

Class of 65 Newsletter

Bulletin d'Information—Classe de 65

Issue/Numéro 96



July/juillet 2016

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Editor's Corner/Coin du rédacteur

Notwithstanding my last message about the frequency of this newsletter, this edition is coming out a month earlier than forecast. We will finish **Gerry Mueller's** Amazon epic (by the way, there was a nice bio on the Reverend Mueller in one of the most recent e-veritas. **Ernie Cable** has provided an interest account of his meeting with the former enemy shortly after the end of the Cold War, and **Richard Archer** has given us a thought provoking article on the ongoing defence review by the Liberal government.

Before getting there however, it is sadly necessary to note that two of our comrades are ailing with serious illnesses. **Ed Sanford** has had a relapse of previous problems and is now struggling. **Nigel Hilliard** provided this report on his condition, "...I just heard from Sharon that our buddy Ed is in a very bad condition. Just to summarize, in November shortly after our 50th he had radiation to his entire head to attack the growing tumours and this had the side effect of damaging his brain. She brought him home although it was recommended he go to a palliative care facility. Recently while at home he had some severe issues including a fall which put him in hospital for a week. This week they moved him to Moments Manor which specializes in patients with Alzheimer's and Dementia and basically they are just trying to make him comfortable. It is a very sad situation for a great guy."

John Adams provided a slightly more upbeat report on Ed's condition following a visit to see him at the Moment's Manor. Without downplaying Ed's serious condition, John reported that he was alert and despite some apparent short term memory loss, appears to have maintained good longer term memory. Above all, he continues to display a sense of humor and an indomitable will. He was pleased to see John and would clearly benefit from visits by other classmates.

In addition to Ed's problems, we also learned via the following RCEME Bulletin that **Andrew Nellestyn** is battling with cancer:

"It is with a very heavy heart that we must inform you that our Colonel Commandant, Col (ret'd) Andrew Nellestyn, will no longer be able to continue his service with the Corps. He has requested to be relieved of his duties, so that he may focus his full attention on winning his courageous battle against cancer and to spend precious time with family and friends. His last day as our RCEME Colonel Commandant will be 14 May 2016./ C'est le couer bien lourd que nous devons informer que notre colonel commandant, le col (à la retraite) Andrew Nellestyn, n'est plus en mesure d'occuper ses fonctions au sein du Corps. Il a demandé à être relevé de ses fonctions, pour ainsi se concentrer sur son courageux combat contre le cancer et du fait même passé plus de temps avec sa famille et amis. Son dernier jour en tant que Colonel commandant du GEMRC sera le 14 mai 2016."



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Editor's Corner (Concluded)

On behalf of the entire Class of 65, we would like to extend our prayers and best wishes to the families and loved ones of both Ed and Andrew at this difficult time.

The Russians Are Coming by 6601 Ernie Cable

After graduating from RMC, I spent most of my career in the maritime sphere of RCAF operations that included three operational tours on maritime patrol squadrons, one of which as Commanding Officer 405 Squadron, plus a three-year exchange posting with the U.S. Navy at the Naval Air Development Center near Philadelphia, PA. From 1966 to the end of the Cold War in 1993 our activities focused on monitoring Soviet submarines, naval vessels and merchant ships in the North Atlantic including Warsaw Pact fishing fleets in the Canadian Exclusive Economic Zone. Training for these activities included studying the capabilities of Soviet combatants, their armaments and electronics; and similarly learning the capabilities of various types of submarines and their arrays of masts and periscopes that could protrude above the sea surface. To better understand the fighting capabilities of the Soviet navy we studied the fighting philosophies and innovations introduced by Admiral Gorshkov, the father of the modern Russian navy. Our role was to contribute to the NATO balance of power at sea to deter the Soviets from escalating the Cold War into an armed conflict.

In 1989, Mikhail Gorbachev, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, introduced glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring) and reoriented Soviet strategic aims, all of which contributed to ending the Cold War. Perhaps the most visible manifestation of the end of the Cold War was the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, which was completed in 1992. To demonstrate the West's commitment to ending the Cold War the Americans introduced the Partnership in Peace program in 1993. This was a program to further reduce tensions and to demonstrate that western nations had no hegemonic aspirations in Eastern Europe. This initiative was intended to build trust among individuals by permitting members from Warsaw Pact countries to meet ordinary citizens of NATO countries face to face to gain confidence in the West's genuine desire for peace. This was a reciprocal program where members from the West also visited Warsaw Pact nations with the similar message of peaceful co-existence.

The Partnership in Peace program became a reality for me while serving as the Deputy Commander of Maritime Air Group in Halifax. On 30 June 1993, three very modern Russian naval vessels slowly sailed in line astern formation into Halifax harbour. These were the first Russian warships to visit Halifax since 1942. The Russian flotilla was led up the harbour by the massive *Marshal Ustinov*, a Slava class guided missile cruiser, followed by the *Admiral Kharlamov*, a slightly smaller but equally impressive Udaloy class guided missile destroyer, the third vessel bringing up the stern was the flotilla's tanker.

Both warships were typical Russian designs featuring sleek hulls with sharply raked bows, sturdy superstructures and heavy armament. The *Marshal Ustinov* was a 10,000-ton cruiser with multiple electronic-support and radar antennae to guide its weapons. The most prominent of which were eight pairs of large cylindrical SS-N-12 anti-ship missile launchers, four pairs mounted in line along the main deck on both the port and starboard sides. The 16 launchers faced forward and were canted upward about 30 degrees. Other weapons included long and short-range surface-to-air missiles, anti-submarine mortars and torpedo tubes plus heavy dual-purpose gun mounts and Close-In (Gatling gun) Weapon Systems.



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The Russians are Coming (Continued)

The *Admiral Kharlamov* was a 7,000-ton anti-submarine destroyer and was similarly festooned with radar and electronic-support antennae and heavily armed with eight SS-N-14 anti-submarine/anti-ship missiles, 64 SA-N-9 vertical launch surface-to-air missiles, and seven heavy caliber gun mounts, plus torpedo tubes and anti-submarine rocket launchers. The *Marshal Ustinov* carried a single Kamov Ka-25 (Hormone) anti-submarine helicopter whereas the *Admiral Kharlamov* carried two Kamov Ka-27 (Helix) anti-submarine helicopters.



Slava Class Cruiser

which we had relentlessly trained, seemed less probable. But, the euphoria was tempered with the uncertainty of our future relationship with the Russians. However, their visit would give cause for optimism.

After the ships tied up along side the jetty Vice Admiral Peter Cairns, Commander of Maritime Command, and his senior headquarters staff officially welcomed the Russian Admiral and his senior naval staff. Since my boss was away I was the senior airman on the Admiral's staff and was part of the welcoming party. As the ceremony took place on the jetty the boyish faces of hundreds of young Russian sailors peered through the ships' portholes, as curious about us as we were about them.

At the ensuing evening "meet and greet" in the Stadacona wardroom we had our first opportunity to personally greet our Russian guests. I eventually met my air counterpart, a flag officer in the Soviet Naval Air Force who was introduced as a Major General of Aviation, the senior air officer in the flotilla.

Regrettably, I have forgotten his name, so throughout this article I will refer to him as "Admiral". Presumably, the mention of the army equivalent rank, rather than the naval rank of Counter Admiral, was a quirk in translation. He could not speak English and I, of course, spoke no Russian, so we communicated through Olav, a translator who was assigned to the Admiral for the duration of his visit. Olav was born in Russia but a Canadian citizen employed by the Department of Foreign Affairs in Ottawa assigned to the Halifax visit.



Udaloy Class Destroyer

The Admiral was a tall handsome, affable man with a pleasant smile and wavy silver hair. During casual talks over drinks and hors d'oeuvres I learned that he had a wife and two sons who were fighter pilots in the Soviet Air Force. He was a helicopter pilot, but had also flown most types of jet fighters and bombers in the Soviet Naval Air Force. Upon learning he flew helicopters I asked him if he would like to fly in one of our Sea King helicopters based at 12 Wing Shearwater across the harbour. His beaming eyes and broad smile endorsed his enthusiastic response. He was particularly pleased because he had never flown a western helicopter with a



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single main rotor and a tail rotor to counter the rotational torque. His experience had been limited to Soviet helicopters such as the Hormone and Helix where rotational torque was eliminated by having two counter rotating rotors mounted, one above the other, on a single mast, therefore, no tail rotor was required. In a quick phone call to my colleague who was the Wing Commander at Shearwater, I explained my impromptu offer to the Admiral to fly in a Sea King and he agreed to juggle the flying schedule to make a Sea King and crew available the next morning; he also offered to include a tour of the base. The Admiral was delighted at the prospect of flying in a Sea King and after further dialogue comparing families and life in Russia and Canada we parted for the evening. I explained that I would pick him up in staff car on the *Marshal Ustinov*'s jetty in the morning for our trip to Shearwater.

The next morning *Marshal Ustinov*'s sailors were swarming over the upper decks preparing the ship for an "open house" for the citizens of Halifax. Olav and I greeted the Admiral at the foot of the gangway and I indicated that I had a staff car and driver standing by. He asked if it would be possible for eight or nine other officers of the air detachment to accompany him to Shearwater. Fortunately, the coordinators for the visit had warned us of the Russian penchant for requesting last minute changes; accordingly there were extra staff cars on the jetty to accommodate the additional Russian officers. The Admiral further asked if one of his officers could bring a camera to record the visit. When I replied that would not be a problem another officer came down the gangway with a large shoulder mounted Sony video camera. All of the Russian officers were wearing their summer naval uniforms consisting of pale yellow shirts, navy trousers and the traditional Russian high crested peaked hat. Our convoy of three staff cars headed off to Shearwater.

On arrival at the air base we paid a courtesy call to the Wing Commander in his spacious well-appointed office. During our conversation through Olav's indispensable translation the officer with the camera was video taping everything in the office: photos, paper and pens on the Wing Commander's desk, flags, wall pictures, light fixtures, etc. Soon, one of the Sea King pilots arrived to escort the Admiral and Olav to the aircraft for their flight. Meanwhile, I accompanied the remaining Russian officers on a walking tour; fortunately, some of the Russians had a working knowledge of English and were interested in the static Sea King on display as well as the maintenance hangars and the operations areas. Again, the cameraman didn't miss a single detail, video taping everything in sight. After the Sea King landed I met a very happy Admiral; he had an opportunity to get his hands on the Sea King's controls and saw the Halifax area from the air including a low level run down the harbour for a close-up view of Bedford Basin where the wartime merchant convoys formed up, the naval dockyard where the Russian ships were berthed and the commercial port facilities, including Halifax's historic Pier 21 from where troop ships sailed for England during the Second World War.

After the flight and tour we adjourned for lunch to the Sea King Club where the Wing Commander had arranged an all-ranks hot dog and hamburger Bar-B-Q and a chance for the Russians to mingle with a cross section of Wing personnel. Because of the language barrier there were a lot of hand gestures and Olav more than earned his pay translating questions and answers.

We planned to return to Halifax by mid afternoon, but the Admiral's next engagement wasn't until early evening. Since my wife, Carol, and I lived about only 15 minutes from Shearwater I asked him if he would like to take a short detour to visit a Canadian home, to which he happily agreed. We owned a two-story house on a large lot in a middle class neighbourhood with four bedrooms, three bathrooms and an in-law suite in the basement. As the three-car convoy approached our house Carol had just pulled into the driveway and stepped out of the car with an armload of groceries. She was surprised to see the convoy of black cars pull up behind her and a group of men in strange uniforms get out of the cars and follow her up the driveway.



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The Russians are Coming (Continued)

I explained to her that I had invited the Russians to for an impromptu visit to our house and notwithstanding the lack of forewarning she gladly welcomed our unexpected guests. This cued the cameraman to follow her to the front door paying particular attention to the grocery bags. The convoy of black cars and strange uniforms also attracted about a half dozen neighbourhood children to whom the Russians gave a generous number of Russian trinkets and lapel pins. After entering the house I gave the Russians a top to bottom tour; the cameraman had a field day, even shooting over Carol's shoulder as she was putting perishables in the refrigerator. The tour ended on our sundeck that overlooked woods and a lake in the distance. Carol graciously joined us and helped organize enough deck chairs and serve Labatt's beer to our guests. The Admiral and his officers seemed relaxed in the informal surroundings and were interested in speaking to Carol, through Olav, about the house and Canadian life in general. They asked many questions, but were most interested in knowing if we owned the house and why the houses were so big and so far apart, which seemed a waste of space to them. They also wondered why a fireplace in the living room was necessary if the house was heated with a furnace. By late afternoon the staff cars returned the Russian sailors to their ship.

That evening Denis and Carol Cronk and Carol and I planned to entertain a small group of Russian naval Captains at our respective houses. We decided to combine the food prepared by the ladies and serve a buffet dinner at the Cronk's house, which was in the same neighbourhood. The Russians wore civilian attire and spoke reasonable English so we were able to express our thoughts and opinions to each other. They ate heartily showing their appreciation for a Canadian home cooked meal and after a number of after-dinner libations in a relaxed atmosphere they talked more and more freely, asking probing questions about our capitalist way of life and countering our answers with explanations of how life was good in Russia. Later in the evening we drove the Russians back to their ship; the time spent with them was enjoyable and informative; despite the language limitations there was even frivolity and humour.

The citizens of Halifax are renowned for hosting foreign sailors and made no exception for the Russians. In the Soviet Union the government provided everything for the military, including personnel and ships at no cost. Therefore, the Russians arrived with no money; unaware or forgetting that everything in a capitalist society was done on a cost recovery basis. When the city learned that the nearly nine hundred visiting Russian sailors had absolutely no money, especially the young sailors we saw earlier peering through the portholes, the city donated \$35 to each sailor to go ashore to purchase souvenirs. Needless to say, the city merchants were the benefactors as the \$35 wound up in their tills, blue jeans being the biggest seller. In the same vein, when the Russian ships refueled in Halifax, the concept of reimbursement vouchers or hard cash to pay for fuel was foreign to them; following the Soviet practice the Russians expected the Canadian navy to provide the fuel at no cost, which in fact happened to avoid a diplomatic incident. Presumably, there were no fuel charges when our ships visited Russia.

When I took the Admiral and Olav on a tour of Halifax the people of Halifax showed their typical generosity. I took them to Citadel Hill, the famous fortress first built in 1749 to protect the Royal Navy Dockyard and Halifax harbour from various enemies throughout our history, including the Americans in the war of 1812. The Admiral was surprised that Canada and the Americans were, at one time, at war. When I offered to pay the usual entrance fee, the Parks Canada ticket agent recognized the Admiral's Russian uniform and indicated to us to proceed at no cost. Similarly, when we arrived at one of the commercial piers on the Halifax waterfront to visit Canada's iconic *Bluenose*, the schooner was not open for tours; however, the Captain recognized the Admiral's Russian uniform and volunteered to give us a personal tour from stem to stern. The Captain even went the extra mile to show us parts of the schooner not included on standard tours. On another occasion when a group of Canadians took their Russian visitors to a pizza shop, a couple of teenagers jumped into line volunteering to pay for the Russians' pizzas.



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The Russians are Coming (Continued)

At an evening social event the Canadians hosted the Russians at a formal dinner in a banquet room on the top floor of the Chateau Halifax hotel (now the Delta Halifax). The banquet room was well appointed and featured a row of plate glass windows that provided a spectacular panoramic view of Halifax harbour. The well-lighted waterfront at night was particularly striking. I pointed out to a group of Russians that the predominant cluster of bright lights near the entrance to the harbour was the Imperial Oil refinery. I further explained that all of the crude oil processed by the refinery was shipped from the Middle East because it was cheaper than refining oil from western Canada. The Russians queried the strategy of relying on oil from foreign nations because the shipments could be suddenly or arbitrarily cut off. I explained that in a capitalist society there would always be other oil producers competing to sell their oil with the incentive of making a profit to grow their business and sell even larger volumes of oil. To bring the concept closer to home, I explained that there were more than a dozen home heating oil companies competing for sales in Halifax; and if I was not satisfied with the price or service of one company I could simply change to another through a phone call and have their oil delivered to my home the next day. The Russians seemed incredulous, or skeptical at best, because they could not relate to this concept in their country.

The Russians reciprocated our hospitality by inviting us to a buffet supper the following evening aboard the *Marshal Ustinov*. About three hours before the buffet I received a phone call telling me the Russians also wanted to invite three veterans from the Second World War, one each from the army, navy and air force, and asked if I could bring them. I said that I would but had no idea of where to start on such short notice. When I explained my dilemma to my headquarters Chief Warrant Officer he said he would take care of it, and so he did! Chief Warrant Officer Ainsworth and his wife, Sharon, went to the Camp Hill Veterans Hospital and recruited three veterans who were willing and fit enough to attend the banquet; the army and navy veterans were able to walk slowly but the air force veteran was confined to a wheel chair. When I arrived at the *Marshal Ustinov* that evening the Chief and Sharon were supervising Russian sailors carrying the wheelchair bound veteran up the gangway and helping the other two veterans to walk aboard. The Chief and his wife joined us for the buffet, keeping a caring eye on the veterans throughout the evening.

The Russians revered the three veterans, seating them in a prominent place in the wardroom and ensuring that they were well attended. The *Marshal Ustinov's* galley treated us to a very lavish buffet with a cornucopia of caviar and tasty traditional Russian fare. Following the meal we followed the Russian tradition of toasting just about everything with Vodka, including heads of state, countries, Admirals, ships, sailors, national heroes, etc. Lastly, there was a toast to the veterans. The senior Admiral of the Russian flotilla approached the air force veteran in his wheel chair and presented him a special gift from Russia to Canada. The gift was a superbly hand crafted, polished wooden box, about twice the size of a cigar box, with a hinged lid. The Admiral solemnly explained (through Olav) that during the Second World War an Allied Anson aircraft while on deployment to northern Russia had crashed near Murmansk killing all five RCAF airmen. These airmen were buried in side-by-side graves near Murmansk and were accorded full military honours for helping Russia to fight the Germans. The Admiral raised the lid to display five beautifully hand crafted miniature wooden coffins nestled side-by-side in the box; then raising the lid of each coffin to reveal a blue lining which cushioned a polished 57 mm cannon shell; each shell was filled with earth from each of the airmen's respective graves. It was a warm, touching moment.

The gift was unexpected so the need for a thank you response was completely unanticipated. Our Canadian Admiral gave me a nod as the senior airman present to indicate, over to you. In retrospect, I probably gave the best impromptu speech of my life. Speaking in phrases so that Olav could translate, I thanked the Russian Admiral for caring for our war dead and their very considerate gift of the earth from their graves.



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The Russians are Coming (Concluded)

I noted that Canadians know from history how deeply Russians revere their country; so to share soil from their venerated homeland was truly a sincere gift of friendship. At the end of the very pleasurable evening the gift was turned over to me and the Chief and his wife drove the veterans back to the Camp Hill Hospital.

The next day the Russian ships prepared to depart for Boston where the US Navy would be their next Partner-ship in Peace hosts. A few hours before departure the Admiral whom I hosted for the past four days invited me aboard the *Admiral Kharlamov* for a tour of the Helix helicopter which had been pulled out of the ship's hangar and parked on her flight deck. We climbed into the cockpit where the Admiral in very broken English explained the helicopter's controls and instruments. At the end of the tour the Admiral gave me three gifts: a small wooden box with a hand painted scene on the lid resembling the Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral on an island in the Neva River flowing through St. Petersburg (birthplace of Russian navy); the box contained two large medallions, a silver medallion commemorating the rebirth of the Russian navy (from the former Soviet navy) and a large bronze medallion commemorating the *Marshal Ustinov*; the second was a desk ornament made of slabs of polished granite from the Murmansk area, and thirdly a framed water colour he had painted of mountains surrounding a coastal inlet near Murmansk. I thanked the Admiral for the rare opportunity to "hangar fly" a Helix helicopter and for his very thoughtful gifts that would be treasured mementos of him and the Russian visit. I disembarked the *Admiral Kharlamov* just before the gangway was pulled back from the brow and waved good-bye to my partner-in-peace.

Post Script.

As the temporary custodian of the Russian gift I wanted to present the coffins containing shells and earth from the graves to living relatives of the deceased RCAF airmen. But first, I asked the superb carpenters at the Fleet Maintenance Unit (Atlantic) to replicate in minute detail the gift box and the five miniature coffins, which I planned to give to the Shearwater Aviation Museum or the naval museum in Halifax to commemorate the Russian visit. I then planned to give the original Russian made coffins containing the shells and earth to airmen's relatives. However, after researching the Anson crash near Murmansk I discovered that only one of the casualties was in the RCAF, the other four were RAF personnel. I was able to locate the Canadian's closest living relative and presented the coffin and shell containing the earth to her in a short ceremony, which was covered by the local press in Thunder Bay, ON. Later, during a visit to Ottawa I explained to the British Air Attaché how I came in possession of the Russian gift and gave him the coffins and shells containing the earth from the graves of the four RAF airmen. He committed to finding the surviving relatives of the four RAF deceased airmen and present the miniature coffins containing shells and earth to them.

Ottawa Area Luncheon

The following classmates living in the Ottawa area met on 21 June for lunch in HMCS Bytown, the Naval Officers' Mess—Carruthers, Braham, Cale, Auns, Emond, Diamond, Forbes, Adams, Mills, Hampton, Pellerin, Lukey, Astley, Colfer, Rioux. The group was pleased to greet Ronald Rioux for the first time at one of these functions. As noted above, John Adams reported on his visit to Ed Sanford.

One topic of interest discussed at the lunch was the Liberal government's decision to convert CMR back to a degree-granting university status.



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Amazon Adventure—Part 3 by 6559 Gerry Mueller

Manaus is the end of navigation for ocean-going vessels on the Amazon, about 1600 km up-river from the Atlantic; yet something less than half-way to the source of the river. Beyond this point travel is by river boat, and eventually canoe. With a current population of about 1.6 million, it is the capital city of Amazonas. First settled by Portuguese in the mid-17th century, in the late 19th and early 20th century it was the centre of the Brazilian Amazon “rubber-boom”, a period of great wealth as the world’s only rubber supplier. Buildings that were erected during this time, such as the Teatro Amazonas, the Customs House (a palace by European standards), and the Mercado Municipal (designed by Gustave Eiffel using his cast iron construction for which the Eiffel Tower was the demonstration model) gave Manaus the nickname “Paris of the Jungle”. Amongst other excesses, the rubber barons were so wealthy that they shipped their laundry to Europe, because they thought the local water too dirty to use for anything next to their skin. (In fact, Manaus is on the Rio Negro, a blue water river, quite clean, and with water slightly acidic, which means mosquitos cannot breed in its stagnant water, making the city relatively mosquito-free.) After the collapse of the Brazilian rubber industry, Manaus fell into decline, and is only now beginning to recover, largely because it is a part of a free-trade zone, which allows international manufacturers to import parts and export finished product with large tax and duty breaks, almost free land, , and avoidance of most other charges. If you own a product made by LG, Nokia, Philco (automotive), Samsung, Toshiba, Sony, Phillips, Harley-Davidson, Kawasaki, the odds are that it, or some of its parts, were made in Manaus. A spin-off from this recovery has been the restoration of many of the buildings that were a part of Manaus’s former glory, and building new ones, such as a soccer stadium for use during the 2014 FIFA World Cup, which will also feature in the 2016 Summer Olympics. That’s the upside; the downside is that the restoration and new construction in a city that was designed for use by people on horseback or carriages has made it a permanent traffic jam.

Manaus was an overnight port-of-call, so we had basically two days, from morning of day 1 to afternoon of day 2 to explore, with the ship as our hotel (and restaurant; we took seriously our travel physician’s recommendation that eating even in larger cities, restaurants or street-food, was not a good idea-and that took will-power, as the smell from street vendors and open-door restaurants was very tempting!). We took our time going ashore on the 1st day (we had booked a guided city tour for the 2nd day) waiting for others to come back to the ship. One description from a returnee stuck with me; think of any Chinatown, but they speak Portuguese! That was quite realistic; the cars were curb-to-curb, and whatever space remained was occupied by people on foot. Our other query was about safety; it’s perfectly safe the ship’s officials told us. (Which didn’t ring all that true; just before we sailed from Ft. Lauderdale, we had heard that the Primate (Head Bishop) of the Anglican Church of Canada had been robbed at gun-point while visiting in Amazonia. It also didn’t jibe with the tourist map of Manaus handed out; although in Portuguese, my Spanish was good enough to note that the police station right next to the exit from the pier into the city was labelled as “specializing in crimes against tourists”.) We did what we normally do in hinky circumstances; don’t take anything you can’t lose (which means a limited amount of money, at most one credit card that you use the least, and no jewellery), and a camera that doesn’t look expensive (I have one that is actually very good, with a Leica lens, but can be slipped into a pocket, plus being rugged enough to stand being rained on.) And off we went.

Initial purpose; wander around, get a feel for the town. Then head in the general direction of Teatro Amazonas, just in case we don’t get to see it otherwise. One of the shore excursions on offer had been an evening concert at this copy of an Italian Renaissance opera house, but we had left it late to book, and were well down the waiting list. It is not difficult to spot from anywhere in the downtown area, with an unmistakable dome, easily seen from just about anywhere. But getting there was a challenge; either dodging cars with murderous drivers, or going up pedestrian alleys with people coming the other way determined to make you go their way. But, we got there. And, it was worth the trip!



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Amazon Adventure—Part 3 (Continued)

The Teatro Amazonas occupies a central square, on top of a small hill above the surrounding area. Christmas decorations were everywhere, including a very much larger than life a) angel Gabriel mounted on the front of the building, and b) off to one side, the by now obvious synthetic northern pine tree, which we later that evening found was strung with an LED light-show. (By this time I would have found it odd if the angel had been anything other than obviously white and European, and the tree anything other than a stylized pine.) The building



would fit without question into any European city, although the paving around it might be considered exotic; in order to avoid the sound of horses and carriages disturbing the performance inside, the paving stones were baked from a mixture of clay and latex, which makes them soft and deadens sound! The surrounding square is also quite interesting, with a pavement that is an interesting optical illusion; while quite flat, viewed in one direction it looks as if it is heaving waves, an allusion, apparently, to the fact that Brazil was settled by people from across the sea (there doesn't seem to be any consideration of the aboriginal tribes that were there well before the Europeans arrived!).

We thoroughly explored the area around the Teatro, before returning to the ship by another route. On the way I managed to do some Christmas shopping for my 12 year old granddaughter (she was my “draw” in the family gift lottery) who had requested “something different”. I doubt if the top and sandals I found for her in Brazil will be matched by anything her friends will wear; but I tell you, speaking some limited Spanish in Brazil is not the slightest bit of help in shopping; sign language and pointing works however!

No sooner had we gotten back to the ship and showered, we had a call from the excursions desk asking if we still wanted to go to the performance at Teatro Amazonas that evening; somehow we had moved from about 40th on the waiting list to the top. If so, we needed to be ready to go in 30 minutes; 10 minutes to get dressed, 15 minutes to get a quick meal at the on-deck Brazilian BBQ supper, and 5 minutes to get to disembarkation. We made it! And we realized why getting to an 8:00 p.m. performance meant leaving at 6:00 p.m., for a theatre that was about 15 minutes by foot away! Just about every road in Manaus is one-way, the wrong way, and blocked by construction, so it took more than an hour to get to the theatre. But, because the ship had reserved all of the orchestra-level seats, there was no hurry to get inside, so there was a bit of a tour of the outside with a guide. As we had seen most of it already, but not at night (the “tree” was spectacular and a still picture does not do it justice), of chief interest was the court building on the other side of the road, which our guide pointed out to us was a lesson in the Brazilian justice system; usually Justice is depicted as blind-folded, holding the sword of truth straight up and down, and the scales on which the evidence is weighted perfectly level. But in this statue, the artist depicted the Brazilian fact; the sword is tilted, the scales are not level, and there is one eye peeping out from behind the blindfold.

The performance we were attending was Handel's Messiah; the orchestra and choir were those of the University of the Amazon, with local soloists. The orchestra and the choir were more than adequate, perhaps as good as any that I have heard. In particular, the English diction was excellent. (There is, of course, a problem with judging a performance of such a familiar work when hearing it in a land with a non-English native language.)



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Amazon Adventure—Part 3 (Continued)

The soprano was excellent, both musically and linguistically, the program notes told us that she was operationally trained, which was obvious. The tenor and bass were adequate, but needed language coaching – it is interesting and odd to hear an English oratorio sung by someone who does not speak the language, and has not had much coaching. The alto was altogether more interesting, although not very good at English diction. S/He however was a male baritone transitioning to female alto. (This is Brazil, and they were perfectly clear about it in the program notes. Next day, on our bus tour of the city we drove by a long [about 10] series of billboards depicting attractive women in lingerie, but, we were passing them in the wrong direction, only the last billboard made it clear that they were advertising a shop for male transitioning to female persons. Random thought; we have a long way to go up here!) That said, musically this person, whom I wish well both as a person and as a singer, at this time was probably a better baritone than alto.



The drive back to the ship took just as long as the drive to the theatre, not so much because of the traffic, which was still considerable, but because of the construction and the one-way system. Watching from the safety of a large bus, it was quite obvious why one would not want to be out alone on the streets. Aside from the street corners being populated by what one might call “girls who go bump in the night”, lurking in doorways and in the shadows were guys who one would probably not invite into one’s home.

Next morning we were booked for a city tour by bus, with an English (so-so) speaking guide. First stop, the Municipal Market. This is a large structure, covering a city block, selling everything food, as well as clothing, small appliances, and sundries. The structure itself is assembled from cast iron elements manufactured in Gustave Eiffel’s Paris workshop, and some of the roofing is mahogany. Other, flat roofing is corrugated sheet metal, which looks new, the original not having survived the climate, but the structural elements look like new (protected by paint), and the wood roofing is the original. The merchant counters for selling fresh fish and meats are obviously modern, made of stainless steel, although in a few areas one can still find the original enamelled metal. We arrived there by about 9:30 a.m., which means we missed most of the action, and few merchants in the fresh foods areas were still at work. Which was fine, it left lots of room to explore this monument of structural engineering! Next stop, again, Teatro Amazonas.

At least that was the plan. But our bus, which had had to move off as there is no parking near the market did not appear at the promised time. Nor 10 minutes later, by which time our guide had confessed that he couldn’t call the driver because he had left his phone on the bus. None of us tourists had brought our phones; why would we? Payphones don’t exist; very few people or businesses have landlines; as in many large developing countries, it is much cheaper and easier to install cell towers rather than wired telephone infrastructure. Eventually a phone was borrowed, the driver called; the bus was stuck in heavy traffic, and at present rate of progress would be at least 30 minutes to go the few blocks needed. We couldn’t walk to it, because we had some people with mobility limitations. And why was there so much traffic, mid-morning, on a weekday, when everybody should have been at work or at home?



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Finally the penny dropped with our guide; it was December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, a holiday; the faithful had been at Mass early, the not-so faithful had slept a little later, and now all of them were downtown, getting started on their Christmas shopping because all stores can open in December even on holidays and Sunday! In the event, we had 40 minutes of people and traffic watching time! Note the enterprising vegetable barrow man; since traffic was gridlocked in all directions, why not set up shop in the middle of the street? I was also able to add to my multi-national collection of electrical engineering horror shows; the one shown is not the only one bagged on this day, or while in Brazil, but it is representative of the genre; note the artfully placed roll of yellow electrical tape, handy for the next guy that needs to splice into this rat's nest. And then the bus came!

From the market to the opera house is a leisurely 10 minute walk, or a 50 minute drive in Christmas shopping traffic. The time was spent by our guide filling us in on rubber industry and Manaus history and interesting facts, many of which have already worked their way into this narrative. However, some related to the opera house were new. It seems that very little of this building is actually local. It opened in 1896 and is now protected as a national monument. Wanting to make Manaus a great center of civilization, no expense was spared to create this cultural palace in a tropical rainforest a 1000 miles from the coast, with the river the only means of transportation. Most of its materials were imported from Europe: the doorways are of Italian marble, the staircase is of English wrought-iron, and many of its 198 chandeliers are Murano glass from Venice; the rest were imported from France. The dome, completed at the beginning of the 20th century, is faced with 36,000 tiles imported from Germany. Even the native Brazilian woods used in the decorations were sent to Europe to be carved and polished. Artists, and entire productions, opera, symphonic concerts, theatre, were brought in from Europe. In the middle of the tropics, a few degrees south of the Equator, with evening temperatures in the high 20's Celsius and relative humidity not far off 100%, those attending were expected to arrive in evening dress, white tie and tails for men, full-length silk and brocade for ladies. To make this tolerable, a cooling system was installed with an air outlet under every seat in the house, and all the boxes above the orchestra level had gilded wrought-iron fronts – which had the unintended consequence of making the acoustics quite poor because that killed most of the reverberation! But then, one didn't attend performances to actually see or hear them; one attended to be seen!

This was our 3rd visit to the outside of the Teatro Amazonas, and our 2nd to the inside, but this time we were able to walk around and actually see the interior, rather than watching a performance. The opulent detail was staggering; one can only imagine how much wealth it took to build this building in its location, and the even greater wealth of the rubber barons who built this monument to themselves as a means of showing off just how wealthy they were! When the bottom fell out of the Amazon rubber market around 1920, the lucky ones left for the new rubber boom countries such as Malaysia with some of their fortune intact, but some were left literally begging in the streets. Of course, there were relatively few to beg from, as the lower-down employees of the rubber companies, and the mostly aboriginal workers, were also without income. (There was a brief 2nd Amazon rubber boom in 1942 – 1945, after Malaysia had fallen to the Japanese, and the U.S. industry returned out of necessity to the original rubber producing region, but this ended abruptly at the end



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of WW II.) It is only in the late 1980's that this magnificent building was restored, and is now once again being used for its original purpose, however with local and national artists, rather than imports.

The bus tour was supposed to have a 3rd stop at the Cathedral, but by the time we finished at the Teatro, it was well past lunch time, several diabetic and needed food, and the ship was scheduled to sail at 3 p.m. By a unanimous vote it was decided to skip the Cathedral, and return to the ship! We had not been able to get into the cathedral the previous day, as it was closed for several hours in the afternoon, and so we never did get to see it. It is another building that is being restored to its previous glory, including restoration of the large park in which it sits, so it was likely worth a visit, but, it is what it is. As we are not likely to return to Manaus (our general summary of this trip was that it was very worthwhile doing, but that we will not do it again!) we will have to do with what we were able to see of the outside. And so we left Manaus, headed back to the Atlantic, but with the early sailing time we had the opportunity to see the large industrial complexes of the Free Trade Zone, well away from the main city, which are generating the wealth that makes it possible to restore the architectural and cultural monuments of Manaus. Our next stop, on the next day, would be for something completely different!

Parintins is a, normally, quiet town of about 100,000 inhabitants, on an island in the river about half-way between Manaus and Santarém. It has no access by road, or air, the only way to go there is by riverboat. And yet, since about 1996 when it was "discovered", this small town is host to the 2nd largest Brazilian folk festival; only the Rio Carnival draws more participants. Called Festival do Boi-Bumbá, this event takes place in late June, and celebrates a local legend about a resurrected ox. It is also a contest with two teams competing in extended retellings of the story with flamboyant dances, singing, and parade floats, based on local Amazonian folklore and indigenous culture, but also incorporating contemporary Brazilian rhythms and themes. This takes place over 3 nights in the "Bumbódromo", a stadium holding 35,000 people! The rest of the year Parintins goes back to being a sleepy town. Until someone, presumably noticing cruise ships sailing by regularly, had a bright idea.

The winner of the annual competition puts together a 90 minute show, capable of being put on in a medium sized convention centre a short few metres from the small pier, with room for an audience of perhaps 600 (what one might expect from the small ships capable of cruising the Amazon). No other infra-structure improvements were needed; cruise ships anchor in mid-river, and use tenders to bring visitors ashore. Since visitors generally would not buy local food or drink, none is offered. A small market outside the convention centre sells team t-shirts from previous competitions, shirts left over that would otherwise not be sold, at what we think of as ridiculously low prices; I paid US\$8 for a brightly coloured shirt in a moisture-wicking fabric (cotton does not do well in that climate!), a shirt which might well sell for north of \$30 in a sporting goods store here. And, with the cooperation of Mother Nature, there are other opportunities for income!

We woke with the ship anchored mid-river, did the usual, and went for breakfast, as the tenders going to the Boi-Bumbá show weren't leaving until early afternoon. And from the dining room looked out at --- nothing! All around the ship was a thick smog (in my time in Manchester in graduate school it would have been



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called a killer fog!), with visibility at best about 100 metres in any direction. At that point the bridge, via the overhead speakers, let us in on the debate; stay or go on. There were good arguments for going on, as there were passengers with serious breathing difficulties. There were also arguments for staying; people wanted to see the show, and cancelling would mean a financial hit to the ship, as the performance had been booked and paid for, but the passengers would have to be refunded! A further consideration was safety, with no visibility, was it safe to tender passengers ashore? In the end the decision was to stay, but to hire local riverboats to do the tendering, the assumption being that the local crew would have better navigation information than the ship's tender crews. As it happened, by the time tendering started, the visibility was normal (see picture for normal!), as normal as it ever gets on the Amazon. For us, it was an opportunity to experience the normal Amazon riverboat way of travel for a short voyage; for the Captain, who was on his 1st voyage with Holland America as Master, it was by his later admission, an opportunity for head office to express its displeasure with his decision.



A short note on Amazon riverboats is needed. Outside the major cities there are no roads connecting Amazon towns to one another, nor are there railways. Air travel is mostly on a hub and spoke system from the large cities on the Atlantic coast to the interior cities, with a few routes between some of the larger interior towns. Air travel within the Amazon basin is very expensive, much as it is in the Canadian North, and for similar reasons, high infrastructure costs and low passenger volume. Thus the default mode of transportation along the Amazon is an extensive riverboat system. These come in all sizes, but except for a very few that are intended for tourist luxury travel, which have dining facilities and cabins, the riverboats used by the locals are all of one type, varying only in size. Two or 3 open decks, with a communal toilet on each deck, plus communal sinks, propelled by a badly maintained (noisy and smelly) diesel engine. No cabins or dining facilities. "Accommodation" is provided by passengers, who bring a hammock, which is hooked into a pair of rings on the ceiling above each deck. Whatever provisions and luggage a passenger brings is stored in the hammock when it is not in use, or under it. There may be a communal satellite TV for entertainment; otherwise, passengers are responsible for entertaining themselves. Food may be bought at the frequent stops in small communities along the river. Where one slings one's hammock depends on how long one is prepared to wait. Tickets are sold well in advance of sailing, and passengers line up in order of arrival. Then, not much before sailing, they board; 1st one on gets the best hammock location, 2nd one the next best; last one gets the worst, next to the engine or outside one of the washrooms. It was two such vessels our ship hired to tender us ashore in Parintins. (If you look closely at the picture, you might notice the decks have plastic lawn chairs, these were purely for our convenience, and would not be provided for river travel.)

And so, on to the show! Loud, colourful, extreme energy! And lots and lots of feathers! We didn't see a lot of birds on this Amazon Adventure. After this show a wag suggested that was because most had been harvested for their feathers to put on this show. Music was by a small group; a couple of vocalists, two guitars,



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a bass, a keyboard, and a couple of drummers. Reinforced by mega amplifiers and speakers! And then a cast of perhaps 70 to 80 dancers, and movers of stage props and pushers of floats and handlers of appendages of large mythical figures, without stop. And feathers, did I mention feathers? No question, this was the highlight of this trip, this was Brazil as we imagine it.

The return to the ship was “interesting”, as neither the riverboats nor the ship were designed to “mate” with each other, complicated by wind which had stirred up relatively large waves. In the end, getting off the riverboat and onto the ship involved jumping a gap that kept changing, but with many hands on one side pushing off and more catching on the other side. June and I are relatively “spry”, but many of our fellow travellers were considerably older and less mobile so I imagine that this operation was something of a nightmare for the crew, as dumping a passenger into the Amazon, or worse, smashing a body part between ship and river boat, would produce a sh-tstorm of law suits. But, all safely back on board, it was off to our last port-of-call on the Amazon.

Alter do Chão, which means “church altar” is named after a nearby large rock formation that, with a bit of squinting, looks a bit like an altar table. The nearby city is Santarém, about 40 minutes away by car or bus on one of the few roads in the entire state. On the Rio Tapajós, a pristine blue water river, it is noted for its miles of yellow sand beaches which gives the area its nickname, “Caribbean in Brazil”. Nevertheless, it is mainly a weekend vacation spot for residents of Santarém, with very few visitors coming from elsewhere in Brazil. We had a Brazilian couple from Sao Paulo on the cruise, and asked them why; they told us that it was actually cheaper for them to fly to Miami, and from there to any of the Caribbean islands, than to fly here. They also told us they were on this cruise because it was a cheaper way of seeing this part of their country than flying from Sao Paulo directly to some the places we had visited, and taking uncomfortable river boats to those that were not accessible by air. These factors make Alter do Chão a sleepy little rural village during the week, when we were there, becoming more lively on the weekends. While not strictly comparable, this town was much more typical of an Amazonian village than Boca da Valeria.

This village is also a tender port-of-call, but this time we were able to take the ship’s tenders to the small makeshift pier, where there was a small welcoming band, and a handful of artisan stalls selling local crafts. Getting to the actual town involved walking over several hundred metres of hot and soft sand, a challenge for the able-bodied and a significant barrier for those less abled. When asked why there wasn’t at least a wooden walk, the ship’s crew explained that ordinarily, before the record draught the Amazon was experiencing, the beach we had to walk over would not exist, and there would be a much better landing facility next to one of the town streets!

There is not much to see or do in the town on weekdays, when there are few visitors; the local bar is short-staffed, although beer is available, and there are a few artisan galleries open when a cruise ship arrives. Other than that, there is a pretty but basic rural church, a town square with benches and views of the river, some beach chairs with umbrellas along the river, an open supermarket (which wouldn’t qualify as a *dépanneur* in size), and not much else. But there is evidence of it being a holiday destination; a posh hotel under construc-



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construction, and several very wealthy looking vacation homes, shuttered, gated, and fenced with spike-topped walls, reinforced by a few strands of electrified or razor wire strung along the top.

And that was the last Amazon port-of-call, although it would be another 36 hours before we were back in the Atlantic (not without some drama as we crossed over the river mouth bar at high tide, having dropped the river pilots, the ship scrapped bottom, producing a rather apologetic bad news-good news announcement from the bridge; the bad news, we scrapped bottom, the good news, it was mud!) On the way we re-crossed the Equator north-bound; having ignored the south-bound crossing, we now had the obligatory crossing ceremony – June and I, having crossed several times each way both by air and sea could sit back and enjoy the ribald fun, and collect yet one more certificate. But the pollywogs in the ship’s company did not escape the judgment of King Neptune! (Neptune, oddly for the location, had the same very thick Scottish accent as one of the engineering officers, and his rather dizzy spouse spoke with a Russian accent, and looked a lot like one of the dancers!)

And here endeth the travelogue. On reflection, I am glad we took this trip, as it gave us insight into a very different part of our world, which is of significance to the health of our planet. It was disappointing, in the sense that the picture conjured up in our minds by the words “Amazon rainforest” prior to going there was completely different from the reality. The lush green was more like dark green drifting to brown. In our entire time on the river we had rain only once, for a few minutes. We saw no birds or animals other than the few “pets” at Boca da Valeria. And that was not just our experience; people who took day-long guided walks of several kilometres into the forest reported the same thing, no animals or birds to be seen, and everything very dry.

And yet this trip was also rewarding, in what we learned. Without being too moralistic about it, it is our North American and European consumption of beef and edible oils that can be grown on the Equator and transported to us for far less than it would cost to produce it ourselves that is destroying, possibly beyond recovery, this enormous and ecologically important area. Would we go back? Probably not, not only because we don’t like to repeat, but also from the suspicion that this kind of tourism is not a solution, even though it brings necessary income to a poor part of the world, but likely adds to the problem.

No answers, only questions! But, this trip has given us things to talk about that are far more interesting than calculating the chances that the Toronto Maple Leafs will ever again win the Stanley Cup!



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Defence Policy Review by Richard Archer

The following copy of a thoughtful letter on the Defence Policy Review has been provided by Richard Archer:

Dear Defence Policy Consultations Team:

I have read with great interest the Defence Policy Review Public Consultation Paper. I found it useful and informative, but in my view it suffers from a major oversight.

Particularly in the section on Contributing to Global Peace and Security, the document makes no mention of the way that Canada depends crucially on the freedom of the seas for its prosperity and security.

Ninety per cent of global trade travels by sea and world-wide communications, in the way of fibre-optic cables, lie on the sea bed. It is a serious mistake to take these two ingredients in our current prosperity and security for granted.

Nearly fifty percent of Canada's trade moves by ship. And as our nation actively pursues further overseas trade deals, such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement with the European Union, this percentage will only increase.

Moreover, Canada has the longest coastline in the world and major oceans on three sides, plus the Saint Lawrence-Great Lakes system on the fourth side. In addition to the major islands off all three coasts, mainland Canada itself can be considered as almost another island. Of the thirteen provinces and territories, all but two, Saskatchewan and Alberta, have salt water coasts. Even so, Saskatchewan depends heavily on the seaborne transport of its grains, potash, uranium and other products for its prosperity. And Alberta continues its efforts to get its major energy exports to tidewater via pipeline, be it to the US Gulf Coast, the British Columbia coast or the New Brunswick coast. Alberta's future prosperity depends on it. In this light, even the people of land-locked Saskatchewan and Alberta are becoming increasingly dependent on the freedom of the seas.

And for the future, a glance at a map of the world shows that Canada is well-placed to benefit from ever-burgeoning world trade, possibly, it can be said, in an emerging global maritime era. As the Arctic Ocean becomes more navigable, Canada will be at the nexus of trade routes between Europe and Asia.

Consequently, even taking into account our continuing continental trade and security relationship with the United States, Canada is by many measures a *maritime* nation.

So what does this mean for Canada's defence policy?

In the first place, a maritime nation must be able protect its sovereignty and interests in its home waters, to provide a secure base for its control of its approaches and the management of its extensive coastal and ocean real estate and resources.

When it comes to the freedom of the seas that permits Canada to prosper, our nation should not depend on a free ride, relying on other nations to keep the sea lines open. Additionally, we must be able to help influence events in the maritime domains of the world, so as to help prevent conflict as much as possible before it arises. If such prevention should fail, then we should then be able to contribute to the conflict's resolu-



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resolution.

In my opinion, the maritime nation that is Canada needs an overall strategic maritime vision, one that recognizes how dependent we are on the seas, including our three ocean approaches, for our security and prosperity. Such a vision would then outline what we are going to do about it.

A key consideration is that to implement such a vision, Canada needs a measure of *sea power*.

Such sea power would be tailored to Canada's specific requirements and reflect our nation's role as a middle power with an enormous stake in what goes on under, on and over the seas. In short, Canada needs to evolve into a significant maritime player, working where necessary with allies and friends to respond to the demands of its national and international maritime interests.

I believe as well that Canada would be recognized internationally for its sea power. It would help establish Canada's place and influence in the global order.

Our measure of sea power would have many elements, but a major component would be a strong navy that can actively defend Canada's multitudinous interests in home waters as well as in the distant corners of the world. Such a navy would have the right mix of vessels that can go in harm's way, with complementary maritime aircraft, and with surveillance systems and ships for home waters sovereignty and defence. Importantly, our Navy would also have the sufficient numbers of vessels and aircraft so as to be able to respond as soon as required to challenges in both home waters and overseas.

In short:

Canada is increasingly a maritime nation, becoming ever more dependent on the seas for its prosperity, security and standing in the world.

A developing maritime nation must take steps to protect and further its interests, both in home waters and with friends in distant waters.

Canada therefore needs a strong and effective Royal Canadian Navy.

Richard Archer

Closing Notes

You will note that this has become a "periodical" driven by my own personal resolve and your inputs rather than any fixed schedule. Thanks to this issue's contributors. Looking forward to hearing from more of you in the near future.