

Class of 65 Newsletter

Bulletin d'Information—Classe de 65

Number/Numéro 155



December/décembre 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

I'm taking advantage of our pre-Christmas weather bomb that I am sure is creating havoc with many of your holiday plans. Nonetheless, Janet and I would like to extend our very best wishes to all of you for a very merry holiday and a happy new year. This will probably be the last edition from home for the next several months as we will be heading for some sunshine (hopefully) in mid-January.

It is a relatively brief edition with just a couple of updates and other short items, and another thought provoker from our resident blogger, Gord Forbes.

But first a sad note. E-Veritas of 9 November reported the passing of **7291 Tony Keefer, Class of 1967**. Tony was the younger brother of classmate **6395 Bowie Keefer**. On behalf of the entire Class of 65, I would like to pass along our sincere condolences to the Keefer family.

A Meeting in Belgium (Revisited)

6611 Doug Cope had the following comment on **Rick Archer's** article in Edition 154.

"I just read your latest newsletter and the story that Richard wrote about the Dieppe Raid. You may be interested in this story that just surfaced about a mysterious flag that was involved in the Dieppe Raid.

<https://ottawa.citynews.ca/local-news/mystery-flag-to-mark-80th-anniversary-of-disastrous-dieppe-raid-on-remembrance-day-6065091>

As an aside I see that Captain Denis Whitaker was of the First Battalion, Royal Hamilton Light Infantry (RHLI).

My mother was born in Beamsville, Ontario and I once asked her why she never saw or spoke of the guys that she went to high school with. Her short response was that most of them died when they went ashore at Dieppe with the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry.

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2023 TEA Award

As advertised in Edition 154, the annual Class Teaching Excellence Award was held at RMC on 14 November. **6508 John Adam**, **6398 Charles Emond**, and I attended in person and were joined by a number of Classmates for a pre-presentation discussion via Zoom.

The presentation itself was well attended and preceded by the giving out of a number of academic awards. The lecture by the award winner, Captain Arman Poonja provided interesting insights into his teaching philosophy and methods. The photo below is of Captain Poonja and John and Charles.



Ottawa Area Class Lunch

The next scheduled Class of 65 lunch for Ottawa area members is 9 January at the Broadway Restaurant on Strandherd Drive in Barrhaven. If you intend on participating and have not yet done so, please let John Hilton know so that appropriate space can be booked



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Taxes by 6533 JG Forbes

The other day I had a call from a gentleman from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. He wanted to talk about, what in the Federation's opinion, was the horror of pay raises for Members of Parliament. He thought it was a scandal in these economic times. When I got a chance to speak, I pointed out that if we did not pay MPs a decent remuneration, you could not attract the quality of people that you needed in government. Could you imagine the kind of people you would get to run the country if you paid them inadequate salaries? He didn't seem quite happy with that response. He seemed really upset when I said that, in my opinion, we did not pay enough taxes for all of the services that we got from each level of government. He quickly terminated the call after that.

"I never did give them hell. I just told the truth, and they thought it was hell."
- Harry S Truman

That got me thinking (always a dangerous habit) about that state of our economy. One of the things that we are beset with is a large federal debt, about one trillion dollars right now, and the government's apparent inability to fully fund several obligations. The largest discretionary item in the federal government's budget is national defence, and yet we seem incapable of fully funding that institution to anywhere near NATO's target. The same deficiency is found in health care where the current expenditure cannot provide decent health care in any province or territory. Despite calls for an overhaul of the whole system and the larger costs of the pandemic and influenza, the truth is that the system has been underfunded for years. And yet, every election, political parties promise more programs for taxpayers' consumption. But no new taxes are offered to pay for them. Dental plans, \$10 childcare and other such programs are in the process of implementation but with no way of paying for them it would appear. And we go on welcoming these goodies.

So, it would appear that my argument about paying too little in taxes has some merit. Other countries, most notably the Scandinavian countries pay much higher taxes than us and accept the fact. Tax rates that hover around 70% and Value Added Tax (VAT, the equivalent of our GST) of 18% and 19% are accepted in these countries. So why are we not willing to pay our way? One answer is that we look too closely at the US and their taxes and think that we pay too much. The problem with that is that there is no equivalency. True, the US supports a large and expensive military, but their government health care spending is relatively minimal compared to other western countries. They do not have near the number of social programs as these other countries. And yet, the US has a national debt of \$20 trillion, an amount that is 20 times the per capita debt in Canada.

The other question is, if we want to keep our taxes low and not raise our national debt, where do we cut? What programs would the majority of the country accept? The elimination of the armed forces? The death of federal and provincial health care? Because these are probably the only programs that are large enough to balance the books and pay down the debt. MP salaries are a miniscule line item in the budget, what private industry would call the cost of doing business.

"Read, every day, something no one else is reading. Think, every day, something no one else is thinking. Do, every day, something no one else would be silly enough to do. It is bad for the mind to be always part of unanimity."
- Christopher Morley



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Closing Notes

That's thirteen years of Newsletters under my belt. It has served me by keeping in touch with classmates who otherwise would have faded from memory. I hope it has served a similar use to others. That said, there are still many of you out there who have remained silent, perhaps by choice. However, if not, you might give some thought and a brief moment to an article on your life since 1965 or any other subject that you might think would be of interest. Given our very varied group, items of interest will have a very broad range.

Happy and safe holidays to all!!