

Royal Canadian Navy Welcomes New Commander



The Royal Canadian Navy ship HMCS Winnipeg (FFH 338) transits the Pacific Ocean while participating in a gunnery exercise during Exercise Rim of the Pacific 2020. U.S. Navy / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jenna Dobson

OTTAWA – Vice Adm. Craig Baines assumed the duties of commander of the Royal Canadian Navy (CRCN) in a virtual change of command ceremony ceremonies Jan. 12, presided over by Gen. Jonathan Vance, chief of the defense staff (CDS), at National Defence Headquarters.

Baines becomes the 37th CRCN, relieving Vice Adm. Art McDonald, who will be promoted to the rank of admiral and will succeed Vance as the 20th CDS.

Baines is a 33-year veteran of sea-going appointments and staff officer positions, with an initial sea tour aboard HMCS Saguenay (D79) and command of HMCS Winnipeg (FFH 338). He

commanded Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt, Canadian Fleet Atlantic, Maritime Forces Atlantic and Joint Task Force Atlantic, and became the of deputy vice chief of the defense staff in July 2020.

“Change of command ceremonies represent both continuity and change, and it’s a tremendous pleasure to mark the change of command of the Royal Canadian Navy between two great sailors: Vice Admiral Art McDonald and Vice Admiral Craig Baines,” said Minister of Defence Harjit S. Sajjan. “Under Vice Admiral McDonald’s leadership, we have seen the RCN maintain an impressive operational tempo at home and abroad. His focus on people and innovation have positioned the navy for success as it transitions to the future fleet.”

“Through his 33 years of service, Vice Admiral Baines has a proven operational and institutional track record from which to draw upon as he continues to put Canada’s sailors first in all that he does,” Sajjan said. “I am delighted to appoint Vice Admiral Baines to command the Royal Canadian Navy and I know that he will lead by example, put our ethos into practice, and continue to steer the navy towards the objectives of the future fleet.”

Baines said it was a huge honor to continue to serve with a group of outstanding Canadians who wear a uniform on behalf of their country, often serving in a complex environment far from home.

“We will continue to prioritize support to our sailors, defense team members and their families while managing ongoing cultural change, domestic and international operations, fleet recapitalization, training and readiness, all while innovating throughout our organization to make us the most inclusive, respect-driven navy we can be.”

The Royal Canadian Navy is composed of 28 warships, submarines, and coastal defense vessels, plus many more

auxiliary and support vessels, with approximately 8,300 regular force and 3,600 reserve sailors, supported by approximately 3,800 civilian employees.

With its motto of "Ready, Aye, Ready," the RCN generates combat-capable, multipurpose maritime forces that support Canada's efforts to participate in security operations anywhere in the world, as part of an integrated Canadian Armed Forces.