

Class of 65 Newsletter

Bulletin d'Information—Classe de 65



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Disclaimer: This Newsletter is produced for members of the RMC Class of 1965 and is based primarily on inputs from members of the Class of 65. It is not an official publication of the Royal Military College nor does it purport to represent the views or opinions of all members of the Class. Unfortunately, the Editorial staff lacks the linguistic skills to produce a bilingual version. Items are published in the official language in which they are received.

Editor's Corner/Coin du rédacteur

Some more perspectives on the new fighter acquisition; notice from a classmate who has certainly not slowed down; and, sadly, notice of the passing of another classmate.

6614 Bunker Crawford (1944-2026)

"Bunker" (Hilliard William Crawford) passed away suddenly at his home in Ancaster, Ontario, on April 29, 2026, following a heart attack. He was 81.

Born on September 25, 1944, in Toronto, Ontario, Hilliard became "Bunker" almost immediately. As the story goes, the nurse present at his birth was from Boston and, seeing that he was Hilliard, son of Hilliard, called him "Little Bunker Hill." The name stayed with him for the rest of his life, and to many of the people who knew and loved him, he was simply Bunker.

Bunker grew up in Edmonton, Alberta, with his parents and his sister, Barbara Anne. From an early age, he stood out both academically and athletically. He excelled as a swimmer, skipped grades, and left for university at a remarkably young age. He attended the Royal Military College of Canada, where he studied chemical engineering, though his independent streak may have made him better suited to entrepreneurship than military life. He received an honourable discharge in order to return home and help care for his ailing father and support the family business, running a marina in North Bay, Ontario.

His career reflected the same mix of intelligence, ambition, curiosity, and independence that marked the rest of his life. He began his professional career with DuPont, making dynamite, and went on to work across chemical engineering, sales, and entrepreneurship. Some ventures succeeded and others did not, but Bunker was always learning, always moving, and always looking for the next idea. One such effort was a new and improved brake pad, a product he believed in deeply even if the market was not ready to move away from entrenched industry practices. Another was Greenback, a paper and cardboard recycling company that also created meaningful work opportunities for people with developmental disabilities, helping them build confidence and independence through employment.

In the later and most successful chapter of his career, Bunker joined Kontek, a wastewater treatment company in Burlington, Ontario, where he became head of sales. He travelled widely, selling large wastewater treatment systems for uses ranging from mines in Mexico to mints in the Middle



Crawford Obituary (Continued)

East. He enjoyed the independence, complexity, and international scope of the work, and helped grow Kontek from its startup roots into a thriving company.

Bunker married early in life and later moved on from his first marriage. He met Paula in Toronto in the early 1980s, and together they had three children: Tad, Sloan, and Lachlan "Lucky." Fatherhood was, in his own eyes, the most important role of his life. He took enormous pride in his children and in trying to give them every opportunity he could. He was deeply involved in their sports, schools, and activities, running the treasury department for the youth football organization, leading fundraising efforts for the gymnastics club, organizing trips for the cheerleading team, and serving on boards and committees wherever he thought he could help.

He cared deeply about his children's futures and was intensely invested in their lives and accomplishments. He never missed a home or away football game during Tad's football career, and he travelled just as devotedly for Sloan's gymnastics events and Lachlan's activities. He was immensely proud that Tad attended Columbia, Sloan attended William & Mary, and Lachlan attended McGill, accomplishments he saw not only as theirs, but as part of the purpose and meaning of his own life.

As his children grew into adulthood and built lives of their own, Bunker remained proud of them and interested in the paths they were taking. He visited Tad in Vancouver, Montreal, and Boston, and he continued to follow the lives and accomplishments of all three of his children with deep pride. He loved them dearly and took great pride in the adults they became.

Bunker was also a man of deep and lasting friendships. Some of his most formative years were in Montreal in the 1960s, where a group of about a dozen young men celebrated Expo 67 in grand style, made the Cock and Bull their neighbourhood pub, spent nights on stage with the band at Your Father's Moustache, skied most weekends in the Eastern Townships and Vermont, and formed the friendships that became the River Devils. Over the decades, the River Devils went on to share canoe trips, whitewater paddling, and adventures across Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Most remained friends for nearly sixty years.

They loved Bunker for his love of life, his energy, his care for others, and the simple pleasure he took in being with his friends. On canoe trips, cold, wet, and bad camp food never seemed to bother him much; he was just happy to be out there with them. The strength of those friendships showed itself not only in adventure, but in loyalty. His friends believed in him, stood behind his ambitions, and remained with him through the ventures and turns that marked a life spent trying to build something new.

He was outgoing, social, smart, and full of appetite for the world. He loved to read, to travel, to go out for a good meal, to laugh, to celebrate, and to enjoy a good bottle of wine, particularly a nice Italian Barolo. He appreciated the finer things in life, but more than that, he appreciated the experience of sharing them with others. He was happiest in good company, with a story being told, a glass being poured, and the next conversation already underway.

In the early 2000s, Bunker met his partner, Lona Burgess. They began sharing their life together in Ancaster in approximately 2007, and their home remained his home until his death. In his later years, he also found great companionship in his beloved dog, Eimear, his best friend and partner in crime.



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Crawford Obituary (Concluded)

Bunker is survived by his children, Tad Crawford, Sloan Crawford, and Lachlan Crawford; his daughter-in-law, Stephanie Crawford; his grandchildren, Sinclair Crawford and Berkley Crawford; his partner, Lona Burgess; and his sister, Barbara Anne of Smiths Falls, Ontario. He was delighted to become a grandfather and took great pride in seeing the next generation of his family begin.

Cremation will take place, and details for a celebration of Bunker's life will be shared with family and friends.

Bunker leaves behind stories, friendships, and a family he loved. Those who knew him are invited to remember him in the way he would have appreciated: by raising a glass of Barolo, sharing a good story, and celebrating a life lived with intelligence, independence, humour, and heart.

Le Tour des Colleges by 6577 George Vanderkuur

I received the following from George:

*"I hope this finds you well. This September I will be joining 17 other riders in the **Tour des Collèges**, a 500 km commemorative and fundraising ride celebrating two milestones: the **150th anniversary of RMC** and the **75th anniversary of CMR**. I'm attaching some information that I hope can be included in an upcoming Class of '65 newsletter. As the oldest member of the "older eighteen," I hope to be a worthy representative of our class."*

Class of '65 – Tour des Colleges Participant

This September, I will be joining 17 fellow alumni in a commemorative ride marking two significant milestones in our shared history: the **150th anniversary of the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC)** and the **75th anniversary of Royal Military College Saint-Jean (RMCSJ)**.

Our group — proudly known as "**the older eighteen**" — will cycle approximately **500 km** from Saint-Jean to Kingston via Ottawa. This ride is more than a physical challenge; it is a tribute to the legacy of both Colleges and to the generations of cadets who have passed through their gates.

As part of this event, we aim to raise **\$150,000**, with proceeds directed **equally** to two important initiatives:

The RMC Museum Project, preserving the heritage and history of the Colleges

The Truth, Duty, Valour Fund, supporting cadet activities that enrich leadership, character, and experience beyond the core program

As the **oldest member** of the team, I am reaching out to the **Class of '65** to help me reach my personal fundraising goal. Your support — whether large or modest — will directly benefit the next generation of officer cadets and help sustain the traditions that shaped all of us.

If you wish to contribute, my Tour des Collèges donation page is here:

<https://form-renderer-app.donorperfect.io/give/rmc-alumni-association/le-tour-des-colleges--georgevanderkuur>

Thank you for your generosity and for continuing the strong tradition of support that defines our class.

George Vanderkuur
6577



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The Fighter Acquisition Debate

Three more members of the Class have provided their views on this important acquisition project. They are presented in the order received:

6173 Jack Flannagan: Are we really having another major defense equipment procurement shit show in this country to buy another go fast aircraft?

Long, long ago, far, far away, in another galaxy, we set out our air defense aims, based on the threat of those nasty Russians coming over the north pole with their bombers. To defeat this threat, we first had the CF100, and when it became totally bypassed by technology, the AVRO Arrow. These were developed and tested to defeat a known threat, in a known area - Russians coming over the pole. Designed and built in Canada. Does anyone know the current defense aims and current mission of the Air Force (Other than squiring the PM of the day around the world)?

In the late 1940's/early 1950's it was determined by the Royal Canadian Air Force that the threat and the environment required an aircraft with two engines, two seats and an avionics and weapons package that could detect the incoming bombers and dispatch them with missiles, then return to base. It didn't exist, so we designed and built it.

O.K. What an idea - detect and define the threat, analyze the threat, design a way to defeat the threat, then build and deploy the hardware required.

Since the time of the CF100, we have dithered, procrastinated, analyzed, and consistently acquired the wrong aircraft and equipment to do the job, regardless of the definition of 'the job'. The AVRO Arrow was a magnificent achievement, but the government determined that it was too expensive, or whatever reason they used to cancel it. The replacement, the CF104, was designed at Lockheed almost as a throw away, a quick fix until a better solution could be found. The 104 was designed to launch, climb to fifty or sixty thousand feet, dash at the bombers at a supersonic speed, fire its missiles at the bad guys, and return to base. One engine, one seat, short range, go at the speed of heat for fairly short distances, then hope you have enough gas to get home. Long range interception over the North Pole - forget about it.

Since the 104 days, we have fiddled and farted around with the concept of high speed interceptors, but have done nothing meaningful about it. Procurement of defense equipment has become more and more a pure political decision, with politics taking precedence over defining and accomplishing the mission. We have the examples of the SAR helicopter - got too few delivered very late, the SAR fixed wing A/C - the baby Herc, which took years even though this was an existing aircraft. Our air transport fleet is older than me (I exaggerate but slightly), our fixed wing anti-submarine fleet is aged, and we don't have a rotary wing anti-submarine capability after years of 'development'. We seemingly cannot build ships anymore. The hulks of our two fleet supply vessels were rusting away in a shipyard the last time I checked, our frigate fleet is falling apart, with hulls that are in some cases rusting through, and the projected date for delivery of new ships keeps sliding towards the next century. These are typical examples of the current state of defense procurement - it is, in short, a disaster.

In recent years the defense procurement system has become a never-never land of stupid decisions, idiotic priorities, and a total disregard for the actual operational requirements of the Canadian Forces. The government hands the military a mission, then goes about procuring the equipment necessary to that mission by first asking 'Does this project team speak French?' and 'is the legal requirement for indigenous participation being met?' and 'make sure to spend the money in Canada', although nobody in Canada can do the job, and 'is the money spread fairly across the provinces', and 'how much will be done in my riding', and 'I know the American equipment is better, but buy it from China anyway because the PM has a shitty on against the Yanks today'.

The meddling in the procurement by the political class causes such things as:

- New frigates delayed until after 2030 - This is an existing design



The Fighter Acquisition Debate (Continued)

- Perfectly good Sikorsky helicopter modified until it is useless (we added too much weight)
- Submarines that don't go to sea (We don't have any torpedoes to fit the tubes anyway)
- Fisheries patrol vessels that can't leave Halifax harbour because of rough seas - the fishing boats went out.
- Light trucks for the Army that have no roof or doors and no electrical system for their radio
- Tanks for the army that are locked up in a barn - we can't afford the people or the diesel to run them?

(Note: The German army ran their own tanks, APC's etc in Shilo for years (ended in 2000))

I could go on, but this is already too long.

I apologize for the length of this thing - it kind of got away from me.

6402 Jean Bigaouette: the articles regarding the GRIPEN and the F-35 by Ernie Cable and Jim Astley last April and now by Peter Houlston are just fabulous pieces of information. Right now, Prime minister Carney focuses on the CUSMA negotiations with the Trump administration. I sure hope that when such negotiations are completed, Mr Carney will review this very important matter in a manner that safeguards Canada's sovereignty and above all, Canadian security and Canadian interests.

6533 Gord Forbes: And so, the discussion goes on. Peter Houlston's input was certainly interesting and thought-provoking. But at this point we have to assume that we will get a new, manned fighter aircraft. We also have to concede it is not what the air force wants as much as what it needs.

The two roles that the fighter force is currently tasked with are support of NATO, presumably in Europe, and support of NORAD in Canada. Support of NATO may entail a ground strike requirement. The support of NORAD entails air intercept and defence requirements.

Ground attack in a modern war scenario requires stealth. The F35 has that and is the best candidate for that role. Perhaps two squadrons dedicated to this requirement is all that is needed, for a total of 30 - 36 aircraft including the 16 currently on order.

For the NORAD, I don't think that stealth is needed. The Gripen would be ideal for this role. It is fast, maneuverable and cheaper than the F35. This would also bring in the industrial benefits that Canada urgently needs. We need an industrial boost in aerospace to be able to design and build more than water bombers and turbine driven passenger aircraft. The government is also looking for an airborne surveillance aircraft. What could be better than one, already in production using the Bombardier airframe made right here in Canada.

As to the argument about a mixed fleet, we've already had several examples of mixed fleets in fighters plus we still have mixed fleets of transport aircraft and helicopters. There can even be an advantage here as in the case where one type is grounded for one reason or another, the other type will still be available.

As Chief of the Defence Staff, General Jaques Dextrase said, "Excellent is the enemy of good enough." (Ed Note: I think it was said by Soviet Admiral Gorshkov but regardless, the sentiment is true).



Government Housing

By 6533 Gord Forbes

Military people might call these married quarters or PMQs. But government owned housing comes in many ways, and for different reasons. The Governor-General and the Prime Minister live in government housing. Military people live in them. There is government housing on almost all military bases. It is common in almost every military in the world. In some countries, government houses come in the form of palaces or castles. But it is all government housing.

If you were assigned to one of these places, like married quarters (it is unlikely that any of my readers would live in palaces or castles), you would not think of making unilateral changes to the structure by yourself. You wouldn't think of tearing down a wall or wing of the house or doing any significant modification without some type of official authorization.

The US White House is government housing. It is meant to house the President of the United States and provide a workspace for his/her immediate staff. So, what gives the current president the idea that he can tear down an entire wing at the east end of the building? Why does he think he has the right to build a garish "ballroom" on this site? Such permission is supposed to be approved by congress with the recommendation of a heritage counsel. Although the heritage body has condemned the plan (it was never asked about tearing down the old structure), the congress has never been asked to vote on it. And what started off as vanity project to be paid for by donors has now to be funded by taxpayers' money to the tune of one billion dollars.

Can you imagine getting away with that in married quarters? But Donald Trump does not believe in rules and laws. If that applied to us, wouldn't be wonderful/horrible world!

Closing Notes

Thanks as always to our contributors. I have enjoyed the fighter debate that has raised some excellent points that I, along with Jean, hope are thoughtfully considered once the decision making gets up to full speed. I'm still hoping that we might have a similar debate on the submarine replacement— non-NATO Korean; NATO German/Norwegian; or, perhaps none at all? Does Canada really need the huge increase forecast for the Defence budget? Are there not more important priorities for Canadians?



HMCS Grilse