



# Class of 65 Newsletter Edition 48-April 2012



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## Editor's Corner

Fore!! Move aside winter, golf season is here! It is time for classmates who have hibernated or temporarily emigrated for the past six months to take pen to paper and pour their hearts out to the rest of us.



I imagine most of you have seen the most recent edition of e-veritas and the news that the pillbox is to be replaced at RMC by a peaked cap that is reminiscent of something from the losing side of the American Civil War! It certainly doesn't look like anything from what I know of Canadian military tradition.

I know we had a debate about the pillbox in this newsletter a few issues back, but I am sure that even its detractors would not have wished for this strange looking headgear for a replacement!

However, moving on ... I'm pleased to note that this month includes input from a couple of familiar contributors as well as two new budding authors. The first article is taken from the RCAF Honorary Colonel site and features classmate **Fraser Holman**. The second appeared in a recent edition of e-veritas and traces the career of **Keith Ambachtsheer** and his ride to fame in the business world.

Our "newbies" this month are **Bob Fraser** and **Barry Mitchell** who share interesting and humorous vignettes from their military and civilian careers.

## 6541 Major-General (Retired) D. Fraser Holman, CD



Born in Toronto in 1943, Major-General (Retired) Holman grew up in Ottawa and graduated from the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC), Kingston, Ontario, in 1965. He was appointed as Honorary Colonel of Canadian Forces College in November 2011.

Honorary Colonel Holman's military career spanned 35 years and alternated between operational and educational assignments. Initially, he was an instructor pilot on T-33 trainers at Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, next on the CF-104 Starfighter with a four-year tour as a reconnaissance pilot in Baden-Soellingen, Germany, then at the 1CAG Headquarters in Lahr, Germany.

Returning to Canada in 1974, Honorary Colonel Holman was assigned as an Assistant Professor of mathematics at the RMC for three years. Next he attended the CF Command and Staff Course in Toronto, before returning to Germany and the CF-104 — this time in the ground-attack role. This was to become a four-year tour as he was promoted lieutenant-colonel in 1980 and appointed Commanding Officer of 421 (Red Indian) Squadron.

In 1982 Honorary Colonel Holman returned to Toronto and the Command and Staff College, where he covered four different assignments over six years. He was promoted to colonel in 1986 and finished his time there as Director of Air Studies, as well as Director of Unified Studies. Returning to fighters in 1988, he was appointed Commander of BFC Bagotville, Quebec, a CF-18 Wing for a glorious two-year tour.

Honorary Colonel Holman was promoted to brigadier-general in 1990 and assigned as the (last) Deputy Chief of Staff Operations at the 4th Allied Tactical Air Force at Heidelberg, Germany. Next, he was reassigned in 1993 to HQ NORAD, in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He served as Vice-Director of Plans, then Deputy Commander of the Cheyenne Mountain Operations Centre, before being promoted to major-general in 1995 and becoming the J-3, Director of Operations, for NORAD.

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He retired from the Canadian Forces in 1996 and returned to live in Toronto. He established himself in a consulting business and from 1997 to 2011 worked in support of the Canadian Forces College as a senior mentor and facilitator. He shared in the development and implementation of two advanced courses in senior officer professional development — the Advanced Military Studies Course, and the National Security Studies Course - which have now been replaced by the National Security Programme. His time at CFC now totals 21 years.

Honorary Colonel Holman accumulated over 3600 hours of pilot-in-command time, primarily on the CF-18, CF-104 and the T-33. His education includes a BSc in Mathematics and Physics (1965) and an MSc in Mathematics and Operations Research (1978) both from RMC, and an MA in International Relations (1987) from York University, Toronto.

Honorary Colonel Holman has served as a Director and Chairman of the Board of the Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies as well as a Director of the Atlantic Council of Canada. He is a member of the Strategic Studies Working Group of the Canadian International Council as well as the Aircrew Association in Toronto, the Royal Canadian Legion, the Royal Canadian Military Institute in Toronto, the Conference of Defence Associations Institute in Ottawa, the Air Force Association of Canada, and the Canadian Air and Space Museum in Toronto.

In 2000 he wrote a monograph entitled *NORAD in the New Millennium*, published by Irwin.

Honorary Colonel Holman is married to the former Sandra Hayter of Ottawa; they have two adult sons and five grandchildren.

**Source:** <http://www.rcaf-arc.forces.gc.ca/or-re/hc-ch/nr-sp/index-eng.asp?id=12546>

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## From RMC to Business Success

By 25881 OCdt (III) Anthony Matlock



In 2011, **Keith Ambachtsheer (6584)** was awarded the CFA Institute's Award for Professional Excellence "for exemplary achievement, excellence of practice and true leadership." This latest achievement is one of a series of accolades which complement his more than forty years of successful experience in the pensions and investments industries. At present Mr. Ambachtsheer multi-tasks between his roles as a Director at the Rotman International Centre for Pension Management, Founder of KPA Advisory Services and Co-Founder of CEM Benchmarking, of which the pension funds and long-horizon investment pools aggregate to \$7 trillion.

The pension funds guru's road to success in the field of economics began as an Officer Cadet in 1961 at Royal Roads Military College.

A young Keith had been drawn to the Canadian Forces' Regular Officer Training Plan for three reasons: one, as a three-year old his family was liberated in Rotterdam by the Canadian Army in 1945; two, he had been a member of the CF Militia growing up in Sarnia, Ontario; and three, his father's unfortunate passing made military college's free education a sound option.

Officer Cadet Ambachtsheer quickly distinguished himself as a talented soccer team "striker" during his first two years at Royal Roads. Securing the league scoring title, Keith saw the team win the Vancouver Island championship in the 1961-2 and 1962-3 seasons.

Upon arrival at RMC for third and fourth year, the Four-Squadron Deputy Cadet Flight Leader transferred to varsity football; however, this sport was short-lived as



In better days!

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*"three cracked ribs ended my football career."* A recovering Keith, now in fourth-year, returned to soccer for 1964-5 - a season which saw RMC reach the league finals.

In terms of academics, the best-selling author realized that *"the only ticket out was to take General Arts in second-year,"* as his first-year experience in Royal Road's mandatory pre-engineering curriculum was not as exciting as Economics - with Professors Cairns and Binhammer being true inspirations. According to the arts-man: *"I was attracted to a discipline that attempts to explain how the world works from some basic premises about human behaviour, decision-making, and the operation of markets for goods, service, labour and capital."*

*"At its best, Economics is both rigorous and intuitive at the same time. How cool is that!"*

Nevertheless, the young-Friedman recalls that the nine arts-men in second-year Roads were *"razzed continually by the hundred-or-so science and engineering types"* - some things never change!

Upon graduation from RMC in 1965, the Immediate Past Board Chair of the Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation joined the Ordnance Corps and managed to twist some arms in order to secure a posting to the London, Ontario supply depot. A year later, on a leave-of-absence, Keith completed his Masters in Economics at Western University.

Following the degree, the junior officer completed his military service on the faculty of the Canadian Forces School of Management (CFSM) in Montreal, and then made the transition to civilian life as a PhD Economics student at McGill University. The transition *"was not that difficult at first; [however], what did become difficult for me was to accept the attitude by some academics that they could lead ivory tower lives, with excursions in the 'real world' completely optional."*

*"So when the opportunity to join the Sun Life Investment Department [came along], I was ready to go."*

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Keith's early years in the "real world" were characterized by a consistent pattern of challenge-seeking, as the four-time winner of the Graham and Dodd Scrolls transitioned from Sunlife to increasingly smaller companies such as Canavest House and Pension Finance Associates.

*"I was willing to sacrifice the positives of large organizations for the flexibility and independence of running a small shop with big ideas."*

According to the economist, this career path has led to *"a large informal global network of people with similar professional interests. This 'connectivity' is much facilitated by the 24/7 wired world we now live in."*

Keith's entrepreneurial leadership led to success when, in the 1970s, and with the guidance of his mentor - *"the great management philosopher Peter Drucker"* - he transitioned his career interest to pension funds management. According to Drucker's 1976 book, the pensions industry would be a sort of Unseen Revolution - *"a fascinating field of both study and business opportunity in the decades ahead."*

*"Well that revolution is unseen no longer!"*

Keith has recently found himself in the spotlight over the Federal Government's apparent intention to make changes to the public pension system which *"is now a big topic of great interest to Canadians."* To listen to the investment-expert's interview with CBC Radio's Rex Murphy on *Cross Country Check-up* click [here](#).

Furthermore, Keith publishes the well-read *Ambachtsheer Letter* through his consulting firm, KPA Advisory Services, to some one hundred clients worldwide representing several multi-billion dollar pension funds.

Aside from consulting, the strategic analyst is also the Co-Founder of CEM Benchmarking (began in 1991) which monitors *"the organizational performance of some 300 pension organizations around the world, with aggregate assets of some \$7 trillion,"* and offices in Toronto, the US, and Europe.

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*"I would like to think CEM has had, and continues to have a significant influence on the quality of pension management around the world."*

In addition to his consulting and managing success, Keith has also simultaneously pursued the field of economics education as a Director and Adjunct Professor of Finance at the Rotman International Centre of Pension Management (ICPM).

ICPM's mandate is to translate and deliver academic research to a "practitioner community." Supported by thirty-three major pension funds from ten countries, ICPM *"creates forums to discuss... how [pension management] should impact current practices, it publishes the International Journal of Pension Management, and it conducts week-long Board Effectiveness Programs for board members of pension organizations."*

*"The Centre produces an amazing amount of value with a small, dedicated team of academics and professionals."*

In looking back upon his career, Keith Ambachtsheer's realizes that the early RMC experience was a preparation for failure as much as success: *"My path over the last 40 years has led me down more than one blind alley where things didn't work out so well - the RMC lesson was to get your butt up off the ground and move on to Plan B."*

When asked if he has a message for current, business-minded Cadets, Ambachtsheer says to stay motivated by making a difference, and furthermore: *"something our soccer coach at Royal Roads drilled into us. If you don't have the ball, find an open space to go to and something good might happen!"*

Keith Ambachtsheer is a member of the RMC Club Foundation's Investment Advisory Committee, and is an active member of the Class of 1965 which has, individually and collectively, donated \$1.6 million in endowments, and funds the yearly *Class of '65 Teaching Excellence and Professorship in Excellence Awards*.

Source: <http://everitas.rmclub.ca/>

## My military career - well sort of!

By 6668 Barry Mitchell

My "real" military career started off with the hiring of a new high school principal for the new- built South River, Sundridge regional district high school when I was in grade 12 and president of the student council. The principal decided to introduce a cadet wing to the student body. As student president I was chosen as the cadet wing CO, an honour which I respectfully declined (mutiny?). Eventually cadet uniforms arrived along with guns and other military paraphernalia. Another student that was actually keen on the military volunteered to be the cadet CO.



Future officer cadet  
Mitchell - circa 1943  
Military college potential?

I think we actually tried to march once or twice. I moved to Sault Ste Marie. I think that the principal and the cadet wing also moved on shortly thereafter.

My next foray into the sphere of the Canadian military was due to ROTP testing. My buddy had found out that while the initial ROTP selection test was conducted in the Sault where we were living, subsequent testing was done in North Bay (for 3 days I think) followed by a further 9 days of testing in Centralia. I had no intention of going to a military college, however two paid holidays looked like a lark so three of us applied and passed the initial test. Two of us made it past North Bay. Sometime during my "paid vacation" in Centralia I decided that I wouldn't mind going to a military college and I indicated this to someone in uniform. I think that it was probably during the same interview when I agreed that if I couldn't be an Air Force pilot I would settle for being a navigator. Guess which one of the 3 vacationers ended up being selected for a career in the Canadian military and not as a pilot either.

Off to Royal Roads where I ran around in circles for a good part of the year. In fact I was so busy circling that I did not do too well on my final exams. While waiting for the exam results to be announced I was on the tennis courts with a few of my buddies when the commandant approached and selected me for a personal chat. In front of the group he congratulated me



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on standing first in my class. I respectfully suggested that he might just have me mistaken for someone else. When I confessed that my name was actually Mitchell he agreed that I might not have done so well. I think because of his error I was actually given the opportunity to write three supplemental exams. When asked if the chemistry supplemental exam would be similar to the final exam the organic chemistry professor assured me that this time I would be given enough rope to hang myself. With this encouragement bolstering my confidence I actually passed the three exams and I was on my way to navigation training in Winnipeg instead of the pilot training I desired.

I was a skilled navigator in the ground based "Link trainer" but not so much in the air where looking down through the Mark Ten drift meter while drawing lines on an air plot with the "Exploder" bouncing up and down caused a severe reaction in my stomach. Vectoring the plane into the Moose Jaw control zone was not well received by the pilot either but he really should have been paying more attention to where he was going instead of reading Playboy. The results of my navigation skill resulted in me failing my navigation check ride. When we landed, the Navigator instructor confirmed my failure to perform and asked if I wanted to keep my dismal documents as a souvenir. I did not. The air plot (incomplete & with the "alter heading" chits, detailing my lack of aptitude etc.) was thrown in a garbage can with the days collection of barf bags and other goodies.

I retired to the cadet mess to celebrate. A little later the instructor arrived to advise me that I could not be CT'd (cease training) without documentation and I was asked to accompany him to the garbage can in front of the hangar to retrieve my navigation documents. Some were found but not all were presentable. Subsequently, another flight check ride was scheduled for me and flown with the same results.

Since no one actually said anything else about ending my career I just showed up at RMC where I seemed to be expected and I started classes. In November I was called in front of the Air Force staff officer and asked what I was doing at RMC since I had effectively failed out of the Air Force training and therefore ROTP. Apparently someone had finally done some

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paperwork. We agreed that since no one had actually confirmed this with me officially, I would be allowed to switch to telecommunications and to continue my military career.

I graduated without any more supplemental exams and actually taught telecommunications courses and served on radar sites at Puntzi Mountain and Falconbridge in both operations and maintenance.

During the armed forces services integration an effort was being made to upgrade French language skills for serving military personnel. If I remember correctly French language skills would be required for promotion to senior ranks which I then aspired to. There was a language aptitude test and personnel that did well were to be given a 6 month posting to live with a French speaking family in Quebec. Several personnel stationed at RCAF Falconbridge took the test. When the results were announced, I and a corporal, who reported to me, had done well and we were nominated for the program.

I happened to be the base Acting CO at the time so I posted both of us! When the "real" CO returned I was quickly un-posted. A rather enthusiastic exchange of views occurred between the real CO and myself about my career opportunities. The CO prevailed so I resigned my commission to pursue other opportunities. I ended up working at IBM for the next 25 years.



The new look Mitchell

I hope that these personal vignettes will have brought back some of your own humorous memories from your time at military college and in the Canadian services. I am proud of my time at Royal Roads and RMC and of the time I served in the RCAF.

TDV, Barry

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## The Story of My Life Since Graduating from RMC as an Electronic Engineer.

By 6246 Robert Russell Fraser



I started my commissioned service in the Royal Canadian Electrical Mechanical Engineers ( RCEME ) at 2 Field Workshop, Base Petawawa, ON in September 1965.

I began as the Control Officer - accepting, scheduling all work, inspection (incoming and outgoing) for all the units on the base.

After about 7 months, I became the Workshop Administrative Officer then took a Security course and wore a second hat as the Security Officer.

I got roped into volunteering as District Commissioner of the Rangers, Scouts, Girl Guides, Brownies, Cubs, and the Squibs (or whatever the wee ones were called), where my major claim to fame was the 1965 Xmas party with presents for everyone and a Santa with a real donkey and sleigh.

The Santa owned the sleigh and felt that it would be safer if it was rebuilt - he could do it on the shop floor - "a small job" - sounded good. I authorized it. The job went 2 months - impressive sleigh! My boss thought I should have let him know - I think that it was the fact that it took place 30' from his office and he did not notice that was the real problem. He and I got over it and the party was fantastic - they talked about it for months.

By summer of 1966, I had studied for and passed the Lieutenant to Captain Exams.

In January 1967 I was posted to the Royal Canadian Dragoons (RCD) Regiment, Camp Gagetown, NB as 2 I/C of the Maintenance Company. At that time the Regiment consisted of (3) Centurion tank Companies, (1) Ferret Scout Car Company, (1) Maintenance Company, and (1) Administration Company.

When I arrived, there was no sign of the O/C of Maintenance Company (I never did find out what they had done with/to him). Thirty or so of their tanks were scattered across the training area after being surprised by a ferocious early winter storm during their big 1966 Lilliefontein Regimental Birthday/24 hour all-out exercise, so it made for an interesting six-month recovery and repair period. The tanks were finally ready for their 1967 Birthday exercise and were then able to (mostly) get back home in working order and life was good.

I started a base-wide program of formal class training for the pre group four specialist candidates, and also a schedule plan of inter-unit RCME short term cross posting of personnel between units for career development - training needs of specific trades.

In early 1968, still with no O/C in sight, I officially became the O/C and shortly after that made Captain (as a 1960 Royal Roads 3rd year retread I got some extra credit for time served).

I was posted as OC Maintenance Company to 2 RCR, Soest, Germany and was on embarkation leave in Ottawa in Sept 1968 when it occurred to me that:

- 1) while I had always wanted to be an engineer and was one, the Army appeared to have very little real engineering work to offer, and
- 2) I was still single and likely to change that in the next couple of years and possibly should stay in Canada during those critical years, and
- 3) I had never really had any career counselling and some might be of value.

So I found myself at a Career Counselling Company in Ottawa where they had a program of many tests each followed by experts examining the results and discussing them with me - \$1000, but looked like a good value - problem was it normally took place over many months and I had to be in Germany in about a month! They were not happy, but could do it as a one month crash course if I really wanted to put myself through that kind of a wringer.

I saw an advertisement in the Ottawa Citizen by Algonquin College who was

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looking for an Electronics teacher at a start-up campus in Pembroke - Bingo! I spoke to the career counsellors who advised that I should save my money and go for it. I phoned for an appointment, was interviewed in Pembroke by the new Principal and offered the job subject to the production of recommendations.

I flew to Gagetown and got the needed recommendations from the Regiment and the Base and flew back to Ottawa in time to hand them to the Principal as he was going in to the President's Board meeting. I waited outside to see if I had a new job or had simply blown my career in the Army. While I waited, I had some time to think seriously about impulse control and risk tolerance.

Fortunately the application was accepted by the Board, and I then went downtown to the DPers, RCME with a list of the names of the officers in Gagetown who had asked me to present their names as willing replacements. He was not all that amused, but my retirement request was officially accepted and my Military career was on the count-down clock.

On 1 Sept 1968 I started teaching Electronics, Physics, and Mechanical Structures to first year students in the Three Year Technology Program.

In 1970 I met my future wife Doreen (at Algonquin College), and in the Fall of 1971, bought twenty-one white pine filled acres 10 miles from town. I started building the house in May 1972 and got married under those pine trees on 3 June 1972 (40th anniversary coming up!). We lived in a one-room schoolhouse in the back yard until 24 December when the house and dishwasher became functional enough for Xmas dinner with my new wife, her family, and my family.

We now have two delightful, married daughters, one a Bank Manager, the other a Payroll manager for the local School Board. One is a hard driving professional, the other is a professional and a very focused mom of two boys - both of whom are amazing and a joy!

I continued to teach and coordinate at Algonquin Pembroke for 28 years -

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electronics, digital, logic circuits, microcomputer design, repair, programming, robotics, computer networks, etc. In July 1996, I took early retirement from Algonquin College, and in August 1996 I taught for a year at a high school in Quebec (science, computers, shop).

In Sept 1997 I took a nine month program in Computer Network Administration and Control and was certified by Microsoft as a Microsoft Certified System Engineer (MCSE) with three extra Internet courses for +I (MCSE +I), also certified for Microcomputer Hardware and Software Repair (A+)

In 1998 I took out a \$113K three year bank loan, a five year lease on the second floor of a downtown building in Pembroke, renovated it extensively, and set up a Computer Network Administration School to do properly what the network schools did not even come close to achieving: namely hands-on practical time on the equipment and a proper level of theoretical knowledge.

My program was 6 months @ 30 hours/week in the lab/classroom with each student having (3) computers on their personal desk and (2) computers at home, (18) major textbooks supplied, and the labs all redone so that they actually worked.

I delivered two programs back to back per year for 11 programs with the student's lab desks eventually going to (7) computers for three weeks of the program when network complexity required it (setting up multiple Exchange mail servers etc). My wife was the school manager and I hired a lady graduate from my 3rd program as a lab assistant for the last 8 programs.

The classes were small, I did not make any money, the work was hard and never ending, but it was an excellent program, graduated some tremendous Network Administrators, and made me proud.

Unfortunately, the bursting Dotcom bubble put a finish to the project and I retired once more.

Over the years I built several houses on spec for sale and rather

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continuously added onto our own house. At one juncture, I had a mother earth thing where a large solar heat collector and storage was desired. I got (70) 9' x 7' x 3/8" sheets of used tempered glass and designed a heat collector for the 70' front of our house. As it seemed a waste to just have it collect heat, I spaced it out 12' from the front of the house and 3 stories high - *"might as well have a green house for almost the same money - it can have computer controlled hydroponics - it will be a natural - I will design and build all the computer hardware and software, my wife will run the actual greenhouse until the heat of summer, and then we will all go the lake for the summer."*

I am certain that I cleared that running the greenhouse part with you know who, but I think it was another of those Xmas sleigh rebuild oversights. Adding to the problem, Harrowsmith had an article about a greenhouse lady who had it all together way better than anything that I would ever hope to achieve - 5 AM to 9 PM seven day weeks with her multiple greenhouses - cleared \$9,000 for the year!!

I reached for my chainsaw and my domestic oversight problem was solved. Over the years, 2,000 hours of chain saw work have made our little woods look like a park and the daughter and her kids, their dog, and grandpa really enjoy the long walks down there. The bush work has also helped keep me in shape.

Several years ago, I got into mountain biking around Lake Dore (26 Km mostly flat). The first couple of weeks when I started, the cows in the fields would all turn to look as I came by to see if I was going to cough up a lung, but now I do 1, 2, or 3 (55 minute) laps a day when I am out there.

By now our house has grown to 8,500 sq feet and has been divided into 3 apartments. Now that I am re-retired, I have found that I have the time to learn how to lay ceramic tile, hardwood floors, install propane fireplaces, and take advantage of the Home Energy Saving Program to replace (15) patio doors and (15) windows, add all sorts of extra insulation, and (3) of those nifty Heat Recovery Ventilators.

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I have never had a garage, and I think now is the time (for a triple).

I got a kick out of writing this, I hope it causes the odd chuckle or belly laugh. Live long and prosper - if you are not laughing, you are not doing it right!

Bob

PS. To the Class of 65 - this took one sitting from 22:00 to 02:00 start to finish. You are all retired now, take some time and drop Mike a short bio - what can it hurt? Bob (*Editor's note: I didn't ask him to say that, but thanks Bob*).

## Closing Notes

A final blah to the new headgear!!

Thanks as always to this month's contributors, particularly to Barry and Bob for their articles - interesting and humorous looks at the many paths our class has taken since 1965.

To close this month off, the following is the second in a series of "droll-ets" from the twisted mind of **Tom Drolet**:

*'Five second fuses last about three seconds.'*

*- Infantry Journal*