

COMPILED BY
P. WHITNEY LACKENBAUER AND BIANCA ROMAGNOLI

SOVEREIGNTY, SECURITY, AND RESILIENCE

SELECTED STORIES ABOUT
1ST CANADIAN RANGER PATROL GROUP, 1998-2022



Sovereignty, Security, and Resilience

**Selected Stories about 1st
Canadian Ranger Patrol Group,
1998-2022**

Compiled by

**P. Whitney Lackenbauer
and Bianca Romagnoli**

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Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Sovereignty, Security, and Resilience: Selected Stories about 1st
Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, 1998-2022 / edited by P. Whitney
Lackenbauer and Bianca Romagnoli

Available in print and electronic formats

Issued by: 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group and NAADSN
ISBN 978-1-989811-26-9 (book) 978-1-989811-27-6 (ebook)

1. Canada. Canadian Armed Forces. Canadian Rangers—History. 2. Canadian Armed Forces—Indigenous peoples. 3. Canada—Armed Forces—Canada, Northern. 4. Canada—Armed Forces—Operations other than war. I. Lackenbauer, P. Whitney. II. Romagnoli, Bianca.

Cover Photos by Combat Camera

Design & Layout
True North Consulting, Otterville, Ontario, N0J 1R0, Canada
Printed in Canada.

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Foreword

It is my honour to introduce this collection of stories and newspaper articles about 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (1CRPG), our patrols and our Rangers. Housing 61 patrols across the Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Atlin, BC, Rangers have long been a valued part of northern society. Since the formal stand up of 1CRPG in April of 1998, our patrols across Canada's north have been an integral part of the fabric through which stakeholder organizations and governments express Canadian sovereignty over our northern lands and water. Furthermore, duty as a Canadian Ranger allows northern citizens to participate in their armed forces while remaining in their communities, a sincere expression of their sense of duty to protect their homeland and Canada's future. The training provided by the CAF, combined with the traditional knowledge, and bushcraft skills Rangers bring to the organization directly and indirectly serve to support community and individual resilience.

The diversity of 1 CRPG membership—including Inuit, First Nations, Metis and non-indigenous—is one of its greatest strengths. These readings, highlighting the diverse knowledge and expertise of our Canadian Rangers, reflects the diversity of our communities across the north. Brought together under the iconic and widely recognized red sweaters, the Canadian Rangers highlighted in this collection express Canada's sovereignty by conducting sovereignty patrols, assisting CAF operations and reporting observations that may be of military significance. Rangers also assist their communities in times of need by conducting Search and Rescue operations and providing community support during man-made or natural disasters. These stories provide emphasis on the commitment Canadian Rangers make to their country.

This volume provides readers with an overview of the history of the Canadian Rangers within 1 CPRG and introduces them to the wide array of contributions that the Rangers have made, and continue to make, to Canada and to their communities. Historian Whitney Lackenbauer and anthropologist Bianca Romagnoli, both close friends of 1 CRPG, have compiled a wide range of newspaper and magazine

articles that begin with the official stand-up of 1 CRPG in 1998 to the present.

These articles underline the Rangers' well-established presence in the North and articulates how as an organization, 1 CRPG exists as an expression of Canadian sovereignty. More importantly, they showcase the valuable individual, and collective, contributions that northern Canadians, as Canadian Rangers, make to their communities during times of need, and to the CAF's role in the Arctic.

As we look into the future, these stories help define the Rangers' role in the past, and will help to determine the role they will play in the future. Echoing the international chapter of the Arctic Northern Policy Framework (ANPF), Canadian Rangers' presence and activities form part of the wide range of activities that governments, indigenous peoples and local communities conduct as an expression Canada's enduring sovereignty across Arctic land and water. As more attention is placed on Canadian sovereignty, the Canadian Ranger role in the north will continue to be of growing interest.

Lieutenant-Colonel Ray Chiasson, CD
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
February 2022



Acknowledgements

We hope that this collection will help to promote the work of the Canadian Rangers in 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group and make these stories about their contributions more accessible to Rangers and their communities.

A special thanks to Corah Hodgson for assistance with transcribing articles and her careful proofread of the book, as well as Mary Paquet for designing the cover. Some of the articles are drawn from a previous collection, with a national scope, that Lackenbauer compiled and published by Canadian Defence Academy Press in 2003 as *Canada's Rangers: Selected Stories, 1942-2012*.

The text is accompanied by photographs taken by Canadian Rangers, Canadian Armed Forces photographers, and Lackenbauer over the last two decades. A special thanks to 1 CRPG for providing unfettered access to its photograph collection.



Sergeant Andrea Fischer of the Whitehorse patrol hands the axe to Sergeant Terry Olson of Ross River during Ex Baton Ranger II, 10 July 2017.

Introduction

P. Whitney Lackenbauer

“Spanning three Territories and stretching as far as the North Pole, Canada’s North is a sprawling region, encompassing 75 percent of the country’s national coastlines and 40 percent of its total land mass,” Canada’s 2017 defence policy highlights. This tremendous expanse, “coupled with its ice-filled seas, harsh climate, and more than 36,000 islands,” presents monitoring and surveillance challenges to the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and to the Government of Canada more broadly. Although Canada’s three northern territories have the lowest population density in North America, *Strong, Secure, Engaged* notes that “the region is spotted with vibrant communities, many inhabited by Canada’s Indigenous populations. These communities form an integral part of Canada’s identity, and our history is intimately connected with the imagery and the character of the North.”¹

The Canadian Rangers – members of these communities – are a celebrated symbol of Canadian sovereignty and security in the North. As part-time, non-commissioned members of a subcomponent of the CAF Reserves, the Rangers are lightly-equipped, self-sufficient, mobile forces that embody the strengths of Canada’s Northern peoples. *Strong, Secure, Engage* emphasizes that “the Canadian Armed Forces must reflect the diversity of the country we defend. We need a military that looks like Canada.”² The Rangers are so effective because they are highly reflective of the diverse Northern communities in which they live and serve.³

Since 1947, the Rangers’ official mission has been “to provide a military presence in sparsely settled northern, coastal and isolated areas of Canada that cannot conveniently or economically be provided for by other components of the Canadian Forces.” Over the last seven decades, the tasks that they perform in support of this mission have become more complex. Their initial focus was national *security* – protecting their communities from enemy attack in the early Cold War. By the 1970s, their responsibilities became directly linked to the armed forces’ role in support of Canada’s *sovereignty* in the Arctic. Since the 1990s, the Rangers have also played a more visible nation-building and

stewardship role in remote regions across Canada.⁴ They represent an important success story for the Canadian Forces as a flexible, inexpensive, and culturally inclusive means of having “boots on the ground” exercising Canadian sovereignty and conducting or supporting domestic operations. As a bridge between cultures and between the civilian and military realms, the Rangers represent a successful integration of national security and sovereignty agendas with community-based activities and local stewardship. This practical partnership, rooted in traditional knowledge and skills, promotes cooperation, communal and individual empowerment, and cross-cultural understanding.⁵

There are five Canadian Ranger Patrol Groups (CRPGs) across Canada, each encompassing a distinct geographical area. This book collects stories from the past seventy-five years about the Rangers who now fall within 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (1 CRPG), the largest military unit in Canada with an establishment of 2000 Canadian Rangers in 61 patrols and more than 1,400 Junior Canadian Rangers (JCRs) in 44 patrols located in 65 communities across the Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and northern British Columbia. The majority of Canadian Rangers in 1 CRPG are Inuit, First Nations, or Métis. Community-based patrols vote in their own leadership, which reflects the grassroots nature of the Ranger organization. As the “eyes, ears, and voice” of the CAF in the North, southern military units rely on and learn from the experience and knowledge of the Rangers to survive and operate effectively in Arctic and Subarctic environments. The Canadian Rangers not only benefit their communities in a direct social and economic sense, they also empower Northern Canadians who mentor and educate other members of the CAF on how to manage, respect, and ultimately, care for their homeland.

The following newspaper and magazine articles provide a sample of the many activities in which the Rangers of 1CRPG have been involved since the standup of the unit in November 1997.⁶ The stories highlight the varied, important roles that the Rangers play – and their unique terms of service. As table 1 shows, the Rangers’ national task list encompasses three broad aspects: conducting and supporting surveillance and presence patrols; conducting and assisting with domestic military operations; and maintaining a Canadian Armed

Forces presence in local communities. Highlighting the Rangers' many contributions, the Canadian Army notes that the "Rangers will remain a critical and enduring presence on the ground, valuable in many roles, including amongst others, the CAF's eyes and ears for routine surveillance purposes, its 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."⁷

The military draws upon the Rangers' Indigenous and local knowledge and capabilities to operate in the North. Many of the stories in this volume emphasize the value of having access to subject-matter experts with extensive experience operating in austere conditions who are willing to share their knowledge about lands and waters. Furthermore, stories also showcase how Ranger activities allow members of Indigenous communities to practice and share traditional skills, such as living off the land, not only with people from outside their cultures but also across generations within. These skills are central to Indigenous identities, and there is a persistent worry that these will be lost unless individuals have opportunities to exercise them and share them with younger generations.⁸

By celebrating traditional and local knowledge and skills, and encouraging and enabling Northerners serving in the Rangers to go out on the land and share their knowledge and expertise, the Rangers play an important role in supporting the retention or expansion of core cultural competencies. In turn, the Ranger concept is inherently rooted in the idea that the unique knowledge, expertise, and skill sets of Northern peoples can make an important contribution to military operations. It is this partnership, rooted in mutual learning and sharing, that has made the Rangers a long-term success on the local and national levels.⁹

By virtue of their capabilities and location, they regularly support other government agencies in responding to the broad spectrum of security and safety issues facing Northern communities. For example, Ranger leadership and training makes them the *de facto* lead during states of emergency in their communities – from avalanches, flooding, extreme snowstorms, and power plant shutdowns to forest fires and water crises. Their familiarity with local cultures, fluency in Indigenous languages, and vested interest in the welfare of their fellow community

Table 1: Canadian Ranger Tasks (DAOD 2020-2)

The tasks in the following table may be undertaken by a CR member on duty when authorized by their CRPG HQ:

Tasks	Examples
Conduct and provide support to sovereignty operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct and provide support to surveillance and sovereignty patrols, including training in Canada. ● Conduct North Warning System site patrols. ● Report suspicious and unusual activities. ● Collect local information of military significance.
Conduct and provide assistance to CAF domestic operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct surveillance of Canadian territory. ● Provide local knowledge and CR expertise (i.e. advice and guides). ● Participate in search and rescue operations. ● Provide support in response to natural or man-made disasters and support in humanitarian operations. ● Provide assistance to federal, provincial, territorial or municipal government authorities.
Maintain a CAF presence in the local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Instruct, mentor and supervise Junior Canadian Rangers. ● Participate in and support events in the local community (e.g. Yukon Quest, Canada Day, Remembrance Day, etc.).

The following tasks may not be assigned to a CR member, except when placed on active service under section 31 of the *National Defence Act*:

1. undertaking tactical military training;
2. performing immediate local defence tasks, such as containing or observing small enemy detachments pending the arrival of other forces;
3. providing vital point security (e.g. dams, mines, oil pipelines, etc.);
4. assisting federal, provincial, territorial or local police in the discovery, reporting and apprehension of enemy agents, saboteurs, criminals or terrorists; and
5. serving in aid of the civil power.

members make them valuable, trusted assets. Their important support in response to COVID-19 over the last two years is clear evidence of how Rangers' networks and relationships come into play.¹⁰ Rangers are also called up to assist with search and rescue in their communities, both as volunteers who know how to work effectively as a group and as an official military tasking when called upon.

The Rangers provide an important outlet for Northern Canadians who wish to serve in the defence of their country without having to leave their communities. By offering a persistent military presence in communities across the Canadian North and bringing their local and Indigenous knowledge and skills to the defence team, the Rangers play a significant role as a “mature capability” (as the Canadian Army describes them). As the “eyes, ears, and voice” of the CAF in the Arctic, they conduct routine surveillance, complete land-based and maritime patrols, and serve as guides and mentors for southern units operating in remote regions. As members of their local communities, the Rangers represent an important source of shared awareness and liaison with community partners. 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 continues to improve 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 about 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.

The Canadian Rangers remain an essential bridge between northern peoples, the military, and the federal government more generally—an essential liaison role ensuring that as the CAF expands its footprint in the North it does not crush local communities. We hope that this collection contributes to the 75th anniversary celebrations of how the Canadian Rangers' have contributed to their communities and to our

country since 1947 – and raises awareness of why the Rangers continue to be such a valued part of the defence team that is stitched into the fabric of our North.

Notes

¹ Department of National Defence (DND), *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa: DND, 2017), 79.

² DND, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 20.

³ P. Whitney Lackenbauer, "The North's Canadian Rangers," in *Strengthening the Canadian Armed Forces through Diversity and Inclusion*, eds. Alistair Edgar, Rupinder Mangat, and Bessma Momani (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019), 67-86.

⁴ See Whitney Lackenbauer, *The Canadian Rangers: A Living History* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013), and Lackenbauer, *Vigilans: The 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group*. Yellowknife: 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, 2015.

⁵ P. Whitney Lackenbauer, "The Canadian Rangers: A Postmodern Militia That Works," *Canadian Military Journal* 6/4 (2005-06): 49-60.

⁶ For a sample of media stories critical of the Rangers and my response to them, see P. Whitney Lackenbauer, "'Indigenous Communities are at the Heart of Canada's North': Media Misperceptions of the Canadian Rangers, Indigenous Service, and Arctic Security," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 19/2 (December 2018): 158-92.

⁷ Canadian Army, *Northern Approaches: The Army Arctic Concept 2021* (Kingston: Canadian Army Land Warfare Centre, 2013), 23.

⁸ P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Peter Kikkert, *Measuring the Success of the Canadian Rangers* (report to the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, October 2020), <https://www.naadsn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Rangers-Success-Metrics-Lackenbauer-Kikkert-high-res.pdf>.

⁹ See, for example, P. Whitney Lackenbauer, "Aboriginal Peoples in the Canadian Rangers: Canada's 'Eyes and Ears' in Northern and Isolated Communities," in *Hidden in Plain Sight: Contributions of Aboriginal Peoples to Canadian Identity and Culture, Vol. 2*, eds. Cora Voyageur, David Newhouse, and Dan Beavon (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 306-28; Lackenbauer, "Canada's Northern Defenders: Aboriginal Peoples in

the Canadian Rangers, 1947-2005,” in *Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian Military: Historical Perspectives*, eds. Lackenbauer and Craig Mantle (Kingston: CDA Press, 2007), 171-208; and Peter Kikkert with Doug Stern, “Finding Ihuma: Inuit Leadership Norms and Canadian Ranger Operations,” in *Canadian Armed Forces Arctic Operations, 1941-2015: Lessons Learned, Lost, and Relearned*, eds. A. Lajeunesse and P. Whitney Lackenbauer (Fredericton: Gregg Centre for the Study of War and Society, 2017), 370-86.

¹⁰ See, for example, Peter Kikkert and P. Whitney Lackenbauer, “The Canadian Rangers: Strengthening Community Disaster Resilience in Canada’s Remote and Isolated Communities,” *Northern Review* 51 (May 2021): 35-67; and Kikkert and Lackenbauer, “The Canadian Rangers and COVID-19,” North American and Arctic Defence and Security Network (NAADSN) *Policy Brief* (June 2020), https://www.naadsn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/20-jun-15-PWL-and-Kikkert_Policy-Brief_The-Canadian-Rangers-and-COVID-19.pdf.

**Selected Stories about
1st Canadian Ranger
Patrol Group,
1998-2022**



1. Stand-up of 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group

Joint Task Force (North) files

2 April 1998

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. My name is Captain Dwayne Lovegrove and I will be your narrator for today's ceremonies.

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 Canadian Rangers draw their lineage from the Pacific West Coast Militia Rangers, a unit of unpaid civilian coast watchers formed in 1942 during the height of Japanese power in World War II. This unit was composed of volunteers raised in isolated communities on the West Coast. Throughout the war they served as the sole military presence in many isolated areas of British Columbia, providing surveillance and reporting unusual incidents. After the war, the contribution of this unit was recognized by the creation of the Canadian Rangers as a corps of the reserve militia in 1947. Ranger patrols were established in coastal and isolated communities from the West Coast, through the Arctic, and down the East Coast through Newfoundland/Labrador and into Quebec down to the north shore of the St Lawrence estuary. Over the years the Rangers have experienced periods of expansion and reduction based upon national defence policies.

During debate over the 1967 white paper on defence, it became apparent that the protection of Canada's sovereignty was a national concern. Sovereignty protection became the priority task for the military. In 1970 the *Manhattan* incident made challenges to Canada's sovereignty over the Arctic Archipelago an issue of national interest. Part of the national response designed to increase our nation's capability to demonstrate sovereignty over the north was the creation of Canadian Forces Northern Region Headquarters here in Yellowknife

later that same year. Soon it was realized that the presence of Canadian Ranger patrols constituted a minimal force-in-being which coincidentally was deployed in many of the areas of concern.

Since that time the Canadian Ranger programme has been gradually expanded. Current plans call for 3500 Rangers organized into five Ranger [Patrol] Groups. Each of these Groups will be assigned to a geographic area Commander.

At the moment there are 2981 Rangers in uniform, with more than 1/3 of them (1200) here in the North. Upon completion of the Ranger Enhancement Programme this number will increase to 1330 Northern Rangers, with the present 54 Ranger patrols expanding to 60. As we speak the basic training of the fifty-fifth patrol is underway in Fort Providence.

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 are men and women over the age of 18 years who generally must have demonstrated the ability to live on the land, are of good conduct, and are both mentally and physically fit. They are issued a military .303 cal Lee Enfield rifle and a uniform consisting of a red ball cap, a hooded red sweatshirt and an armband. Aside from these items they provide All of their own equipment.

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. These personnel are also present on parade today.

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.

Please join me in welcoming the members of the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group at their inaugural parade.

Accompanying the Commander today is Ranger Peter Kuniliussie of the Clyde River Ranger patrol. Ranger Kuniliussie enlisted as a Ranger on 8 October 1952. Fit and still living on the land, 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.

... Ranger Kunilussie will present the new Commanding Officer with the first CO's pennant. The lance used to carry the pennant is an actual seal harpoon manufactured by Ranger Lukasy Ippak of the Sanikiluaq Ranger patrol.

The Commander CFNA will now present the first decorations awarded to members of 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group.

Sgt Laurent Kringaryarkm of Repulse Bay is awarded the First Clasp to the Canadian Forces Decoration, signifying 22 years service as a Ranger.

Sgt Tim Dialla of Pangnirtung is awarded the Canadian Forces Decoration signifying 12 years service as a Ranger.

...

Interview with Maj Knight

Question 1: *How do you feel about being the first Commanding Officer of the Rangers here in the North?*

Answer: I feel honoured, I feel privileged. Personally I'm quite pleased. I've worked for the last 30 years with all manner of forces, be they foreign, Canadian Regulars, Reserves within Canada and the Rangers in fact are even more unique than some of these organizations I've worked with before. I look forward to it as a challenge and also as very informative because many of us have little opportunity to come to the North and see the North and I will have an opportunity to see the North as few other people will be able to see it, with the people that live and work on the land.

Question 2: *To your knowledge, how are the various patrols in the North affected by this event?*

Answer: The effect on the various patrols in the North will be minimal if none at all. The change that has taken place now is an organizational change. Since 1947, the Rangers have been a Corps within the Reserve of the Canadian Forces and command and control relationships have basically officially come from the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff's

office. There have been a number of accommodations to make it work more effectively. We're in the Army, or I'm in the Army, the Army has always had a "can do" attitude and we have made it work using accommodations as far as command and control are concerned. Now what is happening is we are in fact acknowledging the accommodations and creating an officially new command and control which will delegate command to the local level, all across Canada. That is the big change with the standup of the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group. A smaller change is that the Rangers that are in the Yukon will work directly for myself and the headquarters here in Yellowknife, whereas before they were detached under command of the Detachment Commander in the Yukon. But for themselves on the ground, the way they operate, the way they're tasked because the personalities here in the headquarters are not changing, for them will almost be invisible. The big thing I think is that the formation of 5 Ranger Groups across Canada acknowledges the service that the Rangers have made to the country and to their local communities for the last 50 years.



*Major R.D. Knight,
Commanding Officer,
1 CRPG
(April 1998-July 2000)*

2. Gjoa Haven SOVOP

The Ranger Report, August 1998

During the period of 10-23 August 1998 members of 32 CBG conducted a SOVOP in the community of Gjoa Haven. The first two days were spent in town to give the members of 32 CBG and the Rangers time to prepare for the field portion of the exercise. Training during the field portion of the exercise consisted of Navigation, GPS, Ranges, March Discipline, and a company level amphibious assault. One of the highlights for the soldiers was an area set up by the Rangers that demonstrated their traditional skills. One of the Rangers shot a caribou and brought it back to camp. At that time a group of Rangers showed the soldiers how a caribou is skinned and what parts from the animal can be used (ALL OF IT!). The last part of the exercise consisted of a 2-day march back to town. After all preparation was completed for the redeployment back south, a feast was held. At this time gifts were exchanged and a display of drum dancing was held. This also gave members of 32 CBG a chance to thank all members of the community for their help. The hard work by the members of the Gjoa Haven Ranger Patrol made this a very successful exercise.



3. Op NUNAVUT

The Ranger Report, April 1999

On 1 Apr 99, in Iqaluit, 1 CRPG had the honour of providing the military honours at the celebrations marking the creation of the new territory of Nunavut. After several days of preparation the 1 CRPG Nunavut Guard was ready for the task when His Excellency Romeo Leblanc, the Governor General, stepped to the dias to receive the Vice Royal Salute. The standard of drill was impeccable. The hours of practice under the “kind and gentle mentorship” of WO Bachmanek paid off several fold. Congratulations to all who took part.

The guard was formed from representatives of 24 or 25 patrols located in Nunavut. Unfortunately, members of the Repulse Bay Patrol were unable to make it because bad weather prevented air travel from their community. In addition to the Nunavut Guard, 1 CRPG also provided a 14 JCR Colour Party. These youth had a high profile part in the ceremonies and were given the honour of unveiling, for the first time, the new territorial flag.

1 Apr 99 was a long day. Reveille took place at 0600 hrs to the greeting “Happy Nunavut.” After breakfast, last minute inspections were conducted verifying dress, weapons and medals along with some last minute practice prior to being addressed by the Chief of Defence Staff immediately before the Parade. During his address to the Guard, Gen Baril presented the Chief of Defence Staff’s Unit Commendation to Hall Beach Rangers for their lifesaving action of May 98.

After the Governor General had received his honours, the Guard had to quickly reconfigure the parade area to accept more spectators. The event was heavily attended and fortunately our participation ensured that all Rangers involved were able to witness the event and attend the Gala Event that followed.

At 1300 hrs a Ranger Quarter Guard officiated at the Forward Operating Location as Ranger Sergeant Tony Manerluk, the oldest Ranger on parade, and Ranger Tommy Naglingniq, the youngest Ranger, lowered the NWT flag and raised the new Nunavut flag for the first time.

The Rangers were a visible part of the Iqaluit landscape throughout the week of preparation. JCR and Rangers attended cultural events in

uniform. A special rapport was establishment with the RoadHouse Production crew and the support staff from 3 Wing Bagotville. The traditional games night was a hit for all. Realizing that they required voices for the singing of O Canada, the production crew pressed us into service as a choir to record the opening National Anthem in English and French.

When Ranger Sergeant Gamallee Nookiguak of Broughton Island, a featured performer at the official celebrations, began to sing his composition “Love Song,” the cheers and applause of the members of the Guard, epitomized the spirit that had earned them the nickname “The Red Tide” among the production crew.



4. Exercise Baffin Fox

Sgt C. Choquette

The Ranger Report, April 1999

The idea of the whole exercise was to practice the deployment of many Canadian Rangers from several communities to one central location in as short as possible [of a] time frame. With the opening of several new international flight paths across the north and with the very real possibility of one of these aircraft or any other ‘Sched’ crashing, it became quite clear to the Commanders of

Northern Area and 1 CRPG that a rapid deployment should be practiced.

On the 19th of April 99 the DCO of 1 CRPG and 5 Ranger Instructors plus Ranger Mike Taylor from Dawson (who was to participate as part of the the 1 CRPG exchange program) boarded a HS 748 headed for the Baffin. This was definitely an improvement over the ol’ twin otter as we [were] touching down in Hall Beach less than four hours later. They even gave us a stewardess to boot! The luxury of the flight was soon to end though as we began our hopping around the Baffin.

Sgt. Kerri Lampert was the first off at Hall Beach followed by Sgt. Gord Morris (the old dog of the north) in Igloolik, Sgt. Al Deffner and Rgr ‘Mike’ in Pond Inlet, Sgt. Alex Harris in Clyde, and myself Sgt. Colin Choquette in good old Broughton Island. Each of us instructors were met by our Ranger Sgts. at our respective airports with myself having an additional member to my greeting party. WO Chuck Bachmanek (who was just finishing up a JCR FTX) was awaiting my arrival and once all of the hand shaking was done he *told* me with the use of many adjectives that he was acquiring that aircraft to get to Iqaluit. Yes Warrant!

It took all of the patrols about 2 days to prepare for the upcoming mission. A lot of fuel was taken on board for the trip and some even had concerns about whether or not the Quammatiqs would hold out. In Broughton Island each of us averaged 70 gallons per machine plus kit. Needless to say we were heavy. On 21 April all of the patrols left their communities for Fox 3 (Dewar Lakes).

From [here] each and every patrol has [its] own story of the trip, some that should never be repeated or retold from what I understand. However in order to involve as little text as possible I will summarize each and every journey with as much accuracy as possible. Keep in mind that some truths may be stretched and some stories may not be told in the interest of ‘Operational Security’. After all I am getting this information from Ranger Instructors!

Broughton Island: Our journey began with us traveling across a fogged over ocean. Rgr Johnny Kooneeliuse did [a] fantastic job guiding us in these conditions. To this day I still don’t know how he did it, as we couldn’t see five feet in front of us. I was just waiting for us to drive over the [floe] edge only to be eaten by an 800-pound walrus. That never happened though [at] about 11:00 am it started to clear. The view of the Davis Strait and [its] impressive icebergs was quite amazing. The trip went fairly well the whole way up with us arriving at Fox 3 by 1400 hrs on the 23rd April.

Clyde River: Sgt. Alex Harris and Rgr Sgt. Joavee Etuagat headed out early on the 21st of April as well. Not many stories came out of that journey except for the fact that Sgt. Alex Harris loves raw char. The fact that they were at Fox 3 a day before anyone else and that very few stories



[were] told of the trip, one must wonder if they actually drove! After all, they did not look very weary after the trip.

Pond Inlet: Rgr Sgt. Norman Simonie could best tell this story I'm sure. Unfortunately I must base the telling of it on Sgt. Al Deffner's over-exaggerated version. The first obstacle they faced [were] these [icebergs] that were apparently bigger than mountains. A lot of grunting and sweating went into the negotiation of these mammoth pieces of ice, but they eventually did get through. After that they got to the mountains, [each and every one an Everest according to Al]. From here they traveled 16-hour days to finally get to Fox 3 by 232230 hrs, last but not least. For a more accurate version of the story contact any member of the Pond Inlet Patrol or Ranger Mike Taylor of Dawson.

Igloodik: Capt. Don Finnamore and Sgt. Gord Morris left with the Igloodik patrol early on the 21st as well. They had to travel hard and fast in order to get to Fox 3 on time. Over 600 km one way. They made it 4 hours before the NLT timing of 2200 hrs on the 23rd April. The trip was uneventful with the exception of the introduction of the DCO's new favorite meal, aged walrus!

Hall Beach: In the defence of the Hall Beach Ranger Patrol (CDS Commendation holders), their journey was very successful. They had



bad luck right from the start. First of all they had a lot of Quamatiqs break because of the fact that they were carrying more fuel than the other 4 patrols. Coupled with the fact that one or two 45 gal. drums had busted, Sgt. Kerri Lampert was forced to make some tough decisions. It was decided that in order for at least six Rangers to make the objective they would pool together their resources. Considering that they had almost 700 km to go one way and the fact that they had some other problems, it was quite amazing to see even six Rangers show up at Fox 3.

On the morning of the 24th of April, Sgt. Gord Morris under Capt. Don Finnamore quickly assumed command of all 86 Rangers and began training. First was the MAJAID [major air disaster] exercise. The Clyde River Rangers acted as casualties for the other four patrols. All Rangers acted very professionally and all gave proper first aid. In the afternoon all of the Rangers had an opportunity to hunt with old friends and family and to share ideas about the land.

25 April saw the arrival of Maj. Bob Knight (CO 1 CRPG) and the conducting of a mass Range. Two relays of 43 Rangers participated in the Range. Surely it was the biggest Range ever run north of 60. After the Range the Rangers played some traditional games which included a tug-of-war between the Ranger Instructors and Ranger Sergeants. We won't talk about the results of that. In the afternoon the CO, being an old [Cavalry] Soldier, was given a mounted march past. This was an impressive sight to see: 86 Rangers mounted roll[ed] by for the 'Eyes Right'! After the march past the CO gave a *short* speech. By 1700 hrs the First Air Twin came in and picked him up.

That night the Pond Inlet and Igloodik Patrols started back as both had long journeys ahead of them. All of the Patrols were back to their respective communities by the 28th April. The mission was very successful and it did prove to everyone that if need be many Rangers can move many miles over many obstacles in a very short time. Rangers are the North!

5. Northern Soldiers

Nunavut News/North, 18 October 1999

Thanks to our former Governor General Romeo Leblanc, our nation's Rangers have finally been recognized for their long service to the country.

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 vital service. When search and rescue teams are required, ... Northern Rangers are ready on a moments' notice. A lower key Ranger mission, but no less important, is to help maintain the integrity of Canada's Arctic sovereignty. We may hope we never need them, but we can be assured that they are there. Now, through this award, they know the country appreciates them.



6. Rangers Savoured Long-Overdue Recognition

Dan Davidson

Whitehorse Star, 15 March 2000

Dawson City—When Governor General Adrienne Clarkson toured some of the territory last week, part of her purpose was to present a special service award to long-serving members of the Canadian Rangers.

She was carrying out an initiative begun last October by her predecessor, Romeo LeBlanc, before he left office.

While the five branches of the Canadian Rangers are part of the Canadian military establishment, there has never, in the 50-year history of the Rangers, been a way for the Canadian Forces to honour these special members.

LeBlanc ended that by lobbying to establish the Ranger Bar addition to the Special Service Medal. The Ranger Bar-Special Service Medal was to be presented to those who had been members for four years and participated in a minimum of three Rangers' exercises.

Clarkson made the first presentations Feb. 14 to a select group of 17 Rangers from all across the nation at Rideau Hall in Ottawa .

For the rest, it was determined that she'd present them during her first national tour.

During her Yukon foray, she made presentations to Rangers in Old Crow, Dawson City, Mayo, Ross River and Whitehorse.

Yukon Rangers are part of the First Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, which takes in the Yukon, N.W.T., Nunavut, Alberta, Saskatchewan, northern British Columbia and northern Manitoba.

According to Lt. Mark Gough, public affairs officer with the Canadian Forces Northern Area Headquarters in Yellowknife, "The Rangers perform the duties of providing a military presence in support of Canadian sovereignty, including reporting unusual activities, collecting local data of significance to support military operations, providing local expertise, assistance and advice, as guides and advisors, in search and rescue activities."

Aside from their actual military duties, Gough was quick to note that the Rangers also perform a number of other ceremonial and community service functions.

He stressed the Dawson patrol's involvement with the Yukon Quest sled dog race over a number of years. As well, Rangers from all over the North had participated in the recent Trans-Canada Trail Relay, which began in Tuktoyaktuk Feb. 19.

Rangers escorted the water carriers from Tuk to Inuvik, Tsiigehtchic, Fort McPherson and Dawson, as well as south to Mayo, Pelly Crossing, Carmacks and Whitehorse.

In Dawson, the Junior Rangers were also involved, according to Sgt. John Mitchell. "Members of our own Junior Ranger Patrol escorted the dog teams out of Dawson on (their) way to Mayo and south," he said.

In their distinctive red-hooded sweaters and military paraphernalia, the Rangers are a highly-visible addition to most ceremonial events in Dawson.

What's not perhaps so readily understood is that the members are volunteers. While they're provided with the ball cap, sweatshirt, badges, and a No. 4 Lee Enfield rifle, most of their other equipment (cooking supplies, snow machines, shelter tools, etc.) is their own.

A Department of National Defence backgrounder document notes that "As a rule, Rangers are paid only when they undergo formal military training. They receive per diem compensation for the use of their personal equipment on exclusively military missions."



7. Canadian Forces Want Bigger Role for Nunavut's Rangers

Aaron Spitzer

Nunatsiaq News, 26 January 2001

A report done by the Canadian Forces' northern area headquarters says Nunavut's rangers should be used more to protect Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic.

Iqaluit—Nunavut's Rangers are ranging farther to protect Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic.

A report released last month by the Canadian Forces Northern Area headquarters in Yellowknife recommends that Rangers conduct regular exercises in the High Arctic to assert Canada's ownership of that area.

This year, squads of the volunteer soldiers will travel to the Arctic Archipelago to make at least two so-called "sovereignty patrols."

One, in April, will take a team of Grise Fiord Rangers to Alexandra Fiord on the east coast of Ellesmere Island. From there they will use snowmobiles to make forays out onto the land and sea ice.

Another patrol in June or July will be staged out of Mould Bay on Prince Patrick Island in the Northwest Territories. Participants in that exercise will be drawn either from Resolute Bay or from the community of Holman in the Northwest Territories.

"What they will do is cover some area, and they will show the flag and report any unusual activity," said Maj. Yves Laroche, commanding officer of the Rangers for the Canadian Forces Northern Area.

The patrols will likely involve between four and eight Rangers, and spend around a week out on the land.

This year's trips will follow up on a High Arctic sovereignty patrol conducted jointly by the Rangers and the RCMP on Ellesmere Island last March.

Though participants on that exercise were on the look-out for foreign hunters rumoured to be poaching polar bears in the Alexandra Fiord region, Laroche said they didn't encounter anything illegal.

According to the report, called the Arctic Capability Study 2000, the sovereignty patrols are part of a new push to insure Canada's ownership of the High Arctic remains unchallenged.

In sovereignty, as in anything, possession is nine-tenths of the law, said Maj. Bob Knight, the former head of Nunavut's Rangers.

"In purely legal terms, they're proving Canada's sovereignty over the territory they're travelling through simply through their presence," he said.

"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?'"

It's not foreign military activity Canadian Forces officials are worried about.

What concerns them, according to the study, is "a scenario where Canada's claim to sovereignty is whittled away by foreign commercial activity."

Central to that concern is the Northwest Passage, where, the report suggests, the onset of global warming could bring a surge in shipping activity.

The passage is thousands of nautical miles shorter than the standard sea-route through the Panama Canal, and could be a profitable short-cut for transport companies if the polar sea ice thins out.

Canada considers the passage to be a domestic waterway, and demands that other nations secure permission before passing through it.

But other countries, including the United States, say the passage is an international channel. Canadian law, including Canadian environmental regulations, should not apply in the waterway, they say.

"To maintain sovereignty over Arctic waters, Canada must know at all times what vessels are in her waters," reads the report.

Several hundred Nunavut residents, mostly Inuit, serve as Canadian Rangers. They are organized into 25 community-based patrols, each headed by an elected sergeant.

Every year the Rangers undergo 11-day training sessions, where they practice first-aid, navigation and traditional survival skills.

8. Building Good Instructors

The Ranger Report, c2002

It takes a highly trained and experienced staff to instruct and support the Rangers and Junior Rangers. Rangers are expected to have good land skills and to know their home area but additional knowledge and skills must be added to that foundation to make an effective Ranger and member of the Canadian Forces. All Ranger and Junior Ranger Instructors of 1 CRPG are drawn from the regular army's combat arms, the Armoured Corps, the Artillery, the Infantry, and the Combat Engineers.

There are 11 Ranger Instructors. All are Sergeants and combined they have more than 180 years of service. There are also 4 Junior Ranger Instructors who between them have served for 90 years. All have served in Canada and overseas on UN missions. The Ranger and Junior Ranger Instructors bring expertise in a wide range of military areas including navigation, first aid, mountain operations, advanced winter operations, field engineering skills of construction and demolition, communications, small arms, support weapons, and many others.

On arrival all staff receive briefings on Ranger operations and also training in the operation of small boats and the long-range radios that are issued to all Ranger patrols. There is additional cross-cultural training given to all personnel posted to Canadian Forces Northern Area. Supporting the 15 instructors and all 1380 Rangers is a Headquarters and Administration group based in Yellowknife. Providing pay, rations, ammunition, tools, weapons, the HQ group handles support of all kinds for the Rangers as well as planning all operations.

Ranger and Junior Ranger Instructors on average spend 150 days per year on the road travelling by commercial flight, charter, air force Twin Otter, road, snow machine, ATV, boat, and foot. The members of 1CRPG's staff come from every region of Canada and every one of them specifically requested a posting to the Rangers. Sgt Jim Martin is the second generation of his family to be a Ranger Instructor. His family lived in Yellowknife for a number of years when his father was posted to the Rangers in the 1980's. He is glad to be back in the North and very pleased to be a Ranger Instructor.

Each Junior Ranger Patrol is visited three times a year. 1 CRPG Junior Ranger Instructors include Warrant Officer Bill Allen, Warrant Officer Chuck Bachmanek, Warrant Officer Eamonn Barry, Warrant Officer George Laidlaw, and Sergeant Terry Cole. Unlike the regular Ranger Patrols, Junior Ranger Instructors are not specifically assigned to a particular community. This allows all of the Junior Ranger Instructors – with their accumulation of experience – a chance to instruct throughout all 23 Junior Ranger Patrols.

Each Ranger patrol is trained once a year and many patrols also provide members an opportunity to conduct sovereignty patrols and North Warning Site patrols. Ranger Instructors are assigned to particular communities.



9. True North Strong, Free Thanks to the Rangers: Arctic regiment celebrates its 60th anniversary

Canadian Press

Toronto Star, 11 April 2002

Resolute, Nunavut—A thin red line will begin to stretch from this remote Arctic community toward the North Magnetic Pole tomorrow, celebrating a unique military institution and reinforcing Canadian sovereignty when it may be increasingly challenged.

The Canadian Rangers, in their traditional red pullovers and ball caps, will celebrate their 60th anniversary this week by travelling 850 kilometres past polar bears, through freezing cold and over shifting sea ice to the place on the Arctic Ocean where compasses are no longer reliable because of the strong magnetic forces.

“I’m looking forward to it,” says Sgt. Paddy Aqiatasuk of Resolute, the guide for Operation Kigliqavik and a Ranger for 14 years.

Created in 1942 to keep watch on Canada’s Pacific coast during World War II, the Rangers have evolved into the military’s eyes and ears in the Arctic.

Now, nearly 4,000 Rangers from almost every northern community in seven provinces and three territories lend their local knowledge and on-the-land smarts to regular patrols throughout some of the most remote areas on Earth.

Armed with almost indestructible Lee-Enfield rifles and travelling on snow vehicles, they keep an eye out for foreign airplanes or ships and monitor unmanned radar stations. They’re a big part of local search-and-rescue efforts.

And they also give Canada crucial ammunition in disputes about northern sovereignty.

Although no one disputes Canadian ownership over Arctic islands, the United States and some European states consider the Northwest Passage that runs between them to be international waters.

Canada argues that the sea ice is an extension of the land and Ranger patrols such as Operation Kigliqavik are intended to be demonstrations of that.



“It’s all about sovereignty here,” says Capt. Rick Regan, deputy commanding officer of 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group.

“The Rangers are the ones letting us know what’s going on in our own backyard.”

So far, sea ice has limited the usefulness of Arctic waterways.

But thinning ice cover may bring sovereignty disputes forward.

Tourists in icebreakers have been cruising the Northwest Passage since 1995 and many speculate commercial shipping will also increase.

“It does strengthen (our argument), as long as it’s part of a cumulative picture,” says Rob Huebert, a marine law specialist and a director of the University of Calgary’s Centre of Military and Strategic Studies.

But more than that, he says the Rangers provide good role models and productive opportunities to communities that often can use both.

“The kids really look up to it,” says Sgt. Darrel Klemmer of Tulita in the Northwest Territories, who has been a Canadian Ranger for five years.

“It gives them a positive role model.”

Rangers are often leaders in their home communities and patrol leaders are elected by their comrades.

“You’ve got to be well respected to lead the patrol,” Klemmer says.

Operation Kigliqavik, expected to take four or five days one way, brings together Rangers from 28 different northern communities from east to west, their largest operation ever. While there are huge differences between the forest and bush of the Mackenzie Valley and

the treeless tundra of the high Arctic, Klemmer says the Rangers are finding lots in common.

“You get 30 different Rangers together and they’ll have 60 different ways of doing the same thing.

“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.”

Says Ranger John Mitchell of Dawson [City], Yukon: “The Rangers are one of the things that link the whole North.”

They link northerners with the south, too.

“People don’t realize how far we are from the nation’s capital,” he says.

“The Rangers make you feel more like you’re a Canadian.”

Joining the Rangers is an opportunity to serve the local community, says Aqiatasuk.

“I like to travel and I like to help people that need help,” says Aqiatasuk, who has been involved with a number of search-and-rescue operations.

But Klemmer says it’s also a chance to serve the nation.

“We don’t want other people intruding on our land without us knowing about it.

“This is Canada. This belongs to us.”



10. Polar expedition called a boost to sovereignty

Stephanie Waddell

Whitehorse Star, 26 April 2002

An expedition that took Canadian Rangers from across the North to the edge of the magnetic North Pole was about gaining a sense of sovereignty.



“It’s always been a national thing, you know, to wave the Canadian flag here,” Sgt. John Mitchell of Dawson City said in an interview Thursday from Resolute Bay, Iqaluit.

“And I think what everybody, that I’m getting a sense of, got was a sort of personal understanding of sovereignty as it pertains to them. You know, it became a personal thing.”

Mitchell was one of the 30 Rangers on the snowmobiling trek to the magnetic North Pole, which left from Resolute Bay on April 9.

The trek, Kigliqavik Ranger (which means “place on the edge of known land”) was to assert Canadian sovereignty over an area of the Arctic that is seldom visited.

“We got 40 per cent of Canada sitting up here north of 60; we’ve got more than our share of natural resources for the country here; we’ve got some of the unique flora and fauna that you can’t find anywhere else in the world, and vast areas of some of the most beautiful country, and I think any country in the world would be proud to have any of the above and we got the whole works here,” Mitchell said.

Beyond that, he continued, there are the people - some of the most unique, interesting and independent ones to be found in the world.

After departing Resolute on April 9, the group covered more than 800 km. north in a week, ending on sea ice more than 10 km north of Ellef Ringnes Island and about two km south of an open stretch of Arctic sea.

The patrol members abandoned plans to camp on the ice for the night because they were unable to go around or over the water, and there was also concern that a gap might open behind the patrol. Instead, the expedition travelled south to Cape Isachsen and camped there.

When the group reached the most northern area on the trip, it was on the edge of the magnetic North Pole.

On April 18, Prime Minister Jean Chretien and National Defence Minister Art Eggleton called to congratulate the troops on their expedition.

The prime minister spoke with Mitchell as well as Warrant Officer Kevin Mulhern of Yellowknife, Sgt. Darrel Klemmer of Tulita, N.W.T., Sgt. Paddy Aqiatasuk of Resolute Bay and Ranger Deborah Iqaluk of Resolute Bay.

While Eggleton shared greetings with the Rangers, the defence minister also told the troop about the Canadian soldiers who died in Afghanistan in a “friendly fire” incident.

“We are happy for the Rangers and sad for our soldiers in Afghanistan,” Eggleton said.

The Rangers’ trek was the first time Rangers from across the North (1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group) have come together in a combined operation.

There were four Yukoners, 10 Rangers from the Northwest Territories, 16 from Nunavut, one from northern Manitoba, one from northern B.C. and one from northern Alberta involved in the expedition. There were also five non-commissioned officers who worked out of the base camp.

On Sunday, a banquet will be hosted in the Rangers’ honour.



11. Operation Polar Bear: Civilian and military personnel on sovereignty patrol encounter dense fog and majestic mammals on Resolute Island

Miriam Hill

Nunatsiaq News, 16 August 2002

Resolution Island—Ranger Jetaloo Kakee motions a group up a rocky hill on Resolution Island, a small land mass off the southern tip of Baffin Island.

Half a dozen civilians taking part in exercise Narwhal Ranger, a sovereignty patrol helping to assert the Canadian military's control in Northern parts, have just been deposited on the island by the HMCS *Goose Bay*.

The Naval vessel leaves the bay broadcasting Newfoundland music from her speakers as she sails into the fog.

Six Canadian Rangers from Iqaluit and Kimmirut are on 24-hour polar bear patrol on an island frequented by the summering mammals. "Shhh... this way," Kakee says.

He leads up the side of an embankment overlooking the campsite, pausing and gesturing for the group to come closer.

Just below the ledge where Kakee stands is a sleeping polar bear. The animal isn't full-grown, probably only between 1,100 and 1,200 pounds, Ranger Matto Michael says.

Kakee makes a soft noise and the animal wakes up, turning its head toward the group above it. The bear rolls itself to its feet and trundles off down the far side of the hill toward small ice floes that have been pushed against the land.



*Rgr Matto Michael,
Kimmirut patrol*

The bear appears to take its time deciding which ice floe it will stand on. Kakee makes loud cooing noises and the bear looks up. Michael throws small stones toward it to try and scare it off.

The excitement over, the group makes its way back down to the campsite where Canadian Forces personnel are setting up tents. Large white canvas structures stand next to peaked green tents and a small bright yellow one. People mill about, waiting for food.

Boxes filled with army rations are opened, propane stoves are lit and within the hour the group's stomachs are full.

Part of the exercise is to test military communications capabilities on the island, and after breakfast about eight people brave the fog and light rain to begin the two-kilometre hike up the island's winding road to the airstrip, where a communications tent has been set up.

The weather is worse on higher ground and the rain pelts down as high winds blow the drops in all directions.

Two men unwrap a portable antenna and try to assemble it in the less-than-optimal conditions.

There aren't any telephone poles or high trees to attach wires to help transmit radio signals, Capt. Ryan Walker explains. The wires on the antenna attach to a radio sheltered in a tent where a man plays with the frequencies to try and reach someone.

"It's so we have a safety net if something happens here," Walker says. "Also, it's to exercise our interoperability." That means it shows that the Navy and the Canadian Forces can pass voice mail, e-mail or digital images over high-frequency radio. With a little patience and fiddling, the radio signal is heard and responded to by both the Iqaluit Coast Guard and one of the Navy ships that deposited troops on the island.

After the weather clears, the Rangers set up targets facing the bay for target practice. They are put through their paces, safety-checking their equipment before firing on the six wooden targets.



Ranger [Dinos] Tikivik says the exercise has allowed a sharing of knowledge between arms of the Forces.

“I think they were surprised by our knowledge of animal behaviour and weather,” he says. “I don’t think we’ll be going home today.”

As the day progresses, it becomes evident that the planned airlift out will not occur due to the appalling visibility.

The light begins to dim and the group has eaten another meal of rations when the approximately 25 people tuck in for a night guarded by Rangers with .303-rifles.

The night is quiet and dawn breaks with more fog and mist.

Officers are soon in contact by satellite phone with the air force and Kenn Borek Air Ltd. trying to find a way off the island.

At mid-morning, people trundle toward another site near the bay where two bears are wandering the hillside across the water. Sharing binoculars and snapping photos as the weather starts to break, the mood of participants lifts with the cloud cover.

The airstrip has good visibility now and the surrounding landscape, which couldn’t be seen the day before, presents itself.

Through the rolling mountains and blue sky, the charter plane lands to take the first shuttle of people back to Iqaluit.



Pond Inlet patrol members on a sovereignty patrol, 2002

12. Quest Mushers Set to Follow the Usual Trail

Stephanie Waddell

Whitehorse Star, 5 February 2003

The Yukon Quest trail will likely take the same route it normally does on the Canadian side of the border.

“We had looked at another route out of Whitehorse, but fortunately, God must be a musher there,” Sgt. John Mitchell with the Canadian Rangers in Dawson City said in an interview Monday.

The Rangers prepare the Canadian side of the Quest trail. Although this winter has seen unseasonably warm temperatures, Mitchell said, the Yukon River has frozen enough that the usual trail can be formed.

“Concurrent to that, the guys made it all the way through and into Braeburn, so that’s fine into there,” he said. “I mean, we do have low snow this year, but there’s a two-inch base.”

While overall it will be rough, it won’t likely be too bad going into Braeburn because it’s the Trans Canada Trail, Mitchell pointed out.

In Carmacks, the Rangers have cut an overland trail due to open water. Going into Carmacks, mushers travel on and off the Yukon River two or three times, and this will eliminate one of those sections, Mitchell said.

“The main change that I know about, at this time, will be that little section overland; and that’s only two kilometres at the most,” he said.

Mitchell doesn’t think the trail’s status will change much over the next week unless the temperature is drastically warm.



“If we get right up to 0 (C) for a few days, we may have a problem, but right now, it’s not actually looking that bad on the route,” he said.

The rough trail is broken from Pelly Crossing. The worst part of the trail appears to be the lower part of Scroggie Creek, he said.

“There’s some rock faces there where some boulders came down and, of course, promptly froze themselves into the middle of the trail,” Mitchell said. “It’s kind of hard to do anything there.”

Provided there’s no major storm, the trail appears to be in good condition from there.

The Rangers are looking at the trail near the Alaska border. There’s been traffic on the Yukon River from Forty Mile to Cassier Creek.

“We’re only looking at a 10-mile (16.1-km) section of trail that’s unknown, and I’ve got no doubt in my mind the guys will handle that,” Mitchell said.

The race is scheduled to start in downtown Whitehorse at 1 p.m. Sunday.



13. Canadian Rangers Patrol Ellesmere Island

Capt. Conrad Schubert

Canadian Forces Northern Area News Release, 12 May 2003

Yellowknife, NWT - Canadian Rangers from 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group have completed the first-ever Ranger Sovereignty Patrol on Northeast Ellesmere Island.

“This was a difficult and challenging patrol,” said Maj. Stewart Gibson, Commanding Officer of the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, “that proved 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group’s capability of operating in the remotest parts of the arctic.”

The four-member patrol started on April 29 and ended on May 7. Patrol members included Sergeant Paddy Aqiatusak, commander of the Resolute Bay Ranger Patrol, Corporal Manasie Noah of the Grise Fiord Ranger Patrol, Major Stewart Gibson, and Warrant Officer Kevin Mulhern of 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group Headquarters.

The patrol covered over 1000km, from the Eureka Weather Station on the West-central side of Ellesmere Island to Canadian Forces Station Alert at the extreme northern end of Ellesmere Island. The route crossed from the center of Ellesmere Island to the east coast and then inland in a northerly direction to Alert.

The patrol members are the first Canadian Forces members ever to have travel overland from Eureka to Alert, over much ground that has never before been traveled on.

The terrain tested the mettle and ingenuity of the Rangers, often breaking their snowmachines as the patrol crossed sea ice, bare rock and steep terrain. Temperatures dipped to -25C and the patrol had to carried out expedient repairs in challenging conditions in order to reach their objective within the planned time.

The patrol asserted Canadian sovereignty in an area where it is periodically contested by Greenlandic hunters. In 2002, the Grise Fiord Ranger Patrol carried out a sovereignty patrol from Grise Fiord to Eureka. In 2001, a joint Ranger-RCMP sovereignty operation took place in the area of Alexandra Fiord on the east coast of Ellesmere Island, north of the Johan Peninsula.

14. Bringing Tradition to the Armed Forces

Neils Christensen

Northern News Services, 24 November 2003

Sanikiluaq - Jonny doesn't let his age slow him down. In fact as a Canadian Ranger and an elder, he's been able to pass on his traditional knowledge to others.

At 67 years old he is still an active member of the Rangers.

Tookalook was one of the participants in the first Nunavut shooting competition.

"This has been a lot of fun," he said, with one of the Rangers translating for him. "It good to see all these young people out here learning."

He joked that he's been teaching the younger generation about being a Ranger.

"It's important for elders to pass on their knowledge to the younger generation," he said.

During the competition, Tookalook showed the Rangers how to make a fox trap with stones.

Tookalook received his first rifle from the Rangers in 1947 and officially joined the army reserve group in 1989.

"I was asked to join the group and I've enjoyed it ever since," he said.

Part of the reason Tookalook wanted to join was because he wanted to help out his community.

"It's been a great experience," he said.

Early in his career as a Ranger, Tookalook was involved in training soldiers to survive in colder climates.

"The army from the South didn't know how to survive on the land," he said.

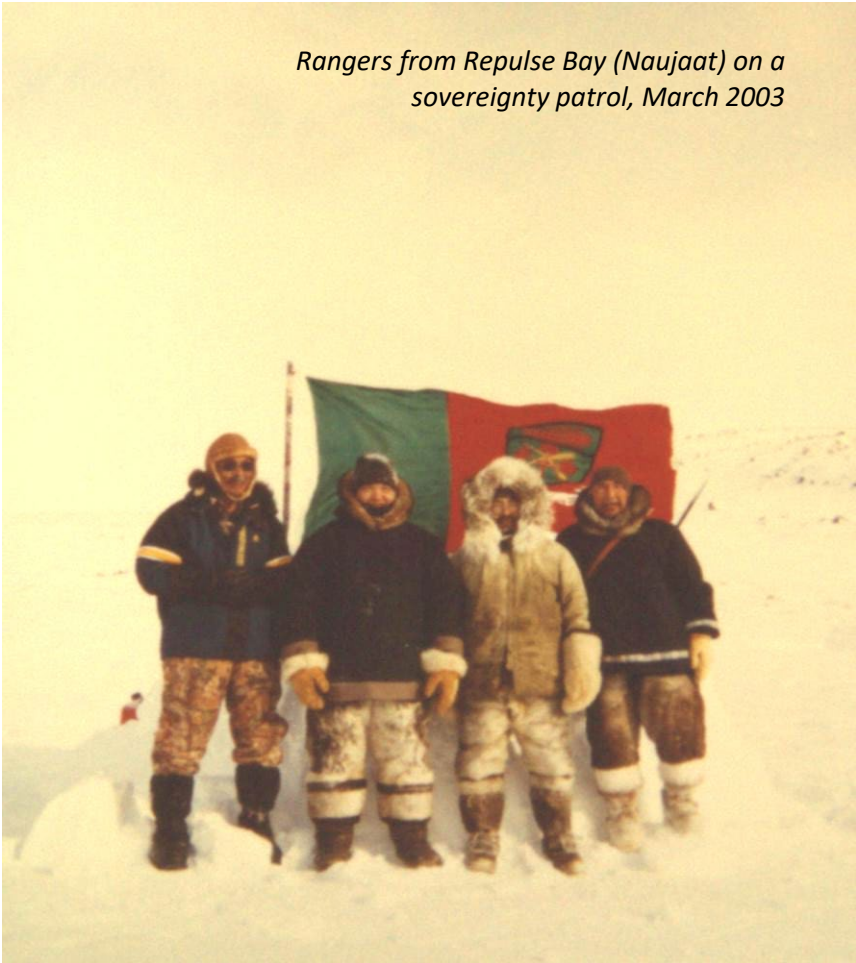


“I would teach them how to hunt and trap,” he said.

Tookalook said the best part about being a Ranger is the comradeship among all the members. For most of the Rangers, the shooting competition was the first time they’ve met others from across Nunavut. It didn’t take long to make friends with the people from the other communities.

“We’ve had a lot of laughs during the competition,” he said.

Rangers from Repulse Bay (Naujaat) on a sovereignty patrol, March 2003



15. Growing in Strength

Darrell Greer

Northern News Services, 24 December 2003

Rankin Inlet - The Rankin Inlet Patrol of the Canadian Rangers held a special ceremony recently to welcome 13 new members into its ranks.

A large gathering of friends and family members came together at the community hall to watch the official swearing-in of the new Rangers, one of the largest growth spurts in recent years for the Rankin Patrol.

Joining the Rankin Patrol are Ambrose Karlik, Frank Russell, Mark Ronald, Ishmeal Naulalik, Sam Ayaruak, Eric Nukapiak, Arsene Karlik, Raymond Mercer Jr. and Herbert Scherer.

Also sworn in were the patrol's first female members, Lucy Makkigak, Nellie Ussak, Mary Ann Hapanak and Lydia Tatty.

There were also two special presentations made by honoured guest Rose Tootoo.

Elder Jack Kabvitok received the Queen's Jubilee Medal for his many years spent with the Canadian Rangers.

Elder Ollie Ittinuar was honoured for his years of service, and for being the oldest-serving member in Canada, at a youthful 82 years of age.



Ranger Sgt. Albert Kimaliakyuk said a group of senior patrol members led the new Rangers out onto the land for training this past month.

The patrol was accompanied by Maj. Stu Gibson (commanding officer of the 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group) and Ranger instructor Sgt. Ken Sallazzo of Yellowknife.

“We spent about 10 days on the land near Corbett Inlet,” said Kimaliakyuk.

“The purpose of the patrol was to train the new recruits on how to build a proper shelter, administer first aid and use search-and-rescue techniques.

“They also learned how to make a landing strip for both airplanes and helicopters, as well as spending some time on the shooting range.”

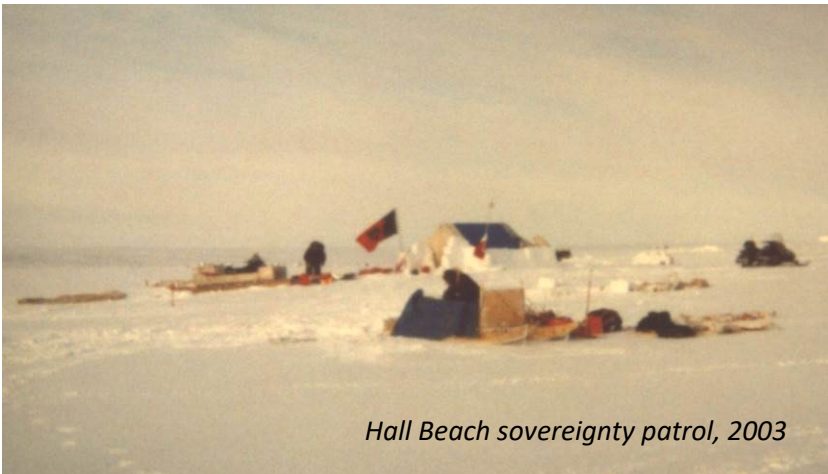
The new recruits quickly became adept at constructing an iglu for shelter and warmth on the land.

Some slept in a tent

While most of the Rangers on the training exercise opted to sleep in an iglu, some decided a tent was more to their liking.

Kimaliakyuk said each mode of shelter had its own distinct advantage on the exercise.

“The ones who slept in the iglu were a lot warmer, but the people in tents had a lot more room.”



Hall Beach sovereignty patrol, 2003

16. Rangers Rescue Stranded Snowmobilers

Sarah Elizabeth Brown

Whitehorse Star, 12 January 2004

When Joe Girves' cousin perked his head up and said he heard a gunshot, Joe put it off to more hallucinations and lay back down in the snow.

Both men had been seeing and hearing things that weren't there for days.

The pair of Anchorage, Alaska, relatives were weak, severely dehydrated and frostbitten after seven days stranded in the bush about 60 kilometres north of Dawson City.

This morning, 19-year-old Brandon Girves was medivaced to a hospital in his hometown, where he's likely to have at least part of his feet amputated due to frostbite. Joe's been told to expect feeling back in his own numb feet in five to six weeks.

They'd set out on a snowmobile expedition from Tok, Alaska, to Dawson on Jan. 2, only to have one of their machines break down just hours into the trip.

The Rangers, out on their annual winter training exercise, stumbled upon the stranded Alaskans on Saturday and promptly set up camp and administered first aid.

Because of the younger Girves' condition, the two men couldn't be transported out of the Clinton Creek area they'd been in for the past seven days. Instead, the Rangers took care of the pair for a day in the bush before a helicopter could transport them to the Dawson nursing station.

Ironically, just two hours after the Rangers inadvertently rescued the pair, Joe's girlfriend flew overhead in a search aircraft. When he'd missed his scheduled Jan. 7 phone call home, she'd notified the RCMP and Alaska State Troopers, who were grounded due to poor weather.

His girlfriend Francine had been flying in the chartered airplane for two days when she spotted the abandoned snowmachine, said Joe, 35, but it would have been another day until a ground crew could reach them.

“By then I don’t know if Brandon would be alive or not,” Joe said this morning as he polished off a hamburger and fries at the Walmart McDonald’s.

“Those guys are real heroes, real professional gentlemen,” said Joe about the couple of dozen Rangers who rescued them. “Babied us along, wouldn’t let us do anything for ourselves.”

Once Joe was flown to Whitehorse from Dawson, a local ambulance attendant dropped him off at the department store because he only had the clothes he’d been wearing for the last week.

He’s currently headed to Vancouver to buy a ticket “to the nearest warm beach,” Joe said this morning. He’s going to take it easy for a while before going home to Alaska.

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“It’s all kind of a blur now,” he said. Throughout the entire ordeal, the men were able to catch only one or two hours of sleep at a time, and it wasn’t restful sleep, he said. He slept for five hours once the Rangers found them, but was up all last night organizing his cousin’s medivac.

At their campsite, the Polish sausage and box of snack bars they’d brought with them on the second machine was gone in 24 hours. Joe had expected to be in Dawson buying snowmobile parts, not stranded in the bush.

The first several days were frigid, with temperatures in the -45 to -48 range, not including the windchill. They both sported several layers of long underwear, with fleece and snowsuits on top of that. Both men wore heavy winter boots and had several hats and layers of gloves.

They weren’t able to get their winter survival tent close enough to the fire, so Joe cut it up to use as a blanket. One man would huddle on one side of the fire, holding a wool blanket around his shoulder to trap in the flames’ warmth, while the other did the same with the tent on the other side. They both now have some level of smoke inhalation, said Joe, but they kept somewhat warm.

For the first three days the cousins had lots of energy to collect firewood and melt snow in their pan for drinking water.



But by the fourth day, the energy and their hunger pangs vanished.

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By Jan. 8, they knew someone would have realized they were in trouble, but became more despondent as help didn't arrive that morning or the next.

At one point they moved their camp 100 metres to be closer to firewood, but it was "pathetic" watching themselves try to move. Despite endlessly melting water, both were seriously dehydrated.

For the last two days alone, the cousins alternated curling up together to keep warm between making the effort to build a fire.

"The last day was real bleak," said Joe.

Both men had been hallucinating for a while, and that's all Joe thought was happening when Brandon heard a gunshot the morning of Jan. 10. But a steady stream of 24 to 25 snowmachines pulled by, ridden by Canadian Rangers who'd seen their helmets the men had propped up in hopes of being spotted.

"I thought it was a hallucination," said Joe.

The Rangers immediately swung into action, setting up a tent for the exhausted pair and calling the Dawson nursing station via satellite phone for instructions about thawing out Brandon's feet.

It was then the cousins learned that poor weather was grounding rescue aircraft, said Joe. It wasn't until the next day that a helicopter could be flown in for a pickup.

They threw up the food the Rangers first gave them, said Joe, and from there on, the pair were given a regimen of fluids, then soup, then solids.

Brandon, who works in a coffee shop back home, went from 113 kilograms (250 pounds) to 86 kg (190 pounds), while Joe lost about 14 kg (30 pounds).

The Rangers told them they'd not met many people who survived three days in those conditions, let alone a solid week, said Joe. He's paying the Rangers to rescue the two machines and gear, he added, noting the Rangers made the offer.

"Some of the kindest individuals I've ever met."

17. Storm delays Arctic patrol: Troops won't visit disputed island on 18-day trek

Canadian Press NewsWire, 31 March 2004

Resolute, Nunavut—Diving temperatures and high winds that whipped up 30-metre plumes of snow delayed the departure of the longest one-way Arctic sovereignty patrol in history Wednesday.

But that didn't diminish the enthusiasm of the 20 Canadian Rangers and regular army soldiers for crossing 1,300 kilometres of ice and snow from Resolute to Alert at the top of Ellesmere Island.

"You're filled with a barely containable excitement when you're starting a patrol," said commanding officer Maj. Stewart Gibson.

The party, armed with antique but cold-friendly Lee-Enfield rifles, was to set out on snowmobiles Wednesday morning.

But clear skies degenerated into howling winds and -35 temperatures.

"Sometimes off the top of the hills you can see a 100-foot plume of snow just picked up and held in the air for a while," said Cpl. Doug Stern, a Ranger from Cambridge Bay.

"This is just normal to me," shrugs Stern, who has lived in the central Arctic for 22 years.

"You wait till it's good enough to go, and then you just go."

Gibson's 15 Rangers and five regular army soldiers are charged with showing the Canadian flag in a part of the world that is rarely visited but increasingly contested as climate change opens up possibilities for Arctic shipping and resource development.

One of those flashpoints is Hans Island, an uninhabited pebble in the sea ice midway between Ellesmere Island and the Danish colony of Greenland. The island is the subject of ongoing talks between Canada and Denmark and a recently published photograph shows a Danish flag waving on its rocky shores.

The Canadians would love to plant the Maple Leaf on Hans Island, but their orders say no, said Gibson.

"I would love to be given the order to go over there," he said. "But that's a national decision that's got to be made at the diplomatic level."

Besides, it's too dangerous to try to reach the island over the ice.

“That is such ugly-looking ice, all jumbled up and crunching along,” said Stern, who looks out toward Hans Island during the summer when he works at Ellesmere’s Quttinirpaaq Park.

“It’s not just rough, but it’s moving.”

This patrol is the latest in a series designed to enhance Canada’s presence in the North. It is intended to mark the start of increased efforts to wave the flag over the disputed waters.



Last summer, two navy minesweepers made it as far north as the south tip of Baffin Island, the first naval presence in the Arctic in 13 years. HMCS Summerside and HMCS Goose Bay landed a group of reservists on a small island off the coast.

This summer, the frigate HMCS Montreal is scheduled to sail north, the first large warship to do so in at least a generation. It will carry 200 soldiers and five helicopters for exercises.

Another sovereignty patrol is scheduled next year from Resolute to Prince Patrick Island, on the west side of the Arctic archipelago.

Gibson’s party is expected to reach Alert in 18 days. Only seven of the original group will conduct the whole tour in order to minimize impact on the fragile environment of Quttinirpaaq Park.

The party can barely wait, said Gibson.

“Every day, you’re saying ‘I’m really doing something terribly important,’” he said.

“Then you look at the scenery. It helps the miles go by as you’re travelling, the realization that you’re making the first footprints in some areas where nobody in recorded history has been before you.

“By the eighth or 10th day, you’re getting tired and you’re looking forward to a bed that’s already made, with running water and a toilet that flushes.”

18. 'Brutal' North Hits Canadian Patrol Hard

Adrian Humphreys

National Post, 14 April 2004

The harsh climate and terrain of the far north is taking its toll on the Canadian Forces patrol trying to assert Canada's sovereignty over the Arctic. Two injured soldiers have been airlifted to safety and all but five of the patrol's 16 snowmobiles lie in pieces.

Master Warrant Officer Gerry Westcott, second-in-command of the patrol, was flown out with a damaged leg yesterday after two earlier medical evacuation flights were unable to land because of the weather. Ranger Corporal Doug Stern was rescued Saturday after injuring his back.

"It is brutal punishment on the men and machines," said Master Warrant Officer Westcott. "We were in whiteout conditions and it is hard to tell which way is up and which is down -- it could be a valley next to you or it could be a hill next to you, it's hard to tell.

"We've used up our supply of snowmobiles. We've worn out every ski we have in the north right now. The terrain we go over is probably the roughest you can ever abuse a snowmobile. We are going over boulders the size of milk crates, piles of these boulders with a dusting of snow, to get through some of the narrow passes.

"Every time a machine breaks we are cannibalizing it so we can keep the others going," Master Warrant Officer Westcott said from Eureka, a research station on Ellesmere Island, while on painkillers and waiting for medical attention.

The patrol is en route to Alert, a weather and military installation that claims to be the world's most northerly permanently inhabited settlement, a 1,300-kilometre trek. It is one of several long-range sovereignty patrols planned to bolster a diminishing claim to the remote Arctic territory.

Among the disputes over northern lands are rival claims to Hans Island, a small, barren rock between Ellesmere Island and Greenland, made by Canada and Denmark. Danish warships have been visiting the island and raising their national flag in what Canada claims is its sovereign territory.



Now, about 100 kilometres from Alert, the patrol is expected to push on with the remaining five soldiers.

It could reach Alert by late today or it could take several more days.

Master Warrant Officer Westcott injured his leg when his snowmobile struck an outcropping of rock during a blizzard that reduced visibility to almost nothing, he said.

Warrant Officer Rick Mackwood, a medic travelling with the patrol, was immediately behind him and tended to the damaged knee. The extent of the injury will not be known until he returns to the south at the end of the mission.

“One of the plans was to fly me out to Resolute but, frankly, it only hurts when I move so I would rather them not fly me anywhere to keep the plane up here as a safety factor for the team,” Master Warrant Officer Westcott said.

Corp. Stern was injured while the patrol turned around after finding their route blocked.

“Its hard to tell [where you are going] because the contours on the maps don’t agree with what is actually on the ground, so we got sucked into a river system... it was absolutely brutal, boulders everywhere,” said Master Warrant Officer Westcott.

A front ski on Corp. Stern’s snowmobile struck a large rock and he was thrown off and landed on a boulder. He is also in Eureka waiting for medical assistance.

The patrol was expected to cost about \$500,000.

It will now likely cost far more.

Rental snowmobiles were needed to add to the army's armada for the first leg of the patrol by 20 soldiers, a mix of regular Canadian Forces soldiers and Canadian Rangers, a military unit comprising mostly aboriginals. Just seven pushed on for the second leg of the mission.

The harsher than expected conditions have meant repeated assistance from a Twin Otter aircraft providing support and supplies for the patrol.

"It is beautiful – you couldn't find a better postcard than this anywhere in the world, it's the most beautiful scene you'll see -- but pretty rough to go through. It gives a pounding. Most of the guys are pretty worn out," said Master Warrant Officer Westcott. "But it won't stop them. They'll get the mission done. They will reach Alert."

Once in Alert the patrol will fly back to Resolute.



19. Irreplaceable Rangers

Derek Neary

Northern News Services, 21 January 2005

Yellowknife - If the snowmobile is the car of the North, the komatik is the irreplaceable cargo trailer.

A team of skilled and knowledgeable Canadian Rangers has been working to produce enough komatiks to supply 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group's planned operations for the next couple of years, according to Capt. Conrad Schubert of the Canadian Armed Forces.

According to Schubert, in a small but representative way, this is what the Canadian Rangers bring to the Canadian Forces: the knowledge of how to live and move on the land.

Ten Rangers from patrols in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories are working in a hangar at the Yellowknife Forward Operating Location to complete the 20 komatiks. Canadian Rangers from Resolute Bay, Nunavut and Holman Island, Northwest Territories, were in Yellowknife to lend their expertise to the task. Rangers also came from

Fort Providence to lend their own skills as carpenters.

Ranger Ronald Minoza of Fort Providence says he is now “a veteran builder,” having taken part in three similar komatik building sessions, Schubert noted.

Sergeant Alan Pogotak came from Holman Island to supervise the building and says he learned how to build komatiks from his father and has built them “all his life.”

Master Cpl. Clyde Kalluk of Resolute Bay also learned how to build komatiks from his father and has been building them for 17 years.



Final assembly calls for all connections on the komatik to be made with rope, so the sled will flex as it passes over rough terrain. Nails, bolts and screws, on the other hand, make for rigid and breakable connections.

Traditional rawhide rope has been replaced by nylon, but the aim and the technique remain the same as they have for generations.

The Canadian Forces bring military know-how to the mission of asserting sovereignty in the North, but that mission cannot be accomplished without the invaluable skill and knowledge of the Canadian Rangers who have lived in the North for generations, Schubert noted.



20. Lost on the Land

Northern News Services, 31 January 2005

Canadian Rangers and local civilians have joined in the intense search efforts for a missing Beaufort-Delta man.

It is suspected that Gordon Moore, who was last seen at a cabin 94 kilometres east of Inuvik around 1 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 22., attempted to walk back to Inuvik.

After four days of air and land searches using up to four RCMP crews, eight snowmobiles and two helicopters, Ottawa was asked to dispatch the 1 Canadian Rangers Patrol Group (1CRPG) out of Yellowknife Thursday afternoon.

By Friday, four Rangers were on the land, each with a snowmobile, where they planned to stay overnight and follow up on whatever leads they find.

“They are staying there to save time and it's much easier for logistics,” said Sgt. Martin St. Charles, co-ordinator of the Ranger's efforts.

St. Charles expected at least two members of the Inuvik Ranger Patrol to join the search Saturday if needed.

A private aircraft and two civilian rescue teams also began performing search patterns Thursday.

“We rely on the expertise of the local people,” said Staff Sgt. Sid Gray of the Inuvik RCMP. “This is their backyard.”

The RCMP, which has co-ordinated the search from the beginning, had to pull all but two officers from the ground search due to court commitments.

Fresh signs of human activity were found Thursday in a rugged area a mere 16 kilometres from the cabin where Moore was last seen.

“They located a camp and fresh urine signs,” said Gray.

A lean-to with tracks leading to a fire pit area was also discovered.

“It gives us hope,” said Gray. “It suggests he's still upright.”

Moore's tracks were also found Tuesday and Wednesday.

“He knows where he is, he's following the pattern of a straight line,” said St. Charles, adding this would suggest Moore's not disoriented or in shock.

Weather problems

Although it was cool and clear Friday, blowing snow and high winds earlier in the week hampered the search as potential tracks and campsites were covered by snow drifts.

St. Charles expected calm and clear weather Saturday, but expressed concern about the cold temperatures expected for Sunday and Monday.

“For sure every minute counts,” he said.

Last seen wearing snowshoes and a white fur hat, thick winter jacket and ski pants, Moore was well prepared to face the elements.

It is also thought he might be in possession of a 22-calibre gun, Carpenter said.

“Hopefully he's got some kind of container to make water,” said Moore's brother-in-law Master Corporal James Rogers of the ICRPG, who is involved in the search.

Moore grew up in the area, is accustomed to living off the land and much of the distance to Inuvik is open tundra, Rogers said.

“I think if he saw someone, he would go to them.”

“I'm still optimistic that we're going to find him OK,” said Gray, who's main concern was Moore's source of food.

“He's an accomplished person of the land, and I expect he could make it a greater distance than I could.”

Police do not suspect any altercation or incident led to Moore's disappearance.

“All indications are he just wanted to come home,” Carpenter said.

The Rangers will also stay with the search until Tuesday, St. Charles said.

Anyone who wants to become involved in the search effort is asked to call the RCMP first. Individuals are asked not to attempt to search on their own.

“We don't want anyone else getting lost,” Gray said.

21. “The Place at the Edge”

Nathan VanderKlippe

Edmonton Journal, 1 May 2005

Isachsen, Nunavut—A little more than a thousand kilometres from the North Pole, a line of snowmobiles snakes through a blistering wind. Behind each snowmobile, a wooden sled called a kamotiq bounces its load of jerry cans, tents and food across the rough and uneven ice of the frozen Arctic Ocean.

Fluttering from the last snowmobile in line is a Canadian flag, its bright red maple leaf the sole splash of colour in a landscape as bleakly monochromatic as it is majestically vast.

This is the land that silence owns, a place where jagged sea ice runs into sharp gravel cliffs and gently rolling tundra hills, all hidden beneath a windswept coat of snowy sameness that obscures the border between land and sea.

The snowmobiles ride over it all, the flag the sole indicator that this land belongs to someone and that, though the men are closer to the Russian coast than Ottawa, this is Canadian soil.

“We’re trying to exercise sovereignty within the North,” says Warrant Officer Randy Cox, one of nine regular force soldiers participating in a \$1-million exercise that has brought the soldiers and 13 Canadian Rangers to this barren corner of the Arctic on what’s called an enhanced sovereignty operation.

“In a nutshell, that means we just want to show a presence up here, in the best interests of Canada,” he said. “So that ever in the event that someone else is trying to conquer this land or lay claim to it, then we can at least say that we’ve occupied certain areas of it.”

It’s a claim that has drawn criticism from some quarters, from people who dispute that expensive patrols like this one do anything to further Canada’s claims to the Arctic and the thousands of islands and waterways in its archipelago.

But this is a critical exercise for the northern military, which is charged with protecting the 40 per cent of the country’s land mass that lies north of 60.

The Rangers are Canada's most important contribution to northern sovereignty. Their 1,500 northern members - all military reservists - in 58 communities monitor the land and waters within a 300-kilometre radius of their hometowns, creating a federal presence with a wide reach over the Arctic that is augmented by some 200 annual patrols.



Those parts that the Rangers do not touch are watched by occasional overflights by surveillance aircraft, and the defence department has begun work on Project Polar Epsilon, which will bring regular precision satellite surveillance to the Arctic by 2009.

But there remain great uninhabited swaths of the Arctic, and part of the tasking for the northern forces is to set “footprints in the snow” on exercises like this one, called Operation Kigliqavik IV, after the Inuit word for “the place at the edge of known land.”

That perfectly describes the place where the Rangers and soldiers are snowmobiling, breaking into two patrols as they leave Isachsen, the site of an abandoned Arctic weather station on Ellef Ringnes Island, for Meighen and Amund Ringnes Islands, smaller chunks of land to the east.

As they travel, a raging windstorm thrusts them on to another edge: the outer limit of human survival.

Once every hour they stop, pulling their snowmobiles together into a cluster against the wind and consulting a GPS unit for a brief location check. The stop is short, however, and the GPS quickly tucked away again inside a parka to preserve its batteries, which have already been sucked of most of their energy by the frigid cold, a -50C windchill that burns white frostbite circles on to the men's cheeks in minutes.

“As soon as you stop, the wind catches up with you and you can turn into a casualty within 15 to 20 minutes if you're not careful,” said Cox.



So the men soldier on, pushing against a hail of snow particles hurled by the wind, not intimidated by the blizzard.

“It’s how I grew up, being out on the land,” said Paul Ikuallaq, a 22-year Inuk Ranger veteran from Gjoa Haven, Nunavut, whose grandfather was Roald Amundsen, the first man to sail through the Northwest Passage. “We’re not scared of anything, because we’re right there with the warm stuff – the Coleman stove and the tent.”

As the men drive, the wind continues to shriek at gale force. Sometimes it gusts to hurricane strength, the entire sky assaulting the land and the men, its force unbroken by trees or buildings.

And unbroken by land. Ellef Ringnes Island lies at the western edge of the Canadian Arctic archipelago. From here to Russia, the wind blows untamed over ice that never melts. When the island’s weather station was still active, the men stationed here sometimes had to crawl on hands and knees between buildings to avoid being toppled by its ferocity.

But lives spent above the 60th parallel have hardened the men on this patrol against the cold. Some of the Inuit leave their faces uncovered as they travel, but their weather-hardened skin is barely touched by the lashing wind, which leaves only a few small “caribou kisses” -- purple frostbite marks.

David Nanook leads one of the patrols. A quiet Inuk man who speaks little English, this land is his home and he is gifted with a remarkable ability to navigate through the limited visibility. Instead of

using landmarks, he finds his way by keeping the wind at one side and using the snowdrifts as compasses.

The drifts, some as hard as concrete, form according to the prevailing winds and point in the same direction; to keep on course, Nanook cuts across each one at a similar angle.

By evening, the men have reached their destination, and stop for another GPS check. Nanook has led them for 84 kilometres, and largely by his use of the wind, snow and sun they have stopped 250 metres away from their target. They patrol the coast for a valley, where they set up canvas tents in the searing wind.

The next morning, they hammer the feet of a metal cairn into the frozen gravel, leaving a permanent marker of their presence for anyone who may pass by here.

For some of the men, this is the longest they have ever been away from home, and the farthest north they have ever travelled. Being here as Rangers evinces a chest-swelling pride for many, who feel they are protecting the territory they call “our land” for future generations.

“I wouldn’t want a foreign person to own this land because of all the animals around here,” said Manasie Kaunak, an Inuk Ranger from Grise Fiord, Canada’s northernmost civilian community. “When we went on the patrol, we saw caribou and there were lots of tracks -- I wouldn’t want anyone to hunt those besides Inuit people.”

The military, too, sees this patrol as an exercise in guarding Canada’s frontiers from unknown intruders who might one day claim parts of the High Arctic for the petroleum or mineral riches that could lie hidden in its frozen depths.

“We’re up here patrolling the boundaries of Canada to show that it is ours,” said Capt. Brian Wiltshire, the deputy commanding officer of the northern Rangers. “If we can’t put people here, then other countries are just going to take it.”

But experts say that while exercises like this may perk a few ears at foreign embassies, they actually have very little bearing on Canada’s Arctic sovereignty.

The Kigliqavik patrol is “next to irrelevant,” said Franklyn Griffiths, a retired University of Toronto professor who specializes in Arctic matters. “If we really were interested in sovereignty, we’d get ourselves some ice-strengthened naval vessels able to operate in the ice up there,” he said. “And that is not coming on.”

Unlike Denmark, Canada has no military ships that can operate in ice-choked waters, limiting the country's ability to enforce its sovereignty over the Arctic.

And the Rangers have been dispatched largely on land, which no one but Canada claims.

"They call them sovereignty patrols but nobody is threatening the land mass of the Canadian North," said Rob Huebert, a northern sovereignty expert and the associate director of the University of Calgary's Centre for Military and Strategic Studies. "Our sovereignty disputes are over the waterways and that's really where we have to have sovereignty patrols."

Asserting ownership over those waters now could become increasingly important as climate change melts the Arctic.

In the past 50 years, temperatures in some parts of the Arctic have risen as much as four degrees Celsius. The thickness and extent of sea ice have diminished by about 15 per cent in the last three decades. Scientists expect the future to bring a continued rise in temperatures, which could melt away the permanent ice in the polar ice cap in summertime by the year 2050.

Ice-Free Waterway Will Spur a Flurry of Resource Exploitation

That could bring a host of sovereignty challenges, as temperatures unlock the Arctic's vast network of waterways, clearing the way for a burst of resource activity in the unexplored hinterlands. It could also open the Northwest Passage to transcontinental marine traffic, potentially exposing the delicate Arctic to environmental disaster since the international community does not recognize Canada's claim to the passage as internal waters. If designated as an international waterway, Canada would be unable to set its own environmental rules on shipping through the passage.

Canada faces two other significant Arctic sovereignty disputes: the U.S. does not recognize our claim to parts of the Beaufort Sea, an area rich in petroleum resources, and the state of Alaska has for the past few years invited oil companies to buy parcels of the disputed zone.

In the far eastern Arctic, Denmark and Canada both claim Hans Island, an otherwise insignificant speck of gravel between Ellesmere

Island and Greenland, but one that has highlighted Canada's indifferent approach to its actual sovereignty issues in the Arctic.

The past few years have brought increasing lip service to solving Canada's far northern sovereignty dilemmas. Last summer, Prime Minister Paul Martin travelled to Nunavut to underscore the Arctic's growing importance to Canada, which was again emphasized in the October 2004 speech from the throne, which promised a strategy to "protect the northern environment and Canada's sovereignty and security."

But despite a pledge in the April defence policy statement of steps to "to preserve our sovereignty, including that of the Arctic," Canada has done little to actually resolve the Arctic's sovereignty challenges.

Over the past two summers, the Danish navy has sent frigates on flag-planting exercises to Hans Island. Canada has not responded in turn. The Canadian Rangers, frequently held up as the country's foremost northern sovereignty contribution, have only patrolled in areas that are indisputably Canadian territory. They have gone nowhere near Hans Island, or to any of the other disputed zones.

In fact, the closest the Canadian military has come to Hans Island was two years ago in a chartered commercial aircraft, when Stewart Gibson, the commanding officer of the northern Rangers, flew near the island.

He never landed on the island because, he said, "my boss has not told me to go there. Right now, this dispute between the Danes and Canada is at the political



Canadian Rangers and other CAF personnel raise the flag on Hans Island, 2005

level, with (the department of) Foreign Affairs, and they're trying to resolve it at their level.”

But at Foreign Affairs, the various disputes have garnered little attention --none have prompted bilateral negotiations, and department spokesman Reynald Doiron said there are no plans to send a military presence to Hans Island.

“At this time and place there's no particular reason for either party to either negotiate or to bring it to the International Court of Justice, so therefore any presence over there by either side's military forces would not be welcome,” he said, despite Denmark's persistence in sending its navy there.

At the same time, social change is beginning to shake Canada's strongest argument for Arctic ownership: the fact that the Inuit have used this land since “time immemorial.”

Today in some places, their presence is dwindling, and several communities along the Northwest Passage route have been left as ghost towns, or are near collapse.

No one is left at Shingle Point in the Yukon, while settlements like Bathurst Inlet and Bay Chimo, both on the northern coast of the continent, have dwindling populations now at just over a dozen people. Sachs Harbour, the only community on Banks Island, is dying away: it lost 16 per cent of its population between the 1996 and 2001 censuses, and is now home to only 114 people.

More worrisome still, the hunting traditions that once pushed Inuit to the farthest reaches of the North are losing a battle against the modern wage economy, which brings sustenance from a cubicle and a grocery store rather than from the land. For those who still do hunt, escalating prices have made it difficult to scrape together enough cash to pay for bullets and snowmobile fuel. Ultimately, that has diminished Canada's presence, and its “eyes and ears” across the tundra.

N.W.T. Premier Joe Handley said the remedy is to invest in the communities themselves, and called on the federal government to invest in tourism and municipal subsidies to help keep hamlets like Sachs Harbour viable.

“The best way of ensuring sovereignty and security is to have good strong healthy communities along right across the Arctic,” he said. “It wouldn't be very expensive because people who live in those small communities are not looking for a six-digit salary. They like the

independence that comes with hunting and living off the land. It could be a good investment to keep that going ... and much cheaper than bringing in military hardware.”

Still, both Huebert and Griffiths see value in exercises like Kigliqavik, even if not for sovereignty in particular. By most standards, the Ranger program is impressively cheap, costing about \$6.5 million per year to run, and Griffiths says the patrols allow Canada to be better keepers of the land – “in the sense of looking after it, we keep it in good order and we manage and see that it is used properly.”

Another part of the value is in showing the military’s Arctic deficiencies. On this most recent patrol, for example, the winds and heavy ice fog grounded military aircraft for more than a week, delaying the exercise. One Twin Otter scheduled to operate out of Isachsen never made it there because it was equipped with skis that crippled its range.

“The lessons learned in and of themselves are of critical importance,” said Huebert. “They drive home to those that pay attention the fact that we are so severely limited in what we can do in the North that hopefully the policymakers make some decent policy decisions on what we can do to shore up that capability.”

“They call them sovereignty (patrols) but nobody is threatening the land mass of the Canadian North. Is it really sovereignty? No,” he said.

“But it is a very clear enforcement and presence capability, so it does say to people, ‘we’re up here and we have this capability.’”



Fort Good Hope, January 2005

22. Forces Plan Arctic ‘Land is Ours’ Mission: Armed snowmobile patrols hope GG will meet them on disputed ice

Adrian Humphreys

National Post, 9 February 2006

Canada’s military is embarking on its largest affirmation of Arctic sovereignty, with five armed patrols snowmobiling 4,500 kilometres to converge in the High Arctic -- where the soldiers are inviting the Governor-General to meet them.

Scheduled to begin next month, the sovereignty mission over the Arctic islands and sea ice of the Northwest Passage is codenamed Operation Nunavut, which means “land that is ours” in Inuktitut, the Inuit language.

The five patrols will pass through or near some of the Arctic areas that have been under increasing international dispute.

One patrol will be leaving from Ellesmere Island, off of which lies Hans Island, the barren rock claimed by both Canada and the Danes. That patrol will head west.

Three patrols will head east from Prince Patrick Island, which is to the east of an area of sea claimed by both Canada and the United States.

A fifth patrol will head northwest from Resolute over part of the Northwest Passage, an area that several countries claim is international water, but Canada claims is sovereign territory.

Several patrols will rendezvous on Loughheed Island, in the middle of the Arctic archipelago, on April 4, according to the plan provided to the *National Post* in a military briefing.

“The hope is that both the Commissioner of Nunavut and also the Governor-General will meet with the patrols on the ice at the rendezvous point,” said Colonel Norm Couturier, commander of the Canadian Forces in the North.

A spokeswoman from Rideau Hall said Governor-General Michaëlle Jean had not yet received the invitation, but would be pleased to consider it.

“This shows the flag and exerts our sovereignty. If you never show up there it is hard to claim your sovereignty,” Col. Couturier said of the

mission.

The patrols are scheduled to begin their trek on March 28 and return on April 9.

Each patrol will consist of about 10 members, two regular force soldiers and eight Canadian Rangers, a largely aboriginal reserve unit based in the north.

“We’re going to be covering a larger piece of the north than has ever been covered before in a patrol of this kind,” said Captain Conrad Schubert, a spokesman for the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (1CRPG).

“There have been a lot of logistics to sort out and it is all nicely co-ordinated on paper. Now we have to see how it co-ordinates on ice,” he said.

These missions are typically difficult and sometimes dangerous. The patrols will be travelling on snowmobiles over brutal terrain, often over sea ice, in temperatures of -40C. Two of the patrols will traverse Polar Bear Pass on Bathurst Island, a channel between two mountain ranges. The patrols will be armed with shotguns for predator control.

The rocky terrain in the far north has wrecked several snowmobiles on previous patrols, and accidents have also forced emergency airlifts of injured soldiers.

For the first time, the patrols will be linking up with one another -- a difficult task when little of the area has been accurately mapped and visibility can be poor.

“It will be challenging, but it is feasible,” said Major Chris Bergeron, commander of the 1CRPG.

“The patrols will meet each other in the middle of nowhere on the ice so we can prove to the entire world that we can deploy Rangers anywhere and they can meet and can react to any major air disaster or any operation they request of us,” said Maj. Bergeron.

Along with the sovereignty mission and the exercise of linking small, autonomous patrols into larger groups, the operation will also document the existing infrastructure of the north -- old wartime airfields, abandoned weather stations and civilian and military exploration outposts.

“There is a fair amount of semi-abandoned infrastructure in the Arctic that is still serviceable but not currently used,” said Capt. Schubert.

At Mould Bay, for instance, there is an abandoned Environment Canada weather station with living quarters and a transport shed where snowploughs and trucks remain.

The soldiers will try to restart the equipment and the station's generators after years of remaining frozen, silent and still.

"This is an opportunity for us to see what the problems are operating out of a structure or station that has been abandoned for many years" said Capt. Schubert.

"From what I understand, coffee cups with dried coffee stains and the remains of cigarette butts are still on the table where the last crew left them when they departed. I'm told the calendar on the wall is from 1995."

An accurate inventory of infrastructure could aid in responding to a crisis in the north, such as an airliner crash or military threat, said Maj. Bergeron.

The mission was planned in November and approved in December, military officials said.

Current satellite images are being used to map the patrol routes and fuel caches and food rations are already being deposited along the routes by air.

It is likely to be the most expensive sovereignty mission so far, as well as the largest.

Previous, smaller patrols have cost hundreds of thousands of dollars each. A 2002 patrol of 34 soldiers to the magnetic North Pole cost \$594,803; a 2003 patrol of 11 troops to Banks Island cost \$336,097; a four-man patrol to Alert, the world's northernmost permanently inhabited settlement, in 2003 cost \$204,894; and a 20-man visit to Alert in 2004 cost about \$700,000, according to documents obtained by the Post.

Maj. Bergeron expects this mission to cost \$1-million.

This the first patrol under the name Operation Nunaliut. The new name carries stronger symbolism. Previous patrols were codenamed Operation Kigliqavik -- from the Inuktitut word for "the place at the edge."

The five patrols will also be testing a new satellite tracking device to allow military headquarters to more accurately track their progress and also test ground-to-air communications in the deep cold.

23. The Guys Who Went Out in the Cold

John Thompson

Nunatsiaq News, 10 February 2006

When a bunch of soldiers from the South try to survive in the Arctic, they screw up their igloo and catch fish too small to eat

The lumpy-looking snow house stands next to another, far more orderly igloo. To be fair, the first started as an oval, while their rivals used a circular design. But now the half-finished oval has acquired a tilt, its walls rising and falling chaotically.

“Elders can do it in about half an hour. We’ve been doing it all day. It gives you an idea of their skill,” says Master Cpl. Eric Viau, who smooths another snow block on the wonky walls. Around him, fellow soldiers are placing bets on whether their igloo will stand by day’s end.

Viau is one of 84 soldiers from Gagetown, N.B., gathered outside Iqaluit at Iqalugaajuruluit, past Tarr Inlet, last Friday for a sovereignty operation dubbed “Glacier Gunner.”

It’s a fitting title for a mission that saw their powerful 50-calibre machine guns freeze, then break during firing practice.

Good thing the soldiers are accompanied by 11 Canadian Rangers. It’s no coincidence that the wobby igloo lacks the guidance of an Inuk, while their symmetrical rival has Sgt. Dinos Tikivik inside it, reaching to grab ice blocks passed to him by a string of soldiers.

“They’ve come a long way,” Tikivik says of the troops. “They only knew how to set up a tent.”

During three days the soldiers will build igloos, ice fish and hunt seal and caribou. Or at least they’ll try.

The morning began with Sgt. Brad Young clipping a parked snowmobile as he pulled up to Iqaluit’s Gas Bar to meet the mayor and escort her to camp. He’s apologetic, but doesn’t need to be — he won’t find much argument with a C7 assault rifle slung across his shoulder.

He lists off some lessons already learned.

Lesson one? Don’t stand still when it’s -25 C. Armed Forces personnel are used to loitering about as they wait for orders. It’s a



good way to freeze. When Rangers notice the troops shivering, they tell them to run around their snowmobile and qamutik. Or they just wrestle them to the ground.

Lesson two: Look where you leap. When the soldiers' snowmobiles bogged down in overflow slush, Young says their first instinct was to jump off and push. Bad move — their legs were soon soaked, and by the time they returned to base, had begun to freeze.

When a female Ranger saw this, Young describes how she took one man's leg, pressed it against her bare belly and leaned forward. "That captures the spirit," he says of the relationship between the soldiers and Rangers.

The Rangers' Tikivik says the military's also learned from Operation Narwhal during the summer of 2004, when two soldiers became lost in fog and spent a night by themselves before they were rescued.

"For here, if we're going anywhere, it's with two Rangers," Tikivik says.

In return for the mutual aid, Rangers had a chance to fire off the guns used by the soldiers. Well, they did before they froze and broke.

A 15-minute snowmobile ride away, another platoon learns another lesson: Hang on to those military rations. The soldiers cluster around holes bored into the ice, hoping to hook a fish. Gunner Eric Landry was among the lucky: he caught one after about six minutes of jigging. Between the dozen-odd men, only five or six tiny fish have been caught.



“Not enough to feed an army,” says Gunner George Spilkin, who wasn’t so lucky and gave up after 10 minutes.

Back at base, the Rangers call the little fish “sardines.”

The soldiers have had to unlearn some southern training, like never put snow on frostbite. The Rangers say otherwise, arguing this lessens the shock to frozen tissue as it thaws. Ice-numbered soldiers seem to agree.

Much of the soldiers’ education involves how to stay warm. Before camping out, soldiers spent a night inside the FOL as they tried to adapt to the cold. The following evening, out on the land, a few others froze — until they followed Rangers’ advice and dug a cold trap at their tent’s entrance.

But they haven’t had to worry too much about the cold, with relatively mild weather of about -25 C most days, with winds pushing the temperature down to -44 C one afternoon out on the ice. Still, four soldiers on Friday are being treated for frostbite back in the FOL hanger while the others try their hand at survival skills.

Lesser lessons abound. It turns out the military-issue gloves, Thinsulate with leather grips, don’t keep out the cold as well as simple cotton workgloves that cost \$1.50 from the Arctic Survival Store.

Snowmobile and sled tips include: don’t use the gas you mixed down south. It will foul the snowmobile, causing it to splutter and stall.

Oh, and you can forget about Stephen Harper. This operation was planned far before the recent federal election campaign, which saw

Canada's new prime minister promise to beef up our country's military presence in the North. Far from television sets, the soldiers only become confused when asked about how their igloo-building skills fit into the next Prime Minister's military scheme.

As the soldiers mill about on the ice, they look a little silly in their olive green uniforms, intended to provide camouflage in a forest. They do pack "whites," but they won't be used in this operation. Rangers are known to use the white uniforms to sneak up on seals.

By dusk, one igloo stands complete — the one the Rangers worked on. It's big enough to hold 25 people inside, and some troops are talking about sleeping inside it. As for the wobbly one — it's been given up as a lost cause.

During past operations, Rangers and other troops would sleep in different tents. Not this time — as each soldier prepares to bunk up, he can count on sharing a tent with a Ranger. That means if any of the Gagetown soldiers have questions about keeping warm, which they will, they'll be sure to get an answer. Or at least a wrestling match.



24. Rangers respond to mock disaster

Graeme McElheran

Yukon News, 7 March 2006

IN TRAINING... A Canadian Ranger tends to a casualty.

Richard Vanderkley lay in the snow on Fish Lake for an hour before help came.

He'd been a passenger aboard a fictional airplane that crashed in the mountains just west of Whitehorse on Friday.

Debris and bodies — some live, some 'dead' — were strewn across the length of Fish Lake, as they would be if a small plane full of passengers and cargo had broken apart during a crash landing.

Despite a 'broken femur,' Vanderkley wasn't crying in pain when two Canadian Rangers from Haines Junction arrived on snowmobiles.

"I was just on my way back from Tahiti, and this happens," he joked as Shane Oakley bound his legs together with metal splints while Bob Reich covered him with a green military parka.

"I'm never flying Southwestern again."

All three men were Rangers participating in a weekend-long mass training exercise.

The Rangers are class-A Canadian Forces reservists, and the first responders to disasters that happen in the North.

They're a lightly equipped, mobile group of local men and women who volunteer for first-aid and wilderness-survival training.

You have to own a snowmobile, and be willing to move at a moment's notice.

Other than that, anyone can become a Ranger. They even get paid a stipend, if they ever put their skills to use.

About 120 Rangers, from Carcross to Carmacks to Beaver Creek, got called to respond to the mock disaster at Fish Lake at 2 p.m.

About 30 Rangers from Haines Junction were the first to arrive.

As Oakley and Reich worked on Vanderkley, their fellows were also busy on the lake, setting up wall tents, determining a perimeter and inspecting immobile shadows on the snow.

Despite the joking banter, they took their jobs seriously. Vanderkley's fictitious wounds were bound and splinted within minutes.

"Triage is up," Reich said as he squinted at two tents in the distance that appeared out of nowhere near the lake's western bank.

"I have to pee," said Vanderkley.

"Reporters would probably be here by now anyway," said Oakley. "So grab his head."

With help, and some comments about "skipping the buffet," Oakley and Reich hoisted their victim onto a portable stretcher produced from a skimmer that was attached to a snowmobile.

Then they were off to the staging area, where a makeshift morgue and first aid station were already in operation.

There, things were much more serious.

"It's important to separate the live bodies from the dead ones because of the psychological factor," explained warrant officer Ken Sollazzo, a veteran Ranger from Yellowknife who co-ordinated the training scenario.

Not far from the makeshift morgue, a lone human figure lay motionless on the snow.

Fatalities are given a lower priority, explained Sollazzo.

From outside appearances, heating was the only discernable difference between the triage tent and the morgue tent.

One had a metal chimney already puffing wood smoke from timber the Rangers cut from the bush. The other was left cold.

"We need signs on those tents," said Sgt. Wade Istchenko of the Haines Junction patrol, who was "the official person in charge" of the exercise.

Istchenko barked orders as he paced about the staging area, waving a clipboard and weaving in between more than a dozen parked snowmobiles.

He had a no-nonsense approach as a female casualty was brought in, moaning from the pain of her wounds.

"Whose sled is this?" Istchenko asked as soon as the injured woman was offloaded.

"Whose ever it is can go down and get more." By 4 p.m. the contingent from Atlin and Carcross had not yet arrived. Those Rangers

had mustered at the Canadian Forces base at Mary Lake, and would be coming through the mountains at the south end of Fish Lake.

Meanwhile another group of Rangers was preparing two runways for Twin Otter search-and-rescue planes that would arrive to medevac the wounded in a real emergency.

Others Rangers were sent to Bonneville flats to make landing pads for helicopters.

But there would be no aircraft this time, said Sollozzo.

“We’re working from a base level,” he said.

“This is the first time we’ve done it like this.”

Every year the Rangers take 12 days of training, some involving a mass exercise.

“For the land portion of it, we grouped everyone together so that we can get this start-up of how we’re going to be doing our response to a major air disaster,” said Sollazzo

In the future, the administrators will plan to involve planes and helicopters, he said.

They work in conjunction with local RCMP and emergency measures organizations, taking the lead on search-and rescue-operations.

The Ranger administration tries to make the training scenarios as realistic as possible. Wounds are treated, fires are extinguished and the disaster area is secured from any additional threats.

“What would happen if the crash happened on the side of a mountain?” Sollozzo said, gesturing to the peaks surrounding Fish Lake.

“They’d have to be extracted by helicopter and moved down on gurneys to this location.”

As the sun began setting, Sollazzo got word that the Rangers were setting up generators, to illuminate the disaster site as the work continued through the night.

They would be at it until at least 8 a.m. Saturday, he said.

25. Ranger Trek Comes to an End

Andrew Raven

Northern News Services, 17 April 2006

When Alan Pogotak pulled into the ice-covered harbour of Resolute last weekend, his face was covered with polar bear kisses.

The dark patches on his weather-beaten cheeks came from two weeks of travelling across some of the harshest terrain on the planet - part of an ambitious mission to stake Canada's claim to the High Arctic.

"I'm glad to be back," said the soft-spoken Ulukhaktok (Holman) native. "The first thing I'm going to do is take a shower."

About 50 Rangers and armed forces personnel received a hero's welcome when their column of snowmobiles pulled into the small bay off Resolute Sunday afternoon.

The Rangers were among the best from the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and the Yukon.

Their mission, code-named Operation Nunaliut, was designed to test Canada's ability to operate in the High Arctic. The Rangers crossed more than 5,000 kilometres of sometimes brutal terrain, weaving their snowmobiles across sections of jagged sea ice that broke skis and splintered wooden sleds.

The patrol concentrated on the western islands of the High Arctic, a huge swath of uninhabited land that stretches from Resolute on Cornwallis Island to Prince Patrick Island. The area is so far north, it was home to the ever-shifting North Magnetic Pole in 1999.

"This (was) by far our most challenging exercise," said Lt-Col Drew Artus, Chief of Staff for the northern wing of the Canadian Forces. The region is dotted with abandoned buildings, airstrips, oil wells and test-mines.

In an area with almost no infrastructure, the meagre remains are a bonanza for the Canadian military. Part of the Rangers' mission was to catalogue what was out there.

Some of what they did find, they used. Several Rangers and soldiers weathered temperatures that dipped to -40C in an abandoned Environment Canada weather station, while pilots landed Twin Otters on airstrips built decades ago by prospectors.

The mission comes while critics question whether Canada has the money and manpower to keep tabs on the Arctic, a region that is home to a wealth of resources including gold, diamonds, oil and natural gas.

Some believe Canada's claim to those riches could be jeopardized without a strong presence in the North -- something Nunavut was designed to address.

"It is important for us to go up there and show we can do things," said Artus. "It says this land is ours."

While there is no immediate threat to Canada's Arctic sovereignty, missions like Nunavut send an important message to the international community, say military officials.

"If we don't go to Isachsen - a remote weather station - for two months, will the Americans plant a flag there? No. But we have to be able to operate in the North."

For about \$100 per day, the Rangers braved treacherous sea ice, brutally cold temperatures, raging blizzards - including one storm where visibility was reduced to a couple of metres - and polar bears.

"It was a fun trip," said Repulse Bay's Merrill Siusangnark, after arriving in Resolute. "But it feels good to be back."

That sentiment was echoed by Hall Beach's Ike Angotautok. "I'm a little tired of the cold," he said.

The Rangers, who travelled by snowmobile, covered more than 100km on clear days. Sometimes the Arctic ice was as flat "as the Collisee in Quebec," said Major Chris Bergeron, commander of northern Ranger units. But rough sections and storms could ground the patrols to a complete halt.

The military took over a Co-op store house - which was originally built for exercises like Nunavut - where they set up communications gear to keep in touch with the Rangers as their five separate patrols weaved across the Western Arctic.

With years of experience living on the land, Bergeron said the Rangers are an important part of Canada's defence plan for the North. "I learned so much in the last 15 days from them," Bergeron said Sunday after reaching Resolute. "Like how to light a stove at -50C in a blizzard."

Despite temperatures so cold "you could not have any exposed skin", the Rangers emerged from trip more or less unscathed, said medic Rick Mackwood.

The cold did play havoc with medical supplies and Mackwood had

to wear rubber surgeons' gloves over his mittens in the field.

The military budgeted \$1 million for the exercise, but poor weather drove up the cost at least an extra \$500,000, Artus said.

There are 1,700 Rangers in the three territories, according to the military.

Created in the aftermath of the Second World War, their job is to keep an eye on a 300-km circle of land around their home communities and - about once a year - embark on patrols like Nunaliut.

With only a handful of permanent bases in the North and shortage of satellites concentrating on the polar region, they have become the eyes and ears of the army in the North.



26. The Critical Role of the Canadian Rangers

Kerry McCluskey

Naniiliqpita (Winter 2006)

As Abraham Kublu grew from a boy to a man, he watched his grandfather Solomon Koonoo hunt on the land and sea near Pond Inlet. Today, the expertise he developed, which has been passed from one generation of Inuit to the next for thousands of years, is in high demand with the Canadian Forces.

Aboard the Canadian navy warship HMCS *Montreal* this past August, Kublu was headed to an observation point on Bylot Island in Sirmilik National Park as part of Operation Lancaster. He was one of 16 Canadian Rangers from the Pond Inlet Ranger Patrol participating in the military exercise executed by the Canadian Forces' Joint Task Force (North) to exert sovereignty in the Northwest Passage and other Canadian internal Arctic waters by ship, aircraft and land troops. It was Kublu's first time aboard a navy ship, and his first time taking part in a sovereignty exercise.

"I get a little tickle in the back of my neck when I think about them depending on us," said Kublu. "This is important to Inuit because we've never had such military presence here. It makes us feel more like Canadians."

As is the case when the military conducts events in isolated, coastal regions that lack the presence of other Canadian Forces, the Rangers provided critically-needed local expertise. Called Siuraliq, meaning there's sand, the observation post where Kublu was based is an area he knows well from years of winter polar bear hunting and spring narwhal hunting. This is exactly the sort of familiarity the military is after.

"We're watching for polar bears, we're watching the water, and on our free time, we want to do some hunting for narwhal and caribou. We know the area and the vegetation of the area and where there's a good chance of catching animals. We have more expertise, and we know if it's dangerous or safe," said Kublu.

This element of added safety is critical to lending a sense of ease to such Arctic missions.

“It can be intimidating when the nearest community is 400 nautical miles away, but the confidence you get from having the Rangers with you as part of the patrol puts you at ease,” said Captain Brian Wiltshire, the Deputy Commanding Officer of the First Ranger Patrol Group. Wiltshire also sailed on the HMCS *Montreal* during Operation Lancaster and oversaw the participation of the Rangers. “The Rangers are very valuable because of the knowledge they bring to the patrol and the operation. They have the knowledge from the Elders on where they should and shouldn’t go, if it’s hunting areas of spiritual areas...so you don’t interfere with the herds or things like that,” he said.

Being able to depend so heavily upon the Rangers means that the Canadian Forces don’t consider heading to the Arctic without the helping hands of the local patrol.

“Whenever we take Canadian Forces to the North, they must be twinned with a Ranger patrol. Survival in the Arctic is not necessarily something the forces from the South are used to. Rangers guide them in traditional ways. They help them out in their own mission and they extend the culture of the North to help them connect with Canadians,” said Colonel Chris Whitecross, the Commanding Officer of Joint Task Force (North) and the lead on Operation Lancaster. “We don’t send any troops up North without the Ranger’s help,” she said.

This strong dependability upon the Rangers is not lost on Nunavummiut. Nunavut Commissioner Ann Hanson also aboard the HMCS *Montreal*, described the Rangers as vitally important and said their knowledge of the land, sea and skies inspired deep respect from Inuit in Nunavut.



“Every time I go into a community, I see the respect and admiration of their peers. They have the skills for survival,” said Hanson.

Of the 58 Ranger patrols that exist across Canada’s North, 25 of those are in Nunavut. The territory’s 761 Rangers regularly conduct surveillance during sovereignty patrols, provide guiding expertise, and teach the military survival skills like igloo building, hunting, fishing, navigation, and dog team travel. Rangers must be at least 18 years of age, in good physical health and have good knowledge of the land.

Nunavut may soon benefit from an increase in the number of Rangers. Whitecross said that federal Defence Minister Gordon O’Connor stated he intends to increase the Ranger program across Canada by 500 people, but Canada Command, the entity that controls the Canadian Forces, has yet to determine how this increase will be dispersed across the county.

At a press conference in Pond Inlet on the heels of Operation Lancaster, Nunavut Premier Paul Okalik said he appreciates the promised growth of the Ranger patrol, but would like to see Inuit involvement in sovereignty matters progress further. Okalik said he supports the federal government’s push to assert their sovereignty in the Arctic because if Canadian internal Arctic waters were deemed international waters, “Inuit would have no control over what would happen in those waters. That’s a major concern.”

About to feast on fresh Arctic hare at his observation post in Dundas Harbour, some 248 kilometers north of Pond Inlet, Ranger Norm Simonie said his priority during Operation Lancaster was to do his part to safeguard the land, sea and animals, and to ensure all the cruise ship passengers dropping by knew the area was part of Canada.

“We hunt here so I want to keep this as ours. This is our hunting area for muskox, walrus, beluga, polar bear, rabbits,” said Simonie.

Brian Simonee agreed. “It seems too easy for anyone to come in and do what they want in our water. We have to show them that this ours,” said Simonee.

27. Arctic ‘Sucks In’ Sovereignty Patrol: Ingenuity Sees Soldiers Press on Goa on Sea Ice and Land Canada Claims

Bob Weber

Edmonton Journal, 2 April 2007

Eureka, Nunavut—It didn’t take long for the Arctic to take its toll on soldiers participating in an unprecedented snowmobile trek to enforce Canadian sovereignty.

A week ago, on the first day of their 5,000-kilometre patrol across and around Ellesmere Island, the 24 soldiers and Inuit Rangers lost two of their snowmobiles and all of their supply-laden komatiks, or sleds.

“We got sucked in,” said Maj. Chris Bergeron, commander of the patrol, now pausing at the Eureka weather station on the way to CFB Alert at the island’s northern tip.

The frozen river bed the patrol had been following had seemed to offer easy passage. But eventually the way was blocked by boulders bigger than their snowmobiles.

The travellers were forced to winch everything over the boulders -- a process that tore the wooden sleds apart and punched holes in the transmissions of two machines, draining all their fluids.



“We knew we were going to have days like that,” said Bergeron. “This is the North.”

So ingenuity took over. First, patrollers lashed the sleds back together. Then they cut bits from some extra rubber snowmobile tracks, plugged up the holes in the transmission cases, topped up the fluids and headed out again.

It was one example of the determination required daily on Operation Nunavut, an epic journey across



land some of which hasn't been visited since the early Arctic explorers were there a century ago. The idea, said Bergeron, is to demonstrate to the world that the Canadian military is capable of operating on sea ice and land that Canada claims for its own.

Near the end of the patrol, the soldiers will place a metal Canadian flag on Ward Hunt Island, a rocky outcrop off the top of Ellesmere Island, which is used by explorers from all over the world as a jumping -off point for the North Pole.

“We have a special flag that will last for ages to make sure that people remember this is Canadian land,” said Bergeron.

After the break in Eureka, the patrol will divide into three groups. One will head up the centre of Ellesmere. Another will swing west and follow the coast up to Alert, a trip that has never been done. A third, which includes a Mountie and fisheries officers, will cross to Alexandra Fiord on the east coast to check for any signs of Greenland Inuit crossing Nares Strait to hunt on Canadian land.

The days are gruelling. Patrols break out of their sleeping bags at 6 a.m. for breakfast. About 10 hours a day are spent on the trail. Half that

is on the bucking backs of their snowmobiles. The rest of the time is spent either making repairs or getting past obstacles.

Blowing snow obscures landmarks so completely soldiers have been relying on GPS to navigate.

At day's end, they anchor their tents to their sleds so the wind doesn't blow them away. Then, hunkered down in the freezing dark, the Inuit hunters trade stories. One of the soldiers pulls out a harmonica and plays old Newfoundland tunes. Temperatures plummet to -40 C. Winds howl.

The patrol woke up one morning to find polar bear tracks near the tents.

"I do it for my community and my Canada," said Ranger Paul Ikuallaq of Gjoa Haven, Nunavut.

He also does it for his family. Ikuallaq is the grandson of famed Norwegian Arctic explorer Roald Amundsen, who fathered a child during a stay there.

"It's catching up with him," said Ikuallaq. The patrols are expected to reach Alert on April 10. "It's never been done before," said Bergeron. "It's history. I'm so proud to be here."



28. Where Only Rangers Tread

Kent Driscoll

Northern News Services, 9 April 2007

Resolute—When you are backing up the country’s claim to the top of the world, bring the Canadian Rangers.

Operation Nunavut has three Ranger patrols operating all over Ellesmere Island, and those patrols were packed with Nunavut members of the Rangers. If you are going to travel the High Arctic, it is wise to bring Nunavummiut.

The 24-member patrol is an all star team of local Ranger groups. Team leaders got to choose their own Rangers from the ranks, and to judge by the Inuktitut on most of the kamotiqs, Nunavut Rangers were well-represented.

Three Ranger patrols left Resolute on March 25. Rangers assembled their own kamotiqs from lumber the army flew to Resolute. They also picked up their military issue snowmobiles, Bombardier Scandic 500s.

The military loves their acronyms, and even something as ubiquitous as a snowmobile in Nunavut has a tag. The official military title for snowmobile is L.O.S.V. or “light over snow vehicle.”

Two teams headed north to the Eureka weather station, while the third made its way east across Ellesmere Island to Alexandra Fiord.

The two teams in Eureka split up, with one patrolling the northwest shore and a second crossing the interior. Both teams will meet in Alert, on or around April 10.

Nunavut is the name of the operation, and it means “land that is ours.” Demonstrating Canadian control of that land is the major purpose of the exercise.

Patrol three will be looking for evidence of Greenlandic hunters on Canadian soil. They brought an RCMP officer with them, but arrests are not on the agenda. Cpl. Tom Cooke is along for the ride, but according to the Rangers commander, he left his handcuffs behind. Instead, he will deal with any trespassers in a very Canadian way.

“He said he would ask them over for tea, because it is cold,” said Major Chris Bergeron, in command of the operation. “Then he would



find out where they are from, and fill out a full report. The aim is not to catch people.”

Patrol one will place a metal Canadian flag on Ward Hunt Island. Ward Hunt Island is the traditional starting point for North Pole-bound adventurers.

“We have all sorts of tourists there, and we have a special flag, which will last for ages. It says “This is Canadian land,”” said Bergeron.

Rangers are making better time on every leg of the journey. On March 25, they were on the move for four hours and 20 minutes, and were stopped for four hours and 37 minutes.

By March 29, they were only resting for two hours and 57 minutes, and moving for seven hours.

On March 25, they only covered 144-kilometres, but on March 29 they travelled 242-kilometres.

“We are learning from our experience. If we don’t make it, the next guy will, but we will make it,” said Bergeron.

That first day was a test of the Rangers and their resolve. They made a mistake and ended up in a riverbed, which slowed down progress.

“We were sucked in by a riverbed. We destroyed two machines and most of the kamotiqs,” said Bergeron.

Bergeron has obvious respect for the Rangers he works with.

“I’m so proud to be here. Without these guys, it would be impossible to do that,” said Bergeron.

And he said communication between troops and rangers is not a problem.

“The only language barrier is with me.” Bergeron is a Francophone born in Trois-Rivieres, Que.

He also will not put his Rangers in danger. High winds delayed the patrols’ departure from Eureka.

The media settled for a staged photo op, with the Rangers faking a departure for the cameras.

“When I’ve got wind like that, I won’t put my men in a dangerous situation,” said Bergeron.



29. Exercise Connects Cultures

Roxanna Thompson

Deh Cho Drum, 27 April 2007

Interesting and unexpected things often arise in the most unusual places.

On April 22 I was invited to visit the Fort Simpson airport to meet some of the soldiers involved in Operation Narwhal.

Driving out to the airport I was pretty sure I knew what to expect. Having written a few articles about the operation I knew all about troop numbers, the scenario, the types of aircraft that were in use and the history of the exercise. It was all information that I thought would serve me well.

Even with all my prep work, after being escorted to the maintenance garage at the airport where the soldiers are sleeping and eating, I was still amazed. This was still the Fort Simpson airport but it was filled with a different sense of purpose.

By treating the scenario as something that is happening in real life all the young soldiers were moving around with a sense of purpose. All the soldiers were in their uniforms and carrying a variety of interesting things like unloaded guns and radio equipment.

The surreal nature of the scene was added to by the Griffon helicopters, which definitely don't look like the helicopters normally seen in the area. They flew overhead continuously, slinging fuel from across the river.

And in the midst of the sea of green colored uniforms a few red sweaters stuck out like bright flags.

Although the soldiers and the helicopters were





exciting, the most interesting part of the whole exercise was the interaction between the 10 local Canadian Rangers and the soldiers.

The Rangers were completely integrated into the scenario with three Rangers assigned to each of the three sections at the airport.

Although their primary duty was to provide protection from wildlife like bears, the Rangers have really been acting as ambassadors for the Deh Cho and the territory.

For many of the reservist soldiers from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia this is their first trip to the Northwest Territories. The Rangers have been showing them what life in the North is about.

The Rangers have shared a variety of local traditions with the soldiers including hunting with snares, bannock, some medicines, and how to collect dry wood. Some have even taught a few words of Slavey to the soldiers.

The soldiers I talked to all commented on how much they've been able to learn from the Rangers and how great they've been. Interestingly, the compliment also worked in reverse with many of the Rangers noting how great the soldiers have been and all the new things they've learned from them.

Cultural exchanges and increased levels of understanding can happen in the most unusual places, even during a Canadian Forces exercises.

30. Canadian Ranger teaches survival skills

Philippe Morin

Northern News Services, 16 July 2007

INUVIK - If you ask Inuvik's Frank Stefansson where he learned his traditional skills, he'll tell you an amazing story.

“One year me and my brother stayed up on a hill from New Years 'till Easter, living in a seven-by-seven-foot tent. I was 14 and he was 17,” he recalls.



Canadian Ranger and former deputy mayor of Cambridge Bay Frank Stefansson shows off his walking stick in Inuvik. He was explaining what could be learned from examining the wood grain, which is one of his many traditional skills. - Philippe Morin/NNSL photo

The year was 1955, and the hill was a frosty peak outside Aklavik.

Stefansson and his brother Sandy had been hired to scare away wolves to protect a local caribou herd, which had decided to stay for the winter.

Stefansson recalls his brother was more experienced outdoors.

“I mostly played cowboy and read Sergeant Preston comics, which were the RCMP comics available at the time,” he said.

While Stefansson would eventually graduate to other jobs - he served as deputy mayor of Cambridge Bay for seven years and has been a repairman most of his life - he always kept close his memories of the land and they inspired him to seek adventure.

In his late 40s, he became a Canadian Ranger and thus followed in his father's footsteps.

Today, at 66, he still proudly wears a red Ranger shirt and hat on occasion, and attends the organization's meetings in Inuvik.

“You don't have to retire at any age,” Stefansson said, adding many elders such as Inuvik's Abel Tingmiak are also Rangers.

Stefansson described his Ranger patrols of youth as “a patriotic chore, and a bit of adventure,” which he feels helped him contribute to Canada.

He recalled living in Sachs Harbour for four years and teaching people survival skills such as iglu building and ways of keeping dry in the wilderness.

While Ranger work is difficult, he said he always felt good braving the elements.

“If someone is missing, we throw away the book that says you have to wait 24 hours. We go right now,” he said proudly of the Ranger's role.

Despite the cold nights in frozen tents, the long patrols, canned rations and, he admits, getting lost in the wilderness a few times, Stefansson said he'd proudly serve again, if not for his use of a cane.

His wearing of the red Canadian Rangers hat and frequent telling of trail stories is a testament to that.

“The army couldn't live without us,” he said laughing.



Sgt. Mark Haongak, Cambridge Bay, March 2006

31. Learning from the Canadian Rangers

Sgt Brad Phillips

The Maple Leaf, 13 June 2007

Norman Wells, Northwest Territories—When he began playing his instrument, the circle of soldiers surrounding Canadian Ranger Angus Shae of Fort Good Hope grew quiet and thoughtful. The haunting sounds flowed over the campsite and most in the audience, lost in thought, were clearly enjoying the performance.

Later, one of the braver soldiers in the audience asked the name of the instrument that he had entertained them with, a question that was on everyone's mind. A thoughtful pause and then, much to the delight of the other Rangers, the musician responded: "A flute."

The response was greeted by howls of laughter.

This misconception may have highlighted a difference between the Rangers and other soldiers taking part in Operation Narwhal 2007, but it also showed how enjoyable and important joint undertakings involving the Rangers and elements of the CF can be.

The mandate of the Canadian Rangers is to provide a military presence in those sparsely settled northern coastal and isolated areas of Canada that cannot conveniently or economically be provided for by other components of the CF.

During Op Narwhal 07, the Rangers were fully integrated with the land forces from the different Reserve brigades, right down to the section level. They acted as local experts of the area and subject matter experts on northern operations and living. Also, each Ranger brought along his trusty Lee Enfield in case any early rising predators, most likely bears, decided to join the fun and become part of the operation.

The Rangers were involved in all aspects of the operation and in all locations, including Norman Wells, Fort Simpson and Inuvik where all the major scenarios were played out. The Canadian Rangers present at Norman Wells came from either Fort Good Hope or Tulita, and for many it was their first experience working with members of the CF who were not part of the Canadian Rangers program.



Ranger Corporal Cyril Cardinal, part of an infantry section involved in vital point security, was getting used to pulling guard duty with the rest of the troops. “I think we’re both learning from each other. Everybody is working pretty good together and seem to be having a lot of fun,” he responded when asked how the operation was going and his involvement with the troops.

His comment seemed to reflect what all the Rangers, as well as the troops that had the opportunity to work side by side with the Rangers, were thinking.

For many of the soldiers, the highlight occurred near the end of the exercise when the Rangers had a chance to set up a tent in the hills near Norman Wells. At their campsite, the Rangers demonstrated how to set snares and gave tips for living off the land. They also prepared some of the local cuisine that the troops had the opportunity to appreciate. Some of these treats included: moose stew, a rack of caribou ribs, whitefish cooked beside the fire, bannock (homemade bread) and, of course, coffee and tea.

Cpl William Simmons of The Toronto Scottish Regiment summed up best the experience of working with the Rangers: “It was a great experience joining team with them.”

32. Time is Right for Ranger Expansion

Editorial

Northern News Services, 27 August 2007

Overshadowed in the federal government's Aug. 10 announcements of a deep-water port for Nanisivik and a military training centre for Resolute was word that the Canadian Rangers will expand nationwide to 5,000 members from 4,100.

In addition, they are to be provided with new gear, weapons and vehicles, an investment that will involve tens of millions of dollars over the next decade.

The Rangers routinely travel across remote areas of Canada, representing the military, carrying out search and rescue missions and leading soldiers on sovereignty patrols. Although they're capable of using modern technology such as global positioning systems (GPS), the Rangers possess skills that their Canadian Forces counterparts lack: familiarity with the vast expanse of land and ice and the ability to recognize weather conditions that can mean life or death.

The North is home to 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group. At about 1,500 members, it's the largest of five such regiments across Canada,



with the others in Quebec, northern Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, the Prairies and Pacific west coast.

While satellites and radar have become primary sources of intelligence gathering for the world's leading militaries, they still require people on the ground. At a time when the High Arctic has become an international hotspot politically - for its natural resource riches and as a commercial shipping route - the Rangers are another means by which Canada can stake claim to disputed territory.

Not only are the Rangers a military presence, they are role models to youth in their communities. Easily identified by their signature red sweaters, these men and women play prominent roles at community events and are often a bridge between elders and youth in sharing knowledge of the land.

We will be better off with more of them.



33. Invisible Force in the North: Rangers guard sovereignty with old guns, radios

Don Martin

National Post, 26 October 2007

Ottawa—The Conservatives' Arctic reclamation project calls for unmanned aerial drones, ocean floor sensors, \$3-billion worth of new patrol ships, a deep sea port and an expanded military base to drape the Maple Leaf across vast stretches of barren rock, ice and increasingly open water.

But our current guardians on the ground are a paramilitary force that carries 60-year-old rifles to fend off polar bears, provides its own snow, land or sea transportation, calls in news over personal satellite phones and exhausts holidays to stand on guard for us.

The Canadian Rangers seem to have been overlooked as the most experienced and economical way to reassert sovereignty claims over a resource-laden region with heightened potential as a shipping corridor in a globally warmed environment.

The Throne Speech gave them a backhanded salute -- pledging to increase their numbers by 20% while getting the name of the 4,100-strong quasi-military force wrong. Prime Minister Stephen Harper's address last week called them the Arctic Rangers, who don't actually exist.

But there's obvious potential to improve surveillance over a region claiming 75% of Canada's coastline using a force that's five times the size of our combat troop deployment in Kandahar yet costs less than the sticker price for three light-armoured vehicles.

Even though they're not whining about it, the Canadian Rangers have an obvious lag in equipment and status when stacked against regular soldiers.

Instead of a uniform, these recruits get a red sweatshirt, T-shirt, ball cap, vest, compass, first aid kit and, naturally, a toque. They're paid an armed forces reservists salary for the time they're on tour and must provide their own all-terrain vehicles, boats or snowmobiles to get around.

Baba Pedersen is the second family member in a three-generation string of Rangers from Kugluktuk, formerly known as Coppermine -- an accomplishment that earned the trio its very own postage stamp. (And just to get the obligatory conflict-of-interest declaration out of the way, Pedersen is related to me through marriage.)

But one could argue the 303 Enfields issued to every Ranger are a tad out of date. “My rifle is World War I vintage, but it works well in the cold and is good for shooting caribou,” Pedersen says with a laugh. “If you were standing half a mile away, I could still drop you with it.”



Ranger Millie Hatogina of the Kugluktuk patrol with her .303 Lee Enfield Rifle, 2001.

He has noticed, but isn't complaining, that Canadian soldiers have the best communications equipment money can buy while Rangers are given old high-frequency radios.

“When the military guys come on our patrols, they come equipped with all sorts of satellite and other technology. We use the stuff while they're here, but when they go, so does the technology,” he says. “That's why I usually bring my own phone along.”

Pedersen's tours, done during his vacation, take him on snowmobile dashes between the automated North Warning System outposts, calling in reports to North Bay's command centre. In the pursuit of re-asserted sovereignty, “we plant flags, take some pictures and move on,” he says.

Pedersen has reported the odd sailboat that seemed out of place in the sea ice (no kidding) and called in unusual aircraft or weather balloons.

Perhaps the Rangers' most notorious apprehension was a Romanian who last year bravely boated to Grise Fjord on Ellesmere Island from Greenland, figuring he could mingle with the locals and eventually fly to Toronto unnoticed.

Unfortunately, he docked his boat 100 metres from a Ranger leader's home and didn't exactly blend into the local population, where he was

only the second non-Inuit person in the community. He was detained by the Rangers and deported.

Nobody is quite sure what the Harper government has in mind for the Rangers beyond increasing their size by 900 members in the years to come. There's a leadership session in Yellowknife in a couple weeks where they might get fresh marching orders. Or not.

But given the positive impact an aggressive recruitment and training blitz would have on a region sagging under chronic social problems and high unemployment, an upgrade would seem to be a win-win move for both the locals and faraway Ottawa decision-makers.

"We always say something isn't ours unless we're standing on it," says Captain Conrad Schubert, spokesman for the Rangers program in Yellowknife, by way of explaining their role in protecting our sovereignty.

That makes this ragtag assortment of Inuit, who spend their vacations serving as our eyes and ears in a hostile but warming environment, Canada's best and brightest north stars.



Rangers Andrew Anaktak and John Akana of the Kugluktuk patrol at Lake Aptalok, Nunavut, April 2001.

34. Serving Together

Roxanna Thompson

Northern News Services, 22 November 2007

Sambaa K'e/Trout Lake—Like most couples Phoebe Punch and Clinton Betthale share many things, among them are matching red sweaters, the hallmark of the Canadian Rangers.

Betthale and Punch are a husband and wife Canadian Ranger duo from Trout Lake. Between them they have more than a decade of experience with the organization and hold the two highest ranks in their patrol.

Being a member of the Rangers gives a sense of being part of something larger, said Betthale.

“I’m part of the Trout Lake patrol and that means a lot to me,” he said.

In the patrol Betthale has the second highest ranking, topped only by his wife. The difference in rank isn’t a problem, said Punch.

“When I’m on duty I don’t treat him as my husband. I treat him as another member of the patrol,” she said.

Betthale said he doesn’t have a problem taking orders from Punch because as soon as he puts on the red Ranger cap it’s all part of the chain of command.

Sgt. Punch joined the Rangers in the late 1990s when a patrol was formed in Trout Lake. Signing up was a way to become the eyes and the ears of the community, she said.

Additional bonuses are the training exercises that, in Punch’s opinion, are the best part of being a Ranger. During the exercises you get to go out on the land and there’s always something new to learn, said Punch.

Being a Ranger also offers opportunities to be part of larger exercises. Punch was one of four Rangers from Trout Lake who took part in Operation Narwhal in Fort Simpson in April.

“That was a big learning experience,” she said.

Training exercises and trips help keep members interested, said Punch. Over the years the Trout Lake patrol has grown to 15 members.

“The patrol is eager to go out on any training exercise outside of the community,” Punch said.

Master Cpl. Clinton Betthale is among those who’ve joined the patrol.

After moving to Trout Lake in 2000, Betthale started talking with members of the patrol about their role. By 2003 he’d signed up.

“For me to be out on the land a lot more is what really caught my interest,” said Betthale.

As a truck driver, Betthale said he’d watched a lot of land roll past his window but he’d never had the chance to live on it. Betthale said he’s learned a lot of skills as a Ranger, like gun safety. He’s also developed a sense of responsibility for the patrol and other Rangers.

“You aren’t just one person. You’re not there for yourself, you’re part of the patrol,” he said.

Rangers in Trout Lake will be practising taking orders during a training exercise in the community from Nov. 19 to 30. The event will involve a six-day trip on the land with an instructor from Yellowknife. Some new recruits will also be part of the event.

“They’re very excited,” said Punch.

After the exercise is finished a graduation parade will be held in the community along with a swearing-in ceremony for the new recruits. At that time the award for top shot will also be given to a member of the patrol.

Rangers are always anxious to find out who has won the award, said Betthale who has taken the honour before.

“It’s just like waiting for your Christmas present,” he said.



35. Arctic Shows its Benign and Beautiful Side in Epic Sovereignty Patrol

Bob Weber

Edmonton Sun, 7 April 2008

Ellesmere Island, Nunavut—Seven tundra wolves yawned and stretched, slowly rising from their snowbank bed near CFB Alert at the top of Ellesmere Island.

For a while, they watched us - a patrol of Canadian Rangers preparing for Operation Nunaliut, another epic trek across some of the world's most remote and rugged country in defence of Canada's Arctic sovereignty. Then they trotted off on their own wolfish business.

Soldiers at this most northerly post on earth are told not to feed or even approach the potentially dangerous pack, but this morning the magnificent animals seemed almost friendly as we readied our snow machines and packed our Inuit sleds, or komatiks.

I hoped that was some kind of sign.

I was joining the seven-member patrol for the first 220 kilometres of its journey across the top of the continent, from Alert to Ward Hunt



Island in Quttinirpaaq National Park. The Arctic has sharp teeth and

strong jaws, but it can be benign and beautiful and this was the side I wanted during the next five days.

Either way, I was with the right people.

The Rangers are a largely aboriginal group of reservists who are the military's northern eyes and ears, and those chosen for sovereignty patrols have exceptional land skills. Our group came from Trout Lake in the southern N.W.T. to Cambridge Bay along the Northwest Passage to Arctic Bay in the eastern High Arctic and ranged in age from young men in their 20s to elders.

"The guys that we've got are the best from their community," said Warrant Officer Dave Dunn, the rugged, hard-driving ex-paratrooper commanding the patrol. "These are the guys you want looking out for you on the land."

Samson Ejanqiaq, a 35-year-old grandfather, hunter and construction worker from Arctic Bay, Nunavut, would scout.

"He knows the ice, he knows the weather," said Dunn.

Adam Ukunqtunnaq, 27, a burly, affable Inuk from Gjoa Haven who liked to sing cheerful Inuktitut church songs, was our mechanic.

"If anything breaks down on the machine, all those Rangers will have that engine out, stripped apart, new piston in it and back on the road within an hour - guaranteed," Dunn promised. "In 40-below weather, with their hands bare."

Our "grandfather," as Samson called him, was David Issigaitok of Hall Beach, a smiling, unilingual elder valued for his long experience.



“He’s a guy to listen to,” Dunn said. “He’ll be able to tell you by changes in the wind, moisture in the air, if there’s a storm coming on.”

On March 28, the eight of us roared off on snow machines towing three-metre komatiks loaded with hundreds of kilograms of rations, tents, spare parts, fuel, scientific equipment and even a generator. The sky was a calm, unclouded blue, the temperature in the -20s, and our view of Ellesmere’s mountains and glaciers seemed to stretch forever in the crystalline air.

But it didn’t take long for the Arctic to bare its fangs.

Within kilometres, we were caught in a vast boulder-field of rough sea ice. Samson and David did their best to pick through the car-sized ice chunks, but before long I had been bounced off my snow machine, got it stuck, rolled it twice and flipped my komatik a half-dozen times.

I ran with sweat under my heavy Arctic gear as we righted the machines and muscled them out of tight spots, and I wondered how long I could keep this up.

Finally, Sgt. Derek Dunn, a Ranger instructor who has led patrols across the Arctic, suggested that the shoreline might be smoother. Samson, guiding his machine and komatik through the rubble like a cowboy cutting cattle, found a path and, sure enough, a highway opened up - narrow, but blissfully smooth.

Ten hours we zoomed over the trail, pausing only for smoke breaks and lunch - soup, trail mix, caribou jerky and raw frozen muskox heart. Once, we stopped for an hour while Adam took apart an ignition right on the tundra to fix a stalling machine.

“There’s glue all around those wires, eh?” he said. “It was all chipped from the cold and motion so I figured it was broke.”

We paused again along the shoreline of a bay. Untouched mountains surrounded us, knuckles of ice stood aquamarine in the flooding sunlight and the Arctic stillness shouted silence.

Someone said, “It’s beautiful,” and that’s all there was to say.

By 8 o’clock, we were snug in our doubled-walled tents, cocooned in heavy, army-issue sleeping bags. The ice beneath me was cold, but I slept anyway.

Good weather returned the next morning and we kept moving to Ward Hunt Island, our backs taking a pounding as we bounced over the hard-packed drifts. Although it seemed as if we were the first who ever burst across these seamless snows, we were anything but.

Royal Navy sailors travelled this route in 1875, towing sleds by hand. Robert Peary followed in 1906, and we visited the last point of land he saw before heading to the North Pole.

“(The route) is totally historical,” said Ranger Doug Stern, a Parks Canada employee from Cambridge Bay. “Because we’re limited so much by the Arctic ice pack and the mountainous terrain, we’re following just that little bit of smooth ice at the bottom of the mountains.”

Some predecessors remain mysterious.

We rode by a series of weathered old tents that Stern said were erected years ago by an Italian count. About 100 Greenland Inuit are said to have lived there once, but Stern said nobody knows what the count was up to.

By late afternoon, we reached our destination - a Parks Canada camp of insulated and heated tents on the north shore of Ward Hunt Island where we spent the next few days. The doorstep view was a white expanse of sea ice - a perfect canvas for the blues, pinks and oranges of a sun that never quite set but slid along a horizon so empty you could see the curvature of the earth.

We set into a routine of gathering scientific data, worthy work but a bit dull for Rangers eager to resume travelling.

“I came for the adventure,” said Samson. “I want to shoot a muskox.”

Samson would have to wait until we left the park, but animal signs were few anyway: ptarmigan, a week-old polar bear track and a small herd of muskox. We did, however, have other visitors.



One morning, four of us from two different tents reported hearing footsteps that night. Samson even got out of his sleeping bag to check, but found nothing. Nor were there any tracks the next morning.

“It was the Innugaguligajuk - the little people,” said Samson.

The little people are said to stand about knee high and dress entirely in caribou skins. Nobody knows where they came from or what they do.

“If you leave them alone, they’ll leave you alone,” Samson said. “But if you attack them, they’ll grow tall as a man right away. They’re all over the Arctic.”

The days passed taking measurements on the ice, and the evenings in hands of cribbage, bannock-baking and movie-watching on Derek’s laptop. Eventually, the Twin Otter slated to take me back landed on the ice.

At the Eureka weather station, halfway down the Ellesmere coast, I towelled off from my first shower in a week, looked at the frostbite marks on my face and sifted through memories of five days in that icy vastness. I may never return, but my thoughts often will.

Outside, far in the distance, I could hear wolves howling.



36. Rangers Seen as a Boon to Arctic Security: Reservists fly flag while serving as eyes and ears

Andrew Mayeda

National Post, 25 August 2008

Iqaluit—When Simigak Suvega and his men arrived here to showcase the skills of the Canadian Rangers, they did not bring their bolt-action rifles. They brought their knives.

Then, as a crowd of local Inuit residents and curious Canadian soldiers gathered around, they skinned four seals.

Their hands bathed in blood, the Rangers distributed the meat to residents, who carried away the entrails in plastic grocery bags or ate the flesh raw.

Some of the young soldiers, amazed by the spectacle, pulled out their cameras. But for many of the residents, it was a way of life that dates back millennia, and for the Rangers, it was just another day's work.

“That’s one of the things that makes people join the Rangers, so they can help the communities,” said Sergeant Suvega, a 60-year-old from Cape Dorset who has been a Ranger for 12 years.

Since taking power 2½ years ago, the government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper has promised to invest billions in military equipment and facilities to help Canada enforce its Arctic sovereignty, including navy patrol vessels and a new Coast Guard icebreaker.

But some Arctic experts say the government’s best decision might have been the least flashy: the expansion of the Canadian Rangers by about 900 members.

“So far, the Harper government has revealed to us a sovereignty strategy that really amounts to a security agenda,” said Whitney Lackenbauer, a Canadian International Council fellow and history professor at St. Jerome’s University in Waterloo, Ont.

“It’s investing in largely southern capabilities that can be deployed to the North. The Rangers represent something that’s an investment in Northerners, for Northerners.”

The Rangers trace their lineage to a volunteer militia established on the Pacific Coast during the Second World War to repel an invasion by the Japanese.

As the Cold War dawned, the Canadian government created the Rangers as a reserve force to protect Canada's remote communities -- a role they play to this day. In many cases, the Rangers are the only military presence in the isolated hamlets along Canada's Arctic coasts.



Technically, the Rangers are volunteer, part-time reservists, but they are unique from the rest of the Canadian Forces in many ways. The requirements for joining are not strict, and recruits receive only 10 days of basic training.

They are also lightly equipped. In addition to the Rangers' trademark red sweatshirt and red ball cap, they receive a .303 Lee Enfield rifle (a weapon that was standard issue during the First World War), an armband and a safety vest. Ranger patrols usually carry GPS devices, first-aid kits and shortwave radios.

On top of a small annual stipend, Rangers are paid only for official missions, but they can quit at any time. Or they could serve for years -- there is no retirement age.

But in an era of satellite surveillance and unmanned spy drones, the Rangers' presence has proven to be a low-tech, cost-effective way of asserting Canada's sovereignty.

"Those Rangers are the on-the-ground eyes and ears," said General Walt Natynczyk, Canada's chief of defence staff.

The Rangers are an under-appreciated but essential part of Canada's "stack" of surveillance systems, he said. "If they're out there on the ground [and] they see something suspicious, then they are the trigger.

But if we actually see something from a satellite, from an aircraft, then they are the guys who are able to respond.”

In addition to sovereignty and surveillance patrols, the Rangers are responsible for everything from inspecting NORAD radar stations to leading search-and-rescue missions.

During Operation Nanook, the \$2.8-million Arctic sovereignty exercise that kicked off here last week, Rangers forces have been teaching traditional hunting, fishing and camping skills to Canadian soldiers from the south in the remote Baffin Island communities of Pangnirtung and Kimmirut.

“It’s this environment that we need to get used to, and that’s why the Rangers are very important to us, because they understand the environment. They know the climatic conditions. They know the terrain,” said Brigadier-General David Millar, commander of Joint Task Force North.

The Rangers also offer a way for the military to build bridges with northern communities while encouraging them to safeguard their traditional skills and maintain independence, said Mr. Lackenbauer, who is writing a history of the force and has called the Rangers a “post-modern militia that works.”

There are more than 4,500 Canadian Rangers across roughly 165 communities. In Nunavut, the vast majority of Rangers are Inuit, and many speak only Inuktitut.



37. At Home on the Land

Herb Mathisen

Northern News Services, 1 September 2008

Kimmirut/Lake Harbour—After spending more than five days on the land around Kimmirut with the Canadian Rangers, soldiers from units of the 33 Canadian Brigade Group had many humbling tales to tell and high praise for the group.

One of the most-talked-about stories was of a Canadian Ranger leading soldiers on patrol over hilly terrain.

The troops struggled to keep up with him and as they crested a hill, they expected to see him making his way down the other side, or just starting up the next hill.

They were shocked when they saw him sitting atop the next hill, off in the distance, smoking a cigarette while he waited for them to catch up.

“The troops called him ‘Superman,’” said platoon commander Capt. Brian Lypps.

Superman, also known as Ranger Lysa Pitseolak, was modest about the tale.

“I was wearing shoes and they had on their boots,” he said, adding the troops were also carrying their day gear.

“They were all sweaty,” he laughed.

In total, 31 soldiers were in Kimmirut with others deployed around Pangnirtung for presence and point patrols as part of Operation Nanook - a Canadian Forces sovereignty exercise.

For nearly six days, Canadian Rangers trained the soldiers to survive off the land.

“They have to know how to survive in the cold weather and good weather like this,” said Canadian Ranger Louie Qimirpik on a sunny Saturday morning.

Rangers showed soldiers where to set up camps, how to hunt small and big game and prepare their catch and what water was safe to drink.

They brought soldiers out to fishing spots to gather mussels and pick berries.

Sgt. James Vogl, who recently completed a tour of Afghanistan, was grateful for the experience with the Rangers, who familiarized them in an environment where Vogl admitted troops were “out of their element.”

“The Rangers have been helpful, showing us how to survive off the land above the treeline,” said Vogl.

Asked whether he thought there would be an increased military presence in the Arctic in the future, Vogl responded:

“There is always a presence here with the Rangers.”

Vogl has trained with the Rangers once before, in the winter, in Resolute.

“They took care of us up there like they did here,” he said.

Lypps said Rangers were the only ones on patrol with ammunition, providing protection to troops from polar bears.

Vogl said the Rangers also helped soldiers understand Inuit culture.

Soldiers and Rangers pulled plenty of cod out of the falls by Soper Lake on Saturday.

Qimirpik and Appa Josephie demonstrated how to gut and fillet the cod, which was then shared with members of the community.

“Once we get food, we pass it on to the community for people who don’t have hunting equipment,” said Qimirpik. “That’s pretty much the tradition for our community, Kimmirut, and we don’t want to lose it.”

Rangers initiated the troops by getting them to taste the cod’s raw liver.

Aside from a few rolled ankles and the inevitable blisters, soldiers made it through the training intact with a strong camaraderie built between the two groups.

Canadian Ranger Sgt. Jamesie Kootoo said he hoped there would be more winter training.



“We like to do that in the winter time,” said Kootoo, adding that winter conditions provided more survival training exercise than the summer, including iglu and snow cave building and ice-fishing.

“It’s harder,” said Kootoo.

Kootoo is also concerned with the significant drop in the number of Canadian Rangers in Kimmirut.

“There are 12,” he said. “I used to have more than 30.”

Qimirpik said government red tape has been an issue.

Rangers in Kimmirut sometimes have to wait two months for paycheques, which travel from Ottawa to Yellowknife to Iqaluit before making it into the community.

“Sometimes Rangers don’t like to wait a couple months to get paid,” said Qimirpik.

Defence minister Peter MacKay recently announced \$3.6 million for the Junior Rangers over five years.

Kootoo said he is encouraged by the increase in the number of Junior Rangers in the community, saying it’s more than 20 now.

He added any new money was good news for the program.

Qimirpik’s son is involved with the Junior Rangers. He said he believes the program is valuable not only in keeping the Canadian Rangers strong, but also to preserve traditional knowledge on the land.

“That’s a good thing to pass on knowledge to our Junior Rangers, because they’re our future,” said Qimirpik.

Lypps said he was proud of all the tasks accomplished by the group, while they were able to build strong friendships.

“I think we’ve developed a mutual respect for one another and the skills we have,” he said. “We’re all Canadians in the end.”



38. Northern General Heaps Praise on Nunavut Rangers

Chris Windeyer

Nunatsiaq News, 13 March 2009

“People always ask me how I protect sovereignty. My answer is always one simple word: Rangers”

Gjoa Haven—Canada’s top northern soldier toured six Nunavut communities this past week to say thank-you to the Canadian Rangers he says are key to protecting Canada’s Arctic sovereignty.

Brig. Gen. David Millar stopped in eight Nunavut communities over five days starting Feb. 28 in Rankin Inlet and ending March 4 in Gjoa Haven. There are Ranger patrols in 56 communities and Millar said he wants to visit them all.

“[This trip is to] get me out on the land where our Rangers operate, meet with them, understand their concerns, but also to motivate and... convey to them how important their role is in defending and representing sovereignty in the North,” Millar said during some rare down time at the E.J. Lyall community centre in Taloyoak.

In Qikiqtarjuaq, Millar inspected the local company of Rangers and Junior Rangers, telling them they are on the front line defending Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic.

“People always ask me how I protect sovereignty. My answer is always one simple word: Rangers,” Millar told each of the patrols.

Sgt. Stevie Audlaqiaq has been a Ranger for 37 years, ever since the Canadian Forces first asked him to show their soldiers how to survive on the land during exercises at the old Cape Dyer DEW Line site.

Audlaqiaq said he and other Rangers from Qikiqtarjuaq still go out to Cape Dyer, and other sites that are now part of the North Warning System, to check for damage and oil leaks, and to clear snow when necessary. That happens three times a year.

The rest of the time Rangers practice their marksmanship, take part in community events and help with search and rescue operations.



In his remarks, Millar also praised the Junior Rangers and said he hoped they would grow up to be full-fledged Rangers. Audlaqiaq, whose own daughter and granddaughter went through the program, said Junior Rangers learn discipline, which helps them keep out of trouble.

“This is pretty helpful for them,” Audlaqiaq said.

Millar’s visit also serves as a chance to see if local patrols need new equipment. Rangers in Pond Inlet recently got new boots, but the treads are slippery and Sgt. Norman Simonie asked Millar for rubber cramp-ons. The general said he’d have some sent out.

“As soon as we get back to Yellowknife I’ll ship out 37 [pairs] to them,” Millar said later. And if Rangers in Pond on are having that problem with the new boots, other patrols likely are too. It’s another reason why Millar thinks it’s important to get out on the road.

Simonie said he was grateful for the chance to meet with Millar and was honoured by his visit.

“A general that’s taking care of us coming into our community makes it very special,” he said.

For Pvt. Jacopie Maktar, also of Pond Inlet, Millar’s visit was an honour for the whole family. Maktar, his brothers Joseph Maktar,

Bernard Maktar and Peter Oolateeta, and brother-in-law George Satuqsi, are all members of the Pond Inlet patrol.

Jacopie said he joined the Rangers eight years ago because his father joined the militia reserves back in 1953.

“I would like to keep his tradition,” Maktar said.

In Clyde River, Millar told the local Ranger patrol their Sgt. Levi Palituq “is famous in the North” for being the only Ranger to be awarded the medal of bravery for trying to save a drowning man.

Seeing Millar off at the airport, Palituq told the general he was honoured by the visit.

“I can honestly say that I’m a proud Canadian and I love this,” Palituq said.

Canadian Rangers are the leading edge of Canada’s efforts to assert its sovereignty in the North.

They travel and hunt on lands that may one day play into the geopolitical designs of governments and military planners in Yellowknife, Ottawa, Washington, Copenhagen, or Moscow.

Millar said Ranger patrols in all of those 56 northern communities need to be acknowledged for the work they do on Canada’s behalf.

“They are proud Canadians and representing Canada, but no one is saying thank you.”



39. Britons' Trip an 'All-Round Super Experience'

Dan Davidson

Whitehorse Star, 19 March 2010

Dawson City—Arctic Roller 2010 arrived back in Dawson City late on March 8, after a somewhat harrowing 780-km drive from Inuvik where they had spent the night after leaving Tuktoyaktuk.

They had arrived in Dawson on Feb. 23 at the end of a 3,000-km journey from the British Army Training Unit Suffield, located within Canadian Forces Base Suffield in Alberta.

British armored groups have been training in Alberta on and off since the Second World War, and BATUS was formally established in 1972.

While the Alberta prairie originally doubled for exercises in which the former Soviet Union was the battleground, these days it is used to prepare the troops for exercises in Afghanistan.

The base has around 200 permanent staff on two year postings. During the year, other people rotate, with as many as 1,500 to 2,000 additional troops brought in for training, which runs from May to October.

As Warrant Officer Tracy Hargreaves explained in an interview on March 9, the aim of the Arctic Roller exercises, which have been going on now for about 15 years, is to conduct survival training with the Canadian Rangers near Dawson City and Tuktoyaktuk. Twelve members of BATUS got to make this trip, which is high on the list of things they like to do.

“We bid for places, and if we’re lucky enough, we get selected.”

From Feb. 24 to March 3, they worked with members of 1st Canadian Rangers Patrol Group, learning how to move by snowmobile, dog sled and snowshoe in our extreme winter climate which, this year at least, hasn’t been that extreme after all.

They also worked on the construction of shelters, lighting fires, living off the land and winter driving as well as conducting trials of their cold weather clothing and equipment.

Part of the exercise was using each others’ gear. The Rangers had a fine time trying out the BATUS group’s L85 A2 (or SA80) Rifle, General

Purpose Machine Gun (GPMG) and the Pump Action Shotgun, while the Brits tried out the Rangers' standard Lee Enfield 303 Rifle.

Arctic Roller isn't exactly a "need" as far as the BATUS group is concerned. Hargreaves calls it a "nice to do.

"It's an all-round super experience."

For the visitors, that even included ice fishing, trapping a rabbit and skating on the ice road to Tuk.

Once in Tuktoyaktuk, they joined up with the Rangers there. They built igloos and watched as the locals showed them trapping skills and ice fishing. Members of the BATUS group were particularly impressed by the way the N.W.T. Rangers lived off the land, taking very few supplies into the field with them.

"When we go on an exercise," said Sgt. Ben Wedgwood, "we take everything with us to survive, supplies, kit and everything. There, they've got one sled, some wood, a tent and a stove and off they go hunting or fishing."

While that may limit the mobility of the patrol in some ways, it makes them very self-sufficient.

Just lighting a fire, even around the Dawson area, can be a challenge, as the BATUS group discovered.

"They all passed," Ranger Sgt. John Mitchell chimed in, adding that Hargreaves was one of the "two brave souls that slept in the improvised shelters" while everyone else enjoyed the shelter of the wall tents.

Back in Dawson, the group had a day's respite before driving south again.

On March 11, they headed for Whitehorse, a little discouraged to be driving in 20 cm of snow, but happy that it had vanished by the time they got to Stewart Crossing.

40. Rangers Camp Out on Ice Pan

Capt. Steve Watton

1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group News Release, 26 April 2010

Very few Canadians receive the opportunity to explore the north, especially the northern tip of Ellesmere Island. They can't even imagine living for five days on an ice pan floating around the chilly arctic waters of the Lincoln Sea.

Bart Hanna, a 20 year veteran with the Canadian Rangers from the hamlet of Igloolik said he enjoyed his time living out on an ice pan.

He was part of the Joint Task Force North, Operation Nanuviut 10 (OP N10) which was conducted in Alert and Ward Hunt Island area.

1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (1 CRPG) operated five patrols during the three weekend exercise that happen from April 8 to 26, 2010.

The purpose of the operation was to enhance the Canadian Forces knowledge and capacity to operate in austere locations and challenging environment and to demonstrate its ability to respond to emergencies in the Arctic.

Hanna recalled that in the old days the elders knew what was going on with the tide and ice.

“Traditionally, we hunt on the ice, said Ranger Bart Hanna, “in the inuit way, we know the effects of high and low tide, how the wind moves the ice and wind direction from snow patterns, so communications with peers and dog team was very important.”

As an elder and well respected by his patrol team, Hanna knew it was multiyear ice, very strong and was not concerned that the ice may crack.

The Ice pan about the size of a small island measured about 8 km long and 10 km wide.

Some members of his team decided to check the depth of the ice but after 6 feet of chipping and digging gave up on breaking through.

They set up shelter using Macpherson tents that was heated by a diesel stove and ate military rations supplemented by caribou stew and bannock.



Skidoos were airlifted to the camp site giving them the opportunity to conduct safety surveillance, record ice movement, and keep a sharp eye out for predators.

Hanna knew that pressure ridges in the ice pan created rough terrain for safe travel, it was high in places and patrol members had to scout around to determine the best routes.

“It was fun and challenging when we were out patrolling, movement by skidoo was slow and ice ridges tough to navigate.” Said Hanna

The patrols were headed by Major Luc Chang, the commanding officer of 1 CRPG, and included 32 red-hooded Rangers, 18 regular and reserve Canadian Forces soldiers, 4 communications specials and 4 search and rescue technicians.

The members divided into five patrol teams, fanned out across the northern tip of Ellesmere Island. They patrolled from Ward Hunt Island, Alert Point and through the snow capped mountains around Alert, the northernmost permanently inhabited settlement in the world.

Chang said “the most difficult part of the expedition was along the coastline of Ellesmere and Ward Hunt Island, a barren stretch of open land where whiteouts easily occur.”

1 CRPG also set up a command post at Ward Hunt Isle, where the Rangers proudly flew the Canadian and Ranger flag to remind everyone that we are conducting patrol reconnaissance in the area.

The Canadian Rangers are charged with Northern and Arctic surveillance, most often by means of sovereignty patrols.

Rangers are reserve force members who volunteer in their communities to serve with the Canadian Forces and conduct training and special missions. Their motto is “Vigilans,” often interpreted as “The Watchers.”



41. The Canadian Rangers: More than a rifle and a red sweatshirt

Whitney Lackenbauer

The Dispatch: Quarterly Review of the Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute, Spring 2010

The Arctic has heated up, as much in political and military rhetoric as in temperature. Journalists warn that a “new Cold War” is brewing over the expectation of new transportation routes and easier access to Arctic resources, citing academic commentators who are eager to highlight the geopolitical complexity of the region and the possibility of future conflict. The short-term horizon, however, is certainly less bellicose than proponents of an “Arctic race” scenario intimate. There is no “use it or lose it” situation for Canada that demands an urgent military response. The Arctic islands are unquestionably Canadian, the Northwest Passage is Canadian waters (although the Americans and others assert that there is an international strait running through it), we are managing boundary disputes with our closest neighbours, and the Arctic littoral states (Canada included) are preparing their extended continental shelf claims. As much as things have changed, they have also stayed the same. As my forthcoming book with Peter Kikkert on *The Canadian Forces and Arctic Sovereignty: Debating Roles, Interests, and Requirements, 1968-1974* reveals, a larger Canadian Forces (CF) presence will not bolster our de jure sovereignty position. We have all the sovereignty that we need, and on the front lines of the changing Arctic stand the permanent residents of the region. They have a primary role to play in its defence – a role that is not new, despite the vicissitudes of southern Canadian interest in the region’s security.

This past summer, the Chief of the Defence Staff, General Walter Natynczyk, applauded the Canadian Rangers for their “tremendous skills.” He was right on the mark. The CF boasts one of the most impressive assets in the North. The Rangers simultaneously serve their country and their communities. They bring indigenous skills and local knowledge about the lands and waters, and serve as an essential bridge between northern peoples, the military, and the federal government more generally. When something is not broken, it is best not to break

it. Nonetheless, promised investments to enhance their capabilities and training are well directed as long as they respect the Rangers' longstanding roles and mission.

From 1947 to the late 1960s, the Canadian Rangers did not receive much, if any, formal training. For the last four decades they have been trained by Ranger instructors – fulltime Regular or Reserve Force sergeants or warrant officers who annually travel to communities to work with them and to act as liaisons with the CF establishment. The Rangers are not prepared for combat, but rather to act as the military's eyes, ears and voice in remote regions. By all accounts, they perform these roles admirably. The raucous applause for the Rangers at the closing dinner of Op Nanook, held in Iqaluit last August, shows the high regard with which they are held by southern troops.

The Canadian Rangers are lightly equipped and self-sufficient for operations near their communities. In the early years, Rangers received only a rifle, a hundred rounds of ammunition, and an armband. They still receive the same .303 rifle as they did in the late 1940s, although a long discussed replacement seems to be in the works. One hopes that it will be equally robust and reliable. Since the 1980s, the Rangers are best known not for their armbands but for their venerable red sweatshirts and ball caps. They now receive combat pants, boots, and are expected to receive additional clothing to do their jobs. Ranger patrols are issued tents, GPS units, stoves, radios, and other equipment. The federal



government has promised more equipment to support them, including boats to facilitate a marine role. These are all welcome investments.

So too are investments in the future. There are currently 37 Junior Canadian Ranger patrols in the territorial north (1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group), with more than one thousand young Northerners participating. This program is hugely popular amongst youth, builds self-esteem, and facilitates the sharing of traditional and local knowledge across generations. This encourages sharing of knowledge and skills across generations, and is a clear case of mutual benefit: communities appreciate opportunities to teach young people on the land; and the military is helping to ensure that “skill fade” will not reduce the local knowledge required to conduct effective operations.

In short, if anyone wants to make the case that the federal government has “bypassed the Inuit,” he should not base it on the Canadian Rangers. They are a clear example of a relationship that the government has actually got right. The Rangers are proof that modest, grassroots measures can assert a national presence over Arctic lands and waters. 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.

The Conservative government has committed to expand and enhance the Rangers, and the key will be seeing it through. Active recruitment is underway and the Rangers are a key component of the Land Forces' Northern rapid response plans. They will provide local expertise and support for a small land manoeuvre element, which is a logical short-term solution so that Canada can respond to the most probable safety and security issues that Canada is likely to encounter in its Arctic in the next decade. For all the hype about the Northwest Passage, sovereignty loss, and circumpolar conflict, the 2009 Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment does not anticipate that it will become a viable trans-Arctic route through 2020. In the meantime, while Canada clarifies its sovereign claims to the extended continental shelf, aligns its Arctic regulatory system for shipping with international standards, and builds air and naval platforms to meet potential threats, the 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.

With all the alarmist rhetoric about Arctic security and sovereignty swirling around these days, the real challenge is to manage our expectations of the Canadian Rangers as a vital northern asset. Residents of remote Northern communities already serve in the Rangers at rates more than five times higher than that of southern Canadians serving in the Regular Forces or Primary Reserves. The Rangers are a flexible, inexpensive and culturally inclusive means of "showing the flag" and provide tangible support to military operations and training. They deserve both our gratitude and respect, as General Natynczyk suggests. The Canadian Forces must be careful not to set the Rangers up to fail by asking too much of them or trying to over-militarize them to face a theoretical enemy that is unlikely to challenge our Arctic sovereignty and security in the near future. Northerners will not stand for it, despite their continued willingness to stand on guard for thee.

42. Two Days at Sea Searching: Clyde River Canadian Rangers Help Look for Missing Helicopter and Pilot

Tim Edwards

Nunavut News/North, 30 August 2010

KANGIQLINIQ/CLYDE RIVER - Choppy waters, rain, fog, wind and clouds – none of these elements affected a group of 12 hardy Canadian Rangers from Clyde River searching for a missing helicopter pilot as much as being forced to come home empty-handed.

The Rangers were assisting a Canadian Coast Guard search for the pilot of a helicopter that went missing Aug. 16 while travelling from Clyde River to Pond Inlet in thick fog. After wreckage of the helicopter was found and the pilot presumed dead, the search was handed over to the RCMP on Aug. 18 at around 6:30 p.m.

“We could have kept looking until we exhausted everything but we just had to follow command out there,” said Canadian Ranger Levi Palituq, the ranger-in-command of the Clyde River patrol.

Palituq said though no one spoke on the approximately two-hour trip back to Clyde River from Sam Ford Fiord, he could tell their mood by their body language.

“Not having found the body, everyone was quiet coming back home and we didn’t talk very much except myself and two of the other boat owners on the VHF radio. We felt pretty bad about not having found the body,” said Palituq.

Palituq said the Clyde River rangers performed admirably assisting the Coast Guard. Participating in search and rescues is part of the job for the Canadian Rangers in all 25 community patrols in Nunavut.

A phone call at 2 a.m. on Aug. 17 roused the 12 Canadian Rangers out of bed in Clyde River. The group set out to sea in three boats to search for the helicopter. Its last known location was at the mouth of the Sam Ford Fiord northwest of the community.

“It was raining, foggy, windy, cloudy – everything that could make it miserable,” said Palituq.





The helicopter, owned by Universal Helicopters in Newfoundland, was supposed to arrive in Pond Inlet at some point on Aug. 16 and when it did not, a search team was assembled by the Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre in Trenton, Ont., to look for the chopper.

The rangers stopped at Eglington Fiord to dry off before continuing on to Sam Ford Fiord. They had military rations to eat, as well as some traditional foods such as maktaaq, seal, and Arctic char.

Then the rangers received a call from the Coast Guard – wreckage had been found of the Bell 206 Long Ranger that had gone missing – and they went and checked it out.

Many had assumed the experienced pilot had set down somewhere to wait out the bad weather, and Palituq said nobody had been expressing doubt about finding the pilot alive until they saw the fuselage of the helicopter.

“I don’t think anybody talked about it; I don’t think anybody thought of it until we saw the wreckage on the ship – that’s when we knew that the pilot was really gone,” said Palituq. “There was no cockpit on the wrecked fuselage. The cockpit had been torn off on impact.”

The rangers then searched the shoreline for the body, venturing to Kigut Peak, far inside the fiord.

“Expecting to see a dead person wasn’t anything new to me, or to a large majority of the rangers that went out with me,” said Palituq, adding that it’s part of the ranger training.

The patrol made camp back at Eglington Fiord and then woke up at 5 a.m. the next morning to continue the search.

The waters were calm by the time the 12 rangers headed home to Clyde River that evening, which made the trip physically easier, even if heading home empty-handed was a hard thing for the rangers to do.

Maj. Jeff Allen, commanding officer for all the Canadian Rangers across the North, applauded their efforts.

“This is another example of the service the Canadian Rangers provide in the North. They used their knowledge of the land, traditional skills and training we give them to serve their communities across the North and Canada,” said Allen in a statement on Aug. 23.



Canadian Rangers from Clyde River scour the isolated and rugged shoreline of Sam Ford Fiord for any sign of a missing Bell 206 helicopter and its pilot. Twelve rangers from Clyde River took part in the search on 17 and 18 August 2010

43. Rangers Train to Tackle Oil Spills

Jeanne Gagnon

Nunavut News/North, 6 September 2010

QAUSUITTUQ/RESOLUTE - Seventeen Canadian Rangers are now trained to respond to oil spills, after a week of training and testing in Resolute Bay.

The Canadian Coast Guard taught the Rangers and six government staff oil spill response techniques for five days late last month. The training was a sub-component of Operation Nanook, the annual Canadian Forces sovereignty exercise.

But finding more people to volunteer for the training is getting challenging, said Janet Twining, a Canadian Coast Guard training officer.

“One of the things we’re starting to find is that people are not as willing to volunteer for training anymore,” she said. “We’re going to have to look at our recruiting strategy moving forward because normally, I would have been to more communities by now. We’re having trouble getting people, really sort of gung ho, and interested.”

Twining said she has taught oil spill response training all across Nunavut. Participants in the training do not get paid but they would receive financial compensation if they ever had to respond to an actual oil spill.

The training in Resolute culminated in a one-day simulation exercise, with the scenario of a tanker leaking fuel after striking an iceberg. No actual oil was used during the exercise.

Overall, the exercise went “really well” and the weather co-operated, said Twining.

“I think they did an absolutely spectacular job today,” she said. “They were keen participants and it was very clear to me, when I saw them demonstrate today, they’ve learned what was taught to them, so I am quite pleased with the training.”

The trainees deployed a beach flushing kit Twining described as a pump and hose that sprays water from its entire length. Using the flushing kit, they moved the “oil” to the water’s edge where it was

contained by booms. She added they used a disc skimmer to take off the “oil” from the surface of the water into a storage device.

Identifying oil sheen

Canadian Rangers Rene Aggark, Peter Nuvviaq and Trudy Ottokie participated in the oil spill response training and exercise.

Aggark said he enjoyed learning how to identify an oil sheen, saying the colours range from barely discernible to light brown, as well as learning a spill would go 90 per cent with the current and 10 per cent with the wind.

Aggark, a ranger for three years who lives in Arviat, said fuel gets transported by tanker ship to communities across Nunavut yearly, so the training is important.

“I think it’s really good for us to have a training ahead of time before that (spill) happens. However, we do not look forward to do that,” he said.

Nuvviaq, of Hall Beach, said the training was “not bad” but connecting the hoses to the pumps was hard.

As for Ottokie, he said he took the training in case there is ever an oil spill in Cape Dorset, where he lives. He has been a ranger for five years.

“It went all right. We learned a lot,” he said, adding they learned how to take care of an oil spill with the right material and how to report it.

“Trying to hook everything up was kind of difficult,” he said. “I enjoyed using the sprinklers and washing the shore. That was the most exciting thing – washing the shoreline on top of the rocks.”



Rangers undertake oil spill response training, 2015

44. Rangers on Patrol

Capt Steve Watton

1CRPG Press Release, November 2010

As deep winter freeze begins, the Arctic landscape becomes covered with snow and the waterways thicken up with ice all across the north Canadian Rangers are out on patrol.

During a recent patrol reconnaissance in Fort McPherson, 24 Rangers participated in Type 1 - annual refresher training out on the frigid and barren land in the area of Husky River, NT from November 20 to 23, 2010.

Led by Ranger Instructor, Sgt. Marcy Maddison, the rangers conducted annual range exercise on November 18 by firing their 303 rifles; they also received familiarization training with the C7 on an improvised range.

Training consisted of general land skills and expedition training to live fire practice and survival techniques unique to the area.

An important function of Type 1 patrols is for the rangers to explore the very remote reaches of their area of responsibility. This helps the rangers to define and clearly understand the patrols overall response capability.

Survival and traditional skills are key components in being a ranger and included hunting and ice fishing ability. This skill was demonstrated by multiple holes cut into the ice in a straight line. The rangers then tied a line to a long skinny tree stick, guided the tree stick under the ice using a stick with a crook, c-shape, end until it reaches the last hole. Then they pull the line through the water with the net attached. Finally, the net is secured at each end to sticks placed across the ice holes.

Another part of this exercise involved the rangers clearing old trails and creating new trails for simple access to remote parts of the land during the snowmobile season. The creation of new trails aids in faster response time in the event of an emergency in the local area.

“Rangers are not only familiar with the landscape and nearby waters but also know how to safely navigate the terrain and deal with inclement



Members of the McPherson Ranger Patrol gather with Sgt Marcy Maddison for a group photo on November 23 following patrol expedition and presentation of certificates.

weather,” said Sgt. Maddison. “They are knowledgeable with all terrain vehicles (ATV), snowmobiles, Macpherson tents, igloos building, how to navigate and survive on the land”.

“There have been 20 Type 1 – annual refresher patrols conducted during the Fall season involving hundreds of rangers across the north”, said Capt Trent Hollahan, Officer Commanding the Rangers, “Their knowledge and expertise are important to the success of the Canadian Forces in the north and this is why we conduct annual training each year with all patrols.

Rangers contributions to the north extend beyond Type 1 – annual refresher training, they also assist in the three major sovereignty operations that transpire each year. Some patrols provide small teams of two to three rangers that conduct shorter missions checking the Distant Early Warning (DEW) line for problems or damage.

For most Rangers, being a reservist in the Canadian Forces means the opportunity to dress in the distinctive red ranger uniform, put on their boots, walk on the ground, assert our sovereignty and represent Canada as guardians of the north.

45. Embedded with the Canadian Rangers

Tim Querengesser

Up Here, vol. 26, no.7, October/November 2010

If Canada's Arctic sovereignty has a brand, it's the red Rangers hoodie. But what does this citizen militia do to ensure the Northern frontier stays ours?

The wave slaps the boat into a high-speed salsa dance. “Slow down!” screams Ranger Corporal Lori-Ann Lennie, beside her niece, Kayla MacCauley, who’s beside me. That’s me, behind the jet boat’s steering wheel. Now, everything starts to happen extremely fast. As the boat gyrates like Elvis and threatens to chuck us into the Mackenzie River, I reach to my left and accidentally push the throttle fully open. The engine roars like God impersonating a grizzly bear and sends the nose skyward. Now, properly scared shitless, I smack the throttle shut, grip the wheel and mutter a prayer. The boat’s nose crashes down with a “Thump!” but, thankfully, stays above the waves.

With the engine cut we begin to drift silently with the current. And having nearly killed the strangers sitting beside me, I wait for a scolding. “Oh my god!” Lori-Ann says, giggling. “Do you even know what yer doing?!”

No. No I don’t.

I didn’t expect my first experience with the Canadian Rangers to be driving a jet boat. In fact, I didn’t expect to drive a boat, period, even if Lori-Ann’s boyfriend, David, said he wanted a man piloting his boat and even if I happen to fit that description. But 20 minutes into my four-day embed with the Rangers and it was already clear that my expectations were way out of touch. I’d expected searches for Russian bombers, or foreign submarines, or some macho assertions of sovereignty, Hoo-Wah! Now, those all seem hopelessly naïve.

As I try to park the jet boat against the rocky riverbank, I manage to point it backwards, then sideways, struggling to negotiate the Mackenzie’s strong current. My mind flashes back to my five-minute test-drive – performed to calm David’s legitimate concern I have no idea what I’m doing in a jet boat. “Landing is the hardest part,” he



Tulita patrol, 2012

warned. It's proving true. The other Rangers giggle and Lori-Ann is electrified. "You see," she yells. "I could have driven the boat."

Yep.

It's likely a majority of Canadians share my misconceptions about the Canadian Rangers. Most probably have a vague notion that this 4,400-strong citizen militia, 85 percent of which is aboriginal (and predominately Inuit), does something to protect Canada's Arctic sovereignty, but couldn't tell you how. To answer that question, I've come to Tulita, a Dene community of 550 located near the Arctic Circle, and home to one of 165 Canadian Ranger patrol groups. The squad is headed into the wilds for their yearly patrol. Now, they'll be the first to tell you they're not on the front-lines like some of the more northerly Ranger patrols. Yet four days spent doing things such as nearly dying in a boat, relaxing, joking, and hunting animals, not Russians, gives me time to ponder. How do the Canadian Rangers help protect our sovereignty?

Wilfred Lennie, a former bureaucrat, sits to rest on a plastic cooler. His tininess has earned him the nickname "Peanut," and at 62, he's combined this disarming nature with a sharp wit to become the group's comedian. Between jokes about the "bushman" he says is stalking us, he wisecracks that Canada should send him to Afghanistan "to go get bin

Laden.” When I ask him about joining Rangers he stops kidding. “Travelling on the land, doing these patrols, that’s what I like,” he says.

All around Wilfred, 14 other Tultitla Rangers are busy erecting a tent city. There is Lori-Ann, a 45-year-old office manager by day, who stands alongside the six other women on the patrol, giggling. There is William and Joe Horassi, 60 and 67, who speak in North Slavey as they collect telephone-pole sized driftwood from the riverbank or cut branches from the surrounding fir trees to build tent frames. There is Ranger Sergeant Eddie McPherson, the group’s elected leader, who inhales a pack of cigarettes seemingly every three hours. And there are Clayton and Ranger Corporal Paul MacCauley, 30 and 25, two intense brothers with wide Jack-O’-Lantern smiles.

“Afterwards you want to go out?” Clayton asks Paul, as he cooks some frozen moose they’ve brought along.

“Yeah, there’s fresh tracks down by that island,” Paul says.

“I just want to go and shoot a moose!” Clayton says, wide-eyed.

The camp is set on a river bend overlooking a spot, everyone says, “is good for moose.” This isn’t a very military-like camp and the patrol’s itinerary reflects that: Day one, arrive. Day two, target practice. Day three, hunting. Day four, go home. Add “joke and visit” and you have an accurate picture.



The Tultia Rangers have packed for comfort rather than mobility for their four day patrol. From their boats they unload oil-drum wood stoves and chimney pipes, coffee thermoses, cribbage boards, camp chairs, gas lamps, a plastic tub with a hind-quarter of moose, boxes filled with industrial-sized stores of macaroni, sugar, coffee-whitener, Kool-Aid, canned meat and lard, and the biggest surprise, black garbage bags containing foamie mattresses – complete with bed sheets.

What army will eat all this food, I joke with Lori-Ann. “I don’t know,” she says, “but I know who’s going to cook it.”

With the six-tent camp finally complete, Eddie gathers everyone up. “There’s nothing else to do for the night, so if you go in a boat, be back by 9,” he says.

“When’s supper and who’s going to cook breakfast?” Paul shoots back, from within the crowd. “You’re supposed to take care of us Sergeant. You’re the big daddy of the bunch.” Everyone giggles.

I seek out Sergeant Francois Tremblay, the only regular Canadian soldier on the patrol. Francois, from Quebec, did a tour in Afghanistan before joining the Rangers, and he’s here as an instructor. He travels throughout the territories helping to oversee 56 Rangers patrols in the first Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, one of five in total across Canada. What now? I ask him. “Now?” he says, in his overly-honest broken English. “Relax.”

During the Second World War, Ottawa realized it couldn’t defend its own frontiers from threats from the Japanese in the northeast, and later, from Russians in the Arctic. Silently, it opened the Northern door to the Americans. The Alaska Highway, countless Yukon airfields, air and weather stations at Iqaluit, Eureka, Alert and Resolute, and the Canol Pipeline were all initially paid for and built by Americans.

After the war, as its inabilities became more widely known and embarrassing, Canada got more serious about keeping watch over its Northern frontier. As a grand gesture it bought the Canol Pipeline back from the Americans, even though the pipe didn’t really work. And it followed the United States’ lead in creating a Northern military force composed of volunteers.

Since 1942, when the Japanese bombed Alaska’s Dutch Harbour and occupied several Aleutian Islands, the Alaska Territorial Guard – a volunteer militia composed almost entirely of native Alaskans – had

been keeping watch over the soon-to-be state. And in Greenland, the Danes had created Slaedepatroljen Sirius, an Inuit sledge patrol tasked with spotting unwelcome German weather stations. So in 1947, Canada created the Rangers, from the ashes of the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers, a volunteer force that had been created to scout the west coast and Yukon during the war for possible incursions by the Japanese.

What's happened since is telling. The Alaska and Greenland patrols have been absorbed by the regular military. The Rangers, on the other hand, have carried on much the same. They're still issued .303-calibre, Lee-Enfield bolt-action rifles, designed in 1895. They still get comparatively little training or equipment (to get to this patrol, the Tulita Rangers used their own boats, which Canada rented from them). They're still volunteers – still paid only when on training or patrols, and still given just 200 rounds of ammunition a year.

A Ranger will never shoot at anyone while on patrol. Instead, they use their rifle to hunt as they explore the Northern wilds. If they see, say, a foreign submarine, aircraft, wildlife poacher or a chemical spill, they are trained to document it and inform their headquarters in the south. If someone goes missing on the land, they're called upon to help find them.

Today, despite the throwback feel of the group, the Rangers are expanding. By 2012, it's estimated they could top 5,000 members.

For anyone still sleeping, morning on day two comes at the crack of Master-Corporal Benny Doctor's .303. Doctor fires on a flock of geese flying by the camp, with Sergeant Francois Tremblay beside him, smiling broadly. Eddie's there, too, with his seemingly five-gallon "Bud Light" coffee mug already full. "Get the machine gun ready for the next ones," he says.

Today is target practice day – on a range created on a flat, dry riverbed, firing at targets held up, like the wall tents, with improvised frames tied together with twine. The targets, used throughout the Canadian military, evoke a long-forgotten enemy: A German soldier rushing at you.

"What day is it?" someone asks, as the range is set up. "Sunday," Eddie replies, grinning. "We have to interrupt this shooting range to have mass."

Behind the firing line people are sitting in camp chairs and ammunition boxes. Here, Wilfred is holding court and Lori-Ann and several others

are in hysterics. “They should send us all to Afghanistan, for bin Laden,” Wilfred says.

“We should put him in white clothes and everything,” Lori-Ann says, giggling. “He’ll look just like bin Laden.”

At the firing line, though, things aren’t as enjoyable. As eight shooters dial in their sights, including Joseph, who smokes a cigarette while firing, Stephanie MacCauley starts complaining. Her rifle isn’t accurate. “I gotta shoot left handed I guess. It’s not shooting nothing.”

Over the course of the day, Paul and Francois work on Stephanie’s rifle, at one point throwing a stick in the water, firing at it and watching the splash to determine how to adjust it. Afterwards, Paul declares: “That gun’s fu##ed.”

I talk with Lori-Ann about the links between the Rangers and the military. To her there aren’t many. In 2007, she was part of Operation Nanook, where the regular army came to nearby Norman Wells and the Rangers were employed as wildlife patrol. One night, at the Legion – after she’d hustled them all for their money at the pool table – things got a bit serious. “It was a lot of fun until all those army guys started fighting in the Legion,” she says. “They just ruined it.” Instead, Lori-Ann sees benefits for herself and her family. Her daughter has recently joined the Junior Rangers.

Eddie, however, sees definite links. A Métis construction worker, he joined the Rangers nine years ago with clear reasons. “I seen, you know, these guys trying to do something – you know, sovereignty, eyes of the North, all this stuff,” he says. “I wanted to be part of it. The other day, when that Russian plane was coming over – who better to protect the North than Northerners?”

But, he concedes a few frustrations, too. “The worst part of all this is ... we have these antique guns,” Eddie says. “It’s hard to get parts for them. A lot of them have bent barrels.” Challenges also include wall tents sent north without holes for wood-stove pipes and a general shortage of supplies. The two tents the Tulita group has are expected to house more than 30 members. The only solution is fundraising. “Although we get it from [Canada] we don’t get enough, so we have all our own [gear],” Eddie says. “Our next goal, if we ever make money at bingo again, is to buy some more tents.”

Kayla is a quiet presence at the range. After firing, I talk to her about her reasons for being in the Rangers, which she joined at 19.

The Rangers were “just something to do, because there’s nothing like really much to do in Tulita,” Kayla says. The more we talk, the more it’s clear this group is a way for Kayla to keep in touch with her culture, too. She tells me her family used to go out on the land a lot. “As I got a bit older, you know, too much drinking in the family and stuff, and I guess we just never went as much,” she says. “This is probably the only time that I go in the bush, is with the Rangers, and the [Tulita] spring hunt.”

Surprisingly, Wilfred – who I chat with after the shooting is done and we’re back at camp – has a similar story. A lot of kids in Tulita drink, and some kill themselves, he says. Drinking is what he did, too, before he retired from a 25-year career with the territorial government in 1997. That same year, when the Tulita division of the Rangers was created, Wilfred signed up and got sober. “When you’re out here, see how beautiful it is, sometimes you think, ‘I want to live longer,’” he says. “But the kids aren’t coming out on the land.”

On day three, Clayton, Paul and Joseph are finally let loose on the river. The night before they tasted first blood, shooting two ducks that swam past the camp and de-feathering them in a flurry beside the river. Today, like everyone else on the patrol, they want the big prize: a moose.



Standup of the Tulita patrol, 1997

We head downriver in a Lund fishing boat, with Clayton steering, Paul near him, and Joseph sitting at the bow. We take a right down a small creek where, at the top of a near-vertical riverbank, a hunter's cabin overlooks what the guys call Harry's Island. We climb up and have a look into the willows. "I just wanted to get away from that camp," Clayton says, lighting a cigarette and relaxing in a chair.

I ask why, if he doesn't like the camp, he joined the group "I thought the Rangers were that soldier-boy stuff," he explains. When he found out they weren't, he signed up. "I did it to go hunting. It's good to get out with a bunch of people and go hunting."

Clayton and Paul both have full-time jobs in Tulita, with the local government. They've come home: The two used to live at a mining camp north of Yellowknife, partying in the city on their off time but feeling disconnected. "In the spring-time in Yellowknife I saw a flock of geese," Paul says, scanning the horizon for moose. "I just said, 'Man, I want to come home.'" Both brothers returned that year for a relative's funeral and never left. Now, Paul says he barely drinks at all.

We wait for a few moments, breathing in the beauty of the Mackenzie River valley, the trees exploding into the florescent yellows of autumn, the water splashing in the creeks, the mountains looking like purple-carpeted blobs in the distance.

Clayton grows tired – we haven't seen a moose all day. "C'mon, let's keep looking," Paul says. "Do you want to go back to that camp and sit in tents? How boring."

As we continue hunting, it strikes me that there are two vastly different ways we can assert sovereignty in the North. One is to militarize the place, to prepare a highly-unlikely future battle over the Arctic. The other is to link the country's broader goals with those of the local people. They, like Ottawa, want to protect the North. Now, if we could only give them some more tents and better rifles in the cause.

46. Yukon Quest, Canadian Rangers grow 17-year partnership for 2011

Whitehorse Star, 6 January 2011

The Yukon Quest will again be partnering with the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (1 CRPG) for the 2011 Yukon Quest Trail to receive trail support from Whitehorse to the US-Canada Border.

Joint Task Force (North) will once again put together a team of qualified Canadian Rangers to develop and maintain this portion of the 2011 race trail.

“This is a very important partnership to the Yukon Quest – one that allows the event to maintain a high service level and continue to produce the legendary trail the Yukon Quest is known for,” said Georgina Leslie, executive director of the Yukon Quest International Association of Canada.

In 2010, Joint Task Force North was unable to provide support for the trail through a partnership with the Canadian Rangers. As a result, a group of experienced volunteers stepped up and the Yukon Quest received funding from the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency.



However, for the 2011 Yukon Quest, there will be a renewed formal partnership between the Yukon Quest and 1 CRPG to utilize the Canadian Rangers.

“The Canadian Rangers have a long-standing relationship with the Yukon Quest and it’s wonderful to be able to offer this opportunity to the Rangers,” said Major Jeff Allen, commanding officer, 1 CRPG.

“I know the men working on the trail take their job seriously and have their operations down to a science.”

The Canadian Rangers use a three-phase process to establish the “Super Highway”, which is how some people refer to the trail because of great trail work and superb quality of the trail in the past two years.

The first phase involves “Ranger-style” trail breaking to clear brush from the path and pack snow down with snowmobiles.

The second phase re-establishes the trail and removes any debris that may be obscuring the trail.

The third phase is called “proofing” and is usually done only hours before the race start as a final check to make sure the trail is in top form.



47. General Visits ‘The Eyes and Ears of Canada’

Jason Unrau

Whitehorse Star, 12 January 2011

The Canadian Rangers, a more-than 4,000-strong militia composed of volunteer residents from the country’s northern communities, are expanding, but there are no plans to upgrade the Rangers’ standard issue, vintage Lee-Enfield rifles.

Canada’s top soldier, Chief of Defence Staff General Walt Natynczyk, said as much during a brief stop in the Yukon on Tuesday to visit with Rangers from Haines Junction, Whitehorse, Carcross and Carmacks.

“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,” Natynczyk said.

“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.”

Officially adopted as the British Army’s standard issue rifle in 1895, the Lee-Enfield is still used by some Commonwealth nations’ armies, but for a modern military like the Canadian Armed Forces, the weapon has long been retired.

While some Rangers have complained about the difficulty in finding replacement parts for the Lee-Enfield .303, Natynczyk said he has heard the opposite from other Rangers who appreciate the gun.

“I still remember Sgt. (Allen) Pogotak from Resolute Bay at Rideau Hall, when he was being given an award by the Governor General,” Natynczyk recalled.

“He said to me, ‘Sir, you know, 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.’”

And expanding the Rangers’ scope of service beyond regular patrols and joint exercises with the Canadian Armed Forces - a 2009 Senate

report on Arctic sovereignty suggested that Rangers be turned into combat-ready units - is not being pursued.

“The government’s intent to grow the Rangers’ numbers, that was part of the Canada First Defence Strategy,” Natynczyk said of increasing membership, rather than increasing responsibilities.

“But it’s a question of how the communities want to expand. We can’t just go out there and say, ‘Hey, we want everyone to join the Rangers.’”

Members of Joint Task Force North, based in Yellowknife, N.W.T., also accompanied Natynczyk on his brief two-day tour of the hinterland.

“The Rangers are the eyes and ears of Canada in all of these communities,” the general said of the volunteer force established in 1947 with the motto *Vigilans* or The Watchers.

“And everytime I’m out here, I’m just humbled by their skill and their knowledge.”

There are approximately 4,200 Canadian Rangers in 163 patrols across Canada, and 85 per cent of Rangers are aboriginal.



Beaver Creek patrol

48. The Canadian Rangers: A CF Touchstone in Canada's Remote Regions

Sentinel Staff, with information from Joint Task Force North and the Canadian Ranger National Authority

The Sentinel (Joint Task Force North), July 2011

They come from all walks of life. Some are mayors, chiefs, teachers or businessmen, and some earn their keep off the land by hunting and fishing. They are of all ages and both genders; most are First Nations people - but many are not. But they all share some invaluable traits. An extraordinary knowledge and sense of the vast and rugged spaces of our land, primarily in the North but not exclusively so, as they are also found almost everywhere Canada has a coast line, from the West Coast, to the shores of Hudson Bay to the St. Lawrence Estuary to the shores of Newfoundland and Labrador.

They operate in conditions that no reality show could emulate, where the weather is often cold, cruel and unpredictable, and where the land is often covered with snow and cloaked in darkness, and inhabited places are few and far between.

These are our Canadian Rangers whose over 4,000 members, scattered in patrol groups at over 170 locations throughout Canada, provide a strategic resource to the Canadian Forces (CF) out of all proportion to the investment in them, and who work on behalf of Canada and the CF but above all for love of country.

The Canadian Rangers were founded on May 23, 1947 to provide a permanent presence throughout the North and to assert Canadian sovereignty through surveillance, most often by means of sovereignty patrols. With 40 percent of our landmass in the territories, 162,000 kilometres of Arctic coastline and 25 percent of the global Arctic, Canada is undeniably an Arctic nation. Sovereignty across this vast expanse is not limited to air patrols or missions by Canadian Coast Guard and Navy ships, or periodic exercises by the Canadian Army, but also by Canadians patrolling on the land year round - often on snowmobiles, whose knowledge of the land can quickly discern if something is amiss.

Identified by their signature red sweatshirt and red baseball cap with a Ranger crest, Rangers help to advance the four pillars of Canada's Northern Strategy by enhancing sovereignty, protecting the environment, encouraging economic and social development and building confidence for the residents of the North to take on provincial-type responsibilities for land and resource management.

They achieve this by receiving important CF training, support and responsibility, and by demonstrating sovereignty through their presence and support in the North. They also work with other CF members across Canada, showing them the skills and ways of life that are unique to Northern environments and resources. This collaboration and knowledge-sharing by the Canadian Rangers enables the CF to ensure the safety, security and defence, as well as the environmental, social, economic and cultural protection of this isolated, exceptional landmass and its communities.

At a recent awards ceremony presided over by the Chief of the Defence Staff, General Walter Natynczyk, the Honourable Eva Aariak, Premier of Nunavut, delivered these praising words to the Canadian Rangers: "Each of you serves as the military's eyes and ears in the North, helping the Canadian Forces to defend our country and protect our national security. It is your knowledge of ways of the land, hunting,



weather conditions and your endurance and strong surveillance instincts that make it all possible.”

Operating as the eyes and ears of the Canadian Forces, Canadian Rangers can be counted on to provide military support in times of community crisis, to act as the advanced guard in the remote areas of the North, and to participate in several capability-sharpening operations and exercises conducted by Canada Command every year in the North.

“There are large parts of this country where we don’t have a permanent Regular Force or Primary Reserve presence,” said Dr. Whitney Lackenbauer, associate professor and chair of the department of history at St. Jerome’s University in the University of Waterloo. “The Canadian Rangers ensure that the Canadian Forces are well represented all across this country in all of its geographical and cultural diversity.”

This is a mutually supportive relationship where the presence of the Canadian Rangers greatly helps the people of these communities and it also helps Canada Command to meet its objective to “Protect and Defend” all of Canada.

These important members of the Canadian Forces are not employed in combat or overseas operations. However, they have played key roles





in the evacuation of several Aboriginal communities threatened by forest fires, tainted drinking water, spring flooding, avalanches and other domestic emergencies. The honed search and rescue skills of these Canadian Rangers have made the difference between life and death for the many people who go missing in this vast landscape.

Canadian Rangers take pride in serving their people as well, and their skills are supported and encouraged by the CF. “They’re serving their country at the same time as they’re serving their community,” said Dr. Lackenbauer.

Canadian Rangers are provided with patrol-specific training that includes first aid, in-service weapons use, guiding or scouting, navigation using maps, compasses and global positioning systems, traditional and modern survival skills, operations in support of Regular Force units, basic military drills, surveillance, search and rescue, North warning system patrolling and patrol leadership, and administration.

Canadian Rangers are organized into Patrol Groups throughout the Land Force (Army) areas across Canadian Provinces and in Canada Command’s Joint Task Force North. The patrol groups tend to be provincially oriented, apart from 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, which covers the whole of northern Canada above the 60th parallel. The patrols tend to be centred on remote communities and are frequently named after the town or village they are from.

... The Government of Canada has increased its emphasis on Northern sovereignty, placing a greater emphasis on the contributions of the Canadian Rangers. This recognition of the tremendous contributions the Canadian Rangers has resulted in a commitment to increase the size of this extraordinary force to 5,000 Canadian Rangers in 178 patrols by the end of 2012.

49. Canada-Denmark wrap up Greenland military exercise: Canadian Rangers helped Danish elite forces learn Arctic skills

Jane George

Nunatsiaq News, 17 March 2012

Canadian Rangers from Nunavut headed back home March 16 after a two-week military exercise in northeastern Greenland, called “Arctic Training 2012,” where they helped train members of Denmark’s special forces and its Sirius dog team patrol unit.

During the exercise, the Danes gained experience about snowmobiling, “where the Canadian Rangers have extensive experience,” according to a Danish news release on the exercise — which was not publicized in Canada.

Exercise participants also took a trip on the land, where they set up a camp to test polar bear alarms and other survival skills.

In Greenland, Danish soldiers generally travel by dog team, and they’re used to being warned about the presence of polar bears by their dogs.

But, travelling by snowmobiles during this exercise, they learned how to rely on an alarm and tripwire instead, the news release said.



Canadian Ranger Jackie Amerlik of Arviat explains how traditional Inuit clothing is made to Canada’s defence minister Peter Mackay and Gitte Lillelund Bech, Denmark’s defence minister, during their brief visit last August to Operation Nanook in Resolute Bay. (Photo by Jane George)

The Canadians and Danes also carried out a mock search-and-rescue operation during the exercise, which took place March 2 to March 16 near Mestersvig, a military outpost with a 1,800 metre-gravel runway, on the southern shore of the King Oscar Fiord in the Northeast Greenland National Park.

Arctic Training 2012 flows from an agreement Denmark and Canada signed in May 2010.

That memorandum of understanding “on enhanced operational defence cooperation in the Arctic,” such as joint military exercises, staff exchanges and co-operation in rescue operations, led to Denmark’s participation in last year’s Nunaliut exercise.

In August 2011, it also brought the head of the Danish Armed Forces and Denmark’s defence minister, along with Peter Mackay, Canada’s national defence minister, on short visits to Resolute Bay to see Operation Nanook.

Denmark’s defence minister, Gitte Lillelund Bech said then that Denmark and Canada planned on more co-operation to find solutions to their shared challenges, like climate change and increased marine traffic.

Bech also wanted to learn more about the Canadian Rangers, an example she said that Denmark is looking closely at for Greenland, where there are only special units from the Danish army patrol-ling the island.

“We can share and learn from each other,” Bech told *Nunatsiaq News*.



The Sirius patrol team arrives back in Alert after a week-long patrol with members of the Canadian Forces and Canadian Rangers. While soldiers from the two countries taught each other a few tricks, the dog-powered Danes did slow down the Canadians who were travelling by snowmobile. (Photo by Chris Windeyer)

50. Canadian Rangers honoured for Resolute crash response: Unit commendation awarded for service beyond normal duty

Vincent Desrosiers
CBC News, 23 May 2012



Investigators work at the scene of the First Air crash site in Resolute, Nunavut, in August 2011. Canadian Rangers are easily distinguished by their red hoodies. (Vincent Desrosiers/CBC)

The Canadian Forces recognized the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group Tuesday in Yellowknife for the role they played in the aftermath of the First Air crash in Resolute Bay, Nunavut, last August.

The Canadian Forces' Unit Commendation honours a military unit that has performed a deed or activity considered beyond the demand of normal duty.

Canadian Rangers were in Resolute on Aug. 20, 2011, as part of the training exercise Operation Nanook, when a 737 passenger jet crashed near the airport. Twelve people on board were killed, three survived.

After the crash, rangers guarded the site 24 hours a day. Authorities investigating the crash relied on the Rangers to frighten away polar bears drawn to the site by the smell of rotting food cargo.

“It’s kind of hard to talk about,” said Ranger Jamie Fabian.

Ranger Kevin Lafferty said the fact that Northerners know one another, and have personal connections in many communities, made it difficult to perform their duties after the crash, but they pushed through.

“To switch gears so quickly for something so obviously so tragic, wasn’t the easiest thing,” he said. “[There were] a lot of sleepless nights initially, as everybody tried to get a handle on what had actually happened.

“Everybody did their job, their duty. For those Rangers who couldn’t be here for the ceremony today, that couldn’t make it on the flights, they should be really proud of how well they served.”

Maj. Jeff Allen, commanding officer of 1CRPG, said the honour also recognizes the group’s overall service.

“It recognizes all the hard work that the Rangers do, not just during the one incident that occurred last summer but it also recognizes the work that they do almost on a daily basis throughout the remote and isolated communities of the North,” said Allen.

The commendation includes a medallion, a scroll and a flag.

There have been five lawsuits filed in the Nunavut Court of Justice in Iqaluit in connection with the Resolute crash, four of which allege negligence on the part of the Department of National Defence, which was in control of the Resolute airport at the time due to Operation Nanook.

The Transportation Safety Board is still investigating the cause of the crash.



Canadian Ranger Kevin Lafferty says his colleagues should be proud of their service guarding the crash site of First Air 6560 in Resolute, Nunavut. (CBC)

51. Rangers Celebrate 65 Years with a River Trip

Dan Davidson

Klondike Sun, 17 October 2012



“Thank you for allowing us to come in and invade your small town here today,” Brigadier General Kelly Woiden said to Mayor Peter Jenkins on October 4.

He was referring to the assembly of First Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (CRPG), who were in Dawson City to celebrate the 65th Anniversary of the Canadian Rangers. Dawson was chosen as the place to celebrate this due to the patrol here being the first to “stand up” after the Rangers were created on September 4, 1947. Dawson’s patrol began its existence on September 22 and the patrol in Whitehorse followed suit after this.

Woiden described the Rangers as a case of “members of the community serving the community”.

Jenkins replied that they were welcome any time.

The red-garbed Rangers had arrived in town about a half hour earlier, having concluded a Type 3 (Joint) River Exercise on three rivers while the Canadian Ranger National Authority was meeting in Dawson.

The river patrol was a three-day exercise with Rangers departing from three different landing sites.

Captain Steven Watton, the Unit Public Affairs Representative, explained that Rangers from seven Yukon communities (Carcross, Carmacks, Dawson, Haines Junction, Pelly Crossing and Whitehorse) were represented in the exercise. There were also members from Atlin, Hay River, Gjoa Haven, Newfoundland and Labrador and Ontario.

The three patrols departed by boat from Minto Landing, Pelly Crossing and a spot near the McQueston Air Strip, and were met by a crew from Dawson who went upstream to rendezvous and then accompanied them to the landing near the bank beneath the Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre.

Woiden praised Sgt. John Mitchell for his role in making the exercise successful.



Rangers arriving in Dawson. Photo by Capt. Stephen Watton



“Thank you very much for everything you’ve done today in making today happen. I know it just doesn’t take overnight to make these things occur. They take a lot of effort and time. I certainly thank you for being a citizen-member of this community.”

Dr. Whitney Lackenbauer, who is writing a history of the Rangers, was part of this exercise and Woiden thanked him for his efforts in this regard.

Alex Van Bibber and Percy Henry were part of the original Ranger mobilization in the late 1940s, and the General brought them forward.

“I’d like to thank you two on behalf of all of us. Thank God you stood up in that 1947 time frame and decided to support your community and support Canada. Thank you very much.”

Brigadier General Woiden is the Chief of Staff for the Army Reserve and the Canadian Ranger National Authority.

“Today,” he said, “I am here to recognize the 65 years since the stand up of the Canadian Rangers. We’ve been recognizing this by doing the patrol (Exercise: Ranger Origins) up the river. Representatives from all the Ranger patrols across the country are here. We’ve also had the working group and a series of conferences the last three or four days here in Dawson City.”

Woiden is just two months into his leadership role in [Ottawa], so this was a great opportunity “for me to come and meet these wonderful folks ad citizens and the local community.”

The Rangers roles, as ground search and rescue and operations watchers, has remained the same over the years, he said.

“They are folks who have the capability – who have skill sets that we don’t have to train. They have those natural skills sets to be able to work in the environment in their local communities. They can do ground search and rescue with a degree of skill set that you can’t really teach; they have it as a natural capability.

“The Army’s mission has been somewhat refocused on the North, so the Ranger’s mission has evolved over time. Our regular and reserve units are both starting to work a lot more with our Canadian Rangers to provide that capability.”

Wooden said the number of Rangers has been growing steadily over the last four to five years.

“We will be approaching 5,000 Rangers across the country and in the (five) major Ranger Patrol Groups.

“As the government of Canada continues its interest in the North, to shore up its sovereignty, to shore up the interest and ability to work in the North; I think as the Canadian Forces itself gets back into cold weather operations, we’ll be using the Rangers much more, because they are the footprint in the community and the ability to operate in the cold operations.”

...

The celebration in Dawson continued in the evening with a wild game barbecue held at the Moose Mountain Ski Chalet, with a couple of big Ranger tents added on to hold the tables and the warmth from the tent stoves.



52. Operation Nunaliivut 2012

Adam Day

Legion Magazine, July/August and September/October 2012

Part One: Drawing Lines In The Arctic

Winston Churchill was wrong. Or at the very least, he wasn't completely correct. Churchill once said that courage is the most important quality because it makes all the other qualities possible. That's wrong though, I found out.

After snowmobiling nearly 1,500 kilometres across the Arctic with the Canadian Forces, led by the remarkable Inuit of the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, I learned courage is not the most necessary quality; it is the second.

Surviving in the Arctic winter for days or even hours without highly specialized skills and equipment is just impossible.

In fact, the odds against any life succeeding there are extremely high—never mind the predatory polar bears or appalling cold—what gets to you after a while is the enormity of the place, the vastness, the seemingly unlimited variety of ice and snow, the strange and bewildering light, the unmistakable hostility of an environment so powerful that it makes humans seem pointless.

After watching the military and their Ranger guides struggle through 11 days of patrolling across the Arctic, sleeping in tents, it became clear that the most important characteristic is not courage, it is resilience—the ability to bend without breaking, to endure the stress and hardship and relentless hazards of travel in the high Arctic and keep bouncing back to carry on. Courage doesn't much matter if the Arctic has deformed your spirit so badly that all you can think about is escape or mutiny or dark rum.

That's not a joke. There is a long, disastrous tradition of various explorers and adventurers travelling into the Arctic and proving their lack of resilience by freaking out completely.



Sgt. Debbie Iqaluk and Sgt. Billy Cornish plot a route. Photo: Adam Day

In one way, this was actually kind of the purpose of Operation Nunavut 2012, the Canadian Forces now-annual northern expedition—for the military to prove to themselves and others that they have the capability to actually operate up there, north of everything, that they can keep going when it’s minus 50 and the patrol is lost and flat-light blind, and running low on supplies and the bears are circling. Resilience.

The Thawing of a New Frontier

There is a struggle going on to control the top of the world. Despite the presence of camouflage and guns and even the occasional fly-by general, this is not a military struggle, not really. Or not yet, anyway.

While the struggle to control Arctic lands and exploit its resources predates the colonization of Canada, it’s now more a legal and political battle than anything else. It’s an issue of sovereign authority—who gets to decide which ships can transit which waters, which companies can drill for resources and, ultimately, who owns the Arctic.

Despite its complexity and, frankly, its difficulty, the intention of Op Nunavut was simple. To get a sense of what that intention is you just have to hear the meaning of the operation’s name: Nunavut. It’s an Inuk word that means “land that is ours.” Our Land.

That's a fairly emphatic message.

Meanwhile, at this point, it's not so much an issue of ownership of the land as it is control of the waterways and the resources beneath them.

The big question is whether Canada can maintain control over the Northwest Passage, a still mostly frozen strait connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans which provides a time- and cost-saving shortcut between Europe and Asia.

The U.S., China, India, the European Union, OK, most of the rest of the world, all want the Northwest Passage to be labelled an international strait, whereas Canada wants it labelled as internal waters. The difference is mainly an issue of control: if we get our way, we get to say which ships transit those waters. If we don't get our way, pretty much any ship can transit.

Now, that's not to say that Canadian ownership of the huge mass of Arctic islands up there is in any way flawlessly perfect, because it's not.



Patrolling the Arctic. Photo: Adam Day

Sovereign ownership of land is traditionally legally based on discovery of the land and effective occupation of the land by the country that claims to own it. In the case of the Arctic, we have a rough time claiming either.

Canadians were hardly involved in the exploration of the Far North. Instead, the British gave us much of the Arctic as a gift in 1880—a move that was legally unprecedented—and we bought the rest from the Hudson's Bay Company. Here's a little known fact: one of Canada's largest Arctic islands is named Axel Heiberg after the Norwegian beer company that sponsored the expedition that discovered it.

As for effective occupation, well, our efforts there have been contentious, to say the least. The 1953 strategic re-location of Inuit to

create the High Arctic communities of Resolute and Grise Fiord was supposed to help cement Canadian land claims and while it may have done that, it was also a human rights fiasco.

Regardless of all these complicated issues, the whole endeavour is wildly significant. If Dutch or Danish or Norwegian claims to sovereign possession of these lands were pressed, if they, instead of the French and English, had been able to achieve effective occupation of North America, well, it would be a very different world (and not an English-speaking world).

Securing sovereign rights to land is a game with potentially vast consequences. That phrase doesn't quite cut it, however. The Arctic wasn't always frozen, and it may not always be frozen. Who controls the Arctic could be the most important thing in the world, in the future. It is potentially that crucial, which makes it imperative now, to try.

So, more or less, that's why Op Nunavut happens every year, as a demonstration of Canadian will. And that's how you should imagine the patrol, as a sovereign procession of human flagpoles trekking across the ice proclaiming to all those who might be interested (even our southern brothers) that despite the possibly dubious legality of all the things we claim about the Arctic and its navigable waters, that we are the rulers of this place, us and no one else.

North From Resolute Bay

The Inuit word for white people is Kabluunak, which means someone with big eyebrows and a fat, protruding stomach.

By the end of the operation, I would become known among the Inuit as one of the clumsiest of the many clumsy Kabluunaks.

The mission was to set off from Resolute—one of the world's northernmost communities—and head north across Cornwallis Island, across the Wellington Strait, north to the edge of Devon Island and there search for a lost patrol. We'd travel by snowmobile, camping every night, moving fast to try and go as far as possible.

Two patrols of 12 people would leave Resolute to take part in the search. Each would have a large group of Canadian Rangers—reservists, mostly Inuit, known as the northern eyes and ears of the Canadian military—a couple of regular force CF trainers, a Search and Rescue survival expert and a medic.

Each of us was required to drag all our own food and supplies behind our snowmobiles on a huge and heavy wooden sled called a qamutiq.

The qamutiq is a very old, very well-tested Inuit invention that has proven durable enough to survive weeks and months of being dragged over rough ice and snow at fairly high speeds.

I destroyed my first one in minutes.

Sergeant Billy Cornish was the patrol leader. He is a straight-talking veteran of two Afghan deployments with the Royal Canadian Regiment (see: *Ghosts In The Hills*, January/February 2007) and it was his unfortunate job to give me a brief introduction into snowmobiling across rough mountainous terrain while towing a sled at the end of long rope.

Cornish wasted no time getting to the difficult stuff. He led me up a small mountain outside of Resolute and then darted down. As I was about to learn, there are some very interesting physics involved with towing a heavy sled down a steep hill. And by interesting, I really mean terrifying.

The faster you go, the faster the sled goes. But there is no slowing down, because you can't let the sled pass you. It turns into a weird kind of race.

I was racing, then I crashed.

I looked back up the hill, the qamutiq was scorching towards me, 400 pounds of furiously careening wood and supplies. It flew off the same drift that foundered me and went past my right shoulder. I watched as the 20-foot tow rope tightened faster than I wanted to see.

There are a few peaceful moments between when you become absolutely sure something bad is about to happen, and when the bad thing happens. I thought of nothing.

The rope snapped tight and the snowmobile's seat turned into a catapult and I launched headfirst down the mountain.

It was a giant mess. I looked back up the mountain to see a debris field worthy of a plane crash—snowmobile upside down, qamutiq upside down, broken, its contents spilled out.

Eventually, Billy managed to right both me and my snowmobile, managed to get everything stuck back together.

When we finally made it back to Resolute, Cornish looked me over and then, his own nose bloodied and skin whitening with frostbite,

pointed at my face and said, matter-of-factly, “That’s going to hurt later.”

Race To Snowblind Bay

“My qamutiq is trying to kill me, I am certain.”

That is the only thing I wrote in my notebook after our first day of patrolling, which saw us run at high speed from Resolute northwest across Cornwallis Island, about 100 kilometres across rough land to our first night camping site at Snowblind Bay on the edge of Wellington Strait.

The patrol’s guide and pathfinder was Sergeant Debbie Iqaluk, a joyful, mischievous and slightly fierce Ranger from Resolute. She’s lived her whole life on the land, and even now, as a grandmother, she still prefers to be out there than in her house.

After Debbie led us safely to Snowblind Bay we wasted no time in building our tent. It’s probably not a tent like you’re picturing. It has wooden beams and draped canvas walls. It’s tied down to the qamutiqs, which we arrange in a square around the campsite, both as a windbreak and to ward off bears.

Not that the windbreak really helped, because, at a certain point, it really doesn’t matter how cold it is.

No one talks about temperature. It is cold or somewhat beyond cold—minus 40? Minus 50 or 60? It doesn’t really matter because there’s nothing that anyone can really do about it other than keep all their skin covered up and try to get the tent’s stove going as soon as possible after we stop.

As I would find out, the only genuinely important measure of the cold was the length of time it took boiling coffee to become icy slush.

Sitting inside the tent, there’s really nothing to do but talk. Over time, Debbie told the story of how she came to Resolute.

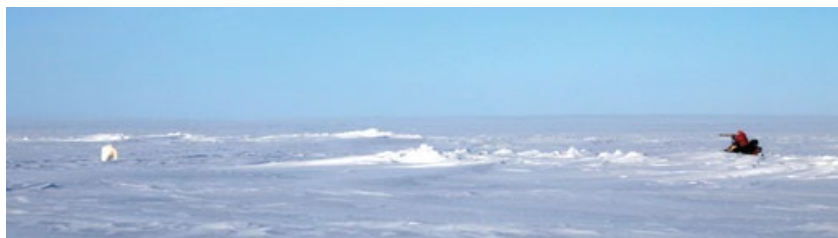
Debbie’s parents were in the original group that moved (or were forcibly moved, if you want to hear it as Debbie tells it) to Resolute Bay in the early 1950s.

Her first memory is of nearly starving to death when she was very young. The relocated Inuit—known as ‘the exiles’—had few supplies and little knowledge of how to find food this far north. “They told us [the game] was plentiful,” says Debbie, “But there was nothing.”

She remembers that her father cut up their dogsled harness and fed it to her. When they finally found food, she was given a fox of her own to eat, but it had to last her a week.

The Canadian government, while never admitting fault or apologizing, did agree to compensate the exiles with a \$10-million-dollar payment in 1996. The money means nothing to Debbie, her father drowned when she was five, trying to get out to a rare passing ship to trade for supplies.

Over the next 10 days I would see that Debbie is, frankly, amazing. She's not perfect, so forget the great myth of the Inuit hunter. She's normal. She gets grumpy, she gets lost, she tries to avoid blame, but none of that really matters. If resilience was highly-prized, Debbie would be the champion—she just keeps going.



Debbie takes aim at a bear. Photo: Adam Day

Across Wellington Strait to Devon Island

Devon is one of, if not the, largest uninhabited islands in the world. Portions of its interior are so remote and austere that NASA has set up a camp there to periodically test their space equipment. If you need to test something like a Mars rover, this is the place you'd do it.

As two-thirds of the patrol headed north to continue the search, the four of us left at the base camp had only one thing on our minds—would Debbie receive a polar bear tag in Resolute's weekly draw.

See, many Inuit communities in the Arctic are allotted a certain number of polar bears, and they decide who gets to go hunting by means of a lottery. Hunting is a way of life for the Inuit, and especially for Debbie. It's not something she does as a hobby; she does it to eat.

It was already late in the day when Debbie got through on the satellite phone. The conversation was brief—she had a tag and she had

only six days left to get a bear or the tag would go back in the pot for someone else to get a chance.

She gave the phone back to Billy and sat for a moment to consider her options.

Tomorrow we would head north, and while it was already late and Ranger Phillip Kringayark was the only other person here to help her on the hunt, he said he would help and that made up Deb's mind.

Just a few kilometres out of camp, Deb picked up a fresh track on the edge of Wellington Strait. I got off my snowmobile to measure—the bear's paw was at least 14 inches long, maybe more.

For the next couple of hours, Phillip and Deb chased the bear tracks through the rough ice, never laying sight on the bear, but growing increasingly convinced that they would eventually catch up.

They ran their snowmobiles fast up the edges of the rough ice, in broad arcs, trying to corral the bear and force it into the open.

Though the sky was bright blue and the sun was shining, it was also starting to get late; we'd been out on the ice for four or five or six hours. But the track was lost and the hunt was foundering.

Deb was picking her way through a patch of particularly rough ice—three-foot drop-offs and 10-foot-high chunks of iceberg and impassable ridges—when in the barely visible distance, the bear's head appeared from behind a block of ice, watching us.

Debbie slammed the gas, but heading in the opposite direction of the bear. She had to go find Phillip to get more gas so she could begin the chase proper.

It was one of those decisions that probably wouldn't make sense unless you were a seasoned polar bear hunter. But Deb knew the bear would stay where it was if we went in the other direction.

And sure enough, about an hour later, after we'd found Phillip and gassed up and followed our tracks back, there she was, in exactly the same spot.

She was young, a sparkling white beauty of a creature. While not huge by polar bear standards, she was still over six feet long and at least 500 pounds.

To say Debbie is fearless around polar bears is like saying the Arctic is cold—it's an understatement the size of which only becomes clear once you've experienced it.

At one point during the chase, the bear hid in a cluster of jagged ice chunks too rough for a snowmobile. Debbie promptly got off her machine and walked into the rough ice to scare the bear into motion. And she left her rifle behind.

With that ordeal survived, and with the bear once again on the run in the wide open ice, Deb decided it was time to take her shot.

Her snowmobile coasted to a stop.

Debbie reached for her rifle.

Part Two: Guardians of the North



The patrol stops to get its bearings. Photo: Adam Day

The polar bear has been running across the ice for more than an hour and she is tired; dead tired, it's impossible to resist saying.

Ranger Debbie Iqaluk's snowmobile coasts to a stop as the bear saunters kind of amiably, about 50 metres away. Deb shoulders her government-issue rifle and fires one shot.

The bear leaps, her head swivelling to see what hurt her; she sprints a bit, slows, and then flops to the ground like a housecat on a sunny carpet—shot through the heart.

Deb and her hunting partner Phillip approach cautiously. I move up beside Deb. For a while no one says anything. We just watch the bear laying there motionless, steaming.

Deb, still staring at the bear, says: "So."

It takes me a second to realize she's asking me a question.

"Very, very sad," I say.

She punches me hard in the chest.

"Hey," she blurts. "This is not sad. This is how we live."

Debbie's looking at me; I'm looking at the bear.

What she says next has to be understood in the context of where we were and what was happening in order for it not to sound like the trite fulfilment of an Inuit stereotype.

We'd been chasing this bear for many hours, way out in the middle of Wellington Strait off of northern Devon Island—an area so remote and hostile that it was literally one of the last places in the world to be fully explored and mapped.

It's something like -40° Celsius. Deb has spent much of her life living out on the land, hunting as a way of life. She stands at the long end of many, many centuries of Inuit tradition. She is perhaps one of the last of her kind in Canada, or anywhere. And in this way, she is even more endangered than the bear she just shot.

"I love this bear," she says. "The bear has given me its spirit."



Debbie and the bear. Photo: Adam Day

Defending a Difficult Claim

Operation Nunavut 12, this now-annual expedition to the Far North, is just one way Canada—and the Canadian Forces—are trying to show the world that the great mass of Arctic islands up there are genuinely Canadian territory.

Debbie and Phillip and the rest of the Canadian Rangers—dubbed the CF’s ‘eyes and ears’ in the North—are in some ways the focus of the operation. They are the ones who live here and learning to partner with them, to understand how to work with them, is ultimately more vital to sovereignty than planting flags in the snow.

That said, proving a strong command of the territory is also a priority. And even the quickest overview of the past seven years of Nunavut operations shows there is a pattern to the effort—each Nunavut covers a new patch of territory in what appears to be a deliberate attempt to cover as much ground as possible.

Past Nunavut operations have ranged from the northernmost point in Canada—right up around Canadian Forces Station Alert on Ellesmere Island—to the far western Arctic to this year’s operation, which is centred on two 12-man snowmobile-mounted patrols leaving Resolute to conduct a fairly complex search and rescue operation on northern Devon Island.

As to whether there’s a pattern to the locations of the Nunavut operations, Lieutenant-Colonel Glen MacNeil, deputy chief of staff at Joint Task Force North and the commander of Nunavut 12, is in full agreement. “We are [trying to cover the whole territory], we should be, and quite frankly we’ve proved that we can. It is a sovereignty operation.”

How much of this sovereignty is real or symbolic can be understood by the following: in the 1980s Brian Mulroney considered it a key policy victory that he convinced the Americans to always ask for permission to transit the Canadian Arctic, on the somewhat gutless condition that we would always grant permission. Despite our hard bargain, there is much evidence that the Americans don’t always abide by the deal and sometimes transit the Northwest Passage without asking.

And most of the time, in most practical ways, there’s not much we can do about it. The reason for this is that our military capability in the North lags behind that of most other Arctic nations—the Russians, in particular, but also the Danish, the aforementioned Americans and, to be honest, many others. “I don’t think there’s any great defence threat [in the Arctic],” says MacNeil. “But in order for us to be able to respond to those things, we need to prove that our people and equipment can operate in these conditions. So unless we go up and practice it, we don’t know that we can do it.”

MacNeil traces the military's involvement in the North back to 1898 and notes that it continued in many forms throughout the 20th century, whether it was mapping operations or Cold War activities such as the DEW (Distant Early Warning) Line. "With climate change there are more countries interested in the North. China's interested. India's building icebreakers. There are vast natural resources," says MacNeil.

"[A few years ago] we were experts at survival in very harsh conditions and we thought nothing of it," adds MacNeil. "But the Army was almost consumed by [Afghanistan]. What that meant was that we weren't paying as much attention to the skills needed for winter warfare, particularly in the Arctic. But as we wind down there, we're trying to regain our expertise here."



Master Corporal Billy Cornish and Debbie plot a route. Photo: Adam Day

Into the Empty Frontier

There are many reasons why it took so long for explorers to make it this far north. To get a sense of some of them, here is a brief toll of our patrol's calamities: dozens of crashes, multiple injuries, one qamutiq destroyed and many broken, two snowmobiles destroyed, one stove burned up, got lost an uncountable number of times despite GPS

systems, a few low-level supply issues and more than a couple of encounters with deadly wildlife.

But none of the bare incidents really capture the numbing difficulty of travelling overland in the Arctic in winter. And I'm not talking about the physical hardships—of which there are no end—but instead how crushingly unsympathetic the place feels, and how this hostility makes every decision something to consider deeply, and how the stress of all of this undermines your ability to consider things with any sophistication. In short then, the land itself seems to inspire human failure.

This is just the experience. It's what makes travel so tough. At the same time, the visuals of the place are beautifully bewildering—thousand-foot rock faces, vistas so big they reach out dozens of kilometres or more through translucent air, the impossible animals that find a way to survive in a place where it seems like nothing could be alive, the sheer variety of ice and snow.

“The North is a powerful place,” says MacNeil. “You look at the vastness of it. It's stunning. It really is. When you sit there and the silence is real silence, and you're looking out at the snow, it's an amazing place, it's spiritual almost. Sometimes I just stand outside and look around. You don't want anyone to talk to you, you just want to stand and take it in.”

Camping Among the Bears

The Arctic, you may be surprised to learn, originally got its name from the Greek word ‘arktos,’ which means: bear. Now, there's some debate about whether this refers to the actual polar bears or some night-sky constellation, but that really doesn't matter, because for the length of our patrol to northern Devon Island, it's the polar bears that are on everyone's mind.

In the fine tradition of military rumour-mongering, during a stop on the first day's ride, our patrol's extremely competent search and rescue technician, Sergeant George Olynyk, tells a fantastical story of polar bears crossing the Strait of Belle Isle to Newfoundland. While I immediately dismissed the story, it, like most of the scariest rumours, turns out to be true.

As the days passed and the bear sightings mounted, it seemed that the soldiers became kind of reconciled to their existence. And while the

CF may be used to dealing with dangerous animals, I'd decided early on I'd rather have a wrestling match with a Taliban than a polar bear any day. The Rangers, meanwhile, seemed to consider the bears as little more dangerous than stray dogs.

Over the very long days and nights of patrolling, time blurred into one long frozen sunny day, for there was no night. After more than a week of this it became, as the patrol's medic Corporal Doug McCallum noted, an odd kind of purgatory. There was nothing to do but survive which, in day-to-day life, meant piloting your snowmobile as perfectly as possible, often at very high speeds for up to 12 hours a day and then building your tent and falling asleep as fast as you could manage.

In the last phase of the operation, more than a week after both patrols had left Resolute, the two columns of snowmobiles spent a couple of days circling northernmost Devon Island, searching, somewhat symbolically, for the group of hunters last heard from in these parts and now presumed lost.

While the scenario was notional, there was an actual group of role-players pretending to be the lost hunters—and they'd snowmobiled all the way from the distant community of Grise Fiord to take part. That there were actual people hiding in the vast expanse of ice and snow and rock did somewhat animate everyone involved, but even then, by this point the Arctic's virulent form of entropy had set to work and our particular patrol, cut in half by equipment malfunctions and running



extremely low on supplies, was in no position to rescue anybody, even notionally.

Even when the operation's commanders tipped us off to the exact location of the lost patrol, they were still some distance out of reach. "We have a maximum range of 200 kilometres, probably less," patrol leader Sergeant Billy Cornish informed his commander over the satellite phone.

He listened for a second and then ended the call.

"They're pushing the lost patrol toward us," he told the assembled group.

"I thought we were rescuing them?" asked patrol's second-in-command, Cpl. Sean Thompson.

"We don't have enough gas to rescue them," replied Cornish.

In true military fashion, this unfortunate turn of events led to many hours of dark jokes and general humour, everyone envisioning the scenario in which our patrol would rescue the lost hunters and thereafter requisition their supplies.

"Hello, we're here to rescue you," we imagined our leader saying. "Now, we're going to need all your gas, your food and your oil. Also, what have you got to drink?"

A New Kind of Cold War

How many Canadians are aware that the Arctic islands comprise just under half of our land mass and way more than half our coastline? Or that Canada shares a hugely long border with the European Union, Denmark to be specific? Or that there is a great and fascinating game now afoot to see which countries can manage to stake the most valuable claim over the landless area near the North Pole?

There is a struggle going on in the North and while there have not been any shots fired—nor, in all likelihood, will there be—it is still a high-stakes struggle between competing nations over land and the division of resources. It is, to be sure, a new kind of cold war.

Political interest in the Arctic is high. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has made the Arctic the centrepiece of his defence policy since 2006, at least.

Much talk, much evidence points to a big thaw, but still, as of now, the Northwest Passage is only really open to shipping one month of the

year and even then, the icebergs and bad-weather hazards are pretty extreme.

The Arctic’s potential—both as a conflict zone and as a resource goldmine—thus remain somewhat hypothetical, dependent on climate change and discoveries of genuine value.



The patrol on north Devon Island. Photo: Adam Day

For those tasked with defending our northern claims, however, the debate is not hypothetical at all. “People talk about sovereignty in the North as if it’s a debate, but to me there’s no question, this is Canada,” says MacNeil. “We are here all the time. In terms of sovereignty, we live it.”

Nunalivut 12 was a big operation—far larger and more complex than this article can show—and it was done for equally large and weighty reasons—quite literally to defend Canada against those who would seek to diminish it. As for MacNeil, his conclusion is simple: “We proved our capabilities.”

And while in the end, the notional lost patrol was never “rescued” by either of the two ground patrols, it definitely didn’t diminish the sense of accomplishment felt by all the patrol members when they finally snowmobiled back into Resolute, having gone so far out into the empty frontier.

For Debbie and many of the other Rangers—especially those from Resolute and Grise Fiord—the sovereignty operation may have ended but they are still on patrol, fulfilling their role as guardians of the North. Right now, Debbie is likely out on the land hunting, wearing her Ranger uniform, struggling across the Arctic, never giving up—a Canadian emissary in a very distant place.



Debbie Iqaluk, Resolute Bay patrol, on Op NUNALIVUT 19

53. Rangers roll out in Watson Lake

Roxanne Stasyszyn

Yukon News, 5 October 2012

On the eve of its 65th anniversary, the First Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, which began in Dawson City in 1947, is expanding its forces with a detachment in Watson Lake.

The chief of the Liard First Nation can now add Ranger Sergeant to his list of credentials.

On the eve of its 65th anniversary, the First Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, which began in Dawson City in 1947, is expanding its forces with a detachment in Watson Lake.

In September, Sgt. and Chief Liard McMillan, along with Liard First Nation Councillor and now Master Cpl. Jim Wolftail, went for training in Fort Simpson, N.W.T. to become the first rangers ready for service for the new detachment.

“It was excellent, a really rewarding experience,” said McMillan about the training. “There were a lot of nice people that have a lot of knowledge and skill for surviving out in the woods and I really enjoyed the opportunity to get some formal, military training and learn some new skills that I think will be useful to our community.”

The rangers, easily recognized by their iconic red hoodies, are local residents in remote communities that report to the Canadian military. They have long been coined the “eyes and ears” of the Canadian Forces, especially in the Far North.

Marksmanship, firearm techniques and search and rescue skills are matched by discipline and leadership skills in the rangers’ training, said McMillan.

The plan is to have the new detachment set up in the south-Yukon town by the end of the year. Early next month, recruitment and land-based training will take place in and around Watson Lake, said McMillan.

Meetings in the community in August showed that interest in the organization is high, he added.



About 40 people have already signed up, said Maj. Jeff Allen, commanding officer for the First Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, which stretches across the three territories and northern B.C.

The Watson Lake detachment will bring the group up to 60 patrols and nearly 2,000 rangers. Each patrol usually consists of about 30 rangers and there are already 11 patrols in Yukon, said Allen.

The idea behind the rangers really started during the Second World War, said Whitney [Lackenbauer], a professor at the University of Waterloo and author of *The Canadian Rangers: A Living History*, which is expected out in 2013.

There were growing concerns that the Pacific Coast may need to be protected, so the solution was to turn to locals, who hadn't gone overseas, to defend their homes, said [Lackenbauer].

As the war continued on, the movement carried up the coast and a group of Pacific Coast Militia Rangers ended up in the Yukon, he said.

At the end of the war, these groups closed down, but in about two years, with the looming threat of the Soviets attacking from the North, the Yukon rangers re-established themselves in an efforts to defend Canada's North.

"The Yukon has been, for much of the rangers' history, front and centre," said [Lackenbauer]. "And this is an incredible, national organization that really is unique in the entire world in allowing

residents of remote areas a chance to serve their country and serve their community simultaneously.”

After the first patrol group in Dawson got started in September 1947, the organization blossomed to more than 2,000 rangers across Canada, said [Lackenbauer]. But by the 1970s, with the military’s focus on nuclear warfare, the rangers’ forces depleted exponentially.

Slowly, in the ‘80s and ‘90s, the focus on sovereignty returned, especially in the North, and the rangers boomed to the numbers they are today: 4,200 rangers in 169 patrols across Canada.

Watson Lake will make 170.

McMillan has high hopes for the new detachment.

“I feel that the positives that will come out of this, for the community, will be to boost the overall spirit and morale,” he said. “A lot of people, especially young people, would really enjoy and appreciate the opportunity to get out on the land and learn some different and unique skills, and I think it will create a better sense of teamwork and family amongst the participants. It provides good role models and an extra level of service for the community.”

For example, local rangers would have been a huge help during this summer’s flood that destroyed homes and left people stranded in the Watson Lake area.

Elsewhere in the territory, rangers have broken trail for the Yukon Quest and helped with search and rescue work.

“It’s a terrific responsibility and, normally, what we find is a lot of the rangers themselves are the leaders in the community, said Allen. “Whether or not it’s assisting with search and rescue, whether or not they’re volunteers at the fire department, typically they are those members that are extremely active in the community already.”

In the North, the rangers are predominantly aboriginal. This is not because the organization is exclusive but rather representative of the communities it serves.

The rangers are “deliberately involved in defending their homes,” said [Lackenbauer]. “This is one of the rare organizations in the Yukon that everyone in the territory agrees is a positive thing, a common ground for the people of First Nations and Metis and those of white descent to work together. It’s everyone sharing a common love for the land. The rangers all share this common passion for the land.”



This also means that the rangers, with six decades of experience, ancestral roots in the land and traditional knowledge of the area, act as a bridge between their communities and the military so the North can be protected seamlessly, [Lackenbauer]added.

“Without them, southerners coming up will be helplessly lost,” he said. “Northerners, very patriotic Canadians, recognize how important they are to serving. (They also) make sure the military’s footprint doesn’t crush communities. This is not tokenism, this is not symbolism, there’s real important substance to what they’re doing.”

After establishing its patrol, the Watson Lake detachment will decide what area it will be responsible for. Their reach could stretch as far as 300 kilometres from the community, said Allen, adding that he leaves that decision up to the patrol because they are the ones who know what trails and equipment they have to work with.

All recruits who pass the training will become official rangers and will be issued their red hoodie, rifle and pants. Rangers receive \$110 each day they are on patrol and are compensated for use of equipment like ATVs, snowmobiles and boats.

54. Canadian Ranger dies during Arctic military exercise

Canadian Press

19 February 2013

GJOA HAVEN, Nunavut - A member of Canada's Arctic reserve force has died on a military exercise intended to monitor snow and ice conditions in the Northwest Passage.

Donald Anguyoak – a hockey coach, hunter and father – died Sunday in a snowmobile accident in Nunavut.

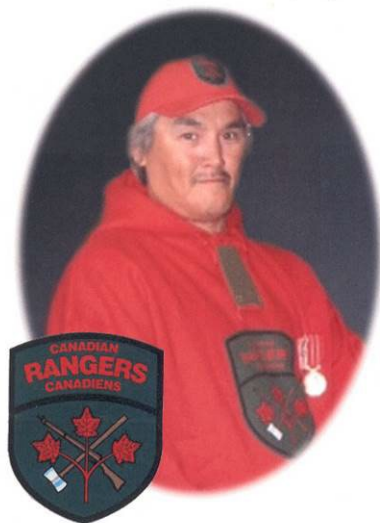
“It's hard to believe he's gone,” said Lydia Anguyoak, who was married to Donald for 20 years.

Anguyoak, 46, was a member of the Canadian Rangers, the largely aboriginal reserve force that works jointly with regular forces in the Arctic. He was taking part in Exercise Polar Passage, which began Feb. 9 and runs to March 3.

He was on duty, acting as head scout for other members of his patrol, when he died. He became the first Ranger to be killed on duty since 2005.

Polar Passage, now in its third year, brings Rangers from Gjoa Haven, Kugluktuk, Cambridge Bay and Taloyoak together with federal scientists to gather information on a long stretch of the Northwest Passage. The Rangers are trained to use sampling kits and to

In Loving Memory of



Corporal Donald Anguyoak

January 6, 1967 - February 17, 2013

measure snow and ice thickness, water temperature, salinity and plankton abundance.

There was no word on what led to the accident.

“There is no criminal investigation,” RCMP Cpl. Yvonne Niego said Tuesday. “The coroner’s office has taken over.”

The Army said in a statement that no other details would be released. A board of inquiry will be convened and is expected to report in a matter of weeks.

“A thorough investigation will be conducted to determine the cause and any factors that contributed to this accident,” said the military release.

Anguyoak was a father of four with a 19-month-old grandchild, said his widow.

“He was so proud of his granddaughter and his kids. He talked about them all the time and he loved us dearly.”

He worked as a caretaker at the local health centre, but his wife said his great love was being around children. He was an instructor in the Junior Canadian Rangers, a youth wing of the Rangers praised in the North for bringing a positive activity to young people and for providing a way to teach traditional land skills.

“He worked a lot with the kids,” she said. “He was really good with kids and he loved kids.”

Anguyoak was also a hockey coach for both children and women.

“He loved hockey. He was playing hockey since he was growing up.”

And when he wasn’t doing any of that, Anguyoak was on the land, hunting.

“He was a regular hunter. He loved to hunt for anything and loved it outdoors.”

Anguyoak also served a four-year term on Gjoa Haven’s hamlet council.

Lt.-Gen. Peter Devlin, commander of the Army, said Anguyoak will be missed.

“We remember Donald for his passion about passing his knowledge and skills to the youth of Gjoa Haven through the Junior Canadian Ranger program,” Devlin said.

Members of the Gjoa Haven Rangers conduct sovereignty patrols and monitor the North Warning System, a joint U.S.-Canadian radar system for North American air defence.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper said in a statement that the death is a reminder that the Rangers and other members of the Canadian Forces face real dangers as they safeguard Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic.

“On behalf of all Canadians, Lauren and I offer our sincere condolences to the family and friends of Cpl. Donald Anguyoak,” Harper said.

Gov. Gen. David Johnston and Liberal Leader Bob Rae also extended their condolences.

Gjoa Haven, a community of about 1,000 people, is on the south end of King William Island, which is just north of Canada’s Arctic mainland, west of Hudson Bay.

There are about 4,700 Canadian Rangers in 173 patrols in Canada. About 1,600 of them are located in 58 hamlets in the three northern territories.



55. Blazing a trail: Hay River Rangers spend three full days cutting and clearing trail to Buffalo Lake

Myles Dolphin

Northern News Services

26 February 2013

HAY RIVER – A caravan of snowmobiles and racing dogs made its way back to Hay River on Feb. 20, after a five-day training exercise that involved clearing more than 50 kilometres of dense trail.

The 12-member team, members of the 58th patrol in the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (CRPG) from Hay River, used a variety of tools such as axes, chainsaws and machetes to clear the way to Buffalo Lake.

The training exercise was a Type 1 patrol, an annual event in which the Rangers practise their survival techniques, navigation skills and communication procedures.

“We do it every year so that our skills don’t fade,” said ranger Jim Constable. “As rangers, we’re the Canadian Forces presence in remote regions, and everyone has to be proficient in using radio, GPS, compasses, etc.”

The team left Hay River on Saturday, Feb. 16 with 12 racing dogs – the first time in more than 30 years that dogs had been used in a CRPG training exercise – and travelled 35 kilometres the first day. When the trail became too dense for the dogs, they set up base camp. Every day a team would head out and clear more of the trail leading up to Buffalo Lake.

They got to within sight of the lake, but because of the overflow – when water comes on top of ice – they were not able to go any further.

“We didn’t get to our destination: we wanted to get there and say we completed the trail,” said Sgt. Anthony Beck. “We spent three full days cutting the trail with a lot of hard work, but we ran out of time. On our last day we would have made it to the lake if not for the overflow.”

Beck said there are two trails to Buffalo Lake, and that the Rangers were trying to open up the most commonly-used one. It was their



Major Jeff Allen and Sergeant Warren Gibb at the standup of the Hay River patrol, 2011

second attempt at doing so: earlier in the year, another group had gone out and done a day and a half of clearing.

Heavy snowfall in November and December caused thousands of branches to bend over from the weight, making the trail completely unusable. As a result the Rangers were tasked with not only cutting the branches down but also clearing them to make the trail usable once again.

“The trail wasn’t even a trail anymore, it’s almost like they had to cut a new trail,” said Const.

The team ran into other minor obstacles along the way such as toboggans becoming unhinged from snowmobiles, but Sgt. Beck was impressed with the way his dog performed.

“These are racing dogs, which aren’t really in tune for travelling on the land,” he said. “Their pedigree leads back to trap line dogs and it was neat seeing them adjust and go back to their roots. They had to learn how to trot because normally, all they know is going full-speed.”

A few local rangers might be attending a Type 3 patrol in Saskatchewan in early March, with members of 4 CRPG. According to the Canadian Forces website, there are over 1,500 Rangers in 58 patrols North of 60.

56. Learning to command: Leadership skills focus of Canadian Rangers training

Darrell Greer

Northern News Services

27 February 2013

KIVALLIQ/CAMBRIDGE BAY – Sgt. Barney Aggark of Chesterfield Inlet and Master Cpl. Gerard Maktar of Whale Cove were among Canadian Rangers from all three territories who attended Ranger Development Phase 2 training about 35 km southwest of Cambridge Bay earlier this month.

The training marked the first time Cambridge hosted the commissioners of three territories, accompanied by Joint Task Force North Cmdr. Brig.-Gen. Guy Hamel.

The program was further highlighted by a special ceremony during which Aggark was awarded a Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal for his significant contributions and achievements within Canada and his community.

Warrant Officer Craig Roury said the majority of Rangers who attended the training session were from Nunavut.

He said the aim of the mission was to teach the Rangers the skills required by Ranger leaders and to have them practise those skills.

“All of these guys are very good Rangers, but it takes a special kind of training and a special kind of thinking to be an effective Ranger leader,” said Roury.



MCpl Gerard Maktar

“You have to learn to think beyond yourself as a leader, and that’s the aspect we were trying to get out of the Rangers we brought in for the training.

“Most of the training is very practical, so we give them a task, or job, to do, and then we sit down and show them how to break down a problem into its various parts.”

“We show them how to solve the parts, delegate some of the work to other people, how to supervise and pull it all together to have everyone meet the same objective.”

Routery said the program is the beginning of a little bit of theory and a lot of hands-on training.

He said the Rangers spent six of the seven days they were gathered together out on the land practising running camps, setting up runways, doing search and rescue, setting up and running weapons ranges, and all the other jobs they need to know as leaders.

The course actually ran from the fourth of February until the tenth.

“We had planned to start a little bit earlier, but, unfortunately, weather didn’t allow us to get some of our people in from the Eastern Arctic, so we lost a day there.”

“That’s just the way things go sometimes, when conducting operations in the North, which anyone with any experience in the Arctic realizes.”

Routery said, overall, the Rangers did an excellent job during the program.

He said the diversity of the group presented the Rangers with an additional challenge.

“Since we had Rangers together from all over, there were language and cultural issues.”

“As well, because of the wide variety of locations involved, the different patrols across the three territories work in different ways.”

“The guys and girl from the Yukon, for example, do things differently than someone from Chesterfield Inlet would because of the land, type of training and the environment. “

“So, having these people, sort of, set aside ideas they came with, understand how other people have to work doing the same job, but in a different environment, was an excellent component of the training.”

Routery said when the training was completed, the Rangers were a really cohesive group.

He said everyone was on a first-name basis and they all understood each other.

“It was really a nice thing to see, having the 20 individuals who came here leave as such a cohesive and tight group.”

“Not only was the mission a success, but it was the first time we’d ever tried it this way because we got the participants out of the classrooms, away from the PowerPoint and out into the environment for most of the course.”

“We did the stuff required, rather than just sitting in a classroom and listening to how it should be done.”

“They picked it up really well, doing an excellent job of grabbing the training and running with it, so we’re really happy with the way the whole thing turned out.”

Routery said it was a nice touch having the two Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medals presented during the training.

He said the group was very fortunate to have the commissioners from each territory, along with Brig.-Gen. Hamel, on the ground to present the prestigious medals.

“It was very special to have these kinds of people there with us as we were handing the decorations out.”

“It’s something these guys will never forget.”



57. Harper goes target shooting with Canadian Rangers in Arctic

PM tries out vintage rifles used by Northern reservists

Canadian Press

21 August 2013

Stephen Harper took up arms — albeit antique ones — for some target practice on the Arctic tundra and plied the frigid waters of the Northwest Passage in a sovereignty patrol meant to show solidarity with Canadian Rangers.

Both the prime minister and newly appointed Defence Minister Rob Nicholson tried their hand at firing the 1950s-era Lee Enfield rifles that are standard-issue weapons for the aboriginal reservists who comprise the Rangers.

“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,” the prime minister said in a statement.

Harper clearly relished the bonding exercise and during target practice he fired from several different positions, including prone on the ground, sniper-style.

Shots from the rifle demonstration reverberated for kilometres over the empty limestone and sand landscape.

But it was as much a political statement as a chance to share the rigours of Northern life for a prime minister whose mantra has been to assert and defend Canada’s claim to the Arctic.

“Canada has a choice when it comes to defending our sovereignty over the Arctic. We either use it or lose it,” Harper said in a July 2007 speech





that helped lay the foundation for the Conservative government's northern strategy.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper wears the Canadian Ranger sweater after he was bestowed honorary Canadian Ranger status in Gjoa Haven, Nunavut on Wednesday. (Sean Kilpatrick/Canadian Press)

The tough rhetoric and thundering military photo-ops, however, have gradually faded with each successive summer tour of the Arctic, which Harper has undertaken religiously since becoming prime minister.

Harper's camp with entourage

His latest trip has led him to this wide-open, chilly nook of Nunavut's King William Island, infamous as the potential resting place of the lost Franklin Expedition of the 1800s.

With four cabinet members in tow, Harper and his outdoors-loving wife set up camp on a remote stretch of beach about 20 kilometres from Gjoa Haven, birthplace of Environment Minister Leona Aglukkaq.

On Wednesday, Harper attended an event at the local community centre before heading out to visit the Canadian Coast Guard vessel Sir Wilfrid Laurier for an update on the efforts to locate Franklin Expedition evidence.

It was a far cry from the previous day's events, when a group of enthusiastic Rangers helped him build an inukshuk, the stone landmark

synonymous with the Inuit. They also showed him how to erect a traditional tundra shelter made of animal hide.

As the sun set close to midnight, Harper inspected drying Arctic char hung on string between wooden posts, and watched a demonstration of the lighting of qulliq, an Inuit oil lamp that is set ablaze using the spark of two flint rocks.

National Defence spends \$38 million annually on the Ranger program, which on Wednesday marked the induction of its 5,000th member.

A recently released defence science report on the Arctic noted the reserve force does not have training in air-mobile and water-borne operations.

Maj. Andre Salloum said future specialized training is being considered, but it “is in the planning stages.”



58. Border-to-border patrol arrived in Dawson right on time

Dan Davidson

Whitehorse Star, 9 October 2013



DAWSON CITY – Dawson’s Ranger Patrol pulled up to the banks of the Yukon River just over the dike from the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Admin.

Building close to their expected arrival time of 3:30 p.m. Sept. 30.

They were greeted by Ranger Sgt. John Mitchell and a handful of locals.

The Dawson patrol had picked up Warrant Officer Mark St. Pierre from the Pelly Crossing Patrol at Coffee Creek/Kirkman Creek the day before, after which the Pelly group had headed home.

The stated purpose of the Yukon Border to Border Exercise, as devised by Mitchell, is to “to determine the feasibility of (having the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group) respond to an incident in the Yukon River drainage system by boat along its entire Canadian waterway.”

Several patrols were responsible for various legs of the journey, each handing St. Pierre off to the next group and returning to its home base when its part was done.

The Atlin Patrol began the exercise, travelling by boat to the Alaska border near Atlin on Sept. 25 and continuing on to link up with the Carcross Patrol on Tagish Lake.

The Carcross Patrol travelled the next day by boat through Tagish Lake and Marsh Lake to Schwatka Lake, and linked up with the Whitehorse Patrol in Whitehorse.

On Sept. 27, the Whitehorse Patrol travelled by boat down the Yukon River to link up with the Carmacks Patrol at Big Salmon/Eagle Rock.

On Sept. 28, the Carmacks Patrol travelled by boat down Yukon River to link up with the Pelly Crossing Patrol at Minto Landing.

On Sept. 29, the Pelly Crossing Patrol travelled by boat down the Yukon River to link up with the Dawson Patrol at Coffee Creek/Kirkman Creek, where they spent the night.

The Dawson Patrol completed the exercise Oct. 1-2, travelling by boat to the Alaska border, then returning to Dawson.

In all, 24 Canadian Rangers from Atlin, Carcross, Whitehorse, Carmacks, Pelly Crossing and Dawson City Ranger Patrols participated in the exercise.



Dawson Patrol, 2015

59. Frostbite-resistant Canadian Rangers teach troops about survival

Brent Wittmeier

Edmonton Journal, 21 February 2014

KUGAARUK, NUNAVUT — When John Qagutaq is asked what holds his igloo together, the Canadian Ranger doesn't hesitate.

“Super Glue,” he says jokingly, cutting 10-kilogram rectangular slabs of Arctic snow with a hand saw.

In a sea of Arctic newbies wearing camouflage green, it's not just the snow shelters, snowmobiles and signature red hoodies that set the members of the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group apart. They're the ones braving wind chills into the -50s with bare hands when dexterity is required.

Decked out in grizzly bear gloves and caribou pants, the 25 men and five women who make up Kugaaruk's Canadian Ranger group are the glue of Arctic Ram. Over the two-week military exercise, Rangers provide a vital community link and support for the 500 or so soldiers more than 2,000 kilometres outside their comfort zone.

The frostbite-resistant Rangers are here for protection, navigation and transportation. Nobody goes out of town without an escort for safety. They're the first to be told about wildlife spotted during nightly patrols. Polar bears are likely far to the north, hunting seals on the ice, but the Inuit hunters are the only ones with guns and the right to kill the Arctic predators.

Later in the exercises, Rangers will teach Edmonton-based soldiers how to ice fish and build igloos, an essential skill when dozens of kilometres from the nearest settlement. After one night on the tundra, soldiers began erecting blocks of snow around their tent to cut down on the wind.

“A tent is really heavy, so us hunters, we've got to learn how to make igloos,” said Qagutaq, a bylaw officer in Kugaaruk.

The Canadian government created the Rangers in 1947, modelled on successful coastal watch programs during the Second World War. As part-time members of the Canadian Forces Reserve, they're often the



Kugaaruk, February 2014

sole military link to the isolated reaches of the North. In addition to monthly meetings and annual patrols, the rangers check in on former Distant Early Warning line stations now monitored by computers.

They're unique to the Canadian military in many ways. The community must vouch for its recruits, who receive 10 days of basic training, a trademark red sweatshirt and a .303 Lee Enfield rifle bought by the government in the 1950s. Rangers in each community vote for their own sergeants, corporals and master corporals. There is no retirement age.

In recent years, police checks have been added, as have Coleman stoves and new coats. During his annual Arctic forays, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has repeatedly mused about replacing the Second World War-era rifles with more modern weapons, a project reportedly shelved until sometime between 2017 and 2021.

Government attention comes and goes, but in Kugaaruk, being a Ranger is a point of pride. For Qagutaq, the draw is the adventure, simply getting out on the land over 100 kilometres from home on the annual four-day patrols.

In the 1990s, a Junior Ranger program was added for students between 12 and 18. In a rapidly changing North, it's a way of transmitting community-specific survival skills that might otherwise

atrophy. Younger Junior Rangers get a chance to train in Yellowknife. Earlier this week, a trio of 16 and 17-year-olds accompany ranger Judas Karoo to Calgary an advanced training session in Kananaskis.

It's opportunities like that that inspire Dan Ring, a Canadian Forces warrant officer and Ranger instructor. Up in Kugaaruk to help out with logistics during Arctic Ram, Ring has spent a decade jumping from community to community.

Ring visits outposts like Kugaaruk three times a year, holding 10-day refresher courses which cover First Aid, navigation and marksmanship, as well as training sessions for Junior Rangers.

“Every time I go out, I learn something new,” Ring said. “With different skills, I’m always learning. And some of the skills that I acquire off the patrols, I show them.”



Warrant Officer Danny Ring

60. The eyes of the Arctic

Laura Busch

Nunavut News/North, 24 February 2014

Taloyoak man passes on traditional knowledge and survival skills through 30 years as a Canadian Ranger

TALOYOAK/SPENCE BAY – Abel Aqqaq has spent roughly half his life on the land.

Now, at 53 years old, the born and raised Taloyoak resident spends much of his time passing on Arctic survival skills through his work with the Canadian Rangers.

Aqqaq first joined the Rangers when the Taloyoak patrol was formed in 1984.

“They hired 12 people from the community and I was the 12th,” he said.

“When I first started, they swore me in to be a Ranger and they gave me an armband, a sweater, a cap. That’s what I got.”

Since then, Aqqaq has risen to the Ranger rank of sergeant and leads the largest patrol in the North with 58 members.

“There’s only four of us left that started in ‘84 that are still active and going out on the land,” he said.

The Taloyoak patrol is part of the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, which has the monumental task of maintaining Canada’s sovereignty throughout Nunavut, the Yukon, the NWT and northern B.C.

During his initial 10-day introductory course 30 years ago, Aqqaq said he was unsure exactly what the purpose of it all was, but over time has come to understand the importance of having locals on the ground ready to provide support to the Armed Forces when necessary.

The bulk of his work as a Ranger has involved assisting military personnel who travel North to train in the cold Arctic climate, primarily through guiding and teaching survival and safety skills, such as how to build an iglu for shelter.

“We try to teach them as much as possible in class what to expect, but it’s always different when we get them out there on the land when

it's really cold out," he said, adding that he can normally tell within the first day if a soldier is going to cut it or not out in the cold.

It takes the average person two to three days to acclimatize to the Arctic environment, he said.

"We just tell them, 'If you don't move around, it's going to get worse.'"

He has also passed on his traditional skills to members of the Junior Canadian Rangers and said he gets a lot of pride from watching young people come up through that program to eventually join the senior patrol group.

"That makes me really happy," he said.

"I like the younger guys to get as much training as they can."

The Rangers are also actively involved in search and rescue operations.

As the eyes and ears of the Canadian military, Rangers keep a look out for unusual activities, like unexpected ships and unusual airplanes in the area.

While they are not authorized to take a combat role, they are equipped with trusty .303 rifles - weapons Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced last year he aims to replace with more modern equipment.

"You can't beat the .303s up here," said Aqqaq. "They're old weapons, but they're the best weapons we ever had up here in the North. I don't know about the new ones that are coming out, if they're going to be as strong."



Canadian Ranger Sgt. Abel Aqqaq started with the Taloyoak Patrol when it was founded in 1984. He is now in charge of the patrol, which has become the largest in Canada's North. Photo by Lt. Paul Pendergast

When he's not leading patrols, Aqqaq is a hunter and trapper by trade and still spends roughly half of the year out on the land.

However, price increases for fuel and supplies have been making it harder and harder to get out in the winter when the animals are farther away, he said.

"Everything is too expensive to go out all the time," he said. "But I still go out in the winter every chance I get."

His years of experience have made Aqqaq invaluable to the Ranger program in the High Arctic, said Capt. Steve Watton with Joint Task Force North.

"Abel's a very knowledgeable sergeant who has been with the Canadian Ranger program for many years," Watton said. "His knowledge of the land and his ability to work with such a large group of Rangers has been a huge benefit to the Canadian Forces."

While he has lost count of the number of military exercises he has been a part of, Aqqaq has no plans of slowing down any time soon.

He is currently instructing an Arctic Operators Advisers course in Yellowknife and will lead the group in winter indoctrination training before taking them back to Taloyoak to see how they do during a week on the land later in the month.

As far as what the future holds for the Canadian Arctic, Aqqaq had this to say: "I'm not too sure but I think there will still be Canadian Rangers a long time from now."



Taloyoak patrol, July 2014

61. Rangers take on scientific monitoring role in Arctic

Meagan Wohlberg

Northern Journal, 10 March 2014

Scientist Mike Dempsey, centre, provides confirmation on the use of ice training equipment to Canadian Rangers Sheldon Klergenberg, John Lucas, Emmanuel Adams and Julia Ekpakohak on Feb. 12 near Inuvik.

Canadian Rangers are known for being the watchers of the North in terms of sovereignty operations, but patrols across the territory are also expanding their roles by taking on some new environmental monitoring efforts.

Ranger leaders from across the Western Arctic got some additional training last month in Inuvik to use on their annual Polar Passage trip, which sends patrols out on sovereignty missions across the Northwest Passage during late February and early March.

Teams were instructed on the use of equipment supplied by the federal department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to be able to take samples and do readings of ocean water while out on the land.

According to Capt. Rich Layden, the operations officer for Polar Passage, the project is mutually beneficial to both the Rangers and scientists.

“It gives good interoperability with other government departments,” Layden said. “With today’s constraints, sometimes they’re not able to send scientists, and sometimes scientists aren’t the best for doing that kind of traveling and work, whereas the Rangers are ideally suited for it; they just need the baseline training on the equipment. In



Photo by Capt. Rich Layden, Ops Officer, 1CRPG

regards to patrolling 300-400 km away from their community and back safely, that's their bread and butter.”

While demonstrating sovereignty remains the Rangers' number one task, Layden said the patrols are now also trained in the use of several pieces of equipment monitoring changes in sea ice and water related to climate change, which he said is now “of grave concern” in the Arctic.

One type of equipment tests ice and is dragged behind the Rangers' komatiks when traveling out on the land. The other is a sensor dropped through a hole in the ice to the bottom of the ocean floor that collects a wide range of data for DFO.

“During that process, the sensor...does salinity, temperature – all those fundamental base readings that DFO scientists require. That's something they've trained our patrols in doing,” Layden said.

DFO then picks up the sensors, which contain the data, and takes them to be analyzed.

This is the third year the Rangers have assisted in gathering scientific data for the DFO while on Operation Polar Passage, but the first time the training has been offered in the NWT. This year's operation focused on the western entrance to the passage at Amundsen Gulf, which saw Rangers from Tuktoyaktuk, Paulatuk, Kugluktuk, Ulukhaktok and Sachs Harbour do patrols.

Previous years have focused on the more eastern and central parts of the passage.

“We move year to year just to spread the experience, the training, and all that around,” Layden said. “It's been such a good success that each year...we've been able to borrow more and more equipment from DFO and put it in more communities. So each year, the sphere of scientific data we're able to give back to DFO is a little larger.”

He said his goal as operations officer is to have enough capacity established that Rangers could patrol the passage from end to end throughout the month of February.

“But that could be a dream on my part,” he said with a laugh.

The Rangers also collect polar bear feces for a separate study being done by Queen's University.

“It doesn't cost us anything except for a few minutes of time,” Layden said. “We're there, we're doing other things anyway, it's no burden.”

62. Five-day patrol goes on land and water: Fort Simpson Canadian Rangers complete training mission

Roxanna Thompson

Northern News Services, 24 July 2014



Ranger Trevor Kjeldsli, left, Ranger Chris Kingsbury, recruit Marion Kikoak, Cpl. Derek Erasmus, Ranger Christina Holman and Master Cpl. Perry Rowe during a parade that concluded the Fort Simpson Canadian Rangers' patrol on 10 July 2014. – Roxanna Thompson/NNSL photo

LIIDLII KUE/FORT SIMPSON - The challenge of paddling across the Mackenzie River on a homemade raft was all part of a recent on-the-land experience for Canadian Rangers in Fort Simpson.

Six members of the Fort Simpson Canadian Rangers participated in a five-day patrol with Sgt. Guy Noel, a ranger instructor. The patrols allow rangers to practise training and skills that they need in order to be ready on short-notice to do tasks like participate in search and rescues, he said.

“We need them because they know the land - they adapt quickly to the military,” said Noel.

This patrol was also about learning what each ranger is capable of and how the Fort Simpson rangers work as a team. Noel, who was recently assigned as the village’s ranger instructor, said he was watching to see who had particular skills, including navigation and first aid, and how they reacted when given a job to do.

One of the biggest challenges of the patrol came on July 8. The rangers, who were camped across the Mackenzie River from the mouth of the Trout River - an approximate 3.5-hour boat trip from Fort Simpson - were challenged to build a raft with only lumber harvested from the forest and rope and then paddle it, carrying a large rock, across the Mackenzie.

“Everybody has different background-skills and all that came out,” said Ranger Sgt. Sandy Kidd, the officer in charge of the Fort Simpson patrol.

During the challenge that took about 6.5 hours to complete, including two hours of paddling, the rangers had to communicate and work together on the raft design. It revealed the different capacities and assets people have, Kidd said.

“You don’t really know people until you have to deal with a situation,” he said.

Noel, Ranger Master Cpl. Perry Rowe, Cpl. Derek Erasmus and Ranger Trevor Kjeldsli paddled the raft and the approximate 200-pound rock across the river while the other rangers followed in a motorboat. Water came over most of the raft, but they made it.

“I’m really impressed,” Noel said about the overall performance of the rangers during the patrol.

“Not a lot of people, but good people.”

During the patrol the rangers also made emergency shelters and trigger traps, a type of snare, and practised using GPS units. Kidd and Noel hid three items in the bush that the other rangers had to find after programming the co-ordinates into their GPS.

The patrol went really well, said Kidd. Everyone was respectful, helpful and willing to learn.

The Fort Simpson rangers’ next patrol will be in January or February using snowmobiles. Noel said that he hopes to see more rangers participate. The patrol already has three new recruits.

63. Ranger savours experience: Leo Natanine follows father's footsteps for Arctic sovereignty

Captain Trevor Reid

Northern News Services, 22 September 2014



Leo Natanine of Clyde River was one of 40 Canadian Rangers setting up and running the camp at York Sound during Operation Nanook last month.- photo courtesy of Cpl. Aydyn Neifer, Joint Task Force (North)

KANGIQTUGAAPIK/CLYDE RIVER - As his Canadian Armed Forces comrades assembled at York Sound last month for Operation Nanook, Canadian Ranger Leo Natanine of Clyde River was there, too, keeping them safe by performing camp security duties.

“I’ve been a ranger for three years now and I like it a lot,” said Natanine.

“My father was a ranger when I was young and I grew up wanting to be like him. This is fun work.”

Natanine and about 40 of his brothers-in-arms from the 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group helped establish and run the military camp on the south shore of Frobisher Bay.

They provided local knowledge and expertise to southern-based armed forces members and performed camp patrols to ensure large predators, such as polar bears, were kept away from camp personnel.

During the operation, the rangers hosted Prime Minister Stephen Harper - an honorary Canadian Ranger - to whom they showed their camp and skills and gave some shooting advice.

“I like the shooting that we do,” said Natanine.

“We sometimes do competitions within our patrol. I also like travelling on snowmobile in winter - it’s a cool scene to see us riding in a column across the snow.”

With the help of the rangers, many of whom rely on the land to feed and sustain their families back home, the camp at York Sound was shut down and airlifted out of the area after the operation was completed, leaving the land as pristine as it was before.

“Back home, we may do a hunting trip that lasts from five to 10 days or longer,” Natanine said. “We’re used to being here on the land.”



64. Fort Smith Rangers take to the land for winter training

Dali Carmichael

Northern Journal (Fort Smith), 2 February 2015

You'd be hard-pressed to find a group of people who know the 300-km radius around Fort Smith better than the Canadian Rangers who train there.

Twice a year, the unit comes together for 10 days to conduct winter and summer training sessions. Over the last two weeks of January, they explored the land around them while brushing up on their winter survival skills with a series of Type 1 military exercises led by visiting officials from Yellowknife.

"The role of the Canadian Ranger is to provide military presence in parts of Canada where there's no military people and it's not feasible to have military people because of costs," said Warrant Officer Woody Keeping, one of the trainers. "They're our eyes, ears and voice of the North."

That's why it's important to keep them sharp and updated on military practices, Keeping said.

For the first half of their session, the unit spent four days and three nights maneuvering around Donovan Lake by snowmobile, a journey that's just over 40 km from town. Every year, they learn in a new destination.

"On the land is where we practice navigation," Keeping said. "We also do communication, military drills, briefings on military rank structures, environmental issues and first aid."

This year they also learned how to build an airplane runway on the frozen lake, first packing the snow with their vehicles, then lining the newly formed ice-road with headlights.

While out in the remote region, the Rangers spent their nights in tents heated by portable wood stoves. This year they said they were lucky to have average temperatures around -12 degrees Celsius. For food, the team was given individual meal packs to boil in bags, a nutritious if not totally appetizing meal, Keeping said.

The Rangers wore military-grade parkas and wind pants along with their traditional garb of red hooded sweatshirts and printed camouflage pants while out on the land, though they were allowed to dress in civilian snow pants to keep out the cold.

“We can’t bring everything out to them,” said Keeping, noting that one of the requirements to sign up for the Canadian Rangers is owning a snowmobile. “Could you imagine if we had to fly a bunch of skidoos up here? We couldn’t do it.”

Because of those high transportation costs, Canadian Rangers are the only military class allowed to keep their guns in their homes.

“They keep those rifles at home in a locked safe with a trigger lock and everything,” Keeping said. “We’ve got Rangers all over Canada. If we didn’t let them take them home, every time we’d go there we’d have to take a bunch of rifles.”

Part of their training is shooting those guns, practising their marksmanship at a local firing range. Generations of Northerners have been using the wooden bolt-action .303 Lee-Enfield rifles, but this was one of the last winter sessions that weapon will be used by Rangers. Starting this year, the Canadian Forces are expected to begin testing out new rifles and by 2019, all .303s are scheduled to be replaced.

In a ceremony held Jan. 29, all who took part in the training activities were certified in a military ceremony, and the sharpest of shooters were awarded for their skills. The team was small this year, with about 18 members on paper and about half present for the session.

When the training officers aren’t in town, Sgt. Brenda Johnson leads the unit in monthly tactical exercises, equipment conditioning and Type 2 patrol training.

“We pick spots that we’re not sure about and our job is to see if we can get there to begin with and what access routes we can use different times of the year,” she said.

Johnson, who has been a Ranger for over two decades, said her unit is like a tough little family.

“If you enjoy the outdoors and you enjoy doing the work stuff it’s not so much a job, it’s more a pastime,” she said. “I don’t find it that hard.”

65. Nunavut’s Canadian Rangers lend a hand in military training exercise

Nunatsiaq News, 1 April 2015

It’s the beginning of spring on Cornwallis Island, but it didn’t feel that way for the more than 200 Canadian Forces members who camped there for six days last week.

Members of the 4th Canadian Division’s Arctic Response Company Group (ARCG), most of them from Ontario, just completed a 10-day training mission based out of Resolute Bay, where they conducted live-fire ranges and learned to load and unload helicopters, and rappel in rescue situations.

As they practiced survival skills in -50 C wind chills, soldiers conducted snowmobile patrols to test equipment, clothing and transport in temperatures and weather conditions rarely seen in their southern bases.

“Key aspects of this exercise are to enhance our ability to move, survive, and sustain ourselves in the High Arctic, while ensuring we can provide support and operate when and where Canadians require us,” said Lieutenant-Colonel Shane McArthur, commanding officer of the ARCG, in a March 31 Canadian Forces release.

But in a land so foreign to the visiting soldiers, local expertise is highly valued. That’s where 18 members of the 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group came in handy, to share their knowledge of the land.

One of them, Canadian Ranger Sgt. Jarloo Kiguktak travelled from his hometown of Grise Fiord, where he lives with his son, and works in shipping and receiving at the local co-op store.

Kiguktak has been guiding and training with members of the Canadian Armed Forces in Nunavut since 1978.

“I was young and I liked it,” he said in a March 30 release. “I’ve been sticking to it since.”

The Canadian Rangers are considered a sub-component of the Canadian Armed Forces Reserves, carrying out patrols on security and public safety mission in northern, coastal and isolated areas.

First established in 1947, the Canadian Rangers are predominantly made up of Aboriginal soldiers.

“I enjoy the trips and the camping,” Kiguktak said. “The soldiers knew how to listen and we had a few laughs.”

Although many of the training exercises Kiguktak takes part in are in Nunavut, they offer a chance to see new parts of the territory.

“I’ve been all over Ellesmere Island and Little Cornwallis Island,” he said.

Last year, Kiguktak and a group of Rangers flew to Alert, where they drove out on the sea ice about a quarter of the way to the North Pole.

“To be up here is an experience that not many in Canada have,” said Cpl. Isaac Pereira, a member of the Grey and Simcoe Foresters out of Barrie, Ont. NOREX 15 was his fourth winter exercise.

“Everyone is very into the exercise,” he said. “This [Arctic response] is our thing. It’s what we love to do.”



Sgt. Jarloo Kiguktak lashes crosspieces to a qamutik March 21 during NOREX 2015, a military training exercise held near Resolute Bay.

66. Foreign fighters taught tricks of Arctic survival: Rangers lead cold-weather combat training

Casey Lessard

Northern News Services, 4 May 2015



Canadian Rangers from Arctic Bay worked with trainees in the Arctic Operations Advisor course during an exercise in and around the community this winter. Photo by Combat Camera

HIGH ARCTIC - It's a course that gives Canadian Army members the tools to help colleagues survive and fight in the Arctic, if needed, and the course is so special, it is now in demand by NATO partners.

For the first time, foreign fighters - three Americans and two Brits - joined the annual Arctic Operations Advisor course, which saw 45 students train in tactics and logistics for most of February and March in Yellowknife, Resolute and other Nunavut communities.

The training wouldn't be the same without the assistance of more than 20 Nunavummiut Canadian Rangers.

"(The trainees) get to understand the logistics of working in the North," said Canadian Army Advanced Warfare Centre Warrant Officer Glenn Whitten. "In Nunavut, there's no road system, no rail system, distances you're dealing with are vast, hyper terrain, very hard to move around. Logistic problems become paramount to planning. A

lot of these things are very different from what they're used to down south. It gives them a very different perspective.”

Any member of the Canadian army can take the course, but most are combat members.

“The aim of the course is to produce a specialist who is capable of advising his commander in the organization, co-ordination, supervision and planning of deployments to the Arctic,” Whitten said.

Before heading North, trainees undertake a distance learning element, which includes studying environmental issues in the North, as well as environmental permits they have to obtain to run operations.

In Yellowknife, the trainees learn self-rescue from falling through the ice, care and maintenance of Ski-Doods, how to tow loads over snow, ice reconnaissance, how to build structures and cross ice safely and how to set up airstrips on ice. Some ground search-and-rescue training is involved as well.

In Resolute, they learn how to pull loads in qamutiit, survival training, snow caves and iglus, and link up with Canadian Rangers from various communities to plan and execute an exercise within that community.

The training has a local element, with trainees reaching out to the hamlets, HTOs, and other organizations on the ground.

“They conduct a small exercise on the land with the Rangers, usually three to four days long, and do some kind of community outreach



program. One did a pancake breakfast at the elementary school this year,” he said.

One Ranger helps throughout the course, and then one assists each of five groups in Resolute. Four Rangers are involved in each of Pond Inlet, Arctic Bay, Iglulik, Gjoa Haven and Taloyoak.

“So few Canadians go to the far North and experience it, and it’s the same with the military,” Whitten said of the importance of doing the training in the Arctic. “We haven’t done as much Arctic training in the 1990s and 2000s because of other commitments in Afghanistan and Bosnia, but now we’re getting into training in the North again. There’s a lot of inexperience in the military, so these people are going to learn how to deal with the environments, how to plan and conduct operations, and advise their commanders on the North.”

He expects the program will expand next year to include trainees from France, another NATO member.

“We’re one of the few NATO countries that actually has a High Arctic element to it, where you can experience those extreme cold conditions, the true Arctic tundra and sea ice. Even in Norway, you’re dealing with sub-Arctic conditions.”

The climate may be different, but the challenges are similar to working in Afghanistan.

“The lack of infrastructure makes what they have to do that much more difficult,” he said.



67. Whatì Ranger Patrol

Thìchọ Ndek'aowo Government, 9 June 2015.

Lieutenant-General Guy Thibault, Vice Chief of the Defence Staff (VCDS) and second in command of the Canadian Armed Forces visited the Canadian Rangers and Junior Canadian Rangers from the Whatì Patrol on Monday, June 8, 2015.

LGen Thibault, who is responsible and accountable to the Chief of the Defence Staff and the Deputy Minister to coordinate and direct activities to ensure departmental defence policy and strategic objectives are achieved participated in air rifle shooting and observed a traditional game, small game trapping technique and McPherson Tent base camp set-up.

The Whatì Ranger patrol, located about 164 km northwest of Yellowknife, NT, is one of 60 Canadian Ranger Patrols across the north managed and administered by the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group.



68. Improving skills on the land: Chesterfield Inlet Rangers conduct annual exercise program

Darrell Greer

Northern News Services, 10 June 2015



Canadian Rangers James Mullins, Jerome Miseralak, Leo Mimialik, Shelia Kadjuk, Kelly Kadjuk, Ralph Simik and Michael Lapoint (instructor), back row from left, and Solomon Ford, Glen Brocklebank and Barney Aggark, front row from left, conduct their annual land skills training program on the land near Chesterfield Inlet this past month. - photo courtesy of Ana Leishman

CHESTERFIELD INLET - Members of the Canadian Rangers Chesterfield Inlet Patrol completed their annual Type I training exercise on the land this past month.

The Chester Rangers travelled to an area on the land where they'd never patrolled before to conduct the exercise.

During the nine-day excursion, the Rangers trained in GPS, map and compass navigation, learned how to properly set up a landing strip on the land and took a number of first-aid courses.

The patrol also worked with the Junior Rangers and did a number of sports activities with the younger members, and then worked the infield of Chester's annual cross-country snowmobile race, towing machines back to the community and providing first-aid services to the racers.

Both the senior Rangers and Junior Rangers received new uniforms.

Glen Brocklebank has been a Ranger for the past 12 years in Chesterfield Inlet.

He said the May training exercise went exceptionally well.

“Barney Aggark is a really, really good sergeant, and he identified some good challenges for us,” said Brocklebank.

“He looked at areas we had fairly proficient skills in and then he looked at areas where we needed a little work.

“He issued me a challenge to find a grid co-ordinate on a map and then get us from one point to another nine miles away on the land without using a GPS.

“I didn’t get us there, but I got us close and he gave me some tips to improve my skills and encouraged me all the way.”

Brocklebank said he had never been challenged on the land in that manner before, and it was comforting to know he had a section of Rangers following behind him.

He said he thoroughly enjoyed and learned a lot from the experience.

“This was the most beneficial activity I’ve ever done on the land, Rangers or otherwise.

“For me, personally, it was a fantastic experience.

“We also worked on search-and-rescue techniques and everything we learned on the land we practised on the way back to the community.

“We put everything together that we’d learned from the individual classes and conducted one big exercise, and that was really beneficial to us as a patrol.”



69. Jumble ice spurs early changes to Yukon Quest trail

Marcel Vander Wier

Whitehorse Daily Star, 2 February 2016

As race day nears, the Yukon Quest has announced two changes to its 1,600-kilometre trail.

The 33rd annual international sled dog race will begin in Fairbanks Saturday morning, albeit in a different location than usual.

Due to jumble ice on the Chena River, the start line will shift slightly upriver “to ensure the safety of the dogs, mushers and public,” according to a press release issued yesterday by the race office.

Teams will now head onto the river at the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitor Center in Fairbanks.

Yesterday’s report comes on the heels of a trail report on Friday that the historic mushing trail will incur a re-route between the checkpoints of Eagle and Dawson City.

There, impassable ice jams between the mouth of the Fortymile River and Dawson City necessitated a re-route to the Top of the World-Taylor Highway.

The result is an additional 762-metre climb over 32 kms from the Fortymile River to the highway, plus an additional 48 kms into Dawson.

The race’s distance, however, will remain the same.

Besides this major change, the only other concern is a general lack of snow.

The trail continues to be broken by Canadian Rangers on Yukon’s side and volunteers in Alaska.

Last Thursday, Major Craig Volstad of Yellowknife was in Whitehorse to meet members of the media.

This year’s effort by the Canadian Rangers is the largest to date, including members of 11 Yukon communities, Volstad said.

“Because the Quest is so integral to the Yukon Territory itself, we’ve involved 11 communities – 11 patrols from the territory and one from Atlin, B.C. That’s up significantly from previous years.

“Last year, we had four communities supporting. It’s not about clearing the trail for us. It’s about a training activity. ... It’s a win-win situation.”

The job doubles as a training exercise for the Canadian Rangers along 800 kilometres of wilderness from Whitehorse to Dawson City.

As part of exercise Tay Naydan, 120 Canadian Rangers worked along the trail last month during three different phases.

The first phase includes initial trail breaking, clearing brush and packing snow down with snowmobiles.

Phase two re-establishes the trail, removing any additional debris, while the final phase consists of a final once-over just ahead of the competing sled dog teams.

“The Canadian Rangers play an integral role in making sure the trail is safe for all participants,” said Natalie Haltrich, Yukon’s executive director for the historic mushing race.

“They volunteer hundreds of hours of their time each year, and it doesn’t go unnoticed.”



70. Games begin as N.W.T. Rangers gather for Exercise Dene Ranger

‘We were all quite happy: we all made it here in one piece,’ says Sgt. from Fort Smith
CBC News North, 25 February 2016



About 130 Canadian Rangers from all sides of Great Slave Lake have gathered near Yellowknife for Exercise Dene Ranger, the largest such operation ever held in the southern N.W.T. (submitted by Lorraine Villeneuve)

About 130 Canadian Rangers have made camp at Weledah Park along the Yellowknife River just outside of the capital to take part in Exercise Dene Ranger, the largest such event ever held by Rangers in the southern N.W.T.

“We were all quite happy: we all made it here in one piece,” said Sgt. Brenda Johnson who travelled about 300 kilometres by snowmobile to reach camp.

Johnson crossed Great Slave Lake with the Fort Smith Ranger Patrol, meeting up with Rangers from Fort Resolution on the way.

She says despite one broken hitch, there was little trouble.



Nine teams of Rangers are at the gathering, from as far away as Wekweeti, Lutselk'e and Fort Simpson. (submitted by Lorraine Villeneuve)

“We were quite lucky. The weather stayed with us. It was a little bit cool on the lake for some of us that aren't used to traveling on the open lake.”

Nine teams of Rangers are at the gathering, from as far away as Wekweeti, Lutselk'e and Fort Simpson. In all, the Rangers will patrol more than 1,400 kilometres by the time they return home.

Today is the first of three days of skills competitions, starting with a rifle range.

Friday and Saturday will see more games of skill, including a toboggan race, a log push/pull, a fish net competition, snowshoe race and tug of war.

According to Johnson, enthusiasm is high.

“This is the first time we've ever done anything this big so everybody was really keen to go and spirits are good.”

The Rangers will also make some time for the public.

They also plan to set up a parade and display on Yellowknife's Back Bay, inviting people to drop by and learn more about the Rangers.

71. “Canadian Rangers meet on Yellowknife Bay for exercises: ‘It’s good to see all the communities from around Great Slave Lake join together’ says Lorraine Villeneuve

CBC News North, 27 February 2016

A –34 windchill on Yellowknife Bay didn’t dampen the enthusiasm of more than 100 Canadian Rangers coming together from 10 Northwest Territories communities for Exercise Dene Ranger this week.

For some, just getting to the exercise required some of the Northern resourcefulness the Rangers are known for.

“I believe I blew a piston so [it was a] gotta-take-the-whole-engine-out-and-start-over kind of thing,” said Dwayne Nataway, who travelled by snowmobile from Lutselk’e.

Maj. Craig Volstad, commanding officer of 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol said dealing with the unexpected – including breakdowns – is always going to be part of such a large exercise.

“When guys are coming 600 kilometres from their communities, vehicles break down, equipment fails, so we’ve had to improvise a few times along the way, getting communities here,” he said.

“We’ve had a couple of minor injuries along the way where we’ve had to evacuate people – burnt hands, and a couple of other minor injuries. But that’s what we’re practicing. So we have the practice and the real-life scenarios, and the guys have done a great job.”

On Friday the Rangers took to the ice of Yellowknife Bay for a series of exercises including setting a net under the ice, and a blindfolded Ranger-powered toboggan race.

Scott King, a trapper and expert outdoorsman, helped pull the Fort Resolution toboggan to a win.

“It was pretty hard, especially when you’re running with the big boots,” he said. “On the way back there I started powering out and my mind just kept saying ‘Don’t give up, don’t give up.’”



Canadian Ranger Lorraine Villeneuve journeyed from Fort Resolution to take part in Exercise Dene Ranger near Yellowknife. (CBC)

The contests are competitions, but for the Rangers it's as much about comradery and reconnecting with friends and relatives they haven't seen in a while.

"I enjoyed the trip and meeting new people from all over and it's good to see all the communities from around Great Slave Lake to join together as one," said Ranger Lorraine Villeneuve from Fort Resolution.

Eric Laboline stopped on the way to the exercise to visit his grandparents, whom he hasn't seen in a while.

"I gave them a hug. I just said, 'Long time, I never saw you guys,'" he said.

"And they were happy for me too, because I'm a Ranger. They were proud of me because I travelled this far, all the way from my hometown Wekweeti, all the way to Yellowknife.

Exercise Dene Ranger continues until Tuesday.

72. Satellite down in military exercise: Rangers play key role in Arctic Ram near Resolute

Michele LeTourneau

Nunavut News/North, 29 February 2016

QAUSUITTUQ/RESOLUTE - Canadian Rangers play a key role in Arctic exercises conducted by the Canadian military, such as Arctic Ram 2016 from Feb. 8 to 22 on the land outside of Resolute.

Maj. James Meredith with Arctic Response Company Group (ARCG) said 15 Canadian Rangers were part of the exercise that involves a complex chain of response which changes depending on a given situation.

The ARCG is part of the 38 Brigade Group and soldiers hail from Saskatchewan, Manitoba and a portion of northwestern Ontario. The group of approximately 120 soldiers is trained to deploy at a moment's notice to the North. Of the soldiers involved in Arctic Ram, the response company worked the most closely with the Rangers.

“Should weather impede a fast response from the Forces, Rangers would generally be a first response,” said Meredith. “The situation will dictate, but it would be SAR Tech (Canadian Forces Search and Rescue Technicians) then IRU (Canadian Joint Incident Response Unit), then domestic response unit. Rangers would be asked by the RCMP. It would have to be a large situation for the military to be involved.”

The Arctic Ram scenario was a satellite down.

“A satellite had crashed down in the area of Resolute Bay. The regular force from PPCLI (Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry) Bravo Company, they jumped in as the initial response unit to be able to get feet on the ground as fast as possible,” said Meredith.

“Then the ARCG, which is the follow-on organization, which has a few more bodies, we were there for a longer, extended period of time conducting a more detailed search in some other areas. The Rangers, because of their intricate knowledge, they're right there to provide assistance right off the bat.”

Meredith says the Rangers supply vital information to the Army.

“They supply so much knowledge of how to operate and live and survive in the Arctic. They were able to show my soldiers how to cut snow blocks properly for snow walls around their tents. (The soldiers) also

learned how to operate machines in harsh conditions. They also learned about cultural aspects of how to work with the Rangers.”

Eight Nunavut-based Rangers worked directly with Meredith’s group, which spent a night at the Canadian Armed Forces Arctic Training Centre northwest of Resolute Bay, on a compound shared with the Polar Continental Shelf Program.

For the remainder of the exercise, they lived in tents as they moved. When the soldiers travelled, moving as a platoon of between 25 and 30 people, at least two Rangers moved with them.

“We always had at least two Rangers with us to help lead the way. As well, if there were any problems that we had, they were in the rear to help pick up and pass along information, be it snowmobile maintenance, how to tie a qamutik properly, looking out if we have some frostbite.”

Meredith says the Rangers do a phenomenal job and he describes the rapport developed over the years as “amazing.”

“The interaction between the Canadian Rangers and the ARCG has been an ongoing relationship for the last eight years,” he said. “Every exercise that we have, an Arctic Ram or an Arctic Bison, we have always incorporated working with the Rangers. That’s been in Churchill, Kugaaruk, Arviat, Yellowknife. This year especially we were working with the Rangers from Resolute Bay, some from Arctic Bay.”

As for the Arctic Response Company Group, it’s made up entirely of reservists.

“All of them volunteered. That was 112 up into Resolute Bay – students, police constables, teachers, mechanics, a very wide-ranging group of people that come together,” said Meredith.

“Just from the soldiers themselves, they enjoyed so much the learning that the Rangers provide to them. They’re trying to learn as many skills and they take those skills the Rangers teach them and take them on future Arctic exercises.

“The benefit is just outstanding.”

73. ‘They’re the knowledge keepers’: Honorary Lieutenant Colonel dives into untold history as Exercise Dene Ranger takes over Yk Bay

Evan Kiyoshi French

Yellowknifer, 2 March 2016

Previously untold stories of the 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group are now out there, thanks to a body of historical writing produced by an honorary lieutenant colonel.

Historian Whitney Lackenbauer was bestowed the designation in 2014 to recognize his unique work telling 70 years of Ranger history. He was one of 130 Rangers from 10 communities around Great Slave Lake to take part in Exercise Dene Ranger in Yellowknife last week, under the command of Maj. Craig Volstad.

“We have never documented our history,” said Volstad, standing on frozen Yellowknife Bay.

“It wasn’t until our honorary lieutenant colonel came along ... and took the time and said, ‘Hey, these people are amazing and make amazing contributions to Canada.’ So he’s an invaluable asset to the organization. It’s been awesome, him being here, as he’s documenting our history going forward.”

Lackenbauer – who lives in Otterville, Ont. – said he’s been obsessed with the Rangers for about 20 years.

‘One of the great success stories’

“It was sheer fascination,” he said.

“I see the Canadian Rangers as such a wonderful success story of partnerships. I’m drawn to it because you hear a lot of stories about friction and this to me is one of the great success stories that we have as a country.”

Lackenbauer’s works include *Vigilans: A History of 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group*, *The Canadian Rangers: A Living History* and *Canada’s Rangers: Selected Stories, 1942 – 2012* covers the operational history of the Rangers – something he said he was surprised no one else was researching when he began.



“I’ve been pleased that in the last decade-and-a-half there’s been a lot more interest in what the Rangers do, but I still think there’s an opportunity to better understand the roles in the communities,” he said.

Ernest Lockhart, a Lutsel K’e ranger, joined the force in 1996.

He said the group serves an important purpose in marking GPS coordinates on routine patrols.

“Around the communities, the people know their way around, but for the outsiders from Yellowknife, if they want to go down the East Arm, now they’ve got the co-ordinates,” said Lockhart.

Lockhart said being a Ranger is exciting and has been a positive influence in his life.

“I stay away from trouble now that I’ve been a Ranger,” he said.

Lackenbauer said hanging out with Rangers has afforded him unique opportunities to meet new faces.

In addition to sifting through stacks of Ranger-related documents, Lackenbauer said he’s joined exercises from “coast to coast to coast.”

Lackenbauer said historical writing can counter misconceptions about the group.

Not ‘fighting off the Russians’

“They’re not the thin red line with their .303 Enfields (rifles), fighting off the Russians or anything like that,” he said.

“First of all, I mean all the military documents are pretty clear that it’s very unlikely that we’re going to face a challenge to our North or to our sovereignty. Instead, they’re the vital support. They’re the guides, the knowledge keepers who can make sure when forces come up (from further south), they operate safely. And I think one of the stories known well in the North but not known broadly is the role the Rangers play in the North as first-responders.”

Volstad, who hails from southern Alberta, is responsible for Rangers in all three territories and in one community in northern B.C. He said working with unique people and in unique areas are the perks of his job.

“You meet pretty amazing individuals. I can tell you, it’s definitely been the highlight of my life.”

Volstad commands 1,800 Canadian Rangers in 60 patrols across the North, which covers 40 per cent of the country’s land mass.



74. The work of Canadian Ranger Dollie Simon is never done

Anne Duggan

Army Public Affairs, 21 March 2016

Fort Resolution, Northwest Territories — Master Corporal Therese “Dollie” Simon may not include juggling in her impressive list of skills and responsibilities as a member of the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, but she must do a lot of it.

Along with her day job as coordinator for Deninu K’ue First Nation Community Wellness Program in Fort Resolution, she organizes a much-appreciated Culture Week, leads the local Junior Canadian Ranger (JCR) program and works tirelessly as a member of the North’s first line of defence. Although she received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for her work with the JCRs, she says escorting JCR Machaela Laroque who was chosen to attend the Remembrance Day Ceremony at the National War Memorial in 2015 was a career highlight.



Q and A with Master Corporal Dollie Simon

Q. How many years have you been a Canadian Ranger (CR, also commonly known as a Ranger) and why did you join?

A. I have been a Ranger since November 1994. Basically, I was looking to do something different but little did I know that it was something I was missing – going out onto the land, hunting and reconnecting that way. I enjoy it and I now have lifetime friends that I have made all over the Yukon and Northwest Territories. And, we are always learning something new.

Q. You missed a large Ranger activity recently. What happened?

A. I will tell you – I was getting ready to go. I went to the Chief and said, "I have everything ready for the Health Fair and I am now going to go to Exercise DENE RANGER." The Chief sat me down and said, "Dolly, I have never ever asked you to stay away from Ranger activities before but we really need you. You do such good work organizing events. Please stay home for the fair." I couldn't say no. I work for the Deninu K'ue First Nation and they have been very supportive of my Ranger responsibilities.

Q. Do you have any family members who are Rangers?

A. Yes, I have a son, Dexter who is a Ranger. My daughter was a Ranger but she moved so she has put it aside for a while. They told her she can pick up her rifle whenever she moves back home.

Q. What Ranger skill was the hardest to learn?

A. Shooting the .303 [The original Canadian-manufactured Lee Enfield .303 has been used by Rangers for 70 years and will be replaced by the Sako C-19 in 2017]. It is so heavy and so different. I was used to shooting rifles like .22s. The .303 is heavy and it kicks. My shoulder was blue the first time I tried to use it.

Q. What is the most unexpected Ranger skill?

A. Our ability to survive in the elements no matter the weather or storm. We make camp comfortable. We are not hindered by stuff like that.



Q. How does your community view Rangers and their work?

A. My community is especially aware of the Rangers' search and rescue skills. However, they think that we can just go out automatically and do it. But, there is a process we must follow. My Ranger unit will usually do two searches a year. We have been very fortunate that this number is so small. Mainly, it is not because people are lost but because they have equipment problems like a broken down Ski-Doo.

Q. What is your main role as a Ranger?

A. We are the ears and eyes and voice for the military in the North.

Q. What has being a Ranger given you?

A. Well, I mentioned that I thought it would be something new but it was really a return to something that I had been missing. I remember being on the land as a young girl. I was raised by my grandparents and so this stopped when they retired and stayed in town. Starting with the Rangers had me reconnecting with how beautiful our land is; it is all free. You can come and go as you please. My son and I have actually built a cabin on the Slave River just because we go on hunting trips there often.

Q. What is your heritage? As a Reservist in the Canadian Rangers, has your experience been affected by your heritage in either positive or negative ways?



A. My heritage is Chipewyan and a little bit of French from my grandparents. Rangers has always been a positive experience – a break from the busyness of the day though we do work hard. The bonus is that we get paid.

Q. Tell me about your day job – your role as the Community Wellness Coordinator in Fort Resolution?

A. Since May 1995, I have worked with the Deninu K’ue First Nation Community Wellness Program. Mainly my job is to work with people who have addictions, like alcohol and drugs. I refer them to treatment centres. Recently, we started an “on the land” program. I do presentations on different topics like the effects of alcohol and drugs. We recently hosted a Health Fair where we had different booths set up and prizes. A canvas tent was the grand prize.

Q. What is the “on the land” program?

A. There are now beautiful cabins built on Mission Island by the First Nation – you can walk, bike, boat and drive to them. We have a mess kit of dishes to lend to families and the First Nation will buy you some groceries. You can do things as a family – cooking, sitting down to a meal, no electronics. It is a unique program and it works well. All we ask is that you don’t use alcohol or drugs there.

Q. What is your proudest achievement as a Ranger?

A. My proudest achievement is my work with the Junior Canadian Rangers.

Q. Is part of your job as a Ranger to lead the Junior Canadian Rangers?

A. Yes, a Junior Canadian Ranger leader does lead the JCRs through the administrative work and the activities. I ask the youth, "What do you want to do?" and "Let's go to the cabin," is the most common response, or "Let's do something different." We do some preventing of harassment and abuse through a successful education program called PHASE [Preventing Harassment and Abuse through Successful Education]. We do our arrow competition. The Rangers have been working with the school. Last year we set up a cabin with a stove and the JCRs helped us. Whenever there is a parade, we are all there on a float or walk in uniform. The JCRs do a lot of volunteering. For example, when the Elders put on a Christmas feast, the JCRs were asked to serve the Elders.

Q. How long have you been working with the Junior Canadian Rangers and what kinds of things do you do?

A. I started about eight years ago. This year, we will take the 16- to 18-year-olds to advanced training in Whitehorse, Yukon. They have to be more than 16 years of age because they are getting their Firearm Certificate, their ATV training, and they jump into ice cold water for learning ice rescue. In June, we are joined by all the ages and we go to Whitehorse Cadet Camp for traditional, life and Ranger skills certificate programs. This year I get to take two JCRs for the advanced training and eight for the basic level. So that is very exciting.

Q. How many Junior Canadian Rangers are there in your group?

A. There are between 24 and 26 Junior Canadian Rangers. I walk to work and I go through the schoolyard on my way. Some days there will be someone calling my name: "Dollie, Dollie!" I will wait and some young boy or girl will come to me and say, "I am twelve today. Can I come and be a Junior Ranger?" I will say, "OK, come and see me after school and I will do the paperwork for you." It is exciting in that way.



Q. What are the most popular skills that the Junior Canadian Rangers learn?

A. They especially enjoy being out on the land, taking nature walks, learning to cook on an open fire, building shelters of different types and hunting. Behind our cabin on Slave River, there is a prairie where we can hunt a buffalo or, if we are really lucky, a moose. Also, we set rabbit snares and make bannock. It is just everyday survival on the land that the kids enjoy.

Q. Culture Week, which is organized in part by you, has been a very important event in Fort Resolution for 12 years. Why?

A. My late husband and I used to go quite far away to a similar event in Fort Reliance, which takes a lot of time and gas to get to. Not many people from Fort Resolution were going so we decided to hold something of our own where people can camp and rotate through the activities. We set up 10 centres: bannock-making, dry meat-making, fish-filleting, dried fish making, canoeing, trap and snare-setting, crafts, sewing, square dancing, singing, traditional drumming, hand games and storytelling. Whatever is going good, we keep. There are draws for camping gear and other good prizes. In the evening there are little competitions like axe-throwing, log-sawing, log-splitting, tea-boiling, canoe races, coin toss and storytelling.

The whole community comes along with people from Yellowknife, Alberta and Saskatchewan, too.

Fort Resolution has a population of 474, is situated at the mouth of the Slave River on the shore of Great Slave Lake at the very end of Fort Resolution Highway (Highway 6). It is the oldest documented community in the Northwest Territories and was a key link in the fur trade's northern water route.



75. Canadian Forces learn on water

The Hub, 18 July 2016

Operation Nunakput 2016 was in Hay River last week, bringing together various maritime patrols to use the local waters for training.

The operation ran from July 5 to 20, using the waters off Yellowknife, Fort Resolution, Fort Simpson, Hay River and Fort Providence.

Participating in the operation were the Canadian Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the RCMP, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Canadian Coast Guard, Parks Canada, the Department of Environment and Climate Change, the Civil Air Search and Rescue Association, and the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, including some members from Hay River.

The operation is meant to provide training across the different organizations, as well as assert sovereignty in the North.

Task Force Operations Officer Capt. James Longaphie from Yellowknife said the operation runs every year on the Mackenzie River but this year it was decided to try something different.

The groups formed a convoy from Yellowknife across Great Slave Lake to train in the more southern waters. They arrived in Hay River on July 14 and departed on July 16, having completed their man-overboard training on the lake and spending an afternoon at the Hay River Canadian Coast Guard base in a presentation about marine spill response.

Chief Petty Officer S.D. Lothian travelled from Halifax to take part in the training on behalf of the navy, and he said training on the lake is much different from what he is used to on the East Coast.

“I’m used to the Atlantic, which is very well-charted,” he said. “It’s good practice to be trying something different. The scales are different. There are not as many navigational aids. You have to rely more on your visuals and the GPS, as well as local knowledge.”

Three of Hay River’s Canadian Rangers were involved in the operation.

Ranger Nihal Silveira Da Graca Costa, Ranger Corporal Kevin Lafferty and Master Corporal Jeremy Storvold made the two-week commitment to travel with the group during their training, which started in Yellowknife on July 5. The operation had 10 boats of various sizes and

capabilities crossing the lake, including a cutter that was brought up from Halifax.

“The other groups are providing us with training and mentorship,” said Storvold. “And they’re learning from us, of course. There are no good charts for this lake, so we rely on local knowledge for that.”

Storvold said the water training was a new experience for the Hay River Canadian Rangers, who have been mobilized for five years.

“Half of our area of response is in water,” he said. “So it’s relevant training for us.”

The Canadian Rangers are reservists of the Canadian Armed Forces, Storvold said.

They are volunteers who keep their training up to date in case extra emergency measures are needed in a place where a Canadian Armed Forces base is absent.



Sergeant Roy Desjarlais, a Canadian Ranger from Lustel k'e, uses a satellite telephone during a search and rescue exercise near Lustel k'e, Northwest Territories, during Operation NUNAKPUT, 7 July 2016. Photo: PO2 Belinda Groves, Task Force Imagery Technician. YK-2016-055-020

76. Four Generations of Canadian Ranger Service: The Pedersens of Kugluktuk

P. Whitney Lackenbauer

Inuktitut [Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami], 26 August 2016.

For nearly seventy years, Canadian Rangers have served as the military's eyes, ears, and voice in the Canadian North. Across the four regions of Inuit Nunaat, thousands of Inuit men and women have carried the Ranger rifle and, since the 1990s, donned the famous red Ranger hoodie.

For many people, Ranger service is also a family affair. The Pedersens of Kugluktuk are a prime example, with four generations proudly serving their country and their community.

The Ranger presence in the Kitikmeot region goes back to 1949, when the local Anglican missionary was asked to set up a Ranger platoon in Coppermine (as Kugluktuk was then known to qallunaat) and told to recruit Inuit to serve as the military's "eyes and ears" in the area. John Sperry inherited command of the platoon when he arrived in the community the following year. If an aircraft went down or if someone was lost, the Rangers went out to look for them. "All the men were going out anyway" as members of the community, he explained. Rangers also provided military intelligence, passing along reports of submarine sightings and other suspicious activities.

Red Pedersen was first member of his family to join the Rangers. Born in Denmark, Red began working as a fur trader at the Hudson's Bay Company's trading post in Cambridge Bay in 1953 at the age of seventeen. After a short stint in Perry River he moved to Cape Dorset where, as the HBC manager, he was commissioned as a Ranger lieutenant in January 1960. As a platoon commander on Baffin Island, his main role was to hand out Lee Enfield rifles when someone new joined or needed a replacement, and to distribute the annual allocation of .303 ammunition so that Rangers could hunt caribou and seal. They conducted patrols and held meetings, particularly when an army Ranger Liaison Officer came up to visit from the south. They even received a bit of demolition training – providing Inuit with practical knowledge of "how to get soapstone without breaking it." As the threat of a Russian invasion declined, however, the military lost interest in the Rangers.

Red returned to Kugluktuk in 1969 where he opened the Igloo Inn, launched a taxi service, and helped to organize the first settlement council. When the military restarted the Rangers in Arctic communities in the 1970s, with local members electing the Ranger sergeants to lead their patrols (the new name for locally-based units), they “wanted to forget all of us [old Rangers] still kicking around.” The commissioning scroll that Lieutenant Pedersen had received in 1960 could not be ignored, however, and he was officially retired and given a service medal at a ceremony in Yellowknife while he was speaker of the NWT Legislative Assembly (a position he held from 1987-91).

In his retirement Pedersen was not an active Ranger, but he has remained a strong supporter of the program and of his family’s involvement in it, with a total of “two sons and three grandchildren in the Rangers, and two great-grandchildren in JCR ... so far!” There are more to come, Red explains, because many of his other great-grandchildren (37 in total) are anxious to become old enough so that they can join.

Red’s son Baba signed up as a Ranger in 1993. “The men I looked up to at time, my mentors, were Rangers and I wanted to be like them and do stuff they were doing,” he recalls. “Being Inuk and living up here, we travel for hunting and subsistence and are already out there, as the Ranger motto says, as ‘the eyes and ears of the North. Using our existing skills and our knowledge of our area is how we contribute to Canadian society.’”

Through Ranger service, Baba notes the benefits of learning subjects like map reading, military navigation techniques, and safe rifle handling from Ranger Instructors – professional soldiers who work with the Rangers. He also highlights the important teaching provided by Inuit elders in the Rangers, such as land skills and search and rescue techniques, as well as the important role of Rangers in “taking youth out on land ... and teaching them how to be better citizens.”

As the Kugluktuk patrol’s Master Corporal since 1999, Baba has attended many leadership conferences and training events with



the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group based in Yellowknife. These are opportunities to build relationships. “I am fortunate to have become very good friends with other Ranger leaders from across north,” he says, and to share traditional skills. “We have a chance to learn from one another, because we do some things very similarly, and other differently.”

Following in his grandfather’s and father’s footsteps, fourteen-year old Calvin Pedersen became a Junior Canadian Ranger (JCR) when the program was first introduced in Kugluktuk in 1998. This community-based program provides youth (ages 12-18) in isolated communities with opportunities to develop Ranger skills, such as navigation, firearms safety, and camping, as well as traditional skills (such as hunting, fishing, and Inuit culture) and life skills.

It was natural for Calvin to become a Ranger as soon as he turned eighteen. “I was right into it, so [my father and grandfather] didn’t need to encourage me very much,” Calvin recalls.

When Inuit enrol in the Rangers, they are considered trained, self-sufficient members of the Canadian military because of their existing knowledge and familiarity with their homeland. “We’re here, we’re naturally all over on this land,” Calvin explains. Because Inuit travel to hunt and provide for their families, you have the skills to operate independently and self-sufficiently within their local areas.

A Ranger patrol’s area is normally considered to fall within a radius of 150 kilometers from their home community. They conduct “sovereignty and surveillance patrols” over these lands and waters during annual training exercises, report on maritime traffic in the Northwest Passage to ensure that the vessels travelling through are authorized, and help respond to local emergencies. Kugluktuk patrol members have also made important contributions to scientific research. Through the Canadian Ranger Ocean Watch research project with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, they gather oceanographic data and take ice, snow, and water measurements throughout the Coronation Gulf region.

Some of this research is done alongside the Rangers’ patrols of the North Warning System – the modernized DEW Line sites spread fifty miles apart across the Arctic coastline. To make sure that these radar installations are still running and are not damaged, Rangers from Kugluktuk have typically conducted winter security patrols in groups of four. “This is a long trip,” Calvin explains, covering roughly 500 miles and taking an average of four or five days. But climate change is forcing



the Rangers to adapt. “It is not safe to go out on ocean as early as we use to, or to go out as late in spring,” Baba notes. “So this year we did 3 NWS patrols in the winter by snowmobile and one in summer by boat.”

The Rangers also play an important role in teaching Arctic survival skills and guiding southern Canadian troops when they come to the North. “For some of them its their first time seeing snow and the frozen ocean,” Calvin explains. “It’s a complete shock for some of them.” Sometimes it is as simple as teaching these visitors how to dress, and in other cases it is sharing traditional skills such as how to build an igloo. The reports that the Army produces after Arctic training exercises consistently highlight the valuable expertise that Inuit Rangers bring to the military, and how essential their partnership and support is to the Army when it operates in the Arctic.

Rangers also share their knowledge and teach one another, particularly when they are on the land. On serving with his grandfather, father, and other experienced Rangers. “Getting to travel with all of them and learn from all of them, its unbelievable,” Calvin explains. “We have

30 guys from all age groups in the Kugluktuk,” Calvin observes. “You couldn’t ask for a better group to learn from.”

The Rangers also share their knowledge with the Junior Rangers, who represent the future leaders not only of the Rangers but of the North itself. Calvin is proud that his son Brayden and his daughter Alycia are Junior Canadian Rangers, continuing the family’s long tradition of Ranger service.

Brayden became a JCR at the age of thirteen, and hopes to become a Ranger when he turns eighteen. He appreciates the valuable skills that he has learned as a JCR, from knot-tying to camping. He also highlights the opportunity that some Junior Rangers have to travel to Whitehorse for an Enhanced Training Session held each June, where they get to meet youth from across Canada’s three northern territories.

If he has kids, Brayden says he will “make sure” they also become Rangers someday. As a fourth-generation member of the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, he already upholds the family tradition of service and reaffirms the deep connection between Canadian Inuit and the Rangers. “I am proud to have so many family members in the Rangers and Junior Rangers, where we use our existing skills and knowledge of the area that we live in, which teaches us valuable like skills and how to be good citizens, and gives us a chance to be more involved in our community and our country” Baba explains. “Being a Ranger makes me feel more Canadian.”



77. Straight-shooter hits the mark: Paulatuk's Frank Green competes in Canadian Armed Forces Small Arms Concentration

Kassina Ryder

Northern News Services, 19 September 2016

PAULATUK - Frank Green remembers the first time he shot a gun as a 12-year-old on a caribou hunting trip outside Paulatuk with his family.

"When I first shot a gun at a young age, I was scared at first," he said. "The more I shot, the more I was familiarized with the weapon."

Green, a Canadian Ranger, is now a top marksman. His skills earned him a spot at the Canadian Armed Forces Small Arms Concentration (CAFSAC) competition after tryouts in Whitehorse, Yukon in June.

"The top shooters from the tryouts were selected to participate in this year's event," said Capt. Stephen Watton, communications officer with the First Canadian Ranger Patrol Group.

The CAFSAC took place from Sept. 5 to 17 in Ottawa, Ont. More than 500 participants from the Regular Force and Primary Reserve Force of the Canadian Army, the Canadian Rangers, the Royal Canadian Navy, the Royal Canadian Air Force and the RCMP competed in this year's event, as well as teams from the U.S. and the United Kingdom.

It's the first time in five years the First Canadian Ranger Patrol Group has entered a team, Watton said.

"It's a new experience and a good learning experience for everyone," he said.

Green, who competed in the service rifle matches, agreed.

"I'm learning, getting there," he said. "I'm having fun."

Getting a chance to compete against hundreds of skilled marksmen is one of the best parts of the event, he added.

"It's a whole new experience with all kinds of shooters from all Canadian Ranger patrol groups and also the United States as well and the U.K.," Green said. "It's different compared to competing back home where we're only competing with 15 to 20 rangers."

Green said it was his father and longtime Canadian Ranger Frank Green Sr. who first taught him how to shoot a gun. He also credited his father for sparking his interest in becoming a Canadian Ranger himself.

“He’s still in the ranger patrol as well,” Green said. “That was one of the reasons that got me into being a ranger.”

Green said his advice to anyone looking to improve their shooting skills is simple.

“Keep practicing,” he said. “The more you shoot, the better you get.”



*MCpl Frank Green
of Paulatuk on the
range, 2014*

78. A Rangers team on target: Northern members participate in Canadian Forces small arms competition

Beth Brown

Nunavut News/North, 19 September 2016

OTTAWA - A team of Northern Canadian Rangers took part in a marksmanship competition for the first time in five years, in Ottawa from Sept. 5 to 17 at the Connaught Ranges and Primary Training Centre.

The annual Canadian Armed Forces Small Arms Concentration brought together Rangers, reservists and regular force members as well as Canadian police forces and international military teams from the U.S. and the United Kingdom.

Capt. Steve Watton, team captain of the 1CRPG team said, “For Canadian Rangers it provides them with an opportunity to improve their marksmanship skills and knowledge in a controlled and focused environment.”

Seven Rangers of the 1CRPG team were there from Nunavut, four from the Northwest Territories and one from the Yukon. There were five teams of Canadian Rangers at the competition.

Competitors used their own service weapons, as they would use in their regular service roles, providing the opportunity for applicable skill development.

“When I’m getting the scores I am improving each match,” said Master Cpl. Nikki Michael, 32, of the Kimmurut patrol.

She said the experience is amazing. “I’m representing 1CRPG and meeting new people from other communities or countries.”

The Rangers used their 303 Lee Enfield rifles in six different shooting matches – from distances of 100, 200 and 300 metres – and three positions of standing, kneeling and prone. The matches had military names like Vimy, Normandy and Defence of Canada. Matches were shot outdoors in relays of 50 to 60 shooters.

“It was fun because I got to shoot more here,” said Ranger Jerry Smale, 21, of the Pond Inlet patrol. “Back home we don’t have that many bullets.”

Approximately 450 shooters and supporting staff participated in the Army organized event. The competition began in Quebec in 1868, and

has been held at the Connaught Ranges Primary Training Centre since 1921.

“Continuous development of small arms proficiency is essential for our soldiers,” stated Major-Gen. J.M. Lanthier, commander of the Canadian Army Doctrine and Training Centre Headquarters, in a news release.

“The Canadian Armed Forces Small Arms Concentration is part of a longstanding tradition that provides a renowned venue for military personnel to test and hone their core soldier skills, combat fitness and marksmanship.”

At the end of the competition, the shooters with the highest accumulative score from the Canadian Army Regular Force and Primary Reserve Force and Canadian Rangers are each awarded with a Queen’s Medal.



A team of shooters from 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group at the Canadian Forces Small Arms Concentration at Connaught Ranges near Ottawa in September 2016. In the front row, from left, are Warrant Officer Tom Harvey (team coach), Ranger Teema Palluq (Clyde River), Ranger Aniqnuq Michael (Kimmirut), Capt. Steve Watton (team captain), Ranger Julianna Aningat (Arviat), and Ranger Davidee Adams (Coral Harbour). In the back row, from left, are Ranger Shoaty Michael (Kimmirut), Ranger Jerry Smale (Pond Inlet), Ranger Frank Green (Paulatuk), Ranger Frank Johnstone (Whitehorse), Ranger Donovan Michael (Arviat), and Cpl. Carl Lemieux (storesman/driver).

79. Special day for Rangers

Five of Rankin’s best complete patrol, presented with service medals

Darrell Greer

Northern News Services, 30 November 2016

RANKIN INLET - Five members of the Rankin Inlet Patrol of the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group were recognized this past week for their years of dedicated service and completing a recent patrol in Rankin.

The patrol completion certificates and service medals were presented to the Rangers by Nunavut Commissioner Nellie Taptaqut Kusugak.

Ranger Sgt. Nellie Scharer and Rangers Herbert (Herb) Scharer, Wayne Ussak, Siatiak Ussak and Samuel Ayaruak received their patrol certificates, while Ayaruak, Sgt. Scharer and Herb also received long service medals.

Sgt. Scharer said the course was held over six days.

She said training focused on learning new skills, reinforcing sovereignty and improving survival skills on the land, including first aid and making a makeshift runway.

“We did one day of training on the land and the rest was done during evening classes,” said Sgt. Scharer.

“Officially we have three female Rangers on the Rankin Patrol, but most of the time it’s only me.





“I’ve been a Ranger for 13 years and I love learning new things from the guys.

“I want the guys to look at me as another Ranger, not as a female, because I don’t want to be treated any differently than anyone else, except for being a sergeant.”

Sgt. Scharer said the male Rangers in the Rankin Inlet Patrol are pretty good in honouring her request, and are quick to teach her new skills whenever she asks.

She said as Sergeant, it's important to her that every Ranger has their say when it comes to what the patrol does.

"I try very hard to be a good sergeant to my guys.

"I don't want to be seen as pushy, and I try to have the patrol do whatever they want, as long as everyone respects me and my rank.

"I do speak up any time they want to do something I don't agree with, and they're usually pretty good in respecting my decisions."

Sgt. Scharer said one of the things she loves most about being a Ranger is travelling out on the land.

She said she doesn't really care what time of year they go out on the land, but she doesn't want to see any more November patrols.

"The snow is just too powdery and there's too much snow for the Quad, but not enough for the snowmachine.

"Two of us were thrown off our machines during our recent patrol because of the snow conditions.

"I bruised up my knee a bit, but I'm good."

Herb was the Rankin Patrol's sergeant from 2007 until 2014.

He said he enjoyed the experience, but after seven years he decided it was time to let someone else give it a try.

"I'm just a plain Ranger now," laughed Herb.

"The patrol is like a democracy, so I can choose to step down, somebody else can choose to step up, and it's all voted on.

"I've been a Ranger for 13 years and I'm dedicated to it because I like to help people and my community.

"Being a Ranger is fun, and I like it when we go out on the land and enjoy ourselves."

Herb said the Rangers still have an important role.

He said part of the patrol exercise is about sovereignty, and flying the Canadian flag over the land to keep it claimed as our own.

"That's our most important role for Canada, and we have to keep that up. Some of us help with search and rescue when we can, but we do that as individual volunteers, not as Rangers."

Herb said the number of active Rangers on the Rankin Patrol has fallen dramatically in the past decade.

He said, hopefully, the numbers will rise again in the near future and restore the patrol back to its former glory.

"We're down to approximately 12 Rangers now.

“The numbers keep falling and there doesn’t seem to be many people interested in joining, although I’m not sure why.

“Almost everyone on our patrol has a fulltime job and sometimes it’s hard for us to be able to take time off, so we’d really like to see some people join who don’t work full-time.

“When Nellie and I joined the Rangers 13 years ago, there were more than 30 people involved and it was a lot of fun with a lot of good people, so, hopefully, we’ll see the numbers rise again.

“I’m confident they will if the right people step in and bring more and more of their friends along.”



Sgt. Herb Scharer operates an ice drill during Operation NUNALIVUT 2020.

80. Ready in red: Canadian Rangers get uniform upgrade

New raincoat has a waterproof shell and resembles gear worn by search-and-rescue technicians

Philippe Morin

CBC News, 4 December 2016



The Canadian Rangers are getting a new look.

The first photo of the new uniforms released by the Canadian Forces shows a jacket with reflective stripes and pockets. It resembles the kind of waterproof shell worn by search-and-rescue technicians.

Another new item is a fleece shirt.

The rangers have famously worn hooded sweatshirts for years with patrols relying on rangers' own equipment.

However the Forces are signalling a move towards new red coats and pants with a Cadpat camouflage design.

'You have to have your own gear'

Canadian Ranger Sergeant Wade Istchenko goes on patrols out of Haines Junction. He's also the MLA for Kluane in Yukon.

He says he's looking forward to seeing the new gear.

"When we first started the Ranger program, all we got was a red



Canadian Rangers use their own equipment, especially when it gets cold. This returning patrol, photographed in Inuvik NWT, has many people wearing locally-made fur hats and mittens. (Philippe Morin/CBC)

sweatshirt and a ballcap. And over the years we've slowly got combat pants, combat boots and more and more and more. And now the coats and the fleece are next in the list of things to get," he says.

Istchenko says the Rangers still use a lot of their own gear, including larger items, like vehicles.

"Part of being a Ranger is you have to have your own gear. Snowmobiles and boats, depending on the season. They pay you a rental for it, you get equipment rental usage for it and when it comes to clothing, most of the guys get pretty cold out there, we wear whatever we can get for real warm gear."

Istchenko says he wears hunting gear while on patrol.

He says in Yukon the tricky balance [is] to stay warm, but also allow for sweating while working.

"You're usually breaking trails out here, and that means you need to stop and get the chains out, cut a tree and clear some brush and keep on going," he says.

Many Rangers wear home-made mitts and hats, often made by family.

New coats look good, says sergeant

Istchenko says the new gear looks useful, even if it's not meant for Yukon winters.

"They'll be great for spring and fall. I think I'll still wear my warm winter coat when it's really cold out," he says.

He expects Rangers will wear the gear for ceremonial functions, such as when they participate in parades.

The Canadian Forces have not yet said when the new coats will be distributed in Yukon, NWT or Nunavut.

The new equipment is part of the same push that saw Rangers' rifles replaced.



"When we first started the Ranger program, all we got was a red sweatshirt and a ballcap," says Ranger Sergeant Wade Istchenko of the Haines Junction Yukon group. He says he's glad to see the new coats on the way. (Wade Istchenko)



81. Joining forces

Kirsten Fenn

News/North, 31 July 2017

It's early on the morning of July 16 and the sun struggles to peak through dark storm clouds as rain spits over Bear Rock near Tulita.

A cold wind whips through the air as a CC-138 Twin Otter from 440 Transport Squadron touches down on the local runway, unloading supplies and Tim Hortons donuts for a troop of young military men and Canadian Rangers camped nearby.

For several days, they've stationed themselves in the now-soggy backyard of two long-time local Rangers, making what looks like a small tent village metres away from a larger military tent filled with maps, cooking gear and an array of equipment.

The military, with Rangers from Deline and Tulita, have been trekking around the Sahtu as part of Operation NUNAKPUT, clearing an overgrown landing strip near Great Bear River and patrolling the waterway between the two communities.

The military operation, which ran from June 26 to July 20, is held annually to develop coordination between the navy, army, RCMP, Rangers and government departments in the event of a problem such as an environmental issue or search and rescue emergency.

But the Rangers are the glue that holds the operation together – the “eyes and ears” of the North who not only provide fuel, the occasional meal and places for the operation's personnel to set up camp, but knowledge of the local surroundings that is integral to navigating the North.

“Some of them have never been out to paddle before,” says Benny Doctor, a Tulita ranger of 20 years.

He's speaking about military personnel from the 2nd Battalion, Royal 22nd Regiment – an infantry unit from Quebec who took part in a leg of the operation in his community.

“The Deline team said they had to show them how to paddle on the lake,” Doctor says, dressed in his red ranger sweater and camouflage pants. “Towards the end, the ranger guide told me that they were getting used to it.”

Doctor is from Tulita and learned from his father how to read the water.

He taught those lessons to his grandson, 24-year-old Sgt. Archie Erigaktuk of the Tulita patrol of the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (1 CRPG), and now they're sharing that knowledge with others in this year's operation.

As a Ranger, Doctor says he knows how to survive on the land, hunt and travel by sleigh and snowmobile in the winter. In the summer, he knows how to make fire and understands which parts of the river are shallow, deep, safe or not safe to travel on.

Building a relationship between the Rangers and military is important, says Erigaktuk.

"They give us the resources to be trained for certain situations," he said, whether that's for search and rescue, a wildfire or other "potential hazards."

And the training isn't for show.

Shortly after the Rangers and infantry unit pulled their boats onto Tulita's shore following a day-long search and rescue exercise on July 16, a real emergency unfolded.

Leaders from the operation quickly halted post-training discussions as local RCMP received a distress call about a small Cessna aircraft experiencing engine failure outside the community.

The military hopped in a truck and drove to the local airport where the plane was attempting to glide in.

Erigaktuk doled out instructions to his Rangers on the beach: pack the boats with fuel, rations and prepare for a search in the bush in the event the plane does not land safely.

The local Rangers are familiar with the land. At the time of the emergency, they were already mapping out a possible rescue location and resources they could use to help.

"Especially on the land, you have to be knowledgeable and be quick in your response or things can go wrong really fast," Erigaktuk says the following day after the plane landed safely in Tulita. "That's why it's important for us to do our job and them respecting our job as much as we respect their job."

Operating in the North is particularly challenging, says Lt.-Col. Luis Carvallo, commanding officer of 1 CRPG and task force commander of this year's operation.



Benny Doctor takes part in a search and rescue exercise near Tulita for two missing canoeists during Operation NUNAKPUT 2017 . Doctor has been a ranger for 20 years. Kirsten Fenn/NNSL photo

“To be able to get sailors, airmen, army personnel, Rangers, boats, equipment – to get everything there requires a lot of logistics,” he said. “And in the North, nothing is simple.”

There’s the vastness of the land, the remoteness of communities and their limited resources that those in the operation must take into account.

They also need to ensure the operation isn’t overwhelming communities by bringing in more personnel than they can accommodate.

But Carvalho is a fan of “hiccups” in the operation. They’re an important learning experience, he says.

On July 18, the Royal Canadian Navy arrived slightly behind schedule in Tulita on three 32-foot-long jet boats while making their way back up the Mackenzie River.

The water had been extremely high during their trip from Yellowknife to Tuktoyaktuk, said Lieut. Jeff Horne, which led to problems.

“We were essentially sucking debris up into the boats and it caused deterioration on two of the impellers,” he said.

The boats still worked, but the problem wasn’t getting better.

So the navy stopped in Inuvik to fix the boats, leading to the operation’s delay.

“That again is a great opportunity, because when we as a military and navy go somewhere, we need to be able to sustain ourselves,” Horne says.

“We need to be able to identify that we need to be able to take a boat out of water for a part in order to conduct a repair. We need to work with people in the community, talk to the Rangers, who can pull a boat this size out of the water in Inuvik.”

The Rangers from 1 CRPG helped connect the navy from one community to the next throughout Operation NUNAKPUT.

They met the jet boats on the river when they approached the communities and arranged overnight camps at each stop as the navy traversed 4,100 kilometres of water along Great Slave Lake and the Mackenzie River, according to Joint Task Force North.

“Communities play a large role for any military operating anywhere around the world,” says Carvallo. “You can’t just barge in and assume that you can do anything you want.”

Whether stopped for a brief fuel-up or an overnight stay, Carvallo makes a point to meet Rangers and locals in communities throughout the operation.



Deployed members of Operation NUNAKPUT 2017 patrol from Inuvik to Aklavik along the Mackenzie River during Operation NUNAKPUT 2017 on July 12, 2017. Photo by Capt Soomin Kim, YK-2017-055-001.

Under the glow of the near-midnight sun at a campsite in Fort Simpson on July 18, Carvallo sits at a picnic table with Capt. Steve Nicoll.

...

Brig.-Gen. Mike Nixon, commander of JTFN, says each of the 140 personnel who took part in this year's operation have their own strengths.

"We all have different capabilities that complement each other, but we don't necessarily have the existing or standing operating procedures to quickly be able to operate together," Nixon says. "So that's one of the main reasons why we conduct an operation like NUNAKPUT."

Back in Tulita, before the navy heads out to finish the operation on the Mackenzie River, Carvallo pulls everyone aside.

He gives a short speech before presenting a special coin to Doctor and his wife for their hospitality in the operation – offering up space for a camp at their home, cooking a feast of moose stew, goose and more during the military's stay, and providing their expertise on the local surroundings.

Another goes to Erigaktuk for leadership.

"It's good to create those relationships and be a part of something," Erigaktuk tells *News/North*, speaking about the operation. "Part of something big, for us to feel good for ourselves and feel accomplished to go through search and rescues and things like that."



Gameti patrol, October 2016

82. Operation Nanook on the land

Northern News Service, 21 August 2017

Planes are a common sight for the people of Rankin Inlet, but the touchdown of a Royal Canadian Air Force CC-177 Globemaster got the hamlet talking.

The plane, which landed Aug. 14, carried troops from the south to begin Operation Nanook.

Currently in its 10th year, the annual, two-week operation runs until Aug. 25 and will see a peak of 260 participants, according to Joint Task Force Nunavut senior public affairs officer Maj. Josée Bilodeau. The 260 estimate includes members of the Canadian Army, Royal Canadian Air Force and Joint Task Force Support Component. Participants included members of government departments and members of 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (1CRPG).

The first week of the operation involved training for military personnel, who set up camp out on the tundra with the assistance of rangers from across the Kivalliq region, including Chesterfield Inlet, Whale Cove, Arviat and Rankin Inlet.



The Rangers were essential to the operation, according to Maj. Samantha Burch.

“They’re our guides to the North,” she said.

“They provide an intimate working knowledge (of the land) that we don’t have.”

Rangers served as guides for troops who headed out on the land on Aug. 16 and 17, choosing the best route for all-terrain vehicles across rocky — and sometimes swampy — tundra.

They also walked participants through survival training, teaching them how to make tools, track and build fires, as well as educating them about ground search-and-rescue, fishing and how to process a caribou.

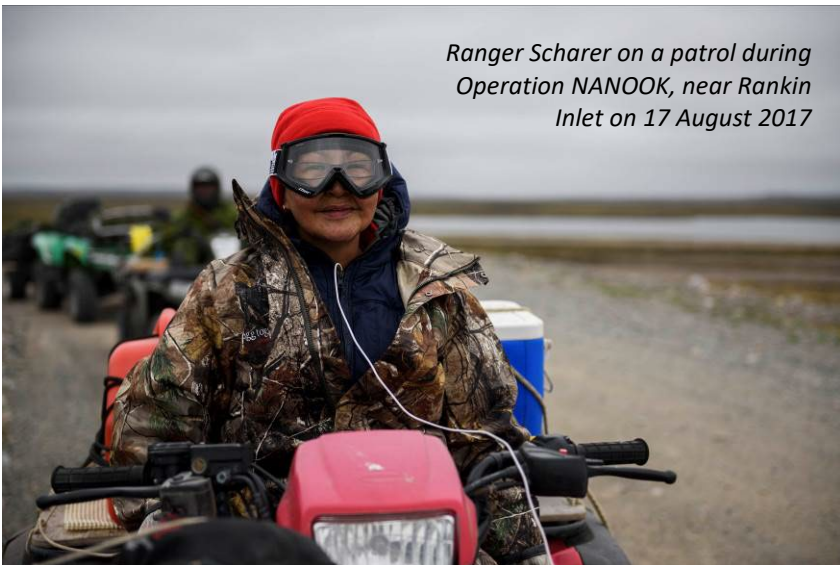
The company that was on the land Aug. 17 was comprised of an eight-person command headquarters and three platoons.

Burch said the operation helps to train participating units to work together.

“Combined arms exercises are very important,” she said.

“It increases our inter-operability.”

Bilodeau said many of the participants came from the Arctic Response Company Group with 38 Canadian Brigade Group headquartered in Winnipeg.



83. Honour and exercise

Darrell Greer

Nunavut News, 4 September 2017

The month of August was a busy, constructive and sentimental one for members of the Canadian Rangers Naujaat Patrol Group.

Twenty-one rangers took to the land with trainer Sgt. Frank Monaghan of Yellowknife on a week-long patrol from Aug. 9-16.

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Naujaat patrol leader Sgt. Oscar Kringayark said Monaghan is an “awesome” instructor and a great guy. He said one segment of the training they received was conducting a mock search-and-rescue exercise.

“We trained to improve our communication abilities and search by boat in a scenario of a couple of guys who had an accident while out on the land,” said Kringayark.

“After locating them we had to administer first aid and arrange to have them safely transported.”

The Naujaat patrol also held a special parade on Aug. 17 to honour a late, long-time member of the rangers, David Tuktudjuk.

A medal and certificate were presented to his widow, Mary Tuktudjuk, to commemorate David’s long and distinguished career.

“A lot of local people came in for the parade and presentation ceremony,” said Kringayark.

“It was a well-deserved honour for David, who was a longtime ranger and highly-respected elder within our group and the local community.”

Kringayark said certificates were presented to all the rangers who completed the beneficial training exercise.

“I found the exercise to be phenomenal,” he said “and it really improved the overall skill level of our patrol.”

“During the exercise, one of our ranger elders, David Nuluk, taught how to make rope out of a bearded seal. It was pretty awesome to watch and a lot of the young guys were really tuned into that.”

84. Rangers return from competition

News/North, 22 September 2017

Six of the NWT's best marksmen arrived home last week after spending the last month training for, and competing in, a high-profile shooting competition put on by the Canadian military.

None medalled, but they did better than last year and plan to put on an even stronger show next year.

A team of eight Canadian Rangers, and one spare, were sent down south to represent the NWT and Nunavut in the Canadian Armed Forces Small Arms Concentration, among hundreds of their peers from the armed forces around Canada.

The competition, known as CAFSAC, took place in Ottawa over 12 days in early and mid-September. The Rangers participated in seven competitions, shooting targets at distances of between 25 metres and 500 metres.

The Rangers were sent down on August 18 and spent the first two weeks training and CFB Petawawa and then the second two weeks competing.

When *News/North* reached Ranger Ella Archie at home in TK on Sept. 20, she'd only been home a day.

"It feels good to be home," said Archie.

The training was nothing like what she expected, she said, but was very constructive. Particularly helpful was training on what to do before pulling the trigger.

"[It was] a lot of shooting," said Archie. "We had to do each match, one every day. It kind of took a toll on some of us. We all managed to get through it and I'd say I did really well, and we all did pretty good at the competition."

She said the Rangers worked together really well as a team during the intense month of training and competing. Capt. Stephen Watton wasn't surprised at how well the team gelled.

"Any time you see a red T-Shirt, red ballcap, red hoodie, they certainly know each other," said Watton. "Rangers tend to stay together, stick together, work together."

The members of the team were selected at a gun camp held in Whitehorse this past May, among Rangers from across the North.

Archie says her skills improved a lot this year, and if she's invited to go again next year, she just may do it—but she'll cross that bridge when she comes to it.

Photo: Good shooters

Nunatsiaq News, 15 September 2017.



Eight Canadian Rangers from the Northwest Territories and Nunavut are among more than 500 shooters and support staff at the Canadian Armed Forces Small Arms Concentration 2017 held at the Connaught Ranges in Ottawa, Ont. from Sept. 4 to 17. CAFSAC is an international marksmanship event organized by the Canadian Army. Lee Enfield Rifle proficiency is a fundamental skill for Canadian Rangers just as service rifle expertise is important for all Canadian Armed Forces members. Front Row: Capt. Steve Watton, Team Captain (Yellowknife); Sgt. Allan Pogotak (Uluhaktok); Ranger Eena Kooneeluisie (Qikiqtarjuaq); Cpl. Samantha Dick (Aklavik); Master Cpl. Ella Archie (Aklavik). Back Row: Cpl. Karl Lemieux, Team Quartermaster (Yellowknife); Sgt. Frank Green (Paulatuk); Master Cpl. Dexter Lafferty (Fort Resolution); Sgt. Jay Mosesie (Qikiqtarjuaq); Sgt. Guy Anctil, Team Coach (Yellowknife). Missing from photo is Joey Pogotak (Uluhaktok). (PHOTO BY CPL. JAX KENNEDY, CANADIAN FORCES)

85. Rangers changes coming soon

News/North, 1 October 2017

While the deployment of new rifles to replace the aging arsenal of Lee Enfields has been delayed until next year, the Canadian Rangers will be soon getting some much-needed boosts on the administrative side of things.

Canada’s military ombudsman, Gary Walbourne, has been leading a review on the Rangers program since October 2016. It is now complete and on the desk of Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan. Walbourne expects it to be made public by the beginning of November.

While this review has been happening, the Department of National Defence has been making its own improvements on the structure of the program. While this has forced the ombudsman’s team to be quick on their feet in their review — “kind of like building a plane while flying it,” says Walbourne – the ombudsman says he’s encouraged that the department has been seeing the same issues.

On Sept. 20, the ombudsman released an update on his office’s website stating the department has revised a policy outlining the role, mission and tasks of the Rangers. Included in this is guidance on a variety of administrative issues, which are at the core of how the group functions.

“Administration is one of the large pieces that they’re going to have to tackle,” says Walbourne. “It’s no great secret — I’ve been telling people in my updates — a lot of what we’re running in against is administrative



gaps in the process or a policy, not clear definition or wording in the policy to allow certain groups in or out.”

These gaps result in all sorts of issues on the ground. In March, Walbourne released findings that there were considerable delays in reimbursement or compensation for damaged equipment. It took eight to sometimes 17 weeks to process the claims.

“There will be changes coming to the administration and especially for the recapture of equipment costs,” says Walbourne, saying many delays stem from the way paperwork is processed or how often approvals authorities can be on the ground in the many remote Northern locations in which Rangers live and work.

Another issue from the review is work-life balance for the Rangers Instructors, who travel to communities and run exercises, are responsible for administration, relay all changes in administrative policy and procedure to the Rangers and institute training programs. Walbourne says there simply aren’t enough instructors.

The roll-out of replacement rifles for the Canadian Rangers’ aging arsenal of Lee Enfield rifles with more modern weaponry, Cold 6820 rifles, has been pushed back to early 2018 from this fall.

The new rifles will then be phased into use nation-wide over two years, according to Jessica Lamirande, senior communications advisor at the Department of National Defence, but did not specify when Rangers in the NWT might begin to receive them.



Photo: Clyde River Ranger inducted into Order of Military Merit

Nunatsiaq News, 13 November 2017.



Clyde River's Levi Palituq, a 22-year veteran in the Canadian Rangers, is inducted as a Member of the Order of Military Merit by Canada's new Governor General, Julie Payette, at a Rideau Hall ceremony Nov. 10. "Created in 1972, the Order of Military Merit recognizes meritorious service and devotion to duty by members of the Canadian Armed Forces," the Governor General's website says. Palituq is a member of 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, in Yellowknife, N.W.T. (Photo courtesy of Governor General)

86. Protectors of the north

Yellowknifer, 16 March 2018

Raisins in the pudding is an analogy used by Joint Task Force North Maj. Conrad Schubert to describe the role of the Canadian Rangers in the North.

The Canadian Armed Forces has three bureaus – one in each of the territories – the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Schubert said the Canadian Ranger Patrol Group help the forces keep an active presence in remote Northern locations.

“They are the extra raisins in the pudding that help us enhance our knowledge of the North,” said Schubert during Operation Nunaliivut on Monday.

The Canadian Rangers played an active role during last weekend’s operations in Cambridge Bay and Resolute. The rangers were out in the field helping soldiers build windbreaks on Intrepid Bay, fixing broken snowmobiles and sharing knowledge on surviving the extreme cold.

Brig. Gen. Mike Nixon said whenever forces travel North of the 60th parallel there is always a ranger aspect close by.

“It means everything. When you travel east-to-west across the Arctic, each group has a very unique skill set for the areas in where they reside,” said Nixon. “The rangers are a part of the army, the two parties collaborating up here is no different than two divisions in the south getting together and conducting operations together.”

Matthew Manik, 37, was at Intrepid Bay on Tuesday to instruct members of the Second Battalion Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry on Tuesday. During the mission Matthew was teaching soldiers the proper technique used to create windbreaks. To make the windbreaks, Manik instructed soldiers to carve igloo style blocks out of the snow. Soldiers then stacked the blocks of snow three-rows high until Manik stepped in and tore it down. Manik then took matters into his own hands carving and stacking the snow in front of the tent.

“They are always asking questions,” said Manik. “I just tell them what I do and then they try and do it the way I said.”

Ranger MCpl Matthew Manik



Though part of the military, not all decisions made by the armed forces are made with the thought of the rangers in mind. When asked if the rangers were talked to in regards to the CAF's initiative to design warmer gear, Defence Research Development Canada scientist Wendy Sullivan-Kwantes said the rangers were not consulted, adding she doesn't feel they would be receptive to the forces' recommendations.

In 2016 during Operation Arctic Ram, Defence Research Development Canada studied the impact of cold weather injuries on soldiers. Their research shows 80 soldiers were affected by some aspect of frostbite. However the same research was not conducted on members of the Canadian Rangers.

Cold weather injuries are the number one reason why soldiers are taken out of these types of operations, said Arctic Operations Advisory, Capt. Wayne Leblanc.

"We never question that it's an issue of our kit, if there is an issue we acknowledge that it's being worked on," said Leblanc. "Fortunately for the past three years since Sgt. Woodworth and I have been up here we have not lost a soldier to frostbite."

Both the rangers and the armed forces wear similar gear, however, the material used for the ranger's gear often comes from furs and pelts and are handcrafted. The armed forces use synthetic materials scientifically designed for the cold.

“If you’re going to do research and include the Canadian Rangers in a completely different project,” said DRDC scientist, Wendy Sullivan-Kwantes. “There is an initiative by the Canadian government to do research on the Indigenous population in the North and that’s something we will look at in the future ... but to date when we bring our troops to the Arctic from the south what they would do is typically different than what the rangers are used to doing on their land.”

Sullivan-Kwantes adds the rangers are at risk of the same type of cold weather injuries.

There is approximately 1,500 rangers dispersed throughout the North, a majority being from First Nations, Metis and Inuit backgrounds.



Ranger Debbie Iqaluk, Resolute Bay patrol

87. Operation Nanook swings into high gear; Rangers will play key role

Derek Neary

Northern News Service, 6 August 2018

Sgt. Roger Hitkolok plans to lead seven other Kugluktuk Rangers on a boat trip to Victoria Island this week to help track activity in the Northwest Passage.

They're part of Operation Nanook, an annual military sovereignty, safety and security exercise that will ramp up over the next several weeks.

Hitkolok expects to be gone for six days, returning on Aug. 13, and then make a similar trek again in September.

"There's so much ships going through now that people don't know about," Hitkolok said. "They (the military) just want to see what's going on out there. We've got to take some information and pictures, if we can get close enough to take pictures."

Approximately 50 Rangers from several communities and an Air Force Twin Otter will keep an eye on increasing traffic in the Northwest Passage into September. There's also growing activity in the air with polar route flights rising to 14,000 in 2016 from 1,000 in 2003, according to the Canadian Armed Forces.

The higher volume of commercial, research and tourist traffic poses safety and security risks; emergency responses to natural and human-caused disasters must be rehearsed; and there's widening interest in Arctic fossil fuels and minerals, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) stated.

"The CAF acknowledges the importance and unique nature of the Canadian Arctic by considering it a theatre of operations, where Operation Nanook complements other Arctic operations by providing training, partnership building and (research and development) opportunities to our mission partners," stated Captain Ian Grant, a military public affairs officer.

The RCMP, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Canadian Coast Guard, and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans are also participating in this year's operation, which officially kicked off on July 16.

Last year's Operation Nanook involved close to 900 soldiers, Rangers and civilians combined. It was split between Rankin Inlet and Voisey's Bay, Labrador.

Hitkolok, who has been a Ranger since 1993, said the Arctic military exercises are beneficial because they allow southern military personnel to get a sense of what life is like in the North.

He said the time on the land can bring some pleasant surprises as well. He recounted an expedition where he was helping to guide Junior Rangers a few years ago.

"We took them out west of Kugluktuk. When we were there a big herd came through, of caribou. It was the middle of the night. We watched these caribou until we went to sleep. They were right outside the tent. There were so many," Hitkolok recalled. "The young Junior Rangers were so excited about that."



Sergeant Roger Hitkolok, Kugluktuk patrol

88. Members sworn in for KFN section of Canadian Rangers

Paul Bickford

Hay River Hub, 8 August 2018

On July 30, six residents of the Hay River Dene Reserve were sworn in as the first members of a newly-formed K'atlodeeche First Nation (KFN) section of the Hay River Canadian Ranger Patrol.

Two KFN members who were already Canadian Rangers will also be part of the new section, while another two KFN members' applications are being processed.

Catherine Heron, the band manager with KFN, said she is very pleased the new section has been formed.

“What we're trying to do is we're trying to work collaboratively with Hay River in many different areas and our goal is to build that relationship with them,” she said.

The new section has been set up under a letter of agreement between KFN and the Canadian Armed Forces.

The section leaders will be chosen from the KFN members, but it will remain under the command of the Hay River Canadian Ranger Patrol and the Canadian Armed Forces.

Under the letter of agreement, any on-the-land activities being planned within KFN traditional territory must involve advance consultation with the First Nation.

According to a KFN news release, Chief Roy Fabian stated at the swearing-in ceremony that the agreement is in keeping with the spirit and intent of Treaty 8, whereby KFN agreed to share the land with Canada but retained its own level of jurisdiction over its traditional territory.

Capt. Dave McEachern, officer commanding of A Company of the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (1CRPG) which includes patrols all over the North, was on hand for the swearing-in ceremony.

McEachern said the agreement was signed in April between KFN and the Canadian Armed Forces.

“It is very unique within 1CRPG,” he said. “I think this is the only agreement we have with a First Nation.”



A new K'atlodeeche First Nation section of the Hay River Canadian Ranger Patrol became a reality on July 30. The eight members of the section – six new Canadian Rangers and two who already belonged to the Hay River Patrol – are, front, left to right, Verna Buggins and Eddy Lau-a Jr.; and, back, left to right, Rose Mary Buggins, Irene Graham, Lorne Poitras, Robert Lamalice, Brendan Boucher and Henry Tambour.

McEachern pointed to a number of benefits from the agreement.

“It allows the 1CRPG to get out more, to have access to more of the patrol’s area of operations,” he explained. “The Hay River Patrol’s area of operation extends in a 150-km radius around the town of Hay River. So it’s a very good thing.”

Plus, McEachern noted it gives KFN a voice in activities that are going to be happening on its traditional territory.

“I think the inclusion of KFN within the Hay River Patrol can only make the patrol get better and stronger and serve the local community better,” he said.

McEachern noted that, when the Hay River Patrol was established in 2011, there were a lot of KFN members on it, but the number fell for several reasons, such as family responsibilities and illness.

“We’re just kind of realigning the patrol to be 100 per cent inclusive of all the people who live in the area,” he said of the new section.

McEachern noted that all three sections of the Hay River Canadian Ranger Patrol will operate as one patrol.

A Canadian Ranger is a reservist in the Canadian Armed Forces.

One of the potential Canadian Rangers now in the application process is Heron.

She said she wants to become a Canadian Ranger to be a role model in her position.

“Just to be more of a supportive person as a band manager for the people in the community,” she said.

Plus, Heron wants to show that people can do pretty much anything if they put their minds to it.



89. Ranger Ookookoo Quaraq has been protecting the land for 54 years

Derek Neary

Nunavut News, 23 August 2018

Canadian Ranger Ookookoo Quaraq has been a member of the Rangers' Pond Inlet Patrol since September 1964. He's a retired maintenance worker with the Department of Public Works. Photo by Master Cpl. Gerald Cormier



Ookookoo Quaraq has never tired of search and rescue training exercises and teaching younger Rangers how to build iglus so they can survive on the land.

He's been doing it for 54 years.

There were few Nunavut Rangers in 1964 when Quaraq enlisted to help address the need, he says. He was around 20 years old at the time.

Since then, he's been on multiple patrols to the North Pole.

“He’s very proud of going there three times,” interpreter Christine Ootova says. “He went (one time) on a sunny day and he said it was quite an experience for him.”

The number of exercises has increased, the amount of equipment has grown and the technological advances have been numerous over those 54 years, Quaraq acknowledges.

“He prefers it today,” Ootova says after asking him if patrols are better than in the past. “Sometimes it’s really hard but he still is a Ranger and he enjoys what he does.”

Something else that has changed over the decades is the weather, sometimes making travel by snowmobile and all-terrain vehicles more perilous.

“Climate change has really affected the North. The ice is starting to freeze later than it used to before and it takes longer for the ice to freeze (in the fall) now because of climate change,” says Quaraq. “Now it’s unpredictable. One day it would be clear blue sky and then all of a sudden it will be windy... We used to have endless, beautiful blue sky in Pond Inlet, now it’s cloudier than it used to be.”

Despite the danger, he’s never come close to losing his life on the land, he says. The worst he’s suffered was an injured back when he fell off his snowmobile.

In addition to a Commissioner’s long-service award, Quaraq has earned the Canadian Decoration (4th Clasp), Special Service Medal with Ranger Bar, Queens Diamond Jubilee Medal and the Canadian Forces Decoration, according to 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group.

How much longer will he serve?

“There were a couple of times that he wanted to retire but he knows so much about the land and survival skills and they need an elder to guide them,” says Ootova. “He wants to continue being a Ranger but he’s not sure how long.”

90. Operation Nanook gathers forces

Michele LeTourneau

Nunavut News, 4 September 2018



Canadian Rangers Moses Iqqaqsaq of Iglulik and Jay Killiktee of Clyde River – seen here on the flight deck of the Canadian warship HMCS Charlottetown anchored in Frobisher Bay Aug. 27 – spent almost two weeks aboard the ship. Michele LeTourneau/NNSL photo

When the call came from 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group headquarters in Yellowknife asking Moses Iqqaqsaq of Iglulik if he wanted to head out to a navy ship, the response was simple.

“I said yes,” Iqqaqsaq said, sitting on the flight deck of the HMCS *Charlottetown* anchored in Frobisher Bay.

He flew to Iqaluit August 13, and was joined by fellow Ranger Jay Killiktee of Clyde River as two members of the Canadian Armed Forces participating in Operation Nanook 2018, a joint effort between this country’s variety of protective forces. The operation takes place each year across the North.

As experts of the land, Iqqaqsaq and Killiktee were consistently praised by the personnel aboard the warship. They also acted as polar bear monitors around the air cadet camp.

This edition of the Arctic operation was supposed to take place on Devon Island, much farther North, but HMCS *Charlottetown* Commander Nathan Decicco said the ice in Lancaster Sound was really

thick this year for the first time in several years, and his ship is not an ice-breaking vessel.

Iqqaqsaq says the work with the army on this trip was more difficult than his previous Nanook experience because, unlike a winter operation, army personnel have to carry all the gear on their backs rather than load it on qamutiik.

Both men, who together have almost half a century experience with the Rangers, say they found being on the massive warship exciting.

“We learned a lot about the people on the ship,” said Killiktee, adding living on the ship for almost two weeks was good.

Going to Nuuk, Greenland, was a special part of the trip for Iqqaqsaq and Killiktee.

“It was our first time we went to Greenland,” said Iqqaqsaq.

...



91. Boost to Rangers good for all

Editorial Board

Yellowknifer, 26 September 2018

Interest in the Arctic has been heating up in recent years, as climate change has turned up the temperature, melting ice in the Northwest Passage.

After years of governments placing the issue of Arctic sovereignty on the back burner, it appears the Trudeau Liberals have stopped worrying about the needs of southern Canada – Ontario and Quebec, in particular – just long enough to airlift some much needed money to the North.

This isn't just about national pride, as there are some legitimate security issues regarding the countless potential air and maritime approaches into North America from the Great White North.

So while Canada might not be the prime target of an invasion or terrorist attack, we could be collateral damage for some sinister types heading to the United States.

Not since Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper announced plans in 2007 to stake Canada's claims in the Arctic with a bold and expensive military campaign have we seen the governing party in Ottawa show some real concern about securing the North.

Who can forget the stunt Russia pulled back then, planting its flag on the Arctic Ocean seabed beneath the North Pole.

But in a new defence policy earlier this year – after failing on most Northern files since coming to power in 2015 – the Liberals have finally looked North.

In June, Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan unveiled the Liberal government's long-awaited vision for expanding the Canadian Armed Forces, with promises of more vehicles, surveillance and presence in the region.

And, as *Yellowknifer* discovered recently, that will include a massive and expensive new headquarters in Yellowknife for the Canadian Rangers who patrol all three territories.

The Department of National Defence (DND) plans to build a 82,000-square-foot facility, expected to open in 2024 with the construction beginning as early as 2020. It's not known where the facility will be located in the city but the project is estimated to cost between \$50 million

and \$99 million and will include offices, and an assembly space, which will double as a drill hall and warehouse and garage space.

It will serve as the headquarters for the 1st Canadian Rangers Patrol Group (1 CRPG), which boasts close to 1,800 Rangers in 60 patrols across the three territories. It will also inject a lot of money directly and indirectly into the economy, with employment on the construction site.

The 1 CRPG consists of close to 1,800 Rangers in 60 patrols. Acting as the legendary “eyes and ears” of the regular military, the largely Indigenous force provides lightly equipped, self-sufficient, mobile forces to conduct sovereignty patrols and monitoring for the North Warning System. Rangers also train in activities such as first aid, ground search and rescue, leadership, navigation and weapon safety.

There are also more than 1,400 Junior Canadian Rangers (JCRs) in 44 communities across the North.

While DND media relations officer Andrew McKelvey stated in an email it is too soon to gauge what, if any, effect this new facility will have on recruitment, having proper facilities certainly can’t hurt.

And the new headquarters announcement came at the same time the DND announced that it’s close to launching the first of six offshore Arctic patrol ships.

And last spring, the federal government announced it would finally outfit the Rangers with .308-calibre C19 rifles – replacing the Lee Enfield rifles in service for the past 71 years.

Minister Sajjan’s mandate letter stated he is expected to “renew Canada’s focus on surveillance and control of Canadian territory and approaches, particularly our Arctic regions, and increase the size of the Canadian Rangers.”

Not only is that a positive step toward rebuilding the country’s military presence in the North but it could help people in and out of Yellowknife find good jobs that will help themselves, their families, the North and the country as a whole.



Photo: Nunavut Remembers

Nunatsiaq News, 1 November 2018.



Nunavut remembers: These four men, among the first Canadian Rangers in Pond Inlet, stand together at the Baffin community's Remembrance Day ceremony, held today, at 11 a.m. in St. Timothy's Anglican Church. While they are not the strongest now, Sgt. Titus Allooloo told the congregation, they were chosen to serve as Canadian Rangers because of their skills as hunters and their ability to survive self-sufficiently on the land in the Arctic. During the ceremony and following church service, Gamalial Kilukishak, left, Ham Kadloo, Paniloo Sangoya and Ludy Pudluk were seated in a place of honour at the front of the church, while attendees sang O Canada and Amazing Grace in Inuktitut and listened to a reading of the John McCrae poem, In Flanders Field. About 11 other Rangers from Pond Inlet took part in the ceremony. Each Ranger placed a poppy on a wreath and saluted while facing the flags of Canada, Nunavut and the Canadian Rangers. (Photo by Beth Brown)

92. Infantry reserve drills survival skills near Yellowknife

Brett McGarry

Yellowknifer, 30 January 2019

Out on Peg Lake, Yellowknife-based C Company of the Loyal Edmonton Infantry Reserve, took part in a military training exercise known as Wolverine Blizzard 19 during the weekend of Jan 25.

The group, weighed down by gear, skied roughly four kilometres across Kam Lake and arrived at Peg Lake in two hours to set up camp late Friday evening.

“We train at night quite a bit,” Master Cpl. Greg Kinsman said. “We work on communicating through hand signals and getting used to moving at night. With the snow it’s pretty light out but we also get to use night vision monacles sometimes.”

The following morning, the soldiers practised tactical patrolling with snowshoes as well as undertaking a retrieval mission to find stashed food rations.

Cpl. Micheal Camille and Ranger Charlie Quitte from Behchoko joined the exercises to impart practical knowledge to the soldiers on how to live in a winter landscape in an emergency situation.

Part of that training included practising making improvised shelters such as a lean-to out of pine branches and a quinzhee – shelters made from piling up and packing snow before digging out the centre.

The Rangers also showed the reserve soldiers the basics of snaring rabbits with wire.

“Bringing a small piece of copper wire is worth being able to set snares,” Cpl. Ryan Collier said. “You also want to set them near tracks and build a barrier to drive them to the snare. It really only takes five minutes of work to set one up.”

After working on improvised shelters and snares, the reserve unit practised skijoring behind a snowmobile, or a light over-snow vehicle (LOSV).

“The purpose of skijoring is to mobilize as many troops as possible, as quickly as possible,” said Capt. Gerald Fillatre. “With just one LOSV, up to eight soldiers can mobilize to a remote location in a matter of minutes.”

Master Cpl. Kinsman described the activity as “fun,” adding that it’s “something we’ve practice a bit.” Kinsman also mentioned some members of C Company will become part of a team in the Frostbite 50, a Yellowknife snowshoe and ski run held every March.

In the final evening of Wolverine Blizzard 19, the soldiers constructed an improvised shelter as quickly as possible while simulating giving first aid to a soldier with hypothermia.

The reserve regiment participates in extended weekend practices once per month, often going to Edmonton.

Last weekend’s exercise took place on public trails and handfuls of civilian snowmobilers passed through while the exercises took place.

Fillatre noted that he always encourages citizens to stop and talk with members of the regiment.

“We always want the public to know what we’re doing. It’s a great opportunity to engage with the community and let them know that we’re always looking to recruit.”

Though the mood was often light and the soldiers said they enjoyed themselves, camping in tight quarters and exercising in extreme winter elements can be challenging.

“It’s certainly difficult,” Master Cpl. David Chafe said. “But now in my career here I can have more of a presence instructing the young guys and give them the discipline, skills and confidence, and I enjoy that.”

Canadian Ranger from Behchoko shows officers from the Joint Command and Staff Program at Canadian Forces College on a visit to the NWT how to set a trap, 2016



93. Hay River Canadian Rangers finally get new rifles

Paul Bickford

Hay River Hub, 7 May 2019



*Members of the Hay River Canadian Ranger Patrol, including Master Corporal Kevin Lafferty, left, and Corporal Kayla Hoff, right, have received the new C-19 Ranger Rifle to replace the Lee-Enfield Mark 4 Rifle, which Canadian Rangers have used since 1947. In the background is Lieutenant-Colonel Tim Halfkenny of Yellowknife, the commanding officer of the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group.
Paul Bickford/NNSL photo*

The Hay River Canadian Ranger Patrol has received its long-awaited new rifles.

The C-19 Ranger Rifles were presented during training and shooting practice from May 2-6.

The new rifles will replace the .303-calibre Lee-Enfield Mark 4 Rifle, which Canadian Rangers have used since 1947.

The C-19 is a specially-designed .308-calibre, bolt-action rifle that is more robust and can perform reliably in temperatures below freezing, which is essential to members of the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group who work and live in Canada's North.

Master Corporal Kevin Lafferty likes the new rifle.

“It’s smooth. It’s updated. It’s well-balanced,” he said. “It’s well thought out for the purposes of the Ranger.”

Lafferty even said Canadian Rangers are happy that it’s taken so long to get the new rifle because it has gone through so many hands to make it right.

The master corporal has been a member of the Hay River Ranger Patrol since it was formed almost 10 years ago.

Lafferty will be keeping his Lee-Enfield, under a program that will allow Rangers to retain the rifle if they meet a number of strict licensing, safety and security conditions.

“I use it all the time hunting,” he noted.

Corporal Kayla Hoff also hopes to be able to keep her Lee-Enfield rifle, noting it would be a piece of history.

“I mean it’s old, but it works,” she said of her rifle, which is from the 1950s.

Lieutenant-Colonel Tim Halfkenny of Yellowknife, the commanding officer of the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group across Canada’s North, said the new rifle has been designed specifically for Canadian Rangers.

“You can tell from the red stock, and the Ranger crest on it,” he said.

The C-19 Rifle – built by Colt Canada – underwent rigorous cold-weather testing in the development and design phase, and was field tested by Canadian Rangers.

Among other things, the bolt handle is bigger and it has a large trigger guard which can be used while a Ranger is wearing gloves.

Halfkenny was on hand for the introduction of the new rifles in Hay River.

“I’m very happy that the rifle is getting issued,” he said.

“We’re just starting the process,” he added. “April was the first month that we started actually issuing. So it’s about six communities that are done so far.”

That means the Hay River Canadian Ranger Patrol, which includes 32 members in the town and on the Hay River Reserve, is among the first in the North to receive the new rifles.

“This is going to be a long process,” said Halfkenny. “It’s probably going to take almost three years to issue across the territories.”

It’s not just a simple matter of handing out the new rifles to members of a patrol.

There are safety, reliability and training requirements, along with

background checks, that have to be completed for each Canada Ranger to receive a new rifle.

“The C-19 is also used by other elements in the Canadian Armed Forces,” said Halfkenny. “While it is a hunting rifle for the purposes of Rangers, it is still a Canadian Armed Forces weapon system. So they’ve established gateways. So this training that they’re undergoing is part of that gateway. They have to learn safe handling from a Canadian Armed Forces safety perspective and complete a personal weapons test on a range before we’ll issue them the rifle.”

Search and rescue personnel will also be issued the rifle, and it will be used to train snipers.

Halfkenny noted the rifles are not being issued to the Canadian Rangers for any military purpose in the North.

“They’re all there as the community link and a Canadian Armed Forces presence – call it an early-warning presence,” he said. “The Rangers are the best ones who know when something is out of place in the Arctic, absolutely the best people. They know the land.”

Halfkenny added Canadian Rangers also assist civil authorities with such things as ground search and rescue.



Rangers from Deline practice search and rescue, 2016

94. Rangers train on new C-19 rifles outside Iqaluit

Michele LeTourneau

Nunavut News, 20 June 2019.



Patrol Sgt. Kevin Kullualik of the Iqaluit Rangers trains on the new C-19 rifle, which replaces the old Lee Enfields in service since the 1940s. Michele LeTourneau/NNSL photo

The C-19 rifle and the accompanying kit have been delivered to Iqaluit Rangers. The roll-out across the North will continue until 2021. Michele LeTourneau/NNSL photo

Fourteen of Iqaluit's Canadian Rangers gathered just outside of town Monday to train on their new, long-awaited rifles.

Training took place all week, June 14 to 20.

"We're just getting the feel of it, now. They're a lot better than the .303. They're shorter. They're lighter. And better sights," said Patrol Sgt. Kevin Kullualik.

The C-19 rifle is based on the Tikka T3 and replaces the .303 Lee-Enfield Mark 4, in service in the North since 1947.

The smaller weapon is salt-water tested, cold-weather tested, has a better punch power, and fires longer bullets.

The conventional military weapon is a gas-operated semi-automatic, which is not ideal for the Arctic.

"In the Arctic you want to use a bolt-action weapon that has minimal moving parts," said Canadian Forces Master Warrant Officer Ryan Mitchell.

"It will perform in an austere environment when it's -50, -70."

The bullet is a .308 and will be produced for many years. They can also be bought directly by Rangers. Finally, the trigger guard is larger and can accommodate heavy gloves.

Sgt. Louis Robichaud says the weapon has "good longevity."

Parts are readily available for repairs, unlike the old Enfield.

Robichaud says 1 Canadian Rangers Patrol Group was overdue to receive these new rifles.

"Now that the rifle's getting issued, they're happy. They're enjoying having some new equipment and trying it out," he said.

The Rangers will have opportunities to comment over the next year or two on how the C-19 performs.

For now, Kullualik says they seem like an awesome rifle, and appear to be easier to take care of.

"We're training on that, how to clean them, how to maintain the rifle," he said.

About the Lee Enfields, Kullualik says since the 1940s they've been passed on from Ranger to Ranger.

One of the Rangers' responsibilities is to look out for Canadian military personnel on Northern exercises, which includes watching out for predators.

Photos: Kugluktuk Rangers scout for new range

Nunavut News, 14 February 2020.

Eighteen members of the Kugluktuk Ranger patrol geared up and mounted their snowmobiles on a mission to identify a new winter shooting range on Jan. 25. Sgt. Roger Hitkolok said the location they selected is approximately 30 km from the community. The Rangers are looking forward to testing new C-19 rifles in April and may add a few new members to their unit that month, said Hitkolok.



Bearing the Canadian flag, members of the Kugluktuk Rangers depart the community on a mission to find a new shooting range on Jan. 25. Photos courtesy of the Kugluktuk Rangers / Whitney Lackenbauer



Roger Hitkolok has been a sergeant with the Ranger patrol in Kugluktuk for close to 25 years.



The headlights from Rangers' snowmobiles pierce the darkness as they traverse the landscape outside of Kugluktuk in late January.



Eighteen Rangers from Kugluktuk took part in an excursion to identify a new shooting range in late January. The Rangers are expecting new C-19 rifles to be delivered in April.



From left, MCpl David Enogaloak, MCpl Floyd Kaitak, MCpl Baba Pedersen, and Sgt. Roger Hitkolok take care of some administrative duties.



95. The Canadian Rangers, community resiliency, and COVID-19

P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Peter Kikkert, *NWT News/North*, 5 April 2020

These are unprecedented times. This week, the Canadian military stated that it sees no “greater threat” to Canadians than the coronavirus. Accordingly, Minister of National Defence Harjit Sajjan outlined plans under Operation Laser for the Canadian Armed Forces to support government responses to the pandemic, including mobilizing up to 24,000 members of the Regular and Reserve Forces to meet domestic needs.

Northern Canadians will certainly note that these announcements include activation of Canadian Rangers to full-time readiness to assist their communities. “These flexible teams are capable of operating as local response forces to assist with humanitarian support, wellness checks, natural disaster response and other tasks as required,” Sajjan explained. “Canadian Ranger patrols will be available to enhance our understanding of the needs of the northern, remote and Indigenous communities, and we will be ready to respond as required.”

Commonly described as the military’s eyes, ears, and voice in remote communities, the Rangers’ leadership, organization, and training often makes them the de facto lead during local states of emergency. Examples include avalanches, flooding, extreme snowstorms, and power plant shutdowns, to forest fires and water crises. Over the years, Rangers have played many roles, from delivering supplies to performing community evacuations.

Ranger patrols have even responded to a pandemic in recent history, supporting health officials in conducting mass H1N1 vaccine clinics in the Arctic. Their effectiveness in times of crisis flows from the relationships, networks, and partnerships that they have in their communities, their familiarity with local cultures, fluency in Indigenous languages, and the trust that they have earned from their fellow community members.

Under Operation LASER, the military is prudent in turning to the Rangers in the North. Although Rangers are not trained in primary health care delivery, they are well positioned to support those who are. They know their communities, who is most vulnerable, and where support and assistance might be required.

Their specific roles and responsibilities remain to be determined, but there is little doubt that they will be involved in community wellness checks, supporting people who might be inflicted with COVID-19 (or at high risk of becoming so), and distributing supplies like groceries. They might assist local health officials in setting up remote clinics or testing facilities. As in the past, Rangers will also serve as a valuable conduit between their communities and government agencies that might be called upon to respond to a potential community outbreak, with important roles in passing reliable information about local needs.

In executing these duties, the military has made it clear that the health and well-being of the Rangers is a highest priority. They will not be enforcing laws or asked to directly interact with or move people with confirmed or likely cases of COVID-19. Others will perform these roles.

How the Rangers will receive protective equipment and associated training in their communities remains to be determined.

While the scale of this pandemic response is unprecedented, the Rangers (and other members of the Canadian Armed Forces) are well positioned and prepared to work with territorial emergency measures organizations and health agencies. Over the last decade, federal and territorial partners have contemplated pandemic scenarios and practiced coordinated responses in Operation Nanook exercises and during meetings of the Arctic Security Working Group.

The Rangers' activation fits within this broader "Whole of Government" approach. Placing Rangers on full-time service to support their communities shows a genuine commitment that the federal government, through this unique group of Canadian Armed Forces members, is looking out for Northerners' needs, leveraging existing community resilience and capacity.

The isolation of the northern and coastal communities in which the Rangers live is the best defence against this global pandemic. Turning to people who wear the Ranger red hoodie is a positive way to leverage local capacity and support local efforts in this time of apprehension and uncertainty.

96. Canadian Rangers discuss their future amid COVID-19: Some Canadian Rangers are elders and therefore vulnerable, says commanding officer

CBC News, 31 July 2020

Leaders of the Canadian Rangers are discussing whether to resume patrols and other activities that were suspended due to COVID-19.

Most Ranger activities have been scaled back since the end of March.

“The initial suspension stopped most of the activities that we were doing,” said Lieutenant-Colonel Raymond Chiasson, commanding officer of the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group based in Yellowknife.

Since March, Rangers have nevertheless been deployed in many parts of Canada to assist with pandemic-related tasks.

This includes the distribution of food hampers in various Yukon, N.W.T and Nunavut communities.

Rangers have also been involved in search-and-rescue operations, including a recent search for a boater in Tuktoyaktuk.

While the Rangers continue to assist in these situations, Chiasson says it must be considered that many rangers are elders and therefore vulnerable to the virus.



A Canadian Ranger from 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group wears a mask as he delivers food in Igloolik, Nunavut, in May. (Canadian Armed Forces)

“We do have Canadian Rangers who are considered in high-risk populations due to COVID-19,” Chiasson said.

The average age of Canadian Rangers is over 40 and many continue to serve into their 60s and beyond.

Rangers have potential to help during COVID-19 says leader

Chiasson says Rangers could be an important resource in case of a northern COVID-19 outbreak.

For instance, he says many Rangers’ local language fluency could prove important in helping health authorities.

Chiasson says discussions are happening within 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group and Joint Task Force North to discuss the Rangers’ future plans.

However there is still uncertainty as to what protocols will be in place, and what activities will be allowed and whether the Rangers will see changes to group size or other variables.

“Our organization still has value within the current COVID-19 situation,” Chiasson said. “We need to make sure we can maintain it and make sure we’re still a viable organization capable of achieving its mission.”



Canadian Rangers have been called to distribute food hampers in some northern communities. Members of the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group are here shown in Tuktoyaktuk on April 20. Canadian Armed Forces photo

Junior Rangers resume some activities

Junior Canadian Ranger programs were also suspended due to COVID-19 and rules around physical distancing.

One complication is that Junior Rangers in Nunavut and Yukon often see military staff visit from Yellowknife to lead workshops, competitions and camps.

Travel between the N.W.T. and Nunavut is currently allowed in a “bubble” but any officers going to from N.W.T. to Yukon would need to self-isolate upon their return.

Chiasson says there have been some signs of Junior Rangers returning.

One group in Tuktoyaktuk recently gathered to learn to use fishnets. Chiasson says this was the first Junior Ranger activity to happen in months.

“Respecting public health measures, communities are allowed to do some activities,” Chiasson said.

Large-scale meetings for Junior Rangers are not being considered for the time being.



*MCpl Soupie Idlout
with JCRs in Resolute
Bay, February 2020.
Lackenbauer photo*

97. Federal government commits Canadian Rangers to NWT flood response

Simon Whitehouse

Yellowknifer, 15 May 2021

The Government of Canada committed to providing flood assistance to the struggling communities of Fort Simpson and Jean Marie River after a state of emergency was declared one week ago.

Bill Blair, federal minister of public safety and emergency preparedness announced on his Twitter account on May 15 that the government approved the request for assistance from the Northwest Territories.

“@CanadianForces Rangers will assist communities impacted by or at risk of floods,” Blair said.

The announcement comes a day after Sean Whelly, Mayor of Fort Simpson, told two territorial ministers in the village that the communities need military help due to the effects of high water from the Mackenzie and Liard Rivers.

On May 14, Diane Archie, Deputy Premier and Minister of Infrastructure and Paulie Chinna, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs arrived to meet with community leaders on the ground.

Andrée-Anne Poulin, communications officer with the federal Department of National Defence said that the government recognizes that high water levels caused by melts and ice jams on the Mackenzie River have led to the need for deployment of Canadian Rangers to the region.

“In response, 10 Canadian Ranger patrols were activated in the region on May 15, 2021, to provide assistance in dealing with the flooding,” she said.

“The Rangers are working alongside other responders in the region to provide humanitarian assistance and address the immediate needs of these remote communities.”

Poulin said that Rangers will help with evacuation of people affected by flooding, assist those vulnerable or stranded or in distress affected by flooding.

They will also be conducting welfare checks on people in the area and will be part of the ongoing Emergency Operations Centre command post in the affected communities.

Other tasks will include logistical and general support and involve things like transportation assistance, resupply and humanitarian assistance.

“Canadian Ranger support has been requested for a period of six weeks but will continue until the situation has stabilized and is manageable through local and provincial resources,” Poulin said.



Members of the Fort MacPherson patrol study a map, 2017. 1 CRPG photo

98. How the Canadian Rangers are responding to COVID-19 in the N.W.T.'s Sahtu

CBC North, 23 August 2021

Approximately 15 Canadian Rangers are being activated to support N.W.T. communities dealing with a surge of COVID-19 cases, according to the Canadian Armed Forces, and as of Monday, the territory said eight of them had been deployed so far.

It's a resource the federal government announced over the weekend, along with support from the Canadian Red Cross, which one community leader says will be a "terrific asset."

Frank Pope, the mayor in Norman Wells, said Sunday two Rangers have become available in his town.

"They're doing stuff like delivering groceries to people, making sure medication is delivered to people who need it, to just help take supplies around the community," he said.

"They're just doing whatever they're being asked to by their municipal leadership."

Julie Green, the territory's health minister, told CBC News on Monday the Rangers are "wide open in terms of what they're able to do and willing to do."

"We had heard, at one point, that the sewage truck and water truck drivers were both sick in one of the communities and so that is something that's an essential service so we might need Rangers to take that on," she said.

Fort Good Hope Chief Tommy Kakfwi called the federal assistance "comforting" on Sunday.

Along with the two Rangers deployed in Norman Wells, Green said two Rangers had also been deployed in each of the communities of Fort Good Hope, Tulita and Délı̄ne. As of Monday, there were no Rangers available in Colville Lake, she said.

Green said Rangers who already live in affected communities are "mostly" the ones being called on to help, but noted that some aren't able to be deployed because of positive COVID-19 tests.

Pope also pointed out that Rangers have other jobs and aren't always available.

99. Canadian Rangers on the way to Tuktoyaktuk

Eric Bowling

NNSL, 17 November 2021

It's official. The Canadian Rangers are being deployed to Tuktoyaktuk.

An announcement the Federal Government had approved a request for assistance to the community was included in the Nov. 17 daily Covid-19 update from the GNWT.

Rangers will be on hand in the community to assist until at least Dec. 1. Their service may be extended if the situation requires it.

Assistance with medication pick up and delivery, grocery pick up and delivery and mail pick up and delivery can be requested by phoning 1-867-689-2178 from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Tuktoyaktuk Rangers Jackie Jacobson told Inuvik Drum the unit had activated on Nov. 16 as volunteers, but were now operating in official capacity.

Cases in both Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik have dropped since yesterday, with Tuktoyaktuk dropping to 101 and Inuvik now down to 11.

A containment order issued for Tuktoyaktuk has been extended until Nov. 29, while students are permitted to return to classroom studies in Inuvik as of Nov. 18.



Photo: MCpl Ella Archie

1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group would like to extend heartfelt congratulations to MCpl Ella Archie, MMM, CD of Aklavik NT on her appointment as a Member to the Order of Military Merit. MCpl Archie runs the Junior Canadian Ranger Program in the community. 1CRPG Facebook page, 27 January 2022.



100. Operation NANOOK-NUNALIVUT 2022

NetNewsLedger, 9 March 2022

The Canadian Army Operation NANOOK-NUNALIVUT 2022 was just completed in February.

Climate change and technological advancements are two of the main factors making the Arctic increasingly accessible, and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) must be ready for potential safety and security issues as activity in the region increases.

That is the motivation behind Operation NANOOK-NUNALIVUT 2022 (Op NA-NU 22), which took place from February 14-28, 2022 in Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik, Northwest Territories.

An annual training event, Op NA-NU 22 is not only a demonstration of the CAF's operational capabilities in the Arctic, but also a collaboration with domestic government partners and military allies from other nations.

The 2022 edition involved more than 200 personnel, including land, sea, and air elements, working alongside partners from the U.S. and France where the focus was on interoperability. The participants conducted long range patrols, under ice diving and other activities to further develop their ability to operate in the challenging Arctic cold.

Isolation is another challenge of Arctic military operations. Due to the inefficiency of road travel in the North, an air task force from the Royal Canadian Air Force moved personnel and supplies back and forth between Inuvik and the operation's headquarters in Tuktoyaktuk. The Royal Canadian Navy provided Port Inspection Divers.

Canadian Army contributions to Op NA-NU 22 included Reservists from Winnipeg-based 38 Canadian Brigade Group and Regular Force Combat Divers from 4 Engineer Support Regiment in Gagetown, New Brunswick.

Members of 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, who serve and live in the North, were also a vital component. Their expertise and local knowledge were vital to the operation itself and in preparation for it.

Canadian Rangers not only act as the CAF's eyes and ears in remote, isolated and coastal regions of Canada, but also as ambassadors in their communities to support consultations between the CAF and local Indigenous communities that took place in advance of Op NA-NU 22.

“Canadian Rangers were invaluable to Op NA-NU 22,” explained Major-General Michel-Henri St-Louis, Acting Commander Canadian Army. “Our planning always includes close consultation with communities that may be affected and Rangers bring an important, local perspective.”

MGen St-Louis, who also serves as Defence Team Champion for Indigenous Peoples, added that maintaining and deepening relationships with Indigenous communities is a priority not only for Op NA-NU 22 but always.

“Indigenous communities are the heart of Canada’s North,” he said. “Improving understanding between them and the CAF, as well as building and maintaining respect between us, is an ongoing priority for myself and CAF leadership.”

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COMPILED BY P. WHITNEY LACKENBAUER AND BIANCA ROMAGNOLI

SOVEREIGNTY, SECURITY, AND RESILIENCE

SELECTED STORIES ABOUT
1ST CANADIAN RANGER PATROL GROUP, 1998-2022

The one hundred stories in this volume celebrate the contributions that the Canadian Rangers of the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group have made to Canada's North since 1998. In addition to affirming the Rangers' value as an operational resource for the Canadian Armed Forces and their value to their communities, these articles reveal experiential knowledge, insights and testimonies from Rangers and from other CAF members and community partners who have worked with them.

