



# MERCHANT NAVY COMMEMORATIVE THEME PROJECT (MNCTP)

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# STATEMENT

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## **ALLIED MERCHANT NAVY PROMOTIONS AND COMMEMORATIVE CELEBRATIONS (AMNPCC)**

### **THE PAN—CANADIAN AND INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF SEPTEMBER 3RD AS 'MN DAY' INITIATIVE**

May 26, 2017—Ottawa—MNCTP

Mr. Stéphane Ouellette, President and Chief Executive Officer, MNCTP, today issued the following statement concerning the status of the Allied Merchant Navy and American Merchant Marine Veterans.

“The Allied Merchant Navy and American Merchant Marine contributions to both World Wars have gone virtually unrecognized for almost a century. All this despite: the constant life threatening conditions they faced while at sea; suffering the highest losses of life (statistically) among all Army, Navy, and Air Force casualties combined; and, the fact that they were the mainstay of the Allied Forces victories in both World War I and World War II.

“During the Second World War, a total of **25,343** merchant ships, with **164,783,921** tons of cargo on board, sailed from North America to Britain. More than **250,000** Merchant Marine sailed the treacherous oceans of the globe. Over **6,835** American Merchant Marine were killed and over 11,000 wounded. In addition, **604** Merchant Mariners were taken prisoners of war, resulting in **61** casualties within POW camps. Over **2,199** Canadian Merchant Navy Seaman were killed in both WWI and WWII.

“These American and Canadian death statistics do not reflect global losses that were experienced by other Merchant Marine and Allied Merchant Navy nations. Also, they do not reflect the losses incurred during the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

“In 2015, facing many time critical challenges, the MNCTP and her partners launched the Allied Merchant Navy Promotions and Commemorative Celebrations (AMNPCC) Phase I: The Pan-Canadian and International Recognition of September 3 as ‘MN Day’ Initiative. Due to forward momentum, on September 1, 2015, [the Apostolic Nunciature in Canada](#) announced that His Holiness Pope Francis would include a special remembrance in his prayers for the souls of the men and women who lost their lives serving their countries in the Allied Merchant Navy.

“Also, on September 3, 2015, the provinces of [Saskatchewan](#) and [Manitoba](#) declared Merchant Navy Day for their respective province. On September 3, 2016, the Province of Nova Scotia made a similar declaration, and it was discovered that the Province of British Columbia had made a proclamation in 2004.

“On May 5, 2017, Mr. Jim Wilson, MPP, Simcoe-Grey, Ontario, introduced Bill 130, *Merchant Navy Veterans Day Act, 2017*, at Queens’ Park, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. If passed, this Bill will designate September 3<sup>rd</sup> in each year as Merchant Navy Veterans Day in the Province of Ontario. (Please note that in most Canadian provinces/territories, Premiers and Lieutenant Governors typically have discretion in the enactment of such proclamations. The Province of Ontario is an exception.)

“To mark the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Confederation, the MNCTP and her partners are requesting that:

- Ontario Members of Provincial Parliament (MPP) unanimously vote the legislation into effect before or on June 1, 2017;
- all remaining provinces and territories follow in the leadership roles of British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, (hopefully) Ontario, and Nova Scotia; and
- raise national and international awareness of the plight of our fellow American Merchant Marine Veterans.

“With an aim at uniting Canadians coast-to-coast through a common understanding of our history, I encourage all citizens to contact their federal, provincial, and municipal representatives to publicly endorse Bill 130: *Merchant Navy Veterans Day Act, 2017*, at Queen’s Park.

“In an effort to build closer relations, generate cultural kingships, and inspire a sharing of true democratic traditions and social values, Canadians should equally encourage all remaining provinces to follow in the leadership role of British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia. The remaining provinces/territories are: North West Territories; Nunavut; Yukon; Alberta; Ontario; Québec; New Brunswick; and Prince Edward Island.

“And let us not forget our neighbours and allies to the south: the American Merchant Marine Veterans that are still fighting for just compensation and rightful recognition 70 years after the fact! We must stop paying lip—service to our veterans and take care of them without excuse and without hesitation. It is a moral imperative that we thank all veterans, our men and women in uniform, and our first line responders for our freedom that should never be taken for granted – *Lest We Forget.*”

#### **Quick Facts**

- The first Canadian and American civilian casualties of World War II took place on September 3, 1939, with the sinking of the SS Athenia, when Britain and France declared war against Germany. (For additional information, please see attached Fact Sheet: The Sinking of the SS Athenia and the Significance of September 3.)
- September 3 was selected to be the Official Day of Remembrance for the Merchant Navy by the United Kingdom in 2000, Canada in 2003, and Australia in 2008.
- On June 12, 2003, the Honourable Paul Bonwick, former Member of Parliament for Simcoe-Grey (Collingwood, Ontario), introduced the Private Member’s Bill C-411, *An Act to establish Merchant Navy Veterans Day* designating September 3<sup>rd</sup> as the National Day of Recognition for Canadian Merchant Navy Veterans. Bill C-411 was passed and adopted at all three stages in the House of Commons, and was instantly referred to the Senate of Canada. The Honourable Senator Joseph A. Day offered immediate sponsorship of Bill C-411, passing all three readings, and received Royal Assent on June 19, 2003.

## Associated Links

### Act of Parliament and Existing MN Provincial Proclamations:

- [Bill C-411, An Act to establish Merchant Navy Veterans Day](#)  
(Parliament of Canada Act—June 23, 2003)
- [Merchant Navy Day Proclamation by the Province of Nova Scotia](#)  
(September 3, 2016)
- [Merchant Navy Day Proclamation by the Province of Manitoba](#)  
(September 3, 2015)
- [Merchant Navy Day Proclamation by the Province of Saskatchewan](#)  
(September 3, 2015)
- [Merchant Navy Veterans Day Proclamation by the Province of British Columbia](#)  
(October 11, 2002)

### Merchant Navy Veterans Day Act, 2017 Introduced at Queens' Park:

- [Wilson introduces Merchant Navy Day Act, 2017](#)
- [Bill 130, Merchant Navy Veterans Day Act, 2017](#)
- [Introduction of MN Bill Video \(on YouTube\)](#)

### American Merchant Marine Veterans Seeking Just Compensation:

- [Maritime TV Catches up with "Storm the Hill" Gang fighting for Merchant Marine Veterans Rights](#) (June 20, 2015)
- [Harvey travels to D.C. in support of Merchant Mariner bill](#) (July 27, 2015)
- [California congresswoman seeks cash for unsung WWII Merchant Marine vets](#) (May 27, 2015)
- [Honoring World War II Merchant Marine Veterans | Commentary](#) (June 17, 2015)
- [A Message of Gratitude to the People of the United States of America on Their National Maritime Day — May 22, 2016](#)
- [75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Attack on Pearl Harbor](#) (December 7, 2016)
- [Merchant Marine Music Video](#)
- [www.ammv.us](http://www.ammv.us)

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