

Volume 67 Number 13 | April 4, 2022

# LOOKOUT

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A member of the Helicopter Air Detachment aboard *HMCS Montreal* conducts a heavy maintenance inspection on the main rotor head of a CH-148 Cyclone helicopter, call sign Strider, in the Mediterranean Sea on March 14.

Photo: Corporal Braden Trudeau, Canadian Armed Forces photo

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# Ex-forensics investigator finding 'Homes for Gnomes'

Retired RCMP officer and former Army Reservist Richard Hessler poses with some military-themed gnomes he makes at his home in Cranbrook, B.C. A portion of the proceeds from sales goes to benefit the Calgary-area veteran's charity Homes for Heroes.

Credit: Richard Hessler



**Peter Mallett**  
Staff Writer

A retired RCMP officer has launched a unique fundraiser for veterans, selling military-themed gnome bird houses and feeders online.

In late January, Richard Hessler of Cranbrook, B.C., launched his charitable initiative called Gnomes For Homes. A portion from sales of his woodwork go to Calgary charity Homes For Heroes.

The charity helps integrate homeless military veterans back into a community, and offers them places to live and support programs. They build special villages of 15 to 25 tiny homes arranged inwardly-facing in a park-like setting.

So far Hessler has shipped over 100 bird feeders and bird houses to locations across the country. They are selling faster than he can make them, he says.

"The interest level and response from veterans has been overwhelming, and it's pure satisfaction for me to know I am bringing a bit of joy to veterans and families."

His military gnomes sell for \$60 via the Facebook Page Canadian Veterans Marketplace. Five dollars from each sale goes to charity.

Gnomes can be personalized as well, with a uniform to match any regiment or unit of the Royal Canadian Navy, Army, and Royal Canadian Air Force, complete with personalized regimental badges.

Accuracy is crucial, says Hessler. He knows military clients closely inspect and scrutinize everything he makes, especially when it comes to regimental badges on the gnomes.

A self-described former 'Base Brat', he lived on or

near military bases for most of his childhood and knows when it comes to authenticity it is important to get every detail of a military uniform correct.

His father was a member of the Corps of Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (RCEME). He joined his local army reserve unit the King's Own Calgary Regiment when he was 16 but opted for a career in the RCMP when he was 20. In 2003, he retired from his job as a Forensic Crime Scene Investigator for the RCMP after 32 years of service.

He started drawing and painting when he was six, and says art has been a huge part of his life. It helps him cope with mild symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Although, not clinically diagnosed, due to the nature of his forensics work at countless homicide crime scenes he is certain he has it. Back then, he had to draw accurate sketches of the scene and some details were highly unpleasant. His artwork was then used as evidence in court proceedings.

"I am very lucky because my [PTSD] symptoms are very minor and I use my artwork as therapy," he says. "Having a hobby or passion helps you cope with the painful memories and I know any other military person, or first responder, can understand this."

When not gnome-making, he creates watercolour paintings and sculptures. In 2016, he created a cenotaph for the City of Chestermere, Alta, to preserve the memory of Calgary's 14 Tank Regiment. In 2017, he built a memorial to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Allies landing that now stands on the beach in Dieppe, France.





# Navy training system accommodates students with learning disabilities



MS Joshua Pickering teaches a class of students in Building N92 at CFB Esquimalt.



## Royal Canadian Navy

For Petty Officer Second Class (PO2) Daniel Pelletier, receiving a letter from the grateful parents of a student with learning disabilities was unexpected and touching.

A 20-year veteran and instructor at Naval Fleet School (Pacific), PO2 Pelletier teaches classes in the Marine Technician trade.

Along with fellow instructors Petty Officer First Class David Van Egmond and Master Sailor Joshua Pickering, PO2 Pelletier was thanked by the student's parents for showing "exceptional leadership and dedication, in particular to the development of future sailors."

Current Canadian Armed Forces policies and directives make it plain that every support possible should be given to those sailors with learning disabilities to promote equity and understanding. Specifically, regarding the navy, this is a practice that is in place across its entire training system.

"Fostering a respectful culture so that we generate personnel with the right skills by enabling our people, both our sailors and our instructors, is at the heart of what we do," says Captain (Navy) Matthew Coates, Commander, Naval Personnel and Training Group, which is the RCN's principal command for naval education, training, and course development.

Putting these policies into practice takes time, dedication, compassion, and the willingness to quickly adapt any program to accommodate those with learning disabilities.

"I just want to ensure that all my students at the school

have the very best start and foundation possible so they can build upon that experience and enjoy a long and successful career," says PO2 Pelletier.

In this case, the coursework involved a lot of technical online reading, which can be difficult for someone with certain learning disabilities. The parents of the sailor, who is just starting a career in the navy, were appreciative of the efforts made by the three instructors to ensure their child was able to successfully complete the course.

"Some would say these instructors were just doing their job, and although this is true, we all know there is a difference between just doing your job and caring about the job you are doing," the parents wrote, noting the instructors were receptive, asked what the young sailor needed, and found ways to adjust the course, while still ensuring the course content was followed and standards met.

This is standard practice according to Chief Petty Officer First Class (CPO1) Pascal Harel, the school's Chief Petty Officer.

"This is something we do every day," he says. "We are instructors, and we have to find ways to help people learn. We want those with disabilities to learn like any other student. When we get students with disabilities, they often have different needs, and we try our best to accommodate them. The instructors do what they can to ensure all students are successful."

For PO2 Pelletier, he makes a point of speaking to the

students to see how he can best support their learning.

"I always offer up my free time in the mornings and at lunch for additional help for those who need it. When I'm teach-

ing my classes, I pay attention to my students to make sure that everyone is following along well, and I try to see who might be needing additional assistance. When questions are asked by one student in class, I make sure to include the entire class in my explanation so that I know everyone is on the same page."

To ensure no student falls through the cracks, PO2 Pelletier and his colleagues monitor everyone's test scores as each class progresses.

"If a student fails a quiz, for example, we use a tool called a Training Experience Difficulty, which allows the school to be aware a student is having difficulty and helps us as a team to check on that student to see what kinds of support they need."

Fostering an inclusive and equitable training environment enables students to demonstrate their ability to achieve a specific standard, placing them on the same level playing field as their peers, explains CPO1 Harel.

"We have a duty to accommodate all students and to help end stigmas," he says. "Traits of caring and dedication in our instructors show good leadership and help young sailors achieve success in their naval careers."

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*Published each Monday, under the authority of Capt(N) J. Jeffrey Hutchinson, Base Commander.*

*Le LOOKOUT est publié tous les lundis, sous l'égide du Capv J. Jeffrey Hutchinson, Commandant de la Base.*

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# Message from the Canadian Forces Provost Marshal regarding the transfer of jurisdiction for sexual assault and other criminal offences of a sexual nature

## To Members of the Defence Team,

I am writing regarding the transfer of jurisdiction for sexual assault and other criminal offences of a sexual nature under the Criminal Code to civilian police agencies as recommended by Madame Louise Arbour in her interim recommendation.

As this directly affects some of you and could affect anyone in the future, I want to assure you the Military Police (MP) is working diligently towards the implementation of this recommendation in a victim-centered and trauma-informed manner.

I am aware the announcement of this process may have evoked emotions and raised many questions, particularly for those involved in cases that had been reported to the MP. While we have already reached out to affected persons directly, I would now like to provide a brief update to the entire Defence Team and offer additional information about the process.

The transfer and referral of cases to civilian police services across the country is currently underway. Putting a comprehensive process in place across Canada will take time but some cases have already been transferred and new cases are being referred in some jurisdictions. Every case is unique and must be assessed individually to preserve the interests of the affected persons, as well as those of justice.

Not all files can be transferred. For example, investigations that are near completion will not be transferred to a civilian police service. This approach is consistent with the parameters outlined in Madame Arbour's interim recommendation.

Achieving Madame Arbour's interim recommendation to transfer investigations to the civilian justice system is our central focus. As we progress towards this end, we consider the best interest of victims when determining the investigating agency. For example, we know that some agencies are not currently postured to readily carry on some of those cases while some victims may prefer to continue with an ongoing MP investigation. MP investigators are ready to have these conversations openly and will encourage victims to seek legal advice or support from the Sexual Misconduct Response Center (SMRC). In the end, the goal is to facilitate a transition that is as smooth as possible, while ensuring that affected persons are supported throughout the process.

Moving forward, Defence Team members can report incidents of sexual assault or other criminal offences of a sexual nature directly to civilian police. If you are not certain to which civilian police service you should direct your complaint, you can always contact your local MP Detachment or the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service (CFNIS), who will ensure the appropriate civilian police service is engaged. A complaint can also be made directly to the MP or the CFNIS, although, unless the victim has requested otherwise, this complaint will normally be referred to the civilian police of jurisdiction.

Throughout the period of transfer or referral to a civilian police service, we will continue to provide affected persons with the support they need and update them on their cases, as information becomes available.

If you are involved in a case that has been reported to the MP and would like further information about this process and how it may impact you, we encourage you to contact your designated investigator or victim services coordinator.

Sincerely,

Brigadier-General Simon Trudeau  
Canadian Forces Provost Marshal



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# New (relocated) Esquimalt Library Now Open



The wait is over for library lovers in the Esquimalt area with Greater Victoria Public Library's (GVPL) relocated Esquimalt branch doors now open. After months of planning and construction, the new library, which is located inside the Esquimalt Town Square development at #101-503 Park Place, opened Thursday, March 31.

Replacing the branch that had been located in the Esquimalt Municipal Hall, the new library is a true community living room with a modern design and décor. With large floor-to-ceiling windows, visitors will be immediately struck by the dramatic design features of the space, including soaring ceilings, exposed natural wood beams, concrete floors, and a calming colour palette inspired by the surrounding landscape.

GVPL CEO Maureen Sawa said

she is thrilled to welcome the community into the beautiful new space.

"We are especially proud of the children's area, which has been thoughtfully designed to encourage discovery and safe play for children who are crawling, learning to walk, and interacting with the space. The space is anchored by an interactive learning play structure that was purchased with funds from the Friends of the Library. The Play and Learn Pod will allow children aged five years and younger to develop and practice early literacy skills through play."

"With dedicated areas for children and teens, comfortable reading areas, public computers with printing, bookable study rooms, flexible program space, and Wi-Fi throughout the branch, this is truly a flexible and inclusive space that will both inform and inspire the community," added Sawa.

The library's collection features the latest fiction and non-fiction books for adults, youth, and children, as well as mystery, romance, and other fiction genres. Audiobooks and music on CD, feature films and TV series on DVD and Blu-ray, video games, and newspapers and magazines are also available. The branch also features resources that are staples of GVPL's system-wide collections, including large print books and an Indigenous Reads display.

Surrounded by a vibrant town centre and open-air gallery and public art walk, the branch has an innovative floor plan that can accommodate both quiet and lively activity due to a custom-built ceiling system that reduces noise by absorbing sound.

It is also home to GVPL's Digital Media Lab. This specialized creative space, which is being introduced in three phases, will provide library users will access to a range of tools that enable digital creativity, collaboration, and storytelling. The Digital Media Lab is partially funded by the Victoria Foundation and the Friends of the Library. The first phase of the space is geared toward younger patrons, providing a range of discovery and STEM-based activities that encourage learning through play and technology.

Designed by the firm, D'AMBROSIO architecture + urbanism and developed by Aragon Properties, the library boasts several sustainability enhancements to help ensure its operations minimize environmental impacts, including a geo-thermal heating and cooling system.

Grand opening celebrations are being planned for May and further details will be provided as they become available. For more information on the Esquimalt Library, see [www.gvpl.ca](http://www.gvpl.ca).

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# Canadian Ranger trying out for SkyHawks parachute team



Canadian Ranger, Master Corporal Christine Kuizema has been skydiving for four years, with almost 400 jumps and her C licence. This month, she will become the first Canadian Ranger to try out for the SkyHawks, the Canadian Armed Forces' military parachute demonstration team.

## Canadian Ranger Lindsay Chung 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Ranger Patrol Group

Two years ago, Master Corporal Christine Kuizema became the first Canadian Ranger chosen to try out for the SkyHawks military parachute demonstration team.

The COVID-19 pandemic put a stop to her attempts to earn a spot on the team and jump under the SkyHawks' distinctive Canada flag canopies in 2020 and 2021. But this month she is getting her chance.

CR MCpl Kuizema, the Second in Command of the Gold River Canadian Ranger Patrol on Vancouver Island, has left for training in Ontario.

SkyHawks demonstrator selection training includes six weeks of theory and practical instruction. Ground training, which is held at the Canadian Army Advanced Warfare Centre at Canadian Forces Base Trenton, will begin with the Parachutist Physical Training test, which includes a 1.6-kilometre run in 7.5 minutes, seven chin ups, and 31 sit ups.

Having gone through all the preparation for the selection training once before in March 2020, she is feeling ready.

In the two years since she was originally chosen for selection training, she has been jumping a lot, refining her skills, and learning new disciplines. She loves skydiving so much it hasn't been hard to stay motivated.

"I think once you have a passion for something, then it's kind of self-motivating. So over two years, I've gotten better at jumping and took on different disciplines and took some training courses," she says. "It's been pretty easy to be self-motivated in that sense. It's a good community to be around as well, so it keeps the stoke high."

She started skydiving four years ago and fell in love with it right

away. Last summer she started wingsuiting – flying with a suit with wings that fill the space between the hands and the body and between the legs.

She has almost 400 jumps and a C licence in skydiving. As well, she is a coach, does videography, and some parachute rigging.

Last year, she joined the Canadian Sport Parachute Association Women's Initiative Committee.

"I'm helping develop a mentorship program for the Women's Initiative Committee for skydiving," she says. "It's one of those things that keeps you motivated and pushes you forward. I would love to have someone mentor me and down the road be a mentor. There are some pretty amazing women in the sport, as well as in the military, and SkyHawks and our whole para world. It's really cool."

She originally was interested in the SkyHawks because she loves skydiving, but she is interested in working on a different discipline within the sport.

"They do canopy relative work (CRW), so that's something I've dabbled in a little bit. But to learn something new and then also to represent the Rangers as the first Ranger in the SkyHawks is a really fascinating opportunity," she says. "From a female perspective as well, there are women in the sport, but they make up about 20 per cent of it, and I would be representing people in remote communities and putting us on the map."

CR MCpl Kuizema, who has been a Canadian Ranger for five years, extends a thanks to BC Company Sergeant Major Master Warrant Officer Donald Clark for all his help during the application process.

"He has definitely helped me through a lot of paperwork and getting things ready and fine-tuning my skills to get paired up with the Reservists and the Reg Force and making sure I represent the Rangers well."

Canadian Ranger Master Corporal Christine Kuizema is the first Canadian Ranger to be selected to try out for the SkyHawks, the Canadian Armed Forces' military parachute demonstration team.  
Right: Here, she does a canopy jump in the winter.





# Hitting All the Right Notes:



The newly formed Celtic ensemble of the Stadacona Band, from left to right: PO1 Charmaine Chaddock, S1 Mark Morton, PO2 Jeff Brancato and PO1 Larry Bjornson.

Photo courtesy of PO2 Hamish Gordon

## Stadacona Band launches new Celtic Ensemble

**Joanie Veitch**  
Trident Newspaper

When the Stadacona Band posted a video clip of the newly formed Celtic ensemble playing the Irish folk tune 'Si Beag, Si Mhór' on the band's Facebook page recently, it generated a bit of buzz, racking up more than 6,000 views in the following days.

"Celtic music is very well loved here on the East Coast," says S1 Mark Morton, a percussionist with the Stadacona Band and the ensemble coordinator. "Actually, because this audience knows the music so well, there was some apprehension about forming the ensemble."

The four members of the ensemble are PO1 Charmaine Chaddock, who plays tin whistle and occasionally spoons; PO1 Larry Bjornson on bass and guitar; PO2 Jeff Brancato playing mandolin, Irish bouzouki and guitar; and S1 Morton on violin and mandolin. All, with the exception of PO1 Bjornson, play secondary instruments.

While the band has performed in the past with many Celtic-inspired arrangements and played with East Coast musicians, such as Scott Macmillan and Dave MacIsaac, the idea of forming a dedicated Celtic ensemble first came up at a Christmas party back in 2018. It wasn't until a year and a half later that it really took hold. Casting about for a project to work on during the initial "lockdown" phase of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020, S1 Morton and some other band members returned to the ensemble idea.

Knowing the band had two "nice old violins from the 1800s" in its inventory, S1 Morton took one home to try out.

"I had taken violin lessons as a kid but when I first tried it again, I had to

relearn everything. I felt like I was 10 years old again," he says.

Still working to improve his proficiency on the violin, S1 Morton also purchased a mandolin. After spending some time "fiddling around" with the two instruments, he and the other three members of the new ensemble began sending each other song ideas and YouTube clips to try.

Drawing from the deep well of Celtic and traditional folk music, the group assembled a small repertoire of songs, some instrumental and some with vocals, with each of the members rehearsing mostly on their own at the beginning and in person whenever possible, depending on restrictions and work schedules.

Given the persistent COVID-19 situation, logistically it made more sense for the band to focus their efforts on smaller groupings, such as the brass and woodwind quintets, and the smaller jazz ensembles, as many of the activities that would have involved the regular band – things like change of command ceremonies, ship arrivals and departures, concerts and other public events – have been limited during the pandemic.

That's how the Celtic ensemble got their debut last October, where they played two sets at the gala celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Cape Breton Highlanders Regiment, held in Sydney, NS.

"Nothing like jumping into the deep end for your first performance. It was well received but I figure there's no tougher audience than that," says S1 Morton.

Now that the group can practice together in person more consistently, S1 Morton said they're looking forward to playing at more events. There's just one snag, the ensemble doesn't have an official name yet.

"We're looking for name suggestions, something with a naval theme, of course," he says.

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# Veteran was secret agent for Allies

**Peter Mallett**  
Staff Writer

Second World War veteran Gordon Quan, 96, has an intriguing story to tell, one that includes top secret work in South East Asia in the final months of the war.

He got his chance to join the fight in 1944 after the Canadian government allowed a select group of 600 Chinese Canadians to enlist.

He underwent Basic Training in Saskatchewan and was then dispatched to England for training by the British Secret Service. Quan and other Chinese Canadians joined Special Force 136, a branch of the British Special Operations Executive.

Chinese Canadians were deemed the perfect recruits to fight against the Japanese because they could blend in with local populations, and understand some Southeast Asia languages, says Quan.

In 1945, with the war in Europe already over, Special Agent Quan worked as a secret agent in Malaya, Burma, and India. His mission was one of sabotage against Japanese forces using his training in demolition.

"We were trained in small groups of 15 in how to be effective and how to destroy and disrupt supply lines, fuel depots, ammunition dumps, transportation networks, and other Japanese controlled infrastructure."

His service lasted only a few months before the war with Japan drew to a close following the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Quan believes the use of the H-Bomb was a necessary evil of war.

"When the Americans used this weapon on Japan it gave us the opportunity to survive," he says. "The world would have been changed completely if the Japanese and Germans maintained their control."

He has few clear recollections of his experiences as a secret agent, and many more he

doesn't want to remember.

"It really boiled down to a case of kill or be killed, so that's why remembering or thinking about these moments can often be difficult," he says.

Quan was discharged from the military in 1946 and returned to Victoria. He underwent vocational training with the help of Veterans Affairs in auto mechanics and heavy duty mechanics. Later, he landed jobs in private construction and the City of Victoria Public Works Department and says he was the first Chinese Canadian to work there.

He also continued his service in the military for the Army Reserves from 1952, rising to the rank of Sergeant Major before his retirement in 1983.

During this time, he served with the 40<sup>th</sup> Technical Squadron as a craftsman, the 155<sup>th</sup> Royal Canadian Army Service Corp, and later the 39 Service Battalion.

He credits this military experience to much of his success following the war.

"My military involvement gave me a lot of opportunity and education to learn a trade. I always believed back then the military turns boys into men and if I didn't have that training I never would have landed a job with the City of Victoria."

His five children, three sons, and two daughters; five grandchildren; and five great grandchildren make frequent visits to see him in his Victoria home.

He is a lifetime member of the Royal Canadian Legion, previously serving as Sergeant-at-Arms of the Pacific No. 7, and the Victoria Chinese Canadian Veterans' Association.

In 2012, Quan was part of a National Film Board of Canada documentary *Operation Oblivion* that tells the story of 13 Chinese Canadians recruited to Force 136. His story is also featured in an exhibit at Vancouver's Chinese Canadian Military Museum entitled *Rumble in the Jungle: The Story of Force 136*.

Gordon Quan in London, UK, 1945.  
The Chinese Canadian Military Museum

Gordon Quan and fellow Chinese-Canadian Second World War veterans gather for a photograph during a Commonwealth War Grave Ceremony at William Head Institution in 2019. Photos courtesy of Richard Quan

Gordon Quan attends a celebration for military veterans over the age of 90 years old, hosted by the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans of Canada at the Pink Pearl restaurant in Vancouver in May 2019.

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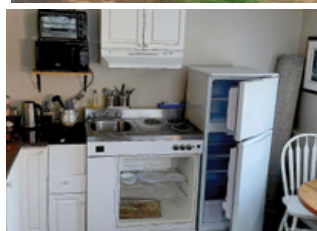
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PO1 Gibbs (centre) receives a Departure with Dignity certificate from Cdr Audy, Base Logistics Officer, and MWO Larose.

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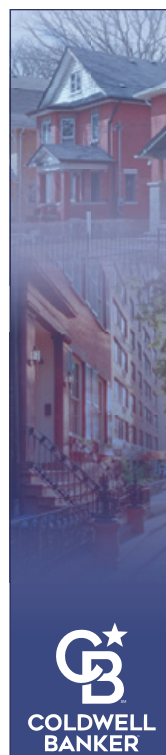
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Master Sailor David Murphy at the wheel of a hybrid electric small boat in Halifax Harbour during trials in 2021. RCN Innovation continually explores new ideas and technologies to ensure the Navy is ready to meet the future operating environment.

## RCN Innovation ushers in advanced tech

RCN

The Royal Canadian Navy's (RCN) Innovation team – a small group focused on matching emerging technologies of today with the needs of tomorrow – is ensuring the navy is finding and exploiting state-of-the-art technologies for its future capabilities.

The RCN is in the midst of its largest naval recapitalization program since the Second World War, which includes building new classes of ships and life-extending others, as well as pursuing necessary infrastructure maintenance and upgrades to shore and training facilities.

Preparing for this future fleet isn't just about building ships. It's also about future-proofing vessels to ensure that systems stay relevant for years to come, and more importantly, that tomorrow's sailors have the equipment they need when sent into harm's way.

"Staying at the frontier of rapidly evolving new technologies is essential to maintain a warfighting advantage," says Commander (Cdr) Lee Vessey, Director of RCN Innovation. "The capabilities of our future fleet will include some of the novel technologies we're trialling now."

The team had a very busy 2021 and continues to have a busy 2022.

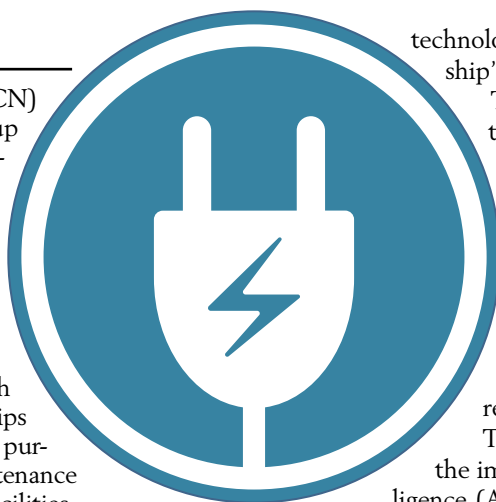
For instance, last year, members of the RCN Innovation team joined a group from private industry to test hybrid electric small boats in Halifax Harbour.

"When they switched off the diesel engine, the boat went completely silent, and changing the battery after three hours felt as normal as swapping cans of gas. It's exciting to get a first look at what could be the future of the navy," says Master Sailor David Murphy, who participated in the trial.

Later in the year, artificial intelligence capabilities were tested when RCN Innovation hosted a session in which 35 sailors tested advanced maritime domain awareness software. The software analyzes past data and makes predictions on where ships are likely to go next, and why, including factoring in the predicted weather, navigation considerations, and previous behavior.

"For a commanding officer of a ship or submarine, having this additional source of information in your decision-making toolbox during an counter-narcotics operation, for example, would be of great use," says Lieutenant Commander Andrew Pile, a member of the Innovation team.

Starting this year, the Innovation team, alongside project leads in the Defence Materiel organization, is helping exploit the new "X-fleet" of dedicated innovation and technology testing ships. These civilian ships give RCN sailors the opportunity to have hands-on exposure to experimental



technology while not using up an operational ship's valuable time and resources.

Through RCN Innovation efforts, there are currently 28 prototypes being built by Canadian industry. These prototypes are outside of normal big projects and will be ready for RCN assessment within the year. They include Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) remote sensing and machine-learning technology that will assist bridge teams with real-time 3D spatial information.

The Innovation team is excited to see the implementation of a new artificial intelligence (AI) module into the navigation system of the bridge simulators at Venture, the Naval Officers Training Centre located at Maritime Forces Pacific. The AI will have learned collision avoidance – just like human bridge officers at sea – but will be trained using hundreds of thousands of hours and scenarios, giving it the ability to make collision avoidance recommendations in complex and war-fighting environments.

RCN Innovation will also be focused on finding opportunities in the comprehensive Net-Zero by 2050 targets – the Government of Canada's commitment to avert the worst impacts of climate change by achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 – including possible benefits found in carbon-neutral small boats and the availability of financial grants to assist those initiatives.

"We see electric vehicles on the road with big advantages in reliability, ease of maintenance, acceleration and performance – even quietness that could translate, in military terms, to reduced acoustic signature, making them harder to detect," says Cdr Vessey. "The marine sector is now starting to convert to this technology and the opportunities to find benefits in our small boat fleet or for anti-submarine warfare capabilities, is significant."

In 2022, RCN Innovation will continue to seek bottom-up idea generation from across the navy by increasing idea input from every position and rank, providing more training courses, offering sailors more hands-on exposure to state-of-the-art technologies, bespoke training in Design Thinking, and delivering Creative Destruction Labs – a non-profit organization that allows new companies in science and technology to seek experience, advice, and partnerships with industry, academia, and government organizations.

"What the RCN is doing in terms of innovation is ground-breaking," Cdr Vessey says. "The things we are testing now will be part of the advanced capabilities of our future fleet. There couldn't be a more exciting time to be part of the navy."

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# Challenging Traditions:

## New museum exhibit focuses on women in the Navy

**Joanie Veitch**  
Trident Newspaper

The changing role of women in the Royal Canadian Navy took centre stage in a new exhibit that opened March 8 at the Naval Museum of Halifax.

While COVID restrictions still prevent members of the public from visiting the museum in person, museum director Jennifer Denty and exhibit co-curator CPO1 (Retired) JoAnn Cunningham, invited Capt(N) Sean Williams, CFB Halifax Base Commander, and CPO1 Alena Mondelli, Base Chief, to join them on a virtual tour that was also live streamed on the museum's Facebook site.

"Traditionally, we would have had a large opening with speeches and finger food but given the COVID environment we're still in, that just wasn't feasible," said Denty during a pre-show sneak peek.

The new exhibit is housed on the lower level of the museum, in the former communications exhibit space. With large panels and artifacts from the early 1900s to present day, the display tells the story of women in the Royal Canadian Navy, highlighting their contributions and how the role of women in the navy has changed over the years.

"We're quite pleased with how it turned out. It's a story that needs to be told," says Denty.

Nursing Sisters served with the Canadian military from the late 1800s through to the First World War, but women were not permitted to enlist in the navy until the Second World

War, when on July 31, 1942, the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRCNS) was established.

Following in the British tradition for the Women's Royal Naval Service, the women in the WRCNS were known as Wrens, and several panels and displays in the exhibit tell their story.

At their peak during the war, more than 6,800 women served as Wrens in the RCN, with nearly 1,000 Wrens housed on the top two floors of a five-storey building, the Naval Engineering School, at HMCS Stadacona.

Trailblazing women are featured prominently throughout the exhibit, such as Adelaide Sinclair, who was appointed Director of the WRCNS in March 1943, and Isabel Macneill, a graduate of the first class of WRCNS who went on to become Commanding Officer of HMCS Conestoga. And Bernice "Bunny" McIntyre, who left her home in Dauphin, Manitoba, to join the WRCNS on Dec. 18, 1942.

"She said she joined the navy because she didn't want to be stuck in Manitoba married to a farmer," says CPO1 (Ret'd) Cunningham, who got to know McIntyre over the past number of years, up until McIntyre died last year, just a few months shy of her 100th birthday.

"She loved her time in the service but when she became pregnant with her first child in 1958, she was discharged from the military. At that time if you were pregnant you were considered medically unfit for service," says CPO1 (Ret'd) Cunningham.

The rule disallowing women to continue service following pregnancy wasn't changed until 1968 following

a recommendation from the recently created Royal Commission on the Status of Women.

After the war ended, the WRCNS were demobilized on Aug. 31, 1946, and women were once again barred from military service until 1951, during the Korean War, when the navy again faced personnel shortages and enlisted Wrens to fill administrative and non-combatant roles.

Up until the late 1970s and early 1980s, women were largely relegated to support trades in the RCN, although the Naval Reserve continued to enrol a high percentage of women and readily integrated them into non-traditional trades and leadership roles.

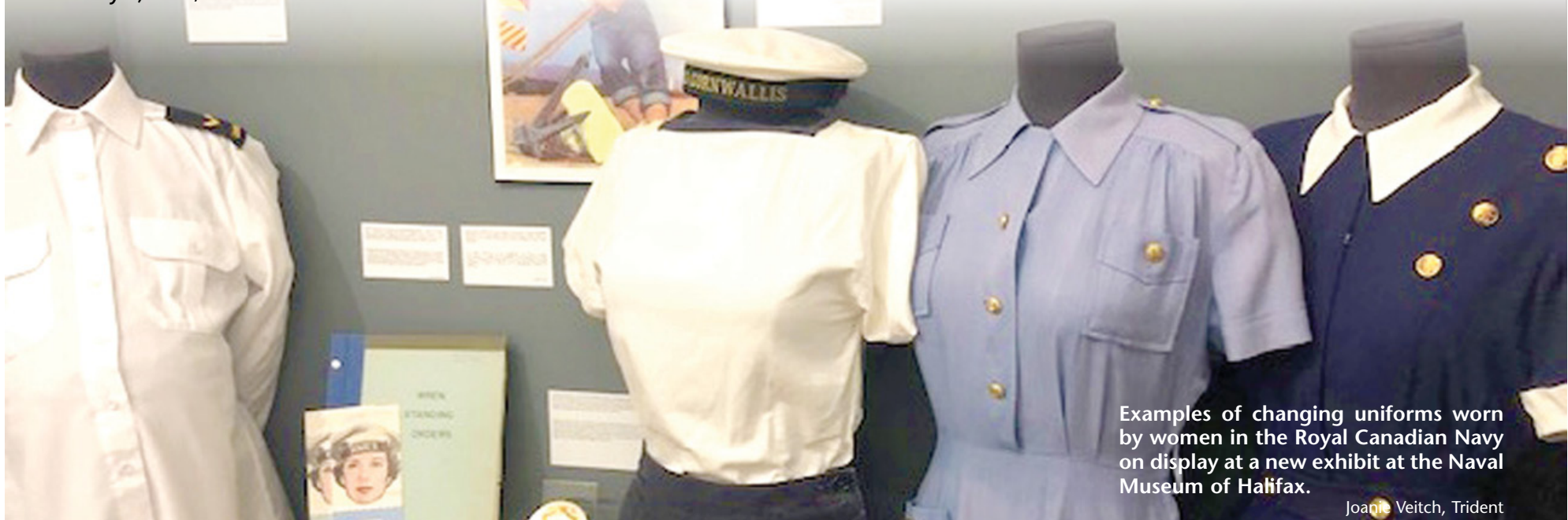
While the items on display show the changing role of women from the war years through to present day, the exhibit also explores stereotypes and exclusionary policies, some that prohibited women from serving and others that continued to present challenges for decades, such as women not being allowed to join if married, or rules that barred women from serving on board ships.

Even when women were given more opportunities, not all women benefitted, says Denty. She notes that even after an early policy stipulating that "only men of European descent" could join the navy was dropped when the WRCNS was formed, only women of European descent were allowed to enlist.

"There was still a lot of discrimination for years after women began to enlist and there are certainly more stories to tell. This is only the beginning in telling those stories, but this is a very good start," says Denty.



Bernice "Bunny" McIntyre is seen distributing poppies in 2018 alongside her friend and fellow Somme Branch Legion member MWO (Retired) Paul O' Boyle, RCN/CF.



Examples of changing uniforms worn by women in the Royal Canadian Navy on display at a new exhibit at the Naval Museum of Halifax.

Joanie Veitch, Trident

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Lynn Carroll (front row, third left), Quilts of Valour Society Canada representative for Southern Vancouver Island, gathers with members of the Esquimalt Transition Centre for a group photo in December 2021 after receiving a Poinsettia as recognition for her volunteerism. Carroll and her organization have teamed up with the Transition Centre to distribute hand-made quilts to injured military veterans. Photo courtesy of Transition Centre

# Sewing up a heartfelt thanks to veterans

**Peter Mallett**  
Staff Writer

A troop of dedicated quilters is providing warmth, comfort, and gratitude to Canada's injured veterans. Armed with the tools of the trade - scissors, rotary cutters, stitch rippers, and sewing machines - members of the non-profit Quilts of Valour - Canada Society (QOVC) are on a mission to wrap quilts of comfort around ill or injured Canadian military veterans.

Since commencing operations in 2006, QOVC has distributed 18,409 quilts across the country.

Nora Johnson, Service Coordinator for the Transition Centre at CFB Esquimalt, says the efforts of QOVC are very beneficial.

"I think this is a wonderful initiative that is allowing people outside of the Department of National Defence to recognize military members' contributions," she says. "They are truly beautiful gifts and a heartfelt way to recognize people who have been injured in their service."

A few years ago, QOVC on Vancouver Island teamed up with the Transition Centre at CFB Esquimalt to distribute quilts on Southern Vancouver Island. The centre is part of the Canadian Armed Forces Transition Group network and works with Veterans Affairs Canada and other partners to provide professional, personalized, and standardized transition services to discharging Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members.

Johnson adds the gratitude is a two-way street and being recognized in this manner is a morale booster for veterans as well.

## National Movement

The charity was founded by Lezley Zwaal, who says its origins stem from a personal visit she made to an Edmonton hospital back in 2006. Zwaal, who now lives in Parksville, B.C., had seen the news about three CAF members recovering from wounds received in Afghanistan, and gave them each a QOV as an expression of gratitude and comfort.

"A Quilt of Valour is a hug from a grateful nation," says Zwaal.

As with any charitable organization, they couldn't do what they do without volunteers.

A determined Lynn Carroll of Cobble Hill is one of those volunteers. The retiree spearheads QOVC's efforts to recruit volunteer quilters on Southern Vancouver Island and works closely with the Transition Centre to match up the right veteran with the right quilt.

Carroll, 75, is a former secretary and cattle rancher from Alberta who joined QOVC after making her first quilt for them in 2018. Today, she is one of 55 QOVC regional representatives across the country responsible for helping the organization.

## Tears of Joy

After her experience of presenting a quilt to a veteran at a rescue dog training centre in Qualicum Beach, Carroll says she was instantly convinced QOVC was the charity for her. As she left the event, she was approached by the quilt recipient in the facility's parking lot, who told her he was delighted it matched the interior of his Recreational Vehicle (RV).

"He was in tears and told me you have no idea how much this quilt means to me," Carroll remembers. "Really, it is this sort of gratitude, appreciation, and positive feedback that I hear that keeps me going."

## A Cottage Industry

Each quilt made needs to be authenticated, numbered, and tracked with an official Quilt of Valour label. The ID number, name of the quilt maker, and name of the recipient are then stored in the charity database. Labelling the quilt also gives the recipient proof this is an authentic, handmade item.

Quilting is a time-consuming occupation. It can take up to 40 hours to make a quilt from scratch depending on the equipment available and the skill level of the quilter. Many quilts take longer. The finished product doesn't come cheap either; similar handmade quilts in retail outlets sell for \$500 to \$1,000.

QOVC volunteers from across the country have been working overtime these days to make up for a backlog of quilt requests because of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the recent relaxing of provincial health guidelines on social distancing, a Quilting Bee event was held at Royal Canadian Legion Branch 134 in Shawnigan Lake. Carroll teamed up with members of the Young Seniors Action Group (YSAG) for a day of quilting.

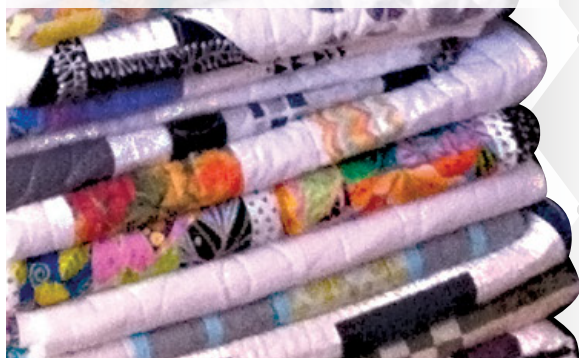
The gathering was a cottage industry of activity she reports, with a network of sewing machines, extension cords, ironing boards, piles of fabric and materials, and copious amounts of tea on hand as the quilters sewed their magic.

"In the end, they had such a good time the group has agreed to meet again in the near future for another day of quilting," says Carroll.

For more information, request a quilt, donate, or how to get involved visit [www.quiltsofvalour.ca](http://www.quiltsofvalour.ca).

Quilts of Valour Society Canada quilter Daphne Greig shows off one of her colourful designs with Lynn Carroll.

Photo: Quilts of Valour Society Canada





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