
News Release Communiqué

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GOVERNMENT OF CANADA AND MARINE ATLANTIC INC. NAME NEW VESSELS

ST. JOHN'S — The Honourable Rob Merrifield, Minister of State (Transport), the Honourable Peter MacKay, Minister of National Defence, Regional Minister for Nova Scotia and Minister responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador, and Rob Crosbie, chair of Marine Atlantic Inc.'s (MAI's) board of directors, today announced the names for MAI's two new vessels.

The MV *Blue Puttees* and the MV *Highlanders*, which are expected to join MAI's fleet in early 2011, will significantly improve MAI's ability to provide on-time, reliable service and meet increasing traffic demand between North Sydney, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

The vessels were named after two military units: the Newfoundland Regiment, nicknamed the "Blue Puttees" (currently the Royal Newfoundland Regiment) and the Cape Breton Highlanders (currently the Nova Scotia Highlanders).

"I am pleased to announce the names for Marine Atlantic's new vessels," said Minister Merrifield. "This marks another step forward in our government's commitment to the revitalization of Marine Atlantic. I'm confident that obtaining these new vessels will improve MAI's service and reliability for the people of Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador."

In May 2010, the Government of Canada and MAI announced that the corporation had entered into an agreement with Stena Group of Companies to charter two vessels to replace the aging MV *Caribou*, and MV *Joseph and Clara Smallwood*. This was made possible by the Government of Canada's recent announcement that it will invest \$521 million over the next five years to revitalize MAI, and renew its fleet and shore facilities at North Sydney, Nova Scotia; Port aux Basques, Newfoundland and Labrador; and Argentia, Newfoundland and Labrador.

"We are pleased that Marine Atlantic Inc. is choosing to recognize the invaluable service and sacrifice of the Newfoundland Regiment and the Cape Breton Highlanders to Canada through the naming of these vessels," said Minister MacKay. "These two regiments have long and storied histories, fighting from Gallipoli and Beaumont-Hamel, from Vimy Ridge to the Italian Campaign, and have made lasting impacts on the communities they serve. The naming of these vessels adds to the honours the two units deserve."

"We are very pleased that our two new vessels have received such strong and symbolic names that reflect our military pride both past and present," said Mr. Crosbie. "We look forward to the MV *Blue Puttees* and the MV *Highlanders* beginning their service with MAI and bringing us towards our goal of providing a modern and efficient service for our customers. Our five-year plan for renewal is moving forward and this is another positive step in that process."

MAI, a federal Crown corporation, provides a vital link between Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nova Scotia. MAI's ferry services support tourism, and the import and export of goods. In 2009, an estimated 27 per cent of all passengers, 50 per cent of all freight and 90 per cent of all perishable goods between the Island of Newfoundland and the Canadian mainland were carried by MAI.

A backgrounder with information on the vessels' names is attached.

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Backgrounder Information

THE BLUE PUTTEES

The Blue Puttees is a nickname for the Newfoundland Regiment, which was established in May 1915 to fight in the First World War. The nickname comes from the blue puttees the soldiers wore as part of their uniform, rather than the British Army khaki puttees, because that was all local suppliers could provide at the time.

The Newfoundland Regiment fought stalwartly during the First World War, first in the Mediterranean theatre at Gallipoli, then in France where, on July 1, 1916, it suffered horrendous casualties on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. The regiment was reconstituted and continued to fight through 1918.

To recognize its service and sacrifice on the western front, King George V re-designated it as the Royal Newfoundland Regiment in February 1918. It is the only infantry regiment in the British Commonwealth to be awarded the designation “Royal” for its accomplishments during the Great War. It has the distinction of bearing on its regimental colour the battle honour “Gallipoli,” which no other regiment in North America carries. Today, the Royal Newfoundland Regiment consists of two battalions.

For additional information, please visit
www.army.forces.gc.ca/37cbg_hq/units-unites/2nl-eng.asp.

THE CAPE BRETON HIGHLANDERS

Previously known as the 94th Victoria Battalion of Infantry Argyll Highlanders, the Cape Breton Highlanders fought during the Second World War. They were regarded as a hard-nosed, tough infantry battalion — reflecting the character of Cape Breton. The Cape Breton Highlanders were mobilized for overseas service on January 1, 1941, and later went on to Italy as part of the 11th Infantry Brigade, 5th Canadian Armoured Division. In January 1945, the regiment left Italy and moved to Northwest Europe, where it participated in the final campaign to liberate the Netherlands.

The Cape Breton Highlanders and a number of other Nova Scotia Highland regiments were brought together and in 1955 were amalgamated into a two-battalion regiment known as the Nova Scotia Highlanders. Today, the men and women from the “Isle of the Eastern Shore” are known as the 2nd Battalion, the Nova Scotia Highlanders (Cape Breton).

For additional information, please visit
www.army.forces.gc.ca/2ns_highlanders/history.asp.

As citizen soldiers, the men and women of both regiments are proudly and efficiently doing a job of real importance to their community and the security of the nation by serving on humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping and peace support operations throughout the world.