

THE ADMIRAL'S VIEW

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



Our Communities that Serve

Many of you are familiar with my role as the Commander of Naval forces in the Atlantic region. What you may not be aware of is that this is but one of four hats that I wear in terms of my roles and responsibilities.

First of all I am the operational commander of the Navy in Atlantic Canada. As such, I am responsible for the Atlantic Fleet and the maintenance, infrastructure and support facilities at CFB Halifax and CFS St. John's, consisting of approximately 10,000 military and civilian personnel and a budget of \$1.25 billion.

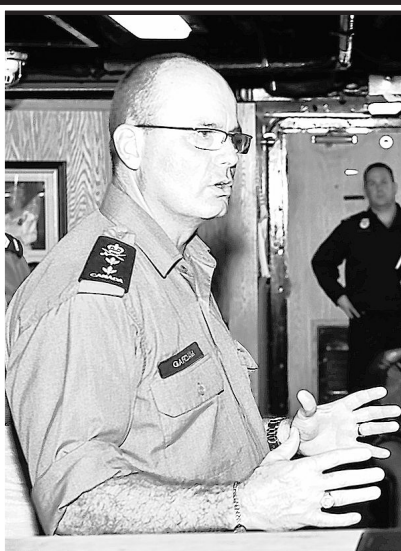
My second major role is as the Commander of Joint Task Force Atlantic for which I am responsible for providing support to other levels of government in the Atlantic region, when tasked by the federal government. This includes humanitarian assistance and disaster response during times of crisis or need, as well as routine co-ordination and planning with provincial and municipal authorities where required. In this role, I am able to call upon all of the Department of National Defence's assets and personnel in Atlantic Canada and if required, from other regions of Canada.

I am also the Commander of the Halifax maritime and aeronautical Search and Rescue (SAR) Region, the second largest Canadian SAR region, which is maintained and operational 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The region extends just past Greenland in the East, almost to Iqaluit in the North, close to Boston in the South and reaches West to the Gaspésie region of Quebec.

Finally, I am the Commander for all cadets in the Atlantic Region which is currently comprised of almost 8500 young persons between the ages of 12 to 18, in 242 locations, including five summer camps.

As a consequence of my many responsibilities, I often find myself travelling throughout the region and I am always impressed with the local support extended to our 25,000 military and civilian personnel in the 41 communities in which we are located. I am sure that part of the relationship we enjoy stems from the significant economic contribution we have in the region through the almost \$2.0 billion in spending on salaries and local purchases.

However, I believe it is based on more than



economics, particularly as I see so many of our personnel engaged with their communities as hockey, soccer and ringette coaches, or cub, scout and guide leaders, to name a few. I do not believe they would be so active in our communities if those very same communities were not creating a welcoming environment for them and their families.

In fact, I see evidence of this supportive spirit reflected in many ways throughout the region. First and foremost is that many of our serving personnel are your sons and daughters. From a region that comprises only seven per cent of Canada's population, Atlantic Canada has regularly made up close to 20 per cent of our military personnel. In fact, if any of you did not have a family member or relative that was currently serving, or had formerly served, in the military, it was almost certain that you had a friend or a neighbour who did. Little wonder we seem to be a part of the fabric of this region.

It is of course one thing to be a part of the fabric but it is another thing entirely to have our communities continue to support our military and their loved ones that are often left behind while ships, squadrons and regiments deploy. In so many instances, communities have risen to the call and provided for families and children and in the most tragic of circumstances they have joined us in our sorrow when one of our own has fallen in service to our country. I need only mention the Highway of Heroes or reflect on the increasing numbers of you that are attending Remembrance Day and other similar commemorative events. In addition, I have also witnessed the outpouring of community and corporate support at recognition and appreciation events such as the recent True Patriot Love dinners that have been held in various locations throughout the region.

So on behalf of the men and women of the Atlantic Canada defence team, I want to thank all of you that are contributing to our lives here in this region. You have welcomed us, our families and loved ones and made us feel at home. For an institution that exists to serve and support our nation, it is most gratifying to belong to communities that return the favour.