

Meeting Note
Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat
Rear Admiral David Gardam
March 16, 2012, 10:00 am
Premier's Office

Attendees:

Premier Kathy Dunderdale

Rear Admiral (RAdm) David Gardam, Commanding Officer of Joint Task Force Atlantic (JTFA(A)) and Maritime Forces Atlantic (MARLANT) (biography attached)

Purpose of Meeting:

- This meeting is a courtesy visit on behalf of the Commanding Officer of JTF(A) and MARLANT, RAdm David Gardam. No formal agenda has been developed for this meeting. RAdm Gardam met with your predecessor, Premier Williams, on October 14, 2010 for a similar purpose.

Background:

- Canada Command (Canada COM) is the Canadian Forces (CF) organization responsible for national security, and all routine and contingency CF operations in Canada and continental North America.
- Under Canada COM, there are six joint task forces including JTF(A), which is headquartered in Halifax and has responsibility for military planning and response in NL, PEI, NS, NB and all of Canada's eastern maritime approaches. As with all of the other regional joint task forces, during emergencies JTF(A) has the immediate authority to task for response all Air Force Navy and Army assets located within the Atlantic region.
- MARLANT is the largest of the three main formations within the Canadian Navy. MARLANT is comprised of Canadian Forces Station (CFS) St. John's and Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Halifax, and is responsible for commanding the Canadian Navy's Atlantic Fleet, and the Halifax Search and Rescue Region (SRR). MARLANT is staffed by approximately 7500 personnel, which include approximately 5000 regular force and 350 reservists.
- In 2010, RAdm Gardam acted as the lead representative for the CF during the initial response to Hurricane Igor. Notably, there was confusion around how the costs related to the deployment of DND/CF resources would be addressed. Initially, there were indications that the Province would be provided with an invoice for the direct costs associated with the deployment of any DND/CF assets required to address the impacts of Hurricane Igor, although these costs would be eligible for reimbursement under the federal government's Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangement. On September 24, 2010, Minister MacKay wrote to Minister Hedderson stating that DND would submit its costs directly to Public Safety Canada. To date, no invoice was received and no payments were made.

Potential Issues for Discussion:**Issue #1 – Search and Rescue (SAR)**

- The Department of National Defence (DND) provides SAR response for aeronautical and maritime incidents occurring in eastern Canada through the Halifax Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC). DND also provides assets to respond to searches for missing persons and other humanitarian incidents when requested.
- The 413 Transport and Rescue Squadron, stationed at 14 Wing Greenwood, and 103 Search and Rescue Squadron, stationed at 9 Wing Gander, are the primary units tasked with providing 24 hour a day, 365 days a year SAR capability to the JRCC. Together these squadrons are responsible for a massive area, covering the lower Arctic, the Maritimes, Newfoundland and Labrador and all offshore waters in the region.
- The 444 Combat Support Squadron, stationed at 5 Wing Goose Bay, comprised of two Griffon helicopters and 42 personnel, provides secondary SAR capability (maximum 12 hours until airborne) to assist SAR operations in the region. Its primary mission is to provide rapid response to local emergencies which occur during military flight operations at 5 Wing. Given the decline in allied flight training at the base, the Squadron could be re-mandated as a primary SAR provider. It should be

noted, however, that the aircraft stationed at the 444 Squadron do not have the level of operational capabilities as the Cormorants that are stationed at 9 Wing Gander.

- The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) is responsible for providing the marine component of the federal SAR program through the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG). In civil aviation matters, coordination of any air SAR operations is the responsibility of the RCMP. They will contact either emergency measure operations of FES-NL in St. John's or the Halifax JRCC, depending on the magnitude of rescue efforts required.
- On January 29, 2012, Burton Winters, a 14-year old boy from Makkovik, was reported missing by his family. On February 1, 2012, his body was recovered. The circumstances surrounding the death of Mr. Winters, particularly DND's role in the SAR effort, has sparked a strong outcry. Two issues remain particularly prominent: (1) the status of DND's SAR assets at the time of Mr. Winters' disappearance and (2) a DND communications protocol that placed an ongoing burden on the lead responding agencies to formally request DND's assistance even if DND was initially unable to respond.
- On February 3, 2012, Minister McGrath wrote to Minister Peter MacKay to seek a swift conclusion to DND's inquiry into the incident and to reaffirm NL's position on SAR capacity.
- RAdm Gardam was tasked with providing media briefings to explain DND's response to the Makkovik incident on February 3, 2012 in Halifax and February 8, 2012 in St. John's. Despite these briefings, questions remained.
- On February 10, 2012, Minister O'Brien wrote Minister MacKay seeking clarity on a number aspects relating to the operation and the federal government's explanations of what happened at the time. Three areas of concern were highlighted:
 - While there are two Griffon helicopters stationed at 5 Wing Goose Bay, neither were serviceable when the initial request for assistance was made to the JRCC in Halifax. Appropriate action was requested to ensure that DND aircraft stationed in the province will be maintained in a state of readiness to assist in air search operations when required.
 - Additional information was requested regarding the status of the Cormorant helicopters from 9 Wing Gander, as they were reportedly available but a decision was taken not to deploy.
 - Current DND operational protocols suggest that DND will not deploy aircraft to assist in ground SAR if private aircraft are already involved. Given the superior capabilities of military aircraft and their specialized crews, Minister O'Brien suggested that this protocol needs to be re-examined.
- To date, the federal government has focused primarily on perceived deficiencies in communications protocols relating to Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR) events. In a February 17, 2012 memo, DND officials recommended that a new protocol be established that would place a degree of responsibility on the JRCC to contact GSAR authorities for updates even if no assistance had been provided and there was no follow-up request before a case file is closed.
- On February 28, 2012, FES NL officials chaired a meeting to discuss GSAR protocols. DND, the RCMP, the RNC, Justice and TW also attended. As an outcome of this meeting, it was decided that a confirmation/feedback protocol similar to the above would be adopted. The results of this meeting were conveyed to Canada Command by RAdm Gardam in a February 29, 2012 letter.
- On March 8, 2012, Minister MacKay announced that the protocol on SAR had been amended to put the onus on military officials to call back the lead agencies to determine if Canadian Forces assets are still needed. He also rejected the call to increase military SAR assets in Labrador and said that the configuration was one that suits the current needs. He also noted that the government, other partners and the CCG are constantly working together to optimize SAR.
- Debate and discussion is ongoing including in the media, House of Commons and the House of Assembly. On March 7, 2012, NL's House of Assembly unanimously passed a private member's resolution calling on the federal government to work with the Province to strengthen SAR capacity in light of the Burton Winters tragedy and consider establishing permanent SAR capability at 5 Wing Goose Bay. The resolution also called upon the federal government to reverse its decision to close the Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre (MRSC) in St. John's.

Potential Speaking Points

- The recent tragedy in Labrador with the death of Burton Winters has highlighted the need to improve SAR response and capacity in NL. I note that the review NL requested of the protocols used during the search for Burton Winters has already identified a needed change in GSAR inter-agency procedures. This is a first step. I am concerned, however, by reports suggesting that DND has limited its considerations mainly to this dimension of its SAR protocols and that no broader review will be conducted. Can you confirm what other aspects of SAR response protocols were considered during the recent review and whether any additional reviews are being conducted and/or planned?
- More clarity would also be welcome around other aspects of the circumstances surrounding the death of Burton Winters. A number of important questions relating to DND's SAR response capabilities in NL remain unanswered. I am particularly interested in the status of the Cormorant helicopters at 9 Wing Gander at the time of Burton Winters' disappearance and any steps that need to be taken to ensure that DND aircraft stationed at 5 Wing will be maintained in a state of readiness necessary to assist in air search operations when required in the future.
- NL is committed to ensuring first responders have appropriate tools to assist them in the important work they do and to further improve the likelihood of saving lives in difficult conditions. Recently, we announced a \$510,000 commitment to purchase a suite of thermal imaging cameras and provide any necessary training. It was reported that lack of knowledge of the local terrain, worsened by poor weather conditions, was a factor in the decision to inform that air support was unavailable during the search for Burton Winters. What steps are being taken to ensure that DND personnel have the knowledge of the terrain in NL necessary to respond under similar circumstances in the future?

Issue #2 - Recent use of Department of National Defense Search and Rescue Helicopters for medivacs within the province.

- Helicopters are used for medivacs in the province to rescue patients from the bush or in areas where no other recovery alternatives (King Air, ground ambulance, etc) can be used.
- The province uses 6 non-dedicated Universal helicopters that are leased by Government through Transportation and Works to complete medivacs. These helicopters are multi-purpose and can only fly in daylight hours and in good weather conditions.
- For medical transports that are required in the night time or during inclement weather, the province relies on DND (SAR) resources. In 2010/11, 57 helicopter medivacs were flown, of which 22 were completed by DND at no charge to the province (cost estimated to be \$1.3 to \$2 million, based on \$30,000 per hour and each medivac lasting 2-3 hours). In comparison, DND completed only 1 medivac in the rest of Atlantic Canada during the same time period. While SARs has expressed their desire to assist the province wherever possible, they consider helicopter medivac requests to be outside of their primary mandate.
- To ensure appropriate requests are being made and proper protocols followed, Eastern Health, HCS and TW met with SAR personnel in September 2011 to develop a decision tree for helicopter requests to DND.
- In early Fall 2011, helicopter medivacs by the medical flight team out of St. John's were discontinued while OH & S concerns were addressed. At the same time, the provincial Office of Medical Oversight at Eastern Health advised EH and HCS of safety concerns regarding the continued use of a single-pilot, single-engine helicopter platform for medivacs. HCS has supported EH in their efforts to resolve this issue.
- As a result of these actions, increased requests to SARs have occurred over the last 4-5 months and deviations from the decision tree have occurred.
- Government has modified its lease arrangement to include a larger Bell 407 helicopter that is being retro-fitted to address the OH & S concerns and EH has bought in an external helicopter expert to address and allay the concerns of the Provincial Office of Medical Oversight regarding use of the current helicopter fleet for medivac purposes.

- At a meeting on March 06th, 2012 between EH, HCS and the Provincial Office of Medical Oversight, the physician group confirmed that they will again consider use of Government's helicopters for medivacs in their assessment and decision-making process.
- Eastern Health has been seeking a meeting with SAR to discuss the operating protocol and to clarify and issues that may require discussion.

Potential Speaking Points

- The province recognizes and values the important role that SAR plays in providing assistance with helicopter medivacs throughout the province.
- With respect to concerns about inappropriate deployment of SAR resources, the CEO of EH has been seeking a meeting with SAR personnel, EH, HCS and the Provincial Office of Medical Oversight to address any concerns regarding the usage of and the decision tree for SAR requests. It is our intention to reinforce the requirement that all provincial resources are assessed before requesting the services of SAR for medical evacuations.
- HCS will be embarking on a review of the provincial ambulance program, including helicopter, in the very near future to assist in identifying efficiencies and improvements.

Issue #3 - CFS St. John's Pleasantville Consolidation Project

- Outside of SAR, RAdm Gardam's main responsibilities in NL pertain to CFS St. John's.
- CFS St. John's was established as autonomous unit of the CF in 1968. The station provides operational support services to naval vessels visiting the Port of St. John's, military aircraft transiting through the St. John's Airport, 15 Reserve Units, 90 Cadet Units, and the Marine Institute Naval Engineering Squadron.
- The Station is home to the following units: 1st Battalion Royal Newfoundland Regiment; 2nd Battalion Royal Newfoundland Regiment; 37 Canadian Brigade Group Detachment St. John's; 36 Royal Newfoundland Service Battalion; 56 Field Engineer Squadron; Air Reserve Flight Torbay; 728 Communications Squadron; Reserve Medical Detachment; HMCS Cabot Naval Reserve; Canadian Forces Naval Engineering School Detachment; and four cadet corps.
- The Station's complement currently consists of approximately 240 regular force, 1100 reserve force, and 50 civilian personnel. CFS St. John's total annual expenditures are approximately \$16M.
- The Pleasantville Consolidation Project (PCP) at CFS St. John's was announced by then Minister of National Defence, Gordon O'Connor, on April 4, 2007. The PCP will replace the CFS St. John's with a single modern, multi-purpose facility. Work on the \$150M project began in late 2009, and completion is expected by 2013.
- The land which will be freed up by the PCP is currently held by the Canada Lands Company (CLC) and will be sold by them. CLC's vision for the property calls for a primarily residential development with a mix of housing types including town homes, single family homes, and apartment/condominium units.
- The St. John's Municipal Council approved rezoning required for the Pleasantville Redevelopment Plan in March 2009. Consultations with area residents are ongoing.

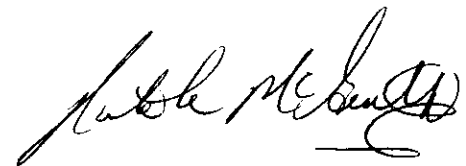
Potential Speaking Point

NL is pleased to see Pleasantville Consolidation Project construction is underway, and we look forward to its timely completion.

Prepared by/Reviewed by: Colin Corcoran / Cam Bodnar / Sean Dutton (consulted FES-NL and HCS)

Ministerial Approval: Minister McGrath

March 15, 2012



Biography
Rear Admiral David Gardam



Rear-Admiral Gardam enrolled in the militia in 1975 as a Private in the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders and subsequently transferred to the Naval Reserves in 1977 and the Regular Force in 1981. His extensive sea time has been primarily concentrated in the Atlantic Fleet where he earned his watchkeeping certificate in HMCS HURON and subsequently served as Weapons Directing Officer, Diving Officer and Navigating Officer. He then broadened his sea experience as Executive Officer of HMCS MIRAMICHI, Combat Officer of HMCS GATINEAU, Combat Officer Sea Training Atlantic, and as Executive Officer HMCS HALIFAX.

Rear-Admiral Gardam's command experience includes HMCS HALIFAX while serving as Executive Officer, HMCS CHARLOTTETOWN, Commander Sea Training Atlantic, HMCS ATHABASKAN and Commandant of the Canadian Forces Maritime Warfare centre. As the acting Commanding Officer in HMCS HALIFAX he participated in a Joint Maritime Command exercise off the coast of Scotland as the Commander of the Anti-surface Task Group. During his tenure in Sea Training he was responsible for preparing the Atlantic Fleet to deploy to the Persian Gulf as part of Task Force-151 which was tasked with the mission to counter the threat against terrorism. While in HMCS ATHABASKAN he assumed the duties as the Flag Captain for the Atlantic Fleet and participated in Op UNISON in support of disaster relief after Hurricane Katrina and was the Flag Ship during a six-month NATO deployment.

Rear-Admiral Gardam's appointments ashore include the Senior Staff Officer Submarine Manning and Training, Detachment Commander of Naval Training Detachment in Halifax, Director Maritime Policy Operations and Readiness for the Chief of the Maritime Staff, Director General Plans for the Strategic Joint Staff working for the Chief of the Defence Staff, and Deputy Director General International Security Policy within the policy group working for the Associate Deputy Minister Policy.

Rear-Admiral Gardam holds a Bachelors Degree from the University of Winnipeg and is a graduate of the Command and Staff College Course and the National Security Studies Program in Toronto. Rear-Admiral Gardam was appointed Commander Joint Task Force Atlantic and Commander Maritime Forces Atlantic in August 2010.