

U.S., Royal Canadian Navy Operationalize Combined Maritime Warfighting Capabilities at 2026 Maritime Staff Talks



NORFOLK, Va. – Senior flag officers and operational commanders from the U.S. Navy and the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) concluded the 2026 U.S.–Canada Maritime Staff Talks (MST) at U.S. Fleet Forces Command headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia, Sept. 30, 2026.

The forum brought together more than 45 maritime leaders from U.S. Fleet Forces Command, U.S. 2nd Fleet, Commander Submarine Forces, the Royal Canadian Navy, Canadian Joint Operations Command, and the Canadian Defence Liaison Staff.

The primary objective of this year's discussions focused on operationalizing combined maritime warfighting capabilities across the Atlantic, Arctic, and coastal approaches to North America.

“Continental defense is not divided by borders as our maritime forces operate as a cohesive, integrated fighting force,” said Adm. Karl Thomas, commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command. “These talks translate strategic vision into tactical reality, ensuring our Sailors, ships, and submarine forces can deploy seamlessly together in high-end operations from the ice-laden waters of the Arctic to the open Atlantic.”

Throughout the two-day summit, leaders focused on key operational priorities essential to defending the continent, centering on undersea superiority, Arctic domain awareness,

advanced combat systems, and deeper personnel integration.

Simultaneously, bilateral working groups prioritized fleet-wide interoperability, accelerating integration between Canadian surface combatants and the AEGIS combat system while expanding Live Virtual Constructive (LVC) fleet synthetic training to validate complex multi-domain command and control.

“Canada and the United States share a responsibility for the defense of North America, and our navies have a long history of training and operating together,” said Vice Adm. Dan Charlebois, commander, Royal Canadian Navy. “These talks turn that enduring partnership into practical cooperation, strengthening our ability to operate together across the Atlantic, and the maritime approaches to North America, while advancing the Royal Canadian Navy’s ability to defend Canada and contribute to collective security.”

Both navies reaffirmed their commitment to relentless operational readiness, shared defense investments, and a unified command posture to ensure the continued security and sovereignty of North America.

U.S. Fleet Forces Command is responsible for manning, training, equipping, and employing 138,000 active duty Sailors, reservists, and civilians; more than 120 ships and submarines; 1,500 aircraft; seven task forces; and five carrier strike groups. USFFC directs training and readiness across the maritime domain, prepares forces for worldwide deployment, and provides combat-ready naval forces to combatant commanders.

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