

# Mighty Maroon Machine in Atlantic Canada

The Commander of reservist-based 5th Canadian Division, **Brigadier-General Derek Macaulay**, recently spoke to FrontLine’s Atlantic Canada correspondent **Tim Dunne** during a demonstration ride through Halifax in the army’s new Tactical Armoured Patrol Vehicle (*referred to as “TAP-Vee”*). Since taking over the command on 1 May 2017, Macaulay has been implementing his philosophy, his enthusiasm and his vision in Atlantic Canada.

## Not just a “Navy Town”

Militarily, Halifax is also unique. It is one of the few locations outside the national capital where senior commanders for Canada’s army, navy and air force reside, and where their various units operate.

The city is the operational home for the Royal Canadian Navy; the centre of excellence for Canada’s maritime aviation; and the historic headquarters for army reserves (whom he has redubbed “part time soldiers”) throughout Atlantic Canada.

Fifth Canadian Division (or, as its new commander, BGen Macaulay prefers to call it, the “Mighty Maroon Machine”) has undergone a series of major and minor changes since the Canadian Army was established by the *1868 Militia Act*.

## Reorganization, Restructure and Reform

Following Confederation, Canada was divided into military districts, each responsible for training and administration of militia units within its jurisdiction, with districts further divided into brigade divisions. The Militia List of 1895 shows the military district of Maritime Canada as *No. 9—Headquarters: Halifax, Nova Scotia*; then, following the First World War, a series of renamings and reorganizations took place until, in September 1991, the Canadian Army was reorganized into four separate Land Force Areas that incorporated both regular force and reserve army units. Land Force Atlantic Area (LFAA) remained in Halifax, initially on Gottingen Street, then moving

to the Mainguy Building in HMC Dockyard in the mid-1990s.

LFAA was renamed 5th Canadian Division in 2013 and, with this change of name, the formation readopted the identifying maroon patch on the right shoulder—reviving the historical lineage that served the Canadian Army during both world wars.

## New Commander for the “Army of the Atlantic”

BGen Macaulay is a third-generation Canadian soldier. During his 28-year career, he served in numerous command and staff positions from Troop to Regimental level, including commanding his Squadron as part of the German-led Kabul Multinational Brigade in Afghanistan (2004), and then commanding the Lord Strathcona’s Horse (Royal Canadians) from 2008 to 2010.

His deployments include the UN Protection Force in Visoko, Bosnia Herzegovina (BiH) (1994), the NATO Stabilization Force in Zgon, BiH (2000) and International Stabilization Assistance Force in Afghanistan (2004).

His recent assignments within Canada include Deputy Chief of Defence Staff Group (International) and Canadian Expeditionary Command Headquarters in Ottawa (2005 to 2007), and Chief of Staff of Land Force Western Area (2010 to 2013).

He deployed as the Chief of Staff, Coalition Joint Land Force Component Command in Iraq (Operation IMPACT) from April 2015 until his appointment as



BGen Derek Macaulay and CWO Shawn Croucher speak to a soldier from 84th Independent Field Battery in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

PHOTO: TIM DUNNE



Colonel Shawn Hale, Commander of 36 Canadian Brigade Group and Exercise Director for Exercise Strident Tracer 2017 addresses participants before they deploy to the 5th Canadian Division Support Base Gagetown range and training area.

PHOTO: CPL BRETT WHITE-FINKLE

the Chief of Staff Army Strategy in June 2016. On 1 May 2017, he was appointed Commander of the 5th Canadian Division.

### One Team, One Fight

“Fifth Canadian Division is the only division co-located with the Navy,” BGen Macaulay told *FrontLine*. “Our soldiers, sailors, and aviators don’t ordinarily have many occasions to work together but we are always looking for opportunities to enhance joint capabilities. This past summer, during Op *Nanook*, soldiers were transported by MCDV [Kingston-class Maritime Coastal Defence Vessels] and frigate – a significant change from previous years. This is a long way from amphibious operations like so many of our wartime soldiers faced at Juno Beach, but it did underscore that there may be opportunities for the two forces to cooperate and inter-operate.”

The nature of the part time army is undergoing significant evolution. “Previously, individual reservists augmented the regular force, but currently there is enthusiasm to integrate the unique skills and qualities of the reserves that are not found within the regular force,” he explains.

The distinctions between reserve and regular soldiers is diminishing – soon to disappear. The new terminology that commanders, commanding officers and leaders throughout the Army are encouraged to adopt, is *full time* and *part time* soldiers. “Today, it’s one team, one fight,” Macaulay notes, stressing the unified nature of the newly integrating full- and part-time army.

The nuance is not subtle. Canada learned many lessons from its deployments and operations. Known as “reservists”, they deployed alongside their regular force colleagues on expeditionary deployments, such as conventional peacekeeping opera-

tions in Cyprus, Egypt, Israel and Iran/Iraq. They augmented the Canadian Forces in Operation *Friction*, the Persian Gulf War in 1990, and the many operations and missions in Afghanistan, as well as domestic operations in response to fires and floods.

Canadian commanders in Afghanistan have opined that Canada would not have been able to meet its operational objectives were it not for reserve augmentation.

### New Roles for Reserves

BGen Macaulay comes to Atlantic Canada from Army Headquarters in Ottawa where he was the Director of Army Strategy, or as he describes it: “the Director of the Army of Tomorrow,” a position he concurrently held until November.

Certain organizational lessons were reinforced by last year’s Auditor General’s report, which underscored the unrealized potential of a strong, well-equipped reserve force. Historically, the Canadian Army Reserves have comprised some 18,000 personnel, but the new defence policy has mandated the Army reserves grow by 950 personnel within the next two years, and so, with these new positions will come new roles, capabilities and responsibilities.

“This is an exciting time as the team works to strengthen the Army Reserves. We are examining how we conduct business, are guaranteeing summer employment four summers in a row to new applicants, and enhancing the recruiting, retention and enrollment process” – all aimed at growing the base of part-time soldiers across the Army.

“In the past, we had to shave the ice cube,” BGen Macaulay noted, using a metaphor favoured by senior Canadian army personnel to explain the frustrations of budget paring, funding claw-backs and acquisition cancellations. “Now, the Army

Commander has told us to build the ice cube. I have conveyed that to my unit commanding officers by telling them ‘You hire them, and I’ll pay them.’”

Building the army’s ice cube includes creating the Canadian Combat Support Brigade. And so, in October, the Canadian Army Doctrine and Training Centre transferred command authority for the Canadian Combat Support Brigade (CCSB) to the 5th Canadian Division at a ceremony held at Fort Frontenac in Kingston. According to the Defence Department’s announcement, the brigade “institutionalizes key operational enabling capabilities such as Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance, Information Operations and Operational Support.”

Previously under the authority of the Canadian Army Doctrine and Training Centre (Kingston) – the brigade now operates under the authority of the 5th Canadian Division, headquartered in Halifax.

The reserves of the four divisions across Canada will each provide four platoon-based capabilities, “the sweet 16” as they are called by BGen Macaulay:

- **Mortar** – once cancelled as a capability of the infantry, is now being brought back as a weapons system for light infantry.
- **Direct fire platoon** – will specialize in heavier weapons, such as the 50-calibre machine gun.
- **Pioneer platoons** – for route preparation and route denial to the enemy.
- **Support** – for light urban search and rescue.

“These specialized mission tasks will not conflict with the primary functions of a unit such as Halifax’s Princess Louise Fusiliers, who will retain their primary roles, but these other capabilities will be added to their list of responsibilities – with additional soldiers and equipment provided to the units to accomplish these missions.

This is in direct contrast to previous times when the reserve force would be assigned new responsibilities but frequently without the personnel, training and equipment to achieve them. “With 5 Div assuming control of the Canadian Combat Support Brigade (CCSB), Atlantic Canada’s maroon patch will be worn by the soldiers in this brigade across Canada,” Macaulay effused.

The core mandate of the CCSB is to oversee the training and operations of the Canadian Army’s key operational enabling functions:

- *Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance* – collection and management of information on the operational environment.
- *Information Operations* – information-related activities planned and conducted to have behavioural effects in support of a mission.
- *Operational Support* – elements of support that facilitate all forms of military operations including engineering and artillery.

The Canadian Combat Support Brigade is the first Regular Force brigade to serve under the command authority of the 5th Canadian Division, which is the command element of the Canadian Army in four Atlantic Canada provinces.

1-20 Nov. 2017 – Soldiers from 4 Engineer Support Regiment gear up for Exercise *Nihilo Sapper*.



## Vision for Atlantic Canada

“My goal is to have a stronger division, full of part time and full-time soldiers that can compliment and provide those unique capabilities. I see this division as modern-day X-men. They have unique capabilities and come from different backgrounds and each provides something that, as a whole, we need,” BGen Macaulay tells *FrontLine*.

“Fifth Division is like that. We don’t look like the other divisions; we don’t have a regular force brigade, but we do have quality soldiers. The other divisions also have quality soldiers, but the soldiers of Atlantic Canada are remarkable.

“The commitment these soldiers give to whatever unit they are part of, full time and part time, is 110 percent. They love being soldiers and they share a love for serving Canada. When you’re around people like that, you have to be energized. So, I can tell you that Atlantic Canada is supportive of its military.”



More than 450 soldiers participated in military engineering exercises throughout Cape Breton to complete eight construction projects.

The Fifth Canadian Division comprises 22 units in 30 communities across Atlantic Canada, not including the Canadian Rangers. “So, if you include the Rangers from Labrador and from Newfoundland then that number increases dramatically.”

A former Director of Army Public Affairs once opined to this writer that Canada has three armies and a National Guard. BGen Macaulay disagrees with this assessment: “That’s not a good analysis of the way our Army is broken down, and it’s not very helpful either. We are soldiers, One Team – One Fight. It doesn’t matter if you’re from Saskatchewan or British Columbia, from the province of Quebec, or from Newfoundland and Labrador. You wear the same uniform and you wear the same flag, and you all bring something to the group to make it better as a whole.

“I tell the soldiers here in Atlantic Canada that each unit has a unique role and each unit, individually, is great – but we can only become awesome when we all soldier together. Armies that soldier together are truly impressive. And that’s what I think the Canadian Army is. Canada has four divisions that soldier together. It doesn’t matter where you come from because it is all about what you bring to the fight. Integration across boundaries and divisions is the Canadian Army’s way of today.”

## Canada’s 21st Century Army

“Today, we have an army that is more integrated,” Macaulay asserts. “Of course we have more work to do, but that’s the vision of the Army Commander, and his vision for us as his commanders. What we’re doing as part of *Strong, Secure, Engaged* (the new defence policy) will allow us to get there.”

BGen Macaulay’s vision is in stark contrast to the past, even the recent post-Afghanistan period when the military, particularly the Army, was looking instead at *restraint, reduction and reticence*, as the Canadian government sought to return to the security of the American military umbrella. But the Government’s new policy promises a new era of plenty for its military.

“The new defence policy allows us to live in exciting times, and it is really an exciting time to be a soldier,” Macaulay repeats. “We have the resources, and must now concentrate on building the Army of tomorrow. Rebuilding the proverbial ice cube involves culture, and it requires under-

PHOTOS: MCFP CHARLES A. STEPHEN, 5TH CANADIAN DIVISION

standing that our force must continue to grow and develop as an integrated force, comprising full time and part time soldiers. It entails bringing on new capabilities and in some cases re-acquiring skills and capabilities we let fade or had lost, like the air defence capabilities we once had in the region. We decided to move on from that capability, but now we recognize that the security environment has changed, and we need that capability back.”

The re-emergence of international terrorism, Russian adventurism in its former republics, and the forced migration of millions of refugees, has changed the global security environment, and Canada’s military must evolve accordingly.

“We recognize that we have to be prepared for the full spectrum of operations,” Macaulay cautions, noting that includes “everything from peacekeeping and peace-making to full spectrum operations. It also entails developing new capabilities that we haven’t had, but that the new security environment requires us to have. Like the Influence Activities Task Force, operating small, unarmed autonomous aerial vehicles, or drones, and the capability to integrate and fuse intelligence. We must develop those

capabilities rapidly so that when the government asks us to perform a mission, we will stand ready.”

The Fifth Division commander is optimistic about achieving the goals and objectives of the Army. “We have great soldiers. I recognize that I am biased, but I believe we have the best soldiers in the world. We have the commitment of a new defence policy that will give us the capabilities we did not have in the past, and I believe that will make us better,” he contends.

“Having the privilege to serve with our allies overseas, and most recently in Baghdad a few years ago, I have seen that our allies truly appreciate when a Canadian shows up.”

### The Leadership Challenge

BGen Macaulay spoke to the constant challenges confronting Canadian Army leaders at all levels. “History,” he notes, “has shown that when we’re faced with adversity – and we are all focused on the same objective – we can achieve our greatest successes, because when we look left and when we look right, all we see are soldiers; that’s what is important,” he says with conviction.

“I think we are in an evolutionary period in which we understand where we need to go, what we need to do, and the tools with which we can achieve our ambitions. While I hope that history doesn’t repeat itself, I think some of the dynamics that caused past difficulties can reoccur, but, at the same time, we have a great opportunity to utilize expertise of all our soldiers. That’s probably what is different about our army today. Good ideas don’t just come from leaders. They also come from soldiers. We have graduated to the evolutionary advancement of listening to soldiers.

“I have received some great ideas from part-time soldiers, someone who works at a different profession and comes into our profession, bringing a bunch of experiences and points of view that can help our institution, and we have to be prepared to listen and try to hear what people are saying.

“I am all for great ideas, whoever the source. I tell my soldiers that if you have an idea, I will steal it and give you credit. If it’s bad I will take the blame.” **FLO**

*Tim Dunne, FrontLine  
Atlantic Canada Correspondent.*



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