



THE AUXILIARIST

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NEWS RELEASE

MIFFLIN PRAISES "UNSUNG HEROES" OF CANADIAN COAST GUARD AUXILIARY, PROMISES MORE SUPPORT

OTTAWA — Fred Mifflin, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, today announced that the Canadian Marine Rescue Auxiliary will now be called the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary. He also affirmed his commitment to provide more federal funding for this "outstanding group of volunteers — the real unsung heroes in our communities".

The Minister made the announcements at the organization's annual meeting in Ottawa. He was the first federal minister to address the annual meeting in the Auxiliary's 18-year history.

"As Federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, I have first-hand knowledge of the important role Auxiliary volunteers have played and will continue to play in what I believe is one of the most unique and cost-effective partnering operations in marine search and rescue in the world."

The Auxiliary's volunteers have helped save many lives. Mr. Mifflin described their work as "one of the truly great Canadian stories that seldom gets told".

"The Auxiliary's 3,400 members and their 1,300 vessels have become an invaluable part of marine search and rescue in Canada," he said.

Since it began operations in 1978, the Auxiliary has participated in upwards of 27,000 incidents — 25 per cent of all search and rescue marine incidents annually. As a result, an estimated 200 lives are now being saved each year through their effort.

"More than efficiency and effectiveness, this is the stuff of heroism — acts that speak to the heart of our communities, acts that reinforce the safety of loved ones," Mr. Mifflin added.

"It is one of the best examples I can think of where members of the public have a working partnership with government that truly works, reaping benefits not only for the people served by the program but also for those of you who volunteer your time and participate."

Mr. Mifflin said he hopes increased funding will allow the Auxiliary to expand its role in search and rescue operations, training, prevention and safety-related activities.

"As a result of increased funding, the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary will continue as a strong and effective organization for many more years."

This news release is available on our web site at <http://www.ncr.dfo.ca/Home.htm>



Canadian
Coast Guard

Garde côtière
canadienne

Canada

EARL TAYLOR JOINS ELITE GROUP

Mr. Earl Taylor, Vice-Chairman, Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (CCGA) National Council, was made an honorary member of the Council at the CCGA National Council Meeting in Ottawa, September 7, 1995.

Mr. Taylor was presented with "The Honourary Membership Certificate" by Harry Strong, Chairman, CCGA National Council. He also received a nicely engraved presentation plaque recognizing his extensive contribution to the development of the Auxiliary.



Mr. Harry Strong (L) Chairman, National Council presenting Mr. Earl Taylor, Vice-Chairman, National Council with an Honourary Membership to the National Council.

NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENTED WITH ENGRAVED GOLD PEN AND PENCIL SETS

On September 7, 1995, the following members of the CCGA National Council were presented with engraved gold pen and

pencil sets by Mr. Anthony Patterson, Acting Director, Search and Rescue in recognition of their hard work, dedication and

contribution to the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary:

Mr. Winston Pitcher, President, CCGA Newfoundland;

Mr. Gary Masson, President, CCGA Maritimes;

Mr. Robert Petitpas, President, CCGA Laurentian;

Mr. John Parsonage, acting President, CCGA Central and Arctic;

Mr. Alex Muir, President, CCGA Pacific; and

Mr. Earl Taylor, Vice-Chairman, CCGA National Council.



Sitting from left to right John Parsonage acting President CCGA Central & Arctic, Gary Masson President CCGA Maritimes, Harry Strong Chairman, National Council. Standing from left to right Winston Pitcher, President CCGA Newfoundland, Earl Taylor Vice-Chairman, National Council, Robert Petitpas, President CCGA Laurentian, Alex Muir, President CCGA Pacific.

Mr. Harry Strong, Chairman, CCGA National Council, had previously received his engraved gold pen and pencil set in a private ceremony in Ottawa attended by Jon Churchill, past-Regional Coordinator, Auxiliary and Prevention (Pacific) and Steve Daoust, Superintendent, Coast Guard Auxiliary.

COAST GUARD AUXILIARY NATIONAL CHAIRMAN PRESENTS AUXILIARY PENNANT TO MINISTER MIFFLIN

On Friday, December 13, 1996, Mr. Harry Strong, Chairman, Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary presented Minister Mifflin with a Coast Guard Auxiliary pennant as a token of his appreciation for the support received from the Minister.

Minister Mifflin is a strong supporter of the volunteer efforts of the Auxiliary. Formerly, the Canadian Marine Rescue Auxiliary, Minister Mifflin announced on November 16th, the official change of the Auxiliary's name to Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary. He also affirmed his commitment to provide more federal funding for "this outstanding group of volunteers - the unsung heroes in our communities".

The Minister made the announcements at the organization's annual general meeting in Ottawa. He was the first federal minister to address the annual meeting in the Auxiliary's 18 year history.

"As Federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, I have first-hand knowledge of the important role auxiliary volunteers have played, and will continue to play, in what I believe is one of the most unique and cost-effective partnering operations in marine search and rescue in the world."

Like Minister Mifflin, Mr. Strong also hails from Newfoundland, having been born and raised in Old Perlican, Trinity Bay. A retired fisherman, Mr. Strong understands the



Mr. Harry Strong (L) Chairman, National Council presenting Minister Mifflin with a Coast Guard Auxiliary pennant. Also present during the presentation was Mr. Michael Turner, A/Commissioner, Canadian Coast Guard and Mrs. Jean Murray, Director General, Rescue, Safety and Environmental Response.

marine environment and gladly volunteers countless hours as Chairman of the National Council and Director of his area. No stranger to politics, Mr. Strong is the mayor of Old Perlican and understands the value of volunteer effort.

Mr. Mifflin said he hopes increased funding will allow the Auxiliary to expand its role in search and rescue operations, training, prevention and safety-related activities.

Mr. Mifflin stated that: "he will proudly display the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary pennant in his boardroom along with other departmental flags so that everyone who enters the boardroom will be able to appreciate them."

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Opinions expressed are those of the author and may not always represent official DFO/CCG policy.

Coast Guard Auxiliary National Chairman presents Auxiliary Pennant to Deputy Commissioner Turner

On Wednesday, December 11 1996, Mr. Harry Strong, National Chairman, Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary presented A/Commissioner, Mr. Michael Turner with a Coast Guard Auxiliary Pennant as a token of appreciation for his support of the Auxiliary.

Mr. Turner was in attendance when Minister Mifflin announced, on November 16th, the official change of the Auxiliary's name to Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary from their former title of Canadian Marine Rescue Auxiliary. Mr Turner has always been a staunch supporter of the Auxiliary and was instrumental in making the name change a reality.

Minister Mifflin and A/Commissioner Turner also affirmed their commitment to provide more federal funding for "this outstanding group of volunteers - the unsung heroes in our communities". The increased funding will allow the



Mr. Harry Strong Chairman, (R) Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary presenting Mr. Michael Turner (L) A/Commissioner, Canadian Coast Guard with Coast Guard Auxiliary pennant for his office.

auxiliary to expand its role in search and rescue operations, training, prevention and safety-related activities.

Mr. Turner thanked Mr. Strong on behalf of all Canadian Coast Guard employees for the excellent volunteer search and rescue work by all the members of the

Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary. He stated that he would proudly display the Auxiliary pennant in his office beside the Coast Guard Jack. Mr. Turner stated that he looks forward to making the partnership arrangement between the two organizations even stronger and more effective.

MINISTER MIFFLIN MEETS FELLOW NEWFOUNDLANDER AT DFO CHRISTMAS PARTY



Minister Mifflin (L) and Harry Strong (R) Chairman, National Council shaking hands at the DFO Christmas Party.

On Friday, December 6, 1996, Minister Mifflin met Mr. Harry Strong, mayor of Old Perlican, Trinity Bay, Newfoundland and National Chairman of the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, at the DFO Christmas party. Mr. Strong presented Minister Mifflin with a Coast Guard Auxiliary tie clip and lapel pin. Mr. Mifflin was spotted wearing the Auxiliary lapel pin in the House on Friday, December 13th.

WOMEN OF THE AUXILIARY

Women certainly do have their place within the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary and that is why we are continuing this column which made its first appearance in the previous issue of the "Auxiliarist". Therefore, it is our pleasure to introduce you to some of these remarkable women.

Let's start with Mrs. Jeanne Drolet, member of the CCGA (L) since the beginning of the organization. Mrs. Drolet has always been a woman dedicated to the cause of the CCGA.

She has sat on the administration board for many years, starting as a District Commander for the region of Montreal and, for the past two years, as a Zone Director. As if all those responsibilities are not enough,

she is also the Unit Commander of Rivière des Prairies and the person responsible for the Coast Guard loaned rescue boat.

As a pleasure boater and courtesy examiner, Mrs. Drolet is particularly committed to informing boaters on the importance of maintaining a safety equipped vessel. She is a great organizer of all kinds of events such as exhibitions, demonstrations of safety equipment, full days of courtesy examinations with the members of her unit and even more. Mrs. Drolet will use any means necessary to deliver safety messages to pleasure boaters.

Mrs. Drolet has expanded her knowledge of boating by taking all kinds of navigation and



seamanship courses. Jeanne is a devoted woman, enthusiastic and communicative. She won't hesitate to pass on her knowledge and experience to people around her and to support and collaborate with other members of the CCGA.

* * * * *



Mrs. Claudette Petitpas is another well-known and appreciated woman within CCGA(L). Mrs. Petitpas has been a member for 14 years and is currently the writer/editor of the newsletter "Le Dauphin".

As editor of the newsletter, she is responsible for obtaining "fresh news" from all around Québec, writing and re-writing articles, selecting appropriate pictures, and finalizing the newsletter for printing so each member may relax and enjoy reading the "Dauphin". Mrs. Petitpas has been carrying out this labour of love since April 1990. Her determination and enthusiasm are the reasons why the "Dauphin" is a huge success.

Eager to perfect her art, at the age of 60, Mrs. Petitpas started studying computers at home to improve her abilities as an editor. She is even thinking of connecting to the Internet to gain additional experience and information. Her tireless energy would make people half her age envious.

Mrs. Petitpas has been a courtesy examiner for the past five years. In spite of all her knowledge and years of experience as a pleasure boater on the "Petitpas III", she undertook the full training course to become a certified courtesy examiner.

Generous and supportive, Mrs. Petitpas never hesitates to lend a helping hand whenever necessary. We saw her a couple of years ago, helping some Coast Guard colleagues prepare for a training session. Mrs. Petitpas is a real giving person. She has unselfishly contributed to the ongoing development of the association and its members.

Women of the Auxiliary *cont'd*

Is there anyone in the Laurentian Region who has not yet heard the laugh of Marie-France Lavoie? She is everywhere: participating in committees, attending meetings, conducting media interviews or engaged in training sessions. She is perhaps the most energetic person nation-wide. Self-confident and dynamic, nothing stops Marie-France from pursuing the goals of the CCGA.



Marie-France has been a member of the CCGA for 10 years. A native of the Saguenay River Region, she has navigated the river on all kinds of boats from a dinghy to a 45 ft sailing vessel. Because of her commitment to the organization, Marie-France quickly became the

Unit Commander of Chicoutimi, then the District Commander for three years and has been the Zone Director for the past year. Since joining, Marie-France has totally devoted herself to the cause of the

Auxiliary. She has conducted many interviews with the media, organized meetings in her community, and relentlessly recruited new members. In between these activities, she has also promoted boating safety through different activities with the public.

For the past year, Marie-France has been Secretary/Treasurer of CCGA(L). Her motto is: Whatever a man can do, a woman can do it too! And she proved it to us the day she rolled up her sleeves and repaired the transmission of a boat. Positive, sociable and vivacious, Marie-France is dedicated to the CCGA and its members.

* * * * *

CCGA Pacific Unit 60

The Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, a volunteer organization for men only... NOT!!! We at the Comox Coast Guard Auxiliary Unit 60 are proud of the women that joined the Unit, and decided to toot our horn so to speak.

Victoria Coffey is the C.P.R./First Aid Instructor. She has been an Auxiliary member for the past eleven years. Vicki says "I can't think of a better way for women to learn the ways of the water." Vicki is employed with the Red Cross as an instructor of C.P.R./First Aid at North Island College. Giving in to her passion for sailing, Vicki will be leaving us temporarily for crew duty on a two masted schooner out of Washington State.

Carol Krinks is the secretary/treasurer and radio operator's

license instructor. Carol is a member of the Canadian Coast Guard, and works at the radio station based in Comox. She has been a member of Unit 60 for nine years. Without her we wouldn't know what colour of ink to write with, red or black.

Michelle Page, a commercial fisherwoman for the past fifteen years, brings a lot of experience with navigation and electronics equipment (loran, radar, etc.) to the unit. She dedicates her time during the winter months. Michelle says, "I think it's an interesting organization for volunteer work especially if you enjoy being outside and like the water. So many facets come in to it — like learning C.P.R., First Aid, and search and rescue training, to name a few."

Angela Swann says, "I joined the Auxiliary because I was afraid of the water. I wanted to learn more about the water so I

could overcome that fear." She has been a member involved with the standby posture for four years. At present she is going to school full-time to become a teacher. Angela says, "It is a great learning experience and I recommend it to other women who might be interested."

Audrey Stewart brings excellent organizational skills to the Auxiliary. She is the Administration Manager for the Comox Valley Credit Union. Audrey organized our Christmas party, and the support she lends to the Auxiliary through various social aspects is the best.

So you see, the organization would not be complete without the dedication these five women give to it. Unit 60 encourages women to join the Auxiliary because we need you. Thank you ladies!

*Submitted By: Paul Smith
Coast Guard Auxiliary Unit 60
CCGA Pacific*

Women of the Auxiliary cont'd



From the time Jeanne Lalonde enrolled in the CCGA (L) in 1983, she has not stopped getting more and more involved. She first started in CCGA search and rescue operations on the "SUM-R-FUN", the Lalonde couple's boat. In 1989, Jeanne became a crew member on the Coast Guard loaned vessel "Auxiliary 1230" in Summerstown. Around the same time, Jeanne was appointed as instructor for the "Introduction to the Organization Course", given to newcomers to the CCGA. For the past year, she has been the Summerstown Unit Commander.

Jeanne is totally devoted to her work in the CCGA and does not count the hours she puts in. Her humbleness hides a great woman, determined to move the association forward.

As a committed member of a rescue team, Jeanne demonstrates that women are an integral part of the CCGA. Her experience as a rescuer helps all of us better understand the importance of team work when it comes to saving lives. Each and every duty of a crew member is important and complementary, no matter the nature of the duty. *Thank you Jeanne for being an example to us all.*



Mrs. Lise Adam has been a member of the Auxiliary for 12 years. Lise and her husband were avid boaters who used to sail their home-built vessel, the "CLOCHARD", on the St-Lawrence River; unfortunately, they had to sell the dream boat. During her first years in the CCGA, Mrs. Adam participated in many activities such as exhibitions and boat shows and rapidly moved on to the administrative side of the Auxiliary, something she really enjoyed. Mrs. Adam's enthusiasm for math and sciences was a natural fit for her position as Treasurer of CCGA(L). During her three year tenure as treasurer, she was also the Supply Officer — a post she still occupies.

Anxious to serve CCGA members to the best of her abilities, Mrs. Adam dedicates long hours to the CCGA with high spirits and devotion.

CCGA Pacific Unit 37

The Sooke Coast Guard Auxiliary Unit 37 is very proud of the participation of their women volunteers as active crew members and Auxiliary supporters.

Ten women volunteers are on the Auxiliary active roster dating back to January 1991.

Margaret Holland will long be remembered at the Annual Coast Guard Auxiliary Meeting in Nanaimo, in March 1992, for piloting the "SPIRIT" one week before her first born was due!

On January 22, 1991, Margaret Hudson, our first Junior Woman member, was enrolled and has since completed military summer boot camp. She is now a full-fledged crew member, and hopes to attend Royal Roads College. On April 22, 1992, Lynn Arnott joined the Unit and has been a stalwart in assisting in membership drives and fundraising activities. In June of 1992, Julie Allen and Christine McDougall became members. Christine has since moved on, but Julie took over as Supply Officer and was a great help in our procurement of the closed Victoria Coast Guard Radio station as our office and training room.

In September 1991, we began a Co-op Education program with the local Edward Milne Community School. Dana Lucas went from being our first Co-op student to become a full crew member but has since gone on to other adventures. Beverly Sheppard officially joined in April 1992 after being the Unit Leader's right arm and keeping

CCGA Pacific Unit 37 cont'd

the Unit afloat with all the paperwork. She now serves on the day crew and has been involved in some of our worst incidents. Beverly also monitors the incidents on a home base VHF. Sally Titchkosky brightened the Unit in May 1992 with her bubbling personality and served as training officer as well as a day crew member. She has had to cut back to a crew member on her husband's crew due to work pressures. Heather Schut was enticed from the Power Squadron Boating Class with her husband to join the Unit in February 1993. Heather has become a reliable and valued member. Aida McLarty, who took over as Membership Officer, joined with her husband in February 1993, is doing an excellent job with new recruits as well as an active crew member. Ruthann Sheasgreen, our newest female member, joined us in July of this year with her husband Peter. She took part in her first SAR exercise on November 8, 1993. She will long bear the ribbing of her crewmates about when she accidentally fell against the starboard windowpane of the 'Spirit of Sooke' and cracked it with her derriere.

The women of the Sooke Coast Guard Auxiliary Unit are an integral and very important part of this organization. Their support and efforts add a special dimension to our Unit. I take great pride in submitting this article in recognition of their outstanding contribution.

*Bill Sheppard, Unit Leader
Coast Guard Auxiliary Unit 37*

TED COOK AWARDED THE CANADA 125 MEDAL

On April 25, 1993, Mr. Ted Cook, a CCGA member from Port Colborne, Ontario, was presented the Commemorative Medal for the 125th Anniversary of the Confederation of Canada in recognition of his significant contribution to compatriots, community and to Canada. Niagara South MPP, Shirley Coppen, presented the Canada 125 Medal on behalf of his Excellency, The Right Honourable Ramon John Hnatyshyn, Governor General of Canada, at a ceremony in Stevensville, Ontario. The decoration is a reminder of the values of service, individual respect, and community effort on which Canada was built and on which its quality of life will always depend.

Congratulations Ted!!!

TOWARF CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY IN 1994

The Town of Oakville Water-Air Rescue Force (TOWARF) celebrated its 40th year of service to the boaters of western Lake Ontario. TOWARF was organized in August 1954 in response to the drowning of two Oakville Sea Scouts and their leader in the waters of Lake Ontario off Oakville.

Originally funded through the Lions Club and by private donations, TOWARF has subsequently been financed directly by the Town of Oakville. In 1979, TOWARF became a member of the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, thus gaining affiliation with the Canadian Coast Guard for search and rescue missions performed on their behalf.

The objectives of the force are to protect persons using the water areas abutting the Oakville shoreline, to do rescue work and to encourage the education of the public in water safety.

As a volunteer non-profit organization, TOWARF has grown to over 100 members operating through an executive and 11 crews. Operations commence in mid April and continue to mid November, with regular daily patrols from the May holiday weekend until the end of October. Crews are on duty from 6:00pm to 10:00pm on weekdays and from 12:00 noon to 10:00 pm or later on weekends and holidays with personnel on call outside of the regular duty hours.

SAVE OUR SHIP! VOLUNTEER RESCUERS ARE ON CALL, SAVING LIVES ALONG CANADA'S COASTS

Allan MacDonald had owned boats half his life and understood the risks. He knew his 150-horsepower outboard motor was too big and heavy for his sleek, five-metre speedboat, but he convinced himself it was safe. He also knew he and his four passengers should stay the night in Murray Harbour, P.E.I., rather than risk the 30 kilometres of waves and wind on the Northumberland Strait.

The morning had dawned hot and muggy and MacDonald, an easy-going 44 year-old contractor, decided on the spur of the moment to shut down his Antigonish, N.S., construction site at noon. He would spend a cooling afternoon on the strait with his 16 year old son, Paul, and three employees. "I'd always wanted to take the boat over to Prince Edward Island," MacDonald explained later, "but I never had the courage until that day."

Shortly after 2 pm on July 30, 1990, they set off from Arisaig, N.S., near Antigonish, and arrived in Wood Islands, P.E.I., 90 minutes later. They got a bite to eat and enjoyed the scenery as they cruised along the shore, then prepared to head home from Murray Harbour at about 7:30 pm. By then, however, a brisk wind was churning up the strait. "My better judgement said stay," MacDonald explains today, "but I was hoping it would calm down and everything would be okay."

It didn't and it wasn't.

About eight kilometres from Arisaig, MacDonald's boat, shaking from the violent pounding of wind and waves, began to take on water. Then the bilge pump stopped working, and although the men bailed frantically by hand, the water got deeper. Suddenly a large wave washed over the stern – weighed down by the heavy motor – and the boat began to go under. MacDonald yelled at the others to put on their lifejackets, a detail they had neglected. Seconds later, another wave crashed over and the vessel turned upside down.

At that moment, Marie and Sonny MacDonald were beginning a relaxed summer evening with friends in Lismore, a coastal community 25 minutes from New Glasgow, N.S. A husband and wife in their 40s, the MacDonalds made their living from the fishery in the nearby waters. Shortly after midnight, the telephone rang unexpectedly. Marie picked up the receiver, listened for a moment. "Rescue centre!" she shouted loud enough so their son Jason, in another part of the house, could hear.

Immediately, the tenor of the evening changed to one of brisk efficiency as a well-rehearsed routine clicked into place. Sonny picked up an extension phone to hear the few details the Halifax Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) could offer, while Marie took notes on the pad she kept by

the phone, carefully writing down the missing boat's size, where it was last seen, how many were aboard and the area the RCC wanted them to search. Meanwhile, Jason, 17, hopped into the family truck and drove to the nearby government wharf. He rapidly prepared the *April Again*, the family's 13 metre fishing boat, for another mission of mercy. Before leaving the house Marie telephoned neighbour Norm McLellan, a retired armed forces search and rescue specialist. In the hours to come he would sit by his radio set relaying messages between local search vessels and the RCC in Halifax.

The quiet efficiency of their preparations was no accident. Sonny and Marie were long time members of Canada's good-Samaritan marine search and rescue organization, the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (CCGA). They had taken part in many CCGA training exercises and a couple of real searches each year, so one might assume looking for a missing or broken-down vessel would be routine. But it never is. Tonight, the missing boater was someone they knew. Although not directly related, Sonny and Allan had grown up together.

"It's always tense when you go out, never knowing what you're going to find," allows Marie, "but it's that much worse when you know who you're looking for."

**SAVE OUR SHIP! Volunteer rescuers are on call,
saving lives along Canada's coasts cont'd**

Set up by Coast Guard officials and concerned boaters in 1978 in the wake of a growing number of distress calls, the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary is now a critically important – if relatively unknown – part of Canada's marine search and rescue system. Its members are involved in about one-quarter to one-third of all marine search and rescue missions across Canada. It provides the Coast Guard's professional Search and Rescue Division with a fleet of 3,500 well-trained volunteer fishers and pleasure-boaters capable of responding quickly and efficiently in marine emergencies. In return the Coast Guard offers CCGA members training and money for gas and insurance while they're on assignment.

The joint Coast Guard/DND Rescue Coordination Centre in Halifax responds to between 1,400 and 1,500 calls for help each year. The majority of calls – sometimes more than 10 a day – are bunched between April and November. They range from a pleasure boat stranded with engine trouble in the middle of a busy harbour on a hot summer day to a huge container vessel that has disappeared in the mid-Atlantic in a fearsome winter storm. The centre is responsible for more than three million square kilometres of ocean, stretching from the High Arctic to Georges Bank and east more than halfway to England. In that vast precinct, it has only two airplanes, two helicopters and about nine vessels available for rescue work on a full-time basis.

"We just couldn't handle all of that by ourselves," concedes Lloyd Brown, the Maritime Superintendent of the Halifax Rescue Coordination Centre. "There's just no way."

Before the CCGA was formed, search and rescue officials used to waste valuable time in emergencies just finding local volunteers. Although the volunteers were eager to help, most were not trained in search and rescue, or even in basic survival techniques. To make matters worse, there was no mechanism to offer them more than a heartfelt thanks for the help.

"It was a mess," says Charlie Clarke, a semi-retired Pictou County fisherman who became an enthusiastic missionary for the CCGA in the late 1970s and early 1980s, organizing local units in coastal communities all over the Maritimes. "Before, you might have three boats going out to rescue the same vessel or none; and no one would know what anyone else was doing," he says.

Today, the CCGA's Maritime region has more than 450 trained members, about three-quarters of them commercial fishers, who collectively crew 350 vessels and are on call (participation in individual searches is still voluntary) 24 hours a day.



**SAVE OUR SHIP! Volunteer rescuers are on call,
saving lives along Canada's coasts cont'd**

Each of the CCGA's five regions across the country is organized to reflect its local realities: in Ontario, most of the CCGA's 900 members are pleasure boaters. Most districts have their own community supported CCGA dock, boathouse and control centre, and the group is as much a social organization as a rescue unit. "We hold raffles and solicit donations," says John Parsonage, the CCGA Director for Ontario's District 3, which covers the Detroit and St. Clair rivers and much of Lake Huron. "It's very similar to belonging to a volunteer fire department," he explains. On the West Coast, the CCGA operates a network of community-based rescue vessels, and volunteers – many of whom do not even own boats themselves – carry pagers. "When you get paged," says West Coast president Alex Muir, "you drop whatever you're doing even, in a lot of cases, your regular job, and you go."

When her husband and son failed to arrive home by nightfall, Claire MacDonald called the Coast Guard. At 9:51 pm, the Duty Coordinator at the Halifax RCC logged her call as Case #1308 – the centre's 1,308th incident of the year. RCC coordinators began by asking local police to check harbours along the P.E.I. coast to make sure MacDonald simply hadn't decided to stay the night without telling anyone.

"I've been called out on searches and found the fellow who was supposed to be missing, within 300 yards of a telephone," says Charlie Clarke. "One time I went down to the wharf to go look for the missing sailor and there he was sitting at the wharf. I said, "Why didn't you call?" "My wife wouldn't be worried," he told me. "That so?" I said. "So why'd she call the RCC then?" Well, he got red in the face and went down into the foc'sle and wouldn't talk to me after that."

Once they realized MacDonald was not ashore, the RCC dispatched a Pictou-based Coast Guard inshore rescue boat as well as a military plane and helicopter from CFB Greenwood to begin the search. "We try not to call in the CCGA right away," says Lloyd Brown. "A lot of them are fishermen and they have their own work to do. We do what we can first and then, if there's a need, we task them too."

Shortly after midnight, the RCC Duty Coordinator – having checked the centre's hypothermia charts to determine that survival time in the strait's 18°C waters would be two to seven hours – decided he needed help. On his computer screen, he called up a listing of all CCGA members, their telephone numbers and locations. The closest vessel was the *April Again*, so the centre called the MacDonalds.

Aboard the *April Again*, Marie MacDonald scoured the water from the starboard side, Jason from the port, while Sonny remained at the helm and steered toward Murray Harbour. Within the hour, a dozen vessels joined them from ports on both sides of the Northumberland Strait. They were mainly CCGA boats like the *April Again*, but included local volunteer searchers too. The Arisaig-based boats conducted the kind of coordinated sweep of the waters they had learned at CCGA training sessions, while the search and rescue airplane and helicopter passed over frequently, dropping occasional flares that would turn night into day. "I could look back and see the boats all lined up side by side with their running lights and their spotlights on the water," says Marie. But they saw no sign of Allan MacDonald, his boat or its passengers.

But Allan MacDonald could see the flares and, in the distance, the lights of the boats. The knowledge that someone was looking for them, he would explain later, helped keep him going. MacDonald, who spent his winters swimming laps at a local pool, was by far the group's strongest swimmer. Shortly after the boat went under, they agreed he and his son Paul would attempt to swim the eight kilometres to shore to get help while the others – Dave MacLellan, 27, Darryl MacDonald, 25, and Sean Baker, 28, all clad only in bathing suits and lifejackets – would wait by the partially submerged hull of the boat.

**SAVE OUR SHIP! Volunteer rescuers are on call,
saving lives along Canada's coasts cont'd**

It took the MacDonalds nearly five hours to reach shore. "My son started to choke, he passed out two or three times and I had to go back and drag him for a while and then he'd swim for a while longer," Allan MacDonald recalled. "We finally washed up on a beach near Arisaig close to 2:30 in the morning." With his last bit of energy, MacDonald found a nearby phone and called his wife, who immediately notified the RCC about the boat's location.

By that time, however, MacLellan, Baker and MacDonald, losing faith they would be rescued, were swimming for shore too. Darryl MacDonald was still more than a mile from shore when his yellow lifejacket was illuminated by the spotlight aboard the *Carrie Anne*, owned and operated by Arisaig fisherman Stevie MacInnis. MacInnis, who had taken CCGA-sponsored courses and first aid as well as marine search techniques, had simply joined the search voluntarily when he heard about it. He dragged the exhausted swimmer aboard and wrapped him in a sleeping bag. "He was turning blue," remembers MacInnis.

It was 4:52 a.m. A few moments later, a fishing boat spotted the two others about a half-kilometre farther out in the strait. They too were cold and tired from their ordeal, but otherwise in good shape.

"When it came over the radio that Stevie had found one of them and then the others were safe too, I cried," recalls Marie MacDonald. She pauses, tries to compose herself. "You know it only takes one renegade wave and it could be you or someone close to you. That's why we do it, I guess. We know it could be us the next time."

A year later, Marie MacDonald arranged a special speaker for a three day CCGA training workshop at Lismore Community Centre in Lismore, N.S., near Glasgow. "We had sessions on first aid and towing and we watched a film on hypothermia," she explains, "but the best part was when Allan MacDonald spoke to us."

MacDonald did not mince words. He confessed his own errors in judgement and related what had gone through his mind in the water that night – from how the cold and the exhaustion played tricks with his mind (he decided at one point to throw away his watch because it was too heavy on his wrist, then changed his mind so his wife could use it to identify his body) to the vital role the rescuers' presence played in giving him the will to survive.

"Seeing the flares, the lights from the boats, knowing that someone was out there was just so important," MacDonald says now. "I didn't realize then how well organized they were at the time, but I do now. It's amazing what they do. I'm grateful, I can tell you that."

Marie MacDonald says it still gives her "chills" to think about Allan MacDonald's talk. "When you sit in a classroom and talk about rescuing people, it doesn't seem real. But then when someone who's been through it comes in and tells you about it, it makes you realize what it's all about, why we do what we do."

**Armand LeBlanc
Receives Certificate of
Merit for Volunteers**

On March 25, 1995, Mr. Armand LeBlanc, Zone Director for the Magdalen Islands, received the Certificate of Merit for Volunteers at the CCGA Maritimes Annual General Meeting in Saint John, New Brunswick. Mr. LeBlanc was presented the Certificate of Merit in recognition of his commitment, dedication and contribution to the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary. Mr. Bob Gowie of CCG headquarters presented the award on behalf of Jean Murray, Director General, Rescue, Safety and Environmental Response.

Congratulations Mr. LeBlanc!

THE VOLUNTEER WAY OF SAVING LIVES OFF B.C.'S COAST

In retrospect, Iowa pleasure boaters Raymond and Mary Ann Meyer are incredibly lucky that George Caird makes it a policy to "always go like hell, no matter what." When Caird, a member of the Oak Bay Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, answered his pager's call at 4 pm on July 28, 1994, the dispatcher at Victoria's RCC only asked him to respond to a "pan-pan."

"A pan-pan is a step below a Mayday," Caird explains. "It's suppose to mean that no one's in personal danger. Usually a broken-down boat or something. *This one* should have been a Mayday."

Within 10 minutes, Caird and two fellow crew members – Dick Yorke and Hans Rodenburg – were aboard the *Jack Groves*, a community-owned eight metre inflatable boat outfitted for search and rescue work, skimming across the water at 50 knots toward the boat's last reported location: three kilometres south-southeast of Discovery Island near Victoria.

Unlike its Maritimes counterpart, the CCGA on the West Coast is largely organized

around community-owned and operated fast response boats, crewed by trained, pager equipped, local volunteers who serve on a 24-hour on-call basis. While the West Coast CCGA also includes fishers and boaters operating their own vessels, a significant number of the 1,200 volunteers are simply "dedicated individuals" who serve aboard one of 24 rescue craft based from Victoria to Prince Rupert.

"The crews are all trained at the Coast Guard school so they're more qualified than on the average vessel," explains Alex Muir, the President of the CCGA's West Coast region. His day job is as a computer applications manager for B.C. Systems Corp., but he also crews on a rescue boat. "I got my university training through the navy and I always wanted to put something back into the community," Muir explains simply. "This was my opportunity to do that."

Caird, a consulting engineer by profession, joined the CCGA just two years ago after seeing a notice in his local paper seeking volunteers. This was his first mission in charge of the rescue

boat. Unlike most of the missions he had crewed on – "we usually help someone who's run out of gas or a fisherman who's fallen asleep and run aground" – this turned out to be anything but a routine assignment. The vessel in distress, an old 38-foot Chris-Craft named the *Mary Ann*, wasn't exactly where the skipper had reported it. To make matters worse, the boat and its passengers were in far more danger than they knew.

By the time the *Groves* finally pulled alongside, only 15 centimetres of the *Mary Ann's* deck showed above the water line. Both engines and the bilge pumps had failed. The skipper and his wife, Raymond and Mary Ann Meyer, both in their mid-sixties, were not wearing proper safety equipment and seemed to be in a state of "shock...not sure what to do and...basically speechless," Caird noted in his report.

Caird hoped to pump out the vessel with a portable pump and tow it and its crew back to port. But when the pump failed, Caird decided he had no choice but to take the Meyers off. Time was

DECLARATION OF BENEFICIARY FORM REMINDER

Remember that the CCGA declaration of beneficiary form is to be renewed annually. As per the instructions on the form please ensure to include:

- The full name and address of person(s) named as beneficiary(ies).
- The full name and address of witness.
- The witness may be any person of legal age of majority in the province or territory **other than a person related** to the beneficiary(ies).

We have had to redo many beneficiary forms because the CCGA member had the form witnessed by a relative.

running out. He could hear the hiss of trapped air, the only thing keeping the *Mary Ann* afloat, escaping from its engine compartment. Caird helped the Meyers into survival suits and shepherded them to the rear of the vessel for transfer to the Zodiac. "But our weight shifted the vessel and the water started coming over the top," Caird recalls. "That put pressure on the trapped air below and the engine covers started to blow. Mrs. Meyer got scared and jumped off and tried to swim away. I knew we'd lose her in

those seas, so I grabbed her and held on." He laughs now, but he admits he wasn't laughing then. Although the rescue succeeded, a sharp post on the *Mary Ann* punctured one of the Zodiac's inflatable pontoons, and the front section began to sink. "I saw that we'd be endangering everyone if we tried to tow the *Mary Ann* in," Caird says. "So we cut the line and let it go. I remember, as we were leaving, the woman said, 'Let it go. I hope it sinks to the bottom. I never want to see it again'."

It didn't. Later that day it was salvaged and brought ashore by other boaters. By then, the Meyers were safe and warm in a local hotel. And George Caird and his crew were home and dry. And waiting by their pagers for the next boater in need of their help.

"It's why we volunteered," George Caird says.

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EARL TAYLOR RECEIVES COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION

On November 12, 1994, Mr. Earl Taylor, Vice-Chairman, CCGA National Council, was awarded the Commissioner's Commendation at CCGA Central and Arctic's Annual General Meeting at the Valhalla Inn, Kitchener, Ontario. The memorable acknowledgement to Mr. Taylor was the highlight of the evening presented by Mr. Bob Gowie, Acting Director, Planning, Coordination and Program Support, on behalf of Mr. John Thomas, Commissioner, Canadian Coast Guard.

The Commissioner's Commendation was presented to Mr. Taylor "in recognition of his dedication and leadership as Chairman, Canadian Coast Guard

Auxiliary, National Council and other offices of the Central Region Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary Executive. The professionalism and commitment demonstrated by Mr. Taylor have allowed the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary to develop into one of the most efficient and responsive volunteer marine search and rescue organizations in the world."

Mr. Taylor joins a select few, being only the ninth CCGA member to receive the Canadian Coast Guard Commissioner's Commendation.

Congratulations Mr. Taylor!!!