



# Class of 65 Newsletter

## Edition 41 - September 2011



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### Editor's Corner

This month we hear from **Al Kennedy** for the first time as he shares his experiences with European River cruising - something that strikes me as very appealing.

I thought I might get some feedback on the re-insertion of "Royal" into the official titles for the Navy and Air Force, but I guess the passage of time has stilled the passions that accompanied the original 1968 decision. Only **Rod MacKinnon** shared his thoughts that are summarised as, "...` `It sure feels good to be vindicated, or authenticated, or simply agreed with, after 43 years.` ` My position at the time was that any self respecting naval officer shouldn` t be caught dead in a green suit of no particular merit or cachet. I also was not wild about being referred to by an army rank, with a letter indicating that I went to `sea`. Also, even then my suspicious nature divined that what Mr. Hellyer, supported by Messrs Pearson and Trudeau, was actually doing had little or nothing to do with efficiency or effectiveness ...".

The Ottawa gang met at the Naval Officers' Mess, *HMCS Bytown*, for lunch on Monday 12 September and a good turnout enjoyed a pleasant lunch and an opportunity to catch up on the latest news. It was particularly nice to welcome a couple of first-timers, **Ernie Cable** who was visiting from Halifax, and **John Critchley** in town from his frequent sojourns in Costa Rica. I don't recall him telling us what he does there - maybe a mystery he can share with us?

In addition to Ernie and John and yours truly, the others in attendance were **Rick Archer**, **Jim Carruthers**, **Ken Clarkson**, **Terry Colfer**, **Gord Diamond**,

Quiller Graham, Jim Humphrey, Cord Lukey, Andy Nellestyn, and Alain Pellerin.

Another first-time contributor, **Stu Smart** has provided some important health advice based on his own experience - advice that might be of immediate value to many of us.

Finally, our third new contributor, **Tony Halliday** wistfully recounts his harrowing experiences flying off aircraft carriers.

## River Cruise Experiences

By 6644 Al Kennedy

On 21 August 2010 Barb and I embarked on the 198 passenger *Viking Sun* (<http://www.vikingrivercruises.com/cruiseships/europe/viking-sun/shipinfo.aspx> - we were Category D in Cabin 109) for the 14 day Antwerp to Basel cruise <http://www.vikingrivercruises.com/rivercruises/europe-rhine-antwerp-basel-2010/itinerary.aspx>.

We enjoyed it thoroughly except we, like everyone else on board, found the weather quite unseasonably wet and cool for the first four or five days while the ship was in Belgium and Holland and hadn't packed clothing appropriate to the climate. The weather for the remainder of the trip was lovely. The service and meals were absolutely first class.



Al & Barb on the Rhine

Our only complaint was that, unlike the other river cruises we have taken, most of the sailing was at night except the portion along the middle Rhine. The itinerary usually involved berthing at a town early in the morning, an included tour of the city or other attraction during the morning, and an optional (at extra cost) excursion in the afternoon and then sailing again at night. The other cruises we have taken did not have the optional tours so the ship sailed most afternoons and usually was alongside for the better part of the night. So on this one, we did not get much opportunity of sitting on the upper deck, quaffing a bottle of wine, looking at the river traffic and watching the lovely scenery unveil before our eyes. On a more positive note, there was complementary wine of very good quality served with every dinner and they poured liberally!

Cost of the cruise itself for the two of us was \$10,800 USD (about 1\$11,250 CDN when we booked) and included the round trip fare from Ottawa on Air Canada. In retrospect, we would have preferred a middle-deck cabin, which was identical except for much larger windows, but category D was the only ones left when we booked in June. As far as the optional excursions, we gave them all a pass because the included program was quite sufficient for us and we did not want to exhaust ourselves (We did one of the optional tours to a Van Gogh museum near Arnhem by taking a 15 km taxi ride with another couple and paying our own admission at half the cost of the tour arranged by the ship).

On August 19 we embarked on a 14-day cruise from St Petersburg to Moscow booked through Canadian Travel Abroad similar to the one indicated in this link

<http://www.cantrav.ca/Russ.html>. About 180 passengers I believe. Cost at the time for the two of us, including Air France fare from Toronto, was \$8,458 Cdn for a lower deck cabin.

The service and meals were excellent as was the quality of the tours and excursions. Basically everything was included and there were only one or two extra cost excursions. I believe we got a glass of wine with dinner and also a shot of vodka at breakfast if we were so inclined. We thoroughly enjoyed this cruise and found it extremely educational as well. The crew went out of

their way to please. All the cabins were very small but we got used to them. They even took our empty luggage once we unpacked and, I think, transported them separately to Moscow, as there was little stowage available in the ship and absolutely no space for our bags in the cabin. We found Canadian Travel Abroad an excellent tour company and booked with them two years later for a two-week tour of Turkey (bus and plane). Viking cruises also run similar Russian excursions with what I understand are larger cabin accommodations.

On 26 September 2007 we embarked on an 8 day Cruise from Paris to Normandy and return with Uniworld similar to this one <http://www.uniworldcruiseline.com/tour.cfm?npid=15732&nhr=1> on board the 128 passenger *River Baroness* <http://www.americasvacationcenter.com/Cruises/Uniworld-River-Cruises/River-Baroness.html>.

All tours and excursions were included. Meals and service were excellent and accommodation very comfortable. We were Category Three on the lower level (Cabin 111) and it was fine. Cost for the two of us was \$4,987 but this did not include airfare as we were already over in France on a separate trip, which we had booked with Aeroplan points. The only drawback for this cruise is that it is too short for making a dedicated trip to Europe - in our case it worked out well by combining it with something else.

There are probably three or four other companies (Scenic Tours for one) offering river cruises throughout Europe and Asia and the business is very competitive. Because Americans are not travelling in the numbers they once did, prices are reasonable right now. A little googling on the subject will give you a lot of information.

We have taken one large ship cruise (Norwegian Cruise Lines on a 2 week Baltic cruise) but for a number of reasons we far prefer the smaller river cruise ships. Practically everyone else who has compared the two concepts agrees but there were two couples on this last cruise that thought otherwise - so it is a personal preference. Although we have travelled with Roger and Bonnie Chiasson together on a number of other trips, for the three river

cruises we booked by ourselves and found we easily made friends with other couples and thoroughly enjoyed the social aspects without knowing anyone beforehand.

I hope this information is helpful and if you would like any further information on our experiences, please give me a call at 778-440-3930 or email [akennedy@sympatico.ca](mailto:akennedy@sympatico.ca)

## Smart's Heart

By 6314 Stu Smart



I had quadruple bypass heart surgery in late May; but this is not bad news; it's good news. It's good news because I got it before it got me. The reason why I am writing this article is because I'm not the only one in our class that either has had this surgery or will need to have it done in the near future. Here is my story. I hope that will bring awareness to classmates that need this surgery and get it done before they prematurely make the SOS page in e-veritas. In case you haven't noticed, we are all getting to that age.

My story starts with a family history. My father died at age 58 with the same problem I had. Unfortunately, they weren't doing the surgery in those days. If they were, he would probably have lived another 20 years. My brother had to have bypass surgery at age 66. I was arrogant enough to think that I was different because I was in better physical shape, did not smoke, did not have diabetes, was not overweight, had not had a heart attack, and got at least a reasonable amount of exercise by walking around a golf course about 4 times a week, downhill skiing, playing hockey and swimming at the cottage (ok bobbing). Moreover, because of my family history, I had been getting stress tests every year for the last 20 years and had one that showed nothing last October. In addition, I had been taking cholesterol medication for the last 10 years and we had been quite careful with our diet. What else can one do?

Looking back, it all began when Judy and I visited Dallas and Joy Mowat at Palm Springs. We went on a short cruise for about 5 days out of Long Beach. While on the cruise Dal suggested that we go up to the gym and work out (he was always more of a jock than me). I got on a machine and punched in my weight and age for cardiovascular exercise. The target heart rate was 130. I ran my heart rate up to 130 and didn't feel well, so I dropped it to 120 and was on the machine for  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour with no difficulty. This was repeated each day for 4 days. I rationalized that I just wasn't in shape. After returning home, I played hockey a few times and then went on 3 week long ski trips. When on the ski trips I noticed that when I really started to work hard I didn't feel well, so I just backed off and took it a little easier. I rationalized that it was the altitude. When I got home from the last trip Judy and I went for a walk up the street. There is a slight hill and I didn't feel well.

When we got home I immediately phoned the doctor that had been giving me the stress tests and he saw me within 2 hours for another test. This time, at a heart rate of 125, something showed up on the electrocardiogram. At a heart rate of 120 there was enough blood getting through that I felt ok, but at a heart rate of 125 there wasn't and I was experiencing discomfort. A couple of days later I went for the radioactive dye in my blood and a whole series of pictures of my heart. Nothing showed up; I was fine. My doctor felt that this test was inconclusive and scheduled me for an angiogram (that's a little camera inserted in the groin and goes up into the heart to see what is going on). The results were dynamic; blockages in most of the arteries around my heart of 90%, 75%, 60%; too many and too widespread for stints. Open heart bypass surgery was the only solution. Within a month from the first phone call to the doctor I had the surgery. I was in the hospital for only 5 days and came through it very well. The reason why I came through so well was because I was in relatively good physical condition going in and had no secondary health issues such as diabetes, was not a smoker, was not overweight and had not had a heart attack. There were 20 others in the hospital wing having similar operations and at least 50% of those people (men and women) had one or more of the health issues I have mentioned. This complicated their recoveries immensely, sometimes with disastrous results (lungs requiring draining and blindness).

My message is this: run your heart rate up on a regular basis so that you are doing your own stress test. If you don't feel well, back off and contact your doctor. Things can change in a hurry as mine did. I was headed for a heart attack, but fortunately, I avoided it. Recently, I have had another stress test and everything now is normal. I am now in a rehab program to build up my endurance. I now have a new set of recycled pipes and should, be good for several more years.

*Ed. Note. Thanks Stu. An important message for all of us! Glad to hear that everything went well for you.*

## **Aircraft Carrier Aviation**

**By 6181 Tony Halliday**



I support The Shearwater Aviation Museum. As a result I receive the *Foundation Magazine*. The most recent copy (Summer 2011) contains the following quote by Vice Admiral J.C. (Scruffy) O'Brien, "*Some fields of human endeavour endure and become routine, while others are cut off before their time but live on in the memory to become legendary. Such was the fate of Canadian Carrier-borne Aviation. In 25 years, aircraft of the Royal Canadian Navy reached their peak of efficiency flying from HMCS Bonaventure. Their achievements were equalled by few, if any, navies of the world*".

I believe that this Magazine is in some ways similar to an expanded version of our Class Newsletter and contains stories of experiences and remembrances of days gone by. After a story is printed it generates recollections of the same happening or related happenings for several editions of the Magazine. It is with this in mind that I would like to give my story of fixed wing Carrier Aviation and hope that it encourages others to add their own stories.

The Class of 65 has a total of seven members who I think have carrier

landings in their Log Book. They are: **Tom Bailey, Derek Carrier, Jack Flanagan** (and he has a story to tell), **Cec Lukenbill, Dick Ouelette, Glen Savigny** (deceased) and myself. Canada's last Aircraft Carrier, *HMCS Bonaventure*, was decommissioned in 1970 and Naval Air died in Canada. Fortunately I was selected for an Exchange Posting to the United States Navy in January 1971 so for me Carrier Aviation continued for two more years. This is my story.

In June 1968 I joined VS 880 Squadron and became part of a crew as the Co-Pilot on the CS2F Tracker, a twin-engine ASW aircraft with a four man crew. We flew together from our shore base at *HMCS Shearwater* for six months preparing for deployment to *HMCS Bonaventure*. I remember an exercise working with a submarine 100 miles south of Shearwater, on August 31st according to my Log Book and the port engine started to run rough (it had actually swallowed a valve). Following the Check List the engine was feathered and shut down. We were flying 1000 feet above the Atlantic Ocean at night and at full power on the starboard engine could not maintain altitude. As we slowly descended we decided to un-feather the port engine and were able to climb to 1500 feet. After this slow climb and still having a rough running engine we feathered it again and were able to maintain 1500 feet back to Shearwater. The cooler air at this altitude allowed us to fly level on one engine.

But this was not our only excitement as a crew. On December 4<sup>th</sup> we detached to *HMCS Bonaventure*. On December 10<sup>th</sup>, for my third Catapult Shot the weather was very rough and we were the first aircraft to be launched. The Catapult Officer made a mistake and we were launched through a wave. Fortunately, my Crew Commander kept the aircraft flying. However,





both generators were knocked off line and so I reset them. Shortly after this the two Observers in the back reported "Smoke" in the aircraft. I advised *Bonaventure* of our problem and requested a landing as soon as possible. The remainder of the aircraft were launched, by a different Catapult Officer and the flight deck was ready for us to land. We made a successful landing back aboard. The very "grainy" series of photos above are from a film shot at the time of the launch. It is taken from *Flight Comment*, Issue 4 Jul Aug 1969 page 20 and gives a graphic view of our launch.

In addition to my regular Co-Pilot duties I was selected for LSO (Landing Signals Officer) training. This training included practice landings and on January 27<sup>th</sup> 1969 I made my first deck landing, successfully completing 5 in total. However it wasn't until August 1969 that I had the opportunity to make 13 more landings for a total of 18. In January 1970 I was made a Crew Commander but *Bonaventure* was destined to be de-commissioned so I thought my time in Carrier Aviation was over.

Then in January 1971 I was posted to VS 22 in NAS Quonset Point, Rhode Island, USA on exchange with the United States Navy flying S2's, the American version of the CS2F. My contemporaries on VS 22 had about half the number of flying hours that I had but many more deck landings so I was always first in line to get landing practice aboard *USS Wasp*.

In May 1971 I made my first night landing, one that will always stick in my mind. The USN helmet has two visors, one shaded for sunny day use and one clear for night use. This is to give protection from bird strikes on the windshield. For my first night landing I followed the briefing and faithfully put the shaded visor up and the clear one down in front of my eyes. The landing was successful and the hook caught one of the cross deck pendants (arresting wires). However, the rapid deceleration caused the shaded visor to fall down (I had not locked it up sufficiently) but I didn't know it. What I saw was every light on the deck and in the cockpit go dim, I thought I had dislodged both retinas and gone blind. For the next 4 night landings the shaded visor was firmly locked in the up position.

October 1971 I was sent to *USS Saratoga* to help evaluate the operation of

all the fighter, attack and ASW aircraft on the same carrier. This was a tremendous experience for me, operating with all the different aircraft. There were 2 Squadrons of F4's and A6's, 1 Squadron of S2's, A5's, EA6's, E2C's, Sea King's and a couple of C2's, plus some of the A6's were configured to refuel. The thing that surprised me the most was the number of personnel on the deck for launches. Moving around the flight deck especially at night was very hazardous with the possibility of being blown overboard or sucked into an intake always present. Fortunately no accidents of this nature happened during my time on *Saratoga*.

About this time the *USS Wasp* was declared unserviceable so I was left again without a carrier. However, the USN decided that the evaluation of the *USS Saratoga* was successful and her next deployment would include a 10 plane Squadron of S2's. Luckily I was asked to change Squadrons and deploy with this carrier. So, I joined VS 28, also in Quonset Point but preparing to transfer to *USS Saratoga* for a six month deployment to the Mediterranean Sea. Three weeks before we were due to deploy the ship's company and air wing without VS28 was recalled and deployed to Viet Nam (they actually went for 11 months). So I was left again without a carrier and with so little time before I was due to return to Canada I could not find any other aircraft carriers to increase my landings. So my deck landings are frozen at 107, 81 day and 26 night.

*Ed. Note: After these experiences, everything else must have paled in comparison.*

## **Closing Notes**

Thanks again to our trio of new contributors. Their inputs contain really diverse and interesting material that will hopefully stimulate others to share their experiences. I have the sense that members of the Class are interested in what classmates have done since 1965. Regardless of how mundane it might seem to the individual concerned, such experiences usually are of interest to others.

Until next time.