

# Class of 65 Newsletter

## Bulletin d'Information—Classe de 65



**Number/Numéro 182**

**Jan/jan 2026**

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 trust everyone enjoyed the holiday season and are now settling into the New Year. I would like to say "Happy New Year", but unfortunately the latest adventures by "the greatest President in American History" (his words, not mine) and his musings on further territorial excursion/expansions do not bode well.

This issue will be relatively short but includes some important observations by **Phil Bury**; an update from our current Professor in Leadership; another personal view on things from **Gord Forbes**; and, more revelations from **Peter Jackson's** memory bank.

### Comments on the CMCRB Report

**By 6339 Phil Bury**

These are comments by one ex-cadet who values his time at both Military Colleges. They come embarrassingly late in the day, but I hope they might be of some use.

Recommendation 17: Core Curriculum. Recommendation 17 should be revisited. The rationale for elimination of the Core Curriculum is weak, and the Core is written off much too lightly. The paragraph "Fourthly", p.53, applauds the Core and then writes it off casually as too costly. All the virtues applauded in that paragraph are vital to the formation of a professional officer. The casual "This is particularly true given the availability of alternative mechanisms for achieving similar outcomes" is unhelpful and leads nowhere. Recommendation 17 suggests no such alternative. I (6339 Bury, '65) took what was reputedly the toughest programme then available, Engineering Physics, but I value my exposure to the Humanities at least as highly. That exposure is essential for a professional officer who will make life and death decisions with enormous implications, in war and peace. A classroom course in "Ethics" won't do it; Shakespeare might. Training in critical thinking and the ability to write a coherent paper are best learnt in the Humanities. The other part, providing an element of technical literacy to the Arts students, is equally vital to an officer in this age. As for the demands on a Cadet's time: we managed. One of the great strengths learnt at the Colleges is time management, and they're going to have to learn it (qv John Scott Cowan)

Bilingualism. The discussion in the report is valid, and the recommendations sound. Comment: Classroom instruction alone won't do it. It appears today as it did in the '60s, that CMR St-Jean is a bilingual college and RMC Kingston is not. The very useful custom in CMR in the day was the "Language of the Day" where everything outside the classroom happened in the official language of the day, including at the table and in conversations between roommates inside the cabin. It provided the basics to Cadets who had never before heard the other language, and a better grounding than all the classroom hours.



# Numero 182

## Jan/jan 2026

Page 2

### CMCRB Report (concluded)

First Year Orientation Program. The observation that there is no programme standard is valid, and there should be one. The recommendation to eliminate FYOP is a non sequitur and misguided. Replacement with an “Orientation Week” misses the point, as does the suggestion to do it again in Second Year. FYOP forms the vital “sense of belonging and identity”. It is the Rite of Passage, of which the Obstacle Course is merely the culmination, and Badging Parade the formal sign. The Obstacle Course is the demonstration of the achievements in FYOP and would be a shambles without it – I hope the Board watched some. The pride shown by Cadets as they complete the Obstacle Course *in a formed body* is an elegant demonstration of a thorough FYOP – and a fine demonstration of leadership by more senior Cadets. Cleaning barracks, inspections, physical training etc are common in military life. For the junior ranks whom the graduating Cadet will eventually command, it’s more demanding and goes on for a lot longer. Two weeks is the minimum for the new Cadet to actually get her or his mind into this new world. As for shortage of sleep, that too is a fact of military life. 6 ½ hours a night for a couple of weeks will not hurt anyone (and is likely to be repeated in exam time). Those lucky enough to serve as officers will spend a good part of their lives with less sleep than that, and for longer periods. Falling asleep in class won’t hurt much, they’ll catch up, may be partly a reflection on the prof, and surely will happen throughout a Cadet’s time at the CMC, as it no doubt happens in McGill etc.

Recommendation 38: CCOR Discipline and Sanctions. Mme Arbour’s observation of some abuses of power by Cadet officers is no doubt true and is shocking. But it is entirely the result of poor leadership *by the staff*. The Board’s observation that the staff are too much encumbered by administration overhead (and perhaps, pursuit of an advanced degree) to do their jobs; is the answer. A Cadet’s experience in a CCOR position will be meaningless without the duty to impose discipline, and this comes with the duty to impose minor sanctions. To not allow this is to throw the baby out with the bathwater. The sanctions or punishments properly available to a Cadet officer are trivial. Legitimate sanctions can be reviewed *by the staff*, even if after the fact, and can do no harm. Minor injustice and grievance (as opposed to abuse) is a fact of military life, especially for the junior ranks whom the future officer will eventually command, and are a valuable life lesson. As for best practices, I believe that West Point, Annapolis and Colorado Springs give significant authority to Cadet officers.

Conclusion. The CMCRB have done good work, and their Report is positive and helpful. To my mind, there are errors in it that arise from misunderstanding. But on the whole, the Report should do much good.

*Editor: Phil’s thoughtful comments were agreed by several classmates. The most comprehensive response was provided by 6560 Andrew Nellestyn as follows:*

Phil. Your comments are noted and supported. Much appreciated! As a former RMC professor and concurrently Squadron Commander (3 years) I was privileged to be in a unique position to assess the philosophy underpinning cadet training and the production of officers and the implementation of these objectives.

I concur with your comments and recommendations including language instruction - specifically French days. Your observation that principally staff, not cadets, set the tone and example wrt to personal abuse is valid. Notwithstanding, conduct and ethics must be jointly practiced and evident. And promoted by the Commandant and Director of Studies.

Re the mix of the humanities, science and engineering, this is essential but must be balanced. STEM pervades all our endeavours but must not be construed as the golden calf.

And ethics MUST be accorded full expression for without it the colleges will be bereft of honour, purpose and legitimacy.



**Update—Professor in Leadership**  
**By Holly Ann Garnett**

Dear Class of 1965,

I wanted to send a note to update you on my activities in my second year as the Class of 1965 Professor in Leadership. My work focuses on strengthening democratic life in Canada and abroad, and it was certainly an interesting year in this field! As you may recall, my main project as the Class of 1965 Professor in Leadership is to engage undergraduate students in work with civil society and government organizations on the front lines of strengthening democratic life. This year, a new class of students took part in the Undergraduate Partnered Research Programme, which is sponsored by the Class of 1965 via the course release provided by the Professorship. For the second year, ten students took part in advanced study on democratic life in Canada and undertook research projects in collaboration with partner organizations from civil society and government. For example, NCdt Nolan Skolski worked with Elections British Columbia using the organization's 2024 post-election survey data to gauge public trust in the implementation of technology in the voting process. NCdt Skolski will be presenting his work in September at an international workshop on Technology and Democracy in Vancouver. You can read the full reports from the 2024-2025 Undergraduate Partnered Research Programme online.

In the Winter semester, I started a sabbatical and served as the Fulbright Research Chair in Canada-US Relations at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. I arrived in Washington, D.C in January, just in time for a number of dynamic situations to arise in Canada-US relations. My experience in Washington was a firsthand experience of political tension between democracies today. With a sudden interest in Canadian politics due to ongoing trade issues and interest in the Canadian federal election, I was able to give a number of public talks and media interviews about Canadian politics in Washington to provide clear, accurate information to academics and public officials.

Drawing on these experiences, my work this year has focused on the resiliency of democracies to global risks and crises. Democracies are at risk of backsliding around the globe, due to the challenges posed by threats including technology and artificial intelligence, climate change and global migration. My work in this field has included a publication in the journal *Democratization* on "Electoral Integrity Resilience: Protecting Elections During Global Risks, Crises and Emergencies" (with Toby S. James) that outlines the evidence-based best practices for preserving electoral integrity during crises, and a report prepared for the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (with Valere Gaspard and Nicole Goodman) outlining the threats and solutions posed by wildfires and other natural disasters to elections.

Among my new publications this year is also the piece "Officers and Civilians: A Civil-Military Gap in Canadian National Security?" I wrote in collaboration with the previous Class of 1965 Professor in Leadership, Christian Leuprecht, and a fantastic research assistant, which was published in *Armed Forces and Society*. This piece compares the political attitudes of ex-cadets with their civilian peers, testing theories regarding the divergence in ideologies between the two groups. It was a pleasure to collaborate with a previous Class of 1965 Professor in Leadership on this project.

Looking ahead to the 2025-2026 academic year, I will be running the undergraduate partnered research programme again (with a new cohort of students). I also look forward to having the opportunity to meet the Class of 1965 this September at reunion weekend. I remain available to present my research in a formal or informal setting for the Class of 1965. I encourage you to also visit my personal website, where I have listed other ongoing publications. I am always happy to send you copies upon request.

I sincerely thank the Class of 1965 for supporting my work this year.



# Numero 182

## Jan/jan 2026

Page 4

### Things that go BANG in the Night by 6362 Peter Jackson

I always thought that relations between Canadian soldiers and German civilians were pretty good in 1967. Sure, the older German women, many still wearing widows' weeds, would tsk tsk at our spouses wearing mini skirts, but the older German men didn't complain at all.

But this tranquil state was broken one Saturday night by two loud bangs heard outside a popular German bar in downtown Hamer. Seems that there were some opinions expressed in the bar and some soldiers left and returned with two grenades with which they expressed their displeasure.

Fortunately, nobody was hurt but the news spread quickly and everyone was hoping that it wasn't one of their soldiers. Unfortunately for the Strathconas, an inspection of the TDMs (temporary depot munitions) revealed an open box of #36 grenades with two missing. Unfortunately for the Saturday night orderly officer, his duties included checking the TDMs. Being an armoured regiment, the Strathconas had several TDMs and orderly officers normally just drove through the area making sure that all the doors were closed. I mean, who's going to steal a 105mm Armour Piercing Discarding Sabot round. 🤔

My turn to be Orderly Officer was the following Friday night. I arrived in the TDM area and parked my car, leaving the lights on. Being a Friday, the sergeants' mess was well attended, and the Regimental Provost Sergeant could easily see the TDM area from the Sergeants' mess.

I went from TDM to TDM tugging on the door handles to ensure they were locked tight. Suddenly one came open in my hand and there at my feet was an open box of #36 grenades with two missing. As I turned and ran back to my car the Provost Sergeant could tell that something was wrong, so he headed down to the gate to order it closed. When I got there, the first car trying to leave was a couple of troopers and their German girl friends. The trunk was open and they were obviously looking for something. When asked, one of the troopers said that he was looking for some socks, and indeed he was bare foot.

The Provost Sergeant had informed his superiors, and they called the German police. The girls were separated from the troopers while we awaited the arrival of the police, The Provost Sergeant had a look through the trunk of the car. It turned out that the troopers had been doing their laundry and the socks weren't quite dry, hence the bare feet. He also found a centurion screwdriver in the trunk. This is a heavy-duty tool about 20 " long. The driver said he needed it to adjust his carburetor. It also turned out, that these two troopers and their girl friends had been questioned about the grenade throwing earlier in the week.

When the German police officer arrived, he reminded me of the actor Broderick Crawford who starred in an early TV show called Highway Patrol. He was almost as wide as he was tall. He started yelling at the girls in German which I didn't understand but when one of them gave answer he didn't like, he gave her a back hand belt that was plain in any language.

I don't know if these troopers were involved in the grenade throwing. I do know that the reason the door opened was that it had just been repaired that day and I pulled it hard enough to break the cement which had not fully cured.



# Numero 182

## Jan/jan 2026

Page 5

### Life in a Snow Globe by 6533 Gord Forbes

It's snowing here. Certainly not an unusual thing in Canada in winter. This snowfall has big flakes that some people will tell you would indicate that it will not last long. But the forecast calls for this storm to last for many hours and to deposit 10 – 15 centimeters. Unlike some storms, there are no high winds or blizzard like conditions. The snow falls gently. Looking out the window is like living in a snow globe.

Do you remember snow globes, or do you still have one? You know, the spherical things that show a serene winter scene and are full of clear viscous liquid and white flakes. When you shook the globe up, or turned it over briefly, the flakes would rise and then descend gracefully through the liquid. They always had a nostalgic look.

Nostalgia seems to permeate this holiday season. It's as if we are trying to grasp some ideal and hold on to it. Some may argue that this is a modern phenomenon called up by the troubling times we seem to be experiencing. But it's not. Nostalgia has been a part of the celebratory season for as long as I remember, and I'm in my eighties. And like it or not, times have always been challenging for those living it at the time. We reminisce about holidays past. We think about those who have gone. We remember about our childhood, or of our younger years. This is not a bad thing. It is a reflection of who we are and how we got here. It could and should be positive. But there comes a time when the snow globe fades and the snow disappears and we have to re-enter the current world. But hopefully we will do so with a more positive attitude, and we will continue to try and make the world a better place.

### Greenland—Lest we Forget

Greenland is officially the world's largest island that is not a continent. Home to 56,000 people, Greenland has its own extensive local government, but it is also **part of the Realm of Denmark**.

Despite the distance between Greenland and Denmark - about 3532 km between their capitals - Greenland has been associated with Denmark politically and culturally for a millennium. **Greenland was a Danish colony until 1953, when it was redefined as a district of Denmark. In addition to its own local government, Greenland has two representatives in the Danish Parliament, the *Folketing*.**

*Editor: Just thought I would mention it.*