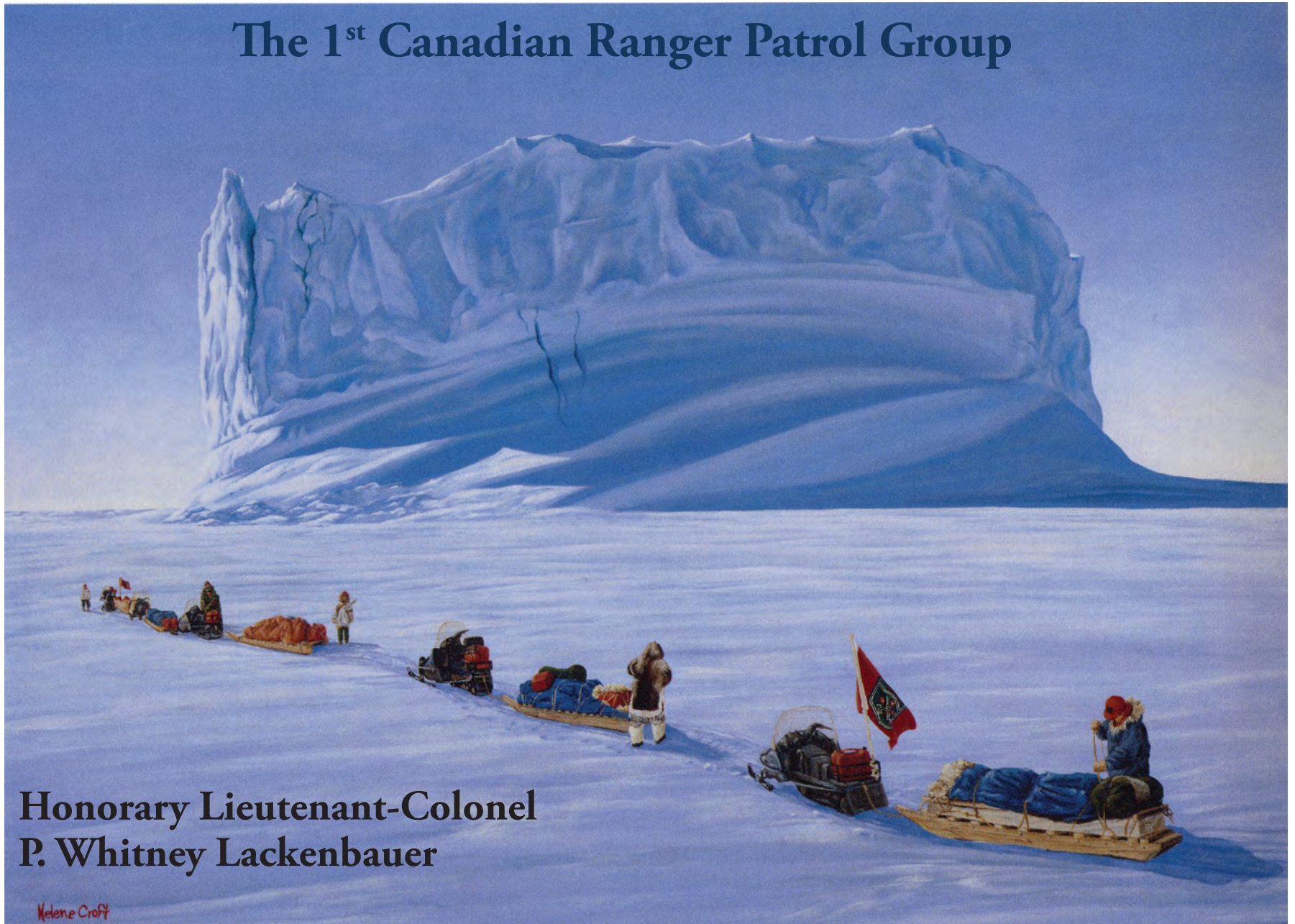


VIGILANS

The 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group



Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel
P. Whitney Lackenbauer

Melene Croft

VIGILANS

The 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group

Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel P. Whitney Lackenbauer, Ph.D.

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1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group
PO Box 6666 Station Main
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2R3

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Lackenbauer, P. Whitney, author
Vigilans: the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group

Issued in print and electronic formats by 1st Canadian Ranger
Patrol Group

ISBN 978-0-660-02436-3 (pbk.)

Cat. no.: D2-356/2015E

ISBN 978-0-660-02437-0 (pdf.)

Cat. no.: D2-356/2015E-PDF

1. Canada. Canadian Armed Forces. Canadian Rangers—
History. 2. Canadian Armed Forces—Native peoples. 3.
Canada—Armed Forces—Canada, Northern. 4. Canada—
Armed Forces—Operations other than war. I. Lackenbauer,
P. Whitney II. Canada. Canadian Armed Forces. 1st Canadian
Ranger Patrol Group

Design & Layout

True North Consulting, Otterville, Ontario, N0J 1R0, Canada

Printed in Canada.



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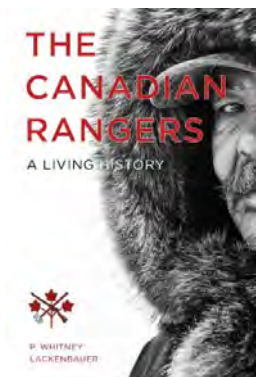


Acknowledgements

Thanks to the Canadian Rangers of 1 CRPG for sharing their insights and stories with me over the last decade.

Major Craig Volstad and Captain Steven Watton have supported this project from the onset, and it could not have been completed without their support. Mitch Patterson provided research assistance for parts of chapter 6, Peter Kikkert offered valuable suggests to improve the narrative, and Jennifer Arthur-Lackenbauer performed indispensable roles as cartographer and copy-editor.

For references to the quotes in the first five chapters of this book, and for expanded commentary on the historical development of the Canadian Rangers across the country, see P. Whitney Lackenbauer, *The Canadian Rangers: A Living History* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013). For a sample of media stories on the Rangers, see the edited collection *Canada's Rangers: Selected Stories, 1942-2012* (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2013).



Foreword



PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

The Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Honorary Canadian Ranger, 1 CRPG

Canada's North is a land of exceptional beauty, boundless opportunity and great challenges. To thrive, our Arctic communities rely on a strong and abiding commitment to civic values of altruism and teamwork. No organization embodies these Northern attributes more outstandingly than the Canadian Rangers.

For over 65 years, the Canadian Rangers have played an essential role in supporting our country's Northern defence strategy and upholding Arctic sovereignty. Canadian Rangers have also played a central role in the life of their communities. As first responders, rescue workers, local guides, disaster relief supporters and in countless additional roles, they provide leadership, inspiration and essential public service.

I have been privileged to observe our Canadian Rangers in action. During Operation NANOOK 13, I patrolled with Gjoa Haven Patrol and was deeply impressed by the skill, dedication and tenacity on display. These exceptional Canadians work diligently to defend our territory from threats and keep our North strong, secure and free.

To support their mission, our Government has made modernizing and expanding the Canadian Rangers a priority. We recognize the vital functions they fulfill, which require modern electronic tracking and digital equipment and an upgrade to the rugged 7.62 mm bolt action rifle. I am proud that since 2007, the Rangers have grown 25 percent to over 5,000 members.

It is therefore a tremendous honour for me to contribute to *Vigilans: An Illustrated History of 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group*. This detailed and enriching volume is a powerful testament to the many contributions Canadian Rangers have made in support of Canada's Armed Forces. I commend the author and extend my warmest thanks to all who have served in the Canadian Rangers for your patriotic endeavours.

The Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada



Preface

Major M. Craig Volstad



1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group is the largest military unit in the country, spanning Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Yukon, and parts of northern B.C. – a region accounting for nearly 40 percent of Canada’s land mass. With over 1750 Rangers in 60 patrols and more than 1600 Junior Canadian Rangers (JCR), 1 CRPG is a key strategic organization for the Government of Canada and a force multiplier for the Canadian Armed Forces in the North.

The Canadian Rangers, as a sub-component of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Reserve, play an important role in performing national

security and public safety missions in sparsely settled northern, coastal and isolated areas that cannot conveniently or economically be covered by other parts of the CAF. Lightly equipped and self-sufficient in their home environments, Rangers are able to support our military’s sovereignty and domestic operation tasks in an effective and responsible manner by participating in Northern operations, sharing specialized skills and local/traditional knowledge with other units, conducting North Warning Site patrols, reporting suspicious and unusual activities, assisting in search and rescue, and collecting local data of military significance. Our Rangers have a tremendous impact on the lives of people in their communities. From helping to recover lost persons to setting a positive example for the youth, Rangers are always ready to participate. In turn, the JCRs are the future leaders of the North and a key element to the sustainment of the Rangers.

The Government of Canada has a vision for the North and our Canadian Rangers fit the profile. Canada’s Northern Strategy and the Canada First Defence Strategy articulate that the area “north of 60” is a fundamental part of Canada – it is part of our heritage, our future and our identity as a country. At 1 CRPG we are committed to meeting the challenges and opportunities of a changing North, helping communities realize their true potential in a healthy, prosperous and secure region within a strong and sovereign Canada. As activities increase in northern lands and waters, our Rangers continue to play an important role in demonstrating a visible presence throughout the north. Our unit continues to grow and at the same time we are becoming more professional and capable.

Achieving and executing our mission requires the shared hard work of Canadian Rangers, JCRs, Ranger instructors and headquarters personnel, along with the special partnership that we have developed with Joint Task Force (North), the Canadian Army, Canadian Joint Operations Command, and other government departments. The North is built on relationships, and our deep roots and connections in the North explain the success of our patrol group — and will allow us to continue to prosper and grow into the future.

Our Rangers are easily identified by their distinctive red t-shirt, red sweatshirt, combat pants and ball cap emblazoned with the Ranger crest. They have become an iconic symbol of the military in Northern Canada and continue to play an essential, visible role in exercising sovereignty. This book is a celebration of their unique contributions to their communities, their territories, and their country, past and present. With the continued government and private sector focus on the Arctic, the demand for Ranger assistance continues to increase. 1 CRPG is up to the challenge, and we continue to meet the growing demand with strength and dedication to duty. We remain vigilant, ever watchful — the eyes, ears and voice of the North in the Canadian Armed Forces.



Introduction

If Canada's Arctic sovereignty has a brand, it's the red Rangers hoodie.

Journalist Tim Querengesser, *Up Here* (2010)

The Canadian Rangers are popularly recognized as Canada's "eyes and ears" in remote regions. With a proud history of service dating back more than six decades, the Rangers represent an important success story for the Canadian Forces in exercising sovereignty, conducting and supporting domestic operations, and helping their communities.

Defence officials first embraced the Ranger concept during the Second World War, when terrified Canadians pushed the federal government to improve west coast defences. The Pacific Coast Militia Rangers allowed citizens who were too old or too young for overseas service, or were working in essential industries, to defend their homes. Apart from a sporting rifle, ammunition, an armband, and eventually a canvas uniform, the army expected the Rangers to be self-sufficient. They reported suspicious vessels or activities, trained with other military units, conducted search and rescue, and reported Japanese balloon bombs that landed along the coast. The organization stood down when the war ended, having accomplished their mission in BC and the Yukon without firing a hostile shot.

As Canadians awoke to the reality of the Cold War in 1947, defence planners resurrected the Ranger concept. The first Canadian Ranger units took shape in the Yukon, before extending down the

Atlantic and Pacific coasts and across the breadth of Canada's northland. The Rangers' drew upon their experience as trappers, bush pilots, missionaries, fishermen or miners to serve as guides and scouts, to report suspicious activities, and to prepare to use guerrilla tactics to delay an enemy advance— at least until professional forces arrived. The army equipped each Ranger with a .303 Lee Enfield rifle, 200 rounds of ammunition each year, and an armband.

The strength of the early organization peaked in December 1956, when 2725 Rangers served in forty-two companies from coast to coast. Rangers provided intelligence reports on strange ships and aircraft, participated in training exercises with Canada's Mobile Striking Force and other army units, and conducted search and rescue. By the 1960s, however, Canadian defence plans overlooked the Rangers. Citizen-soldiers with armbands and rifles could not fend off Soviet bombers carrying nuclear weapons. Apart from Newfoundland and Labrador and a sprinkling of northern communities, the organization became largely inactive by 1970.

Arctic sovereignty crises in 1969-70 and 1985 prompted the military to reinvigorate the Rangers, whose important grassroots connections contributed to keeping Canada's "true north strong and free." Ranger instructors visited patrols across the Northwest Territories and began offering formal training, and visiting soldiers who came north on winter warfare training praised the Rangers for sharing Arctic survival skills. Media coverage emphasizes the social and political benefits of the Rangers in Inuit and First Nations communities, reflecting the growing importance of building and reinforcing Aboriginal-military partnerships. The number and geographical scope of the Rangers grew quickly, particularly in the

1990s. Patrols were re-established in the Yukon and in communities along the Mackenzie River, and by the end of the twentieth century the Rangers provided more coverage in the North than ever before. Journalists applauded the Rangers' role in teaching the military and in encouraging elders to share their traditional knowledge with younger people within communities. The creation of the Junior Canadian Rangers in 1998 formalized this role.

That same year, the military established 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group headquartered in Yellowknife—an important milestone in making support to Rangers in the Territorial North more professional. With more support, resources, and training, the Rangers continued to grow and become more effective. They attracted more national attention in the twenty-first century alongside growing interest in Arctic sovereignty and security.

The Rangers attract their highest profile when patrolling the remotest reaches of the Arctic, showing the flag in some of the most challenging conditions imaginable. Since 2007, Rangers participate in three major annual operations: Nunavut, Nunakput, and Nanook. The national media devotes most of its attention to these activities, which give Rangers a chance to work with other members of the Canadian Armed Forces and foreign militaries, operate in unfamiliar environments, share skills, and build confidence.

Canadian Rangers also support other government agencies in responding to security and safety challenges facing their communities. Because of their expertise and training, they are often called upon to take the lead during states of emergency

(such as snowstorms, power plant shutdowns, and plane crashes) and in conducting ground search and rescue.

The Canadian Rangers' final task—to maintain a military presence in local communities—remains fundamental. They represent the Canadian Armed Forces within their communities, ensuring that the military's Northern "footprint" does not trample on Northerners' interests. Rangers play many local roles. They are also ambassadors for Canada, for their territories, and for their peoples and communities, hosting royalty, politicians, and foreign military officials who come to visit.

Today there are five thousand Canadian Rangers across the country, and 1750 Rangers in 60 patrols in 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group. With their distinctive red sweatshirts and ball caps, they are an appropriate and effective form of military presence in remote regions. The southern establishment depends on them. Without access to local knowledge of the land, sea, and skies, southern visitors are hopelessly lost. Canadian Rangers consider themselves the eyes, ears, and voice of the Canadian Armed Forces in their communities and in the North more generally.

The Rangers are a success story from coast to coast to coast. Canada admires and respects the Rangers' skills, commitment, and patriotism. The Rangers today are icons of Canadian sovereignty. They contribute to domestic security, make important contributions to their communities, and are stewards of our northland. In an age of uncertainty, the Canadian Rangers in 1 CRPG remain vigilant: stalwart sentinels watching over their communities and the farthest reaches of our country.





1

Creating the Canadian Rangers

In 1947, Minister of National Defence Brooke Claxton announced the creation of the Canadian Rangers. Outfitted with bolt-action rifles and armbands, volunteers in remote areas of Canada would provide a military presence on a shoestring budget. Sixty-six years later, the Rangers wear red sweatshirts and have access to more equipment — but they continue to thrive using the same no-frills approach, playing a prominent role in defence, nation-building and stewardship.

The idea of Rangers has deep roots in North American military history. Like the militia in New France, who adopted “little war” tactics of raiding, skirmishing, and ambushing to combat American and Iroquois raids, the first Rangers had emerged on the colonial scene in late seventeenth-century New England. These frontiersmen used local knowledge of the landscape to defend their homes and communities from larger, more powerful enemies. After the British Conquest, the Ranger mystique remained alive in the works of authors such as James Fennimore Cooper and Francis Parkman. It also supported the “militia myth” that Canadians fighting in defence of their homes made the best soldiers.

Military officials revived the Ranger concept during the Second World War, when the Japanese threatened the West Coast. Terrified British Columbians pushed the federal government to improve coastal defences. Evoking the mystique of untrained frontier fighters from centuries past, the army responded by

forming the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers (PCMR) in early 1942. This temporary reserve force allowed British Columbian men who were too old or too young for overseas service, or engaged in essential industries such as fishing and mining, to contribute to home defence.

Apart from a sporting rifle, ammunition, an armband, and eventually a canvas uniform suited to the coastal climate, the army expected the Rangers to be self-sufficient. Using their local knowledge, they reported any suspicious vessels or activities they came across during their everyday lives. If an enemy invaded, they were expected to help professional forces repel it. By 1943, nearly fifteen thousand Rangers served in British Columbia. They trained with other military units, conducted search and rescue, and reported Japanese balloon bombs that landed along the coast. The organization stood down when the war ended in the fall of 1945, having accomplished its home defence mission without firing a hostile shot.

A few years later, Canadians awoke to the reality of the Cold War. Realizing that the country lacked the resources to station large numbers of regular soldiers in its vast northern and remote regions, defence officials returned to the Ranger idea in 1947. This time the force would spread across Canada. The first Ranger units formed in the Yukon, then extended throughout the north and down the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.

The civilian backgrounds of these “ordinary” men (there is no record of any female Rangers until the late 1980s) determined their contributions, whether they were trappers, bush pilots, missionaries, fishermen, or miners. In Aboriginal communities, Inuit, First Nations, and Métis men filled the ranks — although until the 1970s the army usually appointed a token “white” officer to lead them. The Rangers’ local knowledge allowed them to serve

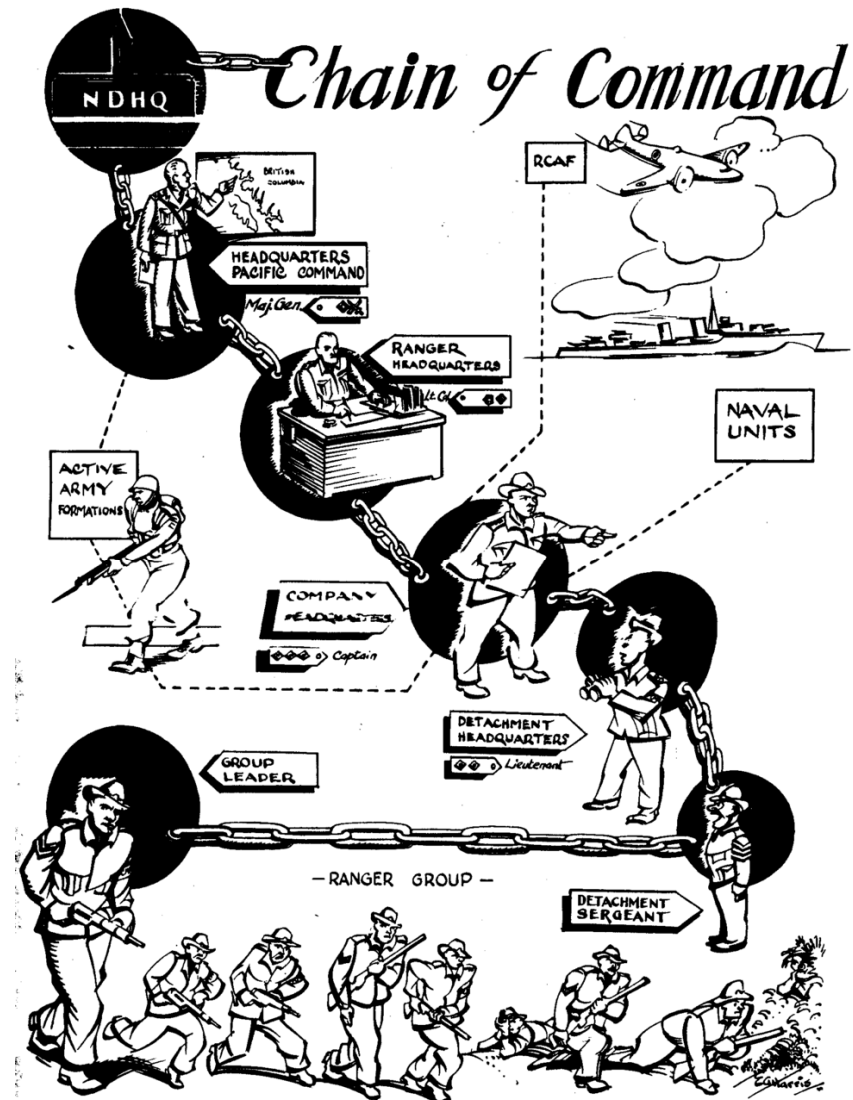
as guides and scouts, report suspicious activities while going about their daily business, and — if the unthinkable came to pass — delay an enemy advance using guerrilla tactics. The army equipped each Ranger with an obsolescent but reliable .303 Lee Enfield rifle left over from the Second World War (which the Rangers still use today), two hundred rounds of ammunition annually, and an armband in lieu of a military uniform. Largely untrained, they were expected to hunt wildlife to hone their marksmanship skills.

The Pacific Coast Militia Rangers, 1942-45

In 1941, Japanese military advances in the Pacific led defence planners to reconsider the security of British Columbia. The chief of the general staff in Ottawa assured the minister of national defence that if war broke out with Japan, the Canadian forces on the Pacific Coast would be adequate to stop any probable attack. When Japan began offensive operations in December 1941, however, concerned citizens worried that these forces were not strong enough.

The military did not want to take trained soldiers who were needed to fight the war in Europe and send them to British Columbia to defend against an unlikely threat. Instead, defence officials saw an opportunity to tap into the local knowledge and skills that British Columbia residents already had. "Only experienced men accustomed to rugged, timbered country could adequately undertake much of the work required if the [Japanese] gained a foothold," insisted Lieutenant-Colonel T.A.H. "Tommy" Taylor, the officer tasked with setting up a volunteer defence force. He sought out hardy woodsmen with strength of character who lived along the coast and in the interior of the province. Their ability to work independently and creatively would make this new force adaptable and effective in fulfilling their duties: patrolling

their local area, reporting anything suspicious, and fighting (if required) as guerrilla bands against any enemy invader.



Military authorities settled on the name "Pacific Coast Militia Rangers" or "PCMR." Members simply referred to themselves as "the Rangers." Originally, military organizers focused on coastal communities, where the threat of invasion seemed most serious. The call went out for volunteers. Within two weeks, Ranger commanders appointed in communities started organizing 40 companies with more than 5000 Rangers. Within a few months, the PCMR had grown to more than 10,000 Rangers along the coast, main roads, and highways, as well as near vulnerable points throughout the province.

Rangers received no pay, vehicles, clothing, or regimental equipment. They were expected to use their own clothing, equipment, and forms of transportation to suit local conditions. They did receive armbands and steel helmets to show that they were part of the military (and not simply ordinary civilians), as well as rifles and ammunition. Using local initiative, they trained to defend against possible raids or attacks, preparing to fight on their own or to assist regular forces. They built rifle ranges to practice shooting. In community halls, Legion halls, and church basements, they trained in reconnaissance, map reading and field sketching. The organization was very informal. The local Ranger captain simply



got "the boys" together and identified individual members with expertise in a given subject area. They trained in guerrilla tactics and scouting, and gathered from miles around to attend lectures and demonstrations when travelling instructors visited their area. The army set up a Ranger training camp near Chilliwack, British Columbia, which Rangers from across the province attended to enhance their skills. At its peak in August 1943, nearly fifteen thousand BC trappers, loggers, and fishers had organized in 126 PCMR companies along the coast and well into the interior.

By this point, the PCMR had even extended into the Yukon. "There will be no 'stab-in-the-back' through Canada's northern back door," one reporter proclaimed. "White clad Rangers in the frozen Yukon are on 24-hour alert with their dog teams, their sleds, their rifles and Sten guns." Residents of the frontier town of Dawson, made famous by the Klondike gold rush, viewed their territory as an unlikely combat zone. Nevertheless, the army authorized No. 135 Company in February 1943. Charles Hathaway "Chappie" Chapman, the manager of Northern Commercial Co. who had five years service with the Mounties, assumed command. The company received 150 Ross rifles and bayonets of Great War vintage, four Sten guns, and a captured German machine gun (which a Ranger promptly retooled to accommodate .303 British ammunition). The company eventually received new 30-30 Marlin carbines, which proved excellent for use in the bush.

The army's inspector general in western Canada visited the company the following year and applauded its strong local leadership. Captain Chapman enjoyed a good reputation with the local citizens, who viewed him as "extremely enthusiastic," an "excellent woodsman," and a strong leader. All five sergeants were veterans and responsible businessmen. The eighty-eight men of other ranks worked for trading and gold-mining companies, had considerable bush experience, and were good rifle shots. "A percentage of them earn their livelihood trapping in the winter time and gold-mining in the summertime," the inspector learned, "which makes them all the more useful to the P.C.M.R."

Dawson's civic support for its Rangers also impressed the inspector. When he met with the unit in the community hall (where the Rangers paraded up to three times per week, attended lectures, and viewed training films), "the entire city of Dawson turned out," including the superintendent of the Yukon, the stipendiary magistrate, and the manager of a gold company who had delayed summer operations so the Rangers could attend the parade. The enthusiasm was contagious. The Boys platoon, using bicycles and carrying rifle slings, relayed messages to the various outposts.

Despite the inexpensive nature of the PCMR, defence officials questioned the Rangers' relevance as the war went on. As the Allies made gains in the Pacific War and the Japanese threat diminished in late 1943, Pacific Command limited the PCMR to ten thousand members in 123 companies. The Japanese launched bomb-bearing balloons on North America, however, which forestalled further cuts because the Rangers played an important role in detecting and reporting balloons that landed in BC and the Yukon.





April 1944



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The Second World War ended in early September 1945, and the Rangers held an official “stand down” ceremony in Vancouver at the end of the month. Individual companies across the province held parades and then disbanded. General Worthington, who had visited each company as Pacific commander-in-chief, “hated to see them disperse.” In recognition of their voluntary and unpaid services, Rangers who had served for more than ninety days were allowed to keep their uniforms and could purchase their rifles for the nominal sum of five dollars.

After the War

Although Canadians were anxious to return to peace after the Second World War, the emerging Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States and its allies (including Canada) changed the way that defence planners saw Canada’s Far North. Isolation, cold, and vast distances once cast the Arctic as an impassable barrier. In an age of strategic bombers, however, the northern approaches to North America now offered the shortest distance between rival superpowers. Canada lacked the power to defend this part of the continent by itself, so it had to cooperate with its American ally. At the same time, officials recognized that the Canadian military had to help defend the North or the United States would do it alone, which could undermine Canadian sovereignty. The federal government, however, wanted to reduce budgets after the war and had no desire to send large numbers of soldiers to defend the North.

Accordingly, regional military commanders across Canada were asked to develop modest measures to provide for Northern defences. Major-General Frank “Worthy” Worthington, who became the general officer commanding Western Command (which included the Northwest Territories and the Yukon) after

the war, focused on using community-based reservists to establish a military presence in remote areas. In early 1946, he informed army headquarters in Ottawa that northerners wanted to contribute to Canadian defence but that transportation, communication networks, and the community demographics would not allow the military to create typical reserve units. They would have to try something different.

When Worthington visited Yellowknife and Dawson City that summer, local delegations proposed forming Ranger units modelled after the PCMR. Because these proposals fit with Worthington’s ideas, he passed them along to Ottawa. Tapping into local expertise made sense. This time, however, the organization would have to be national. It would include the northland and both coasts, and it would focus on small, isolated communities along the “fringe.” In this way, the Militia Rangers—the proposed name—would not compete with existing reserve units.

The Canadian Ranger concept took shape in the months ahead, as regional army commanders and senior officials in Ottawa debated what the Rangers should look like. Eventually, they settled on the idea that the organization would be formed on a limited basis “across Canada for the purpose of operating in the thinly populated parts of the country which are not normally traversed nor under surveillance and where it is impractical to organize units of the Reserve Force.” In short, Ranger units would be established in remote communities (that could not support Primary Reserve units) and would report to regional army commanders.

The idea was not to create a full force, but to recruit a “nucleus” of Rangers led by “key personnel” living in the communities. Rangers would not be trained as soldiers, and would not have to

meet the same physical standards as other soldiers. “Normal service” would go unpaid, but when they participated in manoeuvres with other military units or attended military schools, they would receive standard military pay.

During an inspection of West Coast defences in early April 1947, Minister Brooke Claxton announced the formation of the Canadian Rangers “on a restricted basis” throughout the country. After the military ironed out some minor legal wrinkles, Order-in-

Canadian Ranger Tasks (1947)

In war, Rangers would have the following duties:

- (a) Provision of guides to organized troops within own area.
- (b) Coast watching.
- (c) Assistance to the RCMP and/or Provincial Police in the discovery, reporting and apprehension of enemy agents or saboteurs. The reporting of other suspicious activities.
- (d) Immediate local defence against sabotage by small enemy detachments or saboteurs and to assist and augment civilian protective arrangements against saboteurs, within the area in which the organization is authorized to operate.
- (e) Reporting, locating and rescue work, including first aid treatment in connection with aircraft distress.

In peacetime, Rangers would have a similar but more limited role:

- (a) Provision of guides to troops on exercises, when required.
- (b) The preparation of local defence schemes referred to in (d) above.
- (c) Collection of detailed information concerning their local area likely to be of assistance to them in carrying out their roles in war and the documenting of such information with any necessary sketches.
- (d) Provision of rescue parties for civilian or military purposes, where required.

Council P.C. 1644 officially created the organization as a corps of the reserve militia on 23 May 1947. In peacetime, the Canadian Rangers would be a modest force limited to five thousand members across Canada. The legislation also laid out the Rangers’ roles and tasks in peacetime and in war. They would use their local knowledge to serve as guides and scouts for the regular army, report suspicious activities to civil authorities, help stop enemy saboteurs, and conduct search and rescue. The roles bore remarkable similarity to those of the PCMR, even though the Rangers would cover a much wider geography across Canada.

Some officers suggested that the Rangers should be given a more traditional military role and trained similarly to soldiers in southern Canada. Others, like Lieutenant-Colonel Bob Keane in Western Command, argued that the Rangers should be seen as something unique and different. He explained in July 1947:

We don’t want, and we don’t need, further organized military bodies supplementing Active and Reserve Forces but what we need is that small groups of specially adapted people take an interest in the defence of their country in order that we may derive the greatest benefits from their knowledge and particular facilities and it is necessary that they be organized to some extent; but I am afraid that if we try to make them too military we will certainly stand to lose by it. I can understand that the “powers that be” wish to retain the strictest possible control over anyone with firearms, particularly when issued by the Department [of National Defence] and I can see the reason for it but I also suggest that if the ... interest [is] taken by

the respective Commanders, that the organization can be kept in line and a great deal of benefit will accrue to the [Canadian] Forces and the country in general.

The Rangers' primary role was to collect local intelligence. Even in war they would remain in their local areas, serving as "the eyes, ears and feelers of all services in the more isolated portions of the country." They would provide a unique service, not a watered-down version of other military elements. The key was to acknowledge their local knowledge and existing skills without attempting to make them too militaristic.

The criteria for membership in the Rangers placed a premium on local residence, without any age or physical limitations. For equipment, Rangers would receive armbands and Lee-Enfield No. 4 Mk. 1 rifles. Training would include elementary topography, message writing, the use of wireless, and other basic essentials. Rangers would not be expected to learn close-order or arms drills.

From the beginning, defence officials noted that the "most suitable and desirable" Rangers would differ from other militia and Regular Force personnel. After all, most personnel would remain in their home area during both peacetime and wartime. They would come from diverse backgrounds, might be older than the typical soldier, and might not speak English or French.

To accommodate this diversity, the Ranger organization was designed to be flexible and region- or community-based. Nonetheless, it looked on paper like a typical army company-platoon system. Ranger captains, appointed by regional army headquarters, would be responsible for control and administration of a Ranger **company** up to five platoons. Each Ranger **platoon**, commanded by a Ranger lieutenant, would have

up to thirty Rangers ("other ranks") divided into sections commanded by sergeants. Normally, these Ranger officers and sergeants would command only Rangers.

To start the process of actually creating the units, army officers began to search for the right local leaders: men respected in their communities who would head up companies and platoons. Once a Ranger leader assumed command, he would select outdoorsmen for his detachments, "whether they be white men, Indian, or Eskimo," who knew their local area like "the palm of their hand."

The First Canadian Ranger Companies

The Yukon was a natural place to start building the Canadian Ranger force, and the Minister of National Defence authorized the first companies on 22 August 1947: No. 1 (Dawson City) Company and No. 2 (Whitehorse) Company.

The company in Dawson City was the first to take actual shape. After several territorial residents asked Western Command to form a unit in 1947, General Worthington paid a personal visit to Dawson where he secured the support of "the leading personalities," including the controller of the Yukon and the local magistrate. They unanimously recommended Captain "Chappie" Chapman, the former PCMR captain, to reorganize a Ranger company in Dawson. Howard W. Firth, a former adjutant of the local PCMR, became his second-in-command. Chapman travelled frequently throughout the area while Firth was permanently resident in Dawson when trappers and prospectors came in for outfitting. This balance made them an ideal team, and Worthington approved their commissions as Ranger officers on 22 September 1947. "My hearty congratulations at your being the first officer appointed and in command of the first Ranger Coy in Canada's newest defence organization," he told Chapman in a

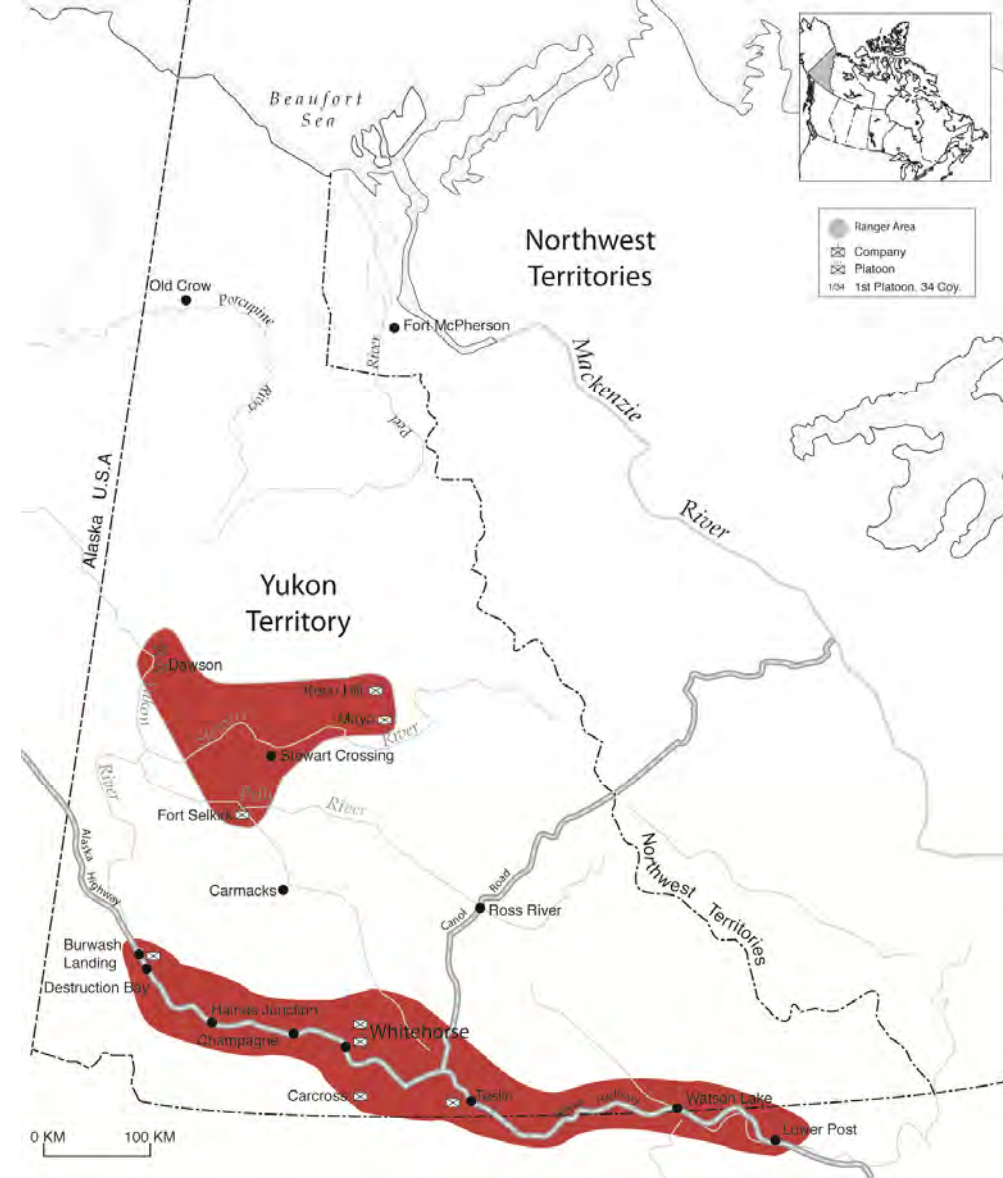
telegram. "It is also gratifying to me that an old RCMP officer leads the van and I am confident No. 1 Dawson City Coy will be first in many other things under your guidance and direction."

No. 2 Canadian Ranger Company in Whitehorse soon followed. The Canadian government had assumed responsibility for the Alaska Highway in April 1946, and Ranger platoons at Burwash Landing, Teslin, and Carcross provided modest coverage of the broader area. F.O. Meet, a decorated RCAF veteran and the local Indian Agent, travelled throughout the region and thus made a logical company commander. Ex-PCMR Captain J.P. Stewart, a game warden at Lower Post, BC, joined him. Together, they began organizing the Whitehorse company in late 1947.

In contrast to the fast-growing PCMR "movement" during the Second World War, the Canadian Rangers' ranks grew slowly in the months following their creation. Worthington deliberately moved in "quietly and effectively," without publicity, to ensure that the Rangers recruited men of "absolute integrity." The military did not provide any money for organizing or recruitment, which also forced Western Command to proceed slowly.

In early 1948, Quebec Command organized the first four companies in Quebec. Similar to the Yukon, planners focused on appointing company and platoon commanders in remote communities who would recruit Rangers, communicate with headquarters, and use local initiative to serve as the military's "eyes and ears" in isolated areas.

At that time, National Defence headquarters in Ottawa instructed army planners to concentrate on Ranger growth in northern areas. The idea was to organize small, core groups of Ranger officers and Rangers in peacetime that could be expanded in an emergency.



Yellowknife, the largest settlement in the Northwest Territories and the main supply and transportation centre for most of the Territorial North, was a logical choice. Major L.W. Nelson, who oversaw the NWT and Yukon Radio System in town, had already recruited prospective Ranger officers in October 1947. Their

pedigrees reveal the impressive range of military experience and practical skills that northerners brought to the new, grassroots military force. Jake Woolgar (a bush pilot, prospector, and ex-Royal Canadian Air Force flight lieutenant) became a captain. Frank Megill, an ex-Royal Canadian Army Service Corps brigade officer, and Jim Elliott, an ex-Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) lieutenant, rounded out a tri-service leadership cadre. Two additional lieutenants, field engineer Henry Denis and bush pilot Ernie Boffa, reinforced the local connection. Accordingly, the military created No. 7 Company headquartered at Yellowknife, with platoons at Snare River, Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, and Wrigley, in May 1948. At the same time, it established No. 8 Company headquartered at Fort Smith, with platoons at Fort Resolution, Hay River, Chipewyan, Embarras, and Fort McMurray.

Soon after, the army organized the first Canadian Ranger companies in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario. The Rangers now became a truly national organization. Their role also complemented the military's new Mobile Striking Force concept, which acknowledged that stationing regular forces in Canada's vast northland did not make sense. Instead, it would send paratroops based in southern Canada to the North if a foreign enemy attacked. To operate safely and effectively, these regular force units would require local knowledge provided by Northern residents serving in the Canadian Rangers.

The Ranger footprint in the North continued to expand quietly. Western Command authorized Woolgar to form an air reconnaissance unit, and he immediately contacted pilots to do so. Ernie Boffa, a well-known bush pilot in Yellowknife whose flights took him over much of the company's territory, agreed to serve as a liaison officer with outlying communities. In turn, Boffa asked the Reverend Harold Webster, a missionary with extensive contacts among the Caribou Inuit, to organize a Ranger platoon in



the Coppermine (Kugluktuk) area. An intelligence officer, tagging along with an Indian Health Services doctor visiting Inuit throughout the western Arctic, enlisted Rangers at Bathurst Inlet (Gingaut), Cambridge Bay (Iqaluktuuttiaq), Gjoa Haven (Uqsuqtuuq), Spence Bay (Taloyoak), Read Island, and Holman Island (Ulukhaktok). Given that Inuit lived on the land, even a relatively small number of Rangers provided a "fairly complete 'intelligence screen'" across a vast territory. Ranger Captain Frank McCall, a forest warden with the Department of Mines and Resources, also began to organize a new Ranger company out of Aklavik with small units at Banks Island, Arctic Red River (Tsiigehtchic), Kittigazuit, and Pearce Point.

The military established special Ranger units to defend the oil well and refinery at Norman Wells (Tłegóhł) and at the Eldorado uranium mine at Port Radium. Western Command received permission to issue automatic weapons (Bren and Sten guns) to the platoons at Norman Wells and Port Radium so the Rangers there could act like a local home guard. Most of these men were

world war veterans with combat experience, so military officials assumed they would know how to train and take care of the weapons.

While organizing efforts continued, existing companies and platoons wanted something to do. Chappie Chapman in Dawson complained that, because the army had not authorized any activities or training for the Rangers, they were losing interest in the unit. For example, the American and Canadian armies carried out a major exercise—Exercise Sweetbriar—in the southern Yukon, but never asked the Rangers to participate. Furthermore, the military overlooked the Rangers when it conducted searches for missing aircraft. Why were the Rangers being passed over as a military resource?

After the Soviet Union detonated an atomic bomb in 1949 and the Korean War broke out in 1950, the possibility of a world war between the communist bloc and the Western democracies (including Canada) seemed more likely. Although the threat to national security in remote regions remained low, defence officials recognized that the Rangers had a role to play in collecting local information about conditions and infrastructure in their area. The Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) asked Rangers to report “any information on unusual activity which they might observe during exercises or patrols in the Arctic Archipelago and elsewhere in the Northwest Territories,” and the army arranged for Rangers to act as ground observers. These roles gave the Rangers a clearer purpose – but they still felt unappreciated and unsupported.

Expansion continued. After Newfoundland and Labrador became the tenth province of Canada in 1949, new Ranger units along the Atlantic coastline soon followed. The western Canadian Ranger force also grew in towns and camps along the Alaska Highway,

spanning from Dawson Creek to Fairbanks. Built during the war to connect the southern US states and Alaska, the highway crossed some of the most beautiful and rugged landscape in North America. In April 1946, the Canadian Army assumed responsibility for the North West Highway System (the new name for the Alaska Highway in peacetime).

Placing Ranger units along the North West Highway System made sense. Civilian workers lived and operated along the controlled highway, so defence planners restructured the Ranger organization to accommodate Ranger detachments of highway maintenance crews.

With all the new interest and activity, the army carved three new companies out of the existing units along the highway. It located new headquarters at Destruction Bay (Mile 1083), Brooks Brook (Mile 830), and Fort Nelson. Employees of the highway maintenance establishment, communications stations, and engineering detachments formed into these companies, which focused on defending highway camps and equipment and reporting incidents in their area.

North to Baffin Island

The Rangers now covered Canada’s eastern and western flanks, but there was little military presence in the Far North. Accordingly, the military’s Eastern Command created two companies in 1951 that would cover northern and southern Baffin Island and appointed officers from the Hudson’ Bay Company to recruit Inuit.

To set things up, the army sent Ranger liaison officer Captain Ambrose Shea on the *C.D. Howe*, the new ice-strengthened Eastern Arctic Patrol ship, during its three-month summer voyage

Ranger Peter Kuniliuse

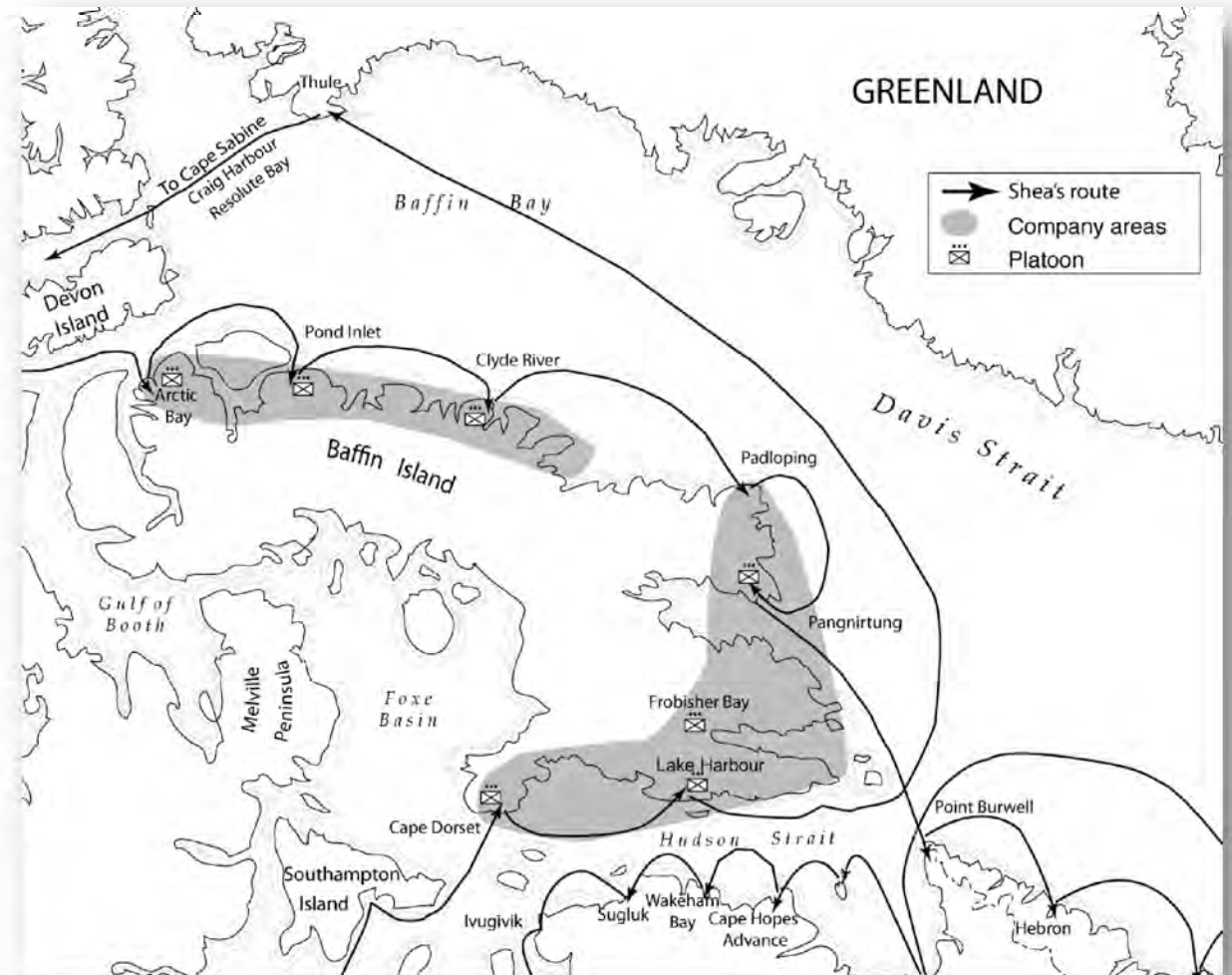
Peter Kuniliuse (*Peterloosie* on the attestation form), a twenty-two-year-old hunter and trapper, officially joined the Clyde River platoon on 8 September 1952. He had been recruited, along with six other hunters, three years earlier when a ship arrived to test for tuberculosis. Each received a .303 rifle, and an officer told them they were Rangers. Kuniliuse's status became official when Captain Ambrose Shea and Doug Wilkinson (a filmmaker and author who agreed to serve as the north Baffin Island company commander during a long-term research trip) formally established the platoons and filled out enrolment forms. Kuniliuse served with the Rangers for more than five decades, observing dramatic changes in the organization and in Inuit society more generally.



ENGAGEMENT OR ATTESTATION FORM	
1. SURNAME	PETER LOOSIE E5-279
2. FULL CHRISTIAN NAMES	
3. PERMANENT ADDRESS	Clyde River (Street/Avenue and No.) N.W.T. (Province) Canada (Country)
4. DATE OF BIRTH	1930
5. PLACE OF BIRTH	Clyde River
6. PERSONAL DESCRIPTION AT DATE OF THIS DOCUMENT:	
(a) Height	5 ft 9 ins.
(b) Weight	165 lbs.
(c) Complexion	Dark
(d) Colour of hair	Black
(e) Colour of eyes	Brown
(f) Distinctive marks or scars	Nil
7. RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION	C.P.E.
8. MARITAL STATUS	Married
9. PARTICULARS OF NEXT-OF-KIN:	
(a) Name	Elisapie E5-254
(b) Relationship	Wife
(c) Address	Clyde River N.W.T.
10. WHAT IS YOUR TRADE OR CALLING?	Hunter & Trapper
11. PARTICULARS OF FORMER SERVICE IN ANY OF HIS MAJESTY'S ARMED FORCES:	First
(If none, write "First Enlistment")	
12. PERIOD OF ENGAGEMENT COMMENCES	8th Sept. 1952
13. ENGAGED FOR	3
14. RANK ON ENGAGEMENT	Private
ATTENTION IS DRAWN TO THE FACT THAT ANY PERSON MAKING A FALSE ANSWER TO ANY OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS IS LIABLE TO A PENALTY OF SIX MONTH'S IMPRISONMENT.	
15. DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ENGAGEMENT OR ATTESTATION:	
I, PETER LOOSIE E5-279 do solemnly declare that the questions and answers written above have been read over to me, that I understand all of the said questions, that all of the answers thereto are true to the best of my knowledge and belief, and I have been cautioned by Lieut. L. Brown that I am liable to be punished as provided by law for wilfully making any false answers to the said questions.	
I hereby engage to serve in the Canadian Army as a Ranger Reserve Militia	
whenever required for that service for a period of 3 years from the 8th day of Sept. 1952 provided His Majesty shall so long require my services or until legally discharged. I do understand the nature and terms of this engagement and will serve under such conditions as to pay and service as may be duly laid down from time to time. I have not been induced to enter into this engagement by any understanding that I am to be transferred at some other date to any other branch or rating.	
I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing it to be true, and knowing that it is of the same force and effect as if made under oath and by virtue of the Canada Evidence Act.	
Declared before me at the City of Clyde River	APP
In the Province of N.W.T.	(Signature of Man)
On the 8th day of Sept. 1952	L. Brown Lieut.
(Signature of Magistrate, Justice of the Peace, Notary Public, or Attesting Officer of Commissioned Rank)	
16. OATH TO BE TAKEN BY MAN ON ENGAGEMENT OR ATTESTATION:	
I, PETER LOOSIE E5-279 Do SINCERELY PROMISE AND SWEAR (OR SOLEMNLY DECLARE) THAT I WILL BE FAITHFUL AND BEAR TRUE ALLEGIANCE TO HIS MAJESTY.	
Swoer (or declared) before me at the City of Clyde River, N.W.T.	
In the Province of	APP
On the 8th day of September 1952	(Signature of Man)
L. Brown Lieut.	
(Signature of Magistrate, Justice of the Peace, Notary Public, or Attesting Officer of Commissioned Rank)	

in 1952. As the ship stopped at points on Baffin Island and in northern Quebec, Shea organized platoons, issued rifles and ammunition, planned communication exercises, and enlisted new members. The Rangers now truly extended from coast to coast to coast.

On 25 May 1951, Minister of National Defence Brooke Claxton proudly boasted to the House of Commons that the Canadian Rangers now covered “fairly well the whole area of the Northwest Territories, the Arctic, the coast of British Columbia,” and were “extending over the Hudson Bay area and the north Atlantic coast.” Given how few resources had been provided to organize the Rangers, this geographical coverage was impressive. More than fifteen hundred Rangers had signed up across the country by the end of 1952. They all wanted to actually do something.





2

From Action to Neglect, 1954-69

Canada's regular armed forces grew from 47,000 to 104,000 personnel between 1950 and 1953, when the defence budget soared to more than ten times the budget of 1947. Rather than heightening the perceived threat to Canada's remote regions, Cold War developments actually reduced the likelihood of direct attack. After all, a Soviet invasion of the Canadian North could not stop a North American bomber response over the North Pole. Nevertheless, army exercises provided the Canadian Rangers with opportunities to test their skills, and journalists heaped praise on this "shadowy band of defenders" who could use local knowledge to fend off invading forces.

By the mid-1950s, the Rangers had proven themselves an inexpensive, useful military asset. Broad and diverse, their strength as a national corps peaked in December 1956 when 2,725 active Rangers served in forty-two companies. Although little more than half the authorized limit, this establishment was an impressive achievement given the few military resources dedicated to them. Rangers provided intelligence reports on strange ships and aircraft, participated in training exercises with the Mobile Striking Force and other army units, conducted search-and-rescue missions, and even captured bandits on the North West Highway System. Reporter Robert Taylor painted a reassuring portrait of the Rangers on their lonely polar watch in 1956. "Some of [the Rangers] can't read their own names but they are the real scholars of this country when it comes to

reading signs on the trails of the north," he explained. "Eskimos, Indians, whites and all the mixtures of these races, they are united in one task: Guarding a country that doesn't even know of their existence." They were not only "the least expensive military force any nation has today" but also a useful source of reports on suspicious activities.

Search and rescue was the most frequent Ranger activity across Canada. For example, two Canadian Rangers helped rescue an airplane crew who had crashed off the highway near Haines Junction during Exercise Sweetbriar in February 1950. The next fall, Highway Maintenance Establishment personnel from the North West Highway System camp at Mile 1,202, employed as Rangers, searched for a soldier lost in the bush. During the summer of 1952, Rangers from No. 2 Company, Whitehorse, served as spotters on RCAF aircraft in the search for a Mitchell aircraft lost south of Mayo, while Rangers of No. 15 Company conducted a rescue operation near Fort Nelson. "It is significant that all these operations were successful mainly due to the local knowledge and ability of the Rangers to make their way through the bush," noted Brigadier H.W. Love, the highway commander. Unfortunately, regulations prohibited Rangers from receiving remuneration for search and rescue if they had not yet been called up on active service to do so. "Such a procedure obviously would take too long to meet the circumstances," he explained. He wanted special authority to compensate Rangers acting quickly, which would "do a lot to strengthen their interest and morale." Although defence officials never rectified this problem, Rangers continued to conduct search-and-rescue missions as unpaid volunteers, proving to their communities time and time again that they were more than symbolic.

Rangers also assisted police. In April 1953, Rangers from No. 40 Company helped the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)

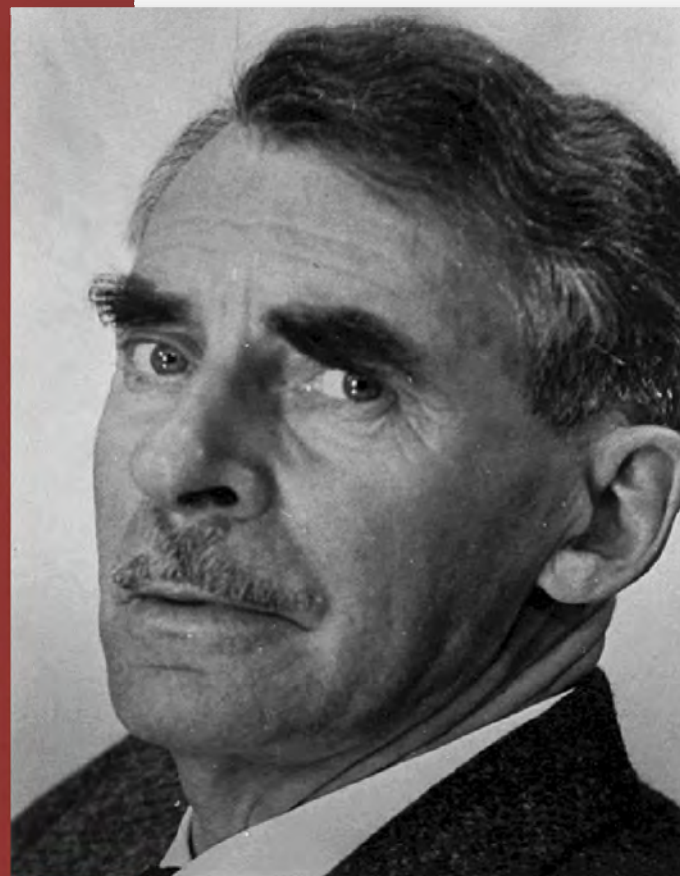
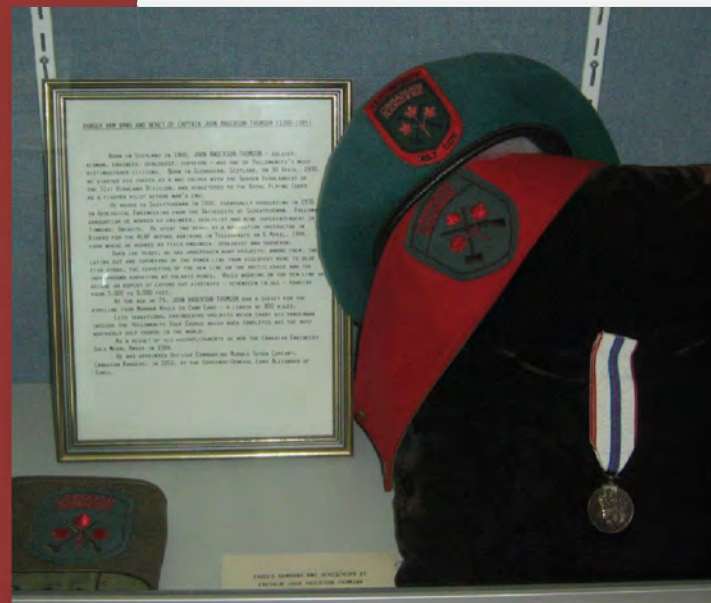
Captain John Anderson-Thomson: Canadian Ranger

John Anderson-Thomson assumed command of No. 7 Company on 9 May 1951. Born in Scotland in 1900, he served during the First World War as a sniper and fighter pilot before moving to Saskatchewan in 1920 and earning a degree in geological engineering. In the late 1930s, he moved to northern Ontario to work as an engineer, geologist, and mine superintendent, and he served as a navigation instructor for the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) at Rivers, Manitoba, for two years during the Second World War. In April 1944, he relocated to Yellowknife, where he wore many hats as a field engineer, geologist, surveyor, magistrate, and justice of the peace. Having served as a commissioned officer “off and on” since he was sixteen years old, the community knew him well, and he knew several of the Rangers when he became captain.

Anderson-Thomson believed that “a little shake up in personnel” would improve the Yellowknife company. The Rangers, “supposedly recruited from trappers, prospectors and bush men,” had, he alleged, been recruited locally “from drunks and dead beats around the town.” He immediately struck off the names of Rangers who he “felt would not pull a very stout oar, in an emergency.” He wrote in his memoirs, “I kept on strength the genuine trappers out in the bush; they would have their ears to the ground and would observe anything that was not normal in the area... There were a fair number of army veterans from both wars, so I picked men with battle experience, especially machine gunners or infantry men who could shoot and I found all the able men that I needed.” He hand-picked Donald Macleod Morrison, an ex-infantry sergeant, as his second-in-command. “A fighting man from the Western Isles,” Morrison “would have tackled the whole Russian army, single handed if necessary.”

The new commander worked closely with other military units in the area. His connections with the 24th Field Squadron of the Royal Canadian Engineers secured access to an old schoolhouse for lectures and meetings. Working together, the local officers produced what Anderson-Thomson described as “a rough strategy for the defence of Yellowknife in case of the cold war becoming a hot war.” In an attack, the Soviet Union would target the airfield, which it then could use to harass allied bombers flying the old staging route from the United States to Siberia. In Anderson-Thomson’s coordinated response, his Ranger company would protect the airfield until outside reinforcements arrived.

Local defence plans generated enthusiasm and gave Rangers a clear sense of purpose. During the summer months in the land of midnight sun, they concentrated on shooting practice at the rifle range near the airport in the evenings and on Sunday afternoons. It paid off. Of the sixty-five men in the Yellowknife platoon, Anderson-Thomson boasted, at least forty were “really first class shots, any of whom was far above average regular army sniper ability.”



apprehend three bandits in a stolen heading south on the Northwest Highway from Alaska. When the fugitives' car broke down at Mile 1165, they held up and then stole a second vehicle. Ranger Captain Don Bakke, the officer commanding at Destruction Bay, Yukon, alerted his company.

The Rangers, armed with their service rifles, followed the car and reported its progress to the RCMP detachment at Haines Junction. Three Rangers went to the Airport Lodge at Mile 1095 to protect the family living there. When the criminals entered the lodge peaceably, the Rangers remained concealed, held their fire as instructed, and allowed them to proceed down the highway. The local RCMP commander requested further assistance to apprehend the bandits, and Ranger platoon commander Lieutenant Wally Wandga (who was also camp foreman at Mile 1016) mustered ten Rangers to block the route with two road graders, using a third vehicle to illuminate the highway. The Rangers took up a defensive position. "The bandits approached the block and looking down the business end of ten 303's realized that the game was up," a Ranger newsletter noted. With the Rangers covering his back, the RCMP constable stepped forward and made the arrest.

Assisting the RCMP was part of their role, Western Command liaison officer Major Casimir Van Straubenzee reminded the Rangers, "and in this case the action was firmly and sensibly carried out, forcibly illustrating the Rangers are suitable and available in this type of an emergency."

The Ranger Liaison Officer held the Rangers together as a military formation, kept in touch with company commanders, helped them with planning, and urged them to train "the boys for action in their areas." It was no easy feat. Each command had one

liaison officer, who could visit Ranger units only sporadically given their inaccessibility.

In Eastern Command, Captain Ambrose Shea described himself as a "latter-day version of the 'Flying Dutchman,'" covering Newfoundland, Labrador, and Baffin Island. He also completed all of the considerable "desk work" associated with the Rangers. If Shea had a thankless job as the Ranger liaison officer, he also recognized that the Rangers might feel similar. The Rangers had neither the support nor the training available to other military units. His January 1953 message to the Rangers encouraged them not to interpret limited visits and lack of financial support as evidence that they were no longer needed:

Rangers get no pay, no publicity and little thanks.

The liaison situation is not going to get any better and it may get worse. DON'T LET IT GET YOU DOWN.

The Canadian Rangers in this Command are doing a useful job simply by being in existence. But it is never possible to stand still. Any organization that tries that surely must go backward.

Don't let this happen. The Rangers have great possibilities... Use your own initiative and push ahead...

One last word. The proudest motto ever borne by proud men was "I Serve." And now in the various languages that you speak --So long! au revoir! tabautisi! auksunai!

Perhaps "auksunai" is the best: "Be strong!"

Shea cringed at strict procedures; he knew that informal methods were more appropriate. He preferred to keep things straightforward so that the Rangers could understand what was actually needed, and to insulate them from needless bureaucracy.

Shea's counterpart in Western Command, Major Casimir Bowen Van Straubenzee, had already travelled throughout the Yukon and Northwest Territories in a previous job, where he had met "many Ranger characters." As the command Canadian Ranger officer (CCRO, or "crow," as Western Command called its liaison officer), he visited units annually for resupply and some basic training. The far-ranging dispersal of Ranger units and the difficulty of communications made this an ambitious task, but he produced liaison letters to provide Rangers with updates on developments with units across British Columbia, Yukon, and NWT – and with the odd bit of poetry:

A Ranger patrol can be mighty rough,
When the wind chill's high and the going is tough,
With old joints a' creak and lungs like to bust –
You would think these fellows had had enough!

BUT

The CCRO states he'll back a hunch
That the Ranger gang is still a stout bunch,
And that men who went through Vimy Ridge,
Can patrol, bead a sight – guard a bridge,
And still beat the teenagers to the punch!

Training and Exercises

The Rangers' readiness to respond to an emergency required more training than originally planned. The 1947 Ranger policy provided for simple training in elementary topography, message writing, the use of the wireless, and other "basic essentials." By the early 1950s, officials in Ottawa recommended activities to

test the alertness, organization, and communication skills of each company. Furthermore, they suggested that Rangers should participate in military training in areas covered by their units, particularly Mobile Striking Force activities. This way, the army could assess their usefulness as guides.

Training policy in the early 1950s emphasized individual instruction in patrolling and reporting, aircraft recognition, navigating, and field sketching, as well as group training in how to share information, survey vital points in their area, and participate in military exercises. Rather than training Rangers at a central location or sending Regular Force instructors out to individual platoons, Ranger liaison officers were expected to distribute liaison letters and training précis to Ranger officers when they were distributing arms and ammunition in the summer.

Eastern Command focused on passing messages rather than field exercises. In Exercise Ambrose, the liaison officer sent telegraph messages to the platoons in Newfoundland, Labrador, and Baffin Island in November 1952 to see how long it took them to reply. He hoped for a response time of twenty-four hours, but many replies took much longer. For example, Captain Shea waited 107 hours and 22 minutes to hear back from the platoon commander at Cape Dorset, who had been frozen in for a month. Overall, however, the Rangers responded with surprising accuracy. In Exercise Seagull, conducted the following year in Labrador and Baffin Island, the platoons showed notable improvement in their response times. The exercise also allowed Shea to pass along Christmas greetings to Inuit Rangers and their families whom he had met during his travels.

Exercise Gabriel, which tested Ranger communications in Northwestern Canada in June 1952, brought disappointing

results. Many of the Rangers' reports to Edmonton contained mistakes. Major Van Straubensee, undeterred, filed the results under "lessons learned." He advised the Rangers to continue gathering information in case of an attack. "How will you get the information? I can't tell Rangers how to stalk the enemy, you are the experts in stalking, hunting and fieldcraft," he noted. "Follow the enemy, shadow him, hinder him if you can, shoot at him if you are sure you can kill him and get away. We do NOT want you chaps to fight a set piece battle, we want you to pass information to us and then act as guides and assistants when we come to beat up the enemy with our heavier weapons and trained troops." Van Straubensee would test these roles in the years ahead.

Paper exercises were one thing, and practical field training with the regular force another. In the early 1950s, intelligence reports estimated that Soviet paratroops could mount only small raids on northern Canada. Atomic weapons made these attacks unlikely, but the enemy could sabotage vital points, such as bridges on the Alaska Highway, remote weather stations, and early-warning lines. In these cases, Canada would need some ability to dislodge the enemy. But how much was enough?

The Rangers, in theory, went to war during Exercise Bull Dog, which took place near Fort Norman, Northwest Territories. On 10 February 1953, Captain Kenneth Murray Mackenzie ordered Rangers from 21 Company to go to the local airstrip and transmitter station to report unidentified aircraft. Just before noon five days later, the enemy (the Royal 22nd Regiment or Van Doos) struck with airborne troops. Rangers Hodson and Godbold made it to the Royal Canadian Signals Station ahead of the enemy patrol and dispatched a warning to Western Command. For the next three days, the Rangers shadowed the Van Doos, stalked their positions, determined their strength, and identified snow forts, trenches, and machine gun posts. When friendly para-



troops, the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, landed on the frozen lake near the transmitter station on 19 February, the Rangers used their rifles to neutralize enemy machine gun fire. "This assault completely surprised the enemy," a Ranger noted. Ranger Lieutenant Russell Wilfred Hanson briefed the friendly force's commander about the local situation. "All that night and the next the Rangers led friendly patrols upon the enemy positions seeking out information and taking prisoners in preparation for the big assault on the enemy lodgement," a report explained after the exercise. The soldiers and Rangers recaptured the airport, and "Norman Wells was liberated. The Rangers returned to their own camp hungry, tired, and unshaven but happy and this they felt was not too much to pay for the defence of their country."

Newspapers played up the Rangers' guerrilla tactics during the exercise, but these grassroots units had much to learn if they wanted to be interoperable with outside forces. The Rangers got confused when the enemy attacked Fort Norman. Immediately

Ranger Roles, 1954

The role of the Canadian Rangers is:

- a. to report to the appropriate army headquarters any suspicious activities occurring in their respective areas;
- b. provision of guides to organized troops within the area assigned to the unit; to assist in immediate local defence against sabotage by small enemy detachments or saboteurs. This does not include the responsibility for planning or directing local defence;
- c. air observation duties within their own localities, as required to supplement the RCAF Ground Observer Corps;
- d. coast watching;
- e. reporting, locating, and rescue work in connection with distressed aircraft and the provision of rescue parties for civilian or military purposes, where required;
- f. assistance to the RCMP and/or Provincial Police in the discovery, reporting, and apprehension of enemy agents or saboteurs;
- g. collection of detailed information concerning their local area likely to be of assistance to them in carrying out their role or of value to the armed forces.

after the initial parachute drop, the Rangers had started a fire fight with the *friendly* force! Officials also noted that the Rangers needed to communicate clear plans and pass along “early and accurate warning” of enemy activities. The Rangers had guided friendly patrols, but they had provided poor advice because they did not anticipate how difficult it would be for troops to move at night while hauling heavy sleds. The Rangers, in their snowshoes, had easily “outdistanced and outpaced the enemy”—as well as their allies. Officials concluded that, if the Rangers wanted to play a useful combat role, they needed more experience.

The Rangers’ interactions with well-trained southern soldiers during these exercises bolstered their enthusiasm and confidence, and Western Command sought more training opportunities for its men. During Hot Dog II, which took place in 1954, the Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry ran a course for eleven Rangers from eight different companies along the North West Highway System. When other Rangers requested similar activities, Western Command offered indoctrination or refresher courses featuring lectures and tactical exercises. These gatherings, held at central locations such as Yellowknife, Whitehorse, and Wainwright (Alberta), gave Rangers an opportunity to meet one another and receive basic military training. They provided a sense of “scope, and buil[t] a mutual respect and esprit de corps.”

Training exercises also fostered close relationships between Ranger units and regular forces. Along the North West Highway System, for example, Rangers watched army-training films and devised local activities with the Mobile Striking Force, the RCAF, and militia units. Rangers participated in the North West Highway System’s annual service rifle competition and often distinguished themselves in team and individual events against their military counterparts. Rangers rivaled members of the reserve force



during the annual shoot in Northwest Territories. In the Champagne area of Yukon, Major Van Straubenzee worked out a winter training program with the North West Highway System in which the Rangers conducted field firing, demolition, and reconnaissance exercises. Four Rangers were called out as sergeants to act as guides and assistant instructors alongside two regular army instructors. They executed the CCRO's creative plans, emphasizing the tactical roles that Rangers might play in a military emergency.

The Rangers crept into the public spotlight through media coverage of army exercises. In a report from Silver Creek, Yukon, a journalist with the *Montreal Gazette* told readers on 13 February 1954 about "unsung Ranger Arctic warfare defenders" engaging in "guerrilla warfare" for the army. This article and others like it helped promote the idea that the Rangers were a combat-oriented force. The reporter explained that during Exercise Hot Dog II this "little-known militia unit," which represented "North America's first line for Arctic defence," demonstrated "the guerrilla tactics they would use if an enemy ever invaded sub-Arctic Canada from the north." The Rangers, a diverse lot, included "ex-RCMP officers who have settled in the north, trappers, guides, prospectors, Hudson's Bay Co. trading personnel, and a few Eskimos and Indians." Every Ranger, the author declared, "is a crack shot." Canadians could rest assured. "Should an enemy ever advance over the Arctic barrens," he reported, "the Ranger role would be hit-and-run operations to stall the invading force until Canada's mobile striking force could be transported or parachuted into the area."

The Rangers' participation in these exercises revived debates about their role. Western Command believed that Rangers should prepare for combat roles and become a proper home guard. The Ranger "home guard" units at Port Radium and

Norman Wells, equipped with machine guns and "appropriate environmental clothing," encouraged local defence without draining local resources. This idea departed from the Rangers' role, mission, and tasks as outlined in army orders. It also frustrated officers who believed that it missed the original intent for the Rangers and did not reflect practical realities on the ground.

Major Pat Templeton, the liaison officer in Quebec Command, observed in March 1955 that activities in Western Canada went far beyond the Rangers' official terms of reference. Various communities already had regular force and militia units, and the Rangers' participation in training exercises set up unrealistic expectations:

The part played by Rangers in recent MSF exercises were beyond their actual capabilities and not in accord with their terms of reference. Aggressive fighting patrols such as were carried out during LOUP GAROU and BULLDOG III were rated to be successful, whereas it does not seem reasonable that a heavily armed, well trained enemy in superior strength would have been as effectively contained as happened on these exercises. Rangers were given tasks during the past two BULLDOG exercises which were far in excess of their normal abilities and in fact were treated as an integral fighting part of the Friendly Force. This is very unrealistic and only serves to give a false impression of the capabilities of the Ranger organization.

Major Templeton noted that most army officers did not appreciate the Rangers' limitations. He attributed their successes in recent Mobile Striking Force exercises "to pre-exercise coaching and to the use of equipment and facilities which would

What is the Proper Role of the Rangers? Two Viewpoints from the 1950s

Training exercises in the mid-1950s generated strong debates about what Canadians could and should expect from their Rangers. While Western Command pushed its vision for a home guard, official army press releases emphasized the Rangers' more modest role as observers and aids to civil authority. Ranger liaison officers in Quebec and Eastern Command insisted that the Rangers' original role remained appropriate and should not be changed.

Western Command, June 1953

NOTES ON CANADIAN RANGERS

1. The history of guerilla warfare has proven the usefulness of small bands of local partisans who, knowing the country and being experienced in its methods of travel[,] can maintain greater mobility and therefore manoeuvrability than regimental troops.

2. Guerilla in Spanish means "little war" and the definition of a guerilla is "one who fights a superior enemy in favourable country by irregular means."

3. Therefore as the Canadian North of mountain, plain, waterway and bush offers an ideal background and sphere for guerilla tactics, it would seem only reasonable that presently organized Ranger groups should be assisted in organizing, expanding and training in order that we keep alive the fast fading spirit, practices and instincts of the hunter, voyager and fighter in order that in the event of an invasion they can better give early, timely information, can better inflict the maximum harassment and demoralization on an enemy with the minimum means and effort. In order that they can better deprive the enemy of his food, fuel[,]

ammunition, mobility and communications, better make him maldesploy his troops and lastly form a basis from which our own regular forces can recover the territory.

4. Therefore groups should be organized and trained on the principle that they must never present a target or fixed front. They must always avoid a pitched battle, always retain the initiative and resist the temptation to consolidate a gain. They must always be elusive and able to fade away into the background. They must always be psychologically maddening to the enemy and able to fight another day. Therefore, keeping in mind the knowledge that the larger the party the more likely they are to be caught, the basic group or platoon should not be more than 20 men, with two or three groups or platoons under a company commander. The Company Commander should never be known to or caught by an enemy. Therefore he should be planner and administrator rather than the physical leader of actual sorties or operations. The Company Commander should organize his platoons to include sections of fit, fighting men for raids and mobile operations such as ambushes, with sections of less fit men for guards, [sentries], guides and earmark men, women and boys of his area for cooks, administrative duties, first aid workers, messengers and such. A general plan should be formed for each area to conform to any possible active Army section to

- (a) Assess patriotic feeling of the local populace.
- (b) Select HQ, rendezvous, rally points and meeting points.
- (c) Earmark or establish hideouts.
- (d) Earmark and establish caches of ammunition, petrol, food, clothing, medical stores, cooking utensils and such.
- (e) Establish and earmark alternate rendezvous HQ, etc.
- (f) Recce possible objectives, ambush areas, approaches, assembly areas for later use.
- (g) Study the country by reconnoitring the roads, trails, waterways, [observation posts], etc.
- (h) Earmark vehicles, boats, canoes, horses, dog teams, explosives, communications, etc, for possible future action.
- (j) Ensure that operations, organization and plans are done with utmost secrecy.

5. Therefore training should include instruction in map using, fieldcraft, simple message writing and reporting, use of explosives and weapons and the art of ambushing and mobilizing vehicles, aircraft, etc, and lastly the art of withdrawing by fire and movement.

Eastern Command, June 1955

CANADIAN RANGERS **Ranger Information Bulletin**

3 June 1955

1. Canada is a very large country, but in some parts of it very few people are living.
2. The job of the Canadian Army is to defend Canada if it should be attacked.
3. Because it is such a large country, with very few people, it cannot have soldiers on guard at all the places where the enemy might attack.
4. That is why the Army is trained to be ready to move fast to any place the enemy might come. They can move by day or night; winter, summer, spring or fall; through storms or in good weather. They are ready to fight as soon as they get there.

Why the Rangers Were Formed

5. In most places where the Canadian Army may have to go to fight there are already other soldiers there to help them.
6. The Rangers are formed in places where there are NO other soldiers. They are a special part of the Army who serve freely to defend their home.

7. If Canada's Army must go to fight in this country in a place where there are no other soldiers, it is the Ranger's job to help them. He lives there and knows the country better than anyone else.

8. The best help the Rangers can give to the Army is to let the Army know, as fast as possible, WHEN enemy soldiers first come into their country and HOW MANY men the enemy have so that our soldiers can quickly fly in and fight them.

9. Our soldiers will want the Rangers to meet them and tell them as much as they can about the enemy.

10. Our soldiers will ask the Rangers how many men the enemy has and what kind of guns and other weapons they carry. They will want to know EXACTLY where the enemy are. They will want to know what the enemy have been doing. Have they dug trenches or holes to hide in? Have they hidden mines or things in the ground which will blow up if someone walks on them? Have they hidden big guns anywhere that can shoot at us?

11. Another very important job for the Rangers is to guide or lead our soldiers where they want to go. Without your help it would be very hard for the soldiers to find their way.

12. For a man to do a good job as a Ranger the Army has found out that he must be very smart at living in his own country. He must be a good shot and be able to take care of and feed himself in very rough conditions for days at a time.

13. It is the duty of the Rangers to guard and defend their own country in every way they can. The Army counts on them to do this and relies on their help and friendship.

14. This paper is marked "Restricted" because the information in it is for Rangers only. Do not talk about Ranger business to strangers. They may be enemies.

not normally be available.” Officials had expected the Rangers to attack and defend like formal soldiers rather than guides and scouts.

To achieve these fighting standards in reality, the army would need to organize the Rangers more fully and provide them with modern infantry weapons, equipment, uniforms, and formal training. Even with these supports, Templeton believed that most Rangers would not be able to afford the time away from work to train up to professional standards. By overselling the Rangers, he worried that the military risked overlooking the Rangers’ modest but clear contributions to national defence. Just because the concept was simple, he wrote to Captain Ambrose Shea, did not mean “it can’t be any good!”

Shea agreed, and sent out an information bulletin to Rangers in the eastern Arctic in June 1955 that offered a succinct overview of the Rangers’ role: to provide the army with precise information and guide it when necessary. Combat was not their primary contribution, regardless of what Western Command suggested.

Templeton urged the military to focus on the Rangers’ positive attributes:

- (a) They are permanent residents of their locality and district.
- (b) They are familiar with the local terrain.
- (c) They are most experienced hunters, trappers, fishermen and guides.
- (d) They are capable of living “off the country” for considerable periods without a fixed base.
- (e) They are experienced, all-weather travellers on land and water, ice and snow.
- (f) They are keen and interested, and particularly responsive to any suggestions from higher authority.



He insisted that the army should keep the Rangers as they were because they were cheap “insurance against surprise air or sea landing nuisance raids in isolated areas.” He also warned against the danger of tying the Rangers too closely to the Mobile Striking Force, in case officials decided that Canada no longer needed paratroopers to defend the North, which would take the Rangers down with them.

Indeed, political and military leaders in the mid-1950s downgraded the idea of the North as a gateway for an enemy invasion using ground forces. The real task was defending North America from an aerial attack over the north pole. Fortunately, the Rangers maintained a role watching the skies.



Canadian Rangers

COMPANIES (DEC. 1956)



Defence planners had acknowledged the Rangers' potential contribution as observers in a long-range warning system since the late 1940s. Strategic bombers posed the primary military threat to North America's peace and freedom, and many considered the Rangers an inexpensive asset for detecting possible enemy encroachments, particularly in the Far North.

Colonel Rueben Kyle Jr., the vice commander of United States Air Force Northeast Command, applauded the Canadian Rangers in the Foxe Basin area in June 1954. During a recent air force exercise, an intelligence officer reported that the RCMP at Lake Harbour on Baffin Island had relayed an airplane sighting by local Rangers. The report's information "could be correlated almost

perfectly as to time, altitude, number and type of aircraft, and direction of flight with the scheduled operational flight.” The base commander at Frobisher Bay had received the report a mere one hour and seven minutes after the event. “All reports were checked with mission plan and local air defense agencies,” Kyle explained, “and the accuracy was amazing.” He considered this an outstanding example of the Rangers’ value in remote regions.

The Rangers and the DEW Line Era

The era when this sort of local reporting might suffice had almost passed. Most strategists now concluded that the Soviets would target the heavy bomber wings in the American heartland. If the Soviets destroyed the United States’ ability to retaliate, they could dictate terms to the Western Allies. Infantry would play no role in a surprise attack on North America: radar arrays would detect enemy activities in Canada’s airspace, and air forces would counter them. Accordingly, most of Canada’s defence budget went to the Royal Canadian Air Force.

The United States and Canada agreed to build the Distant Early Warning or DEW Line, a radar system stretching about 3,000 miles (5,000 kilometres) from Alaska to Baffin Island along the seventieth parallel, to give advanced warning if Soviet bombers attacked over the pole. When planners began to search out locations for radar stations in Arctic Canada, they found the existing maps to be imprecise and inaccurate. They needed information from the people who actually lived and worked in the region. Fortunately, Rangers prepared important reports on local topography, demography, infrastructure, communications, and weather patterns. Individual Rangers, such as Captain Anderson-Thomson of Yellowknife, also played a direct role in surveying sites and laying out airstrips.



The DEW Line project began to reshape the Arctic, drawing Inuit into permanent, modern settlements and changing their patterns of life. Captain Ambrose Shea noticed shifts during his first trip to Baffin Island in 1955. After meeting the Ranger officer at Frobisher Bay, HBC post manager Bob Griffiths, over a card table with local RCMP officers, he ventured out by dog-team to visit Rangers in camps along the bay who still followed a seasonal, migratory cycle. In town, Inuit were different. The local Ranger sergeant, Sageakdok, “a short, thick-set man of about thirty,” surprised Shea with his energetic, direct manner and his proficiency in English. Sageakdok “takes an obvious pride in his efficiency both as a truck-driver and Ranger-Sergeant,” Shea noted. “Well he might. These things represent a tremendous and rapid change in outlook.”

Shea respected Inuit, and Rangers in particular. He did not want to “civilize” them. Instead, he attempted to learn what he could of Inuktitut and Inuit culture. His travels humbled him, and he did not pretend that his army training or sporadic visits gave him special authority on Arctic matters. Shea recognized that “the only real Arctic experts are the Eskimoes, who have forgotten more about living in the North than most white men ever learn. That is why I am so anxious to hang on to them and encourage them where the Rangers are concerned, but it is not easy to make people see this point and take them seriously.”

Shea took Inuit participation in the Rangers seriously, but he saw their world changing before his eyes. While he was in Frobisher, the local platoon was pressed into service to serve as a guard of honour for a group of southern VIPs arriving the next day (including the US secretary of defense, and Canada’s ministers of national defence and trade and commerce). With Lieutenant Griffiths and Sergeant Sageakdok, Shea assembled fourteen Rangers in the town garage. Ranger Sergeant Simonee interpreted as Shea explained basic drill” and taught them to stand at ease and come to attention. Shea planned a “purely Eskimo show,” with Sageakdok as guard commander and Simonee as sergeant.

When the first planeload of dignitaries arrived and the Rangers performed this novel duty, Shea watched with fascination from behind a hangar door as the guard stood at attention through the inspections. They did not move as “much as an eyeball” for thirty minutes. “None of the men concerned had ever heard of a Guard of Honour or done any drill until last night,” he noted. “They were dressed in their best clothes and for the sake of uniformity wore the hoods of their parkas up.

Normally, Eskimos tend to slouch, but I had told them that soldiers were important people and that they should hold their heads high and not move a muscle while they were being inspected. They did this and were amazingly steady. As long as they didn’t move anyone would have thought they had had months of training.”

Neither Sageakdok nor Simonee spoke much English and were visibly nervous, but they performed admirably. Sageakdok carried himself “with all the aplomb of a veteran NCO,” Shea proudly noted, “and I was both amused and amazed to see him stop and adjust one man’s arm-band as he walked behind the inspecting party, looking each man over from head to foot as though he had been doing it for years!” Shea felt surprised until he remembered



the powerful observation and imitation skills of the Inuit: Sageakdok simply mimicked his own demonstration from the previous evening. Simonee proved similarly indispensable. When Shea told them to stand down, he “congratulated them heartily and meant every word of it.” This event established the Rangers’ custom of wearing their parka hoods up while on parade in the Arctic.

This visit was the first in an endless stream of politicians, military personnel, southern construction workers, and government officials who flooded north over the next decade. Wage employment, new housing in permanent settlements, and access to Western technologies changed traditional patterns of life. Journalists proclaimed that the Arctic had transitioned from the “Stone Age” to the “Atomic Age” practically overnight.

Modern technology seemed to reduce the need for citizen-soldiers serving in isolated regions of the country. The DEW Line offered protection from Soviet invasion, so many Rangers felt they were no longer required and lost interest. Once Soviet long-range jet bombers could be refuelled in the air, the enemy had no need to invade the North to establish forward bases. Support for the Rangers dwindled along with the threat of a ground incursion.

“The Shadow Army of the North”

In the fall of 1958, the Canadian government publicly revealed the strength of the “shadowy band of volunteers who patrol Canada’s remotest areas on the lookout for any enemy landings.” It described a force of 2,690 trappers, woodsmen, prospectors, miners, and farmers quietly defending northern and isolated coastal areas. Inquiring journalists learned about the Rangers’ general role, including their careful watch for enemy agents who might parachute “into remote areas to set up beacons to guide

bombers or submarines.” With less than \$42 in equipment given to each Ranger, these sturdy outdoorsmen—their identities “largely unknown”—could “operate alone for weeks at a time and can, for the most part, live off the land.” On other Ranger details, the army remained “extremely close-mouthed,” the *Toronto Star* noted on 10 September 1958. Their activities were “known only to the commanders of their various commands.”

The Rangers were fated to remain individuals in local units isolated from the rest of the military. John Matthiasson, an anthropologist who lived on Baffin Island in the early 1960s, observed that “land peoples” such as the 289 Tununermiut near Pond Inlet still depended on hunting for food, spoke Inuktitut almost exclusively, maintained “a fairly conventional Inuit family structure,” and “respected traditional patterns of hospitality and sharing.” They drove outboard motors instead of kayaks, cooked food on a primus stove rather than over an open fire, and hunted with rifles rather than harpoons – but they were thoroughly Inuit.

“Rifles were the most valued possession of Tununermiut men,” Matthiasson observed, and all the men living at the Aullativik camp had Ranger .303s, “heavy, high-powered rifles designed to kill people,” which they used “to hunt everything from ducks to polar bears.” They had to buy bullets for their .22s, which could only be done after trading furs, so their free annual allotment of Ranger ammunition came in handy. “In return, they were expected to watch the Arctic skies for sightings of foreign aircraft and to report any sightings,” Matthiasson wrote. “In moments of depression my spirits soared at the sight of men, faithful to their duty, watching high-flying jets streaking across the sky, then running into their houses to look up the markings in their English code books, and finally throwing up their hands and laughing. Even if they identified the markings of a low-flying aircraft, they could not afford to interrupt their hunting to take the trip to

Pond Inlet to report it.” Their transistor radios, after all, could not send signals.

Despite these communication difficulties, the Rangers made valuable contributions. “We just knew that if an aircraft went down we should look for it,” Ranger Lieutenant John Sperry reminisced about his responsibilities in Coppermine. If people were lost, the RCMP passed along the information, and community members went out to look for them. “All the men were going out anyway,” he explained, so they did not necessarily view search and rescue as a “Ranger” activity. On one occasion, when a boat containing two Oblate priests and their guides went missing, Sperry and the local Ranger sergeant set out with community members to find them. They also searched for bush pilot Johnny Bourassa, who went missing after departing Coppermine. “We never dreamed of asking for recompense in the very early days,” Sperry recounted. “It was just what was done.”



Message from the Honorary Colonel Commandant of the Rangers (1958)

“Worthy” Worthington sent a letter to each Ranger company commander in August 1958:

My experience with the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers during the latter part of the Second World War convinced me of their value and that the organization should be extended across all of Canada in peace as well as war, and this has been done.

Sometimes you and your fellow Rangers must wonder just what good you are doing and why you should keep the Ranger Organization alive. My answer to this is sincere, simple and real:

First, your Company covers a hard, large and sparsely populated bit of country. In a time of emergency information will be required on any unusual happenings and about the area itself. The best information will come from men who know the country and what to look for and are able to put this together for military purposes. We know of no one better for this job than the Rangers.

The second point comes down to actual fighting -- a few men who know the country and could live in it both winter and summer could do far more than large numbers of city bred soldiers with no experience in the bush. You know this fact as well as I do, and so the answer again is the Rangers.

The last point would be in a situation where soldiers must be used for operations in your territory. To get full value these soldiers must have guides and men to show them how to survive in the country. In my opinion this is a real job for the Rangers.

As I see it, the main thing is to be ready if and where an emergency comes, because afterwards it is too late.

I would like you to know that many of us on the outside appreciate the service that you are giving to Canada.

Ranger Lieutenant John R. Sperry

Coppermine (Kugluktuk) sits on the shore of the Arctic Ocean at the mouth of the Coppermine River. In 1950, this tiny “embryo of a settlement” consisted of two churches, a typical red-and-white Hudson’s Bay Company trading post, a government radio and weather station, and an RCMP detachment. A Canadian Ranger platoon had been established the previous year under the command of Harold Webster, a missionary canon and “a veteran of many years experience in the Arctic, a great traveler, and a keen observer.” Jack Alonak, around thirty years old at the time, recalled representatives of the Canadian Army arriving with a “pile of rifles left over from the Second World War.” They handed him one and told him to shoot at a couple of targets. When his aim proved to be “not too bad,” they signed him on as a Ranger.

When Rev. John R. (Jack) Sperry, a newly ordained Anglican missionary, disembarked from a floatplane at Coppermine in 1950, he had never heard of the Rangers. Born in Leicester, England, in 1924, Sperry volunteered for the Royal Navy in 1943 and served as an asdic (sonar) operator on a destroyer that plied the dangerous convoy routes of the North Sea. He ended the war on a minesweeper heading to the Pacific theatre, all of which constituted a “powerful missionary experience.” Carrying his mission to the Arctic, however, seemed like entering an entirely “different world.” Sperry spoke no Inuinnaqtun (the regional dialect of Inuktitut), depended completely on others for survival, and described the experience as being “like a baby” again. “You have so much more to learn than to teach” in the North, he explained. Yet Sperry immediately found himself in a leadership role. Two years later, he became the Ranger lieutenant at Coppermine, a position he held until 1969. He did not remember how he was asked to lead the Rangers, nor what steps his predecessor, Canon Webster, took regarding the force. He simply inherited command of the platoon and received his commission -- a “fancy document” from the King -- in the mail.

As the platoon commander, Sperry was responsible for Rangers dispersed throughout the central Arctic. His administration was informal. Sperry held no meetings, provided no specific instructions or training, and received no visits from a liaison officer. No one ever asked him to report on the number of Rangers in the platoon. His regular activities as Ranger commander consisted of distributing ammunition and, less frequently, rifles. When the annual supply ship arrived at Coppermine in late July or August, it contained boxes of ammunition from Edmonton addressed simply to “the Ranger platoon.” Sperry stored the boxes in his mission’s warehouse and handed ammunition out to the Rangers in a casual way. Western Command Headquarters never asked for an accounting. Hunters found the Ranger-issue rifles “pretty good” at best, but they maintained them because they welcomed the annual allocation of .303 ammunition for hunting caribou and seal. The ammunition boxes also held two primus stoves perfectly.



The Rangers also provided military intelligence. Few Inuit lived permanently in settlements in the early 1950s; most congregated only after the ice formed in the winter. Indeed, *qallunaat* (White) agents in Coppermine actively encouraged them to continue their nomadic hunting and fishing patterns. As a result, their coverage extended down the coast to southern Victoria Island and inland to east of the treeline. One day, in the 1960s, Bobby Klengenberg, a Ranger who lived with his family at Rymer Point near Reid Island, heard a strange noise as he hunted seals off the coast of Victoria Island. When he turned around, he saw a big black box emerge from the water. The box contained a man who looked at him through binoculars. "It took my mind off the seals," Klengenberg later told Sperry. The Ranger relayed the information to Billy Joss, the HBC manager at Holman who also happened to be a Ranger sergeant, and then on to Cambridge Bay, where officials confirmed that no US Navy submarines were operating in the area. Klengenberg had likely seen a Russian submarine observing one of the intermediate or auxiliary DEW Line stations on southwest Victoria Island.

While on watch, these Rangers' only contact with the military came through liaison officers. They had little institutional support in the late 1950s. Captain Ambrose Shea's journal of his voyage on the 1958 Eastern Arctic Patrol, his seventh liaison trip to the North, provides an intimate perspective on the state of the Rangers and on the changes taking place in the Arctic at that time. Shea embarked from Montreal on the *C.D. Howe* in late June, hitching a ride with administrators and medical personnel who annually braved the Arctic ice, storms, and fog to call in at isolated settlements. He approached the trip with his usual enthusiasm. He checked his Inuktitut phrases with the ship's interpreter, and was delighted to meet two Rangers on board returning from hospital stays in the south (a common occurrence

given the high rate of tuberculosis in the Arctic and the large number of Inuit in southern hospitals).

At each Arctic port, Shea met with Rangers and other members of the community. He had a very flexible approach to doing "Ranger business." When his ship arrived at Lake Harbour (Kimmirut), he discovered the *Rupertsland*, a HBC ship, unloading. Shea therefore had trouble contacting the platoon commander, Don Baird, who was also the HBC post manager. When Shea tracked him down, he learned that half of the men in the platoon had left or were leaving Lake Harbour for Frobisher, the new, bustling hub for Arctic weather and radar stations. The liaison officer off-loaded the ammunition and met some local Rangers, but he did not perform a formal inspection because they were all working. Although a chickenpox epidemic curtailed onshore excursions at Pangnirtung, he managed to meet with sergeants and hand over their ammunition. Three Rangers met Shea about the ship in Resolute, which had been populated with Inuit relocated from Port Harrison (Inukjuak) and Pond Inlet in 1953. The liaison officer had few concerns about the platoon. He found that most local Inuit were prosperous and had access to adequate game and employment at the local weather station.

Shea's down-to-earth demeanour allowed him to connect with Rangers. When he visited the Inuit camp near Resolute, he played "polar bears" with a young boy, all the while learning which Ranger had moved where, assessing the state of their rifles, and handing out military identification cards. He witnessed how the modern world collided with traditional life. On 12 August, for example, he visited the Ranger Sudlavinek in his tent. "To say that he is 'well-fixed' for an Eskimo would be putting it mildly," Shea wrote. Sudlavinek had an old military chesterfield (minus one cushion, which he used in his outboard canoe), an expensive radio, and a telephone to the RCMP constable.

Shea had taken photographs of Rangers the previous year and handed them out to the Rangers he encountered. Given Baffin Island's small population and the Inuit habit of visiting other camps, the men got "a big kick" out of recognizing one another. Shea also showed them pictures of Rangers in Labrador, army photographs of troops serving with the UN in the Middle East, and winter training at Churchill. "Labrador they had heard of as a legendary Eskimo country in the far South," he noted, "and Churchill they knew as 'Kokjuak' (Big River), but I don't know what they made of soldiers in an armoured car, stripped to the waist under a hot desert sun." Through this informal process, Shea connected the Rangers to other members of the force and to their military comrades around the world.

Each annual trip was a voyage of intense cross-cultural contact, and Shea forged close relationships with Rangers over the years. Grise Fiord on Ellesmere Island had only one Ranger, relocated from Pond Inlet, but he obviously appreciated Shea and his annual allotment of ammunition. Shea recounted that:

When I met Const Bob Pilot, RCMP, who handles Ranger affairs, such as they are, in this lonely place, he told me that Ranger Akpaliapik had made a carving for me during the year which he proposed to give me on the grounds that I was "his boss." Later when I was issuing Akpaliapik with his ammunition he produced the carving from under his parka and with characteristic Eskimo detachment offered it to me "piumavit"—"if I wanted it?" Naturally, I did want it, gave him a clasp-knife in exchange and with the help of Alec Spalding [the interpreter], praised it and thanked him. It is a small ivory carving of a walking polar-bear, carefully carved and highly polished ... He

said then that he was giving it to me because I was "always giving him things." When I pointed out that it was the Canadian Army that gave him the ammunition, not me, he said, "Well, anyway, I was easy to get along with". Although Eskimoes are intelligent they are often lacking good judgement.

Given Shea's demeanour and obvious respect for the Rangers, he directed this sarcasm more at himself than Inuit.

The annual allotment of ammunition represented the only compensation that the Rangers received for their service, and they welcomed it. When Shea called in at Inuit camps in the Pond Inlet area, he issued forty-eight rounds of ammunition to each Ranger he met and informed them that they could pick up the remainder from the Ranger officer in the community. When the *C.D. Howe* arrived in Eglinton Fiord, the ship's commander asked Shea if he had any .30-30 or .300 ammunition because the camp was short of it. He did not, but he explained that he could issue .303 ammunition to Rangers. Ranger Ashevak collected ninety-six rounds and explained that something had fallen off the side of his rifle, but that it still worked. Functionality, not aesthetics, mattered to the unfazed Shea.

Other equipment did need replacing. Shea learned, for instance, that Peeyameenee, a Ranger from Clyde River, needed a new rifle. This Inuk and his wife had been travelling by dog team that spring when he spotted a seal on the ice. Running ahead of the team, he asked his wife to bring his rifle. She responded immediately but dipped the muzzle in a snowdrift along the way. Without taking his eyes off the seal, Peeyameenee simply aimed and fired. "How the seal fared I don't know," Shea reported, "but I should think that Peeyameenee must have got an awful jolt, and the muzzle of the rifle opened up like a piece of wet card-board."

Shea exchanged the rifle for another left by a deceased member of the patrol. There were no reprimands and no hassle.

Shea's trip ended at Frobisher Bay (Iqaluit), the administrative centre of the eastern Arctic and a hotbed of military and government activity. The community's rapid growth and the influx of Inuit (including Rangers) from the outlying posts complicated the local situation. Frobisher originally had thirty Rangers, but officers recruited more in 1955 in anticipation that the army would assign the platoon a home defence role. Although this scheme did not materialize, local organizers had already enlisted twenty additional Rangers. The Hudson's Bay Company, the traditional source of platoon commanders on Baffin Island, had converted their one-man trading post into a retail store with a manager and four clerks. Consequently, Captain G.M. Rennie, officer commanding No. 28 Company and the local platoon commander, found it difficult to juggle Ranger affairs and his increasing civilian responsibilities, particularly when he knew that in addition to the fifty Rangers known to be at Frobisher, an unspecified number of others had arrived from outlying posts.

Shea typically used his time in Frobisher to meet with as many Rangers as he could. In particular, he reconnected with Sageakdok, whom he had met during his first trip to Baffin Island. The Ranger saluted correctly, wore a parka with a large, handsome beaded Ranger badge on the front, and startled Shea "by springing smartly to attention when I entered a room in which he was seated."

Locally, at least, Shea had done all that he could to generate interest in the Rangers. If the military establishment failed to support the force in the future, it would not be because of shortcomings at the liaison level.



A New Strategic Focus

By the late 1950s, strategists recognized that any enemy attack on North America would come from the air. The concepts of massive retaliation, deterrence, and mutually assured destruction entered continental defence lingo. Defence planners abandoned their early postwar interest in land and sea-based activities for high-tech solutions like the Mid-Canada and DEW lines, which were operational by 1957. The Soviets responded by launching the *Sputnik* satellite, which demonstrated that they could launch missiles at North America over the polar ice cap. The idea of Canada's Arctic territory as a potential battlefield was obsolete. The focus shifted to missiles and nuclear submarines, which avoided the age-old problem of trying to break through the Arctic ice by simply going under it.

What use were the Rangers in this context? Citizen-soldiers with armbands and rifles could hardly fend off hostile Soviet bombers carrying nuclear weapons. Without a clear purpose, local Ranger commanders lost interest and became "more involved in local civilian affairs which prejudice Ranger training and activity." Army officials suggested revising the Rangers' tasks to include civil defence—having Rangers "report on and trace nuclear incidents and fall-out patterns in remote areas." In the Northwest Territories, a few Rangers learned about locating and reporting nuclear explosions, and liaison officers provided some Ranger officers with radiac meters (to detect radiation) and protective clothing, but they received little training on how to use either.

In practical terms, Ottawa's defence plans sidelined the Rangers during the late 1950s and early 1960s. They garnered little attention, financial or political support. They continued to perform their duties but existed in the shadows rather than in the

public eye. "The Rangers were not disbanded," historian Kenneth Eyre explains, "but they were left to wither on the vine." When Rangers left the North or passed away, the army did not recruit replacements. Nor did it replace lost or damaged rifles, and the annual resupply of ammunition "became sketchy" as liaison officers made fewer northern visits.

From time to time, a journalist would pen an article noting the Rangers' existence. In 1959, Larry Dignum wrote in *The Beaver*, the magazine of the Hudson's Bay Company (which supplied several of officers who led Ranger companies and platoons in the North):

What are the chances of an enemy agent or a fugitive from justice hiding out in Canada's North? Pretty slim, for actually it's easier to hide in a crowd than in these great vacant spaces. Here the stranger may meet only prospectors, miners, or trappers, who may be Indian, Eskimo or white, but sooner or later word of his presence will reach the authorities through the Canadian Rangers, and his progress may be unaccountably delayed till he's been investigated.

Dignum's article, titled "Shadow Army of the North," finished with a romantic tribute:

When on duty they wear a scarlet armband with the three maple leaves of the Canadian Army superimposed on a crossed rifle and axe. They have no uniforms, receive no pay, seek no glory, but these men of known loyalty, Indian, Eskimo and white, take pride in standing on guard in the empty and remote parts of Canada with vigilance and integrity, and in silence.

The Rangers became more silent in the years ahead. The decline of army activity in the North in the late 1950s directly affected them. The lack of interest hurt morale, and the abolishment of other military units had spillover effects. For example, disbanding the 24th Field Regiment in Yellowknife in 1958 left the local Rangers without a meeting place and nowhere to store their equipment, weapons, and ammunition. All of the military gear that they had drawn on for winter exercises was shipped out. Captain John Anderson-Thomson pleaded for rations, tents, and clothing to remain available in case of emergency. "I could not field more than six men who could go in the bush in the winter," he explained. Most Rangers in his unit were miners, not trappers or woodsmen. He lobbied to secure the old army officers and sergeants' mess in the hope that he could draw in "some excellent men" from the disbanded 24th. The local commander's priorities were out of sync with the army's.



Captain Shea, the long-standing Ranger liaison officer in Eastern Command, became disillusioned with the military's disregard for the 550 Rangers in Newfoundland, Labrador, and Baffin Island. After expansion into communities throughout the northland in the 1950s, Shea repeatedly received one simple message from Ottawa: "the Rangers may exist but under no circumstances must they do anything." Army headquarters vetoed even the most minor requests.

As the only liaison officer in Eastern Command, Shea was responsible for organizing and maintaining eleven Ranger companies scattered over 8,000 miles (13,000 km) of coastline.

Liaising with the Baffin Island Rangers alone consumed three months of his year, and although he enjoyed positive relationships with individual Rangers, he had limited influence. Itineraries that looked fine on paper proved impractical in the field.

Given their limited training, Shea explained,

It is doubtful if some of the Rangers really understand what the whole business is about and for various reasons it is difficult to explain it to them. The Eskimo, in particular, have no real word for "soldier"

("Unataktik," that is, "one who fights," is as near as they get) and look upon warfare as a species of insanity peculiar to the white man. "I hear that the white men are fighting like dogs again," was one man's comment on the Suez affair. Furthermore, it is the RLOs [Ranger liaison officer's] belief that some of the Eskimos think that he is the entire Canadian Army and that, as such, he is an eccentric but benevolent dispenser of free rifles and ammunition. The name given the RLO in certain localities, "Kokiutit angayak'ok", "Rifle Chief" or "Boss of the Rifles," is sufficient indication of this.

Shea still saw an important role for the Rangers as "'friends on the ground' as long as the Canadian Army existed." He argued that "the idea of arming a local population and asking them to take a hand in defending their own locality is an ancient one and eminently sensible. It does not become out-dated, even in this atomic age." The Rangers had amassed considerable military intelligence over the previous decade, including topographical detail, submarine and ship sightings, and reports of suspicious individuals. They had reported unexplained bomb drops on northern Baffin Island, verified their landing by collecting bits of the bombs, and provided evidence of guided missile activity.

Perhaps most importantly, the Rangers remained keenly interested. For example, Baffin Island's Inuit Rangers self-identified as soldiers:

An extreme example of this occurred three years ago when a Ranger in North Baffin Island began, but fortunately did not complete, a single-handed attempt to capture the US Coast Guard Cutter Staten Island. He realized that she was not a Canadian ship, jumped to the conclusion that she was a Russian, and felt that it was his duty as a soldier to

take some action. This man's enthusiasm may have been misdirected but there is no doubt that he took his position as a Ranger seriously and realistically.

Although isolated, Shea observed that the Rangers were "vividly aware of the Russian threat; so much so that the RLO has sometimes wondered whether they may not have had some personal contact with the Russians with which they are afraid to reveal." He found Inuit Rangers "intelligent, adaptable and intensely practical"—like the legendary Gurkhas of the British Army—and noted that they took naturally to military training given their hunting lifestyles. "If trained in arms," the officer added, they could prove "extremely effective guerrillas. It is a pity that there are not more of them." Indeed, few White men could navigate the Arctic without their assistance, making Inuit "good people to have on *our* side."

With a final flourish, Shea reminded the military that this relationship needed to be respected. "A small quantity of obsolescent equipment is issued to them in the same spirit that an engagement ring is issued to a prospective bride: as a token of engagement," he noted. These "friends on the ground" married the virtues of civic engagement with voluntary military service at negligible cost to the public purse. They deserved encouragement.

But limited resources prevented proper liaison and support. Shea's successor gave up visiting the platoons in the Eastern Arctic altogether, focusing his efforts entirely on Newfoundland and Labrador. The Rangers in Western Command also declined. Captain Chapman, the first Ranger officer, recalled having no money for stationary or postage, never mind transportation or rent for a meeting hall, before the Dawson company disbanded and he took his release in 1958.

In the years that followed, most units failed to provide annual status reports or updated nominal rolls, and administration and accounting fell into disarray. When local commanders resigned, the liaison officer found it difficult to find replacements. Without resources or a liaison officer to maintain contact with company commanders after 1965, the Rangers languished. Individuals such as Bill Emery, the commander at Whitehorse, lost interest in the Rangers and spent little time maintaining control of stores and equipment. No one inspected rifles in outlying detachments after Rangers received them, and through poor maintenance and carelessness many were lost or beyond repair. In 1963, H.V. George reported No. 39 Company at Brooks Brook, Yukon (Mile 830), at nil strength. "All camp personnel now have own rifles and do not appear interested in being recruited for the Rangers," he explained. Participating in the annual North West Highway System rifle shoot was the only Ranger activity in five years, and the military transferred the highway to the Department of Public Works in 1964. The Rangers were left to fend for themselves. In most cases, units simply disbanded.

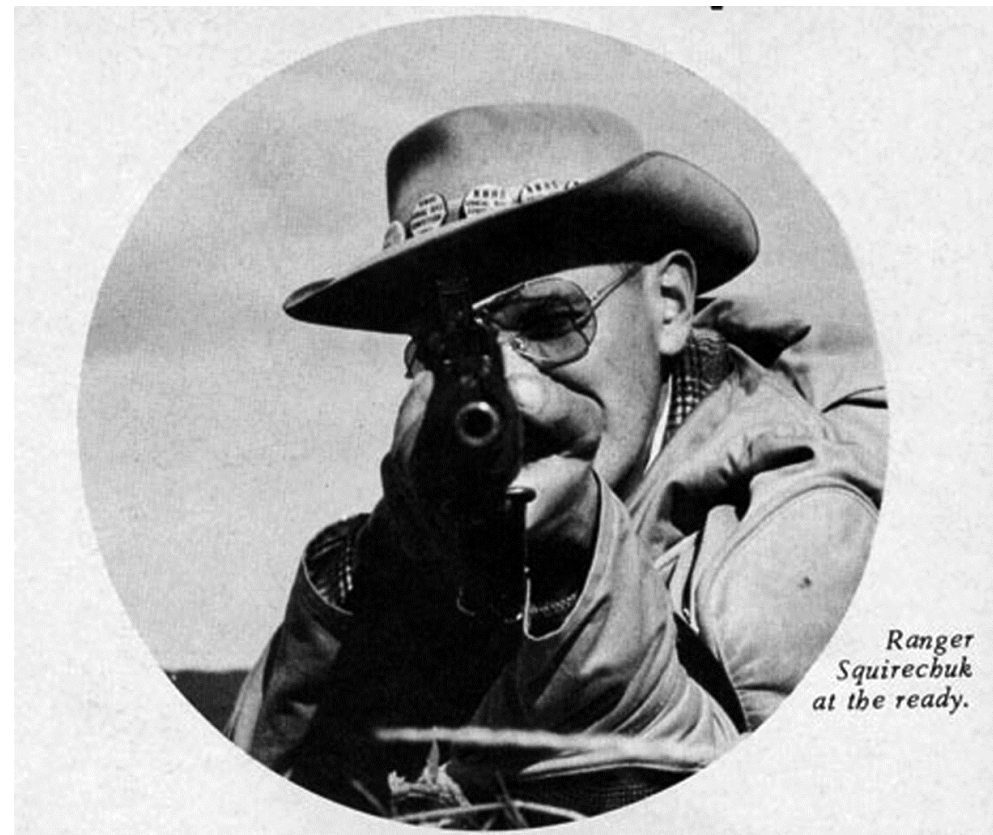
A Quiet Vigil in a Changing Country

Military support for the Rangers had clearly dissipated by the mid-1960s, but at least one reporter held out hope for the force. In March 1964, readers of *Canada Month* magazine learned that the Rangers remained "ready for almost any emergency." Jack Worsell's description was colourful:

In the North, down the bleak coast of British Columbia, and scattered in scores of out-of-the-way spots from one end of Canada to the other are little groups of civilians who, by natural bent or by particular experience, are a

little better prepared to deal with emergencies than their fellows. They are the unsung men of the Canadian Rangers. If the country goes to war, they will report to local military commanders as scouts. If Canada is ever invaded without warning, they are ready to take to the hills as guerrillas.

This story perpetuated the Ranger mystique and focused on units in Yukon. Kit Squirechuck, the ranking officer at Whitehorse, worked as a civilian armourer in the army's local ordinance shops and was a crack shot. "In an emergency," Worsell continued, "Squirechuck, could summon 35 men—civil servants from

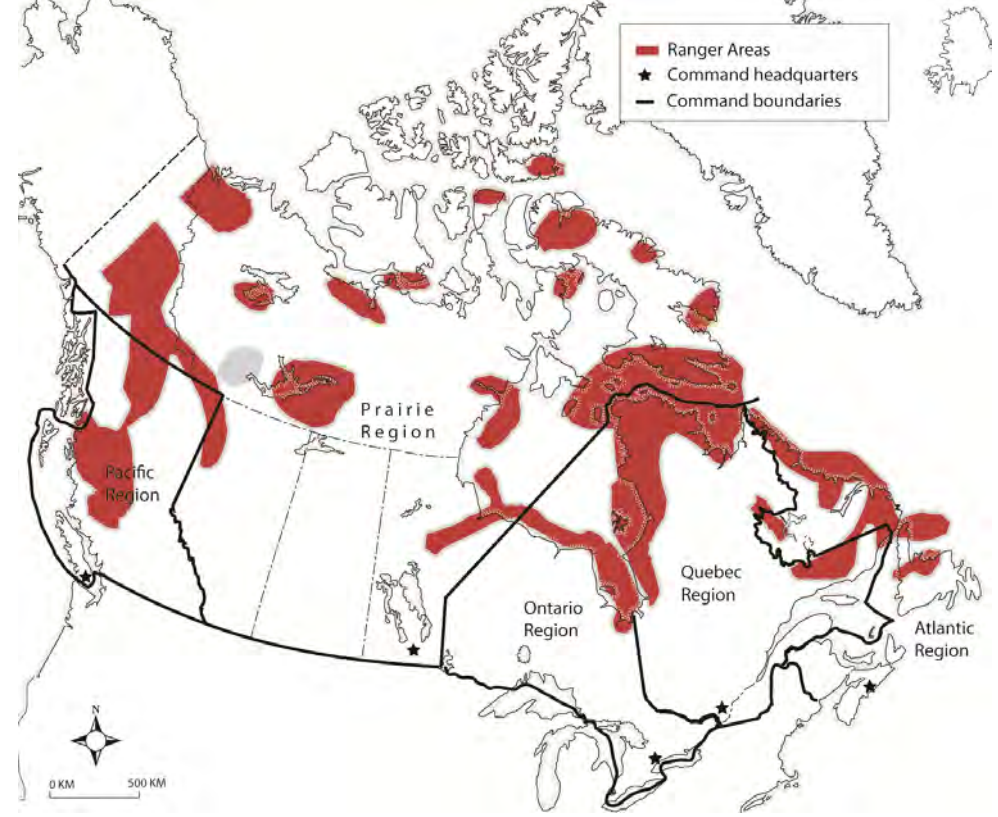


Whitehorse offices, truck drivers from the Alaska Highway, construction workers, Indian trappers (a third of Squirechuck's group are Indians)." Many were veterans, and the rest led lives that equipped them for unconventional fighting. Don Shailer, who worked at the Department of Transport's office in Dawson City, led the fourteen Rangers in his community. He expected the military to call on his group for scouting and for advice on living and travelling in the area.

The army, however, seemed at a loss to clarify the Rangers' role. National Defence Headquarters admitted that the units were "fairly autonomous, put up their own commanders, and simply asked for approval." They had been created when the threat of invasion did not seem far-fetched, "and no one has seen any reason to stand them down." The Rangers cost little while offering a military presence in convenient locations. But the army struggled to explain the military need for Rangers at a time when it was withdrawing more generally from the Arctic and Subarctic for economic reasons.

With the Canadian Forces in a state of continuous reorganization in the mid-1960s and with few conventional military threats to remote regions, the Rangers got lost in the shuffle. Some dedicated Rangers, left to their own devices, continued to serve despite the military's indifference and neglect. The army abandoned any formal recruitment process, and when a Ranger retired he either simply handed his rifle to someone else (often a relative) or his position remained vacant.

After an army officer visited Frobisher Bay in September 1969, local Ranger platoon commander Lieutenant J.A.C. Nuyens wrote how reassured he was "that someone in the Canadian Armed Forces was sincerely interested in the efforts being made by local



people ... to further the continuity of The Canadian Rangers in the Canadian Arctic."

Nuyens had found it frustrating trying to communicate with headquarters and offered various suggestions to make the Rangers "a closer knit and viable force." First and foremost, Rangers needed basic rifle-cleaning kits and replacement weapons. "Two thirds of the rifles currently on issue are unsafe; obsolete and dangerous to use as the moving parts are worn and corroded beyond repair." He urged officials to translate a basic policy statement into Inuit syllabics and to issue platoon commanders teaching aids and silhouette cards so they could instruct Rangers on their duties. In addition, his platoon had never been contacted when military units carried out exercises in the area. He felt the army should use the Rangers "in any capacity" to show his platoon members that National Defence

considered them “a vital part of the Canadian Armed Forces.” Nuyens also wanted to make decision makers in the south more “aware of the importance of the Canadian Rangers in the Arctic.” These volunteers, who freed up regular troops to serve elsewhere, had to “continue in their part to preserve the Sovereignty of the North for all Canadians.”

The Ranger organization ultimately suffered from a fundamental weakness: it lacked focus. After more than a decade of neglect, informal and ineffective arrangements governed what remained of the organization, and national defence headquarters provided no clear direction.

Nevertheless, in 1969 the Steering Committee on the Canadian North recommended retaining the Rangers because of its military and “sociological” contributions. When Mobile Command (the army) begrudgingly assumed command of the Rangers early the next year, it immediately asked Major W.K. (Bill) Stirling to undertake a more in-depth study of the force to determine what should be done “to reorganize the Canadian Rangers to perform their prescribed functions.”

The Stirling Report and the Proposal to Disband

When Stirling set out to study the Rangers in early 1970, he found the force in disarray. The Ranger organization had withered, confirming the arguments of early postwar skeptics who suggested that interest would wane in peacetime. In Stirling’s eyes, the Ranger experiment had failed.

Stirling visited seventeen of the sixty-one communities alleged to have active Ranger units in the summer of 1970. The Rangers still

had 1,647 active members on paper but “for all practical purposes no activity.”

Individual communities told their own stories. Stirling found the Rangers in the Territorial North in a sorry state. He could find only three of the twenty active members in Whitehorse. The two he met did not know what they could actually do, but they requested uniforms and ammunition for an annual rifle competition. At Dawson City, Stirling located one former member of the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers who saw no interest in or need for the Rangers. He encountered the same assessment at Fort Simpson. At Inuvik, he discussed the situation with Ranger Dave Jones, with the RCMP, and with Mayor Dick Hill. They explained that the platoon had been formed in 1952 but had never been called out for any reason. Although Aklavik had twenty-nine active members on paper, Stirling could not find one. He spoke with Rev. H.G. Cook, the Anglican bishop of Northwest Territories. Cook travelled extensively in the Arctic but knew nothing of the Rangers’ existence. Regardless, Cook felt the force “would be of little value today considering the majority of the natives live on welfare in fewer and larger communities and no longer hunt or fish to any extent.”

When Stirling reported to his superiors in Ottawa in August 1970, he got straight to the point: “The Canadian Rangers as presently constituted both in form and concept should be disbanded.” The North had changed, the Rangers were obsolete, and the military should preserve its reputation by avoiding commitments in the region. In Stirling’s opinion, the era of the Ranger had passed.





3

Sovereignty and Renewal, 1970-84

Sovereignty concerns soon changed the attitudes of defence planners about the Canadian North. When a giant American oil tanker sailed through the Northwest Passage in 1969 and 1970, the United States argued that the ship did not need Canadian permission to travel the passage because it considered these waters to be an international strait (and therefore open to transit by anyone). Canada disagreed, quietly considering the waters between its Arctic islands to be internal waters over which Canada had full sovereignty. All of a sudden, Canada's control over its Arctic became a concern. The government turned to the Canadian Armed Forces to assert control, promising increased surveillance and more Arctic training for southern troops. The Canadian Rangers in the North took on a new relevance.

After the military stood up its new Northern Region headquarters in Yellowknife in 1970, staff travelled to communities to provide basic military training to Inuit and Dene Rangers. These meetings were very popular with Northerners, who embraced the Rangers as a form of grassroots service. Furthermore, northern Ranger patrols (as their community-based units became known) now elected their own leaders — a unique form of self-governance. Revitalized by military support and respect, by the early 1980s the Rangers resumed their roles as guides and expert teachers of survival skills in the North.

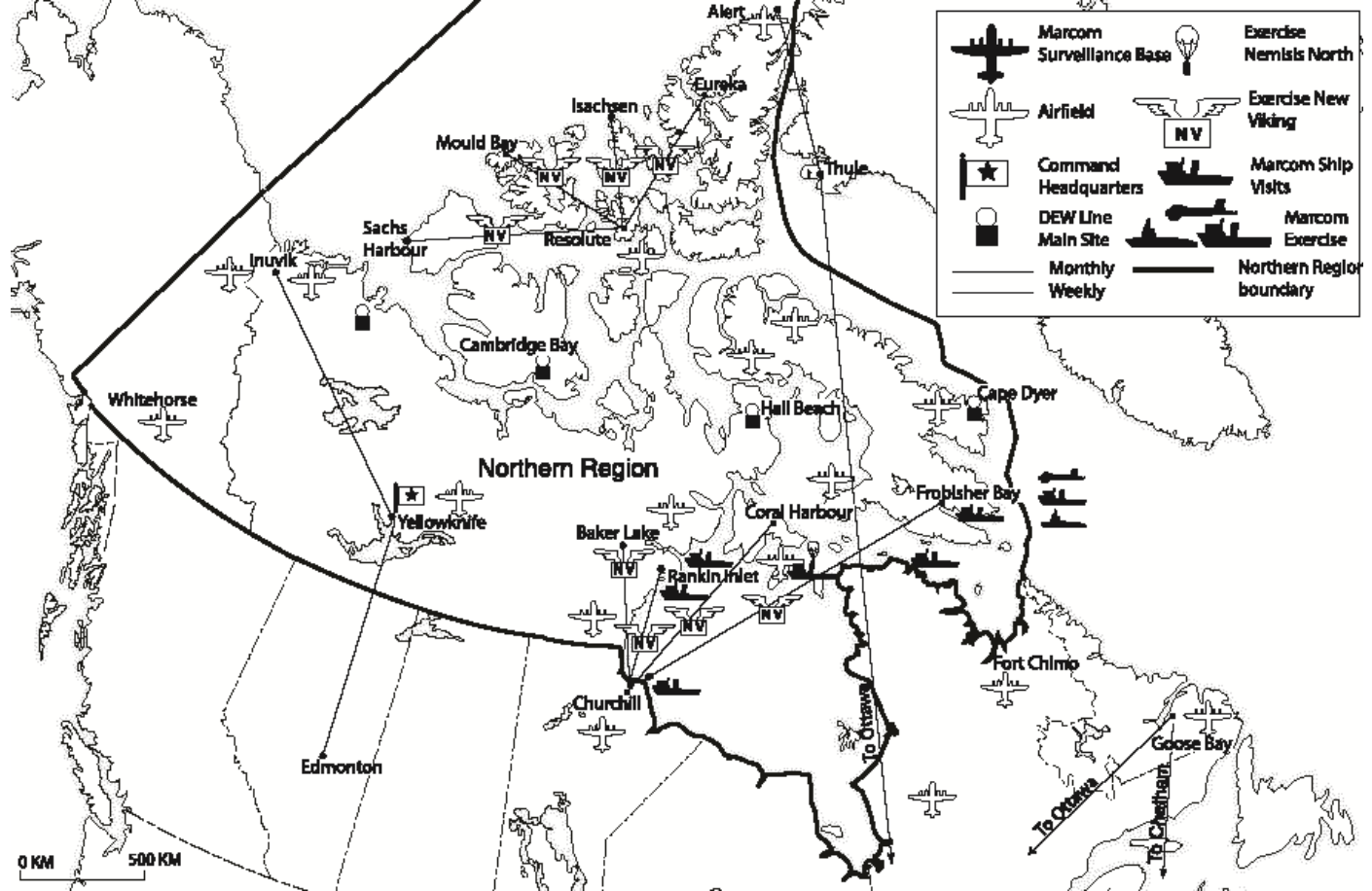
New Sovereignty Concerns

An American, not Soviet, challenge shattered the federal government's complacency about the Arctic in 1969. In August of that year, the oil tanker *Manhattan* pushed through the Northwest Passage, leaving anxieties about Canadian sovereignty in its wake. When Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau unveiled his government's new defence priorities that April, he assigned primary importance to the surveillance of Canada's territory and coastlines and the protection of sovereignty. In Parliament, the Opposition pressured the government to strengthen Canada's presence in the High Arctic. The Steering Committee on the Canadian North concluded in December 1969 that "large scale military activity in the Canadian North would not be justified on the basis of the direct military threat alone, nor would it be valid to permanently station large military establishments in the North." Nevertheless, the committee argued that the Canadian Forces should "substantially contribute to the defence against the indirect threat to Canadian sovereignty ... In order to make its contribution both to economic and social development, and the maintenance of sovereignty, the Canadian Forces must establish a presence in the Canadian North."

This new sovereignty mission was vague. How does a military respond to an "indirect threat"? Can military activities such as surveillance and training strengthen Canada's *legal* sovereignty position? The Trudeau government insisted that no country had legally challenged Canada's sovereignty over its northern lands, territorial waters, or Arctic seabed. The only issue was the status of the Northwest Passage, which the United States insisted was an international strait used for commercial navigation. The Canadian government therefore equated "sovereignty protection" with surveillance and establishing a military presence in the North, not

with preparing for war against Canada's foremost ally and trading partner.

Canada had limited choices. Argus long-range patrol aircraft, designed for submarine hunting, were restricted by seasonal darkness, harsh weather, and the lack of northern bases from which to operate. Canadian naval vessels could patrol only certain waters in ice-free months, and the geographical expanse of the North constrained ground surveillance. The relatively minimal US threat to Canadian sovereignty hardly warranted a major investment of military personnel and resources. Therefore, the best option remained a symbolic presence.



Despite grand plans for the Canadian Forces in the Arctic, money never matched rhetoric. In early 1970, however, soldiers resumed training in the northern territories, Maritime Command sent naval ships on their first northern deployment since 1962, and the military established Northern Region headquarters in Yellowknife as the regional administrative, liaison, and support unit. Although responsible for the largest military region in the world, Northern Region directly commanded almost no operational units. The Rangers were the exception: seven hundred members in thirty-six northern communities, at least on paper. To contribute to sovereignty and security, however, these volunteers – neglected for more than a decade – would need to be re-engaged.

Reorganization or Disbandment?

On 1 April 1970, Canadian Forces Headquarters passed command and control of the Rangers to the Commander of Mobile Command (the army), who directed Major Bill Stirling to study what should be done. Potential options included upgrading the Rangers to militia (Primary Reserve) status or to make them a paramilitary force similar to the Alaskan National Guard. Stirling recommended disbanding the Rangers, but his position contradicted previous reports that argued that an active Ranger force would contribute to national defence.

Senior military officials had mixed opinions. Senior army staff officers in Ottawa supported Stirling's recommendation to disband the Rangers, including the commander of Mobile Command who could not justify their continuation "on military principles." Voices from the North, however, insisted that the region needed a Ranger organization, particularly with the emergence of new sovereignty and security issues. Defence planners believed a larger military's presence and more surveillance activities would support Canada's legal claims in the Arctic. Who could do this better than Rangers serving in their home communities?

Accordingly, the chief of the defence staff decided to "spare" the Rangers but split the national organization in two in February 1971. Operational responsibility for Ranger units north of the sixtieth parallel fell to Northern Region headquarters and those on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts to Maritime Command. This meant that the army no longer controlled the Rangers, and each command was responsible for determining the Rangers' unique requirements in their area. In theory, the commanders of the two headquarters would coordinate activities to retain a "national" organization. In practice, the Atlantic Rangers and the northern Rangers evolved independent of each other. The remaining Ranger units in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Quebec south of Povungnituk (Puvirnituk) fell dormant, and the Rangers in BC were disbanded a few years later.

A New Northern Ranger Concept?

At Northern Region headquarters, officials noted that the Rangers would help with surveillance, act as guides during large-scale operations, and contribute a sustained military presence in the area. Major F.L. Berry, the detachment commander in Yellowknife, emphasized that Canadians living in isolated and

remote Northern communities must become more aware of sovereignty challenges, particularly in the High Arctic and Eastern Arctic. His counterpart in Whitehorse, Major W.S. Deacon, interviewed Yukoners and discovered "an active interest in an organization such as the Canadian Rangers." He expected that ex-Rangers, as well as younger recruits, would help reconstitute the force.

The detachment commanders' research indicated that Northerners did not trust the Canadian Forces. Over the years, the military made plans and then cancelled them when national interest declined. With an "Arctic revolution" in Northern governance and development in progress, the military would have to be more cautious managing its relationships with Aboriginal peoples and would have to consult with experts familiar with the North's social and community issues. "A radical approach to a revitalized Ranger Programme must be developed in view of present communication, travel and social development of the North," Major Berry argued. "Our plan must be based on the most simple and straightforward approach. No plan is workable unless we are in a position to give it complete follow-up support." If National Defence failed to deliver on promises because of costs or timing, he warned, its reputation would be ruined.





Rebuilding the Rangers also meant new approaches to selecting local leaders. In the past, the army had found it convenient to appoint the token “white” resident as the Ranger company or platoon commander. This was no longer appropriate. Northerners were now electing their own political leaders at local and territorial levels. A revitalized Ranger force had to acknowledge and reflect these new realities. Major Berry stressed that communities had to determine command and control:

The Eskimo is not one to be easily regimented. He does not accept imposed leadership, in fact his communities are more akin to a gathering of closely knit family groups banded together for social and welfare advantages. He respects intelligence and skill rather than imposed authority ... The old Ranger concept of appointing the HBC factor or the DOT engineer as Ranger Officers is not considered the answer. The active white resident in some communities should be encouraged to participate but not as automatic leaders.

To be more effective and representative, the Ranger organization would have to evolve to give community members a clear say in who would lead them.

The Rangers had always been organized in the traditional army structure of companies and platoons, which had never really worked in the North. Ranger liaison officers had not visited communities often enough to sustain interest, and company commanders only saw their platoons “on the very rare occasions when they were travelling on their employer’s business.” As a result, the Rangers had few links to the military. Distances between settlements were too large, and resources too few, to sustain an organization above the community level. Accordingly, a task group looking into the Rangers’ future recommended that the units would be more successful if they were simply treated as individual patrols based in specific communities and if the Rangers were allowed to select their own “natural leaders” locally.

The creation of Northern Region made it possible for a team of military instructors, based in Yellowknife, to give Inuit and Indians formal training in their communities. The Rangers would not receive enough training to fight enemies, but they could be taught

how to report “anomalies” and could participate in Regular Force exercises. This fit with the government’s broader objectives for the North as well as its new defence policy, which considered sovereignty -- “the protection of Canada and Canadian national interests” – to be the Canadian Forces’ primary role. The new policy promised to increase Arctic surveillance and training, and it directed the military to explore “the desirability of reconstituting the Canadian Rangers.”

Northern Region headquarters prepared grand plans to try to recreate the Rangers as a full-time, professional force, including an “Arctic Air Squadron” and lots of elaborate support services. Politicians and senior officials in Ottawa hesitated to support these bold ideas. Indeed, financial concerns continued to block Northern Region’s plans for the remainder of the decade. In the end, it cost too much money to convert the Rangers into full militia status, and it would require too many Regular Force personnel to train them to an effective level. By necessity, the military in Yellowknife decided to set up training programs in a few communities and see what actually worked on the ground.

Rebuilding the Rangers in the NWT

In May 1971, Captain David Jones visited the community of Holman (Ulukhaktok) to conduct its first field training in more than a decade. The instructors from Yellowknife shared a “common respect for and interest in the North and northern people.” Well-suited to the job, the soldiers visited prospective Rangers, and with the help of Simon Kataoyak, the president of the community council, they planned a meeting at the school. About forty people (mostly women and children) gathered to watch army films. Unfortunately, an unexpected delay unloading the barge in town kept the men from attending. The following

evening, however, a dozen men gathered at the instructor’s tent on the edge of town. Eight Inuit from Holman and one from Sachs Harbour decided to participate in the training. They brought their boats, motors, and fuel drums to the camp; the instructors bought fuel and food; and the group left on 3 August for a campsite suggested by one of the locals.

Over the next two weeks, the soldiers assessed whether experienced hunters and trappers were interested in receiving military training and serving in a “surveillance, reconnaissance force.” Captain Jones, impressed with the trainees’ map recognition, remarked that the younger participants even gave correct latitude and longitude references. Although high winds hindered marksmanship training, the recruits managed to hold a short shooting competition and hunted for seal. The military’s “hard nose” ammunition proved excellent for this purpose.

When the group returned to Holman, Inuit trainees enthusiastically came by the instructors’ camp, and “there was much friendly discussion over tea and bannock.” They specifically asked for a local Ranger unit and wanted to know when the instructors would return. Other community members expressed interest in joining. They explained that the soldiers were very different than most government workers who came to their community, met briefly with the local priest and HBC manager, did a bit of shopping at the co-op, and then left. By contrast, the soldiers were self-sufficient, spoke with everyone in the community, and treated local people with respect.

Northern Region headquarters considered the training exercise a success, and appointed three non-commissioned officers as Ranger instructors that fall. They promptly began to arrange Ranger training in other communities.



These activities accompanied growing Canadian Forces' Arctic operations in the early seventies. Soldiers from southern Canadian units flew from Churchill and Resolute to remote locations in the High Arctic to experience the difficulties of living, moving, and fighting in the Arctic. The navy visited Arctic waters during the ice-free season, and long-range air force patrol planes flew periodic surveillance patrols over the archipelago. By the middle of the decade, all three armed services had rekindled their northern expertise.

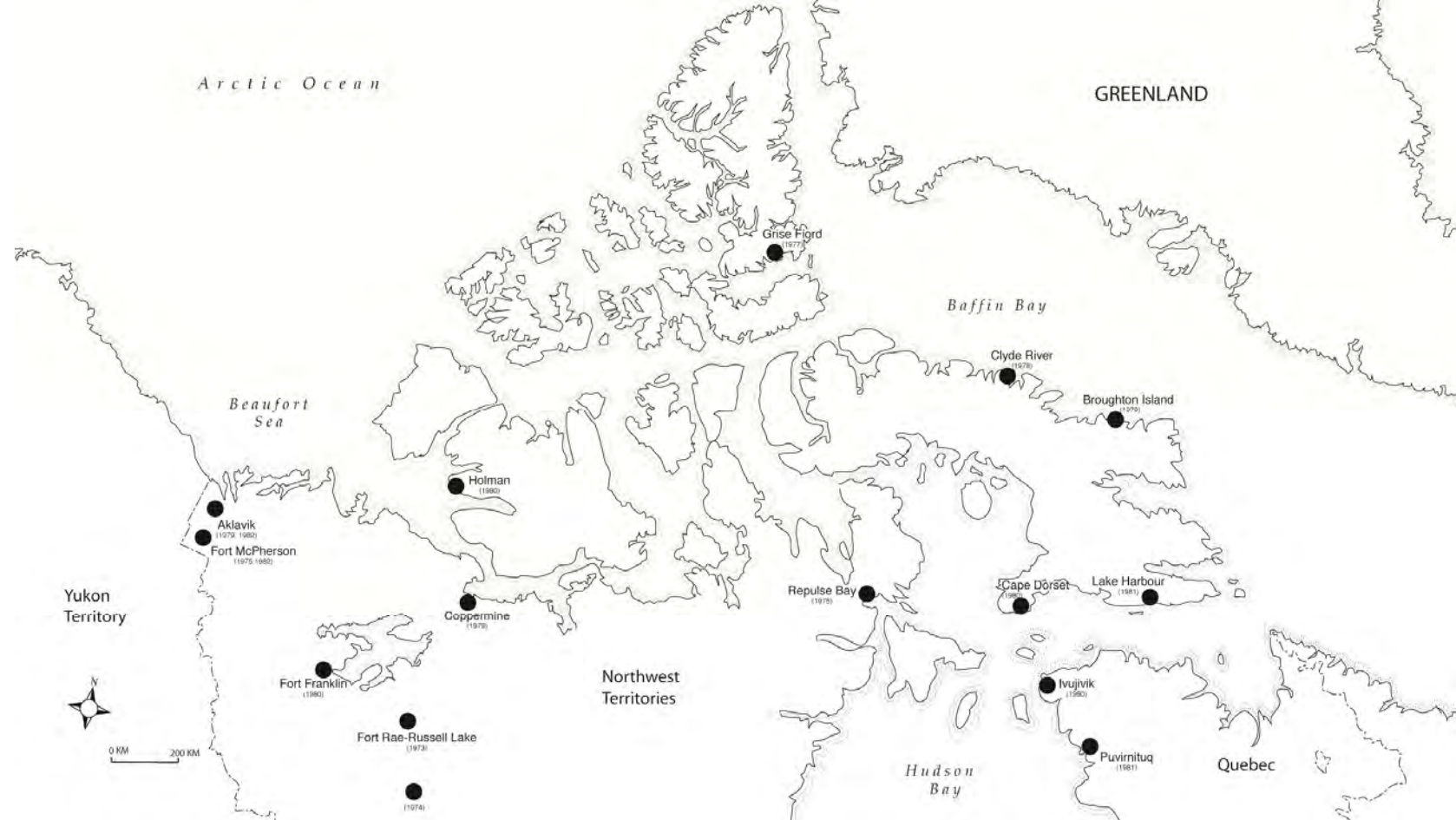
The first opportunity for the army to work with the Rangers during this period came during exercise Patrouille Nocture, launched near Frobisher Bay (Iqaluit) in early 1972. Fourteen men from the community and from Lake Harbour (Kimmirut) had completed preliminary training with instructors from Yellowknife the previous fall. During the exercise, the Rangers played a key role guiding small groups of paratroopers and other soldiers. Rangers provided intelligence about "enemy" movements,

explained how to navigate the local terrain, and advised soldiers how to cope when the wind chill brought the temperature down to -80°F and equipment and communications failed in the cold. Rangers shared their knowledge about trails and topography, taught the soldiers how to build igloos, and offered them vehicles and komatiks. The soldiers uniformly applauded their expert guidance and appreciated the fresh caribou meat the Rangers supplied.

Experiences on the ground showed the importance of mutual learning and respect. The military learned to embrace Northerners' unique capabilities borne from experience and traditional knowledge. Rangers benefitted from military training because it encouraged them to go out on the land and share their skills. The older Rangers from Frobisher Bay knew the area well, but the younger members of the community and the Rangers from Lake Harbour did not. The report written after the exercise noted that the younger Rangers appreciated learning from both elders and military instructors.

Without clear direction or funding from Ottawa, Northern Region Headquarters staff had to implement small, inexpensive changes to improve the Ranger organization in northern communities.

In the mid-1970s, Major Bob Lemaire, the senior staff officer (SSO) Rangers and Cadets in Yellowknife, and Command Sergeant Major Bob Clarke planned a series of trial training exercises for Inuit and Dene Rangers. They prepared a basic Canadian Ranger course for northern indigenous communities, which included weapons handling, map reading, patrolling, information reporting, first aid, and ground search methods. The small, dedicated staff of instructors in Yellowknife conducted a fourteen-day Nanook Ranger exercise in two communities each year. These exercises re-established patrols in the Arctic Archipelago, along the



Arctic Coast, and in communities along the Mackenzie River. In several cases, Rangers in these communities had never received any formal instruction before. By 1982, these exercises meant that most Rangers in the NWT had received at least basic military training.

These visits rebuilt the Ranger units from the ground up. Community-based patrols replaced the old company-platoon structure. This reorientation affirmed the Rangers' primary role: to support "sovereignty policies and programmes." After all, using community names (rather than numbered companies and platoons) emphasized the military's presence across the Arctic, which was the primary goal.

Community-based patrols of ten to twenty Rangers no longer needed Ranger captains and lieutenants, so the local structure changed so that Ranger sergeants commanded patrols, with master corporals as seconds-in-command. Patrol members now elected Rangers to these positions, making Ranger leadership more reflective of northern communities. These changes proved highly popular in Arctic communities.

These reorganization efforts at the grassroots level laid a solid foundation for future growth. There were only 212 active Rangers in Northern Region in July 1976, but the organization aligned with national northern policies which recognized the North's intrinsic value to Canada as a place rather than simply as a remote space.

Nanook Ranger II (1974) “Bannock Builds a Better Team”

In March 1974, at a camp 37 miles (60 km) west of Yellowknife, one officer and seven non-commissioned officers from third battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (3 PPCLI) spent a month training five Inuit from Arctic Bay, six from Holman Island, and four Tłıchǫ from Lac La Martre. The Rangers were a diverse group. John Avilingak, from Holman Island, was 16 years old, and Isaac Attagutsiak, from Arctic Bay, was 56 years old with 25 years of Ranger service. Because only one of the Rangers spoke English, communications required simultaneous interpretation -- and patience. Exercise Nanook Ranger II proved to be a learning experience for everyone. “None of the instructors had ever worked with Rangers,” Captain Craig Mills explained. Inuit rarely operated that far south of the treeline, and the Tłıchǫ -- who had spent five days travelling by dog team to the camp -- found the shacks “too hot and confining.”

Nanook Ranger II trained Aboriginal people from below and above the treeline together for the first time. Mills remarked, “but it worked ... Indian and Eskimo Rangers proved they are able to work with each other and with a military force successfully.” Food provided common ground for cooperation. When everyone complained about the freeze-dried rations, one Ranger proposed a solution:

Bannock just may have been the thread that tied [the team] all together. Early in the training, one Ranger, tired of chewing the spongy glob most Canadians call bread, took matters literally into his own hands. Using gestures sparingly, and no words at all, he demonstrated the ancient art of making bread, Northern style, to [the] course cook ... It proved an instant morale booster. A common ground had been found -- everyone liked it. Military rations became more palatable with it, game and fish tasted better than ever, and it proved especially delightful for tea dunking.

The idea of finding common ground offered a metaphor for the entire exercise -- and the northern Rangers more generally. Rangers learned basic military skills and mastered the snowmobile, and they in turn taught the instructors trapping and fishing techniques. Mills concluded that Canadian Forces personnel learned to appreciate the “Rangers’ unsurpassed bush skills and how to live harmonious with Northerners ... Nanook Ranger II proved that different Canadian life styles can be compatible and can help to build a better country. Isn’t that a worthwhile objective?”



Northern Region Headquarters served “as a link between [the Canadian Forces] and the northern settlements in which they operate and exercise,” which made the Rangers particularly important military partners in their communities.

The perceived threat to Canadian sovereignty declined alongside the oil industry’s decision to abandon the Northwest Passage as a viable route. Within the Canadian North, however, heated discussions about the proposed Mackenzie Valley Pipeline revealed that the future of the northern frontier would no longer be decided solely in government or corporate boardrooms. While southern Canadians often saw the North as a resource frontier, Northerners saw it as a homeland.

Settling Aboriginal land claims was a first logical step for northern development to accommodate these two worldviews. But where did National Defence fit in this new context? Without any obvious threats to Canadian sovereignty or security in the region, what was the military’s role in the North? Was it purely symbolic? Did the tasks assigned to the Rangers in 1947 fit with realities three decades later?

One staff officer suggested that Rangers could play a stronger role in ground search and rescue. Every year, the RCMP failed to find lost Northerners because of insufficient resources for sustained searches. Rangers seemed a natural solution: they lived on the land and received navigation and basic first-aid training. Many Rangers also belonged to hunters and trappers associations, which assisted in local ground searches in the North. But the RCMP, not the military, had primary responsibility to coordinate and undertake searches, which created legal obstacles. Local RCMP constables could not call out the Rangers directly, and required official approval from National Defence before doing so.



In practice, few experienced community members waited for an official tasking before heading out on the land or waters to find someone who was lost. Rangers therefore routinely participated in searches, rescues, and recoveries as unpaid, civilian volunteers rather than as Rangers on official duty. This distinction confused (and continues to confuse) many Rangers.

In November 1979, reporter David Miller described to readers of *News of the North* how 450 Rangers now served in twenty-three settlements “scattered thinly across tundra and taiga, stand[ing]

as our northern sentinels, maintaining a vigilant eye over our nation's Arctic approaches." He characterized the Rangers as "rugged hunters and trappers," 90 percent of whom were Inuit, Dene, or Métis – but all of whom were patriotic Canadians and "humble servants of the Queen."

The military learned to adjust its typical southern behaviour when it came to working with Northern volunteers. "You don't order the Rangers out; instead you ask them -- and kindly," Captain Sandy McDonald, the operations officer at Northern Region Headquarters, explained to Miller. "And then, you still don't know how many will show up. If it's in the middle of hunting season, they may just say 'bugger-off.' On the other hand, if it's a slow time of the year you may have to beat 'em off with a stick." This dynamic did not worry officers such as McDonald who knew they had no other option to "get troops of that potential -- very handy militarily -- for the cost of an old .303 rifle and 300 rounds of ammo a year." He saw the Rangers as patriotic northerners defending their homeland. "They're sincerely loyal, like to be associated with the armed forces, and are very proud of it."

Although national support for most Canadian Forces activities in the North had declined by the early 1980s, the Ranger support staff in Yellowknife actually benefitted from a modest increase in personnel: a master warrant officer and four combat arms sergeants who, as Ranger instructors, conducted liaison resupply and training and maintained records for each patrol.

With additional staff and funding, Northern Region redesigned its Ranger Training Plan to follow a three-year cycle. Each patrol would receive an annual ammunition resupply and liaison visit, and every third year it would participate in a Nanook Ranger field exercise conducted in and around the patrol community. In-town Ranger training included basic drill, first aid, map use, surveillance,



and reconnaissance. Advanced training included five days of refresher training and a four- or five-day field-training exercise, which usually involved a long-range patrol. (The staff in Yellowknife had only been able to conduct two Ranger exercises per year before this point, which meant that it would have taken fifteen years to train each patrol in the region.)

Newspaper reporters liked what they saw, particularly when the Rangers worked with the Regular Forces. For example, in September 1981, thirty members of "C" Company, 2nd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry underwent four days of survival training with two Inuit Rangers from Resolute Bay. Levi Nungaq, a hunter and carver, and Ludy Pudluk, the local member of the territorial legislature for the High Arctic, dazzled the

soldiers with their “amazing Arctic skills.” The southern troops overcame their initial horror at the prospect of eating raw seal meat, learned how to build igloos, and watched the Rangers pull “Arctic char out of 12-Mile Lake with ease.” As part of the larger Operation Sovereign Viking, these activities helped to establish “a firm military presence of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic islands.”

The words *sovereignty* and *presence* became strongly associated with the Rangers, who increasingly cooperated with other military units training and operating in the North. In 1983, Ranger activities included the following: support for a Regular Force company during Exercise Kovik Punch in Eskimo Point (Arviat); aid to Canadian Forces Station Inuvik, along with winter survival training in that community and in Fort McPherson; and assistance to the RCMP in the search for a missing person near Cambridge Bay. The Resolute patrol helped Air Command recover fuel drums in Polar Bear Pass, Bathurst Island, while the Pangnirtung and Broughton Island (Qikiqtarjuaq) patrols supported an army cadet Arctic indoctrination course and an adventure-training exercise. “These native men of the land possess special knowledge that cannot be obtained from books or briefings,” the annual report on defence noted in 1982. “Most rangers know the land intimately up to 500 kilometres from their homes. They have excellent hunting and fishing skills that can be utilized for survival training. Their uncanny ability to improvise can assist troops in coping with a harsh land.”

The Rangers’ navigation skills in arduous conditions earned accolades. In April 1984, northern commander Brigadier Mark Dodd presented Rangers Peter and Johnny Mamgark of Eskimo Point (Arviat) with the chief of the defence staff commendation for their actions during Exercise Kovick the previous year. “While their deed may not seem extraordinary by Inuit standards,”



reporter Brian Mitchell noted, “the Canadian military believe the Mamgarks’ actions saved the life of one soldier and contributed to the safe return of an entire patrol.” The two Rangers had guided a seven-soldier patrol to a lake about twelve miles (twenty kilometres) from the main company position when a blizzard stranded the group. Suffering from the cold and short on rations and food, they decided to return by skidoo to Eskimo Lake on the sixth day. On the journey, a soldier was thrown from a sled and struck by a trailing komatik. After administering first aid, the men placed him in a sleeping bag, strapped him to Peter Mamgark’s sled, and took him to the community-nursing station at high speed. At the same time, Johnny Mamgark’s snowmobile broke down, and he had to guide the rest of the patrol home on foot, in total darkness. “Their courageous action undoubtedly saved the patrol from extreme hardship and possible serious injury as weather conditions worsened the next day,” the commendation read. Local residents who filled the community hall for the formal award ceremony saw first-hand how much the military appreciated Northerners’ survival skills.



By this point, Ranger patrols spanned the breadth of the Arctic, from the most easterly patrol at Broughton Island (Qikiqtarjuaq) to the most westerly patrol at Aklavik. A Northern Region briefing book from the early 1980s trumpeted the Rangers' involvement: "It is significant also that the Ranger concept capitalizes on those attributes of native northerners that they themselves espouse as their traditional way of life -- their knowledge of their environment, their ability to live and survive on the land, their hunting instinct. In sharing an important defence commitment, the Canadian Rangers fulfil a role no less important than any other component of the Canadian Armed Forces, and have a justifiable pride in doing so." The new language emphasized northerners making a contribution to their country.

Although senior officers in Ottawa still struggled to understand or define the Rangers' military role, soldiers who trained and operated with the Rangers realized the value of their contributions. Following an exercise at Cambridge Bay in January 1984, Captain Ernie Reumiller of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry wrote:

We must remember that the Rangers have a different culture, have worked under arctic conditions for many generations and in order to survive, we must be prepared to accept their advice and assistance.

The Ranger's sense of loyalty is very high and we found that they watched over our well-being. We also learned a great deal from the Rangers by watching them do maintenance on stoves, lanterns, and skidoos. Their methods are quite unorthodox; however, no one blew themselves up and the end result was that the piece of equipment was normally fixed in half the time it would have taken us.

The Eskimos were willing to share their food while on the trail. Several members of the course tried eating pieces of raw frozen caribou covered with hair. It was different, filling and not unlike beef jerky. Eating raw char however, did not sit well with any of the personnel. The Eskimo version of bread (banik) was excellent. We ate over 50 pounds of it in five days. Several people even took some loaves home along with the recipe. The purpose of existing on the native diet was to prove to everyone that we could survive on what was available in the North.





4

Expansion and Enhancement, 1985-97

When the next Arctic sovereignty drama unfolded, the Rangers reached a new level of prominence. In 1985 the US Coast Guard icebreaker *Polar Sea* pushed through the Northwest Passage without seeking Canada's permission, resurrecting Canadian concerns about sovereignty. The Conservative government of Brian Mulroney responded by promising big-ticket military investments to improve Canada's control over the Arctic. At the same time, the Rangers received increased recognition and support. Media coverage began to emphasize the social and political benefits of the Rangers in Aboriginal communities. As a bridge between diverse cultures and between the civilian and military worlds, the Rangers successfully integrated national sovereignty and defence agendas with local interests.

While most of the government's promised investments in Arctic defence evaporated with the end of the Cold War, the Ranger organization grew in the 1990s. Although Arctic sovereignty concerns fell out of the political spotlight, the Rangers still represented a positive government presence in remote communities, a bridge between the Canadian Forces and Aboriginal peoples, and a new instrument for internal cohesion and capacity-building. Journalists applauded the Rangers for teaching the military and for encouraging elders to share their traditional knowledge with younger people within Aboriginal communities. The latter role led to the creation of a youth program, the Junior Canadian Rangers, in 1998.

The New Sovereignty Imperative

Soon after Brian Mulroney's Conservatives took office, Canadians cried out for a bolder presence in the North. The voyage of the US Coast Guard icebreaker *Polar Sea* through the Northwest Passage in August 1985 was not intended to undermine Canadian sovereignty, but it generated such a flurry of media interest that the new government in Ottawa had to re-evaluate Canada's Arctic policies. In September, it announced steps to assert Canada's legal claim by establishing straight baselines around the entire Arctic Archipelago. To show the flag, the Canadian Forces would increase their northern patrol flights and naval activities, building upon military activities that had been ongoing since the 1970s.

Joe Clark, the minister of external affairs, made an oft-quoted statement to the House of Commons on 10 September 1985 that directly linked Canadian sovereignty to northern peoples:

Canada is an Arctic nation ... Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic is indivisible. It embraces land, sea and ice ... From time immemorial Canada's Inuit people have used and occupied the ice as they have used and occupied the land ... Full sovereignty is vital to Canada's security. It is vital to the Inuit people. And it is vital to Canada's national identity.

The federal government's mobilization of use and historical occupancy to justify its position raised legal, moral, and practical reasons to encourage Inuit participation in defence activities.

In this context, Inuit spokespersons, politicians, and military officials strongly supported Canadian Ranger service. Mark

Gordon of Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC) believed that Inuit had “a valuable contribution to give” to northern security and praised the Rangers for acting as “the eyes for the Armed Forces.” Testifying before a parliamentary committee, he highlighted that the Rangers provided “valuable services to our communities, such as search and rescue,” and also helped by providing food. In his eyes, the Rangers, “who in most instances are the most experienced and the best hunters of the communities and the most knowledgeable of the area surrounding their communities,” ensured that the military and local populations worked together. Rhoda Innusuk, the president of ITC, saw the Rangers as an appropriate way for Inuit to contribute to Canadian sovereignty and security. “Inuit understand Arctic conditions,” she noted. “National Defence has demonstrated the importance of this fact to Arctic operations by training Canadian troops in Inuit survival techniques and through the Canadian Ranger program, a program we would like to see expanded.”

Hearing these enthusiastic appraisals, members of the parliamentary committee on national defence lauded the Rangers in September 1985. The Rangers, they argued, provided a cost-effective military presence and allowed northern residents to play a direct role in defending their country. “It is not a matter of the people accommodating the old way of life to the military necessity,” Member of Parliament Dan Heap recognized. “It is a matter of accommodating the military necessity, not to the old way of life but to the people who are here now with some old knowledge and some new knowledge.”

The Rangers accommodated and reflected the diversity of the North. By 1986, the organization in Northern Region (with a total strength of 642) was 87 percent Inuit and 12 percent First Nations. The average age was forty, and the average length of service was twelve years. Only 41 percent spoke some English,



while 87 percent spoke Inuktitut and 12 percent spoke a First Nations language. “Native leaders and the Rangers themselves have expressed a renewed interest in the program,” Major S.J. Joudry commented. “While their motivation and enthusiasm may not be entirely military oriented, it is genuine.” Now that Northern Region had amassed “several years of detailed knowledge and extensive exposure” to the Rangers, it could explore options because “the Ranger staff have established an

excellent rapport with the Rangers and are respected visitors to their Native communities.”

Northern spokespeople, staff officers, instructors, and the Rangers themselves took to heart this message of respect and distinctiveness. Instructors relaxed orders and rules about punctuality (a central pillar of military life) strictly because “the hours of the day are not always relevant in the land of the midnight sun. Children play in the streets at two o’clock in the morning, meetings rarely start on time and watches have no place on the traplines.” The military tried “to gradually acquaint them with basic military rules,” but it had modest expectations. Captain Bob Gauthier, the officer in charge of the Rangers, explained that the chief threat to the Rangers was Aboriginal people’s abandoning hunting and trapping for wage employment. The military encouraged traditional pursuits because “as the traditional native lifestyle dies out, the usefulness of the Rangers diminishes.”

Serving as eyes and ears in and around their home communities allowed the Rangers to provide military intelligence. But did they provide relevant information? Rangers actually reported several submarine sightings in the mid-1980s. In September 1986, two Inuit fishermen passed on separate sightings of a vessel “larger than a whale” with a large mast and “mirrors” near Arctic Bay. The next summer, a group of hunters watched a submarine surface in Akimski Strait (James Bay) and called out to the men on its deck, while Rangers at Coppermine (Kugluktuk) identified two submarines. Sergeant Clarence Rufus of Tuktoyaktuk recounted how, upon seeing a strange object in water, “one Ranger asked if it was a whale. The other guy said, ‘if that’s a whale it’s got a guy walking down its back.’” Without Canadian submarines or underwater sensors to detect foreign activities in the country’s Arctic waters, the Rangers fulfilled an important surveillance role.

Reporters continued to describe the Rangers as home defence forces ready to take on Russian paratroopers. Christopher Wren wrote in the *Globe and Mail*, “If an enemy ever sweeps down to invade North America, it will have to contend with the Ikkidluak brothers and their bolt-action rifles.” He reassured readers that Lake Harbour (Kimmirut) residents Iola and Lucassie Ikkidluak, with their Ranger armbands and ball caps, were well suited to their role. Although Wren admitted that the Rangers would not likely have to repel a Soviet invasion, he recognized the need for a continuous military presence.

By the mid-1980s, the Rangers had also established their value to Regular and Reserve Force field operations. “We don’t permit any army training north of 60 without Ranger involvement,” Brigadier John Hayter explained. In 1985, for example, Rangers supported twelve military exercises as guides, advisers, and instructors in northern survival skills. Southern troops who ventured north remarked on the Rangers’ capabilities. When “G” Company, Second Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment (based in Gaagetown, New Brunswick), went to north Baffin Island with members of the Arctic Bay patrol on Royal Hiker ’87, they raved about their local guides and teachers. The Rangers’ ability to operate when it was minus thirty-five degrees Celsius or lower with the wind chill impressed Corporal John Thompson. Soldiers camped in tents, but the Rangers found them too cold and preferred “traditional technology”—their own igloo. The Rangers did not allow the troops to shoot game, but they taught them techniques and allowed them to butcher and eat the meat. Southerners found the Rangers friendly and learned a lot from them. “They’re very intelligent—they definitely know how to survive,” 21-year old Private Nick Corbett commented, “and they’re teaching us the tricks of the trade.”



To enhance its competency in the Arctic, the military came up with training scenarios that saw the Rangers contribute to large-scale exercises. Exercise Lightning Strike '87 involved more than three hundred troops, airmen, and Rangers. The sixteen-day exercise involved hundreds of flying missions, airborne assaults at Cape Dyer and Cape Dorset, and the "fortification" of Iqaluit (Frobisher Bay) as a forward operating base. Northerners did not view the exercise as intrusive because local Rangers participated. "Sovereignty is a matter of deep concern to us," Iqaluit mayor Andy Theriault explained. "We've been wondering when people 'south of 60' are going to wake up." Jim Bell, the editor of *Nunatsiaq News*, stressed that Inuit believed their presence protected sovereignty and therefore needed to be recognized. The military agreed and encouraged the army to integrate communities into their activities. "It used to be that we would just show up, disappear in the bush for our exercises and then when we were finished, fly out," Brigadier Kent Foster explained. "Now, a major objective is to see how well we integrate; we want our presence felt but we don't want to disrupt the lifestyle."



These activities supported the government's promise to affirm Canadian sovereignty with an increased military presence in the Arctic. The Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff commended the 638 Canadian Rangers in the Territorial North when he appeared before the Standing Committee on National Defence:

Having observed them first-hand, it is remarkable: the talents they have for survival on the land, the ability they have to transmit this knowledge and information to our military people, and the very close co-operation that exists between them, the pride the Canadian Rangers take in their job. I believe we are really using them in a most effective manner. As you are probably aware, it is the communities whose advice is sought as to whether they wish to establish a Ranger unit, and it is the community whose advice is sought as to who should be the leader of that unit. It is not a decision we impose in the north...

The Canadian Rangers – Professionals of the Land

The 1987 white paper on defence, *Challenge and Commitment*, emphasized the need to increase Arctic capabilities in a Cold War context. This included new long-range patrol aircraft, nuclear-powered attack submarines capable of operating under the polar ice, and fixed sonar arrays to detect submarines. The government pledged to upgrade airfields at forward operating locations in the North, to modernize the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), and to construct the North Warning System to replace the antiquated DEW Line. The policy also stated that sovereignty and territorial defence required “appropriate land forces to demonstrate presence, authority, and effective defence within Canada in peace time and to defend against incursions and sabotage in war.” Accordingly, *Challenge and Commitment* stated that the Rangers’ “significance as a surveillance force and as a visible expression of Canadian sovereignty in the North requires its expansion and an improvement in the equipment, training and support it receives.”

Given strong levels of Aboriginal and military support, politicians and senior defence officials touted the Rangers’ contributions. “In a part of the country where the federal government spends \$1.5 billion a year, the Ranger program has a \$210,000 budget,” a reporter noted in 1987. Brigadier John Hayter, the commander of Northern Region, referred to the Rangers as the “most cost-efficient program in the Canadian Armed Forces.” Perrin Beatty, the minister of national defence, also committed to improving the force. He not only deemed the Rangers “an important expression of sovereignty,” he also anticipated an increased role for them as military activities expanded in the region. The standing committee on national defence concurred and reported in 1988 that Rangers would receive new rifles and communications equipment. It expected the number of Rangers in the region to rise to one thousand by 1995 with new patrols in several communities. Political support paved the way for growth.

Planning an exercise or operation in the Arctic? Don't forget to include the Canadian Rangers. They can provide you and your troops with invaluable assistance in navigating, training, and surviving in the vast regions of Canada's North. These native men of the land possess special knowledge that cannot be obtained from books or briefings. Most Rangers know the land intimately up to 500 kilometers from their homes. They have excellent hunting and fishing skills that can be utilized for survival type training. Their uncanny ability to improvise can assist you in living comfortably in a harsh land.

... The value of the Canadian Rangers must not be underestimated. They are a special breed of skilled men who are eager to assist regular troops operating in the barrens. The Ranger concept capitalizes on the native northerners traditional way of life, that is, their knowledge of the environment, their ability to live and survive on the land, and their hunting instincts. The Canadian Rangers are alive and well in the North and are strong asset to the Canadian Forces.

Major S.J. Joudry, NRHQ briefing notes, c.1985



The Rangers expanded more rapidly than expected. In the late 1980s, new patrols opened in Igloolik, Baker Lake (Qamani'tuaq), Behchoko (Rae-Edzo), Tuktoyaktuk, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour (Ikaahuk), Sanikiluaq, Chesterfield Inlet (Igluligaarjuk), Whale Cove (Tikiraqjuaq), and Pelly Bay (Kugaaruk).

The Ranger organization also grew along the Pacific coast. The re-establishment of patrols in British Columbia in 1990 began a decade of major expansion across the provincial norths that complemented the growth in Canada's northern territories.

The Northern Growth Spurt Continues

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War raised questions about Canadian defence. The Department of National Defence's annual report in 1989 noted that "no one seriously believes that the current Soviet leadership has any intention of attacking Western Europe or North America." The federal government soon cancelled its nuclear submarine program, its icebreaker project, and most of its plans to improve its Arctic defences. The media focused more on federal deficits and the massive national debt than on sovereignty and security issues, and the government slashed the budget for national defence.

Fortunately, the Canadian Rangers' low cost and favourable political and media profile made them particularly attractive compared to other military organizations and activities.

Indeed, increased Ranger budgets facilitated expansion in the 1990s when most Canadian Forces activities faced deep cuts. Brigadier-General Larry Gollner, the commander of Northern

Number of Rangers in Northern Region, 1981-93

Year	Patrols	Rangers
1981	29	600
1982	32	658
1983	36	729
1984	32	627
1985	32	620
1986	33	632
1987	37	707
1988	40	758
1989	43	846
1990	45	987
1991	53	1209
1992	57	1362
1993	48	1200





Region, continued “to press growth with *vigour*” in the early post-Cold War period. By June 1990, seven personnel in Northern Region looked after 44 patrols and 935 Rangers: 38 patrols were predominantly Inuit, 5 were Dene, and one was non-Aboriginal. In “basic military skills, musketry, field craft, robustness and survival knowledge, the Rangers are every bit as proficient as their Primary Reserve counterparts at a fraction of the cost,” Gollner argued. “There are not very many places in Canada amongst the native population where the CF and our activities are welcomed these days,” he explained. “In the North, the Rangers are welcome as a vital and integral part of the native communities. We have a chance to expand, using very few resources ... our influence and at the same time our ability to enhance our national sovereignty and security.”

Given the strained relationship between Aboriginal people and the military in other parts of Canada, politicians and defence officials highlighted the “wide positive public and territorial support” for the Rangers. Aboriginal people’s frustrations with the state boiled over during the “Indian summer” of 1990, when Elijah Harper’s stoic stand defeated the Meech Lake Accord and when camouflaged Mohawk warriors faced off against the Canadian Forces in Quebec. In the North, however, the Rangers showed an ongoing spirit of cooperation. Inuit, for example, actively supported the Rangers because elders saw the organization as a

way to take young men “out on the land or ice to learn and master the old way of life and skills.” These elders were often community leaders, so the military had friends in places of influence.

The Rangers’ other activities helped Aboriginal communities and drew attention to northerners’ contributions. “The pivotal role

played by the Rangers in [securing the town of] Old Crow last summer during the forest fire driven evacuation and several successfully concluded searches for missing people have received excellent coverage in the Northern media,” Brigadier Gollner explained. “All of this public acceptance and positive feeling about our Rangers did a great deal to ameliorate the post Oka anti-military feeling amongst the military in the North,” the commander noted, particularly among Inuit and Inuvialuit. One Ranger in Old Crow quit in protest of government and military actions against the Mohawks, but one out of 975 Rangers (98 percent of whom were Aboriginal) was “not a bad figure!”

Northern leaders from the Dene Nation and the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada singled out the Rangers as a positive contribution to the defence of Canada and hoped to see the organization expanded. The government listened, seeing this as a way to further relationships with northern communities and Native organizations. When Rosemary Kuptana, president of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, was invited to lay a wreath at the National War Memorial on Remembrance Day 1993, she felt it “only appropriate” that an Inuk serving with the Rangers carry the wreath for her. Even Audrey McLaughlin, the leader of the federal New Democratic Party who was perennially critical of all things military, wrote to the chief of the defence staff in 1992 asking him to expand the Rangers in the Yukon, her home territory.



The military did little to publicize the Rangers, but the media remained positive. “As ‘Twice the Citizens’ and true volunteers they have a good message to put out,” Brigadier-General Ernest Beno commented in 1991. The Rangers were cheap and inclusive: a winning recipe. Consequently, Brigadier Gollner received full support for his plan to expand to fifty patrols and then add two or three patrols per year in the early 1990s. His headquarters raised and trained new patrols in Inukjuak, Inuvik, and Hall Beach in 1991. At this point, practically every Inuit community capable of supporting a Ranger patrol boasted one. The northwestern subarctic offered room for expansion, however, and Yukon became Northern Region’s highest priority.

The Yukon Territory had changed dramatically since the Rangers’ footprint faded away in the late 1960s. Most Yukoners now lived in a few settlements, with more than two-thirds of the population concentrated in Whitehorse. The military, however, had little presence: one Ranger patrol in the remote community of Old Crow, along with five Regular Force officers and four cadet units serving the entire territory.

When the military stood up new patrols in the hamlets of Mayo, Haines Junction, Ross River, and Dawson City in early 1991, the enthusiastic response caught Northern Region off guard. “We optimistically estimated that approximately 50 Rangers would volunteer for service,” Brigadier Gollner observed. “Instead we had more than triple that number.” This meant that Ranger instructors actually had to turn away good applicants because the organization did not have the capacity to accommodate them. Nevertheless, 117 Rangers enlisted by July, and regional planners grappled with how to accommodate even more diversity in their organization.

Although the Yukon’s population was largely non-Aboriginal, Northern Region contacted the fourteen Yukon tribal councils to see if any had an interest in the Rangers. Their initial responses were “guarded but positive.” Unsettled land claims translated into an uncertain political climate. For example, a series of “minor but quite violent confrontations between developers, local whites and natives” over land ownership near Carcross Landing put initial plans for a patrol on hold. When the military finally set up the

Carcross patrol in 1991, however, its diverse membership included Rangers from Carcross, Tagish, and the Alaska Highway between Whitehorse and Teslin. The patrol's presence actually mitigated crosscultural tensions by providing common ground for interactions, and the Rangers' quiet progress in the Yukon attracted positive attention. A representative in the territorial legislature exclaimed, after watching patrol training in his hamlet, that "this is the first time I've seen white and native people ever doing something together other than argue here in Ross River." Seizing the opportunity, Northern Region appointed a dedicated instructor—Captain Dale Dryden—in Whitehorse to train and liaise with the "Yukon Ranger Company."

Rangers in the territory embraced service zealously and quickly established a name for themselves. In 1992-93, they broke eight hundred kilometres of trail for the Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race between Fairbanks, Alaska, and Whitehorse and attracted international media attention. Rangers assisted the RCMP in locating the coordinates of the famous Lost Patrol of 1934, participated in re-enactments, provided honour guards during the fiftieth anniversary of the Alaska Highway, and resupplied fuel caches for a military aerial survey. Most Rangers also belonged to Emergency Management Organization (EMO) volunteer societies, and many took EMO-sponsored training for basic search and rescue, search management, emergency planning, and water rescue. The Haines Junction patrol specialized in avalanche rescue and cliff rescue. As a consequence, the Rangers participated regularly in ground search and rescue, and their popularity soared. "All of our existing [patrols] have waiting lists of applicants wanting to join," the detachment commander boasted in early 1993.

More modest expansion along the Mackenzie River and in the Great Slave area of Northwest Territories increased First Nations



and Métis representation. Communities in this region initially expressed little interest, so Brigadier Gollner tried to raise two patrols in the South Mackenzie region in 1992 to better gauge popular interest. Fort Smith produced a small but well-motivated patrol, while efforts in Fort Resolution floundered because of internal, "family-related" problems. Despite mixed results, new patrols formed the following year in the Gwich'in communities of Tsiigehtchic (Arctic Red River) and Fort McPherson (Teet'lit Zhen), as well as in the Dene and Métis community of Fort Simpson in the Dehcho region. This laid the groundwork for continued expansion along the Mackenzie River.

The Rangers' growing footprint across the North ensured the military's integration into local and regional political networks. They had a vested interest in using Ranger training to promote the exercising and sharing of traditional land skills. Instructors concurred with elders that "the younger generation of northern natives is gradually losing its knowledge of traditional skills." Accordingly, Ranger exercises specifically included time "for the older members to teach and reinforce this knowledge to younger members of the patrol." The Ranger concept was predicated on local knowledge, so passing along traditional skills such as igloo

building, ice fishing, and special hunting techniques remained essential to sustain the organization.

To adapt to northern realities, all new military personnel posted to Yellowknife attended a week-long cultural awareness course. They learned that during char and halibut fishing season, for example, Inuit would pursue subsistence activities rather than Ranger training. Opportunities to hunt caribou, muskox, or narwhal took priority over Ranger duties. The Ranger staff emphasized tolerance, patience, and humour, along with the importance of keeping the Ranger “organization as far away from peace time bureaucracy as much as possible.”

Northern Region’s expansion efforts paid off. In January 1992, it oversaw 1,160 Rangers in fifty-two patrols that represented nearly half of the national strength. This membership eclipsed that of Atlantic Region, which had boasted larger numbers than its northern counterpart since the 1970s.

When the army restructured its national formations, the twelve patrols and 250 Rangers in northern Quebec, which had been under the command of Northern Region since 1971, were transferred to Land Force Quebec Area in 1993. This meant that the Ranger instructors based in Yellowknife could focus their energy and resources more specifically on the patrols in the Territorial North.





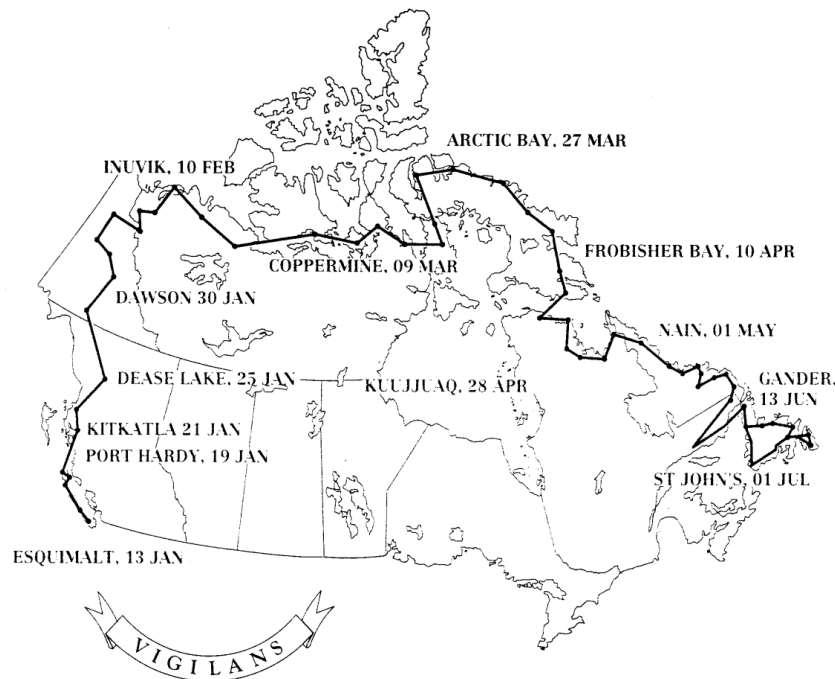
Exercise Baton Ranger 1992

By 1992, the Rangers had much to celebrate. In addition to Canada's 125th birthday activities, the Department of National Defence officially celebrated the Rangers' fiftieth anniversary. The date was based on the formation of the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers in 1942 rather than the formation of the Canadian Rangers five years later. Nonetheless, this anniversary justified Exercise Baton Ranger.

Starting in Victoria, Rangers relayed a twelve-sided wooden baton from coast to coast to coast. For six months, the baton travelled more than twelve thousand kilometres -- by dog sled, canoe, snowmobile, small boat, light aircraft, and by foot. Temperatures dropped to minus ninety degrees Celsius with the windchill.

Planners treated the Northwest Territories leg, also called the "Trans Arctic Expedition," as a route reconnaissance exercise that covered the short range radar sites of the North Warning System. The successful trek confirmed that the Ranger units could carry out security checks at various unmanned stations in extreme conditions. Furthermore, local Ranger patrols along the route marked and timed the winter trails, acted as guides between communities, and resupplied the two continuous travellers: Sergeant Mario Aubin and Ranger Sergeant Simeoni Natsek from Repulse Bay (Naujaat). A military aircraft flew the baton from Lake Harbour (Kimmirut) to Kangiqsujuaq on the northern tip of Ungava then Rangers carried it down the coast of Labrador.

The baton arrived in St. John's on Canada Day. "This relay reminds us of the important role played by Canadian Rangers in our more remote regions," extolled the chief of reserves and cadets. "It is symbolic of people's hands coming together all across this country, to pass along a message of unity."



The Rangers continued to attract positive attention, and outside commentators praised the Rangers for their unconventional contributions to security and to their communities. When scholar Richard Langlais visited Grise Fiord in 1992, he noted that other military activities in the North—such as NORAD forward operating locations, the DEW Line cleanup, and the proposed system of underwater acoustic sensors—generated friction and frustration between the military and local residents. By contrast, the Rangers were held in universally positive regard. They were “sensitive to the relations between people and the Arctic environment,” and they allowed local residents to take direct responsibility for Canadian security. The mayor of Iqaluit, a former Ranger, noted that the Rangers helped ensure that the military respected the land. “The military ... learns a lot from the Canadian Rangers, who learn a lot from the military,” the mayor explained, “so ... the Canadian Rangers ... aren’t going to allow the land to be too polluted by the other military, the full-time, or permanent military. So there is a working relationship there.”

Rangers accepted their role as custodians of their homeland and its residents. Patrol members in Grise Fiord happily served as eyes, ears, and trainers for the military, but they would never participate in missions overseas. It was “just not their lifestyle,” the local RCMP officer explained. “Someone once told me that ... in the Inuktitut language [there are] ten different ways to say kayak, just depending on the breakdown of the language ... but they don’t have a word for war ... They see themselves as Rangers, not as soldiers.” In Grise Fiord, every young male that the RCMP officer could think of between the ages of twenty-two and thirty-five was a Ranger. “You see Ranger baseball caps everywhere you go, and sweatshirts,” he observed. They were proud of their contributions “to the Canadian way of life.” Given their self-







management, Langlais suggested that the Rangers offered a “clue to what future Inuit-style government might be.”

Aboriginal groups were realizing self-government through the painstaking process of settling comprehensive land claims, which culminated in modern treaties with the government of Canada. The negotiation and the final agreements were complex. For example, when Inuvialuit of the western Arctic completed their agreement in 1984 and when the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut, which represented Inuit of the eastern Arctic, signed the Nunavut Agreement nine years later, Inuvialuit and Inuit accepted outright ownership of 91,000 and 353,610 square kilometres of land, respectively. After nearly a decade of negotiations, Dene and Métis leaders in the Mackenzie Valley reached a settlement agreement with the government in April 1990, which was defeated in a ratification vote that July. Two of the five original groups, the Gwich'in and Sahtú Dene, promptly entered into

negotiations for separate agreements, which were reached in 1992 and 1994. In the Yukon, the federal government reached an umbrella agreement with the Council of Yukon First Nations (an association of fourteen groups) on points of common interest in 1990 and then began negotiating specifics with each group. This new form of treaty federalism transformed northern governance and significantly enhanced Aboriginal groups’ influence over land, wildlife, and resource decisions.

Through the Rangers, residents of remote regions contributed directly to sovereignty and security. “The Ranger program is without a doubt the most respected military activity in Northern Canada,” Major Marcel Beztilny explained, “and the public support it fosters is of extreme benefit to the Canadian Forces.” When Daniel Norris, the commissioner of the Northwest Territories, was inducted as an Honorary Ranger in 1990, he mentioned to the chief of the defence staff that he would “be held in greater respect as he tours the villages of the NWT now that he is a Ranger and can wear the hat and arm-band.”

The Ranger Enhancement Program

During the 1990s, most political and national media attention fixated on Inuit participation in the Far North, where the Rangers retained their appeal as an inexpensive, culturally inclusive, and visible means of demonstrating Canadian sovereignty. Although concern about Arctic sovereignty receded, the organization received more funding and support to expand the Ranger presence and capabilities North of 60.

The Canadian Rangers as a national organization also enjoyed modest growth throughout Canada, consolidating its footprint in Quebec and along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts and returning to

northern Ontario. Most new growth came in Aboriginal communities, reflecting the importance of building and reinforcing Aboriginal-military partnerships. Observers applauded the Rangers' role not only in teaching the military but also in encouraging and facilitating the sharing of traditional knowledge within communities.

Ironically, the 1994 federal budget and defence white paper (which revealed the Liberal government's declining commitment to national defence more generally) marked the beginning of the Rangers' formal revitalization. Ranger patrols were inexpensive and offered greater flexibility, a permanent and visual presence, and social benefits that air or naval operations did not. Most importantly, modest increases in Ranger budgets still represented a miniscule percentage of overall national defence expenditures, and high rates of Aboriginal participation made the Rangers politically attractive. The 1994 white paper stated that "the Canadian Rangers reflect an important dimension of Canada's national identity and the Government will improve their capability to conduct Arctic and coastal land patrols." This policy directive clearly emphasized the importance of the North, where the Regular Forces had little presence, despite the previous governments' promises.

Colonel Pierre Leblanc, the director general reserves and cadets from July 1994 to July 1995, recognized that the Rangers remained "a unique and in some ways romantic force" and that officials had a political interest in promoting Aboriginal involvement in the military. He used this idea to sell the Rangers Enhancement Program in 1995 as a "low risk, cost effective" way to build capacity in the North. He equated the "remote and isolated" part of the Rangers' mandate with North of 60, where he focused his enhancement efforts. The first component of his plan entailed opening patrols in nine communities in the

territories to improve "the social fabric" of the communities. The second was to provide Rangers with new equipment.

Local knowledge of landforms, weather patterns, and the stars allowed Rangers to navigate in a difficult environment, but it did not allow them to communicate specific locations to others. Northern patrols would now receive global positioning system (GPS) units to support land navigation, but military personnel who worked with the Rangers often lamented that the Rangers had no way to report events—centralized communications meant day- or week-long delays. Patrols visiting North Warning System sites had been issued high-frequency radios to communicate back to their home base. The equipment withstood the rigours of the northern climate, so each patrol would receive two SBX-11A radios.

The Enhancement Program also addressed the long-standing issue of uniforms. Leblanc understood that "recognition as a member of a Ranger patrol is extremely important to the morale of the Rangers and their standing in their community." On their own initiative, Canadian Ranger units designed and purchased sweatshirts and t-shirts, but there was no common, national uniform. Providing Rangers with expensive standard- standard-issue combat uniforms would violate the principle that Rangers equipped themselves appropriately for local conditions. Rangers



The Relationship in Practice: Dawson

The Dawson Ranger patrol enjoyed easy relations with both the military and its host community. In August 1993, two representatives from Third Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (3 PPCLI), met with representatives of the Dawson First Nation, the city, and the Rangers to plan a November training exercise. During the first phase, soldiers would learn winter survival skills from the Rangers. "They'll teach us all those lessons we won't have to learn ourselves the hard way," Major Shane Fisher told a local reporter. During the second phase, the army would train the Rangers in tactics and weaponry. When a local resident worried that the exercises might affect the 40 Mile caribou herd, she received reassurances from the local Ranger sergeant and army representatives that they would not disrupt the animals and would adjust their locations if necessary. The community threw its full support behind the exercise.

Exercise *Reliant Nordic* did not have an auspicious start. Inclement weather delayed the arrival of Bravo Company, 3 PPCLI. The last of the soldiers arrived shortly after midnight on 11 November. Later that morning, the Ranger patrol led the soldiers through town to the Remembrance Day ceremonies at the elementary school, the local cenotaph, and the Anglican church. Afterwards, the troops met locals over lunch at the Dawson First Nations Band Centre before heading into the wilderness. The frozen Yukon River prevented access to the training area, forcing adjustments to the plan. In response, the Rangers shared their knowledge and experience in winter transportation, survival, tracking, and trapping. "The training was excellent, and the standard and professionalism of the Dawson City Patrol was outstanding," an after-action report exclaimed. Afterwards, a section of Rangers attached themselves to each platoon to participate in ambush or raid tasks and target practice. Despite delays and deviations, the soldiers and Rangers came away pleased with the experience.

The soldiers returned to Dawson on 20 November to demonstrate mock attacks, display their equipment, and play touch football and ball hockey with locals in "thirty-five below" weather. The day ended with a potlatch supper hosted by the Dawson First Nation. "This was quite a feast, with plenty of Moose and Caribou, and was rumoured to have been the largest community supper in recent history," 3 PPCLI's after-action report noted. "All ranks of the company left Dawson City and the Yukon with good memories of excellent training, the Ranger Patrol, and a town that received them with open arms."



needed something simple but distinctive and symbolic, so officials decided to issue standardized red sweatshirts with hoods, red t-shirts, and red toques adorned with the Ranger crest to all members. The clothing provided a huge boost to morale, and the red “hoodies” quickly became the hallmark of the Rangers in their communities and in the media.

The Rangers’ expertise on the land was applied to new operational tasks, such as security patrols of newly modernized, unmanned North Warning System (NWS) sites. These activities reduced the need for expensive overflights and monitoring by the contractors who ran the NWS, while offering Rangers opportunities to test their land skills.

New funding for sovereignty patrols also enhanced the Rangers’ community profile, encouraging them to go farther from their communities to exercise a “northern capability.” During these SOVPATs, four Rangers travelled to designated locations within range of their home communities to “show the flag.” A Ranger instructor would normally brief the local patrol leader on expectations, but the Rangers operated independently on the three- or four-day excursions.

These patrols proved a resounding success. The first SOVPAT was held in Sachs Harbour on 13 November 1996, and nine more were completed before the end of the fiscal year. The patrols allowed the Rangers to visibly exercise sovereignty over lands and waters and the military to delegate responsibility for maintaining a northern “presence” to Northerners themselves.

Creating the Junior Canadian Rangers

The Rangers’ presence in remote northern communities also offered an opportunity to reach out to youth. Elders who



deplored the loss of traditional knowledge among younger generations applauded the Rangers as a way for community members to exercise and share their skills on the land. While attending school, young people had less time and fewer opportunities to acquire knowledge about hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering. The final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, released in 1996, observed that the “majority of Aboriginal youth spend much of their lives immersed in non-Aboriginal culture. Many get little encouragement from the world around them to celebrate who they are, who their forebears were, who they could become as Aboriginal people.” Studies emphasized that government-funded, community-based solutions represented the only viable solution to the multidimensional problems of suicide, alcohol, drug and solvent abuse, criminal activity, and other self-destructive behaviour.



The cadets enjoyed a long history in the North, but many communities could not meet the formal requirements of this program which was primarily designed for southern cities. Given that Canadian Forces Northern Area (the new name for Northern Region) had already relaxed the rules of the cadet program more than regulations allowed, it designed a new community-based youth initiative built around the Canadian Rangers. Working with the existing Ranger patrols and members of the community, the Junior Canadian Rangers (JCR) programme was a way to offer meaningful activities for young people that would foster good citizenship and community responsibility, while taking into account the special requirements and circumstances of the North.

In early 1994, Northern Area received support for a two-year pilot project in Paulatuk, NWT, to test a JCR program for young men and women between the ages of twelve and eighteen. Major Rick Bell, the regional senior staff officer for the Rangers and cadets, explained that, “as many of the Native people of the far north in particular move towards independence and self-government, they continually stress two basic requirements for their youth: (a) a good education; and (b) the need to be educated in traditional values and skills.” Because the Canadian Rangers provided a core of experienced, local leaders, they ensured that the JCR program aligned with these values. An adult committee comprised of other volunteers from the community also supervised the program. Furthermore, the goal was not to train young people to become Canadian Rangers, but to provide “a community-based, structured, and supervised youth activity free of charge in remote and isolated communities.”

The core JCR curriculum focused on three areas:

Ranger skills, including:

- administering first aid;
- navigating in the North by reading maps and using a compass;
- using weapons safely; and
- preparing for exercises on the land.

Traditional skills, including:

- making shelters, hunting, fishing, and living off the land;
- building, loading, and using sleds, as well as using small boats and canoes;
- learning about native spirituality, the local native language, traditional music, as
- well as singing and dancing; and
- discussing local customs and traditions with elders.

Life skills, including:

- living in a healthy way;
- preventing substance abuse;
- speaking in public;
- being a good citizen and a responsible member of the community; and
- protecting the environment.

Only the Ranger skill component, which complemented Canadian Ranger training, would be standardized. Traditional skills, determined in partnership with the adult committee and taught by local subject-matter experts, would vary depending upon the priorities and interests of each community. This ensured that the JCR curriculum incorporated “the diverse cultural and natural attributes of the North, cultural norms, local language, and particular social needs.” Local leaders also had considerable latitude to address issues affecting their youth within the life skills portion of the program. In short, the Junior Rangers offered a community-based youth program supported by the military, not a military program designed to assimilate youth into military ways of thinking.

The concept proved very popular, and the minister of national defence officially announced the creation of the Junior Canadian Rangers in November 1996. The initial implementation plan called for seven patrols in Northern Area, but this number soon grew. Ethel Blondin-Andrew, a Dene from Tulita and the secretary of state for youth in Ottawa, announced three years of federal funding for the Junior Rangers in July 1998. “It’s a success story the government wants to see grow,” she explained, with funding in place to double the number of JCR patrols by 2001. In fact, it grew even quicker, with seventeen JCR patrols in the Territorial North by the end of 1999.

The Junior Canadian Rangers Programme’s greatest asset is its flexibility. It is a community-based and supervised program with little external direction that ensures that the culture, traditions and activities unique to each community are preserved.

Membership in the Junior Canadian Rangers Programme provides youth with meaningful activities and experiences, which are not usually offered in isolated communities. These activities foster good citizenship, community responsibility, personal health and welfare, and self-esteem in youth, thereby building a stronger, healthier community for all. The Junior Canadian Rangers Programme is an investment in our youth today and a means of safeguarding our future tomorrow.

The Junior Canadian Rangers Programme
DND Backgrounder, 17 March 1999

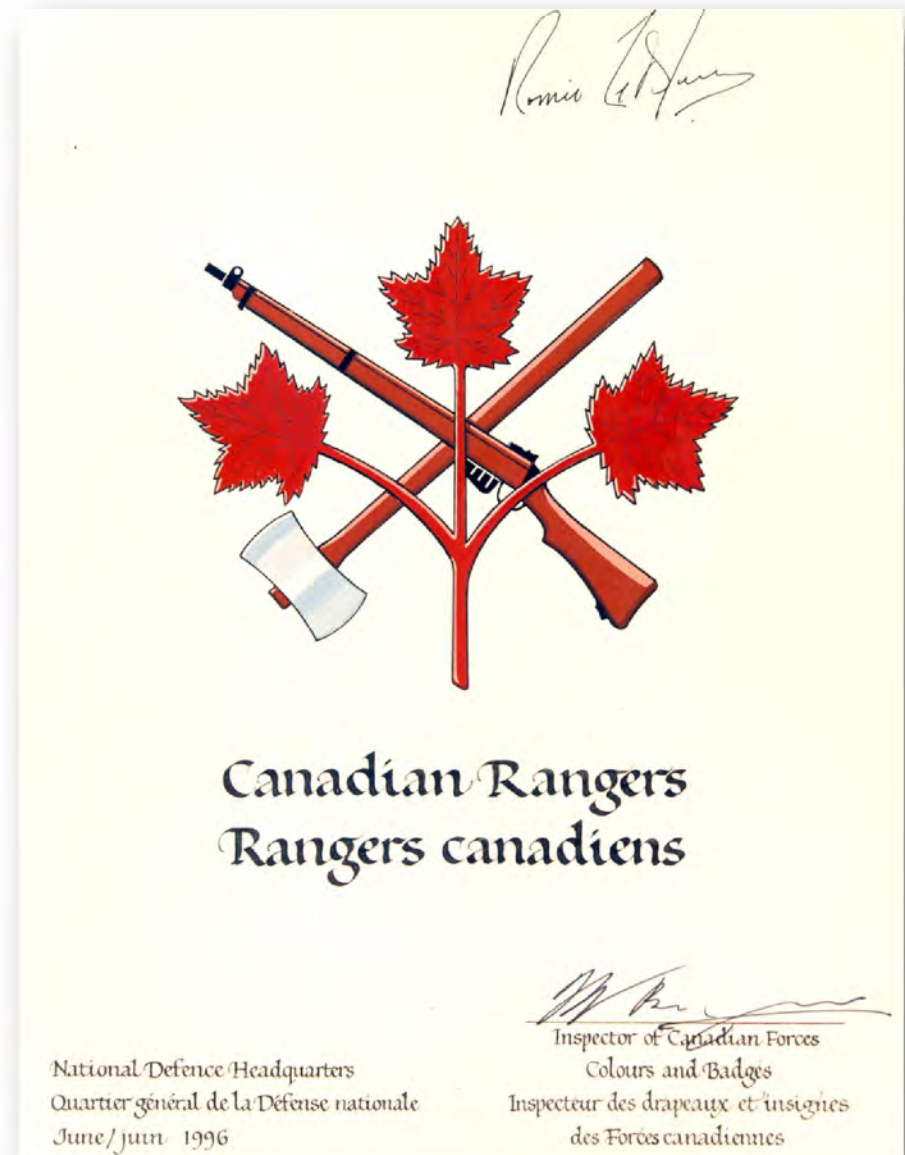


Vigilans

Vigilans (meaning “watchful”) became the Canadian Rangers’ official motto in 1997. The adoption simply confirmed what the Rangers had always done. They remained the “eyes and ears” of the Canadian Forces in the North, as intended since their creation fifty years before.

The Rangers’ responsibilities, however, had also expanded. Their important grassroots connections contributed to keeping Canada’s “true North strong and free,” playing an increasingly high profile role in the country’s efforts to demonstrate its sovereignty over its northern regions. Journalists applauded the Rangers’ role in teaching the military and in encouraging elders to share their traditional knowledge with younger people within communities. This role was formalized with the creation of the Junior Canadian Rangers in 1998.

The media and politicians emphasized the social and political benefits of the Rangers in Inuit and First Nations communities, reflecting the growing importance of building and reinforcing Aboriginal-military partnerships. Accordingly, the number and geographical scope of the Rangers grew quickly, particularly in the 1990s. With patrols re-established in the Yukon and in communities along the Mackenzie River, almost every community that could sustain a Canadian Ranger patrol in the northern territories had one by the end of the century. The Rangers had re-emerged from the shadows to play an increasingly prominent and symbolic role in promoting sovereignty and security.







5

Coming of Age, 1998-2006

Growing concerns about climate change, the opening of the Northwest Passage, and global demands for Arctic resources and security in the post-9/11 world conspired to put the Arctic back on the national and international agenda in the early twenty-first century. The Rangers played a major role in the unfolding drama. The perception that countries such as the United States and Denmark were challenging Canada's ownership of remote regions gave renewed meaning to sovereignty operations. In the early twentieth century, the RCMP had planted cairns to establish Canadian ownership. One century later, it was the Canadian Rangers who served as Canada's sovereignty soldiers.

In the military's eyes, the Canadian Rangers had one main role: to assert Canadian sovereignty. Their activities as guides, scouts, and patrol members conducting surveillance and demonstrating a military presence around their home communities fit within the organization's traditional mandate. The growing expectation that Rangers should demonstrate Canadian sovereignty over the most remote stretches of coastline in the Far North applied in particular to 1 CRPG. "The significant amount of equipment needed to conduct a patrol of several days duration several hundred kilometres away from established communities" was "still more economical than a series of Aurora flights or naval patrols," the chief of review services noted in 2003. These enhanced sovereignty operations cost significantly more than "a ball cap, .303 rifle and a couple of hundred rounds of ammunition."

The investments certainly paid off from a public relations standpoint. The Canadian Ranger mystique gained new lustre under the national spotlight, and assumed almost mythic proportions in media stories. "They're the MacGyvers of the Canadian Arctic," reporter Stephanie Rubec exclaimed in 2002. "Strand any Canadian Ranger on an ice floe north of 60 with their military issued .303 rifle and they can live off the land indefinitely. Throw in a needle and some dental floss—which no Ranger would be caught dead without—and they'll sew up a fur outfit to ward off the most chilling arctic wind."

Caricatures such as these reveal the Rangers' high status in the popular imagination. Stories about the Rangers appeared regularly in regional and national newspapers, and a postage stamp released in 2003 depicted a Ranger peering through binoculars that reflected a snow-crusted mountain peak. The Rangers symbolized the military's positive cooperation with all Canadians in remote areas, particularly Aboriginal communities. Furthermore, the organization proved that the military could successfully integrate national security and sovereignty agendas with community-based activities and local priorities.



The national profile revealed one face of the Canadian Rangers. Their other face was well known by the residents of northern communities. "We rarely make notice of the Rangers, but they are the ones we see at the cenotaph every Remembrance Day. But more than sombre figures to remember the ones that have fallen, the Rangers are here to provide us all vital service," an editorial in *Nunavut News/North* noted on 18 October 1999. "When search and rescue teams are required, the Rangers are trained, ready and willing to deploy on a moments' notice. When emergency situations call for help, our Rangers are there first. We don't often notice them and we hope we never need them, but we can all sleep a little better at night knowing they're out there ready if the unexpected happens."

Establishing Canadian Ranger Patrol Groups

Given the growing responsibilities and the expanding size of Ranger staff, it made sense to organize the patrols into a formal "patrol group" in Canadian Forces Northern Area and in each of the Land Force areas. This happened in early 1998 with the creation of five new patrol groups. 1 CRPG, based in Yellowknife, was responsible for patrols in Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Alberta, Saskatchewan, northern British Columbia, and northern Manitoba. 2 CRPG was responsible for Quebec, 3 CRPG for Ontario, 4 CRPG for the West Coast and Interior of BC, and 5 CRPG for Newfoundland and Labrador. Patrol commanders now reported to the commanding officer of their patrol group, who in turn reported to his or her area commander.

Captain Dwayne Lovegrove was the master of ceremonies at the stand-up parade for 1 CRPG, held in Yellowknife on 2 April 1998. He remarked:



Today marks a significant moment in the military history of the North. This afternoon, we will formally stand up the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group as a unit of the Canadian Forces. The creation of this unit demonstrates an acknowledgment by the federal government and the military of the significant contribution that Canadian Rangers have made over the past fifty years to the defence of Canada and the maintenance of national sovereignty.

... The operational tasks assigned to Rangers have remained constant. They are expected to report unusual or suspicious activities, and collect and maintain detailed information on their local area. They carry out these tasks, for which they receive no pay, in concert with their normal daily routine. In addition they can be called upon to assist CF units deployed in their area, conduct surveillance/sovereignty patrols, patrol and inspect North Warning Radar sites, and respond to emergency situations. When tasked by the CF in these latter roles, they are paid in accordance with CF Reserve Force rates of pay. They undergo 10 days paid training per year during which they are taught basic military skills and are required to demonstrate their ability to travel and survive on the land.

... Rangers come from all walks of life, reflecting the many faces of the North. In the NWT approximately 80% of the members are First Nations peoples, whereas in the Yukon the opposite is the case. The patrols in Atlin BC, Fort Chipewyan AB, and Churchill Manitoba also reflect the demographic and cultural diversities of their communities.

Regardless of who they were before enlistment, service as a Ranger generally results in a change in their personal status. Rangers, and particularly their leaders, are respected members of their communities and are often treated as role models. Serving in their ranks you will find politicians, mayors, chiefs, by-law officers, businessmen, tradesmen, elders, educators, hunters and fishermen. Chances are that you have met many Rangers without realizing it.

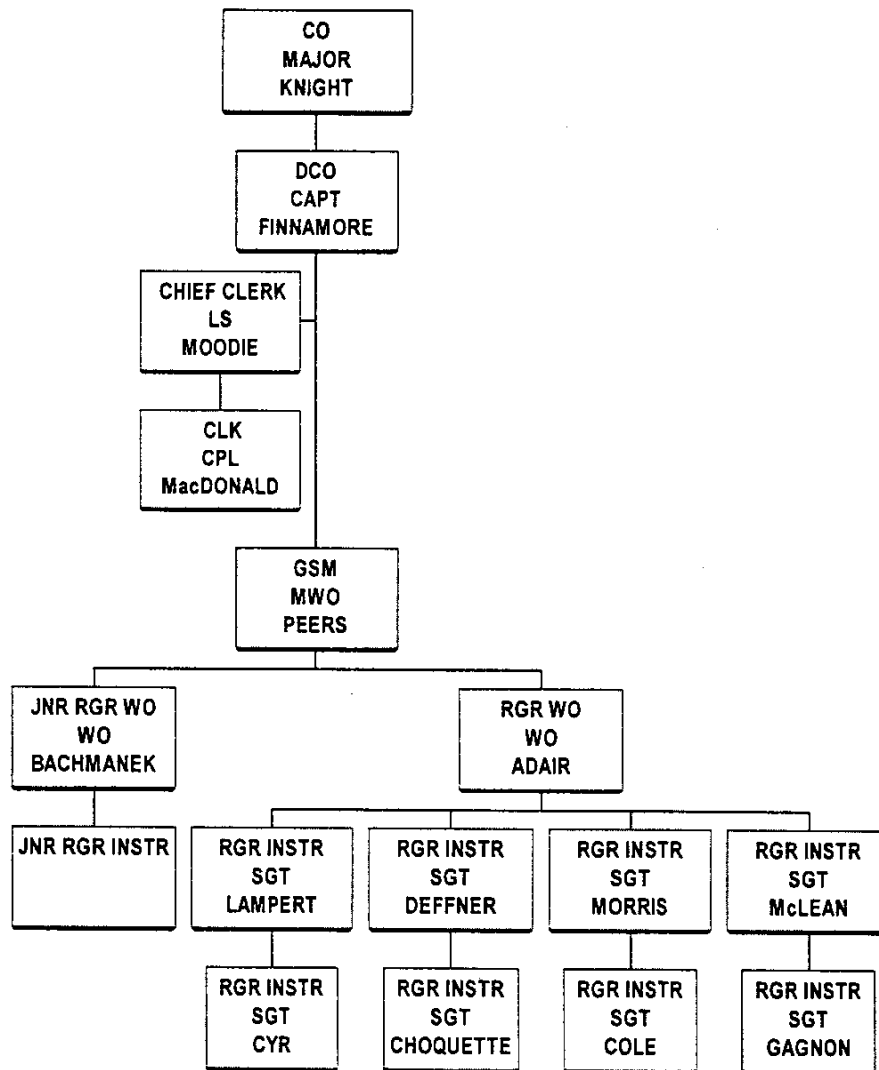
Rangers are unique in many ways within the Canadian Forces. Each patrol is commanded by a Sergeant assisted by a Master Corporal, both of whom are elected by the patrol at large. They generally can serve until age sixty-five. Rangers older than sixty-five can continue to serve at the discretion of the CF provided they are of good mental and physical fitness and continue to be able to live on the land.

The formation of 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group does more than amalgamate all Ranger patrols in the North. It creates a total force unit by transferring all members of the regular support training and administrative cadres previously assigned to Northern Area [Headquarters] into the unit as well....

To mark this significant occasion we have attempted to gather here in Yellowknife one Ranger from each existing patrol. These Rangers were selected by their fellows as being the best [Rangers] to represent their patrol.

Ranger Peter Kuniliussie of the Clyde River patrol accompanied the new commanding officer, Major Robert Knight, on the occasion. "Fit and still living on the land," Lovegrove noted, "Ranger Kuniliussie at 68 is the longest serving Ranger in the North. He holds the third bar to his Canadian Forces Decoration, signifying 42 years of service. As such, he is awarded a place of honour at these ceremonies and represents the dedicated service to Canada by all Rangers, past and present." Kunilussie presented Knight with the first CO's pennant, an actual seal harpoon manufactured by Ranger Lukasy Ippak of the Sanikiluaq patrol that served as the lance to carry the pennant.

1ST CANADIAN RANGER PATROL GROUP HEADQUARTERS



Vigilans: Continuing Service

Like other Rangers, Solomon Curley, a Ranger raised along the DEW Line who joined the Hall Beach patrol in 1993, found the annual training exercises particularly enjoyable. The first four or five days of classroom training included first aid, map reading, using GPS, and rifle assembly and cleaning. On the four-day field exercise that followed, Rangers had a chance to fire the Colt Canada C7 rifle and a 9mm pistol, and they learned how to build igloos, “make a runway out of nowhere,” conduct search-and-rescue exercises, and do some traditional hunting.

Curley exercised skills that he already had and developed new ones. As patrol sergeant, he received “a lot of phone calls from headquarters in Yellowknife saying whatever they need us to do.” For example, the Hall Beach Rangers met with radar inspectors visiting from Yellowknife, and every few months four members of the patrol went out to inspect the unmanned North Warning Sites near the community. Polar bears sometimes stepped on the lights surrounding the helicopter pads, which then needed to be replaced. “I have learned a lot of things” through the Rangers, he explained. “It’s pretty much a big part of my life right now. Because being a Sergeant I have to be a contact person for this community and it’s keeping me busy and it’s quite fun.”

Curley enjoyed having the opportunity to meet Rangers and other Canadian Forces personnel. “Top shots” from various patrol groups met one another at the Canadian Forces Small Arms Competition held every summer at Connaught Ranges. Curley, a regular participant in the late 1990s, said it was wonderful to meet members of the military from different places: “They were pretty much from all over the place, all the way from Yukon to Eastern Baffin Island ... We met people from all across Canada and ... from the United States and the British Army, Army MPs who

participate in shooting. Also private shooters and I've met some people from Australia and Netherlands." The trips had a downside, however—the heat. "Sometimes we have to be outside most of the day in sun and we are not used to that. We are sweating a lot and drinking water and all that."

Curley and the other Rangers did well at the competition, but they were really in their element in their home communities. For the Hall Beach patrol, their training paid off when a helicopter went down near Hall Lake (about sixty-five kilometres west of the settlement) during the annual Victoria Day fishing derby in May 1998. According to Curley, "We were called up through the radio

that there had been a crash and who ever is around near this area could report to the area to do what ever was necessary, if there were any injured persons." Rangers carried six of the seven casualties back to the Hall Beach health centre by snowmobile, a two-hour drive in white-out conditions. (Only one person, whose leg had been broken in the crash, suffered injuries severe enough to require transport by air ambulance.) In recognition of its part, Curley explained that the patrol received "a nice little flag that we would carry around every time we were on duty." General Maurice Baril personally presented a Chief of the Defence Staff Unit Commendation to the Hall Beach patrol during the national ceremonies celebrating the creation of Nunavut.

The Canadian Forces commends:

HALL BEACH RANGER PATROL, 1 CANADIAN RANGER PATROL GROUP

The Hall Beach Ranger Patrol is recognized for its actions at Hall Lake Northwest Territories on two separate occasions. On 16 May 1998, a woman attending Victoria Day celebrations at Hall Lake was injured. By midnight her symptoms had deteriorated to the extent that the nurse in charge felt it imperative that she be evacuated to town for assessment. As no helicopters were able to fly due to severe weather conditions, a Ranger transported the casualty on a komatik behind his skidoo and delivered the injured woman to the Health Station at 0630 hours the next day. On the second occasion, a helicopter from the North Warning Site in Hall Beach crashed while attempting to take off from Hall Lake on 17 May 1998. The helicopter was destroyed, and all seven persons aboard were injured and in shock. The Ranger Patrol at the scene rapidly intervened, rescuing the passengers, treating their wounds and evacuating the casualties by skidoo and komatik to Hall Beach. Without their intervention, one of the casualties would have bled to death before obtaining medical treatment. The initiative and skills demonstrated by the Hall Beach Ranger Patrol in dangerous and adverse conditions reflect the best traditions of the Canadian Rangers and justify the trust that northern communities place in them during emergency situations.

Chief of the Defence Staff
General J.M.G. Baril

26 March 1999



The birth of Nunavut, Canada's newest territory, on 1 April 1999 reflected Canada's sense of northern identity and inclusivity. The prominence of Canadian Rangers and Junior Rangers during the creation ceremonies affirmed the Rangers' place as a nationally recognized and respected symbol of Inuit patriotism and participation in state building. Fifty Rangers representing twenty-four of the twenty-five patrols in Nunavut formed an honour guard during ceremonies in Iqaluit. A colour party of fourteen Junior Rangers also played a high-profile role. Junior Rangers Ryan Nivingalok of Kugluktuk and Daryl Tee of Coral Harbour had the honour of unveiling the territorial flag and coat of arms. The Canadian Rangers embodied the old and the new in the North: Sergeant Tony Manerluk of Rankin Inlet, the oldest Ranger on parade, and Tommy Naglingniq of Iqaluit, the youngest, lowered the Northwest Territories flag and hoisted the new Nunavut flag for the first time. With a new millennium dawning, the Rangers had clearly come of age.

The Canadian Rangers in November 1999 comprised 3,446 Rangers in 140 patrols. Their physical footprint had expanded and so had their purpose. Over the preceding decades, the Rangers



had evolved from being the informal eyes and ears of the military to become Canada's sovereignty soldiers. In the process, they assumed more social and political roles within their communities, roles that matched the priorities of Northern communities. Lieutenant-Colonel Rory Kilburn, the chief of staff at Canadian Forces Northern Area, observed that some Aboriginal elders played a direct role in identifying Rangers with leadership potential and encouraging them to become sergeants and master corporals so they could develop skills to lead their communities and territorial governments. The Rangers also groomed future leaders by transferring knowledge and land skills to younger members. It presented a "win-win" situation for communities and for the military, which made it so popular.

The Rangers aligned perfectly with the spirit of political cooperation and national support that Ottawa hoped to foster with Northern communities. The connection between encouraging traditional land skills, teaching traditional knowledge, and sustaining military operations in remote regions over the long-term became increasingly clear. In late 1998, 1 CRPG anticipated that:

The Canadian Ranger profile will start to change dramatically in the next few years. Currently Ranger training places a priority on development/integration of technological skills and the demonstration of land skills. The land skills are for the most part traditional skills learned from elders. Retention of these skills is disappearing. Most Rangers over 40 years of age have them, but few under thirty have the same capability. Despite a resurgence of traditional values through the North the common complaint in communities is that the young are becoming town bound and exhibit little interest in seriously pursuing traditional skills. These young people are, however, better educated than their parents and retain information such as GPS and map reading better than their elders. To maintain our current deployable capability more emphasis will have to be placed on exercising on the land.

These ideas were not new, but the political environment of the 1990s was more receptive to this emphasis on knowledge transfer. Commentators recognized that the Ranger organization depended upon healthy communities. The line between what was of military value and what was of national value had blurred.

The growing emphasis on the Rangers' contributions to the social fabric of remote communities seemed to fit with the government's emerging circumpolar emphasis. The parliamentary committee report *Canada and the Circumpolar World*, released in 1997, explained that the "new agenda for security cooperation is inextricably linked to the aims of environmentally sustainable human development."

A national review of the Rangers, called CAN RAN 2000, highlighted their impact as community role models. Aboriginal



communities had suicide rates up to seven times higher than in the Canadian population at large, and higher-than-average rates of illness, family violence, alcohol abuse, and incarceration. They also had lower-than-average life expectancy, education, and employment rates, and they suffered from poor housing and sanitation conditions. The Rangers offered a ray of hope in an otherwise dreary picture:

By their nature, the Canadian Rangers are having a tremendous impact on the lives of the people and communities in which they are located ... They are active community members who are in a position to have a positive influence on their local environment. Rangers, in those communities where there is no other federal presence, are often perceived to be the elite of the community and are held up as role models for others. Frequently the Rangers represent the only identifiable and formed group that is readily available to the community in times of need ... The Rangers have now taken on a new role—they are educators and role models for over a thousand youth that participate in the JCR Programme. Consequently, there is beneficial value in the presence of Rangers in a community both from the perspective of enhancing the community environment as well as adding to the image of the federal government and the Canadian Forces.

The Rangers served as a consistent, visible link to the state and were worthy of expansion.

CAN RAN 2000 had an immediate impact: the number of instructors and headquarters staff grew in the patrol groups, and the Rangers began to receive modest allotments of new equipment. Observing and reporting anomalies required binoculars and communications devices, so each patrol now received new radios and two GPS units. Each patrol group also had access to satellite telephones for use during exercises. Rangers also received new combat pants and boots – a modest addition to their uniform.



The Special Service Medal (Ranger Bar)

As the Rangers' profile expanded and politicians became more aware of their value, national recognition followed. Governor General Roméo Leblanc (1995-99), always a strong supporter of the Rangers, hung a painting of them behind his desk at Rideau Hall and lobbied for special recognition of Ranger service. As one of his final acts as Canada's viceroy, he approved the Ranger Bar to the Special Service Medal, presented to Rangers who had served for at least four years and participated in at least three patrol exercises.

On 14 February 2000, his successor, Adrienne Clarkson, hosted a special ceremony at Rideau Hall to hand out the first Special Service Medals to seventeen Rangers from across Canada. "You are the eyes and ears of the military in remote communities in the Territories and the northern parts of the provinces," Clarkson proclaimed. "You support the military and help to protect our sovereignty. You also serve as guides and advisors, and participate in search and rescue. Your skills, your knowledge, your know-how, are unparalleled ... You, the Canadian Rangers, have made great contributions to the north -- and you continue to do so -- and to our journey as your fellow Canadians. I thank you."

Like her predecessor, Clarkson supported the Rangers. She toured the North and remote coastal communities, where she presented the medals and even camped overnight with Rangers on occasion. Rangers became a regular feature of her northern visits as governor general. For the Rangers, the Special Service Medal (Ranger Bar) indicated that they were no longer a forgotten element of the Canadian Forces. Individual Rangers had won Canadian Forces decorations before, but the Ranger Bar represented national acceptance of the Rangers' unique contribution. For individuals, the medals carried a multitude of meanings. They were certainly a mark of recognition for their service to the country. The Ranger Bar also reflected the military's appreciation of their traditional ways of life and affirmed the connection between community life and active citizenship.

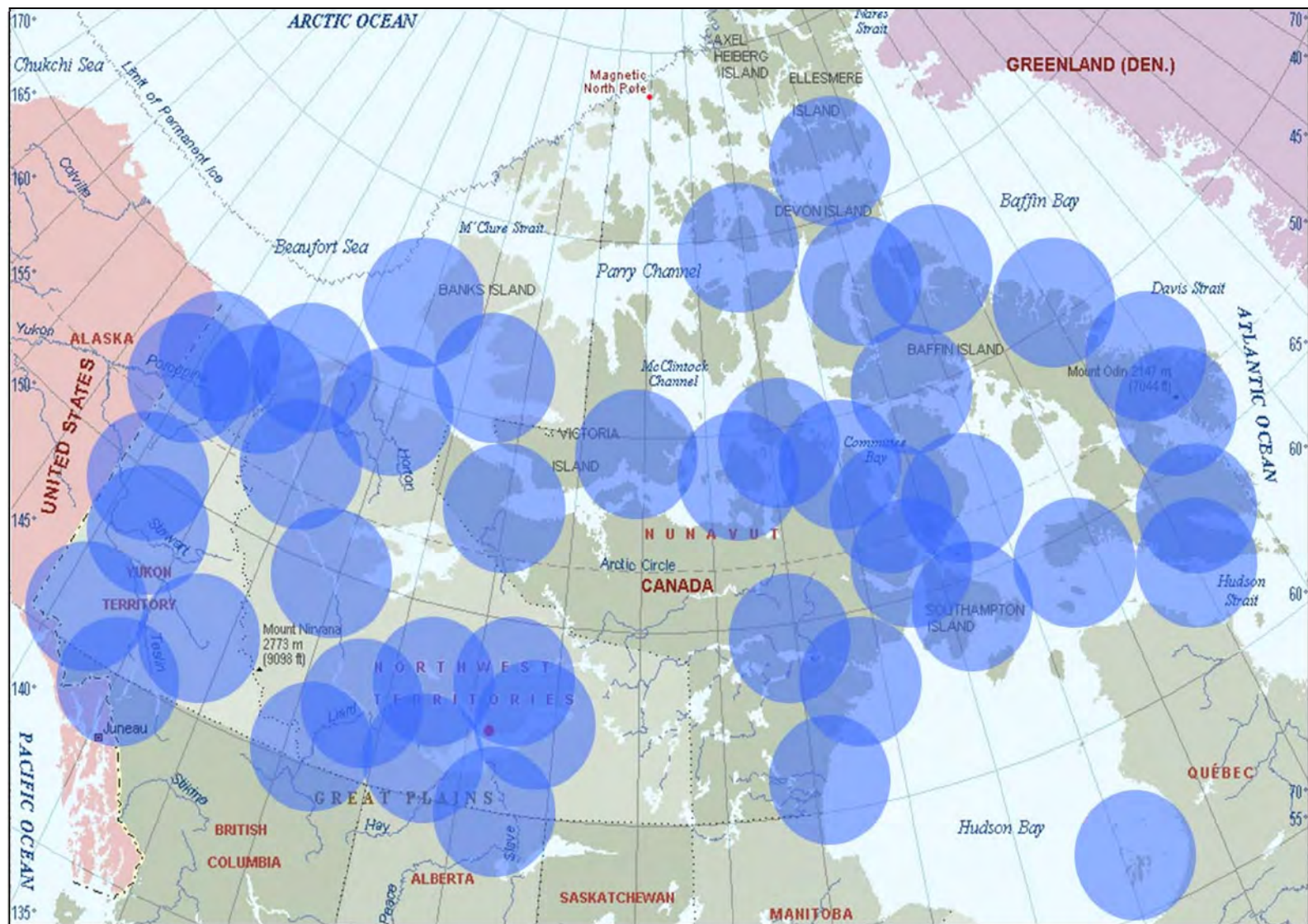


Footprints in the Snow

Colonel Pierre Leblanc, the commander in Northern Area, noted a disturbing trend away from maintaining a military presence in the Arctic. In 1998, for example, the army decided to reduce its annual sovereignty operations from five to three. The change further weakened the Canadian Forces' capabilities in the North and, in Leblanc's view, also eroded Canada's sovereignty. Many unoccupied islands in the Far North received "very little military coverage," and he asserted that international law provided a basis for foreign powers to claim unoccupied territories if Canada was "perceived as losing interest in the Arctic." Although the Canadian Rangers provided an extensive and visible military presence, as well as constructive and intimate connections with northern communities, Leblanc warned that Arctic security issues were becoming more complex while the military's Arctic capabilities deteriorated.

Leblanc insisted that increasing maritime activity in the Arctic in particular demanded more surveillance. In 1999, Rangers reported a submarine sighting in Cumberland Sound as well as the unexpected arrival of a Chinese research ship in Tuktoyaktuk. Cruise ship visits increased exponentially after the end of the Cold War. Global warming, which made Canadian waters more accessible, heightened the risks. Thinning ice raised the possibility of international shipping traffic exploiting extended ice-free periods to run cargoes between Asia and Europe through the Northwest Passage.





“The Arctic Region is a huge, vast treasure chest for Canada and her future generations,” Colonel Kevin McLeod, Leblanc’s successor, asserted in his cover letter for the *Arctic Capabilities Study* released in December 2000. “The increased threat to both the people and the resources of this area should be a concern to all of us. This threat and increase in vulnerability must be countered.” Canadian Forces Northern Area’s detailed study linked Canada’s Arctic sovereignty and security challenges to the

issues of environmental protection, climate change and the opening of new northern shipping routes, the opening of Russia’s airspace and heightened commercial airline activity, and the transnational criminal activity that accompanies resource development such as diamond mining. To meet its obligations, Northern Area argued for improved capabilities to monitor and respond to emergencies. Although the study triggered significant media attention, the Department of National Defence decided

that its scarce resources should go to more pressing priorities. Northern Area would have to fulfill its surveillance responsibilities with what it already had.

The majority of the Canadian Forces' activities in the Territorial North revolved around the Canadian Rangers, which remained a cost-effective and high-profile way to let northerners show the flag. National Defence Headquarters consequently doubled 1 CRPG's annual budget in 2001 to more than \$5 million and authorized it to increase its Ranger strength to 1,800 members by 2008.

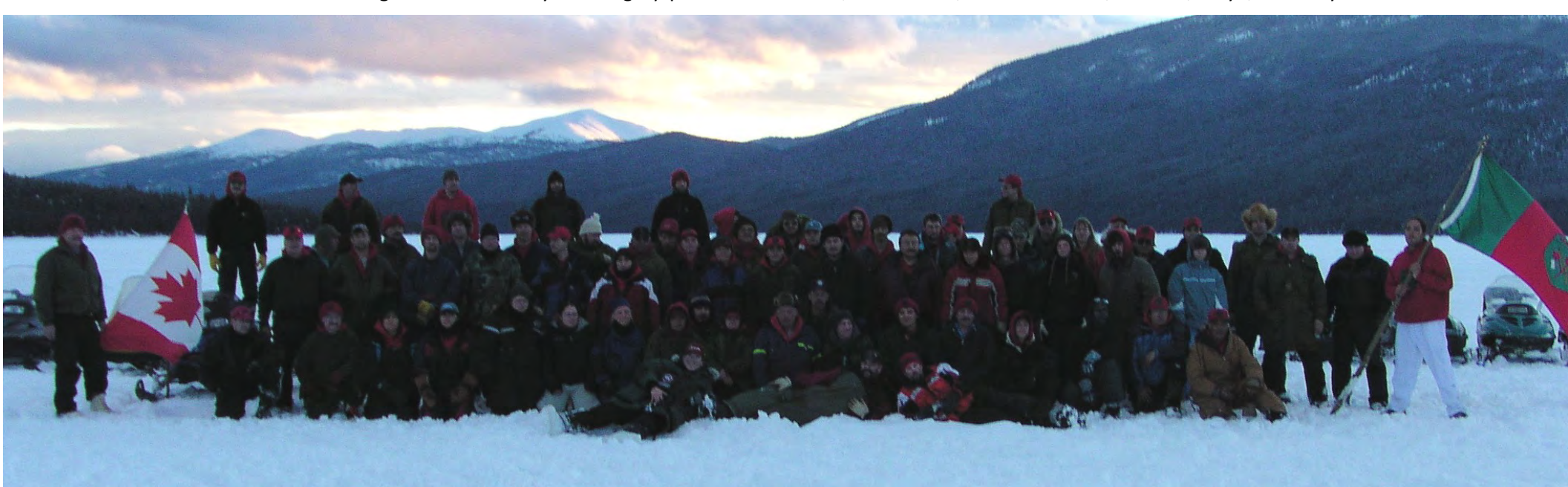
"My goal is to have a Ranger patrol in every community in the North," Major Yves Laroche, the CO of 1 CRPG from 2000-02, told a reporter. In reality, there was little opportunity to expand the Rangers' footprint. Only eight communities without an existing patrol had the demographic potential to support one, and there were no communities in the Arctic Archipelago that could.

1 CRPG prided itself on being the only patrol group that accomplished operational tasks on direct orders from Ottawa, and it insisted that sovereignty and security patrols took priority. Northern Area had funding to conduct thirty sovereignty patrols

(SOVPATs), its main flag-planting activity, each year. Combined with the Rangers' existing footprint in communities across the territories, the coverage looked impressive on paper, but it remained modest in terms of Canada's perceived need to demonstrate a continuous military presence in the remotest reaches of the archipelago.

In addition to annual standard training for each patrol in its home community (Type 1 patrols), increased funding permitted a wider variety of activities. All Rangers in 1 CRPG received annual training, and various patrols inspected forty-seven North Warning System sites (Type 2 patrols) periodically throughout the year. For example, Rangers from 15 different patrols conducted 80 NWS site security inspections in 2003 and 59 in 2004.

Mass exercises (Type 3 patrols) allowed multiple patrols to meet and train at a predetermined location. These exercises challenged Rangers to operate in unfamiliar terrain and to build esprit de corps as a patrol group. In 2003, for example, Rangers from Pangnirtung, Qikiqtarjuaq, Igloolik, Arctic Bay, and Clyde River conducted a patrol on Baffin Island in Nunavut; Rangers from Atlin, Whitehorse, Haines Junction, Dawson, Mayo, and Pelly



Types of Ranger Patrols in 1 CRPG (2004)

Type 1	Ranger Training Patrol	Annual standard training for each patrol, consisting of classroom and field exercises.
Type 2	Ranger North Warning System (NWS) Patrol	Inspections of NWS installations by individual patrols.
Type 3	Ranger Mass Exercise	Collective training exercises conducted by two or more patrols.
Type 4	Ranger Sovereignty Patrol (SOVPAT)	Patrols tasked by CFNA HQ as part of the CFNA Surveillance Plan.
Type 5	Ranger Enhanced Sovereignty Patrol (ESOVPAT)	A long-range patrol tasked by CFNA HQ to a remote part of area of responsibility. One ESOVPAT is conducted each year, involving 1 CRPG HQ personnel and representatives from various Ranger patrols.

Crossing conducted one at Quiet Lake in the Yukon; and Rangers from Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, Tulita, Fort Good Hope, Tsiigehtchic and Inuvik completed a Type 3 boat patrol on the Mackenzie River.

Alongside Sovereignty Patrols (Type 4), joint training with other Canadian Forces and international units, and tasks such as confirming reports of submarines or suspicious activities in Canadian waters or airspace, Major Laroche estimated that Rangers conducted about 350 activities each year in the Territorial North. Colonel McLeod explained that the military expected the Rangers “to know their backyards very well,” and this would not change. Their “backyard,” however, was expanding in the minds of military officials and the Canadian public.

Enhanced Sovereignty Patrols

Rangers had always gone on patrols but never far from their home communities. With the renewed emphasis on Arctic sovereignty, Northern Area recommended that Rangers conduct regular enhanced sovereignty patrols over vast, uninhabited

stretches of the High Arctic. “What they will do is cover some area, and they will show the flag and report any unusual activity,” Major Laroche told reporters.

Major Bob Knight, the former commanding officer at 1 CRPG, used the maxim “possession is nine-tenths of the law” to rationalize these activities. “In purely legal terms, they’re proving Canada’s sovereignty over the territory they’re travelling through simply through their presence,” he asserted. “If you claim that you have sovereignty over a certain area, yet you have never been there, then someone else could turn around and say, ‘Is that really your sovereign territory?’” Other media, political, and academic commentators made similar arguments for Ranger patrols based on the idea that Canada’s legal sovereignty depended upon effective occupation. These highly publicized patrols also served to increase awareness of the Rangers’ existence and solidified their role as sovereignty soldiers.

The connection between sovereignty issues, security threats, and land-based surveillance took tangible form at the dawn of the new millennium. Rumours of polar bear hunters crossing from Greenland to Ellesmere Island led 1 CRPG to participate in Oper-

ation Ulu, a fifteen-man operation with the RCMP, in April 2000. In an unprecedented move, the military airlifted Rangers from their communities to the uninhabited Alexandria Fiord region of Ellesmere Island, 300 kilometres above Canada's northernmost settlement of Grise Fiord, to show the flag and deter illegal hunters from violating Canadian laws. Whether the primary goal was to enhance Ranger skills or deterrence, the operation took the Rangers beyond their typical area of responsibility. Although a more covert operation might have caught "Greenlandic hunters red-handed," a Northern newspaper editorial noted, "the whole point of sovereignty patrols is to fly the flag and let the world know the borders of Canadian soil and tundra."

The scale of the enhanced sovereignty patrols quickly grew as Northern Area conceived plans to both demonstrate sovereignty and bolster the Rangers' national profile.

Operation Kigliqaqvik Ranger I (2002)

To mark the Rangers' sixtieth anniversary celebrations in 2002, thirty-three Rangers from patrols in 1 CRPG met in Resolute Bay in April to launch Operation Kigliqaqvik Ranger, named after the Inuktitut word for "the place at the edge of known land." The 1,700 kilometre expedition to the Magnetic North Pole covered more than 1,600 kilometres of rough sea ice, pressure ridges, rocky river valleys, and breathtaking expanses of tundra. Each Ranger drove a snowmachine that pulled a sixteen-foot komatik laden with up to 675 kilograms of supplies. They endured wind chill temperatures below -50°C, near whiteout conditions, and 24-hour sunlight.

The patrol had travelled more than 800 km when it was forced to stop on the sea ice north of Ellef Ringes Island. Two kilometres ahead lay a huge, impassable lead—a crack in the sea ice over 400



km long and 5 km wide. By attaining 79°N, the expedition technically could claim that it had reached the magnetic pole. Ranger Sergeant Peter Moon reported that a "small iceberg was selected as the symbolic centre of the Pole and Rangers ran to it whooping and shouting and waving two big Maple Leaf and Canadian Ranger flags, as well as the flags of the three territories and their home communities. They hugged, shook hands and slapped high fives." Major Laroche "sat quietly on his snowmobile amidst the jubilation and thought about the 18 months of planning that had gone into the event, the longest, furthest and largest sovereignty patrol in Canadian history." "You know, guys, usually I don't say too much," he told the group, "but today is outstanding. Today, you made history. You should all be very proud."

Some Rangers reflected on patriotism and service. “We don’t want other people intruding on our land without us knowing about it,” Ranger Sergeant Darrel Klemmer of Tulita explained. The operation demonstrated the Canadian Forces’ ability to patrol the outermost reaches of the country. It also offered Rangers from different areas a chance to share their experiences. “You get 30 different Rangers together and they’ll have 60 different ways of doing the same thing,” he noted. “But we talk about our families and our communities and tell stories of the old ways. Everybody has hunting in common. Everybody likes to hunt.” Ranger Sergeant John Mitchell of Dawson observed: “the Rangers are one of the things that link the whole North.” A quiet patriotism underlay their statements. “It’s always been a national thing, you know, to wave the Canadian flag here,” Mitchell told a reporter. “I think what everybody ... got was a sort of personal understanding of sovereignty as it pertains to them. You know, it became a personal thing.”

The political profile and extensive media coverage of the operation highlighted the Rangers’ contributions to Canadian sovereignty. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Art Eggleton, the defence minister, telephoned by satellite phone from Ottawa to congratulate the Rangers on their operation. “This sovereignty patrol is a continuing example of the service and dedication of the Canadian Rangers over the past 60 years,” Eggleton told the press. “It illustrates their unique skills and vital contributions, not only to their own communities, but to Canada. Canadian Rangers, who are masters of operation in Canada’s harshest environment, are an invaluable component of the Canadian Forces.” The media reported that the exercise provided Canada with “crucial ammunition” for its northern sovereignty disputes. “It’s all about sovereignty here,” Captain Rick Regan, the deputy commanding officer of 1 CRPG, explained. “The Rangers are the ones letting us know what’s going on in our own back yard.”



On 22 April 2002, a *Northern News Services* editorial titled “The Heavy Responsibility of Sovereignty” noted:

There’s a lot riding on the shoulders of a few Rangers.

It’s ironic these days when the mighty American military is talking about continental defence. They will rely on satellites, high-flying planes and other high-tech sensors to keep terrorists and others from infiltrating our shores—from Mexico to the Arctic.

All well and good. But that doesn’t diminish the importance of the women and men in red who have been the guardians of the North for the last 60 years. If anything, it makes the Rangers’ role more essential to Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic.

With their .303 rifles, ball caps and sweat shirts these “citizen soldiers” have been Canada’s eyes and ears in the North, patrolling on snowmachines for decades.

And for the past two weeks, 29 Rangers from around the NWT, Nunavut and Yukon have been taking part in one of the most ambitious sovereignty patrols in Canadian history, making their way from Resolute to the Magnetic North Pole and back. A publicity stunt?

Perhaps.

But such a trek to uninhabited territory—and publicity that comes with it—does help establish Canadian ownership to the Arctic and reinforces the Rangers’ importance.

The extensive media coverage of the patrol reflected a growing interest in Arctic sovereignty and the Rangers’ activities in support of it. Applauding this “heroic and historic accomplishment,” Vice

Chief of the Defence Staff Lieutenant-General George Macdonald wrote:

This courageous expedition in support of our country’s sovereignty was not only a clear demonstration of the importance of the mandate and roles of the Canadian Rangers, but is also a testament to the special breed of person it takes to fulfill this most important duty. The sheer magnitude of the journey leaves one breathless and the daily media releases ... could only provide us with a small glimpse of this grand adventure. This initiative can only serve to reflect positively on the Canadian Rangers organization and the Canadian Forces.

I know that the Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence were both delighted to have been directly involved by phone, and their conversations with participants have reinforced their support for the Canadian Rangers and their personal interest in the members. It is indeed fitting that this courageous journey was the first of our special events to commemorate 60 years of history with the Canadian Rangers in 2002.

...

Your recent achievement in reaching the farthest North has become a matter of great national pride amongst Canadian Forces members across Canada.

Unataktuksainun ukiuktaktumitunun:

Quyanamik. Uvagut unatktigipta nunalimainit
quviagiyapsi Qigliqaqvik tikivigapsiuk aullarsutik
ungasiktumit.

Political accolades matched the Rangers' sense of personal accomplishment. Governor General Adrienne Clarkson awarded the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal to the participants the following year and thanked each one in a letter "for the support you have given me as Commander-in-Chief and for the loyal and dedicated service you provide Canada." She also applauded the Rangers for the operation in her Canada Day message on Parliament Hill.

The tragic, accidental bombing of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, killing four and injuring eight others, overshadowed the conclusion of Operation Kigiliqavik Ranger. Canadian Rangers mourned the loss, which placed their sovereignty operation in sober perspective. One could not forget that the war in Afghanistan was the Canadian Forces' foremost priority. Nonetheless, epic patrols like this one made Canadians more conscious of the need for a greater military presence in the North.

In the years ahead, Rangers participated in even more enhanced sovereignty patrols. The Kigiliqavik series of patrols occurred annually and included increasingly ambitious plans to trace lines over Canada's remotest islands. Costs escalated accordingly, but capturing national media attention made the patrols worthwhile. "We're putting footprints in the snow where they are not normally put," Colonel Norris Pettis, commander of Canadian Forces Northern Area, explained to journalists. Of course, these footprints came from Ranger boots—an important demonstration of Northerners' contributing to Canadian sovereignty.





Operation Kigliqaqvik Ranger II (2003)

Op KII was conducted in the western Arctic Archipelago from 23 March – 12 April 2003, with participants from the Sachs Harbour and Holman patrols. The Canadian Forces planned to conduct the patrol on Prince Patrick Island but had to go to Banks Island instead. A bulldozer, left in cold storage at Mould Bay when the weather station closed in 1997, failed to work, preventing the clearing of the runway and the landing of the Hercules aircraft carrying Rangers, equipment, and supplies. Instead, the Rangers established a base camp near Sachs Harbour and patrolled remote parts of Banks Island.



Operation Kigliqaqvik Ranger III (2004)

Op KIII, conducted in the central Arctic Archipelago from 31 March – 16 April 2004, involved 15 Rangers and 5 Regular Force soldiers from 1 CRPG. Facing punishing conditions, the group crossed more than 1300 km of ice, snow, and boulder-strewn valleys from Resolute Bay to CFS Alert, on the northern tip of Ellesmere Island. The harsh climate and terrain took its toll, requiring the airlifting of two injured members of the patrol to safety and damaging most of the snowmachines. Despite the brutal conditions, however, the Rangers accomplished their mission.

Operation Kigliqaqvik Ranger IV (2005)

Op KIV, conducted from 30 March – 18 April 2005, centred around the abandoned weather station at Isachsen on Ellef Ringnes Island. Despite abominable weather conditions, 30 Rangers from across the North completed sovereignty patrols to nearby Amund Ringnes and Meighen islands to plant emergency cairns and report on the land and sea ice conditions. Reducing the operation from twelve to seven days meant that a planned aircraft crash simulation, designed to enhance the Rangers' first-response

capability, was cancelled. Nonetheless, the Rangers emerged with pride that they had played a role in patrolling one of Canada's most isolated frontiers.

Operation Nunalivut (2006)

The creation of Joint Task Force (North) (JTFN) to replace CFNA in 2006 confirmed the Yellowknife commander's new responsibilities to command, control, and coordinate all military activities in the North. As an indication of the new emphasis on exercising Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic, the Canadian Forces launched their largest sovereignty patrol yet: a 5000-km trek through some of the most difficult terrain and weather in the

world that was christened Operation Nunalivut—Inuktitut for "land that is ours."

The 42-member patrol consisted of 11 Regular Force soldiers and 31 Rangers divided into five teams. They left Isachsen, Grise Fiord, and Resolute Bay in Nunavut and Mould Bay in the NWT before linking up to finish the patrol as a single group at Resolute Bay. Participants broke snowmobiles, bashed up their komatiks, and coped with frigid temperatures, searing winds, white-outs, and blizzards. In overcoming these obstacles, they gathered useful information on abandoned buildings, equipment, and airfields in some of the remotest parts of Canada which could prove useful in an emergency.





Revisiting the Rangers' Role, Mission, and Tasks

Representatives from the Canadian Ranger patrol groups agreed that the Rangers served two central elements of Canada's defence mission:

- surveillance and control of Canada's territory, airspace, and maritime areas; and
- helping the federal government achieve national goals.

The Rangers' revised role, mission, and task list reflected these basic principles.

The Rangers' original role remained unchanged. After all, the Rangers represented the only military presence in some of the least populated parts of the country. Their mission statement emphasized that they were expected "to provide lightly equipped, self sufficient, mobile forces in support of the CF's sovereignty and domestic operation tasks."

Other things had changed since 1947. The Rangers no longer factored into Canadian defence plans as a potential combat force. Accordingly, the military officially removed tasks that required combat or the application of force more generally, such as providing local defence to contain small enemy detachments, assisting police in reporting or apprehending enemy agents or saboteurs, or riot control. All of these duties required a level of training and risk far beyond the Rangers' mandate, and the Regular Force and Primary Reserve held proper responsibility for them.

Accordingly, the revised national task list explained that Rangers were expected to:

a. *Conduct and Provide Support to Sovereignty Operations:*

- conduct surveillance and sovereignty patrols as tasked
- participate in CF operations, exercises and training
- report suspicious and unusual activities
- conduct North Warning Site patrols as tasked
- collect local data of military significance

b. *Conduct and Provide Assistance to CF Domestic Operations:*

- conduct territorial, coastal and inland water surveillance as required/tasked
- provide local knowledge and Canadian Ranger expertise (guides and advice)
- provide assistance to Other Government Departments
- provide local assistance and advice to Ground Search and Rescue operations
- provide support in response to natural disasters and humanitarian operations

c. *Maintain a CF Presence in the Local Community:*

- instruct and supervise the Junior Canadian Rangers Program.



To Conduct and Provide Support to Sovereignty Operations

The Rangers would first and foremost conduct and provide support to sovereignty operations. Patrolling, which had grown in scale and tempo, constituted the most basic element of this role.

Epic enhanced sovereignty patrols in the Far North certainly dominated political discussions and media coverage, but Rangers from across 1 CRPG completed more modest, regular sovereignty patrols (SOVPATs) by snowmobile, all-terrain vehicle, and boat on an annual basis. For example, in August 2001, nine members of the Fort Simpson Rangers undertook a five-day sovereignty patrol up the Mackenzie River during which they honed their map-reading skills and harvested a moose to feed the community. In another case, in September 2005, the Dawson patrol conducted a long-range SOVPAT south along the Ladue River, which parallels the Alaska-Yukon border. Rangers covered 400 miles of wet and rugged terrain by truck, ATV, and foot. These activities demonstrated a national presence, familiarized Rangers with new areas, and encouraged them to refine their capabilities.

The Rangers always worked with other military units, but as their national profile grew so did their participation in Canadian Forces exercises and training. Canada's concerns about sovereignty revolved primarily around the issues of global warming and the potential opening of new international transit routes through the Northwest Passage. This focus on the maritime domain raised serious questions about Canada's military capabilities as well as the Rangers' role in supporting naval operations.

The navy had not undertaken an Arctic mission for thirteen years prior to participating in Exercise Narwhal Ranger in July 2002. During this joint sovereignty operation, two coastal patrol vessels rendez-voused with twenty-five Rangers and army officers in



Iqaluit who then led them to Resolution Island off the southwest tip of Baffin Island.

The Rangers' experiences reinforced the long-standing theme of mutual learning. Pitseolak Alainga, a thirty-five-year-old Ranger from Iqaluit who travelled aboard HMCS *Goose Bay*, enjoyed the experience of working with the soldiers and preventing polar bears from intruding on their camp on Resolution Island. The trip produced less cultural shock than one would expect. The camp reminded Alainga of home. He saw rifles outside the tent and men socializing. "When you grow up with your dad and all the other brothers that travel down here for walrus hunting, it's just like any other trip," he told a reporter. His Ranger responsibilities—helping others and keeping them safe—were simply an extension of his everyday life. He had learned this role from his grandfather and father, both former Rangers. The learning continued during the exercise. "When we're out on the land, it's usually us being the teachers and the army being the students, but sometimes it

turns around,” Alaina explained. The military’s emphasis on rejuvenating the Canadian Forces’ Arctic capabilities ensured that the Rangers became a regular fixture in joint exercises with the army, navy, and air force. Careful observers recognized that the Rangers served as force multipliers: when they joined combat forces, they significantly increased those forces’ operational effectiveness. Rangers gathered local intelligence, provided ground-based surveillance, and played a supporting role in the exercise.

The first Exercise Narwhal, held off the coast of Baffin Island in August 2004, involved 200 infantry soldiers, the frigate HMCS *Montreal* with its complement of 220 sailors, five helicopters, and the Twin Otter fleet. Thirty Rangers, including the mayor of Pangnirtung and the local member of the Nunavut legislative assembly, helped train soldiers in general land skills and acted as predator control when the army went out on expeditions. When two unaccompanied soldiers got lost during the exercise, the Rangers who searched for them scolded the military. “You shouldn’t be going out there without us,” Sergeant Simeonie Keenainak of Pang told a reporter. With Ranger escorts, “this never would have happened.”

Ranger escorts ensured that this situation did not repeat as the scale and frequency of sovereignty operations grew in the following years. In 2005, for example, Rangers assisted the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in a July boat patrol along the Mackenzie River to Herschel Island in the Beaufort Sea. This patrol, dubbed Exercise Beaufort Sentinel, became an annual joint event. Rangers from 1 CRPG also provided assistance to Maritime Command with Operation Hudson Sentinel, a patrol by two Maritime Coastal Defence Vessels around Hudson Bay, in August.



The following August, 30 Rangers deployed at three locations along the Beaufort Sea coast as part of Operation Beaufort, where they spent “a week scanning an endless horizon with a spotting scope and pounding through the waves of the Beaufort Sea in a rigid-hulled inflatable boat.” The next month, during Operation Lancaster, Rangers from 1 CRPG supported three sections of infantry from the 2nd Battalion Royal 22nd Regiment (the Van Doos) who established observation posts on Bylot and Devon Islands. A detachment of four Rangers accompanied each section to share knowledge of how to operate in the North and to ensure that the troops were protected from curious (or hungry) polar bears.

During these operations, Rangers acted as local ambassadors to both the Canadian military and to foreign units. In countless newspaper articles, southern troops stressed their admiration for the local and traditional knowledge that the Rangers shared. The Dawson and Tuktoyaktuk patrols’ annual support to the British Army Training Unit Suffield (BATUS) during its winter indoctrination training in the western Arctic exemplified the Rangers’ important training role.



Ranger Participation in Sovereignty Operations and Exercises, 2002-06

Sovereign Operations (SOVOPS)

Jan 2002	Resolute Bay	LCH (RC)
Mar 2002	Arctic Bay	1 R Nfld Regt
Feb 2004	Hall Beach	2 CER
Mar 2004	Inuvik	1 PPCLI
Feb 2005	Arctic Bay	1 CER
Mar 2005	Resolute Bay	1 R22R
Jan 2006	Iqaluit	4 Air Division
Feb 2006	Baker Lake	2 RCHA
Mar 2006	Cambridge Bay	3 PPCLI

Advanced Winter Warfare Training

Mar 2004 – Fort Providence
Mar 2005 – Tuktoyaktuk
Mar 2006 – Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk

Exercise Narwhal

2004 August 11-30 – Pangnirtung patrol

Exercise Beaufort Sentinel

2005 Jul 15-23; 2006 Aug 6-13

Exercise Hudson Sentinel

2005 Aug 11-31

Operation Lancaster

2006 Aug 11-31 – Lancaster Sound, Nunavut



“Eyes and Ears”

On 24 August 2000, Pond Inlet Ranger Sergeant Norman Simonie telephoned the patrol group headquarters in Yellowknife to report three separate sightings of potential submarine activities around Bylot Island that summer. The information came to him from an experienced local Inuit hunter, a photojournalist kayaking in the region, and a party of ten Inuit (including two Rangers) out hunting bow whale who observed “a strange and unusual but consistent (mechanical) wake with no visible source.” When Lieutenant-Commander S.C. Bloom met with the local patrol, he advised the Rangers on how to spot a submarine. “The Rangers listened intently to every word,” the naval officer observed. They asked how aircraft such as the Aurora detected submarines, which led to a discussion about sonobuoys. Their questions revealed sophisticated knowledge about modern military technology, the naval officer noted. “There were no quizzical looks when it was explained that a hydrophone was deployed from a sonobuoy and that sound was then transmitted to an aircraft by radio and interpreted aboard.” Twenty-first-century Rangers were technologically adept and far from naive.

The need for connectivity between communities and the national security establishment took on heightened significance after 11 September 2001. The shock of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington led the Canadian and US governments to make public safety and national security the highest priorities. Although Canada had not been attacked directly, the threat of foreign aggression reaffirmed the importance of the military’s home game: the defence of North America.

The Rangers did not participate directly in Operation Apollo, Canada’s military contribution to the international campaign against terrorism, but military officials stated that they had a



essential, ongoing domestic role. “Our primary goal is to maintain and protect sovereignty and security in the North,” public affairs officer Captain Brian Martin explained shortly after 9/11. “The Rangers report anything unusual immediately and we respond to that.”

This context renewed an emphasis on the Rangers’ function as the military’s eyes and ears. Although terrorists were less likely to attack a remote Northern location than a metropolitan area, commentators emphasized the need to guard against terrorist and criminal infiltrations. In 2004, Colonel Norm Couturier, commander of Canadian Forces Northern Area, suggested Canada’s northern territories could prove a tempting target because they represented the “soft underbelly of the continent.” His chief of staff reassured Canadians that northerners would report any suspicious people or activities through the Rangers.

When a Romanian tried to sneak into Canada by taking an eighteen-foot fibreglass boat from Greenland to Grise Fiord in September 2006, Ranger Sergeant Jeffrey Qaunaq met him on the beach. “It could have been anybody who was a terrorist, and he could have just bombed us right away, so it kind of opened our eyes,” the local patrol commander told a reporter. Instead, the RCMP apprehended the illegal visitor and had him deported. The Rangers’ tasks in support of sovereignty continued to be both symbolic and practical.



To Conduct and Provide Assistance to Canadian Forces Domestic Operations

The Rangers' second major grouping of tasks related to Canadian Forces' domestic operations. The phrase "to conduct and provide assistance" emphasized a supporting role. Rangers could help their communities during a domestic emergency, but they could not be treated as the "force of first resort." First responders such as police, fire, or medical specialists held primary responsibility for most emergencies. The Rangers regularly supported other federal departments and agencies in activities as diverse as flood watches for the RCMP to search-and-rescue training exercises with the Canadian Coast Guard.

The Rangers' response capabilities in remote regions routinely linked to search and rescue. Officially, their task list stated they would "provide local assistance and advice to Ground Search and Rescue operations." Although police retained primary responsibility for ground searches, in many locations Rangers represented the only trained, equipped, and knowledgeable group available. Rangers often led rescue missions into the bush, onto the tundra, over and in rivers, and out on the sea ice in brutal weather conditions and to great media fanfare. "While Rangers continue to reinforce Canadian sovereignty, their most important role has been found in search and rescue operations," Daniel MacIsaac, editor of the *Inuvik Drum*, extolled in 2000. "Just as the Canadian army has evolved into a peace-keeping force so, too, do the Rangers act as a source of support in the Arctic."

In addition to the hundreds of recorded cases they participated in each year, Rangers conducted searches that went unreported because they did not fill out paperwork describing their actions or

did not want to embarrass the people who got lost. The RCMP, community leaders, and people rescued by Rangers regularly applauded their professionalism, knowledge, and leadership.

In recognition of their leadership roles and unique capacity in many remote communities, Rangers received specialized training to respond to natural disasters and support humanitarian operations. A lack of government capacity often makes Rangers the *de facto* lead in any community-based crisis response—a role often integrated into regional emergency plans. During training exercises, Rangers practised building improvised airstrips or helicopter landing pads as part of scenarios that simulated a major air disaster (MAJAID) or a cruise ship running aground.

Other domestic operations, while not as well publicized, served to reaffirm the Rangers' contributions in times of crisis. To list but a few examples:

- The Kimmirut patrol (which happened to be in the midst of its annual training exercise) provided disaster relief by forming work crews after an avalanche in the community from 8-12 March 1999.
- When a fire shut down the power plant in Sanikiluaq in May 2000, forcing Nunavut to declare its first state of emergency, local Rangers "came to the rescue."
- When a massive snowstorm drove people from their homes in Pangnirtung in February 2003, Canadian Rangers worked with the RCMP and volunteer firefighters to shuttle people to school gymnasiums.

To Maintain a Canadian Forces Presence in the Local Community

The third pillar of the Rangers' revised task list—maintaining a Canadian Forces presence in the local community—recognized the prominent position that the Rangers played at home. By formalizing these grassroots contributions, officials highlighted the Rangers' unique knowledge of local needs and community expectations. “When they perform these tasks the Rangers may be wearing the Ranger ‘uniform’ but they are performing the task [as private citizens] on behalf of the community and not as Canadian Rangers,” Colonel Tom Tarrant, the director general reserves and cadets, explained in April 2004. They embodied the values of voluntary service.

The Rangers' varied forms of service earned them reputations as the “doers” of their communities. Rangers in the Yukon blazed a trail for the Yukon Quest International Dogsled Race, packing down the race route with their snow machines and placing thousands of reflective markers through “forest and brush, over frozen rivers and streams, and up and down steep and sometimes dangerous terrain.” The Carcross patrol also put in the trail for the annual Carcross-to-Atlin Commemorative Mail Run, while the Dawson patrol did the same for the Percy DeWolfe Mail Race. Rangers served as safety crews for the Yukon River Quest, supported the launch of the northern branch of the Trans Canada Trail through the Arctic, and assisted with the Hudson Bay Quest (a sled race from Churchill to Arviat).

As one of the most recognizable symbols of Canadian patriotism in remote regions, Rangers often represented the human face of the North to prominent visitors. Clad in their red sweatshirts, they appeared regularly in media photographs documenting visits by senior military officials, politicians, and foreign defence attachés.



They formed so many ceremonial guards of honour for former governor general Adrienne Clarkson on her visits to remote northern and coastal communities that some Rangers jovially referred to themselves as “Adrienne Clarkson’s Army.”

When Prince Charles visited Whitehorse in April 2001, he inspected a guard of honour mounted by fifty Rangers. The Yukon River in the foreground and snow-capped mountains in the background offered imagery befitting royal visitors. The following year, Rangers greeted Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip when they arrived in Iqaluit to begin their Golden Jubilee visit. (The Queen made particular note of the Rangers’ presence and told them how much she liked their uniforms.)

The Canadian Ranger sweatshirt, however modest a uniform, is a source of pride identifying the Rangers as part of the Canadian Forces. Rangers became a regular fixture at Remembrance Day ceremonies in their communities across the country and in Ottawa. They also played a prominent role at national gatherings celebrating Aboriginal peoples’ military contributions more generally.

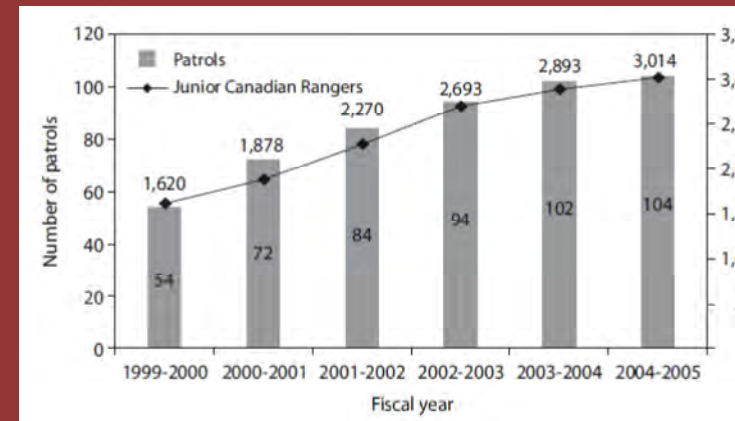
The meteoric growth of the Junior Canadian Rangers testified to the popularity and acceptance of the Ranger organization in communities across Northern Canada. The Junior Rangers provided youth with a sense of identity, purpose, and civic awareness that community leaders saw as a way to prevent juvenile delinquency. Elders accepted the program because Rangers, some of the most well-respected people in their communities, ran it. Not one commentator accused the program of attempting to colonize or assimilate indigenous youth. While the cadet program had a mixed reputation in remote regions, the Junior Rangers’ blend of self-direction and military structure struck people as relevant, interesting, and culturally appropriate.



Military officers and the Rangers themselves voiced a growing concern about skill fade: the erosion of traditional skills that allowed people to safely and confidently operate on the land and waters. As elders retired from Ranger service, the Canadian Forces lost access to their knowledge of the land, the seas, and the skies, and each successive generation had fewer basic survival skills. “I’ve had people that didn’t know how to make a snow block, didn’t even know how to try to start an igloo,” Ranger Sergeant Solomon Voisey from Whale Cove (Tikiraqjuaq) explained. He estimated that less than 5 percent of Rangers younger than twenty-five had a solid grasp of traditional knowledge. Even older people used their skills less frequently; without more resources dedicated to facilitating the sharing of knowledge, Voisey predicted that traditional land skills would gradually die out. These developments amplified the value of having elders involved in training younger Rangers and the importance of a more aggressive patrol program. After all, these skills were vital to the long-term viability of the Canadian Rangers and, by extension, the military’s ongoing ability to operate in remote regions.

Junior Canadian Ranger Growth across Canada, 2000-2005

To support the trans-generational transfer of knowledge and to create opportunities for Junior Canadian Rangers to meet one another and experience Canada, 1 CRPG also ran an annual Advanced Summer Training Session (ASTS) in Whitehorse. Alongside community-based training and activities, youth benefitted from a safe, positive learning environment that instilled values of discipline, respect, and civic mindedness. In turn, JCRs gave back to their communities. For example, the JCR patrol in Sanikiluaq was instrumental in helping their community when the hamlet lost its power generator in May 2000. They also served alongside Rangers as honour guards when distinguished guests visited their homelands.



Hans Island, Nunavut, 13 July 2005

At 10:45 a.m., two CH-146 Griffon helicopters swooped down over a windswept rock in the middle of Kennedy Sound between Ellesmere Island and Greenland. Onboard were three Rangers from the Grise Fiord patrol—Sergeant Jeffrey Quanaq, Corporal Manasie Kaunak, and Ranger Jimmie Nungaq—along with Ranger instructor Sergeant Denis Lalonde. Their mission—named both Exercise Frozen Beaver and Operation Sovereign Inukshuk—would demonstrate Canadian sovereignty over a barren, uninhabited 1.3-square-kilometre rock in the middle of Nares Strait that had become the subject of intense political scrutiny.

When Canada and Denmark signed a continental shelf boundary agreement in 1973, the negotiators could not agree on the status of Hans Island. The island did not contain any exploitable resources, so neither country placed a high priority on settling the issue for the next three decades. In 2005, however, political and media attention suddenly made the island an acid test of the Canadian government's resolve to protect its Arctic. "The Vikings are back. A thousand years after the Norse colonized Vinland, they're again staking a claim to Canadian territory," warned political scientist Rob Huebert. In his view, the status of Hans Island demonstrated "our almost total inability to defend our interests in the Canadian north. Our boundaries in the region are already contested and under pressure, a trend that is likely to continue as a warming Arctic gives increasing access to previously ice-bound coastlines."

When the first helicopter landed on Hans Island, the Rangers reconnoitred the ground. They found evidence of past visits by foreign nationals: a cairn and two Danish flags, one on a flagpole and the other in a barrel. After unloading the equipment, two of the Rangers gathered rocks and built an inukshuk. In the meantime, an engineer from Canadian Forces Northern Area and the third Ranger prepared a base for a flagpole. They affixed a trilingual brass plate to memorialize their visit and finished the ceremony with a rendition of "O Canada." They raised the Canadian flag at noon. Thirty minutes later, the team departed from the island.



A Mature Capability

Rising concerns about climate change and its implications for sovereignty, security, and safety brought the connections between local management, national preparedness, and transnational forces into sharper focus. Residents in remote regions faced daunting challenges. In 2004, the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment report showed that the impacts of global warming were already felt locally (rising temperatures, melting ice caps and glaciers, and changes in flora and fauna) but that the root causes were global. Security and sovereignty threats had to be considered alongside food security, cultural survival, physical health, coastal erosion, permafrost degradation, and the vulnerability of critical infrastructure in a changing world.

Fortunately, the Rangers' expertise contributed to both the defence of North America and the protection of local communities. The media extolled the Rangers' social and cultural benefits alongside their role as sovereignty soldiers. On 22 April 2002, a *Northern News Service* editorial concluded:

Overflights and satellite surveillance are important, but nothing beats a person on the ground for accurate intelligence gathering. Rangers are perfect for the job. They live in the North and understand the land and the climate. When full-time soldiers come to the Arctic, they turn to Rangers for advice. They mean as much, and more to their communities. The Canadian military understands this and has been working to expand Ranger ranks. It's building upon a fine tradition for which all Northerners should be grateful.

When Prime Minister Paul Martin landed in Pond Inlet during a northern tour in August 2004 to reaffirm Canada's sovereignty over the Arctic, he applauded the Rangers. "These are the very men and women who are at the very forefront of the protection of our sovereignty and have been for generations." Martin told the audience at the airstrip, "I just want to say to those of you in this room who are Rangers, on behalf of all Canadians, how grateful we are to you."

Descriptions of the Rangers in the popular media emphasized that the most appropriate boots on the ground were mukluks on the tundra, planted during regular hunting activities or sovereignty patrols. Readers of the Inuit publication *Naniiliqpita* learned in early 2006 that the Rangers gave Inuit a critical and direct role: "I get a little tickle in the back of my neck when I think about [the Canadian Forces] depending on us," Ranger Abraham Kudlu of Pond Inlet explained. "This is important to Inuit because we've never had much military presence here. It makes us feel more like Canadians."

The Rangers themselves had no question that their role, mission, and tasks remained appropriate. "We hunt here so I want to keep this as ours," explained Ranger Norm Simonie, also from Pond Inlet. "This is our hunting area for muskox, walrus, beluga, polar bear, [and] rabbits." Nunavut commissioner Ann Hanson described the Rangers' vital importance and how their knowledge of land, sea, and skies had inspired Nunavummiut. "Every time I go into a community," she observed, "I see the respect and admiration of their peers. They have the skills for survival."



6

A Mature Capability: The Rangers since 2007

I do it for my community and my Canada.

-- Ranger Paul Ikuallaq, Gjoa Haven, Nunavut (2007)

By the twenty-first century, the Canadian Rangers had emerged from the shadows to occupy centre stage in the unfolding Arctic drama. The Rangers represent both Canada's military presence in the North and a key element in a national strategy that engages Northerners directly. Their activities reflect the interests of both the military and their communities. The Rangers' established record of operations, extending back over more than half a century, affirms the interconnectedness between local knowledge, identities, and practices on the one hand, and the nation's interest in exercising its sovereignty on the other.

The Rangers' practical contributions reflect a community-military relationship that flows both ways. The military receives local expertise, traditional knowledge about lands and waters, and practical support for activities in "extreme environments." Local people benefit from modest pay, training and operational experience, leadership development, and public recognition of their contributions to Canadian sovereignty and security. "Both the Canadian Ranger and the Junior Canadian Ranger programs are strong and effective in the North and make a real contribution to local safety, national sovereignty and preservation of land

skills," Jackie Jacobson, the representative for Nunakput, told the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly in 2008. As a long-standing member of the Rangers and the patrol sergeant in Tuktoyaktuk, he was well situated to make this case.

Canadian Rangers are leaders in Northern communities that are navigating complex challenges in the twenty-first century. They possess knowledge of local lands and traditions, have a strong commitment to community service, and can communicate effectively. Community spokespersons so frequently associate these traits with the Rangers that there is rarely a major northern media event related to sovereignty, security, or safety issues without men and women present in their red sweatshirts.

"The Canadian Rangers embody some of the best qualities of the North including self-sufficiency, on-the-land knowledge, practical problem solving skills and a willingness to help others," journalist Roxanna Thompson told readers of the *Deh Cho Drum* in late 2007. "People join Canadian Ranger patrols for a number of reasons. They might be looking for something fun to do to get them closer to the land or they might see Rangers as one of the few activities available in their communities. People also join so they can use their daily lifestyle to be part of something bigger. No matter what reason draws a person to the Rangers, their contributions are an important part of keeping our country strong and free."

Stephen Harper's Inheritance

In the campaign leading up to the federal election of January 2006, the Canadian Rangers featured for the first time in national party platforms. Conservative defence critic Gordon O'Connor, visiting Iqaluit in late 2005, promised that his party would expand the Rangers as part of its plan to strengthen Canada's Arctic

sovereignty. “I look on the Rangers as one of the prime instruments in enforcing our sovereignty,” O’Connor said. Rangers requested better equipment, more training, and more work to do. “Patrols have to increase in frequency,” the former brigadier-general told a northern reporter. “As I understand it, the current 4,000 Rangers are capable of doing more patrols, but there just isn’t enough money.” In O’Connor’s assessment, Rangers “should be touching every island and every piece of land in the north on a regular basis.” Promises of more cash to Rangers to maintain personal equipment, new uniforms, and a new rifle fit with the Conservative party’s “Canada first” approach to defence.

When Stephen Harper won a minority government in early 2006, his party inherited a mature and capable Ranger organization. The Rangers also fit with his commitment to improving Canada’s capability to exercise and enforce its sovereignty in the Arctic.

Building on his earlier campaign promises, Prime Minister Harper announced measures to bolster Canada’s Northern sovereignty on 10 August 2007. He unveiled plans for a Canadian Forces Arctic Training Centre in Resolute, a deepwater docking and refueling facility at Nanisivik, and the expansion of the Canadian Rangers from 4,100 to 5,000 members. The Ranger expansion program had four objectives:

- to add new patrols and strengthen existing ones in the North and farther south where required;
- to put in place the command-and-control systems necessary to manage the expanded force;
- to formalize business plans for the Rangers’ \$29-million-annual budget; and
- to support the Ranger Modernization Project, designed to address all aspects of the Ranger’ uniforms and equipment.

Under this plan, the Ranger organization across Canada would received \$12 million dollars more each year (totaling nearly a quarter-billion-dollar investment over twenty years). According to the Prime Minister’s Office, the commitment would “significantly strengthen Canada’s sovereignty ... [and] benefit communities throughout the region by creating jobs and opportunities and enhancing the safety and security of the people who live here.”



Expansion

As one of its core promises, the Harper government promised to expand the Canadian Rangers to five thousand members. Despite the government's strong Arctic sovereignty focus, the Ranger organization could only expand so far in the Territorial North. The Rangers already had a permanent footprint in every High Arctic community. Captain Conrad Schubert, the deputy commanding officer of 1 CRPG, reported in October 2007 that "Military membership in the North ... is already more than five times the national Canadian average with 1.44% of northerners serving as Canadian Rangers against 0.27% of Canadians serving in the Regular Force and all other reserve components."

The Rangers could expand in the Arctic by recruiting more people into existing patrols to "make a credible presence if called on in an emergency or for training." 1 CRPG also set a target of sixty Rangers patrols. This led to the creation of new patrols in Faro in January 2010, Hay River in May 2011, Deline in January 2012, and Watson Lake in February 2013.

On 21 August 2013, Prime Minister Harper welcomed Nigel Nakoolak from Coral Harbour, Nunavut, as the 5000th Canadian Ranger, during a ceremony on the Arctic tundra. "Our government has expanded the Canadian Rangers, our eyes and ears of the North, as they serve a critical role in safeguarding Canadian sovereignty," Harper proclaimed. Having 5000 Rangers from sea to sea meant that, for the first time in its history, the organization reached the level initially set in 1947.



Enhancement

Public statements by senior military officers suggest that the Canadian Armed Forces are pleased with the Rangers' existing roles and contributions and do not intend to add new responsibilities. The army already considers the Rangers a cornerstone of their emerging Arctic strategy, which relies heavily upon Primary Reservists: four newly created Arctic Response Company Groups (ARCGs) designed to respond to incidents in the Arctic as well as the Yellowknife Company of the Loyal Edmonton Regiment. Building an effective response capability will take time, but the army considers the Rangers "a mature capability" and the

foundation of the military's "operational capability across the North for a range of domestic missions." These include humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, support to ground-based search and rescue (GSAR), major air disaster (MAJAD), and major maritime disaster (MAJMAR).

In a military emergency, the army would expect the ARCGs rather than the Canadian Rangers to do the fighting. Rangers would advise the southern forces on local developments and serve as guides. Further-more, Rangers play an important role in teaching southern-based units how to survive on the land, a skill not included in training tailored for foreign missions.

In recent years, the Rangers have benefitted from improved support. Equipment usage rates for "use, wear and tear" on their personal equipment during formal activities increased. The Canadian Rangers Equipment Modernization Project allotted \$45 million to ensure that the Rangers have "light equipment of the best quality to allow them to perform their tasks effectively." The new equipment list (scale of issue) includes duffel bags, ballistic eyewear, backpacks, multi-tools, and new hand-held radios to allow section-level communications within Ranger patrols.

The Ranger uniform is also expanding. The red sweatshirt is distinctive and unique. It is the hallmark of the Rangers. For decades, however, Rangers have requested more army clothing so they can look more uniform while on parade. After the handover of the Ranger national authority to the Army in October 2007, the Chief of the Land Staff committed to a "Clothe the Ranger" project. The military is supplementing the Rangers' ballcap, sweatshirt, and t-shirt with a red fleece, an ICE jacket, a rain suit, wet-weather boots, socks, wind pants, and combat gloves. The military still expects the Rangers to wear personal clothing suited to local conditions, but this new ensemble expands the "Ranger red" brand.

The red hoodie is an icon of Canadian sovereignty and patriotism in remote regions, but the .303 Lee Enfield rifle remains the most enduring symbol of the Rangers. Military officials discussed replacing the rifle for decades, but without a clear deficiency they had trouble identifying and justifying a replacement. General Walt Natynczyk, the Chief of the Defence Staff, explained the problem during a brief stop in Yukon in January 2011: "Over the past five years, this is an issue that's come in and gone out so many times, because we have folks, mostly from the South, who want to give the Rangers a newer, more modern weapon ... But the feedback



we get from many Rangers, depending on who you talk to, they want a simple weapon. And the Lee Enfield .303 rifle that the Rangers have, although it's old, it's one of the most reliable, simple and accurate weapons, that's ever been designed." He recalled a conversation at Rideau Hall with Ranger Sergeant Allan Pogotak of Ulukhaktok (Holman), who told him that "you can take this weapon, it can be dropped in the ocean, you pick it up and shoot and it fires and fires true. And when anyone in my patrol breaks this weapon, I can go on the Internet and order the parts, and it's delivered in a week."

Time, however, has caught up with the Ranger rifle. In 2007, the military estimated that its stock of Lee-Enfield rifles would run out within the next decade. Finding a suitable replacement has been difficult. "There is a good probability that the New Ranger Rifle would resemble the current rifle in fit, form and function," Major Jim Mills, the staff officer responsible for Ranger training and equipment, has explained. "Only a very robust model, with a bolt-action would have the guaranteed reliability and service life to meet the Rangers' expectations." Delivery of the new rifle is expected from 2017-21. Time will tell if the replacements will have the same endurance, reliability, and mystique as the Lee Enfield.

Other enhancements are occurring at the patrol group level. For example, 1 CRPG recently introduced a plan to strengthen the patrol organizational structure. Each patrol is initially based off of an established strength of 32 Rangers, with another 2 Rangers dedicated to support a JCR program within the community. Typically, most patrols have 1 Sergeant, 1 Master Corporal and 1 Corporal responsible for everything. Under the new model, patrols are divided into 3 sections of 10 Rangers, with a MCpl and Cpl leading each section, and a headquarters element consisting of the Sergeant and the Patrol second-in-command (Ptl 2IC). This

means that patrols may have up to 4 MCpls and 3 Cpls. This gives patrols opportunities to create more leadership positions to help with passing information, organizing tent groups and equipment, and coordinating multiple tasks at the same time. A larger leadership cadre also means more opportunities for leadership training.

1 CRPG continues to offer the DP1 Basic recruit training as part of all Type 1 patrols and offers a standardized DP2 Ranger Patrol Commander course in selected areas. Annual leadership conferences and professional development (PD) sessions also build Ranger capacity and allow patrol leaders to share thoughts with one another and with 1 CRPG headquarters staff.



These expansion and enhancement efforts have had significant effects on Ranger Instructors and 1CRPG headquarters staff. The military's rising operational tempo "north of 60" has meant a growing demand for Rangers, as well as the instructors and staff that support them, to undertake a wider range of tasks over the year. With responsibility for Canada's largest military unit, 1 CRPG personnel face a daunting task in meeting both Ranger training requirements ("force generation") and operational tasks ("force employment"). In 2014, for example, the unit carried out over 250 exercises, operations, patrols, territorial shoots, JCR events, NWS site inspections, and other activities – an incredible number for a small headquarters of 48 military personnel.

The first and foremost priority for the unit is to produce (force generate) trained Rangers who are capable and equipped to fulfill their roles, mission and tasks. In this (and other) respects, Ranger Instructors remain the "glue" that connects the Rangers in their communities with the military establishment. They spend, on average, 100-150 days each year in communities and "on the land" with the Rangers. This includes conducting annual training patrols, supporting mass Ranger exercises and military operations, and overseeing the community-based JCR program. While in the communities, they are expected to play many different roles.

Throughout the year, Ranger Instructors are also involved in events and activities that build future capacity for Rangers and Ranger leadership, such as new recruit training, Ranger leadership sessions, and JCR camps. Furthermore, like the Rangers themselves, Instructors are considered "force multipliers" by sharing and integrating Northern skills and knowledge with other military personnel operating in the North. These activities build Ranger capacity and that of the Canadian Armed Forces more generally to deploy to the North effectively to complete its mission.

Ranger Instructors: The "Glue" of the Organization

In the community, the Ranger Instructors function independently as the unit:

- Administrative Staff: prepare releases / enrolments / medals requests
- Operations Staff: patrol planning, execution, post Op Admin/Drills
- Accounting Officer: bill payment, entitlement calculation, disbursement of funds
- Quartermaster Staff: kit issue, accounting, repairs
- Company Sergeant Major: dress and deportment, parade conduct
- Training Staff: conduct lessons on weapons, military skills, weapons, initial training, drill
- CIMIC team: meet with local leaders, establish community priorities, mentor patrol
- Padre: deal with social psychological issues
- Youth Worker: developed youth community programs, deal with youth issues
- Risk Management: assess risks when on the land and when working with youth

While expansion has affected all of the Ranger patrol groups across Canada, 1 CRPG is unique in its standing requirement to provide Rangers for routine domestic operations across the Territorial North. Every patrol and operation that the unit conducts or participates in helps to meet the Government of Canada's *Northern Strategy* objectives to provide presence, safety, and security throughout the region – a reality that translates into a high degree of political and military attention to unit activities. Accordingly, the last few years have represented a transition period as 1 CRPG has become more closely tied to Joint

Task Force (North) and Canadian Army Headquarters in supporting its activities and higher direction, as well as Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC) for force employment.

As southern Canadian awareness of the unit has grown, and more military units seek opportunities to operate with the Rangers of the North, 1 CRPG headquarters has faced the ongoing challenge of adapting its administrative practices to more closely align with the military policies and procedures that are expected down south. At the same time, it must moderate southern expectations of how the unit can and should function given the cultural and practical realities of operating in the Territories. These pressures, coupled with the growth in the number of the Rangers and patrols and the high operational tempo over the last few years, has brought new stresses and challenges (particularly at the headquarters level) as well as exacerbating old ones.

The unit has succeeded in completing the first phase of expansion in terms of Rangers (a 25% increase in six years), but the headquarters has not grown according to plan. Although financial budgets have increased to cover more Rangers and more Ranger activities, the headquarters in Yellowknife remains under-staffed and over-stretched. This makes it difficult to sustain the Rangers as well as the JCR programme that is an integral part of the partnership between the military and Northern communities. One step to deal with resource constraints has been the redistribution of personnel and rebalancing of workloads by merging the Ranger and JCR organizations (which had operated as separate entities within the headquarters). Each Ranger Instructor is now responsible for the Ranger and JCR patrols in three communities, meaning that all instructors now have the same level of responsibility and work. Implementing these changes while maintaining routine operations and the unique culture that has developed in the unit has proven difficult, but the unit leadership



believes that these initiatives will make the organization more efficient and effective as it prepares for the future.

1 CRPG's many successes reflect the expertise and commitment of the Rangers, as well as the mentoring and support provided by Ranger Instructors and of headquarters staff. Strong, healthy communities are the basis for strong Ranger patrols, as are strong, high quality Ranger Instructors who bring their military training and knowledge to communities. In turn, Rangers and Instructors depend upon a strong patrol group headquarters that offers constructive leadership, liaises effectively with higher military authorities to ensure that the unit's activities reflect the priorities of Northerners, and provides appropriate administrative and financial support. All of the partners in this relationship must be willing and able to do their part. Accordingly, to be effective and relevant in future operations, 1 CRPG must have sufficient resources to meet increased responsibilities and demands for Ranger patrols as well as the particular challenges of operating as the military's eyes, ears, and voice in the North.



Eyes, Ears, and Voice of the North

“The Rangers are our eyes and ears, and there’s no substitute for boots on the ground and people living in the communities,” Brigadier-General David Millar explained during a tour of Arctic communities in March 2009. “Technology doesn’t always work in the extreme conditions of the High Arctic. That’s why nothing can replace the Rangers, and why I reassured them they are the vital link in the North for maintaining sovereignty, representing the forces and providing security for their communities.” According to Millar, the Rangers’ red sweatshirts and ball caps have become “as symbolic to Canadians as the Snowbirds or RCMP.”

Long-distance military patrols that extended to the remotest reaches of the Arctic received the most attention from media and politicians. The Rangers’ primary responsibility throughout the second half of the twentieth century was to know their local areas. In the twenty-first century, however, their operational area reached far beyond their home communities.

From 2007 onward, Rangers have participated in three major “N-series” operations each year:

- Nunaliut in the High Arctic,
- Nunakput in the western Arctic, and
- Nanook in the eastern Arctic.



Operation NUNALIVUT

Operation NUNALIVUT is a sovereignty operation conducted annually since 2007 in Canada's North. It provides an opportunity for the Canadian Armed Forces to:

- assert Canada's sovereignty over its northernmost regions;
- demonstrate the ability to operate in the harsh winter environment in remote areas of the High Arctic; and
- enhance its capability to respond to any situation in Canada's North.

It also allows the Canadian Armed Forces to provide meaningful support to scientific research in the Arctic, and to demonstrate interoperability in the High Arctic with military allies and other Canadian government institutions.

On **Op NUNALIVUT 2007**, conducted in the northernmost islands of the Arctic Archipelago, three teams of Canadian Rangers patrolled Ellesmere Island on snowmobiles, covering almost 6,000 kilometres. One team travelled up the island's west coast to CFS Alert, the world's most northern permanent settlement, stopping on the way to install a flag on Ward Hunt Island, a traditional start point for North Pole expeditions. The second team patrolled up the centre of Ellesmere Island, and the third crossed the island from Eureka on the west coast to Alexandra Fjord on the east coast. 440 Squadron from Yellowknife, flying ski-equipped CC-138 Twin Otter utility transport aircraft, provided air support to deliver fuel and supplies along the patrol routes.



During **Op NUNALIVUT 2008**, conducted during the International Polar Year, scientists accompanied Canadian Rangers to the northwest shore of Ellesmere Island to investigate changes in the Ward Hunt Ice Shelf. Three patrol teams were deployed. Patrols one and two guided the scientists to the ice shelf from Eureka and assisted them as they carried out their work, while patrol three departed from Canadian Forces Station Alert to Eureka and served as a “back-up” to ensure the success of the mission.



On **Op NUNALIVUT 2009**, about 100 Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) personnel conducted four aerial surveillance and ground patrols on Ellesmere Island and Axel Heiberg Island. For the first time, a northern operation exploited RADARSAT 2 and Polar Epsilon imagery, and benefited from weather forecasting by the CAF's Joint Meteorological Centre.



Op NUNALIVUT 2010 (6–26 April 2010) demonstrated the CAF's ability to respond to emergencies on Ellesmere Island, near Canadian Armed Forces Station Alert, on Ward Hunt Island, and on the sea ice of the Arctic Ocean. It featured a combined exercise with *Slædepatruljen Sirius*, a Greenland-based Royal Danish Navy reconnaissance unit that uses dogsled teams. Using Alert as the initial staging area, four patrol teams of Rangers were deployed. Tasks including establishing a semi-permanent Tactical Command Post located at Ward Hunt as well as supporting the CAF's port inspection diving team and the Sirius Patrol. This exercise served as a test bed for ground resupply, communication devices, and interoperability between international units.



Op NUNALIVUT 2011 (6–22 April 2011) involved about 200 CAF members, including sixty Rangers and 1 CRPG staff, who conducted cross-country patrols between Resolute and Isachsen in Nunavut. The purpose of the operation was to test critical communication links under adverse conditions and to demonstrate JTFN's ability to respond to potential security and safety issues by deploying the Rapid Reaction Force (North).



Op NUNALIVUT 2012 (10 April–1 May 2012) was conducted on Cornwallis Island and Devon Island by a task force of about 150 CAF members, including about 50 Rangers. The Rangers conducted sovereignty patrols and provided ground support to the Fleet Diving Unit (Atlantic) who surveyed the world's most northern known shipwreck, HMS *Breadalbane*, lost in 1853 while searching for traces of the Franklin expedition. 1 CRPG patrols also conducted a search and rescue operation to locate missing Rangers from Grise Fiord who became disoriented while out on the land. The Rangers' success in deploying to an isolated environment and sustaining themselves throughout the operation demonstrated the unit's ability to support other government agencies in emergency situations.



Op NUNALIVUT 2013 (2–30 April 2013) involved 120 CAF participants who conducted over 600 km of reconnaissance and surveillance patrols on the land, in the air and on ice. Approximately 35 Canadian Rangers conducted four different presence patrols between Resolute Bay and Isachsen as well as on Devon Island, more specifically in Griffon Inlet and in Gascoyne Inlet. They effectively operated on the land for two weeks, patrolling thousands of square kilometres of the northwestern portion of Canada's Arctic Archipelago.



Op NUNALIVUT 14 (2 April-3 May 2014) was conducted on Bathurst, Cornwallis, and Devon Islands. Rangers participated in Force Generation activities and sovereignty patrols, establishing a forward operating base on Sherard Osborn Island. An eight-Ranger patrol team, along with the Combined Dive Team, traveled to Gascoyne Inlet to conduct Arctic Diver operations under the sea ice. Rangers also circumnavigated Bathurst Island, traveled to Isachsen, constructed mock defensive positions, and conducted small arms training.





Operation NUNAKPUT

Operation NUNAKPUT is a recurring CAF sovereignty operation conducted annually since 2007 in the Mackenzie River, Great Slave Lake and Beaufort Sea region of the western Arctic. The objectives of the operation are:

- to assert Canada's sovereignty over its northernmost regions;
- to enhance the Canadian Armed Forces' ability to operate in Arctic conditions;
- to improve coordination and cooperation in whole-of-government operations; and
- to maintain interoperability with mission partners for maximum effectiveness in response to safety and security issues in the North.



The size and make-up of the forces deployed on the operation vary from year to year, but they always include 1 CRPG. During NUNAKPUT, the military conducts concurrent and complementary operations with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), and Environment Canada (EC). These activities test the effectiveness of CAF northern capabilities and promote a whole-of-government approach to northern operations.

Op NUNAKPUT 2008 (30 July-13 August) involved aerial and maritime surveillance by the Canadian Armed Forces in close coordination with the RCMP along the Mackenzie River. Escorted by four members of the Fort Simpson patrol, Ranger instructor Sgt. Dan Ring and Ranger Cpl. George Aklah of Taloyoak returned

to Fort Providence on 13 August after a 14-day trip on the Mackenzie River. “Everything went well, no hiccups, and that’s a good thing,” said Ring. At each community along the river, two new boats and four Rangers from that patrol joined Ring and Aklah while the members from the previous community returned home. Participating patrols included Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, Wrigley, Fort Good Hope who joined the trip in Norman Wells, Tsiigehtchic, Inuvik and Aklavik. The purpose of the patrol was to provide surveillance coverage of the Ranger’s area of operations. The patrol fostered relationships between the patrols and challenged the Rangers’ skills, Ring explained. Aklah noted that being part of a trip like this is one of the best parts of being a Ranger, providing him with his first trip up the Mackenzie, seeing bison and grizzly bears along the route, and meeting Rangers from different patrols.

In **Op NUNAKPUT 2009** (13 July–21 September), 440 Squadron flew surveillance missions over the Mackenzie River and the Beaufort Sea while the Canadian Rangers conducted boat patrols alongside the RCMP. All of the stakeholders drew upon the Rangers’ local knowledge and contacts. “We’ve got a good mix with the Canadian Rangers living in the communities, knowing what goes on there, and being able to point out when there are abnormalities that warrant investigation,” RCMP Chief Superintendent Tom Middleton explained.

Op NUNAKPUT 2010 (1 June–17 September) focused on air surveillance of the Mackenzie River and Beaufort Sea by 440 Squadron out of Yellowknife, and boat patrols on the Mackenzie River by the Canadian Rangers in support of the RCMP and DFO. The Canadian Rangers also participated in a ground search-and-rescue exercise in the delta of the Mackenzie River.

During **Op NUNAKPUT 2011** (2 July–18 August), about 20 CAF personnel conducted boat patrols on the Mackenzie River and the in-shore waters of the Beaufort Sea in support of the RCMP and DFO. Rangers from Hay River, Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, Tulita, Fort Good Hope, Fort McPherson and Aklavik conducted reconnaissance boat patrols along the River to provide navigational information to the RCMP in preparation for Op GATEWAY, which is an independent patrol along the River from Hay River to Herschel Island. Ranger patrols reported to 1 CRPG HQ on the navigability of the river and any other notable information or activity. The RCMP used the information during Op GATEWAY and conducted community visits along the route.



In **Op NUNAKPUT 2012** (early July to mid-August), the RCMP carried out a marine security patrol along the Mackenzie River. Rangers from Fort Providence, Fort Simpson and Tulita linked-up with the RCMP and provided situational reports about river conditions and activities in their area of responsibility. The Rangers also performed route reconnaissance patrols in the Great Slave Lake, Mackenzie River, Great Bear Lake and Beaufort Sea areas. This phase included cooperation with the local DFO in the Great Slave and Beaufort Sea areas. Members from 15 Ranger patrols in the Northwest Territories assisted with marine patrols along the Mackenzie River and extending into the waters of Great Slave Lake.

During **Op NUNAKPUT 2013** (mid-June to mid-August), approximately 60 CAF members including Rangers conducted joint inter-agency exercises, as well as surveillance and presence patrols of the Great Slave Lake, the Mackenzie River and the Beaufort Sea (covering more than 2400 km of waterways) to increase situational awareness. The operation involved Canadian Ranger marine patrols from Fort Good Hope, Fort McPherson, Fort Smith, Fort Providence, Hay River, Lutsel'ke, Tulita and Inuvik in the Northwest Territories.

Op NUNAKPUT 2014 (14 June to 31 July) saw Rangers from thirteen patrols across the Northwest Territories provide surveillance support to Op GATEWAY conducted by the RCMP and to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) maritime enforcement activities. Rangers conducted reconnaissance patrols in the Great Slave Lake, Mackenzie River and Beaufort Sea areas.



Operation NANOOK

NANOOK, the largest sovereignty operation conducted annually in Canada's North since 2007 takes place in several locations across Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

The objectives of Operation NANOOK are:

- to assert Canada's sovereignty over its northernmost regions;
- to enhance the Canadian Armed Forces' ability to operate in Arctic conditions;
- to improve coordination in whole-of-government operations; and
- to maintain interoperability with mission partners for maximum effectiveness in response to safety and security issues in the North.

Operation NANOOK typically involves simultaneous activities at sea, on land and in the air. The number of soldiers, sailors, airmen and airwomen deployed on the operation has ranged from about 650 to more than 1,250. The size and make-up of the forces vary from year to year, but they always include Rangers from 1 CRPG.

Op NANOOK 2007 (7–17 August) took place on Baffin Island near Iqaluit and Kimmirut in Nunavut. It included drug-interdiction and oil-spill scenarios that involved about 650 CAF personnel, two surface ships, a submarine, and four types of aircraft. Op Nanook was designed to familiarize southern personnel with the Rangers north of 60. Although foggy conditions limited the Rangers' involvement in the environmental spill exercise, a few took part in the drug bust exercise as spotters placed on islands in Frobisher Bay. "[The military] should come here more if they want us to get them out on the land," Ranger Naisana Eecheak of Arctic Bay told a reporter. "Rangers know a lot of things ... [and] I'm glad to be a part."



Op NANOOK 2008 (16–26 August) focused on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief scenarios in and around three communities on Baffin Island: Iqaluit, Kimmirut and Pangnirtung. About 70 Rangers were involved in exercises designed to increase the military's ability to respond to maritime emergencies, including the evacuation of a ship in distress and an oil spill. "I would describe the Rangers' role, our Canadian Rangers, as the front lines of asserting Canadian sovereignty here in the Arctic," Minister Peter MacKay said during his visit with Rangers on 18 August. "If you sit back, especially in some climate that's very warm like down south, it is easy to be an armchair critic," Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Walt Natynczyk said. "But you have to be up here and survive the conditions through the winter, and recognize when weather's bad, that's when things go wrong, that's when you need the natural skills of our Rangers."



Op NANOOK 2009 (6–28 August) took place on the southeastern coast of Baffin Island. Rangers and soldiers with an Arctic Response Company Group based in Ontario traded lessons about the rugged landscape and their different cultures. “There is a shifting of focus on the use of the Rangers to do with more of a focus on the North and military operations, to get them more involved and more used to the military side,” Major Mike Clarry explained. “This exercise is the first time that we have practised some of that and incorporated them into a military exercise as opposed to having military personnel go on one of their patrols.” For example, Rangers accompanied reserve and regular infantry in “storming the beach of Apex” in Iqaluit at dawn on 18 August, simulating how the military would respond if an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) crashed on the tundra. Like the infantry, Rangers carried 40-kg rucksacks for the 5 km trek to the simulated crash site. Twenty-three Rangers then joined the troops in setting up a camp and conducting land exercises over the next two days. “Their main job in this operation, they're there as guides,” Chief Warrant Officer Mark Saulnier told a reporter. “They know the land.” Ranger Greg Spenner of Whitehorse said “We learn from them and they learn from us. There are lots of questions.”





Op NANOOK 2010 (6–26 August) took place in Resolute Bay, Grise Fiord, Pond Inlet / Bylot Island, and Iqaluit, with more than 900 CAF personnel participating. Soldiers from 32 Canadian Brigade Group in Ontario, deployed north as an Arctic Response Company Group, were joined by Rangers, three naval ships, a dive team, helicopters and transport and patrol aircraft in this demonstration of Canada's military capabilities.

The 29 Rangers who participated from across the three territories provided knowledge of the land and advised the southern soldiers on Arctic survival. “They’re absolutely critical,” Major Allan Best of the ARCG emphasized. “They’re from the region, they know the lay of the land.” Rangers appreciated the respect that the soldiers had for their knowledge and skills. “I have taken out the chief warrant officer on an A.T.V. recreation trip,” Ranger Gary Kalluk noted. “He wanted to check out the land. It makes me feel important and well respected.” Experiences during the operation also served as an important reminder that “sovereignty begins at home.”



Op NANOOK 2011 (4 August–1 September) consisted of sovereignty and presence patrolling ashore on Cornwallis Island and on nearby waters, followed by an air-disaster scenario—planned as an exercise but cancelled so that the engaged forces could respond to a real crisis when First Air Flight 6560 crashed near Resolute Bay on 21 August. CAF members were first on the scene and remained to assist throughout the rescue and recovery operations.

During the operation, 45 Rangers acted as guides and safety experts, provided predator control, and participated in training at the main camp in Resolute. Ranger Absalem Idlout saw it as a “wonderful” experience, bringing money and excitement into his community. Other Rangers, like Jackie Amerlik of Gjoa Haven, expressed pride in “meeting the boys from the South and teaching them skills.” On the land with the soldiers, reporter Jane George observed, Rangers “straightened up misconceptions— such as Inuit not living in igloos and how an inuksuk is built for a purpose, not just as a decoration. They also introduced the southern troops to bannock and char — much better than the dried packaged rations like pineapple chicken heated up in a pressure cooker, or coffee drunk out of a plastic bag.”



Op NANOOK 2012 (1–26 August) centred on two areas: Inuvik and Tsiigehtchic in the western Arctic, and Hudson Strait, Hudson Bay and its littoral area in the eastern Arctic. In the western scenario, air and land forces worked with the RCMP and other whole-of-government partners in a simulated security incident involving a toxic spill into the Yukon River. Rangers helped out at the military camps in Inuvik and Tsiigehtchic, with Rangers from the Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson patrols supporting the whole of government safety scenario involving the deployment of an Immediate Response Unit (IRU) company.



Op NANOOK 2013 (2-23 August) focused on emergency management, responding to threats to public safety, and assisting law enforcement agencies. The operation included four scenarios:

- In Whitehorse, CAF members provided the Government of Yukon with disaster relief as the result of a wildfire that was threatening the city;
- Environment Canada requested the assistance of the CAF on Cornwallis Island, Nunavut after a report of suspected poaching activities in the area;
- On Resolution Island, the Canadian Armed Forces, worked with the RCMP and helped investigate simulated suspicious activity; and
- On King William Island, Rangers conducted simulated patrols to report on activity in the Northwest Passage.

During the operation, Prime Minister Stephen Harper participated in an overnight Arctic military sovereignty patrol with the Gjoa Haven patrol. "It was an honour to patrol with the Rangers, as they work to defend our territory from potential threats and emergencies and keep our North strong, secure and free," Harper stated. In Gjoa Haven the prime minister took part in a boat patrol, participated in building an inukshuk, learnt about traditional skills which included the komatik and fish drying, and became a Honourary Ranger of 1 CRPG.



Op NANOOK 2014 (20-29 August) took place on and around Baffin Island in Nunavut. Two scenarios promoted interoperability between participants:

- A SAR exercise (SAREX) was held from 20-23 August in the Davis Strait featuring a simulated fishing vessel in distress. Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC) Halifax led the SAR operation to locate the vessel and survivors. The JRCC was supported by HMCS Shawinigan, HMDS Triton, and the Canadian Coast Guard Ship Henry Larsen with associated aircraft.
- From 25-29 August, Canadian Armed Forces members responded to a simulated 50 passenger cruise ship grounded due to mechanical difficulties in York Sound. The CAF deployed a major air disaster (MAJAD) kit and worked with OGDs to respond to the simulated crisis.





Other Operations and Tasks

In addition to the N-series operations, Rangers contribute to a range of exercises, patrols, and tasks. These are now grouped into six basic “types,” encompassing routine training to high-profile sovereignty operations. This means that 1 CRPG must operate at a very high tempo—a testament to its professionalism and maturity as a unit.

Although Canada does not face any current military threat in the North, heightened activity due to climate change and new economic prospects raises the possibility of safety and security challenges in the years to come. “The absence of a military threat in the Arctic is no reason to ignore the potential for natural disasters, transportation accidents, pandemics and other unforecasted events to occur across our North,” the Army stresses in its Arctic guidance document.

The Canadian Army must be well trained and prepared to deal with crises, and the Canadian Rangers are key to this operational capability. National Defence expects the Rangers to remain “a critical and enduring presence on the ground, valuable in many roles, including amongst others, as eyes and ears for routine surveillance purposes, as guides, local cultural advisors, interpreters and the core of our liaison capacity in many locations, while remaining immediately available to support local government or other agencies.” Rangers also play an important role in supporting and training southern units, including the Arctic Response Company Groups and Immediate Readiness Units (IRUs), so that they can operate with a high degree of readiness and effectiveness in the North.

In February 2014, for example, the Kugaaruk patrol assisted 500 soldiers from southern Canada during the two-week Exercise

Tasks	Title	Description
Type 1	Canadian Rangers Basic Training	Routine training
Type 2	Canadian Rangers Individual Training	Patrol training exercise
Type 3	Canadian Rangers Collective Training	Multiple patrol training exercise
Type 4	Training, Exercise and Event	Conduct and provide support to a CAF training/exercise or any non-military/ non-operational event
Type 5	Domestic Operations	Conduct and provide assistance to Domestic Operations, including other government departments’ activities
Type 6	Sovereignty Operations	Conduct and provide support to Sovereignty Operations

Arctic Ram, a comprehensive winter-training exercise to develop skills in Arctic operations. The Rangers worked with members of the 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry (3 PPCLI) and the Arctic Response Company Group from 38 Canadian Brigade Group, who learned Arctic winter survival, snowmobile patrolling, advance winter warfare skills and quick response to a threat or hazard. Out on the Arctic tundra, the Rangers taught the soldiers how to ice fish, build igloos, and set up blocks of snow around their tents to reduce wind chill. “A tent is really heavy, so us hunters, we’ve got to learn how to make igloos,” said Ranger John Qagutaq, a bylaw officer in Kugaaruk. These local skills inspired others. “Every time I go out, I learn something new,”

Warrant Officer Dan Ring, a 1 CRPG Ranger Instructor, noted. "With different skills, I'm always learning. Many of the skills that I acquire off the patrols, I pass them along to other patrols."

The Rangers also exchange skills and knowledge with international partners. They continue to work with Allied units, such as BATUS on its annual winter survival exercise Arctic Roller. The patrol group has also partnered with the *Slædepatruljen Sirius* (Sirius Sledge Patrol), an elite Danish military unit that conducts long-range reconnaissance patrolling using dog teams and enforces Danish sovereignty in northern and eastern Greenland.

At the invitation of Commander JTFN, representatives from the Sirius Patrol joined with 1 CRPG on Op Nunavut 2010. "When we were out, a couple of our female Canadian Rangers took the dogs and went on a ten kilometer trip while the Danes got on the Rangers' snowmobiles!," Captain Neil Whitman, Deputy Commander of 1 CRPG, observed. "We're doing all kinds of patrolling together so it's been really good to exchange not just the sledding experience but also the skills that they have developed for working in the Greenland environment; and back and forth in terms of type of equipment and shelter as well as the sleds of course." Sergeant First Class Jens Bonde, Chief of Training for the Sirius Dog Sledge Patrol, noted:

I admire the Rangers a lot because they are living on the land and they have experience that we cannot have had. I'm just a college boy from Denmark. I haven't been living my whole life in an arctic area. While I have what it takes and have had a good arctic experience, the Rangers have had it for their whole lives so they can do a lot more than I'm ever going to learn. So I have a great admiration for the Rangers and we can learn a lot from them.

In 2012, Ranger Alan Poowotak from Ulukhatktok and Ranger Instructor Sgt Francois Tremblay travelled to northeastern Greenland for a two-week military exercise where they participated in a series of training activities with Denmark's special forces and the Sirius patrol. The Rangers and Danes travelled out on the land, where they set up a camp to test polar bear alarms and other survival skills including a mock search-and-rescue exercise – an experience that again allowed the participants to share knowledge.

Although international engagement builds new partnerships, local relationships remain the cornerstone of the Rangers' practical contributions. Captain Trent Hollahan, the Officer Commanding (OC) Rangers at 1 CRPG, noted in his annual report for 2010 that "the Rangers have distinguished themselves during all Operations and with every task assigned to them. They continue to stand proud as guardians of the North and remain prepared to respond to any crisis or to help anyone in need. The sheer numbers of [Ground Search and Rescues] conducted by Rangers are far too many to mention and the success rates are extremely impressive considering the austere conditions."

The Canadian Rangers remain the CAF's first responders in many situations and are called upon frequently to conduct Search and Rescue in the North. For example, Rangers from Clyde River assisted in a tragic SAR mission to find the missing pilot of a helicopter that crashed in Nunavut on 16 August 2010.

The Rangers, using three boats, conducted a 55-km search along the coastline from Eric Point to Kigut peak and another 48-km search along the shore on the Northwest side of Sam Ford Fiord. They probed the 250- to 500-metre cliffs with their eyes and binoculars for any sign of the wreckage, and collected debris along the coast. They also faced poor weather conditions includ-

Canadian Forces Unit Citation to 1 CRPG (2012)

On 22 May 2012, Lieutenant-General Walter Semianiw, Commander of Canada Command, on behalf of the Chief of the Defence Staff, recognized 1 CRPG for its selfless dedication and vigilant attention to their duties during the First Air Flight 6560 crash in Resolute Bay, Nunavut in August 2011. The **Canadian Forces Unit Commendation** cited the quick response by 1 CRPG in providing critical site safety and predator protection for emergency respondents until the RCMP could assume responsibility.

"In the changing environment of the Arctic, the Canadian Forces need to be prepared for tomorrow's safety and security challenges," Semianiw explained. "The success of CF Northern operations has been achieved through an ongoing reliance on the Canadian Rangers and the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group has gone above and beyond all expectations to not only serve the Canadian Forces but also to provide exceptional support to other Government Departments." Major Jeff Allen, CO of 1 CRPG, noted that "this CF unit commendation recognizes all the hard work that the Rangers do, not just during the crash that occurred last summer but also recognizes the work that they do almost on a daily basis the North." The commendation included an inscribed medallion, framed scroll, and a pennant which the unit can fly underneath the Ranger flag.



ing rain, wind and fog. Sergeant Levi Palituq noted that the sea water was choppy and their boats bounced easily in the shoreline swells, but they managed to be the first responders to get to the crash site. "I felt we reacted in a timely manner," Palituq concluded, "and were the only group who would venture out in this type of weather."

Similarly, during the 31st annual Yukon Quest in 2014, Canadian Rangers ensured trail safety for all participants and allowed the race to proceed despite unusual weather conditions. They also assisted when racers ran into difficulties. "When musher Tony Angelo pushed his emergency help button between Forty Mile and Dawson City, the Canadian Rangers immediately left on snowmobile and were able to safely transport not only Tony, but all 12 of his dogs as well, into the Dawson checkpoint," Laurie Parris, the executive director of the race, applauded. "On the back half of the race, leader Brent Sass sustained a head injury during a fall on the trail and was unable to make it into Braeburn on his own. Sass pushed his assistance button and the Canadian Rangers were first on the scene. They performed first aid on Sass and transported him into the checkpoint so he could receive further medical attention." These rescues, completed in temperatures around -40°C, are a testament to the Rangers' capabilities and tenacity.

Given their training and preparedness, Rangers are valuable local assets when community members find themselves in trouble. For example, four members of the Dawson patrol were awarded the JTFN Commander's Pennant for their actions on 25 January 2011 when one of the workers at the local airstrip crashed his snowmobile and suffered a broken femur and facial lacerations, a trail detachment from the patrol was asked to assist. Upon arrival, they took charge of the situation, rendered first aid, and coordinated air evacuation. "The prompt and continued applica-

RANGERS BREAK TRAIL

By Ranger Sergeant John Mitchell

During January and February 2013 Canadian Rangers of the Carmacks, Dawson City, Pelly Crossing and Whitehorse Patrols conducted joint training **Exercise Tay Nadan** ("Frozen Trail"). The goal was to break and maintain an overland route of about 800 km from Whitehorse, Yukon to the Alaska border as fast as possible. This is the type of tasking the Rangers would normally be expected to do when working with the Canadian Forces.

As an additional benefit to the territory, the Exercise provided support for the 30th running of the **Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race** as mushers followed the Rangers' trail through the Yukon during this year's 1000 mile race. In a separate provision of service, the Rangers also verified the safety of the trail for mushers until the race reached the Canada-US border west of Dawson.

The history of the Rangers with the Quest began in 1991 and has been going almost every year since.

The Rangers begin to break open the trail about a month prior to the race. A series of short concurrent trail breaking operations executed by small Op teams from the participating Patrols opens, marks and maintains a trail route which is not normally passable. Each Team is self-contained and covers the ground of their allotted section on snowmobiles pulling sleds full of chain saws, axes and camp gear.

The Rangers break trails through the rough river ice and around open leads of the waterways, slash out brush trails and build bridges to make passage. At the end of each Phase the independent operations link up to create a navigable route.

This year's operation was undoubtedly one of the most challenging in the history of the Yukon Quest. Initially low snow levels and jumbled ice on the Yukon River slowed progress and damaged equipment. Immediately following the initial phase of operations, a heavy snow fall smoothed the land but covered over much of the trail and the Rangers worked hard to relocate it.

Next, a severe blizzard left parts of the route with the worst trail conditions seen in the 30 year history of the race. This forced the Rangers to create two major re-routings as the temperatures plunged to minus 50°C just prior to the race start.

Thanks to the hard work of the Rangers the lead musher posted one of the fastest runs ever from Whitehorse to Dawson and, once again, confirmed—on an international level—the trail breaking reputation of the Canadian Rangers.





tion of first aid, administered by the patrol, prevented a major injury from turning into a life threatening situation,” their citation noted.

Rangers continue to play more celebratory roles in local events across the north, as discussed in the previous chapter. In Yukon, for example, Rangers from Whitehorse, Carmacks, Dawson City, Beaver Creek and Haines Junctions provided support to a convoy of Second World War vintage military vehicles that drove up the Alaska Highway in August 2012 to mark the 70th anniversary of the highway’s construction. These individual events supplement ongoing activities that contribute to the vibrant cultural life of the territories. “Each winter, the Rangers volunteer hundreds of hours of their time in order to assist the Yukon Quest and the entire Yukon Territory in hosting this community event,” the organizer of the event noted in 2014. “The Yukon Quest Alaska and Yukon boards of directors would both like to once again offer our most sincere thank you to the Canadian Rangers for all of their hard work and assistance during this year’s race, as well as all previous races they’ve been a part of. Your community spirit and dedication does not go unnoticed!”

Through nonconventional activities, Rangers also help governments meet the Northern Strategy’s objective of building

self-sufficient, vibrant, and healthy Northern communities. During Nunavut’s two-week mass vaccination program against swine flu (the H1N1 virus) in November 2009, Rangers played a pivotal role guiding Nunavummiut through the process and helping them fill out paperwork. *Nunatsiaq News* editor Jim Bell noted that, alongside health workers, the Rangers “achieved something that most other governments in the country have fumbled so far ... They managed to conduct a mass flu-shot clinic that worked.”

1 CRPG supports Canada’s efforts on the scientific front. During Op Nunavut 2008, Rangers helped southern scientists studying ice shelves as part of International Polar Year, a global research program. Two years later, they set up huts for polar bear researchers along M’Clintock Channel in 2010. Rangers have also supported government departments in identifying and verifying sites as part of the federal “legacy sites” cleanup project. These activities, which provided new opportunities for collaboration, serve broader national interests and give Rangers opportunities to “patrol with a purpose.” They also fit with Canada’s avowed commitment to demonstrate its sovereignty in the Arctic, “in adherence to international law, and through science-based measures.”

The Canadian Rangers Ocean Watch (CROW) program, established in 2011, formalizes Ranger support to science. This collaborative undertaking to measure and monitor environmental changes in the Arctic region with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), the Vancouver Aquarium and other governmental and non-governmental partners, leverages Ranger knowledge and capabilities to extend the timeframe for scientists to collect data. DFO scientists train Rangers within their home communities to gather oceanographic data, which scientists and local communities then use to better understand ocean dynamics and climate.

For example, in February 2013, 25 Rangers from Kugluktuk, Cambridge Bay, Gjoa Haven, Tolayoak and Kugaaruk conducted Polar Passage, a mass exercise in the Northwest Passage to demonstrate sovereignty, increase situational awareness and support Government of Canada initiatives by participating in ice measurements off the south coast of Victoria Island. "There are Ranger patrols in the vicinity that are developing and verifying their capability to project themselves into uninhabited areas," Major Jeff Allen, CO 1 CRPG noted. The program was designed to measure the snow and ice thickness, snow/ice interface temperature, water column temperature, salinity, chlorophyll content, dissolved oxygen and surface nutrient concentrations at several locations along the Northwest Passage. Rangers accomplished this task by deploying ice buoys to measure ice and water temperatures at hourly intervals, and transmit data real-time via an Iridium link. The team of Rangers worked in extreme conditions, with temperatures dropping to minus-30, and covered a total distance of 1040 kilometers. All of the Rangers patrols then linked up at the Hat Island NWS site (CAM B) before returning to their home communities.

Having first-hand knowledge of the area and unmatched skills and experience travelling on the ice made the Canadian Rangers perfect partners in this project. The data that they gathered will help to build a sustainable network to observe the marine environment of the Arctic Archipelago. "This collaborative science work between Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Department of National Defence is vital to understanding and protecting Canada's North," said lead Fisheries and Oceans Canada research scientist Bill Williams. "The work involving Rangers from Arctic communities also points to the importance of outreach and involving northern communities in the monitoring of sea-ice conditions and conducting other important research."



The environment conditions of the Far North make these challenging operations. The tragic loss of Ranger Corporal Donald Anguyoak, killed in a snowmobile accident on 17 February 2013 while acting as lead scout for the Gjoa Haven patrol on Exercise Polar Passage, reinforced this reality. Prime Minister Harper acknowledged in his condolences to Anguyoak's family that the accident was "a stark reminder of the very real dangers that the Canadian Rangers and other members of the Canadian Armed Forces face regularly while promoting national security and exercising sovereignty in our harsh northern territories." Nunavut Premier Eva Aariak noted that "Corporal Anguyoak's sacrifice in the name of defending his country will be honoured and remembered." He "made the ultimate sacrifice for his country," she explained,. "We hope there is some comfort in knowing that he was providing an invaluable service to both Nunavummiut and Canadians."

Ranger Pauloosie Paniloo died in April 2007 while hunting caribou on a routine patrol to inspect the FOX-3 North Warning Site, about 200 kilometres outside of his home community of Clyde River. He left the group to hunt caribou for his patrol members to eat when he suffered a fatal heart attack. Paniloo, a proud Ranger for 28 years, had served as a Member of the Legislative Assembly of both the NWT and Nunavut, on the Nunavut Impact Review Board, and on the Clyde River Hunters and Trappers association. As an elder, he used his leadership and traditional knowledge to keep his patrol safe on the land. It was fitting that, at his family's request, Paniloo was buried in his red Ranger hoodie, combat pants, and boots.

Before leaving Clyde River, Paniloo had told fellow Rangers this would be his last patrol. Afterwards, he planned to step down from the Rangers to make room for a younger person. Like many

In Memory of



Ranger Pauloosie Paniloo
July 1, 1943 - April 20, 2007



Corporal Donald Anguyoak
January 6, 1967 - February 17, 2013

Rangers, he was committed to sharing his knowledge with younger people. He knew that the future of the Rangers, and of the North more generally, depends upon sustaining the vitality of diverse cultures and lifestyles. In this respect, the military understands that it is in its best interests to continue promoting the exercising of traditional skills on the land and sea. Since the Rangers were established in 1947, the military has recruited individuals for the skills that they already possess. Ensuring that youth have access to local knowledge and experiences on the land and sea, whether through the Junior Canadian Rangers or other forms of capacity-building, is vital.

The JCR program exemplifies the Ranger organization's role in bridging generations, promoting healthy communities, and improving the quality of life of young Northerners. Increased funding has allowed the JCR program to expand dramatically in 1 CRPG over the last decade to more than 1600 Junior Rangers in 41 patrols.

The program received a very positive appraisal by the Department of National Defence's internal auditor in late 2013, giving every indication that the JCRs will continue to find widespread support.

In addition to patrol activities organized by Rangers and other community supporters and regular community visits from JCR instructors, hundreds of JCRs from the three territories attend the week-long JCR Enhanced Training Session (ETS) in Whitehorse each year. This summer camp includes activities such as horseback riding, trapping, navigation and woodsmanship, archery and trap shooting, ATV safety, rappelling, wall climbing, canoeing and swift-water rescue. Northern youth also enjoy opportunities to participate in an ETS-Advanced program offered at Tim Horton Children's Ranch in Kananaskis, Alberta, featuring training in ice rescue, emergency first aid, small arms safety and hunter education, cross country skiing, responsible leadership, komatik (sled) building, and cultural visits. These opportunities build youth capacity and promote cooperation, mutual respect,



and cross-cultural awareness—values that underpin the Ranger organization more generally.

Like the Canadian Rangers, the JCR program instills pride in its membership and in communities that host patrols. It has become a highly visible part of the Ranger “brand,” as ten JCRs from 1 CRPG who went to Ottawa to participate in Remembrance week activities in 2010 discovered. They met war veterans, learned about Canada’s distinguished military history, and attracted attention in their own right. Everywhere they went, Captain Sharon Low observed, current and former members of the CAF recognized their green JCR hoodies and the red sweatshirts of their Ranger escorts. “On Remembrance Day, as we marched past the veterans to honour them for their service and remember the sacrifice of their comrades, there were shouts of, ‘Here comes the Rangers,’” she observed. “We all marched a little prouder, with heads held a little higher.”

Although the Canadian Rangers have existed for more than sixty-five years, their profile in the popular imagination has never been higher. They enjoy sweeping, positive publicity and are regularly featured in regional and national newspaper and magazine stories, sharing their insights on life in the North, the challenges posed by climate change, and security and safety issues facing their communities. Comedian Rick Mercer has gone skidooring, shooting and trapping with Rangers in the Yukon, and Mikey of Ice Pilots NWT has trained for Arctic survival with the Rangers. Rangers in Nunavut feature in documentary films, such as *Riding with the Rangers*, *This Land*, and *Arctic Defenders*, as well as the six-part documentary adventure series *Watchers of the North* broadcast on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) in fall 2013. This media coverage helps to promote awareness of 1 CRPG activities across the North to Canadian and international audiences.



Celebrating 65 Years of Canadian Ranger History

Dawson, YT, 5 October 2012: A three-day boat patrol along the Yukon River marked the 65th anniversary of the Canadian Rangers, commemorating the stand up of the first Ranger company in Dawson City on 22 September 1947. More than 25 Canadian Armed Forces personnel, representing all Canadian Ranger Patrol Groups as well as members from the Canadian Ranger National Authority, and 35 Canadian Rangers took part in the event. First Nation dancers and singers welcomed the boat patrol in Dawson, receiving applause and cheers from the entire contingent and the general public who lined the shore as fourteen boats passed by the reviewing stand. "Community spirit and commitment to the Canadian Ranger program is key in demonstrating the sovereignty of Canada, and for 65 years the Canadian Rangers have been performing this deed." said Brigadier-General Kelly Woiden, Chief of Staff, Army Reserve, serving as reviewing officer at the gathering. "Recognizing the 65 years of service by the Rangers is one way of saying thank you for all the years of dedicated service by current and former members."

Two original Rangers from 1947, 85-year old Percy Henry from Dawson and 96-year old Alex Van Bibber who resides in Champagne Landing, attended the ceremony. "We didn't have army parkas, much equipment or support in 1947 and there were very few Rangers." said Van Bibber, "It's good to see how much the Rangers have grown, I am excited to be here to witness the 65th anniversary." During an evening commemoration BBQ that included traditional food, Ranger Van Bibber cut the cake donned with 65 maple leaves.





Because of their stellar reputation the Rangers are ambassadors of the North, welcoming Canadian and foreign dignitaries with honour guards and introducing them to their communities, to their cultures, and to life on the land. They have greeted governors general and met with Prime Minister Harper and various ministers of national defence during many northern tours since 2007.

They also have hosted members of the Royal Family. During the Prince of Wales' Royal Visit to Ottawa in November 2009, three Rangers from 1 CRPG—Joseph Catholique of Lustsel k'e, David Illituk of Kugaaruk, and Kelly Suits of Carcross—made a special presentation to Prince Charles. Illituk presented the traditional Ranger uniform for their Royal Highnesses Prince William and Prince Harry, who were appointed Honorary Canadian Rangers. This honour was affirmed in 2010, when Rangers and JCRs hosted Prince William and his wife Kate Middleton, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, and made the Duchess an honorary Ranger.

The following year, Rangers took Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex, and his wife Sophie out on the tundra for a two-hour hike during their visit to Canada's northern territories. Before departing on

the hike, the prince took time to speak with a dozen Rangers from the Iqaluit patrol, his gloves off so he could shake hands and personally thank them for their service.

These symbolic relationships affirm the Canadian Rangers' patriotism and loyalty, as well as broad-based respect for the Rangers and their knowledge. As representatives of the North, in all of its diversity, the Rangers are strong examples of how people come together to serve the greater good of the nation. Rooted in ancestral ties to the land and deep local knowledge, Ranger service ensures that Northerners are key players in defence and security of their territories, and that military activities align with community and national interests.

The importance of having "friends on the ground" in remote regions was one of the original benefits that defence planners saw when they conceived the Rangers at the end of the Second World War. This remains true today. When the resources of the nation are called upon to deal with Northern challenges in the years ahead, the Rangers will continue to play a leading role through their common love for their country, their communities, and the lands and waters that sustain them.



The Rangers' Royal Connection

During the visit of the Duke and Duchess visit to NWT, the Royal Couple flew by a twin otter float plane from Yellowknife to Blachford Lake Lodge where they met with Canadian Rangers and JCRs from various northern communities on 5 July 2011.

The Rangers set up a typical McPherson tent complete with all the equipment used on a Type 1 patrol. As well, they presented a display of different fur coats, mitts and boots along with traditional foods for tasting.

During the brief visit, Rangers from 1 CRPG gifted Prince William with a specially made, engraved Ranger knife and made Princess Kate a honorary member of the unit.

"They attended a unique demonstration which highlighted the capabilities, traditions, history and role of the Canadian Rangers in the North," said Major Jeff Allen, Commanding Officer, 1 CRPG, "Having the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge visit us is an extraordinary moment that will be remembered by 1 CRPG, Rangers and JCRs for a long time."

JCRs Priscilla Angnakak from Pangnirtung and Arlyn William James Charlie from Fort McPherson were two of four JCRs who presented the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge with specially made slippers.

Two hundred JCRs, while attending the Enhanced Training Session (ETS) in Whitehorse from 24 June to 1 July, prepared the special gift for the Royal Couple. Each JCR received the opportunity to sew beads to the back strip, so that it was truly a gift made by the JCRs of 1 CRPG.

In the Gwich'in tradition, when two people come together in marriage they are made and given a pair of slippers as a wedding gift.



A Living History

History has shown that Ottawa's "on again, off again" interest in Arctic sovereignty and security has influenced support for the Canadian Rangers. As Canada lurched from sovereignty crisis to sovereignty crisis during the Cold War, military interest rose and fell accordingly. Having a lightly-equipped, self-sufficient group of local subject matter experts to act as "eyes and ears" in the North made sense – and fit the budget when the threat of an enemy invasion of Canada was remote. Thanks to their tiny cost and strong foundation in Northern communities, the Rangers survived downward cycles of political and military interest.

Today, the situation is different. Global interest in Canada's North continues to grow, generating concerns about sovereignty, security, and safety. Although media reports of a "new Cold War" over transportation routes and easier access to Arctic resources are overblown, the Canadian Armed Forces must be prepared to support Northerners if and when crises arise. On the front lines of the changing Arctic stand the permanent residents of the region. They have a primary role to play as protectors and stewards of their homelands—roles that are not new.

The Canadian Rangers are the CAF's most impressive, versatile, and permanent assets throughout the North. These patriotic men and women serve their country and their communities at the same time. They bring indigenous skills and local knowledge about the lands and waters, which is instrumental to patrolling and other forms of surveillance that they provide and support.

Because Ranger activities allow Northerners to exercise jurisdiction and control, they demonstrate that traditional indigenous activities continue unbroken to the present and are supported by Ottawa. This is a key pillar of Canada's sovereignty position. Their very presence is an affirmation of Canadian sovereignty.

Rangers remain an essential bridge between northern peoples, the military, and the federal government more generally—an essential liaison role that ensures that as the CAF expands its footprint in the North it does not crush local communities.

Rangers are not just the *eyes and ears* but also the *voice* of the military in their communities. They represent an ongoing conversation about what is happening in remote regions, about how the military can best operate in the North, and about the importance of connecting considerations of sovereignty and national security to a strong sense of place.

As the CAF improves its ability to operate in the North, the Canadian Rangers will continue to play an important role in gathering intelligence, teaching southern personnel, and demonstrating Canada's sovereignty over the land and waters through their daily activities. They are a poignant reminder that, at its core, sovereignty is more than lines on a map. It is the human activities that occur within those lines. In their Northern homeland, Rangers are proud guardians prepared to respond to crises and help anyone in need. The military, and Canadians more generally, depend upon these dedicated volunteers to keep our northern territories safe, strong and free.



1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group

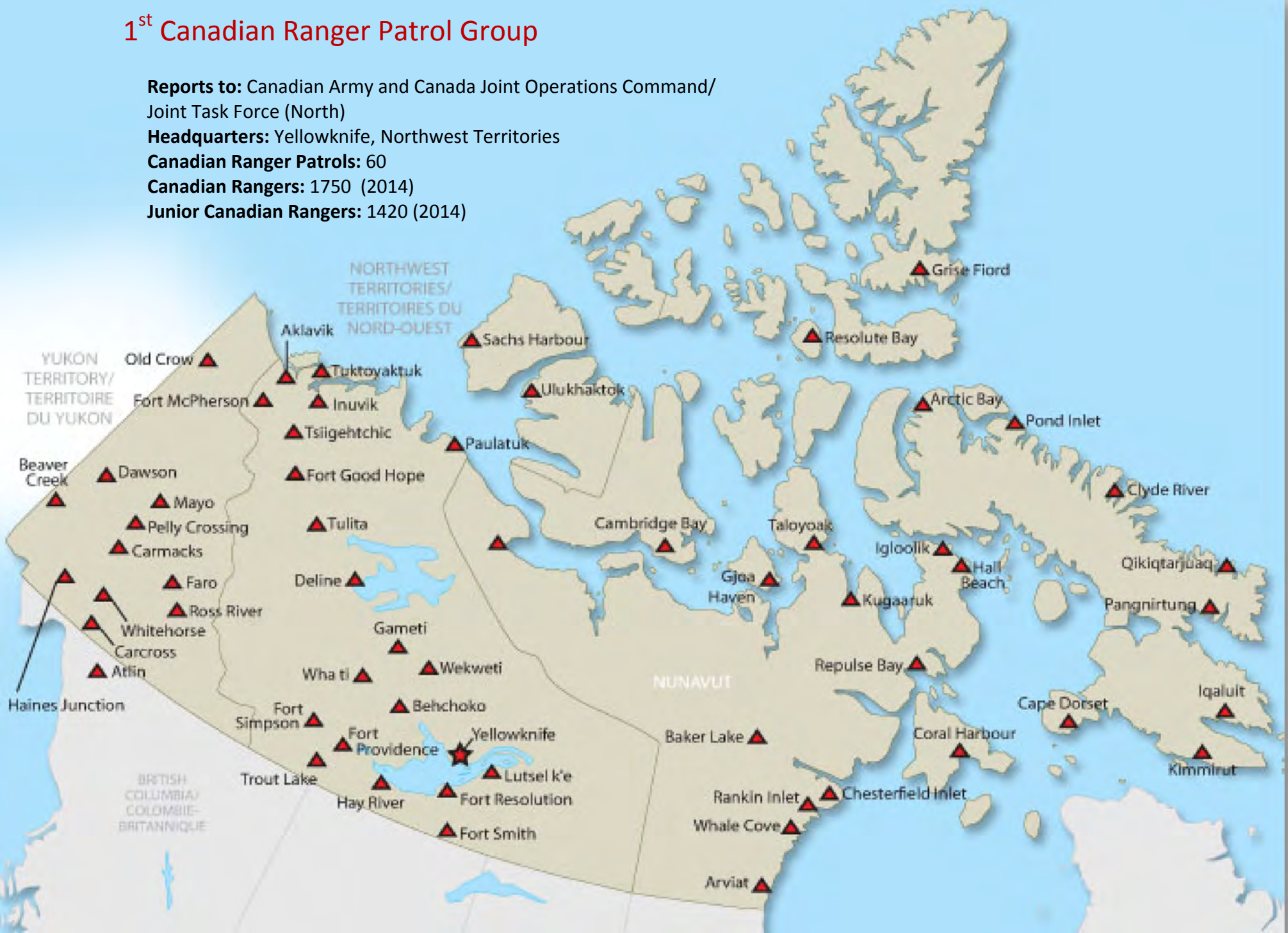
Reports to: Canadian Army and Canada Joint Operations Command/
Joint Task Force (North)

Headquarters: Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Canadian Ranger Patrols: 60

Canadian Rangers: 1750 (2014)

Junior Canadian Rangers: 1420 (2014)



Nunavut

Arctic Bay
Arviat
Baker Lake
Cambridge Bay
Cape Dorset
Chesterfield Inlet
Clyde River
Coral Harbour
Gjoa Haven
Grise Fiord
Hall Beach
Igloolik
Iqaluit

Kimmirut
Kugaaruk
Kugluktuk
Pangnirtung
Pond Inlet
Qikiqtarjuaq
Rankin Inlet
Repulse Bay
Resolute Bay
Sanikiluaq
Taloyoak
Whale Cove

Northwest Territories

Aklavik
Deline
Ft Good Hope
Ft McPherson
Ft Providence
Ft Resolution
Ft Simpson
Ft Smith
Gameti
Hay River
Holman
Inuvik
Lutsel k'e

Paulatuk
Rae Edzo
Sachs Harbour
Trout Lake
Tsiigehtchic
Tuktoyaktuk
Tulita
Wekweti
Wha Ti

British Columbia
Atlin

Yukon

Beaver Creek
Carcross
Carmacks
Dawson City
Faro
Haines Junction
Mayo
Old Crow
Pelly Crossing
Ross River
Watson Lake
Whitehorse



Aklavik

Inuvik Region, Northwest Territories
Population 628 (2012), 91.6% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1987: 23 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2002: 25 JCRs

Aklavik, located on the west shore of the Peel Channel in the Mackenzie Delta, is home to Gwich'in and Inuvialuit people.

An excellent trapping area and key transportation centre, Aklavik became the major community in the Delta by 1920. The Hudson's Bay Company established its post in 1912 and the Roman Catholic Church built a mission in 1926. In the winter of 1931-1932, the famous 42-day RCMP manhunt for Albert Johnson, "The Mad Trapper of Rat River," drew national attention to the area. Rapid development of Aklavik in the early 1950s coincided with disastrous flooding and erosion of the Peel Channel's banks, prompting the federal government to begin construction of Inuvik.

Travel to Aklavik is limited to flight year-round except for seasonal ice road from January until late March that stretches across the Mackenzie Delta to Inuvik.



Arctic Bay

Qikiqtaaluk Region, Nunavut
Population 853 (2012), 95% Inuit
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1953: 44 Rgrs

Arctic Bay, known to the Inuit as *Ikpiarjuk*, "the pocket," is surrounded on three sides by high hills. Located on northern Baffin Island, it is a great place to see narwhals, walruses, seals, and other sea mammals.

During the summer months, tourists arrive on cruise ships to experience the sights and sounds of traditional Arctic Bay. Marble carvings, ivory sculptures, clothes and other arts and crafts are viewed and purchased from talented local artists and seamstresses.

Commercial airlines operate weekly flights from Iqaluit to Arctic Bay.



Arviat

Kivalliq Region, Nunavut
Population 2514 (2007), 92% Inuit
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1981: 43 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2011: 173 JCRs

The name "Arviat" comes from *arviq*, the Inuktitut name for bowhead whale. The community is located on the western shore of Hudson Bay, north of Churchill, Manitoba. Arviat's lands and waters are rich in wildlife. The McConnell River Migratory Bird Sanctuary, south of town, is a great place to observe thousands of nesting waterfowl. In the fall, beluga whales are frequently seen in the bays around town and caribou are often spotted near the community.

Arviat is a diverse community where traditional knowledge and values are maintained in harmony with practical economic development. The Inuktitut language remains strong among residents.

Commercial airlines operate daily flights to Arviat.



Atlin

Northwestern Region, British Columbia
Population 450 (2004)
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1994: 26 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2000: 10 JCRs

Atlin is a small isolated community in the northwest corner of British Columbia, on the traditional lands of the Taku River Tlingit First Nation. Glacial-fed Atlin Lake lies in a wide valley surrounded by snow-capped mountains.

During the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898, the population rose to approximately 5000 people. Many buildings from that era still exist. Placer mining and tourism (fishing, hiking and heli-skiing) continue to underpin the local economy.

Travel to Atlin is done by flight or land via Yukon Territorial Highway 7 (Atlin Road), which connects to the Tagish Road and the Alaska Highway. By road, the community is 2-3 hours from Whitehorse or Skagway.



Baker Lake

Kivalliq Region, Nunavut
Population 1728 (2006), 92% Inuit
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1987: 25 Rgrs

Baker Lake, or *Qamani'tuuq*, is situated inland 320 km from Hudson Bay at the huge widening at the mouth of the Thelon River, close to the geographic centre of Canada. It is the only inland Inuit community in the country.

The Hudson's Bay Company established a trading post at Baker Lake in 1916, Anglican missionaries arrived in 1927, and RCMP set up a post in 1930.

The community, which is home to eleven Inuit groups, is well known for its arts and crafts industry. The Meadowbank gold mine, about 70 km from the community, is opening local job opportunities.

The community is accessible by air.



Beaver Creek-Burwash

Kluane Region, Yukon
Population 103 (2013), 50% First Nations
Canadian Ranger Patrol: 17 Rgrs

Beaver Creek, the most westerly community in Canada, is a small border town on the Alaska Highway. Although located on the highway, Beaver Creek is relatively isolated from other Yukon communities, lying almost 300 km northwest of Haines Junction and 457 km from Whitehorse.

Beaver Creek is home to the White River First Nation. Traditionally, the area around Beaver Creek was home to the Upper Tanana people who camped there on their seasonal migrations. In the early twentieth century, the settlement took preliminary shape as a camp for the team surveying the Canada-US border. Later, mining interest developed in the area. In the mid-1950s, a Canada Customs post was established and the community developed around it.

The community is accessible by road from the Alaska Highway and by air.



Cambridge Bay (Iqaluktuuttiaq)

Kitikmeot Region, Nunavut
Population 1367 (2007), 83% Inuit
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1982: 25 Rgrs

Cambridge Bay is the transportation and administrative centre for the Kitikmeot region and the hub for business in western Nunavut. Situated on the southeast corner of Victoria Island, the community is located in a traditional hunting and fishing area that has been occupied for thousands of years. The Inuktitut name for Cambridge Bay, *Iqaluktuuttiaq*, translates to “a good place with lots of fish.”

The Hudson's Bay Company opened a post at Cambridge Bay in 1921, and the community grew when the air force built a main Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line site there in the late 1950s. Today, community members are active in business and government, catering to tourists visiting the area for fishing and outdoor experiences and exploration companies working on Victoria Island. The Canadian High Arctic Research Station (CHARS) is being built there.

Cambridge Bay is accessible by daily air service.



Cape Dorset/Kinngait

Qikiqtani Region, Nunavut
Population 1236 (2006), 91% Inuit
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1962: 28 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 1998: 47 JCRs

The Inuktitut name for Cape Dorset, *Kinngait*, refers to the picturesque hills that surround the community. Located on southwestern Baffin Island, Inuit have lived in the area for thousands of years. The Hudson's Bay Company started their trading post in 1913.

Since the 1950s, Cape Dorset – which calls itself the “Capital of Inuit Art” -- has earned an international reputation for drawing, printmaking, and carving. Art remains the community's main economic activities, with nearly one quarter of the local labour force employed in the arts. The community is actively engaged in promoting its tourist industry, which offers tremendous possibility for future growth.

Daily commercial flights operate from Iqaluit to Cape Dorset.



Carcross

Southern Lakes Region, Yukon
Population 289 (2011), 60.5% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1992: 36 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2000: 26 JCRs

Carcross is located about 74 km south of Whitehorse and north of Skagway, Alaska, on Lake Bennett. Home to the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, the community was traditionally a caribou crossing during their annual migration. Klondike prospectors who conquered the infamous Chilkoot Pass on their way to the Klondike gold fields took a much needed break in the small settlement of Caribou Crossing (shortened to Carcross).

Today the community is a popular tourist destination.

Carcross is accessible year-round by road and air.



Carmacks

Klondike Region, Yukon

Population 503 (2011)

Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1993: 24 Rgrs

JCR Patrol since 2003: 39 JCRs

Carmacks is located on the Klondike Highway between Whitehorse and Dawson City. The region boasts abundant mineral resources.

The community consists of the Village of Carmacks and the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation, a Northern Tutchone-speaking people. It is named after George Washington Carmack, who built a trading post and traded with locals (who who relied heavily on the abundant salmon in the Yukon River) near the present townsite and also started a coal mine on the south bank of the Yukon River. Carmack soon discovered gold in the Dawson region with Skookum Jim and Tagish Charlie, launching the Klondike Gold Rush.

Various mining activities are taking place in the region, including a zinc-copper mine in production and a gold property to the northwest currently in the exploration stage.

Carmacks is accessible year-round by road and air.



Chesterfield Inlet / Igluigaarjuk

Kivalliq Region, Nunavut

Population 373 (2012), 90% Inuit

Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1989: 20 Rgrs

JCR Patrol since 2001: 32 JCRs

Chesterfield Inlet is located on the western shore of Hudson Bay, just north of Rankin Inlet and just south of the Arctic Circle. Its traditional name *Igluigaarjuk* translates to “place with a few houses.”

Chesterfield Inlet officially claims to be the oldest community in the Arctic, dating back to the mid-1800s when it became the Hudson's Bay Company's main supply centre for other posts in the area. Inuit and their predecessors had already inhabited the area for hundreds of years before that time.

Today, the Chesterfield Inlet Historic Trail outlines the rich history of the area. Other tourist activities include fishing, hiking, whale watching, and caribou hunting.

Commercial air travel to Chesterfield Inlet is via Rankin Inlet.



Clyde River / Kanngiqtugaapik

Qikiqtani Region, Nunavut

Population 934 (2011), 95% Inuit

Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1952: 27 Rgrs

JCR Patrol since 1997: 56 JCRs

Clyde River, which Inuit refer to as *Kanngiqtugaapik* or “nice little inlet,” is located on the eastern shore of Baffin Island. Located on a flood plain in the shelter of Patricia Bay, it is surrounded by spectacular fiords that stretch into the Barnes Icecap. The mountains, icebergs and glaciers in the area attract rock and ice climbers from around the world.

The Clyde River Economic Development Society, which oversees new development projects for the community, expresses particular interest in areas of tourism, community micro-businesses, arts and crafts, and export development (including halibut and shrimp, clams, seal and caribou meat).

The community is served by air and by annual sealift.



Coral Harbour / Salliq

Kivalliq Region, Nunavut

Population 834 (2011), 97% Inuit

Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1979: 23 Rgrs

JCR Patrol since 1997: 38 JCRs

Coral Harbour is located on the southern shore of Southampton Island on the northern rim of Hudson Bay. The Inuktitut name for the community, *Salliq*, means “large, flat island in front of the mainland. The English name refers to the fossilized coral that is found in the harbour.

Coral Harbour is one of the best places in Nunavut to see marine wildlife. The nearby Coates Island is a resting place for colonies of walruses. Thousands of snow geese, as well as tundra swans, sandhill cranes, gyrfalcons, and other species migrate to the area in spring. Local outfitters offer boat tours to view the wildlife in the area.

The community can be reached by commercial air flight from Rankin Inlet to Coral Harbour throughout the week and sea supply in the summer. The main transportation on Southampton Island itself is by snowmobile and dog team in winter and all-terrain vehicle in summer.



Dawson City

Klondike Region, Yukon

Population 2000 (2012), 21.8% Aboriginal

Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1991: 40 Rgrs

JCR Patrol since 1998: 23 JCRs

Dawson City, a National Historic Site and Yukon's original capital city, is located at the confluence of the Yukon and Klondike rivers about 536 km northwest of Whitehorse. At the peak of the Klondike Gold Rush in 1898, Dawson was the largest city in western Canada with a population of 40,000. Its population dropped after the gold rush and again after Second World War, when the Alaska Highway bypassed it 480 km to the south.

Today, Dawson residents work mainly in the tourism, mining and public service industries. The town boasts an eclectic mix of arts, culture, wilderness and history. The town is also the gateway to the Dempster Highway to Inuvik, the Top of the World and Taylor Highways to Alaska, and the Klondike Highway to Whitehorse

Dawson is home to the Hän and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (People of the River) First Nations who have lived throughout the Yukon and along the Yukon River for millennia.

Dawson is accessible year-round by air and land.



Déline

Sahtu Region, Northwest Territories

Population 559 (2012), 92.7% Aboriginal

Canadian Ranger Patrol since 2012: 31 Rgrs

Déline, meaning “where the waters flow,” refers to the headwaters of the Great Bear River (Sahtúdé). The community is situated on the north shore of Keith Arm, Great Bear Lake, 544 km northwest of Yellowknife. It officially changed its name from Fort Franklin (named after Sir John Franklin, who used the area as a base for exploration during the mid-1820s) in 1993.

The original trading post was constructed at one of the most productive Dene fisheries in the Mackenzie River basin. Later, the discovery of pitchblend at the Eldorado mine, about 250 km away at Port Radium, generated work for many men from Déline, exposing them to radiation.

Both North Slavey and English are the dominant languages in the community. The economy is based on hunting, trapping and fishing. Tourism, oil and gas services, local services and arts and crafts are also important.

The community has limited air service from Norman Wells and winter road access to Tulita.



Faro

Central Yukon Region, Yukon Territory
Population 244 (2011), 16% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 2010: 22 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2012: 9 JCRs

Faro is located on the Pelly River in the Anvil Mountains, 356 km northeast of Whitehorse on the Robert Campbell Highway. It was established in 1969 to support the largest open-pit lead and zinc mine in the world, which closed in 1998. Since that time, Faro has re-invented itself as an eco-tourist destination to view animals such as Dall's Sheep and Stone's Sheep (a species of mountain sheep almost unique to the surrounding area).

Faro is home to the Kaska Dena First Nation. Members of the community traditionally hunt in the Ross River area, an area which is well-known for being a prime moose-hunting spot.

Faro is accessible year-round either by car or plane.



Fort Good Hope / K'asho Got'ine

Sahtu Region, Northwest Territories
Population 515 (2011), 99% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1997: 22 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2007: 33 JCRs

Fort Good Hope or K'asho Got'ine is the oldest settlement in the lower Mackenzie Valley, located on a peninsula between Jackfish Creek and the east bank of the Mackenzie River, about 145 km northwest of Norman Wells.

Established in 1805 by the Northwest Company, Fort Good Hope moved several times before it reached its current location in 1839. The community is home to the Sahtu Dene First Nation. Hunting and trapping are the main sources of income, and the two principal languages are North Slavey and English.

Fort Good Hope is accessible by air from Inuvik, Norman Wells, and Colville Lake, and winter road access from Wrigley to the south.



Fort McPherson / Teetl'it Zheh

Inuvik Region, Northwest Territories
Population 792 (2011), 90.3% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1982: 32 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2001: 17 JCRs

Fort McPherson (Teetl'it Zheh), a Gwich'in, Métis, and Inuvialuit community, is located on the Peel River 121 km south of Inuvik and 1107 km northwest of Yellowknife. The two principal languages are Gwich'in and English.

The Hudson's Bay Company established a post at the site in 1840, which it named after the chief company trader. A Gwich'in village moved to the post a few years later, and an Anglican mission arrived in 1860. The community is the home of Métis politician Wally Firth, the first northern Native Member of Parliament (1972-79).

Fort McPherson is accessible by road all year from Dawson City, Whitehorse, and Inuvik, with the exception of spring break-up and fall freeze-up on the Peel River. There also is a small airport with seasonal flights to Inuvik.



Fort Providence / Zhahti Kue

Dehcho Region, Northwest Territories
Population 734 (2011), 92.2% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1998: 35 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2005: 28 JCRs

Fort Providence is located on the northeast bank of the Mackenzie River 233 air km southwest of Yellowknife and 72.4 air km west of Great Slave Lake. The Dene of the community are represented by the Deh Gah Gotie Dene Band and the Métis by Fort Providence Métis Nation. Both groups belong to the Dehcho First Nations.

Monsignor Grandin opened the Roman Catholic Mission in 1886 and a school in 1896. A Hudson's Bay Company post soon followed, attracting Dene to the site in sufficient numbers to establish a permanent settlement. Today, the economy is based on traffic from the Mackenzie Highway, as well as tourism, traditional art, and trapping in winter.

Fort Providence is accessible air and road year round except for during thaw and freeze up. The Dehcho Bridge, which opened in 2012, allows for year-round crossing of the Mackenzie River.



Fort Resolution / Deninu Kue

South Slave Region, Northwest Territories
Population 474 (2011), 93% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1992: 31 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2003: 25 JCRs

Fort Resolution or Deninu Kue ("moose island") is a hamlet located on the Slave River Delta, 153 km from Yellowknife. The oldest documented community in the Northwest Territories, Fort Resolution has existed on its present site since the 1820s. The community is situated at the focal point of important waterways which formed the transportation network of the early fur trade. It was the largest trading post on Great Slave Lake in the mid-nineteenth century and became an important supply base for other trading posts. The nearby site of Pine Point was once a thriving lead mine.

Fort Resolution is home to Dene (represented by the Deninu Kue First Nation and part of the Akaitcho Territory Government) and Métis peoples, which English, Chipewyan (Slavey) and Michif as dominant languages. Local people engage in fishing, moose hunting, and trapping (ptarmigan and rabbit).

Fort Resolution is accessible by air and land year-round.



Fort Simpson / Liidli Kue

Dehcho Region, Northwest Territories
Population 1238 (2011), 67.4% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1993: 25 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since

Fort Simpson or Liidli Kue (Slavey for "place where rivers come together") is the regional centre of the Dehcho and is located at the confluence of the Mackenzie and Liard Rivers, 375 km southwest of Yellowknife.

Fort Simpson is the oldest continuously occupied trading post on the Mackenzie River. The Northwest Company first built a trading post on the Mackenzie River at Fort Simpson in 1804, followed by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1822. The Anglican Mission started in 1858, the Catholic Mission in 1894, and the first Indian agency in 1910. With rich soils and relatively temperate climate, Fort Simpson became known as the Garden of the Mackenzie.

Fort Simpson is home to the Liidli Kue First Nation and by Fort Simpson Métis Local 52, both of which belong to the Dehcho First Nations. The main languages are South Slavey and English.

Fort Simpson can be reached by air, water and road via the Mackenzie Highway.



Fort Smith / Thebacha

South Slave Region, Northwest Territories
Population 2450 (2012), 62.9% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1992: 24 Rgrs

Fort Smith or Thebacha (“beside the rapids”) is located on the Slave River south of the “Rapids of the Drowned” and immediately north of the Northwest Territories/Alberta border, 322 km southwest of Yellowknife.

The location of Fort Smith served a vital link for water transportation between southern Canada and the Western Arctic during the early fur trade. A portage trail, used by Aboriginal people for centuries, allowed users to navigate four sets of impassable rapids.

The majority of the population is Dene, Cree, and Métis, represented by the Salt River First Nation (part of the Akaitcho Territory Government) and the Northwest Territory Métis Nation. The main languages are English, Chipewyan, Cree, and Michif.

Fort Smith is accessible year-round by air and land.



Gamètì

North Slave Region, Northwest Territories
Population 253 (2011), 94.5% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1996: 31 Rgrs

The Tłı̨chǫ Community Government of Gamètì (“rabbit-net lake), formerly known as Rae Lakes, is located 177 km northwest of Yellowknife. It falls within the traditional territory of the Tłı̨chǫ First Nations and was the site of a popular hunting camp prior to permanent settlement.

In the 1960s, Dene elders around Behchoko decided to return to the land and establish traditional camps in the bush. Gamètì was established during this time, and it has evolved into a modern community with essential services of its own. Today, the economy is based on fishing, hunting and trapping.

Gamètì is accessible by air year-round. The community does not have all-weather road access, but an ice road is usually built in the winter.



Gjoa Haven / Uqsuqtuuq

Kitikmeot Region, Nunavut
Population 1279 (2011), 95% Inuit
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1983: 35 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2004: 58 JCRs

Gjoa Haven is the only settlement on King William Island. Its Inuktitut name, *Uqsuqtuuq*, means “a place of plenty of fat” – a reference to the fat fish and seals abundant in the area.

Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen travelled to the area in 1903 during his transit of the Northwest Passage and put his ship, *Gjøa*, into what he described as “the finest little harbour in the world” for nearly two years. He and his crew lived with local Netsilik Inuit, who taught land skills and guide Amundsen’s explorations of the Boothia Peninsula to locate the Magnetic North Pole. Permanent European-style settlement started in 1927 when the Hudson’s Bay Company established a trading outpost. Although a modern community, residents continue to enjoy traditional activities such as throat singing, drum dancing, hunting, and fishing.

Gjoa Haven is accessible by air from Yellowknife.



Grise Fiord / Aujuittuq

Qikiqtani Region, Nunavut
Population 130 (2011), 95% Inuit
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1977: 21 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 1999: 13 JCRs

The most Northern civilian community in Canada, Grise Fiord is located at the southern tip of Ellesmere Island in the High Arctic. Picturesque and remote, it is surrounded by high hills and, for most of the year, sea ice.

Grise Fiord means “pig inlet” in Norwegian – a name given by explorer Otto Sverdrup in 1900 because he thought the walrus sounded like pigs. Local residents call it *Aujuittuq*, “the place that never thaws out,” referring to the glacier near the community. It is also one of the coldest inhabited places in the world, with an average yearly temperature of -16.5 °C.

Hunting is still an important part of the lifestyle of most local residents, who supply many of their needs from populations of seals, walruses, narwhal and beluga whales, polar bears and musk oxen. The area is developing ecotourism as a way to draw people to see the beauty and wildlife of Ellesmere and surrounding islands.

Grise Fiord is accessible by air from Resolute.



Haines Junction

Klune Region, Yukon
Population 593 (2011), 45.5% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1991: 30 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2000: 19 JCRs

Haines Junction, located at the junction of the Alaska and Haines highways, is set against the spectacular backdrop of the St. Elias Mountain Range. Haines Junction and Champagne are home to the Ashihik First Nations.

The community is the gateway to Kluane National Park and Reserve, a World Heritage Site and one of the most dynamic and spectacular landscapes on the planet.

Southern Tutchone people have lived in the area for thousands of years. Discovery of gold in 1903 led to an influx of European prospectors, but most quickly moved on when the gold deposits proved to be very small. The present-day town began life as a construction camp for the US Army Corps of Engineers building the Alaska Highway during the Second World War.

Haines Junction is located at kilometre 1,632 on the Alaska Highway and is accessible year-round by road and air.



Hall Beach / Sanirajak

Qikiqtani Region, Nunavut
Population 736 (2011), 92% Inuit
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1991: 27 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2000: 26 JCRs

Hall Beach, located on the shore of Foxe Basin on the Melville Peninsula approximately 69 km south of Igloolik, was created when a Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line site was built in the area in 1957. In the late 1950's and early 1960s, Inuit moved from surrounding camps to work at the site, thus creating the community.

The traditional name of Hall Beach is *Sanirajak* (“one that is along the coast”). The main occupations here are hunting and fishing. Each year on 1 April, the community holds a Hamlet Day festival featuring a community feast, traditional games and square dancing to celebrate the return of continuous daylight from mid-April through mid-August.

Hall Beach is accessible by air from Iqaluit.



Hay River / Xátl'odehchee

South Slave Region, Northwest Territories
Population 3606 (2011), 42.4% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 2011: 17 Rgrs

The Town of Hay River, known as "the Hub of the North," is located on the south shore of Great Slave Lake, 200 km southwest of Yellowknife and 134 km from the Alberta border via the Mackenzie Highway.

Archaeologists confirm that the area has been in use by Aboriginal people since 7000 BC. It is still home to the Hay River Dene and the West Point First Nation. The first permanent buildings were those of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1868, a Roman Catholic Mission in 1869, and an Anglican Mission in 1894. It became the first community in the NWT to have highway access to southern Canada, and is the northernmost point on the continental railway system. In 1959 the Northern Transportation Company Limited made the community its main base, and it remains the main staging point for the annual sealift along the Mackenzie River and the Arctic communities from Taloyoak to Barrow, Alaska.

Hay River is accessible by air, road, and railway year-round.



Igloolik

Qikiqtani Region, Nunavut
Population 2000 (2013), 95% Inuit
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1987: 28 Rgrs

Igloolik (translated as "there is a house here") is located on a small island in Foxe Basin, just off Melville Peninsula on the mainland of Nunavut. Archaeological sites on the island date back more than 4000 years, and the community represents a mix of Inuit cultural traditions from Baffin Island, Southampton Island, and the Melville Peninsula. Local Inuit had first contact with British Navy ships that wintered in the area in 1822. The first permanent presence by southerners came with the establishment of a Roman Catholic Mission and a Hudson's Bay Company post in the 1930s.

Igloolik is a community that balances modern living with a traditional way of life. An ancient legend from the area formed the basis for direct Zacharias Kunuk's film *Atanarjuat*, which the Toronto International Film Festival recently listed as the greatest Canadian film ever made. The Igloolik Research Centre focuses on documenting Inuit traditional knowledge and technology, as well as climatology and seismic data research.

Igloolik is accessible by air from Iqaluit.



Inuvik

Inuvik Region, Northwest Territories
Population 3321 (2012), 64.5% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1990: 26 Rgrs

Inuvik ("the place of man") is located on the Mackenzie River Delta 1086 km northwest of Yellowknife and is the administrative centre for the Inuvik Region. Nearly 40% of the local population is Inuvialuit, with sizable Gwich'in, Métis, and non-Native populations. The main language is English, and some local people still speak Inuvialuktun and Gwich'in.

The town was created in 1954 when the federal government attempted to relocate the entire community of Aklavik owing to persistent flooding. The local population and the economy expanded considerably in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a result of a massive oil exploration program in the Beaufort Sea. The boom went bust by the mid-1980s, however, when oil prices collapsed.

Inuvik has been the northernmost point of Canada's highway system since the completion of the Dempster Highway in 1979. The highway relies on ice roads in the winter and ferries in the summer to cross rivers, so the town is only accessible by air during the fall and spring periods where the ice is freezing or thawing.



Iqaluit

Qikiqtani Region, Nunavut
Population 6699 (2011), 60% Inuit
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1990: 26 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2012: 48 JCRs

Iqaluit (formerly Frobisher Bay) is the business and government centre for the Baffin region and the capital of the territory of Nunavut. Located on the southern portion of Baffin Island on Koojesse Inlet, Iqaluit is the largest community in Nunavut and the gateway to the Arctic from Eastern Canada.

Founded in 1942 as an American air base, Iqaluit has experienced remarkable growth over the last two decades. Many new offices have opened their doors to meet the demands of expansion in government, hospitality and tourism, retail trade and the service sectors. In 2001, Iqaluit was officially designated as a city.

Iqaluit is accessible by commercial flights that operate daily from Yellowknife, Ottawa and Montreal.



Kimmirut

Qikiqtani Region, Nunavut
Population 455 (2011), 91% Inuit
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1964: 14 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2008: 23 JCRs

The community of Kimmirut (formerly Lake Harbour) is located on the southern coast of Baffin Island, near the mouth of the Soper River. The name, translated as “heel,” refers to a rocky outcrop in the inlet.

The site of a former Hudson’s Bay Company trading post and Royal Canadian Mounted Police post, Kimmirut is now a tourist destination. Hikers access the Katannilik Territorial Park Reserve from just outside the community. Other outdoor pursuits in the area include sea kayaking, canoeing, and hunting. Kimmirut is a destination for cruise ships and offers guiding and outfitting services. Furthermore, many of Kimmirut’s residents are renowned carvers.

Kimmirut is accessible by air from Iqaluit.



Kugaaruk

Kitikmeot Region, Nunavut
Population 771 (2011), 97% Inuit
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1990: 38 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2002: 61 JCRs

The name *Kugaaruk* means “little stream” and the community’s other common name, *Arviligjuaq*, means “place of many bowhead whales” because the settlement is situated near bowhead habitat. Formerly known as Pelly Bay, the community is located on the Simpson Peninsula south of the Gulf of Boothia. The area is known for its excellent fishing, and Kugaaruk is nestled within coastal mountains which lie between the bay and the wide expanse of tundra.

The *Netsilingmiut*, or the people of the seal, are have occupied this area for centuries. Missionary priests in the 1930s built a church which is now an historic site maintained by the hamlet. Regular contact with the outside world began with the construction of a nearby DEW line site (CAM-4) in the 1950s, and the people followed a nomadic lifestyle until 1968 when the last families settled in the community. Residents now blend a land based lifestyle with modern technology and interests. Most families supplement their diet with ringed seal, caribou, and Arctic char.

Kugaaruk is accessible by air from Yellowknife.



Kugluktuk

Kitikmeot Region, Nunavut
Population 1450 (2011), 90% Inuit
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1971: 32 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 1998: 69 JCRs

Kugluktuk (*Qurluktuk* or “the place of moving water”), formerly known as Coppermine, is situated along the banks of the Coppermine River and on the shores of Coronation Gulf. It is the most westerly community in Nunavut.

The people of Kugluktuk continue to rely heavily on their traditional economy of hunting and fishing to feed and clothe their families. Residents are also optimistic that the growth sectors of tourism, government, and mining, will bring economic development, along-side traditional pursuits. In summer, canoeists and rafters take the popular route up the Coppermine River to the scenic “Bloody Falls Territorial Historic Park.” Other outdoor activities include hiking, fishing, hunting, kayaking, and photography. Because the tundra is close to the tree line, a diverse array of wildlife can be viewed in the area, including grizzly bears, wolverines, moose, muskoxen, caribou, foxes, and wolves.

Kugluktuk is accessible by air from Yellowknife.



Lutselk'e

South Slave Region, Northwest Territories
Population 310 (2011), 89.7% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1996: 30 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 1999: 23 JCRs

Lutselk'e (also spelt Lutsel K'e, meaning “place of the Lutsel,” a type of small fish) is located on the East Arm of Great Slave Lake, 201 km east of Yellowknife. Formerly known as Snowdrift, the community is represented by the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation which is part of the Akaitcho Territory Government. The main languages are Denesuline and English.

There is a two person Royal Canadian Mounted Police detachment and health centre with a single nurse in the community. There is a single grocery store, the Lutselk'e Co-op, a post office and nine lodges or outfitters in the area. Education in the community goes up to Grade 10 and there is also a community learning centre run by Aurora College.

Lutselk'e is accessible by air from Yellowknife. Annual sealift is provided from Hay River, and the local water aerodrome is available in the summer months when the lake is clear of ice.



Mayo

Central Yukon Region, Yukon
Population 226 (2011)
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1991: 10 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 1999: 16 JCRs

Mayo lies on the Stewart River and Silver Trail in central Yukon, about 400 km northwest of Whitehorse, within the traditional territory of the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun. The Stewart and Mayo rivers meet at the town, formerly known as Mayo Landing.

In the past, placer gold and hardrock silver mines around Mayo drove the Yukon economy. Today the economic balance has shifted to other parts of the Territory, but Mayo remains a prospecting and placer mining community and serves as a supply centre for the surrounding area. Tourism and outfitting also stimulate the local economy, with the community serving as the staging point for backcountry wilderness trips into the magnificent Peel River Watershed.

Mayo is accessible by road on the Silver Trail, which connects to the Klondike Highway, and by air.



Old Crow

North Yukon Region, Yukon
Population 245 (2011), 87.8% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1985: 14 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 1998: 6 JCRs

Old Crow is the most northerly community in the Yukon and the only community in the territory located north of the Arctic Circle. It sits on the banks of the Porcupine River near Vuntut National Park and is one of the earliest sites of human habitation in North America.

Old Crow derives its name from Chief "Deetru` K'avihdik," which means "Crow May I Walk." Following his death in the 1870s, his people named the river, mountain and area in his honor. The community is home to the self-governing Vuntut Gwitchin ("People of the Lakes") First Nation. Their main source of livelihood is trapping, hunting, and fishing, with the Porcupine caribou herd providing meat and hide for boots, moccasins, mitts, traditional outfits, and other decorative items.

Old Crow is only accessible by air. It is the only community in the territory not accessible by road.



Pangnirtung (Panniqtuuq)

Qikiqtani Region, Nunavut
Population 1425 (2011), 95% Inuit
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1979: 37 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 1998: 51 JCRs

Pangnirtung ("Pang" for short) is located on Baffin Island in Cumberland Sound, 50 km south of the Arctic Circle. Surrounded by spectacular fiords, the community is known to hikers, climbers and skiers as the southern gateway to Auyuittuq National Park.

Indigenous people have inhabited the land near Pangnirtung for 4,000 years. A Scottish whaling station was established on nearby Kekerten Island in 1840 and British and American whalers soon visited the region regularly. The Hudson's Bay Company founded a trading post in Pangnirtung in 1921, followed by the RCMP two years later.

Today, Pangnirtung's artistic community is famous for its woven tapestries, lithographic prints, and "Pang" hats. Pangnirtung Fisheries contributes to the local economy by harvesting and processing arctic char and Baffin turbot (Greenland halibut) at a newly-modernized processing plant before shipment to international locations.

Pangnirtung is accessible by air from Iqaluit.



Paulatuk (Paulatuq)

Inuvik Region, Northwest Territories
Population 329 (2012), 83.6% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1988: 32 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 1997: 13 JCRs

Paulatuk ("the place of coal") is an Inuit community located on Darnley Bay in the Amundsen Gulf approximately 402 km east of Inuvik and 885 km northwest of Yellowknife.

Paulatuk was named after the coal used by the local Inuit when they settled there in the early 1920s. In 1935 the Roman Catholic Church opened a trading post and, twenty years later, the construction of a DEW Line station at Cape Perry 95 km to the northeast offered wage employment for community members.

Hunting, fishing and trapping form a large part of Paulatuk's economy. The principal languages in the community are Inuvialuktun and English.

The hamlet is accessed by air from Inuvik. Annual sealift is provided from Hay River, and the local water aerodrome is available in the summer months when the lake is clear of ice.



Pelly Crossing

Klondike Region, Yukon
Population 336 (2011), 90.8% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1992: 27 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2001: 13 JCRs

Home to the Selkirk First Nation, Pelly Crossing is located between Whitehorse and Dawson City at the intersection of the Klondike Highway and the Pelly River.

Pelly Crossing was established as a ferry crossing and a highway construction camp when the Klondike Highway was built connecting Whitehorse to Dawson in 1950. With the completion of the Pelly River bridge, sternwheeler traffic on the Yukon River ceased and Fort Selkirk, located near the confluence of Pelly and Yukon Rivers, was virtually abandoned. The Selkirk First Nation eventually settled at Perry Crossing, and Northern Tutchone cultural displays and artifacts are housed in the community in a replica of Big Jonathan House.

The local economy is based on hunting, fishing, trapping and guiding.

Pelly Crossing is accessible by air or road on the Klondike Highway.



Pond Inlet / Mittimatalik

Qikiqtani Region, Nunavut
Population 1549 (2011), 95% Inuit
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1960: 41 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2011: 82 JCRs

Pond Inlet is located on the northeastern shore of Baffin Island, near the eastern entrance to the Northwest Passage. Inuit also call the community *Mittimatalik*, “the place where Mittima is buried.” (The identity of Mittima is a mystery to the present-day people of Pond Inlet.)

The region around Pond Inlet is scattered with archaeological sites of ancient Dorset and Thule peoples (the ancestors of modern Inuit people), and European and American whalers frequented these waters throughout the 19th century.

Today, this traditional Inuit community attracts tourists from around the world. Overlooking Eclipse Sound and the mountains of Bylot Island, which is a migratory bird sanctuary, Pond Inlet is situated near scenic fiords, glaciers and icebergs. It is renowned as a place to see large pods of narwhal, and it is conveniently close to both Tamaarvik Territorial Park and Sirmilik National Park.

Pond Inlet is accessible by air from Iqaluit daily.



Qikiqtarjuaq

Qikiqtani Region, Nunavut
Population 520 (2010), 95% Inuit
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1979: 41 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 1998: 24 JCRs

Qikiqtarjuaq (“big island”), formerly known as Broughton Island, is located off the east coast of Baffin Island at Davis Strait, 97 km north of Arctic Circle. Although a relatively new community, the coastal region around Broughton Island has been known for excellent whaling since ancient times. In the 1800s, European whalers would crisscross the strait between Greenland and Baffin Island to trade goods with local Inuit. The construction of a DEW Line station in the 1950s encouraged Inuit to abandon the community of Kivitoo and develop the settlement now known as “Qik.”

Located at the northern trailhead of Auyuittuq National Park, tour guides, certified divers, and outfitters from Qik cater to the growing number of cruise ships visiting each year.

Qikiqtarjuaq is accessible by air from Iqaluit daily.



Rae Edzo (Behchokò)

North Slave Region, Northwest Territories
Population 2174 (2012), 93.9% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1987: 36 Rgrs

Rae-Edzo (Behchokò), comprising two towns approximately 6 km apart, is the largest Dene community in Canada. The community is located on the Yellowknife Highway (Great Slave Highway), approximately 80 km northwest of Yellowknife, on the northwest tip of Great Slave Lake in the traditional territory of the Tłıchǫ Dene.

The Tłıchǫ have lived in the area for centuries. The first trading post was established in the area around 1790, but the Tłıchǫ and Yellowknife Dene fought until their leaders, Edzo and Akaitcho, made peace in the 1830s. John Rae opened a Hudson's Bay Company post in 1852 about 8 km from the present site. The Tłıchǫ signed Treaty No.11 in 1921, received permanent housing in Rae in the 1940s, and secured access to the Yellowknife Highway in 1960. The development of nearby Edzo began in 1965.

The community is accessible by air and by road.



Rankin Inlet / Kangiqliniq

Kivalliq Region, Nunavut
Population 2358
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1984: 26 Rgrs

Rankin Inlet or *Kangiqtinik* ("deep bay/inlet" in Inuktitut) is the business and transportation hub of the Kivalliq region. Inuit ancestors inhabited this area for centuries. At nearby Iqalugaarjuup Nunanga Territorial Park Pre-Dorset archaeological sites date from 1000 BC to 500 BC, with several Thule sites dated to 1200 AD. Regular contact with Europeans began in the late 17th century when the Hudson's Bay Company started fur trading in the area. The settlement of Rankin Inlet was founded in 1957 by the owners of a nickel and copper mine that operated until 1962.

Owing to the large volume of traffic through the region, as well as a history of regional government, mining and exploration, Rankin Inlet has developed a strong entrepreneurial spirit that complements its ties to traditional knowledge.

Rankin is accessible by air from Winnipeg, Yellowknife, and Iqaluit.



Repulse Bay / Naujaat

Kivalliq Region, Nunavut
Population 926
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1975: 49 Rgrs

Repulse Bay is situated on the Canadian mainland, right on the Arctic Circle, at the northwestern limit of Hudson Bay near Foxe Basin in eastern Nunavut. The Inuktitut name *Naujaat* means "nesting place for seagulls." Every June, the cliffs just north of the community are occupied by thousands of seagulls, as well as snow birds, loons, eider ducks, longtail ducks, and jaegers.

The local Inuit (Aivilingmiut) are descendants of the Thule. The site was a popular destination for American and Scottish whalers in the nineteenth century, and the first trading post opened in 1916. Activities such as fishing, hunting, dog sledding, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, ATV riding, kayaking and hiking are popular, as is bone, ivory and stone carving. Ukkusiksalik National Park lies 145 km from the community and can be accessed by plane, boat, snowmobile or dog sled, depending on the season.

Repulse Bay is accessible by air year round.



Resolute Bay / Qausuittuq

Qikiqtani Region, Nunavut
Population 242 (2011), 80% Inuit
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1982: 19 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 1999: 24 JCRs

The second northernmost community in Canada, Resolute Bay is located on the south coast of Cornwallis Island. Its Inuktitut name, *Qausuittuq*, means the “place with no dawn” because of the long winter night this far north. As the gateway to the High Arctic, the community is the starting point for many scientific research teams and expeditions to the North Pole and to Quttinirpaaq (Ellesmere Island) National Park.

Resolute, which lies along the Northwest Passage, is named after the HMS *Resolute*, a British ship that searched for the lost Franklin expedition. Although the area contains archaeological evidence of Pre-Dorset, Dorset and Thule people, modern Inuit did not occupy or use this area until the 1953 High Arctic relocation – after Canada and the United States jointly had built a weather station and airstrip in 1947. It is home to the Polar Continental Shelf Project and the Canadian Forces Arctic Training Centre.

It is accessible by air from Iqaluit.



Ross River

Central Yukon Region, Yukon
Population 352 (2011), 82.4% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1991: 24 Rgrs

Ross River is a Kaska First Nation community located at the confluence of the Ross and Pelly Rivers, where the Canol road meets the Robert Campbell Highway. The community is home to the Ross River Dena Council, which represents the local Kaska people.

The site was long used as a gathering place for First Nation peoples, and the first permanent settlement at the community's current location was a fur trading post built in 1901. The building of the Canol Road during the Second World War connected the community to the outside world, and Kaska Dena people were encouraged to move across the river from the Old Village. An exploration and mining boom in the 1960s led to the development of the nearby Faro lead-zinc mine, which closed permanently in 1997.

Ross River is accessible by road or by air from Whitehorse and Watson Lake.



Sachs Harbour / Ikaahuk

Inuvik Region, Northwest Territories
Population 135 (2011), 88.9% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1988: 19 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2001: 10 JCRs

Sachs Harbour is located on the southwest coast of Banks Island, 523 km northeast of Inuvik. The traditional name for the area is *Ikaahuk*, meaning “where you go across.” The modern community is named after the *Mary Sachs*, a ship in the Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913. A permanent settlement was established in 1929 when three Inuit families moved there to trap. In 1953, the RCMP set up a detachment.

The local economy is based largely on hunting and trapping, and the community is home to the largest commercial muskox harvest in Canada. Residents also harvest fish from Amundsen Gulf and the Beaufort Sea. The hamlet also serves as the headquarters of Aulavik National Park.

Sachs Harbour is accessible by air from Inuvik.



Sanikiluaq

Qikiqtani Region, Nunavut
Population 812 (2011), 95% Inuit
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1989: 30 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 1999: 43 JCRs

The most southerly community in Nunavut, Sanikiluaq is located on the Belcher Islands in Hudson Bay about 150 kilometres off the Québec coast. It is the only permanent settlement in the archipelago of 1,500 islands spread over 3,000 km², which serve as breeding grounds for many species of migratory seabirds, ducks and geese. The hamlet is named after a legendary Inuk named Sandy Kiluaq, who was adopted and lived in hard times, but he grew up to become the best hunter and best provider in the region.

Sanikiluaq is famous for the unique handicrafts made by its women, including dolls made of fish skin and parkas made of eider ducks. Feathers of eider ducks (eiderdown) are collected from nests on steep cliffs and made into duvets and outerwear. Furthermore, artists are known worldwide for their distinctive carvings made from argillite, the dark stone found on the Belcher Islands.

Sanikiluaq is accessible by air from Montreal.



Taloyoak (Talurjuaq)

Kitikmeot Region, Nunavut
Population 809 (2006), 98% Inuit
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1984: 62 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 1999: 91 JCRs

Taloyoak (formerly known as Spence Bay) is located on the southwestern coast of the Boothia Peninsula, at the heart of the Northwest Passage. The local Netsilik Inuit are descendants of the ancient Thule culture. The community name referring to a “large caribou blind” built by piling stones along caribou migration routes to herd caribou so that hunters could catch them.

Formerly known as Spence Bay, the area has a long history of exploration, including the John Ross expeditions in the 1830s that succeeded in locating the Magnetic North Pole.

Taloyoak boasts exceptional fishing. Artists, carvers and artisans are prolific, producing Spence Bay “packing dolls” (animals dressed in duffel amautiit, carrying their young) and carvings made from stone, whalebone, caribou antler and walrus ivory that frequently depict subjects from ancient Inuit legends.

Taloyoak is accessible by air from Yellowknife.



Trout Lake / Sambaa K'e

Dehcho Region, Northwest Territories
Population 100 (2012)
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1998: 11 Rgrs

Trout Lake or Sambaa K'e (“trout lake place” in Slavey) is located 161 km south of Fort Simpson and 442 km southwest of Yellowknife, near the Alberta border east of Fort Liard.

Although the Northwest Company established a post on the Trout River in 1796, the site did not become an organized community until the late 1960s, when several Slavey families settled on this 504 km² lake to hunt, fish and trap – activities that remain the main sources of local income. The Dene of the community are represented by the Sambaa K'e Dene Band and belong to the Dehcho First Nations.

Trout Lake is served by a weekly charter flight. It has no all-weather road, but can be reached by ice road in the winter months.



Tsiigehtchic

Inuvik Region, Northwest Territories
Population 128 (2012), 96.9% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1993: 24 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 1998: 8 JCRs

Tsiigehtchic ("mouth of the iron river") is a Gwich'in community located at the confluence of the Arctic Red and Mackenzie Rivers, 96 km south of Inuvik.

This location has a long history as a summer fish camp for the Gwichya Gwich'in ("people of the flat lands") and was the site of many gatherings and trade between the Gwichya Gwich'in, Slavey and Inuvialuit. A Roman Catholic Mission was established at the current site in 1868 and a trading post soon followed, but some families continued to winter in the mountains along the NWT-Yukon border until the 1960s. The construction of the Dempster Highway in the 1970s brought wage employment and community members operate the ferry that takes summer travelers across the rivers.

The Dempster Highway crosses the Mackenzie River at Tsiigehtchic by ice road in the winter and by ferry during the summer. There is no permanent airport in the community.



Tuktoyaktuk

Inuvik Region, Northwest Territories
Population 870
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1988: 30 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 1999: 25 JCRs

Tuktoyaktuk ("looks like a caribou") is the most northerly community on mainland Canada, located at the edge of the Mackenzie Delta on the Arctic Ocean about 125 km north of Inuvik.

Inuvialuit long used this area as a place to harvest caribou and belugas. After influenza epidemics brought by American whalers wiped out many native families, Alaskan Inuit settled the area. A large movement of people from Herschel Island to "Tuk" in 1928 coincided with the establishment of a Hudson's Bay Company post and a Roman Catholic Mission, followed by an Anglican Mission, school, and RCMP detachment by 1950. Later that decade, Tuk became a resupply hub for the DEW Line in the western Arctic. In the 1970s, the community was a key base for oil and gas exploration in the Beaufort and Mackenzie Delta. The industry declined in the mid-1980, but seems poised to reemerge in the near future. Many residents continue to rely on hunting, fishing and trapping for their livelihood.

Tuktoyaktuk is accessible by air from Inuvik. The winter ice road from Inuvik will be replaced by a new all-season road by 2018.



Tulita

Sahtu Region, Northwest Territories
Population 567 (2012), 88.4% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1997: 25 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2001: 22 JCRs

Tulita ("where the rivers of waters meet" in Dene) is located at the confluence of the Great Bear and Mackenzie River, 620 km from Yellowknife, and 72 km from Norman Wells. The surrounding area is forested and well south of the tree line.

Originally known as Fort Norman, the Northwest Company established the community in 1804 or 1805 on the Mackenzie River opposite the Red Stone River. The Hudson's Bay Company moved the post three times repeatedly, but the Sahtu Dene community (on whose land the post was built) has remained in the same spot since 1869.

Residents of Tulita, who speak English and North Slavey, rely on hunting, fishing, trapping and traditional art for their livelihoods. Oil and gas exploration and tourism also contribute to the local economy.

Tulita is accessible by air from Norman Wells. Supplies are brought in by barge from Hay River in summer, and the community is linked to the Mackenzie Highway by ice road in winter.



Ulukhaktok

Kitikmeot Region, Northwest Territories
Population 479 (2012); 91.2% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1980: 34 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2009: 26 JCRs

Ulukhaktok (formerly Holman) is located on west coast of Victoria Island, 925 km north of Yellowknife and 322 air km north of Kugluktuk. Its name, meaning “the place where ulu parts are found,” refers to the large bluff overlooking the community which provides slate and copper for ulus.

No Inuit lived permanently in this area until the opening of the Hudson's Bay Company store and a Roman Catholic mission in 1939, but people did visit the area en route to other seasonal camp areas. Ulukhaktokmiut come from various backgrounds, with family ties extending mainly to Kugluktuk and the communities of the Mackenzie River Delta and Beaufort Sea. Most residents rely on hunting, fishing and trapping for subsistence, with printmaking emerging as another major contributor to the local economy.

The community is accessible by air from Inuvik and Yellowknife.



Watson Lake

South Yukon Region, Yukon Territory
Population 802 (2011), 25.6% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 2014: 30 Rgrs

Watson Lake is a key transportation hub located in southeast Yukon at the junction of the Alaska, Robert Campbell and Stewart-Cassiar Highways, within the traditional territory of the Kaska First Nations. The town and the neighbouring Upper Liard settlement are the home to the Liard River First Nation. The Town of Watson Lake owes its origins to the construction of the Northwest Staging Route airfields and the Alaska Highway during the Second World War, and its place as the regional link between the Alaska and Robert Campbell Highways was confirmed when the latter was completed in 1968 to service mining developments in east-central Yukon.

Today, Watson Lake is the key transportation, communication and distribution center for mining and logging activities in southern Yukon, northern British Columbia, and parts of the NWT.

Known as the “gateway to the Yukon,” it is the first Yukon community after crossing the border by road from British Columbia on the Alaska Highway. It is also accessible by air.



Wekweètì

North Slave Region, Northwest Territories
Population 141 (2012); 97.9% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1998: 13 Rgrs

Wekweètì (formerly called Snare Lake) is a Dene community on the Snare River, about 195 km north of Yellowknife.

The community lies within the traditional territory of the Tłı̄chǫ First Nation and was a popular outpost hunting camp before it was permanently settled in 1962, when Dene elders around Behchoko decided to return to the land and establish traditional camps in the bush. Since that time, Wekweètì has become a modern community with essential services of its own.

Most residents practice hunting, fishing and trapping, and it is the closest community to the Ekati diamond mine on the border with Nunavut.

The community has no permanent road access, but an ice road operates from January to March. Most transportation to and from the community is through Wekweètì airport.



Whatì

North Slave Region, Northwest Territories
Population 519 (2012), 97.7% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1973: 40 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2003: 29 JCRs

Whatì is located on Lac La Martre, 164 km northwest of Yellowknife. The Northwest Company established a permanent post at the site in 1793, and the community was formally known as Lac La Martre until it was officially changed in 2005 to Whatì under the Tłı̄chō land claim agreement.

Lac La Martre boasts some of the largest lake trout and northern pike on the planet. Each spring and fall, the area's marshes host thousands of ducks, geese and other migratory species that gather there to feed.

Hunting, fishing, trapping, and arts and crafts are the main economic activities. Over 92% of this Tłı̄chō community fluently speaks their Aboriginal language.

Whatì is accessible by air from Yellowknife, and an ice road connects it to the Mackenzie Highway at Behchoko in the winter season.



Whale Cove / Tikirarjuaq

Kivalliq Region, Nunavut
Population 403 (2011), 95% Inuit
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1989: 28 Rgrs
JCR Patrol since 2000: 16 JCRs

The community of Whale Cove or *Tikirarjuaq* ("long point") is situated on a long point of the Canadian mainland that projects into northwestern Hudson Bay, about 72 km south of Rankin Inlet. The English name for this sheltered cove and its community comes from the great abundance of beluga whales that congregate there annually.

Nearby Pre-Dorset archaeological sites date from 1000 BC to 500 BC and Thule sites date to 1200 AD. The Hudson's Bay Company arrived in the area during the eighteenth century to trade rifles, ammunition, tea and sugar for furs harvested by the local Inuit men, but the permanent settlement of Whale Cove did not occur until the Keewatin Famine in the winter of 1957-1958, when the federal government Canada relocated survivors from three distinct Inuit groups (one inland and two coastal), with different dialects, kinships and cultural histories, to the community.

Whale Cove is accessible by air from Rankin Inlet.



Whitehorse

Whitehorse Region, Yukon Territory
Population 27,753 (2012), 13.6% Aboriginal
Canadian Ranger Patrol since 1991: 38 Rgrs

Whitehorse is Yukon's capital and largest community, boasting 75% of the territory's population. Nestled on the banks of the Yukon River, it is the administrative, transportation and communications hub of the Yukon and lies on the traditional territories of Ta'an Kwach'an Council and the Kwanlin Dun First Nation.

Archeological research south of the downtown area confirms that indigenous peoples have used the site for several thousand years. The city was named after the White Horse Rapids near Miles Canyon, which resembled the mane of a white horse before the river was dammed. Now known as the Wilderness City, the Guinness World Records reports that it is the city with the least air pollution in the world.

Whitehorse is connected to Canada's highway system by the Alaska Highway, and is also accessible through Whitehorse airport with several daily flights to Vancouver and other Canadian destinations.



1ST Canadian Ranger Patrol Group Commanding Officers



Major R.D. Knight
April 1998 – July 2000



Major Y. Laroche
July 2000 – July 2002



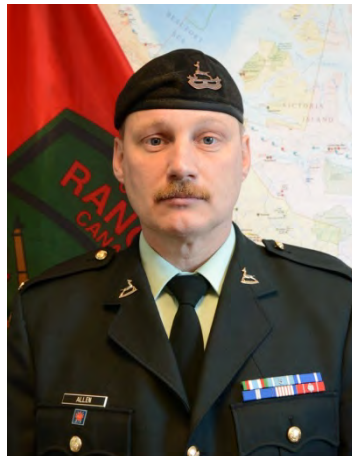
Major S.V. Gibson
July 2002 – August 2005



Major J.H.C. Bergeron
August 2005 – August 2007



Major L. Chang
August 2007 – July 2010



Major J. Allen
July 2010 – July 2013



Major M.C. Volstad
July 2013 - present

1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group Sergeant Majors



MWO B.W. Peers
April 1998 – July 2000



MWO J.P. Sandul
July 2000 – July 2003



MWO G. Westcott
July 2003 – July 2007



MWO B.M. Baldwin
July 2007 – June 2010



MWO D. Mann
June 2010 – July 2012



MWO D. Elson
July 2012 - present

Honorary Canadian Rangers

2005 - 2007

The Honourable Tony Whitford - Commissioner of Northwest Territories
Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean - Governor General of Canada

2009

Prince William and Prince Harry

2010

Brigadier-General David Millar - Commander, Joint Task Force North

2011

Princess Kate Middleton

2012

The Honourable George Tuccaro - Commissioner of Northwest Territories
The Honourable Edna Ekhiyalak Elias - Commissioner of Nunavut
The Honourable Doug Phillips - Commissioner of Yukon

2013

Brigadier-General Guy Hamel - Commander, Joint Task Force North
Chief Warrant Officer Gilles Laroche - Command Chief Warrant Officer
The Right Honourable Stephen Harper - Prime Minister of Canada

2014

Brigadier-General Greg Loos - Commander, Joint Task Force North
Chief Warrant Officer Gerald Blais - Command Chief Warrant Officer



Honorary Lieutenant Colonels



HLCol Stuart (Stu) M. Hodgson, OC
(1977-1980)
Canadian Rangers in Northern Region



HLCol Rt Rev. John R. Sperry, CM
(June 2008-August 2010)



HLCol P. Whitney Lackenbauer, Ph.D.
(September 2014-present)

1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group

Canadian Ranger Recipients of the Order of Military Merit

**Sergeant John Mitchell, M.M.,
Dawson City Patrol
22 September 1997**

While in a Sovereignty Operation, Sgt Mitchell gathered the members of his patrol and the company of soldiers from the south during a white out and lead them to safety. He has also provided excellent support to the community of Dawson City by organizing youth programmes, search and rescues and being the driving force behind the Yukon Quest dog race. Sgt Mitchell is a very active, reliable and dedicated Ranger.



**Ranger Ollie Ittinuar, M.M.,
Rankin Inlet Patrol
30 January 2009**

Ittinuar, 88, was recognized for his outstanding service to his community and his country. The Rankin elder, still active, was the oldest serving member of the Canadian Forces, having joined the Rankin Inlet Canadian Ranger Patrol in 1984 at the age of 60. Prior to the Rangers, Ittinuar served with the RCMP as a guide and special constable from 1949 to 1957. "The legacy I would like to leave behind is that no matter who you are, or where you live, don't ever give up and be the best you can be for yourself and others," said Ittinuar.



**Sergeant Jorgan Aitaok, M.M.,
Cambridge Bay Patrol
2 December 2011**

In 2004, Aitaok enrolled in the Canadian Rangers as a private and within three years he became the patrol's sergeant. As the patrol leader, he is responsible for approximately 27 Rangers. "I originally wanted to join because I thought it would bring back something to the community and also to Canada," he said. "I have seen the Ranger patrol here in Cambridge Bay grow. Hopefully I can interest more people in joining the Rangers here in Cambridge." Aitaok, 44, is a native of Yellowknife was raised in an outpost camp at Perry Island about 153 km southeast of Cambridge Bay.



Canadian Ranger Recipients of the Canadian Decoration 3

The Canadian Decoration 3rd clasp signifies 42 years of service with a good record of service.



Ranger Johnny Tookalook
Sanikiluaq Patrol
April 2004



Ranger Johnassie Iqaluk
Sanikiluaq Patrol
April 2004



Ranger Ookookoo Quaraq
Pond Inlet Patrol
September 2006



Ranger Josie Enuaraq
Clyde River Patrol
September 2006



Ranger Johnanasie Apak
Clyde River Patrol
August 2007



Ranger Iikoo Angutikjuak
Clyde River Patrol
August 2007



Ranger Solomon Natanine
Clyde River Patrol
September 2007



Ranger Tommy Tatatuapik
Arctic Bay Patrol
August 2010

The Watchers

In the furthest whispers of Canada
Like shimmering mirages in the wide arctic lands
Almost beyond the limits of a too comfortable imagination
- You'll find them.
Cloaked in the color of life and armored in yesterday
There exists a unique breed of Canadian

They run with the rhythm of the seasons
As wild and unbound as this true North land
A thin red line of souls stretching across a nation's horizon
Striding under the skies of unreachable places
With eyes piercing into seldom seen spaces

Watching over us

In a land that shows no mercy
Like the dim echo of raw comfortless silence
From places you have never before listened
- You'll hear them.
Strong hearts drumming out a beat of warmth and compassion
Becoming the song of a nation

With a knowledge and skill so intimate
Each caress and curve of the land is known to them
As they slide softly in the footsteps of ancient ones
On timeless unmarked trails of featureless starkness
From the very edge of light and darkness,

Watching over us

Guardians of the soul of a nation
Like stone sentinels at the gates of a great civilization
An idea buried in the collective viscera of each of us
- You'll feel them.
Though we ignore them as is our nature to make less of much
greatness
They are the very fabric of Canada in so many plain and ordinary
ways

The North wind, relentless in following each hard won footstep
Often as the only and doubtful companion
Erases all memory of their passing
Its slow icy breath whispers their name
And the maelstrom blizzard screams out the same

Watching over us

Into the absolute cold of the deep arctic night
Like that lonely place of passage we must all one day find
On these nights when the other world is drawn closest
- You'll see them.
When crimson cloaks cast shadow on jeweled snow
And they whistle down their dead

Through the emptiness of night the call is heard
Each breath of the Watcher draws skyward
Faint hints of life to animate the shadows of ancestors
Who would once more laugh and dance for fleeting moments
across the sky

To remember what it was to be alive and know that they can
never truly die

Watching over us

There is a richness that comes from a life on the land
Like the knowledge a thousand generations deep
Etched into your being
- You'll know them.

To look into their eyes is to see wilderness
And feel the source of life's fire

Should you come across one of these gentle Guardians
Like the meeting of a familiar old friend
The quick smile, easy strength and calm bearing to put you
at ease

From that single moment never would you say you'd
looked into the eyes of a stranger,
Only to know you'd just met a Canadian Ranger

Watching over us

Ranger Julian Tomlinson, 2002

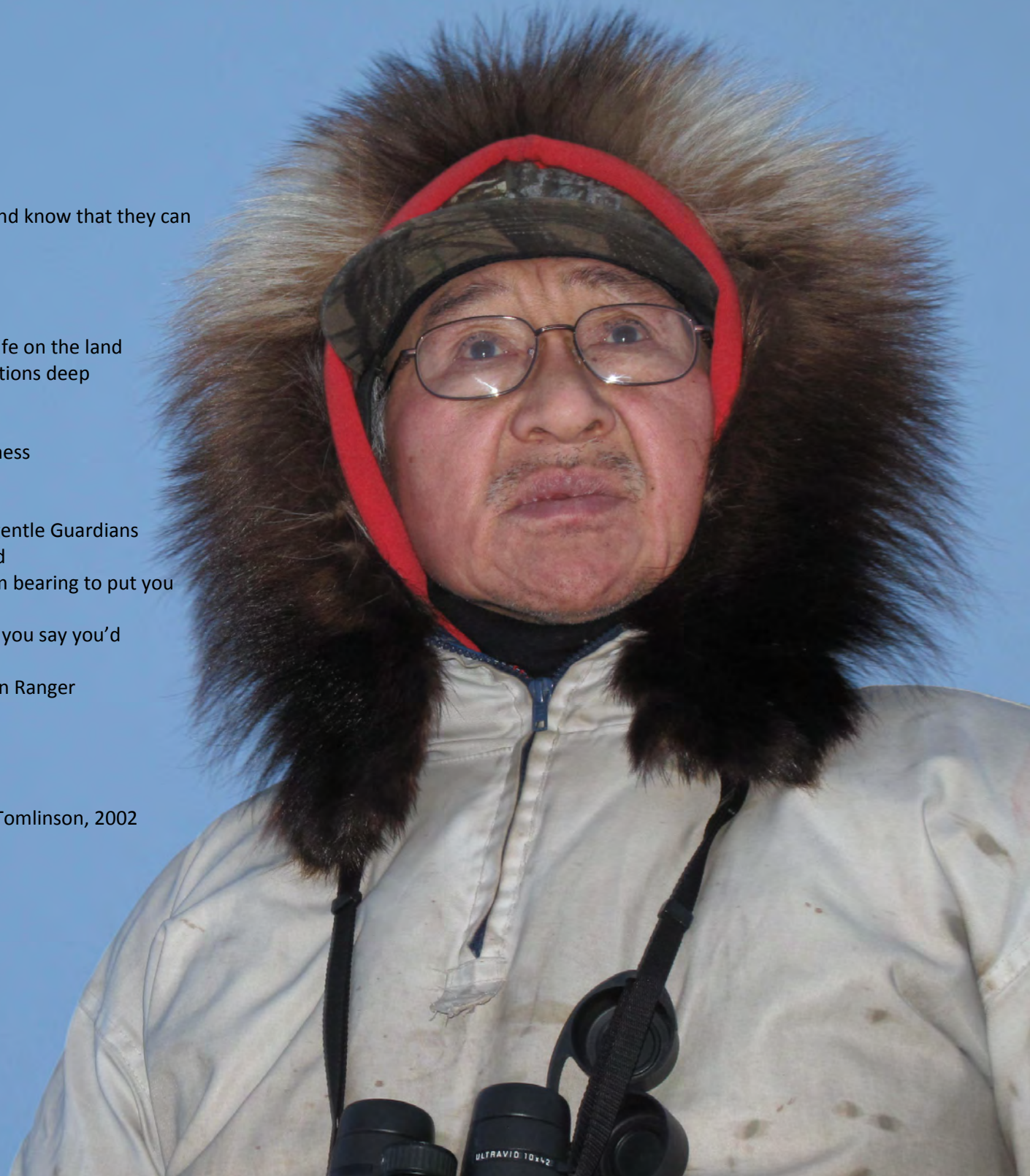




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UL – upper left CL – centre left LL – lower left
UR – upper right CR – centre right LR – lower right

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Sovereignty begins at home. For six decades, the Canadian Rangers have quietly served as the Canadian Armed Forces' eyes, ears, and voice in isolated Northern communities. *Vigilans* tells the story of how 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group has evolved into a flexible and culturally-inclusive organization that successfully integrates national defence with community-based stewardship. The Rangers' red hoodies have become a strong symbol of Canada's sovereignty and security, representing an enduring partnership rooted in traditional knowledge, local skills, and cross-cultural understanding.

HLCol P. Whitney Lackenbauer, Ph.D., is professor and chair of the department of history at St. Jerome's University, Waterloo, Ontario, and the author of several books including *The Canadian Rangers: A Living History* (UBC Press, 2013).

