



# TRIDENT

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## Home Sweet Home

*After six months away from home supporting Operation HORIZON and Canada's Indo-Pacific strategy, the ship's company of HMCS Charlottetown returned to Halifax on August 17 to a waiting crowd of friends and loved ones.*

CPL ANNABELLE MARCOUX



From left, the incoming commander of MARLANT and JTFA, RAdm Pascal Belhumeur; Commander RCN Vice Admiral Dan Charlebois, and the outgoing commander of MARLANT and JTFA, RAdm Josée Kurtz, during the change-of-command ceremony held on August 11 aboard HMCS William Hall.

FORMATION IMAGING SERVICE



## RAdm Belhumeur takes command at MARLANT, JTFA

By Trident Staff

The new commander of Maritime Forces Atlantic (MARLANT) and Joint Task Force Atlantic (JTFA) says he's putting the focus on people as he begins his appointment as the senior Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) officer in the region.

Rear-Admiral (RAdm) Pascal Belhumeur officially began his new role on August 11 following a change of command ceremony at sea held aboard His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *William Hall*.

The Commander of MARLANT and JTFA is responsible for the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) on the East Coast. This includes conducting routine and domestic operations, as well as leading Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) continental operations across Atlantic Canada to defend Canadian interests and values at home and abroad.

He arrives during a busy and dynamic

time for the RCN. Halifax-class frigates, Harry DeWolf-class Arctic and Offshore Patrol Vessels, and the remaining Kingston-class vessels have all seen heavy tasking, deploying on multinational operations and exercises stretching from Eastern Europe to the Indo-Pacific and the Arctic. At the same time, the fleet is preparing for major change on the horizon, with work underway to ready the Formation for the arrival of the future River-class destroyers and Joint Support Ships, and eventually a new fleet of submarines under the Canadian Patrol Submarine Project. That transition will bring significant training requirements and infrastructure work in the years ahead.

Looking ahead to potential challenges in the coming years, RAdm Belhumeur pointed to recruitment, retention, and training as vitally important as the

Atlantic Fleet prepares for the future. Recruitment has already been trending in the right direction; building those new recruits into effective sailors will be key, he said.

"We want to ensure that every time we're at sea, we provide training opportunities to train those new recruits that we've brought into our ranks - so we can deliver effect for the government of Canada."

He referenced a recent Flag-hoist message from Commander RCN Vice-Admiral Dan Charlebois, which placed people as the top priority. RAdm Belhumeur said he's aligned with that approach for the East Coast.

"It's all about our people—developing our people, and taking care of our people, because people are our capability."

RAdm Belhumeur takes over from out-

going Commander MARLANT and JTFA RAdm Josee Kurtz, who began her appointment in June 2023 as the first woman to lead Formation Halifax. In a statement issued following the changeover, RAdm Kurtz expressed confidence in her successor and the future of the RCN overall, while offering thanks to the team members who supported her through a successful three years in command.

"What impressed me most throughout my time in command and really energized me to show up for work every single day, has been the people: the military personnel and civilian employees whose commitment to the mission, resilience in the face of challenges, and care for one another have been the foundation of everything we have achieved together as a team," she said.

RAdm Belhumeur echoed those comments about the workforce he'll now be overseeing.

"The professionalism, dedication, and excellence demonstrated by our people is recognized across the Canadian Armed Forces and with our Allies, and I am committed to building on the strong foundation established by Rear-Admiral Kurtz."



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*HMCS Charlottetown sails into Halifax Harbour on August 17 with a CH-148 Cyclone helicopter escort as the ship returns from Operations HORIZON and NEON.*

CPL ANNABELLE MARCOUX

*Friends and family try to spot returning loved ones as Charlottetown comes into view.*

CPL ANNABELLE MARCOUX

# Warm welcome for HMCS Charlottetown after Operations HORIZON, NEON

By Nathan Stone,  
Trident Staff

**His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS)** Charlottetown returned home to Halifax on August 17, marking the end of a six-month-plus deployment to the Indo-Pacific in support of Operations HORIZON and NEON.

The ship departed from His Majesty's Canadian Dockyard on February 1. During the deployment, HMCS Charlottetown sailed more than 45,000 nautical miles and visited 13 ports across 10 countries.

It kept a busy schedule throughout, working alongside vessels from 15 allied and partner nations through a number of multinational exercises, including KAKADU, BALIKATAN and VALIANT SHIELD.

Speaking to reporters after coming alongside, Commander (Cdr) Jonathan Maurice, HMCS Charlottetown's Commanding Officer, reflected on a successful mission.

"From my perspective, maybe a little bit of a biased one, I think it went great. We represented Canada abroad in the Indo-Pacific, met all our objectives, met the mission, and we all came back safely here today."

He said that sailing in the Indo-Pacific

was a unique experience. The ports of the region were highlights for his team of East coast sailors, who don't often find themselves in Australia or New Zealand.

"It was my first time sailing in the region. We saw new ports, new cultures to adapt to, which is fantastic. Operating with our allies and partners out there, who I wasn't used to operating with, was a unique challenge and something that I'll never forget."

Chief Petty Officer 1st Class (CPO1) Brett Marchand, the ship's Coxswain, praised the crew's morale and focus through a long and demanding program at sea.

"It comes with its challenges, but we were able to keep the crew engaged, doing different things, and having fun when we could. But we kept our eyes on the prize, which was executing the mission."

He said that the extended time away from home had been the toughest test for the crew.

"Missing families, birthdays, anniversaries and everything in between," he said. "But today is very worth it, being able to reunite an entire ship's company."

The ship was met by a large crowd of

cheering family and friends as it came alongside.

"I knew it would be a very, very warm welcome," said CPO1 Marchand.

Karen and John Gilley, both former sailors themselves, were waiting for their daughter, Lieutenant (N) Lacey Gilley, a Combat Information Systems Officer aboard Charlottetown.

"It's very emotional for them to come into home port," said Karen Gilley. "It

really is a big thing. We're very proud."

CPO1 Marchand said he felt that the deployment had been extremely valuable to the crew, who came home with new skills and experience to take with them on future missions.

"We trained a lot of sailors. We came back healthy, safe, all together, and a very close-knit team. Very happy with how it all turned out."

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## HMCS Robert Hampton Gray leads Op NANOOK departure

*His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) Robert Hampton Gray, the Royal Canadian Navy's (RCN) newest Arctic and Off-shore Patrol Vessel, sailed from Halifax Harbour on August 14 alongside partners and allies. The departure marked the start of a historic transit that will carry the ship through the Canadian Arctic and ultimately to a new home port at Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt, where*



*Robert Hampton Gray will join Canadian Fleet Pacific ahead of its commissioning this fall. The ship is also sailing with an embarked Canadian Coast Guard Bell-429 helicopter, a new capability for the class and the RCN, and a sign of growing integration across the defence team.*

*HDMS Thetis of the Royal Danish Navy and the Canadian Coast Guard ship (CCGS) George R. Pearkes also departed*

*from Halifax, and the task group will grow further at sea, with USS Wichita and the French patrol vessel FS Fulmar rendezvousing with the ships for multinational operations and exercises in Canada's North.*

*The voyage opens with Operation NANOOK before continuing through the Northwest Passage. Along the way, the crew of HMCS Robert Hampton Gray*

*will take part in exercises and community engagements across the Arctic, including stops of historical and cultural significance, before rounding out the journey with Operation LATITUDE alongside U.S. allies.*

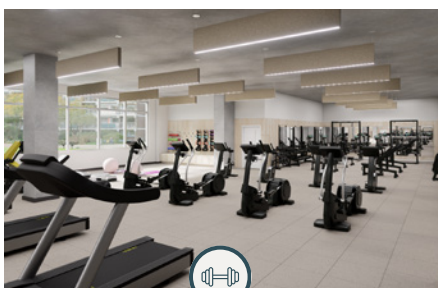
CPL MITCHELL PAQUETTE

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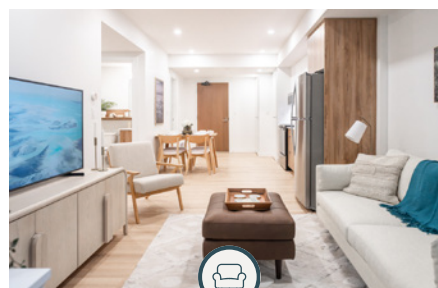
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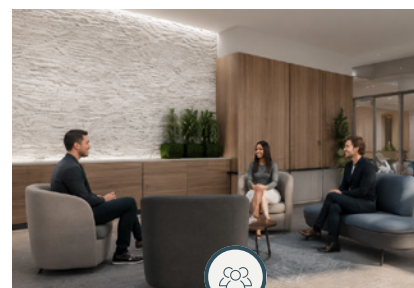
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# HMCS *Charlottetown* conducts rare Demolition-at-Sea Training during pacific transit

By Lt(N) Rosa Gutierrez

One never knows what hazards may be encountered at sea. Although rare, ships can come into contact with abandoned vessels, drifting sea containers, or other floating debris that threaten safe navigation. In a scenario like this, one method of eliminating such a hazard is to conduct a demolition. Unfortunately, due to the nature of the task, opportunities to practice this capability at sea are few and far between.

Prior to the ship's recent return to Halifax, His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Charlottetown* found a rare training opportunity during its recent transit to Guam, United States. The ship had an inoperable Hammerhead Target drone on board that had reached the end of its service life. Rather than discarding it, the crew repurposed it as a realistic floating navigational hazard for the demolition exercise.

As with any operation involving explosives, safety was the top priority. Led by Petty Officer, 1st Class David Howard, Officer-in-Charge and a former senior demolitions instructor, the team spent considerable time planning the evolution, coordinating personnel, and mitigating risk.

The team assembled and secured demolition charges before carefully launching the target. The ship also deployed two safety boats to ferry the payload 1,500 meters away from the ship, providing the redundancy needed to safely position the charge and leave the danger area. With the target in position, the demolition team received final authori-



*By conducting a demolition at sea, sailors were able to practice an important capability used to eliminate hazards that may threaten the safety of the ship.*

MS ALEXANDRE HEAGLE

zation from Command before initiating a time-delayed firing system, allowing personnel to safely withdraw before the detonation.

The resulting blast, using 23 kilograms of C4 explosive, successfully destroyed the target exactly as planned. Beyond

eliminating the floating hazard, the evolution offered sailors a chance to practice a skill rarely used.

"Opportunities like this don't come along often, and when they do, we owe it to our sailors to train safely and realistically," said Commander Jonathan

Maurice, *Charlottetown*'s Commanding Officer. "This evolution showcased the professionalism of our team, their commitment to thorough planning and risk management, and their willingness to seize unique training opportunities that strengthen our operational readiness."

## Crossing the Line aboard HMCS *Ville de Québec*

The ship's company of His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Ville de Québec* recently celebrated a maritime rite of passage as they continue their Operation REASSURANCE deployment alongside NATO allies. As the ship crossed the Arctic Circle, a traditional Crossing the Line ceremony was held on board. As always, the occasion was complete with costumes and theatrics, as first-time Arctic Circle crossers were transformed from lowly "tadpoles" into fully fledged "shellbacks," inducted into one of the sea's oldest fraternities under the guise of "King Neptune" himself.

CPL GREGORY COLE





## Updated guide supports military-connected children and youth

By DND

Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS), in partnership with Kids Help Phone, has released an updated [Guide to Working with Military-Connected Children and Youth](#).

The guide offers practical, evidence-informed tools to help those working with military-connected children and youth better understand and respond to their unique experiences. It is intended for professionals and caregivers across Military Family Resource Centres (MFRCs), schools, childcare settings, community organizations, and within CFMWS.

### Understanding a unique experience

Military-connected children and youth

experience frequent relocations, parental deployments, and ongoing transitions. These experiences can build adaptability and resilience, but they can also create challenges related to social connections, emotional well-being, and continuity in education.

The updated guide supports the development of military literacy by increasing awareness of military family life and its impact on children and youth.

### Practical tools for everyday support

The guide provides actionable strategies that can be applied in daily interactions. It highlights ways to support children and youth through transitions, foster

a sense of belonging, and create supportive environments where they can succeed.

The resource helps professionals deliver consistent and informed support across settings.

### Reaching communities in Canada and abroad

The guide is being shared across CFMWS platforms and with partners to support broad access and adoption. MFRC staff, educators, and service providers are encouraged to integrate the guide into their work.

It also supports OUTCAN communities, where families may face additional challenges related to distance, access

to services, and integration into new environments.

### Supporting awareness and adoption

This initiative aims to increase awareness of the needs of military-connected children and youth and promote the use of tools that support their well-being and development.

By building a shared understanding of the military lifestyle, communities can better support military-connected children and youth and help them thrive wherever they are located.

## Barn Swallows within MARLANT's Area of Responsibility – Education and Awareness

By MARLANT Safety and Environment

Barn swallows are protected under the Migratory Birds Convention Act (MBCA) and Migratory Birds Regulations, 2022, which prohibit damaging, destroying, removing, or disturbing active nests containing live birds or viable eggs. Barn swallows are also listed as threatened under the Species at Risk Act (SARA). Under SARA, the nest, whether occupied or unoccupied, is considered a protected residence during the breeding season, typically from May 1 to August 31 (or from when nest building begins

until use has clearly ended).

Barn swallows commonly nest on human-made structures such as buildings, bridges, and other infrastructure. Surveys and observations have confirmed their presence at some MARLANT properties. Barn swallow nests persist for many years and are frequently reused within a breeding season for a second brood and in subsequent years.

MARLANT is required to comply with SARA and the MBCA and is committed to supporting the protection and re-

covery of barn swallows. This includes identifying where they occur, incorporating species at risk considerations into planning and maintenance activities, and implementing appropriate mitigation measures.

An initiative is underway to install signs at locations where barn swallows are known to nest within CFB Halifax. All personnel play an important role in supporting compliance. Where signs are posted, limit activity in the area of the nest and do not disturb nests, birds, or

nesting structures. If barn swallows or nests are observed, or if planned work may affect a nest or structure where barn swallows are nesting or may be nesting, contact MARLANT Safety and Environment ([MARLSE@forces.gc.ca](mailto:MARLSE@forces.gc.ca)) for guidance before proceeding.

By taking proactive steps, MARLANT can meet operational requirements while supporting barn swallow conservation and meeting federal environmental obligations.



A unit photo was taken with the new CO following the ceremony on July 31.  
S2 VENI COLICO

# Outgoing CO commends FDU(A) members for high-tempo work

By Ryan Melanson,  
The Trident team

A busy change-of-command season has also brought new leadership for Fleet Diving Unit (Atlantic) (FDU(A)). A gathering inside the unit's hangar in Shearwater on July 31 saw Lieutenant-Commander (LCdr) JR Gallant assume command of the unit, taking over from outgoing Commanding Officer

LCdr Michael St-Pierre. Recent years have brought an increase in international tensions, which in turn led to an increase in the frequency and intensity of calls for FDU(A) to support Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) operations, LCdr St-Pierre noted. This aligned well with his vision for the unit.

"I wanted to see the unit go out, find problems, and do our thing – as often as possible, both domestically and abroad," LCdr St-Pierre said.

"I was not disappointed."

Among other taskings, he lauded his team for their performance during Mine Countermeasures operations alongside the Romanian Navy in 2025 and 2026, where they helped identify and neutralize sea mines and other explosives that have drifted into Romanian territorial waters.

LCdr St-Pierre was also credited for being a strong advocate for the unit, ensuring that operational capability remained constant during a time when the RCN has struggled with personnel shortages.

The incoming CO is no stranger to the RCN's East Coast dive community. A Clearance Diver since 2010, LCdr Gallant has held every principal position during different stints at FDU(A), including a tour as the unit's Executive Officer that he completed in 2018. His most recent roles have focused on mine warfare with Canadian Fleet Atlantic and the Canadian Forces Maritime Warfare Centre.

"I'm incredibly humbled and honoured to have the opportunity to come back here to this special place and lead this very special team of people," LCdr Gallant said.

"I look forward to reconnecting and relying on your knowledge and experience to help move the unit forward together."



During FDU(A)'s Change of Command ceremony, LCdr JR Gallant assumed command from LCdr Michael St-Pierre. The ceremony was presided over by Cmdre Jacob French, Commander Canadian Fleet Atlantic.

S2 VENI COLICO



It was a full house at FDU(A)'s hangar in Shearwater as friends and colleagues gathered for the occasion.

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## SkyHawks help send off Nova Scotia Tribute Ride at 12 Wing Shearwater

*The Canadian Armed Forces Parachute Team, the SkyHawks, performed for a large crowd at 12 Wing Shearwater on August 15 to help kick off this year's Highway of Heroes Nova Scotia Tribute Ride. The event is an annual memorial to Canadian Armed Forces members and first responders who have died in the line of duty or due to their service. Following the SkyHawks performance and a fly past from Royal Canadian Air Force CF-18 Hornets, hundreds of motorcycles and first-responder vehicles made the memorial ride from Shearwater to Truro, NS.*

SGT IAN THOMPSON



## 2026 NDWCC: Volunteer as a Canvasser or Unit OPI

By CFB Halifax Public Affairs

The 2026 Halifax Region National Defence Workplace Charitable Campaign (NDWCC) runs from September 8 to December 11, 2026. The NDWCC Regional Coordination Team is recruiting Canvassers and Unit OPIs for the 2026 campaign. Canvassers and Unit OPIs are Defence Team members who volunteer

their time in addition to their daily work duties to support the NDWCC.

**Canvasser duties:** Canvassers will make their way through units across CFB Halifax during the campaign to raise awareness about the NDWCC. They will be available to help Defence Team members navigate ePledge (online

donation portal), answer questions, and identify ways to participate in this year's campaign.

**Unit OPI duties:** Unit OPIs are local campaign representatives that will connect unit members with volunteer opportunities, help promote NDWCC events within their units, support

fundraising efforts, and provide updates to the NDWCC Regional Coordinator throughout the campaign.

To volunteer as a canvasser or Unit OPI or for more information, please contact Deshawn Davison, the NDWCC Regional Coordinator, at [Deshawn.Davison@forces.gc.ca](mailto:Deshawn.Davison@forces.gc.ca).



*Defence Team members participated in the annual Dragon Boat Regatta in support of the National Defence Workplace Charitable Campaign on August 12 at Graham's Cove Park in Dartmouth. The 2026 campaign kicks off on September 8: Canvassers and Unit OPIs are currently being recruited.*

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# MSE Tech awarded for dedication to shipmates and RCN

By Trident Staff

Master Sailor (MS) Stephen Goulding, a Marine Systems Engineering Technician aboard His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Robert Hampton Gray*, was recently named Canadian Fleet Atlantic's latest Sailor of the Quarter in recognition of his leadership, professionalism and dedication to both the Royal Canadian Navy and the wider community.

His colleagues and superiors say that MS Goulding has distinguished himself through a commitment to developing others, providing mentorship and hands-on training to his shipmates through a busy period of trials and workups. His efforts have helped ensure personnel are confident and prepared to meet operational demands while contributing to the ship's overall engineering readiness. He's also demonstrated a strong commitment to the readiness of the ship itself, including responding to shipboard issues after hours and while off duty to help ensure

the vessel remains ready for its taskings.

MS Goulding is known as a morale booster among the crew, with a leadership style that has helped foster trust and cohesion among teammates.

"MS Goulding exemplifies the highest standards of leadership, with an exceptional commitment to training and developing the next generation of sailors through deliberate mentorship, hands-on instruction, and a genuine investment in the success of Engineering Watchkeepers, Roundpersons, and duty engineers," wrote Commander Brian Henwood, HMCS *Robert Hampton Gray*'s Commanding Officer, in nominating MS Goulding for the award.

"Their leadership not only strengthens internal unit cohesion, morale, and readiness, but also extends across the Arctic and Offshore Patrol Vessel fleet, where they actively share expertise, reinforce standardized practices, and enhance interoperabil-

ity and collective effectiveness."

MS Goulding's recent completion of the Primary Leadership Qualification provided further recognition of those qualities. He was awarded the Commandant's Shield, presented to the candidate who best demonstrates leadership excellence throughout the course.

Outside of military duties, he's also been recognized as an active community member. MS Goulding contributes to local youth sports as a hockey referee, and has also volunteered personal time as a research participant with Dalhousie University's Psychology Division.

The Sailor of the Quarter award was presented aboard HMCS *Robert Hampton Gray* on August 10 by Commodore Jacob French, Commander Canadian Fleet Atlantic, and Chief Petty Officer 1st Class Paul Greene, ahead of the ship's recent departure for Op NANOOK and eventual transfer to the West Coast.



From left, CPO1 Paul Greene, MS Stephen Goulding, and Cmdre Jacob French during the Atlantic Fleet Sailor of the Quarter presentation on August 10.

FORMATION IMAGING SERVICES



## New leadership at 423 MH Squadron

The Royal Canadian Air Force's East Coast Maritime Helicopter Squadron has welcomed a new Commanding Officer, with LCol Stephen Brosha assuming command of 423 Squadron during a ceremony at 12 Wing Shearwater on August 4. Pictured from left are LCol Brosha, Wing Commander Col Tara Willis, and the outgoing CO, LCol Kris Sutton. Behind them are 423 Squadron's Chief Warrant Officer, CWO Aaron Evans (left) and 12 Wing CWO James McCarron.

CPL OLIVIA MAINVILLE



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# SPORTS & FITNESS

## PO2 Craig Blake Memorial Fitness Challenge returns to MacDonald Beach

By Trident Staff

More than 16 years after the tragic loss of Petty Officer, 2nd Class (PO2) Craig Blake, Royal Canadian Navy Clearance Divers and the broader military community continue to pay tribute to him by taking part in one of his favourite activities.

The 2026 edition of the PO2 Craig Blake Memorial Fitness Challenge will take place Friday, September 18 at MacDonald Beach in Shearwater. The sprint triathlon event invites participants to tackle a course that includes a 300-metre swim, 6.5 km bike ride and 2 km run. The course can be completed as an individual, or the legs of the race can be split up among teams of two or three.

PO2 Blake, who was killed on May 3, 2010 while on duty in Afghanistan, is remembered as an exceptional sailor and loving father and husband, but also as an avid triathlete in top physical shape. Former Fleet Diving Unit (Atlantic) (FDU(A)) colleagues established the memorial race shortly after his death as a fitting way to honour his legacy.

As always, participants of all athletic levels are encouraged to form a team and take the challenge. The event puts the focus on teamwork and camaraderie rather than the fastest finishing times, though timekeepers from Atlantic Chip will be on hand to record the results. Prizes will be awarded in a number of different categories following the race. The goal of the PO2 Craig Blake Memorial Fitness Challenge is to bring people of all fitness levels together to strive to do their best through friendly competition.

The race is open to active and retired Canadian Armed Forces members, as well as civilian employees of the Department of National Defence and Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services. Registration is open now through [Race-Roster](#).

### Divers Association plans new memorial

Members of the Canadian Naval Divers Association (CNDA), with the support of FDU(A), are raising funds for

a permanent memorial to be installed at the PO2 Craig Blake Memorial Park in Dartmouth.

The group has launched a Craig Blake Memorial Archway Foundation, with the goal of raising \$60,000 toward the construction of a sculptural archway dedicated to the memory of PO2 Blake and other naval divers who have lost their lives while serving.

Organizers note the project has already been approved by the Halifax Regional Municipality; anyone interested in contributing to the project can visit the [GoFundMe](#) campaign page, which reads “The archway is designed to be a gateway of reflection—a place where family, sailors, veterans, and the public can connect with the legacy of a hero.”



*Participants wrap up the swimming leg of the 2025 PO2 Craig Blake Memorial Fitness Challenge, held last September at MacDonald Beach in Shearwater. This year's installment of the event is set for Friday, September 18.*

CPL SAMUEL MARTELL

