

11 September 2018

Good evening all and greetings from Ottawa,

I was very pleased to be asked to provide greetings as you celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the inauguration of the UNTD program and the 50th Anniversary of the follow on Reserve Officer Programs in the Naval Reserve. I see by the guest list that there are representatives and guests from coast to coast representing a great number of NRDs and Universities and many familiar names so I am sure that it has been a great reunion as well as commemoration.

I liked the phrase in the program info that indicated that the “local organizing committee had developed an exciting, comprehensive programs of events that included a healthy dose of nostalgia, naval related activities, socializing and time for a yarn or two with old friends and colleagues.” That sums up some of the key reasons why the UNTD program and its successor programs were so successful and why there continues to be a unique association and network across the country and around the world for so many who participated in training programs over the past 75 years and why events like the one this week and the Mess Dinner this evening continue to draw so many to gather nationally, locally or regionally.

In 2008, I was honoured to be one of the speakers at the UNTD 65th Anniversary dinner in HMCS STAR, representing my father, Commodore Buck Bennett and to have been made an “honourary UNTD member”. As many of you know, my family has had a long association with the RCN and through the service of my father, myself, my sister and brother, we have amassed over a century of service (135 years so far!) that all started with UNTD or other summer programs that were “not just a job, they were an adventure” as the recruiting ads used to say. Each of you will have a story as to how and why you joined and continued to remain connected so many years later, but all seem to have the common theme of being part of an exceptional group of people, having unique opportunities with an incredible range of personal and professional challenges combined with fun that resulted in strong and lasting friendships.

Even today’s recruiting ads and material have a similar message that speak to the same things that drew all of us into this organization. The occupations are broader and the Ship’s and equipment significantly updated, but the same aspects remain “endless career possibilities, full or part-time, an exciting path and adventure, being part of a team – and pay! Today’s advertising also encourages Canadians to “Sign up for training in one of our many sea trades and learn what it is to be a sailor. As part of crew aboard one of the fleet’s state-of-the-art frigates, support vessels, maritime coastal defence vessels or submarines, you will be part of centuries-old traditions that have made seafarers proud to call the navy home. Sail with your crew on operations and exercises that can take you down Canada’s coastline or across the world.

Whether it’s as a non-commissioned member or officer, the Regular navy or Naval Reserve, opportunity abounds. Enjoy endless career possibilities, an exciting path and an adventure – that pays you! If you enjoy working as part of a team and using your mental and physical strengths in an exciting, fast-paced setting, then the navy is a course worth sailing. “

As you gather to renew friendships and look back at the time you spent with the RCN, I encourage you to also celebrate and connect to the legacy of proud service and tradition of excellence that is proudly kept alive by today's RCN sailors and officers. Throughout our history, Canadian sailors have carved out a reputation as courageous, compassionate, innovative and capable while earning the respect of allies and foes alike. The men and women of the RCN have always been and continue to be the foundation of our service, the bedrock. They are amongst the most professional, highly educated and highly trained sailors in the world and they continue to proudly serve Canada and Canadians knowing they can make a difference at home and abroad, on, above and below the sea, day and night. Canada continues to need a strong and well equipped Navy.

The RCN is "Canada's First Responder". In times of crisis or conflict, when Canada wants to demonstrate its leadership and commitment, the Government sends ships. A Canadian warship is the "Swiss Army Knife" of responses for the Government of Canada – a self-contained, flexible and cohesive platform with outstanding Ships Companies that have proven themselves time and time again.

The RCN is in the midst of the most comprehensive fleet modernization in its peacetime history. The new ships will ensure that the RCN can continue to monitor and defend Canadian waters, including the Arctic and make significant contributions to international naval operations. These are interesting and exciting times for your RCN and as we plan for the future fleet and the next generation of sailors and officers, we also look back at the foundation that was built by Canadians like you.

Vice Admiral Lloyd, Commander RCN has the philosophy of "People First, Mission Always" – a bit of a new message that builds upon "Ready Aye Ready" and the proud history of the RCN that you are a part of through your service and continued affiliation and support. I have always been impressed with the pride and enthusiasm that UNTD members have for naval service, the RCN and particularly the Naval Reserve. You are all a part of the story of why Canada needs a Navy and how every day, the men and women of the RCN are making a difference somewhere in the world.

I wish you all UNTD members a "Happy 75th Anniversary" and a "Happy 50th Anniversary" to members of the ROUTP, RESO and follow on officer programs. I hope you will join in helping us organize and celebrate Naval Reserve Centennial coming up in 2023.

Yours Aye,

Rear-Admiral Jennifer Bennett, CMM, CD