

The Unit Visibility Team: A shift in Naval Reserve's Culture

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The bos'n whistle pipes for hands fall in. From all around the unit a sea of sailors form up on the drill deck. After the obligatory formalities and announcements we come to the 'promotions and awards' part of the ceremony. The first Able Seaman (AB) is called forward and smartly clicks her heels, salutes, and shakes the Commanding Officer's (CO) hand.

The CO and Cox'n remove the AB epaulets and replace them with Leading Seaman (LS). A huge smile covers the new LS's face as the ship's photographer takes the photo. This is a standard chain of events which occurs frequently at every Naval Reserve Division (NRD). Except tonight it's a little different.

The CO looks at the LS and says "LS, do you have your cell phone on you?" Her hesitant reply is "Yes, Sir, I do". The CO then asks "Do you want to do a selfie right now and share it with all your friends?"

Moments later 253 friends receive an Instagram of three smiling faces, two of them pointing to the new rank on the LS shoulders. This is the tip of the iceberg in a dramatic shift in culture within NRDs across the country.

To facilitate and accelerate this shift, Naval Reserve Headquarters has encouraged each NRD Commanding Officer to designate a Social Media Manager for their unit. This individual can be of any rank but should be social media savvy and have the trust and confidence of the command team. Another tool in the new toolbox is the creation of a Unit Visibility Team (UVT) at each unit. Public Affairs, Social Media and Recruiting working together can complement each other's efforts for maximum visibility and results.

"Up until recently our recruiting efforts at a university may have been two recruiters setting up a display and hoping students stop by," says Lieutenant-Commander Yanick Bisson, Senior Staff Officer (SSO) Recruiting. "Now it is supplemented by a proactive Public Affairs (PA) program promoting their presence

on school radio and newspapers, and the Social Media Manager creating an Instagram campaign engaging students on their behalf. Already we've seen a significant increase in our audience."

The UVT meets at least once a month to assess their strategy. What visibility events might recruiting see value in attending? What recruiting events can PA help promote? How can it all lead to greater visibility on social media for the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN), through each NRD?

"If we're duplicating efforts for half the result, it makes no sense," says Major Catherine Larose, SSO PA. "Communicating with each other, and taking advantage of each other's strengths, makes us all much more effective."

The Naval Reserve Band welcomes HMCS *Toronto* at Port of Quebec.
 Photo by MCpl Richard Hallé ►

A recent professional development weekend in Québec City brought together Public Affairs Officers, Unit Public Affairs Representatives, Social Media Managers and some recruiters from NRDs across Canada. The seeds of the new UVT were planted with presentations from NAVRES and RCN and a challenge from Commodore Marta Mulkins, “you are at the fore-front of taking the Naval Reserve into a new era. Our task of taking the Navy to Canadians means we must meet them within their communities. Social media is the new frontier. Let’s be bold and creative in taking our place in this large and fast-growing community.”

Moving forward, we can all be part of the solution by following the social media of our own NRD, the Naval Reserve, the RCN and other relevant sites which positively represent our Navy online.



IN BRIEF

2018 CIOR

Summer Conference in Quebec City

BY PUBLIC AFFAIRS,
NAVRES HQ

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Reserve Officers (CIOR) in Quebec City?
 Want to know more, visit www.cior.net!