

Class of 65 Newsletter

Bulletin d'Information—Classe de 65

Number/Numéro 152



August/aout 2022

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

This will be a relatively short edition, but nonetheless, important. It contains a summary of the work being done by the Class Professor in Leadership, Christian Leuprecht. I think that summary is important for two reasons. First, it is clear that we are getting a tremendous return for our money in Dr. Leuprecht. Second, and in light of the recent Arbour Report and its findings with respect to the continued viability of the RMC, his work will provide the basis for a rational response in favour of retention. **6349 Alain Pellerin** has also weighed in on the subject of the report. Finally, **6533 Gord Forbes** entertains us again with some thought provoking ideas from another of his blogs

Professor in Leadership: Summary of Activities—by 6584 Keith Ambachtsheer

AN UPDATE FROM PROF. CHRISTIAN LEUPRECHT.....THE CLASS OF 1965 PROFESSOR IN LEADERSHIP:

Christian became the Class of 1965 Professor in Leadership in 2018.

He has three important projects on the go:

1. CANADIAN MILITARY JOURNAL - Winter 2022

- * Christian has been appointed Editor of this important publication on Canadian military affairs
- * First issue under his Editorial leadership is scheduled for release in Jan. 2023
- * Focus will be on Canadian Military Colleges: past, present, and future
- * Given this is a 'hot topic' right now, contents will be shared with NDHQ this Fall for its decision-making purposes
- * Class of 1965 to get shout-out for its support in the Editor's Comments introduction to Winter 2022 issue

2. THE BOOK ON MILITARY COLLEGES AROUND THE WORLD

- * Still waiting for Turkey, Germany, Australia
- * Will be important background material for Arbour Review on Canada's Military Colleges
- * Manuscript ready for review in Spring 2023



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Summary of Activities(Concluded)

- * Book launch at Ex-Cadet Weekend Sept 2023
- * Our Class has committed \$25K to this project from our Endowment Fund

3. EX-CADET SURVEY

- * Will be administered in house at RMC in collaboration with Prof Holly Garnettat
- * Co-operation from the RMC Alumni Association has been requested
- * Do test run with Class of 1965....followed by the entire CMC post-grad population
- * Get the findings out expeditiously for potential use in review of Canadian Military Colleges in 2023
- * Class of 1965 to provide financial support for this project from our Endowment Fund

Comments/questions welcome!

The Class of 1965 Gifting Committee

Members: John Adams, Keith Ambachtsheer, Charlie Emond, Mike Houghton

RMC Alumni Association Reponse to the Arbour Report by 6349 Alain Pellerin

The following is Alain Pellerin's input to the RMC Alumni Association response to the Arbour Report.

"A lot has been written about the Canadian Military Colleges (RMC, and CMR) following the Arbour Report recommendations (particularly recommendation 29). Except for a couple of excellent letters to the editors by anciens of the College- Lawrence Stevenson and Bryan Brulotte- most of the writing on the Colleges has focused essentially on alleged incidents that took place some 25 to 30 years ago, Cadieux and Fortin. Little has been written on the progress made at the Colleges in the last few years. Even the RMCAA statement fails to mention the real progress of these last few years. Real progress can be identified at the College following the Maddison (Greg) report in 2017 and clear directives by the then CDSJon Vance and the four year appointment of BGen Bouchard as Commandant RMC.

Bouchard ably supported by the Principal Harry Kowal, has really turned things around at the College. The progress made in these last few years should be front and centre in DND and RMCAA communication strategy on the merits of the Colleges.

Attached is an excellent 2019 report by Kowal which covers very well the actions taken at the college since the Maddison report in 2017. An important element of the Kowal report is the response of the Department to the 2017 AG report which questioned the merit of the programme offered at RMC. An issue also raised in the Arbour report, recommendation 29. The Kowal paper (link below) is a tad long but worth reading."

http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.doi-10_35467_sdq_109259/c/sdq-pdf-109259-40438.pdf

Ed Note: It should be noted that arrangements have been made for Dr Leuprecht to have input into the RMCAA Response.



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Criticism by 6533 Gord Forbes

I have a computer bridge game that criticizes my play. It tells me what I should have made but never how I was supposed to do that.

Criticism can be a good thing. Helpful criticism can correct mistakes, improve things, bring in new ideas and lead to healthy debate. But, like the computer game, it too frequently doesn't add anything positive to the criticism.

You see this in a lot of newspaper op-ed opinion pieces. The writer will rail away at his or her target but provide no alternative advice. A lot of columnists make a career out of this type of writing. Instead of adding anything new to the discussion, the criticism just leaves you hanging. This is not helpful nor constructive. It's no use telling everyone what's wrong with something or somebody without telling them why it's wrong.

"It's so much easier to suggest solutions when you don't know too much about the problem." - Malcolm Forbes

Another abuse of criticism is to avoid the topic and attack the messenger. You frequently see this in the comments section of on-line news stories. In the most ridiculous cases, one commentator will start attacking another commentator just because they don't agree with the message. In other uses, the commentator will blame everything on a business or political leader. This is particularly evident in attacking our current Prime Minister. Everything is his fault. "I got Covid-19; it must be the PM's fault." "The war in Ukraine must be the PM's fault." "I have hay fever; it must be the PM's fault." You would think that the poor man must stay up all night plotting these horrible things.

Too many critics don't understand the topic they are critiquing. Critics of healthcare who don't understand that provinces are the arbiters of this field. Critics of military procurement who don't understand how that system works or the parts played by different players, including the courts. Critics of banks and money who have no idea how monetary policy and bank management work. Just a few examples.

"Nothing is impossible for the man who doesn't have to do it himself."
- A. H. Weiler

There are of course professional critics; theater critics, political columnists, and book reviewers (confession: I have reviewed books for specific-topic magazines, and sometimes got in trouble for it). Too many of them make the same mistakes as I've outlined above. Theater critics who nit pick every little fault of a production without analysing why. Political columnists who are so obviously biased that it removes all objectivity from their remarks. The list goes on. But good ones don't make these mistakes. They provide insightful and fair comment with no hint of their own bias.

"The remarkable thing about Shakespeare is that he really is very good, in spite of all the people who say he is very good."
- Robert Graves



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Criticism (Concluded)

In my mind, a good critique is one that gives a balanced approach to the subject at hand, provides reasonable alternatives to the problem they find at fault, avoid attacking the messenger, and give no hint of the particular bias they may hold. Just as important, it is really important that the critic know the field they are criticizing. And finally, any criticism must be honest. To argue using untrue facts or examples must be the worst sin of all.

"I never guess. It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts."

- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Closing Notes

It is expected that the Ex-Cadet survey, mentioned in our lead article, at least as it applies to the Class of 65 will be conducted through the medium of this newsletter so this is a heads up to start considering your inputs and to demonstrate the continuing leadership role that our Class has so richly deserved.

On a similar note, I am making my oft repeated plea for input. The well has dried up and I am searching for updates on your lives, travels and activities so don't be shy, put pen to paper. There are a good many of you that we have never heard from and it would be a relief to get some proof of life!

I hope you are all enjoying the summer and taking advantage of the great weather to golf, bike, hike, sail or whatever else suits your fancy