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

# LOOKOUT

NEWSPAPER & PUBLISHING

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## “Peace did not come easily”

*Battle of the Atlantic,*

*story on page 3*

A member of the RCN stands during the Battle of the Atlantic ceremony in Victoria on May 3.  
Photo: MS Bryan Underwood, MARPAC Imaging

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CFB ESQUIMALT, VICTORIA, B.C.  
A Division of Personnel Support Programs

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

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# SPORTS CORNER

A member of the CFB Esquimalt Tritons volleyball team prepares to strike the ball during the CAF National Women's Volleyball Championship held in April.  
Photo: Cpl Randy Bross, CAF Imagery



## Big wins, big plays, and even bigger team spirit.

Here's a look at some of the teams and athletes from Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Esquimalt who made waves in April.



- Bravo Zulu to all Tritons teams and athletes who represented CFB Esquimalt at the annual Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) National Championships in April.
  - » Men's Volleyball captured a silver medal with a second place finish
  - » Women's Volleyball and Men's Basketball secured fourth place finishes
- Seventeen athletes from CFB Esquimalt will represent Canada West at the upcoming CAF Running National Championships
- The CAF Women's Golf Clinic as well as Golf Playdowns kicked off in May



The CFB Esquimalt Tritons volleyball team pose for a photo during the CAF National Men's Volleyball Championship held in April. Photo: S1 Filip Opacic, CAF Imagery

# “Peace Did Not Come Easily”

## *Remembering the Battle of the Atlantic*

A convoy during the Battle of the Atlantic in 1942 Photo: Lookout archive

### Archana Cini

Lookout Newspaper

Contributions by the Naval Association of Canada

Beneath clear skies at the British Columbia (B.C.) Legislature, Defence Team members, their families, veterans, and civilians gathered for the Battle of the Atlantic remembrance ceremony.

Held annually on the first Sunday in May, the ceremony commemorated the thousands of Canadians who served during the longest continuous campaign of the Second World War — nearly six years of conflict at sea.

Over the course of the conflict, the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) helped escort thousands of convoys across the Atlantic, protecting vital supply lines between North America and Europe from German U-boat attacks.

Addressing attendees during the ceremony, Rear-Admiral (RAdm) David Patchell, Commander of Maritime Forces Pacific/Joint Task Force Pacific (MARFAC/JTF(P)),

reflected on both the sacrifice and fortitude of the campaign.

“The Battle of the Atlantic was a campaign defined not by single moments, but by unrelenting endurance and quiet courage,” said RAdm Patchell. “It was fought across a vast, unforgiving ocean, far from the public eye, where danger was constant and reassurance was scarce.”

Today, the RCN is credited with destroying 33 U-boats and 42 surface ships through the end of the war, by which time more than 110,000 Canadians had taken part in the campaign. However, the cost of the war was immense. The Navy lost 34 vessels and more than 2,000 sailors, while the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and Merchant Navy also suffered significant losses.

“The cost of that duty was profound,” said RAdm Patchell. “Thousands of Canadians from the Royal Canadian Navy, the Royal Canadian Air Force, and the Merchant Navy never returned home ... This loss is especially poignant because it reminds us that vigilance is

required until the very last moment, and that peace did not come easily, but through perseverance in the face of exhaustion.”

The ceremony served not only as a tribute but also as a reminder of the enduring values still carried forward by today’s sailors, aviators, and soldiers: duty, vigilance, and service before self.

“We live in a world that is increasingly uncertain, where stability cannot be assumed, and peace cannot be taken for granted,” said RAdm Patchell. “History reminds us that maritime security is not theoretical.”

As wreaths were laid and the ceremony came to a close, the band continued down Government Street as cheers erupted from the crowd. The message remained clear: we honour the past and all those who have sacrificed and continue to sacrifice — for us.



Members of the Defence community stand during the annual Battle of the Atlantic ceremony held on May 3 in Victoria. Photo: MS Bryan Underwood, MARFAC Imaging



## Yoga on the Lawn Returns to Boost Wellness Across Defence Team

Archana Cini  
Lookout Newspaper

Defence Team members rolled out mats under sunny skies on May 5 for the return of Yoga on the Lawn, a weekly wellness initiative aimed at encouraging movement and mindfulness through the summer months.

Held at the Commodore's Lawn at His Majesty's Canadian (HMC) Dockyard, Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Esquimalt, the first session of the season marked a strong start to the program by welcoming more than 20 participants. Open to all base employees, the initiative encourages members to step away from their desk during their lunch break for a mid-day pause focused on health and well-being. Hosted by the Maritime Forces Pacific (MARPA) Health and Wellness Strategy, sessions are led by instructor Allison Jones with mats and blocks provided on-site.

Beyond the immediate physical benefits of stretching and movement outdoors, initiatives like Yoga on the Lawn also support a broader culture of wellness and operational readiness across the Defence Team. Yoga supports mental health and overall physical well-being, important components of maintaining operational readiness in high-tempo military and civilian workplaces. The relaxed outdoor setting also provides participants from across units and departments to connect, helping foster community and morale throughout the base.

As the summer season continues, Yoga on the Lawn will take place from 12:05 to 12:50 p.m. every Tuesday at the Commodore's Lawn until mid-September. Registration is not required.

Members of the Defence Team participate in the first 2026 iteration of Yoga on the Lawn on May 5. Photo: Archana Cini, Lookout Newspaper  
Grass background: Nastco and Lotus: Základní RGB / iStock Photo via Getty Images

the **LOOKOUT**

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# Red Dress Day with Movement is Medicine



Members and allies of the Indigenous Community and the Defence Team gathered on May 5 for the event, "Movement is Medicine," in recognition of Red Dress Day – the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people (MMIWG2S+).

Inset: Lisa deWit with Mary Anne Thomas, Esquimalt Nation Elder, on May 5 for Red Dress Day, the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people (MMIWG2S+). Photos: Lindsay Groves, Lookout Newspaper

**Lindsay Groves**  
Lookout Newspaper

At Clover Point on May 5, members and allies of the Indigenous Community and the Defence Team gathered for the event, "Movement is Medicine," in recognition of Red Dress Day – the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people (MMIWG2S+).

This event, coordinated by Caitlin Hancock of Fleet Maintenance Facility (FMF), aimed to raise awareness of MMIWG2S+, support the effort to end gendered and racialized violence against Indigenous peoples, and encourage healing, reflection, and community support. Participants were invited to wear red, walk, run, or wheel in solidarity.

Sergeant (Sgt) Nate (Nathan) Spence, a member of the Sandy Bay First Nation in Manitoba (Man.) and the Military Co-Chair of the Pacific region's Defence Indigenous Advisory Group (DIAG), opened the event with a land acknowledgement spoken in his Anishinaabemowin language. He then shared his own deep connection to Red Dress Day.

"For me, this movement is not abstract," he said. "It is not symbolic. It is personal."

His aunt, Charlene Ward-Lake, was murdered on Nov 1, 2007 – "a day forever engraved in my mind, my heart, and my soul," Sgt Spence shared.

He continued to share how the violence of that day did not end with her passing. It flowed through her loved ones, leaving Ward-Lake's daughters without their mother and her grandchildren without their grandmother. Those left behind are now without Ward-Lake's "laughter, her warmth, and the joy she brought," Sgt Spence said. Instead, her family is left "with an absence that cannot be filled."

Sgt Spence continued, saying that within this "gaping hole," there have been no answers and no justice in the 6,760 days since Ward-Lake's life was taken.

"But today," he said, "this event, and events like it ... offer a moment for me, for my family, for my friends, and for all of us as a society to bring these stories back to

the forefront. To refuse to let Charlene's name, her life, and her memory fade into the silence."

"Today, we remember. Today, we stand together ... we honour all Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit people."

Lisa deWit, proudly Wet'suwet'en and a member of DIAG, also spoke at the gathering with a reflection on gratitude, healing, and respect for the land and ancestors.

"Today is about a sincere dedication to ending violence, healing relationships, and fostering respect," said deWit. "Our feet are standing on where the ancestors lived, and Mary Anne [Mary Anne Thomas, Elder from the Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) Nation, part of the Lekwungen (Songhees)] has taught me, we must always tell the old ones what we are doing so they can guide and protect us."

"I thank you for the land that we gather on today," deWit continued. "And I feel your spirit around us as we uplift our families and loved ones. I raise my hands in gratitude for welcoming us as guests on your ancestral land."

Throughout the event, participants were encouraged to care for themselves and one another.

"Move, nourish, take a break if you need, but all is welcome," said deWit. She also shared the deeply personal story of her Auntie, Frances Brown, who disappeared in 2017.

"For me, the phone rang on Oct 15, 2017. It was a Sunday morning," she said. "My mom cuts to the chase: Auntie Frances is missing. We can't find her."

Brown was 53 years old when she disappeared. She was described as Indigenous, with brown eyes and brown hair, standing five-foot-eight and 119 pounds. DeWit remembered her auntie as someone who "taught me how to bead," reflecting on a woman who "launched two children into the world" and was in the process of reclaiming her life and time.

According to RCMP reports, 18 Indigenous women and girls have gone missing along the Highway of Tears, an approximately 700-kilometre stretch of Highway 16

between Prince George and Prince Rupert in British Columbia (B.C.). Indigenous organizations place the number of missing Indigenous women and girls closer to 40. Many, including Brown, have never been found.

"This October will be nine years since I received that phone call," said deWit. "We have never found her body."

Reflecting on the lasting impacts of loss and uncertainty, deWit spoke about the realities many Indigenous communities continue to face.

"I don't know a reality where I have not been acutely aware that you can cease to exist and no one will know what has happened to you," said deWit. "As time goes on, you question what justice is."

She also emphasized the importance of community-led healing and education.

"Host healing circles and educate younger generations with strength-based solutions," said deWit. "We heal, find our



voice, look out for young ones and become matriarchs ... [Healing] is founded in relationship."

DeWit referred to the National Inquiry's Final Report, *Reclaiming Power and Place*, which outlines the Calls for Justice addressing systemic violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

"We wear red because we believe it's the colour Spirit can see and they will know we're still searching," deWit said. "Enjoy the medicine today."



Sergeant Nate (Nathan) Spence, (right), opening the event.

Red Dress Day was inspired by Métis artist Jaime Black and her REDress Project, launched in 2010 to honour missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. The commemorative day also coincided with Canadian Mental Health Association Mental Health Week, which focuses on raising awareness around mental health and community well-being.

There is a \$10,000 reward for the arrest and conviction of person(s) responsible for the disappearance or safe return of Frances Brown. If you or anyone you know have information that can help locate Frances Brown, please contact Smithers RCMP (250-847-3233).



Above: Naden Band of the Royal Canadian Navy. Photo: Jayden Eric Beaudoin

Highlights from past performances conducted by the Republic of Korea Navy Band. Photos supplied.

## Naval Bands Come Together for an International Performance

**Master Sailor Zachary Everett**  
Naden Band of the RCN

The Naden Band of the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) would like to invite you and your families to attend an upcoming joint concert with the Republic of Korea Navy (ROKN) Band. The concert will take place at 7 p.m. on May 26 at the Royal Theatre, 805 Boughton Street, Victoria.

This performance is a unique opportunity to hear professional musicians from two countries join forces to perform classical and pop songs from both Canadian and Korean cultures from Gordon Lightfoot and John Estacio to Bangtan Sonyeodan, also known as the Bangtan Boys (BTS) and Arirang folk melodies. The ROKN Band will also highlight their members' singing talent, beatboxing experience, and breakdancing skills. They will also provide a rare opportunity to hear the Taepyeongso, a traditional Korean double-reed instrument.

Music has long served as a powerful instrument of diplomacy, transcending both language and culture, and this performance reflects an enduring partnership committed to cooperation, mutual respect, and regional and global security. In addition, there will be numerous chances to reflect on the shared values of both countries and the personal relationships that underpin them.

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S1 Brett Truscott-Arthur (left) and S1 Justin Vonn Arenas (right) prepare C8 rifles prior to a small arms shoot conducted aboard PCT vessel COUGAR on April 22.



# Orca-Class Introduces Small Arms Capability to Boost Maritime Readiness

Archana Cini  
Lookout Newspaper

A sharp crack echoed across the waters off Constance Bank on April 22 as members of the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) conducted a live-fire shoot aboard the Orca-class Patrol Craft Training (PCT) HMCS *Cougar*.

This shoot forms part of a broader effort to introduce small-arms operational capabilities aboard the RCN's Orca-class vessels, which are operated by members of Patrol Craft Training Unit (PCTU). While Orca-class vessels are primarily utilized as training platforms, the introduction of embarked weapons reflect both the changing realities of the global modern maritime environment and the RCN's renewed focus on operational readiness at every level of training.

"The introduction of a small-arms capability on the Orca-class reflects an evolving security environment," said Lieutenant(Navy) (Lt(Navy)) Jeremy Morissette. "There is growing recognition that even training platforms must be prepared to operate safely and credibly in a range of situations."

This new capability includes the C8 and C22 rifles, and C6 machine gun. For PCTU, the capability represents more than simply adding weapons to a platform – it also reinforces the principle of 'we train as we fight,' bridging the gap between a training environment and an operational environment.

"The Orca-class vessels are arguably the RCN vessels that see the most sea days year-round, and where many sailors will have their first sailing experience," said Lt(Navy) Morissette. "Having weapons onboard allows sailors from all ranks to gain exposure to weapons procedures at sea while also making the vessels more operationally able to respond to potential threats."

Beyond operational advantages, the capability's introduction also provides sailors with valuable hands-on exposure to procedures, responsibilities, and safety

standards associated with conducting weapons serials at sea.

Before the April 22 shoot could take place, extensive preparation and procedural development were required. Members involved in the ship's weapon safety organization also underwent formal range qualifications and received mentorship supported by senior personnel under established Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) standards.

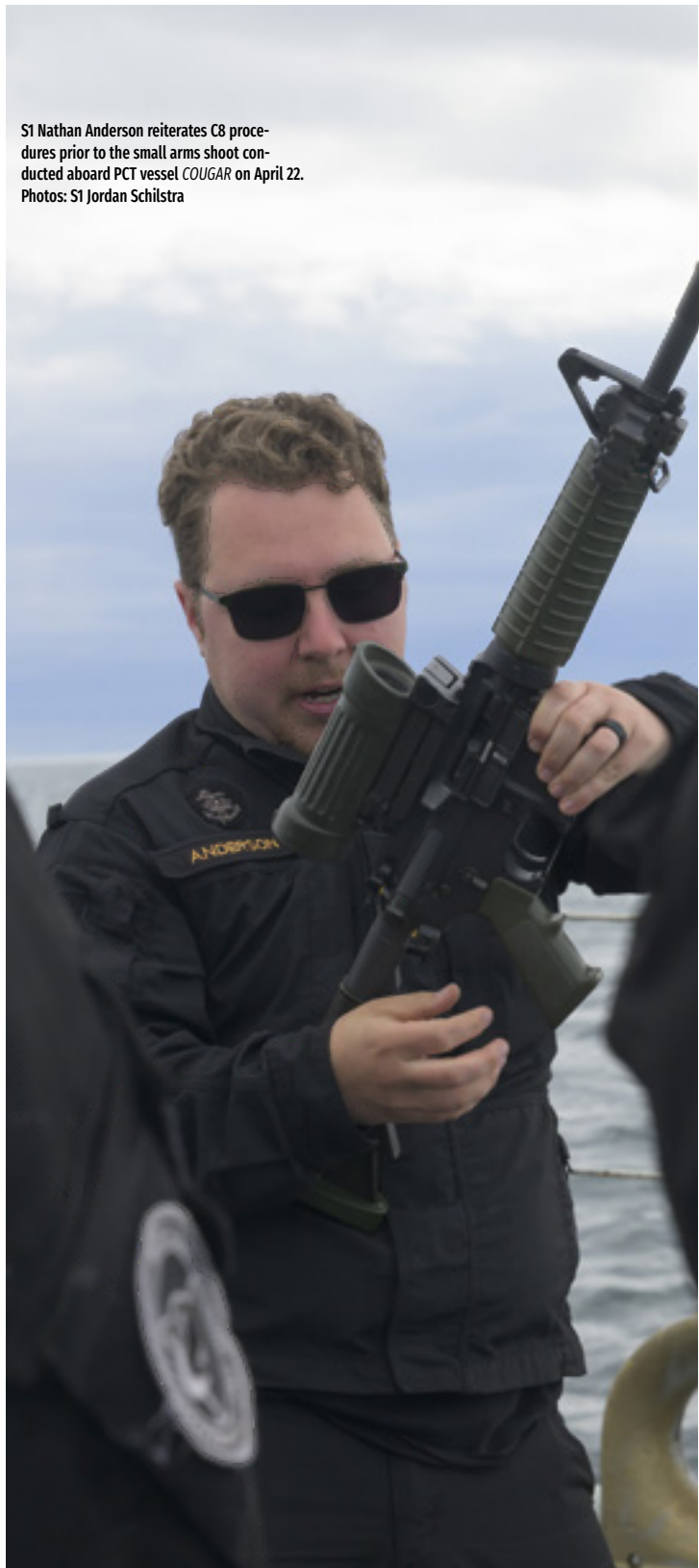
"Safety is central to how the RCN operates, and this capability is no exception," noted Lt(Navy) Morissette. "The rigorous planning and training process that went into making this shoot happen ensured the atmosphere onboard was calm and composed and that every member knew exactly what their role and duties were."

For the shoot location, the team chose Constance Bank, a well-established maritime training area off the coast of Victoria. Even though it was selected for its abundance of safe water for conducting live-fire serials and geographical location, weapons firing at sea introduces a unique level of complexity in comparison to a static land range.

"When conducting a shoot ashore, the range is almost entirely predictable," said Lt(Navy) Morissette. "At sea, you need to account for other vessels, marine mammals, range to land, sea state, and constantly changing environmental conditions."

Ultimately, these factors combined with strict safety procedures, make maritime weapons capabilities a distinct and demanding skillset. As the RCN continues to modernize and adapt to evolving maritime demands, initiatives like this are helping ensure that operability begins early – even aboard the Canadian Pacific Fleet's training vessels.

When asked to describe the value of the new small arms capability in one word, Lt(Navy) Morissette's response was simple: readiness.



S1 Nathan Anderson reiterates C8 procedures prior to the small arms shoot conducted aboard PCT vessel COUGAR on April 22. Photos: S1 Jordan Schilstra





Plots of land maintained by members of the Work Point Garden Club.  
Photo: Sonia MG

## A New Chapter Takes Root for the Work Point Garden Club

Archana Cini  
Lookout Newspaper

Tucked between community buildings and the rhythm of Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Esquimalt operations, the Work Point Garden Club is quietly growing something beyond vegetables and flowers.

The club has now entered a new chapter after relocating to a new garden site, where members are once again digging in, rebuilding plots, and cultivating community together. For those involved, the club has become much more than a hobby space. It is a place of connection, wellness, food security, and calm amidst the many demands of Defence life.

Open to military members, Defence Team employees, dependents, and Non-Public Funds (NPF) staff, the Work Point Garden Club offers allotment plots, shared gardening spaces, tools, and

water access for members of all experience levels. Whether growing herbs for the kitchen, tending flowers, or learning how to plant their first seeds, members are welcomed into a collaborative and community-oriented environment.

For Commander (Cdr) Paula McHale, President of the Work Point Garden Club, gardening has long been both a personal passion and a meaningful outlet.

“Living in Esquimalt offers such an incredible opportunity to garden all year long,” said Cdr McHale. “I love to grow kale, garlic, potatoes, onions, zinnias, zucchini, herbs... It is so beneficial to spend time outdoors, and many people don’t have their own yards to garden in.”

The club’s previous site, located near the Work Point housing area, had become a cherished oasis over the years. According to McHale,

the space was alive with hummingbirds, blossoms, and pollinators, while gardeners learned from one another as they tended to their own plots.

“It was truly magical,” said Cdr McHale. “It was peaceful, and it was a joy to see things grow there and learn from one another’s practices and experiments.”

When the site was later designated for future Canadian Forces Housing Agency (CFHA) development, the club faced the task of relocating. The move now brought uncertainty and physical

labour for many long-time members who had spent years building their soil and gardens.

“Gardening is an act of tinkering and building over time,” explained McHale. “The idea of disturbing what was built over decades was experienced as a loss for some members.”

Despite its challenges, the transition revealed the strength and resilience of the gardening community itself. Members rallied together to move irrigation systems, establish new plots, transport plants and trees, and

prepare the new site for the 2026 growing season.

The new site, located near the RV storage compound and Macauley Elementary School, offers slightly more protection from coastal winds, though members are now tackling invasive Himalayan blackberry bushes and Scotch broom. Even so, optimism is steadily returning.

“Now that the move is behind us, it has been awesome to see so many members working together and pitching in to get established,” said McHale. “The fresh start has actually brought members together in the effort.”

McHale credited much of the successful transition to the support of club volunteers, Personnel Support Programs (PSP) staff, and Real Property Operations (RP Ops), who assisted with fencing, water access,

and planter boxes to help members quickly begin growing again. Among the many community contributions, members relocated an apple tree from the old site, installed mason bees to support pollination, sourced manure and cardboard for soil preparation, and helped one another rebuild garden spaces from the ground up.

“It will take several years to build up the new garden site,” said McHale. “But witnessing the progress will be as satisfying as watching any plant grow in my own plot.”

As spring settles across Vancouver Island and the first radishes begin to emerge from the soil, the Work Point Garden Club continues to offer something increasingly valuable within the Defence community: a shared space to slow down, reconnect with nature, and build community.

**The Work Point Garden Club welcomes members from across the Defence community to grow, learn, and connect.**  
**Individual and allotment memberships are available, with shared garden spaces accessible even when plot waitlists are in place. Those interested in joining can learn more by contacting [workpointgardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:workpointgardenclub@gmail.com)**



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## MARPAC Honours and Recognition Ceremony Celebrates Excellence Across Defence Team

**Archana Cini**  
Lookout Newspaper

Members of the Defence Team and their families gathered at Government House on April 16 to recognize outstanding service, leadership, and dedication across Maritime Forces Pacific/Joint Task Force Pacific (MARPAC/JTF(P)).

Presided over by Rear-Admiral (RAdm) David Patchell, Commander of MARPAC/JTF(P), the annual Honours and Recognition ceremony celebrated individuals whose outstanding efforts in the past year have strengthened aspects of the formation both at home and overseas. Awards presented throughout the ceremony highlighted operational excellence across multiple deployments, including Operations (Op) HORIZON, NEON, and CARIBBE, as well as domestic training, institutional leadership, and community engagement.

By honouring 37 Defence Team members across units and roles from junior sailors to civilian employees, the ceremony reflected both the depth of talent and the breadth of contributions required to sustain Pacific Fleet operations.

Bravo Zulu to all those recognized during the ceremony.

## HONOURS AND AWARD RECIPIENTS

### Commander Canadian Joint Operations Command Commendation

- ◆ Sub-Lieutenant (SLt) Isaac Hossie
- ◆ Master Sailor (MS) Eric-Olivier Frappier
- ◆ Sailor 1st Class (S1) Svyatoslav Hliva
- ◆ S1 Connor Lorenz

### Commander Royal Canadian Navy Commendation

- ◆ Commander (Cdr) Nicholas Kucher, CD
- ◆ Lieutenant-Commander (LCdr) Evan Roberts, CD
- ◆ Lieutenant(Navy) (Lt(Navy) Robert MacKay, CD
- ◆ S1 Andrée-Anne Dion-Tessier
- ◆ Mrs. Tiffany Eygenraam

### Commander Military Personnel Command Commendation

- ◆ Petty Officer 2nd Class (PO2) Zachary Lye, CD

### Maritime Component Commander Certificate of Achievement

- ◆ LCdr Corey Davidson
- ◆ LCdr Andrew Pink, CD
- ◆ Lt(Navy) Gordon Emerslund
- ◆ Captain (Capt) Pedram Mohyeddin
- ◆ Petty Officer 1st Class (PO1) Elizabeth Morin-Fortin, CD
- ◆ Sergeant (Sgt) Kyle Mitchell, CD
- ◆ S1 Jared Fass
- ◆ S1 Isabelle Roy

### MARPAC Bravo Zulu Certificates of Achievement

- ◆ PO1 Stephen Mahabir, CD
- ◆ MS Joseph Dimayuga
- ◆ S1 Jaqueline Abutin
- ◆ Mrs. Courtney Looye-Pohoney
- ◆ Mrs. Danielle Wickens
- ◆ Mr. Steven Hills
- ◆ Mr. Matthew Miller
- ◆ Mr. Matthew Stidson
- ◆ Mr. Christopher Schreyer
- ◆ Mr. Wayne Young
- ◆ Mr. Mladen Rudman

### Joint Task Force Pacific Bravo Zulu Certificates of Achievement

- ◆ Chief Petty Officer 1st Class (CPO1) Rob DeProy, CD
- ◆ PO1 Steven Donegan, CD
- ◆ PO2 Allison Zaichkowski, CD
- ◆ PO2 Barrie Sorensen, CD
- ◆ MS Zachary Everett
- ◆ S1 Lachlan Barry
- ◆ S1 Andrew George

### Chief Petty Officer First Class Scroll

- ◆ CPO1 Francine Griffin, CD



Top: Award recipients stand with members of MARPAC Command (at front) during the April 15 Honours and Recognition ceremony. RAdm David Patchell, Commander of MARPAC/JTF(P), addresses the crowd. Photos: S1 Jordan Schilstra, MARPAC Imaging

# How RRSPs and TFSAs Support Long-Term Investing

## SISIP Financial

Esquimalt Team

Many investors often see impressive projections showing their portfolio's future growth, only to look back and wonder, "Why does it feel like my money didn't grow that much?" This is a common disconnect – one that can easily be minimized by better understanding the rules of taxation and timing.

When it comes to the reality of investment growth, investment projections assume smooth compounding. On the other hand, real life doesn't, with markets moving in cycles, returns arriving unevenly, and long-term growth occurring late in the journey. After adding fees, inflation, and taxes on top of this, growth can feel muted. The key issue in this case is not usually the investment return itself, but how and when taxes are paid.

### How RRSPs and TFSAs Can Help

As powerful tax-deferral tools, contributions to a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) reduce

taxable income today and allow investments to grow without annual tax drag. RRSPs work best when you contribute at a higher tax rate than the rate you'll withdraw at, with withdrawals spread over time. When withdrawals are delayed too long or taken in large amounts, income can stack into a higher tax brackets – making growth feel like it "only paid the tax." Rather than being an RRSP flaw, this is a planning issue that can be avoided.

With a Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA), growth is tax-free, and withdrawals don't affect tax brackets or benefits. In this way, TFSAs provide clarity and psychological confidence, which is valuable in retirement and major life transitions.

Ultimately, investing rarely creates sudden wealth. It does, however, protect purchasing power; convert time into options; reduce reliance on future income; and prevent savings from quietly falling behind inflation. When used alongside RRSPs and TFSAs, the result can be incredibly effective.



Contact your local SISIP office [www.cfmws.ca/insurance-finance](http://www.cfmws.ca/insurance-finance) now to learn how these financial growth tools can work for you and fit into your overall retirement plan.

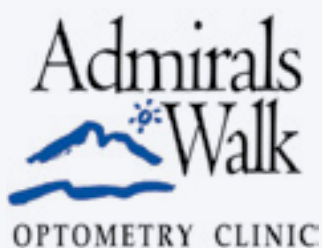
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# Red Truck Beer Company Strengthens Community in the Messes

**Lindsay Groves**

Lookout Newspaper

Red Truck Beer Company is helping strengthen community at some Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Esquimalt messes through a partnership with Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS). The Officers' Messes – Wardroom and Gunroom, along with the Junior Ranks Mess – Pacific Fleet Club, now each have their own branded lager – and the response has quickly grown beyond what many expected.

As part of the initiative, Red Truck completed a special tap takeover by designing and installing custom tap handles inspired by the crest and colours of each participating mess. The beer on tap is Red Truck's Road Trip Classic Lager, described by the company as a traditional European-style

lager made with all Canadian malts and Saaz hops. Since its launch, the re-brand idea has become something more meaningful for members of these spaces.

"We didn't know how people would react to a beer change," shared Kyle Murphy, Red Truck's Vancouver Island Territory Manager. "Each group has their favourite kind of beer – it can backfire at times. We're really happy to see how well it has been received."

The response has been positive. In fact, the mess-branded lagers have become the top-selling beer at their respective messes, reflecting not only popularity in taste, but also the sense of pride and connection tied to having something uniquely their own.

"The price is right, and it represents the mess,"

said Adolfo Gil, Junior Ranks – Pacific Fleet Club Mess Manager. "It's been a huge success. For the first couple months, we couldn't keep it in stock!"

This partnership also reflects Red Truck's desire to support the military community beyond business.

"We are trying to give back as much as we can," said Murphy. "I have family in the military and our Chief Operations Officer's (COO) brother is in the military. We view this as more of a partnership than a business deal."

By combining tradition with modern community-building techniques, this partnership demonstrates how even small touches – from custom tap handles to a shared pint – can help strengthen morale and connection within the CAF presence at CFB Esquimalt.

**Traditions and customs continue to play a pivotal role within the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), with mess culture forming an important part of that history. In *Customs and Traditions of the Canadian Armed Forces*, author E.C. Russell describes the mess as a space that fosters camaraderie, mentorship, and professional development. Russell writes, "The seasoned regimental sergeant major knows the value of the friendly, informal atmosphere of the unit mess where, over a period of time, the Service attitudes and professional competence of junior sergeants are slowly but surely built into something approaching the peak of perfection -- far better than can be done in the classroom."**



Red Truck Beer Company has partnered with CFMWS to rebrand beer as mess-specific lagers. The custom tap handle is inspired by the crest and colours of each participating mess.





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