

Press release – January 2001 (for immediate release)

Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame – Wetaskiwin, Alberta

Three distinguished individuals are to be inducted into Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame in 2001.

Paul D. Manson, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Hall, announced today that Air Commodore Len Birchall, Lieutenant-General Bill Carr and the late James Chamberlin will be formally installed as Members of Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame at and Induction Dinner to be held in Ottawa on June 16th, 2001.

At the same event the Belt of Orion Award of Excellence will be presented to the Canadian Aviation Historical Society. The award is given annually to a deserving organization in recognition of distinguished service to aviation in Canada.

Air Commodore (Ret'd) Leonard Joseph Birchall, CM, OBE, DFC, CD with 5 bars, of Kingston, Ontario is a graduate and former Commandant of the Royal Military College of Canada. He was pilot of a Catalina flying boat in 1942 when he and his crew spotted the advance of the Japanese fleet steaming toward Ceylon, now Sri Lanka. Before being shot down and taken prisoner of war, they were able to alert the British of the approaching fleet. For this action, then Prime Minister Winston Churchill named Birchall "The Savior of Ceylon". He was later awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for this action and the Order of the British Empire for Gallantry for his selfless conduct during a 40-month stay in a Japanese prisoner of war camp. Leonard Birchall is the longest serving officer in the history of the Royal Canadian Air Force, receiving a 5th Bar to his CD in 1996. He currently serves as Honourary Colonel of #413 Squadron.

Lieutenant-General (Ret'd) William Keir Carr, CMM, DFC, OStJ, CD with 4 bars, BA, BSc, of Stittsville, Ontario, was born in Grand Bank, Newfoundland. Carr joined the RCAF in 1941 and flew 143 photographic missions over Europe, Malta, North Africa and Sicily in Spitfire aircraft. During the post-war years he advanced rapidly in rank, serving as Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff from 1973 to 1975, following which he was appointed the first Commander of the Canadian Forces Air Command. He is known as the "Father of the Modern Air Force" for his work in consolidating military aviation in the aftermath of the unification of the forces. After retiring from the military in 1978, Lieutenant-General Carr joined Canadair Ltd., where he enjoyed a remarkable career in worldwide marketing of the then-new Challenger business aircraft.

James Arthur Chamberlin, BSc, DIC, (deceased) was born in Kamloops, B.C. Chamberlin joined the engineering staff at Avro Aircraft at Malton, Ontario in 1946 where he became Chief Aerodynamicist on the C-102 Jetliner and the CF-100 Canuck interceptor aircraft. In the early 1950s he was appointed Chief of Technical Design, working on the Avro Arrow. Following cancellation of the Arrow program in 1959, he joined the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), working on the Mercury, Gemini and Apollo projects. For this work Jim Chamberlin was awarded the

Exceptional Scientific Achievement Medal and the Exceptional Service Medal from NASA, and was described as "one of the most brilliant men ever to work at NASA". He died in Houston, Texas in 1981.

The Belt of Orion Award for Excellence for 2001 has been awarded to the **Canadian Aviation Historical Society**. Formed in 1962, this Society is dedicated to furthering awareness and understanding of Canada's rich aviation history. Through their excellent publication, the CAHS Journal, their local chapters across Canada, and their annual conventions, this society has for many years been instrumental in the effective research and recording of Canada's aviation heritage.

Since its creation in 1974, some 165 members have been inducted into Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame. The organization makes its home in the Reynolds-Alberta Museum in Wetaskiwin, Alberta. The annual induction dinner is held in various cities across Canada from year to year.

The 2001 induction will take place during a gala dinner at the Canada Aviation Museum at Rockcliffe in Ottawa, on Saturday, June 16, 2001. For further information visit the Hall's Website at www.cahf.ca or contact:

Jennifer Romanko
Curator
Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame
Phone (780) 361-1351
Fax (780) 361-1239