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Heading Home!

HMCS Vancouver heads home after completing its operations in the Mediterranean Sea.

Photo by Cpl Brandon O'Connell, MARPAC Imaging Services

See full story on page 2

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11 January - 26 February

Deployment over, Vancouver returns

Ben Green
Staff Writer

After six months of active NATO operations in the Mediterranean Sea, *HMCS Vancouver* has begun its long journey home to Esquimalt.

The frigate, which has been attached to Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 as part of Operation Active Endeavour since Nov. 15, is being replaced in the region by East Coast-based *HMCS Charlottetown* and is expected to be alongside its home port sometime in mid-February.

The five-week transit back to West Coast waters is the final leg in a tasking that saw *Vancouver* originally deploy on Operation Mobile, Canada's part in Operation Unified Protector, the NATO-led international response to the crisis in Libya. Subsequently, *Vancouver* was reassigned to Operation Active Endeavour, NATO's maritime counter-terrorism effort in the Mediterranean Sea.

"We transited the Straits of Gibraltar earlier today; we're westbound and you can see on the crew's faces that we're starting to think of home," says Cdr Bradley Peats, Commanding Officer of *Vancouver* in a phone interview. "We're certainly excited to get back after transiting the Atlantic, through the Panama Canal, and up back towards Esquimalt. To say we're excited about coming home would be a bit of an understatement."

Vancouver left Esquimalt on July 10 and started its first patrol off the Libyan port city of Misrata on Aug. 24. Over the next 58 days the frigate completed three patrols escorting minesweepers, boarding vessels of interest, and gathering information on the movements of Gaddafi forces.

"Unlike exercises where we train and prepare ourselves for any sort of mission or conflict, we were actually in a zone where there was a real threat presence, in particular when we were operating off the coast of Libya," says Cdr Peats.

For much of September and October, *Vancouver* enforced the arms embargo and no-fly zone mandated by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973 of Mar. 17, 2011. Cdr Peats says he has no doubt lives were saved because of their highly visible presence in the region.

In particular, he notes the safe delivery of humanitarian aid into Libyan ports as a highlight of his vessel's efforts. When they first arrived in Misrata, a World Food Program ship was able to enter the harbour without trouble, due in part to the work of both *Charlottetown* and *Vancouver*. As Gaddafi forces weakened, *Vancouver* was able to provide safe passage for humanitarian aid in other ports.

"By the end of the mission on the 31st of October, we were operating off Tripoli and that same World Food Program ship was now proceeding into Tripoli harbour," Cdr Peats said. "Throughout the course of our time on station, we were able to ensure every Libyan port was open for maritime commerce."

During the waning days of the conflict, with *Vancouver* patrolling about 12 miles off the Libyan coast, they were able to track the National Transitional Council (NTC) fighters' final push into Sirte.

"Certainly at night, you were able to see the rocket fire. None of it was directed at us, but we were able to see as NTC forces advanced towards the city of Sirte," says Cdr Peats. "We were able to report that back and provide

situational awareness to the NATO headquarters."

By November, Gaddafi had been killed and Sirte had fallen. Two weeks later, on Nov. 15, *Vancouver's* role shifted when the Canadian government tasked it to remain in the region as part of Operation Active Endeavour.

For the next six weeks the frigate, along with its embarked Sea King detachment, patrolled every corner of the Mediterranean – from France to Algeria, Spain to Israel – in an effort to deter terrorist activities in the area. As part of its maritime surveillance task, *Vancouver* was responsible for hailing and investigating ships that did not seem to fit into the local "pattern of life."

Now en route to the confines of Esquimalt harbour, Cdr Peats reiterates how proud he is of what they accomplished during their six months in theatre.

"I want to recognize the hard work and dedication of the crew. Without a good crew, no ship will move, float, or fight," he says. "These sailors, soldiers, airmen, and airwomen are the finest, most professional, and most skilled ship's company I have had the pleasure to sail with."

He adds that without the unwavering support of the crew's husbands, wives and families in Victoria and across Canada, the success of *Vancouver's* deployment would not have been possible.

HMCS Charlottetown left Halifax on Jan. 8 to replace *Vancouver* in Task Force Endeavour, the fleet that conducts Operation Active Endeavour. The Government of Canada has said it will maintain a maritime presence in the Mediterranean region until the end of this year.



Cdr Bradley Peats

HMCS Vancouver marked the end of its mission by flying the ship's Battle Ensign during its transit through the Strait of Gibraltar, thus leaving the operation area of the Mediterranean Sea. Ship and crew are now transiting back to Esquimalt.

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MCpl Maxwell Murphy, Formation Imaging Services, Halifax, Nova Scotia
Sailors line the deck as HMCS Charlottetown departs Halifax. The ship is sailing to the Mediterranean Sea where it will participate in the NATO-led Operation Active Endeavour, tasked with finding and boarding ships suspected of participating in terrorism.

HMCS Charlottetown heads overseas

Darlene Blakeley
Navy Public Affairs,
Ottawa

HMCS Charlottetown is returning to familiar waters, but after a 100 per cent crew change, the sailors themselves will be heading into new experiences.

The frigate departed Halifax Jan. 8 for the Mediterranean Sea with 250 sailors and a Sea King helicopter detachment aboard. Charlottetown will join other NATO ships participating in Operation Active Endeavour, NATO's counter-terrorism effort in the Mediterranean designed to prevent the movement of terrorists or weapons of mass destruction, as well as enhance the security of shipping in general.

"The crew is excited to deploy," says Cdr Wade Carter, Charlottetown's commanding officer. "They have trained long and hard for this opportunity and are excited to get under way and practise the skills

they have worked so hard to perfect."

It will be Charlottetown's second overseas deployment in a year—she returned in early September 2011 after six months in the Mediterranean as Canada's naval contribution to the NATO-led mission in Libya. During that mission she was the first Canadian ship to be fired upon and return fire in a combat role since the Korean War. She will replace HMCS Vancouver.

"Like all members of the Canadian Forces, the men and women of Charlottetown are committed to protecting Canadians' safety and security, at home and abroad," explains VAdm Paul Maddison, Commander Royal Canadian Navy. "This deployment supports the Government of Canada's defence and foreign policy priorities, and national and collective security objectives."

Along with the excitement of the departure, crew members are also "under-

standably concerned" about leaving their families, adds Cdr Carter. "All those who deploy go through this, but the navy is adept at looking after loved ones and has tremendous support mechanisms in place to deal with separation stresses, such as the Military Family Resource Centre and its many support programs and initiatives. Once we get under way the crew will settle into a routine that they know very well and the anxiety related to separation will diminish, and the deployment focus will heighten."

At least one sailor took care of important personal business before leaving Halifax. A day before the ship's departure, SLt Eric Melady and his fiancée Mary got married in a quiet ceremony at home. "We were supposed to be getting married in June," said SLt Melady.

Instead of waiting, the couple decided to move the date up and marry

before he sailed. "All of our families are back in Ontario," said Mary Melady. "So we called them, they supported it, and then we called a justice of the peace to come over, and some friends that we have here."

SLt Melady won't be the only newlywed in Charlottetown: Formation Imaging Services technician Cpl Ronnie Kinnie got married a week earlier.

Charlottetown is expected to join NATO ships in the Mediterranean Sea by mid- to late January.

Files from Virginia Beaton

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matters of OPINION

MPCORNER The truth about Ecstasy

Sgt Benoit Rheume
Military Police Community Relations

As the drug problem has made the news once again, I will discuss the most common illegal drugs and their effects. I hope this information will shed some light on potentially deadly drugs that are the most common on the "street."

Ecstasy is one of the most dangerous drugs threatening young people today. Called MDMA (3-4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine), it is a synthetic chemical that can be derived from an essential oil of the sassafras tree. MDMA is also one of the easiest illegal drugs to obtain. Its effects are similar to those of amphetamines and hallucinogens. Distributed almost anywhere, it has become very popular at social events such as raves, concerts, etcetera.

One reason Ecstasy can be especially dangerous is the lack of content control. Ingredients are a mix of harmful additives such as cornstarch, soaps and detergents, or other drugs: caffeine, ephedrine, methamphetamine, LSD, PCP, and ketamine.

Ecstasy is usually taken in pill form and swallowed, but it can also be injected. Some users have been known to crush and snort the resulting powder.

How Does It Affect You?

Ecstasy is similar in nature to other amphetamines and hallucinogens. It speeds up the nervous system and acts as a mood enhancer. Also referred to as "the love drug", Ecstasy often makes the user feel good, happy and relaxed - at least at first. Contrary to common beliefs, Ecstasy is not an aphrodisiac and can actually inhibit sexual performance.

The taking of any drug affects people differently. Depending on size, weight, health, dosage and other drugs being used, the reaction can be mild or very severe. Anyone suffering from hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, epilepsy, mental illness or panic is at an even greater risk than a healthy individual.

Common Side Effects

The following effects start within 20 minutes of taking "E" and can last for four to six hours or longer:

- Increased heart rate
- Increased body temperature
- Increased blood pressure
- Increased confidence
- Nausea
- Anxiety
- Feelings of well-being (happiness, love)
- Sweating
- Loss of appetite

Taking too much Ecstasy can result in:

- Extremely high body temperatures
- High blood pressure

- Hallucinations
- Fast Heartbeat
- Breathing problems
- Death

Death often results from harmful overheating (hyperthermia), or from drinking too much at one time (hyponatremia). Hyponatremia is a condition where excess fluid intake swells the brain resulting in coma. A third cause of death is stimulation. Over stimulation of the nervous system can result in heart attack or brain hemorrhage.

Duration of Effects

An Ecstasy high can last from six to 24 hours but usually averages three to four hours. Some reactions have been reported to persist from one to 14 days after use.

Long Term Effects

Recent findings connect use of Ecstasy to memory loss. Use of Ecstasy depletes serotonin, a very important chemical in the brain which regulates mood, sleeping and eating habits, as well as, the thinking and behaviour process, sexual function, and sensitivity to pain.

Ecstasy is an extremely dangerous drug and its effects on your body are potentially lethal.

CFB Esquimalt Military Police: (250) 363-4032 or 9-1-1.

To report information relating to any crime, visit: www.victoriacrimestoppers.com or call 1-800-222-8477.

Military member makes mental health a priority

(The following article is a testimonial from a Canadian Forces member through the MFRC who wanted to share her experience with others, but wanted to keep her identity private).

Eileen, a military member at CFB Esquimalt, recently accessed mental health services, and wanted to share her experience with the community.

She had a variety of challenges in her life and they all seemed to converge at once. Work had been busy and stressful. Her marriage needed help. Her daughter had been diagnosed with bipolar illness. On top of that, Eileen had been recently diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

It was time to make her family's mental health a priority, so she went to the Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC) for help.

"The support of the social workers and counselling staff has been very helpful," says Eileen.

While she was there, her family received individual, couples and family counselling, and facilitated conflict resolution sessions. She also attended a women's group, and accessed youth services for her daughter. She says she found all of these services very beneficial.

"The MFRC's women's self-help group is a good, confidential, safe place where I can say what is on my mind," said Eileen, "A place to share my hopes and fears openly - to support each other through very difficult and diverse life challenges."

She went to the Base Clinic for information and support on evaluating her PTSD symptoms, and advice on how to proceed with getting help. She found the Base Clinic a good resource and the staff very helpful.

Even though Eileen experienced stresses both at home and work, she was able to continue to work effectively. In the past year, she gained a commendation in her professional work role and a promotion to a higher rank with greater responsibilities. However, Eileen admitted she waited too long to reach out and ask for help. Looking back, she wanted to share a few tips to assist other military family members going through similar challenges.

Her first piece of advice is to make time for work, home, health and friendships.

"I need to separate them and not allow them to spill over into other parts of my life," she says. "One of the real simple things I do is to make regular time for my friends by sharing healthy meals at places like Nelle's Block."

Her second recommendation is to "focus on something simple that you love." A favourite activity for her is competitive sailing. It offers her both physical and social benefits.

Her third suggestion is to "surround yourself with good people." It's important to be aware of those who "stoke you up" and those who you can only be around in "small doses." When you are feeling low, she recommends not being around those that bring you down.

Eileen's fourth recommendation is "to

practice self-care." There are many easy ways to practice family self-care. Eileen buys a punch card at a local massage therapy school allowing everyone in the family the chance to relax.

Her fifth suggestion is for families to eat dinners together.

"We focus on good nutrition," she says. "Lots of fresh veggies, no processed food and we shop together every few days as a family so that we are all involved."

Her sixth suggestion is "to cut down on sugar, caffeine and alcohol." She makes sure she sets limits and avoids these vices until she is in a better space.

Eileen's final takeaway is to "reach out and ask for help." She found it valuable to have professionals on her side to provide support.

Note: If you or anyone else in your family would benefit from some professional assistance, please note some of the various resources that are here in the CF community to assist you.

- Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC): 250-363-2640
- Base Chaplain: 250-363-4030
- Civilian Employee Assistance Program (EAP): 250-363-7968
- PSP Health Promotion: 250-363-5621
- Members Assistance Program (MAP): 1-800-268-7708
- Canadian Forces Health Services, Mental Health: 250-363-4411

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Editorial



Photo by Shelley Fox, Lookout

Paying the price for holiday cheer

Ben Green
Staff Writer

Languishing in my aisle seat, the plane's turbulence was an ever-so-subtle reminder that my vacation was nearing an end. The occasional ascents and descents vibrated through the fuselage, jiggling my belly uncomfortably over the seatbelt wrapped snugly around my waist.

Ten days of homemade fudge, pies, gourmet chocolates, ice cream, burgers, and barbeque over the festive period had settled into my mid-rift and now the terrifying realization that I'd have to work it off was sinking in. Loosening the belt slightly I rake my brain for any contributing factors to my dilemma. Frustrated, I finally concede that in hindsight there were a number of warning signs that my holiday exercise regiment was waning:

- I became disappointed one morning when my girlfriend informed me that the chocolate oranges you smash on the counter don't qualify as a serving of fruit.
- The morning after going to an NFL game I realized my aching hamstrings were only due to standing and cheering a few times each quarter.
- I needed to rehydrate after coming up the stairs from wrapping presents.
- In an attempt to follow a workout DVD, I got tired and just watched it from the couch as a movie instead.
- Cutting down three dead trees with my girlfriend's dad in their backyard left me bedridden the following day.
- I got a little winded trying to follow Tom Cruise on the IMAX screen during the new *Mission Impossible* movie.

Touching down in Seattle, I quickly zip

up my down jacket to hide the Kris Kringle-sized paunch I'm now sporting. My metabolism as a high performance athlete at 17 is not what it is now as a low performance recreational jogger only a few years later. My own body has betrayed me, and it hurts a little. I've always been fairly fit with a thin frame, so these few extra pounds tagging along on my trip home are all the more discouraging.

Arriving back in Victoria the next day on New Year's Eve, I commit myself to hitting the pavement hard in 2012, clock the miles, and be back to my lean self in no time.

Standing in front of the bathroom mirror, I lean in and stare into the blues of my eyes; the music from the Rocky montages playing in my head.

"I have the resources to succeed!" I tell myself with a ferocious look of determination. I think of the gym at Naden, the track near my house, and the countless exercises I've accumulated in my repertoire after years of competitive sports.


"This is nothing!" I continue. "I've played through broken bones, fractures, and ligament tears! Dropping a few pounds will be easy as pie!"

Mmm pie, my mind begins to drift back to the scrumptious assortment of pumpkin and apple I had been accustomed to over break.


"No, focus! I can't wait to put those running shoes on, slip on a hoodie, and feel the sweat of an intense workout run down my brow again!"

The glare of the bathroom lights start to give me a headache. All this self-motivating is proving to be a workout in itself. I change into sweatpants, grab a blanket, and lie down on the couch.

I'll start tomorrow...after this Toblerone.



Please note: due to routine pool maintenance, the Naden Athletic Centre Pool will be closed from Jan. 4-23, 2012. We apologize in advance for the inconvenience.



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Long awaited apology

Ben Green
Staff Writer

It took more than seven decades, but last month Canadian veterans who fought in Hong Kong and became prisoners of war (POW) during the Second World War received the first formal apology from the Japanese government.

The public regret was for their treatment at the hands of Japanese soldiers following the two-and-a-half week battle and subsequent years of imprisonment.

Joining Steven Blaney, Minister of Veteran Affairs, and a small delegation of Hong Kong veterans, was Victoria-native Gerry Gerrard, who made the journey across the Pacific once more to accept the statement delivered by Toshiyuki Kato, Japan's Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Following a commemorative ceremony, the delegation visited the graves of Canadian soldiers at the British Commonwealth Cemetery in Yokohama.

Gerrard, who was one of the fortunate Canadians to survive the Hong Kong theatre, says while he accepted the apology, he didn't lose much sleep waiting for it.

"My attitude is it's a war and it's over with," he says.

Now just days shy of his 90th birthday, he reflects on a campaign that killed or wounded more than half the contingent of Canadians sent to defend the island.

An inauspicious welcome – Early December, 1941

Nineteen-year-old Signalman Gerrard was assigned to Hong Kong with almost 2,000 other Canadian soldiers. Just a few months earlier he was lined up for a convoy in Halifax destined for the European theatre, only to be sent back to Ottawa and eventually Vancouver to sail across the opposite ocean. It took him and the rest of the troops 18 days to reach Hong Kong.

"We didn't know where we were going to start with, everything was secretive," says Gerrard. "It was an experience; there was a certain amount of excitement. We didn't know until we left Hawaii where we were going."

The thrill of deployment vanished with the realization that Japan had invaded the British colony with a force currently unmatched in the region.

He faced the reality of war days after landing a shore when he stepped into a barracks one night.

Within a fraction of a second, a concussion wave lifted him off his feet and blew him back through the open door he'd just walked through. Dazed, he pulled himself from the ground and peered out onto the Hong Kong landscape through a hole where a wall stood moments earlier. Bodies lay on the room's floor, dead, injured, and dying.

Gerrard had experienced the venom of a Japanese shell. The Second World War had reached Canadian troops in the Pacific.

The surrender – Dec. 25, 1941

After days of intense fighting, the Canadians were low on food, ammunition, water, and morale. Highly outnumbered, they're forced to surrender on Christmas Day, 1941.

"We were dealing with 10-1 odds," says Gerrard, nervously fidgeting his thumbs resting in his lap. "We couldn't get any rest, we slept when we could. Pure exhaustion is what it was."

That night, Gerrard says they were marched into a neighbouring town to sleep. The next day they were marched back through the streets to their old barracks turned prison camp at Sham Shui Po. The



Gerrard flips through a scrap book he's kept of pictures and articles from his time as a POW and visits back to the island of Hong Kong in later years.

streets were packed with locals catching their first glimpse at the defeated soldiers.

"It was quite upsetting, it brought a lot of men to tears," he says. "We were just saying, 'What's going to happen to us now?'"

Prison camps and forced labour – 1941-1945

Sham Shui Po was a prison camp in all facets of the word. Gerrard says the Japanese were quick with camp rules and even swifter in enforcing them. Punishments often included being slapped or hit with the butts of rifles, holding weights up for long periods of time, or enduring cold water showers.

Perhaps one of the more haunting memories for Gerrard was a malicious guard they called the Kamloops Kid. This young Japanese soldier was born in Canada, educated in Vancouver, and joined the Japanese army two years before war broke out. His perfect Canadian accent was a wolf in sheep's clothing for the brutality he extended to POWs.

"We always had to watch out for that guy," says Gerrard. "It turns out after the war crimes deal [at war's end] he was executed."

In 1943, on his 21st birthday, Gerrard was shipped out of his prison camp in Hong Kong and transferred to work in the shipyards just outside of Kawasaki in Japan. Days would see him and approximately 150 other prisoners help erect ships on the docks, march several miles back to camp, and slip into an exhausted slumber on straw mats. Within months only 48 men were still working the shipyards; the others were too hurt or weak to work such intensive labour.

"I took it day to day, but the sad thing was that a lot of men had bad health, injuries, and were hurt at work," he says.

A lack of key vitamins eventually became the POW's greatest enemy. Poor nutrition led to many of them developing excruciating boils and worms. Gerrard recalls one night in particular when the man lying next to him couldn't stop coughing. The next morning they realized he had spat up a worm the size of his finger.

Despite having better health than some in the camp, Gerrard was not immune to



Photos by Ben Green, Lookout

Gerry Gerrard was a young signalman when he was captured by the Japanese in Hong Kong during the Second World War. After spending nearly four years in various camps as a prisoner of war, he was liberated by American forces at war's end. Here, Gerrard sits with a photo of him and his wife Evelyn on their wedding day. Evelyn passed away last year, but Gerrard said she waited for him through the entire war. They were married six weeks after he arrived home in Victoria.

the boils. With no anaesthesia available, on more than one occasion he had to have four orderlies hold him to the floor as a doctor sliced into a boil below his knee to drain. He says it took a month to heal properly.

The beginning of the end – August, 1945

The POWs received about 10 cents a day for working in the shipyards, although Gerrard says there were only a handful of items the Japanese would allow them to buy. Surprisingly, one item for purchase was a straight blade for shaving. With not much else to pass the time, Gerrard bought a blade and taught himself how to shave. Soon he was taking requests from other prisoners, and even a few of the prison guards.

"It was pretty dicey," he recalls. "I've got one guy standing behind me with a rifle and I'm going up the throat of the other guard."

By this time, the remaining Canadian prisoners knew tides were turning in the outside war. Japanese civilians and soldiers were often in poor moods, and allied planes were completing bombing raids of the ports. With the shipyards being targeted, Gerrard was moved inland to work in a blacksmith's shop in the iron mines.

The day the Japanese surrendered was a day like any other; Gerrard dragged himself out of bed and lined up for work. The only difference was there were no guards.

For the now 23-year-old, the Second World War was over. Since his capture in Hong Kong he had spent three years and eight months as a prisoner of war to the Japanese.

For the next month, they painted P-O-W on roofs inside the camp so allied planes

could drop supplies. Eventually the U.S. Navy landed just down the coast from Gerrard's mine. He was put on a train to the coast and boarded a hospital ship where he was stripped, showered, checked, and transported to Tokyo Bay.

"There were ships as far as the eye could see," he says, clearly visualizing the memory. "They were American warships."

From Tokyo, Gerrard was shipped back to Victoria via Pearl Harbor and San Francisco. Six weeks after arriving home he married his sweetheart Evelyn.

The fallout

With Evelyn dying last year after six-and-a-half decades together, Gerrard once again finds himself alone with his thoughts on most days. Unfortunately, there are some things he experienced that no amount of time will ever fade.

"Every time you see someone killed it's sad and there isn't a day that goes by where it doesn't come to you; something reminds you of it," he says. "Of course, when you get sessions [interviews] like this, you get days there where you don't go to sleep at night. You're thinking about it, there are times there where you think if I'd done this or done that, would it have made a difference? Not really when you get right down to it. You just did the best you could and that was it."

During the battle for Hong Kong and the subsequent years of being prisoners of war, 554 Canadians were killed and almost 500 more were wounded. With a total of 1,975 deployed to the region in 1941, the casualty rate was over 50 per cent for Canadian soldiers in the Hong Kong theatre.

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Base Personnel Selection



On Dec. 14, personnel from Environment Protection and other base units conducted an exercise to test a new single-point inflation open ocean boom they had received a few months ago. The boom will give the department greater ability to contain a spill, either in the harbour or out in open ocean. Above, with the boom attached to an air pump on a sea truck, it begins to inflate as it unravels from its reel.

Photo by Ben Green, Lookout

New oil boom expanding clean-up capabilities

Ben Green
Staff Writer

Last month, personnel from Canadian Forces Auxiliary Vessel's Environmental Protection Office braved choppy seas and stubborn winter winds as they looked to familiarize themselves with a recently purchased single-point inflation open-ocean oil boom.

The 250-metre boom, manufactured by Connecticut-based Lamor and purchased from Marener Engineered Systems in Halifax, can be deployed from a barge or vessel to prevent a spill from entering or exiting a harbour. It can also be used in larger bodies of water where two boats tow it in various configurations to collect oil for a skimmer. Similar booms were deployed during the recent Gulf disaster in the waters off many of America's southern states.

"This gives the navy the capability to

respond to a spill out in the straits and up the West Coast," says Lyle Fairley, Environmental Officer at Environmental Protection. "This boom is larger, stronger, and more robust than the booms in the harbour."

Having received the boom a few months ago, Environmental Protection personnel had it already unpackaged and attached to a reel. An earlier exercise saw the unit deploy the boom from a jetty in the stable confines of the harbour; the Dec. 14th exercise aimed to put it through more dynamic evolutions and test it against the stronger winds and currents of an open-ocean environment.

"This is new gear, so running an exercise meant we could actually figure out the most effective and safest way to deploy and utilize this boom," says Fairley. "We also had the company reps out with us who were able to provide some suggestions and clarify some minor concerns we had during the

evolution."

Under a heavy ceiling of dark morning clouds, the team from Environment Protection made their way on board the YOM 252 barge docked at F jetty. With help from CFAV Glendyne, the barge was towed just outside the harbour where it was met by one of CFB Esquimalt's versatile sea trucks. The small sea trucks have a two-person wheelhouse overlooking a loading area and are often used for a host of odd-jobs around base.

Following a brief meeting to ensure safety and the morning's logistics, personnel on board the barge hooked one end of the boom up to the awaiting vessel. Thrusting its engines in reverse, the sea truck slowly unravelled the boom.

On board the sea truck, Sylvain Sheehy, Environmental Logistics Chief at Environmental Protection, attached the boom to an air pump and monitored

its progress. As the vessel reversed, the unwinding boom began to inflate section by section. In a constant battle with Mother Nature, the operator of the sea truck and tug had to continuously adjust their positions to ensure the boom came off the reel straight. After approximately four hours, the boom had been deployed, tested, and properly stored back on the barge's outer deck.

"We identified a few minor things that require fixing and we had a general debrief afterwards with everyone to discuss the lessons learned," says Fairley. "I think all things being equal; it will go even smoother next time."

Fairley adds that the exercise shed light on a few modifications the unit needs to make to the system, but overall was pleased with the device's progression. Environmental Protection plans to have the boom back out on the water sometime this summer.

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RCMP and RCN team up for exercises

Ben Green
Staff Writer

Last week, approximately 70 Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) members teamed up with *HMCS Algonquin* for a series of boarding exercises off Constance Bank.

Tactical Assault Training is something local RCMP is mandated to keep current with its members, as the agency is responsible for responding to maritime incidences such as drug trafficking or migrant transportation.

"Our training branch in Ottawa recognized a need to ensure everyone's skills are up to date," says Staff Sergeant Scott Morrison, Advisory NCO with the RCMP. "Techniques are always changing; people go to different courses all over the world with various partner agencies and they learn new techniques and they like to come back and share that."

The day's exercises saw the RCMP repeatedly approach *Algonquin* with four attack RHIBs. Manned with personnel in full combat gear, the RHIBs tucked snugly along the ship's port and starboard sides while ladders were thrown onto the flight deck above. Once all personnel had clambered on board, each team completed a sweep of the ship

searching for 10 "merchant sailors" located on various levels. In reality, the sailors were *Algonquin* crew dressed in civilian clothing.

"It was very physically hard on our emergency response team members going up those ladders," says Staff Sergeant Morrison. "But they had a heck of a time having fun doing it."

Embedded with the RCMP teams were a handful of *Algonquin's* boarding party members. Ship boarding is a secondary duty for sailors of the Royal Canadian Navy, so the opportunity to work closely with the agency allowed them to see different techniques and learn about kit that might be of value to their naval activities.

Cdr Timothy Kerr, Commanding Officer of *Algonquin*, says providing the destroyer as a platform for the day's exercises was a win-win for all personnel involved.

"It allowed us to facilitate the RCMP training so they got really good training in a marine environment and how to assault a ship at sea," he says from the ship's bridge. "It also allowed us to incorporate some boarding party members to get that assault experience that we might not necessarily get in the course of our training."

Staff Sergeant Morrison echoed Cdr Kerr's thoughts, stressing the importance of having the two forces collec-

tively provide maritime security throughout our coastal waters.

"What we were hoping to achieve was to look at the interoperability between our two agencies and iron out any kinks there may be if we do get deployed in future operations, as well as to allow our members to board a vessel while underway at sea in various conditions," he says.

After almost eight hours and six or seven runs, the exercise ended and all parties made their way back to berth. Staff Sergeant Morrison says the productiveness and real-environment experience his teams received wouldn't have been possible without the help from the flagship of the Pacific Fleet.


"I'd like to thank the commander of *HMCS Algonquin* and the Canadian Navy for allowing us to have this training opportunity," he adds. "It was great, they treated us like kings."

In addition to the exercise with *Algonquin*, the RCMP also ran through two more days of scenarios. This included climbing and rappelling practice on the destroyer while secured in jetty, as well as more at-sea boarding exercises with the MV *Coho*, the civilian ferry running between Victoria and Port Angeles, WA.



Last Wednesday, approximately 70 members of the RCMP teamed up with *HMCS Algonquin* just outside Esquimalt harbour to practice a series of boarding exercises. Like the navy, the RCMP trains certain personnel in ship boarding practices and are often called to deal with migrant or narcotic transportation on our coastal waters. With Mt. Baker setting the scene in the background, the RCMP attack RHIBs break from position and race towards the destroyer in an attempt to board it.

Photos by Ben Green, Lookout




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Why does rent for DND housing change annually? Demystifying the Annual Shelter Charge Adjustments

Did you know that the Canadian Forces Housing Agency (CFHA) is a part of the Department of National Defence (DND) and cannot earn a profit on the housing it provides? In fact, all of the rent money collected from occupants goes back into the operation and maintenance of the housing portfolio.

These are some common questions and misconceptions about the rent adjustment process:

How does CFHA ensure that the shelter charges (or rent) collected are fair? Why is my rent adjusted when there have been no changes or improvements made to my home?

All rent adjustments are driven by changes in the market. Shelter charges are set annually by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) by appraising the value of a representative selection of housing units at each site. During this process, CMHC compares DND housing units to houses in the private market, looking at factors like type of unit, size, age, general condition

and how close they are to various amenities. Shelter charges for DND housing units vary because of these factors, and they reflect the rent charged for comparable houses in the local market.

Why are rents adjusted annually?

It is the policy of the Government of Canada to ensure that shelter charges for Government housing are comparable to the rent charged for similar homes in the local private market. This ensures fairness for all Canadian Forces (CF) members, regardless of where they choose to live. If the Department froze rents or charged less than market value, it would not be fair to the more than 85 percent of CF members who have chosen to live in accommodations in the private market. Shelter charge is not part of a CF member's compensation package and is not a benefit. Treasury Board and DND accommodation policies are in place to ensure that the shelter charges set for Crown housing are fair, and that all government employees

are treated equitably. Also, freezing shelter charge below market rates would create a taxable benefit for occupants.


What if the market changes substantially and results in a high rent increase?

There are measures in place to ensure that people living in CFHA housing will not experience a rent adjustment that is too large. Shelter charges cannot be increased by more than \$100 per month, regardless of the CMHC appraisal value. If the shelter charge represents more than 25 percent of the gross combined household income of the occupants, customers can apply to have the shelter charge reduced. Additionally, Ontario, British Columbia and Manitoba have rent-control legislation that restricts the shelter charge increase to a certain percentage. This legislation is adhered to when adjusting shelter charges in these provinces.

The Canadian Forces Housing Agency (CFHA) has recently sent letters to DND Housing Occupants to provide information on the results of this year's shelter charge adjustment process. These letters provide 90 days advance notice of the adjustments that will take effect on April 1, 2012.

Please contact your local Housing Services Centre for more information or if you are a customer and have not yet received your letter of notification of rent adjustment. All contact information for CFHA and more information on shelter charge adjustments and provisions on affordability can be found on the CFHA website at www.cfha-alc.forces.gc.ca

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Photo courtesy of Lt(N) Erin Vipond

The children at Lampson Street Military Family Resource Centre Daycare enjoyed a special fun-filled visit from CFB Esquimalt firefighters. Summer Cotey was in awe of the fire truck, the firefighters and their cool helmets. Perhaps a career in the making for this toddler. Summer's dad, CPO2 Tim Cotey, works for Port Operations Emergency Services Branch. Her mom, Erin Vipond, is a Marine Sciences Instructor at the Naval Officer Training Centre and a Lt(N) MARS officer at HMCS Malahat.

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Trailers expanding clean up area for Environment Protection

Ben Green
Staff Writer

Almost a decade ago, *HMCS Regina* accidentally leaked 1,000 litres of oil into Pat Bay. With the spill threatening the fragile marine ecosystems off the Saanich peninsula, the Environment Protection Office was called in to spearhead the clean-up effort with the help of various naval assets.

"It was our first time responding to an incident outside of the harbour," recalls Lyle Fairley, branch environmental officer at Environment Protection.

As the team set up at the external spill site in Deep Cove, Fairley says they quickly realized they did not have enough equipment for the magnitude of the spill. With truckloads of gear such as sorbents, gloves, masks, anchors, ropes, coveralls, and boots needed to properly deal with the spill,

personnel had to make trips back to the Base for supplies. The external site also presented a problem with privacy. The unit needed to constantly relay information back to the Base Commander and public affairs, but were often interrupted by media and community members searching for more information.

Learning from the situation, Environment Protection purchased two trailers about a year later dedicated specifically to spills off-base. One trailer, called their first-response trailer, is now pre-packed with all the equipment they'll need in a clean-up.

The second trailer, called their Mobile Incident Command Trailer (MICT), acts as a mobile headquarters, allowing the unit to lay out charts and maps and coordinate clean-ups with privacy and efficiency.

Since the trailers' acquisition, the unit has made a few upgrades and renovations. This has included removing some original shelving from MCIT and installing desks,

laptops, printers, photocopiers, monitors, and phones. Base Information Services has also set up a network for the trailer that allows the five workstations inside a greater ability to coordinate incoming and outgoing information.

The past few years have also seen MCIT receive various software upgrades, such as the addition of crisis management software and a geographical information system, as well as oil trajectory software.

"[This program] is based on tides, currents, winds, and temperature," says Fairley. "It doesn't just determine where the oil goes, but it predicts what is going to happen to it."

To date, there has not been a major spill that would engage the MCIT. However, Fairley says the unit is well-prepared thanks to a number of external exercises held since 2002. Within the next few months, they'll be involved in another SpillEx to test their coordination with other base departments.

"We'll sit in the trailer offsite and manage a [mock] spill," adds Fairley. "We'll test how we communicate back and forth between the Mobile Incident Command Trailer and the Emergency Operations Centre who provide support to the site."

The majority of calls the unit receives are from boats who've leaked fuel into the harbour or storm water runoff from nearby jetties. These usually require spill kits to clean-up, not a mobilization of the entire unit like the *Regina* incident.

In the case of a large spill, Environment Protection has four or five personnel who would manage from MCIT and another seven specially trained personnel who would assist naval assets, the entire Auxiliary Fleet and external resources, such as the coast guard, in the actual clean-up.

The two trailers have expanded the unit's spill-response territory from Esquimalt harbour to much of the coastal waters of B.C.

Calling all Marchers



Briefing Feb. 17 at 11:30 a.m.

The 96th Nijmegen International March will take place in the Netherlands July 17-20, 2012.

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Teams must complete the four-day 160-km (4 x 40 km) march in CADPAT carrying a minimum rucksack load of 10 kg.

Interested volunteers, both regular and reserve force, are encouraged to attend an information brief at 11:30 a.m., Feb. 17 in the MSE Theatre at CFFS(E), Engineering Division. Team training will start Feb. 27.

For further information contact CPO2 Chris Koblun at 363-1680.



Photo by Ben Green, Lookout

Following an external oil spill by *HMCS Regina* in 2002, Environment Protection purchased a Mobile Incident Command Trailer to ensure they can command a similar situation with privacy and efficiency in the future. Here Lyle Fairley stands by the trailer in dockyard at the ready to deploy.

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Cdr Christopher Ellis and Commander (US) Bryant Trost are promoting Lt(N) Preston McIntosh to LCdr effective Jan. 1, 2012.

Photo by Cpl Michael Bastien, MARPAC Imaging Services



LCdr Francois Laplante proudly appoints LS Erik Lindholm to Master Seaman. He also received his Rotation Bar to the General Campaign Star for his deployment with ROTO 8 for Task Force Afghanistan.

Photo by MS Emil D.P. Edwards HMCS Brandon

At brief ceremony held in the Naval Construction Troop workshop, BCEO LCol Darlene Quinn made a few presentations.



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Phil Gray, ADMINO, NLCC Micmac, Trident Military Newspaper
 On Nov. 3, 2011, Navy League Cadet Corps (NLCC) Micmac and the First Nations Community came together to celebrate a historical event that reconnected the corps with the First Nations. HMCS Micmac has been the name of our corps since its inception and the Corps wanted to bring back the original ship's crest to honor those who served and the people of the First Nations.

Present at the crest changing ceremony were numerous dignitaries, including RAdm Jennifer Bennett, Chief of Reserves and Cadets; Elder Douglas Knockwood of Indian Brook First Nations; and Don Julien, Executive Director of the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq. Also in attendance were CPO2 Dan Peppar of HMCS Windsor; Earle Corn, NLCC Division President; Cdr Garry Reddy; Scott Briand; Vice President Navy League Cdr (NL) Susan Murphy, and NL Branch President Leon Lewis.

RAdm Bennett presented the cadets with their new crests, with the original ship's crest of a golden fern on it, by followed by Elder Knockwood presenting the cadets with their rocker, aptly embroidered 'Melkedae', meaning 'fearless' in Mi'kmaq.

This change has brought history full circle for the corps. The day HMCS Micmac sailed, seven chiefs from the First Nations appeared on the jetty to bless the ship as she set sail. With this crest change, both the First Nations and the Royal Canadian Navy have reunited with the corps, Micmac, our namesake.

Hampers make a difference

A heart felt thank-you to all those who participated and supported this year's Base Construction Engineering Christmas Hamper program. With the help of volunteers and committee members we were able to provide eight hampers containing groceries and gifts for needy families. These were delivered December 21 and were received with a lot tears and gratitude. We also sent four memorial baskets

to each of the wives of the gentlemen co-workers we lost this past year. All in all this year's campaign was a true success, raising approximately \$4000.00 and was a pleasure for committee members to coordinate.

*Thanks to everyone,
 Marian Cranston and Ken Lidstone
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