

CLASS OF 65 NEWSLETTER



Edition 1 – Jan 2008



Disclaimer: This Newsletter is produced for members of the RMC Class of 1965 and is based solely 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 of 65. Articles will be entered in the official language in which they are received. Regrettably the Editorial staff still lacks the linguistic skills to produce a bilingual version.

Editor's Corner (Mike Braham)



The idea of this newsletter was cooked up over lunch by a bunch of us who had been shipmates in HMCS GATINEAU immediately after graduation - **Jim Carruthers, Hugh Spence, Peter Houlston** and myself.

The Class has remained in the forefront of ex-Cadet activities and has maintained good internal ties through the ongoing efforts of folks like Hugh and Jim.

We agreed however, that despite those strong ties, the periodic regional get-togethers, and annual reunions, it might be interesting to create something at a more personal level with which we could share what we are doing with our lives through tid-bits of information about our families and activities.

I recently ran this thought by you in an e-mail and received a positive response to the thought of a periodic newsletter on happenings within the Class of 65 community. As a consequence, this is the first crack at a newsletter based on some of the inputs I received as a result of that e-mail. Let me have your feedback and inputs, including articles of interest and, if appropriate, relevant pictures. The following is a summary of some of the ideas I received for articles.

"Copious" Cope who has recovered from his snit at having had the idea for a newsletter some years ago, but being rejected, sent the following thoughts - *Keep it as interesting and humorous as possible. As we advance in years it seems we get enough bad news about old friends as it is. I note that Mike in his Email suggested "providing a recap of their life since 65". My comment is that there is already a venue for that in the "bios" section of our class internet site. And the conclusion would seem to be that since I only count about 20 bios on that site (many of which have not been updated for a long time) that there does not seem to be a lot of interest from the class in providing such details to the class. Perhaps one function of the newsletter could be to remind people that they can submit a bio to the class site if they are interested.*

*Can we submit items about others in the class even if they will not submit them on their own? With the 3rd party's approval, of course. For example, I was thinking about Waine uncovering the interesting story of **Bonard Whatley** being a missionary in Borneo or wherever. I mean Waine could write a synopsis of what he found and then ask Bonard if it was all right to put it in the Newsletter.*

(Editor's note: With the third party's agreement - why not?)

*I agree with **Rick Archer** wanting to put in old anecdotes from Roads, RMC and CMR plus military adventures. For example, how many know that the late **Paul Kervin** was the guy jumping the motorcycle through the hoop of flames at the big tattoo in 1967? Does everyone know the Al Kennedy story? How about Kitty's story about the Tsunami in Indonesia ? Personally I find these all a lot more interesting than knowing that old Blogs was the Director of DXOR and taught at staff college for 4 years. Do we want to do obits for classmates and their immediate families?*

John Hilton suggested that it should include, ... *short snippets from the engineers such as 'retirements' and 'heat trips' or events that might be of interest to others. All in all, a light, informative newsletter 2 or 3 times a year that strengthens the bonds of friendship.*

Picking up on one of Doug's suggestions, **Gord Forbes** thought that it might be interesting to include, ... *a series of articles would be to highlight one of our departed classmates in each edition.*

Since most of us are now reached that stage, **Terry Colfer** suggested that, ... *how they spend their time since retirement would be of particular interest.*

So there are a few ideas that I hope will stimulate some input. As I indicated in a recent e-mail, the success of this venture will depend entirely on your interest and inputs - I am just a collection and distribution agent looking for ways to fill my impending retirement and stay out from under my wife's feet!

One of the challenges for me will be to keep up with changing e-mail addresses. I started out with the listing on the RMC site for our class and have made a couple of amendments based on the returns to date. Let me know if you have another address you would prefer me to use.

In the interests of kicking things off and despite Doug's legitimate concerns about bios, I have included my own, partly because I have been out of touch with the majority of you and it might serve to prove that I am still alive. (Doug - I did submit it to the Class internet site and you are right, there aren't too many there.). I have included a fairly recent picture and ask those of you submitting articles to try to do the same. That way we might recognise each other if we meet on the street after many years.

Finally, I haven't got any idea about the frequency of the newsletter yet. Perhaps 2 or 3 a year, however, it will depend largely on the amount of material.

Where have they been and what are they doing now?

6364 Mike Braham

Despite rumours to the contrary, I am not dead although I must confess to being "missing in action" from most ex-Cadet and Class activities since graduation.



I am probably one of the few still slogging away full-time in the workplace although the light at the end of the tunnel recently came on and I have announced my retirement from the Public Service effective 30 September 2008.

I stayed in the Navy until 1987 when I retired as a Logistics Captain (N). Service life was fun and varied and not quite what I had envisaged.

After several years as an "operator" in destroyers and submarines I discovered (more accurately, it was discovered for me!) that I wasn't very good at operational stuff so I transferred to the Logistics Branch which seemed to suit my ponderous decision-making style a little better.

The Navy provided me with a variety of postings including an exchange tour with the USN in Oakland, CA and a posting at NATO Headquarters in Brussels. These international jaunts were interspersed with a number of staff jobs including one with the Land Procurement Directorate responsible for the acquisition of all ammunition for the Canadian Forces and Leopard tank parts! It was about that time that the Navy and I started to lose sight of each other!

That separation was reinforced by my final posting as the Director of Logistics Operations in NDHQ, traditionally an Army staff job coordinating national support for deployed operations.

The thought of returning to the Navy as an anonymous Captain and the growing mutinous grumbles from the family led me to resign from the CF in 1987 and move one stop further east on my bus route to Emergency Preparedness Canada (EPC).

I spent thirteen interesting years as a Director in EPC developing national disaster plans that were given their baptism of fire during the Red River and Saguenay floods and the Ice Storm of 1998.

A falling out over the direction taken with respect to the Y2K fiasco led me to seek other employment and I landed up as the DND Director responsible for occupational health and safety which is where I have hung my lunchbox since September 1999.

Janet and I were married shortly after graduation and have since raised two kids, Wendy, a teacher in Mission, BC, and Stephen, an analyst with Public Safety in Halifax. We are now the proud grandparents of 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ grandchildren. (The $\frac{1}{2}$ is due in April)

Struck off Strength

On a sombre note, the Class entry in the College Web Site reports twelve of our class as "struck of strength" as follows:

6590 Tom Barton
6517 Rick Briese
6519 Ross Burns
6634 Bryan Harwood
6459 Boris Izweriw
6535 Paul Kervin
6666 Ken Menzies
6015 Rob Murrell
6563 Gord Reay
6569 Glenn Savigny
6450 Dave Smith
6698 Gerrit Van Boeschoten

If anyone would like to take up the suggestion to write a memorial piece on any of these past colleagues I think it would be an important contribution to our collective memories.

Gatherings

Ottawa Lunch: A group of Ottawa-based 65'ers met for lunch at a local restaurant on 14 November to swap lies and salty dips. The following classmates attended - **Rick Archer, Vil Auns, Carl Armstrong, Mike Braham, Jim Carruthers, Ken Clarkson, Doug Cope, Brian Davis, Gord**

Diamond, Al Kennedy, Waine McQuinn, and Hugh Spence. Also joining the group was Dave Young, Class of '66 who was in town from Washington , DC

Living out in the country like he does, "**Fats**" **Carruthers** organizes these lunches from time to time so as to maintain contact with the world.

Another is planned for the end of this month and the Newsletter will provide an update in its next edition.

John Cowan

Yvan Gagnon wrote in a couple of items on his way South. The first is a proposal that the name of John Cowan be added to our class list on the panel of the second floor of Curry Building . As some of you may know, we are the last class listed in large letters on these panels and there is almost half a panel of empty space left... lots of place to add one more name. John has been made an honorary member of our class and we could add Hon24263 instead of the class numbers that we all have. Yvan notes that John does not know about this proposal. He thinks that this would be a nice recognition of his status in our group, but leaves it in our hands to decide.

The Newsletter looks forward to hearing from you on this proposal with suggestions on how to implement it if there is agreement.

Book Feedback - Yvan Gagnon

On a more personal note, Yvan writes, ... that at the last reunion in the Senior Staff Mess, ten classmates bought a copy of my last book, "Making Sense of Politics, Anytime... Anywhere..." If any of these brave souls have read part or most of the book, I would like some feedback. Please remember that the content of this book is more or less what I have taught students at RMC for 30 years, so you may think of the book not only for what you get (or do not get!) from it, but also as an object of studies for future Officers of the Forces.

Editors Note: More information on Yvan's book can be found at the eVeritas site at

http://www.rmclub.ca/eVeritas/2005/Issue016/200516.htm#6715_Dr._Yvan_Gagnon__

Odds and Ends

A couple of responses indicated that some lucky souls were living or visiting warmer climes.

Yvan Gagnon reported that he and his wife were on their way to Florida for an annual reunion with **Michel Matte** and **Marc Jette** and their wives.

Barry Mitchell, who apparently has been about as active as your editor in Class activities, reported that he was in Australia visiting their son and his wife and their first grandchild

He is semi-retired and living in Stouffville , Ontario when not in Australia .

Gary Running is also in Australia and not returning to Canada until May/June.

Doug Ross trades in the Okanagan Valley for Panama City Beach , Florida in the winter. Not bad work if you can get it!!

Although my wife would think it closer to heaven than the sunny places, the thought of Zermatt ,

Switzerland makes me think of hibernation, however, that's where **Ed Mallory** wrote from and updated me on our godchild, their son, Christopher.

Reminder

Jack Flannagan has 3 n's in his name!!

Copious in the Outback



In the spring of 1972 while staring into a microscope and implanting a cannula into the brain of a live but anaesthetized rat, I realized that the advice of several of my colleagues in the neurophysiology department at the University of Western

Ontario was likely correct. While this work was some of the most fascinating I had ever been involved with, my chances of getting a job as an experimental brain surgeon in four years when I would finish my Ph.D. would be about nil. So when my buddy, Howie, in Ottawa called two weeks later I abandoned my Ph.D. studies after one year and fled to Australia on an archeological expedition into the outback.

At the time, Howie, an electrician by trade, was working on his Bachelor of Arts degree and while doing so was also having an affair with his female archaeology professor. (Yes, before you ask, he did pass the course.) Luckily this professor had been offered a grant to finish her Ph.D. in Australia studying the ancient habits of the aboriginal. That grant allowed for her to hire two assistants. Howie was to be one assistant and he said that he would rather have me along as the second assistant than some kid he did not know. Ergo he offered me the job of off-sider (aka gofer) for room and board on a six-month expedition to the continent down under.

So two months later there I was living in a tent in a trailer park in Derby , beside a trailer that held Howie, the archaeologist and her 4-year-old son. In that era Derby was truly a small town on the edge of nowhere in the upper left corner of Western Australia . To get there we had first driven a 4-wheel drive, used Nissan Patrol over 800 miles of dirt road across the Nullarbor Plain from Adelaide to Perth . Then we pulled a 20-foot, rented house trailer from Perth over approximately 1000 miles of bone-jarring, washboard road north to Derby . I can tell you that you have not really experienced wilderness driving until you have eaten red dirt; dodged huge, four-trailer 'road trains' and bounced your kidneys over the Aussie dirt highways of that era. And yes, I drove that stick shift Nissan on those roads. This will shock Jacques Cale after I almost destroyed the clutch in his Volvo Canadian when he tried to teach me to drive during pre-fleet.

But I digress. For the next six months from our headquarters in Derby we mounted field trips to explore aboriginal caves and living sites in the Kimberley . Each of these outback excursions took about a week and the team usually consisted of Howie and me plus an aboriginal guide. After loading all our gasoline, water and food into the truck, the three of us would drive about 200 miles into the outback on what can only be described as the lowest grade of dirt road possible, even worse than the dirt highways. At the nearest cattle station we would get permission to camp for the night.

The next day, following our guide's directions, we would drive truly off-road anywhere from 50 to 150 miles into the bush looking for aboriginal living sites. At each site we would dig a 3-foot deep test pit and collect and catalogue spear points, pottery, fireplace charcoal and any other artifacts that we found. Some of these artifacts were later dated (from the charcoal) at about 20,000 years.

Most of these sites were in caves or more correctly large overhanging shelters in the sides of the red rock hills. This was the same era as Erich von Däniken and his *Chariots of the Gods* book. We explored many of the same caves that he had explored and saw many of the same 'space man' cave paintings he had documented in his book.

Needless to say we had many interesting adventures during those six months in the bush. They ranged from almost stepping on deadly snakes and red-back spiders, to encountering foot-long inch-wide poisonous centipedes, to kangaroo tick infestations, to meeting crocodile hunters and bull-chasers.

One crocodile hunter that we met while searching for an aboriginal living site near Collier Bay on the coast was a small Frenchman. This intriguing character weighed no more than 150 pounds and was accompanied by his three young children. Together this group made a living of catching, wrestling, killing, skinning and selling the hides of salt-water crocodiles. I think Paul Hogan (aka Crocodile Dundee) was still working as a laborer in Sydney at the time.

The bull-chasers were another fascinating breed unique to Australia. The land in the Kimberly is so poor for cattle ranching that cattle station owners 'free-range' their steers on their huge stations. This is a fancy way of saying that they did not build fences for their stock. One disadvantage of this method of cattle farming, and there were many, is that often there are too many bulls, ergo a lot of barren cows. So to get rid of the excess bulls the farmers hire bull-chasers. Most of these bull-chasers used old Bedford 5-ton army trucks with several cages welded underneath. These cages housed a number of ferocious pit bulls. The dogs were let loose to run down and kill bulls.

However, Howie and I discovered that there was another technique used by at least one group of bull-chasers. One day Howie and I were driving through

five-foot grass when up ahead we saw what appeared to be a guy sitting in mid-air tearing through the bush waving a lasso over his head. When we finally intercepted him (it is so lonely out there that everyone stops to talk to whoever they meet) we found that it really was a guy sitting in mid-air tearing through the grass waving a lasso over his head. Mid-air man was a Texan and he and his buddies had bolted a saddle to the hood of a 4-wheel drive Austin Champ. While one guy drove the Austin at breakneck speed (literally) through the outback, the Texan sat on the saddle on the hood of the truck trying to lasso bulls. Truly one of the weirdest things I have ever come across.

After about a dozen field trips and many adventures 'the wet' arrived. We had seldom seen a cloud in the sky for six months but one day they appeared and it started to rain. The locals told us that it would soon rain almost all day every day for the next six months. Since one could not drive in the bush in 'the wet', it was time to return south.

However, there had been developments during our six-month stay. The lady archaeologist and Howie had split up. She had taken up with a truck driver from a geological oil-exploration crew and Howie had moved out. Since Howie was gone, I was now in charge of bringing the entire rig back to Perth. Luckily we found two young Australian girls and a Swiss kid to share the driving. In Perth the trailer rental company almost had a bird when they saw what a trip from Perth to Derby and back on those washboard roads had done to their house trailer.

The epilogue to the story is that Howie stayed in Australia and became a multi-millionaire oil explorer; the lady archaeologist married the truck driver and got her Ph.D.; and the small son survived. I worked for another six months as a ditch-digger, building labourer and grape-picker from Perth to Sydney and then went on a six-month largely overland trek from northern Australia to Timor, Indonesia, Malaya, Burma, India, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Europe and finally to Stoney Creek. But that is another story.

Parting Shot

Well that's it for the first edition with thanks to all those who provided some initial suggestions and particular gratitude to Yvan and Doug for their

inputs. As I indicated earlier I would like to include photos, but ask that you keep them small and simple - two concepts I understand.

Comments will be appreciated and considered if they are positive. I have developed a fairly thick skin over the years and won't mind constructive criticism.

Get those keyboards working and let's build up a bank of stuff for future editions. The next one will be when I think there is enough to make it a go.

Cheers and best wishes to all.