

Painting the Maritimes Skies Yellow

By Kevin Psutka, COPA president and CEO

As many members know, COPA is a strong supporter of Vintages Wings of Canada's Yellow Wings program www.yellowwings.ca that commemorates the tremendous contribution Canada made to the war effort with the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP).

We support this effort to commemorate and educate because the yellow Wings aircraft stop at many former BCATP airports that today soldier on as vital links in our national airport system as well as provide homes for many of our aircraft.

The many Yellow Wings events held across Canada over the past two years provided an opportunity to get people out to their airport and remind them that their airport had a role to play in our past but continues to serve today and into the future.

The successful tour in 2011 from west to east, including our Fly-in AGM in Langley, B.C., ended in Quebec with the Vintage Wings air show because they simply ran out of time and weather to continue east, so the organizers decided to finish the job with a Maritime tour in 2012. I put out a call in the February edition of *COPA Flight* for COPA Flights to contact Vintage Wings with any plans they had for events that might coincide with the tour or to volunteer in support of the effort.

I am pleased to report that the Maritimes tour was a huge success, due in large part to COPA members stepping up to the plate. A full report is available at:

www.yellowwings.ca/downloads/pdfs/Yellow_Wings_2012_Historical_Report.pdf.

I am pleased that the list of events is peppered with references to COPA. I know from being involved in some of the coordination that it took many more people than are officially acknowledged in the report to make the tour go as smooth as it did, from the organizational effort leading up to each event, to hosting the Yellow Wings aircraft and crews, to cleaning up afterward.

So in addition to being grateful to Vintage Wings and its personnel who volunteered so much of their time to shine a light on many GA airports throughout the region, I would also like to extend my personal thanks to every one of our members who had anything at all to do with this effort. Without your help, the BCATP story and the importance of the airports would not have reached as many people.

Following on the success of the past two years it is great to see that in 2013 Yellow Wings will be partnering with the Air Cadet League to step up their effort to bring history alive and inspire our youth toward a career in aviation. As one who got his start in the Air Cadets, this development is close to my heart.

The Yellow Wings 2013 Cross Canada Air Cadet Tribute, presented by Raytheon Canada Limited, will see the Vintage Wings BCATP fleet split into three groups (eastern, central and western Canada) operating from bases in Calgary, Gatineau-Ottawa and Moncton, to support Air Cadet Programs from coast to coast.

In addition to providing Vintage Wings lectures to teach Cadets about their past, lectures given by Raytheon employees will connect them to the math and sciences of the present day and Canadian Space Agency astronauts will link this all to their future, both as strong Canadian citizens and technology leaders of tomorrow.

The lectures will be reinforced by taking over 500 Air Cadets flying in BCATP aircraft that their RCAF forefathers learned to fly in. Where schedules can be coordinated, other Vintage Wings assets such as their F86 Sabre Hawk One, Spitfire, Mustang, P40, Corsair or Hawker Hurricane would be on static display for motivational cockpit tours. In addition, Vintage Wings will offer “Fighter Reward” flights, if they can secure funding, in their P-51D Mustang and P-40 Kitty Hawk for top cadets.

Over 500 flights will be provided in large part through private and corporate donations and here is where COPA members can help.

Several sponsorship options exist to support the Yellow Wings 2013 program.

Sponsor 1 Youth Incentive Flight x \$375/Flight= \$375

Sponsor 2 Youth Incentive Flights x \$375/Flight= \$750

Sponsor 5 Youth Incentive Flights x \$375/Flight= \$1875



All donations can be made at the Yellow Wings website www.yellowwings.ca and tax receipts will be issued.

Sponsoring a deserving Canadian youth for a once in a lifetime vintage aircraft flight complete with ground briefings from Canadian role model astronauts and pilots is truly worth the Vintage Wings team's time and your generous donations. Please donate early and generously.