



Class of 65 Newsletter

Edition 11 -December 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

This will be the final edition of our first year in production and, based on the responses, I think it has been a worthwhile effort. Certainly, from a personal viewpoint it has been an interesting venture finding out where old classmates are and what they have done over the past 43 years.

In this edition **Gary Running** confesses to a desire to have pursued the higher career path as a naval officer rather than his chosen course as a "pigeon", and reveals how he finally satisfied that dream.

'**Copious**' **Cope** entertains with another of his rambling reminiscences from his College days. It remains a wonder to this writer how this man ever got into military college, let alone survive to graduate!

Dick Wright has contributed a remarkable story of airmanship and gallantry from World War II.

Finally, **Steve Arnold** reports on his participation in the Class of '65 Teaching Excellence Award ceremony for one of this year's recipients.

Crabfat Becomes Wannabe Fishhead

By 6383 Gary Running

I left the Armed Forces in early 1973 for an engineering job with Transport Canada in the Aviation Group. My first job involved the evaluation and



procurement of equipment used in airport security such as metal detectors, X- ray machines and explosive detectors. I was promoted after a couple of years, to be in charge of a small unit that evaluated and procured Distance Measuring Equipment (DME) Non Directional Radio Beacons (NDB) for enroute aviation applications. After a subsequent stint at Rue Bisson in Hull learning French, I got a new job still at Transport Canada but in the Coast Guard in charge of a section responsible for procuring and installing Loran C stations in co-operation with the US Coast Guard. Loran C was a long range navigation system used primarily by ships but also by aircraft and terrestrial vessels.

In 1985 I finally got to leave Ottawa and went out to Coast Guard's Western Region as the Regional Manager of Telecommunications and Electronics. Among other things, we ran a network of Coast Guard Radio Stations on the west coast and, seasonally in the western Arctic. We also maintained the Vessel Traffic Management Stations (VTS) and the marine navigation infrastructure.

Those of you who have spent any time working in the federal government will realize that organizational change is constant. All this to say, that after one such change I became the Director of Operational Programs for Coast Guard's Western Region. One of the programs in my charge was the fleet.

How ironic life is! Here you have an ex-Crabfat whose total operational sea time was one landing and one takeoff on *HMCS Bonaventure* from the back seat of a Tracker, in charge of the Coast Guard's Western Region fleet. The learning curve was steep but lots of fun. The irony was not to end there however. As noted above, change (and reorganization) is constant and before long Coast Guard was moved from Transport to Fisheries & Oceans and I was now responsible for integrating the two west coast fleets. Cultural change is something we all lived through at the time of the integration of the Armed Forces. As an aside I was one of the first light blue uniforms at Shearwater (navy flying station in Dartmouth) in 1967, and the first green uniform on the base in 1968. The changes that faced the two departmental fleets were

not of the magnitude of the changes to the Armed Forces but were none the less significant.

In 1996 I was posted back to Ottawa to become the Director General of Marine Navigation Services. In December 1997 I turned 55 and with more than 36 years service, decided to retire and return to the west coast.

Although I was retired, and happy being so, my wife Moninna still had to work for another 5 years. Because of my fleet experiences I was always secretly a little embarrassed that I didn't have any kind of marine certification. So I signed up at the Pacific Marine Training Institute (PMTI) to a program that leads to a Certification called Master Limited (Home Trade IV). It is commonly referred to as a "60 ton ticket" and allows the holder to skipper vessels up to 60 tons carrying passengers and/or cargo in specified coastal waters. The course was lots of fun - including navigation, seamanship, Canada Shipping Act, first aid, ocean survival, and fire fighting. After completing all the course work I faced a problem. Before I could write the Transport Canada Ship Safety exams and sit the orals to get the certificate, I had to get the required sea time.

To resolve this I volunteered to work for free as a deckhand on various Coast Guard vessels. Lots of fun! I worked for several months at the SAR Base at Kitsilano on the SAR cutters, and for another couple of weeks at the SAR Base in Powell River on the Mallard. Most fun of all however, were 2 weeks aboard the *Sir Wilfred Laurier*, a light icebreaker/buoy tender. The trip was the annual replenishment voyage for the Atmospheric Environmental Services (AES) off-shore weather buoys known as ODAS buoys. These buoys form a north to south picket line in the north Pacific about 200nm off Canada's west coast. The ODAS buoys along with satellite data are what AES uses to help them produce their marine weather forecasts for the west coast. Until the early 80's the Coast Guard used weather ships that cruised in a race track pattern roughly where the ODAS buoys now stand watch. Once a year the Coast Guard goes out and hauls up the old ODAS buoys and puts in new ones. The old ones are brought back to Victoria, refurbished and put back in the salt chuck the following year.

These buoys are fairly large (about 3 metres in diameter), and yellow in colour. Needless to say the water is deep out there, and can be rough, so the mooring hardware is substantial. The buoys are like mini islands in the north Pacific and invariably covered in seals or sea lions when you get to them so before you can get a line on them, you have to encourage the inhabitants to leave.

Duties of a deckhand include going out in the ship's Zodiac to put the line on the buoy, and helping to sling the old buoys aboard, and the new ones off. During the transit time between buoys you get your turn to act as the ship's helmsman. It was an altogether great experience. At the end of the voyage one of the deckhands gave me one of the nicest complements I've every received. He said to "Gary, most people spend their careers trying to work their way from the bottom to the top. You're the first guy I know that worked his way from the top to the bottom, and had a great time doing it."

I eventually got enough sea time to be able to sit the exams and oral, and got my 60 Ton ticket.

Still waiting for Moninna to be able to retire, I worked very briefly as 2nd officer on some of the booze cruises on the English Bay, Burrard Inlet, and Deep Cove circuit. However I soon got contract offers from Transport to help them in the design and implementation of the Victoria Harbour Traffic Scheme. This was a scheme designed to let seaplanes, commercial vessels and pleasure boaters all peacefully and safely co exist on the somewhat confined waters of Victoria Harbour. Incidentally, a seaplane on the water is considered to be a vessel under the *Canada Shipping Act* and is subject to all the applicable regulations.

I did this for a few years each spring until Moninna too retired and we could get on with the next phase of our life's plan. We have a son and a daughter both of whom are married. Our son is an RCMP officer and lives in British Columbia. Our daughter married an Australian and lives in Sydney. Moninna and I spend our winters in Australia (Australia's summer) and the rest of the year in Canada. In Canada we split our time between Nelson Island in the mouth of Jarvis Inlet and North Vancouver, about a 70/30 ratio. To transit back and forth between the Sunshine Coast and Nelson Island we bought an

ex-US Navy 24' aluminum utility craft powered with a 4 cylinder Detroit diesel. It doesn't go fast (about 8 kts all out), but is very seaworthy, something important when you live on an island. So.... you might say, I put my belated fish head training to some ongoing practical use.

You only go around once, so you might as well have fun doing it

Cheers .. TDV .. Gary

The Sword Fight

By 6611 Doug 'Copious' Cope



In fourth year at RMC I had the great pleasure of sharing a flight and a wing of Fort Lasalle with **Jack "Slack Jack" Harris, Pete "Baby Huey" Walker** and **John "The General" Adams**, the D/CWC. One Sunday afternoon during exams when things were getting tense and a diversion was needed, Jack and Pete decided to provide that diversion by having a sword fight.

Now Jack was equipped, he was a three-bar man and had his issued sword. However, Pete, was a rifleman like me, so where to get a sword? As it would happen, John Adams was out signing the Declaration of Independence (look it up, I tell you John Adams signed it) or attending some other noteworthy event. So Pete took advantage of his open door and went in and grabbed John's sword.

Then for the next ten minutes the residents of the floor were treated to a vigorous sword fight in the best tradition of Basil Rathbone and Errol Flynn. There were sparks flying and the sound of clashing metal echoed through the halls.

It was great fun and a great release of tension until John returned. Now, as I noted earlier, Slack Jack's sword was RMC issue, but the sword that Baby Huey had grabbed was one that Adams had been awarded for being the best army cadet in history or something like that. Needless to say he was less than pleased with the damage inflicted on his prize sword. Mind you none of

us brave spectators witnessed the aftermath since as soon as Adams had returned and shrieked at Pete we all fled back into our rooms and tried to listen through the closed doors.

REMARKABLE WWII FLYING STORY

Submitted by 6706 Dick Wright



These guys WERE the greatest generation ... "They shall mount up with wings as eagles"

Tomorrow they will lay the remains of Glenn Rojohn to rest in the Peace Lutheran Cemetery in the little town of Greenock, Pa., just southeast of Pittsburgh. He was 81, and had been in the air conditioning and plumbing business in nearby McKeesport.

If you had seen him on the street he would probably have looked to you like so many other graying, bespectacled old World War II veterans whose names appear so often now in the obituary columns.

But like so many of them, though he seldom talked about it, he could have told you one hell of a story. He won the Air Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Purple Heart all in one fell swoop in the skies over Germany on December 31, 1944.

Fell swoop indeed.



Capt. Glenn Rojohn, of the 8th Air Force's 100th Bomb Group was flying his B-17G Flying Fortress bomber on a raid over Hamburg. His formation had braved heavy flak to drop their bombs, then turned 180 degrees to head out over the North Sea. They had finally turned northwest, headed back to England, when they were jumped by German fighters at

22,000 feet. The Messerschmitt Me-109s pressed their attack so closely that Capt. Rojohn could see the faces of the German pilots. He and other pilots fought to remain in formation so they could use each other's guns to defend the group.

Rojohn saw a B-17 ahead of him burst into flames and slide sickeningly toward the earth. He gunned his ship forward to fill in the gap. He felt a huge impact. The big bomber shuddered, felt suddenly very heavy and began losing altitude. Rojohn grasped almost immediately that he had collided with another plane. A B-17 below him, piloted by Lt. William G. McNab, had slammed the top of its fuselage into the bottom of Rojohn's. The top turret gun of McNab's plane was now locked in the belly of Rojohn's plane and the ball turret in the belly of Rojohn's had smashed through the top of McNab's. The two bombers were almost perfectly aligned — the tail of the lower plane was slightly to the left of Rojohn's tailpiece. They were stuck together, *"like mating dragon flies"*, a crewman recalled.

Three of the engines on the bottom plane were still running, as were all four of Rojohn's. The fourth engine on the lower bomber was on fire and the flames were spreading to the rest of the aircraft. The two were losing altitude quickly. Rojohn tried several times to gun his engines and break free of the other plane. The two were inextricably locked together. Fearing a fire, Rojohn cut his engines and rang the bailout bell. For his crew to have any chance of parachuting, he had to keep the plane under control somehow.

The ball turret, hanging below the belly of the B-17, was considered by many to be a death trap — the worst station on the bomber. In this case, both ball turrets figured in a swift and terrible drama of life and death. Staff Sgt. Edward L. Woodall, Jr., in the ball turret of the lower bomber had felt the impact of the collision above him and saw shards of metal drop past him. Worse, both electrical and hydraulic power were gone. Remembering escape drills, he grabbed the handcrank, released the clutch and cranked the turret and its guns until they were straight down, then turned and climbed out the back of the turret up into the fuselage. Once inside the plane's belly Woodall saw a chilling sight, the ball turret of the other bomber protruding through the top of the fuselage. In that turret, hopelessly trapped, was Staff Sgt. Joseph Russo. Several crew members of Rojohn's plane tried

frantically to crank Russo's turret around so he could escape, but, jammed into the fuselage of the lower plane, it would not budge. Unaware that his voice was going out over the intercom, Sgt. Russo began reciting his 'Hail Marys'.

Up in the cockpit, Capt. Rojohn and his co-pilot 2nd Lt. William G. Leek, Jr., had propped their feet against the instrument panel so they could pull back on their controls with all their strength, trying to prevent their plane from going into a spinning dive that would prevent the crew from jumping out. Capt. Rojohn motioned left and the two managed to wheel the huge, collision-born hybrid of a plane back toward the German coast. Leek felt like he was intruding on Sgt. Russo as his prayers crackled over the radio, so he pulled off his flying helmet with its earphones.

Rojohn, immediately grasping that crew could not exit from the bottom of his plane, ordered his top turret gunner and his radio operator, Tech Sergeants. Orville Elkin and Edward G. Neuhaus to make their way to the back of the fuselage and out the waist door on the left behind the wing. Then he got his navigator, 2nd Lt. Robert Washington, and his bombardier, Sgt. James Shirley to follow them. As Rojohn and Leek somehow held the plane steady, these four men, as well as waist gunner, Sgt. Roy Little, and tail gunner, Staff Sgt. Francis Chase, were able to bail out.

Now the plane locked below them was aflame. Fire poured over Rojohn's left wing. He could feel the heat from the plane below and hear the sound of 50 cal. machinegun ammunition 'cooking off' in the flames. Capt. Rojohn ordered Lt. Leek to bail out. Leek knew that without him helping keep the controls back, the plane would drop in a flaming spiral and the centrifugal force would prevent Rojohn from bailing. He refused the order.

Meanwhile, German soldiers and civilians on the ground that afternoon looked up in wonder. Some of them thought they were seeing a new Allied secret weapon — a strange eight-engined double bomber. But anti-aircraft gunners on the North Sea coastal island of Wangerooge had seen the collision. A German battery captain wrote in his logbook at 12:47 pm:

"Two fortresses collided in a formation in the NE. The planes flew hooked together and flew 20 miles south. The two planes were unable to fight anymore. The crash could be awaited so I stopped the firing at these two planes."

Suspended in his parachute in the cold December sky, Bob Washington watched with deadly fascination as the mated bombers, trailing black smoke, fell to earth about three miles away, their downward trip ending in an ugly boiling blossom of fire.

In the cockpit Rojohn and Leek held grimly to the controls trying to ride a falling rock. Leek tersely recalled, *"The ground came up faster and faster. Praying was allowed. We gave it one last effort and slammed into the ground."* The McNab plane on the bottom exploded, vaulting the other B-17 upward and forward. It slammed back to the ground, sliding along until its left wing slammed through a wooden building and the smoldering mess came to a stop.

Rojohn and Leek were still seated in their cockpit. The nose of the plane was relatively intact, but everything from the B-17's massive wings back was destroyed. They looked at each other incredulously. Neither was badly injured. Movies have nothing on reality.

Still perhaps in shock, Leek crawled out through a huge hole behind the cockpit, felt for the familiar pack in his uniform pocket and pulled out a cigarette. He placed it in his mouth and was about to light it. Then he noticed a young German soldier pointing a rifle at him. The soldier looked scared and annoyed. He grabbed the cigarette out of Leek's mouth and pointed down to the gasoline pouring out over the wing from a ruptured fuel tank.

Two of the six men who parachuted from Rojohn's plane did not survive the jump. But the other four and, amazingly, four men from the other bomber, including ball turret gunner Woodall, survived. All were taken prisoner. Several of them were interrogated at length by the Germans until they were satisfied that what had crashed was not a new American secret weapon.

Rojohn, typically, didn't talk much about his Distinguished Flying Cross. Of Leek, he said, *"in all fairness to my co-pilot, he's the reason I'm alive today."* Like so many veterans, Rojohn got un sentimentally back to life after the war, marrying and raising a son and daughter. For many years, though, he tried to link back up with Leek, going through government records to try to track him down. It took him 40 years, but in 1986, he found the number of Leek's mother in Washington State. Yes, her son Bill was visiting from California. Would Rojohn like to speak with him? Some things are better left unsaid. One can imagine that first conversation between the two men who had shared that wild ride in the cockpit of a B-17.

A year later, the two were re-united at a reunion of the 100th Bomb Group in Long Beach, Calif. Bill Leek died the following year.

Glenn Rojohn was the last survivor of the remarkable piggyback flight. He was like thousands upon thousands of men — soda jerks and lumberjacks, teachers and dentists, students and lawyers and service station attendants and store clerks and farm boys who in the prime of their lives went to war. He died last Saturday after a long bout of sickness. He apparently faced that final battle with the same grim aplomb he displayed that remarkable day over Germany so long ago.

Let us be thankful for such men.

Story by way of Fred Hope of Ocean Shores, WA, former RCAF pilot and retired United Airlines captain. September 7, 2008

RMC '65 Teaching Lecture

By 6588 Steve Arnold

One of this year's lectures was presented in Kingston on 29 October and Steve and a couple of other classmates participated in the event. The following is a brief report provided to Fats by Steve along with the introductory notes he used.

It was a good turnout last night and lecturer Jane Boulden presented an insightful, thoughtful and well-presented lecture on international terrorism.

Kevin Brushett ran the show and introduced the speakers led off by me, followed by the Principal, Joel Sokolsky, Jane Boulden and **Mike Houghton**. **Peter Glynn** rounded out the class of '65 presence and was recruited to present a lovely plaque to the speaker after Mike presented the cheque. There was lengthy Q&A after the lecture which was indicative of the engaging nature of Dr. Boulden's remarks.

I attach the notes for my introduction and trust that I responded to your request in a satisfactory manner.

I spoke to Ron Weir who I have known from the early 90s and is currently chair of the award selection committee. He mentioned that the two award winners could not be separated in terms of quality and hence the dual recognition. He thought it was the first time this had ever happened. Ron added that the amount of the award was insignificant for an award that is regarded with very high esteem and recipients would be happy if it was only \$25!

Introductory Remarks

My classmate, **Jim Carruthers**, was unable to attend this evening because of the threatening winter storm. He asked me to explain the background of the Class of '65 Teaching Excellence Award and why our class thinks it is important. I am able to do so on the basis of a couple of relevant experiences. First, I was on a class committee that brought the award into being. Second, I was the member for four years on the RMC committee that selects the annual award recipient.

The class committee was initiated by **Keith Ambachtsheer** who has a summer home northwest of Kingston. In the late 80s, he invited **Tom Barton** and I over to think of a way our class could give back to RMC on the occasion of our 25th reunion. "It's payback time, guys," Keith would say. Tom was an RMC prof and I was at Queen's but the three of us had also been Flight mates at Royal Roads.

We brainstormed ideas and with Tom at RMC and me at Queen's, it wasn't surprising that the idea of a Teaching Excellence Award emerged. However, we had a couple of other ideas and went back to the class for a vote. The class voted overwhelmingly for the Teaching Excellence Award.

The reason why our class thinks the Teaching Excellence Award is important can be simply put. The teaching staffs at Roads, CMR and RMC collectively had a huge impact on us, an effect magnified in the small class sizes of the senior years.

The nature of this impact was evident in the nominations and ratings presented to the RMC selection committee. While I wasn't on the particular committee that selected Dr. Boulden, this is what I suggest her nominators were saying about her based on my four years of committee experience:

- 1 The course was well organized.
- 2 The instructor presented material clearly.
- 3 The instructor was enthusiastic in presenting course material.
- 4 This course challenged me intellectually.
- 5 I learned a great deal from this course.
- 6 My interest in the subject has been stimulated by this course.

But it isn't just about the course itself—it's the personal connection that is made between the teacher and the student that is also important:

- 1 The instructor related the course to students' experiences and backgrounds.
- 2 The instructor was receptive to new ideas and others' viewpoints.
- 3 The instructor created a positive class environment.
- 4 The instructor showed genuine concern for the students.

5 The instructor was available for discussion outside class.

6 I was able to get individual help when I needed it.

In sum, the nominators not only described the effectiveness and enjoyment of the instructor and how she or he challenged and stimulated their interest in the material. They also indicated how much their instructor showed a genuine concern for, and interest in, their students. The benefits of this kind of teaching last a lifetime and with this award, the class of '65 shows that it is eternally grateful.

Editor's Note: The second recipient of the award, Major Alain Gosselin, will be making his presentation on 1 Jan 09.

Closing Notes

That's it for our inaugural year. Thanks to all those of you who have contributed and commented - please keep both coming. I hope that all of you and your families have a happy and safe holiday season.

Until next year.