



Rear-Admiral (retired) Jennifer Bennett, CMM, CD



Jennifer Bennett successfully pursued two concurrent careers, one with the Canadian Armed Forces as a member of Canada's Reserve Force and the other as a teacher and school administrator. She retired from the Canadian Armed Forces in December 2019 after serving for more than 44 years, rising through the ranks to assume key institutional leadership positions and was a trailblazer who became Canada's first female Rear-Admiral, leading and influencing significant change across the institution.

A native of Hamilton, Ontario, she enrolled in the Naval Reserve in 1975 in HMCS STAR and served full and part-time in a variety of training, staff, leadership, and command positions across Canada while also working as a teacher and school administrator in elementary and secondary schools in Ontario and British Columbia.

Jennifer Bennett holds a Bachelor of Physical Education from McMaster University, a Bachelor of Education from Queen's University, a Master of Arts in Leadership and Training from Royal Roads University Victoria, an Honourary Doctorate from University of Alberta (Doctor of Laws) and an Honourary Doctorate from McMaster University (Doctor of Science). She is also a graduate of the Canadian Forces Staff School, Canadian Forces Staff College, NATO School, and NATO Defence College.

She gained experience with the cadet programs and Navy League of Canada through various positions in the CAF working as a Liaison Officer while commanding HMCS MALAHAT in Victoria, BC and visiting many Cadet Corps and Cadet Summer Training Centres, Junior Canadian Ranger Patrols, Competitions, and Annual Cadet Reviews as the Director of Reserves (2000 – 2003), Commander Naval Reserve (2007 – 2011), and Chief of Reserves and Cadets (2011- 2015).

Promoted to Rear-Admiral in April 2011, she was appointed as Canada's Chief of Reserves and Cadets and was responsible for the oversight and delivery of the two DND sponsored youth programs, Cadets and Junior Canadian Rangers as well as implementation of Canadian Armed Forces policies, procedures and programs for Reservists and oversight and implementation of the national employer support programs and engagement with a national Board of civilian volunteers. During this time, she worked directly with the three National Leagues to partner in the delivery and support of the Cadet Programs and was also engaged with Maritime Affairs through the Navy League of Canada.

In addition to primary military appointments, Jennifer Bennett was also engaged as an advisor and Champion in Employment Equity; Gender, Diversity and



inclusion programs and served as the National Capital Region Champion for Visible Minorities 2011 through 2013 and the National Champion for Women in Defence 2013 through 2018.

Since May 2020, Jennifer Bennett has served as the President for Ontario Division of the Navy League of Canada and a member of the Navy League Foundation and National Board of the Navy League of Canada. Subsequently in April 2021 she also was elected as the National Vice President, Division Presidents Representative of the Navy League of Canada.

Jennifer Bennett has been recognized for outstanding leadership, change management and exemplary service in the military and civilian communities. In 2011, she was named as one of Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women as a Public Sector Leader and in 2013 she was promoted from Officer in the Order of Military Merit (OMM) which she received in 2005 to Commander (CMM). She has received the Canadian Forces Decoration with three clasps, the Canada 125 medal, Queen's Golden and Diamond Jubilee Medals, Departmental Awards of Excellence from the Department of National Defence and Department of Justice, and a Chief of the Defence Staff Commendation.