



# Naval Association of Canada Association navale du Canada

## 2025 – 2026 REPORT OF NAC NAVAL AFFAIRS PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

1 June 2026

This report summarizes Naval Affairs (NA) activities since the last National AGM in June 2025.

### 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 2025-2026. The online events were open to all branches and guests and continued to achieve good levels of attendance. The online sessions were recorded, and the videos were posted on the newly created NAC YouTube Channel. Below is a summary table of the Guest Speaker events from June 2025 to June 2026.

### Summary of 2025 Monthly Speaker's Events:

Month	Speaker	Topic	Registered/ Attended
June	No Meeting.	No meeting due to National and Branch AGMs.	0/0
July	No Meeting.	Summer Break.	0/0
August	No Meeting.	Summer Break.	0/0
September	RAdm Chris Robinson, Deputy VCDS	RAdm Robinson was the guest speaker at the 23 September Ottawa Branch Fall Luncheon. He spoke on the RCN's current operations and activities and his new role as Deputy VCDS, responsible for the CAF's role in the new Defence Investment Agency, which is being stood up by the Government to manage major crown projects including the CPSP.	54/40
October	No Meeting.	No meeting as no speaker was available.	0/0
November	RAdm Jason Armstrong, RCN	On 24 Nov 2025, in his new portfolio as the RCN's Chief of Naval Capability, Rear-	73/44

	Chief of Naval Capability	Admiral Armstrong discussed how the RCN is adjusting its leadership structure to deal with the rapid pace of change. He also updated the attendees on major crown projects, including the River Class Destroyers and submarines replacement.	
<b>December</b>	No Meeting	No meeting due to holiday season break.	0/0
<b>January</b>	No Meeting	No meeting as no speaker was available.	0/0
<b>February</b>	Capt(N) Robert Watt, Director Naval Strategy	The Guest Speaker on 18 February was Captain(N) Robert Watt, Director of Naval Strategy. Through a Q and A session Capt(N) Watt provided an excellent overview of his Directorate's work on a new Naval Strategy document which is expected to be published later this summer.	134/81
<b>March</b>	Cmdre Scott Robinson, DGNFD	On 24 March Commodore Scott Robinson, the RCN's Director General Naval Force Development provided an update on the theme, "The Navy Canada Needs" in a Q and A format session. The Commodore explained the current RCN force development structure, current activities and the ongoing and upcoming changes on both coasts. The YouTube link for the recording is <a href="https://youtu.be/1NKt7SwjtsI">https://youtu.be/1NKt7SwjtsI</a> .	139/81
<b>April</b>	No Meeting	No meeting due to planning for BOA events.	0/0
<b>May</b>	No Meeting	No meeting as no speaker was available.	0/0
<b>June</b>	VAdm Angus Topshee, CRCN	On 1 June VAdm Topshee participated in a final interview with NAC Naval Affairs before he assumes duties as VCDS in mid-June. The turnout was exceptional and once again he responded forthrightly on subjects and issues of interest to the membership and guests.	190/114

## Other Naval Affairs Activities

### Canadian Maritime Security Network (CMSN)

CMSN is a collaborative effort supported by NAC Naval Affairs and led by our STARSHELL editor, Dr. Adam Lajeunesse of St Francis Xavier University, Dr Rob Huebert of the University of Calgary, and several other Canadian and international organizations. The relationship is becoming very worthwhile, as CMSN contributed to sponsorship of the symposium in Halifax in late April; paid for the printing and mailing of “In Extremis” in the summer of 2025; and paid for recent editions of STARSHELL.

### CBC Interview

On 8 Oct the undersigned was interviewed by CBC’s Ryan Cooke about US military attacks on supposed drug smuggling boats off the coast of Venezuela. His article went live on 10 Oct at <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/us-airstrikes-caribbean-drug-smugglers-9.6932751>. The intent was not to speak on behalf of the RCN, but to press the Government of Canada to understand the legal implications of the United States’ actions in the Caribbean and eastern Pacific where they had been attacking and sinking vessels being operated by what they refer to as “narco-terrorists”, and the drug cartels as “unlawful combatants”. This subject received a lot of media attention in the following weeks, particularly after the US conducted a regime change operation in Venezuela in early 2026.

### Sea Power Conference

The 26-28 September 2025 Sea Power Conference held in Calgary, which was organized and led by our STARSHELL Editor, Adam Lajeunesse and sponsored by CMSN, was a great success. It was attended by a tremendous cast of characters with deep roots in naval affairs, including CRCN, Vice-Admiral Angus Topshee. Copies of the latest STARSHELL and the NAC NA paper “In Extremis” were distributed to attendees. The event kept the NAC in the midst of the dialogue on important subjects like the bringing the Canadian Coast Guard under National Defence, the strategic importance of the Arctic and the potential for maritime conflict in the Asia-Pacific. Expenses for the Sea Power Conference were covered by the Canadian Maritime Security Networks MINDS funds.

### Appearance before the Standing Committee on National Defence

Around the time of the Sea Power Conference, the undersigned was contacted by the Clerk of the House of Commons’ Standing Committee on National Defence and asked to provide testimony on 2 October as a witness for the Committee’s study on the integration of the Canadian Coast Guard into the Department of National Defence. I wasn’t available, however Adam attended, representing both the CMSN at St. Francis Xavier University and the NAC. Adam’s opening remarks, which were drafted as a NAC team effort, thanks to the support of the STARSHELL Editorial Board were included in the Fall STARSHELL.

## Vanguard Deep Blue and SHIP TECH Forums

The undersigned attended the Deep Blue Forum on 4 November and the SHIP TECH Forum on 24 February 2026. NAC supports Vanguard by including notice of these events in NAC News and in return NAC is recognized as a supporting sponsor, and NAC members can attend at a discounted rate. The events were well attended by RCN personnel, as well as government and industry executives and provided an opportunity to discuss BOA event sponsorships and promote the NAC as an organization which advocates for the RCN.

## Interview with South Korean Journalist

A request for an interview by the South Korean media was received on 18 December 2025. The undersigned agreed to the interview with the Korean journalist Soyoung Oh, with The Guru, a Korea-based online business and industry news outlet which occurred on 16 February. The journalist posed questions to me on the role NAC plays in connecting with Canadians and Canada's naval, defense, and maritime industries and then moved on to questions on the Canadian Patrol Submarine project. The interview content as well as that of an interview with Vice-Admiral Topshee appeared in The Guru site the week of 2 March 2026. The interview was not published in the Winter STARSHELL due to space constraints. It will be included in the Spring/Summer STARSHELL.

## April 2026 Battle of the Atlantic (BOA) Events

The Halifax BOA events (Reception, Symposium and Gala Dinner) held in late April 2026 were very successful due to an incredible team of volunteers, led by retired Captain (N) Dave Benoit, and assisted by G. Powell and N. Kennedy. B Belliveau reported that VAdm Topshee was "impressed by the entire organization" and pleased with the three speaking opportunities offered to him, noting he gave three different messages. B Belliveau also shared that plans are being made for an annual Maritime Security Conference in Halifax. The Ottawa Reception was again well received with over 170 guests present and lots of positive feedback. A total of 43 mostly defence oriented companies were engaged to sponsor the events held in Halifax and the Ottawa Reception and a total of \$163,500 in sponsorship revenue was generated with \$122,000 coming from Ottawa area sponsors. An estimated \$140,000 remains after expenses. Sponsors' logos for all the events are posted on the Wild Apricot and National (WordPress) sites and were referenced during the 1 June Guest Speaker's event.

## Naval Affairs Conference

Associated with the BOA commemorative events in Halifax, NAC Maritimes and the CMSN hosted a timely and well attended (131 registered) conference: Canada in Alliance: Maritime Security in a Changing World. Keynote addresses featured Jeff Kibble, MP Cowichan-Malahat-Langford, Colton LeBlanc, NS Minister of Growth and Development, and CRCN, VAdm Angus Topshee, bookending four highly relevant panel discussions featuring an interesting array of military, industry, and academia subject matter experts.

## STAR SHELL

Three editions of STAR SHELL (Spring/Summer 2025, Fall 2025 and Winter 2026) were published over the past year. The Fall STAR SHELL included articles based on presentations at the fall Sea Power Conference by VAdm Topshee, RAdm (ret'd) Brian Santarpia, and Commodore Scott Robinson, the current Director General of Naval Force Development. There was also an excellent overview of the Conference, other articles and a section devoted to Branch activities. The Winter STAR SHELL was published in late March. Due to the large volume of material included in that edition, a Spring edition is now being progressed with a target for publication of early June. The subject matter in this edition will be related to the Symposium held in Halifax on 30 April.

## Naval Affairs Announcements

A total of 6 Naval Affairs announcements were put out on Wild Apricot email over the past 12 months. They dealt with a variety of subjects including STAR SHELL publication, a CDAI sponsored podcast, announcement of the Admirals' Medal recipient for 2025, guest speaker events, a notice about RCN ships lost in the BOA being recognized by the UK government as war graves and notice of the passing of Vice-Admiral (Ret'd) Nigel Brodeur.

## Niobe Papers and other new material on the Website

Two new papers were published on the website in December 2025. The first called "Rebalancing the Surface Fleet", discusses Canadian Sea Power and focuses on the Continental Defence Corvette as a potential stopgap while the River Class Destroyers are being built. The second, Niobe Paper # 24, is a lengthy, but well-informed analysis and critique of the Canadian Patrol Frigate project. A Briefing Book, essentially a collation of papers produced by members to support NAC's contribution to the RCN's ongoing work on a new Naval Strategy document was published after the 18 February 2026 interview with Capt(N) Watt.

## Salty Dips

The latest Salty Dips, Volume 12, was not available for sale during BOA 2026 events due to some unavoidable issues with the publisher. Print copies arrived several weeks later and are being sold by the Committee. The e-version is on sale through Friesen Press.

## The Admirals' Medal

Three nominations were submitted to the Chairperson of the Selection Committee, Vice-Admiral (Ret'd) Mark Norman on 12 November 2025. In late March 2026 the Admirals' Medal Committee selected Dr. Rob Huebert, well known expert on Arctic and maritime security issues and frequent commentator in the media. Rob's selection as the 2025 recipient was published in an article in STAR SHELL and he was awarded the Medal by Commander RCN and the undersigned at the Ottawa BOA Reception on 28 April 2026.

## Social Media and NAC Websites

Maintaining and providing new content on the NAC Facebook, X, and LinkedIn accounts continues to be a challenge. The “Tiger Team” established after the 5/6 April 2025 retreat in Ottawa to manage social media accounts fizzled later in the year. More assistance is required to increase NAC visibility with these social media platforms. There is still confusion over who has admin responsibility for the LinkedIn and Facebook Sites.

A discussion on the future of the NAC National website was held in the fall of 2025. Editor STARSHELL created a new website as a first step towards updating the current site. Questions arose about security and cost of switching to a new application/platform. Discussions were held with Crystal our Website Admin who advised against the switch. Although discussed in the spring 2026, in the end the idea was not pursued further.

## Relationship with the Navy League of Canada (NLOC)

On 27 October 2025 Ottawa Branch Members Howie Smith, Jake and Stan Jacobson, Norm Jolin, Harry Harsch, Luc Cassivi, Tom DeWolf and Glenn Walters joined the undersigned in supporting the NLOC’s Navy and Coast Guard Appreciation Day on Parliament Hill. Collectively the teams engaged Senators and MPs of all stripes to ensure they are aware of the Cadet programs and the need for better funding and understand the importance of shipbuilding to Canada’s economy and by extension the importance of Canada’s maritime capabilities in ensuring our security at home and abroad.

Vice President of the NLOC Maritime Affairs Alliance, Ms Louise Mercier has become the lead in planning the RCN’s Maritime Gala Ball which will take place 19 June in Ottawa/Gatineau. NAC members in Ottawa have assisted her with finding sponsors and other planning aspects.

## Relationship with Canadian Defence Association (CDA) Institute

On 3 December 2025 the undersigned attended a CDA Institute sponsored event on sustainment and logistics considerations for Canada’s future submarine fleet. It was well attended and included a number of high-profile panelists, including Dr. Rob Huebert, Gordon Venner (former Assoc ADM at DND), Philip Lagasse (well known columnist), Ms Paula Folkes Dallaire (ADM in Defence and Marine Strategic Program Management Sector of Public Services and Procurement Canada) and Dr. Paul Mitchell (another well known Canadian academic). VAdm (Ret’d) Bob Davidson and RAdm (Ret’d) Luc Cassivi were the co-MCs and NAC member Capt(N) Ret’d Norm Jolin was on one of the panels. In addition to the 3 December event discussed above, the Director Naval Affairs attended the CDA Annual General Meeting and the CDA Institute Conference in March 2026.

## Relationship with Naval Reserve Association of Canada (NRAC)

The President of NRAC, Cmdre (Ret’d) Marta Mulkins attended the Ottawa BOA Reception and there was discussion with her on a follow up meeting to discuss the NRAC – NAC relationship. Nothing further has happened on this front to date.

## Conclusion

Finding guest speakers continues to be a challenge although several individuals have expressed interest in doing an interview or a presentation in the Fall. Maintaining a presence on the Internet with social media also continues to be an ongoing challenge. The revenue generated by sponsors of BOA events was promising and indicates that NAC is getting better recognition and support. The same can be said for comments made by NAC guest speakers and attendees at other NAC events - conferences and luncheons.

(O.S.B.)

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Naval Association of Canada