



# MERCHANT NAVY COMMEMORATIVE THEME PROJECT (MNCTP)

## STATEMENT

A MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE TO  
MR. JIM WILSON, MPP, SIMCOE—GREY,  
AND TO THE TOWN OF COLLINGWOOD,  
ONTARIO, CANADA

JUNE 7, 2017

**Today** – Mr. Stéphane Ouellette, President and CEO, MNCTP, thanked Mr. Jim Wilson, MPP, Simcoe—Grey, and the Town of Collingwood for over twenty years of unwavering dedication to the cause of the Canadian and Allied Merchant Navy Veterans.

“After an arduous six year battle by the proud People of Simcoe—Grey in seeking national recognition for our gallant Merchant Navy Veterans, the Parliament of Canada Act: Bill C—411, *An Act to Establish Merchant Navy Veterans Day*, received Royal Assent on June 19, 2003. In addition, on September 3, 2003, the Town of

Collingwood held Canada’s first Merchant Navy Day of Remembrance ceremony. These efforts were initiated and spearheaded by the (late) Mr. Jack Stapleton, Canadian Merchant Navy Veteran and former Simcoe—Grey MP Paul Bonwick.

“On September 3, 2004, the MNCTP and her partners held the first Merchant Navy Day ceremony at the National War Monument in Ottawa, and maintained this successful NCR tradition for ten consecutive years. In January 2015, the MNCTP 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.

“As such, on September 3, 2015, the Merchant Navy Day commemoration, traditionally taking place in Ottawa, was held in the Town of Collingwood as the AMNPCC main launch event. Not only did I wish to honour our Merchant Mariners on this most solemn occasion, I wanted to also pay tribute to the stalwart efforts of this community of citizens and her triumphs that made Bill C—411 possible. Her Worship Mayor Sandra Cooper, Town of Collingwood, Mr. Robert Graham, President, Royal Canadian Legion (Branch 63), the Honourable Paul Bonwick, in addition to several volunteers, were key to making this event a success.



(From left): Merchant Navy Veteran, Mr. Jim Wilson, MPP for Simcoe-Grey, and Mr. Stéphane Ouellette, President and CEO, MNCTP, at the 2015 MN Day event in Collingwood, Ontario.

“In addition, the AMNPCC 2015—2016 exercise resulted in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia declaring September 3 as Merchant Navy Day in their respective province. British Columbia made this declaration in 2002. Within the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Confederation, the MNCTP and her partners are now requesting that all remaining provinces and territories follow in the leadership roles of the aforementioned provinces by September 3, 2017.

“On May 5, 2017, Mr. Jim Wilson introduced Bill 130, *Merchant Navy Veterans Day Act, 2017*, at Queen’s Park. This Bill would designate September 3 in each year as Merchant Navy Veterans Day in the Province of Ontario. The deadline for the Winter/Spring 2017 session was June 1, 2017.

“Through its many good—will efforts, the Town of Collingwood fosters a strong sense of cultural kingships and encourages a sharing of democratic traditions and social values that proudly defines us as Canadians today.

“Like many communities across Canada, the Town of Collingwood is a shining example of the contributions being made to build, grow, and encourage the inclusion of our veterans in the community of services that allow us to be recognized as one of the most accepting, free, and democratic countries in the world. And thank you Mr. Wilson for your leadership in sponsoring this historic Bill.”

### **Associated Links**

- [The \(late\) Mr. Jack Stapleton, Merchant Navy Veteran, Wartime Story](#)
- [Wilson introduces Merchant Navy Day Act, 2017](#)
- [Bill 130, Merchant Navy Veterans Day Act, 2017](#)
- [Introduction of MN Bill Video \(on YouTube\)](#)
- [Message of Support from Mr. Jim Wilson, \(as\) Interim Leader of the Official Opposition \(September 2015\)](#)
- [Message of Support from Her Worship Mayor Sandra Cooper, Town of Collingwood \(May 19, 2015\)](#)
- [Media Advisory: Merchant Navy Veterans Day, Ceremony at Collingwood Cenotaph, Thursday, September 3, 2015](#)
- [2015 Merchant Navy Day, Collingwood, Ontario, Photo Gallery](#)

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