ordered scrambles to take out the next three hijacked airliners (the last, destined for Washington, could have been destroyed by approaching fighters if it had not been crashed into a Pennsylvania field). He further ordered all NORAD fighters to runway alert, and established airborne CAP over critical sites. What became known as Operation Noble Eagle was under way.



Canadians joined for a commemoration service on Parliament Hill on September 14th in a virtually unprecedented outpouring of sympathy for our American neighbours. (Photo by Julie Oliver, the Ottawa Citizen)

While the immediate threat had been answered, appropriate retaliatory response options were not so clear. Meeting in emergency council on September 12th, NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) ministers had no hesitation invoking – for the first time ever – Article 5 of the North Atlantic Charter, which states that any attack on a NATO nation shall be interpreted as an attack on all NATO members. NATO AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) aircraft, including Canadian crews, were sent from their base in Germany to augment Operation Noble Eagle.

When *Iroquois* returned to port to refuel on the 13th of September, the replenishment ship HMCS *Preserver* was being readied to sail to New York City in case of a request for humanitarian relief, much as she had done a decade earlier when Hurricane Andrew had ravaged Florida. In the event, both ships were told to stand by "to deploy for an extended period in the near future." They could expect a ten-day warning order.



Vancouver Harbour. (John McQuarrie)

As for port defence, the Naval Reserve and the Coast Guard were learning to their chagrin that Canada sorely lacked the specialized equipment needed to identify and examine container shipments for the possibility of nuclear, biological, chemical or radiological (NBCR) weapons of mass destruction (WMD) – a threat that until recently had been considered too remote to consider seriously. Suddenly it was only too real.

American and allied intelligence quickly deduced that Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda terrorist network were the perpetrators of the September 11th attacks, but such unconventional enemies defied easy military response. Other Al-Qaeda sleeper cells were possibly preparing to strike against remaining significant national symbols such as the White House or the Parliament Buildings, so the best solution seemed to lie in disrupting the terrorists before they could attack again. But their home base was in far-off Afghanistan, with elements in the Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, Indonesia, the Philippines and elsewhere. The Navy's Director of Maritime Plans Operations and Readiness (DMPOR), Navy Captain Peter Avis observed, "NDHQ staff is confronted for the first time in recent history with generating forces both to deploy [overseas] and to protect the homeland."

With typical naval understatement he added, "Deployability and sustainability are difficult as force numbers are stretched thin." Not since the darkest days of the Cold War, or perhaps even the Second World War, had there been such a direct threat to the North American continent, requiring significant military forces for the close defence of the homeland while also demanding forces to project against the enemy's overseas bases. The Canadian Forces (CF) were over-extended from continuing peace support operations throughout the world. An on-going 'Defence Update' process within National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) was grappling with the problem of how to keep mounting costs of capital equipment replacement programs within the designated budget allocation (approximately \$12 billion in 2001, a cut in real dollars of about one-third since the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s).



Montreal Harbour. (John McQuarrie)

An independent report prepared over the summer of 2001 and delivered only days after September 11th styled the predicament "Caught in the Middle," with the CF inhabiting the worst of two worlds: "...conventional military capabilities are in decline; and, new capabilities are unaffordable."¹

Indeed, Canada's capacity for homeland defence, let alone for providing options for overseas contingency operations, was exceedingly limited. When commercial airlines were allowed to resume flying a few days after the attack, the Air Force's entire fleet of some 80 CF-18 fighters was required to maintain the 24/7 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) combat air patrols near major Canadian airports. Even accepting the fact those aircraft had fallen sadly behind in the secure communications and precision guided munitions (PGMs) needed for their secondary role of fighter-bomber, none of them could be diverted from Operation Noble Eagle.

For its part, the Army's immediate priority was to focus on providing soldiers and air defence batteries for critical infrastructure protection. With a significant portion of the deployable Army already overseas in Bosnia, it would take several months to develop another battle group capable of contributing effectively to any combat action. Both the Air Force and the Army also were hampered in any deployment options analysis by the fact that the destination was uncertain, and the availability of secure bases from which to launch operations was highly unlikely.

¹ Conference of Defence Associations, *Caught in the Middle – An Assessment of the Operational Readiness of the Canadian Forces* (Ottawa, 2001).



A typical day on the North Atlantic: the coastal defence vessel Kingston disappears hull-down between waves as she participates in training with the task group ships headed to the Arabian Sea for Operation Apollo, October 18th, 2001.

(DGPA/J5PA Combat Camera photo by Master Corporal Brian Walsh, ISD01-9595a)

With domestic security remaining its first priority, the Navy immediately increased the number of patrols performed by the appropriately named Maritime Coastal Defence Vessels (MCDVs), while taking steps to ensure closer cooperation with the Coast Guard and Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

But Vice-Admiral Ron Buck, the Chief of the Maritime Staff (or CMS, as the head of the Navy is known) had other tricks in his bag. With the equipment available in September 2001, the Navy was the only arm of the Canadian Forces capable of taking the fight to the enemy. Besides *Iroquois* and *Preserver* in Halifax, there were their respective sister ships *Algonquin* and *Protecteur* in Esquimalt, and the fleet of twelve frigates divided relatively equally between the coasts (seven east and five west), although these were in varying degrees of readiness because of limited funds in the Operations and Maintenance (O & M) budget.

As a cost-saving measure in the mid-1990s, the Navy reluctantly accepted that the two coasts should take turns being ready to deploy quickly. The fall of 2001 found the East Coast designated as the High Readiness Task Group. Only a week after the initial attacks, an options analysis of all three services prepared for the Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (DCDS) determined that a Naval Contingency Task Group, consisting of a guided-missile destroyer (DDG), plus a replenishment ship (AOR) and two frigates (FFHs), each with an embarked helicopter air detachment (HELAI-DET), was the most appropriate Canadian response to the crisis. Soon after the attacks of September 11th, Admiral Buck issued orders "to take the necessary action within prevailing conditions" to assemble a High Readiness Contingency Naval Task Group and sail it for work-ups, and to move all other naval units to their wartime establishment.



Ten days after giving the order to sail, Prime Minister Jean Chretien was in Halifax to bid farewell to the crews of Task Group 307.1. Here he discusses the forthcoming mission with Commander Ron Lloyd, captain of Charlottetown (left, in yellow wet-weather gear). Flanking the prime minister, from the right are: Chief of Defence Staff General Ray Henault (in background), Chief of the Air Staff Lieutenant-General Lloyd Campbell (back to camera), Minister of National Defence the Honorable Art Eggleton, and Commander of Maritime Forces Atlantic Rear-Admiral Bruce MacLean. (HMCS Charlottetown photo, 020)

The decision to deploy finally came almost a month after the initial attacks. Meeting with President George Bush in Washington on the Saturday of the Canadian Thanksgiving weekend, Prime Minister Jean Chretien committed Canadian Forces to engage alongside those of the United States in what was by then becoming known as the War Against Terrorism. The United States was commencing operations against Al-Qaeda and its state sponsors, the Taliban government of Afghanistan. With no bases in the immediate area, the US was employing a combination of long-range strategic bombers and carrier-based strike aircraft to soften-up 'hard' targets in preparation for assaults by local Northern Alliance forces. Special Forces were being inserted from the south by means of a 'lily-pad' strategy, hop-scotching from bases in the Gulf to carriers in the Arabian Sea off the coast of Pakistan and thence inland by Blackhawk helicopters. Soon they would be joined by Marines from Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) assault ships also operating off Pakistan.

Even as the Prime Minister went on television that Sunday, October 7th to broadcast to the nation that Canada was joining the fight, Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) General Ray Henault was issuing the promised ten-day warning order. He also identified the codename of the Canadian national operation as Apollo, to run in conjunction with the United States' Operation Enduring Freedom. As a first step, the Navy was to deploy to the Arabian Sea – the actual operations were as yet unknown, but that area was certain to be a centre of activity, and a task group would allow flexibility to meet a range of options. An initial planning staff already had been dispatched to US Central Command Headquarters (CENTCOM HQ) in Tampa, Florida to further coordinate details. That staff very soon was transformed into a much larger group known as the Canadian Joint Task Force – South West Asia (CJTFSWA), and with the Navy forming the bulk of the initial contingent its first commander was a naval officer, Commodore Jean-Pierre Thiffault (see further discussion in Part VII, "They Also Serve").

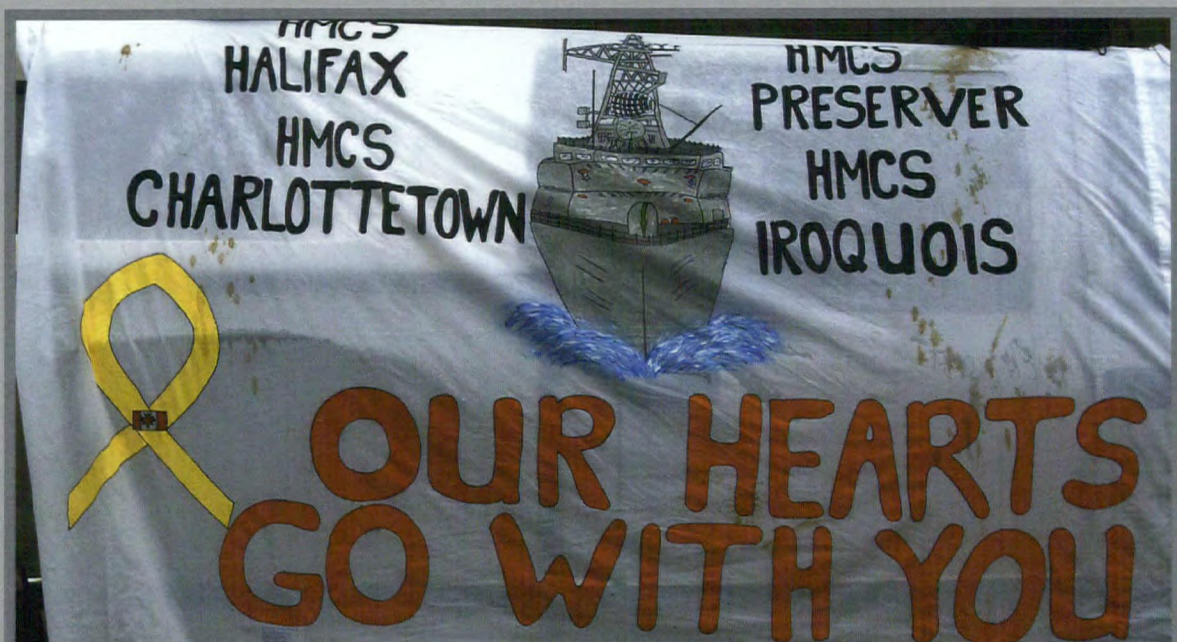
The next day, October 8th, Minister of National Defence Art Eggleton ordered the frigate HMCS *Halifax* to detach from the NATO Standing Naval Force Atlantic (STANAVFORLANT, or SNFL), with which it was on a regular four-month assignment, and proceed to the Arabian Sea. The NATO naval force was on a scheduled port visit to El Ferrol, Spain, and due to sail the next morning for a return to northern European waters. In the words of *Halifax's* captain, Commander Peter Ellis, "the Force turned right and headed north, we turned left and headed south."

Conducting extensive nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC), and force protection exercises and other preparations while passing the length of the Mediterranean, they transited the Suez Canal on October 22nd and 'chopped' (that is, passed command) to the Operational Control (OPCON) of CENTCOM on the 24th, the first Canadian Forces unit to participate actively in the War Against Terrorism. She would operate with US Navy forces already in the theatre of operations until more Canadian warships could arrive. Those were not far behind.



On a gray Halifax day, October 17th, 2001, Charlottetown slips from her jetty to join Iroquois in departing harbour. (DGPA Combat Camera photo – ISD01-9585a)

Families and friends of sailors serving in HMC Ships Halifax (already deployed), Charlottetown, Preserver and Iroquois prepared a farewell banner with a portrait of Iroquois and the yellow ribbon representing hope for the safe return of military personnel on operations overseas. (CFB Halifax Formation Imaging Services photo by Corporal Paz Quillé – HS20010718-01)



On October 16th, Commodore Drew Robertson, the Commander of the Canadian Atlantic Fleet (COMCANFLTANT), reported that his Task Group, designated TG 307.1, was ready to sail. The next morning, the little flotilla did just that – his flagship *Iroquois* in the lead, followed by the frigate *Charlottetown* and the tanker *Preserver*, their respective Sea King helicopters buzzing overhead before flying-on outside the harbour. They all were escorted by firetugs throwing jets of water into the sky and hailed by the cheers of Haligonians thronging the waterfront. Their Navy – their husbands, wives, parents and neighbours – were off to war!

Canada's sailors could take some comfort in those cheers. Just as appropriate was their pride in the speed with which it all transpired. The Canadian Forces are provided general guidance in the annual *Defence Plan*² as to 'vanguard' and 'main contingency force (MCF)' levels for each of the services. For the Navy, these are respectively a frigate and a task group, to be deployable on corresponding notice of 21-days and three months. Halifax achieved her vanguard re-tasking literally on a day's notice, and the full task group got under way in a similar fraction of the allotted time – a truly impressive accomplishment.

² Department of National Defence, Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff (DND / VCDS), Defence Plan 2001, at: http://www.vcds.forces.gc.ca/dgsp/pubs/dplan/intro_e.asp.

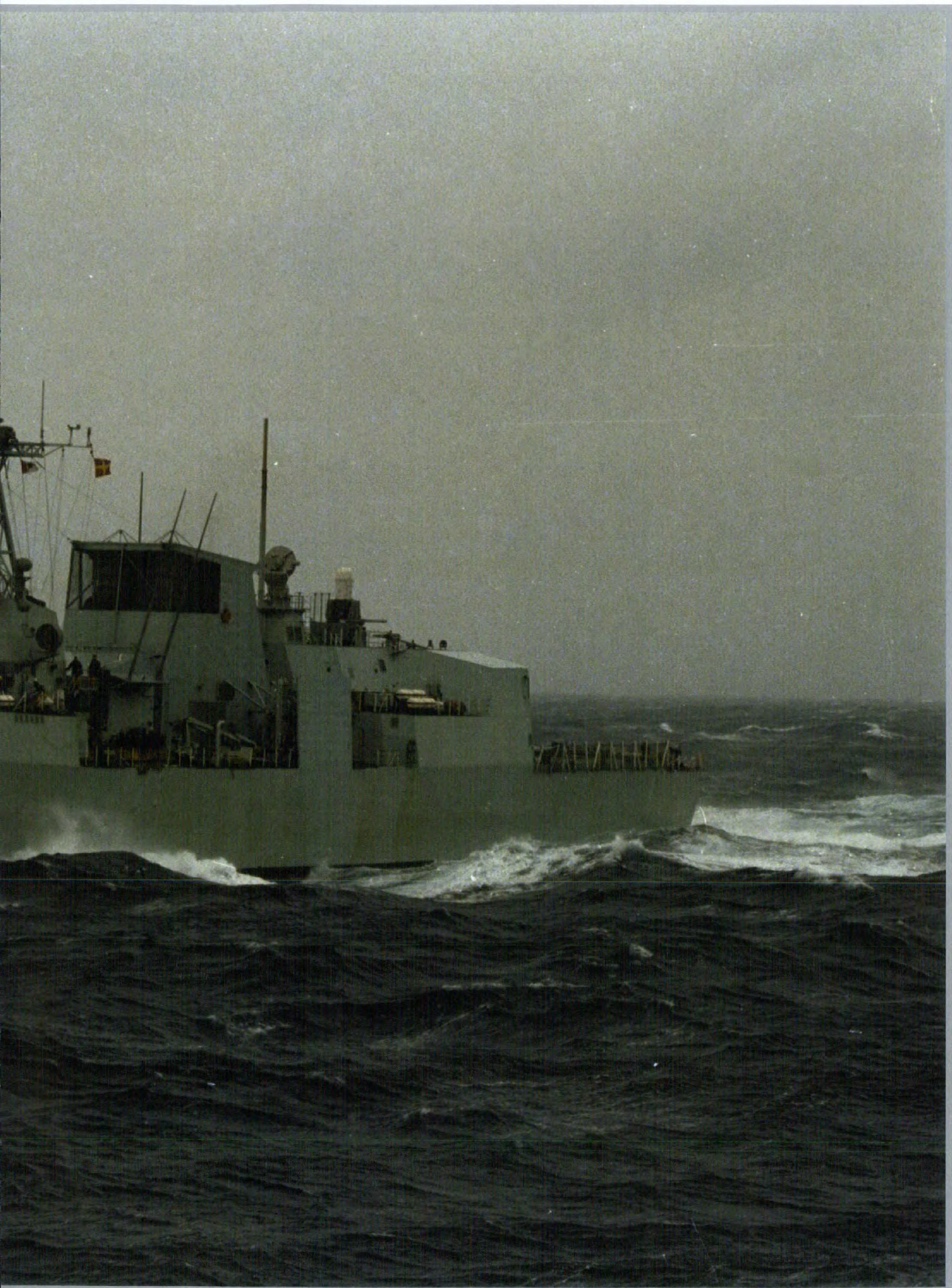


Preserver (foreground) follows Charlottetown (left) and Iroquois (centre) out of Halifax harbour to begin the voyage to the Arabian Sea for Operation Apollo. (CFB Halifax Formation Imaging Services photo by Corporal Paz Quillé – HS20010715-07)

With Preserver in the background, families and friends wave to the ships of Task Group 307.1 as they depart for the Arabian Sea. (CFB Halifax Formation Imaging Services photo by Corporal Paz Quillé – HSC20010723-8A)









II. THE 1990S - DAWN OF A NEW GOLDEN AGE

The scenes in Halifax raised memories of the time Canada's Navy last went to war, barely a decade before, to assist Coalition forces in the liberation of Kuwait. It was to roughly the same area of the world; and as before, the Navy was the first to deploy. Yet much had changed within that Navy. True, technically the destroyer and the tanker were the same class, and the venerable Sea Kings were still at it – but otherwise the fleet had undergone a sea change in those ten years.

Previous page: A pair of Canadian Patrol Frigates emerges from the mist at speed on the North Atlantic. (Canadian Forces photo)



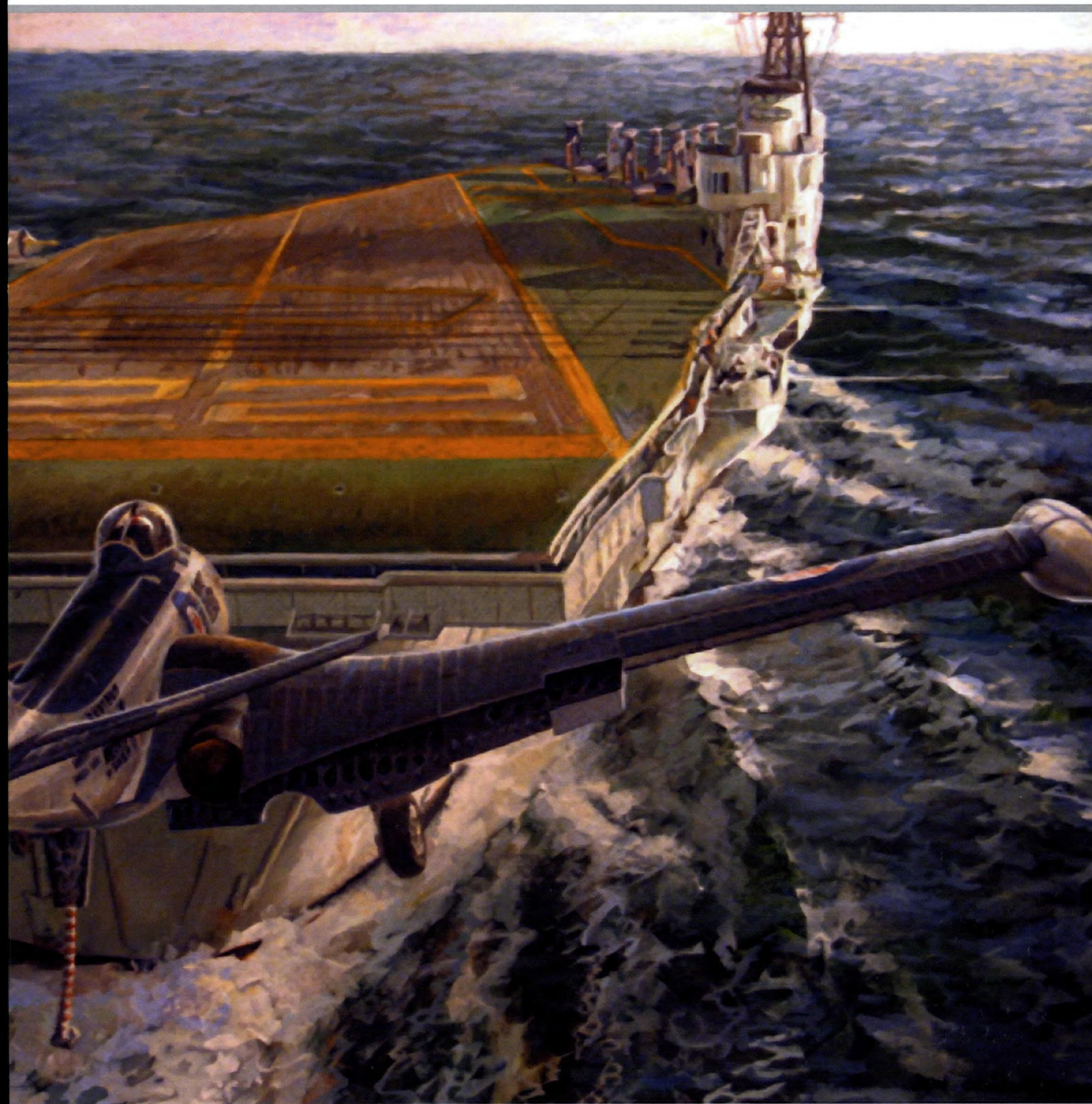
Observers of Canada's Navy look back fondly on the years 1955-1965 as its Golden Age. The last decade in which it sailed under the White Ensign, that was also perhaps the last time Canada's Navy had made a real difference. It was freshly seasoned from battle experience in the Korean War: the first of the 'Cadillacs' – the designed and built in Canada destroyer St Laurent, commissioned in 1955.

The Royal Canadian Navy's Atlantic fleet, 1968, including the aircraft carrier Bonaventure (centre-right background) and embarked Sea King helicopters and Tracker anti-submarine aircraft passing overhead. The 'Golden Age' had already passed, with the retirement of the Banshee jet fighters from Bonnie in 1965. (Canadian Forces photo, BVC68-4)

Soon followed 'Bonnie' (HMCS *Bonaventure*), the RCN's last aircraft carrier, an angle-decked armoured-hangar symbol of sea power sporting state-of-the-art Banshee fighters and Tracker sub-hunters. At the height of the Cold War, the Navy was expanding to meet the Soviet threat. Besides the new *St Laurents*, the older *Tribal*-class destroyers and *Prestonian*-class frigates had been updated, and flotillas of *Bay*-class minesweepers rounded out the fleet. During the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962, the east coast squadrons sailed to intercept the Soviet submarine fleet, supported by the long-range patrol aircraft of the RCAF's Maritime Air Command. A year later, the first of an eventual three replenishment ships was accepted, as was the first of the Sea King helicopters, and soon a Canadian submarine service was established. Throughout that period, the Royal Canadian Navy was among the leaders in technological development. Even if the fast sea-going hydro-foil *Bras d'Or* proved an evolutionary dead-end, other Canadian experiments in variable depth sonar, inter-ship datalink and flying a big helicopter (the Sea King) from a destroyer's small deck soon would become standards adopted by navies the world over.



Tracker aircraft on patrol. (John McQuarrie)



*"VF-871 Banshee about to trap on Bonaventure"
Painting commissioned by Col. B. Oxholm in early 1980's, then base commander of CFB Shearwater.
Donated to and on display by the Shearwater Aviation Museum. - Artist: Don Connolly
www.shearwateraviationmuseum.ns.ca*

After 1965, as battles over Unification raged, the Navy lost its bearings in a struggle for survival. The guided-missile General Purpose Frigate was unceremoniously cancelled, soon Bonnie would be scrapped, and in 1968 the 'Royal' and 'Navy' designations were taken away, replaced with the distinctly unromantic 'Sea Element of the Canadian Forces'. Commissioning the four-ship *Iroquois*-class of helicopter-carrying destroyers (DDH-280) in the early 1970s – 'Sisters of the Space Age' they were styled then – and two new tankers of the *Protecteur*-class could do little to reverse the trend. By the end of the decade, the Cadillacs were worn out and the Canadian Navy was the butt of media jokes as 'the rust bucket fleet', the sailors 'bus drivers' in their non-nautical green uniforms. By the close of the 1980s, it was little more than a fleet-in-being.

And then Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. A sudden change of focus from anti-submarine warfare in the North Atlantic to sanctions enforcement in the Persian Gulf proved the essential versatility of even rust-buckets, so long as their crews were well trained and motivated. Fortunately, capital programs to update the *Iroquois*-class and to build a new class of frigates recently had been approved. Even though the ships were not yet ready, the new modular systems and equipment destined for them could be fitted to the older hulls. And through the 1980s, while the ships themselves might have been lagging, the Navy had wisely invested its scarce budget allocations in two key areas: maintaining communications connectivity with the USN so as to wage strategic anti-submarine warfare against Soviet 'boomers' (SSBNs or ballistic-missile firing nuclear submarines); and in re-building the ashore infrastructure of the Ship Repair Units, which then became the focus of activity to ready the ships for the Gulf. Within ten hectic days of receiving the order, a three-ship flotilla sprouting new missiles, guns and satellite dishes was sailing out of Halifax harbour.

In August 1990 as in October 2001, the Navy deployed as a task group. A Task Group (TG) is defined as "a mutually supporting multipurpose force" – another mouthful puts it as "the task-tailored mix of capabilities brought together in a variety of surface, sub-surface and aerial platforms." To put it in layman's terms, ships are grouped in different combinations to do different jobs. Apart from such obvious capital ships as aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines, warships might seem to be interchangeable platforms, each capable of carrying any selection of weapons and sensors simply in varying quantities. In reality, different hull types are designed to be fitted with varying standards (not just different quantities) of weapon, sensor, communications and habitability capabilities:

- Cruisers and destroyers are purpose-built large enough to carry enhanced command and control (C2) staffs and equipments, as well as long-range area protection weapons (these are of necessity bigger and are required in great quantities to provide adequate coverage to a force).
- Frigates and submarines are the workhorses of the fleet, designed with the needs of long endurance and an emphasis on more compact self-defence weapons for independent operations (coastal defence vessels fill a similar function in a lower threat environment).
- Operational Support Ships are larger vessels, built to carry sufficient fuel, ammunition, food and spares to sustain other ships in company for up to three months without themselves having to be replenished.

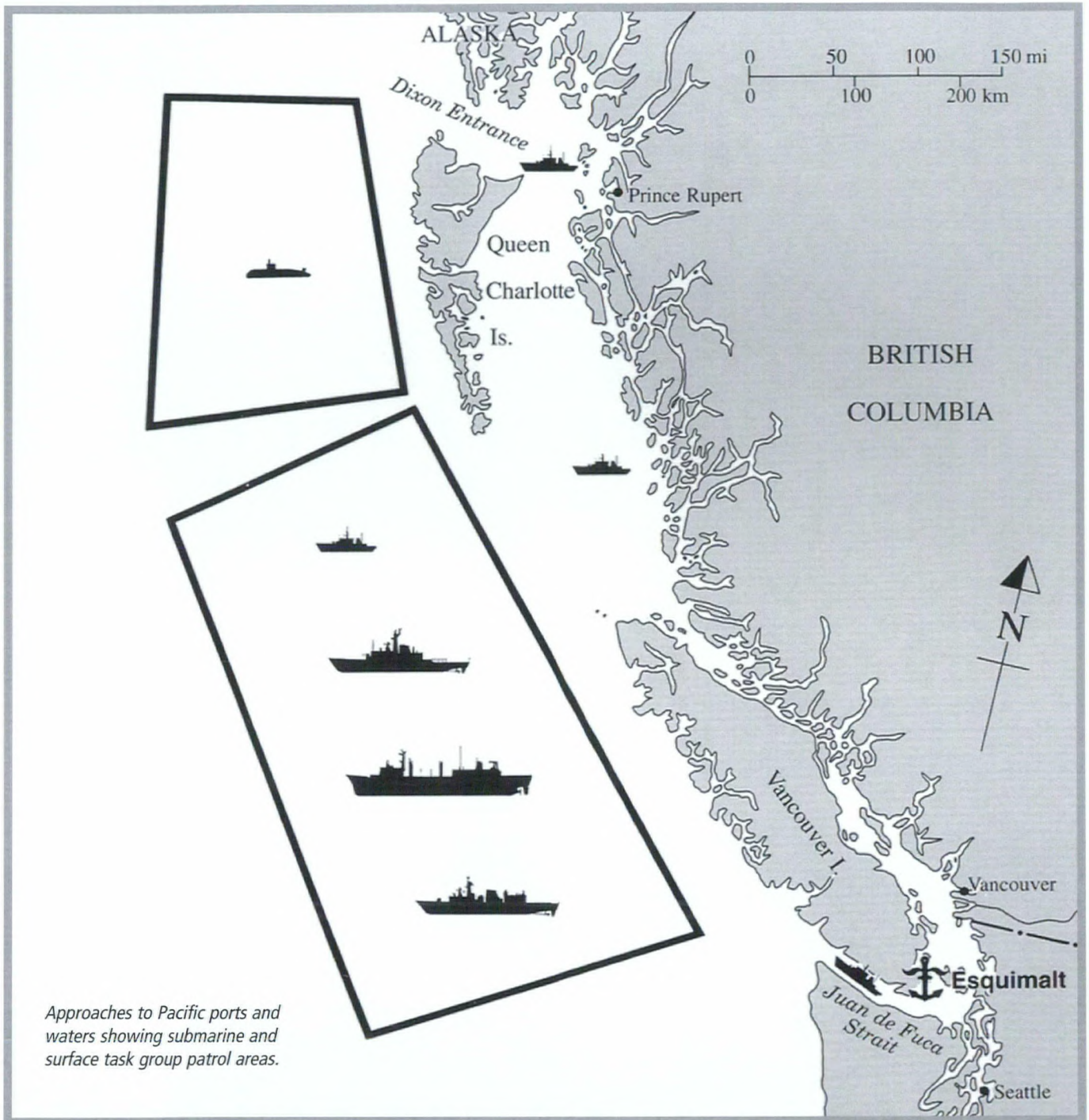
The naval task group 'capability trinity' then and now: command and control, integral sustainment, and operational depth, 1990 (top) and 2002 (bottom).



Task Group 302.3, (left to right) Her Majesty's Canadian Ships Athabaskan, Protecteur and Terra Nova in the Persian Gulf for Operation Friction, 1990-91. (Canadian Forces photo, ISC90-2104A)

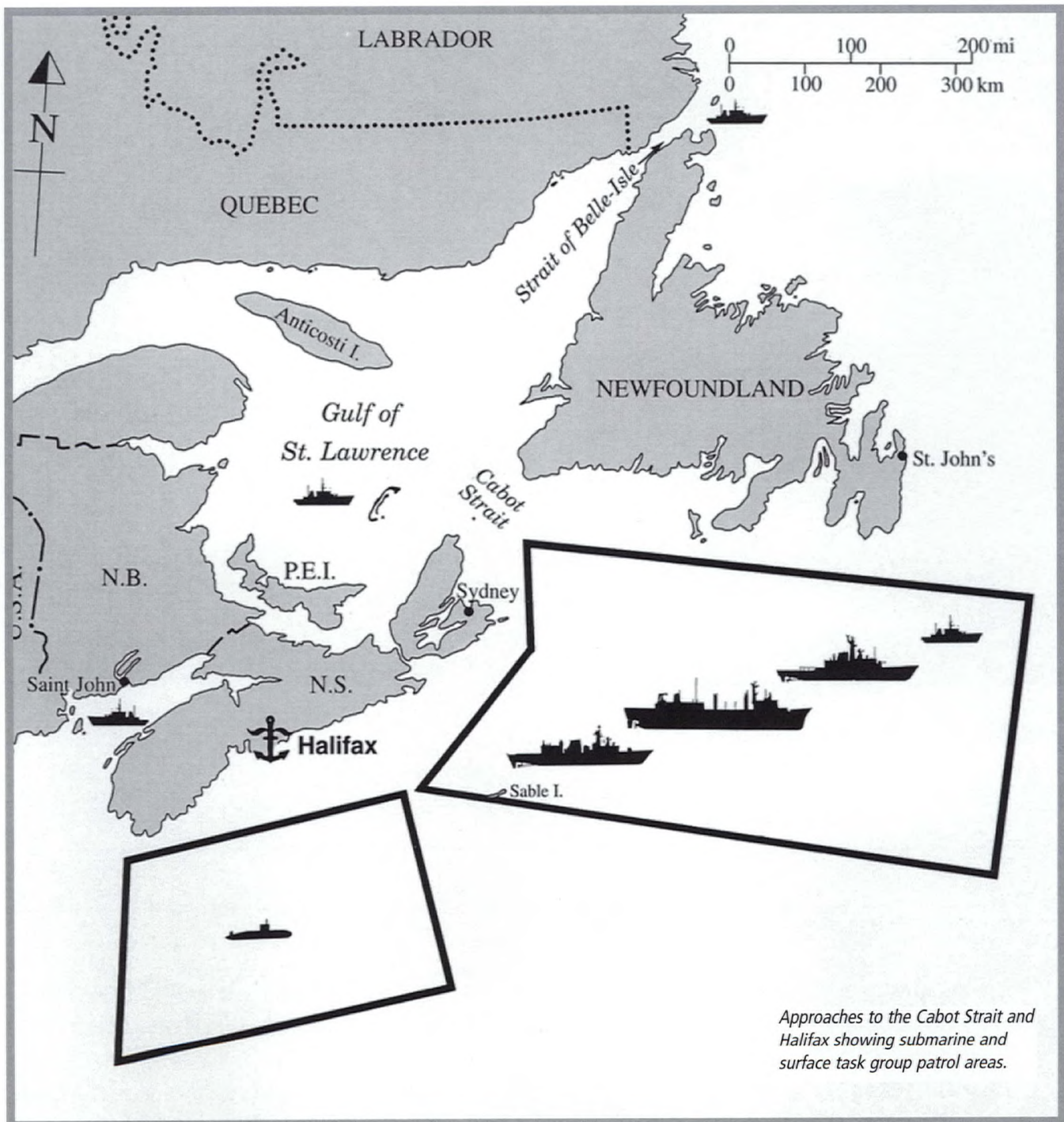
Task Group 307.1 (right to left) HMC Ships Algonquin, Protecteur and St. John's in the Arabian Sea, 2002. (HMCS Algonquin photo, HS2002-10260-03)





With their embarked helicopters, and augmented by land-based fixed-wing aircraft such as the CP-140 Aurora, the time of response and the area under control of warships operating at sea is increased exponentially. A study published in the mid-1990s found that a Canadian task group "has a continuous surveillance coverage of some 192,000 square kilometres (an area equivalent to... roughly the total area of the five Great Lakes)"³ – or, one might observe, the Arabian Sea.

While by definition the precise composition of any task group is dependant upon the mission, the Canadian Naval Task Group ideally is constituted of a trinity of critical elements corresponding roughly to the ship-class capabilities described above: command and control (as presently epitomized in the DDG-280 class of destroyers); operational depth (frigates, submarines and attached aircraft, both helicopter and fixed-wing); and integral sustainment (an operational support ship).



Approaches to the Cabot Strait and Halifax showing submarine and surface task group patrol areas.

Brought together, the result is greater than the sum of their individual parts: it is the ability to deploy a visibly Canadian force capable of independent and militarily useful operations.

The essence of sea power is mobility over long distances. With eighty per cent of all countries having a coastline, a globally deployable navy provides government with the independent means to be engaged at short notice, anywhere on three-quarters of the earth's surface – anytime, at the moment and place of its choosing. The deployment of naval forces is especially appealing to governments as an initial response in crisis management situations such as those in the South West Asia theatre because of their inherent flexibility:⁴

³ Fred W. Crickard and Peter T. Haydon, *Why Canada Needs Maritime Forces* (Ottawa: Napier, 1994), pp. 23.

⁴ Adapted from Peter T. Haydon, *Sea Power and Maritime Strategy in the 21st Century: A "Medium" Power Perspective* (Halifax, NS: Dalhousie University Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Maritime Security Occasional Paper No 10, 2000), p. 38.



The Canadian frigate HMCS Charlottetown manoeuvres in close to the American amphibious assault ship USS Bataan. (HMCS Charlottetown photo, HSCADO20102)

... Navies cannot hold ground to the extent that an army can. Nor can they reach as swiftly to the far corners of the globe as an air force. But the ability of a navy to stand off a foreign shore for an indefinite period with substantial combat capability cannot be matched. ... In particular, naval forces are endowed with the following strategic characteristics:

- They are unique in their ability to deploy quickly and remain in an area for extended periods without the agreement of neighbouring states and do not need to rely upon complex shore-based in-theatre logistic support systems;
- They have an inherent flexibility which allows them to change roles quickly without loss of efficiency or without having to return home to reconfigure;
- The modern warship can extricate itself relatively easily from threatening situations, but has the capability to function "in harm's way" and protect itself and those entrusted to its care; and,
- Warships have a symbolic value in that they are legal extensions of their parent state; in this, the presence of a warship is a clear signal of the interest or concern of a state (or of a group of states in the case of a multinational force) about a situation.



This sequence shows the sea breaking over Toronto's bow as she crosses the Grand Banks on the return voyage from the Arabian Sea in the spring of 2002. (HMCS Toronto photos)



For all of that, not all navies are created equal. Perhaps only half a dozen countries anywhere can assemble a national task group on just a few days' notice and sail it independently to the other side of the globe. Recognizing that it possessed something unique even amongst other medium powers, the Canadian Navy spent most of the 1990s seeking to articulate its value to the nation. It entered the new millennium proud and confident, and in the summer of 2001 published a visionary document to guide it into the 21st century.

Leadmark: The Navy's Strategy for 2020 boldly recognized the Canadian Navy as a 'Rank 3, Medium Global Force Projection Navy', in line only behind the fleets of the Rank 1 United States and Rank 2 Britain and France. Based upon a solid understanding of the Navy's historical contributions to Canadian defence and a sound appreciation of future threats (it named Osama bin Laden among major security challenges), *Leadmark* broke new ground in naval theory by identifying eight 'Principles of a Canadian Naval Strategy' and the future naval capability requirements to fulfill it.⁵

⁵ *Leadmark: The Navy's Strategy for 2020* (DND, 2001) and the eight principles are described at Appendix A at the end of this chapter. Readers interested in a deeper exploration of *Leadmark* can find it on the disc in the back cover sleeve, or online at: http://www.navy.dnd.ca/mspa_news/news_e.asp?id=11.

During an exercise off Norfolk, Virginia, in February 2002, in preparation for Fredericton's deployment to the Arabian Sea, Chief Petty Officer 2nd Class Bos'n Mate Leroy Fancy looks on as the fuelling probe slides across from an American tanker. The destroyer Iroquois can be seen through the tanker's superstructure. The weather was stormy and extremely cold, making for a difficult RAS – a typical northern operating environment for Canadian sailors.

(HMCS Fredericton photo
by Cpl Mike Selig, HS032500d13)



One major distinction from fleets lower down the scale is that they tend not to deploy as a task group, but rather as individual ships – that is, if they can deploy abroad at all. The irrefutable nature of our unchanging geography is a major factor in determining the size and type of navy for Canada. Most countries with shorter coastlines can get away with fixed defences or 'short-legged' fast patrol boats. Our extended coastline, with broad approaches and isolated expanses, requires relatively large ships with good sea-keeping qualities. And it simply would be impossible to build a navy that could be everywhere at all times. As a reasonable compromise, our Navy adopted the notion of a roving task group that does not need to return to port to refuel every few days. A direct consequence of that force structure embodying the trinity of capabilities – command and control, operational depth, and integral sustainment – is a navy with global reach. And that fits precisely with the national strategy of forward security: that Canada is made more secure by seeing to the resolution of global problems at their source, before they can expand to threaten the Canadian heartland. This is not only a measure of the idea of 'the best defence is a good offence'. It speaks also to Canada's acceptance of a responsible role in the global community.

Canadian naval uniqueness is due as well to the special relationship with the United States. Ever since the Second World War, the Canadian and United States Navies have exercised combined responsibility for the seaward defence of our island continent of North America. The high degree of naval interoperability needed to conduct Cold War anti-submarine warfare (ASW) has continued to progress operationally into the present era of Hot Peace. Still, despite increasing professional ease at operating with the USN, over the decades Canadian naval staffs observed that they had a greater influence in operational matters when Canadian ships and aircraft contributed as identifiable national tactical formations. In NATO especially, such national groupings proved the distinct advantages of coming fully trained, ready for the task, and being self-sufficient. Adherence to the task group concept was a guiding principle for the commitment of Canadian naval forces to operations in the Persian Gulf War of 1990-1991. It was rewarded when the Commander of that Canadian Naval Task Group became the only non-USN officer accorded the status of an independent Warfare Commander within the theatre of operations.⁶ Since the mid-1990s, *Halifax*-class Canadian Patrol Frigates have deployed regularly to enforce United Nations sanctions against Saddam Hussein's Iraq as fully integrated units of American aircraft carrier battle groups in the Persian Gulf.

⁶ Jean Morin and Richard Gimblett, *Operation Friction: The Canadian Forces in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991* (Toronto: Dundurn, 1997), p. 182; and Dusty Miller and Sharon Hobson, *The Persian Excursion: The Canadian Navy in the Gulf War* (Clementsport, NS: Canadian Peacekeeping Press, 1995).

The term 'integrated' is significant: warships of other navies often also deploy with USN battle groups as extras, but only Canada's meet the stringent communications and other technical compatibility requirements to be inter-changeable one-for-one with American warships.⁷ Southwest Asia would not seem a natural operating area for the Canadian Navy. Since the Gulf War of 1990-1991, however, it has replaced the North Atlantic as a 'home away from home', with most major surface ships having deployed there at some time (see box below). These all were long deployments, typically six-months' duration, under trying circumstances. But through them Canadian sailors developed a familiarity with the region, and a growing proficiency in a range of naval operations not previously practiced in the North Atlantic and Asia-Pacific theatres.



Winnipeg (left) and Charlottetown together in the Persian Gulf on May 9th, 2001 during an overlap between their Op Augmentation deployments. Both ships soon would return to the region on Operation Apollo. (HMCS Charlottetown photo, HSCHAD010509-12)

7. Lieutenant Commander (USN) Michael Crockett, "Professional Notes: O Canada!", United States Naval Institute *Proceedings*, vol 124/12/1150 (December 1998), pp. 65-67; and Captain (USN) Jim Stavridis, "They Got Game", USNI *Proceedings*, vol 125/6/1156 (June 1999), pp. 51-54.

Operation	Date	Ship(s)	Mission
Friction	1990-1991	<i>Athabaskan</i> <i>Terra Nova</i> <i>Protecteur</i>	Coalition eviction of Iraq from Kuwait
Flag	1991	<i>Huron</i>	UN sanctions against Iraq
Barrier	1992	<i>Restigouche</i>	UN sanctions against Iraq
Deliverance	1992-1993	<i>Preserver</i>	UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I)
Promenade	1995	<i>Fredericton</i>	High-tech Trade Mission
Tranquility	1995	<i>Calgary</i>	UN sanctions against Iraq
Prevention	1997	<i>Regina</i>	UN sanctions against Iraq
Determination	1998	<i>Toronto</i>	UN Special Commission Observers (UNSCOM) access
Mercator	1998	<i>Ottawa</i>	UN sanctions against Iraq
Augmentation	1999	<i>Regina</i>	UN sanctions against Iraq
	2000	<i>Calgary</i>	UN sanctions against Iraq
	2001	<i>Charlottetown</i>	UN sanctions against Iraq
	2001	<i>Winnipeg</i>	UN sanctions against Iraq

In the fore amongst these new taskings – indeed, the *raison d'être* of the Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO) the Canadian warships were engaged in – were boardings of vessels suspected of violating UN sanctions against Iraq. Where other big navies have a force structure that allows specialized forces for these operations (such as the US Navy Seals or the RN's Royal Marines), Canada's medium navy must resort to multi-tasking of its sailors. The hidden benefit is that they are always there in the ship. Non-compliant boardings resisted by the target vessel normally would be left to the specialist teams, but in what would prove to be the last Operation Augmentation deployment, HMCS *Winnipeg* was the only ship in the USS *Constellation* carrier battle group in the northern Persian Gulf with such a capable team. She undertook a total of seven of them, with a couple being especially dangerous.



Over the course of the Operation Augmentation deployments, Canadian Navy boarding parties became proficient at conducting opposed boardings. This photo taken on Charlottetown's flight deck on May 17th, 2001 in the Persian Gulf shows Master Seaman David Coderre demonstrating the Husqvarna Crash Saw he used for cutting through metal doors and hatches sealed shut by smugglers. Watching are (from left to right) the ship's coxswain Chief Petty Officer 1st Class (CPO1) Tim Spring, the visiting Maritime Command Chief CPO1 Richard Lupien, and then-Chief of the Maritime Staff Vice-Admiral Greg Maddison (after turning over command to Admiral Buck in the summer of 2001, Maddison served as Deputy Chief of Defence Staff through Op Apollo, and Lupien moved at the same time to become Chief Petty Officer of the Canadian Forces). (HMCS Charlottetown photo, H5CHAD010517-13)



Montréal's naval boarding party in their RHIB (rigid-hulled inflatable boat). (HMCS Montréal photo, BP_336_2002_019-7)

⁸ Sean M. Maloney, *War With Iraq: Canada's Strategy in the Persian Gulf, 1990-2002* (Kingston, ON: Centre for International Relations, Queen's University, 2002).



For a period of a week in the spring of 2001, Charlottetown was the only warship on station in the northern Persian Gulf. Here are three members of a combined USN and Argentinian Navy boarding team borrowed from USS Mitscher, to keep up with the pace of operations. (HMCS Charlottetown photo, HSCHAD010520-24)



The combined American-Argentinian-Canadian boarding team makes the long climb up the side of a tanker riding high out of the water. (HMCS Charlottetown photo, HSCHAD010503-50)



They have affectionately named their tools 'Thelma' (hammer) and 'Louise' (bolt cutter). (HMCS Winnipeg photos, Corporal Dave Payne)



Captain Kelly Williams gives a pre-boarding brief to Ops Room Officer Lt(N) Richard Dowker and Boarding Officer Lt(N) Jonathan Myers. Late in 2003, Williams learned he also would receive a MSM for the Augmentation deployment.

This was a key aspect of what one observer has called "Canada's war against Iraq through the 1990s,"⁸ but departmental reticence to advertise the Navy's involvement meant none of these were reported in the Canadian media at the time. A fitting recognition of *Winnipeg's* prowess finally came in March 2003, when the Governor-General's Chancery Office announced that two Canadian sailors were to be awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for distinguished duty. Navy Lieutenant Jonathan Myers led that ship's Boarding Party in the spring and summer of 2001, and Petty Officer 2nd Class Richard Swann was his second-in-command. Myers was awarded the medal as a result of his crew setting new records for boarding operations: 64 boardings (7 of them non-compliant), 162 health and comfort inspections, and 77 security teams sent in search of illegal oil. Their citations made special mention of Myers and Swann playing vital roles in a July 2001 non-compliant boarding incident that led to the recovery of 7000 tonnes of smuggled oil. While Myers led "the daring takedown of a heavily fortified ship," Swann was the key to defusing a confrontation with the ship's "angry, aggressive and determined smugglers."⁹

Members of *Winnipeg's* Naval Boarding Party, just returned from the non-compliant boarding that earned two of their members a Meritorious Service Medal: (back row, L to R) PO2 Richard Swann - the NBP 2i/c, MS *Levesque*, LS Glenn Bartley, AB Dave Vanderlee,

Lt(N) Joe Dagenais, and (front row, L to R) MS Andrew Carnegie, OS Chris Davenport, Lt(N) Jonathan Myers - Boarding Officer, LS Sharpe, and OS Greg Hofer.

⁹ "Two Winnipeg sailors honoured for stellar service," Canada.com News, 14 March 2003.

Those boarding practices are just one example of how the Navy had to learn a new set of capabilities for the 1990s. The shape of the Navy that would emerge in the middle of the decade can be traced back to the good staff management of acquisition programs through the 1980s, developed from a deep understanding of the task group concept and of the merit of interoperability with the USN. But there was a large measure of good fortune in it as well. The Navy's capabilities had suffered through the last half of the Cold War because it was not its turn in the procurement cycle. Each of the new programs that soon would appear (with the exception of the special case of the submarines) was approved and underway just as the Cold War ended. If the building of them had not already been well underway before Canada decided to cash in on the peace dividend that came with the fall of the Berlin Wall, those programs could have just as easily been cancelled – the Sea King replacement is a case in point.

But built they were. By 1995, a new and modernized fleet was entering service in sufficient numbers and undertaking such a range of challenging operations it is appropriate to mark that year as the start of a new Golden Age for the Canadian Navy. Forget the 'rust bucket' image of the 1980s – today Canada possesses a world-class navy.

With the notable exceptions of the replenishment ships and the helicopters, the Canadian Navy essentially was rebuilt over the course of the 1990s. Even as war raged in Kuwait in the winter of 1991, the first of the Canadian Patrol Frigates, HMCS *Halifax* was undergoing her acceptance sea trials. By 1995, all twelve ships of that new class had been accepted and the last of the 1950s vintage steam destroyers (the Cadillacs) were leaving the service. At the same time, the four destroyers of the *Iroquois*-class had been transformed in an overdue mid-life refit into creditable area air defence platforms with a command and control (C2) system that is the envy of many fleets. Four diesel-electric *Victoria*-class submarines acquired from the Royal Navy (ex-*Upholder*-class) are presently being converted to Canadian standards and will ensure the continuation of a capability for stealthy underwater surveillance and attack. For home defence, the last of twelve *Kingston*-class Maritime Coastal Defence Vessels was commissioned in the summer of 1999. The many new systems have put the Navy in direct competition with industry to find and retain ratings with the necessary high-tech skills, but these recruiting challenges are being overcome with the help of 'Quality of Life' improvements in pay and terms of service – along with the increased profile arising from success in the War Against Terrorism.



*Every boarding has a different twist.
From HMCS Fredericton
SITREP message for May 29th, 2003:*

*"Commander's Comments:
Fascinating place - we were offered a goat
in exchange for a box of milk today.
Gave them the milk,
politely declined the goat."*

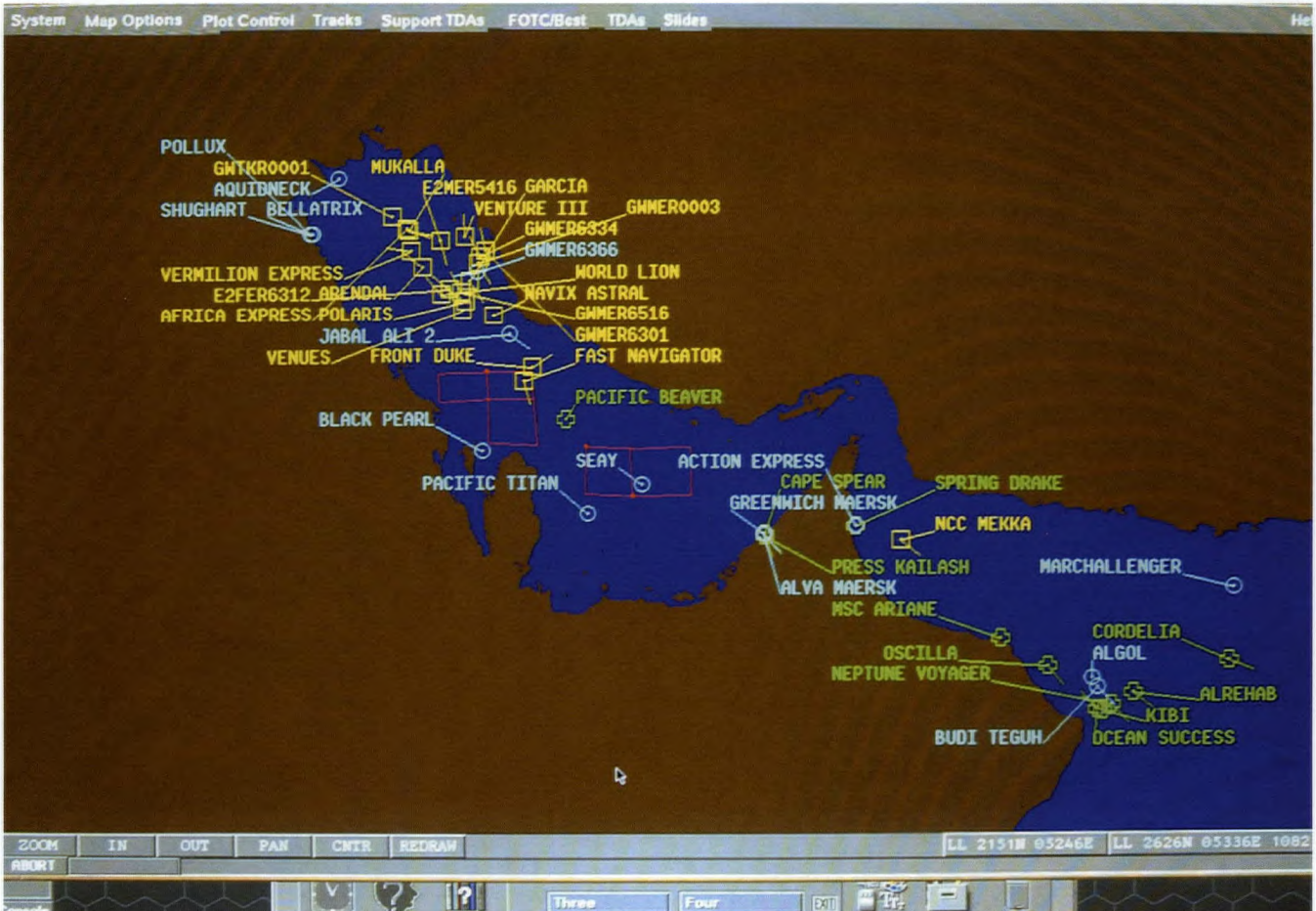
*Lieutenant Jonathan A. Kouwenberg (left) closes the deal.
(Photo courtesy Lt(N) Jonathan A. Kouwenberg)*

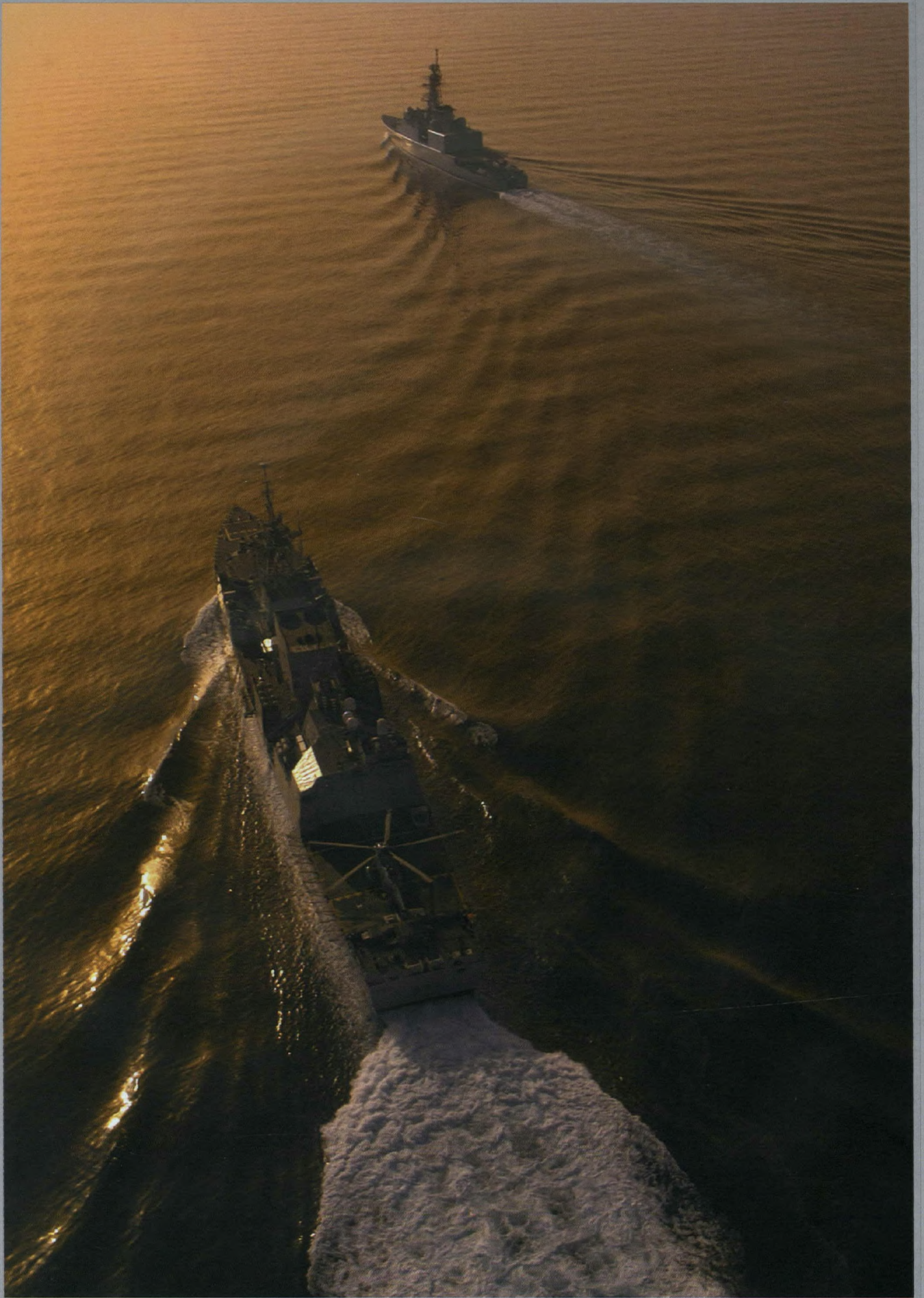
By the dawn of the new millennium, the Canadian Navy had established a vision of itself as "a medium global force projection navy that will serve Canada as a multipurpose, interoperable force, capable of joint and combined operations worldwide."¹⁰ That vision was based in large part on the success of the past and the enduring values of sea power for medium powers like Canada. What will be valid 20 years hence was proved over a decade ago and is being practiced today. Firmly into its new Golden Age, the Canadian Navy is making a difference.

¹⁰ Leadmark, p. 170.



A variety of consoles in the Operations Rooms of Canadian warships display a high-tech 'fusion' of processed radar imaging overlaid with graphics generated by inter-ship datalink (computer-to-computer exchange), all representative of the unique connectivity with American and allied warships. Above left, Ordinary Seaman Wes Bennet (near) and Leading Seaman Beaumont at their radar displays in Algonquin's Ops Room; while above right another operator is 'closed up' during an Action Stations drill. Below is one of the newest displays, presenting information in a web-based format. (Canadian Forces Photos, top left AP2002-E027-71a, top right ISD01-9605a_L, below HS040161d02).







Images of Canada's navy in its second golden age. (Canadian Forces Photos)



Appendix A – *Leadmark: The Navy's Strategy for 2020*

With the September 11th, 2001 attacks coming so soon after its publication, *Leadmark* had not yet been widely disseminated to the fleet, and it would be wrong to suggest that the Navy consciously followed its tenets in the prosecution of the War Against Terrorism. However, *Leadmark* had been developed from an understanding of the traditional employment of the Canadian Navy and how that might be affected by the emerging technologies and practices of the Revolution in Military Affairs. As the experience of Operation Apollo has been to validate the strategy described in *Leadmark*, it is useful to outline it briefly.

The Naval Strategy for 2020:

The Canadian navy will continue its development as a highly adaptable and flexible force, ready to provide the government with a wide range of relevant policy options across a continuum of domestic and international contingencies up to mid-level military operations.

The navy will generate combat capable forces that are responsive, rapidly deployable, sustainable, versatile, lethal and survivable. Canada's naval forces, from individual units to complete Task Groups, will be tactically self-sufficient and be able to join or integrate into a joint, US or multinational force, anywhere in the world. The navy will enhance the capability to deploy Vanguard elements for crisis response and to support the rapid deployment of the Land and Air Main Contingency Forces.

There are eight underlying principles to be followed in pursuing this strategy:

- the ability to influence events at a distance – The capacity to act decisively in home waters constitutes the outer line in a layered close-in national defence. When the threat of direct conventional assault is minimal, solving global security challenges at their source can diminish the potential for asymmetric threats against Canada. The expanse and harsh conditions found in Canada's three ocean approaches demand the number and types of naval forces that allow also for effective Canadian intervention overseas;
- contributing to general freedom of the seas - Canada occupies the northern half of what is essentially an island continent. While the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) facilitates a great internal cross-border trade, a large proportion of this is carried by sea and any quantity of imports and exports from other lands must, by definition, be carried over seas. Maintenance of freedom of the seas, so that they will continue to serve as a highway and a barrier for the interests of Canada and like-minded states, is key to the future prosperity of the country;
- acting as a 'joint enabler' of land and air operations – The exercise of sea power has tended to grant its users the ability to control the geostrategic terms of engagement in war. While eventual stability in most conflicts (which tend to occur on land) can only be achieved by army units on the ground, the navy can play a critical part in getting the army there and in sustaining it with logistical and fire support. The generally uncontested freedom of the seas forecasted to characterize the next few decades means that Western navies can be dedicated more than ever to influencing the course of military actions on land;

- the capacity to conduct a wide range of operations – Canada's global maritime interests are best served by remaining fully capable of conducting sea control and sea denial operations in home waters, exploiting a broad range of crisis management and naval diplomacy opportunities, and cooperating on a limited scale in power projection operations. Overseas, despite overall human progress, the world is – and likely will remain – a heavily armed, potentially dangerous and unpredictable place. As a consequence, Canada's navy must continue to be prepared to go in harm's way;
- possessing forces that are versatile and combat capable in order to do so – While naval forces structured to undertake mid-level combat operations have the capability to perform the constabulary (coast guard) role, the reverse does not hold. A broad base of self-defence and 'force multiplier' capabilities is the surest guarantee of a flexible response and independence of action in a crisis. In order to qualify for a political role in the management of a crisis, the deployment of a more substantial force may be required. As such, the Canadian navy must retain its competence in task group operations;
- the utility of working in combination with alliances or coalitions – With the downsizing of Western armed forces from Cold War levels, no one state (not even the US) will be pre-dominant in all situations. Meaningful participation by a number of like-minded states serves to temper any move to unilateral action by the more powerful members. Concentrating on specialist or support roles would restrict Canada to the role of a minor contributor in a coalition effort and seriously detract from Canada's ability to independently assert its rights as a sovereign nation within its own water space;
- the merit of interoperability with the USN – The US Navy will set the standard for interoperability, since it will be the service with which like-minded states are most likely to combine, and because it is the model chosen for transformation of the US armed forces. Interoperability allows a number of advantages, ranging from the efficiency of common doctrine in the battlespace, to the opening of access to wider markets for Canadian high-technology products. The Canadian Navy's substantial progress in this regard is demonstrated by acting as a communications 'gateway' to coalition forces; and,
- the need for an indigenous capacity to support independent operations – the maintenance of broad-based levels of national infrastructure and political support serves to assure the capacity for independent action when allies cannot assist (such as in cases of national sovereignty, where such assistance would be inappropriate). As well as guaranteeing the fullness, immediacy and effectiveness of the naval response, this self-sufficiency works to offset the integrationist tendencies of interoperability.







III. FIRST IN THE FRAY OPERATIONS (I), NOVEMBER 2001 – APRIL 2002

Previous page: The Shadow by John Horton



Sending the Navy against land-locked Afghanistan was criticized by some as "going to a gunfight with only a knife" – it was held to be an inappropriate Canadian response to assisting the United States in the War Against Terrorism. In point of fact, it fit in well with the American campaign strategy. The criticism soon proved moot, and not just in relation to whether Canada had other forces available or not.

HMCS Vancouver keeps pace with the USS John C. Stennis aircraft carrier. (US Navy photo, 020520-N-9312L-025)

Through the 1990s, the US military had been looking to transform its supposedly heavy and ponderous Cold War forces into a smaller yet 'lethal and agile' structure more appropriate to an era of stabilization operations in a unipolar world. Surprisingly, it was the US Navy – the service that had seemed to have the least operational role in the Gulf War of 1991 – that came up with the winning formula. Its strategic vision for the 21st century, *Forward... From the Sea*, signalled a change in focus away from operations on the high seas and toward naval expeditionary forces designed to influence events in the littoral regions of the world. In January 2000, the new US Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld was sufficiently impressed with the plan that he named one of its naval architects (Vice-Admiral Arthur K. Cebrowski, retired President of the Naval War College) to head his new Office of Transformation. Working as it did on a definition of 'littoral' as encompassing up to 650 miles (or roughly 1000 kilometres) inland from a coast, that meant only areas deep inside Russia, parts of central Africa, South America, northern Canada and the US were beyond the reach of sea-launched cruise missiles, carrier air strikes and helicopter-borne Marines.¹



Leading Seaman Dane Sharron views Charlottetown's progress across the Atlantic Ocean towards the Mediterranean and finally the Arabian Sea, updated daily on a chart posted in the main flats. (HMCS Charlottetown photo, H5CHAD011101-12)

Of course the Canadian Navy had none of these, but it did bring a useful number of things even the US Navy never had enough of – frigates for escort work and miscellaneous tasks, and a tanker for sea-based logistics (two of the three pillars of the task group concept). With even American forces experiencing tight budgets in the 1990s, the USN concentrated on the 'sharp-end' capabilities of aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines, and a new generation of *Aegis* air defence destroyers (the DDG-51 *Arleigh Burke* class) – the integration of Canadian frigates into deployed American carrier battle groups through the latter 1990s worked to the Americans' advantage as well as Canada's.²

USS Bataan profiled against the mountainous shore of Pakistan. (HMCS Charlottetown photo [2186])



¹ . . . *From the Sea: Preparing the Naval Service for the 21st Century* (US Department of Defense, September 1992), at <http://www.chinfo.navy.mil/navpublib/policy/fromsea/fromsea.txt>; and *Forward . . . From the Sea* (US DoD, November 1994), at <http://www.chinfo.navy.mil/navpublib/policy/fromsea/forward.txt>.

² See again ref above to *USNIP* article(s) on *Ottawa's* integration: Lieutenant Commander (USN) Michael Crockett, "Professional Notes: O Canada!", *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, vol 124/12/1150 (December 1998), pp. 65-67; and Captain (USN) Jim Stavridis, "They Got Game", *USNI Proceedings*, vol 125/6/1156 (June 1999), pp. 51-54.



Iroquois (right) followed by Preserver making their way through the Suez Canal, early November 2001.

(HMCS Charlottetown photo, [640])

Additional opportunities to improve interoperability came as Canadian naval officers (along with their British and Australian colleagues) participated in the US Navy's series of computer simulated Global War Games, which would prove to be a very good script for how the Afghan and later Iraqi campaigns would unfold. Combined with the third element of the trinity of task group capabilities – the command-level connectivity to be found in the *Iroquois*-class destroyers – American naval officers were impressed with the professionalism of the rejuvenated Canadian Navy, ably demonstrated in major NATO exercises, such that they were increasingly comfortable to assign their forces to act under Canadian command.

Even if it is perhaps extended readily enough in peacetime, that recognition of confidence and trust is something the USN extends only sparingly to other national services. Significantly then, within a day of arriving in the area of operations off the coast of Pakistan, on November 26th, 2001, Commodore Robertson found himself appointed to the role of Amphibious Support Force Defence Commander and assigned responsibility for protection of the US Marine Expeditionary Unit embarked in the *Bataan-Peliliu-Whidbey Island Amphibious Ready Group (ARG)* gathering off the Pakistani coast.³ When it is considered that Robertson and his ships assumed the task having just completed a month-long, independent 8000-mile passage, it is all the more impressive as testament to the readiness of Canadian naval forces.

³ At the time of opening phases of Operation Enduring Freedom, a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) typically comprised some 2200 troops, 4 tanks, 13 amphibious assault vehicles (AAVs), 22 helicopters, 6 Harrier tactical aircraft and 6 artillery howitzers. Each MEU is embarked on three US Navy landing ships that are coordinated as an Amphibious Ready Group (ARG). For more information, see the official USMC web sites: http://www.usmc.mil/meus/meu_organization.htm, and http://www.usmc.mil/meus/meus_capability.htm.

Immediately upon arrival in the Arabian Sea, the Canadian Task Group was assigned responsibility to protect the US Amphibious Ready Groups. Here in a posed formation, from left are HMC Ships Charlottetown and Iroquois, US Ships Bataan (LHD 5) and Decatur (DDG 73) and HMCS Halifax. (HMCS Iroquois photo by Corporal Shawn Kent, HS20017025-005)



The Canadians arrived at just the right moment, with just the right forces, as the Marines began to move their operations ashore in late November. In the month since the departure of TG 307.1 from Halifax, USN carrier battle groups in the Arabian Sea and long-range USAF bombers from Diego Garcia, the United Kingdom and even the continental United States had been pounding Taliban and Al-Qaeda strongholds in Afghanistan, in the hopes of cultivating a Northern Alliance uprising. That had not yet occurred and, although the eventual outcome would be much different, at the time it appeared that American ground forces would be needed to apply the decisive push. An ARG spearheaded by the *USS Bataan* had only recently arrived offshore, and more 'amphibs' were expected soon after. Unlike carrier battle groups, however, which are established with their own protective shield of cruisers, destroyers and nuclear attack submarines, Marine Corps ARGs typically come with no escort, relying instead upon local command of the sea already having been established. But in this situation, the carriers were operating a couple of hundred miles offshore to provide ample safe airspace for their supersonic fixed-wing fighter-bombers. The ARGs needed to operate much closer inshore, just outside the twelve-mile limit of Pakistani territorial waters, because Afghanistan was at the extreme range of the embarked helicopters. Although Pakistan – and nearby India – were notionally neutral, the inshore operating area was filled with potential threats. The events of September 11th had established that any commercial airliner could be a deadly missile, and the operating areas were immediately adjacent to the airways out of Karachi and Mumbai [Bombay]. Added to that now were any other smaller aircraft capable of spraying deadly chemical or bacteriological agents like a crop-duster, and the many traditional local vessels called 'dhows' – small wooden-hulled ships, difficult to detect on radar and easily crammed with terrorist explosives.



(top) This dhow being inspected by Halifax's Boarding Party (with Bataan in the background) proved to be an Indian dhow, the Riddi Sagar, which had been adrift for a month. (HMCS Halifax photo)

(above) A dhow (previously inspected and cleared by Charlottetown) passes through the operating area while Whidbey Island (LSD 41, closest to camera) and Bataan (LHD 5) (background) conduct a RAS with the American tanker Sacramento (barely visible between the two other ships). (HMCS Charlottetown photo [1436])

Dealing with that range of threats was Commodore Robertson's task. For that, *Iroquois* and *Charlottetown* were his mainstays, but with his new Coalition designation as Commander Task Group 50.4 he took under his command also several American frigates and coordinated the efforts of air defence destroyers, including some of the *Arleigh Burke* class. The commander and sailors of the Canadian task group did not know it then, but they were embarking upon a task that would preoccupy them for an unprecedented two continuous months at sea, for the whole period that the amphibious ships were engaged supporting the Marines ashore. It would end, coincidentally, towards the end of January 2002, at about the same time that the battalion of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry would arrive in Kandahar as part of the US Army's relief of the Marines.

Other Canadians already were hard at work. After chopping to the control of the Commander of US Naval Forces in Central Command (COMUSNAVCENT, or simply NAVCENT – his other organizational title was Commander Task Force 50), *Halifax's* first several missions were to escort American and British replenishment ships through the Strait of Hormuz in and out of the Persian Gulf. That busy international waterway had been a scene of some tension ever since the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s, when Iran had stationed Silkworm anti-ship missile batteries there for random attacks on shipping to disrupt the flow of Iraqi oil. Iran's intentions in the present crisis remained unclear, leading to a fear of the possibility of renewed attacks, but *Halifax* completed her missions without incident.

NAVCENT next planned for *Halifax* to join the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* carrier battle group, lending protection to the carrier as she launched strikes against Afghanistan. But the frigate's limited area (long-range) weapons brought no special additional capabilities to the group, so she was assigned what proved to be a more valuable 'fleetwork' task. She was directed to take up station outside the territorial waters of the United Arab Emirates port of Fujairah, where there existed a large anchorage known locally as 'the Parking Lot' comprising typically some 150 tankers and freighters, most awaiting passage into the Gulf for their turn to embark oil at one of the many terminals. Quite a few of the less scrupulous owners, however, were not averse to taking alongside smaller tankers coming out of the Persian Gulf to trans-ship smuggled black market oil.

The bulk of this would have originated in Iraq, and hence was subject to confiscation under existing UN sanctions (the Maritime Interdiction Operation [MIO] was on-going under Australian direction, although no Canadian warships were formally assigned to that operation at the time).

A shortage of assigned forces meant that the MIO focus was in the northern Gulf, but NAVCENT was concerned that a group of possibly three such tankers operating in the Parking Lot were using the profits to finance Al-Qaeda activities, making their whereabouts an Operation Enduring Freedom priority. The problem was to find those three needles in the Parking Lot haystack, most of which was inside territorial waters (and hence off-limits to foreign warships), and in conditions of visibility frequently restricted to less than three miles in the haze of the hot and humid airs of the Gulf of Oman. Over the course of a five-day patrol in the first week of November, *Halifax* visually identified the great majority of the anchored ships, making especially good use of her embarked Sea King helicopter to take high-definition digital photographs of the suspect merchant ships. The digital advantage was that the photos could be sent immediately by satellite to NAVCENT headquarters in Bahrain for comparison against the USN databases. Although *Halifax* never learned the ultimate success of her efforts, the American commander commended the ship for an "excellent job of building an RMP" (a Recognized Maritime Picture) of the area.



The JMSDF destroyer Maresame (foreground left) and tanker Towada steam past the 'Parking Lot' off Fujairah just outside the 12-mile territorial limit on a 'clear' day.

(Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force photo)

Halifax soon was involved in other developing tasks that proved the merit of her vanguard deployment in advance of the task group. Although in mid-November the ground war in Afghanistan seemed to be proceeding slowly, the senior members of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda could see the writing on the wall and were fleeing the country, filtering south through the poorly patrolled reaches of western Pakistan and eastern Iran, to attempt their escape across the Arabian Sea. Intelligence indications were that a popular collecting point was the Iranian port of Jask. So that was where *Halifax* was ordered, to commence an offshore patrol to monitor shipping and look for suspicious vessels harbouring escaping Al-Qaeda. This was the beginning of what would become known as Leadership Interdiction Operations (LIO). Building upon her efforts, Commodore Robertson undertook a major LIO operation on November 24-25th. With *Iroquois* as well as a French and two American warships under his control, the force intercepted a collection of seventeen small boats smuggling several hundred people from Iran to Oman. Warning shots had to be fired to stop them, but once collected they were taken alongside the USN ships for identification. They were assessed to be economic refugees (a common enough plight in that region) and released. But the simple establishment of presence, and making local mariners aware of the scope of the Coalition effort, was immensely important.

Even as that effort was being established, a new, unexpected and potentially horrific task arose. Coalition naval commanders watched anxiously as the nuclear standoff between India and Pakistan developed over the course of December 2001. Operating in the crowded adjacent waters and airspace of the northeast Arabian Sea, naval and air forces from both nations often were encountered and, as greater numbers began to deploy, the Coalition concern was both to maintain a good appreciation of the situation and also to ensure that Enduring Freedom operations did not accidentally become involved in – or even precipitate – any escalation. Once again, *Halifax* found herself thrust into a demanding situation, tasked to maintain the recognized maritime picture of developments, through which the extensive NBC (nuclear, biological and chemical) training suddenly took on new relevance. Her main advantage as a Canadian warship was being a fellow Commonwealth member to both sides and thus able to mediate less obtrusively than an American or even British warship. In the process, the signal processing and tracking capabilities of the Canadian frigate combat systems were proven to be superior in some respects even to the nominally next-generation features of the *Aegis* system. *Halifax* was able to provide observations on Indo-Pakistani air and submarine movements that were especially important to the Coalition effort.



Migrant workers make their way in an open boat from Pakistan to the United Arab Emirates. (HMCS Toronto photo)



Canadian warships frequently encountered regional forces while working in the Arabian Sea. Here, an Iranian Navy P-3 Orion passes close to HMCS Charlottetown. (HMCS Charlottetown photo [2778])

At the peak of tensions between India and Pakistan, this found *Halifax* conducting surveillance in a position between the Coalition amphibious forces and the naval and air bases of India and Pakistan. On the second day of the new year 2002, the Canadian frigate was ordered to investigate what was believed to be a fleeting submarine contact detected by the cruiser, USS *Lake Champlain*. *Halifax* took responsibility for patrolling that ship's sector and commenced a search to find the possible submarine. At the time, no submarines were expected to be operating in that vicinity. Despite being in international waters, because of the level of tensions and its proximity to the amphibious group, the presence of an unknown submarine in this area was of particular concern. In the event, *Halifax* soon detected a submarine contact and, through its investigation using the ship's active and passive sonars, determined it to be a Pakistani diesel-powered submarine. *Halifax* and her helicopter tracked this submarine for several hours, shepherding it away from the amphibious ships and back northeast towards its home base. The submarine remained dived throughout, and attempts to establish communications with the intruder were unsuccessful. This interaction was especially significant in that this submarine was detected well outside its agreed operating area.



While *Preserver* (left) fuels from an even larger US Navy oiler, a USN *Sea Knight* helicopter shuttles overhead between the two ships conducting a VERTREP (Vertical Replenishment) to load dry stores on *Preserver* for distribution to US warships in the Persian Gulf. (HMCS Charlottetown photo [1046])

The incident illustrates that the ability to conduct anti-submarine warfare is not just an old-fashioned Cold War capability, but also a skill that is relevant in modern regional conflicts. So-called conventional submarines (that is, non-nuclear powered) are proliferating rapidly throughout the Third World. Anywhere Canadian warships are dispatched, they will encounter potentially hostile submarines.⁴

Throughout this time, *Preserver* was engaged in her own unique contribution to the Coalition effort. Finding a critical shortage of replenishment ships upon their arrival in the area, Commodore Robertson seconded his tanker to NAVCENT for employment (under CTF 53 – see task organization). Over the several months of her stay, *Preserver* made a semi-regular run through the Arabian Sea and into the Persian Gulf, passing fuel and tonnes of supplies to Coalition ships, allowing them to stay at sea for longer periods instead of having to go into port to top up. *Preserver* (and later *Protecteur*) was especially popular with the USN because of the Canadian style of 'one-stop shopping' with all kinds of fuel and stores available from the same vessel instead of the American style of a specific ship for each, requiring a long succession of replenishments from the full fleet train. Putting it in bolder statistical relief, she conducted more than 120 replenishments at sea with ships from Canada, the US, France, Australia, the UK, the Netherlands and Italy, transferring almost 27,000,000 litres of fuel and 1,380 cargo pallets equalling 203,192 kilograms of stores. At the same time, she also participated in the general surveillance and LIO effort, including two boardings – this in contrast to the auxiliaries of practically every other navy, that avoid engagement in such 'combat' operations.⁵

⁴ See James W. Crawley, "Quiet diesel subs surface as new threat," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 22 January 2004, at: http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/military/20040122-9999_1n22antisub.html.

⁵ "HMCS *Preserver*'s Op Apollo Deployment Review," at: http://www.navy.dnd.ca/mspa_news/news_e.asp?category=3&id=8, accessed 29 July 2002.



Early in February 2002, the Canadian Task Group met up with the Royal Navy group also operating in the Arabian Sea. HMC Ships Toronto (left background) and Iroquois are in close formation with the carrier HMS Illustrious (foreground) and other British warships. (Royal Navy photo, ILL2002-044C-09)

Meanwhile, the Canadian contribution to the war on terrorism continued to grow. Next to arrive in the theatre was a West Coast frigate, *HMCS Vancouver*. Even before September 11th, she had been planning a deployment to the Persian Gulf as part of the on-going Operation Augmentation, to be integrated with the *USS John C. Stennis* carrier battle group enforcing UN sanctions against Iraq. After the attacks, the mission of the *Stennis* group was changed to Operation Enduring Freedom and moved up in schedule, to participate in the air war against Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. Because this was entirely consistent with the other employment of the East Coast task group, Admiral Buck ordered the *Vancouver* deployment to continue, under Operation Apollo.

She left Esquimalt on October 30th to meet up with the carrier battle group for training off San Diego, and two weeks later (on November 12th) they all departed for southwest Asia by way of Pearl Harbor, Hong Kong and Singapore. Theirs was perhaps one of the fastest Pacific crossings ever, averaging more than 24 knots. When they did their theatre 'in-chop' on December 15th, it quickly became clear that *Vancouver* was surplus to the escort required for the carrier, and she was re-directed to join the Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO), to which Canada was still a party. In that she quickly established a reputation for success that attracted the attention (amongst other things) of an Internet news-satire page report that, for all its tongue-in-cheek attitude, spoke to many of the prevailing



Canadian Task Group in the early summer of 2002, from right to left, the destroyer Algonquin, frigate St. John's and tanker Protecteur. (HMCS Algonquin photo, (HS2002-10261-07))

misconceptions about the capabilities of the Canadian Navy (it is reproduced in Part V, "Just Another Day at Sea").⁶

The final element of what would constitute Canada's initial Operation Apollo deployments in the war against terrorism came on December 5th, when yet another frigate, HMCS *Toronto*, left Halifax. In this case, she had been designated to replace her sister *Halifax* in STANAVFORLANT, which itself had finally received orders to become more actively engaged in Operation Enduring Freedom, by deploying to the eastern Mediterranean Sea to relieve USN warships normally stationed there but themselves re-directed to the Arabian Sea. Events, however, were developing, and *Toronto* soon would see herself also being detached from the NATO squadron and sent off to the hotter climes.

The intent was to relieve *Charlottetown*, which had been dispatched for Operation Apollo only a few months after returning from her Op Augmentation deployment to the Gulf in the first half of 2001, meaning her crew had been home for only a couple of months in the previous year.



The throng of spectators on *Toronto's* bridge, dubbed "Gawker's Alley", have a good view of an F-14 taking off and F-18s waiting their turn. (HMCS Toronto photo)

⁶ "Canadian Warship Seizes Tanker in.... Wait... Canada has a warship?", at: <http://www.satirewire.com/news/feb02/warship.shtml>.

But with that, by the close of the year 2001, the basic tasks that would occupy the Canadian Navy over the whole course of Operation Apollo had been defined. Commodore Robertson and his small but potent flotilla were actively engaged in various combinations of the following missions:

- Command of a multinational task group
- Force protection and screening of US Marine Amphibious Ready Groups (ARGs)
- Compilation of a Recognized Maritime Picture (RMP) over a large geographic area with multiple air, surface and sub-surface contacts, in challenging political environments
- Escort of Coalition and other vessels through vital chokepoints along the sea lines of communication (SLOC) (e.g., the Strait of Hormuz)
- Al-Qaeda and Taliban Leadership Interdiction Operations (LIO)
- UN-sanctioned Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO)
- Integration in USN carrier battle groups (CVBGs)
- Logistics re-supply
- Backfill of higher capability units dispatched on other taskings





The Canadian Task Group in the Arabian Sea, February 1st, 2002: destroyer Iroquois in the lead, tanker Preserver in the rear, flanked by frigates Toronto and Charlottetown. (Canadian Forces photo)

Fully one-third of Canada's expeditionary fleet – six of seventeen major surface combatants: a command destroyer, four frigates and a supply ship – had been deployed. Admiral Buck took a calculated risk in recommending a commitment of that size and scope at the outset of Operation Apollo. But the times demanded it, since it seemed that the Western world was at war against a determined foe. He recognized the urgent need to make clear Canada's presence in the struggle, and was confident that the Navy presented the best – indeed, the only – military option at that time. That presence had to be big enough and bold enough to be effective and to be appreciated by our American allies as more than a token in their moment of need. Over the better part of the next two years, the men and women of the Canadian Navy proved him right.

This is a most reasonable expectation, but the Navy's difficulty in the fall of 2001 arose from the fact that it did not possess such a 3:1 ratio of anything except the frigates. The twelve of them theoretically could be kept deployed indefinitely in groups of three (one less than the January 2002 level). But personnel shortages had forced the Navy to lay-up into long-term reserve status one of its four command destroyers (the Esquimalt-based HMCS *Huron*), and there were only two replenishment ships in the fleet – *Preserver* and her West Coast sister *Protecteur*, and to complicate matters both of them were commissioned over thirty years ago and were getting difficult to maintain at sea for any extended periods.



Chief of the Maritime Staff Vice-Admiral Ron Buck (right), accompanied by his senior sailor Command Chief Petty 1st Class Serge Joncas (next left), speaks with members of Charlottetown's ship's company. (HMCS Charlottetown photo [2419])



The faces of this .50 cal machine gun crew are hidden by their action stations anti-flash hoods as Charlottetown escorts the USS Ogden (LPD 5) through the SOH on January 31st, 2002, the day after US President George W. Bush's State of the Union speech in which he declared Iran to be a member of the "axis of evil". (HMCS Charlottetown photo, HSCHAD020201-002)

That initial level of effort, however, could not be sustained over such a long haul. The Canadian Forces *Defence Plan* allows for a rotation ratio of 3:1 for deployed forces, that is, requiring a force structure that is four times the size of the intended deployed force.⁷ It specifically states that, "During a period of high operational tempo [optempo] this would result in units undertaking six-month tours and then returning to Canada for eighteen months before being re-deployed."

Even as the first round of ships were heading to the Arabian Sea, it was becoming obvious that Operation Apollo could escalate to a commitment measured in years rather than months. Admiral Buck set his staff to squaring the circle of resources versus commitments. It would require not only imagination but also sacrifice and commitment.

⁷ DND/VCDS, Defence Plan 2001, at: http://www.vcds.forces.gc.ca/dgsp/pubs/dplan/intro_e.asp#2001, p. 3-4.

What it meant was that, for the Canadian Navy, the proverbial War Against Terrorism indeed had been raised to real 'war' status requiring the effective mobilization and commitment of the entire Navy. That said, the prospect of a Canadian naval officer exercising a significant multinational command over a large geographic area such as the Arabian Sea was a feather in the national cap that was worth maintaining even at some cost.

Various courses of action were explored, revolving around a range of factors, besides the mere availability of numbers of hull-types. Perhaps the most significant of the other considerations was the limited number of sailors available for service – for the 4200 men and women of Canada's Navy in sea-going positions, 'perstempo' (personnel tempo) was the corollary to the Defence Plan optempo, and the long-existing critical shortages in certain technical trades had to be monitored carefully to avoid burnout of those people. In addition, everyone was subject to Canadian Forces-wide terms of service that they would not normally be re-deployed overseas within a year of returning from a six-month tour, without invocation of a waiver specifying the exceptional circumstances.

In a similar sense, the Navy also had to take into account the low availability of air force resources – not only was the aging Sea King fleet low on numbers of ready aircraft, but it too was experiencing personnel shortages in several key trades (including pilots as well as technicians), such that the Air Force could only put together nine HELAIRDETS, five of which already were deployed.

Another factor was the capacity of the Dockyard Fleet Maintenance Facilities (FMFs Cape Scott in Halifax and Cape Breton in Esquimalt) to prepare ships to deploy – the personnel and resource cut-backs in the mid-1990s had reduced their 'throughput' (that is, the yard capacity) such that they could only give priority to one ship at a time. A related technical consideration was the scheduled refits of ships in private contractor shipyards for long-term maintenance beyond the capacity of the Dockyard FMFs – *Protecteur* was just coming out of refit and could not be ready for operations before the end of March 2002, while *Preserver's* long overdue overhaul was scheduled for October later that year; and *Athabaskan* (*Iroquois'* East Coast sister) was in the midst of a refit that would not allow her return to service until the spring of 2003.

The compact Esquimalt naval harbour is dominated by the gray building of the Fleet Maintenance Facility Cape Breton (centre foreground), with jetties for easy working access to, in this case, two frigates and the tanker Protecteur, and behind them a destroyer. The rest of the fleet normally would be clustered alongside the vacant jetties farther back at the harbour mouth – with most of them deployed, this was a typical view through Op Apollo.

(MARPAC Formation Imaging Services photo, ET2003-0069-09c)



Yet another factor was spares and logistics, where the quantities of some ammunition stocks (especially the metal-plastic alloy chaff rockets that create a false radar echo to confuse anti-ship missiles) were in short supply, and the West Coast had a limited number of stores technicians to staff a Forward Logistic Site (FLS). And then there were other standing national obligations, such as STANAVFORLANT – but so long as NATO was not directly involved in the war, integration in a USN carrier battle group was considered a more productive endeavour; temporary withdrawal from the NATO squadron could be rationalized in that the invocation of Chapter 5 allowed the NATO commitments to be met through sustaining Operation Apollo. Finally, not an insignificant consideration from the aspect of national command was the very limited number of senior officers available to take charge of the operation. The Navy has only two sea-going flag officer appointments (those being the commodore on each coast acting as fleet commander), a structural weakness unlike, for example, the Army, which with more formations spread across the country has more brigadier-generals (the equivalent to commodore) than the Navy has total number of flag officers. It meant, however, that some creative measures were required to pull such senior naval officers from pressing headquarters duties.

The conclusions to be drawn were only too stark. The West Coast task group was the obvious choice for what was to become known as 'Roto 1' to replace the original group from the East (which henceforth would be styled 'Rotation 0' – see the deployment schedule chart). Equally obvious was that it should be under the charge of the Pacific Fleet Commander, Commodore Eric Lerhe. FMF Cape Breton, however, would be hard-pressed to bring a full group of four ships up to high readiness in the few months remaining before the deployment had to begin, and with an Esquimalt frigate already deployed those numbers available were reduced.

As such, it was decided to scale back the task group composition to one of each class of ship – the destroyer *Algonquin*, the frigate *Ottawa* and the tanker *Protecteur* (HELAIREDT availability also was a major consideration, and where *Algonquin* could carry two helicopters and *Protecteur* three, in the event the tanker only would carry two and the destroyer none).

Moreover, the FMF throughput issues and helicopter detachment availability made it preferable to dispatch the ships as they were readied, rather than the naval preference to sail as a complete task group. Indeed, it proved impossible to ready the destroyer and tanker in time to relieve their sister ships at the six-month point, and *Ottawa*, already at a fairly high readiness level, was deployed early enough to act as a temporary command ship. That gapping of those two other classes of ship pointed to the only option for Roto 2 in the fall of 2002: at the very best, it could be filled by two East Coast frigates, and the possibility of dropping to only one was seriously considered. Beyond that, for all of the Navy's good intentions, there was no depth to the Canadian task group concept: there could be no DDG-280 command ship after *Algonquin* unless *Iroquois* re-deployed within six months of her own return; when another tanker could be readied was anybody's wildest guess (it would be late 2003 at the earliest); and an increasing number of ships might have to deploy without a helicopter.

The matter of employing a frigate as the task group commander's flagship was one that would bedevil the Navy for the remainder of Operation Apollo. USN commanders in NAVCENT welcomed a Canadian officer's taking charge of the multinational task group for protection of the amphibious groups, especially as that developed into the leadership interdiction and UN MIO missions. As the Coalition coincidentally broadened to include members from other navies, these were assigned under the Canadian command umbrella.

The Coalition pooled their logistics resources, so that while Preserver was away servicing Coalition warships in the Persian Gulf, the rest of the Canadian Task Group had to fuel from local ships. Here Charlottetown moves in to get a 'drink' from Bataan, with Whidbey Island in the 'lifeguard' station astern.

(HMCS Charlottetown photo, HSCHAD020102-060)



NAVCENT's reasoning included all the issues of professional competence and confidence noted earlier. Those stemmed importantly from the communications connectivity also discussed earlier, but which existed at a closer level with the Canadians than any other allied navy, primarily because the US Congress placed severe NOFORN (no foreign) limitations on the release of classified information, equipment and codes – limitations that had to be relaxed in the case of Canada for the common defence of North America. A certain circularity developed as the USN tended to occupy itself with a higher level of power projection operations than other allies (usually for political reasons, but also because the others did not possess those equipments). As such, Canada tended to act as an extremely

useful 'gateway' between the Americans and other allies engaged in more routine surveillance and interdiction work.⁸ To do that, however, required the right combinations of equipment and the staffs experienced in fleet management. While the frigates had much communications and computer console equipment in common with the destroyers (and much of the shortfall could be fitted with FMF support), the real challenge was in finding bunks and office work area for the 30-40 extra persons on a commodore's staff. The destroyers had been purpose-built for such a function; in the mid-1980s, however, as the cost of the frigate program began to escalate even at the design stage, a conscious decision had been made not to include such space in them.

Some boardings could be more interesting than others. An earlier boarding discovered 130 tons of onions. This dhow is carrying a load of sheep.

(Canadian Forces photo, PKTMP142)



⁸ Captain(USN) Phil Wisecup and Lieutenant (USN) Tom Williams, "Enduring Freedom: Making Coalition Naval Warfare Work," US Naval Institute Proceedings, (September 2002), pp.52-55.



The frigate *Ottawa* departs Esquimalt harbour at high speed to join operations in the Arabian Sea.
(CFB Esquimalt Imaging Services photo by Master Corporal Pierre Vaudry, ETC02-0054-06)

No one then had foreseen a day when command destroyers would not be available. The alternative was for a commodore and his staff to embark in an American warship to exercise the command function while using USN equipment, as Australian officers did to conduct the Multinational Interdiction Operations in the northern Persian Gulf.⁹ That would be unacceptable politically to Canadian sensitivities.

Anticipating the drastic circumstances *Ottawa* would find herself in, as a stopgap she sailed from Esquimalt on February 17th, 2002 to relieve *Iroquois* in-theatre on April 1st, with a much reduced staff complement, and all trainees and other non-essential hands landed. Even then, recalled *Ottawa's* Executive Officer (second-in-command), Lieutenant-Commander Dave Steele, "For extra bunks, we had some... installed in the common areas of the messdecks and we also had some people sleeping in #2 Storeroom.... We topped out one day with 258 persons onboard - they were sleeping everywhere."

⁹ Commodore (RAN) James Goldrick, "In Command in the Gulf," US Naval Institute *Proceedings*, (December 2002), pp. 38-41.

Still, they made it work. They had to. As many commentators have observed, the defeat of the Taliban government and collapse of Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan was not the end of the War Against Terrorism. It was but the end of the beginning. As operations shifted to the next phase of the war, the Canadian Navy was settling in for the long haul.



The Canadian Task Group in the Arabian Sea, February 1st, 2002: destroyer Iroquois in the lead, tanker Preserver in the rear, flanked by frigates Toronto and Charlottetown. (Canadian Forces photo)



Marking their change of command, Commodore Drew Robertson (left) seals the deal with Commodore Eric Lerhe on April 1st, 2002, on the flight deck of HMCS Iroquois. Behind them are the captains of the ships of the task group: (from left) Captain Cal Moffard (Iroquois), and Commanders J.B. McCarthy (Preserver), Ian Paterson (Toronto), and Paul Hendry (Ottawa), and the Task Group Chief of Staff Commander Don Shubaly. In the background is the frigate Ottawa, about to become Lerhe's temporary flagship. (Canadian Forces photo, 796H8193)







IV. "EVERYONE CHECKS IN WITH CHARLIE ZULU" OPERATIONS (II), MAY – DECEMBER 2002

Previous page: Dawn Boarding by John Horton



In the month before *Algonquin* arrived in-theatre for Commodore Lerhe to shift his flag from *Ottawa* on May 3rd, he had time to progress the range of operations established in Roto 0 and to set his own firm stamp on the on-going activity.

George Thomas of the Esquimalt First Nation drums a farewell as the destroyer Algonquin prepares to depart her home port of Esquimalt for the Arabian Sea, March 23rd, 2002. (HMCS Algonquin photo by Corporal Charles Barber, ETD02-0081-07)



Commodore Eric Lerhe surveys a developing tactical situation from his seat in the Operations Room of his flagship Algonquin.

(HMCS Algonquin photo by Corporal Charles Barber, AP2002-E015-55a)

By then, the area of Canadian responsibility had been established to encompass all of the critically located Gulf of Oman (GOO), Strait of Hormuz (SOH) and southern Persian Gulf (this referred to by the Americans as the 'Arabian Gulf' in deference to Saudi sensitivities, but also allowing for the acronym 'SAG' for Southern Arabian Gulf¹). For the sake of reporting convenience, CTG 50.4 was given the sector designation 'CZ', or 'Charlie Zulu'. Through the winter of 2001-2002, other nations had joined the Coalition (for example, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands and Spain), and their naval forces were beginning to arrive in-theatre. Certain of these set off for the Horn of Africa (HOA) area, to form a Western European Union (WEU) Task Group patrolling those waters, using the former French colonial port of Djibouti as their base. Most nations nonetheless wanted to maintain some sort of presence in the Arabian Sea and, although elements were chopped to Task Group 50.4 under Canadian command, the majority continued to operate independently.

*"Everyone checks in with Charlie Zulu":
A British frigate passes by on her way to joining
Royal Navy forces in the northern Persian Gulf.*

(HMCS Charlottetown photo [2811])

For all the vast expanse of the Arabian Sea, the available sea room for modern naval operations was getting quite constricted. Some order needed to be brought to the situation, as much for operational efficiency as for simple safety. Commodore Lerhe became the driving force to that end, inviting other Coalition naval commanders aboard his flagship as well as visiting theirs, to establish reporting coordination and air separation procedures. By mid-June, Lerhe could report that he had "firmly taken charge of the SAG/SOH/GOO sector in a manner not matched by any other national sector commander. Coalition units that used to breeze through the area in transit to and from the Gulf now check in, join our COMPLAN [communications plan] and Link and are tasked. Everyone... checks in with Charlie Zulu."



¹ And as such, the other portions of the Gulf were known as the NAG (Northern Arabian Gulf) and CAG (Central Arabian Gulf). Aside from the convenient acronym usage, this narrative uses the more commonly recognized 'Persian Gulf', denoting no political bias in doing so.

On a visit to ships from his formation in the Arabian Sea, the Commander of Maritime Forces Pacific Rear-Admiral Jamie Fraser speaks with members of Ottawa's Boarding Party.

(HMCS Ottawa photo by Corporal Charles Barber: AP2002-E020-44a)



By this time also, participation of other Canadian Forces had expanded greatly. On December 28th, 2001, as attempts continued to sort out the eventual Army deployment into Kandahar, the government announced that two separate Air Force detachments of Aurora long range patrol (LRP) aircraft and of Hercules theatre airlift (TAL) aircraft were being sent to the region. (The delay to that late date was due mostly to the inability to find a base of operations for them, and even after that, the host nation preferred not to be identified – the base located "somewhere on the Arabian peninsula" remains known only as Camp Mirage. Two of each aircraft were committed to the respective detachments, and the Aurora story will be recognized more fully in Part VII, "They Also Serve." Even though the Auroras are an Air Force resource, they are a vital element of the surveillance and response in Canadian waters, and are managed for day-to-day operations by the Navy formations on each coast. As such, in the Arabian Sea as in home waters, not unlike the Sea King HELAIRDETs, the Auroras were an integral part of a maritime operation.

Upon arrival in the theatre, they were assigned to NAVCENT for coordination with the other MPA resources, under CTF 57 (as were American, British, French, Dutch, Spanish and German aircraft). Employing the nickname *Polar Bear* as their operational call sign, the first Aurora mission

was flown on January 5th, 2002, barely a week after their announced commitment. To begin they flew in support of other Coalition operations in the Persian Gulf, but by springtime they were being assigned more regularly to the operational tasking of CTG 50.4 in the Gulf of Oman. The aircraft were limited to daylight operations only, given the limited range of their aging radar and forward-looking infrared (FLIR) sensors, but they made up for that with an unmatched commitment to operational availability. This became especially important later that spring, when other Coalition members began to reduce their contributions to Operation Enduring Freedom. At about the same time, many of the remaining ships experienced unrelated but coincidental problems with their helicopters (in the Canadian case, *Algonquin* eventually had to sail without a helicopter, and *Ottawa* experienced on-going difficulties, even after swapping her original 'sick bird' for *Vancouver's* when that ship departed).² Commodore Lerhe reported, "The two [Canadian Aurora] aircraft are becoming especially important in view of declining ship and embarked helo numbers." And circumstances were developing to bring the unique combination of Canadian warship and maritime patrol aircraft capabilities to great operational effect.

² *Vancouver's* Sea King had been overhauled aboard *Preserver*. See also Dean Beeby, "Breakdowns idle Sea King in Persian Gulf," *National Post*, 16 December 2002.

Aurora, CP-140 on patrol. (Photo, John McQuarrie)







Canadian frigate St. John's (left) in company with the American supply ship Seattle and aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy. (Canadian Forces photo by Master Corporal Michel Durand, HS2002-10188-061)

Intelligence indications were that the Pakistani coast had been sealed off to potential escapees and that, if any Al-Qaeda or Taliban still were fleeing Afghanistan, they were heading farther west through Iran to cross the narrower seas of the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman. This accounted in part for the allocation of that sector to Canadian control. The expansion of Leadership Interdiction Operations into the GOO led to a natural evolution of closer cooperation with the Maritime Interdiction Operation. That also raised one of the greatest challenges faced by the Canadian task group and its commander throughout the course of Operation Apollo – the question of Iran. The natural Coalition suspicion of Iranian intent was driven largely by the erratic behaviour of the Revolutionary Guards. That was complicated, however, by the entirely professional conduct of regular Iranian naval and air forces often encountered as they observed Coalition operations so close to their home waters. In reacting to this Iranian presence, most Canadians adopted the attitude of Commander Harry Harsch, *Fredericton's* captain: "How would we feel if a task group of Muslim ships suddenly showed up on the Grand Banks to oversee a fishing dispute off of St Pierre & Miquelon?"

Other than maintaining a purely defensive posture while exercising right of transit through the Strait of Hormuz, the Canadians were careful to give Iranian territorial waters a very wide berth.

It was equally obvious, however, that Al-Qaeda would be likely to take advantage of this self-imposed Western constraint. Certainly Saddam Hussein did so. The efforts of the MIO to cut off smuggling of oil constantly was hampered by the ability of 'leakers' to slip through the blockade by traveling down the length of the Gulf inside Iranian territorial waters (the Coalition's small numbers through the 1990s meant the main effort was focused in the northern Gulf, and was not able to pursue them south). The smugglers then would use another Coalition shortcoming – the inability to establish a regular permanent patrol right in the international waterway of the SOH – to slip across that narrow strait into Omani waters and then lose themselves in the Parking Lot. Operation Enduring Freedom gave a new lease on life to the MIO effort, with the arrival of larger numbers of Coalition vessels operating in the southern areas of the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman, and with the LIO hailing effort gleaning much of the same information

Before every boarding, standard procedure was for the ship's captain to personally provide the team his interpretation of the existing rules of engagement and to brief them on what to expect in the particular situation. Here Algonquin's Captain Gary Paulson prepares his Boarding Party for a dawn mission.



(HMCS Algonquin photo by Corporal Charles Barber, AP2002-E027-16a)

required to assess MIO violators (see further discussion on hailings in Part V, "Just Another Day at Sea").

All these various factors came together to startling effect in an incident involving HMCS *Ottawa*, in mid-April 2002, very soon after her arrival in-theatre. It began with a NAVCENT intelligence report that a vessel suspected of attempting to break the UN oil sanctions had eluded MIO forces in the northern Gulf by proceeding south in Iranian territorial waters. This soon was followed with orders for *Ottawa* to locate and inspect the ship, identified as the MV (motor vessel) *Roaa*. Operating in the area of the Gulf of Oman known as the 'Sharkfin' for the way it narrows into the southern approach to the Strait of Hormuz, *Ottawa* continued hailing traffic proceeding into and out from the Persian Gulf, to no avail until one of the Aurora aircraft reported sighting *Roaa* in the Parking Lot, some 40 miles away to the southwest. The smuggler indeed had made its way through Iranian, Omani and UAE (United Arab Emirates) territorial waters to elude Coalition detection. The trick now was for *Ottawa* to maintain contact with *Roaa* without herself being detected until the master felt confident enough to make a break for the open sea, where *Ottawa's* boarding party could take action. For the better part of three days, *Roaa* moved slowly about the crowded Parking Lot,

making it difficult for the ship's radar operators to keep its 'blip' separate from the 150-odd others. Through careful coordination with visual reports from the Aurora, and closing at night to use the FLIR of the ship's Sea King (ranged on the flight deck), but then opening beyond visual sight during the day, *Ottawa* kept contact until late in the evening of April 18th, when *Roaa* moved into international waters, apparently having sold off her oil and now attempting to head back into the Gulf and to Iraq. The take down of the smuggler culminated with a dramatic nighttime boarding, *Ottawa* swooping in at 30 knots to catch *Roaa's* crew unawares before they could place anti-boarding devices over windows and hatches. (See story excerpt "Anatomy of a Boarding" in box, next page.) In a throwback to an earlier era, a small prize crew from *Ottawa* took command to divert *Roaa* – properly, in international waters – to a Coalition holding area in the southern Persian Gulf, with *Ottawa's* boarding team remaining vigilant to ensure the smuggler's crew could not destroy any evidence or even attempt to scuttle the ship. She was delivered safely the next day for further evidence collection and the beginning of a long legal process. No longer directly involved, the Canadian crew returned to their ship, satisfied both with their readiness for action, and that the evidence gathered could offer links leading "to the capture of bigger foe."³

³ "Anatomy of a Boarding," <http://www.dnd.ca/eng/index.html>, accessed 25 July 2002.

Anatomy of a Boarding

As soon as *Roaa* passed into international waters, *Ottawa* took up station on her port side. In the dark, the alpha wave of *Ottawa's* NBP climbed into the Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB).

"*Ottawa* screamed in at 30 knots," said RHIB Coxn Leading Seaman Patrick Moulden. "It was intimidatingly fast. Then they illuminated *Roaa* with the xenon, the ship's high-power searchlight. The guys on [*Roaa's*] bridge must have been stunned."

After *Ottawa* CO Commander Paul Hendry announced his intention to board *Roaa*, the NBP stealthily scaled the side of the vessel. Before *Roaa's* crew knew they were being overtaken, the bridge and engine room were secured and *Ottawa* had control of the ship.

"We'd been on two-minute standby since quarter to six," said Ottawa NBP member Master Seaman Bob Sackett. "The ship came to boarding stations at about 10 p.m."

"No real worries," Leading Seaman Chet Horne said when asked what it was like to be the first person up the ladder. "We're always ready for whatever might happen. You trust the other members of your team. Besides, if they can't see you coming, it doesn't make you a target."

"At first, the crew were really stunned. But when they realized that we would take care of them, they relaxed a bit."

Control was established before *Roaa's* crew could affix the anti-boarding devices lying in wait at every door, hatch, and window: sheets of steel, ready to be welded on at the hint of a boarding. Training and a little creativity paid off. It was a beautiful boarding.

It was what we came to do.

Ottawa escorted *Roaa*, under the temporary command of Lt(N) Peter Sproule and the protection of the Boarding Team, to the detention area.

"What an experience. It was a nice change from the routine of the Ops Room," said Lt(N) Sproule, who was given the call sign "Hornblower", after the title character of C. S. Forester's books about an RN midshipman's rise through the ranks during the Napoleonic Wars. "[*Roaa*] was absolutely filthy, but, fortunately, I only had to stand on the bridge and didn't have to search through the galley or the heads. Eight hours was long enough."

Source: <http://www.dnd.ca/eng/index.html>, accessed 25 July 2002, 08:03

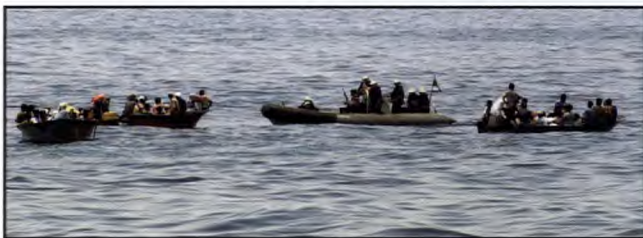
⁴ PBS Frontline, "In Search of Al-Qaeda," aired 21 November 2002. Available at: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/search/view/> (see part 5, "Karachi to the Gulf of Oman").

While that bigger foe – Osama bin Laden – remained elusive, the Canadians continued to circle in on their prey. On July 14th, *Algonquin* detained two suspected Al-Qaeda terrorists from a group of economic migrants crossing the Gulf of Oman in three 'go-fasts' (small speedboats capable of upwards of 40 knots). In another excellent example of Coalition cooperation, the group of small open boats was detected by the Canadian Aurora *Polar Bear* on a routine mission, and then intercepted for an initial investigation by the French Navy Ship (FNS) *Guepratte*. Because the Canadians had more robust rules of engagement (ROE), *Algonquin's* boarding party conducted the subsequent close investigation, including taking digital pictures of the men that were e-mailed immediately to NAVCENT for analysis. Due to the high midday temperatures (the humidex was in excess of 50 degrees Celsius), and given that there were no immediately suspicious indicators, the boats were allowed to proceed. Several hours later, however, NAVCENT determined that two of the Afghani passengers indeed were suspect, and ordered their detention. By that time night had fallen, and a Royal Netherlands Navy (RNLN) P-3 Orion (an updated version of the same basic aircraft type as the Aurora) re-located the boats, vectoring in *Guepratte's* helicopter to stop them until *Algonquin* could catch up. The pair were taken without further incident, detained on board *Algonquin* overnight, and transferred the next day to US custody in the aircraft carrier *John F. Kennedy*. A similar operation just a few days later netted another pair, as highlighted in a US Public Broadcasting System (PBS) *Frontline* documentary, "In Search of Al-Qaeda." ⁴



An Al Qaeda suspect is escorted across *Algonquin's* flight deck for temporary detention. (HMCS *Algonquin* photo by Corporal Charles Barber, AP2002-E022-53a)

Besides the operational concerns, the process of screening up to a hundred persons packed on several small vessels posed many humanitarian and legal challenges. One was the language barrier. Most of the occupants were economic migrants simply seeking a better life and, although some could speak fractured English, the boarding parties found they could reduce their anxiety and glean much useful information in a more timely fashion when accompanied by Urdu (Pakistani) and Farsi (Persian) linguists. The few regular Navy members who were native speakers could not be spread far enough, and the Naval Reserve outreach into Canada's growing multicultural communities was proven constantly in the number of volunteers who came forward for service (on the occasions when no Canadians were available, USN linguists were embarked).



In July 2002, *Algonquin's* Boarding Party inspects a group of three 'go fast' boats transporting economic refugees – and potentially leaders of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban escaping from Afghanistan. (HMCS *Algonquin* photo by Corporal Charles Barber, AP2002-E022-46a)

Another concern was the blistering heat and humidity, and with the migrant processing taking up to several hours, to further mitigate their anxiety level the Canadians would use an extra boat to shuttle evidence, food and water. Then there were the varying standards of evidence among the Coalition partners. The debacle surrounding the capture of Al-Qaeda suspects by the Canadian special forces unit JTF2 (Joint Task Force 2) in Afghanistan earlier that spring showed just how highly charged the process could be. In contrast to that episode, Commodore Lerhe refused on more than one occasion to order a person detained for questioning because he lacked confidence in the information upon which the request had been made. In this respect, the strong Canadian role to date was a determining factor in NAVCENT deciding to allow the Canadians to define many of the legal criteria for the Leadership Interdiction Operations.



Canadian crews frequently found themselves acting more as Good Samaritans than global cops, passing provisions to stranded sailors. Here, Leading Seaman Abdul Abdi of Iroquois passes fuel to the crew of a fishing boat found adrift in the Gulf of Aden in November 2001.

(HMCS Iroquois photo by Master Corporal Brian Walsh, ISD01-9671)



The boarding of larger vessels continues apace. Montréal's team boards yet another dhow. (HMCS Montréal photo by Corporal Paz Quillé, BP_336_2002_026-03)



Winnipeg's team boards a container ship. Through the better part of Op Apollo, Canadian warships maintained an average of two boardings per day. (HMCS Montréal photo by Corporal Paz Quillé, HS025081d20)

Finally, there was the problem of the physical holding conditions for the detainees. As Lieutenant-Commander Doug Young, *Algonquin's* Executive Officer, put it, "this was the first time since the Korean War that the Canadian Navy had to deal with what were effectively prisoners of war." To be sure, they were not strictly POWs, because Al-Qaeda was not a formed military body and Canada did not recognize the Taliban government. But the Canadian Navy was determined that, even if the letter of the Geneva Convention did not apply, they would certainly live within its spirit. Although occasionally bound and blindfolded as a security precaution, detainees were kept under the same strict but humane conditions of close custody that would apply to Canadian citizens.

As the summer of 2002 and his tenure as commander of the multinational operations came to an end, Commodore Lerhe could take pride in NAVCENT's assessment that Task Group 50.4 was detecting and intercepting practically all of the migrant smuggling trade in the Gulf of Oman: "we have closed the most obvious Al-Qaeda and Taliban maritime escape routes and that they appear to have been successfully deterred." He turned over to his successor, Commodore Dan Murphy on September 4th, 2002, one week before the first anniversary of the attacks that had set the Arabian Sea operations in process.

Leading Seaman Tara Watts documents the names of crewmembers of a dhow.

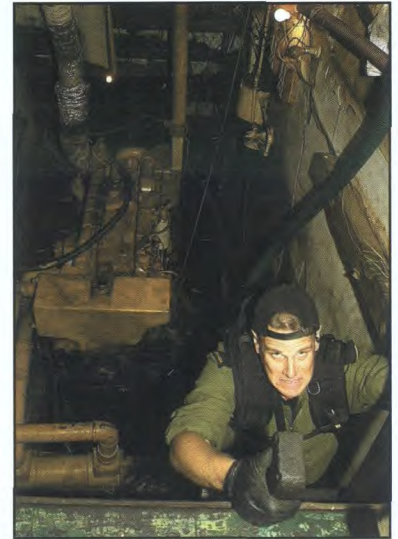
(HMCS Montréal photo by Master Corporal Brian Walsh, IS2002-1615)



At first blush, it appeared that Murphy's would be little more than a custodial term. Just as most of the other Coalition partners had drawn down their active participation earlier in the spring, by late summer the Canadian Navy had found the limits of its sustainability. With Lerhe went his destroyer flagship, and Murphy had to hoist his broad pennant in *HMCS St John's*, an especially challenging undertaking because that frigate had not been configured for the command role (that would be improved only marginally with the arrival of the so-equipped *HMCS Montréal* a month later, on October 5th). Indeed, his own appointment was significant, because the Navy literally had used up all its commodores, and Murphy had to be promoted 'while so employed' (until then he had held the rank of naval captain; he had been named on the promotion list for 2002 and the commodore rank was confirmed on November 5th). Then there was the looming prospect that the task group composition would be measurably reduced on October 21st by the departure without replacement of *Protecteur*. Since her arrival in-theatre on July 7th, the West Coast tanker had earned the nickname 'Battle Tanker', being the only Coalition oiler regularly operating throughout the GOO and into the Persian Gulf. Once she was gone, Task Group 50.4 would be left with no integral fuel support, having to rely instead on the occasional 'RAS (Replenishment at Sea), of opportunity', but more

Master Seaman Ashley Cox scales a ladder up from the bilges of a freighter's engine room.

(HMCS Montréal photo by Corporal Paz Quillé, BP_336_2002_012-10)



often faced with the inconvenience of going off-station and putting into port to refuel. (The two Sea Kings she carried, and the large maintenance facilities in her hangar, would also be sorely missed.)



A pair of 'go-fasts' crossing the Strait of Hormuz. (HMCS Charlottetown photo)



With her forays into the Persian Gulf, Protecteur was a welcome sight to Coalition warships. Here, on August 25th, the USS Hopper learns she is about to become the Canadian tanker's 50th customer of the deployment.

(HMCS Algonquin photo by Corporal Charles Barber, AP2002-E028-64a)

The signal that the South West Asia theatre was not sliding into backwater status came just a week after Murphy's assumption of command. On September 12th, US President George W. Bush addressed the United Nations General Assembly, admitting his "greatest fear is that terrorists will find a shortcut to their mad ambitions when an outlaw regime supplies them with the technologies to kill on a massive scale." He challenged the world body that, "In one place – in one regime – we find all these dangers, in their most lethal and aggressive forms, exactly the kind of aggressive threat the United Nations was born to confront."⁵ In identifying Saddam Hussein's Iraq as that regime, one of the immediate side effects was to make CTG 50.4's sector a renewed centre of activity.

Through the fall and into the new year of 2003, as the Security Council debated the need for additional resolutions against Iraq, the Americans began to move additional forces into the region to bring pressure against the regime. The vast bulk of that materiel had to funnel through the Strait of Hormuz, and Murphy found the volume of traffic through his sector beginning to increase perceptibly.

⁵ "Remarks by the President in Address to the United Nations General Assembly," 12 September 2002, at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020912-1.html>, accessed 7 July 2003.



Alongside in a Gulf port at the end of August 2002, Protecteur's crew celebrate the 33rd anniversary of her commissioning into the Canadian Navy with a ship's company photo. A variety of Coalition warships (mostly USN) can be seen in the background.

(DGPA Combat Camera photo by Corporal Charles Barber, AP2002-E029-23a)

The return of a Canadian tanker to the Arabian Sea in July 2002 was a welcome development for national re-supply. Here St John's (right) comes alongside *Protecteur*.

(HMCS Algonquin photo by Corporal Charles Barber, AP2002-E023-47a)



Whatever the other implications of the American President's declaration, so much high value materiel could expect to be a magnet for a terrorist strike. That threat very soon was given credence, when on October 9th the French oil tanker *Limberg* was attacked by Al-Qaeda in that other vital chokepoint of the Straits of Bab al Mandeb, off Aden.⁶ The number of requests for Coalition escort through the SOH rose dramatically, such that by mid-November Murphy was reporting over 100 had been completed, with Canadian warships having conducted roughly a third of those.

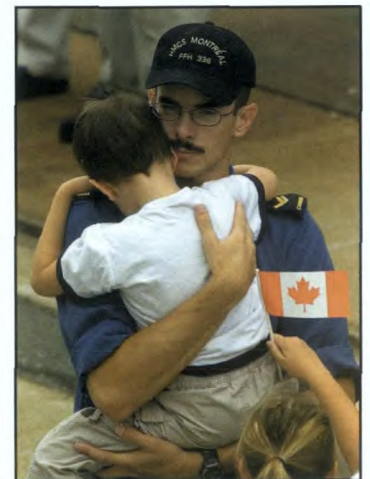
Three significant Al-Qaeda attacks occurring during Rotation 2, against the French tanker *Limberg* (below), a night club in Bali, and a hotel in Mombassa, Kenya. As such, force protection issues occupied Commodore Murphy's attention on a daily basis, and several planned port visits were cancelled due to high threat conditions. (British Broadcasting Corporation photo)



⁶ Alan Philps, "Al-Qa'eda behind attack on oil tanker," *London Daily Telegraph*, 07 October 2002, <http://www.news.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2002/10/07/wyem07.xml>, accessed 26 June 2003.

However consoling those close escorts might be to shipping masters, with only 3 to 6 frigates typically assigned to his command, Commodore Murphy soon found his resources taxed to their limit. Among the novel solutions devised were an immediate greater reliance on the shipborne helicopters of the force and the maritime patrol aircraft of CTG 50.7 assigned to his tactical employment, *Polar Bear* continuing to provide the highest mission completion rate. The various aircraft would be tasked to conduct SOH transit overflights to coincide with Coalition military shipping, and complementing those efforts frigates would be stationed as 'gateguards' at the western (Persian Gulf) and southern (Gulf of Oman) approaches to the SOH, ready to pounce in the event of trouble.

Yet another rotation of ships into the Arabian Sea. Family members say goodbye to the crew of HMCS Montréal leaving Halifax, September 9th, 2002, just days before the first anniversary of the Al-Qaeda attacks, and knowing that President Bush would be going to the United Nations for a mandate to bring pressure upon Iraq. (HMCS Montréal photo by Corporal Paz Quillé, HS025001d07)



Another especially effective development was the employment on the task group staff of Naval Reservists in the Naval Control of Shipping (NCS) specialty, to undertake a long-term analysis of regional maritime traffic patterns. From this it was possible to identify any developing anomalies and react accordingly. On those rare occasions when Murphy discovered additional resources at his disposal, he was able to thwart hostile activity with pre-emptive action such as the 'Sharkfin surges' of a group of frigates into the southern approaches to the SOH. More rarely, he was able to go further afield (like Lerhe before him) to re-visit the eastern Arabian Sea area on a 'Karachi SAG' (Surface Action Group).

The effects of these bold actions were twofold. First, by affirming the Coalition presence in the area, they effectively continued the deterrence of Al-Qaeda and Taliban operatives from escaping to the Arabian peninsula. Second, Murphy noted a steep increase in the number of boardings. Over his four-month period of command these had doubled from the previous first eight months of operations, and the Canadian warships continued to undertake roughly half of the ever-increasing Coalition total. And some of these were proving to be significant hauls such as *Montréal's* interception at the end of October of a ship carrying suspected military hardware bound for Iraq. Encountering no resistance from the freighter's

A significant intercept by Montréal late in the fall of 2002 was the M/V Passat bound for Iraq carrying five 24-metre patrol boats that appeared to be in violation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (another two were stowed in the hold below). (HMCS Montréal photo by Corporal Paz Quillé, HS025054d05)



crew, *Montréal's* boarding party discovered a total of five 24-metre patrol boats (three were visible on its upper decks) that could have had dual military and civilian uses in violation of the long-standing UN MIO resolutions.⁷

All this continued against a backdrop of the increasing likelihood of war against Iraq. Tensions began to rise dramatically as the Christmas season approached, in turn working to increase the profile of the Canadian task group as national media headed to the Gulf region in search of a story. For the most part, these circled around practical, if also sensationalized, statements such as the observation by Commander Kelly Williams, captain of *Winnipeg*, that the pair of Canadian ships "would be ready to join a US-led attack on Iraq within 24 hours of the order being given" – that being the length of time it would take to reach the northern Persian Gulf from their farthest patrol stations in the Gulf of Oman. Williams knew the speed-time-distance navigational calculations only too well, because his ship and many of her company were on their second tour to the region, having sailed from Esquimalt on September 15th, a year to the day from her return home from the last of the Operation Augmentation missions just after the original terrorist attacks.

⁷ "Canadians intercept suspect freighter," *Ottawa Citizen*, 1 November 2002.

The captain's cabin of Montréal doubled as the Commodore's office, and it witnessed a procession of meetings with Coalition partners. Murphy is at the right-hand end of the table, and proceeding counter-clockwise from him are Cdr Paul Earnshaw (task group Chief of Staff), Cdr Kelly Williams (CO Winnipeg), the captain of a Dutch ship, Cdr 'Doc' Hatton (CO Montréal) and the captains of a Greek and an Italian ship. (HMCS Montréal photo by Corporal Paz Quillé, HS025120)





During the period when a Canadian tanker was gapped, St John's had to obtain fuel from Coalition resources. Here she waits her turn in a RAS (replenishment at sea) with USS Seattle. (HMCS St John's photo by Corporal Charles Barber, AP2002-E016-41a)

Whether they would join operations against Iraq and just what they could do in that event remained open questions. But Williams had been a member of the team in the Directorate of Maritime Strategy that had developed *Leadmark* (and after his return to Canada and promotion to the rank of naval captain he would be sent back to Ottawa to head the directorate). He and his commodore knew one of the principles of Canada's naval strategy to be that, in responding to overseas crisis management situations, it is critical to dispatch naval forces capable of more than simply showing up and defending themselves. Instead, Canada gains great diplomatic leverage with our allies by contributing materially to the accomplishment of joint and combined operations. That was precisely what had been achieved by participation in and command of Task Group 50.4. As CENTCOM planners turned to the problem of Iraq, NAVCENT had become entirely confident to leave guarding the backdoor to the Canadian-led Coalition.



The Navy is a family, but some ship's companies are more close-knit than others. A large proportion of the crew of the frigate St John's hails from Newfoundland.

(Canadian Forces Photo, HS2002-10353-01)

Operation *Apollo* Deployment Schedule

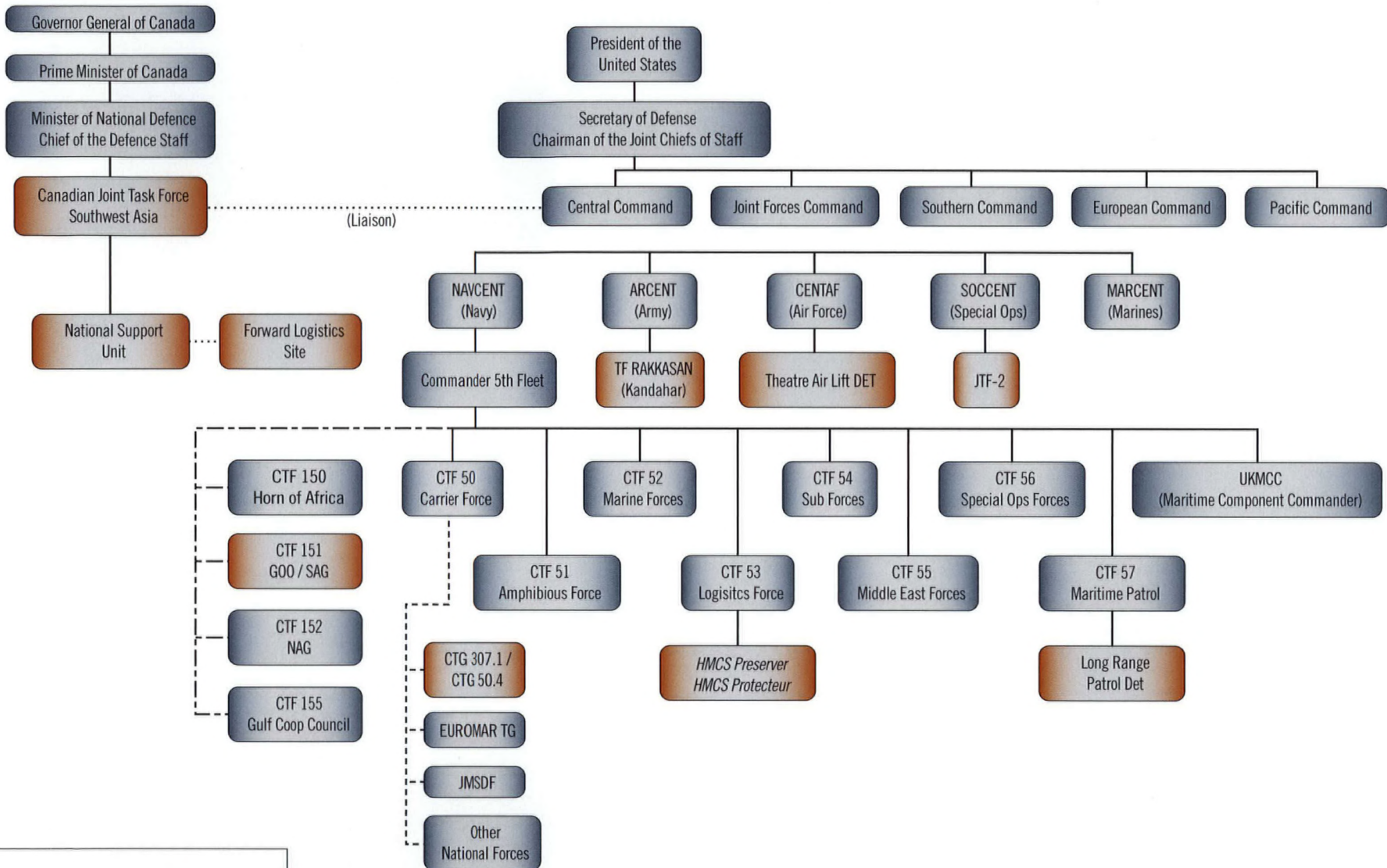
	2001				2002								2003															
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Comd CJTF SWA (Tampa)			Commodore Jean-Pierre Thiffault				Brigadier-General Michel Gauthier				Brigadier-General Angus Watt				BGen Dennis Tabbernor													
Task Group Commander			Cmdre Drew Robertson				Cmdre Eric Lerhe				Cmdre Dan Murphy				Cmdre Roger Girouard													
SHIP / Air Det																												
MARLANT																												
IROQUOIS			Capt(N) Cal Moffard / CH12438																		Capt(N) Paul Maddison / CH12405							
ATHABASKAN																												
HALIFAX			Cdr Peter Ellis / CH12405																									
TORONTO					Cdr Ian Paterson / CH12401																							
CHARLOTTETOWN			Cdr Ron Lloyd / CH12441																									
ST JOHN'S									Cdr Brendan Ryan / CH12443																			
MONTREAL													Cdr Doc Hatton / CH12426															
Ville De QUEBEC																												
FREDERICTON																					Cdr Harry Harsch / CH12410							
PRESERVER			Cdr J.B. McCarthy / CH12416 & 408																									
MARPAC																												
ALGONQUIN								Capt (N) Gary Paulson / nil																				
VANCOUVER			Cdr Jim Heath / CH12429																									
OTTAWA					Cdr Paul Hendry / CH12440[29]																							
WINNIPEG														Cdr Kelly Williams / CH12431														
REGINA																				Cdr Bill Truelove / nil								
CALGARY																										Cdr Dan Mackeigan / CH12419		
PROTECTEUR									Cdr Sandy Bellows / CH12404 & 417																			
Maritime Patrol Det						LCol John Mitchell				LCol Jack Backstrom				LCol Fred Bigelow														

Legend:

- Roto Zero
- Roto One
- Roto Two
- Roto Three
- Roto Four
- STANAVFORLANT (SNFL)

NOTE: This table shows total deployed time with approximate dates of departure from and arrival at home port.
For theatre "In / Out Chop" dates use the following rough transit times: one month (each way) for MARLANT ships; one-and-a-half months for MARPAC.

Operation Apollo and Enduring Freedom



Legend:

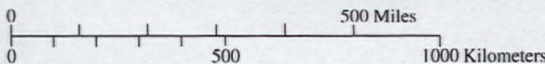
Canadian Forces Unit

- - - - To February 2003

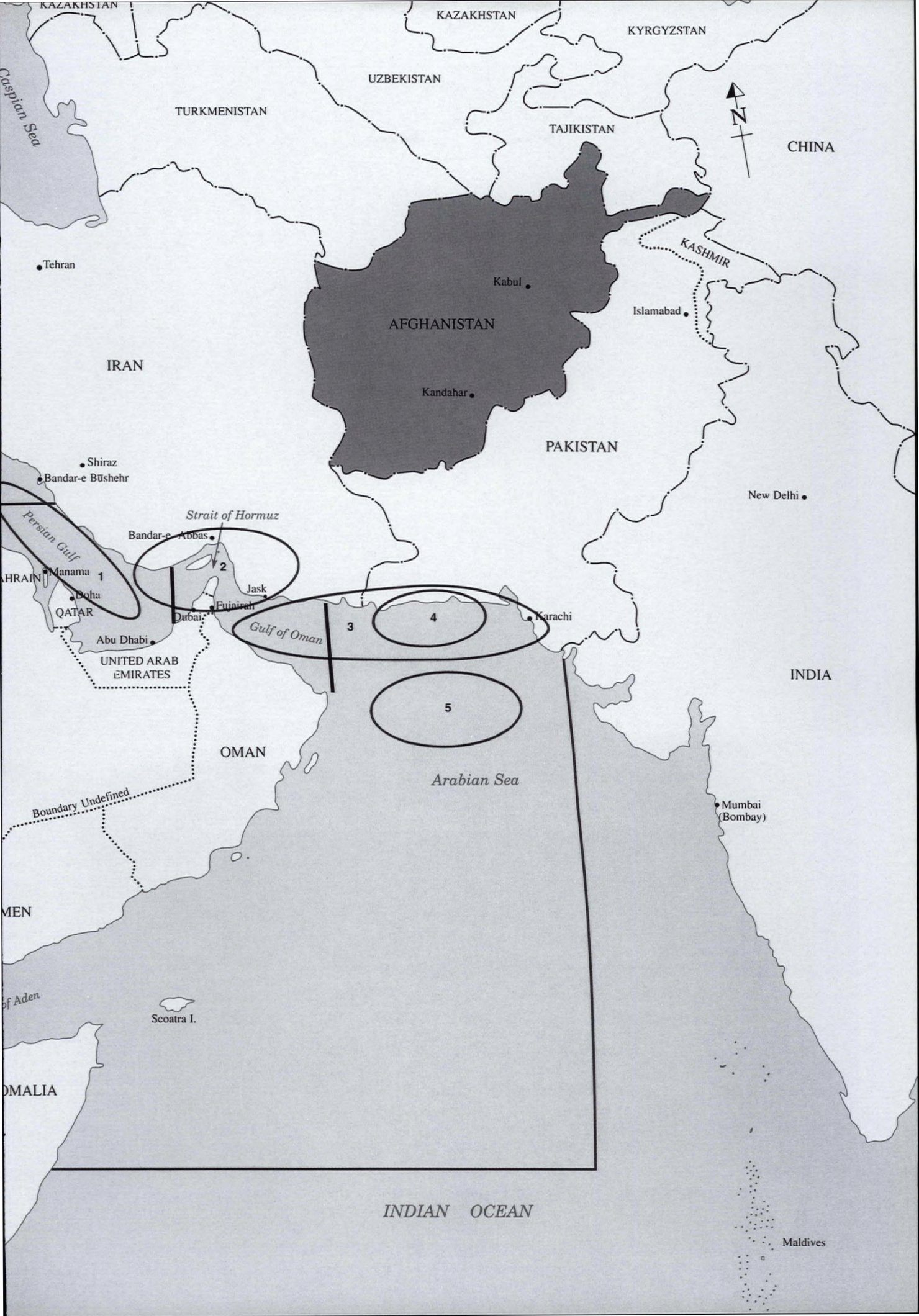
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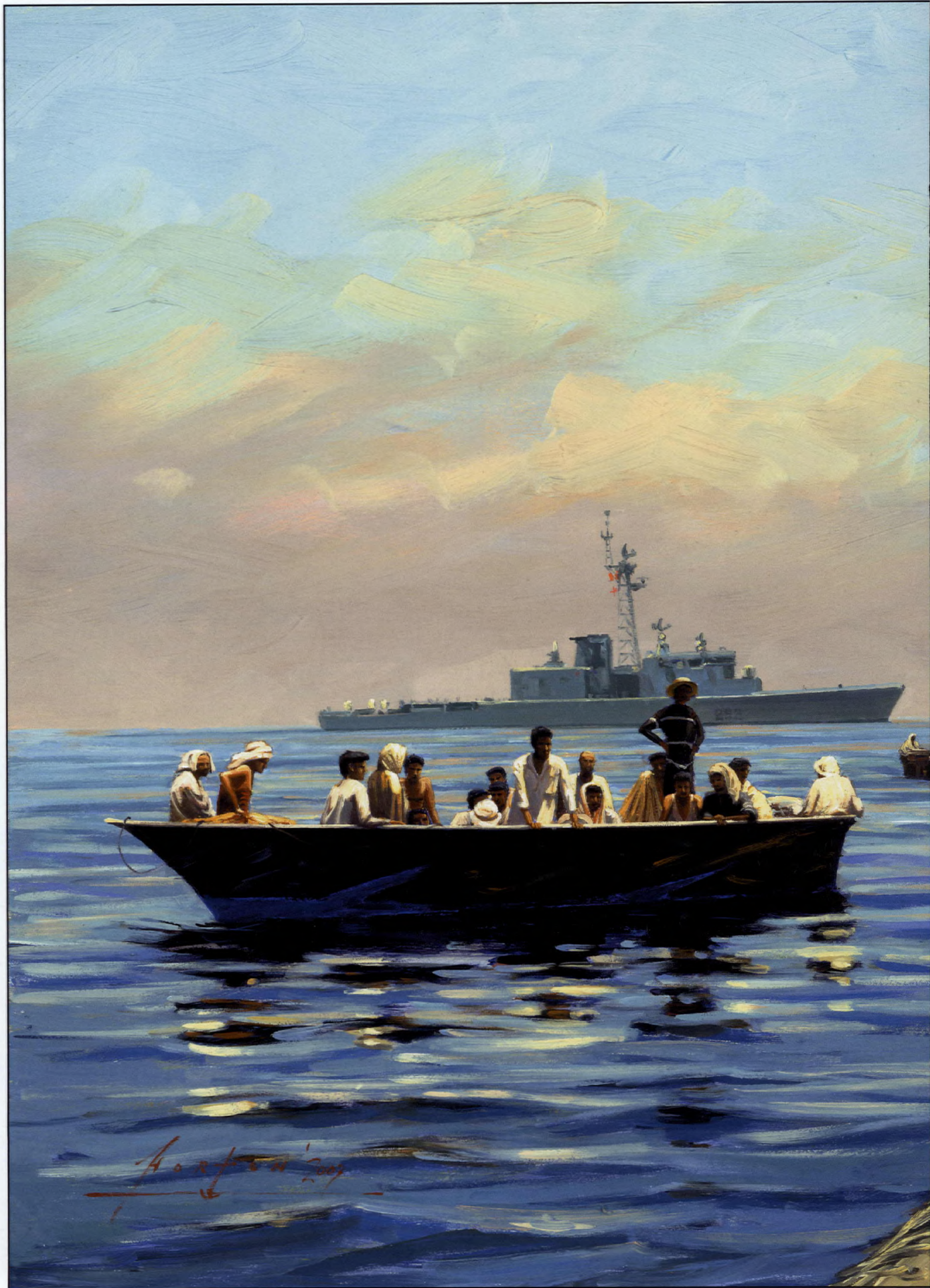


THEATRE OF OPERATIONS

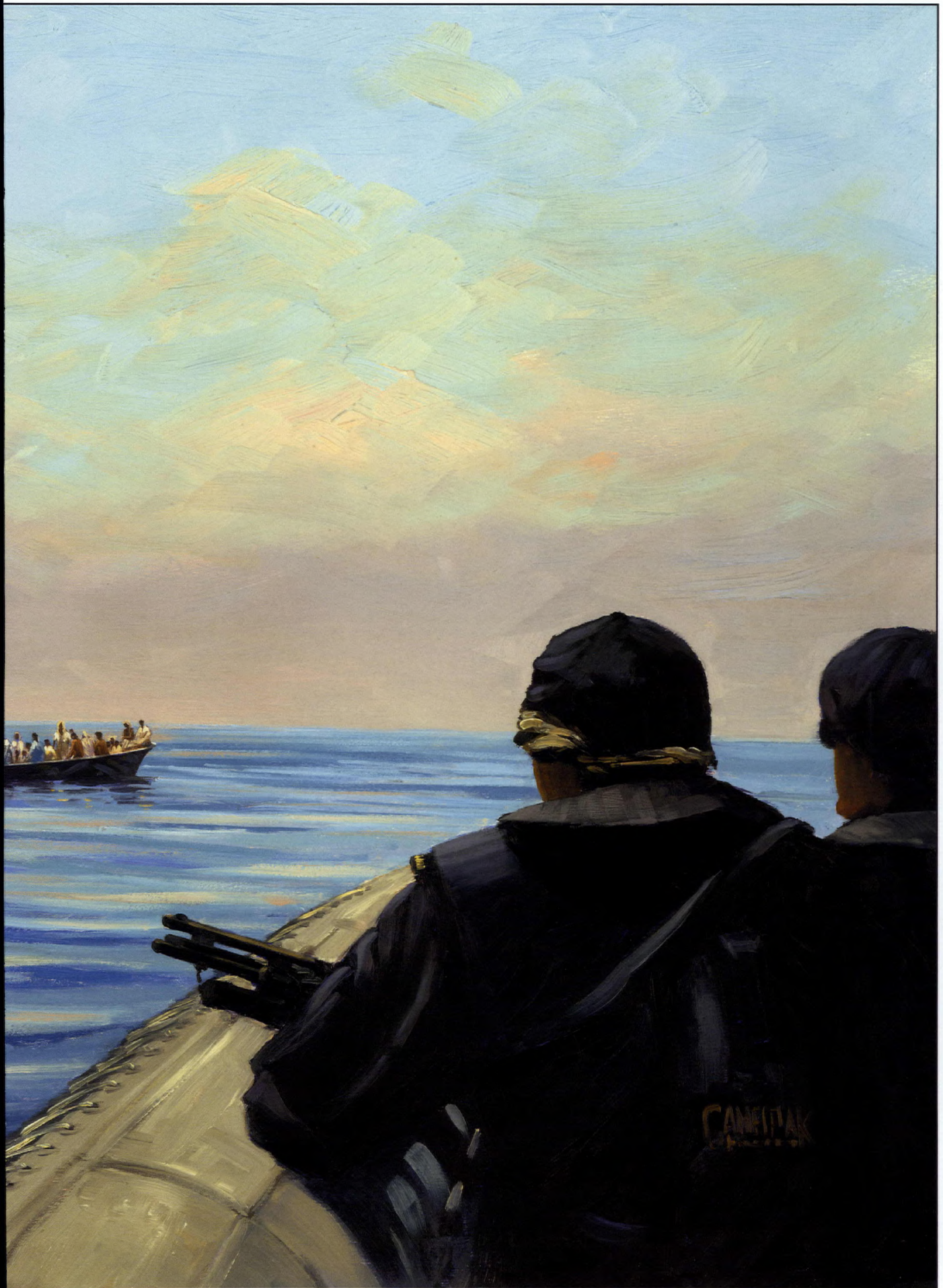


- TF 151 Area of Operations **—————**
- Normal Operations Area **—————**
- Maritime Interdiction Operations 1
- Strait of Hormuz Escort 2
- Leadership Interdiction Operations 3
- Amphibious Op Area 4
- Carrier Op Area 5





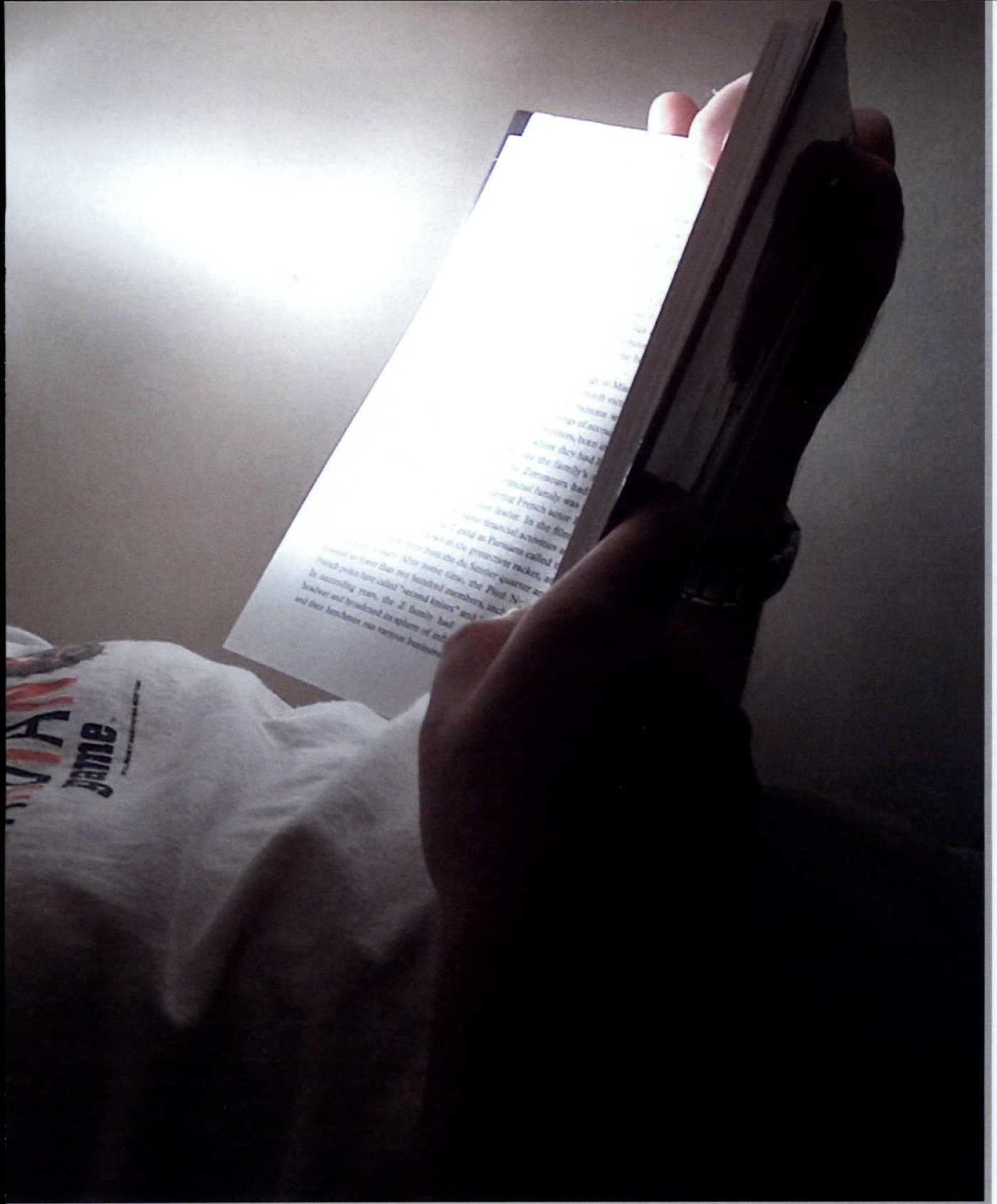
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V. "JUST ANOTHER DAY AT SEA"

Previous page: Go-fast Interdiction by John Horton



Imagine living in a small village with some 250 to 300 other people, all of you occupying the same narrow space – 130 metres long, 15 metres wide, and only two main roads (each on different levels, connected only by ladders at irregular intervals) – and no weekends off for 10 weeks running.

A ship is a village in which privacy is hard to come by, each sailor's personal space limited to a bunk and the single locker beside it. Here Able Seaman Craig McQuilken spends a bit of time at 'home' between watches. (HMCS Fredericton photo by Cpl Mike Selig)



Battlespace or recreation space? With no helicopter embarked, Navy Lieutenant Kathleen Thaler (left) leads an early morning spinning class in Algonquin's hangar, May 2002.

(HMCS Algonquin photo by Cpl Charles Barber, AP2002-E005-05a)

The work routine is 12-hour shifts, generally split into two or three shorter parts, depending upon your specific trade, and then paper work to be done in your *off* time. Call it an 18-hour day. Special events requiring the participation of everyone can occur at any time of the day or night – and usually do, at least three or four times in any 24-hour period. The 'mayor' is always on-call, and can sleep only in snatches.

Welcome to life in a warship. Organizational behaviour analysts agree it's not the most efficient way to conduct human activity, but they are at a loss to come up with any better solution to the unique conditions of living, working and fighting at sea. It is continually a challenge, in different ways, for all ranks. But it works. Eleven weeks at sea – 79 days straight – that's how long HMCS *Vancouver* remained on continuous operations with the *USS Stennis* carrier battle group. It is believed to be the longest by any Canadian warship: previous endurance milestones such as the Pacific Ocean cruiser operations in the Second World War, postwar North Atlantic weather ship duties, and NATO exercises and operations rarely exceeded a month (the submarine *Ojibwa* recorded a patrol of 38 days in 1984); indeed, the longest cruises had occurred during the Gulf War of 1991, when the destroyers *Athabaskan* and *Terra Nova* stayed out for 48 days.¹

That sort of effort can only be sustained by an efficient logistics effort to provide fuel and fresh food at sea. Even during the Korean War, when underway replenishment and refrigeration techniques were not so refined, the Canadian destroyers often would put into nearby Sasebo, Japan for fresh supplies and a little shore leave.

Not in the South West Asia theatre. To begin, the distances separating the operating areas are just so vast, typically a full day's steaming from the nearest port [see map of SWA super-imposed on USA], it would be inefficient to run ships in and out every few days. And that is presuming a friendly port nearby. In the early days after September 11th, with renewed memories of the experience of the destroyer *USS Cole* that was attacked by Al-Qaeda terrorists with a bomb-laden boat in Yemen in October 2000, it was clear that the safest place for warships was operating at sea, especially in that area of the world (the similar attack against the French oil tanker *Limberg* in October 2002 confirmed that reality). Certainly that was where Canadian sailors in the region were most comfortable. Later rotations would resolve these problems through various force protection means.

¹ Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH), "Royal Canadian Naval Vessels Days at Sea, 1924-1984," compiled by M.E. Kletke (2002).

Otherwise, it's a lot of times around the flight deck.

(HMCS Algonquin photo by Cpl Charles Barber, AP2002-E012-39a)



Although Pakistani and Indian ports remained off-limits so as not to appear that Canada was taking sides in their on-going difficulties, the major cities of the southern Gulf States were confirmed as being among the most pleasant and metropolitan in the world. Special arrangements were made to enter only secure ports (usually including local or US Coast Guard water patrols) and then within them to block off the assigned jetty area with concrete and other obstacles as a security perimeter. Operations at sea were organized into their own sequence of events, such that the gateguard stations at either end of the Strait of Hormuz would be scheduled in the days just before entering or leaving harbour, and the patrols to Jask, Karachi or farther afield would be made in-between.

But Rotation 0 fully earned their sea pay. Besides *Vancouver*, *Charlottetown* went 75 days straight at sea, *Iroquois* just a shade less at 74 (but that included 22 hours alongside in Bahrain for staff meetings, during which the ship remained in sea watches), and *Halifax* a 'mere' 47. *Preserver* set no such endurance records, having to go into port at regular intervals to re-provision fresh food supplies. For her part, as a floating gas station, going through the strict force protection regimen to do so was not an especially pleasant prospect. For all ships, even as conditions improved, later rotations typically would go 5 to 6 weeks at sea, and then 4 to 5 days alongside.

The attack on the *USS Cole* while stopped for fuelling in Aden harbour in October 2000 was a portent both of Al-Qaeda intentions and of the vulnerability of modern warships to low-tech unconventional or 'asymmetric' attacks.

(US Department of Defense photo [Cole-190])



The result was an amazing operations tempo of days on-station and working at sea versus those alongside and out of action. The rate was immediately apparent to anyone who cared to notice – and people who mattered did care. When Commodore Lerhe visited CENTCOM headquarters in Tampa in the course of his turnover briefings, for example, American officials quoted him the statistics they had compiled so far for Operation Enduring Freedom. The USN was running at a 97 per cent optempo (their carriers do not go alongside when deployed), the Canadians came next at 92 per cent, and the average of all the other navies was much farther behind at under 80 per cent. Over a typical four-month period of actual employment in the theatre (given the more than a month in transit each direction to and from home base adding up to the six-month tour), it was calculated that the difference in sea-days between the Canadian Navy and one of the other major navies was some 25 per cent, or the equivalent of another full month of destroyer time at sea.



Routine maintenance carries on, whether a warship is on patrol in the Arabian Sea or off the Grand Banks. In the first photograph, Leading Seaman Brian Perry (left) and Master Seaman Stephan Pageau weld a repair to the main feed line for Charlottetown's port main lube oil system. The next photo shows that same main feed line being reinstalled the next day by (back to front) Leading Seamen John Allen, Rick Macpherson, and Eric Thibault. (HMCS Charlottetown photos, HSCHAD011202-28 and HSCHAD011203-08)

Life in a warship is one of contrasts. Periods of monotony are constantly upset by sudden turmoil. One way of dealing with the tension is to impose as much order as possible upon it. Much of this order occurs naturally just from the sheer routine of running a ship's machinery and driving the vessel about the global seaways – the laws of mechanics and the international law of the sea are the same the world over for warships and merchant ships alike. Even such uniquely naval activity as surveillance and patrols are much the same – water tends to look the same everywhere. On a good day, allowing for the extreme differences in temperature, the North Atlantic can look a lot like the Arabian Sea. The Executive Officer of HMCS *Fredericton*, Lieutenant-Commander Rob Clark was stretching the point, however, when he observed in the midst of a June 2003 boarding that, "It's just another day at sea."

That comment was laced with irony, of course, because the Arabian Sea routine came to revolve around the constant interception and inspection of other vessels. Boardings as conducted by the Canadian Navy have changed quite a bit since the 1980s. Back then, when this author was the Boarding Officer of a steam destroyer, they were a fairly routine administrative affair. Ships' teams were meant only to augment the constabulary functions of Fisheries Officers and the RCMP. The first Gulf War of 1990-1991 was the wake up call. The requirement to enforce UN sanctions against frequently non-compliant Iraqi merchant vessels led to the hasty introduction of new equipment, weapons and techniques. The procedure was progressively refined through the 1990s such that each ship produced something approaching what could best be compared to a naval SWAT-team. (See DND backgrounder next page.)

In the War Against Terrorism no port can be considered entirely safe. Here, Leading Seaman Bos'n Stephen Copp mans Charlottetown's port bridge wing .50 calibre heavy machine gun during the entry into New York City in May 2002 for the annual Fleet Week celebrations.

(HMCS Charlottetown photo, HSCHAD011202-28)



Much of that refinement came on-the-job in the Persian Gulf, the high point being reached in the early summer of 2001 with *Winnipeg's* team earning its kudos in the Gulf. The *GTS Katie* affair occurred just the year before in the home waters of the Gulf of St Lawrence, when a chartered sealift company transporting vehicles and stores back from Bosnia (roughly a third of the Army's combat capability) essentially attempted to hold the Canadian Forces to ransom until a defaulting

loan by a third-party was paid.² In resolving the impasse, a boarding team from *Iroquois* (commanded by then-Captain Drew Robertson) rappelled from a hovering Sea King helicopter onto the deck of the manoeuvring merchantman, while the frigate *Montréal* covered the operation with her main gun and a backup team.

² "HMCS *Athabaskan* Carries Out Boarding of *GTS Katie*," August 3, 2000, Op Megaphone (Archive), at: http://www.navy.dnd.ca/mspa_operations/operations_e.asp?x=1&id=11.

Canadian warships don't have to go as far as the Arabian Sea for an opportunity to conduct boardings. The first photo shows HMCS Athabaskan following the GTS Katie about 400 km from

St. John's, Newfoundland on August 3rd, 2000, shortly before (inset) her Sea King helicopter lowers a boarding team onto the Katie. (Canadian Forces photo by WO Larry Graham, ISD00-445 & Boarding_Katie2)



NAVAL BOARDING OPERATIONS

Boardings are as old as navies themselves. Indeed, in ancient times, they were the principal expression of warfare at sea. Boarders have poured over the bows of everything from Greek triremes and Roman galleys to Viking long boats. When hand-to-hand combat gave way to broadsides fired from the massive "walls of oak" Men O' War of the Napoleonic era, many a young lieutenant and "enseigne de vaisseau" won favour and promotion by issuing cutlasses and ordering "Boarders away!" Even in the age of steam, sailors coming over the side have caused colours to be struck. As recently as the Second World War, the navy boarded a German U-boat, capturing valuable information before it was scuttled. During the Cold War decades, our navy's role concentrated mainly on anti-submarine warfare. But with the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the proliferation of regional conflicts, the navy re-established its general purpose character. Now, the service has a decade of extensive experience behind it in interdiction operations - hailing, stopping and boarding vessels - to help enforce trade sanctions and blockades.

Since 1990, the navy has sent many ships in support of allied and UN maritime operations. As well as enforcing the oil embargo against Iraq in the Persian Gulf, navy ships have patrolled in the Red Sea and the Adriatic, where we enforced UN sanctions against the Former Republic of Yugoslavia. Interdiction operations like these involve locating and hailing merchant ships and, if necessary, sending boarding parties to verify ships' registries, status and cargoes.

Members of Canadian navy boarding parties master a range of skills. After 12 days of basic individual training, boarding teams from each ship undergo a further four days of intensive training at the Fleet School facilities at CFB [Canadian Forces Base] Halifax. Sailors become proficient in areas such as small arms safety and marksmanship, strength training, unarmed combat, small-boat handling and search and sweep tactics.

They receive instruction from legal staff on topics such as rules of engagement [ROE] and the Law of the Sea. An interactive simulator at the facility provides students with a variety of realistic training scenarios requiring them to hone reaction times and sharpen their judgements. Actual boardings are carried out on decommissioned ships waiting for disposal, in-service warships, coast guard vessels and, occasionally, merchant ships. Teams are trained to apply escalating steps that may be required, when authorized, to coerce a Vessel of Interest (VOI) into submitting to lawful authority. All Naval Boarding Party (NBP) members are thoroughly grounded in the rules and regulations governing the use of small arms and other weapons.

At sea, naval boarding parties train and practice constantly to develop their skills and improve their efficiency. Boardings are a standard part of most at-sea exercises. ...

Navy ships send boarders away to enforce Canadian laws such as fishing quotas and drug legislation, usually in concert with other government departments. International operations fall under the auspices of international law (the Law of the Sea) or United Nations Security Council Resolutions and do not involve the enforcement of Canadian domestic law. Boardings launched to enforce Canadian law are not limited to Canadian territorial waters. They may also be mounted within our Exclusive Economic Activity Zone or fishing zones where Canadian legislation applies. Domestic boardings can be authorized by statute, such as the Criminal Code, by orders-in-council (pursuant to the federal government's exercise of the Crown prerogative), or by Ministerial Authority through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with other government departments such as Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the RCMP. Of course, NBP operations are only carried out through the chain of command on the basis of ample and appropriate legal authority.

Our major warships carry 20 member NBPs. Typically, the team is organized into two 'waves,' each made up of a carefully balanced selection of trades and functions, under the command of a Maritime (Surface) specialist Sub-Lieutenant or Lieutenant. This person is known as the Boarding Officer, and is assisted by an NCO, a Witnessing Officer and a Technical Advisor, as well as other specialists. Most NBP members are volunteers. They are selected on the basis of their common sense, trade expertise, initiative, motivation, fitness level, stamina, and their knowledge of weapons handling and safety.

NBP are armed with a variety of weapons, including combat shotguns, Heckler and Koch sub-machine guns, C8 automatic rifles, Sig Saur 9mm semi-automatic pistols, Riot Control Agents ('pepper spray') and batons.

When a warship approaches a VOI, she will first try to establish bridge-to-bridge communications via radio, flag signals, signal lamp, loud hailer, searchlight or manoeuvring into a 'close' station in relation to the vessel. The 'boarding hail' follows a standard pattern and includes an identification of the warship, the authority for her action, her intention to board and a request for the VOI to heave to. The commanding officer's first task is to appeal to the common sense of the ship's master to co-operate. But failing this appeal the government may authorize, through ROEs and amplifying instructions, a graduated response leading up to and including the use of force. ' "Force" ' may include the use of intimidating verbal instructions, searchlights, manoeuvres, the training of weapons, warning shots, non-disabling fire and disabling fire.

When the vessel reports it is ready to be boarded, the warship will manoeuvre to take up a position 200 to 300 yards off the VOI. The ship's 24-foot long RHIB (Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat manufactured by Zodiac-Hurricane of Richmond, BC) is then lowered into the water. It is launched on the 'disengaged' side, protected from the view of the suspect vessel by the warship's superstructure

(thus maintaining the element of surprise) and also from the wind and sea. The boat's coxswain will use the boat's powerful engine and inward helm to 'stick' the boat against the side of the warship, which will be underway at approximately 12 knots. This is possible even in a 'moderate' swell and Canadian helmsmen are well versed in the technique. With the coxswain holding the boat against the ship's side, the members of the NBP team will climb down the side of the ship by rope ladder and embark in the RHIB. Generally, when requested to do so, the VOI will stop or proceed under bare steerageway on a course that is 'beam to the wind'. This creates a 'lee' side to the ship – a side that is out of the wind. The RHIB will transport the party to this side. The NBP will climb up a 'pilot' ladder as quickly as possible and board the VOI. Smartly executed, all this can be accomplished in less than two minutes. The team's second wave can usually be inserted within five minutes of the first. The NBP can also be inserted by helicopter.

Once onboard the vessel in question, members strive to foster a productive and co-operative atmosphere. More aggressive sweep and search techniques can certainly be used, but NBP members are instructed and trained to be courteous, professional and efficient during these operations. The crew is mustered and the Boarding Officer will secure the bridge and determine the location of the ship's key spaces – fuel, water, ballast, cargo, machinery, and so on – from ship's diagrams. The engine room will be inspected and secured, then cargo will be searched and assessed. On returning to the warship, the Boarding Officer provides an immediate report to the Commanding Officer of the warship.

Assuming that the VOI's papers, crew and cargo are in order, the warship's commanding officer may clear the vessel to proceed on its intended port of destination. If the commanding officer is not satisfied, however, the vessel can be sent into port for a more comprehensive inspection of her crew and cargo, or refused further passage through the area.



The truth behind the satirical story at right: Vancouver's RHIB approaches the drifting Motor Vessel Zakat in international waters off the coast of Pakistan. The ship had suffered a major engine breakdown. Originally boarded to lend assistance, a closer inspection proved Zakat was a significant sanctions-breaker. The evidence included documents, communications and repair equipment, technical facilities and a full load of Iraqi oil. Vancouver subsequently took the disabled vessel under tow for delivery to a secure area and closer Coalition inspection. (Canadian Forces photos, above ETD01-6019-07, left SLIDE4-ZAKAT_STBD_HELOa)

CANADIAN WARSHIP SEIZES TANKER IN... WAIT... CANADA HAS A WARSHIP? OH RIGHT, AND SWITZERLAND HAS NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Arabian Sea (SatireWire.com) — Canadian television reported Friday that a Canadian warship in the Arabian Sea had seized a tanker suspected of smuggling oil from Iraq, leading many to suspect that the report was a hoax.

"You're kidding, right? Canada has a *warship*?" asked U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. "Like for *war*?"

"Does Canada know?" he added.

"Nobody was more stunned than we were," said Kali Omari, first mate of the seized vessel. "We saw this frigate steaming toward us, and we were worried, but then we saw the maple leaf on the flag, and we thought, 'Oh, Canadians. What the hell do they want?'"

When an officer of the HMCS *Vancouver* announced that the tanker was about to be boarded, the crew of the detained ship was confused, said Omari, but their confusion quickly turned to anger when they saw what the Canadian sailors were carrying.

"They were armed. With guns," said Omari. "Canadians. With guns. And a warship. What is this world coming to?"

"They were pretty rude, too," Omari added. "They started asking us all sorts of questions, like 'Where did that oil come from?' But first we wanted to know who gave them the damn warship."

According to Canadian defense officials, the *Vancouver* is one of four frigates deployed in the region to assist in the U.S.-led Afghanistan conflict. The tanker was stopped, officials said, because its cargo of crude oil violated United Nations sanctions, which prohibit Iraq from selling oil unless in exchange for food and medicine.

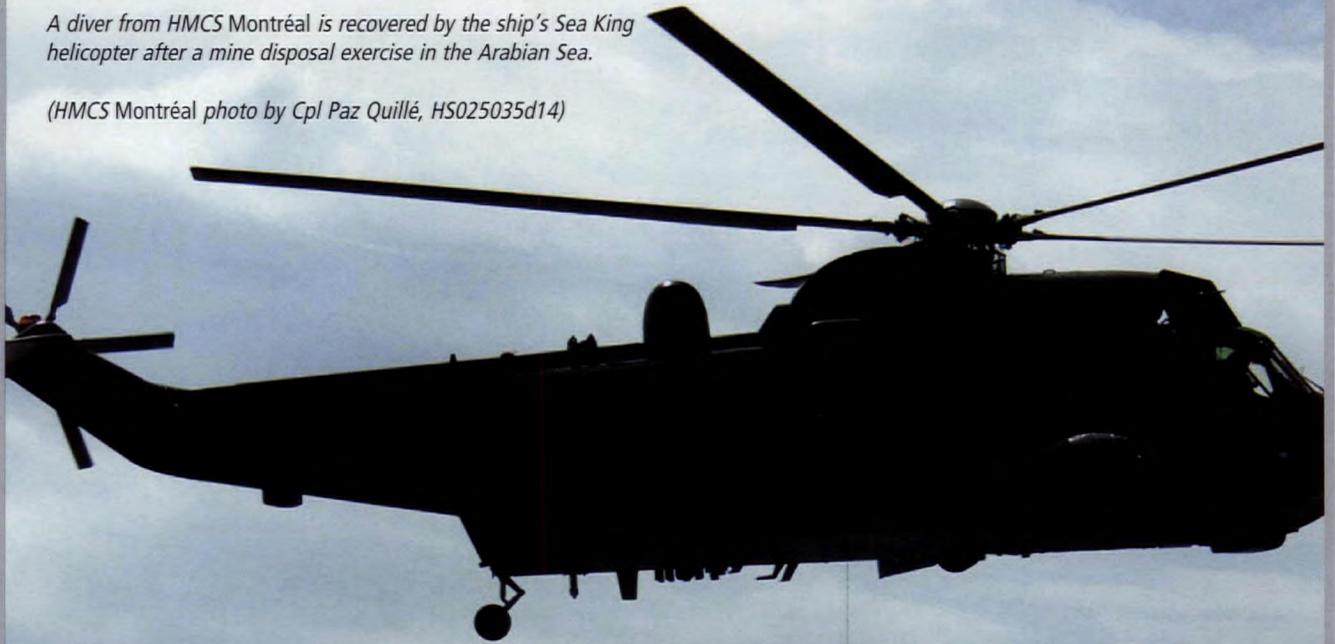
The U.N. said the incident is already under investigation, and promised swift action against those found responsible for giving the Canadians guns. Initial findings indicate that the *Vancouver* crew may have been watching too many American television shows.

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Source: <http://www.satirewire.com/news/feb02/warship.shtml>

A diver from HMCS Montréal is recovered by the ship's Sea King helicopter after a mine disposal exercise in the Arabian Sea.

(HMCS Montréal photo by Cpl Paz Quillé, HS025035d14)



With the number of vessels passing through the Arabian Sea counted in the hundreds each day, it would have been impossible – and non-productive – for the Coalition to board each one. As such, the selection process for determining which vessels to board developed a most professional bent to it. The process of contacting merchant vessels by radio is known as ‘hailing’. Hailings were made to gather as much information as possible through a radio exchange with

the merchant shipmaster, to then compare to pre-defined assessment criteria. Certain types and sizes of vessels, from certain ports of origin or destination were considered more likely to be harbouring Al-Qaeda and Taliban escapees. Similarly, some third-party states offering registrations under their flag of convenience were known to be less rigorous in the enforcement of international law, making those vessels attractive to the escapees.



Frequent changes of name or owner were among the criteria making a vessel a prime candidate for closer inspection. This photo reveals at least three names painted over, and the latest has been hurriedly applied. (HMCS Montréal photo, BP 336_6)

In an effort to be scrupulously fair to the majority of ships simply exercising the freedom of the seas for which the Coalition stood, the hailing procedure developed by the Canadian Navy as the model for use throughout Operation Enduring Freedom stressed the possibility that the Master might be unaware of the presence of escapees in his ship. It also emphasized the voluntary or compliant nature of the Coalition inspection visits. Although broadly conducted under UN approval, Operation Enduring Freedom (and for that matter also Apollo) had no formal mandate, unlike the MIO sanction inspections against Iraq. Therefore, Masters were requested to grant permission for their vessels to be boarded. In a further attempt at non-discrimination, no one was given a 'by' just because they might be flagged in a Coalition state, such as the United States or Great Britain. Occasionally, such actions would be challenged by irate Masters, concerned at the costly time lost during the boarding. A quick satellite telephone call to their head office invariably changed the response: costs might be incurred while so stopped, but those were more than offset by the drop of insurance rates for travel in the region to near historic lows due to the Coalition presence.

The other tasking guaranteed to raise adrenalin levels was the escort of Coalition or any other allied shipping requesting assistance through chokepoints such as the Strait of Hormuz or SOH (another was the Strait of Bab al Mandeb, or BAM, at the bottom of the Red Sea between Yemen and Eritrea). The normal in-theatre 'pucker factor' was somewhat elevated in both areas because Silkworm batteries from either Iran or Yemen guarded them. Increasing it yet more was the combination of high merchant ship traffic density, proximity to relatively un-patrolled territories, and an unregulated but traditional illegal trade in all sorts of goods and people passing across them, all of which made these constricted waters natural attractions to piracy and terrorists such as Al-Qaeda. The bulk of that unregulated trade was conducted in small speedboats capable of upwards of 40 knots and hence known as go-fasts, which could be transporting lucrative cargoes of people, cigarettes, drugs or carpets, but could just as easily be filled with explosives to be run alongside a tanker and exploded.³



Naval weapons technicians from HMCS Ottawa replace 20mm tungsten ammunition on the Phalanx close in weapons system (CIWS), for defence against 'conventional' air and missile attack. (HMCS Ottawa photo by Cpl Charles Barber, AP2002-E018-20a)

Almost equally as difficult to detect on radar as by visual sighting, the very nature of their business meant that most go-fasts tended not to use lights at night. As such, the preferred time for Coalition transits was during daylight, although too often this could not be reconciled with the arrival timings of the merchant ship or transport to be escorted. Because of the short reaction times and to provide best defence, the escort would lead very close on the bow of the merchant ship (it is easier to turn a ship about and proceed back on an enemy than to try to gain on them from astern). Invariably, however, the go-fasts would attempt to cross directly ahead of the ships, in order to avoid getting bounced about through the wakes of the much larger vessels. This ordained that every encounter would be of the very close kind, and it was impossible to tell the innocent smugglers from the terrorists. The only policy was to try to convince the go-fast operators that they should stand off even if it meant passing astern afterwards; the alternative was to be prepared to destroy the small boat before it could get too close.

³ David Pugliese, "Suicide 'go-fasts' threaten warships," *Ottawa Citizen*, March 27, 2003.



One of the best stand-off tactics was to have a helicopter airborne through the transit to scout ahead for go-fasts and then to divert them at some distance, either by hanging large signs in Arabic out the side, or by a judicious burst of machine gun fire to explain matters to the illiterates. Frequently enough, flares and warning shots did have to be fired to gain compliance. The commanding officer of *Iroquois* in Roto 3, Navy Captain Paul Maddison described the operation:

The whole escort function through the Strait of Hormuz – I've been through the Strait of Hormuz thirty-one times now in less than two months [as of end-May 2003], and every time we go through it's a unique experience, whether it's at three o'clock in the morning or at noon. And you have the force protection component closed up again, because there is always the threat of terrorists in go-fasts, suicide boats perhaps, coming up either to do you some grief or the vessel you are escorting some grief. From a bridge perspective, when you are 700 yards on the bow of a 60,000-ton vessel, doing 23 knots going through the Strait of Hormuz, that's exciting, especially when it's three o'clock in the morning – in fact, it's a little more than exciting then. It becomes very hard work.

"Poetry in motion": (from left) HMC Ships Algonquin, Protecteur and St John's RAS in the Gulf of Oman, September 2002. (HMCS Algonquin photo by Cpl Charles Barber, AP2002-E030-09a)

Another naval procedure or evolution worth noting in passing, not for its combat potential but rather for the particular degree of naval professionalism it embodied, is the Replenishment at Sea, or RAS. Typically undertaken from an oiler to a frigate or destroyer, sometimes one on each side, such an operation can too easily be taken for granted. But this is really a very complicated undertaking that is mastered by only very few navies. Bringing two or three multi-thousand-ton ships close together at relatively high speed, linking them by tensioned spanwires to support fuel and cargo lines, and passing large quantities of volatile fuels and ammunition explosives between them is not something to be attempted by amateurs or the faint-of-heart. The Canadian Navy has refined it to a slick professional procedure, in both giving and receiving. The 'customer' records of *Preserver* and *Protecteur* attest to the giving; the receiving was demonstrated consistently through recognition of the efficiency of Canadian destroyers and frigates by other Coalition tanker captains in their operational summary messages (OPSUMs) of daily events. From either perspective, observing such a sight on a fine sunny day can only be described as the nearest thing to poetry in motion.

Preserver's Executive Officer, Commander Colin Darlington recalls the especially memorable 'Super-RAS' that ship undertook just before Christmas 2001:

For Preserver, every day that there was a RAS was a good day. This is what we tanker sailors had trained for. Common standards in procedures and equipment, resulting from being part of an alliance, ensured that large amounts of fuel, parts, provisions, post and people (and even waste material) could be transferred quickly and safely. Many years of practice in exercises allowed ships to drive quickly up to alongside the AOR, where hoses and lines would be passed across while the ships continued to steam through the area. Different from exercises though, was the type, number and sheer quantity of material moved in an Apollo RAS. 'Super-RAS' day, just before Christmas, saw Preserver service seven ships of three nations, with hundreds of pallets transferred while the ship's company worked all day.

By the time Super-RAS day occurred, we were confident and proud of our work. We were fast, we were safe, and we were efficient - the dance on the deck as the forklifts kept pallets moving to keep up with the transfers to and from the customer ship was a joy to behold.

I was at my RAS station, and watched the sun come up, and was still there working when the sun went down. We were all on a high at the end of that day.



But hailings, boardings, SOH transits, and even a RAS occupied only a minority of the members of a ship's company at any time, even allowing for the extra lookouts and machine gunners engaged at force protection stations while those evolutions were in progress. For the majority of others, closed up on their normal watches, whether gazing at radars in the Operations Room or at gauges in the Machinery Control Spaces, perhaps it indeed was just another day at sea. For them, other parties of the more common type were arranged to break the monotony between port visits.



Master Seaman Ed Wadlow describes the fitted systems control board in HMCS Winnipeg to Lieutenant Deborah Lynn and Sub-Lieutenant Dave Vanderbyl. (HMCS Winnipeg photo, HS025114d10)

Leading Seaman Mike Coggins perches on the mast high above the bridge of HMCS Fredericton to repair the navigation radar. (HMCS Fredericton photo by Cpl Mike Selig, HS032565d15)



In May 2002, as HMCS Algonquin takes on fuel in a RAS (replenishment at sea) with the USS Seattle, naval communicator Ordinary Seaman Stef Moreau sends a semaphore message, as Leading Seaman Bredon Warwaruk takes notes. (HMCS Algonquin photo, AP2002-E005-13a)

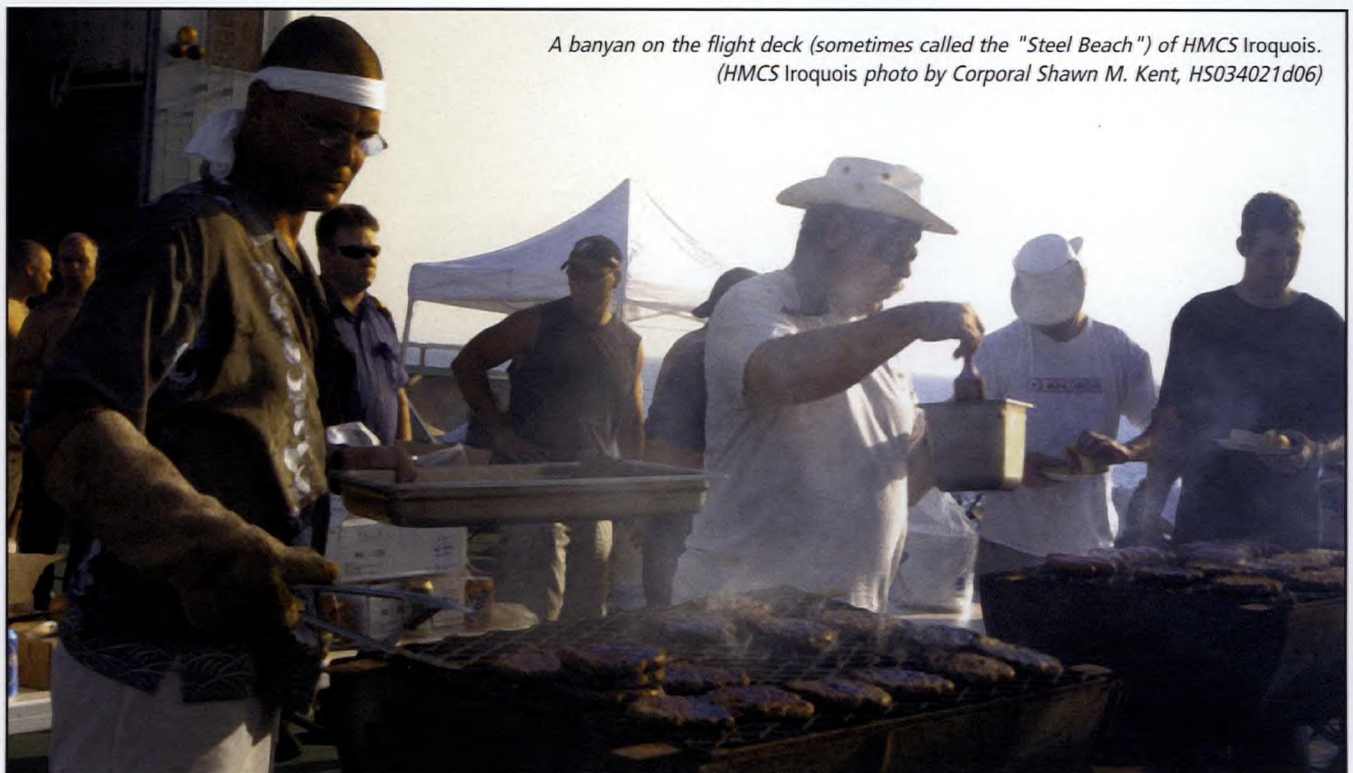
The most easily slotted into the individual ship's schedules were 'Banyans' – the traditional naval name for a good old-fashioned barbeque, except these were held on the 'steel beach' of the flight deck. Usually the mood would be lightened with games or homemade entertainment. As the accompanying photos will attest, sailors can be extremely resourceful. But these impromptu happenings were definitely amateur-hour events, a fact brought on not through any lack of talent, but more through the unavailability of materials to prepare costumes and props, and that the scheduling was entirely at the whim of the pace of operations. When the recreation hall of your home happens also to be your battlespace, you go with what you have, and when you can.

Occasionally the beach was real: Algonquin crewmembers celebrate Canada Day 2002 with a game of beach volleyball in a Gulf port. (HMCS Algonquin photo by Cpl Charles Barber, AP2002-E021-01a)



Fortunately, more professional distractions also were available. Through the good offices of the Canadian Forces Support Agency (CFSA), show case tours by Canadian actors and performers often made it to the ships, again usually with the flight deck as the stage, but at least alongside in port. The CFSA, in coordination with the Halifax and Esquimalt Military Family Resource Centres (MFRCs) arranged for wide-screen televisions for each of the shipboard messes, complete with DVD players and satellite reception of major Canadian channels. These organizations also assisted in the maintenance of family contact by providing dedicated satellite e-mail and telephone channels, the recording of private videotape messages to send to the ships, and just contributing to general peace of mind by letting sailors and their families know that someone cared.

Santa and his Elf make the rounds of a Christmas Eve Banyan. (HMCS Montréal photo)



A banyan on the flight deck (sometimes called the "Steel Beach") of HMCS Iroquois. (HMCS Iroquois photo by Corporal Shawn M. Kent, HS034021d06)

Of course, the Navy could always be counted upon for more formal ceremonial occasions. Many of these, however were surrounded by a special poignancy against the backdrop of operations on active service: Canadian warships marked three November 11ths away from home, and two Battle of the Atlantic Sundays, in remembrance of previous generations killed in struggles to preserve our freedom. After her return to Canada in the spring of 2002, *Charlottetown* went to New York for the annual Fleet Week, the first to be celebrated without the Twin Towers dominating the Manhattan skyline.

In the Arabian Sea, the Canadian Task Group marks the 60th anniversary of the Second World War Battle of the Atlantic. On board Iroquois Navy Captain Paul Maddison (right) and the ship's Coxswain, Chief Petty Officer 1st Class Pat Evans, prepare to throw a wreath made of palm leaves over the side. (Canadian Forces photo, HS034010d06)



Firefighters from HMCS Charlottetown lay wreaths at Ground Zero during a visit to New York for Fleet Week, May 2002. (HMCS Charlottetown photo by MCpl Ron Flynn, HS2002-471)



(Below) Navy Padre Lieutenant Bonnie Mason commits to the eternal sea the ashes of a pair of deceased retired sailors after departing Halifax. (HMCS Fredericton photos, HS032508d09)



Shipboard entertainment - homemade (right) and professional (above), courtesy of CFSA. (HMCS Montréal photos, HS025150 & HS0251)





Christmas Eve, 2002, at sea.

Canadian Forces Photo, HSO25150



Canadian Forces Photo, HSO25158



Canadian Forces Photo, HSO25156



Canadian Forces Photo, HSO25162



Canadian Forces Photo, HSO25155

And finally, a constant procession of visitors assured our sailors they were never far from the thoughts of those at home. For all the attendant bother, the procession of ministers, senior officers and even journalists were important to provide just such assurances. But of them all, perhaps the most deeply appreciated presence was that of Her Excellency Madame Adrienne Clarkson, fulfilling her role as Commander-in-Chief of the Canadian Forces. She reported it best in her New Year's message to the nation:

After a year in which we travelled from sea to sea, meeting people in many small communities, some very remote, I have been reminded once more of our reality as a country – who we are, and what we are. ... An important part of... our shared history has always been the military, and it has helped bind us as a nation. ... Today, we have called upon our military again, not only in peacekeeping but also in the campaign to ensure that our country and our values are free from threat.

There are hundreds of members of the Canadian Forces who are starting this New Year abroad, far away from home, some of whom are serving on Canadian ships in the Gulf. John Ralston Saul and I spent Christmas with them aboard HMCS Winnipeg and HMCS Montreal. ...

And I think, what a wonderful country we have – this Canada. May we all do more, each of us, not to take anything for granted, but to live our lives with purpose, with love and with joy.



Her Excellency the Governor-General, Adrienne Clarkson speaking at an ecumenical Christmas Eve service in HMCS Montréal, December 2002. (HMCS Montréal photo by Cpl Paz Quillé, HSO25151)

"New Year's message from Her Excellency the Right Honorable Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada," 27 December 2002, at: <http://www.gg.ca/media/doc.asp?lang=e&DocID=546>, accessed 05 January 2004.







VI. THE CLOUDS OF WAR

OPERATIONS (III), JANUARY – NOVEMBER 2003

Previous page: Action Stations by John Horton



One of the significant implications of sea power described in Part II is that navies structured like that of Canada – possessing a wide range of capabilities for global deployments – offer their governments a variety of diplomatic and military options across the spectrum of conflict. The evolution of Canadian naval roles in the War Against Terrorism through the winter and spring of 2003, under the threat and eventual conduct of war against Iraq, is a signal case in point.

Coalition warships exercise in formation in the Gulf of Oman in January 2003. Winnipeg and Montréal are respectively 2nd and 4th from the left. Passing tankers produced the slicks in the water. (HMCS Montréal photo by Corporal Paz Quillé, HS035005d42)



In May 2003, HMC Ships Fredericton (right), Iroquois (centre forward) and Regina (left), joined by Her Majesty's New Zealand Ship Te Mana, sail in a diamond formation in the Gulf of Oman.

(HMCS Iroquois photo by Corporal Shawn Kent, HS034012d12)

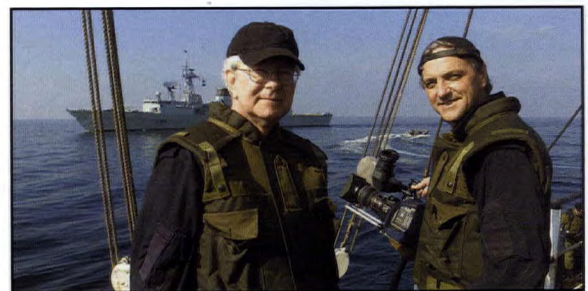
Contrary to widely popular perception, as the Americans increasingly directed their attention to what would become known as Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), they were neither indifferent to the activities still being conducted in the on-going Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) nor insensitive to the differing political positions of the various partners. Whereas the Americans saw operations against Iraq as a necessary subset of the larger War Against Terrorism, they fully appreciated that others might not share that broadened perspective. More specifically, no matter how happy NAVCENT was with Canadian command of Task Group 50.4, Vice-Admiral Timothy J. Keating recognized that not all of the Coalition partners could be expected to engage also in any potential operations against Iraq. Whether one is a disciple of Clausewitz or of Sun-Tzu, among the basic laws of war are concentration of force and maintenance of the aim. But even superpowers will admit that there is a limit to their reach, while the point of coalitions is that all partners bring something to contribute.

The dilemma in the South West Asia theatre of operations was somehow to put in place an organizational structure ensuring a clear separation of activity without undermining any aspect of the overall effort. If nothing else, the practicalities of managing modern war presented Admiral Keating with the organizational imperative to draw a dis-

inction between the efforts. Under the prevailing task organization structure for Operation Enduring Freedom (see Task Organization Chart), all warships operating in the theatre fell under the naval Task Force Commander, CTF 50, embarked in the single carrier still operating in the area (the actual flagship had rotated several times in similar fashion to the Canadian; on December 15th, 2002 the admiral and staff in the USS *Abraham Lincoln* had turned over to those in the USS *Constellation*). The imminent arrival of several more carrier battle groups and amphibious ready groups meant this task organization would expand dramatically, with the several 'strike and littoral warfare' groups to be collected under CTF 50. The simplest solution was to elevate the existing task group commanders with non-strike roles (specifically the multinational groups in the Gulf of Oman and off the Horn of Africa) to the status of task force commanders reporting directly to NAVCENT and not through any American at-sea commander. The expected rush of additional Coalition forces to the region, as had occurred a year earlier to join in operations against Afghanistan, lent weight to this reasoning, their added numbers being more easily managed under a task force structure than within task groups. The tentative assignments were designated CTF 150 for the WEU (Western European Union) task group in the Horn of Africa area, and CTF 151 for the CTG 50.4 area straddling the Strait of Hormuz.



*HMCS Calgary departs the scene of a boarding conducted in company with a USN destroyer (left).
(HMCS Calgary photo by Sergeant Rick Ruthven, ISD00-2405a)*



With the approach of war, Canadian journalists began to take a deeper interest in the activities of the task group in the Arabian Sea. Here, CBC reporter Dan Bjarneson and cameraman Keith Whelan join a boarding by HMCS Montréal.

(HMCS Montréal photo by Corporal Paz Quillé, HSO35008d04)

*The Coalition task group, January 2003.
(HMCS Montréal photo by Corporal Paz Quillé, HSO35005d24)*



As Commander of Task Force 151, Commodore Roger Girouard watches as Iroquois refuels from the Japanese tanker JDS Tokiwa.

(HMCS Iroquois photo by Corporal Shawn Kent, HS034001d91)

Although these considerations had been brewing for several months, they came to a head at about the same time as the next regularly scheduled change of commander for the Canadian Naval Task Group. On January 13th, 2003, in a small but poignant ceremony on the flight deck of HMCS *Montréal*, Commodore Roger Girouard replaced Commodore Murphy as CTG 307.1, along with the double-hatted responsibility as CTG 50.4. At almost that same time, back in NDHQ in Ottawa, the Chief of Defence Staff, General Henault, was contemplating the speed at which events were developing in the region, and recognized that, "Although there has been no decision by the Government of Canada [GOC] to participate in a military campaign against Iraq, ...[there] is an urgent need to develop detailed and coordinated options... in order to inform Canadian decision makers." On January 17th, he dispatched Lieutenant-Commander Brian Costello to NAVCENT headquarters to act as a liaison officer from the Canadian headquarters element in Tampa, specifically charged to "explore options... for the employment of a potential CF naval contribution to a military campaign against Iraq." Costello's mission was a weighty one for a relatively junior officer, as he himself fully recognized in noting the need "to guard against youthful enthusiasm to exceed my mandate and confuse issues by seeming to promise commitment where there is none and

potentially embarrass or cripple our political support." (This inspired the reply back to Costello, "a quotable quote... keep it for your memoirs!") Remaining sensitive to the need to manage expectations on all sides, his range of options would run the full gamut from non-involvement, through simple continuation of present operations, to the possibility of Canadian responsibility for the coordination of all air defence requirements over a region expanded well into the central Persian Gulf.

The over-riding concern was to retain the greatest degree of flexibility for the government to arrive at its preferred eventual decision. At sea, Girouard appreciated two factors were unlikely to change: first, that the Al-Qaeda threat was increasing with the potential for terrorists to instigate diversionary attacks as 'spoilers' in the event of a war in Iraq; and second, that Canada remained the best candidate to act as the bridge between the American and the Coalition command and logistics structures. The Americans also remained sensitive to all concerns, and patiently explored the various options. Recognizing the fundamental requirement for the efficient conduct of operations, however, their planning retained the flexibility to permit the late appointment of a USN commander, in the worst-case scenario of Canada withdrawing entirely from all operations.



A significant weapon that remained unused through Operation Apollo is the surface-to-surface Harpoon missile carried by Canadian frigates. (Canadian Forces photo, HS030753d01)

In the event, the more grandiose schemes fell by the wayside, and neither did Canada 'go neutral'. A compromise was reached between continuation of the regular Coalition employment, but over a greater geographic area of responsibility. On February 7th, 2003, Commodore Girouard assumed the mantle of Commander Task Force 151, with clear responsibility for the limited objectives of coordinating multinational forces in prosecuting the War Against Terrorism (Operation Enduring Freedom), through the area of the Gulf of Oman and into the central Persian Gulf up to a northern limit just south of the Saudi Arabia – Kuwait border (28 degrees, 30 minutes North longitude – See map).

As many as 20 to 30 Coalition ships could be expected to be assigned to his command. The significance of the appointment cannot be underscored enough.

This was expected to be the largest operational area of responsibility and span of control exercised in an active theatre by a senior Canadian officer of any service since the Second World War.

HMCS Montréal as lead ship in the arrow formation is farthest to the left in the photo; the other Canadian ship is Winnipeg, just right of centre background.

(HMCS Montréal photo by Corporal Paz Quillé, HS035005d41)





The winter and spring of 2003 witnessed a ceaseless flow of Coalition supplies into the Gulf.

(HMCS Fredericton photo by Corporal Mike Selig, HS032532d09)

In the immediate term, Girouard experienced little change in role or even tempo of operations from Murphy. With the overwhelming American, British and Australian presence in the northern Persian Gulf, the ability for Iraqi smugglers to slip through the Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO) net was significantly reduced, and the continued dominant Coalition presence in the Gulf of Oman meant even fewer dhows and go-fasts were attempting to run the gauntlet of Leadership Interdiction Operations (LIO). The emphasis now almost exclusively was on the escort of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. Although the bulk of this undoubtedly was feeding the American and British build-up against Iraq, neither Girouard nor the other members of his force (which regularly included French, Italian, Greek and New Zealand warships as well as American and his own Canadians) had little hesitation in extending protection to vessels in transit. All knew what attractive targets the military pre-positioning ships presented and that the regional Al-Qaeda presence was at best undetermined. Just as previous commanders had not discriminated in who they felt met boarding criteria, Girouard was not inclined to discriminate against anyone in need of escort.

At the same time, the general possibility of regional instability in the event of an attack on Iraq raised all kinds of alarming scenarios, and the responsibility of a military commander is to be prepared for all contingencies. Even though he was not to be *the* air defence commander for the central and southern Persian Gulf, Girouard anticipated the need to ensure area coverage for transiting merchant ships and their point-defence frigate escorts. As availability allowed, the USN was attaching one or two DDG-51 *Arleigh Burke* destroyers to his task force for this purpose, but because these also carried Tomahawk land-attack cruise missiles (TLAM) they were just as likely to be called away at the precise time of need. From the purely national perspective, Girouard also recognized the potential requirement to remove Canadian citizens from threatening situations ashore, under what are called Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO). There were a host of other possibilities, including the potential of mines being released into Gulf waters and the now extreme likelihood of chemical or biological attacks. The conduct and planning of this range of operations required more Canadian national forces and indeed a larger staff than could continue to fit comfortably in a frigate. All scenarios pointed to the urgent requirement for an *Iroquois*-class destroyer to join his command.

Because they presented an attractive target for terrorist attack, these meant a heavy demand for escorts through the Strait of Hormuz by the ships of Task Force 151.

(HMCS Fredericton photo by Corporal Mike Selig, HS032525d05)



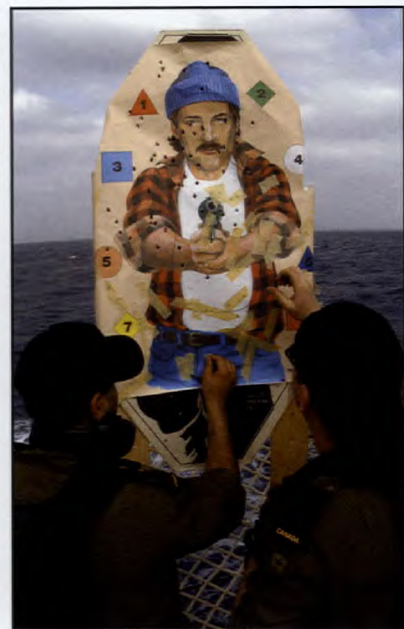
When *Iroquois* had returned from performing as the flagship and area air defence destroyer on Rotation 0, the decision very quickly had been reached that she should begin to be readied to enter a scheduled refit in the summer of 2003, by which time her sister *Athabaskan* (just coming out of her own refit) would be ready for Roto 4. Any intervening requirements would be met by the West Coast (as in Roto1) or by gapping with a frigate (as in Roto 2). The obvious weak point all along was recognized as Roto 3, which now was coinciding with Girouard's command and the pending outbreak of war. *Iroquois'* new commanding officer, Navy Captain Paul Maddison, had watched these developments through the

fall of 2002, knowing that he would remain the high-readiness flagship even as the increasingly finite Fleet Maintenance Facility resources had to be directed at readying and sustaining the designated Operation Apollo deployer – first *St John's*, then *Montréal* and lately yet another frigate, *Fredericton*. Anticipating the probability that his call would come, but recognizing that his ship at best could expect a priority no better than "an other above all the others", he had his ship's department heads maintain a wish-list of technical and personnel requirements that would have to be met in order to sail quickly. With the talk in January 2003 of establishing CTF 151, he formalized that with the commencement of an internal ten-day rolling deployment preparation plan.

A military saying goes, "Practice as you expect to fight." While crossing the Atlantic in March 2003, Fredericton's 'pre-wetting' system is tested. The fine spray of seawater over the ship offers protection against nuclear, biological or chemical attack by washing away any residue before it can collect.

(HMCS Fredericton photo by Corporal Mike Selig, HS032511d32)





Leading Seaman Mark McHugh of Fredericton's Boarding Party shoots at a training target (left) while members of Iroquois's boarding team check their own results during small arms training on the flight deck of their ship (right). (HMCS Fredericton photo by Corporal Mike Selig, HS032530d13) (HMCS Iroquois photo by Corporal Shawn Kent, HS034000d34)

With *Fredericton* slated to depart on February 17th, the ironies began to accumulate. That frigate and her captain, Commander Harry Harsch, were the envy of the rest of the fleet, as being probably the best prepared of all of the ships to be dispatched on Operation Apollo. Having known her schedule well in advance, 'Freddie' had been able to go through the ideal tiered-readiness programme, following the rigorous sequence of FMF technical attention, workups and team training, and operational exercise milestones (such as a live missile shoot) almost exactly as prescribed in the pertinent Maritime Command Order.² Commodore Girouard's request that *Iroquois* be dispatched as his flagship was made on February 7th, precisely ten days before Freddie's scheduled departure.

The obvious plan in a perfect world would have been for *Iroquois* to sail with *Fredericton* as a mini-task group on February 17th. A series of misadventures quickly put paid to any such ideas. To begin, the confused 'Big Five' posturing in the Security Council meant that no clear direction was coming from the United Nations.

The Canadian government still was grappling with its options, and rightly refused to be stampeded into any quick decision on purely military considerations. Then, when the Minister of National Defence, the Honourable John McCallum, rose in the House of Commons on February 13th to announce *Iroquois'* deployment, the vexed problem of helicopter air detachment availability came into play. No HELAIRDET was ready to deploy with the destroyer and, even though Girouard had made it quite clear his priority was to have an air defence flagship and he could make do without a helicopter, the whole Sea King issue had assumed such political proportions that no ship could sail without one.



Another standard drill is dealing with the fire and injuries that can be the most disastrous consequences of a helicopter crash-on-deck. Here, a workups exercise on *Montréal* is supervised by a pair of fire-fighter warrant officers from Sea Training (right, in blue work dress). (HMCS *Montréal* photo by Corporal Paz Quillé, HS025010d02)

² "Preparing 'Freddie' For The Gulf," at http://www.navy.dnd.ca/mspa_news/news_e.asp?id=19, accessed 16 July 2003.



Because the unexpected inevitably does occur. Iroquois' helicopter crashes on deck, February 27th, 2003, fortunately with no fire and only minor injuries to the aircrew. (Left, Canadian Forces photo, GDAC03-094-19a / above photo courtesy Sandy McClearn)

Iroquois would embark *Fredericton's* to sail on February 24th, with the frigate to stay behind and follow on her own when the next detachment could be readied, in about another two weeks time. Sailing with the tanker *Preserver* as her workups escort, *Iroquois* was nearly halfway across the Atlantic when disaster struck, and her 'new' helicopter crashed on deck shortly after lifting off for a training flight on the 27th of February.

Maddison, with his detachment commander, Major Todd Smart, at his side, put it squarely to a press conference on the ship's return to Halifax:

...Thursday was a bad day at sea. Yet it was also a great day at sea. And the reason it was a bad day, obviously, is because my helicopter crashed on deck and sustained severe damage. It was a great day at sea because none of the air crew were injured seriously and the response of my ship's company to the emergency was superb, so much so that any risk of further damage to the ship or my crew after the accident was minimized significantly and I'm very proud of that. ... The business of going to sea has always been inherently risky. The business of flying machines in the air has always been inherently risky. And these are the risks that all sailors and air men and air women are well aware of when we pull off the wall and go out to sea.³

Indeed, given the potential for disaster, the actual damage to the ship's structure was remarkably superficial. *Iroquois* was readied to sail – regrettably without a helicopter – ironically in time to go with *Fredericton* (complete with her new air detachment) on her revised departure date of March 5th. The saga closed with *Iroquois'* detachment staying behind to participate in the accident investigation, but rejoining the ship shortly after her arrival in the Gulf. The final ignominy was that a new helicopter had to be shipped as deck cargo on a container ship (at a cost of \$180,000), the only good news being the great efficiency of the Forward Logistics Site from Camp Mirage in facilitating the transfer.⁴

With all that, however, *Iroquois* and *Fredericton* arrived late for the war. With very little aerial preparation of the battlefield, on March 18th American armoured forces began a lightning dash to Baghdad from the south that left commentators as well as Iraqis 'shocked and awed'. When the two newcomers arrived at the end of the month to join *Montréal*, *Winnipeg* and *Regina*, for a short time there were five Canadian warships operating in-theatre as a tremendous boost to Girouard's task force. (*Regina* had arrived from Esquimalt on March 15th as scheduled for Roto 3; this was that ship's third deployment to the region over the years, and she would be the only Canadian warship to remain for the entire duration of operations against Iraq.)

³ DND, "DGPA Transcripts: Press Conference to Discuss the Incident with the Sea King Helicopter," 01 March 2003.

⁴ "Sea King's strange voyage to Gulf gets stranger," *Toronto Star*, 18 March 2003.

But the boost was short-lived and the transfer of Girouard's flag to Iroquois on April 3rd was almost anti-climactic. Within hours of the event, *Montréal* had disappeared over the horizon, as did *Winnipeg* only a few days later. Both ships had seen their tours lengthened significantly to nearly eight months each, rather than the ideal of six. And during that time, because of the confused political situation, many fewer Coalition forces had joined than expected. In those last few weeks especially, the Canadians had worked hard, they were tired, and now that things were returning to normal, they were more than ready to go home.

As things transpired, the wartime employment of CTF 151 did not prove as big an event as anticipated. That is to take nothing away from Commodore Girouard, or the members of his staff, and the men and women in the Canadian ships who put in very long hours very heavily engaged in a myriad of activity throughout its course. Certainly, the SOH transits continued unabated, and there remained the endless patrols of the GOO. But none of the expected threats materialized, and very few others came to join the force. Girouard's command never exceeded a dozen warships. In part that was due to the fact that many nations had shot their naval bolt a year earlier and had nothing more to give. But it had more to do with a general wariness of showing any degree of support for the American action against Saddam Hussein. When the Canadian government decided on the eve of war that it would not participate in those operations, it also imposed very strict conditions on the rules of engagement of its task group, including direction that any Iraqis taken prisoner in the act of escaping by sea were not to be passed on to the USN. As a direct consequence of that decision, Girouard noticed an immediate and perceptible cut-off of access to certain elements of intelligence, which came as quite a shock after decades of close operational exchanges with the USN:



Soon after their arrival in-theatre, Commodore Roger Girouard speaks to the junior ranks in Fredericton about their upcoming taskings. (HMCS Fredericton photo by Corporal Mike Selig, HS032560d07)

...because we were not signed on to Op Iraqi Freedom ...there was a separate communications plan the Aussies and Brits and Americans were on that we were not, and that meant that there were pretty important nuggets of information that we were not by default privy to. ... At the end of the day we were certainly given the information to do our job, but there were times we were not 100 per cent sure that we had all of the information we needed. It was not the most comfortable way to be doing business at that time.

The United States Navy therefore held to a clear separation between Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom (OEF and OIF). So what then of the Canadian Navy?

The Government of Canada was not pre-disposed against action in Iraq, only concerned that any initiatives be taken under UN auspices, as it had been possible to obtain in the previous Gulf War of 1991. Such clarity, however, was to prove elusive this time. Following President Bush's challenge to the United Nations in the fall of 2002, the Security Council had eventually agreed upon the toughly worded Resolution 1441, calling for serious consequences ("all necessary measures" – UN code for military action) should Saddam fail to allow weapons inspectors to re-enter Iraq.



No two boardings were ever alike. As this team from Regina (left) discovers climbing the rope ladder of a tanker, their quarry literally came in all sizes and shapes. Fredericton's boarding party (above) takes a close look at the yacht of the Emir of Qatar.

*(HMCS Regina photo by Master Corporal Frank Hudec, IS2003-2250a)
(HMCS Fredericton photo by Corporal Mike Selig, HS032549d03)*

Now on the watch for Iraqi mines as well as smuggled oil and Al-Qaeda leaders, the boarding and inspection of 'vessels of interest' remained an important activity.

(HMCS Fredericton photo by Corporal Mike Selig, HS032532d04)



By March 2003 the work of those inspectors was well advanced, but Franco-German insistence upon allowing still more time for Saddam to comply fully came up against growing American impatience to resolve the issue before the onset of summer heat cut short the campaign season. The Security Council was reduced to an impasse, with debate revolving around whether or not an additional resolution was needed to authorize military action.

Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations Paul Heinbecker attempted to argue the merits of a compromise plan, effectively proposing a second resolution but with an immediate deadline for Iraqi compliance. All the while, Prime Minister Chrétien hedged his bets, refusing to be tied to either side, and issuing statements filled with sufficient ambiguity not to compromise any eventual decision.

The literally 'fluid' nature of sea power actually afforded the government a great deal of flexibility. Vessels on the high seas can come and go, engage and withdraw, very much as they wish, unlike armies or even air forces tied to fixed bases. Its fleet allowed the Canadian government to demonstrate precisely the degree of resolve it desired. The Navy was confident that the task group's presence in the theatre continued to provide the flexibility to respond to the developing circumstances, in being supportive of the Americans while maintaining whatever degree of distance the government might desire. In the end, that is exactly what transpired. Prime Minister Chrétien and Minister of National Defence McCallum were thoroughly briefed on the scope of the new arrangements, so that when the House adopted a resolution not to become involved in offensive operations in Iraq, they felt no inconsistency in not ordering the fleet to withdraw. Indeed, they authorized the additional measure of dispatching *Iroquois*. But neither was American Ambassador Paul Cellucci inconsistent when the Canadian course of action prompted him to observe, in a widely reported speech:

So we are disappointed that some of our closest allies, including Canada, have not agreed with us on the urgent need for this military action against Iraq. But Canada remains a crucial partner in this global war on terrorism, and we are grateful for that. Canadian naval vessels, aircraft and military personnel continue anti-terrorist operations in the Persian Gulf. ... Ironically, the Canadian naval vessels, aircraft and personnel in the Persian Gulf I mentioned earlier who are fighting terrorism will provide more support indirectly to this war in Iraq than most of the 46 countries that are fully supporting our efforts there.⁵

Our national domestic media certainly impugned a lack of distinction, with headlines such as "Ships may enter war by back door" (*National Post*, March 13th, 2003). This theme was picked up for fairly confused debate (pro and con) on the floor of the House of Commons, leading to media observations such as in the *Ottawa Citizen*, "Canadians [are] all at sea about navy's role" (March 26th, 2003), and the *Globe and Mail*, "Messages mixed on where Ottawa stands, and sails" (March 29th, 2003). The recently elected New Democratic Party leader, Jack Layton, was particularly mischievous with a factually incorrect op-ed piece in the March 26th *Ottawa Citizen* entitled "Canada's illegal war".

For those actually at the 'sharp end' (the sailors serving at sea), the issue was no less easy. But at least they recognized that the immutable nature of the oceans on which they sailed offered sufficient flexibility to manage the task at hand. In this particular case, even though he had the freedom to operate throughout the Gulf as circumstances demanded, Commodore Girouard ensured that no Canadian warships were assigned anywhere near the northern extent of their operating area, just to minimize significantly the odds of any hypothetical encounter with Hussein's escaping henchmen. Still, one could not tell in advance whether a certain vessel would have Iraqis on board or not. Canadian naval officers had to be constantly vigilant, assessing each arising situation in all of its detailed unfolding.



The outflow begins suddenly. On a gray day near the end of April 2003, Iroquois escorts the USS Constellation through the Strait of Hormuz as the American carrier returns to her homeport after combat operations against Iraq. (HMCS Fredericton photo by Corporal Mike Selig, HS032545d06)

⁵ "Speech By U.S. Ambassador to Canada A. Paul Cellucci to the Economic Club of Toronto," 25 March, 2003, at: http://www.usembassycanada.gov/content/content.asp?section=embconsul&document=cellucci_030325.

A major concern was that Saddam Hussein would repeat his tactic of the 1990-91 Gulf War, the release of drifting mines into the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman (an illegal act under international maritime law and the laws of war). Lending credence to the threat was the capture by Royal Australian Navy Boarding Parties in the northern Gulf of an Iraqi tug and barge outfitted for that purpose, as seen in this photo. (US Department of Defense photo)



The many dimensions of this professional responsibility is best illustrated by Commodore Girouard, in recounting the saga of an Iraqi vessel discovered in the southern Persian Gulf just the day after a very similar ship had been intercepted by the Royal Australian Navy in the northern Gulf in the process of a mine laying operation in clear violation of international law:

... The line of demarcation between OEF and OIF was really right there, about Iraqi detainees and focusing any effort on a known Iraqi vessel. So we ended up with this vessel named the Proton at anchor off the UAE in international waters, and we came across her the day after we had been doing this search for potential minelayers. ... [My] construct was purely MIO, purely around making sure that the sea lanes stay safe, making sure that international sailors are not blown up – in my construct that was valid and defensible.

Well when we get to the Proton we find that it's an Iraqi crew, and this Iraqi crew looks very fit, unlike the average Iraqi sailor, and they have some gas masks, some vials of atropine [an antidote to nerve gas] and the makings of a Molotov cocktail – so that lit off a little bit of consternation. And so we wondered if perhaps these were some agents. We [advised NAVCENT and] waited and I expected that particular vessel would result in detentions. I alerted Ottawa to stand by, that I expected this to develop, and after a few hours we were told by [NAVCENT] to release the vessel. I thought that was a little strange, but we confirmed that was what they wanted us to do, and were told, 'Yes'. I wondered if it was one of those situations where they had intelligence I was not privy to because I wasn't inside this campaign against Iraq.

So off we went, and oddly enough they didn't have intelligence, but being as big an organization as they are had missed something they had, and asked us to go back and board, because this guy now potentially had Iraqi agents. At that point, having boarded them once under MIO, I couldn't board again because this was now – because of the information we had – Operation Iraqi Freedom. It wasn't OEF, it was clear to me this was OIF, and I declined the invitation to board. So when you ask about where was the line – the line was there. And it wasn't the vessel per se but what I knew about the vessel. So that vessel went from an OEF entity to an OIF entity with the knowledge that we had.

Interestingly enough, two days later after the Americans had boarded this fellow and released it once again, we were back in the neighbourhood again, and there is Proton rafted up with [another suspected mine transporter] – having been released a second time by the US, and not being an OIF problem anymore – at two in the morning and I am now back to having potential mines being transported in the region, and I am wondering, do I go back to visit again just to make sure that there are no mines? And the answer is, 'Yes'. – I rebuilt an MIO [OEF] construct... and proceeded with a boarding.

So for this one fellow, it was really quite convoluted. It illustrates that for every single boarding we would go through what set of rules allowed or precluded us from visiting.



Fredericton's *Sea King*, "Stalker" patrols overhead a trio of vessels nested together in a suspicious fashion.

(HMCS Fredericton photo by Corporal Mike Selig HS032547d01)

That leaves then the question: was *Iroquois* really needed? To this also, the answer must be "Yes." Certainly, the war was essentially over by the time she arrived, and the need had diminished for her area air defence capability or assistance in the event of non-combatant evacuation. But none of that was known when she sailed. *Iroquois'* capabilities provided Commodore Girouard a wide margin of flexibility, an important consideration given that it was impossible to predict either the scale or the course of the war. As noted above, the regular pace of operations in support of the War Against Terrorism continued unabated. More to the point, the task of coordinating those operations was really quite inefficient in the cramped command and control set-up in *Montréal* as the task force flagship. The option of Girouard transferring his flag to another frigate (*Regina* was the original plan for Roto 3) had nothing to recommend it other than being a 'fresh' hull. If for that reason alone, the arrival in-theatre of *Iroquois* was worth the very considerable efforts that had gone into making her deployment happen. Factor in also just the availability of an additional ship (and eventually her helicopter), as well as *Fredericton*, to share the load in making up for the numbers of other Coalition forces that had not arrived as hoped, and it was an immense relief.

Finally, there is the matter of assessing the import of Canadian naval forces taking the lead in Task Force 151. In many ways this is attempting to deal with intangibles, and any considerations must include the aspects of both command and level of participation. The discussion above of the role of *Iroquois* already has addressed this issue. But to that must be re-asserted the high level of communications interoperability between Canadian and US naval forces, giving our flagships (whether destroyer or frigate) the particular ability to act as a gateway communicator with other Coalition members. To a certain extent that uniqueness evaporated during Operation Iraqi Freedom, as the effort to raise British and Australian interoperability received a boost in return for their active engagement in operations.

Still, there are other particularly Canadian attributes that may prove to be determining factors. For one, there is the fact that our Navy operates on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, and in the course of normal peacetime activity has longstanding relationships with practically every other Navy participating in the War Against Terrorism, a claim that cannot be made by many navies other than the USN.

Regina's Boarding Party
conducts a reconnaissance
of another pair of
suspicious vessels.

(HMCS Regina photo by
Master Corporal
Frank Hudec
IS2003-2323a)



Then there is the fact that Canada has never really been in a competitive power relationship with any other country, a consideration that certainly would have hampered the ability of several of the other countries to take the lead (in this respect it is instructive that neither Britain nor France has led the WEU task group operating in the Horn of Africa, even though they and the USN have participated in it – the Germans, Italians and Spanish have established a rotating succession). Finally, there is the sense among senior officers that their American counterparts remained appreciative of the Canadian ability to act as honest brokers by challenging our allies on any variety of issues, in a forthright yet cooperative fashion. In this respect, Girouard was impressed at how quickly the relationship with the USN that had chilled with the onset of Operation Iraqi Freedom began to warm once again.

Indeed, things soon were back to 'normal', but with a twist. By the middle of April, as Easter came and went and the American hold on Iraq began to consolidate, CTF 151 suddenly was escorting more high value units out of the Gulf than in to it. To be sure, there was still the inflow of fresh forces such as the US 4th Infantry Division that had been unable to

offload in Turkey, but the implication was clear – the drawdown of forces soon was in full force. Within a couple of more weeks, the numbers in both directions were reduced to a trickle. Nor was there much cross-GOO migrant traffic, due to a combination of both the onset of a normal summer lull and the certainty of Coalition interdiction. True, the activity rate remained high. The Canadian Navy continued to constitute typically about twenty per cent of the Coalition force, while doing fifty per cent of the work. Late in May, *HMCS Fredericton* conducted the 1000th Coalition boarding to search suspect vessels for Al-Qaeda escapees (by the end of the operation at the beginning of November, the Canadian total had topped out at an even 600 of them).



Fredericton's Boarding Party celebrates their completion of the 1000th Coalition boarding of Operation Enduring Freedom.
(HMCS Fredericton photo by Corporal Mike Selig [NBP 1000])

But the LIO effort had very much been reduced to maintaining a presence. And of course, the sanctions enforcement regime of the Multinational Interdiction Force (MIO) was no longer required, a fact soon confirmed by the UN Security Council. To this, Captain Maddison of *Iroquois* added an interesting anecdote:



... We boarded a vessel... around the mid-April timeframe... that during the Iraqi Saddamite regime... had been used to get around UNSCR resolutions – sanctions – and smuggled oil out of Iraq. This guy was on a list of vessels that we were interested in... doing a fair search, and getting the identities of the crew sorted out – and they were all Iraqis – and what was really interesting about this is that the tanker was actually on its way to a shipyard in either India or Pakistan to be broken up for scrap, because the bottom had fallen out of the oil smuggling market, because of the war in Iraq... But the other interesting thing was that the crew were all Iraqi, but when we hailed them the master very proudly said that he was 'from the Free State of Iraq.' And when my boarding party went over, all the crew were very happy, delighted with the turn of events in Iraq. ... We felt really gratified by that.⁶

(right) During an inspection in April 2003, Navy Lieutenant Joel Kam of *Iroquois*' boarding team takes notes of the documentation and charts found on the bridge of an Iraqi tugboat. (left) Petty Officer 2nd Class Cyrus John (left) and Master Seaman Todd Hodder return to *Iroquois* after boarding the Iraqi tugboat pictured in the background. (HMCS *Iroquois* photos by Corporal Shawn Kent, , left HS034006d34 and right HS034006d06)

Operational focus was shifting to the Horn of Africa area, where intelligence indicated a higher level of seaborne Al-Qaeda activity in concert with local piracy and smuggling. His staff developed an options analysis of shifting locale to the area off the Island of Socatra in the eastern Gulf of Aden, but that generated little national political interest. The next decisions were only too logical. On May 26th, *Regina* was ordered to cut her tour short, and made good time home for an entirely appropriate Canada Day entry into Esquimalt harbour. Even as she was in transit, Girouard offered to NAVCENT that his own command no longer was required. With the disbandment of Task Force 151 so also went Task Group 307.1. He hauled down his flag on June 15th. Within days he and his staff were on a service flight back to Canada, and *Iroquois* also was on her way home. Even *Polar Bear* flew her last sortie on June 19th. Only *Fredericton* remained, to take on in much diminished fashion the former task force staff function as the local Sea Combat Coordinator of Coalition forces.

The fact also was that the bottom had fallen out of the anti-terrorism 'market' in the Gulf of Oman. Even as the few other Coalition forces that had joined Task Force 151 began to leave, Girouard assessed that there was no need to keep Canadians in the area unnecessarily.

⁶ See also "HMCS *Iroquois*' Boarding Party Hears Iraqi Sailors Tell Their Story," at http://www.navy.dnd.ca/mspa_news/news_e.asp?id=22.

Leading Seaman Joyce Farmer attends to a casualty after Fredericton responded to a distress call from a vessel suffering an electrical fire in the engine room. Canadian medical staff treated two casualties before airlifting them to the nearest local hospital in the ship's Sea King helicopter.
 (HMCS Fredericton photo by Corporal Mike Selig, HS032588d12)

In Canada the withdrawal of forces was characterized as 'a worn-out' navy coming home to rest – the *Ottawa Citizen* editorialized it as "HMCS Snooze," noting "the bad guys don't take breaks."⁷ Nothing could be further off the mark. The bad guys indeed were taking a break, having been deterred from the Canadian area of responsibility. The continued presence of *Fredericton* and the smaller group of ships under her control were sufficient to maintain the Coalition presence, and Commander Harsch and his crew did so with distinction. The national effort in the War Against Terrorism would be maintained with HMCS *Calgary's* uneventful sojourn as the sole Roto 4 deployer – if one can style 24 boardings and 92 SOH transits as "uneventful". Her departure from the Arabian Sea without replacement on November 1st, 2003 marked the end of Operation Apollo, not only for the Canadian Navy, but also for the Canadian Forces.



As Leader of the Official Opposition, Stephen Harper (seen here looking over St. John's Harbour from Signal Hill) offered firm support of the naval deployment: "Two world wars demonstrated that principles do not matter unless one is prepared to fight and stand for them."
 (House of Commons Debates, March 24th, 2003)

(Photo courtesy Conservative Party of Canada)



Prime Minister Chrétien, here seen standing shoulder-to-shoulder with Governor General Adrienne Clarkson and US Ambassador Paul Cellucci, advised Parliament on March 18th, 2003, as offensive operations commenced against Iraq: "They [Canadian warships] are doing what they have done all along. All those ships that are there now were escorted there, because we are there to maintain navigation in that area of the world. ... The role we have accepted some time ago is the same role that we have played in the past and will play in the future. ... It's exactly the same waters, it's the same geography and what is on the water tends to be ships."
 (House of Commons Debates, March 18th, 2003)

(Photo by Wayne Cuddington, the Ottawa Citizen)

⁷ "HMCS Snooze," *Ottawa Citizen*, 02 July 2003.

Upon returning from Operation Apollo, Calgary's Captain Dan MacKeigan is congratulated on his promotion to that rank by the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, the Honourable Iona Campagnolo.

Looking on are (left) Chief of the Maritime Staff Vice-Admiral Ron Buck, (centre) Commander of Maritime Forces Pacific Rear Admiral Jean-Yves Forcier, and the Honourable David Pratt in his first official act as the new Minister of National Defence.

(CFB Esquimalt Imaging Services photo by Corporal Joseph Morin, ET2003-0345-08a)



Admiral Buck had been on hand to greet every ship and her crew upon their return to homeport, but *Calgary's* arrival in Esquimalt on December 14th was a special event warranting a Navy-wide celebration. Besides the customary bands and fireboats – and not to forget the throngs of loving family and friends – also on hand were the new Minister of National Defence, David Pratt, the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, Her Honour Iona Campagnolo, and other long and faithful supporters of the Navy. Leading the throng were official and private delegations of citizens from the frigate's namesake city of Calgary. Admiral Buck captured their collective sense of pride and relief in the remarks at right:

And of course there was the breaking news, as *Calgary* spent her final night at sea sailing up the more familiar Strait of Juan de Fuca, that American and Iraqi forces had captured Saddam Hussein. Saddam and Iraq were not the focus of the Canadian effort in Operation Apollo, but they had been of the Canadian Navy for more than a decade. This was *Calgary's* third return from southwest Asia. The only better indication it was safe for the Canadian Navy to come home could have been the capture of Osama bin Laden.

First and foremost, every sailor that I sent out the door we brought back safely. You don't know how much that weighed on me... [and] I'm very pleased that this Christmas our sailors will be home with their loved ones, which is hugely important to me....⁸

You are the 16th Canadian warship to return from Operation Apollo, this essential campaign against terrorism, and you are also the last one. It is a period that saw 16 ships and 4100 sailors deployed in support of this operation – a huge undertaking that had not been seen since the Korean War. You have made a huge commitment to the success of this operation, made a huge difference. You have done the heavy lifting.⁹

⁸ Quoted in Chris Wattie, "Last ship sails home from Gulf," *National Post*, 13 December 2003.

⁹ Vice-Admiral Ron Buck, "Speaking notes for return of HMCS *Calgary*," December 14th, 2003.



American Ambassador Paul Cellucci on the bridge of HMCS Toronto:

"Canadian naval vessels, aircraft and personnel in the Persian Gulf ... provide more support indirectly to this war in Iraq than most of the 46 countries that are fully supporting our efforts there."

(Canadian Forces photo)

Meanwhile, the Navy on both coasts already was embarked on a rigorous programme of catching up on maintenance and re-building a host of professional skills that had not been utilized in the course of operations in the Arabian Sea region. There were engines and radars to be overhauled, missiles and guns to be fired, and complex anti-submarine exercises to be practiced. In November, the Fleet Commanders on each coast took their task groups to sea to practice their arts. The ships and their sailors had to be readied for the moment when the next deployment would arise. The Navy has been Canada's first at bat in the major conflicts throughout our history – the two world wars, the Korean conflict and the previous Gulf war. Its immediate dispatch in response to the War Against Terrorism was entirely within the national practice, irrespective of government in power. So it's not so much because the Navy is 'tired' that it is taking a break, but rather to affect a strategic pause, to re-group and prepare for the next contingency. For there always is a next crisis, and the Navy is likely to take a lead role in Canada's initial response. The only question is: How influential a role do Canadians want that to be?



On the voyage home in November 2003, Calgary exercised with Royal Australian Navy forces before paying a port visit to the capital Sydney.

(Royal Australian Navy photo, NIUE20030685-15)







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VII. THEY ALSO SERVE

Previous page: Apollo Patrol by John Horton



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The focus of this story has been on the ships of the Canadian Navy and the sailors working in them, which of course is the point of the Navy's role in Operation Apollo. It takes a great deal of many kinds of effort, however, to get a fleet to sea and ensure it is operationally effective once there. Nor should it be supposed even in passing that the Canadian Navy was engaged in an independent mission. Operation Apollo is the story of a massive national and Coalition effort, of which the Canadian Navy frequently was a focal point. But our fleet most evidently could not have done it alone.

(Large photo, Canadian Forces, two inset photos, John McQuarrie)

September 11th marked the end of a languid Canadian summer through which the Maritime Staff, along with most other sections of NDHQ, had been absorbed analyzing yet another Defence Update. This was becoming a perennial exercise in futility, working the numbers to make the expanding defence commitments fit the limited budget allocations. It would be wrong to call the Al-Qaeda attacks a welcome distraction, but in many ways it was a relief to get down to dealing with a tangible problem.

The sudden onset of Operation Apollo required the mobilization of peacetime Maritime Command Headquarters (MARCOM HQ) to what was effectively a wartime footing. The process proved that the depth in the bureaucratic sea of staff work was almost as shallow as the numbers of ships to form complete task groups. There was simply too much work for too few people to do, in too short a time. But at least the recently constituted Maritime Staff was better prepared than it had been under the arrangement that existed before 1997, when MARCOM HQ had been co-located with Maritime Forces Atlantic. The move to Ottawa ensured the development of a truly national vision for this first major operation it had to face. That became especially important when Operation Apollo expanded beyond a short-term six-month commitment, and required the extended deployments of additional rotations alternating between the east and west coasts. The common adage from the sharp end – be it the fleet, or regiments in the field, or squadrons on combat air patrols – is that headquarters are "fat" with non-productive paper-pushers. The Maritime Staff nonetheless proved its worth when its naval and civilian members teamed to ensure equipment was procured and personnel were posted to allow the timely departure of Task Group 307.1 – and its subsequent rotations – to the Arabian Sea.

The headquarters effort soon became more difficult, however, as officers and ratings began to leave Ottawa to augment the deployments. The obvious priority was the ships, many of which were short key people, such as skilled technicians to maintain the high-tech equipment in the destroyers and frigates.



CENTCOM's "Eagle of Flags", with Canada's early entry marked by a prominent placing. (U.S. CENTCOM photo)

But there was a shortage also of officers to fill task group staff functions. And as discussed elsewhere, the Navy did not even have enough commodores for successive command rotations.

The pressure for experienced officers and senior ratings was increased by the unanticipated demand to establish a presence on the headquarters staff of the Commander of US Central Command (CENTCOM), at Madill Air Force Base in Florida. The Assistant Chief of the Maritime Staff, Commodore Jean-Pierre Thiffault, was among a delegation of senior Canadian officers sent to CENTCOM HQ shortly after September 11th to discuss possible Canadian contributions to any planned American effort. They arrived in Tampa to find a British detachment already fully integrated, a carry-over from activity with the Americans through the previous decade of close involvement in Operation Southern Watch, enforcing the no-fly zone over Iraq in support of UN resolutions against Saddam Hussein. (The Operation Augmentation frigate deployments had not required that high level of coordination.) Otherwise, the Canadian generals and commodore constituted the first high-ranking national delegation, and their timing was perfect. Over the course of their few days visit, the American campaign plan against Afghanistan began to coalesce, and it became apparent it would initially be mainly a seaborne US Navy and Marine Corps operation, due to the lack of American bases in the region. Because this coincided precisely with the availability of our Navy as the only forces ready to



At Kandahar International Airport in February 2002, Corporal Alain Jacques, a military policeman with the Tactical Airlift Detachment (TAL Det), guards a CC-130 Hercules aircraft as it prepares to unload cargo destined for the 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (3 PPCLI) Battle Group. (Canadian Forces photo by Master Corporal Jeff D. de Molitor, APD02-0020a-03)

deployment, Thiffault made especially great progress in his liaison with the naval cell in Tampa (it will be recalled that the commander of NAVCENT, the Naval Component of Central Command, was permanently forward-deployed in Bahrain).

It quickly became clear that Operation Enduring Freedom was leading to a long-term commitment of forces, and there was a need to establish an operational Canadian command within CENTCOM to ensure direct control of our forces. It was equally clear that a senior naval officer should lead this deployed Canadian Joint Task Force – South West Asia headquarters (CJTFSWA HQ), at least initially. Thiffault had gone to Tampa expecting to be away no longer than three days. Because this was still before Prime Minister Chrétien had formally announced participation, he found himself placing a cryptic call to his wife "to send more underwear and shirts". It would be six months before he could get home to do the laundry. Tampa may not seem like a hardship posting, especially through the long months of a Canadian winter. But it is if you are working 14-hour days, with no chance to get to the beach. And your family is just as far away as if you were at sea.

Thiffault remained on his own for about a week, before a supporting staff began to arrive. It soon grew to about sixty persons with representatives from all three services, and formally stood up on October 26th, 2001.



In November 2001, Commodore Pierre Thiffault organized a Remembrance Day ceremony including the other Commonwealth members of the Coalition (US forces celebrate Memorial Day in May) (US CENTCOM photo)

That joint representation was important as the American campaign plan continued to evolve. Within a short time they successfully negotiated the inclusion into it of a CC-150 Polaris Airbus Strategic Airlift (SAL) detachment, the Aurora Long Range Patrol (LRP) and Hercules Theatre Airlift (TAL) detachments, and eventually also the deployment of the army battalion to Kandahar. In the six months of his tour, Thiffault watched the Coalition presence grow as well, to forty-nine nations being represented in Tampa by a tiny compound of air-conditioned trailer huts. A measure of the Canadian status within that group was that, at the Daily Component Commander Briefings, Thiffault found himself seated immediately to the right of the Commander Central Command, General Thomas "Tommy" Franks, to be displaced only by the attendance of special visitors of higher rank. Thiffault felt he had the ear of General Franks, and his deep appreciation for Canada's contribution to Operation Enduring Freedom.

One senior American officer who was especially appreciative of the Canadian response was the Commander of the Naval Component of Central Command headquartered in Bahrain, initially Vice-Admiral Charles W. Moore, who was replaced in normal rotation in March 2002 by Vice-Admiral Timothy J. Keating.

With the rapid deployment of a Canadian task group to the Arabian Sea, and wanting to assure its most effective employment in-theatre, Commodore Thiffault dispatched a liaison officer to NAVCENT HQ in Bahrain. Commander Steve Bell quickly established a reputation for providing sage and professional advice in that period of great stress. He was instrumental in making the NAVCENT staff aware of the capabilities of the Canadian task group, resulting in Commodore Robertson's appointment to command of the Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) protection force. Bell's liaison function ashore soon was augmented at sea with the arrival of the USS *John C. Stennis* aircraft carrier battle group, with a Canadian officer embarked to support the integration of HMCS *Vancouver*, in a direct continuation of a practice established during Operation Augmentation. Both the NAVCENT and the carrier staff liaison positions quickly proved their worth, and became important fixtures throughout the course of Operation Apollo.

The Canadian naval liaison positions proved of immense value in a much wider fashion. Not unlike the task group and task force command positions at sea, the Bahrain-based and carrier-borne officers found a useful niche role as go-betweens for the USN and the other Coalition forces.



Commodore Dan Murphy (second from left) and Brigadier General Angus Watt (centre, then-Commander CJTF SWA, visiting from Tampa) speak with Dr Bob Arnot (right) the Middle East correspondent for American television network NBC. (HMCS Montréal photo by Corporal Paz Quillé, HS025051d12)

Many of those forty-nine nations represented by a trailer in Tampa also wanted a physical presence in the South West Asia theatre, and for many the dispatch of a frigate or supply ship was a simple solution. Not so simple was the fact that a great many of those nations had little experience operating with the United States Navy. In the stress of trying to organize a campaign against terrorists in Afghanistan, teaching them was understandably low on the USN's list of priorities. But their presence was critical to the establishment of the Coalition. Enter the Canadians.



Admiral Buck (right) meets with COMNAVCENT, then Vice-Admiral Charles W. Moore, in January 2002.

(US Navy photo)



Montréal leads the Coalition task group in manoeuvres in the Gulf of Oman in January 2003. (HMCS Montréal photo by Corporal Paz Quillé, HS035005d31)

Coalition building is perhaps the most under-appreciated of the naval roles in the War Against Terrorism, and yet it is the most quintessentially Canadian. Our Navy was the first major fleet to arrive in-theatre after the United States Navy. Task Group 307.1 appeared ahead of other contributing forces by a matter of weeks, even though most of those others were single ship deployments from shorter starting distances. The Royal Navy's deployment eventually comprised an impressive fleet of 30-odd vessels, but it was dedicated to support of national operations ashore in Afghanistan and later Iraq, and generally kept separate from the rest of the Coalition forces.¹

¹ While readers will be familiar with the USN effort from constant media coverage, the Royal Navy and Royal Marine effort has been under-appreciated. Their own popular history is in similar format to this volume: Robert Fox, *Iraq Campaign 2003: Royal Navy and Royal Marines* (London: Agenda Publishing, 2003).

The only other nation to undertake a task group deployment of similar scope to our own was Japan, and the efforts of Canadian naval officers afloat and ashore to include the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) in the Coalition is a signal achievement. The JMSDF group typically comprised one of their new-generation Aegis-class destroyers, an older destroyer or frigate, and a supply ship – a very potent force in its own right. However, they patrolled in the area under the significant constitutional restriction of not being able to engage directly in actual operations. Each of the Canadian commodores in turn made frequent visits to their Japanese counterparts and invited them to their flagship to share information and discuss procedures, and the liaison officers made similar efforts in their own ways. Admittedly this was partly out of self-interest to ensure no unintended interference between their forces, but mostly it was in the spirit of all sailors as comrades-in-arms. The effort was reciprocated when the Japanese admiral was able to convince his government to extend refuelling privileges to Canadian warships at a critical juncture when our own tankers were no longer available, and the American and British oilers were engaged in the northern Persian Gulf for operations against Iraq.

A Canadian Sea King idles on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis, flagship of the American at-sea naval commander in the Gulf.

(HMCS Toronto photo)





*A unique touch brought to the standard replenishment evolution by the Japanese is to exchange salutes once finished and the last line is stowed before the two ships part.
(HMCS Fredericton photo by Corporal Mike Selig, H5032532d67)*

Any attempt to detail the complete naval participation of the Coalition inevitably would overlook some other valuable contributions, but with that risk accepted it is worth observing certain of them. The USN and the RN were unique in dispatching the full range of naval capabilities to the region, including aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines with land-attack cruise missiles, and amphibious forces. France also deployed their new aircraft carrier, *Charles de Gaulle*, but only to the eastern Mediterranean, leaving the actual in-theatre participation to the commander of the French Indian Ocean forces (Amiral de l'océan indien, or Alindien) carrying his flag in the tanker *Var*. While his forces tended to operate with the WEU group in the Horn of Africa area to take advantage of a base in the former colony of Djibouti, there almost always was a French frigate attached to the Canadian commander of Task Group 50.4 or later Task Force 151, and at one point so was the nuclear submarine *Saphir*, believed to be the only recent experience of another navy exercising tactical control over such a French naval asset. Reports from all perspectives indicate it was an entirely successful experiment.

In the fall of 2003, as the operations were winding down, the Chief of the French Navy, Amiral Jean-Louis Battet, took the exceptional step of sending the following observations on their larger import to Admiral Buck [translation into English]:

Since October 2001, warships of the French Navy have served in the Arabian Sea under command of Canadian Commodores Robertson, Lehre, Murphy and Girouard as part of TG 50.4 and then TF 151.

In an uncertain and complex environment, as much militarily as politically, these dynamic commanders knew how to extract the fundamental meaning of common action and translate them into precise tactical orders that each commanders of French warships could unanimously appreciate the relevance and the level of conviction conveyed by them.

This perceptiveness formed the basis of the actions of the naval force, across a well thought-out and coherent management of the rules of engagement, and an efficient and cordial use of tactical control.

This success, which I proudly acknowledge, required a thorough understanding and knowledge of men, of means, of cultures and of national politics.

I would like to express my appreciation for the values displayed by the Commanders who have led our actions, and my gratitude for their conviviality.



*Doubling as the flagship of the admiral commanding French naval forces in the Indian Ocean (ALINDIEN), the tanker *Var* fuels the USS O'Kane. (HMCS Charlottetown photo, 1191)*

A member of Iroquois's crew watches the fuelling probe during a replenishment at sea (RAS) with the Japanese tanker JDS Tokiwa in the Gulf of Oman in April 2003.

(HMCS Iroquois photo by Master Corporal Frank Hudec, IS2003-2300a)



Additionally, the British, Dutch, and even American forces tended to offer their frigates freely to the anti-terrorist Leadership Interdiction Operations (LIO). The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) operated in the northern Persian Gulf in a capacity similar to the Canadian, in a follow on from their active participation in the Multinational Interdiction Operations (UN MIO) against Saddam Hussein. But the Australian task group commander found that, without a fully equipped command ship of his own, he and his staff had to embark in a USN destroyer to exercise control over Coalition forces in the Gulf. Still, his smaller frigates sported a big 5-inch gun that was of great assistance in lending gunfire support to amphibious forces landing in the Al-Faw region of southern Iraq. That capability no longer exists in the smaller-calibre guns of the Canadian Navy. The Royal Danish Navy made effective use of another capability that ours is just re-discovering: they were the only Coalition force to operate a diesel submarine in-theatre, and they reportedly accomplished a variety of essential in-shore surveillance operations in the northern Persian Gulf.

Its small size, however, severely limited its patrol time, and accounted for the nearly six months of frequent port stops it took to get there (it was returned home uplifted onto a barge for transport). These are handicaps that would not effect employment of the Canadian Navy's own *Victoria*-class submarines in future operations.

In private conversation, USN admirals will candidly admit that the Canadian Navy manages the frigate navies of other nations better than they could hope to, what with their preoccupation instead with power projection ashore from carriers, and submarine and cruiser-launched land-attack cruise missiles. In that sense, Canadian command of the Coalition naval force was critical to its success. No other navy could have performed this role as effectively, for several reasons. First, the US Navy was rather limited in its own operational depth at the level of frigates to perform the myriad fleetwork tasks of the War Against Terrorism. Second, there was the basic issue of communications interoperability, which existed at a closer level for the Canadians than any other allied navy.

Finally, there was the simple matter of *realpolitik* that few of the Coalition partners – which at various times included French, British, German, Dutch, Greek, Italian, Spanish, Australian, Japanese and New Zealand forces (the list comprised 21 nations in total) – could have worked comfortably under the direct command of any of the others. Canada, however, could take the lead, being a member of an array of multinational organizations including virtually all of these other nations, and having never really been in a competitive power relationship with any other country.

To be sure, some other navy could have exercised command of the Arabian Sea multinational task group, and would have had to, if Canada had responded to the events of September 11th with just another frigate deployment. But any other navy would not have been as effective, for all the reasons given above. Indeed, another multinational task group operated in the Horn of Africa area under the rotating command of WEU navies. That area, however, did not demand the close air-space and waterspace coordination with several American carrier battle groups, and for a variety of reasons that group was not as effective in closing off the traffic of escaping Al-Qaeda leadership (mostly because their rules of engagement were less robust than Canada's).

In a certain way, our own national deployment was just another such frigate force. Where Canada was able to make a difference to the Coalition was in collecting these individual efforts under effective command, to ensure their useful incorporation into Operation Enduring Freedom, so that all could add materially to accomplishing the mission.

There is yet another dimension to Canadian success in the Arabian Sea. With the concentration of this study on the achievements of the deployed warships and their operational commanders, it is easy to overlook the critical participation of other Canadian Forces elements in Operation Apollo, without which the naval task group would have been at a significant disadvantage. Many of these have been mentioned throughout, but three deserve special discussion here: the Forward Logistics Site (FLS); the ship-board helicopter air detachments (HELAIRODETs); and the shore-based CP-140 Aurora Long Range Patrol (LRP) detachment.

Sea power achieves its great flexibility primarily because it is not tied to fixed bases, and especially does not require them in someone else's territory. Because of this, the Navy exercises a different logistics support (or in-theatre sustainment) policy from the Army and Air Force.



*The conning tower crew in HMS Splendid wave as they pass close by Toronto in the Gulf of Oman.
(HMCS Toronto photo)*



*In a Gulf port, a US Coast Guard harbor patrol boat motors past the Italian aircraft carrier Giuseppe Garibaldi.
(HMCS Toronto photo)*

On a foray into the northern Persian Gulf, Preserver fuels the Australian frigate HMAS Sydney.

(HMCS Preserver photo)



It all starts at home. In each coastal formation there are located Maritime Logistics Operations Centres (MLOC), but although located respectively in Halifax and Esquimalt, these are designed to support operations in geographical divisions of the globe, and hence are referred to as MLOC (East) and MLOC (West). Manned as separate cells on a routine basis, in times of crisis or intense activity they are augmented to full 24/7 manning and linked to the appropriate Formation Operations Centre.

They then become directly responsible to the deployed task group commander, so that any operational deficiencies (OPDEFs) – and especially those marked as an immediate operational requirement (IOR) – receive urgent attention to be located and dispatched on the very next flight.



Protecteur takes on stores flown in from Canada at a Gulf port.
(John McQuarrie)



Routine maintenance, such as these touch-ups to Fredericton's hull, were arranged by the FLS staff to coincide with ships' visits to Gulf ports. (HMCS Fredericton photo by Corporal Mike Selig, HS032540d06)



Leading Seaman J. Chaisson uses a fitted crane to sling supplies aboard Regina from a barge contracted by the Forward Logistics Site. (HMCS Regina photo by Master Corporal Frank Hudec, IS2003-2219a)



FLS staff catered to ships' needs not only in Gulf region ports, but also on their voyages to and from the theatre. Here, Toronto is alongside in Malta. (HMCS Toronto photo)

The in-theatre representatives of the MLOCs are a small group of naval logisticians and technicians located at a Forward Logistics Site. The FLS has no set size or organization, so that it can be as large or as small as required to meet the precise needs of the deployed task group: the philosophy recognizes that only a relatively small cadre is needed to augment the large measure of self-support already built-in to a ship's company. In the case of Operation Apollo, the FLS peaked at 30 members in April 2003, supporting some 1300 sailors and airmen embarked in the half-dozen ships of TG 307.1. That contrasts with the National Support Unit (NSU) that was established with the aircraft detachments at the fixed location of Camp Mirage, which required some 240 administrative and logistics staff to support four aircraft and approximately 170 air and ground crew members.

In fairness, the NSU also served as a rear-link to support the occasional Army deployments to Afghanistan, but once the NSU was established, the FLS was brought under its wing and included in the total. The points of size and mobility, however, underscore a doctrinal debate that raged through the course of Operation Apollo and remains to be resolved: that of trying to rationalize the concept of operations of the FLS (derived in accordance with standard NATO naval doctrine) with the desire of the Canadian Forces to develop a distinctive joint concept of operations (in which the small footprint of the Navy inevitably tends to be subsumed to much larger Army imperatives). Commodore Lerhe summed it up best in his inimitable style:

I, and probably many others, am still groping about trying to understand exactly what the NSU is or does. My view is that [as Task Group Commander] I should expect 99 per cent of my on-going ashore support to come from the FLS that is embedded in the NSU. This is probably the percentage that is provided today, and I and my Commanding Officers have nothing but rave reviews for its people, their work, and their procedures. They understand my and my ships' unusual demands, standards and procedures, whether it involves the care of my sailors, the ships' equipment, or the force protection of the ships. Change nothing here.

I then looked at the larger NSU as 'a joint good' that would provide that final one per cent. It would involve services that are either not profitably put in an FLS (such as [specialist CF communications] technicians – who are superb in their support) or those of an occasional nature (like sending a doctor to a severely ill sailor [landed ashore] – a one-time only event – or manning a detention centre for the fourteen days of my five month deployment when I needed one).

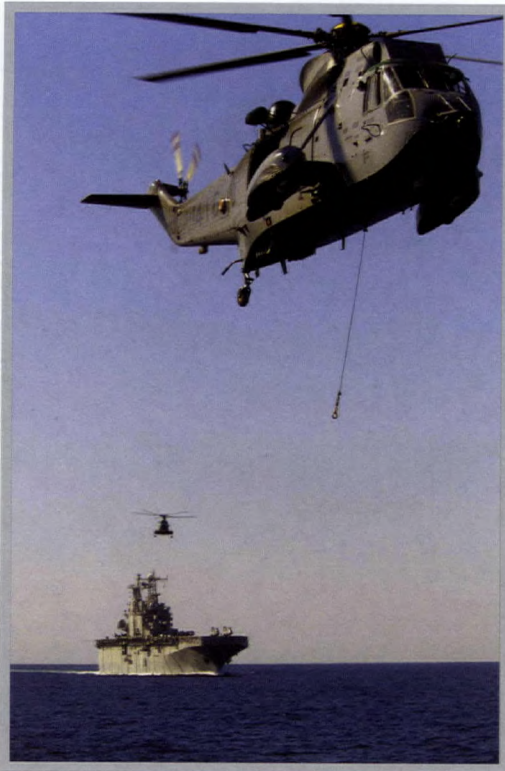
At the end of the day I am still not clear, however, if my view of what the NSU provides and what the FLS provides is the correct one....



Charlottetown exiting Malta harbour on her voyage home from southwest Asia. (HMCS Charlottetown photo.)

Through the course of Operation Apollo, the primary location of the FLS could not be officially disclosed at the request of the host nation, but that mattered little to the task group, as by definition the FLS normally has no fixed address. Indeed, the focus of Operation Apollo on roughly the same geographical area for an extended period simplified the task of the FLS, in being able to remain at a single location. But even in this case (and over the course of the preceding Operation Augmentation), with the ships putting in to various Gulf ports not just for rest and maintenance but to support Canadian diplomatic missions in the region, FLS representatives were frequently on the move among Bahrain, Kuwait City, Dubai, Fujairah, Karachi, Mumbai, Jeddah, and Haifa. And tending to the ships' logistics needs en route to and from the theatre of operations took them to such diverse ports as Singapore, Hong Kong, Malta and Gibraltar.

The Forward Logistics Site supported not only the ships, but also their embarked helicopter air detachments (HELAIREDTs – the actual aircraft deployed with each ship are noted on the deployment schedule chart). The venerable Sea Kings once again proved the immense utility to the Canadian Navy of operating such a large helicopter at sea (many other navies make do with less robust smaller aircraft that cannot accomplish the same range of missions). The integration of Air Force ground and aircrews into the ships' companies so they can live and work effectively in the naval environment is an amazing success story. The Sea Kings are literally the eyes of the fleet, greatly extending the area that can be brought under surveillance by a ship to well beyond its visual and radar horizon. But they also offer the ability to react rapidly to arising events, such as flying cover for boardings and sweeping ahead of SOH transits. Other familiar utility roles of the past, such as passenger transfers and mail runs, had to be severely curtailed in the interest of conserving precious flying hours for missions in direct support of operations.



(HMCS Preserver photos)





Ottawa's Sea King "Renegade" is serviced in the heat of the flight deck sun. (HMCS Ottawa photo, AP2002-E014-12a)



The alternative was doing needed repairs in the cramped space of the hangar. (HMCS Charlottetown photo, 158)

(Main picture: Canadian Forces photo, HS2002-10029-12)



Charlottetown's *Sea King* manoeuvres for a closer look at a vessel of interest.

(HMCS Charlottetown photo, 2605)



Even so, the pace was such that, over the course of Operation Apollo, the embarked Sea Kings flew a total of 6463 hours. That was far in excess of the normal yearly flying rate, and required the approval of the Chief of the Air Staff to maintain it. And in spite of their well-reported aging, most of the Sea Kings enjoyed an impressive 95 per cent availability, although there were some very obvious exceptions. *Fredericton's* 'bird' managed to achieve only a 55 per cent flying rate, having to scrap 42 of its scheduled missions. Another, *Charlottetown's*, was 'down hard' – stricken with a series of engine problems – so soon after leaving Halifax that the task group had to wait for a calm spell to crane the 'sick bird' across to *Preserver* for major repairs. The tanker, being a larger ship, enjoys not only a spacious hangar with a better appointed second-line maintenance detachment, but also provides a more stable platform upon which to perform precise engineering routines. More than once a special periodic inspection was performed in the tanker's hangar on a high-hour aircraft under the Contingency Air Maintenance Program (CAMP) developed to govern the performance of major procedures away from the home bases of Shearwater, NS, and Pat Bay, BC.

Preserver's maintenance detachment performed two CAMPs (one alongside during a port visit and another at sea), effectively giving the Roto 0 task group another 1000 flying hours; *Protecteur* performed a similar service for Roto 2. Altogether, those maintenance efforts were amounting to approximately 45 hours for a typical 3-hour mission – and each helicopter usually was slotted for two flights each day. The 11-man maintenance detachments had very full days.²

Even the good serviceability rates belied some serious operational restrictions. Flights had to be carefully scheduled around the maintenance cycle, which limited the tasking of aircraft on short-notice alert status to react rapidly to developing situations. Unless operations required otherwise (that is, for SOH transits, or urgently arising boardings), flights tended to be scheduled for dawn and dusk patrols, to visually check the surrounding waters for small wooden craft not reliably picked up by radar through the night. This narrow operating envelope was determined primarily by the oppressive operating conditions: midday boardings were avoided for obvious reasons.

² The widely held figure of 30 man-hours for each hour of flight is not used for the Apollo deployments, as it includes not only the first-line maintenance performed aboard ship but also second and third-line maintenance undertaken at the home bases and by civilian contractors. On the other hand, the lower 15:1 rate was due in very large measure to the fact that the Sea Kings were not configured for anti-submarine operations: their sonars (a very high maintenance piece of equipment) were removed, and also they were not constantly going into the 'dip' (hover) which produces high vibrations affecting other equipments. The 30:1 ratio remains a handy rule-of-thumb.



In the back of the Sea King, the tactical navigator and airborne sensor operator check their reference publications for existing data on the vessel of interest. (HMCS Charlottetown photo, 2606)

But there existed also a local atmospheric inversion that saw temperatures actually rise instead of falling with elevation. That in turn added to concerns over the helicopters' ancient radar, whose performance was severely degraded in the anomalous propagation conditions: sometimes ranges in excess of 60 miles could be achieved, but more often it was difficult to pick out contacts 10 miles away. Coupled with an obsolete tactical navigation system that would not allow for exact calculations, the Canadian helicopters were careful to avoid situations requiring any degree of precision – such as straying too close to the twelve-mile limit of Iranian territorial waters. Staying inside that no-go zone was a known tactic of smugglers. How many of the Al-Qaeda and Taliban leadership escaped apprehension by resorting to that practice remains unknown.

So midday flights (like boardings) were avoided in favour of dusk and dawn sorties when it was cooler, making more operational sense. Shutting down for the night didn't really help the maintainers, however, who learned the meaning of the naval phrase, "caught between a rock and a hard place".



In order to conserve Sea King flying hours, 'utility' flights were severely cutback – no exceptions, even for Chief of the Air Staff Lieutenant-General Lloyd Campbell, shown here being lowered by a 'Billy Pugh' from Fredericton onto a chartered tug that will take him to Iroquois. (HMCS Fredericton photo by Corporal Mike Selig, HS032535d16)

During the day, the sun beating down on the thin metal exterior turned the cramped, non-air-conditioned hangars into an oversized baking oven; what little comfort came from working through the midnight hours was diminished by 'darken ship' requirements that meant the doors had to be kept closed and the air just didn't flow.

The bottom line is that throughout Operation Apollo, with rare exceptions, the Sea King performed admirably in harsh conditions. The helicopters are a vital component of the ship's combat system. When they flew they were safe – accidents such as the well publicized 'crash-on-deck' suffered by *Iroquois* can happen at any time over the course of an aircraft's lifespan, and are the exception rather than the rule. But keeping the Sea Kings safe through Operation Apollo required an often-superhuman effort by ground crews. And when airborne on a mission, the aircrews were only too aware of their significant operational restrictions. Knowing they could have achieved so much more with a newer bird with up-to-date systems could be frustrating, and made their accomplishments all the more commendable.



An aviation systems technician at Camp Mirage marshals a CP-140 Aurora that has just completed a mission to the Arabian Sea.

(Canadian Forces Photo)

Camp Mirage, home of the LRP and TAL dets, and the NSU. (Canadian Forces Photo)

One of the beneficiaries of the NSU was the Long Range Patrol (LRP) Detachment. Consideration had been given to dispatching Aurora maritime patrol aircraft along with the original task group, but the actual deployment had to be delayed until an appropriate site could be identified and an agreement worked out with the host nation. It was not until December 27th, 2001 that Minister McCallum was able to announce their departure; but once the word was given, the Canadian Aurora community demonstrated the great flexibility of this maritime surveillance resource. The first aircraft launched almost immediately, arriving in-theatre on December 28th, and flew its first mission a few days later, on January 5th, 2002. At first, the aircraft were kept at a makeshift location at a local airbase and the crews in a nearby hotel. When joined by the Hercules Theatre Airlift (TAL) detachment, it made sense to combine the group of Canadian airmen and women. The collection of ATCO-style trailers that would become known as Camp Mirage was not especially comfortable, but it was good enough and made much sense from a force protection perspective, and also to maintain a lower profile in respect of the host nation wishes.

The difficulty in finding an operating location arose in part from the fact that several other nations already had landing rights in the region and had taken the available dispersals. Joining maritime patrol aircraft from the United States, Germany, France and Spain, Canada was by no means the last – the Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand and others would arrive over the next year – and, except for the USN, they all were present in about the same numbers (2 to 4 aircraft per detachment). Most other nations operated variants of the basic P-3 Orion airframe (like the Aurora), as well as the British Nimrod and French Atlantique. Many of the other forces' aircraft had benefited from recent upgrades, such as the US Navy and Dutch P-3s whose advanced sensor suites made them preferable for employment flying over Afghanistan in direct support of land missions (the Aurora Incremental Modernization Program, or AIMP, now underway will incorporate many similar features).

Coalition maritime patrol assets were pooled under a US Navy commander, initially designated CTG 50.7 but later up-graded as part of the February 2003 re-organization to CTF 57 (see task organization chart).



Crew commander (pilot) Captain Len Kosciukiewicz and flight engineer Sergeant Steve Truesdell of the Long Range Patrol Detachment take their CP-140 Aurora maritime patrol aircraft back to Camp Mirage after a routine patrol in January 2001. (Canadian Forces photo by Master Corporal Jeff D. de Molitor, APD02-0002a-11)



Navigator-communicator Captain Jeff Fenske (foreground) and tactical navigator Captain Glen Engebretson at work in the tactical compartment of a CP-140 Aurora maritime patrol aircraft during a routine mission. (Canadian Forces photo by Master Corporal Jeff D. de Molitor, APD02-0002a-12)

The Canadian commitment was to provide one direct support mission every day to that group, but being a Coalition asset, the Aurora was not automatically slated to Canadian naval control. Although the first few missions were flown over the Persian Gulf, the restricted airspace of that region soon proved to be too great a challenge for the aging navigation suite of the Aurora. The equipment in the Aurora differed in detail from that of the Sea King, but the vintage was not much newer, and suffered many of the same limitations. Neither aircraft was fitted with night vision goggles for the front cabin crew, the Forward-Looking Infrared (FLIR) heat signature detection device could not compensate very well for the high local humidity, the radar was also susceptible to anomalous propagation conditions, and the ancient inertial navigation system wandered, requiring frequent manual updates from a stand-alone GPS (Global Positioning System). A fast flying aircraft like an Aurora required the full attention of the crew just to keep track of the large number of surface obstacles in the narrow confines of the Gulf, such as oil platforms and the proximity of territorial waters, leaving very little time to concentrate on the mission. By the end of the LRP Det's Rotation 0, in early July 2002, the Canadian Auroras were flying all of their missions as daylight only and over the more open waters of the Gulf of Oman.

Although still tasked by the American CTG 50.7, that new operating area put them at the disposal for employment of CTG 50.4, the Canadian task group commander, just in time to participate directly in the significant Al-Qaeda leadership interdiction operations of mid-July 2002. Such catches were the pay-off for the long hours of patrolling. The routine was interrupted briefly early in 2003, when it seemed the Canadian government might opt for an active role in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and so the Auroras resumed patrols over the Persian Gulf. When Canada did not participate, airspace coordination and the national mission did not permit missions in the northern and central Gulf once the war had begun, but *Polar Bear* continued missions in the SOH, supporting defensive escort of high-value units (HVUs) through the Strait, and the odd flight into the southern Gulf.

"Star Hero, you are on fire."



On a routine mission, *Polar Bear* approached the stern of this merchant vessel on a normal 'ID run' when the observer noticed the fire on the aft deck. The ship was unaware of the fire, and immediately put it out, and thanked the Aurora for raising the alert. They all then continued with the normal radio hailing procedure!



Polar Bear returns from a mission over the Arabian Sea.

(Canadian Forces photo)

Having just taken command of the Canadian Task Group, Commodore Dan Murphy watches from the flight deck of Algonquin as an Aurora flies over the frigate St John's, which is about to become his flagship.

(HMCS Algonquin photo, HS200225)





The aircrews came to call the daily routine succession of Gulf of Oman flights "Ground Hog Day" (after the 1993 Bill Murray movie of the same name, in which a sarcastic weather man finds himself trapped in identical repeats of February 2nd, but he's the only person who realizes it). The aircraft would report on-station by 06:00, starting with a sweep of the Sharkfin area of the southern approaches to the Strait of Hormuz before proceeding to the Gulf of Oman proper. All radar contacts had to be identified visually and by name, requiring the aircraft to fly at very low altitude – as low as 100 feet for dhows – to take a digital photo of the often barely-legible names painted on the stern. The file would then be downloaded to a laptop computer, zooming in on the still shot to read the name for comparison to a list of contacts of interest (COI). The results were reported immediately by e-mailing the image to the controlling warship, or even directly to NAVCENT headquarters ashore, to compare to the larger databases of known imagery. A more refined decision could then be made to direct the nearest Coalition warship to set up a closer inspection or even a boarding.

The Canadian Aurora detachment provided such a reliable service that it was with more than a hint of national pride that Commodore Dan Murphy (commander of the naval task group's Roto 2) reported in his mid-rotation situation report (or SITREP) to his various commanders that:

Polar Bear continues to provide better RMP [recognized maritime picture] support for OEF MIO than any other LRP assets in the theatre. The commitment they bring to this operation is evident in their 98 percent mission completion rate. When delayed for weather or maintenance, Canadian MPA frequently extend mission times to compensate. Likewise, when serviceability problems arise on station, the Canadians can be trusted to return to base and then re-launch, if repaired, to complete the mission.

As Murphy noted, it was not just the reliability but also the quality of service that distinguished the Canadian Aurora crews. This could be traced to the Aurora LRP Det also enjoying connectivity with the US Navy, admittedly at a more basic level than the Canadian Navy ships, but still better than any of the other Coalition maritime air partners.

Even with their rudimentary sensor suite, when upgraded with ad hoc fits of modern high-tech equipment, the Auroras proved a valuable asset in the 21st century operating environment. It is hard to argue with the conclusion of Lieutenant-Colonel Fred Bigelow, commander of the last rotation of the LRP Detachment:

Our participation made it clear to all throughout the CF and beyond that LRP can make an efficient, useful contribution that goes beyond traditional ASW, and do so reliably during peacetime and rising tensions. ... [With] AIMP on the horizon, ... the LRP capability will be a flexible resource in great demand by warfare commanders both afloat and in the field.

The statistics confirm their truly impressive accomplishment: 507 missions flown, for a total of 4375 hours, and a greater than 98 per cent mission completion record. *Polar Bear's* final mission was flown on June 19th, 2003, some 530 days after the first.



Polar Bear lands at Camp Mirage after a mission over the Gulf of Oman. (Canadian Forces photo)

BOARDINGS – THE SEA KING

The dull-grey form of HMCS *Ottawa's* Sea King helicopter 440 ("Renegade") roars out of the haze at 300 feet [92 m], quickly overtaking a school of dolphins playing in the calm waters of the approaches to the Straits of Hormuz. The Straits narrow to less than 48 km, and daily traffic is several dozens of merchant vessels containing people, cargo, one-quarter of the world's daily consumption of oil, and, potentially, terrorists and their supplies.

"We are pretty much in the funnel now, so it is going to get busy," Tactical Officer Captain Dale Arndt says over the helicopter's intercom. He is tracking contacts on the helicopter's APS 503 radar. The screen is awash with yellow dots, some caused by wind on the water, others by vessels of various sizes.

"We've identified close to 500 vessels since we've been in-theatre," Captain Arndt says. "After a while, it's not difficult to say which dot is a ship, and what size it is." He directs the pilot to close the contact for a closer look: "Pilot, right turn 040, one large surface contact bearing 035 – 10.5 miles [17 km]."

"Roger. Hail the Motor Vessel *Memento*."

Renegade to *Memento*: "Motor Vessel *Memento* at position N 25'30' E 57'10' this is coalition helicopter calling you channel 16."

The hail is repeated several times with no response. Sergeant Schultz pulls out a large white-board and writes a simple message, a channel number the vessel should contact Renegade on. The Sea King hovers in a position just ahead of the ship's bow, giving the vessel a clear look at the sign Sergeant Schultz is holding. There can be no doubt that the helicopter wants to speak to the vessel. "It's funny," he says. "You look at all the equipment and all the radios and it seems like you are stepping back a few decades. You can have all the sophisticated things in the world, but sometimes it is the simple things that help get your point across."

"Coalition helicopter, this is *Memento*."

"Good day, sir. We would like to ask you a few questions."

Memento provides the required information, which is passed back to the *Ottawa's* Ops Room.

"Thank you for co-operation, sir. Have a nice journey." Renegade proceeds to its next contact.

Adapted from: http://www.navy.dnd.ca/mspa_news/news_e.asp?x=1&id=16









This volume has offered a survey of the achievements of the Canadian Navy in the War Against Terrorism. Commodore Eric Lerhe probably summed them up best in the conclusion to his final SITREP on the period of his command:

First, ours is the best medium power navy in the world. Few navies receive anything like the materiel support we get from home and the Forward Logistics Site. Significantly, we do this further from home than everyone else and we have no in-theatre bases. Second, our Aurora support is unmatched, be it in crew skill or outright determination in meeting their on-station time. Third, our helos are old but they fly longer days than any other and achieve hail rates that often are higher than some nations' ships. Fourth, our ships' C4I [communications] fits are unmatched by anything short of a USN cruiser or DDG-51.



VIII. CONCLUSION: THE SETTING OF THE SUN

The most competent of the other Coalition ships has declined to take the Acting Sector Commander role that our own CPFs execute flawlessly. No one can compete with the LIO intelligence products we develop on board and this was acknowledged by CTF 50. Fifth, only the USN exceeds our optempo. Finally, ... with five nations regularly tasked to LIO duties, Canadian ships still provide 50 per cent of the hails and 63 per cent of the boardings. Our Naval Boarding Parties are unmatched and our AOR is now providing hailing and consensual visit rates equal to some nations' frigates while also serving as the only Arabian Gulf oiler. All in all, this navy has no peer competitors.

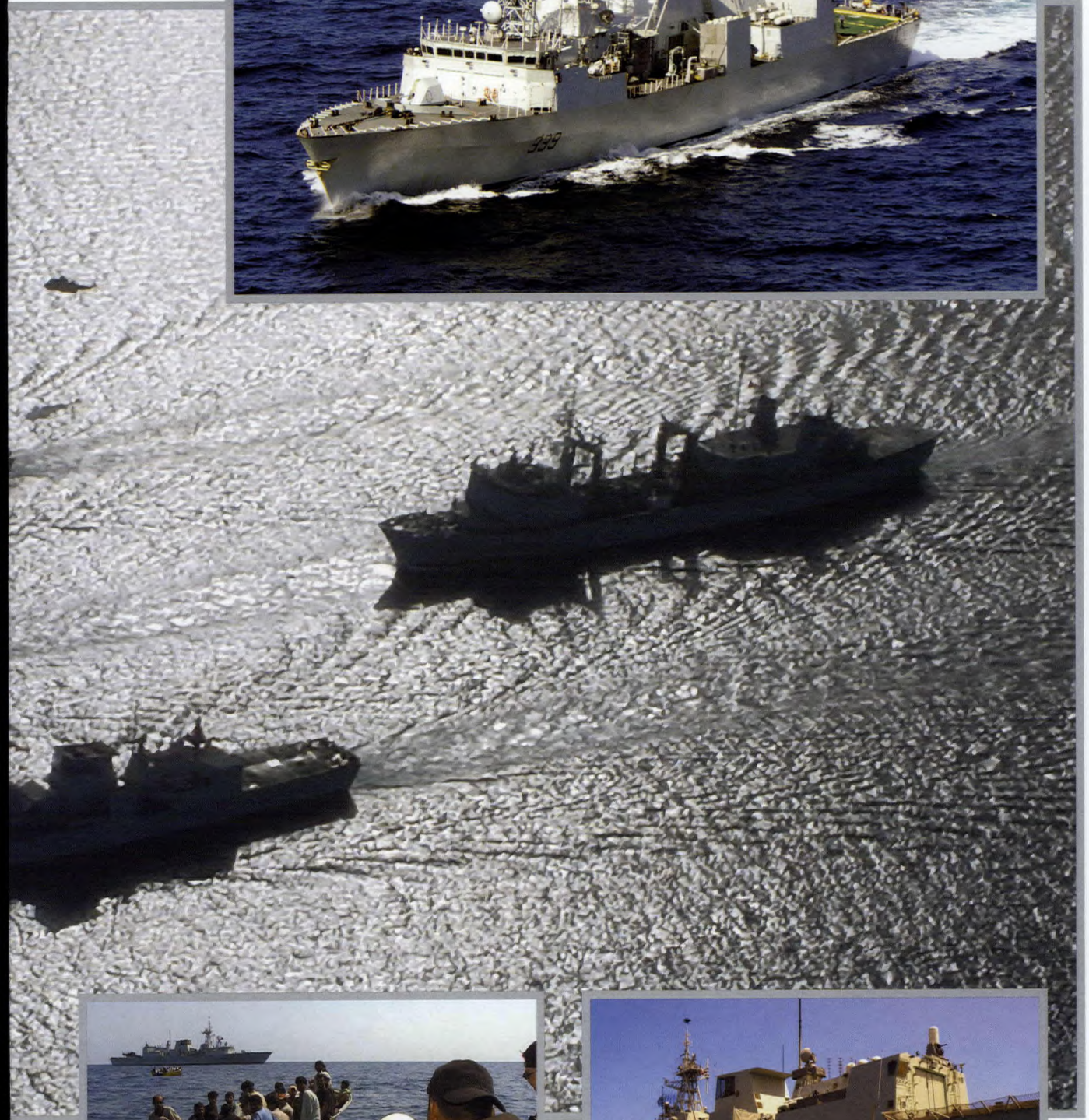
*HMCS Vancouver leads a procession of vessels out of the Strait of Hormuz.
(HMCS Vancouver photo)*

Halifax Harbour with
naval Dockyard in the
foreground.
(Photo John McQuarrie)



Canada's Apollo
achievement:
A navy with no
peer competitors...

(Canadian Forces
Photos)



As good as it sounds, the accomplishments go deeper than that immediate assessment. It is instructive to recall *Leadmark's* eight Principles of Canadian Naval Strategy and compare them to the actual unfolding of Operation Apollo (readers are invited to fill in their own examples):

- *the ability to influence events at a distance*: there are few places on the surface of the earth farther from either of our coasts than the Arabian Sea, yet the Canadian Navy sustained operations of significant forces in that distant theatre for the better part of two full years, while never diminishing the ability to respond to threats that could have arisen in home waters;
- *contributing to general freedom of the seas*: marine traffic through the Strait of Hormuz typically amounts to about 250 transits daily, and the close escort and general protection provided them under Canadian direction saw insurance rates actually decline during the course of the Iraq war;
- *acting as a 'joint enabler' of land and air operations*: the close Canadian escort of the US Marine ARGs contributed directly to the effectiveness of their operations ashore in Afghanistan, while the later task of "keeping the backdoor open" to the free transit of Coalition vessels provided indirect support for the continuing War Against Terrorism;
- *the capacity to conduct a wide range of operations*: the Canadian Navy performed a classic sea control operation in the Arabian Sea theatre at all levels of warfare, ranging from command of a multinational task force, through the fleetwork functions of compiling a Recognized Maritime Picture, anti-submarine tracking and interdicting suspicious vessels while escorting valuable Coalition traffic through vital chokepoints, to the at-sea replenishment of Canadian and Coalition warships;
- *possessing forces that are versatile and combat capable in order to do so*: the inherent flexibility of the warship types that constitute the Canadian Task Group allowed for an easy shift from one type of operation to another by forces in-theatre, with no need to enter port yet alone return to Canada to re-equip;
- *the utility of working in combination with alliances or coalitions*: Canadian warships may possess limited ability to unilaterally project power ashore, but they performed the equally valuable task of maintaining Coalition integrity in the War Against Terrorism while the United States turned its attention to Iraq, with a Canadian commodore exercising command of the at-sea forces continuing to be engaged in Operation Enduring Freedom;
- *the merit of interoperability with the USN*: the unique access of the Canadian Navy to communications connectivity with our American allies was an obvious force multiplier and the key to a significant Coalition command appointment; and,
- *the need for an indigenous capacity to support independent operations*: the availability of a locally-established Forward Logistics Site and an at-sea replenishment vessel (at least initially) considerably facilitated national supply lines and afforded the Canadian Task Group Commander useful options for independence of action.



Leading Seaman Travis Jagoe and other members of Fredericton's boarding team climb a ragged rope ladder up the side of a vessel of interest.

(HMCS Fredericton photo by Cpl Mike Selig, HS032570d07)



Chief Petty Officer 1st Class Brian Forsyth, the Coxswain of HMCS Regina, stands beside a signal lamp to observe an at-sea replenishment in the Gulf of Oman in April, 2003.

(HMCS Regina photo by Master Corporal Frank Hudec, IS2003-2215a)

Without doubt, the Navy's participation in Operation Apollo was in balance an overwhelming success. For the better part of two years, the Navy mobilized for the largest prolonged Canadian naval operation since the Korean War. Practically the entire fleet – fifteen of its seventeen major surface combatants – deployed to the South West Asia theatre (only the destroyer *Athabaskan* and the frigate *Ville de Québec*, both in long-term refit throughout the period, missed the opportunity). Virtually every one of the 4200 sailors in sea-going billets, regardless of rank or trade, including a large number of reservists, and many of them for a second time in as many years, became Apollo veterans.

At the same time, and for many of those same reasons, it is a cautionary tale. As also observed in *Leadmark*, "If the cost of building and maintaining a viable navy is high, the cost of not having one is infinitely higher." It takes decades to build a navy; maintaining it takes effort and the dedication of national treasure in many forms – financial, political, and personal. The reward primarily is increased security. In taking the war to Al-Qaeda by assisting the American and Coalition efforts ashore in Afghanistan, and leading the effort to shut down the terrorist escape routes from southwest Asia, the Navy has increased Canada's security.



In the process, it has reaped our nation an enormous additional reward – it substantially increased Canada’s standing in the international community of nations committed to making a difference in the world. We dare not squander this diplomatic capital, purchased with the dedication and selflessness – and always potentially the blood – of the men and women who serve their country.

Leading Seaman Mike Diaczenko lowers the Canadian flag during the Remembrance Day ceremony aboard HMCS Montréal in the Gulf of Oman, 2002.

(HMCS Montréal photo by Corporal Paz Quillé, HS025071d03)

Charlottetown races to an interception in company with destroyer USS Decatur in the distance. (HMCS Preserver photo)



(Opposite inset) The cycle resumes: in January 2004, the Commander of Maritime Forces Atlantic (right), Rear-Admiral Glenn Davidson is joined by Defence Minister David Pratt in bidding farewell to the frigate Toronto, off to join the USS George Washington carrier battle group in maintaining a presence in the South West Asia region. (Cpl J.A. Wilson, CFB Halifax Formation Imaging Service photo, HS040020d12)

Navy Lieutenant
Jonathan Kowenburg
(foreground)
and Petty Officer 1st Class
Tony Gibson lead
Fredericton's boarding team
on an inspection of a North
Korean vessel of interest.

(HMCS Fredericton photo by
Cpl Mike Selig,
HS032570d05)





(Canadian Forces photo, HS025036d01)

The very real possibility exists that Operation Apollo will prove to be the apex of the modern Canadian Navy. Many of the capabilities described in these pages are coming due – indeed, some are overdue – for replacement. The struggle to rejuvenate the submarine service illustrates the danger of allowing a capability to lapse or gap even for a short period of time. The replenishment ships are well past their end-of-service date and are insufficient in number to maintain continuous support to deployed forces. Upgrades of the Aurora patrol aircraft are in progress, but the fleet could accomplish so much more with a modern and versatile shipborne helicopter. The Fleet Maintenance Facilities, built at great expense in the 1980s but scaled back precipitously in the 1990s, are unable to support a wartime operational pace. The frigates are coming due for their mid-life extension, but no such program has been funded. Most critically, the command and control destroyers are nearing the end of their operational life, but the military and political value of these ships remains under-appreciated. Without them, Canada would not be able to command formations of multinational ships in far distant waters.

Operation Apollo truly has demonstrated the value of the vision described in *Leadmark*, for "a medium global force projection navy that will serve Canada as a multipurpose, interoperable force, capable of joint and combined operations worldwide." Standing at this height of achievement, as Canadians we must ask ourselves two questions. Will our Navy's second Golden Age that commenced in 1995 last – like the first one – only a decade? When the next threat or contingency operation arises – and there always is a next one, and it always is unexpected – will there be a Canadian Navy with the capabilities necessary to be first in the fray yet again?



John Horton graduated from the Poole & Bournemouth School of Art before joining the Royal Navy. He worked in design and architecture for several years before moving to Vancouver in 1964. His passion for the work of marine artist increasingly occupied his time. John Horton is currently living in Vancouver, B.C. and is a member of the Canadian Society of Marine Artists. His paintings can be viewed at: www.johnhorton.ca

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“EVERY COUNTRY HAS A NAVY IN THEIR WATERS,
THEIR OWN OR SOMEONE ELSE’S”



“YOU ARE THE 16TH CANADIAN WARSHIP TO RETURN
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TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS OPERATION,
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YOU HAVE DONE THE HEAVY LIFTING.”

VICE-ADMIRAL RON BUCK’S ADDRESS TO CREW OF
HMCS CALGARY UPON THAT SHIP’S RETURN TO CANADA,
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