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LOOKOUT

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

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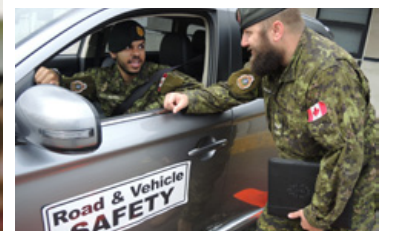


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TEME rolls out road safety campaign

(Left) Master Warrant Officer Renaud Michel, Lieutenant Anabelle St-Martin, Second Lieutenant Naman Sharma and Corporal Trevor Leslie of TEME display this year's Department of National Defence National Road Safety Week promotional poster at their Work Point headquarters, May 4. This year's campaign titled "Safer Me, Safer You" runs May 15 to 21. Photo: Peter Mallett/Lookout Newspaper

Lookout for SAFETY

Peter Mallett
Staff Writer

The slogan for this year's Department of National Defence (DND) National Road Safety Week is simple and to the point: 'Safer Me, Safer You'.

"The intention is to remind people that road safety is a shared responsibility and adopting safe driving habits is one of the most effective ways to make the roads safer," says Corporal (Cpl) Trevor Leslie of the Transport Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Branch (TEME). "This campaign is designed for everyone who drives a vehicle at the Base, including military personnel and DND and civilian staff."

Hosted by Road and Vehicle Safety at CFB Esquimalt, the campaign runs May 15-21 and intends to make roadways and travel safer for everyone who operates a DND vehicle.

Cpl Leslie, In-Command for Road and Vehicle Safety, hopes the message sinks in and drivers heed the advice. He is the primary instructor for safety and driving courses, handling collision reports and traffic infractions, and heading the Base's licensing team.

His unit maintains a fleet of 753 vehicles for TEME, including cars, trucks, vans, buses,

and special-purpose vehicles, including fork-lifts and tractor-trailers. He also oversees a staff of 51 drivers holding provincial driver's licences in classes 5, 4, 2 and 1. Improving safety in the workplace and reducing injuries or fatalities from motor vehicle accidents is Cpl Leslie's overall goal.

"Accidents can happen to even the most experienced drivers, especially when complacency comes in behind the wheel," he says.

The easiest way to avoid accidents and injury is to use common sense; Cpl Leslie urges drivers always to be 100 per cent concentrated behind the wheel.

"The easiest thing to do to stay safe is to relax, slow down and pay attention to the rules and signage," he says. "This also includes absolutely no cell phone usage while driving, conducting proper walk-around checks of your vehicle before you drive, and filling out all necessary paperwork when using a Government of Canada vehicle."

Cpl Leslie advises drivers of several resources available to improve driving skills, such as logging on to the Defence Learning Network and completing the Safe Driving Course (SDC) or reviewing the ICBC Road Safety web portal: Road Safety (icbc.com). You can also contact Base Transport RVS for further information on Safe Driving and Licensing programs: +ESQ BLOG Road and Vehicle Safety@BLOG@Esquimalt.



ICBC Safety Tips

The Insurance Corporation of British Columbia Road Safety web page offers several tips on improving your driving habits and overall road safety. Here are a few key reasons why accidents and crashes happen:

Distracted Driving – Phones or anything that takes your attention away from driving can contribute to distracted driving. Even if you are not using a phone, you can still be distracted by it. You are 3.6 times more likely to crash using your hand-held phone.

Speed – Speeding is one of the leading causes of car-crash fatalities in B.C. The faster you go, the longer it takes to stop,

and the more dangerous a crash can be. Keep yourself safe by slowing down, keeping your distance, and passing with care.

High-risk Driving – Following too closely and failing to yield are two of the most common high-risk driving behaviours. Other high-risk driving includes ignoring traffic control devices and improper passing. Don't count on others to obey the rules of the road or make allowances for you, especially if you are taking dangerous risks.

Source: ICBC



Commodore Patrick Montgomery, Commander of the Naval Reserve, presents the Commander of the Naval Reserve Coin to Petty Officer First Class (ret'd) Jim Silvester at his 100th birthday celebration in Shawnigan Lake on Apr. 8. Photos provided



Petty Officer First Class (ret'd) Jim Silvester in uniform with medals: 1939-45 Star, Atlantic Star, Burma Star, Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp, War Medal 1939-45, and Canadian Forces Decoration.

Former wartime Reservist celebrates Centennial with Naval Reserve

Lookout for HEROES

Lt(N) Donald Den
Senior Public Affairs Officer, HMCS Malahat

The year 2023 marks a significant milestone for the Canadian Naval Reserve, as all 24 divisions mark the Centennial of their service with various ceremonies and commemorative events.

But for one former Royal Canadian Naval Reservist, 2023 marks a centennial of a different kind.

On Apr. 7, Petty Officer First Class (ret'd) Jim Silvester celebrated his 100th birthday, in the same year as the Naval Reserve. The following day, senior members of the

Naval Reserve gathered in Shawnigan Lake to celebrate this centennial occasion with Silvester.

Commodore (Cmdre) Patrick Montgomery, Commander of the Naval Reserve, presented him with both the Commander of the Naval Reserve Coin and the Naval Reserve Coin.

"It is a pleasure to be here, to be able to thank Mr. Silvester in person at his birthday and acknowledge his years of service," Cmdre Montgomery said while presenting the two coins.

Chief Petty Officer First Class Robert Campbell, incoming Fleet Chief of the Naval Reserve, also presented him with the Naval Reserve Centennial Coin, while Commander (Cdr) Cameron Miller, Commanding Officer of HMCS Malahat, Victoria's Naval Reserve Division, presented him with the Ship's Coin of HMCS Malahat.

"It was special to hear about Mr. Silvester joining HMCS Chippawa at 16, since, coincidentally, I would join the same unit at 18, albeit many years later," Cdr Miller said. "The building had not really changed much between us joining, and it was absolutely an honour and a privilege to be there for his 100th birthday."

Silvester joined the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR) at HMCS Chippawa, Winnipeg's Naval Reserve Division, on Nov. 6, 1939, at the outbreak of the Second World War. He was initially classed under the Canadian Boys Seamen because he was underage at the time.

After training, he took part in the Battle of the Atlantic, protecting the convoys bringing supplies across the North Atlantic Ocean and serving aboard HMCS Malaspina, HMCS Quesnel, HMCS Inch Arran, and

HMCS Aquitania. He was discharged from the RCNVR on Jan. 31, 1946.

Silvester then rejoined the Naval Reserve at HMCS Chippawa on Apr. 23, 1955. He served for an additional ten years, instructing recruits in rifle and parade ground drills and classroom instruction. During this time, he served aboard HMCS Assiniboine and HMCS Skeena for naval training before being honourably released from the Naval Reserve on Apr. 28, 1965.

Brenda, Jim's daughter, said having the Navy be a part of the birthday celebrations meant a lot for her dad.

"He has done nothing but brag about naval officers presenting him with coins," she said. "Your presence here is so special. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you so much."



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"Some people struggle to know where to start, and others have been waiting to get this off their chest for a long time."

~ Thomas Goenczi

The First Session



Thomas Goenczi

Lookout contributor

There is something genuinely palpable and ineffable about embarking on something for the first time. Stepping forward and embracing uncertainty, a willful deployment into the oceans of the unknown. In essence, to go into direct combat with fears.

Often before the first therapy session, the individual becomes aware of a particular area they struggle with. Once the first session is booked, a whirlwind of thoughts and emotions whips around, ranging from adrenaline-inducing excitement to existential dread. These waves of excitement and nervousness become more frequent the closer you get to the office.

Some people deliberate what they're going to say, how they're going to say it, and what the whole process will be like. These are all common experiences before a session, which may culminate in the waiting room. The waiting area can be a great place to gather yourself and reset. Take subtle deep conscious breaths from the diaphragm and slowly exhale a few times. This is also the place to set an intention for your session.

You hear the footsteps approaching. The door opens, and you greet your therapist for the first time. You find your seat, and after going over confidentiality and informed consent, your first session finally begins. Some people struggle to know where to start, and others have been waiting to get this off their chest for a long time. Try to be authentic to yourself, don't overthink it, just be.

After about 50 minutes, your counsellor discreetly checks the time and announces the session has ended. Emotions and thoughts thunder within. Sometimes people feel a little raw after the first session, some relieved, some confused, and sometimes people get this little spark and high afterward. What's significant here is identifying the feeling and finding the reason for it. Maybe you feel raw because you had to open up about past trauma; maybe you feel relieved because you finally unburdened yourself about something you've kept to yourself for so long; or maybe you feel confused because you don't know how to feel. It's vital here to dispel the notion that these feelings and thoughts are limited to the first session. They're not. Once fully committed to a long-term therapeutic process, you eventually imbue the wide range of human experience.

Reflect on your initial rapport with your counsellor. You must be able to see your therapist as someone whom you can trust and who you believe can contain the space needed for you to overcome your struggle. Now, this may take a couple of sessions, but if you feel and know that there is warmth, compassion, and a sense of purpose in the room, then this is a good indication you are a good fit for one another. At times, the client and counsellor are incongruent with one another. This is okay; don't let this discourage you from the work you have set out to accomplish for yourself.

Obstacles arise in many forms, and you must not let them get the best of you. All you can do is continue the search and not let your first experience be your last.

Thomas Goenczi is an RCN Veteran and MA Clinical Counsellor with Private Practice: Well Then Therapy.

The content is not intended to be a substitute for professional advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your mental health professional or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding your condition.

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One Navy Team

Brad Pendlington's journey with the RCN and FMF



Brad Pendlington stands in the sun outside his current Work Centre's Shop 144 Electrical at FMF Cape Breton.

Ashley Evans
Fleet Maintenance Facility

The Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) motto, 'One Navy Team', reflects exactly what we are. We work in support of *each other*, those in uniform protecting us and our country, and civilians conducting work in support of them and their overwhelming purpose.

One of them is Brad Pendlington, a member of the Electrical Shop at the Fleet Maintenance Facility Cape Breton (FMFCB). Brad served in the RCN for four years as a Sailor First Class (S1) Marine Electrical Technician before retiring and coming full-time with our unit as a Journeyman Marine Electrician. For the past two months, he has been cycling through the various electrical specialty shops.

Brad's career path to FMF has been a bit unconventional, as he received his Red Seal in Electrical in 2017 before enlisting with the RCN. He began his apprenticeship in 2012 at Southern Okanagan Secondary

School. He did the work hours portion of his apprenticeship with an electrical contractor as they worked to rebuild the school after an unfortunate fire. Ultimately, he earned enough hours to attend his first two years of electrical school at the British Columbia Institute of Technology. He completed his 3rd and 4th years at Okanagan College in 2017 and received his ticket after completing his Red Seal exam.

Brad had initially put in his application to the Royal Canadian Navy in high school but did not enlist until 2018, as he wanted to complete his ticket first. He completed basic training the same year, and because his prior schooling was considered when enrolling, Brad was given specialist pay and promoted directly to Sailor First Class.

"It was a great place to be, to meet friends from all walks of life from all across Canada," Brad continued. "They really took care of us; it was a privilege to serve my country".

Joining the RCN was important to him as he felt impassioned to follow in the footsteps

of family members, including grandparents, who had served before him. His time with the Navy was spent with HMCS Winnipeg as a Marine Technician and Ships Team Diver, with whom he was deployed on Operations *Projection* and *Neon* for six months in far East Pacific. Brad also worked at the Naval Fleet School Pacific (NFSP) at the training boat service facility, where he worked on Rigid-hull Inflatable Boats (RHIBs) and their diesel engines.

"I found through my time with the RCN, I acquired many new skills apart from electrical, and learning about other people's jobs makes you better at your own," he said.

While many go on to have long-term careers in the RCN and Canadian Armed Forces, in late 2022, Brad decided it was time for him to move into a civilian role and couldn't think of a better place to continue supporting the community he'd held in such high regard.

"My entire pension carried over to FMF, and I have stability, a competitive salary,

and benefits as well. These benefits aren't found elsewhere in industry – we are very fortunate here," he said. "FMF is a great place to learn while working on a wide array of electrical equipment. I find it very technical and enjoy the troubleshooting aspect and using all my skillsets."

There are many paths to success, support, and serving one's country, whether through military or civilian service, as all of us provide. Brad has been fortunate to experience both sides of this, understanding the complexities in both work environments.

"It is great to have my friends from the Navy nice and close, and I still feel that sense of pride serving Canada," Brad said. "Regardless of where we are – here or on the ships, we are all working for a common goal."

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Battle of the Atlantic symposium

Lookout for EVENTS

Paul Seguna

LCdr RCN (Ret'd)

A Battle of the Atlantic symposium event was held at the CFB Esquimalt Naval & Military Museum featuring an interactive online presentation by Chris Perry, the Official Historian of the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN).

The presentation outlined the comprehensive history of the six-year struggle in which the RCN played an essential role in winning.

Master Sailor Ron Carlson, a Navy League of Canada volunteer, commented that attending the event was "very worthwhile...100 per cent would do it again!"

This was followed by a presentation by Don Thomas from the Victoria-Esquimalt Military Reenactors Association (VEMRA) on the role of a

Second World War merchant sailor, relaying the story of the critical part played by the merchant marine in the battle.

A movie presentation topped off the morning of activities – *Corvette Port Arthur* – a war-time film featuring the exploits of Commander Ted Simmons, DSO, DSC, in the museum exhibit room dedicated to his story.

The Esquimalt Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC) graciously supported the symposium with refreshments.

Battle of the Atlantic background

"At the height of wartime shipbuilding, in 1943, Canada's production of merchant ships – 150 cargo ships totalling 1,487,000 tons – was only 15 per cent less than that of the United Kingdom. To crew the growing merchant fleet, the Canadian Merchant Navy employed 12,000 sailors, a complete civilian service never lacking in volunteers despite the dangers they faced in the war."

Battle of the Atlantic – Gauntlet to Victory, page 7, Ted Barris, 2022.

"Of the 12,000 Canadians who served aboard merchant navy ships during the Second World War, 1,344 became casualties, 146 were killed (including eight women) and 198 taken prisoner. From Erik Boye, the first Canadian merchantman torpedoed, on June 15, 1940, to the last, Avondale Park, sunk on May 7, 1945, a total of 58 Canadian-registered merchant ships were lost to enemy action...."

Battle of the Atlantic – Gauntlet to Victory, page 64, Ted Barris, 2022

Don Thomas of Victoria/Esquimalt Military Reenactors Association poses as a merchant mariner in the Battle of the Atlantic. Photo: Paul Seguna

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MLA Susie Chant, Minister Mitzi Dean, and HMCS Malahat and HMCS Discovery members pose for photos at a ceremony recognizing the Naval Reserve's Centennial year on Apr. 26.

Inset: MLA Susie Chant, former Coxswain of HMCS Discovery, recognizes the contributions of HMCS Malahat and HMCS Discovery to the Naval Reserve during its Centennial year on Apr. 26.

Photo: Lt (N) Smith



West Coast Naval Reserve Divisions Honoured in the Provincial Legislature

Lookout for EVENTS

SLt Adam Smith

HMCS Malahat Public Affairs Officer

Throughout the 2023 training year, the 24 Naval Reserve Divisions (NRDs) across Canada have been celebrating and honouring the 100th anniversary of the Naval Reserve.

On Apr. 26, it was time for British Columbia's two NRDs to be recognized during this historic year. Members of HMCS *Malahat*, Victoria's NRD, and HMCS *Discovery*, Vancouver's NRD, were invited to the B.C. Legislature to receive recognition for the hard work put in by citizen-sailors across Canada over the last century.

During a ceremony in the Legislature's Hall of Honour, Susie Chant, Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) for North Vancouver-Seymour, spoke from her personal experience as the former Coxswain of HMCS *Discovery* about the valuable contributions and sacrifices Naval Reservists regularly make for the good of their country.

"Over the years, reservists have deployed from these stone frigates on operations

such as maritime security for the 2010 Olympics, responding to the pandemic, and supporting communities stricken by emergencies including B.C. wildfires and floods," Chant said. "Further afield, they contribute to international security and Canadian Armed Forces operations in Central and South America, Asia, the Middle East, Europe and other areas."

The Honourable Mitzi Dean, Minister of Children and Family Development and MLA for Esquimalt-Metchosin, also spoke of the role of Naval Reservists in the Second World War.

"Most of the nearly 100,000 sailors who made up the Royal Canadian Navy by 1945 were reserve members. These reservists, who started the war as pharmacists and lawyers, miners, schoolteachers and lawyers, became the backbone of the Navy as officers and crew of Canadian ships contesting the longest continuous military campaign of the Second World War: the Battle of the Atlantic," Minister Dean said. "From 1939 to 1945, their courage, skill, and sacrifice secured supply lines from the Americas to sustain the European war effort by protecting convoys from the threat of German U-Boat submarines."

Commander (Cdr) Cameron Miller,

HMCS *Malahat's* Commanding Officer, also spoke briefly on what it takes to be a Naval Reservist today. Recalling the famous quote that a reservist must be 'twice the citizen,' Cdr Miller emphasized the dedication required for someone to choose to put in a full day of work at their day job (or other full-time responsibilities) and then spend their evenings and weekends training in defence of Canada.

After the ceremony, sailors from both *Malahat* and *Discovery* were invited to the Gallery to witness Question Period. There, before the Legislative Assembly, MLA Chant proceeded to formally recognize the significance of the Centennial of Canada's Naval Reserve and the contributions of both West Coast NRDs to that legacy:

"I rise today to recognize Canada's Naval Reserve in their Centennial Year 2023 and to recognize in particular the contributions to this province made by the sailors of His Majesty's Canadian Ships *Discovery* and *Malahat*."

"Today, the Naval Reserve is represented in 24 divisions, comprising more than 4,100 Canadians. We are fortunate in British Columbia to host two Naval Reserve divisions: HMCS *Discovery*, located on Deadman's Island in Stanley Park and estab-

lished in 1924, and HMCS *Malahat*, now situated at Shoal Point here in Victoria, established in 1947.

"Members of both *Discovery* and *Malahat* join us today in the Gallery. These proud British Columbians, past and present, have chosen to be citizen sailors who serve full or part-time in the Royal Canadian Navy while engaging in their civilian lives and careers. We recognize them for their bravery, thank them for their dedication over the last 100 years, and wish them and their shipmates well in their endeavours near and far in service to Canada."

"That was a great experience," said Sailor Third Class Brian Haug, one of HMCS *Malahat's* sailors in attendance. "It was a privilege to be publicly acknowledged in the Legislature and to spend time with MLA Chant. She was delightful and gave us a personalized tour where we met both the Speaker and Premiere Eby."

HMCS *Malahat* and *Discovery*, and other NRDs across Canada, are continuing to host activities this year to commemorate the Centennial. Anyone wishing to participate in and support the upcoming events is encouraged to contact their local NRDs directly.

FLEET WEEKEND

ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY | VANCOUVER 2023

Lt(N) Pamela Hogan
MARPAO PAO

'Victoria Traffic, Canadian Warship 341 estimating First Narrows one-three-zero-zero, over.'

HMCS *Ottawa* entered Vancouver Harbour on May 4, followed by HMCS *Nanaimo* and *Orca*-class training vessels *Raven 56*, *Orca 55*, and *Moose 62*, for Canadian Fleet Pacific's (CANFLTPAC) second annual Fleet Weekend at the Burrard Drydock Pier in North Vancouver.

The Fleet Weekend spanned from May 5 to 8. It included displays from several Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) units, including the Naval Tactical Operations Group, Fleet Diving Unit (Pacific), Canadian Submarine Force, the Naden Band, Fleet Maintenance Facility *Cape Breton*, Naval Reserve recruiting, and the Naval Security Team (NST).

NST, along with the Patrol Craft Training Unit, provided free Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB) rides to members of the public in Vancouver Harbour.

Clive and Kathy Mark of West Vancouver said while they waited for their HMCS *Ottawa* tour to begin, 'two friendly Navy midshipmen' signed them up for a 'leisurely' tour of the inner harbour in an RHIB.

"An exhilarating tour of the inner harbour was more like the experience; we loved every one of the 15 or so minutes," the couple said. "Equally as impressive was the HMCS *Ottawa* tour – every sailor we met clearly explained the equipment and the purpose of each device."

CANFLTPAC ships provided free upper deck tours. By the end of the weekend, HMCS *Ottawa* was estimated to have hosted approximately 4,600 people; the *Orca*-class training vessels hosted about 1,430 people; and HMCS *Nanaimo* hosted about 2,400 people.

During the weekend, HMCS *Nanaimo* received a surprise visit from a 100-year-old Wren who enrolled in the Royal Navy as a mechanic in 1942.

Kathy Morrison encountered the ship's captain in the passageway leading up to the main flats.

"I asked, 'are you the Captain?', and when he con-

firmed, I said, 'well, now I don't know whether I should salute or curtsey,'" she said.

Lieutenant-Commander Mike Vanderveer, the ship's Commanding Officer (CO), had given her a CO's ballcap by the time she disembarked. Morrison returned to the pier the following day for a private tour of HMCS *Ottawa* given by Sub-Lieutenant (SLt) Deidre Van Herpt and SLt Spencer D'Amore. She also attended the Battle of the Atlantic commemorative ceremony held at Sailor's Point Waterfront Park by the Vancouver Naval Veterans Association on Sunday. The ceremony commemorated the 78th anniversary of the longest continuous battle of the Second World War.

Sailors also participated in outreach events, including HMCS *Discovery*'s open house and job fair, handing out finisher medals at the BMO Vancouver Marathon, and presenting an RCN skateboard to CityFest's Youth Skateboard Competition. The RCN is estimated to have engaged with approximately 11,000 members of the public during the Fleet Weekend.



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(Holding photo frame) Honour House President and Honorary Colonel of the 15th Field Artillery Regiment Al De Genova.
 Photo: Honour House Society

Honour House is an 11-bedroom heritage home in New Westminster, B.C., that opened in 2010. It is a temporary home away from home for CAF members, veterans, first responders and their families to stay free of charge. At the same time, they receive medical care and treatment in the Metro Vancouver Area.

Honour Ranch, located on 120 acres of scenic property near Ashcroft, B.C., opened in 2019. It operates mental health support programs, including equine therapy, meditative practices, music, movement, and art, designed for recovery from Operational Stress Injuries (OSI) and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Plans are currently underway to build additional support buildings and ten new cabins.



HMCS Vancouver reconnects with their community charity

Lookout for COMMUNITY

Peter Mallett
 Staff Writer

A flag that flew atop HMCS *Vancouver* as it sailed across the Pacific Ocean has returned to its original owners.

The bright blue flag proudly fluttered aboard the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) warship during last year's five-month deployment in Operation *Projection* in the Indo-Pacific region. It belongs to Honour House, the ship's official charity, which provides vital support programs for military members, first responders and veterans.

Returning the flag was part of a goodwill gesture, says Commander (Cdr) Meghan Coates, the ship's Commanding Officer.

"Our ship's charity provides amazing support and lodging to our members in their time of need," Cdr Coates said. "I was very excited to host Honour House and present the flag to them."

Al De Genova, Honour House President and founder, and Larry Campbell, one of the charity's most prominent supporters and former Canadian Senator, visited Esquimalt during the expansive two-month-long Tour of Honour. From Apr. 4 to June 10, De Genova and his staff are making tour stops in 54 destinations in British Columbia and the Yukon while travelling in a large green camouflage Humvee.

When planning his province-wide tour, Esquimalt was the first destination to come to mind, says De Genova.

"We are here to help the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members in difficult times," says De Genova. "Our visit to

CFB Esquimalt was another chance to educate people about the programs and supports we provide."

They also met with members of the Esquimalt Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC) and military families, 4 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, and Base Commander Capt(N) J. Jeffrey Hutchinson.

De Genova created Honour House in 2008 following discussions with General Rick Hillier, former Canadian Chief of Defence Staff, and Rear-Admiral Tyrone Pile that focused on the many occupational-related injuries facing military members.

"The General came to me, gave me a four-star challenge coin, and said, 'I challenge you to make this work,'" De Genova said. "Never challenge an Italian to do something, I told myself, and the rest is history."

De Genova says the reward for all his recent hard work is seeing the successful start-up of Honour Ranch and the 13,000 nights of accommodation that Honour House has provided.

De Genova wears the beret of the Canadian Army Reserves and has worked in an outreach capacity as Honorary Colonel for the 15th Field Artillery Regiment for the past nine years. He estimates he and his staff will cover thousands of kilometres as they stop at Royal Canadian Legion branches, military bases, police and Canadian Rangers detachments, and ambulance and fire stations in the cities, towns, and villages they visit. The Tour of Honour also made other stops on Vancouver Island, including Duncan and Nanaimo (Apr. 26), Comox and Courtenay (Apr. 27), and Campbell River (Apr. 28).

For more information about Honour House and the Tour of Honour, visit honourhouse.ca.



A 2005 GMC Hummer and box trailer parked in front of Honour House in New Westminster, B.C. The City of New Westminster Police Department loaned the vehicle and trailer to the Honour House Society for its ongoing tour of B.C. and the Yukon.
 Photo: Honour House Society

Did you say **RRSP?**

Diane Kennedy, CFP
Financial Planner,
SISIP Financial, Comox

As financial planners, we praise the tax advantages of Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs) but often hear, 'No thanks; I have a great pension plan; I don't need an RRSP'. While it is true that the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) does offer an excellent pension plan, it is also true that all financial situations are unique, even though your friend or co-worker may have the same rank, monthly allotment, and years of service as you, your financial needs and goals may vary.

RRSPs can add significant value to your financial plan during your working years, in retirement and within your estate plan. A contribution to an RRSP reduces your taxable income today, which means you pay less tax now and are putting money away to grow, tax-sheltered, for the future. You can save even more money by strategically planning your RRSP withdrawals. Let's look at some situations that people may only sometimes consider when considering an RRSP.

IS THE COST OF BUYING A HOME TOO HIGH IN YOUR CURRENT PROVINCE?

If you plan to buy a home at a future posting or in retirement, consider using the RRSP Home Buyers' Plan (HBP). The HBP is for more than just first-time homeowners. You can use the HBP more than once, provided you and your spouse have yet to own a home in the four years before the home purchase. You can 'borrow' up to \$35,000 tax-free from both your and your spouse's RRSP to put towards the payment of your new home. By contributing to your RRSP, you can save towards your new home while receiving a tax deduction, which you could also reinvest to compound your savings strategy.

WHAT'S ON YOUR RETIREMENT BUCKET LIST?

If you are married or in common law, you can contribute to a spousal RRSP. This will reduce your taxable income today and create a future nest egg (a sum of

money saved for the future) to be withdrawn by your spouse as income in retirement. You can then allocate the spousal RRSP to pay for the fun stuff, such as travel, sports, and hobbies, while your CAF pension can be used to pay the monthly and annual household expenses (bills, maintenance, etc.).

HAVE YOU CALCULATED SURVIVOR INCOME NEEDS YET?

Having funds in an RRSP can help fund any shortfalls in your estate plan. When a retirement member passes, the surviving non-military spouse is entitled to a 50 per cent survivor's pension. But will that be enough to ensure your spouse has a comfortable income for life? Saving through an RRSP or spousal RRSP can help fund future income needs, not to mention that generally, it will be taxed in a lower bracket.

Talk to a financial advisor at your local SISIP Financial office and ask how an RRSP can benefit your specific financial plan.



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FLEET WEEKEND

ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY | VANCOUVER 2023

The first trick landed on the hand painted skateboard presented by the Royal Canadian Navy at Burrard Dry Dock Pier in North Vancouver on May 6.

Photo: Corporal Tristan Walach, Canadian Armed Forces

The skateboard was hand-painted by Leslie Eaton, Lookout Creative Designer, for Fleet Weekend organizers to present as a gift for the CityFest's Youth Skateboard Competition.



Military music spectacle to close first day of Highland Games

Lookout for EVENTS

Victoria Military Music Festival Society

The 160th edition of the Victoria Highland Games at Topaz Park will host a Military Music Spectacle in partnership with the Victoria Military Music Festival Society (VMMFS) on May 20.

This is the second year in a row that VMMFS has brought a military tattoo performance to the highland games. Presented as part of the Victoria Day weekend celebrations, the performance will recognize the coronation of King Charles III as King of Canada.

The Naden Band of the Royal Canadian Navy will be joined by the 5th (B.C.) Field Regiment Band and the Canadian Scottish Regiment Pipes and Drums. Alberta and Ontario will be represented by the Regimental Pipes and Drums, and dancers of the Calgary Highlanders and 400 Squadron Royal Canadian Air Force Pipes and Drums from Borden, Ont. Returning to Victoria after 20 years, The United States Marines, Third Marine Aircraft Wing Band of Miramar, California, will represent the United States of America.

"Our event brings together a blend of military and civilian performers that would otherwise not be assembled in Victoria or anywhere else," said Roger McGuire, VMMFS Chairman. "Following the pandemic, musical organizations everywhere are challenged to rebuild an audience. This is our unique way to return to the Victoria entertainment scene."

McGuire said the program would include brass-reed bands, massed pipes and drums, dancers, and conclude with a massed band featuring the entire cast. There will be some crowd-pleasing surprises in addition to the general expectation of great music and colourful uniforms.

Scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. on completion of the first day of Highland Games events on May 20, the gate admission after 6 p.m. will be half-price for adults, seniors and teens with children under 12 at no charge. In addition, bands will perform separate stand-alone concerts around Victoria on May 21 and then march in the Victoria Day Parade on Monday, May 22.

The VMMFS was established in 1993 and has brought a variety of Canadian and foreign bands from around the world to Victoria to perform in military tattoos, musical rides, festivals, celebrations, and concerts. The Society looks forward to bringing military music to the Victoria audience and collaborating with new partners and opportunities.

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 Photo credit: John's Photography, Sooke, BC



Lieutenant (Navy) Harjot Deol, Petty Officer First Class Kanwar Nijjer, and Sub-Lieutenant Mehak Dhinsa attend Khalsa Day celebrations at Victoria's Gurdwara Singh Sabha temple on Apr. 30. Photo: HMCS Malahat

CAF members join Victoria Sikh community in Vaisakhi celebration

Lookout for COMMUNITY

Peter Mallett
Staff Writer

The largest Vaisakhi festival on Vancouver Island saw military members join Victoria's Sikh community to celebrate the birth of the Sikh Nation.

Petty Officer First Class (PO1) Kanwar Nijjer arranged for a Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) booth to be at the Gurdwara Singh Sabha temple on Apr. 30.

"Our presence here allows us to share our experiences with the wider population," PO1 Nijjer said. "We have been getting a very good response from the community and some are even applying to become members, which is very important for the growth of our organization."

PO1 Nijjer, a Human Resources Manager with HMCS Malahat, attended the ceremony with his wife Gurdeep Nijjer. He said wearing his uniform to the temple was a proud moment since Sikh people played such an

important role fighting for India in the First and Second World Wars.

Petty Officer Second Class (PO2) Nancy Rheume said the Pacific Recruiting Centre's attendance generated more public interest in CAF careers than any other single event her unit has attended so far this year.

"It is essential that the CAF [membership] be better represented by current Canadian demographics as people from all cultural groups will provide us with new insight and greater breadth of knowledge in the future," PO2 Rheume said.

The event was also an opportunity for the Sikh community to display its charitable nature and goodwill preparing meals for everyone who arrived at the celebration. These gestures included some charitable work and the preparation of over 500 meals for Our Place Society, a non-profit that supports the homeless and people living in poverty.

Also known as Khalsa Day, the holiday was founded by Guru Gobind in 1699. More than 5,000 people attended the Khalsa Day parade along Douglas and Finalyson Street, downtown Victoria.



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—United Way Period Poverty Report

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An initiative by the MARPAC and MARLANT Defence Women Advisory Organizations

Switchboard improvements at Base Health Centre



Peter Mallett
Staff Writer

A new telephone system at the Base Health Centre is providing faster connections and reducing wait times for patients needing services.

Canadian Forces Health Care Service Centre (Pacific) (CFHSvcs(P)) introduced its new Vocalls automated call system on Apr. 24.

"The new system is certainly more user-friendly than what existed previously," said Captain (ret'd) Peter Blencowe, Primary Care Services Manager with CFHSvcs(P).

The new technology replaces the previous antiquated call-forwarding system. The Vocalls call system is already helping ease delays and end confusion concerning enquiries and calls to its first-come-first-serve walk-in clinic and other services, Blencowe said.

Under the new Vocalls system, members are placed in a queue, and calls are taken within the order they are received.

Incoming callers are directed to the appropriate extension, with receptionists ready to take the calls immediately. If there is an overload of calls or unexpected delay, the system will prompt the caller to leave their name and number and wait for a call-back. Blencowe said Vocalls also enables staff members from other departments to assist co-workers if they are backlogged with calls.

Blencowe warns if a patient is experiencing a severe or life-threatening health emergency, they should not call the Base Health Centre but 9-1-1.

The Vocalls phone system was provided by Shared Services Canada. It is the same technology used by Base Information Services to direct calls and is also used by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and several other Government of Canada Departments.



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Reflecting on an Op Regulus Exchange



A/SLt Morgan Gray
HMCS Venture

A/SLt Timmons and I recently returned from Coos Bay, Oregon, where we sailed for two weeks with the United States Coast Guard (USCG) onboard USCG Cutter Orcas as part of an Operation (Op) Regulus exchange. Our two-week patrol was part of USCG's marine safety and security mandate.

An excited crew of 14 eagerly showed us the ins and outs of their cutter and assigned us to bunks we'd call home for the next two weeks.

We shadowed the Officer of the Deck (OOD), whose role is to drive the ship physically, monitor radars, be their lookout, and make contact reports to the captain. Concurrent activities were made more accessible as the cutter used autopilot most of the time. In addition to sailing with autopilot, the USCG also used GPS for fixes while underway, as there was no pelorus on the bridge. By the end of our journey, we were acting as the OOD under supervision in both sailing and low-speed manoeuvres. One of the most challenging manoeuvres was coming to a mooring buoy, which required precise throttle control.

Upon arrival in Port Angeles, we participated in 'Cuttermen's Call', a patrol boat Olympics where the events utilized the sailors' skills at sea. I participated

in the guppy swim, which is when participants don a survival suit and attempt to swim as fast as they can to the other jetty and back. Though the suit is well-designed for survival in cold ocean waters, it is not particularly effective to swim in, which made the event challenging. Nevertheless, I completed the challenge, but not before drinking a bit of Port Angeles Harbour. We were also honoured to take part in a memorial service for a sailor lost a few years back.

After our Port Angeles patrol, we transited to Seattle to participate in a multi-boat flotilla, where USCG Orcas embarked multiple high-ranking officers. After the ceremony, we remained in Seattle for an extra day of R&R before starting the long transit back to Coos Bay.

On our last day, the crew practiced

emergency procedures such as fire and flood drills, which are similar to how ours are completed. During rescue stations, the OOD picked the person up just off the side of the ship – ship handling was vital here because crew members on deck attempted to cross two lifelines behind the person in the water. This was a daunting task with five foot seas that day.

The multi-tasking required by USCG members on the bridge made us appreciate the tasks needed to run our bridges. The ship-handling skills we learned while manoeuvring the ship slowly will benefit our Naval Warfare Officers' paths. And lastly, working with our USCG brethren gave us a better understanding of international interoperability with our allies.



Op Regulus is an innovative program that facilitates exchanges between the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) and partner navies from around the world to provide at-sea experience and unique training opportunities for mutual benefit.



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