

Canada's Naval Role in the Persian Gulf before and during Iraq War, 2003

Here's what U.S. Central Command had to say about the role of Canadian warships in the Persian Gulf during the Iraq war and how they were "integrated into a coalition formation."

Force Protection

Heavily armed, manoeuvrable warships, such as Canada's destroyers and frigates, provide defensive capabilities to the more vulnerable specialized vessels in the multinational coalition fleet. (See pp.12-15)

Fleet Support

The replenishment ships HMCS Preserver and Protecteur cruised the Arabian [Persian] Gulf and Arabian Sea to replenish the coalition fleet. Replenishment ships are crucial to sustaining coalition naval operations; as well as food and essential materiel such as fuel, ammunition and replacement parts, they provide other ships of the fleet with specialized services such as health care and engineering expertise. During their time in theatre, HMCS Preserver and Protecteur conducted more than 200 replenishment operations. (See "Fleet Support," at right.)

Leadership interdiction

To prevent Al-Qaeda and Taliban members from escaping the area of operations in merchant ships and fishing boats operating from Pakistan and Iran, Canadian ships hail vessels, identify them, pursue and board them when necessary, and search for material and activity indicating the presence of Al-Qaeda or Taliban members. (See p.11.)

Maritime interdiction

Since the beginning of Operation Apollo, Canadian ships hailed more than 21,800 vessels. To date [August 6, 2003], Canadian ships have performed more than half the 1,100 boardings conducted by the multinational coalition fleet.

Source: U.S. Central Command website, "Canada," August 6, 2003. www.centcom.mil/en/canada/

"Force Protection" for the Coalition Navy



Retired Admiral Ken Summers confirmed in 2003, that the Canadian Navy was then providing "direct support to the war on terrorism ...and indirect support to the war on Iraq, in that they are escorting through the Strait of Hormuz any allied ship that needs to get in or out of the [Persian] gulf." More than a decade earlier, Summers commanded Canada's naval, air and land forces in the 1991 war against Iraq.

HMCS Preserver



HMCS Protecteur



"Fleet Support" for Coalition in the Persian Gulf

During the massive buildup of naval forces in the Persian Gulf just prior to the invasion of Iraq, two Canadian Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment ships "cruised the Arabian [Persian] Gulf and Arabian Sea to replenish the coalition fleet."¹

These ships' role is to provide "everything a frigate or destroyer needs at sea, thus increasing their range and endurance... [including] ammunition, fuel, stores, provisions and helicopter support."²

Canada's support ships carry "enough provisions to supply a task force of six destroyers for six weeks without having to return to port."³ During Operation Apollo they "provided fleet support by conducting over two hundred replenishment missions."⁴

At 172 meters in length—the largest in Canada's Navy—each ship carries 365 sailors, including air crew for two CH-124 Sea King helicopters.

Cargo Capacity (for other warships)

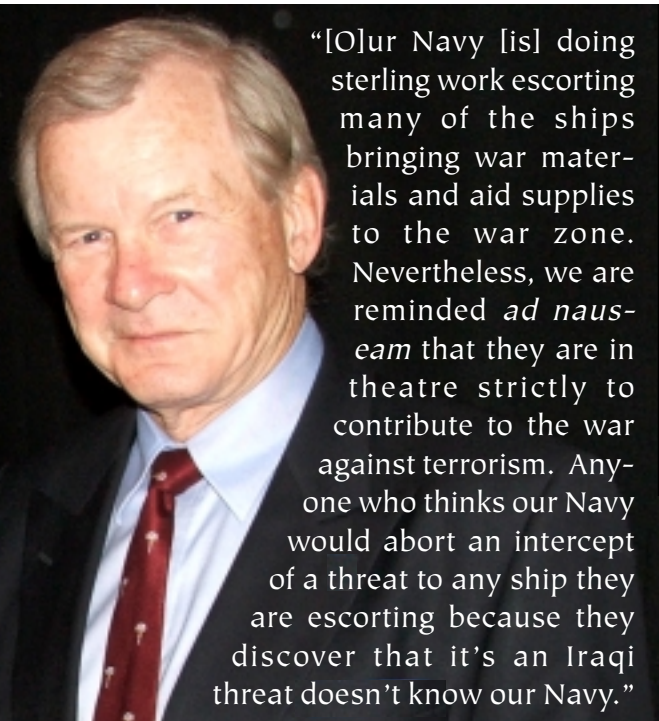
- 14,590 tons fuel
- 1,250 tons ammunition
- 1,048 tons dry cargo
- 400 tons aviation fuel

Armaments

2 x Phalanx Close in Weapons Systems
6 x 50 calibre machine guns⁵

References

1. U.S. Central Command, "Canada," August 6, 2003. www.centcom.mil/en/canada/
2. HMCS Preserver, June 22, 2004. web.archive.org/web/20040626163355/www.navy.dnd.ca/preserver/about/ship_about_e.asp
3. Welcome Aboard, HMCS Protecteur www.navy.forces.gc.ca/protecteur/1/1-s_eng.asp
4. Philippe Lagasse, "Matching Ends and Means in Canadian Defence," from *Canada Among Nations, 2004, 2005*. books.google.ca/books?id=iGgtiaeOVA4C
5. Ship's Characteristics, HMCS Protecteur www.navy.forces.gc.ca/protecteur/1/1-s_eng.asp?category=17&title=578



“[O]ur Navy [is] doing sterling work escorting many of the ships bringing war materials and aid supplies to the war zone. Nevertheless, we are reminded *ad nauseam* that they are in theatre strictly to contribute to the war against terrorism. Anyone who thinks our Navy would abort an intercept of a threat to any ship they are escorting because they discover that it’s an Iraqi threat doesn’t know our Navy.”

Major-Gen. (ret.) Lewis McKenzie

“Admit it, we’re engaged in combat.”
National Post, April 4, 2003.



HMCS Iroquois

Tribal-Class Destroyer

Built by: MIL Davie, QC
Home: Halifax, NS
Crew: 300 Sailors

Flagship of Task Force 151 (TF151) during “Operation Iraqi Freedom”

(Deployed to the Persian Gulf, Feb. 24 - July 29, 2003)

Armaments:

- 29 x Surface-to-Air, Standard Missiles (Lockheed Martin, U.S.)
- 1 x 76 mm (62 calibre) Artillery Gun (OTO Melara, Italy)
- 6 x high-explosive MK-46 torpedoes (Alliant Techsystems, U.S.)
- 1 x Phalanx 20mm radar-guided Gatling gun (Raytheon, U.S.)
- 2 x M2 Browning heavy machine guns (General Dynamics, U.S.)

Multi-Role Patrol Frigates

Each with a crew of 225 sailors

HMCS Regina



Deployed to Persian Gulf:
Feb. 2-July 1, 2003

Built by: MIL Davie Shipbuilding, QC
Home: CFB Esquimalt

These six, multi-billion dollar warships —with 1,425 Canadian sailors— were in the Persian Gulf with TF151 supporting the Iraq War in 2003!

Armaments:

- 24 x high-explosive MK-46 torpedoes (Alliant Techsystems, U.S.)
- 16 x Evolved Sea-Sparrow Surface-to-Air Missile (Raytheon, U.S.)
- 8 x RGM-84 Harpoon Surface-to-Surface Missile (Boeing, U.S.)
- 1 x 57 mm Mk2 gun (Bofors, Sweden, now BAE Systems, U.K.)
- 1 x Phalanx 20mm radar-guided Gatling gun (Raytheon, U.S.)
- 6 x .50 caliber Browning machine guns (General Dynamics, U.S.)

HMCS Fredericton



Deployed to Persian Gulf:
Mar. 5-Aug. 28, 2003

Built by: Saint John Shipbuilding, NB
Home: CFB Halifax

HMCS Calgary



Deployed to Persian Gulf:
June 15-Dec. 14, 2003

Built by: Saint John Shipbuilding, NB
Home: CFB Esquimalt

HMCS Winnipeg



Deployed to Persian Gulf:
Sept. 15, 2002-May 2, 2003

Built by: St. John Shipbuilding, NB
Home: CFB Esquimalt

HMCS Montreal



Deployed to Persian Gulf:
Sept. 9, 2002-April 25, 2003

Built by: Saint John Shipbuilding, NB
Home: CFB Halifax