

Canada in Alliance

Maritime Security in a Changing World

Dates: April 29 - 30, 2026

Location: Hotel Halifax, Halifax NS

For Canada, national security has long been built on a foundation of partnerships. This web of alliances has bound our nation to friends across the globe and shaped not only our defence strategy, but our place in the world. Today, as international tensions mount and the security landscape shifts, these partnerships have never been more vital.

This conference examines how Canada fits into these maritime partnerships. What does it mean for Canada to work alongside partner navies and coast guards? How does the country operate within allied maritime frameworks, and where do real opportunities for deeper contribution lie?

This event brings together defence strategists, CAF personnel, and policymakers to explore these questions. Through their insights and expertise, we'll assess Canada's strategic position within allied naval operations, examine how the country can better support collective efforts in both peacetime and conflict, and uncover what our partners genuinely expect from us – in capabilities, in support, and in leadership.



Programme

Wednesday April 29, 2026

Hotel Halifax (Delta)

6:00 - 8:00 PM

Welcoming Standup Reception; speakers and guests welcomed.

Thursday April 30, 2026

Hotel Halifax (Delta)

8:00-8:30 | Registration & Coffee

8:45-9:00 | Keynote Opening Remarks

- Minister Colton LeBlanc, Minister of Growth and Development, Nova Scotia

9:05 – 10:30 | Panel 1

The View from the Atlantic, Moderator Chris Elson

- Commodore French (Commander Canadian Fleet Atlantic)
- Col Snider (NORAD)
- LtCdr Knight (RN, UWW section Fleet School)
- Trevor Hodgson (CCG, Senior Director Fleet Atlantic Region)

10:30 - 10:45 | Coffee Break

10:45 – 12:10 | Panel 2

Arctic and Continental Defence, Moderator Jamie Baillie

- Commander Kasper Ladegaard (Royal Danish Navy, Danish Defence Mission)
- Cdr. Alexis Dieryckx (NORAD)
- Dr. Adam Lajeunesse (St Francis Xavier University)
- Jason Rimmer (CCG) Director of Maritime Security and Intelligence)

12:10 – 1:30 | Lunch

- Lunch Keynote: Vice Admiral Angus Topshee, Commander of RCN

1:40 – 3:05 | Panel 3

Defence Innovation, Moderator: Adam Lajeunesse

- LCol Nadia Kang (NATO DIANA)
- Melanie Nadeau (COVE)
- Dr. Kristen Csenkey (Postdoctoral Fellow, St. Francis Xavier University)
- Dr. Aaron Plamondon (Irving Shipbuilding)

3:05-3:20 | Coffee Break

3:20–4:45 | Panel 4

New Maritime Capabilities and Procurement, Moderator: David Benoit

- Simon Page (contre-amiral à la retraite)
- Dr. Jeff Collins (University of Prince Edward Island)
- Patrick Daucourt (Avenis Novis Partners Conseil/Officier de liaison, Mission défense Ambassade de France)
- Simon Hughes (Lockheed Martin)

4:45-5:00 | Wrap up

6:00-7:00 | National BoA Gala, Pre-Dinner

7:00-8:00 | National BoA Gala Dinner





Speakers

VAdm Angus Topshee



VAdm Angus Topshee is the RCN's 38th Commander. Since joining the CAF in 1990, he has deployed around the world, served as Commander of HMCS *Algonquin*, and assumed numerous shore postings, including in the RCN's Strategy directorate, as Base Commander of CFB Halifax, and as Deputy Director, Strategy, Policy, and Plans at NORAD and United States Northern Command Headquarters. VAdm Topshee commanded Maritime Forces Pacific and Joint Task Force Pacific before assuming command of the Navy in May 2022.

Cmdre Jacob French



Commodore Jacob French joined the Canadian Forces in 1994 as a Maritime Surface/SubSurface Officer. He has served aboard multiple warships, including HMCS *Algonquin*, Calgary, Vancouver, and Regina. His shore appointments include Executive Assistant to Comd MARLANT and Director Navy Strategy – Concepts and Project Director Interim AOR. As a Captain(N), he was appointed to Deputy Commander Joint Task Force North in Yellowknife, NT from 2020 – 2023. In 2024 he was promoted to Commodore and is now the Commander Canadian Fleet Atlantic.

Rear-Admiral (Ret'd) Simon Page



Simon Page recently completed a 41-year career as a senior official and member of the CAF. As Assistant Deputy Minister in Public Services and Procurement, he oversaw multiple large project procurements, the management of numerous long-term contracts and the associated defence procurement strategy and industry governance. His Branch was also responsible for the management of the NSS and innovation in defence procurement. Simon also chaired the Defence Industry Advisory Group and spent three-years as Director General Maritime programme Equipment Management where he oversaw the programme management for all RCN sustainment activities.

Jason Rimmer



Jason Rimmer is the Director of Maritime Security for the Canadian Coast Guard, where he provides national strategic leadership for Canada's maritime security programme, including oversight of the National Command Centre and coordination with partners such as the Canadian Armed Forces, RCMP, CBSA, Five Eyes, and NATO allies. With over two decades of operational and executive experience across the Great Lakes, Central, and Arctic regions, he has held senior roles including National Director of Search and Rescue, Superintendent of the Central and Arctic Regional Operations Centre, and Commanding Officer of multiple Coast Guard vessels.

Cdr Alexis Dieryckx



Cdr Dieryckx completed a Royal Military College of St-Jean, Quebec, Bachelor's degree in Military and Strategic Studies, with a minor in Military Psychology. He served as a Naval Warfare Officer on IROQUOIS and HALIFAX class warships and progressed through myriads of staff positions in various headquarters, including, Canadian Forces Recruiting Group in the Quebec City Recruiting Centre, Chief of Maritime Staff in Ottawa, NATO's Joint Force Command in Naples, Combined Maritime Forces in Bahrain, and NORAD in Colorado Springs.

Dr. Adam Lajeunesse



Dr. Adam Lajeunesse is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Public Policy and Governance programme at St. Francis Xavier University. He is the Arctic and Maritime Security Chair at the Brian Mulroney Institute of Government, a Fulbright Scholar with the Fulbright Arctic Initiative, and Director of the Canadian Maritime Security Network. A specialist in Canadian and maritime sovereignty, security, and circumpolar geopolitics, he is the author of *Lock, Stock and Icebergs: A History of Canada's Arctic Maritime Sovereignty*, the editor of the *Arctic Operational Histories*, and an editorial board member of the *Canadian Naval Review*, the *Canadian Military Journal*, *Arctic*, and the *American Review of Canadian Studies*.

Lt.Cdr Charlie Knight



Charles Knight joined the Royal Navy in 2011 as a Midshipman after growing up in Lincolnshire. Trained at Dartmouth, he completed deployments and exchanges, including operations with 854 NAS and training in China, before qualifying in 2015 as an ASW Observer on Merlin HM Mk2 at 824 NAS. At 814 NAS he deployed to the Arabian Gulf, supported operations, and in Maritime Counter Terrorism. Qualifying as an Observer Instructor and Helicopter Warfare Instructor in 2019, he led training at 824 NAS and embarked in HMS Queen Elizabeth. In 2022 he served with the UK Carrier Strike Group, coordinating air operations and planning. He now serves in Halifax with the Royal Canadian Navy while pursuing postgraduate studies.

Colonel Matt Snider



Colonel Matt Snider joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 1998 in the Royal Canadian Artillery. After working through the ranks to Sergeant, he transferred to the Air Force as a pilot. Most of his career has been spent at 427 Special Operations Aviation Squadron. He has also served three years on exchange with the Royal Air Force, and in staff roles at 1 Canadian Air Division Headquarters. He is currently posted to NORAD & United States Northern Command in Colorado Springs, where he has served as Command Centre Director and Chief of Operations, and is now the Deputy Chief of the Integrated Operations Division.

Lieutenant-Colonel Nadia Kang



LtCol Kang holds degrees in Mechanical Engineering and Military Arts and Science from the Royal Military College of Canada. Her career spans diverse aerospace maintenance and sustainment roles, including work on the CP140 Aurora at 14 Wing Greenwood, CC130H Hercules at ADM(Mat), and as a Foreign Liaison Officer in Warner Robins, Georgia. She also served as Squadron Aircraft Maintenance and Engineering Officer for the Snowbirds in Moose Jaw and supported the P-8 Implementation Team at 14 Wing Greenwood. Currently, she is posted to NATO DIANA's Halifax office as a Project Manager on the Accelerator programme, contributing military insight and supporting innovation delivery across NATO. She enjoys exploring Nova Scotia and playing drums with the 12 Wing Pipes & Drums band.

Patrick Daucourt



Patrick works in international risk management, with over thirty years of experience, mainly in West Africa, in complex and multicultural environments. In this context, he has worked on operational security issues in sensitive settings, in situations shaped by security challenges, coordination requirements, and organizational adaptation. Since arriving in Halifax in 2024, he has continued these activities in the fields of cooperation and training. A member of the French Army's Citizen Reserve, he serves as a liaison officer to the French Defence Attaché in Canada, supporting the monitoring of bilateral military relations at the provincial level and cooperation dynamics. He also contributes to international development projects by facilitating interactions between economic stakeholders in transatlantic environments, between France, Canada (particularly Nova Scotia), and Africa.

Trevor Hodgson



Trevor Hodgson has been Senior Director, Fleet for the Canadian Coast Guard's Atlantic Region since January 2024, bringing nearly 20 years of operational and leadership experience across sea and shore. He progressed from Navigation Officer to Commanding Officer in 2018, with extensive service throughout Atlantic Canada, the St. Lawrence River, and the Arctic, including two missions to the North Pole. Ashore, he has led key functions in Icebreaking and Regional Operations, including oversight of the Regional Operations Centre and Marine Security Operations Centre. In his current role, he is responsible for the safe and effective operation of the Atlantic fleet, workforce readiness, and the integration of new vessels, with a strong focus on safety and supporting his people.

Dr. Kristen Csenkey



Dr. Kristen Csenkey is a SSHRC postdoctoral fellow at the Brian Mulroney Institute of Government, St. Francis Xavier University. She also holds a postdoctoral fellowship with the Canadian Maritime Security Network where she leads the upcoming symposium, "Navigating Uncharted Seas: Quantum, AI, and the Future of Maritime Defence". Her research focuses on global cyber governance, technology interdependence, and the geopolitics of emerging and disruptive digital technologies. Dr. Csenkey also leads a SSHRC project on responsible quantum technology governance. She regularly shares her expertise at the request of Canadian government departments, parliamentary committees, and military task forces. Her work has been featured in leading media outlets, including CBC, CTV, and Global News. She holds an H.B.Sc., M.A., M.A.P., and Ph.D. in Global Governance.

Dr. Jeffrey Collins



Dr. Jeffrey F. Collins is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of PEI. Prior to joining UPEI in August 2025, he worked as a Senior Policy Analyst with Canada's Department of National Defence (DND). A leading expert in defence procurement, he's authored two books and dozens of reports on Canadian defence policy. He holds a PhD in Political Science (Carleton), a MA (Birmingham), a LLB (Aberdeen), and a BA (Memorial).

Cdr. (Ret'd) Simon Hughes



Simon enrolled in the RCN in 1982 and left in 2012 after completing 30 years as a Naval Technical Officer, specializing in the Combat Systems Engineering domain. His career included progressively more senior seagoing assignments on both coasts, as well as directing a range of programme/personnel management deliverables within NDHQ and the DND Material Group. Simon transitioned to the defence industry in 2012 in Business Development, a role he has maintained for 14 years, with the past 10 years being at Lockheed Martin Canada. His efforts are focused on procurement opportunities in the Canadian maritime and naval domain with some crossover into the joint domain. Simon holds a Bachelor of Science in Physics from Dalhousie University (1985) and an MBA from the University of Ottawa (2010).

Melanie Nadeau



Ms. Nadeau is the CEO of COVE, a global technology partner specializing in commercialization, where she is responsible for leading the strategic direction and managing overall operations including assets, programmes, and services to over 700 clients worldwide. Ms. Nadeau has been a global expert and thought leader for the International Energy Agency, the UN Environment programme, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the International Electrotechnical Commission. She has earned multiple awards including Canada's Clean16 Award for her outstanding contribution towards clean capitalism, has been named Atlantic Canada's 25 most powerful women, was an invited speaker to TEDGlobal, and is a strong supporter for Canada's tech ecosystem as a mentor for the Creative

Dr. Aaron Plamondon



Dr. Plamondon is the Director, Industrial Participation, at Irving Shipbuilding and is responsible for the company's ITB obligations to the Government of Canada. Aaron is an experienced member of the defence industry, where he served in similar roles before coming to Irving, including 8 years with Raytheon Company. He received a Masters in War Studies at the Royal Military College of Canada, where he did a thesis on Canadian Defence Procurement, and a Ph.D. at the University of Calgary focusing on defence procurement and civil-military relations.

Commander Senior Grade Kasper Flinker Ladegaard



Commander Ladegaard serves as Defence, Military, Naval & Air Attaché at the Royal Danish Embassy in Ottawa, overseeing engagement and partnerships across all branches of the Canadian Armed Forces and with the Department of National Defence and Global Affairs Canada. He brings more than two decades of experience both on land and at sea. Previous roles have included deployments in the Atlantic and the Indian ocean, The Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf, duties on submarines, frigates and patrol ships in the Baltics. Later he held positions in the Danish Defence Acquisition Organization and in the Danish Ministry of Defence working with Arctic and transatlantic defense policy.



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