



Vitality

**ON THE
WATERFRONT**
*A Fleet Week to
remember*

**STRONGER
TOGETHER**
*CAF Grappling
Takes Shape*

**PSP at
a Glance**

*Find your must
have map inside!*



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ABOUT PSP HALIFAX

At Personnel Support Programs (PSP) Halifax, we take pride in supporting the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) community with programs and services that promote fitness, well-being, and morale. From tailored training and reconditioning programs to leisure activities, sports, and health promotion, we help CAF members stay mission ready. You'll find us in the gym, on the ice, at the golf course, and even aboard ships – wherever we're needed most.

PSP Halifax also helps bring people together. We organize major base events, including CAF sporting competitions and our Signature DND Family Days, and work with community partners and corporate

sponsors to ensure these initiatives thrive. We proudly manage local messes, community recreation programs, and unique facilities such as Falls Lake Cottages and Campground, CFB Halifax Curling Club, Shearwater Yacht Club, and Hartlen Point Golf Club. The PSP team also provides deployment support, catering services, facility rentals, and more – all designed to enhance life for CAF members at CFB Halifax.

Many of our staff have supported the Defence Community for years, building relationships and an understanding of the unique needs of military life. Whether you're newly posted, training and competing, or simply striving to live your best life, PSP Halifax is here for you.



The CAF Mascots **Juno**, **Sonar**, and **Astra** are **keeping active** all over this issue!

Can you find them and name all the things they're doing?



Un scan, et Vitality s'ouvre à vous en français.

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Vitality is produced in part by the Trident team. The newspaper of Maritime Forces Atlantic since 1966, Trident is now produced by Personnel Support Programs (PSP) Halifax under Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS). As a member of the Canadian Forces Newspapers Association, Trident covers operations, exercises, sports, community events, and more from CFB Halifax, the Atlantic Fleet, and 12 Wing Shearwater. The paper features original stories from its staff and contributions from the Defence Team. Since 2020, Trident has been exclusively digital. Find the latest stories and bi-weekly e-editions at

www.tridentnewspaper.com.

Have a story to share or an event to highlight?

For more information contact:

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ON THE COVER:

2025 Halifax International Fleet Week Run

Cover photo by Cpl Connor Bennett



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On behalf of Personnel Support Programs

(PSP) Halifax, welcome to this new edition of *Vitality*. As we continue building on the renewed vision for this publication, we're highlighting some of the people and programs that support the Defence Team across Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Halifax and 12 Wing Shearwater.

Over the past year, our teams have focused on promoting sports, active living and recreation for Canadian Armed Forces members and their families while delivering services that aim to boost morale and support operational readiness.

PSP's Health Promotion team relaunched the Base Health Expo in collaboration with Canadian Forces Health Services, reconnecting members with valuable wellness resources. The Shearwater Aviation Museum also marked an important milestone with its grand reopening following major repairs and renovations, welcoming visitors back to a refreshed space celebrating our region's maritime aviation history.

PSP staff have continued contributing directly to operational readiness, joining deployments aboard Royal Canadian Navy ships and assisting personnel involved in the Canadian Armed Forces mission in Latvia. Closer to home, our PSP Fleet Support team has taken shape, providing accounting, operations, and procurement support to ships of the Atlantic Fleet.

We've also supported commemorative initiatives recognizing service and history, including the 85th anniversary of the Stadacona Band of the Royal Canadian Navy and museum-led activities marking the 35th anniversary of the end of the Gulf War.

Community connection also remains central to what we do. Earlier this year, a full week of activities at 12 Wing Shearwater brought families together for our Snow Festival, and we now look ahead to the return of DND Family Days, bringing the Dockyard to life on June 12-13 with activities for all ages.

Inside this edition of *Vitality*, you'll find features showcasing the work of PSP and Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services, alongside stories from across our wider Defence community here at CFB Halifax.

We hope the information encourages you to explore the many resources available to you and your family. If you have questions about our programs or services, don't hesitate to reach out. From mess membership and FORCE test bookings to a cabin stay at Falls Lake, our team is ready to help.

*Mike Almond,
Senior Manager, PSP Halifax*



Au nom des Programmes de soutien du personnel (PSP) Halifax, bienvenue dans ce nouveau numéro de *Vitality*. Alors que nous poursuivons la vision renouvelée de cette publication, nous mettons en lumière certaines personnes et certains programmes qui soutiennent l'Équipe de la Défense à la Base des Forces canadiennes (BFC) Halifax et à la 12^e Escadre Shearwater.

Au cours de la dernière année, nos équipes se sont concentrées sur la promotion du sport, d'un mode de vie actif et des loisirs

auprès des membres des Forces armées canadiennes et de leurs familles, tout en offrant des services qui renforcent le moral et soutiennent la disponibilité opérationnelle.

L'équipe de promotion de la santé des PSP a relancé l'Expo santé de la base en collaboration avec les Services de santé des Forces canadiennes et a permis aux membres de renouer avec d'importantes ressources de bien-être. Le Musée de l'aviation de Shearwater a également franchi une étape importante avec sa réouverture après d'importants travaux de réparation et de rénovation et accueille de nouveau les visiteurs dans un espace renouvelé célébrant l'histoire de l'aviation maritime de notre région.

Le personnel des PSP a continué de contribuer directement à la préparation opérationnelle en participant à des déploiements à bord de navires de la Marine royale canadienne et en soutenant le personnel engagé dans la mission des Forces armées canadiennes en Lettonie. Plus près de chez nous, notre équipe de soutien à la flotte des PSP a pris forme et fournit un appui en comptabilité, en opérations et en approvisionnement aux navires de la flotte de l'Atlantique.

Nous avons également soutenu des initiatives commémoratives rendant hommage au service et à l'histoire, notamment le 85^e anniversaire de la fanfare Stadacona de la Marine royale canadienne ainsi que des activités muséales marquant le 35^e anniversaire de la fin de la guerre du Golfe.

Les liens communautaires demeurent au cœur de nos activités. Plus tôt cette année, une semaine d'activités à la 12^e Escadre Shearwater a réuni les familles à l'occasion de notre Festival de la neige, et nous attendons maintenant avec impatience le retour des Journées de la famille du MDN, qui animeront l'arsenal CSM les 12 et 13 juin avec des activités pour tous les âges.

Dans ce numéro de *Vitality*, vous trouverez des articles présentant le travail des PSP et des Services de bien-être et moral des Forces canadiennes, ainsi que des récits provenant de notre communauté de la Défense ici à la BFC Halifax.

Nous espérons que ces informations vous encourageront à explorer les nombreuses ressources offertes à vous et à votre famille. Si vous avez des questions sur nos programmes ou services, n'hésitez pas à communiquer avec nous. De l'adhésion au mess et aux réservations pour les tests FORCE jusqu'à un séjour en chalet à Falls Lake, notre équipe est prête à vous aider.

*Mike Almond
Gestionnaire principal, PSP Halifax*

Base Commander's *Message*

Vitality comes from the Latin word *vitalis*, meaning “pertaining to life” – an appropriate name for the publication before you. The *Vitality* magazine embodies what keeps our Defence community vibrant, connected, and thriving: the sports and fitness programs, social and recreation services, family-focused activities, deployments resources as well as mental and physical health programming provided by our amazing Personnel Support Programs (PSP) Halifax team.

Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Halifax is a vast and complex ecosystem and the country's largest naval base. We support over 10,000 Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members, Department of National Defence (DND) civilians, and Non-Public Funds employees. Our base spans a large geographic footprint, with properties located in many Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) communities including peninsular Halifax, Dartmouth, Bedford, Shearwater, Eastern Passage, and Herring Cove as well as satellite sites scattered across Nova Scotia. CFB Halifax is home to Maritime Forces Atlantic (Royal Canadian Navy), 12 Wing Shearwater (Royal Canadian Air Force), and 5th Canadian Division/36 Canadian Brigade Group (Canadian Army) – all elements whose employees work tirelessly in support of CAF operations at home and abroad.

Defence members also contribute to local communities through involvement with charitable organizations and groups across the HRM. Outside of work, they coach sports teams, volunteer with schools and Veteran organizations, and continue to be good neighbours. And while they are supporting others, they have loved ones supporting them on the brightest days and through the hardest challenges. All this to say: our people (and their people) are at the core of everything we do and work towards. Which is why it is vital to recognize their service, leadership, and impact on the community by offering programming and services tailored to them.

From health, wellness, and recreation activities to incredible morale and welfare outreach initiatives like Morale Mail and DND Family Days, our PSP team meets the moment and offers something for everyone. And by positively impacting our Defence community, PSP is also helping to elevate our operational output, institutional success, and collective ability to protect Canadians while contributing to peace, security, and stability on the global stage. We thank the entire PSP Halifax team for their inspiring work and unwavering dedication to others.

Thank you for taking the time to explore this issue of *Vitality*. I hope you enjoy learning more about our base, its people, and how you can benefit from PSP programming and resources across the region.

Captain(N) Annick Fortin
Commander, Canadian Forces Base Halifax



Message de la commandante de la base

Le terme « Vitality » vient du mot *vitalis*, qui signifie « relatif à la vie », un nom tout à fait approprié pour la publication que vous avez sous les yeux. Le magazine *Vitality* incarne ce qui garde notre communauté de la Défense dynamique, connectée et florissante : les programmes de sport et de conditionnement physique, les services sociaux et de loisirs, les activités axées sur la famille, les ressources liées aux déploiements, ainsi que les programmes liés à la santé mentale et physique offerts par notre formidable équipe des Programmes de soutien du personnel (PSP) d'Halifax.

La Base des Forces canadiennes (BFC) d'Halifax forme un vaste écosystème et constitue la plus grande base navale du pays. Nous soutenons plus de 10 000 membres des Forces armées canadiennes (FAC), civils du ministère de la Défense nationale (MDN) et employés des fonds non publics. Nos installations sont situées dans plusieurs communautés de la Municipalité régionale d'Halifax (MRH), notamment sur la péninsule d'Halifax, à Dartmouth, à Bedford, à Shearwater, à Eastern Passage et à Herring Cove, ainsi que sur des emplacements satellites répartis dans l'ensemble de la Nouvelle-Écosse. La BFC Halifax abrite les Forces maritimes de l'Atlantique (Marine royale canadienne), la 12^e Escadre Shearwater (Aviation royale canadienne) et la 5^e Division du Canada/36^e Groupe-brigade du Canada (Armée canadienne), dont les employés travaillent sans relâche à l'appui des opérations des FAC, au pays et à l'étranger.

Les membres de la Défense contribuent activement à la vie des communautés locales en s'impliquant auprès d'organismes et de groupes dans l'ensemble de la MRH. En dehors du travail, ils s'engagent comme entraîneurs et bénévoles, notamment dans les écoles et auprès d'organisations de vétérans, tout en demeurant de bons voisins. Tandis qu'ils soutiennent les autres, ils peuvent compter sur le soutien indéfectible de leurs proches, tant dans les moments heureux que lors des épreuves. Nos membres (et leurs proches) sont au cœur de tout ce que nous faisons et de tout ce vers quoi nous tendons. Il est donc essentiel de reconnaître leur service, leur leadership et leur influence en leur offrant des programmes et des services adaptés à leurs besoins.

Qu'il s'agisse d'activités liées à la santé, au bien-être et aux loisirs ou d'initiatives de sensibilisation remarquables au moral et au bien-être, comme le service Courrier d'encouragement et les Journées de la famille du MDN, notre équipe des PSP sait répondre aux besoins du moment et offrir quelque chose pour tous. En ayant une incidence positive sur notre communauté de la Défense, les PSP contribuent également à améliorer notre rendement opérationnel, notre réussite institutionnelle et notre capacité collective à protéger les Canadiens, tout en contribuant à la paix, à la sécurité et à la stabilité sur la scène mondiale. Nous remercions toute l'équipe des PSP d'Halifax pour son travail inspirant et son dévouement indéfectible envers les autres.

Merci d'avoir pris le temps de découvrir ce numéro de *Vitality*. J'espère que vous aimerez en apprendre davantage sur notre base, ses membres et la manière dont vous pouvez profiter des programmes et des ressources des PSP dans toute la région.

Capitaine de vaisseau Annick Fortin
Commandante, Base des Forces canadiennes Halifax

RESOURCES FOR VETERANS AND VETERAN FAMILIES

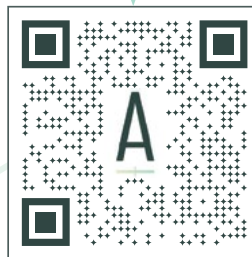


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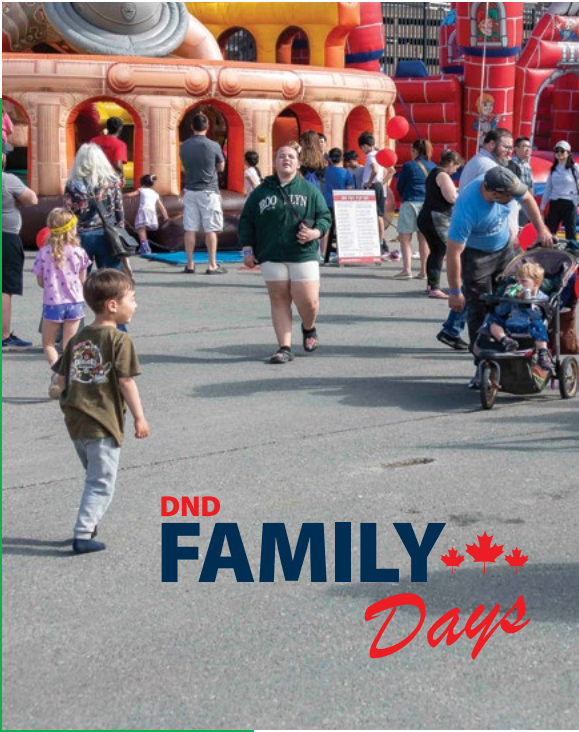
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HARTLENPOINT.CA



WHAT'S GOING ON?



Spring

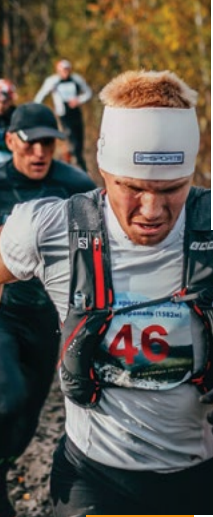
Navy Bike Ride
DND Family Days

Summer

Craig Blake Memorial Fitness Challenge
Wanderer's DND Appreciation Game

Fall

Base Commander's Golf Tournament
NDWCC Golf Tournament
CFB Halifax NDWCC Travel Party



RUCK MARCH
RACE



HEATED RIVALRIES

CHEER ON THE HOME TEAM
OR JOIN IN THE ACTION



health



Winter

Ruck March Race
27 Day
Health Promotions Health Expo

Mooseheads DND Appreciation Night
DND Snow Festival

CFB Halifax and 12 Wing Shearwater are set to host several upcoming CAF Atlantic Region Championships. These events bring together teams from across the region and offer a chance for members to represent their base while connecting with colleagues through sport.

Don't miss your chance to sign up and compete for regional (and national) gold or come out to support your local teams. Contact your PSP Sports Coordinator for more information.

Atlantic Regional Golf Championship
(Hosted by 12 Wing - Summer 2026)

Atlantic Regional Soccer Championship
(Hosted by CFB Halifax - Summer 2026)

Atlantic Regional Women's Hockey Championship
(Hosted by 12 Wing - Winter 2027)

Atlantic Regional Volleyball Championship
(Hosted by CFB Halifax - Winter 2027)

Atlantic Regional Basketball Championship
(Hosted by 12 Wing - Spring 2027)

FORCE RECONDITIONING

*Supporting Recovery
and a Return to Duty*



Personalized training and expert support help injured CAF members clear a final hurdle before getting back to work

“I feel alright now, but there’s always something in the back of my head.”

Master Sailor (MS) Chris Langille is taking a break after completing a sandbag drag the length of the gymnasium at the Stadacona Fitness and Sport Centre. He must be cautious when hefting the 20kg bag, holding it in his arms to avoid causing debilitating pain.

“Most people put the weight on their shoulders, but that’s the worst trigger for me.”

If he’s not careful handling the sandbag, MS Langille could give himself a severe migraine headache. It’s a condition he’s been struggling with for over four years after an incident on duty left him nearly unconscious.

After extensive work with doctors and PSP reconditioning staff, he’s now close to fully returning to work. To get there, he needs to pass the Fitness for Operational Requirements of Canadian Armed Forces Employment (FORCE) Evaluation. The sandbag drags and lifts he’s practicing are key pieces of the test.



For MS Langille, returning to work safely means being able to complete the FORCE Evaluation without triggering his condition. Carefully adapting how he lifts and carries weight is critical to avoiding migraines that could delay his recovery.

“I know I can pass the whole thing right now, but then I would probably be laid up for days.”

Fortunately, he can count on support to help him prepare. The PSP FORCE Reconditioning program helps members like MS

Langille overcome this hurdle. The program is specifically designed for CAF members who are already participating in the broader PSP Reconditioning Program and are working toward FORCE test readiness as part of their recovery.

The PSP Reconditioning Program supports injured and ill CAF members throughout their rehabilitation journey, with the goal of returning to active duty and improving overall quality of life. Through individualized fitness

training, certified clinical exercise specialists, and a holistic approach that integrates with other rehabilitation services, the program helps members rebuild functional independence and operational readiness. It also forms an important part of the CAF Transition Group’s Return to Duty Program.

Within that larger framework, the FORCE Reconditioning program provides focused training for members preparing to meet CAF testing standards. To improve accessibility, reconditioning staff offer the program at all three base gyms in the area: the Stadacona Fitness and Sport Centre, the Fleet Fitness and Sport Centre, and the Shearwater Fitness, Sports and Recreation Centre.

Meeting twice a week, CAF members recovering from long term injuries gather and practice the variety of tests that make up the FORCE Evaluation. They are helped along the way by PSP Physical Exercise Specialist Kieran MacGillivray, who oversees the program.

Participants practice and train each component of the FORCE Evaluation: 20-meter rushes, sandbag lifts, intermittent loaded shuttles and sandbag dragging.

When entering the program, a CAF member will be evaluated on each of the components to see where their strengths and weaknesses lie.

“We work backwards from where they need to be, which is the full scale components of the



PSP Physical Exercise Specialist Kieran MacGillivray (left) leads the FORCE Reconditioning program at the Fleet Fitness and Sports Centre.

test, to where they are currently,” says MacGillivray. “We try to make gradual progressions over weeks or months. Whatever it takes for them to get from where they are to where they need to be.”

Each participant enters the program in recovery from specific injuries and dealing with their own personal physical challenges, so staff work to ensure everyone has a unique training plan to meet their specific needs.

That training plan is stored in the PSP app, which provides participants with their full workout routine in easy reach on their phone whenever they need to check it. MacGillivray says the program helps build independence, encouraging participants to take a more self-directed approach as they grow comfortable with the exercises and class structure.

“I put it on them to make sure that they’re responsible and autonomous with their game plan, that we’ve discussed and come up with previously. Then when I come in, it’s basically just fine-tuning movements and checking in on how people are doing that day.”

Corporal (Cpl) Krista Warcop has been attending FORCE Reconditioning classes for the past four months. Armed with the PSP app, she can efficiently move through the gym from exercise to exercise.

She attends classes on Tuesdays and Fridays and has different routines scheduled for each day.

“On Tuesdays I’m doing basically the whole FORCE Test,” says Cpl Warcop

Cpl Warcop was first admitted to the PSP Reconditioning program after developing severe tendonitis in her hand in March 2025. She narrowly failed her most recent FORCE Evaluation — missing the time requirement for the 20-metre rushes by just one second — and soon after began participating in the FORCE Reconditioning program for targeted training.

After training alongside peers and under Kieran’s guidance, Cpl Warcop says she’s optimistic about her chances of success when she attempts the evaluation again, and has seen improvement across all components of the test.

“I’ve noticed that I’m getting better with the rushes and everything else.”

For participants, the goal isn’t just passing the FORCE Evaluation; it’s about fully rejoining their units, feeling right, and returning to a sense of normality with their bodies.

“I’d like to be able to get back to sailing, yeah. I’m one of those weirdoes that likes his job,” says MS Langille with a laugh. 🍀

For more information on the PSP Reconditioning Program, speak to your doctor or contact PSP Reconditioning Manager Kerianne Willigar at 902-402-4890 or Kerianne.Willigar@forces.gc.ca



UNLEASH YOUR FORCE POTENTIAL

The Fitness for Operational Requirements of Canadian Armed Forces Employment (FORCE) Evaluation is the benchmark that keeps CAF members mission-ready. Commonly known as the FORCE Test, it sets the minimum physical standard tied to the Universality of Service principle, ensuring all members are prepared for the real-world demands of defence and security duties, no matter their trade.

In the Halifax area, PSP Fitness staff are responsible for administering FORCE Evaluations, and they’re also there to help members succeed. From booking your test to building confidence ahead of evaluation day, staff can offer guidance and hands-on support.

Tests must be booked in advance. To secure your FORCE Evaluation, contact your Unit Coordinator. You can also reach out to a PSP Fitness Coordinator with questions:

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Back IN THE Hangar

Shearwater Aviation Museum
Soars After Renovations

It's been a turbulent few years for the Shearwater Aviation Museum. When its roof was torn off by a storm, the museum faced challenges that would ground any organization. But after a year-long renovation, visitors are returning to new displays, artifacts and experiences.

"We're off to the races," says Christine Hines, the museum's curator. "It's given us a new lease on life in many, many ways."

The comeback didn't come easily. The museum's home — a building

constructed in 1939 as the RCS Station Dartmouth Men's Recreation Centre — has long required careful upkeep. Over the years, aging infrastructure required significant work, including lead abatement in the ceiling. Then in February 2020, a powerful storm tore a section of roof from the building, forcing the museum to empty its main exhibit space to protect its collection.

For a staff of one full-time curator and a part-time assistant, it was a monumental task. Personnel from 12 Wing Shearwater provided

crucial help and ground-support equipment, but it was the museum's dedicated team of around 20 volunteers that made it possible.

"We had to figure out how to disassemble the aircraft and exhibits," Hines says. "One of them is a rare Second World War aircraft built from wood and fabric, so we couldn't move it outside. Our volunteers saw what was happening and stepped up right away. We couldn't have done it without them."

Displaced to a conference room at the Shearwater Fitness, Sports and Recreation Centre for over a year, the team watched as their home was transformed.

The project addressed the critical issues: a brand-new roof, a

full lead abatement and repaint of the ceiling, and an upgrade to the lighting system. The old fluorescent fixtures were replaced with modern LED lights, which produce less heat and ultraviolet light and help protect sensitive artifacts like textiles and paint.

When the team returned to the building in November 2024, they didn't just put things back the way they were. Months of displacement gave them time to rethink the museum's layout. Armed with 3D-printed scale models of their collection, Hines and the volunteers mapped out a new floor plan that is easier for visitors to navigate.

"We could really rethink how the museum was laid out," Hines says. "Our objects are quite large, so having a safe and logical floor plan and traffic flow is really important." The result is a space that feels both familiar and new, with refreshed exhibit areas and a cleaned-up collection.

Among the new installations is a memorial for the crew of a Royal Canadian Air Force Cyclone helicopter, call sign Stalker 22, who were killed in a crash off the coast

Museum Director Christine Hines accepted a Wing Commander's Commendation on behalf of the entire restoration team during a grand reopening event in July 2025. Acting Wing Commander Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Dukowski made the presentation.

of Greece on April 29, 2020, while participating in Operation Reassurance with His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) Fredericton.

Another display, installed just before the renovation, tells the story of Canadian pilot Lieutenant Thomas Barry Troy, who was lost in 1958. He disappeared in thick fog while flying from Shearwater to Florida to deploy with HMCS Bonaventure.

The missing plane was never found. Following a hurricane in 2017, a park ranger in Florida discovered artifacts on a beach, including a parachute strap with Lt. Troy's name on it. After the ranger got in touch with Veterans Affairs Canada, arrangements were made to donate the items to the aviation museum.

New interactive elements have been installed to enhance the visitor experience. The museum now has Meta Quest virtual reality

headsets loaded with a Sea King helicopter experience, allowing guests to feel what it was like to be in the cockpit of one of Canada's longest serving military aircraft.

Hines says the virtual reality experience allows guests to digitally explore the inside of an aircraft, something the museum can't offer in the real world.

"We don't allow our visitors in [the aircraft] for safety's sake, so that first-hand experience can be missing. That's where these interactives come in."

Hines and her team are creating new interpretive signs for several aircraft and a biographical exhibit on Second World War flying ace Don Sheppard.

They've also recently taken delivery of a Bell 47G helicopter, a reconnaissance and search and rescue aircraft that entered service

New LED lighting in the museum's main hangar not only makes the space nice and bright but is also an improvement for preserving artifacts compared to traditional fluorescent bulbs.



in 1953 and was made famous by its use on the TV show MASH.

As the museum settles into its new era, Hines's focus is shifting outward.

"A lot of people don't know that we're here, and I'm on a mission to change that. It makes us that much more excited to come to work, knowing we have something shiny

and new to offer that 'wow factor' for our visitors."

After years of hard work and planning, the Shearwater Aviation Museum has not only repaired its roof but rebuilt its foundation for the future. With a safe, modernized facility and a host of new features, it's ready to share its unique stories with the world. 🍁



WINTER FUN AT THE WING

PSP's annual DND Snow Festival brings Defence Team families at 12 Wing Shearwater together on Nova Scotia's Heritage Day for a day of seasonal fun at the Shearwater Fitness, Sports and Recreation Centre.

Kids enjoy bouncy castles, face painting, snacks, and games inside, while families can also head outdoors for sledding and s'mores. The day also features activities like swimming at the Shearwater pool, plus open skating and pickup hockey at the Shearwater Arena. In 2026, the celebration expanded to a full week of events, including yoga, Family Bingo, a paint night, and a museum scavenger hunt.



Scan the QR code to learn more and watch for details on the next Snow Festival in February 2027.





A Unified Approach to Wellness

Base Health Expo highlights collaboration between PSP Health Promotion and Canadian Forces Health Services Centre (Atlantic)

When organizers set up inside the Naval Fleet School (Atlantic) drill shed last November, they were expecting a busy day, but the turnout for the Base Health Expo exceeded even that. Across 32 vendor tables, six guest speakers and a drop-in vaccination clinic, Defence Team members turned out in force to explore the full spectrum of health and wellness resources available to them across Formation Halifax.

The 2025 edition, themed “Navigating Your Health Journey”, built on previous well-received events, but stood out for the prominent involvement of Canadian Forces Health Services Centre (Atlantic) alongside PSP Health Promotion Services. That partnership, reflected in the breadth of clinical expertise and community programming being showcased, added extra weight behind the event.

Organizers also credited the success of the day in part to strong support from CFB Halifax units who freed up their members to allow for attendance.

“The leadership support from across the Base was also vital,” said Megan Freeman, Health Promotion Manager at CFB Halifax. “This allowed teams to take time to come visit the Expo, get their vaccinations, walk the site and check out the great resources that were available. We had great participation.”

For Major Mallory Pike, Deputy Commanding Officer and Senior Nursing Officer at the Health Services Centre, the collaboration was a natural extension of a shared mission.

“Teaming up with PSP Health Promotion was an excellent experience,” she said. “Our organizations share a common goal of supporting the overall health, resilience, and readiness of CAF

personnel, so partnering for the Expo was a natural fit. CF H Svcs C (A) brought clinical expertise and preventive health knowledge, while PSP Health Promotion excelled in health education and community engagement. Together, we were able to offer a well-rounded and accessible picture of health and wellness to Base personnel.”

PSP staff led coordination and outreach efforts while Health Services departments contributed clinical depth and direct member engagement, together producing an event that aimed to bridge the gap between awareness and care. Extra seating was added on the spot to accommodate demand for the guest presentations, which addressed multiple dimensions of personal well-being including mental, social, emotional, spiritual and physical health.

Vendor tables drew a wide variety of service teams from across the CAF and civilian partners



— including the Women’s Health Clinic, the Base Dietitian and the Military Family Resource Centre — many of whom spotlighted specific services. Physiotherapist Jennifer Cantwell, who put together the exhibit for CF H Svcs C(A) Physiotherapy Rehabilitation Services, focused on foot care.

“A lot of people come to us worried about their feet, thinking that they have a problem,” she said. “I will let them know that all feet are good feet and that if there is a problem, we’ve got a lot of great supports, insoles and other goods to help.”

The vaccine campaign area saw steady engagement throughout the day, and a drop-in flu and COVID vaccination clinic allowed both military and civilian guests to receive their annual shots while health was already top of mind. Many attendees also took the opportunity to speak one-on-one with clinicians about preventive screening, mental health resources and general health concerns. These conversations can sometimes be easier in a more casual setting.

“Connecting with members in a non-clinical environment helps break down barriers and encourages open conversations,” Maj Pike added. “It allows our staff to share information, answer questions, and build trust in a more relaxed setting. It also helps us better understand the needs and concerns of the Defence Team, which ultimately improves the care and support we provide.”

Feedback from clinical staff was overwhelmingly positive. Many described the experience as energizing and said they appreciated a chance to connect with members outside of appointment times and clinic walls, increasing awareness of the breadth of services available through the Health Services Centre.

As organizers look ahead, early planning is already underway for a 2026 edition. There are ambitions to expand the on-site vaccination clinics, which proved among the most popular features of the day, and to explore a larger venue to meet growing interest. CF H Svcs C(A) has already signalled its intent to return, a sign that the partnership forged this year has some staying power. ✨



WELLNESS SPACES

offer room to reset and recharge

Health Promotion Services, in collaboration with Chaplain Services, has launched two newly named Wellness Spaces, designed to help members of the Defence Community reset both mentally and physically while in a high-tempo work environment.

Recognizing that accessibility is key to resilience, the hubs are strategically located to align with our broader support network. The Stadacona Chapel site offers a setting near Chaplain Services, providing access to support in a neutral space outside the traditional Chain of Command. A second location at Windsor Park 106 sits close to Health Promotion and the Military Family Resource Centre, creating a central hub for holistic wellness.

Each space provides a quiet, comfortable environment where members can independently access tools for rejuvenation, including mindfulness resources, soft seating and massage chairs. The Chapel location will also pilot an Energy Pod, supporting tactical napping and its proven cognitive and recovery benefits.



For more information, contact hfxhealthpromotion@forces.gc.ca

MORALE *on the* MOVE

From Latvia to the high seas, PSP deployment support staff deliver the same essential services that members rely on at home

The need to support Canadian Armed Forces members doesn't stop at the base gates. Through deployment support roles with Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS) and Personnel Support Programs (PSP), civilian employees travel overseas and aboard ships to deliver the same morale and wellness services available at home bases, helping deployed personnel stay healthy, resilient, and ready to accomplish their mission.

"The main priority of all of our staff when they're there, for all of our different trades, is to boost the morale and welfare of the troops," says Deployment Support Operations Manager Brian Zorgel.

Deployment support staff provide a wide range of services including fitness programming, sports and recreation activities, retail operations, travel assistance, financial administration, and barbering services. These supports are often extended not only to Canadian personnel, but also to allied forces serving alongside them, creating welcoming environments that encourage connection and well-being across national lines.

Even routine services can play an important role in helping deployed members cope with demanding conditions and time away from home. "Something like the barbershop can be an important stress reliever, and a way for people to feel a sense of normalcy," Zorgel explains. "It's a comfortable space where people can relax and talk about their day with someone outside of the military."



Right: PSP Halifax's Hannah Doiron aboard HMCS Charlottetown during Operation HORIZON in February 2026.

Left: Members of HMCS Ville de Québec participate in a flight deck fitness class while sailing as part of Operation HORIZON in late 2025.



For PSP Halifax Physical Exercise Specialist Shaun Vail, deployment support offered an opportunity to apply his expertise in an entirely new environment. He made a significant contribution to the program by becoming the first PSP Physical Exercise Specialist to deploy to Latvia in a reconditioning role. The addition was requested by the CAF and has since become vital in helping members maintain their physical readiness while managing the demands of operational tasks.

While Vail's work in Halifax typically focuses on chronic injuries and supporting members working toward full fitness, his role overseas emphasized early intervention and preventative care. Vail provided an additional layer of support alongside busy CAF medical staff.

"If somebody's shoulder starts to hurt because they're working hard and doing new things while they're deployed in theatre, they probably don't need to be sent home, but they could still benefit from some help," he says.

The program continues to evolve to meet operational needs. Halifax's own Mary Driscoll from the PSP Health Promotion team is currently in Latvia delivering a pilot program for a Health Promotion Specialist role, further expanding the range of services available to deployed personnel and reinforcing the organization's commitment to supporting members' overall well-being.

Following his time overseas, Vail completed a second deployment aboard the naval support ship MV *Asterix*, where he again played an important role in supporting morale during extended sailing periods. Alongside structured workouts and fitness sessions that drew strong participation, he introduced creative activities to help lift spirits during long stretches at sea. One initiative, a ship-wide game of "Assassin," quickly captured the crew's imagination.

"It really captured everybody's minds for 72 hours or so; it's all people were talking about in the dining hall or throughout the ship," he recalls. "It was just a silly game, but so cool to see people appreciate it and join in." >





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HALIFAX & REGION MILITARY FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE

The impact of PSP deployment staff was also clearly demonstrated during a recent Indo-Pacific deployment for HMCS *Ville de Québec*, which embarked PSP Fitness, Sports and Recreation Coordinator Tianna Pietrowski for six months during Operation HORIZON. Lieutenant-Commander Pierre-Luc Dessureault-Beaulieu, the ship's Executive Officer, described the decision to bring PSP aboard as one of the most valuable personnel choices of the deployment.

Pietrowski created and delivered an extensive fitness program featuring daily classes and also organized ship-wide activities such as trivia nights, bingo, and celebrations. She coordinated sports competitions with allied units and supported international engagements, strengthening both morale and operational cohesion. Her work, he adds, “took the ‘morale’ intent and ran with it.”

While deployment support roles offer meaningful opportunities to help others, they also demand adaptability, long hours, and months away from home. For Vail, however, the experience proved both professionally and personally rewarding, offering a strong sense of purpose and camaraderie.

“What I would say is that it’s tremendously valuable and tremendously rewarding — a truly cool, once-in-a-lifetime experience,” he says. “You want to make sure you’re doing it for the right reasons: for the fantastic experience, to help people, to connect with others, to challenge yourself, and to provide a good service.”

For civilians interested in supporting Canadian Armed Forces members while gaining unique professional experience abroad, deployment support roles offer an opportunity to make a meaningful difference while contributing directly to the well-being and readiness of those who serve. 🍁

The Halifax & Region Military Family Resource Centre (H&R MFRC) supports CAF members and the people they consider family across Halifax, Shearwater, and throughout Nova Scotia. Governed by military family members, it provides programs and services that help families navigate the unique realities of military life.

As the cost of living rises, the H&R MFRC offers financial assistance programs to help families manage unexpected challenges. Its Community Pantry, available at both Windsor Park and Shearwater, provides a no-questions-asked supply of pantry staples, nutritious food, and personal hygiene items based on community needs.

The centre also connects families with counselling, referrals, transition support, and child and youth services, including guidance on childcare options and access to its Shearwater-based Children’s Centre. 🍁



Scan the QR code to learn more about available programs and support.





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How 270 West Consulting Helped a Royal Canadian Navy Veteran Find His Way Back to Hope

The roar of engines filled the air, a sound that stirred something deep within Florent Roy, a retired Royal Canadian Navy sailor. Standing at an air show beside his son, cane in hand, he felt both proud and fragile.

The man who had once served his country at sea, now finding his footing on land.

"I was hobbling along with a cane," Florent remembers. "I wasn't there looking for help; I just wanted to see the planes again."

As they made their way through the crowd, his son stopped at a small kiosk bearing the sign 270 West Consulting. One of the representatives reached out, smiled, and asked, "Is there anything we can help you with?" Florent thanked them, took a brochure, and kept walking, unaware that the simple handshake at that booth would mark the start of a life-changing journey. A few weeks later, his phone rang. "They said, 'We didn't forget about you.' And they meant it, Florent recalls.

That call became a turning point. The team at 270 West Consulting listened to his story, his service, his health, and the quiet struggles that followed retirement. They treated him with patience, dignity, and respect.

"I found out I had problems I didn't even know I had," he says quietly. "But the difference was, I wasn't facing them alone anymore."

Navigating Veterans Affairs Canada can feel like charting rough seas without a compass. For Florent, 270 West Consulting became that compass. They assembled his documentation, arranged medical assessments, and connected him to the support programs he had earned but didn't know how to access. Their efforts helped ease both the physical and emotional toll of his years in uniform. "They handled everything," he says. "They made me feel like my service still mattered."

What Florent found through 270 West Consulting wasn't just assistance, it was belonging. "For one thing," he says, "you find out you're not alone." He now shares his experience with other veterans, encouraging them to seek help and reminding them that support is out there.

"There are a lot of veterans who need help but don't know where to go," he says. "270 West is definitely another venue. They give you hope when you think you've run out of it."

For the sailor who once found his strength on the open sea, that hope has become his new anchor, steadying him through calm and storm alike.



Florent Roy | Navy Veteran



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Stad Band TURNS 85

The Navy's East Coast musicians celebrate a milestone with band members past and present, friends, and the wider community

Last summer, the Stadacona Band of the Royal Canadian Navy took the stage at Sackville Landing for a community concert on the Halifax waterfront. It's a familiar sight for residents and visitors alike during the summer months, but this particular July afternoon performance marked a special occasion — celebrating the band's 85th anniversary and bringing together current members, alumni, and supporters to recognize a legacy of service through music.

For more than eight decades, the band has provided the soundtrack to naval life on Canada's East Coast, accompanying moments of ceremony and celebration while building and maintaining an internationally recognized reputation for musical excellence. The 85th anniversary offered an opportunity not only to look back on that history, but also to recognize the people and traditions that continue to shape the ensemble today.

The band's 35 musicians were joined by returning veterans and former leaders for a program that blended traditional military and naval selections with modern favourites. It proved to be a crowd-pleasing mix for the large audience gathered along the promenade. Petty Officer 1st Class Brad Davidge led the band in an arrangement of Stan Rogers' *Northwest Passage*, sometimes described as Canada's "other" national anthem, while a spirited rendition of the theme from *Hockey Night in Canada*, conducted by former commanding officer Commander (Retired) George Morrison (1976–1980), had audience members humming along.

The event also highlighted the band's own musical heritage through works composed or arranged by its own members, including the *Seven Seas Overture*, a medley created by the late Chief Petty Officer 2nd Class Earl Fralick for the Royal Canadian Navy's 70th anniversary. Former Commanding Officer and Director of Music

Lieutenant-Commander (Ret'd) Jim Forde (1988–1993) returned to the podium to conduct another of Fralick's contributions, the march *Ready Aye Ready*.

Several other former directors were welcomed back to the podium, including LCdr (Ret'd) Peter van der Horden (1993–2001), Cdr (Ret'd) Gaétan Bouchard (2001–2006), and LCdr (Ret'd) Ray Murray (2006–2016), each representing a chapter in the band's evolving story. The performance also looked forward, with younger musicians featured in solos and throughout the program, reflecting the ensemble's continued growth and the continuity between past and present.

Current and former band members gathered afterward at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic for a reunion reception hosted by current Commanding Officer Lieutenant (Navy) Jeff Campbell, while a further reception at Government House brought together military and civic leaders



EVERYTHING'S BETTER WITH MUSIC!

to recognize the band's contributions and connections to the broader community. The roots of today's Stadacona Band stretch back to the early days of the Second World War, when the creation of a permanent force navy band in 1939 marked a turning point for naval music in Canada. The ensemble soon relocated to HMCS Stadacona in Halifax, and its success led to the formation of additional naval bands across the country, with 14 established by the war's end to support morale, recruitment, and ceremonial duties.

Though many musicians returned to civilian life following the war, a dedicated core remained, preserving a musical tradition that would continue through postwar restructuring and the unification of the Canadian Armed Forces. During the 1950s, the Stadacona Band demonstrated remarkable flexibility by forming multiple orchestras for Royal Canadian Navy aircraft carriers while maintaining a primary ensemble ashore. The band later contributed ▶

PSP Halifax extends sincere thanks to the Stadacona Band of the Royal Canadian Navy for their ongoing support throughout the year.

From playing the hits at DND Family Days to livening up our Travel Parties in support of the National Defence Workplace Charitable Campaign (NDWCC), the band's musicians always ensure a memorable soundtrack. Most recently, Petty Officers 1st Class Brad Davidge and Larry Bjornson offered a special performance during PSP Halifax's mental health coffee break in January 2026, reinforcing the important role music can play in supporting wellbeing.

Their continued partnership and professionalism help strengthen our community connections and enrich base life through music!





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Cdr (ret'd) George Morrison makes the first cut into the band's anniversary cake, beautifully crafted by Heather Scott at CFB Halifax Food Services. Thanks to the Food Services team for their support to this special occasion!

to national initiatives such as Canada's Centennial celebrations and the development of the Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo, where it remains a central participant today.

The Halifax-based ensemble provides complete musical support for ceremonial requirements while representing Canada's East Coast Navy at home and abroad. Its musicians perform in a variety of configurations — from parade and concert band to smaller ensembles — allowing the group to support major military ceremonies, community events, and educational outreach across the Atlantic provinces.

For the musicians who serve within its ranks, the band's role extends beyond performance to embodying the professionalism and values associated with military service. Petty Officer 2nd Class Christian Navratil, a bassoonist with the band, sees his work as a reflection of the broader institution he represents.

"Part of the reason I play is because I like to bring attention to the professionalism of the military," he said. "We are a professional band and we represent the same professionalism that we see in every other trade across the Canadian Armed Forces."

Master Seaman Tony Taylor, who served as master of ceremonies for the anniversary concert, emphasized that the band's identity is shaped as much by its shared experiences as by its formal record.

"The official history of the Stadacona Band is just that," he said. "Those who have been in the band know that, like any military unit, its real history sits among those who have lived and been a part of the band. It's the stories of camaraderie, of sharing those special musical moments together, and of service to country through music."

The band's legacy is perhaps most clearly expressed through its continuity of service. Since 1940, its musicians have provided musical farewells on the jetty for ships departing Halifax harbour — playing as vessels sailed into harm's way in the early years of the Second World War, as ships departed for the Middle East during the Gulf War, and as Canadian vessels leave port for operations and exercises today.

Over decades of global change, the music of the Stadacona Band has been the last sound of home for sailors heading to sea, and the first welcome back when they return. 🍁





LASER TAG *Scores a Hit!*

The gymnasium lights are out. Red and blue LEDs flash from headbands and laser tag guns as two teams move cautiously through the space. Players duck and weave behind pop-up obstacles, firing shots while techno music pulses through the room. A deep robotic voice cuts through the noise to announce each player elimination.

The action is part of a laser tag session booked by staff from the 12 Wing Shearwater Firehall as a team-building exercise. The equip-

ment is available to rent through PSP Halifax's Community Recreation department at the Shearwater Fitness, Sport and Recreation Centre.

For those familiar with traditional glowing vests, the PSP Halifax laser tag equipment appears minimalist, more like military hardware than the bulky gear and sci-fi flair commonly associated with kids' birthday parties. It consists of just a headband and gun for each player, but the small target surface is a purposeful design choice.

"It takes a little more aim to hit an opponent,

which is why the military members prefer it," says J.J. Paisley, a gym attendant who helps run PSP Halifax's laser tag activities. "You have to make sure you're aiming at the headband or the front of the gun to score a hit."

Paisley and fellow gym attendant Abby Drozdowski help operate the program, setting up and running games and keeping the equipment in good working order.

PSP Halifax invested in a full system from Battle Company, a high-end laser tag manufac-

turer. During gameplay, each player's gear sends information to software that tracks eliminations, times eliminated, and more detailed statistics such as hit location.

Players can choose a variety of settings before the game starts, including round length and the limit of how many times players can be tagged before elimination. At the end of each round, participants can review their performance, see which team was victorious, and receive awards such as game MVP and Most Accurate Shooter.

Although the program was initially developed with military participants in mind, Paisley says laser tag has also proven popular across the wider CFB Halifax and 12 Wing communities.

"We've run games for military, civilian and DND families. We set it up for our big family events and staff Christmas parties. Everyone is welcome."

Along with those internal events and special recreation opportunities, PSP Halifax rents out the equipment and gym space in 75-minute blocks at the Shearwater facility, with Canadian Armed Forces members receiving a 15 per cent discount on bookings.

Drozdowski says children's parties are especially memorable for the team.

"They get really serious. They run and dive on the ground. It's very fun to see how competitive the kids can get."



SHEARWATER RECREATION LASER TAG BOOKINGS

Laser tag is offered through PSP Halifax's Community Recreation department at the Shearwater Fitness, Sport and Recreation Centre. Party bookings include a 1.25-hour laser tag experience for up to 24 players. No experience is necessary.

Cost

\$225 plus applicable tax

Military discount

15% off for Canadian Armed Forces members

Availability

Sundays, 1 – 2:15 p.m.

For more information or to register, email shearwaterpsrecreation@gmail.com or call 902-720-1071

2025 was the busiest year so far for the PSP Halifax laser tag program, with Paisley noting that the team regularly handles multiple bookings in a single day.

The program currently supports games for up to 24 players at a time, allowing large groups to take part in team-building activities, parties and special events. With demand continuing to grow, the team is exploring ways to expand the experience further and introduce new game modes in the future.

"We're looking to try to get in some much bigger groups," Drozdowski added.

Those interested in booking a session can find more details below. 🍁



Find Your Community WITH THE CAF SOCIAL LEAGUE

Looking to connect with colleagues beyond the workplace or the mess? The CAF Social League at CFB Halifax offers a welcoming way for CAF members to come together through experiences that support wellness, mental health, and active living.

Led by PSP Community Recreation, the Social League organizes a wide range of social and sport-focused activities throughout the year, offering something for nearly every interest. Previous meetups have included outdoor adventures such as group hikes, beginner surfing sessions, and ski

trips, alongside more relaxed outings like ghost tours, axe-throwing nights, and even a Mario Kart tournament. While many events are geared toward junior rank members, participation is open to all military and civilian personnel, and participants are often welcome to bring friends or family along. Thanks to sponsorship support, many events are offered free of charge or at a reduced cost for CAF members. Watch for upcoming events through the PSP Weekly Update or contact halifaxrecreation@cfmws.com to learn more



A city and its Navy **RECONNECT**

**Halifax International Fleet Week highlights
the city's enduring connection to the Royal
Canadian Navy and its allies**



Halifax's history and daily life have long been influenced by its relationship with the Royal Canadian Navy. Halifax International Fleet Week builds on that connection, offering a moment for sailors, allies, and the community to come together along the waterfront and celebrate the role maritime service continues to play in the life of the city.

First held in 2023, Halifax International Fleet Week was inspired by the success of similar events in Vancouver, which have drawn strong public interest and large crowds in recent years. From the outset, the goal was to create a welcoming, accessible way for Canadians to connect with their Navy and its international partners, while highlighting Halifax's role as a defence and ocean hub. With its return in 2025, Fleet Week further established itself as a signature, biennial event, one that reflects both Halifax's naval heritage and the remarkable growth that has reshaped the city's global profile over the past decade.

Fleet Week comes alive on the waterfront

Fleet Week is about connections. Over several days, the waterfront becomes a gathering place for sailors and civilians alike, with ship tours, cultural events, and opportunities to meet the people behind Canada's maritime operations.

Cmdre Jacob French, Commander Canadian Fleet Atlantic, emphasized that community engagement is central to Fleet Week's purpose. "The events focus on connection with the community," he said, noting that some international allies were also able to participate after completing their operational commitments. Personnel from Canada, Denmark, the United States, and the United Kingdom took part in an international exercise off Nova Scotia prior to Fleet Week activities, reflecting the strong partnerships that underpin modern naval operations.

Public ship tours once again proved to be a highlight. According to Paul MacKinnon,

chair of the community committee for Halifax International Fleet Week, they remain one of the most anticipated elements of the program. "Ship tours are always the highlight," he said. "People have the opportunity to go on board, meet the sailors, and then maybe even catch up with them later as they see them walking around the city."

Cmdre French noted that ships open to the public had recently returned from demanding deployments, giving visitors a rare chance to hear first-hand accounts of current operations. His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Charlottetown*, fresh from Operation REASSURANCE in the Mediterranean, and HMCS *Margaret Brooke*, following a deployment to South America and

Antarctica on Operation PROJECTION, were among the ships docked downtown. "It's a chance for our people to get up close and actually spread the message about the work they're doing," he said.

CUTLASS FURY and international cooperation

Fleet Week's timing is closely tied to Exercise CUTLASS FURY, a biennial multinational naval exercise hosted by the Royal Canadian Navy off the coast of Nova Scotia. In both 2023 and 2025, the exercise set the stage for Fleet Week by bringing allied ships and personnel to the region. ▶



An official opening and ringing of the bell from HMCS Athabaskan DDG 282 kicked off Halifax International Fleet Week in June 2025. From left, Vice-Admiral Angus Topshee, Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston, and Halifax Mayor Andy Fillmore.

The Halifax International Fleet Week run saw hundreds of runners hit the streets of North End Halifax, while those who prefer cycling tackled the Navy Bike Ride.

Focused on anti-submarine warfare and air-maritime integration, CUTLASS FURY is meant to strengthen interoperability among NATO allies while reinforcing Canada's role as a trusted defence partner. The exercise also makes Fleet Week more meaningful for visiting sailors, allowing their operational presence in Halifax

to extend into community engagement, cultural exchange, and friendly competition ashore.

For Halifax residents, the connection between the exercise and Fleet Week can offer added context, linking the ships at the waterfront to real-world missions and collective security efforts taking place just beyond the horizon.



Building connections through sport

A key part of Fleet Week's success has been the role played by PSP, using sport and recreation as another way to bring people together. In 2025, PSP helped organize several Fleet Week-aligned activities, including the Halifax International Fleet Week Run and the Navy Bike Ride.

The International Fleet Week Run, held at Stadacona in North End Halifax, welcomed hundreds of participants for 5K and 10K distances, complete with custom finishing medals. Cmdre French was joined by Vice-Admiral Angus Topshee, Commander RCN, and Captain(N) Annick Fortin, Base Commander at CFB Halifax, who took part before continuing on to other Fleet Week activities along the waterfront. The Navy Bike Ride, an established annual tradition, also coincided with Fleet Week in 2025, drawing riders onto scenic local trails and marking the occasion with commemorative coins and event shirts.

PSP Halifax also supported sporting events for visiting ships' crews, both during Fleet Week and earlier during Exercise CUTLASS FURY, reinforcing camaraderie, wellness, and friendly rivalry among Canadian and allied sailors.

Looking ahead

With Halifax International Fleet Week now established as a biennial celebration, attention is already turning to its next return in 2027. Organizers say the event captures something essential about both the Navy and the city it calls home.

"We always appreciate the recognition and the welcome that Halifax brings to us," Cmdre French noted. "This is one of the best cities to live as a sailor, nationally or internationally. It's a town that has always had its Navy at heart and has always looked after us."

Halifax will no doubt continue to welcome sailors from around the world in the years to come, and Halifax International Fleet Week stands as a reminder that the relationship between the city and its Navy remains as strong and meaningful as ever. 🍁



NAVY BIKE RIDE GOING THE DISTANCE

While the Navy Bike Ride coincided with Halifax International Fleet Week in 2025, the event has built a strong identity of its own since its founding in 2016. What began as a way to encourage fitness and connection within the naval community has grown into a national initiative that brings riders together, both in person and virtually, from coast to coast to coast. In the Halifax area, the ride begins at 12 Wing Shearwater and connects to the scenic Salt Marsh and Atlantic View trails.

The Navy Bike Ride encourages participants of all abilities to get moving while supporting causes that matter to the Canadian Armed Forces community. Funds raised through the event support the Royal Canadian Naval Benevolent Fund, Support Our Troops, and Soldier On, extending the impact beyond the cycling route. 🍁



To learn more or to start getting ready for the 2026 edition

MORE THAN A RACE

PO2 Craig Blake Memorial Fitness Challenge



Rather than being a highly competitive race, the mini-triathlon challenge focuses on teamwork, camaraderie, and achieving personal bests.



Each September, as summer begins to give way to fall at 12 Wing Shearwater, members of the Defence team gather on the sand and surrounding trails at MacDonald Beach for one of the base's most enduring traditions. The PO2 Craig Blake Memorial Fitness Challenge has become a fixture on the calendar, blending physical challenge with remembrance and camaraderie in a way that continues to resonate across different generations of service members, colleagues, friends and family who take part each year. In 2025, the annual event marked a significant milestone, coming 15 years after the death of Petty Officer 2nd Class Douglas "Craig" Blake.

PO2 Blake was killed in Afghanistan on May 3, 2010, two weeks into his first tour of

the country as an explosive ordnance disposal operator. After successfully disposing of an improvised explosive device, he was returning to camp when another IED detonated near him in the Panjwai district southwest of Kandahar City. At 37 years old, Blake became the first Royal Canadian Navy member to lose his life in the conflict, leaving behind his wife and two children.

Born in Simcoe, Ont., PO2 Blake joined the Navy at the age of 18 and went on to build a career defined by professionalism, quiet leadership, and dedication to his trade. A Clearance Diver with Fleet Diving Unit (Atlantic), he was widely respected not only for his technical skill, but for the calm, thoughtful way he carried himself within the team.

“Craig was absolutely the best of us,” said fellow Clearance Diver Chief Petty Officer 2nd Class Scott Danells. “He was soft-spoken and kind, and one of the most intelligent and thoughtful people you could hope to serve with. His commitment to fitness was part of who he was and it motivated all of us around him. He embodied everything a clearance diver should be.”

That commitment to fitness extended well beyond the workplace. Blake was an avid cyclist and triathlete who pushed himself physically while encouraging others around him. He cycled to work year-round, took meticulous care of his equipment, and approached training with the same discipline and enthusiasm he brought to operations. Those qualities would later help shape the memorial event now held in his honour.

First run in 2011, the Craig Blake Memorial Fitness Challenge was created by his fellow divers as a way to remember him through something he genuinely loved. The mini-triathlon features a 300-metre open-water swim, a 6.5-kilometre mountain bike ride, and a roughly two-kilometre run through beach and wooded terrain. Participants can compete individually or split the three disciplines among a team of three, a format designed to keep the event accessible while emphasizing teamwork and camaraderie over competition.

Fleet Diving Unit (Atlantic) members continue to play a central role in the event each year, participating on the course, providing safety support for the swim, and welcoming participants from across Formation Halifax. Their strong showing reflects the lasting bond between the unit and the colleague they lost. Following the race, participants are invited back to FDU(A) for a reception, where guests can gather informally and, for those visiting the unit for the first time, gain a better sense of its history and culture.

Those post-race gatherings have become an important part of the day. For many, they offer space to share stories about PO2 Blake, particularly among those who trained or served alongside him.

Even for divers who never had the opportunity to work directly with Blake, his influence remains evident within the unit. Executive ▶



V The annual PO2 Craig Blake Memorial Fitness Challenge is typically held in September at MacDonald Beach in Shearwater. More than 100 participants turned out for the 2025 event, some competing individually and others as teams of three.





NOVA SCOTIA

PROUD TO DEFEND

**CANADA'S CAPITAL
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Nova Scotia is proud to support Seamless Canada in their efforts to make the posting process easier for CAF families. Find out more here.



Officer Lieutenant (N) Frank MacLeod says that legacy is apparent from the moment new members arrive. “From the moment we arrive at the unit, it’s evident who Craig was and the lasting impact he continues to have,” he said. “He’s known as someone who was a husband and a father first, but who also always had love for his other family here at the unit, and who was always ready to do the job with the utmost professionalism.”

The importance of the challenge to FDU(A) was especially clear during the COVID-19 pandemic, when public health restrictions forced changes across base life. Rather than allowing the tradition to lapse, the unit adapted, reducing the size of the event and hosting it at their headquarters in Shearwater. Even in a scaled-down format, maintaining the memorial was seen as essential.

PSP Halifax staff have been honoured to support the event each year, with many choosing to participate themselves. Wally Buckoski, a longtime Shearwater presence and Sports Stores

Technician at the Shearwater Fitness, Sports and Recreation Centre, acts as emcee for the event, as he does for many PSP activities, and remembers PO2 Blake well from his regular visits to the gym.

“It’s always really special to see so many people come out and remember Craig in such a fitting way,” Buckoski said. He recalls PO2 Blake as a positive and familiar presence on base, someone who took pride in his fitness and his gear, even shining his bicycle with lemon pledge before rides. “He was just a great guy and such a positive presence at our gym and on the base. He loved fitness and cycling, and he was always happy to talk or to help out others,” he said. “It was a huge loss for our community.”

Buckoski added that emceeing this event carries special meaning. “This one always comes from the heart for me,” he said, noting that the challenge continues to feel like a true reflection of Blake’s personality. “This is exactly what he loved to do, and he’d be on the beach with us if he was still here.”

PSP Fitness and Sports Coordinator Kevin Miller says supporting the event is something he’s proud to be a part of. “This is an important event for us,” he said. “It means a lot to the Fleet Diving Unit and they always show up in full force to set the example for everyone else. We’re just happy to help make it happen.”

Beyond the fitness challenge, PO2 Blake’s name and legacy live on throughout the Halifax region. A Halifax Harbour ferry bears his name, as does the Craig Blake Memorial Park in Dartmouth, serving as daily reminders of his service and sacrifice within the broader community.

With the Craig Blake Memorial Fitness Challenge set to return again in September 2026, the event continues to serve as both a physical test and a shared act of remembrance. Each year, new participants learn Craig Blake’s story for the first time, while others return carrying memories of a friend, colleague, or mentor, ensuring his legacy endures, on the course and beyond. 🍀

Finding their ground

CAF grappling takes shape in the Atlantic region

Brazilian jiu-jitsu mats in the Halifax area are busy places, where CAF members at CFB Halifax and 12 Wing Shearwater are steadily building a grappling community focused on training, fitness, and practical skill development. What has developed in recent years is one of the most complete CAF grappling scenes in Atlantic Canada, supported by regular sessions, experienced leadership, and a consistent mix of new and returning participants.

Though recognized officially under PSP as "Grappling," the discipline practiced by most CAF members in the region is Brazilian jiu-jitsu (BJJ), an art that emphasizes leverage, technique, and problem-solving over size or brute force. While its popularity has surged in civilian gyms thanks to the rise of mixed martial arts and other combat sporting events, its growth within the CAF has followed a quieter path, shaped by local leadership and a diverse mix of participants.

The diversity is evident at both of the Halifax area's primary CAF grappling hubs, the long-established 12 Wing Shearwater Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Club and the newer HERO Grappling Club based at Stadacona on the Halifax side. Though anchored in Air Force and Navy spaces respectively, neither club is defined by a single element. Instead, members from across the CAF, including Army, Navy, Air Force, and civilian Defence Team employees, train side by side, leaving rank, trade, and posting at the door once they step onto the mats.

There is also regular crossover between the two clubs, with members training at both depending on schedules and availability. Beyond the military, connections with the civilian-run Halifax Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Society have further strengthened the local grappling ecosystem, exposing CAF members to different coaching styles and training environments while reinforcing the shared language of the sport.

Major James Locke, an Army Signals Officer with 5th Canadian Division and Brazilian jiu-jitsu black belt, has watched CAF grappling evolve for more than a decade. Having started training in 2009, he has seen the sport weather setbacks and rebuild momentum, particularly following its formal adoption as a CAF sport.

"Since the adoption of Grappling by PSP as a CAF Sport, we've started to see more success at the regional level across the country," Major Locke said, noting that Regional Development Camps and smaller competitions in places like Halifax, Edmonton, Petawawa, and Valcartier have helped sustain growth. While the hope to eventually establish a signature national event remains aspirational, the steady expansion at local levels has laid out a foundation that feels durable rather than fleeting.

What sets grappling apart within a military environment, Major Locke suggests, is how quickly traditional hierarchies dissolve once training begins.

"Rank doesn't matter and the mats don't lie; We're all there to get better together and keep each other safe," he said. "Quite often people will assume the more hardcore grapplers must be combat arms soldiers, but our head coaches here in Halifax are Navy (Sailor 1st Class Atlas Del Mar of the HERO club) and Air Force (MCpl Eric Nevitt of the 12 Wing Club), with me being a Signals Officer in the Army."

The levelling effect is felt immediately by newcomers, including Sailor 3rd Class Ashnoor Kaur, who joined the HERO Grappling Club shortly after graduating from basic training in June 2025. Brand new to the RCN as a Naval Combat Information Operator, S3 Kaur was looking for a way to stay active and burn off energy when one of her superiors suggested she look into a grappling session.

She arrived with no prior experience in Brazilian jiu-jitsu and some understandable hesitation.

"I had some concerns because there aren't many others around with the same body weight," S3 Kaur said. "But Atlas (S1 Del Mar)



explained to me that it's not all about size and strength; it's about technique."

Those reassuring points proved accurate. While there are occasional opportunities to train with similarly sized partners, S3 Kaur says she has learned to find her rhythm during open mat sessions, even when rolling with significantly larger teammates.

"I learned that I can choke people who are bigger than me," she joked.

Though she is quick to downplay her success, S3 Kaur has made big strides in a few short months and has gained new confidence when it comes to self defense. "Mostly I'm surviving here, focusing on defence and not attacking that much, but that's ok. I'm still working on it, and I've gotten much better at protecting myself."

Her experience reflects a broader reality within these grappling clubs, where members arrive with vastly different backgrounds, body types, and motivations, but are unified by a desire to learn and the camaraderie that naturally develops through shared experiences and overcoming challenges on the mat.

For Master Sailor David Fitzpatrick, grappling offered a way back into fitness and structure after returning from an overseas deployment in 2018. With a background in football, hockey, and wrestling, MS Fitzpatrick was searching for a new challenge and gravitated toward Brazilian jiu-jitsu.

What drew him in, he says, was the sport's unconventional logic.

"It's the only grappling art that says the person who's on their back is offensive," MS Fitzpatrick explained. "You might be on top of me, but I still have all my weapons available."

Being effective from disadvantaged positions resonates in a military context. While civilian gyms often emphasize competition and sport-specific goals, MS Fitzpatrick notes that HERO Grappling Club comfortably accommodates both athletic and self-defense-focused approaches, shaped in part by its founder's own journey.

S1 Del Mar, who founded the HERO Grappling Club in late 2024 and recently achieved his own Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu black belt promotion, brings a unique blend of experiences to the scene. S1 Del Mar began training in 2008, initially driven by aspirations as a professional mixed martial artist. Competition took him across Europe, Asia, and the Americas before his focus shifted toward military service.

Today, as a Boat Coxswain and Boarding Party qualified sailor, S1 Del Mar views jiu-jit-

su through the lens of survival rather than competition alone. His philosophy has shaped the culture of HERO Grappling Club since its inception, emphasizing adaptability, personal responsibility, and mutual support.

S1 Del Mar often describes Brazilian jiu-jitsu as a "superpower," a concept he revisits with students during training and milestone events. Rather than promoting a single idealized style, he encourages members to discover what works best for them, whether that means speed, flexibility, endurance, or grit.

"At the same time, it requires confronting your weaknesses with honesty, because true growth in Jiu-Jitsu only happens when you face what you are not good at," he added.

An inclusive mindset has also informed how HERO Grappling Club approaches accessibility. In addition to regular training sessions, S1 Del Mar has organized special women-only HERO sessions, creating a less intimidating entry point for those curious about the sport but hesitant to step onto a crowded mat for the first time. The sessions saw strong participation and offered a supportive environment focused on fundamentals, questions, and confidence-building, and have already led some participants returning for regular classes.

The club's growth was also marked recently by a significant milestone, its first-ever belt and stripe promotion ceremony. For S1 Del Mar, who only recently became eligible to formally promote his own students after earning his black belt, the event was as much about recognition as it was about continuity.

"Progress in jiu-jitsu is earned over time," S1 Del Mar told students. "The day is about recognizing those who have shown up, put in the work, and continued to move forward."

An emphasis on consistency resonates deeply in a military environment, where deployments, courses, and operational demands often disrupt routines. S1 Del Mar has acknowledged that reality openly, noting that the strength of the HERO Grappling Club lies in its community and its ability to sustain itself even during periods of absence.

Major Locke sees resilience as one of grappling's greatest strengths within the CAF.

"I would tell new members that everybody must start somewhere," he said. "Some people will put off trying grappling until they are in better shape, or until they know a little bit. This is not required. You will get in better shape and learn everything you need to on the mats." 🍁



HERO Grappling Club – CFB Halifax (Stadacona)

Location: Building S-120
(Hand-to-hand Combat Training Room)
Atlas.DelMar@forces.gc.ca

12 Wing Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Club

Location: Shearwater Fitness,
Sports and Recreation Centre
Eric.Nevitt@forces.gc.ca

Members from all service elements, ranks, and trades are welcome at both clubs.



YOUR HALIFAX SUMMER STARTS HERE

One of the perks of being posted to CFB Halifax is simple: you end up in one of the most beautiful corners of the country. Between the Atlantic coastline, historic sites, and a waterfront that comes alive each summer, the region and province offer no shortage of ways to get outside and explore or unwind. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

Beaches Worth the Drive

Crystal Crescent Beach: A local favourite just 30 minutes from Halifax, Crystal Crescent delivers white sand, rolling waves, and great views. Perfect for a relaxed beach day or a coastal walk.

Lawrencetown Beach: Famous for surfing, Lawrencetown offers a steady ocean breeze and some of the province's best waves. New to surfing? Local lessons and board rentals make it easy to give it a try — or just enjoy the show from shore.

Rainbow Haven Beach: Closer to Dartmouth and popular with families, Rainbow Haven has a long sandy shoreline, supervised swimming areas in summer, and boardwalk access over the dunes.





Hit the Trails

If you'd rather trade sand for sneakers, Nova Scotia's trails and natural areas offer something for every pace, from forest loops to dramatic coastal cliffs.

Cape Split: One of the province's most iconic hikes, Cape Split rewards a moderate trek with jaw-dropping views over the Bay of Fundy.

Polly's Cove: Just beyond the famous lighthouse, Polly's Cove offers a quieter coastal experience; Granite rock formations, open ocean views, and wild Atlantic scenery.

Shubie Park: Looking for something closer to home? Shubie's wooded trails and canal paths are perfect for a casual afternoon or family outing.

Step Into History

Thanks to the Canada Strong Pass from Parks Canada, admission to Halifax Citadel National Historic Site is **free from June 19 to September 7, 2026**.

Perched above downtown, the **Citadel** offers panoramic harbour views, costumed interpreters, historic demonstrations, and a chance to explore Halifax's military past. If you haven't made the trip up yet, this is the summer to do it.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR DND FAMILY DAYS

Some of the best summer memories are made right here at CFB Halifax.

DND Family Days returns **June 12–13** at His Majesty's Canadian Dockyard, open to all Defence Team members and their families. Expect games, rides, good food, engaging military demonstrations, and more! Every attendee also receives a ticket for the **daily prize draws**, with giveaways including bicycles, gift cards, and travel and hotel packages. Winners are drawn at 2 p.m. each day, so be sure to stick around!

Waterfront Energy Returns

International sailing action is set to electrify Halifax again when **SailGP** returns **June 20–21, 2026**.

With catamarans hitting speeds up to 100 km/h, it's high-performance action set against the scenic backdrop of downtown Halifax and Dartmouth. The best part? You can catch much of the action for **free**. Great vantage points include **Alderney Landing, King's Wharf**, and the **waterfront parks** along both sides of the harbour. Paid options are available for those who want a closer look, but simply being near the water puts you right in the middle of it.



Looking for More?

There's plenty to discover, whether you arrived last month or have spent years here. The Province of Nova Scotia's summer guide at novascotia.com/get-inspired/summer is a good place to start.

NO CASH? *No Problem*

**Fleet Support Team
Delivers Modern NPP
Services at Sea**



Sailors serving in most Royal Canadian Navy ships can now tap to pay for a drink or snack onboard, just as they would at a convenience store ashore.

It's just one small change as part of a Service Level Agreement signed in January 2024 between the RCN and Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services to provide Non-Public Property (NPP) accounting and operational support to the Fleet.

With the Steward trade no longer serving aboard ships, a new approach was needed to manage Mess and Canteen services at sea. From beer and pop to chips and hoodies, ships required a modern system to buy, sell, and properly account for onboard stock.

To meet that need, two new onboard roles were created: an NPP Accounting Manager and an NPP Warehouse Manager. Together, they identify crew needs, order and receive stock, oversee sales, and, alongside the ship's Logistics Officer, provide advice to Ship's and Mess Committees.

To support these roles, CFMWS established dedicated NPP Fleet Support teams on both coasts. Comprised of Accounting and Opera-

tions sections, these teams provide traditional support services, but in new and innovative ways, ensuring consistent assistance whether ships are alongside or deployed abroad.

Accounting services are now managed through centralized CFMWS financial systems, allowing statements to be generated ashore and shared monthly, similar to other Canadian Armed Forces messes. Modern Point-of-Sale technology has also been introduced onboard, enabling streamlined purchasing, clearer oversight, and cashless transactions on ships.

For ship's staff, the changes simplify day-to-day operations. Instead of sourcing products themselves, ships submit orders through Fleet Support, which manages purchasing from start to finish in homeport — this ensures ships get the best price, for the right product, at the right time.

The goal is to deliver best value across the Halifax Dockyard while maintaining the comforts crews rely on when serving far from Canadian shores. Even something as simple as ketchup chips can offer a welcome reminder of home after standing a long watch at sea.

Fleet Support teams also provide complimentary training to Logistics Officers and Material Management Technicians preparing to serve as shipboard NPP staff. And regardless of time, or time zone, ships with questions can connect with knowledgeable CFMWS team members who are always ready to assist.

To date, nine of nineteen Atlantic units have been fully onboarded and are being supported by CFMWS. While there's still work ahead, this initiative is having positive effects for Fleet programs. A recent review of HMCS *Ville de Québec*'s purchases ahead of its Indo-Pacific deployment identified approximately \$4,000 in savings generated through new purchasing methods. Those savings created additional opportunities for morale and welfare programming for the crew, which is the goal of every NPP program.

Whether supporting another Banyan on the steel beach or a relaxing barbecue on a distant shore, Fleet Support is poised to provide exceptional service and support to ships and their crews. Serving those who serve is what we do. 🍁

Contact Us

PSP Facilities

CFB Halifax Curling Club

902-455-1444 cfbhxcurling@eastlink.ca

Falls Lake Cottages and Campground

1-877-325-5253 bookings@fallslake.ca

Hartlen Point Golf Club

902-465-6354 info@hartlenpoint.ca

Naval Museum of Halifax

902-721-8250 navalmuseumofhalifax@forces.gc.ca

Shearwater Aviation Museum

902-720-1083 info@shearwateraviationmuseum.ns.ca

Shearwater Yacht Club

902-469-8590 https://swyc.ca/

Fleet Fitness and Sports Centre

902-427-3524

Stadacona Fitness and Sports Centre

(902) 721-0133

Shearwater Fitness, Sports, and Recreation Centre

902-720-1071

Shearwater Arena

(902)720-1078 Jamie.Mercer@forces.gc.ca

Halifax Officers' Mess (Royal Artillery Park and Wardroom)

902-721-8626 Monika.Ackland@forces.gc.ca

Halifax Chiefs & Petty Officers' Mess

902-721-8632 Michelle.Johnston2@forces.gc.ca

Fleet Club Atlantic Junior Ranks' Mess

902-721-8350 Robert.Benoit@forces.gc.ca

Shearwater All Ranks' Mess

902-720-1934 Michelle.Baumhour@forces.gc.ca

PSP Services

Fleet Support: NPP Accounting Services

NPFEastCoastFleet@cfmws.com

Fleet Support: NPP Operations and Procurement

Hfxpspfleetsupport@cfmws.com

Juno Catering

902-721-1047 Bradley.Bowden@forces.gc.ca

Corporate Services

902-721-7805

Health Promotion

902-722-4956

Trident News

902-721-8662 Melanson.Ryan@cfmws.com



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YACHT CLUB

JOIN THE CREW

Did you know we have a military yacht club in Shearwater? At Shearwater Yacht Club, you don't need to own a boat to be a member.

Join as a sailing, racing, crewing or social member and be a part of a welcoming waterfront community!

- 🚣 Access to club racing & events
- 🚣 Crewing/Social memberships available
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- 🚣 Year-round social events & celebrations

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:
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WHERE IT'S AT

Fitness Centres

- 1 Shearwater Fitness, Sports & Recreation Centre
- 2 Stadacona Fitness & Sports Centre
- 3 Fleet Fitness & Sports Centre
- 4 PSP Reconditioning Centre

Active Recreation

- 5 Hartlen Point Forces Golf Club
- 6 Shearwater Yacht Club
- 7 Shearwater Arena
- 8 CFB Halifax Curling Club
- 9 MacDonald Beach
- 10 Falls Lake Cottages & Campground

Messes and Accommodations

- 11 12 Wing Mess
- 12 Chiefs and Petty Officers' Mess
- 13 Fleet Club Atlantic Junior Ranks Mess
- 14 Halifax Officers' Mess RA Park
- 15 Halifax Officers' Wardroom
- 16 Juno Tower
- 17 Tribute Tower
- 18 Warrior Block

Support Services

- 19 Health Promotion
- 20 Fleet Support
- 21 PSP Headquarters

Museums

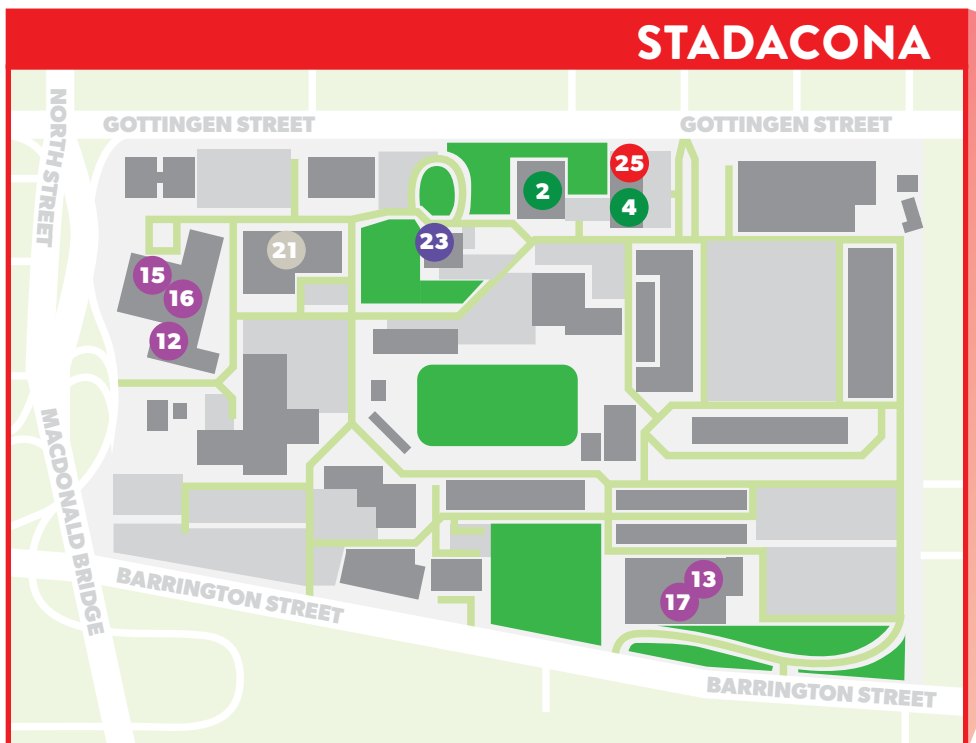
- 22 Shearwater Aviation Museum
- 23 Naval Museum of Halifax

Canex

- 24 Halifax Windsor Park Retail
- 25 Halifax ExpressMart
- 26 Shearwater ExpressMart

MFRC

- 27 MFRC Halifax
- 28 MFRC Shearwater



GET OUTSIDE!



10

Falls Lake Cottages & Campground

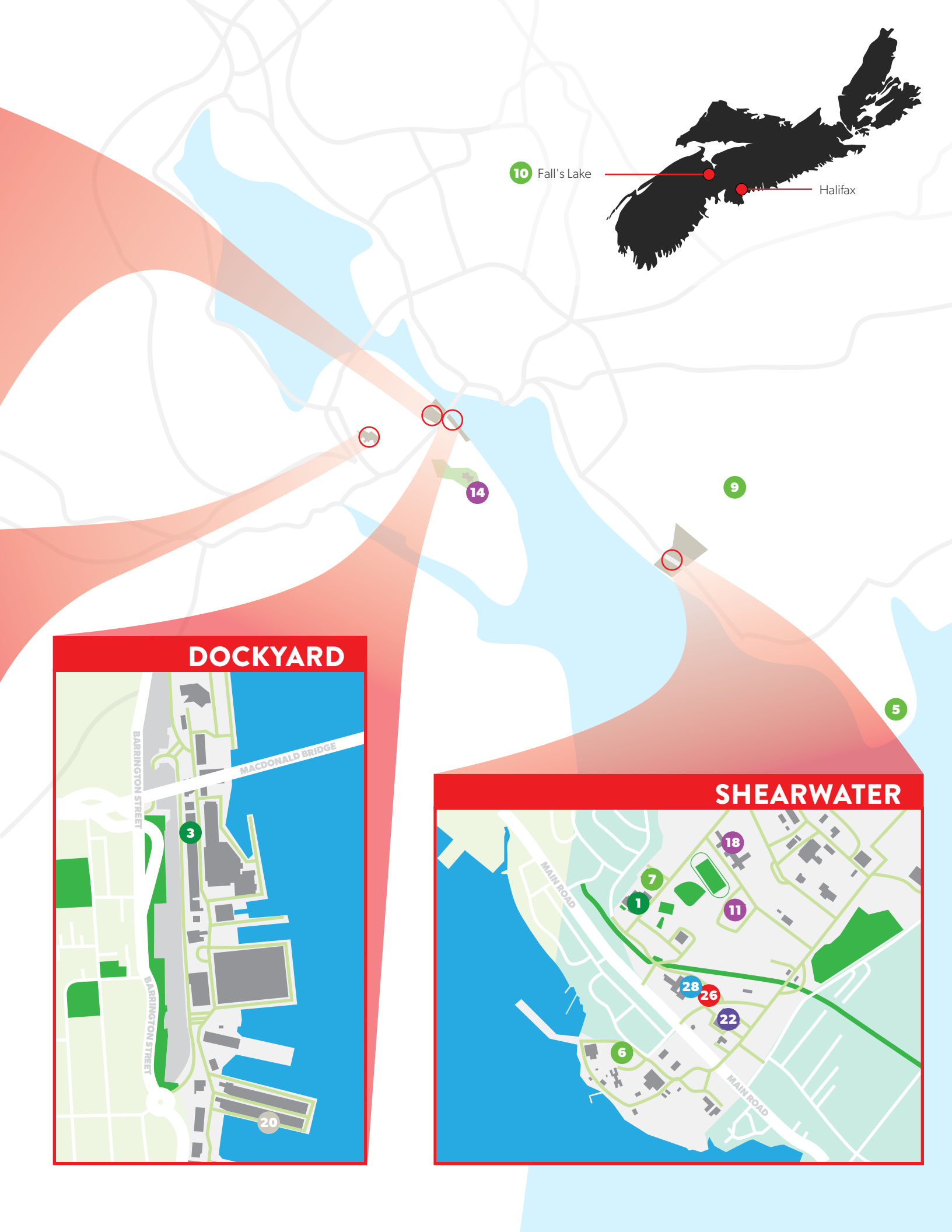
Our lakeside retreat is open year-round and just a short drive from Windsor or Chester. Falls Lake is perfect for a unit getaway, family reunion, weekend escape, and even weddings! The facility includes 25 cabins + 1 yurt, a main lodge, beach, boat rentals, and a seasonal campground.



5

Hartlen Point Golf Club

Our scenic Forces golf club is located on the northern mouth of Halifax Harbour in Eastern Passage, just minutes from the 12 Wing Shearwater main gate. Reach out to inquire about membership or a golf day for your unit!



10 Fall's Lake

Halifax

DOCKYARD



SHEARWATER





STAY FIT STAY CONNECTED STAY READY WITH PSP HALIFAX

WE SUPPORT THOSE WHO SERVE

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