



# Canadian Naval Air Group

**ACROSS THE FLIGHT DECK**

**CANADIAN NAVAL AIR GROUP  
40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY REUNION  
TRENTON, ONTARIO  
18 - 20 SEPTEMBER 2009**

The 40th Anniversary Reunion of the Canadian Naval Air Group will be hosted by the Sea King Chapter in Trenton Ontario 18 - 20 September 2009. Registration forms will be mailed to members and chapters in early April and also placed on the CNAG web site [www.ncf.ca/cnag](http://www.ncf.ca/cnag) Registration fee is \$ 95.00 per person. For further details contact John Eden at (613) 394-0316 or email at [jon.lil@sympatico.ca](mailto:jon.lil@sympatico.ca)

\*\*\*\*\*

## **A Tribute to the Memory of our "DEPARTED SHIPMATES"**

Several years ago, a fellow CNAGER, "Don Hunter", (since departed), introduced me to the subject tribute. It was his requested that we utilize it in conjunction with our "Moment of Silence" during CNAG meetings, which is now a tradition for Hampton Gray, VC Chapter. As for the history of who wrote the original, I have no idea, as Don only told me that it was part of an old Naval Prayer. However, once you have had the opportunity to read the following, I think you will undoubtedly agree, it is indeed a fitting eulogy to our "DEPARTED SHIPMATES".

Prior to the "Moment of Silence", the appropriate speaker shall read the following.

"To the memory of those stout hearts, our shipmates and messmates, who have not returned; and will not be returning from the dark waters. Somewhere in those unlit depths they lie, a torn steel hull their sepulchre, an ocean floor their abbey. One remembers them, not alone for the gallantry of their sacrifices, but too, because somehow one's own life is richer for having had their friendship".

On oceans deep where whitecaps flow,  
There are no crosses row on row,  
But those who sleep beanth the sea,  
Can sleep in peace, their country is free,

AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN AND IN THE MORNING, WE SHALL REMEMBER THEM.....  
RESPONSE.....WE SHALL REMEMBER THEM.

I for one know that my life has indeed been richer for having had the opportunity to serve with such an elite group of servicemen. The fact that our friendships have endured the test of time is selfevident in the fact that we still take the time to meet and reminisce. WAUNGA.. Yours in Naval Air, *Paul Baiden*

Fellow CNAGers,

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to Hampton Gray, V.C. Chapter for nominating me as their candidate for CNAGer of the year and most importantly to the Directors for their approval of that nomination. I am extremely proud, and yet very humbled to have been chosen to receive this great honour. However, I also realize that by accepting this privileged title, I must also be prepared to continue to perpetuate the history of "Naval Air", and to that endeavour, I pledge my unwavering dedication.

Having said that, it is my contention that CNAGers are now facing one of our greatest challenges to date. In particular, the documentation of our "Naval Air History". Unfortunately, we must concede that we are a dying breed and consequently if we haven't the foresight to archive our place in the annals of time and/or the significant achievements of Canadian Naval Air, we will undoubtedly become yet another insignificant moment from the past. Think about it, our grandchildren will never have the opportunity to brag about what we accomplished because we didn't take the time to log those ( what many may regard as trivial yet most important) pieces of history.

No doubt most will ponder how do we overcome this dilemma? Simple, "perhaps", time consuming "yes", but difficult, "definitely not". In fact I would venture a guess that many Naval Airman have contemplated (at one time or another) taking a few moments out of their daily routine to summarize their role in Naval History. Most would no doubt agree that it is our vested right to ensure that our gallant efforts are well documented and that regardless of how trivial they may seem, the story(s) that we hold so dear should be told. Only you can make our future historians truly aware of what, and how, we did things aboard those magnificent floating fortresses called "Air Craft Carriers". As Canadian Naval Airmen, our history dates back to 1918 and the first brave individuals that flew during the final stages of WW1. A fellow Airman, Al Snowie, author of the book titled "The Bonnie", is currently putting that part of our history on paper and several others have published books detailing similar episodes of our past. However, my challenge to the remainder of you is to take just a brief moment of your time to put your experiences on paper and/or dig out those old photos/items of memorabilia and pass them on to SAM before they are lost forever. If you don't think they are worthy of being part of history, what do you suppose your children will do with them on your demise?

Once again I thank you for giving me the great honour of being CNAGer of the Year. I truly hope that you will give serious consideration to my request for your support in documenting this most significant part of our history, "Canadian Naval Air". Yours in Naval Air,

**Paul Baiden**  
\*\*\*\*\*

## **Naval attaches address CNAG Hampton Gray VC Chapter**

As part of the winter program HGVC chapter members of CNAG were privileged to be addressed by two prominent members of the naval diplomatic corps in Canada.

United Kingdom Naval Attache to Canada, Captain Peter Steel RN, addressed the evolving nature of the Royal Navy in the fleet's continuing world wide responsibilities and power projections, which has been its historical role. This world view is being demonstrated with the recent decision to go ahead with the building of two fleet Aircraft Carriers which will be the sharp end of the Navy's battle groups in the decades to come. Also included in the naval program is replacement or refurbishment of the strategic nuclear submarine Trident class SLBM .

United States Naval Attache to Canada Captain Steven Luce, USN spoke on the continuing world wide challenges of naval power. He made special reference to the historical role of navies to contain piracy, which in recent years has exploded in areas of heavy commercial shipping, such as the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. The number of ships transiting these areas is colossal, nearly 24000 each year. For all that, the number of piracies is very small, just fractions of one percent, but large in actual numbers and especially evocative when reported in the western press. On any given day there are, on average, over four hundred seamen being held for ransom. Navies, with limited resources, have vast areas to cover and are subject to severely restricted rules of engagement. Commercial shippers and insurance companies have taken the view that some losses are to be expected and charge accordingly, or ships are routed out of harms way.

Captains Steel and Luce were thanked by President Paul Baiden and Peter Milsom. They kindly accepted their

inductions as honorary members of the Hampton Gray VC Chapter CNAG. They were presented with appropriate certificates and copies of the book "A Formidable Pilot", the biography of Hampton Gray VC, authored by Stu Soward.  
**Ted Forman**

### ***The Canadian Naval Air Group Star***

At the recent 2008 CNAG Reunion in Vancouver I was approached by Roger Rioux who requested that I give an explanation to the gathering about the "Canadian Naval Air Group Star". This was a surprise to me as I only had a few minutes to gather my wits and provide an impromptu speech. At the conclusion of presentation I was approached by a number of people who were not even aware of it's existence. In addition to them it was suggested by Roger Rioux, Chapter President Peter Milsom, National Chairman, Gord Moyer National Secretary, Bud Maclean, John Eden and Paul Baiden all avid CNAGers, that I would send a note to you for consideration of a mention of the "Star" in the "Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation" newsletter.

It was originally published in the "Fall Issue" 2002 page 25, with a copy of the certificate issued in 1992 by the Edmonton Space and Science Foundation.

In 1991 after the annual CNAG Reunion, my wife Gwynn and I were discussing "In The Delta" and all the shipmates and friends who were listed as such. The realization that we were a dwindling group and someday would not have any shipmates to carry on the tradition of CNAG and it's members, led us to give some thought to the "Naval Aviation Group" and all who served therein.

We decided that a "Star" would be a great tribute to all, thus the Annual Reunion could carry on forever each Thanksgiving Weekend, long after our demise. As a result of our thoughts "The Star 31 in the constellation of Auriga visual magnitude 4.74" was obtained and named the "Canadian Naval Air Group (CNAG) Star" in perpetuity.

In 1992 at the CNAG Reunion in Victoria BC the star was presented to CNAG and subsequently to the Shearwater Aviation Museum. This star may be seen by the naked eye in the hemisphere the year round all over the world and will forever remain a bright light. This in time to come, will hopefully be the meeting place for all Naval Air Persons at their annual reunions.

Trusting you might pass this along to The Newsletter readers. Yours Aye,



### **Where is the Esteemed Flying Fish Head Trophy?**

A Flying Fish Head, well now there's an oxymoron if I've ever heard one, a Fish Head that actually envisions that it can fly. I think not! However, that is another story, the subject trophy and its current whereabouts is what I would like to reminisce about in this particular article..

Suffice it to say, that those of us that had the distinct privilege to serve in VS 880 with (Chief) Joe Saunders during the late sixties will remember the trophy well, and the unquestionable esprit de corps that it created throughout the Squadron, the Fleet, and in particular, the 081(Observer) Trade. To the best of my recollection, the trophy (a mystical work of art, composed of a very large, ugly, codfish head, with well groomed sea gull wings protruding out from behind its gills, all mounted on a decorative wooden plaque) was designed and paid for by Joe. Unfortunately, he has joined the DELTA; and therefore, can no longer confirm and/or deny my description of this masterpiece, a description which is based on my fond memories from forty years ago. However, regardless of how time may have fogged certain aspects of my memory, it is still my contention that the development of this trophy was yet another ingenious example of Joe's efforts to forge that spirit of comradeship between Wing Walkers and the Fish Head community by encouraging us to engage in competitive rivalry. I also believe that the initial challenge to claim this prestigious Rembrandt, was transmitted in the form of an Operational Immediate message to the Fleet and Shearwater Squadrons in and around the spring of 1967? A message that would challenge the best Whaler Pullers from the Fleet, to take on the inept Airy Fairies from Cowards Cove.

No doubt, one would have to assume that our friends from across the harbour would consider any postulation of this nature a huge mistake on the part of Joe's Air Types, especially given that we had never had any particular reason to become adept in whaler pulling. Never-the-less, the line had been cast, the bait taken, and the hook set. Unfortunately, the unsuspecting sailors/airmen were in for the surprise of their lives as Joe's secret weapon was about to be unleashed in the form of several extremely well trained 880 Observers. Now don't cry foul, just because we had the foresight to commence training in advance. Yes indeed, early every morning (for approximately three weeks) we had been honing our skills to the point where we could all but fly across the harbour waters adjacent to the Bonaventure Jetty. A fact that our sailor friends got to experience first hand as we thoroughly thrashed their meager efforts in the initial inauguration of the Flying Fish Head Trophy Race.

Knowing full well that this would (in-all-likely-hood) be the end resolve of the race, Joe felt that it would behoove us to organize a Banyan at the Shearwater Yacht Club. His intent was two-fold; first, it would enable the sailors and other participants an opportunity to drown their sorrows while meeting first hand those intrepid 880 airmen that had just kicked their butts; but most importantly it would provide a relaxed form in which to set the tone/guidelines for the several races that followed. One particular race that still stands out in my mind, is when our crew once again devoured the competition, on Mic Mac Lake, during Dartmouth Natal Day and received a metal from the Mayor for our accomplishment. I remember it well, because in a moment of stupidity I jumped into the lake after crossing the finish line and damn near drowned because I was so physically exhausted I could barely stay afloat. Life jackets were not mandatory in those days!

To the best of my knowledge, the Fish Heads, Submariners, and/or for that matter, any of the other Zoomie Squadrons ever managed to win the trophy. Oh well! Now having said all of this I'm still faced with my original dilemma and the reason for imparting this story to begin with. ***Where is the Flying Fish Head Trophy?*** I asked Joe this very question at a CNAG reunion a year or so before he joined the DELTA and he was unable to give me an answer. He was also uncertain when the last race was held.

Therefore, I would like to pose a new challenge, and that being, an attempt to find Joe's trophy. This unique piece of our heritage symbolized the comradeship that evolved out of one man's simple quest to bring Sailors and Airmen together during those troubled early days of integration. If it is still out there somewhere, I would love to see it returned to its birthplace in Shearwater as an exhibit in the Shearwater Aviation Museum.

Bear Cats Rule! *Paul Baiden*  
*The individual holding the trophy is Jim Mulhall, who was the coxswain on our winning crew 1968. Although the picture is old it does give a good sample of what the trophy looked like.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Jim McCaffrey sent the following from the OM's Discussion Group:

**Dave Kelly** writes: Notice the title "Flying Fishhead" trophy, not just fishhead. The following is the straight gen.

The trophy was a cod's head plus the wings of a blue jay (I believe), mounted on a base by a dowel. It wasn't kept in the gymnasium showcase but kept in the squadron, more than likely in Joey's office. I can't remember the date but on a certain day I noticed the trophy was in a gash can ready to be deep sixed. I, repeat, I dug it out of the gash bucket, because

I didn't think it fitting to be trashed. I took it home and it has travelled with me for over 25 to 30 years through Shearwater, Greenwood, Shearwater again, Lake Echo, back to Greenwood and finally here in Courtenay, B.C. It is now in my garden shed, but it consists only of the base, with multiple Obs wings inscribed with various years. Throughout the years the cod's head has disintegrated and also the blue jay wings are now gone. For many years I was going to replace the head and wings and present it to the Shearwater museum but never got around "TU IT". That is the tale of the Flying Fishhead trophy. ***Cheers, Dave***



