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Tribute to naval aviators

Aviators and sailors paraded at the Halifax Memorial on August 8 for a memorial service honouring all Canadian naval aviators who lost their lives in conflict. The ceremony included a special tribute to 15 Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve members who died during the Second World War while serving with the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm. Among those fallen aviators was Lieutenant Robert Hampton Gray, namesake of the Navy's newest Arctic and Offshore Patrol Vessel. Members of the Gray family laid wreaths alongside Royal Canadian Navy and Royal Canadian Air Force leaders following the service.

CPL CONNOR BENNETT





Training centre renamed for submariner who made ultimate sacrifice

By Nathan Stone,
Trident Staff

Submariners training at Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Halifax will now learn in the Petty Officer 2nd Class (PO2) Laverne Donald McLeod building.

PO2 McLeod began his naval career in 1949 and served with distinction aboard several Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) ships, deployed during the Korean War and lost his life in a submarine accident in 1955.

The PO2 Laverne Donald McLeod building (Stadacona S100) is home to a Submarine Training Hub that allows RCN members to achieve operational readiness and technical excellence needed to work at sea.

The building was officially renamed in an outdoor ceremony on Porteus Field on July 29. S100 staff and members of the Canadian Submarine Force (CSF) were joined by family members of PO2 McLeod, MLA John Lohr and Commodore Jacob French, Commander Canadian Fleet Atlantic, for the occasion.

Captain(N) (Capt(N)) Alex Kooiman, Commander CSF, hosted the renaming ceremony.

"Naming this building after Petty Officer Laverne McLeod is a fitting tribute to the man who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our country," said Capt(N) Kooiman, "his ultimate sacrifice secured a safer future for generations of submariners at sea."

PO2 McLeod first joined the RCN as a Naval Reservist in London, Ontario, continuing his career at CFB Cornwallis and aboard former HMC Ships *Ontario*, *Athabaskan*, *La Hulloise*, *New Liskeard* and *Huron*. In January 1955, he volunteered for the submarine service in the United Kingdom and graduated in May 1955 as a Torpedo Detector 3rd Class.

PO2 McLeod was killed on June 16, 1955 while on loan to the Royal Navy

and serving aboard His Majesty's Ship (HMS) *Sidon*. A faulty torpedo exploded in the launch tube while the submarine was alongside in Portland, England.

The inquiry into the deaths of PO2 McLeod and twelve of his shipmates led to improved submarine safety standards in both Canada and the United Kingdom and caused the discontinuation of the specific torpedo type that caused the explosion.

Family members of PO2 McLeod who attended the ceremony included one of his daughters, Lynda Fielder, along with grandchildren Shani Talbot and Todd Liebelt. Shani spoke on behalf of the family, thanking the RCN for a "deeply moving and memorable" event.

In an emotional address, she said the recognition of her grandfather's legacy "means more than words can express."

Equipped with advanced simulation systems, the S100 training hub is used by submariners of all ranks and offers training from the first required certifications up to highly specialized qualifications. The facility includes trainers focused on ship and machinery control, weapons handling, autopilot for Victoria-class subs, and more.

The Ship Control Trainer is at the heart of the facility; it helps keep submariners alive at sea by teaching them how to safely navigate dangerous situations with the use of life-like simulations.

"By dedicating this building after PO2 McLeod, we keep his memory alive within our Canadian Submarine Force family," said Capt(N) Kooiman.

"To his family, we recognize your loss. This building stands as a lasting tribute to a brave sailor and a cherished member of our community, we will never forget."



Canadian Submarine Force Commander Capt(N) Alex Kooiman hosted relatives of the late PO2 Laverne Donald McLeod for the official renaming of Stadacona's submarine training facility in his honour. From left, Capt(N) Kooiman, Lynda Fielder, Todd Liebelt and Shani Talbot.

CPL MITCHELL PAQUETTE



The facility, now known as the Petty Officer 2nd Class (PO2) Laverne Donald McLeod building, houses several advanced submarine trainers and simulators.

CPL MITCHELL PAQUETTE

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CANADIAN SUBMARINE FORCE

Checking in on HMCS Windsor

During his recent visit to the Halifax area, Minister of National Defence David J. McGuinty was welcomed aboard His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) Windsor as the submarine continues its extended docking work period after a busy sailing period through 2024 and early 2025. From left, Fleet Maintenance Facility Cape Scott Commanding Officer Capt(N) Éric McCallum, Minister McGuinty, Royal Canadian Navy Commander Vice-Admiral Angus Topshee, and HMCS Windsor's Lieutenant(N) René De Haitre. The Minister's visit also included stops at other facilities throughout CFB Halifax (complete with boat trip in Halifax Harbour), as well as a tour of Irving Shipbuilding's Halifax Shipyard.



CPL MITCHELL PAQUETTE



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CPO1 André Normand is seen aboard HMCS St. John's while deployed on Operation Reassurance.

CPL ANNABELLE MARCOUX



2,300 Days at Sea: CPO1 André Normand

By Capt Matt Rowe



Chief Petty Officer, 1st Class (CPO1) André Normand received his gold anchor years ago, a recognition from the Royal Canadian Navy for those who

have spent considerable time at sea. The anchors awarded are in ascending colours: gun metal, bronze, silver and gold. The gold anchor represents more than 1,460 days at sea – four years of time.

CPO1 Normand has seen more sunsets than he can count while at sea. Not as many as his days sailed, but as many as he had time for in his 2,300 days.

Currently the Coxswain (Cox'n) of His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *St. John's*, CPO1 Normand just achieved a massive milestone in his career and a rarity among sailors. On July 22nd, 2025, while deployed on Operation Reassurance, he spent his 2,300th day at sea – that's over six years of time.

A career that started in 1994, when he first enrolled as a Naval Combat Infor-

mation Operator, almost ended after just four years.

However, his "retirement" only lasted 10 months when he decided to enroll once again.

The sea was calling his name, and he knew he couldn't leave it behind. He went on to serve aboard HMC Ships *Halifax*, *Montréal*, *Ville de Québec* and held various positions ashore in recruiting and Sea Training.

"I don't know if there is a way of explaining it. Being at sea is what I like to do. It's what I love. It makes me feel alive to be at sea," said the Cox'n when asked why he decided to return to the Navy.

It's also the crew he works with. For CPO1 Normand, one of the best parts of the job is the interactions he has with the crew, learning their background, experience, goals, ambitions and providing mentorship.

"When they are down, I bring them back up," the Cox'n affirms. "That's the aspect I like the most."

He is not entirely alone in this achievement, he admits. "There are a few, but we are a dying breed, the old guys are retiring now."

Like any member of the Canadian Armed Forces, the Cox'n credits support from family for being able to have such a long, storied career under his belt.

"What you need is the support of your family back home. Without the support of my family it would be impossible."

There will be many more sea days for

the CPO1 Normand. Day 2,301 will be another day doing what he loves.

St. John's has just transited the Strait of Gibraltar to join up with NATO allies in the Mediterranean on Operation Reassurance for the next five months.

Five more months of sunsets and a love for the sea.





Former RCN officer, Air Force Commander honoured at Hometown Heroes event

By Trident Staff

The first and only Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) officer to command Canada's Air Force has been honoured for his lifetime of service to Canada.

Lieutenant-General (LGen) (ret'd) Larry Ashley was recognized during a ceremony at the Shearwater Aviation Museum on August 9, where friends and family gathered alongside senior leaders to recognize his distinguished career. Among those on hand were Defence Minister David McGuinty; Vice-Admiral Angus Topshee, Commander RCN; Lieutenant-General JaMie Speiser-Blanchet, Commander of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF); and Nova Scotia Lieutenant Governor the Honourable Mike Savage.

The recognition came through Parks Canada's Hometown Heroes program, which highlights Canadians whose military or civilian contributions have left a lasting mark. Since its launch in 2015, the program has grown to honour more than 140 individuals across the country.

LGen (ret'd) Ashley's career spanned more than three decades and included significant contributions to Canada's maritime aviation community. A naval cadet turned helicopter pilot, LGen (ret'd) Ashley was credited for helping to pioneer the use of shipborne helicopters, laying the foundation for a maritime air capability that remains central to naval operations today. He served as a pilot aboard numerous RCN ships, and even helped develop the Beartrap system used to safely land helicopters on destroy-er-sized ships at sea.

He later commanded two naval air squadrons before an appointment as Base Commander at what was then named Canadian Forces Base (CFB)

Shearwater. He served in senior posts with Air Command in Winnipeg and contributed to NATO efforts in Europe, working as a program manager to bring the new Airborne Warning and Control System into service. His rise to Commander of the Air Force in 1986 remains the only time a former naval officer has held the position.

Present-day Canadian Armed Forces leaders described his accomplishments as both innovative and enduring. VAdm Topshee said Ashley's service "broke new ground and built enduring bridges between our naval and air forces," while LGen Speiser-Blanchet highlighted his "lasting impact on the maritime helicopter community and naval aviation."

Outside of uniform, Ashley gave decades of his time to public service. He has been a longtime supporter of the Shearwater Aviation Museum, a founding director of the Canada Science and Technology Museum Foundation, and a board member with Bytown Brigantine, which provides sail training opportunities for underprivileged youth. He was also recognized nationally with several honours, including his appointment as a Commander of the Order of Military Merit, and receiving the Queen's Golden and Diamond Jubilee Medals.

LGen (ret'd) Ashley said he was deeply moved to be recognized in this way.

"Never in my wildest thoughts did I think that in my 88th year, after a lifetime of service to the country that I love deeply, I would be standing here before Canada's Minister of Defence, and the Commanders of both the Navy and the Air Force, trying to say thank you for this honour."



LGen (ret'd) Larry Ashley (third from left), was joined by government officials, military leaders and dignitaries at the Hometown Heroes event.

PARKS CANADA



The event was held at 12 Wing Shearwater, where LGen (ret'd) Ashley was posted for many key moments of his career.

PARKS CANADA



Parks Canada President Ron Hallman helped LGen (ret'd) Ashley unveil the display piece created as part of the Hometown Heroes recognition.

PARKS CANADA

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Gordon Stirrett
WEALTH MANAGEMENT



RCN's sixth and final AOPV officially named in Halifax



The ship's sponsor, Jane Underwood, a descendant of Robert Hampton Gray, officially named the ship, which included the traditional breaking of a bottle of sparkling wine against the bow.

CPL MITCHELL PAQUETTE

August 9 marked the official Naming Ceremony of the future HMCS Robert Hampton Gray, the sixth and final Arctic and Offshore Patrol Vessel (AOPV) built by Irving Shipbuilding for the Royal Canadian Navy.

CPL MITCHELL PAQUETTE

VAdm Topshee presented a gift to Jim Irving, co-CEO of Irving Shipbuilding parent company J.D. Irving Limited: a naval ensign that has been flown on all six AOPVs.

CPL MITCHELL PAQUETTE



Members of the future ship's company of HMCS Robert Hampton Gray formed up alongside the ship following the ceremony.

CPL MITCHELL PAQUETTE



Guests for the official Naming Ceremony included VAdm Angus Topshee, Commander RCN; LGen Jaime Speiser-Blanchet, Commander RCAF; David McGuinty, Minister of National Defence; Joël Lightbound, Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement; and H.E. Kanji Yamanouchi, Japanese Ambassador to Canada; along with descendants of Robert Hampton Gray, RCN sailors, and Halifax Shipyard shipbuilders.

CPL MITCHELL PAQUETTE



HMCS *William Hall* sails north as part of CAF’s Arctic show of force

By Trident Staff

His Majesty’s Canadian Ship (HMCS) *William Hall* is heading north as the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) deploys to the Arctic by land, air and sea to reinforce Canadian sovereignty in the region.

William Hall sailed from Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Halifax on August 18 on a two-month Arctic deployment to Operation Nanook that will include a sail through the Northwest Passage.

Operation Nanook is an annual mission meant to provide a visible CAF presence in the Arctic and to display Canada’s ability to respond to emergencies and security threats. It takes place each year across Yukon, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Labrador and includes participation from all CAF elements.

William Hall will operate alongside the Canadian Coast Guard as well as ships from allied navies including France, Germany and Denmark. The

ship will also visit Rankin Inlet as part of a continued effort to strengthen the CAF’s relationship with Indigenous peoples in the region. In 2024, HMCS *William Hall* became affiliated with the Kivalliq region of the Inuit Nunangat during a ceremony in Rankin Inlet.

“HMCS *William Hall*’s mission will be comprised of several phases. The first will be military interoperability, strengthening relations with allied nations and other Government of Canada agencies that operate in the far north. The second will be cooperation with the Canadian Coast Guard and carrying out presence and domain awareness patrols in the region. Lastly, the ship will focus on connecting with our affiliated region,” said Commander Scott Kelemen, Commanding Officer of *William Hall*.

In an August 18 press release, Rear Admiral (RAdm) Josée Kurtz stressed the importance of Operation Nanook.

“*William Hall* will enhance our presence in the North, strengthen interoperability with our allies, and foster meaningful engagement with northern Indigenous communities. This mission reflects our responsibility to uphold sovereignty, security, and collaboration in one of the most strategically important regions of our nation.”

While HMCS *William Hall* is the RCN’s latest Arctic and Offshore Patrol Vessel to make the northern voyage, it is only one piece of a much broader CAF effort in the region this summer and fall.

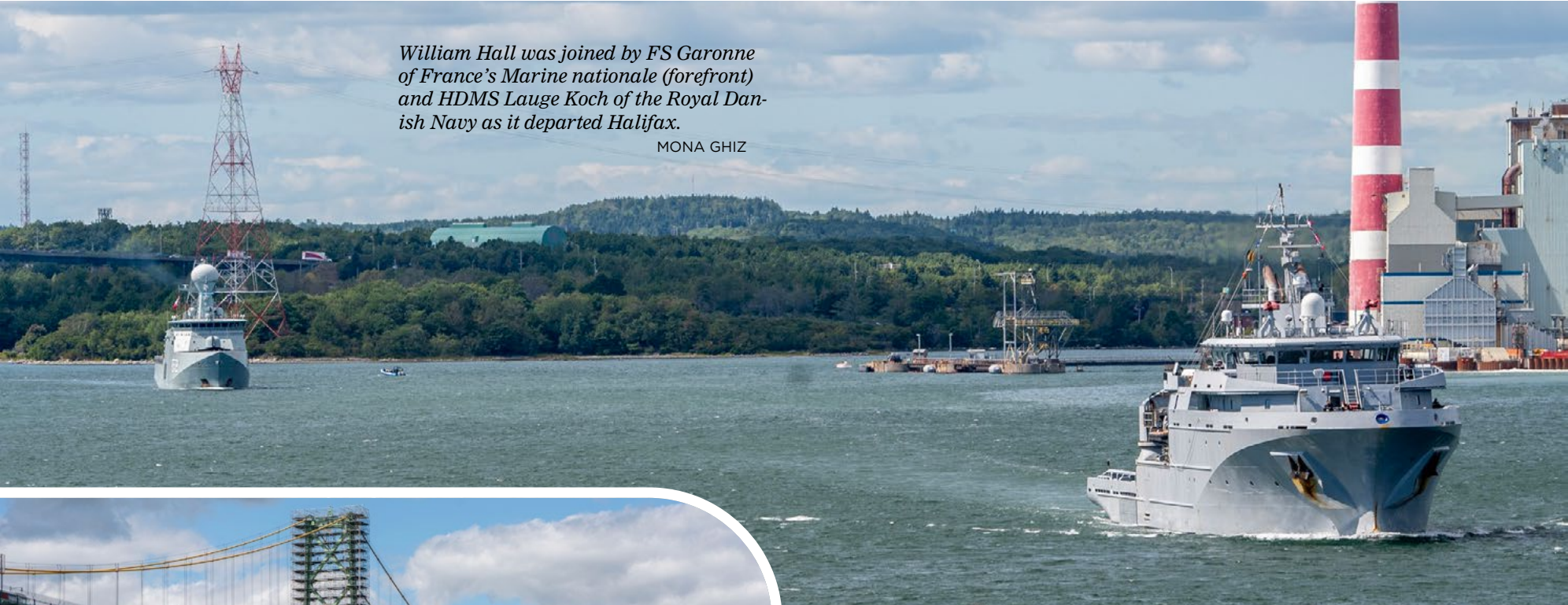
In the Western Arctic, HMCS *Regina*, HMCS *Max Bernays*, and Motor Vessel (MV) *Asterix* have sailed from Esquimalt on Operation Latitude, working with U.S. forces in the Alaskan theatre and supported by Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) CP-140 Aurora and CC-150 Polaris aircraft. Their deployment will include participation in the U.S.-led Exercise Northern Edge 25.

Other activity includes Northern Arctic patrols by Canadian Rangers alongside members of the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry, with RCAF support.

The RCN, RCAF, Canadian Coast Guard, Canadian Army, and Canadian Forces Special Operations Command have all committed assets and personnel to participate in Arctic operations and exercises this fall and summer

Chief of the Defence Staff, General Jennie Carignan, emphasized in an August 10 press release that maintaining a continual presence in the Arctic is essential for deterring potential threats and upholding Canadian sovereignty. By improving domain awareness in the North, the CAF ensures it remains prepared to defend both Canada and the broader North American continent, she said.

HMCS *William Hall* is expected to return to Halifax in late October.



William Hall was joined by FS *Garonne* of France’s Marine nationale (forefront) and HDMS *Lauge Koch* of the Royal Danish Navy as it departed Halifax.

MONA GHIZ



HMCS *William Hall* left Halifax on August 18 for an Arctic deployment as part of Operation Nanook.

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HMCS *Shawinigan*'s final CO relinquishes command



Lieutenant-Commander (LCdr) Andrew Foran, outgoing Commanding Officer of His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Shawinigan*, speaks during a Relinquishment of Command ceremony held on July 30. The Royal Canadian Navy is preparing to pay off eight of its Kingston-class vessels during formal ceremonies this fall. East coast ships to be paid off will include *Shawinigan*, *Summerside*, *Goose Bay*, *Glace Bay* and *Kingston*.

CPL CONNOR BENNETT



HMCS Shawinigan first appeared on the cover of *Trident* for the June 5, 1997 issue, just days before the ship's commissioning ceremony. *Shawinigan*'s very first Commanding Officer, LCdr André Boisjoli, was joined at the commissioning by then Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, who was born and raised in *Shawinigan*, QC.

TRIDENT ARCHIVE

HMCS Shawinigan (right) most recently deployed to Operation Reassurance through the summer and fall of 2024, operating with Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 1 (SNMCMG1) in the Baltic Sea.

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Combined ceremony highlights 12 Wing leadership transition

By Ryan Melanson,
Trident Staff

The maritime aviation community gathered at 12 Wing Shearwater on August 9 for a unique moment in the Wing's history, as both the Wing Commander and Wing Chief Warrant Officer passed their leadership responsibilities to new successors in a combined Change of Command and Change of Appointment ceremony.

Held inside the 423 Maritime Helicopter Squadron hangar, the event marked a transition of senior leadership at a Wing that plays a critical role for both the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN). With the weekend already filled with significant RCAF and RCN milestones and com-

memorations, the occasion drew senior leaders from both services, including RCN Commander Vice-Admiral Angus Topshee and RCAF Commander Lieutenant-General Jamie Speiser-Blanchet.

The decision to combine the ceremonies was fitting, given the strong partnership that outgoing 12 Wing Commander Colonel (Col) David Holmes and Wing Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) Kevin Wezenbeek forged during their time in office. Both leaders spoke about the bond that developed between them, describing both professional respect and genuine friendship, while also reflecting on the importance of the CO/CWO relationship as the foundation of leadership at any RCAF Wing.

That spirit of teamwork was a central theme throughout the ceremony. CWO Wezenbeek pointed to people-focused initiatives like the 12 Wing Innovation Program and Junior Member Advisory Council as leading to some of the most meaningful moments of his appointment.

He'll soon be commissioning as an RCAF officer and moving to a new role within 12 Wing, as CWO James McCarron steps in as the new Wing CWO.

CWO McCarron comes to Shearwater after recently serving as Formation Chief for Canadian Element NORAD in Colorado Springs. He thanked mentors and colleagues for their support in guidance through his career, leading him to a role where he now hopes to foster innovation and inclusivity across the wing.

After presiding over the official changeover of Wing CWOs, Col Holmes spoke about the successes and challenges that shaped his time in command of 12 Wing. He noted the uncertainty surrounding the CH-148 Cyclone after the helicopters were temporarily grounded earlier this year, but also commended his team for successfully receiving some of the last new Cyclones, building on capabilities, and efficiently delivering frontline aircrew and technicians for deployments.

"I was especially proud last fall when all six HELAIRDETs (Helicopter Air Detachments) were deployed at the same time, a first for the Cyclone era. This was enabled by the work of our 12 OSS (Operational Support Squadron) and our HQ teams," Col Holmes said.

The Wing's new Commander is no stranger to Shearwater; Col Tara Willis is back at 12 Wing after several previous postings and deployments, including as Deputy 12 Wing Operations Officer and later as the Commanding Officer of 12 Air Maintenance Squadron. It was noted that much of her career has been spent supporting the CH-124 Sea King and then introducing the CH-148 Cyclone helicopters. Other career highlights include a deployment in 2016 as a Military Liaison Officer with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, and to Mali in 2021 as the Canadian Task Force Commander of Operation Presence.

"The world we live in is increasingly dangerous. The rules-based international order is being questioned, and we need to be ready. Readiness means we must always be prepared to deliver operational effect, safely, efficiently and without hesitation," Col Willis told the crowd gathered in the hangar after officially taking command. She added a commitment to work to address capability and availability gaps, while asking her team to also get the most out of the tools they have currently.

"We'll face challenges, operational, institutional, and personal, but we are not defined by our challenges, we are defined by how we meet them. And we, 12 Wing, are up to this challenge," she said.



From left, Col Tara Willis, new Commander at 12 Wing Shearwater, signs documents at the Wing Change of Command Ceremony alongside BGen J.S. Davis, Deputy Commander Force Generation, 1 Canadian Air Division, and her predecessor, Col David Holmes.

CPL OLIVIA MAINVILLE



12 Wing Shearwater also welcomed a new Wing Chief Warrant Officer during the August 9 ceremony. From left, incoming CWO James McCarron, Col David Holmes, and outgoing CWO Kevin Wezenbeek.

CPL OLIVIA MAINVILLE



A gift presentation from Col Holmes (left) to CWO Wezenbeek.

CPL OLIVIA MAINVILLE



Bluenose Bienvenue

A family fun day for military members, Veterans, and their families – Presented by Eastlink

By Don MacGillivray,
H&R MFRC



If you're new to the area or wishing to connect with other military community members or newly posted members, then this event is for you – kids will love the bouncy castle and activities, too!

On Saturday, September 6, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., the Halifax & Region Military Family Resource Centre (H&R MFRC) and our partners at 12 Wing Shearwater warmly welcome military members, veterans, and fam-

ilies to Bluenose Bienvenue at the Sea King Club & Shearwater Fitness, Sports and Recreation Centre. This is a great opportunity to connect with others who share the military lifestyle, as well as active local community organizations, groups and vendors, members of 12 Wing, and staff from your H&R MFRC.

We will have prizes, draws and free samples from more than 100 community groups and vendors present, including **military organizations & static displays, entrepreneurs, defence advisory groups, pets, veteran organizations, sports teams, PSP community clubs, and more.** We will have tons of fun booths and activities – go for a ride on the trackless train, learn about the best hiking locations in Nova Scotia, or treat yourself to something yummy from the Dairy Farmers of Nova Scotia (the first 360 people get a cold treat!), and a hot slice from Dominos. There will also be a free barbecue from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.!

If you've been looking for a way to connect to the local community and find somewhere you can volunteer,

this is it! We have many groups and community organizations that would love to increase their volunteer base, and **Volunteer Nova Scotia will help you do just that!** Maybe you're a single member, looking to meet people and engage in a new hobby? **Cycling Nova Scotia, NS Arm Wrestling Association, Urban Trail Racing, the CFB Halifax Historical Recreation Club, and a full contact medieval combat club, the Halifax Citadels – are some of the options that could be for you!**

Enjoy music by The Stadacona Band of the Royal Canadian Navy as they set the tone with their Jazz Combo and visit the numerous vendors on-site, including Mauvetoat Sewn, Saji's Creations, and Simply Savoury Halifax. **Not all vendors carry Interac/Master Card, so we encourage you to have cash on hand too.*

And that's not all - some of the community partners in attendance include the Halifax Tides & HFX Wanderers soccer clubs, Shearwater Community Council, Hali-fax Public Libraries, Friends of Mc-Nabs Island Society, Caregivers Nova Scotia, Shearwater Aviation Museum, Shearwater Scuba Club, Shearwater Yacht Club, and others! The Discovery Centre will also be doing hands-on sci-ence; the kids won't want to miss this!

Staff from the H&R MFRC will be on-site to chat about all our programs and services that aid military families in

absences, relocations and transitions, as well as the Veteran Family Program, so please stop by our information tables and say hello! We have a huge range of services and programming that are ready to support your family.

To finish off the day and cool down, the Shearwater Fitness, Sports and Recreation Centre Pool will be open for **free open swim from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

We are grateful for the support from our presenting sponsor: Eastlink. We also want to thank 12 Wing, the Sea King Club & PSP for their support, as well as our Community Event Sponsor BMO, and all the in-kind sponsors such as Domino's Pizza, Dairy Farmers of Nova Scotia, and Angus G Foods for helping us with this welcome for newly posted families to the area!

Follow us on social media (@hrmfrc) for ongoing updates and a complete list of vendors and community groups in attendance.

This event will run rain or shine. There is no cost to attend and no need to register.

Parking: Available at Shearwater gym and Shearwater Flyers Arena.

Accessible parking is available. Please speak to one of our volunteers at the gate to request accessible parking.

For more information, please contact our Family Information and Referral team at 902-427-7788.



The event offers fun for the kids as well as a chance for community connection among CAF families.

SUBMITTED

The Bluenose Bienvenue family event returns to 12 Wing Shearwater on September 6.

SUBMITTED



SPORTS & FITNESS



The CFB Halifax women's team, a combined squad that included members from 12 Wing Shearwater, won the gold medal after a 3-0 finish in the final match against 5 CDSB Gagetown.

RYAN MELANSON



The CFB Halifax men's team won their gold medal after a hard-fought 3-2 victory over rivals from Gagetown.

RYAN MELANSON



Halifax women in action against Gagetown on August 20 in Dartmouth.

RYAN MELANSON

Halifax teams headed to soccer nationals after winning regional gold

By Ryan Melanson,
Trident Staff

The home crowd didn't leave disappointed after the recent Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Atlantic Region Soccer Championship, with both the Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Halifax men's and women's teams coming away with gold medals.

The tournament was held from August 19-21, hosted by 12 Wing Shearwater and held at the Harbour East field in Dartmouth.

On the women's side, the combined CFB Halifax and 12 Wing Shearwater team went undefeated through the week,

capping it off with a 3-0 win in the final over counterparts from 5th Canadian Division Support Base (5 CDSB) Gagetown.

Lieutenant(N) (Lt(N)) Alex Lair, the team's goaltender and co-captain along with Lt(N) Carrie Wood, said her squad was in top form all week long, even after absorbing a few brand-new postings who weren't present for earlier practices.

"We came out strong. We came out scoring high goals in the first game, and then we just didn't let off the gas from there," she said.

The story was similar for the men's team. Like the Halifax women, they benefited from a roster of strong players, including international-caliber talent like Lt(N) Jaidonn Freeland, a member of the CAF's CISM soccer team.

"Military soccer is always challenging. You bring together a group of individuals who don't have as much opportunity to train together," Lt(N) Freeland said, adding that it was great to see the team come together, and even adjusting to fill gaps after intense play led to minor injuries and lineup changes through the week. The gold-medal game against Gagetown was hard fought until the very end, with Halifax staving off a late comeback for a 3-2 final.

Lt(N) Freeland made a point to thank the supervisors and unit commanding officers who allowed their members the time away from regular duties to participate in the tournament, and who will again be called on for their support ahead

of CAF nationals, which will be held in September for the first time since 2023. After winning regional gold, both teams qualify for the national tournament.

He said the physical and mental benefits that come from organized CAF sports, along with the camaraderie and connections made between teammates and opponents across the country, should be recognized as a positive force.

"Military sport has been a huge driver of why I have continued to be here. If I didn't have this draw, the job could have a very different dynamic for me. The opportunities that I've been presented through soccer have made for an unbelievable career. I know the same is true for others."

The teams will now strive to get as much practice time in as possible ahead of the next challenge, with the CAF National Soccer Championship set for September 15-19 (women) and September 20-24 (men) at CFB Borden.