



ASSETS AND PLATFORMS

The Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) is a medium-sized navy, with the ability to conduct operations around the world – normally with partners and allies. If you have read the other Briefing Notes from this series, you’ll have seen that the RCN plays (or can play) a number of roles in Canadian security, from fishery patrols to war-fighting. This Briefing Note looks at the ships, and other assets, that the RCN has to play these roles.

Halifax-Class Frigates

Canada has 12 *Halifax*-class patrol frigates, considered the backbone of the Royal Canadian Navy. The ships were planned in the 1980s and built in the 1990s (See Briefing Note about the frigates for more details). They were originally designed for anti-submarine warfare and anti-surface warfare in the open ocean, however they are now used by the navy for a wide variety of tasks. These tasks include deterring unfriendly military forces or hostile actors from using Canadian waters, operating internationally with allies to conduct exercises and operations (for example, counter-piracy, counter-drug, counter-terrorism operations have all been undertaken by the frigates in recent years), helping the Canadian Coast Guard monitor domestic fisheries, and conducting sovereignty patrols.

<i>Halifax-class</i>	
HMCS <i>Halifax</i>	HMCS <i>Calgary</i>
HMCS <i>Vancouver</i>	HMCS <i>Fredericton</i>
HMCS <i>Ville de Québec</i>	HMCS <i>Winnipeg</i>
HMCS <i>Toronto</i>	HMCS <i>St. John's</i>
HMCS <i>Regina</i>	HMCS <i>Charlottetown</i>
HMCS <i>Montréal</i>	HMCS <i>Ottawa</i>

Victoria-Class Submarines

The RCN’s submarine fleet is made up of four *Victoria*-class diesel-electric boats. (Note that submarines are not referred to as ships but rather as boats.) These vessels were purchased from Great Britain in 1998 and have undergone significant upgrades and retrofitting. (See Briefing Note #5 about submarines for more detail.) Today, these submarines are extremely active, participating in exercises and operations in both the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans in 2018. They are a capable strategic asset that adds to the navy’s surveillance, deterrence and warfare capabilities.

<i>Victoria-class</i>	
HMCS <i>Victoria</i>	HMCS <i>Corner Brook</i>
HMCS <i>Windsor</i>	HMCS <i>Chicoutimi</i>

Kingston-Class Coastal Defence Vessels

Canada has 12 *Kingston*-class Maritime Coastal Defence Vessels (MCDVs). These ships were built in the late 1990s and are designed for coastal surveillance and support to law enforcement. Although designed for coastal operations in Canadian waters, in recent years they have travelled beyond the coasts of Canada, participating for example in counter-drug operations in the Caribbean and visits to West Africa for naval diplomacy and capacity-building purposes. These vessels are lightly armed but they are excellent assets for the navy.

<i>Kingston-class</i>	
HMCS <i>Glace Bay</i>	HMCS <i>Whitehorse</i>
HMCS <i>Glace Bay</i>	HMCS <i>Goose Bay</i>
HMCS <i>Nanaimo</i>	HMCS <i>Moncton</i>
HMCS <i>Edmonton</i>	HMCS <i>Brandon</i>
HMCS <i>Shawinigan</i>	HMCS <i>Saskatoon</i>
HMCS <i>Yellowknife</i>	HMCS <i>Summerside</i>

Replenishment Ships

After the retirement/decommissioning of the last of the *Protecteur*-class replenishment vessels – referred to as auxiliary oiler replenishment (AORs) ships – in 2016, Canada was left without an at-sea replenishment capability. In response, MV *Asterix* was acquired as an interim solution. (See Briefing Note #11 for more details on this.) Leased by the navy until permanent replacements are built as part of the National Shipbuilding Strategy and can enter service, *Asterix* supports RCN operations overseas and extends the range of RCN operations.

Replenishment
MV <i>Asterix</i> (interim)

Orca-Class Patrol Vessels

The *Orca*-class is a class of eight RCN training tenders, acquired in the mid-2000s, and based on the West Coast. These craft serve as training platforms and patrol ships, and they also conduct search and rescue operations, or aid ships in distress, if necessary. Because they are not commissioned vessels they do not receive the HMCS prefix.

Orca-Class	
<i>Orca</i> (PCT 55)	<i>Wolf</i> (PCT 59)
<i>Raven</i> (PCT 56)	<i>Grizzly</i> (PCT 60)
<i>Caribou</i> (PCT 57)	<i>Cougar</i> (PCT 61)
<i>Renard</i> (PCT 58)	<i>Moose</i> (PCT 62)

Sailing Craft

HMCS *Oriole* is a sailing ketch used by the RCN as a training vessel. The longest serving vessel in the navy, *Oriole* was built in 1921, and has served as a training and recruiting vessel for the navy after the Second World War. *Oriole* was officially commissioned HMCS *Oriole* in 1952.

HMCS *Oriole*

Naval Personnel

The assets and platforms of the RCN would not be terribly useful without personnel. There are more than 8,000 full-time RCN personnel (Regular Forces), and their training and dedication make the RCN what it is. There are around 3,000 civilians employed by the RCN to take care of, for example, ship maintenance and administration.

As well there are approximately 3,600 Reserve Force personnel. The Canadian Naval Reserve consists of individuals working for the navy in the evening and weekends and during time away from their civilian professions. This force dates back to the First World War and has long been a cornerstone of the RCN's efforts to train qualified sailors for naval service. The Naval Reserve provides the country with a pool of skilled personnel that can respond to domestic emergencies, be mobilized in an emergency, or used to support day-to-day operations – primarily by manning the country's *Kingston*-class patrol vessels. Canadian Reserve divisions are officially christened as ships of Her Majesty's Canadian Navy.

Canadian Naval Reserve Divisions		
Ship	City	Province
HMCS <i>Brunswicker</i>	Saint John	New Brunswick
HMCS <i>Cabot</i>	St. John's	Newfoundland
HMCS <i>Carleton</i>	Ottawa	Ontario
HMCS <i>Cataraqui</i>	Kingston	Ontario
HMCS <i>Champlain</i>	Chicoutimi	Quebec
HMCS <i>Chippawa</i>	Winnipeg	Manitoba
HMCS <i>Discovery</i>	Vancouver	British Columbia
HMCS <i>Donnacona</i>	Montreal	Quebec
HMCS <i>Griffon</i>	Thunder Bay	Ontario
HMCS <i>Hunter</i>	Windsor	Ontario

HMCS <i>D'Iberville</i>	Rimouski	Quebec
HMCS <i>Jolliet</i>	Sept-Îles	Quebec
HMCS <i>Malahat</i>	Victoria	British Columbia
HMCS <i>Montcalm</i>	Quebec City	Quebec
HMCS <i>Nonsuch</i>	Edmonton	Alberta
HMCS <i>Prevost</i>	London	Ontario
HMCS <i>Queen</i>	Regina	Saskatchewan
HMCS <i>Queen Charlotte</i>	Charlottetown	Prince Edward Island
HMCS <i>Radisson</i>	Trois-Rivières	Quebec
HMCS <i>Scotian</i>	Halifax	Nova Scotia
HMCS <i>Star</i>	Hamilton	Ontario
HMCS <i>Tecumseh</i>	Calgary	Alberta
HMCS <i>Unicorn</i>	Saskatoon	Saskatchewan
HMCS <i>York</i>	Toronto	Ontario

Bases

Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt

CFB Esquimalt is the second largest military base in Canada and home to one of the country's three naval formations. Located just west of Victoria, B.C., CFB Esquimalt was first established as a military installation by the Royal Navy in 1855 and has been serving the Royal Canadian Navy since its inception in 1910. Today, the base is responsible for providing support services to all ships as well as over 6000 military and civilian personnel of both Maritime Forces Pacific.¹

Canadian Forces Base Halifax

Canadian Forces Base Halifax provides materiel, administrative, logistical and operational support to Joint Task Force Atlantic, Maritime Forces Atlantic and lodger units. The Base Commander's team is made up of military and civilian members headed by five Branch Heads, which provide construction engineering, logistics (including transportation and electro-mechanical engineering), administration, safety and environmental management and base operations (including Military Police and security). CFB Halifax is the largest military base in Canada, serving a workforce of approximately 7,500 military and 2,300 civilian members.²

Canadian Forces Station St. John's

Canadian Forces Station St. John's is an operational support station situated in St. John's, N.L. It employs approximately 85 military and civilian personnel with the purpose of providing operational and logistical support to 11 lodger units and essential support to military ships visiting the City of St. John's. The Station is also responsible for providing immediate response to crisis situations on the Avalon Peninsula.³

Training Centre Venture

Venture is the Naval Officers Training Centre at Work Point in Esquimalt, B.C. dedicated to the professional education and development of Canada's future naval leaders. In addition to Maritime Surface and Sub-surface (MARS) Officer core occupation training, Venture also conducts Fleet Navigating Officer, Arctic Operations, Command Development, Navigator Yeoman, and Ship Handling courses.⁴

The Naval Training Development Centre (Pacific)

NTDC (P) was established to develop and continually improve the training required for the Naval Defence Team. Its curriculum produces engineers, technicians, as well as Naval Technical and Warfare Officers.⁵

Fleet Maintenance Facility Cape Breton

One of the largest enclosed buildings on North America's west coast, the 35,000-m² Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) Fleet Maintenance Facility (FMF) Cape Breton, at CFB Esquimalt, is nearing the finish line. Once the final phase is complete in 2019, the Pacific FMF will handle every aspect of maritime maintenance – including fabrication, maintenance and repair, all to keep the Navy's west coast fleet operational.⁶

Fleet Maintenance Facility Cape Scott

Located within Her Majesty's Canadian Dockyard Halifax, the Fleet Maintenance Facility Cape Scott is the largest military industrial complex in Canada. The command team combines military and civilian personnel who support the Commander of Maritime Forces Atlantic by providing engineering and maintenance services to the 15 vessels that form the Canadian Atlantic Fleet.⁷

Notes

- ¹ Canada, RCN, "Maritime Forces Pacific," <http://www.navy-marine.forces.gc.ca/en/about/structure-marpac-home.page>
- ² Canada RCN, "MARLANT Units," <http://www.navy-marine.forces.gc.ca/en/about/structure-marlant-units.page>
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Canada, RCN, "Maritime Forces Pacific Units," <http://www.navy-marine.forces.gc.ca/en/about/structure-marpac-units.page>
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Canada, DND, "FMC Cape Breton Shop Consolidation Project," Backgrounder (July 2003)
- ⁷ Canada RCN, "MARLANT Units," <http://www.navy-marine.forces.gc.ca/en/about/structure-marlant-units.page>