

Class of 65 Newsletter

Bulletin d'Information—Classe de 65



Number/Numéro 185

Apr/avril 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

Once again, a couple of substantive articles and notification of the passing of another classmate.

6188 Jerry Jensen

We received the following notification of the passing of classmate **Jerry Jensen**.

"Gerry passed away in hospital peacefully and surrounded by most of the family Tuesday . Apparently it was an easy passage with no pain although quite unexpected. Funeral arrangements are still pending although cremation was to be immediate. A celebration of life is intended for "when the weather warms up".

The Class of 65 mourns the loss of another friend and comrade.

Letters

The following letters were received in response to articles in the Edition 184.

6575 L.T. Taylor: The information provided by Charles Emond on our gifts to the college was very informative. I really appreciated the information provided by the Naval Cadet on his appreciation of the impact on at least one student. His description of his achievements resulting from working with our professor in leadership sound quite significant. I noted that the Professor in Leadership gives a lecture to which class members can attend. I don't recall any notice of that lecture. I personally would like to know when and where it would be given in the future as I have always enjoyed our TEA recipients' lectures and would consider attending.

6439 Hugh Spence: Thank for another interesting bulletin, Mike, though the article on the Class's benevolence made me gag when I read NCdt Skolski's contribution. I have to ask, is this really the kind of thing the Class wishes to support? He's got great plans for his future but none are really related to serving his country in the military. This is an example of academia run riot at RMC, and why the institution is currently on its knees, in my opinion.

Ernie's treatise on the F-35 purchase was most enlightening.



Numero 185

Apr/avril 2026

Page 2

Class of 65 Endowment Report

Re: Class of 65 Endowment Report December 31, 2025, update:

	Endowed Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Total
Balance as at 31 December 2024	\$510,785.40	\$644,797.87	\$1,155,583.27
Adjustments		\$0.00	\$0.00
Benefactions			
RMC Professorship Benefactions		-\$13,500.00	
RMC Teaching Excellence Award		-\$7,500.00	
RMC St Jean Teaching Excellence Award		-\$5,000.00	
Sub-Total		-\$26,000.00	-\$26,000.00
Interest Attribution			
11.41% interest attribution 2025		\$131.852.05	\$131.825.05
Administration Fees			
1% admin fee 2025		-\$11,555.83	-\$11,555.83
Donations to Endowment			
Donations	\$19,220.00		
Sub-Total	\$19,220.00		
Balance as at 31 December 2025	\$530,005.40	\$739.094.09	\$1,269.099.49

Endowed Funds: This represents the capital portion of Endowment and is typically not touched. It increases as a result of donations or other fund-raising activities undertaken.

Endowed Restricted Funds: This Fund represents the amount of money you have available to expend on the purpose of your Endowment in any given year. This Fund reflects interest attributed to

the market returns achieved by the Alumni Association's Balanced Investment Fund, any Benefactions made in accordance with the purpose of the Endowment, and an annual Endowment administration fee.

Endowment Total: Your Endowment Fund Total represents the actual value of your Endowment as of 31 December 2025 and is achieved by adding the Endowed Funds with your Restricted Fund



F-35 vs Gripen: A Rebuttal

By 6158 Jim Astley

Ernie Cable has argued that the only rational response to the F35 vs Gripen review is to pick the F35 as the superior fighter. I would like to challenge some of his arguments.

In particular, I would challenge

- (partially) the F-35s supposed huge technical advantage,
- the assumption that post Trump we will resume our former relationship with the US,
- the US ambassador's statements about NORAD deficiencies, and
- Ernie's dismissal of the potential Canadian job prospects.

1.1 F35 Technical Advantage

In his opening statement he describes the F-35 as having "far superior capabilities". I'm sure he is referring to the leaked summary page of the DND evaluation which showed an enormous technical advantage for the F-35. Having been a principal in several large DND procurements, I can confidently say that this result was entirely predictable. DND's own statements indicate both fighters meet the Statement of Requirements. The evaluation, however, would have used DND's detailed specification supposedly derived from the SOR. In fact, it is clear that they essentially paraphrased the detailed specification of the F-35 and thus biasing in favour of the F-35. I interpret that to mean that both fighters would do the job, but DND wants what it wants.

1.1.1 History of DND Evaluations and Results

There is a sorry history of the results of "DND wants what it wants". Even as far back as the Aurora. The Aurora was a successful program resulting in great capability. However, a friend who had been in the program office pre-contract confided to me that the office had had great difficulty in writing a spec that would exclude the French/German Atlantique, which could well have been just as good.

The crushing program example was the Maritime Helicopter. The obvious choice was the EH-101 performing superbly in the Royal Navy and with significant commonality with the Cormorant SAR fleet. The NH90 was a good candidate, admittedly a little small in the cabin, but with advanced airframe technology and superb handling characteristics plus a huge order book for the maritime variant. (Canada was originally part of the NH90 program but eventually pulled out). All three candidates proposed mission systems from the same set of suppliers.

The S-92 by comparison was a purely civil helicopter. Sikorsky made great promises of being able to produce a compliant maritime helicopter within four years. In fact, over 10 years later it was unable to meet the specification and the Sea King had to soldier on. DND has now accepted the H-92, but it is not clear that even today it meets the original requirement. By contrast, the RN Merlin midlife update has been operational since about 2007 with an equivalent mission system to that required by Canada.

I won't even go into the problems of the River Class ships caused by "DND wants what it wants"



Numero 185

Apr/avril 2026

Page 4

F35 vs Gripen (Continued)

1.1.2 A Different Look at Relative Capabilities

Back to F-35 vs Gripen performance:

If one looks at published data, it is clear that the F-35's only major advantages over Gripen are networking to other F-35s (I say "other F-35s" because the F-35's datalink is limited to that fighter) and stealth.

For the foreseeable future NORAD will have a mixed fleet of F-22s, F-35s, F-16s and F-15s. The Gripen has the same datalink system that they do, plus its own analogue to the F-35 datalink. It's hard to honestly say that the Gripen would limit NORAD interoperability.

The other major F-35 advantage is stealth. Realistically, that is primarily needed only in the first several days of war with a peer adversary. Canada has not participated in such a war since WW2 and is unlikely to be the spearhead in the next US major war. Stealth is of limited advantage in pursuing bombers or cruise missiles and lack of it would not be an impediment to dealing with air threats over Canada's north, nor would it preclude participation in coalitions of the willing. A case in point is the current Iran war. Israeli and US incursions may have been led by F-35s, but the brunt of the fighting is being done by F-15s and F-16s.

In terms of vehicle performance, the Gripen has a larger payload over a longer range than the F-35. It has a higher top speed and equivalent or better agility. It has a state of the art electronically scanned radar and an EW suite that is best in class (Sweden is known for its prowess in EW). It even, in its current iteration, has AI support to the pilot to manage the tactical scenario.

It can also operate from austere environments, which has to be a big advantage for Canada. The news media has reported that the F-35 will require multi-hundred million dollar upgrades to northern airfields which currently allow CF18 operations.

It is worth remembering that Sweden is on Russia's doorstep and yet they are comfortable putting up their Gripens, even the older versions, against Russian fighters.

I would say that even without considering the Trump issue, the Gripen should be at least as desirable as the F-35.

1.2 The Trump Issue

Now the Trump issue. Our Prime Minister has clearly stated that the Canada - US rupture is not temporary. Trump is a phenomenon but he has remade the US to his model. The demands to yield to being a foreign policy vassal of the US, the demands to bring back manufacturing from Canada to the US, and the right wing radicalization of the US will continue after him.



F-35 vs Gripen (Continued)

I firmly believe that. All indications are that the change in US world posture and attitude to former allies is permanent.

If Canada is to remain a sovereign nation with some latitude in foreign policy, we must break or at least weaken the link to the U.S. military. NATO has been a great organization that has developed the ability for member nations to fight together and be interoperable at a deep level, from procedures to logistics to tactics. It needs to move away from total U. S. dependence and is making baby steps to that end. Canada needs to be part of that.

1.3 Dependence on US Support

The F-35 would tie us even more closely to the U. S. While the rumoured “kill switch” is likely not a thing, it is close to being a thing. Our F-35s share a parts pool with the US controlled inventory. Upgrades and software fixes can only be done in Fort Worth. The mission data load must be provided by the US, as its database is NOFORN. For those not in the know, that means Canadians cannot have any access. It’s not well publicized, but our CF18s were not able to participate fully in operations in the first Gulf War, as the USN was too busy to create a mission load for our aircraft. We were relegated to low threat back areas.

Note that several nations have already suffered from lack of control over system upgrades. They were unable to integrate new weapons onto the F-35, as the U. S. was not interested. If we were to choose the Gripen we would have an in-country ability to bring in new or upgraded weapons.

I would also note that F-35 upgrades are notoriously years late and billions over budget.

As a side note, when I was chief engineer for Lockheed Martin’s pursuit of the Maritime Helicopter Project, we planned to base our mission computer software on that in the MH-60R Seahawk. One of the software modules was data fusion for track identification and management. This module was sourced from our Montreal facility, building on research done in conjunction with Concordia University. Our American compatriots informed us that Canadians would not be allowed to access the software for that module, as incorporating it into the

Seahawk software made it NOFORN in spite of its Montreal origin. This issue will surface in spades for the F-35. I note that Saab has offered full access and control to the Gripen software.

1.4 Relative Cost

I seriously challenge Ernie’s assumption that the Gripen does not provide a cost saving over the F-35. That is purely a Lockheed Martin marketing statement. The economies of scale to lower costs are insufficient to compensate from the simpler and lower cost base of the Gripen. NATO nations that have started F-35 operations are finding that sustainment costs are several times higher than promised and certainly several times more than the Gripen.



F-35 vs Gripen (Concluded)

1.5 Canadian Jobs

Finally, Ernie states without evidence that “the fighter may only bring hundreds of jobs”. I don’t understand why he would think that. Surely any Saab contract would legally solidify its claims. The majority of the jobs will not be in final assembly, but in the support chain. The F-35 support chain is hardwired to be largely dominated by U. S. contractors. Having Canadians in the supply chain would give us operational flexibility. I can recall that when the EH101 contract was cancelled by Chrétien, many thousands of jobs disappeared within two weeks. By contrast, Trump has ordered Lockheed Martin to reshore F-35 jobs to the US. This will result in Canadian firms losing their current F-35 contracts. Those contracts were the result of several hundred million Canadian dollars to allow them to compete for part of the F-35 supply chain.

The jobs created in Canada change the relative cost equation. During the first Sea King Replacement Program Ernst & Young were funded by Paramax (now Lockheed Martin) to estimate the economic effect of Canadian job creation. They found that,

- First, the program jobs would be high value, attracting a better educated work force and thus increasing Canada’s capability,
- Second, that there is a multiplier effect such that each created position supports 3 more jobs in the wider economy, and
- Third, that all these jobs return over 20% of their salary and benefits in income and other taxes thus reducing the net cost of the program.

2.0 Summary

I don’t know how the internal government assessment will play out, but I would hope that the DND slow roll is unsuccessful and a fair evaluation is done.

The Passing of Jim Boyd

By 6544 Rick Johnson

I found the news of the passing of Jim Boyd very upsetting. He was always the picture of health and happiness, and although I don't recall ever having been aware that he was that much younger than me, a did not expect to outlive him.

As recruits, we lived on opposite sides of the parade square, but we did have one thing in common: he and I were the only class of 65 recruits who weighed under 130 lbs. I only weighed 129 pounds soaking wet, which put me in the "featherweight" category along with Jim. This meant that we would each have to fight just a single bout. There would be no subsequent heats: whoever won our three-round bout would be declared the champion of the weight division. That turned out to be me, and as a result, I got the bragging rights and the honour of having my name lettered in gold on a boxing plaque in the main gymnasium. I think the Jim was actually happy that he had not won, because as champion of the featherweight division, I was immediately expected to become part of the college Rep boxing team and obliged to continue the very intense boxing training until the intercollegiate boxing finals were held in



Jim Boyd (Continued)

January.

At that event, there were three universities taking part: the University of Toronto, Queens University, and RMC. That meant that there would have to be at least two bouts fought in each category. In the featherweight division, the reigning champion was from Queen's, so he got a bye in the first round, and I had to fight the chap from the University of Toronto. I gave it my best shot, but my coach was convinced that I would not win the split decision, and so, in an effort to make me feel better, he whispered in my ear, "Don't feel bad, this guy will really get his clock cleaned tomorrow!" Then I was declared the winner! The following evening, I had to fight the boxer from Queens, and he certainly was a tougher competitor. During the second round, he bloodied my nose to the point where the referee considered stopping the fight, but my coach managed to staunch the flow of blood, and the fight continued. I didn't win, but I like to think I wasn't a pushover.



Jim and I slugging it out!

In third and fourth years, Jim and I came together again in Chem Eng. Class. Members of the Chem Eng. Class at the Reunion in 2025 with Jim looking the picture of health and happiness.





Numero 185

Apr/avril 2026

Page 8

Jim Boyd (Concluded)

In addition to his tribute to Jim, Rick had the following comments on items in Edition 184.

I appreciated Ernie Cable's discussion of the F-35/Gripen controversy. He makes good sense, although I have to admit I yearn for the opportunity for the Canadian aerospace sector to be re-developed to the point where we once again had the capability to lead the world in the production of such machines. In the current political climate, I hate the idea of having to spend a single Canadian dollar south of the border.

Like Doug Cope, my wife and I moved into a 3-bedroom apartment a year ago. We'd been in a 4-bedroom side-split with a 2 1/2-car garage and an outdoor pool, so it was quite a transition. Based on my last experience living in an apartment in Ottawa in 1966-67, I wasn't sure how well I'd like it, but selling the house was the only way to be able to access the equity we'd accumulated in the house. A year has passed, and I am very happy with the decision. I love the apartment, and the freedom from maintenance concerns it has brought. We still get to enjoy a pool, but now I don't have to worry about fishing out leaves, balancing the chemicals, or worrying about the cost of keeping it at a comfortable temperature. Oh, and yes, when the time comes, our kids won't have the headache of having to deal with real-estate.

There are no Problems

By 6533 JG Forbes

Do you think you have problems? We all do, I'm sure. There are financial problems, family problems, problems at work, problems with neighbours, health problems, problems with governments. There are so many kinds of problems. But the word 'problem' has such a negative connotation. It feels static. It sticks in your brain. It is kind of like the lump in your stomach when you've eaten too much. It just sits there.

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

- Malcolm Forbes

What if I told you that you could eliminate problems? Oh no, is this one of those feel-good theories that we hear about!? Well, no.

. . . there are only challenges

What if we treated each problem as something else? What if we treat each one as a challenge? Challenge is an action word. Challenge is something you work at. Challenge is something you take action on.

Financial issues – do some budget analysis. See where you can reduce costs, or increase income. If necessary, see a financial counselor.

Family issues – communicate with each other. Actually, talk and listen. Don't let it fester.



Numero 185

Apr/avril 2026

There are no problems (concluded)

Work issues – talk to your boss. Oh, is your boss the problem? Then talk to HR, other managers. If it's absolutely necessary, look for an opportunity in another part of the company or look for another job.

You get the idea. Devise a plan and carry it out. Can't come up with a plan? Then get help to develop one.

The important thing is to do something. Don't succumb to a problem and let it fester. Challenge is something we can all deal with. Give yourself a chance.

"In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on."

- Robert Frost

There are no problems, only challenges.

AND SPEAKING OF CHALLENGES ...

