

THE ADMIRAL'S VIEW

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This first Sunday in May, we pay tribute to the Battle of the Atlantic. The Battle of the Atlantic was a time for Canada where every element of our naval institution and indeed the nation was challenged in the Allied effort from 1939 to 1945, which was the largest sustained battle of the Second World War. Our nation and our Navy had a major role to play in this six-year-long conflict.

Along the waterfront in downtown Halifax, as one walks along Sackville Landing, stands a sailor carrying his belongings in a rolled hammock hoisted on his shoulder. This is the Sailor Statue, which has been a fixture on the waterfront for a number of years. This statue is a tribute to those valiant young Canadians who serve at sea in both war and peace. It symbolizes the thousands of sailors who were instrumental in our great victory in the Atlantic, and a fitting acknowledgement to those who continue to maintain the peace. The image of this sailor is engrained in our minds as we remember the Battle of Atlantic, this first Sunday in May.

Our nation, and the Royal Canadian Navy are the beneficiaries of this proud legacy. We benefit from the sailors who fought under unimaginable hardship to bring about victory. The depth of their sacrifice and that of their families can never truly be fathomed. But today, we carry their torch and continue hold it high as we serve our great nation.

Our young men and women in uniform are an impressive group of people. In speaking to our young sailors, it is always encouraging to see their enthusiasm, their optimism, and more often than not, their understanding of the challenges that we face as a Navy. When one observes them at sea and in action, they are smiling, proud, and feel that they are making a difference in the world. They are following in the footsteps of our veterans and carrying on the proud traditions of our service that were forged in combat in the Atlantic and Pacific.



Photo credit: Courtesy of the Atlantic Chiefs and Petty Officers Association

This new generation of young officers and sailors who will take the watch in the years to come have an exciting future. They will be instrumental in the introduction and integration of the modernized Halifax class frigate and new ships such as the Arctic Offshore Patrol Ship (AOPS), Joint Support Ship (JSS) and the Canadian Surface Combatant (CSC). They will work with their Air Force counterparts on integrating new CF capabilities like the new Maritime Helicopter, shipboard UAVs and CP-140 Aurora Block III Long Range Patrol Aircraft. And they will serve our country from coast to coast to coast and around the world in what will most certainly be a dynamic and unpredictable future.

And as these young sailors pursue their careers and become the Coxswains, Commanding Officers and Admirals of the future, they'll carry on the work of continuous renewal and change that is so necessary to our enduring institution. They will conceive, design and build the Fleet that follows AOPS, JSS and CSC, and they'll prepare the next generation of young sailors for the challenges they will face in operations around the world. But the sailors of the future will still look back upon the legacy of those who went down to the sea before them. And they will continue to draw inspiration from the sailors who served in HMCS SACKVILLE.

As we picture the young men and women of today's Navy, and the future generation to take the watch, on this Battle of the Atlantic Sunday, we should recall the Sailor Statue. They exhibit the same traits as our veterans' youthful courage and strength. We can never thank them enough.