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**Sailor 1st Class (S1) Frank Moore of His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) Max Bernays launches a PUMA Uncrewed Aircraft System during Operation (Op) NEON in 2025.**

Photo Credit: Sailor 1st Class Jordan Schilstra, Canadian Armed Forces Photo



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# Reunited After Decades: Korean War Shipmates Reconnect in Retirement

Archana Cini  
Lookout Newspaper

For Roy Mackay, Gil Russell, and Don Russell, life in the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) as teens meant hard work and discipline. Almost eight decades later, life would give them an unexpected gift — a sudden reunion of shipmates now in their nineties.

Now 92, 95, and 94 respectively, (Gil and Don are unrelated, and Don passed away shortly before being interviewed) the three reunited at Victoria's Broadmead Care Society for the first time in decades. The last time they saw each other was when they were only 16, 18, and 19, serving aboard His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) Athabaskan during the Korean War, a vessel often nicknamed 'Athabaskan II' or 'Athabee'.

A Tribal-class destroyer, Athabaskan II deployed on three wartime tours starting in 1950 with duties ranging from anti-submarine patrols to troop transport, evacuations, and bombardments. The vessel was in service to Canada from 1948 to 1966. Gil, Roy, and Don all deployed together during its third wartime tour, working as stokers in the boiler room.

"I was glad to get out of the army and into the navy, you know," said Roy. "The navy actually helped me find a job during my return to civilian life, and that was really important to me."

Roy shared details of his work once aboard Athabaskan II for his first deployment with the RCN.

"It was freezing down there in the boiler room, and there'd be three or four of us per watch, 24 hours a day. It was scary work and you'd just have to hope a mine, or the enemy, wouldn't get you."



A photo of Roy Mackay (left) as a young man in service to Canada. Photo supplied.

Even the process of entering the boiler room was one of care and intent, with incorrectly done work potentially leading to serious consequences.

"When you entered the boiler room, you had to remember to shut and lock the air lock behind you," said Gil, recalling his duties aboard. "It was hundreds of pounds of pressure there. After a few minutes though, your body would begin to get accustomed to it, and you'd start work."

Gil also recalled the funnel, where those who were seasick and cold would huddle for warmth and relief during watch.

"They were called high-speed boilers, what we would work on, and the ships would go around 42 miles an hour on the water. They were very efficient actually."

Life aboard Athabaskan II was noted as rigorous and full of routine, with sailors sleeping in hammocks that would experience jarring vibrations whenever "the big guns" would be used.

Beyond the boiler room and daily routines, the Athabaskan steamed long months at sea, rescuing downed pilots and transporting troops. Gil remembered how cold and disruptive seasickness could be, while Roy described heading ashore whenever they reached port to simply feel solid ground beneath their feet. "You get your feet on the ground; you'd order a beer," he said with a grin.

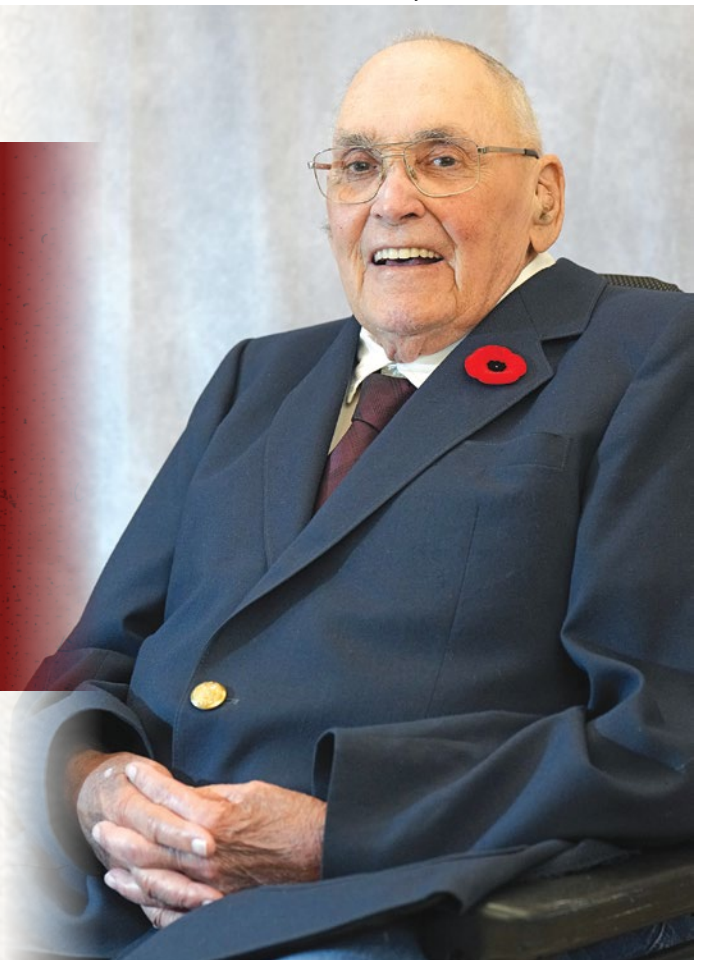
After leaving the navy, both men built full lives ashore: raising families, working in civilian trades, and keeping the memories of their time at sea alive through stories.

"I think I was the youngest there, at 18," said Gil. "We'd all lay on the deck when we'd get seasick and look forward to our rum every day — 11:30 on the dot."

Roy chuckled, adding, "We'd sing songs... don't get too drunk!" Roy's energy transitioned into his civilian life, with his enjoyment for songs morphing into a lifelong love for dance. For Gil, baseball became a passion.

"I changed," Roy said thoughtfully when asked what service taught him. "It did also teach good hygiene," he said, a joking answer that earned laughter all around the room.

It was only after each of the three had independently moved to the Veterans Memorial Lodge, a Broadmead Care Home, that they learned they had served aboard Athabaskan II at the same time — a realization that sparked their recent reunion.



A photo of the late Don Russell, captured in 2025 at the Veterans Memorial Lodge. Photo supplied.



A photo of Gil and wife Lorraine Russell on the day of their marriage, shortly after Gil's return from deployment aboard His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) Athabaskan. Photo supplied.

"It was something," Gil said, reflecting on the connection decades later. "You don't expect to find someone you served with half a century ago living in the same place as you, much less two men."

While Gil continued to note that his memory was not what it used to be, his eyes lit up when describing his late wife. "Every day, I'd write a letter. It might not be long, but I'd write one to her. And then one day, we'd all get a whole stack back and try to control ourselves reading them all." Roy nodded, remembering his own wife he'd also write letters with at the time.

When asked what it was like

to see his love in person following his return home after the war, Gil replied simply: "To call it a special moment would be to call it nothing."

When asked how they'd describe their service in three words or less, Gil responded with "proud of myself" and Roy with "a good life."

Over 70 years after they first served together in the boiler room of Athabaskan II, Gil Russell and Roy Mackay sit side by side once again — not as stokers, but as men reflecting on lives shaped by service.

*Written in memory of the late Don Russell, April 1, 1933 – Dec 16, 2025. Don was an RCN veteran who passed away after a life marked by hard work and service to Canada. Known for his dedication, resilience, and sense of humour, Don leaves behind a legacy of service and stories that will be fondly remembered for generations to come.*

*As the men of Athabaskan II grow fewer, reunions like this become living history, moments where Canada's naval past sits across the table, smiling and reminding us all what service once demanded and still represents.*

Special thanks to Shannon Donnelly, Broadmead Care for their contributions to this article



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# The Importance of Conduct After Capture (CAC) Training and Becoming a CAC Instructor

**Bordie Lawrence**

CAC Training Centre

Following the events of Sept 11, 2001, and the commencement of the Global War on Terror, it became clear that Canada's Tier 1 Unit, Joint Task Force 2 (JTF 2), needed new specialized training for personnel deploying overseas. This training would ensure survivability in captivity, deny the enemy valuable military intelligence, and minimize the exploitation of isolated personnel.

As such, JTF 2 members began Resistance to Interrogation (R2I) training to meet this critical need, with support from the British military. By 2005, the first Canadian R2I Instructor Course had been conducted, staffed by British R2I instructors, to fully qualify a pool of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members to hold the R2I qualification.

This enabled Canada to begin delivering R2I training independently. The first Canadian-run R2I course was held in 2006, staffed entirely by Canadian instructors. The title of instructor was then officially renamed Conduct After Capture Instructor (CACI). In 2008, the Conduct After Capture Training Centre (CAC TC) was formally established in Kingston, ON, under the Canadian Defence Academy. The program continued to evolve, and in 2019, a comprehensive review led to changes designed to adapt training to the modern global climate, taking into account events such as the annexation of Crimea and the increasingly complex battlespace. The updated program went live in 2021 and continues to adapt to today's challenges, including the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and Canada's ongoing commitments to NATO missions.

Canadian CAC training has always been informed by real-world events and case studies of personnel being held in captivity. One prominent example often used in CAC training is that of Air Commodore Leonard Joseph Birchall, CM, OBE, DFC, OOnt, CD, remembered as the "Saviour of Ceylon." On April 4, 1942, while piloting a PBX Catalina flying boat on patrol south of Ceylon, Birchall spotted a large Japanese fleet, the Nagumo Task Force, responsible for the Pearl Harbor attack, heading toward the island. He successfully

transmitted a warning message before his aircraft was shot down, and he and his crew were captured. Birchall's heroism did not end with his sighting report; during captivity he emerged as a leader, advocating for his fellow prisoners and dramatically reducing the death rate of Allied POWs by ensuring they were treated properly. His actions remain a model of resilience and leadership under captivity.

Another case study used at CAC TC is that of Robert R. Fowler, former Deputy Minister of National Defence, and Louis Guay, who were taken hostage by Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in the Sahara Desert on December 14, 2008.

Fowler, who was serving as a United Nations Special Envoy to Niger, and Guay were held for 130 days. Their ordeal, like others studied at CAC TC, highlights the unpredictable and dangerous realities of captivity and reinforces the importance of preparing CAF members for such possibilities. Many of the case studies taught at CAC TC are not abstract lessons, but living experiences shared directly with instructors and trainees through presentations and conversations with those who endured captivity. These firsthand accounts add depth to training and remind both CACIs and CAF members of the stakes involved.

The CAF delivers CAC training at three levels. Level A is introduced during basic training and reinforced through an annual

Distance Learning Network (DLN) course that all members are required to complete. Level B is a one-day presentation with audience engagement, delivered exclusively by CACIs, for personnel preparing to deploy or for units requesting additional training on Canadian CAC policy. Level C, the most advanced level, is conducted only at the Conduct After Capture Training Centre in Kingston. It combines academic and practical instruction for personnel assessed to be at the highest risk of captivity, for those applying to become CACIs, and for CAF members seeking to develop this skill set. This training is especially relevant in today's context, as evidenced by the Russia-Ukraine war, where captivity has become a grim reality for many.

This training also plays an important role in maintaining interoperability with Canada's allies, particularly within the Five Eyes community; Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, New Zealand, and Australia. Through shared training, exchange opportunities, and instructor collaboration, CACIs build international partnerships and improve collective readiness. Canada regularly hosts Five Eyes instructors and students for Level C and CACI courses, while Canadian CACIs also travel abroad to teach and learn from allied programs. These exchanges reinforce Canada's contribution to global security and strengthen the shared knowledge base surrounding captivity survival. Canadian CACIs also engage in international conferences and specialized courses, further broadening their expertise and keeping Canada aligned with NATO and allied standards. Becoming a CACI is both rewarding and demanding. Instructors are drawn from all trades, elements, and ranks, both Regular and Reserve Force. While remaining in their primary occupation, they take on CAC instruction as a specialty role that allows them to prepare their peers for one of the most difficult scenarios imaginable. The process begins with the submission of a Notice of Intent (NOI) on the CAC TC homepage via the DWAN. Candidates are then invited to attend a two-day assessment. Successful applicants must complete a Level C if they have not already done so, followed by the Conduct After Capture Instructor Course. This course not only trains them in the delivery of CAC material but also empha-

sizes the importance of safety and resilience when exposing CAF personnel to realistic, stress-based environments.

Graduations from the instructor course are marked by a sobering tradition: A former captive shares their experiences with the new instructors, reminding them of the profound responsibility they carry in preparing others for captivity. CACIs may serve part-time while posted to their home units or take full postings to CAC TC, where they continue to progress in their respective Military Occupation Specification Identification (MOSID). In both cases, they remain the only CAF members authorized to deliver captivity training. The role of the Conduct After Capture Instructor is therefore a vital one. CACIs teach and test the skills that may one day save the lives of their peers. Their work is built on the foundation of history, real-world experience,

international collaboration, and the unwavering principle that CAF members must be prepared for the unthinkable. At the heart of this mission is the Centre's motto, to ensure that all members trained can "Survive with Honour and Return with Dignity."

*Conduct After Capture Training will be held at Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Esquimalt on Jan 27 and 28 at building N92 in the MSE Theatre @10:00am to provide a CACI Recruiting Brief. All ranks are invited to come and learn what CACIs do, what it takes to be a CACI, the added benefits of being a CACI to include international travel and added allowances, the professional work environment seen at CAC TC, and the professional development you gain as being a CACI.*



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

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# ICE TO IRON:



## Canucks Alumni Spend Afternoon at CFB Esquimalt

**Archana Cini**

Lookout Newspaper

Vancouver Canucks alumni recently swapped skates for steel decks during a visit aboard His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Vancouver*.

On Jan 15, former National Hockey League (NHL) players Geoff Courtnall, Matt Pettinger, and Greg C. Adams were welcomed aboard the Halifax-class frigate for a ship tour, where Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) sailors shared insight into the daily routines, operational capabilities, and teamwork required for life at sea. From *Vancouver's* bridge to living spaces below deck, the visit also uncovered some of the parallels found between professional sport and naval service, including discipline, preparation, and trust in one another.

For the crew of HMCS *Vancouver*, the visit was a chance to showcase a Canadian warship and connect with familiar faces from Canada's hockey community. For NHL alumni, it was an opportunity to experience the hard work of our strong local Defence community, build relationships, and share stories of life on the ice.

"I was surprised to learn there are 250 people on the ship," shared Matt Pettinger. "The treadmill is also a nice touch."

Following the tour, Courtnall, Pettinger, and Adams joined Defence team members for an all-ranks Vancouver Canucks viewing party held at the Pacific Fleet Club. A full-house event with all seats taken, there was also a grand prize draw sponsored by the Molson Coors Beverage Company, won by Sailor 1<sup>st</sup> Class (S1) Dan Kadatz.



Vancouver Canucks alumni explore the deck and quarters of His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Vancouver* during a ship tour on Jan 15. Photos: Sailor 1<sup>st</sup> Class (S1) Kyle Maguire, MARPAC Imaging



# Local RCN Sailors Secure Third

## at Canadian Forces International Running Championship

**Brittany Wiseman**  
MARPAK PA

The Canadian Forces International Running Team delivered an impressive performance at the 2025 Canadian Cross Country Running Championships held in London, Ontario. The women's team secured a strong third-place finish in the Women's Open 10K category.

The championship drew an exceptionally competitive field, including Olympians and elite runners competing for spots on the Canadian National Cross Country Team. Despite fresh snowfall and chilly race-day conditions, the Canadian Forces athletes embraced the challenge, using the demanding terrain as an opportunity to sharpen their skills.

This event served as a key training milestone as the team prepares for the upcoming CISM Cross Country Championships in Trikala, Greece, scheduled for Feb 2026. The athletes noted that the national competition not only tested their endurance, but also strengthened their readiness for the international stage.

Their podium finish highlights the dedication, resilience, and teamwork that continue to define the Canadian Forces International Running Team as they look ahead to representing Canada in the new year.

**Bravo Zulu!**





(Left to right) Master Sailor (MS) Rachel McCarthy, Officer Cadet Amanda Polus, Sub-Lieutenant (SLt) Aisling Wydysh, and Petty Officer 2nd Class (PO2) Bailey Toupin pose for a photo during the Canadian Forces International Running Championship. Photo supplied.

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# MARPAC Health and Wellness Expo Returns this Spring

Archana Cini  
with contributions by  
Andrea Modesto  
Lookout Newspaper

The 2026 MARPAC Health & Wellness Expo is set to return to Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Esquimalt on Thursday March 5, bringing together the West Coast Defence community for a day focused on healthy living, connection, and well-being.

Scheduled from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Naden Athletic Centre, the annual exposition welcomes both military and civilian Defence team members to explore tailored products, services, and resources in support of their physical, mental, and

spiritual health and wellness. Registration is now open for booths, with anticipation already building for one of MARPAC's most well-attended community events of the year.

The exposition will feature a growing lineup of indoor and outdoor displays, with more than 40 displays anticipated. Attendees can expect to meet organizations offering services in health care, nutrition, fitness, mental wellness, education, finance, recreation, and lifestyle support. Confirmed exhibitors include Admirals Walk Optometry, Sunshine Coast Health Centre, Island Prostate Centre, WildPlay, HearingLife Canada, Helmets to Hardhats, Bank of Montreal (BMO), the University of Victoria, Royal Roads University, and

3M Canada, which will be bringing an outdoor fall-safety demonstration truck to the event.

In addition to community partners, several on-base services and recreation clubs will also be present, including PSP Recreation, Health Promotion, the *Lookout Newspaper*, and various base clubs such as gardening, golf, and model rail. Participants can also expect to catch their first glimpse of the new race shirt designed for the 20th annual CFB Esquimalt Navy Run.

Whether you're looking to boost your fitness, explore new wellness tools, or simply see what's available in the community, March 5 promises something for everyone.

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# Bravo Zulu



## Naval Fleet School(Pacific) Holds Honours and Awards Ceremony

Naval Fleet School(Pacific) (NFS[P]) held an Honours and Awards ceremony on Jan 15. During the formal event, Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class (PO2) Robyn Murree received their CD 1<sup>st</sup> clasp and Sailor 1<sup>st</sup> Class (S1) Aron Kim recieved their OSM. The award was presented to each by Commander (Cdr) Meryl Sponder. Bravo Zulu, PO2 Murree and S1 Kim!



Sailor 1st Class Aron Kim (right) recieves their OSM.



Petty Officer 2nd Class Robyn Murree (right) received their CD 1<sup>st</sup> clasp

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Naval Fleet School (Pacific)



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# School of Diving Surges Training

**Lt(Navy) Michael Cormie**  
Fleet Diving Unit (Pacific)

Petty Officer 2nd Class (PO2) Paul Paquette has his work cut out for him. He is the course instructor for one of two classes of RQS1 Clearance Divers being run concurrently at the School of Diving at Fleet Diving Unit (Pacific) (FDU(P)) this year.

A record-high number of 19 students started their training in October 2025, aiming to graduate the high-intensity, thirteen-month course in late October 2026. PO2 Paquette will help them get there.

Shortly after the courses began, students were on parade for the graduation of 2025's class of divers.

"The training is very much a marathon," said Paquette. "So I hope being on parade helped them visualize what they are working towards when they graduate next year."

Over the duration of the course, the students will learn to dive with various types of diving equipment including the Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus, Surface Supplied Diving, and the two types

of rebreather. In addition to the diving itself, students will learn other vital skills including rigging, driving various vehicles and boats, and operating recompression chambers. They will also cover introductory skills in Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) at the Canadian Forces School of Military Engineering in Gagetown. Students will also be introduced to methods of searching for, identifying, destroying, and/or recovering naval mines that have been rendered safe. They will also learn how to provide engineering support to the fleet and use cutting, welding, and various underwater hydraulic tools.

"The course is extremely long, simply because there are so many topics to cover



*"It has definitely forced us to think creatively about how we manage people, equipment and facilities"*

Chief Petty Officer 2nd Class Keith Slade,  
School of Diving Chief

and skills to teach that may be required in the real world on short notice," said PO2 Paquette.

PO2 Paquette would know — he was deployed to Petawawa days after the crash of a Chinook helicopter in the Ottawa River, which tragically killed both pilots in 2023. "It was a challenging job. It was deep, it was dark, and it was full of hazards. It ended up being one of the largest recovery jobs that Clearance Divers have undertaken. It also yielded many lessons that I want to make sure that I pass on to these students," said Paquette.

FDU(P) continues to be deliberate in their effort of reconstitution after experiencing historically high attrition during the COVID-era. To lead this effort, FDU(P)

has also dedicated additional human resources towards supporting a double-cohort of diving students.

"It has definitely forced us to think creatively about how we manage people, equipment and facilities because this is happening at the same time that G-Jetty is undergoing a disruptive, but important restoration project," said Chief Petty Officer 2nd Class (CPO2) Keith Slade, Chief of the School of Diving. In the meantime, FDU(P)'s boats are berthed at D-Jetty, an inconvenient two kilometre distance by road.

"We've been able to pivot somewhat, by installing equipment that makes the D-Jetty annex a bit more habitable and efficient, storing some of our assets there, and getting people their meals out of the weather," continued Slade.

For now, the job ahead is clear for both students, and PO2 Paquette: there will be many long days and long night dives ahead.

"This course is not for the faint of heart. It is hard," concluded Paquette.



Staff from the Fleet Diving Unit (Pacific)'s (FDU(P)) School of Diving (front row) pose alongside the two new serials of clearance diver students (standing on either side) at the graduation parade for serial CD 0020 (standing, centre). Photo supplied

**Clearance Diver and Clearance Diving Officer training are both open to all trades.**

**For those interested in challenging the Assessment Centre, please contact [goclearancediver@forces.gc.ca](mailto:goclearancediver@forces.gc.ca) or your BPSO for more information.**



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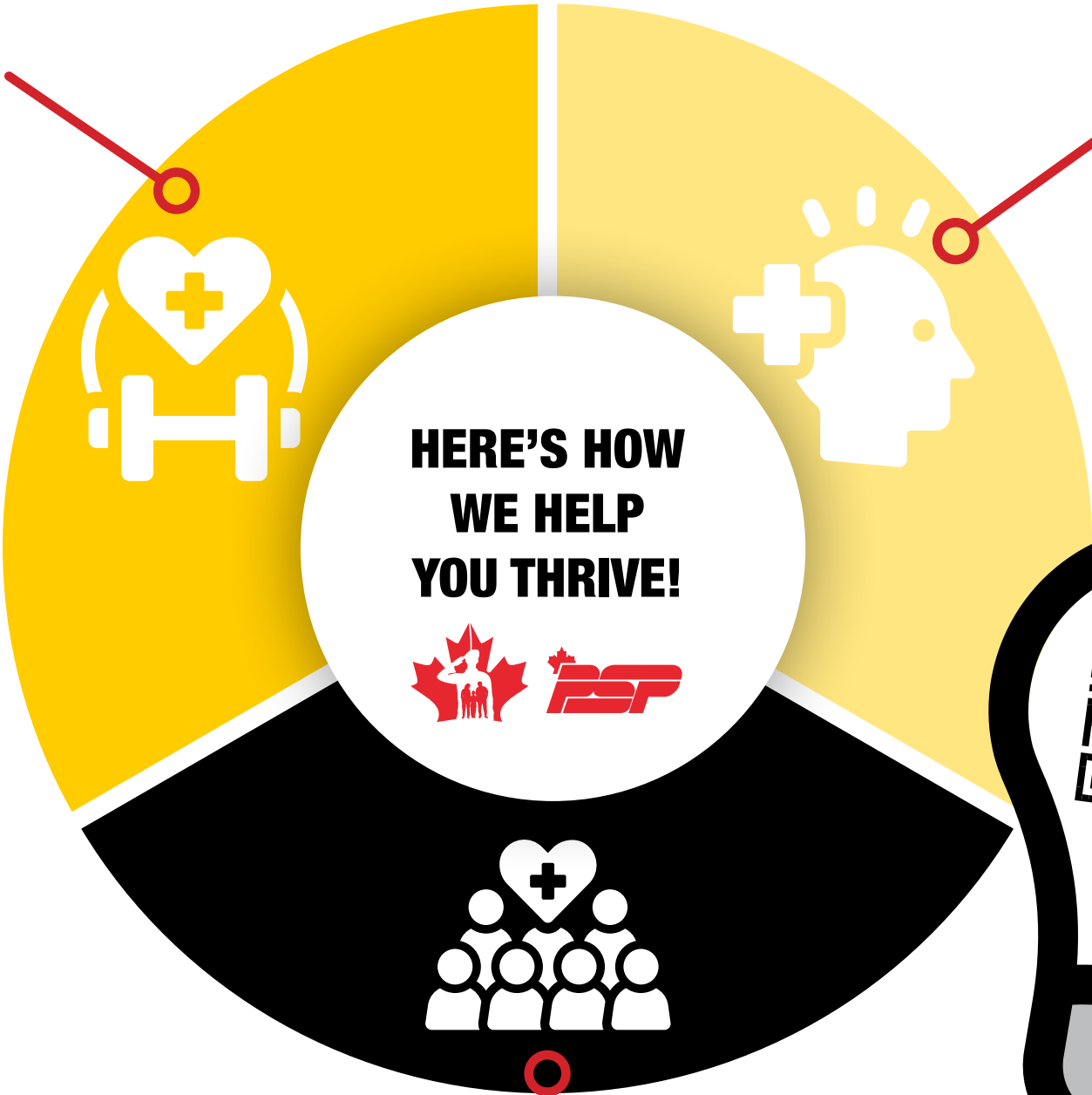


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# How to Start the New Year Equipped for Financial Success

# 2026



## SISIP Financial Esquimalt Team

With the new year comes 12 months of both financial opportunities and potential challenges.

As such, begin the year on strong financial footing by making the most of your registered investment accounts.

The first step is to review and update your annual budget. To do so, forecast your annual costs, monthly expenses, and any potential financial hurdles you anticipate for the year.

Consistent saving and time are also powerful tools for achieving your financial goals. As such, working with a financial advisor can provide clarity on your investment options and help you create a comprehensive budget for the year. An accurate, current budget also allows financial advisors to then make necessary adjustments to your savings plan.

Next, spend time understanding market uncertainty and how it might affect

your investments, whether you are a new or experienced investor. Concerns about market volatility is common, but ultimately the principle of time in the market versus timing of the market is key. Since financial advisors cannot predict short-term market movements, automatic contributions can be one of the most effective investment strategies. By investing regularly at different price points, you benefit from dollar-cost averaging over time, allowing you to stay invested through market fluctuations and ensuring you don't miss out on period of growth. By considering your goals, timeline, risk tolerance, and general financial situation, a financial advisor can help set up a successful new year of investments.

A registered investment offers tax advantages, flexibility, and carry-forward opportunities.

## Registered investment options to consider include:

1. **Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP):** An RRSP helps reduce taxable income, allows investments to grow tax-deferred, and provides supplemental retirement income. While highly beneficial, RRSPs require careful planning, particularly around withdrawal strategies to maximize growth and minimize taxes in retirement. Additional features can also include a home buyers' plan (withdraw funds for a first home purchase) and a lifelong learning plan (withdraw funds for education). The deadline to contribute to your RRSP for the 2025 tax year is March 2, 2026.
2. **Tax Free Savings Account (TFSA):** A TFSA allows investments to grow tax-free and offers flexible with-

drawals. The annual contribution limit for 2026 is \$7,000, and unused room carries forward indefinitely.

3. **First Home Savings Account (FHSA):** An FHSA is a newer option designed to support first-time home buyers. With an \$8,000 annual tax-deductible contribution limit, the account can remain open for up to 15 years. If you don't purchase a home within this time-frame, you can either withdraw the funds (subject to withholding tax) or transfer the balance into your RRSP without penalty.

Start the new year financially strong by taking proactive steps toward your financial goals. Schedule a meeting with a financial advisor today to review your budget, optimize your registered accounts, and create a plan that sets you up for financial success — in 2026 and beyond.

**Speak to a SISIP investment fund advisor today for CAF-specific, jargon-free RESP support.**

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## BRAVO ZULU



**Brazo Zulu to Master Sailor Jarrod Rampone, promoted to his current rank by Lieutenant Commander (LCdr) Reynolds, Commanding Officer (CO) of Naval Replenishment Unit (NRU) MV Asterix, on Jan 9.**

Photo: Petty Officer 2nd Class (P02) Matt Savola

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**Features:** On-demand Hot water, private laundry in-suite, full kitchen with garburator and dishwasher. **All-Inclusive: \$2,000/month** covers everything (Heat and Water included). This is a smoke-free and pet-free property. We understand the military relocation (HHT) process and are happy to facilitate remote walkthroughs and flexible move-in timelines. Email: bitdraco@protonmail.com or call: 250-893-0877

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## NAVY OFFICER MESS KIT SIZE 40 WITH GOLD BRAID

Men's Jacket, pants with waist coat. Gold braid in good condition per Mia the base tailor. For the mess kit jacket it's about 17" for shoulder width. Shoulder to cuff is 25". 18.5" from armpit to end of sleeve. 22.5" from back of neck to bottom of the waist coat. Waist on the pants looks to be 34" 41" long outer seam 29.5 for the inseam of the pants. Asking \$500. Contact: 250-415-5812

**WOMAN'S MESS KIT - \$100** Dark Blue woman mess kit. Measurements - Skirt - waist 27 inches, hip 38 inches, length 39 inches. Jacket - length 21 inches, shoulder width 15 inches. Blouse size 12. Asking \$100. Text 250 886 2361 if interested.

## LOCAL CLUBS

**VICTORIA YOUTH PADDLING CLUB (VYPC)** We have programs as well as summer camps for youth to learn paddling techniques, try different types of water craft and generally have some fun with a good sweat. Contact Marianne at commodore@vypp.ca or (250) 744-8543

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**FRIENDS OF ASHTON ARMOURY MUSEUM** Is a non-profit society made up of volunteers with a passion for military history. We are seeking volunteers. If you are interested in helping out please contact Chris Preston, at (250) 479-7634, or prestoncm@shaw.ca.

**THE WITS PROGRAMS FOUNDATION** Is looking for a volunteer who is fluent in French with a background in elementary education to edit and review French translations of materials. Please contact us at [info@witsprogram.ca](mailto:info@witsprogram.ca) for more information!

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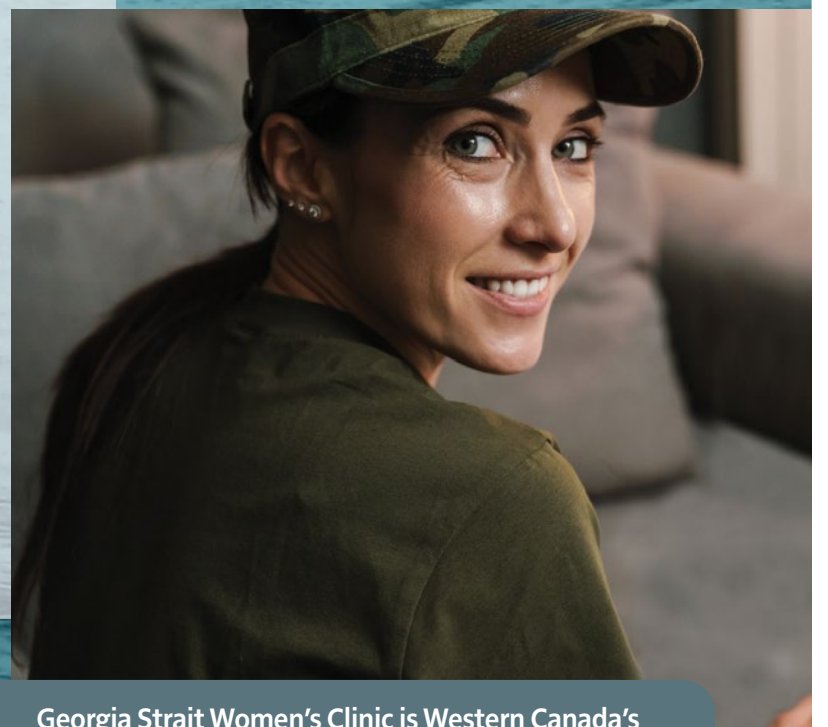
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