



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

Jennifer Bennett has been able to successfully pursue 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.

A native of Hamilton, Ontario, Rear-Admiral (ret'd) Bennett enrolled in the Naval Reserve in 1975 in HMCS STAR as a Naval Communicator. In 1977, she transferred to the Naval Reserve Officer Cadet program for training as a Logistics Officer and was commissioned as a Sub-Lieutenant in August 1979 then continued to serve in the Naval Reserve on a part-time and full-time basis in a variety of training, staff, leadership, and command positions across Canada while also working as a teacher and administrator at 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, 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 School of Administration and Logistics, Canadian Forces Staff School, Canadian Forces Staff College, NATO School and NATO Defence College.

Rear-Admiral (ret'd) Bennett commanded HMCS MALAHAT, Victoria, British Columbia from 1995 to 1998 and the Naval Reserve Basic Recruit Training Detachment, Borden, Ontario in the summer of 1999.

Promoted to Captain (Navy) in January 2000 she was appointed Director of Reserves within the Chief of Reserves and Cadets Division in National Defence Headquarters and Branch Advisor for the Cadet Instructor Cadre. Other national appointments include Director Professional Development and Director of the Ottawa Detachment of the Canadian Defence Academy, Director of Training and Education Policy and Project Director (Military) for the Defence Learning Network.

Promoted to the rank of Commodore on December 1st, 2007, upon appointment as the Commander of Canada's Naval Reserve, she commanded the Formation until January 2011. In 2010, she also served as the Team Leader for the Naval Strategic Analysis Team shifting the Navy from an organizational model based on geography to a functional model to address the Navy's personnel and operational challenges.

Promoted to Rear-Admiral in April 2011, she was appointed as Canada's Chief of Reserves and Cadets, the most senior Reserve officer in the Canadian Armed Forces and champion for Canada's Reserve Force, employer support program and the two DND sponsored youth programs, Cadets and Junior Canadian Rangers.

Rear-Admiral (ret'd) Bennett was 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.

In September 2015, Rear-Admiral (ret'd) Bennett was appointed Director General - Canadian Armed Forces Strategic Response Team on Sexual Misconduct in support of Operation HONOUR responsible for leading institutional culture change, enhancing victim support and response, and eliminating sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Appointed as the Director General - Litigation Implementation in National Defence Headquarters in July 2018, she was responsible for implementation of the Final Settlement Agreement for the LGBT Purge class action lawsuit and representing the Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces in negotiating a settlement in a major class action lawsuit related to sexual misconduct, gender discrimination, and harassment.

Since May 2020, Jennifer Bennett has served as the President for the 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.

In October 2020, she was appointed as a member of the Defence Advisory Board providing independent advice to the Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces. She also serves as the First Vice President for the University Naval Training Division (UNTD) Association Board of Directors and is a Patron on the Advisory Committee of the Juno Beach Centre.

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.