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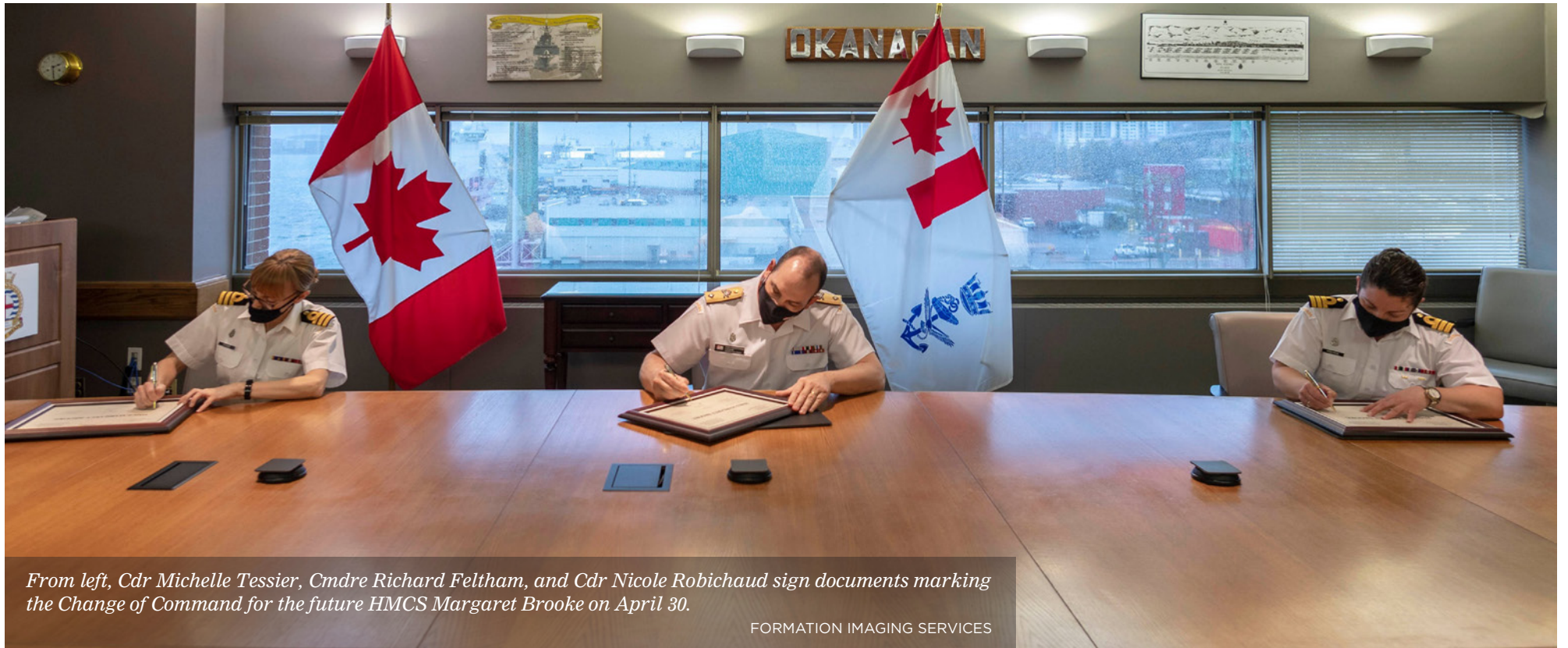
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THE NEWSPAPER OF MARITIME FORCES ATLANTIC SINCE 1966 • LE JOURNAL DES FORCES MARITIMES DE L'ATLANTIQUE DEPUIS 1966

Staying protected at sea

The CAF COVID-19 vaccination program is in full swing. Many members across Formation Halifax have already received their initial vaccine dose, and sailors from HMCS Halifax recently rolled up their sleeves for an onboard vaccine clinic at sea. The ship is currently deployed to Operation REASSURANCE alongside NATO partners. Every CAF member has the opportunity to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, regardless of geographic location.

SI BRYAN UNDERWOOD, CAF PHOTO



From left, Cdr Michelle Tessier, Cmdre Richard Feltham, and Cdr Nicole Robichaud sign documents marking the Change of Command for the future HMCS Margaret Brooke on April 30.

FORMATION IMAGING SERVICES

New commanding officer for future HMCS Margaret Brooke

By Joanie Veitch,
Trident Staff

Cdr Nicole Robichaud assumed command of the future HMCS *Margaret Brooke* on April 30, in a virtual Change of Command ceremony presided over by Cmdre Richard Feltham, Commander Canadian Fleet Atlantic.

Cdr Robichaud, who is originally from Red Deer, Alberta, was Commanding Officer of HMCS *Moncton* in 2016 and Executive Officer with HMCS *Fredrickton* from 2018 to 2020. She takes over leadership from Cdr Michele Tessier, who grew up in Grand Bank, Newfoundland and Labrador, and was given command of the future Arctic and Offshore Patrol Ship (AOPS) in 2017.

Cdr Tessier is retiring from the Royal Canadian Navy.

"It is quite unfortunate that you are not able to be the first Commanding Officer to take *Margaret Brooke* to sea after the four years you have dedicated to both the ship and crew," Cdr Robi-

chaud said, directing her remarks to Cdr Tessier. "I will continue to forge ahead and build on the culture that you have created within the *Margaret Brooke*, one of inclusivity, of positive space, of welcoming arms and a place where people are happy and want to come into work."

In her farewell address, Cdr Tessier said she will watch the launch of the future HMCS *Margaret Brooke* "with a little jealousy and a ton of joy", adding that Cdr Robichaud is "exactly what this team needs and I know I am leaving them in good hands."

Cdr Tessier also thanked the ship's company of HMCS *Harry DeWolf*, the first of the AOPS to launch, for welcoming her to their shore office when she first arrived in Halifax in 2018, where she joked that she assumed "squatter's rights" while she tried to figure out what "the Pink Palace" meant.

"Through the past couple of years as *Margaret Brooke*'s team has come together, you have been integral to our success in preparing for the delivery of the second AOPS, sharing lessons learned, providing tours and training and taking our sailors to sea to learn the platform. Thank you so much."

Cdr Tessier also received a Gold Service Insignia from Cmdre Feltham at the ceremony, in honour of the more than 1,460 days she has spent at sea during her 25-year career in the Navy.

In an earlier ceremony — held before the latest round of restrictions were put in place in the province, with limited in-person and livestreamed online — CPO1 Steve Clark took over the Coxswain position for the future HMCS *Margaret Brooke* from outgoing CPO1 Yves Dumont, who retired from the Navy in January.

In his address to the audience, CPO1

Clark said becoming Coxswain of a ship has been a goal since he was a young sailor and first joined the Navy, noting that he always looked up to his Navy father, also CPO1 Clark or "Knobby Senior" who was Coxswain of HMCS *Athabaskan* before he retired.

Although the future HMCS *Margaret Brooke* and her crew have faced setbacks that have caused delays to the ship's schedule over the past few years — including the ongoing Covid pandemic — CPO1 Clark said his words of advice to the crew is to continue to respect one another and to always take a positive view.

"You can look for negatives, but why?" he said. "Don't sweat the stuff you can't control."

Weekend parking posture at CFB Halifax

By CFB Halifax Public Affairs,

CFB Halifax has implemented a weekend parking posture until further notice. This means that all members of the local defence team — whether or not they have a parking pass — are permitted to use General Parking Areas on Base. Parking within the HMC Dockyard Controlled Access Area will still be enforced, and reserved/accessible parking spaces may only be used by individuals who possess a relevant pass.

This Weekend Parking Posture is being implemented not only to recognize the limited numbers working on the Base, but also to offer increased

flexibility and reduce dependency on public transportation for everyone. Our base team is working to ensure we can maximize parking availability to as many employees as possible for as long as we can, which we acknowledge is an important step in responsible business resumption.

*The Parking Control Office at S90 is currently closed. For emergencies or if returning a Parking Pass, please report to the Dockyard Security Office, Bldg D247. If the office is closed, please utilize the Drop Off Box outside the Security Office.



A very different Ramadan

Muslim sailors observe a month of fasting while on deployment with HMCS Halifax

By Joanie Veitch,
Trident Staff

If he's not already on duty, Sailor Second Class Yunus Kurt gets up every day, an hour before sunrise, to have something to eat before beginning his daily fast — it will be about 16 hours before he will eat or drink anything again.

During the month of Ramadan — the most sacred time in the Islamic calendar — Muslims around the world fast during daylight hours. For S2 Kurt, along with S3 Ahmad Bitar, both Naval Communicators on deployment with HMCS *Halifax*, this is a most unusual Ramadan. Their ship left HMC Dockyard in Halifax on January 1, headed for Europe and a six-month deployment to Operation REASSURANCE alongside NATO allies.

and break the fast together as the sun sets, that practice has 'gone online' for many Muslims around the world this year due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Using available technology to talk with family and friends from home and read their messages of support has been a huge help, said S2 Kurt.

"Fasting on Ramadan while at sea has been harder than I thought, when you don't have a home to come back to. That is one of the biggest challenges while sailing," he said. "It is very difficult being away from my community, however I've become used to it since joining the military, due to the amount of moving I've had to do."

fighting temptations. Just focusing and reminding myself helps me out through the day."

During Ramadan, S3 Bitar also likes to take time to reflect on how he can be of service to others. "Doing good deeds, they could be little things or big things, but I try my best to help people," he said. "It makes you feel better...and it makes their day easier."

For S2 Kurt, Ramadan is a time to deepen his faith, noting that he has enjoyed talking with colleagues and supervisors who've shown interest in learning about his faith and the importance of Ramadan to Muslims.

Both sailors said that despite the hardships of fasting while at sea, they have felt supported by their shipmates — especially the kitchen staff — for saving

them dinner to eat when the sun sets and they can break their fast.

"I give big thanks to the cooks," S3 Bitar added.

The end of Ramadan, which falls on May 12 this year, is celebrated worldwide with the festival of Eid al-Fitr. Although the two sailors don't know for certain how they'll mark the event, they plan to spend the time together, along with another Muslim sailor observing Ramadan onboard HMCS *Halifax*.

"I don't know where we will be, but probably somewhere in the middle of the ocean," said S2 Kurt.

"We'll celebrate by hugging each other and hopefully breaking our fast together."



S3 Ahmad Bitar and S2 Yunus Kurt are both observing Ramadan at sea while on deployment with HMCS *Halifax*.

SI BRYAN UNDERWOOD

"This is my first deployment and also the first time where I fasted during Ramadan while in the middle of the ocean," said S2 Kurt, who is from London, Ont and joined the Navy in 2018 "to see the world."

When Ramadan began on April 12, both S2 Kurt and S3 Bitar called their families to wish them well, and have continued to stay in touch using FaceTime and other messaging apps. While Ramadan usually sees families and friends gather to share the Iftar meal

Although evenings after sundown during Ramadan are usually social, for Muslims it is also a time to slow down and take extra time for spiritual reflection beyond their daily prayers — not easy to do while on a warship.

"It is hard to slow down in a high-tempo program, but it adds an extra sense of accomplishment when you finish that day," said S3 Bitar, who is from Halifax, NS and joined the RCN straight out of high school in 2018. "It is difficult, but that is the whole purpose:

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Annual Subscription (25 issues):

- NS: \$37.38 (\$32.50 + 15 % HST)
- ON, NB & Nfld: \$36.73 (\$32.50 + 13% HST)
- BC: \$36.40 (\$32.50 + 12% HST)
- Remainder of Canada: \$34.13 (\$32.50 + GST)
- United States: \$45 US
- Abroad: \$65 US

Courier address:
2740 Barrington Street,
Halifax, N.S.
B3K 5X5

Publication Mail Agreement No.
40023785

Return undelivered Canadian address to:
Trident Newspaper Bldg. S-93
PO Box 99000
Station Forces, Halifax, NS B3K 5X5
Return Postage Guaranteed
ISSN 0025-3413

Circulation: Minimum 8,500



Members of HMCS Calgary stand with 1286kg of heroin seized from a dhow during a counter-smuggling operation on 23 April in the Arabian Sea during OPERATION ARTEMIS and as part of Combined Task Force 150.

CPL LYNETTE AI DANG

Royal Canadian Navy sets CMF record with major back-to-back drug busts

By Combined Maritime Forces,

HMCS *Calgary* has made the largest heroin bust in Combined Maritime Forces history, operating under the command of the Canadian-led Combined Task Force (CTF) 150.

Naval Boarding Party members aboard HMCS *Calgary* are seen during a boarding operation to counter drug smuggling on April 23 in the Arabian Sea during Operation ARTEMIS.

The record-setting haul of 2,835 lbs (1,286 kg) of heroin on 23 April was achieved seven years to the day since HMAS Darwin interdicted 2,275 lbs (1,032kg) of the drug in 2014. In addition to their record-breaking success, *Calgary* struck again less than 24 hours later with a second interdiction capturing 794 lbs (360 kg) of methamphetamine.

"I'm speaking for everyone on HMCS *Calgary* when I say it's a great feeling to have made two substantial busts so early into our operation," said the Commanding Officer of *Calgary*, Commander Mark O'Donohue. "A lot of work and coordination at both the ship level, and throughout Combined Task Force-150, and the CMF coalition goes into our work. It's fantastic to see that pay off

and to know we are contributing to the interruption of a revenue stream that is being used to fund terrorism."

Whilst operating off the coast of Oman, the RCN frigate intercepted two vessels suspected of smuggling. The ship's boarding team conducted subsequent searches, uncovering the high value contraband with a combined total worth of over \$23.22 million, making a salient impact to drug trafficking, often used to finance terrorism in the region. These interdictions come less than ten days after *Calgary* began operations in the region, increasing the total number of successful counter-narcotics operations under CTF-150 to 14 since the RCN took command of the task force on 27 January.

Calgary arrived in the CMF area of operations as a part of Canada's Operation ARTEMIS on April 15. ARTEMIS is the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) mission to help stop terrorism and make Middle Eastern waters more secure. In 2021, CAF contributions to Operation ARTEMIS include commanding and operating CTF-150, naval support from HMCS *Calgary* and a Royal Canadian

Air Force patrol aircraft.

"An excellent job by our Canadian partners, conducting these successful interdictions in such rapid succession. As a multinational organization, our agility is such that we are able to maintain a constant watch on illicit actors, using ships from many different navies," said Deputy Commander of CMF, Commodore Ed Ahlgren of the Royal Navy.

"I could not be more pleased with HMCS *Calgary*'s recent success at sea. Through diligent preparation and focused pre-deployment training the *Calgary* team arrived in theater in a position to immediately contribute to Maritime Security in a meaningful way," said Commander of CTF-150, Commodore Daniel Charlebois of the Royal Canadian Navy. "Less than ten days after arriving in the CTF-150 area of operations, they have already made 2 substantial seizures of illicit narcotics, disrupting the illegal flow of drugs destined for our communities, and whose proceeds finance criminal and terrorist organizations and their activities."



Exercise JOINT WARRIOR 21-2 underway

Exercise JOINT WARRIOR 21-2 began on May 8 off the coast of Scotland, with SNMGI ships and aircraft, including HMCS *Halifax* and its embarked CH-148 Cyclone helicopter, participating in realistic multi-threat scenarios at sea.

S1 BRYAN UNDERWOOD, CAF PHOTO



How organ donation and RCN support is helping a grieving family

By Joanie Veitch,
Trident Staff

When Chris Williams died following a catastrophic car crash near his home in West Chezzetcook on July 25, 2019, his family took comfort in knowing his organs would go on to save other lives.

Williams, who served in the Royal Canadian Navy for more than 18 years, died in hospital on August 1, 2019, after a harrowing week of fading hope for his family. The trauma he'd suffered in the accident, most notably to his brain, left no further medical options. When the health care team gave the devastating news to his spouse and parents, followed by a discussion about organ donation, they didn't hesitate.

"He was so proud of that. We had talked about it at different times so I knew that's what he would have wanted," she says. "He had such a big personality, he always wanted to give. That's just who he was."

Williams was just 40 years old when he died, leaving Taker to raise their three young children on her own: Elizabeth, Vincent and Sophia. Sophia, who was only five months old at the time of his accident, is now two and likes to carry around a large photo of her dad sleeping with her cradled in the crook of his arm.

"We talk about him all the time, I

before leaving the RCN in 2017.

CPO2 Joe Dickie remembers when he first met "Willy" as he was known to most people, back in 2005 when they were both young sailors. "He was a good guy; he was the type of person that if you were with him, you were smiling."

S1 Kaelen Michaud was posted to HMCS *Montreal* with Williams in 2014. She was young — just 19 years old at the time — and remembers Williams helping to show her the ropes. They became good friends and, over the years, she got to know Taker and the children as well.

When Taker called her from the hospital the morning after the accident, S1 Michaud went to the hospital right away to support her friend in any way she could. She's still doing that, checking in most days by FaceTime or Messenger text, just to see how she is.

In the days following Williams' accident, CPO2 Dickie was also in contact with Taker and put out a call to other RCN members to help support the family, stocking the fridge and gathering a work crew of more than a dozen people to clean up around the house, paint and do repairs — even taking on major jobs, such as building a mantle atop the fireplace so there would be a place to display photos and William's RCN shadow box with his medals.

"Given this specific situation... I determined that the standard bouquet of flowers was much too far from what was required and, therefore, decided to go all in with a team of shipmates to get Donna and her little ones the boost they needed," he says.

Like S1 Michaud, he's stayed in contact, bringing gifts for the children each year at Christmas and on their birthdays.



Donna Taker, wife of Chris Williams, with their three children — left to right: Sophia, Vincent and Elizabeth — in front of the mantle that Williams' RCN friends built for the family.

JOANIE VEITCH, TRIDENT STAFF

"I signed the papers immediately," says Donna Taker, Williams' wife. "It was severe brain damage, I knew it and knew there was nothing more they could do...but we could do this. He could save other lives."

Taker knew it's what Williams would have wanted because they'd talked about it several times, most recently less than a year before he died, after they went to get him a new health card. Smiling as she looks at one of the many pictures of Williams on display in their home, Taker recalls how eager he was to show her the 'donor 1' printed on his card.

want the kids to know their dad and feel him here with us still," says Taker.

Like Sophia, Elizabeth and Vincent, now eight and seven years old respectively, also like looking at pictures of their dad, especially the ones of him wearing his naval uniform, taken in their home some years back.

"I miss him a lot. I wish I could put my head on his chest and just hear his heartbeat," says Elizabeth.

"Willy was one of the good ones"

During his time in the Navy, Williams served on deployments with HMC Ships *Halifax* and *Montreal*, as well as working on the Stadacona base,



Chris Williams was a member of the Royal Canadian Navy for more than 18 years; he died August 1, 2019.

SUBMITTED



Donna Taker looks at photos of Chris Williams in his RCN uniform, with two-year-old Sophia looking on.

JOANIE VEITCH, TRIDENT STAFF

Last August, on the one-year anniversary of Williams' death, S1 Michaud organized a 'celebration of life' gathering at Taker's house, bringing her big white tablecloth and making large trays of food.

"What she's been through and the situation she's in, it's incredibly hard, but she's doing it and she's doing a good job," S1 Michaud says. "I want her to know she's not alone, and she's not."

Although there's no standard code of practice, RCN members tend to look out for one another, and their families, in challenging times.

"As sailors, we get thrown together and spend every waking and sleeping hour together... you really get to know each other," says CPO2 Dickie. "Willy was one of the good ones."



Donation supports mental health programs for military families

By Trident Staff,

This past year has been especially challenging for military families coping with the impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic, in addition to their usual stressors of relocation and operational separations.

In recognition of Mental Health Week, led by the Canadian Mental Health Association, Lockheed Martin Canada made a \$300,000 donation to programs supporting the mental health of children and youth from military families across Canada.

By partnering with Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS), and local Military Family Resource Centres (MFRCs) in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia, the initiative will provide tangible relief to military families during a very challenging period.

To date, the multi-year funding has

already directly benefited more than 500 children and youth, according to a recent press release from Lockheed Martin Canada.

"We are grateful to Lockheed Martin Canada for their unwavering support of military families in Canada. These new programs and services go a long way in providing vital support for children and youth helping to ensure their resiliency," said Commodore Sean N. Cantelon (Ret'd), CEO of Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services.

COVID-19 is having a significant impact on everyone's wellbeing and the past year has underlined the importance of access to mental health programs and resources for military families, added Lorraine Ben, Chief Executive, Lockheed Martin Canada. "I am incredibly proud of this partnership with Canadian Forces Morale and

Welfare Services that is providing more access to tailored and timely mental health resources for children and youth of military families through their local centres."

Below is a list of military family programs supported by Lockheed Martin Canada's donation in 2020:

- Extending the delivery of a national CAF Kids Crisis Text Line by 4-5 years, dedicated to ensuring children, youth and young adults from military families have free access to mental health and wellbeing support in both English and French. Powered by Kids Help Phone, and also supported by True Patriot Love Foundation, kids can text the keyword CAFKIDS to 686868 for mental health support.
- In Halifax, the MFRC partnered with the Tranquility Online program to teach life-long skills to military fam-

ily members, helping both parents and youth manage their own mental health during stressful or difficult situations.

- Creating a peer support network in the Region of Montreal MFRC for adolescent girls from military families, delivered fully online.
- Establishing a monthly book-sharing program in Esquimalt MFRC in collaboration with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (an international non-for-profit working to support enhanced education outcomes for children).
- Counselling services through the Calgary MFRC, for children and youth struggling with complex mental health challenges and tutoring for those with academic difficulties.

Padre's Corner: Life in lockdown

By Padre Lt(N) Tim Parker,
Base Chaplain

"They must live alone; they must live outside the camp."

-Leviticus 13:46

Before COVID-19, we lived a very full way of life, and now we are struggling to adapt to a more deprived way of life. Constant quarantine, isolation and lockdown mean we have lost most

human interaction and meaningful contact. We have the bare necessities of life, but we do not have a healthy and normal range of relationships. We are very careful about the air we breathe and the things we touch: people are out-of-bounds. It is very hard.

Quarantines throughout history

have always meant hardships. When the Jews escaped slavery in Egypt and were on the long march to the Promised Land, quarantines were imposed on any individual who contracted leprosy, a dangerous and infectious skin disease. Anyone who caught leprosy was isolated from

society for 14 days in order to prevent the spread. Weekly medicals determined when the sufferer was no longer contagious.

What is different about our quarantine is that every single individual – with or without COVID – is essentially quarantined from every other individual. It is society itself which is in quarantine. Where historically the sick individual was removed from society, now society itself is removed altogether,

and we become quarantined individuals living the lockdown life.

But let us derive some benefit from this quarantined way of life! There is a spiritual response to quarantine that can help us: it is to treat the quarantine as a fast. A fast is when we give up

some necessity of life, usually food, in order that we might be filled with God. Our quarantine is a kind of fast from normal human relationships. We can offer to God the suffering it causes. Here the Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) agree: God will not spurn a contrite heart. Offer your hurt and your heart to God. Use isolation as a solitude which is time for God. And if

you should encounter a person with COVID-19, remember that God asks us to love the leper. Peace be with us.



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An expression of recognition for volunteers

By Sarah-Jean Mannette,
Halifax & Region Military Family Resource Centre

Like much of this year, the pandemic has created many challenges. It has also created opportunities to connect with people in alternative and creative ways.

One such opportunity is the annual event to recognize volunteers who support military members and families by giving their time to the Halifax & Region Military Family Resource Centre (H&R MFRC) and to PSP programs in Halifax/Shearwater. As part of their mission to improve the lives of military families, CANEX funds the Volunteer Recognition Program (VOREP), which allows them to recognize the important role volunteers play, and typically hosts this event.

Our volunteers are well known at the H&R MFRC and through PSP, many of whom have been volunteering for over 15 years. Volunteers are military members, family members, and those who have a passion for supporting military members and their families.

The volunteer recognition event also provides the H&R MFRC and PSP Halifax/Shearwater the opportunity to show their gratitude and thanks to the amazing contributions volunteers make throughout the year. Although the event could not be held due to

current restrictions for public events, the annual cheque presentation did occur. To show the value of volunteer time that is given to both organizations, a mock cheque in the amount of \$71,743.00 was presented by Acting PSP Halifax Manager Mike Almond and H&R MFRC Volunteer Coordinator Jill Clarke, to CFB Halifax Base Commander Capt (N) Sean Williams, 5th Canadian Division's Col Chris Cotton, and 12 Wing Shearwater's LCol Lauri Darras, CO of 406 Squadron. The cheque signifies the combined savings for PSP Halifax/Shearwater and H&R MFRC from the over 5,000 hours volunteers gave in support of military members and their families over the past year.

CAF Bases and Wings acknowledged the contributions of volunteers, along with the H&R MFRC and PSP Halifax/Shearwater demonstrated in their thank you letters to all volunteers.

In his letter, Capt (N) Williams referenced the challenging times faced this past year and the impact the volunteers had. "Hundreds of Defence Team members and their families have volunteered thousands of hours providing hope and smiles to sailors, soldiers, aviators and their families just when they needed it most," he wrote.



A cheque for \$71,743 was presented by Acting PSP Manager Mike Almond and H&R MFRC Volunteer Coordinator Jill Clarke to representatives from CFB Halifax, 12 Wing Shearwater, and 5th Canadian Division.

SUBMITTED

12 Wing Commanding Officer, Col James Hawthorne, recognized volunteers in his letter to them. "Your support to military members and their families is vital to the success of the Canadian Armed Forces and I know that your work is especially appreciated by the members of 12 Wing."

BGen Roch Pelletier, Commander of 5th Canadian Division, echoed Capt (N) Williams and Col Hawthorne's sentiments on the effect volunteers have had. "Your contribution has left a positive impact on our military families, and would not have been possible without your commitment and dedication to our community."

Almond, on behalf of PSP Halifax, encouraged volunteers to reflect on their contributions. "You should be truly proud of your commitment toward promoting esprit de corps and participation in the CAF recreation programs

and MFRC events," he said.

Shelley Hopkins, Executive Director of the H&R MFRC, thanked volunteers for their dedication to supporting military families. "Although you have had limited opportunities to volunteer over this past year, I must acknowledge that whenever we did make a request for volunteers, you have all offered to step up in support of military families."

This year, in lieu of hosting an in-person event, due to COVID-19 guidelines, last month volunteers received a letter and a CINEPLEX movie code that they can use to watch a 'new' premier movie from the comfort of their home. It is a different way of celebrating their efforts and has been well-received.

"The H&R MFRC recognizes the generous support of CANEX for sponsoring this annual Volunteer Recognition Event," Hopkins added.

Vote for your favourite youth reporter story

By CFMWS,

Support the next generation of writers. Vote for your favourite youth reporter story between now and May 31st and you can set one young person up with a grand prize package, including a \$2,500 scholarship.

Every fall, Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Newspapers* invites young people, 13 to 18-years-old, from military families and Cadets, to enter our Youth Reporter Competition. This year's competition is sponsored by Adobe.

Aspiring reporters are asked to submit a story idea about something important in their life or community. CAF Newspapers received more than 50 applications from CAF-affiliated youth across Canada and the world.

In late January, a selection committee of CAF Newspaper editors reviewed applications to select six story ideas with the most editorial merit. Originality and social impact are key considerations.

One month later, six finalists were contacted and given a deadline to develop their story idea into an original article. All stories are featured in a special PLAY e-zine edition, published on CAFconnection.ca and in CAF newspapers across Canada.

Your vote takes them to the next level.

"The youth reporter competition gives young people affiliated with the CAF a chance to have their voices heard and to develop their writing acumen," says

Ryan Cane, Editor in Chief and National Recreation Manager for PSP. "As a community, we learn a lot by listening to stories that are meaningful to the next generation, and it's great that CAF Newspapers offers this opportunity annually."

Now it's your turn to connect with these young writers. Read the top six stories and vote for your favourite for a chance to win a participation prize. Voting is open until May 31, 2021 (closing at midnight EDT), at CAFconnection.ca/YouthReporter.

*CAF Newspapers are managed by Personnel Support Programs (PSP), a division of Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS).

**Voting rules apply

YOUTH REPORTER COMPETITION

presented by
CAF NEWSPAPERS

Between 1- 31 May 2021
vote for your favourite story
for a Chance to Win a Prize!*

The Youth Reporter with the most votes will win a grand prize package and scholarship valued at \$2,500!

*Voting rules apply. More details are available at:
CAFCONNECTION.CA/YOUTHREPORTER



Naval officer trades cruise ships for warships

By RCN PA,

Lt(N) Joe Cheng was 42 years old when he joined the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN).

While that might be considered a late career move for some, for Lt(N) Cheng it was a natural progression from a job he held for eight years as an officer aboard Holland America Line cruise ships.

"I think this is where my love of the seas came from, having acquired over 2,500 sea days with them," he says. "I was also part of the team that brought out two different first-class vessels for Holland America Line."

This experience came in handy when Lt(N) Cheng joined the crew of the RCN's newest warship, Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Harry DeWolf*, where he is a bridge watch keeper.

He was one of the first aboard when *Harry DeWolf* was handed over to the Navy from shipbuilders in July 2020, first taking it out on a proficiency sail around Newfoundland and then proving its ice capabilities near Baffin Island earlier this year.

"The realization of being a part of and seeing the fruition of all our work was truly majestic," he says. "It was iconic to see it sail under another Canadian icon of unity and connection, the Confederation Bridge in P.E.I., and a bigger highlight to be given the con on the bridge to do so."

He adds that highlights on that deployment included watching *Harry DeWolf* deftly handled in medium first-year ice; breaking through and stopping in an ice floe to watch a family of polar bears wander past ahead of the

vessel; and seeing the Northern Lights appear over the ship in the evenings.

For a naval reservist whose home unit is HMCS *Discovery* in Vancouver, it was a long way from home.

But Lt(N) Cheng joined the RCN to serve and give back "to this amazing country."

Along the way he has faced some challenges, but was able to overcome them by keeping an open mind and a positive, can-do attitude.

"As a reservist, one is constantly balancing their civilian employment, family needs and RCN training and readiness needs. Often these demands all peak at the same time and this becomes increasingly difficult with requirements to go on course for several months at a time."

After completing his Maritime Surface/Sub-Surface Operator and Naval Warfare Officer courses and qualifications, he was posted from the West Coast to Halifax.

"It was tremendously challenging and daunting to move to a new city, establish a brand new life and leave my home, family, girlfriend, dogs and an established career behind, along with the network and support of the community I've built up over four decades in British Columbia."

He also had to leave his civilian job, knowing that it may no longer be there for him in the future.

A second challenge he encountered after joining the RCN was the tremendous learning curve, not only in knowledge, but also in culture and how business is done. But he found that listening to colleagues with an



Lt(N) Joe Cheng on the jetty in front of HMCS *Harry DeWolf*

RCN

open mind, seeking advice and developing his own conclusions helped him move forward with confidence.

"I feel this is critical when we are bringing out a brand new class of ship with new technologies and new ways of doing things in an ever changing climate," Lt(N) Cheng says.

He says the best part of being in the RCN is the regular challenges every day brings, combined with the people he works with.

He recommends that anyone interested in joining the Navy, no matter what their age, do some research. Look at the different trades and their description carefully, talk to those people who have done it and have frank, candid conversations about the job, lifestyle, compensation and rewards.

He also believes the Naval Reserve

is a great way to start a career in the RCN or Canadian Armed Forces. While it's normal to choose a trade prior to enrollment, starting out in the Reserves and completing basic training is a great way to learn about the Navy, the people and roles prior to fully committing to a trade and further training, while assessing time commitments and life balance requirements.

"I have found the sailors and leadership in the Naval Reserve to be exceptionally good and supportive in these capacities and the individuals are motivated to do well and assist each other to succeed."

Lt(N) Cheng plans to stay in the RCN for the foreseeable future "for the simple reason that every day is an adventure."

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A member of the ship's dive team aboard HMCS Winnipeg conducts a diving exercise with the ship's embarked CH-148 Cyclone in the fall of 2020. HMCS WINNIPEG, CAF PHOTO

Shared experiences connect Navy ship's divers across generations

By Ryan Melanson,
Trident Staff

Training to be a ship's diver is one of the most physically and mentally demanding challenges that a Royal Canadian Navy sailor can take on. Candidates spend six weeks being pushed to the limits by senior instructors – this includes intense daily physical training, frequent exposure to new and uncomfortable scenarios, and the expectation that prospective divers can grasp difficult new skills and concepts in a short period of time.

Yet for LS Jeff Hines, who completed his ship's diver course in 2016, those challenges weren't enough to keep him from falling in love with the trade.

"It's probably some of the best training you're ever going to get in the Navy. It's the best course I've been on, hands down," he said.

inspection and clearance diver roles. It suggests that it takes a certain type of person to excel in the role, someone who finds excitement in plunging into the dark depths of the ocean to examine a ship's hull, make small repairs or support operations in any number of different ways.

"You need to have grit to get through the course and do the job," said Bill Lee, a former RCN member who graduated from his course back in 1973 on his second attempt, after a shoulder injury forced him to step away from his first course three years earlier.

Lee recalled frantic mornings during his training - being woken and immediately jumping into wetsuit gear for a swim to Shannon Park and back - all before the first dive of the day. He also

described diving in Halifax Harbour with a blackout mask, relying on the diving tender to signal bells and pulls that attached the diver and tender with a rope, to locate objects that had been tossed in.

Today, the training for new ship's divers has been slightly modified, with more focus on the practical skills and training needed. But this doesn't mean diver training has gone soft, explains LCdr Neville Lockyer, the current Commanding Officer of Fleet Diving Unit (Atlantic). Recruits can still expect a very difficult and physical course,

though hopefully with fewer injuries or unnecessary burnout. The ratio of those who successfully complete the course, compared to those who don't, also proves it's no walk in the park.

"There still absolutely has to be

a certain amount of adversity that people have to put up with in order to do this job," LCdr Lockyer said. "You need to have a certain amount of toughness to you – the environment you're dealing with isn't kind, there's pressure and there's cold and darkness and other factors.

The shared experiences of pushing through difficult training, and the unique stories that come from diving on deployments across the world, help create a camaraderie among current and former ship's divers. And for those who complete the training course together, or serve together as part of a small ship's diver team, the bonds can last a lifetime.

Lee, and his friend Moe Muise, another former RCN diver, met on their first ship's diver course 50 years ago, and are still connected today. They're also part of a newly formed ship's divers group that has so far brought together 250 current and former divers on Facebook. They share photos and stories, keep up with the latest Navy news, and they've even worked with ring manufacturer Jostens to develop a new Navy Ship's Divers ring that's now available to purchase for all those who've served in the role. The first rings were ordered in 2019, and are now proudly worn by some of the group's founding members.

"There's a special connection between all of us, and we're absolutely looking to recruit more ship's divers, both from the past and from the present, to be a part of our group," Muise said, adding that their colleague former RCN ship's diver and clearance diver Jack Lewis also deserved credit for being a diligent moderator and helping to bring the Facebook group together.



A ship's diver jumps into the water from the Dive Tender Granby, which will be familiar to those who did their training in the 1960s to early 1970s.

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And for RCN members who haven't entered the diving world yet, but who may be interested in becoming a ship's diver, the advice is to embrace the challenges and difficulties, because the payoff is worth it.

"It's not easy, but you build up that confidence, and then there's a brotherhood that gets built along with that," LS Hines said.

Muise echoed those comments.

"It was the best thing I did for my career, I'd do it all over again," he said.

For more information on the ship's divers group and the new ship's divers ring, visit "Royal Canadian Navy Ship's Divers Group" on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/405636316825591> and <http://Jostenscanada.com/RCNSD.HTML>



A member of HMCS Halifax's dive team gives a thumbs up indicating no issues during Operation REASSURANCE in the Fjords of Norway in February 2021.

S1 BRYAN UNDERWOOD, CAF PHOTO

"You'll work very hard, but you have fun while you're doing it."

It's a common sentiment among most who've spent time as naval divers, whether at the ship's diver level, or in the more advanced port



Newly minted ship's divers graduate at FDU(A)

The latest crop of RCN divers graduated from their six-week Ship's Diver course at Fleet Diving Unit (Atlantic) recently. Despite the difficulties added by COVID-19 restrictions, staff at FDU(A) have now completed multiple Ship's Diver courses, using smaller cohorts, separate meal and shower times, and other steps to reduce potential disease spread. The six-week course is common to all diving-related occupations/sub-occupations in the Canadian Armed Forces. For information on how to become a Ship's Team Diver, visit the FDU(A) page on the Defence Team Intranet and consult with your Chain of Command.

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RCN Ship's Diver Ring Testimonials

David Carson - I am very pleased with my Ships Diver ring, I am thrilled with the design and the fit and finish could not be better. I have attached a photo taken at depth.

William (Bill) Lee – Josten's has made this old school RCN Ship's Diver very proud to be part of this elite group of Sailors.

John Abraham – Of all the rings I own this is the one I will wear the most because it tells my diving story with quality and detail. Bravo Zulu Josten's!

Maurice (Moe) Muise – It was of great pleasure to work with the Josten's Team in the design, production and delivery phases of our RCN Ship's Diver Ring. The quality is a 10 out of 10. BZ Josten's!

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SPORTS & FITNESS

Greasing the groove: small sets for big progress

By Gage Smith,
Fitness and Sports Instructor, CFB Halifax

If your objective was to learn to play the violin, perfect your tennis serve, or improve your free throw percentage, how would you go about improving your skill? Would you practice once or twice a week at an extreme intensity, or would you take a more deliberate and conservative approach and practice often, with bouts both short and long? Clearly the second strategy would yield better progress on these skills, but how does this relate to exercise and physical development? Believe it or not, some movements respond well to this unorthodox approach that has become known as “greasing the groove”. This approach relies on very frequent, very submaximal sets of a given movement or movements that you are trying to improve. Let’s take a closer look at how and when to apply this strategy, as well as when it might be best to take another approach.

Greasing the groove works best with low stress, minimal equipment bodyweight movements. My best advice is to only use this approach with either the pushup OR the pullup, and to account for the additional volume appropriate in your main training sessions. While some have had success using this approach with other movements such as pistol squats or kettlebell presses, these movements present too many variables for me to advise using the grease the groove approach in good conscience. Using this approach with bodyweight movements, however, allows to maximize frequency and deliberate, specific practice without overreaching. This can be a fantastic strategy for those needing to improve these movements for an occupational PT test, or anyone trying to keep from going stir crazy in lockdown. I would definitely avoid this approach with any barbell movements, though something very skill intensive with a low demand on recovery, like a

handstand hold, would be a great fit.

An effective greasing the groove approach can take many different forms. Someone with a very high max set of pull ups or pushups may be able to make great progress with one or two near max sets per day (morning and evening would suit most people’s scheduling just fine), while someone struggling to perform 2 or 3 pull ups would be much better served to do a single rep as frequently as possible. The rules here are simple, albeit a little vague, and they do require some customization.

Perform the movement often. Perform an amount of reps that feels like work, but is nowhere near difficult or intense enough to impede recovery. If in doubt, do less reps. The frequency is the key here. You would be shocked by how much weekly volume you can accumulate by setting small challenges for yourself. You could perform 5 or 10 pushups every waking hour, or perform a small set of pullups (30-50% of your max) every time you pass by your doorway pullup bar. These small, low stress sets are just a drop in the bucket. But the bucket fills up over time, and before you know it, you’ve made considerable changes to both your physique and your performance.



Physical training at sea aboard HMCS *Harry DeWolf*

HMCS Harry DeWolf members perform lunges during a flight deck PT session on May 2. The ship is currently conducting warm weather trials in waters off Puerto Rico.

CPL SIMON ARCAND, CAF PHOTO





Using exercise as medicine: S1 Jack Brownell

By Joanie Veitch,
Trident Staff

After a severe injury during basic training ten years ago, Stadacona Band member S1 Jack Brownell drew from his years of music and academic training to help him get through a long rehabilitation process — that and the PSP Reconditioning team at CFB Halifax, whose support went far beyond simply setting him up with an exercise program.

An accomplished musician, S1 Brownell holds a Ph.D in musical performance. Working with the Stadacona Band as a civilian before joining the band as a member of the Royal Canadian Navy in 2011, S1 Brownell played with professional brass quintets internationally and as the principal tubist with Symphony Nova Scotia in his earlier career. He has also taught at several universities, most recently serving on the faculty at Dalhousie University.

After his injury, he worried about his ability to work in any capacity, musical or otherwise.

“I remember back then, there were times I didn’t think I would ever get better but the PSP staff were always there; they believed in me long before I could believe in myself again,” he said. “These are the folks who know what’s hurting and know how hard you’re trying; they understand. When you’re

going through something like this, that understanding is everything.

S1 Brownell was halfway through basic training at Saint-Jean, Quebec, when a training exercise on uneven ground caused severe injury to his lower back and left hip, forcing him to return home — his training incomplete and a long stretch of rehabilitation ahead of him.

As a musician, S1 Brownell is well-versed in the rigours of practice and repetition, finding parallels between the strict practice regimen music requires and the tough rehabilitation process he went through following his injury.

“Classical musicians are like athletes in the sense that they go through extremes in training and discipline, training their muscles over and over and over... sometimes not seeing the results of their efforts for months or even years. I know that and it helped me a lot as I went through this,” he said.

Even with that perspective, however, S1 Brownell reflects on that time of injury and recovery as one of the most stressful he’s ever been through, crediting Joint Personnel Support Unit staff and trainers at the PSP Reconditioning Program for getting him through rehabilitation, enabling



S1 Jack Brownell of the Stadacona Band
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him to maintain his position with the Stadacona Band.

Following his injury, S1 Brownell first spent time in physiotherapy before going to the PSP Reconditioning Centre — where he went every day, for two hours a day, for more than three years. The improvements were incremental at first, but as the months passed, he could see that he was on the road to recovery.

In January 2015, at 52 years of age, S1 Brownell went back to Saint-Jean to complete basic training. “I’m sure when they saw me they just thought I was this old broken guy...most of the recruits were 18- to 22-year-olds,” he laughed. “When it came time for graduation, I wasn’t the fastest, I wasn’t the strongest...but I won the award for the male that worked the hardest. I still look at that from time to time.”

S1 Brownell is still a regular at the PSP Reconditioning Centre, joking that at times he sees the trainers there more than he sees his work colleagues.

Currently in recovery from surgery unrelated to his injury, he’s back in the PSP program, working to regain fitness and function to prepare for the FORCE test, a prerequisite for all CAF members.

Even with the various COVID restrictions that affect the in-person program at the centre, the PSP folks have set him up with a phone app with exercises for him to follow every day. As part of his cardio program, he works out on an elliptical machine at home — watching episodes of TV programs to stay motivated.

“I went through the entire West Wing and I’m working on House now,” he laughed. “I like the oldies.”

The PSP Reconditioning program is a fitness program designed to meet the demands of serving CAF members that are dealing with injury and illness. For more information, speak to your doctor or contact PSP Reconditioning Manager Kerianne Willigar at 902-402-4890 or Kerianne.Willigar@forces.gc.ca.

Face of Base: Deshawn Davison

By CFB Halifax Public Affairs,



Deshawn Davison
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Meet this week’s #FaceofBaseHFX, Deshawn Davison! Deshawn works at Base Executive Services (BES) as a Training Coordinator, where he administers experiential learning opportunities and offers training support to various units at CFB Halifax. In this role, Deshawn supports senior management in learning-focused event planning, such as BES Professional Development Days, which he is very proud of. He also enjoys finding creative solutions in his work, like when he developed an online training program last year for summer students who could not physically work on Base property due to the pandemic.

Born and raised in Dartmouth, Deshawn attended Prince Andrew High School and went on to enroll at Nova Scotia Community College for a diploma in Business Administration.

While studying, Deshawn was inspired to join DND after discussing work opportunities with some classmates and attending a DND job fair in Windsor Park. Today, he’s a big fan of his colleagues and working at the Base: “For anyone considering a career at DND, CAF or RCN – if you are looking for an organization that genuinely cares about its employees and members, recognizes its flaws and strives to better itself – look no further!” A fun fact about Deshawn? He played competitive baseball and hockey for over 10 years, which allowed him to travel throughout Canada and the U.S. as a young athlete. As one of our Defence Team members who is still early in his career, Deshawn is part of the next generation of leaders and change-makers at the Base – and we are thrilled to have him onboard!