

Class of 65 Newsletter

Bulletin d'Information—Classe de 65

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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

Welcome to Autumn. Lots of meat on the bone this month. Our Secretary, **Hugh Spence**, has provided a couple of articles—an amusing Royal anecdote in the wake of the passing of Her Majesty; and, a report on a recent visit to St John's, Newfoundland. **Doug Cope** recently visited RMC Kingston and has provided a rather unsettling report on his observations that others might like to corroborate or to challenge. **Keith Ambachtscheer** sent me an interesting challenge from an educational institution that I hope stimulates some thoughts. Our resident blogger **Gord Forbes** has once again provided an interesting article that should generate some debate. I have reproduced a couple of letters commenting on articles in previous editions. Finally, a brief report on a luncheon organised by **John Hilton** for Ottawa-based classmates.

Royal Anecdote submitted by 6439 Hugh Spence

The following was sent to Hugh by an army officer graduate a couple of years before ourselves, and is a wonderful reflection of Her Majesty's renowned sense of humour.

"I was on a Guard of Honour waiting for the King of Saudi Arabia on Horseguards Parade. On the Right Flank, the Scots Guards (100 guardsmen). In the gap, HM the Queen mounted, in uniform and CO, Colonel Gerald. On the Left Flank, the Queen's Company Grenadier Guards (100 guardsmen).

We are stood at ease, waiting. Suddenly, Colonel Gerald's horse erupted with horse poo, full volume for what seemed like two minutes. Col. Gerald says, "Sorry about that your Majesty." She replies in a wonderful voice, "That's alright Gerald, I thought it was your horse!" 200 Guardsmen silently cried with laughter and tapped their rifle butts on the gravel. From that moment every man there adored her!"



Numéro 153

September/septembre 2022

Page 2

Visit Report by 6611 Doug Cope

On Saturday 17 September I visited RMC to shamelessly sign and sell my book, *The Roadants*. [Copies are still available]. I arrived about 1000 on a perfect but strange day. I say 'strange' because it should have been the Reunion Weekend with all its bells and whistles. However, because of the Queen's death and impending funeral, all of the parades and other events had been postponed until the weekend of 24 September. Regardless, hundreds of ex-cadets were in town for their class luncheons, dinners and other events that they had booked months before. They did not want to, or could not come back the next weekend so they stayed. With no other events scheduled numerous ex-cadets wandered the campus sight-seeing and reminiscing. I was ensconced on the porch at Panet House for approximately 5 hours and talked to many of them and heard their thoughts on the weekend and events or lack of same.

Another thing that made it strange was that there were no cadets to be seen. The only uniform I saw was on the guard at the main gate. Apparently the cadets had been given the weekend off! You would have thought that they would have strewn a few about just to 'show the flag' so to speak.

Next, and what seems to be a common occurrence, most of Currie Hall, the Mackenzie Building and the old Hospital were sheathed from view in plastic and construction hoarding.

Even more strange was that there is an apparent rat infestation, yes a rat infestation, in Yeo Hall and the cadet's mess; so they are closed. As a result the cadets now mess in the Senior Staff Mess and the field across the road from the SSM is festooned with numerous cook tents, etc.

In regard to the ex-cadets, one of their frequent complaints was that while the Gift Shop in Panet House was open, but apparently in their lack of wisdom, the wizards in charge had closed the shop in Yeo Hall. Unfortunately that shop sells many items that are not available in the Gift Shop. As a result, many of the ex-cadets were vocally pissed off that it was closed since they had little to do but wander the campus and spend money. Maybe the administration staff worried about rats biting the ex-cadets?

The second most frequent and most serious complaint and observation from the ex-cadets was how seedy the campus looked. They felt that there was definitely an aura of lack of maintenance about the place. I did not see it myself but apparently Fort Frederick looked particularly unkempt. On the unkempt theme, one ex-cadet noted that the eave trough on Panet House looked as if it were about to fall off the building. I posted a note about my book signing to one of the columns at the Panet House entrance and when I took it down a 4 inch chunk of blistered white paint came with it. [Yes, I am officially a vandal.] Also the grass and garden at the front of the building was definitely in need of work. One ex-cadet exclaimed, "don't they have defaulters anymore – get them to fix this up."

I just wondered if this lack of maintenance is a subtle way of DND letting the place decline so that they can say 'look, it's a mess so let's close it'. Some of you influential RMC types may want to visit in the near future to see the sad state of the place.

Finally, a note to old Roadants. As usual the only Royal Roads related item for sale in the gift shop is my



Numéro 153

September/septembre 2022

Page 3

Visit Report (Concluded)

book. However, there is hope. One class of 1987 ex-cadet said that he was contacting some classmates to see if they could arrange for RR caps, etc. to be sold in the shop. We shall see.

That is my report on the strange state of our old college.

Ed Note: I would be interested to hear if anyone else shares the same observations as Doug.

Redesigning Remembrance Day

Submitted by 6584 Keith Ambachtsheer

Keith forwarded a brochure he had received from a program called I-Think at the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto. The Mission Statement of I-Think is, “to change the educational experience for young people so they have the skills, tools, and agency to ignite change.

He thought that a specific project of I-Think had some pertinence to our Class since most of us have children and grandchildren and that we might have some ideas on the topic. Specifically, the relevance of Remembrance Day to today’s younger generations.

Their dream for this program is to have every school design a Remembrance Day that is relevant and meaningful to their students. One that recognizes the diversity of the lives and experiences of young Canadians, while, at the same time, not losing our rich history.

It would be of interest to hear your thoughts on this subject with a view to providing the Program with an overview of our perceptions and thoughts on redesigning Remembrance Day without losing its historical significance.

Representational Diversity

By 6533 Gord Forbes

I think we have a problem in this country about who we elect to represent us in the various legislatures. In this case I don’t mean ethnic or religious diversity, I mean diversity in the working experiences that are the background to their legislative endeavours.

The Conservative Party of Canada is about to elect a leader who has never worked at anything except politics. The current Prime Minister is not much better having been a teacher before politics, but at least he has that much. Most politicians are lawyers, political studies majors, or economists. There have been a few medical doctors although these days of medical shortages we may prefer that they had stuck to their professions. But where are the steel workers, the engineers, the scientists, the miners, the fishermen



Numéro 153

September/September 2022

Page 4

Representational Diversity (Concluded)

(fisherpersons?), or oil workers?

“A conservative is a man who believes that nothing should be done for the first time.”
- Alfred E. Wiggam

If our legislatures are to truly represent the people who elect them, there must be more of these people. How can the law makers pass judgement on the labour movement without steel, auto and mining workers? How can these bodies make intelligent decisions of large procurements without engineers? How can they decide scientific policy without scientists? Oh, you can say that the various ministers have access to these specialists in the civil service. But civil servants don't make laws or decide policy. As we have seen several times over the last few years, governments are prone to make decisions despite any input from experts. Just look at Donald Trump and Covid, or most conservative movements and climate change.

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

So, why aren't these vocationally diverse people not represented? It can't be about the pay. Most workers would make more salary in a legislature than on a shop floor. It could be about the cost of entry into the election process where they have to spend money to get any name recognition. But surely attractive candidates could get some support from the political parties. Or could they? Could it be that political parties have a prejudice against these 'ordinary' people? Could a party that serves the interests of the lawyers, economists and political majors see these working people as not worthy of entering their hallowed ground? That ordinary people are to be ruled, not be rulers. Is that the attitude?

If we are to face the technical and scientific challenges of today and the future, it is imperative that we bring more expertise in other fields into our legislative bodies. Ways must be found to bring more diversity into those who make our laws and policies.

“At least two-thirds of our miseries spring from human stupidity, human malice and those great motivators and justifiers of malice and stupidity: idealism, dogmatism and proselytizing zeal on behalf of religious or political ideas.”

- Aldous Huxley

Food for thought, I think. Oh, that I was 30 years younger!



Kissing the Cod by 6439 Hugh Spence

A recent novel travel experience made me wonder how many of my classmates, or even Canadians generally, have ever visited Newfoundland and Labrador, the province known as The Rock. I suspect the number, or at least the percentage, may be quite small.

On my first visit to The Rock, in the summer of 1964 as a Midshipman aboard *HMCS Columbia*, we berthed in St. John's for a few days to give the ship's crew some time ashore. We had a grand layover in that very old harbour, but despite some seagoing service on the east coast I hadn't been back since.

Dipping into our bucket list, my wife Chris and I recently went on a 12-day coach tour of Newfoundland and Labrador. We lucked in to a group of 37 fun-loving crazies who made the trip with a super tour director, a former local secondary school teacher. (The touring company was *McCarthy's Party*, which, run by native Newfoundlanders, is much in demand. We booked through CAA.)

I won't present a travelogue, but can certainly give the tour an AA+ for what it covered, including two salt water boat cruises, a round-trip ferry ride to visit Labrador and overnight there, and an introduction to Gander and its stupendous airport, the *Come from Away* civic hero of 9/11.

I should mention that during one of the boat rides we were Screeched in a traditional ceremony where you become a member of a special order by downing a small tot of Newfie screech (coarse rum) and kissing a cod fish on its ugly, rubbery lips. No mask allowed! (Actually, the routine involves one volunteer from the tour group doing the cod smooch for all the rest.)



Watching out for nature is an interesting feature of the tour, everything from whales to puffins, birds of all sorts, caribou and moose. The latter giants are not originally native to Newfoundland but were introduced years ago as a free-range red meat source (shoot your own dinner!) But without any natural predators they over-proliferated and became a really serious hazard on highways. However, despite their reported large numbers we only saw two, one male, one female (just her butt disappearing

into the roadside undergrowth.) One joke on our bus was that in the moose world, you'll never find a female with a big rack!

The nation we know as Canada is a mere pup historically speaking in comparison to Newfoundland and Labrador, which has seen Europeans profiting from its vast marine natural resources for over ten centuries, beginning with the Vikings. It also has a good deal of military history which comes as a surprise to some visitors. As an ex-naval person, I was particularly taken by the saga of *HMS Raleigh*, an almost new British cruiser commanded by a knight of the realm that went aground in a foggy storm near L'Anse Amour (Love Cove) Labrador in 1922 and couldn't be refloated. All but a few of her crew were saved and sheltered with the aid of the folks in a local hamlet, mostly members of the same family, who were granted ownership of the cove in perpetuity by the British Monarchy for their efforts. The Raleigh's captain and navigator were court marshalled and then retired in ignominy.

Towards the end of the trip, a highlight for me was a self-organized visit to *The Crow's Nest* in St. John's. That historic officers' refuge from WW II convoy duty was set up in 1942, so is the same age as moi. It is a mess/wardroom/club really jam-packed with naval memorabilia, including the periscope from the German



Numéro 153

September/September 2022

Page 6

Kissing the Cod (Concluded)

submarine U-190. The club's reputation as the last happy refuge for many men who subsequently went down with their ships under U-boat attack makes for a touching, reflective visit even if the bar isn't open!



At the bottom of the 59 steps to the historic Crow's Nest.

To wind up this salty dip, we found on the tour that unlike some years ago, Newfunlanders are now quite happy to make fun of themselves and even appreciate Newfie jokes, a kind of humour that used to be considered a bit insulting to them. Here's a fine example:

Three outport women were taking tea and the discussion got around to birth control, a big issue on The Rock where some women used to have 10, 12, 16 children due to a lack of leisure entertainment in their remote, water access-only communities. (Well, that's what they blamed!)

Mary shyly reveals she uses the pill, started after her third child. Joan says she didn't like taking chemicals so she and her mate use a condom, despite its effect on spontaneity, to keep their brood at three also. Rose is a bit embarrassed but announces she and her husband Davy use the bucket method.

"The bucket mettud? What in hell is dat?" chorus the other two moms. "Well," says Rose, "I tried de udder two mettuds but dey din't work too well fer us, so when we gots to eight kiddies we tried using de bucket. Works a treat, so it does."

"Ya see, Davy loiks to do it standin up and since he's way shorter than me, he stands on an up-turned bucket to get on wit the bizness. I watch real careful loik as Davy grinds away, and when his eyes start to cross I kicks over de bucket!"

Dontcha love those Newfies!



Numéro 153

September/September 2022

Page 7

Letters

This first e-mail (In two parts) is from **6440 Tony Goode** in response to the article from **Alain Pellerin** in Edition 152 on the Arbour Report.

"It's very encouraging to see our Class supporting Dr. Leuprecht as well as the CMC survey. As you may recall, I was the President of the RMC Club(as it was then) when Greg Maddison was working on his report. I was interviewed by him and some of his team and I like to think that some of the Club's views on the subject made it into the final report. As a previous commandant of RRMC, I think that Arbour's views on RMC are fundamentally flawed and reflect her lack of understanding of the role played by the Colleges in supporting the fundamental ethos of the Canadian Armed Forces. While RMC grads do not form the majority of the officer corps of the CF, the fact that they all graduated from institutions whose motto of Truth Duty Valour formed the basis of the ethics taught at the colleges, however badly those may have been inculcated over the years. RMC grads are at the core of virtually every officer classification across the CF and as such form the nucleus of the commissioned officers who lead the CF, where they can provide leadership on many of the issues that have plagued the CF over the past few years."

"While it is a bit dated now, Harry produced an excellent paper summarizing all the work that went on to adapt RMC to modern day realities. It certainly puts the lie to many of Mme Arbour's recommendations. However, based on my own career, there is no substitute for strong personal leadership making sure that all subordinates understand the senior officer's approach to ethical issues and harassment. As Commandant of RRMC, I managed the introduction of female cadets into Roads; I had to do the same thing again when I assumed command of Training Group Pacific after leaving Roads. In both cases, I made it clear to staff and cadets what I expected of them in the changed environment. I like to think that while there were some issues, overall, the transition went relatively well. "

6632 Don Hansen also had some thoughts on the same subject.

"In the 1961 entry year at Royal Roads, not only were there no female cadets, as a recruit I recall having a stress level high enough to have zero interest in any sort of sexual activity. Clearly equal treatment would have required opening a new military college or colleges for the fair sex. This was not done.

We have a brand-new system of integrated colleges. Anything new has a break in period with rough spots. Frankly I can not imagine a worse situation than having a hungry legal profession looking for billable hours with cadets under the stress level that we had.

If militarily expedient perhaps a full female college system should be studied, possibly experimented with by way of study. The forces and staff at colleges have plenty to work on without guarding against no no happenings or insinuations experienced or imagined becoming a feeding ground for billable hours.

I fully acknowledge to knowing nothing about the subject."

6660 Waine McQuinn had the following thoughts on **Gord Forbes** blog on criticism.

"In line with Gord's observations, I have criticized hundreds of surveys that I have received over the years. At the same time, I have personally drafted a few national business surveys as well as a couple of Departmental system wide computer user surveys.

The first question is "What is the objective of the survey". From there one considers what appropriate questions need to be asked and how many questions are needed to provide the desired info.

There are many issues in drafting a survey. Who is actually drafting the survey in question and will there be an opportunity for independent review of the survey questions?"



Numéro 153

September/September 2022

Page 8

Ottawa Area Class Lunch

Following a tradition established by recently departed classmate **Jim Carruthers**, **6540 John Hilton** organised a luncheon for Ottawa-based classmates. This was the first such function since the onset of the COVID pandemic and was a welcome “coming out” event. It was held at the Broadway Restaurant in Barrhaven which very kindly set aside a semi-private area for our gathering and enhanced the event with excellent service and a wide and tasty menu selection.

Seventeen classmates attended: **Adams, Amundrud, Archer, Astley, Braham, Cale, Cable, Clarkson, Colfer, Cope, Corbett, Emond, Hilton, Humphrey, Jensen, & Spence**. Special mention to Don Amundrud who was attending one of these functions for the first time.

As a heads up, **Charlie Emond** mentioned that the next Teaching Excellence Award would be on 18 November. More details to follow.

All were agreed that these lunches were useful opportunities to keep in touch and **John Hilton** undertook to organise them on a 5-6 weekly basis.

Closing Notes

I think there are a number of topics here that should generate some further discussion and I hope that you will take a moment to share your thoughts. I’m still looking for updates on the great silent majority out there so don’t be shy—put pen to paper. Our numbers are shrinking and there is no time to waste!

As a staunch monarchist I was saddened by the passing of Queen Elizabeth and spell bound by her funeral with its pageantry and remarkable precision. That said, there may be some of you with similar or contrary views on the event and the monarchy in general that you might wish to share