



## What does the RCN do?

If you have read Briefing Notes #1 and #2, you will know that Canada is a maritime country. And if you have Briefing Note #3, you will see how the work that the Royal Canadian Navy has done over the past year, as discussed here, illustrates the classic roles of a navy – undertaking constabulary, diplomatic and warfighting roles, the three elements of Booth’s Triangle.

In defence of Canada’s national interests, the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) deploys around the world on a diverse mission set across the spectrum. This briefing note offers a snapshot of some of the RCN’s major exercises and operations in late 2018 and early 2019 to provide a glimpse at the kinds of missions the Canadian navy undertakes and the demanding deployment schedule of the fleet.

### Domestic Support

In August 2018, the RCN participated in *Operation Nanook*, a whole-of-government exercise designed to familiarize Canadian navy personnel with northern conditions, improve cooperation between the armed forces and other government departments, and prepare for safety and security events in the rapidly changing Arctic. During *Nanook*, HMCS *Charlottetown* and *Kingston* worked with the army, air force, coast guard and RCMP, as well as several other government departments and the northern territories to rehearse a government response to a major air disaster, visited a number of Arctic communities, transported Canadian Rangers to their patrol locations, and practiced gunnery with the Danish frigate HDMS *Vaederren* in the Labrador Sea.

*Operation Nanook* is an example of the important support that the RCN is ready to provide for other government departments and agencies, which rely on these ships to fulfill a wide variety of civilian safety and security mandates in areas like the far North.

### Global Security and Working with Allies

The most important mission of the RCN is the protection of Canada. The defence of Canada is linked to the strength and unity of NATO and Canada’s partnerships around the world. For that reason, the RCN regularly conducts joint exercises with its partners to enhance interoperability and improve communication. Regular overseas deployments with allies familiarize crews with other countries’ procedures and provide an opportunity to practice interoperability. These exercises are valuable training but are also undertaken to demonstrate capacity and presence in strategically important areas, project Canadian sea power in support of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and enhance regional stability.

In 2018 and the first months of 2019, Canada participated in a number of major multinational exercises around the world. We'll just give a few examples here.

The first example is participation in the biennial Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC) held in the summer of 2018. Her Majesty's Canadian Ships *Vancouver*, *Ottawa*, *Yellowknife* and *Whitehorse* from the Pacific fleet, participated. This exercise, of which Canada is a founding member, is the biggest maritime exercise in the world, bringing together ships from allies and partner states from across the Pacific. Making its debut at RIMPAC 2018 was the RCN's leased supply ship Naval Replenishment Unit (NRU) *Asterix*.

One of the main goals of RIMPAC is to foster and sustain those cooperative relationships which play a role in helping to ensure the safety and security of sea lanes and the world's interconnected oceans. The training program is vast: sailors, soldiers and aviators from participating states hone their gunnery, missile, anti-submarine and air defence skills, as well as their abilities in amphibious, counter-piracy, mine clearance, explosive ordnance disposal, diving and salvage operations.

A second example is *Operation Reassurance* another of the RCN's recurring deployments. Canada has provided a frigate since 2014. This operation takes place in Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean as an element of NATO's program of deterrence established after Russia's invasion/annexation of Ukraine in 2014. These measures aim to reinforce NATO's collective defence, show allied solidarity and deter aggression.

In January 2019, HMCS *Toronto* replaced HMCS *Ville de Québec* in *Operation Reassurance*, and *Ville de Québec* returned to Canada after a six month deployment. The deployment of *Ville de Québec* marked the first operational deployment of the new Cyclone helicopters.

While embedded with Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG 2), *Toronto* undertook a number of readiness activities. In March 2019, *Toronto* participated in Dynamic Manta 2019, an at-sea maritime engagement as part of the ship's deployment on *Operation Reassurance*. During Dynamic Manta, *Toronto* and allies from nine other states operated off the Sicilian coast to enhance interoperability and hone their anti-submarine skillsets in all three dimensions (air, surface and sub-surface). In April 2019 *Toronto* participated in Sea Shield 2019, an at-sea engagement in the Black Sea to enhance interoperability with allies and partners from the task group. Over 20 ships from Romania, Bulgaria, Canada, Greece, the Netherlands and Turkey worked with maritime patrol aircraft from the United States and Turkey to conduct scenarios designed to enhance readiness, joint warfare tactics, and techniques used against underwater, surface and airborne threats.

A third example comes from the West Coast of Canada. On 6 February 2019, HMCS *Regina*, accompanied by Naval Replenishment Unit (NRU) *Asterix*, departed from Esquimalt, BC, for a deployment to the Asia-Pacific and Middle East regions. The ships will work with partner navies to enhance military cooperation and partnerships particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. This represents Canada's third deployment to the region under *Operation Projection*, following the deployment of HMCS *Calgary* from August to December 2018 and HMCS *Vancouver* from April to June 2018.

But first, HMCS *Regina* and NRU *Asterix*, plus a CP-140 Aurora aircraft, joined the Canadian-led Combined Task Force 150 (CTF 150) in March 2019. They conducted maritime patrols in the waters of the Persian Gulf and off the east coast of Africa. On 6 April 2019, *Regina* seized 2,596 kilograms of hashish while deployed in the Indian Ocean. On 15 April *Regina* conducted a second interdiction, seizing more than 150 bags containing 3,019 kg of hashish off the coast of Oman. On 18 April, the ship and crew conducted their third successful interdiction of the month, seizing 1,502 kg of hashish and 10.5 kg of heroin.

Our fourth example is the RCN participation in Exercise Joint Warrior 19, off the coast of the United Kingdom starting 30 March 2019. This exercise involved warships, submarines, aircraft and helicopters from 13 countries. The Joint Warrior exercises run through a range of scenarios, including crisis and conflict situations that could be realistically encountered in operations – including disputed territory, terrorist activity, piracy.

Our final example is the deployment of HMC Ships *Kingston* and *Shawinigan* as part of another element of *Operation Projection*. The ships departed from Halifax for West Africa on 22 January 2019, as part of a three-month deployment. The ships operated both at sea and ashore fostering relationships with partner navies and working to enhance maritime security and stability in the Gulf of Guinea and North Africa regions. Their deployment included engagements to build partner capacity, promote maritime security and foster relationships in the region by conducting stakeholder engagement and community relations activities. The ships provided support to regional capacity-building events Obangame Express 19 and Phoenix Express 19, aimed at assisting West and North African states to develop domestic maritime security capabilities. Port visits included Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire; Contonou, Benin; Lome, Togo; Takoradi, Ghana; and Dakar, Senegal. The crews of *Shawinigan* and *Kingston* also spoke at the Lycée Moderne de Jeunes Filles in Côte d'Ivoire, visited the Sekondi School for deaf children in Ghana, and were the first RCN ships to visit Togo. Both ships arrived back in Halifax on 26 April 2019.

## Support for Law Enforcement

Assisting law enforcement in interdicting smugglers, terrorists and dangerous substances on the seas is an important navy role in support of broader national security objectives. One of the most important regions for interdiction is the Caribbean, where drugs from South America are smuggled to the United States and Canada.

The Canadian navy regularly deploys on *Operation Caribbe*, and has been doing so in partnership with the US Coast Guard and American law enforcement agencies since 2006. HMCS *Moncton* returned to Halifax on 11 December 2018 after a two-month deployment patrolling Caribbean waters to counter illicit trafficking. HMC Ships *Edmonton* and *Nanaimo* returned to Esquimalt on 18 December 2018 after two months patrolling the eastern Pacific. This was after HMCS *Edmonton* helped the US Coast Guard offload over 7,000 kilograms of seized narcotics on 7 December.

In mid-March 2019 HMC Ships *Whitehorse* and *Yellowknife* deployed to the eastern Pacific Ocean on *Operation Caribe*. In addition to trying stop the flow of illicit drugs into North America, the ships have also conducted a cooperative deployment with the United States, and rescued seven endangered sea turtles in four separate occasions.

### **A Versatile Force**

This snapshot offers a quick look at some of the major deployments and tasks undertaken by the Royal Canadian Navy during a typical year. While far from a comprehensive account, the diverse set of missions and operational locales provide some insight into the flexibility and pace of Canadian naval operations.