

ADM(PA) Canadian Forces Combat Camera

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

**Guidelines for Image Submission to the
Canadian Forces Image Gallery**

Last Updated: 14 September 2009

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Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this SOP is to attain a consistent look and feel for digital imagery submitted to the CF Image Gallery, maintain a quality required for archival and external communication, and to minimize post production for the CF Image Gallery photo editor.

The goal of this SOP is to provide information on the quality of imagery received and to ensure a consistent caption describing the events in the photo that providing the necessary information for researchers both within and outside the Department of National Defence (DND).

Background

The Canadian Forces Image Gallery is a common tool used to search by both military and civilian personnel who are frequently looking for imagery of the Canadian Forces working in international or domestic operations. The user of the website can consist of photo editors of various media outlets, CF and non-CF personnel for internal communications, a family member of a soldier working in theatre and or any person interested in the Canadian military.

Specifications for Submitted Images

When submitting images to the photo editor it is best to submit the original dimensions of the photograph, meaning an image that has not been resized or cropped to a specific dimension (i.e. 4x6 or 5x7). Granted the photographer may crop the image for compositional reasons.

The image should be of a JPEG format, saved between level 9 and 11, between 1 – 2mb.

With all images submitted, touch ups should be minimal - **NO image alteration** (except to touch up dust and/or scratches, and slight adjustments contrast and density if required). If an image has been altered in some way, it should be specified in the description after the caption (e.g. some parts of the image have been blurred for security reasons.).

Captions should be complete and answer the five W's. They do not need to be very long, although all the questions should be answered. There can be further background info to establish the why. This will be discussed in greater detail below.

Caption Information and IPTC Fields

The following caption description is an example of the format that should be followed when submitting images to the CF Image Gallery.



Line 1	Language written in.	English / Anglais
Line 2	Image annotation number	IS2006-0314
Line 3	Date	July 8, 2006
Line 4	Location photo was taken	Zjarey district, Afghanistan

Opening Paragraph:

Describe the photo itself. A quick description of Who is doing What, Where and When.

Private Jim Kerr, A Company 1 Platoon, 1st Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, surveys the perimeter 8 July 2008 within the Zjarey district, 40 kilometres west of Kandahar City, Afghanistan.

Second Paragraph:

Used to further answer the Why. Explain more general information about the photo (the operation, mission, etc.).

In a joint Afghan National Army (ANA) and Coalition security operation, the Canadian soldiers are working with the ANA to help remove Taliban forces from the area in what is being called Operation ZAHAR.

Third Paragraph:

A third and fourth paragraph may be used to further explain any background information to give context to the photograph.

Approximately 2,300 Canadian Forces personnel are deployed with Task Force Afghanistan (TFA) on Canada's renewed commitment to the international campaign against terrorism known as Operation ARCHER.

Photo Credit:

Photographer's name and organization (if applicable).

Photo by MCpl Robert Bottrill, Canadian Forces Combat Camera

NOTE: Please keep captions under 700 characters

NOTE: Write full term of an acronym in its first use (e.g. International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)). Following uses of the acronym in the same caption do not need to be explained again.

NOTE: Further Information on Caption Writing can be found in Appendix A

File Information for IPTC Fields in Nikon Software

Caption: as stated above.

Caption Writer: writer's name
(MCpl Robert Bottrill)

Headline: name and position of releasing authority for image (or leave blank)

Keywords: Enter certain KEYWORDS that will assist people when navigating the web site. Include the subject's name, unit, any special equipment, location, date, photographer's name etc

ORIGIN

City: (Zjarey District)

State/Province: (Kandahar)

Country: (Afghanistan)

Title(Object Name): General name describing the event or subject. (Op Archer)

Date Created: Should be checked with date photographed (July 8, 2009)

Transmission Reference: Image Number (IS2006-0314)

Category: C (for Canada)

Supplemental Categories: camera name (Nikon D2x)
file format (Jpeg, Neff)

Urgency: none, (leave as is)

CREDIT

Author: Photographers name (MCpl Robert Bottrill)
(NDIL database: location of shoot)

Author's Position: title of author (Still Photographer)
(NDIL database: members home unit)

Credit: Name of photographer (MCpl Robert Bottrill)

Source: Name of your unit (CF Combat Camera)
(NDIL database: name client)

Copyright Notice:

“The Crown, Canadian Department of National Defence”

When using the File Information function in Nikon or Photoshop software, templates can be created to save time when annotating images.

NOTE: When a template is created and used, certain fields should be amended to reflect the change in imagery. Examples would be the Caption, Keywords, Origin, Date Created, and Transmission Reference. In order to release imagery, photos **must** have the basic File Information completed.

File Information for IPTC Fields in Photoshop Software

IS2009-0012.JPG

Description | IPTC | Camera Data | Video Data | Audio Data | Mobile SWF | Categories | Origin | DICOM | History | Illustrator | Advanced | Raw Data

Document Title: Op Athena, Kabul

Author: MCpl Robert Bottrill

Author Title: CF Combat Camera

Description: English/Anglais
IS2009-0012

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Description Writer: MCpl Robert Bottrill

Keywords: International; ISAF; Signal Support Group; Orphanage; Global Point; Kabul; Afghanistan; Children; Sergeant Geri Hibbs; OP Athena

ⓘ Semicolons or commas can be used to separate multiple values

Copyright Status: Unknown

Copyright Notice: The Crown, Canadian Department of National Defence

Copyright Info URL: http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/notices_eng.asp Go To URL...

Created: 1/29/2009 - 11:15 AM Application: Adobe Photoshop CS3 Macintosh
Modified: 1/29/2009 - 5:45 AM Format: image/jpeg

Powered By **xmp**

Import... Cancel OK

Document Title: General name describing the event or subject.

Author and Author's title: Optional: Name of photographer and his position title.

Description : Caption, as stated above.

Description Writer : Name of caption/description writer.

Keywords: Enter certain KEYWORDS that will assist people when navigating the web site. Include the subjects name, unit, any special equipment, location, date, photographer's name etc...

Copyright Status: You can indicate a Copyright.

Copyright Notice: The Crown, Canadian Department of National Defense

Copyright Info URL: Link to copyright notice and terms for usage / reproduction

http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/notices_eng.asp

IS2009-0012.JPG

Description IPTC Camera Data Video Data Audio Data Mobile SWF Categories Origin DICOM History Illustrator Advanced Raw Data

IPTC Contact

Creator: MCpl Robert Bottrill

Creator's Job Title: CF Combat Camera

Address:

City:

State/Province:

Postal Code:

Country/Territory:

Phone(s):

E-Mail(s):

Website(s):

IPTC Image

Date Created: 1/29/2009

Intellectual Genre:

IPTC Scene:

Scene values are defined at <http://www.newscodes.org>.

Powered By **xmp**

Import... Cancel OK

Date Created: m/dd/yyyy

City: City Image was taken

State/Province: Province image was taken

Country: Country image was taken.

Credit: DND or rank and name of photographer.

Source: Member's home unit. (or client's unit for NDIL)

Headline: Can be used to identify the approving authority to release the image.

Instructions: Can be used to identify the location where the image was shot.

Transmission Reference: Usually the Image Number

Urgency: None or leave blank

Submitting Images to the CF Image Gallery

To submit images to the CF Image Gallery, you may choose from two methods:

1. By File Transfer Protocol (FTP) – preferred method:

- If sending by FTP, you will need web access.
- Type the following web address into your web browser:
www.combatcamera.ca/upload
- Select the **Choose File** button. Locate your image on either your computer or memory stick. It is recommended that all images to be sent be located in an easily identifiable folder. If image sizes are large, submit only three images at a time. Once three images have been selected, hit “**Submit**” at the bottom.
- Be patient...the images may take some time to upload. You will know if the image went through because the screen will turn yellow and confirm that the images were uploaded successfully. If the image didn't go through, then you will most likely have an error page appear. If uploading takes too much time then it is recommended to send only one image at a time.

Once images have been sent, send an email to the photo editor (combatcamera@dnd.ca) stating that a number (or the number) of images have been sent to the FTP site and request a confirmation receipt.

2. By e-mail:

- Send to combatcamera@dnd.ca (Image specifications stated on Page 1).

Appendix A

Caption Writing (Original Courtesy US Navy Public Affairs)

Photographs, despite their unique story-telling ability, are seldom effective enough to stand alone. No matter how exciting the picture may be, it fails unless the viewer understands the five Ws:

- Who,
- What,
- When,
- Where, and
- Why of the photograph.

The area of providing information that the photograph cannot give is in the caption, *the text that accompanies the photograph*. It is your responsibility, as the photographer, to gather the necessary information and write complete, concise, and factual captions.

The caption supplements the photograph by answering the five Ws. It provides clarification of important details that are not readily apparent in the photograph. To make a caption work, you must use three basic elements:

- A. An explanation of the subject**
- B. Identification of persons or things in the picture**
- C. Additional details of background information**

In caption writing, the first sentence is the most important. It must describe the action without overemphasizing the obvious. Always use the active voice of the verb and write in the present tense. Another important consideration in caption writing is background information. This consists of additional facts or explanations needed to clarify the photo. The amount of background information included depends on where the picture will be located and how it will be used.

Whether the photo will be printed in a military or a civilian publication, used in a report, or used as a display picture is of primary importance. The caption explaining a picture of a sailor wearing an oxygen breathing apparatus to a civilian is more difficult than explaining it to another sailor. The second consideration, how the photograph is to be used, refers to whether it will be used alone, as a single picture, or used in conjunction with something else, such as a news story or report. When the picture is to accompany a news story or a report, the caption should not repeat details used in the text. On the other hand, when the photograph is to be used as a single picture, it must tell the whole story, and the amount of background information must be enough to provide the reader with all the necessary details. In other words, the caption and picture combination must tell the complete story. The answers to the five Ws should be given in vigorous, forceful language without sacrificing simplicity and brevity.

- **WHO**—Give as much information as possible about the personnel shown in the photograph, beginning with rank and full name.
- **WHAT**—Used to identify ships, aircraft, awards, and other things shown in the photograph.
- **WHERE**—Identifies the location of the event.
- **WHEN**—The actual time or date of the event.
- **WHY**—The reason for a particular operation or action taking place.

The novice caption writer is often confronted with the problem of how long to make the caption. In order to ensure that captions can be read in all programs, ensure that they are no more than 500 words (the caption will be roughly 1000 words after being translated). Caption content is your last opportunity to tell what makes a photograph significant. The shorter you make the caption and still tell a complete story, the better. There is no best way to write a caption. There are, however, rules that make caption writing easier. One proven method is to make use of the three basic elements:

- explain the action,
- identify persons or things in the photograph, and
- give necessary background information.

A. Explain the action

The first of the three elements, explain the action, is the most important part of the caption. The very first sentence must link the caption to the photograph by describing the action. One of the peculiarities of the first sentence in caption writing is its verb form. Since a photograph has “frozen” a moment in time, the verb should be written in present tense. This provides a sense of immediacy, as though the reader is actually witnessing the event. For example:

"Petty Officer Second Class Paul T. Boat swims through swirling flood waters of the St.Johns River to rescue 6-year-old Sammy Cameron"

This has more dramatic impact than a caption which reads:

"Petty Officer Second Class Jane B. Doe swam through"

There is, however, one problem that arises from the use of present tense in the first sentence: what to do with the “when” or time element? If the when or time element is included in the first sentence, the result reads something like this:

"Pete Rose hit a line drive to center field yesterday"

A sentence, such as this, would be somewhat jarring to the reader and should be avoided. To alleviate the problem, you should leave out the when or time element of the first sentence when writing captions, thus avoiding an awkward shift in tense.

B. Identify persons or things in the photograph

The second element of caption writing, identification, frequently poses the question of who or what should be identified in the photograph. There is no magic formula to cover every situation, but the general guideline is to identify everyone or everything that is identifiable and pertinent to the action. A pertinent individual or object is one that is involved in the central action of the photograph. In other words, anyone or anything in the photograph that attracts attention should be identified. Identification should come as early as possible in the caption. Many times you can identify people or things at the same time you describe the action.

"Warrant Officer Stan Poirier, a member of the Lord Strathcona's Horse (LdSH) "B" Squadron, salutes as his Coyote armoured vehicle passes ..."

Here the action and the man are identified together. The only exception to placing names high in the caption is in the case of group identification. The recommended way to handle group photographs and still maintain reader interest is to use an impersonal identification in the first sentence; that is, “A

group of sailors . . .,” then list the names at the end of the caption. This method achieves complete identification without cluttering the all-important first sentence. Identification in caption writing can be handled in any one of several ways. The idea is to handle it in the most natural and concise manner consistent with clarity. To ensure consistency, the caption writer generally uses four methods of identification:

- Action
- Obvious contrast
- Elimination
- From the left

Action is, of course, the best method. When a little league baseball player is sliding into second base, it should be obvious from the action which boy is the base runner; therefore, it is not necessary to say left or right as a means of identifying the players.

Obvious contrast is another simple way of identifying people in a photograph. If the commanding officer and an airman recruit are photographed, it is not necessary to identify the commanding officer as being left or right.

Identification by **elimination** is slightly more complex but nevertheless very effective. Suppose there are four people shown in a photograph. The commanding officer of the photo school is presenting a citation to a third class petty officer. These two are identified by the action. A third person, the petty officer's wife, standing alongside, is identified by obvious contrast. The fourth person, the award recipient's division officer, is then identified by elimination.

The fourth and least desirable method of identification is **from the left**. This method of identification should be used only as a last resort or when there is a chance of confusion from using any of the other methods, such as in identifying groups of people. When you use this method of identification, it is not necessary to say, “From left to right.” To do so only wastes space. Logic tells us that if we start from the left there is no place to go except to the right. The task is therefore simplified by saying, “From the left.”

C. Give necessary background information

Background information is our third element of caption writing. It consists of additional facts or explanations needed to clarify the photograph. It is often impossible for the photograph and the five Ws alone to provide all the details necessary for a complete understanding of the photograph. Therefore, it becomes necessary to provide the viewer with additional information for the purpose of clarifying the photograph. How much background information is needed to clarify a photograph depends on two factors: where the photograph is to be used and how it is to be used.

Credit Line

The last part of caption writing is the **credit line**. The usual method is to credit both the photographer and the service. While there is not a set standard for giving credits, the following format can be used:

Photo by MCpl Paul MacGregor, Canadian Forces Combat Camera

A typical caption should also identify the unit that produced the photography and, if appropriate, contain a file number. As an example, a typical caption may look something like the following:

English/Anglais
IS2002-6773a
November 09, 2002
Zgon, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Warrant Officer Stan Poirier, a member of the Lord Strathcona's Horse (LdSH) "B" Squadron, salutes as his Coyote armoured vehicle passes the Corporal James (Jim) W. Ogilvie Memorial. Cpl Ogilvie died in a vehicle accident August 30, 1998 while serving with "A" Squadron of the Royal Canadian Dragoons (RCD) as part of the Third Battalion Royal Canadian Regiment (3 RCR) Battle Group. The Memorial is located 30 minutes north of Camp Maple Leaf near the village of Bravsko, Bosnia-Herzegovina. There are currently 1,450 Canadians maintaining the peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina as part of NATO's 12,000 strong Stabilization Force (SFOR).

Photo: MCpl Paul MacGregor Canadian Forces Combat Camera

Your skill as a caption writer, like any endeavor, will improve with practice. When you write a caption, have the photograph in front of you. This may help you recall just what was taking place. Avoid phrases, such as "Shown above," "This is a picture of. . . ." or "Posing for the camera" These phrases insult the reader's intelligence.

When writing captions, you should always be alert to point out interesting or important things in the photograph that might escape the casual reader. Remember to spell out the meaning of all unfamiliar abbreviations. CER may mean Combat Engineer Regiment to you, but it may be meaningless to the reader. Finally, you must remember that the caption should supplement the photograph, not duplicate with words what is readily evident in the photograph.

Appendix B

Photo – Tips for Shooting Good Photos

Composition makes the difference between a boring photo and an interesting one.

You want the viewer to feel what the soldier is feeling, experiencing. If you're shooting winter warfare, reflect the weather in your images. If the soldiers are cold and uncomfortable you want to make your viewers feel cold and uncomfortable, or hot and sweaty and tired, happy or sad. Show the tears, the pain, and the emotion.

You're a fly on the wall. While you do not want to be part of the action, get in your subject's face. Get as close to the action as possible with your legs. Zooms from far away don't always get you the up close feel. Move in close while shooting soldiers crawling through the bush. If they are on the ground, get on the ground. The lens should be at the same level as the action. If it's not, look for an angle that is totally different. Shoot from overhead or from under the action if possible. More often than not, you do not want an eye-level shot. Use wide angles and telephotos. Let the photo contrast from the regular weekend shooter.

Cameras with motor drives and large memory cards enable the photographer to take several images of a particular event. As a photographer use your discretion on how much you shoot. It is easier to review several images than to realize after the fact you missed that pivotal moment. Memory doesn't cost anything but time, however you will have a better selection to choose from. Everyone has taken that photo where at least one person has his or her eyes closed. So take several to be sure. You may capture that more relaxed and candid shot on the last frame.

Use natural light as much as possible, for interior as well as exterior shots. The use of a flash will be very useful in both areas for reducing shadows. Use the flash to fill the subject, not flood the subject with artificial light.

Action. Reaction. Capture the action and capture the reaction to the action. Shoot the soldiers on parade. And then shoot the baby waving to his mom on parade.

Never question if you should shoot this or not. For example, you come across an accident scene. Shoot it. Your editor, public affairs officer or you can decide whether to release or publish it later.

When you take a photo, decide:

- What to include
- When to press the shutter button.

Decide where you want the horizon to appear. The most common position for the horizon is a third of the way down a photo. For a more dramatic look or to set a mood, go higher or lower.

A busy or overwhelming background can ruin a photo, while a background that complements the subject creates a stronger photo. When considering the background, watch for these three distractions:

- Objects - lampposts, branches or anything else blocking or appearing to protrude from the subject
- Competitive backgrounds – a general confusion or jumble
- Intrusive light or colour

To reduce or remove these distractions:

- Change your camera angle
- Change your position
- Change your subject's position (if you can)
- Eliminate some of the background by tightening up on your subject
- Use a large aperture to reduce the background or foreground focus

Constructive use of the foreground is an important composition tool. It balances, emphasizes and tells more about the subject. The proper use of the foreground gives an impression of depth and scale to the photo. The foreground can also be used to frame the subject.

Sometimes the foreground will dominate the photo. Three ways to correct this include:

- Change the camera position
- Use a longer focal lens
- Reduce the depth of field

Decide where you want the subject to be. To produce a balanced composition, use the rule of thirds. Imagine that the scene is divided into thirds both horizontally and vertically. The intersections of the lines produce four ideal points to position your subject.

If you want your subject centered, position the most important part of your subject just above the center of the image.

A well-exposed photograph produces a superior quality picture. Experiment with exposure. The results are sometimes surprising and help create a mood or underline something you want to show in the photograph.

Before submission of an image use this checklist as a guideline for quality control

1. Does the photo have technical excellence?

- Sharp Focus
- Good Contrast
- Correct Colour Balance

2. Does the photo have compositional creativity?

- Dominant Foreground, Contributing Background
- Introducing disorder into an ordered situation
- Introducing colour into a monochromatic scene
- Juxtaposition
- Reflection
- Panning
- Rule of thirds
- Linear perspective
- Framing
- Silhouette
- Decisive moment
- Selective focus

3. Does the photograph have any editorial relevance or merit?


- Is the photo active or passive?
- Is the photo of something no one has ever seen before or is it a unique or interesting picture of something everyone has seen?
- Is the photo style and the writing style consistent?
- Does the photo communicate quicker, stronger, better or more eloquently than a simple sentence could describe?
- Does the photo go beyond the trite and the obvious?
- Does the photo contain essential information to help the reader understand the story?
- Does the photo have enough impact to move the reader?
- Is the photo clean, interesting and well composed enough to stand on its own?
- Does the caption information answer who, what, where, when and why, along with other required information (eg. age and hometown)
- Are both the photo and the caption information objective and accurate accounts of what happened?
- Is the photo mindless documentation?
- Does the photo communicate effectively? Photo should either move, excite, entertain, inform or help the reader understand a story.

*With notes from National Geographic photo editor Larry Nighswander

Appendix C


Example of a Canadian Press (CP) caption vs. a DND Caption

Re: Sea King Crash Thursday, February 27, 2003



National
Defence

Défense
nationale



Français	Contact us	Help	Search	Canada Site
Home	News Room	Operations	The Minister	Defence
Navy	Army	Air Force	Recruiting	HR

Canadian Forces Image Gallery

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PHOTOGRAPHER BIOS

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MVC-003F.jpg (0.78MB)

English/Anglais
MVC-003F
Thursday February 27, 2003

Seen here is the view of a Sea King helicopter lying on its side where it came to rest on the flight deck of HMCS Iroquois following a flight accident. At the time of the photo the ship was somewhere south of the Grand Banks, off the coast of Atlantic Canada.

HMCS Iroquois had just left Halifax days earlier and was enroute to the Arabian Gulf Region to join coalition forces in the on-going war against terrorism when the accident occurred.
Photo DND

French/Français
GDAC03-094-31A
Jeudi 27 février 2003

On aperçoit ici l'hélicoptère Sea King, retourné sur le côté, après s'être écrasé sur le pont d'envol du NCSM Iroquois. Au moment où la photo a été prise, le navire se trouvait quelque part au sud des Grands Bancs, au large du Canada, dans l'Atlantique.

Le NCSM Iroquois venait à peine de quitter Halifax quelques jours auparavant, en direction de la région du golfe Arabo-Persique, pour aller aider les forces de la coalition dans la lutte contre le terrorisme lorsque l'accident s'est produit.
Photo MDN

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

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CP Caption of Same Picture:

One of Canada's aging Sea King helicopters crashed Thursday, Feb. 27, 2003 as it was lifting off the deck of a Canadian Forces destroyer, slightly injuring an airman and a firefighter. The ship, HMCS Iroquois, left Halifax on Monday and was on its way to a mission in the Persian Gulf when the accident occurred. The vessel will take about 48 hours to return to Halifax, where repair crews will assess the damage. (CP PHOTO/ho-Department of National Defence)

A difference of opinion?

We received both images the same day (28 Feb 03) at Combat Camera – one captioned by CP and one captioned by MARLANT. The same picture was released to the CP picture desk the day before by MARLANT and the DND caption was revised by CP editors.

Let's compare the two captions in greater detail:

DND Caption

English/Anglais

MVC-003F

Thursday February 27, 2003

Seen here is the view of a Sea King helicopter lying on its side where it came to rest on the flight deck of HMCS Iroquois following a flight accident. At the time of the photo the ship was somewhere south of the Grand Banks, off the coast of Atlantic Canada.

HMCS Iroquois had just left Halifax days earlier and was enroute to the Arabian Gulf Region to join coalition forces in the on-going war against terrorism when the accident occurred.

Photo DND

"Seen here is the view of a Sea King helicopter lying on its side where it came to rest on the flight deck of HMCS Iroquois following a flight accident..."

"*Seen here is the view...*" states the obvious to the viewer – we already know we're looking at a picture of a helicopter lying on its side and it looks to us like it has crashed and not just "*...came to rest on a flight deck...*" after an accident. There is no need to insult the viewer's intelligence. The caption should supplement the photograph, not duplicate with words what is readily evident. What we really want to know is how did this happen? How did the helicopter get there? And especially was anyone hurt or killed? This human element is missing from the DND Caption. It is the prime concern to viewers in any accident photo. What is the *HMCS Iroquois*? Is it an Aircraft carrier, a minesweeper, a destroyer? Most Canadians really don't know. We have to keep this in mind when writing captions for photographs that will be released to the public.

"At the time of the photo the ship was somewhere south of the Grand Banks, off the coast of Atlantic Canada."

“*At the time of the photo...*” this is redundant, and could be removed from the sentence without changing the meaning.

“...*the ship was somewhere...*” This implies that we at DND do not know exactly where our ships are at any given time. It would be better to give a precise location, if it is known – otherwise state where the ship was headed.

“...*the Grand Banks, off the coast of Atlantic Canada. ...*” Most Canadians have heard of the Grand Banks, and know they are off the coast of Atlantic Canada.

“*HMCS Iroquois had just left Halifax days earlier...*” How many days earlier?

Canadian Press Caption

One of Canada's aging Sea King helicopters crashed Thursday, Feb. 27, 2003 as it was lifting off the deck of a Canadian Forces destroyer, slightly injuring an airman and a firefighter. The ship, HMCS Iroquois, left Halifax on Monday and was on its way to a mission in the Persian Gulf when the accident occurred. The vessel will take about 48 hours to return to Halifax, where repair crews will assess the damage. (CP PHOTO/ho-Department of National Defence)

“One of Canada's aging Sea King helicopters crashed Thursday, Feb. 27, 2003 as it was lifting off the deck of a Canadian Forces destroyer, slightly injuring an airman and a firefighter. ...”

While the use of the word “*aging*” may be somewhat questionable, it is nonetheless correct in fact. The rest of the sentence answers many of the questions the DND caption does not. Remember, the opening sentence is the most important when writing any caption.

“... The ship, HMCS Iroquois, left Halifax on Monday and was on its way to a mission in the Persian Gulf when the accident occurred. ...”

This sentence describes where the ship was headed and when it left, but leaves out the specifics of the “*mission*”. These should be included, if known. Is it the Persian Gulf or the Arabian Gulf? In Western countries it is referred to as Persian Gulf, while in all Arab countries it is called Arabian Gulf.

“... The vessel will take about 48 hours to return to Halifax, where repair crews will assess the damage.”

A very important detail that is missing from the DND caption is answered by CP – how will this affect the ships mission?

So which is the better caption?

As a professional photographer you have the ability to make that choice!