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Sailor 1st Class Kevin Kraljak of HMCS Ottawa stands with his family, Liviah and Siobhan, during the homecoming celebration on Mar. 24.

Photo: Sailor 1st Class Brendan McLoughlin, MARPAC Imaging Services

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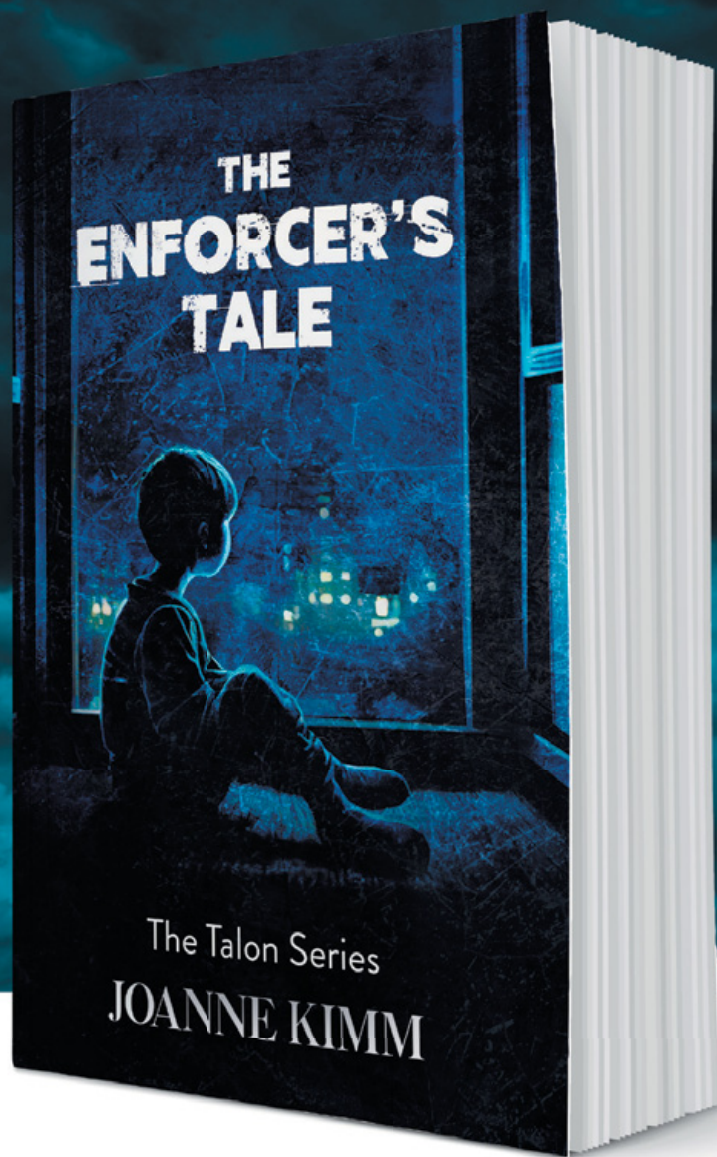
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THE ENFORCER'S TALE

Canadian author Joanne Kimm's award-winning YA Dystopian novel, *The Enforcer's Tale*, embodies a coming-of-age story that deals with loss and betrayal.

Joanne is an award winning, Canadian author who has published books in varying genres. Her love of writing was sparked when she was young. Growing up in a military family inspired her love of travel and culture, which is infused in much of her writing. She feels at home when creating new worlds for readers to enjoy.

Her children's book, *George: A Memoir* has helped many grieve pet loss. She supports several causes, notably animal rescue and child sponsorship in impoverished countries. Joanne lives outside Halifax, Nova Scotia with her family and two cats.

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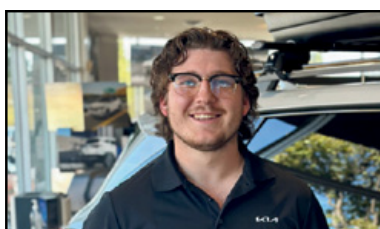
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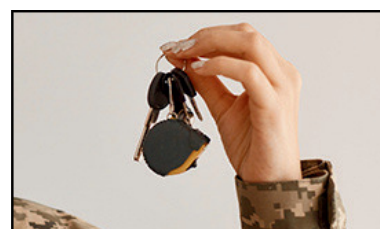
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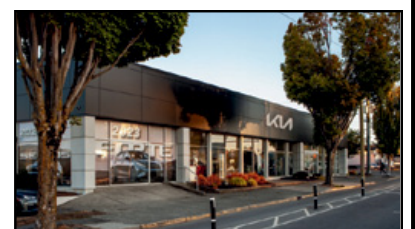
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RCN Graduates First Marine Systems Technician Course in Major Trade Overhaul

Capt Pedram Mohyeddin
MARPAQ PAO

The Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) marked a historic milestone with the graduation of the first cohort of the Marine Systems Technician (MST) course at Naval Fleet School Pacific. This event signals the first step towards the official transition to a new, more specialized training system that replaces the broad Marine Technician trade with two distinct occupations.

The ceremony held at the school theatre was attended by senior naval leadership, including: Commodore Dave Mazur, Commander of Canadian Fleet Pacific; Captain (Navy) Mike Stefanson, Commander of Naval Training Group; Commander Meryl Sponder, Naval Fleet School Pacific Commandant; and Chief Petty Officer 1st Class André Aubry, Naval Personnel Training

Group Chief.

This course marks the beginning of a new career path for naval technicians. It is the first of several training courses that Marine Systems Technicians will complete throughout their careers, designed to build expertise in their respective mechanical or electrical specializations.

A RETURN TO SPECIALIZATION

This transition represents a return to a more focused approach to naval technical training. Before 2017, the RCN maintained three separate trades: Hull Technician, Marine Electrician, and Marine Engineer. In an effort to provide flexibility to operational units, these trades were amalgamated into a single Marine Technician trade. However, over time, it became clear that this broad approach resulted in training programs that were too long and lacked sufficient spe-

cialization to provide expertise required for naval operations.

"The Marine Technician trade required sailors to be trained in a vast amount of subject matter," says Lieutenant-Commander Gregory Oickle, Deputy Commandant of Naval Fleet School Pacific. "The Navy recognized the need for true experts rather than a 'jack of all trades,' which led us to rethink and restructure the trade."

With this in mind, the RCN will soon split the Marine Technician trade into Marine Systems Mechanical Technician and Marine Systems Electrical Technician, allowing sailors to focus on either mechanical or electrical systems from the start of their careers.

NEW TRAINING, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

One of the most significant changes in the new training system is how recruits are

introduced to these trades. Previously, candidates interested in naval technical work would enter as Marine Technicians, without a clear distinction between mechanical and electrical roles. Now, the recruitment process reflects the new specializations, making it easier for potential candidates to find the trade that aligns with their interests and skills.

"If someone is interested in being an electrician and searches for that trade, Marine Systems Electrical Technician will now appear as an option," explained Cdr Sponder. "This ensures that recruits are getting into the right trade from day one." By offering clear specializations, the RCN hopes to attract individuals with strong mechanical or electrical aptitudes who may have previously overlooked a career in the Navy due to the broad nature of the old Marine Technician trade.

The restructuring of the training pipeline involved a complete overhaul of course content. All career courses for both occupations are being designed holistically, ensuring a seamless progression from entry-level training to leadership positions. The changes eliminate redundant training and increase hands-on experi-

ence, aligning with the RCN's goal of producing highly skilled technicians.

The previous courses were heavily reliant on digital learning and classroom time. Now, training is far more hands-on, with decreased emphasis on online or classroom instruction. This ensures sailors are getting real, practical experience before being posted to a ship.

PRIDE IN THE TRADE

For many sailors, the shift to specialization brings a greater sense of direction and pride in their work. It is not uncommon to have Marine Technicians talk about their original specialization before amalgamation. This move hopes to boost the pride in the trade in the community.

"There's a lot of pride in being an expert at something," said CPO1 Aubry to the new graduates. "We want you to feel that pride in your trade. This is your profession, and you will be the ones shaping its culture for years to come."

The graduation ceremony was not only a celebration for the newly qualified Marine Systems Technicians but also for the instructors, curriculum developers, and leaders who worked tirelessly to bring this

transformation to life.

"This has been years in the making, and I could not be prouder of everyone who contributed to building this new training system," says Cdr Sponder. "It took an immense amount of research, planning, and dedication to create these courses and provide our technicians with the training they need to succeed in the fleet."

LOOKING AHEAD

As the RCN continues to roll out this new training model, more courses will follow, ensuring that future Marine Systems Technicians receive consistent, high-quality training throughout their careers. The Navy expects this shift to enhance operational readiness and improve technical expertise across the fleet.

For the graduates of this inaugural course, this ceremony marks the start of their careers in a trade that is evolving to meet the demands of modern naval operations. With clearer career paths and enhanced hands-on training, these new technicians are better prepared than ever to serve Canada's Navy with skill and dedication.

A Canadian Son's Mission to Preserve His Father's Story of World War II Survival

Archana Cini
Lookout Newspaper

Without the courage of the Canadian military, poignant Second World War stories like the Lowy family's might never have been told.

Meet the late Leopold Lowy, Canada's last known surviving Mengele twin, and his son, Richard K. Lowy, the author determined to preserve his father's story of survival. As a sixteen-year-old child, Leopold endured over six-and-a-half months of Josef Mengele's infamous experiments in Auschwitz until the concentration camp's liberation on Jan. 27, 1945. Decades later, the self-publication of *Kalman & Leopold: Surviving Mengele's Auschwitz* is son Richard's meticulously edited transcription of his own father's outlast of the Holocaust.

"My father Leopold always carried an intensity about him, an unspoken weight that I felt but never understood as a child," Richard Lowy admitted. "Now, I know that his survival wasn't just about making it out of Auschwitz—it was actually about navigating the rest of

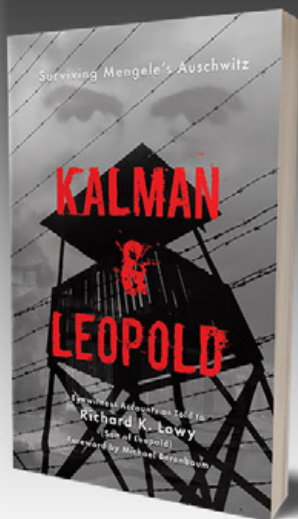
his life with the burden of that survival." Lowy recounts how reintegrating into society, becoming proud Canadians, nor starting a family and career could take away his father's intensity.

The memoir itself is one of few in existence that authentically takes readers into the operations of a Schutzstaffel (SS) guard post. Additionally, it's an incredibly accurate account of Mengele's Auschwitz built through the testimonies of survivors Leopold Lowy and Kalman Braun and recounted as their authentic 16- and 14-year-old selves.

"Building this publication made me really go back in time and see my father as a

boy—one who had to make conscious, calculated choices to keep himself and those around him alive. It made history very real to me," Lowy said.

By publishing *Kalman & Leopold: Surviving Mengele's Auschwitz*, Lowy honours not just his own father's experience, but the people of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and Allied forces who fought against fascism. Lowy shared, "Their sacrifices is what ensured that stories like my father's could be told—not as stories of loss, but as a testament to survival and hope instead."





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CFB ESQUIMALT, VICTORIA, B.C.
A Division of Personnel Support Programs

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Reach out to us, we'd love to hear your feedback and story ideas!

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8 New Tax Numbers for 2025

SISIP Financial Esquimalt

As a member of the Canadian Armed Forces, staying on top of tax updates isn't just about meeting obligations - it's about maximizing opportunities. With 2025 bringing several important changes to the tax rules, it's the perfect time to check in with a SISIP Advisor to see how they could impact your achieving your financial goals.

\$16,129

The Updated Basic Personal Amount

In 2025, the Basic Personal Amount (BPA) - the income every Canadian can earn tax-free - will increase to \$16,129, up from \$15,000 in 2024. This adjustment means slightly more of your income will be protected from federal taxes. For CAF members, this translates to more take-home pay, providing a small but welcome boost to your budget.

\$9,872

The Higher Disability Tax Credit Threshold

The Disability Tax Credit (DTC) threshold - the amount that qualifies for tax relief under the DTC - will increase to \$9,872 in 2025, up from \$9,428. This adjustment means enhanced financial support for those living with disabilities. For CAF members and their families, it could result in greater tax savings and improved financial flexibility where it's needed most.

50%

The Capital Gains Inclusion Rate Is No Longer Increasing

In a welcome policy change, the federal government announced that the inclusion rate for taxable capital gains will no longer increase to 67% on amounts over \$250,000 in 2025. That means if you sell investments like stocks or real estate in 2025, you can

still expect to pay tax on only half of any profit you make. Keep in mind that the sale of your principal residence remains completely exempt.

\$32,490

The New RRSP Contribution Limit

In 2025, the maximum Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) contribution amount is \$32,490. Keep in mind that your personal contribution room is calculated as 18% of your earned income from the previous year minus any pension adjustments, which means that anyone who participates in the CAF pension has a lower limit.

Nonetheless, maximizing your RRSP contributions is a powerful way to save for the future while reducing your taxable income today. Even smaller contributions can make a big difference over time, thanks to the magic of compounding.

Note: The deadline to contribute for the 2024 tax year is Monday, March 3, 2025.

\$71,300

The New CPP Maximum Pensionable Earnings

The Year's Maximum Pensionable Earnings (YMPE) under the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) will rise to \$71,300 in 2025, up from \$68,500. While this means higher contributions from your pay, it also enhances your future CPP retirement benefits. This is especially important for military members planning for life after

service.

\$65,700

The New EI Maximum Insurable Earnings

Employment Insurance (EI) maximum insurable earnings will increase to \$65,700 in 2025. The maximum employee contribution will now be \$1,077, while employers will contribute \$1,508. If you have any self-employed or secondary income, these changes could affect your planning.

\$95

The Increased Federal Carbon Tax

As of April 1, 2025, the federal carbon tax will rise to \$95 per tonne of greenhouse gas emissions, up from \$80. This increase will likely result in higher prices for gasoline, home heating, and other fuels. It's a good time to revisit energy-saving practices to minimize the impact on your household expenses.

APRIL 15, 2025

The End of the Temporary GST/HST Holiday

Take advantage of the two-month GST/HST holiday on select items, including prepared meals, children's clothing, and some beverages. This temporary tax break ends on April 15, 2025. It's a small window, but every bit of savings can add up, especially for families.

If you have any questions or would like tailored advice, please reach out to your local SISIP Advisor. With the right strategies, you can navigate these changes and get further ahead financially in 2025.

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Dr. Andrea Holwegner.
Photo sourced.

Nutrition Month

Bringing Healthy Eating to Military Families

Archana Cini
Lookout Newspaper

Since 1982, Nutrition Month has encouraged Canadians to make informed food choices and develop balanced eating habits. For military families, building sustainable nutrition habits can be extra challenging when juggling deployments, training schedules, unpredictable routines, children, and other demands.

To tackle this, MARPAC Health and Wellness Strategy brought nourishment front and center to CFB Esquimalt this March by facilitating healthy cooking workshops, informative webinars, fruit handouts, and affordable dining options that empowered service members. As part of the 2025 Nutrition Month theme “Nourish to Flourish,” Andrea Holwegner, registered dietitian of 20+ years,

led a speaker’s bureau on nutrition trends and healthy eating tips. Known across Canada as the *Chocolate Loving Nutritionist*, Holwegner presented valuable tips to simplify nourishment for Defence community members and military families.

To Holwegner, nutrition doesn’t have to be complicated. “Fueling your body with the right nutrients is easier than we think and makes all the difference in our energy and performance,” she emphasized. According to Holwegner, here are some of the small key changes Defence community families can make for long-term nutritional impact:

Add to the plate instead of taking away: Holwegner shares that nutrition isn’t about restriction, but rather

abundance. She suggests powering up meals by including small, nutrient-packed additions like nuts, cheese, seeds, fermented foods like yogurt or sauerkraut, and chopped vegetables or fruit that’s already in the fridge.

Try ingredient prepping instead: To military families, sometimes taking the time to meal-prep isn’t feasible. To combat this, Holwegner recommends ingredient prepping. Chopping vegetables for later, cooking and refrigerating grains in bulk, pre-washing leafy greens, or portioning protein and snacks makes cooking later easier without sacrificing nutrition.

Utilize our local community: When barriers make it difficult to access whole foods, Holwegner turns to the community. By

keeping an eye on grocery flyers, visiting community fridges, and leveraging local produce apps, military families can spot discounts on staples, access fresh foods, and find affordable produce nearby.

Use an easy formula for a balanced plate or meal: To Holwegner, nutrition isn’t about perfection, but simplification. “Add a grain or starch, some fruit and/or vegetables, and a source of protein to the plate or box. If you can, incorporate healthy fat or a source of dairy,” she adds. This simple formula helps ensure meals are both nourishing and satisfying with minimal thought.

“Nutrition can’t look perfect when our lives sure aren’t,” Holwegner shared openly. “It’s about doing what we can and feeling the changes.”



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HMCS OTTAWA: A Homecoming *That Meant More Than Coming Home*



Archana Cini
Lookout Newspaper

"There isn't a single thing about him I haven't missed," said Simone Littledale in the rain, her eyes glued to a military vessel cutting through the Salish Sea.

After a five-month deployment in the Indo-Pacific, Mar. 24 marked the return of Littledale's spouse with the approximately 240 sailors and crew serving aboard His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Ottawa*, a Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) Halifax-class frigate, to CFB Esquimalt.

Reflecting on how she stayed connected to her partner during his deployment, Littledale shared,

"We love to send each other pictures of things that are important to us - I'll send shots of how the garden's coming along, and he'll send me the sea. We're also both big bird watchers, so sometimes we'll just send each other bird photos without context. It keeps us feeling close." During its time at sea, the frigate engaged in anti-smuggling operations, maritime security patrols, and multinational exercises with allies from Japan, Australia, and the United States as part of Operations HORIZON and NEON.

The *Ottawa's* homecoming turned a rainy Esquimalt morning into a day of joy as the Base's new B-Jetty came alive

with dancing children, live music, the smell of hot sandwiches and coffee, and the vibrant colours of homemade signs and flower bouquets.

To Lisa Thompson, the biggest blessing of the past five months was not having to resort to attaching handwritten letters to carrier pigeons like those before her. "We relied a lot on FaceTime and text to feel close across the sea," she shared. "Every aspect of him is so important to me, and he's been very missed."

Cheers were euphoric as rope and anchor finally secured the *Ottawa* and its crew on island soil once more, the cold replaced by the warmth of reunion. To some local Defence commun-

ity members, the homecoming meant even more than a personal reunion. Instead, it was a reminder of the strength and solidarity of the naval community.

"This crowd reminds me that I'm not alone in this experience, and that so many others have been thinking about these sailors just as much as I have," one shared. "It means a lot to see people showing up, photographs taken by media, stories exchanged, tears of joy shed. It's a reminder that we're a community, not just people welcoming only those we love."

After months of service at sea, the crew of the *HMCS Ottawa* was finally home.



Members of HMCS *Ottawa* with friends and family as they welcome them back. Photo: Sailor 1st Class Brendan McLoughlin, MARPAC Imaging services



Sailor 1st Class Samuel Dunn of HMCS *Ottawa* and family members during the homecoming. Photo: Sailor 1st Class Brendan McLoughlin, MARPAC Imaging services



Sailors welcome home their fellow sailors during the HMCS *Ottawa* homecoming at B-Jetty. Photo: S1 Alexander Koller, MARPAC Imaging Services



HMCS *Ottawa's* arrival during its homecoming at B-Jetty, CFB Esquimalt on Mar. 24. Photo: Sailor 1st Class Alexander Koller, MARPAC Imaging Services

*"It's a reminder that
we're a community ..."*

Above: Petty Officer 1st Class James Merriam, shares the First Kiss with wife, Sherry Merriam during the homecoming. Photo: Sailor 2nd Class Jordan Schilstra, MARPAC Imaging Services

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We Salute Our Fleet

98.5 OCEAN

TM



Corporal Kimmee Meigs of the Military Police Unit at CFB Esquimalt shows Paige, 6, what it's like to be an MP while being part of the community.



Commodore David Mazur, Commander Canadian Fleet Pacific, congratulates Sailor 1st Class Sterling Fox during the Sailor of the Year 2024 Presentation on HMCS Max Bernays' bridge on Mar. 21. Photo: Sailor 2nd Class Jordan Schilstra, MARPAC Imaging Services

Celebrating Hard Work and the Future of the Navy

Archana Cini
Lookout Newspaper

When Sailor First Class (S1) Sterling Fox realized he was to be formally recognized as the Canadian Fleet Pacific's (CFP) 2024 Sailor of the Year, his reaction was pure shock. "I think I was so surprised because I genuinely don't seek out attention in any form," S1 Fox shared openly. To him, the honour wasn't just an individual achievement, but an important reflection of the hardworking people around him. Fox was officially honoured with the title and Commander's coin on Mar. 21 amongst cheers from family, crew, and other Defense community members. S1 Fox has spent the last year and a half aboard HMCS Max Bernays, where he and

his shipmates faced the many challenges of bringing a new Arctic and Offshore Patrol Ship (AOPS) into service and preparing it for deployment—an experience he calls the most fulfilling period of his career to date. "Real learning often happens on the ship," Fox smiled, crediting all his fleet mates and mentors for their camaraderie and support. Carefully selected as 2024's Sailor of the Year from a pool of over 2,000 CFP sailors, S1 Fox is well-known amongst peers for not just his technical proficiency, but also his dedication to mentorship. With over 750 new Sailor Third Class (S3) recruits poised to enter the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) in 2025, the future of the RCN remains bright. Clustered at the command bridge of Max Bernays for the ceremony, shipmates united on the importance of mentors like S1 Fox in instilling values of motivation and discipline into upcoming generations of sailors. When asked what advice he would give to young sailors, S1 Fox didn't hesitate to provide his powerful one-word answer: attitude. "Have a positive mindset every single day and really show up. Be genuinely unafraid to work hard and have pride in your contributions and learning." To Fox, pride isn't about the recognition that comes with the work you do—it's about the care you have for it instead. "You can go unexpectedly far when you care about what you do every day. It's what drives me to try and be the best version of myself every day," he shared, showing great enthusiasm for the future of the RCN.



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VETERANS IN VICTORIA:

Jim Hanson

"From the cold regions of Germany to the well-guarded bases of Western Europe, Jim was part of the Canadian legacy that helped keep the peace during one of the most dangerous periods in history."

Shannon Donnelly
Broadmead Care

James (Jim) Hanson was born in 1938 in Ottawa and served in the Canadian military for more than 30 years. His journey began in 1961 when he joined the militia in Kingston, later joining the regular forces in 1962 with the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. In 1965, Jim was sent to Soest, Germany as a Lieutenant with the 4 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group. This was one of Canada's key NATO deployments during the Cold War. Jim started out leading a platoon of 40 soldiers who fixed wheeled trucks, but his role quickly expanded. By 1966, he was in charge of the Forward Repair Platoon, which maintained critical military equipment like tanks and armored personnel carriers.

The Cold War created a tense environment. Jim and his team trained for the worst-case scenario – nuclear conflict. As part of NATO's defense strategy, Jim's brigade was stationed in a key position along the front line, ready to respond if war broke out.

One significant event in Jim's career was the Prague Spring of 1968. Political tensions were high, and there was lots of uncertainty. Jim recalls that Canada played an important role in NATO forces, despite being smaller than other countries. At a time when some countries still had a draftee army, Canada's professional, all-volunteer army was highly respected.

Nuclear warfare was a constant focus

in their training. Jim and his team were prepared to operate Honest John rocket launchers and handle nuclear ammunition supply points if necessary.

The Honest John was an American rocket designed to carry a nuclear warhead, key to NATO's Cold War deterrence strategy. As a NATO member, Canada helped maintain and operate it to defend Western Europe in case of conflict with the Soviet Union.

In the early 1970s, Jim moved to Canadian Forces Base Lahr, where he worked with infantry units and had a role in overseeing logistics and operations. By the time he returned to Canada, Jim had advanced through the ranks and retired Brigadier General in August 1991.

Throughout his career, Jim witnessed many military and political changes. During the Cold War, Canada's military played a vital role, both on the frontlines and in logistical operations. Jim recognized that Canada's presence in Europe wasn't just strategic – it showed Canada's strong commitment to the defence of freedom alongside its NATO allies.

In a 2007 interview through the Vault UVIC Libraries, Jim spoke about the deep bond he felt with his fellow soldiers and his love for his country. For him, military service wasn't just a job; it was a way of life. Even though Canada was far from the heart of the Cold War, its contributions to the defence of the Western world played a pivotal role.

Following his retirement from the



Army, Jim pursued a Master's degree in War Studies at the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario. After graduating, he was invited to take on part-time teaching assignments at RMC. In 1994, Jim and his wife Alice moved to Toronto, where he began working with the Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies. After retirement, they relocated to the West Coast and settled in Victoria, where Jim and Alice have remained committed to their community, especially through their support of veterans at Veterans Memorial Lodge.

Despite suffering from cognitive decline, Jim still lives at home and participates in the Veteran Health Centre program. This program, a partnership between Broadmead Care and Veterans Affairs Canada, provides essential health, social, and recreational services to veterans who live in the community.

It is an honour to have the opportunity to share some of the moments that shaped Jim's life experience. From the cold regions of Germany to the well-guarded bases of Western Europe, Jim was part of the Canadian legacy that helped keep the peace during one of the most dangerous periods in history.



Jim Hanson with his wife, Alice. Photo supplied



Congratulations!

Sonar Op RQ-S3 Qualifications

Presented by Lieutenant (Navy) Helmeczy
on Mar. 21 at CFB Esquimalt

Photos: Photos: Sailor 1st Class Alexander Koller, MARPAC Imaging Services



Sailor Third Class Abbott receives their Sonar Op RQ-S3 Session 0020 Course Certificate.



Sailor 3rd Class Cayanan receives their Sonar Op RQ-S3 Session 0020 Course Certificate.



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Sailor 1st Class Gagnon receives their Sonar Op RQ-S3 Session 0020 Course Certificate.



Sailor 3rd Class Jacques receives their Sonar Op RQ-S3 Session 0020 Course Certificate.



Sailor 3rd Class O'Reilly-Chappelle receives their Sonar Op RQ-S3 Session 0020 Course Certificate.



Sailor 3rd Class Ryan receives their Sonar Op RQ-S3 Session 0020 Course Certificate.



Sailor 3rd Class Stefan receives their Sonar Op RQ-S3 Session 0020 Course Certificate.



Sailor 3rd Class Jacques receives their Sonar Op RQ-S3 Session 0020 Top Student Certificate.



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