

## **Naval 2010 Centennial Celebrations**

We continue to hear from members that there is no formal Naval Aviation representation in 2010. Notwithstanding three years of briefings, reports to the annual Directors Meetings, special letters to Chapter Directors, Presidents and Secretaries, etc., information is clearly not getting out to individual members. In fact, a very considerable effort has been made to ensure there will be a significant acknowledgment of Naval Aviation in the key centennial events and symbols. This article is intended to ensure the widest possible promulgation of this information, particularly as there will be many events across Canada and throughout the year that will be meaningful for members.

The Navy 2010 Centennial website provides increasingly detailed information on a wide number of special 2010 initiatives. This brief is not intended to emulate that detailed source but rather to highlight events both on and (a few) not yet on the site. It is necessarily a work in progress and this article will provide some assistance in finding Naval Aviation specific components. It will also underscore that the NCR Naval Centennial Committee and, increasingly, the senior command of the Navy itself, are strongly supportive of the effort to highlight the role and contribution of Naval Aviation.

### **2010 Initiatives Focusing on Naval Air:**

1. **Historical Monument – Formation of the Royal Canadian Naval Air Service.** Since joining as a member of the committee in 2006, CNAG has strongly argued for a tangible Naval Aviation presence in the 2010 celebration. It appears this monument is Chairman Captain (N) John Pickford's and the Navy's effort to champion that request and as a result, Naval Aviation has one of the three most visible and important national historical recognitions of the 2010 initiative.
2. **Naval Centennial Bell:** Several CNAG chapters responded to the call for contribution of materials for the Naval Centennial Bell and these contributions will be acknowledged in a book to be displayed with the bell. It was cast in Esquimalt in October and will be presented to the people of Canada at a ceremony on Parliament Hill on 4 May, 2010. It will reside in Parliament for one year and then another home will be found, likely the Canadian War Museum (CWM).
3. **Centennial Paintings:** Here again, Canadian Naval Aviation has been very well represented. The last three of the six paintings selected (the eras portrayed are the First World War, Second World War, Korean War, the Cold War, First Gulf War and the Campaign against Terrorism) have a major Naval Aviation presence. The Cold War has the carrier and a tribal class destroyer with a Sea Fury fighter in the air, the First Gulf War shows three destroyers seen by the pilot through the cockpit of what appears to be a Sea King and the last has a vessel apprehended by a CPF

with a Sea King hovering over the interdiction operation. Naval Aviation, therefore, is represented clearly in three of the six eras depicted.

4. **Commemorative Coffee Table Book:** Dr. Richard Gimblett is the Command Historian of the Canadian Navy and his comprehensive coverage of the Navy in this special publication, featuring articles by distinguished contributors, covers the political origins of the Canadian Navy back to the late 1800's, both world wars, the Korean conflict, the postwar period, and a look at the Navy of the future. There is also a section on naval war art including the six selected 2010 paintings, three of which have Naval Aviation prominently displayed. Of interest to Canadian Naval Aviation personnel, Naval Aviation is very well represented in the book with colour spreads of all five of the carriers and naval aircraft by noted graphic artist, Lt. (N) Carl Gagnon. In graphics, photographs and in text, Naval Aviation receives prominent attention. The book was launched on 16 November, 2009 in Ottawa and is available in bookstores.
5. **CNAG Specific Initiatives:** Formal submissions have been made to the Project Manager, Canadian Naval Centennial 2010 Project, to have a number of CNAG national or Hampton Gray VC Chapter initiatives officially recognized as 2010 Initiatives.
  - a. Nomination of "Canadian Naval Aviation" for Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame, "Belt of Orion Award" in recognition of the contributions to Canada's Aviation History and the Aerospace Industry by the naval airmen of the Royal Canadian Navy. This CNAG initiative, led by Bud MacLean with the assistance of the National Executive, was actively supported by Adm Falls, Gen. Manson, LGen Ashley, RAdm Allen and by LCdr Stu Soward. (*CNAG National*)
  - b. Initiative, led by Dave Tate and Stephen Quick, Associate Director General, Canada Aviation Museum, to contribute a detailed, to-scale replica of Canada's last operational aircraft carrier, *H.M.C.S. Bonaventure*, as an important component of the Naval Aviation exhibit of the Canada Aviation Museum in Ottawa. (*Hampton Gray VC Chapter*)
  - c. Assist the Canada Aviation Museum in developing a multi-media "loop" presentation in audio-video format to showcase the history, evolution and active operational activities of Canadian Naval Aviation over the years as a complement to the static naval aircraft exhibits in the Canada Aviation Museum. Operations on three carriers, *HMCS Warrior*, *HMCS Magnificent* and *HMCS Bonaventure*, are featured. The presentation is projected on a 25' x 25' square screen. CNAG provided much of the video footage and many of the still photos and collaborated on the arrangement of the presentation. (*Hampton Gray VC Chapter*)
  - d. Sponsor Lt J. Allan Snowie, RCN (Ret'd) and his new book, "*Collishaw & Company*" as an individual 2010 Initiative formalized through the submission of

a CNAG project request. (*CNAG National*)

- e. Actively promote and support the distribution and foster public awareness of Allan Snowie's new book on the history of Canadian Naval Aviation which may prove, along with Bud MacLean's outstanding Belt of Orion initiative, to be one of the biggest factors in enlightening the Canadian public on the true nature and scope of the contribution of Naval Aviation in Canada. The facts Allan has uncovered are astonishing and it is very much deserving of our active support. (*CNAG National*)
  - f. Identify and confirm registration of Canadian Naval Air memorials, through an initiative undertaken by Bob Ferguson, to ensure the completeness and accuracy of this important record. (*Hampton Gray VC Chapter*)
  - g. Conduct an official commemorative ceremony to honour the only naval VC of the Second World War, Lt. Hampton Gray VC, DSC, MID, RCNVR, at the National War Memorial Valiants site through an initiative by Paul Baiden currently in negotiation with Veteran's Affairs Canada. This 19 May 2010 event will be combined with the annual Naval Aviation Rendezvous at HMCS Bytown and will be supported by overflights of the Vintage Wings Canada Corsair and possibly the VWC Swordfish. (*Hampton Gray VC Chapter*)
  - h. CNAG has been approached by Kay Collacutt, Editor of the SAMF *Warrior* Magazine, to assist in ensuring the first edition of *Warrior* in 2010 will be a special edition dedicated to Naval Aviation. SAMF's Chairman, RAdm Gord Edwards, is also dedicated to this effort to ensure Naval Aviation receives its due in 2010. CNAG has enthusiastically agreed to support this most worthy effort. (*CNAG National and Hampton Gray VC Chapter*).
6. **Gray Ghost Initiative:** This is a Vintage Wings Canada (VWC) initiative in collaboration with Canada Aviation Museum (CAM) and Hampton Gray VC Chapter, CNAG to support the Naval 2010 Centennial. This is CNAG's eighth formal 2010 initiative. Its objectives are:
- a. To celebrate 100 years of Naval Service to Canada, and
  - b. To acknowledge the major contributions of Naval Aviation in Canada and the role and contributions of the Maritime Air Group as the successor to the Naval Air Service.

It involves the flights of the VWC FG-1D "Hampton Gray" Corsair (currently on display in the Naval Aviation Exhibit of CAM) and, where practical, the VWC Swordfish over key 2010 events across Canada. These will include the east coast International Fleet Review (IFR) (and possibly the west coast IFR as well), Battle of the Atlantic Ceremonies on 4 May 2010 in Ottawa, the 19 May 2010 Hampton Gray commemorative event, the Admiral Kingsmill commemorative ceremonies, two dozen air shows across Canada, and many more, all of which will be announced when the schedule is firm in the Naval Centennial website. It must be noted that the Air Force has thoughtfully offered the courtesy of the participation of a CF 18

painted as a naval aircraft to complement this initiative.

The initiative will feature the Gray Ghost Heritage Flight which includes the above aircraft and possibly a Canada Warplane Heritage Museum Firefly and also the Victoria Cross Tour with Lt. Hampton Gray's medals and memorabilia, as the only VC recipient in the history of the Canadian Naval Service, present at all VWC Gray Ghost static displays at air shows across Canada. (*Hampton Gray VC Chapter*)

There are many local initiatives being planned for the NCR – a formal Centennial Ball, mess dinners, Parliament Hill activities, expansion of the Battle of the Atlantic ceremonies, involvement of CNAG members in local parades, wreath laying and ceremonies, etc. There will be many events in centres all across Canada. There will be firmer plans on reunions and other activities made known in the coming months and these will be promulgated as soon as known. In the meantime, it is recommended that you keep an eye on the 2010 website. The website has some duplication and takes a bit of practice. For Naval Aviation folks who find it cumbersome – it is a complex site because it must cover hundreds of activities, plans, schedules, presentations, etc and it is improving both in quality and in information almost daily – perhaps the following will help.

The web site hyperlink is <http://www.navy.forces.gc.ca/centennial>. Under the following index menu keys on the site you will find the following:

**Background Information** – under “*Upcoming Events*” and under “*Future Events*” there is a listing by city and town, of all already known and programmed events – i.e. the 19 May Hampton Gray Commemorative event in Ottawa can be found there. Look for your local area. Look further down under “*Upcoming Events*” for “Namesake community presentations” – for more information about events in communities close to you. For better event coverage, however, it is best to go down the main index to:

**Events and Activities** – if you click on this menu bar it opens up “*Event Listing* (including future and past events), “*Events by Province*” and “*National Events*”. The event listing part is a replication of the material found under city and town names in Background Information. Clicking on “*Events by Province*” gives you a more detailed description of events in chronological order for each province (outlined in the left hand menu) i.e. the description of the Hampton Gray commemorative event is outlined for 19 May in the Ontario listing as a “Canadian Naval Air Group” initiative. Returning to the “Events and Activities” section, click on “National Events” and you will see, prominently listed at the top under the menu Bar “Canadian Naval Air Group”, a number of CNAG initiatives (some combined) and there are more to come.

And if you still don't think Naval Aviation is well represented, scroll down the menu to “Centennial Paintings” and have a look at the last three of the six portrayed. In half of the paintings, Naval Aviation is prominently displayed.

Have a good look through the rest of the Navy 2010 site - it is very informative and we are a lot better represented than you believe. Soon there will be detailed schedules of our Gray

Ghost and other initiatives with cross-references to hyperlinks at Vintage Wings Canada and their detailed flight and event schedules for all of 2010 across Canada now approaching completion. It takes time to coordinate all schedules and plans but it will happen.

As a final reminder, there is still time to get involved, to make Naval Aviation's contributions known to Canadians. It doesn't matter how small the initiative – they all count and they all contribute to achieving the objective of educating Canadians on the enormous contribution to Canada of its Naval Aviation service in the ninety-one years since Canadian Naval Aviators first took to the skies in the Great War.

Peter S. Milsom  
CNAG National 2010 Representative