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# TRIDENT

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## Holiday homecoming in Halifax

*Members of the ship's company of HMCS St. John's wave to family and friends as they make a timely return to Halifax following a five-month deployment to Operation REASSURANCE. The ship arrived home on December 20.*

CPL BRENDAN GAMACHE



# From the Inside Out:

## Register for Defence Team communications learning event

By DND

If you are a Defence Team member working or interested in communications, please join the Assistant Deputy Minister (Public Affairs) (ADM(PA)) Corporate Internal Communications and Social Media teams for a two-day hybrid learning event on January 21 - 22, 2026.

In recent years and more than ever before, communications professionals have faced increasing challenges and rapidly evolving communications tools. In this landscape, it is our job as communicators to not only keep up with these

changes, but to continue to deliver clear, resonant, and informative communications to our audiences.

This year's theme, *From the inside out: Communicating in a changing world*, focuses on how both internal communications and social media can be leveraged to ensure communicators are reaching and connecting with their audiences.

This two-day learning event will explore a range of communications topics including policies, tools, resources, social media, internal communications,

multimedia, and web. These sessions are designed to provide relevant and practical information to support communications efforts.

A highlight of the program is a panel discussion featuring regional Public Affairs Officers who will share their experiences and perspectives on internal communications "on the ground" — from bases and wings to deployed units — providing practical insight into what communications looks like across the Defence Team.

### Event Details

**Date:** January 21 and 22, 2026

**Time:** 10 a.m. to 3:35 p.m. AST (both days)

**Location:** NDHQ (Carling) Ottawa, Pavilion Auditorium (MS Teams if you are not in the region)

There is no cost, but registration is required. [Register for this event](#) by January 16, 2026.



## Welcome home, NLT Canso!

*Naval Large Tug Canso arrived in Halifax for the first time just before the holidays, getting a warm welcome in the harbour from fellow tugs Glenside, Glen-evis, and Merrickville. Canso is the first new Naval Large Tug on the East Coast and the third built to replace the Navy's aging Glen-class tugs. Based at Canadian Forces Base Halifax, these tugs will play a key role in moving ships safely and providing fire protection for the Atlantic Fleet and visiting vessels. Named after the Canso Strait, the tug also carries on the legacy of HMCS Canso, which served during the Second World War, including on D-Day.*

*Next up: sea trials, testing, and crew training before Canso officially joins the RCN. A fourth NLT, Stella Maris, is expected to arrive in Halifax in late 2026.*

CPL BRIAN LEVESQUE



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## Community generosity adds up at CANEX Halifax

Staff at the CANEX Halifax ExpressMart are thanking members of CFB Halifax for their generosity during the store's annual Support Our Troops holiday campaign. The Stadaco-na location led all East Region stores (Atlantic Canada and Quebec), with approximately 650 individual donations contributing to more than \$1,500 raised for Support Our Troops, the official charitable cause of the Canadian Armed Forces. Pictured are store manager Michelle Berkman (left) and sales associate Frank Beals, surrounded by just a portion of the many thank-you cards signed by donors and displayed throughout the store.

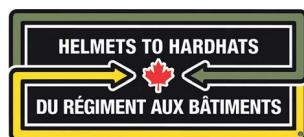
RYAN MELANSON

**“H2H reached out to me and guided me through the process from start to finish.”**

Shawn, Reservist and Millwright



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Canada



# HMCS St. John's tests RCN's on-board blood supply program

By Captain Matt Rowe,  
HMCS St. John's

A new Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) initiative is transforming how ships prepare for medical emergencies at sea, and His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) St. John's helped to determine its feasibility during the ship's recent deployment.

Select RCN vessels now sail with a supply of packed red blood cells in their sick bays. This capability has been normal practice on Army deployments, but was only introduced for naval operations in late 2023. The aim is to dramatically improve a ship's ability to treat severe injuries when higher-level medical care may be hours, or even days, away.

"For me, the real story is that we are making strides towards improvement of pre-hospital care in the RCN," explains Lieutenant-Commander (LCdr) Sabri-

na Dzafovic, the Medical Officer (MO) aboard HMCS St. John's. This includes enhanced first aid training for all sailors (Maritime Combat First Aid), the pending introduction of a maritime version of Tactical Combat Casualty Care, improved medical team pre-deployment training, and updated protocols for casualty evacuation by air. Together, these advances aim to "improve our ability to deal with acute injuries and trauma aboard the ship."

Massive hemorrhage remains the leading cause of preventable death in both combat and major trauma. While fluids like saline can restore volume, they cannot support clotting or carry oxygen the same way blood does. "Nothing actually is as good as blood and blood products," the MO notes.

Because naval deployments can last six months or more, the Navy is also refining its global resupply chain. During HMCS St. John's recent Rest and Maintenance Period (RAMP) in France, the ship successfully received a shipment flown from Canada and picked up at the Nice Côte d'Azur Airport. Temperature monitors confirmed the supply remained viable, thereby proving the capability of delivery to Mediterranean Operations.

A key partner in this capability is Canadian Blood Services (CBS). CBS is responsible for the safety, collection, and storage of all blood and blood products in Canada. As LCdr Dzafovic explains, "They are the ones that monitor the safety of blood and blood products in Canada, collect it and store it... They

also ensure that we're following all of the proper guidelines."

CBS works closely with the Health Services office in Ottawa to ensure transport standards are met, to guide training based on the *Bloody Easy* transfusion safety publication, and to support future developments such as a shipboard "walking blood bank" volunteer donor system.

The motivation behind the program is forward-looking. "We're looking at a different reality of combat in our next theater of operations," LCdr Dzafovic says. By carrying blood at sea and securing the partnerships needed to sustain it, the RCN is strengthening its ability to save lives in combat, during accidents, or when operating far from reliable medical care.



Some RCN ships now sail with a supply of packed red blood cells in their sick bays.  
HMCS ST. JOHN'S



Canadian Blood Services works closely with Canadian Forces Health Services to support the military program and ensure blood is collected and stored properly.  
HMCS ST. JOHN'S

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HMCS St. John's returned to Halifax on December 20 following a five-month Operation REASSURANCE deployment.

CPL BRENDAN GAMACHE



Family and friends, many with festive signs and outfits, crowded the jetty to welcome home loved ones.

CPL BRENDAN GAMACHE

## HMCS St. John's homecoming a gift for sailors, families

By Nathan Stone,  
Trident Staff

**There was no place like home** for the holidays for the crew of His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) St. John's as they were greeted by family and friends in a joyful return to Halifax on December 20.

Onlookers dressed in festive clothes and waving holiday themed signs cheered as the ship came alongside at His Majesty's Canadian Dockyard. The celebratory atmosphere was supported by live music from members of the Stadcona Band.

St. John's returned from a five-month deployment on Operation REASSURANCE in support of NATO's defense and deterrence efforts in Europe.

The 241-person crew departed in July and spent the first 120 days of the mission sailing the Mediterranean

with Standing NATO Maritime Group 2. In November, the ship transferred to Standing Maritime NATO Group 1 in the North Atlantic.

While deployed, HMCS St. John's joined NATO allies in exercises and patrols. The ship's company also attended Remembrance Day ceremonies at Beaumont-Hamel and Vimy Ridge in France and Passchendaele in Belgium.

"I could not have asked for a more amazing crew to have had this opportunity to sail with. The flexibility, the tenacity, and the resilience that all of these sailors showed was outstanding," said Commander (Cdr) Jeffrey Anderson, the ship's commanding officer.

Cdr Anderson said that he had mixed feelings returning to Halifax, as he'll soon be turning over command of the

ship and this deployment was likely his last at the helm of St. John's.

"I was excited to come in, but I wasn't ready for it to end."

Sailor 1st Class (S1) Steven Andrews had the honour of disembarking first to give his wife a kiss and said that he felt overwhelmed by the emotional moment.

"The moment that I was able to cross the brow, all the emotions hit and I got all teary inside trying to hold it in."

Embracing his wife and three young children, S1 Andrews said that after months of family video calls he was, "so happy being able to touch them and actually hug them," and that he was excited to just spend quality time together during the holidays.

Simple time spent together was a wish for the Forrester family as well.

"We'll just enjoy some family time and the warmth of home," said Lauren Forrester, wife of Petty Officer 1st Class Thomas Forrester.

In a press release announcing the ship's homecoming, Rear-Admiral Josée Kurtz, Commander, Maritime Forces Atlantic, described HMCS St. John's as providing vital reassurance of NATO solidarity and readiness to European allies.

"This mission underscores Maritime Forces Atlantic's ability to deliver multi-mission capable assets abroad. Canada stands firmly with its allies to protect what we believe in. We welcome and congratulate the crew back after a successful mission and wish them and their loved ones well-earned quality time together."

## DWAO seeks civilian co-chair

By Trident Staff

The Defence Women's Advisory Organization (DWAO) in the Halifax region is currently seeking nominations for its civilian co-chair position.

The DWAO volunteer membership works to assist in resolving any systemic issues that may be adversely affecting the DND and CAF's ability to capitalize on the full contribution that women can make towards a strong, effective and representative DND and CAF.

Potential candidates are asked to send a brief bio (400 words maximum) to [HALIFAX.DWAO@Forces.gc.ca](mailto:HALIFAX.DWAO@Forces.gc.ca) by February 2, including qualifications and reasons why they are interested in the role.

For more information, contact the DWAO via email or visit [https://halifax.mil.ca/assets/MARLANT\\_Intranet/docs/en/splash\\_page/dag-tors.pdf](https://halifax.mil.ca/assets/MARLANT_Intranet/docs/en/splash_page/dag-tors.pdf) (DWAN only).



Defence Women's Advisory Organization // Organisation consultative des femmes de la Défense



## Travel party helps cap off 2025 NDWCC

Personnel Support Programs (PSP) Halifax wishes to thank everyone who attended or purchased a ticket for the recent NDWCC Travel Party in support of the 2025 Halifax Regional National Defence Workplace Charitable Campaign (NDWCC).

Now in its third year, the Travel Party has become a highlight of the campaign, offering guests an evening of fun, food, and entertainment while raising funds for local charities through United Way Halifax and HealthPartners.

Attendees enjoyed music from the Stadacona Band, food and drinks, and the chance to win great prizes. Giveaways included jewelry, hotel stays and new luggage, but the biggest excitement came from the grand prize: a \$5,000 travel package from Air Canada Vacations, presented by Judy Munden, Sales Manager for the Atlantic Region. Congratulations to all the winners!

PHOTO CREDITS: RYAN MELANSON





S1 Stephen Happe welcomed attendees and spoke about upcoming changes aimed at making CFB Halifax more welcoming to guide dogs and service dogs.

CPL GREGORY COLE



The morning event also featured a panel discussion with members of the local Defence Team.

CPL GREGORY COLE

## New programs, initiatives highlighted to mark IDPWD

By Nathan Stone,  
Trident Staff

**From service dogs to online support** networks, a range of initiatives aimed at improving accessibility for employees with disabilities were discussed at Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Halifax last month.

In recognition of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPWD), a panel discussion was held at Juno Tower on December 12 to share updates and perspectives on accessibility and inclusion within the Defence Team.

Hosted by the local Defence Advisory Group for Persons with Disabilities (DAGPWD), the discussion featured Defence Team members alongside community partners and advocates.

DAGPWD Military Co-chair Sailor 1st Class (S1) Stephen Happe highlighted a forthcoming initiative that will use signage to clearly identify which base buildings are service dog and guide dog friendly.

To date, rules surrounding service dogs at CFB Halifax have caused confusion and, in some cases, unintentional discrimination toward employees who rely on the animals, noted S1 Happe.

DAGPWD expects the new signage program to launch within the next few months. CFB Halifax is acting as the pilot site for the initiative.

“It is our intention to bring this initiative national, and hopefully, within a year or two, we’re going to start to see these signs permanently placed across all the bases in the country,” S1 Happe said.

Glen Smith, of Fleet Maintenance Facility Cape Scott Safety and Environment, shared information on the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport, a national program now available to all Defence Team members with disabilities.

The passport allows employees to document barriers related to their disability

and work with supervisors to identify individually tailored solutions.

“Employees know their barriers best, and their voice is central in finding the solutions,” said Smith.

He noted that the passport represents a shift in how accommodations are approached.

“Instead of focusing on medical documentation, the passport embraces the social model of disability, which means we look at the environment and the systems, not the person and their limitations, as the source of the barrier.” The program also allows accommodations to follow employees between positions, something Smith said had been a challenge in the past.

Another online support tool highlighted was the Infinity Network, a platform designed for neurodivergent federal employees to connect and share solutions to workplace barriers.

There are 90 federal institutions represented in the Infinity Network, including the Canadian Armed Forces. S1 Matthew Raniowski said the network has already grown into a large and supportive community.

“It’s just a few years old, but it’s the largest neurodivergent community of government employees in the G7.”

He added that the network hosts frequent social events, both virtual and in person, and makes it easy for members to connect with one another.

The panel discussion also featured several Defence Team members sharing personal experiences of living and working with disabilities, along with a question-and-answer session with DAGPWD representatives.

IDPWD is marked annually on December 3.

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CCGS *Naalak Nappaaluk*, seen here in Vancouver, is set to arrive on the East Coast in early 2026.

SEASPAK

## New Offshore Oceanographic Science Vessel to serve in 2026

By Archana Chi,  
The Lookout

**A major milestone in Canada's ship-building program was reached this November when Seaspan Shipyards officially handed over the new Offshore Oceanographic Science Vessel (OOSV) *Naalak Nappaaluk* to the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG).**

The delivery was celebrated in November at Seaspan's North Vancouver Shipyard and marked the latest vessel completed under the Canadian National Shipbuilding Strategy (NSS). Constructed entirely in Vancouver by Seaspan ULC, Canadian Coast Guard Ship (CCGS) *Naalak Nappaaluk* is set to become the CCG's largest purpose-built science vessel. Designed to support long-term oceanographic research on both the Atlantic and Arctic coasts, the ship brings a suite of specialized tools and technology to help answer Canada's most pressing marine questions.

The *Naalak Nappaaluk* is set to replace the retired CCGS *Hudson*, serving as the primary ocean science platform on Canada's East Coast for the next 30 years and beyond.

Onboard features include: dedicated laboratories; an ocean sampling room; a marine mammal observation station; and advanced monitoring systems that will allow scientists to gather data on ecosystems ranging from coastal shallows to deep-ocean environments. Beyond marine research, *Naalak Nappaaluk* is also equipped to assist with search and rescue, environmental response, and other urgent operations.

Notably, the vessel carries the name of Naalak Nappaaluk, an Inuit Elder from Kangiqsujuaq, Nunavik whose work helped preserve Inuit language and culture. Before his passing in 2010, Nappaaluk loved being on a boat at sea to hunt beluga with his unsay (harpoon). He was a leader, hunter, fisherman, mid-wife, storyteller, teacher, and harvesting advocate. He was also a consultant, astronomer, newsman, navigator, and meteorologist.

"He was just my father," says Qiallak Nappaaluk, mayor of Kangiqsujuaq and son of Naalak Nappaaluk. "Everybody has a father. But when he was gone, I realized my father was really knowledgeable because he had been teaching us many things. But the most important was home and family. Sometimes we face good things, happiness, sadness, but we have to work together." Naalak Nappaaluk's legacy will now sail forward in a vessel built to deepen Canadian understanding of the waters around us.

As part of its reconciliation mandate, the CCG is also updating its vessel naming policy to incorporate more guidance from Inuit, First Nations, and Métis peoples.

"The CCG is deeply committed to its reconciliation journey," said Nicole Elmy, CCG's Executive Director of Indigenous Relations. "Of equal importance is the process by which names are selected and the opportunity for our staff and the public to learn about their significance," she said. "We understand

the power that names hold, that they can celebrate or be hurtful, and so we are approaching the naming of some of the new ships as an important, collaborative opportunity to work together with Indigenous Peoples."

The name was selected in collaboration with the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) organization, reflecting the Government of Canada's ongoing commitment to reconciliation and partnership with Indigenous Peoples. The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Industry, attended the acceptance ceremony on behalf of Minister of National Defence, The Honourable David J. MacIntyre, formally accepting the vessel into federal service.

"The CCGS *Naalak Nappaaluk* is a powerful symbol of Canada's industrial ambition and strategic vision. Through our National Shipbuilding Strategy (NSS), we are not only revitalizing our marine sector but also driving innovation, creating high-quality jobs, and reinforcing our sovereign research capabilities," said Joly. "Built by Canadians, this vessel reflects our commitment to building a resilient industrial base, a competitive defence sector, and a future where Canadian expertise leads on the world stage."

The vessel will now make the transit from Vancouver Shipyards through the Panama Canal to its home port at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, where it will enter into service in 2026.



## Demystifying the Silent Service: January 12

By Trident Staff

Are you interested in service beneath the waves? An upcoming informational event in Halifax is meant to answer common questions and introduce members of the Defence Team and their families to the world of the Canadian Submarine Force.

Royal Canadian Navy submariners will be on hand to answer questions and provide advice to anyone interested in a career with the submarine service or in simply broadening their understanding of this unique naval community.

The "Demystifying the Silent Service" event will be held from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. on January 16 at Tribute Tower in Halifax. Coffee and donuts will be offered courtesy of the Halifax & Region Military Family Resource Centre.



# New year, new financial strategy:

Why human advice matters more than ever

By SISIP Financial

**January marks a fresh start.** After the holiday season, many Canadians face credit card bills, renewed resolutions, and a desire to get their finances back on track. It's tempting to turn to artificial intelligence (AI) tools for quick budgeting help or retirement planning, but when emotions run high, relying solely on AI can be risky.

## The dangers of AI financial advice

AI tools like Copilot or budgeting apps powered by machine learning can be helpful for tracking expenses or suggesting savings strategies. But they fall short when it comes to personalized financial guidance, especially for CAF members and their families.

Here's why:

AI doesn't understand your full financial picture. AI isn't trained in military-specific financial challenges. AI often gives one-size-fits-all advice that may not suit your goals or obligations.

If AI gives poor advice, there's no one to help you course-correct- and you may not realize something went wrong until it's too late. Budgeting apps and AI tools may collect sensitive financial data, raising privacy concerns.

It's reasons like these and more that we need to be cautious about trusting technology when it comes to our financial future.

## Best practices for post-holiday budgeting and growth

Instead of relying on AI alone, consider these human-centered strategies:

**Connect with a SISIP Financial Advisor:** A skilled professional offering confidential, judgment-free support tailored to CAF members and their families.

**Review your holiday spending:** Identify where you overspent and why. This builds awareness and helps set realistic goals for the year ahead.

**Break down your debt into man-**

ageable chunks:

A SISIP financial advisor can help you prioritize and build a recovery plan.

**Set SMART goals for 2026:** Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound goals can help you stay focused and motivated.

## Think beyond budgeting

Maybe you didn't overspend and you're ready to grow. This is a perfect moment to take stock of where you stand and where you want to go next. Growth doesn't always mean taking bigger risks. It might mean fine-tuning your investments, building an emergency fund, or exploring opportunities to make your money work harder through disciplined saving or long-term investing.

A SISIP 6 advisor can help you move from simply managing your money to maximizing it in a way that's aligned with your goals, values, and future plans.

## Use AI as a supplement, not a substitute

Tools like Copilot, our [online calculators](#) and [budgeting worksheet](#) can help you track expenses or visualize goals, but they're no replacement for human insight. Always validate your financial plan with a SISIP advisor who understands your unique circumstances.

January can feel overwhelming. If you find yourself asking AI, "How do I fix my financial situation?", it might be time to pause. That's a sign you need real human guidance, not machine-generated advice.

SISIP Financial is here to help you take the next step, whether that means rebuilding after the holidays, strengthening your long-term plan, or exploring new ways to grow. Start with one conversation, and you might be surprised how far it takes you.



## New record for FDU(A) Christmas Daddies fundraiser

Members of Fleet Diving Unit (Atlantic) (FDU(A)) participated in their 43rd annual Navy Divers Donation Drive, in support of Christmas Daddies, on December 6. They collected a new record of \$33,000 for this year's Christmas Daddies Telethon, with the help of generous donors, in support of local children in need. The donation drive day followed a campaign that began on October 25 with the annual Navy Divers Run and continued with additional fundraising efforts leading up to the telethon day.

Members of FDU(A) have raised more than \$1.2 million for Christmas Daddies since the unit's first fundraising campaign in 1983.

MONA GHIZ