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A Naval Warfare Officer takes a bearing from the bridge of HMCS William Hall during Operation CARIBBE. Photo: Canadian Armed Forces Imagery Technician

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Rear-Admiral Christopher Robinson OMM, CD Photo: Sergeant Malcolm Byers, MARPAC Imaging Services

Rear-Admiral Christopher Robinson, OMM, CD
Maritime Forces Pacific

As I pass over command of Maritime Forces Pacific (MARPAC) and Joint Task Force Pacific (JTFP) to Rear-Admiral David Patchell, I want to express my deepest gratitude to the extraordinary team that has stood watch with me during these past three and a half years.

With your unwavering support and dedication, MARPAC has stood strong as Canada's leading presence on the Pacific Coast. Through challenging times, your resilience, agility, and professionalism has ensured that we not only met our operational commitments but also advanced efforts to reconstitute and strengthen our force.

Together, we navigated a global pandemic while continuing to support overseas operations, domestic disaster response through Operation (Op) LENTUS, and vital regional search and rescue missions. Our ships — His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Winnipeg*, *Vancouver*, and *Ottawa* — deployed to the Indo-Pacific under Ops PROJECTION, NEON, and HORIZON,

reinforcing Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy. Meanwhile, HMCS *Saskatoon*, *Yellowknife*, and *Edmonton* deployed in support of Op CARIBBE, interdicting thousands of kilograms of illicit narcotics into North America.

In 2024, clearance divers from Fleet Diving Unit (Pacific) deployed to the Solomon Islands under Op RENDER SAFE, continuing their vital mission to remove explosive remnants of war from the world's oceans. Closer to home, they responded on short notice to assist in the recovery of a Royal Canadian Air Force CH-147F Chinook helicopter that had tragically crashed in the Ottawa River. Their expertise and professionalism under challenging conditions were instrumental in the safe, successful recovery of the aircraft.

At home, our Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) team supported British Columbia's 2023 record-breaking wildfire season by responding to countless search and rescue callouts — each one a testament to courage and commitment.

We also saw the arrival and return of several key capabilities that will shape the future of our fleet. The completion of the B-Jetty project brought much-needed pier space to the dockyard, followed

by the groundbreaking for the A-Jetty recapitalization. HMCS *Max Bernays* was commissioned as the first Harry DeWolf-class ship on the West Coast, joining Canadian Fleet Pacific. HMCS *Protecteur*, the first of the Navy's new Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment (AOR) ships, was launched and commissioned with another AOR, HMCS *Preserver*, soon to follow.

After nearly 13 years laid up, HMCS *Corner Brook* returned to sea and, alongside HMCS *Windsor* operating out of Halifax, marked a milestone with two Canadian submarines at sea simultaneously. *Corner Brook* is now deployed, patrolling the Pacific Ocean in defence of North America. The dockyard also welcomed the new Haro-class tugs, adding vital strategic capability to our operations on the West Coast.

Joint Task Force Pacific has also been very active leading the CAF response to the worst forest fire season in recent history with back-to-back Op LENTUS deployments in 2023. They also played a critical role in maintaining the flow of goods across the country by directing efforts under Op PALACI to keep east-west rail and road corridors open — preventing an estimated \$3 billion in annual eco-

nomic losses. Finally, they have completely rebuilt our defence of Canada plans, and brought new energy and focus to Op LIMPID.

In response to the Royal Canadian Navy's (RCN) personnel challenges, MARPAC has taken a leading role in driving meaningful change. We created two key leadership positions — Director of Naval Personnel Management and Director of Naval Civilian Management — to better coordinate and strengthen our workforce. Under their leadership, coordinated through the Personnel Coordination Centres, we've gained the flexibility to quickly adapt and scale our personnel efforts even under ongoing strain. One of the most successful outcomes of this work is the Naval Experience Programme, which has welcomed hundreds of enthusiastic Canadians into our ranks. Their energy and commitment are strong reminders that the RCN remains an employer of choice across the country.

As I pass the watch, I do so with immense pride in what we have accomplished together. Thank you for your service, your sacrifice, and your steadfast commitment to Canada and each other.

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Nine Important Things to Know Before an Indo-Pacific Deployment

Written by:

Commander Tyson Bergmann
former CO HMCS Vancouver and
current CO Sea Training Pacific



Brett Witthoeft
Maritime Forces Pacific

Every year, Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) ships from both coasts deploy to the Indo-Pacific region (IPR) in support of Canadian policy. It is important for Defence community members to understand the dynamics of this region from a Canadian perspective. The summary below is based on an article originally published for free in the *Canadian Naval Review* (Volume 21, No. 1 2025).

1

The IPR is home to

two-thirds of the human population who currently generate approximately 45 per cent global wealth and are on track to possess half of world-wide Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2040. The RCN's involvement in the IPR now is an investment in our future success.

2

The IPR is primarily a maritime theatre

with many of its countries dependent on seaborne trade and either connected or separated by water. In fact, 33 per cent of all global trade sails through the South China Sea, while China, South Korea, and Japan build over 90 per cent of all new ships every year. This makes maritime power vital in the IPR, with the region home to some of the world's largest navies and coast guards.

3

The IPR is busy 24/7

with maritime traffic especially high near the Malacca and Taiwan Straits. Potential challenges include dhows making sudden course changes, lasers being directed at the bridge, and fishers not following best practices. As such, RCN crews need to be hypervigilant to avoid incidents.

4

Northeast and Southeast Asia are different

sub-regions with varying maritime capabilities and approaches. Northeast Asia focuses on threats considered "traditional" such as China and North Korea's maritime weapons and belligerence. In contrast, Southeast Asia tends to prioritize "non-traditional" threats like maritime piracy, climate change, and illegal fishing.

5

China is front-of-mind

in the IPR as both a trading partner and a security challenge. China is the largest trade partner for over 120 countries, and as such, helps to sustain millions of jobs across the world. However, Beijing's support for North Korea, along with increasing maritime exercises, illegal fishing, and other growing security challenges, has created tensions between China and other IPR countries.

6

Regional relations are complex

with the IPR lacking an overarching alliance like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Instead, countries in the region hold bilateral alliances, organizations, and mini-lateral arrangements on issues important to them. IPR nations each have varying risk tolerance, threat perception, and standards the RCN must adapt to.

7

Canada is not the United States

The U.S. has had decades to build up IPR allies, which gives the U.S. Navy significant benefits. While Canada supports ties with the IPR, Canada may not be strategically relevant to some of its countries in the IPR. As such, an RCN warship may not get all it asks for in port.

8

Weather is challenging

with waters in the IPR bringing both monsoons and typhoons. Bad weather can lead to reduced shore leave, traffic jams, or altered planned exercises. Be ready to change course as needed, leaning on local knowledge to develop effective responses.

9

Canada has a lot to learn

from Indo-Pacific (IP) navies about operating in contested waters. While Canada has contributed in the IPR by having international exchanges, sharing intelligence, and cooperating against cyber-crime and terrorism, IP navies often operate in the "grey zone" where actions are neither openly hostile nor peaceful. Understanding this environment is something the RCN can learn from its IP partners who navigate it every day.

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Reach out to us, we'd love to hear your feedback and story ideas!

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Fighters in the boxing ring during the Be First Boxing Night. Photo: Brittany Luckino

COMPETITIVE BOXING

Brings Excitement to Locals at Wurtele Arena



Archana Cini

Lookout Newspaper

From youth novice divisions to senior elite competitors, Vancouver Island recently proved it has an exciting roster of competitive amateur boxers.

The ring was alive with energy this past June as Crusher Combat Sports (CCS) brought the excitement of boxing to local

audiences. Sanctioned by Boxing BC and held at the Wurtele Arena at Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Esquimalt, the *Be First Boxing Fight Night* showcased the skills of amateur boxers from Vancouver Island, British Columbia's lower mainland, and even Mongolia.

With a mission to give boxers the chance to perform in front of friends and family, the CCS event delivered competitive

matches across several divisions throughout the night. Approximately half of the matchups ended in split decisions, highlighting the exciting competition between fighters.

CCS extends its sincere thanks to CFB Esquimalt for supporting this unforgettable evening of sport and community.

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Real culture change and workplace inclusivity takes more than policy — *it takes people.*

Archana Cini

Lookout Newspaper

Real culture change and workplace inclusivity takes more than policy — it takes people.

This is the guiding belief behind the Positive Space (PS) Program, a Department of National Defence (DND) initiative that equips and encourages trained volunteers to support 2SLGBTQI+ peers, challenge workplace discrimination, promote inclusion, and help retain a diverse workforce.

The PS Program began as a small 2014 effort at CFB Halifax to foster inclusion and understanding for 2SLGBTQI+ members of the Defence Team. Following its early success and guidance from the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) 2017 Diversity and Strategy Action Plan, the program was officially launched in 2018 with over 800 volunteers nationwide.

Today, the PS Program is fully resourced and formalized as it continues to improve workplace experiences with the support of the Chief of Professional Conduct and Culture. Volunteers who successfully complete formal training offered via the PS Program become Positive Space Ambassadors (PSA).

Whether on base or at sea, those in need of support with 2SLGBTQI+ related topics are encouraged to reach out to a PSA. At Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Esquimalt, PSA training has flourished under the leadership of dedicated facilitators like Tracey Conrad and Sub-Lieutenant (SLt) Lia MacDonald, whose commitment has helped grow both the program's reach and reputation.

To SLt MacDonald, one of the most meaningful parts of teaching future PSAs is hearing students share their stories and experiences.

"It's one thing for me to stand in front of a class and list the qualities of a good listener," says SLt MacDonald. "It's an entirely different thing when someone shares the story of how they came out and how those qualities had a direct impact on them."

The PSA training follows a structured two-day curriculum that concludes with a role play assessment where students provide support from a list of scenarios. Each scenario reflects real challenges from the Defence community's past, offering PSAs a chance to practice newly learned skills in realistic contexts.

To course facilitator Tracey Conrad, teaching the course is undeniably energizing.

"I love it when I can see an important concept land for someone — that 'thunk' of understanding that the issues we talk about aren't just happening to others, but those we know and love," says Conrad.

To sign up to become a Positive Space Ambassador (PSA), contact PositiveSpace-EspacePositif@forces.gc.ca for more information.

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RCSU Pacific Welcomes Accomplished New Commanding Officer

“It is important to recognize the many amazing people that put in massive effort daily to ensure the success of the Cadet Program, both within this region and across the country. Comprised of Regular and Reserve Force personnel, CIC, League Partners, Civilian Cadet Instructors, and Volunteers, everyone goes above and beyond to ensure cadets are cared for and provided with the tools they need to successfully transition into adulthood.”

— Cdr Benjamin Seaby.

A/SLt Melanie Mallet
Assistant to Public Affairs

The Regional Cadet Support Unit (RCSU) Pacific recently observed a Change of Command (CoC) ceremony presided over by Brigadier-General Dominique Brails, Commander of the Cadets and Junior Canadian Rangers Group.

RCSU Pacific, responsible for the British Columbia Cadet Program, transitioned command from outgoing Commanding Officer (CO) Commander (Cdr) Paula McHale to incoming CO Cdr Benjamin Seaby. Cdr Seaby will now assume regional leadership of one of Canada’s top youth development programs.

Born in Ottawa and raised in Aylmer, Quebec, Cdr Seaby graduated with a Mechanical Engineering degree from the Royal Military College of Canada. After completing his Naval Warfare Officer Training, Cdr Seaby joined His Majesty’s Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Halifax* as a Bridge Watchkeeper. Cdr Seaby has also participated in several international deployments during Operation (Op) SEXTANT in 2007, Op SAIPH in 2009, and Op NEON in 2023. Additionally, Cdr Seaby has also held several key

staff positions including Recruit Division Commander at the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School, N31-1 MARLANT Fleet Scheduler, Military Assistant to the Minister of National Defence, Career Manager, Commanding Officer of the Personnel Coordination Center (Pacific), and, most recently, Deputy Commander Submarine Sustainment.

Cdr McHale served as Commanding Officer for RCSU Pacific from July 12, 2022 to July 7, 2025, and will assume command of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Transition Unit BC on July 30.

Guided by over a thousand dedicated members of the Cadet Organizations Administration and Training Service (COATS), approximately 5,500 cadets participate across British Columbia’s 135 corps and squadrons. COATS includes both Cadet Instructor Cadre (CIC) Officers and former members of the Regular Forces and Primary Reserve, all passionate about supporting youth involved in the CAF’s Cadet Program.

To learn more about the Cadet Program and explore opportunities to contribute and join, visit www.cadets.ca.



A member of the Junior Canadian Rangers Group. Photo: cadets.ca

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CFB Esquimalt Then & Now:



RCN Events 50 Years Ago

Archana Cini

Lookout Newspaper

Curious what life was like at Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Esquimalt 50 years ago?

From local modernization projects to multinational exercises, the 1970s were a time of tradition and transformation for CFB Esquimalt and the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN). As national priorities evolved, community focus deepened, and defence technology advanced, the base played a critical role in shaping Canada's naval readiness.

Here's a look back at some key local naval moments from five decades past:

- 1975-1980 saw several destroyers and frigates (including HMCS *Algonquin*) from CFB Esquimalt's Pacific Fleet participating in critical North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led anti-submarine warfare (ASW) exercises. A countermeasure against submarine activity in the Pacific Rim, these exercises reaffirmed the RCN's naval readiness and strengthened Canadian alliances.

- A society was formed in the late 1970s to plan and build what would eventually become CFB Esquimalt's Naval and Military Museum. Until this point, the entire museum's "collection" was housed in a two-door metal cupboard at the back of the base's library.
- École Victor G Brodeur is built in 1973 to teach French-speaking children from military families. Nicknamed "la petite école rouge" or "little red schoolhouse," the building housed up to 80 elementary students at a time until 1985, when the school moved to a larger building off base.
- HMCS *Huron* is commissioned at CFB Esquimalt in 1972. This Tribal-class destroyer became a key RCN asset, deployed on several anti-terrorism operations throughout the Pacific Ocean, Persian Gulf, and Arabian Sea. Eventually, *Huron* was decommissioned and sunk 100 kilometres west of Vancouver Island as an exercise target ship in 2007.

- In 1972, the Naden Band of the RCN set sail from CFB Esquimalt for a Western Pacific tour. Performing in Australia, Fiji, and New Zealand, the band became official Canadian ambassadors and strengthened international alliances during a tense global period.
- HMCS *Saskatchewan* becomes a familiar sight in British Columbia waters throughout the 1970s. Constructed at the Victoria Machinery Depot, launched locally and commissioned at Esquimalt Harbour, the vessel participated in both humanitarian missions and international exercises before its official decommissioning in 1994.

Looking back offers more than a glimpse into old headlines — it's a tribute to the sailors, musicians, educators, and support staff who shaped CFB Esquimalt into what it is today. These events remind us that even in an era of strategy and defence, humanity and connection is never far from the Canadian mission.



Antique illustration - Harper's Magazine - Victoria British Columbia. Photo: Getty Images, Campwillowlake

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Corner Brook Chronicles: From Dream to Reality – Commander Éric Isabelle

Defence Stories
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Three years ago, Commander (Cdr) Éric Isabelle, from Montmagny, QC, received his second command, onboard His Majesty's Canadian Submarine (HMCS) *Corner Brook*. At the time, the submarine was completing a long period of refit. Now, Cdr Isabelle departs, leaving a fully operational submarine with a crew ready to deploy to serve Canada.

"The submarine has been in refit for a while. We had the time to prepare ourselves and train, and now it's time for action."

That enthusiasm comes from a long wait and a desire to accomplish what has always interested him. His father's family had a lot of experience in the Army, but his father, Gilles, a gunner, had often told Éric that he could see him as a naval officer.

In fact, when he was still quite young, the world of the Navy had already made an impression on him. He even remembers that during a visit to the Musée Maritime du Québec in L'Islet, he made a discovery that would have a major affect on his future.

"My family is really Army but when I saw HMCS *Bras d'Or*, I was definitely interested. I even told myself that one day I was going to command a ship," says Cdr Isabelle.

In 2002, he enrolled in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) as a Naval Warfare Officer and began his studies at the Royal Military College of Canada. During his time there, he discovered the Canadian Submarine Force and that was it.

"Small teams, the fact that it's unique, the fact that it's very independent and the fact that we create our own destiny. You become the commander of a submarine if you put in the time and effort to be able to do the job," Cdr Isabelle explains.

Having commanded HMCS *Victoria* beginning on June 6, 2019, then HMCS *Corner Brook* from April 1, 2022, to May 26, 2025, he admits that the sacrifices are not only his own. He is the father of three and his wife often looks after the children without him.

"Being the commander of a submarine is the most interesting thing in the Navy, but dedication to family deserves recognition," Cdr Isabelle points out.

With 22 years of service, Cdr Isabelle is proud of his time in the CAF. Something he would like to do in the future is to see and even participate in the procurement of new submarines for Canada.

"My objective is that the future CAF have a healthy Navy. We have to move forward," says Cdr Isabelle. "That project is an important project for Canada and for the Navy."



*"My objective is that the future
Armed Forces have a healthy Navy."*

— Commander (Cdr) Éric Isabelle



HMCS *Corner Brook* awaits start of HOISTEX in Constance Bank in March 2025. Photo: Sailor 1st Class A. Koller, MARPAC Imaging Services



Cdr Isabelle beside the naval ensign of HMCS *Corner Brook*. Photo: canada.ca

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HOW TO BE A STRONG FINANCIAL ROLE MODEL FOR KIDS

SISIP Financial
Esquimalt Team

TEACH A FIVE-YEAR-OLD

Whether it's how you handle stress, treat others, or react when the bill arrives, children notice everything — including how you manage money. Here's how to set a great financial example for kids.

TEACH A FIVE-YEAR-OLD

Children don't read stock market reports, but they do understand cause and effect. Teach basic money habits by:

- Explaining:* Children can think money is endless if they only see a card tap. Try to narrate as you pay with "I'm using my card, but I have to pay this money back soon."
- Allowing choice:* If a child wants a toy at the store, allow them to buy it or save for something better in the future. This teaches children about avoiding impulse purchases.

TALK TO AN 18-YEAR-OLD

At this age, things get real with your child's first job, first car, and possibly their first taste of credit card debt. Teach smart money tips by:

- Having the credit card talk:* Explain how a strong credit score can help rent apartments and secure loans, but paying minimum balances can quickly lead to financial stress.
- Reiterating the concept of inter-*

est: If they charge \$500 on a credit card with 20 per cent interest and make minimum payments, it will take over nine years and \$584 in interest to pay off.

HAVE OPEN CONVERSATIONS

Children can sometimes grow up thinking finances are a taboo topic — and then struggle to manage their money. To combat this:

- Make it a family conversation:* Instead of discussing bills behind closed doors, involve children when appropriate by using simple language and adding more specifics as they grow. Kids understand statements like "We're saving up for something important."
- Give honest answers:* Don't dodge questions like "Are we rich?" and "How much do we make?" Instead, match explanations to the child's age and level of understanding so they grow up confident, not confused.
- Use real examples:* Share a time you saved for something big or learned from a financial mistake. Stories and experiences stick better than lectures!

BE THE ROLE MODEL

BE THE ROLE MODEL

Realistically, you can't teach good money habits if you're not practicing them yourself. Here's how to lead by example:

- Stick to budgets:* Rather than telling children to save while overspending, show them how you track your own spending, limits, and make compromises.
- Plan:* Set financial goals and stay on top of your investments, insurance, emergency fund, and more. Kids watching you plan makes them more likely to do the same.
- Provide explanations:* Kids don't just copy actions — they absorb how you think. When saying no, explain why to help children learn to weigh trade-offs and think long term.
- Stay consistent:* Actions add up! Whether it's monthly investing or smart spending choices, show consistency to teach children that financial success is about good habits.

Schools don't often teach kids financial habits, but that doesn't mean you can't. Book a chat with your SISIP advisor today to build a solid financial plan for both you and your family. You can also sign up to the SISIP Money Mastery portal for actionable, financial resiliency resources tailored to Defence community members.

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