

CENTENNIAL OF NAVAL AVIATION

January 2011-
22 May 2013



CoNA

100 Years of putting the "A" in MAGTF

On May 22, 1912, Marine Corps 1stLt Alfred A. Cunningham reported to Annapolis, Maryland for flight training, marking the birth of Marine Corps aviation. Since then, from the Cactus Air Force of Guadalcanal, to the break out of the 1st Marine Division at Chosin Reservoir, to the countless medical evacuations troop insertions, and close-air-support missions in support of the war in Viet Nam, Operations *Desert Storm*, *Enduring Freedom* and *Iraqi Freedom*, Marine aviation has been a key component of the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF). MajGen O.P. Smith, Commander of the 1st Marine Division at Chosin, captured best the essence of the relationship between Marines on the ground and Marines in the air when he wrote, "A bond of understanding has been established that will never be broken."

Beginning in January 2011, the Marine Corps, in concert with the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Coast Guard, will celebrate the 100th anniversary of Naval aviation. The celebration will last throughout 2011 and extend into 2012--the 100th anniversary year of Marine aviation. This historic occasion is an opportunity to celebrate the Marine Corps' naval character alongside our nation's other naval services. It is also an opportunity to celebrate the contributions of the Marine Corps and Marine aviation to our nation's defense.

As we move forward in planning events to commemorate, it is important to understand and communicate the role of the Marine Corps and its unique contribution to our nation. We are a distinct organization comprised of warfighting elements that, when pulled together as the MAGTF, are more efficient and effective than its individual parts. Combined arms operations and expeditionary capabilities pioneered by our earliest Marine aviators and refined over the years have served to make the Marine Corps a lethal force that can strike virtually anywhere in the world, at any time.

Marine aviation's value to the individual Marine and the Marine Corps as a whole has centered on a number of long-established and essential hallmark qualities. These qualities have been seen during past campaign successes, are witnessed during today's combat operations, and are key planning factors for future aircraft and aviation capabilities. These elements include: **ADAPTABILITY** - embracing new thoughts, technology, and capabilities. **AGILITY** - successfully

performing in every climb and place. And, being **OF ONE MIND** - every Marine is a rifleman, the "bond of understanding."

The Centennial of Naval Aviation (CoNA) celebration will afford the Marine Corps opportunities to build upon and maintain public support for Marine aviation and the MAGTF as a whole. It is our responsibility to reflect on our heritage, honor the accomplishments of our past, and invite the public to celebrate with us as we reach this historic milestone. In conjunction with the Navy's centennial, the Marine Corps' 2012 celebration will focus on the MAGTF and Marine aviation's role in this critical component of our nation's expeditionary "Force in Readiness." It will also focus on our shared history and tradition, the legacy of those who have gone before us. Marine aviation's heritage of innovation and transformation will also be highlighted as we move forward in accomplishing the Commandant's Marine Aviation Plan.

Soon to be published, the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps will state his vision for the celebration through the Centennial of Marine Corps Aviation Campaign Plan. The Assistant Commandant's guidance will be found on the Headquarters Marine Corps Department of Aviation website shortly; this website will act as a clearing house for Centennial information and events. You can also go to that link or look on page 61 in this issue of the *Yellow Sheet* to learn about the logo contest that the Marine Corps Aviation Association is sponsoring.

In just a few short years we will celebrate 100 years of Marine aviation. Until then, we have much to do and plan. It is within this context that we are seeking your input and effort to make this a meaningful commemoration. As we look to our future and concentrate on the tasks at hand, we can never forget the legacy that we have been given by the giants of Marine aviation on whose shoulders we now stand. LtGen Leslie Brown, in his oral history interview, spoke of Marine aviation's role at Chosin, and said, "There was nothing that would have kept them off those targets - nothing." May we continue to strive for such noteworthy recognition.

Semper Fidelis.

LtGen George Trautman,
Deputy Commandant for Aviation