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Volume 56 Number 35 | August 29, 2011

LOOKOU MARPAC NEWS CFB Esquimalt, Victoria, B.C.



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BGen Madower, Assistant CMP, encourages CF members and their families to attend an important information session about VAC services and benefits available for CF personnel, and to learn how VAC can help members when they transition to civilian life.



Information Session

Sept. 8, 2011 **Naval Officer** Training Centre, Nixon Building 1367 9 - 11:30 a.m.

Editorial & Opinion......4 Bravo Zulu......11 Classifieds......14-15





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Navy connects to community through the "Beautiful Game"

Ben Green Staff writer

Navy personnel were given the unique opportunity to connect with a demographic of the local community that is often misunderstood and overlooked.

On a wind-swept field at Victoria High School a week ago the CFB Esquimalt Tritons soccer team squared off against the Victoria Dreams, a soccer team for people who are homeless, struggling with addiction, mental illness, and poverty.

While the Tritons were using the match as further preparation for their upcoming national tournament at CFB Borden Sept. 9-16, it was not the only experience they took away from the park.

"Their team is a great example of how sports can bring something positive to someone's life," says LS Jermaine Pedro from HMCS Winnipeg and a midfielder for the Tritons. "The fact that soccer is a cheap sport to play means it only takes a ball to bring a smile to your face. Sometimes that's all it

takes to get you going in the right direction."

The Victoria Dreams is a branch of Street Soccer Canada, an organization that has set up almost a dozen similar programs across the country. The local team was officially launched in March by Times Colonist reporter Katie DeRosa. With a pool of about 30 players and a number of volunteers, she says the team is a great unifying force for everyone involved.

"It [soccer] transcends socioeconomic backgrounds; it's the same equipment, same uniform, you can't tell who is a volunteer and who the street people are," she says.

LS Pedro says the two teams were perhaps more similar than meets the eye.

"The Dreams show that if someone is willing to put in the work, great things can be accomplished," he says. "I think we in the CF share that mentality within our day-to-day situations."

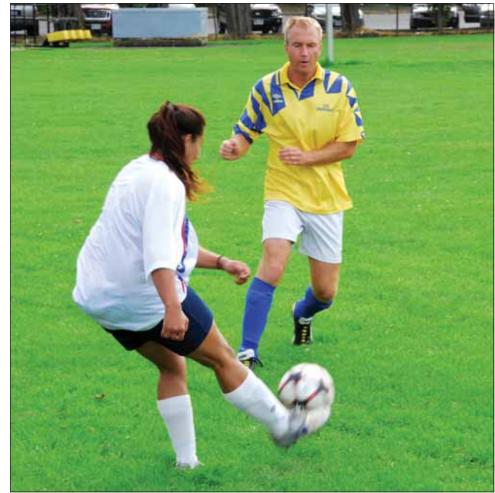
After a back-and-forth first half, the teams went into the break 1-1. Both sides were looking to involve the entirety of their

line-ups, which meant continuous changes throughout the match. The second half started much the same as the first ended, but as the game entered its twilight, the Tritons pulled away with two late goals, winning 3-1.

"When we can get out and interact in a positive way, it gives the community a better idea who we really are; it gives personality to the CF," adds LS Pedro.

The Victoria Dreams train every Sunday at Victoria High School from 3:30-4:30 p.m. Through a donation from Adidas Canada, DeRosa and her host of volunteers are able to provide any attending player with cleats and shin-pads. Interested players should be people who self-identify with the street community, but volunteers are always welcome. Anyone interested in donating gently used cleats, balls, athletic clothing, and other soccer equipment can do so by emailing victoriastreetsoccer@gmail. com or calling 250-588-2414.

For more information on the team, visit www.victoriastreetsoccer.com.



Ben Green, Lookou

A Victoria Dreams player lofts the ball forward during their game against the CFB Esquimalt Tritons last weekend. The base team used the game to prepare for their upcoming national tournament and to connect with the street community in Victoria.





August 29, 2011 LOOKOUT • 3

NATIONAL NEWS: OPERATION NANOOK

Right place and right time for rescue

Canada Command

At the time of the tragic First Air Flight 6560 plane crash in Resolute Bay, Nunavut, the Canadian Forces, through Canada Command's Joint Task Force (North), was conducting Operation Nanook 11 – one of three annual northern operations – to take place this year in Resolute Bay, Nunavut, from Aug. 4 to 26.

Planned to exercise sovereignty and hone the CF and its partners' capabilities to respond to a simulated marine incident followed by a simulated major air disaster in the Arctic, this operation was suspended as the CF provided immediate and critical support to the real-life First Air tragedy in the North.

The Canadian Forces suspended the exercises associated with Operation Nanook 11 in order to devote their attention to conducting search and rescue recovery efforts and provide support to their partners.

Twelve of 15 passengers died when the Boeing 737-200 crashed into a hill approximately 1.5 km from the Resolute Bay Airport runway. Due to the CF's proximity to the accident during Operation Nanook 11, they were able to respond quickly with available assets to assist the three injured survivors: a 23-year-old woman, a 48-year-old man and a seven-year-old girl.

Out of respect for the commu-

nity, to continue to support the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Transportation Safety Board of Canada in their investigation, and to continue to support the CF's partners and the community of Resolute Bay, the simulated scenarios of Op Nanook 11 concluded Monday, Aug. 22. CF support to other government departments in relation to the First Air crash and support to the community of Resolute Bay and related partners is continuing.

Canada Command and its six regional task forces across Canada are responsible for CF routine and contingency operations in Canada and North America, including the North.









Sgt Norm McLean, DND

Canadian Forces medical members carry a stretcher with one of three survivors of the crash of First Air Flight 6560 in Resolute Bay, Nunavut, from the medical centre to a vehicle, for medical evacuation by CC-117 Globemaster III.







Mel Hunt BA (Hons), LLB Lieut Col (ret'd)
Leigh Gagnon BEd, BA, LLB

Mel Hunt practises military law, criminal law, and personal injury law, and is a former member of the Judge Advocate General's Branch in The Canadian Forces.

Leigh Gagnon practises family law, real estate law, and in the area of wills and estates.

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People Talk

Lookout asked this question following the death of Jack Layton:

What are your thoughts on the death of Jack Layton?



I feel extremely sad. He was very influential in Canadian politics and did a lot for this country. Growing up in Toronto, Jack Layton was one of the first names I heard in politics, and also one of the first names I saw on a ballot. His mark on the City of Toronto and Parliament will never be forgotten.

ames I saw on a



It's very sad for the country and for the party. The party itself might take a bit of a plunge but they will recover.

LS Pierre Ouellet



I first read it on Facebook on my friends' statuses and I was shocked and saddened. I supported his beliefs. His work was unfinished.

AB Katlin Braithwaite



It's unfortunate especially considering the circumstances.

MS Ryan Pollard



I feel for Jack's family because my mother had cancer. I am more partial to peace than conflict and he wanted to bring the troops home from Afghanistan. I hope there will be someone like him to fill his boots.

OS Nick Frenette

BOOKreview

Pte Felicia Ogunniya

All On Her Own - Stories of Canadian Navy Wives

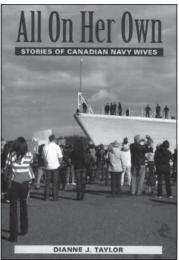
Dawn Bennett Staff writer

"When God created woman, He made her as perfect as He could. Then He stood back, took a second look, and made the Navy wife. It's the hardest life you'll ever live."

The above quote came from one of the women featured in Dianne Taylor's book, All On Her Own - Stories of Canadian Navy Wives. Her Padre said it to her at her wedding to her navy husband more than 30 years ago and it's something she's never forgotten.

It was originally published in 1985 as "There's No Wife Like it" in honour of the 75th anniversary of the navy, but it has been out of print for decades. Now, 25 years later, this enthralling book has been re-issued with a new cover and a new title. Sadly, Mrs. Taylor passed away in 1995 and Suzanne Anderson of Half Acre Publishing spent several years tracking down her family to get permission to reprint the book.

The book brings to life the loves, lives and triumphs and tribulations of navy wives. But not



all the stories are happy. There are stories of separation and loss; of babies born when Daddy was away; of the coldness and bleakness of Halifax and Dartmouth in the 1930s and 1940s; of no running water or electricity in those early years; of arriving in a new city with no place to live.

The underlying thread in many of these women's stories is the ever present loneliness and fear of raising a family and taking care of the home-front on their own.

But there are also stories that

bring a chuckle such as a frustrated wife chasing the customs representative up the gangway with her umbrella when she thought he was taking too long letting the men off the ship, or a spouse accidentally driving off the jetty in the excitement of meeting her husband.

The book is divided into six sections: Getting Started, Changing Home Port, A Time of Independence, Living With War, Navy Blues, and Potpourri and Home Comings.

Getting Started details the adjustments and sacrifices (and for some, shock to the system) many women went through in the early months and years of their marriages after marrying a military man.

Changing Home Port chronicles that challenging time when the family is asked to pack up everything and move.

Anyone who's ever stood impatiently on a cold jetty waiting for a ship to come in will enjoy the Home Comings section, while the chapter A Time of Independence emphasizes the incredible strength of character

it takes to be a navy wife. The stories in Living With War are the reality check of what being in the military is all about. Navy Blues chronicles the controversy surrounding the change of the old bell bottomed sailor suit to the blue serge, and Potpourri covers all the stories that don't fit into a neat category.

The sadness of the war years, the horror of the Kootenay explosion, the accidental sinkings of Fraser and the Margaree (and the ensuing survivor's guilt), as well as the disaster in Halifax Harbour in 1917 are all covered in this book.

The women in All On Her Own remember both the good and the bad times, but the emotion that rises to the top is pride - pride in being a navy wife, pride of their husband's contribution to Canada, and pride in their ability to survive on their own for months at end when their husbands are at sea.

Copies of *All On Her Own* are available through Half Acre Publishing, 250-746-3919, 3321 Renita Ridge Road, Duncan, B.C. V9L 5J6 (www.selfpublishing.ca).



www.budgetvictoria.com





August 29, 2011 LOOKOUT • 5

MARS III students take Navy 5K to Nanaimo

NCdt Steve Lamarche Contributor

It is 8:55 a.m. on Aug. 14 at the Nanaimo visiting vessel pier.

Nabob MARS III and Sussexvale/Stettler NETPO students line up alongside PCT Grizzly, each of them anxiously waiting for Grizzly's Executive Officer to give the next command. The deck watch reads 0900 as he yells "go!" from the starboard bridge wing and starts his stopwatch. The young officers dash down the jetty, out the gate and set their course through the streets of Nanaimo. They are running the Navy 5k Run: Nanaimo Edition.

Due to the Sea Phase of their courses, the MARS III and NETPO students of PCT Grizzly, Wolf, Moose and Cougar were unable to compete in this year's Navy 10k Run at CFB Esquimalt. However, with a weekend alongside in Nanaimo, there was an opportunity to hold a less-publicized version of the navy road race through the city streets and along the waterfront. With several former university athletes and avid runners among the crews, finding members to run the course came with no difficulty.

"Most of us would have gone for a run today anyway," says A/ SLt Guerra. "Having my morning run turned into a race just makes it more fun. There would've been more if they didn't have a duty

Due to a last-minute change to the route, because of some unexpected downtown road closures, the event distance was shortened to 4k. The men's race winner was A/SLt Michael-Lucien Bergeron, finishing with a strong time of 15:24. Hot on his heels was A/SLt Sebastien Harper finishing second in 15:36. The podium was closed out by

NCdt Steve Lamarche crossing the finish line at 15:42.

On the women's side. NCdt Taya McGillivray led the field in a time of 17:21. A/SLt Chelsea Henderson finished a strong second in 20:17.

There weren't just runners participating in the fun run either. One student opted to ride his home-built recumbent tricycle around the course, albeit twice to be fair. Another with an injured ankle walked the course, took a wrong turn and walked almost

In total, nine students participated in the run along with several volunteers charged with organizing and planning the

Special thanks go out to: NCdt Nelson (Nanaimo Liaison Officer) and NCdt Paul Larose for planning the course routes and advertising the run among the crews; duty driver A/Slt Bryce Witherspoon; and finally to Lt(N) Darren Sleen for organ-

Navy run raises over \$5,700 for **Canadian Diabetes Association**

More than 300 runners from CFB Esquimalt and the community tied up their laces to raise over \$5,700 for the Canadian Diabetes Association on Sunday, Aug. 14 at the annual Navy 10K. The race started at Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt and toured the surrounding neighbourhood.

RAdm Nigel Greenwood, Commander Maritime Forces Pacific, participated in the 10 km run to set an example of leading a healthy lifestyle.

"We thought this was a great opportunity to partner with the Canadian Diabetes Association. It helps underline the message of health and enables people to contribute in a meaningful way," said RAdm Greenwood.

Rebecca Taylor, manager for Team Diabetes was delighted to partner with the navy.

"When people raise money and train for this event they're leading by example by making a difference in their own health and encouraging others to do so too," said Taylor. "After the success this year we look forward to opportunities to work with the Navy again."

This was the run's fifth year, and the first in partnership with the Canadian Diabetes Association. Runners, online donators and corporate partners raised more than \$5,700 for the charity. The winner of the 5km race was a female runner, Michelle Gordon of Victoria, while Ryan McKenzie of Victoria took the 10km title for the third year in a row.



- The Joint Task Force Human Intelligence (HUMINT) Recruiting Team will be visiting and providing an education briefing to interested military personnel in Esquimalt. The two part presentation will explain what HUMINT is and how to apply, followed by a presentation from a Source Handler who recently returned from theatre. Details: Sept. 1, 10 a.m. - noon, Collier Theatre, dress of the day, personnel must possess a valid military ID.
- From Aug. 28 Sept. 26, HMC Ships Montreal, Shawinigan, and Summerside will take part in the Great Lakes Deployment. The vessels will visit 16 ports in Quebec, Ontario and Newfoundland and provide Canadians the opportunity to see the importance of the navy in security and humanitarian assistance.
- Joint Task Afghanistan Air Wing has officially ended its operations at Kandahar Airfield. Combined, the aircrafts flew almost 96,000 hours over three years of operations. The CC-130 Hercules will continue to fly and support Mission Transition Task Force until the end of the year.



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Vancouver assumes maritime role in Libya

Lt(N) Tony Wright HMCS Vancouver

After taking the baton of Operation Mobile from *HMCS Charlottetown* on Aug. 18, *HMCS Vancouver* is bound for the Gulf of Sidra, off Misrata. Libva.

Vancouver is the second frigate to take on the role of Canada's naval contribution to Operation Unified Protector. This operation is the NATO-led effort to enforce the arms embargo on Libya and the no-fly zone in Libyan airspace. It is authorized by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973, which calls on the international community to protect civil-

ians and civilian-populated areas in Libya.

Charlottetown deployed from Halifax on March 2, and was already on station with the NATO fleet in the central Mediterranean Sea when the first air strikes in support of the U.N. resolution were conducted. It finally withdrew to Palma de Mallorca after five busy months of operations in defence of Misrata.

The two Canadian warships met in Palma de Mallorca for a comprehensive turnover to prepare *Vancouver's* crew for the mission.

In Operation Mobile, "Task Force Charlottetown" becomes "Task Force Vancouver" as Vancouver moves into the combat operations area. NATO warships patrol in plain sight to warn and deter those who would harm civilians.

"What we are looking to accomplish here is very simple — protect civilians," said Cdr Bradly Peats, the commanding officer of *Vancouver*. "By working closely with our NATO allies, we aim to accomplish our mission by providing a flexible platform and crew able to respond to any developing situation."

Vancouver departed Esquimalt July 10, and arrived in the Mediterranean by way of

the Panama Canal, the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.

"We've been given an important job to do. We've travelled a long way to get here and we are ready to start putting our training to work," said naval communicator PO2 Jim Wilson.

With extensive preparations and long transit completed, *Vancouver* now begins its mission, hoping to make a positive difference in the lives of Libyans and certain to show Canada's commitment to peace and security.

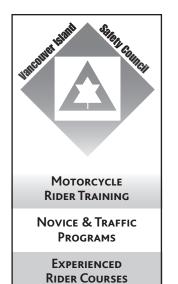
"Vancouver's presence off the coast of Libya will protect civilians," said Lt(N) Sam Patchell, one of Vancouver's two operations room officers. "It will allow legitimate traffic to flow to and from Libya and ensure humanitarian assistance is able to reach those in need."

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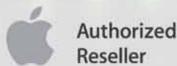
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Cpl Michael Bastien, MARPAC Imaging Services

Above: Raven recruits, under the command of SLt Anya Daradics, welcome RAdm Nigel Greenwood, Commander Maritime Forces Pacific, with a general salute.

Right: RAdm Nigel Greenwood and other VIPs salute during the national anthem. **Bottom right:** Steven L. Point, Lieutenant Governor of B.C., inspects Raven graduates on parade.

Below: OS Benjamin Rozon is awarded a traditional First Nations paddle by LGov Steven Point in recognition of his outstanding overall performance during the Raven program.

Now in its ninth year, Raven is one of three Aboriginal youth employment initiatives in the CF.







August 29, 2011 LOOKOUT • 9

Legion honours Afghanistan veterans

Dawn Bennett Staff writer

Legions across the city held an Afghanistan Veterans Appreciation Day Saturday, August 20.

Joining veterans at the Royal Canadian Legion (Esquimalt Branch #172) were Member of Parliament Randall Garrison; Esquimalt Mayor Barbara Desjardins; RAdm Nigel Greenwood, Commander Maritime Forces Pacific; and Cdr Tim Allan, the new Base Administration Officer.

"The Royal Canadian Legion wanted to thank the men and women, and their families, for their dedication and commitment during the combat stage of the Afghanistan mission," said Legion President Ches Dicks. "Words are not enough to show our appreciation.

Padre Doug Friesen, a vet himself after spending 10 months in Kandahar, conducted a prayer of remembrance in front of The Wall of Heroes. The wall is a pictorial of Canadian military members who died in the conflict. It's a labour of love from Legion manager Doug Grant who felt a strong need to honour Canada's military personnel who've sacrificed their lives in Afghanistan.

"I put this together through the tears," said Grant. "I would have to stop when I became too overwhelmed at the thought of how young these people were, and how much life they had left to

The Legion presented guests and dignitaries with Support the Troops Afghan Vetertan" edition pins, 65th anniversary Esquimalt Legion pins and ribbons, and "We Remember" wrist bands. For the guests of honour, the Legion created a desert camouflage style ball cap. Any Afghan veteran who wasn't at the event can go to the Esquimalt Legion with their ID and receive their cap.

"It was very rewarding to be part of the team that helped Afghanistan with their first free elections ever," said Capt Grant Whittla. "For me, it was a personal highlight to have helped achieve a democratically elected government in a country which



Dawn Bennett, Lookout

LS Gareth Eley stands in front of the Wall of Heroes. LS Eley served with Sgt Miok, Sgt Taylor, Cpl McCormick and Pte Chidley, who died with Calgary Herald reporter Michelle Lang in an roadside bomb attack on Dec. 30, 2009.

had never had one before. I also felt very lucky that we didn't lose anyone."

Capt Whittla was the Sergeant-Major in the All Source Intelligence Centre as part of the National Command Element in Kabul from August 2004 - February 2005 that helped monitor the city's first free elections. crossing the Gulf of Aden.

He has since taken a

commission and is now a

Electronics Engineer (Air

"I had a great time at the

Legion Appreciation Day

and was well received there,"

said LS Gareth Eley. "It's

good to know you have a place to go and swap stor-

ies with people who have shared similar experiences."

LS Eley was part of the Kandahar Provincial Troop

from October 2009 to May

2010 as the Operations/

Commissioned Officer for

Camp Nathan Smith. He

served with Sgt George Miok,

Cpl Zachery McCormack,

Sgt Kirk Taylor and Pte

Garrett William Chidley

who were killed, along with

journalist Michelle Lang of

the Calgary Herald, on Dec.

30, 2009, when the group's

light armoured vehicle was

struck by an improvised

Accommodations

Communications

Force Officer).

"I think the Legions Appreciation Day was great," said MS Pertl. "I know it was something the vets will not forget. I was there to support all our veterans for the great job they did and are still doing over there. A lot gave some, some gave all."

explosive device in the city of Kandahar. All five are honoured on The Wall of Heroes.

Also present was MS Shawn Pertl who served in the Gulf in 2008 aboard HMCS Calgary as part of Operation Altair ROTO 4 (CTF 150). They were tasked to inspect small boats

OVATION







Dr. Paul Henn

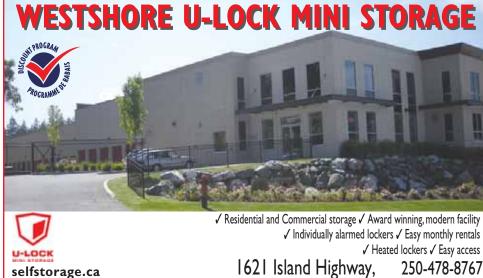
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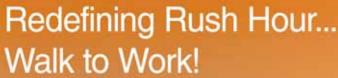
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August 29, 2011 LOOKOUT • 11



Above: The first reserve Junior CISN Op course serial 0001 to graduate with Regular Force qualifications. Front (left to right): PO2 Tracy Raven, CPO2 Steve Lesperance, MS Christian Mosley. Middle: OS Benoit, OS Stockermans, OS Lee, OS Gaudette, OS Song. Back: OS Mantha, OS Demers, OS Wright, OS Kitchen and OS Cairns.

The reserve officially adopted the Regular Force curriculum for its QL3 Junior CISN Ops in March 2011 and has since conducted four courses, successfully training 37 reserve Naval Communicators.

Below: OS Stockermans receives Top Student Honours for Junior CISN Op serial 0001 from the **CFFSE Combat Div Commander, LCdr Thaler.**





Cpl Lagimodiere is promoted by Cdr Bolduc, Commanding Officer of Maritime Forces Pacific Headquarters, and LCdr Thorp of J2.



Cope is promoted by Cdr Bolduc, Commanding Officer of Maritime Forces Pacific Headquarters, and LCdr Smith of J41.

Special marchpast for a special officer

Lt Michelle Wilson **HMCS** Quadra

With more than 800 cadets and staff mustered on the parade square, Cdr Mike McCormick, HMCS Quadra Sea Cadet Summer Training Centre's Officer Commanding addressed the ship's company for the last time during the final morning divisions.

After promoting an officer to Sub-Lieutenant, Cdr McCormick called LCdr Julie Hillsden forward and presented her with a Commanding Officer's coin. This is LCdr Hillsden's last summer at Quadra, as she will retire in the coming months.

LCdr Hillsden joined the Cadet programme in 1985 as a civilian volunteer when her sons became members of 5 RCSCC Rainbow. She was attested into the Canadian Forces in May 1991. After holding all positions in the corps, she assumed Command of Rainbow from 1998 - 2001. She spent 11 summers at Quadra as a GT Divisional Officer, Support Coordinator, Food Services Officer and Movements Officer before being appointed to the position of Chief Administration Officer in 2009. LCdr Hillsden also spent four years at Albert Head Air Cadet Summer Training Centre as the Public Affairs Officer.

LCdr Hillsden has worked at the Regional Cadet Support Unit (Pacific) since 2001, as the Area Cadet Officer, Special Projects Officer and in her current position as the Quadra Staffing Officer. She is responsible for pre-CSTC coordination and hiring of all Staff Cadets and Officers and through the years, has had a huge impact on the lives of many Cadets and Officers.

After Cdr McCormick made the presentation of the coin, he invited LCdr Hillsden to take the dais as

LCdr Julie Hillsden takes the salute from the Ship's company during her final morning parade on Aug. 17 at HMCS Quadra.

the ship's company saluted her - one last time - in recognition of her service.

Later that evening, the Wardroom presented her with a personalized Canucks jersey, with Hillsden and 11 on the back, and the Quadra crest sewn on the front. LCdr Hillsden is a very strong supporter of the Vancouver Canucks.

LCdr Hillsden will return to her position at the RCSU (P) in September and will officially retire from the Canadian Forces in December 2011.

HMCS Quadra recently completed its 55th consecutive year of training Sea Cadets from across Canada. For more information on HMCS Quadra, please see www.cadets.ca/cstc/quadra.



PO1 O.K. Meyer accepts the Canadian Forces decoration from Cdr A.R. Harrigan, Officer in Charge PCC Esquimalt on Aug 24.



PO1 S.L. Wilson receives the Canadian Forces decoration from Cdr A.R. Harrigan, Officer in Charge PCC Esquimalt, on Aug. 24.



Congratulations to Joy Hamilton, winner of the Canadian Forces Housing Association \$300 Gift Basket in support of United Way. CFHA sold \$347 in tickets.

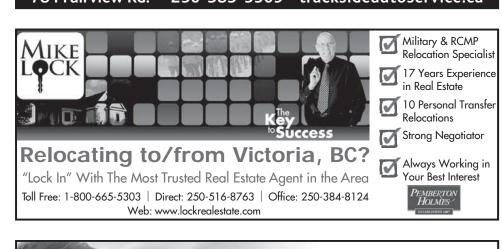
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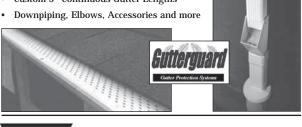


SLt Jo-Ani Mercier, from Canadian Fleet Pacific, practices a deadlift during the the new Tactical Athlete Training Program (TATP) at the Naden Athletic Centre. The three-week program is a new national Personnel Support Programs fitness initiative designed for CF personnel who are athletically advanced and looking for operationally specific training that will better prepare them to cope with the demands of their professions. All TATP participants possess a high level of fitness, are at the exempt level for EXPRES testing, able to complete five chin-ups, and able to achieve a recommended Level 3 in the Army Fitness Manual. The 10 participants of the pilot program will expand on their base of training knowledge to allow a safer and more effective workout.



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LOOKOUT • 13 August 29, 2011

Challenging flight in theatre leads to Royal meeting for pilot

Ben Green Staff writer

Capt Kurt Schweitzer has flown hundreds of missions in Afghanistan.

Deployed seven times for a total of 14 months between 2005 and 2009, the Hercules Aircraft Commander has done it all. He's transported entire regiments in and out of combat, successfully air dropped fuel, food, and water to U.S. soldiers at the most remote Forward Operating Bases, medevaced casualties to safety, and flown missions he can't talk about.

He's even experienced enemy ground fire.

On May 7, 2009, Capt Schweitzer landed his four-engine, 130,000 pound bird on a barebones runway for a routine passenger pick up. It was scheduled to be one of his last flights in the Afghan theatre.

"We landed at an austere airfield in Afghanistan a few hours before dark to pick up some passengers and take them to Kabul," he recalls. "Unfortunately, the gravel runway had numerous sharp rocks on it and we blew a tire while taxiing for take off. By the time we changed the tire, we knew it was going to be night and my crew was not trained to take off from an unlit gravel runway."

The Canadian Hercules crews were not trained on Night Vision Device operations. As the sun fell below the horizon, the

crew noticed spectators gather to look at the distressed aircraft and talk on cell phones.

"We knew that another Canadian Hercules aircraft had blown a tire in a similar situation about a year earlier and they ended up spending the night where they were," says Capt Schweitzer. "We did not want to chance leaving the aircraft and crew vulnerable to Taliban attack."

The crew quickly developed a plan to minimize their time on the ground.

With first officer Capt Joseph Tufenkdjian and air combat systems operator Capt Joshua Leveque, Capt Schweitzer mapped out a take-off scenario that would minimize risk to the crew, passengers, and the aircraft. Flight engineer MCpl Terry Lacaille, loadmasters WO Mark Kelly and MCpl Terry Parsons, and two technicians were tasked with changing the blown tire.

With night now settled in, the crew's gamble seemed to pay off as they once again taxied down the short runway and lifted into the dark unscathed -

'We heard loud banging from the back of the aircraft after we levelled off," says Capt Schweitzer. "We could not determine the source of the noise, however we knew there was something seriously wrong with the aircraft so we diverted to Kandahar Air Field (KAF) to be safe."

What the crew didn't

realize was the Hercules' underbelly had been hit by an anti-aircraft artillery round. The bullet tore through one of the main landing gear tires, the main landing gear door actuator, as well as several components of the refuelling panel.

'We managed to land safely at KAF, but we had to use emergency brakes on the runway because our normal brakes failed," he says. "We were relieved to be safe back at our home

The exploits of Capt Schweitzer and his crew spread through the ranks, both overseas and at home. Turning a dire situation into one with little consequence earned him a Mention in Dispatches (MID), which recognizes valiant conduct, devotion to duty, or other distinguished service in combat or near combat conditions.

"It's a great honour to receive an MID; however, it is an even greater honour as a member of the air force because most recipients are from the army," he says. "This mission would not have been successful without the professional crew I was flying with that day. They deserve to be recognized for their actions as well."

Two years on, now piloting the CC-144 Challenger executive jet with 412 Squadron in Ottawa, Capt Schweitzer's passenger manifest reads like a list of Canadian who's who the Prime Minister, the



their Hercules aircraft during a routine passenger pickup in Afghanistan in May 2009. For his decisive actions, Capt Schweitzer was awarded a Mention in Dispatches and was selected to attend a reception with the Royals when they visited during the summer.

Governor General, the all those nights ago they Chief of Defence Staff, heads of state - a far cry from austere airfields in Afghanistan.

Higher leadership even thought so highly of his calm and collected actions

recently chose him to represent the Air Force when the Royals visited in July.

"I was invited to the reception for the Royals at the Canadian War Museum because my Air Force leadership decided I was a 'deserving member' from my actions in Afghanistan," he says.

With wife Thandie, a humbled Capt Schweitzer represented the currently serving member of the Air Force at the Ottawa-based

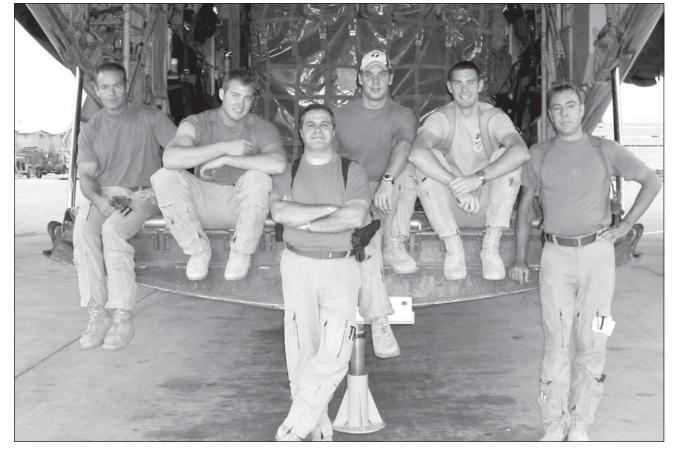
"The atmosphere was very relaxed, we were all told the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge were not overly concerned about formal protocol, so that put most of the crowd at Leadership Award on behalf ease," he recalls. "We could of Task Force Afghanistan see the people who had been invited to the reception had taken their time to look their best that day. The men were wearing immaculate suits, the veterans were wearing all of their medals, and the ladies were wearing new dresses with matching shoes and purses."

For now, life has eased back on the throttle for

the Victoria, B.C., native. Although he misses lowlevel tactical flying and still keeps a close eye on the development of the new J-Model Hercules, he knows returning to its cockpit one day is always a possibility – perhaps even on his home island.

"We would like to retire back on the west coast, there always is the possibility of being posted to Comox one day as well," he adds. "My family is very proud of me; however, they are glad that I am not flying in Afghanistan anymore.'

On Nov. 4, Capt Schweitzer will be part of the Guard of Honour to receive the Birchall at the Shaw Conference Centre in Edmonton, AB. Named after 2364 Air Commodore Leonard J. Birchall, the "Saviour of Ceylon", the award recognizes individuals or groups who have demonstrated some of Birchall's extraordinary leadership qualities he possessed throughout his military career and in the years following.





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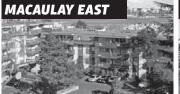
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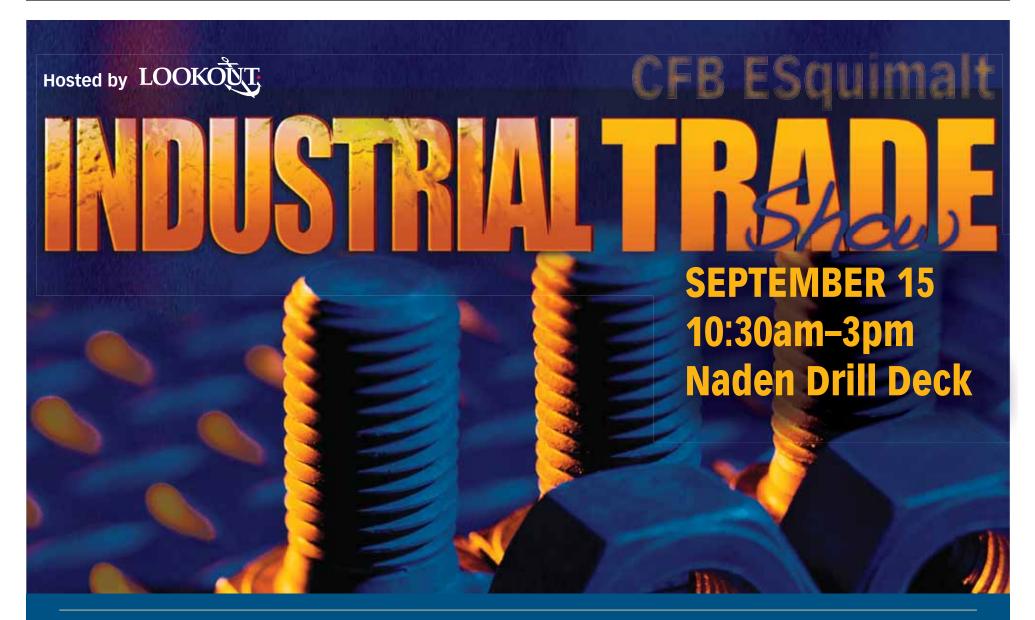
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