

Vice-Admiral Angus Ian TOPSHEE, CMM (OMM), MSM, CD
Commander – Royal Canadian Navy
30 May 2022 -



Vice-Admiral (VAdm) Angus Topshee was born in Nepean, Ontario and joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 1990. His first four years were spent at the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) and included a six-month term on exchange at the Australian Defence Force Academy.

His first summer of Training, he wore an Air Force uniform and took flying training on a Beechcraft Musketeer. After 17 hours of flying, he was turned down. What to do with him? Army training in Gagetown was not available so he was sent to Victoria to MARS II. They were not impressed when he showed up in an Air Force uniform. Navy training went well and so he took a voluntary occupational transfer.

Upon graduation from RMC in 1994, he was awarded the Canada Memorial Scholarship and, in 1996, earned a Masters of Literature in

Strategic Studies from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland.

After six years of schooling and a short posting to the Directorate of Maritime Force Development at National Defence Headquarters, VAdm Topshee finally started formal MARS training in 1996 and then joined his first ship, Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Winnipeg*, on a Thursday in 1997. He sailed for a NATO deployment the following Tuesday and we were gone for six months.” About six ships made up the NATO Task Force. To hone their skills, ship’s crews did boarding exercises off the Strait of Gibraltar. NATO hired four merchant ships for them to find. The buzz of activity was all new to Topshee. “I remember we were on the bridge as the second officer of the watch had us charging the wrong way up the traffic lanes at 25 knots, shining the xenon death ray at different ships and hailing them asking if they were our boats.” As a new sailor, he thought this was normal; it was not until he sailed in *Winnipeg* for a routine Task Group exercise after the deployment that he discovered it was not.

He was incredibly fortunate to spend the next nine years largely at sea and completed a succession of very rewarding tours and operational deployments as a Navigating Officer, Operations Officer, and Combat Officer on Canada’s Pacific coast.

In 2003, he experienced the worst possible warship scenario while serving in HMCS *Ottawa* – a major engine fire. The ship’s emergency pipe woke him up. Thinking it was a planned man overboard exercise that had been piped incorrectly, he stormed on to the bridge. “I put the headset

on and the first report that came in was the Engineering Officer, calmest person in the world, and he simply said, ‘Command HQ1 we have a major fire in the forward engine room, fitted system has been activated to no effect. Fire is out of control. I have two casualties in the MCR...’, And I’m like okay, so this is not a man overboard. I should really not be mad at the XO anymore.” He chuckled while he reminisced about those early formative years in his career. But he became solemn when asked about the hard times.

In 2005, he was selected to attend the “NSC 10” course at the United States Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. That fantastic year was followed by appointment as the Executive Officer of HMCS *St. John's* in 2006 and then HMCS *Toronto* in July 2007.

As penance for two exciting years at sea as an XO, VAdm Topshee was posted to the Directorate of Maritime Strategy at NDHQ in Ottawa in 2008 where he was assigned to assist in developing a new strategy for the Royal Canadian Navy.

In July 2009, he was delighted to be given the best job in the Navy – command of HMCS *Algonquin*, the flagship of Canada’s Pacific Fleet. His time aboard *Algonquin* was easily the highlight of his career and included high readiness workups, Op PODIUM (security for the Vancouver 2010 Olympics), and Op *Pacific Amistad* (a five-month deployment in the central and western Pacific). He very reluctantly turned over command at the end of 2010 and was somewhat surprised to find himself immediately heading to Afghanistan as part of the NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A) where he spent a year based in Kabul as the Director of Afghan National Police Training Operations.

Upon his return from Afghanistan, VAdm Topshee spent six months working with the Canadian Fleet Pacific staff leading up to his role as the Director of Operations for RIMPAC 2012.

In the summer of 2012 VAdm Topshee was honoured to assume command of Canadian Forces Base Halifax, a position he held for three years. He then attended the National Security Programme (NSP 8) at the Canadian Forces College in Toronto in 2015 before being promoted to Captain(N) and assigned as the Deputy Director of the Strategy, Policy and Plans Directorate North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado in 2016.

In July 2018, now Commodore Topshee returned to the West Coast to take command of Canadian Fleet Pacific (the second-best job in the Navy).

In April 2021, he was promoted to his Rear-Admiral, and in May 2021 and assumed command of Maritime Forces Pacific and Joint Task Force Pacific.

In late May 2022, he was promoted to Vice-Admiral and on 30 May 2022 assumed command of the Royal Canadian Navy at NDHQ in Ottawa.

VAdm Topshee is blessed with a fantastically supportive wife and four tremendous daughters.

VAdm Topshee was awarded the **Officer of the Order of Military Merit (OMM)** as per the **Canada Gazette** of 02 June 2018 in the rank of Commodore.

VAdm Topshee was awarded the **Meritorious Service Medal (MSM)** as per the **Canada Gazette** of 25 October 2014 in the rank of Captain(N) for organizing a Rim of the Pacific multi-national Exercise in 2012.

The citation reads as follows:

“Captain Topshee’s performance, as director of operations for the Rim of the Pacific Exercise 2012, was critical to the successful coordination of 40 warships, six submarines, over 200 aircraft and **more** than 25 000 multinational personnel. His intellect and professionalism proved essential to enhancing interoperability among 22 participating nations and, ultimately, to the exercise’s resounding success. Captain Topshee’s performance in this high-profile position brought great credit to the Canadian Armed Forces.”



Awarded **Officer of the Legion of Merit (USA)** as per the **Canada Gazette** of 29 June 2019 in the rank of Commodore.

Medals: OMM - MSM – General Campaign Star with SWA ribbon and one extra tour bar – Peacekeeping – NATO ribbon Article 5 – CD and bar – Officer of the Legion of Merit (USA)