



News Release

Communiqué

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GOVERNMENT OF CANADA LAUNCHES ARCTIC OPERATION

YELLOWKNIFE, N.W.T.—Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway Peter Gordon MacKay announced today that Canadian Rangers will begin patrols on Ellesmere Island this weekend as part of Operation Nunaliut 2009, the first of three annual sovereignty operations planned this year in the North by the Canadian Forces. Nunaliut, Inuktitut for “land that is ours,” focuses on military operations in the High Arctic and will also involve air surveillance patrols and parachute insertions of search and rescue technicians.

“Operation Nunaliut is but one example of how the Government of Canada actively and routinely exercises its sovereignty in the North,” said Minister MacKay. “The Canadian Forces play an important role in achieving our goals in the North, which is why the Government of Canada is making sure they have the tools they need to carry out a full range of tasks in the Arctic, including surveillance, sovereignty, and search-and-rescue operations.”

“The North represents 40 per cent of Canada's land mass and is Canada Command’s single biggest region,” said Vice-Admiral Dean McFadden, Commander of Canada Command, the CF’s lead organisation for domestic and continental operations. “In keeping with the Canada First Defence Strategy, we are placing greater emphasis on our northern operations, including in the High Arctic. This operation underscores the value of the Canadian Rangers, our eyes and ears in the North, which at the direction of the Government are growing to 5 000 in strength.”

“This operation is a golden opportunity to expand our capabilities to operate in Canada’s Arctic,” said Brigadier-General David Millar, the Commander of Joint Task Force North, the regional military command responsible for Canadian Forces operations north of the 60th parallel, headquartered in Yellowknife, N.W.T. “In addition to air and ground patrols, this operation calls on a range of supporting military capabilities—communications, intelligence, mapping, and satellite imaging.”

Including deployment phases, the operation will run from March 30th to April 20th, with patrols by the Canadian Rangers ending in Eureka, Ellesmere Island, on April 17th.

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Canada Command's six regional commands, including Joint Task Force North, monitor developments across the country on a continuous basis and stand ready to deploy the Canadian Forces when and where they are needed. Defending Canadians at home is the Command's primary mission.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Still imagery will be available throughout the operation from CF Combat Camera at: www.combatcamera.forces.gc.ca; video B-roll will be also be available, at www.combatcamera.forces.gc.ca/common/combatcamera/news. For more information, please contact Lieutenant(Navy) Jordan Holder, JTFN Public Affairs Officer, at: phone: (867) 873-0700, ext 6005, fax: (867) 766-6803, or cell: (867) 765-4060.

