

Class of 65 Newsletter

Bulletin d'Information—Classe de 65

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Editor's Corner/Coin du rédacteur

As I start to put together Ottawans are awaiting the first significant snowfall of the year—due sometime this afternoon. That is perhaps more significant than usual for many of us as it is normally time to start thinking about packing up for an annual sojourn to a warmer place somewhere south of the border. For most of us, that routine has likely been shattered by the upward spiral of COVID-19 both here in Canada, and, more particularly in the United States, where the numbers are truly heart rending.

I imagine that most of you will also be transfixed by the fall-out from the United States Presidential election and the refusal of the incumbent to accept defeat or to provide an orderly turnover to the President-elect—a state of affairs more reflective of a third world dictatorship than of the “Great Democracy”.

One can only hope that some sense of calm and stability returns in January when the new administration takes over, but that may be a faint hope given the current level of political polarity in the United States.

I am sure most of you will have your own opinions and if you wish to share them here, they will get equal billing, regardless of proclivity.

Webinars of Potential Interest (Continued)

In Edition 134, we reported on a couple of upcoming Webinars that included representation by our Professor in Leadership, Dr Christian Leuprecht. The following is review of one of those by **6496 Charlie Emond**.

Dear Christian,

I very much enjoyed watching the forum on NATO-Canada. It was a lively, broad-ranging, informative discussion to which all panelists contributed in good measure. I am much the more informed as a result of my 2 hours of viewing and all the questions I had in advance and more were answered.

I appreciated your initial comments to clarify your status with regard to the Class of 1965, that you had, by your academic merits obtained this appointment rather than being among that venerable cohort of older gentlemen.

In listening to your particularly praiseworthy contribution to the discussion, I was reminded of the comments from your students who enthusiastically nominated you on many occasions for the Class of 1965 Teaching Excellence award. They experienced as I did, the breadth of your knowledge, the rigour of your analysis, your willingness to listen and appreciate the merits of another point of view, your willingness to be the first to speak when others might be reticent, but to listen in equal measure, your projection that this is a compelling subject matter worthy of their attention and effort to understand.



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Webinars of Potential Interest (Concluded)

I, like your students, am more knowledgeable and eager to learn more for having shared this experience with you.

Some highlights of my career activities related closely or loosely to NATO.

- Military attaché to the Canadian Embassy in Warsaw Poland (1983-85) - **a different perspective of NATO during turbulent times.**
- Base Commander Lahr (Germany) responsible to support a resident Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group assigned as a rapid reaction force to NATO and Commander of a bi-national (US-Canada) Fighter Wing assigned as a rapid reaction force and regularly deployed in support to NATO (1986-89) - **helping to keep the “pointy end” of deference sharp.**
- Director General, Defence Policy Operations (1989-91) - **a time of great change and interesting initiatives.**
- Participated in the first visit of a Canadian Chief of Defence Staff to Russia as part of efforts to forge a new relationship with former adversaries.
- Led a delegation of officer cadets from all 3 military colleges along with members of the military and the academic staff (Political Science) at RMC Saint-Jean to Russia to visit a similar officer training/education college and later, to host their return visit to RMC Saint-Jean.

Cher Christian,

J'ai beaucoup aimé regarder le forum sur l'OTAN-Canada. Ce fut une discussion animée, vaste et informative à laquelle tous les panélistes ont contribué dans une bonne mesure. Je suis beaucoup plus informé grâce à mes 2 heures de visionnage et toutes les questions que j'avais à l'avance et plus encore ont été répondues.

J'ai apprécié vos premiers commentaires pour clarifier votre statut à l'égard de la promotion de 1965, que vous aviez, par vos mérites académiques, obtenu cette nomination plutôt que de faire partie de cette vénérable cohorte de messieurs “beaucoup plus” plus âgés.

En écoutant votre contribution particulièrement louable à la discussion, je me suis souvenu des commentaires de vos élèves qui vous ont proposé avec enthousiasme à plusieurs reprises pour le prix d'excellence en enseignement de la promotion de 1965. Ils ont fait l'expérience comme moi, de l'étendue de vos connaissances, de la rigueur de votre analyse, de votre volonté d'écouter et d'apprécier les mérites d'un autre point de vue, de votre volonté d'être le premier à parler quand les autres pourraient être réticents, mais aussi à écouter en mesure égale, votre projection qu'il s'agit d'un sujet convaincant digne de leur attention et de leurs efforts pour comprendre.

Comme vos étudiants, je suis plus informé et désireux d'en savoir plus pour avoir partagé à cette expérience avec vous.

Pour référence, voici quelques faits saillants de mes activités professionnelles étant étroitement ou vaguement liés à l'OTAN.

- **Attaché militaire auprès de l'ambassade canadienne à Varsovie en Pologne (1983-85) - une perspective différente de l'OTAN en période de turbulence.**
- **Commandant de la base militaire canadienne de Lahr (Allemagne) en soutien à un groupe-brigade mécanisé canadien assigné à titre de force de rapide réaction à l'OTAN et commandant d'un escadron de chasse (Canada -Américain) affecté en temps de crise, donc responsable de les accueillir en tout temps(1986-1989) - contribution à maintenir « l'extrémité pointue » de la dissuasion de guerre.**
- **Directeur général des Opérations de la politique de défense (1989-91) - une période de grands changements et d'initiatives intéressantes.**
- **Participation à la première visite d'un Chef d'état général canadien en Russie dans le cadre des efforts visant à forger une nouvelle relation avec des anciens adversaires, le plus notable étant la Russie.**
- **Chef de délégation d'un groupe d'élèves-officiers des 3 collèges militaires ainsi que quelques personnels militaires et académiques (science politique) du CMR de Saint Jean pour une visite-échange en Russie d'un collège de formation / éducation des officiers similaire et d'accueillir un pareil group russe lors de leur visite de retour au CMR de St-Jean.**



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Letters

6539 Nigel Hilliard wrote: *Pic of Donna and I at the top of Blue Mountain after we completed a 50 km hike LOL. Well maybe not quite 50 kms.. Notice I am wearing my RMC hoodie.*



6181 Tony Halliday, 6183 Terry Hogan, and 6475 Mike Houghton all remarked on this considerable achievement

Thoughts on Remembrance Day 2020 by 6533 Gord Forbes

I, like many others, watched the annual Remembrance Day ceremony on television yesterday. It was a different kind of ceremony because of the coronavirus with only a token 100 people in attendance. But as one woman said, it made it a quieter, more peaceful ceremony.

I was born in wartime England in a city called Swindon where my father and my mother, before I was born, were working for a company that made wings for Spitfire fighters. After the war when no more Spitfires were being built, we moved to a town just east of London. There you could see some of the ravages of war. Across the street from our flat, there were the ruins of what had been a doctor's home and office. It had been destroyed by a V-1 flying bomb that didn't quite make it to London. In that village I played with two other boys my age. They were also victims of the war. Between the three of us, we had three good eyes, and I had two of them. Flying glass from a bomb explosion had blinded the other three eyes.

In the late 1940s, we emigrated to Canada. My father came over in late 1948 on the RMS Aquitania which was still fitted out as a troop carrier. My father sailed in a room with 39 other emigrant men. Six months later, when my mother and I came over, we travelled on a Canadian Pacific Empress liner. We shared a cabin with one other mother and her young son who was also moving to Canada. When we



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Thoughts on Remembrance Day 2020 (Continued)

went to the lounge for tea, my mother was surprised to see cake with butter on it. When she looked closer it was white bread, the first she had seen for over ten years. No signs of war or rationing here anymore.

I, of course, later went to the Royal Military College of Canada as a naval cadet and spent the next 28 years in that service. During that time, I had an experience that changed the rest of my life.

Which brings me to the reason that I don't put Remembrance Day at the top of my remembrance dates. First on my list is 23rd of October, the anniversary of the explosion and fire aboard HMCS Kootenay that killed nine of my shipmates, left three badly burned and over fifty others hospitalized for mostly smoke inhalation; a ship on which I was the Weapons Officer at the time. Second is Battle of Atlantic Sunday, a true Navy ceremony. When I was a young officer, the Canadian Navy was still steeped in the exploits of that six-year long battle. In my first summer training, they showed us the movie "The Cruel Sea", probably the best movie ever made of that battle. Remembrance Day has always felt to me as a day for Army and Air Force veterans to reminisce. Despite the Governor-General wearing a Navy uniform yesterday, the day never seemed to be a day for the Navy.

As some of you know I love music. Music and Remembrance Day go back to a concert that my wife and I attended some years ago at the National Arts Centre. The concert featured the very fine Scottish Canadian tenor, John McDermott. It included many wartime and memorial songs. We thoroughly enjoyed the show and afterwards bought a CD of the performance. I play it in the days leading up to Remembrance Day. There are some wonderful songs on the CD. They include "The Green Fields of France" remembering a young English lad who was killed and buried in France in 1916, probably at the Battle of the Somme which along with Verdun were two of the bloodiest battles of the war; battles that lasted months. Ask any Newfoundlander why they remember July 1st, 1916.

Other songs on the CD include "The Band Played Waltzing Mathilda", the poignant Australian song about Gallipoli, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" from the American Civil War, and "The Wall" a lament about the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., that wall of black marble with the names of over 58,000 Americans that died in that war.

The CD also has a song, "Christmas in the Trenches" about the unofficial and unplanned cease fire along the British and German trenches on Christmas Eve 1914. It was strongly condemned by the officers on both sides, but the men were not listening. Peace on Earth on that night was too important to those men. People now ask how such a thing could happen. But you must remember that the war was young and there was still an innocence about it. The Lusitania and the use of chlorine gas had not yet happened. The bloody battles of 1915 and 1916 had not been envisioned yet. It was still a time in the war when Christmas was still important. It never happened again, and it never happened at all in the French sector.

I have one problem with the way that Remembrance Day is celebrated these days. That is the concept of the Silver Cross Mother. The selection of a mother was probably appropriate after the First World War when most of the men who died were young and single. It may have been appropriate after World War 2. But these days, in places like Afghanistan and Iraq, the men and women who fought in and died



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Remembrance Day 2020 (Concluded)

in these battles are usually a bit more mature and I would guess that most had spouses. So why not a Silver Cross Spouse? They are the ones that suffer the most from a lost member of the military. As some of you may remember, I have a special place for military spouses. You may remember my blog of a few years ago, *Unsung Heroes*, <https://gordf.blogspot.com/>. Therein, I think I captured some of the challenges of being a military spouse and perhaps an argument for a Silver Cross Spouse.

Probably well over 99% of the population of the world do not want war or violence. A mere fraction of a percentage point want war. Why can't the world listen to the 99% +?

Gun Crime, Gun Tragedies and Gun Control by H24263 John Cowan

Will the new Canadian initiative in banning certain styles of semi-automatic rifles reduce gun crime and gun tragedies? The best answer, based on data and logic, is maybe, but only slightly, and only if the measure reduces overall gun ownership, which is not necessarily a predicted outcome of the change.

In 2017, there were 7660 violent firearms crimes in Canada. The vast majority were committed with firearms that were not legally registered, and the vast majority were committed with handguns.

Of those violent crimes, 267 were murders committed with guns (the other 393 Canadian murders that year did not involve guns). Of the gun murders, most were committed with illegal handguns. Only 65 were committed with (mostly unregistered) long guns (the term for rifles or shotguns). The fraction of those 65 involving the style of rifle recently banned is not known. (The newly-banned rifles are long guns styled to look like, but not function like, military assault rifles. True fully-automatic assault rifles have long been banned in Canada.)

On the other hand, there were 4157 suicides in Canada that year, and about 665 were gun suicides, about 80% of which were carried out with long guns (rifles or shotguns). These were almost all legally registered weapons.

So banning legal ownership and registration of assault-style semi-automatic rifles, while permitting others that work the same way, but look different, can only help in the following minor ways:

- Some fantasists, who imagine themselves as “warriors” of some type, who see assault-styled weapons as important to their bizarre persona may be discouraged, and may find other outlets for their fantasies. A small fraction of such fantasists might have become violent, and if this legal change makes such a person less likely to go on to commit a violent act, so much the better.
- If the total number of registered weapons drops somewhat (and this is not certain to occur), there may be a slight drop as well in the number of weapons stolen from registered owners and falling into criminal hands, though this source accounts for only a small fraction of illegal street weapons in Canada.



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Gun Crime, Gun Tragedies and Gun Control (Concluded)

- If a result was indeed a modest reduction in the total numbers of registered long guns, it probably would also mean fewer gun suicides. Experts suggest that while less availability of long guns may in some cases simply result in other methods of suicide, it would still be likely to slightly reduce the number of suicide deaths.

However, most violent gun crime will be unaffected. So what can be done to reduce violent gun crime? The answer comes in two parts.

1. For the minority of violent gun crimes perpetrated with guns legally owned by the person committing the crime, gains may come from stricter vetting of owners. The relevant act currently mandates assessment based upon of four aspects of an applicant's history: criminal activity, mental health, addiction, and domestic abuse. Arguably, some initial assessments may have been too lenient, and revocations too infrequent.
2. The vast majority of violent gun crimes are committed with illegal guns. The most effective way to reduce violent gun crime is to make illegal guns vastly more costly and dangerous for people to trade or own. There is only one civilized way to do this, and that is to change the law to make the penalties for owning or having care and control of an illegal gun very similar to the penalties for using that illegal gun in a violent crime. If this were the case, those who buy and resell illegal guns would be taking much greater risks in order to ply their trade, and therefore the price of what they sell would go way up. On the street, only gang leaders would be able to afford such a status symbol, which would be beyond the reach of the rank and file criminals. Furthermore, many of the rank and file might wonder about the wisdom of owning and carrying such a status symbol, if the penalties for just having it are as high as if they used it.

This may not directly address the problems of violence and violent criminal behavior, but it takes illegal guns, and the false courage they give, largely out of the equation. Without affordable illegal guns, the criminals may not be nearly as bold. That's what real gun control is about.

(First published in Ottawa Life Magazine on May 4, 2020)

Closing Notes

A couple of articles here that I hope will draw some comment. Until next time, stay safe.