

That Mother of all Short Snorters

DR KERRY RODGERS HAS BEEN BURNING THE MIDNIGHT OIL IN CYBERSPACE

IN last month's CAB mention was made of that ultimate short snorter, that belonging to Harry Hopkins, President Roosevelt's personal envoy, advisor, and confidant during World War II. Thanks to its current owner, Gary Schulze, CAB has been provided with images and some of the story of this remarkable and historic note.

As mentioned earlier this snorter is the real McCoy. It carries the signatures of many of the major players on the Allied side during World War II. The

signatures identified to date are shown below the images of both sides of the note. They include several WAACs.

The unconfirmed signatures have been something of a puzzle but shortly after CAB October went to press, serendipity struck in North America. Tom Sparks who runs the short snorter website received an email from Linda Williford in Florida. She had been Googling the web and stumbled over Tom's new site.

She wrote, "I can identify one of the unknown signatures on the Harry

Hopkins short snorter. D. Ray Comish was my father. He was a Flight Engineer for Pan American Airlines and was part of the crew that flew Roosevelt and his entourage to Casablanca aboard the [Dixie] Clipper."

Both Tom and Gary were stoked by this revelation, even more so when Linda offered to make a trip to her safe deposit box to check out her dad's own short snorter from the Casablanca trip. It is signed by many of the same folks and also comes with backup documentation.



The Harry Hopkins' ten shillings short snorter. Confirmed signatures, front as at end-September 2007: **Mattie A. Pinetti**, 1st Officer, WAAC; **Arlene Dreznal**, WAAC; **Harold Rupert Leofric George Alexander**, Deputy Commander-In-Chief of Operation Torch; **Louis Mountbatten**, British Admiral, later Governor of India; **George S. Patton, Jr.**, General, US Army, Commanding Officer of the 3rd Army; **Robert D. Murphy**, FDR's Personal Envoy to North Africa; **Ross McIntyre**, Admiral, US Navy, Personal Physician to FDR; **John McCrae**, Captain, US Navy, Military Aide to FDR; **F. J. Terry**, Chief Yeoman, US Navy; **Anthony Eden**, British Foreign Minister. Confirmed signatures, back as at end-September 2007: **Dwight D. Eisenhower**, General, US Army; **Averill Harriman**, FDR's liaison to

Josef Stalin; **Stephen Early**, FDR's Press Secretary; **Harry Butcher**, Captain, US Navy, Aide to Eisenhower; **Kathleen Harriman**, Press Correspondent; **Anthony Biddle**, US Ambassador to Poland; **Winston Churchill**, British Prime Minister; **Stan Stanton**, (Unidentified); **Hal Blackburn**, (Unidentified); **H.C. Loomis**, (Unidentified); **Hoyt S. Vandenburg**, General, US Army Air Corps; **J.D. Love**, Press Correspondent; **George Durno**, INS White House Press Correspondent; **F. Langer**, Press Correspondent; **J.B. Olenford**, Admiral, US Navy, Battle of Leyte Gulf; **Franklin D. Roosevelt**, President of the United States; **D. Ray Comish**, Flight Engineer aboard the Dixie Clipper; **G.A. Bisbee**, (Unidentified); **Elliott Roosevelt**, Colonel, US Army, son of FDR. Image © Gary Schulze, courtesy Tom Sparks www.shortsnorter.org



Harry Hopkins leaving the USA for London, 1941. Image US Library of Congress.

Those of you up-to-speed with WWII history will quickly figure out that all the signatories on Harry's note cannot have been together in London on the date shown: 25 July 1942.

The story of its signing, as understood by Gary, is that Hopkins was attending a conference in London on 25 July trying to hammer out appropriate strategies to fight the war in Europe. He received a wire from Roosevelt agreeing to Churchill's plan to launch the first joint Allied attack on the German military machine in North Africa.

At the conclusion of this conference many of those present signed Harry's proffered snorter. These included Eisenhower and Averill Harriman. Intriguingly two signatures that are absent from those attending are those of General George Marshal, US Army Chief of Staff, and Admiral Ernest King, US Chief of Naval Operations. Both were opposed to the African decision and preferred the first strike to be against the Axis in Europe.

Hopkins then took his ten shilling note to the Casablanca Conference six months later. There he added the signatures of Churchill, Patton, Alexander, and Mountbatten. Roosevelt's signature arrived in Trinidad en-route to Casablanca. Since Roosevelt did not want his Secretary of State to attend the Casablanca Conference, he had talked Churchill into not bringing Anthony Eden, the UK Foreign Secretary, to the meeting. Hopkins obtained Eden's signature later in Washington, DC.

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American and British military leaders at Casablanca, Morocco, January 1943. Harry Hopkins can be seen standing at far right. Photo: US Library of Congress.