



National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces

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Major-General Blaise Cathcart, OMM, CD, Q.C. - Biography



Judge Advocate General of the Canadian Armed Forces

Major-General Blaise Cathcart was born in Exeter, Ontario in 1961. He is a graduate of Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia (NS) (Bachelor of Arts (Honors)), University of Ottawa (Master of Arts) and Dalhousie Law School (Bachelor of Law). Major-General Cathcart articulated with the law firm of Huestis Holm, Dartmouth, NS in 1988.

Major-General Cathcart was called to the Bar of Nova Scotia in August 1989. He worked in private practice with the law firm of Boyne Clarke in Dartmouth until he enrolled in the Canadian Armed Forces as a member of the Office of the Judge Advocate General (JAG) in 1990.

Since 1990, Major-General Cathcart has served in a number of positions with the Office of the JAG, including: Assistant Judge Advocate Atlantic Region (1990-91); Directorate of Law/Claims (1991-92); Directorate of Law/Human Rights and Information (1992-93); Deputy Judge Advocate Pacific Region (1993-96); Deputy Judge Advocate Prairie Region (1996-97); Director of Operational Law (1997-2003); post-graduate studies (LLM) in International Law at the London School of Economics and Political Science, London, England (2003-2004); the Special Assistant to the JAG (2004-2005); and Director of International Law (2005-2006). He was promoted to the rank of Colonel in June 2006 and served as the Deputy Legal Advisor and General Counsel – Military in the Office of the Legal Advisor to the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces (2006-2007); Second Language training (2007-2008); the Deputy Judge Advocate General/Operations (2008 - 2010). He was promoted to the rank of Brigadier-General in April 2010, prior to his appointment to the position of Judge Advocate General on 14 April 2010. On October 29, 2012, he was promoted to the rank of Major-General.

He has deployed as legal advisor to the Commander Canadian Contingent United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and the United Nation Peace Forces (UNPF) in the former Yugoslavia in 1994 and 1995. Major-General Cathcart deployed as the Senior Legal Advisor to the Commander Canadian Task Force Bosnia-Herzegovina (SFOR) from February to September 2000. He was the legal advisor to Joint Task Force 2, the Canadian Forces Counter-Terrorism/Special Operations unit from 1997-2000.

In his capacity as the Director of Operational Law (2000-2003), he provided daily legal advice to the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff and senior National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) staff (including J3 Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations) on a number of issues arising from domestic and international operations. Major-General Cathcart was intimately involved in providing legal advice at the strategic and operational levels during the planning and execution of the Canadian Armed Forces participation (conventional and special forces) in the Campaign Against Terrorism.

Major-General Cathcart graduated with "Distinction" from the Masters of Law Programme (Public International Law) at the London School of Economics and Political Science in 2004 in the UK where he was awarded the following honours: The LSE Lawyers' Alumni Prize for the Best Overall Performance on the LLM Degree Programme. The Lauterpacht – Higgins Prize for the top student in Public International Law. The Blackstone Chambers Prize for the Best Public International Law Dissertation (the paper was entitled "International Law and Persons Detained as Unlawful Enemy Combatants During the War Against Terrorism"). The winning of the Blackstone Chambers Prize as well as the LSE Lawyers' Alumni Prize was particularly noteworthy in that Major-General Cathcart was the inaugural winner of both of these prestigious awards.

Major-General Cathcart was also awarded the Derby-Bryce Prize in Law from the University of London for the top student at the final examinations for the LLM programmes of all the law schools comprising the University of London (LSE, King's College, Queen Mary University and the University College of London).

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