

Class of 65 Newsletter

Bulletin d'Information—Classe de 65

Number/Numéro 173



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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

Another year is coming to a close—not a banner year with the conflict in Ukraine still raging, and the Middle East embroiled in an escalating war of destruction with no end in sight. One can only hope that saner heads will prevail in 2025 and the world can turn its collective attention to global warming and the plight of seemingly endless streams of refugees.

That said, you will find little in the following pages that is designed to address those issues. There are, however, a number of topics to deal with and I shall plunge right in. There is no deliberate order of priority in what follows, except to kick off with the sad news of the passing of another classmate.

6562 Arnold (Arnie) Powell

6668 Barry Mitchell passed along the very sad news that **6562 Arnie Powell** had passed away on 1 November as a result of a fall at home. The Class of 65 joins in expressing its sympathy to Arnie's Wife JoAnn and the rest of his family.

RMC Alumni Association Annual Report 2024

In the event you have not seen it in e-Veritas or elsewhere, the following is the link to the subject report. <https://www.rmcalumni.ca/en/rmc-alumni-association-2024-annual-report/> I think this is a well constructed report that is worthy of our attention.



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2024 TEA Presentation

As forecast in the last newsletter, this year's TEA presentation was held on 18 November in Currie Hall and simultaneously via Zoom. Given the availability of Zoom it was somewhat disappointing that only six members of the Class of 65 attended by Zoom or in person. As has become the custom in recent years, **6496 Charlie Emond** made some introductory remarks on behalf of the Class.

Despite the slim Class turnout, a couple of interesting, related topics were raised and are summarised here for your consideration and further comment.

First, it was noted that none of us are getting any younger and that it was perhaps time to consider asking another younger class to assume joint stewardship of the award to ensure that it can continue to flourish "after we are gone."

Second, and noting the rather lukewarm response to the current format for the Ex Cadet weekend, it was suggested that a more meaningful alternative for our Class' 60th anniversary in 2025 would be to link it to the Annual TEA Award and include a social event or two at the College and an overnight (or two) at a local hotel. Once again, your thoughts and comments would be appreciated.

Annual Alumni Christmas Lunch

The Annual Ottawa Chapter of the RMC Alumni Association Christmas luncheon was held at the Hylands Golf Club on Thursday, 12 December. It was well attended by about 130 alumni, including three from the Class of 65—**Terry Colfer, Charlie Emond**, and yours truly. We were served an excellent turkey lunch with all the trimmings and enjoyed the opportunity to catch up with old friends from other years. A roll call at the end of the dinner revealed that the oldest Class represented was 1952! And the youngest—1998.

The following provides a good idea of the size of the crowd and of the venue which was ideal for that sort of gathering and a warm reminder of golf as we start to feel the effects of winter.





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Marriage After Sixty

By 6566 Doug Ross

After a full career in the RCAF and the CAF, I remarried in 2012 well past the age of 60. According to the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act (CFSA), if I should die before my current wife (Mary) does, she will receive none of the benefits detailed for surviving spouses in this pension plan because she is offensively and erroneously labelled as a “Gold Digger”. The “Marriage After 60” clause in this archaic CFSA should have no place in veteran's legislation. Its genesis is the Militia Pension Act of 1901 (repeat 1901) which authorized the Government to exercise discretion to deny benefits to widows deemed “unworthy”. As a result, a widow at that time could not receive survivor benefits (today's pension, health and dental services) if he had married her after the age of sixty. Fast forward to 2024 - and the circumstances and the current legislation are eerily similar!

I contributed to the CFSA throughout my entire 34 year career and always thought that one of the important benefits was a 50 per cent Survivor's Benefit and continuing health and dental care upon my demise. Not so because I was 69 years old when I remarried! This “clawback provision” adversely affects more and more CAF retirees in view of the fact that they are living longer and marrying for a second time. There have been several recent serious attempts to repeal this “Marriage After 60” clause by many veterans organizations and government committees who advocate strongly - but they all fall on deaf ears because of “cost containment” issues and the impact on other parallel pension plans. In other words, if the vets were to get it, all government pensioners should get it. Hogwash! Our veterans merit special consideration and deserve better!

I wonder if any of our '65 classmates are in the same predicament? Perhaps you could let me know by replying to me by e-mail or by stating so in this newsletter.



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Letters

6601 Ernie Cable: As with your previous newsletters I enjoyed your most recent Edition 172.

I was saddened to learn of the passing of Derek Carrier who was a talented running back on our RMC senior football team. He was certainly one of our team's stalwarts with the ability to play in more advanced leagues.

I don't think the newsletter should be a political voice piece, however, that should not prevent us from commenting on events that concern us about the future of our country, particularly as a veteran on the well being of our military. During my 35 years of service I had the opportunity to serve shoulder to shoulder with five of our allies. Our military was relatively small but we were respected for being effective and fighting above our weight. To see our International reputation waning because of our government's dereliction of its military is a serious concern to me. I feel it is incumbent on us who served during those halcyon years to inform the public of our concerns with the aim of expediting government fulfillment of our defence treaty obligations. To this end I support your inclusion of LGen (Ret'd) Michel Maisonneuve's presentations in the newsletter as food for thought. The only problem I suspect is that you are preaching to the converted. As we saw his presentations were tossed into the political abyss with little consequence. His presentation should be tailored to the average citizen and published in a more public forum.

To answer your question regarding the aircraft photograph at the end of edition 172, it is a German Bucker Bu 131 B "Jungmann" dual seat training aircraft introduced in October 1933. This type was likely used to clandestinely train Luftwaffe pilots during the German arms prohibition era prior to the Second World War.

6602 Jim Cale: There is a very good reason for most organizations consisting of people of diverse backgrounds banning discussion of politics within their meetings or other organization related activities. That is simply because their membership consists of people with varying political views and such discussion tends to be divisive. Our class is no different. Our members come from a wide variety of backgrounds and have widely different political views. On one level it could be argued that political discussion is a harmless activity where friends amicably discuss political philosophy. But that is not what political discussion is about today, if it ever was. An individual's political view is based on his ideology, beliefs and biases. The majority of political discourse that I have experienced has been negative by attacking the policies and leaders of a political party other than one's own, often getting into ad hominem attacks. This discourse only serves to reinforce the bias of like minded individuals and does nothing to change the bias of those with a contrary view. So, in my mind these discussions are really pointless. More importantly, I view the Class of 65 Newsletter as a means of uniting us as classmates. Political discussion can quickly upset that unity. I vote NO!

6533 Gord Forbes: First, I want to congratulate you on the excellent and informative newsletter you produce. I always look forward to getting and reading it (even if some of my pieces cause such consternation from some of our classmates). In edition 170 you gave your thoughts on the Canadian Forces and asked for responses. The following is my response to that challenge. I hope that you find it useful. It might even spark further input.

Our concerns, even fears about the US election have come true. Donald Trump has been elected as the next President of the US. Not only that, it appears he will enjoy a majority in the two houses of congress. Be prepared for a bumpy ride.

But now let's look at your ideas for the Canadian military.



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Letters (Concluded)

The 'Corvette Navy'. This not the first time that this argument has been put forward. In the late 1970s, I was in the Directorate of Maritime Requirements (DMRS) in charge of above water weapons. There were a couple of Future Ship Studies that went on during that time. In one instance, I did a study and wrote a paper on why we did not have area air defence (long range) air defence systems on our ships. The assumption that Canada had been working on was that we would always be working with other navies that had such weapons and would therefore provide that protection to us and others. The noted navies we used as examples were the USN and RN. It turned out that these navies only built different types of ships for their own balanced fleets. There was no excess to address our needs. We needed our own capability. The result of this study was the impetus for the Tribal Class Update and Modernization Project (ironically called TRUMP) to outfit those four ships with area air defence missile systems (US Standard Block 2 Missiles). However, if we assume that we would only be working in the future with the USN in which almost all of their destroyers now carry Standard Missiles, it could be argued that this bolsters the case for the ASW corvette navy. But again, it is an assumption that that would be the case. A more likely scenario is that we will probably work alone most of the time. A class of capable destroyers such as the Canadian Surface Combatant or a mix of ASW 'corvettes and air defence destroyers in a ratio of about four to one is probably a better move.

I've always wondered why we need submarines. The only justification that I heard for their need was that so we would get information from the NATO submarine authorities about the location of US and British submarines so we could ensure safety for our variable depth sonars. The best definition I ever heard of diesel submarines was "The sardines' revenge – a tin box full of oily men." When nuclear submarines were being considered for Canada in the 1980s, I looked at their upkeep costs and figured that they would bankrupt the Canadian Forces.

As for the F35s and their single engine, I again remember when the New Fighter Aircraft project was going on. Air Force pilots were horrified that one of the short-listed candidates was the F16, another single engine plane. They told of the terror that would arise if they had an engine failure over the high arctic. They were very relieved when the F18, a two-engine aircraft, was chosen. It is true that we have had single engine fighters in the past, namely the Sabre and the F104, but they were only used operationally in Europe where it could be concluded that an engine failure was much less catastrophic. Your plea that the Air Force should concentrate only on NORAD bolster the argument that the F35 is not the right aircraft for our fighter needs. It is a multi-purpose aircraft and we need a dedicated interceptor.

One of the problems with Canadian Forces procurement of major systems is our proclivity to add Canadian extras to existing off the shelf (OTF) systems. A relatively minor change to the OTF system can have two significant problems. The first problem is the increased cost which can be quite significant. Also, it will lengthen the delivery timeline for the system as the new feature(s) are integrated and tested. There is also an increase in risk. That is not to say that there have been some notable achievements of Canadian developed systems. In the Navy alone there has been systems like SHINPADS (ships integrated processing and display system), a command and control system, developed by our own Jim Carruthers, not to mention the introduction of large helicopters to destroyer escorts. But they came at a cost and took time.



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A Christmas Compendium

By 6533 Gord Forbes

Since I started this blogging nonsense eleven years ago, I have frequently written a Christmas theme entry. Many of you are fairly new to my writing and therefore have not read all of these masterpieces. So, to give you something to read other than your bible or Christmas cards during this time, I present links to several of these pieces.

To get you off on a happy note, here are a couple with a more humorous (I hope you agree) theme found at these links.

<https://gordf.blogspot.com/2024/12/christmas-gift-ideas.html>.

<https://gordf.blogspot.com/2024/12/tis-season-to-be-shopping.html>.

I think of myself as something of an amateur historian including ancient history. Therefore, three of the blogs are of a more historical nature as follows.

<https://gordf.blogspot.com/2024/12/one-more-christmas-blog.html>.

<https://gordf.blogspot.com/2024/12/a-most-influential-man.html>.

<https://gordf.blogspot.com/2024/12/we-dont-talk-about-that.html>.

One blog is a hope. It may seem a forlorn hope, but I believe that even one or two steps can make a difference.

<https://gordf.blogspot.com/2024/12/my-christmas-wish.html>.

And finally, one blog is a personal one. Unfortunately, the village no longer adorns my house since it is smaller than my previous place and the trains have now also gone.

<https://gordf.blogspot.com/2024/12/the-christmas-village.html>.

If you choose to read these pieces, you can do it find of like a countdown to Christmas, one reading very couple of days. Or you can settle back, maybe in front of a fire with a glass of wine and binge watch the entire seven offerings.

Either way, I hope that you enjoy them and that this leads to a very Merry Christmas.



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Closing Notes

Well that's it for another year. Janet and I are not going to Florida this year—the cost of medical insurance is way off the clock. Instead we are going to break up the winter a bit with a couple of cruises—one in January to the Eastern Caribbean and, in March/April a river cruise from Avignon to Paris.

I hope all of you have a wonderful holiday season and weather the winter with your usual aplomb.

The following photo was taken by **Terry Colfer** while cruising from Florida to Montreal. A beautiful picture. Can anyone identify the nationality, type and class of ship in the photo?

