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LOOKOUT

NEWSPAPER - MORALE & WELFARE NEWS | CFB ESQUIMALT, VICTORIA, BC

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Happy Holidays

An International Eagle truck hauled CFB Esquimalt's holiday float as it took part in the Peninsula Co-op Santa Claus Parade in Victoria on Nov. 21 and the IEOA Truck Parade and Food Drive on Dec. 2. Read the full story on page 9. Photo: Brian Auger / TEME

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Members of MARPAC/JTFP Defense Team,

We hope your holidays are filled with joy, generosity, and memorable celebrations. CPO1 Lee, the Formation Chief Petty Officer, MS LeClair, the Formation Master Sailor, and I wish everyone an extraordinary holiday season with friends and family.

The lingering effects of the pandemic, high cost of living, difficulty hiring new Defence Team members, and training system challenges make being positive a choice that requires determination. We have been deeply impressed that the Formation team has continued to make this choice to bring their best selves to work and contribute so much to the defence of our nation.

To meet the Government of Canada's objectives, we have continued to deploy ships and personnel to stay strong at home, secure in North America, and engaged in the world. At home, our ships and patrol craft have maintained our presence in our local waters to safeguard against threats and improve working relationships with Indigenous, federal, and territorial governments. HMCS *Winnipeg*, in particular, has been a regular sight in the waters close to home as it conducted exercises and trials. Our Defence Team, in conjunction with our Coast Guard partners, has helped make Canada a safer place to live by conducting over 2,500 search and rescue missions in 2023.

Later this month, we will welcome home over 600 of our teammates, which is the gift we're most looking forward to. The exemplary efforts by the members of HMC Ships *Vancouver* and *Ottawa*, along with Naval Replenishment Unit *Asterix*, demonstrate the skill and professionalism of the Royal Canadian Navy in challenging environments. The work done by the crews of these ships over the last four months has directly impacted upholding the rules-based international order in the Indo-Pacific region. These ships sailed in the Indo-Pacific region, where they conducted training, exercises, and engagements with foreign navies and other international security partners. HMCS *Vancouver* moved on to Op *Neon*, a coordinated multinational effort supporting the implementation of UN Security Council sanctions imposed on North Korea. Although we're proud of the Defence Team's work, we also recognize the friends, families, and loved ones for the love and commitment they show daily.

In North America, as part of Op *Caribbe*, HMCS *Edmonton*, working in conjunction with partners, helped seize 755 kg of drugs in April.

We are very cognizant that the holiday season can sometimes be stressful, even without the added taxation of a global pandemic. In addition to practising self-care, please take the time to reach out and connect with your current and former shipmates, as they may be struggling this holiday season.

CPO1 Lee, MS LeClair, and I thank you for another successful and collaborative year and send our warmest wishes of health and happiness to you and your friends and family this holiday season. If you can, please use this holiday as an opportunity to rest, relax and reset for 2024!

Rear-Admiral Christopher Robinson,
OMM, CD
Commander, Maritime Forces Pacific,
Joint Task Force (Pacific)

Valued Defence Team Members,

With gratitude and appreciation, we wish you a bright and joyous holiday season filled with kindness, cheer, and togetherness. But above all, one with rest and time to connect with your loved ones.

As the end of 2023 approaches, we pause to reflect on the many successes we have enjoyed, including the return of Defence on the Dock to Ogden Point for the first time since 2019, the return of the National Public Service Week BBQ, the Victoria-Class Cup in support of the Esquimalt Military Family and Resource Centre, and the Victoria Royals' Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Military Appreciation Night. We also oversaw, for the first time here at CFB Esquimalt, the Royal Canadian Navy Bike Ride, and were allowed to take part in many exciting events with the Victoria Grizzlies Hockey Club, Rugby Canada 7's, and Oldtimers Hockey Nationals. We have seen an awesome start to the National Defence Workplace Charitable Campaign season, allowing folks to give and make a real difference in our community.

It has been exciting and encouraging to come together and enjoy the community and connection we love to be a part of. We continue to be encouraged by the awesome pride of the Defence Team at CFB Esquimalt each day as we see a diverse team of hard-working individuals who demonstrate our motto, 'Portare per omnia', translating to 'Support for All', daily. This begins with you, our colleagues, our teammates. This motto is seen in your efforts throughout the year, none of which go unnoticed. Every one of us is integral to this team, and we owe our successes over the past year to every team member.

We see your hard work and dedication each day to keep the Base running and deeply appreciate it. Not only have your efforts aided us in fulfilling our motto but have directly contributed to aiding the Fleet in efforts ranging from the deployments of HMC Ships *Vancouver* and *Ottawa*, along with Naval Replenishment Unit *Asterix* to the Indo-Pacific region, HMCS *Edmonton* as part of Operation *Caribbe*, and HMCS *Winnipeg*, who has conducted tremendous Force Generation in local waters. Additionally, your dedicated efforts enabled the Base to support Operation *Lentus* as CAF personnel aided in forest fire responses across the province.

We have experienced the rise of inflation in and around the Greater Victoria area. Regardless of where you are geographically located, everyone has been impacted. We recognize that for many, this season may be difficult for a variety of reasons. Let us all remember to extend grace and kindness around us this season, helping to lift those who may need a bit more cheer.

Since joining the Base team in our current roles this past summer, we have cherished the time we've spent with members from our surrounding Indigenous communities, the Township of Esquimalt, local municipalities, and you, our valued Defence Team members.

Your dedication and resiliency as members of the Defence Team of CFB Esquimalt continue to amaze and encourage us and are among the many reasons why it is an honour to serve you as Base Commander and Base Chief Petty Officer.

As we move into the holiday period, we urge everyone to spend quality time with those you care about. Look after yourself, take time to rest and recharge, and take care of each other – please endeavour to check in with your colleagues and shipmates as you can.

Whatever holiday you celebrate, in whichever way you choose, from our families to yours, we wish you Happy Holidays and a bright and prosperous New Year.

Yours Aye,

Captain (Navy) Kevin Whiteside
Base Commander

Chief Petty Officer First Class
Susan Frisby
Base Chief Petty Officer



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MARPAC Awards ceremony celebrates outstanding efforts

Peter Mallett
Staff Writer

A Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) member who assisted a classmate experiencing a mental health crisis is among 23 award recipients hailed for their extraordinary efforts by Maritime Forces Pacific (MARPAAC).

Sub-Lieutenant (SLt) Megan Desjardins, a Naval Warfare Officer (NWO) in training at HMCS *Calgary*, is one of three recipients of a MARPAAC Bravo Zulu certificate recognized in a MARPAAC Honours and Awards ceremony on Nov. 15 at the Chief and Petty Officers' Mess.

The semi-annual awards ceremony recognizes military members, civilian staff, community members, and their families and friends. Rear-Admiral (RAdm) Christopher Robinson, Commander Maritime Forces Pacific, presided over the ceremony.

When the incident occurred, SLt Desjardins (formerly SLt Crump) was attending HMCS *Venture's* NWO training program in March. A former social worker trained in how to respond to mental health situations, SLt Desjardins, learned through her peer network that a classmate was having difficulties and sprang into action. The member has since recovered after being directed to counselling and support thanks to the efforts of SLt Desjardins.

SLt Desjardins said she was surprised and grateful to receive the award.

"When we look out for each other instead of looking the other way during scary situations, we get positive outcomes," said SLt Desjardins. "I am one of many people who took the right steps to support a member in this situation. When military members see something is wrong, they are supported by a Chain of Command who respond with urgency and compassion."

Also honoured with a Bravo Zulu Certificate is **Sailor First Class (S1) Brian Michalski** of MARPAAC HQ.

S1 Michalski is a member of MARPAAC's Fleet Cyber Team. He was recognized for his exemplary professionalism and leadership in assisting an elderly woman who had fallen and sustained multiple fractures during an incident outside of a local coffee shop in April. S1 Michalski, a trained medical first responder of St John's Ambulance, applied advanced first aid, comforted the casualty, and maintained detailed notes before paramedics arrived several minutes later.

S1 Michalski also said the award came as a surprise to him. He encourages those reading his story to undergo first aid training, take refresher courses, and never shy away from helping someone in need, if it's safe.

"The two things you need to give good first aid are training and experience," he said. "A classroom can only give you the first part.

I am fortunate to have several experiences where I've tested these skills and in doing so, have developed them better."

Petty Officer First Class (PO1) Dean Kijek of future Joint Support Ship (JSS) HMCS *Protecteur* was also honoured with a Bravo Zulu certificate.

PO1 Kijek assisted a cyclist who was struck and injured by a vehicle in September 2022. PO1 Kijek immediately took control of the scene and provided initial first aid to the victim while concurrently contacting emergency services. His actions directly prevented further injury and ensured the individual received crucial, prompt medical attention.

MARITIME COMPONENT COMMANDER CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Also receiving honours were six sailors of the formation who performed a deed or activity beyond the demands of normal duty while on international deployments.

Petty Officer Second Class (PO2) Steven Bueckert of Naval Fleet School Pacific (NFS(P)) received recognition for his performance and mentorship while deployed in HMCS *Winnipeg* for Operation *Projection* and *Neon* as Senior Operations Room Supervisor from August to December 2022. His extracurricular efforts aided Command to improve onboard morale through a dynamic and challenging program at sea and alongside.

Master Sailor (MS) Darryl Forry from NFS(P) also went above and beyond the call of duty during the same deployment aboard *Winnipeg*, noted RAdm Robinson. He led a team in repairing a critical failure in the ship's freshwater production capability and allowing it to remain at sea.

Fleet school's **PO2 Justin Horvath's** award came for his planning and organization as President of the Junior Ranks Mess and his work as a Flight Coordinator, allowing an embarked helicopter to attain its mission objectives.

Lieutenant-Commander (LCdr) Riley Monsour of the Naval Training and Development Centre (NTDC) was in HMCS *Vancouver* as its Combat Systems Engineering Officer for Operation *Projection* and *Neon* from August to December 2022. LCdr Monsour expertly coordinated a complicated forward re-arm of *Vancouver* following Exercise Rim of The Pacific (RIMPAC). This enabled the ship to maintain a high-readiness weapons posture in the deployed theatre.

MS Lake Marie Ruiz of HMCS *Saskatoon* accompanied a critically ill shipmate for a medical evacuation ashore in Ecuador for life-saving surgery during Operation *Caribbe* from February to May 2021. She overcame complex logistical issues coordinating pay-

ment and provided exceptional empathy and compassion to her shipmate while relaying important updates to *Saskatoon's* Command Team and Canadian Forces Health Services staff in Esquimalt.

MS Kortni Watson, MS Ruiz's shipmate during the same deployment, was recognized for her dedication, focus and attention to detail while acting as a Senior Head of her ship's Operations Department. Her ability to manage the significant administrative requirements and train and lead her inexperienced section while mentoring a Junior Operations Officer also helped her earn the Maritime Component Commander Certificate of Achievement, noted RAdm Robinson.

CJOC COMMENDATION

Five awards went to members who performed a deed or activity beyond the demands of regular duty while deployed or on operations.

PO2 Andrew Astles of HMCS *Brandon* provided outstanding oversight of an explosive demolition operation and destruction of a derelict hazard to navigation while deployed in HMCS *Yellowknife* for Operation *Caribbe* in March 2022. His actions likely saved his demolition team from serious injury while his team's boat stalled out after the explosives fuse ignited.

Commander Tyson Bergmann of HMCS *Regina* received the commendation for displaying tremendous leadership and leading and mentoring a team of international officers from numerous nations while in Pearl Harbor for RIMPAC exercises.

Lieutenant (Navy) (Lt(N)) Kurtis Doekersen of Canadian Fleet Pacific (CNAFLTPAC) HQ was deployed to the Sinai from July 2022 to July 2023 as the Contingent Adjutant for Canada's commitment to Multinational Force and Observers. He demonstrated selfless dedication while facilitating the acquisition of host nation visas and, throughout his tour, facilitated repatriations and mediated conflict with great compassion.

S1 Ewa Orzechowska-Trojan of the Personnel Coordination Centre (PCC) displayed extraordinary professionalism, contributing significantly to the initial planning process for training Ukrainian soldiers on Leopard 2 tanks during Operation *Unifier* Rotation 14, Feb. 4 to 5, 2023.

Sergeant Kylie Peterson of Base Logistics (BLOG) proved herself a dedicated leader throughout her deployment to Kuwait as the Road and Vehicle Safety Specialist for Joint Task Force-IMPACT and Task Force Central. Her efforts benefited all members of the Canadian contingent and enhanced partnerships with coalition forces.

COMMANDER ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY COMMENDATION

Six individuals received commendations for accomplishing deeds that bring great credit upon themselves and the RCN. The honorees included:

Amanda Campbell of the Office of the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia for her lead as Civilian Organizer of the Women in Uniform Symposium in March 2023;

Captain (Capt) Patricia Laing of CANFLTPAC HQ for her role as Military Lead;

Ashley Evans, Base Public Affairs Officer, for her management and development of strategies for COVID-19 communications for FMF Cape Breton and Cape Scott;

Capt Marjorie Gaulin-Riffou of the Base Comptroller built relationships with key agencies and international allies for Operations *Projection* from Feb. 17 to Aug. 7, 2022;

Lt(N) Sarah Kucher of HMCS *Venture* for her tireless work to improve training and lead vital lasting culture change for the RCN, including the use of online tools and training materials for Gender-Based Analysis and leading MARPAAC's training on Military Sexual Trauma and the Navy's Virtual Reality Project.

EAGLE FEATHER

The Eagle Feather presented to **PO1 Steve Morrison** of the PCC acknowledges his service, sacrifices, and tireless work. Many Indigenous cultures believe the eagle is sacred as it flies closest to the Creator and is also seen as its messenger who imparts wisdom and medicine. PO1 Morrison's work includes his efforts to raise awareness of the contributions of Indigenous members as National Military Co-Chair of the Defence Indigenous Advisory Group (DIAG) over several years, also for his efforts in Operation *Northern Reach*, where RCN members visited Northern Vancouver Island to showcase naval capabilities.

CPO1/CWO SCROLL

During the ceremony, **Chief Petty Officer First Class (CPO1) Lyne Edmondson** of Base Information Services (BIS) and **CPO1 Donald Joseph Dagenais** of Fleet Maintenance Facility (FMF) Cape Breton received their Chief Petty Officer Scrolls.

All Chief Petty Officers and Chief Warrant Officers of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) are appointed to the rank by the Minister of National Defence. As the senior-most rank among non-commissioned members, it is a career milestone that few attain and comes with significant responsibility as an institutional leader.



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New Year, New Me?



Thomas Goenczi

Lookout contributor

The idea of 'new year, new me' has always made me smile because the changing years never stopped people from being who they are.

Another year is coming to a close, and with that comes an increase in wait times for equipment at the gym, more fresh produce in your fridge, and an awakened awareness of your true potential. In saying that, the new year also precipitates many emotions and thoughts.

Some people become inextricably reinvigorated toward life and can cultivate motivation seemingly out of nowhere. Life becomes a task worth taking on once the calendar has prompted the urgency. Consciously or not, this motivation comes from the recognition of our mortality. We are getting older, and thus, the sand in the bottom of our hourglass gets a little fuller. In this sense, the new year works similarly to one's birthday, and that almighty fear of watching life pass by reverberates in our souls.

Other people utterly fear the new year. They feel as though they have yet

to accomplish what they wanted to. This can be due to procrastination, a topic broached in previous columns, derailing life circumstances, or not setting goals in the first place. The new year may trigger anxiety and lead people to question their self-worth.

Lastly, some people are indifferent to the new year and treat it as usual. This attitude embodies a stoic nature toward the changing of times. People with this attitude will not be swayed by the sands of time. However, such an approach to passing time can also have drawbacks. When people do not reflect on their past or meditate on their aspirations, they become susceptible to repeating the same patterns, which can breed ignorance and inflate their urge for grandiosity.

The new year invites you to reflect on your life and its direction. By meditating, you can assess your level of growth over the year. The recognition that there was growth, no matter how much is essential.

Beyond reflecting on the year that has passed and being grateful for where we are, we can also deliberate on the upcoming year and work on embracing who we can become. The new year provides us with a new opportunity to understand our actual capacity.

Implementing the demanding change is challenging at the dawn of a new year. However, I would like to share these tips when doing so:

Set attainable goals. This is quintessential because when we set overly lofty goals, we set ourselves up for failure. Have short-term goals that you would like to accomplish in 2-3 months, medium-term goals in 4-7 months, and long-term goals spanning over 8-12 months. This breakdown gives you a clear road map of your aspirations, making the planning to accomplish your goals more manageable.

Consistency. Often the most difficult to instill. Consistency comes when a habit has been fortified over time. This takes discipline, not only during the beginning but also during the maintenance phase of reaching a goal.

Grace and patience. When we afford ourselves these prized qualities, we embody self-compassion. We learn things worth accomplishing are never easy, and obstacles will always be along the way. We become more resilient by being graceful during times of turmoil and patient in achieving our goals.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May your holidays be filled with love and joy!

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

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Naden Band carries on holiday tradition of

Generosity

Peter Mallett
Staff Writer

The Naden Band delivered the gift of holiday music while celebrating the 45th anniversary of its annual Christmas Concert.

The official band of the Royal Canadian Navy hit all the right notes for its Dec. 4 and 5 performances of its Christmas on the Coast Holiday Concert at Victoria's Royal Theatre. The annual concert benefits the Salvation Army's Toy Drive, where all attendees must donate an unwrapped children's toy.

Lieutenant (Navy) (Lt(N)) Benjamin Van Slyke, Naden Band Commanding Officer, conducted the concert and gave his musicians full marks for

their performance this year. He says the concert series is a great way to help the less fortunate but also marks the official start of the Christmas season for many in the community.

"This is one of our favorite events of the year and it was so much fun to perform at and carry on its tradition of giving and generosity," said Van Slyke. "Our musicians put in a lot of hard work, played beautifully and I can tell from their reactions that the audience enjoyed it immensely."

This year's musical lineup included traditional Christmas songs such as *The Nutcracker Fantasy*, *O Holy Night*, *Let the Bells Ring*, *Sleigh Ride*, *I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas*, and *The Night Before Christmas*.

Joining the Naden Band's 36-member ensemble on stage in their first-ever collaboration was local husband-and-wife musical duo Jeff and Eden Poynter of the band West My Friend. Some of their contributions to the musical lineup included a tribute to legendary Canadian singer-songwriter Gordon Lightfoot and the band's rendition of *Song for A Winter Night* and *River* by Joni Mitchell.

"It was exciting and wonderful to have our first collaboration and we quickly noticed everyone in the Naden Band is a stellar player and a joy to perform with," said Eden Poynter during a dress rehearsal at the Naden Band Headquarters on Dec. 1.

All Naden Band members are full-

time, professional musicians. They will be busy in the days leading up to the holiday break by playing at several Yuletide holiday lunches, including performances at HMCS *Venture*, HMCS *Calgary*, Joint Task Force Pacific (JTFP) and the Wardroom Mess. They marched in the Sooke Santa Claus Parade on Dec. 10 and will make an appearance at the Admiral's Holiday Reception later this month. In their last event of 2023, band members will provide a musical welcome to friends and family in Dockyard as HMCS *Vancouver*, HMCS *Ottawa*, and MV *Asterix* return home from their five-month deployment in the Indo-Pacific region.



"Spread the word" says the RCAF Honorary Colonel, Loreena McKennitt

HCol Loreena McKennitt, CM, OM, CD

On the eve of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) 2024 Centennial, I would like to express my heartfelt joy in being the RCAF Honorary Colonel during this extraordinary historical moment.

Anniversaries happen every year, but a Centennial happens once. Let's use this occasion to celebrate and commemorate. Let's celebrate a century of excellence and commemorate the many brave members who made the ultimate sacrifice.

For 17 years, I have had the awesome privilege of being an honorary colonel. It all began in 2006 with 435 Transport and Rescue Squadron at 17 Wing in Winnipeg, M.B.

The members of the RCAF, whom I've gotten to know so well, have given me an education I wish I had received

at school, an education I believe every citizen deserves and needs to have. And sadly, it probably does not.

I have witnessed first-hand – and often from the back of a C130 Hercules aircraft – re-supply missions to our northernmost communities, search and rescue procedures, air-to-air refuelling during major training exercises, national sovereignty operations across Canada and the Far North, including my memorable visit to Alert, on Ellesmere Island in Nunavut – the northernmost continuously inhabited place in the world.

I have visited our people in theatres of operations in Lithuania, Romania, and Kuwait.

I experienced – in flight – the rigours of a Canadian Forces Snowbird's training mission in Moose Jaw, Sask. And, during the Afghanistan conflict,

witnessed the sobering repatriation ceremonies of fallen Canadians being brought home to Canada through Trenton, Ont.

I have great admiration and profound pride in you who serve or have served with the Royal Canadian Air Force. And that goes double for your families. Family support is critical. The missed birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, and every other important family occasion is a testament to your courage and fortitude in being intimately associated with military life.

The New Year will usher in a dynamic array of Centennial activities, events, air shows and banquets. Spread the word. The Centennial of the Royal Canadian Air Force is just around the corner, and I look forward to celebrating and commemorating with all of you.



Loreena McKennitt, RCAF Honorary Colonel. Photo: Canadian Armed Forces



Happy Holidays from the Lookout Newspaper!

We want to extend our sincerest appreciation to all readers, writers, contributors, carriers, and the entire Defence community for an incredible 2023. We have had the pleasure of sharing your accomplishments, adventures, operations, deployments, personal stories, and more throughout the past year and we couldn't be more honoured.

Thank you for trusting us with your experiences, allowing us to celebrate your Bravo Zulus with you, and above all, taking the time to learn more about the Canadian Armed Forces, Royal Canadian Navy and local CFB community, including its past, present, and future.

We look forward to another year of being your avenue for local Navy news and we can't wait to share all that 2024 will bring. We'll be back with our first edition of 2024 on Jan. 8. Until then, Happy Holidays and best wishes for a healthy and Happy New Year!

The Lookout Newspaper Team

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Wishing you a happy and healthy holiday season from PSP!

As the year comes to a close, and the holiday season is upon us, we reflect on the incredible year that Personnel Support Programs (PSP) has had, with many thanks to the PSP team and the extended Defence community at CFB Esquimalt.

As part of Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS), our teams have worked hard to support our CAF Members and families through our various departmental offerings of Community Recreation activities, Fitness and Sports (including that FORCE testing everyone looks forward to), Health Promotion, the Lookout Newspaper and Creative Services, and Messes!

We are grateful for the support and participation by all who engaged with us in one way or another this year, and we look forward to continuing to support the Defence Team in the year ahead.

From all of us at PSP, we wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season and look forward to another successful year together.





Helen Edley of Sharkz Coins and Sailor First Class Matthew Hartley, Naval Training Group HQ, display a Bos'n Trade Coin at the 40th Annual Bos'n Gathering, Dec. 1 at the Royal Canadian Legion, Prince Edward Branch 91 in Langford. Photo: Peter Mallett/Lookout Newspaper

Bos'ns have their day in the sun

Peter Mallett
Staff Writer

Several generations of boatswains (bos'n) gathered on Dec. 1 to reminisce and celebrate the trade during the 40th Annual Bos'ns Gathering.

According to Chief Petty Officer Second Class (CPO2) Eric Pohoney, a bos'n by trade, this year's attendees drove from as far away as Sayward, B.C.

"We haven't seen many people in a few years, so there was a lot of catching up to do," said CPO2 Pohoney, Deck Division Chief Petty Officer at Naval Fleet School (Pacific).

Known as boatswains, bosuns or bos'ns, these men and women are the Canadian Armed Forces seamanship specialists and unofficially known as 'Jacks of All Trades' aboard RCN vessels. They are responsible for the safe operations and maintenance of the ship's rigging, shipboard cargo and handling equipment, boats and small crafts.

This year's Annual Bos'ns Gathering included the first-ever draw for a Bos'n Trade Coin. Sailor First Class

(S1) Mathew Hartley's name was drawn from dozens of entrants to win the attractive keepsake made by Sharkz Coins of Esquimalt.

"It's very cool to win this trade coin," said S1 Hartley of Naval Training Group HQ. "I am going to be medically released soon so it's nice to have this keepsake."

The coin is stamped brass, features polished ungraded gold and silver, and depicts the bos'n trade badge on one side. On the flip side, the coin features symbols relevant to the trade, including a bos'n whistle, an anchor and a compass.

The Bos'ns Annual Gathering began in 1983 when the former Boatswain's Association established itself with senior Non-Commissioned Members. In 1985, Chief Petty Officer First Class Tom Eustace, former president, changed the membership to be more inclusive of the whole occupation, including all ranks of the trade, both serving and retired. In 1995, the association ceased operations but continued its tradition of an annual gathering.



The Bos'n Trade Coin by Sharkz Coins of Victoria is made of stamped brass, features polished ungraded gold and silver and contains a depiction of the boatswain's trade badge on one side. On the flip side the coin features symbols relevant to the trade including a boatswain's whistle, an anchor and a compass. Credit: Helen Edley/Sharkz Coins

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The Royal Canadian Navy crew of HMCS Nanaimo pose for a group photo with the Nanaimo Clippers hockey team at Frank Crane Arena, Nanaimo. Photo: Aviator Conor R.G. Munn

HMCS Nanaimo: Exercise Sea Ranger and Community Engagements

2Lt Vatsal Shah

PAO

In November, HMCS *Nanaimo* embarked on a significant journey, showcasing the Canadian Armed Forces' commitment to operational readiness and community engagement. Departing CFB Esquimalt on Nov. 6, the crew engaged in intensive force generation drills en route to Nanaimo, B.C.

Upon reaching Nanaimo, the crew attended a hockey game on Nov. 10 between the Nanaimo Clippers and Victoria Grizzlies. The crew's participation in the ceremonial puck drop marked the event, reflecting the close ties between the military and local communities. Continuing their engagement, HMCS *Nanaimo*'s sailors began their Remembrance Day observances by attending a breakfast and ceremony at the local legion. Following this, they participated in the Remembrance Day ceremonies and parade in Nanaimo, paying heartfelt tribute to Canada's veterans and fallen heroes.

On Nov. 12, the Nanaimo Clippers hockey team was welcomed aboard HMCS *Nanaimo* for a ship tour. This exchange offered a unique glimpse into naval life for the Clippers, fostering a mutual appreciation between the sailors and the sports team.

Exercise *Sea Ranger* was a focal point of the voyage. In collaboration with the 4th Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (4 CRPG), the exercise simulated a response to a natural disaster, highlighting the importance of preparedness and collaboration in disaster-prone regions such as British Columbia's coast. It involved realistic scenarios to test and enhance collaboration between HMCS *Nanaimo* and 4 CRPG, leveraging the Rangers' extensive local knowledge and understanding of the terrain. Their involvement in the simulation was realistic, culturally sensitive, and respectful of the local communities that might be affected in real-life scenarios. This exercise was more than a display of military skill; it represented the Canadian Armed Forces' commitment to protecting



and serving the community in times of need. The exercise concluded with a potluck-style dinner hosted by the Gitxaala Nation on Nov. 16. This event celebrated the partnership and mutual respect between the military and the communities they serve with HMCS *Nanaimo*, also presenting a special gift to the community.

The voyage took an exciting turn with the inclusion of Mike Downie, a prominent Canadian YouTuber. Downie's presence on board during the sail to Prince Rupert provided an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at naval operations, life at sea and the navy's versatility. His documentation of Exercise *Sea Ranger* with the 4 CRPG showcases unified response, preparedness, and military collaboration to potential disasters. This highlights the intersection of online media and military endeavours, offering a modern twist to military engagement.

HMCS *Nanaimo*'s visit to Stewart, B.C., on Nov. 18 highlighted its community-focused mission. The crew conducted tours for students, first responders, and notably, one of Canada's most active Junior Canadian Rangers programs (JCRs). In a significant meeting with Mayor Angela Brand Danuser, discussions centred on Stewart's isolation and potential natural disaster risks. A community dinner hosted by the Rangers and JCR brought together the ship's crew, local leadership, and first responders. The event featured meaningful exchanges, including presenting a historical book on Stewart, commemorative Ranger coins to HMCS *Nanaimo*'s command team and a Rangers Flag signed by all the Rangers for junior mess, symbolizing the strong bonds forged during this engagement.

Concluding the voyage, HMCS *Nanaimo* returned to Victoria on Nov. 22, wrapping up a journey marked by robust community engagement and operational exercises. The upcoming release of Mike Downie's videos in February 2024 are eagerly anticipated, as it will further showcase the remarkable experiences and accomplishments of HMCS *Nanaimo* and its crew during this expedition.



Nanaimo Clippers pose for a group photo after they received a tour of HMCS Nanaimo docked at Nanaimo Port. Photo: Aviator Conor R.G. Munn



(Left to Right) Private Godfrey Mason, Private Jordan Schmidt, Private Dallas Allison and Sailor Second Class Zach Chaudhry have disembarked HMCS Nanaimo and begin off loading equipment as part of Exercise *Sea Ranger*. Photo: Aviator Conor R.G. Munn



CFB Esquimalt's brilliant, significant holiday float returns

Peter Mallett
Staff Writer

Approximately 80,000 holiday lights and decorations on a giant holiday float resembling HMCS *Vancouver* brightened people's spirits and entire city blocks for this year's Santa Claus parade.

The float was the giant float at this year's Peninsula Co-Op Santa Claus Parade on Nov. 21. Hauled by an 18-wheel double-drop equipment trailer and truck, the float is the creation of CFB Esquimalt's Transport Electrical and Mechanical Engineering (TEME).

"People really can't believe the size of it as they see it coming from miles away," says Brian Auger, an operator at TEME's Special Purpose Vehicles department. "It creates such an incredibly brilliant light that you almost need

to wear sunglasses to see it."

The float also appeared at the IEOA Truck Parade and Food Drive on Dec. 2, the Esquimalt Festival of Lights on Dec. 3 and the 12 Days of Christmas event at the Base.

The model was created by Shipwrights of Fleet Maintenance Facility (FMF) Cape Breton six years ago. Each year, the ship's call letters are updated to represent a different Halifax-class ship. The lights, decorations and parade entry fees are paid for by non-public funds from the Office of CFB Esquimalt Base Commander.

Along with the standard outdoor holiday lights, the ship is adorned with icicle lights, stars, candy canes and a blow-up helicopter. A sandblaster that turns water into mist under high pressure, meant to look like illuminated smoke, adds to the special effects. Powering the display are two 2,000-watt generators and a third generator

to power air compressors for the ship's look-a-like guns mounted on the bow.

Updating the float's design takes six weeks. The team of six logs 600 hours to get the float up and running each year. Christopher Shipway, TEME's Special Purpose Vehicles supervisor who supports the project, says Auger is the 'driving force' behind the float.

"Brian works late nights and weekends, and his wife and son even come down to the maintenance yard and put in a few shifts to help in the effort," says Shipway.

The float has become an annual holiday tradition at the Base since it first appeared in 2015. Last year, the float's involvement in holiday festivals was cancelled because the truck and trailer used to haul it were required for other tasks. Shipway says the return of the float and its outreach power in the community is immeasurable.

"We were greatly missed last year

when we couldn't attend the parades," said Shipway. "The parade coordinators were purely delighted to learn we were returning for 2023."

Auger also says seeing the tradition rejuvenated just in time for the 2023 holidays is excellent. He estimates personally putting in over 100 hours each year to decorate the float and says it's worth it.

"People's eyes light up and I live for that moment," he said.

After all that yearly work on the float is completed, Auger doesn't return to his house for a long winter nap. Instead, he is working hard on the next project, creating an elaborate Christmas lights display in his home. Auger says this display is part of a friendly annual competition with one of his neighbours down the street, attracting visitors for miles each year.



Brian Auger, a civilian employee of the Transport Electrical and Mechanical Engineering (TEME) unit, connects the cords to light up CFB Esquimalt's Christmas Float ahead of the IEOA Truck Light Convoy and Food Drive. Photo: Peter Mallett/Lookout Newspaper





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A crew member of HMCS Vancouver uses a range finder for the approach to a United States Naval Ship. Photo: Corporal Alisa Strelley

CFB ESQUIMALT HOLIDAY HOURS AND SERVICE ADJUSTMENTS

BASE FOODS

- Closed for holiday meals:
Dec. 4 to Dec. 8
- Venture and DCTF Galley closed:
Dec 16 to Jan 7
- Base Rounders Shuttle not running:
Dec 16 to Jan 7



DENTAL



- Open regular hours (0715-1515) except Stat holidays
- After hours (24/7) contact via duty phone

CFHA

Closed for statutory holidays, normal service otherwise



BOR

- Claims with accountable advance requests are due by Dec. 6;
- ClaimsX claims to be finalized and paid out are due by Dec. 6; and
- Claims without advances to be initiated are due by Dec. 20.

BASE COMPTROLLER

- Cashier Section closed:
Dec 16 - Jan. 7
- Claims Section closed:
Dec. 23 - Jan. 3



PSP

- Dockyard Gym is closed Dec. 18 - Jan. 7
- Wurtele Arena facility hours: Specific facility booking will still be honoured
- CPAC will be back to regular hours Jan. 2
- CAF members can use the Esquimalt Recreation Centre Pool free of charge while Base Pool is closed; bring your Mil ID.
- Jan. 8 All facilities are back to regular business hours



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HMCS Vancouver



HMCS Ottawa



MV Asterix



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Replenishment at Sea.
Photo: Master Sailor (MS)
Marilou Villeneuve-Last





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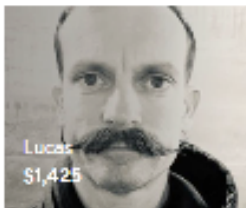
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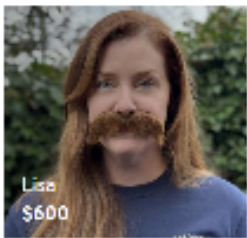
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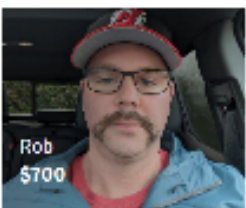
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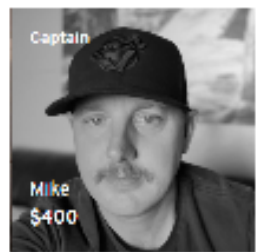


Jeff
\$505

CFB ESQUIMALT IT'S MOUSTACHE SEASON

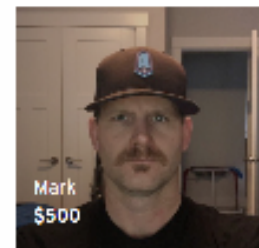
CFB Esquimalt Firefighters raised \$7765 that will be donated to Movember. The funding will go towards the three biggest health issues facing mens mental health. Suicide prevention, prostate cancer and testicular cancer.

FIREFIGHTERS

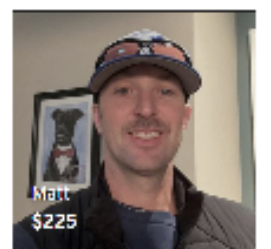


Captain

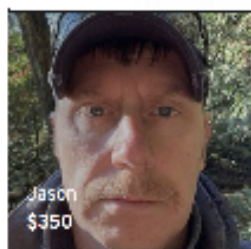
Mike
\$400



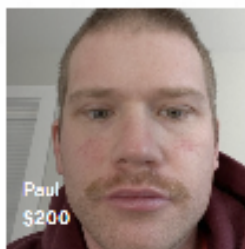
Mark
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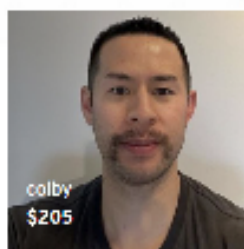
Matt
\$225



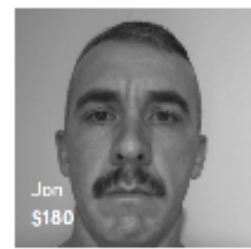
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Shannon Childs

Financial Planning SISIP Esquimalt

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Registered Retirement Savings add value to your financial plan during your working years and retirement, and play an important role in estate planning. An RRSP is versatile, allowing you to invest in various products and contribute an amount that works for your budget. Whenever you contribute to your RRSP, your taxable income reduces, allowing you to pay less tax now while also putting money away to grow, tax-sheltered, for the future. The money you save in your RRSP grows and earns interest, but you only pay income tax once you withdraw the money as income, ideally in retirement when you are in a lower tax bracket.

RRSPs can help you save even more when you strategically plan your RRSP withdrawals. Automatic contributions over time provide the benefit of dollar-cost averaging, the practice of investing a fixed dollar amount at regular, pre-determined intervals. Since the amount is fixed, you buy fewer mutual fund units when the prices are higher and more units when prices decrease.

RRSP season reminds us to evaluate our finances to ensure we are ready for the 2023 tax

season. With this two-month window, we can estimate our income for 2023 and make any last-minute contributions to help lower our income. Many of us saw changes to our pay, increases and back pay. Added income was a welcome addition, but for some individuals, this can bump us into the next tax bracket, thereby increasing the amount of tax owed. Ensure you are in the best position and contribute before the Feb. 29, 2024, deadline.

If you do not have an RRSP room, or your focus is purchasing a home, familiarize yourself with the New First Home Savings Account (FHSA). This registered plan allows qualified first-time Canadian home buyers to save and accumulate tax-free funds toward a house. Individuals can contribute \$8,000 annually for a maximum of \$40,000 for a first home purchase. Contributions are tax-deductible. The deadline to contribute to your FHSA to reduce your 2023 taxable income is Dec. 31. The plan allows you to carry forward unused contribution room up to a maximum of \$8,000 from previous years for as long as the account is open. You must have opened an account in 2023 to contribute \$16,000 the following year.

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International Day of People with Disabilities



(Left) Lieutenant-Commander (LCdr) Judith Harlock, Maritime Forces Pacific (MARPAC) Senior Staff Officer of Diversity, Culture Change and Inclusion, and Chris Kachanoski, Civilian Co-Chair of the MARPAC Defence Advisory Group for Persons With Disabilities (DAGPWD), stand at the speaker's podium during an event to commemorate the International Day of People with Disabilities (IDPWD) Nov. 30 at the Wardroom. The event included opening remarks by Captain (Navy) Peter Sproule, MARPAC Chief of Staff, LCdr Harlock, also CFB Esquimalt's Ambassador for Soldier On, and Kachanoski. Approximately 25 people attended the event,

hosted by the DAGPWD. Attendees enjoyed free snacks and refreshments and viewed Part 1 of Heart of Invictus, a six-part Netflix documentary series. The opening of the docuseries traced Prince Harry's wartime service in Afghanistan to his founding role in the games, along with Invictus Games athletes from Great Britain, Ukraine, the United States and other nations.

IDPWD is an international observance promoted by the United Nations since 1992 and aims to increase awareness and understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities.

Photo: Peter Mallett/Lookout Newspaper

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MEDIUM URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE



A Medium Search and Rescue (MUSAR) Member cuts a wedge with a chainsaw.
Photos: Sub-Lieutenant Wilson Ho, MARPAC Communications and Public Relations Officer



Medium Search and Rescue (MUSAR) Members work on the Airbag Maze.



Medium Search and Rescue (MUSAR) Members participate in Jaws of Life Jenga.

SLt Wilson Ho MARPAC PAO

On a brisk Wednesday morning on Nov. 29, members of the CFB Esquimalt's Medium Urban Search and Rescue (MUSAR) Team gathered at the MUSAR Compound near His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Venture* at Workpoint for their monthly training.

Monthly training allows team members to hone their search and rescue skills in complex and challenging scenarios. This month's training was the last one for 2023, and as such, everyone was split into three sub-teams for some friendly competition.

The first challenge was ropework. The teams were instructed to tie four knots blindfolded. Immediately after correctly tying the knots, the teams were handed various rope rescue gear and instructed to create pulley systems. This good refresher allowed the teams to practice knot-tying and review their mechanical advantage knowledge.

The second challenge was cutting wedges with a chainsaw, and the teams were instructed to cut wedges utilizing two-by-fours and four-by-fours. Not only did the teams have to make the wedges correctly, but they were also assessed on the proper chainsaw usage. Typically, wedges are made in a shop to specific dimensions. Still, this challenge allowed the teams to practice mitigating and reducing errors in their cuts and operating a chainsaw in the field.

The third challenge was the airbag maze. Airbags are a useful part of the MUSAR deployment kit, as they help lift and stabilize heavy items such as concrete. This challenge was a bigger version of Labyrinth, a game consisting of a box with a maze on the top and a marble.

The teams were instructed to tilt the Labyrinth using the airbags and guide a golf ball to holes drilled into the maze to earn points. This challenge was difficult for the teams, requiring precise movement and coordination to move the golf ball from point A to point B. However, after some trial and error, each team successfully moved the golf ball around and earned points.

The last challenge was the Jaws of Life Jenga, and the teams were instructed to play a standard game of Jenga but were only allowed to move the wooden blocks using the Jaws of Life. This challenge proved to be a lot of fun, as each team was given a hand-pump version of the Jaws of Life, so steady hands and excellent hand-eye coordination were necessary to accomplish the task.

At the debrief, one team was ultimately crowned the winner. However, although this month's training was a friendly competition, it highlighted the need to continue practicing search and rescue skills and techniques to avoid talent fade.

The CFB Esquimalt MUSAR Team continues actively recruiting members. The MUSAR team trains 20 days a year, on the last Wednesday of every month except in December, and conducts two week-long exercises each year. Prior qualifications or experiences are optional for joining.

Interested members are asked to go to the CFB Esquimalt MUSAR recruiting website on the DWAN (collaboration-navy.forces.mil.ca/sites/ESQ_USAR/SitePages/Home.aspx) and submit their applications (with Chain of Command authorization) via email to the indicated personnel on the webpage, or to glenn.cooper@forces.gc.ca.

Marking Time

Michael McWhinnie
NTG

Matthew Coates met his first child on a jetty in Halifax. His wife Meghan had given birth to Nathaniel while Matthew was deployed as Executive Officer of HMCS *Charlottetown* during the ship's NATO mission to Libya. Twelve years later, it is now dad's turn to assume parenting duties for Nathaniel and younger brother Jackson as Meghan, now Commanding Officer of HMCS *Vancouver*, leads a crew of 240 on operations in the Indo-Pacific Region.

The couple has traded these duties back and forth for years, during deployments, business trips and training stints. Their story is unique and, at the same time, common; just as the experiences of all military children are unique but with similarities.

The Coates' have relocated several times with postings from Halifax to Newport, Rhode Island, to Ottawa and now Esquimalt. Both boys are active in hockey. In addition to the obvious benefits of participating in team sport, hockey has been a constant for Jackson and Nathaniel when dealing with change. It has allowed them to make immediate social connections in new environments. They both play for the Victoria Admirals (U11 and U13 respectively) which, along with school, provides them a constructive focus while either parent is away. Nathaniel wears the captain's 'C' proudly and when prompted to list his on-ice strengths replied, 'I am good at defence and can score but the one thing I am known for is never giving up'. It's an especially beneficial quality for a military child.

When asked what they thought was different for military families

Nathaniel mentions Remembrance Day. He has memories of his mother and father taking turns supporting school ceremonies in uniform.

"It's important for us," he says. "More, I think than for some people." With both parents currently serving, it's easy to understand why.

When a hockey tournament precluded attending a public ceremony this year, Nathaniel created his own gesture of remembrance with tape and a Sharpie to compliment the poppy stickers both boys wear permanently affixed to their helmets.

Jackson says he likes Esquimalt but finds inviting school friends to visit his home inside HMC Dockyard awkward.

"We mostly hang out with kids here," he said gesturing to a small collection of residential housing units.

He begins recounting a tale about Christopher, his best friend from Ottawa. "I remember one time he biked to my home to give me a Lego Ninjago." As the story unfolds, he reveals it was a going away gift, his smile fades. His father is quick to comfort him.

"As a parent, you know and accept that your children will encounter adversity at various points in their lives," reflected Matthew. "It's tougher when your child's pain is a consequence of the parents' career choice."

Every military parent recognizes that leaving friends and family to restart in a new location is one of the most difficult aspects of being a military family for the children, who do it as well as the parents.

The other hardship, which affects everyone, is absence. Every frigate is crewed by 240 humans, each with their own family, friends and loved ones. When a ship deploys those rela-

tionships are disrupted, impacting children, spouses, and even pets.

In addition to keeping involved with school and hockey, Jackson and Nathaniel have an established ritual to mark their mother's absence.

"Every day we cut a strip of paper to make a chain," explains Jackson. "We keep them after and have a bunch saved."

His brother chimes in. "We number each one starting with #001 and count up, not down," he clarifies. The distinction is subtle. Counting up tallies the achievement of making it through successive days whereas counting down emphasizes the number of days separation left to endure.

Every household has its set of rituals and routines during deployments and homecomings; service couples are no exception. The boys were asked if they had a preference between which parent deploys and which stays home. They glanced at their father standing within earshot then looked at each other.

"We don't have a preference," declared Nathaniel. "The best is whichever is shortest." Jackson nods his agreement.

They say the thing they are looking forward to most is simply the restoration of what they enjoyed previously: their mother's presence and the opportunity to spend time with her.

HMC Ships *Vancouver*, *Ottawa*, and *MV Asterix* are due to return to Esquimalt in mid-December. The homecoming will entail 630 sailors, aviators and civilian mariners reuniting with spouses, sweethearts, children, extended family and friends. The Coates' will be there, one story amongst many.



Nathaniel (left) and Jackson (right) add a link every day their mother is away.



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Christmas Afar

Heather Cowley

MARPAC HQ

The year was 2006.

It was my first posting, my new military husband, my first Christmas away from home, and we were OUTCAN in Colorado Springs.

Many miles separated everything we knew and were familiar with, yet we were ready to engage, embrace and experience it all! Eagerly, we anticipated visions of diverse new encounters and memorable adventures in our new surroundings.

After settling in, the Christmas season began to draw near.

Visions of previous holiday activities danced in my mind. A warm crackling fire, roasting turkey aromas tempting everyone's taste buds, seasonal music, laughter filling every room, twinkling lights that accompanied the excitement and joy as a family gathered to celebrate the season and all it represents.

My husband and I chatted, reminiscing all these marvellous, magical memories; our thoughts and emotions flooded with fondness of festivities.

Yet, with each tantalizing tradition tempting us and as grateful for this posting as we were, inevitably, our hearts went homeward bound. The reality began to change into something unexpected.

I quickly realized that living far away from family, friends, and familiarity makes for an emotional rollercoaster at various times of the year.

December, I was discovering, was one of those times.

What does one do when everything associated with a season changes drastically and almost completely? How does one cope away from regular routines and familiar faces in a foreign country? With the inspirational highs came the emotional lows, and this distance was dauntingly depressing.

My husband and I were together, yet painfully alone.

They say home is where the heart is, so we had to find ways to make new Christmas memories in a new land. We were determined to have a better outlook and embrace this posting and all it offered.

"Let's make our own Christmas spirit and holiday vibe!" I said. "New traditions!"

So, we purchased seasonal ornamental items, decorated the home inside and out, and tried our best to make the merry atmosphere

abound. It worked for a bit, yet as the countdown to Christmas continued, we realized the festive frilliness was fleeting and fading fast. With heaviness of heart and feeling isolated, we realized the seasonal sadness began settling on our spirits again. There must be something more?!

At this time, my memory Rolodex recalled reflective words I'd heard from long ago, "You are only truly happiest when you reach out and help others!"

I let the enticing intelligence of those wise words inhabit and linger in my thoughts.

Then a favourite quote, written by author Mary Ann Evans, came to mind: "What do we live for, if not to make life less difficult for each other?"

Especially for this time of year, those long-ago written words were poignant, powerful and profound!

Hope was now planted inside me. The excitement started to grow. How could my husband and I change our loneliness? It was so simple. Stop thinking of ourselves and our situation and focus on others, someone else and their needs! That was it!

We focused on other Canadians living in our area who were alone in the seclusion far from home. Anyone who wished to gather in friendship would find it with us, in our house! We'd open our

hearts and homes, to those needing fellowship and comfort. We prepared our home for Christmas camaraderie and conversation!

I will always cherish the lesson I learned from our first OUTCAN Christmas.

The big day approached, and although only one person arrived for dinner that first year, one was always more than none! The joy and excitement on that soldier's face, the newly formed friendship, and the treasured time together as a Canadian military family have stayed with me all these years.

Such simple sharing on that Christmas day was better than any storebought gift could bring. From now on, whether we celebrate Christmas near or afar, we will open our homes and welcome those who were all alone. We've also taken it a step further, and instead of giving frivolous gifts, we donate that money to families and children in need.

It is true, you are only truly happiest when you reach out and help others.

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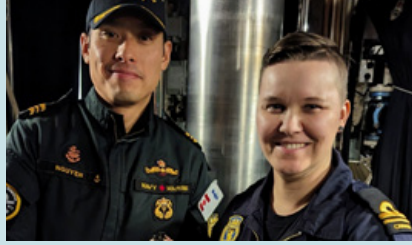
Sailor First Class Skylar Bolton is awarded their Submarine SONAR Operator Qualification (AILO) by Lieutenant-Commander Harrison Nguyen-Huynh on Nov. 20.



Master Sailor Gabriel Choiniere is promoted to their current rank by Lieutenant-Commander Harrison Nguyen-Huynh on Nov. 20.



Sailor First Class Jacques Dufort and Sailor First Class Kyle Beecker are awarded their Dolphins by Lieutenant-Commander Harrison Nguyen-Huynh on Nov. 20.



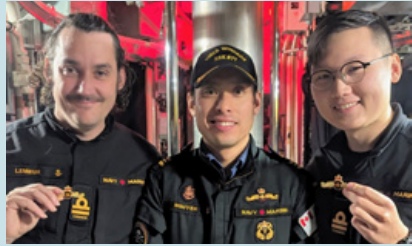
Sub-Lieutenant Alexandra Duplessis is awarded their Gun Metal SSI by Lieutenant-Commander Harrison Nguyen-Huynh on Nov. 20.



Captain Michael Jerrott is awarded their Dolphins by Lieutenant-Commander Harrison Nguyen-Huynh on Nov. 16.



Master Sailor Raymond Kwan and Sailor Second Class John Goodbody are awarded their Dolphins by Lieutenant-Commander Harrison Nguyen-Huynh on Nov. 10.



Lieutenant (Navy) Francois Lemieux and Lieutenant (Navy) Benjamin Hong are awarded their Dolphins by Lieutenant-Commander Harrison Nguyen-Huynh on Nov. 22.



Sailor First Class Graham Peters is awarded their Dolphins by Lieutenant-Commander Harrison Nguyen-Huynh on Nov. 23.



Veteran Families have their own brand of courage.

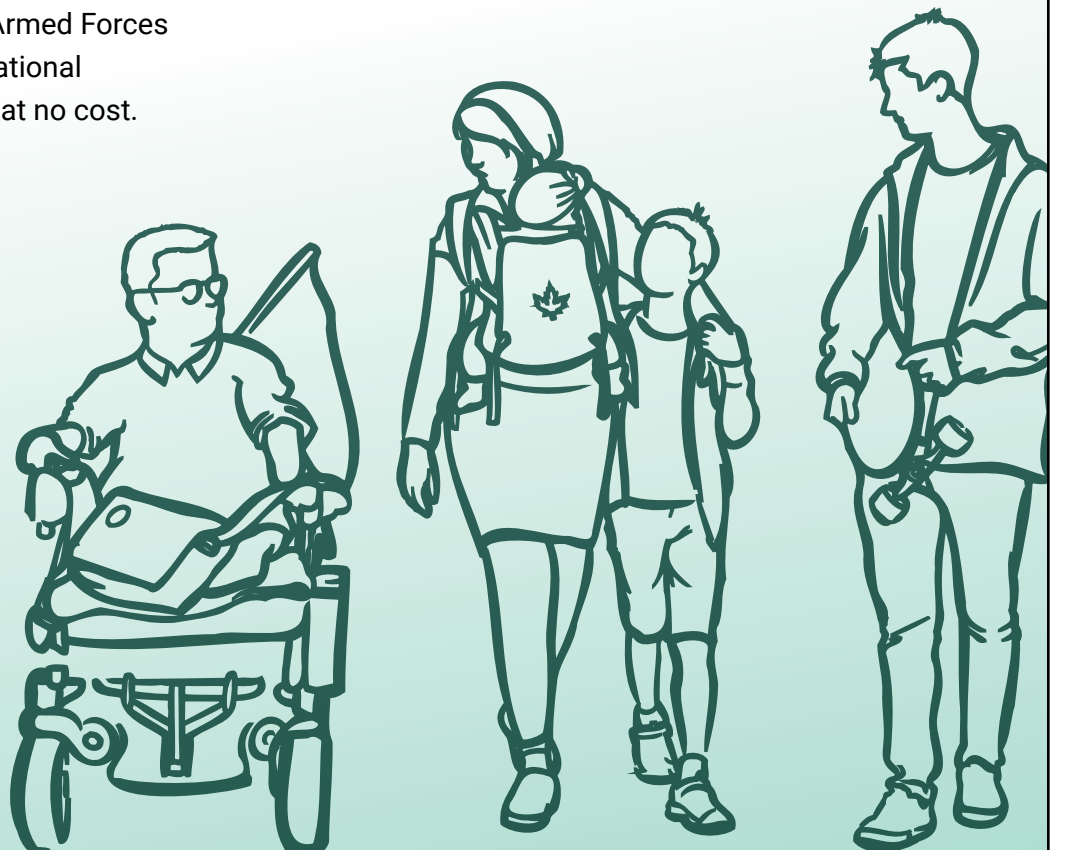
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