

The Admiral's View



CUSTOM MEDIA FEATURE



SEASON OF CHANGE

**By Rear Admiral Dave Gardam
Commander Joint Task Force Atlantic
and Maritime Forces Atlantic**

Summer marks many changes in our society. For our young children, it marks the end of the school year while they look forward to the thrill and excitement of summer vacation. Some will reach milestones such as graduations while others will prepare for advancement to the next grade. For the Navy summer is also a season of change as sailors approach what is called the posting season.

Military personnel within the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) spend about two years in any given job, after which they are posted to a new position. Sometimes a posting brings with it a promotion, or an advancement, involving new responsibilities, and sometimes a posting means moving people to similar positions in a new unit. Regardless of the reason for the posting, this periodic change of jobs helps to refresh our perspective. It instills a kind of flexibility in us that allows us to transition quickly and seamlessly into any new team. Our missions arise and evolve quickly, and can range from providing humanitarian

relief to hurricane or earthquake victims to engaging in combat in Afghanistan. Our Ready Aye Ready motto reflects this need to accept change at a moment's notice.

As sailors, we are accustomed to adjusting our activities to the daily cycle of the tides and the changes in the weather. In a similar way, we also experience the predictability of the annual posting season and the changes that it brings. Some of the CAF members who will be posted this summer will remain in Halifax but will move to a new ship or shore unit. Others will not only be posted to new jobs but will be required to relocate to different geographic locations such as Ottawa or Victoria. These kinds of postings can have a profound effect on members and their families as they must adjust to life in a new city, or endure the separation from a parent and the difficulties posed by a long distance relationship.

After three years as the Commander of both Maritime Forces Atlantic and Joint Task Force Atlantic, my season of change has arrived, and I will turn over my responsibilities to Rear Admiral John Newton, effective July 12. John Newton is well known to the Halifax community. As a Halifax native and a former Base Commander of Canadian Forces Base Halifax, he is an ideal choice to serve as the next Admiral in Halifax.

Each of us stands upon the shoulders of the generations that have come before. Each successive watch endeavours to improve on what they inherited from their predecessors. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the work done by the Admirals who served in Halifax before me, and the conditions for success which they established and which I have enjoyed. I thank them all for their dedication and service. I experienced many challenges over the past three years as Commander but one of my most poignant and rewarding recollections concerns my interactions with our veterans. The example of 'service before self', and the dedication and sacrifice they demonstrate, served as

an inspiration to me which I am incapable of adequately putting into words. To our veterans, I wish to tell them that their example of service before self has been successfully transmitted to their successive generations, and is alive and well in the Defence Team in Atlantic Canada.

The success of every commander is directly attributable to the collective dedication and initiative of the commander's team members. I have been blessed with a superb team whose remarkable dedication has made my time as Commander extremely gratifying. In addition, I have enjoyed an excellent relationship with the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Province of Nova Scotia which has enabled the Defence team to get on with business. Our partnership with other government departments such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Transport Canada, Public Safety Canada, Canada Border Services Agency, Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the Canadian Coast Guard has also been superb.

It is inevitable that I should feel regret as I prepare to leave Halifax and proceed to Ottawa where I will take up my new position as head of the policy division for the CAF. What I will recall most when I look back on my time as the Admiral in Halifax, will be the many rewarding relationships which I established and the support which I have enjoyed with both the Defence team and in the larger community. I wish to extend my most sincere thanks to the Defence Team, our government partners, the Province of Nova Scotia, and the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Fair winds and following seas.

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