

# MILITARY MATTERS

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## Speaking Notes for Vice-Admiral P. Dean McFadden Chief of the Maritime Staff to The Halifax Chamber of Commerce 16 June 2010

### Editor's note

Vice-Admiral Dean McFadden spoke to the Halifax Chamber of Commerce on 16 June, just prior to the International Fleet Review by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, as part of the Canadian Navy's centennial activities.

VAdm McFadden's remarks provide many insights into our Navy, its operations and its future and is, accordingly, an important "porthole" through which we can begin to understand the Navy's course into its second century.

Long known as "the silent service," the Navy's tradition of quietly going about its business and its concentration of personnel and vessels on both coasts has led to what VAdm McFadden calls *maritime blindness*, "a lack of understanding of Canada's deep and comprehensive relationship with the sea, and thus insufficient interest in how critically it supports not only our prosperity but our very way of life."

With 95 per cent of the world's commerce *floating* and Canada's very sustainability dependent on our international trade, it is easy to understand just how simply our economic viability and our collective livelihood can be affected, influenced and jeopardized by an external force.

Those forces need not necessarily be an adversary or even a trading competitor. A small number of fast boats piloted by a half-dozen modern-day pirates off the coast of Somalia can increase maritime insurance rates and even force ships to take the longer course around Africa's Cape of Good Hope, adding weeks and hundreds of thousands of dollars to the cost of transit of goods destined for our businesses, our homes and our families.

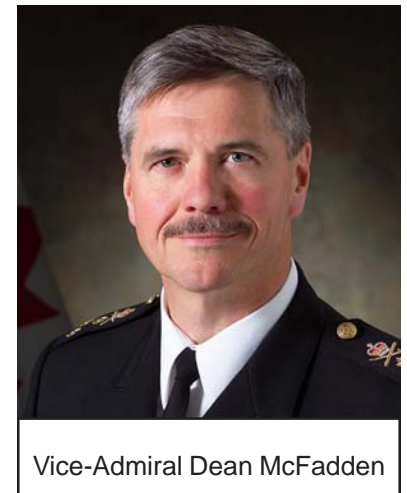
Mr. Durrell, Ms. Payne, fellow sailors and "Persons of the Year" – what a great tribute that is to Maritime Forces Atlantic in this centennial year – and dear friends of the Navy:

Je voudrais vous donner cette après-midi une explication, une impression de la marine canadienne du

vingt-et-unième siècle dont le Canada a besoin. Je vais faire mon discours en anglais mais vous aurez l'occasion de poser des questions et je vous encourage à le faire en anglais ou en français, c'est à votre choix.

It gives me great pleasure to return to the waterfront of Halifax Harbour. In just a couple of weeks, ships from the world's navies will assemble here in Halifax to be reviewed by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. It will be an occasion, not just of historic importance to our Navy, but also one of rare pageantry and spectacle.

Few events can match the grandeur of a Fleet Review – great warships assembled closely at anchor with colourful flags of ceremony fluttering in the breeze, sailors manning their graceful lines from stem to stern, as each nation in turn renders honours to a reviewing dignitary sailing past.



Vice-Admiral Dean McFadden



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Today, I wish to set in context what you will see two weeks hence. Why will so many nations have dispatched these most potent symbols of their national will and purpose to a roadstead in Halifax – to assemble in an altogether symbolic and fitting echo of the great convoys that were organized in Bedford Basin for their dangerous ocean passage during the Second World War?

I propose to address myself to this question, to talk about historic connections among navies in this highly interconnected world, and what the coming assembly represents.

I will admit that I want to convince you of the importance of these connections, not only that they allow a celebration amongst friends, but that they help to accomplish what this nation of ours hopes for the world, and how they are critical to that hope and indeed to our own security and prosperity.

I really want to do more than tell you this story. I want to deputize you – all of you – so you can tell this story to other Canadians yourselves.

### A Tale of Two Photographs

There is no doubt, particularly as a result of the knowledge that Canadians have gained of the men and women we have sent to Afghanistan now over many years – of their skill, determination, sense of purpose and compassion in executing a complex and dangerous mission – that Canadians today overwhelmingly admire their military and understand much about what it can do.

But most of them have neither an understanding of their nation's relationship with the sea nor a sense of

how the work of their navy relates directly to their daily lives. This is because Canada is a big country, and most citizens live well away from the coasts. Moreover, as the smallest of the three services, the Navy has the smallest “natural constituency” of Canadians who depend on it for employment or whose families count a sailor among them. In that regard Halifax is no doubt an anomaly.

But many Canadians find it hard to visualize what a life at sea is like, what it's for and certainly what the work of the Navy entails, even in this most maritime of cities.

Let me try to bring these issues, and challenges they present to life by recounting for you a tale of two photographs.

Imagine I showed you the first photo – picture in your mind a caring military nurse providing medical attention to a distressed child in some faraway land. In the background imagine a fully equipped soldier – vigilant and professional.

Is there anyone in the country who wouldn't know

what that soldier was doing or why it needed the likes of him or her in that far-distant place of need or whose heart would not swell with pride in the fact that a maple leaf was on their shoulders? Who wouldn't know immediately what an army can be used for, and how well that army is today being used?

Now imagine I showed you the second photo of a sleek warship at sea with little else than the horizon as her constant companion. What Canadian – other than someone like me who thinks the image of a ship underway and with a bone in her teeth pretty sexy – but what ordinary citizen would understand from that photo why this country has and needs a Navy, and



HMCS VILLE DE QUÉBEC'S Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB) ferries personnel between the warship and the freighter Abdul Rahman as VILLE DE QUÉBEC escorts the merchant vessel and her load of relief food supplies from Mombasa, Kenya, to Mogadishu, Somalia.

The Canadian Halifax-class Patrol Frigate HMCS VILLE DE QUÉBEC deployed to the region of Somalia from August to December 2008 to conduct naval escorts of World Food Programme (WFP) ships carrying life-saving supplies to the area.

DND Photo by Master-Corporal Kevin Paul, Canadian Forces Combat Camera.

what that Navy does?

The difference between the perceptions these two images evoke is at the heart of what is meant by maritime blindness—a lack of understanding of Canada's deep and comprehensive relationship with the sea, and thus insufficient interest in how critically it supports not only our prosperity but our very way of life. Too many, leading busy lives of their own, don't know why they need to care.

The events of this naval centennial year afford me an opportunity to help address that. This talk to you, and I hope your talk to others, is part of that effort.

So let's return to our warship. Imagine zooming back to include a merchantman under close escort, one that was chartered by the United Nations to bring relief supplies to East Africa.

In the fall of 2008, HMCS VILLE DE QUÉBEC was operating in the Mediterranean with NATO, when a letter arrived on the Prime Minister's desk from the United Nations' World Food Program.

Ship's owners and masters were refusing to make deliveries because the approaches to Somalia had become too dangerous for their lucrative cargoes and yet the World Food Program was counting on supply by sea to meet a rapidly increasing demand.

Canada's Navy, forward deployed, provided options to the Prime Minister. So although tasked to a NATO mission, VILLE DE QUÉBEC was reassigned and proceeded at speed to the Indian Ocean. No reassignment of personnel occurred; no additional stores or equipment were embarked.

There was no delay to prepare for a fundamentally new mission. Within days she was on station.

On escorting the first shipment into Mogadishu, the Commanding Officer could see firefights underway in the distance. He didn't need to read the latest intelligence files to understand the threat of shore launched missiles, but the frigate he commanded was designed to defend itself against such a threat.

VILLE DE QUÉBEC was ready for operations in a tough neighbourhood.

Over a two-month period, more than 150,000 tons of food supplies

were successfully delivered into Somalia: enough to feed over a million people. Most of the ship's company considered it to be the most satisfying mission of their careers—using skills and tools that had been honed for combat placed in the service of humanity.

The Navy's been back to that region twice since VILLE DE QUÉBEC deployed there in 2008, most recently with [HMCS] WINNIPEG and [HMCS] FREDERICTON. But why has Canada been there since 1991, having deployed task groups or individual frigates nearly three dozen times since the First Gulf War?

Let me answer that question by looking in an entirely different direction—towards Canada's High North.

### A Parable for Change

The Arctic is likely to see more change in the coming three decades than has occurred since Europeans first arrived in Greenland. Indeed, the region is being propelled towards the center of global affairs, as the five Arctic coastal states Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia and the United States—establish their claims to the vast energy and mineral reserves that have been already discovered, or are believed to lie, in the Arctic Basin and



HMCS CORNER BROOK on arctic patrol during *Operation Nanook* sails past an Iceberg.

*Operation NANOOK 07*, a Canada Command sovereignty operation, took place in the Baffin Island Coastal and the Hudson Strait areas from 7 to 17 August 2007. During this operation, Joint Task Force (North) participated in an exercise designed to train the Headquarters in the conduct of domestic operations in support of other government departments in its area of responsibility.

*Operation NANOOK 07* was a joint operation involving the deployment of Navy, Army and Air Force personnel and resources, and conducted in close cooperation with and the participation of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canadian Coast Guard.

DND photo by Master-Corporal Blake Rodgers, Formation Imaging Services Halifax, Nova Scotia.

its periphery.

Climate change and improvements in extraction technologies are likely to make these resources commercially exploitable perhaps decades sooner than was thought possible only a few years ago, bringing with them a host of economic opportunities, but also accelerating social change and risks to the delicate Arctic environment from unprecedented levels of human activity.

Competition will undoubtedly mount for access and control of strategic resources in the Arctic seabed.

The stakes are enormous, and not only for the five Arctic coastal states, but also for Finland, Iceland and Sweden, the region's indigenous peoples and a range of non-Arctic actors that have declared their interests.

As the recent maritime boundary delineation agreement between Russia and Norway attests, we have every confidence that oceanic competition in the Arctic will be moderated by cooperation and disputes reconciled by law. However, there are many other parts of the world where such competition will yield to confrontation and perhaps eventually to conflict.

Regardless of the rapidity with which these circumstances occur, or their frequency, what is beyond doubt is that ocean politics will make for a global maritime

order of unprecedented strategic complexity, with a latent but rising potential of conflict among states over oceanic resources and assured access to strategic materials by sea.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Indo Pacific, where ocean politics already occupy centre stage. When China recently stated that its **p r i n c i p a l** vulnerabilities and threats came from the sea, it was

acknowledging an enduring reality about the way the world works ...

... a reality first expressed some 500 years ago by the Portuguese traveler Tomé Pires in the powerful language that was characteristic of the early 16<sup>th</sup> century: "Whoever is Lord of Malacca has his hand on the throat of Venice." In today's globalized era, this applies as much to Singapore or Vancouver, Mumbai or Halifax, as it once did to the trading empire of the Venetians.

Where once the world's oceans served to shield Canada from far distant events, today they connect us through a vast web of relationships – political, legal, economic, financial and social – that have made us neighbours with all the world's peoples.

But not just neighbours. Our prosperity and security are thoroughly enmeshed in a global system that transcends all boundaries: a system that depends to varying degrees on regulated air, space and cyber commons, but that would not function at all without a regulated ocean commons.

Defending that system is not a matter of choice for Canada. Defending that system is essential to our very way of life.

## Purpose

Ladies and gentleman, we defend Canada by defending that global system at home and abroad, both at sea and from the sea. That is our essential purpose, our unique contribution to Canada's prosperity, security and national interests.

I expect you've heard the expression of "home" and "away" games as a sports metaphor for our business. While it describes land operations, it doesn't really apply to the maritime environment. For any Navy there is but one game, one interconnected surface covering 70 percent of the globe. Your Navy operates simultaneously on offence and defence: forward deployed, often with our friends and allies to protect our interests abroad, to build trust and confidence among nations and thereby to prevent conflict – but, at the same time, ever watchful and vigilant in our home waters, where we must – as a sovereign nation – have the capacity to act alone in our three ocean approaches to respond to the kinds of threats and challenges that 9/11 brusquely reminded us are possible in this globalized era.

## Platforms

It's for these reasons that Canada has, and will continue to require, a Navy that can deploy globally, control events at sea and influence events ashore.

But the tools of our craft are ships, aircraft and submarines, so let me tell you a little of what is happening



The Sea Sparrow missile left HMCS FREDERICTON and, seconds later, struck the unmanned target simulating an aircraft attacking the frigate. The simulated attack took place more than 100 kilometres off the coast of Nova Scotia.

DND photograph by Corporal Peter Reed, Formation Imaging Services Halifax.

to move this fleet into the future, beginning with our Victoria class submarines.

[HMCS] CORNER BROOK is operational in the Atlantic, conducting the full range of missions we expect of these naval “special forces” – and demonstrating that the class is among the world’s most capable conventional submarines. [HMCS] VICTORIA will be operational in 2011, when she will prove the heavyweight torpedo firing capability for the class, and [HMCS] WINDSOR will follow the year after.

Meanwhile, [HMCS] CHICOUTIMI has been delivered to a civilian yard awaiting its extended docking work period, beginning a strategic transfer to industry of the knowledge and work related to the deep maintenance of our submarines.

In other words, we’re nearing the end of a long beginning in which the *Victoria* class will achieve full operational capability – a capability unlike anything else in the Canadian Forces arsenal: a strategic “game-changer” whose presence or inferred presence at sea alters an entire theatre of operations.

Work to deliver the Government’s *Canada First* Defence Strategy is also well underway. The first frigate, [HMCS] HALIFAX, has already been removed from operational assignment in the Atlantic Fleet to prepare for her mid-life modernization. She will be followed next year by [HMCS] CALGARY, the first frigate from our Pacific fleet.

Three other *Canada First* projects – the Joint Support Ship, the Arctic Offshore Patrol ship and the Canadian Surface Combatant – are progressing steadily, as part of the roadmap laid out in the *Canada First* Defence Strategy.

That roadmap is crucial to the Navy, because the next class of warships we build in Canada are likely to still be in service in 2050. In fact, building a Navy is a series of fifty-year decisions, any one of which is among the most substantial a government will ever make, not only for the size of the investment involved, but also because it will determine for decades to come the options future Prime Ministers will have at their disposal to respond to events.

But no plan, no matter how good, can be implemented without the necessary machinery of national policy, industrial infrastructure and ‘know how’ in the public and private sectors. For this reason, I can’t stress enough the importance of the Government’s National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy. Shipbuilding is not just about the cutting of steel, nor is it just about investing in the navy. It’s an investment in the nation.

But getting from that effective but aging fleet we operate today to that highly capable fleet of tomorrow is going to require hard work. Simply put, while individual ships or submarines must periodically enter refit to



Leading Seaman (LS) Joyce Farmer, a member of HMCS FREDERICTON’s ship’s company, attends to a civilian casualty while the ship’s Sea King helicopter is prepared to transport him to a local area civilian airport for immediate transfer to the nearest hospital ashore. The man, who sustained various burn related injuries, was rescued from his ship, the *Motor Vessel (MV) Al Safa*, by HMCS FREDERICTON while at sea in the Gulf of Oman.

DND photo by Corporal M.D. Selig, HMCS FREDERICTON Ship’s Photographer.

conduct the deep maintenance that is needed to keep them in the order of battle, a Navy cannot do so.

The challenge we face is to refit the Navy by implementing the *Canada First* Defence Strategy among the most comprehensive programs of navy modernization and renewal ever in our history – while remaining in the order of battle to defend Canada at home and abroad, both at sea and from the sea.

## People

One of those challenges relates to recruiting.

There are a number of reasons why we lost the equivalent of four ships companies over the past several years, even as the Canadian Forces was growing as a whole. Maritime blindness was a contributing factor, no doubt, which is why I have been shameless in leveraging the visibility afforded by the Navy



A CH 124 Sea King helicopter from HMCS VILLE DE QUÉBEC fires off defensive flares during an exercise above the Indian Ocean.

Eighty per cent of the WFP food for Somalia arrives by sea. Ships carrying these vital supplies have been targets for pirates off Somalia's eastern and northern coasts.

DND photo by Master-Corporal Kevin Paul, Canadian Forces Combat Camera.

commitment: to shipmates, to Service, to nation and to the values that we not only espouse but for which we stand, for which we are prepared to risk our life and limb, and for which we are prepared to fight.

### Looking Back, Looking Ahead

It will be a hard road to get there, but the future of the Navy is both bright and meaningful. Even though we find ourselves under strength today, a vigorous effort to restore the Navy's numbers is well underway, whose success and momentum will be maintained until our strength is fully restored. Decisions to replace elements of an aging fleet, deferred for many years, are now made. And we have started, as a whole-of-government effort, to advance the shipbuilding program that this country has long needed.

centennial to recruiting advantage.

At the same time, I am encouraged by last year's 'whole of department' recruiting effort, not only for reversing recent trends of year-to-year decline, but for posting our best annual intake in a decade. My optimism, however, remains tempered by the fact that it's going to take a sustained effort over many years to restore the Navy's occupations to health.

But I can't speak about people without bragging about them a little bit.

As trite as it may sound, our sailors prove every day that they are our most priceless asset. As mariners, they perfect their craft in the most daunting waters to be found anywhere on earth - Canada's three oceans. As warfighting professionals, they are second to none, their knowledge and competence sought after in leadership of international operations. As ambassadors, they remind the world of what Canada stands for, not in words but rather in deeds.

As citizen-volunteers they accept prolonged absence from loved ones in arduous duty because they believe that they are making a difference. They understand that they belong to something that's bigger than any one of us—a national institution that brings citizens together from every walk of life and every part of Canada, and that connects them together in a higher purpose of

We have our eyes firmly set on the future, but an anniversary such as this—a centennial—affords the opportunity to check astern from whence we came. And when I look back at our recently completed first century of naval service, what truly stands out for me is how closely the story of your Navy parallels the story of the nation itself.

Certainly, the sovereign decision to establish a national naval service was a defining moment for the still young dominion of Canada—when it decided to create an independent capacity to see to its own maritime defence, however modest it was initially, but clearly aspiring to contribute beyond its shores.

Both country and Navy came of age in the crucible of war. It is said that the young nation first gained a true sense of its own capacity, character and identity as a result of its national sacrifice and victory achieved at Vimy Ridge during the Great War.

Her Navy certainly acquired that sense of capacity, essential purpose and identity in the long struggle of the Battle of the Atlantic, against a determined adversary, at the moment of Canada's most urgent peril.

Of course, the Navy was standing watch long before the Second World War, and has ever since been, "ready,

aye ready”:

- Patrolling the coasts of Korea during the first conflict fought under the banner of the United Nations;
- Maintaining a ceaseless vigil at sea throughout the course of a long Cold War;
- To the present day, where the Navy maintains an even more vigilant watch over our own waters and upon the world’s oceans stands ready to respond to aggression in all its forms, from piracy to terrorism, while also acting as a force for good around the world, as was so recently the case in Haiti.

This is a story of service, of a long and ceaseless watch in which we who wear “Canada” on our uniforms take great pride, because we know that Canada’s place in the world was secured in part through the contributions and sacrifices of those who preceded us, just as the men and women who serve at sea today strive to maintain that position at home and abroad.

Ladies and gentlemen, the story of your Navy’s second century has begun. I can’t pretend to foresee all the challenges that await us in the decades to come. But then neither could Sir Wilfred Laurier looking forward from 1910, when he guided the Naval Service Act towards Royal Assent.

But he held an abiding faith in what Canada stood for, even then, and a vision of the country as a leading member of the community of nations—a vision that our navy helped to secure in peace and war, and that we continue to sustain today.

That alone gives me great confidence for this new second century, because Laurier’s vision remains undiminished: that Canadians will continue to strive to make a difference, knowing that the world will not be as we wish but rather as we are prepared to help make it.

The ships you will see arrayed at anchor just two short weeks from now speak to how well Canada’s Navy has delivered on that aspiration.

And as you admire the coming pageantry and spectacle of the International Fleet Review, I trust you will have a better understanding of the purpose to which your Navy is and will be put in this century, and of the challenges that the men and women that crew the fleet will meet in the coming decades.



## BIOGRAPHY

### Vice-Admiral P.D. McFadden, CMM, CD

Vice-Admiral (VAdm) Dean McFadden was appointed Chief of the Maritime Staff and Commander of the Navy in June 2009 following appointments as Commander Canada Command and Commander Maritime Forces Atlantic/Joint Task Force Atlantic. In both appointments, he focused on delivering Joint CF effect and the development of an integrated, *whole-of-government* capacity to address Canada’s security and defence needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The establishment of the interdepartmental Maritime Security Operations Centre in Halifax and enhanced inter-department cooperation at the national level are examples of this capacity building.

His operational experience includes service at every level of command: in Her Majesty’s Canadian Ship (HMCS) MONTRÉAL; Sea Training (Atlantic); the Fifth Maritime Operations Group; Commander Canadian Fleet Atlantic; and of the high-readiness Task Group. In this last assignment he led a Joint/Inter-agency Task Group, (Army, Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard elements) to assist disaster relief efforts in the US Gulf States in the wake of hurricane Katrina in 2005.

VAdm McFadden’s experience at sea is divided between Pacific and Atlantic Fleets. His assignments include Scheduling Officer for NATO’s Standing Naval Force Atlantic at Northwood, UK and as Chief Staff Officer the Fifth Canadian Destroyer Squadron. At National Defence Headquarters, he served as Director Asia-Pacific Policy, Special Assistant to the Director General International Security Policy, Director of Maritime Strategy on the Maritime Staff, and he led development of the Navy’s current strategy document, *Leadmark* (this document is being updated for the new century).

VAdm McFadden is a graduate of Royal Roads Military College, of the Command and Staff Course and the Advanced Military Studies Programme at the Canadian Forces College. He is a Fellow of the Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies.

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