

# Class of 65 Newsletter

## Bulletin d'Information—Classe de 65

Issue/Numéro 91



Dec/déc 2015

*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

There is some more follow-up to the recent Reunion in this edition including an informative and amusing exchange between **Hugh Spence** and **Gerry Mueller** following on from Gerry's description of his Reunion experience in the last edition.

In addition, **Gord (Navy) Forbes** has produced a politically un-correct piece on political correctness.



Before getting to them (and others), the Ottawa Branch of the Class was pleased to welcome **6471 Derek Carrier** (seen here) to one of its periodic luncheon gatherings at HMCS Bytown. Others in attendance on this occasion were: **Diamond, Mulvihill, Bury, Spence, Archer, Emond, Cale, Jackson (P), Mills, Pyne, Carruthers, Clarkson, and Hampton (66)**.

Finally, **Hugh Spence**, has added a thoughtful piece on a way in which our better halves might be recognised more meaningfully within the context of the Class.

### Reunion Letters

**From 6700 Bob Walker:** First, **Mike**, thank you for this excellent summary issue of the Reunion weekend. You have been busy. **Hugh**, your multifaceted roles in super-organizing our RMC65 reunion activities & events, & handling the money for them all, were exceptional in every element. **Steve**, your CITL initiatives & your cooperative work with the Principal & VPrincipal - Academic, as reflected in Mike's news-letter, are most commendable! Ya done good, Guys!!!

**Jim**, your presence at the Reunion Sat morning parade, as part of the Commandant's & Principal's group march to the dais, was enhanced by your discreet half-waves to admiring classmates like me. Then, almost immediately after the reunion weekend, you reminded us RMC65ers in this eastern Ontario region to get our asses to the 16 November RMC65 Teaching Excellence Award evening. Jim, you are the Energizing Bunny! See you there.



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### Reunion Letters (Continued)

Another Reunion Weekend experience I encountered was **Doug** outlining to me, while he simultaneously was selling his Roadants publication that, a. 2018 would be the 55th year since we Roads 1963 "graduates" had departed RRMC on our way to RMC, and b. our advancing ages should be a consideration/motivating factor that 2018 might be/should be the year for the RRMC 1961-to-63 classmates to make extra efforts to be at that Fall 2018 55-year gathering!

I was inspired & energized by being among our classmates at our 50th RMC65 reunion. The opportunity for Colleen & me to be at the Roads 1963-to-2018 '55th' looks very appealing, especially seeing I have Vancouver Island family relatives to visit. We shall see...

My thanks to each of you for your substantial contributions & support for that reunion weekend & for other RMC65 initiatives that support RMC all through every year. I will see some of you on 16 November.

**6475 Mike Houghton** had the following to add, primarily about some of the points raised in **Gerry Mueller's** article: Gerry, I too enjoyed your article and happy that we met each other during the weekend (my being from CMR). I echo the comments concerning both the "happy box" and the slovenly dress for the March to the Arch ceremony, which to me is the most meaningful event of the entire reunion. Total disrespect in my view and in need of corrective action by the Commandant and RSM. Because I live in Kingston, I get to see cadets of all years parading through the city in all sorts of dress, often very embarrassing to me.

As for the "happy box", if cadets are going to continue to wear the stupid thing, then at least wear it properly. Better still, relegate the pill box to the museum where it rightly belongs and replace it with some form of peaked head dress that, if nothing else, will provide protection from the sun to the nose and eyes. (I'm sure my dad # 2428 is rolling in his grave as we used to enjoy arguing over such items!!!).

Mike, thoroughly enjoyed your souvenir edition plus all of your editions. I receive and enjoy e-veritas, but not as much as your periodicals. Well done and thank you.

**6559 Gerry Mueller** has provided the following addendum to his article in the last edition: Two items I didn't put into my reflections on the weekend.

After the Legacy dinner, returning to my hotel (4 Points by Sheraton) after a drink in Jim Carruther's suite down the road, I walked by the Kingston Brewing Company patio, which was literally a sea of scarlet. I'm not sure that the most formal of RMC dress uniforms is suitable for beer drinking in a pub. (Oh, and the patio is "outside" but not a hat of any kind in sight.)

And then after the Badging Parade, I took a stroll around downtown Kingston, and noted that ahead of me at one point, walking far faster than me, was a newly-badged lady cadet, hand in hand with a well-built guy in shorts and a muscle shirt. From their speed, my charitable nature, which as a clergy-persons I need to work



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### Reunion Letters (Continued)

on, suggested they were late for meeting up with family, but my knowledge of human nature caused me to suspect they were heading for a hotel room. I judge not their personal stuff, but, hand-in-hand. In uniform?

I didn't see the sloppy dress for the March to the Arch from some of the "younger" years live, but did see the posted pictures. No, not acceptable, and something needs to be said about it. To me, it feels like acting out; you made us dress up when we were here, but now we get to wear what we want. Ughh!

As for hats, the college could do worse than think about berets. They are traditionally Canadian, (there would have to be some kind of "shape" standard – AS AN OLD TANKER I WOULD GO FOR THE PULL-DOWN PART JUST TOUCHING THE LEATHER BAND – but that's just me. Colour could be scarlet (the MPs might object, but nobody likes them anyways), or, since hat variety seems to be in anyways (what's with the highland dancers wearing glengarries on parade?), why not service/regiment specific colours, or, if "uniform" is taken seriously, how about black, which, technically is no colour.

### Impressions of a Reunion Newbie—Follow-up

The following is an exchange between **Hugh Spence** and **Gerry Mueller** regarding some of the points raised in Gerry's article in Edition 90. Hugh' remarks are in red.

*Wanted to express my appreciation for your amusing piece in the newsletter about your reunion experiences. (As you know I've mailed you a replacement for your lost nametag, so if you find the original in the bowels of your car you'll have the makings of very tiny matching bookends!)*

Sadly, the detailer did NOT find the name tag, although, as always, did find other long-missing items: a Gerber mini multi-tool, which of course I had replaced and now have two, and 110/220 volt USB chargers, which found its way into the car by means unknown. This of course does not mean the name tag is NOT in the car, it could be magnetically attached somewhere inaccessible. Too bad, the bookend idea sounds attractive!

*A comment on two points you brought up in your article:*

*Pillboxes - fine observation; they haven't a clue and nobody seems to care; the result is a body of keen officer wannabees who simply look foolish, most of the time. FYI: There is a wee cadre of guys, of which I am proudly one, who give vent to their dislike of that silly hat at every possible opportunity. Attached please find a rant on the subject I did for the newsletter four years ago. If you'd like to join this small group of dedicated but frustrated stalwarts, let me know. There are neither dues nor meetings nor special handshakes. And we don't wear hats.*



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## Impressions of a Reunion Newbie (II) (cont)

Count me in (it fits with my belonging to a more religious “Society Against Tacky Vestments”), although I do confess being rather fond of the old beanie, if worn correctly (and I note from Hugh’s attached fulmination that it was in fact an enlisted man’s hat, but it also has some Canadian history in being what the NWMP wore in their trek west). To be worn correctly simply needs a missive from on high, the Commandant or DoC, such as “pill boxes will be worn touching and bending the top of the left ear by 1 mm [or such other number as may from time to time be promulgated], and if the damn thing falls off your chin strap isn’t tight enough. What part of “uniform” is not clear?”. But, I’m sure one could find other 19<sup>th</sup> c. period hats that would not clash with the 19<sup>th</sup> c. period tunics. Or, here’s an idea, how about future 21<sup>st</sup> c. Canadian Forces officers wearing a uniform that is a decently designed composite of what real sailors/soldiers/airpersons(?) are wearing. Navy blue trousers, Army green tunics, Air Force Blue wedgies? Or design a military colleges uniform that is modern, functional. Or whatever. (Somewhere in the photos in eVeritas from the ex-cadet weekend is one of two lady cadets from the German Army, who seem to be wearing a uniform that works.

But another observation on hats. The pith helmets are a thoroughly bad idea. Did any unit in Canada ever wear these things, within Canada? Or anywhere else? [Anybody know Granatstein well enough to ask?] They look ok on (some) men, but on (most) women they are far too large, and make them look like a small person hiding under a large turtle.

*Footnote:* you've probably noticed that cadets with the CF-approved RMC Sikh turban headdress look really sharp (in comparison to their beanie brethren/sisters.) Do you suppose that the new (turbaned) Defence Minister might be amenable to a new cadet hat replacement? After all, that would be a tiny step into "real change".

Yes, I thought the approved turbans looked good (more than good, impressive on one of the Commandant’s ADC’s), and even the plain blue worn by a couple of the Recruit class were well done, and looked “military”. But, who knows what

*Beer cheer* - not sure of the full origin of this but it is surely based on the early army organization of the College, wherein the cadet grand panjandrum, now the CWC, was known as the Battalion Sergeant Major (BSM), highest NCO rank/position. The cheer or chant is based in part on the phonetic alphabet used in the early days of the 20th century for "wireless" communications, where Beer = B (Bravo), Esses = S (Sierra) and Emma = M (Mike), hence **BSM**.

I knew from somewhere in my chequered past that Beer/Esses/Emma was from an early (WW1?) phonetic alphabet, from the beginning of telephony and wireless with unclear channels. (Before RMC, I was an armoured Trooper, and qualified as a Loader/Operator on Sherman tanks. The Operator part was running a large, and flacky, radio; the Loader part was stuffing large shells into a gun, and then catching the very hot shell casings as they were ejected, trying not to let them get above the tops of long asbestos gloves, because then they would remove considerable skin. I also qualified as a Driver, which was more fun.) Somewhere in there, beyond learning the now standard phonetic alphabet, someone thought we should know about the history of that. I had already come up with Battalion Sergeant Major (or Battery Sergeant Major) as a possibility, but hadn’t made the connection to the early cadet rank structure. Thanks for that!



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### Impressions of a Reunion Newbie (II) (cont)

The full cheer, to the best of my recollection, goes: *Beer, Esses, Emma, TDV; Who can stop old RMC. Shrapnel, cordite, NCT; R! M! C!!!*

I think NCT was some sort of explosive like TNT; maybe the active ingredient in gun cotton?: Nitro C....Toluene?

As for NCT, I suspected, from context that it had to be something that blew up, or resulted from blowing up, but hadn't yet found anything. Of course, as a chemical engineer, we try not to have things blow up, so I'm going to try to connect with some of my mining engineering colleagues, and see if it rings a bell. Will let you know.

The grey fur winter hat we used as a pillow in class gave way some time ago to a faux-fur black job which, like the pillbox, is worn in a comical variety of positions today. In a photo of cadets at the Arch on Remembrance Day, I was stunned to note that only one cadet of hundreds, a female at that, had her winter lid poised at a jaunty and military angle, which to me made her the sharpest cadet on parade.

I always thought those Persian lamb astrakhans were rather fetching, and functional. Maybe two versions, warm and cold, might make a suitable hat replacement, as long as they come up with a correct angle instruction.

### **"Whiskey" Galore, the W's: A Wonderful New Tradition**

By 6439 Hugh Spence

In the ramp up to our last reunion, a potential Meet & Greet lady guest communicated with me and signed her name along with a prefixed number, W (numerals). When I inquired here and there as to what that alphanumeric meant, I was advised that it has become customary for widows of ex-cadets, if they wish, to use their late husband's College number in dealings with our *alma mater*. Or just to use as part of their life-long remembrance.

Now, I personally find that a rather nice thing, and I thought my classmates should know about it. Certainly all of the ladies I've discussed this with since have expressed what I'd call a fond interest.

*(A sidebar on this: do share this newsletter with your spouse if it's not already your habit. You may be surprised how interested she is in any subject covered.)*

At the present time, the RMC Club formally recognizes widows using their husband's College number prefixed "W", but only if the late husband was a Club Life Member. We won't comment on that blatant elitism but I can tell you that the Club is now actively looking at its constitution/rules/regs, whatever, to change things so the widow of *anyone* who had a College number may use it with the W prefix, for whatever legitimate purpose. The Club may take it further, so that a widow is eligible for actual Club membership and might even assume office in the Club itself, but all that remains to be seen... Don't hold your breath.



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Whiskey Galore (continued)

By the way, it doesn't affect us, but of course this whole issue now embraces *widowers*, because of the early 80's entrance of Lady Cadets to the College.

The following brief e-mail thread is related to this, close to home. Kind of a nice story about someone who now wants to keep connected with our "family".

.....  
To: HJM Spence  
From: Nancy Stevens  
Subject: Class of 65 Reunion

I received your notice regarding the reunion of the Class of 65 and have just found it with the intent of notifying you.

It is with regret that I must tell you that my husband Charlie Stevens, Class of 65, died April 5th, 2012, from dementia. Sadly he lived four years in long term care in Guelph but thankfully remained his upbeat yet calm self throughout his illness.

I would ask you to terminate any further mailings to me.

With great memories of RMC,

Nancy Stevens

.....  
From: Hugh Spence  
To: Nancy Stevens

Hello, Nancy:

It sounds like you had a tough time as Charlie's life was ending, and please accept our condolences for that and your loss, but I thank you for letting us know of his passing.

From his college number, 6573, Charlie was an RMC entrant in 1961. He evidently didn't graduate and although his name is strangely familiar, as a CMR grad who didn't get to RMC until 1963 I confess I don't know him for sure.

In this, our Class's 50th anniversary year of graduation from RMC, I'm sorry we didn't previously get the obituary information because at our Parade to the Arch on Sept. 27th, we all carried a souvenir listing of fallen comrades, and he should have been on it.

All best,

6439 Hugh Spence

Secretary



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Whiskey Galore (continued)

To: Hugh Spence

From: Nancy

Thank you for your sympathy note. That was a lovely gesture carrying the souvenir listing of fallen comrades. I am indeed sorry I missed sending you Charlie's information earlier. Lesson learned.

Charlie failed third year and was not asked to return. (Probably from spending too much time at Queen's, where I'm returning for my 50th Queen's reunion next weekend.)

Charlie was accepted in the Engineering Program at Waterloo after that and graduated with first class honours and went on to become a water resources engineer with The Grand River Conservation and then Ontario Power Generation.

He was a good friend of John Bart, Gordie Reay and Richard Briese at RMC.

Nancy

.....

From: Hugh

To: Nancy

Hiya, Nancy:

I trust you are aware that John, Gordie and Richard have sadly all passed away; John and Richard of natural causes, and (retired) General Reay in a vehicle accident in the Balkans while on UN duty if memory serves. (Gord's grave marker was for a time on display at the *Canadian War Museum*, where my wife and I volunteer, but it's been "disappeared" for some time, reasons unknown.)

If there's a place for ex-cadets in the afterlife, I guess Charlie's now with his three buds, and others, and all have probably reverted to the carefree boys they once were. Well, maybe boys old enough to drink celestial brewskis or whatever plonk is served.

Just for info, I attach a copy of the memorial list I prepared for the guys on the March to the Arch this year... The list is now quite long but it includes a lot of names of people who didn't graduate and I (personally) don't know, though they were "found" (deceased) within the last few years and therefore recognized at our 50th.

Unfortunately, we weren't able to include Charlie, as you know, and that's not your fault. Incidentally, I think



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Whiskey Galore (continued)

a classmate has discovered an obituary for Charlie somewhere and you may find it on our Class website... <http://www.rmc65.ca/> This is a site you may find of interest from time to time...there's a sort of regular newsletter there...

Do have a blast at *your* Queen's 50<sup>th</sup>. *Oiled thyse gebandrigan* and all that. (I know it, but can't spell it...my Dad was Queen's '36, and #1 son a Queen's grad, too.)

In closing, I cordially invite you to consider attending our Class 55th reunion in 2020, at least the traditional Meet & Greet (cocktail party) held on the Friday evening, if in our dotage we manage to organize such a thing.

We had a divorcée by herself attend this year, a reunion first, though from time to time we've had the odd widow (not all of them are odd, as you know,) and the ex-wife apparently had a blast with friends she hadn't seen for nearly a half-century. Where else can you find such an experience?

You should know that you are entitled to be identified at the Royal Military College as **W6573 Stevens, Nancy**, and always welcome.

All you have to do is keep in touch.

Best to you and yours in the holiday season to come.

Hugh

*P.S.* I now think I actually knew (and can sort of visualize) Charlie, since he was at RMC during "our third year after I'd moved in from CMR.... But I really regret I was never aware he had contact with hot babes from Queen's.

.....  
To: Hugh

From: Nancy

I'm finally settling down after our Queen's 50th which was an absolute blast. Memories of RMC came up many times in conversation with alumni friends!!

Here I thought I was closing a door when I wrote to you about Charlie, only to find that another one has opened with the designation of W6573. I am delighted and who knows I may just show up at the RMC 55th reunion!

I appreciated reading the '65 news from the site and ask that you keep me in the loop. I was aware of the passing of Rick Briese, and Gordie Reay but not John Bart (who was Charlie's room mate).

The last contact we had with John was when I called to invite him to our 40th wedding anniversary party ten years ago. He said at that time he was not feeling well and would not attend and then we did not hear from him.





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### Whiskey Galore (concluded)

I was pleased to see that Charlie's obit is now on the '65 site. You will see some of the ways he volunteered over the years...and there were many more ways.

Thanks for being in touch.

All the best

Nancy

**Warm thanks to W6573 Nancy Stevens for permission to use this personal material.**

### Political (In) Correctness

Submitted by 6533 G. (Navy) Forbes

For the last six odd years, almost all of the things I wanted to write or say, have been stymied by that modern term referred to as 'POLITICAL CORRECTNESS'. Although I consider myself reasonably fluent in English, that term was not in my vocabulary. Curiosity got the better of me so I decided to do a little research, and after two weeks of chasing fruitless leads, I found what I'd been looking for at the Truman Library and Museum in Independence Missouri. An unnamed source there sent me copies of four telegrams between then-President Harry Truman and Gen Douglas MacArthur on the day before the actual signing of the WW2 Surrender Agreement in September 1945.. The contents of those four telegrams below are exactly as received at the end of the war - not a word has been added or deleted!

(1) Tokyo, Japan 0800-September 1,1945

To: President Harry S Truman

From: General D A MacArthur

Tomorrow we meet with those yellow-bellied bastards and sign the Surrender Documents, any last minute instructions?

(2) Washington, D C 1300-September 1, 1945

To: D A MacArthur

From: H S Truman

Congratulations, job well done, but you must tone down your obvious dislike of the Japanese when discussing the terms of the surrender with the press, because some of your remarks are fundamentally not politically correct!

(3) Tokyo, Japan 1630-September 1, 1945

To: H S Truman

From: D A MacArthur and C H Nimitz

Wilco Sir, but both Chester and I are somewhat confused, exactly what does the term politically correct mean?

4) Washington, D C 2120-September 1, 1945

To: D A MacArthur/C H Nimitz

From: H S Truman

Political Correctness is a doctrine, recently fostered by a delusional, illogical minority and promoted by a sick mainstream media, which holds forth the proposition that it is entirely possible to pick up a piece of shit by the clean end!



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### Closing Notes

Special thanks to **Hugh Spence** for donning his secretarial mantle and clarifying a number of issues not only for **Gerry Mueller**, but also I am sure for many more of us, including Yours Truly. Also, for the thoughtful and successful way in which he dealt with the issue confronting Nancy Stevens and, potentially other spouses in her situation. The Newsletter welcomes **W6573 Nancy Stevens** to the Class of 65.

We have learned that **6568 Ed Sanford** has had a recurrence of his medical problems and on behalf of all of his classmates we send he and his family our best wishes for a full recovery.

I'll look forward to receiving more inputs from many of you in the new year, but in the meantime, Janet and I join in wishing all of you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.