



FROM THE BRIDGE

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Progress Update...

At our June meetings in sunny Victoria we identified a number of tasks we wanted to tackle. I must admit things are moving slower than I had hoped but perhaps the summer intervened. However, we have made some headway:

- Better service to members / value from National was a driver in starting up **NAC NEWS** emails which have been well received. **NAC NEWS** now reaches about 970 members.
- The 'Interim Membership' has been established which we hope will allow us to get retiring members and those in the training system involved in NAC. Branches should be thinking about how they involve Naval Cadets if they are at universities in their catchment areas or those undergoing initial training in the case of Halifax, Victoria and Québec City Branches. We need to attend all 'Depart With Dignity' (DWD) functions at bases where serving members retire so as to present an Interim Membership and welcome them into the NAC.
- It came as a surprise to me that we did not have a good national membership list. The lists are compiled by Branches with varying success. More on this below.
- I have polled Branch Presidents regarding relationships with reserve divisions so as to get a feeling for how Branches and their local reserve units cooperated. All Branch Presidents were copied on the reports so that we could all gain a better understanding. Surprisingly the relationships varied from none and even antagonistic, to very cooperative and close. Why this is so needs to be probed. I have opened discussions with the Chief of Reserves and the Chief of Naval Reserves.
- The relationship between Branches and local RCN units also varies. In some cases we have been successful in engaging both serving and newly retired RCN members, but often we have not made the connection. Suggestions such as moving meetings to the RCN mess, scheduling meetings so that working people can attend after work, are under consideration by Branches affected.
- Initial work on establishing an 'Institute' (a place-holder name for a much expanded naval affairs effort) is underway. More on this in future *Starshell* issues.
- The Endowment Fund is enjoying success due to the untiring efforts of Brooke Campbell and his merry men. You will already have seen the direct request from Brooke which has resulted in an improved return.
- Through the good offices of our Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Tom Riefesel, I had a brief sit-down with the three Formation Chiefs. I explained how NAC has changed and its goal of supporting the RCN. They were very supportive and will take the message back to their contemporaries — stand by. Which leads me to the discussion on the need to make our association more welcoming by extending the national name change to branches discussed below.
- National ties to RCN leadership continue to develop. The Battle of the Atlantic Gala on 1 May 2014 and National Conference on 2 October to be hosted by NAC Ottawa, are of great interest and utility to the RCN as venues where government, industry and naval leadership can discuss issues vital to the RCN. There is also initial planning on the creation of an RCN advisory entity.
- Funding of national initiatives such as an 'Institute' is a work in progress. The very successful Victoria-hosted national meetings, the Battle of the Atlantic gala in Ottawa earlier this year and last year's national meetings in Ottawa all delivered a surplus which we have agreed will go to national purposes. We need to institutionalize this process and expand it to other Branches. We are also examining initiatives such as expanded sales of NAC and RCN logoed items. The bottom line is that our initiatives will be supported by such new revenues, not from increased member dues.
- Opening our association so as to embrace all those who share our goal of supporting our navy means we should be recruiting members from all walks of life, all ranks and all backgrounds. Some Branches have embraced that concept but others have difficulties. We need to do a better job of sharing approaches.

At our Victoria meetings, the issue of our relationship to other like-minded organizations was once again raised. Depending on how one defines such organizations there seem to be about 10 groups who claim interest in support of our navy. It seems that in some instances there is a case to be made for a close relationship with such organizations whose membership is decreasing with their becoming some sort of branch of NAC. In the case of others where the organization is vibrant, we need to ensure we work more closely together toward our common goals. Some discussions have been held and thoughts exchanged with members of

such organizations:

- The Navy League of Canada (NLOC) is an outstanding organization that deserves our support and I recently sent out a letter from the NLOC National President Ron Buck inviting all NAC members to support their local cadet organizations. We have also held a number of discussions over the summer as to how we might cooperate more closely and have come to the decision that at least for the present time, we would work to steer a parallel course.
- The Sea Cadet Education Fund (RCSCEF) is a great organization now operating independently from the NLOC. Our NAC Endowment has looked at increasing support and Brooke made mention in his recent appeal. Look for more emphasis on NAC support of the RCSCEF.
- Last year the UNTD Association held its meetings collocated and interlocked with our Victoria meetings. We will do the same in the coming year in Ottawa. Perhaps we should consider a closer relationship such as a 'UNTD Branch.' Past President Ken Summers is looking into the possibilities.
- Many UNTD members are also strong NAC members — this is also the case for the Submarine Association (SOAC) and Naval Air Group (CNAG) where executives of those associations are involved as executives of NAC.
- We have had some Wren members recently join and many members belong to related organizations, such as the RCNA, which are experiencing a decrease in membership and therefore perhaps viability. What should we be doing to foster ties and bring our associations together?
- A large and successful organization is the C&POs Association. In the past when we had a different Navy with separate officers and C&POs organizations, perhaps segregation based on rank made sense. Today's Navy is a team and all members, regardless of rank, share common goals. Why wouldn't all those dedicated to the support of Canada's Navy belong to a single organization such as the Naval Association of Canada? Which leads me to...

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

In 2011, we voted to change the name of our association to the Naval Association of Canada. We decided to do this, after a long period of discussion involving all branches and members, for a number of reasons including:

- Today's RCN is a team effort and the existence of an Officers organization was not attractive to today's leadership or serving members.
- We know that the RCN needs support which is widely based. We should welcome anyone who shares our aim of such support.
- Those who want to help the Navy should look to our organization as their natural home and be welcomed by us.
- Other organizations mentioned above (with the exception of the C&PO's Association), draw their membership from all who

have served regardless of rank. The NOAC was an anomaly. As the number of such organizations shrink, they should see NAC as a welcoming natural home.

Yet our two major coastal bases continue with names incorporating the word 'Officers.' As mentioned above, I had a great meeting with our Command Chiefs who bought into the idea of a Naval Association and were enthused about taking the message to their contemporaries that they should join and participate in the Naval Association of Canada. How can they promote the idea to the MCMs when the coastal Branches retain a name which has Officers in the title?

I suggest that all branches should be using the title NAC - XXX (where XXX is the location such as Ottawa). This is critical to our success. It helps establish brand awareness through repetition across the country.

I recently came into possession of an email wherein the author made the argument that NAC was not an organization but a group of factions. It is time to establish our brand; it is time to be welcoming and inclusive; it is time to expand the Naval Association of Canada brand to each and every Branch.

What is your name?

As we continue to improve direct communication with members, it is essential that we have your postal and email addresses correct. We are only reaching about 75% of our members by email. We realize there will always be a small percentage that we cannot reach for a variety of reasons, but we need to do better than we are. Please talk to your mates and make sure we have their correct postal address and emails.

This also becomes important with our new 'corporate' structure where our members are individuals. Future election of Directors and Annual General Meeting motions will be based on individual votes — not Branch votes as it was in the past. We need to have a solid membership list for this to work.

As always, I welcome and solicit your comments.

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