NEW YORK, JUNE 14, 2016 – A new Smithsonian Channel series will chart the stealthy game of undersea warfare from the greatest submarine campaigns of World War II. The six-episode HELL BELOW premieres Sunday, July 17 at 9 p.m. ET/PT. It profiles the strategic masterminds behind the brutal tactics of Nazi U-boats and reveals the extraordinary feats of Allied subs in the Atlantic and Pacific.

Both the Axis and Allies employed unrestricted submarine warfare to bring their enemies to their knees in World War II. Submariners on both sides were a special breed of warrior, always volunteers, often fighting alone. Sub warfare evolved rapidly during the war, as German U-Boats and American submarines attacked military targets and commercial shipping. Submarine attacks created chaos and unnerved adversaries. And while the world’s oceans provided concealment and protection, the environment was unforgiving. Each hour-long episode of HELL BELOW features expert analysis and stock footage along with dramatic re-enactments filmed aboard authentic World War II era submarines, placing viewers in the heart of the action.

HELL BELOW kicks off with THE WOLFPACK, as Hitler’s U-Boats begin their deadly combined attacks on Atlantic convoys in 1940. One of Germany’s top U-boat captains is pinned down in the North Atlantic, and realizes the vulnerability of attacking with a single submarine. His U-99 survives the onslaught, and its emboldened commander forges a reputation as a daring strategist who leads Germany’s first successful multiple submarine attack. The Allies strike back with new anti-submarine technology that would
change the face of naval warfare, pitting British engineering against Germany’s U-boat aces.

Ensuing episodes of HELL BELOW:

**HELL BELOW: HITLER’S REVENGE**  
Premieres Sunday, July 24 at 9 p.m. ET/PT  
It’s December 1941, and the German Commander of U-boats, Karl Dönitz, hopes to capitalize on America’s chaos after Pearl Harbor. Dönitz orders five submarines to travel 3,000 miles to launch a surprise attack…right outside New York Harbor. The orders to U-boat commanders are simple: Sink as many American shipping vessels as possible, particularly those carrying vital cargo to the Allied forces in England. Five new Type IX U-boats are sent to accomplish the task, and they find the East Coast is completely unprepared for warfare. As the U-Boats begin to pick off targets silhouetted by the lights of Manhattan, America hears a wake-up call.

**HELL BELOW: AMERICA FIGHTS BACK**  
Premieres Sunday, July 31 at 9 p.m. ET/PT  
The attack on Pearl Harbor has crippled the U.S. surface fleet, leaving only its aircraft carriers and a small fleet of submarines as America’s best hope against Japan. A new breed of skipper begins to transform U.S. submarines from their traditional job as a scout to a new role as a brutal predator. The mission: Sink the merchant ships that Japan depends upon to fuel its war machine. America’s Gato class submarine packs 24 torpedoes and is larger and more technologically advanced than its contemporaries. But with Japanese warships controlling the Pacific, and America rebuilding its fleet, the U.S. subs must risk everything in an aggressive campaign to keep the war effort alive.

**HELL BELOW: ATLANTIC SHOWDOWN**  
Premieres Sunday, August 7 at 9 p.m. ET/PT  
In March 1943, two Allied convoys leave North America bound for Britain. They total nearly 100 ships carrying vital food and raw materials to supply the Allied war effort. Halfway through their journey, they are assaulted on all sides by the largest U-Boat wolfpack of the war. Twenty German subs attack the thinly protected convoy, just as a brutal winter storm sweeps the North Atlantic. For three days the Allied convoy is mercilessly hammered by torpedoes, and the defending ships struggle to protect the perimeter while rescuing survivors of sinking ships. It’s the largest convoy battle of the Second World War… and the winner will control the Atlantic.

**HELL BELOW: DESTROYER KILLER**  
Premieres Sunday, August 14 at 9 p.m. ET/PT  
In June 1944, Commander Sam Dealey and the crew of USS Harder sneak into the waters of the most heavily guarded Japanese Naval base in the Pacific. Their goal is to rescue Allied commandoes trapped on Japanese-held Borneo. But the lone sub discovers evidence of a massive Japanese troop buildup that could affect the outcome of the entire Pacific War. Outnumbered and out-gunned, the sub must try to inform the
American command of its discovery and take out as many enemy ships as possible before being discovered.

**HELL BELOW: FATAL VOYAGE**
Premieres Sunday, August 21 at 9 p.m. ET/PT
In preparation for the invasion of the Philippines, USS Tang is sent into the Formosa Strait – the most dangerous area in the Pacific – to disrupt shipping. Commander Dick O'Kane leads Tang into the Strait, where they successfully sink four enemy ships. But when they meet an entire Japanese convoy, everything starts to go wrong. In a head-to-head fight with Imperial destroyers, the U.S. sub finds itself crippled and plummeting. This may be one battle Tang cannot survive.

HELL BELOW is a Pacific Fleet production in association with Smithsonian Channel, Blue Ant Television Limited, Historia, and National Geographic Channel International. Ian Herring is the executive producer. Maija Leivo is series producer. David Royle and Tim Evans serve as executive producers for Smithsonian Channel.

Smithsonian Channel™, owned by Smithsonian Networks™, a joint venture between Showtime Networks Inc. and the Smithsonian Institution, is where curiosity lives, inspiration strikes and wonders never cease. This is the place for awe-inspiring stories, powerful documentaries and amazing entertainment across multiple platforms. Smithsonian Channel combines the storytelling prowess of SHOWTIME® with the unmatched resources and rich traditions of the Smithsonian, to create award-winning programming that shines new light on popular genres such as air and space, history, science, nature, and pop culture. Among the network’s offerings are series including *Aerial America, Million Dollar American Princesses, The Weapon Hunter, Mighty Ships, Mighty Planes and Air Disasters*, as well as critically-acclaimed specials that include *Civil War 360, 9/11: The Heartland Tapes; MLK: The Assassination Tapes and The Day Kennedy Died*. Smithsonian Networks also operates Smithsonian Earth™, through SN Digital LLC., a new subscription video streaming service delivering spectacular original nature and wildlife content. To learn more, go to [www.smithsonianchannel.com](http://www.smithsonianchannel.com), or connect with us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com), [Twitter](https://twitter.com), and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com).

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**CONTACTS:**

Joanna Brahim  
212-708-8014  
[Joanna.brahim@smithsonianchannel.com](mailto:Joanna.brahim@smithsonianchannel.com)

Josh Gross  
212-708-1578  
[Josh.gross@smithsonianchannel.com](mailto:Josh.gross@smithsonianchannel.com)