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MORALE & WELFARE NEWS | CFB ESQUIMALT, VICTORIA, B.C.

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## Honouring the Fallen of HMCS Esquimalt

Captain(Navy) (Capt(Navy)) Kevin Whiteside, Commander of CFB Esquimalt (left), and Chief Petty Officer 1st Class (CPO1) Susan Frisby, Base Chief Petty Officer of CFB Esquimalt, place a wreath during the HMCS Esquimalt Memorial Service on April 16.

Photo: Cpl Conor Munn, MARPAC Imaging

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A Division of Personnel Support Programs

The Lookout Newspaper and Publishing provides morale and welfare news to CFB Esquimalt, Maritime Forces Pacific, and is nationally distributed bi-weekly online at lookoutnewspaper.com with social media updates on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

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

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# VAdm Topshee Stresses Accountability After Charges Laid in Sailor's Death

## Archana Cini

Lookout Newspaper

The death of a sailor in the Halifax harbour last year continues to weigh heavily as charges have now been laid against two sailors.

Petty Officer 2nd Class (PO2) Gregory Applin died on Jan 24, 2025, after the rigid hull inflatable boat (RHIB) he was aboard struck a mooring buoy and capsized in Bedford Basin.

On April 15, 2026, the Canadian Forces Military Police (CF MP) announced charges against two members of the RCN following the conclusion of their investigation. One sailor is charged with criminal negligence causing bodily harm and negligent performance of military duties, while another faces charges of dangerous operation of a conveyance causing death and negligent performance of military duties.

In a message to members of the Defence community, Vice-Admiral (VAdm) Angus Topshee, Commander of the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN), said that though news of the charges is difficult for the entire institution, it also underscores the responsibility carried by all who serve.

"[It] highlights the challenging realities of our service in the Royal Canadian Navy," VAdm Topshee wrote in a joint message with Chief Petty Officer 1st Class (CPO1) Pascal Harel, Command Chief Petty Officer of the RCN. "We operate in a demanding environment where mistakes and errors can have fatal consequences, and we must be accountable for our actions and our inactions."

VAdm Topshee said the laying of charges does not determine guilt, and that the military justice system must be allowed to proceed fairly.



A Royal Canadian Navy portrait of the late PO2 Gregory Applin.  
Photo supplied

"There will be a fair, independent, and impartial process to determine the outcome of these charges, and those accused deserve every opportunity to defend themselves," he said.

At the same time, VAdm Topshee cautioned against viewing incidents of this nature too narrowly.

"We are also extremely mindful that an incident like this almost never results from a single cause or single error and is most likely the outcome of a combination of factors."

VAdm Topshee also reserved words for those serving in leadership positions, noting that command teams at every

level bear responsibility for oversight, stewardship, and operational discipline. "You must be vigilant, proactive, and uncompromising in enforcing safety standards and operational discipline," he wrote. "The lives of your sailors depend on it."

Ultimately, the message reflects a longstanding reality of naval service: even routine tasks can quickly become high-risk, and accountability should live not only in policy, but also in daily practice.

For many across the fleet, however, the issue remains deeply personal. Applin was a 19-year veteran of the RCN who had recently returned from deployment to the Indo-Pacific at the time of his death. His loss was felt not only by his family, but by shipmates and the wider naval community.

"The loss of one of our own weighs heavily on us all," said VAdm Topshee.

*"The loss of one of our own weighs heavily on us all."*

— VADM TOPSHEE —

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# JTFP Concludes Ex CLEARWATER

## IN PRINCE RUPERT

### Captain Pedram Mohyeddin

JTFP Public Affairs

Exercise (Ex) CLEARWATER concluded on April 17 following a week of joint and interagency operations that reinforced the Canadian Armed Forces' (CAF) ability to observe, monitor, and protect Canada's western maritime approaches.

Conducted from April 11-17, the exercise was hosted by Joint Task Force Pacific (JTFP) and focused on domain awareness and presence operations in the Prince Rupert maritime area. Ex CLEARWATER brought together members of the Advanced Naval Capabilities Unit (ANC); 4th Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (4CRPG); 39 Canadian Brigade Group (39CBG); 443 Maritime Helicopter Squadron (443MH Sqn); and the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG). Together, the exercise enhanced interoperability and operational readiness in a strategically significant coastal environment. Throughout the exercise, CAF aviators, soldiers, and sailors operated across air, land, and sea to improve their ability to detect, assess, and respond to activity in Canada's maritime approaches.

Importantly, these efforts directly support Canadian sovereignty and domestic security at a time of increasing maritime traffic and evolving security dynamics in northern and coastal regions.

"Domain awareness is fundamental to sovereignty," said Rear-Admiral (RAdm) David Patchell, Commander of Maritime Forces Pacific/Joint Task Force Pacific (MARPAF/JTFP). "Exercises like CLEARWATER allow us to train jointly and operate with our partners in realistic conditions, ensuring we remain present, informed, and prepared to safeguard Canada."

Sailors from ANC conducted coastal domain awareness and presence operations, integrating both innovative tactics



Highlights from Ex CLEARWATER was conducted from April 11 to 17.

Photos: Avr Rebecca Mainardi, MARPAC Imaging

and emerging technologies (including uncrewed systems [UXS]) to support intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance activities. ANC's participation demonstrated how modern capabilities can be integrated with conventional forces to address current and emerging maritime threats.

443MH Sqn supported the exercise with CH-148 Cyclone helicopter operations, conducting maritime patrols and reconnaissance in complex littoral environments; personnel movement; and supply transfers. The squadron's involvement strengthened coordination between air

and maritime forces and expanded situational awareness across the Prince Rupert area.

On land, members of 4CRPG and 39CBG played a critical role in enabling operations across the exercise area. Canadian Rangers shared their extensive regional and environmental knowledge, supporting operations in complex and remote coastal terrain. Soldiers from 39CBG provided communications and signals support, ensuring reliable command and control and enabling effective coordination between land, air, and maritime forces.

The CCG contributed to maritime activities and logistical movements within the exercise area. Coast Guard assets assisted with personnel and supply transfers, supporting CAF operations while reinforcing interagency familiarity and coordination.

As Ex CLEARWATER concludes, Major (Maj) Mike Hughes, Ex CLEARWATER Officer in Charge, noted that "[lessons] learned in Prince Rupert will inform future training and operations, ensuring the CAF remains ready, adaptable, and prepared to protect Canada's maritime approaches and coastal communities."



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*On Remembrance and Continuity:*

# What Happened After the Sinking of HMCS Esquimalt in 1945

**Archana Cini**  
Lookout Newspaper

Almost 81 years after His Majesty’s Canadian Ship (HMCS) Esquimalt sunk within sight of the Canadian shoreline, members of the Defence community, local leadership, and island residents gathered in the Township of Esquimalt to remember the ship’s crew and reflect on something larger than the tragedy alone.



The annual ceremony marked the sinking of the Bangor-class minesweeper, torpedoed by the German submarine U-190 on April 16, 1945 – just weeks before the end of the Second World War in Europe.

Captain(Navy) (Capt(Navy)) Kevin Whiteside, Commander of Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Esquimalt, shared that the ceremony remains one of the most meaningful events he attends.

“This is one of my favourite ceremonies to be a part of because of how much it means to this township, and this base,” said Capt(Navy) Whiteside. “Though the events of 1945 grow distant in time, their meaning does not.”

Mayor Barbara Desjardins, who has spoken at the annual remembrance ceremony for the past 18 years, emphasized the deep connection between the Township of Esquimalt and the vessel that carried its name.

“The loss of HMCS Esquimalt is significant to the township, not only because she shares our name, but because we recognize the sacrifice and the loss of those who served on her,” she said. “Behind each of these men lost were families; wives, sons, daughters, parents, friends, and communities.”

On April 16, 1945, 44 lives

were lost in what became the last Canadian warship to be sunk by enemy action during the war. Yet, history did not end there.

Following Germany’s surrender, U-190 received a transmission that it must surrender to Allied forces, after which it became a Canadian prize of war. The submarine was then commissioned into the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) and participated in naval training exercises; testing and evaluations; and a St. Lawrence River tour. With this transition of ownership, a vessel that had once hunted Canadian ships and sailors now helped strengthen the operability of the Canadian Armed Forces. In this reversal of roles was a valuable learning: even instruments of war can be repurposed in service to peace, and history can

carry forward in unexpected ways.

On Oct 27, 1947, U-190 was scuttled with live fire in the approaches to Halifax Harbour, in the same approximate position that it had sunk HMCS Esquimalt two years prior. The submarine’s periscope was also removed from its body and is now on display at the Crow’s Nest, St. John’s, a private club founded over 70 years ago for visiting and stationed Navy officers during the Second World War. Now, the club houses hundreds of rare Canadian naval and military artifacts.

However, remembrance is not only about loss; it is also about what people choose to build, afterward. Werner Max Hirschmann, chief engineer and second-in-command aboard U-190, later immigrated to Toronto following

the war’s end. In the years that followed, Hirschmann consistently attended earlier memorial services in remembrance of HMCS Esquimalt, the very vessel he was involved in sinking. Poignantly, he did so alongside Canadian sailor Joseph Frank Wilson, one of the final few survivors of HMCS Esquimalt. Their joint attendance offered an enduring and powerful image of reconciliation – one of two men once divided by war, united decades later for the purpose of remembrance.

“Their shared presence bore witness to the powerful truth that even after war, there can be humanity, reconciliation, and peace,” said Lieutenant-Commander (ret’d) Gerald Pash, Master of Ceremonies, during the April 16 ceremony. “As such, our act of remembrance today is not only about the past; it is also about the future.”

Mayor Barbara Desjardins also pledged that the community would continue to gather each year, noting that “[with] their passing, it falls to all of us to carry the torch of remembrance.”

This is a torch that continues to burn, since that 1945 April morning, not only for those who sacrificed their lives, but also for those who continue to choose reconciliation in the years that follow.



Moments from the HMCS Esquimalt memorial ceremony held on April 16.

Photos: Cpl Conor Munn, MARPAC Imaging



# Save 15% on CFB Esquimalt Navy Run Registration



Photo:  
Cpl Jay  
Naples,  
MARPA  
Imaging

The countdown is on to one of Esquimalt's most anticipated community events, and the first week of May brings yet another reason to register.

Participants registering for the 20th annual CFB Esquimalt Navy Run between May 4 to

10 can save 15 per cent on registration with the discount code FLASH15 at checkout.

The Navy Run, featuring a 10-kilometre run, five-kilometre run, and Kids' Event, is an inclusive, family-friendly community event. The event is open to everyone regardless of

whether they are a member of the Defence community. It will also feature an outdoor marketplace and other community engagements. We look forward to seeing you on June 20!



Register now for the 20th annual Navy Run at [cfmws.ca/esquimalt/esquimalt-navy-run](http://cfmws.ca/esquimalt/esquimalt-navy-run)



Participants from previous iterations of the CFB Esquimalt Navy Run, returning to Esquimalt this June 20.  
Photos: Joseph Camilleri

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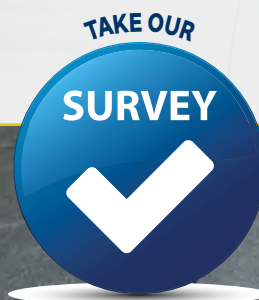
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# How Do You Get to Work AT CFB ESQUIMALT?

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Bikes ready to roll at the bike shelter in HMC Dockyard Esquimalt. Photo: Archana Cini, Lookout Newspaper



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# SERVICE AND ACHIEVEMENT RECOGNIZED AT MARPAC/JTFP HQ CEREMONY

**Archana Cini**  
Lookout Newspaper

Members of the Maritime Forces Pacific and Joint Task Force Pacific Headquarters (MARPAC/JTFP HQ) were recognized during a medals presentation and promotion ceremony held April 16 at the Wardroom Upper Lounge.

The ceremony highlighted dedication, professionalism, and years of service across the Defence Team, with members receiving Canadian Forces' Decorations, operational service medals, and promotions. Bravo Zulu to all those recognized!



Members of the Maritime Forces Pacific and Joint Task Force Pacific Headquarters (MARPAC/JTFP HQ) during the April 16 Honours and Awards ceremony.



Cdr Nicolas Bruzzone, Commanding Officer of MARPAC HQ, presents the Canadian Forces' Decoration medal to MS Swance on April 16.



Cdr Nicolas Bruzzone, Commanding Officer of MARPAC HQ, presents the Canadian Forces' Decoration medal to Cpl Desrosches on April 16.



Cdr Nicolas Bruzzone, Commanding Officer of MARPAC HQ, presents the Canadian Forces' Decoration medal to MS Park on April 16.

## BRAVO ZULO TO THE FOLLOWING RECIPIENTS:



- Chief Petty Officer 2nd Class (CPO2) Elson was awarded the Canadian Forces' Decoration (CD) (second clasp).
- CPO2 Chabassol was awarded the Canadian Forces' Decoration (first clasp).
- Petty Officer 1st Class (PO1) Neufeld was awarded the CD (first clasp).
- Major (Maj) Hughes was awarded the CD (first clasp).
- Master Sailor (MS) Swance was awarded the CD.
- MS Park was awarded the CD.
- Corporal (Cpl) Desrosches was awarded the CD.
- Lieutenant(Navy) (Lt(Navy)) Thiessen was awarded the CD.
- Sailor 1st Class (S1) Reves was awarded the CD.
- Cpl Munn was awarded the Special Service Medal – Expedition (SSM-EXP).
- Lt(Navy) Lemus was awarded the SSM-EXP.
- PO1 Morin-Fortin was awarded the Operational Service Medal – Expedition (OSM-EXP).
- Lieutenant-Commander (LCdr) Bruce was promoted to their current rank.
- MS Mutcher was promoted to their current rank.



# Annual CFB Esquimalt Clothing Swap Highlights DND Community

Archana Cini,  
Lookout Newspaper

Rows upon rows of donated clothing filled the upper gym at the Naden Athletic Centre (NAC) on April 23 as more than 100 attendees took part in the annual clothing swap event hosted by the Maritime Forces Pacific (MARPA) Health and Wellness Strategy.

Open free of charge to all Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Defence team members, the event invited participants to browse hundreds of donated items and take home pieces

they could use – with no donation required to participate. The result was an energetic and welcoming atmosphere built around community, sustainability, and giving back.

Throughout the four-hour event, attendees moved through tables and racks of clothing that ranged from casual and workplace staples to children's clothing and home wear, creating a sustainable shopping experience that for many was a chance to refresh a wardrobe, reduce waste, and share quality items with other individuals and families who could benefit from them. The swap also

reflected a growing appreciation for practical wellness initiatives that support both people and the environment. By extending the life of used clothing, the event encouraged mindful consumption while making everyday essentials more accessible to members of the Defence community.

With strong attendance and a gym full of donated items finding new homes, the event proved that giving back does not always have to be grand in scale. Rather, it was a simple reminder that generosity does not need to be complicated to matter.

Clothing laid out during the April 23 Clothing Swap event.

Photo: A/SLt Michael Samuels, Base Public Affairs

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Beaver Cup champions, the Engineers, pose with their trophy on April 24.  
Photos: Krista Morgan, Real Property Operations

# ENGINEERS WIN BEAVER CUP IN A FINAL THRILLING OVERTIME HOCKEY GAME

Archana Cini

Lookout Newspaper

Contributions by Master Warrant Officer Robert James Kerr, Real Property Operations

Competition, camaraderie, and overtime action took over Wurtele Arena as Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Esquimalt hosted the annual Beaver Cup hockey tournament from April 22 to 24.

Four teams, including the Bandits, Engineers, Sappers, and Pioneers, took to the ice in a tournament built on connection as much as competition. Players consisted of Real Property Operations (RP Ops) personnel; active and retired Military Engineers; and members from other units, mixed across the four teams.

“The Beaver Cup hockey tournament was originally initiated in order to maintain esprit de corps,” said Master Warrant Officer (MWO) Robert James Kerr, who noted that the tournament has existed for more than 50 years. “It initially started in the 1970s in Eastern Canada, and in the mid-80s out west.”

From 1996 to 2019, CFB Esquimalt and CFB Comox alternated hosting duties every second year. Since the pandemic, the tournament has been held solely in Esquimalt since 2024.

This year’s iteration of the tournament featured two days of round-robin play, with each team playing four games. The scores concluded with the Bandits topping the standings, followed by the Engineers, Sappers, and Pioneers. This set the

stage for Friday’s medal games.

In the championship game, the Engineers defeated the Bandits in overtime to claim the Beaver Cup title 4-3.

“With a goal waved off in the final minutes of the third period, the finals saw the game go into the tournament’s first ever playoff overtime period,” said MWO Kerr.

The Sappers secured third place over the Pioneers in the bronze medal match.

Individual performances were also recognized, with each team acknowledging the following Most Valuable Players:

- Jacson Alexander from the Engineers
- Marc Lavoie from the Bandits
- Jeff Barr from the Sappers
- Steve Melnick from the Pioneers

Beyond the scoresheet, the event delivered several memorable moments that kept Wurtele Arena a lively gathering place throughout the tournament. Opening ceremonies featured an *a cappella* rendition of *O Canada* by Petty Officer 2nd Class

(PO2) Cindy Hawchuk from the Naden Band of the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN), while a DJ made use of the arena’s new Wi-Fi and Bluetooth systems to keep music playing between faceoffs and after goals.

Off the ice, the canteen also became a popular stop for fans and base personnel passing through the arena. “Our canteen was a huge hit with the fans and passersby heading to and from work,” noted MWO Kerr. “We served many breakfast sandwiches, pulled pork carnitas, and hamburgers.”

This blend of hockey, joy, and friendly rivalry is part of what has allowed the Beaver Cup to endure for so many decades. While trophies matter, the tournament’s lasting value may be in the way it brings people together – serving members, veterans, civilian employees, and friends of the Defence community – all to share a few days of spirited competition and connection, year after year.



Members of the Defence community work the grill at the outdoor Canteen area during the Beaver Cup Tournament.

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2026 Navy Bike Ride ambassador Eric Chan.  
Photo supplied



## Navy Bike Ride Returns to Esquimalt

with



2026 Navy Bike Ride ambassador Tanya Woods.  
Photo supplied

# New Energy and Ambassadors

### Archana Cini

Lookout Newspaper

Contributions by Lindsay Chung, CFMWS

This year's Navy Bike Ride (NBR) is getting a fresh burst of creativity, and Esquimalt riders will be among the first to experience it.

The Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) has announced the appointment of the first NBR National Ambassadors: Eric Chan, a Canadian artist known professionally as EEPMON, and Tanya Woods, founder of Project In-Kind. The new national ambassador roles are intended to help grow awareness of the annual cycling event; inspire participation across Canada; and strengthen support for the three charitable organizations the ride benefits — the Naval Foundation, Support Our Troops, and Soldier On — causes that directly support serving members, veterans, and their families.

"Our Navy's strength lies not only in

its operational excellence, but in the people and communities that stand behind it," said Vice-Admiral (VAdm) Angus Topshee, Commander of the RCN. "EEPMON and Tanya Woods bring leadership, vision, and a deep commitment to service."

The annual NBR event offers a chance for local residents, Defence Team members, and supporters alike to come together in a positive, active way.

For Chan, the mission behind the NBR was an easy one to support. "The dedication of Canada's sailors and the families who support them inspires me," he said. "I'm excited to help grow the Navy Bike Ride and support the amazing charitable organizations that make a real difference in people's lives."

Woods echoed this sentiment. "The Navy Bike Ride brings Canadians together in such a meaningful way,"

she said. "It's an honour to help champion this event as Canadians increasingly recognize the impact of our Navy and the shared responsibility we have to prioritize the well-being of our serving members, veterans and their families."

For participants of the May 30 Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Esquimalt in-person NBR event, the announcement of 2026's national ambassadors adds another layer of excitement to the day. Ambassadors Chan and Woods are collaborating on several ride elements, including designing the 2026 event's technical T-shirt, cycling jersey, commemorative participation coin, and a new "Hero Flag" initiative. The flag will honour currently deployed RCN personnel, with event participants invited to share messages of encouragement and support to those serving Canada. These details, all developed by NBR's first national ambassadors, will all be part of this

year's anticipated in-person event.

Registered riders will receive this year's event T-shirt, while participants attending the in-person NBR event will also receive the commemorative coin. NBR Jerseys will be available for separate purchase.

The CFB Esquimalt in-person ride will run from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and offers both an 18-kilometre route and a 36-kilometre route for cyclists of varying experience levels. Families with younger children can also take part in a free kids' bike rodeo for those ages 12 and under. Whether a seasoned cyclist, young rider, or a family looking for a fun summer day, the NBR is designed to be both a welcoming and accessible event. More than a ride, it offers a chance for all to support the local RCN community while spending time outdoors alongside neighbours, friends, and supporters.

**Registration for the 2026 Navy Bike Ride is now open**



· NAVY ·  
**BIKE  
RIDE**

**DÉFI  
VÉLO**  
· DE LA ·  
**MARINE**

Presented by

Présenté par

**BMO**



30 May / mai 2026

**Ready, Aye, Ride**  
**Prêt, Aye, Partez**

Register  
online  
[navybikeride.ca](http://navybikeride.ca)



S'inscrire  
en ligne  
[navybikeride.ca/fr/](http://navybikeride.ca/fr/)

