

The Canadian Rangers: Cornerstone for Community Disaster Resilience in Canada's Remote and Isolated Communities



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Canadian Rangers from Inukjuak train with nurses from the Inuulitsivik Health Centre on the use of PPE. Photo courtesy of Ranger Sergeant Betsy Epoo, 2nd Canadian Ranger Patrol Group.

Rangers from 4CRPG conduct wellness checks, raise awareness about social distancing and other protective measures, and build triage centres. Photos from 4CRPG's official Facebook page.





Members of the Île-à-la-Crosse, Fond-du-Lac, and Wollaston Lake Canadian Ranger Patrols in northern Saskatchewan cut and deliver firewood and clear snow. Photos from 4CRPG's official Facebook page.





Trisha O'Neill, Fort Vermillion Resident: “The Rangers were an immeasurable help supporting the community through this disaster. They dealt with fatigue, frustrated residents and hard labour while maintaining positive attitudes. Seemed every time you looked around a red sweater was hauling, shoveling, patrolling, and comforting us. We are very grateful to them.” (4CRPG Facebook Page)

Community Disaster Resilience (CDR)

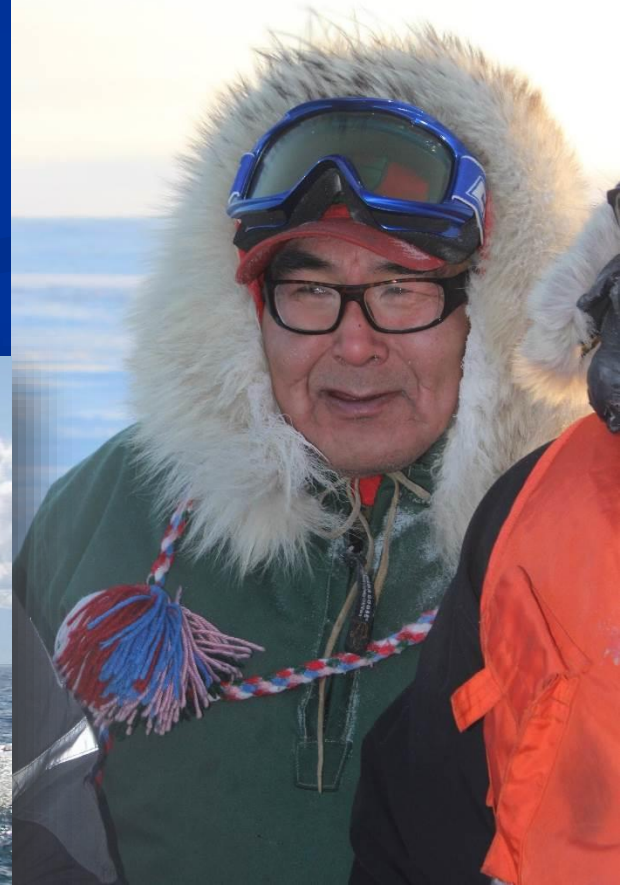
- A community's ability to “anticipate, and where possible prevent or at least minimize the potential damage a disaster might cause” and to cope with the effects of a “disaster if it occurs, to maintain certain basic functions and structures during the disaster, and to recover and adapt to the changes that result.”
 - Justice Institute of British Columbia, n.d. Cox and Hamlen, 2015.

Talk in a Nutshell

- The Canadian Rangers provide an answer to how targeted government investment can effectively build disaster resilience in at-risk, remote, and isolated communities
- Why?:
 - Their presence
 - Their organization, leadership, training, knowledge;
 - Their ongoing involvement in community preparedness and hazard risk analysis;
 - Their social relationships and networks;
 - The trust they have earned from their fellow community members
- How can Rangers be leveraged to build even greater community disaster resilience?

Canadian Rangers

“Provide a lightly-equipped, self-sufficient military presence in those sparsely settled northern, coastal and isolated areas of Canada which cannot conveniently or economically be covered by other elements of the Canadian Armed Forces”



Patrol Group	Region	Patrols	Canadian Rangers
1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group	Northwest Territories, Yukon, Nunavut	61	2000
2 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group	Quebec	25	752
3 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group	Ontario	20	591
4 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group	Manitoba, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Alberta	43	988
5 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group	Newfoundland and Labrador	32	929

A Unique Model

- Ranger service requirements
 - “trained upon enrolment”
- Indigenous knowledge
- elect own patrol leadership
- use their own environmentally-appropriate clothing
- Rangers compensated for use of their own vehicles and equipment on taskings/ exercises





Building Blocks of Community Disaster Resilience

- A community's disaster resilience should be built from the bottom-up
- Resilience flows from:
 - Ability to mobilize relationships and networks
 - Communities empowered to use existing skills, knowledge and resources in disaster management
 - Key capacities, such as hazard identification and risk awareness, emergency response training, effective leadership and organization, etc.



Ready, Willing, and Present

- “We are the eyes and ears of the military, but we are also the eyes and ears of our community. We protect our communities.”
Canadian Ranger,
Taloyoak, Nunavut





The Ranger organization bypasses many of these challenges facing CERTs: patrols do not have to fundraise for training and equipment, annual exercises and assigned tasks keep them active and ready to respond, and modest military pay supports retention.

Presence = Immediate Response: Pangnirtung Power Plant Fire (2015)



- Over the course of the crisis, the Pangnirtung Canadian Ranger Patrol:
 - helped set up emergency shelter
 - served dinner to elders
 - performed door-to-door wellness checks,
 - ensured that people had access to heat sources
 - informed residents about potential dangers

Presence = Immediate Response

Kangiqsualujjuaq (1999)



Presence = Immediate Response

First Air Flight 6560 (2011)



Ranger Kevin Lafferty: “To switch gears so quickly for something so obviously so tragic, wasn't the easiest thing ... [There were] a lot of sleepless nights initially, as everybody tried to get a handle on what had actually happened. Everybody did their job, their duty.”

Training, Experiences, Knowledge



Ifti Gehlen [second from left] and Peter Harvey [second from right] were two of seven Canadian Ranger Patrol Group members from Powell River who assisted in disaster response to wildfires in the BC interior this summer. Powell River Peak, 11 October 2017

Private John Hill of the Vanderhoof Ranger Patrol highlighted how, in these dangerous conditions, “after many years of training and working with the military and other units, everything came into place.”

SAR Training



- Ranger Sergeant Jean Rabbit-Waboose from Eabametoong First Nation (3CRPG): “the army’s training and funding for us has been a blessing for all our communities. It has saved a lot of lives.”

Exercising Emergency Management Scenarios



Rangers from Fort Smith, Northwest Territories learn how to FireSmart their community, while in Ranger in the Yukon practices urban search and rescue.



Training: Working Together



Traditional and Local Knowledge



Ranger Sergeant Roger Hitkolok, the patrol commander in the Inuit community of Kugluktuk, Nunavut. MCpl Dollie Simon from Fort Resolution, NWT teaches her Junior Canadian Rangers.

Rangers = Closing Gaps

- Gaps in Disaster Risk Reduction in Canada's Indigenous communities:
 - Need to create space for traditional knowledge and practices in Canada's broader disaster risk reduction efforts
 - Lack of opportunity provided to Indigenous communities to develop their local emergency response capabilities
 - Difficulties working within larger regional or national emergency response frameworks

Planning and Preparedness

- Rangers often key components of community emergency plans
- Given a variety of roles
- Involved in community planning committees
- E.g. Hay River, NWT
 - Support for searches
 - Dissemination of emergency notices
 - Transport of residents in evacuation
 - Flood Watch Committee



**KEEP
CALM
AND FOLLOW THE
EMERGENCY
PLAN**

Hazard Risk Analysis



“[It is] important to get out of the community and report on the changes, because there are a lot of changes happening, and people need to hear about them.” Ranger, Cambridge Bay Canadian Ranger Patrol.

Tracking Local Resources

Ranger role in completing
Local Area Resource Reports
(LARRs)



Command Commendation from the Joint Task Force Pacific
Commander: “Tasked in support of Operation Lentus 17-04, Ranger
[Juri] Agapow’s performance and dedication to duty were exceptional.
His knowledge of the local area was an outstanding resource to the Task
Force, specifically, his in-depth knowledge of the Chilcotin Plateau area
was of great value during evacuation operations.”

Leadership and Organization

- Major Charles Ohlke of 3 CRPG: leadership trainees go back “to their communities with some planning tools in their toolbox that will enable them to react to any situation with a sound plan of action.”



Relationships and Networks

“Rangers wear a lot of hats. We are in local government, hunter and trappers organizations, Coast Guard Auxiliary units, housing associations. We are coaches. We volunteer at community events. We have coffee with elders. We go to church. We run bingo. We work with a lot of different people.”
Ranger, Kugluktuk Ranger Patrol.



Putting it all Together: Community Evacuations

- Community Evacuations
 - Complex operations
 - Lots of challenges
 - Poor conceptualization and execution
- Indigenous communities:
 - Lack of translation services, medical care, mental health supports
 - Weak lines of communication
- Rangers can help mitigate these issues

Pikangikum First Nation Evacuation, 2019



Putting it all Together: Community Evacuations

- Chief Amanda Sainnawap later described that “the situation was chaotic,” but the Rangers helped “just by being there in their red (Ranger) sweaters. It gave me peace of mind that they were trained. I don’t know what we would have done without them.”
- Master Corporal Lilly Kejick: “the fires are the first time the Rangers have been able to serve our community and our people are proud of what we’ve been able to. We’re proud to have been able to do it for them.”

Moving Forward: Additional Disaster Management Training

- Consistent flood and fire watch training
- Earthquake and Tsunami response
- Courses on hazard risk analysis, prevention, and mitigation (e.g.) Fire Smart
- Creating effective emergency plans
- Mimic training given to CERT: including how to extinguish small fires, remove fuel sources, shut off utilities, assess and communicate damage, and conduct urban and interior SAR.
- Annual exercises might include a routine preparedness component (practice possible disaster response tasks, including evacuations, flood relief activities, and power failures)

Preparing for Mass Rescue Operations

Clipper Adventurer, an expedition cruise ship that ran aground near Kugluktuk, Nunavut.



“If a major emergency happened, like if a cruise ship ran aground people would come from the community to help. That’s just the way it is up here. I guess it would be helpful to know how we could help. So, if we go out as Rangers, what could we do? Maybe not a lot, but something. People are going to go out anyway, can’t we get some direction on how we might be able to help the most? I think that the Rangers would have something to contribute.”

Developing MRO Ranger Roles

- put eyes on the situation;
- provide updates to the JRCC;
- on-scene coordinator;
- provide intel on where passengers could be evacuated to on the land;
- assist with the deployment of the Major Air Disaster (MAJAD) kit (see insert below);
- shepherd lifeboats or zodiacs to safe havens or the community;
- help in offloading and tracking passengers;
- search for missing passengers;
- establish a camp to provide warmth and shelter;
- give first aid;
- provide predator control;
- reassure evacuees that the situation is under control;
- assist in setting up accommodations for evacuees in their communities;
- be the points of contact between evacuees and the community, etc.

Developing a Ranger Military Emergency Management Specialist Badge

- Based off U.S. Military Emergency Management Specialist program developed by the State Guard Association of the United States
- “Individuals with Basic MEMS certification will have operational understanding of the principles of emergency management, including mitigation, preparedness, emergency response and recovery with knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to effectively work within a comprehensive emergency management operation. Those with Senior and Master level certification will be able to lead and plan incident response efforts of increasing complexity.”



Moving Forward: Planning and Preparation

- Monthly patrol meetings could include formalized hazard risk analysis
- Conduct community level hazard risk assessments in cooperation with other stakeholders
- Participate in prevention and preparedness measures (such as flood watch committees)
- Undertake low-scale mitigation efforts (clearing away underbrush to reduce fire risks; marking tsunami evacuation routes)
- Work with local governments to ensure that community emergency plans reflect their capabilities and provide patrols with clear roles and responsibilities
- Be tasked to complete Local Area Resource Reports on a regular basis.

A Model for Greenland (YES) and Alaska (Maybe)

The Danish military plans a Greenlandic militia to help close its Arctic capacity gap

The creation of a force of volunteer "subject matter experts" draws some of its inspiration from Canada's Rangers.

By **Kevin McGwin** - August 17, 2020

- Rangers enhance community disaster resilience, WHILE providing:
 - a military presence in isolated communities that reflects local cultures
 - enhanced human surveillance capabilities and domain awareness
 - a pool of experienced individuals who can teach southern-based units how to operate safely and effectively in diverse regions

Final Thoughts

Clear example of how community resilience can be strengthened from the bottom-up, with the CAF empowering Rangers to use their existing skills and social relations within an organizational structure that provides them with the framework, training, and equipment they require to assist in every phase of disaster management

The training, organization, structure, leadership, local knowledge, cultural competence, and relationships of the Rangers allow many patrols to become cornerstones for disaster resilience in their communities

Through a relatively modest investment, the Government of Canada has supported the Rangers as a practical and celebrated tool to strengthen the resilience of over 200 communities in regions particularly vulnerable and exposed to natural hazards

THE CANADIAN RANGERS

A LIVING HISTORY

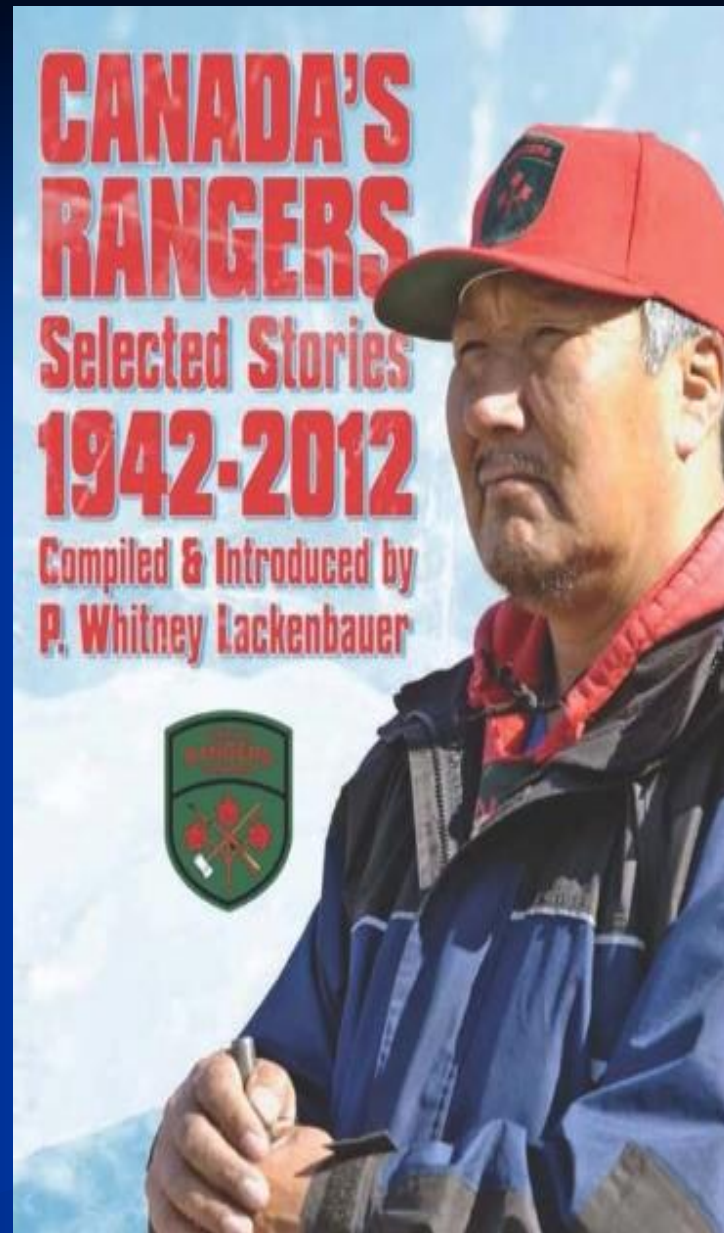


P. WHITNEY
LACKENBAUER

CANADA'S RANGERS

Selected Stories
1942-2012

Compiled & Introduced by
P. Whitney Lackenbauer



Further Reading

- North American and Arctic Defence and Security Network
 - <https://www.naadsn.ca/>
- Kitikmeot SAR
 - www.kitikmeotsar.ca



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Thank you, merci, mársı,
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quyanainni, máhsi, màhsi' choo,
másin cho, sógá sénlá', shàw
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