

**Admiral Arthur ('Art') Gerard McDonald, CMM, MSM, CD**  
**Chief of the Naval Staff**  
**12 June 2019 to 12 January 2021**



Art McDonald was born in New Waterford, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia in 1967. He attended the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston from 1986 to 1990 graduating a bachelor's degree in Military and Strategic Studies and later a Master of Defence Studies degree,

After completing basic Naval Warfare Officer training and becoming an Above Water Warfare specialist in the early nineties, he spent most of the next two decades as a sea-going officer while serving in HMC Ships *Vancouver*, *Halifax*, *Montréal*, and *Calgary*, with the Canadian Fleet Pacific staff, as Executive Officer in HMCS *Regina* from 2003 to 2005, and as Commanding Officer in HMCS *Halifax* from 2007 to 2009. In so doing, he deployed repeatedly – including three tours on the Arabian Gulf and one on the Adriatic Sea – and also circumnavigated the globe (HMCS *Calgary*, 1995).

As Captain (N), he was the Maritime Component Commander of Canadian Joint Task Force (Haiti), leading sea-based humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in response to the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. He then commanded a seven-ship combined, multi-national Task Group in the High Arctic later in 2010 during the annual Op NANOOK. Later, as a Rear Admiral, he also led the Canadian Armed Forces' recurring Op LENTUS responses to historic fires and floods in British Columbia while commanding Joint Task Force Pacific from 2016 to 2018.

As a staff officer, VAdm McDonald served four tours on the Naval Staff in National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa. In addition to service as Deputy Commander of the RCN from 2018 to 2019, he was Director General Naval Force Development from 2013 to 2016, Director Naval Requirements from 2012 to 2013, and Executive Secretary to the Chief of the Maritime Staff from 2005 to 2007.

Vice-Admiral (VAdm) Art McDonald became Chief of the Naval Staff and assumed command of the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) on June 12, 2019, becoming the thirty-sixth Commander of the RCN (CRCN) in the RCN's 109 years. Prior to his appointment as CRCN, VAdm McDonald commanded at the ship (HMCS *Halifax* from 2007 to 2009), Operations Group / Fleet (Maritime Operations Group Five from 2010 to 2011), and Formation (Maritime Forces Pacific and Joint Task Force Pacific from 2016 to 2018) levels.

On 12 January 2021, he turned over command of the Royal Canadian Navy to Vice-Admiral Craig Baines, former commander of Commander Maritime Forces Atlantic and Joint Task Force Atlantic from 2017 until July 2020 when he assumed the position of Deputy Vice Chief of the Defence Staff.

He was promoted to the rank of Admiral in January 2021 and became the Chief of the Defence Staff on 14 January 2021. He voluntarily stepped aside as the CDS on 24 February 2021 due to an investigation by the Canadian Forces National Investigation Service in allegations of sexual misconduct. He remained on full pay as an Admiral while the investigation was being conducted.

Lieutenant(N) Heather Macdonald identified herself as the person making the allegation after somebody leaked details of her case without her consent. She is a 16-year veteran of the Royal Canadian Navy and serves as a combat systems engineer in the navy. The incident was alleged to have taken place at a social function aboard the frigate *HMCS Montreal* when it was docked in Greenland in 2010.

In August 2021, the Canadian Armed Forces Provost Marshal said that the CFNIS investigation did not reveal evidence to support laying criminal or military code-of-conduct charges against Admiral McDonald but no details were released. The Provost Marshal later made a statement to the press when Admiral McDonald said he should be returned as the CDS that the investigation of "allegation of sexual misconduct against Admiral McDonald" did not lead to charges because of "insufficient evidence." However, the Provost Marshal also stated: "This does not mean that the allegation was unfounded, which is defined by Statistics Canada as, 'After a police investigation it is concluded that no violation of the law took place nor was attempted.'"

On 12 October 2021, Admiral McDonald sent a letter to senior military officials claiming he has been exonerated on an allegation of sexual assault and should be immediately reinstated. This letter may have led to him being formally relieved of His command as Chief of Defence Staff on 25 November 2021 and General Eyre being permanently appointed to serve as the Chief of the Defence Staff.

VAdm McDonald is also a graduate of the 2003 Canadian Forces College (CFC) Command and Staff Course, the 2012 CFC National Security Studies Programme, and the 2014 U.S. CAPSTONE General and Flag Officer Course. A 2016 alumnus of the Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies, he is also a graduate of the Senior Executives in National and International Security program at Harvard University (2017).

#### Honours and Awards

Awarded **Commander of the Order of Military Merit (CMM)** as per the **Canada Gazette** of 01 June 2019 in the rank of Rear-Admiral.

Became the **Principal Commander of the Order of Military Merit (CMM)** on his appointment to the position of Chief of Defence Staff on 14 January 2021.

Awarded the **Meritorious Service Medal (MSM)** as per the **Canada Gazette** of 18 December 2010 in the rank of Captain(N) as the Commander of the CF Maritime Component of JTF Haiti.

“Captain(N) McDonald was deployed as the maritime component commander of Joint Task Force Haiti, from January to March 2010. His detailed understanding of the conduct of joint land operations, in the context of humanitarian assistance and recovery, was at the source of the very successful land and sea operations led by Her Majesty’s Canadian Ships *Halifax* and *Athabaskan*. This, combined with his dynamic leadership, enabled the delivery of necessary supplies, labour and security to a ravaged landscape. His decisive actions had an immediate and enduring positive effect on the disaster zone, greatly contributing to Canada’s international reputation.”

**His Medal include:** CMM - MSM – SW Asia bar Afghanistan – Operational Service Medal with ribbon Haiti - SSM bar NATO – Peacekeeping – NATO bar former Yugoslavia – EIIR Diamond Jubilee - CD and 2 bars – Saskatchewan Centennial

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**Chief of the Defence Staff**  
**14 January 2021 to 24 February 2021 (41 days)**