

History of HMCS PREVOST

Her Majesty's Canadian Ship PREVOST dates its history to 8 August 1938, with the founding of the London Division of the Royal Canadian Naval Reserve under the command of Lieutenant E. E. Hart. The Division's first home was the second floor of the Darch Building on Talbot Street, with Market Square employed as the division's first parade ground.

Following the outbreak of hostilities in 1939, the Division moved to the Carling Block at Richmond and Carling. Like its counterparts in cities across Canada, the London Division became a vital recruiting and training centre for the wartime Navy. In keeping with the tradition, the navy decided in 1941 to commission shore establishments as "Stone frigates", entrusted with the names of historically significant ships. London's Division was christened HMCS PREVOST after HMS LADY PREVOST, a schooner brig which served in the Lake Erie Squadron during the War of 1812 and named for the then Governor-General's wife.

From 1943 to 1945, HMCS PREVOST operated as an English Language Training school for French recruits. Under the command of Lieutenant-Commander J. R. Hunter, HMCS PREVOST won the Commodore Walter Hose efficiency trophy as top Naval Reserve Division in 1941, 1942, and 1943. In all, PREVOST recruited and trained over 4,480 officers, men and WRENs (Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service) for active service.

After the war, HMCS PREVOST was converted from a wartime establishment to a permanent Naval Division. New boats, equipment, and training aids were acquired. In 1950, a boathouse was established in Port Stanley, and on 23 November 1957, the Division's present building was officially opened by the Hon. G. R. Perkes, VC, Minister of National Defence.

In 1964, the Division fell victim to budget cuts and was decommissioned. The building was turned over to the Army which used it to house Militia Units. The Navy returned to London on 11 January 1978 as London Detachment to Hamilton's HMCS STAR. On 29 September 1990, HMCS PREVOST was re-commissioned by Vice-Admiral C. M. Thomas, the Vice-Chief of Defence Staff. Freedom of the City was granted on 31 October 1998.

In recent years, HMCS PREVOST's sailors have crewed Maritime Coastal Defence Vessels, participated in numerous peacekeeping and NATO missions, served in the Persian Gulf War, aided in search and rescue for a crashed Snowbird and provided support to the Canada Summer Games. Today, sailors from HMCS PREVOST are deployed on multiple ships of the fleet and on named operations worldwide.