**Public Affairs Guidance: 2019 Battle of the Atlantic**

**SITUATION**

1. On 5 May 2019, members of the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) will gather with Canadians in commemorative ceremonies across the country to honour the sacrifices of our sailors and aviators who served in the Battle of the Atlantic (BOA) from 1939 to 1945. Commemorative ceremonies will be held in 24 communities across the country, with major events occurring in Ottawa, Quebec, Esquimalt and Halifax. Naval Reserve Divisions (NRD) will lead ceremonies in their respective regions.

**PURPOSE**

2. The purpose of this Public Affairs Guidance (PAG) is to provide guidance regarding the BOA as well as guidelines to all RCN units conducting local events to ensure appropriate PA support is provided.

**GUIDANCE**

3. In order to help raise awareness for the BOA, public affairs templates have been produced for media advisories and public service announcements; a national news release will be issued as well. Talking Points have also been provided to assist and align messaging for spokespersons.

4. All queries and interview requests must be logged accordingly into Verilog. National media queries regarding the BOA will be managed by RCN PA. Local requests for interviews with local officers and/or about local ceremonies will be managed at the local level.

5. Units shall leverage local imagery resources to capture both stills and video of local events in the two preceding days – and highlight these activities on their social media channels. Units shall BPT share imagery with RCN PA to build a bank of photos and videos that will be used to promote the BOA.

6. All units are encouraged to promote their local ceremonies via their unit’s social media accounts. If units require imagery of their reviewing officer, requests should be sent to RCN PA NLT 12 Apr 19.

7. Any additional produced PA products (excluding speaking notes, MA, PSAs) produced in support of a local ceremony should be discussed and coordinated with RCN PA for review and awareness prior to publication.

8. Day-of Interviews: Units should have at least two members (ideally a PAO and UPAR, however, it is up to unit discretion on how to best manage their resources) to assist media during local events and to facilitate interviews with members of the leadership team and Ship’s Company. These interviews do not need to be logged in Verilog, but a brief summary (media outlet, type and tone of questions) should be reported back to PA OPI following the ceremonies.

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

9. All events and activities shall maximize the use of social media to generate greater awareness and community participation, using relevant hashtags when and where appropriate:

Hashtags: #BattleofAtlantic #RCNRemembers #NavyHistory #RCNavy #MarineRC #Shiporformation’sname #location (ex: #Vancouver)

10. All local and formation social media should tag the national accounts whenever possible in local BOA posts. The account names are:

1. **Facebook:** RoyalCanadianNavy – Marine Royale Canadienne
2. **Twitter:** @RCN\_MRC – @mrc\_rcn
3. **Instagram:** @RCN\_MRC – @mrc\_rcn

**Examples of social content:**

We were the first into the action, even before war was declared, west coast destroyers HMC Ships *St. Laurent* and *Fraser* sailed from Vancouver on August 31, 1939 to form the backbone of the convoy escort force gathering in the Atlantic. On September 16, *St. Laurent* and *Saguenay* sailed with the first convoy, HX 1. When the Allies’ backs were against the ocean, HMC Ships *Skeena*, *Restigouche* and *St. Laurent* sailed from Halifax on May 24, 1940, while *Fraser* followed 2 days later, to patrol the English Channel.

**Option #1** - Each year on the first Sunday in May, Canada’s naval community commemorates those lost at sea during the Second World War. They uphold the legacy of the Battle of the

Atlantic by pledging themselves “Ready, Aye, Ready” to face today’s security challenges with pride and professionalism.

**Option #2** - Each year, on the first Sunday in May, we recognize the service of our veterans, and the sacrifice of so many of their shipmates who never returned home. More than 4,600 Canadians lost their lives in the Battle of the Atlantic, in hard-fought victories at sea, or on treacherous convoy duty.

Over 1,900 sailors and wrens, 1,700 merchant seamen, 900 @RCAF\_ARC air crew, and 33 vessels were lost during the Battle of the Atlantic. #RememberRCN #BattleofAtlantic

**In memoriam – Author Unknown**

To the memory of those stout hearts, our mates, who have not returned

and will not be returning from the dark waters. Somewhere in those

unlit depths today they lie, in torn wreckage their sepulchre, an ocean

floor their abbey. One remembers them, not alone for the gallantry

of their sacrifice, but too because one’s own life seems the richer

for having had their friendship.

**Statistics & Facts on BOA**

For BOA, the UK uses 1943 because it was the turning point of the battle, so they use that year to mark their anniversaries.  We may have been winning the Battle of the Atlantic in 1943, but the battle wasn’t over until Germany surrendered.

We lost HMCS *Esquimalt* just outside Halifax Harbour on 16 April, 1945 to U190.  Only 26 of the 70 crew survived.  For Canada this will be the 74th anniversary of the end of the Battle of the Atlantic.

For HMCS *Athabaskan* it is the 75th anniversary of her sinking this year.

11. RCN PA will be providing a graphics package that will include banners to update Facebook page headers, as well as Twitter banners – and some general imagery that can be used when posting about BOA. This link will be shared the week of April 15th.

**KEY MESSAGES**

12. Below are the Key Messages for the BOA:

1. The Battle of the Atlantic was the longest, most gruelling and most contested of the Second World War’s campaigns. It was a “no-fail mission” upon which victory in Europe depended. We prevailed, through the tenacity, grit and sheer determination of our veterans – shipmates of yesteryear; sailors, airmen & merchant mariners too.
2. As we honour our past by looking back to the tremendous efforts of Canadian sailors, in fulfilling their commitment to secure Allied victory, we also salute the RCN’s resolute path forward in remaining committed to the safety, security and defence of Canada at home and abroad.
3. Today, we recognize the service of our veterans, and the sacrifice of so many of their shipmates who never returned home. On the 75th anniversary of the sinking of HMCS *Athabaskan* we remember the captain and 127 men who died, the 85 who were captured and the other 48 who were either rescued by HMCS *Haida*, or who made it to England in a small craft.
4. The Royal Air Force’s Coastal Command, which included seven Royal Canadian Air Force squadrons, fought against the enemy’s U-Boats, merchant ships and warships. Coastal Command aircraft escorted convoys sailing from North America to Britain, and searched the seas from Iceland to Gibraltar. Coastal Command crews destroyed more than one-quarter of all German U-Boats “killed” during the war: 212 out of 800.
5. RCAF squadrons in Coastal Command and in Canada accounted for 19 U-Boats, while RCAF crews serving in Royal Air Force squadrons involved in many more “kills” in the North Atlantic.

1. This year marks the 75th anniversary of the mission for which Flight Lieutenant David Hornell was awarded the Victoria Cross. Flight Lieutenant Hornell flew with the Royal Air Force’s Coastal Command, stalking German U-Boats during the Battle of the Atlantic as the aircraft captain of a PBY-5A Canso amphibious aircraft. On June 24, 1944, he was on a patrol out of Iceland, when he sank a U-boat while taking heavy anti-aircraft fire. His Canso crash-landed into the rough and icy sea.  By the time the crew was rescued, two had died and Hornell was blind and completely exhausted; he died shortly afterwards.

**CONTACTS**

13.. Points of contact:

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