

War Memories across Canada Conversation Kit:

The Longest Battle HMCS Sackville Halifax, Nova Scotia

Crow's Nest Officers' Club St. John's, Newfoundland



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Built in 1940 as a convoy escort ship, HMCS Sackville is the last of a fleet of 123 Canadian corvettes. In 1985, the HMCS Sackville was restored to its original condition and docked in Halifax, Nova Scotia and thus made Canada's official naval memorial.

Established in 1942, by Captain Rollo Mainguy, the Crow's Nest officer's club, was a meeting place where merchant and naval officers could spend

time together to build trust and confidence in each other as partners in the war effort. Today, the Crow's Nest serves as a time capsule honouring those who served in the Battle of the Atlantic.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe the role of the HMCS Sackville's during the Battle of the Atlantic? What is the ship's significance today, as a war memorial today and why is it important that she be preserved?

How would you describe the role of the merchant mariners, what about the role of mariners today? How would you describe the difference in roles between the navy and military personnel? Why were they not recognized as veterans after the war, and how do you think they are recognized today?

How would you describe the conditions of the Atlantic, especially in winter? How might this have impacted the living conditions of the mariners?

In the 1940s post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was not understood as it is today. What is your understanding of PTSD? How does PTSD affect veterans to this day? What type of activities are used today to help navy/air force and military personnel cope with resilience in today's society? Can you list any examples?

Activities:

Read: [My Life Aboard HMCS Sackville](#), by Canadian naval veteran, Patrick Onions. What was the connection between Derry and the Canadian Navy? Write a newspaper article about Onions and submit it for publication to your school newspaper. Alternatively, give a presentation to your class.

The photo of Captain Mainguy (page 2) shows the artwork crews would display at the Crow's Nest to "leave their mark". If you were a crew member of



Captain Mainguy at the Crow's Nest
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HMCS Sackville what would your 2' X 2' artwork look like? Create a drawing and explain the symbolic meaning of your artwork.

Research the Canadian merchant navy. Write a journal entry describing an average day for a merchant mariner. Did women have a role in the merchant navy?

Resources:

Websites

Battle of the Atlantic: The U-Boats Surrender – Canadian War Museum
<http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/navy/gallery-e.aspx?section=2-E-2-g&id=3>
Available in [French](#).

Canadian Naval Memorial – HMCS Sackville
<http://hmcssackville.ca/>

My Life Aboard HMCS Sackville – Veterans Affairs
<http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/those-who-served/diaries-letters-stories/second-world-war/ponions>
Available in [French](#).

The Crow's Nest
http://crowsnestnl.ca/?page_id=43

Valour at Sea: Canada's Merchant Navy – Veterans Affairs Canada
<http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/history/valour-at-sea>
Available in [French](#).

Videos

Action Stations, directed by Joris Ivens. National Film Board, 1944
https://www.nfb.ca/film/action_stations/
A documentary about Canadian corvettes during the Battle of the Atlantic.

Books

Canada's flowers: history of the corvettes of Canada, by Thomas G. Lynch. Nimbus, 1981.

North Atlantic run: the Royal Canadian Navy and the battle for the convoys, by Marc Milner. University of Toronto Press, 1985.

The real cruel sea: the Merchant Navy in the Battle of the Atlantic, 1939-1943, by Richard Woodman. John Murray, 2004.

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