



On your Marks, Get Set, Go! HMCS *Charlottetown* races in the PEI Marathon

October 12th 2024 – Catania, Italy

It was a sunny morning in Catania, Italy where 60 runners gathered on the flight deck of His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Charlottetown* warming up ahead of participating in a PEI Marathon Virtual Race in the 5km or 10km distances.

Why are these runners in Catania? They are part of the crew of HMCS *Charlottetown* and are currently deployed on Operation REASSURANCE where the ship is serving as the Flagship of Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2) in the Mediterranean Sea since July.

Named after the capital of Prince Edward Island, HMCS *Charlottetown* is one of 12 Halifax-class multi-role patrol frigates that are considered the backbone of the Royal Canadian Navy. Each ship in the class is named after a Canadian city. Crews of these ships make efforts to maintain connections with their namesake cities.

There are seven Prince Edward Islanders currently deployed in HMCS *Charlottetown*. A few of them even took the opportunity to participate in this race.

"Being from Charlottetown, I was thrilled to be posted to HMCS *Charlottetown*. Now, I'm excited to participate in the PEI Marathon for the first time, having previously been either training on the West coast or sailing during the fall months," said Sub-Lieutenant Alexis Banks. "It is great that we were able to set up this virtual run. Events like this, connecting us to home while we're deployed, are always special. Our small group of Islanders on board takes immense pride in representing our province as well as our ship. We're looking forward to showing our Island spirit!"

While the ship is unable to visit Charlottetown this year, crew members were keen to find a way to keep this connection going. The organization of the event was spearheaded by Lieutenant

(Navy) Émilie Béland with support from crewmembers who helped plan the route, distribute race kits and work the water and aid stations along the route.

“I wanted to share my love of running with my fellow crewmembers and find a way to connect with the city of Charlottetown,” said Lieutenant (Navy) Béland. “Whether running or walking I’m happy at the amount of people who showed to participate and support each other throughout the event.”

These activities provide deployed crewmembers with connections to home and deepen the relationships they have with each other when deployed in high tempo operational environment. HMCS *Charlottetown* has been deployed since mid-June and is expected to return to its homeport of Halifax, Nova Scotia in time for the holiday season.

Background Information

Operation REASSURANCE represents Canada’s commitment to NATO’s collective security and is currently the largest Canadian Armed Forces operation. For Canada, participating in SNMG2 provides an opportunity to showcase the Royal Canadian Navy’s versatility, dedication and professionalism of its members, contributing to Allied efforts in a significant way.

SNMG2 is one of four Standing Naval Forces that operate under NATO Allied Maritime Command. It is a multinational NATO force, and interoperability is key to its success. Canadian sailors regularly engage in joint exercises and activities with Alliance ships, honing their skills and building the relationships necessary for successful combined operations.