

Class of 65 Newsletter **Bulletin d'Information**—Classe de 65

Issue/Numéro 94



March/mars 2016

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

The feature article in this edition is Part I of **Gerry Mueller's** saga of a trip he took up the Amazon. Following on from **Gord Forbes'** tale about one of his first cars, I thought I would add my own automotive narrative. Also included is a letter from **6632 Don Hansen** requesting some photographic memorabilia from Royal Roads. But first we must deal with the sad loss of one of our own.

6633 Edwin (Ed) Mallory, 1943-2016



Our classmate, Ed Mallory passed away in Scotland on 12 March after a long illness. He leaves his devoted wife and friend of 51 years, Irene, two sons Christopher and Phillip and five beloved grandchildren. Following graduation from RMC, Ed served in the RCN before taking on a distinguished career as a trade commissioner with the foreign service, and latterly as a consultant in the foreign business development realm. Ed will be remembered for his kind demeanour and good humour. He and Irene were particularly good friends with Janet and I when we were learning how to deal with our first children. I am sure that all members of the Class of 65 will join in remembering Ed and in sending condolences to Irene and her family.

Letter

The following e-mail was received from **6632 Don Hansen** subsequent to the last edition, *"This is great—Would love to see any photos of the obstacle course we had at Royal Roads for class of 1965. Also of any wing parade photos. loved it."* It is always nice to hear from someone for the first time. Unfortunately, my own archives don't contain any of the requested pictures—can any of you help Don with his quest for some memorabilia?



Issue/Numéro 94

Mar/mars 2016

Page 2

2016 Navy Mess Dinner

The following is an adaptation of an article that appeared in a recent e-veritas and written by fourth year 26651 Naval Cadet Juliana Currie.

On Tuesday March 8th, the naval cadets of the Class of 2016 gathered at the SSM to partake in a navy mess dinner. This dinner was a chance for the fourth year cadets to get some exposure to what their future naval careers hold, and we were honored to have the many distinguished guests there with us to celebrate. These guests included: Cmdre Simon Page, Director General of Maritime Equipment Program, Cmdre Mark Watson, Director General of Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services, and our guest of honor, Cmdre Luc Cassivi, Director General of Maritime Strategic Readiness. This diverse company representing the different naval classifications provided opportunities for all cadets to talk to respected officers within their chosen field.



We also had the pleasure of the company of **Capt (N) Dr. Jim Carruthers**, the President of the RMC Foundation, and the National President of the Naval Association of Canada. Dr. Carruthers had the pleasure of presenting the Naval Swords of Honour to two of the winners: MARS, and Engineering - NCdt Sophie Cormier, and NCdt Jean-Francois Levesque respectively. The Logistics sword, presented by Cmdre (Ret'd) Robert Hamilton went to NCdt Jordan Bornholdt. These swords were based on the merit of the cadets during their performance on MARS II, and their overall time at RMCC. Congratulations to all!

The funding for the swords is administered through the RMC Foundation.

Overall, the night was a success and everyone sincerely enjoyed the distinguished naval presence at the dinner. Thank you to everyone who attended and making the night enjoyable and entertaining.



Issue/Numéro 94

Mar/mars 2016

Page 3

Amazon Adventure—December 2015 (Part 1)

By 6559 Gerry Mueller

Owing to an on-board misadventure in late 2014, June Longworth (my spouse) and I had a substantial cash credit as well as ship's credits for a future Holland America Lines (aka HAL) cruise, but, it had to be booked before mid-November 2015. So late Summer we began looking for possibilities. One of our criteria was (and usually is) not repeating too much of what we've already done. This, given that June spent 38 years with Air Canada flying as a Purser and had holidayed just about everywhere reachable the airline served, plus we had traveled a lot since we both retired, limits the possibilities. Fortunately Air Canada did not fly to South America until the last years of June's career, and so we were happy to find a 25 nights "Amazon Adventure" cruise (with Eastern and Southern Caribbean stops to and from), round trip Ft. Lauderdale, leaving late November.

Once we began the planning, and looked at the logistics of packing – leaving/returning to Canada late Fall/early Winter, late Fall Florida and Northern Caribbean, 2 weeks at or near the Equator, 4 formal (black tie) nights and the rest elegant casual on the ship – we escalated; we usually do. Driving to Ft. Lauderdale made sense, and if we were going to drive, we might as well make it a part of the holiday. So, 10 days got added, with stops in Kentucky, South Carolina, Savannah GA (3 nights), and in Florida. Some of those may warrant another newsletter article in the future, but this one will concentrate on just the Amazon portion.

MS Prinsendam is Holland America Lines' "small" ship. For the Navy types, she is 38,000 gross tons, 673 ft. long, can carry about 820 guests (719 for this voyage), with a crew of 470 (by far the majority of whom are "hotel" staff). Her maximum speed is 21 knots, and she is powered by 4 diesel engines, each just short of 7,200 hp, and her average fuel consumption (which includes 3 more just south of 4000 hp diesels driving electrical generators) is 16,000 gallons per day (at full speed that becomes 26,000 gallons). Something that will become relevant; the potable water consumption on this ship is 350,000 liters/day. She can make potable water using vacuum evaporators that are heated with diesel exhaust gases at the rate of 550,00 liters/day, and store 1,490,000 (3+ days worth) liters.

One of the nicer things about cruising on small ships is it is easy to get to know the crew, and a good number of the other passengers. A rule of thumb in cruising is the longer the cruise, the older the average age, and we quickly noted we were probably in the bottom quartile of age. We naturally gravitated to some of the other "young ones", a surprising number of which turned out to be retired U.S. military. Once becoming aware of that they were easy enough to spot if one looked for West Point, Naval, and Air Force Academy rings. Some of them became very good dining acquaintances. Another one of the younger ones on board, with whom we shared a table early on was a retired Mountie who had spent much of his working life at the detachment at Toronto Pearson Airport (YYZ), and June and he discovered they had probably met several times while both working, as it was not unusual for a Purser to arrange to have a flight met by police, to take off some miscreant who had tried smoking in a lavatory, or become abusive. And through the Mountie we heard of another coincidence; he had sat at a table with another Air Canada retiree on the ship, and in chatting had discovered



Issue/Numéro 94

Mar/mars 2016

Page 4

Amazon Adventure—Part 1 (Continued)

their previous connection; the police officer had been first on the scene when an Air Canada DC9 (Flight #189) went off the runway at YYZ on an aborted take-off in 1978, and had carried an injured flight attendant off the aircraft. The two had never again met subsequently, until they were at the same table on a cruise ship heading for the Amazon 36 years later. It turned out that June knew both this flight attendant, and his flight attendant (retired) wife, so we had a gang of 6 Canadians, and the U.S. military types who got pulled in, who ended up spending time together.

Getting there. We boarded near noon of November 24th, and after the usual unpacking and finding places to store stuff in an actually larger than we are used to cabin (complete with a walk-in closet!), finding our way to the basics (dining room, theatre, bars), and the obligatory life boat drill, we waited for the 5 p.m. departure. Alas, it was not to be. Prinsendam, just arrived that morning from repositioning from her summer cruising in Europe, had been subject to a mandatory U.S. Coast Guard inspection, and had been ordered to make certain repairs (details not revealed to the passengers, sorry guests). But we would not leave until six, then seven, and finally, actually past 9:00 p.m. So for our first dinner we were still solidly tied to the pier in Port Everglades. As it turned out, this was a good thing, we had a good meal before sailing out into the front edge of a nasty North Atlantic storm, and had a far rougher first 48 hours than if we had sailed on time.

Not only were the waves higher, but the ship had to make up the lost time to get to the first port-of-call on time. (One of the U.S. Navy types we met had served in destroyers, and thought that not only had the ship gone faster than optimal for the conditions, but also had exceeded the speed at which stabilizers are effective, or had folded in the stabilizers.) I wasn't much affected, and had been in worse weather on the three Atlantic crossings in my life, but surprisingly June, who spent most of her working life on aircraft in turbulence, didn't do well with this different motion, and basically bailed for the next 36 hours, until we were sheltered behind the Eastern Caribbean islands. Also, a lot of the hotel crew were new, having joined the ship for their first 9 months at sea in Ft. Lauderdale. So there were a lot of green faces, and staff shortages in the dining rooms and kitchens (including the 1st formal night) until we arrived in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas U.S. V.I. on Day 3 of the voyage.

I am not going to detail the cruise to the Amazon or back home, except to list our ports-of-call: Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe, Castries, Saint Lucia, Bridgetown, Barbados, Devil's Island, French Guiana, on the way down; and Scarborough, Trinidad and Tobago, and Willemstad, Curacao, on the way back.

Only Devil's Island needs some extra mention. We had looked forward very much to this visit, and had even had Yellow Fever shots (Brazil only advises having these for Amazon visits, French Guiana requires them), but it was not to be. The French Space Agency (which has their launch site in French Guiana) postponed a rocket launch by one day, to the day we were to visit, and banned all non-French Navy ships from their territory. We got to watch the movie *Papillon* instead. The French rocket blew up a few hundred miles down range, so there!



Issue/Numéro 94

Mar/mars 2016

Page 5

Amazon Adventure— Part 1 (Continued)

Into the Amazon River. Long before, perhaps 12 hours before we actually entered the river, we knew it was ahead. The ocean water colour suddenly changed from its normally grey-blue to a creamy chocolate colour, giving notice that, among other things, the Amazon River is a prodigious carrier of mud into the Atlantic Ocean. With an average flow rate of just over 6 million cubic feet per second, the river carries about 1,350 cubic feet of mud per second into the ocean. About 85% of these solids are from the Andes mountains! (Doing the rough math, every second the volume of the Andes is reduced by a 10 x 10 x 10 foot cube, which is then transported to the Atlantic!) The plume of muddy fresh water covers almost 1 million square miles of the Atlantic beyond the river mouth; and because of the Atlantic's tidal energy the mud does not accumulate sufficiently to create a true delta; instead, there are only two wide river branches that enter the ocean, separated by an island the size of Switzerland!. We entered by the northern branch, near the city of Macapá. At this point the ship boarded two river pilots, one of whom is on the bridge at all times when the ship is moving. As the navigable channels shift frequently, the pilots bring up-to-date charts with them, and are in radio contact with pilots on ships further along, who relay current conditions. (These are not the only the pilots the ships take on; at every harbour they also take on a harbour pilot, not so much because they have specialized knowledge not available to the river pilots, but because of union jurisdictions!)

One of the consequences of sailing into this “white river”, the technical term for a river that is carrying a lot of sediment, was communicated to us *via* a letter from the Captain in our cabin mail the day before entering. In elegant but blunt terms we were told that while in the Amazon, the ship could not make potable water because the river water would very quickly foul the evaporators. (In retrospect, this should have been obvious, but I had certainly not thought of it, and from conversations later, it came as a surprise to most passengers.) The ship would take on city water in the major cities we would stop at, but that would have to be purified and stored, and the ship could only store a little more than 3 days worth of potable water. Hence there would be control of water usage: no laundry would be taken, the coin laundries would be locked, we were encouraged to conserve as much water as possible by not flushing for #1, water conservation shower practices, and re-using towels for more than a day or two. And, horror of horrors, there would be no towel animals on beds in the evening!

The Amazon basin, which is not much smaller in area than the United States, is currently suffering from a drought that is the most severe in a hundred years, water levels are well below their historic average, and thus ships the size of Prinsendam can only cross the mud bar at the mouth of the river at high tide. In our case that was in late evening, just as we were returning to our cabin after the late entertainment show. We quickly learned another fact about Amazon cruising. Entering our cabin, we smelled smoke. June, having spent her working life on aircraft, does not like to smell smoke in enclosed spaces, and quickly goes into fire hunting mode. With no obvious cause in sight, we called the front desk, who sent a very nice young lady from Guest Services, who explained to us that what we were breathing was quite normal on the Amazon river, because the locals a) cooked with charcoal, b) burned down forests to clear land for farming, and c) we were just then sailing by a large industrial area stretching for dozens of miles along the river, and pollution control was not a high priority in a developing country.



Issue/Numéro 94

Mar/mars 2016

Page 6

Amazon Adventure-Part 1 (Continued)

The next morning it was perfectly “clear” what we were breathing. The picture, taken at about 10 a.m., is perhaps a bit beyond “normal” but not much, and while we did get clearer air at times, we also got times when the visibility was much worse! That ship is perhaps 200 metres away, and the river bank perhaps another 800 to 1000 metres, and totally invisible even to the naked eye. At no times on the Amazon was the air what I would call clear and without odour.

Santarém, Brazil, a city of about 300,000 inhabitants, our first port of call on the Amazon, is located about 880 km upriver from the Atlantic, at the mouth of the Tapajós river, a pristine blue water river. So different are the

two waters, that one of the local attractions is the “wedding of the waters”, with the creamy Amazon and the clear Tapajós flowing side by side in the main channel for several miles before merging. It is also a major shipping centre for the 2nd-largest cash crop in Amazonia, soybeans, the largest still being cattle farming. Cattle farming accounts for perhaps 75% of the land cleared by burning in the Amazon basin, and soybeans 25%, with Brazil accounting for about 80% of the total cleared (almost 60 million hectares since 1978; to be fair, Brazil’s rate of land clearance has been reduced by about half in recent years, mostly due to greater enforcement of laws, while that of other, smaller countries in the Amazon basin has increased).



The somewhat small municipal dock for cruise ships and river boats is dwarfed by a huge loading facility and warehouse, owned by the international farming company Cargill. At an estimate, 500 metres of conveyers connect a loading dock large enough for several ocean-going vessels to a warehouse capable of holding 60,000 tons of fresh soybeans. The facility is nearing 15 years old, but a little research



shows that it is still illegal, at least technically as there appears to be no enforcement, as it has never filed the environmental impact studies required by Brazil’s national government, although the local governments are quite happy to have the employment and tax income generated. It is also a major source of local traffic congestions; as we took a bus into the city centre we passed north of 100 very large hopper trucks waiting to enter the Cargill facility to unload their bean cargo. Car and other truck traffic was imply stalled on all cross roads; but locals coped by weaving through the congestion on bicycles and motor scooters, the latter appearing to be the favoured mode of individual transportation in a city that is otherwise a wide-area traffic jam.

First stop on our city tour was the municipal fish and produce market. Like in most Latin-American cities, the market selling fresh product is a major source of food supplies for most families except for the very wealthy. This market was no exception, and at about 10:00 a.m. (on a Saturday) was a hub of locals doing their shopping. The extensive fish market sold everything fresh-water that had been





Issue/Numéro 94

Mar/mars 2016

Page 7

Amazon Adventure—Part 1 (Continued)

caught overnight; my conservative guess being about 40 – 50 different fish species of all sizes, from near human size to approaching finger length. (And that would represent less than 1% of the estimated 5,600 species of fresh water fish found in the Amazon and tributaries, where it is not unusual to annually find another handful of previously unknown fish species.) There was also a small area devoted to beef (whole sides and very large cuts, mostly) and an extensive section, equal in area to the fish market, selling every species of fruit and vegetable grown locally, some known to us, and others completely strange. There was also the familiar in strange guise; who knew that brazil nuts, which we know as very hard-shelled individual nuts, actually grow 8 to 15 packed like a 3-D jigsaw puzzle inside a shell about the size of a coconut, so individually, that once emptied out, they are impossible to reassemble into the original sphere.



Onward from the market to the cathedral; but not without a very loud and annoying cultural import, directly ahead of our bus. Yes, Santa Claus, red suit, fur-trimmed hat, and all, accompanied by two comely elves, high on a truck normally carrying soybeans, shouting into a microphone connected to very large speakers. My Spanish has faded, and the Brazilian Portuguese dialect makes the many Spanish cognates unrecognizable, but it was perfectly obvious what Santa was huckstering, for every so often the name “Paraíso Shopping Centre” was perfectly audible. Brazil, like much of Latin America, and a lot of Europe, has taken common English (read American) phrases into its language. As it has commercial North American cultural symbols; for a start Santa Claus, dressed for a northern climate in 30 Celsius temperatures, and as I later observed, much of northern Christmas, in store windows decorated with stylized pine trees in snowy landscapes, in a country that has neither pine trees nor snow.

The cathedral, dedicated to Our Lady of Immaculate Conception, was fully decorated for its patronal feast (the Feast of the Immaculate Conception is December 8; we were there on the 5th), as was much of the city with blue and silver streamers (the colours of Our Lady, who is also the patron of Amazonia). Prominent was a life-size statue of Our Lady (a very white, European Virgin) dressed in sumptuous robes, standing on a flower-covered float, ready to be carried through the city in procession on her Feast. Architecturally, there was not very much to tell you that this cathedral was in South America rather than Spain or Portugal, other than the large number of wall-mounted electric fans and a few ductless air conditioners, which did very little to dispel the high humidity tropical heat. The stained glass and art was mostly European in style, with very little that might be of aboriginal nature. Historically of course it was the European settlers that brought Christianity with them and built the city churches and cathedral, and thus determined the building style and art decoration.





Issue/Numéro 94

Mar/mars 2016

Page 8

Amazon Adventure—Part 1 (Concluded)

The remainder of our sight-seeing in the city was at a local museum, which was interesting mostly for its pre-Columbian artifacts, and for having an English-speaking guide well versed in local and Amazon history and facts, who was very willing to answer any and all questions. This was a welcome prelude to our final stop, about a 40 minute drive out into the country to an agri-educational centre in the rain forest where we learned a great deal about agricultural history and methods, and why the air we were breathing was as full of smoke as it was.

The soil in the Amazon basin is very poor, often being only a few inches of fertile soil over sand, most of the nourishment being the decay products of fallen leaves and dead trees. Among other facts, rubber trees grow naturally in the forest at some distance from one another, as the soil is too poor to support them growing any



closer, and as settlers quickly found out, cannot be grown in plantations, at least not in Brazil. Thus the early rubber industry, interestingly started as a by-product to Henry Ford's developing mass-produced cars and hence a demand for rubber for tires, had European settlers operating vast harvesting areas for latex, and shipping the raw material out for processing in North America. Harvesting basically consisted of sending large numbers of aboriginal men into the rain forest, locating rubber trees, cutting them to weep latex (as in the picture) and after half a working day,

reversing their path and peeling dried latex off the trees and bringing it to a central depot. These European rubber barons became incredibly wealthy (more on this when we get to Manaus), and protected their wealth by making it difficult, and illegal, to take rubber tree cuttings or seeds out of the Amazon. Inevitably, someone managed to bring rubber trees to Malaysia (where there is money there will be found a way), where it was possible to grow rubber trees in plantations, and the Brazilian rubber industry died almost overnight.

The remaining agricultural product, other than timber (mahogany) and fruits, was cassava, from which comes tapioca, and cassava flour. The former had some export value, while the latter is a staple of the aboriginals. Cassava can be grown in plantations, and to do so in larger quantities led to the adoption of aboriginal land-clearing methods, which were the burning down of the rain forest. Burned down with the rainforest would be the occasional mahogany tree. Quite rare, these trees could still be harvested for export, until Brazil banned the export of mahogany in 2001, to protect the tree. Ironically, since they became essentially without value; it is now simpler to burn them down with the rest of the rainforest! The law of unintended consequences at work! When clearing by burning was limited to aboriginal use, ashes would provide nutrients to the growing crop, and when the soil was again exhausted the land was simply abandoned, the rain forest would re-grow in relatively little time, and a new area would be cleared by burning down more rainforest. All this was sustainable for the rather sparse aboriginal population in the Amazon, who also lived from fishing and hunting. It might have been sustainable for the increased settler population as well, were it not for export, first of tapioca, then when refrigerated ships became economical, of beef, and lately, of soybeans, as a source of edible oil and protein. Because of the poor soil, both cattle and soybeans require large tracts of land to be cleared for grazing or growing, land which is quickly exhausted of nutrients needing to be abandoned and more land cleared. With world demand driving the demand for grazing and growing land in the Amazon, the burning-growing crops-exhaustion-regrowth cycle becomes unsustainable. **(To be continued)**



Issue/Numéro 94

Mar/mars 2016

Page 9

The Car That Hated My Wife by 6364 Mike Braham

In the last edition, **Gord Forbes (Navy)** entertained us with some recollections of his first car and that has prompted me to do the same, albeit somewhat shorter and from a different angle.

As graduation approached, I still did not know how to drive an automobile and an invitation to **Ernie Cable's** wedding, to be held shortly after graduation in North Bay loomed. Fortunately, my parents lived in Kingston for my 4th Year so I took the opportunity to learn how to drive returning to the College after Sunday dinners at home with my father as a nervous and somewhat abrupt instructor. I gained sufficient proficiency to be able to get my driver's licence during Grad Week, and with some financial support from Dad, who was relieved to get me out of his prized Mustang, purchased a second-hand 1963 Ford Falcon with automatic transmission, a utilitarian vehicle that seemed to run well and definitely met my requirements.

The first real test of my new-found skills came with the drive to North Bay to attend Ernie's wedding. I took my future bride Janet along and it was on this drive that I think the car developed its initial dislike for her. En route, I stopped for gas for the very first time in my driving career and, as things were in those kinder days, an attendant came out and filled it up for me. I thought this was good service so I tipped him generously only to be berated by my beloved for being so stupid!! We smoothed things over during the balance of the drive, but I think it was that incident that turned the car against Janet as the following summary might confirm.

After the wedding, I went solo to Montreal and then Montreal for pre-fleet training with nary a problem with the car that purred like a contented pussy the whole time. We got married immediately after pre-fleet and the car's animosity to Janet started to show its ugly head. Our wedding day (coincidentally Grey Cup day, which is why very few remember our wedding) dawned ugly—a combination of freezing rain, snow, sleet, etc—conditions that apparently did not agree with the car which refused to start. Dear old Dad ended up missing the ceremony while he got the car fixed.

The next hint that all was not well between my bride and the Falcon was on the drive from Ottawa to Halifax to join my ship. We hit a major snowstorm in Fredericton and were forced to hole up in a motel overnight, despite the fact that I was going to have to be in Halifax by 0800 the next morning! Ever hopeful, I was up at the crack of dawn, backed the car up to the motel room to facilitate loading the trunk and turned it on to warm it up for my poor (by now) weeping and shivering bride. Unfortunately, this only served to almost kill the poor dear with CO fumes. Another round to the car!!

I'm not going to prattle on much more, but rather list the events that I think adequately back up my claim that the car HATED Janet. Readers of this list should bear in mind that I was not present for any of these events and that when I was in command of the car, it ran beautifully:

- The passenger side door dropped off while crossing the Angus L. MacDonald Bridge;
- The brakes failed in the Armdale Rotary;
- The car was stolen and used in a robbery. When it was recovered, the RCMP kept the rear view mirrors for evidence so Janet drove around using a make-up compact as a rear-view mirror;
- She rear-ended another car,— an expensive car that just happened to belong to our auto insurance agent!



Issue/Numéro 94

Mar/mars 2016

Page 10

The Car That Hated My Wife (Concluded)

Needless to say, I always returned from a tour of sea-duty with some trepidation and was always surprised to see wife and/or car waiting for me on the jetty!

In retrospect however, it might not have been just that car that hated my wife—cars in general seem to have some reservations about her. When I met her she was driving the car described by Gord Forbes in his article, the Ralph Nader Special, the Chevy Corvair. She left it outside one warm summer day and, all by itself, it blew out the rear windscreen! She now drives a brand-new upscale Lexus and even that seems to hold some resentment to her. Despite having voice recognition, it won't speak to her in French, at least not her French!!

Who said cars have no emotions?

End Notes

Thanks to **Gerry Mueller** for another of his entertaining travelogues. I for one will be looking forward to the follow-on parts to the story. Thanks also to **Jim Carruthers** for his unrelenting and uncompromising support to RMC, the Class, and the Navy.

I would be grateful for some input from the silent majority. When I have to write about cars, I am clearly running out of material!

Until next time.