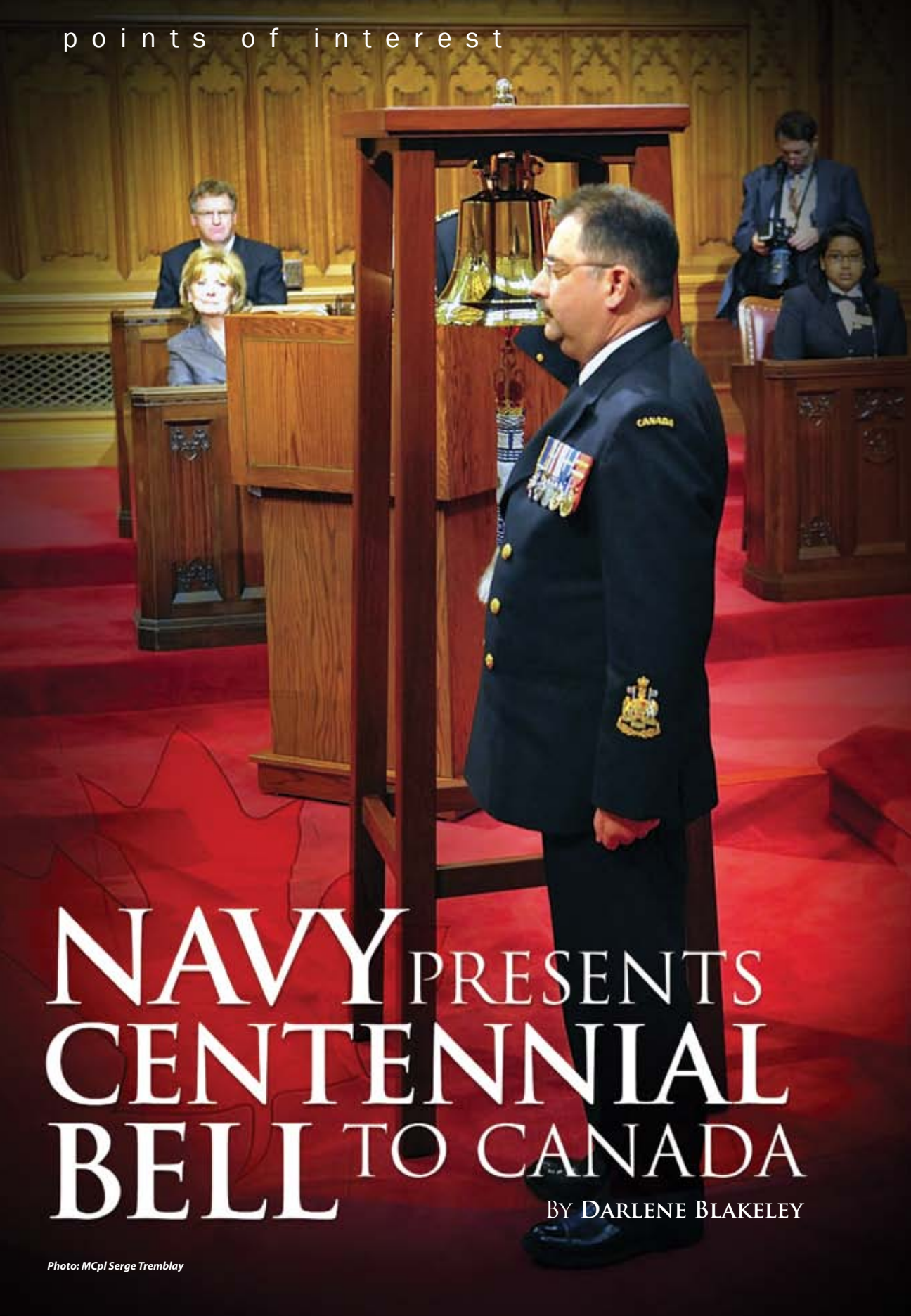


points of interest



# NAVY PRESENTS CENTENNIAL BELL TO CANADA

BY DARLENE BLAKELEY

OTTAWA – In the hallowed hall of the Senate of Canada, the Canadian Navy, 100 years to the day that it was created (4 May 1910), presented a ship's bell to the people of Canada, rededicating itself to another century of service.

"[The Centennial Bell] stands as a symbol that honours the past, celebrates the Royal Canadian Navy's achievements and recognizes the Navy's safeguarding of Canadian values of freedom, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law," said Minister of National Defence Peter MacKay.

During the ceremony, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced that the Government of Canada is designating May 4, 2010, as Canadian Navy Centennial Day to mark the Navy's 100th anniversary of service.

of artefacts from which it was made, are to be kept as a permanent reminder that Canada is a maritime nation dependent upon the oceans for its national prosperity.

"For many mariners, the ship's bell came to symbolize life at sea itself," said Vice-Admiral McFadden. "That is why even to this day, the bell is a warship's most important artefact, and why it continues to play an important role in naval routine and ceremony, even in a technically sophisticated force where operations are coordinated to the second."

In a tragic turn of events, attendees at the ceremony also mourned the loss of Petty Officer 2nd Class (PO 2) Craig Blake, the first Canadian sailor to die in Afghanistan. A member of Fleet Diving Unit (Atlantic), PO 2 Blake



Photo: MCpl Serge Tremblay

"In one relatively brief century, our sailors have established a mighty tradition of service and heroism, one that is second to none in the world among navies that are often far older, and in some cases, far larger," said Prime Minister Harper. "And Canadians have come to understand that our way of life, our trade, our security, our capacity to influence events elsewhere depends in significant part upon the men and women of the Canadian Navy and the ships in which they sail. It has for 100 years, and in the future that is mine to see, I expect it will continue to be so."

The Centennial Bell, presented by Chief of the Maritime Staff Vice-Admiral Dean McFadden, was christened with the waters of Canada's three oceans—Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic—and the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes, as well as the Indian Ocean to represent the Navy's international theatre of operations. These waters were collected throughout 2009 by naval ships and submarines. The bell, with its original rope made by Chief Petty Officer 2nd Class David Lowther, and a book highlighting the history of the bell and displaying the variety

was killed May 3 after an improvised explosive device detonated during a dismounted operation, about 25 kilometres southwest of Kandahar City in the Panjwayi District.

"The presentation of this bell to the people of Canada allows us—the men and women of today's navy who are but custodians of this great national institution—to do more than commemorate and reflect on the past," Vice-Admiral McFadden said. "It allows us to acknowledge our covenant with the nation and dedicate ourselves anew to the watch, that ceaseless vigil that keeps Canada safe from the perils of the world. It is a vigil that still demands effort to the last measure, and sacrifice, even far from the sea—in the dusty plains of Afghanistan where we lost one of our own yesterday, PO 2 Craig Blake." ■

Darlene Blakeley is the senior editor and writer with Chief of the Maritime Staff in Ottawa.

## List of Abbreviations

**PO 2** Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class