CLASS OF 65 NEWSLETTER

EDITION 4 – May 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

I continue to be pleased with the positive input to these brief insights into members of our Class, however, I must confess to being a bit underwhelmed by the number of responses and, in particular, by the limited number of inputs. I had hoped to have developed a bit of a bank of articles by now and been able to turn production over to my cat. However, such is not the case. So gents – dust of the old quill and let's hear from you. Where are you now? I have been surprised by the number of respondents living and working outside Canada. Presumably they have been more diligent in responding because it is harder for them to keep in touch.

One of those was **Derek Carrier** who wrote from San Jose, California. I have a lasting memory of Derek from CMR days. We were playing against each other in inter-squadron football. I was playing safety, a position selected because I thought its name reflected relative security from harm and injury. It was near the end of the game and the score was close when the line of scrimmage parted like the Red Sea and Derek came thundering through the hole straight at me. He didn't even have the good grace to fake or deke – he just ran right over me without breaking stride. It took about two days to dig me out of the hole. Seeking a less violent form of recreation, I took up boxing!

This edition contains some reminiscences from **Eric (Rick) Johnson** on his time flying the venerable Hercules. Unfortunately, his article is about as long as a Herc flight from Ottawa to Kandahar so it is serialised into a couple of editions, with Part 2 to follow later.

Also, in this edition is some information on the Class sponsored professorship at RMC. There is also a squib from **Alain Pellerin** on a recent visit by members of the Conference of Defence Associations to Afghanistan. I'm sure many of you will join me in thanking and

congratulating Alain for his devoted and informative service to the CDA and to the Defence community at large.

Obituary – Terry Goode

Finally, it is with great sadness that I have to report the untimely passing of Terry Goode, dear wife and companion of our classmate Tony Goode. The following is an extract from the obituary that appeared in the Halifax Mail Star

GOODE, Terry Ellen - Dartmouth, passed away April 17, 2008, in the VG Site, QEII, Halifax, after a spirited and courageous battle with cancer. She is survived by her loving husband, best friend and partner of 37 years, Tony Goode; her beloved twin sons, Charles (Jeanne), Lennoxville, Que.; Jonathan (Marta), Toronto, Ont.; sisters, Joanne Keddy, Halifax, and Julie (Stephen) Dore, Ottawa, Ont.; a niece and nephews. She was predeceased by her mother and father, Murray F. and Hilda B. Keddy. Terry was born in Halifax on April 8, 1948, and lived there until she was married at the young age of 22 to a naval officer from Toronto. Terry followed her husband across Canada, to Ghana, and the United States, enduring many moves (19) with great grace, good humour and considerable patience. After the birth of her twin sons in 1978, she decided to return to Mount Saint Vincent University to complete her degree, graduating as a mature student with an Honours B.A. in 1982. A talented amateur interior decorator, she devoted her life to creating a number of beautiful homes for her family, in which she raised two accomplished sons. Terry had a distinguished career as a designer and tailor, and also excelled in a number of other fields including: mortgage banking, journalism, retail sales and teaching. Terry was a gracious and warm hostess, equally at home arranging buffet dinners for 60 or intimate diplomatic dinners that did much to raise the profile of Canada in Washington, where her husband served as the Naval Attaché at the Canadian Embassy. She was the district captain for the annual Canadian Cancer Society fundraising efforts in her district, a member of the Newcomers Executive Committee and for many years, ran the Garden Club for the Newcomers. An accomplished golfer, she was a member of the Hartlen Point Golf Club. She will be sorely missed by her family and by her large circle of friends across Canada, the United Kingdom, United States, Europe, Australia and Singapore.

Class Web Site

I received notification from **Waine McQuinn** that the Class Web Site will be updated in the very near future. Of note are new coordinates for **Ron Jackson** (jacksonhall.sussex@gmail.com) and **Tom DeFaye** (defayet@gdls.com). Also, in case you can't access the newsletter when it is sent out or if you missed one, they are being posted on the Class site at http://www.rmc65.ca/.

Leadership Professorship

The following is an extract from the competition notice for the Class of 65 sponsored professorship. The full notice may be found at http://oraweb.aucc.ca/ua_e.html.

Position: **Leadership Professor (Class of '65)/Professeur(e) en leadership (crée grâce à la promotion de 1965)**
Date posted: **2008-03-10**

Le Collège militaire royal du Canada (CMR) vient de créer un nouveau poste de professeur en leadership grâce à la générosité de la promotion de 1965. La personne nommée se verra accorder un poste à temps plein menant à la permanence ou un poste permanent de professeur. Elle occupera les fonctions de professeur en leadership pendant dix ans, après quoi elle réintègrera le corps professoral normal, et le poste fera l'objet d'un autre processus de dotation. Pour la première nomination, les candidats devront être, de préférence, des professeurs agrégés. Par la suite, la politique de promotion normale du Collège s'appliquera. À titre d'université des Forces canadiennes et de seule université fédérale au pays, le CMR a pour mandat de préparer des hommes et des femmes à occuper des fonctions de leader au sein des Forces canadiennes, d'autres organismes gouvernementaux ou de la communauté en général, tant dans le secteur public que privé. Le CMR est également très axé sur les études supérieures, un diplômé sur trois étant au deuxième ou au troisième cycle.

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La date limite pour faire parvenir les candidatures est le 31 mai 2008.

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The Royal Military College of Canada is establishing an endowed Professorship in Leadership, thanks to the generosity of the Class of 1965. The person appointed as the Class of '65 Professor of Leadership will be accorded a full-time tenure track or tenured faculty position, and

will hold the Professorship for a decade, after which the incumbent continues in the normal faculty stream, and the Professorship is competed again. The initial appointment is intended to be at the Associate Professor level, and the normal promotion policy of the University subsequently applies. As the University for the Canadian Forces and Canada's only Federal University, RMC is dedicated to educating men and women to assume leadership roles within the Canadian Forces, other government agencies and in the wider community in both public and private sectors. RMC is also very graduate studies intensive, granting one graduate degree for every two undergraduate degrees. intments will be subject to a probationary period of 36 months.

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The closing date for applications is 31 May 2008.

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CDA Visit to Afghanistan

By 6349 Alain Pellerin

The Conference of Defence Associations' (CDA) Executive Director, **Colonel (Retired) Alain Pellerin,** has just returned from a visit to Afghanistan. Along with other defence stakeholders, he met with, among others, the Commander of JTF-Afghanistan BGen Guy LaRoche, Canadian Ambassador to Afghanistan Arif Lalani, Commander ISAF General Dan McNeill, and top Afghan officials such as Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development Zia and Minister of Defence Wardak. The group also visited a forward operating base at Ma'sum Ghar and the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar. They met with LCol Dana Woodworth, Commander of the KPRT, Col JF Riffou, Commander of Canada's Operational Mentor and Liaison Team, and Col Serge Labbe, Commander of the Strategic Advisory Team in Kabul.

(Photo taken at Ma'sum Ghar, Afghanistan
From Left to Right: Mr. Paul Turcotte, Director External Communications and Public Relations, DND;
BGen (Ret'd) Don Macnamara, Past President and Member of Board of Directors, CDAI;
MGen (Ret'd) Lewis Mackenzie, Member of Board of Directors, CDAI; Col (Ret'd) Alain Pellerin , Executive Director, CDA-CDAI;
Dr. David Bercuson, University of Calgary and Member of Board of Directors, CDAI; RAdm (Ret'd) Ken Summers, Member of Board of Directors, CDAI; LCol (Ret'd) Raymond Taillefer; BGen (Ret'd) Gaston Cote, Vice-Chairman, CDA)

In a meeting with Minister Zia it was made clear that security and development are two sides of the same coin. The group of visitors came to the conclusion that the mission is not failing, although it could be accelerated if more resources were provided. The mission is in fact progressing well and pointing in the right direction, with the training of Afghan security forces, development and reconstruction occurring in tandem. For example, a roadway is being constructed in the Panjwaii Valley under Canadian supervision and funding, employing some 400 Afghan workers (with plans to increase the workforce to 800) who are being paid the equivalent of $6 a day (a generous amount by Afghan standards). This provides employment, entails infrastructural development, and keeps these workers, who would otherwise be unemployed, out of the clutches of the militant recruitment.

We can be rightfully proud of the work of Canada 's military and civilian officials from various departments in Afghanistan. They are making a difference and believe strongly in the mission. Progress is being achieved, and if they are withdrawn before the mission has achieved its objectives all that they have sacrificed will be lost.

The Herc and I (Part I)

By 6544 Rick Johnson

My first flight on a Hercules was in 1962 when I had to fly from Trenton to Winnipeg for summer navigation training. I had not expected to fly by Herc...I was booked on a Yukon flight, but somehow I managed to get the

times messed up (local vs. GMT), and when I arrived at the Air Movement Unit, my flight had already departed! Luckily for me, there was a Herc flight leaving for Winnipeg, and I was able to get a seat. This was where I learned that passenger seats on the Herc were nothing like regular airline seats. They were made of nylon stretched over a light metal frame that could fold up against the wall of the aircraft, and they were anything but comfortable. The cargo compartment of a Herc was great for cargo, but it wasn't a very hospitable place for humans. Nevertheless, I was more than happy to be able to get to Winnipeg any way I could, so I didn't complain. Luckily for me, the flight I was originally booked on went via Ottawa, so I arrived in Winnipeg only a few minutes behind it.

My next encounter with the Herc did not come until three years later, when, as part of the Navigation School tour of different Commands, we visited Trenton and had a tour through one of the aircraft at the Operational Training Unit.

While the aircraft is not very comfortable for passengers, it has a great cockpit for the flight crew. It was spacious, the Navigator had a well equipped position, (for its day), and there were more windows than a greenhouse. I always enjoyed being able to stand up behind the co-pilot and have a great view of what was happening.

The Hercules really was the perfect aircraft for a young Air Force navigator: because of its short-field capability (it could land and take off from a 5,000 ft gravel strip) it went everywhere, so unlike the Yukon, and later the B707, it was not confined to the same old route day in and day out. I got to see practically all there was to see of Canada. It had much better range than the Cosmo or the Buffalo, so I got to see a lot of the rest of the world too. Unlike being in the back-seat of a CF-101 Voodoo, I worked in a reasonably comfortable shirt-sleeve environment, with the ability to get up and walk around, or make a coffee. And the navigation equipment, though primitive by today's standards (my $150 hand-held GPS is far more accurate and reliable than any of the $100,000 navigation suite on board the Herc in 1966) it was very good for the time. The Herc also had an interesting role...we did paradropping of both troops and cargo, as well as search and rescue, arctic re-supply, and support of army and naval operations from Norway to Jamaica.

The aircraft could also be fitted with eight solid-rocket boosters, called JATO (Jet Assisted Take Off) to enable it to get out of very short airstrips. Although I don't believe these were ever used for anything other than airshows, they were very exciting...the rockets would burn for about 12 seconds, during which time the aircraft (if empty) could easily climb 1500 feet. In my stint with 436 Squadron I think I held the record for the number of JATO firings. I did about a dozen of them for two CNE airshows and another at Abbotsford, BC. Although they were intended for getting a heavily loaded aircraft out of a short strip, we "cheated" and used them for maximum visual effect. This involved doing a low approach to the "centre-stage" area at maximum indicated airspeed, then firing the rockets while pulling the aircraft into a 45 degree climb. The noise, flame, and smoke belching out of the back of the aircraft while it shot up like an elevator was always a great crowd-pleaser. It was the navigator's responsibility to count down as the burn continued to ensure that the pilot leveled off before the rockets burned out. A 45 degree climb may not sound too steep, but when you are standing in the cockpit, it feels like you are going up vertically!!

When I first joined 436 Sqn in Ottawa, I had not yet taken the C-130 OTU, so I was not qualified to fly 'solo' (i.e. as the only Navigator on board). Flights within Canada that could be flown on airways, during times of the year when the weather radar was not required, could be flown without a nav, or with a nav under training who had not obtained his 'ticket'. My first trip with the squadron was a jaunt down to California. The RCAF was having its Convair 580's re-engined, converting them from piston engines to turbo-props. Our job on this trip was to pick up two of the old piston engines, and return them to Canada for storage. Why they could not have been shipped back by rail, since there was no demand for them, escapes me to this day. Sending a C-130 from Ottawa to California and back to get them was a terrible waste that could only be justified from a training point of view. We were not about to complain, however, since the opportunity for a trip to LA was rare.

At the Van Nuys airport, they did not have the equipment needed to be able to load the engines in their cast-iron storage containers onto the aircraft. They tried using the aircraft's winch to pull them up the ramp on cargo rollers, but that just succeeded in burning out the winch motor and destroying several sets of rollers. It was decided that the only way to get the engines on to the deck of the aircraft was to use a fork-lift.

However, they did not have a fork-lift capable of lifting that much weight, so instead they used two...each with one lifting tine in the base of the engine container. When they first tried to lift it off the ground they discovered that it was too heavy and what lifted was not the engine, but the back ends of the fork-lifts! They had to get two people to hang on the back of each forklift to keep them from tipping. Next came the delicate task of moving both forklifts forward at exactly the same speed!

(Insert cries of horror from your Editor – the current DND Director for Occupational Health and Safety!!)

Washroom facilities

The Herc was designed in the early 1950's as a military transport for bringing troops, armoured vehicles, and supplies into a forward battle-zone. As such, its designers did not pay much heed to the notion that it might ever be used to carry female passengers, or that at some point in the future it could be conceivable that flight crew and even troops could be female. This accounts for the reason that the washroom facilities on the aircraft are, to say the least, crude. On the forward cargo compartment bulkhead (the wall that divides the cargo hold from the cockpit or flight-deck, better known to crews as the "245 bulkhead") were affixed two small, white fixtures just below waist height. Opening the lid on these would reveal a small cup with drain holes in the bottom...these were the urinals. Very handy if you were just carrying freight, but hardly usable if you were carrying passengers! Under those conditions, you had to make use of the toilet facilities, such as they were, in the rear of the aircraft. On the side wall of the aircraft, just above the cargo ramp, there was a toilet mounted on a frame that allowed it to be stowed up against the wall out of the way when not in use, or lowered down to the floor when needed. There was also a vinyl curtain that could be pulled around it in order to provide some privacy. Generally speaking, flight crews only made use of this facility in cases of emergency, partly out of regard for the Loadmaster, who had the unenviable job of seeing to it that the 'honey bucket' was emptied at the end of every flight, and partly because it was often difficult to get past the freight to reach the rear of the aircraft.

These primitive facilities, combined with the arrogance and ignorance of some folks we transported, led to a few comical situations. In one case an officer was not willing to accept assistance from our Loadmaster who was a mere Corporal, so he wound up perched on the can without having first

lowered it into its 'operating' position. Whilst in the midst of doing his business, the clamps that held the toilet in its retracted position against the wall let go under the strain, and it came down with a crash, tossing the officer, bare bum and all, onto the cargo floor for all to see. I hope he learned his lesson!

In another instance, the officer did not deign to enquire where the potty was, but merely assumed. In the Herc there is a forward door that provides access to the flight deck and the forward part of the cargo hold. It has steps built into it, so that, when opened, you can easily climb in. The flight deck floor is actually about 3 feet above the cargo floor, so there is another little ladder you have to climb up. During flight the door is closed, and a panel is lowered into place to provide a floor over the stairwell, providing easy access to the galley. In this configuration, the steps on the door are upside down, and the stairwell becomes a dark little cubbyhole. The riser of the lowest step, which had openings in it until after this incident, would be more or less horizontal. This particular nitwit decided that this must be the crapper, and that's where he did his business!

Tactical air lift

One of the more exciting aspects of C130 operations was doing paradrops. I was first sent to the TAL School at Rivers, Manitoba in 1966. There we took ground school courses to learn how to calculate where a parachute would land, allowing time for it to open and then drift with the wind after it had left the aircraft. We also learned about drop zone markings, low-level navigation, formation flying, and all the other aspects of Tactical Air Lift.

Most of our drops were personnel, and did not involve a great deal of flying, other than to allow sufficient time for the troopers to go through all of their pre-drop checks, which took about 15 minutes. All of the drops were conducted over a drop zone on the south edge of the airfield, which was close enough that the troops could walk back to the hangar. By the time they started streaming back in across the tarmac we would already have landed, parked, shut down and getting prepared for the next batch. It was during one of these "between sortie breaks" that I learned that paratroopers didn't know too much about the physics of parachutes. I overheard one soldier talking to his buddy, saying, "Boy, did you see where those damn fools dropped us this time? It was a darn good thing there was a strong breeze or we wouldn't have landed on the DZ at all!"

Although it was possible to have troopers jump from the cargo ramp, normal practice was to have them go out the side doors. This gave them more separation from one another, for safety, and at the same time it was psychologically better for them not to be able to see the ground rushing by until the last second when they stood in the doorway and jumped. I spent some time in the back of the aircraft watching the procedures, and I know jumping is something I wouldn't have wanted to do. Even at the low speeds we used for dropping, there was a 120 mph hurricane roaring past the door, adding to the usual noise of the engines. When the navigator called the 5 minute warning the troops would stand up, and hook up - i.e. connect the hook on the end of the line which would pull open their parachute to the steel "clothes line" that ran the length of the aircraft. They would then spend the next few minutes checking their own equipment, and that of the trooper on either side. Their Jumpmaster would also make a final inspection. At the one minute warning they would face the door, which would have been opened by this time, along with the air deflectors. At 30 seconds the red warning light would go on, and tension would mount. The first man in the stick would be positioned in the doorway until the nav called, "Green Go!" Then he would jump out (or be pushed out by the Jumpmaster if necessary). One by one the troopers would position themselves in front of the door and jump. They would be about 1 second apart, and from the cockpit you could count them go by the thumps as they jumped into position at the door and then dove out.

Cargo drops were a different kettle of fish...the cargo ramp would have to be open, and it was the loadmaster's responsibility to make sure that the load was properly on its rail system so that it would clear the aircraft cleanly when the time came...the worst fear when doing a heavy drop is that the load would become jammed on exit and would shift the centre of gravity so far aft that the aircraft would be uncontrollable. Heavy cargo usually required two or three very large chutes, and these would be pulled out by a smaller 'drogue' chute. This smaller chute would be packed, and suspended on a hook over the cargo ramp. When Green Go was called, the drogue chute would be released electrically, it would fall out into the slipstream, deploy, and pull open the main chutes, which in turn pulled the cargo out of the aircraft. By the time the cargo left the back of the aircraft it would be moving like an express train, so you wanted to make damn sure that you were well out of it's way!

In 1967 I was involved in one of the largest airborne exercises ever held by the airforce. This involved moving most of the Canadian Airborne

Regiment and their equipment from their base in Edmonton to Coral Harbour in the northern entrance to Hudson's Bay. This involved a formation of some 15 Hercs, flying for about 3 hours to the drop zone, discharging everything by parachute at the crack of dawn, and then returning to Edmonton. Troops were dropped first, so that they would be on the ground and ready to accept (and defend if necessary) the heavy equipment that was dropped last. Even though we did not fly the sort of close formation you see in air shows, but rather a 'trail' formation of groups of three aircraft with a mile and a quarter between aircraft and three miles between sections, it was a long stressful trip. Separation had to be maintained by radar, and you had to be prepared to conduct 'loss of contact' procedures if you got into cloud, had radar failure, or ran into any other condition that made station keeping impossible.

The first time we attempted this, the winds over the DZ were above limits, and the drop had to be scrubbed, so we had to fly the whole regiment back to Edmonton and arrange to do it all over again the following night. This actually caused an amusing (?) little ruckus in the married quarters at CFB Namao, because when the soldiers arrived home in the wee small hours of the morning, their families were not expecting to see them again for a couple of weeks. More than one arrived to discover someone else providing husbandly services in their absence, and it is lucky that no one was murdered as a result. From that day forth it became standard operating procedure for trucks with loudspeakers to roam through the married quarters making announcements about troop returns anytime an operation was cut short for any reason!

The second night the winds had died down, and the drop was able to proceed as planned. Personally, I was not impressed. The formation had flown in at high altitude to a range where it would have been easily detected by enemy radar before descending to drop altitudes, and little effort was made to enforce radio silence. The drop zone itself was lit up like a used car lot, which seemed most unrealistic, and we dropped cargo onto the same zone that troops had just landed which seemed to me to be foolishly dangerous. When a 2000 lb cargo pallet is dropping out of the sky on a parachute it is still coming down at about 20 feet per second, which is plenty fast enough to crush an unsuspecting body. Dropping silently out of a dark sky these things would be difficult to avoid if you were alert and mobile, impossible if you were injured or incapacitated in any way during your own landing. Fellow navigator and class-mate **Bill Sherk**, shared my opinions, and after we returned to Ottawa we wrote up

a lengthy military paper on the subject. However, I was never aware that it had any impact on procedures.

One aspect of tactical airlift that I was interested in, but never got a chance to participate in, was Low Altitude Parachute Extraction System, or LAPES. Rather than have the cargo dropped from 1500 feet on large cargo chutes, the idea was to fly the aircraft in, just skimming the ground (10 feet was the nominal altitude, but the procedure was to extend your landing gear, just in case you happened to touch down), and have the chutes pull the load out right onto the ground. To do this, you had to have a fairly level DZ, and the cargo had to be mounted on a pallet that could withstand skidding along the ground without disintegrating or digging in and causing it to tumble. The chutes actually helped keep the load stable, and to bring it to a halt. Operationally, this was a more practical way of delivering a heavy load in a hostile environment because both the aircraft and the load would spend far less time being a sitting duck for enemy fire. It was not without its hazards.

One of the worst C-130 accidents in the CAF happened when a 435 Sqn Herc was doing a LAPES drop on the airfield at Namao (Edmonton). The load jammed during extraction. The emergency procedure for this condition is to chop the power, land straight ahead, and hope for the best. With the aircraft just feet off the ground, and a long flat DZ ahead, odds are you will survive. For whatever reason, the crew applied power and attempted to stay airborne. With the weight of the load moved to the back of the aircraft, and the drag of the extraction chutes now slowing the aircraft, the nose pitched up vertically, the aircraft stalled, tumbled over and plunged into the ground nose first with the loss of everyone on board. A photographer who had been filming the drop caught the last terrifying seconds of the aircraft's death dive. It still sends shudders through me.

Safety

Despite the role it performed, which often involved low flying or operations in remote places with poor runways and poor landing approach facilities, the Herc's record of safety was excellent. The first C-130's had been delivered to the RCAF in the 1950s, and there had only been one crash before I started flying them. That had occurred when a forward side cargo door had come open in flight, damaging engines and aircraft systems in the process so that only one engine was left running, and the crew could not keep the aircraft fling in a straight line. Luckily they were

over the prairies where they were able to belly land the aircraft in a wheat field with no injuries. It was a miracle that nobody was sucked out of the aircraft with the door. As a result of that accident the forward cargo doors were permanently sealed.

The first fatal Herc accident for the RCAF occurred at Trenton in about 1972. A crew doing circuit training at night (takeoff and landings) had a runaway trim event shortly immediately after takeoff, which they did not recognize until it was too late. The trim tabs that control the horizontal stabilizer ran to full nose down, the aircraft pitched over into a descent, and before it could be recovered it struck hydro wires and crashed. This was another one of those cases where a series of factors gang up on an unsuspecting crew. Had the same thing occurred during daylight the results would have been quite different. Had the aircraft been taking off in the opposite direction so that it was over the town of Trenton, it probably would have survived too, because there would have been plenty of visual clues as to what was happening. But taking off from the well lit airfield into the "black hole" between Belleville and Trenton, the crew were stripped of those visual aids, and all were killed.

There was only one other fatal accident before I retired in 1981. I was directly involved in this accident, because it involved a 436 Sqn aircraft based in Trenton where I was Base Air Operations Officer at the time. It was also the only accident in which I personally knew any of the victims - in this case the navigator, Ron Cavanaugh. He was on my nav course at Winnipeg, and had driven to Toronto with my wife and I when we had come home for Christmas in 1965.

In this accident the aircraft was on a search and rescue mission, looking for a light aircraft that had gone missing. One of the spotters in the rear of the aircraft reported seeing something, so the pilots initiated a turn to circle around for another look. It appears that they were slow to apply additional power, and so the aircraft began to stall in the turn. By this time they were too low to be able to trade height for speed, the best they could do was level the wings and let the aircraft mush into the trees. The aircraft remained reasonably intact. The copilot and the flight engineer survived the impact, and were able to escape through the cockpit windows. The captain and the navigator (Ron) died, as did several of the observers in the rear of the aircraft.

There were no other accidents until after I had retired in 1981, and then in relatively quick succession at least five aircraft were lost - two in a

mid-air collision at Namao during an Air Force Day fly past, one in a landing accident in Alaska, one which misjudged an assault approach to a LAPES drop and crashed into the ground, and another that failed to monitor its descent altitude, and crashed into the ground while approaching Alert. This latter accident received a lot of media attention because there were a number of passengers on board. It was a very difficult rescue mission to get to the survivors, and the Captain died trying to care for the survivors. *(Ed. Note – If memory serves me correctly, this tragic incident was presented as a made-for-TV movie.)* Like so many other accidents, this one was the result of number of coincidences. Ironically, the fact that the visibility was good and the lights of the airport could be seen from 100 miles away was a major contributor...the crew elected to do a visual approach rather than a GCA (precision radar controlled approach), so they were not being required to fly specific headings and altitudes. They initiated their descent from cruising altitude, and simply flew into high ground about 10 miles south of the airport. Given the terrain, they were lucky that there were any survivors at all.

Despite all of these crashes, the Herc was an exceptionally reliable aircraft. During the 16 years of my flying career I accumulated over 4,000 flying hours on type, and never had an engine failure. We did do one precautionary shut-down because of a high temperature warning, but that was due to a temperature sensor failure, rather than a faulty engine, and we were in the circuit at Trenton at the time anyway.

Closing Notes

We'll pick up on Rick's interesting and at times, harrowing remembrances in a future edition. Rather reminds me of going to the Base movie theatre as a kid and watching Captain Canada serials.

I am able to add a happy note by reporting the arrival in Halifax on 22 April of our third grandchild, William Harris Braham, a brother for Addison Pyper; and a cousin for Lucas Michael in Mission, BC.

Thanks again to this edition's contributors. To all of you out there - keep the stuff flowing – I'm going to need something to do in my imminent retirement.