



# **MERCHANT NAVY COMMEMORATIVE THEME PROJECT (MNCTP)**

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Announcement**

#### **Colonel John Gardam Lifetime Achievement Award 2015 CDA/CDA Institute Ottawa Conference Friday, February 20, 2015**

**Ottawa** – Mr. Stéphane Ouellette, President and CEO, the Merchant Navy Commemorative Theme Project (MNCTP), was proud to announce the first time recipient of the Colonel John Gardam Lifetime Achievement Award, that was presented to Vice-Admiral Ron Buck, RCN (Ret'd), at the 2015 CDA/CDA Institute Ottawa Conference on Security and Defence.

The MNCTP created this award to recognize excellence in character, loyalty, and devotion of the highest order in service to Canada, and a long time and enduring commitment to bringing awareness and support to the cause of the Canadian and Allied Merchant Navies.

Throughout his long career of public service, Vice-Admiral Buck (Ret'd) has demonstrated unwavering support to Canada's veterans, including Canada's Merchant Navy Veterans. Vice-Admiral Buck supported the Merchant Navy both while serving as the Chief of the Maritime Staff, Vice-Chief of Defence Staff, and more recently, as the President, and now Immediate Past President of the Navy League of Canada.

"It is an honour and a privilege for me to be here today to recognize the recipient of the Colonel John Gardam Lifetime Achievement Award presented to Vice-Admiral Buck, here at the CDA/CDA Institute 2015 Ottawa Conference on Security and Defence," said Mr. Stéphane Ouellette, President and CEO, MNCTP. "Both Colonel Gardam and Vice-Admiral Buck have provided leadership roles that were, and continue to be critical to the Mission of the Canadian and Allied Merchant Navies."

"I commend Vice-Admiral Buck for his devotion to the legacy of the Canadian and Allied Merchant Navies. His dedication to Canadian veterans while serving in the CAF and as a veteran makes him truly deserving of this Award."  
The Honourable Erin O'Toole, Minister of Veterans Affairs.

Of the many displays of support, Vice Admiral Buck ensured that Canada's Merchant Navy Veterans be included in the official National Battle of the Atlantic ceremonies. In 2003, Vice-Admiral Buck acknowledged the importance and scope of the Merchant Navy initiative, and (in collaboration with MNCTP) established a historical precedent by ushering in a new era of co-operation between the Canadian Merchant Navy and the Royal Canadian Navy.

The Award was presented to Vice Admiral Buck by Mr. Royal Galipeau, Member of Parliament for Ottawa — Orléans, and Chair, House of Commons Committee on Veterans Affairs, and Mr. Stéphane Ouellette.

"It is with great pleasure that I pay tribute to the accomplishments of Vice-Admiral Ronald Douglas Buck CMM, CD (Ret.)", says MP Royal Galipeau. "The role played by the veterans of the merchant navy during World War II has often been marginalized. It's thanks to the support of devoted people such as Vice-Admiral Buck, who is and has always been a great supporter of veterans, that their important contribution is remembered and honoured. "

"The Conference of Defence Associations (CDA) is delighted to see Vice-Admiral Ron Buck, Vice-Chair of the CDA, recognized as the first recipient of the Colonel John Gardam Lifetime Achievement Award by the MNCTP," said LGen Richard Evraire, Chairman of the CDA. "The CDA was established in 1932 to study the problems of security and defence and to promote the efficiency and well-being of Canada's Armed Forces. **It is a non-partisan, independent, and non-profit advocacy organization, representing 52 associations from all parts of the country.** It is an honour for us to witness this recognition of VAdm Buck for his outstanding work and support for the Canadian Merchant Navy."

This award was named after Colonel John Alan Gardam, O.C., O.M.M., M.S.M., C.D. (Ret'd). Colonel Gardam has spent a lifetime serving Canada and Canadian Veterans. Among his many achievements, Colonel Gardam was awarded the Order of Canada, by His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada in 2012. Colonel Gardam has also been named to the Honourary Board of Governors of the MNCTP.

**Date:** Friday, February 20, 2015

**Time:** 11:15 am

**Location:** Ballroom, Fairmont Chateau Laurier  
1 Rideau Street  
Ottawa, Ontario

### **Contact Information**

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# MERCHANT NAVY COMMEMORATIVE THEME PROJECT

## *Their legacy...our freedom*

### FACT SHEET

#### THE FACTS

- In **1992**, after five decades of struggle, Canadian Merchant Seaman were officially recognized as Veterans. The sacrifices and contributions made by our Canadian and Allied Merchant Navy Veterans resulted as the mainstay of the Allied Forces victories in both World War I and World War II.
- During the Second World War, the Canadian Merchant Navy losses (alone) were 1 in 8. Out of the 12, 000 WWII Merchant Navy Veterans, there are only 500 (approximately) that remain, with an average attrition rate of 12 per month.

#### BACKGROUND

- In **2003**, *Bill C-411, An Act to establish Merchant Navy Veterans Day*, is passed by Parliament, and Vice-Admiral R.D. Buck, Chief of the Maritime Staff, Royal Canadian Navy, acknowledges the importance of this initiative, and establishes a new era of co-operation with the (newly created) Merchant Navy Commemorative Theme Project (MNCTP), the Canadian and Allied Merchant Navies, and the Royal Canadian Navy.
- In **2004**, the first Merchant Navy Veterans Day ceremony was held at the National War Memorial in Ottawa (under *Bill C-411*), followed by a reception located at the prestigious Senate Foyer (hosted by Senator Joseph A. Day). The event was set in motion by the MNCTP, in collaboration with Colonel John Gardam, the Office of Senator Joseph A. Day, the Royal Canadian Navy, the **Conference of Defence Associations**, Veterans Affairs Canada, and various veterans organizations.
- **Today**, the MNCTP continues to preside over the annual MN Day of Remembrance ceremony held in Ottawa, and is in the process of developing a Global Maritime Promotion Integration Strategy (GMPIS) entitled: **Allied Merchant Navy Promotion and Commemorative Celebrations (AMNPCC)**.

#### WHAT IS THE MERCHANT NAVY COMMEMORATIVE THEME PROJECT (MNCTP)?

- The Merchant Navy Commemorative Theme Project (MNCTP) is an initiative dedicated to educating Canadians and the international community on the sacrifices and contributions made by the Canadian and Allied Merchant Navies during WWI & WWII, and to promoting them as part of Canada's, and indeed the world's rich maritime heritage. The AMNPCC is the next phase.
- The AMNPCC consists of a series of proposed programs, projects, products, and special events aimed at unifying our people through a common understanding of our history. We must also ensure that the forgotten stories of our Merchant Navy are told alongside those of the Royal Canadian Navy, Royal Canadian Air Force, and the Canadian Army.
- To this end, the **Colonel John Gardam Lifetime Achievement Award** was created to recognize excellence in character, loyalty, and devotion of the highest order in service to Canada, and a long time and enduring commitment to bringing awareness and support to the cause of the Canadian and Allied Merchant Navies. The first time recipient of this award was presented to Vice-Admiral Ron Buck, Vice-Chair of the CDA, on February 20, at the 2015 CDA/CDA Institute Annual General Meeting.

#### NEXT STEPS

- The AMNPCC is intended to be the foundation for building a global partnership of shared themes and common values among participating nations, governments, private sector and non-for-profit organizations, educational institutions, the general public, and more.

For additional information, please contact:

**Stéphane Ouellette**

President and Chief Executive Officer

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## Colonel John Alan Gardam, O.C., O.M.M., M.S.M., C.D. (Ret'd)

Soldier, author and historian, Colonel John Gardam was born in England in **1931**, and immigrated to Canada in **1946**, where he began a long military career, the following year, when he joined the Reserve Army.

In **1951** Colonel Gardam enlisted in the Regular Forces as a trooper with the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians). He was selected for officer training in January **1952**, and was commissioned in the Royal Canadian Dragoons.

A UNEF peacekeeper, Colonel Gardam has served in a wide range of command and staff appointments in Canada. He commanded the Officer Candidate School at Canadian Forces Base Chilliwack, and has the distinction of being the first Director of Cadets at the Royal Military College, Kingston, who was not an RMC graduate. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Manitoba in **1979**.

Colonel Gardam retired from the Canadian Forces in **1984**. He was appointed to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Canadian Agency, as the Assistant Secretary General, where he was responsible for all the War Graves in North America.

He was next appointed as Project Director for the Canadian Peacekeeping Monument, a position he held until December **1992**. Colonel Gardam was then appointed to be the Program Director for the Department of National Defence component of the Canada Remembers program **1993 – 1995**. He was awarded The Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation for this project.

In **1998** he took a group of Ortona Veterans to Ortona, Italy, for the reenactment of the Christmas Dinner held there in **1943**. He was a Department of National Defence Advisor for the Unknown Soldier project, and marched in the parade representing all retired peacekeepers.

In **2003**, Stéphane Ouellette, President and CEO, Merchant Navy Commemorative Theme Project (MNCTP), met with Colonel Gardam to discuss issues surrounding the status of the Canadian Merchant Navy Veterans. In **2007**, Colonel Gardam, accepted the position of Honourary Governor, on the MNCTP Board of Honourary Governors.

In **2008**, both Colonel Gardam and Stéphane Ouellette appeared before the Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence.

In **2009**, the Ottawa Chapter of the Canadian Association of Veterans in United Nations Peacekeeping (CAVUNP) was named after Colonel John Gardam.

In addition, Colonel Gardam served on three different Boards, at the Perley Rideau Veterans Health Centre, in Ottawa, for over fourteen years. His last position at the Perley was as the Foundation Chair. Colonel Gardam held this position for four years.

For over a decade, Colonel Gardam was the Curator for the National Peacekeeping Monument. He retired from this position in **2011**.

He continued to be involved in many projects, one being the newly formed Wreaths Across Canada. He has since retired from this position.

In **2012**, His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, awarded Colonel John Gardam with the Order of Canada.

Colonel Gardam has been a member of the Royal Canadian Legion for over thirty years.

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**MERCHANT NAVY COMMEMORATIVE  
THEME PROJECT**



**PROJET THÉMATIQUE COMMÉMORATIF  
DE LA MARINE MARCHANDE**



## **Ron Buck, CMM, CD**

Ron was born and raised in Montreal and joined the Royal Canadian Navy in 1967. He graduated from McGill University in 1971 and was commissioned as a Sub-lieutenant in the Navy. He served his formative years from 1971 to 1975 in HMC Ships FRASER, SASKATCHEWAN, MARGAREE and PRESERVER. He was appointed Executive Officer (second in command) of HMCS ATHABASKAN in 1983 and on promotion to Commander he was posted to National Defence Headquarters in 1985.

In 1987 Ron was appointed as Commanding Officer of HMCS RESTIGOUCHE and in 1989 he was selected as the Project Manager for the Maritime Coastal Defence Vessel Project which he led to successful award of the implementation contract which delivered 12 ships to the Navy.

In 1992, he was appointed as Commander Fifth Canadian Destroyer Squadron and during this period he led the operational acceptance of the Canadian Patrol Frigates and updated Tribal Destroyers to fleet operations.

On promotion to Commodore in 1994 Ron was appointed as Commander Canadian Forces Training System and was subsequently appointed as Chief of Staff of the Management Command and Control Reengineering Team (MCCRT) in Ottawa. In 1997 he was appointed as the first Commander Canadian Fleet Pacific and he was promoted to Rear Admiral and appointed as Commander of Maritime Forces Pacific in 1998. He served as MARPAC for three years through June of 2001 during which he was promoted to Vice Admiral

Shortly after appointment as the Commander of Maritime Command (head of Canada's Navy) in 2001 he led the planning and execution of the naval component of Operation Apollo, the Canadian contribution to the Global War on Terrorism.

Ron was appointed as Vice Chief of the Defence Staff and served as VCDS from 2004 to 2006. Ron retired on 4 July 2006 after just short of 40 years of service in the Royal Canadian Navy and Canadian Forces but quickly failed retirement.

During his military career Ron had major Cadet related responsibilities going back to 1994 in Ontario, from 1998 to 2001 in British Columbia and as Vice Chief of Defence staff from 2004 to 2006.

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THEME PROJECT**



**PROJET THÉMATIQUE COMMÉMORATIF  
DE LA MARINE MARCHANDE**

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Vice-Admiral R.D. Buck, CMM, CD

Chief of the Maritime Staff

National Defence  
Headquarters  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0K2



Le Vice-amiral R.D. Buck, CMM, CD

Chef d'état-major des Forces maritimes

Quartier général de  
la Défense nationale  
Ottawa (Ontario)  
K1A 0K2

Le 5 décembre 2003

*M. Ouellette,*

Je vous remercie de votre lettre du 31 octobre 2003 à propos du projet de commémoration de la marine marchande. J'ai constaté, en examinant le document que vous avez joint à votre lettre, qu'il s'agit d'une entreprise importante et de grande envergure.

Vous avez sûrement appris, lors de conversations avec l'Officier du patrimoine, que la Marine planifie actuellement le 100<sup>e</sup> anniversaire des Forces navales du Canada. L'Officier du patrimoine et moi reconnaissons que de très nombreuses possibilités d'information et de publication conjointes pendant la période menant aux événements de 2010 peuvent être examinées en détail. Le meilleur moyen de discuter d'initiatives du genre est certainement, comme vous le suggérez, de réunir tous les intervenants du projet.

À cette fin, je désigne le Capitaine de corvette Graeme Arbuckle, Officier du patrimoine de l'état-major, pour représenter la Marine lors de toute réunion future tenue dans le cadre de l'organisation de votre projet. Vous pouvez communiquer avec le Capitaine de corvette Arbuckle à [Arbuckle.JGG@forces.gc.ca](mailto:Arbuckle.JGG@forces.gc.ca) ou à :

Chef d'état-major des Forces maritimes  
101, promenade du Colonel-By  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0K2

À l'attention de l'Officier du patrimoine de l'état-major des Forces maritimes

Je vous souhaite énormément de succès dans cette importante entreprise et j'espère que nous aurons bientôt l'occasion de collaborer avec vous en vue d'informer les Canadiens de l'ampleur et de la profondeur du patrimoine maritime du Canada, un patrimoine dont ils ont toutes les raisons d'être fiers.

Veillez agréer mes sentiments les meilleurs.

M. Stéphane Ouellette  
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