



Naval Association of Canada Association navale du Canada

2024 – 2025 REPORT OF NAC NAVAL AFFAIRS PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

1 June 2025

This report summarizes Naval Affairs (NA) activities since the last National AGM in June 2024.

National Outreach Program

In support of National, the Ottawa Branch organized five online Guest Speaker Evenings and luncheons with a guest speaker over the course of 2024-2025. The online events were open to all branches and guests and continued to achieve good levels of attendance. As in 2023, the calendar year culminated with having Commander RCN, Vice-Admiral Topshee as the guest speaker on 21 November 2024. Below is a summary table of the Guest Speaker events from June 2024 to June 2025.

Month	Speaker	Topic	Registered/ Attended
June	No Meeting.	No Meeting due to Branch and Annual AGMs.	0/0
July	No Meeting.	Summer Break.	0/0
August	No Meeting.	Summer Break.	0/0
September	Rear-Admiral (Ret'd) Simon Page, Assoc ADM, PSPC.	Our 25 September Fall Luncheon guest speaker, Rear-Admiral (Ret'd) Simon Page, had a few words for those present about the progress of the National Shipbuilding Strategy and spoke of some important delivery milestones coming up in 2025. The presence of the Deputy Commander RCN, RAdm Steve Waddell was also much appreciated as the Admiral took the time to give some of his perspectives on recapitalization of the RCN Fleets.	53/48
October	Capt(N) Christopher Chalmers, RCN	On 15 Oct our online Guest Speaker Capt(N) Chris Chalmers provided a very strategic level and most interesting talk on	?/30

	Director Naval Logistics	naval logistics in the fluid 21st century maritime environment.	
November	Vice-Admiral Angus Topshee, CRCN	Our guest speaker on 21 November was CRCN, Vice-Admiral Angus Topshee, who provided his annual update to the NAC through an interview by Branch President Tim Addison, which later appeared in STARSHELL. The Admiral stated that he expects to remain at the helm for another year.	148/89
December	No Meeting	No meeting due to the holiday season break.	0/0
January	No Meeting	No meeting as no speaker available.	0/0
February	Linas Pilypaitis, BMO Financial Advisor	Our 19 February Branch Member and BMO Nesbitt Burns Financial Advisor Linas Pilypaitis provided a talk on “Investment Strategies in Tumultuous Times”. Linas’ comments were very informative and well received. A recording of his presentation is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibkmHrfH_8w .	31/17
March	Mr Peter Croal, Naval Historian	On 27 March the Ottawa Branch held a luncheon which included a presentation by naval historian, Mr. Peter Croal, whose father served in HMCS Labrador and chronicled her operations in the Arctic in the 1950s. Given the recent focus on Arctic security this was quite topical.	?/40
April	No Meeting	No meeting was held due to BOA Reception preparations by the branch.	0/0
May	No Meeting	No meeting as no speaker was available.	0/0
June	No Meeting	No meeting planned do to National and Branch AGMs.	0/0

Outreach Pamphlet

A pamphlet based on one created by Calgary Branch and shared with Ottawa, was updated, printed and distributed at the Ottawa Branch BOA Reception on 29 April. It was also distributed at CANSEC using the RCN’s booth, which gave it exposure to serving members who dropped by during the trade show.

Canadian Maritime Security Network (CMSN)

Most of 2024 was spent finding research assistants and establishing the CMSN, which is a collaborative effort lead by Dr. Adam Lajeunesse of St Francis Xavier University, Dr Rob Huebert of the University of Calgary, and several Canadian and international organizations. Work is now progressing under Adam's leadership with many of the initiatives described below being executed by Adam and his team. A Seapower Conference is being planned for 26-28 September 2025, which will bring together noteworthy participants to discuss global maritime security challenges with emphasis on the Canadian situation. The CMSN and the MINDS grant is also supporting additional print runs of the NAC NA "In Extremis" paper and issues of STARSHELL which were distributed at events like the Ottawa Branch BOA Reception, and CANSEC. This summer these publications will also be mailed to members of the new government and parliamentary/senate committees that focus on defence and security and distributed at the fall Seapower Conference.

NAC Strategic Naval Affairs Paper

The Naval Affairs paper, "In Extremis", which had its origins in a workshop in Calgary in November 2023, was finalized in May 2024 and posted on the NAC Website. Social media and email were used to draw attention to it, over the summer and fall of 2024 with positive results. VAdm (Ret'd) Dusty Miller wrote a highly supportive comment which appeared online on the National Newswatch Website. Over the course of 2024, the paper was distributed to politicians and government officials prior to the publication of the Government's defence policy statement "Our North Strong and Free" and referenced in other NAC publications.

STARSHELL

Three editions of STARSHELL (Summer 2024, Winter 2025 and Spring of 2025) have been published over the past year. The editions have evolved into a mix of commentary on RCN activities, crown projects and follow ups on issues raised in "In Extremis", historical articles and updates on individual branch activities. The most recent issue was printed and distributed at CANSEC.

Briefing Notes and Encyclopedia

NAC Briefing Notes have undergone a further review by the CMSN team and update and have been consolidated into a "Canadian Naval Encyclopedia" which is now available on the National website.

Niobe Papers

The Canadian Forces Command and Staff Course continues to generate papers written by naval officers that have a maritime theme. Adam reviews the papers, picks the most relevant and then works with the authors to update and republished the papers on the CMSN and NAC websites. Several new papers were published using this modus operandi in 2024-2025.

Social Media and NAC Websites

NAC has a Facebook account, a LinkedIn account and a Twitter/X account, all of which are used to promote the organization, and its values and to indirectly educate Canadians on the importance of naval forces to defence and security, by drawing attention to RCN activities, naval affairs related writings and events. After social media was discussed at the 5/6 April retreat in Ottawa the Director Naval Affairs initiated a “Tiger Team” to take responsibility for these accounts and look at how to best utilize them to achieve objectives. Thus far with contributions from Ottawa Branch members Roger Litwiller, Barry Walter, Kate Todd and Scott Hausberg from Calgary, and Adam Lajeunesse, progress is being made and traffic on these social media sites is increasing. A similar “Tiger Team” approach to updating and maintaining the Wild Apricot and National websites will be looked at later this year.

Interview with Vice-Admiral (Ret’d) Nigel Brodeur

In January 2025 the Director Naval Affairs travelled to Victoria and interviewed Vice-Admiral Brodeur to chronicle his family’s relationship with the Navy from the time it was established in 1910; his numerous contributions to the development of the RCN; and capture his thoughts on the current state of the Navy. The Admiral’s service encompassed a great period of change, experimentation, and modernization in the Fleet. He was very involved in the development of the operational requirement for what would become the Canadian Patrol Frigate and was involved in the assessment of a number of more unconventional ship types, such as hovercraft, in the 1970s. Retiring from the CAF in the mid-1980s, he has remained involved in various organizations to ensure the Government of Canada is reminded of the need for a navy. The results of the interview will be included in serial form in STARSHELL and in Volume 12 of “Salty Dips”, discussed below.

NAC- RCN Mentorship Program

Over 2023-24 the RCN Project had progressed to a point where purchase of a software application by DND to support the program was imminent. However, the project stalled again in late 2024 due to internal procurement issues. The most recent information from the RCN is that a larger CAF wide mentorship program is under consideration and the RCN project, which was to start with a pilot project or proof of concept, has been put in abeyance. The RCN has indicated that it values NAC participation and will look to us to provide mentors once a project gets underway. NAC Ottawa is maintaining a listening watch, thanks to branch member Phil Dana.

Relationship with the Navy League of Canada

The Director Naval Affairs attended several NLOC social events over the past 12 months and the Director of NLOC’s Maritime Affairs Alliance Ms Louise Mercier continues to mention the NAC’s Naval Affairs program in some of her messaging. Ms Mercier also assisted NAC Ottawa by sponsoring the BOA Reception on 29 April 2025 at the Rideau Club, where she is a member. NAC Ottawa members participated in the NLOC Navy and Coast Guard Day on the Hill in November 2024. The President of the NLOC RAdm (Ret’d) Jennifer Bennett has been visible in

Ottawa over the past 12 months, although there has been no action on updating the NAC – NLOC MOU.

Relationship with Canadian Defence Association (CDA) Institute

The Director Naval Affairs attended the CDA Annual General Meeting and the CDA Institute Conference 4-6 March 2025. This was facilitated by paying annual dues to CDA Institute this year which allowed the Director to attend the conference at no cost, and other members to attend at a reduced rate. The conference was an excellent networking opportunity and a chance to promote the NAC to RCN members and others present over the two days. Additionally, the NAC now appears to be getting better traction with CDA Institute with several invitations to Naval Affairs to participate in online “podcasts” in 2024-25 and more in the offing. As explained in last year’s report, many CDA member associations benefit financially from a relationship with the TD Bank and RBC regarding personal insurance. In 2024 an attempt to establish a relationship with TD Bank did not achieve any results. In early 2025 based on a reference from CDA Institute staff, RBC was contacted with the same intent. Although a local business development manager attended and spoke briefly at an Ottawa Branch luncheon in March, again there was no follow-up on this relationship, despite several attempts including invitations to the BOA Reception.

Children’s Books

There have been no recent sales to report.

Salty Dips

The Salty Dips (SD) Committee continued to meet over the past 12 months and progress content for a new volume. Volume 11 produced three years ago was somewhat of a return to themes from previous publication, in terms of highlighting social change in the RCN since the 1950’s. Similarly, the next publication, Volume 12 will provide those unfamiliar with service life a broad overview of the opportunities and challenges that accompany life in the RCN and the Canadian Armed Forces over the period from the early 1950s through to the early 2000’s. It is scheduled to go to print in the Fall of this year. The SD committee has submitted a request for a grant from the Endowment Fund to support publication of this edition.

The Admirals’ Medal

The Admirals’ Medal for 2024 was awarded to Mr Robert G. “Rob” Allan for his outstanding leadership, both nationally and internationally, in the design of commercial working vessels of all types but with a particular focus on the specialized tugboat market. Three generations of “Robert Allans” have developed the business to the point where the company can credibly claim to have designed a significant portion of the world market of this unique and important sector of naval architecture and maritime engineering. The oldest privately-owned consulting naval architectural firm in Canada, Robert Allan Limited recently contributed directly to enhancing the Royal Canadian Navy’s capabilities by designing the four large new tugboats that were built in Quebec under the National Shipbuilding Strategy and recently delivered to the Dockyards on both coasts. Commodore Dave Mazur, Commander Canadian Fleet Pacific, made the

presentation on behalf of NAC and the RCN. Vice-Admiral (Ret'd) Nigel Brodeur, one of the founders of the award, was also present.

Fundraising in support of Naval Affairs – 2025 BOA Reception

The 2024 BOA Gala Dinner, organized and executed by the Ottawa Branch was a huge success and contributed significant excess revenue towards supporting the Naval Affairs program. In 2025 instead of a formal dinner Ottawa Branch decided to celebrate and commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the end of the Battle of the Atlantic with a reception, which was held on 29 April 2025. Held at the Rideau Club as mentioned above, the event proved to be a huge success with some refreshments, excellent h'ors d'oeuvres and outstanding camaraderie. There were 166 members and guests present, including some senior RCN folks, serving and retired and sixteen RMC Naval Cadets who were hosted by our sponsors. The sponsors were well represented, and the evening was a huge social/networking event. The event generated approximately \$50,000 in excess revenue which will be used to offset expenses for Branch events that support Naval affairs, with a portion (to be determined once all payments are received and bills are paid) which will be transferred to National to support other aspects of Naval Affairs and NAC operations. The Ottawa Branch has already decided to hold a reception again next year.

Conclusion

Although online monthly guest speaker events proved popular during and after COVID, they are becoming more challenging to plan and execute. Additionally, some of the more senior RCN, Coast Guard and government officials have expressed a preference to doing presentations with an in-person audience at a luncheon event. As such, Naval Affairs will move in that direction with a hybrid approach to the guest speaker program. The CMSN experienced somewhat of a slow start; however, thanks to the tireless efforts of Adam Lajeunesse, it is now delivering on a number of fronts and the fall Seapower Conference is expected to be a seminal event. MINDS funding through the CMSN for some naval affairs activities is also helping defray expenses. Ottawa Branch has been very supportive of naval affairs activities over the year, and the contributions of the branch are very much appreciated. This approach to planning and executing the naval affairs program will continue going forward.

(O.S.B.)

Tim Addison
(former) Director - Naval Affairs
Naval Association of Canada