



# HMCS Calgary (FFH335)

## Commander Blair Saltel Commanding Officer

Commander Blair Saltel was raised in Sioux Lookout, Ontario. Wishing to see more of Canada and the world, he was recruited into the Canadian Armed Forces in 1996 as a Maritime Surface (MARS) officer. He graduated from the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, ON with a Bachelors of Mechanical Engineering.

His first ship was HMCS *Toronto*, where he completed a 2002/2003 tour of Operation *Active Endeavour* in the Mediterranean and Operation *Apollo* in the Arabian Sea. This eventful deployment saw him receive his Bridge Watchkeeping Certificate, participate in many successful boardings and experience his first Christmas at sea.

Specializing as a Fleet Navigating Officer, he joined HMCS *Ville de Quebec* in 2003. Active continentally, VDQ sailed with the NATO fleet Standing Naval Maritime Group 1 and participated in OP *Unison* (Hurricane Katrina relief). Completing his Operations Room Officer course, he moved to the Pacific Fleet to join HMCS *Calgary*, which deployed again to the Arabian Sea for Operation *Altair* in 2008.

After a brief stint as Operations Officer with Canadian Fleet Pacific staff, he was appointed Commanding Officer, Patrol Craft Training Squadron in 2009. Cdr Saltel sailed regularly in the capable *Orca*-class training craft, contributed to the Vancouver Olympics security planning and thoroughly enjoyed training young Naval officers.

Completing a Masters of Defence Studies in 2011, and following a brief stop-over at a desk in Ottawa at Canada Command, he assumed the role of Executive Officer of HMCS *Iroquois* in 2012. An RCN workhorse for this period, *Iroquois* conducted frequent operations, including Operation *Caribbe* and Exercise *Unitas* in the Caribbean, Exercise *Joint Warrior* in Europe and 1812 Fleet Ex in North America.

Returning to a desk to serve in the Project Management Office for the Canadian Surface Combatant in 2014, Cdr Saltel was steeped in Ottawa process and project management jargon.

Throughout his career, he has briefly served onboard HMC Ships *Halifax*, *Charlottetown*, *Regina* and *Winnipeg* and wore a red hat with Sea Training. He is a proud Polar Bear and member of the Order of Magellan though still yearns to earn an Equator crossing.