

# The Admiral's View



## TODAY'S YOUTH – TOMORROW'S LEADERS

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

As citizens of our country, we have a profound responsibility to build the nation of tomorrow and ensure its ongoing freedom and prosperity. Our youth and the way that we invest in their development is a sacred trust because today's young people are tomorrow's leaders and decision makers. One of my least known duties as the Commander of Maritime Forces Atlantic is also one of the most satisfying; I am responsible for the delivery of the Cadet Program in this region.

The Cadet Organization offers a fantastic program and, in fact, I believe it provides one of Canada's premier youth development opportunities. The foundations of the Cadet Program were laid more than 150 years ago. In 1862, five years before Confederation, drill associations were formed across the country. These early drill

associations formed the basis for what we now know as the Royal Canadian Army Cadets. The Royal Canadian Sea Cadets and Royal Canadian Air Cadets eventually followed.

The Cadet Program provides a structured extracurricular activity which instills values in our youth which support the very essence of Canadian society. Girls and boys aged 12 to 18 are exposed to core Canadian values which include, democracy, peace, order and good government, Canadian rights and freedoms, the respect for the dignity of all persons, and obedience to lawful authority. The Cadet Program emphasizes good citizenship and develops leadership within an environment of physical fitness and active living. Cadets learn to become active, responsible members of their communities, while making valuable contributions to Canadian society on a daily basis through citizenship and community service activities.

The Cadet Program includes training which is conducted in the evening and on weekends during the school year at cadet corps and squadrons all over Atlantic Canada. These programs are run by volunteers who believe that the programs they offer help young people to grow into socially balanced, community-minded individuals. In addition, there are summer camps that offer a broader range of opportunities for the cadets to learn. This summer, approximately 3000 cadets will proceed to one of the many summer camps located throughout the Atlantic Region, where they will develop valuable life skills such as self-confidence, teamwork and respect for others while building self-esteem, having fun and making lasting friendships. The cadets will also have the opportunity to develop unique skills while at camp.

These include pilot training for Air Cadets, orienteering and wilderness skills for Army Cadets, and sailing and seamanship for Sea Cadets.

There are many prominent former cadets from our region, these include: His Honour Brigadier-General (ret'd) the Honourable J.J. Grant, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia; the Honourable Darrell Dexter, Premier of Nova Scotia; country music singer-songwriter George Canyon; Bell Canada Senior Vice-President Marketing Heather Tulk; and Nova Scotia Power CEO Bob Hanf. Just as these former cadets have become prominent citizens, many of the cadets that proceed to summer camp this year will also become leaders in our community in the future.

As the Commander charged with the delivery of the Cadet Program in Atlantic Canada, I have had the opportunity to meet many cadets, to observe their training and to formally recognize their successes at their annual ceremonial parades and inspections. Like some of their accomplished predecessors, I can tell you that the youth of today's Cadet Program are some of Canada's finest up and comers. Many of the Sea Cadets who will spend this summer learning about sailing and seamanship will navigate the boardrooms of the future; the Army Cadets who travel to the far corners of the globe, trekking through breathtaking landscapes like the Mount Everest region are the future entrepreneurs who will succeed in spite of insurmountable odds; and the 17-year-olds whom I have watched earn their pilot's license through the Air Cadets will continue to soar, even after they leave the Cadet Program. Life provides us with many lessons, and cadets have taught me that our future is in good hands. I am very proud to play a part in such a worthwhile program.