cert-manager Help Enhance Security and Flexibility of Istio Certificate Management

zhangchaomeng@huawei.com



About me



Chaomeng Zhang, Architect of Huawei Cloud Application Service Mesh, Architect of Distributed Cloud Native.

Chaomeng has cloud computing related design and developing work experience in Huawei Cloud, including service mesh, Kubernetes, micro service, cloud service catalog, big data, APM, cloud computing reliability and DevOps. He is Istio Steering Committee member, Istio community member, an experienced speaker of KubeCon, IstioCon, ServiceMeshCon, author of books "Cloud Native Service Mesh Istio"(《云原生服务网格 Istio: 原理、实践、架构与源码解析》) and "Istio: the Definitive Guide"(《Istio权威指南》上册&下册)



Agenda

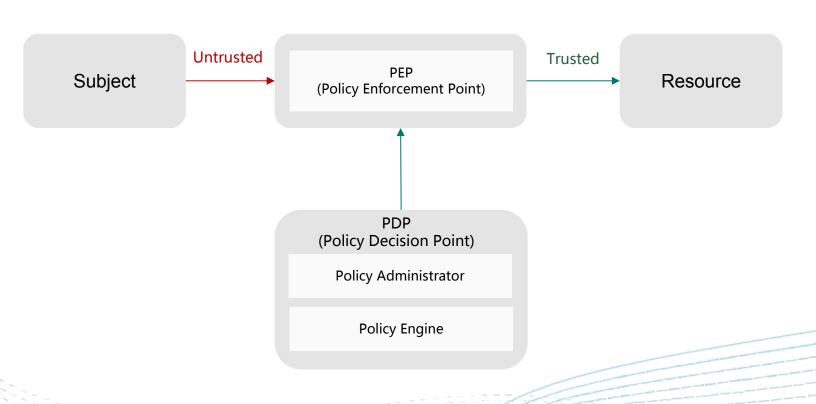
- Background: Istio Zero Trust Security
- Challenge: Certificate Management In Istio
- Solution: cert-manager
- Practice: cert-manager Issues Certificate For Mesh Root CA
- Practice: cert-manager Issues Certificate For Ingress Gateway



- Describes an approach to the strategy, design and implementation of IT systems.
- The main concept is "never trust, always verify", Users and devices should not be
 trusted by default, even if they are connected to a permissioned network such as a corporate
 LAN and even if they were previously verified.
- Implemented by establishing strong identity verification, validating device compliance
 prior to granting access, and ensuring least privilege access to only explicitly
 authorized resources.

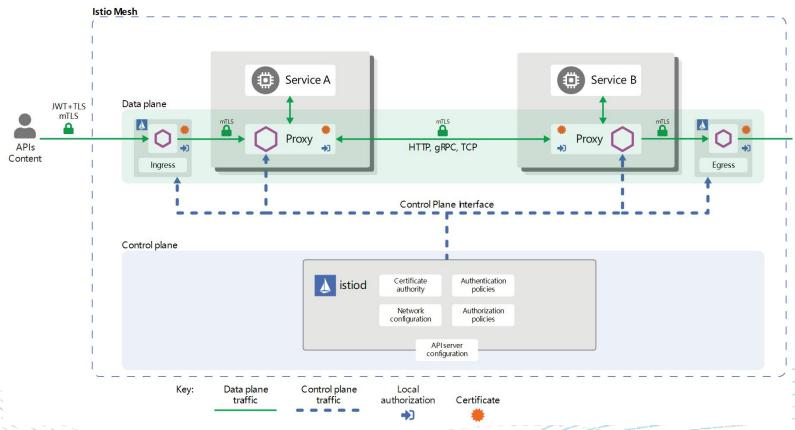


Zero Trust Security Architecture Implementing





Istio Security Architecture



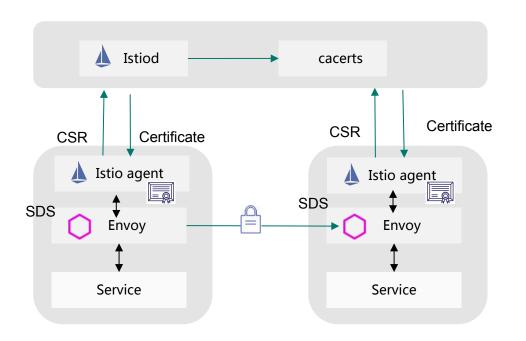
from Istio / Security

Agenda

- Background: Istio Zero Trust Security
- Challenge: Certificate Management In Istio
- Solution: cert-manager
- Practice: cert-manager Issues Certificate For Mesh Root CA
- Practice: cert-manager Issues Certificate For Ingress Gateway



Certificate Inside: Transparent mTLS

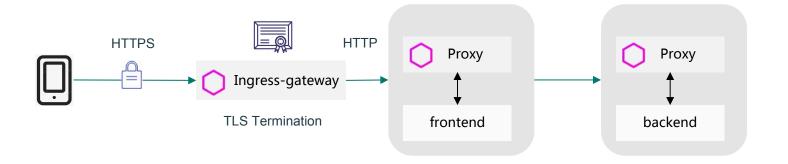


Istiod's certificate management helps singe and rotate workload certificate.

But where does mesh root CA come from? And how to manage the root CA?



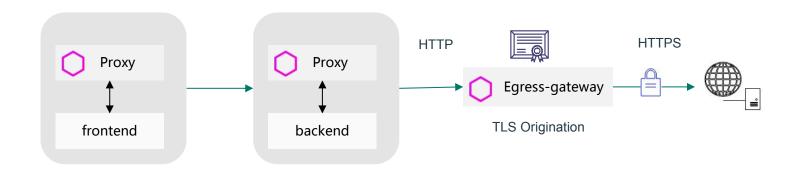
Certificate At Mesh Edge: Ingress TLS Termination



An ingress proxy accepts incoming TLS connections, decrypts the TLS, and passes unencrypted requests on to internal mesh services.



Certificate At Mesh Edge: Egress TLS Origination



TLS origination occurs when an Istio proxy (sidecar or egress gateway) is configured to accept unencrypted internal HTTP connections, encrypt the requests, and then forward them to HTTPS servers that are secured using simple or mutual TLS.



Certificate In Istio: Comparison

TLS	mTLS	TLS Termination	TLS Origination
Location	Inside mesh	Mesh entry	Mesh exit
Mesh component	Sidecar	Ingress-gateway	Egress-gateway
Source service	Mesh internal service	External services, client. Such as browser, mobile application	Mesh internal service
Target service	Mesh internal service	Mesh internal service	External services, such as cloud middle ware, SaaS service
TLS client	Source sidecar	External services, client. Such as browser, mobile application	Egress-gateway
TLS server	Target sidecar	Ingress-gateway	External services, such as cloud middle ware, SaaS service
LAMINICAIA	Signed by Istio and loaded in sidecar	Configured and loaded in ingress gateway	Configured and loaded in egress gateway

Challenges And Requirements:

- Avoid any downtime caused by certificates(lots of certificates)
 problems in production environment)
- Automatically certificate renew before expiry(according to configured certificate duration and renew time)
- Flexibility of certificate configuration
- Rich issuer supported(public and private Certificate Authorities)
- Easy cloud native integrated



Agenda

- Background: Istio Zero Trust Security
- Challenge: Certificate Management In Istio
- Solution: cert-manager
- Practice: cert-manager Issues Certificate For Mesh Root CA
- Practice: cert-manager Issues Certificate For Ingress Gateway



About cert-manager

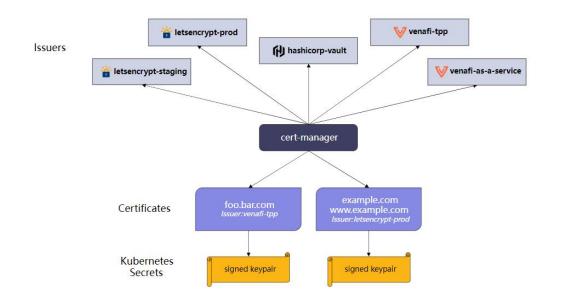


cert-manager is a powerful and extensible X.509 certificate controller for Kubernetes and OpenShift workloads. It will obtain certificates from a variety of Issuers, both popular public Issuers as well as private Issuers, and ensure the certificates are valid and upto-date, and will attempt to renew certificates at a configured time before expiry.

- Automated issuance and renewal of certificates to secure Ingress with TLS
- Fully integrated Issuers from recognised public and private Certificate Authorities
- Secure pod-to pod communication with mTLS using private PKI Issuers
- Supports certificate use cases for web facing and internal workloads
- Open source add-ons for enhanced cloud native service mesh security
- Backed by major cloud service providers and distributions



cert-manager Architecture



Issuer: are Kubernetes resources that represent certificate authorities (CAs) that are able to generate signed certificates by honoring certificate signing requests

Certificate: Certificates define a desired X.509 certificate which will be renewed and kept up to date. Certificates resources allow you to specify the details of the certificate you want to request. They reference an issuer to define how they'll be issued.

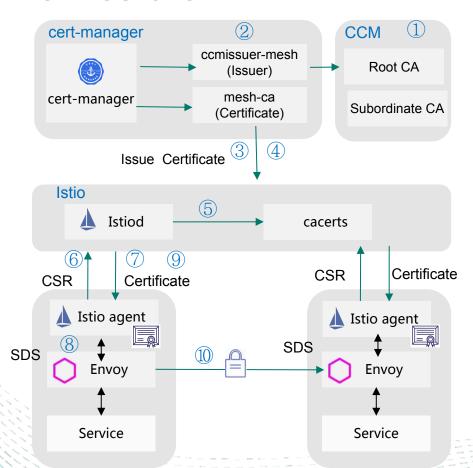


Agenda

- Background: Istio Zero Trust Security
- Challenge: Certificate Management In Istio
- Solution: cert-manager
- Practice: cert-manager Issues Certificate For Mesh Root CA
- Practice: cert-manager Issues Certificate For Ingress Gateway

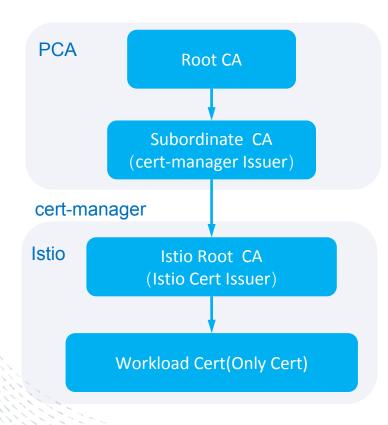


Architecture



- ① Create PCA CA hierarchy, include root CA and a subordinate CA
- ② Configure to make subordinate CA as cert-manager issuer
- ③ cert-manager issues certificate as root CA, and store in secret cacerts, according to certificate mesh-ca configuration.
- ④ cert-manager check and renew certificates at a configured time in mesh-ca before expiry.
- istiod offers a gRPC service to take certificate signing requests (CSRs)
- 6 Istio agent creates the private key and CSR, and sends CSR to istiod for signing
- (7) Istiod signs the CSR to generate the certificate
- Envoy requests the certificate and key from the Istio via
 Envoy secret discovery service (SDS) API
- (9) Istio agent monitors the expiration of the workload certificate, periodically check for certificate and key rotation
- ① The proxies of each workload communicate with other workloads by mutual TLS (mTLS) with workload certificate

CA Hierarchy (1)



#IstioCon

Root Certificates

The public key certificate of a CA. A root certificate is the trust anchor in the public key infrastructure (PKI) system. It can issue subordinate CAs, private certificates, and certificate revocation lists (CRLs). After a root CA is imported into the client trust list, the certificates issued by it can be validated as trusted

Subordinate Certificates

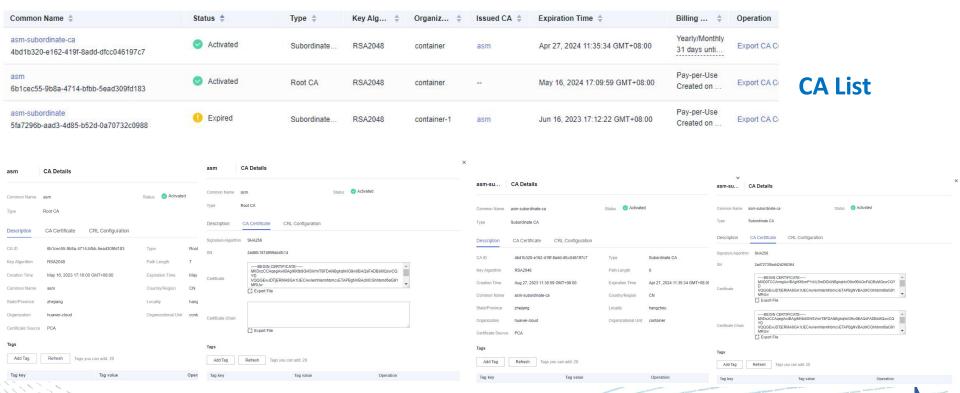
Subordinate are CA certificates signed by another CA. Most intermediates will be signed by a root certificate, but it's possible to construct longer chains where an intermediate can be signed by another intermediate. Subordinate certificates are usually issued with a much shorter lifetime than the CA which signed them.

Leaf Certificates

Leaf certificates are usually used to represent a particular identity, rather than being used to sign other certificates. On the Internet leaf certificates usually identify a particular domain.

CA Hierarchy (2)

#IstioCon-



Subordinate CA

Configuration: cert-manager Certificate

```
apiVersion: ccm-issuer.ccm.com/v1beta1
kind: CCMIssuer
metadata:
labels:
app.kubernetes.io/name: ccmissuer
app.kubernetes.io/created-by: ccm-issuer
name: ccmissuer-mesh
spec:
urn: "4bd1b320-e162-419f-8add-dfcc046197c7"
region: "cn-north-4"
secretRef:
...
namespace: istio-system
name: ccm-secret
```

```
apiVersion: cert-manager.io/v1
kind: Certificate
metadata:
 name: mesh-ca
 namespace: istio-system
spec:
 isCA: true
 duration: 7200h #300d
 renewBefore: 240h #10d
 secretName: cacerts
 commonName: mesh-ca
 subject:
  organizations:
  - cluster.local
 issuerRef:
  group: ccm-issuer.ccm.com
  kind: CCMIssuer
  name: ccmissuer-mesh
```



Configuration: Istio mTLS

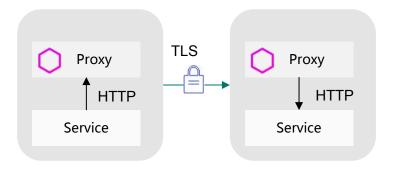
```
apiVersion: security.istio.io/v1beta1
kind: PeerAuthentication
metadata:
    name: nginx
    namespace: accesslog
spec:
    mtls:
    mode: STRICT
    selector:
    matchLabels:
    app: nginx
```

```
apiVersion: networking.istio.io/v1beta1
kind: DestinationRule
metadata:
    name: nginx
    namespace: accesslog
spec:
    host: nginx
    subsets:
    - labels:
        version: v1
    name: v1
    trafficPolicy:
    tls:
        mode: ISTIO MUTUAL
```



Test: Transparent mTLS

```
# curl -v -s nginx:80
  Rebuilt URL to: nginx:80/
  Trying 10.246.91.131...
  TCP NODELAY set
  Connected to nginx (10.246.91.131) port 80 (#0)
> GET / HTTP/1.1
> Host: nginx
> User-Agent: curl/7.52.1
 Accept: */*
< HTTP/1.1 200 OK
< server: envoy
< date: Wed, 06 Sep 2023 06:09:04 GMT
< content-type: text/html
< content-length: 615
< last-modified: Tue, 28 Mar 2023 15:01:54 GMT
< etag: "64230162-267"
< accept-ranges: bytes
< x-envoy-upstream-service-time: 2
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
<head>
<title>Welcome to nginx!</title>
<style>
```



[2023-09-06T06:09:04.949Z] "GET / HTTP/1.1" 200 - via_upstream - "-" 0 615 2 2 "-" "curl/7.52.1" "0c25359b-a6f7-46c0-bb25-d39194c33205" "nginx" "10.66.1.2:80" outbound|80|v1|nginx.accesslog.svc.cluster.local 10.66.0.39:37200 10.246.91.131:80 10.66.0.39:52026 - -

[2023-09-06T06:09:04.951Z] "GET / HTTP/1.1" 200 - via_upstream - "-" 0 615 0 0 "-" "curl/7.52.1" "0c25359b-a6f7-46c0-bb25-d39194c33205" "nginx" "10.66.1.2:80" inbound|80|| 127.0.0.6:53389 10.66.1.2:80 10.66.0.39:37200 outbound_.80_.v1_.nginx.accesslog.svc.cluster.local default

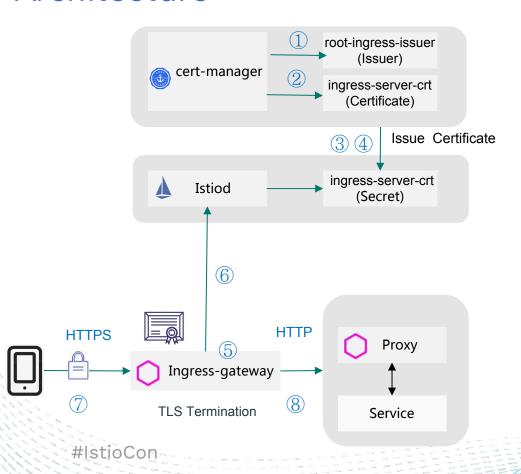


Agenda

- Background: Istio Zero Trust Security
- Challenge: Certificate Management In Istio
- Solution: cert-manager
- Practice: cert-manager Issues Certificate For Mesh Root CA
- Practice: cert-manager Issues Certificate For Ingress Gateway



Architecture



- Create Issuer root-ingress-issuer in cert-manager
- ② Create certificate ingress-server-crt in certmanager
- ③ Issuer issue certificate and store in configured secret ingress-server-crt
- cert-manager check and renew certificates at a configured time in mesh-ca before expiry
- ⑤ Gateway TLS reference certificate secret
- 6 Istiod dynamically push certificate to Ingressgateway
- Client make HTTPS request with server CA, handshaking with Ingress-gateway, verify certificate
- Ingress-gateway make TLS termination, and forward HTTP request to backend service.

Configuration: cert-manager Certificate

apiVersion: cert-manager.io/v1 kind: **Issuer** metadata: name: root-ingress-issuer namespace: istio-system spec: ca: secretName: root-ingress-certs

ca type issuer

#IstioCon

apiVersion: cert-manager.io/v1

kind: Certificate

metadata:

name: ingress-server-crt namespace: istio-system

spec:

isCA: false

duration: 7200h #300d renewBefore: 240h #10d

secretName: ingress-server-crt commonName: ingress-server-crt

dnsNames:

- cert-test.com

issuerRef:

name: root-ingress-issuer

kind: Issuer

group: cert-manager.io



Configuration: Gateway Route

```
apiVersion: networking.istio.io/v1beta1
kind: Gateway
metadata:
 name: cert-gw-https
 namespace: istio-system
spec:
 selector:
  istio: ingressgateway
 servers:
 - hosts:
  - cert-test.com
  port:
   name: https
   number: 1028
   protocol: https
  tls:
   credentialName: ingress-server-crt # cert
generated by cert-manager
   mode: SIMPLE
```

```
apiVersion: networking.istio.io/v1beta1
kind: VirtualService
metadata:
 name: cert-gw-https-962a97e6
 namespace: istio-system
spec:
 gateways:
 - istio-system/cert-gw-https
 hosts:
 - cert-test.com
 http:
 - match:
  - uri:
     prefix: /
  route:
  - destination:
     host: tomcat.cert-test.svc.cluster.local
```



Parse: Certificate Content

kubectl get certificate

```
root@cluster-zcm-66173-v1o7e codedl# kubectl get certificat
  ingress-server-crt -nistio-system -oyaml
apiVersion: cert-manager.io/v1
kind: Certificate
metadata:
 creationTimestamp: "2023-09-02T12:58:02Z"
  generation: 2
 name: ingress-server-crt
 namespace: istio-system
  resourceVersion: "19291650"
 uid: e9b48e13-d331-40b7-bacf-04dedf23249b
spec:
 commonName: ingress-server-crt
 dnsNames:
  - cert-test.com
 duration: 7200h0m0s
  issuerRef:
   group: cert-manager.io
   kind: Issuer
   name: root-ingress-issuer
  renewRefore: 240h0m0s
 secretName: ingress-server-crt
status:
 conditions:
 lastTransitionTime: "2023-09-06T07:28:34Z"
   message: Certificate is up to date and has not expired
   observedGeneration: 2
   reason: Ready
   status: "True"
   type: Ready
 notAfter: "2024-07-02T07:28:34Z"
 notBefore: "2023-09-06T07:28:34Z"
 renewalTime: "2024-06-22T07:28:34Z"
```

config_dump secret

```
"name": "kubernetes://ingress-server-crt"
     "version into": "2023-09-06|10:28:05+08:00/
     "last updated": "2023-09-06T07:28:34.596Z"
     "secret": {
      "@type": "type.googleapis.com/envoy.extens
      "name": "kubernetes://ingress-server-crt"
      "tls certificate": {
       "certificate chain": {
        "inline bytes": "LSOtLS1CRUdJTiBDRVJUSUZ
kcKTVNid0VBWURWUVFLRXdsdFpYTm9MbU5sY25Rd0V3WURWU
Zd056STRNelJhRncweU5E0TNNREl3Ck56STRNelJhTUIweEd
W9DZ2dF0kFMWklWWEZ4SzZLTXl5YUFa0GRXY1VFVkVoNTNlN
FaTVtMjQrRVVHcTJ4RmhNay9mQkxjeHlnbVFqcDdvRmZoR3F
mdKTk5wb1IvRzhiWjNCV3NzcgpYL25SZTdNdzNVNGViZ0VrU
PdzJhUUtaY3hjNWJpaFVJVituQkdnMmpMa0NBd0VBQWF0Yk1
XliWGtXSz01VHRmZVc4d0dBWURWUiBS0kJFd000SU5ZMlZ5Z
UTDZMR0ZCT2U0R1NYZVkKaElNU28003owUUtVdFBlSXcvL0c
zFxakxaQTFFb2FmTk13REp0bTdWQnFmbW9iSW93ekVW0VVXC
hcXlEZkFWN0pWM3ppbExLQWF0MkxPVmtkeUJhS3pTQU1aUUE
lRJRklDQVRFLS0tLS0KLS0tLS1CRUdJTiBDRVJUSUZJQ0FUR
Fbk1CQUdBMVVFQ2hNSmJXVnphQzVqWlhKME1CTUdBMVVFQ2h
1hEVEkyTURJeU1qQTNNamN3Ck1Gb3dSakVuTUJBR0ExVUVDa
NdFkyVnlkSE13Z2dFaU1BMEdDU3FHU0liM0RRRUJBUVVBQTR
Xp6QnhlK3k2RDBGUnZJd3FPdkZNNURUeWFRMzZGWWJxR1NYR
2UHJKYlR1Tyt5cWNCcapXbGwwKzI0bU1u0S9NUi9sWW10dUh
lViOWdScGF0TlVRcTduVEdtemk5bVdKYmlueWdF0W1lWisK\
nTlZIUk1COWY4RUJUOURBUUqvTUIwR0ExVWREZ1FX0kJRaz0
2txaGtpRzl3MEIKOVFzRkFBT0NBUUVBWnhxY040WG9G0Et2e
zN2lQUmJqaGNDajZkTUZuWUw2bEp6dnNuWFJNdnhSClMrUEY
3VNcUJ10TRrNnJDL1FVYVRB0zRa01ZIa3RMU3VaaU55T01sd
wQXZNRmxKCkdTZk1kSkRCbjBUanB40U9Lc1dIMU43cnZxVWF
       "private key": {
        "inline bytes": "W3JlZGFjdGVkXQ=="
```

base64 -d | openssl x509 -noout -text

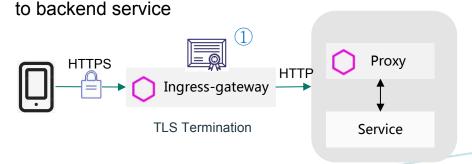
```
JUSUZJQ0FURS0tLS0tCg== | base64 -d | openssl x509 -noout -text
  Data:
       Version: 3 (0x2)
      Serial Number:
          58:3b:d2:6f:ee:f4:2d:d6:c7:f4:f1:14:3d:1a:99:69
      Signature Algorithm: sha256WithRSAEncryption
      Issuer: 0 = mesh.cert + 0 = cert-manager, CN = root-ingress-certs
          Not Before: Sep 6 07:28:34 2023 GMT
          Not After : Jul 2 07:28:34 2024 GMT
       Subject: CN = ingress-server-crt
      Subject Public Key Info:
          Public Key Algorithm: rsaEncryption
              RSA Public-Key: (2048 bit)
                  00:b6:48:55:71:71:2b:a2:8c:cb:26:80:8f:c7:56:
                  71:41:15:12:1e:77:7b:ac:97:f7:d9:34:c3:3b:ed
                  9f:b1:a4:94:40:e1:4a:f7:c4:45:53:d4:ed:4d:ed:
                  e9:5c:2c:89:25:0c:e3:3b:cf:f9:77:le:c8:a8:86:
                   f8:fc:76:2a:cf:c8:4c:19:67:ce:7d:19:53:2d:d1:
                  44:48:b9:9b:6e:3e:11:41:aa:db:11:61:32:4f:df:
                  04:b7:31:ca:09:90:8e:9e:e8:15:f8:46:a9:df:b6:
                  2d:6a:89:59:b4:43:82:6d:03:a4:78:28:69:bf:cc:
                  99:67:ca:09:7f:d0:2b:f7:11:f8:b9:39:af:b1:ff:
                  a5:c6:f6:f9:36:82:4b:27:07:8a:99:91:a6:15:5b:
                  0a:b7:23:ac:a3:87:46:38:09:34:da:68:47:f1:bc:
                  6d:9d:c1:5a:cb:2b:5f:f9:d1:7b:b3:30:dd:4e:le:
                  6e:01:24:44:71:df:fe:28:a6:80:77:c0:12:2e:42:
                  55:be:01:92:fc:e4:25:db:bb:10:3f:d0:6b:39:4a:
                  48:66:50:98:f1:72:d5:32:d7:17:01:c2:da:4a:a0:
                  61:d0:95:fd:da:86:9e:ed:7f:2f:ed:c4:c0:ec:36:
                  69:02:99:73:17:39:6e:28:54:21:5f:a7:04:68:36:
              Exponent: 65537 (0x10001)
      X509v3 extensions:
          X509v3 Key Usage: critical
              Digital Signature, Key Encipherment
           X500v2 Basic Constraints: critical
          X509v3 Authority Key Identifier:
              keyid:24:E3:8F:5F:DD:BC:34:72:49:23:26:D7:91:62:B8:E5:3B:5F:79:6
          X509v3 Subject Alternative Name:
              DNS:cert-test.com
  Signature Algorithm: sha256WithRSAEncryption
       af:e9:d8:71:59:d3:5d:29:40:d8:c9:54:1c:62:08:34:db:9e
        41:e2:28:f5:c4:cc:69:32:fa:2c:61:41:39:ee:06:49:77:98:
       84:83:12:a3:80:b3:d1:02:94:b4:f7:88:c3:ff:c9:d1:b3:bc:
        f3:f4:79:5d:30:34:35:0c:e4:3a:ef:d3:47:68:5a:0c:e8:f8
        4e:d3:9b:da:ef:87:5a:08:dc:d1:c0:39:54:90:99:f0:36:69:
        28:62:9b:00:11:c4:c1:91:d6:16:ee:4d:2a:73:4b:93:5a:a3
        2d:90:35:12:86:9f:34:cc:03:26:d9:bb:54:1a:9f:9a:86:c8:
       a3:0c:c4:57:d5:16:4d:c6:27:d3:44:02:63:25:34:d7:3f:b9:
       c0:77:b8:58:5d:e2:73:58:50:e2:80:1d:8f:04:75:f4:99:0c
       06:f9:1b:3e:b7:37:7e:99:55:8d:ea:27:93:3e:d3:d2:18:0c:
        9a:f1:d5:4d:3d:b6:6a:ac:83:7c:05:7b:25:5d:f3:8a:52:ca:
       01:a3:76:2c:e5:64:77:20:5a:2b:34:80:31:94:00:e7:68:f3:
       1b:9e:12:e4:66:43:cf:16:a0:34:88:9a:aa:3d:d8:8b:eb:50:
       3f:3c:42:4d:a3:68:e6:e7:ab:ab:21:84:60:d6:c9:cc:ad:95:
       b7:8d:9c:47
```

revision: 2

Test: Ingress TLS Termination

```
root@cluster-zcm-66173-v1o7e coded]# curl --cacert ingress-server-cert-
a.crt -v -HHost:cert-test.com --resolve cert<del>-test.com:443:100.85.115.8</del>0
https://cert-test.com:443/
Added cert-test.com:443:100.85.115.86 to DNS cache
Hostname cert-test.com was found in DNS cache
  Trying 100.85.115.86:443...
Connected to cert-test.com (100.85.115.86) port 443 (#0)
ALPN, offering h2
ALPN, offering http/1.1
successfully set certificate verify locations:
 CAfile: ingress-server-cert-ca.crt
 CApath: none
TLSv1.3 (OUT), TLS handshake, Client hello (1):
TLSv1.3 (IN). TLS handshake. Server hello (2):
TLSv1.3 (IN), TLS handshake, Encrypted Extensions (8):
TLSv1.3 (IN), TLS handshake, Certificate (11):
TLSv1.3 (IN), TLS handshake, CERT verify (15):
TLSv1.3 (IN), TLS handshake, Finished (20):
TLSv1.3 (OUT), TLS change cipher, Change cipher spec (1)
TLSv1.3 (OUT), TLS handshake, Finished (20):
SSL connection using TLSv1.3 / TLS AES 256 GCM SHA384
ALPN, server accepted to use h2
Server certificate:
 subject: CN=ingress-server-crt
 start date: Sep 6 07:28:34 2023 GMT
 expire date: Jul 2 07:28:34 2024 GMT
 subjectAltName: host "cert-test.com" matched cert's "cert-test.com"
  issuer: 0=mesh.cert + 0=cert-manager; CN=root-ingress-certs
 SSL certificate verify ok.
 Using HTTP2, server supports multiplexing
Connection state changed (HTTP/2 confirmed)
Copying HTTP/2 data in stream buffer to connection buffer after upgrade
Using Stream ID: 1 (easy handle 0x562fcc8ec6d0)
GET / HTTP/2
Host:cert-test.com
user-agent: curl/7.79.1
accept: */*
TLSv1.3 (IN), TLS handshake, Newsession Ticket (4):
TLSv1.3 (IN), TLS handshake, Newsession Ticket (4):
old SSL session ID is stale, removing
Connection state changed (MAX CONCURRENT STREAMS == 2147483647)!
HTTP/2 200
content-type: text/html;charset=UTF-8
date: Wed, 06 Sep 2023 08:11:14 GMT
x-envov-upstream-service-time: 3
server: istio-envoy
```

- ① Ingress-gateway load certificate which configured by cert-manager
- ② Client make HTTPS request with server CA
- 3 TLS handshake between client and Ingress-gateway
- 4 Verify certificate, include expire date, subjectAltName
- ⑤ Ingress-gateway offload TLS and make a HTTP request



[2023-09-06T06:42:45.383Z] "GET / HTTP/2" 200 - via_upstream - "-" 0 11230 4 3 "172.16.0.96" "curl/7.79.1" "78c0ce88-dc95-495c-adf2-be59584448e2" "cert-test.com" "10.66.1.12:8080" outbound|8080||tomcat.cert-test.svc.cluster.local 10.66.0.9:48024 10.66.0.9:1028 172.16.0.96:10021 cert-test.com tomcat.cert-test.svc.cluster.local:8080

Thank you!





