

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Rear Adm. Royal Canadian Navy calls “All hands on deck ladies!”

Navy to host two Operation: This IS You! events with Achieve Anything Foundation to inspire more women in Aviation, Aerospace, Marine & Defence and other STEM fields



Vancouver, BC- Sept. 14, 2017 – Select females will have the opportunity to experience first-hand a day in the life aboard a warship with the Royal Canadian Navy. Warships will depart from Canada Place cruise ship terminal Oct 21, 2017 & Jan 27, 2018.

Activities include: tours of ship duty stations, crew quarters and operational equipment, RCAF joint search and rescue demonstration, ship firefighting simulation, and demonstration of the warship's impressive manoeuvring capabilities. Lunch will be provided. For more information, or to apply, please visit www.achieveanything.ca

The warship events are the second in a series of hands-on experience events organized by the Achieve Anything Foundation. These unique events are being hosted by the Navy and other agency and industry partners keen on improving gender diversity within their organizations and promoting opportunities for women in what many still perceive as “non-traditional” fields.

“As an equal opportunity employer, the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) is proud to support Operation: This IS You!” says Commander – Maritime Forces Pacific, Rear Admiral Art McDonald. “Seeing us in action you’ll discover not just what we do but also how! You’ll see, for example, that women and men have served alongside each other in RCN ships for many years, that all navy trades are open to either gender, and that all receive equal pay for equal work. We look forward to having you onboard to see our work today shaping the Navy of tomorrow!”

The RCN is one of three environmental commands within the unified Canadian Armed Forces. The Navy's Pacific Fleet is co-located with Maritime Forces Pacific (MARPAAC), with headquarters at CFB Esquimalt, BC. MARPAAC employs over 4,000 naval personnel and 2,000 civilian personnel.

Comprised of 15 warships and several auxiliary vessels, the Pacific Fleet is responsible for protecting Canada's West Coast up to the Western Arctic. Fleet Naval Facility Cape Breton provides repair and maintenance services to the Pacific Fleet. The Royal Canadian Air Force's 443 Maritime Helicopter Squadron, based at Patricia Bay Heliport provides shipborne helicopter support for the Pacific Fleet, while 19 Wing Comox provides fixed-wing maritime air support for MARPAAC through 407 Long Range Patrol Squadron. Other Pacific Fleet facilities are CFAD Rocky Point, an ammunition depot, and Naval Radio Section Aldergrove.

The Achieve Anything Foundation is a federally incorporated not-for-profit organization with a mission to inspire female future leaders in STEM (science, technology, engineering & math), and STEM-based fields such as Aviation, Aerospace, Marine & Defence.

With the mantra *“From shop floor to top floor”* the Foundation employs a unique hands-on approach towards changing perceptions and addressing gender disparity in high tech fields.

Achieve Anything President, Kirsten Brazier, is excited to partner with the RCN on Operation: This IS You! “We were happy to have the Navy join our annual airport-based events in 2016. Now these warship events will provide women an exceptional opportunity to experience the Navy’s true marine environment. As we grow Operation: This IS You! we’ll be announcing more events with other agency and industry partners. We can’t expect women to imagine a career that they have had no contact with. We need to get them sailing, flying, working with tools of the trade and engaging with real-live role models in the technical fields before we can expect to see real improvements to gender diversity.”

This hands-on approach has proven very successful for the Foundation’s signature event **The Sky’s No Limit – Girls Fly Too!**, held annually during the week of International Women’s Day. Since 2012 the family-friendly, free event has grown from 1,500 to 15,000 participants, with 20,000 expected in 2018.

Events have been supported by the Canadian Forces, Canadian Coast Guard, RCMP, Cadets, Canadian Space Agency, US Air Force, US Navy and other agency, industry and education partners. Special guests have included NASA Astronauts Wendy Lawrence and Heide Stefanyshyn-Piper, the Honourable Harjit Sajjan, Minister of National Defence and the Honourable Judith Guichon, Lieutenant Governor for British Columbia. Free helicopter rides are provided to hundreds of female first-time fliers of all ages to draw the females to the airport and pique their interest in further exploring the many hands-on ground activities. Visit www.girlsfly2.ca for more information.

Purpose:

Out of 25,413 professional pilots in Canada, only 5.8% of them are women. Out of 17,278 aircraft engineers, only 2.3% of them are women. Women account for only 4% of the technical trades and less than 3% of the top command positions in the Canadian Forces.

From the numbers, it would be tempting to conclude that women are either uninterested or unwelcome in these fields. Instead, studies have shown that a common perception persists that Aviation, Aerospace, Marine and Defence are industries reserved for men. From an early age, males and females alike are affected by this perception message, which is continually reinforced by observation (lack of change), media, social media and advertising. The low numbers also mean that most women have no direct family or peer connection to these target industries. Therefore, it is unreasonable to expect gender and cultural diversity to resolve naturally in these fields.

Achieve Anything Foundation’s **Operation: This IS You!, The Sky’s No Limit – Girls Fly Too!** and other events, projects and programs aim to change this perception and awaken new interests by providing females of all ages with fun, interactive, and hands-on introductions into STEM and STEM-based fields.

Brazier is a professional pilot from the Lower Mainland, BC and she holds Airline Transport Ratings for both aeroplanes and helicopters. With over 24 years of flying experience, Brazier has enjoyed a diverse career flying across Canada, US and the Caribbean on wheels, floats, skis and skids as well as two-crew operations in both aeroplanes and helicopters.

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