



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 #13 about the frigates for more details). These are warships 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.

Halifax-class	
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 submarines were purchased from Great Britain in 1998 and have undergone significant upgrades and retrofitting. (See Briefing Note #5 about submarines for more detail.) After a slow start, these submarines were extremely active in 2018, participating in exercises and operations in both the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans. They were less active in 2019 and 2020 as they entered a cycle of maintenance and the pandemic slowed international operations. However, HMCS *Victoria* returned to sea for trials in September 2020 on the West Coast after it underwent routine maintenance, repairs and upgrades. HMCS *Corner Brook* finished its extended docking work period in June 2021 and after sea trials will return to operational status. And HMCS *Windsor* finished a maintenance

period in March 2021 and returned to sea, most recently participating in Exercise Cutlass Fury in September 2021. The submarines are a capable strategic asset that adds to the navy’s surveillance, deterrence and warfare capabilities.

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

Arctic and Offshore Patrol Ships

Under the National Shipbuilding Strategy (NSS) (see Briefing Note #6 for more information), the RCN is to receive six Arctic and Offshore Patrol Ships. The first ship was delivered to the navy on 31 July 2020 and, after undergoing sea trials, in June 2021 HMCS *Harry DeWolf* was commissioned into the RCN. *Harry DeWolf* began its first major operation starting in August 2021. (The ship will circumnavigate North America, starting from Halifax, going through the Northwest Passage, then south along the coast and through the Panama Canal back to Halifax.) The second AOPS (the future HMCS *Margaret Brooke*) completed builder’s sea trials and was handed over to the RCN in July 2021 to begin RCN trials. The third ship, the future HMCS *Max Bernays*, is undergoing final assembly in preparation for launch later in 2021. The keel of the future HMCS *William Hall* was laid in February 2021 and construction of the bow, mid-ship and stern mega-blocks is underway. The first steel of the fifth ship (the future HMCS *Frédéric Rolette*) was cut in May 2021. =

As the name suggests, these ships are multi-purpose. In the summer months, they will spend time in the Arctic, and the rest of the year they will undertake other assignments, for example, counter-narcotic patrols. The AOPS will be the largest ship in the RCN until the delivery of the Joint Support Ships in the mid-2020s. Despite their large size, they will carry a small crew of 45, with the capacity to support up to 40 additional personnel (see Briefing Note #14 for more on these ships).

Harry DeWolf-class (commissioned and planned)
HMCS <i>Harry DeWolf</i> (AOPS 30) - COMMISSIONED
HMCS <i>Margaret Brooke</i> (AOPS 431)
HMCS <i>Max Bernays</i> (AOPS 432)
HMCS <i>William Hall</i> (AOPS 433)
HMCS <i>Frédéric Rolette</i> (AOPS 434)
HMCS <i>Robert Hampton Gray</i> (AOPS 435)

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, for example participating in counter-drug operations in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific off Central America, and visiting West Africa for naval diplomacy and capacity-building purposes. These vessels are lightly armed but they are excellent assets for the navy.

Kingston-class	
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* (also referred to as Naval Replenishment Unit/NRU *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, *Asterix* supports RCN operations overseas and extends the range of RCN operations.

As part of the National Shipbuilding Strategy, two Joint Support Ships (JSS) are being built for the RCN. As of spring 2021 construction of the first JSS is well advanced, with over 90% of the ship’s blocks currently in production. It is expected that the first ship will be completed by 2023 (and the second JSS to be completed in 2025).

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 since after the Second World War. *Oriole* was officially commissioned HMCS *Oriole* in 1952.

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 (MCDVs). 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

Canadian Forces Base (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, BC, 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 6,000 military and civilian personnel of Maritime Forces Pacific.¹

Canadian Forces Base Halifax

Canadian Forces Base (CFB) 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 of Maritime Forces Atlantic.²

Canadian Forces Station St. John’s

Canadian Forces Station St. John’s is an operational support station situated in St. John’s, NL. 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 Centres

Venture is the Naval Officers Training Centre at Work Point in Esquimalt, BC. It is 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.

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.

The Naval Training Development Centre (Pacific) (NTDC (P)) was established to develop and continually improve the training required for the navy. Its curriculum produces engineers, technicians, as well as naval warfare officers.

Fleet Maintenance Facilities

Fleet Maintenance Facility (FMF) Cape Breton

Newly completed Fleet Maintenance Facility (FMF) Cape Breton, at CFB Esquimalt, is one of the largest enclosed buildings on North America's West Coast – at 35,000 square metres. With the final phase of construction in 2019, the Pacific FMF now will handle every aspect of maritime maintenance, including fabrication, maintenance and repair, to keep the RCN's West Coast fleet operational.

Fleet Maintenance Facility Cape Scott

Located within Her Majesty's Canadian Dockyard Halifax, the Fleet Maintenance Facility (FMF) 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.