

Class of 65 Newsletter

Bulletin d'Information—Classe de 65

Numéro 111



March/mars 2018

Disclaimer: This Newsletter is produced for members of the RMC Class of 1965 and is based primarily on inputs from members of the Class of 65. It is not an official publication of the Royal Military College nor does it purport to represent the views or opinions of all members of the Class. Unfortunately, the Editorial staff lacks the linguistic skills to produce a bilingual version. Items are published in the official language in which they are received.

Editor's Corner/Coin du rédacteur

The following are included in this rather tardy edition—a report on the annual class snowbird luncheon; some comments by **Gord (Navy) Forbes** on the recent Auditor General report on the Canadian Military Colleges; a suggestion by **John Critchley** of a film of possible interest; an update on efforts to find “lost” classmates; and finally, but definitely not least, information on an autobiography written by classmate **6606 Roger Chiasson**

Florida Visit and Lunch

This year, my wife Janet and I decided to take a break from the winter and to spend a couple of weeks in sunny Florida. While there we spent a somewhat nomadic time, enjoying the kind hospitality of **Hugh** and **Chris Spence** in Fort Myers, as well as with other friends in Cape Coral and Bradenton. This gave us a good opportunity to take in a variety of local sights and beaches as well as doing a bit of shopping - all in two weeks of glorious sunny and warm weather.

This year it was the turn of Hugh and Chris Spence to host what has become an annual event—a luncheon for those other classmates basking in the same area of Florida. This year's gathering, shown in the picture on the next page from left to right, were: **Gord Diamond, Hugh Spence, Fras Holman, Sandy Holman, Chris Spence, Nigel Hilliard, Nancy Burton, Donna Hilliard, Mike Houghton, Irene Diamond, Evelyn Ambachtsheer, Jan Braham, Lynn Colfer, Terry Colfer, Mike Braham, Nellie McQuinn, Waine McQuinn, Keith Ambachtsheer.**

This was a very pleasant opportunity to get together and to renew old acquaintances in a very pleasant environment.



Numéro 111

March/mars 2018

Page 2

The Annual Lunch Group





Numéro 111

March/mars 2018

Page 3

The Issue of the AG Report By 6533 Gord Forbes

The issue of the AG's report on RMC reminded me of my thoughts over the years about "our" institution. In fourth year, I was part of the cheering section that went to the USMA at West Point to support the annual hockey game. I stayed with a US Army cadet who was studying engineering as was I. I looked at his text books and saw that almost all of them were written by the US Army Corp of Engineers. I realized that his education was directly focused on his upcoming employment in the Army. It made me realize that the engineering that I was studying had no practical application on my chosen service. Study of the steam cycle did not directly apply to the steam engineering plant of the ships I would soon be joining. This applied to classmates going into other services as well.

As it turned out, I did not go into the engineering branch of the Navy for many years, but became a General List/MARS officer. I specialized in weapons. When I did enter the MARE branch, it was as a Combat Systems Engineer (CSE) where I dealt with guns and missiles, radars and radios. I came to realize that what I had been taught at RMC was the *discipline* of engineering, not details of this or that piece of machinery. I seemed to spend most of my working life dealing with electrical and electronic systems rather than steam engines.

I spent a lot of time working with naval engineers who had gone back to RMC for post graduate studies. Most of their M.Eng degrees were in some specialty such as radar. But based on my experience, engineering officers don't design radars or any other type of equipment. What they do is to supervise technicians who fix radars or work in project offices where they procure systems that include radars. When they leave the military, if they still work after the military, they work as supervisors of designers, as system engineers or as project managers. So if I have one complaint against the military education system and RMC it is that it does not produce enough system engineers. However, this takes nothing away from the excellent military officers and engineers that come out of RMC, and soon CMR.

The government and the public must therefore understand that RMC has three roles: to produce military officers with the requisite education and leadership training; to produce tomorrow's leaders in industry, commerce, academia or government; and to produce these people as fully bilingual citizens. Considering these three roles which are unique to the military academies is it any wonder that RMC costs more to educate its students? Add that to the fact that they are very small for a university and small institutions will inevitably cost more per student.

If we are to answer the AG on his report, it is important to concentrate on this bigger picture rather than arguing over minor details. RMC serves a wide constituency including the military, civilian institutions and the country as a whole. No other institution of higher learning can do this as well as the two Canadian military colleges.



Numéro 111

March/mars 2018

Page 4

A Film Recommendation

6525 John Critchley wrote the following: Came across an interesting movie on Netflix about the CAF in Afghanistan. Its called, *Hyena Road*. Mighty different situation than what we were trained for and faced in our mechanized warfare days with the Soviet Union. Not much need for my Centurion armoured bridge layers now... except for the museum. Might want to put it on as a footnote to your Class newsletters?

The Search Goes On

The intrepid team of investigators who are diligently trying to track down “lost” members of our class have located two more, both sadly deceased. The first was **6648 Ron Klassen** and the other, **6265 D.D. Larsen**.



Ron Klassen



D.D. Larsen

The team is now trying to track down **6599 Joe Brown** . If anyone can shed any light on his whereabouts, please pass the info along to your editor for onward transmission to the team



Numéro 111

March/mars 2018

Page 5

An Autobiography by 6606 Roger Chiasson

I'm not sure when my decision to write my memoirs first emerged. For years I had reflected on the fact that I only knew one of my grandparents, and at that I never got to know my Dad's father very well. Interest in my Acadian roots was piqued during the 400th anniversary of Champlain's original settlement on St. Croix Island, in New Brunswick, which a year later was moved to Port Royal, in Nova Scotia.

My first real inspiration came after a conversation I had with Richard Archer. He was being encouraged to write about his life by his wife, Marilyn, who I was told was into genealogy. I asked Richard to send me an example of his writings – a chronicle of our first year in the Navy at HMCS Venture – and so began a ten-year journey dedicated to my grandchildren. I did not want to deprive them of any curiosity about what made me tick. The intent was never to foist my ruminations on anyone but these five “apples of my eyes”, but as my writings started turning into a sizeable tome I started wondering if the story might have wider appeal. I asked a few people to read drafts as I progressed, and got considerable encouragement from them to publish a book. After all, it is not every day you get a Cape Bretoner Engineer serving as a diplomat in Japan!

The rest, as they say, is history. My project swelled from a few notes to over 280 pages! If Doug Cope can write 800 pages about one year at Royal Roads, I can write about 74 years on this planet in under 300 pages! The end result, entitled “Cape Bretoner at Large”, subtitled “From New Waterford to Tokyo and Beyond” is dedicated to my grandchildren, but is available to anyone who might be curious (or bored) enough to read it! A copy of the publisher's brochure, which includes links to their store is attached. The book is also available on Amazon. Finally, I have soft covered versions at home that I can ship to anyone who might want an auto-graphed copy.

I would encourage all of you to record your time on this planet for the benefit of others. We all have a story to tell..... Richard Archer, you're next!

If you are desperate for reading material, here's how you can get a copy:

<https://books.friesenpress.com/store/title/119734000030160683/Roger-Chiasson-Cape-Bretoner-at-Large>



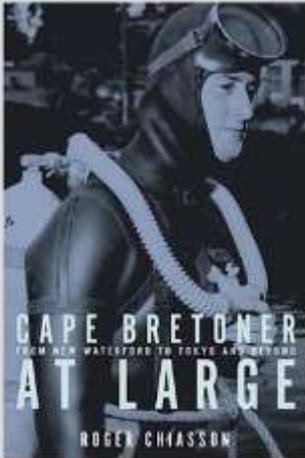
Numéro 111

March/mars 2018

Page 6

Cape Bretoner at Large

From New Waterford to Tokyo and Beyond by Roger Chiasson



Although this book, written for his grandchildren, is one man's chronicle of his life and his 38 - year career in the Royal Canadian Navy during the Cold War, it is also a compelling story about pride in one's cultural roots, the pursuit of adventure, the role of curiosity in life's travels, and an abiding passion for leadership. The story starts in a pastoral setting in Nova Scotia and winds its way to British Columbia, where the author is immersed in the hectic life of a Naval Cadet. Upon graduation from the Royal Military College Chiasson goes to sea and attains a Bridge Watchkeeping Certificate before joining the engineering branch. He spends the next few years as the Engineering Officer of two Naval destroyers prior to attending Staff College to broaden his horizons. The remainder of his Engineering career is devoted to overseeing and managing refits and new construction in Canadian shipyards and in National Defence Headquarters. Following attendance at the National Defence College, his crowning Engineering achievement is as the Commanding Officer (and religious change-management fanatic) of Canada's East Coast Naval Dockyard. In a remarkable quirk of fate he ends his career as Canada's Defence Attaché in Japan.



Roger Chiasson was born in New Waterford, Cape Breton Island, in 1943, to a family of modest but adequate means, which provided for a healthy and happy childhood. He has traced his roots to one of two Chiasson brothers who were married in Port Royal, the cradle of Acadia, in the 1660's. He is grateful for the fact that his branch of the family tree escaped the expulsion of the Acadians in the mid eighteenth century, and was part of the migration of Acadians from Prince Edward Island that founded Cheticamp in 1885.

His idyllic childhood in the beautiful Margaree valley ended in 1954 when his family moved to Quebec in pursuit of greener financial pastures for his teacher father. The move however exposed him to new opportunities that may not otherwise have presented themselves had he stayed in Cape Breton. He joined the Canadian Navy at the age of 16, and enjoyed a long career that took him to five Canadian provinces, England and Japan, where the selection process broke down and allowed a Cape Bretoner engineer to serve as a foreign diplomat, as the Canadian Forces Attaché. At least his roots qualified him to eat and drink for his country.

As the saying goes, "you can take the boy out Cape Breton, but you can't take Cape Breton out of the boy"!