

**Canadian Forces Naval Engineering School Detachment St. John's  
Naval Combat Systems Technician Training Plan Graduation  
Glenn Blackwood  
Vice-President, Memorial University (Marine Institute)  
Friday, January 10, 2014**

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Good morning, everyone.

- Captain (Navy) Angus Topshee
- Commander David Benoit (Review Officer)
- Lieutenant-Commander Alan Brown
- Councillor Tom Hann (City of St. John's)

Welcome Dr. Rob Shea, AVP, Academic and Student Affairs at MI to his first Navy graduation, Ms. Cathy Dutton, Head, SMS and to all of our faculty and staff who are attending.

Special welcome to all the family and love ones in attendance – this is your day too. You are a big reason for their success to this point (fortunately for you – you are not in the parade).

To the Royal Canadian Navy, I say thank you for allowing the Marine Institute of Memorial University the honour of joining in the celebration of our newest weapons engineering technician graduates.

For our graduates, your diplomas symbolize the knowledge and expertise your education has provided.

You will make a significant impact on the world through your work and contributions within the Royal Canadian Navy.

You are tasked with defending the longest coastline in the world and representing Canada throughout the oceans of the world. That, ladies and gentlemen is 72% of the planet!

That's a tough and demanding job that not everyone could take on. As Canadians, we thank you for taking on this role.

My message to the graduates here today is – **Education is a journey. Not a destination.** OR, as I like to say – **Education is a voyage, not a port of call.**

As members of the Royal Canadian Navy, you understand and appreciate the value of education more than most.

Your voyage will not end today. In fact for the rest of your life you will see the importance of continuing your education. Take the time to read Capt. Topshee's bio in your program. His career is one of continuous learning and growth.

The Royal Canadian Navy provides its members with endless opportunity for advancing their education and I encourage you to make use of it.

During the past two years you have spent part of the voyage with us and I am proud to see how much each of you has grown since you first came to the institute and proud of the role we have played in your education – every mess dinner you get a little more mature!

Education at MI is more than a classroom. We partner with industry so that our students are exposed to the best learning experiences in the field and at sea where they learn, first-hand, the latest developments in their sectors.

The feedback we receive from industry goes directly into our curriculum and we are working with our local and national companies to develop **products** and **people** to grow our oceans sector.

We are proud to educate and graduate **innovative** men and women, **like you**, whose knowledge and dedication energize our oceans sector, whether that be in the areas of marine transportation, ocean technology or maritime defence.

**You** are the result of our work. We feel confident that your education has given you exceptional skills to excel in your positions on board one of the best fleets in the world.

We thank the Royal Canadian Navy for having the confidence in us to help contribute to the Navy's greatest asset – **its people**.

Our partnership with the Navy is exceptional and one which we highly value.

The Naval Combat Systems and Marine Engineering Technology programs are tailored specifically to the needs of the Navy and we constantly review them to ensure we are delivering these programs to the highest calibre.

I, now, want to offer my congratulations and thanks to the family members of our graduates.

I know from experience that having a family member at sea for long periods can be difficult.

Everyday life can be challenging and sometimes you are called on to sacrifice the time you could have together. It is during these times you have to be understanding, sometimes independent.

But your support for them is invaluable and it helps maintain their spirits and morale when they are serving at sea.

Today though, you should feel nothing but pride for these men and women as they take up their new roles.

To our graduates, the Marine Institute is honoured to have provided you with the knowledge on which you will build your careers.

We are proud to count you among our alumni and we thank you for contributing to our rich and vibrant student community.

You are about to embark on an amazing career where the rewards are your experiences as you travel to new places, meet new people and appreciate different cultures.

As members of the Royal Canadian Navy, you are second-to-none in professionalism, commitment and enthusiasm. Most importantly, you are second to none in the impact you will have representing Canada to the world.

On behalf of everyone at the Marine Institute, **congratulations** and we wish you “fair winds and following seas”.

You represent Canada wherever you go and for that we are extremely proud.

Thank you.