

Class of 65 Newsletter

Bulletin d'Information—Classe de 65

Numéro 110



February/février 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

To kick off this short edition, it is my sad duty to report the passing of **Steffanie Leesti**, the wife of **6550 Marti Leesti**. Her obituary appeared in the Ottawa Citizen of 31 January and may be seen at <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/ottawacitizen/obituary.aspx?n=steffanie-leesti&pid=188026038>. I am sure all classmates will join me in offering sincere condolences to Marti and his family on their loss.

On a happier note, on 22 January, Jan and I were honoured to be asked to witness the marriage of **6604 Jim Carruther** to his long-time partner **Gail Wilson**. The ceremony was conducted in the Ottawa City Hall. Also in attendance was Sharon, one of Jim's daughters and Gail's younger brother Gordon. Following the ceremony we adjourned to the Bytown Mess for a celebratory noggin before heading out into a combination blizzard/ice storm to a restaurant in Kanata. (usually a half-hour drive that took an hour and a half!). The next day, the happy couple headed off to the Dominican Republic for some rest and relaxation.



Jan and I are off in a couple of weeks for two weeks of warm sun in Florida. While there, we will be spending several days as the guests of **Hugh and Chris Spence** and partaking in the annual snowbird "rump" lunch that is being hosted by Hugh and Chris this year. We are eagerly anticipating what is served at a "rump" lunch!

In previous issues, I have raised the subject of the Gatineau Five, five naval classmates who all were posted to the same ship following graduation and who all now live in Ottawa and who get together periodically to share old war stories. A more complete version of the story that appeared in a recent e-veritas follows.



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The Gatineau Five

The achievements and contributions of the RMC Class of 1965 have been well documented, but this tale is about a rather unique sub-set of that distinguished class that is less well known. No, not a new rock band, but rather a group of fellows who were flung together by the fickle finger of navy fate, and remain socially connected to this day, more than 50 years later.

Following RMC graduation in the '60s, newly minted naval sub-lieutenants embarked on three months of pre-fleet training before being assigned to their first full-time posting afloat or ashore. In the fall of 1965, after pre-fleet, five of those keen young officers were posted to the same ship, **HMCS GATINEAU**, DDE 236, a destroyer escort based in Halifax. That as many as five from the same RMC graduating class served together on one ship at the same time is a circumstance that is likely unmatched before or since.



The self-styled Gatineau Five, after completing their working lives, have all retired to Ottawa where they get together on a periodic basis, along with their partners, to remind each other of their time in the old *Gatineau*, and swap life yarns and medical bulletins.

The five are: **6364 Mike Braham, 6602 Jim Cale, H6604 Jim Carruthers, 6069 Peter Houlston, and**



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The Gatineau Five (continued)

6439 Hugh Spence. Mike, Peter and Hugh began their naval careers bilingually at CMR; the two Jims started out unilingually as “Roadents”. Mike and Hugh became good friends at CMR, and the Jims were thrown together at Royal Roads because their surnames began with “C” and *everything* at RR was done in alphabetical order. Peter added spice to the mix as in third year he poured himself into the remarkable Class of 65 and the naval component thereof.

It was not until their time together in HMCS *Gatineau* however, that they jelled as a group through their common initial experience aboard one of Her Majesty’s Canadian ships. Commanded by Cdr. Andy Fulton (later Vice-Admiral Fulton and Commander of the Navy), *Gatineau* spent a busy commission with operational cruises to the Baltic, Barbados and the Great Lakes as well as the constant menu of anti-submarine exercises in the North Atlantic and in the warmer climes of the Caribbean. These each provided their own unique, special bonding experiences for our stalwart quintet and formed the basis for a life-long relationship. After their time in *Gatineau* they all went separate ways both within the Navy and as civilians.





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The Gatineau Five (continued)



HMCS Gatineau Ship's Officers 1966

Back Row: Houliston, *, Braham, *, *, *, Carruthers, Cale, *, Spence



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The Gatineau Five (continued)

Mike Braham served as Deck Officer and then as Communications Officer in *Gatineau* while earning his watch-keeping certificate. He continued with a 27 year naval career, retiring as a Logistics Captain (N) in 1987. He then spent 13 years as a Director in Emergency Preparedness Canada and ten as the Director responsible for Occupational Health and Safety in DND. He now volunteers at the Diefenbunker Museum and the Canadian War Museum.



Jim Cale was *Gatineau's* Assistant Operations Officer. On leaving *Gatineau* he went on to a 34 year career in the Navy in various positions at sea and ashore. He served for a further two years as a civilian on a Special Project Team which restructured Dockyard operations. In 1996 he took Freedom 55 and volunteered in a number of organizations in the Halifax area, moving to Ottawa in 2008.



Jim Carruthers left *Gatineau* in late summer '66 after completing his watch-keeping ticket to become the 'guinea pig Combat Systems Engineer (CSE)'. The first shipboard digital computer, ASROC, 505 sonar and CSD developments followed. Unqualified in any field – except perhaps for a PhD - he spent seven of his 22 year career in NDHQ and is perhaps best known as the 'father' of SHIN-PADS. Subsequently 25 years were spent as CEO of Norpak Corporation followed by volunteer work, which included time on the Board and as President of both the RMC Foundation and the Naval Association of Canada.



Peter Houlston went from *Gatineau* to serve on HMCS *Restigouche* after which he left the Navy to get married and pursue a graduate degree. Subsequently he spent most of his career in international development with the Canadian government (CIDA) and later as a consultant. He worked in the Caribbean, Africa and Pakistan including five years living in Guyana and Jamaica. He now spends his time volunteering with Rotary, visiting grandchildren, travelling abroad, playing bridge and walking around golf courses, playing being too strong a term.



Hugh Spence was *Gatineau's* Information Officer and on being posted from the ship joined DND's Information Services. After leaving the Navy, he held marketing and information positions with St. Lawrence College and then Transport Canada Public Affairs. This was followed by the major portion of his career as head of the Atomic Energy Control Board's Office of Public Information in Ottawa, from which he retired in 1997. He is currently a Volunteer Interpreter at the Canadian War Museum.



By 2008, all five class/shipmates were living in Ottawa where they occasionally get together with their wives for good food, good wine and reminiscences of their time in *Gatineau* and the characters they met there.



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The Gatineau Five (concluded)



Dinner Outing 2017

I. to r. Peggy Houliston, Peter Houliston, Hugh Spence, Chris Spence, Gail Carruthers, Jim Carruthers, Jane Cale, Jim Cale, Jan Braham, Mike Braham



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Memories

The following photos are from the files of Georges Wilson and/or e-veritas. Perhaps they will evoke some memories?



REAR: Guthrie RH, Williams CN, Keefer TA, Tyrrell CJ, Keefer BG, Cathcarton WE, Bellingrde JG. FRONT: Wylie JD, Erwood JC, Capt JP Fortier (Chairman), Holman DF (Captain), Carswell JG. ABSENT: Gibbons JG.

Alpine Ski Team 1965



Top. L. to R., B. Andersen, L. Beverly, M. McCreary, R. Gynn.
Bot. L. to R., J. Kempling, D. Brown, D. Brimeau, G. Reay

Debating Club 1965