



904 (Lake Chapala-Mexico) Wing Air Force Association of Canada

March 2004

President's Message

I am delighted to be a part of this first issue of our Wing Newsletter. Many thanks to Bob Rowlett and Mario Okunsky for their efforts in pulling it together.

Last fall we established two membership goals. The first was to have the 25 members needed for the Charter Application, by the end of December. The second was to have 35 members by the end of March. Both goals have been achieved. The Charter Application was forwarded to AFAC National HQ in Ottawa in mid January and by the end of January our membership was up to 35.

We have an interesting mix of members. Forty percent of our members are snowbirds while sixty percent are full-time residents. We have former members of the military services of Canada, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK, several of whom have also had very successful careers as airline transport pilots. In addition, we have members who have never served in the military but who have many years of experience in civil aviation both on the ground and in the air. We have one member who belongs to the Royal Air Forces Escaping Society and we even have a member who is a past National President of AFAC. There must be enough stories here to fill a shelf of books!

Until now, the efforts of the Executive Council have been concerned mainly with building membership and obtaining the Wing Charter. With the Wing Charter Dinner now scheduled March 25th, we have been making some plans for the fall. In a separate item in this issue, you can read about the Medical Support Project that is getting underway. To complement this newsletter, we are also planning to establish a Wing web site. The web site will provide information 'on demand' to both members and non-members, wherever they may be. The web site will take some doing, but we hope to have it up and running by the end of the year.

Finally, thanks to Renaud Préfontaine, whose initiative in organising an 'ex-Canadian Military Aircrew' TGIF in January 2003, provided the seed for the establishment of 904 (Lake Chapala-Mexico) Wing, Air Force Association of Canada.

In closing, here is a classic example of political astuteness. "The airplane is an invention of the devil and will never play any part in such a serious business as the defence of a nation..." Sir Sam Hughes, Minister of Militia and Defence, August 1914.

Per Ardua Ad Astra

Bill Watt

Editors Comments

Welcome to the first edition of the 904 (Lake Chapala-Mexico) Wing of the Air Force Association newsletter.

The aim of the newsletter is to help create an image in the community, inform the membership of upcoming events and create a satisfactory image with our most affected critics – you our Members.

We hope to give you a sense of participation and to inform you of upcoming events. To assist us in this process we welcome your comments and suggestions for future editions.

We intend to establish a Wing website to assist in the distribution of the newsletter, other Association news and aviation topics of interest to the membership. When the website is complete we will have an email address for the Wing that will allow you the opportunity to pass us your suggestions by email. In the interim, please pass your comments to Mario or Bob.

Outstanding Member

Bob Pope.

Bobs outstanding recruiting efforts ensured that we had the number of members required to establish a Wing of the Air Force Association here in Mexico.

“Good Show Bob”

Charter Dinner

- Location: La Nueva Posada
- Date: 25 March 2004
- Time: 1930
- Dress: Smart Casual
- Price: \$200 pesos each
- Guest: The Canadian Defence Attaché from the

Meet Your Wing Executive

President Bill Watt
Vice President Peter DeTracey
Secretary Don Slimman
Co-Secretary Jacques Girard
Treasurer Ron Hudson

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PERSONNEL

Pilot recruitment campaign underway

The Air Force is mounting an aggressive pilot recruitment campaign, in conjunction with Canadian Forces Recruiting Group, to bolster the number of people applying to become CF pilots. Currently, we have about 1332 pilots, however, we should have approximately 1475.

As a result, we are attempting to recruit approximately 184 men and women under the Direct Entry Officer (DEO) plan. The total recruiting target for new pilots this year is 222, which includes entry via Royal Military College, direct from a civilian university (DEO), internal CF occupational transfers as well as a limited number of high school graduates under the recently re-activated Continuing Education Officer Training Plan. It may seem surprising that we are falling short for pilots, however, the challenges we're facing are due to complex and inter-related factors, including economic, demographic and organizational (training) issues. Also, the CF has not actively promoted or advertised the military pilot occupation in the past because historically there have been plenty of applicants. As a result Canadians may not be aware of the opportunities in this profession.

We hope that the \$4.5 million recruitment advertising campaign, which began this fall, will inform Canadians about the opportunities in the pilot occupation. We are confident that the pilot occupation offers a challenging and rewarding career for those Canadian men and women who have the right stuff for this exciting job.

Meanwhile, on the aircraft technician side of the house, and our efforts to regenerate the MOC 500 series trades (Avionics, Aviation and Aircraft Structures technicians), our recruitment, re-enrolment and regeneration efforts are slowly turning the tide. The 500 series trades have historically made up approximately 37-39 per cent of the Air Force; and with so many of those technicians approaching their retirement within the next few years, it's possible the Air Force will have to regenerate up to 70 per cent of those trades within the next 10 years. While the outlook is improving, the issue is fast becoming one of absorption as we juggle to absorb an inordinate number of new trainees while maintaining a vigorous ops tempo, something which we and our colleagues at 1 CAD are working hard to address.

NATO Flying Training in Canada

At the meeting held on 13 February, Bill Watt presented a video on the NFTC Program. For those of you who missed it or who would like additional information, here are some relevant web sites.

The NFTC Web Site:

<http://www.nftc.com> (Note that this web site requires that your computer have a “Flash” player capability.)

The Macromedia Flash Player can be downloaded free from the Macromedia web site.

<http://www.macromedia.com/>

The DND/CF Web Site:

The Department of National Defence and Canadian Forces Web Site is a well-constructed and informative site. Go to: <http://www.forces.gc.ca/>. Click on “Air Force” and browse.

Medical Support Project

On Wednesday, the 25th of February, the Medical Support Committee met for the first time. The purpose of the meeting was to establish committee objectives concerning medical and hospitalisation issues of concern to members. It was agreed that, initially, the committee would focus on:

- Determining the advantages of access to the full capabilities of the Hospital Militar in Guadalajara;
- Investigating ways and means of obtaining access to the Hospital Militar; and
- Providing information to both snowbird and resident members on travel medical insurance options.

Members of the committee are Martin Inwood, Roger Heath, Frans Vandenberg and (ex-officio) Bill Watt.

More information will be provided in future issues of the Newsletter.

Happenings

- 25 March - Charter Dinner
- 16 April - Annual General Meeting
- 9 July - Wing Meeting/TGIF
- 13 August - Wing Meeting/TGIF

Annual General Meeting

Be sure to attend the Annual General Meeting on 16 April at La Nueva Posada. The top item on the agenda is the election of a slate of Wing Officers for the Year.

Member Survey Results

- | | | | | |
|--|------------|-------------|----|------------|
| 1. Should members wear identification at Wing meetings? | Yes | 79% | No | 21% |
| 2. Do you favour a dress code for Wing meetings? | Yes | 32% | No | 68% |
| 3. Should we invite spouses for dinner after our meetings? | Yes | 92% | No | 8% |
| 4. What other social functions would you like? | | | | |
| ➤ Videos of air operations | | | | |
| ➤ Annual Dance party | | | | |
| ➤ New Meeting place | | | | |
| ➤ Games Occasionally | | | | |
| ➤ Semi-monthly social functions | | | | |
| ➤ Occasional Dances for members and spouses | | | | |
| ➤ Annual “Dining In” with formal or Mess Kit dress | | | | |
| ➤ Annual Meeting with Dinner and Dance | | | | |
| ➤ Christmas party | | | | |
| 5. What topics would you like to see in the Newsletter? | | | | |
| ➤ Letters to the Editor | Yes | 96% | No | 4% |
| ➤ Articles from aviation newsletters | Yes | 92% | No | 8% |
| ➤ Surveys of Members on topical issues | Yes | 87% | No | 13% |
| ➤ Wing Achievements | Yes | 100% | No | 0% |
| ➤ Memorials | Yes | 96% | No | 4% |
| ➤ Local Tips on: | | | | |
| ➤ Health Care | Yes | 88% | No | 12% |
| ➤ Restaurants | Yes | 84% | No | 16% |
| ➤ Insurance | Yes | 88% | No | 12% |
| 6. What other items would like to see in the newsletter? | | | | |
| ➤ Travel Tips | | | | |
| ➤ Views on happenings in the Air Force | | | | |
| ➤ Communications with Mexican Forces | | | | |
| ➤ List of new members each edition | | | | |
| ➤ Members stories – a short history in each issue | | | | |
| ➤ A humour column | | | | |
| ➤ Interest in Mexican military, with reciprocal rights | | | | |
| ➤ Air Force/Aviation articles | | | | |
| ➤ Information on the departure and arrival of members | | | | |
| ➤ A section on “ Recommended Tradesmen” | | | | |
| ➤ Traffic experiences by members travelling north re: routes, hotels, etc. | | | | |

Next Issue: The next issue of the newsletter will be published in May 2004. Please submit your suggestions or letters to Mario or Bob by 23 April 2004.