

# Class of 65 Newsletter

## Bulletin d'Information—Classe de 65

Number/Numéro 126



January/janvier 2020

*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

Just a brief edition before Janet and I head south to the Dysfunctional States of Trumpland for some sunshine. We have a report from **6523 Terry Colfer** on his visit to the Australian Military College; some information from our Professor in Leadership on a series of proposed roundtables on his findings with respect to comparisons between RMC and the military colleges in other nations; a proposal for an Alberta Pension Plan from **6584 Keith Ambachtsheer**; and, finally, some information on the RMC response to the 2017 Auditor General of Canada's report on the RMC.

Before getting into those however, it has been brought to our attention that Anne Robison, sister of classmate **6554 Harold Merklinger**, and wife of naval officer Dave Robison has passed away. On behalf of the Class of 65 we pass on our sincere condolences to Harold, Dave and to other members of the Merklinger and Robison families.

### Visit to RMC Duntroon

by 6523 Terry Colfer

Last spring (March, 2019), Lynn and I visited our son, Christopher, and his family in Sydney, Australia. While in Oz we decided to take a side trip to Canberra. We had not been to Canberra since our posting in Australia some 4 decades previously. The changes were positive.

Anyway, during our stay, we toured the Royal Military College-Duntroon located in a suburb of Canberra.



The Aussie RMC has close connections with our Alma Mater. In fact, the founder of the college was a member of the Royal Military College of Canada class of 1877. After moving to Australia, Sir William Throsby Bridges (an artillery officer) was tasked with establishing an Australian military college. He was appointed the first Commandant of Duntroon in 1910 with the rank of Brigadier General. Unfortunately, Maj Gen Bridges was mortally wounded at Gallipoli in 1915.

The officer training program in Australia is slightly different from the Canadian model. Australian Navy, Army and Air Force officers spend their initial three years at the tri-service Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) which is situated adjacent to RMC-Duntroon in Canberra. Cadets receive military and leadership training while there and graduate



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### Visit to RMC Duntroon (Concluded)



**Parade Square RMC Duntroon**

with a degree from the University of New South Wales. Following ADFA graduation army officers complete 12 months 'post grad' training at RMC-Duntroon. Navy officers attend the Royal Australian Navy College at HMAS Carswell in Jarvis Bay. "Chair" Force officers proceed to the Officers Training School in East Sale, Victoria.

Overall, the Australian Defence Force recruiting program appears to be on a successful track ... promoting a rich and rewarding blend of career and lifestyle opportunities. Fair Dinkum!



**Army Cadet at Duntroon**

### A Proposal for an Alberta Pension Plan

By 6584 Keith Ambachtsheer

In his capacity as President of KPA Advisory Services Ltd, Keith Ambachtsheer has provided the following proposal: "Possibly the most important issue Alberta's *Fair Deal Panel* has been asked to address is whether Alberta should withdraw from the *Canada Pension Plan (CPP)*, and go it alone with a new *Alberta Pension Plan (APP)*. While Quebec sponsored a parallel *Quebec Pension Plan (QPP)* since *CPP's* inception over 50 years ago, no province has ever withdrawn from the *CPP* since then. Given its importance and lack of precedence, this *KPA Policy Paper* assesses the pros and cons of such an action. We do so at the request and encouragement of prominent Canadians from coast to coast."

For those of you that may be interested in this proposal, you can find it on-line at:

[http://kpa-advisory.com/news/the-alberta-pension-plan-proposal/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=January%202020%20Policy%20Paper&utm\\_content=January%202020%20Policy20Paper+CID\\_357272c02e6f5b24b71898c83728351b&utm\\_source=Campaign%20Monitor&utm\\_term=access%20it%20online](http://kpa-advisory.com/news/the-alberta-pension-plan-proposal/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=January%202020%20Policy%20Paper&utm_content=January%202020%20Policy20Paper+CID_357272c02e6f5b24b71898c83728351b&utm_source=Campaign%20Monitor&utm_term=access%20it%20online)



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### Round Tables on Military Education

A focal issue for our Class-sponsored Professorship in Leadership has been to develop some comparative information between the approach taken to military training and education at the RMC of Canada and that taken in a variety of other countries. To this end he is organising a series of roundtable discussions with prominent Canadians. One of these is being planned Kingston during next year's reunion weekend. The current plan is to hold a lunchtime session on the Thursday afternoon before the other weekend activities get into full swing. It is hoped that a good representation from the Class of 65 might be available to attend this session. More details will follow as they become available, but in the meantime, perhaps you could add this event to your weekend schedule.

### RMC Response to the 2017 AG of Canada Report

The following is the text of the covering letter to the RMC response sent by the Commandant. BGen Bouchard. A copy of the report will be attached to the mailing list of this Newsletter.

*“Dear College Team,*

*As 2019 comes to a close and we reflect on the myriad of experiences and accomplishments of our students, faculty and staff, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you all and everyone connected to Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) for your amazing contributions and remarkable work that you do each and every day. There have been and there always will be challenges, but the way we have come together to address them as a team speaks volumes for the quality and dedication of people we have serving this wonderful institution.*

*These last few years have been formative for the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC). The Special Staff Assistance Visit (SSAV) from the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) and the audit from the Auditor General (AG) of Canada both resulted in recommendations for improvement and have initiated change that was very much needed. Both of these interventions have been extremely positive for RMC. With the renewed importance of the 4 pillars (military leadership, academics, physical fitness and bilingualism) as well as the commitment to the core curriculum, our students are more focussed and more motivated than ever. RMC is a university with a difference and work is underway to ensure we remain that way. It takes time to change a culture though and there is still work to do.*

*The SSAV from the CDS was the initial catalyst for change and it also recognized that investments were needed at RMC. The AG Report was humbling; it stated that our cost per student was too high and it questioned the value-added of the RMC education. The AG Report opined that if RMC does not follow the recommendations of the Audit, we risk becoming just another university. The results of the Audit were tabled with the Standing Committee of Public Accounts (SCoPA) and the Department of National Defence (DND) responded this past summer to numerous queries. This past summer, the RMC Report was also published. Aided by General (Retired) Tom Lawson, former RMC Commandant and former CDS, the RMC Report tells the RMC story and responds in full to the AG's observations. The RMC Report has just been translated and is now available in both official languages RMC Report - Response to AG. It is provided herein for your information; we encourage you to read it. It is the roadmap to guide our way forward.*



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### RMC Response (Continued)

*The RMC Report speaks to the value proposition of the Canadian Military Colleges – Regular Training Officer Plan (CMC-ROTP) program and provides comparisons to other officer production plans as well as to other educational institutions. The importance of revenue for RMC is underscored as the AG's analysis discussed expenditures only and attributed them all to the RMC-ROTP program only. Our report highlights the other mandated tasks, including research, graduate and continuing studies as well as support to the Canadian Armed Forces and other Defence organizations. The RMC Report does validate the expenditures reported by the AG and does recognize that RMC spends more money per student than some other Ontario universities. However, the RMC Report demonstrates that when compared to 19 other universities and adjusted for scope and size, RMC's expenditures are exactly where they are expected to be for a university in Ontario. Our analysis also concluded that the expenses incurred by the CMC-ROTP also correspond to other military academies and other officer entry programs. While these conclusions are in contrast with the AG Report, they have not softened our resolve to make changes recommended by the AG.*

*Over the recent years, with the help of many hands, RMC has made significant improvements in every facet of the CMC-ROTP program. You will find the details of these changes in the RMC Report, which sets the context leading up to the reviews and provides an overview of our vision that is now articulated in the RMC Strategic Plan 2023. After a discussion on RMC governance, the Report outlines the unique nature of the four-pillar program as well as RMC's core curriculum, both of which sets the RMC education apart from any civilian university. In the Report are the details of how military training has been strengthened to maintain relevance to the profession of arms as well as the efforts in place to better synchronize military and academic activities. You will see concrete initiatives such as; the four-pillar degree, the review of the core curriculum, the creation of a Balanced Scorecard, optimizing online learning, pursuing cost-efficiencies, growing our student numbers, evolving our academic programs and investing in areas such as teaching-pedagogy and technology, to name a few.*

*These are still early days in our response to the AG Report and we recognize that we have an obligation to ensure our actions speak as loud as our words. You can be confident that the leadership is engaged to make a difference and that the action RMC is taking today is to ensure our success for years to come. RMC is the 'university with a difference' and rest assured we are all putting every ounce of energy possible so that the student experience is everything it needs to be so that RMC continues to produce officers prepared to excel, continues to be recognized as a unique and inclusive military university and continues to support the Defence program. This is our mission and we are proud of it!*

*As we pause for this moment, we would like to say how grateful we are that you are representing RMC in such admirable fashion. We wish you all the best of the festive season and the very best of the New Year!*





### RMC Response (Continued)

*Chère Équipe du Collège,*

*Alors que l'année 2019 se termine et que nous réfléchissons à la myriade d'expériences et de succès de nos étudiants, professeurs et personnel, nous aimerions profiter de cette occasion pour vous remercier tous, toutes les personnes liées au Collège militaire royal du Canada (CMR), pour vos incroyables contributions et le travail remarquable que vous accomplissez tous les jours. Il y a eu et il y aura toujours des défis, mais la façon dont nous nous sommes réunis pour les relever en tant qu'équipe indique la qualité et le dévouement des personnes au service de cette merveilleuse institution.*

*Ces dernières années ont été déterminantes pour le Collège militaire royal du Canada (CMR). La visite d'aide d'état-major spéciale (VAEM) du Chef d'état-major de la Défense (CEMD) et l'enquête du Vérificateur général (VG) du Canada ont toutes deux débouché sur des recommandations d'amélioration et ont amorcé des changements qui étaient vraiment requis. Ces deux rapports ont été extrêmement positifs pour le CMR. Avec l'importance renouvelée des 4 piliers (le leadership militaire, les études universitaires, la condition physique et le bilinguisme) ainsi que l'engagement envers le tronc commun, nos étudiants sont plus concentrés et plus motivés que jamais. Le CMR est une université avec une différence et des travaux sont en cours pour s'assurer que nous restons ainsi. Mais, il faut du temps pour changer une culture et il y a encore du travail à faire.*

*Le VAEM a été le premier catalyseur du changement et il a également reconnu que des investissements étaient nécessaires au CMR. Le rapport VG a été déstabilisant; il y fut déclaré que notre coût par étudiant était trop élevé et il a remis en question la valeur ajoutée d'une éducation au CMR. Le rapport du VG est d'avis que si le CMR ne suit pas les recommandations de la vérification, nous risquons de devenir une autre université comme tant d'autres. Les résultats de la vérification ont été déposés auprès du Comité permanent des comptes publics (CPCP) et le ministère de la Défense nationale (MDN) a répondu l'été dernier à de nombreuses questions. L'été dernier, le rapport du CMR a également été publié. Avec l'assistance du Général (à la retraite) Tom Lawson, ancien Commandant du CMR et ancien CEMD, le rapport du CMR raconte la version du CMR et répond pleinement aux observations du Vérificateur général. Le rapport du CMR vient d'être traduit et est maintenant disponible dans les deux langues officielles [Rapport du CMR - Réponse au VG](#). Il est fourni ici pour votre information; nous vous encourageons à le lire. C'est le plan pour guider notre chemin à suivre.*

*Le rapport du CMR parle de la proposition de valeur du programme PFOR-CMC et fournit des comparaisons avec d'autres programmes d'entrée pour officiers ainsi qu'une comparaison avec d'autres universités. L'importance des revenus générés par le CMR est soulignée dans la mesure où l'analyse du VG ne portait que sur les dépenses et les attribuait toutes au programme PFOR-CMC uniquement. Notre rapport met en évidence les autres tâches mandatées, y compris la recherche, les études supérieures et permanentes ainsi que le soutien aux Forces armées canadiennes et à d'autres organisations de Défense. Le rapport du CMR valide les dépenses déclarées par le VG et reconnaît que le CMR dépense plus d'argent par étudiant que certaines autres universités de l'Ontario. Cependant, le rapport du CMR démontre que, comparativement à 19 autres universités et ajustées en fonction de mandat et grandeur, les dépenses du CMR sont exactement là où elles devraient être pour une université en Ontario. Notre analyse a également conclu que les dépenses engagées par le programme de formation de la force régulière – collèges militaires canadiens (PFOR-CMC) sont comparables à d'autres académies militaires et à d'autres programmes d'entrée d'officiers. Bien que nos conclusions soient en contraste avec le rapport du VG, elles n'ont pas diminué notre détermination à apporter les changements*



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RMC Report (Concluded)

*recommandés par le VG.*

*Au cours des dernières années, avec l'aide de nombreuses parties prenantes, le CMR a apporté des améliorations importantes dans tous les aspects du programme PFOR-CMC. Vous trouverez les détails de ces changements dans le rapport du CMR, qui définit le contexte menant aux examens et donne un aperçu de notre vision qui est maintenant articulée dans le Plan stratégique du CMR 2023. Après une discussion sur la gouvernance du CMR, le rapport décrit la nature unique du programme à quatre piliers ainsi que le tronc commun, qui distinguent le CMR d'autres universités civiles. Le rapport contient des détails sur la manière dont la formation militaire a été renforcée pour maintenir sa pertinence pour la profession des armes ainsi que sur les efforts mis en place pour mieux synchroniser les activités militaires et universitaires. Vous verrez des initiatives concrètes telles que; le diplôme de quatre piliers, la révision du tronc commun, la création d'un tableau de bord, l'optimisation de l'éducation en ligne, la recherche de la rentabilité, l'augmentation du nombre d'étudiants, l'évolution de nos programmes académiques et l'investissement dans des domaines tels que la pédagogie et la technologie, pour n'en nommer que quelques-uns.*

*Ce n'est que le début de notre réponse au rapport du VG et nous reconnaissons que nous avons l'obligation de veiller à ce que nos actions parlent aussi fort que nos paroles. Vous pouvez être certain que le leadership est engagé à faire la différence et que les actions que le CMR prend aujourd'hui assureront notre succès pour les années à venir. Le CMR est une «université avec une différence» et soyez assurés que nous mettons l'énergie nécessaire pour que l'expérience étudiante supporte notre mandat de former des officiers prêts à exceller, continue d'être reconnue comme une université militaire inclusive et continue de soutenir le programme de la Défense. Telle est notre mission et nous en sommes fiers!*

*Alors que nous prenons une pause à ce moment-ci, nous aimerions dire combien nous sommes reconnaissants que vous représentiez le CMR de façon si extraordinaire. Nous vous souhaitons de passer des joyeuses fêtes ainsi qu'une bonne et heureuse année !*

### Closing Notes

We would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year. We are looking forward to a bit of sunshine to help get us through the winter, however, keep those articles coming and maybe we'll get to publish at least one edition from south of the border.

For those of you who wondered why I included an article on Jim Palmer in the last edition, it's simply because he was a member of our class. Apparently that is not the case.