

**Address by Mr. Harvey Mercer, Chair, Argentia Management Authority
On the Occasion of the 70th Anniversary of the Atlantic Charter
Ship Harbour, NL – 11:30am - August 14, 2011**

Lieutenant Governor Crosbie (and wife Jane), Hon. Felix Collins, MP Scott Andrews, representatives of the Atlantic Charter Foundation, the International Churchill Society, and the Atlantic Council of Canada, special guest Mr. Peter Russell, other invited guests from Fort Pepperrell and elsewhere, residents of Ship Harbour and surrounding communities... welcome to the area.

As chair of Argentia Management Authority, it is my privilege to address you today on the occasion of the anniversary of the Atlantic Charter crafted just hundreds of feet away from us, off these shores 70 years ago this week.

Led by a dedicated board of volunteers and a professional management team, AMA owns the Argentia Port, its infrastructure and the surrounding lands which formerly made up the US Naval Facility at Argentia. The AMA mandate is to market the site and promote increased economic activity at Argentia, resulting in jobs and spin off activity, in an effort to increase the population and tax base of the Town of Placentia and generally improve the prosperity of AMA's mandated region which extends from Ship Harbour to Point Verde.

While we are keenly focused on Argentia's future, not a day goes by that my colleagues and I do not reflect on the significance of the ground on which we walk. The bravery and commitment of those who, in their own individual way, served the cause of freedom, is tangible to us, as each time we pass across the old runways, or walk over South Side properties which once housed somewhere in the order of 15,000 service men and women and civilian Newfoundlanders, gives cause to remember and reflect.

Argentia's legacy is one of great sacrifice, as eloquently told by Mrs. Eileen Houlihan in her book entitled Uprooted. However, Argentia was also witness to the extraordinary will, determination, and youthful 'can do' attitude of the Americans who came among us at that time. When we, at the AMA, examine old documents and images on the Argentia property and port, we are frequently in awe of that unshakeable willpower that the Americans displayed in sometimes literally moving mountains to make Argentia into the valuable military asset which it became. Without a doubt, Argentia's legacy of sacrifice and bold determination in the fight for freedom continues to inspire us at the AMA to work all that

harder, to create the brighter future we are seeking for our community and our entire region.

When it was completed, Argentia was the largest American military installation outside the continental USA. There is no stronger evidence of its importance to the Americans than the fact that Roosevelt insisted on using the protection which Argentia afforded to meet in secret with Prime Minister Churchill for the 'First Summit' here off the shores of Ship Harbour.

I would like to take this brief opportunity to acknowledge and thank Mrs. Cathy Griffiths and the others involved with the Atlantic Charter Foundation. Cathy is by the way, a former member on the board of the AMA, and served the organization well during her time. (Mr. Dan Meade of Ship Harbour currently serves on the AMA board of directors). Cathy, the Atlantic Charter Foundation continues to 'carry the torch' for us all in this area, in continuing to raise awareness of this most important event in our history, through events like the 70th anniversary celebration today. For the volunteer service of your group and for allowing us to participate with you in this day, we are grateful, and we encourage you to keep up the good work.

To everyone gathered here today, I hope you will enjoy your time with us, and hope that through these discussions on the great challenges and achievements of that time, you will also find a little inspiration and take away some of that youthful 'can do' spirit for yourself. A safe and pleasant journey home, everyone... Thank you and may God Bless.