

THE ADMIRAL'S VIEW

Operation *ARTEMIS*

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"Excellence With Vigour." Such is the motto of HMCS *Toronto*, currently deployed on Operation Artemis. This operation is Canada's contribution to Combined Task Force 150 (CTF-150) which is a multinational maritime counter-terrorism force operating in the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea and the northern section of the Indian Ocean. This is an area which contains some of the world's most important shipping lanes as well as significant political instability amongst some of the many nations that border this vast region. HMCS *Toronto*'s task is to detect, deter and protect against terrorist activity by patrolling and conducting maritime security operations. She departed Halifax on January 14, 2013, and will return later in the fall of 2013.

HMCS *Toronto*'s presence in this volatile area of the globe sends a clear message that Canada, as a key member of the coalition, is contributing to the stability of the region. In addition to patrolling the sea lanes, HMCS *Toronto* will participate in a series of events in support of Canada's foreign policy objectives. For example, HMCS *Toronto* participated in the Naval Defence Exhibition (NAVDEX) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in February 2013. This is an event that was attended by prominent members of the UAE government, business community and the diplomatic corps, as well as the International Defence Exhibition and the conference participants. HMCS *Toronto* also conducted an exercise with the Israeli Naval Ship Kidon in the Red Sea on February 7, 2013.

Canada is one of 27 nations which contribute naval assets to Combined Maritime Forces, the naval coalition that promotes security and stability in the international waters of the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Persian Gulf, Arabian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman and the Indian Ocean. CTF-150 is one of three Task Forces which operate under the direction of the Combined Maritime Forces, and it is responsible for maritime security and counter-terrorism. The objective of CTF-150 is to deny terrorist organizations from using merchant shipping lanes for smuggling weapons, illicit cargo and narcotics.

Like other frigates of the Halifax-class, HMCS *Toronto* has a crew of about 225 personnel, including a CH-124 Sea King helicopter air



detachment as well as a shipboard unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) detachment. Notably, a UAV troop, consisting of four personnel and UAV service providers, work with the air force personnel of the Sea King to provide aerial surveillance. Accordingly, HMCS *Toronto*'s mission is a joint effort which includes members of the Canadian Army, Royal Canadian Air Force and Royal Canadian Navy, all working collectively in HMCS *Toronto*.

The surveillance capability which UAVs represent is spectacular, as demonstrated when HMCS *Regina* disrupted a suspected drug transfer off the coast of Yemen in January 2013. The surveillance provided by the ship's UAV was critical to locating and interrupting this transfer of narcotics. HMCS *Charlottetown* conducted a similar mission during Op Artemis, when in May 2012, she disrupted a drug exchange and recovered 600 pounds of hashish.

In addition to the core mission, to conduct anti terrorism patrols, Canadian ships which are deployed to the Middle East also provide the ready capability to perform other tasks such as search and rescue, and humanitarian assistance. For instance, HMCS *Regina* was operating in the Gulf of Aden in October 2012, when she, along with the Republic of Singapore Ship Intrepid, responded to a Yemeni dhow in distress. The dhow had run out of fuel and the crew was without food or water. HMCS *Regina* was able to provide food, water and sufficient fuel for the dhow to reach port safely.

Our ongoing participation in Op Artemis highlights Canada's commitment to peace and security in the Middle East. The effect achieved by CTF-150 leverages the collective capability of the coalition partners and is critical to the success throughout this vast area. Our continuing commitment to Op Artemis clearly demonstrates Canada's solidarity with partners and allies as we strive for greater stability in this strategically vital region.