

5th Canadian Division

The Canadian Army Centred in Atlantic Canada

CANADIAN
ARMY



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FORTS. FIERS. PRÊTS.

Operation LASER

Employment of Reservists in Atlantic Canada in Response to COVID-19



National
Defence

Défense
nationale

#MightyMaroonMachine #StrongProudReady
#5Divsoldier

Canada



1. Introduction
2. Definition
3. Origins of Op LASER
4. Organization
5. Task Force Contribution
6. Key Tasks Completed
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9. Discussion/Questions





Operation LASER Revealed

Operation **LASER** is defined to the public on 4 March 2020 :

“The purpose is to ensure that the CAF (Canadian Armed Forces) implements measures to maintain CAF operational effectiveness and readiness, preserve essential health services for (members), and maintain responsive support to civil authorities as part of the CG (government) response,” Vance’s message noted. “We will immediately assess CAF posture at home and abroad, refresh business continuity plans, protect defence supply chains, and take measures to limit the chance of infection of our (members).”

Gen. Jonathan Vance
Chief of the Defence Staff





What is '**OPERATION LASER**'?

Operation LASER was the activation of a Contingency Plan (CONPLAN LASER) for the response to a pandemic influenza-like disease in Canada, in this case, enacted as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.



Operation LASER defined by 4 phases:

Phase 1 – Pandemic Preparedness: Mitigation planning and normal monitoring of worldwide pandemic threats.

Phase 2 – Pandemic Alert: Active monitoring of the evolving pandemic threat, with some protective measures adopted.

Phase 3 – Pandemic Response: Characterized by widespread and sustained transmission of the virus in the general population and imminent risk of significant absentee rates (*Note: focus of today's lecture as it pertains to Atlantic Canada*).

Phase 4 – Post Pandemic Restoration: Starts when CDS declares post-pandemic status.



Joint Task Force LASER

Following the activation of phase 3 of Operation LASER, First Canadian Division Headquarters was assigned as **Joint Task Force-LASER (JTF-LR)**.



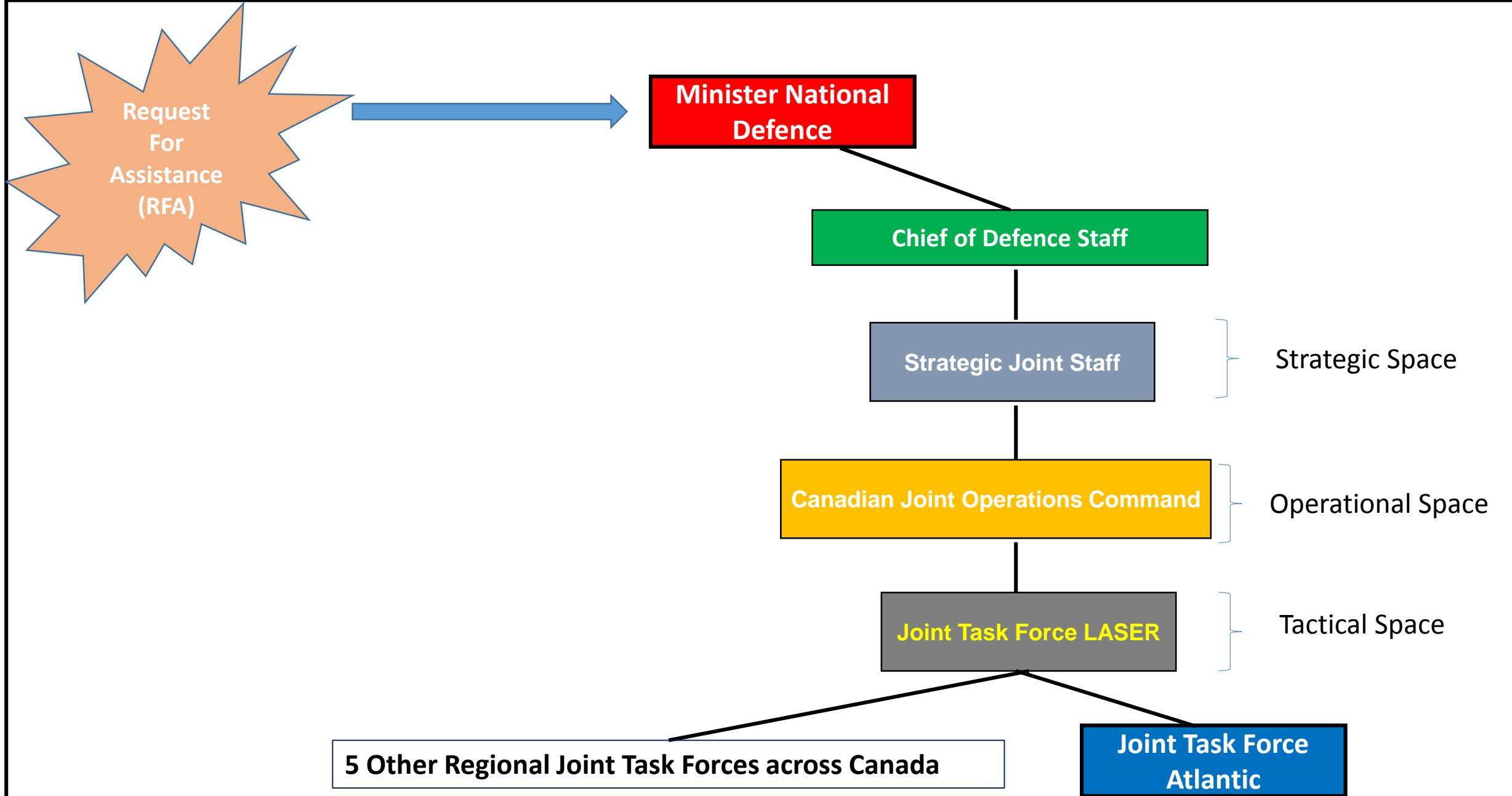
For Phase 3, JTF-LR was responsible for the coordination and command of all domestic operations related to Operation LASER.

Joint Task Force- LASER produced the effects real time via Regional Joint Task Forces (RJTFs), of which, **Joint Task Force Atlantic (JTFA; based out of Halifax) had the Atlantic Provinces as its area of operations.**



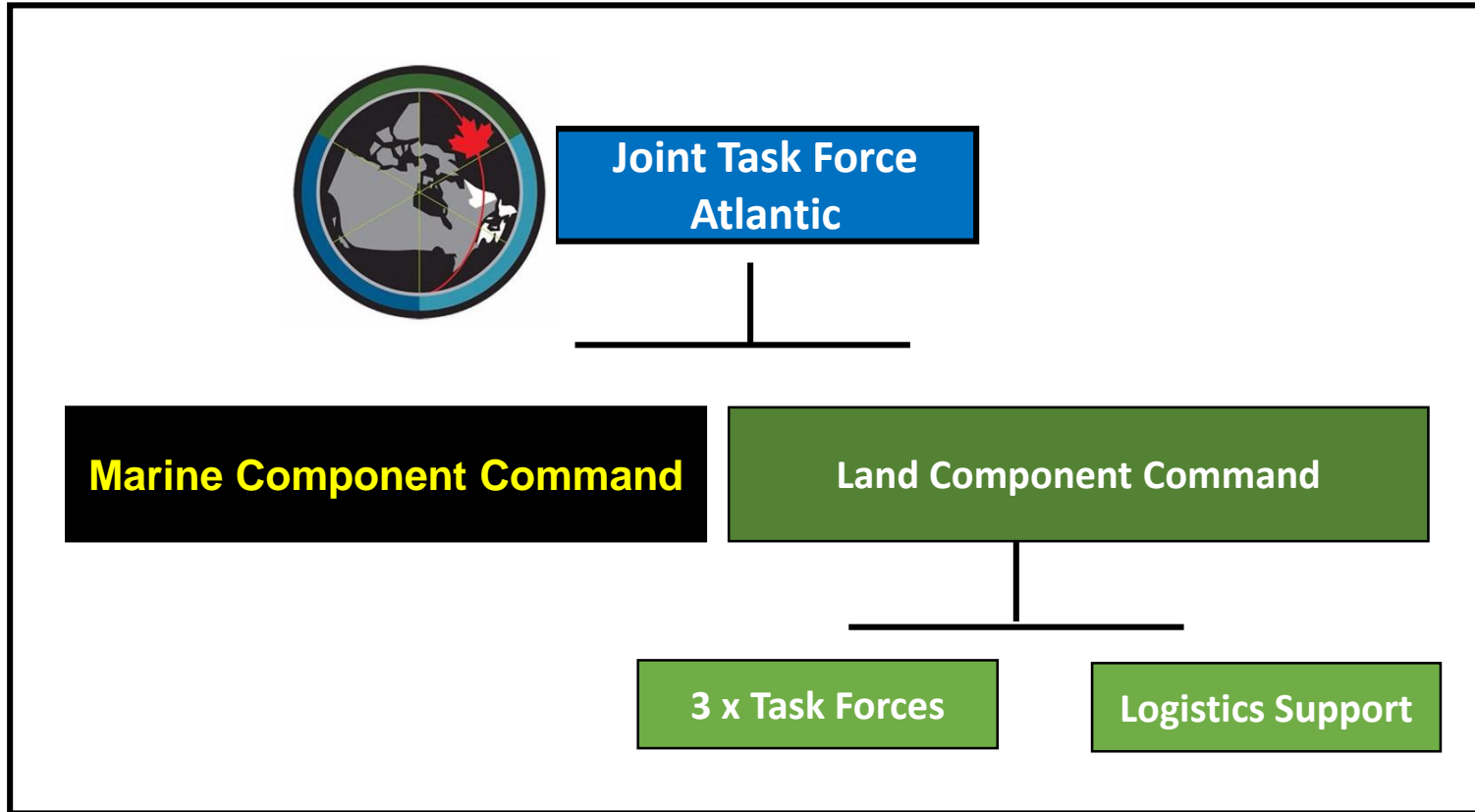


Operation LASER: Request to Task

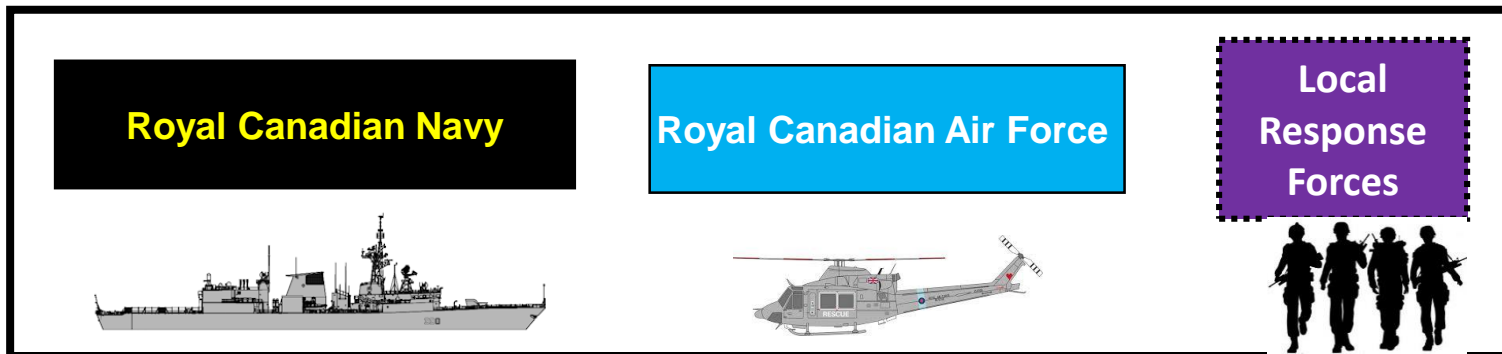




Operation LASER: Simplified Command and Control Overview



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Operation LASER: Lines of Effort



Lines of effort for Joint Task Force Atlantic (JTFA)

1. Humanitarian Aid.
2. Assistance to Law Enforcement.
3. Civil Order.
4. Disaster Relief.





Operation LASER— Land Component Headquarters (Atlantic Canada)

Key:

Comd: Commander

DComd: Deputy Commander

CWO: Chief Warrant Officer

COS: Chief of Staff

G1: Personnel

G2: Intelligence

G3: Operations

G4: Logistics

G5: Planning

G6: Command/Communications

G7: Training

G9: Influence Activities

DO: Duty Officer

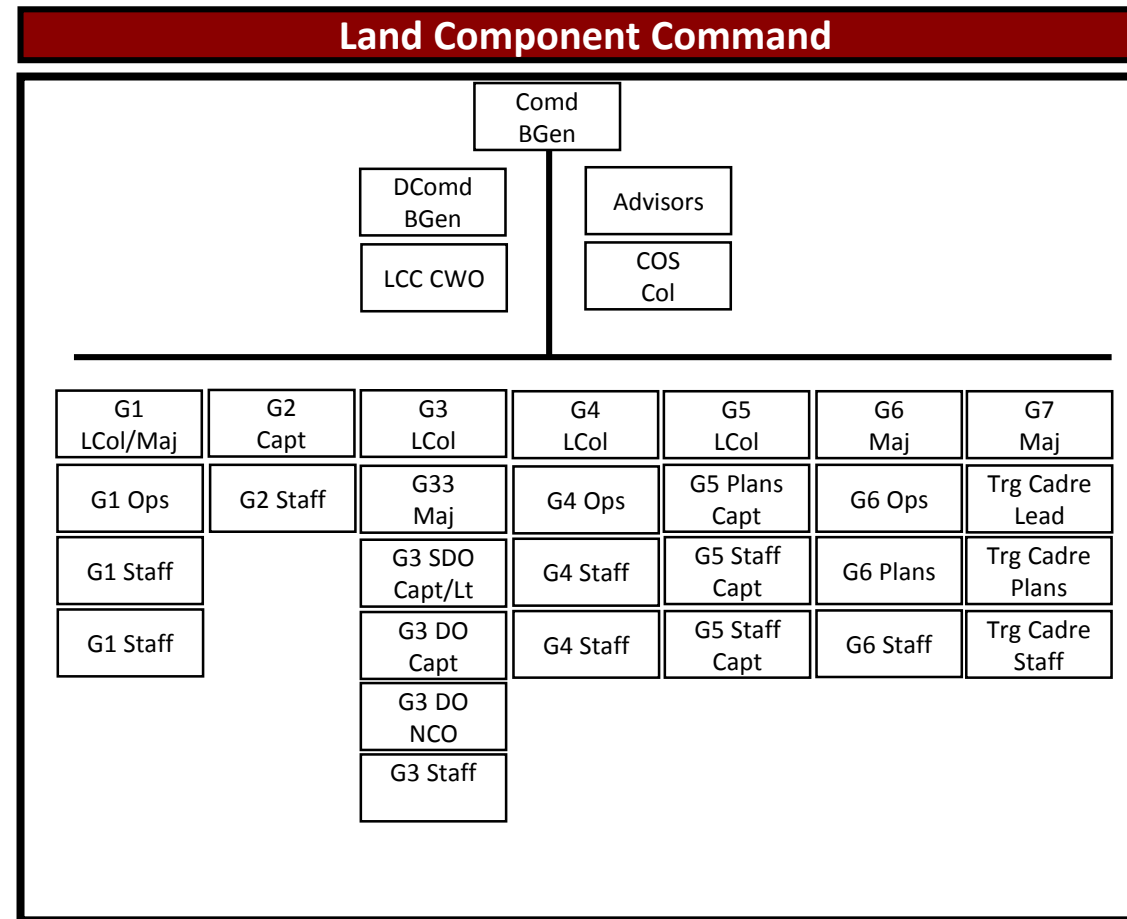
BGen: Brigadier General

Col: Colonel

LCol: Lieutenant Colonel

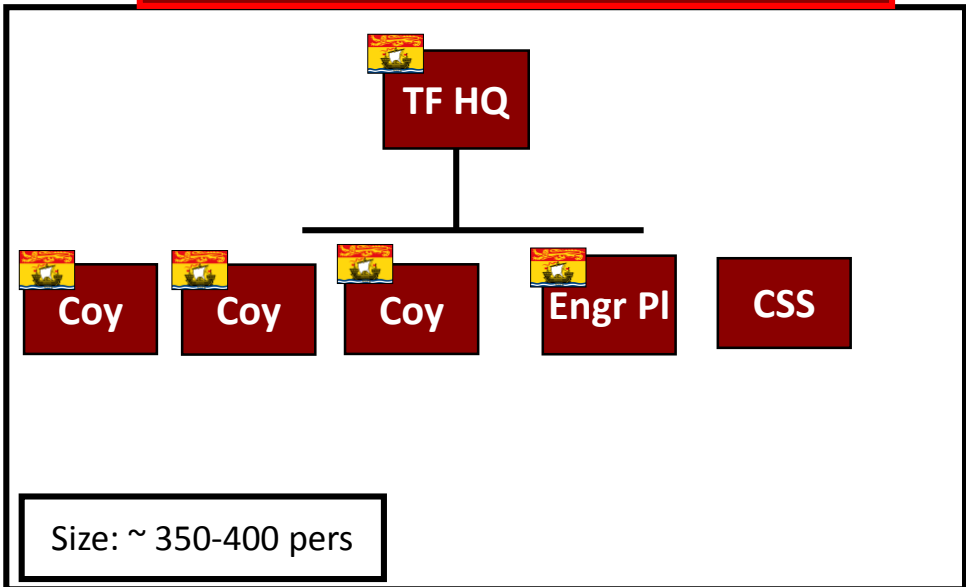
Maj: Major

Capt: Captain

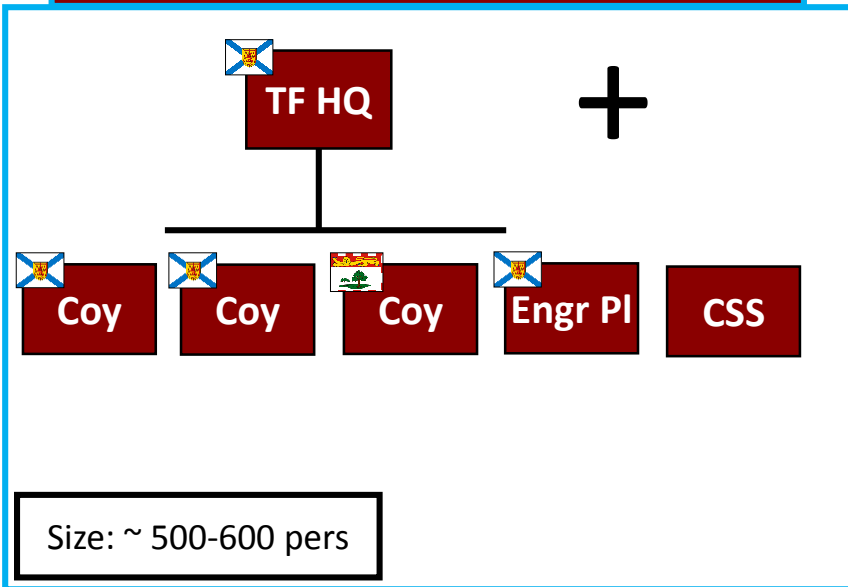


Operation LASER— 'Boots on the Ground' Atlantic Canada

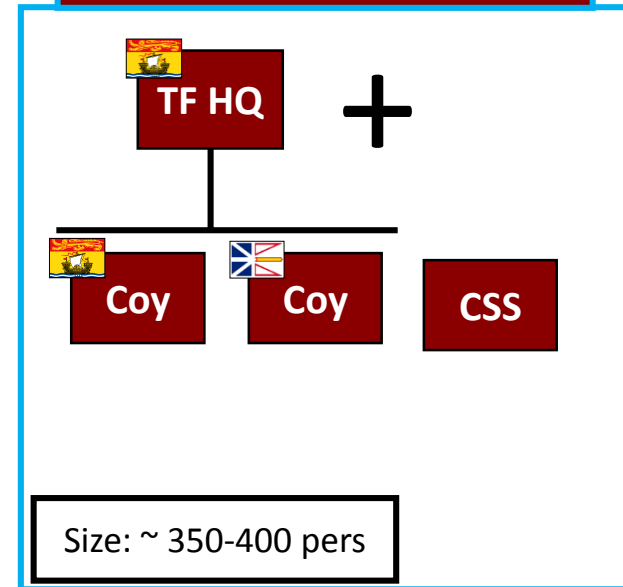
Task Force 4 Regt (RCA)



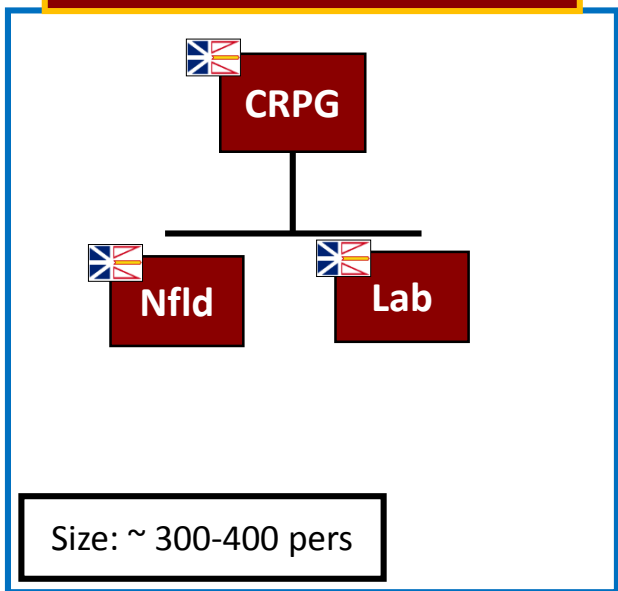
Task Force 36 (36 CBG)



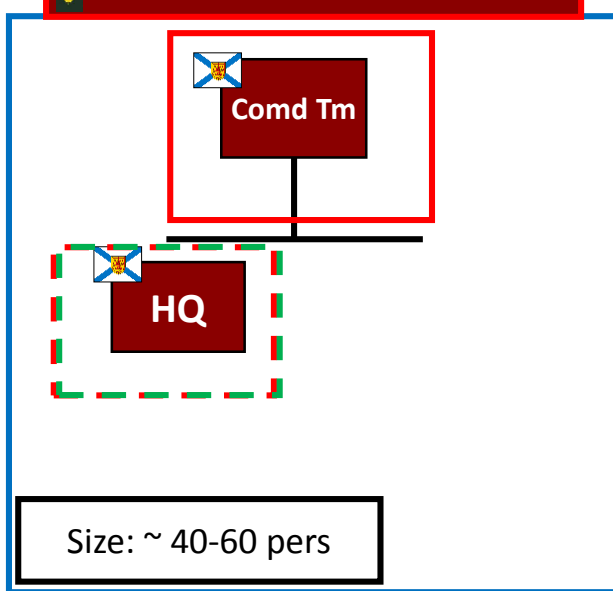
Task Force 37 (37 CBG)



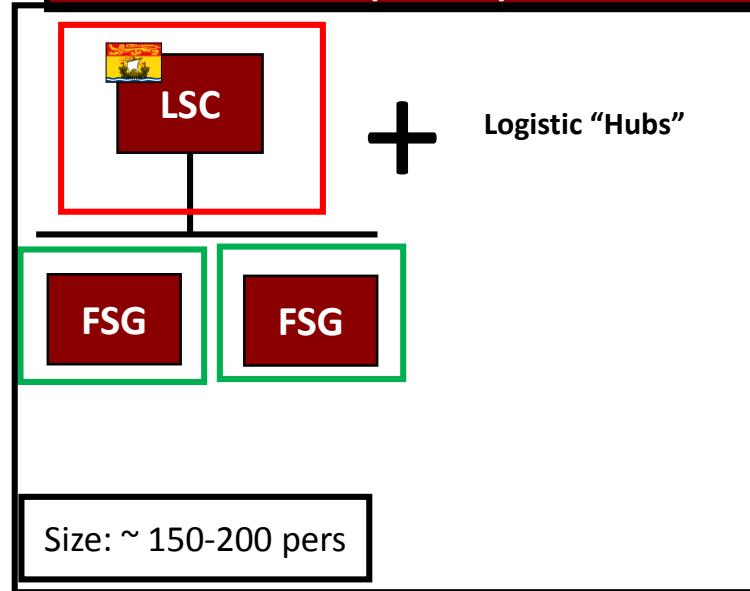
5 CRPG



LCC Command



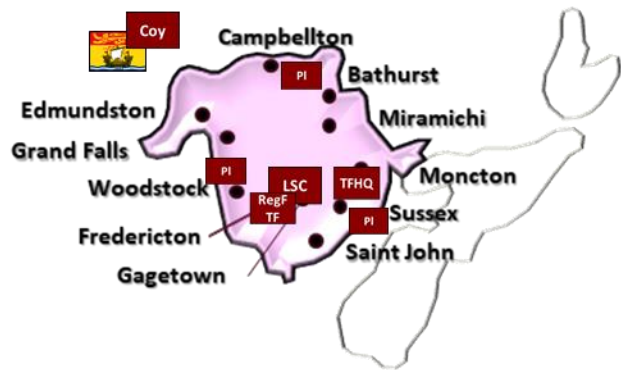
LSC (5CDSG)



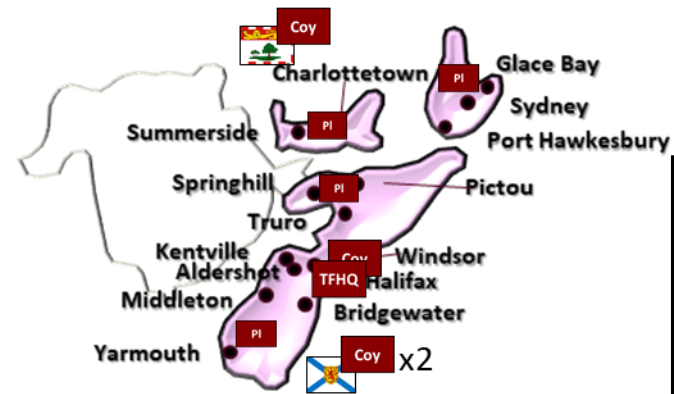
Land Component Size: ~ 2000



Operation LASER – Reservist Task Force Laydown in Atlantic Canada



TF 37
5x PI



TF 36
7x PI



1. JTFA gets formal request and drafts 'probable task' to LCC.
2. LCC issues early warning to applicable TF.
3. LCC conducts estimate/course of action/ war gaming (OPP).
4. Applicable TF Commander asserts to LCC Commander 'the plan'.
5. Commander asserts to JTFA 'the plan'.
6. Once affirmed from JTFA, LCC Comd gives TF the authority to proceed.
7. LCC monitors and supports TF throughout task.
8. TF feeds LCC who, in turn, feeds JTFA via situation reports.



TF 1.1 (4 REGT)

Date	Pers	Eqpt	Vehicles	Training	PPE
XXXXX	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

TF 2.1 (36 TBG)

Date	Pers	Eqpt	Vehicles	Training	PPE
XXXXX	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow

TF 2.2 (37 TBG)

Date	Pers	Eqpt	Vehicles	Training	PPE
XXXXX	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green

5 CRPG

Date	Pers	Eqpt	Vehicles	Training	PPE
XXXXX	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red

LCC HQ

Date	Pers	Eqpt	Vehicles	Training	PPE
XXXXX	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green

LSC

Date	Pers	Eqpt	Vehicles	Training	PPE
XXXXX	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

No Concerns
Needs Mitigation
Critical Shortfall



Operation LASER: Key Tasks Completed by Reservists

- **Public Health Agency Canada Assistance (NB and Nfld)**
- **Assistance to RCMP (Mass Shooting: NS)**
- **PPE Training/advice (NS)**
- **Wellness Support (Cyclone Crash; NS)**
- **Food Distribution/Delivery (Lab)**





Operation LASER: Example of a 'Storyboard'

Op LASER 20-01 – 5 CRPG SUPPORT

Who – 5 CRPG Canadian Rangers (CR) from Canadian Ranger Patrol Port Hope Simpson.

What – CRs assisted in food delivery to people living in remote communities at-risk of COVID-19.

When – 28 May to 30 May, 2020.

Where – Labrador communities of Charlottetown, Pinsent's Arm, Port Hope Simpson, St Lewis, Cartwright, Mary's Harbour and Lodge Bay

Why – The NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC) sought the province of NL's assistance in delivering food to residents on the south coast. As part of Op LASER 20-01, 5 CRPG was tasked to support.

Success – 5 CRPG CRs helped deliver approximately 300 food hampers to residents, and the NCC appreciated 5 CRPG's support.



Ranger with his truck loaded for delivery.



Canadian Rangers about to deliver food to residents along the south coast of Labrador.



Canadian Rangers with the food shipment in Charlottetown, Labrador



Ranger helps sort the food shipment.



Operation LASER: Reservists (General)

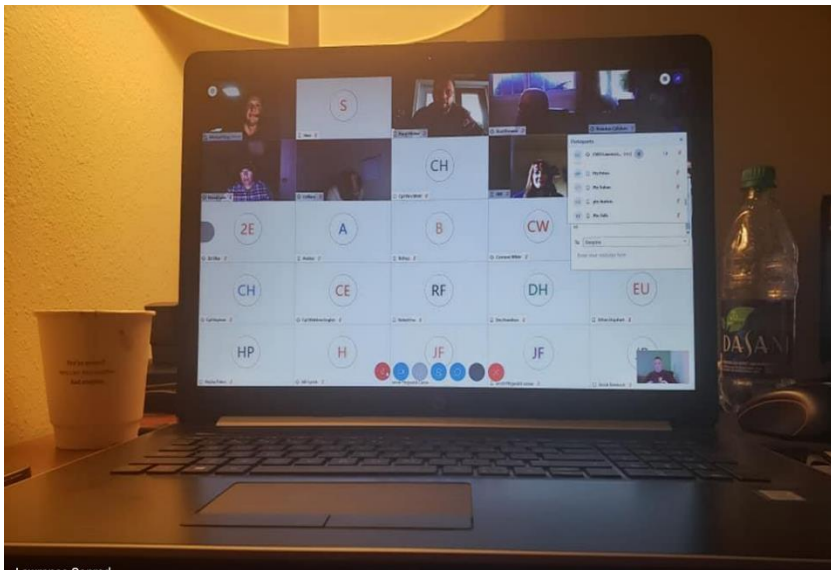
- Many reservists were already operationally ready and living locally = quick in-processing.
- Reservists were ordered to self-isolate very early on (Force Protection).
- The dispersed nature of Reserve units allowed for Armouries and unit offices to be leveraged as safe hubs to prep for Op LASER.





Operation LASER: Reservists (General)

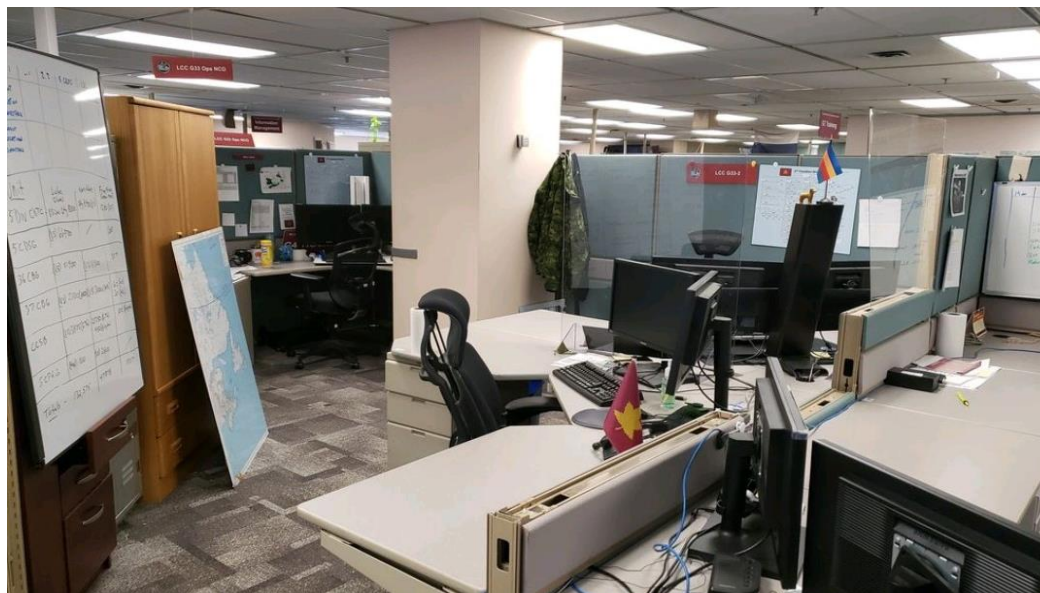
- **Allowed for a unique opportunity for reservists to contribute who would never be normally able to deploy due to work/school.**
- **Contracts were flexible to fit employment or geographical restrictions.**
- **Soldiers could work/deploy from or return home as needed during the week = family security and employment security.**





Operation LASER: Reservists (LCC HQ)

- Operated right in the Division HQ and JTFA office space enabling quick assimilation, contact with Comd and ongoing mentorship.
- Allowed reservist senior officers and NCOs unique opportunity to execute Operational Planning Process (OPP) in a real-time operation.
- Acted as a key learning environment for Reservists at the staff level.





Operation LASER: Reservists (LCC HQ)

- Reinforced concept of CAF senior staff officer training that Reservists take in their career alongside Regular Force peers.
- Allowed senior reservist officers to leverage their civilian skills and experience.
- Previous relationships amongst the local reservist officers and NCOs facilitated and ability to stand up a functional HQ quickly.





Operation LASER: Key Challenges

- **Avoiding cross contamination to those in need (Labrador communities).**
- **Operating a functional HQ while avoiding close contact.**
- **Difficulty of physical interaction/control of troops and equipment.**
- **Difficulty in movement from home directly to a given task and back again.**
- **Differences between Provincial and CAF health mandates.**
- **Uniformity and availability of tech mediums (ZOOM, laptops).**
- **Confusion of medical terminology between civilian and military domains.**





Operation LASER: Key Outcomes for Reservists

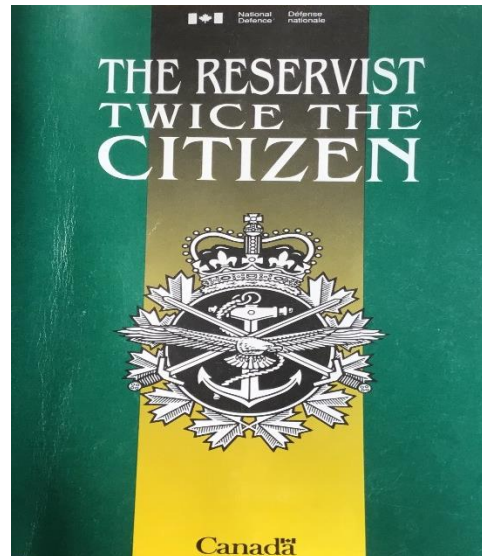
- **Positive effects rendered to Atlantic Canadians by its own community members.**
- **Allowed Div HQ to quickly self-isolate and begin forward planning (Business Resumption).**
- **Showcased ability to rapidly integrate with Regular Force units and in a combined arms environment.**
- **Validated Domestic Ops training and use of Territorial Battalion Group (TBG) construct.**
- **Highlighted use of Liaison Officers at all levels as a key enabler to military–government relations.**
- **Use of cross border waivers during a pandemic domestic operation is vital to force mobility.**
- **Minor COVID-19 impact on soldiers in Atlantic Canada (Force Protection).**





“An increasing share of the burden of safeguarding Canada’s freedom and security is going to fall to you, the reservist. That is why you have an important place in the emerging total force, the integrated military structure that is destined eventually to rely as much on its part-time members as those who serve full-time.”

The Reservist: Twice the Citizen



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